# Supplier Tips

### Sustainability

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# Introduction

What is sustainability?

The way we live can have a detrimental effect on the quality of our lives and the environment we live in. We would like to ensure a better quality of life for current and future generations. To do this we all need to seriously look at the way we use the earth’s resources, operate our businesses and live our lives.

Sustainability for Islington is about providing the best for our residents whilst limiting any negative effects on other local residents and the environment. Sustainability focuses on two key areas: local regeneration and environmental impact.

Local regeneration is about using the money and the skill we have locally to the maximum advantage of local people. This covers looking at the way we procure things, whom we procure them from and what they do to support local trading, employment and training.

Environmental sustainability is about reducing pollution and our carbon footprint. It is about increasing recycling and controlling waste. We encourage use of renewable (as opposed to virgin) products at all stages of the procurement process. We are actively looking at reducing the amount of unnecessary energy we use. We are also utilising electronic technology and being clever about the way in which we travel, and build new homes taking into account whole life appraisal.

Sustainability is a fast moving area of change and we have a duty to promote it. The procurement process is fundamental to the development and improvement of sustainability within Islington. The basic principle of sustainability is looking after our future now. There may be some initial investment needed in sustainability, but most projects look at the whole life costs.

#### What is sustainable procurement?

Sustainable procurement refers to all ‘policy-through-procurement’ issues. Public procurement can achieve wider policy objectives such as:

* Jobs in regeneration areas;
* Opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises;
* Disability, race, gender and equality;
* Innovation;
* The promotion of ongoing and contestable supplier markets;
* Taking environmental and social factors into procurement decisions (minimising impact);
* Looking at what products are made of;
* Where and who they come from; and
* Considering if the item is necessary at all.

Our procurement processes demonstrate our commitment to sustainability that we extend to you as our suppliers. We express this in the advice we provide, through the questions we ask and by ensuring contractual arrangements actively endorse, enforce and promote sustainability.

### Charter Against Modern Slavery

#### The Council’s commitment

Islington Council signed the Chater Against Modern Slavery in March 2018.

* Details of the Charter are available on this link:

<https://party.coop/publication/modern-slavery-briefing-for-local-councillors/>

#### Council expectations on Modern Slavery

Existing and potential suppliers should read the Council’s commitment and consider the implications for their organisation.

The Council requires that contracted workers should be free to join a trade union and must not be treated unfairly for belonging to one. In addition, tendered contractors should adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.

#### Information and reporting of Modern Slavery

* Information on Modern Slavery is published by government on the following page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery>

### Being Green

#### What makes a product green?

Green products are made or operate in a way that:

* Uses fewer natural resources;
* Contains fewer hazardous or toxic materials;
* Has a longer life span;
* Consumes less energy or water in production or use;
* Can be reused or recycled on disposal; and
* Generates less waste, for example is made from recycled materials, use less packaging or be recycled by the supplier.

#### What about the cost?

The price of green products is often regarded as a barrier to green purchasing. Some products may be more expensive, but many are of equal or better price than their non-green equivalents. Price often depends on supply and demand, the more we buy the cheaper the product becomes.

Furthermore, green procurement usually goes hand in hand with waste minimisation, meaning you use less in the first place.

#### Sustainability in procurement

Having open, fair and competitive procedures for procuring contracts is important for the Council. It helps the Council get best value for money on what is being spent on services delivered through suppliers. This area is also regulated by European Union law designed to ensure fair competition.

The rules on operating fair, open and competitive processes when procuring a contract are contained in the Council's Procurement Rules. These Rules also set out the requirements for advertising.

### Procurement process considerations

#### Advertisements

It is the Council's policy to attract as wide a range of suppliers as possible. Islington promotes equality of opportunity and will consider applications from persons of all backgrounds.

Islington will often cover sustainability within its advertisements. This may be the specific short listing qualitative elements or maybe details of the specification or requirements of the final contractor.

#### Short-listing

Where appropriate, the Council uses a Selection Questionnaire (SQ), in accordance with national standards. The SQ is an application pack similar in idea to the one you may complete for a job application. The SQ asks all our suppliers to confirm whether or not they have convictions regarding environmental legislation.

In some cases a specific question may be asked about an Environmental Management System (EMS). An EMS provides you with a framework for managing environmental responsibilities efficiently in a way that is integrated into your overall operations. EMSs are relevant to every organisation, including:

* Single site to large multi-national companies;
* High risk companies to low risk service organisations;
* Manufacturing, process and the service industries; including local governments;
* All industry sectors including public and private sectors; and
* Original equipment manufacturers and their suppliers.

An accredited EMS has been assessed through an organisation such as UKAS. The United Kingdom Accreditation Service is the sole national accreditation body recognised by government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection and calibration services.

Accreditation by UKAS demonstrates the competence, impartiality and performance capability of these evaluators (<http://www.ukas.com/>).

