



# **Stratford-on-Avon District Council**

## **Interim Procurement Strategy 2008-2012**

Approved by Executive on 28 July 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

Warwickshire Association of Chief Executives (WACE) agreed a strategy for shared services across the county in March 2008. Executive agreed this strategy on 7 April 2008. One of the first services to be pursued is procurement. Meetings are taking place to pursue this. In the meantime there is a need to agree an Interim Procurement Strategy whilst a new countywide approach is agreed.

### **Aims of the Strategy:**

To provide an interim strategic framework that will ensure the Council maximises the opportunities that can be derived from effective and innovative procurement of goods and services.

To promote an approach to procurement that will improve service delivery, realise savings and achieve benefits from working in partnership.

### **Adoption of this will:**

- ❖ Assist in achieving Corporate Strategy objectives
- ❖ Raise the profile of procurement and highlight the opportunities that effective procurement can create
- ❖ Promote consistency in procurement
- ❖ Improve efficiency through reduced costs and the achievement of value for money
- ❖ Ensure the delivery of high quality competitive services that meet the need of the customer
- ❖ Support the delivery of the Council's e-procurement agenda
- ❖ Support sustainability for the communities and areas served and benefit local citizens
- ❖ Provide equitable opportunities to a diverse range of suppliers including local providers

The profile of procurement within the public sector has been raised following the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07) and the publication of the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government final report 'Towards Public Service Transformation (DCLG<sup>1</sup> 2008) and The Local Government Review, promoting best practice in local government (IDeA<sup>2</sup> 2008). Procurement has also been identified as a priority area of the Government's Efficiency Agenda, as a means of achieving significant cashable savings by more collective and professional purchasing across the public sector.

Procurement is the foundation of providing cost effective and efficient services and is undoubtedly at the heart of everything the Council does. Ensuring the appropriate strategic framework is in place is essential if, as an organisation, the Council wishes to be proactive and innovative in the provision of value for money services.

The Council has already undertaken work in this area with the production of a previous Procurement Strategy that encompassed many of the good practices identified in the National Strategy. However, the Council's 2007 Comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (previously the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

<sup>2</sup> Improvement and Development Agency

Performance Assessment (CPA) identified the need for further development in Procurement.

This Strategy builds on the work already undertaken and sets out the framework for the Council's approach to Procurement in ensuring that this area of activity meets the requirements of the Council and directly contributes to the achievement of the Council's corporate aims and objectives.

The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan to further develop the Council's procurement policies and practices and establishes a programme for continuous improvement whilst measuring targets against the milestones within the National Procurement Strategy.

This document addresses all the key procurement and Efficiency Agenda issues and is closely aligned to the four main themes of the National Procurement Strategy:

Providing Leadership and Building Capacity;  
Partnership and Collaboration;  
Doing Business Electronically; and  
Stimulating Markets and Achieving Community Benefits.

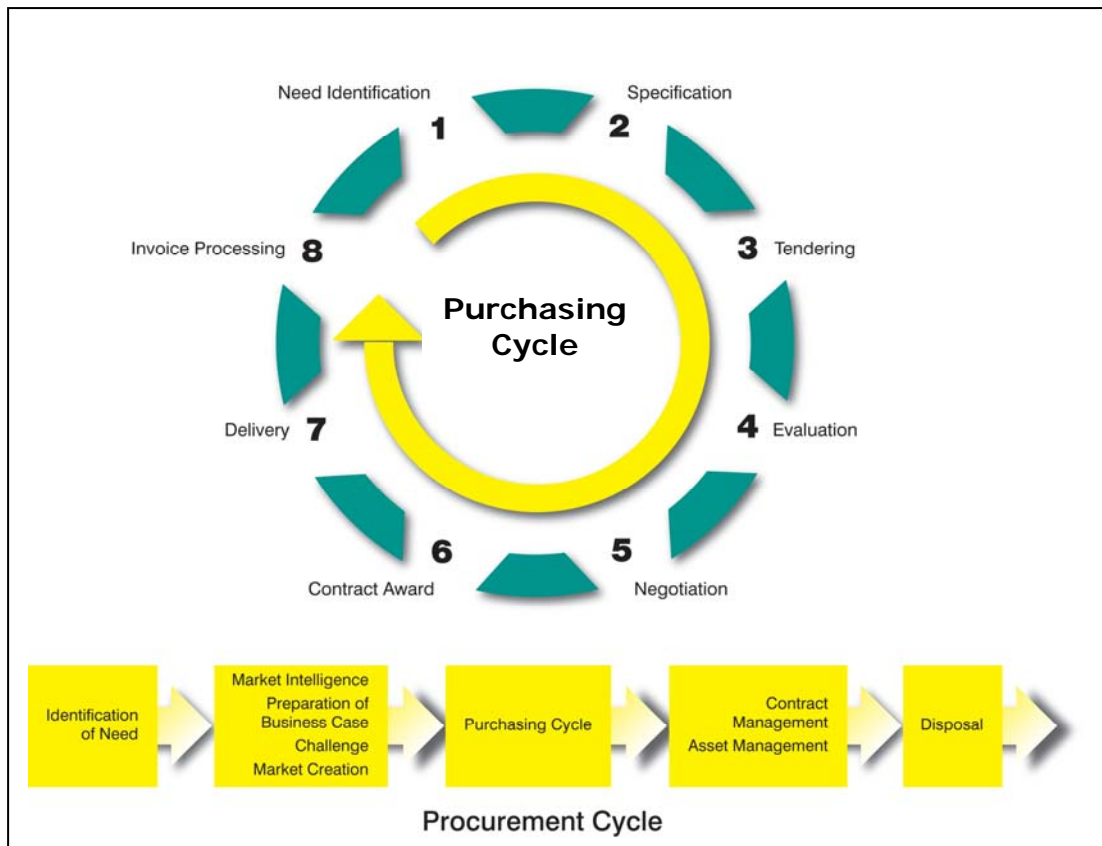
The Strategy is not overly prescriptive in many areas. It does however provide a framework within which the Council can maximise the opportunities that can be derived from better procurement. It is important that this Strategy is used as a backcloth for delivering efficient and effective services. The methodology adopted to achieve this will differ between functions. It is important however that all options are properly and robustly evaluated. This process will include the consideration of outsourcing of service delivery albeit this will not be appropriate for all services.

