



NEWSLETTER

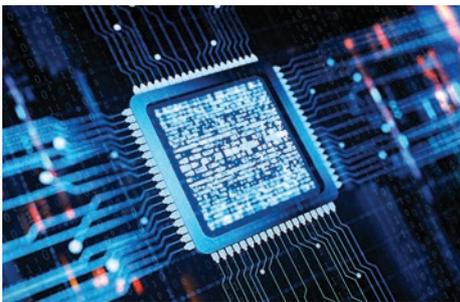
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ISSUE 39



NWUPC Annual Conference 2019

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NWUPC to Join Electronics Watch

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Customer Service Excellence Certification

In June NWUPC Ltd were assessed by Centre for Excellence as part of the Customer Service Excellence certification. This was the second year review since achieving the Customer Service Excellence status in 2017.

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Category Group Focus: Office Solutions

Following the last Office Solutions Category Group meeting the Chair, Linda Sutton, Keele University, and Deputy Chair, Chris Benson, Bangor University, spoke with Jane Billows about their involvement with NWUPC Category Groups.

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Managing Director's Update

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

It's difficult to believe we have reached that time of year again! As we all start a new academic year we have been busy making sure that our contracting activity is where it needs to be, we have been reflecting on our performance over the last year and putting plans in place for the coming year. Everything we do is about our members, we want to make sure you have the best frameworks, the best service and the best experience possible when working with us. We have so many exciting developments to share with you all it's difficult to know where to start. One of our headlines is the exciting news that the NWUPC will be funding Electronics Watch membership for our Full and Associate Members, we know this is something that many of you have wanted for some time and we are now in a position to proceed, you can read more on page 3.

Arrangements to cover the business administration elements of the organisation have been implemented and are working well, Jane Billows is now responsible for managing the administration, finance, MI and HR elements of the organisation. Jane will also continue to look after the Board, Heads of Procurement, Strategy Group and Management Council.

We are delighted to welcome Ayoade Onireti as our new Category Group Coordinator; he has been in post since 23 April and has made a positive start in the role. Ayoade is responsible for the smooth running of our Category Group meetings and supports our Chairs and Deputy Chairs to ensure the meetings are worthwhile and continue to have value for our Members.

Ruth Allen, our Contracting Support Officer, has now left her temporary role with us and will be starting an MSc in the next academic year. We are currently recruiting for this role

and will hopefully have someone in place soon.

Our contracting team have been working hard over the last 12 months to make sure that all of our deadlines have been met and all of our frameworks have been let on time. In response to membership demand, we have increased the overall number of frameworks this year so this has been no mean feat – you can read more on page 4. This achievement has only been possible because of the teamwork of all NWUPC employees, we sure know how to pull all the stops out when we need to!

The NWUPC Strategy Group met in June to review the current Strategy, review progress against our KPIs and agree the content of our next membership experience survey. We are on target to achieve, and, in many cases, exceed the KPIs set for the year and will give a further update once all KPIs have been reviewed for the year.

We ran a very successful Annual Conference in April this year at The University of Manchester; you can read more about the programme and an event overview on page 2.

The UKUPC Heads of Consortia Group met in June and overall it was a very positive meeting. It was agreed to further improve the links between the UKUPC subgroups and ensure effective cross reporting between the groups. We are working hard on the production of our new UKUPC Strategy and will share that with you as soon as we can. We will also be engaging with HEPA to identify how we can support them to engage with national procurement policy developments and how to increase engagement at that level in issues affecting our sector. The aim is to ensure that our procurement community are part of the bigger conversation, and they have a say in procurement matters that have an impact on our sector.



We are delighted to report that we have retained our Customer Service Excellence Accreditation. It was a good health check to ensure we have the appropriate systems and procedures in place to deliver effective customer service to our members and other key stakeholders, you can read more about this on page 7.

I do hope that you have an enjoyable read and that you enjoy the rest of the summer as we enter into the new academic year. As always, thank you all for your continued support, we couldn't do it without you.

Julie-Ann Garton
Managing Director



NWUPC Annual Conference 2019

Our Annual Conference this year saw us return to The University of Manchester and their flagship conference venue, University Place on Oxford Road. The venue has excellent facilities, and it was a pleasure to hold the event there again.



Stephen Dauncey, Director of Finance at the University, welcomed delegates to Manchester and the University and officially opened the Conference. NWUPC receives tremendous support from its members, so it is always pleasing to acknowledge an individual who has made a significant contribution to the activities of the Consortium. The recipient of The Outstanding Contribution to Collaborative Procurement Award this year was Leanne Horton, Head of Procurement at the University of Central Lancashire. Leanne has worked at the University for many years and has always been a firm supporter of NWUPC. Recently Leanne has been the driving force behind our new Professional Services Group, taking on the role of Chair and spending time developing this category area. Congratulations Leanne!

