



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

PROCUREMENT POLICY 2025

1. Introduction

- a) Procurement is a complex function guided by numerous policies and statutes. A comprehensive Procurement Policy is critical to ensuring that all stakeholders involved in procurement follow the proper procedures and rules, and that there is a clear and consistent understanding of the regulations and organisational approach in relation to procurement.
- b) The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the procurement of goods and services. It is intended to complement but not replace the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- c) The Town Council is accountable to the public for the way that it spends public funds, and this Procurement Policy supports the delivery of the Town Council's strategic objectives in the efficient, effective, and economic delivery of services, ensuring that suppliers and contractors provide best value products, services, and performance. The pursuit of sustainability and continual improvement is a key goal of the Procurement Policy.
- d) The Town Council is committed to providing quality services. It will use fair and open competition and will use external as well as internal providers wherever practicable as a means of securing efficient and effective services.
- e) This Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's Governance & Resources periodically, or in response to changes in legislation.

2. Purpose

Stotfold Town Council's (The "Council") Procurement Policy has the following purposes:

- a) To obtain best value in the way the Council spends money, so that it may in turn offer better and more cost-effective services to the public.
- b) Best value does not always mean the cheapest. Quality products or services which cost more may sustain themselves in the longer term and therefore may be the better option where best value is concerned.
- c) To support the ability of the Council's officers to procure and manage goods, services, and suppliers effectively, including informing all Council staff of the appropriate procedures and responsibilities.
- d) To enable the Council to comply with legal obligations that govern the spending of public money such as the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- e) Wherever possible, practicable and financially viable, support the local economy by prioritising local procurement of goods and services within a five- mile radius of Stotfold.

3. Scope

Every individual involved in procurement and contract management processes within the Council falls within the scope of this policy. The Town Clerk and Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring that their staff comply with this Policy. The Responsible Financial Officer will co-ordinate all procurement practices helping to ensure compliance with this Policy as well as being responsible for providing all associated advice.

The Policy governs the method by which the Council spends money on goods and services which the Council needs to deliver its services. It does not apply to internal purchases or service provision and only applies to external purchases from outside the Council.

4. Related Policies

Every contract made by or on behalf of the Council shall comply with:

- This Policy.
- The Council's Financial Regulations.
- All relevant statutory provisions including in particular the Local Government Act 1988 Part II, Local Government Act 1999, Local Government Act 2000, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997, Procurement Act 2023.

5. Procurement Principles

When procuring goods and services, the Council, where possible will aim to meet the following principles:

- a) The Council shall only enter into a contract with a supplier if it is satisfied as to the supplier's suitability, eligibility, financial standing and technical capacity to undertake the contract by carrying out appropriate due diligence.
- b) The Council recognises the benefits to the economy of using local businesses and will seek out local contractors and suppliers wherever possible, practicable and financially viable.
- c) All contractors and suppliers working on Council sites will be required to comply with the Council's Health & Safety policy and any rules specific to the site of operation, for example Cemetery Regulations. Provision of suitable risk assessments and safe working method statements will be a condition of all such contracts.
- d) The Council requires all contractors working on Council sites and projects to maintain adequate insurance, including but not limited to Public Liability insurance for £10 million.
- e) All procurement will be in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy and in line with our legal obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex or marital status, disability and on the grounds of age.
- f) The Council recognises the importance of sustainability and will consider the environmental, social, and economic impacts of its purchasing decisions. The Council will encourage the purchase of locally sourced products and, where possible, ensure that products and materials originate from sustainable sources and accredited sustainable companies. In order to:
 - Minimise waste and maximise efficiency
 - Minimise travel
 - Minimise energy consumption
 - Promote greater use of new sustainable technologies
 - Keep material consumption to a minimum.

6. Register of Approved Contractors

The Council needs to have access to pre-approved contractors to supply routine services or who can be called on to provide emergency services, including but not limited to:

Electricians, grave diggers, glaziers, grounds maintenance contractors, general builders, ground workers, locksmiths, memorial masons, plant hirers, play equipment repairers, plumbing and heating engineers, tree surgeons, vehicle, and machinery service engineers.

