

A guide to understanding procurement

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Introduction

In order to ensure the best use of public money we need to be smarter in how we procure the things we need. Where another public body has a contract we can use, it meets our requirements and offers value for money we should use it. Where there is none then we may need professional advice on how to let our own.

This toolkit is designed to give general advice and provides signposts to other public buying organisations who have contracts we can use and bodies that can provide professional procurement services and tendering support.

A simple checklist highlights the common issues and pitfalls we need to address and there is also advice on preparing specifications and complying with legislation.

Parishes should make sure they also consider more formal advice as set out in NALC's Legal Topic Notes (including LTN 35, Local Council's Explained, model standing orders and financial regulations and JPAGs Practitioners Guide).

NALC is committed to supporting its members in achieving value for money contracts whilst minimising the resources needed to do so.

This toolkit is a beginning and we will develop it in the light of feedback from you. The toolkit was overseen by NALC's Larger Councils' Committee and drawn together with the help of Shar Roselman, Town Clerk, Newport Pagnall, Catherine Southern, MKSP, Sandra Sewell, ESPO and Tina Holland, LGA.

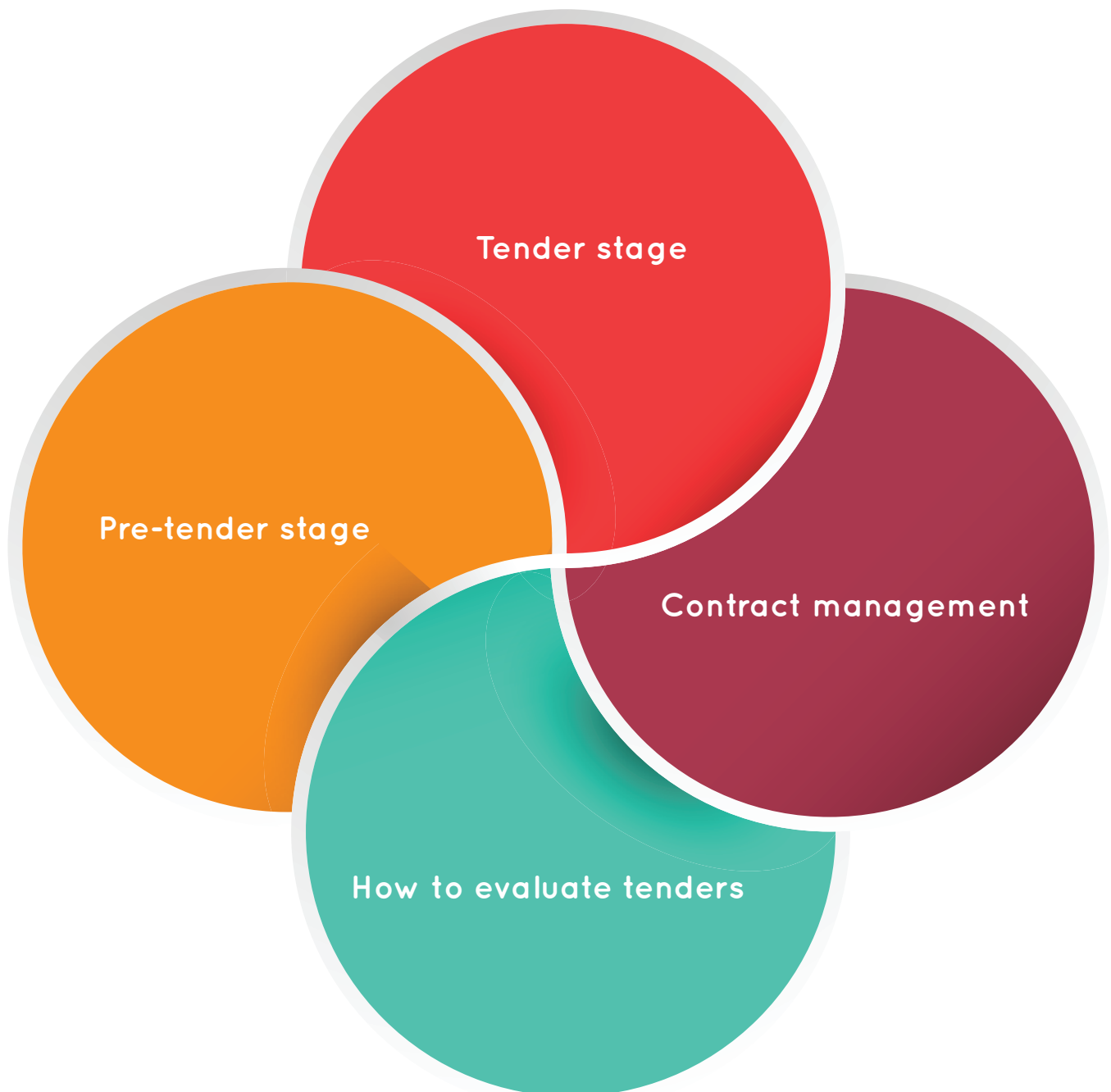
Jonathan Owen
Chief Executive, NALC

Understanding procurement

procurement

noun

1. the act of procuring, or obtaining or getting by effort, care, or the use of special means
2. the act of obtaining equipment, materials, or supplies



Pre-tender stage

Before starting any procurement ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I clear on the outcome/output I want to achieve?
2. What do the financial regulations/standing orders or Procurement legislation say I need to do? (Also don't forget that the Public Contracts (Social Value) Act of 2012 requires you to consider social value in all services contracts over the EU threshold. It is also good practice to consider social value in all contracts). NALC / CALC member councils should see NALC Legal Topic Note 87 for the procurement regulations that apply in England and Wales. This is available on the NALC website at www.nalc.gov.uk/members-area/legal (member councils will need to log in using their NALC log in passwords and usernames)
3. Have I got the budget for the purchase and ongoing costs?
4. What would happen if I did nothing?
5. Could I do this in stages?
6. Am I clear on the outcome/output I want to achieve?
