

PURCHASING POWER

Issue 15

Summer 2005



www.norfolk.gov.uk

Procurement Training

Since the introduction of procurement NVQ's the Council has seen 17 members of staff enrol on the scheme. Some 2 years on we now have

- ◆ 2 employees who have attained NVQ level 2
- ◆ 2 employees who have attained NVQ level 3
- ◆ 6 employees who have attained NVQ level 4

Level 2 is for those who are fairly new to procurement or procurement only represents a small part of their duties.

Level 3 is for procurement staff at operational level where procurement represents most of their duties.

Level 4 is for those who operate at a tactical or strategic level and achievement at this level provides entry to the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply who represent the profession at all levels.

The duration of study required is approximately 18 months however this could be shorter but it is dependant on time available.

The Corporate Procurement Unit currently subsidises the scheme for each candidate however the candidates department is required to make a contribution to the costs and these are set out below.



NVQ level 2	£500
NVQ level 3	£600
NVQ level 4	£700

The programme has been very successful and the CPU has been able to provide these opportunities with the assistance of personnel from Children's Services and CTD.

The CPU is also able to offer training on:

- ◆ Procurement awareness
- ◆ Contract / Supplier Management
- ◆ Managing risk in procurement
- ◆ Negotiation skills
- ◆ Sustainability in procurement

If you would like to gain a recognised qualification in procurement or are interested in any of the courses above, why not give Colin Bottjer a call on 01603 222025 to find out more.

- ◆ Contracts - Work in progress
- ◆ Green light for Southwark
- ◆ Feedback from the FIMS clinics

- ◆ Procurement in Adult and Childrens Services
- ◆ One Anglia Rail rebate news
- ◆ ESPO news

Editorial

Welcome to this latest issue of **PURCHASING POWER**.

The main focus this time is on procurement training and the very successful NVQ programme, together with the introduction of professional procurement standards.

Our procurement focus this time is on Adult Social Services and Childrens Services. We also outline several contract updates, and there is news of 'One' Anglia Rail rebates for those of you who take regular business trips.

If you have a request for more information on a particular procurement issue or you would like to pass on your views about this newsletter, please do get in touch with us.

This newsletter is also available on the intranet. If you have any interesting articles or news items that could be included in future issues please let us know.

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Contracts - Work In Progress

Removal Services

ESPO are currently out to tender on behalf of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire County Councils for the provision of removal services. It expected that a formal contract will be established in time for the October 2005 edition of Dealing Direct.

A focus group has already provided ESPO with a draft specification for the type of contract required, including turnover information and a list of companies who currently provide these services to the authority.

IT Maintenance Contract

CPU recently hosted a meeting with a representative of the ESPO ICT Group and Peter Azulay and John Connor of Charles House Services. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the options for a contract for the maintenance of IT equipment. The current arrangement with Norsk Data expires at the end of September and ESPO have been invited to tender Norfolk's requirement. ESPO are currently drafting an Invitation to Tender document and a project timetable.

Contract News

ESPO Contract 113 - IT Related Goods and Services

ESPO have now let the above contract from 1 April 2005. The contract was too late to catch the April - September edition of Dealing Direct but a contract broad sheet, listing the suppliers, product groups and the contract terms, is available from CPU. Please call 01603 222820 to request a copy.

Tim Howard
01603 222820

A green light for Southwark



I have recently spent three days at the London Borough of Southwark doing a peer review of their waste management procurement. The Government has introduced peer review as a method of ensuring the quality and success of major projects and it is often necessary to gain grant approvals.

Stage reviews happen at key points in projects. These are called 'gateways'. The idea is to quality assure a project before moving onto the next stage. Will the project still meet corporate objectives? Is it being resourced properly? Are we ready to move on to the next stage? - are some of the questions asked. I was part of a 4Ps team that went into Southwark to do a Gate stage 2 review that looked at their readiness for the actual competitive tendering process.

When the waste management project was originally scoped, 4Ps, a government body that supports local government procurement projects, was asked by Southwark to do an initial Gate 0 Gateway. A gate 0 review is a review of the suggested approach to a project and the outline business case.

The results of the gate 0 review gave Southwark some excellent pointers of what needed to be addressed if they wanted success, i.e. a clear outcome specification of what they wanted to achieve, stakeholder buy-in, a dedicated project manager and good project management procedures.