Contractors wishing to be included on the Council's register of approved contractors will be required to complete a registration form (see attached). The register of approved contractors will be reviewed periodically.

7. Thresholds and procedures for procurement

The table below sets out the actions to be followed when the Council intends to enter into a contract for minor, medium, and major spend commitments for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services. Reference is to be made to the Council's Financial Regulations for the full procedure and list of exceptions.

Expenditure Value	Action
Minor Expenditure Commitments For expenditure of £500 or less in value	Town Clerk or the duly authorised Senior Leadership Team within the Scheme of Delegation.
Medium Spend Commitments Expenditure exceeding £500 but less than £3,000	Quotations from at least three contractors first shall be invited.
Major Spending Commitments For expenditure exceeding £3,000	A minimum of three fixed price quotes.
Additional Requirements Public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (The Regulations), which is valued at £30,000 or more	The Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations. The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts.
Public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds, the Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24EU which may change from time to time. (Footnote 2 Thresholds currently applicable are: a) For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£164,176) b) For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,104,394)	The full requirements of the Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award.

8. Tendering

Tendering is a more formal and exhaustive method of obtaining quotations. A tender submitted by a supplier is a legal offer, and when accepted by the Town Council, a formal contract exists.

Tendering must be used for all purchases where there is a possibility that the overall contract value may exceed £25,000. The invitation to tender must be advertised, including on the Government 'Contracts Finder' web portal.

The Council may choose in some instances to tender for service contracts below this value (e.g. cleaning contracts). A more in-depth procurement process may be necessary for smaller contracts due to the importance of the quality of service to be provided. However, where the Council has an established relationship with a professional service provider and is happy with the standard of service and price, it will not be necessary to tender. Also, it can be advantageous not to tie the Council to a contract with one provider, such that, in the event of poor performance, it is straightforward to take business elsewhere.

Invitations to Tender

An invitation to tender includes the following information:

- Tender Name/Number
- Name/email/phone number of lead officer
- Covering letter
- Conditions of Tender
- Conditions of Contract
- Standardised Financial Costing Summary
- Specification
- Timetable/dates
- Stamped or Freepost envelope for return of tender specifying date and time for return.

It is the responsibility of the lead Officer to produce a tender document.

Any invitation to tender must be addressed to the Town Clerk within a sealed envelope. The tender is to remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. In the future Council may wish to consider a secure methodology for the electronic submission of tenders. Alternatively, it can be sent electronically to an email specifically set up for the purpose of receiving tenders and opened by the Town Clerk in the presence of a councillor.

Financial Cost Summary

The Financial Cost Summary is the pricing schedule which tenderers must complete. Its purpose is to ensure that all tenderers submit prices on a common basis and in a common format, making evaluation more straightforward – e.g. fixed price or time basis, one-off or multiples, annual cost, or full contract cost.

Tendering Period

During the period between invitation to tender and receipt of tenders, it is vital that all tenderers are treated equally e.g. an extension request, or any queries of substance raised by one tenderer must be applied to all tenderers simultaneously.

Tender Opening

A Register of Tenders Received is kept by the Town Clerk. This process will be administered and evaluated by the Town Clerk. Tenders are opened simultaneously by a Councillor in the presence of the Town Clerk, who will record the prices in the Tender Register. The result of tenders will be reported to Committee once an evaluation has been undertaken.

Tender Evaluation

Once tenders have been opened, they are evaluated to ensure best value for money and that the tender matches the specification and any other selection criteria. In many contracts, whilst all tenderers may be capable of meeting the requirement, some may be better in terms of cost, quality, availability of resources, quality of staff, proposed timescales, and environmental factors. Tenders that do not meet the specification should be rejected.

Post Tender Evaluation

Once the tenders or quotes have been evaluated, it may be possible to improve the overall value for money of bids through negotiation. Post-tender negotiation may involve more than one supplier. Potential areas of improvement may involve areas other than cost e.g. improved delivery times. When choosing which tender to award a contract to, it is important to consider the

cost over the lifetime of the asset, any additional costs, and any re-sale value. If during such negotiations the requirement is vastly changed, the Council should consider re-tendering

9. Contracts

Ideally contracts should not be placed that run beyond the end of the current administration, although to obtain 'best value' a longer term may be necessary. A contract letter and official order should be sent to the successful tenderer. Letters should also be sent to the unsuccessful tenderers.

