

Supplier Adoption and Economic Development (Strand 5)

Case Study: Bristol's Kick-start Model for Supplier Adoption

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Bristol's Kick-start Model for Supplier Adoption

This paper provides a detailed analysis of the Kick-start model implemented by Bristol City Council, together with a summary of the issues expressed by suppliers in the run-up to the scheme. A number of these companies' profiles and views are provided as they give a useful insight into the way that suppliers were reacting, even before the scheme began.

Background

Bristol City Council is a pathfinder authority. The Council is committed to developing e-procurement as a major tool in its procurement strategy, believing that the application of e-procurement will achieve efficiency savings. This will occur not only with the actual costs of supplies or services but will also impact on the current transaction and process costs.

Their procurement initiative is driven by the Finance Department, which employs a dedicated team of procurement officers. E-procurement is considered to be a mechanism to achieve additional efficiency savings above and beyond those resulting from their introduction of good procurement practice.

www.bristol-city.gov.uk

The authority has been motivated to move towards e-procurement for a number of reasons, these include:

- The need to comply with the Government's target for local authorities to be trading online by 2005
- The opportunity to achieve targets for prompt payment
- The opportunity to achieve improved procurement practice, (in 2002/3 they spent £324M over 19,000 suppliers)
- The opportunity to have a positive impact on economic development by providing Bristol businesses with better opportunities
- The opportunity to achieve 'joined up' public sector trading through partnership activities with other organisations.

The Council has selected @UK plc as the provider of its e-procurement marketplace infrastructure. This marketplace includes the offer to suppliers of a range of low cost, template driven websites that can be maintained and updated by the company itself, providing catalogue or service description formats, and giving full, secure integration with both the Council and the suppliers' back-office functions.

www.uk-plc.net

As part of its procurement initiative, the Council has conducted a comprehensive analysis of its supplier base. Using this data, it invited a number of key suppliers to attend an introductory briefing session in May 2003, at which its moves towards e-procurement were outlined. Council officers and representatives of @UK plc, Sage; The Consortium and the Business Link (Business West) gave presentations. Suppliers were able both to ask questions from the floor and to address specific issues with the various speakers over a buffet lunch.

Council officers presented a clear message that they would be pursuing the e-procurement agenda and that companies that were unwilling or unable to take part could run the risk of losing business.

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"There's no doubt that we are going down this road. The potential benefits in terms of savings, rapid payments, good quality management information and process efficiency are just too important. Our suppliers need to know this as soon as possible so that they can get themselves ready", says Russell Darling of Bristol City Council.

As a result of the May event, over 90% of the audience expressed their willingness to take part in the pilot stage of the e-procurement initiative. These companies are being contacted by Business West to determine their development requirements and the current experience is that all companies sign-up as a result.

After this event, the Council established a 'Kick Start' team of 3 staff to focus on dealing with priority companies. This team makes the initial contact with suppliers that have been identified through the supplier analysis and prioritisation process,. They explain the changes that will be made by the Council as a result of the introduction of e-Procurement and outline how the supplier can benefit from becoming involved and the process through which they can do so. The team will issue invitations to awareness road-show events, for appropriate companies, and carries out the bookings for these events. The team provides the point of liaison with the IT@work project and introduces the companies to @UK plc when appropriate.

IT@work is a project supported by the European Social Fund, in which Business West is a lead partner. The project aims to assist SMEs to understand and meet their ICT requirements. In addition it:

- Provides young people with an opportunity to develop work-based skills
- Offers SMEs a chance to utilise the ICT skills of young people
- Enables employees to benefit by taking advantage of subsidised ICT training and development – to benefit both themselves and the business within which they work

The project provides a service for all SMEs, advertising widely in the local press and through business networks. However a major part of the project is geared towards providing assistance for those SMEs that require support to be able to participate in Bristol's e-procurement activity. It is anticipated that some companies that do not currently trade with the public sector may become capable of doing so electronically, as a result of their participation in the Bristol e-business project.

IT@work involves a broad partnership of Business West, **learndirect** and the Connexions service and the Council. Business West is able to provide advice in respect of e-business implementation issues and to provide specific hands-on ICT related training; **learndirect** is able to offer a broad portfolio of business oriented training courses, which can be undertaken online in the workplace; Connexions is able to organise and support the placement of students within companies.

