

Witney Town Council – Draft Procurement Policy

Background to Procurement Policy

Procurement is a complex function guided by numerous policies and statutes. A comprehensive Procurement Policy is critical to ensuring that all stakeholders involved in procurement follow the proper procedures and rules, and that there is a clear and consistent understanding of the regulations and organisational approach in relation to procurement.

The Council strive to attain best value for the goods, materials and services that it purchases. Best Value is defined as a balance of price, quality of product and supplier services.

The Council operate a transparent procurement process in accordance with its Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, which cover, amongst other things the number of quotations required and tender rules – and is appended to this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to provide additional guidance on the factors that will be considered when purchasing goods and services.

Related policies

Every contract made by or on behalf of the Council shall comply with:

- This policy
- The Council's Financial Regulations, in particular Chapter 10 "Orders for work, goods and services" and Chapter 11 "Contracts"
- The Council's Climate Emergency declaration to be carbon neutral by 2028 as declared on 26 June 2019
- All relevant statutory provisions including in particular the Local Government Act 1988 Part II, Local Government Act 1999, Local Government Act 2000, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997

Sustainable procurement

- 1) The Council recognises the importance of sustainability and will take into account the environmental, social and economic impacts of its purchasing decisions.
- 2) The Council recognises that this is good practice to consider social value for all contracts.
- 3) The Council recognises its duty to protect biodiversity under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. To meet this duty the Council will wherever possible purchase products or specify working methods that protect biodiversity.
- 4) The Council will, wherever possible, purchase goods that meet Fairtrade standards (or similar).

Local procurement

- 5) The Council recognises the benefits to the economy of using local and SME businesses and, where appropriate, the voluntary sector. The Council will seek out local contractors and suppliers wherever possible.
- 6) The Council pays a real living wage to its employees and will encourage its suppliers to do the same.
- 7) All procurement will be in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 8) The Council understands the importance of paying suppliers promptly and will wherever possible settle accounts within a maximum of 30 days, or earlier, by agreement.

Health and safety and insurance

- 9) All contractors and suppliers working on Council sites will be required to comply with the Council's Health & Safety policy and any rules specific to the site of operation.
- 10) Provision of suitable risk assessments and method statements may be a condition of contracts involving work on Council properties or sites.
- 11) The Council requires all contractors working on Council sites and properties to maintain adequate insurance, including but not limited to: Public Liability insurance for £10 million and, where relevant, Professional Indemnity insurance at a level commensurate with the value of the contract.

Community engagement

- 12) Where relevant the Council will consult with residents and service users to better understand what is needed, who will use it and what the essential requirements are for an item of capital expenditure. Examples of when this may apply include provision of new play equipment, bus shelters, benches and possibly bins.

Selection criteria

- 13) The following factors may be taken into account in the Council's selection process:
 - Health and safety record
 - Health and safety procedures
 - Financial accounts
 - References
 - Location of supplier
 - Organisational structure and staffing levels
 - Organisations environmental policy

Procurement procedures and guidance

- 14) All contracts over £25,000 will be advertised on the Council's website and the Contracts Finder website (or equivalent).
- 15) In accordance with Standing Orders the Council is not obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quotation or estimate.
- 16) The Council maintains monthly accounts with suppliers of regular purchases. All purchases on Council accounts may only be made by authorised Council officers who must either provide a purchase order or be provided with a receipt. Limits will be set on each account on the maximum value of individual purchases and the overall balance on the account. Expenditure over these limits must be authorised by the Town Clerk in advance.
- 17) Where additional guidance is needed the following documents will be taken into account:
 - Governance and Accountability for Local Councils A Practitioners' Guide (England)
 - NALC (2015), A Guide to Understanding Procurement

ESTIMATED VALUE OF CONTRACT (Net of Vat)	CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS
Between £500 and £3,000	3 estimates required. A purchase order is required.
Between £3,001 and £24,999	3 quotations required. A purchase order is required.
Between £25,000 and Procurement threshold	Tender advertised on the Town Council, Contract Finder and Find a Tender websites, and specialist website if appropriate. A contract is required.
Above Procurement threshold	Legal advice shall be obtained on the most appropriate processes. A contract is required.

Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee every 2 years, or in response to changes in legislation.