

Sustainable development

The Government's approach - delivering UK sustainable development together

Sustainable Procurement Task Force

The Government has a crucial role in furthering sustainable development through its procurement of goods, services and buildings. With a budget of over £125bn, the public sector can transform markets so that the private sector can join forces in pursuing sustainable purchasing policies.

Established in May 2005, the Sustainable Procurement Task Force under the chairmanship of Sir Neville Simms, a leading private sector exponent of sustainable development, is charged with drawing up an action plan by April 2006 to bring about a step-change in sustainable public procurement so that the UK is among the leaders in the EU by 2009.

Speaking on the day of the first meeting, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary Margaret Beckett said: "We want to be an example for others to follow and to demonstrate that everybody involved in purchasing - including householders and the public and private sectors - can contribute to sustainable development."

A Task Force priority will be construction, property and facilities management which has a total annual spend through central and

local government of £33bn, about £230bn nationally equating to 20% of GDP. With the help of all involved in the industry the aim is to continue the move away from historical data allowing a more flexible and up to date framework for evaluation producing not just greater 'greening' but also a stimulus to economic regeneration.

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The first meeting of the Task Force



LGTF case studies

Work continues to identify and publish the case studies of which eight have now been published. These are sent out to members with the LGTF newsletter, such as the case study enclosed with this issue and developed jointly with OGC on the Birmingham Construction Partnership - Decent Homes.

There are three specific areas on which the LGTF wishes to focus:

- Adoption of fair payments practices, including the avoidance of retentions;
- Use of integrated supply chains, especially the early appointment of suppliers and sub-contractors;
- Collaboration amongst authorities for construction procurement, particularly amongst district council.

If you could provide us with examples of how your project illustrates one or more of these themes please get in touch.

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Natalie Clinton

Constructing Excellence Website

The new website makes a dramatic improvement to the appearance, navigability, accessibility and usability of all the resources, tools and information library within Constructing Excellence.

We have completely overhauled all of the main sections of the website including:

- Dynamic home pages customisable by each user - place the information relevant to YOU at your fingertips;
- Intelligent and super fast 'Google' like searching of the entire site to help you find the information you need quickly;
- Clearly defined sector and forum sections such as The Housing Forum, LGTF, BE, etc;

- Tools and facilities available only to registered website users and members;
- Exciting new look and feel for the entire site.

Constructing Excellence recognises that an attractive and easy-to-use web is essential if it is to maintain a competitive position and to improve its services to its members and non-members alike. Development of the new corporate web is being carried out by www.idnet.net in conjunction with the Constructing Excellence IT Department.

Go to www.constructingexcellence.org.uk to try out the new site



Bob King
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Gershon Efficiency Review: Construction Procurement Strand

Bob King has been appointed by the East Midlands Regional Centre of Excellence to project manage the national lead on construction procurement. The work will include mapping existing work on frameworks as well as highlighting some exemplars for recommendation to local authorities and should conclude in April 2006 with a report.

At the last LGTF Board meeting the need for more signposting was noted to enable local authorities to tap into the large number of existing models. Also the importance of culture change in the promotion of good practice, hard evidence from the exemplars and feedback from other bodies carrying out linked research.



Office of Government Commerce

Common Minimum Standards

For the procurement of built environments in the public sector

Last year the Office for Government Commerce (OGC) published Common Minimum Standards which are now mandatory for all Government construction contracts. Although not yet mandatory for local government the LGTF Board consider that they could be commended to local authorities, subject to amendments allowing greater flexibility across the wide range of local government contracts.

The aim is to achieve value for money in public sector procurement by adopting a consistent benchmark and coherent approach to the market. The common standards adopted are not new and some are already mandatory. Application should be considered on a project specific basis, within the context of practicality, achievability and value for money, defined as the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality to meet

user requirements. Procurers will be expected to comply with these standards unless it can be clearly demonstrated that one or more of them fall outside the above criteria.

The OGC Achieving Excellence in Construction (AEC) initiative encompasses all the CMS within its best practice principles for managing and delivering construction projects. A direct link to the AEC guidance is available at www.ogc.gov.uk and type in 'achieving excellence'.

For further information about the CMS contact the OGC service desk.

T: 0845 000 4999

E: ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

The CMS documentation is available on the SCALA website at www.scala.org.uk

Taking a strategic approach to construction



Sue Reid
Head of the Modernisation
& Efficiency Division, ODPM

Local authorities are not only surpassing expected efficiency targets but are forming more effective partnerships. Sue Reid, Head of the Modernisation & Efficiency Division at ODPM, speaking at the SOPO conference, said that local authorities are "rising to the challenge of balancing savings with sustainability". She also stressed that efficiency should be part of the fabric of local authorities and not just a one-off initiative.

Proving her right was the LB of Hackney who won the award in the Single-Tier Authority Category for taking a strategic approach to construction through the 'Decent Homes in Hackney' initiative. This will benefit around 19,000 out of a total of 25,000 rented homes in the Borough and is an LGTF Demonstration Project as well as a future case study.

