

## Selling to the council

### Contents

Introduction .....	3
About South Gloucestershire Council.....	3
How is procurement organised? .....	3
Council Plan 2024 to 2028.....	4
Working with the voluntary sector and stimulating business activity in South Gloucestershire.....	4
Social value .....	5
Rules and regulations.....	5
What are the UK Procurement Directives? .....	5
Framework agreements & Dynamic Markets.....	7
What internal Rules & Regulations must be followed by the Council?.....	8
The Procurement Process.....	9
How do I find out about opportunities? .....	9
How do I apply for contracts? .....	9
What information do I need to provide at each stage?.....	9
What is a Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)?.....	10
What if I am invited to tender? .....	10
What are the Council's expectations of suppliers? .....	10
How is a contract awarded? .....	11
How else might I be evaluated?.....	12
Can I ask for feedback?.....	12
How are contracts monitored?.....	12
Where can I find further information? .....	13
Appendix 1 – Suppliers' introduction to the portal .....	14
Introduction to supplying the council.....	14
Why do we use this system? .....	14
Benefits to you as a supplier.....	14
How do I register?.....	15

Requirements and tips for using the portal ..... 15

Questions ..... 15

Appendix 2 – Getting paid ..... 16

What information do I need to supply on an invoice? ..... 16

Payment terms..... 16

Payment of invoices..... 16

Payment contact details..... 16

## Introduction

South Gloucestershire Council (the Council) is a major purchaser of goods and services and spends over £200 million a year on obtaining a vast range of supplies, works and services from the external market.

Naturally many organisations will want to sell or provide their services and supplies to the Council, so we have put together this “Selling to the Council Guide” to assist existing and potential suppliers who wish to do so, by:

- Outlining the rules that the Council must follow
- Explaining where to find details of opportunities to supply the Council
- Explaining how to tender for the Council's business
- Explaining what is expected of you when undertaking work for us

The main purpose of this document is intended to provide guidance about the practicalities of the Council's procurement or buying processes, from small purchases to major contracts.

## About South Gloucestershire Council

South Gloucestershire is located in the South West of England and covers 53,665 hectares. It is a mixed urban and rural authority with rich natural and cultural heritage. It is an area of great diversity and contrast with a variety of communities, characterised by the special relationship between town and country. Residents are fortunate to have a high-quality local environment which they greatly value. Attractive and historic landscapes link unspoilt market towns, villages and established rural and urban communities with major new residential areas, industrial and commercial developments.

The Council operates out of four main sites based in Yate, Kingswood, and Patchway with three “directorates”, or departments, each with their own specific responsibilities:

### People

This department brings all the 'people' areas of our work together and incorporates public health.

### Resources and Business Change (R&BC)

This department concentrates mainly on the internal needs of the Council, for example the IT systems, HR, legal matters, property and budgets.

### Place

This department works towards providing a cleaner, safer and greener environment, and creating healthier communities through services such as community Libraries, street care, waste collection and recycling.

## How is procurement organised?

The Council has adopted a procurement hub model with a specialist team based in each of the 3 directorates. The Corporate Hub (R&BC) is responsible for developing the Council's procurement and commissioning strategy, policy, good practice and procedures to drive best value for money. It is also responsible for Corporate Purchasing Arrangements.

Contracts let by the Council can take a number of forms, including:

- Corporate Purchasing Arrangements: A contract where terms and conditions are agreed with the supplier for certain services, supplies or works which affect the whole Council, e.g. office supplies, office furniture, etc.
- One-off Contracts or Commissioned Services: These contracts meet specific needs/individual requirements.
- Concessions: An arrangement whereby the Council grants the contractor the right to operate a contract, within stipulated parameters, and to benefit from the profit made from the operation.
- Framework Agreements: used to procure batches of similar works, supplies or services which the Council expects to need over a period of time, but where it has no certainty as to what sort of quantity or details it may require. The Council can set up its own framework agreements or opt to use those arranged by other central buying consortiums such as the Crown Commercial Service (CCS), Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO).

