

## Case Study

# Solihull Community Housing discovers the benefits of Contract Hire.

Solihull Community Housing Ltd (SCH) is the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that runs the housing service on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). It is run by a board made up of five tenants, five councillors and five independent members.



### Previous arrangements for vehicle management.

Previously SCH procured vehicle provision and maintenance contracts through SMBC's Environment Services department. This arrangement made it difficult for them to get a service tailored to their needs.

Lex Autolease, which has an experienced team dedicated to meeting the needs of public sector organisations, was approached by the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) as an approved supplier under their framework agreement. ESPO had been appointed by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to act as its procurement agent for the provision of approximately 50 vehicles.

“Our first step in assisting SCH was to closely examine their fleet and evaluate requirements. We wanted to make sure we designed our solution to meet SCH's specific needs whilst staying within budgets.”

Steve Doyle, Public Sector Business Development Manager at Lex Autolease.

### Type of company:

Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).

### Service offering:

Contract Hire / Fleet Management.

### Size of fleet:

Circa 50.

### Key benefits:

- Guidance in vehicle specification and selection.
- Increased flexibility.
- Reduced administration.
- Lower costs.
- Superior customer service.

“We were genuinely surprised at how competitive their prices were compared to our costs under previous corporate arrangements. Our original plan was to procure a fleet of 25 vehicles. However, savings were so significant that we could afford to almost double our intended order.”

Glen Williams, Maintenance Services Team (MST) Operations Manager,  
Solihull Community Housing Ltd.

## Reasons for change.

A best value review of corporate vehicle management recommended that individual departments should take on responsibility for their own fleet vehicle arrangements. SCH viewed this as an opportunity to review vehicle fleet funding, reduce contract administration and to achieve greater flexibility in cost and vehicle selection.

Through Contract Hire, Lex Autolease was able to offer a very flexible solution that met these requirements, which means officers now have more time to concentrate on key business areas. And as SCH's sole supplier of long-term Contract Hire vehicles, Lex Autolease also managed to negotiate a cost-effective local Maintenance arrangement with Warwickshire County Council, which reduced travelling and lost-time costs.

## Managing change and the new structure.

Since April 2004, Lex Autolease has provided SCH with 48 vehicles on a Contract Hire basis, with further additions to the fleet planned.

Glen Williams, Maintenance Services Team (MST) Operations Manager commented: “When Lex Autolease won the tender, we were aware that they were a successful Contract Hire and Fleet Management supplier. We were genuinely surprised at how competitive their prices were compared to our costs under previous corporate arrangements. Our original plan was to procure a fleet of 25 vehicles. However, savings were so significant that we could afford to almost double our intended order, which allowed us to mobilise the entire

workforce in new highly visible and immediately recognisable vehicles that presented a more professional image.”

“At first our main concern was to secure a financially viable deal, but since we have been working together, we have been very impressed with the quality of customer service. Not only has Lex Autolease offered an extremely competitive price, they are never more than a phone call away. I have been really impressed with the Fleet Management support offered by Lex Autolease.”

Glen Williams, Maintenance Services Team (MST)  
Operations Manager, Solihull Community  
Housing Ltd.

Steve Doyle continues: “One of our goals, when dealing with any client, is to ensure excellent communication and a close working relationship. Once this is achieved, we can respond to their requirements as they change and develop, continually providing them with information to make informed decisions without any risk of surprise. By working in this way, our customers have a greater understanding of what we are here to do and, consequently, we both develop stronger levels of trust.”

## Outcomes:

With unparalleled experience in evaluating and understanding the specific fleet needs of public sector organisations, Lex Autolease was able to develop a solution for SCH tailored to its operational requirements.

As a result of selecting Lex Autolease, SCH has lower fleet costs and benefited from significant economies of scale, efficient systems, 40 years' Fleet Management experience and award-winning customer services.

Any issues that arise are addressed quickly and without hassle, reducing the burden that managing fleet vehicles involves, allowing SCH to focus resources on core activities.

Lex Autolease's Public Sector team continues to work very closely with SCH, and both are looking forward to a productive and successful future.

To find out more,  
contact our dedicated  
Fleet Consultancy team

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