Tending to our homes

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Tending to our homes

Anchor is England's largest not-for-profit provider of [housing and care](#) for people in later life, serving more than 65,000 residents in 54,000 homes across almost 1,700 locations. Its residential care services employ the majority of the 9,000-strong workforce, providing services to residents at more than 120 care homes.

Case study

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Danny Harris

Senior Software Delivery Lead

Email

danny.harris@waterstons.com

Tender

In 2021, Anchor realised that, as a growing organisation, the processes and system in place were no longer fit for purpose and needed to be updated. With every core operational department feeding into the data, tracking it, or using it to make decisions, but operating from a series of spreadsheets, it was vital that any new system met the needs of each member of the team.

The tender was requesting the creation of a system to govern and track the organisation's portfolio of housing developments; from finances to project progress and reporting on all developments, as well as considering the system's downtime and planning for disaster recovery.

The system would need to cover the entire lifecycle from initial site prospecting, via validation, sign-off, design, construction, sales, occupation and through to 60 years of operation. It would also need to integrate with other Anchor systems and fit seamlessly into their existing processes whilst providing detailed reports, being easy to use, reliable, and resilient in the face of disaster recovery.

With over 60 requirements as part of the tender, we knew that this was a significant and complex project so, upon winning, we took a phased approach to the project, immediately transitioning to our first phase.

Due diligence

As with many projects, the possibilities are endless – and in this case, we needed to turn requirements built on experience and what was already in use, to agnostic requirements that align to their problems.

To better understand the business, and their priorities, we set up workshops with 14 key stakeholders within the team including the Executive Director, senior finance team members and affected department directors.

This one-on-one interaction enabled us to build trusted relationships across the team, and for each individual to talk candidly about what they do now, what they needed to do, and what they might like to do.

After six months, we knew the organisation and key team members very well, and were able to not only recommend, but build a robust budget and plan to enact this change through the building of a fully bespoke software solution that would ensure all key requirements were met.

From the client

"Waterstons demonstrated a breadth and depth of experience across several disciplines which included requirements elicitation; project management; agile development; architectural design and account management. The team quickly created a working environment that became an effective partnership through demonstrating a desire to understand the business needs of Anchor; to listen to stakeholders and being prepared to challenge, contribute to and shape direction.

"A combination of good people and excellent communication skills meant our Waterstons account team established an open, trusted, and enjoyable working relationship across our business, which was grounded in a desire to thoroughly understand the business needs.

"A key factor that attracted Anchor to Waterstons was the ability to deliver a bespoke software solution via an agile methodology, which was proven as they successfully steered the project, assisted Anchor in acquiring its own capability and delivering a high-quality outcome."

Paul Potter – Head of Analysis and Design

"From the outset they were professional, approachable and friendly, and immediately gave us confidence in their abilities to deliver a product.

"The approach to the discovery phase was professional and well planned, engaging the right people at the right time to discuss the right things. They continually played back learnings to ensure they fully understood our existing processes and

spreadsheets."

Jane Worsnop, Project Manager

"From the very beginning it was clear that the Waterstons team had the experience needed to take us on the agile journey with them – something we have limited experience in, but they recognised and understood that so went out of their way to ensure we knew what needed to be done, and how we would need to work.

"Having three very supportive people from the team meant they could focus on different aspects from understanding the processes, to technical design as well as project management which all came together to build the proposed solution design.

"Building relationships/rapport can be difficult when working remotely, but I found Waterstons to be professional and really friendly; making a real effort to connect with us and creating a positive and energetic environment, which made working with them so easy.

Kamala Sarda, Business Analyst

https://waterstons.com/print/pdf/node/8571