We may also ask you specific questions related to the bid at tender stages. All questions will be relevant and proportional to the contract. The questions tell us how you will demonstrate our sustainability aims.

We will consider pertinent sustainability issues should you be asked for an interview and/or presentation as part of the short listing process. It will be mentioned in the tender instructions.

#### Specifications

Careful consideration is given to the way goods, works or services are specified in the council’s tender documents. Suppliers should consider the following when responding to tenders:

* Use of sustainably sourced materials;
* Disposal of goods at the end of their use/life;
* Minimise water consumption;
* Decreasing pollution;
* Decreasing transport impact;
* Use of renewable energy; and
* Use of recycled materials and materials that can be recycled or reused at the end of their life.

#### Sustainability in contracts

All of our contracts include sustainability clauses where relevant and proportionate to the contract. You can expect to be monitored on these clauses.

#### In the policy

You may be asked to provide either an environmental policy statement or policy. A policy statement is a single page summary whereas a policy goes into more detail about how you may deliver some of the agenda.

A good policy statement will confirm your commitment, a commitment to review the agenda and be signed and dated by a senior person in your organisation. It will show you provide training and roughly outline your process. It will nominate someone to be responsible for sustainability. A very strong policy statement will commit you to complete impact assessments.

Remember if you have been asked specific questions relating to sustainability it is not acceptable to answer “covered in my policy”. These often for practicality and relevance reasons will have a very specific word count attached to them.

# Hint and Tips

### What practical things can I do?

#### Switch Off

Switching off lights and electrical equipment (not just leaving it on standby) when not in use will save energy and reduce carbon dioxide emissions to the environment.

Switching off electrical equipment can also be safer and help to avoid circumstances of accidents where the item is potentially dangerous.

Switching off equipment can increase the life expectancy of the item.

A supplier may occasionally be required to work in a resident’s home. Remember having things powered up unnecessarily uses electricity and costs our residents money.

#### Energy Efficiency

Try to use and fit energy efficient apparatus and equipment. As the Council increasingly specifies services rather than the buying of goods directly many of the purchasing decisions will be left to you as a supplier and we rely on you making good judgements. You also tend to have a better idea of what is available in terms of product in the market place as you deal with this on a day to day basis.

Think about the temperature you are working in. High temperatures will actually make you sleepy and less effective.

If you are required to work in a resident’s home, turning up the heating may cost them money that they can ill-afford. Never turn things up without being asked.

#### Packaging

When transporting and storing your materials use the amount of packaging you need to transport or store the material safely. Do not use excessive packaging and where possible purchase recycled materials or reuse existing packaging.

Make sure what packaging you take with you to a site you take away and dispose of properly or better recycle for other jobs.

Some key hints are:

* Try to avoid the purchase of over packaged goods;
* Offer to take back any substantial packaging for re-use; and
* Specify level of waste that is used in the make up of packaging.

#### Travelling

Although you may be required to organise a variety jobs in a number of locations, by arranging these to be in the same area on the same day you will reduce your travelling requirement. You can gain twice because you are not losing money travelling and can complete more jobs in the same timeframe.

Travelling creates large amounts of pollution. Generally speaking the less travelling you do the less pollution you will create as well as reducing congestion. When you do need to travel you should consider how you travel. Cycling and walking are obviously the best forms of travel but we recognise these are often not the most practical.

It is often practical to travel by public transport. Use of the bus, train or underground services within Islington will help reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) and Carbon Monoxide (CO) within the air.

If you do need to travel by van or car then think in an environmentally considerate manner. Leaving your engine running creates fumes and noise pollution. The times of day you travel will affect the pollution you create, due to traffic congestion. Do not wait for the vehicle to warm up and do not carry unnecessary loads, as this will inevitably increase the amount of fuel used and the amount of pollution created. Driving smoothly in a higher gear will create less pollution.

It may be beneficial to consider alternatives to single car occupancy, flexible working practices and carbon off setting.

#### Materials

Purchasing materials in a sustainable way goes beyond buying recycled paper and toilet tissue. Consider where you are buying. When you buy locally you will help to create local jobs and local employment. Buying locally is often cheaper and reduced transport helps the environment too.

Consider with materials:

* Do I really need/want this product?
* Is this product made from renewable or recycled resources and taken in a sustainable way?
* Is this product safe for the environment and for me?
* Is this product practical and durable, well made, good quality, with a timeless design?
* Is there any information about the manufacturing practices that tell of environmental improvements?
* How will the product be disposed of and what will the environmental impact be?
* What kind of packaging does the product have?

Try to buy sustainably sourced products.

Advisory bodies such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) will ensure that wood products come from well-managed forests, for example.

#### Water

Water is a precious resource. Think carefully about water use when you are working. Turn off dripping taps. Dripping taps not only have an environmental cost, but cost money. Bear this in mind if you are working in a resident’s home; many are on water meters.

When you are washing your vehicles or equipment consider whether you do need to leave a hose running to wash. It is much more environmentally friendly to use a bucket or at least turn the hose off when not actually washing down.