Southwark has large areas of deprivation, 60% social housing mostly high-rise and English is the second language of a majority of residents. Up until a couple of years ago they had one of the poorest waste recycling rates in the country but have since quadrupled their recycling and, further, set themselves very stiff targets above those required nationally for minimising, recycling and recovering waste.



The waste management project is for a completely integrated waste management contract (from educating people not to produce waste through to the collection, treatment and disposal of that which cannot be minimised) and will cost around £40m.

Southwark responded well to the recommendations of the gate 0 review and, it is in no small way due to that, that they were able to submit an excellent outline business case to DEFRA and received PFI funding.

At gate 2, we found the project team had researched their market well and striven to meet and speak to all the key players in the waste treatment market. They did this through an open day held before inviting expressions of interest but also by being active at DEFRA working parties etc and networking. They had strong member and chief officer support represented by a project board that empowered the project team to get on with the project, reporting back only at key milestones.

They had done their homework about the best way to engage the market and identified the key risks to such a project, and, by forethought, mitigated those risks as far as possible.

Their new corporate procurement unit had laid down protocols for various levels of procurement and the protocol for strategic procurement (an on-line toolkit of what to do and why) was very helpful.

One of the major factors in mitigating risk to the project was their search for, and purchase of, a site in the borough that is to be leased to the prospective supplier. This is key as so much risk lies around land and planning issues in waste projects.

Continued overleaf . . .

A green light for Southwark (continued)

They found an industrial site designated in their urban plan where, actually, building a waste facility would enhance the area because the Council will decontaminate the site and put in good road infrastructure and access and services.

Parts of the land unneeded for the treatment plant will be used for waste related businesses and a further bonus is releasing land from their current waste depot to be sold for housing and shops near to the Elephant and Castle regeneration site.

The procurement proved very attractive to suppliers and all key players expressed an interest. It is not only the forethought around site acquisition that attracted bidders but also the clear definition of the Council's outcome requirements and constraints applying.

Suppliers were encouraged to come forward with a fully integrated solution for the Borough which meant a supplier would succeed or fail only through their own capabilities. This reduces the risk for them as they have total responsibility for service delivery.

Southwark are managing the whole procurement as a programme, e.g. the site acquisition, the PFI and, most importantly, change management of the service operations and they are using Prince 2 to do so. This means a very complicated project can be kept in control and various workstreams and key players co-ordinated.

We were very impressed with what we saw - we interviewed councillors, chief officers, all levels of the project team and managers and unions and perceived a real and widespread knowledge of what was trying to be achieved and that everyone was pulling in the same direction.

We gave them a green light based on the traffic light system.

An amber would have meant there were issues that need to be addressed in the next stage, whereas a red light would have meant the project should progress no further until certain key things were put right.

Southwark have programmed in Gateways as their external project assurance and were obviously happy to be given the green light. They were ready, however, to respond to any findings as they said they were willing to accept any help toward improvement. 4Ps will go in again at preferred bidder stage, before contract agreement, to further assure the project.

I found serving as a 4Ps gateway reviewer very rewarding. The system only works because practitioners in different fields are prepared to come forward and share their knowledge as reviewers. You act in a team of three and the leader is always very experienced in the review process. I would say I have learned a lot from the experience and another team member said he was taking away many valuable lessons for his authority.

If you want to know more about gateways, log onto the 4Ps web site, www.4ps.co.uk. Gateways are also being adapted on a regional basis and a simplified gateway process is being adopted by many authorities for their smaller projects. Peer review can be very helpful and rewarding for everyone concerned. Why not think about a peer review for your project?

For further information contact me,

Wendy Baker
01603 223861.



Procurement Code of Ethics

Norfolk County Council via the Corporate Procurement Panel has adopted a code of ethics for staff involved in procurement. This code has been taken from the professional body representing procurement the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply.

Those who hold either corporate or affiliate membership of the institute will already be familiar with this code as they have already signed up to it when registering with the institute.

Moving forward, the plan is for those who are not currently members of the institute should adopt the same ethical standards as those who are.

The standards are as follows:

1. Procurement professionals and members of the Institute undertake to work to exceed the expectations of the following Code and will regard the Code as the basis of best conduct in the Purchasing and Supply profession.
2. Members should seek the commitment of their employer to the Code and seek to achieve widespread acceptance of it amongst their fellow employees.
3. Members should raise any matter of concern of an ethical nature with their immediate supervisor or another senior colleague if appropriate, irrespective of whether it is explicitly addressed in the Code.

