

PROCUREMENT POLICY

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Procurement is defined as the process of acquiring goods, works and services. This policy outlines the approach to be taken by budget holders within Riverside College Halton to obtain maximum value for money from everything it buys and all the services it provides.
- 1.2 Following reclassification to the central government sector on 29th November 2022 all College procedures must follow the requirement set out in HM Treasury's document 'Managing Public Money' and other procurement obligations as set out in the ESFA reclassification guidelines.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 This document aims to ensure that procurement planning reflects the College's strategic aims and priorities, that all spend follows public sector procurement intentions and that there is propriety in the use of the funds.
- 2.2 It will provide an opportunity, not only to co-ordinate current processes but also to provide a clear pathway for identifying and acting on improvements to ensure that best value is being obtained consistently when goods and services are purchased.
- 2.3 It should be noted that this document is not a procurement manual. Procurement regulations, including competitive tendering processes are found in the College's Financial Regulations and the Financial Procedures Manual.
- 2.4 This policy will be reviewed annually.

3 OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

The objectives are to outline the role that procurement will play in the delivery of the College's aims and priorities and are as follows:

- To evaluate and improve current procurement practices to achieve better value for money and meet customer/client needs
- To ensure that examples of good procurement practice are identified and applied consistently across the College
- To align procurement activities with other policies and to ensure that the strategic objectives are addressed

- To ensure that current and future procurement activities are planned, monitored and reviewed effectively
- To identify opportunities for working with others, both public and private sector, in order to widen the scope for maximising purchasing power and identifying innovation.

4 PROCUREMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES (INCLUDING SUBCONTRACTING)

4.1 Light Touch

- In compliance with the **Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Subcontracting Standard** published in July 2021 and in relation to the Statutory Instrument “**The Public Contract Regulations 2015**”, the College strategy will be to stay below the contact value threshold for “Light Touch” assurance for the Procurement of Education and Training Services from an external organisation.
- Provided the threshold is not exceeded the college will not be required to publish such contracts or invite organisations to tender on the Public Procurement website. Organisations that are invited to bid for contracts will be subjected to stringent checks and the college due diligence process to establish their suitability as a delivery partner.

(see Eversheds Sutherland: Advice in Connection with the Public Contracts Regulations & Procurement of Delivery Sub-contractors)

4.2 Any such contract for the delivery of Education and Training services by an external organisation must

- Support the college Strategic Plan (see items 3.4, 3.5),
- Be compliant with the Supply Chain and Fees and Charges Policy, and
- Be supported by a Business Case which has been submitted to the Board for approval
- Support the college Curriculum Plan
- Be supported by a Contract Management Plan

5 PROCUREMENT LINKS TO OTHER KEY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The College already has policies and strategies in the following areas without specific reference to procurement. These need to be considered at the same time as referring to the procurement policy to make sure that the strategic objectives for procurement are achieved.

5.1 Value for Money

- 5.1.1 The College is fully committed to improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of all its activities. All procurement of goods, works and services will be based on best value principles, having due regard to propriety, regularity, and the College’s legal obligations.
- 5.1.2 The College will consider all reasonable procurement options and any suitable hybrids/alternatives to ensure best value is secured from all procurement of goods, works and services.

5.1.3 The College promotes economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its expenditure and it will seek to ensure that competition supports this. Goods, works and services will be purchased in a mixed economy of suppliers from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, according to which supplier offers best value. The College will give local suppliers every reasonable opportunity to bid for its business.

5.2 Risk Management

The College's Risk Management Strategy has been developed to make sure that risk is properly recognised and managed. In all its procurement dealings, the College will identify risks, evaluate their potential consequences, consider possible opportunities and manage those risks effectively at every stage of the process.

5.3 Equality & Diversity

The College is committed to review services and policies to remove any discrimination and to ensure that it fulfils its duties in relation to equality and diversity. Procurement practice will reflect this commitment by encouraging relationships with contractors and service providers who are as equally committed to equality and diversity.

5.4 Anti-Modern Slavery Policy

The College has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all its business dealings and relationships. It aims to implement and enforce effective systems and controls to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in its activities or in any of its supply chains.

The College is also committed to ensuring there is transparency of its activities and the approach to tackling modern slavery throughout the supply chain, consistent with the disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The College expects the same high standards to be applied by all of its contractors, suppliers and other business partners. Specific prohibitions are included as part of the College's contracting processes against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude (whether adults or children), and the College expects that suppliers will hold their own suppliers to these standards.

5.5 Sustainability

Criteria based upon the procurement of environmentally friendly goods, works and services will be used in all purchasing decision-making processes, where cost-effective.

5.6 Health, Safety & Well-being

5.6.1 The College recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer for providing a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for all its employees.

5.6.2 College staff need to be mindful of health and safety issues when contracting in goods, works and services.

5.7 Financial Regulations

- 5.7.1 Staff responsible for purchasing need to be familiar with the relevant section of the College's Financial Regulations (available on the College Intranet) and their respective line managers are responsible for ensuring that any appropriate training is undertaken.
- 5.7.2 Suppliers should be informed of the College's terms of purchase and payment policy before any order is placed.

5.8 Organisation for Procurement

Staff involved directly with the buying of goods, works and services will be responsible for:

- Following procurement guidelines associated to the goods, works and services being purchased
- Conducting relationships with suppliers and partners in an appropriate way to promote the College in a positive manner.