# Sustainable Procurement at NWUPC Ltd

# About NWUPC Ltd

NWUPC Ltd is a not for profit organisation limited by member guarantee working predominately in the North West region on behalf of Higher Education Institutions but with a commodity specific national reach. We have 22 full members who “own” NWUPC as well as additional associate and affiliate members who utilise our services but do not have voting rights.

NWUPC Ltd has 12 members of staff with 6 operational procurement managers. We have a Contracting Director, two Senior Category Managers, two Category Managers and one procurement trainee who has joined us on an 18 month apprenticeship scheme.

The Contracting team manages 161 suppliers over 11 categories (ProcHE Level 1) and non-paye aggregate spend of £200m.

Sustainable Procurement is important to NWUPC at every level. It forms part of our Strategy as one of the five core Operational Methodologies; Ethical Procurement Processes and underpins all six of our Strategic Objectives and Operational Objectives.

At NWUPC, Sustainable Procurement supports wider social, economic and environmental objectives in ways that offer real long term benefits. NWUPC is able to leverage its market power to bring about environmental and social benefits that we are committed to in twelve key drivers:

1. Working conditions
2. Eco-friendly products and services
3. Green Credentials
4. Monitoring and reducing negative impacts
5. Compliance with EU legislation
6. Ethical procurement options
7. Embedding best practice
8. Eliminating discrimination
9. Opportunities for reuse and recycling
10. Reduction of impact of transportation
11. Communication and promotion

# NWUPC’s Sustainable Procurement Strategy

The purpose of NWUPC’s sustainable procurement strategy is to give us the direction to achieve our organisational strategic goals by embedding sustainability into all our processes and throughout our supplier base. The keys themes of which are people, policy, process, and measurement and which we hope to achieve through engagement with our key stakeholders both in the supply chain and our membership.

**Our goal is to support our members to achieve value for money through sustainable collaborative procurement.**

## Why

NWUPC’s members are at the core of our organisation and we are driven to ensure that our Framework Agreements meet their requirements. The responsibilities, targets and commitments of our members must be reflected in the work that we do and so the Sustainable Procurement Strategy has been written to govern our assurance to our members.

## How

The strategy of NWUPC is devised in consideration of the Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan for the UK set out by UK Government in “Procuring the Future” (2006). Our strategic aims support this plan and embed the ethos of Government’s goals and targets for Higher Education (HE). NWUPC also actively supports the Sustainable Procurement Policy devised by Procurement for England (PEL) and our organisational policy is aligned to this.

NWUPC is committed to creating contracts and Framework Agreements that promote ethical and sustainable procurement activity. For NWUPC, Sustainable Procurement supports wider social, economic and environmental objectives in ways that offer real long term benefits and helps us to achieve our goal of delivering value for money for our membership.

## Endorsement

Sustainability has been and is supported at the highest level in NWUPC with its Board of Directors first approving an environmental policy in 1999 and the PEL Strategy Aims Paper that endorses the PEL Sustainability Policy in March 2014. As both Managing Director and Company Secretary Paul Tomany has championed sustainability from the incorporation of the Consortium in 2000 not only for NWUPC’s activities but also to the higher education institutions that are its Members. NWUPC has organised training courses on sustainability for its own and Members’ staff, played a leading role in developing the Scope 3 Carbon Measurement Tool sponsored by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), is a member of the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges and supported the work of the Sustainable Procurement Centre of Excellence.

Paul Tomany, Managing Director, NWUPC Ltd

“NWUPC has long held a commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness with policies reflecting this being in place for over 15 years. The Consortium seeks to pro-actively engage with both its Members and its suppliers to raise awareness of the importance of reducing the negative impact on the planet of its and their activities. As Chair of the NWUPC Board of Directors I ensure that the policies of the Consortium reflect this long-term commitment and that resources are made available to support and train our staff in this vital area.”

Geoff Hope-Terry, Chair, NWUPC Ltd

# Our Story

NWUPC has long engaged in Sustainable Procurement Practices and considered its impact in our Frameworks. However this has been on an ad hoc basis and recently it has become increasingly important for us to be able to demonstrate tangible evidence of the aims, processes, measures and results. The desire to embed sustainability across the board met with some challenges at the outset due to confusion over the best place to start and a lack of guidance over how to practically achieve what we wanted to do.