Joint working with Warwickshire County and other District and Borough Councils will continue to develop a joint procurement strategy.

## **What is Procurement?**

Procurement has many different meanings. Within the National Procurement Strategy it is defined as "the process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering both acquisition from third parties and from in-house providers. The process spans the whole cycle for identification of needs, through to the end of a services contract or the end of the useful life of an asset. It involves options appraisal and the critical "make or buy" decision which may result in the provision of services in-house in appropriate circumstances".

Procurement is not the same as purchasing. Purchasing is only one element of the process i.e. the basis of the acquisition stage in the Procurement Cycle. The procurement cycle starts with the identification of a need and moves through purchasing decisions to the end of a service or the end of the useful life of an asset. Procurement decisions would cover why, how and where in respect of service delivery options.

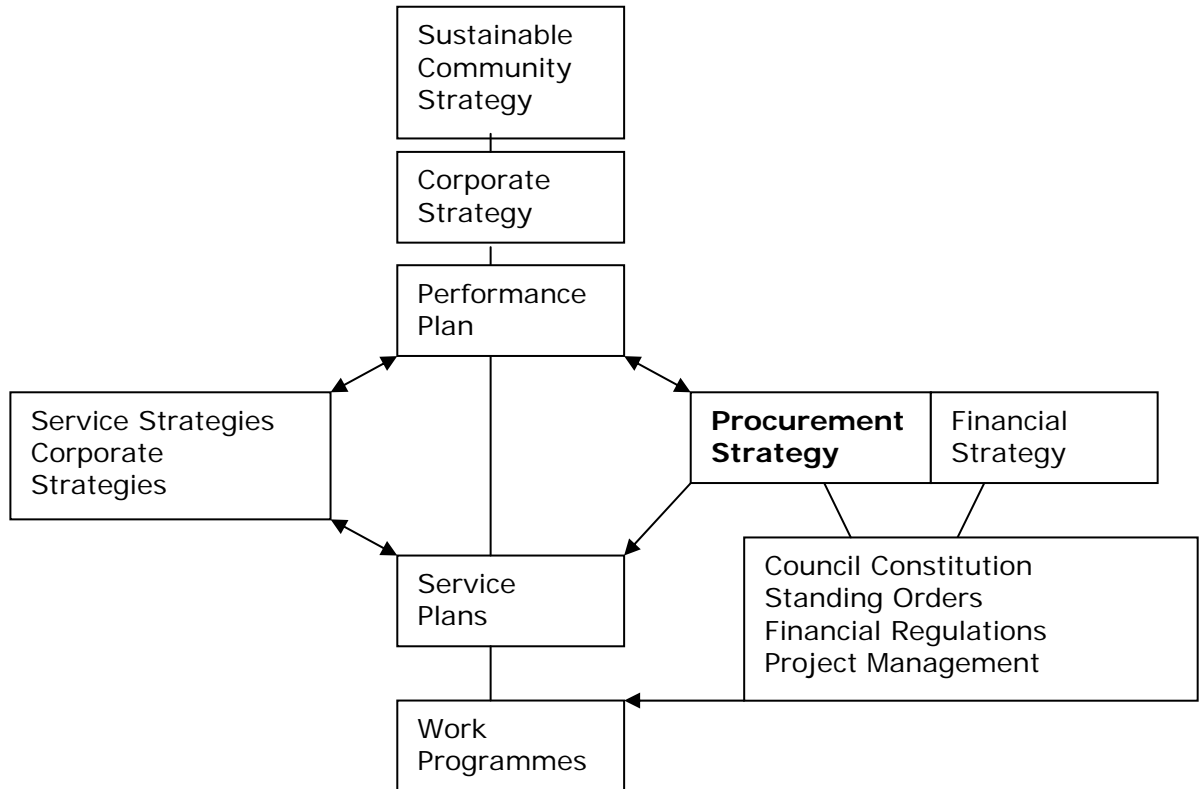


### The Council's Strategic Aims

The Procurement Strategy 2008-2012 is aligned with the Council's strategic aims and outcomes as set out in the Corporate Strategy. Adoption of the strategy will assist in achieving the following outcomes:

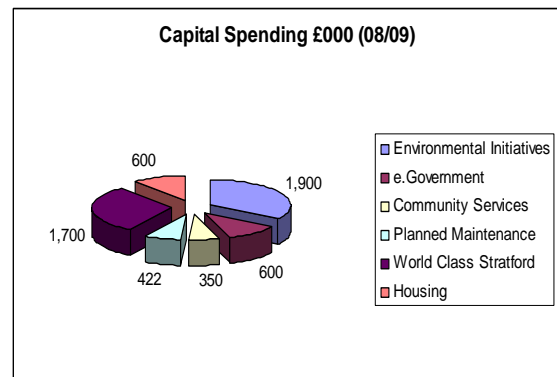
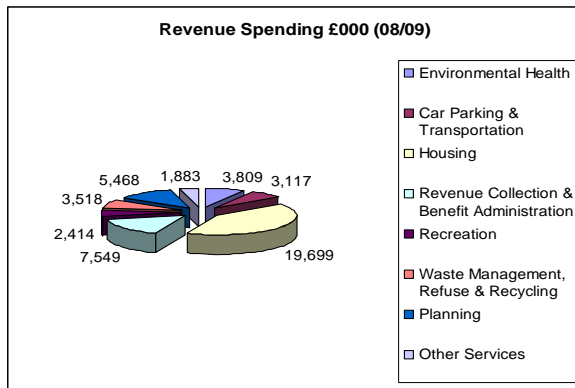
- Access to services
- Carbon footprint
- Business
- Value for Money

This strategy will seek to support these outcomes by implementing its aims to foster innovation in service delivery, making the best use of new technology, working with partners and the community, maintaining a sustainable local economy through use of local suppliers and service providers, and by ensuring a sustainable environment through green procurement and purchasing initiatives.



