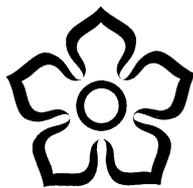


Leicester City Council

Guide to Sustainable Procurement



Leicester
City Council

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Introduction

The Sustainable Procurement Guide is designed to assist Leicester City Council staff in making more sustainable procurement decisions, providing practical information on how to reduce our impact on the environment; ensure high ethical standards are followed and bring benefits to the local economy and community. Whilst the guide is intended to help staff when making decisions on behalf of the Council much of the information could also be applied at home to help you make your own actions more sustainable. This is especially true of the environmental information where much of the information about reducing energy consumption or buying products that have a lower impact on the environment may be relevant.

The guide is not intended to be used as a procurement manual and should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Procurement Framework and Corporate Procurement Rules.¹ The general principles contained within this policy should be applied to all procurement activities but this does not remove the need to seek appropriate legal advice where necessary.

The sustainable procurement guide integrates and replaced the information previously contained in the *Environment Friendly Purchasing Guide*.

If you have any specific questions concerning this guide, sustainable procurement or would like further advice or information on how to make your procurement activities more sustainable please contact the Environment Team on tel. 0116 4542251 (mark.jeffcote@leicester.gov.uk).

¹ Procurement Toolkit <http://insite.council.leicester.gov.uk/e-handbook/procurement-toolkit>

What is Sustainable Procurement?

Sustainable procurement is about incorporating environmental, social and economic concerns into all procurement activities. The Government established Sustainable Procurement Task Force has defined sustainable procurement as:

...a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to **society** and the **economy**, whilst minimising damage to the **environment**.²

Sustainability can and should be brought into the whole procurement cycle from writing the specification to tender evaluation to post-contract management; it is a key part of the procurement process and should be considered from the very beginning when you are defining your need, it is not something that can be added on at the end.

The Council's the sustainable procurement policy drives the commitment to sustainable procurement.

² Procuring the Future Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan: Recommendations from the Sustainable Procurement Task Force

Leicester City Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy

The Council is committed to the following policy which should be considered when making any procurement:

Environmental – protecting the environment

- We will align our procurement decisions with our Environmental Policy to seek to:
 - Reduce our impact on climate change through the procurement of goods and services with a lower carbon impact;
 - Protect and enhance open spaces and the natural environment;
 - Minimise our use of energy, water and other natural resources;
 - Minimise waste and prevent or minimise pollution;
 - Specify goods that, wherever possible, have a minimal environmental impact in the extraction or sourcing of materials, manufacture, use and disposal.
- We will only purchase timber or wood derived products that are either recycled or from legal and sustainable sources, either independently verifiable or from FLEGT licensed or equivalent sources.

Social – ensuring high ethical standards

- We will not knowingly work with contractors and suppliers whose activities do not comply with the conventions of the International Labour Organisation.
- We intend, where possible, to purchase fair trade products and will continue to promote Leicester as a Fairtrade City.
- We will not knowingly engage with suppliers who support, encourage or facilitate the trade in illegal drugs, arms, tobacco, slavery or prostitution.
- We will not knowingly buy foodstuffs that are genetically modified or contain genetically modified ingredients.
- We will consider animal welfare when making purchasing decisions and ensure purchasing precludes any future animal testing by suppliers and therefore contributes to the end of animal testing.

Economic – supporting the local economy and community

- We will encourage local businesses to take advantage of opportunities in the city – this will include improving their access to public sector procurement opportunities.
- We will continue to engage with businesses such as local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), the third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities and cooperatives), ethnic and minority owned businesses, sheltered businesses and women owned businesses to encourage a wider and more diverse base of suppliers and to promote equality of opportunity.
- We will seek to incorporate provisions into our contracts, where appropriate, to offer training and employment opportunities for members of the local community.
- We will explore the opportunities for delivering specific community benefits through our procurement activities and seek to understand the impact our procurement activities have on local communities.
- We will consider the cultural and religious requirements of the local community when making procurement decisions.

Using this guide

The Sustainable Procurement Policy sets out the aspirations we aim to achieve through our procurement activity. Not all aspects of the sustainable procurement policy will be relevant for all procurement decisions and it may not be possible for you to deliver some or all of these aspirations in every procurement activity whether this is for goods, works or services. However, you should give full consideration to the environmental, social and economic implications of your decisions and as far as possible seek to achieve the aims set out in the policy.

The sustainable procurement guide has been split into three main sections on environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability. Under each of these three sections there is specific information on issues to consider when making particular procurements and at the end of each section there are links to further information. Before looking at the specific guidance there are some general issues you should consider when making any procurement.

Making the sustainable choice

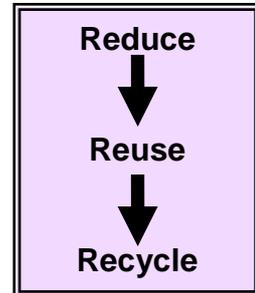
When making a procurement decision there are a number of aspects which you will need to take into consideration. One key consideration should be to deliver value for money. The City Council owes a 'fiduciary duty' to local tax payers meaning that best value for money should be demonstrated when purchasing. However, this does not imply the cheapest in every case - cheapest does not necessarily mean best value. Value for money is the 'optimum combination of whole life cost and quality (fitness for purpose) to meet the user's requirement'.³ It is for the Council to decide what the 'user's requirement' is and set this out in the specification but this must be subject to tests of need, affordability and cost-effectiveness.

It is important to remember that in order to achieve the best outcome it is useful to make your requirements clear early on in the procurement process. This way the supplier/contractor will know exactly what you require/expect from them, enabling them to respond better to your requirements or suggest alternative options. Once the contract is set up it is important to monitor the sustainability requirements that you initially agreed to ensure these are being delivered. For instance, it is necessary to monitor and record documentary evidence that timber and wood derived products are from legal and sustainable certified or equivalent sources. There can be a risk that the sustainability issues come to be seen as 'add-ons' and they may be lost if they aren't monitored and checked.

³ Office of Government Commerce & Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs *Joint note on Environmental Issues in Purchasing* October 2003

Sustainability in practice

The best way to make our activities more sustainable is to minimise consumption. Before making a procurement consider if you really need to buy that item/service; could you borrow, hire or share instead? And make sure you buy the amount you actually need and don't buy 'spares'. By asking yourself these kinds of questions you can cut down significantly on your impact on the environment as well as saving money to spend elsewhere. Try and remember the three 'Rs': **reduce** the amount you use; **reuse** what you can and **recycle** what you can't reuse.



When making any kind of procurement it is always worth thinking about how you could make it more sustainable.

- Can you reduce the environmental impact by sourcing certified sustainable timber or by reducing the distances that goods need to be transported?
- Can you purchase something that has a social label, such as a fair trade label?
- Can you deliver additional training opportunities through the delivering of a contract?

If you are purchasing something from the ESPO catalogue it is worth looking out for their environmental icons, these show where products are made from recycled materials, can be recycled or reused and so on. The items marked with these icons may offer a more environmentally friendly option but remember to consider if this is the most environmentally friendly option for your particular project and ensure that it meets the standards set down in the Council's [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#). ESPO also have a National Sustainable Products catalogue⁴ which may include some products which can make your procurement more sustainable, the catalogue covers microgeneration; recycled products; energy saving products and sustainable parks management.

Whole life-cycle costs

A concern that is often raised is that the sustainable item will cost more than buying the 'standard' item. As the market for more sustainable products develops so the price for many of these items has come down, the price difference between the standard and more sustainable item will in many cases be small.