Charlie Bray, IT@work's Project Manager commented, "To engage in e-procurement successfully, companies won't just need help with their IT, they'll need to look at all their business processes: they'll also need the skills to implement and manage their new systems and their ways of working will inevitably change. The great thing about our partnership is that we can input into all of these issues"

www.itatwork.org

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Process

A programme of awareness events is being delivered by IT@work, based on the Council's May event, with inputs from the project, the Council and @UK plc. These events are financially supported by **learndirect**, as part of their SME marketing activity.

It is considered critical that the Council issues the invitation since this lends gravitas to the event and avoids it being dismissed as simply another unsolicited, commercial, promotional event. The experience of the Kick Start team is that written invitations get lost, whereas a targeted telephone call followed up by a personal communication is more successful. The event is being targeted on those suppliers that are most significant for the Council in terms of volume of invoices generated. It is felt that these offer the greatest opportunity for process savings.

"... if they are with us, then we have a chance to help protect and develop our local firms. Using these systems should give them access to wider markets, too". **Russell Darling, Bristol City Council.**

"...here is an opportunity to improve your knowledge base, your technical business expertise and expand your market. Come on board and use this Council initiative to give you the leg-up you need." **Sue Lutkenhouse, Bristol City Council.**

At the event, the Kick Start team are able to capture information from interested companies regarding their specific issues and concerns and are able to identify those suppliers wishing to progress. Subsequently the company is called to follow up the issues and to explain how the Council works with its other partners: a data-protection statement is then sent out to obtain their permission for their information to be shared by the various partners in the consortium. It is the intention that client records will be maintained on a secure extranet, which will be shared between the partners and managed by the Kick Start team, ensuring that information is only captured once and that all parties have access to the most up-to-date and accurate data.

At this stage some companies are fast-tracked and are visited by a member of staff from @UK plc, accompanied by a member of the Kick Start team. The presence of a Council representative at that meeting has been found useful to provide immediate answers to questions from the supplier.

A representative of Business West visits the other companies to carry out a diagnostic that will identify the company's needs in order for it to be able to engage effectively in e-procurement. The Business West visit will result in a specific action plan and a subsequent referral to one, or a combination of interventions with records maintained on the extranet and managed by the Kick Start team. The interventions potentially include referrals to:

- @UK plc for subscription to the marketplace
- Task oriented ICT training
- To **learndirect** for online training
- To an IT surgery to address specific technology implementation issues
- To the youth project to arrange a student placement (to assist with implementation)

Further contacts from project staff review progress and enable the participating companies to move between these referral options, providing a continuous development process. Companies that were fast-tracked direct to @UK plc may also re-enter the process for specific areas of support.

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Using ESF funding, the project is able to provide limited financial support to participants. Partners will be able to provide additional input on a cost recovery basis.

Companies that have signed up with @UK Plc and who have registered interest with the Kickstart Team, are kept informed of developments by monthly e-newsletters. These give an update on the project, have a partner focus and list the latest companies who have signed with @ UK Plc.

Strengths

Working with a consortium of organisations to support the engagement of SMEs provides the Council with considerable capacity and access to expertise that will cover the full range of cultural, technical and skills needs of their suppliers.

ESF funding enables IT@work to implement a comprehensive programme, drawing together the contributions of the partners, and providing SMEs with one:one diagnostic visits that enable issues to be explored in depth leading to efficient and appropriate referral.

The provision of a secure project extranet will ensure that all partners are able to access up-to-date, accurate information about each client. It permits the generation of management information from a consistent data set and should ensure good client tracking with efficient responses to identified needs. The extranet also removes the need for clients to be asked repeatedly for core data – once captured, their information is available to all.

The independence of the partners [from the system provider] and high level of input ensures that the SME obtains support and advice that is of wide benefit, rather than merely ensuring it can take part in the e-procurement initiative led by Bristol City Council. This enables the project to assist each SME towards full development as an e-business,

Weaknesses

Reliance on external funding means that the current IT@work model is not sustainable in its current form, nor is it easily replicable to other areas that do not have access to additional resources. The additional revenue stream might be found by charging suppliers a small hand-holding fee if they need help putting their e-commerce site online.

External funding also places a requirement for higher levels of management information than may otherwise have been necessary.

The involvement of a range of disparate partners increases the possibility for communications problems to occur and for conflict of agendas between the different organisations. However, the central role of the Kickstart team, together with well-resourced and competent project management, seems to be avoiding this problem.

