



Date agreed	Committee	Minute number	Renewal date
7 th July 2025	Resources	128/25	July 2028

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL PURCHASING AND PROCUREMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the framework and procedures by which Buckingham Town Council (BTC) procures goods, services and works. It ensures that all procurement activities comply with current legislation (including the Procurement Act 2023), deliver best value for money and support the Council's strategic goals, including its Climate Emergency Action Plan.

2. Procurement Policy Statement

- 2.1. In accordance with Section 12 of the Procurement Act 2023, Buckingham Town Council is committed to obtaining best value for money in all procurement activities.
- 2.2. This includes achieving the most advantageous balance of quality, whole-life cost and public benefit through fair, open and competitive processes.
- 2.3. When awarding contracts, the Council will:
 - Evaluate value for money based on whole-life cost, not just initial price.
 - Consider quality, sustainability, innovation, ethics and social value where appropriate.
 - Ensure effective, fair, and proportionate competition.
 - Maintain transparency through decision-making, procurement notices, and supplier feedback.

These principles ensure that public funds are used responsibly and for maximum community benefit.

3. BTC Financial Regulations

- 3.1. The Financial Regulations state that "Members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times."
- 3.2. Section 5.4 confirms that contracts above government thresholds must follow "The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation" - this is now the Procurement Act 2023.

- 3.3. This policy operates alongside and in compliance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

4. BTC procurement principles

- 4.1. In accordance with Section 13 of the Procurement Act 2023 Buckingham Town Council is committed to complying with the following procurement principles:

- Fair treatment of suppliers
- Open and fair competition
- Proportionality
- Transparency

These principles support achieving best value for money, by ensuring a competitive, accountable, and transparent procurement process.

5. Conflicts of interest

- 5.1. All procurement decisions must identify and mitigate any actual or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with Section 14 of the Procurement Act 2023. All Members and staff must understand their legal obligations and are expected to seek further training and guidance if they are in any doubt.

6. Dispute resolution mechanisms

- 6.1. BTC will comply with obligations under Section 18 of the Procurement Act 2023 including supplier feedback and dispute resolution requirements.

7. Quality and technical expertise

- 7.1. The Procurement Act recognises the importance of quality and technical expertise in evaluating value for money, especially for complex contracts. Officers and Members must assess whether suppliers have the capability and resources to deliver the required standards.

8. Climate emergency and social considerations

- 8.1. The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan guides procurement decisions. Consideration should be given to:

- Local, fair-trade, recycled, plastic-free, repairable, and sustainable products.
- Suppliers that support low-carbon supply chains and community benefits.

These considerations must align with the value for money requirement and must not unlawfully discriminate between suppliers, in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

9. Procurement Procedures by Contract Value

9.1. Thresholds are calculated on the total contract value over its **entire** lifespan, including options and possible extensions. Where there is any doubt on the contract total then use the higher value procedure.

9.2. **Up to £250 (Ex VAT)**

Staff may procure items in accordance with the scheme of delegation. Purchases must align with this policy and demonstrate value for money.

9.3. **£250 - £1000 (Ex VAT)**

Requires authorisation by designated staff under the scheme of delegation. Staff must assess offers using the principles in the policy.

9.4. **£1,000 ex VAT - £30,000 (Inc VAT)**

9.4.1 At least three estimates will be sought (above £3,000 these should be written quotes).

9.4.2. BTC Staff will assess as per the Procurement Policy Statement.

9.4.3 Where Full Council or a Committee are required to choose between quotations to purchase a product or service, Officers should provide a report to Members outlining the options, the business case for any recommendation and the technical proficiency/quality of the product.

9.4.4. The report will indicate whether each company is located within either a 10 mile radius of the BTC Office, a 30 Mile radius of the BTC Office or "not local".

9.4.5 Geographic proximity may be **considered** as part of a wider assessment of public benefit and environmental impact but not as a sole or determinative factor.

9.5. **£30,000 Inc VAT – up to the procurement regulations threshold (currently £214,904 Inc VAT).**

9.5.1. A formal tender process is required. The procedure will be managed as per the financial regulations.

9.5.2. Tender requirements will be specific to each project and published on the government Central Digital Platform (Find a Tender). Each tender will be scored against the tender requirements subjectively.

9.5.3. Officers will complete a debarment list check.

9.5.4. The highest-scoring tender should ordinarily be awarded the contract. If concerns arise about procedural quality, the process must

be repeated so all companies have a fair chance to bid against any revised criteria.

9.5.6 Section 13 of the Procurement Act 2023 requires the 'fair treatment of suppliers' and 'open and fair competition'. Failure to follow these requirements could result in legal challenges and the setting aside of procurement decisions.

9.6. **Over the procurement regulations threshold (currently £214,904 Inc VAT).**

9.6.1 Professional advice should be sought before the tender process is commenced.

9.6.2 Full competitive procedures and full compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 are required.

9.6.3 Section 13 of the Procurement Act 2023 requires the 'fair treatment of suppliers' and 'open and fair competition'. Failure to follow these requirements could result in legal challenges and the setting aside of procurement decisions.

9.6.4 A formal, open and competitive process must be followed, including the publication of notices and outcomes on statutory platforms.

9.6.5 The Council must comply with its obligations under Sections 13–18 of the Procurement Act 2023, including supplier transparency and dispute resolution mechanisms.

10. Public Access and Confidentiality

10.1. Unless the business to be conducted is of a confidential nature that requires the exclusion of the press and public in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, decisions of the Council and Committees should be held in public.

10.2. Companies that have provided quotes expect their bids to be kept confidential for commercial reasons. It is therefore not generally appropriate to publish information in or with the report which could link a bid or price to a particular company. The absence of company names in the report also avoids the risk of conscious or unconscious bias when considering options. It is expected that relevant research will have been undertaken by the Officer drafting the report

10.3. If a committee or Member considers that additional information regarding the companies is desirable it is recommended that this is discussed with the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

11. Review and Updates

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if required by legislative change. It should always reflect current legal obligations and best practices in public procurement.