

Statement: PS09.01

Cabinet – 8 February 2022

Re: Agenda item 9 – Sustainable Procurement Strategy

Statement submitted by: Cllr Martin Fodor

I was invited to chair a Scrutiny Focus Group that was formed to review the proposed new Sustainable Procurement policy. This was a cross party and multi sector group [see membership in the report, Appendix B] which met twice to review and comment on the emerging policy.

We had the following Terms of Reference:

1. Collate feedback on the environmental requirements to go into tenders.
2. Seek feedback on the draft policy statement and were supported by the Lead officer and colleagues.

Our conclusions and recommendations

After briefing and extensive discussions over two meetings we agreed the following conclusions and recommendations:

Environmental requirements

- The focus group acknowledged the importance of addressing supply chain impacts in reducing BCC's environmental impacts.
- The group endorsed the policy and approach as set out to us.
- Some of the group emphasised that particular focus should be given to contracts with a significant environmental impact and that our approach will need to be flexible enough to deal with having a very limited choice of supplier - e.g. highways
- The group recommended that until there is a credible standard way of being carbon neutral or moving to carbon neutrality, then:
 1. Supplier responses would need to be qualitatively assessed by the Council and so should remain scored criteria rather than mandatory pass/fail
 2. BCC will need to be clear with suppliers what we're looking for in their responses
 3. The approach and what we're looking for might vary considerably from contract to contract as different issues matter for different goods and services.
- The group emphasised that we should be careful about adopting or accepting particular environmental standards in an immature situation, as some may not be credible (i.e. risk of labels used for "greenwashing").

- The Council recognise and expect that some cost implications may need to be accepted in order to implement the One City Climate and Ecological Emergency strategies. This could save revenue but cost capital.
- The group highlighted the importance of minimising red tape. As tender processes are already complex, one member was pleased to hear that only relevant requirements would be included. There was an emphasis to make it as easy as possible to reduce the risk of counter-productive effects by discouraging small local suppliers.
- Some of the group suggested there should be a clear “roadmap” of when requirements were expected to move to being scored or mandatory might help suppliers plan their adoption of particular measures. This should be in line with the timescale of being carbon neutral by 2030 including the supply chain.
- The group recommended that the progression to move requirements from information only to scored and scored to mandatory should be made explicit to suppliers and potential bidders.
- Some of the group highlighted that priority should be given to supporting local business with local manufacturing supply chains.

Sustainable Procurement Policy

- The group emphasised that the sustainable procurement policy and environmental requirements must be integrated into the contract management framework – and that it is ensured they remain integrated moving forwards.
- The group emphasised that it would benefit local suppliers if BCC and other neighbouring public bodies were able to take a common approach to environmental requirements in tenders. However it was recognised that whilst Bristol City Council can encourage this and collaborate, it’s not something the Council can decide on alone.
- The group voiced strong support for the new policy but recommended that we should learn from pioneers and share our learning if we are ahead of other organisations.
- Some minor amendments were suggested for clarity and coherence.

Support and guidance for prospective suppliers

- The group recommended that support and guidance should focus on the requirements that we will be mandating, as they could exclude suppliers. In addition, measures that are expected to become mandatory on a short timescale, as well as particularly critical measures such as carbon reduction should also be prioritised for supplier support.
- Some of the group emphasised that it is important to ensure this work is joined up with the wider one-city work so that it’s coherent with other work by

partners active in this area. It was recommended that where there are good resources already available these should be used or signposted where appropriate.

- Some of the group requested that sessions are held with suppliers to cover the new policy (when adopted), with a videoed session made available for people who could not attend.
- The group requested that when requirements are refreshed in future that Cllrs are given visibility and opportunity to comment on changes.
- Some of the group recommended that the sustainable Procurement policy should be considered as part of key decision process (Eco-impact assessment) to join up decisions and procurement practices.

Outcome

The group thanked the officers for their input and assistance and endorsed the revised Sustainable Procurement Policy, asking for these recommendations and points to be addressed.

I'm pleased to present these points to Cabinet so that the work can be noted and taken into account.