**Introduction**

Shropshire Fire and rescue Service spends around £3 million per annum on the procurement of supplies, works and services providing companies of all sizes with a wide range of business opportunities.

The Service has a statutory duty to ensure that the procurement of supplies, works and services represents the most cost-effective solution and that best value for money has been achieved.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that public money is spent in a way that is fair, honest and accountable and that all decisions are transparent. This short guide outlines the procedures that deliver that commitment.

**About Us**

The Technical Services department provides specialist support to Fire Service departments in all tasks relating to a wide variety of contractual arrangements.

To obtain best value, most of our procurement is carried out through corporate contracts which have been subject to competition or joint arrangements with other local authorities and emergency services. Our procurement procedures are governed by internal standing orders, financial regulations and EU Procurement Directives (where applicable).

**Procurement Thresholds**

The procurement process adopted is dependent on the value of the purchase. (see table below). Where an existing Contract or Framework Agreement is in place, it will be evaluated prior to tendering.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Value of Purchase** | **Preferred System** | **Others suitable** |
| Less than £2,500 | * Existing Service Contract. | * Petty Cash or purchasing card * Establish new Service Contract if regular use is anticipated * Purchase Order on 1 verbal or written quotation or catalogue price |
| £2,500-15,000 | * Purchase Order on lowest of 2 or 3 written quotations or catalogue prices | * Existing contract * Full tender exercise, particularly if complex contract or specification, or high risk |
| £15,000-170,000 | * Full tender exercise, preferably in partnership with a similar organisation. | * Consortium Contract |
| £170,000-500,000 | * Full tender exercise in accordance with EU legislation. | * Consortium Contract |
| More than £500,000 | * A business case detailing the procurement process to be used must be prepared and approved |  |

**Advertising our Contracts**

Contracts over £10,000 and where appropriate contracts under £10,000 will be advertised on the government website: **www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk**

**Tendering Procedures**

When you have expressed an interest you may receive an Invitation to Tender (ITT) however in some cases you will be asked to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ). These will be assessed on a number of criteria including technical capability, financial standing, health and safety, equal opportunities and environmental issues. If your PQQ is acceptable you will go through to the next stage which usually means you will be sent an Invitation to Tender (ITT).

**Tender Evaluation Criteria**

We have an obligation under EU regulations to state what criterion and relevant weightings will be used to evaluate tenders. Although this is not a mandatory requirement for Contracts below the EU Threshold it is considered best practice to follow this same procedure when developing the evaluation criteria.

The basic criteria will usually be either lowest price or highest price when payment is to be made to the authority e.g. disposal of assets. Alternatively it will be based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) where considerations other than price also apply. These considerations may include price, service, quality of goods, running costs, technical merit, previous experience, delivery date, cost effectiveness, environmental considerations, aesthetic and functional characteristics, safety, after sales service, technical assistance and any other relevant factors.

**Approved Lists**

The Service does not hold an approved list of suppliers. Approved supplier lists are often used for building, construction and maintenance supply or service contracts, valued below the EU threshold. Management of these activities is outsourced to Shropshire Council or Telford and Wrekin Council, with suppliers sourced from their approved lists. For details of how to become an approved supplier to these organisations, please see their websites.