PROCUREMENT TASK GROUP – 19 OCTOBER 2011

A meeting of the Procurement Task Group will be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 19 October 2011 in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Rugby.

Councillor Mrs Kaur
Chairman

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes (attached) – to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2011.
2. Apologies - to receive apologies for absence from the meeting.
3. Declarations of Interest.

To receive declarations of –

(a) personal interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) prejudicial interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors; and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a prejudicial interest, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a personal interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

*Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed here via the website.*

**Membership of the Task Group:**

Councillors Mrs Bragg, Cranham, Mrs Kaur, Roodhouse and Srivastava

*If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Linn Enticott, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (01788 533523 or e-mail linn.enticott@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.*

*If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer named above.*
MINUTES OF PROCUREMENT TASK GROUP
29 SEPTEMBER 2011

PRESENT:

Members of the Group: Councillors Mrs Kaur (Chairman), Mrs Bragg, Roodhouse and Srivastava

Officers: Doug Jones, Head of Business Transformation; Scott Ashwood, Procurement Officer; Paul Ansell, Scrutiny Officer; Linn Enticott, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.

19. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

20. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Cranham

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

22. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2012-16

The Procurement Officer gave the group a brief introduction to the new strategy and informed the group of the main differences between the Procurement Strategy for 2008-11 and the new draft version for 2012-16. The main points made were:

The new strategy is more streamlined and was specifically designed to link in and support the general principles contained in the Council’s Corporate Strategy.

It was designed to provide clear direction and a co-ordinated strategic approach to the procurement process.

The document is similar in design and contains the same key principles as the strategy for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council which will support shared service and partnership working.

It will raise the profile of the procurement process and support the supervision of procurement and contracts management.

The strategy will maintain the Council’s compliance with all procurement-related legislation.

The strategy has been pared down to a true strategy that has been based on four key areas:
Members were informed that the strategy was still at the draft stage and were asked to make recommendations and changes. During discussion the following points were made:

It was noted that the fourth paragraph of the first page had been removed.

Members commented that there were a number of elements across other documents that had not been cross referenced and it was agreed this should be included.

It was agreed that a hotlink to the Procurement Toolkit was needed.

It should be made clear that value for money (the first key area) did not simply mean the cheapest. Value for money should not impact negatively on quality.

The group discussed the phrase “without attempting to reduce profit margins” under Strategic Procurement. It was agreed the second sentence of the section should be amended to read “In this area it is important to concentrate on building excellent working relationships with contractors and collaborative partners with a view to driving down costs while still remaining sustainable for suppliers.”

The second bullet point of the Collaboration section should be amended to read “Encourage the use of collaboration within commodity groups and value for money/service requirements can be improved.”

The first bullet point of the Procurement Vision on the final page should be amended to read “Make procurement happen at the most efficient level with the right people.”

Members commented that good ideas for monitoring the procurement process existed but questioned how improvements would be measured and be visible. They were informed that the action plan would sit behind key performance indicators and the benchmark for procurement performance would be based around data in terms of spend and performance and the key performance indicators. The key performance indicators needed to be meaningful and were currently in the process of being put into place. The action plan and benchmarking measures will be input onto Covalent.

Members raised concerns that though the action plan could work in operational terms it needed to be more detailed. They were informed that the detail in the action plan had been pulled from the 2008-11 action plan. It was agreed that the actions needed to be clearer and linked to both the priorities and expected outcomes. The key points from the new strategy needed to be broken down to form the actions.

It was agreed that the action plan would be re-drafted to include the detail below the high level areas of activity currently included. These lower level actions would help to establish the desired clear linkages between action and expected outcome as detailed within the strategy.
It was noted that this approach would assist the work of audit in tracking progress.

The action plan should be an easily understood stand alone document.

23. FUTURE WORK

The task group discussed its future work and raised the following points:

The group were informed that it was unclear when a replacement for the Procurement Officer would be in position. Steve Ryder the shared Procurement Manager was currently covering the day to day work for both Rugby and Nuneaton and Bedworth. The recruitment process was underway for a replacement officer and as an interim measure support will be drawn from within the shared service as necessary.

Members asked how work to update Covalent with both new and existing contract details was progressing and were informed that all those that had gone through the procurement team were now included in the new contracts database. There were plans in place to load information received from all contract managers and this was progressing slowly.

80% of the Council’s contractual spend (20% by volume) has been uploaded onto Covalent. Work was still ongoing to source the remainder of the contracts, to load the information into Covalent and to ensure that when these are re-tendered that full use of procurement and legal guidance and expertise would be made. This will improve significantly conformance and compliance of approach to procurement across RBC.

Members agreed the existing toolkit was too long and complicated and a revised toolkit that was streamlined and simple to follow was essential.

Ideally all contracts would be handled by procurement officers but this aspiration may be challenging. A simplified toolkit would give contract managers support and guidance and act as a necessary prompt. This would also ensure that contact was made with the procurement team to gain crucial expert advice at the initial stage. It was agreed that the development of a revised concise toolkit should be included in the action plan.

The group considered three options for its future work including:

(1) the group should end its work having reviewed the Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Strategy. The toolkit could be incorporated into the action plan;

(2) the group should report to Corporate Performance Committee and suspend its activity until work could continue to oversee the toolkit; or

(3) the group should end its work to allow the Employee Wellbeing Review to commence and re-convene again at the end of the calendar year.

The group agreed that it would prefer to continue its work to review the Procurement Strategy and action plan after the recommended changes had been made and then report to Corporate Performance Committee on 10 November. The group would then suspend its work until a new Procurement Officer had been appointed and work could commence on the toolkit when the task group would re-convene.
The One-Page Strategy was reviewed and it was agreed that, with the exception of the toolkit, the outcomes had been completed. A comment was made that, although there had not been an explicit focus on the issue of compliance, the discipline imposed by the Covalent-based contracts database would achieve this by helping contract managing officers to be compliant.

The group were informed that work on the contracts database was happening on a sub-regional basis. This had been quite a step change and put Rugby ahead of other authorities who only have simple systems such as spreadsheets in place.

The group agreed that its final meeting should be held on Wednesday 19 October to review the updated Procurement Strategy draft review report and action plan. Members requested that draft copies be circulated in advance of the meeting. The Scrutiny Officer will inform the Resources and Corporate Governance Portfolio Holder of the progress of the review and invite him to comment.

CHAIRMAN
REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT

Draft report to be considered by the Procurement Task Group
19 October 2011
TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The task group consisted of the following members:

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Group thanks the following for their contribution to this review:

Scott Ashwood       Rugby Borough Council Procurement Officer
Steve Ryder         Strategic Procurement Manager, Nuneaton and Bedworth shared procurement service
Peter Aughton       Improvement Officer, Rugby BC
Jason Husain        Housing Maintenance Specialist, Rugby BC
Tim Margerison      Corporate Property and Building Control Manager, Rugby BC
Andy Smith          Works Services General Manager, Rugby BC
CHAIRMAN’S FOREWORD

To be added
1. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of this the Task Group proposes the following specific recommendations:

IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE QUICKLY AND AT LOW COST

1 | Revised Contracts Standing Orders, as attached at Appendix 1, be adopted [already adopted by Council on 26 April 2011]

MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4 | The Procurement Strategy [Appendix 2] be adopted and implemented through its Action Plan [Appendix 3]

SIGNIFICANT PROPOSALS WHICH WILL REQUIRE COMMITMENT OF TIME OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

6 | Covalent to be used as the Council’s contracts database

Note: Recommendations are listed in order of priority within each category.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 Background

The 2010 overview and scrutiny work programme workshop put this review on a shortlist of scrutiny reviews to be carried out in 2010/11. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board placed the review in the programme on 15 March 2010. Although the task group met on five occasions between December 2010 and May 2011, its work was then put on hold because of the absence through injury of one of the key officers, and the review was not completed till autumn 2011. As a result of this, some of the review’s recommendations were implemented during the course of the review.

2.2 The one page strategy

The ‘one page strategy’ is the name given to the scoping document for the review. It defines the task and the improvements being aimed for and how these are going to be achieved. The one page strategy for this review – approved by the Corporate Performance Committee on 1 July 2010 and amended by the task group in December 2010 – is as follows:

What is the broad topic area?

Procurement
What is the specific topic area?

Achieving savings; implementation of revised contracts standing orders; improving compliance

What is the ‘unreasonable’ ambition of the review?

Maximising savings
Total compliance with contracts standing orders, procurement policies and legislation

How well do we perform at the moment?

The procurement strategy is being implemented, and the target savings of 3% per year are being achieved. The procurement toolkit defines processes and standard documents. The review should seek to make improvements in governance and legality and to resolve issues of sustainability (environmental and local economic).

Who shall we consult about the current service and about how we can improve it?

