

The policy framework

- 28 All procurement takes place within the context of the overall policy framework at the Council as set out in the Constitution. There are already a number of corporate policies that have a direct bearing on procurement considerations including those for Equalities, Environment, Risk Management, Insurance, x, y, z
- 29 In addition to those wider 'generic' policy statements, the specific policy framework for procurement at the Council is made up a grouped series of policy 'platforms' relating to the following issues:
- Competition (contracting with external suppliers);
 - VFM;
 - partnering and collaboration;
 - sustainable procurement;
 - ethical purchasing;
 - stimulating markets and achieving community benefits.
- 30 The policy headline for each platform is set out below.

Contracting with external suppliers

All goods, works and services which are to be sourced externally will always be acquired through a legally compliant competition process unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise and any necessary exemption from Council Regulations is allowable under UK law and EU Directives and has been agreed in advance with the Chief Finance Officer. The decision to award must be transparent and evidence of comparative quotes or tenders must be fully documented through an equitable and consistent evaluation process.

VFM policy

Contracts will normally be awarded to the provider offering the most economically advantageous balance of quality and cost. The evaluation process will ensure that competitive bids or quotes are fairly assessed on the basis of quality and other non-cost considerations and the costs that will be incurred by the Council throughout the life of an asset (including its disposal) or contract period.

Partnering & collaboration policy

Opportunities to work effectively in partnership and collaboration with others to deliver better, cost effective outcomes to our customers and across the community will be actively pursued and supported through the development and use of innovative procurement solutions. New approaches will be encouraged in order to support new ways of working in the future wherever possible, providing the Council is protected at all times against risk of loss, misappropriation, fraud,

damage to its reputation or legal challenge. Entering into contractual partnering arrangements with a third party organisation, irrespective of its market place position, will be subject to normal competition and VFM requirements set out in the procurement policy framework. The comparative benefits of non-contractual shared service solutions and informal partnering arrangements based on non-contractual agreements must be documented along with an examination of alternative market place solutions.

Sustainable procurement

Good, services and works will be procured wherever possible and within known financial constraints in such a way as to maximise the whole life values to the organisation, its partners and the wider community whilst seeking to minimise any adverse environmental impacts of any given supply. Thought must be given to any relevant environmental sustainability issues. Equally, consideration should be given to the sustainability of the supply within the market place and how contracted goods, services or works will contribute to the sustainability of the Council and its services to the community.

Ethical purchasing

All procurement decisions must give due regard to known ethical concerns relating to any given supply. Council procurements must not (however indirectly) go towards supporting the known exploitation of child or slave labour, promoting racism or encouraging social segregation or division. Ethical considerations may be brought into the evaluation process as quality or other non-cost considerations. For example, an ethical preference for Fair Trade products for example may be rewarded through additional 'non-price' criteria within the evaluation process. A balanced judgement as to the desirability of any given supply should then be assessed on the basis of the overall costs and value that will be incurred and derived by the Council throughout the life of an asset (including its disposal) or contract period.

Stimulating markets & achieving community benefits

The Council has a legal responsibilities to help stimulate the market place, foster the social and economic well-being of its communities and support the development of a vibrant local economy. Procurement solutions will be developed with this in mind and preference given to Small & Medium sized Enterprises and/or local providers where there is no legal or VFM detriment to the Council.

Public access & scrutiny

All procurement activities will be transparent and open to public scrutiny. All contract information relating to existing awards, up and coming contracts and approved supplier lists will be logged on the Council's web-enabled Supplier Contract Management System for easy reference by the business community across the region.