

## 10. Waiving of Standing Orders

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide members of the Audit Committee with a summary of any waivers given since the last report made in July 2008.

### **Recommendation**

That the Audit Committee note the report and comment as appropriate.

### **Procurement Procedure Rules**

As members may recall a review of the existing Standing Orders for Contracts and the elements of financial regulations that impacted upon procurement or contracting has been undertaken by the Head of Procurement and Support Services.

As the Committee will be aware the new Procurement Procedure Rules have been in place for some time now and the impact is being felt across the organisation. The Procurement Procedure Rules have recently been updated and amended and this process of embedding is well underway. The new rules have already undergone a degree of refreshing to keep them current and relevant.

Embedding of these rules will take some time to achieve, however, so far the Procurement Procedure Rules are being well received by officers accessing or using them.

In summary very few exemptions from either the full-blown Procurement Procedures Rules or, if relevant, the financial rules have been requested during the year.

### **Waiving of Financial Procedure Rules**

The requirement to report to Audit Committee on the exemptions given from the Financial Procedure Rules, governing contracts below £50K (previous rules) was removed with the introduction of the Procurement Procedures Rules issued last year together with changes made at that time to the Financial Procedure Rules. If members recall under the old Contract Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules the Head of Procurement and Support Services had been given the power to grant an exemption based on evidence.

Officers have been given greater freedoms now within the Procurement Procedure Rules (see section 3.2 Exemptions), however a degree of clarity and challenge has been placed within the Procurement Procedure Rules (see section 3.3) and it will be those exemptions tested and checked under section 3.3 that I will report on in future.

## Exemptions from Procurement Procedure Rules

During the proceeding period the number of requests made to the Head of Procurement and Support Services has diminished to a large extent and now, only one or two requests in the main request clarification.

This is refreshing, as it would indicate that the new rules are allowing officers to take the decisions they knew without fear of redress from over autocratic rules or procedures.

If members recall, most exemptions under the old rules given by the Head of Procurement and Support Services were in reality officers seeking assurance and clarification and we were, in the main, already compliant with exemptions.

### Full Exemptions from the rules granted by Council or Committee.

Bentonite barrier to the rear of Romsey Road along the northern boundary of the Birchfield landfill site, Yeovil. The exemption has been given that we will not stipulate the use of Constructionline approved suppliers only.

**Background Papers:** None.

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