



# Procurement Health Check: Improving procurement for better service delivery.

## Introduction

Since the McClelland report was published, councils have significantly improved their procurement. The momentum that has built up is impressive, and the collaboration that is taking place through the Centres of Expertise in Scotland is also starting to bear fruit.

But challenges remain, including:

- **Considering strategic partnerships to underpin the delivery of shared services (frontline, corporate services, front office)**
- **Sharing best practice within the commissioning and procurement of social care and learning the lessons for other council services**
- **Improving relationships with the third sector**
- **Establishing/participating in regional e-Marketplaces**
- **Supporting sustainable procurement, including the new equalities agenda**
- **For councils who have not done so, adopting the Small Business Friendly Concordat.**

## How we can help

SOLACE Enterprises has extensive experience in helping councils to improve and achieve the original goals of the McClelland report and to deal with the increased pressures for economy and demand management brought about by the current economic downturn and the greater demands on public services. We do this in the way which best suits individual councils; but which has at its heart a 'health-check' approach that analyses where you are and how change can be best focussed for improvement.

Our overriding concern in performing this role will be to objectively identify issues that will improve performance and use an understanding of the range of possible solutions to deliver a workable set of forward looking proposals.

## The work programme

We would use two seamless phases for the work. In our analysis and 'as is' phase we would use meetings with senior Members and Officers to gain high level understanding and hold in depth structured interviews with procurement staff and service managers to complete a 'picture' of the working of the current arrangements; review policies and procedures; undertake an equality impact

assessment of the council's procurement strategy and policies, and evaluate the council's procurement processes against 'excellence' standards and key performance measures. This would be presented to the council in an agreed format.

In our second phase we would outline proposals to improve, based on judging how capable the current arrangements are for delivering the council's corporate objectives and 'future-proofing' the council's arrangements to improve areas such as ensuring community benefits; core labour standards; sustainability; whole-life costing and equalities and diversity.

Deliverables could include proposals for embedding the culture changes proposed through training and continuous professional development, and proposals for business process improvements linked to ongoing compliance; such as enhanced supply chain management (including learning from the Pennington report), and better more consistent and transparent performance management.

This 'health-check' is likely to take between 8 and 12 working days depending on the size of the council and represents good value for the results achieved.

## Our consultant

The work will be carried out by Ray Tomkinson, previously responsible for contracting for Birmingham City Council and a member of the Audit Commission's "Learning from Inspection" working group on procurement in 2002. Ray has recently been acting as the 'Subject Matter Expert' assisting Argyll & Bute and Moray Councils in developing their change proposals for improved procurement across the councils. In 2008, he reviewed the procurement arrangements for the Scottish Care Commission and the Scottish Social Services Council, providing them with recommendations on new administrative arrangements, new policies and procedures and recommendations on compliance arrangements. Later that year he was engaged by Uttlesford District Council to undertake a review of their procurement arrangements, providing them with a new Procurement strategy, policy and procedures and to recommend new ways of improving procurement in the council.

For further information please contact the Resource Centre. You can either phone on **0845 601 0649** or email **resourcecentre@solaceenterprises.com**

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