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8th October 2012

Dear Colleagues

Invitation to join the National Procurement Service

As Senior leaders across the Welsh public sector we face the challenge of unprecedented budgetary pressure at a time when public services remain critical for our more vulnerable citizens.

We spend one third of its budget on external goods and services – some £4.3billion per year. It is our duty to spend wisely and secure maximum value for money in its widest sense.

At least 20-30% of what we buy is common across organisations and is bought year on year. We have had some success from looser forms of collaboration. Now is the time to go to the next level. The 2010 review 'Buying Smarter in Tougher Times' clearly recommended that contracts for this spend should be set up on a 'Once for Wales' basis. This recommendation was endorsed by the Simpson report and a commitment to progress the business case for a National Procurement Service was reflected in the Compact. This is a necessary step change and one that was fully endorsed by the recent McClelland Review.

The National Procurement Service model has delivered significant benefits to other devolved governments within the United Kingdom. It is a proven approach to maximising procurement benefits and is a model used in the majority of global private sector businesses.

We know that our existing procurement capability is stretched. The McClelland Review points to major weaknesses in certain areas. The recent cross party Inquiry into 'Influencing the modernisation of European procurement policy' calls for us to address 'creativity, capability and capacity'. Collaboration need not have a negative impact on our economy. The McClelland Review shows that stronger centralised procurement, with a focus on economic value, results in a greater level of local spend than with uncontrolled maverick buying.

We cannot continue to ignore the need to strengthen our collaboration, to standardise demand for our common spend areas and to invest in creating capability that will get the best out of the market. The Business Case for the creation of an NPS shows that it will deliver better contracts, efficiencies in process, smarter use of scarce skills, and also the potential for local social and economic benefits.

The Proposal



1. That a National Procurement Service be established to carry out common and repetitive spend once for Wales
2. That it has independent cross-sector governance – through an NPS Board attended by Chief Executives
3. That it be set up on a ‘category management’ basis – structured so that lead officers have a good understanding of spend, future demand and the market and develop appropriate and relevant category sourcing strategies
4. That investment of £2.4million per annum be made in the NPS – to secure a savings benefit of £74.8million over 5 years which is £34million over and above current arrangements. Sector specific savings projections can be found in section 13 of the appendix to the Business Case – page 138.
5. That in addition to generating savings the NPS is tasked with developing opportunities to deliver social and economic benefits
6. That organisations commit to using the NPS for a 5 year period – and fully using associated contracts other than on an exception basis agreed in advance of tender and through justification to NPS Board. This is on the assumption that the NPS is centrally funded directly through WG budget process until it reaches a point of maturity; estimated in Year 3 (2016/2017) of operation; at which point it is proposed that the funding model switches to a self funding rebate from 2017/2018 onwards
7. That local procurement expertise be retained to deliver local spend categories and to put in place the controls to ensure organisational compliance with agreed national contracts
8. That sector based collaboration continues so as to service spend areas unique to a given sector where collaboration will drive benefit.

Features


- Strategic vehicle for procuring common goods and services for Wales, taking into account the needs of all sectors.
- Central delivery model with own governance structure with appropriate representation from all sectors
- Focus on three key aspects of the procurement process – Developing Common Specifications, Tendering and Contract Management.
- Structured on a category management basis; will seek to leverage the procurement scale; influence demand management and implementing best practice approaches.
- Utilises Welsh Public Sector Procurement policy to support best practice.
- Capability to procure as yet unknown new or innovative solutions in support of public service reform.
- Co-ordinated approach to procurement which seeks to develop the SME community within Wales.
- Provide effective supplier relationship management through a single route.

Benefits

- Cashable savings achieved through reduced total cost of acquisition for the common and repetitive spend goods and services, estimated at £75million over 5 years
- Cost avoidance benefits delivered through the simplified procurement and increased compliance
- Opportunity to be gained by individual stakeholder organisations by redeploying their scarce resources onto higher risk more critical spend areas
- Developing the professionalism and capability of the procurement community in Wales.
- Positive impact on the Welsh economy
- Easier for suppliers to engage and transact with the Welsh public sector.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the Executive Summary of the Business Case and the full version plus appendices. Clicking on the paper clip links at the side of this text will open the attachments.  

We now require a formal commitment from each organisation to join the NPS to enable the investment decision to be made. I would be grateful if you could consider the proposal outlined above. While recognising that the delivery plans and staffing structure of the NPS will be subject to development, you are now asked to confirm your commitment to sign up to joining the NPS for a five year period, recognising that this will mean a financial commitment estimated in 2016/2017 in the form of a rebate, and fully committing to using the contracts that are created by the Service (subject to exceptions agreed by the Procurement Board).

You will find a pro-forma attached, which I would be grateful if you could duly sign on behalf of your organisation following your own internal approval process and forward a copy to the Project Team (rebecca.rees2@wales.gsi.gov.uk) by 14th December 2012. 

Should you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact the Project Team at the email address above. Once again, you will need to click on the paper clip links to open the attachment.

Regards



TRACEY LEE

Managing Director, Newport City Council

Appended below - NPS: Categories in scope / out of scope

Category	Subcategories considered within the scope of a National Procurement Service	Subcategories considered <u>out</u> of the scope of a National Procurement Service initially	Subcategories included in NPS review (£m)
Information Communication Technology	Hardware, Consumables, Software, Telecoms, Network and Support	Repair, Photographic Equipment and Website Design	£291.80
Utilities	Electricity, Gas and Petroleum	Water, Wind, Solar, Coal and Wood	£153.30
Facilities & Management Services	Maintenance Services, Travel, Advertising and Printers	Design, Photography and Market Research	£99.50
Human Resources	Employment agencies and translators	Advisory Services and Training	£74.40
Consultancy	Business and Technical consulting	Highly specialised - e.g. Planning, Food and Geological	£68.60
Vehicle Management	Vehicle acquisition, Lease and Hire	Heavy construction and Industrial	£75.80
Catering	Catering Supplies, Food and Vending	Fresh food, Equipment Maintenance, Linen Services and Caterers	£53.00
Legal Services	Solicitors	Specialist support, Barristers	£35.20
Healthcare	Medical and Mobility Equipment	Drugs, Specialist Medical Supplies and Hospital Equipment	£30.00
Construction Materials	General Materials, Electrical Supplies and Equipment Hire	Specialist Materials - e.g. fencing, bathroom and kitchen	£20.00
Stationery	Paper and General Stationery Supplies	Sundries including Promotional items	£14.20
Furniture & Soft Furnishings	Office Furniture & Equipment	Commercial Furniture and Social Care Supplies	£14.20
Mail Services	Postal Services, Couriers and Mailing Equipment	Freight and Mailroom services	£16.40
Clothing	Uniforms, Workwear, Protective and Safety Equipment	Specialist protective clothing	£10.80
Cleaning & Janitorial	Cleaning Materials and Equipment	N/A	£5.70
Education	Audio-visual Equipment & Supplies	Services and Books	£4.20
TOTALS			£967