

Sustainable Buying Standard: Highways and construction materials



Introduction

The construction of buildings and highways is an area of significant expenditure for the Council, accounting for approximately 20% of all external outgoings. The two materials most commonly used in highways construction – concrete and asphalt – are associated with a number of environmental impacts including extremely high production energy requirements and CO₂ emissions. Additionally, the construction industry is responsible for more than 30% of all waste arisings in the UK. For these reasons, careful supply chain management and resource efficiency are particularly important in this area.

In addition, there has recently been concern regarding the import onto the EU market of lower-quality steels manufactured outside the EU. As well as affecting the trade of UK and EU steel manufacturers, the lower quality of these steel products is a matter of concern – for example in some cases having a tendency to crack on welding.

By applying this Standard to purchases of potentially high-impact construction materials, Durham County Council aims to minimise these impacts and achieve reductions in cost, energy use, CO₂ emissions, transport distances and waste, as well as disruption to the community, by encouraging responsible sourcing and lifecycle costing in each procurement. At the same time, the standard is designed to be proportionate and un-biased, therefore also helping to promote fair competition.

Compliance with this standard is mandatory for all Service Groupings.

Buying Standard

In any relevant procurement relating to highways or construction works and materials, Durham County Council will:

- Encourage the use of materials from secondary sources where practical and where a net reduction of CO₂ can be achieved.
- Require bidders to seek ways to reduce the need for long-distance transport of materials and waste products.

In addition to the above, Durham County Council will observe the following standards and measures for specific materials:

Material	Durham County Council will:
Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify concrete that is certified to BES 6001 or equivalent* standard, • Where appropriate give preference to mixes containing supplementary cementing materials as partial replacement for portland cement, • Where appropriate, consider specifying the use of pervious concrete, • Give preference to suppliers who hold, or are working towards, achieving an ISO-14001 certified Environmental Management System (or equivalent), via a technical question at selection or tender stage.
Asphalt (bitumen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify contracts in which reclaimed bituminous material may be used as a partial replacement for virgin material – up to 10% in surface course and 50% in all other layers, and specify this where appropriate, • Where appropriate, give preference to cold or warm mix asphalt, • Where appropriate, consider specifying the use of pervious asphalt.
Steel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify steel that is certified to BES 6001 or equivalent* standard, • Specify that all structural steel must be <u>non-alloy</u> steel, • Give preference to suppliers who hold, or are working towards, achieving an ISO-14001 certified Environmental Management System (or equivalent), via a technical question at selection or tender stage.

In the table above, phrases in **bold italic** indicate the means by which the given measure is to be included in the tender or quotation process.

*In the absence of BES 6001 certification, bidders must be able to demonstrate a product's equivalence to the BES 6001 standard, by either:

- certification to an alternative standard, where it can be demonstrated that this is equivalent both in scope and detail, or
- evidence of internal policies and procedures which can be relied upon to achieve the same or higher standard.

Definitions

"Non alloy" steel	Non-alloy steel is steel which has no elements added to the steel as it is smelted. To qualify as "non-alloy", a steel must comply with strict limits on the quantity of other metallic elements it contains. This "non-alloy" classification amongst other things ensures that the steel is readily weldable without the need to apply any special welding parameters. A detailed technical definition of non-alloy steel is contained in European Standard EN 10025 - Hot rolled products of structural steels .
"Pervious" asphalt or concrete	Also known as "porous" asphalt or concrete, pervious materials are those which allow the movement of stormwater through the surface.

Sustainable Buying Standard:

Last updated:

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