

Wandsworth's Environmental Purchasing Policy

Introduction

Wandsworth has developed a good reputation for its sustainable purchasing practice and wishes to formalise this by setting targets and ensuring that best value options are considered for all forms of procurement. This policy outlines principles to be adopted in the procurement of goods and services and a series of steps covering implementation and monitoring. Minimising its consumption of resources in relation to worthwhile outcomes is the Council's chief concern in environmentally-sensitive procurement of goods and services.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Statement 1 - General

1. The Council's prime strategic objective is to deliver high quality, value for money services and acting as a champion for sustainable procurement is a key element of this. It will seek products and services that are environmentally-acceptable; perform well; and achieve overall best value for money. It will also ensure that relevant contracts are assessed for environmental impacts and may request comparative costs for recycled or environmentally preferable products and approaches. It will specify waste, transport, energy, pollution control and other environmental conditions as appropriate.

Statement 2 - Value for money and whole life costs

2. It is important to note that policy decisions will continue to be made on the overriding basis of value for money. However, "value" is not necessarily the same as the cheapest purchase price. In selecting the "most economically advantageous" option, a whole life cost approach will be taken. This will include cost in use, maintenance costs and end of life disposal costs, where they can be realistically estimated, to identify a "best value for money" option. The "most economically advantageous option" may be one that:
 - (a) does not require a costly upgrade to meet current or imminent environmental legislation or standards e.g. considering whether new fleet vehicles meet current and impending EC emissions criteria;
 - (b) takes account of risks to health and the environment for which the Council could be liable for damages or remediation; or
 - (c) costs less to maintain; does not need replacing frequently; is energy efficient and/or more reliable than a comparable product.

Statement 3 - Environmental Purchasing Principles

3. The Council and its contractors will pursue environmental principles in their purchasing and operations. These aim to reduce waste and encourage efficient and sustainable use of resources; minimise our contribution to climate change; habitat destruction; and pollution.
4. The Council will reduce waste by adopting the waste hierarchy. This means:-

- (a) reducing waste - only purchasing products or services where there is a worthwhile outcome and reducing packaging and use of disposable products.
 - (b) re-use - using the same item more than once e.g. by refurbishment or finding new uses for redundant equipment, furniture or building materials.
 - (c) recycling – favouring products that are made from recycled or remanufactured materials and/or can be easily recycled themselves, such as remanufactured toner cartridges.
5. The Council will reduce its potential impact on climate change by:
- (a) giving preference to products with good energy ratings and efficiency features;
 - (b) identifying more opportunities to purchase energy from cost-effective renewable resources (so-called "green energy") and identifying opportunities for the installation of renewables in Council-owned properties and offices (see Target 16(a); and
 - (c) incorporating best practice energy efficiency measures into building works where they can be shown to be cost effective using the Energy Code of Practice. A life-cycle costing approach will be taken to the evaluation of alternatives to establish long term value for money in energy investments.
6. The Council will reduce its impact on habitat destruction by:
- (a) ensuring that all wood and wood products are from recycled, plantation, salvaged or renewable sources;
 - (b) requiring Forest Sustainability Council (FSC) accreditation, or equivalent, for hardwoods unless there is no viable alternative; and
 - (c) avoiding the use of peat and giving preference to the purchase of properly treated recycled garden organics such as mulch and compost.
7. The Council will minimise pollution by:
- (a) ensuring that all fleet vehicles are fuel-efficient and meet emissions standards likely to come into force during the contract period;
 - (b) continuing to investigate retrofitting devices; grit traps and other means to reduce vehicle emissions and improve fuel efficiency;
 - (c) seeking to avoid or limit the use of chemicals for pest and weed control;
 - (d) avoiding the use of potentially harmful or toxic substances, where more benign substances or approaches exist;
 - (e) using slow-release fertilisers for sports surfaces and boxed grass cut areas to minimise run-off and leaching into groundwaters; and
 - (f) where all other factors are equal, favouring local suppliers and goods that have not been transported long distances.

IMPLEMENTATION

8. The Council will achieve this by:
 - a) reviewing purchasing specifications, tender documentation, consultants briefs and contracts for compliance with this policy, as they are due for review and renewal to achieve best value;
 - b) including in tender specifications clear statements relating to the environmental issues with which the contractor must comply (e.g. source of materials, use of chemicals) so that tendered prices include any essential additional costs;
 - c) requiring contractors and consultants to assist in implementing this policy via clauses in contracts, performance reviews and submission of environmental policy statements, as appropriate;
 - d) ensuring that elected Members are properly informed about the anticipated environmental impact of tenders;
 - e) encouraging staff to attend procurement and environmental training courses and awareness programmes, as appropriate;
 - f) ensuring that staff have access to information on environmentally-preferential products and suppliers e.g. through preferred suppliers database; and
 - g) monitoring and reporting on performance and targets as part of the annual Agenda 21 update and London Remade's Purchase Audit.

