

Inside this issue:

Working with small businesses and the third sector. 1

Find a Fairtrade supplier. 2

SCMS 1 year on. 3

Procurement training. 4

Equality, diversity & procurement. 5

Welcome to the Procurement Unit '5 in 5 briefing' (5 articles in 5 minutes).

We want to hear from you. Please give us your feedback, good or bad.

- Is there anything you would like to see in future newsletters?
- Please [Click Here](#) to complete our quick questionnaire (3 questions).

Or Email us at: cpu.5in5@leeds.gov.uk



Wayne Baxter
Chief Procurement Officer

1. Working with small businesses and the third sector makes good business sense.

The main complaint that SMEs have about Local Authority contracts is that the large contracts are too large, and the small contracts are not advertised widely enough.

For a contract valued under £100K with no approved list or framework contract in place, departments are required to get at least 3 written quotes. If the estimate is over £10K the scheme **must** also be openly advertised on the Supplier & Contract Management System. This does not mean that quotes under £10K cannot be advertised on SCMS & the Procurement Unit would strongly encourage departments to do so.

This is where you can take advantage of the Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) to find the most suitable firms to provide you with the best possible quote.

More than 5,000 SMEs have registered on the SCMS, and want to work with Leeds City Council.

They are looking for small value contracts and can provide a vast range of products and services, ranging from furniture and furnishings, to teaching aids, photography, baby and childcare products, exhibition stands newsletter production, there is even a brass band and many more.

[Click Here](#) to read more.

2. Find a Local Fairtrade Product Supplier with the Contract Information System.



It is council policy that coffee and tea in free vend, hot drinks vending machines is fair trade. Council Officers now have access to a list of local Fairtrade certified hot drinks vending machines suppliers through the Contract Information System (CIS).

Do you have a hot drinks vending machine? If so, is it a free vend, hot drinks vending machine for council use only? If yes, when the arrangement for your machine terminates and you look for a replacement supplier you can access lists for local suppliers of vending machines that supply Fairtrade certified drinks.

The CIS now holds a list of regional Fairtrade hot drinks vending machine suppliers as well as other Fairtrade products. The lists are provided by the Fairtrade Foundation, the UK co-ordination body for the FAIRTRADE Mark.

Please [Click Here](#) to read more about Fairtrade suppliers.

3. Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) – 1 year on.

It's now twelve months since Leeds became one of the first implementers of the innovative supplier and contract management system (SCMS) scms.alito.co.uk. The regional web based solution enabling on line approved list applications, electronic tendering and contract management.

Leeds is a major contributor to the project and has seen a fantastic level of support within the organisation which has contributed to the success of the system. We now have almost 250 officers registered to use SCMS in Leeds, including Contract Managers, Procurement Officers, Supplier Administrators etc. – a number which is increasing rapidly as the system is promoted throughout the Authority.

To read more about the Supplier and Contract Management System [Click Here](#).

4. Want to learn more about procurement?



Having a well skilled and trained workforce undertaking procurement activities across the council is key to projects achieving a high quality service and generating the required efficiency savings.

The Procurement Unit is introducing a number of short, structured learning courses which will aim to improve the skills and knowledge of those staff who are involved in procurement. The courses are also suitable for officers who want to learn

more about what procurement is and the work that we do.

To read more about procurement training please [Click Here](#).

5. Addressing Equality in Procurement.

Leeds is a cosmopolitan city. It is a city of many cultures, languages, races, religions and lifestyles. It is a welcoming city to immigrants and there is a mix of very different neighbourhoods. Despite this, there is still evidence of unfair discrimination against people because of their race, faith, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation or lifestyle.

Equality is about treating people fairly and ensuring that we do not unfairly discriminate against particular individuals, groups or communities.

Diversity is about understanding that each individual is unique and will have different experiences, expectations and needs.

Leeds City Council spends millions of pounds every year on contracts with private and voluntary organisations for goods, works and services. All groups in our communities have a right to expect that public money is spent on local services, which suit their needs. In addition it should be spent in a way which promotes equality of opportunity and delivers high quality goods and services.

Promoting equality and diversity through procurement is important and it should be considered as an integral part of the contract.

To read more [Click Here](#).

1. Working with small businesses and the third sector makes good business sense.

If you need 3 quotes you might currently look in the phone book, yellow pages, or search the internet. You probably don't have a lot of time to contact firms, those you do contact might not be particularly interested and their quote uncompetitive. By using SCMS we can encourage more competition from a wider supply base and invite quotes from specialist companies who are keen to supply the council.

