

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 Euros)

Services £156,442 (193,000 Euros)

Works £3,927,260 (4,845,000 Euros)*

** 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.

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

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 Euros)

Services £156,442 (193,000 Euros)

Works £3,927,260 (4,845,000 Euros)*

** 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.

Does Kingston Council maintain any select lists or frameworks for procuring goods or services?

For building related works, Exor Management Services Ltd (Exor) have compiled a database of Approved Suppliers for the Council which is operated on behalf of the Council by NPS, its Technical Consultant. If you have any queries about these arrangements or the operation of the Standing List, please contact the Council's Technical Support Consultant: Annette Turner, NPS South East Ltd, 76 Bridge Road, Hampton Court, KT8 9HD. Tel: 020 8481 7926. email: annette.turner@nps.co.uk