

Stephen Pearson

Partner

"He's helpful, supportive, experienced and knowledgeable on local government and procurement matters."

(Chambers & Partners, 2021)



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Stephen specialises in and has spent over 15 years specialising in complex matters on the interface between the public and private sectors. He has acted on a number of major public sector outsourcing projects in leisure, waste, development and education and now actively advises on the creation of various new public/public and public – private corporate entities designed to service public sector and not-for-profit organisations. He specialises in drafting complex contracts, advice on Procurement Law and State Aid, and frequently runs seminars and workshops in these specialised areas.

Stephen is also Head of Freeths' Education Group and acts for a large number of Academy Trusts, Local Authorities, universities and housing bodies within nationally. Stephen has spent time as a Non-Executive Director of an NHS Trust and as Chair of a Parish Council, sitting on an area committee vetting misconduct allegations against local authority members.

Stephen is recognised as a Leading Individual by Chambers (2021 edition) and he is listed as a Recommended Lawyer in the Legal 500 (2022 edition).

Legal Services

Social Housing

Stephen has acted for a number of Housing Associations and Local Authorities on complex projects to develop housing schemes using a variety of innovative structures.

Selected Cases

- RCT Homes, South Wales – creation of Porthcwlis, a joint public private venture to develop housing in Cardiff Bay and the valleys of South Wales. This incorporated a complex funding structure, utilising reinvested pension fund monies.
- Nottingham Community Housing Association – scheme to develop interactive technology for use by isolated elderly and disabled people.
- Rushmoor BC, Hampshire – advice on creation of proposed new Housing development Company
- Advising Derby City Council-Castleward on their “Urban Village” project.
- Advising on major procurement challenge, including the leading case of Woods v Milton Keynes BC.

Sectors

Education

Stephen has a wide range of work with Universities and schools including the creation of Multi-academy trusts, advice on Admission issues including for faith schools, Conversion of PFI Schools into Academies and a Complex FM Contract for Loughborough University in London Campus.

Selected Cases

- Advised on the creation of an Academy Trust where the School concerned was built under PFI; advising on risk, commercial issues, completion of commercial transfer and school agreements.
- Transfer of Schools into a multi-academy trust including complex assignment liabilities.
- Advised the University of Nottingham on a project to create the new “Nottingham International College”. This was an innovative project to develop the skill sets of international students prior to joining undergraduate courses at major Russell Group University.
- Advising on transfer of Sikh education campus from a religious body to an Academy Trust including negotiating funding agreements with DFE.
- Contract Arrangements between DEFRA and University of Nottingham, Sutton Bonnington.
- FE College mergers – due diligence.
- PFI variation/academy creation for Telford and Wrekin Council.

Public Sector Health & Care

Stephen has been seconded to NHS Nottingham and has been a board member of an Acute Hospital Trust. His work includes advice on LIFT primary care projects, Multi Site Treatment Centre Contracts, advising on major disputes regarding IT Services. Key clients include Chesterfield NHS Trust and East Midlands Ambulance Trust.

Selected Cases

- Advice to Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Trust on complex contract disputes.
- Heads of Terms for proposed new EMAS tender to support “111” service hub.
- Multi-site Dialysis Clinic project across the North of England.
- Clinical Trials contracts.

Local Government

Stephen has acted for over 100 public bodies on a wide range of procurement and contracting matters including the outsourcing of FM, Building Regulation work, Leisure and Waste Management services, New JV Companies/LLPs for Bolsover, Cambridge, North East Derbyshire and others.

He also works on the Development of Procurement Frameworks and gives State Aid advice regarding various projects including Peak Resort, Chesterfield. Stephen also has experience in a range of Code of Conduct Investigations.

Selected Cases

- Acting on a project to create Derbyshire Building Control Partnership Limited, a company owned by 6 local authorities. Stephen was given the responsibility of carrying out supervision and accreditation of building developments across most of the county of Derbyshire.
- Creation of the Cambridge Investment Partnership, a public private joint venture between Cambridge City Council and Hill Partnerships to develop key accommodation on difficult sites in the Cambridge area.
- Creation of Dragonfly Development Limited, a joint project between Bolsover District Council and Woodhead Construction. The project was created to bring into operation a number of difficult sites within the minor regions of North Derbyshire, incorporating procurement, leading documentation and state aid advice.
- Currently advising North Tyneside Council on options in terms of potential partnership venture to redevelop areas of North Shields.
- Advice to Plymouth City Council on procurement aspects of major development proposals involving institutional/corporate partners.
- The creation of Place Partnership – a multi-party FM Company for Worcestershire with 7 public sector shareholders.
- Advised Sheffield City Region on the “state aid” implications of supporting a major leisure project and international resort.
- Arc Property Services – a new Joint Venture for Education Development between Scape group and Notts County Council.
- State Aid Advice – advising on new developments in Derbyshire Dales, a major new Leisure complex for Chesterfield/Sheffield City Region.
- Sports Village Project, Melton Mowbray.
- Has acted on a number of code of conduct complaints related to local authority members across the UK

and governance enquiries of all types.

- Waste Recycling Mediation, Charnwood Borough Council.
- Code of Conduct Investigations, Huntingdonshire.

Public Sector

Selected Cases

- Stephen is key adviser to Scape Group, the largest operator of public sector frameworks in the UK.