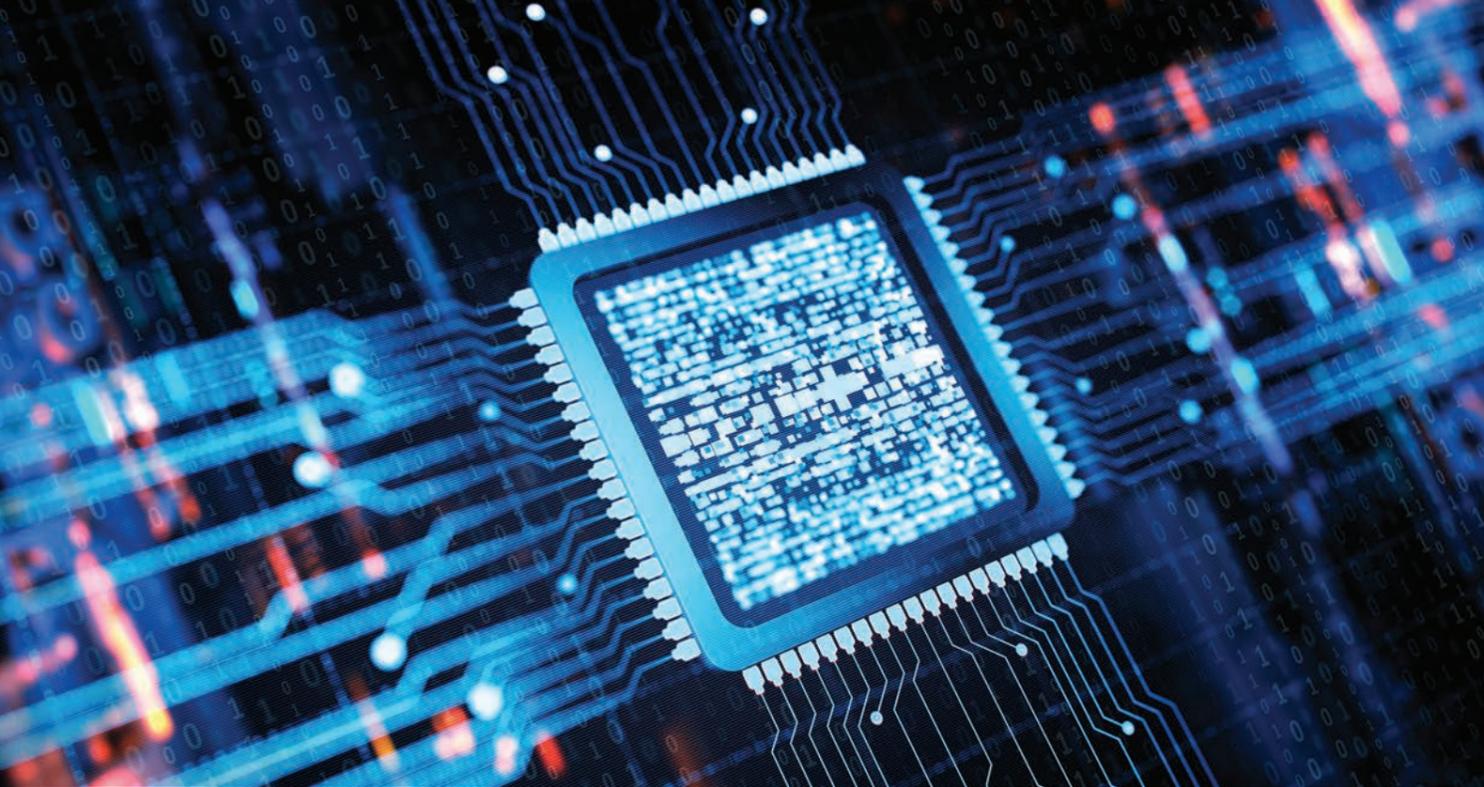
The Conference theme this year was Procure, Protect and Empower, and the programme for the day included sessions to reflect this theme. Our opening address this year was given by Stewart Wood (Lord Wood of Anfield) covering Brexit and the impact on the UK and on UK Higher Education, appropriately subtitled - The Story That Never Ends! Stewart gave an enlightening overview of the issues surrounding Brexit, and the likely impact on the HE sector, presenting possible outcomes and their implications.

The Conference continued with a series of sessions for delegates to choose from on the theme of Procure, Protect and Empower. This included a presentation by Slave-Free Alliance on modern slavery; a presentation on sustainable laboratories and a session covering Effective Communication with Internal Stakeholders by Sarah Browning, which was so popular, it was standing room only. Afternoon sessions covered the threat of a cyber breach and the always popular session by Helen Dodd-Williams on how to use Framework Agreements, ably assisted this time by Natasha Peacock and Rikaya Knott. The closing address was once again presented by Kerry Leigh from Laughology, entitled Building Resilience and Positive Thinking, exploring how resilience and a positive mindset can be learned, closing the Conference on a positive note.

Throughout the day, the supplier exhibition ran alongside the Conference programme, and we are grateful to so many of our suppliers who came along to support the event. A wide range of suppliers exhibited at the Conference and there were some interesting products and demonstrations by the exhibitors. Particular thanks to our sponsors Allwag Promotions, DMA Signs, Banner, ESM Branding,

Extravaganza Promotional Merchandise and W&G Baird. We must also thank the staff at The University of Manchester who looked after us on the day and made sure the event ran smoothly. We are already planning next year's Conference; we will bring you more news about the event soon.





electronics watch

NWUPC Ltd has recently announced that it will be joining Electronics Watch as an affiliate member on behalf of members as well as ourselves from 1st September 2019.

