

Buckingham Town Council Sustainable Purchasing and Procurement Policy

1. Summary

Buckingham Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan includes a commitment to Buy local, fair-trade, recycled, plastic free, repairable and sustainable products wherever possible/available (Action 20)

The Council recognises the impact that our contracts may have on the environment and that the Council can influence sustainable practices and policy in our area. This policy and procedure explains how the Council will aim to incorporate sustainable procurement into tendering procedures and contracts.

Sustainable Procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services and works in a way that achieves value for money on a Whole Life Cost (WLC) basis. Sustainable procurement not only focuses on benefits to the organisation; but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment. It encompasses environmental sustainability, social value, ethics and equality.

Buckingham Town Council is committed to ensuring that sustainability is embedded throughout every level of the organisation and its operations.

A holistic approach is required when implementing a process to govern purchasing decisions. It is not enough just to consider what a product is made of and so the decision needs to be based on a lifecycle assessment.

2. General Approach

Although this will differ depending on the product being considered, the usual assessment considerations will be as follows:

SOURCING MATERIALS – IMPACT – Natural resource depletion, habitat damage

MANUFACTURE – IMPACT – Greenhouse gas emissions, Contamination of water supply, Effect on air quality

PACKAGING – IMPACT – Natural resource depletion, habitat damage, Greenhouse gas emission, increased landfill

TRANSPORT – IMPACT – Greenhouse gas emission, Effect on local air quality, Increase demand for petroleum

DISPOSAL – IMPACT – Habitat damage, visual intrusion, Increased burden on landfill

3. Questions to be considered

It would be impossible to completely eliminate all of the above impacts when selecting a product, but the aim is to try to make a purchase which removes as many as possible.

Making a purchasing decision can be broken down to several easy to follow steps and centre on the following principle:

Does the Council really need to buy the product at all? Does the Council have to buy new or does the product already exist within the organisation or local community? Could it be borrowed instead of bought?

If the product really does have to be bought, then the following steps will apply:

- I. Buy locally wherever possible. Local can either mean distributed from a local supplier or manufactured locally. A local distributor may have had the products they sell brought in from elsewhere but at least buying from them restricts the amount of miles that this product has travelled. Better still is a product made locally as this is likely to have less associated transport, be made using local ingredients and be sourced sustainably
- II. Check the credentials of the manufacturer or product. The Ethical Consumer website may be able to assist with this
- III. Check whether the manufacturer or product is associated with known environmental issues
- IV. Check whether the product requires certification. A number of sustainable products require certain standards or certification (such as FSC timber). If the product you are considering requires this, make sure that your purchasing choice does actually have the certification.
- V. Does the product require excessive transport in delivery? If it is not available locally, the closest option should be sought.
- VI. End of life options: can the product be recycled when it is no longer needed? If not try and find an alternative that can.

4. Fairtrade

Wherever possible, the Council will prefer Fairtrade products.