



# Corporate clothing procurement

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## Introduction

The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) approached the end of their corporate clothing contract and were very keen to improve sustainability in this area to ideally eliminate any of their end-of-life clothing going to landfill. Zero Waste Scotland and Business in the Community (BITC) provided advisory input, by suggesting some potential areas/questions to ask their supply chain. BITC shared examples from other textiles procurements supported by their community of practice. Zero Waste Scotland also attended a meeting with their Supported Business supplier (Haven).

The discussion focused on: options to move away from embroidered corporate logos to other options for removable corporate logos so workwear can be reused or recycled, and opportunities for the Scottish Parliament to move to more sustainable materials for clothing through the Supported Business Framework. The clothing manufacturers were also asked about how they design clothing

from the start so that it is durable, repairable and can be recycled at end of life.

## Procurement process

### Market Engagement

Initial engagement was undertaken with the clothing manufacturer (Brook Taverner) and the clothing supplier (Haven, a social enterprise). Haven place and dispatches to order, finishing the garments by attaching logos.

The following questions were asked of the supplier market:

*The Scottish Parliament are approaching the end of our current Corporate Clothing Contract and we are looking to engage the market to establish what options are potentially available to us, should we chose to go out to a full tender exercise in the relet of the contract, rather than utilising a framework.*

*Your organisation has been identified during our market research as a potential supplier for our*



*corporate clothing requirements and I would be very grateful if you could please answer a few questions for us as part of our ongoing market research.*

*There will be a strong focus on sustainability for the new contract. We are very keen to move away from the majority of our end-of-life clothing going to landfill, moving to a circular economy where our end-of-life clothing can either be reused or recycled. One of the current barriers to this is that the Scottish Parliament Logo is currently embroidered onto our clothing, meaning that the clothing has to be destroyed for security reasons. Information on what innovation there is in the market for a removable alternative to embroidery would therefore be greatly appreciated.*

*I would therefore be grateful if you could please respond to the below questions:*

- 1. Is your organisation capable of supplying all of the corporate clothing garments as outlined in the attached document?*
- 2. Do you provide the option to hire corporate clothing?*
- 3. How do you design clothing from the start so that it is durable, repairable and can be recycled at end of life?*
- 4. Do you use recycled content in any of your garments?*
- 5. What are the options to move away from embroidered corporate logos to other options for removable corporate logos so workwear can be reused or recycled?*
- 6. How do you ensure the sustainability of your supply chain?*
- 7. Do you provide a clothing repair/maintenance service?*
- 8. Do you provide an end of life clothing returns service?*

Responses included:

#### Question 3

Garments are produced in tried & tested fabric that we know will perform to the required standards as long as they worn and washed to our guidelines, details attached. Repairability depends on the damage to the garment. Buttons & zips can be replaced on any garment, fabric tear can be stitched or patched but it tends to ruin the look of a garment. There are companies that specialise in recycling garments.

#### Question 4

The majority of the garments supplied are from the Concept Collection which does not currently have any recycled products in. There are 3 other garment collections that are using polyester yarns

produced from recycled bottles.

#### Questions 5 and 7

Potentially look into offering a repair service for garments, but this part of the business would need to be developed in partnership with the client over time. Discussion was held on different methods of attaching logos that enabled reuse of garments, such as heat-sealing treatment, rather than stitching.

#### Procurement route

The decision was taken by Scotland Excel to utilise the [Scottish Government's Supported factories and businesses procurement framework](#), which Haven is a supplier to. This is a multi-lot, multi-supplier framework for the provision of commodities reserved for supported businesses. This reflected Scottish Parliament's need to ensure continuity of supply of required workwear, while continuing to better understand procurement options and the potential for circular approaches from the wider market.

A meeting with Haven was followed by evaluation of the response to tender requirements.

Having received assurances regarding services available Scottish Parliament has committed to continuing with Haven for the clothing supply and tax tabbing service, moving away from embroidered logos with relevant alternatives described below.

