

**PAC: Procurement Review - States Greffe**

<b>No</b>	<b>Questions relating to Government Processes</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	How often does your department utilise the central procurement system for acquiring goods and services?	<p><b>Daily – mostly Ariba and HRG.</b>  <b>Total for period Jan 2023 to June 2024 inclusive was 1019, averaging 57 monthly.</b></p>
2	At what levels in terms of monetary value (e.g., small, medium, large purchases) do you most regularly engage with the central procurement system most frequently?	<p><b>Mostly small and medium. Of the 1019 during the period Jan 2023 to June 2024 inclusive 693 were under £1k, 300 were £1k to £25k, 24 were £25k to £100k and only 2 were £100k+.</b></p>
3	What aspects of the central procurement system work well and what challenges or issues does your department face when using the central procurement system?	<p><b>The system works well with suppliers if they are registered and raising their own invoices in the system. It would be good for this to be publicised more to encourage suppliers to join as payment reaches suppliers quicker and with fewer issues. Receipting processing for invoices is laborious and involves duplication over two different systems, without any certainty of payments being made. It is not possible to check every single one easily and issues aren't flagged from accounts payable.</b></p> <p><b>Example - APF banking details were missing so it appeared we had paid our annual membership subscription when this was not the case. This was embarrassing for the Island as Jersey was listed as a non-payer of its subs in the APF conference paperwork.</b></p> <p><b>HRG takes days to make bookings. Because of the nature of our work, we often only get confirmation of travel details and who is travelling quite close to the event itself and such tight timescales pose logistical difficulties. It is far easier and quicker to book direct. Flight details change during the process due to the delay, with seats on flights and availability of hotel rooms disappearing – and the costs can increase too. The cost differential between HRG suggested flights and direct booking for long haul is regularly more expensive than booking directly and often is more than £1200 per person.</b></p>

		<p>The overall impression is that the system is not as good as what we had. We have to concoct our own reporting systems in order to see where we are at – the snapshot/live view doesn't work. HRG used to provide a monthly travel update automatically - transaction reports are not as clear and accessible anymore. We used to be able to identify when items had been charged to us incorrectly and from other Departments. The autonomy is reduced and we need to check and review far more. Faith in the system is much lower. We can't journal payments and follow progress in the same way as we could previously.</p> <p>Updating who approves invoices is almost impossible and with limited visibility of which invoices have been processed, monthly finance catch ups are less productive.</p> <p>The system is less flexible and harder to access. It is worse than Hubble and JD Edwards – and they weren't great.</p>
4	How would you describe your department's relationship with suppliers when using the central procurement system and what feedback have you received from suppliers about their experiences with the central procurement system?	<p>We have a good relationship with existing suppliers and those we deal with regularly who are familiar with the process are relatively content. It has changed the relationship with suppliers as there is little direct personal contact now (unless the payments don't go through!)</p> <p>Problems arise when a new supplier has to register and anecdotally some businesses regard the process as laborious and off-putting.</p>
5	Can you provide details on the number of engagements that have been extended above their original value over the past 5 years?	<p>No extensions as far as we are aware. We have had contract renewals for our webcasting (Public-i) and Hansard (Epiq) but these have been renegotiated.</p>
6	How do you evaluate the delivery and closure of individual procurements within your department?	<p>As well as the Public Finances Manual, we adhere to the procurement best practices and the guidance issued by Commercial Services.</p>
7	Does the current level of autonomy provide work well for your procurement needs?	<p>There is less autonomy than previously. We used to be able to raise reports and chase payments and there is no access to live reports. It is very difficult as the Accounting Officer to investigate payments. It is not as agile as it needs to be and we often need matters to be dealt with more quickly than the system allows, especially in relation to travel.</p>

