

TELFORD COLLEGE

PROCUREMENT POLICY

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 Procurement involves acquiring goods, services and works from external parties. The primary requirement of this policy is that all procurement activities must prioritise value for money, defined as achieving the best balance of quality and effectiveness for the lowest cost throughout the lifespan of the goods or services, but with a revised impetus to provide the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT), based on social and environmental considerations being incorporated. All procurement evaluated under the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) principle will have published criteria and weightings in the Invitation to Tender (ITT). These may include price, quality, social value, sustainability, innovation and risk. The evaluation panel must score tenders against these criteria using a consistent scoring methodology.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1.1. This policy aims to empower budget holders to procure goods, services and works efficiently, effectively and economically through:
- **Transparency:** All procurement processes will be conducted openly and transparently to foster trust and accountability.
 - **Fairness:** All suppliers will be treated equitably, with no discrimination or favouritism in the procurement process.
 - **Value for Money:** Procurement decisions will focus on achieving the best possible outcome for the college in terms of quality, cost, and sustainability.
 - **Accountability:** Staff who procure goods and services are accountable for their procurement decisions and actions in accordance with this policy.
 - **Compliance:** Adhering to all relevant legislation including the updated Procurement Act 2023, , the Freedom of Information Act, the Anti-Bribery Act, the Modern Slavery Act, and Environmental legislation and any retained EU procurement legislation still in force where applicable, until superseded by UK legislation and the PCR 2015 where that still applies for the foreseeable future, and relevant College Policies including but not limited to the Financial Regulations and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policies.
- 2.1.2. NOTE - All goods and services procured must have budget holder approval prior to placing an order.

3. Sustainable Purchasing

- 3.1.1. Sustainability is increasingly recognised as a crucial aspect of procurement, and the Procurement Act 2023 typically incorporates sustainability considerations.
- 3.1.2. The College commits to environmentally and socially responsible purchasing practices. Therefore, prior to procurement, the following should be taken into consideration:
- Is the product/service necessary?
 - Can the need be fulfilled in alternative ways?
 - Is a more sustainable product available internally?
- 3.1.3. This means that when acquiring goods and services, consideration is given to broader impact on the environment, society and the economy. Key aspects include:
- **Environmental Impact:** Choosing products and services that minimize harm to the environment, such as those made from recycled materials or using renewable energy sources.
 - **Social Responsibility:** Ensuring that procurement practices support fair labour practices, human rights, and community well-being.
 - **Economic Sustainability:** Balancing cost effectiveness with long term economic benefits, such as supporting local business and sustainable supply chains

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1.1. The responsibility for procurement and achieving value for money sits with governors, managers and staff, not just restricted to those with resource or financial responsibilities.
- **Budget Holders:**
 - Carry out procurement activities in compliance with the Quotes and Tenders thresholds
 - Raising and authorisation of requests including purchase order requisition, single BACS requests and credit card payment requests.
 - Are not authorised to commit the College to any expenditure unless duly authorised through the procurement routes stated in this policy.
 - **Finance:**
 - Ensures procurement activities align with the approved budget, compliance with Financial Regulations and the Procurement Act 2023, and any other public sector procurement legislation still relevant.
 - Enforces procurement limits as defined within this policy
 - Director of Finance has oversight of all tendering activities.
 - **Governors:**
 - The Corporation approves the budget for the financial year, thus allocating funds and delegating authority to the Principal/CEO to make purchases from these funds via the College Leadership Team and Budget Holders.
 - **Internal Auditors:**
 - Ensure internal control and compliance is in place by carrying out audit and review summarising their findings in reports and make recommendations to improve the internal control environment for assurance purposes.

5. Suppliers

- 5.1.1. The Director of Finance ensures a standardised approach to procurement across the College. Where possible, purchases are to be made from approved suppliers list which is maintained and available from the Finance Department or on the ordering system to ensure all purchases and supplies undergo an approval process.
- 5.1.2. Approved suppliers are reviewed annually, and where instances of unsatisfactory performance are identified, suppliers will be removed from the list where appropriate once all other avenues for resolution have concluded. For suppliers not listed on the ordering system, contact the Finance Department to ensure a new supplier is appropriately checked and assessed for their appropriateness, prior to placing any order with them.
- 5.1.3. For maintenance and IT agreements, coordination with the relevant department is essential to leverage supplier capabilities and reduce costs while ensuring compatibility with existing systems.
- 5.1.4. Supplier capabilities must be assessed before awarding contracts. The Finance Department and purchasing consortium will review suppliers' terms to ensure they align with the College's interests.

6. Quotes and Tenders

- 6.1.1. A competitive arms length process and value for money are key drivers in the use of public funding. Therefore, the thresholds set out below detail how the College considers the above criterion is gained:
- **Under £10,000 (including VAT):** For purchases below £10,000, a simplified process which requires one competitive quote.
 - **£10,000 - £49,999 (including VAT):** A formal quotation process is required of a minimum of 3 quotes from different suppliers need to be obtained. These should be attached to the associated Purchase Order Requisitions and forwarded to Finance for audit and compliance purposes.
 - **£50,000 and above (including VAT):** This includes inviting formal tenders as outlined below and utilising the College's formal tender proformas, from at least three potential suppliers

appropriately identified. The process is overseen by the Director of Finance for audit and compliance purposes.