#### Results

Haven have committed as follows:

- Haven have created a Net Zero Carbon Plan, on the back of our contract and a sustainability event that they attended at the Parliament back in April 2022, with the target to become carbon neutral by 2030. Haven is also committed to supporting SPCB with the transition to a circular economy.
- Haven have committed to provide a minor repair and alteration service as part of the contract in order to increase the durability of garments – this is a service that they haven't provided before.
- Haven have committed to providing either pin or magnetic Parliament logo name badges with Tax Tabs rather than embroidery of the Parliament logo – this will allow for all Parliament clothing to be either reused or recycled at end of life rather than shredded/incinerated, which has been the case for years for security reasons due to embroidered logos.



- Haven have committed to keeping an eye on the market to establish any other alternatives to embroidery which will allow for the removal of logos at end of life. These will be assessed on an annual basis.
- Should embroidery be required for any reason, Haven have indicated that they can provide the removal of embroidered logos using a stitch eraser (a time-consuming process so not recommended) to allow for the garment's reuse.
- Haven have committed to redesigning the fixing of Parliament Tax Tabs so that they can be removed and returned to Haven at the garment's end of life and then reused on new orders.
- Haven will provide more sustainable clothing options. It is anticipated that the Parliament Security and Visitor Services teams will move to suits which contain between 15-50 recycled plastic bottles per suit and that Security, FM and Events teams will wear Fleeces made using 100% PET recycled plastic bottles and polo shirts made from 100% pre-shrunk ring-spun organic cotton.
- Community benefits (subject to confirmation/ clarification) - Haven are keen to further support SPCB add social value into the contract by providing disabled contract labour in the areas of warehousing and office administration under their new Transitional Workforce Solutions which supports the supported placement of disabled workers into host employers, providing vital additional training and personal skill development for workers.
- Haven's supply chain is externally audited and certified by SEDEX on an annual basis undertaking a detailed 4-Pillar SMETA (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit) audit. SMETA 2-Pillar audit comprising of Labour Standards and Health & Safety, these are mandatory modules for any SMETA audit. It also contains the additional elements of Management Systems, Entitlement to work, Subcontracting and Homeworking and a shortened Environment assessment. SMETA 4-Pillar audit includes all the above elements; plus, the additional pillars of Environment and Business Ethics.
- Throughout the lifetime of the contract, Haven's Contract Manager will track and report on the increase in environmentally sustainable products. If additional environmentally friendly garments come to market they will be added to Haven's offering on an annual basis.
- Potential options that Haven will explore with the Scottish Parliament in order to increase the supply of products that are environmentally sustainable, includes workwear produced from the:
  - Use of Organic Cotton –reduces the use of pesticides (16% of the worlds pesticides are currently used on the 2.4% of arable land used for the production of cotton). Using Organic Cotton can reduce the impact of this.
  - Use of Recycled Polyester – Polyester produced from recycled PET (Polyethylene-terephthalate) beverage bottles (i.e. single use water, fizzy drink and fruit juice bottle) reduces air, water and ground pollution.
  - Use of alternative fabrics –for example Bamboo which does not require pesticides and agrochemicals.
  - Environmentally friendly products will only be offered if there is no impact to the performance or durability of any Personal Protective Equipment being procured.
  - Haven aims as its preference to offer products certified by internationally recognised bodies such as the Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP), formerly the Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production, which is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting safe, lawful, humane, and ethical manufacturing around the world through certification and education. The WRAP certification programme mainly focuses on the apparel, footwear and sewn products sectors. Also Oeko -Tex certified goods which confirm the human-ecological safety of textile products and leather articles from all stages of production (raw materials and fibres, yarns, fabrics ready-to-use end products) along the textile value chain; attesting to socially and environmentally sound conditions in production facilities.



## Lessons learned

Engagement with markets and existing suppliers is essential to help identify opportunities for applying circular approaches; sharing your ambitions with the market stimulates them to provide solutions. While the textiles market is relatively mature and capable of providing sustainable solutions, Scottish Parliament's experience shows that a collaborative approach can improve circularity outcomes.

This provides opportunities to promote a positive two-way dialogue:

1. For SPCB to set out its intended objectives, which support Scotland's transition to Net Zero and a Circular Economy while also supporting social improvement, and to seek detail on how these may be supported, including through continual improvement by the market, including incumbent suppliers.
2. For suppliers to review SPCB objectives, to consider how their business models support this and whether changes are necessary – this may include the provision of additional services (such as repair services) or potential partnering with other businesses or organisations. This will reflect the importance of SPCB (or other public bodies) as a customer and the benefits for suppliers from alternatives to their business models.