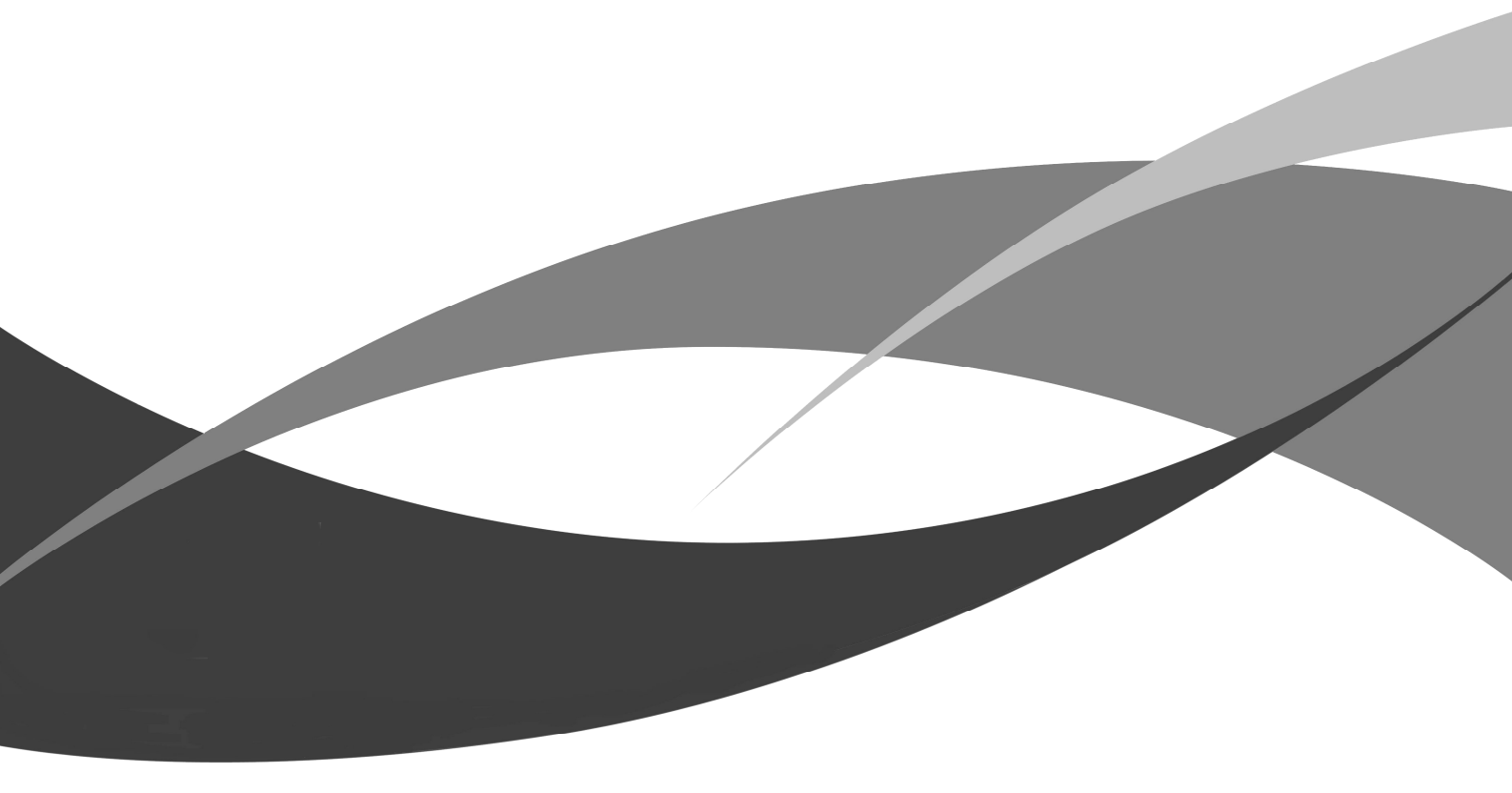




Contract Standing Orders

Kent Authorities' Contract Standing Orders at Thanet



Contract Standing Orders

Kent Authorities' Contract Standing Orders at Thanet

1 Introduction – Purpose of the Contract Standing Orders

- 1.1 Purchasing decisions and processes are important because the money involved is public money. The purpose of these Contract Standing Orders is to provide a structure within which purchasing decisions are made and implemented and which ensure that the Council:
 - 1.1.1 Furthers its corporate objectives
 - 1.1.2 Uses its resources efficiently
 - 1.1.3 Purchases quality goods, services and works
 - 1.1.4 Safeguards its reputation from any implication of dishonesty or corruption.
- 1.2 Purchasing by the Council, from planning to delivery, shall incorporate (where appropriate) principles of sustainability, efficiency, whole life costings and cost savings.
- 1.3 These Contract Standing Orders are made in accordance with the requirements of Section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.4 These Contract Standing Orders do not provide guidelines on what is the best way to purchase works, supplies (goods) and services. They set out minimum requirements to be followed. Further information and guidelines are set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide that accompanies this document.

2 General Principles – Application and Compliance with Contract Standing Orders

- 2.1 These Contract Standing Orders apply to the purchase by or on behalf of the Council of works, supplies (goods) and services.
- 2.2 These Contract Standing Orders apply to all contracts including all purchase orders, concessions and contractual arrangements entered into by or on behalf of the Council, except for the specific types of contracts and purchasing methods which are listed in 2.3.
- 2.3 These Contract Standing Orders do not apply to:
 - 2.3.1 Employment contracts
 - 2.3.2 Contracts relating solely to the purchase or sale of interests in land
 - 2.3.3 Contracts for retention of legal counsel and the appointment of expert witnesses in legal proceedings
 - 2.3.4 Service level agreements setting out the conditions which the Council applies to its funding of particular voluntary sector bodies.
 - 2.3.5 Post Entry Training Schemes

3 General Principles Applying to All Contracts

- 3.1 There should be written evidence of all purchases.

- 3.2 Standard contract clauses shall be used in all contracts of a value of £10,000 or more. The standard contract clauses are issued by Legal and Democratic Services and can be found on the intranet.
