



North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 1 July 2024

Topic: Procurement Strategy 2023-2027

Report by: Simon Fuller, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report recommends the introduction of a new Procurement Strategy identifying key themes which the Council must take into account when it procures goods, works or services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To adopt the Procurement Strategy 2023-2027 as included with this report at Appendix 1.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To ensure the Council has a robust and up to date Procurement Strategy which reflects the key priorities of the Council as regards the goods, works and services that it procures.

4. REPORT

4.1. The Council's Procurement Strategy expired at the end of 2022. The Council had been part of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy since 2019 and had joined in the development of place a new Devon Districts Procurement Strategy but the preparation of this new Strategy was delayed.

4.2. The Council has since lost its Procurement Officer and has signed up to partnership working with Devon Procurement Services, which is Devon County Council's procurement team. Devon Procurement Services already works with Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council, Plymouth City Council, Exmoor National Park and Dartmoor National Park on the same basis.

4.3. Devon Procurement Services has a Procurement Strategy which Devon County Council has adopted. The Procurement Strategy they have produced is such that its partner authorities are similarly able to adopt it albeit they are also able to personalise the Procurement Strategy to suit their authority but keeping the overriding themes which are common to all.

4.4. There is a sound basis for holding a Procurement Strategy in common with Devon Procurement Services as the service they provide ensures that template documents and how advice is provided has the Procurement Strategy in mind. It is also beneficial for suppliers who do not have to deal with a different set of rules and requirements in different parts of the County.

- 4.5. We have therefore adapted the Procurement Strategy template provided by Devon Procurement Services to suit North Devon. We consider that it is worth applying this Procurement Strategy retrospectively to have a seamless transition between the Procurement Strategies held by the Council.
- 4.6. It is important that once this Procurement Strategy is in place that it is not forgotten about and put in place just for the sake of it. In this regard the key messages being taken as a result of the Procurement Strategy are that:
- 4.6.1. Each procurement should be planned on an individual project by project basis with consideration being given to the operational circumstances of each individual project being planned across the organisation where multiple teams need to be involved (e.g. to include legal, finance, insurance, ICT and other teams).
- 4.6.2. The planning process for a procurement must be started sufficiently early, to build in enough time to consider the various alternatives and approaches the Council could take on each project, including potentially consulting the market informally in advance – to understand suppliers' knowledge and what solutions are achievable.
- 4.6.3. That considerations for a procurement project should be beyond just a specification and a price competition.
- 4.6.4. Accepting that it will not be possible to drive every single one of the themes of the Procurement Strategy for each project – otherwise there is a risk of losing sight of the specific service the Council needs to actually drive and deliver.
- 4.6.5. It will be important to think outside of the organisation and look back in from the supply market perspective – i.e. what is the market capable of delivering in each case. Also how the Council's requirements will reflect back in terms of how suppliers view the prospect of working with the Council and whether it is a fair and attractive client to work with.
- 4.6.6. It will be important to get the most out of what providers can offer and push the value they can add, without limiting the market's ability to respond or reducing the Council's supply base capable of bidding for its work.
- 4.6.7. Considering proportionality in terms of applying the Procurement Strategy – the difference between small and low value procurements (where a light touch should be taken) versus the higher preparatory time and organisational consequences for larger procurements.
- 4.6.8. Regarding the weightings in scoring procurement activities – sometimes weightings are directly linked to the service specification and the question set – if the specification sets a high bar, or has pass / fail considerations, the weightings can and should vary in their importance. However, if the Council puts together a tight specification, then the procurement could still be based 100% on price.

4.6.9. The Procurement Strategy is meant as a toolkit to help the Council run procurements well, in the context of what each service needs to achieve and in line with the Council's aims.

4.6.10. The Procurement Strategy is also important not just for the procurement phase but throughout the contract in terms of checking whether specification requirements are actually being fulfilled via appropriate contract management and performance monitoring.

4.7. Devon Procurement Services will be providing a Procurement Strategy toolkit and associated familiarisation training to assist the Council in achieving the above.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no resource implications in the adoption of this Procurement Strategy

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. It is not considered that there will be any equalities implications as a result of the recommendations in this report. The Procurement Strategy is replacing an existing out of date strategy and, pursuant to law and the Constitution, provides for the appropriate procurement of goods, works and services in line with the principles of transparency and equal treatment to ensure best value for public funds spent.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There are no environmental implications arising from the proposals in this report. Given the Procurement Strategy raises key themes on the Global Climate Emergency and Social Value among others, the Council's Sustainability and Climate Officer has been consulted on this Strategy and considers that it is appropriate.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: the Procurement Strategy has a particular key theme on commercialisation in terms of focussing on value for money and reducing costs and the utilisation of the Council's partnership working with Devon Procurement Services for greater spending power.

8.1.2. Improving customer focus: bringing in this Procurement Strategy will allow customers and suppliers to more clearly understand the underlying basis behind how the Council procures goods, works and services.

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: economic development forms one of the key themes of the Procurement Strategy with the intention to



create opportunities for SMEs and the voluntary/community sector and to promote and prioritise local economic development.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 1.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2019-2022

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Simon Fuller, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer