

2025

Sustainable Procurement POLICY



MARLOW
TOWN COUNCIL



Sustainable Procurement Policy

Adopted: 2025

Review date: 2026

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Marlow Town Council's commitment to sustainable procurement by embedding the principles of environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic resilience into all purchasing decisions. This is in addition to the Council's Financial Regulations Policy. Our aim is to procure goods and services that not only meet our operational needs but also contribute positively to our community, town and planet.

Marlow Town Council will consider how the services that it commissions might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. Before commissioning services, the ways that the contracts can be of the most benefit to wider society, will be considered. This includes thinking more broadly, over longer periods of time and about how the demands on other services might be lowered. This might also include working better and with more partners, such as police and health services.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all purchasing activities carried out by or on behalf of Marlow Town Council, whether paid for or gratis.

3. Guiding principles: The three pillars of sustainability

a) Environmental sustainability

We will seek to reduce environmental harm by:

- Preferring energy-efficient, low-carbon, low-waste, repairable and recyclable products. This can include products and services that are produced using green or renewable energy, or those that are made using materials that are sourced from sustainable sources.
- Avoiding hazardous materials and minimising pollution throughout the supply chain. This includes preferring (certified) organic products wherever available.

- Avoid products that are, or are reasonably suspected to be, linked to illegal deforestation. Any wood or paper products procured need to be FSC certified.
- Preferring suppliers, that adopt sustainable practices, such as carbon reporting, renewable energy use, or certified green products.
- Preferring suppliers, that use locally sourced or produced products.
- Preferring suppliers, that minimise travel required in order to fulfil or deliver the product or service.

b) Social sustainability

We commit to fostering equity and well-being by:

- Selecting suppliers that uphold fair labour practices, promote diversity, and adhere to health and safety practices, and human rights standards.
- Supporting inclusive procurement by engaging with ethnic minority-owned, women-led, and social enterprises and encouraging them to participate in the Council's procurement process.
- Prioritising procuring safe and ethically produced goods and services, especially in high-risk categories (e.g., textiles, electronics). This includes products recognised by a credible certification scheme (e.g. Fair Trade¹, Rainforest Alliance², BCorp³).

c) Economic sustainability

We support long-term economic resilience by:

- Considering the total cost of ownership, including operational efficiency, repairability and product lifespan.
- Supporting the regional economy by selecting suppliers that are, in order of preference,
 - (1) local to the Marlow community,

¹ <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

² <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>

³ <https://bcorporation.uk/>

- (2) local to Buckinghamshire,
- (3) located in the UK,
- (4) located internationally.

This may require tailoring contracts to maximise local benefit.

4. Implementation

To embed sustainability into procurement, we will:

- Incorporate the social and sustainability considerations outlined above in tenders, RFQs, and supplier evaluations.
- Train relevant officers on sustainable procurement principles.
- Establish preferred suppliers that meet our sustainability expectations as per this policy and our Environment Policy.
- Encourage dialogue with suppliers to promote shared sustainability goals.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- **Town Clerk:** Ensure officers' awareness and compliance with this policy.
- **Contract Manager or delegated officer:** Apply sustainability criteria in procurement processes.
- **All Officers:** Promote resource efficiency and suggest sustainable alternatives when feasible.

6. Monitoring & review

Marlow Town Council will:

- Monitor purchasing activities for alignment with sustainability commitments as per this policy and the Environment Policy.
- Review and update this policy as required to reflect emerging best practices and lessons learned.

7. Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted in cases where sustainable options are unavailable or disproportionately costly. All exceptions must be justified, documented (e.g. via email), and approved by the Town Clerk / Deputy Clerk.