- 3.3 As a minimum, all contracts of a value of £10,000 or more shall include clauses which set out:
 - 3.3.1 The works, supplies (goods), services, material, matters or things to be carried out or supplied
 - 3.3.2 The time within which the contract is to be performed
 - 3.3.3 Quality requirements and/or standards which must be met
 - 3.3.4 Requirements on the contractor to hold and maintain appropriate insurance
 - 3.3.5 What happens in the event that the contractor fails to comply with its contractual obligations (in whole or in part)
 - 3.3.6 Requirements on the contractor to comply with all relevant equalities and health and safety legislation
 - 3.3.7 That the Council shall be entitled to cancel the contract and recover losses in the event that the contractor does anything improper to influence the Council to give the contractor any contract or commits an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 or s117(2) Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.4 Written contracts shall not include non-commercial terms unless these are necessary to achieve best value for the Council. In this context, “non commercial” means requirements unrelated to the actual performance of the contract.
- 3.5 All contracts shall include relevant specifications and/or briefs/technical requirements which are prepared taking into account the need for effectiveness of delivery, quality, sustainability and efficiency (as appropriate) and the information set out in the Council’s Purchasing Guide.
- 3.6 All contracts of a value of £10,000 or more or which involve a substantial risk to the Council must be subject to a written risk assessment, which should be kept on the contract file held by the responsible officer.

4 Regulatory Context

- 4.1 All purchasing shall be conducted in accordance with Regulatory Provisions which are:
 - 4.1.1 All relevant statutory provisions
 - 4.1.2 The relevant EU Rules and EC Treaty Principles which are defined in the Council’s Purchasing Guide
 - 4.1.3 The Council’s Constitution including these Contract Standing Orders, the Council’s Financial Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation
 - 4.1.4 The Council’s Purchasing Guide and other policies and procedures of the Council as appropriate.
- 4.2 In the event of conflict between the above, **the EU Rules will take precedence**, followed by UK legislation, then the Council’s Constitution, the Council’s Purchasing Guide and guidelines, policies and procedures.