### Council Spending

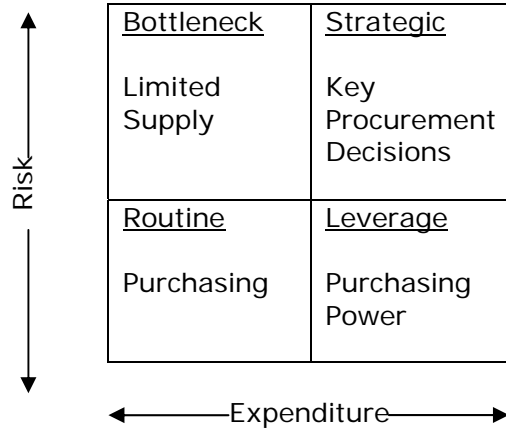
The Council spends in excess of £47m per annum (excluding housing and council tax benefits) on the procuring of goods and services either internally or externally provided.



## Managing Risk

All procurement decisions carry with them inherent risks. The exposure to these risks will be dependant upon a number of factors including the nature and cost of the procurement. In order that the risk management approach adopted is appropriate a matrix approach will be applied.

A number of different approaches will be used to manage risk depending on the nature of the procurement itself. High-risk, high value procurement such as partnering or shared services will require a strategic approach using formal project management techniques. Low-risk requirements will be based on the leverage of collective buying power in order to minimise costs or by streamlining processes.



## PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

### PROVIDING LEADERSHIP AND BUILDING CAPACITY

**Objective:**

*To ensure that there is commitment from the top of the Council to procurement excellence by managing it strategically and resourcing it adequately.*

**To achieve this the Council will:**

- ❖ Identify procurement champions
- ❖ Maintain a procurement strategy aligned with its corporate aims
- ❖ Award contracts on best value for money rather than lowest price
- ❖ Ensure expertise exists in procurement and project management
- ❖ Encourage procurement skills through relevant training
- ❖ Publish procurement guidance for internal and external use
- ❖ Maintain a corporate contracts register
- ❖ Plan and resource procurement projects effectively

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Strategic Director and Portfolio Holder (Resources) will assume the roles of Chief Officer and Member Procurement Champion respectively for the subsequent implementation and delivery of this strategy.

