Sustainable procurement

Preface

We are aiming to make the procurement of the Cohen Geochemistry Group more sustainable. By doing this we aim to fulfil the Universities key themes outlined in the University Sustainability Strategy:

- Embedding sustainability through collaboration
- Building knowledge and capacity
- Being a positive Partner in society
- Making the most of resources

As such we are concerned about our own impact and the impact of our suppliers on:

- Extraction and use of resources
- Climate Change
- Local and international biodiversity
- Pollution
- Social, economic and community value

The purpose of this document is to outline the group's objectives and a new procurement procedure that we aim to follow. We also aim to follow the Universities Sustainable Procurement Standard.

Objective

We aim to ensure that procurement activities are managed in a sustainable manner, having due regard to their environmental, economic and social opportunities and impacts. As such we will think about impact in terms of: what we purchase, who we purchase from, and how much we purchase. We will use the procedure set out below to achieve this.

Definition

Sustainable: An item is sustainable when it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Here we are particularly interested in the impact on the environment of the items life cycle. That is from production, delivery, use and disposal.

Achievements

- **We produce deionised water** in house which reduces the transport of DI water that would otherwise create a significant environmental impact.
- **List of chemicals** which can be consulted prior to purchasing new chemicals so encouraging people to use current supplies before making new purchases.
- **Centralised purchasing** of heavily used consumables and selected chemicals so allowing bulk purchasing and reducing environmental impact.

Areas for improvement

- **Procurement of chemicals** – while we have a list it is not easy to keep this up to date and so more work is required to better monitor chemicals present within laboratory and so reduce the amount of repeat chemical purchases.
- **Consumable purchasing –** The procurement procedure above needs to be applied to the consumables that we regularly purchase. This is an ongoing project that will take time.
- **Communication –** of this procedure to others within the group

Procedure

The procedure outlines is the ideal situation for all procurement within the group. This is the process we are working towards (see below for two examples of this procedure in use).

1. **Does the item need to be purchased?**
    a. Do we need the item?
    b. Can the item be borrowed or hired?
    c. Can an alternative, existing, item be used to avoid purchase?
2. **Which of the procurement options for the item is the most sustainable?**
    a. Which option is the most sustainable to produce?
    b. Which option is the most sustainable during use?
    c. Which option is the most sustainable to dispose of?
3. **Can we reduce the amount of the item purchased?**
    a. Can the item be reused / repurposed?
4. **Can the transport impact of them item be reduced?**
    a. Can the item be purchased in bulk and so potentially reduce transport impact and packaging?
    b. Can the item be purchased locally?

Examples of how the procedural points can be used:

Procedural points		Worked example	
		Freezer	**Plastic bottles**
1. Does the item need to be purchased?	a. Do we need the item?	Could space be cleared in another freezer?	Do we already have enough plastic bottles?
	b. Can the item be borrowed or hired?	Could a freezer be hired and returned at end of project?	Could we borrow some bottles, clean them and give them back?
	c. Can an alternative, existing, item be used to avoid purchase?	Could freezer space in another school be used temporarily?	Could we borrow some bottles, clean them and give them back?
2. **Which of the procurement options for the item is the most sustainable?**	a. Which option is the most sustainable to produce?	How is the freezer produced (CFCs etc.)? What kind of labour is used?	How are the bottles produced (raw materials etc.)? What kind of labour is used?
	b. Which option is the most sustainable during use?	How energy efficient is the freezer?	Can the bottles be reused?
	c. Which option is the most sustainable to dispose of?	Does the company collect the freezer for disposal at the end of its life? Are the parts of the freezer recyclable?	Can the bottles be recycled if they cannot be reused? Does the company collect them?
3. Can we reduce the amount of the item purchased?	a. Can the item be reused / repurposed?	Could the freezer be used on other projects after this one has finished?	Could we reuse the bottles and so purchase fewer of them?
4. Can the transport impact of them item be reduced?	a. Can the item be purchased in bulk and so potentially reduce transport impact and packaging?	N/A	Do we need enough that purchasing in bulk makes sense?
	b. Can the item be purchased locally?	Where does the supplier make/store the freezers?	Where does the supplier make/store the bottles?