Welcome to the second edition of sustainABLE, NEUPC's biannual responsible procurement newsletter. With contributions from the NEUPC team, our members and framework suppliers, we hope that you find the information, ideas and resources useful in your own sustainability efforts.

In this edition, we share our new Responsible Procurement and Social Value Policy, and the 4 key themes which will be the focus of our Responsible Procurement actions and initiatives for the forthcoming year.

Inside, we discuss the impact of the COVID19 pandemic – from disposable PPE to how we can best adapt to the new normal of remote working. We also celebrate the success of our members around their efforts in creating sustainable procurement practices.

You can use the interactive contents page below to jump straight to the articles of most interest to you. Please do share this publication with your colleagues and as always, we welcome your feedback.

The Environmental Impact of Disposable PPE

The big story over the last 6 months, (apart from Brexit), is the dramatic increase in use of disposable PPE linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, and with it the growing realisation of the immense environmental impact. Whilst medical grade PPE is usually incinerated for infection control purposes, the amount of single use PPE used for non-medical purposes or personal Covid protection purposes has grown enormously. Conservationists and wildlife experts have become increasingly concerned at the amount of disposable PPE being thrown away without due care, which will become a long-term environmental issue unless action is taken now.

The first evidence of the issue was noted back in March 2020 by Hong Kong-based environmental NGO OceansAsia who found heaps of discarded single-use masks washed up on a 100-metre stretch of beach in the Soko Islands off the coast of Lantau Island, Hong Kong. Hong Kong has a total population in the region of 7 million who clearly could generate substantial amounts of PPE waste – but looking at it from a UK context, with an adult population of just over 53 million, if 50% are using a single-use mask on a daily basis, that's 185 million masks a week being discarded and/or going into landfill.

The adverse environmental impact of the waste is far-reaching. As masks are often made of plastics such as polypropylene, if they end up in the ocean, they have a potential lifespan of 450 years so it's a serious long-term impact on an ocean's eco-system and health.

So how can purchasing consortia and university procurement professionals contribute to the resolution of this problem?

Talk to Suppliers and your internal stakeholders about options such as:

- Reusable masks and laundry services
- Products designed for easier recycling
- Plant based compostable alternatives
- Recycle bins for used non-medical PPE

Compostable products should be EN 13432 certified - i.e. products are required to disintegrate after 12 weeks and completely biodegrade after six months. Sustainable Sidekicks give some helpful guidance as to the questions to ask when you consider a new plant-based or biodegradable product:

- Is the recycling or composting process practically available in the location this item will end up?
- Can my waste contractor process it in the suggested way?
- Does the manufacturer offer a take-back scheme?
- Will it actually end up in general waste (which means it is probably going for waste-to-energy incineration)?
- If it becomes litter, can it actually degrade? (if something can hold a fizzy drink in it, it is unlikely to dissolve when it lands on a grass field)
In August 2020, NEUPC was able to provide a file of evidence to an external evaluator (NETpositive Futures), to demonstrate that our responsible procurement processes and activities could be mapped effectively against ISO20400:2017 Guidance for Sustainable Procurement. We received the following report:

"Against the ISO20400 Guidance NEUPC has demonstrated a clear commitment and excellent practice on sustainable procurement.

EVIDENCE OF LEADERSHIP 70.9%
SOME EVIDENCE 3.6%
SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE 25.5%
NO EVIDENCE 0%"

NEUPC will take forward a simple action plan to ensure continuous improvement on this excellent position.

Flexible Framework – Level 5

It is also clear that since NEUPC achieved Level 4 of the Flexible Framework in 2017 significant progress has been made on systems and processes as well as clear leadership, which indicates that NEUPC is clearly operating at Level 5 of the Flexible Framework." - Jimmy Brannigan

NEUPC UPDATES

ISO20400
Mapping Success

In late 2019/2020 NEUPC undertook a survey with members to review the Social Value TOMs, widely used by Local Authorities and some Government departments and consider which social value measurements would be appropriate for our Frameworks. We used this feedback as well as the Government's consultation paper on social value to develop a new Responsible Procurement and Social Value Policy which we circulated to the NEUPC RPG and PSG groups for feedback before finalizing and implementing with our Team from 1st October 2020.

Incorporating Greater Social Value into Procurement

The Social Value Act (2012) places responsibilities on contracting authorities in the Public Sector to consider economic, social and environmental well-being prior to designing procurement exercises. Whilst it is not mandatory for NEUPC and our member universities to incorporate it into our tenders, with a collaborative spend of over £400m in 2018/19, it is widely acknowledged that we can contribute positively to the delivery of greater equality and social inclusion as well as broader sustainability goals.