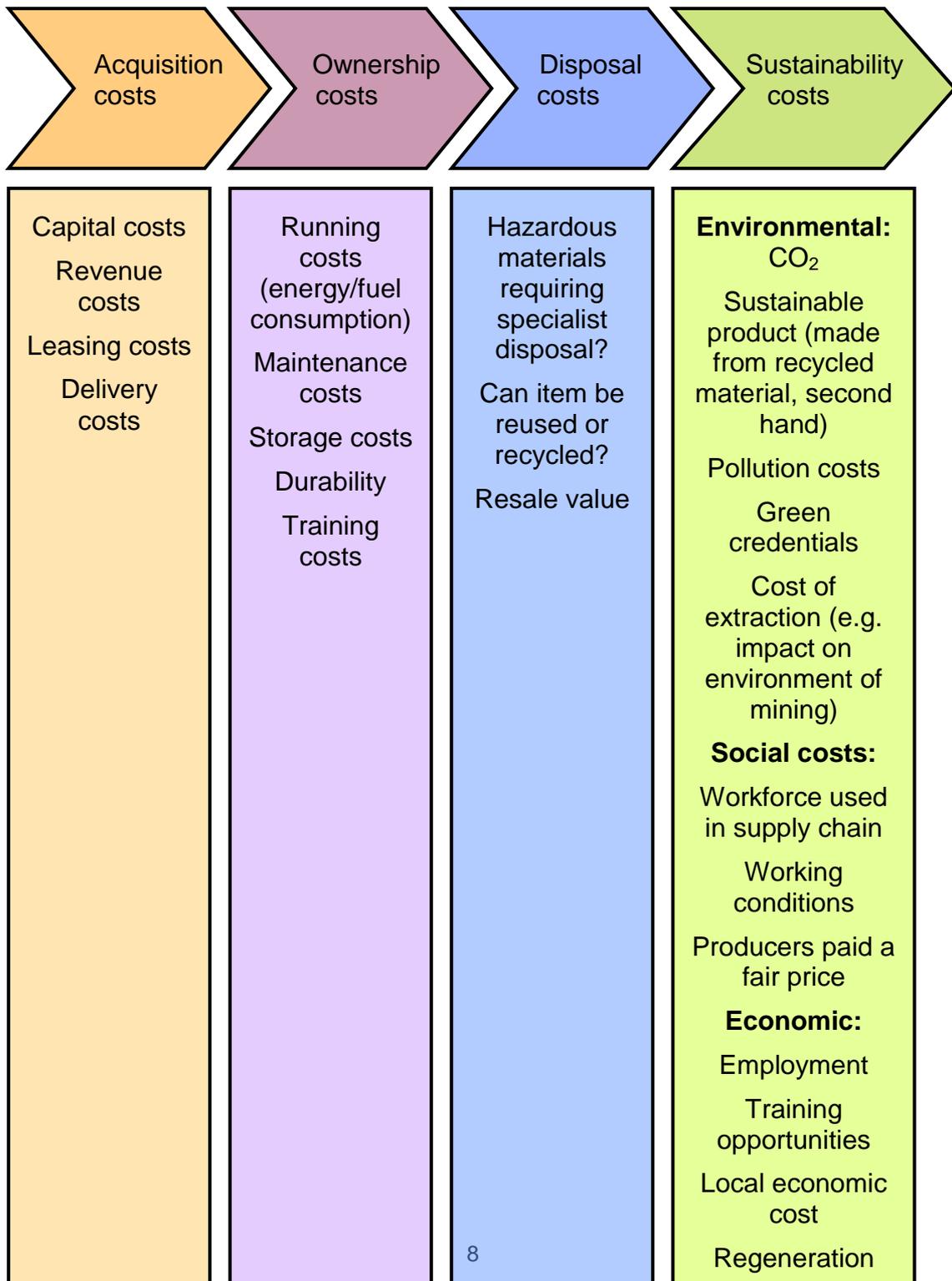
When considering value for money you need to consider not just the initial cost of an item but the full 'life-cycle' costs of a product or service. If you take

⁴ <http://www.espo.org/pdfs/sustainable.pdf>

the whole life-cycle costs of an item into consideration the more sustainable item may actually be cheaper in the long-term.

Whole Life Costing involves considering all the costs that will be associated with procuring goods/works/services considering not only the initial purchase price but also the running costs, disposal costs and other factors.

There is no single way of carrying out a whole-life cycle assessment, it will depend on the kind of goods/works/services you are procuring but you should consider some or all of the costs under each of the following headings (this list is not exhaustive and there may be other costs worth considering):



It can be difficult to allocate a cost to some of these headings, especially the sustainability aspects but all procurement decisions must take into account the sustainability impact *where this is relevant to the contract*.

Sustainable Labels

The products we procure may make many environmental or ethical claims but it is not always easy to assess the validity of such claims – one of the best ways to check on the validity of claims is to check if it has been certified or accredited under any scheme. There are some recognised labels which can provide some certainty of the environmental or ethical credentials of a product or service. You should be cautious of any product or service making claims about its sustainability without providing evidence to back up these claims.

There are a wide variety of labels that exist, the list below should not be considered to be comprehensive but seeks to provide information on some of the most well-known labels and those you will be most likely to come across whether it be when making a purchase for the Council or when doing your weekly shop.

Blue Angel –

The Blue Angel scheme is administered by the German Quality Control Institute. Blue Angel criteria exist for an extremely wide range of products from buckets to wrist watches. The scheme is voluntary and once a product has been approved manufacturers pay an annual fee to use the logo.

For further information visit:

<http://www.blauer-engel.de/en/index.php>

Energy Label –

By law, the European Union Energy Label must be displayed on all new domestic refrigerators, freezers and fridge-freezers, washing machines, tumble dryers, washer-dryers, dishwashers, lamps, electric ovens and air conditioners displayed for sale, hire or hire-purchase.

The label gives the appliance an overall rating from A to G, with A being the best performance and G

being poor performance – this rating refers to the energy efficiency of the product; the more efficient the product the less energy it needs which not only is good for the environment but saves you money as well. The label may also provide you with information about the performance of the product, water usage and noise.

If an appliance has met the criteria for a European Eco-Label (see below) this will also be displayed on the label.

For further information visit:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/Environment/consumerprod/energylabels/energylabel.pdf>

Energy Star –

Energy Star was introduced by the US Environmental Protection Agency as a voluntary labelling programme designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Leicester City Council has a policy of only buying computers which have an Energy Star label; staff should also ensure that the Energy Star energy saving option is enabled when a new machine is installed.

For further information visit: www.energystar.gov

Ethical Company Organisation: Ethical Accreditation Scheme –

The Ethical Company Organisation awards Ethical Accreditation to companies that score highly compared to other companies in their sector.

The rating system the Organisation uses is based on a company's performance in a number of subject areas, these are:

- Environment: environmental reporting; pollution; nuclear power; other environmental issues.
- Animals: animal testing; factory farming; other animal rights.
- People: oppressive regimes; worker's rights; irresponsible marketing; armaments.
- Extras: genetic engineering; boycott call; political activity; alerts.

For further information visit: <http://www.ethical-company-organisation.org/default.htm>

European Eco Label –

The European Ecolabel was launched to avoid a proliferation of separate national schemes. The label signals that the item meets 'rigorous environmental criteria and proper fitness for use'. Awards are made using an assessment of the complete life-cycle of the product

from the extraction of raw material, production, use and final disposal.

For further information visit: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

Fairtrade Foundation –

The Fairtrade Foundation seeks to ensure a better deal for marginalised and disadvantaged third world producers. The Foundation awards a consumer label, the Fairtrade Mark, to products which meet internationally recognised standards of fair trade. Fairtrade now covers a wide range of products such as a variety of fruits, coffee, biscuits, chocolate, t-shirts, flowers and wine amongst other things.

For further information you can refer to the chapter on fair trade as part of this guide or visit: www.fairtrade.org.uk

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) –

The aim of the FSC is to promote environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests, by establishing a world-wide standard of recognised Principles of Forest Stewardship.

The FSC has developed an international accreditation scheme for forest derived wood products and paper. To apply the logo to either sawn timber or wood products, forests and manufacturers have to go through an accreditation process to ensure that the forest is managed correctly and that emissions to air, water and land meet minimum standards.

Purchasing timber products with FSC certification ensures they have a minimum of 70% certified timber material content, and is considered by the UK Government to be both legal and sustainable. Suppliers should be able to provide you with their Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate and may label their products as FSC certified with a unique CoC number.

For further information visit:
<http://www.fsc-uk.org/>

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)-

The MSC was set up to find a solution to the problem of overfishing. They have developed a label for products which assesses seafood products against environmental standards. Products with the label have come from well managed fisheries and won't have contributed to the environmental problem of overfishing.

For further information visit:
<http://eng.msc.org/>

Mobius loop –

The mobius loop can be found on a wide range of products made from a variety of different materials. The loop is used to indicate that an object can be recycled – it **does not** mean that an object has been recycled. A mobius loop containing an x% in the centre shows what percentage of that product has been made from recycled material. Use of the symbol is voluntary.

Products made from plastic use a modified version of the mobius loop to indicate the type of plastic resin from which the item has been made.

For labelling purposes the symbol includes a number within the mobius loop, and usually, but not always, the chemical resin is shown below the loop in acronym form, see examples below. Whether the plastic can be recycled is usually determined by local collection and recycling schemes – see chapter on plastics for more information.



Polyethylene terephthalate

- Fizzy drink bottles and ready-meal trays.