The expenditure must be within agreed budgets and the order signed according to the Scheme of Delegation. Any unsuccessful tenderer may request a debrief in respect of their tender, although the Town Council reserves the right not to declare all information relating to the award of the relevant contract.

Contract Management

Once a contract has been agreed, it is the responsibility of the Manager to ensure that, as far as practicable, the goods or services are delivered as per the specification. Procurement advice should be sought if required and the RFO should always be advised in case of unsatisfactory performance.

Variation and Extension

From time to time, variations and extensions to contracts are required. These require different types and levels of approval, depending on their nature.

- Time extensions with no extra cost - small time extensions can normally be authorised by the Town Clerk and reported to the relevant committee.
- Extra work/Extensions to contracts - if this does not exceed 5% of the contract value, a revised order can be placed (subject to normal authority levels). Anything above 5% (of the contract value) will need Committee approval and may require a further tender.

Regular Service Contracts

Regular Service Contracts provide goods and services at fixed prices on a regular basis and over a fixed period of time e.g.:

- Computer equipment/ongoing support
- Contract Cleaning
- Alarm and Fire Systems

Where a Regular Service Contract is in place, other suppliers must not be used for the purchase of these goods or services unless authorised, in order to avoid a potential breach of contract.

10. Employing Consultants

Officers need to determine that in-house resources are not sufficient and that the extra expense involved in hiring a firm of consultants is clearly justified before employing a consultant. A detailed project brief should be prepared before selecting a consultant. If necessary, it can be refined later to take account of the consultants' ideas and input. The brief becomes the consultants' Terms of Reference. A project brief can avoid any misunderstanding between consultants and council.

Identification of Need:

- Identify the objectives of the project and what the outcome is intended to achieve or change.
- Consider the availability of potential in-house resources before seeking to engage external consultants.
- Assess and document the benefits of employing consultants
- Identify costs of Council's contribution, i.e. staff time.

- Agree a budget.
- Obtain approval from the relevant Committee

Preparation of Project Brief

The project brief should include:

- Background to the project
- Project objectives
- Expected outcomes
- Project timetable
- Council's own contribution
- Reporting requirements
- Relevant source documents available for inspection

Employment of Consultants

A draft agreement should contain the following elements:

- Description of project
- Project schedule with key milestones
- Fees, including definition of reimbursable expenses
- How payments will be made
- Reporting arrangements
- Arbitration/termination arrangements
- Names of Council staff involved

Terms of reference agreed between the Council and consultants should be attached to the agreement. This should include clear end point and procedures for 'signing off' when the project is complete. Once the contract is signed, consultants should be given official notification to proceed in writing.

The project should be closely monitored against specification, key milestones, and costs. Regular progress reports should be made to Committee. A project evaluation should be made at the end of the contract.

11. Authorisation of Expenditure

Orders for goods or services by Stotfold Town Council must be made in accordance with approved budgets and the approved spending limits set up in the Scheme of Delegation.

Purchases that are likely to exceed the maximum officer spending limit, require Committee authorisation. The Town Clerk is authorised to undertake urgent matters, including emergency repairs and maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment, to be reported to the appropriate Committee or Full Council as soon as possible thereafter.

The first signature of certification of an invoice prior to payment verifies that the officer is satisfied that the goods or services have been received by the Council and represent proper value for money.

Final certification of all invoices for payment will be as follows:

- Town Clerk.
- Two other bank signatories who will also authorise the payments online.



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

PREFERRED SUPPLIERS REGISTER

Application form for contractors wishing to be included on the Council's register of approved contractors:

Business Name	
Business Address	
Contact Name	
Contact telephone number and Email address	
Type of business	
Member of professional bodies/ accreditations/qualifications if applicable	
I can confirm that I hold Public Liability Insurance of £10m or greater	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that I will comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to provide relevant risk assessments and/or method statements	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Please return this form to enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk

Stotfold Town Council
Greenacre Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold SG5 4HG 01462 730064