The Objectives of Our New Policy Are:

Minimise environmental and ethical risks and drive performance through NEUPC supply chains.

Maximise the opportunities for leveraging the value of collaborative procurement to bring about social and economic benefits to communities.

Embed responsible procurement and social value consideration at all stages of the procurement lifecycle.

Ensure our members receive best value by supporting and guiding responsible procurement activities.

Establish NEUPC as a sector leader in responsible procurement practice.

Responsible Procurement 4 Key Themes

We now have 4 key themes as our focus for responsible procurement and as part of the policy, we have included a guidance document for Category Managers which may also be of use to members.

SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT
DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE SUPPLY CHAINS
ENVIRONMENT
SAFE SUPPLY CHAINS

You can expect to hear about these key themes in our sourcing strategies and will be the focus of our Responsible Procurement actions and initiatives for the forthcoming year.

Read our new Responsible Procurement and Social Value Policy Here
LED Retrofit Project
Newcastle University

Appointed via the NEUPC Electrical Works for the NES framework, Project Facilities Management Limited are delivering a 3-year, £2.4m campus wide LED lighting upgrade, part funded by Salix at Newcastle University. This involves surveying the buildings, designing and installing an approved LED lighting scheme which meets the needs and requirements of the building and its end users.

The scheme is a huge step towards meeting the University's carbon targets as well as creating large financial savings for the University. Converting to LED lighting has a positive sustainability impact through the reduction of energy consumption. LED bulbs can be up to 80% more energy efficient than conventional bulbs, converting 95% of their energy into light with only 5% being wasted as heat.

Sam Boot, Energy & Carbon Manager at Newcastle University stated “Our three year, £2.4m LED retrofit scheme has proven extremely successful and on completion will lower the electricity demand of our estate by approximately 2.5GWh per annum, rendering circa. 700tCO2e savings each year. Spanning across 23 of our central campus buildings and three satellite sites; the works cover a wide variety of building and lighting types, which meets the needs and requirements of the building and its end users.

In a similar capital development project for the Sir William Henry Bragg Building, architects were asked to measure and cost-effective also factors in environmental sustainability through every stage.

Established in 1996, Project Facilities Management Limited has been delivering quality electrical contracting projects for almost 25 years. A PAS99: 2012 accredited company with core values based around outstanding health and safety standards, quality management and environmental management allow the business to provide a high quality, safety conscious, service that whilst cost effective also factors in environmental sustainability through every stage.

This collaborative approach is guiding the University on their journey towards becoming net-zero by 2030. By using the latest innovations in the industry and establishing Living Lab research opportunities, they are increasing their understanding of reducing embodied carbon emissions in construction as well as saving hundreds of tonnes of CO2e.
Achieving the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark

In February 2020, NEUPC was the first HE consortia to achieve the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark in recognition of our commitment to ethical procurement and ensuring that our procurement staff undertake mandatory annual e-learning and test to ensure currency of knowledge. Since then, LUPC and the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol and the West of England have all followed suit, so how does it benefit a university and how do you get it?

The CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark is a way for a university that commits to ethical procurement to be recognised by CIPS and – because organisations that hold the Mark are listed on a publicly accessible register – by the wider community. It shows that they have been able to demonstrate the value they place on ethical procurement and gives suppliers, customers, employees and other stakeholders confidence that they are dealing with an organisation that is committed to ensuring that their staff are trained in ethical procurement and that they have adopted ethical values in how they source and manage suppliers. For the University, the Mark contributes to enhancement of your brand and is a sign that you have taken steps to safeguard your organisation against procurement and supply chain malpractice and supply chain risk.

In order to obtain the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark institutions should ensure that all staff responsible for supplier selection decisions or supplier relationship management are trained in ethical procurement and that there is a consistent understanding of procurement ethics across the business. Those wishing to achieve the CIPS Corporate Ethical Procurement and Supply Mark must ensure that 100% of staff who have responsibility for supplier selection decisions or supplier relationship management have, within the last 12 months, completed the CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply E-learning course and successfully passed the accompanying test. This test is free to all CIPS members or for a small fee of £50 for non-members and also counts towards members achieving Chartered MCIPS status (30 hours annual CPD also required). The University is required to confirm that they have adopted the CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics or ensured their own corporate code includes all the key principles within the CIPS Code as well as signing the Statement of Commitment which confirms an organisation’s intent to procure ethically and to take proactive steps to eradicate malpractice from its supply chain. There is no charge by CIPS for awarding this certification, and the mark is renewed annually upon successful completion of the CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply E-learning course and completion of the Statement of Commitment. Once reviewed and awarded by CIPS, organisations will be entitled to display the CIPS Corporate Ethical Procurement and Supply Mark on their literature and website and their name published on the CIPS Corporate Ethics Register on the CIPS website.