The Procurement Champions will ensure that procurement is seen as a strategic issue and will be responsible for the adoption of this strategy. They will challenge the way the Council procures and monitors the effectiveness of the strategy.

Effective procurement across the Council will be delivered through the active participation of all those who are responsible for the delivery of service, control budgets, and authorise expenditure as well as those with the appropriate technical expertise.

Procurement will be measured in terms of delivery against this strategy and day to day management of the procurement process. In addition to the management of the Action Plan that will facilitate the delivery of this strategy it is intended to develop some key performance indicators that will measure the Council's overall performance in this area.

### Procurement Expertise

The Council will seek to achieve maximum purchasing power through collaboration in this area by pursuing the option of shared working with other Warwickshire councils, and the use of other relevant agencies.

The Central Administration Finance Team (CAFT) coordinates the purchasing of goods and services of a day-to-day operational nature, achieving savings by way of economies of scale and coordination.

The post of Energy & Procurement Officer not only builds on existing expertise, but provides a synergy to the procurement cycle.

It is a requirement of the Council's Standing Orders as to Contracts (Standing Orders) that all orders for goods and services, with limited exceptions, are placed using CAFT in order to benefit from:

- purchasing knowledge;
- an overview of purchasing activity, ensuring that opportunities can be maximised i.e. economies of scale of orders; and
- the reduction of costs through the creation of centralised contracts, appropriate tendering processes or negotiations on price.

The requirement to use the service is supported by the e-procurement system, which electronically routes all requisitions for goods and services for orders to be placed.

For larger service specific contracts, these are currently managed within the particular unit where the service is managed.

Legal Services, Internal Audit and the Solicitor to the Council provide specialist advice on tendering and contract issues and monitor compliance with Standing Orders to ensure the requirements for public accountability and probity are met, whilst satisfying the need to obtain value for money.

The service and financial planning, base budget review, and Performance Management Framework are key drivers to challenging service delivery to ensure the Council continues to provide value for money services. The Performance & Improvement Team provide expertise in performance management techniques and service and financial planning processes.

The significant benefits of developing corporate expertise have been well proven in many areas. This principle equally applies to the procurement process. Various degrees of knowledge and skills exist within the Council but, prior to implementing the administrative review, no one overall service provided support and guidance for the entire procurement cycle.

### **Basis of Procurement Decisions**

The Council will make its procurement decisions to further its corporate aims of improving the economic, environmental and social well being of its community and on the basis of achieving best value for money. Best value is defined as "the optimum combination of whole life costs and benefits to meet the customer's requirement" and requires authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which they exercise their functions, having due regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Contracts will not be awarded solely on the basis of lowest initial price, but on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, quotation or proposal, as determined by such criteria as are relevant to the type of works, suppliers or services. This will generally cover the optimum combination of whole life costs and benefits, including such factors as quality, initial price, running and disposal costs.

## **Project Management**

The development of Project Management is actively supported as a core competence of the organisation for the effective management of time, cost, quality and risk in projects. The Project Management is overseen by an Executive Steering Group (the Strategic Directors' Management Team). It is supported by a guiding set of Project Management Governance Principles and in the main projects are split into two categories - strategic projects (capital cost of over £20,000 and impact on cross service resourcing) and other projects. Strategic projects are managed using full PRINCE2 methodology. All other projects are managed using the SDC Project Charter principles (PRINCE2 light).

Procurement decisions are clearly a fundamental element of many, but not all, projects. The guide is to be used alongside the Constitution's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Business cases will be expected for all projects but this will be commensurate to the size and complexity of the project. All 'strategic' procurement will require formal project management and will need to be supported by a business plan.

## **Contract Management**

Effective procurement is measured by the achievement of the intended outcomes and not by completion of the process. Contracts will be managed throughout their life to ensure that the benefits identified in the business plan are delivered. The management of all contracts will be undertaken in compliance with Standing Orders which will be monitored by the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer in accordance with their responsibilities under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Corporate Governance respectively.

The Council will develop an Approved List of service providers and suppliers to ensure that they are appropriately vetted and meet the standards required by the Council in terms of technical competence, quality assurance, sustainability and compliance with legislative requirements.

A single Contracts Register will be maintained to assist in the advertising of future opportunities and to enable the reporting of all contracts, above and below the OJEU<sup>3</sup> threshold, to the DCLG in order to demonstrate compliance with EU regulations.