Principles

4. Members shall always seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the Purchasing and Supply profession and will always act professionally and selflessly by:
 - a. maintaining the highest possible standard of integrity in all their business relationships both inside and outside the organisations where they work;

- b. rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper and never using their authority for personal gain;
- c. enhancing the proficiency and stature of the profession by acquiring and maintaining current technical knowledge and the highest standards of ethical behaviour;
- d. fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
- e. optimising the use of resources which they influence and for which they are responsible to provide the maximum benefit to their employing organisation;
- f. complying both with the letter and the spirit of:

- i. **the law of the country in which they practise;**
- ii. **Institute guidance on professional practice;**
- iii. **contractual obligations;**

Members should never allow themselves to be deflected from these principles.

Guidance

5. In applying these principles, staff & members should follow the guidance set out below:
 1. **Declaration of interest** - Any personal interest, which may affect or be seen by others to affect an officer's impartiality in any matter relevant to his or her duties, should be declared.
 2. **Confidentiality and accuracy of information** - The confidentiality of information received in the course of duty should be respected and should never be used for personal gain.

Continued overleaf . . .

Procurement Code of Ethics (continued)

Information given in the course of duty should be honest and clear.

3. **Competition** - The nature and length of contracts and business relationships with suppliers can vary according to circumstances. These should always be constructed to ensure deliverables and benefits. Arrangements, which might in the long term prevent the effective operation of fair competition, should be avoided.
4. **Business gifts** - Business gifts, other than items of very small intrinsic value such as business diaries or calendars, should not be accepted.
5. **Hospitality** - The recipient should not allow him or herself to be influenced or be perceived by others to have been influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting hospitality.

The frequency and scale of hospitality accepted should be managed openly and with care and should not be greater than the member's employer is able to reciprocate.

Decisions and Advice

6. When it is not easy to decide between what is and is not acceptable, advice should be sought from the member's line manager, another senior colleague or the Institute as appropriate.

Advice on any aspect of the Code is available from the Corporate Procurement Unit or the Institute.

Colin Bottjer
01603 222025

Whistleblowing policy

In order to ensure the highest standards of behaviour from its Members and Officers, the Council has a policy to ensure people's concerns about them can be raised without the fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

It is called our whistleblowing policy and it is available not only to employees but to our suppliers as well.

Suppliers to the Council or fellow employees may be the first to realise there is something seriously wrong that needs to be brought to the attention of the Council's proper officers.



The policy can be found from the intranet front page corporate list or direct at http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/dla/whistleblowing_title.htm

Do have a look and familiarise yourself with it

Procurement in Adult Social Services, and Children and Families

The section is based at County Hall and currently supports some 4500 people across the County working in Community Care Services, Learning Disabilities, Children Services, Mental Health and Performance and Resources. There are approximately 120 establishments throughout the county ranging from Residential Homes, Housing with Care Schemes, Offices, and Day Care Centres. Support is also given to Lone Workers such as Homecare Workers.

Lesley Lambert, Senior Procurement Officer, heads the team which is involved in the Commissioning of premises, providing all equipment required and the Decommissioning of all premises arranging the emptying of all equipment and the reallocation/storage/disposal of the same.

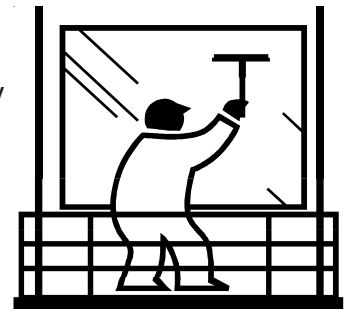
They advise Responsible Budget Officers on the supply of goods and services appropriate to their requirements, and are also involved in the negotiation of supply contracts and the implementation of iProcurement within the Department. The team have a responsibility to ensure that all Procurement regulations are met and Norfolk County Council Standing Orders are adhered to. Lesley is very happy to meet with staff in establishments to give a Procurement Overview to ensure that all these guidelines are being met.

Each member of the team specialises in a particular aspect of our service as outlined below but all of us are willing to help where we can.

Lesley Lambert, who can be contacted on 01603 223086, manages the team on a daily basis. She is the Departmental Liaison Officer for ESPO and negotiates Supply and Service contracts. She supervises the Capital Programmes purchases and budget control.

Graham Abbott controls the furniture and equipment stores and coordinates specific contracts such as portable appliance testing,

gas service, lifting equipment, grounds maintenance, laundry equipment and window cleaning. Please contact Graham on 01603 222098.