5 Responsibilities of Directors, Service Managers and Responsible Officers

- 5.1 Each Director shall have overall responsibility for the purchasing undertaken by his/her Directorate.
- 5.2 Each Service Manager shall be responsible for the purchasing undertaken by his or her service and shall
 - 5.2.1 be accountable to the Director for the performance of his/her duties in relation to purchasing
 - 5.2.2 comply with the Council's decision making processes including, where appropriate, implementing and operating a Scheme of Delegation
 - 5.2.3 appoint a Responsible Officer in writing who shall be an authorised signatory
 - 5.2.4 take immediate action in the event of breach of these Contract Standing Orders.
- 5.3 A Responsible Officer is an officer with responsibility for conducting purchasing processes for the purchase of works, supplies (goods) or services on behalf of the Council.
- 5.4 A Responsible Officer's duties in respect of purchasing are to ensure:
 - 5.4.1 compliance with all Regulatory Provisions and integrity of the tender process
 - 5.4.2 compliance with the relevant statutory provisions and the Council's requirements relating to declarations of interest affecting any purchasing process
 - 5.4.3 that there is an appropriate analysis of the requirement, timescales, procedure and documentation to be used
 - 5.4.4 the purchasing process, from planning to delivery incorporates (where appropriate) principles of sustainability, efficiency, whole life costings and cost savings
 - 5.4.5 compliance with the Council's decision making processes
 - 5.4.6 that all contracts of a value of £75,000 or more are included on the Council's Contract Register
 - 5.4.7 that proper records of all contract award procedures, waivers, exemptions and extensions are maintained, with separate files for each purchase of a value of £75,000 or more
 - 5.4.8 that value for money is achieved
 - 5.4.9 that adequate and appropriate security (such as a bond or guarantee) is taken to protect the Council in the event of non-performance.
- 5.5 In considering how best to procure works, supplies and services, Directors, Service Managers and/or Responsible Officers (as appropriate in the context), shall take into account wider contractual delivery opportunities and purchasing methods including the use of Purchasing Schemes and e-procurement/purchasing methods, and the availability of local authority charging and trading powers under the Local Government Act 2003.
- 5.6 It is a disciplinary offence to fail to comply with these Contract Standing Orders and the Council's Purchasing Guide. All employees have a duty to report breaches of Contract Standing Orders to the Section 151 Officer or the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
- 5.7 Any officer or Member who suspects any misconduct or corruption in relation to the purchase by or on behalf of the Council of works, supplies (goods) and services must refer to the Council's Whistleblowing Code which can be found on the intranet and follow the guidance contained within.

6 Scheme of Delegation

- 6.1 Council purchasing may only be undertaken by officers with the appropriate delegated authority to carry out such tasks as set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation. Officers with delegated authority may only delegate to other officers who have the appropriate skills and knowledge for the task and such delegation shall be recorded in writing by the officer delegating the task and notified to the relevant Service Manager.
- 6.2 Each Service Manager shall inform officers, where appropriate, of the extent of any delegated authority and applicable financial thresholds.

7 Financial Thresholds and Procedures

- 7.1 The table below sets out the general rules applying to the choice of purchasing procedure for contracts at the stated threshold values.
- 7.2 There is a general presumption in favour of competition. Wherever possible contract opportunities should be advertised by way of a public notice and/or the Council's and South East Centre Of Excellence Business Portal. The Council must consider the potential effect of a contract on interstate trade (at a European level). If a contract may be of interest to contractors from other member states then this may result in a need to advertise in a manner which ensures that potential contractors from other member states are aware of the opportunity, even for small value contracts or contracts under the EU Threshold levels outlined below.
- 7.3 The public notice referred to at 7.2 may take the form of a notice or advertisement in an electronic or paper format, on an easily accessible website or other electronic media and/or in the press, trade journals or Official Journal of the European Union ("OJ") (as appropriate). The Responsible Officer may choose to place one or more public notices in different media.
- 7.4 **Table setting out financial thresholds and procedures**

