Background

The City of Bristol was recently awarded the European Green Capital Award 2015 for allocating €800m towards transport improvements, energy efficiency and renewable energy, for consistently reducing carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions since 2005 and for doubling the number of cyclists between 2001 and 2011. The award also recognised Bristol's growing green economy and ambition to become a centre of low carbon industry.

Bristol City's sustainable procurement strategy was adopted in 2009. It includes training, the development of relevant criteria, clauses and targets, monitoring SPP and market development. Every new purchase that requires a contract undergoes a sustainability assessment and input from the environment team, including recommended GPP criteria.

The Council has had emissions reduction targets for a number of years, but in 2011 a new target for the whole city was adopted to reduce CO₂e by 40% by 2020, from the baseline year 2005.

Criteria used

On the first page of the specification, the aims of Bristol by 2015 (as relevant to the contract) were set out, which included being a beacon authority delivering locally accountable 'Streetscene' services including street cleansing, litter picking, graffiti removal, litter bin emptying, and recovery of fly tipping. Aims also included working with partners to achieve excellence, being a recognised leader in waste collection and recycling, and being Britain's cleanest City.

Selection Criteria: A pre-qualifications phase allowed the selection of candidates according to the appropriateness of their Environmental Management System (EMS). This was necessary due to the subsequent requirements of the Environment Agency.

Desired Outcomes: Due to the fact that a competitive dialogue process was carried out, 'desired outcomes' were used as opposed to conformance-based technical specifications. These included:

- Reduce the 'carbon footprint' associated with the service in line with the agreed 2020 target for Bristol,
- Increase waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, towards an aim of zero waste,
- Deliver significant reductions of untreated waste sent to landfill,
- Maxmise the efficient recovery of resources i.e. recyclates and energy from residual waste,
- Tackle and reduce the incidents of environmental crime (e.g. by storing and collecting evidence from 'fly tipping'),
- Enhance community understanding of sustainable waste management.

Award criteria: Bidders were judged on the bids they put together following the competitive dialogue procedure and were evaluated according to factors including a carbon management plan indicating how they would achieve reduction targets. 4% of marks were allocated to environment and sustainability aspects including the carbon footprint of the service, quality of EMSs and the environmental impacts of the winter maintenance service. Effective operational management of the following aspects were also evaluated; waste collection (13%); street cleansing (12%); winter maintenance (4%) and waste transfer and processing (2%). A demonstration of how the bidder would meet performance targets for waste collection (8%) and street cleansing (5%) was also scored.

Contract performance clauses: The share of CO₂e emissions savings from this service contract, which would contribute to the overarching municipal target, was defined. In order to do this, the City target of a 40% reduction in CO₂e emissions by 2020 (baseline 2005) was adjusted on a pro rata basis to fit the length of the service contract (2011 – 2017). Baseline emissions data from the previous contractor (2009/2010) were used to help calculate tonnes of CO₂e saved. Calculations were also carried out on the difference in efficiency of available vehicles
Lessons learned

• Transportation-based service contracts should only be set up/extended for periods equivalent to the length of the reasonable economic lifespan of the vehicle fleet.

• The size of the contract and the competitive dialogue procedure used twice the amount of time usually spent on a contract awarded under the open procedure. However, the final evaluation was found to be no more complex than an average tender.

• Originally, both incentive and penalty clauses were planned but this was not possible in the end, due to restrictive budgets. A difficulty with the penalty clause system was that the CO$_2$e reduction target could not be made too challenging, because a higher risk of supplier failure would imply price increases.

• It was useful to have monitored CO$_2$e emissions in the past and to have set overarching Council targets in order to both justify collecting emissions data from suppliers and to help calculate reduction requirements as part of service contracts. Being clear about data requirements and asking providers about the amount of fuel used, rather than about miles covered in a generic vehicle type, resulted in more accurate data when calculating fleet emissions.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for Transport and the corresponding Background Report, & the Clean Vehicle Portal
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