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SUMMARY OF ISSUES FOR BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

The following issues were identified during the development of the Kick-start model

Awareness

None of the companies visited for the case studies were trading on-line. They only became aware of e-procurement through the Council's awareness event. A large number of companies did not attend and it seems unlikely that they have grasped the significance of the major changes in store through e-procurement. There needs to be a continual programme of making companies aware of this development, particularly the smaller SME s where time is extremely tight.

The Process

Whilst the companies understood the principles of the technology issues being described, none of them felt that the Council had made clear the changes that were going to take place in their purchasing policy and procedures in line with e-procurement. They therefore felt unable to judge the impact of this on their work. They had many questions about how a more centralised system will work and, if the Council go through with their aim to reduce their number of suppliers, how would this is to be done. This was probably the main issue from each company's viewpoint.

Quality Assurance

Word of mouth referral between the various purchasers in the Council seems to act often as a means of quality assurance. A number of the companies raised the issue of how quality control, assurance and monitoring will be linked to decisions on purchasing once e-procurement is in place.

Tendering

In some cases, it became clear that whilst companies are currently supplying a number of items which in themselves are under £1,000 – once aggregated over a year they may require a tender process, under the current local government guidelines. This is a cause of concern.

Cost/Benefit

No company was able at this stage to do a cost /benefit analysis of this development. Most of the companies were able to estimate the investment that will be necessary to engage in e-procurement. Most were willing to make the investment to secure their current business with the Council and, hopefully, to grow their business with other customers.

However, they are generally wary about making this investment until they have clear answers to the issues raised above.

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Managing the Change

The majority of the companies had only a basic understanding of their technology needs and the company processes that will change with e-procurement. The work that Business Link and **learnirect** will be doing with them, not only on training, but also on modeling e-procurement processes will therefore be very important. They are willing to start on the journey, but will need continued support as the issues emerge for them.

Connectivity

Most of the businesses will need to improve their connectivity. Some identified the need for broadband at this stage. There may be scope for the delivery partners to consider brokering deals with the local broadband providers to support their awareness raising and to obtain favourable deals for companies, as has been done with SAGE.

HR and Training

All the companies are, even at this stage, identifying the training needs of their staff, both those currently directly involved in purchasing and also a wider group, often sales and marketing staff. Some of the companies will be able to use **learnirect** in the workplace, but with low connectivity, others will need to go to a local learning centre.

@Ukplc Software

All the companies consider that they will need in-depth training in this software - how to develop their own catalogue and how it can link with their own software. There are many concerns about how diverse products, services and costing models can be displayed using the platform. The Authority needs to be aware of these issues as they are worked through with @Ukplc, to ensure that their procurement policy is not dictated by the limits of the technology application.

A number of companies were interviewed – their profiles and views are given in the following pages.

These companies were among those that attended an initial awareness session that the Council held for its key suppliers in May 2003. These case studies are therefore derived from discussions with the companies at a very early stage of their journeys towards full engagement in e-procurement. The statements made in the documents represent the companies' understanding of the potential implications of the process, based on their current knowledge: other issues will undoubtedly arise as the process is worked through.

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1. A Building Contractor

The Company

L Contractors has two separate divisions that work with the City Council – the first acts as a main contractor for building work such as extensions to schools and the second provides industrial fencing. 8 – 10% of their businesses is done with the City Council, but they also work with the Fire Service, the Prison Service and with utilities companies.

Current work with Bristol City Council

Most of the work they currently do with the City Council is for jobs over £1,000 so the council has to put out tenders for them. They do this currently by written enquiry, tendering and contracting. The company works with lots of different sections of Bristol City Council. They are paid by BACS for their jobs but the council systems are not very clear. They often get payments amalgamated for a number of jobs with no related order number and no indication what the payment is to cover. They hope that a more clear e-procurement process would ensure that jobs and payments were more clearly associated. They only have one or two items that are purchased by the council on an individual basis, cycle stands, which would be the only item to go on a catalogue.

Developing a Consortium Approach

L Contractors already acts as an informal 'consortium' for the purchase of a broad number of small items and services for a building job. For example, when putting in a tender for building a school they will typically have suppliers who have quoted them prices for: steel fabrication, roofing, groundwork, glazing, electrical work, painting and tarmacing. They use these suppliers as they have built a relationship with them which is partly based on price but mainly on quality of the work and ability to work to deadlines. They would not purchase these sorts of items on-line as their suppliers do not all have suitable systems to do this and their prices move so quickly.

