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west sussex county council

Sustainable Procurement Policy



Foreword

"As joint sponsors - Cabinet Member for Finance and Property; and Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, we are proud to sponsor West Sussex County Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy.

This policy represents a **vital step in embedding environmental responsibility into every aspect of our procurement activity**—ensuring that the goods, works and services **we commission contribute positively to our climate ambitions and the wellbeing of our communities.**

Our Council Plan sets out four key priorities:
- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities fulfil their potential
- Making the best use of resources

These priorities are underpinned by a cross-cutting commitment to protecting the environment, which is central to our long-term vision for West Sussex - as set out in our Council Plan.

We know that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our county. That's why **we've committed to becoming a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient organisation by 2030**, as outlined in our Climate Change Strategy 2020–2030. **Procurement plays a critical role in achieving this goal.**

With supply chains accounting for **up to 90% of our total carbon footprint**, we must work collaboratively with our suppliers to reduce emissions, protect biodiversity, and promote sustainable resource use.

This policy sets clear expectations for our suppliers and partners, **encouraging innovation, transparency, and continuous improvement**. It ensures that sustainability is not an afterthought, but a core requirement in how we do business.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this policy - from our Procurement and Sustainability teams to the Climate Change Board and staff across the organisation that have developed this.

Together, **through sustainable procurement, we can make a meaningful and positive difference to our community, and supporting local businesses, jobs and economy..**"



Jane Davey
Cabinet Member for Finance and Property



Natasha Davie
Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Introduction

West Sussex County Council is committed to ensuring it's operations are environmentally sustainable and resilient to future climate change impacts.

The Council recognise that mitigating the effects of climate change and protecting the environment should underpin everything it does and are foundational to a thriving economy, prospering communities and personal wellbeing.

The Council is aware that their procurement of goods, works and services will have environmental implications, both in the local area and around the planet and, as a result, the Council is actively working to reduce and minimise these negative effects where possible.

The Council has acknowledged the threat posed to the county and its residents by climate change and is committed to becoming **a carbon-neutral and climate resilient organisation by 2030**.

Tackling climate change underpins the four priorities of our Council Plan and our Climate Change Strategy 2020 to 2030 sets out our framework for action.

Within our Climate Change Strategy we have identified five key commitments which we will apply across all areas of our business when planning. One of those five relates to Procurement and our Supply Chain - ***'we will source and use resources sustainably'.***

1. We will **use resources efficiently and economically**;
2. We will take a **whole-life approach** to our product selection and purchasing;
3. We will **procure and source** our resources **responsibly**."

Environmentally sustainable procurement is the commissioning, sourcing and contract management of goods, works and services in a way that reduces or negates negative environmental impacts within the supply chain.

Given the Council's significant expenditure on procurement for goods, works and services, we have the opportunity to work with our Suppliers to drive significant carbon reductions, improve the natural environment and make meaningful climate action in our supply chain.

This policy sets out the Council's expectations of our current and prospective suppliers in line with their own environmental commitments.



Introduction (continued)

This policy considers four interconnected focus areas of environmentally sustainable procurement (detailed definitions can be found at the end of this document):

1. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation;
2. Prevention of Pollution;
3. Sustainable Resource Use and Consumption; and
4. Protection and Restoration of Biodiversity.

As a result of this policy, **environmental considerations will be built into the procurement** and delivery of goods, works and services through specifications, tender questions, evaluation criteria, key performance indicators and clauses of contracts.

This policy is **complementary to the Council's** Social Value Policy where we seek to maximise environmental, economic and community value through procurement activity.

Where relevant to the contract, evaluation criteria may take account of factors such as carbon emissions, supply chain resilience, delivery efficiency and community benefits. The **Council encourages participation by our local SMEs** while ensuring compliance with procurement legislation and maintaining fair and open competition.

West Sussex County Council has set ambitious targets to achieve carbon neutrality and climate resilience in its direct operations.

Local Authority supply chains are estimated to account for around 90% of their total carbon footprint.

Emissions from goods, works and services procured by the Council are **"scope 3" emissions** and, we are seeking to reduce these emissions wherever possible.

In addition, the Council has committed to protect the environment, improve biodiversity, and recover natural capital.

To deliver this, all Directorates, services and teams have an important role to play in developing and implementing - supported by our Procurement and Contract Management service and by our Sustainability team.

"Environmentally Sustainable Procurement is the **Commissioning, Sourcing and Contract Management** of goods, works and services in a way **that reduces or negates negative environmental impacts** within the supply chain".

Scope & Aims

This policy covers the Council's expectations of prospective suppliers supporting the Council, through commissioning, procurement and contract management.

