

Aire Rivers Trust Procurement Policy

This Policy and associated documents enable Trustees to discharge their personal responsibility on issues of procurement risk and expenditure and Employees to undertake procurement to a defined and consistent good standard.

This policy has been revised to take account of the financial limits included in the scheme of delegation, which authorises the executive to sign contracts for projects, deeds, partnerships and legal agreements up to the value of £50,000.

Principles

Procurement effectiveness means the quality and value of goods and services delivered and includes, where opportunities are identified, the local economic, social and environmental benefits accruing from the contract.

Value for money means the most advantageous combination of cost, quality and sustainability over the life of the project and is defined specifically for each contract.

Procurement is carried out by **competitive process** unless

- it has a whole-life value of less than £500, or
- there is only one supplier in the market who can meet the essential parts of the specification, or
- there is only one supplier with essential historical knowledge or experience with a particular issue or was the original provider, or
- the supplier has the capacity and willingness to respond to an emergency.

Suppliers will be **treated fairly and without unfair discrimination**, including protection of commercial confidentiality where required and without imposing unnecessary burdens or constraints on suppliers or potential suppliers.

There will be **no corruption or collusion** with suppliers or other persons involved in a procurement project. [To do so will be considered gross misconduct and disciplinary action will follow.](#)

ART will base its procurement decisions on **accurate information, monitor procedures and standards** to ensure that they are being met and keep records to support openness and clarity in our practices.

This policy and associated procedures and standards will be reviewed and updated to maintain legally compliant, robust and effective procurement practice.

Procedures

Contract values are calculated as the sum of all lots over the lifetime of the contract.

The ART procedural thresholds are set out below. Where a funder requires acceptance of their (different) thresholds as a condition of funding, agreement should be sought from the Chair of the Board prior to acceptance of the funding.

Value less than £100

Small purchases, typically for less than £100, do not require any saved evidence of alternative costs, but the exhortation to consider value for money and remain within agreed budgets still applies.

Value £100 to £500

Permanent staff members may, at the discretion of the Treasurer, be provided with a company debit card. This must be used for purchases of less than £500 whenever possible.

For purchases between £100 and £500, evidence must be gathered and saved showing that at least **three** sources of supply have been looked at and prices obtained. This might, for example, be copies of internet searches for suppliers of goods or services of similar specifications. Subject to the expenditure being within a pre-agreed budget it must be authorised by the relevant 'Project Manager'. If the purchase represents an overspend on the agreed budget, the Chief Executive must be consulted.

Value over £500 but less than £10,000

All goods, works and services procurement within these values requires a minimum of three written quotations. Subject to the expenditure being within a pre-agreed budget it must be authorised by the relevant Senior Project Officer, failing which the Chief Executive should be consulted.

Where we find we are frequently buying similar goods or services we may set up Framework Agreements to enable us to quickly and easily procure from a pre-selected pool of suppliers who meet our standards and accept our terms and conditions. These can be useful for values below and above the £10,000 threshold.

Value over £10,000

All goods, works and services procurement over £10,000 requires a minimum of three competitive tenders. Contracts will be advertised on our ART website and in any other forums considered appropriate by the Chief Executive.

Tenders should be prepared using the Aire Rivers Trust Standard Tender Document Pack.

Tender documents will need to be approved by the Chief Executive for expected values of less than £50,000 and by the Chair for expected values in excess of £50,000 before being issued.

The completed tender evaluation should be provided for review to the Chief Executive or Chair, as appropriate, before the contract is awarded.

No contract must be awarded before written approval is given by and all contracts must be signed by the Chief Executive or Chair, as appropriate, on behalf of the Trust.

Value over £500 but less than £50,000

Any project contracts, deeds, partnership and legal agreements below £50,000 may be signed off by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair provided that the amount is

consistent with the budget for the project and the procedures for obtaining quotations have been followed.

Value over £50,000

Any expenditure over £50,000 will need to be authorised by the Chair of the Board.

Value over £100,00

Any expenditure over £100,000 will need to be authorised by the Chair of the Board in consultation with the Finance and Risk Committee.

Standards

At the time of writing this policy the Aire Rivers Trust does not have a set of standard documents for procurement procedures. Standardisation enables trustees and employees to act with confidence. Our scope and scale of activity is expanding so standard documentation suited to our needs will be developed, most likely in collaboration with the wider Rivers Trust ([National](#)) as they develop shareable documentation.

The standard documentation is expected to include sets of templates for Goods and Services as well as a Compliance Pack. Works contracts are usually more complex so a combination of guidance and template may be required for these.

The tender pack for each of Goods and Services will include templates for:

- Information and Instructions for Tendering (including timetable and evaluation criteria)
- Specification
- Terms and Conditions
- Pricing
- Checklist of documents for tender submission (e.g., environmental/sustainability statement, anti modern slavery policy)

We will develop guidance on procurement processes including advertising, clarification, evaluation, contract award and framework agreements.

This policy will be reviewed in 12 months from agreement to monitor progress in these developments.

We will take care to make this [policy](#) appropriate for our scale of operation and the nature of our supplier market.

To be approved by the Board of Trustees 13th November 2024