If you have a business unit you could consider:

* Using a water butt to conserve water for any plants you may have;
* Urinals - far more environmentally friendly than using a conventional toilet; and
* Efficient use of technological developments to deliver a better service, with less water input.

Please consider carefully what you are pouring down the sink or down the toilet. Chemicals and bags can cause blockages or damage wildlife. Chemicals entering the water supply can be difficult to eliminate and can have potentially harmful effects on the wider environment.

#### Waste

Does your company have a waste management strategy? Think about the waste you are producing at a site. Is it all waste or could you actually save some money by taking it to another job? Could what you produce be recycled or would it benefit another organisation?

Thinking about how you will dispose of waste when at a site in advance will help you control it before you get to site. Carrying waste makes travel harder and will mean you carrying extra weight as an individual or use more fuel in a vehicle. It is not acceptable practice to leave large amounts of waste for others to deal with.

By reducing the amount of waste produced we lessen the demand for raw materials like paper and metal and decrease the impact on the environment through extraction, processing and transport costs.

As a business you will need to pay for your waste to be removed either from the Council or an approved private contractor.

You have a duty of care for the storage, transportation and disposal of your waste under environment legislation. If you are using a carrier for your waste remember to ensure that they provide you with a waste transfer note and are appropriately licensed from the Environment Agency or you could still be liable. This is even more important if your waste is either hazardous or clinical.

#### Recycling

Most forms of waste can be recycled. However it often more practical for you as a supplier to recycle or reuse it directly then to have the waste go to a processing plant. Packaging is the main form of waste from contractors and is often readily reusable. You may like to consider having containers created to practically store and transport certain goods.

#### Chemicals

Lots of businesses need to use chemicals. Chemicals must be used appropriately and properly disposed of. Environmentally friendly products can often be substituted for traditional chemicals. This can be particularly relevant to cleaning products.

If your business is likely have directly or indirectly any contact with chemicals you should establish which laws affect you and cover them in your risk assessments, environmental policies and health and safety policies.

#### Noise

Everyone reacts differently to noise. What can be unbearable for one person may pass almost unnoticed by another. How annoyed we become depends on loudness, time, place and frequency of noise.

To avoid complaints when you are using machinery, you must advise residents in advance when they can expect disruption. Keep the noise to a minimum by only using loud equipment at particular times. Close windows if reasonable and not dangerous while the noise is actually being created.

If you are approached about the noise you are making deal with it sensitively. Explain why you are making the noise and how long it will last.

If a resident does contact the Council about noise we will investigate and act appropriately. The Council will consider the time, duration, volume and frequency of the noise being made. We will always try to seek a compromise between you and the person affected, but where this is not achievable within a reasonable timeframe we may issue a Statutory Notice.

Suppliers need to check they are operating at safe noise levels.

#### Graffiti

The Council cannot have officers everywhere and unfortunately graffiti does occur within Islington. Graffiti is a criminal activity that is normally dealt with in minor offences by a fixed penalty notice (a fine) from the police, but can carry a custodial (prison) sentence.

Graffiti is very damaging to sustainability. It not only has a negative effect on residents but also discourages people shopping and using the borough which affects business. Graffiti can cause environmental damage as can its removal.

The Council asks its suppliers to act on its behalf - please report any incidents of graffiti you witness so we can act quickly and appropriately.

#### Training and local employment

Think about work experience, traineeships, apprentices, and local employment. Islington has an average of 1.3 jobs for every adult of working age, but an unemployment rate higher than the national average. Paid employment is vital to tackle social exclusion and stronger communities.

To improve access to higher pay and more varied jobs we often include within our contracts consideration of their social value. Getting a degree of experience and training can seriously aid the roles, pay and job security that our residents can access.

You can help by allowing someone to shadow you or an employee on a work experience placement. The individual may be either a school leaver or someone who is long-term unemployed.

We may encourage you to offer direct traineeships or apprenticeships. We may encourage your use of local suppliers or local employment schemes. This combined regenerative process will help develop the sustainability of the contract.

Having a skilled workforce will provide you with greater employment opportunities in the future and increase local economic regeneration. It helps the Council to build stronger communities and assists social value.

# Appendix 1

### Sources of help and advice

**Sustainable Development in London**

The Mayor of London’s website to ensure a better quality of life in London now and in the future

[www.londonsdc.org](http://www.londonsdc.org)

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Government department whose aim is to enable everyone to live within our environmental means

[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

**Environment Agency**

Public organisation for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

**The Islington Sustainable Energy Partnership**

Helps businesses in the borough who want to reduce energy costs, cut carbon emissions and better manage their environmental impacts.

[www.isep.org.uk](http://www.isep.org.uk)

**Islington Environmental Forum**

Organisations in Islington looking to protect and improve the environment

<http://www.vai.org.uk/services/networks/islington-environment-forum/>

# Useful Contact

Strategic Procurement procurement@islington.gov.uk