



# Poplar Adolescent Unit Education Provision

## Procurement Policy (incl. Best Value)

Accepted by the Management Committee	January 2021
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# Poplar Adolescent Unit

## Procurement policy and achieving 'Best Value'

### Best Value Statement 2020

As a maintained school we have a duty to ensure we obtain the best value for money (VfM) from any contract we enter into. Whether an existing contract is coming to an end or a new service or good is required, we are required to follow a procurement process. The Management Committee is accountable for the way in which the school's resources are allocated to meet the objectives set out in the School's Development Plan. Management Committee Members are responsible for:

- the allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school.
- the targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision.
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils.

### Establishing a culture of efficiency

A culture of efficiency and effectiveness is promoted generally in the school, and everyone should understand their role in securing VfM.

1. **Management Committee Members** will apply the four principles of **best value**:
  - a. **Challenge** - Is the school's performance high enough? Why and how is a service provided? Do we still need it? Can it be delivered differently? What do parents want?
  - b. **Compare** - How does the School's Pupil Performance and Financial Performance compare with all schools? How does it compare with Local Authority Schools? How does it compare with similar schools?
  - c. **Consult** - How does the school seek the views of Stakeholders about the services the school provides?
  - d. **Compete** - How does the school secure efficient and effective services? Are services of appropriate quality, economic?

Saving money, including through effective procurement, is an integral part of the role of school business manager in particular. When managing the performance of staff members who have responsibility for resources in school, it is appropriate to focus on targets relevant to securing efficiency savings.

VfM is not just about saving money, but also about maximising income and revenue generation. In order to achieve VfM, we need to adopt a commercial mindset and have a marketing and business development plan in place.

Using this mindset means challenging the status quo:

- Question why things are done the way they are, what the current systems achieve and whether they could be improved.
- Look at what other schools are doing to achieve VfM using benchmark tools devised by The Department for Education (DfE) to help compare different schools deploy their resources.
- Where can efficiency savings be made?
- School managers:

- will not waste time and resources on investigating minor areas where few improvements can be achieved.
- will not waste time and resources to make minor savings in costs.
- will not waste time and resources by seeking tenders for minor supplies and services.

School Managers will:

- make comparisons with other / similar schools using data provided by the Local Authority and the Government, e.g. RAISE, quality of teaching & learning, levels of expenditure,
- challenge proposals, examining them for effectiveness, efficiency, and cost, e.g. setting of Annual Pupil Achievement Targets
- require suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality / suitability of services / products / backup, e.g. provision of computer suite, redecoration,
- consult individuals and organisations on quality / suitability of service we provide to parents and pupils, and services we receive from providers, e.g. Sex and Relationships Education, pupil reports, assigned Inspector, Ofsted.

## How this applies to:

### Staffing

The staffing resource is reviewed every year to ensure it meets the school's needs and is cost-effective:

- Are all current posts still required? School Managers will deploy staff to provide **best value** in terms of quality of teaching, quality of learning, adult-pupil ratio, and curriculum management.
- Can any working hours or weeks be changed to meet the school's current needs?
- What would the staffing structure look like if we could start from scratch, and how could we move to this ideal model over time?

This is a difficult area; however the staffing structure must always reflect the need to deploy sufficient resources in areas where they will have the greatest impact. Opportunities to save money can include:

- Use of visiting speakers, trainee psychologists, volunteers, apprentices.
- Sharing staff between schools.

### Use of Premises

Management Committee Members and School Managers will consider the allocation and use of teaching areas, support areas and communal areas, to provide the best environment for teaching & learning, for support services, and for communal access to central resources, e.g. the library.

### Use of Resources

Management Committee Members and School Managers will deploy equipment, materials and services to provide pupils and staff with resources which support quality of teaching and quality of learning.

### Teaching

Management Committee Members and School Managers will review the quality of curriculum provision and quality of teaching, to provide parents and pupils with:

- a curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Local Authority Agreed Religious Education Syllabus, and the needs of pupils.
- teaching which builds on previous learning and has high expectations of children's achievement.

