

Procurement Strategy 2020 - 2025

Introduction

This Procurement Strategy is written to support the Council's Corporate Strategy – "Brentwood 2025".

It will give detail as to how strategic procurement can support the Council's Corporate priorities for the borough, of enabling economic growth, environmental protection, community development, and housing improvement. A fully integrated procurement function can support the Council to deliver substantive savings, increased efficiencies and improvements in services.

The Council will follow these Procurement Principles:

- Operate to ensure fairness and transparency and ensure all procurement decisions are evidence-based;
- Preserve the highest ethical standards at all times;
- Remain open to innovation, take a long-term strategic view to allow exploration of new solutions;
- Work closely with potential suppliers to assist in developing markets and supporting existing suppliers to deliver optimum solutions;
- Maintain at all times clear and regular internal communications to ensure all procurements are based on corporate requirements and gain optimum benefits for the whole Council and community; and
- Comply at all times with current legislation ie Public Contracts Regulations (2020), Modern Slavery Act 2015, Prompt Payment Code, Social Value Act 2012, Equalities Act 2010, etc. and our own Standing Orders.

Procurement will contribute to the Council's key priorities as follows:

Growing our economy

- Promote our business among local suppliers;
- For larger tenders, ask how bidders would feed into local economy, and how they can create local economic impact;
- Pay suppliers based within the Borough within 20 days;
- Advertising suitable tender opportunities on the website.

Protecting our Environment

- Refer to the Social Value Act in tenders to send clear message to the market that we share the Government's vision of environmental protection;
- Include more questions around sustainability in tender exercises and give them sufficient weighting to make a difference to the outcome; and
- Work closely with current suppliers to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

Developing our Communities

- Combine understanding of local requirements and expertise within other departments with procurement knowledge to commission the services most suitable for borough residents; and
- Use social value questions in tenders to demonstrate the Council's commitment to improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough.

Improving housing

- Robust contract management of existing contracts, ensuring all work is completed in a timely manner and to satisfactory standards;
- Work closely with planning department and housing on housing development strategy for new homes to provide advice on tenders and award criteria; and
- Where beneficial engage consultants to add expertise to housing projects, using the most expedient compliant procurement route.

Delivering an effective and efficient Council:

- Work closely with client departments at the outset of procurement to ensure clear vision of requirements so procurement exercises are designed appropriately and proportionately;
- For complex procurements, involve legal at early stages so they can prepare terms of business to be part of the tender pack;
- Plan time for regular contract management meetings to ensure correct contract delivery and to build trusting and mutually beneficial supplier relationships, aiming for continuous improvement; and
- Consider all avenues of procurement, including possible collaborations with other organisations, to ensure maximum savings.

Procurement Cycle

All procurements will be conducted in accordance with the following cycle, which is common to organisations in all sectors: The Council's recognition of this allows for forward planning and each stage to inform the next:

Define need and draw up specification	Draw up contract terms	Publish tender and award to MEAT	Contract and Supplier Relationship Management	Learn throughout the current contract to inform the next
Understanding the business need by analysing our requirements in consultation with all stakeholders and by market research and soft market testing, will give detailed knowledge, informing appropriate specifications....which can be reflected in clear contract terms, contributing to.....carefully-planned and compliant tender exercises; including quality questions pertinent to the main requirements; bringing together a suitably-qualified evaluation team allowing us to have confidence in awarding contracts which will bemanaged to ensure optimum outcomes and develop excellent supplier relationships, gaining good will and assistance where necessary to...increase our knowledge of the requirement so when the current contracts end, we are well-equipped and more knowledgeable to start the process again.

Before going to market

We will plan ahead to ensure continuity of services; and work closely with Accountancy and budget holders to ensure management of spend, approving necessary budget before going out to tender;

There will be a clear business case approved by our project management Programme to outline reasons for need;

Early market engagement/soft market testing where appropriate will inform and shape our procurements, allowing us to gain valuable insights from the market and help us create a solid and suitable specification, which can include KPIs for performance monitoring;

Key stakeholders will be engaged at early stages and kept informed throughout in a proportionate way to ensure we consider everyone's needs while managing expectations and ensuring we maintain control;

Terms and Conditions for contract will form part of the tender pack, clarifying expectations and stating our Terms at the outset.

Procurement Process

Where appropriate we will bring in outside expertise to assist and inform tenders, but all tenders will be managed in-house to ensure probity and compliance and ease of internal communications;

We will take time to consider the right evaluation questions for the tender – pertinent to needs and highlighting the main elements of the requirement, covering any potential risks. Weighting scores accordingly will result in the best fit solution, and ensuring evaluation criteria support Council's priorities;

All tenders will be advertised on the Council's website to give local suppliers the best chance of spotting the opportunities and putting in a bid.

Contract and Supplier Management

All long-term relationships with suppliers will be subject to contracts in which terms of business, prices and any price increases are agreed by both parties and enshrined in formal contracts;

We will ensure officers responsible for supplier relationship and contract management are supported by regular training so they can secure continued value for money and the promised benefits are delivered throughout the contract;

Contract and Supplier Relationship management will include working closely with strategic suppliers to deliver continuous improvement and manage risks throughout the life of the contract.

Social Value

We can structure tenders and advertise in such a way that we can encourage bids from local suppliers; can include in the scoring criteria questions around how the bidder would support our local economy;

Modern Slavery Act --- we will make every effort to ensure modern slavery in any of its forms is in no way part of our supply chains

All procurements will support the Council's Sustainability and Green Agenda by including, where appropriate, questions on suppliers' track record, and relevant evaluation criteria, for example on use of single use plastic and reduction in carbon footprint;

All procurements and purchases will be published on the Council's website in line with the Government's Transparency Code, making all our purchasing activities fully transparent and accessible

Efficient administrative processes

An up-to-date contracts register will be maintained and monitored, allowing it to inform planned procurement activity;

We will always take a proportional approach to all purchases --- The amount of time and effort involved in each procurement will be proportional to its value and importance.

We will be open to collaboration opportunities with other local authorities where shared expertise can help to gain better value; and partnering and shared service arrangements where these represent the best value and most efficient use of council resources.

Frameworks and Dynamic Purchasing Systems will be used where this is considered expedient to ensure we are offering work to suitably qualified suppliers and where category experts can advise and enhance our procedures. Use of frameworks will always support and demonstrate best value for money.