



Doubling the bang for your council buck

Building local economic, social and environmental benefits into council contracts could yield £2 for every £1 spent, says the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) following its latest research.

More Bang for the Public Buck: A guide to using procurement to achieve community benefits, in partnership with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), shows how councils can use their spending power to make local economies more resilient, communities more sustainable and minimise environmental impacts. It considers barriers preventing them getting the most from their procurement and draws upon practical examples of measures they are using to overcome obstacles.

APSE chief executive, Paul O'Brien, said: *'Using £175bn public procurement power effectively can deliver huge benefits. Our previous work analysing the 'local economic footprint' shows how a £1 of public spending can generate £1.64 in the local economy through strong employment and supply chains. If councils considered how to deliver community benefits through their procurement processes, that figure could rise to £2.'* He added: *'Achieving community benefits is not just about the money. By looking carefully at how we procure goods and services, we can start to have a real impact on the environment and well-being of communities.'*

APSE assistant chief executive, Mark Bramah, said: *'UK and EU law are often cited as barriers, but case studies in our guide show how councils are that are less risk averse are able to boost employment, skills and training and small business and the third sector locally while remaining within the law. Councils need a positive, innovative 'can do' culture.'*

CLES chief executive, Neil McNroy, said: *'Imminent public sector cuts make it imperative that we start sweating the public sector pound to maximum effect. We in the local government community can do more to ensure public resources cradle and nurture the local economy through supporting local businesses, social enterprises, the voluntary sector and supply chains. Progressive procurement is the solution. This research and guide shows you the way.'*

Measures highlighted in the guide include:

- Building strong relationships with local suppliers

- Training staff
- Advertising locally through a procurement portal,
- 'Contract unbundling' to enable smaller suppliers to compete
- Reviewing procurement processes from tendering to contract management and making them more flexible
- Including specific 'community benefits' clauses in contract evaluation

The guide, launched at the Conservative Councillors Association conference in London on 5th March, includes a checklist to help formulate a strategic approach to delivering community benefits from public spending and summarises legal considerations that must be adhered to.

Copies of *More Bang for the Public Buck: A guide to using procurement to achieve community benefits* are available at £20.00 for APSE member authorities and £40 for non-members. Email: mbaines@apse.org.uk

Notes for editors:

- APSE is the association for public service excellent, a not for profit organisation working with over 300 local authorities throughout the UK
- For further information or to arrange an interview please contact Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk or mobile 07971 843515
- More Bang for the Public Buck is the latest in a series of publications produced as part of a research partnership between APSE, the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and the Institute of Local Government Studies at Birmingham University (INLOGOV) and De Montfort University.
- Previous publications in the series include *Towards A Future for Public Employment*, which demonstrated the value that public employment brings to local economies through high quality jobs and training opportunities and *Creating Resilient Local Economies: Exploring the economic footprint of public services*, which mapped the 'local economic footprint of public services'. This study used an economic multiplier model to demonstrate that council expenditure on direct employment, effective procurement and local supply chains can mean £1 of public money generates £1.64 in the local economy.