Internal customers: main purchasing heads of service and Works Services General Manager.

What other help do we need?

Procurement officers; Legal Services Unit officer; Corporate Assurance officer
The Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
Benchmarking evidence from other councils: all Warwickshire councils, Coventry, Solihull, Worcestershire districts

How long should it take?

Up to six months

What will be the outcome?

Contracts standard orders will be reviewed and adopted.

The procurement toolkit will be amended and include new or revised standardised documents.

[The longer-term outcome will be the making of savings but it will not be possible to quantify these during the life of the review].

2.3 Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

The review relates to key aims 5.2 and 5.4 of the Corporate Strategy:
Make best use of the council’s assets to maximise service delivery for our customers

Look to develop private and public partnerships to deliver value for money services to customers

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fact-finding

The task group relied largely on information and advice provided by Rugby and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Councils’ procurement, legal and business improvement officers.

Input from end-users (ie Rugby BC officers who carried out procurement or tendered their services) provided invaluable validation of the conclusions arrived at by the task group.

3.2 Background papers

The task group papers for this review can be found online at www.rugby.gov.uk, clicking on agendas, reports and minutes near the foot of the page and then selecting all committees.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 What is procurement?

The task group used the following definition of procurement:

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

4.2 Where are we now?

Through the joint procurement operation between Rugby Borough Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, the strategic emphasis of procurement is changing, with a shift from devolution to the front line to the use of centralised expertise and knowledge.
4.3 **Contracts standing orders**

The contracts standing orders form Part 3F of the council’s Constitution. A revised constitution was due to be submitted to Council on 26 April 2011. It was therefore important to give priority during the early months of the review to contracts standing orders.

The standing orders needed to be updated in terms of such matters as changes in the law (particularly European law), financial thresholds, frameworks, evaluation criteria, electronic tendering and new internal structures. It was, however, also important to produce a document that was easy for contract managers to use and which did not restrict their ability to operate effectively.

For this reason three key end users\(^1\) gave the task group their views on the existing contracts standing orders. These were as follows, although it is stressed that each of the views expressed was not necessarily held by all three of them.

- The document was considered to be of some importance but was not used on an everyday basis.
- Refresher training on contracts standing orders would be useful for officers.
- Financial thresholds were too low and should be reviewed annually.
- Prices for commodities change rapidly and this precludes the use of the sealed bids process.

The task group considered changes in the subject areas listed below:

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\(^1\) Jason Husain, Housing Maintenance Specialist; Tim Margerison, Corporate Property and Building Control Manager; and Andy Smith, Works Services General Manager
4.3.1 Emergency exemptions from standing orders by officers in the event of an emergency — a requirement that, if a contract is likely to exceed £75,000, the relevant portfolio holder must be consulted.

4.3.2 Steps prior to purchase — more detailed instructions relating to the use of the toolkit and obtaining advice from the Corporate Procurement Team.

4.3.3 Financial limits — new financial limits of £5000 (A), £25,000 (B) and £75,000 (C) which determine the minimum number of quotations or tenders, the method of inviting quotations or tenders, the basis of selection of the supplier or contractor, the records required and the form of contract required.

4.3.4 New sections — on the Approved List and Framework Agreements.

4.3.5 New section — on Pre-Tender Market Research and Consultation.

4.3.6 Electronic tendering — Current CSOs state all electronic tendering systems must be approved by Cabinet after consultation with Director of Corporate Services. The RBC Cabinet has approved the Council’s electronic tendering system. The new CSOs state that the approval of Head of Resources and (Business Transformation) shall be obtained.

4.3.7 Receipt and opening of tenders
- Portfolio Holder to be kept informed of all contracts which are greater than £25,000.
- New provision for Quality Assurance to attend the opening of the tender if it feels it is appropriate.
- New procedures for the opening of electronic tenders (which now constitute the majority of tenders), not requiring the presence of a portfolio holder.

4.3.8 Post-tender negotiations — amended procedure.

4.3.9 Evaluation, award of contract and debriefing of contractors — new procedure.

4.3.10 Extensions — new provisions governing the award of contract extensions so long as they comply with European procurement regulations.

4.3.11 Long Term Relationships — New standing order governing the packaging of similar types of recurring goods, works or services into one contract over a maximum of five years.

4.3.12 Contracts Standing Orders not applying to use of internal resources

The task group considered a suggestion that the standing orders should be amended to state that standing orders do not apply to the use of internal resources or services, for example the Works Services Unit, where this is practicable in terms of skill, cost, quality or capacity. There is no legal
objection to this and it was incorporated in the draft, subject to the proviso that there must be an options appraisal and political agreement (ie by the portfolio holder) to the provision of the service internally.

4.3.13 Financial limits – minimum requirement for inviting competitive tenders.

The table on financial limits (Standing Order 5.1) states that, for each of the contract value bands £A and less than £B, £B and less than £C, and £C up to the EU threshold, there need to be three written quotations (or tenders in the case of £C up to EU), but four if one of them is internal.

It had been suggested that the words in italics be changed to one of which can be internal. In other words, the internal quotation or tender would be treated as just one of the three, as if it were an external tender.

Legal advice stated that the council was required to prove best value for money in its tendering so a reduction in tenders from four to three plus an internal bid could be challenged. This amendment was therefore not included in the draft contracts standing orders.

4.3.14 Financial limits – re-tendering when low response

A suggestion was made to add the words in bold italics to clause 5.4, to make it read as follows:

For tenders which exceed £C, consideration should be given to re-tendering where two or fewer tenders are received and where prices are high and value for money cannot be demonstrated. If one of these tenders is internal there is no necessity to re-tender. If it is decided not to re-tender the written authority of the Head of Resources must be obtained, unless the work is awarded to an internal supplier.

This too was resisted on the grounds that the council could not assess value for money on just one external quotation of higher value.

4.3.15 Pre-tender market research and consultation

Standing Order 9.2 says:

An employee must not seek or accept technical advice on the preparation of an invitation to tender or quotation from anyone who may have a commercial interest in them if this may prejudice the equal treatment of all potential contractors or distort competition. If in doubt seek advice from the Procurement Officer or the Legal Services and Elections Manager.

A question was raised as to how any form of soft market testing could be carried out to gain an understanding of the market in order to frame the work in the most effective fashion and thereby achieve best value.
The task group noted that a distinction could be made between market research and discussing invitation to tender preparation with a potential supplier. As the clause indicates, Legal Services would be able to advise on the legality of any proposed market testing.

4.4 Contracts database and compliance

The task group learned that there had in the past been no systematic central recording of existing contract details, key dates and amounts involved, and this had resulted in renewal dates could be missed to the financial detriment of the council.

By the beginning of the review, the use of Covalent as a contracts database was being developed and the entry of some data onto Covalent for this purpose had begun. This was a new use for Covalent, which was taking the council to a more advanced position than other many larger councils. The council could do this at minimal cost because it already has the necessary Covalent licences. The council has given Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council two Covalent licence at cost price and Stratford on Avon District Council will also have some form of Covalent licensing if it joins the partnership. As other authorities join the partnership, they will have read-only access to enable them to view each other’s contracts.

Opportunities for collaboration are being explored with the Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull alliance, particularly as Solihull already has Covalent. This is in the Rugby Borough’s interests because having access to a wider contracts database will increase the council’s buying power.

There are two aspects that need to be managed by the database: the contracts and the tendering and procurement aspect.

4.4.1 Contracts

Covalent is capable of dynamic triggering which sends messages automatically to relevant officers in good time to enable contract time frames to be met.

Documents can be attached which allows relevant guidelines or additional information to be readily available.

The system allows notes to be added which assists in creating an audit trail.

The contract managers’ details can be stored to allow ownership to be visible and ensuring important technical detail is correct. The information can be made available to any staff level as required.

4.4.2 Tendering and Procurement

Covalent can act as a project managing tool for the open tender procedure. It will allow the progress of all tendering to be clearly visible.

The framework will consist of a template that will be attached to contracts. Time frames can be adapted as necessary.
Triggers will be automatically produced by the system and sent to relevant officers. This will ensure all procurement activity is carried out in an efficient and timely manner. If there is a problem then a message can be created to escalate the issue to a higher management level.

4.4.3 Other benefits of using Covalent

- it will be possible to publish a contracts register on the RBC website

- contract start and end dates will be visible and allow for better collaboration

- information on contracts will not be lost if responsible officers leave the council

- it will be ‘fail safe’ as the process will be overviewed by procurement officers and service heads

- it will be possible to publish spends across Warwickshire which will enable Rugby BC to pick out and target the best contracts and contractors as part of a wider collaborative group

- Covalent will empower users and enable the council to benchmark and re-negotiate deals at better rates. It also means users can take control of the market place rather than the supplier.