## **Forward Planning**

The Council will proactively notify interested parties of future procurement opportunities by displaying Forthcoming Contract Notifications, where the value of the contract is likely to exceed £5,000, on the Council's website. In order to ensure compliance with the EC procurement rules, where a contract is subject to the OJEU procurement process these notices will be published after the OJEU notice has been published and will not contain additional information than is available from the notice.

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<sup>3</sup> Official Journal of the European Union – This is the publication in which all contracts from the public sector above a certain threshold must be published.

### **Documented Guidance**

A number of different corporate procurement related policies exist. The Council will ensure that these policies and any related procedures or guidance are widely available to all Officers via the corporate Intranet.

### **Training**

The Council will ensure that Officers and Members have the appropriate skills in procurement and are adequately trained in both internal and external procedures and requirements in order that they can make procurement decisions that will further the Council's aims and objectives and to ensure that regulatory compliance is met.

## DELIVERING EFFICIENT SERVICES

### Objective:

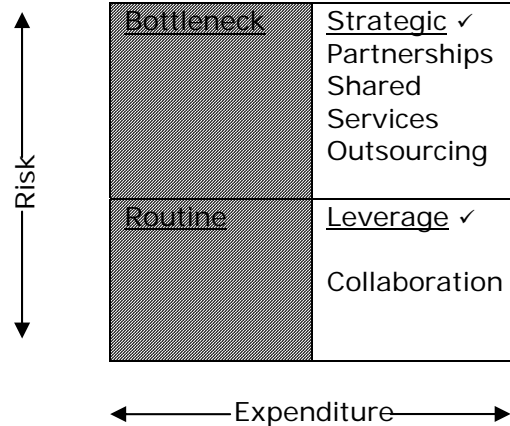
*To deliver efficient services by exploring service delivery options through its Performance Management Framework and the opportunity to partner or collaborate with others.*

### To achieve this the Council will:

- ❖ Identify and encourage opportunities for shared services, partnering and collaboration
- ❖ Use its Performance Management Framework to explore service delivery options and to proactively seek out partnering and collaboration opportunities to improve service delivery and projects
- ❖ Remove barriers that may prevent effective partnering or collaboration
- ❖ Award Council wide contracts and framework agreements to make the most of buying power
- ❖ Open up to and enter into contracts and framework agreements with other councils and public sector partners

### Shared Services, Partnering and Collaboration

The strategic objective of partnering is the delivery of better services to citizens through the creation of sustainable partnerships between councils and suppliers in the public, private, social enterprise and voluntary sector. This includes not only the delivery of services but the carrying out of major projects, including construction.



The strategic objective of collaboration is to obtain better value by bringing councils and other public bodies together at local, regional and national levels to combine their buying power and create shared services.

- Combining buying power
- Sharing of expertise and knowledge
- Creating shared services
- Improved utilisation of resources

The Council will proactively seek shared services, partnering and collaborative opportunities that will deliver contracts or services more efficiently, effectively and economically. It will encourage the development of new and creative methods or approaches to procurement including working with main suppliers to develop good working relationships, to enhance service provision, and the use of purchasing consortia and collaboration with neighbouring authorities, the voluntary sector and other public sector organisations.

Partnership and/or collaborative working will be considered as a service delivery option for all service and financial planning reviews.

Where it is determined that partnering or collaboration is the appropriate route, the preferred delivery model will be identified in a business case before procurement commences.

The Council will have in place specific rules and guidance for each arrangement of this kind, to include performance monitoring, in conjunction with Internal Audit and Legal Services and in compliance with the Council's Constitution.

Links will also be forged with the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) to take advantage of regional collaborative opportunities.

The Council can already demonstrate several examples of partnership and collaborative working. The Council needs to build on this work with the consideration of partnership working in all appropriate procurement decisions and be bold in encouraging other agencies and organisations to lead these partnerships where it can be demonstrated they have the capacity to deliver service improvements.

### **Performance Management Framework**

The Council has implemented a Performance Management Framework that is creating improved focus on service performance both at an officer and member level. Although progress has been made there is still much more to be done. Performance information will be used to drive service improvement and inform alternative service delivery evaluations.

The Framework requires all Heads of Service to keep their services under review. The major purpose of this is to challenge why, to what level, and how the service is provided. The programme should also be delivered using performance and trend analysis.

### **Service Delivery Options**

Building on the work already undertaken through the Performance Management Framework all service and financial planning reviews will include a robust and challenging appraisal of service delivery options.

This should include the following options:

- In-house
- Public sector consortium
- Non-profit-distributing organisation
- Local authority company
- Framework agreement
- Partnering and collaboration
- Outsourcing
- Mixture of the above

Services will be required to demonstrate value for money and that their performance level is consistent with the top quartile of service providers, either nationally, by District Authority or by appropriate family group.