## Council Plan 2024 to 2028

The Council Plan is our overarching strategy for the Council. It sets out the key actions we will take over the next 4 years to achieve the best for our residents and communities.

Grounded in hundreds of conversations with local people, it explains how we will play our part in creating a fairer, greener future for the places we call home.

The 3 top issues you told us were most important to you are housing, transport, and climate and nature. We have put these at the heart of the new plan.

### Our goals

The plan has 5 core goals:

- Respond to the climate and nature emergency
- Help reduce inequalities
- Support children and young people to thrive
- Support wellbeing and independence in our communities
- Build better places with secure affordable housing and good sustainable transport links

[Read the Council Plan 2024 to 2028](#)

## Working with the voluntary sector and stimulating business activity in South Gloucestershire

The Council is committed to working with communities, the voluntary sector, local organisations, small businesses (SMEs) and micro enterprises as part of its approach to commissioning and procurement. Whilst major procurements are subject to competitive tendering, the Council engages with and supports community groups, voluntary and local organisations through a range of funding streams and processes. This is where smaller

organisations can apply or bid to provide services which meet the needs of specific areas, communities or service user groups. These are not under commercial contracts but arranged through grants and commissioning agreements, where the Council works in partnership with the communities and organisations involved.

In the sense of larger opportunities, where appropriate, the Council will fully consider whether any contract may be suitable for providers that are [small or medium enterprises](#) (SMEs). However, any selection of tenderers will be based solely on the criteria set out for the procurement, and the contract will be awarded on the basis of the most advantageous tender. The Council is also an active member of the West of England Partnership.

Through the South Gloucestershire Compact with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), the Council is committed to giving voluntary and community organisations the fullest opportunity to compete for the provision of services. Where appropriate, a full assessment is always made of the Voluntary and Community Sector's capacity and suitability to provide services to meet an identified need. The South Gloucestershire Compact is an agreement between the public sector and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in South Gloucestershire. It sets out a way of working to strengthen the relationship between the sectors, for the benefit of residents and communities.

Visit the council website for the full [South Gloucestershire Compact](#).

## Social value

Social Value has been defined as “the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning/procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes”.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires that we consider how the Council can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. This helps us maximise the value of public money spent through our contracts and benefits the community as a whole.

Social Value shifts focus from the cost of a service to the overall value of the outcomes that can be delivered.

Therefore, the Council will take the opportunity to integrate Social Value into contracts where this can be realistically achieved and will ‘sound out’ stakeholders and suppliers at the planning.

For more information on the Council's approach to Social Value and the expectations on suppliers visit [how to do business with us](#).

## Rules and regulations

### What are the UK Procurement Directives?

The UK Procurement legislation is the overarching framework which dictates the way in which public bodies carry out their procurement activities for contracts over the relevant thresholds for local authorities. We have a legal requirement to comply with these Directives.

A summary of the Thresholds is available in the [Procurement Policy Note](#) on GOV.UK.

Note: the thresholds are reviewed every two years.

When the thresholds above are exceeded, the UK Procurement legislation is applicable and South Gloucestershire Council can conduct their procurement using one of two processes, both of which will be advertised and conducted using the [Supplying the South West Portal](#) ("the Portal"):

- **Open** – any supplier can express an interest and download the tender documents. There is only one stage to this process: suppliers complete a Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) as well as a response to the tender documentation.
- **Competitive Flexible Procedure** – a multi-stage process. The Competitive Flexible Procedure allows the Council to tailor the procurement process to their specific needs. Unlike traditional methods, this procedure provides more flexibility in how bids are solicited, negotiated, and awarded. It enables a more dynamic interaction with suppliers, allowing for negotiations on terms and prices, which can lead to better value for money. The procedure is typically used when the requirements of a contract cannot be met by off-the-shelf solutions or when innovation is needed.

Both processes have certain mandatory minimum time limits that suppliers are given in which to return their tender submissions.

