

PROCUREMENT EQUALITY REPORT 2011-2012

The Council is committed to ensuring equality considerations are integrated into procurement decision-making. We spend significant sums of money with external organisations and have high expectations of our all our partners, suppliers and contractors, who are required to demonstrate compliance with our own equality and diversity standards before we do business with them.

In accordance with legislation and best practice we have introduced guidance, questionnaires and a monitoring process to ensure services delivered on behalf of the council, or supporting council activity, reflect our expectations in relation to equality and diversity and support better community cohesion. The main documents supporting this are **Integrating Equality and Diversity into Procurement** and **Procurement – Guidance for Contractors**.

During the 12 month period April 2011 to March 2012 we conducted 131 procurement processes through our online business portal, The Chest. Of these 125 complied fully with procurement procedures in relation to ensuring equalities standards are upheld by external contractors as follows:-

- 44 had completed equalities questionnaires
- 63 were low value procurements either not requiring completion of pre-qualification information or where contractors were selected from a pre-vetted accreditation scheme
- 15 were procured through frameworks where equalities standards had already been demonstrated
- 3 were discontinued and no contract awarded

Action will be taken to ensure equalities standards continue to be recognised throughout the procurement process through dissemination of best practice and training updates. Performance information will be updated annually.

We are continuing to develop our procurement policies in line with legislation and our own aspirations - a new procurement strategy is currently being developed to cover the period 2013 to 2015; and to monitor and improve performance through simplifying processes and better management of contracts and service providers.

This will help us to:-

- Improve value for money;
- Improve the quality, responsiveness and appropriateness of our services;
- Ensure public money is not spent on practices which lead to unfair discrimination to sections of the borough;
- Create a diverse and flexible workforce;
- Deliver more responsive and flexible services in combating social exclusion and building stronger and cohesive communities; and
- Encourage other organisations to promote and practice the council's policies on equality.