L Contractors like the idea that bringing in e-procurement may reduce the number of suppliers to the City Council. Their view is that the contracts may be bigger and that smaller businesses, e.g. locksmiths, alarm services etc would be able to supply their services through a sub-contract with larger suppliers such as L Contractors. They feel that this would fit in with other pressures on smaller companies to comply with increasingly weighty health and safety requirements, the cost of which can also be supported better if they act as a subcontractor to a larger contractor.

Readiness for e-procurement processes

L Contractors has a basic website which covers the same information as their brochure giving examples of work they have done, but with no prices. The website brings in 3/ 4 enquiries a year, the rest from word of mouth. They are investing in an upgrade to their Sage Accounting packages as a result of the e-procurement awareness day and are training their administrator to run this package. They do not use payment on-line, making most of their outgoing payments by cheque.

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e-Procurement Awareness

They have already been involved in electronic tendering with some private suppliers and had some awareness of e-procurement. They do not feel that the Council's development of e-procurement will affect them very much. Their current view is:

Opportunities

- Potential for them to act as a contractor for a broader number of jobs which are currently delivered by smaller companies e.g. locksmiths
- There may be some potential for them to buy some of their own supplies on line from those on the @Ukplc website and thus drive their own costs down and produce more competitive tenders.
- They feel that this system is likely to be advantageous in that it will weed-out cowboy contractors.

Concerns

- If e-procurement leads to less contractors, how can they ensure they are one of them?
- It may not be worth their while to develop all the necessary systems to put their one or two items that are sold individually into the catalogue
- What is the timetable for Bristol's implementation (this appears to be a common concern for the more enthusiastic suppliers). Who should be doing what, when etc?
- They do not feel they have a clear view of the pre-requisites for IT systems.
- They do not feel they have a clear understanding about how the system will work, in practice, for suppliers of service, as opposed to standard products through a catalogue.

"Most of our contracts with the Council are won through a tendering process - will the centralising of e-procurement mean that the Council will have to buy many more things through tendering?"
Managing Director

What do they want from Bristol City Council?

- Improvement in [some aspects of the] payment system of the City Council
- Clarification over whether the centralising of procurement processes mean that most purchasing, even for seemingly small cost items (over a year) goes over the £1,000 limit and thus will need to be tendered for
- To be kept informed about the progress of the Bristol's e-Procurement implementation.

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2. A Construction Supply and General Service Company

The Company

P Construction is one of a number of businesses run by the P family of 6 brothers. They have two businesses that trade with Bristol City Council, one supplying stone, sand, cement and aggregates and the other clearing up scrap cars and rubbish such as park and garden nursery refuse and items dumped in rivers. The work with the City Council is only a small part of their work as they mainly supply to private building contractors for the first business and insurance companies for the second. They do other work for another local authority and a health authority. They are often used for jobs for which the Council 'doesn't know who else to call'.

Current work with Bristol City Council

The company currently gets their orders from known contacts within the Council who generally have used them before and know their price- this is mainly done over the telephone. They have a price list for their suppliers and they don't offer discounts. They will be putting their basic information onto a catalogue for the City Council. They are keen to know whether the Council will have a way of grading suppliers, for example on quality of service. Their view is that price is only one factor, the ability to do a quality job and to do it on time are also important.

Readiness for e-procurement processes

Mike P has been interested in developing a website for years but has not trusted the companies that have quoted prices to him in the past. They have now ordered one through @UKplc as they like the idea of how simple it is and they are now working on improving the basic model. They are particularly keen to use this for another related business where they take bookings over the internet for off-site airport parking dealing with 400-500 cars per week.

Most of the office work of the business is done by Mike with the help of a secretary in a portacabin on the farm. Mike is enthusiastic about computers and their use for him personally and for the business. He is continually looking at ways to utilise them more. He is completely self-taught in their use and application. They have used computers in the past for their livestock trade and for returning forms to the Department of Agriculture.

They currently have an ISDN link which is better than their previous service, but they are not able yet to get broadband to their area – they have been told that it may be available in 6 months. They need to use this for their salvage work with the City Council and with insurance companies so that they can send pictures of vehicle wrecks simultaneously to all parties involved.

HR and Training

They run their 5 companies through SAGE but their accounts person is not comfortable with computers, so does it manually and then enters it periodically into SAGE. They have internet banking and are interested in paying their wages directly through the bank. Mike is aware that they will need to do more of their accounts in a computerised way, and, whilst he is keen, he and his accounts person will need additional training to do this.