7. Can I achieve this by borrowing from someone else or buying it together with others to share costs? Or by recycling something you already have or use elsewhere?
8. Could residents/voluntary groups help me to deliver part of it at no cost?
9. Could I rent or lease it instead?
10. How much time will it take to run a compliant tender process to attract sufficient quality bids?
11. How can I encourage small businesses and voluntary sector to bid for this work, at the very least how can I make the tender process 'SME friendly'?
12. What are the risks and opportunities associated with purchase of a product or the long term risks of a service provided to you over a period time? Risks come in many shapes and sizes, and can include risk to Council reputation, financial risk such as loss of income, health and safety risk, significant time loss, difficulty of replacement if things go wrong, insurance risk, and risks associated with people such as the need to take on contract staff at the end of a contract term, under TUPE legislation (Transfer of Undertakings)

Consultation with residents and service users is essential to make sure you are clear on what is needed, who will use it and what the essentials are. Time must be built into the procurement project plan to allow for engagement and feedback. Consider if residents should be on the project team and provide help in evaluating part of the tenders

but you retain ownership of the project overall.

Find out what other parishes have paid and find out how their procurement went to build that learning into your project. Did they get any extra external funding to contribute to the costs and if so where from? Could you slip the timing of your project to enable you to access extra funds? Could you break down the project into affordable pieces without any significant risk?

In the pre-tender stage you can do market research and speak to suppliers as long as you do not then discriminate in their favour once the procurement starts by specifying something that only one company can provide, or give them information that you do not then share with all suppliers at tender stage. You should take care not to do anything that may give the perception that you are treating one supplier more favourably than any other and should avoid accepting hospitality or free gifts/trials etc during your research. If your project is over the EU threshold, the new PCT 15 Regulations for OJEU procurement make the assumption you have broken your project down into 'lots' which encourages small and medium size enterprises to bid. If you don't use 'lots' for a large project, you need to provide an explanation as to why you have not.