Total value £	Type of contract	Procedure to be used
1,000 to 9,999	Works, supplies and services	At least one quote in advance
10,000 to 74,999	Works, supplies and services	At least three written quotes in advance
75,000 to 139,893**	Works, supplies and services	At least three written tenders in advance, following advertisement by public notice
139,893** plus **EU Threshold for supplies and services	Supplies and services	EU Rules apply – full competitive process following advertisement in the OJ for supplies and Part A* services. For Part B* services reduced requirements apply under the EU Rules but there is a presumption in favour of advertising and a competitive process
139,893 to 3,497,313**	Works	Full competitive process with tenders following advertisement by public notice
3,497,313** **EU Threshold for works	Works	EU Rules apply – full competitive process with tenders following OJ advertisement

* *For the purposes of the EU Rules services are divided into two types and the EU Rules apply to a different degree. Responsible Officers should act cautiously and seek advice when considering the procedure to be used and application of the EU Rules to services contracts.*

** *or relevant threshold in force at the time under the EU Rules.*

7.5 Where contracts are of a type and value that mean the EU Rules apply to them then there are four main types of EU procedures available. These are the open, restricted, competitive dialogue and competitive negotiated procedures. Care must be taken to ensure that the correct and most appropriate procedure is used and assistance on the choice and use of EU procedure should be sought from Legal & Democratic Services and process progressed via the Procurement Unit

8 Financial Thresholds and Processes Applying to Approval and Execution of Contracts

8.1 For contracts over the relevant EU threshold (in force at the time), the choice of purchasing procedure to be used and the decision to proceed to advertisement must be authorised in writing by the relevant Service Manager in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in advance.

8.2 When a decision is made to award a contract then the Responsible Officer must, in addition to complying with his/her general obligations under these Contract Standing Orders ensure, in particular, that:

8.2.1 the appropriate approvals have been obtained to authorise that decision; and

8.2.2 where appropriate, a standstill period complying with the EU Rules is incorporated into the final award process.

8.3 Any contracts valued at £75,000 or above shall be executed as a deed under the Council's common seal. Officers with appropriate delegated authority may sign all other contracts. £10,000 shall be the threshold for the purposes of Regulation 8 of the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Modification of Enactments and Further Provisions) (England) Order 2001.

8.4 Electronic signatures may be used in accordance with the Electronic Signature Regulations 2002 provided the sufficiency of security arrangements has been approved by the Director of Customer Services & Business Transformation and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

9 Calculating the Contract Value

9.1 The starting point for calculating the contract value for the purposes of these Contract Standing Orders is that the contract value shall be the genuine pre-estimate of the value of the entire contract excluding Value Added Tax. This includes all payments to be made, or potentially to be made, under the entirety of the contract and for the whole of the predicted contract period (**including proposed extensions and options**).

9.2 There shall be no artificial splitting of a contract to avoid the application of the provisions of the EU Rules and/or these Contract Standing Orders.

9.3 The EU Rules can cover contracts, which are below the stated EU threshold, where they constitute repeat purchases and/or purchases of a similar type in a specified period. Responsible Officers should therefore seek advice on the application of the EU Rules where they envisage that they may require to make such purchases.

10 Principles Underlying Tendering Processes and Tender Evaluation

- 10.1 All tendering procedures (including obtaining quotes), from planning to contract award and signature, shall be undertaken in a manner so as to ensure:
 - 10.1.1 Sufficient time is given to plan and run the process
 - 10.1.2 Equal opportunity and equal treatment
 - 10.1.3 Openness and transparency
 - 10.1.4 Probity
 - 10.1.5 Outcomes that deliver sustainability, efficiency and cost savings (where appropriate).

