

Birmingham Strategic Partnership (BSP) sustainable procurement project

LWM has been commissioned by the Birmingham Strategic Partnership to undertake a project to produce a sustainable procurement action plan for the BSP members. The project was funded following a review of the Community Strategy, which highlighted the potential of procurement, and is intended to help meet commitments laid down in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), where environmental sustainability is one of the cross-cutting themes designed to influence all areas of the agreement. A reduction of CO₂ emissions is one of the key outcomes of the 'safer and stronger communities' block, and the project will seek to develop procurement processes to achieve wider community benefits, also relating to the 'stronger and safer communities' block and to the commitment to wider community engagement. The project will work in line with the National Sustainable Procurement Action Plan, and will fit into a wider policy context, helping partners to meet requirements and guidelines from bodies such as the Audit Commission and the Environment Agency.

About LWM

Localise West Midlands is a not-for-profit think-tank and consultancy which promotes the environmental, social and economic benefits of:

- Local trading, using local businesses, materials and supply chains
- Linking local needs to local resources
- Development of community and local capacity
- Decentralisation of appropriate democratic and economic power
- Provision of services tailored to meet local needs.

Localisation helps build social capital, targets regeneration to meet local needs, maximises local job creation, and reduces transport and CO₂ emissions. This approach makes economic development and government systems more sensitive to local autonomy, culture, well-being and the responsible use of finite resources, and is growing in popularity with people and organisations all over the world.

In addition to the work being carried out for the BSP, LWM is involved in a number of other projects. These include work on mapping fruit and vegetable wholesalers in the West Midlands, a scoping study for decentralised energy in Birmingham; and some research on regionalising prosperity indicators.

Defining Sustainable Procurement

The government's sustainable procurement Task Force defines sustainable procurement as "a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment."

LWM broadly concurs with this, further defining "benefits to . . .the economy" as meaning increases in economic well being for real people, and emphasising the positive impact sustainable procurement can have on the environment.

Approach and Methodology

The project will work collaboratively with partner organisations to build up an effective understanding of current procurement practices, and will seek to identify areas where progress can be made quickly, as well as the barriers and constraints to developing sustainable procurement policies. An emphasis will be made on understanding procurement chains and organisational structures, with the aim of encouraging joint working and solutions between partners. The project aims to capitalise on existing skills and procurement expertise, while providing the support to develop a key group of personnel from across the partnership with a shared interest in sustainable procurement. This will help ensure progress continues beyond the immediate term of the project, and will contribute to embedding sustainable procurement policies within each partner organisation.

Project Outcomes

The outcome of the project will be action plans for the individual organisations and for the BSP: to identify best practice and areas of greatest opportunity, in order to arrive at measures enabling BSP members to implement or improve sustainable procurement policies. A series of recommendations will be made to the BSP board, based on the project's findings. These will be contained within a final report, and will be informed by a workshop involving procurement staff from across the partnership, to be held on the 8th of March.

The LWM Team

The LWM team carrying out the project are as follows:

- Jon Morris - A consultant in housing, planning and regeneration, Jon has extensive experience in the fields of housing, planning and regeneration, as a practitioner, researcher and lecturer. Jon has also been a member of a number of ministerial advisory groups and an expert witness to the House of Commons Environment Select Committee.
- Karen Leach - LWM's coordinator, Karen was involved in setting up the organisation.
- Rosemary Foggitt - A solicitor and a director of Common Futures, a specialist social enterprise research and development consultancy.
- Sam Hunter - Sam has just joined the project after finishing a degree in economic and social history

Advisory Group Members

The advisory group for the project are as follows:

- David Geere, of the Regional Centre for Excellence in Procurement
- Keith Budden, Head of Sustainability for the BSP
- Mark Cook, of Anthony Collins Solicitors
- Alastair Jewson, Acting Strategy and Performance Group Manager, Corporate Procurement Service, Birmingham City Council.

For further information

For any other information about the project, please contact either Sam Hunter or Karen Leach at LWM –

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