The strategy is intended to ensure that all blocks are fully wind and weather-tight with significant savings and minimisation of tenant disruption utilising scaffolding and other access means to carry out works to the Hackney Standard, with internal works carried out concurrently. Environmental improvements will be carried out in the final phase.

The aim is to have the programme delivered in five contract areas, contiguous with Neighbourhood Management boundaries, by well organised and effective contractors with a proven track record in carrying out works with residents in occupation. The contractors must have demonstrated a well developed customer focus and a willingness to work with the Council to obtain value for money, maximise

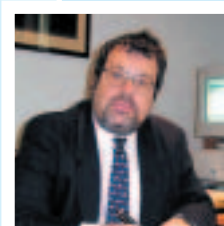
programme delivery and the creation of training and employment opportunities for residents in the Borough.

Joint Officer and Resident Panels considered only the quality aspects of the bids with the financial review carried out by external consultants and judgement on a 50/50 basis. The contract allows for all the Decent Homes works to be carried out on a design and build basis over a period of at least four years at a budget estimate of £140m under a PPC2000 partnering contract.

Tenders were invited on an open book accounting principle using a schedule of rates but in practice a basket of rates has been agreed with all constructors for kitchens and bathrooms, surveys, scaffolding roofs, windows, heating and asbestos removal utilising preferred suppliers. Similarly, survey and design consultants were common to all contracts enabling a common web-based IT system to be used.

An independent evaluation has indicated that in the first year of this contract the estimated savings against the tendered rates will be around 35%.

New chairman for Local Government Construction Task Force



Roger Latham
New Chairman
of the LGTF

Roger Latham, the Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire County Council, is the new chairman of the Local Government Construction Task Force (LGTF). He replaces Tim Byles, the Chief Executive of Norfolk County Council, who has stepped down after three years as chairman. Mr Byles is also standing down from the LGTF Board after being a member since its formation in 2000.

Mr Latham said, "I will ensure that the Task Force continues to play a major role in helping local government meet its efficiency savings while achieving

the highest possible standards of construction. I am looking forward to the challenges ahead and I am determined to bring an energy and passion to the job."

Mr Byles said, "Local government is in a fitter position today to deliver high quality construction projects at a reasonable cost thanks to the work of the Task Force. I have been privileged to have been a board member and I would like to pay tribute to the many people who have worked so tirelessly to help make the Task Force the success it is."

DQI for schools launched

The Design Quality Indicator (DQI) for Schools was officially launched at the 'Designs for Learning Conference' in December by the Minister of State for Schools and 14-19 learners, the Rt Hon Jacqui Smith MP.

The DQI for Schools has been developed from the CIC Design Quality Indicator (DQI) in partnership by the Department for Education and Skills and the CIC. The DQI for Schools remains extremely close to the DQI sharing in both concept, and methodology of application. The DQI for Schools shares around 90% of indicators in the DQI but has allowed emphasis to be put on the spaces found in schools, such as teaching spaces, halls, staff areas, school grounds and dining areas, and the relationship between the school and the community it is part of.

Rt Hon Jacqui Smith MP, Minister of State for Schools and 14-19 learners said at the launch:

"I am today delighted to launch the Design Quality Indicator for Schools. I have talked about the importance of schools being able to recognise good design and the DQI for Schools is an important step in this direction. It is an online package, based on the Construction Industry Council's 'generic' DQI tool. It will allow schools and other stakeholders to consider and evaluate design quality at every stage of the project. It is in the form of a tailored questionnaire and I am assured that it is a product of good design itself! The DQI for Schools is the result of fruitful collaboration and I would particularly like to thank the architects and educationalists who have freely given their time in its development; the CIC staff who worked on the project; Imperial College and all of those who participated in the advisory group. The Schools DQI will be mandatory for all BSF projects and I am sure that schools will find it to be invaluable."



Rt. Hon. Jacqui Smith MP
Minister of State
for Schools

Graham Watts CIC Chief Executive said:

"Working with the DfES to develop the DQI for Schools has been extremely fruitful and is an excellent new dimension to the DQI concept. CIC is very pleased to be able to offer this direct support to the drive to improve school buildings. The decision to base the DQI for Schools firmly upon the generic DQI is one we strongly support and is a clear sign of the industry responding to the issue of measuring design quality in a joined-up way. I welcome the rigour that the DfES has put into developing the DQI for Schools and the thorough critique that this has given the generic DQI; which I am pleased to say has stood up extremely well to this close scrutiny. I am very pleased to welcome the DQI for Schools to the DQI family."

The DQI for Schools website



For more information please view the website by clicking on www.dqi.org.uk/schools or by calling 020 7399 7400

Contact the LGTF

- to let us know your views;
- for information, support and resources on procurement issues;
- to change address details or nominate a colleague to receive this newsletter.

Next LGTF Board meeting: 14th March 2006.

See website for a synopsis of meetings.

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