Vanessa Ash co-ordinates fire fighting equipment, protective clothing, linen hire, incontinence products and meals on wheels equipment requirements. Please contact Vanessa on 01603 223088.

Both Graham and Vanessa advise and guide RBOs in the purchasing of goods and services and also purchase furniture and equipment for Capital Schemes and coordinating bulk purchases. They are also involved in commissioning and decommissioning of premises.

Lisa Steptoe co-ordinates the contract for mobile phones, including purchasing, repairs, upgrades. She also specialises in iProcurement for the Department. Lisa coordinates requests for water coolers and provides procurement assistance to both Graham and Vanessa. Please contact Lisa on 01603 223089.

Jane Chilvers, processes the printing requisitions for departmental establishments, stationery for County Hall and co-ordinates the issue of controlled stationery. She maintains stock of printed matter and stationery and coordinates the deliveries to establishments. Please contact Jane on 01603 223085.

Peter Richardson processes accident and violent incident report forms, BT and mobile phone invoices. He assists Jane despatching orders and provides administrative support to the Premises and Procurement team. Peter can be contacted on 01603 223084.

One Anglia Rail Rebate News

As a result of negotiations conducted in 2003/04 by Stuart Hutchinson of the Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) and One Anglia Railways, Norfolk County Council now receives a yearly incentive rebate from One Anglia.

The rebate is based on 10% of NCC's annual spend with Anglia Railways. The rebate is paid in the form of carnet tickets, which allow unlimited travel for one day on One Anglia lines (which now includes the Cambridge to London line, as well as the Norwich to London line and other local area stations such as Gt. Yarmouth, Lowestoft etc.).

There are no travel time restrictions on carnet tickets, provided all journeys take place on one day.

Each carnet ticket is valued at £58, which is approximately 10% below the price of a standard open return ticket between Norwich and London.

The first rebate was paid in April 2004 and amounted to **320** carnet tickets, which equates to **£18,560** worth of free business travel. This year's rebate was paid in April 2005 and amounted to **450** carnet tickets, which equates to **£26,100** worth of free business travel. Usually, carnet tickets are valid for use within a six-month period but this year One Anglia have agreed to extend the period that the rebate carnet tickets are valid for, to just over nine months.

As you can see, this rebate arrangement provides NCC with a substantial amount of free travel and is especially pleasing when you consider that prior to this arrangement being negotiated, two years ago, NCC received no rebate whatsoever from One Anglia.

The rebate arrangement represents a very good value for money saving for NCC, particularly as incentive rebates are usually around the 3-5% mark and this arrangement is based on a 10% rebate.

Moreover, because One Anglia hold the franchise for the East Anglia to London routes they are, effectively, in a monopoly situation, so we don't really have the option of taking our business elsewhere. Which just goes to show that, by adopting the right approach, it is possible to negotiate good deals even in a "sole supplier" situation.



When these rebates are received the tickets are distributed amongst the various departments that utilise rail services, according to the percentage of spend each department contributed to the overall yearly NCC spend. The only proviso is that if a department thinks they are unlikely to use all of their

allocation before the expiry date, they return any unused carnets to CPU who will reallocate them to ensure that all of the NCC rebate tickets are used within their use by dates.

This worked very well last year (46 carnet tickets were reallocated - which means that the vast majority of the tickets were used by the department they were originally distributed to) and via this arrangement we were able to ensure that none of the rebate tickets were wasted.

Carnet tickets represent best value when used for a return London journey. But it should be remembered that they offer unlimited travel on One Anglia Railways for one day. This means that the journey could start from any station within the One Anglia network.

One Anglia Rail Rebate News

So, if you are due to take a business trip to London for NCC and would like to utilise one of these *free* rebate carnet tickets please contact the relevant member of staff for your department - as per the list below.

Chief Executives	Susan Speakman	01603 - 222954
Education	Janet Evans	01603 - 222282
Social Services	Gillian Pointer	01603 - 223068
Planning & Transport	Sylvia Hughes	01603 - 222622
Cultural Services	Julie Ward	01603 - 223342
NPS	David Myhill	01603 - 224299
NCS	Lucy Fawbert	01603 - 228953
Norfolk Fire Service	Alison Watts	01603 - 819725

For further details about the information contained in this article please contact me on the number given below.

Stuart Hutchinson, 01603-222740

ESPO News



Purchasing a vehicle ? ...ESPO can help!

When you call ESPO, you may already have a good idea of the specification(s) and/or performance of the vehicle(s) you require.