High-density polyethylene

- Bottles for milk and washing-up liquids.



Polyvinyl chloride - Food trays, cling film, bottles for mineral water and shampoo.



Low density polyethylene

- Carrier bags and bin liners.



Polypropylene - Margarine tubs, microwaveable meal trays.



Polystyrene - Yoghurt pots, foam meat or fish trays, hamburger boxes and egg cartons, vending cups, plastic cutlery, protective packaging for electronic goods.



Any other plastics that do not fall into any of the above

categories. - An example is melamine, which is often used in plastic plates and cups.

National Association of Paper Merchants (NAPM) –

NAPM offers certification to all branded papers and boards which comply with its definition of recycled paper. To be awarded with the mark, the paper or board must be made from a minimum of 75% genuine post consumer waste paper or board. Mill broke waste (waste that has never left the paper mill) is not considered to be genuine waste.

For further information visit:
<http://www.napm.org.uk/>

Nordic Swan –

This label was introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1989, to encourage production methods that create minimal environmental impact. The label is available for around 60 different product groups which can be anything from washing-up liquid to furniture and hotels.

For further information visit:
<http://www.svanen.nu/Default.aspx?tabName=StartPage>

Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC)

PEFC is an international umbrella organisation for the mutual recognition of independent national or sub-national forest certification schemes.

The PEFC promotes sustainably managed forests through independent third party verification. The PEFC provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood

and paper products that they are promoting the sustainable management of forests. The scheme covers wood and paper products and demonstrates that these products come from sustainably managed forests.

As with FSC certification, suppliers should be able to provide you with their CoC certificate and may label their products with the PEFC license number together with the certified logo. This is evidence that can be recorded and verified to ensure that the timber is from a legal and sustainable source.

For further information visit:
<http://www.pefc.org/internet/html/>

Rainforest Alliance –

The Rainforest Alliance sets standards for sustainability that seek to conserve wildlife and wildlands as well as promoting the well-being of workers and their communities.

The Rainforest Alliance works to help change the way crops and timber are produced as well as working with tourism businesses to help them reduce their impact on the environment at the same time as contributing to local economies. Farms and forests that meet the Rainforest Alliance criteria receive a certification seal – the seal of approval shows that the product has been grown or made sustainably. Certified products range from wood to coffee, pineapples and chocolate.

For further information visit:
<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>

Red Tractor-

The Red Tractor scheme covers chicken, pork, lamb, beef, turkey, fruit, vegetables, salad, flour, sugar and dairy. Inspections are carried out at the farm level and all the way through until the product is packed.

In order to use the logo standards need to be met relating to food safety, hygiene, animal welfare, the environment and production methods.

For further information visit:
http://www.myredtractor.co.uk/site/rtc_main.php

Soil Association Organic Standard –

The Soil Association symbol is a national, independent quality mark (operating under EU regulation) for organically grown food and other products such as compost. The symbol is recognised by all the major supermarket, independent food retailers and wholesalers. It is awarded to farmers, growers, food processors, distributors etc. who follow standards laid down by the Soil Association.

For further information visit:
www.soilassociation.org

Environmental – protecting the environment

Leicester City Council has for many years played an active role in encouraging and supporting measures to protect and enhance the environment.

The Council has an [Environmental Policy](#) and the environmental commitments contained in the Sustainable Purchasing Policy seek to reflect this.

To ensure that we focus on environmental protection and measurable improvements the Council has adopted the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme or EMAS for short. EMAS is a European scheme which helps the Council manage and improve its environmental performance by setting minimum standards and assessing the Councils progress against these. Where there is an EMAS target for a specific product area this will be referenced in the relevant section of this guide.

For more information on how Leicester City Council is performing against the environmental targets you can view the annual [Environmental Statement](#).

There is real scope within EU and national procurement rules to consider environmental issues in procurement, as mentioned earlier in this guide it is best to do this early on when setting out your needs as this is more likely to be

successful. It is important that you do not act in a way that may be considered to ‘distort competition’ or discriminate against candidates from other member states. The *Joint note on Environmental Issues in Purchasing*⁵ provides some useful information on how you can include environmental considerations in procurement decisions.

You should also check the [Government Buying Standards](#) (formerly known as Quick Wins) website which provides a set of sustainable specifications for some commonly purchased products such as IT equipment, cleaning products and furniture. The website also provides information about sustainable procurement and how to apply it when buying as well as links to products which meet the standards. You should always check the *Buying Standards* list to see if it covers the type of procurement you are making and staff should apply the *Buying Standards* specifications whenever they are applicable to a procurement activity.

The following 10 sections provide further information on some specific products which relate to the environmental sections of the Sustainable Procurement Policy.

⁵ Office of Government Commerce and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs *Joint Note on Environmental Issues in Purchasing*
http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/environmental_issues-defra.pdf

Biomass

Biomass should either be sourced from Leicester City Council produced waste (such as from arboriculture work); from FSC or equivalent sustainable and legal sources or should be waste products that would otherwise go into the waste stream such as waste vegetable oil.

Background

'Biomass is biological material derived from living, or recently living organisms⁶ and is promoted as an alternative to fossil fuels as it can be produced sustainably. Plants and trees grown for biomass will take carbon out of the atmosphere as they grow and will then return the carbon to the atmosphere when it is burnt but the crop can be managed and grown as a constantly renewed crop making it more sustainable than fossil fuels. However, since biomass material is sourced from forests it is important to ensure that it is legally and sustainably sourced (see Timber section for more information on this), and authenticated with evidence to demonstrate this.

Environmental groups have raised concerns around the use of biomass as they are concerned that growing biomass crops may come at the expense of growing food crops (often in countries where food supply is a critical issue) or result in the destruction of forests or natural habitats to clear land for biomass crops.

⁶Biomass Energy Centre *What is Biomass?* http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk/portal/page?_pageid=76,15049&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

A recent report by the Environment Agency has shown that using biomass to generate electricity and heat can deliver very large greenhouse gas emission savings compared to using gas or coal but only if the fuel is produced in an environmentally sustainable way and is used efficiently.⁷ In order to deliver the carbon reduction benefits it is important to consider how the fuel is produced and the distance it has been transported as this can have a major impact on the carbon emissions created.

Key Points

Buy waste materials that have travelled as short a distance as possible

or

Buy materials with sustainable and legal certification

What should I do?

In order to deliver the carbon benefits from biomass and avoid having a negative impact upon the environment it is important to know

⁷ Environment Agency *Biomass – Carbon Sink or Carbon Sinner?* <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news/106432.aspx>

where the biomass you are using has come from and how it has been produced.

The most sustainable option is likely to be using waste materials that have travelled as short a distance as possible (ideally under 30 miles), such as waste wood from necessary tree felling work or from coppicing. By using a product that would otherwise be thrown away and that has not been transported long distances you can deliver some of the advantages of using biomass without the potential negative impacts. However, you do need to ensure security of supply both in terms of the quantity and quality of product required.

If you cannot find a suitable supply of 'waste' materials the next option to consider is using a product that has an environmental or sustainable and legal certification (or equivalent evidence) such as using FSC certified wood (see [Sustainable Labels](#) and Timber section). By using a product which you have evidence of coming from a sustainable source you can be more certain that the product you are using has not been grown at the expense of the environment or at the expense of the growth of food crops. However, you will still need to consider where the product

has come from and the distance it has travelled; if the product has to be shipped around the world then the carbon created by the transportation process may mean the biomass has as large a carbon impact as using a fossil fuel and no environmental benefit is achieved (see section on [whole life cycles](#)).

Biomass and biofuels can be a good alternative to fossil fuels but you need to be sure that the product you are sourcing is sustainable, will deliver the desired carbon reductions and is not being produced at the expense of food crops.

Further information

See section on [Timber](#).

Biomass Energy Centre – for information on the types of biomass and the different fuel options:

http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk/portal/page?_pageid=73,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Energy Saving Trust – for information on wood-fuel heating:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Generate-your-own-energy/Wood-fuelled-heating>

Cleaning Materials

Cleaning products should be:

- 90% biodegradable in 5 days
- Should not have been tested on animals, where available (see section on [Animal Welfare](#))

And must not contain:

- Petroleum base
- Phosphates
- EDTA (ethylene-diamine-tetra-acetate)
- NTA (nitrotriacetic acid)
- Optical brighteners
- Chlorine bleaches
- Synthetic perfumes or colours
- VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds)
- APEs (alkyl phenol ethoxylates)

Background

Maintaining clean buildings is essential to ensure that employees and visitors can enjoy healthy, safe and comfortable conditions. Choosing cleaning products which will both clean and minimise the impact on the environment is challenging as many products on the market contain toxic or hazardous chemicals.