The Procurement Act 2023 is a legislative framework established in various jurisdictions to regulate public procurement processes. This act aims to ensure that procurement by public bodies is conducted in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner, promoting competition, accountability, and value for money, and must be followed by all Contracting Authorities, which includes local government. If the procurement/commissioned service exceeds the UK thresholds and one of the two processes stated above is used, the Council must follow these basic requirements:

- Decide which of the processes is the most appropriate
- Publish a Tender Notice in the Central Digital Platform to give all UK and treaty state suppliers an equal opportunity to tender
- Consider whether larger procurements can be broken down into lots
- Adhere to the minimum timescales laid out for above threshold procurements (consideration should be given to extend these for complex procurements / commissioned services)
- Advertise the opportunity, which the Council does via the Portal
- Invite tenders according to the process being used taking account of the minimum timescales imposed, to ensure that reasonable time is given to respond to adverts and prepare submissions
- Select a suitable supplier using the criteria published in the tender notice or tender documents
- Place a Contract Award Notice in the Central Digital Platform
- Follow a mandatory 8 working day standstill process for above threshold contracts. This is a period of time between notifying the successful supplier that we want to award the contract to them and notifying the unsuccessful suppliers of the outcome of the tender
- Place a Contract Details Notice on the Central Digital Platform and actually award the contract.

Follow a mandatory eight working day standstill process for above threshold contracts. This is a period of time between notifying the successful supplier that we want to award the contract to them and notifying the unsuccessful suppliers; and the actual award of the contract.

# Framework agreements & Dynamic Markets

The Council also makes use of other contracting authority's frameworks. This is where the contracting authority has undertaken a fully UK compliant procurement and the contract (framework) is open to other public sector bodies to use. Unfortunately, this means that if a framework is being used as a route to market, suppliers who are not awarded to the framework originally, will not be permitted to take part in the tender process.

The exception to this is for Dynamic Markets and Open Frameworks where suppliers may apply and be awarded onto such systems throughout the duration of the agreement.

GOV.UK provides more information on [Dynamic Markets](#) and [Guidance on Frameworks](#).

## Light Touch Contracts

Light Touch Contracts are contracts for certain social, health, education and other public services and are subject to more flexible procurement rules. One thing these services have in common is that they are services provided directly to individuals or groups of people and therefore warrant special treatment and greater flexibility. Light Touch Contracts are subject to higher thresholds compared to standard goods and services contracts and offer greater flexibility in the procurement process. More information on [Light Touch Contracts](#) is available.

## Provider Selection Regime (PSR)

When commissioning Public Health clinical services South Gloucestershire Council must follow the [Provider Selection Regime \(PSR\)](#). The PSR came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and was introduced by regulations made under the 2022 Act. It has been designed to:

- introduce a flexible and proportionate process to decide who should provide health care services
- ensure all decisions are made in the best interest of patients
- apply to all commissioning decisions as there is no minimum financial threshold
- provide collaboration across systems (if applicable)

The PSR applies to the arrangement of health care and clinical public health services but does not apply to goods and non-healthcare services (such as medicines, medical equipment, cleaning, catering, business consultancy services and social care), unless arranged as part of mixed procurement.

Under the PSR, we are required to:

- act transparently, fairly, and proportionately to:
  - secure patient needs who will use the services
  - improve the quality and efficiency of services
  - provide integrated service delivery

NHS England provides further information and guidance on the [Provider Selection Regime](#).

## What internal Rules & Regulations must be followed by the Council?

As a Local Authority there are regulations which the Council has to follow when procuring supplies, works and services. It is useful for suppliers to be aware of the rules and regulations which govern the way we operate internally.