- councils will be able to check if they are being charged different rates, so by allowing a new strategic approach further savings can be made

- procurement will become more strategic and will allow the council to analyse and plan before buying

- The storage of all contract details in one place will also makes it easier to identify the scope for collaboration and economies of scale

- Framework contracts will also be included on the database

- it will be possible to cross-reference and search the system by a variety of fields, for example, type of contract or name of contract

- Covalent will be able to support any contract over its lifetime by raising triggers for aspects such as insurance and financial checks on suppliers

- Possibilities exist for Covalent to be used for a wider range of tasks which could include licence agreements, service level agreements and protocol agreements though caution would be needed to ensure usage was kept simple so Covalent would not lose its impact

- Commercially sensitive information would not be displayed. Access could be tailored by user level to maintain confidentiality.
4.4.4 End user views on the use of Covalent as a contracts database

In general, the end-users welcomed the use of Covalent for this purpose. Cases were cited where managers had missed renewal dates for contracts and extensions had been missed.

On the negative side, it has been argued that Covalent is a command and control tool that is antithetical to systems thinking, and that there are other, better tools for managing contracts, particularly construction contracts where consultant architects and engineers are involved. On the other hand, although Covalent has traditionally been thought of as a performance monitoring tool (and it still is), its use to store contract details makes it into a system to alert managers to the need to take action rather than a control mechanism.

There have also in the past been some negative experiences with Covalent because officers have spent a lot of time putting data onto the system and the information has then not used by officers or by members.

Concerns were raised over the level of staff resource that would be needed to populate the system with existing contracts and tendering data. From 1 April, new contracts were being added as they occurred and each service area would be added in turn starting with the housing service. Data on the tendering process would also be input.

Finding all of the existing contracts would also present a challenge. Currently, 80% of contracts in terms of value have been detected. However, this is believed to equate to only 20% in terms of quantity.

4.5 Collaboration

The shared service with Nuneaton and Bedworth has the objective of sharing resources, technology and good practice to improve customer service and Value for Money way.

Sub-regional initiatives are currently in place in the form of the:

Warwickshire and Worcestershire Procurement Group (WWPG) – a group of Warwickshire and Worcestershire districts and boroughs

Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull (CWS) – who have jointly produced the Sub-regional Procurement Strategy

4.6 Policy and strategy

The 2008-11 Procurement Strategy has seven aims:

(i) A more co-ordinated approach to procurement

(ii) Procurement opportunities that are sustainable for the supplier while at the same time providing good value for money for the council
(iii) Procurement which identifies best practice and challenges current methods

(iv) Having at the centre the right amount of procurement skills, resources and governance

(v) Socially responsible procurement

(vi) Procurement in line with the Council’s transformation programme

(vii) Openness to – and seeking of – opportunities for partnership or collaborative work with other authorities to achieve efficiencies

These aims are still regarded as legitimate. However, the policy and strategy was originally agreed at a time when the strategic approach to procurement and reliance on a central procurement function was new, and the strategy therefore spelled out the reasoning behind it in some detail.

The council’s corporate strategy for 2012-16, which Council approved in July 2011, marked a move from large strategy documents containing many pages of tactical detail to concise statements of policies and strategic priorities. This review presented the opportunity to produce a new procurement strategy in the same vein.

The task group considered a new strategy that concentrated on four key areas:

4.6.1 Value for Money

Outcomes sought

Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services
Improved supplier service to end user
Drive down procurement costs while obtaining value for money
E tendering

4.6.2 Strategic Procurement

Outcomes sought

Develop central contracts database for improved transparency
Application of category management from analysis of spend data
Improve management information allowing better financial management, budgeting and tendering
Devolution of council policy to external bodies through supply contracts
Sustainable procurement – local economy and environmental considerations
E procurement

4.6.3 Compliant Procurement

Outcomes sought

Ensure council's reputation is maintained
Council staff are aware of relevant legislation to have access to compliant documents
Manage the risk of legal challenges and keep these to a minimum

4.6.4 Collaboration

Outcomes sought
Actively seek shared service and partnership working
Encourage the use of collaboration within commodity groups where value for money and service requirements can be improved
Establish links to public sector frameworks

4.5 Procurement toolkit

An important part of the review had originally been perceived to be the review of the procurement toolkit. The assumption had been that, if officers were equipped with a reliable armoury of guidelines, checklists and forms, compliance and performance would be improved.

Feedback from the end users included the following comments:

- It was acknowledged that the toolkit was detailed. It had been a good piece of work when it was first introduced but had since become too complicated.
- The section of the toolkit most relevant to users could be contained on a single page.
- Services tended to have their own specialised documents to supplement or replace those included in the toolkit.

The toolkit pre-dated the establishment of a dedicated procurement function, and the thinking now is that contract managers should seek support and advice from the procurement function rather than trying to navigate through the toolkit unaided. The necessary documents will be available to download from Covalent which will, in time, become the primary source for documentation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The task group has drawn the following conclusions from the evidence:

The thresholds in contracts standing orders needed to be reviewed to avoid having to carry out a disproportionate amount of work when small quantities are involved.

[This and other changes to other changes to contracts standing orders were reviewed by the task group and submitted to Corporate Performance Committee on 10 February 2011 and to Council 26 April 2011]
The traditional procurement model was flawed, largely because it saw procurement as an administrative function rather than a strategic agent for improvement and change.

Although a toolkit is still required, it is not the key resource that it was originally envisaged to be, and it can be integrated in the Covalent contract database.

The absence of a central database of contracts has limited the council’s ability to achieve better contract management, collaboration with partners and use of framework agreements.
# Part 3F

## Contracts Standing Orders

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2011 v1
1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of these Standing Orders is to:-

- ensure that the council promotes the probity and integrity of the procurement process;
- provide employees involved in the procurement process a framework within which to work;
- ensure fairness in allocating contracts and protect employees from allegations of corruption and/or collusion with suppliers and contractors;
- promote public accountability;
- ensure compliance with all legal requirements;
- achieve value for money on behalf of the council; and
- support the council’s corporate aims and objectives in relation to procurement.

1.2 Standing Orders must be complied with strictly. They are minimum requirements and any instances of non-compliance may result in disciplinary action being taken. A more thorough procedure may be appropriate for a particular contract such as where the EU procurement regulations apply. Please see the Procurement Toolkit or contact Procurement.

1.3 Any consultant, agent or contractor acting on behalf of the Council must comply with these Standing Orders and this must be a condition of their employment.

1.4 Contracts let on behalf of a consortium, association or similar body of which the Council is a member should comply with the rules of the body or lead authority.

1.5 The amounts £A to £C in these Standing Orders (section 5) have the initial values given to them below:

£A = £5,000

£B = £25,000

£C = £75,000

1.6 All monetary values included in these Standing Orders shall be deemed to exclude any Value Added Tax applicable to the contract.

1.7 The Head of Resources is designated as the responsible officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (for the proper administration of the Council’s financial affairs) and the designated officer in accordance with section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (incurring of unlawful expenditure) is the Head of Resources in
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conjunction with the Monitoring Officer. The designated Monitoring Officer in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 is the Legal Services and Elections Manager.

1.8 The Head of Resources, as Section 151 Officer, and the Legal Services and Elections Manager shall review all monetary limits annually and any amendments, if appropriate having regard to inflation and other relevant factors, shall be reported to an Executive Director.

1.9 Questions of interpretation of these Standing Orders should be referred to the Legal Services and Elections Manager (the Monitoring Officer).

1.10 References to the Head of Resources and Legal Services and Elections Manager shall include other employees authorised to undertake duties on behalf of the Head of Resources and the Legal Services and Elections Manager.

2. Scope

2.1 These Standing Orders relate to any arrangement made by, or on behalf of, the Council for the carrying out of work or for the procurement of goods, works or services. These include arrangements for:

- the supply or disposal of goods;
- hire, rental or lease of goods or equipment;
- execution of works;
- the delivery of services including those relating to the recruitment of staff, land and property transactions and financial and consultancy services

2.2 These Standing Orders do not apply to:

- the employment of permanent staff;
- agreements regarding the acquisition, disposal or transfer of land, for which Financial Regulations shall apply;
- insurance policies; and
- treasury management transactions.

2.3 The use of e-procurement technology and purchasing cards does not negate the requirement to comply with all elements of these Standing Orders.

3. Exemptions

3.1 Contract Standing Orders are intended to protect the Council and only under circumstances which are exceptional and unavoidable shall authority be given to waive them.
3.2 All exemptions and the reasons for them must be recorded in writing and must be given as soon as is reasonably practical after the decision has been made. Reports shall include a description of the contract, the nature of the exemption, the unavoidable circumstances which require the exemption, value and the implications (if any) to the council.