Electronics Watch is an independent monitoring organisation set up with the purpose of protecting the rights of workers within supply chains. Their focus is on working with public sector organisations who purchase electronics and collaborating with them to have a positive impact on workers through the goods the public sector procures.

NWUPC Ltd is excited to be joining Electronics Watch as further demonstration of our commitment to ensuring transparency within our supply chains. We feel that this is an area where we can have a tangible impact on those involved with the production of goods that we typically buy in volumes that can be

aggregated to have a huge value. We are also pleased to be able to extend this association to our institutions as an additional benefit of NWUPC membership. This means that as NWUPC members you can demonstrate to your stakeholders that you take the potential risks in your supply chains seriously and are committed to taking positive action.

We look forward to sharing more good news stories from Electronics Watch with you as our relationship develops. If you have any queries please contact Helen Dodd-Williams, Head of Contracting on helen.dodd-williams@manchester.ac.uk.

Contracting Activities

Recently Launched Agreements

Office, Computer & Library Supplies

In 2019 NWUPC have assumed responsibility for leading the National Office, Computer and Library Supplies Framework which has been successfully managed by LUPC in the past. The retender of the Framework began in late 2018 and evaluation has been in progress over the last three months. The Framework has an extensive list of products which tenderers are required to price to allow transparency for members. The structure of the pricing is full open book costing. A large proportion of the evaluation was given to sustainability requirements (20%) due to the nature of the products purchased and the delivery methods. The Framework was split into three lots and the successful suppliers are:

Lot 1:
Office, Computer and Library Supplies
Banner Group Ltd
Lyreco UK Ltd
Office Depot UK Ltd
Staples UK Ltd

Lot 2:
Computer Supplies
ACS Business Supplies
Commercial Ltd
OfficeXpress Europe Ltd
XMA Ltd

Lot 3:
Library Supplies
Demco Europe Ltd

Thank you to the dedicated and supportive tender working party without whom this process wouldn't be able to take place; Linda Sutton, Keele University; Chris Benson, Bangor University; Alison Bates, The University of Manchester; Darran Whatley, LUPC; Howard Allaway, HEPCW; Jayne Thorn, SUPC; Lorona Watts, APUC and Paul Eagleton, NEUPC.

Financial Services

The Financial Services agreement has been evaluated and will go-live on the 1st August 2019. It is equipped with five lots; Internal Audit, External Audit, Taxation Services, Accountancy Services and Treasury Services. Awarded suppliers will be announced soon.

Furniture

NWUPC is pleased to announce the launch of the new Furniture Framework Agreement which commenced the 1st May 2019. This agreement is split into three Lots covering Office Furniture in Mainland UK and Islands, Office Furniture in Northern Ireland and Residential Furniture in Northern Ireland. Further details can be found on HEC. Please note that the current Furniture agreement expires 31st July 2019.

Portable Appliance Testing

The Portable Appliance Testing agreement is now a separate Framework Agreement. This new agreement is split into three Lots for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Lots 1 and 2 commences the 1st August 2019, with Lot 3 Northern Ireland planned to commence on the 6th August 2019. Further details can be found on HEC.

Fixed Wire Testing

The Fixed Wire Testing agreement is now a separate Framework Agreement. This new agreement is planned to commence the 13th August 2019 and is split into two Lots for England, Northern Ireland and Wales and a Lot for Scotland. Further details can be found on HEC.

Gas Equipment Maintenance & Repair Services

The Gas Equipment Maintenance and Repair Services agreement has now been awarded and commenced the 1st August 2019. Previously a regional agreement, this has now become a national agreement split across a number of regional Lots and is available to APUC, CPC, NEUPC, LUPC and SUPC. Further details and regional Lotting split can be found on HEC.

Broadcast Equipment & Integration Services

The Broadcast Equipment and Integration Services agreement started on the 1st July 2019 and runs until the 30th June 2021 with a two year extension available. This framework consists of 7 awarded lots covering supply of equipment and supply and integration. Implementation meetings have taken place with details available on HEC.