We're proud of our team for their dedication to ethical procurement and look forward to hearing about more of our members also achieving the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark.

University of Birmingham Sustainable Success

Congratulations to our members at the University of Birmingham who have been recognised for the success of their institution-wide Sustainability Review. Not only were they finalists at the National GO awards, receiving a Highly Commended award in the ‘Best Environmental Impact’ category, but they also won “Best Sustainability Project of the Year” at the recent CIPS Excellence in Procurement Awards 2020.

Sustainability has become essential for modern institutions which are serious about fighting climate change. As such, the University of Birmingham carried out a review on ways to best integrate sustainability throughout every aspect of its operations. This covered business processes, recruitment, student engagement, and procurement. A particular focus on promoting sustainability within the university’s supply chain has resulted in more than 850 suppliers producing sustainability action plans. University CO2 reduction measures include cutting traffic on campus, replacing older fleet vehicles, and introducing an ultra-low emission vehicles scheme for staff, as well as more efficient printing practices. The university’s first apprenticeship contracts saw 70 hired across various departments. Within the Procurement Maturity Assessment, the university’s Corporate and Social Responsibility scores increased from 27% in 2013-2014 to 87% in 2017-2018, helping obtain an overall rating of 80% and achieve Superior PMA status. The university is continually looking for ways to further improve sustainability practices.

The team were praised for their entry which was overall a good example of complex global procurement used to integrate contracts across very different cultures with board-level visibility and impact. One of the judges, Melinda Johnson (Commercial Director, Department of Health and Social Care) said that the entry “stood out because of the whole organisation approach and a commitment to sustainability as a strategic theme in running the university with evident impact across the sector.”
Remote Working

The New Normal

Remote working has been a major change for all of us in 2020 and brings both benefits and challenges for employers and employees. In this article, we look at good practice for your comfort and environment when working and also some tips for staying mentally fit and connected to your colleagues.

Avoiding Eyestrain and Physical Discomfort

20-20-20
Every 20 minutes
Look 20 feet away for 20 seconds
Give your eyes a break regularly using the 20-20-20 rule.

Move Regularly
Try to get up from your chair 2-3 times an hour for 30-60 seconds and having a comfort break every 2 hours for 5-10 minutes. Consider standing up when on the phone. Desk exercise and dynamic stretches will also help and the NHS has some useful suggestions.

Illuminate
Consider adding a lamp to your desk to increase light levels to illuminate documents especially as we move to the dark days of winter.

21°C – 24°C
Have your work area at a comfortable temperature between 21 and 24 degrees and ventilate from time to time to let in fresh air.

Framework Suppliers Supporting Home-working

Suppliers from several frameworks available to NEUPC members are offering bespoke delivery services to home addresses without additional charges. This is something offered this year as a value added service due to pressures and impacts on our businesses linked to COVID 19 and the need to have equipment and supplies sent directly to homes of HE staff currently working from home.

- Suppliers to the NDNA agreement (Notebooks and Desktops) have all confirmed that they can support delivery to residential addresses without additional charge. It's interesting that this framework reports year-on-year desktop sales to end 31 July 2020 are down 31.0%, whilst notebook sales for the same period are up 33.4%.
- Home delivery is also available on the ITRAP framework for IT related accessories and parts.
- On the Office, Computer and Library Supplies Framework, several firms have not implemented charges for their home delivery option. Banner are offering a home delivery service via UPS and that orders should be of a value of £25 or over to cover the additional delivery costs.
- The furniture framework suppliers are also providing products for home delivery. Considering the size of domestic front doors, package sizes have been condensed and products promoted for home delivery are considered suitable for self-assembly. The cost of couriers is generally covered on a ‘pass through’ basis, and NEUPC is pleased to report that in overcoming these challenges, suppliers are not increasing product price.

Staying Mentally Fit and Connected

Try to set up and stick to a routine for starting work, taking a lunchbreak and cut-off time at the end of the day. It's important to set boundaries to protect your personal time and home-life.

Try to take some exercise regularly outside of the home, even if it's just a walk on your lunch break or a visit to the supermarket.

Remember you can always pick up the phone to chat with colleagues rather than sticking to email – or even better have a video call to get the full benefit of communication.