This policy aims to minimise negative and promote positive environmental impacts, and reduce carbon emissions, where possible, within our supply chain. This will be done by:

- ❑ **Engaging early with the market** to identify opportunities and encourage innovative solutions for the Council's services;
- ❑ **Baselining emissions** from procured goods, works and services.
- ❑ **Evaluating environmental implications** and their relation to Council targets in the design, commissioning and procurement process including qualification and evaluation of bidders;
- ❑ Building **environmental commitments and targets** into relevant supplier contracts, these may include carbon reduction focused outcomes that align with the Council's carbon targets for example;
    1. Monitoring and measuring supplier performance against contractual environmental commitments; and
    2. Seeking opportunities for continuous improvement with suppliers throughout the life cycle of the contract.
    3. Carbon Reduction Plans.



Expectations

Where relevant and appropriate to the contract and decided on a caseby casebasis, the Council expects prospective contracts and our suppliers to:

3.1 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

- Provide requested information and details of environmental impacts (including relevant activity or Scope 1,2,3 carbon emissions data), corporate commitments and with plans for improvement over the lifetime of a contract (especially applicable for contracts with a value in excess of £5M, that are of long term nature - ie, greater than 5 years, or have been identified as having significant climate impact);
- Commit to mitigating impact on climatethroughout operations through carbon reduction initiatives as well as encourage and support this practice throughout their own supply chains;
- Minimise the transport requirements associated with any contract through local sourcing and servicing, efficiency improvements or transport alternatives (such as using postal services, active transport or electric vehicles) to minimise air pollution and carbon impact of transport operations;
- Use and procure energy-efficient processes, products, buildings and services and source electricity from renewable energy sources, green energy tariffs and low carbon fuels;
- Seek to minimise the embodied carbon of supplied goods. Embodied carbon is part of the circular economy transition. Focussing on using fewer resources and extending the useful life of materials in circulation, will reduce the embodied scope 3 carbon emissions.
- Ensure that goods, works and services take into account changing weather impacts as a result of climate change (such as severe storms, heat waves and flooding) so that they are well adapted and resilient;
- Provide data to WSCC that supports the suppliers' performance in meeting Contractual Key Performance Indicators and or Contractual obligations that enable a process of continuous improvement.

Expectations

3.2 Prevention of Pollution

- Avoid and minimise consumption and waste through smart design and innovation where products, packaging and assets canbe easily reused, repurposed, repaired or recycled (removing single-use plastics, where there are suitable alternatives) without jeopardising the quality of products or services provided;
- Treat and manage waste following the waste management hierarchy, all legal requirements and industry best practice throughout the supply chain;
- Implement measures toeliminate the escape of pollutants and waste, including litter, associated with service delivery;
- Determine and minimisethe risk of negative water impact, with particular focus on water use, waste water and discharges into the water system;

3.3 Sustainable Resource Use and Consumption

- Adopt and promote circular economy principles throughout product life cycles with considerations to making and using products made from non-virgin, repurposed and local materials (where possible) in order to reduce waste and embodied carbon;
- Make, use and promote products made from natural, biodegradable and renewable materials where appropriate and avoid the use of toxic chemicals and products that are not cruelty-free;
- Where possible and appropriate, avoid the use of materials which are scarce or at risk of becoming so (such as rare earth elements) and find sustainable alternatives;



Electric Vehicle chargepoints being installed across West Sussex

Expectations

3.4 Protection and Restoration of Biodiversity

- Avoid and minimise the use of products, chemicals and materials that cause habitat destruction and degradation (such as deforestation for palm oil), demonstrating industry certifications where appropriate;
- Commit to remove adverse effects on biodiversity and natural habitats, avoiding damage and achieving measurable, long-term and secured biodiversity net gain and restoring natural capital, when possible;
- Support and promote use of products, materials and services that protect and enhance native biodiversity;
- Source sustainable, organic and local food and drink, avoiding unsustainable fishing and farming practices, in relevant catering contracts.

3.5 Cross Cutting Requirements

- Declare any related organisational Environment Agency enforcement actions, or actions taken by similar bodies, within the previous 3 years as a result of environmental incidents or breaches in environmental permits and any associated remedial actions;
- Increase organisational understanding in the importance of tackling climate change and protecting the environment and approaches to minimise negative impacts through staff training and, where appropriate, supplier training;
- Work with the Council's communications team on the production of case studies, media releases and other content and joint marketing opportunities that help showcase how the supplier's products or services support our sustainability ambitions, where feasible.
- Continue to explore innovative solutions to reducing or negating environmental damage as well as promote environmental improvements during the lifetime of contracts; and
- Seek opportunities to work with the Council to improve mitigation efforts on environmental impacts.