The Procurement Unit can either provide company details so you can contact them direct, or can provide a full procurement service. We can advertise your quote to the widest market, and also ensure there is an audit trail for the procurement exercise.

If you need to obtain quotes please contact Daren Thornhill, 0113 24 78487 or Email: daren.thornhill@leeds.gov.uk

What is an SME?

The term SME may be defined as an enterprise with less than 250 employees. Third Sector organisations include social enterprises and voluntary, community and faith organisations.

What are the advantages of working with SMEs?

Helping SMEs to compete gives better value for money for the council. Small firms can offer greater competition, lower costs, new ideas, specialisation, responsiveness, flexibility and a high quality of service .

Opening the market to a wider supply base means that you will not miss out on potential suppliers who may be more competitive. You might find innovative solutions you might otherwise have missed and you will avoid the danger of the market stagnating through an ever decreasing number of large suppliers.

But don't large companies provide a better service?

Not necessarily. Being a large customer of a small business means you are very important to the SME. This can result in a more personal level of service and a better relationship with the supplier.

SMEs have short management chains and can respond quickly to changing requirements. SMEs may also be more willing and able to tailor a product or service to meet specific customer needs, whereas a large firm may only sell an established offering. Many SMEs supply high quality specialist products or services that larger suppliers are discouraged from supplying due to limited demand, all of this can mean better value for money.

Why are SMEs important?

- SMEs account for about 99% of all businesses in the UK.
- They account for 57% of employment.
- They are the main source of new employment.

The Government recognises that SMEs are vital to the health of the UK economy and is seeking to create an environment where more entrepreneurs emerge and are successful. In recognition of their importance the government created the Small Business Concordat. This was set up for local authorities in support of the National Procurement Strategy. It is a voluntary code of practice and Leeds signed the concordat in November 2005.

The concordat requires local authorities to adopt SME - friendly practices and to encourage a mixed range of suppliers in order to help develop and stimulate a competitive market.

If you have any questions please contact:
Ian Hodge
Tel: 0113 2474084
Email: ian.hodge@leeds.gov.uk

2. Find a Local Fairtrade Product Supplier with the Contract Information System.



The CIS now holds a list of regional Fairtrade hot drinks vending machine suppliers as well as other Fairtrade products. The lists are provided by the Fairtrade Foundation, the UK co-ordination body for the FAIRTRADE Mark.

The CIS is the council's dedicated internet site providing details of all relevant corporate and departmental contracts. To use the CIS enter the web address <http://cis.leeds.gov.uk> in your internet browser or go to the intranet homepage and use the speedlink on the bottom right hand side. You will need to register a username and password. To access the lists type the words 'fair trade' in the search box at the top of the screen.

What is fair trade?

Fair trade guarantees that farmers and workers in the developing world are paid a stable minimum wage for their product or crop. Farmers and workers in the developing world are also paid an extra amount of money to invest in schemes that will benefit their wider community.

Leeds and fair trade

Leeds City Council passed a resolution in support of fair trade in 2003. The City of Leeds was awarded 'Fairtrade City' status in 2004 by the Fairtrade Foundation. We are committed to increasing the availability of Fairtrade products, or equivalent, wherever possible.

The FAIRTRADE Mark

The Fairtrade Foundation award a consumer label – the FAIRTRADE Mark (see above) to products that meet internationally recognised fair trade standards. The FAIRTRADE Mark is the only consumer label that focuses on ensuring farmers in developing countries receive an agreed and stable price for the crops they grow, as well as additional income to invest for the future. There are now over 2,000 Fairtrade products that carry the FAIRTRADE Mark. To see the full list of Fairtrade products go to The Fairtrade Foundation's website at : www.fairtrade.org.uk

Did you know that Leeds City Council has a corporate policy in support of fair trade?

Corporate Policy on Fair Trade

Leeds City Council (the members sitting as full Council) passed the following resolution on 4 November 2003 which forms the basis of the council's corporate policy on Fair Trade:

"That this council notes the need to improve the economic and social conditions of Third World workers and farmers working for poverty wages in incredibly poor conditions."

To learn more about what you can do to support Fairtrade at work please go to the internet site www.fairtradeatwork.org.uk or the Procurement interest area on the intranet homepage.

3. Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) – 1 year on.

The benefits of communicating electronically have also been realised by the business community as over 9000 organisations have self registered to work for Leeds, a figure which climbs to almost 14,000 if all participating Councils (i.e. all 22 in the Yorkshire and the Humber region) are taken into consideration.