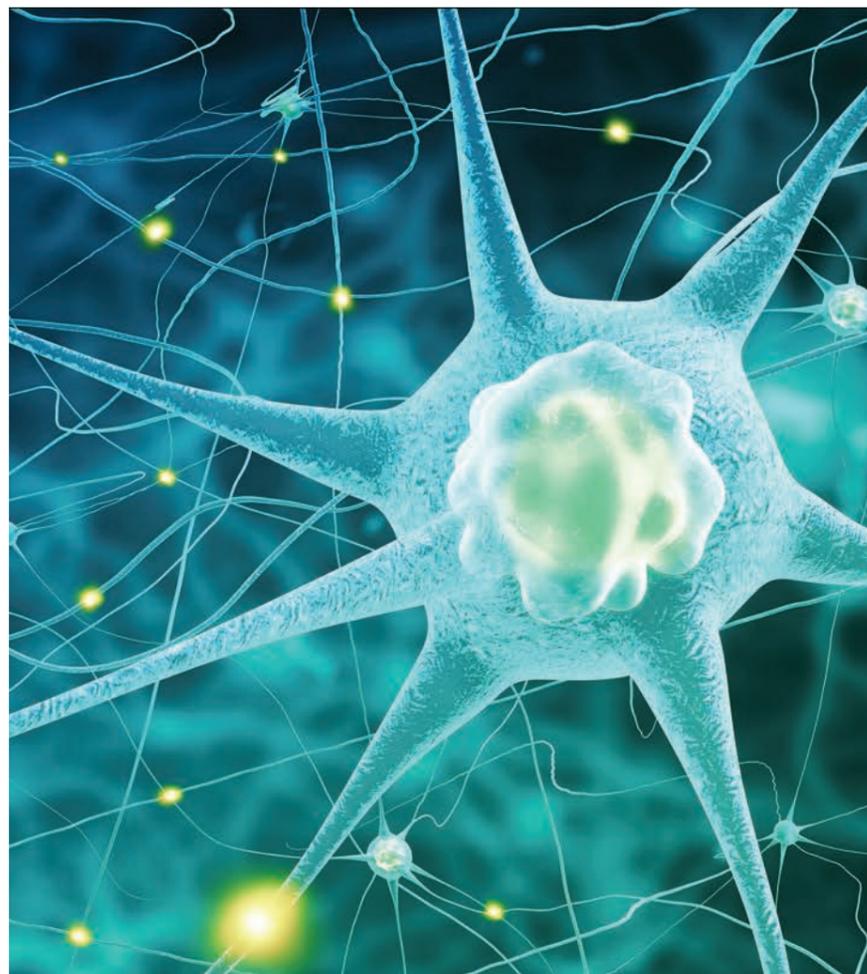
High Value Laboratory Equipment

The new High Value Laboratory Equipment Framework Agreement has now been awarded and started on the 1st August 2019 and runs for two years with the option to extend for two further one year periods. This agreement amalgamates the previous 7 HVLE frameworks into one large agreement containing 22 awarded lots. Further details including a buyers' guide can be found on HEC.

Life Science Equipment

This is a new agreement and area to compliment the laboratory framework agreements. The agreement started on the 8th July 2019 until 30th June 2022 with a further one year extension. The agreement covers a range of lots as follows:

- Lot 1a:**
Cell Analysis Systems
- Lot 1b:**
Cell Counters
- Lot 2:**
Cell Manipulation
- Lot 3:**
Entry Level Flow Cytometers
- Lot 4:**
Biomolecule Manipulation
- Lot 5:**
Other DNA/RNA Applications
- Lot 6:**
Post-Installation Services for Life Sciences Equipment Only



Work in Progress

Plumbing, Sanitary & Heating Equipment, Supplies & Associated Services

Work has commenced on the retender for Plumbing, Sanitary & Heating Equipment, Supplies & Associated Services. Market Engagement will commence in August and a Tender Working Party is yet to be finalised. Members are welcome to join the Tender Working Party if they would like to be a part of this retender.

Other Consortia Estates

Signs & Signage

The retender for the Signs and Signage agreement let by NEUPC is due to commence on the 1st August 2019. Further details will be available on HEC.

CCTV

The CPC are currently in progress on a tender for the Supply, Installation and Maintenance of CCTV Systems and Equipment, this agreement will be split across a number of regional Lots. The tender submission for this was the 15th July 2019 and commencement is set to be September 2019. Further details will be on HEC once the agreement commences.

Professional Services

Global Mobility

The Global Mobility Support Services Framework is currently being extended in to its final year, which will take it to the 30th September 2020. NWUPC will start review of the Framework and begin preparation for retender next year should the agreement be desired after consultation with members and the sector alike.

Telecommunications

At the latest Telecommunications category group meeting, on the 28th June hosted at Bangor University, the group welcomed EE to give a presentation on the highly anticipated 5G network, which is now present in six major cities in the UK. The presentation gave an insight into EE's offering, as well as the proposed development and progression of 5G over the years to come.

Network Services

The replacement of the Network Services Framework, aptly named Network Services 2 (RM3808), is now due to go live mid-August rather than the 26th July.

Travel

Travel & Student Travel Services

The Travel and Student Travel Services tender is currently in the final stages of evaluation. The current Framework Agreement has been extended until 17th August 2019. The new Framework is expected to start on 18th August 2019. The Lot structure will be as follows;

- Lot 1:**
Business Travel
- Lot 2:**
Student Group Travel

NWUPC have taken part in the evaluation of the agreement to ensure members' views are represented. Thank you for the tremendous support of NWUPC members of the Tender Working Party, which has been invaluable.

Laboratory

Chemicals and Consumables

This framework renewal is currently in progress with evaluation of the tender returns under way. This new agreement will combine both the current individual frameworks for chemicals, and consumables into one agreement with a start date on the 1st September 2019.

Computing

Data Centre Management

The re-tender of this agreement is underway. The strategy has been signed off and work is underway on preparation of the tender documents. It is anticipated that this NEUPC led agreement will be in place in line with the expiration of the existing agreement.

