



# Everyone Procures

**Doing Business with Kingston Council**



**May 2006**

**[www.kingston.gov.uk](http://www.kingston.gov.uk)**

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## Introduction

Each year the Royal Borough of Kingston spends millions of pounds on goods, works and services.

The Council is committed to working in partnership with its contractors and suppliers. We take a positive approach to procurement and aim to create a business friendly environment for both the Council and its partners to work within.

The information contained in these pages and on our website aims to help all potential contractors, consultants and suppliers to tender for contracts with the Royal Borough of Kingston.

We've also included information on what legislation and rules affects the Council's tendering requirements and the procedures which apply to tendering for Council work.

All contracts must comply with UK law, and with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and procedures for obtaining quotations, tenders and awarding contracts.

The information and guidance here will tell you what we need, what we buy, who we buy from, how we advertise and how we work.

In addition we have answers to frequently asked questions and a jargon buster that provides definitions of commonly used procurement terms.

You can also view related documents in pdf format including the policies and strategy that inform all of our procurement activities and ensure that we achieve our aims. These documents can be found in the Key documents for procurement in Kingston page on our website.

## What we need and what we buy

We buy a wide range of goods, works and services every year. These range from tissues to tarmac, books to buildings, locksmiths to legal advice and cleaners to consultants.

Listed below are examples of some of the goods, services and works we frequently purchase.

You can view our current tenders on the tender opportunities page on our website and upcoming tender opportunities planned over the next 2 years on the forthcoming tenders page on our website.

### Corporate contracts

The council has a number of corporate contracts and supplies arrangements for goods or services that are used commonly throughout the council (e.g. for stationery). All council departments are required to use these corporate contracts. Further information can be found within the Corporate contracts section.

Corporate contracts are marked with an asterisk (\*) in the list below.

#### Goods

- Office furniture
- Computer consumables\*
- Cleaning materials
- Desktop hardware and software\*
- Domestic furniture
- Vehicles (hire) \*
- Stationery and paper\*
- General electrical including white goods (cookers, fridges, microwaves etc)
- Protective clothing
- Mobile phones\*
- Water coolers

#### Services

- Printing and reprographics \*
- Grounds maintenance
- Estate cleaning
- Building maintenance \*
- Legal services contracts for various types of specialist legal work
- Catering (school meals, meals on wheels)
- Security
- Building cleaning
- Refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing
- CCTV monitoring
- Passenger transport
- Managed service for temporary staff

## Works

- Civil engineering works
- Building and associated works contracts (Housing, Schools and Public Buildings)  
Domestic furniture\*

A pdf version of the Contracts List contains information on current contracts that have a total value of more than £50,000. This list includes the supplier's details, the name of the contract, annual value and when the arrangement expires. This list is available from our Doing Business pages on our website.

## **Who we buy from**

We recognise that there is more to procurement than the lowest price. We believe value is measured in many other ways. Some of these measures mean we will encourage supplies from:

- Local businesses as well as major companies
- SMEs and micro businesses
- Ethnic businesses
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Other public sector organisations

We will also:

- Consider small businesses who want to deliver big projects, and bigger companies who want to provide small products.
- Encourage our partners to use local businesses and suppliers for their needs.
- Use central Corporate Contracts particularly for items which are used widely across the council.

### **Small Medium Enterprises**

The Council has adopted the National Procurement Concordat for small and medium sized enterprises. This is a statement of principles to encourage effective trade between local authorities and small businesses.

### **Procurement of services from the Voluntary Sector**

The Council is committed to developing its relationship with the voluntary sector as suppliers of services in line with the Council's Voluntary Sector Compact agreed in 2000. The voluntary sector, particularly at local level, has strong links with the community and can be skilled in drawing on resources in the community and gaining support for new projects.

The voluntary sector brings an understanding of the needs of specific client groups and a commitment and capacity to reach and earn the trust of excluded or disadvantaged groups. Their independence, commitment to charitable aims and direct experience of the community they work with can make them especially responsive and flexible in seeking to meet customers needs.

