

Norfolk County Council's Sustainable Procurement Project

We are just beginning in earnest to move forward on our Sustainable Procurement Project. Both Chief Officer Group (COG) and the Corporate Procurement Panel (CPP) have agreed and are supporting our action plan and the project is being sponsored by Peter Hawes, Managing Director of Norfolk County Services and I am the project manager. Sustainable procurement is about integrating the principles of sustainability into all county council procurement projects and ensuring supplies, services and works are sustainable.

Sustainability is about more than environmental issues, although these are very important. It includes social and economic issues also, and balancing the demands that each make. The Government's Sustainable Procurement Taskforce (SPTF) defined sustainable procurement as;

'a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.'



Newcastle is the other pilot authority helping to progress sustainable public procurement

Following agreement by the COG in August 2006 that Norfolk County Council act as one of the two national pilot authorities with Newcastle City Council to work with Regional Centres of Excellence to progress sustainable public procurement, a workshop was successfully completed involving contributions from all departments, together with support from ESPO and the RCE East.

This workshop evaluated the SPTF Flexible Framework, which sets out targets for local authorities to achieve by 2009. The Government's goal is to be recognised as amongst the leaders in sustainable procurement across the EU.

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Comments

Welcome to our latest newsletter.

As you can see we lead with the progress of the Sustainable Procurement Project.

We have included more money-saving tips, an important i-Proc update, WEEE news and the latest on the TNT postal services contract.

Also included is a very interesting article about Norfolk museums and heritage partnership.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter. Any feedback (good or bad) is most welcome.

The Corporate Procurement Unit would like wish you all the best for 2008!

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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Contract news

ESPO Contract 282 – Office Furniture

Since 1 July, there has been a new contract for office furniture. The primary supplier is a company called Desk Link who submitted the most competitive tender for the contract. However, to ensure continuity of supply for items of furniture like Lee and Plumptre and Symmetry, Millar West and Saber Daynes have been retained as secondary suppliers.

The Desk Link catalogue is on the i-proc portal but catalogues are available from the Corporate Procurement Unit if you want to see their extended range. The main contact at Desk Link is Alan Bugler and he can be contacted on:

Tel: 01495 711777
Mobile: 07970 219018
E-Mail: alanbugler@desklink.co.uk



ESPO Contact 272D – Digital Photocopiers

Konica – Sole Supplier for Norfolk

Konica Minolta Business Solutions East Ltd has been appointed as sole supplier for digital photocopiers to the end of the current contract period in March 2008.



Since coming onto the ESPO contract in 2001, Konica have grown their share of the copier population in Norfolk to the point where they are now the single largest supplier, both corporately and in schools. Their success has been based on providing reliable equipment, excellent back up and maintenance support, and free user training.

Konica have committed a great deal of resource to the Norfolk area, emphasised by the fully equipped showroom established on the Thorpe Business Park on Meridian Way. This means customers can go along and see a demonstration of the machines they are thinking of renting.

Latest price schedules are available from the Corporate Procurement Unit. Greg Wright is the Norfolk Regional Sales Manager and can be contacted on: 01603 703040. Mobile: 07714 221755

Tim Howard (MCIPS)

Norfolk County Council's Sustainable Procurement Project

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The output from the workshop was a recognition that we have already achieved a lot but not in a joined up way and we need to repackage, re-label and improve some of our current practice. But more importantly we need to define our strategy and vision and bring all our procurement decision makers up to speed in the sustainable choices they can make.

For example, building evaluation of sustainability benefits into the front end of our procurement to enable both evidencing and prioritisation a major tool for doing this is to look at the whole-life cost of the procurement not just the tendered price. Cost is not only assessed in money terms but also in terms of putting value to social, economic and environmental impacts. Several organisations and agencies are currently working to develop measurement frameworks and metrics to enable balanced evaluation of these factors in procurement projects.

This represents ongoing development of the Council's procurement and is not something new for us but we need a coordinated approach and high-level leadership. The workshop enabled an understanding of the aspirations and realistic targets for the Council to aim for between now and 2009, and the action plan below to achieve those goals.

This initiative also supports three of our Corporate Objectives, namely to protect and sustain the environment, lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the development of the Norfolk economy and to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector, whilst also supporting our organisational objective to deliver excellence and ensure good Value for Money.

The CPA/CAA requirements for 2008 have been issued and those for 2009 are being consulted on, and in light of the imminent Local Government strategy in response to the SPTF Action Plan, discussions are underway with the Audit Commission as to the inclusion of sustainable procurement requirements.