Once registered, these organisations have direct access to procurement opportunities across the region. As far as Leeds is concerned, we ensure that any scheme with an estimated contract value of £10,000 or above is posted on the site in order that we comply with our Contract Procedure Rules. Not only are the tender details posted to the site, but the applicable documentation is also attached, providing the opportunity to undertake the whole process in an electronic format. By doing this we are seeking to make the whole process easier for potential tenderers, more efficient in terms of cost and flexibility and overall improve the Councils ability to engage more fully with the business community. During the twelve months of operation, 1069 tendering opportunities have been placed on the SCMS website by Leeds, resulting in 862 contract awards totalling approximately £82M worth of business (the remainder not having reached contract award stage as yet). This excludes framework contracts.

A number of system or system related developments are currently being considered which will hopefully further enhance the existing base product, and these will be publicised in future editions of this newsletter. One important development however has seen the introduction of the SCMS Help Desk, a dedicated team of officers dealing with all system related problems or issues. In addition, the Help Desk will provide guidance and advice on how to use the system to its full potential. The Help Desk is available during normal working hours (i.e. 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 4:30pm Friday) to all users, both internal buyers and external suppliers, and can be contacted by phone or email – the details are:

Telephone: 0113 2474001

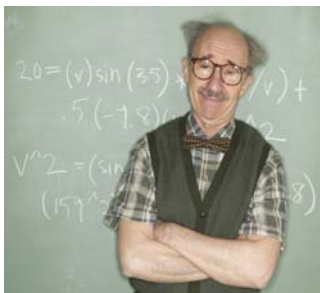
Email: scms@yhcoe.org.uk

If you would like to find out more about the SCMS or arrange a demonstration, please contact Steve Kelvin, Procurement Performance and Systems Manager, Procurement Unit:

Telephone: 0113 22 43466

Email: steve.kelvin@leeds.gov.uk

4. Want to learn more about procurement?



A new training course, 'An Introduction to Procurement', has recently been introduced and is now available for staff to attend. The course aims to de-mystify the world of procurement, explain the benefits of good procurement practice to the council and takes staff through the procurement process in order that they may undertake their own quotation exercises.

The course lasts for approximately three hours and will explain (in a non-technical way) the rules and regulations that govern the work we undertake. It will explain many of the new initiatives that we are engaging in such as opening up procurement opportunities to the third sector and factoring environmental issues into the procurement process.

The training is provided in a city centre location on a periodic basis or can be provided in any office location on request.

The Procurement Unit currently offers courses on Contracts Procedure Rules and EU Procurement Regulations. Further structured learning courses are being developed on specification writing, evaluation skills and contract management and will be introduced later in the year. If you are interested in attending any of these training sessions, they will be advertised on the procurement training pages of the intranet as well as in future editions of this newsletter.

To register your interest in the 'Introduction to Procurement' course, or to find out more information on other learning opportunities please contact:

Nigel Hill

Procurement Training & Development Officer

Telephone: Leeds 24 77542

E-mail: nigel.hill@leeds.gov.uk

To visit the procurement training pages of the intranet go to:

Interest Areas / Procurement / Training or [Click Here](#) .

5. Addressing Equality in Procurement.

Where one or more of your functions is carried out by an external contractor, you remain responsible for ensuring discrimination does not occur.

Contractors themselves must not discriminate, but they do not have the same legal obligation to promote equality of opportunity. So you must build relevant quality considerations into the procurement process to ensure the contractor meets your requirements.

The Procurement Unit has produced a guide to including equality and diversity issues in the procurement process.

The guide provides an introduction to the different tools and techniques that will help you to address equality and diversity issues in your procurement processes.

The first part of the guide describes the issues that you need to consider such as:

- Documentation
- Quality
- Specifications
- Service User Involvement
- Contract Terms
- Monitoring

There is also a real example of a scheme's quality criteria and evaluation model.

The second part of the guide describes the work that goes on in the Procurement Unit. This is the ongoing, behind the scenes work, that supports the procurement process and contributes to equality and diversity in the council's service provision.

To read the guide go to the Intranet / Interest Areas / Procurement / Equality and Diversity / How to address equality and diversity in the procurement process.

Or [Click Here](#) for a direct link.

Should you need more help and detailed guidance please do not hesitate to contact a Procurement Officer or;

Ian Hodge
Telephone: 0113 2474084
Email: ian.hodge@leeds.gov.uk



Ian Hodge
Procurement Projects Officer
4th Floor West
Civic Hall
Leeds LS1 1UR
T: 0113 247 4084