The various chemicals contained in cleaning products can have numerous negative impacts on the environment for example, when phosphates get into rivers and lakes they cause algae which deprives the water of oxygen which can kill marine life and optical brighteners (the chemicals that are used to make your clothes 'whiter than white') contain chemicals that can be toxic to fish and other animal and plant life.

Key Points

Reduce the amount of packaging

Buy concentrates where possible

Buy containers that can be reused/refilled

What should I do?

As well as following the above guidelines there are other actions you can take to reduce the environmental impact of cleaning materials.

You can cut down on packaging and the amount of transport needed by buying concentrates whenever possible; asking

manufacturers to produce refillable versions and buying in bulk.

In order to reduce waste you should also ask for containers made from recycled materials or containers that can be recycled. Staff should also be trained on the appropriate use and 'dosage' of products which will prevent

wastage through overuse as well as protecting staff from potential mis-handling of chemicals.

Further information

See section on [Animal Welfare](#).

See section on [Ozone Depleting Chemicals](#) in relation to the use of aerosols.

Energy Efficiency

The Sustainable Procurement policy states that the Council will:

- Reduce our impact on climate change through the procurement of goods and services with a lower carbon impact;

and

- Minimise our use of energy, water and other natural resources.

The procurement of energy efficient products is a key part of achieving these goals.

Background

The more energy we use, the more CO₂ we produce which makes a significant contribution to climate change. Even small changes and improvements to the energy efficiency of products can have a significant impact on carbon emissions especially when such changes are replicated right across the Council.

Using more energy efficient products as well as benefitting the environment can save money as the running costs of energy efficient appliances can be significantly lower than older and less efficient appliances. As mentioned in the [whole life costing](#) section the initial upfront costs of an energy efficient product may be slightly higher but when you consider the amount of money that could be saved through reduced electricity use and reduced carbon impact the whole life-cycle costs should be lower.

Key Points

Avoid replacing items unless really necessary

Buy appliances with the most energy efficient rating

Only buy computers with an Energy Star Label

What should I do?

Before you even begin to look at what appliance to buy you should consider if you really need to buy that new computer, fridge or printer at all. Could you share a printer with another team? Does the fax machine get used enough to make it worthwhile to have one at all? Not buying or not replacing an item is the best way to reduce our energy consumption – if you decide you really do need to buy a new appliance there are a number of ways in which the energy consumption and environmental impact can be reduced. All new domestic refrigerators, freezers and

fridge-freezers, washing machines, tumble dryers, dishwashers, lamps, electric ovens and air conditioners must display an Energy Label (see [Sustainable Labels](#)). The label will give the appliance a rating from A++ to G, with A++ being the best performance and G the worst. The more efficient the product the less energy it uses which reduces the amount of carbon produced as well as saving money. You should aim when buying one of these appliances to choose the most efficient product possible.

If you are buying a new computer you must comply with the Council policy to only buy computers which have an Energy Star Label (see [Sustainable Labels](#)) and once the computer is installed ensure the Energy Star energy saving option is enabled and just as importantly remembering to turn the computer and monitor off when it is not in use.

Further information

See [Sustainable Labels](#) section
Energy Saving Trust
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

Energy Saving Trust for energy saving products, ranging from lighting to loft insulation:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Energy-saving-products>
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

Office Equipment

Preference should be given to products which minimise our use of energy, are recycled, re-usable/refillable, or recyclable e.g. refillable highlighter and marker pens, files made from recycled paper.

Background

Office equipment such as stationary is often considered to be of little importance, as 'low value' items but if you consider all the office equipment and stationary the Council uses over the course of the year it very soon adds up not just in terms of monetary cost but also in terms of environmental cost.

The best way to reduce the environmental impact of these types of products is to try and reduce the amount you use, ensure anything you do buy you use until the very end of its working life and if possible use items that can be reused or refilled to cut down on the amount of waste produced.

Key Points

Only buy what you need

Use items to the end of their working life

Buy items that can be reused or refilled

What should I do?

Adhesives:

Tapes – general purpose tape should preferably use water-soluble adhesive and be paper or cellulose

based which means on disposal it will be biodegradable. Always try to use a narrow tape to reduce the quantity used.

Spray adhesives – should be avoided if possible; much of the product is lost to the air and can be very wasteful. Most spray adhesives contain some solvent, although many are now available in water based versions or with reduced solvent content.

Glue sticks – are more environmentally friendly as they are less wasteful as well as non-toxic.

Blu-Tack – can be re-used many times which significantly reduces its environmental impact.

Batteries: require up to 50 times⁸ more energy to produce and dispose of than they are able to produce which makes them a very inefficient use of energy. Most batteries also contain heavy metals which can be harmful to the environment. It is best to use mains electricity where possible, buy products that allow you to use mains electricity and where

⁸ My Climate Website
<http://www.myclimate.org/en/information-climate-tips/climate-tips/week-10-which-item-requires-50-times-more-energy-to-produce-than-it-yields.html>

batteries are required use re-chargeable batteries.

Correction fluids: the growth of computers has seen a large reduction in the use of correction fluids and use should be avoided if possible. If you decide you really do need to use correction fluid choose solvent free, water based correction fluids as they do not emit solvents into the atmosphere.

Envelopes: for all internal mail use re-usable envelopes which can be used numerous times. Try to avoid using staples or adhesive tape to seal them as this damages the envelope which reduces their life-span. You can also re-use standard envelopes by using a sticker or label to cover the old address.

Files and Binders: reduce the amount of paper based filing as much as you can, some things may still need to be stored on paper but see where you can reduce this and consider replacing the paper files with electronic files. Avoid folders with a plastic cover (see chapter on [Plastics](#)); use cardboard folders and wallets made from recycled materials or re-use old folders and use a label to cover the old folder name.

Flipchart paper: use whiteboards where possible instead of unnecessarily using paper (see chapter on [Paper](#)). If you do choose to use flipcharts buy recycled paper and use both sides of the paper to make sure you use it to its maximum.

Notebooks and pads: try as far as possible to minimise the use of notebooks and pads (see chapter

on [Paper](#)). Consider stapling together pieces of paper that have only been used on one side to make notepads. Where you do need to buy notebooks buy ones made from 100% recycled paper.

Pens: many pens are lost or thrown away before the ink has even run out. Invest in better quality pens so they don't need to be thrown away as they are less likely to leak or for the writing quality to deteriorate, the initial upfront cost should be offset as they should last longer. Buy pens that can use refills rather than replacing the whole pen to reduce waste (highlighter pens, flipchart pens and whiteboard pens are all available with refills) and ensure any disposable pens are made from recycled materials.

Post-it notes: the glue on post-it notes makes them unsuitable for many paper recycling schemes so minimise their use where possible; if you do need to buy post-it notes make sure they are made from 100% recycled paper.

Printer cartridges: many different types of ink/toner cartridges can be reused by being cleaned, refilled and repackaged which reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and saves natural resources. There are a number of schemes already operating across the Council but a corporate system has now been set up with Office Green to recycle printer and toner cartridges. When the cartridges are collected Office Green will add points to the Council's account which will then be converted into cash to donate to the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

For further information visit:
[http://insite.council.leicester.gov.uk/
regeneration-and-
culture/cpwb/waste/recycling-in-
lcc/printer-cartridge-recycling](http://insite.council.leicester.gov.uk/regeneration-and-culture/cpwb/waste/recycling-in-lcc/printer-cartridge-recycling)

Remember

For any paper-based stationery products that aren't 100% recycled, check that the paper originates from a sustainable and legal source (see Timber section) and check that this is

evidenced on your supplier's delivery notes and invoices for you to maintain in your records.

Further information

A number of different environmental labels may apply to office equipment depending on what it is you are purchasing. For further information see the [Sustainable Labels](#) section.

Ozone Depleting Chemicals

The City Council will not buy products which contain ozone depleting substances and the City Council will minimise the use of solvents and solvent based products.

Background

Ozone depleting chemicals are substances which contain chlorine and bromine such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), HCFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons) and halons. There is evidence that man-made emissions of these substances deplete the stratospheric ozone layer.

The ozone layer around the earth acts as a natural barrier to filter out ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun, any depletion of the ozone layer results in an increase in UV radiation reaching the surface of the earth. Human exposure to UV, even in moderate levels, can result in increased levels of skin damage such as sunburn, skin cancer, snow blindness and cataracts. Animals and plants can also suffer from increased UV exposure and there can be consequences for biodiversity and food supply.