Although this will be a light touch in 2008 the requirements on authorities to progress this agenda will be quite challenging in 2009. Norfolk County Council has already made significant progress in individual projects, sustainable approaches need to be mainstreamed across the organisation in line with a corporate vision, sustainability policies, a sustainability strategy and sustainability training and awareness. The ten most important actions for the project to undertake to achieve this are listed below

1. Identify a SP champion, who is in the procurement process that can act as facilitator and project manager.
2. Organise for Key staff to receive SP training
3. A package to be developed at two levels: Overview for those involved in the process - Detailed for procurement professionals
4. Build understanding of values and objectives – and decide on 'what is the appetite of the organisation'
5. Create and co-ordinate a corporate vision
6. Develop and produce a corporate strategy to be endorsed by the CEO and Chief Officer Group
7. Set out and translate Policies into actions with service specific applications
8. Orchestrate a common approach
9. Undertake a detailed supplier analysis to ID key suppliers who need to be targeted to know what is expected re sustainability
10. Develop and produce a detailed timeline and action plan and resource allocation

So we've got a lot to do but the benefits we can gain for Norfolk are within our grasp if we can all work together with a common goal.

Jane Waring, Head of CPU

i-Procurement update

Hello. My name is Alan Chappell and I recently took up the position of e-Procurement Manager, within Corporate Procurement Unit

I have worked in local government for approximately 20 years now, with a strong background Systems (resolving issues and developing both functional and business processes) and more recently in Procure to Pay, where I was responsible for implementing both the Oracle Payables module and the Core Purchasing module as part of the FIMS Project.

This role also presented me with the opportunity to build effective working relations with CPU, improving/developing the business and system processes within i-Procurement (i-Proc), right through to supplier invoice payments.

Now having settled into a well established, professional team, it is my intention to carry on the already successful implementation of i-Proc and continue development of e-procurement methods throughout Norfolk County Council.

I also intend making best use out of the Buyers forums, and i-Proc Refresher training sessions, which are so well established and which hopefully so many of you have benefited from. Having recently instigated departmental review meetings, to better understand the issues we currently face, and armed with an invaluable e-proc team, along with the important support of our Buyers, I am confident we can continue moving forward.

Statistics provide extremely encouraging news, but we must not get complacent. The target for 2007-08 is to place £150m of spend through the system, so there is still some way to go.

Hence a report was recently taken to COG on the 23rd August, which detailed the take up of i-Proc. This report was requested by David White and follows what is now to be a monthly report to COG as part of a performance monitoring meeting, monitoring progress by Departments in achieving the i-Proc target for the year (see above).

COG strongly endorsed the proposal to have a further push on i-Proc and strongly endorsed the use of i-Proc as the way we will be procuring our goods and services.

This has also received backing from FMG, the result of which is that CPU will be working even more closely with Departments to draw up Departmental Action Plans, to identify ways of increasing take-up, improving performance and identifying mechanisms for monitoring this.

In addition work has also commenced on reviewing the exemptions to i-Proc, which will eventually result in a new corporate list which will allow NCC to benchmark its i-Proc activity.

Other news of current system developments is the imminent upgrade on Oracle to 11.5.10. This is a necessary update to ensure Norfolk remains on a platform still supported by Oracle. But what does this mean to you?

Statistics.....

Total spend through I-Proc in 2006/07	£40.1m
Total spend to date in 2007/08 (as at end of July)	£75.5m

i-Procurement update continued

The release of this version provides many functional enhancements that will improve the experience of requisitioners, financial line managers, approvers and professional purchasers (Buyers) alike. Some of the benefits you will receive are:

- a single checkout process: Standard, Express and Power, have been consolidated into one checkout process.
- Users can also save the requisition at any time during the checkout process.
- Smart forms
- Enhanced information templates, which can be assigned to specific categories or suppliers.
- Full life-cycle information of the requisition right through to payment (ie requisitioners can now view information relating to purchase orders, receipts, invoices and payments from i-Proc.
- Many of the screens/layouts have been improved to be more user friendly.

To help the transition into 11.5.10, user guides will be issued and training will be provided. We also anticipate asking each Department to ensure that between two and four people will attend two official Oracle training courses, looking at the procure to pay life cycle, and a more focused course looking solely at i-Proc. It is our intention that these courses will provide sufficient skills and knowledge on Oracle to create Departmental champions, people who are armed with the information and training to support your departmental i-Proc needs.

If you are not sure who to contact regarding i-Proc, please contact your departmental representative as outlined below:

Dept	Name	Number
ASSD	Lesley Lambert	01603 223086
CEX	Sue Speakman	01603 222954
CEX	Howard Collins	01603 228899
CH	Richard Pendlebury	01603 222039
CH	Tim Wilby	01603 222494
CSD	Julie Ward	01603 223342
CSD	Jo Springall	01603 22 2152
FIRE	Grant Fogg	01603 810351
FIRE	Steve Woodgate	01603 810351
P&T	Trevor Dye	01603 222723
P&T	Andrew Skiggs	01603 223182
FIN	Alan Chappell	01603 224429
FIN	Mark Fisher	01603 222590
FIN	Louise Mijatovic	01603 224468

Rail Ticket Booking - NCC Staff

NCC staff who regularly undertake business travel by rail may already be aware of how the booking system works. However, for those staff who only occasionally need to book business related rail travel, this article will act as an overview of the system and also indicate how value for money savings can be made if you are able to book rail travel in advance.