Responsibilities for implementation

9. To some extent, all employees have responsibility for implementing this policy, with elected Members and Directors having ultimate accountability for decisions about value for money and the "most economically advantageous option". In doing so, they will need to bear in mind whole life costs and anticipate future demands and changes. Day to day, the primary groups responsible for implementing this policy will be budget-holders, purchasing officers and contract managers, with support, co-ordination and monitoring from the Policy Unit, the Head of Audit, the Borough Solicitor, the Energy Management Unit and the Supplies Officer.

Budget-holders

10. Individual budget holders are responsible for making appropriate purchasing choices. They should question the need for purchases and consider whether, in some cases, reuse, sharing or hiring arrangements may be more appropriate. A framework for this and corporate guidance on individual cases is offered by the Supplies Officer.

Purchasing Officers

11. Purchasing Officers have a responsibility to stay informed about new products and services and to assist in running pilot purchasing schemes. Best practice and preferred products will evolve over time and it is intended that best practice and the experiences of different Departments will be shared via the Supplies Co-ordination Group and Supplies Officer. Purchasing officers are also encouraged to maintain

records so as to facilitate the monitoring and reporting of environmental/ recycled purchases.

Contract Managers

12. Any person involved in the specification or tendering of a contract for goods or services is responsible for adopting "best value for money" using whole life costs, where appropriate for the contract and selection criteria. Environmental standards and expectations should be properly identified in the specification so that all tenderers are pricing on the same basis and against common requirements. Contract Managers will be responsible for giving effect to the Policy Statements and Environmental Purchasing Principles outlined here at all stages of the contract process. Contract managers are encouraged to seek advice from the Supplies Officer on preferred suppliers and the tendering process and the Policy Unit, if there are uncertainties surrounding environmental aspects to the contract. In line with existing requirements, they need to ensure that contractors are appropriately qualified and competent to undertake the works and this may include verifying environmental credentials.

Administration Department.

13. The Policy Unit and the Supplies Officer will be responsible for promoting, monitoring and offering guidance on the implementation of this policy and targets. They will ensure that environmental purchasing issues are regularly addressed at the inter-departmental Supplies Co-ordination Meeting and will be the primary contacts for liaising with London Remade.

TARGETS

14. The Council proposes these environmental purchasing targets to build on the current baseline position. These cover the purchase of specific materials and are directly measurable. It is anticipated that the impact of this policy will be wider than shown by the targets and progress and developments in other areas will reported to elected Members and made publicly available.
15. On recycled purchases, the Council will ensure that:
 - (a) each Department purchases at least 15% of its stationery from the environmental range of the contracted stationery supplier;
 - (b) each Department moves towards a target of purchasing 100% of its white A4 paper with a minimum of 80% recycled content;
 - (c) all Type 1 Fill used in the Aggregates Contract will be recycled content materials.
 - (d) at least 15% of benches, fence posts and picnic benches in parks will have a recycled content; and
 - (e) at least 15% of orange recycling sacks, litter and Euro bins will have a recycled content.
16. The Council will also:
 - (a) maintain or improve on its November 2004 position of 36% of electricity purchased from renewable resources.

(b) Fit all Heavy Good Vehicles (HGV's) with remould tyres, where available and fit for purpose

17. The Council will report on these targets every year and review them, based on progress and product availability and costs. All targets are based on cost, not volume or weight.

DEFINITIONS

Environmentally preferable products are those that do not have a negative impact on human health and the environment when compared with competing products. This comparison may consider the source of raw materials, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, potential for reuse and recycling, operation, maintenance and disposal of the product.

Practicable means satisfactory in performance and available at a reasonable cost.

Recycled products are made from materials that have been recovered, processed and used as a raw material for the manufacture of a useful new product through a commercial process. These products will contain a specified percentage of material that would otherwise have been disposed of as waste.

Re-manufactured means to renew or restore a used product into its original form or into a useful new product through a commercial process.

Sustainable use of resources is a use that meets the present needs of the purchaser while taking into account external and future costs, including costs to the environment and depletion of resources.