3.3 If an exemption to these Standing Orders is necessary because of an unforeseeable emergency involving immediate risk to persons or property, disruption to council services or in the best interest of the service it may be made:

- by the Council
- by the Cabinet
- by an Executive Director or Head of Service, in consultation with the Head of Resources and the Legal Services and Elections Manager. (If the Head of Resources or the Legal Services and Elections Manager is applying for an exemption then he/she must consult with an Executive Director. Where the contract is likely to exceed £C the relevant portfolio holder must be consulted. In this case the exemption and the circumstances must be reported to the next available meeting of Cabinet)
- where any direction under an agency agreement requires it

3.4 In deciding the preferred route for securing an exemption the value and sensitivity of the purchase must be considered.

3.5 All exemptions and the reasons for them must be recorded in writing, which shall include email.

3.6 No exemption should be used if the EU Procedures apply.

3.7 Under the principles of Value for Money the Council should discourage requests for authority to obtain only one quotation or tender unless there is only one suitable contractor available. Where there is only one suitably qualified supplier then all reasonable efforts to secure value for money must be made.

3.8 An exemption from Contracts Standing Orders may be permitted to allow a service to be provided in house where practicable in terms of skill, cost, quality and capacity

**Collaborative procurement arrangements**

3.9 In order to secure value for money, the Authority may enter into collaborative procurement arrangements. The Head of Resources must be consulted where a purchase is to be made using collaborative purchasing arrangements with a local authority, government department, statutory undertaker or public service purchasing consortium. Where the council is acting as the lead authority in a consortium for the procurement of goods, works or services, these Contract Standing Orders will be applicable.
3.10 All purchases made via a local authority consortium, such as CWS, ESPO, OGC, PfH and CBC, are deemed to comply with these Standing Orders and an exemption is not required. However, purchases above the EU threshold must be let under the EU Procedure, unless the consortium has satisfied this requirement already by letting their contract in accordance with the EU Procedure on behalf of the authority and other consortium members. Please contact procurement for advice on suitable Frameworks.

3.11 Framework agreements, due to their nature, always comprise several suppliers and a selection should be evaluated to ensure that the most economically advantageous is selected. A reduced selection of suppliers can be contacted when the price is pre-determined and fixed, as the organisation will have a pre-released pricing tariff, which can be referred to. In any instance where the cost of the procurement need is not fixed then all suppliers need to be contacted with an opportunity to bid (mini tender).

3.12 Access to Frameworks will be defined by the Framework owner. Some may require an access agreement authorised as per Clause 15.6 (copy to be forwarded to Procurement for the Central Contract Database). Others may require a contract Number to be issued on purchase orders. Where neither are offered the Service Unit should obtain a copy of the original framework contract and attach the council’s Form of Undertaking document, authorised as per Clause 15.6 (copy to be forwarded to Procurement for the Central Contract Database).

4. **Steps prior to purchase**

4.1 Before beginning a purchase the employee responsible for it must appraise the purchase, in a manner commensurate with its complexity and value, by:

- referring to the Procurement Toolkit and contacting Procurement
- checking to ensure that the Corporate Procurement Team do not already have a preferred supplier agreement for the product/service
- completing the appropriate pro-forma maintained in the Procurement Toolkit
- appraising the need for the expenditure and its priority
- defining the objectives of the purchase
- Assessing the risks associated with the purchase and determine how to adequately manage them
- considering what procurement method is most likely to achieve the objectives, including internal or external sourcing, partnering, and collaborative procurement arrangements with another local authority, government department, statutory undertaker or public service purchasing consortium
consulting users as appropriate about the proposed procurement method, contract standards and methods of performance and user satisfaction monitoring
• drafting specification/Brief/Description of Contract supplies or services required
• selecting the standard terms and conditions that are to apply to the proposed contract and, in consultation with the Procurement Officer, make any appropriate amendments to suit the needs of the particular contract
• confirming that approval has been given for the expenditure and that an appropriate budget exists
• ensuring that EU procedures have been complied with, including the sending of a prior information notice (see Section 6)
• identifying the evaluation criteria (see Para 9.2)
• ensuring that the purchase has been reported in the Forward Plan if it is a key decision, i.e. incurring expenditure or creating savings of more than £50,000.

5. Financial limits

5.1 Minimum requirements for inviting competitive offers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Value of the Whole Contract *</th>
<th>Minimum Number of Quotations or Tenders</th>
<th>Method of Inviting Quotations or Tenders</th>
<th>Basis of selecting Supplier or Contractor</th>
<th>Records Required</th>
<th>Form of Contract Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than £A</td>
<td>No minimum numbers but must demonstrate getting value for money</td>
<td>Verbal quotation is acceptable but this must be confirmed in writing</td>
<td>Purchasing knowledge</td>
<td>Written note of source, name and amount for each quotation obtained</td>
<td>Purchase order and/or invoice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£A – Less than £B</td>
<td>3 written quotations (4 if an internal quotation is included)</td>
<td>Written email or fax</td>
<td>Purchasing knowledge and/or approved list</td>
<td>Quotations obtained</td>
<td>Purchase order with terms and conditions attached and invoice and attached quotation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Basis of selecting Supplier or Contractor</th>
<th>Records Required</th>
<th>Form of Contract Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£B – £C</td>
<td>3 written quotations (4 if an internal quotation is included)</td>
<td>Formal sealed written quotations</td>
<td>Purchasing knowledge And/or approved list</td>
<td>Quotations obtained</td>
<td>Quotation schedule, purchase order with terms and conditions attached and invoice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than £C to EU threshold</td>
<td>3 tenders (4 if an internal tender is included)</td>
<td>Sealed tenders</td>
<td>Approved list/ Advertisements/ Open competitive or restrictive tendering</td>
<td>Tender schedule and tenders received</td>
<td>Formal Sealed contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above EU threshold</td>
<td>Not less than 5 tenders</td>
<td>Follow EU procurement procedures</td>
<td>Link to EU rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* **Definition of whole contract** – all capital and revenue costs payable to the supplier over the life of the contract or over a 5 year period if there is no end date to the contract.

5.2 Quotations must, as far as possible, be comparable by reference to a relevant British industry or internationally recognised equivalent standard, or to an appropriately detailed specification.

5.3 Where it can be demonstrated that there are insufficient suitably qualified suppliers or contractors to meet the competition requirement, all known suitably qualified suppliers or contractors must be invited.

5.4 For tenders which exceed £C, consideration should be given to re-tendering where 2 or fewer tenders are received and where prices are high and Value for money cannot be demonstrated. If it is decided not to re-tender the written authority of the Head of Resources must be obtained.

5.5 An employee must not enter into separate contracts nor select a method of calculating the total value in order to minimise the application of these Standing Orders.

5.6 The splitting of contracts so as to avoid EU Procurement Directives is prohibited. The European Procurement Regulations must be complied with.
if the contract value, taking into account the aggregation rules as defined in the Regulations, exceeds the appropriate financial threshold.

5.7 Wherever possible, consideration should be given to contract mergers and aggregation with existing preferred contracts to encourage Value for Money. It is essential that if a contract already exists for the supply of the same goods, services or works, the existing contract must be used in the first instance.

6 EU public procurement legislation

6.1 EU procurement legislation is primarily based on directives. There are three directives, The Supplies Directive, The Services Directive and the Works Directive. Each Directive provides for a threshold sum above which all procurement contracts become subject to stringent EU rules and regulations. For detailed definitions of the activities covered by each directive and the current thresholds please consult the Procurement Toolkit or Procurement Officer.

6.2 Services are categorised by the EU as Part A or Part B. Part B services are those unlikely to be of interest to the wider EU and are not subject to the full OJEU process with regards to advertising and award procedures. However, case law demonstrates that Public bodies must observe general EC Treaty principles so it is advisable to follow the process defined for above £C in these Standing Orders.

6.3 At the start of each financial year each Head of Service must consider whether there is any likelihood of a particular contract exceeding the financial threshold relating to Prior Indicative Notices (PIN), as set out in the EU regulations and if so, notify the Procurement Officer. If a Prior Indicative Notice is required it shall be published by the Procurement Officer in the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union as quickly as possible after the beginning of the financial year to indicate what they plan to tender for in the forthcoming year.

6.4 The penalties for non-compliance with EU requirements are severe and failure to comply could expose the Council to legal action by contractors possibly resulting in fines, re-tendering costs and compensation. The Corporate Procurement Team should be notified of all EU tenders to ensure that the process is in line with the Public Procurement Act 2006.

