

Procurement Developments – Overview

There are a number of recent developments relating to procurement at Waverley

Lead officer on procurement

Since 2004 this has been Mark Hill, but since taking up the role of Monitoring Officer, it has proved to be difficult to devote much time to procurement and a resource is needed to take forward a focus on procurement work with other authorities and agencies.

The resource will need to advance the initiatives (subject to agreement) that are set out in this paper. The Procurement Strategy will also need revision. Contract Procedure Rules may also require some minor amendment..

Heads of Service (HoS) who now have a much more direct responsibility for their budgets and purchasing have identified that it would be helpful to have a resource that can be contacted for advice on procurement.

Buying locally – suggestions discussed with local business representatives and with HoST

Following comments made at the NNDR consultation meeting earlier this year, Iain Lynch, Mark Hill and Daniel Bainbridge have met with local business people, representatives of local business organisations (Chamber of Commerce and Business Link Surrey, Waverley Business Forum and the Federation of Small Businesses) to review some of the procurement arrangements in the council.

The meetings have been well-received and appreciation has been expressed for the approach being taken by Waverley.

There was also great appreciation of the Council's move to pay local firms within 10 days.

A number of relatively short-term measures were identified whereby local businesses' opportunities of bidding for Council contracts would be enhanced. These are listed below, which Heads of Service and Corporate Management team believe would be appropriate to take forward.

Technology initiatives

- Advertise all contracts on a dedicated webpage on Waverley's website: this will need the creation of a web-page that all staff can update, and will need the lowering of the thresholds within CPRs where there is a requirement to advertise in local newspapers and on the website
- Continue to use IESE (Improvement and Efficiency South East) web portal for larger contracts – this assists in facilitating joint working with other authorities, but if local companies were accessing the portal to view Waverley's opportunities, companies may then also spot opportunities offered by other authorities

- Links to/from the website to related sites e.g. Compete4 (2012 contract opportunities), Business Link, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses
- Compile advance list of forthcoming tenders and publish on website with details of how to be tendered – this will require more pre-planning than takes place at present, particularly in respect of the smaller value contracts. Businesses could register to receive information on contract opportunities that may be of interest to them supporting the local economy and potentially reducing costs.

Non-technology initiatives

- Have a clear policy on local buying and what is deemed to be “local” – Waverley must not be anti-competitive, but has two priorities within the Corporate Plan that are relevant (improving lives, and value for money). “Local” can be open to mean different things e.g. it can include a national/international company with a local base
- Test existing arrangements by seeking prices from local companies e.g. leased cars, the agreement with Kent not being an exclusive contract
- Appropriate use, within legal provisions, of sub-contracting clauses in larger contracts e.g requiring Waverley contractors and suppliers to reflect the same payment terms offered by Waverley to their sub contractors
- Make it a condition of contracts that training schemes be run, aimed at upskilling Waverley residents (subject to legal provisions) e.g. apprenticeships
- Collaborate with other authorities e.g. through Surrey Procurement Network, IESE
- Analyse spending and identify areas where there might be greater opportunity extended to local businesses to tender – this should be achieved through the forthcoming analysis by Spikes Cavell. Further in-house analysis should also be possible.

Training and development

- Training sessions/awareness sessions for local businesses on how best to approach supplying public bodies
- A “simple” procurement toolkit that is readily available as a page on the Waverley Intranet Backstage (the current manual is a Word document that can be accessed but it is not clearly signposted)
- Staff training on Waverley’s approach to improve consistency and value for money

Longer-term

- Explore using the NNDR and other databases to contact companies advising them of where to look for details of Waverley contracts (subject to legal provisions)

- Subscriber facility through website, giving e-mail notice of forthcoming contracts
- Clearer links between sustainability policies and procurement specifications and decisions
- Making a clear link between contracts (content) and service heads/managers on website – whilst service heads' names and positions are available, there is no clear link to the type of contracts for which they are responsible
- Use of e-tendering initiatives such as reverse auctioning – this generated a lot of interest, but there were concerns that companies/contractors without the necessary/compatible software might be disadvantaged
- Assessment of contractors to be commensurate with and proportionate to the size and type of contract
- Placing a register of all contracts on the website – a legal requirement to have a public register, but at present it is a traditional paper register that contains larger contract details only
- Consider allowing factoring by Waverley's contractors

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