

HYNDBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SMALL BUSINESS CONCORDAT

INTRODUCTION

We recognise the important contribution that small businesses can make to the delivery of public services and the vital role these businesses can play in the national and local economy. We are committed to making the most of the benefits offered by them.

We wish to encourage a mixed range of suppliers to the Council in order to help develop and stimulate a varied and competitive marketplace. This concordat sets out the actions that we will take to make our contracts more accessible to small and medium size businesses.

This concordat is particularly focused on small businesses of less than 50 employees.

OUR COMMITMENT

Procurement strategy

We will publish a procurement strategy that will set out our commitment to:

- The role procurement plays in delivering the Council's objectives and its contribution to the community strategy, workforce issues, diversity, equality and sustainability;
- Encouraging a diverse and competitive supply market, including small firms, social enterprises, ethnic minority businesses and voluntary and community sector suppliers;
- Ensuring our approach to individual contracts, including large contracts and framework agreements, is supported by a sound business case and options appraisal;
- Ensuring that, where we decide that the best value option is to aggregate supply or let a longer term contract or framework agreement, we will invite bidders to demonstrate their track record in achieving value for money through effective use of the supply chain;
- Considering the role of SME specialist suppliers in delivering elements of larger contracts and framework agreement.

Access to contract opportunities

We will publish on our website:

- Guidance to suppliers on how to do business with the Council
- Details of forthcoming tender opportunities
- Contact details for each contract

Details of our key suppliers

- We will advertise contracts where practicable. We will use a range of publications and other means in order to encourage greater diversity and competition;
- We will give potential suppliers and opportunity to discuss procurement in order to understand our requirements and assess their suitability. Nothing will be done however that would give a particular business or provider an unfair advantage in competing for a specific contract;
- We will work with contractors to establish the contribution that small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community sector suppliers can play in the supply chain.

Fair tender processes

- We will apply our own rules and policies fairly;
- At pre-tender stage and during the tender process we will ensure that all tenderers have equal access to relevant information;
- We will keep the tender process as simple as possible in order to help minimise the cost to suppliers;
- If a pre-qualification stage is used we will use a Council wide pre-qualification questionnaire containing common core questions with limited bespoke additions for each contract. We will work with regional and national partners to ensure a consistent approach to pre-qualification;
- We will assess potential suppliers against published pre-qualification tender evaluation criteria. These criteria will be proportionate to the risks of the particular contract. The criteria relating to financial standing will not be set to unreasonably exclude newer businesses.

Feedback

- We will offer meaningful feedback to suppliers following the procurement process in order that suppliers can improve for future tenders.
- We will seek feedback from tenderers, and their trade associations, on our tender processes and address where we can any problems that are brought to our attention;
- We will publish our complaints procedure.

Contract management

- We will treat suppliers openly and fairly;
- Suppliers will:
 - Be paid on time – no more than 30 days after receipt of an undisputed invoice;
 - Receive honest and constructive feedback on their performance