You also need to decide on how you will advertise any tender. Would a procurement portal be of use to you, where you can

advertise your tender as widely as possible? Do you just need to advertise in the local paper? At the very least, your tender should be advertised on your own parish website. You may also need to consider advertising on Contracts Finder anything over £25k which will be a new rule in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. You can enquire whether there are any expressions of interest instead of simply submitting the tender, and hold 'market' days for those interested bidders to discover what the issues may be that you have not thought of.

Tender stage

You must ensure that everything you do as part of a tender is fair, transparent and does not discriminate for/against any supplier. This applies to all procurement, whatever the value. Your actions are subject to scrutiny under the Freedom of Information Act as well as your own financial regulations.

The following is a short summary of the key requirements of a tender. Please get advice if you feel unsure or lack experience.

Calculate the contract value

This will either be the actual standalone cost if a one-off purchase of goods or the four year value if there are ongoing costs or it is a service contract. If the term is known, such as a ten year term, then you should use this value instead (Annual value x the term). Terms over 10 years are regarded as unacceptably long for Council contracts, as they prohibit new tenderers from entering the market. This will include all maintenance, licensing, upgrades, consultancy, training and anything else associated with that purchase. If this value is approaching the OJEU thresholds of £172,000 for supplies or services or £3.5 million for works then you must get professional support as you are required by procurement regulations to do a full tender according to the EU/UK regulations. (These figures are subject to change in 2016 and every two years thereafter. Failure to fully comply with the Public Contract Regulations can incur

unlimited fines and prevent you from awarding the contract at all. At the very least you may have to use precious resources to start the process all over again.

Establish project plan

If this is an EU tender process (known as OJEU) the timescales are set out in the regulations (get professional advice) and can be lengthy if a PQQ (pre-qualification questionnaire stage) is needed to make sure you get suppliers with the right technical and financial standing. If it is below the threshold then you must allow sufficient time for suppliers to prepare and submit quality tenders - no less than two weeks for a lower value requirement, but up to a month if it is technical, riskier or more complicated. You must establish a project team and identify who will sign off final documents before publication. You will need to block diaries out for the evaluation phase and also establish a mechanism for responding to questions from suppliers whilst it is out to tender. If you are consulting on the specification with residents before tendering you will need to build extra time in for this.

Write the specification and evaluation criteria and legal terms and conditions of contract

Write a comprehensive specification detailing what outcomes are required, what the essential requirements are, how you will

measure performance, how you will manage the contract and most importantly what evaluation criteria and weighting you will use when you get the tenders back. You must tell suppliers how you will conduct the tender exercise, what criteria they will be measured against (price and quality or other factors such as their health and safety record) and the rules around canvassing officers or councillors during the tender period.

Do not be led by smart sales advertising that may lead you to specify a specific brand or product/provider. Advertise the requirement as widely as possible {if OJEU you must advertise using the EU tender portal}. You will also need your own set of legal terms and conditions drafting specific to what is being procured.

Consider how the contract will be managed at this stage, who will be the key contact points, what performance management process will be used, will there be any opportunity for suppliers to provide you with innovative solutions that may add further value to the procurement you are undertaking. It is very important that suppliers understand how you will measure their bids, because it is more often than not that this is the issue that results in a legal challenge. Do not have any 'hidden' criteria, or unpublished sub-criteria.

When considering evaluation of your contract, price, product quality, durability and other

factors may be important to you. However, if the tender is for a service provision, don't forget to include performance indicators, that will tell you whether the organisation is doing a good job or not. For this you might use references from other companies as an important component of your evaluation criteria.

Contact others to see if they have any documents you can use or engage with a professional advisor. In England there is a requirement to publish all tenders with a value of over £25,000 on the Contracts Finder portal. For details of how to use the Contract Finder Portal please visit www.gov.uk/contracts-finder.

Evaluating tenders

During the period the tender is out awaiting bids, various questions may arise. If you answer a question for one bidder, then you should ensure that all the other known bidders receive the question and the answer you have provided. No bidder should be able to claim that someone else had additional knowledge before the tender submission period.