The following table summarises the rules that must be followed by Council Officers, depending on the value of the purchase or contract:

Value	Process	Advertising
£10,000 to £175,000	The Council's internal rules apply. 3 written quotations to be sought.	No requirement to advertise, but if it is advertised and the opportunity is >£25,000 this must be advertised via the Portal and Central Digital Platform and the below threshold requirements from the regulations must apply.
£175,001 to UK Threshold	The Council's internal rules apply. These opportunities will often (but not always) be offered via the Portal	If advertised, opportunities over £25k (full contract value) will usually be advertised via the Portal and the Central Digital Platform and below threshold requirements from the regulations must apply.
Above UK threshold for <b>goods and services</b>	The UK Procurement legislation applies in full.	Adverts will be placed on the Central Digital Platform and the Portal <i>unless a framework contract is being used and suppliers on that framework will be invited directly.</i>
Above UK threshold for <b>works</b>	The UK Procurement legislation applies in full.	Adverts will be placed on the Central Digital Platform and the Portal <i>unless a framework contract is being used and suppliers on that framework will be invited directly.</i>
Above UK threshold for light touch services	The UK Procurement legislation applies in regards to the light touch regime (more specifically in respect of advertising and placing contract award notices)	Adverts will be placed on the Central Digital Platform and the Portal <i>unless a framework contract is being used and suppliers on that framework will be invited directly.</i>



# The Procurement Process

## How do I find out about opportunities?

Details of forthcoming contracts are advertised through our procurement 'portal' – <http://www.supplyingthesouthwest.org.uk> - ('the Portal'). The Portal allows suppliers to register to access past, current and future contract information, and submit bids electronically. Suppliers can also keep their profile updated, including the goods and services they offer and supporting documentation. The Council recommends that all suppliers registered on the portal regularly update their details, particularly if key people leave the organisation.

All processes to let contracts over £175,000 would normally be undertaken through the portal (including advertisement). Accordingly, all relevant tender documentation is available to download from here and/or instructions on how to obtain further information will be clearly outlined. Potential suppliers should register on the Portal if they have not already done so. Once registered, suppliers should receive automatic alerts when relevant opportunities are available. Appendix 1 is a guide to registering and basic use of the Supplying the South West procurement portal.

Contracts over £25,000 are also advertised in the Central Digital Platform.

## How do I apply for contracts?

The tender notice (in the Central Digital Platform) and/or the advertisement (on the portal) will provide suppliers with all the required information regarding submitting a bid for a particular contract. Suppliers will need to be registered on the portal and the Central Digital platform in order to bid for a contract. For all opportunities over £25,000 (and for some under this threshold) the tender process should only take place on the portal. No direct communication i.e. paper, email, phone, will be permitted. Therefore, if you wish to supply the Council you must be registered on the Portal.

As part of the procurement process, we are required to ensure compliance with legal regulations regarding supplier eligibility. The council will conduct checks against the Debarment List to ensure compliance with procurement regulations. Here's what will happen if a supplier is identified as excluded or excludable:

- **Excluded Suppliers:** If a supplier is found on the excluded list, it means they have been officially debarred and are not permitted to participate in public procurement. In this case, the supplier is ineligible to submit bids, and their participation will be disqualified immediately.
- **Excludable Suppliers:** If a supplier is flagged as excludable, they have engaged in activities or meet criteria that could lead to exclusion, though they have not been debarred yet. In this case, the council may request further information or clarification from the supplier to assess their eligibility. The supplier may still participate, depending on the outcome of the council's review.

## What information do I need to provide at each stage?

For above UK threshold contracts, the Council is likely to use either the **Open** (one stage) or the **Competitive flexible procedure** (multi-stage). The published tender guidelines for

each opportunity will detail what information is required for that bid and for a multi-stage procedure that would normally involve a pre-qualification stage.

## What is a Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)?

The PSQ helps the Council receive core supplier information (from the central digital platform), additional exclusions and debarment information, and information relating to conditions of participation. It will fulfil a similar role to the Standard Selection Questionnaire used under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR).