The system we have adopted is to have specific rail travel bookers located in each department. Some departments (such as Chief Executives and Children's Services) have also adopted an on-line rail booking form, via the intranet or their departmental websites. The advantage of having specific departmental bookers is that they become very familiar with the booking process and build a relationship with the One Rail booking staff. This system also ensures that rail tickets are correctly accounted for and logged against the relevant budget codes etc.

There is no detrimental impact on delivery times by using this system as (when orders are placed) tickets can be sent straight from One Rail to any of our outlying offices or, if necessary, be collected from the appropriate One Rail station - providing the traveller makes it clear to the booker where they want the tickets sent.

Please see below for a list of current departmental rail bookers.

Adult Social Services	-	Gillian Pointer
Chief Executives	-	Susan Speakman
Children's Services	-	Zoe Harris
Cultural Services	-	Julie Ward
Fire Service	-	Alison Watts
Norfolk County Services	-	Holly Banfield
Norfolk Property Services	-	David Myhill
Planning &Transportation	-	P&T Registry

When making a rail booking via one of the departmental contacts, it is important that the traveller gives the booker as much information as possible about travel times, as this will enable the booker to get the best priced ticket available for the circumstances of travel.

If you can be fairly specific about what time you will be travelling and can book in advance, then we will sometimes be able to buy rail tickets for London from as little as £6 each way. Obviously you may not always be able to book in advance, or be certain about what time trains you will be utilising, for example if the duration of a meeting in London is not known. However, it is quite important, from a value for money perspective, that we take advantage of the lower priced tickets whenever we can. So, please ensure you give the booker all the relevant information when you are able to be a bit more specific about travelling times.

If you are unable to be specific about travel times, then an "open" ticket will be booked for you and - as with most other forms of private enterprise travel - "open" tickets tend to be the higher priced tickets. **Please see the flyer, inserted in this issue of Purchasing Power, for further details of advance purchase availability on Norwich to London rail services.** Please bear in mind that availability will depend on how many other travellers have already booked the lower price tickets, when you make your booking.

If you have any questions about this article please contact me or, alternatively, your departmental booker.

Stuart Hutchinson 01603 222740 Email: stuart.hutchinson@norfolk.gov.uk

Go green - Go GREENlife

ESPO recently listed the Greenlife Ball Point Pens in their catalogue.

They are available in Medium Blue and Medium black.

With a paper barrel the pen is 66% recycled and at only £2.54 for 50 these pens can help your budget as well as the environment!



BIFFA refuse collection

Please note that the current price via the ESPO contract with Biffa per 1100 litre bin is £6.71. This covers bin rental, waste transfer notes, Duty of Care etc.



If you have been charged **any** additional amounts please contact Dale Parker at Biffa on 07768 546 486 to request a credit.

Biffa also offer a recycling service in Norfolk and requests for this can also be made direct to Dale Parker on the above number quoting ESPO Contract 379.

Curtains, Blinds, Flooring

If you are planning to purchase any of the above in the near future? Then using "the company we used last time" may not mean you are getting a competitive price or Best Value. ESPO have a fully tendered arrangement for all these services and a catalogue with details in. To order a catalogue please contact 0116 265 7927 and quote Code 133043

The suppliers on the Contract offer FREE advice, measuring service and samples. Something to remember for next time!

Get help to reduce your phone bill

Many schools are finding they can make big savings on their phone bill by switching to ESPO Contract 7.

With per second billing and no additional charges for paying by cheque, schools can request advice and a FREE phone bill comparison by



calling ESPO
Norfolk Account
Manager Peter
Legend on
07787 128778.

Bespoke Rubber Stamps

We are pleased to advise that following the recent tendering process, Contract 163 for rubber stamps has again been awarded to **Stamps Direct Ltd** a local Norfolk company.

Custom made rubber stamps, daters, numberers etc can be made to order and delivered direct to you. For an up to date catalogue and pricelist please phone 01603 634407 or email norw@stampsdirect.co.uk quoting ESPO Contract 163.

WEEE news

We said we would get back to you on new regulations regarding WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment). Purchasers need to take account of the WEEE directive when negotiating contracts for electrical and electronic equipment (EEE). You can EITHER

- enforce the duty *the producer* has under the WEEE regulations, i.e. to fund the recycling, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of old for new WEEE through a producer compliance scheme

OR

- negotiate better terms for purchasing excluding the disposal of WEEE if you have access to satisfactory disposal facilities that you wish to use.

You are able to require the producer to dispose of your WEEE free of charge through a producer compliance scheme if:

- it was sold to you **after** 13 August 2005

AND

- you are **replacing** it with new equivalent EEE.

In these circumstances the producer through a producer's compliance scheme is responsible for the WEEE. Your EEE retailer/distributor can give you information on any producer-financed take-back system available to you.

