

## City Reformers Group Conference – 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> March

### Speaker Notes (John Bradley)

#### **“Why does Kier get involved in the community?”**

The majority of the service contracts we enter into are: -

#### **a) Partnering Contracts**

Where we have to support our partners' aims and ambitions as well as delivering the service to specification.

One of Sheffield City Council's aspirations is to maintain local employment, particularly for the young, those with special needs (learning difficulties etc); another is to raise skill levels.

**b) They are also long contracts** often with an ageing workforce, so we need to create a great place to work, up-skill our workforce so our staff are capable of taking on the supervisor roles so that we can attract new staff, be it cleaners, caterers or engineers and surveyors into a dynamic profitable organisation.

To achieve these outcomes, Kier interfaces with local schools and colleges to create a 'pipeline' of talented young people who we encourage to join our industry.

We do this through school visits, career days and where possible we work with schools to raise attainment levels through work placements, help with school projects and even helping with maths and literacy within the schools.

We have also built a relationship with the Trade Union where Union Learn provides 'training reps' to identify members of our staff with life skills issues such as difficulties with numeracy and literacy and then provide appropriate training. (This is an area where employers find it almost impossible to either identify or up-skill their workforce who will not admit their shortcomings to management).

#### **Kier's Success in Sheffield**

- We have developed a well trained workforce with over 25,000 training days delivered. Moral is high with opportunities for advancement and low employee turnover.
- We have improved the life skills of at least 10% of our cleaning staff.
- We have provided more than 6000 work experience days.
- We have employed over 150 apprentices, 79 long term unemployed, 80 disabled people.
- Our service delivery has been recognised through the award of a charter mark.
- We have improved our profitability and have grown the business.

### **Lessons for other companies in struggling cities**

- Recognise that you need to invest in up-skilling your workforce to achieve better financial returns and growth.
- You also need to invest in the community to encourage enthusiastic young people with the right skills to join your organisation as it grows.
- Remember that a diverse workforce will add to the culture and experience of your business.
- Celebrate success.