



New Forest National Park Authority

Procurement Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 The New Forest National Park Authority is an independent local authority that has two statutory purposes:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park, and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park.

The Authority also has a duty to foster the social and economic well being of local communities and is the local planning authority for the New Forest National Park.

2. Procurement Strategy Purpose

2.1 To promote the delivery of best value, sustainable supplies/services by the most appropriate procurement route thereby ensuring that value for money is obtained.

To set out a clear, corporate framework for best value procurement, which runs alongside our financial regulations.

3. Procurement within the Authority

3.1 Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services and spans the whole life cycle from the identification of needs, through to the end of a service contract or the end of a useful life of an asset.

3.2 In procurement terms the Authority is a relatively small public sector organisation with an annual budget of around £4-7m including an annual spend on goods and services of around £2-5m. Procurement is carried out on a devolved basis, with nominated Budget Responsible Officers able to acquire goods and services within their budget.

3.3 The Authority has adopted Contract Standing Orders (and a Procurement Guide) that sets out the procurement rules, terms and conditions, tender procedures and

evaluations and letting contracts that must be followed for all purchases and contracts.

3.4 The Authority has clear procedures for procuring goods and services.

3.5 The role of procurement within the Authority will:

- apply a consistent, corporate and collaborative approach across departments
- encourage collaboration with other authorities to deliver best value services and value for money
- encourage joint procurement initiatives with other authorities, where feasible, to secure economies of scale
- support fair employment terms
- support environmentally sound provision
- continue to provide a sound competition policy, which will provide best value and quality.

4. Sustainable procurement

4.1 The Authority is committed to minimising its negative environmental impacts through continuous improvement in its use of resources. In particular, the Authority is committed to reducing its CO² emissions and all National Park Authorities are aiming to be carbon neutral by 2020. The manner in which the Authority procures goods and services has a fundamental role to play in meeting these commitments and implementing its environmental policy. It is therefore essential that sustainability is embedded throughout the Authority's procurement strategy, policies and procedures.

4.2 Sustainable procurement is the application of sustainable development principles to procurement. It is about taking environmental and social factors into consideration, alongside financial factors, when purchasing goods and commissioning services and works. The aim is to procure goods and services that have the least impact on society and the environment throughout the full life cycle of the product.

4.3 All product and services create social and environmental impacts throughout their lifecycles, from employment and waste to CO² emissions and changing land use. The UK public sector spends over £150 billion a year on procurement, sourcing goods and services from around the world. This represents a huge opportunity for enhancing the environment and quality of life by choosing sustainable goods and services.

4.4 The Authority has begun to move towards sustainable procurement, for example, by reducing the use of disposable items, purchasing energy efficient computers and office stationery with a high recycled content. Actions have been identified within the Corporate Sustainability Action Plan to increase sustainable procurement.

5. Procurement objectives

5.1 To achieve the Authority's objectives relating to environmental sustainability, the Authority recognises that it should take a positive lead, by carrying out its procurement activities in an environmentally responsible manner. The Authority will therefore work to:

- Reduce the number of goods and services procured by cutting down on waste and repairing or reusing existing goods;
- Purchasing products and services that use fewer natural resources in production and distribution and promote locally-produced and Fairtrade products;
- Take account of whole-life costs, quality, environmental impacts and other benefits and not just the initial price;
- Purchasing products that can be recycled or disposed of with minimal environmental damage;
- Buy the most energy-efficient products where they give value for money, taking account of whole-life costs;
- Purchasing locally where possible, to reduce the impact of transport, as long as the criteria above are met; and
- Ensure procurement is consistent with this statement, by conducting at least one pilot project or environmental audit each year;

while complying with the law, including EC procurement rules and international agreements on trade. The Executive Leadership Team will take responsibility for ensuring that the Authority's procurement objectives are achieved.