## Learning

Management Committee Members and School Managers will review the quality of children's learning, by cohort, class and group, to provide teaching which enables children to achieve nationally expected progress.

## Purchasing

Management Committee Members and School Managers will develop procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide "*best value*" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time, and cost. Measures already in place include:

- competitive tendering procedures (e.g. for goods and services above £50,000)
- procedures for accepting "*best value*" quotes, which are not necessarily the cheapest (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of workmanship)
- procedures which minimise office time by the purchase of goods or services under £5,000 direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment).
- In accordance with the Schools Financial Regulations.

## Pupils' Welfare

Management Committee Members and School Managers will review the quality of the school environment and the school ethos, in order to provide a supportive environment conducive to learning and recreation.

## Health & Safety

Management Committee Members and School Managers will review the quality of the school environment and equipment, carrying out Risk Assessments where appropriate, in order to provide a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors.

## Monitoring

These areas will be monitored for *best value* by:

2. In-house monitoring by the Executive Head and Curriculum Managers, e.g. classroom practice, work sampling.
3. Annual Performance Management.
4. Annual Budget Planning.
5. Executive Head's monthly financial review.
6. Termly visits by the Local Authority School Effectiveness Partner.
7. Analysis of School Pupil Performance Data, e.g. standardised test results, Local Authority schools and similar schools.
8. Analysis of Local Authority Pupil Performance Data.
9. Analysis of Local Authority Financial Data, e.g. Department for Education's Consistent Financial Reporting Benchmarking website.
10. Analysis of Department For Education's Pupil Performance Data, e.g. RAISE.
11. Ofsted Inspection Reports.
12. Management Committee Members' termly classroom observations.
13. Management Committee Members' termly Committee Meetings.

## 14. Management Committee Members' full termly meetings.

### **Managing contracts**

The school business manager keeps a register of all contracts, indicating when they are due for renewal in order to leave enough time to renegotiate contracts or to look for alternatives well before the date of renewal.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) can be set to monitor the quality of service delivery for contracts, and challenge suppliers when these are not being met. This is equally true for the services provided by the local authority (LA), such as payroll, human resources (HR), finance support and IT. We should always evaluate whether LA contracts are delivering what we need, and whether they are offering good VfM.

### **Check responsibilities and existing contracts.**

The contract register helps us monitor whether our local authority, Essex County Council is responsible for buying certain things. However, in many circumstances we do not necessarily have to go with their recommended option, for example an MIS supplier. It is important, therefore to consider what option is best for our school. When contracts come to an end it is good practice to "re-procure", to make sure the product or service still meets your needs and gives you the best value for money.

### **Writing a business case.**

- This will help us set out what we need, why we need it, and by when. It enables us to record our decision-making process.
- It should include:
  - A draft specification.
  - An estimated whole-life cost for the contract.
  - Opportunities to collaborate with other schools. This can earn bigger discounts through greater buying power but will only succeed if there is a formal framework and terms of reference in place to facilitate the work of the group.
- Inform everyone who should be involved such as Management Committee, technical experts, a project manager for construction projects, legal experts, and suppliers.
- Identify and remove any potential conflicts of interest:
  - Withhold the names of companies while bids are assessed.
  - Ensure interests are declared in writing.
  - Ask different staff members to assess the bids.