Conversely, there will be some information that bidders provide you with that they regard as confidential. They may for example have given you an added value option that other tenderers may not have thought of. This information should not be shared between bidders. It is the Council that must determine whether an issue is deemed confidential or not (as bidders will always say that everything is commercially confidential.)

If you are undertaking an OJEU tender then the regulations give direction as to how you conduct your pre-qualifying questionnaire (known as the PQQ stage) and evaluation stage. If you are doing a two stage OJEU (called a restricted procedure under the regulations) then you need to build in extra time for these stages. PQQ's may not be used for tenders below the OJEU threshold. Please see the standard PQQ provided by the Crown Commercial Services, as this is now a requirement of the OJEU process (see: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/crown-commercial-service).

A two-stage tender involves a PQQ stage. The PQQ stage is used where the value is likely to be high, there is a large and active

market, there are concerns about the ability of the various bidders to meet long term requirements, where you have very specific technical requirements that must be met by bidders or where there is a degree of financial risk associated with the contract.

You must set out the scoring methodology in the PQQ and Tender documents and must not replicate criteria in both stages. A typical PQQ might enquire about the long term financial viability of a bidder by asking for financial accounts, might include information about the health and safety Record of the bidder, might establish how long the bidder has been in business, might request public liability insurance details and/or might wish to understand the levels of staffing of the bidder would aim to offer towards the contract, the questions must be proportionate to the procurement being undertaken. If for example you are allocating a percentage to each of these aspects with the aim of scoring the bidders PQQ submissions against this percentage, you need to ensure that when developing your PQQ questionnaire, you clearly set out how these will be scored.

This is an area where there have been a lot of successful court challenges by suppliers as public sector buyers have not complied with the rules so please get professional advice on this if at all unsure.

You can only apply those evaluation criteria you put into the tender documents. You cannot use other criteria or introduce something new or different after tenders have been

received. Equally you cannot accept tenders or amendments after the published deadline unless there are very special reasons for doing so - you could be challenged by other suppliers.

You should not evaluate alone - ensure you do it with at least two, preferably three people, or at a formal council meeting, which may need to be a part two meeting, excluding the public and the press. If this is an OJEU tender then you must ensure that the panel are suitably technically qualified and experienced to evaluate; though the same applies for lower value ones too to make sure you evaluate properly.

Score individually then come together to produce a moderated score. Do not use a mathematical average of scores because some factors will clearly be more important than others, and bidders with high scores in a number of low importance areas could override a bidder with a single high score in a most important consideration such as quality, longevity, durability, etc. You should do all this in writing and use a pre-agreed scoring template that allows you to record comments on each bid.

Award stage

Once the evaluation is completed you will be ready to award the contract. If this is an OJEU then you cannot just tell the winning bidder and start the contract as there is a mandatory standstill period of ten days. This is to allow unsuccessful bidders the time to challenge the

anticipated award (get professional advice on this).

The contract award should be in writing and reference the terms and conditions of contract issued at the tender stage. The full contract will include the specification, the bid and the terms and conditions of contract. If you are letting an OJEU or high value/sub OJEU contract you should seek legal advice on the documents at the pre tender and award stages.

Good practice is to provide all unsuccessful bidders with feedback on their bids, you should do this as soon as possible after the winning bidder is decided. This is mandatory for OJEU tenders and you must provide details of the relative characteristics of the winning bid. Actual pricing or any other commercial in confidence information must not be disclosed amongst bidders but you must tell them their position relative to the winning tender.

Contract management

Often forgotten in the rush to buy something is the process for actually making sure you get what you specified for the price you have agreed in the contract, hence the need to consider this at pre-procurement and tendering stages. This is the stage where things can go wrong and where costs can increase if not managed carefully. Your specification and terms and conditions of contract should have a direct reference to who is responsible for doing what, when payments are triggered, what happens when it goes wrong and what standards/performance indicators the supplier must meet.

Pre-contract start

Before the contract starts sit down with the supplier and reach a common understanding of the contract so there are no surprises later on!

Whatever the length of the contract agree a delivery plan, with dates, outcomes and owners of activity. Set dates for regular meetings/updates, make these relevant to the contract and the risks and opportunities associated with it.