8	Do you have any additional suggestions or recommendations in order to further enhance procurement processes?	<p>I have requested that we are allowed a ‘permanent breach’ or similar in relation to travel so that we can secure the best value flights and accommodation in as short a timescale as possible without having to submit a breach every time we have saved thousands on costs.</p> <p>We had a discussion with a colleague from the Chief Operating Office last week about our request to create an ‘ongoing breach’ facility in relation to long haul travel. Our Finance Business Partner was present at that meeting. We and he were taken aback by a suggestion that HRG should be ‘price matching’ flights where possible – this was something none of us were aware HRG would do and it is not within the Commercial Services guidelines. We have undertaken to test this option the next time we are booking long haul flights, but I wonder if it is something which is widely known. If people can challenge HRG’s first quote, then should this not be more widely publicised? Do the majority accept HRG’s quote without looking for an alternative because they are unaware that this facility exists? Certainly if we did not challenge HRG’s quotes then we would have potentially spent thousands more for flights, just in the last year alone.</p>
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No	Questions relating to Non-Government Processes	Response
1	<p>How does the States Greffe currently ensure that procurement processes align with government regulations and policies, and do you have any processes that sit separately to government regulations and policies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you please clarify what any additional processes that sit outside of Government processes relate to?</li> <li>• What is the decision-making process that you go through in order to decide whether to follow your own procurement processes of the central procurement process?</li> </ul>	<p><b>We are subject to the Public Finances Manual.</b></p> <p>However, we do regularly record breaches when making travel bookings, primarily to save on costs, although HRG often suggest inconvenient routes which are also more expensive. Many of the trips we are booking are for conferences where States Members and an officer are flying long haul and require several days hotel accommodation at one of the host nation’s chosen conference hotels. Staying where everyone else is makes sense not just for travel logistics but also provides greater networking opportunities.</p> <p>We have had issues with accommodation bookings, where it has not been paid despite us expecting this to be so. This has led to Members and staff having to use their own bank cards to pay for often</p>

		<p>substantial accommodation costs and then seeking reimbursement. It is also not possible with the present system to see if something has been double paid – sometimes its bill back. What if Members don't have sufficient funds to pay themselves? Also the repayment process is slow. It is not a great system for Members.</p> <p>By example HRG long haul flights are regularly £1200+ more than booking directly with the airline per person. There is also limited availability – for example HRG will show only 3 seats when the airline's website has far more available. HRG is also not a live site, so in some instances when getting to check out, the seats 'reserved' are no longer available.</p> <p>The travel booking system is very time consuming, not straight forward and it is often easier and cheaper to book on our own. We don't go outside of the central processes otherwise.</p>
2	What strategies are in place to enhance the transparency of your own procurement processes for suppliers and stakeholders?	<b>We follow the Public Finances Manual and best practice guidance issued by Commercial Services. We always let suppliers know when we are seeking three required quotes so they are aware of the process and can be confident that a fair and transparent system is in place.</b>
3	How do you assess the effectiveness of your own procurement processes, and what key performance indicators do you use?	<b>We follow best practice guidance issued by Commercial Services.</b>
4	What feedback mechanisms do you have in place to gather input from suppliers about your procurement processes, and how do you act on this feedback?	<b>We would provide feedback through the operational support teams.</b>
5	How do you ensure that your procurement requirements are clear and well - communicated to all potential suppliers?	<b>We follow procurement guidance and tenders over a certain level are advertised on CI Tenders.</b>
6	What measures do you have in place to ensure the sustainability and social responsibility of your procurement decisions?	<b>We follow best practice guidance issued by Commercial Services.</b>
7	How do you handle disputes or grievances from suppliers regarding procurement decisions from your own processes, and what is your process for resolution?	<b>We would provide feedback through the operational support teams. When handling disputes it is vital to have a clearly defined and documented process around the decision making, so that if a challenge is raised, it is easy to provide detailed objective feedback.</b>

<b>8</b>	What are the barriers to engagement that suppliers face in your procurement processes, and how can you work to eliminate these barriers?	<b>Anecdotal reluctance to register as process is seen as laborious.</b>
<b>9</b>	How do you ensure that procurement opportunities are widely communicated and accessible to all potential suppliers?	<b>We follow best practice guidance issued by Commercial Services.</b>