

A guide for contractors and suppliers

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1. Introduction

Worcester City Council spends with organisations of all sizes, procuring a variety of works, supplies and services. We want our procurement processes to be as clear and useful as possible.

This guide aims to help potential suppliers understand Worcester City Council's approach to purchasing and how this is organised.

2. Worcester's approach to purchasing

Worcester City Council has a Procurement Team whose role is to ensure that purchasing is undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement Code, Financial Regulations and relevant legislation.

On 24 February 2025 the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations replaced the Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015. There will be a transition period between the old and new regulations, during which the two regimes will run in parallel for a period of time.

This transformation of public procurement represents a big change for all public bodies.

The new Act aims to

- create a simpler and more flexible, commercial system that better meets our country's needs while remaining compliant with our international obligations
- open up public procurement to new entrants such as small businesses and social enterprises so that they can compete for and win more public contracts
- embed transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle so that the spending of taxpayers' money can be properly scrutinised

Suppliers should make themselves aware of the Procurement Act 2023.

[Procurement Act 2023](#)

[The Procurement Act 2023: A short guide for suppliers \(HTML\) - GOV.UK](#)

The Council's aim with procurement is to use a variety of methods and contractual arrangements to help to deliver the Council's objectives, vision and values and high-quality services to residents of the city. Within this, we aim to provide value for money on works, supplies and services bought and leased by the Council. This does not mean the cheapest but a balance between cost and quality.

In common with other local authorities, the Council will:

- Ensure value for money is achieved in all purchasing activities.
- Encourage a diverse and competitive supply market, including small businesses, social enterprises, voluntary and community sector suppliers.
- Encourage fair and open competition.
- Comply with all applicable statutory requirements and best practices, including Council policies and procedures.
- Operate fair, impartial and transparent selection and contract award processes.
- Ensure that the procurement method used is cost-effective and in line with the level of expenditure involved.
- Require suppliers and contractors to comply with applicable requirements, policies and procedures.
- Consider the Social Value Act 2012 in any relevant purchasing exercises;
- Have regard to the [National Procurement Policy Statement](#) (NPPS)
- Consider and minimise (where possible) barriers for Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) when tendering opportunities.

3. Council structure

The Council is structured into multiple service areas, with budget holders responsible for making purchases in line with the Council's Procurement Code.

Some services are delivered by partners or contractors under long-term contracts, which are typically re-tendered at the end of the contract period. Once awarded, the contractor or partner is responsible for sourcing supplies and services needed for daily operations.

Additionally, some services are provided in partnership with other local authorities. When a service is managed by another local authority, they are responsible for procuring the necessary supplies and services for its operation.

4. How the Council buys works, supplies and services

The way in which the Council places orders or lets contracts is set out in the [Procurement Code](#).

The higher the purchase value, the more formal the procurement process required. To view the current thresholds and requirements see the following link: [Procurement Code – Appendix A](#)

Where possible, the Council collaborates with neighbouring authorities to achieve economies of scale, ensuring the best value for both contract prices and procurement costs. The Council also uses framework agreements when appropriate.

As a public body, the Council must be fair, transparent, and impartial in its spending and cannot favour specific suppliers.

The Council maintains a [contracts register](#), which details all existing contracts and their expiry dates.

5. E-Procurement Portal

The Council uses the e-procurement portal known as the [Proactis ProContract portal](#) to conduct its procurement exercises.

You can register for free on the Council's E-Procurement Portal at any time. Please see the link above to see details on how to register.

Opportunities over £50,000 will be advertised on the Proactis Portal but are also required to be advertised on the Find a Tender Service (Central Digital Platform) [Find a tender / Central Digital Platform](#)

6. Find a Tender Service/Central Digital Platform

Where a contract exceeds the UK threshold and a framework agreement is not being used, the contract will be advertised on the Find a Tender service (FTS). FTS can be accessed electronically via [Find a tender / Central Digital Platform](#).

All bidders must be registered to submit bids, and access procurement opportunities. If you have previously registered on Find a Tender (FTS), you must re-register and follow the instructions)

You can register yourself for free on the Central Digital Platform (CDP) here [Supplier Registration Service](#).