Data Centre Management

Although the agreement is due to expire in May 2020, SUPC have brought forward the retender process due to the coinciding expiration of a number of agreements in this category area. The new agreement is therefore due to be in place for January 2020. The Tender Working Party had their first meeting in July.

Domestics

Recycling Bins and Street Furniture

The re-tender is currently in the evaluation process with award due in the middle of August. The agreement follows the same lotting structure as the current agreement:

- Lot 1:**
Recycling Bins
- Lot 2:**
Street Furniture

The new agreement will be in place in line with the expiration of the existing agreement at the end of September.

Cleaning and Janitorial Supplies

Work is underway on the renewal of this widely utilised agreement. The Tender Working Party have met to discuss the strategy and work is currently ongoing on the draft tender documentation. The tender will be advertised in August.

Courier Services

The renewal of this agreement is currently in evaluation. Further information will be provided on the anticipated start date for this agreement when received. The existing agreement has expired though the Lot for International Airmail has been extended until February 2020 to accommodate the establishment of a sector specific postal agreement, which will subsequently incorporate this requirement within a broader offering.

Future Agreements

Window Cleaning

NWUPC are to participate in an inter-regional agreement with NEUPC for Window Cleaning. The agreement is scheduled to be available in December and the Tender Working Party includes NWUPC representation. There will be approximately four lots to accommodate the NWUPC membership.

Customer Service Excellence Certification

In June NWUPC Ltd were assessed by Centre for Excellence as part of the Customer Service Excellence certification.

This was the second year review since achieving the Customer Service Excellence status in 2017 and the assessment was to ensure we continue to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard.

The team worked hard in preparing for the assessment and were able to present a wide range of evidence to demonstrate the commitment and priority given to developing and improving the services to our members, partners and suppliers. Our members and partners also assisted and were part of the day

and met with our assessor and provided necessary information.

At the end of the day we were informed that we had successfully retained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation. Thank you to our members from University of Wolverhampton, University of Salford, Manchester Metropolitan University and Edge Hill University for their support on the day. Also thank you to our partners, TUCO, CPC, LUPC and HEPA for their contributions and assistance. We could not have retained this status without your continued support.

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Article 86 Notices

Why are they important, what they must include and what Contracting Authorities get wrong.

Introduction

Pursuant to article 86 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ('the Regulations') a Contracting Authority is required to send 'candidates and tenderers' a notice communicating their decision to award a contract or enter into a Framework Agreement. An article 86 notice is also known as an "Alcatel letter" or a "contract award notice" but is most commonly referred to as a "Standstill Letter". To be lawful and valid, a Standstill Letter must contain the information prescribed in article 86(2) of the Regulations.

period has not been observed, could be considered an illegal direct award and could be subject to a challenge seeking a declaration of ineffectiveness. It is therefore imperative that Contracting Authorities get their Standstill Letters "right".

From a practical perspective, the Standstill Letter will usually be the first document that a Claimant's solicitor will consider when dissatisfied tenderers are seeking advice. A properly drafted and fully compliant Standstill Letter will go a long way to defeating potential challenges before they formally arise.

Why are Standstill Letters Important?

Save for in specified limited circumstances, the Regulations mandate that Contracting Authorities must produce Standstill Letters at the conclusion of a tender process. Serving a Standstill Letter, that does not comply with the terms of article 86, could lead to a finding that the standstill period has not been deemed to have commenced. A contract entered into in circumstances where a valid standstill

If a Contracting Authority gets their Standstill Letter "wrong" they are likely to have to deal with an increased number of challenges and will likely be advised that a new Standstill Letter will need to be produced. This will incur unnecessary cost and could also start a new 30 day limitation period, giving an unsatisfied tenderer additional time to challenge the tender process and obviating the advantage that a Contracting Authority enjoys pursuant to article 92. Contracting Authorities can help themselves enormously in defeating or preventing challenges by ensuring that their Standstill Letters are "right".

What must a Standstill Letter include?

Pursuant to article 86(2) a Standstill Letter must include:

1. the award criteria for the contract or framework agreement;
2. the name of the successful tenderer;
3. the score obtained by the successful tenderer and the party receiving the Standstill Letter;
4. the reasons for the Contracting Authority's decision, including the "characteristics and relative advantages of the successful bidder's bid"; and
5. a precise statement of when the standstill period will expire or the date before which the Contracting Authority will not enter into a contract with the successful tenderer.



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What do Contracting Authorities get wrong with Standstill Letters?

Not setting out the award criteria in the Standstill Letter.

Article 86 requires the award criteria be re-produced in the Standstill Letter. This remains the case even though the award criteria were published in the ITT. A failure to re-produce award criteria in the Standstill Letter would breach the terms of article 86. The award criteria in the Standstill Letter also need to be consistent with those contained in the ITT. If the award criteria are inconsistent, a Contracting Authority has likely assessed a tender with reference to an undisclosed marking criterion and will likely to have breached the duty of transparency.

Not providing the “characteristics and relative advantages of the successful bidder’s bid” within the Standstill Letter

Not providing the “characteristics and relative advantages of the successful bidder’s bid” is the most common mistake that Contracting Authorities make in the preparation of Standstill Letters.