Contract delivery phase

All contract managers require good communication skills, a shared understanding of what is to be delivered and clear standards of performance.

Service contracts require ongoing management and some degree of flexibility from both parties as the situation may evolve over a longer period of time. Supplier relationship management skills are more important in ensuring the contract continues to deliver to the standard needed to avoid disputes and a switch to adversarial behaviour. What to monitor at contract meetings should have been built into your contract, and may include volumetrics, (i.e.

number of times service used) number of complaints by residents, number of health and safety issues raised, quality improvements logged, etc. It is important to not only hold regular contract meetings, but also to take formal minutes at these meetings. Any contract changes should be signed, and added to your signed service contract.

Short term contracts such as minor works, installation of play equipment or street furniture may require a short burst of scrutiny focussing on ensuring that health and safety matters are covered, the public is safe and the materials used are as specified. You may need to engage professionals such as a clerk of works or project manager experienced in delivery to ensure you adequately manage these contracts. Ensure you complete a snagging list in time to point out to the organisation all those areas which you are not happy with. The contract should have a built in period for snags to be reported.

Change control

Things do not always go to plan so your contract should have a clause that sets out how you will manage change and the resulting costs/savings. All contract changes must be agreed in writing, and only by the persons named as responsible in the contract documents.

Contract end

Make sure you have copies of all the relevant warranties/insurance relating to any goods/works contracts so you can recover costs if needed in the future. Build in retention money if this is a works contract to cover the costs of any defects that arise when they have left site. Ensure that if things do not go to plan, you have the ability to levy a schedule of contra-charges, against those components of the contract that were not met.

Frequently asked questions

Do I have to advertise tenders and quotes?

Your Financial rules will set out exact details. However if you do not advertise you are unable to demonstrate you have value for money and could potentially give the appearance of having favourite contractors which may put you in breach of your rules and or legislation.

Can I just ring suppliers I know for verbal quotes?

Your financial rules will set out exact details, and if the value is very low (under £1000) then this may be appropriate but you must always ring more than one supplier and keep a written record. If your requirement involves any warranties/guarantees then you should get quotes put in writing so you fully understand what is provided, covered and where liability sits for faults etc.

What happens if I tender and do not have anyone to help me?

Ring around other parishes who may have experience in what you are procuring, look at pre-established contracts/frameworks to understand if they meet need and allow for a shorter process. If a tender exercise is essential then consider engaging a third party to provide support, advice and templates.

What's the worse that could happen if I just buy something direct from a supplier and do not get any other prices?

You could be held in breach of your employment contract, your financial rules and potentially the EU/UK law if the value exceeds the OJEU threshold. You could lose your job, be prosecuted and/or face unlimited fines from the courts. But most importantly you could be wasting public funds and bringing your Council into disrepute.

Can I use other contracts set up by other parishes/councils?

If the contract was advertised for use by others and the terms and conditions allow - then yes. Professional Buying Organisations (PBOs) exist to tender on behalf of the wider public sector and have hundreds of contracts that you can use. **[Link to later page with CJC, ESPO/YPO etc).**

What if the tenders come back well over budget?

Clarify with bidders that they understood the requirement and have not priced for extras not specified. If the value is below the OJEU threshold then you could amend the specification and ask all bidders to resubmit pricing - if above then get professional advice.

Why do I have to follow EU regulations?

They are part of UK law and are non-negotiable. English courts can, and do, issue judgements, stop contract awards and can issue unlimited fines in relation to breaches of the rules.

Do you already know what you want?

Go direct to a buying portal. If you are know what you want, have a specification and the budget then you may want to take advantage of an existing National/Regional contract/framework agreement already set up by the Professional Buying Organisations. They provide a vast array of compliant contracts to choose from covering categories for everyday suppliers to specialist equipment. They have all been set up in compliance with UK and EU regulations and are ready for you to use. You can contact them directly and they can also run mini competitions for you from their contracts.