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Mike maintains the computers himself – he has Norton Anti-virus after a serious virus attacked his computer some years ago causing significant difficulties with Department of Agriculture returns.

e-Procurement awareness

Mike was not aware of e-procurement until attending an awareness event run by the City Council. His current view of e-procurement development is:

Opportunities

- it feeds into Mike's personal enthusiasm for making greater use of computers in his business;
- there is an opportunity to use services and developments on e-procurement with their other business.

"I'm really keen to develop on-line trading as I can use it for other parts of my business to allow on-line car-park booking as well as my work with the Council... but my secretary, who does the books, is not very keen and will need some training." Owner/Manager

Concerns

- the business is very reliant on Mike's ability to use computers – this may not be sufficient once many of the materials are being purchased on-line.
- there is a need to train any other people who support the business to use the e-procurement package and upgrades on SAGE.
- the physical security of the computer and the maintenance of it may need to be improved.

What do they want from Bristol City Council?

- the Council could make use of an electronic noticeboard for unusual purchases, services required that are not in their catalogue (e.g. second hand parts for valuable machines).
- could the system allow for a comment on quality and customer satisfaction so that the Council can build up an account history?
- ISDN is just about sufficient but broadband would be preferred – this may be difficult to get in the area, can the Council help?

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3. An Office Equipment Company

The Company

V Office Equipment Company has a turnover of £2.5m and has 25 employees; 3 in sales, 13 in servicing, 7 admin and 2 Directors. The company supplies photocopiers, printers, fax machines and is a dealer for Minolta, Minolta-QMS and Oki. The photocopiers are sold via lease rental agreements or outright purchases and come with fully inclusive service agreements. The machines can be sold without service contracts and consumable can also be sold separately. The Company has had a large number of sales within the City Council mainly of fax machines. It also provides all their product range to a large number of schools and also to many other public sector organisations including other local authorities, health authorities, and the local Universities. Their volume of sales in the public sector is in the region of 30%. Their customers are predominately local to their servicing area. Their main competition is the manufacturers themselves and other main dealers. Customers generally only change a dealer if the price can be undercut or if current service is poor, otherwise they are quite loyal.

Current Work with Bristol City Council

Whilst they have been able to sell a broad range of their products to many of their customers including schools, they have only been able to sell fax machines into the main work of the City Council. They have contacts and orders from a large number of departments – one of whom wanted to try one of their photocopiers and had one on trial. Despite the manager and their team being very keen, the purchase was halted by a central buyer. They are not clear how the big contracts for photocopier supply get allocated. If there is one central contract, is this put up for tender to select a preferred supplier or does each department make its own purchase? Under a more centralised e-procurement process, they wonder whether this will be more transparent.

Readiness for the e-procurement process

The company does have a website but it is not yet very developed. They are currently in limbo whilst they decide how far down the e – trading route they wish to go. They are considering whether it could be developed for taking service call requests. It could also be an opportunity to really grow the sales of their consumables products. They hope that engaging with the @Ukplc software, will give them a cost-effective opportunity to explore and develop these opportunities.

"We had started to develop a website but its currently on hold as we were not sure how much we'd use it... this will give us the push to do more e-procurement generally"

Marketing Manager

They currently have a separate price list for local authorities but they would still like the opportunity to be able to put together a beneficial package of costs to a customer depending on who they are and the size of order for example. They are not sure how this would fit with putting fixed prices on a catalogue for the City Council.

The company has just stopped using SAGE and has changed to a bespoke accounting package for their industry – Common Sense Business Systems. It is UNIX based rather than windows but is more powerful than SAGE for their needs. They will need to view how easily this package can be made to interact with the City Council procurement process and at what cost.

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HR and Training

The company is currently receiving training on their new accounts package. They can envisage that once e-procurement becomes more widespread, it might impact on the roles of some of their staff, in particular the sales team who are responsible for sales by fax and staff who process orders and send out quotes. They may need to change their internal processes for receiving and processing orders.

The Supply Chain

The Company currently stores a large quantity of machines and consumables on their premises. Once an order is placed, if it is not immediately available, they will order it from a manufacturer or go to a number of other suppliers some of which trade over the internet. The company does not have any plans yet to extend any e-procurement plans down to the next level of its supplier base but would want to explore the potential for this with their biggest suppliers.

e-Procurement Awareness

The Company did not know anything about e-procurement developments until they went to the Bristol City Council seminar. The invite did not relay to them the importance of this development and they sent along one of their sales staff who in hindsight may not have been the most appropriate. At the moment, they are not able to fully quantify the costs involved but they would want to engage in order to maintain their existing business and if possible grow it. They also see this development as a giving a boost and focus for further e-business developments generally.