BUT

You must **arrange** and **pay** for the disposal of WEEE at an **approved authorised treatment facility** (AATF) if:

- you are discarding EEE which was purchased **before** 13 August 2005, and are **not replacing** it with equivalent EEE
- you cannot trace the producer or their compliance scheme
- you are purchasing new EEE and you choose, through negotiation with the producer, to accept the future costs of treating and disposing of it.

You will have to arrange and pay for transport to the facility by a licenced waste carrier unless they include this in their overall price. You may also have to pay for any take back scheme/transport of WEEE to a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS) as the producer is only responsible for actual disposal costs not for transporting it to the facility.



WEEE news (continued)

Where can I find information about where I can dispose of non-household WEEE?

If replaced by buying new EEE then the producer should advertise means of disposal of the appropriate old for new WEEE. The producer may have an arrangement with a local retailer for a take back system or collection service.

Where WEEE is not being replaced by a new purchase, WEEE should not be disposed of in ordinary household wheelie bins or mixed with other trade waste but should be disposed of separately through a waste collector's bulk disposal service.



What is the role of ESPO in all this?

ESPO is a distributor. Producers of the EEE sold via ESPO should furnish ESPO with their 'producer registration number' to assure ESPO they are registered in the UK, a member of a Producer Compliance Scheme and working to EEE design requirements.

As part of the supply chain for non-household EEE, ESPO may be asked by producers of EEE and end users to help them discharge their duties under the regulations but actually they have no obligation in relation to their sales of non-household EEE. ESPO will help advertise producers' arrangements for take-back or collection points where new EEE is sold to replace old but the cost will fall on the producer or end user for this service. ESPO will be required to supply customers with details of suppliers' Producer Compliance Scheme.



Unfortunately although all suppliers are now legally required to be registered with a PCS not many have relayed this information to ESPO and ESPO will be contacting suppliers and compiling a list by supplier of these schemes initially for stock and X items only.

Do ESPO provide an old for new take back service?

Small items may go back to ESPO if sold through the store or if they have an arrangement with a framework supplier. ESPO will classify what they will take back – batteries, fans etc and advertise it in the catalogue or in frameworks.



Norfolk Museums and Heritage Partnership

The Norfolk Museums and Heritage Partnership is a partnership of 11 heritage organisations sharing an £8.5 million programme that came to an end this year. Our projects ranged from capital projects rebuilding entire museums, galleries and gardens, through to community projects providing libraries, databases, exhibitions and events for both local residents and tourists.

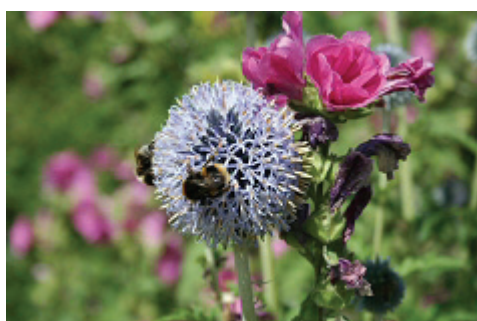
Over the last 3 years we have brought 37 new jobs to Norfolk, refurbished 8,500 square metres of historic visitor attractions and increased visitor numbers by almost 150,000.

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service took the lead in securing £2.8 million from the European Regional Development Fund's (ERDF) Objective 2 programme. The strategic theme of the partnership was to improve the heritage sector's tourism offer in Norfolk, working towards its sustainability and to ensure competitiveness for the future. In Objective 2 terms, improving the tourism offer in Norfolk meant alternative forms of tourism, situated in less popular areas and out of the traditional tourist season. Apart from the sustainability of the museums themselves, the programme would enhance employment opportunities throughout the County.

ERDF Objective 2 funds are only eligible within certain disadvantaged areas. Luckily 5 of Norfolk County Council's Museums/projects were located in these areas – after extensive, planning and consultation, another 6 museum and heritage attractions joined the programme. These included small voluntary run organisations such as the Fisherman's Heritage Centre in Sheringham and the Charles Burrell Museum in Thetford, to town museums such as Swaffham Museum.



CHARLES BURRELL MUSEUM, THETFORD



The Norfolk Historic Building's Trust came on board as a partner with their restoration of Nelson's Monument as did the North Norfolk Railway with the creation of their new museum the William Marriott Museum. The final partner, the British Trust for Ornithology was perhaps an unusual choice, but with a restoration project of their 12th century Nunnery Headquarters with new accessible wildlife gardens they proved to be an extremely valuable partner.

By packaging together 11 partners each with their own very different development project the partnership approach allowed us to pull together more match funding which in turn maximised the Objective 2 potential. It provided more outputs and allowed elements to be included which might not be eligible as stand alone projects.

The final programme value stands at £8.5 million. When the original bid was submitted the total value was just £7.5 million. Over the last three years increasing numbers of funds and funders have come on board. Many have seen how successful the partnership has become and have provided funds or increased their commitments.

