

Procurement Policy

for

SERVING BRISTOL BETTER

Our aim

Our aim is to provide the citizens of Bristol and other service users with the right services in the right way at a competitive cost. The council is committed to the continuous improvement of all of our services whether we provide them directly or commission them from others, and to ensure that they support our corporate priorities of equalities, regeneration and sustainable development.

How we will achieve it

Services will be designed to meet customer needs now and as far as possible anticipate future needs. Consultation with users, non-users, interested groups and staff will form the basis of service development. In order to identify all the options for the service we will look at the full range of ways by which the service can be delivered, taking account of best practice, legislative changes, the current market and alternative ways to procure the service. We will have an open mind as to how a service might be provided and by whom.

In addition to services which are provided by council employees we already use a wide range of suppliers to provide services on our behalf. For example an Industrial and provident society has been established for the delivery of leisure and sports services in 8 swimming pools and 5 sports centres, and a private contractor provides the refuse collection service. As part of each best value review we will identify, as we have done previously, the most effective and efficient mechanism by which to deliver our services. It is not realistic to assume that we are, or can be, the best at providing all of the activities and services that the council is responsible for.

In determining how to deliver the service we will take full account of the opportunities for innovation and genuine partnership available from working with others in the public, voluntary and private sectors. This will include consideration of providers from community enterprises and cooperatives, known as *the third sector economy*. These are organisations which share our social values and objectives and which have their roots in local communities.

When we make a decision on the best option for future service delivery the choice will be based on an objective analysis of what has emerged from the review of the service. Considerations include the availability of skills and professional expertise, access to capital to meet investment requirements, and the ability to achieve economies of scale. Where competition is used the process will be fair and open and carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. Long term relationships with providers based on a effective partnership with shared objectives will be the basis of future arrangements.

Finally....

Procurement is not primarily about competition. It is about identifying the best way of delivering services which are designed to meet the needs of the people who use them.