Case study

Plythwiddy Parish Council are faced with a problem. Play areas in their parish are old, and are designed as Local Area Play provision (LEAPs) with no Neighbourhood Area Play provision (NEAPs). Each has only a few pieces of poor value play equipment, and all are geared towards very young age groups (toddlers up to age five). The principal authority manages play areas, but has offered these to parishes under the community asset transfer scheme. Below is the process this parish follows:

PRE-TENDER STAGE

PROBLEM AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Issue: What is the problem? Define the problem carefully – it's not simply that you need to get a good price for services or goods.

Action: Our Principal authority has said it will not replace old play equipment and will gradually remove facilities. We have too many LEAPs, many of poor quality, and not enough NEAPs.

Issue: What could we do about it?

Action: 1. Parish could take on ownership and management of play areas A, B, C, D and E.

2. Parish could try to open negotiations to replace facilities providing principal authority maintains.

3. Parish could work with community groups to take ownership of facilities.

4. Parish could avoid anything to do with this.

5. Parish could offer to make an annual contribution to principal authorities to keep play areas open.

6. Parish could develop a play area strategy either in agreement with principal authority if they continue to maintain the assets, which closes down least useful play areas, and improves others, turning them from LEAPs into NEAPs.

Issue: Refine options.

Action: Principal authority won't agree to two or five above.

Option one - Possible, but parish must decide whether it can fund long term capital refurbishment plus revenue costs with existing precept, or whether it needs to increase precept.

It would be possible take on only some of the play areas allowing the principal authority to close others down as they become unfit for purpose.

Option three - Early discussions with community groups indicate a willingness to become involved, but not to take full ownership of project.

Survey undertaken indicates play areas most valued by community are A and C.

PROJECT STRATEGY

Issue: How could we do it?

- Consider user groups
- Consider who can help delivery the outcomes
- Consider funding sources
- Consider options for project:
 - Close down
 - Restructure/re-organise
 - Make internal efficiency improvements
 - Benchmark service against others
 - Test the market
 - Outsourcing or insourcing
 - Privatising
 - Joint Ventures
 - Can technology be improved?
- Define outcomes or service requirements you want the project to achieve
- Do you need a business plan?

Action: Parish pins down local residents who use play groups as to exactly what they could provide to project – e.g. security, maintenance of area, litter picking, grass cutting, weekly play inspections etc. Determines lifecycle of existing facilities including paths, bins,

benches, playground surfacing and extends capital costs into the future to provide replacement.

Reviews what quick wins could be gained – e.g. immediate improvements to areas concerns.

Reviews whether immediate capital improvements can be made.

Decides on whether any portion of the work can be done internally by existing staff, or whether it must all be done externally.

Insourcing vs outsourcing or privatising versus fully supported by precept revenues. Joint venture options.

Takes the temperature on what on-going revenue costs are likely to be by doing research on typical grass cutting, litter picking, maintenance costs are likely to be. Price up various types of play equipment. (Parish seeks expression of interest from potential bidders.) Draws up business plan.

PROJECT PLAN

Issue: What is our plan?

Action: Takes a decision that Council is willing to take on ownership and management of play areas A, C and D. Advises principal authority there is no interest in play area B or E. Asks residents if a contribution of and extra £1.32 on their precept per D band is acceptable to keep these play areas open and regularly refurbished.

Applies for transfer of Play Areas A, C and D from principal authority.

Applies for grant funding opportunity with waste recycling.

Agrees refurbishment plan with residents.

Works out who will undertake play area inspections, (handyman) and ensures he get appropriate training.

Agrees to replace certain items of equipment

and to put new items in place in one of the play areas.

Agrees to refurbish another play area, using a combination of community volunteers and contractors.

TENDER STAGE

TENDER ONE

Issue: Write out specification – input or output standards?

Decide on whether you need a PQQ process – depends on size of tender.

Decide on evaluation process – panel, checklist, weighting to various factors, etc.

Do you wish to only go to people on approved contractors list or go to open tender?

Decide whether you need to advertise tender on a tender portal, your own website, or simply send to local suppliers?

Is this an EU Tender over the threshold?