Norfolk Museums and Heritage Partnership continued

The concept of Partnership has brought so much to the programme. Most importantly in terms of monetary value but it has also allowed greater flexibility, the opportunity to share knowledge and learning and has allowed small organisations to become part of something bigger than they ever imagined. For example the Charles Burrell Museum received just 290 visitors in 2003 – by the end of the programme they had enjoyed a record year with over 4,000 visitors. The capacity building programme for the museum's volunteers has ensured a now professional and sustainable future for the museum.

The last three years haven't all been plain sailing. In the latter part of 2005 we were very behind with our spending and Government Office were beginning to get concerned. As with any capital project we came across delays – partners were finding wells all over the place and during the project we found 8 in all. These delayed building works, roofs were found to be unstable and needed urgent repair, planning processes delayed us and we got into legal wrangles with architects. All these combined meant that at one stage we were over £1 million behind in our spending which risked loss of funding.

All the partners pulled together in a big push to increase spend as quickly as possible. Projects were brought forward and goods that we could purchase early were procured and paid for, then stored until they were required. The partnership approach brought us real dividends during this time.

The BTO project was part of a much bigger development at their head office where they were using their own funds to extend offices and create a library. The flexibility of our funding coupled with the partnership effect meant they could claim for the other work that had been completed already. This allowed us to catch up on our underspend and it also meant additional outputs, a win-win situation for all.

To successfully bring in an £8.5 million programme on time and to budget is no mean feat, especially when you are dealing with 14th century timber framed buildings and grade 1 listed monuments. Not only did we spend our budget and finish on time but we also massively increased our outputs required by GO East. This represents real value for money and something the partners are very proud of.

None of this success would have been possible were it not for the support and management from NCC and NMAS. With a central management team, a rigorous governance structure and involvement from senior officers and members, elements of risk and budget were always dealt with effectively and efficiently.

NCC processes and procedures such as recruitment and procurement ensured our activities were carried out with the upmost rigour and fairness satisfying even the most ardent auditor!

The Norfolk Museums & Heritage Partnership really has created a lasting legacy, not only in improving museums and delivering high quality public services, but also in the firm and supportive relationships that the partnership has engendered.



NELSON'S MONUMENT, GREAT YARMOUTH

Ellacombe 14 Bedroom refurbishment project

The following article is to give a brief overview of the procurement process in Adult Social Services, within this type of project.

Ellacombe, in Ella Rd, Norwich, was originally a local authority residential home, with 2 wings leased to the Norfolk & Waveney Mental Health partnership NHS Trust during September 1996 – September 2005.



When the NHS vacated these 2 wings, Adult Social Services decided to provide 14 high dependency beds

that would comply with the Commission for Social Care Inspection standards and the disability discrimination act. Each room is to have en-suite toilet, and some fitted with ceiling hoists.

Our role within the premises and procurement team was primarily to purchase the appropriate furniture, and equipment, and to ensure that it was on site, and available to use within the project time scales. This would have initially involved discussions with Chris Murphy, the establishment manager; care staff, the architect, suppliers, and other interested professionals. Residents were also consulted throughout the programme.



When buying for this type of scheme we have to take into account the specific needs of our users. This has implications in the colour of the fabrics that we select, and the height of the seating that we use within the project.

Studies in dementia have shown that the grey blue colours are the first colours to be lost; hence we go for bright vibrant colours such as yellow, or red.

Ellacombe project continued

However, these colours also have to look good with the décor of the ceilings carpets, and curtains. We have also found it useful to purchase chairs with different seat heights, to suit the different height of users.

The project will become the home of our users, therefore we have to purchase much of the equipment that we would like to have in our own homes. Purchasing from the various ESPO dealing direct contracts, we purchased items such as wide screen televisions, digital CD, dab radios, patient hoists, bedroom furniture, dining furniture, curtains and bedding.



During any project orders may have to be amended to meet changing circumstances and monitored to ensure delivery dates are achieved. Because of the limited access to the site deliveries needed to be spread over the week prior to completion.

On the day of delivery we have to ensure we have adequate numbers of staff to receive, unpack and place the equipment within the rooms. Although many suppliers will provide this type of service, it can come at a considerable additional cost.

The equipment was delivered without any problems, within budget, and installed on time. One small surprise was that all the bedroom furniture handles were screwed to the inside of the units, to prevent damage in transit. We can confirm it takes considerable time to unscrew the handle, and refit to the front of 14 suites of bedroom furniture!

Due to the hard work of everybody involved, the project looks fantastic. When walking around the refurbished wings, many visitors have been heard to say that they feel they are in a new building, rather than one that has been refurbished.

Graham Abbott
Procurement Officer
Adult Social Services



Contract

Following the deregulation of postal services in January 2006, Norfolk County Council took the decision to send second-class mail, posted from County Hall, via a private contractor in order to realise savings and improve efficiency. The contract was awarded to TNT Post following a full procurement exercise undertaken by ESPO on our behalf. Implementation began on the 2nd October 2006 starting with the 7 main Departments based at County Hall.