The voluntary sector is in a position to offer innovative solutions, often in niche markets, where private sector suppliers are not willing or able to engage in highly specialised service provision.

## How we advertise

Where no corporate contract exists, our officers will always look for a range of suppliers. We will look within and outside the Borough to ensure that suppliers can provide the most cost effective solution to meet our standards.

The value of the procurement determines how and where we advertise:

- Tenders and contracts over £50,000 are advertised online within our tender opportunities page and in local papers. Advance notice is also given online on our forthcoming tenders page on our website
- Adverts and notices for tenders and contracts with a value of more than the EU Public Procurement Directive thresholds are also published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), in compliance with European requirements
- Purchases and contracts less than £50,000 are sourced locally where possible. The Kingston Business Directory and the Kingston Voluntary Action's (KVA) publication called 'Directory of Community Organisations' are useful sources for potential suppliers.

## How we buy

The Council procures along departmental lines with co-ordination of common and large contracts through the Improvement and Procurement Team based in the Chief Executive's Department.

The Council's five departments are: Chief Executive's; Community Services; Environmental Services; Finance, and Learning and Children's Services.

In 2003/04 we handled approximately 185,000 invoices. To buy goods, services or works consistently, efficiently and effectively we have a process or Procurement Path. This helps officers ask the right questions at the right time, to make the right decisions.

The first decision we take is to decide whether the procurement is covered by a Corporate Contract. If the goods, works or services are covered by a Corporate Contract then officers must use that contract.

If the procurement is not covered by a Corporate contract then the next step is to classify the procurement as Minor, Routine or Major:

- If the total cost is less than £1,000 it is a Minor Procurement
- If the total cost is more than £150,000 it is a Major Procurement
- If the procurement poses a high risk to the Council or its services it is also a Major Procurement
- If it is neither Corporate, Major or Minor then it is a Routine Procurement

We use these classifications to help us determine:

- How we advertise
- What kind of contract is appropriate
- The tender process that we use
- Key documents for Procurement in Kingston

# The Procurement Process

All of our business is procured through a competitive process - whether it be comparing quotes for low value purchases, or a formal tender process for high risk/high value contracts.

We have a number of different procurement processes and the time frames for each will depend on how complex the procurement is.

If the contract is above the European Union (EU) thresholds and is not exempt then the EU regulations will apply. The EU regulations set out the time frames for each stage in the process.

It is important for us to allow a reasonable amount of time for prospective suppliers to respond and for us to carry out our evaluations. Sometimes it can take several months for the process to be completed.

The first decision we take is to decide whether the procurement is covered by a Corporate Contract. If the goods, works or services are covered by a Corporate Contract then officers must use that contract. If the procurement is not covered by a Corporate Contract then the next step is to classify the procurement as Minor, Routine or Major.

**Minor procurements** are procurements with a total cost of less than £1,000.

**Routine procurements** are either:

- procurements with a total cost of between £1,000 and £50,000; or
- low/medium risk procurements with a total cost of between £50,000 and £150,000.

**Major procurements** are either:

- high risk procurements with a total cost of between £50,000 and £150,000; or
- procurements with a total cost of over £150,000.

A summary of the procurement processes and when they are normally used is as follows:

<b>Contract Value (total cost)</b>	<b>Procurement Classification</b>	<b>Procurement Process</b>
Under £1,000	Minor	Quotes
£1,000 to £50,000	Routine	Proposals
£50,000 to £150,000	Routine	Standard Tender Contracts which fall within the EU thresholds value & are not exempt categories, follow the procedures as set out in the EU Public Procurement Directives.
High Risk or Over £150,000	Major	EU procurement procedures - could be either an Open, Restricted, or Competitive Dialogue Procedure

Where possible local suppliers will be asked to quote for procurements under £50,000.

## **The Quotes process**

Officers must seek three quotes. Preferably these quotes need to be in writing, but this could mean a catalogue listing, written record of a verbal quote or an email. Where possible, two must be from suitable suppliers based in the Borough.

