

Procurement Policy

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Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out West Suffolk Council’s approach to the process of procuring goods, services and works. It covers the procurement process throughout the full lifecycle of the asset or service contract, from the initial definition of the business need through to the end of the useful life of the asset or service contract.
- 1.2 The Contract Procedure Rules for West Suffolk Council that are included as part of the constitution set out the minimum requirements for all procurement activity and the methodology by which any procurement is undertaken.
- 1.3 As an ‘anchor institution’ and significant purchaser, commissioner and buyer, West Suffolk Council recognises that its procurement processes and spending decisions will have an impact on a range of stakeholders, including local businesses, communities, Council Tax payers and community groups. As such, the council wants to achieve value for money, environmental sustainability, delivery of social value and security against modern slavery within its supply chains.

Strategic aims

2.1 In carrying out its procurement activities, West Suffolk Council will:

- ensure that procurement activities deliver value for money and achieve savings by reducing the cost of purchasing and the time taken to select suppliers
- enable local suppliers, small and medium sized enterprises and community-based providers to participate where possible
- ensure full consideration of environmental sustainability and impact of contracts and tenders
- leverage our procurement expenditure to maximise social value delivered through contract awards (for example, job creation, education)
- ensure that our supply chains are free from modern slavery and human trafficking
- increase transparency in procurement to improve accessibility for new suppliers and to ensure accountability
- use the latest technology to enable faster, more efficient and less bureaucratic procurement – including, but not limited to, the use of appropriate e-procurement tools and available electronic marketplaces.

Key procurement considerations

Value for money

3.1 The methods used to demonstrate that value for money is delivered through the council's procurement processes are detailed in the Contract Procedure Rules, which make up part of the West Suffolk Council Constitution.

3.2 The processes set out within the Contract Procedure Rules show the requirements for transparency, approach to the market (for example, use of quotations, frameworks, formal tenders) and award criteria.

3.3 It is through these rules and requirements that comparison of competing quotes and tenders will prove the attainment of value.

Supporting local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)

3.4 To support small and medium sized enterprises, West Suffolk Council will:

- work to use a mix of the best suppliers to promote a diverse and competitive economy. To help achieve this, the council will support smaller businesses, the voluntary, charitable and social enterprise sectors, as well as community organisations to become part of the supply chain

- ensure financial evaluation is proportionate to the contract and therefore does not exclude SMEs from participating in procurement opportunities at West Suffolk Council
- encourage main contractors to make timely payment to all sub-contractors and will, where appropriate, ensure that this expectation is reflected within any invitation to tender.

Sustainable environmental procurement

3.5 In 2019, West Suffolk Council declared a climate emergency, with a biodiversity emergency being declared the following year in 2020. In consequence, the target was set for the council to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The council's procurement of goods, services and works need to consider the environmental impact it will have, and evidence provided to show how sustainability principles are being met. This should be in keeping with the concept of 'sustainable procurement' – a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services and works in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis and generates benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society, the economy and the environment.

All purchases should (aim to) contribute to this target and we expect that all of the council's suppliers support this goal.

We ask staff looking to procure goods and services (including extending contracts) to:

- consider the environmental impact (in terms of both the carbon footprint and the biodiversity impact) of the goods, services and works contracted and understand that procurement decisions can have significant environmental implications both today and into the future. This can be considered in terms of managing the possible impacts on carbon emissions, as well as the impact on natural habitats and the pollution of land, air and water
- deliver value for money by realistically assessing the whole lifecycle costs of our procurement and not simply considering the initial purchase price
- include at least one environmental question within the quality section of tenders, with a minimum weighting of 10 per cent:
 - this question could include, for instance, a focus on how the organisation will incorporate environmental impact into its auditing processes, measure or reduce its carbon footprint, source raw materials in a low carbon and environmentally friendly way, or offset carbon emissions
 - the questions should be relevant to the company – different companies will have different impact on the environment. It is important to identify the particular issues potentially facing this company and seek to ask questions around how they would lower or offset this impact

- there should also be prioritisation of energy or resource efficiency over offsetting, which should be considered the last option – only in the event that carbon emissions or biodiversity impact can't be reduced, so must be offset
- make sure that the contract is consistent with the aim of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 – see the [West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce – Final Report](#)
- ensure that suppliers know that the council has declared a climate emergency and a biodiversity emergency, with the aim of being net carbon zero by 2030
- ensure that the contract management targets include the environmental impacts of the contract and how negative impacts will be minimised and monitored.