Don't be shy – we're all in this situation together so it's beneficial to be on-screen during virtual meetings. You'll feel better if you've had an input to discussions and seeing people on video.

If you're not the only one at home, set ground rules with those you live with to minimise disturbances during worktime. You can use music and/or headphones if it helps concentration and reduce background noise.

Arrange a virtual social meet with colleagues once a week or a fortnight over a coffee to catch up on what everyone is doing and have a non-work chat. Consider quizzes, fund-raising, competitions or even a fantasy football league for a bit of fun and common ground.

Ensure you get enough sleep and have time to wind down before bed away from your workspace. There are many well-being apps to support mental resilience and relaxation such as Headspace or Moodfit.

Be kind to yourself, it's a different way of working and you may have to fit around childcare or other commitments. Talk to your manager if you're struggling or anxious.

If you can't achieve this, consider items such as monitor stands or lumbar supports or asking whether you can relocate your office equipment from work. Remember that many people get into bad posture habits, so sometimes following the guidance can feel uncomfortable and takes practise. The HSE has some useful guidance including a self-assessment checklist.
Engaging Students in Procurement at Leeds Beckett

By Sarah Coll – Head of Procurement

One of our initiatives to include social value in procurement at Leeds Beckett University is to engage more with our academic colleagues. During 2018/19 the Head of Procurement and the Procurement Manager met with Deans and their leadership teams across all 14 Schools (62 staff in total). Following this we were invited to deliver lectures on procurement and sustainability to our students. In 2018 The IT Procurement Manager delivered a guest lecture on pragmatic procurement to 30 undergraduate Events Management students and the Head of Procurement delivered a lecture on sustainable procurement to 20 post graduate Business School students (even managing to promote NEUPC with the help of goody bags - left over from the NEUPC annual conference so a great way to reuse and reduce waste!). We were invited back in Dec 2019, this time to deliver sustainable procurement including modern slavery to over 400 undergraduate Business School students, even setting them a modern slavery project as part of their coursework. Although delivering further lectures may be on hold for us at the moment we’re still managing to engage with our academic community - providing work experience for a student and participating in our recently formed Sustainability Advisory Group.

NEUPC NE5’s Latest Initiative: “Building Better Futures”

In 2019 we held a successful event for schools at Newcastle University, as a part of the NE5 engagement workshop group. COVID has delayed the roll out of that event across the rest of the region but it hasn’t stopped the group from developing its next initiative. To further increase awareness and encourage young people to consider a career in the Built Environment, “Building Better Futures” has been created.

Building Better Futures is a series of short videos that offer an insight into a wide range of professions and careers in the Built Environment Industry. The videos combine animation with real life interviews to highlight the opportunities available and to encourage young people to consider a career in this industry, and in particular, to encourage more women into the sector.

Several factors encouraged the group to develop this project, including:

- **Male Dominated Industry**
  Construction is still a male dominated industry.
- **Average Pay Gap Stands At**
  Even at apprentice level, the sector attracts few women.
- **Reach Out To Young People**
  The North East has excellent primary results in terms of attainment and aspiration but less so in secondary schools. This highlights the need to reach out to young people both before and after that transition period.

Backed and funded by NEUPC and the Universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside, and with the animation being created by TUCan (an innovative in-house digital production studio, based at Teesside University), Hollie Statham (Design Manager at Bowmer & Kirkland) and Jonathan Hunter (Partner at GSS Architecture) have done a fantastic job (especially considering the current situation) in designing, creating and delivering this piece of work.

Building Better Futures is set around the story of the Newcastle Helix development and focuses on the various roles that women have played across a range of careers in construction, in order to make the Helix a reality.

The videos will offer an introduction/overview of a range of professions and will be followed up with further information and guidance, should any of the young people want to investigate a particular career further.

**NEUPC NE5**

**KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE BUILDING BETTER FUTURES CAMPAIGN**

**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER**

@NEUPC_NES

**NE5’S Latest Initiative: “Building Better Futures”**

In 2019 we held a successful event for schools at Newcastle University, as a part of the NE5 engagement workshop group. COVID has delayed the roll out of that event across the rest of the region but it hasn’t stopped the group from developing its next initiative. To further increase awareness and encourage young people to consider a career in the Built Environment, “Building Better Futures” has been created.

Building Better Futures is a series of short videos that offer an insight into a wide range of professions and careers in the Built Environment Industry. The videos combine animation with real life interviews to highlight the opportunities available and to encourage young people to consider a career in this industry, and in particular, to encourage more women into the sector.