A Contracting Authority will always perform an analysis of a tenderer’s bid when awarding marks within a procurement. This analysis is often included within the Standstill Letter. The inclusion of this analysis does not satisfy the requirements of article 86. An unsuccessful tenderer

is entitled to receive the “characteristics and relative advantages of the successful bidder’s bid”. To comply with article 86 a Contracting Authority is therefore required to perform a further and separate analysis to that completed when assessing the bids.

This further analysis needs to be carried out in respect of each unsuccessful tenderer separately. A Contracting Authority is not able to use a standard response to all unsuccessful tenders. The “characteristics and relative advantages of the successful bidder’s bid” will vary between the different unsuccessful tenderers.

Calculating the wrong date for the expiry of the standstill period.

The Standstill Letter should set out the date that the standstill period ends. It is not uncommon for Contracting Authorities to incorrectly calculate this date. The conclusion of the standstill period is sometimes incorrectly calculated because:

1. an assumption is made that the standstill period is automatically 10 days. This is not always correct. If the Standstill Letters are not served by electronic means the standstill period is increased by 5 days;
2. the day that the Standstill Letter is despatched is included within the standstill period calculation. This is not correct. Assuming that all Standstill Letters are sent out by the same means and on the same day, day 1 for the purposes of calculating

the standstill period end date, is the day after the Standstill Letter is dispatched;

3. subject to what is said in the paragraph below, the expiry of the standstill period is incorrectly calculated by reference to “working days” rather than days. The Regulations hold that the standstill period should be calculated by reference to days rather than “working days”; and

4. It is not always appreciated that, pursuant to article 4(2)(b), the standstill period cannot expire on a weekend or bank holiday. This is the position even if the 10 days period actually expires on a non-working day. Where a Standstill Letter is served on a Wednesday or Thursday, the standstill period will not expire until the second Monday after this date (assuming that the second Monday is not a bank holiday).

Whilst mistakes will always occur, Standstill Letters should be carefully prepared and reviewed before they are served. Significant commitments of time and expense can be potentially avoided if Contracting Authorities ensure that their Standstill Letters are “right” before they are served.

Josh Conroy is a legal director at Weightmans LLP. He advises in relation to all aspects of procurement law, including the preparation of Standstill Letters, and can be contacted on 0161 233 7330 or by email at josh.conroy@weightmans.com



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Category Group Focus: Office Solutions Group

Following the last Office Solutions Category Group meeting the Chair, Linda Sutton, Keele University, and Deputy Chair, Chris Benson, Bangor University, spoke with Jane Billows about their involvement with NWUPC Category Groups.

Tell us how you first became involved with the Office Solutions Category Group?

Linda - I started at Keele in 1999 and my manager at the time, Leon Warburton, took me along to my first Stationery Commodity Group meeting as it was known back then so that I could take over being the representative from Keele. I will always remember the journey from Manchester to Stoke on the train as we got the wrong one, ending up in Stalybridge!

The stationery contract was with Ofrex at the time and the service was questionable. The contract was re-tendered not long after I joined the Group so I volunteered going forward, the rest is history!

Chris - This was shortly after I arrived at what was then the University of Wales, Bangor, in June 2007. Mike Montgomery and I used our own cars to transport several of the Group from Bangor railway station to the Technium CAST building on the Parc Menai Business Estate, a few miles outside the city, where the Group meeting was being held. Mike introduced me to the Group and advised that I would be taking over from him as the representative at the Group on behalf of the University.

The relaxed leadership style of the Group led by Linda Sutton ably supported by Judith Hoyle made it easy for me to quickly feel part of the Group and start contributing to the information exchanges taking place. I was pleased to learn that Lyreco and QC Supplies (now XMA) were major suppliers to the Group institutions, as I knew both companies well from my work in the real world before I joined that of academia. Having been nominated to the role of Deputy

Chair of the Group in March 2017, I was plunged in at the deep end when Linda was unwell for the October gathering, which took place at Bangor. I was not only the host representative but also now the Chair of the meeting where there was a reasonable attendance by members, multiple video links to others who could not easily reach Bangor, and a large delegation from Banner including their MD who was personally concerned at the scale of the problems members voiced on the day. I am grateful for the support I received on the day from Jane Billows as it was not the easiest of meetings to navigate through.

What do you think members get out of the Category Group meetings?

Linda - As Chair of the Group I would like to think members find the meeting of value, especially the networking opportunities with other members and being able to share ideas and experiences, the meeting enables members to be kept up to date with framework activity and encourages member discussion. Supplier presentations provide an opportunity for members to gain knowledge of suppliers and what they have to offer, all in a short space of time.

Chris - From my perspective it is the chance to learn from the experiences of counterparts at the other institutions where they have encountered difficulties in their procurement work and how they have overcome those to produce a good

result. The sharing of specialist knowledge is most valuable and being able to discuss issues and concerns with peers who can be facing similar problems is tremendously helpful, as sometimes you really can't see the wood for the trees. This is where an alternative view can suddenly provide clarity in order to make progress to a satisfactory conclusion.

It is great that the Group members are so open and willing to share information that can be of benefit to others at the meetings, as there is a deep pool of knowledge of the Category within the membership.

What do you think are the future opportunities and challenges within the Office Solutions category?

