Procurement Policy

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St Helens College Procurement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 St Helens College has an annual third party spend of £13m and is committed to delivering value for money when working with suppliers by procuring works, goods and services that are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable while providing appropriate quality solutions for our students and staff. This policy aligns with our strategic plan to transform lives through excellence in education and training.

1.2 As a publicly funded organization, St Helens College will comply with the Procurement Act 2023, noting there are some schools exemptions which apply to the College. The College is now subject to the framework for financial management set out in the College Financial Handbook including its requirements to achieve value for money.

2. Objectives of Procurement

2.1 **Value for Money -** To provide optimum value for money through effective sourcing and performance management for goods, services and works Contracts. procurement activities.

2.2 **Effective sourcing -** Ensure the delivery of right quality solutions which support the learning and development of students and effective running of the College.

2.3 **Social value -** Utilising procurement as a lever to support environmental, social, and economic sustainability for St Helens and the Liverpool City Region.

2.4 **Compliance -** Adhere to the Procurement Act, College Financial Regulations and all other relevant procurement legislation.

2.5 **Innovation -** Encourage innovative solutions from suppliers that benefit our students and staff.

2.6 **Inclusivity -** Foster an inclusive environment by engaging with diverse suppliers, including Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME), Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations and local suppliers where appropriate.

2.7 **Continuous learning -** To collaborate with staff to develop their commercial skills and support them in making positive commercial decisions for the College.

2.8 **Ethical sourcing -** To ensure all staff maintain an ethical approach in their sourcing activities.

3. Procurement Principles

3.1 **Transparency -** Maintain transparency in all procurement processes in alignment with the Procurement Act 2023, our College Financial Regulations and other relevant legislation.

3.2 **Fairness -** Ensure fair and equal treatment of all suppliers and encouraging open competition.

3.3 **Accountability -** Train staff and hold them accountable for their roles in the procurement process.

3.4 **Collaboration -** Work collaboratively with suppliers, College staff and framework providers to deliver positive outcomes.

3.5 **Integrity -** Uphold high ethical standards in tendering activities.

4. Alignment with College Values

4.1 **Ambition -** We are committed to raising aspirations and expectations, motivating each other to achieve our full potential. Our procurement activities will seek suppliers who share this ambition and can provide innovative solutions that help us reach our goals.

4.2 **Excellence -** We commit to being the very best in everything we do and encourage our teams, students, and stakeholders to do the same. We will select suppliers who demonstrate alignment to our values.

4.3 **Collaboration -** We work together as one team, valuing our different perspectives and consulting with colleagues to achieve our goals. Our procurement process may involve early engagement with suppliers to ensure the best outcomes.

4.4 **Innovation -** We actively search for novel ideas, leading technologies, and the most effective ways of working that benefit our students, teams, and employers. We will work with suppliers who bring innovative solutions and technologies.

4.5 **Respect -** We treat people the way we would expect to be treated, championing difference and diversity and embracing and valuing everyone's right to have an opinion. Our procurement practices will ensure respect for all suppliers and stakeholders.

4.6 **Trust -** We believe in each other, trusting our teams to work with autonomy and integrity. We will build trust with our suppliers through transparent and fair procurement processes.

4.7 **Care -** We are kind and empathetic to everyone we encounter. Our procurement policy will reflect our commitment to caring for our community and environment by collaborating with suppliers who share these values and can put forward compelling social value offerings.

5. Procurement Process

5.1 **Impacted spend -** All College non-pay expenditure is covered by this policy. It is essential that this policy is followed when committing College funds. These procurement procedures must be followed by all staff and any departure from these rules must be agreed in writing in the form of a Financial Regulations exemption which is subject to approval of the Procurement Manager and Chief Finance Officer. It is the responsibility of all budget holders to draw these regulations to the attention of all staff likely to become involved with the procurement of goods, services or works.

5.2 **Procurement Regulations -** The rules for the College on purchasing goods, services and works in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are set out in the Procurement Act (for tenders from 24/2/2025) the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (for Call Off Contracts from Frameworks awarded prior to 24/2/2025) and in our Financial Regulations.

5.3 **Consultation -** The Procurement team should be consulted with to obtain advice and assistance at an early stage when procurements which a whole life cost above £50,000 including VAT are being considered. The tendering process will be run by Procurement for all requirements above £50,000 including VAT.

5.4 **Quotation process -** The quotation process for requirements below a whole life cost of £50,000 including VAT maybe run by the budget holder or where required by the Procurement team.

5.5 **Supplier selection -** Where existing contracts are in place with suppliers, these should be used in the first instance.

5.6 **New Suppliers -** New Suppliers shall be considered to be added to the Colleges portfolio in the circumstance the supplier has been successful in a procurement process, or where the value is below £5,000 including VAT and cannot be sought from an existing Contract. Any new Supplier may be vetted to ensure they are financially viable. The link for new supplier submissions is here.

5.7 **Procurement requirements -** The College applies a procurement process to ensure that they understand proportionate scrutiny over its spend requirements. This includes:

- £0-£4,999 including VAT – 1 written quote required
- £5,000 - £49,999 including VAT – 3 written quotes required
- £10,000 - £49,999 including VAT – 3 written quotes required and a value for money statement to support the award
- Over £50,000 including VAT – a full tender process will be required.
- Over £214,904 (goods and services), £663,540 (light touch regime) and £5,372,609 (works). These thresholds align to the Procurement Act 2023 and a full tender process is required. Note these thresholds may change from time to time.