### **Use of In-House Services**

Where it has been demonstrated that the most effective and efficient service delivery at that time is through in-house provision, these resources will be used by all other internal services who will not seek to procure the same service externally.

### **New Trading Powers**

As a CPA 'good' rated authority the Council can establish companies for the purpose of trading under the Local Government Act 2003. The Council will look to exploit trading opportunities where it can be demonstrated that such an approach will provide additional benefit.

### **Framework Agreements**

The Council will look at the aggregation of demand by identifying how departments procure various goods and services and how these could be joined up more strategically.

The CAFT will continue to play a lead role in exploring and securing Council wide contracts and framework agreements. These arrangements will be open to use by others that may benefit from them, including other councils and public sector partners.

The Council will also see opportunities to make use of framework agreements and contracts put in place by local authority purchasing consortia and other public bodies, such as the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), where these offer best value for money.

## DOING BUSINESS ELECTRONICALLY

### Objective:

*To achieve efficiencies in the procure-to-pay cycle, including the reduction in cycle time and transaction costs, by implementing appropriate electronic solutions in order to free resources that can be directed into front line services.*

*To use e-Marketplaces to assist in accessing framework agreements and contracts.*

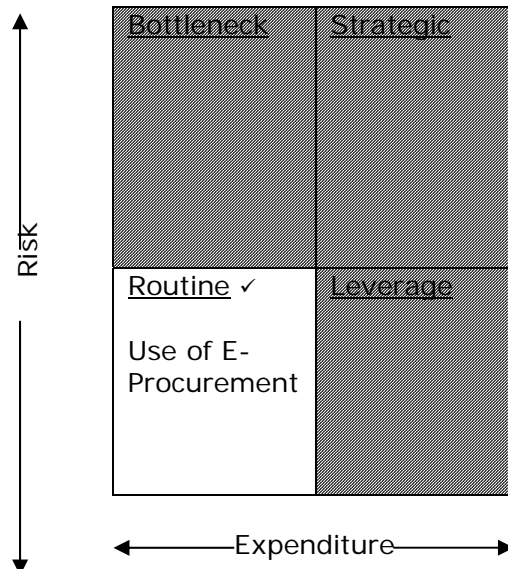
### To achieve this the Council will:

- ❖ Integrate e-Procurement with Financial, Human Resources and other ICT systems
- ❖ Ensure that the ICT architecture supports the procuring of goods and services across the internet
- ❖ Support small businesses and the local business community in electronic trading
- ❖ Use existing facilities such as the procurements links of the West Midlands Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership, OGC website, and Advantage West Midlands procurement hubs

## E-Procurement

The Council will ensure that its e-procurement is closely aligned with the Procurement Strategy and that potential suppliers (including local small medium enterprises [SMEs]) are not unreasonably disadvantaged by the Council's use of electronic trading.

E-procurement describes the use of an electronic system to acquire goods, works and services and payments to third parties and is the subject of a number of government initiatives/ targets for local authorities in the area of transformational government and the National Procurement Strategy. The European Commission (EC) Consolidated Directive (2004/18/EC) supports the adoption of e-procurement. E-procurement will reduce transaction costs across most procurement routes and will extend to on-line tendering for Council services.



E-procurement consists of a number of elements including:

- e-ordering – the ability to place orders electronically including by fax, email and the Internet.
- e-invoicing – the ability to receive invoices electronically.
- e-payments – the electronic payment of invoices through CHAPS, BACS and purchase cards.

- e-tenders – the ability for suppliers to tender on-line, to apply for inclusion in the tender process and receive and submit tender documentation electronically.
- e-auctions.
- e-catalogues – introduction of an electronic market place.

The Council's ICT Strategy sets out how it intends to implement electronic service delivery across the range of its services and in partnership with other service providers.

Much of the Strategy deals with the Council's plans to make services more electronically accessible. However, it also sets out the Council's vision to fully utilise information and communication technologies (ICT) to enable joined up working with partners. These partners include all external contractors from whom the Council procures works, services and supplies.

The majority of payments are made electronically using BACS, however the Council will actively promote and encourage payment by this method to all its suppliers.

Additional work will be undertaken to explore further opportunities for e-ordering, e-invoicing and e-tenders in an attempt to reduce the number of paper based transactions and associated costs. The Council needs to ensure that its performance indicator of 30 days for payment of invoices is met.

The use of procurement cards will be explored for small purchases and in order to achieve benefits through prompt payments and simplification of processes. These benefits will need to be balanced against the need for the internal controls that will be required to accompany the introduction of such cards, including financial limits, and administration of another payment method.

The Council will continue to actively support the National e-Procurement Programme (NePP) and collaborate with the West Midlands RIEP to ensure that its e-Procurement Strategy is kept under review and informed of the latest developments and opportunities.

