

Procurement process

London Fire Brigade

Background

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) is a world class fire and rescue organisation with over 6,000 operational staff. The LFB has 112 fire stations and a fleet of over 600 fire appliances and support vehicles throughout London.

The LFB is the third largest fire-fighting organisation in the world, working within the 1,587 square kilometres of Greater London and protecting a resident population of 7.5 million.

Sustainable procurement

The LFB has embarked on an ambitious 'green programme' and aims to exceed the Mayor of London's energy efficiency targets for its buildings and low emission zone targets for its vehicle fleet.

An Environmental Management System to ISO14001 standard has been introduced in the procurement department. As a result, LFB spent £265,000 on sustainable products this year, an increase of 18% on 2007. Sustainable purchases include fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar

and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified timber.

One of LFB's most recent successes was the furniture disposal contract which included the following sustainability objectives:

- reducing waste: 83% of approximately 250 tonnes reused and 12.5% recycled
- vehicle emissions: local reuse & back filling vehicles
- promoting new markets & supporting SMEs: social enterprise
- equality: improvement of staff conditions in fire stations
- social responsibility & training opportunities: furniture bought by local authorities & donated to charities

The LFB continues to promote the use of commercial reuse in innovative products such as furniture, belts and bags.

Implementation

LFB is committed to embedding sustainability in its procurement practices. An environmental procurement policy and

Environmental Management System (EMS) have been developed out of the existing procurement strategy for 2005-08.

The LFB's new procurement strategy encourages key suppliers to develop their own EMS - three have done so to date - helping LFB to reduce its environmental impact and improving risk assessment of its supply chain.

Annual internal and external reviews of procedures, impacts and action plans have helped the LFB to identify areas for improvement and the organisation considers this to be an ongoing process.

Policy

The LFB has developed an environmental procurement policy and a sustainable procurement policy alongside its EMS. A responsible procurement action plan details tasks to implement the responsible procurement policy and assigns responsibility by department.

Environmental advisors work with procurement staff to

identify the major impacts of upcoming contracts. The impacts are then detailed on a high level sustainability risk register and specifications considered in forward planning.

An online ordering system allows for detailed review of product categories.

Suppliers are required to complete environmental questions on pre-qualification questionnaires and standard environmental and sustainability clauses are included within all contracts.

The LFB continually works to improve its analysis of spend and reports quarterly to its Corporate Management Board and the GLA on contracts with SMEs and diverse suppliers.

Communicating with staff, customers and suppliers

All new LFB trainees take part in an induction programme covering the environmental and sustainability impacts of the organisation.

The LFB has implemented a green champions programme which is now made up of over 119 members of staff at 90 sites who are trained to encourage environmentally friendly practices, including purchases.

Details of all policies are listed on the LFB website next to details of upcoming contract opportunities - these are also highlighted in the 'Selling to LFB' guide.

The procurement department's EMS has been used to encourage its wide supply-based audience to follow best practice and has helped to improve their own environmental performance.

The LFB has also encouraged key suppliers to attend seminars addressing environmental issues and will be looking further into how it can support them to become more sustainable. This includes encouraging suppliers to sign up to the Green Procurement Code.

Business Benefits

LFB's successful furniture disposal contract delivered a 50% saving over other less sustainable alternatives.

LFB's programme of measures to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings has led to a saving of £230,000 in 2007/8 with a further £28,000 through the purchase of water efficient devices.

LFB has purchased 100% green energy for the past three years and has reduced its CO₂ emissions by 16.8% from 1990 levels.

Results

In June 2008, LFB became one of only 12 organisations to achieve the Carbon Trust Standard and one of only 6 public sector organisations in the UK.

This year also saw the LFB's renewable energy projects recognised by the Heating & Ventilation News awards and

the furniture disposal project was highly commended at Sustainable Development UK.

Looking to the future

Recent EMS and Green Procurement Code audits have helped to provide guidance on where the LFB needs to focus its efforts over the next year.

The organisation is currently in the process of rolling out the EMS to the property department and is working with the GLA to plan future efforts through the Delivering More Together programme.

The LFB's recently approved travel plan will also help to reduce its overall transport burden on the Capital.

Contact

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