6.5 If the European Procurement Regulations apply these Contract Standing Orders must be complied with subject to the following procedures:

- Not less than 5 contractors shall be invited to tender
- The advertisement must be published in the supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) before it is advertised in any specialised journals or the Council’s web-site. Advertising must be
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proportionate to the contract requirement and not give grounds for ineffectiveness (Remedies Act 2009)

- The timescale for inviting expressions of interest shall be 37 days (unless the urgency procedure is used in which case 15 days applies)
- The timescale for inviting tenders shall be 40 days (unless the urgency procedure is used in which case 10 days applies)
- Please refer to Procurement for Award letters and standstill process in line with the Public Procurement Act 2006 and the Remedies Act 2009
- Once the contract has been awarded the Procurement Officer shall place a Contract Award Notice in the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union
- Subject to suitability, Government and EU approved e-tendering solutions may be applied in the tendering process. By using e Tendering, timeframes are shortened and advertising requirements satisfied. Please refer to procurement for information
- Where a project was not registered with OJEU due to being below threshold but then subsequently breaches the EU threshold, a voluntary Ex Ante Transparency notice can be raised by Procurement

7. Selection of suppliers and contractors

7.1 All persons or bodies invited to quote or tender for the supply of goods, services or works to the Council must be suitably assessed. The assessment process shall establish that the potential suppliers have sound

- economic and financial standing
- technical ability and capacity to fulfil the requirements of the contract and
- CIS employment status (Construction).
- suitable professional indemnity(particularly for design/architect projects)

The use of pre-qualification questionnaires (PQQs) can assist in the selection of potential contractors who should be invited to quote or tender and shall be used when appropriate. Before approving any contractor they should normally be asked to complete a questionnaire which may include the following as appropriate:

- Company details
- Environmental policy
- Equal opportunities
- Insurance and legal considerations
- Health and Safety policy statement
- Financial details to enable a financial status check to be carried out
- Principal personnel CVs
- Past relevant experience particularly of working with local authorities
- Current work and customer base
- Quality assurance
- IIP
Guidance on the use of pre-qualification questionnaires can be found in the Procurement Toolkit or from Procurement.

7.2 Unless the European Procurement Regulations apply, for proposed contracts of lower value the tendering process may be achieved by selecting firms from:

- the central government register of pre-qualified contractors
- standing lists of providers maintained by the council compiled following responses to a public advertisement; or
- a shortlist of contractors assessed from expressions of interest in a particular contract submitted in response to a public advertisement; or
- specialist contractors as agreed with the Head of Resources and the Head of Business Transformation.

**Approved lists**

7.3 Approved lists must be drawn up after an advertisement inviting applications for inclusion on the list. The advertisement must be placed to secure the widest publicity among relevant suppliers, including all EU member states if appropriate.

7.4 No person shall be entered onto an approved list until there has been an adequate investigation into their financial and their technical ability to perform the contract, unless such matters will be investigated each time bids are invited from the list. The Head of Resources must set out in writing the criteria for short listing from the lists.

7.5 The lists and short listing criteria must be reviewed at least annually and re-advertised at least every 5 years. On re-advertisement, a copy of the advertisement must be sent to each contractor on the list, inviting them to reapply. Review means:-

- The reassessment of the financial, insurance and technical ability and performance of those contractors on the list, unless such matters will be investigated each time bids are invited from the list; and
- The deletion of those persons who no longer qualify, with a written record kept justifying the deletion.

7.6 All approved lists shall be maintained in an open, fair and transparent manner and be open to public inspection.

A register of pre-qualified contractors maintained by central government such as Constructionline, will be deemed to be an approved list for the purpose of these Standing Orders. The approved supplier list can be accessed through the Bip Solutions site [www.delta-esourcing.com](http://www.delta-esourcing.com)
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Framework agreements

7.7 The term of a Framework Agreement must not exceed four years and, while an agreement may be entered into with one provider, where an agreement is concluded with several organisations, there must be at least three in number.

7.8 Contracts based on Framework Agreements may be awarded by either:

(a) applying the terms laid down in the Framework Agreement where such terms are sufficiently precise to cover the particular call-off without reopening competition; or
(b) where the terms laid down in the Framework Agreement are not precise enough or complete for the particular call-off, by holding a mini competition in accordance with the following procedure:

- Inviting the organisations within the Framework Agreement that are capable of executing the subject of the contract to submit written tenders;
- Fixing a time limit which is sufficiently long to allow tenders for each specific contract to be submitted, taking into account factors such as the complexity of the subject of the contract;
- Awarding each contract to the tenderer who has submitted the best tender on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in the specifications of the Framework Agreement.

8. Records

8.1 Where the total value is more than £B but less than £C the following documents must be kept:

- Invitations to quote
- Quotations received
- A written record of any exceptions and the reasons for them
- Selection criteria
- If the lowest price is not accepted the reasons why
- Written records of communications with the successful contractor

8.2 Where the total value exceeds £C, the following must be recorded

- The method for obtaining bids and method of advertising
- Details of any exemption and the reasons for them
- The evaluation criteria in descending order of importance
- A copy of the invitation to tender and a list of the contractors invited
- Any pre-tender questionnaire
- Tender documents received
- Details of any pre-tender market research
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- Any clarification or post-tender negotiation (includes any minutes of meetings)
- The contract documents
- Post contract evaluation and monitoring
- Details of all approved variation;
- A full reconciliation of the contract sum and the amount(s) paid taking into account any variations to the original specification
- Communications with contractors and with the successful contractor throughout the period of the contract
- Copy of the Contract forwarded to Procurement for addition onto the Central Contracts database
- The Contract must be signed by the Legal Services and Elections Manager

8.3 Written records must be kept for six years after the final settlement of the contract, 12 years if the contract is under seal. However, tender documents which relate to unsuccessful contractors need only to be kept for a period of 12 months from award of the contract, provided there is no dispute about the award. In some cases it may be desirable to retain documents for a longer period by microfilming, scanning or using some other suitable method. Where the cost of the contract is to be met in part or in whole, by sources of external funding, the written records shall be retained in accordance with any directions of the external funder.

9. Pre-tender market research and consultation

9.1 Employees may consult potential suppliers prior to the issue of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire/ Invitation to Tender in general terms about the nature, level and standard of the supply, contract packaging and other relevant matters, provided that this does not prejudice any potential contractor.

9.2 An employee must not seek or accept technical advice on the preparation of an Invitation to Tender or quotation from anyone who may have a commercial interest in them, if this may prejudice the equal treatment of all potential contractors or distort competition. If in doubt seek advice from the Procurement Officer or the Legal Services and Elections Manager.

10. Standards and award criteria

Standards

10.1 Employees must ascertain the relevant British Industry standard or internationally recognised equivalent standard that applies to the contract and these must be used to properly describe the required quality. The Legal Services and Elections Manager must be consulted if it is proposed to specify a proprietary brand.
Evaluation criteria

10.2 The evaluation criteria must be defined and documented before tenders or quotations exceeding £B are sought. The criteria must be designed to secure value for money for the Council. Generally this shall be the ‘most economically advantageous’ where considerations other than purchase price apply. If a Restricted Procedure and a PQQ are to be used then criteria used at the PQQ stage cannot be used during the following ITT stage. Also in a Restricted Procedure, References must be included at the PQQ stage.

Considerations other than price should be included and examples of criteria are listed below:

PQQ

- References
- Insurance
- Financial Statement
- Professional qualifications and accreditations
- Capacity
- Technical ability
- Health and Safety
- Equalities
- Jobs and Skills Framework considerations

ITT

- Level of service
- Quality of goods
- Cost effectiveness
- Delivery requirements
- Environmental considerations
- Functional characteristics, such as security, safety and control features
- After sales service
- Technical assistance
- Partnering
- Long term relationships
- Cessation of contract clause to recognise the potential of withdrawal costs in the event of cancellation
- Where appropriate, contractors will adhere to the Council’s complaints, customer feedback and monitoring procedure

11. Invitations to tender and quotations over £B

11.1 The invitation to tender shall state that no tender will be considered unless it is received by the date and time stipulated in the invitation to tender. No tender delivered in contravention of this clause shall be considered.
11.2 Every invitation to tender or quotation shall include the following:

- A specification that describes the Council’s requirements in sufficient detail to enable the submission of a competitive offer
- The goods, services or works required together with the terms and conditions of contract that apply. Under EU legislation if you specify the manufacturer or model of goods required you are also required to state ‘or equivalent’, otherwise a detailed description of the specific features required must be given.
- A statement that says that the Council is not bound to accept a tender or quotation
- A description of the evaluation criteria
- No guarantee of spend where discretionary works apply

11.3 If the contract is valued at £C or more the Invitation to Tender shall also include the following:

- The method of submitting the tender e.g. in writing or electronically
- If in writing, it should be made clear that the tender will be considered only if it is received in the Democratic Services Unit in a sealed, plain envelope with the words “Tender for” and the title of the contract written on it
- If electronically, the submitted tender must be received in accordance with e tender procedures approved by the Head of Resources. Faxed or e-mailed tenders shall not be considered.
- Contract and tender time frames
- The method by which any arithmetical errors discovered in the tender will be dealt with. In particular, whether the overall price prevails over the rates in the tender or vice versa
- A requirement for tenderers to declare that the tender content, price or other figure or particulars concerning the tender have not been disclosed by the tenderer to any other party (except where such a disclosure is made in confidence for a necessary purpose)
- A requirement for tenderers to complete fully and sign all tender documents including a form of tender and certificates relating to the Bribery Act 2010
- Notification that tenders are submitted to the Council on the basis that they are compiled at the tenderer’s expense; and
- A description and definition of the evaluation criteria and, weighting.
- Standard (and/or Special) Terms and Conditions
- Confidential reporting code
- Any collaborative partner councils by name

11.4 All contractors invited to tender or quote must be issued with the same information at the same time and subject to the same conditions. Any supplementary information must be given on the same basis.

