

Part 4B

Contract Procedure Rule

1 Application

- 1.1 These Contract Procedure Rules provide the governance structure for the Council to procure works, goods and services.
- 1.2 These mandatory Contract Procedure Rules apply to everyone who commissions or procures contracts on behalf of the Council, including external consultants and third party providers.
- 1.3 Approved Officers (Heads of Service and above) are accountable for all Procurement in their respective area of responsibility including following the Contract Procedure Rules and complying with operational procurement guidelines and codes of practice.
- 1.4 All Officers must ensure that the Council's approved processes and standards for Procurement, as set out in the Procurement Toolkit are adhered to. All information governance, insurance, safeguarding, social value (including Support to Local Community), conflict of interest and business continuity requirements must be adhered to in line with the Procurement Toolkit and the Council's Information Governance Policies.
- 1.5 The Assistant Director of Commercial and Procurement and the Head of Finance in consultation with the Executive Director of Strategy and Resources shall maintain and issue the Contract Procedure Rules.
- 1.6 Procurement are responsible for ensuring Council awareness and compliance with all relevant Law. Any significant changes to relevant Law will be reflected in these Contract Procedure Rules.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The Contract Procedure Rules apply to all Procurement activities, including expenditure of external funding on Procurement, such as grant allocation, received by the Council from external sources and may apply CIL funding allocations agreed by area committees
- 2.2 The Contract Procedure Rules do not apply to Non-Procurement activities whereby the Council has to pay for a Service which it did not initiate or for payments where it is not appropriate to tender including (but not exclusively) inter-authority and inter-agency payments, subscriptions/memberships, emergency temporary accommodation for vulnerable people, assessments, recoument and Council grant allocations, including those payments that constitute an investment in the community infrastructure of the Borough. Payments to third parties for these activities are subject to authorisation by Finance.
- 2.3 Where the Council is entering into a Contract as an agent in collaboration with another public body or organisation which is the principal or lead body in the collaboration, these Contract Procedure Rules apply only in so far as they are consistent with the requirements of the principal or lead body concerned. Where the Council is acting as principal or the lead body, these Contract Procedure Rules will take precedence.
- 2.4 Where the Council's schools have to abide by the Scheme for Financing Schools which requires them to follow Contract Standing Orders (CSO) for Schools, then the CSO for Schools shall take precedence over these Contract Procedure Rules.

- 2.5 These Contract Procedure Rules do not apply to any acquisition or disposal of any interest in land including any transaction in land under section 75 of the National Health Services Act 2006; partnership arrangements between NHS bodies and the Council under section 75 of the National Health Services Act 2006 are not subject to these Contract Procedure Rules though procurement activities undertaken under any such arrangements will be subject to these Contract Procedure Rules unless such procurement activities are with an NHS body or another contracting authority.

3 Contract Value Calculation

- 3.1 Contract value means the estimated aggregate or recurring value payable in pounds sterling exclusive of Value Added Tax over the entire Contract period including any form of options or extensions of the Contract. Contract Values inclusive of VAT will determine whether advertising and conduct of procedure as above thresholds is required. Where the Contract term is not fixed the estimated value of the Contract must be calculated by multiplying the monthly spend value by 48 in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 3.2 Contracts must not be artificially underestimated or disaggregated into two or more separate contracts with the intention of avoiding the application of Contract Procedure Rules or the Law.
- 3.3 In the case of Framework Agreements or Dynamic Purchasing Systems the contract value must be calculated to include the total estimated value, net of VAT, of all the contracts envisaged to be awarded for the total term of the Framework Agreement or the Dynamic Purchasing System.

4 Authorisation

- 4.1 Any Procurement, including extensions and variations to Contracts set out in the Annual Procurement Forward Plan and approved by Cabinet, is deemed as Authorised irrespective of the Contract value, subject to 4.3 below.
- 4.2 Any Procurement which has not been Authorised as set out in 4.1 must be Authorised in accordance with the Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds set out in these Rules and in the Allocation of Responsibilities (as set out in Part 2 of the Constitution).
- 4.3 Any Procurement authorised via the Annual Procurement Forward Plan is subject to the reporting requirements detailed in the approved Annual Procurement Forward Plan.

5 Procurement Method

- 5.1 The method of procurement is set out in the Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds and the Allocation of Responsibilities section of the Constitution.
- 5.2 All Procurements for goods and services over £25,000 must be advertised on Contracts Finder within 24 hours of the time when the Procurement is advertised in any other way. Procurement over the tender financial threshold must be advertised since 1 January 2021 in the 'Find a Tender' first and then on Contracts Finder. A Contract award notice must also be published on Contracts Finder. Procurement will arrange this through provision of softcopy authorised contract from service area to procurement.
- 5.3 Commissioners may decide to award a contract in the form of separate lots and may determine the size and subject-matter of such lots. If commissioners decide not to subdivide into lots they must document the main reasons for their decision.