ESPO purchases around £20m of vehicles every year; with the benefit of aggregation across our Member Authorities and beyond, we are able to negotiate contracts with manufacturers and dealers that you in isolation could not achieve. In other words, you will benefit from the fleet discounts we are able to obtain on behalf of our member and other authorities.

Contract arrangements with major suppliers of popular vehicles are already in place, so when you ask ESPO for a price, we can respond swiftly with a firm quotation.

We purchase vehicles on behalf of a wide range of customers from Norfolk County Services and Planning & Transportation at a corporate level to individual schools, colleges and universities.

BUYING MINIBUSES

- Minibuses (up to 17 seats) can be driven on an ordinary car licence making them ideal for educational and welfare groups who do not employ professional drivers.

- Advice on the types of minibus available (8-17 seaters) and the various seating plans you can choose from.

- Arranging the fitting of towbars, roof-racks, tachographs, easy clean vinyl seating, non-slip flooring and other accessories.

- Other options to consider include high roofs or passenger lift (to enable safe and easy carriage of people in wheelchairs).

- All makes are supplied including Citroen, Fiat, Ford, Iveco, LDV, Mercedes, Peugeot, Renault, Vauxhall and VW. We can advise whether a factory built minibus, van conversion or a coach built vehicle may best suit.

ESPO can advise on the budgetary, cash flow and tax implications of daily rental, outright purchase, contract hire, and leasing schemes and arrange quotations for consideration of each option.

ESPO has a range of contracts in place to assist you after you have purchased your vehicle.

- **Supply and fit of tyres**
- **Replacement of windscreens and other vehicle glass**
- **Self drive vehicle hire**
- **Refuelling options**

These contract details can be found in our latest ESPO Dealing Direct catalogue and also on the website www.espodealingdirect.org

To obtain a copy of the latest Dealing Direct catalogue call **0116 265 7927**.

For further information contact one of the ESPO Vehicles contacts below:

Contacts at ESPO

Kevin Matthews	Group Buyer	0116 265 7936	k.matthews@espo.org	Steve Warren	Vehicles	0116 265 7854	s.warren@espo.org
Alan Hind	Highway Materials	0116 265 7853	a.hind@espo.org	Steve Blewitt	Vehicles	0116 265 7974	s.blewitt@espo.org

Children's Services

Procurement Training

CPU held a procurement training session in April for the Early Years team of Children's Services. Staff said that the half day session gave them a broader understanding of the council's procurement objectives, policies and procedures. We hope more training events will take place in the future with other sections.

Healthy Eating in Schools

Healthy eating in schools has always been a concern for the Children's Services Department and the Procurement Unit work closely with Norfolk County Services and other caterers to improve the quality and nutritional content of the meals.

NCS provides meals for the majority of our primary schools and over half the high schools in the county. Chris Cope, Operations and Purchasing Manager for NCS, outlines their food purchasing policy below:

Norfolk County Services Purchasing

Over the last 2 to 3 years the style of menu for the schools in Norfolk has dramatically changed. The popular processed and shaped chicken dinosaurs, turkey twizzlers, chicken moons and many others have disappeared from the menu to be replaced by home cooked dishes such as spaghetti bolognese, tomato pasta and chilli con carne.

Many schools have moved over to using fresh meat purchased from a local Norwich catering butcher, P.J. Rooft, instead of frozen meat. They have also moved over to more fresh vegetables such as carrots, cabbage and cauliflower.

Two years ago the government introduced minimal nutritional standards to try and improve the quality of school meals.



These were not very prescriptive and did not go far enough to improve the standards however they were a start.

Then came Jamie Oliver and he has revolutionised school meals. This is the springboard that was needed to really shake up the service. Norfolk had been doing this for the last 2 years – however we realised we still had work to do. Improvements have been made and we are continually striving to be even better.

Norfolk currently spends 55p on primary school meal food, considerably more than the quoted 37p in the press. All of our contracts are regularly tendered and we work closely with Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation on the tender process. Our 2 main contracts are with Danish Bacon Company for provisions and Brakes for frozen food and chilled food. Our other main contracts are for fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, dairy goods and cleaning materials.

Local sourcing is the other current topic and we work closely with our suppliers to ensure local sourcing wherever possible. About 75% of our fresh produce is actually sourced from East Anglia. The future demands more home cooked dishes, more local sourcing and possibly organic produce. All this is excellent for the customers (the children) however it will incur additional cost in staff needing more hours and training, higher cost of ingredients and closer monitoring for due diligence.