## **E-Marketplace**

The Council has already signed up to the IDeA Marketplace and is committed to collaborating at a local level to establish a Warwickshire Marketplace. This will enable the Council to access on line catalogues and benefit from greater purchasing power including volume discounts. Efficiencies will also be achieved through this joint working approach in the identification and accreditation of suppliers.

The West Midlands RIEP and Advantage West Midlands have developed a procurement hub. This enables all councils to benefit from collective agreements and achieve economies of scale. Whenever there are opportunities for benefiting from this they will be taken.

## STIMULATING MARKETS AND ACHIEVING COMMUNITY BENEFITS

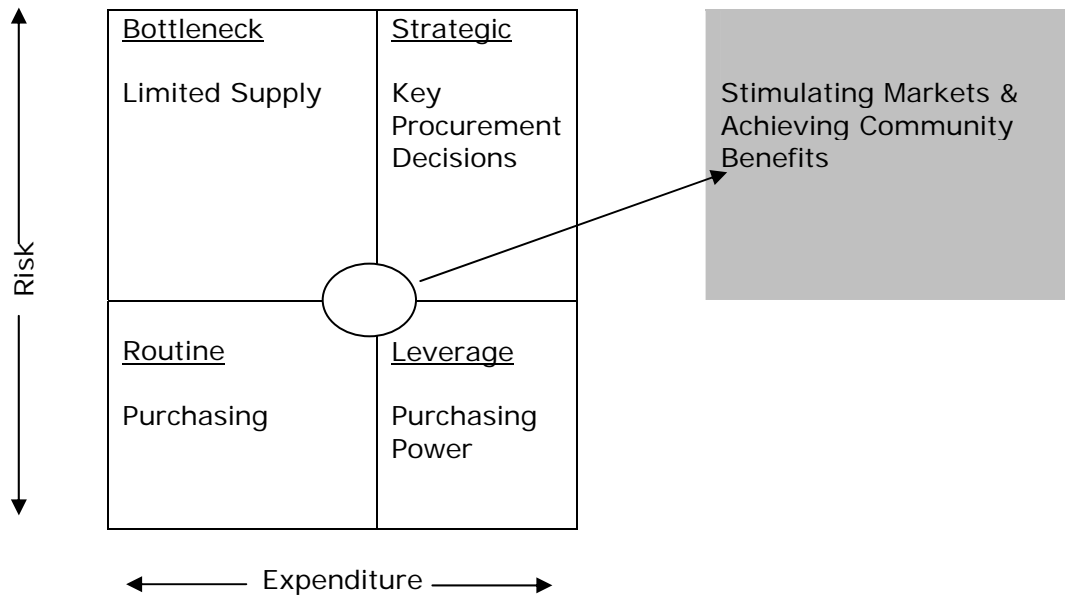
### Objective:

*To maximise the opportunities that exist within the procurement cycle to deliver Corporate Strategy outcomes.*

### To achieve this the Council will:

- ❖ Market itself to suppliers
- ❖ Encourage small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community sector suppliers to bid for contracts
- ❖ Ensure compliance with employment issues in procurement
- ❖ Ensure diversity and equality issues feature in procurement
- ❖ Use procurement to assist in achieving its Corporate Strategy outcomes
- ❖ Give preference to buying local whenever opportunities arise

When deciding on the procurement approach for a particular requirement the Council will take into account the added value that local small firms, voluntary and community sector providers, social enterprises and ethnic minority businesses might bring.



### Generating Increased Local Activity

In order to foster creativity and innovation in the local area the Council will encourage a diverse and competitive supply market including small firms, social enterprises, ethnic minority businesses and voluntary and community sector suppliers. It recognises that many of these organisations will be from the local community and that developing local solutions to public service delivery will assist in maintaining a healthy local economy.

The Council will proactively engage with local businesses to identify barriers that may prevent them from working with the Council in order to improve their capability of being able to compete for Council contracts.

Contracts Procedure Rules as defined within the Council's Constitution - Contracts fall within one of five categories depending on total contract value. For those contracts over the threshold for a category 'A' contract, European Public Procurement Directive rules apply. Other categories deal with the size and types of goods and services being procured. All contractors making a submission are checked for financial standing. Those not meeting the required standing are either rejected or required to supply a suitable bond.

### **Community Benefits**

Provided there is compliance with the EU Public Procurement Regulations and that value for money is offered, the Council will work with suppliers to realise community benefits through its procurement processes. This might include employment, training and enterprise opportunities in the locality and local community.

Tenderers will be encouraged to submit optional, priced proposals for the delivery of community benefits, where they are relevant to the contract and the Council's Corporate Strategy.

### **Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

The Government's Procurement Concordat for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises sets out principles to encourage effective trade between local authorities and small businesses in order to encourage a mixed range of suppliers to help develop and stimulate a varied and competitive marketplace.