The Kingston Business Directory and the Kingston Voluntary Actions' (KVA) publication called 'Directory of Community Organisations' are useful sources for potential suppliers.

For items such as specialist publications, where there is only one supplier, there is no need to seek three quotes.

It is not anticipated that Adverts be placed for minor procurements under £1,000.

## **The Proposals process**

Proposals are conducted in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Officers must get at least three written proposals, including two from local suppliers.

If there is a need to advertise, for example if specialist services are required, officers will first place the advert for the attention of suppliers based in the Borough or use the Council's relevant approved list.

Officers will provide suppliers with a written specification (including the selection criteria), a copy of the Council's model conditions, tell you when proposals need to be received by and who you need to contact for any enquiries should be made.

Officers will determine the most satisfactory proposal using the criteria in the specification and cost. Once the decision has been made all suppliers who made proposals will be notified of the decision.

## **The Standard Tender process**

Standard tenders are carried out meeting the requirements of the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

An advert will be placed in one or more local papers and on the Council's website. Where there is a strong market, with many potential suppliers, a Supplier Questionnaire may be provided for interested suppliers to fill out.

After the deadline for responses in the advert, an Invitation to Tender (ITT) will be sent to the selected tenderers. The ITT specifies the selection criteria that officers intend to use. Included with the Invitation to Tender will be:

- the specification
- a copy of the Council's model contract conditions; and
- a letter with detailed tender instructions, the date and time by which tenders need to be returned and the officer to whom further enquiries should be made

All tender envelopes must be clearly marked with job title, tender number and the closing date and time. No indication of the identity of the sender (e.g. franking) should appear on the envelope.

The most satisfactory tender shall be determined using the criteria given in the specification. Once the decision has been made all tenderers who submitted tenders will be notified of the decision.

## **EU procurement procedures**

Where the value of the contract exceeds EU threshold levels the Council will ordinarily use what is known as the Restricted Procedure to tender a contract. All contracts subject to the EU procurement procedures will be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

### *The Restricted procedure*

This is a two-stage approach in which the Council invites interested suppliers to undergo a pre-qualification assessment before inviting them to tender. You will be asked in the advertisement to write, email or fax the Council to express your interest and request the Supplier Questionnaire.

You must complete the questionnaire and return it within the specified timescale to be considered. The Council will evaluate all the returned Supplier Questionnaires and create a shortlist of suppliers who it will invite to tender for a contract. The tenders are then evaluated and the contract awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender to the Council.

There are two alternative procedures for letting contracts that are occasionally used by the Council: the open procedure and the competitive dialogue procedure.

### *The Open procedure*

Under the open tender procedure all suppliers who respond to an advertisement are invited to tender and supplied with tender documentation, and, in some cases, a Supplier Questionnaire. In this procedure the information you provide in the Supplier Questionnaire will be considered together with your tender bid at the same time.

### *The Competitive Dialogue procedure*

For complex contracts this permits the Council to advertise its needs, requirements and award criteria rather than a specific contract. This provides a starting point for a dialogue with contractors to assist the Council to identify the best way of meeting its needs.

## **Key documents for Procurement in Kingston**

Procurement is not just about 'buying things'; the process of procuring goods, services and partners affects the quality of services we deliver and promotes our key values.

Key policy documents for procurement in Kingston Council include: (The following documents are all available in pdf versions on our website.)

### **Everyone Procures – Our Procurement Strategy 2006**

The Procurement Strategy is the overarching document within the Procurement Framework "Everyone Procures" and responds to national and local developments since RBK's original Procurement Strategy was agreed in 2002. It sets the direction for developing and delivering the aims and objectives of the Council through procurement to ensure the delivery of quality services in the most cost effective and environmentally sustainable way.

The Strategy, which links with a number of Council policies, strategies and procedures, is implemented through Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and supported by a new Ethical Procurement Policy.