We wait with interest to see what money is forthcoming from the £220m promised by Ruth Kelly for school meal funding.

If schools have any views or concerns they would like to share, we would welcome comments on meals:

Maureen.dewath@norfolk.gov.uk or
Richard.pendlebury@norfolk.gov.uk

Maureen Dewath
01603 223491

A cautionary tale, women's logic and Gershon

Yesterday I was reading how much the Government reckon public service have saved already in the first year of Gershon efficiencies and this made me think of my experiences last month.

Having a week's holiday, I took the opportunity to go shopping for clothes. I am not renowned for my sartorial elegance but things were getting decidedly tired-looking and we were still in that awful period where summer clothes are not a option and I was running out of things to wear.



In addition, I felt we should apply this saving to the next urgent-most need that was for him to take me out for meal. He did not seem very pleased or to be able to follow my logic. He did not know I was going shopping and had not expected to spend anything from the household budget.

Anyway, because the clothes were such a bargain and having spent a considerable time trunching from one shop to another, I had not tried on the clothes. Getting them home and having a quiet time to myself, I tried them on in turn.

One skirt, a beauty that I loved was a bit of an impulse buy. I still love it but it can only really be worn in the evening and I was supposed to be shopping for office wear. Another skirt, again very nice, turned out to be quite long - it will look OK in the winter but rather silly for the coming time.

The third skirt was a bit on the short side and mutton dressed as lamb came to mind. So really none of them was appropriate for what I wanted.

Still I was very pleased with the jacket (but I already have several jackets that would have done the same job).

What about the tops then. I was short of tops - surely I had bargains here! One of them did not really suit me but I have found a skirt it goes with and it does not look too bad (it was supposed to go with the skirts I bought but looked awful with them - the idea was to have everything colour co-ordinated so I could mix and match but everything seemed slightly different shades and did not really go together).

One blouse was very good - I hoped it would wash OK, it is seesucker and you know what a devil that is to make look anything once you have washed it (it shrunk!). Another was a tee-shirt which quite frankly I could have got equally or more cheaply from Tesco.



The final blouse I thought was my coup d'etat. I had been looking for some time for a top to go with a particular skirt. The colour was out of fashion but I like the skirt and was so pleased to at last find a top that matched. I wore it for work, pleased as punch but opened my coat on arrival to find all the cute pearl buttons had slipped out of the button holes and I was exposed to the world! Rushing to the loo, I managed to staple myself together for the rest of the day and now have some sewing to do. As I hate sewing, it will probably languish unsewn forever. While I have my needle out, should I shorten the long skirt and do something about the one that does not quite fit round the waist?? NO!!!!!!!!!!

A cautionary tale, women's logic and Gershon *(continued)*

So I am feeling pretty let down. My £130 spend plus £80 saving does not seem so exciting now. I spent some £30 on my trip into the city on bus fares, coffee and lunch, so in fact it cost me £160 when you think about it and what have I got to show for it?

I should have had a good look round before-hand to see what was about (what shops had what and what was good quality and real value for money) and certainly tried and tested my purchases. I was carried away with the euphoria of saving. Savings are all very fine but we should still buy only what is really needed and what are good quality, fit for the purpose goods and ensure the stuff is not too highly priced before 'savings' are knocked off. When is a saving not a saving?

I admire those people in departments who purchase on behalf of the council - they do this tricky task day in day out. They, among a host of things, ensure we have good food for our school children (and we do despite what Jamie Oliver says), manage care in the community schemes so people have everything they need, buy everything needed for our award- winning museums or ensure construction supplies and services get to our establishments and roads just in time.

This shopping lark is not as easy as it looks! Hats off to them who get it right for us.

Please contact **Wendy Baker**, (for advice on how to buy anything except clothes!)

01603 223861.

Early indications are that ESPO delivers best value



The Corporate Procurement Unit has been conducting a benchmarking exercise on a basket of goods supplied to the Council over the past 12 months. This exercise is carried out every year and ensures that the Council achieves best value on its purchases of commodity goods.

ESPO prices were compared against 3 similar organisations in the private sector and so far the savings range from between 16 and 24%.

The categories of goods benchmarked were General Stationery, Cleaning Disposables, Paper and Printer Cartridges.

Not many organisations are able to cover the range of goods ESPO delivers and a lot of those who do are reliant upon their suppliers holding stocks for them.

Colin Bottjer

01603 222025

If you need this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the Department of Finance on 01603 223488 (minicom 223833) and we will do our best to help.