5.8 **Whole life cost -** All values are based on the whole life cost of the requirement, budget holders should consider the expenditure of all departments when considering the value of a procurement.

5.9 **Find a tender -** Where appropriate the College will advertise opportunities on Find a tender especially where there is a localised service which is required.

5.10 **Procurement Frameworks** - Where appropriate the College will leverage Procurement Frameworks to achieve optimum value for money and quality solutions.

5.11 **Exemptions -** From time to time the College may seek an exemption from the Financial Regulations when making a procurement decision. The exemption can be articulated on the Contracts Award Form.

5.12 **Contract and Purchase Order approval levels -** The Financial Regulations set out limits for Contract and Purchase Order approvals as follows:

Curriculum

- Under £3,000 Head of School / Department
- £3,000 - £9,999 including VAT – Curriculum Director
- £10,000 - £24,999 including VAT – Vice Principal
- £25,000 and above including VAT – Chief Financial Officer

Business Support

- Below £10,000 including VAT – Head of Department
- £10,000 and above including VAT - Chief Financial Officer

5.13 Contracts above the value of £5,000 including VAT awarded by individual departments must be notified to Procurement via the Contract Award Form prior to placing the purchase order.

6. Supplier Engagement

6.1 **E Sourcing tools -** Tender opportunities on Find a tender are open to any supplier to respond to our requirements. The majority of tenders will require Suppliers to register and respond on our e-sourcing platform MultiQuote.

6.2 **Preliminary market engagement -** Where the College undertakes a complexed procurement process, we may run pre-market engagement sessions to understand how suppliers can meet the requirements and provide insight into opportunities to create savings, innovation or service enhancements for the benefit of the College.

6.3 **Supplier management -** The College will work in collaboration with key suppliers post contract award to monitor and continually enhance opportunities to improve social value outcomes, value for money and service levels.

7. Ethical Standards

7.1 **Ethical accreditation -** Procurement staff maintain the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Ethical accreditation. Procurement staff will champion the values of the accreditation when collaborating with College staff and suppliers.

7.2 **Managing conflicts of interest -** Procurement staff will robustly manage any potential conflicts of interest throughout the lifecycle of the tendering process. Below the threshold for tendering College staff are required to self-declare any potential conflicts for scrutiny by the Procurement team in alignment with the College Financial Regulations.

7.3 **Compliance to the Modern Slavery Act -** Procurement staff will utilise Framework agreements where the Framework owner has an obligation to ensure compliance to the Act. Where tenders are being undertaken outside of a Framework Agreement the tender documents may make require bidders to confirm compliance to the Act as part of their bid.

7.4 **Compliance to our gifts policy -** The College maintains a robust and appropriate Gifts policy to ensure College staff do not accept any inappropriate gifts.

8. Social Value

8.1 **Social value delivery -** The College is committed to working with Suppliers to deliver positive social value outcomes for the College, its students, St Helens and the wider Liverpool City Region. These social value commitments may include opportunities to bring educational, jobs, supply chain and environmental benefits to the local area.

8.2 **Social value thresholds -** Where appropriate a weighting for social value will be applied on Tenders over £50,000 including VAT to stimulate supplier engagement.

9. Procurement Cards

9.1 **Purpose of Procurement cards -** Procurement cards enable staff to make purchases against a card which has been issued for their College expenditure. The cards have restrictions relating to types of purchase and monetary limits; these vary between card holders.

9.2 **Approval of Procurement cards -** Procurement cards are issued with the approval of the Head of Finance to specific staff for the purchase of low value items.

9.3 **Use of Procurement cards -** Cardholders are required ensure they use the cards solely for the purpose of College expenditure and under no circumstances for personal expenditure. Expenditure must be made within approved budgets.

10. Conditions of Purchase

10.1 **Quotation Contract Terms -** The College standard conditions of purchase are available on the New Supplier Request Form. For procurements below £50,000 plus VAT which are subject to quotation Suppliers should Contract under these terms, unless a Procurement Framework has been utilised, or the Supplier has the written authorisation from the Procurement team to accept alternative terms.

10.2 **Tender Contract Terms -** For tenders above £50,000 the process will be managed by the Procurement Team and will be subject to specific Terms of Contract to reflect the requirement.

11. Supplier Payment

11.1 **Payment terms -** In consideration of the supply of Goods, Services and Works by the Supplier, the College shall pay the invoiced amounts on the last working day of the month following the date of a correctly rendered invoice to a bank account nominated in writing by the Supplier unless otherwise agreed by the Procurement Manager or the Head of Finance.

11.2 **Deposits -** No deposits will be paid for the supply of Goods unless otherwise agreed by the Procurement Manager or the Head of Finance.

11.3 **Invoice address -** Suppliers must submit invoices which detail the relevant purchase order via email to shcinvoice@sthelens.ac.uk.

12. Contracts Register

12.1 **Contract register -** The Procurement team will hold a Contracts Register for all Contracts valued over £10,000 including VAT.

12.2 **Contract award notices -** The College will ensure that all Contracts let over £30,000 including VAT are registered on Find a Tender or Contracts Finder to allow suppliers early visibility of likely renewal dates.

Contact

For further information, contact:

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