### **Together in Partnership - Doing Business with Kingston Council**

The Council has come a long way since the adoption of the first Procurement Strategy in 2002 and the launch of the Contractor Charter in 2003.

We want to build on the success of the Contractor Charter to develop further relationships with our Partners and Suppliers and promote the principles outlined in the Procurement Strategy and Ethical Procurement Policy. We know that it is only by working together in partnership that we can deliver the better services that our communities have come to expect.

This document sets out the principles of our approach and the responsibilities of the Council and Partners.

### **Everyone Procures – Our Ethical Procurement Policy**

The new Ethical Procurement Policy provides an ethical framework for procurement activities.

Its role is to apply the Council's various policies around sustainable development to its procurements, and thereby to its partners/suppliers. The issues covered include the environment, sustainability, equalities, health and safety, and health and well-being.

## **Tender opportunities**

You can find advertisements for contracts on the Tender opportunities page on our website. We also advertise in trade journals, local and national press and the Official Journal of the European Union.

Any tenders that are advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) can be viewed at Tenders Electronic Daily. Follow the link at the bottom of this page to view the site.

All current advertisements for contracts are displayed on our Tender Opportunities page on our website - [http://www.kingston.gov.uk/tender\\_opportunities.htm](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/tender_opportunities.htm)

## Forthcoming Tenders

You can find information below about contracts and frameworks that will be up for tender in the future. Please do not contact us about the contracts list below until they have been advertised.

Once advertised, there will be a process you will need to follow. This process will be explained to you when you express an interest in a tender.

Tenders and contracts over £50,000 are advertised online within our tender opportunities page on our website and in local papers.

Adverts and notices for tenders and contracts with a value of more than the EU Public Procurement Directive thresholds are also published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), in compliance with European requirements.

<b>Name of Contract</b>	<b>Type of arrangement</b>	<b>Current arrangement expires</b>
AXIS Cash Receipting	Contract	April 2007
Guildhall Security	Contract	April 2007
Recruitment and Provision of Temporary Staff	Contract and framework	June 2007
Building Professional Services - Consultants Panel	Approved List	March 2008
Lifts - Council Property	Contract	March 2008
Lifts - Housing	Contract	March 2008
Waste Transport and Disposal	Contract	September 2008
Servicing of the Council's Static Recycling sites	Contract	September 2008
Refuse Collection	Contract	December 2008

# Questions and Answers about Doing Business with Kingston Council

## How does Kingston Council buy goods and provide services?

*Kingston Council has a range of rules for its procurement. These are based on European legislation, the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Best Practice, with the processes adopted for each contract reflecting the value, risks and expected lifetime of the contract.*

*The rules applying to each contract value are in the Council's Contract Standing Orders.*

*The most formal - and complex - method of Procurement includes advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Kingston Council must adhere to a variety of procedures including timescales, advertising, evaluation methods and contract award procedures.*

*Formal tenders apply to lower value contracts, but involve similar processes without a need to advertise in OJEU.*

*The procedures are designed to ensure that all companies interested in Kingston Council contracts are treated fairly and that all decisions are transparent.*

## How can I supply goods or provide services to Kingston Council?

*To ensure fair competition, all of our needs are advertised. Companies must apply for inclusion in the procurement process when an opportunity is advertised. Each advert states exactly what a company needs to do to be considered.*

*You can see details of current tender opportunities within the web page entitled Tender opportunities.*

## Where does Kingston Council advertise procurement opportunities?

*Where no corporate contract exists, our officers will always look for a range of prices. We will look locally and outside the Borough for those prices to ensure they are competitive.*

*The value of the procurement determines how and where we advertise:*

- *Tenders and contracts over £50,000 are advertised online and in local papers. Advance notice is also given within the web page entitled Forthcoming Opportunities.*

- *Adverts and notices for tenders and contracts excess of EU Public Procurement Directive thresholds are also published in the OJEU, in compliance with European requirements*