11.5 Contractors must be given an adequate period in which to prepare and submit a detailed quotation or tender which is consistent with the urgency
of the contract requirement. The EU Procedures lay down specific time periods; see Procedure Rule 6.3 and/or the Procurement Toolkit.

11.6 Electronic tendering systems must be discussed and approved by the Head of Resources and the Legal Services and Elections Manager. Electronic systems need to comply with the spirit of these Procedure Rules. Faxed or e-mailed tenders will not be accepted.

11.7 Any shortlisting must have regard to the financial and technical standards relevant to the contract and the evaluation criteria.

12. **Receipt and opening of tenders and quotations**

12.1 If a quotation or tender is subject to a sealed bid process, quotes or tenders received by fax or email, must be rejected.

12.2 All tenders or quotations received must be opened on the same occasion and in the presence of:

- *Contracts valued at £C or more* – the employee responsible for managing the contract and a member of the Procurement Team;
- *Contracts valued greater than £B but less than £C* – the Head of Service and the employee responsible for managing the contract; and
- *Contracts valued greater than £A but less than £B* – the appropriate manager and the employee responsible for managing the contract.

The Corporate Assurance Manager shall be informed of the opening times for contracts valued in excess of £C who will then decide whether a representative from the Corporate Assurance Team should attend.

The relevant Cabinet Member should be kept informed of contracts let which are greater than £C.

12.3 A written record shall be maintained showing:—

- The title of the contract;
- The names of all firms submitting tenders or quotations;
- The amount of each tender or quotation, where available;
- The date and time of opening; and
- The names of those present.
- Verification that all documents are present.

The record should be signed and dated by all those present.

**Contracts in excess of £C**

12.4 Two copies of all tenders (unless received through an approved e-tender process) must be returned to the Democratic Services section who shall be responsible for the safekeeping of tenders until the appointed time of opening. Each tender must be
• suitably recorded so as to subsequently verify the date and precise
time it was received; and
• adequately protected on receipt to guard against any amendment of the
contents.

12.5 The written record, as detailed in paragraph 12.3 above, shall be
maintained by Democratic Services for contracts in excess of £C. For
contracts valued in excess of £B but less than £C the written record shall
be kept by the employee responsible for managing the contract.

12.6 The tender documents that contain information unique to each tender, and
which will be used to evaluate tenders such as financial data, shall be
initialled and dated by the relevant Member (same comment as before re
the assumption that routine member involvement is required). A working
copy of the tenders should be released for evaluation and an original filed
away in a secure location.

12.7 All Quotations or Tenders received through the Council's authorised e-
Tender solution which maintains a secure and fully auditable process, will
be opened by Procurement (minimum two officers in attendance) who will:
• produce a summary of details contained in section 12.3 for signing by
relevant members/officers detailed in 12.2
• download the tender responses and make them available to relevant
members or officers as required for record/audit/evaluation

13. Post-tender negotiation for contracts valued in excess of
£C

13.1 Providing clarification of an invitation to tender to potential contractors or
seeking clarification of a tender, whether in writing or by way of a meeting,
is permitted. However, discussions with tenderers after submission of a
tender and before the award of a contract with a view to obtaining an
adjustment to price, delivery or content (i.e. post tender negotiations) must
be the exception rather than the rule. It must not be conducted in an EU
Tender Procedure where it might distort competition, particularly with
regard to price.

13.2 If post tender negotiations are necessary after a single stage tender or
after the second stage of a two stage tender, then such negotiations shall
only be undertaken with the tenderer who is identified as having submitted
the best tender and after the other contractors have been informed.
Tendered rates and prices shall only be adjusted in respect of a
corresponding adjustment in the scope or quantity included in tender
documents. A record of the minutes of negotiation meetings shall be kept
on file and the changes agreed by both parties shall be in writing.

13.3 Where post tender negotiation results in a fundamental change to the
specification or contract terms which results in an increase in price of 10%
or £50,000, whichever is the least, the contract must not be awarded but re-tendered.

13.4 The Legal Services and Elections Manager must be formally consulted wherever it is proposed to enter into post tender negotiations. Negotiations must be conducted by a team of at least two employees, one of whom must be from a Unit independent to that leading the negotiations.

14. Evaluation and award of contract and debriefing contractors

14.1 Apart from the debriefing required or permitted by these Standing Orders, the confidentiality of quotations, tenders and the identity of contractors must be preserved at all times and the information about one contractor’s response must not be given to another contractor. FOI Section 43 and 44 refers to exemptions for confidential and commercially sensitive information.

14.2 Contracts must be evaluated and awarded in accordance with the evaluation criteria. During this process, employees shall ensure that submitted tender prices are compared with any pre-tender estimates and that any discrepancies are examined and resolved satisfactorily.

14.3 Any arithmetic within the tenders must be checked. If any errors are found they should be notified to the tenderer, who should be requested to confirm or withdraw their tender. Alternatively, if the rates in the tender, rather than the overall price, were stated within the invitation to tender as being dominant, an amended tender price can be requested to accord with the rates given by the tenderer.

14.4 Where the total value of the contract exceeds £C, all contractors must be informed in writing simultaneously and as soon as possible of the intention to award the contract, please refer to Procurement for letter templates. Unsuccessful contractors must be given at least 10 days in which to challenge the decision before the contract is awarded. If the decision is challenged by an unsuccessful contractor then the contract will not be awarded and advice must be obtained from the Legal Services and Elections Manager.

14.5 Unsuccessful contractors shall normally be informed in writing of the reason for non selection. No information, other than the following, should be given without taking the advice of the Legal Services and Elections Manager:

- How the evaluation criteria was applied and comparison with the winning tender scores;
- The range of prices submitted
- The name of the winning contractor.
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NB. See the Procurement Toolkit for draft Award/Rejection letters.

14.6 If a contractor requests in writing the reasons for a contracting decision, they must be given the reasons in writing within 15 days of the request. If requested, contractors who were deselected in a pre-tender short listing process may be given the information in 14.5 above.

14.7 An Executive Director or Head of Service may accept quotations or tenders provided that they have been fully evaluated and are the most economically advantageous to the Council. If the quotation or tender is not the most economically advantageous the approval of the relevant portfolio holder, or other Cabinet member, must be secured and the decision may be subsequently reported to the Cabinet.

15. **Contract documents**

15.1 All contracts must be in writing.

15.2 All contracts shall clearly specify the following:

- The work to be done or the goods, materials or services to be supplied
- That all goods supplies and services used or supplied are to comply with any relevant Standards Specification or Code of Practice in force at the date of the tender (British and/or any internationally recognised equivalent)
- The price to be paid with a statement of any discounts or deductions (amount and timing)
- Any insurance requirements
- Any health and safety requirements
- Safeguarding children requirements (if appropriate)
- Compliance with the Equalities Act 2010
- That the Contractor will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 or any re-enactment of that Act insofar as any personal data supplied by the Council or obtained on behalf of the Council is kept secure and is not disclosed to any other party without the express consent of the appropriate Head of Service
- The terms of the Bribery Act 2010 and standard anti-corruption clause as set out in Standing Order 17.2
- The time within which the contract is to be performed
- The provisions for the Council to terminate the contract
- A mechanism for agreeing price escalation and/or cost reduction requirements

For contracts valued at less than £C an official purchase order form with the Council’s Terms and Conditions attached, approved by the Head of Resources, must be used wherever possible.

15.3 In addition contracts valued greater than £C must also state the following:
Appendix 1

- That the contractor may not assign or sub-contract without prior written approval
- Ombudsman requirements
- That charter standards are to be met if relevant
- Sustainability requirements
- Confidentiality and Anti Corruption (see Procedure Rule 17.1)
- A right of access to relevant documentation and records of the contractor for monitoring and audit purposes, if relevant
- Key Performance Indicators
- That the Freedom of Information Act may require the council to release information provided by contractors

15.4 The formal advice of the Legal Services and Elections Manager must be sought for the following contracts:

- Where the total value exceeds £C;
- Those involving leasing arrangements;
- Where it is proposed to use a supplier’s own terms;
- Those involving the purchase of application software which exceeds £30,000
- Those which are complex in any other way or expose the Council to significant risk.

