

How to do business with the council: A Guide

Who is this guidance for?

The purpose of this guidance is to explain to current and potential businesses, contractors and suppliers to Preston City Council the way in which we do business, and how they can be involved.

What is the aim of the guidance?

The guidance aims to clarify the council's buying procedures for contractors and suppliers, and to make the process of procurement at Preston more transparent: it will help us to make sure that we're always getting value for money and we're spending public money in the right way. It is part of Preston's wider Procurement Strategy, and the National Procurement Strategy.

The guidance aims to enable more small and medium enterprises, more businesses from black and ethnic minority communities and more local suppliers to engage with the council. Whilst we cannot commit to giving contracts and tenders to local organisations, we aim to support as far as possible local businesses to enable them to take part in our tendering processes.

Introduction to Preston and council's corporate objectives

The way that the council does business will always reflect its priorities for improvement; we therefore decided that it would be useful for our potential suppliers and sub-contractors to have the following background information.

Preston was granted city status in 2002, and is a city of ambition and a place of broad economic growth. The city is on the brink of major regeneration and is fast becoming the place in which people want to live, work and spend their leisure time.

Our vision sees Preston as a growing vibrant city in the North West

This will only be achieved in partnership with all stakeholders in the city. To achieve this the council's medium to long term objectives for the city and the council as an organisation are set out as three priority areas.

Your City – Securing investment to improve the assets and infrastructure and create high quality jobs

Your Council – Delivering well run, value for money services, valued by the public; demonstrating good governance, openness and transparency and a strong democratic process

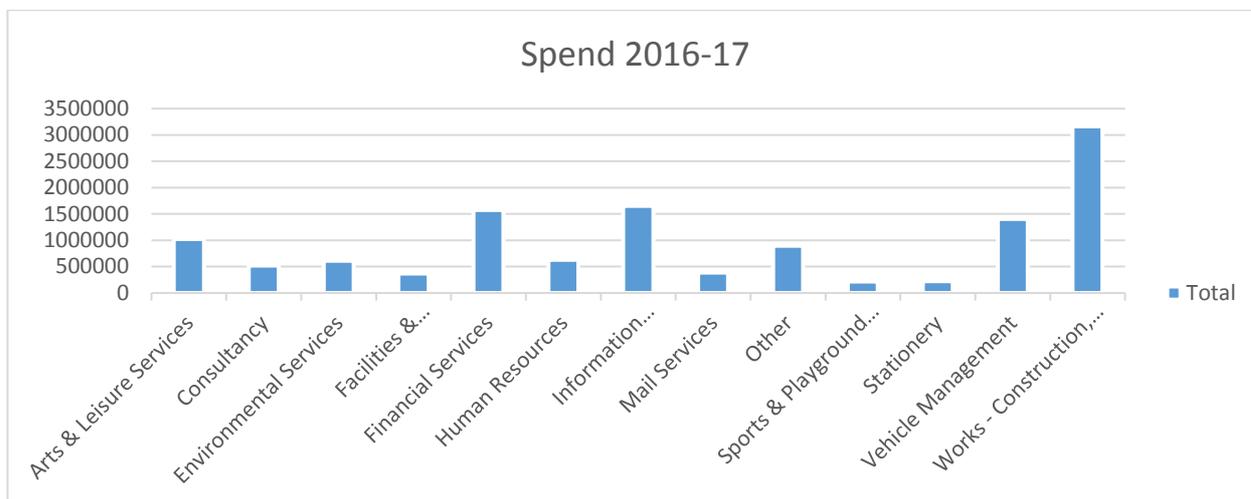
Fairness for you - Fairness at the head of our decision making. Building an economy which supports prosperity and promotes fairness in working lives and practices. Accessibility to affordable energy and decent affordable living.

We will consider our priorities when we're preparing a tender brief, and we also expect suppliers and sub-contractors to consider our priorities, and our responsibilities such as sustainability, the environment and equality and diversity, when working on our behalf.

What does the council spend its money on?

In providing services to tens of thousands of people, Preston City Council spends approximately £15m each year. In spending that money, our duty to citizens in Preston is to ensure value for money and a high standard of service.

We spend money on a broad range of services and supplies, varying widely in cost and type. The chart below gives some examples of the type of supplies and services Preston procures, although this is by no means an exhaustive list:



Who are the buyers?

As a council we annually set and agree our budget for each financial year; sections of that budget are then under the overall control of either the Chief Executive or one of the four Directors.

On a day to day basis, each directorate nominates its own purchasing officers, responsible for buying-in services and supplies.

What are the different ways in which the council does business?

The way in which we advertise for services and suppliers is dependent on the value of each particular service/supply.

Q u o t e s	Supplies, services and works which are lower in value (up to £10,000) are procured by authorised officers in each directorate, ensuring good value for money and high quality service. For supplies and services up to £75,000, managers will request quotations of cost from suppliers, running a competition through our partner e-procurement portal - currently The Chest (see below).
T e n d e r s	Supplies, services and works which are higher in value (over £75,000) will be put out to tender via The Chest, also advertising on the national Contracts Finder register. Alternatively, PCC will use frameworks where appropriate.
E u r o p e	Suppliers and services whose value exceeds the European Union (EU) thresholds are subject to slightly different procedures and the council will comply with the EU procurement regime. A threshold is set for services and supplies, and another is set for works. When advertising a contract over EU thresholds, the council may use one of several procedures, including open procedure, allowing anyone to submit a tender; and restricted procedure, which requires councils to invite expressions of interest then draw up a short list invited to tender; this is Preston's preferred method for tendering. Further information about the current EU thresholds can be found at https://www.ojec.com/thresholds.aspx

What added value does the council look for?

All suppliers and contractors to the council would be expected to consider the council's values, responsibilities and priorities towards **social value, environment and sustainability, health and safety, equality and diversity**, and to take those issues into account when submitting bids.

The council recognises the value of the re-spend within Preston's communities and seeks to maximise the benefit of partnering with local providers, where appropriate and within its own legitimate ability.

This Council is committed to the prevention, deterrence and detection of bribery and operates a zero tolerance stance towards bribery. The Council does not, and will not, pay bribes or offer improper inducements to anyone for any purpose, nor does it or will it accept bribes or improper inducements. Further, the Council seeks to encourage all external partners with whom it deals to adopt the same principles and approach towards bribery.

A copy of the council's Anti Bribery Policy, and other policies such as Living Wage, Fair Employment and Whistleblowing, can be found on its website at www.preston.gov.uk .

Where are contracts advertised?

Invitations to tender are currently advertised through the Preston City Council's eportal "The Chest" at www.the-chest.org.uk . Each advertisement will provide details, upon free registration and login, of the specific requirements for suppliers and contractors. Tenders are also advertised on the national register "Contract Finder.

Awards

The council will generally award contracts/tenders to those suppliers offering the best value for money. The council will always consider whole life costs and costs in use in its tender evaluation process.

If you are unsuccessful in bidding for works or to supply the council, we will provide feedback to enable you to learn from the experience and better compete in future.

Payments are usually made to suppliers and contractors following receipt of goods or materials. As far as possible, payments are made by bank automated credits (BACs) within 30 days, with over 80% payments made within 10 days .

Feedback

If you would like to comment on this leaflet, please get in touch with Preston's Procurement Manager, using the details below:

Procurement Manager
Preston City Council
Town Hall Lancaster Road Preston PR1 2RL
Email: procurement@preston.gov.uk