



PROCUREMENT

## The Northamptonshire Procurement Forum

### Summary

Prior to 2002 the District and County Councils across Northamptonshire, along with the Police Authority had a history of working collaboratively on some contracts. However, the majority of procurement across the county was on an individual basis.

In 2003 the Councils established the Northamptonshire Procurement Forum to increase the opportunity for collaborative working and to develop an environment where procurement, policy information, expertise and knowledge could be shared to the benefit of all the authorities. The East Midlands Centre of Excellence (EMCE) has been supporting the procurement programme, helping those local authorities involved establish collaborative contracts with contractors, and supporting the Forum's move to create a common set of procurement related tools and systems.

### Quote

*“As a relative newcomer to the role of procurement I have found the Forum an invaluable source of knowledge and information to help me really establish procurement within Corby Borough Council.”*

Stuart Taylor,  
Procurement Officer,  
Corby Borough Council

## Forum objectives

- To improve and develop collaborative working by seeking to aggregate contracts where there is a financial and service benefit
- To share information on procurement policies amongst all stakeholders
- To ensure procurement policies from all members are complementary
- To achieve greater procurement efficiencies, securing a better frontline service
- To share expertise, knowledge and best practice information
- To work towards a commonality of procurement related systems
- To develop standardised documentation and processes to achieve greater efficiency

## Working collaboratively

The Northamptonshire Procurement Forum has now established sub groups to include specialist professionals, in areas such as IT.

**Benefit:** To help develop common specifications for products and further the collaborative working at service level, ultimately achieving greater efficiencies for the public purse and frontline services.

## Collaborative contracts have been set in place

**Benefit:** This ensures Forum members are achieving greater efficiency across a number of council services including, recruitment advertising, stationary, credit/debit card handling, car hire and temporary agency staff. In 2004 District Councils achieved total savings of £378,539 thanks to the use of collaborative contracts.

## Participation in consortia framework contracts

Two of the Forum members, Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council, are members of the Central Buying Consortium (CBC), involving 17 local authorities across the South of the UK.

**Benefit:** Through the CBC, members collaborate on contracts to aggregate value and achieve a better market price. This has enabled other Forum members to take advantage of a variety of contracts such as Electricity, Gas, bottled water, canned drinks and PCs.

## Standardisation of documents

Historically local authorities were often asked the same questions of suppliers, and received the same applications, causing unnecessary costs for suppliers and local authorities. The Forum has now established a standard ITT template and PQQ documents for use on collaborative contracts.

**Benefit:** The standardisation of documents has ensured unnecessary duplication is reduced.

## Selling to Guide

In 2005 the group established a common 'Selling to Guide' for all the Councils in Northamptonshire. The guide informs suppliers how to bid for council contracts and who to contact for each contract.

**Benefit:** The 'Selling to Guide' ensures that suppliers are more informed on how to sell to the council. In turn, this cements real time savings, preventing duplicated queries from suppliers.

## Contact

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