

# Vision, values & objectives

- 15 An overarching vision statement for procurement at the Council has been developed and is set out below.

***“To ensure that all procurement activity results in the right things being bought, at the right price and quality and at the right time on a transparent, consistent, lawful and sustainable basis that best supports the needs and expectations of our customers and the wider community”.***

- 16 A series of key objectives and supporting ‘success’ measures have been devised further to the Council’s strategic vision for procurement. These are organised across key themes and are set out in the table shown at Exhibit 3 overleaf.

- 17 The strategic vision and objectives for procurement are rooted in a commitment to the following guiding principles and assumed cultural values that should inform the approach to all procurement activity across the organisation:

- **Fairness & transparency**

The Council is committed to ensuring fairness, openness and honesty in all its procurement activities. All staff and members will act with due probity and propriety in all their dealings with third parties and in the development of business relationships and service partnerships. Equally, the Council expects its contractors and suppliers to act openly and honestly in all their dealings with the Council.

- **Equality & diversity**

The Council is committed to ensuring equal opportunities, access and treatment for all. All procurement activity will be conducted in a way that is non-discriminatory and promotes equality of opportunity for staff, the public and business. The Council will ensure it fulfils its statutory responsibilities by requiring all its contractors and suppliers to comply with all current equalities legislation including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality Regulations 2003 and Codes of Practice issued by the Equality Commission. The Council will promote the healthy development of a mixed economy of supply in which the optimum procurement solution for the organisation and the wider community will be preferred.

- **Sustainability**

All procurement activities will be undertaken with regard to the need to ensure integrated, sustainable development and the use of assets. Procurement decisions must be made with regard to 'whole life' value for money considerations and environmental impacts. The Council will implement the actions recommended by the Sustainable Procurement Taskforce (May 2007) to support the shared national goal for the UK to become a leader in the EU on sustainable procurement by 2009.

- **Value for Money**

There will be no automatic preference for lowest price awards where it is known that important quality or other whole life costing considerations should also be evaluated to ensure the Council obtains and sustains best value throughout the life of an asset and/or contracts for supplies and services. All awards will be made through competitive process in accordance with Council Regulations, UK legislation and EU Directives. Corporate contracts for generic supplies and services will be used by all parts of the organisation wherever possible to make best use of the Council's purchasing power in the market place, exploit potential economies of scale and ensure the proper aggregation of contract values across the organisation.

- **Management standards**

All procurement activity at the Council will be lawful and undertaken in accordance with the relevant professional and best practice standards. The regulatory and procedural framework for procurement will be complied with at all times to ensure accountability, probity and the proper safeguarding of Council assets of public monies. Any exception to this rule must be approved in advance by the Chief Finance Officer and also, when appropriate, the Monitoring Officer. All procurement exercises must be clearly documented to provide a clear audit trail and records must be kept securely by the commissioning department for a specified period. All contracts entered into must be logged on the Corporate Contracts Register maintained by the Corporate Procurement Team for overall management and reporting purposes.

- **Risk Management**

All risks associated with the development and on-going performance of a contract must be assessed by the commissioning department in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy. A formal risk assessment should be completed as part of any significant procurement exercise and all mitigation actions recorded within the Risk Register for effective management purposes.

- **Project Management**

All major procurement exercises must be managed as structured projects, scaled to fit the complexity and value of the procurement and incorporating appropriate levels of monitoring and control. It is the aim of the Council to move towards the use of structured project and programme management methodologies to ensure the necessary skills and disciplines are in place to ensure the successful management and completion of all project work, on time, within budget and in accordance with the project specification.

- **Doing business electronically**

It is recognised that long term efficiencies in the procurement process may be best realised through the better, universal use of e-technology solutions. The Council is committed to reviewing how e-procurement developments can be used to improve its current arrangements. It is developing the use of its Supplier & Contracts Management System which incorporates an e-tendering solution and allows the business community to access information about all local authority contracts and awards across the region via a shared web-portal. Other long term efficiencies and service improvements will be afforded through the replacement of the Council's financial ledger system.

- **Training & development**

Effective procurement relies on the involvement of suitably knowledgeable and expert staff to support the initial procurement process but equally then to manage the deployment of individual contracts post-award. The staff training and development required to build competence and capacity across the organisation ranges from a basic knowledge and understanding of purchasing practice to more formal procurement and project management qualifications as appropriate. The Corporate Procurement Team are responsible for developing and delivering a Council-wide training programme for all staff and Members engaged in procurement.