Several factors encouraged the group to develop this project, including:

- **Male Dominated Industry**
  Construction is still a male dominated industry.
- **Average Pay Gap Stands At**
  Even at apprentice level, the sector attracts few women.
- **Reach Out To Young People**
  The North East has excellent primary results in terms of attainment and aspiration but less so in secondary schools. This highlights the need to reach out to young people both before and after that transition period.

Backed and funded by NEUPC and the Universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside, and with the animation being created by TUCan (an innovative in-house digital production studio, based at Teesside University), Hollie Statham (Design Manager at Bowmer & Kirkland) and Jonathan Hunter (Partner at GSS Architecture) have done a fantastic job (especially considering the current situation) in designing, creating and delivering this piece of work.

Building Better Futures is set around the story of the Newcastle Helix development and focuses on the various roles that women have played across a range of careers in construction, in order to make the Helix a reality.

The videos will offer an introduction/overview of a range of professions and will be followed up with further information and guidance, should any of the young people want to investigate a particular career further.

**NEUPC NE5**

**KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE BUILDING BETTER FUTURES CAMPAIGN**

**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER**

@NEUPC_NES
NETpositive Futures has been working hard to ensure HE users are aware and involved in the process of updating both content of the supplier tool and the associated dashboard functionality.

Refreshing the tool content will support suppliers to comprehensively respond to the environmental, social, and economic challenges we are becoming more aware of. These are increasingly urgent, and they are also evolving in terms of profile and priority.

Updating the dashboard functionality will allow universities to scrutinise the sustainability journey of suppliers more effectively. This will include facilitating a greater level of challenge and support as well as reporting on a range of key issues.

Developers are working through the technical detail and when the new dashboard is at Beta stage we will be sharing this with all 46 users of the tool for further comment and input.

**Tool Content**

- The tool content has been updated to include:
  - Greater emphasis on social value and social justice
  - Consideration of community contribution and social innovation
  - A focus on decarbonisation in the context of commitments
  - Updated detail in relation to cyber security, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
  - Refinement of existing Modern Slavery content to increase challenge and scrutiny, especially in relation to public reporting

- In addition, we have mapped content against the Themes Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reflect the higher priority being given by these holistic approaches.

**Dashboard Functionality**

We have consulted extensively on the requirements of procurement professionals accessing and using the data associated with suppliers engaging with the tool.

We have focused on the following areas: supplier management and data quality, and reporting and data visualisation. The updated dashboard will include the ability for users to:

- Add or remove suppliers
- Create 'favourite' dashboards tailored to their preferences (using filters such as favourite companies)
- View data (issues and actions) through themes (SDGs, Social Value, Modern Slavery)
- Group data by supplier types and apply this to the issues and actions
- More easily download datasets, action plans etc
- Generate info-graphics for reporting purposes

**Support from NETPositive Futures**

To coincide with the launch of the new content and dashboard, NETpositive Futures will be refreshing the associated support package we provide (for users and suppliers).

This will deliver 3 main objectives:

- To improve the quality of the supplier action plans
- To increase the support we offer to procurement users to extract and interpret the data for reporting purposes
- To use the national data set (over 6000 suppliers) to identify critical category issues and progress in key areas to provide insights to universities using the tool.

More details will be provided closer to re-launch however, we are committed to taking a more active role in engaging suppliers, increasing the quality of the action plans, and using the broader dataset to benefit of all users. This will continue to deepen engagement and improve the quality of supplier responses across the HE supply base.

The HE sector, through the 46 university users of the tool, has made a significant contribution to supporting suppliers to develop sustainability action plans. Suppliers have committed to over 70,000 sustainability actions and demonstrated progress towards 26,000 of these.

We are committed to stimulating deeper and broader engagement, demonstrating continuous progress and helping suppliers to take positive action. We will also continue to celebrate the positive impact of the tool users and the suppliers.
Did you know that the Government has been consulting on the Modern Slavery Act 2015 over the summer and published its response on 22nd September 2020? The response sets out the government's next steps to strengthen section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

**So what might that mean?**

In Annex D of the response, the government lays out the following commitments:

- The Government will legislate to ensure the public sector is covered by the MSA
- Statements will be required to be published on a Government run reporting database designed by the Home Office and currently in development. There is no current UK government database for Modern Slavery Statements, however a charity (Business and Human Rights Resource Centre) does publish an online Modern Slavery Registry.
- They will set a single reporting deadline date, rather than it being linked to individual organisations year end
- They will set up an Enforcement body and further consider enforcement methods
- They will mandate key sections and approvals on future statements
- They will retain the £36 million reporting threshold and focus on improving compliance at this threshold

Further guidance and information should follow over the next few months.