The Council is committed to actively engaging with small businesses in order to promote good procurement practices and as such will sign up to the principles of the Concordat, many of which are addressed in this Strategy.

The Council will aim to increase the amount of work, goods and services awarded to local businesses directly or indirectly within legal constraints.

Principal Contractors will be encouraged, both at tender stage and during the life of the contract, to establish and demonstrate the contribution that small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community sector suppliers play in the supply chain.

### **Delivering the Corporate Strategy**

The Council's aims, as identified in the Corporate Strategy, are based on a commitment to promoting and improving the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of local communities.

In order to help the Council achieve these aims, consideration will be given to non-financial factors when entering into contracts with external providers.

Where relevant to the performance of a contract, all suppliers used by the Council are required to identify their approach to environmental issues; this will be further enhanced to include an assessment of the suppliers approach to social and ethical issues.

With regard to the usage of energy, it is crucial that we reduce the amount used – for instance the Local Area Agreement includes a national indicator to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emission by 4% per capita. We should also be pursuing a reduction in the use of paper and other types of office sundries. Through effective procurement we will target reductions and monitor against those targets.

The Council will ensure that when seeking to enter into contracts with external contractors all opportunities are taken to deliver the procurement in a sustainable way. Non commercial matters such as recycling, energy usage, environmental and equality impact and the use of local suppliers will be considered both in the selection of tenderers and in the overall evaluation of tenders.

## **Workforce Matters**

When **relevant** the Council will take workforce matters into consideration during the decision making process for service delivery, this may apply whether or not a TUPE<sup>4</sup> transfer will take place. Appropriate consultation will always be undertaken.

Workforce matters will also be taken into account in establishing the suitability of tenderers. These may include:

- Possession of Investors in People (IIP) or equivalent accreditation
- Details of Employment Tribunal convictions
- Experience and track record including references that can be called upon
- Training policies and plans to improve quality
- Transition plans for implementing TUPE
- Health and Safety management
- Human Resources procedures
- Individual employees qualifications and training records
- Equal opportunities policies and practices

Officers involved in any procurement activity where workforce matters are likely to form part of the tenderer section or tender evaluation process will consult with the Head of Customer Services and will take legal advice to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and that guidance is met.

## **Diversity**

The Council will take a positive approach to removing barriers to trading with individual sectors. We want people and organisations we work with to see us as promoting diversity and equality, and as a leading example of good practice in employment. The Council's Diversity Scheme covers age, disability, sex (equality between men and women), sexual orientation, race, religion and belief. This approach helps us:

- make sure we focus on specific inequalities; and
- create links between equality (promoting fairness) and diversity (valuing people's differences) for us and the organisations we work with.

We meet our responsibilities under:

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<sup>4</sup> Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations 1981 – Protection of employees' rights when business changes hands between employers.

- The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
- Equality Act 2006, which promotes diversity and equality in our work.

In complying with the legislation the Council will ensure that public money is not spent on practices that lead to unlawful discrimination, and that it is used to support and encourage equality of opportunity and good community relations.

The Council is committed to only working with organisations that conduct themselves in an acceptable manner. To achieve this all contractors applying for inclusion on the Standing Approved List of Contractors will be assessed for their commitment to and level of compliance with:

- Equality Act 2006
- Equal Opportunities and Minimum Wage legislation
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Health and Safety legislation
- Environmental legislation

In complying with the legislation, the Council will ensure that public money is not spent on practices that lead to unlawful discrimination, that equality obligations will be specified where they are a core requirement of the contract, and that the Council will through its procurement decisions take into account the objectives of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.

### **Voluntary Sector<sup>5</sup>**

The Council has entered a county wide Compact with the voluntary sector agencies. The Compact is an agreement that sets out the guidelines for how all public bodies and the voluntary and community sector engage with each other. It is intended to ensure that all agencies make best use of the resources available to them by improving communication and avoiding duplication of the services provided. As part of this Strategy it is recommended that the Council consider how the voluntary and community groups could be better engaged to deliver some of the services currently provided by the District Council.

Should opportunities exist, each case would need to be considered on its individual merit in line with the Council's Corporate Strategy.

### **SUMMARY**

The Procurement Strategy is an essential tool to ensure the Council delivers value for money services and maximises potential community benefits through the procurement cycle. It is fundamental to all that the Council does and its importance in setting the right framework criterion which the Council is to operate should not be underestimated.

In endorsing this Procurement Strategy and undertaking actions to ensure its delivery, the Council formally acknowledges the importance of the effective use of procurement in contributing to the delivery of its strategic aims.

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<sup>5</sup> Organisations ranging from small, local community groups to large, established national and international organisations.

The Strategy will be subject to regular review and will be benchmarked against the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government for compliance.