

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES
19 SEPTEMBER 2012

EXECUTIVE
2 OCTOBER 2012

ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING REPORT 2012/13

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report on progress made against the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan 2011/12.
- 1.2 To outline the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan for 2012/13

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In March 2009, the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2009-2012 was published. Each year an action plan is developed, informed by the strategy and changes in wider procurement policy.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Strategy

- 3.1 The Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Strategy is supported by a Procurement and Commissioning Good Practice Guide and a number of toolkits. The toolkits in particular provide straight-forward guidance on key elements of procurement and commissioning, such as developing a specification, risk management, appointing consultants, etc. This guidance is available on the intranet to assist officers considering contracting as an option.
- 3.2 The guidance is generic enough to enable tendering for work as diverse as dealing with abandoned vehicles and the disposal of composted material to achieve a consistently good standard of procurement across the council.

Working with small businesses

- 3.3 We will continue to work with small businesses in Exeter and the surrounding region to increase their involvement in bidding for Council work, in particular involving the voluntary and community sector where possible. In addition, efforts will be directed to encourage those bidding for council work to offer apprenticeships, particularly for young people, within their companies. The increasing use of the *Selling to the Council* web page is essential to continue this work.
- 3.4 The website: www.exeterbuysellprosper.co.uk was designed to actively encourage those making buying decisions in local public sector and large employers, particularly for contracts that do not need to go out to formal tendering to buy from local small businesses. This initiative was coordinated by Exeter City Council on behalf of its partners and in collaboration with Exeter Business Support, Business Link, Exeter Chamber of Commerce and the Exeter Federation of Small Businesses.

The Green Accord

- 3.5 The Green Accord is the subject of a separate report on this agenda and is a prime tool in the Council's Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Strategy.

4. CHANGES TO PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

- 4.1 A number of changes have been introduced at a national level that may impact on the Council's procurement processes. These include:
- 4.2 The introduction of standard core pre qualification questions with the aim to be incorporated in all pre qualification questionnaires (PQQ). The PQQ is used to make an initial assessment of a potential bidder's suitability. It has long been a general issue with businesses that there is little consistency across Councils over what questions are asked and the level of detail required. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have cited this as a perceived barrier to their engagement with Councils. In Exeter we have for a long time used a PQQ format that contains the core questions recommended by the national PQQ and now a compliant model PQQ has been developed for use across the South West.
- 4.3 With effect from January 2011, and as part of the Coalition Government's transparency agenda, the Council is required to publish all new contracts and tenders on the internet above £500 in value in a mandated format. Details include the name of the successful bidder and the price of the winning bid. Guidance for officers has been produced and the work is co-ordinated centrally. However the ultimate intention is to deliver this information through a regional web portal.
- 4.4 The Council's Standard Terms and Conditions and Contract Regulations have been assessed against the requirements of the new Equality Act and no changes are required.

5. COLLABORATING WITH PROCUREMENT BODIES ACROSS DEVON

- 5.1 The Council continues to take an active role in the Devon Procurement Partnership (DPP). This is comprised of all public procurement bodies in Devon including local authorities, emergency services and academic institutions. It seeks to develop best practice in terms of procurement and initiates collaborative procurements for the benefit of its members.
- 5.2 In the light of the specific challenges faced by local authorities, the need for a more strategic group was identified. A Heads of Procurement Group, comprising the procurement leads from Devon County Council, Torbay, Plymouth and Exeter, together with the chair and deputy chair of the DPP, has been established. Exeter's involvement remains particularly beneficial as it recognised that it can ensure that the City's unique contribution comes from being the only urban Devon district.

6. FUTURE PLAN OF WORK

- 6.1 The progress achieved against the 2011/12 Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan is attached at Appendix I.
- 6.2 The Action Plan for the coming year, attached as Appendix II, sets out plans for wider, more challenging changes to seek to deliver greater probity, transparency and financial control in procurement and purchasing procedures across all council activities. This plan details how the council will seek to work with the wider business community to drive economic, social and environmental sustainability in Exeter to both reduce the effect of their operations on the environment and effectively reduce the amount of carbon released to the atmosphere. The plan also details how changes will be made to encourage and afford the better opportunity for small business to be awarded work from the council.

7. RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee Resources and Executive:

- 1) notes the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Action Plan for 2012/13
- 2) notes the actions taken to reflect the new national requirements identified in section 4 of the report.

ASSITANT DIRECTOR HOUSING AND CONTRACTS

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None