Action: Ground and playground maintenance

Decides on contract period (term of 10 years to allow contractor to ensure depot near sites).

Advertises on website, and contacts all known ground maintenance contract providers.

Decides on risk allocations – ensures insurance risk is covered on playground maintenance routine, and that insurer is happy with number and type of inspections.

Gets quote for new public liability issues, and determines who carries which public liability risk.

Decides on payment schedule.

Decides on dispute process and how to measure dissatisfaction levels with playground and ground maintenance.

Decides on Termination process.

Decides on contract monitoring process, reporting to council, etc.

Clerk to meet monthly with contractor, and to report quarterly to the Policy and Finance Committee.

Reviews personnel related issues (e.g. structure to manage contract). Understands whether at the end of Ground Maintenance contract there are ongoing TUPE obligations. In this case, when the contract ends, it does not.

TENDER TWO

Issue: Write out specification

Decide on whether you need a PQQ process – depends on size of tender.

Decide on evaluation process – panel, checklist, weighting to various factors, etc.

Do you wish to only go to people on approved contractors list or go to open tender.

Send out invitations to tender.

Action: Play area refurbishment/replacement

Advertises on website and on national portal for government contracts. Seeks out an opportunity to advertise alongside others advertising at the same time for play equipment at a national level, to gain bulk buying opportunity.

Requests known discount in tender for undertaking one playground or more than one.

Also contacts all known play equipment providers to ask if they have seen the tender.

Procurement for this new equipment is not an EU Tender, but is a high value item, so PQQ process is built in to evaluate financial status and previous contracts undertaken by bidders.

Decides on broad product type but not specifics of product (e.g. asks for swing suitable for disabled and able body use, but does not specify product name). Specifies

type of under-surface material – e.g. Rubber under-surface, grass matting, mulch, etc

Decides on risk allocations (assesses at what point does risk of site accidents transfer to contractor, then return to council).

Decides on payment schedule (25% up front then 75% on completion of contract, following snagging period of 6 weeks after completion).

Decides on dispute process and how to measure dissatisfaction levels with pieces of play equipment.

Decides on termination process.

Decides on contract monitoring process, reporting to council, etc.

Advises insurance company of new type of equipment and gets provisional quote.

EVALUATING TENDERS

PQQ

Issue: Pre-screening of bidders to determine whether they should become approved contractors.

Decide on criteria that will rule out bidders.

Action: Considers long term financial accounts of bidders.

Considers H&S record and procedures of bidders.

Considers references.

Considers whether org. structure of bidder meets requirements.

Considers location of tenderer as this is important to service delivery in ground maintenance contract.

Decides that only five out of eight interested parties who have submitted PQQ's on the ground maintenance contract will go forward to next stage of tendering as one has failed to produce two years of accounts, and two have not submitted references that are of good calibre.

Decides that all bidders on play equipment will go forward to next stage of tender, as all bidders are well established companies, with good financial track record, and two good references each.

RECEIVE QUOTES/TENDER BIDS

Issue: Opening evaluation process.

What criteria – price, service level, standard of build, local service, added value?

Notification to bidders.

Transparency of information to public.

Action: Evaluates in a panel consisting of all members of policy and finance committee as agreed earlier.

Decides on whom to appoint.

Notifies successful bidder and unsuccessful bidders.

Issues letter of appointment on play equipment refurbishment.

Issues contract to contractor for playground maintenance.

Advises public of who successful bidder is on website, and when the contract will start.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

MOBILISATION PERIOD AND INITIAL STARTING DATE

Issue: Does the contractor need time for mobilising prior to start date?

Review how on-going communications will work.

Define sticking points.

Consider health and safety implications.

Action: One-month built into tender as a mobilisation period for the ground maintenance contract, and start date before end of financial year for play equipment installation with completion date six weeks

thereafter.

Sets up meeting between affected staff and contractor.

MONITOR PROJECT

Issue: On-going or project end date?

Is a Service Level Agreement required?

Who will monitor?

What will be the reporting mechanism to council?

Snagging list review.

What are the criteria for a successful project?