11 Submission and Opening of Tenders

- 11.1 An Invitation to Tender shall be issued by the Council for all contracts over £75,000 and tenders shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Invitation to Tender.
- 11.2 Any tenders received (other than those received electronically, to which 11.3 shall apply) shall be:
 - 11.2.1 addressed to the Democratic Services Manager
 - 11.2.2 in a sealed envelope marked "Tender" followed by the subject matter to which it relates
 - 11.2.3 kept in a locked cabinet by Democratic Services
 - 11.2.4 retained unopened until the date and time specified for its opening.
- 11.3 Where the Council has indicated in the Invitation to Tender that a tender can or must be submitted electronically, then those tenders shall be:
 - 11.3.1 addressed to the e-mail address as notified in the Invitation to Tender
 - 11.3.2 in the format specified in the Invitation to Tender
 - 11.3.3 stored in a secure mailbox, which requires a code or other appropriate security measure, to open it
 - 11.3.4 retained unopened until the date and time specified for its opening.
- 11.4 No tender received after the time and date specified for its opening shall be accepted or considered by the Council unless the relevant Service Manager is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the tender having been dispatched in time for it to have arrived before the closing date and time, or other exceptional circumstances apply and the other tenders have not been opened.
- 11.5 Where Tenders are expected to have a value in excess of £75,000, they shall be opened in the presence of the appropriate Portfolio Holder or another Cabinet Member, a Procurement Officer, one Responsible Officer nominated by the relevant Service Manager and a Democratic Services Officer to undertake the completion of the Record of Receipt of Tender Document of tenders received including names and addresses and the date and time of opening .

11.6 The tender opening process is set out in detail at Appendix 1 to these contract standing orders.

12 Evaluation of Quotes and Tenders

- 12.1 All quotes and tenders shall be evaluated in accordance with evaluation criteria notified in advance to those submitting quotes/tenders.
- 12.2 Tenders subject to the EU Rules shall be evaluated in accordance with the EU Rules.
- 12.3 Save in exceptional circumstances approved in advance by the relevant Service Manager all contracts shall be awarded on the basis of the quote or tender which represents best value for money to the Council and not on the basis of lowest price.

13 Waivers

- 13.1 The requirement for the Council to conduct a competitive purchasing process for contracts in excess of £10,000 may be waived in the following circumstances.
 - 13.1.1 For contracts which are not subject to the EU Rules, the work, supply or service is required as a matter of urgency and a delay would be likely to lead to financial loss, personal injury or damage to property; or
 - 13.1.2 the circumstances set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2006 Regulation 14 apply (whether or not the contract is of a type which is subject to the application of the EU Rules); or
 - 13.1.3 the contract is awarded under a Purchasing Scheme of a type where a competition has already been undertaken on behalf of the Council; or
 - 13.1.4 at the discretion of the relevant Director who may proceed in a manner most expedient to the efficient management of the service/Council with reasons recorded in writing.
- 13.2 A Responsible Officer who seeks a waiver of Contract Standing Orders, shall do so only in advance and only in exceptional circumstances. Further guidance on what may constitute exceptional circumstances permitting waiver of these Contract Standing Orders is set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide.
- 13.3 All waivers from these Contract Standing Orders must be:
 - 13.3.1 Fully documented
 - 13.3.2 Subject to a written report in an approved format, available on the intranet, to be submitted **in advance** to the relevant Director which shall include reasons for the waiver which demonstrate that the waiver is genuinely required
 - 13.3.3 Subject to **approval in advance** by the Section 151 Officer who shall record that they have considered the reasons for the waiver and that they are satisfied that the circumstances justifying the waiver are genuinely exceptional. Applications for waivers which are a result of poor contract planning will rarely be considered genuinely exceptional.
 - 13.3.4 Subject to periodic report to Cabinet by Procurement Unit and retrospective waivers will also be reported via Governance & Audit Committee
- 13.4 All decisions on waivers must take into account:
 - 13.4.1 Probity

- 13.4.2 Best value/value for money principles.
- 13.5 For contracts subject to the EU Rules, any waiver from the requirement for competition must meet the conditions set out in the EU Rules in addition to the general requirements above.