As well as the consequences of depletion in the ozone layer, ozone depleting substances are greenhouse gases which means they contribute to climate change.

In 1987 an international agreement to limit the production and consumption of many ozone depleting chemicals was reached in the Montreal Protocol. As a result

world production of CFCs fell by 94 per cent between 1986 and 2005.⁹

In the UK, production and consumption of CFCs had ceased by 1995 and UK manufacturers are only able to have CFCs manufactured under licence overseas for essential uses such as metered dose inhalers and laboratory purposes.

Key Points

Buy products in pump action packaging rather than aerosols

When disposing of refrigeration or air-conditioning systems check if they contain ODCs and ensure disposal company will de-gas before disposal

What should I do?

CFCs have been banned from consumer aerosols since 1989 but any product that might come in an aerosol format (such as air fresheners, cleaning products etc.)

⁹<http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:MEt3kqWqzSgJ:www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/statistics/environment/ozone/ozkf11.htm+result+world+production+of+CFCs+fell+by+94+per+cent+between+1986+and+2005&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk> Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs e-Digest Statistics about: Ozone Depletion

should instead be purchased in pump action packaging.

The use of (H)CFCs was banned in refrigeration and air-conditioning systems at the end of 2001 and so any refrigerators purchased should be manufactured after this date. Any existing refrigeration or air-conditioning systems that may contain (H)CFCs need to have the

ozone depleting substance removed before disposal.

Further information

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs 'Ozone' pages:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/ozone/index.htm>

Paper

The Council has identified paper use as one of its most significant environmental effects and has two EMAS targets addressing this issue, to increase the use of recycled paper and to reduce the quantity of paper used.

Any paper purchased should meet the following specification:

- Publications, leaflets, flyers & posters to use 75% recycled paper (The remaining 25% should be legally and sustainably sourced).***
- Site and volume photocopying to use 100% post consumer waste paper.***
- Council stationary to use 100% post consumer waste.***
- Printing of web products (e.g. Link) to be 100% recycled paper.***
- Digital colour low volume printing to be 100% post consumer waste paper.***

Background

As paper and cardboard is derived from timber, all the environmental impacts that arise from timber also apply to paper. This also means that for any paper that isn't 100% recycled, the non-recycled content should be from a legal and sustainable source (see Timber section). Paper usage has a significant environmental impact with deforestation caused by paper production thought to be a bigger cause of climate change than transport.¹⁰ In addition to the issues associated with deforestation the manufacturing processes used to make paper make intensive use of energy, water and a range of potentially harmful chemicals all of which can

have a significant impact on the environment.

As well as the impact of paper production, paper is a product that is often unnecessarily wasted; each person in the UK gets through around 201kg of paper a year. This compares to a European average of 132kg; but in France they use 179kg and in Ireland just 91kg a year.¹¹ A lot of paper waste happens at work, on average office workers throw away 45% of documents within a day of printing them.¹²

¹⁰ *The Independent* 10th July, 2008
<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/how-to-cut-your-paper-footprint-863793.html>

¹¹ Resource Consumption: Paper & Paperboard consumption Europe Region 2005
<http://earthtrends.wri.org/>

¹² *The Guardian* 14th October, 2007
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2007/oct/14/workandcareers.news>

What should I do?

Although the paper we use in the Council is largely 100% recycled (see above EMAS target) this paper still has a significant environmental impact and as such we all need to do as much as possible to reduce the amount we procure and use. All paper should be procured via Supplies Team Solutions or the Marketing and Brand Management Team for printed paper products, which will ensure that you are using the most environmentally friendly kind of paper available for the job you are doing.

Paper is an area where we as individuals have a real ability to make an impact on the amount of paper we use and in turn the environmental impact we have. Use only what you really need when ordering leaflets and magazines or printing publications make sure you have considered how many you need and how many you can really use, over ordering creates massive amounts of waste both in terms of wasted spend and in terms of the environmental impact of unnecessary waste.

Key Points

Only buy what you really need

Don't over order leaflets or publications

Minimise your personal use of paper by printing less

Further information

- See the [Environment Network pages](#) on Insite for more suggestions on reducing paper use.
- See the Timber section to learn more about how to ensure you are procuring sustainable and legal wood products (if not wholly recycled).
- See the [Sustainable Labels](#) section of this guide for more information about environmental labels relating to paper.

Peat

Peat should only be used for bedding plants and when hard to source plants are only available to buy grown in peat. Peat should not be used for any other purposes and alternatives will continue to be sought for use with bedding plants.

Background

Peat is created in living bogs, plants that live on the surface don't rot when they die as the ground is waterlogged, instead they form peat; this process takes place over hundreds of years.

Peat bogs are very important habitats which maintain many rare plants and wildlife, when the peat is extracted the habitats they create are destroyed along with the wildlife and plants that rely on that area. Nearly all UK lowland bogs have been destroyed or damaged, less than 6% now remain.

As well as being an important habitat for plants and wildlife they are also a means of reducing the effects of flooding as they absorb and hold excess water.¹³ Peat bogs also act as 'carbon sinks' capturing and storing carbon but when they are destroyed they release this carbon into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Peat dug up in Britain for use as garden compost releases almost half a million tonnes of CO₂ a year, equivalent to 100,000 cars on the road.¹⁴

43% of peat used in the UK comes from the UK, 54% from the Republic of Ireland, and 3% from the Baltic States.¹⁵ Sourcing peat from other countries just exports the same problems that destruction of peat bogs causes and contributes even more to the carbon footprint due to the impact of transporting the peat to the UK.

Key Points

Only use peat for bedding plants

or

For plants from specialist nurseries or growers

What should I do?

Peat should only be used for bedding plants, an alternative for which will continue to be sought. Peat is also acceptable when a plant needs to be purchased from a specialist nursery or grower and the plant is only available grown in peat.

¹³ Natural England *Natural Solutions to Flood Management*

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2009/210409.aspx

¹⁴ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs *Clearer Compost Labels*

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2009/090518a.htm>

¹⁵ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs *Clearer Compost Labels*

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2009/090518a.htm>

Further information Information about alternatives to using peat: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environ>

[mentandgreenerliving/Greenerhomeandgarden/Greenergarden/DG_064415](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenerhomeandgarden/Greenergarden/DG_064415)

Plastics

Given the environmental concerns surrounding the production and use of PVC (poly vinyl chloride) and the availability of alternative materials, the City Council will encourage the purchase and use of products made from alternatives to PVC.

Background

Plastics are often used due to their versatile nature, they are cheap, light, strong and durable but these attributes can become problematic once plastics have fulfilled their purpose.

Production

There are a number of concerns surrounding the way in which plastics are produced, many of which center on PVC. Plastic production makes use of a number of potentially harmful chemical additives, for example, adipates and phthalates are added to PVC to make it pliable so it can be used to make products such as tubing and food containers. Phthalates are regarded as hormone disrupters and some studies have also suggested they are carcinogens; the EU has gone as far as to ban phthalates in items which may be put in the mouths of children under 3. In addition to this the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer has recognised the chemical used to make PVC, vinyl chloride, as a known human carcinogen.

As well as the chemicals used in the production process it is estimated that 4% of the world's annual oil production is used as a

feedstock for plastic production and an additional 3-4% is used during the manufacturing process.¹⁶ This is a significant use of a non-renewable resource and adds to the carbon impact of plastic as a result of the extraction, processing and shipping of the oil.

Disposal

When it comes to disposing of plastic again issues can arise such as through the creation of litter which not only affects how an area looks but can also have an impact on wildlife. The United Nations Environmental Programme has estimated that more than a million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals are killed annually by plastic in the seas. It has been calculated that 46,000 pieces of plastic can be found in each square mile of the oceans; a large vortex of plastic has been found covering a huge area of the Pacific Ocean from about 500 miles (800km) west of California stretching almost as far as Japan.¹⁷ It is due to the fact that plastics take so long to break

¹⁶ Waste Online *Plastics Recycling Information Sheet*

<http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/Plastics.htm>

¹⁷ Times Online *Should we introduce a ban on Plastic Bags?*

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article3463543.ece>

down in the environment that plastic waste has become such a problem.

As well as the problems created in the wider environment, when plastics are placed in landfill they take up a lot of valuable space and as they do not break down easily they will remain in the landfill for hundreds of years. Plastics in landfill can also leach additives which enter soil and groundwater further damaging the environment.

One of the alternatives to landfill is incineration however, when chlorine (a big source of which is PVC) and hydrocarbons are burnt at high temperatures dioxins are produced. Dioxins are thought to cause cancer, affect reproductive health and cause increase incidence of diabetes.

