

## Plenary 2 / Workshop 2A

# Rocky Road to Magnificent Harmony - the development of the client / contractor relationship

### Speakers:

Connor Mitchell, Sales Director - Harmony Fire

Peter Wheeler, FRA Compliance Manager - Magna Housing

### Chaired by:

Stephanie Lloyd-Foxe, NHMF Group Board Vice Chair | Head of Building Safety and Compliance, Magna HA

### Room: A



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# Introductions



**Connor Mitchell**  
Director  
Harmony Fire



**Peter Wheeler**  
FRA Compliance  
Manager  
Magna Housing



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# Introduction to Harmony

- Fire Safety Engineering Consultant
- Founded in 2016
- Nationwide operations
- Full spectrum of fire safety
- Largest retrofit social housing specialist in England
- Unique methodology think.protect.sustain.



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# Introduction to Magna



- Mainly work in Dorset and Somerset (our head office is in Dorchester), providing housing services to local people.
- Story begins in 1993 when the West Dorset District Council transferred all its housing stock to us.
- Magna Housing, as we're known today, was born in 2017 when we brought all our separate organisations together.



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# A Sector Under Pressure

- Building Safety
- Disrepair
- Inflationary pressures
- Rent cap
- Skills shortage
- More complex buildings



# Challenges

- Volume and complexity of work
- Lack of data
- Supply Chain
- Quality
- Lack of resident engagement/understanding
- Complaints
- Leaseholders





# Our Story

Having initially secured works via framework in 2019, Harmony Fire has continued to serve as Magna Housing's preferred fire safety provider.

Over the past five years, we have both learned an enormous amount, and it is these learnings, that we would like to share today.



# Client & Contractor Reflection

- Contract initially suffered teething issues
- Lack of communication from both sides
- Not utilising resources and technology efficiently
- Housing Associations will often issue work and not follow up
- Lessons learned and defined rectification programme





# So, How Do We Change?



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# Communication

- The importance of two-way conversations
- Contractor team feels like Client own team
- Finding innovation in technology
- Clear and consistent communication allows for huge cost savings e.g. admin, resource
- Client knows everyone – goes beyond weekly progress meeting
- Removes need for escalation process due to strong relationships



# Resident Engagement

- Onboard residents early!
- Bespoke resident engagement strategies
- 100% access rate - the industry average for compliance works is a 38% no-access rate
- On average, every no-access costs circa £500 to Magna
- Residents are aware and informed of works and engaged with team



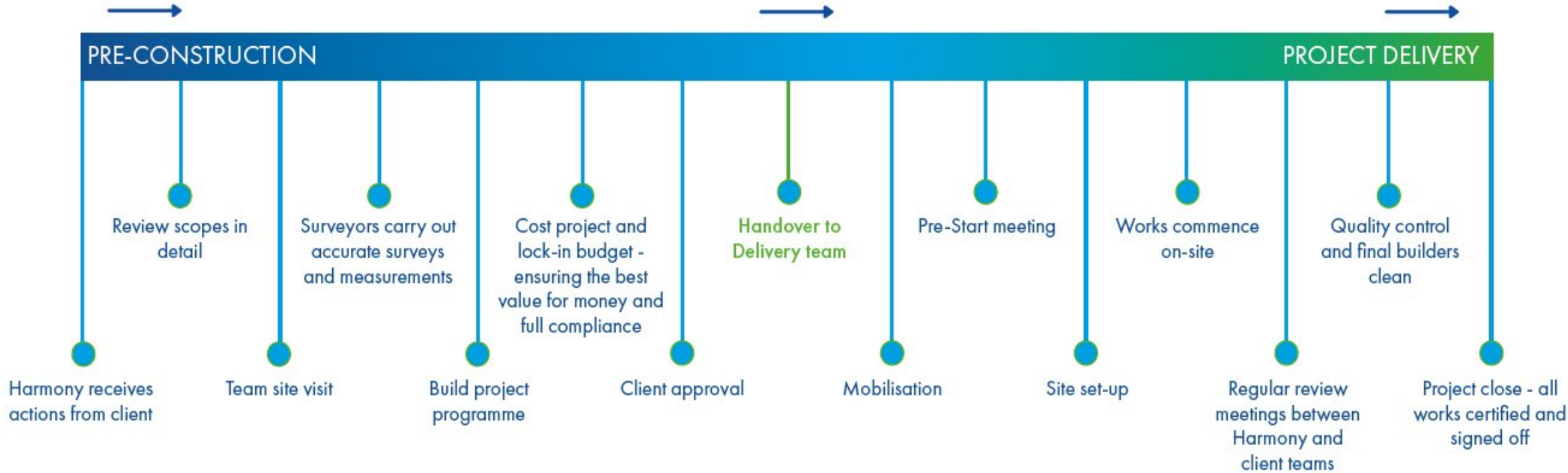


# Resident Engagement: In Action



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# Pre-Construction Process



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# Transparent Costs

- Pre-Construction removes hidden costs and variations
- Any unforeseen items highlighted immediately
- Hard and fast SORs
- Full confidence in every invoice





# Resolving Issues Quickly

- 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Arson attack at Magna site
- Door did not breach however suffered smoke damage so needed to be replaced
- Fire doors typically have 6–8-week lead time – Harmony replaced the door in a fortnight
- Quick lead time = huge money savings!
- Average £4,000 accommodation cost saving (8 week lead time)
- Resident back in place quickly and efficiently



# A Revised Methodology





# Partnership Working

- Removing the barriers between contractor and client
- Acting as one team trying to achieve one singular goal rather than separate entities
- Continual improvement
- Lessons learned applied to all sites
- Collaboration both onsite and offsite, for example, joint events





# The Result!



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# Q&A

# Thank you.

See you at the  
**next conference!**



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