



# Together in Partnership

Doing Business with Kingston Council



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# Foreword

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

We have moved away from traditional contracts that were often adversarial and input based towards long-term partnership relationships. Long-term strategic partnerships are now in place for a number of our services and we will continue to develop this approach. This is a big achievement for both the Council and its partners.

These new arrangements are based upon good relationships. We work together in a spirit of partnership in an honest and open manner based on trust and shared aims.

Future service provision will be developed jointly by the partners, focusing on outcomes and service improvements, utilising the partnership knowledge and skills and prioritising resources effectively.

We have recently revised our Procurement Strategy in the light of national, regional and local initiatives and adopted a new Ethical Procurement Policy to support that strategy. 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 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.

**Councillor Ian Reid**

**Executive Member for Improvement and Performance**

## Aims and Values

As the Council becomes more dependent upon external suppliers, it is increasingly important to develop a clear corporate strategy for how these externally provided services are selected, acquired and managed. We see long term partnership as key to this.

Our revised **Procurement Strategy** aims to:

- improve Council services;
- secure economic benefits for the community through savings and investment;
- make the Council a better client and partner;
- maintain above average performance standards.

Our Strategy sets out the way we will transform procurement in order to achieve our aims through better controls, better organisation, efficient use of resources and effective engagement with our partners.

The Strategy is supported by a new **Ethical Procurement Policy**. This applies the Council's various policies regarding sustainable development to its procurement practices, and to its partners and suppliers.

The Ethical Procurement Policy draws together our ethical responsibilities including those around equal opportunities, environmental protection and enhancement, fair trade and health and safety, and sets out the practical steps we will take to achieve them through procurement.

# Partnering Principles

These were developed as part of the Contractor Charter. Many of our partners signed up to them in 2003 and we hope that all partners will want to do so. They provide a useful focus for our partnering relationships.

- To work together in a spirit of partnership, sharing commitment and common objectives.
- To foster open and honest communication and trust.
- To deliver high quality services that demonstrate best value for local communities.
- To behave ethically in our business delivery.
- To work together to seek investment opportunities to enhance services.
- To be innovative and imaginative in developing service improvements.
- To identify and solve problems to achieve solutions, not impose penalties.
- To focus on outcomes, adopting a flexible approach to service improvements.
- To share the risks and the benefits.
- To be aware of and accept our respective responsibilities.
- To ensure that the Council's policies, aims and objectives are adhered to in providing services.

# Partnership in Practice

The key to success will be making the partnership work on the ground. This will require both partners to take actions to create an appropriate framework such as:

- create **Partnership Boards** of Councillors, senior officers and senior managers from partners to oversee the partnership and monitor key performance indicators;
- maintain **open book accounting** with joint management of cost increases and budget pressures and shared savings;
- operate **flexible service specifications** - service requirements are developed with partners;
- undertake **shared training** where there are common issues and to induct Partner staff into the Council;
- adopt and work towards the Council's **objectives and ethical values**;
- seek **investment** – identify funding opportunities for service development;
- **innovate** – try new ideas, challenge the status quo and break the mould of client/contractor.

# Partnership Benefits

For partnership to flourish and succeed, this must deliver benefits to both partners. There must be clear understanding and empathy of the outcomes each partner is seeking. Benefits will not always accrue equally or at the same time, which will require a mature and supportive approach.

Benefits will include:

## For the Council

- secure long-term services;
- high quality affordable services with ongoing improvement;
- investment in service developments;
- control over costs;
- contractor staff develop local knowledge and experience and act as ambassadors for the Council.

## For the Partners

- long term business stability;
- guaranteed income streams;
- scope to remodel services;
- developing the supply chain to include SME & local organisations;
- working with a 'business friendly' Council.

# Doing Business with the Council

## Where to get help:

Visit our website at [www.kingston.gov.uk/doing\\_business](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/doing_business) to see our:

- Procurement Strategy;
- Ethical Procurement Policy;
- Contracts Register;
- Sample tender documents;
- Supplier guidance.

## Consult the Improvement and Procurement Team

on 020 8547 5178 for advice and information about:

- procurement process and documentation;
- current contracts and future work;
- ethical procurement, environment and sustainability, equalities, health and safety and healthy living;
- how the Council is supporting the voluntary sector;
- how the Council is supporting small businesses.