Social value

3.6 West Suffolk Council will seek to maximise the social value achieved through any procurement process. This could include, but is not limited to:

- provision of training or educational opportunities
- inclusion and consideration of the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector needs
- provision of programmes that support local mental health and wellbeing
- supporting digital inclusion for local communities.

Modern slavery and human trafficking

3.7 The Government Procurement Policy Note 05/19: Tackling Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains sets out the requirements for all government bodies to follow.

3.8 The West Suffolk Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement lays out the council's approach to understanding potential modern slavery risks and steps to ensure that none exists in its own activities and supply chains.

3.9 Within the procurement process, West Suffolk Council will ask for consideration by staff and self-certification from suppliers in all quotations. For businesses larger than £36 million turnover, evidence of their own modern slavery and human trafficking policy must be supplied.

Equality and diversity

4.1 West Suffolk Council will:

- ensure all applicable procurement opportunities are advertised to alert as wide a range of businesses as possible
- conduct its procurement operations in a transparent and fair manner
- comply with relevant equality and diversity legislation and expect the same of its suppliers
- treat people fairly and not discriminate against any individual or group and actively promote equality
- abide by the council's statutory equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 and ensure compliance.

Health and safety

5.1 The West Suffolk Council Health and Safety at Work Policy recognises and accepts that the council has a responsibility as employer for providing a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for all employees.

5.2 West Suffolk Council will outline key health and safety issues within supplier contracts.

Staff and training

6.1 West Suffolk Council will ensure that all staff directly responsible for procurement and contract management are appropriately trained and possess the required core competencies. Training will be given to ensure staff are up to date with new developments in procurement.

Adult and child safeguarding

7.1 West Suffolk Council provides a range of services and facilities to the community. The nature of the provision means, inevitably, employees (permanent, temporary or contracted), volunteers and councillors, as well as contractors, will come into contact with vulnerable people and their families in a variety of settings. West Suffolk Council requires all contractors to understand their responsibility regarding the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable adults and children, as set out in West Suffolk Council's Safeguarding Policy.

7.2 West Suffolk Council will:

- undertake measures to ensure safeguarding practices are implemented when working with community groups and external contractors

- ensure that all contracts will be monitored via the contract management system, with contractors undertaking an annual safeguarding compliance review meeting with an appropriate officer representing the council.

Fraud prevention and detection

- 8.1 West Suffolk Council is committed to creating a culture of zero tolerance of, and minimising losses to, fraud, theft and corruption (including bribery) and maintaining high ethical standards in its administration of public funds. Procedures are in place to ensure that third parties are not able to use West Suffolk Council for the purposes of money laundering and also to enable anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns.
- 8.2 West Suffolk Council requires that councillors, all staff (including those permanently employed and temporary agency staff) and contractors will:
- act honestly and with integrity at all times and safeguard the council's resources for which they are responsible
 - comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws, regulations and codes of practice of all jurisdictions in which the council operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of procurement activities.
- 8.3 In line with its commitment to the highest possible standards of openness, propriety and integrity, West Suffolk Council encourages anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice concerns should they suspect impropriety or malpractice.
- 8.4 West Suffolk Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. The West Suffolk Council Whistleblowing Policy makes clear how any concerns can be raised in confidence without fear of harassment, victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.
- 8.5 This statement has been approved by the portfolio holder who will review and update it in response to changes in legislation or guidance or changes in the risk environment or local circumstances.