

Buying electricity well

What to check before you sign



The unit rate is the part of the bill everyone argues about, and it is worth arguing about, but a good procurement outcome is mostly timing, evidence and clarity, not haggling alone.

The checks that matter

Check	What to know
Contract end dates	Miss a renewal window and you can fall onto out-of-contract rates, which are far higher. Diarise the contract end date twelve months ahead, renewal windows typically open 28 to 90 days before the end date, and missing notice risks rolling onto more expensive default rates.
What is in the rate	Standing charges, pass-through vs fixed components, commission and broker arrangements. Ask for the breakdown in writing.
Bill validation	Invoices routinely disagree with contracts: wrong rates, duplicate charges, estimated reads. Check every bill against the contract terms and the metered consumption, overcharges can be recovered, sometimes back over years.
Timing the market	Procurement windows chosen with evidence of where prices sit, rather than bought on the day the renewal letter arrives.
Your data decides your deal	The better your consumption picture, the better the price you can negotiate: suppliers price risk, and a well-documented profile is lower risk.

Three questions to ask any supplier

- What exactly is in this rate, and what is passed through separately?
- What commission is included, and who is paying it?
- What happens to my price if I do nothing when the contract ends?

How Hawley Energy helps: procurement through our Baseline Power service, no hidden commissions, procurement windows chosen with precision, and bill audits that recover overcharges. One point of accountability across the buying, the data and the compliance.

Worked example (illustrative): a site spending £200,000 a year on electricity misses its renewal notice and rolls onto out-of-contract rates for three months. Those default rates are typically more expensive than contracted prices, so even a 2 to 3p/kWh gap over a quarter can mean thousands of pounds, all for want of a diary reminder. The cheapest procurement win is often simply never falling out of contract.

Where this fits the bigger picture

Procurement is the last step, not the first. Reduce what you use (monitoring, controls, drives), generate what you can (solar, batteries), and then buy the smaller remainder as competitively as possible. Buying well before cutting demand means paying good money to over-contract a problem you could have engineered away first.

It also connects back to the data: your consumption profile is part of your negotiating position, and the half-hourly evidence in this pack is what turns a generic renewal quote into a priced-to-your-site deal.

Remember: the cheapest source of capital is the energy you are wasting.

Here's the bit people learn the hard way, too. If you're ever changing that capacity, give some proper consideration to introducing limitations on the connection agreement, in case you need to increase it again in the future. Skip that, and going back a second time becomes very messy and very expensive.



About Hawley Energy

Hawley Energy is an independent energy consultancy based in West Yorkshire. We turn energy compliance pressure into measurable progress: data analytics and reporting (Enerlyse), transparent procurement (Baseline Power), coordinated project delivery and flexible financing (PowerPacks), with one point of contact and complete accountability. Certified to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001, and led by a CIBSE-accredited ESOS Lead Assessor, we replace guesswork with evidence-driven insight. The cheapest source of capital is the energy you are wasting.

Talk it through: no pressure

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30-minute call · I love a challenge



Sources: Ofgem guidance on contract transparency; Hawley Energy bill-audit practice. Outcomes depend on market conditions at the time.

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