Action: E.g. grounds maintenance and playground inspection and repairs are on-going. Installation of play equipment has a fixed end. Agrees clerk will meet monthly with ground maintenance contractor on site, to discuss issues of quality, out of spec job rate work etc. Reports snag list to contractor dealing with play area refurbishment. Ensure snag list is fixed.

E.g. use of playground increases number of complaints/complements on ground maintenance. Work always meets standard on ground maintenance (in this case set by council as an output standard rather than an input standard (e.g. grass always no longer than 2.5 centimetres rather than cut eight times a year).

Resources

CATEGORY BUYING GROUPS AND CONTACTS (CBC)

www.hants.gov.uk/cbc

CBC can offer a full range of appropriate frameworks through any one of the CBC member-authorities, with Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Kent in particular well placed to assist. CBC has links with parish councils in Hampshire.

The CBC website has a full overview of their work and information on CBC contracts. Additionally, the website will reveal full details of the local authorities in CBC and their contact details.

EASTERN SHIRES PURCHASING ORGANISATION (ESPO)

<http://www.espo.org>

ESPO is offering over 27,000 catalogue products and 150 frameworks. Providing vast framework opportunities to a wide number of customer sectors including:

- Education (nursery through to university)
- Local and central government (parish, borough and county councils)
- Emergency services and NHS
- Charities and social enterprises
- Wider public sector

Frameworks on offer include:

- Building and facilities management
- Energy
- Environmental services
- Food and catering
- Highways and vehicles
- ICT
- Hardware
- Professional services
- Social care and health

CROWN COMMERCIAL SERVICES (CCS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/crown-commercial-service>

Providing a range of innovative procurement solutions via category frameworks including:

- Communications
- Construction
- Energy
- Facilities management and property
- Fleet
- Learning and development
- Office solutions
- Print
- Professional services
- Research
- Travel

YORKSHIRE PURCHASING ORGANISATION (YPO)

www.ypo.co.uk
procurementservices@ypo.co.uk
01924 834 812 (David Bemrose)

YPO is a national public sector buying organisation providing customers easy access to over 30,000 catalogue products and free access to around 100 OJEU compliant framework contracts. YPO Procurement Services provides dedicated expertise for each of the contract categories to help you achieve better value for money in all areas of your expenditure and is also able to provide a comprehensive and flexible procurement support service.

Key categories include:

- Building maintenance
- Business services
- Education and learning
- Energy and energy solutions
- Facilities management
- Professional and financial services

- Fleet
- Food and catering
- Furniture and design service
- Highways
- HR services
- ICT
- Social care
- Waste management
- Work wear and PPE

NORTH EASTERN PURCHASING ORGANISATION (NEPO)

<https://www.qtegov.com>

Delivering nationally available frameworks to the public sector, which includes:

- Construction
- Corporate and professional services
- Facilities management
- Social Care

PORTAL

Portals work if you know exactly what you need. However, if you:

- are not clear on your exact procurement needs
- need help in writing a tender
- want advice and templates
- need help on working with EU regulations
- want to set up more professional procurement practices in your parish or get feedback on your existing practices
- or don't have time and want someone to source comparative quotes on any item

Further help is available from a number of sources. In addition, many principal authorities have procurement expertise that they may make available to parishes.

MILTON KEYNES SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

Milton Keynes Service Partnership can help whatever your tender requirements. If you have to deal with an OJEU contract, or just want to advertise locally, need help drawing up a specification or access to an e-tendering portal, or you simply need advice and help with your own tendering process.

<http://www.mksp.org.uk>
contracts@milton-keynes.gov.uk
 01908 254 688 // 01908 254 000

PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES

There are also some private sector companies that can provide advice and access to contracts for a fee.

Parish Council Purchasing Group

<http://pcpg.co.uk>

LEARN ABOUT HOW PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT OPERATES

Society of Procurement Officers

<http://www.sopo.org>

Local Government Association-National Procurement Strategy

www.lg-procurement.org.uk

Crown Commercial Services

<http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/i-am-buyer>

