

# PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2018

## Most Effective Partnership

Submitted by:

**London Borough of  
Waltham Forest and YPO**



## Introduction

When the London Borough of Waltham Forest decided to create a national procurement framework – available to every public sector organisation in the UK – it put partnership working at the heart of the process.

The council joined forces with YPO, the UK's largest public sector buying organisation, to create the Local Government Resourcing Partnership (LGRP), a new framework that makes it easier for all public sector organisations to purchase a wide range of HR services.

Following a rigorous procurement process, the LGRP went live in October 2017. It provides access to a national supplier base of 15 organisations who deliver services across four categories:

- permanent and interim executive recruitment
- permanent recruitment below executive level
- HR consultancy, and
- HR marketing

“The partnership between Waltham Forest and YPO is unique. Together, our two organisations have delivered something that makes it easier for HR teams all over the country to procure cost effective HR services. We think it's the first time a national framework – of any kind – has been created in this way: through collaboration between a council and a public sector buying organisation.”

Ben Plant, Director of Transformation and HR, London Borough of Waltham Forest

## Background

The LGRP has its roots in a partnership between eight London boroughs, who came together in 2006 to form the London Borough Recruitment Partnership (LBRP). Supported by the London Borough of Sutton, the LBRP launched a framework that helped member organisations to purchase a range of recruitment related services. Over time, the LBRP grew to include 28 London boroughs and was renamed the Local Government Recruitment Partnership.

In 2016, Sutton announced it could no longer continue with its vital support role and Waltham Forest approached YPO to create a partnership that would deliver a new version of the framework. Drawing on the customer experience of Waltham Forest and the procurement expertise of YPO, the two organisations created the Local Government Resourcing Partnership (LGRP), which launched in October 2017.

## Working in partnership to create the LGRP

From the outset, Waltham Forest and YPO decided they wouldn't simply replicate earlier versions of the LGRP, but instead take the time to engage with boroughs and suppliers to discuss the potential for improvements.

Together, the two organisations surveyed London Heads of HR and Heads of Procurement. They also arranged to visit both groups and meet with a wide range of suppliers.

This engagement process generated a lot of feedback, including the suggestion that the new framework should be opened up to all local authorities and, beyond that, the public sector at large. Waltham Forest and YPO saw an immediate advantage in this: it would mean the LGRP could draw on the collective buying power of the whole UK public sector. And this wasn't the only change they decided to make. As a result of listening to the views of prospective users and suppliers, the two organisations agreed to introduce a raft of improvements, summarised in the table below.

Earlier frameworks	Changes made by Waltham Forest & YPO
Designed for use by London local authorities	Available for use by the whole of the UK public sector
Primarily focused on recruitment services	Range of services expanded to include HR consultancy and HR marketing
Perceived as insufficiently flexible – every individual purchase had to be subject to a competitive process	New option for purchasing organisations to directly award contracts as well as run mini competitions
Funded by a membership fee charged to all purchasing organisations	Membership fee removed and replaced with a small levy charged to suppliers, making access to the framework free of charge for purchasing organisations

With these changes agreed, Waltham Forest and YPO then launched a formal procurement process, open to suppliers from all over Europe. The response was staggering: over 70 providers bid for a place on one of the four lots included in the LGRP. Waltham Forest and YPO invited other boroughs to join in the evaluation process, and following a meticulous review of every submission, a list of successful suppliers was approved.

But before the framework was launched, there was one more change that Waltham Forest and YPO wanted to make. Lizzy Grayson, Buyer at YPO explains, "We know that procurement frameworks can sometimes feel complex and difficult to use. With the LGRP, we wanted to do something about that. So we created a new online portal –

www.lgrp.co.uk – which any public sector organisation can use to directly engage with suppliers, run competitions, and award contracts. And if anyone needs additional help accessing the framework, we've also introduced a hands on support offer, available free of charge and provided by procurement experts at YPO."

The LGRP went live in October 2017 and was formally launched at events in London and Wakefield during November. Over 65 public sector organisations attended the two events to find out more and meet with the suppliers who have been appointed to the framework. During the first month of operation, more than 900 unique users visited the LGRP website and over 20 organisations made a purchase through the portal, often more than once.

"I'm impressed! I just used the LGRP for a direct award and it was dead easy..."

Head of HR and Electoral Services

"You've made a really professional and slick start to the contract, so well done!"

HR Quality Assurance Manager

## What makes the partnership between Waltham Forest and YPO a worthy winner?

A summary of how this entry meets each of the criteria for Most Effective Partnership is set out below.

### Criteria 1. Close working relationships with other organisations

- The HR team at Waltham Forest established a partnership with YPO, the UK's largest public sector buying organisation.
- In addition, while the partnership between Waltham Forest and YPO is the focus of this award entry, it wasn't the only partnership that drove the delivery of the LGRP. Other key partnerships include the collaboration between Waltham Forest's HR and Procurement teams, as well as the broader partnership approach that was taken to working with prospective users and suppliers.

### Criteria 2. Achievement of a significant outcome contributing to sustainable change

- The successful delivery of a national framework is a significant outcome in itself, but all the more so given the wide range of improvements that Waltham Forest and YPO delivered. From greater flexibility for purchasing organisations to a new online portal, the LGRP represents a significant step forward compared to earlier versions of the framework.

- In addition, the sustainability of the LGRP has been secured through YPO's involvement: they provide the expertise and resources that are required to ensure the framework is effectively developed and maintained in future.

### **Criteria 3. Held up as an example of best practice**

- As far as we know, the collaboration between Waltham Forest and YPO is one of a kind – the first time a council and a purchasing organisation have joined forces to deliver a national procurement framework.
- By taking this approach, the HR team at Waltham Forest have been able to bring about the delivery of something that benefits their own organisation – and the wider UK public sector as well.

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