15.5 All contracts over £C must be concluded formally in writing and signed by the Legal Services and Elections Manager before the supply, service or construction work begins, except in exceptional circumstances, and then only with the written authority of an Executive Director or Head of Service. An award letter is insufficient. All contracts should be given a unique number allocated by the Procurement Officer who should also be supplied with a copy of the contract.

15.6 The employee responsible for obtaining the signatures on the contract must ensure that the person signing for the other contracting party has authority to bind it.

15.7 A contract must be sealed by the Council if any of the following apply:

- The council may wish to enforce the contract more than 6 years after its end
- The price paid or received under the contract is a nominal price and does not reflect the value of the goods or services
- There is any doubt about the authority of the person signing for the other contracting party
- The total value of the contract exceeds £C.
16. **Liquidated damages, bonds and parent company guarantees**

16.1 A risk assessment and financial check of every contract for the purposes of determining the level of security needed, if any, must be made by the Contract Supervisor, and/or appropriate Head of Service.

16.2 For every contract where it is considered that the council would suffer loss if the contract works, supplies or services are not provided in the time specified, the contract shall provide for the payment of liquidated damages by the contractor to reflect the anticipated loss to the Council.

16.3 Employees must consult with the Head of Resources to establish whether a Parent Company Guarantee is necessary when a contractor is a subsidiary company and:

- the total value of the contract exceeds £250,000; or
- the award is based on an evaluation of the parent company; or
- there is some concern about the stability of the contractor.

16.4 Employees must consult with the Head of Resources to establish whether a bond is needed where:

- the total value of the contract exceeds £1,000,000; or
- it is proposed to make stage payments in advance of receiving the whole of the subject matter of the contract and there is some concern about the stability of the contractor.

17. **Prevention of corruption**

17.1 Employees must comply with the Employee Code of Conduct and must not invite or accept any gift or reward in respect of the award or performance of any contract. It will be for the employee to prove that anything received was not received corruptly. High standards of conduct are obligatory. Corrupt behaviour will lead to dismissal and is a crime under the statutes referred to in 17.2 below.

17.2 All formal written contracts must include the following:

“The Council may terminate this contract and recover all its loss if the contractor, its employees or anyone acting on the contractor’s behalf do any of the following:

- Offer, give or agree to give to anyone any inducement or reward in respect of this or any other Council contract (even if the contractor does not know what has been done)
- Commit an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 or section 117(2) of the Local Government Act 1972
Commit any fraud in connection with this or any other Council contract whether alone or in conjunction with Council members, contractors or employees.

Any clause limiting the contractor's liability shall not apply to this clause."

18. Declaration of interests

18.1 If it comes to the attention of a member or employee of the council that a contract in which he or she has a financial or non-financial interest has been or is proposed to be entered into by the Council, he or she must record it in the Interests Register which is maintained by the Legal Services and Elections Manager. Where necessary such declarations shall be reported to the Cabinet.

18.2 Such written notice is required irrespective of whether the interest is direct or indirect. An indirect interest is distinct from a direct interest in as much as it is not a contract to which the member or employee is directly a party.

18.3 A shareholder in a body not exceeding a total nominal value of £1,000 or 1% of the nominal value of the issued share capital, whichever is the less, is not a financial interest for the purposes of this procedure rule.

18.4 The Legal Services and Elections Manager shall ensure that the attention of all members is drawn to the National Code of Local Government Conduct and the local Member Code of Conduct and that all employees are aware of the Employee Code of Conduct.

19. Post-contract monitoring

19.1 An internal contract manager must be nominated for all contracts over £B. The nominated person will be responsible for the planning, coordination, monitoring and controlling of the contract, and ensuring completion on time, within cost and to the required quality standards.

19.2 For all contracts with a value exceeding £C contract managers must:

- maintain a risk register during the contract period
- undertake appropriate risk assessments
- for each risk identified, ensure that contingency measures are in place.

19.3 During the life of the contract the following issues must be monitored:

- Performance
- Compliance with specification and contract
- Cost, quality and value for money;
- User satisfaction and risk management
- Customer complaints
Appendix 1

NB see Commissioning section of Procurement Toolkit

19.4 Where the total cost of any work carried out under a contract is expected to exceed the contract sum by £10,000 or 10% if the contract is valued over £C, a report detailing the reasons for such increases and the proposals for dealing with them shall, after consultation with the Head of Resources, be submitted to the Cabinet.

20. Extensions of existing contracts

20.1 Subject to compliance with the European Procurement Regulations contract extensions can be awarded when:

- value for money can be demonstrated for the council
- the option to award was written into the original contract
- the extension period is less than the original contract term
- for contracts subject to OJEU, the Notice and Award notice included the option to extend

20.2 The extension must be approved in advance by the Head of Resources in consultation with an Executive Director, the relevant Head of Service and the relevant Portfolio Holder if the value of the contract exceeds £C. Before approval is given, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- The existing contract was let following full competition in accordance with Standing Orders and a period of less than five years has elapsed since the initial contract was awarded.
- The new work is sufficiently similar in nature and extent.
- The majority of the rates for the new work are directly based on the existing contract.
- Rates for work which cannot be based directly on the existing contract can be negotiated equitably. A written report should be compiled detailing the circumstances and outcome of these negotiations.
- The likely benefit of further competition would be outweighed by the administrative cost and/or delay involved.
- The interests of the Council will not be compromised by the negotiation.

21. Long-term relationships

21.1 Competitive tendering does not have to relate to an individual piece of work or item of supply. Similarly, it is not necessary to re-let contracts for recurring goods, works or services every financial year.

21.2 Better value for money and improved quality of service delivery may be achieved by entering into long term agreements with contractors, suppliers and service providers. Therefore, consideration should be given to package contracts in such a way that they reduce the number of times that the Council needs to seek competitive tenders. This can be achieved
by amalgamating similar types of supplies and services into single contracts and then seeking competitive tenders for delivery over a maximum of five years.

22.  **Partnering**

22.1 Partnering involves two or more bodies working together to provide goods, services or works based on the principles of shared objectives, risks, resources and continuous improvement in performance.

22.2 Partnering arrangements which involve a joint venture or contractual arrangement with a private sector body are subject to the provisions of these Procedure Rules.

22.3 If the partnering agreement involves another local authority the Standing Orders of the lead authority will apply.
Both the Gershon Efficiency Review (2004) and the Roots Review (2009) highlighted the fundamental role Procurement plays in achieving best value and wider corporate aims for the Authority. The purpose of this document is to define Procurement’s role in contributing to the strategic aims of the Council and operating principles outlined in the Corporate Strategy and to meet the recommendations of the National Procurement Strategy.

The previous strategy explored in detail the drivers, tactics and tools required to establish procurement discipline within the Council. During this time we have ensured that good value services are provided throughout the Council whilst maintaining a philosophy of continuous improvement.

This second Procurement Strategy since the inception of the procurement shared service between Rugby Borough Council and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council in July 2008 concentrates on high level principles and 4 key areas; Value for Money, Strategic Procurement, Compliant Procurement and Collaboration.

Procurement is an essential element of delivering cost effective efficient services. It impacts on Members, Executive Directors, Corporate Management Team, staff, the public, suppliers and partners. Procurement embraces the whole of the supply chain and commissioning cycle from identifying need to contract management and monitoring i.e. the ‘procure to pay’ cycle is one process. Key to the success of this strategy is delivering the Council’s procurement at a strategic level and optimising the advantages of a corporate approach to supply chain management. This means that in the future the Council will work with its partners to engage in supplier and market development and packaging of contracts to ensure the most effective purchase is made. This strategy seeks to provide clear direction and a co-ordinated strategic approach that avoids duplication or increased bureaucracy, to deliver improvements to our procurement process for the period 2012 – 2016.

Procurement is a critical process for ensuring that the Council meets the needs of the community. The public do not distinguish between in-house services and those provided by contractors. Poor procurement can lead to a loss of confidence by the public in our ability to deliver excellent public services.

Rugby Borough Council currently spends approximately £20m per year on procurement of supplies, services and works, using around 1500 suppliers. The council is actively working to modernise and streamline its current processes and procedures to achieve maximum efficiency.

Our operating principles are to:

- Provide Good Value Services whilst not impacting on service
- Manage Procurement which identifies best practice and challenges current methods
- Carry out Socially responsible / Environmentally Sustainable procurement
- Deliver efficiency savings
- Be open to and seek opportunities for partnership or collaborative work with other authorities
- Ensure Procurement is conducted within EU / UK legislation and is compliant.
**Value for Money**

Outcomes Sought:

- Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services
- Improved supplier service to end user
- Drive down procurement costs whilst obtaining value for money
- E tendering

Delivering value for money is at the heart of RBC’s objectives and is a key principle for the procurement service. Creating efficiency and releasing resource into front line services, outlines a vision for RBC to harness opportunities available to deliver measurable efficiency improvements and deliver Value for Money. The Shared Service for Procurement will facilitate Best Value in Procurement and be responsible for strategic development including provision of Contract frameworks, procurement processes, collaboration and benchmarking.