The best option for plastic at the end of its life is to recycle it however this is an undeveloped market. There are around 50 different types of plastics, all of which are recyclable but recycling of plastics is currently limited in the UK, it is estimated that only 7% of total plastic waste is currently being recycled.¹⁸ The main difficulties that exist around plastic recycling are due to the high volume to weight ratio of plastics meaning that collection and transport of plastic waste is difficult and expensive; there are often high levels of contamination in plastic due to it being used for example, as food containers – this makes the recycle less useable; and given that there are so many different

types of plastic, segregation for processing can be a problem.

Key Points

Reduce the amount of plastic you buy and use

Aim to use alternatives to PVC

What should I do?

Given the environmental impact that plastic has for any project it is worth considering if there are alternatives to using plastic or if you can reduce the amount of plastic you need to use. However, it is always important to consider the whole life cycle of the non-plastic product versus the plastic product as it may actually be more sustainable to opt for plastic depending on the distance the product will have to travel; how the product will be transported; if there is the possibility of the plastic being reused/recycled at the end of the project and so on (see section on [whole life cycle costs](#)).

If once you've considered the alternatives plastic seems to be the best option try to select a non-PVC product which will avoid some of the potentially harmful substances that are used in the production of and are contained within PVC. The Greenpeace website offers some alternatives to using PVC in a variety of applications (see Further Information below).

¹⁸ Waste Online *Plastics Recycling Information Sheet*
<http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/Plastics.htm>

Further information

See section on Sustainable Labels

– [Mobius Loop](#).

Green Peace PVC Alternatives
Database:

<http://archive.greenpeace.org/toxics/pvcdatabase/bad.html>

Timber (and wood derived products)

We will only purchase timber and wood derived products that are either recycled, from independently verifiable legal and sustainable sources, or from FLEGT licensed or equivalent sources.

¹⁹

Background

Forests and woodlands around the world are being destroyed not only to meet demand for timber and timber based products but also to clear the way for large scale agriculture. Forests and woodlands are home to diverse ecosystems as well as indigenous people who live in and rely on the forests for their survival.

Destruction of forests and woodlands threatens the extinction of a number of often unique species of wildlife ranging from insects to birds to animals such as tigers, grizzly bears and gorillas that need large forest areas to survive. Forests also store large quantities of carbon, when forests are destroyed they release this carbon into the atmosphere which contributes to climate change. As well as acting as carbon stores forests play an important role in regulating the global climate;

¹⁹ Legal in the context of timber and timber derived products (such as paper and cardboard) means that the organisation or company that felled the trees had legal rights to use the forest as well as complying with all relevant local and national laws. Sustainable when referring to timber is concerned with forest management that minimises harm to ecosystems, ensure the forest ecosystem remains healthy and maintains biodiversity. *Central Point of Expertise for Timber Procurement*

continued destruction of forests around the world reduces their ability to perform this vital function which is even more important now, given the pace of climate change.

As part of our responsibility to ensure that procurement positively supports responsible forest management, the council has made a Pledge with the WWF to ensure that we only purchase recycled or sustainable and legal timber products across all our services.

Key Points

Buy recycled or reclaimed timber

Any 'new' timber or wood derived product must have sustainable and legal certification, or other evidence.

Contact the Environment Team for standard specification text to use in procurement exercises.

Make it a requirement that your supplier provides this documentary evidence for you to monitor, record and verify.

What should I do?

When purchasing timber and wood derived products (some such as

paper and biomass have their own chapters in this guide) there are a number of actions you can take to reduce the environmental impact. Initially you should consider if you can use second hand, recycled or reclaimed timber, this will not be appropriate for all projects but is an option worth considering at an early stage.

If this is not possible the next step is to procure certified timber. The only way to guarantee that the timber or timber-based products you procure are from sustainable and legal sources is if the product has been independently certified.

The Government funded Central Point of Expertise for Timber Procurement (CPET)²⁰ has considered a number of certification schemes and has listed four as meeting both legal and sustainable criteria. These are:

- Canadian Standards Association;
- Forest Stewardship Council;
- Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification;
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Probably the best known of these schemes is run by the Forest Stewardship Council, FSC certification is recommended and promoted by many environmental groups and organisations.

Other documentary evidence may provide assurance that the source is legal and sustainable, including Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) licensed timber (See CPET's

section on FLEGT and Other Evidence).²¹

When purchasing timber it is important to make clear in documentation that you require timber from a legal and sustainable source. **Contact the Environment Team to get the current standard specification text for use in procurement exercises.** If the timber is certified your supplier should be able to provide a chain-of-custody (CoC) certificate which verifies that the timber product is from a sustainably managed forest. It is this certificate or certification number that should be stored as evidence of compliance with our sustainable purchasing policy.

The timber will not necessarily carry the logo of the certifying organisation but the supplier should include on the invoice a CoC certificate number. If they do not provide this number ask the supplier to provide this information and to include it on all future invoices and delivery notes.

For contractors carrying out work on behalf of the council, it is important to specify evidence of compliance from them both beforehand in contract specifications, and for them to record and monitor their use of legal/sustainable timber during and after the project. This evidence can then be included as part of the project's closing report, for example.

The CPET website provides further information on how to assess evidence to demonstrate that

²⁰ <http://www.cpet.org.uk/>

²¹ <http://www.cpet.org.uk/uk-government-timber-procurement-policy/evidence-of-compliance/flegt>

products come from both a legal and sustainable source (see Further Information below).

More details on some of the better known timber certification schemes are provided in the [Sustainable Labels](#) section of this guide.

Also, remember this applies to all wood-based products, including any paper and paper-based stationery that is either partially recycled or not at all, plus biomass materials

Further information: Central Point of Expertise for Timber Procurement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/central-point-of-expertise-on-timber>

Friends of the Earth have compiled a list of different types of wood assessing how endangered each type of wood is; the guide can be accessed at:

http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/resource/good_wood_guide/wood_timber_types_a_to_g.html

Vehicles and Transport

City Council will aim to purchase the lowest polluting vehicles which meet our emission targets and service requirement. The City Council will purchase vehicles that meet the current Euro emissions standard or equivalent in place at the time.

Background

Road transport is the third largest source of UK greenhouse gases and account for over 20% of total emissions.²² When a gallon of petrol is burned it combines with oxygen to produce nearly 20 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂).²³ In addition to this road transport account for many other emissions such as benzene, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), up to 13,000 deaths per year among children (aged 0-4 years) across Europe are directly attributable to outdoor pollution. The WHO estimates that if pollution levels were returned to within EU limits, more than 5,000 of these lives could be saved each year.²⁴

In addition to the above car fluids such as oil can end up in water systems which can be harmful to plants and wildlife. Noise and congestion from road traffic can impact on quality of life particularly in urban areas such as Leicester.

²² What Green Car Road Transport Emissions
<http://www.whatgreencar.com/caremissions.php>

²³ The Green Car Website Environmental Impacts
<http://www.thegreencarwebsite.co.uk/environmental-impact.asp#impact>

²⁴ What Green Car Road Transport Emissions
<http://www.whatgreencar.com/caremissions.php>

Key Points

Reduce the amount you travel

Try to use public transport instead of using a car

Reduce fuel consumption

Consider buying a team bicycle

What should I do?

During 2007/08 the Council fleet vehicles travelled 5.4 million miles using 1,473,339 litres of fuel. Whether you use a fleet vehicle or your own car for Council business or if you just use your car for personal use there are steps you can take to reduce your environmental impact.

→ Aim to use alternative modes of transport, try public transport, walking or cycling. Even if you only change a few journeys from using a car to a more environmental friendly option this can have a positive impact. Always consider walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing before choosing to travel as a lone care driver.

- Consider purchasing a pool bicycle for your team or section to use on Council business.
- If you have to drive consider if you could car share, is there someone else going to the same meeting or who you could share the journey to work with?

You should try to cut down the number of journeys you make by car as much as possible but if you do decide to use your car there are some simple steps to reduce your fuel consumption (good for your pocket as well as for the environment).

- Reduce the weight of your car by removing any unnecessary items from the boot or unused roof racks which increases wind resistance.
- Ensure your car is well maintained and serviced so it is running efficiently. This includes checking your tyre pressure regularly.
- Consider your speed – driving at 70mph can consume almost 25% more fuel than driving at 50mph and avoid harsh acceleration and braking as this uses more fuel and can cause wear and tear.
- Plan your journey before you leave so you can complete as many jobs as possible in one trip and avoid driving in rush hour.