Linda - The highest spend commodity within this Group is Office Solutions, this year NWUPC will be managing the tendering for this requirement nationally which is the first time for us as we have always had an NWUPC standalone agreement.

One challenge will be to ensure that the suppliers awarded to the framework will have the capacity and experience to deliver the level of quality that we demand for members. Contract management will also be key as we will be managing more than one supplier delivering a service to a large number of cross consortia members, all with different requirements.

A further area of concern is the continuing pressure on members to trade with SMEs and local suppliers, which may drive spend away from the Office Solutions framework, as SMEs will not have the infrastructure to trade nationally. We will have to counter this by ensuring the framework exceeds expectations and is highly competitive. The group reviews spend data to see if there are any future opportunities and recently implemented a Print Solutions framework where there is a huge opportunity to increase spending, but further work is required to continue promoting this arrangement.

Chris - Now that Helen Dodd-Williams is leading on what will become a national framework agreement, there is a great opportunity to demonstrate to the wider HE sector and their office supply providers that the NWUPC is the best organisation to bring extra benefits to the sector, along with realistic expenditure forecasts which allow those providers to structure their bids to ensure they are sustainable in an evolving marketplace. The practice of the Group in carefully preparing specifications for frameworks and then working with awarded suppliers to strive for constant improvement helps bring benefits to all the parties to the frameworks.

Challenge wise, I feel that finding a way of encouraging the more shy members of the Group to pitch in with their thoughts could unlock even more potential at the meetings. Everyone is involved in doing their best for their own institutions and the next best idea or practice could be brought out rather than being held back by the originator who just lacks a bit of confidence to speak up about it for fear of being ignored.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Linda - I would have to say it's the people, both from within Keele and from other institutions. There is always someone who will offer advice and share knowledge despite the ever demanding pressures on everyone. Collaboration is excellent within the sector.

Chris - As I have a dual role (insurance as well as procurement) no two days are the same as I never know what the next phone call, e-mail or visitor to the office will bring. Colleagues only generally contact me when they have a problem and they are relying on me to be able to help them out by providing a solution. Quite often I can do that quickly, but some problems require a step back to think about how to achieve a good outcome, so that can take time and some days I find that an entire morning or afternoon has flown by whilst I have been engrossed with finding a solution to the problem. However, it is very satisfying when I go back to the colleague and give them the answer that helps them to move on with their work and subsequently the thanks that they give to me for supporting them.



What would you be doing if you weren't in your current role?

Linda - I'd be a Lady of Leisure living on Anglesey for part of the year and travelling the world for the rest of the year seeing birds, wildlife and experiencing culture.

Chris - As my background is in electronic engineering, which then morphed into procurement in an earlier life, I would most likely be out of work as there aren't a lot of jobs within the sector in the UK. Hence my transfer to the weird and wonderful world of academia, which came about when I joined the Estate Management & Building Services department at the University of Cambridge. The lack of hills and mountains in Cambridgeshire prompted the move to Bangor once the opportunity arose.

What achievement are you most proud of and why?

Linda - There are two that come to mind, one was the implementation of E-procurement and E-invoicing within a 3 month period where myself and colleague worked flat out for 11 weeks meeting the funding goal! IT were involved but it was very much driven by Procurement.

The other was the implementation of Managed Print, it has been one of the hardest projects I have ever had to work on and at times felt like I was swimming against a very fast tide single handed. The amount of resistance was unbelievable, hard hat and bullet proof vests were required. It has been in place for 6 years now and it very much has become the norm with no complaints. The strategy has generated an enormous amount of savings not only in hard cash but also from an efficiency point of view.

Chris - Helping to save the life of a member of staff who had been taken critically ill whilst on a field trip in China. I was alerted to the incident by their department who turned to me for help whilst "wearing my insurance hat". I contacted our travel insurers medical emergency support team and helped them to liaise with the university in China that the person was taken ill at. It was quickly decided to move the staff member out of China to Bangkok where the medical facilities were much better. I acted as a conduit for information between Bangor, the medical emergency support team, the University's insurers and most importantly the family of the staff member. A lot of the communications took place whilst I was on holiday in Europe, but divine intervention helped here as just a few weeks before I had bought a smartphone so I was able to keep in close contact by e-mail to all of the concerned people.



Once I was back at Bangor, I continued to provide twice daily updates to all parties as the staff member's condition was very unstable for several days. Thankfully the specialists at Bangkok were able to bring things under control sufficiently to allow an air ambulance transfer back to the UK. Again I was helped from above as I questioned why the air ambulance flight plan was to go to Heathrow and then drive a normal ambulance all the way to the Walton Centre at Liverpool, when surely it made more sense to have the flight land at Liverpool John Lennon, with the Walton Centre only twenty minutes away, since I knew that time was of the essence to ensure the best outcome for the still critically ill person.

Reflecting on the chain of events that took place I had used a number of skills gained over the years; a logical engineered approach to understand the problem and the need to make sound decisions using the best resources available; regularly communicating frankly and honestly with many different stakeholders whilst understanding their individual perspectives; negotiating with external parties when required in order to bring about the best possible outcome in exceptionally difficult circumstances. I must have done a reasonable job as I received a special commendation for excellent service from the Vice Chancellor later that year!