**Strategic Procurement**

Outcomes Sought:

- Develop central contracts database for improved transparency
- Application of Category Management from analysis of spend data
- Improve management information allowing better financial management, budgeting and tendering
- Devolve Council policy to external bodies through supply contracts
- Sustainable Procurement – local economy and environmental considerations
- E procurement

Strategic procurement takes place where there is high risk / high value spend for the authority and makes a crucial contribution supporting the operating principles of the Corporate Strategy. In this area it is important to concentrate on building excellent working relationships with contractors and collaborative partners with a view to driving down costs while still remaining sustainable for suppliers. This involves looking across service boundaries to identify synergies and opportunities for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Supplier rationalisation will allow procurement power to be refocused with the resultant benefits of increased leverage, reduced numbers of transactions and improved value for money. Whilst improving relationships with our suppliers this approach will enhance the collaborative partners and give a more professional image of the markets which we operate.
Appendix 2

**Compliant Procurement**

Outcomes Sought:

- Ensure Council's reputation is maintained
- Council staff are aware of relevant legislation and have access to compliant documents
- Manage the risk of legal challenges and keep to a minimum

The risk profile for failing to comply with EU procurement rules has changed dramatically since 2009. Procurement is affected by both EU & UK procurement legislation which is ever-changing and must be managed effectively. The Procurement Team must ensure all procurement activity is undertaken within these regulations so that the Council is not open to challenge. We will continually review our procurement practices and procedures to ensure the Council is compliant with existing and developing legislation. An appropriate level of central professional procurement resource and knowledge will also be maintained within the Council to help ensure outcomes are delivered.

**Collaboration**

Outcomes Sought:

- Actively seek Shared Service & Partnership working
- Encourage the use of collaboration within commodity groups and value for money/service requirements can be improved
- Establish links to Public Sector Frameworks

The opportunities and outcomes identified within this strategy become even more powerful when shared with other authorities. We are actively collaborating within the Warwickshire Sub Region, working in various ways with other public bodies to combine our buying power and procure good’s, works or services jointly. We have already realised benefits through economies of scale, accelerated learning and reduced sourcing activity. The Council will encourage the development of new methods or approaches to procurement that will deliver services efficiently, effectively and economically. Active participation in Government sponsored groups such as the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership will provide further opportunities to share best practice.
Appendix 2

Procurement Vision – The key challenges ahead for procurement:

- Making procurement happen at the most efficient level with the right people
- Using technology and in particular e-procurement to support organisational and behavioural change
- Making procurement a key management activity
- Involving members in the procurement strategy so they provide leadership in embedding procurement excellence into the culture of the Council
- Complying with all legislation relating to procurement activity
- Developing partners and partnership working
- Stimulating markets to be able to procure from a diverse and competitive range of suppliers including minority businesses, voluntary and community sector groups and SME’s
- Developing the Contracts Management System on Covalent covering recurrent procurement activity
- Enhancing existing guidance and support offered to officers on procurement process / contract management
- Providing strategic procurement advice to major projects
- Providing procurement training for officers

For further Procurement advice please contact your local Procurement Department or for reference visit the Procurement Toolkit:

**Procurement Action Plan** - The 4 Key Delivery Areas of the Procurement Strategy will be delivered through the attached Action Plan. This will be monitored through Covalent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aim</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Planned Date</th>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Develop performance measures for purchasing</td>
<td>To benchmark current performance and identify methods of improving efficiency &amp; effectiveness of procurement service</td>
<td>Develop comprehensive list of KPI’s</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Value for Money</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Maintain &amp; Report on quarterly basis</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>Identify areas where potential savings can be made without the loss of Quality, Effectiveness or Efficiency.</td>
<td>Exploit opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services across the Council</td>
<td>Spend data Analysis</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Value for Money</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Category Management</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Define streamlined procurement processes and identify cost/time saving</td>
<td>Establish streamlined procurement process (reduced waste) to improve service and reduce costs</td>
<td>E-tendering used for all tenders</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Value for Money</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Use CMS to trigger officers into action and support them with procurement process</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td><strong>1.4</strong></td>
<td>Gain understanding of supplier capability and support supplier development</td>
<td>To secure strong supply chain and improve supplier interface in support of Council Process improvement</td>
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<td>Meet the buyer events</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Maintain supplier lists</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful suppliers</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td><strong>1.5</strong></td>
<td>Baseline existing procurement processes including costs</td>
<td>Establish baseline process and cost / time, audit issues associated with them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop comprehensive list of KPI's</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Benchmark against CWS and other Councils</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td><strong>1.6</strong></td>
<td>Ensure all tenders / quotations are carried out electronically</td>
<td>Advertise all opportunities using E-tendering portal</td>
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<td>Control all tenders across the authority</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>Make officers aware of risk to council by tendering themselves</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.1</strong></td>
<td>Implement contract management system using covalent enabling visibility &amp; transparency</td>
<td>Develop and maintain a contract database to ensure Council spend is appropriately controlled, tendering and collaborative work can be planned and co-ordinated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify &amp; Implement all contracts within Council</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Maintain contracts using CMS</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Aggregate spend and rationalise suppliers where possible. Undertake detailed supplier and spend analysis and implement Commodity Groups</td>
<td>Compare like for like spend and identify areas for aggregation and category management</td>
<td>Follow template guidance for each contract</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Collect regular Management Information to benchmark performance</td>
<td>Implement KPI’s to monitor procurement activity and identify areas for improvement</td>
<td>Develop comprehensive list of KPI’s</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Enforce new contract standing orders as agreed with Cllrs</td>
<td>Devolve new CSO’s across the council and ensure officers are aware of changes</td>
<td>Make officers aware of new CSO’s</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Ensure council is working to new thresholds &amp; rules</td>
<td>2012/ On-going</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
<td>Ensure there is a commitment to our policies on sustainability and respect for the environment</td>
<td>Working with Service Units to give guidance/steerage on issues relating to sustainability and environment when procuring.</td>
<td>Tender Documents up to date with sustainability legislation</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Strategic Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.6</strong></td>
<td>E-Procurement</td>
<td>Improve contract compliance, spend management and efficiency</td>
<td>Present EGS system to HOS and get buy in at Director level</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Strategic Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.1</strong></td>
<td>Ensure tender / quotation documents are maintained with latest procurement legislation</td>
<td>Update all documents when new case law is introduced to avoid risk to Council</td>
<td>Update documents with latest legislation to ensure compliance</td>
<td>2012/ On-going</td>
<td>Compliant Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.2</strong></td>
<td>Procurement staff suitably</td>
<td>Attend regular procurement training events to keep up to date with any changes in legislation</td>
<td>Work towards CIPS qualification</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Compliant Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Identify procurement training and resource needs within the Authority, and ensure officers are aware of relevant legislation.</td>
<td>Attend events / courses to improve procurement knowledge</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Compliant Procurement</td>
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<td>Ensure toolkit is maintained and regular drop in sessions with officers are carried out.</td>
<td>Constantly update toolkit with latest legislation.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Carry out drop in sessions with officers to improve procurement knowledge.</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>Enforce robust evaluation of tenders to keep challenges to a minimum.</td>
<td>Provide advice / guidance to officers regarding evaluation.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>All submissions must be given fair treatment and scored accordingly without prejudice.</td>
<td>Ensure all legislation is adhered to and feedback given.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Maintain shared service with NBBC.</td>
<td>Continue with the close relationship between the 2 councils and collaboration with certain projects</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Discuss on-going / new projects.</td>
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<td>Continue with weekly meetings.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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Appendix 3
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Actively develop shared services, Partnerships and Collaborative working with organisations such as ESPO, Central Buying Consortium &amp; OGC</td>
<td>Achieve economies of scale, reduced cost of administration, whilst retaining auditable process(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utilise CMS to identify collaboration opportunities</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue meetings with Partners and seek opportunities</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Check framework agreements for contracts prior to tendering</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Collaborate with CSW for on-going projects</td>
<td>Allow to tap into significant spend of larger authorities and achieve significant savings</td>
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<td>Continue meetings with Partners and seek opportunities</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work closely with CSW procurement departments and check framework options</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Utilise Spikes data to benefit category management</td>
<td>Manage data to identify areas of common spend and look at collaboration opportunities with other authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spend data Analysis</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Category Management</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with other authorities procurement departments to</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Investigate ways to maximise opportunities with the local voluntary and community sector</td>
<td>Link in with other public authorities including the police / fire and Hospitals in the Rugby / Warwickshire area</td>
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