Although, at present, TNT cannot handle all our second-class mail, what can be handled will save the council approximately 20% in postal rates alone. At the moment, they will not handle any mail over 100g or envelopes with handwritten addresses or incomplete addresses (i.e. no postcode). Currently mail in these categories is still being sent via Royal Mail. However, in order to maximise the potential savings, we obviously need to send as much as possible via the TNT contract.

To help us to use TNT for as much of our post as possible, your post room staff would appreciate your co-operation with the following:

- Use either printed envelopes, printed labels or window envelopes (ensuring that no other print appears below the address in the window)
- Always have the postcode as the last line of the address.
- Please use DL (22cm x 11cm), C5 (23cm x 16cm) or C4 (32cm x 23cm (approx)) sized envelopes where possible. If using C4, ensure the envelope is addressed in 'portrait' layout.
- The window envelopes present the address in the correct location
- Insert your letter ensuring that it fits the envelope securely and does not move around obscuring the address (however, do not overfill the envelope as this will take it above the acceptable weight)

Please let staff in the post room know in advance when you intend sending a mailshot, so you can discuss the correct method of addressing envelopes.

The contract we have entered into with TNT guarantees a 3-day delivery period so, obviously, anything genuinely urgent will still need to be sent 1st Class via Royal Mail for next day delivery. However, please consider carefully whether your item is genuinely urgent or whether it could be sent via TNT. The contract has been operating in County Hall for approximately 10 months and, while we had a few operational issues to sort out in the early days, is now running successfully.

Finally, in order to help clarify some of the points above, and to help with achieving the potential savings identified through using this contract, a corporate Postal Services Policy has been written to guide officers and to encourage them to think about the most cost effective way of sending mail.

http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/documents/corporate_policy_on_mail.doc.

Should you have any questions that are not answered by the Policy, your Departmental Post Room staff will be happy to help.

Can you rely on key suppliers in an emergency situation?

Have you identified the suppliers that are key to the continuation of your crucial core services? If one of your department's suppliers were impacted by an incident, would your department be significantly affected? Could the supplier supply you with the uninterrupted service you require?

Where a contract or procurement requirement involves a key area of supply or service, consideration should be given to what Business Continuity Plans (BCP) the supplier has in place. Critical suppliers you may need to utilise should be named in your BCP with up to date contact details and you should have an assurance from that supplier that they will respond and be available in the case of an emergency. The current advice from the Audit Commission is that you should:

“Require evidence that key suppliers (particularly where there is a unique service, which may not be procured in the open market) themselves have BCP's in place such that if a major incident befell them, disruption to the Council would be kept to a minimum”

Departments should think carefully about the crucial suppliers or contractors needed to give an immediate response in an emergency or who carry out a service for the Council where vulnerable users need immediate support, be it a continuation of that service or some form of information and assurance for clients.

Evidence that the supplier has suitable Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery plans in place that meet our needs should cover a range of issues such as fire, flood, loss of staff, loss of power and any other issues that would affect the ability of the business to function. Their plans, together with documented evidence that plans are reviewed and tested at least annually, should be made available for evaluation, particularly during a tendering exercise if they are bidding for a new contract.



Where suppliers or contractors may be called upon only to give a second wave response, i.e. to ensure services are up and running after the immediate crisis has been dealt with, assurances from them of support, by way of a statement of intent to quickly respond to our needs, is sufficient.

They should state how they will assure the goods or services are available when needed. This is a particularly important if they are a unique supplier of the goods and services required.

Further help and advice about business continuity can be obtained from your departmental lead or from Emma Tipple, Corporate Business Continuity Manager on 01603 224404. For advice about tendering processes and supplier evaluation phone the CPU helpline 01603 222820.

How well do you know your partners?

When drawing up a contract with new partners or considering tender applications what are the things you think about?

Can they do the job?

Are they qualified?

Do they have experience?

Are they affordable?

Will they do it on time?

But one area you may not think about that is just as important is:

Will they do it safely?

Why is this important? Surely it is their responsibility to undertake the work safely?

In short the answer to this is **NO** even if you are using one of our known partner organisations.



As a public authority it is important that the companies that undertake work for us, and represent us share our values, and this includes doing the job in a safe manner. By contracting out some of our work or by getting partners involved in the work that we do does not mean our legal responsibilities diminish. We need to make sure that right from the beginning we are asking the right questions. This means that as part of the procurement process we should be asking questions about potential contractor's safety record and their approach to working safely.

As a minimum we should be asking routine questions within the tender application form. For more complex works or where there is a specific legal responsibility more detailed information and even proof of safety claims should be sought.