### **Write a specification and work-out the contract's cost**

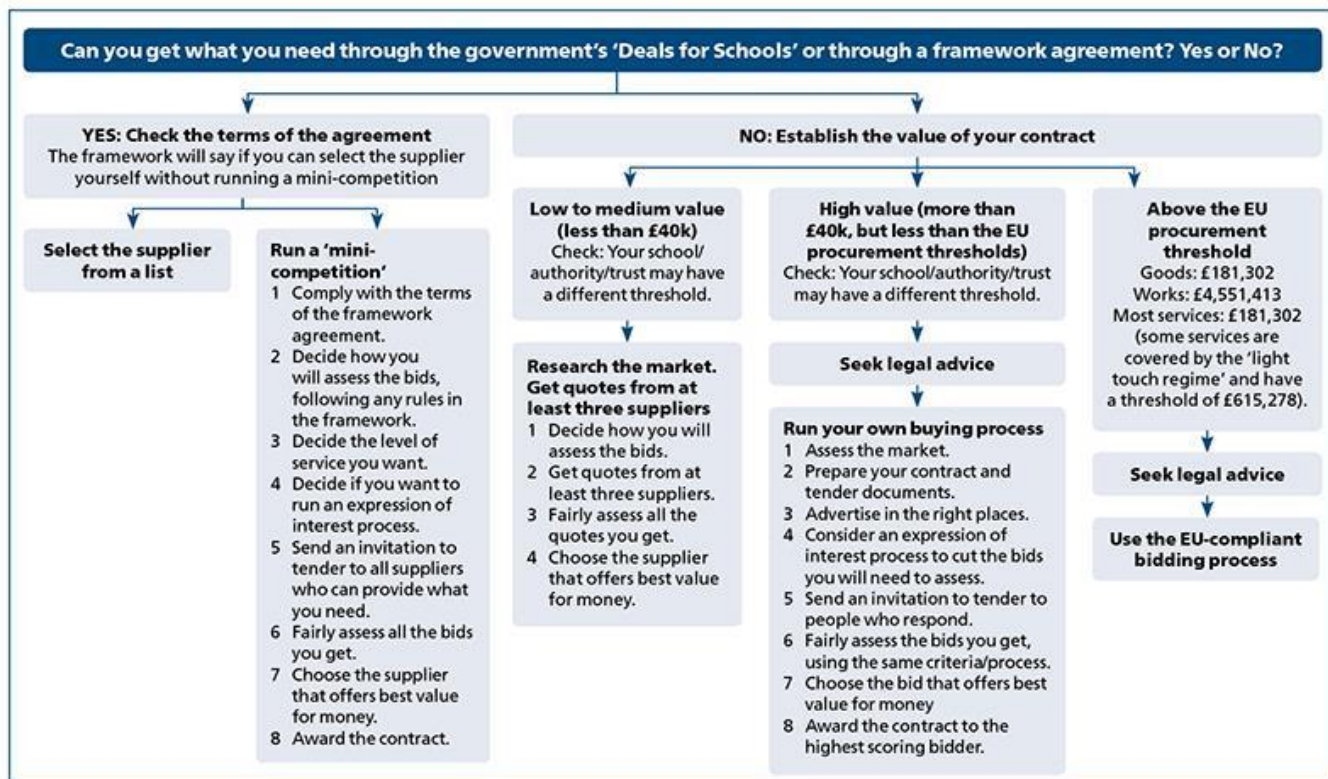
- Will it meet the needs of the people who will use it.
- Research the market so you know what is available. Speak to potential suppliers and ask other schools what they have done.
- Specification should include: a precise description of what you need, how it should meet the school's needs, the quantity and quality required, and when you need it.
- Estimate the whole-life cost of the contract, so you can decide which buying process you need to use. Include: the initial cost of the goods, works or services, VAT, delivery charges, on-going maintenance or support costs, running costs, and the cost of removing or disposing of an item or service when you no longer need it.
- Using the school's procurement rules identify which process or thresholds to use. The flowchart above helps you decide which process to follow.

Chair of Management Committee Members: ..... Date: .....

Executive Head: .....Date: .....

Agreed at the Management Committee Meeting on: .....

Minute Reference: .....



**VALUE FOR MONEY CHECKLIST – TO BE INCLUDED ON BACK OF EVERY ORDER FORM**

Question	Completed?
Are the goods/services competitively priced?	
Does the quality of the goods/services meet the school's needs, and has this been measured against an alternative provider?	
Does the provider's range of services meet the school's needs?	
Is the supplier known to the school as being reliable, either through first-hand experience or through recommendations by others?	
Is the product/service so unique that there are no alternative providers?	

VALUE FOR MONEY CHECKLIST – TO BE INCLUDED ON BACK OF EVERY ORDER FORM

Have long-term sustainability issues been considered?

Has the support provided by the supplier, and the supplier's responsiveness, been considered?

Have procurement processes, as set out in the financial regulations, been followed?

With thanks to: Justine Berkeley and Imogen Rowley