We formalised the way forward by nominating a Sustainability Champion who would carry out the work and take the lead whilst engaging with our key stakeholders and steering group. We also embarked on a partnership with NETPositive futures who gave us some clarity, practical applications and direction on how to achieve our goals.

They also gave us an ambitious target to achieve Level 4 of the Flexible Framework which was a commitment our Managing Director made to the Board of Directors to endorse the project. We have worked on this project collaboratively with two other HE consortia; North Eastern Universities Purchasing Consortia (NEUPC) and The Universities Catering Organisation (TUCO).

In 2006 the UK Government set out a Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan for the UK public sector in “Procuring the Future”. The Flexible Framework was developed as support method for public sector procurement to embed sustainability into all their activities. It has five sections which we used to shape our Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

# Our Approach

## Sustainable Procurement Pathway

## Pathway in Detail

What follows is more detail on the pathway to achieving Level 4 for NWUPC so that we can share our story to enable others.

### Our Commitment to Members and to The Board

Sustainable Procurement neatly fits NWUPC’s ethosto provide a structure for higher education institutions mutually to secure value for money in matters relating to the purchasing of goods and services. Without consideration for sustainability within procurement we cannot truly achieve best value for money. Therefore we made a commitment to members to embed sustainability into all our activities and the first step was by setting up a steering group NWUPC Sustainable Procurement Group (NWUPC SPG) with a nominated Sustainable Procurement Champion, Helen Dodd-Williams, Senior Category Manager.

To maximise the impact of our work and to fully demonstrate the importance of Sustainable Procurement at NWUPC our Managing Director fully endorsed a project to achieve Level 4 of the Flexible Framework and made a commitment to our Board of Directors that this would be completed by the end of 2014. This was no easy feat as the work was to be carried out in addition to an ambitious contracting programme and no additional resources could be employed.

### Materiality Analysis

As part of our contracting activity all category managers undertake spend analysis of their Frameworks on a quarterly basis. This was pulled together to give an accurate picture of the overall spend profile of the Consortium members.

We also established the Social, Environmental and Economical priorities of our members by analysing their Institutional Sustainability Strategies and used this information to build a robust Sustainable Procurement Strategy for NWUPC which would contribute to delivering members targets.

### Risk and impact analysis

NWUPC then undertook detailed risk analysis utilising the Marrakech Sustainability Tool and impact assessments of all Commodities at ProcHE Level 2.

This information now forms part of the procurement process and is built into the contract strategy which will be undertaken by all category managers.

### Stakeholder Engagement

The key stakeholders for the Sustainable Procurement process are members, suppliers, and the steering group (NWUPC SPG). The Sustainability Champion engaged with the SPG at various stages during the course of the termly meeting and considered their feedback during the process. Suppliers are engaged with through the formal review process that takes place annually as well as on an ad hoc basis when relevant information is received. Sustainability forms part of the commodity group agenda when the category manager engages with members and feeds the information back to the Sustainability Champion.

### Modernisation of Governance

Existing policies were reviewed and updated to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. We also identified some gaps which resulted in the creation of a suite of governance documentation. These have been endorsed by the Managing Director and communicated to our members for comment. Our website was updated to be used as a depository for policy information to ensure this is accessible by all. It will also be used to store guides and toolkits for our members and to communicate initiatives to our suppliers.

### Training and Development

To ensure that sustainability forms part of excellent procurement practice within our team we embarked on a training programme. All NWUPC staff have received sustainable procurement training over the past few years and this has been enhanced by advanced modules for our contracting team. This has built up the knowledge of staff and given them confidence to embed sustainability within our procurement decisions.

### Measurement and Reporting

Targets and KPIs have been set within our Sustainable Procurement Strategy and these will be measured on an annual basis. This will be reported through the annual Sustainability Report which will be issued to all members, and communicated via the NWUPC website, e-newsletter and SPG.