

Briefing Note

4 October 2018

‘Smart, Sustainable Procurement’ – workshop and outputs proposal

Background

Through our Sustainable Smart Cities taskforce it has been agreed that a workshop should be arranged, bringing together key stakeholders, to discuss procurement barriers to the greater uptake of environmentally-focused smart solutions. Depending on the nature of the discussion, this could then see a number of possible outcomes:

- A policy report setting out challenges, opportunities and recommendations.
- A pragmatic toolkit for use by local authorities on how to support smart (environmental) innovation through procurement processes. This could include a sample procurement document and response. The idea is that it would be something tangible.
- A combination of both.

Timeline

Workshop to take place this year, with the 29th November being the currently preferred date (though this is subject to change). Subsequent outputs will be delivered in Q1 2019.

These outputs will be launched in tandem with a new procurement microsite on our website, www.SustainableSmartCities.org.

Venue

TBC, but AECOM or Bird & Bird would be appropriate (if in London). Dial in option will be available, with video conference also if possible to make it more interactive/accessible.

What questions do we want answered at the workshop?

The agenda will be discussed with a select group of interested taskforce members and ADEPT to ensure relevance, with a paper being tabled to all attendees in advance so that they can come prepared.

This will set out the challenges specific to procuring environmentally-focused smart technologies to set the parameters of the discussion.

There is also the possibility of putting together a survey for participants in advance with the results presented at the meeting as a way of encouraging engagement with the topic.

Following the workshop, depending on output, more in depth discussions or interviews can take place with individual LAs.

Example workshop agenda items/discussion points include:

- Environmental drivers at national and local levels – policy, regulation, targets etc – and how do these manifest themselves formally in procurement practices, if at all?
- Are procurement practices or environmental targets consistent across local authorities? Is this a problem?
- Do current procurement practices stifle innovation? If so, how?
- What would encourage Local Authorities to take ‘risks’ on newer innovations which may not have an established track record but have the potential to provide more effective environmental or public good outcomes?
- What can the industry do to better ‘educate’ local authorities on the changing nature of available environmental technologies? Would neutral pre-procurement discussions on required outcomes be helpful, for example?
- Is challenge-based procurement – procuring an outcome rather than a specific technology – a helpful approach in an environmental context?
- Without dominating the discussion, does Brexit and the potential impact on procurement rules have a positive, negative or neutral effect?
- Is there any international best practice from which we can learn?

Invites/Attendees

Tailored invitations to ensure right mix of attendees, at an appropriate level.

To keep the discussion focused and manageable, attendance should be limited to approximately 25-30 attendees max – preferably with 50/50 split between public and private sector.