5.2 The Authority will also work with its suppliers, wherever possible and practical, to green the supply chain by:

- Promoting environmental awareness amongst suppliers and ensuring they are aware of the Authority's Procurement Policy;
- Encouraging suppliers to introduce more environmentally friendly processes and goods (which can be verified) at competitive prices; and
- Assessing the environmental credentials of major suppliers and their goods.

5.3 The best environmental option is to procure and use less. This will conserve resources and reduce pollution, as well as significantly reducing the amount of waste produced. Before buying any goods staff should consider whether consumption can be reduced by reusing or repairing existing materials and goods. Investigations should also be made into whether alternative procedures can be put in place to remove the need to buy goods and services. For example, can goods be shared, borrowed or loaned rather than purchased?

5.4 Procurement decisions should be based on environmental criteria along with other major factors such as value for money, quality and whole life costs. The Authority should assess whether goods and services:

- Are durable, reusable, refillable or recyclable;
- Contain reused, recycled or renewable raw materials;
- Are energy and resource efficient;
- Use minimum packaging and encourage waste reduction;

- Are non (or minimum) polluting;
- Promote Fairtrade;
- Are locally produced;
- Are free from ozone depleting substances, solvents, volatile organic compounds and other substances damaging to health and the environment;
- Are from certified sustainable sources;
- Cause minimal damage to the environment in their production, distribution, use and disposal; and
- Are on the most competitive terms having regard for Best Value.

6. Good practice

- 6.1 All procurement must comply with EU Procurement Regulations and the Authority subscribes to guidance issued by the Government on the principles of good procurement, namely that:
- The procurement process should give the Authority sufficient information to form a view of the competence of potential service providers without placing undue burden on them.
 - Potential suppliers / service providers should understand clearly from the outset what service standards are expected. They will be provided with adequate, accurate and timely information at all relevant stages of the procurement process.
 - All potential supplier / service providers will be subject to the same requirements to ensure fair competition and be treated equally throughout the procurement process.
 - Care will be exercised to avoid taking too narrow a view of how the service might be delivered as this may limit the options and deter potential providers.
- 6.2 Whenever the Authority invites tenders for new contracts a copy of the Procurement Strategy will form part of the tender documentation. Suppliers who initiate and promote good environmental practice and provide a good service will be recognised. The Authority also intends to highlight opportunities for suppliers to improve their environmental performance through disseminating best practice and directing suppliers to further sources of information.
- 6.3 In order to be able to demonstrate that procurement has been undertaken in an open and transparent manner, the Authority will ensure that bidders are fully aware of the basis for bid evaluation. They should also be clear that all stages of the procurement process can be audited satisfactorily with reference to the Authority's procurement strategy and financial regulations which are made available to all bidders.
- 6.4 The Authority makes no assumption on the best method for supply or service provision. Its policy is to procure contracts through open competition based on the Authority's procurement objectives. Existing partnerships and / or contracts are not exempt from the competition requirement and will be reviewed regularly (normally every three years, or five years where substantial investment is involved) to assess whether they continue to deliver value for money.

7. Equality

- 7.1 The Authority is committed to promoting equality of access. The Authority will treat all people equally including those contracting to supply goods or services. It will not discriminate on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender and sexuality or on any other unjustifiable grounds.
- 7.2 Suppliers or contractors appointed for the provision of goods, services or works will have to comply with these criteria.

8. Risk management

- 8.1 It is essential that the risks associated with procurement are properly assessed and managed. This will be particularly important when changing service providers and suppliers and will need to be considered in respect of both initial and ongoing costs and service level. Management of risk involves having processes in place to monitor risks, access to reliable current information about risks and appropriate levels of control within a framework of risk identification and analysis.
- 8.2 Risk management of contracting with suppliers with no track record will be explored. This will ensure, for instance, that suppliers without long term experience but demonstrating capability will not be ignored. In these circumstances the need to demonstrate financial and economic standing by requesting three years final accounts may be reviewed in order to introduce some flexibility and to avoid discriminating against smaller and new suppliers.