*The thresholds as at 1 January 2010 are as follows:*

*Supplies £156,442 (€193,000)*

*Services £156,442 (€193,000)*

*Works £3,927,260 (€4,845,000)*

*\* Including subsidised services contracts under regulation 34.*

*The above thresholds are net of VAT.*

*Purchases and contracts less than £50,000 are sourced locally where possible. The Kingston Business Directory and the KVA publication called 'Directory of Community Organisations' are useful sources for potential suppliers.*

### **I'm a local company. What can I do to supply goods or provide services to Kingston Council?**

*Kingston Council has to treat all potential suppliers fairly. That means that we can't discriminate in favour of local firms. It isn't legal, and we could be challenged by companies that are not local. However, we will encourage supplies from local businesses. You can see details of current tender opportunities within the web page entitled Tender opportunities*

### **How can companies improve their chances of winning contracts?**

*There are a number of ways in which companies can improve their chances of being successful.*

*Most important is to read and follow the instructions for completion and return of the documentation. Ensure that all of the documented evidence requested is provided.*

*Be open and honest. If you are unable to answer a question, give the reason why.*

*Do not answer questions by providing annual reports or marketing / sales brochures. They probably won't be relevant and the evaluation team won't have time to search for the information.*

*Failure to follow the above three points will severely restrict your chances of winning business and could even result in your proposal not being considered.*

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*There are other factors that could improve your chances depending on the procurement opportunity. Some examples are as follows:*

- *Online ordering facility*
- *Ability to accept orders electronically - e-mail or fax*
- *Policies in place dealing with issues such as Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, the Environment and Quality Management*
- *Compliance to Acts such as the Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act*
- *Insurance cover commensurate with the requirements of the procurement opportunity*
- *Technical capacity and ability to ensure delivery or provision of the procurement opportunity*

*Please remember that - no matter how much you might like to undertake a particular contract - if your company does not have the experience that the Council is seeking, it is highly unlikely that your application will be considered.*

#### **I've been unsuccessful in an application for a tender. What can I do?**

*Kingston Council will give you feedback on your submission. We can give feedback over the telephone, or we can arrange to meet you to discuss your submission in detail.*

*As each opportunity is treated separately, do not be put off by lack of success on one occasion - feedback may help you to understand our needs for future opportunities.*

*The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) gives you the right to feedback.*

#### **How do companies return procurement submissions?**

*Full details of how to return proposals will be detailed within the procurement documentation issued and these instructions must be followed to the letter to avoid possible disqualification.*

#### **What is Kingston Council's policy on Health & Safety?**

*Kingston Council is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its residents, employees, visitors and everyone who uses the facilities and services it provides.*

*As a result of this commitment, Health & Safety is included in evaluation criteria for procurement processes and Kingston Council will monitor contracted suppliers.*

*Where risks are higher, such as in construction contracts, Health & Safety can be a significant aspect of the evaluation criteria*

## **What is Kingston Council's policy on Equal Opportunities and Discrimination?**

*Kingston Council is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and the elimination of discrimination of any type.*

*Therefore, Equal Opportunities and compliance to Acts such as Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, are included in the evaluation criteria for procurement processes. Kingston Council will monitor contracted suppliers on these issues throughout the contract period.*

*Where the Council is seeking to appoint a company to provide services, contract monitoring may include the development of performance indicators for equalities monitoring.*

## **What do I do if I need more information?**

*Ask! Contact our Improvement and Procurement team. You can email them at the following address: [procurement@rbk.kingston.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@rbk.kingston.gov.uk)*

## **Where do I find out what contracts are coming up for tender?**

*Our contract opportunities are advertised on our web site, in local or national press, trade journals or the supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union.*

## **How does the tender process work? How long will it take?**

*There are a number of different procurement processes and the time frames for each will depend on how complex the procurement is.*

*You can find more information within the web page titled the Procurement process.*

## **Who is the best person for me to speak to about tender opportunities?**

*There are many tender opportunities within the council. You can view our current tenders on the tender opportunities page and upcoming tender opportunities planned over the next 2 years on the forthcoming tenders page.*