## What if I am invited to tender?

Suppliers who wish to bid for an opportunity (or those who have been shortlisted after evaluation of the selection stage) will be invited to download a set of tender documents, which will consist of all or some of the following:

- **Instructions to tenderers** – provides guidance for completing tender documentation and how the tender will be scored and evaluated
- **Specification** – sets out what needs to be achieved and includes policies, procedures and guidelines that need to be followed. Suppliers are expected to tender on the basis of this specification, which will include performance targets or criteria to be met in delivering the services, supplies or works.
- **Pricing Schedule** – the document where you enter all your prices.
- **Terms & Conditions** – defines how the Council will let the contract, the rules suppliers must comply with and the relationship between the Council and the selected suppliers. The Council's standard Terms & Conditions for goods and services can be found on [how to business with us](#).
- **Any additional supporting information** – such as the Council's policies that suppliers are expected to follow.

Tenders must be returned by the date given. The portal will not normally allow you to submit tenders after the deadline. This is because all tender documents must be opened at the same time to ensure a fair process.

As the system is web-based, we advise all suppliers not to leave uploading their submission until just before the deadline, but to upload several hours in advance. The reason is that there might be a large number of suppliers trying to upload their submissions, not only for the tender that you are involved in, but there might also be other tenders with the same closing date and time – this is unavoidable.

Once the deadline for receipt of tender documents (PSQ or ITT) has passed, all documents will be evaluated. This evaluation will be conducted against the evaluation criteria which will have been provided by the Council with the original documentation.

## What are the Council's expectations of suppliers?

The Council needs to ensure that we offer value for money to South Gloucestershire taxpayers. By value for money we mean achieving the optimum balance between quality and cost. We therefore expect excellent performance from suppliers, demonstrated through:

- **Appropriate total cost** - Suppliers should consider the total, whole life costs of supply when putting together their tenders.
- **Quality** - suppliers are expected to provide services, supplies and works to an appropriate standard of quality, to meet the needs set out in the specification. In this respect the Council will expect suppliers to *commit to partnership working and continuous service and quality improvement*
- **Adherence to Council policies and protocols** - we are committed to delivering our services with consideration for a number of issues including sustainability, equalities, data protection and confidentiality, health and safety, and look for suppliers who are committed to helping us achieve our aims in these respects.
- **Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults** - All suppliers of personal care and support services that the Council purchases for its service users must have the necessary safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place and be registered where appropriate with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- **Integrity** - honesty is expected in all dealings between the Council and its suppliers in addition to other relevant parties. In particular it is a criminal offence to give or offer any gift, inducement or reward to a local government official. It is Council policy not to accept inducements, gifts or hospitality. Suppliers should note that they risk being excluded from the procurement process for failing to observe this requirement.
- **Innovation** - suppliers are encouraged to be innovative and suggest new ideas to add value, continuously striving to improve their performance and helping the Council to *develop services and increase capacity to meet the changing needs of the Council's area and its service users*.
- **Relationship between the Council and suppliers** - the Council is committed to developing and maintaining good supplier relationships and suppliers are expected to maintain good communications with the Council throughout the contract.
- **Social Value** – suppliers are expected to support and deliver against the [Council's social value priorities](#) for all applicable contracts.

## How is a contract awarded?

Tender evaluation is carried out in a comprehensive, equitable, auditable and transparent manner. To ensure fairness the evaluation criteria and method will be available with the tender documents when they are issued.

The Council must be sure that in selecting a supplier it is getting value for money and the services will be delivered effectively. Evaluation is therefore based on two key criteria – how the tender proposes to deliver the contract (quality) and the cost of the contract (price). The Council is looking for the best balance of quality and price, not just the lowest price. In most cases additional criteria will also be used in evaluating tenders. Suppliers will be advised what quality/price percentage breakdown will be used in the evaluation in the tender documentation as this varies from contract to contract.

Unless otherwise stated in the tender documentation, contracts are normally awarded to the supplier who is considered to offer the best value for money, having regard to price, quality and best value over the 'whole life' of the contract – often referred to as “most advantageous tender” (MAT), and to be best able to meet the Council's specification.

Evaluation of the most advantageous tender can incorporate a number of factors including:

- ability to meet the specification

- technical merit
- after sales service
- delivery date
- technical back-up
- competence
- policy issues such as safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, equalities and sustainability
- social value

The criteria to be used will be listed in the tender documents, in order of importance. The weightings of the criteria will also be given.