The above suggestions should be applied whether you are using your own vehicle on Council business or a fleet vehicle. The Transport Team is responsible for the management and purchase of the

City Council's vehicle fleet and there is an annual programme to replace older vehicles. The Fleet Manager identifies vehicles that are reaching the end of their life and will contact the users of the vehicles about replacing the vehicle. If your vehicle is due to be replaced you should:

- Consider if the vehicle needs to be replaced. If it is not used on a regular basis consider if you could share a vehicle or use other forms of transport instead.
- Choose the correct size of vehicle based on the type of work it is intended for and type of journey it will be making.

Don't just assume that as your team has had a particular type or number of vehicles that you still need the same number and type of vehicles for the future – consider all the possible alternatives.

The use of electric vehicles has been piloted by the Council and we are actively investigating the suitability of alternative low carbon vehicle technologies. Where practical specifications can be met and best value can be demonstrated, the Group Manager responsible for the Council Fleet will consider the purchase of low carbon vehicles.

Further information

An internal Travel Plan was launched in 2008 providing information and support for staff to use alternatives to car travel: <http://insite.council.leicester.gov.uk/regeneration-and-culture/regeneration/travel-plan>

Social – ensuring high ethical standards

Leicester City Council has for many years played a leading role around a number of social issues in particular around fair trade and animal welfare.

A number of the subjects in this section of the guide are concerned with considering the needs of people, often in developing countries, whose quality of life may be impacted upon by our procurement decisions. It is important to remember when making procurement decisions that within supply chains there may be practices that would be unacceptable to us, such as the use of child labour and we as a Council need to ensure as far as possible that our actions do not contribute to these practices and that we seek to have a positive impact upon the people producing the good and materials we use.

There is real scope within EU and national procurement rules to consider social issues in procurement, as mentioned earlier in this guide it is best to do this early on when setting out your needs as this is more likely to be successful. It is important that you do not act in a way that may be considered to ‘distort competition’ or discriminate against candidates from other EU member states. The Office of Government Commerce note on *Social Issues in Purchasing*²⁵ provides some useful information on how you should include social considerations in procurement.

The following 4 sections provide further information on some specific issues which relate to the social sections of the Sustainable Procurement Policy.

²⁵ Office of Government Commerce *Social Issues in Purchasing*
http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Social_Issues_in_Purchasing.pdf

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare should be considered when making purchasing decisions and should ensure that purchasing precludes any future animal testing by suppliers and therefore contributes to the end of animal testing.

Background

All testing involving animals in the UK are licensed by the Home Office and project licences are only granted under certain conditions. There are also EU Directives covering testing and treatment of animals as well as industry best practice agreements.

All drugs licensed for use in Britain have been tested on animals but testing of cosmetics on animals has been outlawed in Britain since 1997/98, testing household products on animals is still carried out. The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) estimate that 100 million animals are used in testing worldwide and the UK is the largest user in the EU.

BUAV and many other animal rights groups argue that animal testing is unnecessary. Under the law household products do not need to be tested on animals, a company only has to demonstrate product safety and this can be done using non-animal tests or using ingredients that have already been established as safe for human use.

The BUAV has developed two standards for approving products that have not been test on animals:

- The Humane Household Products Standard is designed to help consumers identify household products that have not been tested on animals.
- The Humane Cosmetics Standard is designed to help consumers identify cosmetics and toiletry products that have not been tested on animals.

Key Points

Aim to buy products that are 'animal friendly'

Ask for evidence that products have not been tested on animals

What should I do?

When procuring consider if the item you are purchasing may have been tested on animals, this is most likely to apply to cleaning products. If an item may have been tested on animals you should establish if the item has been certified as 'animal friendly' such as under the BUAV scheme (see Further Information below) or if the company can provide equivalent evidence that

they do not test products on animals.

It is worth showing some caution when products are labelled as 'not tested on animals' or just 'animal friendly' such terms can be misleading and may mean the end product has not been tested on animals but that the ingredients contained within the product have been tested on animals. When a company makes such claims ask them to explain exactly what they mean and what evidence they have to back up their assertions.

Further information

See section on [Cleaning Materials](#) for environmental issues to consider when purchasing cleaning products.

The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection : www.buav.org

Information on BUAV approved products and organisations: http://gocrueltyfree.org/b_shopcrueltyfree.php

Fair Trade

We intend, where possible, to purchase fair trade products and will continue to promote Leicester as a Fairtrade City.

Background

Fair trade is concerned with better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. Companies are required to pay sustainable prices to producers and under some schemes producers also receive a fair trade premium which is then invested in social, environmental and economic developmental projects decided upon by a committee of producers or of workers on a plantation. By paying a 'fair' price fair trade aims to address the injustices of conventional trade which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers.

Fairtrade standards comprise both minimum social, economic and environmental requirements, which producers must meet to be certified, and progress requirements that encourage continuous improvement to develop farmers' organisations or the situation of estate workers.

The UK is one of the world's leading Fairtrade markets, the Fairtrade Foundation has licensed over 3,000 Fairtrade certified products for sale through retail and catering outlets in the UK and around 20% of roast and ground

coffee and 20% of bananas sold in the UK are now Fairtrade.²⁶

The range of Fairtrade products currently available includes bananas; cocoa; coffee; dried fruit; fresh fruit and vegetables; honey; fruit juices; nuts; quinoa; rice; spices; sugar; tea; wine and non-food products including cotton; flowers; plants and sports balls.

Leicester has been a Fairtrade City since 2002 and the City Council working with other partners in the Leicester Advocating Fairtrade (LaFT) group continues to promote fair trade across the city. As part of this ongoing work the City Council has adopted a ten point pledge to be delivered over a five year period (2008-2013), the pledge reads:

1. All of our members and officers to be aware of Fairtrade and actions.
2. All of our schools to incorporate Fairtrade into the curriculum.
3. We will make use of as many Fairtrade products as possible within school catering – starting with bananas and fruit juices.
4. All catering franchises to use and promote Fairtrade products.

²⁶ Fairtrade Foundation *Frequently Asked Questions*
http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/what_is_fairtrade/faqs.aspx

5. All vending machines to stock Fairtrade products.
6. All Leicester City Council supported festivals and events to have a Fairtrade element.
7. Every Fairtrade Fortnight to be actively promoted and supported by Leicester City Council.
8. All Leicester City Council staff polo shirts to be made from Fairtrade cotton.
9. All footballs used in Leicester City Council schools and leisure centres to be Fairtrade.
10. We will promote our work to other Local Authorities and Fairtrade towns and cities.

Some of these commitments are already being delivered and all should be fulfilled by the end of 2013.

Key Points

Buy Fair Trade whenever possible – choose Fair Trade for catering and when procuring cotton products such as uniforms

What should I do?

Consider where you can use fair trade products and how you can help to deliver the Council's Fairtrade Pledge when making a procurement decision. Specific information on how to procure fair trade within procurement rules is contained in the Office of Government Commerce *Guidance on Fair Trade & Public Procurement*.²⁷

Further information

Fairtrade Foundation:

www.fairtrade.org.uk

Office of Government Commerce
Guidance on Fair Trade and Public
Procurement:

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Guidance_on_Fair_and_Ethical_Trading.pdf

²⁷ Office Of Government Commerce *Guidance on Fair Trade & Public Procurement*
http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Guidance_on_Fair_and_Ethical_Trading.pdf

Genetically Modified Foods

We will not knowingly buy foodstuffs that are genetically modified or contain genetically modified ingredients.

Background

Genetically-modified (GM) food is made from plants or animals which have had their genes changed by scientists. In the EU, if a food contains or consists of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), or contains ingredients produced from GMOs, this must be shown on the label. Foods from animals that have been fed on GM animal feed do not need to be labelled, this includes meat and milk.

There has been an ongoing debate about the relative advantages and disadvantages of GM foods. Supporters of GM argue that the technology has the potential to address the food needs of the developing world. They argue that by developing crops that are resistant to pests or drought or which will produce a higher yield, farmers in the developing world will be able to produce the food they need and address some of the issues they currently face when growing crops. Whilst the EU has taken a precautionary approach to the use of GM, many countries have pursued GM technology. In the USA GM technology has been embraced and supporters argue that GM crops and foods have been used there for around the last 10 years and no adverse health or environmental impacts have been demonstrated.

On the other side of the argument, people who are against GM argue that it is not clear if GM foods will have any long-term affect on human health as these products have not been in use for long enough to study or understand the consequences. Environmentalists have also raised concerns that GM crops could 'contaminate' wild plants or non-GM crops, altering their genetic structure which it is argued may pose a risk to biodiversity.