- 5.4 Where the Council accesses an existing Framework Agreement, the Framework Agreement terms and conditions of contract must be used, amended as appropriate as permitted by the Framework Agreement. Before entering into a Framework Agreement due diligence checks must be carried out to demonstrate that the Council can lawfully access the Framework Agreement and that it is fit for purpose and provides value for money.
- 5.5 For activities that result in a contractual obligation for social care placements and special education needs where the decision has been made on the Council's behalf (such as court directed order, personal budget/statement request or an individual's specific needs) the authority to sign off to award an individual funding agreement in accordance with the decision-making framework is contained within the Allocation of Responsibilities section of the Constitution.
- 5.6 Procurement activity for Contracts for certain health, social, community, educational and cultural related services, "Light-Touch Regime Services" whose value is equal to or over the threshold of £663,540 must be tendered and awarded in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Refer to the Procurement Team to advise on the procedures to be applied in connection with the award of these Contracts.
- 5.7 For Procurements below the tender financial threshold only Suitability Assessment Questions can be asked. This means there can be no SQ stage.
- 5.8 For Contracts under the tender financial threshold the Assistant Director Commercial & Procurement in conjunction with the Assistant Director Investment and Innovation Resources may waive the requirement to seek 2 written quotes subject to an Officer Decision being provided, demonstrating that the market-place has been fully tested and the Council has obtained value for money.
- 5.9 The award of Contracts will be based on the most economically advantageous tender assessed from the Council's point of view.
- 5.10 Commissioners shall require tenderers to explain the price or costs proposed in the tender where tenders appear to be abnormally low in relation to the works, goods or services.

6 Single Tender Action

- 6.1 A Single Tender Action is the awarding of a Contract to a contractor without undertaking a competitive tendering exercise. This is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and should be approved in advance by the [Assistant Director Investment and Innovation Head of Finance Resource](#) and Assistant Director Commercial Services. Procurement advice should be sought in all cases. Exceptional circumstances may include where the works, supplies or services can be supplied only by a particular supplier.
- 6.2 Where a competition has been undertaken and only a single bid has been received the [Assistant Director Investment and Innovation Head of Finance Resource](#) and Assistant Director Commercial and Procurement can approve the award of a Contract, subject to an appropriate review being undertaken and an audit trail being available for inspection.

7 Concession Contracts

- 7.1 Concession Contracts are contracts under which the council outsources works or services to a contractor or provider, who then has the right to commercially exploit those works or services in order to recoup its investment and make a return. The key feature is that the

contractor/provider bears the operating risk of the arrangement and so has no guarantee of recouping its investment or operating costs.

7.2 Concession Contracts must meet certain requirements and advice should be sought from Legal Services and Procurement.

8 Acceptance

8.1 Acceptance of Contracts must be in accordance with the Allocation of Responsibilities section of the Constitution, and in all cases is subject to: Budget provision; a compliant Procurement process; and confirmation of acceptable financial status of the contractor.

8.2 Acceptance of Contracts with independent providers of individual placements for children or adults will in the first instance be achieved through approved frameworks or approved lists of providers. Where requirements cannot be met through approved frameworks or approved lists, authority is delegated to the relevant officer of a service area under the scheme of delegation in the council's Constitution to enter into contract with a new independent provider.

8.3 Acceptance thresholds for Contract extensions and variations are set out in the Allocation of Responsibilities section of the Constitution.

8.4 The financial assessment of tenders will be undertaken where they are necessary either by statute, to ensure value for money for the council, or both by the following:

8.4.1 The relevant service undertaking a procurement if it identifies a requirement for financial assessment to be undertaken for a service/goods contract beneath the 'Find a Tender' tender threshold or beneath the Find a Tender works tender thresholds, or;

8.4.2 A Financial Officer as delegated by the Executive Director of Strategy and Resources (Section 151 Officer) if: (a) the contract is valued at Find a Tender Service tender threshold or more, for goods or services; or (b) the contract is valued at Find a Tender Service tender threshold or more for works; or (c) the Executive Director of Strategy and Resources (Section 151 Officer) considers that the Contract has a significant impact on the council's finances.

9 Contract Signing and Sealing

9.1 Every Contract must be in a form approved by Legal services or delegated officer, if its value exceeds £25,000 or where appropriate to the nature of the Contract.

9.2 All Contracts awarded following a Procurement process with a Contract value above the tender financial threshold shall be sealed unless Legal Services or delegated officer directs otherwise.