Category Groups Update

The last couple of months have been a busy period for the Category Groups at NWUPC and I am delighted to share some of the activities that have taken place within some of our Category Groups, particularly during the summer.

Audio Visual - The AV Group met at the University of Bolton in June and the meeting was chaired by Max Fossard. Members welcomed Chris McEvoy from Keele University into the group. The group received a presentation from Sony on the Vision Exchange Collaborative Suites currently being used at the University of Bolton. Jason Huggins from Sony demonstrated to members how the new vision exchange has transformed teaching and learning at the university. Of interest in Jason's presentation is the engaging experiences the vision exchange offers students at Bolton. This includes functionalities such as wall mounted HD screens showing the learning session taking place; touch-screen capabilities; up to 10 pod connections that allows for sharing of content from front to all pods; BYOD Mirroring – up to 6 connections for Win/Mac/ Android/iOS as well as functionality for remote learning. The central aim of this project was to replace the traditional 'one-way' lectures with HD interactive teaching methods that encourages deeper student engagement with the course. The group thanked Don Moffatt for his invaluable support and wished him the best in his retirement.

Heads of Procurement & Joint Chairs Meeting - The Heads of Procurement group met in Keele University Library in June, which was a joint meeting with Category Group Chairs. Also in attendance was Steve Mole, NWUPC Chair. The group received update reports from each of the Category Groups and received an update and overview, from Linda Sutton, of the procurement structure and function at Keele.

Office Solutions - Following discussions from members at the last Office Solutions group meeting, it was agreed that Office Solutions and Library Services should be split into two groups for effective management of both groups. The Office Solutions Group met at Edge Hill University in June. The meeting was chaired by Linda Sutton and members discussed issues affecting their Universities. Linda and Helen also updated the group on their recent visit to Banner's warehouse. The group received presentations from two clothing suppliers – Richard from JSW Uniwear and Mandie from International Insignia Ltd. Both suppliers used the presentation to showcase their products as well as promotional offers to members of the group.

Professional Services - The group were guests of University of Liverpool earlier in June, and the meeting was chaired by Leanne Horton. The group received information and presentation from Barclaycard on precision pay. Of interest in this presentation was the three flexible payment options available to members under Barclaycard Precisionpay, depending on the payment needs to cover ad-hoc or strategic spend with suppliers.





Strategy Group - The Strategy Group meet annually to review the current NWUPC Ltd Strategy and receive an update on the progress during the year. The group updated the performance measures for the forth-coming year 2019/20 and agreed the survey questions for members and suppliers. A first year progress report will be produced and shared with members later in the year.

Travel - The group met at The University of Manchester in June where they had a travel tender evaluation workshop coordinated by Jayne Thorn from SUPC. The workshop saw members breaking up into small groups for a mock evaluation exercise with each group completing an itinerary scoring sheet. The group received a presentation from Wessex Fleet.

Telecoms - The Telecoms group were hosted by the University of Bangor in June, and the meeting was chaired by Nathan Millward (Deputy Chair). The group had a lengthy discussion on telecoms equipment, mobile phone facilities used by individual institutions, network services and other pressing issues currently experienced by members. The group also received a presentation from EE. Of interest from the presentation was the soon to be released 5G network by EE into six UK cities namely; London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast – as well as Birmingham and Manchester. Ten more cities will also see 5G services later this year.

E-market Place - The E-market Place meeting scheduled for Staffordshire University took place at the NWUPC Office in Manchester in July. The meeting was ably chaired by Lorraine Edwards. The E-Market Place meeting was divided into two sessions. The morning meeting covered the usual E-Market Place business with group members, while the afternoon session was split into two groups, one for the Parabilis Meeting and the other for Advanced Meeting. The group members used the afternoon session to update and feedback their concerns to both Advanced and Parabilis suppliers.

The remaining summer term Category Group meeting was the Library Services Category Group meeting, which took place on 12th July at Edge Hill University.



The winter term Category Group meetings have been scheduled as follows;



04 SEP	Catering Liverpool Hope University
13 SEP	Professional Services University of Central Lancashire
25 SEP	Heads of Procurement Queens University Belfast
04 OCT	Furniture University of Chester
11 OCT	Office Solutions The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts
16 OCT	Domestics Royal Northern College of Music
23 OCT	Estates University of Cumbria
08 NOV	Computing Edge Hill University
13 NOV	Audio Visual University of Liverpool
20 NOV	Laboratory Manchester Metropolitan University
29 NOV	Telecommunications University of Bolton
04 DEC	Travel Liverpool John Moores University

Meet The Team



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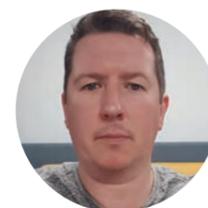
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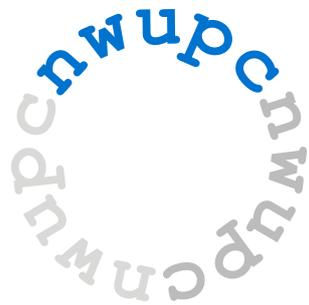
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