Examples of questions include:

1. Does the company have a Health & Safety policy?
2. When was the health and safety policy last reviewed?
3. Do you have a health and safety training programme for employees?
4. Do you routinely carry out risk assessments?
5. Do you have an accident reporting and investigation system?
6. Do you use sub contractors?
7. Do you monitor sub contractors safety performance?
8. Has your company been served with an enforcement notice or been prosecuted in the past 3 years for breaches of health & safety legislation? Please provide details.
9. Have you had any insurance claims relating to safety issues against your company in the last 3 years?

How well do you know your partners? continued

In addition some specialist works within the project will need to be completed by firms that are specifically qualified or licensed to undertake such works. It is important that you seek proof that your chosen contractor is so qualified before agreeing a contract with them.

There is a code for contractors available on the intranet: [HR - Intranet | Code of Practice](#) which provides more detailed advice.

For more information and advice contact your departmental safety advisor or Derryth Wright Corporate Health and Safety Manager.

Project Inform - Electronic Document and Record Management

Do you have difficulty finding a document ?

As part of its investment in managing information, one of our important assets, NCC is about to procure a system for managing electronic records. This system will manage all electronic documents and records throughout their lifecycle, from capture, through 'trusted record-keeping', to eventual destruction or permanent preservation, while retaining integrity, authenticity and accessibility. In addition it will support the use of consistent policies, standards and frameworks for managing information across NCC that will facilitate joined-up working and good business practice.

The project, known as Project Inform, is part of the ICT Medium Term Plan. The ICT MTP has recognised that this project cannot deliver unless it implements changes to the way people work. The project is therefore a business change project and not an IT systems implementation project.

When implemented YOU will be able to:

- Write a document only once as you will be able to find it again easily and use others to help you to initially create a document
- Find it quickly through 'Google'-like search facilities
- Share it easily work with others in a secure environment whether internal or external partners fully respecting security and access rights
- Store it safely in a managed and backed-up repository fully implementing our records management policies
- Fully discharge your responsibilities as a Public Servant by being given all the tools you need to record the business of NCC

Watch out for further information about Information Management and this exciting project that will have an impact on all of us. For further information please see http://intranet.Norfolk.gov.uk/cex/ICT/Information_Management/default.htm

Local Conference Venues

As many of you will be aware, it can sometimes be difficult to book meeting rooms at County Hall and other NCC locations. This can be because they have already been booked or are not suitable for the style of conference, or the number of attendees - particularly when guests are arriving from further afield, given the pressure on car park spaces at County Hall. But it can also be because you need a venue further in the North, South or East of the county. This means it is sometimes necessary to book outside conference venues.

In general, we tend to book local conference venues directly with the venues themselves, rather than through our hotel and conferencing agents Travelocity. There is nothing wrong with this and we have always made Travelocity aware that they are unlikely to get local conference business from us, for a number of reasons, including:

- Our staff's superior local knowledge of the county and transportation options.
- Our staff's knowledge of local venues.
- Being as Travelocity are based in Stockport they would effectively do a post code search to find a conference venue. Whilst this will reveal the distance in miles from the required location, it will not necessarily reveal how easy/difficult it is to get to. As we all know, road and rail links and travel options are not always as numerous in Norfolk as in other parts of the country - which is why local knowledge is important.

If we were booking conferences in other locations outside of Norfolk, where we might have less knowledge of the local area, we would still book those through Travelocity.

Up until now we have not struck any deals with local conference venues.

However, Corporate Procurement have recently been visiting the local conference venues we most regularly use to negotiate better terms.

The basis of these negotiations is a competitive room hire rate - bearing in mind the facilities on

offer at the venue - but also an annual rebate based on NCC's total level of business with that venue.

These rebates, once received, will be apportioned amongst departments according to their percentage level of the overall NCC spend. All NCC departments and NCS, NPS and Norfolk Fire are included in these deals.



Local Conference Venues continued

Details of which conference venues have already agreed a deal can be found on the Children's Services website <http://intranet.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk/> under A-Z, Conference Venues (please read the details carefully). Further venues will be added as more negotiations are concluded. Obviously we have started with the venues that represent the highest level of spend by NCC but, in due course, we will look to negotiate with venues further down the "spend" list and also to get better coverage across the county.

The aim of this exercise is not to take business away from NCC meeting and conference rooms, it is more a case of getting better value for money when we do have to book outside conference venues. Because the rebates will go directly back to the departments making the bookings, individual departments can make budget savings by taking advantage of the negotiated deals.



We are not suggesting you *must* use the venues but presuming the price and location is right we would encourage you to do so, from a value for money viewpoint. The long-term plan is to establish a framework agreement with a number of local conference venues in the county. This will only be possible if we can reduce the number of local conference venues we currently use to a manageable amount. If we can achieve this it would mean that, when it comes to tendering for the framework, the potential level of business is greater for suppliers (and therefore of more interest) which should also result in better room rates and higher levels of discounts.