To register, you will require:

- Mobile phone – for two-factor authentication
- Companies House number or other registration number
- Business email address

- Shared email address – ideally a shared mailbox or generic company email address

7. How to Tender for Council Contracts

When a supplier expresses an interest in a tender, a set of tender documents will be issued via the Council's E-Procurement Portal. These documents typically include:

- **Specification** of the required works, supplies, or services
- Details of the **Contract period**
- **Submission deadline**, including the date and time by which the tender/quote must be returned
- **Selection criteria** which focus on the supplier's suitability, capacity and experience
- **Quality questions** which focus on how the supplier will meet the contract requirements
- **Form of Tender and/or Price Schedule**, where the supplier submits their priced bid
- **Terms and Conditions** of the contract

The specific amount and type of information requested will depend on the size and scope of the contract but may include the following:

Economic and Financial Standing (EFS)

For high value UK threshold contracts bidders will need to provide financial information about their business to demonstrate they have adequate financial capacity to deliver the services throughout the contract period. Financial data utilised to evaluate a bidder's EFS may be provided by one or more of the following:

- financial statements or extracts from the financial statements where appropriate (i.e. where publication of financial statements is required by law); or
- a statement of the bidder's overall turnover and, where appropriate, of turnover in the area covered by the contract for a maximum of the last 3 financial years available; or
- appropriate statements from banks or, where appropriate, evidence of relevant professional risk indemnity insurance.

Credit ratings may also be obtained from a credit reference agency to provide an indication of a bidder's EFS.

In below-threshold procurements, financial information may be requested and reviewed to assess the economic and financial standing of a potential bidder, provided that it is relevant and proportionate.

Equal Opportunities

The Council is committed to promoting equal opportunity and ensuring fair access for all members of the community. We expect our suppliers to uphold the same high standards that we follow within the Council and suppliers may be required to submit their equal opportunities policy as part of the procurement process.

Health & Safety

Organisations are required to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) and may be required to submit their Health and Safety Policy

Environmental Sustainability

The Council is committed to environmental sustainability see this link [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#) to the Councils Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Suppliers may be required to submit their environmental policy as part of the procurement process.

Social Value

The Council want to ensure our procurement has positive social, environmental and economic benefits for the City, such as

- Supporting /creating local jobs and businesses
- Supporting/creating local skills
- Local sourcing of goods –
- Energy efficiency
- Increasing use of renewable energy
- Tackling climate change and reducing waste
- Sustainability of materials and products
- Improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience

Suppliers may be asked to provide a commitment to offering social value as part of their tender.

Modern Slavery

The Council is committed to a zero-tolerance approach to any form of modern slavery, and we expect our suppliers to have their own Modern Slavery statement or confirm that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in any part of their business or supply chains.

[Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement](#)

8. Tender Evaluation

Evaluations will typically assess two key factors:

- **Quality** – how well the proposal delivers the required works, services, or supplies.
- **Price** – the total cost over the contract term.

The Council is required to inform suppliers of the evaluation criteria and their weightings in the Request for Quote (RFQ) or Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents. Submitted quotes or tenders will then be evaluated based on these criteria, and the contract will be awarded to the highest-scoring bidder

9. Tender Outcome

Bidders will be notified of the outcome in writing and will receive tender feedback to help them improve future bids.

10. Contract Performance

All contracts are monitored throughout the contract period against the performance criteria outlined in the tender documents.

Contracts must be delivered as specified in the contract documentation.

The Council is committed to continuous improvement and expects its suppliers to uphold the same standard.

11. Information Governance

Suppliers and Contractors should be aware of the Council's obligations under The Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA"), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"), public sector transparency policies and Disclosure Obligations.

- Placing of contract award notices on the Contracts Finder database, apply to the Council (together the "Disclosure Obligations").
- The Council's obligations and responsibilities under the Disclosure Obligations to disclose information held by the Council. Information provided by you in connection with any Procurement Process, or with any contract that may be awarded, may therefore have to be disclosed by the Council under the Disclosure Obligations, unless the Council decides that one of the statutory exemptions under the FOIA or the EIR applies.