## **Do I have to be based in Kingston to do business with Kingston Council?**

*No. Where no corporate contract exists, our officers will always look for a range of prices. We will look locally and outside the Borough for those prices to ensure they are competitive. Our contract opportunities are open to all suppliers and will be awarded on the basis of best value.*

## **What are the current EU Procurement Directive thresholds?**

*The thresholds as at 1 January 2010 are as follows:*

*Supplies £156,442 (€193,000)*

*Services £156,442 (€193,000)*

*Works £3,927,260\* (€4,845,000)*

*\* Including subsidised services contracts under regulation 34.*

*The above thresholds are net of VAT.*

## **What makes a supplier local?**

*For the purposes of Kingston's Procurement Framework, a local supplier is defined as one that has an operational base in the Royal Borough or within 1 mile of the Borough boundary. Such suppliers support the Borough's economy by providing local employment and accessing local services.*

# Jargon Buster

The following terms are frequently used during the procurement process.

## **Agreement**

The legally binding contract terms and conditions between the parties.

## **BIP**

Business Information Publications Ltd.

## **BME**

Black and Minority Ethnic (EMB is Ethnic Minority Business).

## **Best Value**

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act that all councils ensure that they achieve "best value" from all of their contracts.

## **Contract Standing Orders**

The Council's internal control procedures for procurement and contracting.

## **Contract**

The legal agreement which sets out the rights and obligations of all parties.

## **e-Procurement**

The use of an electronic system to acquire goods, works and services, and payments from third parties. Solutions currently on the market include:

- Complete 'end to end' procurement systems that are integrated with financial back office systems
- Stand alone modules used to seek tenders or quotations (known as e-Sourcing)
- Web-based systems that enable ordering from approved catalogues (e-Marketplaces)
- Other web-based systems such as e-Auctions
- Procurement cards for ordering and payment
- Payment through BACS

## **EU**

The European Union.

## **EU Legislation**

EU Public Procurement Directives, which are the rules and regulations that public sector organisations must comply with when completing any procurement process.

## **FOIA**

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

**ITT**

Invitation To Tender. This document is used in the tendering process and will advise you of when and where tenders should be submitted.

**KPI**

Key Performance Indicator. KPIs are tools which help us to measure the performance of suppliers against their contractual obligations. KPIs are normally detailed in the service specification document.

**Method Statement**

The document used in a tender process which sets out questions for the suppliers to answer which help us understand how you intend to provide the goods or services.

**OJEU**

The Official Journal of the European Union. Contracts which fall within the EU threshold values & are not exempt categories must be advertised for tender by placing a notice in the OJEU. Current EU thresholds as at 1 January 2010 are as follows:

Supplies £156,442 (€193,000)

Services £156,442 (€193,000)

Works £3,927,260 (€4,845,000)

\* Including subsidised services contracts under regulation 34.

The above thresholds are net of VAT.

**PQQ**

Means pre-qualification questionnaire - see supplier questionnaire.

**Procurement**

Buying or purchasing goods or services and taking into account the whole life costs. The acquisition by purchase, lease, rent, hire, transfer, loan or other legal means of the goods, services and works required and/or used by an organisation.

**SLA**

Service Level Agreement. This is sometimes used internally between council departments.

**SME**

Small and Medium business Enterprises.

**Specification**

The document which we use to set out our requirements for the goods or services.

**Supplier questionnaire** (also known as 'PQQ' - Pre-qualification questionnaire - and 'RFI' - Request For Information)

This document is used in the Routine procurement process and the Major procurement process. The responses are used to help us evaluate submissions or suppliers depending on the procedure used.

**Sustainability**

The environmental issues to be considered.

**Tender**

The procurement process of inviting and evaluating bids from suppliers to provide goods or services.

**Total Cost** (also known as total aggregated value)

The total cost of the overall requirement over the contract term. Individual or annual costs are irrelevant where goods, services or works are of the same type or have similar characteristics. The total cost of the contract must be used when deciding which process.