After undertaking consultation with services that provide meals and given the fact that the debate about the use of GM technology continues and the consequences of GM do not appear currently to be fully understood, Leicester City Council decided to adopt a precautionary stance.

Key Points

Check the labelling on food products to ensure they do not contain or consist of GM food.

What should I do?

If you are making a procurement that involves any foodstuff then you need to check that the product you are buying does not contain or

consist of GM food; as stated above food products that contain GM should be clearly labelled and easy to identify.

Further information

Food Standards Agency general information around GM food:
<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthissues/factsbehindissues/gmfood/>

International Labour Organisation Conventions

We will not knowingly work with contractors and suppliers whose activities do not comply with the conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

Background

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was founded in 1919 and became a specialised agency of the UN in 1946. The ILO aims to advance opportunities for men and women to obtain 'decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity'.²⁸

The ILO conventions and recommendations cover a wide variety of issues but the ILO has identified eight Fundamental Conventions which cover the below issues:

- Freedom of association and right to organise e.g. workers are able to set up or join a union;
- Right to collective bargaining – again this may be through a union or other collective of workers;
- No use of forced or compulsory labour – workers choose their employment freely;
- Abolition of child labour;
- Equal pay for men and women for work of equal value;

- Workers should not be subject to discrimination such as on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

It is not a straight-forward process to be able to say definitively that a company complies with the ILO conventions. Even if you were able to visit the company's factory it would still be difficult to say for certain that the company meets these standards as it may be, for example, that they are employing children working in other factories or employing people who are working from home, you may not see the full picture.

Key Points

Check the working practices and track record of suppliers to identify any potential bad practices

What should I do?

There are also organisations which try to assess whether a company adopts good working standards and rights for workers which may enable you to check if a company has good working practices in place. For example, the Ethical

²⁸ International Labour Organisation *Decent Work for all*
http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Mainpilars/WhatisDecentWork/lang--en/index.htm

Accreditation Scheme (see [Sustainable Labels](#)) as one of their assessment criteria looks at worker's rights and you can view the scores companies have received under various assessment criteria. There is also the Ethical Trading Initiative which uses the ILO conventions as a basis for its code by which they identify good practice.

It is not possible to be 100% certain that the contractor or supplier you procure a service from is complying with the ILO conventions but every effort should be made to check the company's working practices and

look at their track record to identify any potential problems.

Further information

International Labour Organisation:
[http://www.ilo.org/global/What we do/InternationalLabourStandards/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/InternationalLabourStandards/index.htm)

Ethical Trading Initiative
<http://www.ethicaltrade.org/>

Ethical Accreditation Scheme
<http://www.ethical-company-organisation.org/default.htm>

Ethical Consumer Organisation's 'Ethiscore' website:
www.ethiscore.org

Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index:
www.bitc.org.uk

Economic – supporting the local economy and community

The subjects included in the economic section of the guide are concerned with considering the needs of the people of Leicester and working to encourage local firms, small and medium sized business and other businesses (who may sometimes find it difficult to win public sector contracts) to increase their opportunities to do business with us and increase the amount the Council are spending in the local economy.

There is real scope within EU and national procurement rules to consider social issues in procurement, as mentioned earlier in this guide it is best to do this early on when setting out your needs as this is more likely to be successful. It is important that you do not act in a way that may be considered to 'distort competition' or discriminate against candidates from other EC member states. The Office of Government Commerce note on *Social Issues in Purchasing*²⁹ provides some useful information on how you can include economic considerations in procurement.

The following three sections provide further information on some specific issues which relate to the economic sections of the Sustainable Procurement Policy.

²⁹ Office of Government Commerce *Social Issues in Purchasing*
http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Social_Issues_in_Purchasing.pdf

Community Benefits

We will explore the opportunities for delivering specific community benefits through our procurement activities and seek to understand the impact our procurement activities have on local communities.

Background

Local authorities have an important role to play in developing thriving communities and to make it possible for people to get involved in and benefit from their local communities. In our procurement activities the Council should seek to deliver benefits to the community wherever possible and deliver value-for-money by supporting local communities.

Key Points

Consult local people early on in projects

Consider working with locally based organisations to use their knowledge and insights

What should I do?

It is important that you make it possible for local people to get involved in projects especially if the procurement will have a major impact on the local area such as by building a new library or community centre. Consult with and seek the views of all potentially interested parties engaging them when you're developing your initial ideas and keeping them engaged throughout the rest of the project.

You should also consider working with locally based organisations early on in the process for example, you can engage with small and medium sized enterprises and the voluntary and community sector to seek their views. Local groups may have more knowledge or insights about the best way to deliver benefits for the specific community you are working with. However, when doing this you must ensure that you do not give preference or an unfair advantage to local suppliers as this would be considered discriminatory under EU rules (see [Supporting Businesses](#) section).

Other considerations to take into account when setting the user requirements are issues like location and community buy-in which may have a positive impact on the community and help regenerate a local area. Consider the needs of both the current generation but also consider the long-term and the needs of future generations in the community.

Finally, you should consider if the procurement process is the best way to deliver the benefits you are aiming to achieve - are there more effective ways of achieving these objectives which will make a better use of resources whilst achieving

the same benefits for the community.

Further information

For information about community engagement, consultations and the Duty to Involve visit: <http://insite.council.leicester.gov.uk/e-handbook/customer-services-and-comm-egage/community-engagement>

Providing Employment and Training

We will seek to incorporate provisions into our contracts, where appropriate, to offer training and employment opportunities for members of the local community.

Background

Providing a range of opportunities to increase the skill levels of local people through training and employment opportunities is important to help develop Leicester's economy and to enable people to gain new experiences and skills that they can use in the future. Increasing skill levels through training and providing opportunities for those who may be long-term unemployed can have positive social and economic consequences not just for the individuals involved but for the wider community.

Key Points

Communicate employment opportunities to local communities

Ask contractors to promote training and employment opportunities

What should I do?

It is not possible to require contractors to employ local people – this would be considered discriminatory under EU procurement rules. What you can

do is to work with suppliers to ensure that, when appropriate, any employment or training positions arising from contracts are communicated to local communities; in this way people who may benefit will be aware of the opportunities. You can also encourage voluntary action by the contractor post-award of contract - see if they are able to promote training or employment opportunities as part of their delivery of the contract.

Where you do intend to take employment and training factors into account remember to ensure that these factors are relevant to the subject of the contract, are delivering value-for-money and are consistent with EU procurement rules.

Finally, you should consider if the procurement process is the most efficient and cost-effective way to deliver the desired outcomes. Could you promote employment and training opportunities in other, more effective, ways? Ensuring you deliver value-for-money may mean that creating employment and training opportunities through contracts is not necessarily the most cost-effective way of achieving these goals.

Supporting Businesses

We will continue to engage with businesses such as local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), the third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities and cooperatives), ethnic and minority owned businesses, sheltered businesses (providing supported employment opportunities for disabled people) and women owned businesses to encourage a wider and more diverse base of suppliers and to promote equality of opportunity.

Background

Small and medium sized businesses and the voluntary and community sector are important in helping to create a more diverse range of suppliers; can be a source of innovation or may have a particular expertise which it is useful to tap into. Small and medium sized businesses make up a large quantity of UK enterprises, figures taken nationally show that 89% of enterprises have less than 10 employees and 98.1% have less than 50 employees.³⁰ By not utilising this resource we may be missing out on some important opportunities.

Key Points

Make the process as accessible as possible to different types of suppliers

Consider breaking large contracts down into a series of smaller contracts

What should I do?

You should not act in a way that distorts competition or discriminates against candidates from other EU member states: this means that you cannot specify that a business should be based in Leicester or Leicestershire as this would discriminate against candidates from other parts of the UK and other EU countries.

What you can do is to be clear about what you need from the outset - provide potential suppliers with as much information as possible so they have everything they need to be able to compete for work. You should also make sure the process is accessible to as many different suppliers as possible by considering how you can best assist SMEs and the voluntary sector in competing for work – but remember you should not act in a way that distorts competition or gives an unfair advantage to any particular supplier.

You could also give consideration to the size of the contract - could you break the contract down into a

³⁰National Statistics Online - Figures taken from March 2008
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1238>

series of smaller contracts to make it more manageable for small businesses? However, it is important to remember that you still have to deliver value-for-money and splitting a contract may result in additional work and higher management costs; you need to

consider how you will control this process.

Whilst you cannot specify or give an advantage to local or small businesses what you can do is enable businesses to compete for work, through clear communication, advice and guidance.