

Sustainable Procurement - Case Study

Category: Stationery Contract **Benefits:** Environmental / Social / Economic

Background

Wakefield Council worked collaboratively with Doncaster and Kirklees councils to deliver a stationery contract to supplement the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) contract. YPO remain the Council's main stationery supplier; the supplementary contract is ideal for supplies that YPO does not stock and for urgent deliveries.

Sustainability was identified as key to the contract and was built into the evaluation criteria. We avoided asking bidders what sustainability benefits they could bring to the contract as this would prove difficult to evaluate, especially if it wasn't specific enough. We chose to create a sustainability risk log, and from these ask specific questions so bidders could demonstrate how the risks could be minimised.

EU procurement directives require sustainable considerations to be '*reasonable and relevant to the subject matter of the contract*'. Using questions based on the risk log ensured we complied with the legislation.

The Process

The participating authorities decided to use a risk based approach to identify all the significant risks associated with the delivery of the contract. To do this, the key stakeholders from the three participating authorities attended a risk workshop. Risks were identified using [Wakefield Council's Risk Log](#) template.

The risk identification process focused on eight key risk areas:

- Legal
- Contractual
- Financial
- Political & reputational
- Technological
- Economic
- Environmental
- Social

The last three areas of risk represent the sustainability risks and were used to capture any key sustainability risks linked to the delivery of the contract.

The first stage of the process was to identify exactly what the contract output would be. Once this was identified the risk log was used to capture all the significant risks associated with the delivery of this output.

Proposals to minimise the impact of the risks were sought through the tender process and bidders were required to provide method statements detailing how they proposed to reduce or remove the risk.

Some examples of the sustainability risks identified on the risk log that bidders had to minimise were:

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Environmental Risk

Risk: Excess use of packaging resulting in increased levels of waste going into landfill.

Question in the specification: “Please detail the steps your company has taken in terms of reducing the packaging of stationery items and provide evidence of how successfully this has worked”.

Successful tenders’ response: Computerised packing software calculates the box size required for the order. The box is then cut to fit the contents exactly. The waste packaging is recycled. Boxes do not use polythene shrink fit so are 100% recyclable and reusable. There is also an option available to use plastic reusable tote boxes. There is no need to use space fillers as the boxes are measured to leave no void.

Social / Economic Risk

Risk: Failure to maintain or create jobs and training in the region.

Question in the specification: “The contract can be utilised by other public sector organisations in the region. ‘Please provide details of any benefits you will bring to the local economy within the Yorkshire and Humber region’”?

Successful tenders’ response: Delivery hubs are based in Leeds and Brigg with more than 140 jobs. Support local work experience schemes at the two sites. 3 of the top 20 suppliers are based in the region.

Supporting Factors

The winning bidder had attended a sustainability presentation at the Wakefield Meet the Buyer event in November 2008 prior to tendering for the contract.

Success Factors

- Key stakeholders conducting a risk workshop at the start of the process to feed into the specification formulation.
- Sustainability had been embraced by the participating authorities.
- The bidders had the knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues.
- Sustainability questions in the tender were relevant to the contract output and therefore could legitimately be asked.

Key sustainability indicators:

- **Environmental:** package boxes are used 4 times so 75% less packaging is required.
- **Social:** increase in local work experience schemes.
- **Economic:** employment policy.