14 Extensions to Existing Contracts

- 14.1 Where extensions to existing contracts are made the extensions must be determined in accordance with the contract terms, for a specified period and made in accordance with the principles set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide.
- 14.2 Any extension must be:
 - 14.2.1 Fully documented and notified to the Procurement Unit to update Contract Register
 - 14.2.2 Subject to a written report in an approved format to be submitted to the relevant Director and Section 151 officer, which shall include reasons for the extension which demonstrate that the need for the extension is genuinely exceptional
 - 14.2.3 Subject to approval by the Director and Section 151 officer, and section 151 officer, who shall record that they have considered the reasons for the extension and that they are satisfied that the circumstances justifying the extension are genuinely exceptional
- 14.3 Any extension must take into account:
 - 14.3.1 Probity
 - 14.3.2 Best value/value for money principles.
- 14.4 For contracts subject to EU Rules, any extension must meet the conditions set out in the EU Rules in addition to the more general requirements set out above.

15 Purchasing Schemes

- 15.1 A Responsible Officer may use Purchasing Schemes subject to the following conditions and the Council's Purchasing Guide.
- 15.2 Responsible Officers must check in advance that
 - 15.2.1 The Council is legally entitled to use the Purchasing Scheme
 - 15.2.2 The purchases to be made do properly fall within the coverage of the Purchasing Scheme
 - 15.2.3 The establishment and operation of each Purchasing Scheme is in compliance with the EU Rules (where they apply) and meets the Council's own requirements.
- 15.3 A "Purchasing Scheme" may include:
 - 15.3.1 Contractor prequalification lists/select lists
 - 15.3.2 Framework arrangements (including those set up by the Office of Government Commerce, Central Buying Consortium, Kent Commercial Services)
 - 15.3.3 Purchasing arrangements set up by central purchasing bodies and commercial organisations
 - 15.3.4 Consortium purchasing
 - 15.3.5 Collaborative working arrangements
 - 15.3.6 Formal agency arrangements

15.3.7 E-procurement/purchasing schemes and methods

15.3.8 Other similar arrangements such as the IDeA Marketplace

15.4 Where a Purchasing Scheme is used then there shall be a whole or partial exemption from the obligations under these Contract Standing Orders in respect of the choice and conduct of procedures to the extent permitted and indicated in the Council's Purchasing Guide.

16 Review and Changes to these Contract Standing Orders

16.1 These Contract Standing Orders shall be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Save in the case of revisions to the EU Thresholds in Contract Standing Order 7, amended Contract Standing Orders shall be recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee to Council. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services will make revisions to the EU Thresholds.

17 Standard Clauses

17.1 Each contract shall include standard clauses, or those indicated where applicable dependant on the nature of the contract, on

17.1.1 Anti Fraud and Corruption

17.1.2 Prevention of Assignment

17.1.3 Equal Opportunities

17.1.4 Health and Safety

17.1.5 Freedom of Information Act 2000

17.1.6 TUPE and workforce matters as applicable

17.1.7 Child Protection and Safeguarding Children where applicable

17.1.8 Liquidated Damages where applicable

17.1.9 Protocol for performance data sharing by contractors where applicable.

Tender opening

Instructions to opening officers

- Present: Appropriate Portfolio Holder or another Cabinet Member
 Procurement Officer
 Responsible Officer
 Democratic Services Officer
- Requirements: Unopened tenders
 Record of Receipt of Tenders Form - summarising tenders opened