Compliance

- Prospective suppliers may be asked to provide evidence of environmental initiatives, credentials, industry certifications, plans or commitments at the tender stage (environmental obligations and related KPI's will be contained clearly in the tender documentation) and contract delivery stages.
- Depending on the procurement, failure to provide these may result in lost scoring opportunities or exclusion from prequalification or tender.
- The Council recognises that not all suppliers will currently be able to provide data, credentials, plans or commitments to environmental initiatives due to multiple reasons, such as market sector, maturity, or size. As a result, the Council will aim to work collaboratively with the supplier both during the tender process and progressing through the lifetime of contracts.
- Where it is decided that the Council will work with a supplier to assist in implementing environmental changes to the service, methods for how the Council will do this will be included in the tender documentation.
- The Council will look to gradually increase and improve environmental considerations in future procurement activity as suppliers and sectors grow in environmental maturity.



Compliance

- The Council will aim to set performance measures that are proportional and relevant to the contract.
- Suppliers are expected to meet all performance measures which are built into the contract and will be required to evidence progress on their environmental commitments, which may include reporting on information from other parties in their supply chain (scope 3 emissions and material sources for example).
- If there is continued or significant failure to meet performance measures and sustainability obligations, remedial actions will be taken. This may include, but is not limited to, requests for approved carbon offset project payments, payment reductions, or lastly, contract termination.
- In the unlikely event of any significant environmental incident in the supply chain, the supplier is obligated to inform the Council as soon as possible.



- If a supplier is responsible for significant environmental damage (such as a chemical spill or illegal dumping) due to negligence or disregard within their operations, the Council will take remedial actions and may seek remedies for incurred costs and retain the right to terminate the contract with the offending supplier if necessary.
- Suppliers are encouraged to raise any environmental concerns, feedback or improvement opportunities they have identified with the Council.
- Where viable, the Council will seek to explore and action environmental improvement opportunities with suppliers.

Definitions

- **Biodiversity** – describes all of the different forms to be found in one area - the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life.
- **Carbon Neutral** – Refers to a position where all possible carbon emissions have been removed or avoided, and any remaining carbon emissions are being either captured, or removed safely from the atmosphere.
- **Circular Economy** – A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended.
- **Cruelty Free** – Manufactured and developed by methods which do not harm animals.
- **Environment Agency Enforcement Actions** – Formal cautions and prosecutions carried out by the Environment Agency to enforce laws and permits that protect the environment.
- **Environmental Maturity** – An organisation's ability to implement more ambitious, complex, robust and resilient environmentally conscious practices. Maturity differs among organisations and industries because of the unique obstacles they each must overcome.
- **Greenhouse Gases** – A gas that contributes to the greenhouse effect and climate change by absorbing infrared radiation. Carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and chlorofluorocarbons are examples of greenhouse gases. *For simplicity in this policy, we use the term 'carbon' as shorthand for all greenhouse gases.*
- **Local Food:** Sustain, The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, defines as follows: ""Local food includes short supply chains which involve few intermediaries and will typically be regional in nature but vary according to food type and location. To be truly local, food must deliver benefits to the local producers, environments, communities, economies and eaters that it passes through." (Local food benefits go far beyond food miles | Sustain).
- **Natural Capital** - the way elements of nature; e.g. woodlands, rivers, soils and seas, offer value to people, society and the economy in various ways. The stocks of natural capital (referred to as natural capital assets) include all ecosystems on land and at sea.
- **Net Zero** – refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) that are released and the amount that are removed from the atmosphere. It can be achieved through a combination of emission reduction and emission removal. Also see Carbon Neutral.
- **Scope 1 Carbon Emissions** – Those emissions that an organisation makes directly. For example, emissions from fuel that is directly used while running boilers and vehicles.
- **Scope 2 Carbon Emissions** – Emissions coming indirectly from an organisation. This is mainlythe generation and distribution of electricity the organisation buys from the National Grid.
- **Scope 3 Carbon Emissions** – Emissions associated with the goods, works and services that are produced elsewhere but consumed by the organisation. This category includes all the emissions the organisation is indirectly responsible for, up and down its supply chain.
- **Significant Environmental Incident** – An event that would need to be reported to the Environment Agency, or similarnational body, or where damage is of a nature or quantity which poses a threat to the health or safety of humans, animals or vegetation that is not expected to dissipate within twenty-four hours either naturally or by human intervention.



WS33732