**TUPE**

Means the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981. The purpose of TUPE is to preserve continuity of employment and to safeguard employment rights of all employees whose employment transfers to a new employer as a result of a relevant transfer.

## Useful Procurement websites

Drawn together on this page are a number of links to external procurement related websites that you may find useful.

### Local Organisations

**Kingston Voluntary Action** - Kingston Voluntary Action is an umbrella body for voluntary and community organisations in the outer London borough of Kingston upon Thames. Its main role is to strengthen voluntary and community activity in the borough.

*[www.kva.org.uk](http://www.kva.org.uk)*

**Kingston Business Directory** - Lists Businesses in the London Borough of Kingston Upon Thames.

*[www.kingston.gov.uk/business/council\\_business\\_services/directory.htm](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/business/council_business_services/directory.htm)*

**Kingston Chamber of Commerce** - The Kingston Chamber of Commerce is a membership based organisation that exists to provide networking opportunities for small businesses, represent their views at all levels and provide them with information and support.

*[www.kingstonchamber.co.uk](http://www.kingstonchamber.co.uk)*

**Federation of Small Businesses - North Surrey Branch** - The Federation of Small Businesses is a group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms.

*[www.fsb.org.uk/data/default.asp?id=116&loc=150](http://www.fsb.org.uk/data/default.asp?id=116&loc=150)*

**Kingston First** - Information about Kingston's entertainment, shopping and places of interest to visit.

*[www.kingstonfirst.co.uk](http://www.kingstonfirst.co.uk)*

**Kingston Town Centre Management**- Kingston Town Centre Management provides news and information on town centre management issues affecting Kingston.

*[www.ktcm.co.uk](http://www.ktcm.co.uk)*

## **Regional Organisations**

### **Business Link for London**

Business Link for London is a small business support and advice service for London, providing free, impartial and comprehensive advice to businesses to help them start up and grow.

*[www.businesslink4london.com](http://www.businesslink4london.com)*

### **London Centre of Excellence**

The London Centre of Excellence (LCE), is one of nine regional Centres of Excellence created by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It aims to help the thirty-two London boroughs, the Corporation of London and the Greater London Authority (GLA) deliver the efficiency agenda.

*[www.lcpe.gov.uk](http://www.lcpe.gov.uk)*

### **London Contracts and Supplies Group**

The London Contracts and Supplies Group aims to reduce costs for both suppliers and authorities through co-ordinated purchasing and supply.

*[www.lcsg.org](http://www.lcsg.org)*

## **National Organisations**

### **Small Business Advice Service**

The Small Business Advice Service provides free professional advice to businesses.

*[www.smallbusinessadvice.org.uk](http://www.smallbusinessadvice.org.uk)*

### **Small Business Service**

The Small Business Service provides straightforward business information and access to a wide network of business support.

*[www.sbs.gov.uk](http://www.sbs.gov.uk)*

## Contact the Improvement and Procurement Team

Day to day operational management of procurement services remains with Directorates. The Council also has a corporate Improvement and Procurement Team (the I&P team) who work with departments supporting the renewal and procurement of all major services. The Team provides guidance and is responsible for the Procurement Framework - 'Everyone Procures'.

The I&P team's corporate responsibilities are to:

- Develop, own, embed, monitor and maintain the Procurement Strategy, Cycle and Framework;
- Coordinate response to internal/external audit and scrutiny;
- Establish and maintain corporate arrangements for some widely used goods and services, consulting with Service Directorates regarding their requirements.

The I&P team act as internal consultants to support Service Directorates during individual procurements. How involved the team becomes in a procurement is decided by the procurement classification.

In general terms this includes:

- Providing specialist procurement experience and project management in Major procurements;
- Bringing objective and independent challenge to service scope and delivery models during relevant stages of the Procurement Cycle; and
- Reviewing key documents.

You can contact the Improvement and Procurement team by using the following email address:

[procurement@rbk.kingston.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@rbk.kingston.gov.uk)