## How else might I be evaluated?

The tender documents may include Method Statements and/or Case Studies, which are used to determine how contractors would manage the service or deal with particular issues. In responding to method statements and case studies applicants are expected to illustrate what methods and procedures they propose to use in undertaking the work, showing initiative and innovation in delivering the service.

At any time during the tender process you might be invited to give a presentation, demonstration or attend an interview as part of your submission. The Council may also conduct site visits to see first-hand how suppliers organise their work. Normally the information gained from such activities is used for moderation of tender scores or for due diligence purposes.

Additionally, the Council will take into account the debarment list when considering the eligibility of suppliers and ensure compliance with conditions of participation as stipulated under the Procurement Act 2023. This approach ensures that suppliers have the necessary legal, financial, and technical capacity to perform the contract effectively, and that excluded or excludable suppliers do not gain an unfair advantage during the procurement process.

## Can I ask for feedback?

Under the UK legislation you are legally entitled to written feedback from the Council and if your tender is unsuccessful you will be given feedback automatically within the assessment summary sent by the relevant procurement team. However, if you would like further explanation as to why you were unsuccessful you can ask for more detailed feedback from the Council. This may include face-to-face meetings or teleconferences.

Within the limits of confidentiality, we can provide suppliers with feedback on which aspects of their submission were strongest and which were weakest, along with advice on improving and developing for the future.

Being unsuccessful in one tender application does not mean you will be unsuccessful in future. You should use the feedback to help you improve for future opportunities.

## How are contracts monitored?

If you have successfully bid for a contract, you will be expected to provide the service in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation and your proposals to carry out the contract. The Council's standard [Terms & Conditions for Contracts and for Purchase Orders](#) (that the supplier will be expected to comply with) are available on the council website.

In order to ensure that we are continually providing value for money services to our community, suppliers working for the Council are regularly monitored to assess their compliance with pre- defined performance criteria. The contract conditions are strictly applied, and explanations sought if a supplier fails to perform to the levels required.

## Where can I find further information?

If you are looking for information regarding a specific contract please use the contact details provided in the advert/contract notice and tendering details either published in the Central Digital platform or via the [South West contracts portal](#).

General information on the tendering process and procurement at the Council can be found on the website or by e-mailing: [procurement@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@southglos.gov.uk).

Should you have any comments or feedback on this guide we would be happy to hear from you as we are always looking to develop the advice, guidance and support we offer to potential suppliers. Please contact us by e-mailing [procurement@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@southglos.gov.uk).

## Appendix 1 – Suppliers' introduction to the portal

### Introduction to supplying the council

The Council's e-tendering system is a web-based portal titled **Supplying the South West** ("the portal"). It has been developed so we can publish our contracts and tendering opportunities alongside other Councils and public sector bodies in the South West.

This portal enables each Local Authority within the South West to advertise all contract opportunities and all awarded contracts on one central portal giving suppliers the ability to view information from all the Councils, and if applicable express their interest in forthcoming opportunities in one central place.

### Why do we use this system?

The Council's own internal rules would normally dictate a full competitive process for all opportunities over £25k (whole life cost). The portal also enables the Council to comply with the UK guidance for contract opportunities over the relevant threshold. However, for best practice and to encourage competition, as many opportunities as possible will be published on the portal no matter the value

For the Council, the portal provides:

- a channel for advertising tenders at no cost and for publishing tender documents
- a facility for conducting the complete tendering process electronically (e-tendering)
- a facility for recording information about the contracts we manage, as required by Council policy

The system also facilitates collaboration between Councils on procurement. It is possible for Officers of different Authorities to collaborate on joint e-tender processes.

It also makes the Council more open and should result in better value contracts being let as more suppliers will be aware of current contracts and their end dates, hopefully resulting in increased competition.

