

PROCUREMENT PROTOCOL

June 2017



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Mission Statement

“to ensure procurement opportunities with the City of Lincoln Council are fair, straightforward and accessible to all”

Introduction

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all those who wish to do business with us, from micro businesses to multi- national companies.

The Council realises that a one size fits all procurement policy is not a productive way forward both for external suppliers and the Council. The Council has therefore developed this policy and the actions that lie underneath it, to ensure that the procurement process it has, whilst complying with due process, is as straightforward as possible and assists contractors and partners to work with the Council to achieve the most advantageous outcomes.

What are the current barriers?

It is acknowledged that there is a perception faced by all public authorities that the procurement process within local authority’s is too bureaucratic, time consuming and weighted against smaller companies.

It is true that procurement must follow due process. The process is dictated by law, through the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and internal contract procedure rules.

However the Council realises that there are ways that we can assist those bidding for work with the Council and to support and guide them through the process. This policy sets out how the Council will adapt and improve the procurement process so that potential partners can more readily work with the Council.

Appendix one – Social Value Policy

Appendix two – Executive summary contract procedure rules

Appendix three – Glossary of terms



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The Procurement Process

The first discussion that a supplier has with the Council should not be when bidding for work. The Council intends to put into place a series of actions which support potential suppliers through the whole procurement process. These actions will include support/assistance in understanding the process and mechanisms involved. They are not overly complex and by providing bespoke support we will help breakdown perceptions that they are.

This will be addressed in the following ways:

1 Prior to the bid

1.1 Work with LEPS, federation of small businesses, developer forums.

- We will take a pro-active approach in engaging with local businesses groups re: procurement issues on an on-going basis. We will not only raise awareness of public sector procurement opportunities but will also identify the most effective ways of completing documentation and highlight that we will support businesses, as much as we are able to throughout the process.
- We will make SME's aware that consortia bids will be accepted, where appropriate, that this is an option to them for larger contracts and how to go about completing documentation in these circumstances.
- We will develop a procurement page on our web site. This will include, faq's, glossary of terms; latest OJEU figures; uploaded standard documents and policies so suppliers can become familiar with them and have easy access to them at any time. We will also ensure that standard terms and conditions are available on our web site so that there are no surprises in our documents.
- We will undertake a review of how the Council puts together the award criteria for contracts, such as the price/quality mix.
- We will examine whether there is too much emphasis on wordy quality assessments, and whether these can be streamlined in any way.
- We will host procurement networking events and workshops at least bi-annually. This will ensure that we are as pro-active as possible in engaging with the local supply chain and the relevant market place.
- We have drawn up a Social Value Policy (attached as Appendix two) and this will be supplied with every tender.



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- We will review framework agreements that we currently use and promote these to local suppliers in order to help them bid to be part of those and if not as the main contractor then as a 2nd/3rd tier supplier.
- We will continue to develop relationships with the existing framework providers and encourage them to bring networking events to Lincoln, to explain to our local suppliers the advantages of being on a framework.
- We will look to set up our own frameworks in order to speed up the delivery of projects
- We will signpost local suppliers to the local supply portal where they can register to become 2nd/3rd tier suppliers.
- The Council will use this local supply portal as an opportunity to advertise sub-contracting opportunities within our larger (potentially over OJEU) contracts.
- In addition to this we will also include a provision within the specification about the use of the site by the successful contractor to engage with sub-contractors.
- We will continually review our documentation and assess whether, these can be simplified.
- Where appropriate within our tender documentation we will incorporate an executive summary with a full technical specification held within an Appendix rather than the main document.

2 Pre-engagement

- As relationships have developed with SME's we will advise them of contract opportunities. We will be more pro-active in that we will meet with suppliers face to face, if requested, in answering questions about the specification or documentation completion.
- We will also look at structured pre market engagement to ensure that we are asking for the right things within our specifications and to ensure that suppliers understand what we are asking for and are looking for from them.
- We will make it clear that advice and guidance is available to all suppliers throughout the procurement process, and relevant contact details will be given to enable this.
- Wherever possible we will have a single stage submission tender, dependent on the market place i.e. a high volume of tender returns could result in delay of the contract award.



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- Where we are procuring developable land packages, we will look at whether the land agreements can be packaged into lots which would still see the delivery of the project/scheme to the desired outcome.
- We will hold ‘meet the supplier days’ (if appropriate and proportionate to the tender exercise) where we ask/advertise our requirements in respect of developing the above agreements, and then evaluating all the interested party’s proposals to see which deliver the best overall outcome rather than looking at deals in isolation

3 Bidding

- We will be more flexible when assessing the financial standing of a supplier especially when there is no financial risk to the authority.
- When undertaking a RFQ exercise in respect of Goods & Services (not Works), we will assess whether the financial standing assessment can be removed completely from the document and do this as part of the shortlisting of the contract.
- We will offer a number of hours of free support to suppliers prior to the commencement of the procurement exercise.
- We will, where legislation and also capacity allows, offer support and training to businesses to upskill them in the completion of documents



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