

Winchester City Council

**Procurement Concordat
for
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises**

February 2007



Winchester City Council Procurement Concordat for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Introduction

Winchester City Council recognises the important contribution that small businesses can make to the delivery of public services and the vital role these businesses play in the national and local economy. We are committed to making the most of the benefits offered by them.

We are also committed to delivering locally the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government. This Strategy asks local authorities to adopt a small and medium sized enterprise (SME) friendly procurement concordat and to encourage a mixed range of suppliers in order to help develop and stimulate a varied and competitive marketplace. The concordat sets out the actions that a local authority will take to make its contracts more accessible to SMEs. Although the principles should relate to all SMEs, the concordat is particularly focused on small businesses of less than 50 employees.

This document is a statement of procurement principles to underpin and encourage effective trade between Winchester City Council and small businesses.

Underlying Principles

a) Best Value

Contracts are awarded in order to support the Best Value delivery of local government services. We will look for value for money through our procurement processes, and whole life costs will be taken into account where appropriate. (*WCC Procurement strategy 5.2*)

b) Wellbeing

We are committed to a socially responsible approach to procurement and will endeavour to enhance the well-being of our community through support for local businesses, SMEs, ethnic minority businesses and businesses operating in the voluntary and community sector. (*WCC Procurement strategy 5.4*)

c) Equality

All tender processes and contract awards will comply with EU Public Procurement Directives and the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency and our duties under UK law.

Local Authority Commitments

i) Procurement Strategy

The City Council has an agreed Procurement Strategy which includes commitments to:

- strengthening the role procurement plays in delivering the Council's objectives and its contribution to the Community Strategy, equality and sustainability;
- encouraging a diverse and competitive supply market, including small firms, social enterprises, ethnic minority businesses and voluntary and community sector suppliers;
- ensuring that our approach to individual contracts, including large contracts and framework agreements etc, is supported by a sound business case and options appraisal;
- involving SMEs in larger contracts wherever appropriate, and
- ensuring that all parties deal fairly with each other and with their sub-contractors, specialists and suppliers, in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation.

ii) Access to contract opportunities

- We will publish on our website:
 - ▶ guidance for suppliers on how to do business with the Council, and
 - ▶ details of forthcoming contract opportunities including relevant officer contact details.
- We will advertise contracts using an appropriate range of publications and other means in order to encourage greater diversity and competition.
- In addition, the Council is considering publishing contract opportunities in a South East business Portal by 2008.

iii) A positive and equitable procurement experience

- We will give potential suppliers an opportunity to discuss the procurement process in order to understand our requirements and assess their own suitability.
- We will ensure that the procurement process is fair to all, applying our own rules and policies consistently;
- We will work with prime contractors – both at tender stage and during the life of a contract – to establish the contribution that small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community sector suppliers

can play in the supply chain. We will provide details of our prime contractors on our website.

- We will keep the tender process as simple and fair as possible in order to help minimise the costs to suppliers, including:
 - ▶ ensuring that all tenderers have equal access to relevant information;
 - ▶ using a standard corporate wide questionnaire for any pre-qualification process, containing common core questions with limited bespoke additions for each contract;
 - ▶ working with regional and national partners to ensure a consistent approach to pre-qualification;
 - ▶ assessing potential suppliers against published pre-qualification and tender evaluation criteria, the scoring of which will reflect the characteristics of the individual contract. In particular the scoring relating to financial standing will not to be set to unreasonably exclude newer businesses, provided the Council's financial position is not prejudiced.
- We will create opportunities for meaningful feedback following the procurement process:
 - a) to suppliers in order that they can improve for future tenders, and
 - b) from suppliers, and their respective trade associations, to inform improvements to our tender processes.
- We will continue to publish a complaints procedure on the City Council's website at www.winchester.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/corporatecomplaints

iv) Good contract management

- We will treat suppliers openly and fairly. We will make clear to our suppliers and to those wishing to do business with us exactly what is expected of them.
- We will work in a positive way with our suppliers. They will:
 - ▶ be paid on time. No more than 30 days from receipt of an undisputed invoice;
 - ▶ receive honest and constructive feedback on the performance of their contract, and
 - ▶ be given notice of any performance problems and an opportunity, if appropriate, to put matters right.
- In turn, we will encourage our suppliers to pay any sub-contractors within thirty days from receipt of an undisputed invoice.

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY CONCORDAT

The Department for Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Association and Small Business Service are encouraging all local authorities to the Small Business Friendly Concordat. The Concordat is a voluntary, non-statutory document, and our signature not only demonstrates a pledge to engage actively with small businesses, but it also shows this authority's commitment to good procurement practices in general. We believe this will in turn help foster a professional approach to managing procurement in the Council and, in doing so, help us implement key strategic objectives and milestones in the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government.

Name of the authority: **Winchester City Council**

Signed by: 

Date: **1st February 2007**

Position in Local authority: **Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism**