

Case study: Keepmoat Regeneration

Keepmoat Regeneration refurbishes its planning approach across the business



Summary

Keepmoat Regeneration, part of the global energy and services ENGIE Group, has a diverse business operating across regeneration, refurbishment, new build homes and property services. Keeping projects on track is critical, as it helps to breathe new life into neighbourhoods, bring brownfield sites into new use, and create future homes. Keepmoat Regeneration chooses Powerproject to help it deliver every time, and to meet and exceed the expectations of its clients and partners.

Keepmoat Regeneration undertakes a range of project sizes and types, from a 25-house inner city development to multi-phase housing developments, tower blocks, and extra-care retirement villages.

When planning manager Jonathan Dann joined Keepmoat Regeneration, he was glad to find Powerproject was in use. As a user for 25 years, he knew how to gain value from it – yet he discovered that many of its main benefits were not being secured. A mix of other tools were also in play, along with ad hoc spreadsheet-based planning. This prevented the company from driving best practices in planning across the business.



Berrington Court extra care scheme, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

Powerproject is now the company's standard planning tool, with 19 licenses already in use, and is gradually replacing previous processes and tools.

Jonathan and three planning colleagues are the most active users and already seeing clear benefits, no matter what project size or type.

Planning benefits across the board

Jonathan identified several clear benefits delivered by the software:

1. “We can set custom **views** to show the different types of information required for each project ranging from

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new build houses, apartments, extra care and retirement villages to kitchen and bathroom refurbishments, external wall insulation (EWI) and tower block internal and external refurbishment.”

2. “Our commercial teams find **filters** very useful when sending out enquiries for work packages. Because we have previously coded all the activities, we can filter out those specific to the works packages. These are better received by the sub-contractor, as it only shows their works.”

3. “**Cash-flow profiles** have been particularly useful on the multi-block projects. We have sometimes experienced client constraints, resulting in blocks being delayed. The cash-flow is automatically updated when the programme is rescheduled, which saves time for the commercial teams.”

4. “The ability to manage **material allocations** has proven invaluable on one of our city centre sites where deliveries are required ‘just in

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Newton Grange Elderly Care Facility, Wath Upon Dearne, Sheffield

time'. We did a take-off of the quantities for the various materials, and allocated them to tasks on the programme to create a material histogram. This was then exported into a spreadsheet, which calculated how many deliveries were required, on which days, to maintain sufficient materials on site to keep work going."

This ability to structure and filter views, and support business processes, is an improvement on the way planning was approached previously.

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Business-level insight

Powerproject could also help the company to give clients a better overview of projects. Jonathan explained the background: "As a business, the Progress Dashboards are invaluable. The company always tried to give a quick overview of each of the new build projects. A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was developed internally but, as the projects got larger and began to have several Phases, the running of the S Curves in the EVA Reporter was becoming time-consuming. We approached Elecosoft to see if they could assist in developing a macro

that would run all the calculations automatically, after the initial set up at the start of a project."

After an initial half-day consultation, which defined the scope of works and clarified what the company wanted the macro to achieve, an Elecosoft Professional Services Developer got to work and "on just one of our multi-block projects, our customised macro saved nearly 2 hours on producing the report."

Broader involvement drives accountability

The use of consistent planning practice is gradually being extended. Now programmes are covering every stage from outline and pre-start planning,

through construction. When Jonathan first arrived, the planning process was only applied to the construction programme. He explained: "Since then we have introduced the procurement programme to the front end of the construction programme. The place order activity is linked into the start on site activity. Preceding that in the procurement programme is the Lead-In time, the Mobilisation time, which is preceded by Place Order, which is preceded by going Out to Tender, and so on. In effect, we now have three programmes for each project: the Information Required schedule, the procurement programme, and then the construction programme."

“It's the visual aspect of it – it's easy on the eye, so if you want people to relate to the programme, it's what you need.”

It is making more people, in more departments, more aware of how their activities impact everyone else: "What it means is that people are understanding that if a particular department doesn't stick to its programme, it has an effect on site."

The benefits of gradually moving planning in all areas of the business to a single, shared platform, include building accountability and making



Housing regeneration project, Leeds

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Powerproject: The power behind successful projects

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queries easier to handle. “Now that we are using Powerproject across more departments, we can track issues back to the source. This helps to increase accountability back up the chain.”

Broadening engagement in planning also means that Keepmoat Regeneration’s planners are now able to identify the right responsible person at any state of a project more easily, and talk to them about progress, so that the programme can be marked up. Longer term, the aim is to get many more individuals trained up on Powerproject, so that they can each drop in their own updates weekly.

Support on hand when needed

Keepmoat Regeneration has built a good relationship with Elecosoft, calling on its consulting expertise when required. It knows that technical support is also on hand if it is needed – though this is rare, as Jonathan related: “With the online help from Elecosoft being so easy to understand, the need to contact technical support is minimal. However, should it be that we cannot find the solution to our problem, we do contact the support line. Mostly the problem can be solved there and then, but on the rare occasions that hasn’t happened, either a call-back is scheduled within the hour, and we receive an email with screen shots to help us through it, or they connect to your machine to sort it out directly. As a last resort, we have sent Elecosoft a project file which either comes back with the fault corrected, or with instructions on how to rectify it.”

Keepmoat Regeneration is also using Elecosoft’s training capabilities, to help it continue to build momentum in planning excellence, and support the increased usage of Powerproject. Following an internal “Introduction to Planning” course for key construction staff, Keepmoat Regeneration has worked with Elecosoft to formulate



Hafod Care Association extra care development, Talbot Green, Nr Cardiff

a one-day course to introduce them to the basic principles of using Powerproject.

Looking to the future

Powerproject is helping Keepmoat Regeneration deliver projects on time across its planning and construction activities, but now Jonathan is starting to introduce it to other areas of the business too: “As well as new build construction, we also have a Refurbishment section for external wall insulation, re-rendering, re-roofing, and internal refurbishments like replacement bathrooms and kitchens. The software is used across that group. We also have a Maintenance group, based in Leeds, which is currently using MS Project. I’ve been up there a few times to start the process of introducing them to

Powerproject, because then everything will connect up smoothly.”

Jonathan has been an advocate of Powerproject for 25 years and chose it from a line-up of planning alternative software right from the start. When asked why he liked it then, and remains a user today, he said “It’s the visual aspect of it – it’s easy on the eye, so if you want people to relate to the programme, it’s what you need. MS Project is just black and white lines, and you need a training course just to set up or understand a P6 plan. I prefer Powerproject. You can easily put a client’s logo on it, so they feel more involved, and you can colour code areas and shade things. It’s just easier to look at and understand.”

He continued: “One of the other things we most like about it is its ease of use i.e. you just click on the chart where you want the task to start then click and drag to where you want it to finish. Restraint flags are easy to add as is the linking of tasks to create the logic.”

Summing up the business benefit of using Powerproject at Keepmoat Regeneration, Jonathan concluded: “Like all projects, our objective is to finish on time and on budget. Powerproject provides the platform from which to monitor progress and costs while, at the same time, forecasting any potential delays that could affect the project completing on time.”

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