



Sustainable Procurement Advice for Schools

Sustainable Schools Conference 23rd November 2022

Chris Lowe – Schools Category Manager – Corporate Procurement Service

Christopher.lowe@solihull.gov.uk

Sustainability – Sustainable Supply Chains

- A very topical area for discussions amongst Procurement professionals at present
- Schools need to consider the environmental and human cost of everything that is procured
- Make everyone aware in the process inc suppliers. It does not add to cost but having sustainable supply chains can reduce costs

Communicate good news stories widely – increases morale

How could Schools contribute

To start consider the **need** and **necessity** – are the goods or services really required? - challenge the requirement

Could they be acquired by a – different and more sustainable way – **reuse , repair or recycle – its not all about procurement!**

If you procure can you buy products that can be upcycled

What Can be Done?

Work as Team – not just the head teacher and business manager but other members of staff and importantly there could be an input from the pupils themselves as well as your suppliers

- Beware of Greenwashing suppliers – do they think like you- are they really eco friendly, sustainable, green and working with you?
- Include Sustainability / Environmental award criteria in your tenders
- Remember to include KPI's to measure sustainable aspects and hold suppliers to account if they fail to deliver what is promised



Steps Towards Sustainable Supply Chains in Schools

- Ensure products purchased are sustainable as possible
- Consideration for the Environment – how much waste, gases and hazardous materials are produced in the goods and services procured – how much water used and its disruption to the environment
- Request suppliers reduce packaging, or whether they can use more sustainable packaging materials
- Consider using local suppliers wherever possible - supporting local SME's can help reduce the carbon footprint in delivering goods and services
- Financial considerations - Ensure suppliers are paid on time and ask that their employees receive the same consideration. Staff working for suppliers should therefore be looked after and treated fairly. Potential suppliers should be seen to be acting in a financially responsible way



What are the Hurdles

We know it is not easy – to have peace of mind that what is procured does not harm the environment or communities, and that staff working for suppliers are treated with the respect they deserve

Visibility of the supply chain is key and knowing more about the whole supply chain is important – complicated by tiers within supply chains and having to possibly deal with multiple suppliers that may source from abroad

What are the Challenges

- **Lack of Resources** or **Complex supply chains** to begin with
- **Understanding** perhaps amongst smaller suppliers about the importance and an unwillingness to change – which could be a culture issue
- **Cost** – Perception of increased costs .Smaller suppliers may also struggle with upfront costs in making supply chains sustainable it may require considerable capital investment.
- **Skill Set** of people involved in transformation.

What are the Rewards of a Sustainable Supply Chain

- Energy costs can decrease as a result of lower emissions when Buyers set targets with suppliers and work with them to identify opportunities for improvement
- It can enhance your reputation if you are known to be involved with sustainable procurement initiatives, and you are giving something back to communities
- Improved Supply Chain continuity can lead to having more than one supplier rather than reliance on single suppliers for products
- Use of sustainable techniques and resources can produce cost savings ie efficient use of buildings ,machinery and buildings
- Creativity and Innovation meeting Sustainability standards can lead to more efficient ways of working
- An overall benefit can be a reduced environmental impact