9.3 Contracts and Framework Agreements must be sealed. Call-off Contracts from a Framework Agreement under the tender financial threshold do not require sealing and need only be signed by a Council Officer in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

10 Contract Management

10.1 During the life of the Contract Approved Officers must ensure that the Council's approved processes for Contract Management, as set out in the Contract Management Toolkit are adhered to. In particular to ensure continuous improvement and value for money is achieved all Approved Officers must ensure that those responsible for managing Contracts undergo Procurement approved training

11 Extensions and Variations

- 11.1 Contracts that have been originally advertised with extension options and which contain clear extension options can be extended subject to acceptance under the Allocation of Responsibilities section of the Constitution.
- 11.2 Under Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 certain amendments, and extensions or renewals of an existing Contract can be made without triggering a requirement for a new Procurement exercise, subject to the financial limits. Where necessary seek advice from Legal and Procurement.
- 11.3 Placement Agreements for individuals in Social Care or Educational Needs may be varied or extended without reference to the Variation or Extension Acceptance levels and documentation set out in the Allocation of Responsibilities (Part 2 of the Constitution).
- 11.4 The value referred to in the Allocation of Responsibilities (Part 2 of the Constitution).
- 11.5 in the column headed 'Variation or extension Acceptance' is the total value of the original Contract value plus the addition of the value of any extensions and/or variations i.e. the total value of the extended or varied Contract.
- 11.6 In addition to the requirements of Regulation 72 Contracts may only be extended or varied if all of the following conditions have been met:
- 11.6.1 the initial Contract was based on a Contract Procedure Rules compliant competitive tender or quotation process;
 - 11.6.2 the value of the extension or variation added to the value of the original Contract does not exceed the original Authorisation threshold as defined in the Allocation of Responsibilities (Part 2 of the Constitution);
 - 11.6.3 the extension or variation has an approved Budget allocation;
 - 11.6.4 if the initial Contract was subject to an UK regulated tender procedure, that the extension option was declared within the Find a Tender contract notice and the original Acceptance report (Delegated Powers Report/relevant Committee or Cabinet Report);
- 11.7 Where the Procurement results in a Contract which includes a provision for an extension, any Acceptance of that extension needs to be in accordance with the Allocation of Responsibilities (Part 2 of the Constitution).
- 11.8 Save where the modification can be justified under Regulation 72, if any of the conditions at 11.6 or 11.7 cannot be met, then a new Procurement exercise must be commenced.
- 11.9 Where a variation or extension moves the total value of the Contract into a higher threshold, then acceptance must be sought in accordance with the Allocation of Responsibilities section of the Constitution.

12 Waivers

- 12.1 If the application of these Contract Procedure Rules prevents or inhibits the delivery or continuity of service, Approved Officers (Heads of Service or above) may apply for a waiver. All applications for a waiver of these Contract Procedure Rules must be submitted to Cabinet specifically identifying the reason for which a waiver is sought, including justification and risk.
- 12.2 Approved Officers may take decisions on emergency matters (i.e. an unexpected occurrence requiring immediate action) in consultation with the Leader providing they

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report to the next available Cabinet meeting, setting out the reasons for the emergency waiver. A copy of the relevant Cabinet report must be provided to Procurement and stored on the Council's contract repository.

- 12.3 Any waiver should only be granted for a maximum period of 12 months, except in exceptional case.

13 Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds

	Procurement Value	Procurement Commencement Process		Procurement method	Bid Acceptance Process		Variation or Extension Acceptance Process		Contract Requirement
		Authorisation	Documentation		Authorisation	Documentation	Authorisation	Documentation	
A	£10,000 - £24,999	Council Officer as approved by Scheme of Delegation Officer Decision; or Procurement Forward Plan Officer Decision	Under £25k Audit Form Officer Decision Report; or Procurement Forward Plan Officer Decision Report	Minimum 2 written Competitive Quotations sought	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	Officer Decision Report	Must move to next threshold if £25,000 or above	Officer Decision Report	Purchase Order
B	£25,000 - £213,477	Officer Decision; or Procurement Forward Plan	Officer Decision Report; or Procurement Forward Plan	Minimum 2 written quotations No SQ – Suitability Assessment Questions only	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	Officer Decision Report	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	Officer Decision Report	Signed Contract Contract Award Notice
C	£213,477 - £500,000	Portfolio Holder Decision or Procurement Forward Plan	Portfolio Holder Delegated Powers Report; or Procurement Forward Plan	Services/Goods – Find a Tender Works – Competitive Quotation	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	Officer Delegated Power Report	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	If within Budget: Officer Delegated Power Report If not within Budget: Portfolio Holder Delegated Powers Report	Signed and sealed contract Contract Award Notice

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	Procurement Value	Procurement Commencement Process		Procurement method	Bid Acceptance Process		Variation or Extension Acceptance Process		Contract Requirement
		Authorisation	Documentation		Authorisation	Documentation	Authorisation	Documentation	
D	£500,000 and above	Cabinet Report; or Procurement Forward Plan	Cabinet Report; or For items authorised via the Procurement Forward Plan in accordance with reporting requirements detailed in the approved Plan	<p>Competitive quotation for works contracts for values £500,000 to £5,336,937</p> <p>Works and Concession Contracts: Full Find a Tender above £5,336,937</p> <p>Goods: Full Find a -Tender</p> <p>Services: Full Find a -Tender</p> <p>Health, educational, cultural and social car related services: Light Touch Regime Tender above £633,540</p>	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	<p>If within Budget: Officer Delegated Power Report</p> <p>If not within budget: Cabinet Report Cabinet Report</p>	Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation	<p>If within Budget: Officer Delegated Power Report</p> <p>If not within budget: Cabinet Report Cabinet Report</p>	Signed and sealed contract Contract Award Notice