1. General

- 1.1 Before opening the tenders the Democratic Services Officer shall check with the Support Services Manager that the post box was emptied and any tenders collected from Main Reception at the designated time for receipt; and that all tenders received up to that date are in his possession.
- 1.2 All tenders given to the Democratic Services Officer should be properly sealed, dated and timed on receipt and show no signs of being tampered with. Where there is evidence of tampering the tender may still be opened but the Democratic Services Officer shall make a statement to that effect on the Record of Receipt of Tenders Form. If in doubt the Democratic Services Officer should refer the matter immediately to the Department concerned.
- 1.3 The Democratic Services Officer shall ensure prior to opening that each set of tenders to be opened are identifiable as relating to the same scheme. At this stage the Democratic Services Officer should ascertain whether any late tenders have arrived (see Note 2 below).
- 1.4 Tenders should be opened as soon as possible but no earlier than 24 hours after the designated time for receipt and arrangements should be made in advance of that time with both Council Officers and Councillor to facilitate the procedure.
- 1.5 Although it is not the duty of the Democratic Services Officer to analyse the technical content of tenders the officer shall at least take note of any tender qualifications (normally in the form of a letter) and bring them to the attention of the Department concerned. For these purposes it is best to make a brief note on the Record of Receipt of Tenders Form.
- 1.6 The Democratic Services Officer shall not destroy any of the tender envelopes but shall return them to the department who invited the tenders who shall consider their future retention. All envelopes relating to opened late tenders shall be kept.
- 1.7 If due to unusual circumstances a problem arises which is not covered by this code and cannot be resolved by the Democratic Services Officer advice should be immediately sought from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
- 1.8 One copy of the Record of Receipt of Tenders Form is to be kept by the Democratic Services Section and one copy sent to each of the following: the Client Department, Legal & Democratic Services and one copy to be delivered immediately to the Financial Services Manager for budgetary purposes.

2. Late tenders (see CSO 11.4)

- 2.1 A late tender is any tender arriving after the designated time on or after the appointed day. In respect of all such tenders the envelopes shall be endorsed "late tender" and shall specify the time and date received together with the signature of the receiving officer.
- 2.2 If any late tenders are received they may only be opened with a view to acceptance if the conditions in contract standing order 11.4 are met, namely, 'no tender received after the time and date specified for its opening shall be accepted or considered by the council unless the relevant Service Manager is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the tender having been dispatched in time for it to have arrived before the closing date or time, or other exceptional circumstances apply and the other tenders have not been opened'.
- 2.3 In cases where late tenders are opened a note to that effect shall be made clearly on the Record of Receipt of Tender Form and the envelope in which the tender arrived shall be retained.

3. Tender opening instructions for each tender opened

Opening officer duties	Second officer duties
Normally Democratic Services Officer	Normally Responsible Officer or Procurement Officer
Open envelope and remove tender.	
Read out name and address of contractor as shown on Form of Tender.	Check that name and address agrees with RRT Form (See Note A over page)
Check that the Form of Tender is filled in correctly, ie: a) Contractor's name; b) the contract for which he is tendering; c) Tender sum: words and figures agree; d) the Form of Tender is signed and dated by the contractor.	
Read out tender sum.	Write down tender sum next to relevant contractor on RRT (see Note B).
Check that amount entered on RRT agrees with tender - if so, initial form of tender in bottom right hand corner and pass documents, envelope and RRT to Second Officer.	Pass RRT to Opening Officer.
Repeat process for each tender received.	Check that tender sum agrees with that entered on RRT and, if so, initial next to Opening Officer on the Form of Tender and place tender back in envelope.
	Once all tenders have been dealt with RRT will indicate those contractors (if any) from whom a tender has not been received. In such cases the RRT, shall be clearly endorsed "No Tender Received".

Once this procedure has been followed, and provided that all officers are satisfied that their duties have been carried out correctly, the RRT should be signed by each officer and endorsed with the date and time at which these procedures were completed. The Councillor present shall also sign the RRT form to confirm their satisfaction with the tender opening procedures. The tender envelopes and a copy of RRT can then be forwarded to the Client Department.

NOTE A: In the event that a tender is returned from a firm other than that invited, including a subsidiary or alternative division, the details of the firm and his tender price shall still be entered on the RRT by the Second Officer and endorsed to the effect that this tender was received in addition to those invited.

NOTE B: In those circumstances where a contractor is not requested to state a tender sum the RRT shall be endorsed "Tender Received" at stage six above and the remaining procedures amended accordingly.

NOTE C: In those cases where the tender did not require an overall price, but rates, both officers and both members shall initial all those pages of the tender on which the contractor has inserted rates or prices.