- 6.1.2. All purchase orders and invoices must specify the supplier details (name, address and VAT registration number where applicable) the quantity and nature of goods, services or works supplied, referencing any agreed prices, quotations, or tenders.
- 6.1.3. Under the Procurement Act 2023, there are provisions that acknowledge situations where obtaining multiple quotes for small contract values is not feasible due to the specialist nature or urgency of goods, services or works. Where this is the case, a Procurement Justification Form must be completed and retained in Finance, which addresses why other suppliers cannot meet the requirements. Criteria to cover includes:
 - **Clearly Documented Reasons:** Provide a detailed explanation of why obtaining multiple quotes was not feasible. This could include the uniqueness of the goods or services, the specific expertise required, or the lack of alternative suppliers.
 - **Specialist Skills or Qualifications:** Highlight any certifications, licenses, or unique skills that the chosen supplier possesses, which justify their selection.
 - **Market Research:** Where multiple quotes are not available, market research should be conducted and evidenced to demonstrate that the selected supplier is capable of providing the necessary goods, services or works at a reasonable price.
 - **Value for Money:** The procurement process must still aim to achieve value for money. This may involve considering factors such as quality, delivery timelines, social value inclusions and supplier reputation, in addition to cost.
- 6.1.4. Comparative **Analysis:** If applicable, compare the chosen supplier's pricing with any previous contracts or industry benchmarks. The aggregation rule in the Procurement Act 2023 refers to the principle that requires consideration of the total value of contracts over a specific period when determining the appropriate procurement procedure to follow.
- 6.1.5. For example, a contract for one year with an annual value of £40,000 would be a procured via the three quotes route. However, should the contract be for a four year period, the procurement value would be £160,000 and fall into the tender procurement route.
- 6.1.6. Please refer to the Quotes and Tenders thresholds above to ensure compliance with the appropriate route and contact the Finance department for further assistance should it be required.

7. Tendering Procedures

- 7.1.1. Competitive tendering is mandated for all procurement exceeding £50,000. The Chief Finance & Operating Officer must be notified of all tender activities which are added to the register of tenders - a single record source of tendering activity. Disclosure of tenders with a value exceeding £5million is mandatory. In addition, contracts exceeding £5million must contain a minimum of three KPIs which are actively monitored with the supplier. Contracts awarded with a value exceeding the publication threshold under the Procurement Act 2023 will be published on the central digital platform (e.g Contracts Finder) in accordance with legal requirements.
- 7.1.2. Unless a Framework tender is being used, Invitations To Tender (ITT) must be set out on the College's tender proforma and include at a minimum the project details, submission deadlines, and return instructions. All tender returns must be electronic submission and sent to the Procurement email address, unless otherwise agreed with the Director of Finance and stated in the invitation to tender. Pre submission questions regarding the tender can be submitted by prospective tenderers, however for transparency, the questions and responses must be available to all invitees.
- 7.1.3. Where appropriate, the College may undertake pre-market engagement in a fair and transparent manner to understand market capabilities or shape requirements. This will be conducted in line with the Procurement Act 2023 to avoid any distortion of competition.
- 7.1.4. Late submissions will not be considered unless there is clear evidence of a technical fault of fore majeure circumstances beyond the bidder's control, and only with prior approval from the Chief People, Finance & Operating Officer.

- 7.1.5. The minimum number of College staff included on a tender opening panel will be:
- The Director / Manager who is engaging the supplier / contractor, and
 - The Director of Finance
- 7.1.6. The opening process will include completion of the evaluation proforma which captures all aspects of the tender process as well as the predetermined criteria which has been set out in the invitation to tender.
- 7.1.7. All staff involved in procurement must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

8. Frameworks

- 8.1.1. The College has memberships with purchasing groups such as the Crescent Purchasing Consortium and ESPO which could have benefits in using them as they have already been pre-assessed for the suitability of the service provision and therefore in a position to go to contract much sooner should they be successful in their tender.
- 8.1.2. These frameworks are designed for the education sector and also provide templates for a tender process. For further details on CPC/ESPO frameworks, please contact the Director of Finance for assistance with utilisation of the Purchasing Frameworks.

9. Subcontracting

- 9.1.1. The Procurement Act 2023 addresses subcontracting relationships in several important ways to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with procurement standards. Where subcontracting is permitted, main contractors must declare any subcontracting arrangements at the time of tender, and ensure subcontractors comply with relevant policy standards including modern slavery, anti-bribery, and sustainability requirements. Subcontractor performance is subject to the same monitoring and reporting obligations.

Policy Review History

Version	Review Date	Reviewer	Reason for Review
6	September 2025	M Parry	Annual review