Opportunities

- gives a focus for general e-business development, currently on hold in the company
- is there the potential to grow their business with Bristol City Council and with other users of the @Ukplc software or other supplier on the catalogue?

Concerns

- they may lose their relationships with the individual purchasers if it goes through a central procurement process
- will they be on the City Council's list of suppliers if it is being reduced?
- what happens to their existing contracts when they come up for renewal?
- how will they have the opportunity to refine their pricing and negotiate 'a deal' with suppliers under this system?
- what will the full costs of implementation be against the benefits?

What do they want from Bristol City Council?

- more clarity about how the procurement process itself will change as it becomes more centralised and the number of suppliers is reduced.
- information on how they might get on the supply list for their full range of products and what the review process will be for a reduced list of suppliers.
- information on the timescales of implementation from the City Council's point of view.
- to avoid the situation of encouraging suppliers to invest in bespoke software and then find that they are no longer a supplier to the City Council.

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A Timber Merchant

The Company

R Timber is a longstanding company with 40 employees and a turnover of £5/6m per year. The company mainly supplies timber which it imports from a number of countries. The timber is stored in one of 5 warehouses locally, on the docks or is in transit. The timber is mainly used in general construction and by boat builders. The work with the Council accounts for only about 1-3% of their total business but they also supply schools directly, hospitals and a few other public sector organisations. 50% of their custom is reasonably local and the other is national and international.

Current work with Bristol City Council

The Company has a wide range of accounts within the City Council. Orders are currently placed by phone or fax with an order number. This generates a purchase order, works order and delivery note. The Council has now improved their payment system and in the last 18 months, the payments, by BACS, have been clearly identified and on time.

Readiness for e-Procurement process

The Company is currently in the process of developing its own website. This has just gone live. There is no facility to order or pay on line, but there is an enquiry that can be e-mailed or printed. They are keen to understand further the @UKplc catalogue process and hope as they have all their products itemised in their own system, that it should be fairly easy to transfer it into Excel and then onto the website catalogue. The investment in the software and time needed to set up the catalogue is significant in terms of the relative size of the Council's business with the company, but they realise that they will not be able to keep the account if they do not invest, so are willing to do so.

They have recently purchased a new account package, Unistrip, which is customised for the timber and building trades. This software is not able yet to deal with transactional e-mails and it would cost approximately £4K to adapt it. At the moment, the tracking of stock and orders is not done electronically but the new package has the capacity to do this. The company is just starting to expand its use of the product and are developing the on-line purchase order system.

The Company has recently invested in broadband for 4 of their computers, for the general manager, accounts manager, order manager and an additional one for other users. They have a secure system with firewalls in place and virus protection.

HR and Training

The accounts team is very conversant with working electronically, but other members of the office team including those involved in dealing directly with orders and tracking stock will also need to use the system more. Whilst some members of staff are OK with this, there are a few who are not comfortable about using computers at all. They would need some general training to improve confidence to use and navigating a computer, before training on specific packages would be possible.

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e-Procurement Awareness

The company was not aware of e-procurement before the invitation to the meeting at the Council House. They were not aware that adopting it would be required to maintain work with the council in the future. They felt that this was rather underplayed at the event, also the fact that the council would want to significantly reduce the number of suppliers as a result of introducing a more centralised e-procurement process. The communication about the events and follow up and timescales proposed has not been clear. They want to be clear on this, as the work will need planning alongside other company priorities.

Opportunities

- to maintain existing business with the local authority
- to use the system and processes with other current public sector customers as they adopt e-procurement also.
- they feel it is unlikely to bring in new business from other areas as there would usually be a local alternative to them that could transport goods cheaper.

Concerns

- is the timescale and follow up support realistic?
- there may be a significant set up time needed?
- is their current accounts package sufficient?
- staff reluctance and lack of confidence in using computers

"We will have to integrate the software into our new accounts package which will have an additional cost for us.... it will be worth it if we keep the contract, but the Council are talking about reducing the number of suppliers and its not clear yet how they will do this" Finance Manager

What do you want from Bristol City Council?

- a sensible timescale to implement this.
- clearer communication about the process of implementation.