

Southfields Multi Academy Trust Work With ERA to Deliver Transparent Strategic Savings

CLIENT:	Southfields Multi-Academy Trust
SECTOR:	School/Academy Trust
COST CATEGORIES:	Waste, Managed Print, Utilities, Paper, Wastewater, Cleaning

THE TRUST

CASE STUDY Southfields Academy converted to a Multi-Academy Trust in 2018, comprising a 1300-pupil secondary school with a nursery and sports centre facilities. When Catherine Anderson met Steve Elson the FD and his team, he told her that the MAT had a healthy balance sheet and planned to expand to 6-10 schools in the future. Steve wanted to know if the Trust was currently getting the best value in its procurement, or could it achieve better; and where possible, could new schools be added easily to supplier contracts.

THE TASK

Impressed by ERA's expertise and experience, plus Catherine's promise that ERA would always work in his team's best interests, Steve agreed to two initial projects on paper and waste.

Whilst the trust was using a cost-efficient method to buy their paper, ERA's Nigel Richards was able to leverage better value from their existing supplier, with a saving of 18%.

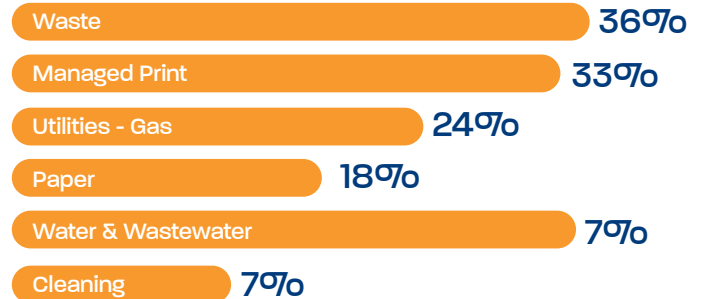
Dan Howells analysed the Trust's waste spend and recommended their best approach was via a framework agreement, set up by ERA for smaller spends that could incorporate new schools. After careful consideration, the Trust agreed. They then enjoyed a 36% saving over three years and, afterwards, ERA's ongoing protection from above-market price rises from their supplier.

Steve and his team swiftly realised they could trust ERA and were happy to work with Catherine and ERA's specialists on other projects including IT hardware, water rates and vending machines. Steve has found the ongoing strategic service on Utilities particularly useful.

They are also using ERA for more complex, resource-rich projects for the academy and its new school.

Andy Kinnear, one of ERA's managed print specialists, aided by Nick Robinson, doggedly achieved large savings and claimed overcharges on the existing complex contracts for the new special school. Then Andy found the MAT the best value solution on a new copier contract to the delight of the CEO Jackie Valin.

SUMMARY OF SAVINGS



"I continue to be impressed with the knowledge that ERA's people have across a number of differing areas. I trust them, have learnt a lot from them and have found it easy working with them all.

I use ERA in areas where I perceive there to be a risk that I'm not able to get the best value."

**STEPHEN ELSON, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
SOUTHFIELDS MULTI ACADEMIES TRUST**

Southfields Multi Academy Trust Work With ERA to Deliver Transparent Strategic Savings

VALUE ADDS GAINED

- Significant supplier overcharges found through ERA analysis on managed print and water & wastewater.
- The Trust could choose to keep the same incumbent supplier and still achieve significant cost savings.
- The setting up of a transparent fee structure and ongoing strategic advice on utilities has allowed Southfields to make an informed decision to reduce their risk.
- Analysis of complex supplier contracts has given a full picture of actual liabilities and notice periods in areas including waste and managed print.
- A whole life running cost analysis of printers has shown that sweating the assets was loss-making.
- ERA resource and expertise injected into multiple cost areas that the Trust simply could not have found internally.



CLEANING UP THE CONTRACTOR'S MESS

When the Academy's cleaning contract ended, the MAT asked for help with the OJEU tender.

Catherine brought in Steve Clamp from ERA, who rewrote an output specification, added in KPIs and researched a suitable framework that included the incumbent, who was performing well. The incumbent was successful in the tender, at a lower cost for the school.

Phase two with Steve Clamp was to tender the outsourcing of the specialist cleaning at the new school, which was becoming too time-consuming for the school's management with high absenteeism.

Most recently the Academy's contract was up for retender. A larger company had bought the incumbent contractor and this, combined with Covid-19, meant that the MAT now faced poor incumbent service with no control over attendance, inadequate quality of operatives and no contract administration. Steve quickly took control, using his contacts, to get the information needed from the incumbent for the tender. A new contractor won the tender with a saving for the school and strict KPIs in place with penalties for deficient performance.

Asked if he would recommend ERA to others, Steve said "Absolutely." "I think that academies have been seen as an easy target for profit maximising and ERA give me the tools to get the best value for my schools."

VALUE ADDS ACHIEVED

- Fixed prices for cleaning and copier contracts. Future-proofed against inflation and supplier increases.
- ERA have replaced complicated shift and attendance profiles with smoother, leaner and efficient profiles, underpinned with an accountable time & attendance system.
- Implemented fixed monthly reporting detailing quality audits, service standards, training and contract delivery.
- Produced a clear output specification, ensuring standards are high and contractor is penalised for deficient performance.
- Significant reduction in facilities manager's time and involvement in the cleaning service.