Of course at the point we go out to tender it will be "open" for any local conference venue to bid but obviously we would expect those we have negotiated with to be interested in bidding. However, as an interim measure these negotiated arrangements will offer a better degree of value for money while also allowing us to ascertain whether a framework agreement for this service is feasible.

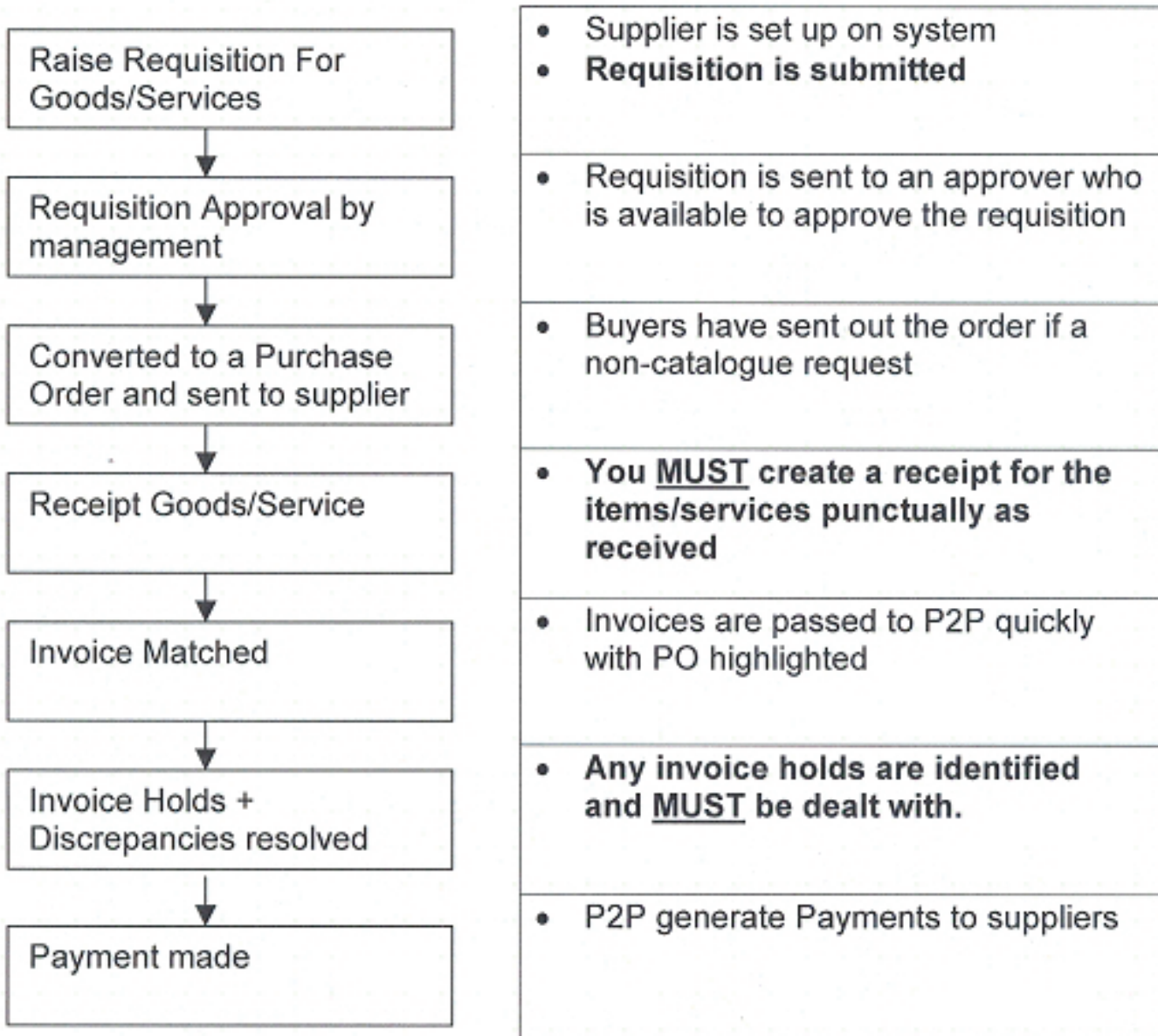
Stuart Hutchinson, 01603 222740
Corporate Procurement Unit



Please take note if you use a laminator! A new plastic coated paper is available which may save you lots of time and money. Not only is it tough, it is waterproof too and can be used in normal printers. Please contact Petrina Plumstead on 01603 223213 for further details.

End to End Purchase Order Process: IProcurement

The diagram below shows the End-to-End IProcurement Purchasing Process on the left. On the right are the areas that a Requisitioner should be aware of at each of these stages. They may be required to take some action to move the process on to the next stage.



Stop Press:

Have you seen the new National Sustainable Producers catalogue? It includes microgeneration, energy saving, recycled and parts management producers. This exciting new catalogue has been produced by ESPO on behalf of Pro4. for a copy please contact customer services at ESPO on 01162 657927.

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.