### Benefits to you as a supplier

It is totally free to register your details on the system, and once done will allow you to take part in any tenders, questionnaires or quotations with the organisation(s), receive email alerts when opportunities arise in categories of interest, and to express interest in opportunities electronically. This will result in less time being needed to check the portal for opportunities that are relevant and should ensure that no future opportunities are missed.

The system handles all aspects of the tender process including PSQ's (Procurement Specific Questionnaires'), ITT's (Invitation to Tenders) and RFQ (request for quotation). This includes expressing interest in a contract opportunity, the electronic sending and receiving of documentation, questions and answers throughout the tender process, post tender clarification and various notifications through the process.

You only need to register once to do business with all the Councils. At the point of registration, you can choose to receive updates from all organisations or may select which organisations to receive opportunity alerts from. You are also given the ability to select the product or service categories that you wish to receive updates from, ensuring you only receive information that is relevant to your areas of skills and services.



Once registered you will then be informed automatically of relevant contract opportunities as they are published, based on the organisations and categories that you selected. This is done via an automatic email that is sent to your registered email address, removing the need to check the portal daily.

The Contract Store area of the portal allows suppliers to freely and easily see what contracts have been let by the Councils and details on these contracts. It will direct you to the correct people to get in touch with if you have any questions. You can come to the site and search the contract store, even if you are not registered on the portal.

The Opportunities Store is an area where you can come and see any upcoming tenders that you can potentially get involved with. You can search opportunities without being registered, but if you are registered you will receive automatic notification as described above.

## How do I register?

One registration gives access to all Councils using the portal and will enable you to access a huge number of contracts and tender opportunities.

**Please go to the [Supplying the South West portal](#) to register.**

## Requirements and tips for using the portal

- It is critical that you keep the contact details up to date on your account otherwise you may not receive notification of relevant opportunities e.g. if the named contact has left your business. Therefore, we would suggest using a generic email address that can be accessed by multiple employees, and/or naming several secondary contacts under your account. Delete old account/users.
- All contact and questions must be directed through the portal
- Bids must be received by the deadline. No late bids will be accepted
- All bids must be submitted electronically through the portal. We cannot accept paper or emailed bids

## Questions

For technical queries or guidance on using the portal, there is a link to 'Supplier Frequently Asked Questions'. If after reading the reference guides online you are still unable to resolve your issue about using the system and require support - please contact the Portal's Technical Support by Email: [ProContractSuppliers@proactis.com](mailto:ProContractSuppliers@proactis.com). If the query is of a time sensitive nature they also have an Emergency Contact number which is 0330 0050352.

If the question relates to a specific tender or existing contract then this needs to be answered by the contract owner, details of which can be found within the published opportunity.

## Appendix 2 – Getting paid

**When performing work for the Council, the Council operates a No PO, No Pay policy, you will not be able to submit an invoice unless you have been issued a Purchase Order.**

It is the council's policy that all procurement of goods and services must have an official order. The official order number must be on all Supplier Invoices. Where there is no order number on the invoice, accounts payable will return the invoice to the supplier which may delay payment.

### Receipt of Invoices

Electronic invoices should be in pdf format only and sent to [sgcinvoices@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:sgcinvoices@southglos.gov.uk) for processing.

## What information do I need to supply on an invoice?

To ensure the council can make accurate and timely payment to you, the following key information needs to be provided on the invoice:

- Your full address and VAT number
- The council's address
- A unique invoice/identification number (per invoice)
- Date of invoice
- The Purchase order number
- Clear description of goods or services being invoiced
- CIS Net Payees must show the labour/material split

## Payment terms

The Councils standard payment terms are 30 days from RECEIPT of a valid invoice to the official submission point, as per the instruction displayed on your Purchase Order, unless payment terms held in your signed contract are different.

## Payment of invoices

The council's policy is to make all payments to suppliers by BACS transfer.

## Payment contact details

Queries concerning payment of an invoice please contact Accounts Payable:  
[exchequer@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:exchequer@southglos.gov.uk)

South Gloucestershire Council  
Department for Resource & Business Change  
Accounts Payable  
PO BOX 1953  
Bristol  
BS37 0DE