

# Selling to the Council

# Your Guide to Doing Business With Lambeth

April 2010

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## About This Guide

This guide has been developed to assist businesses who wish to sell their goods or services to the London Borough of Lambeth. It is designed to give you an insight into the procedures we must follow and why, to let you know how you can find out about our contract opportunities, and how you can register your business with us as an approved supplier.

We understand that some organisations may not know where to begin in selling their services to the council and we hope that this guide will help to demystify the process.

We hope you will find the information useful.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Galardo', written in a cursive style.

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## **Disclaimer**

This document is designed to give general guidance and an overview about how to do business with London Borough of Lambeth. You should always ensure that you carefully read all documentation supplied to you as part of any tender process and comply with the more detailed and specific obligations set out in that documentation.

The Council does not warrant or guarantee that the information supplied in these documents are accurate or up to date and it shall not be held to be liable in any circumstances for any loss, damage, whether direct or indirect, or in respect of any actions, claims, demands, costs, charges, and expenses whatsoever in any way arising out of, the supply of these documents by the Council.

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## Lambeth Procurement

This booklet has been developed by the Lambeth Corporate Procurement Team. We are a business unit based within the Council's Finance & Resources department. Our aims are:

- To provide a corporate focus for the Council's procurement, commissioning and contract management activity.
- To improve the Council's procurement, commissioning and contract management partnership capability, ensuring excellent value for money.
- To provide the Corporate Head of Profession role for all staff employed in contracting and commissioning across the Council, and to deliver continuous improvement.
- To give advice, support and information to all Council departments on procurement practice, including the requirements of the Lambeth Procurement Guide and Best Practice guidance.
- To develop and deliver Lambeth's in-house suite of procurement training courses.
- To ensure compliance by all directorates and client officers with the requirements of the Lambeth Procurement Guide.
- To continuously strengthen the Council's reputation for effectiveness and efficiency as a client and partner.
- To embed more modern processes and help deliver and manage the Council's contracts.
- To support or lead specific strategic or corporate contracting projects.
- To coordinate or manage specific strategic or corporate contracts.

Lambeth spends approximately £400 million on goods and services each financial year; obtaining value for money in all our contracts is therefore crucial. Our aim is to procure quality services that best meet the needs (both current and future) of local people while at the same time ensuring value for money within the budget constraints. The council is committed to delivering high quality services to its residents and getting the best value from its contracts.

We regularly consult and listen to your views when developing our service specifications. Opportunities to have your say are frequently advertised on the consultation section of the Lambeth website here: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/consultation/>.

We regularly review and update our procedures so that these reflect the best practices in the industry, feedback from key stakeholders and to continuously improve our procurement processes wherever possible.

Our contact details are as follows:

Lambeth Corporate Procurement Team  
Finance and Resources Department  
Third Floor  
Olive Morris House  
18 Brixton Hill  
London  
SW2 1RL  
Phone: 020 7926 9358  
Fax: 020 7926 0245  
Mail: [CorporateProcurement@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:CorporateProcurement@lambeth.gov.uk)

The procurement pages on the Lambeth website can be found at this direct link:  
<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Business/TendersContracts/>.

## **Value for Money**

### **What is Value for Money?**

You may have heard the term Value for Money or even the acronym “VFM”. It’s an important part of the procurement process, but what does it mean?

Lambeth, like other councils, has a duty to ensure that it achieves Value for Money from all of its contracts. This requirement was introduced by the Government in the 1999 Local Government Act and all councils must follow this procedure.

Value for Money is the term used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it acquires and/ or provides, within the resources available to it. It not only measures the cost of goods and services, but also takes account of the mix of quality, cost, resource use, fitness for purpose, timeliness and convenience to judge whether or not, when taken together, they constitute good value. Achieving VFM may be described in terms of the “three Es” - economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

**For Lambeth to achieve Value for Money, we need to be as effective as we can in our use of public and other money.**

The focus is now on the Comprehensive Area Assessment, or CAA; a new way of assessing local public services in England. It examines how well councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of six independent watchdogs.

Assessments will be made publicly available every year and will provide an annual snapshot of quality of life in the area. Results will appear on the Lambeth website at [www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk).

## **The Rules & Regulations We Follow**

In carrying out our procurement activities there are a number of rules and regulations we must follow. These regulations come from three sources - the European Union, UK law and legislation and advice from the government the Council itself. An explanation of each of these is given below. These rules should provide for a fair and transparent procurement process.

### **European Rules - OJEU**

England as part of the United Kingdom is a member of the European Union and therefore we need to comply with the European Community Directives on Public Procurement. Whether or not the EU rules apply will depend on the value of the contract and the type of contract. Where a contract value is equivalent to or exceeds the EU financial thresholds (currently £156,442 (€193,000) for supplies and services and £3,927,260 (€4,845,000) for works and construction) then the contract usually must be advertised in the supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union ("OJEU"). Some services are exempt from full advertisement to the EU but these will still be competitively tendered.

The same rules apply to all of the countries in the EU. Therefore contract opportunities in other countries will also be advertised in OJEU and you are entitled to apply for them. There are 4 different types of tendering process that could apply under the EU regulations – open, negotiated, restricted and competitive dialogue. The EU regulations also provide time frames for the activities that occur within each of these procurement methods. These are detailed in below.

### **The Open Tender Process**

The contract is advertised and all businesses which respond to the advertisement will be issued with a full set of tender documentation.

### **The Restricted Tender Process**

This is the process we most commonly use as this allows for a selection process to be applied prior to invitations to tender through the use of a business questionnaire. Organisations which respond to the advertisement will be issued with the business questionnaire. Responses will be evaluated and a shortlist will be created of firms who best meet the criteria. These businesses will then be invited to tender.

## **The Competitive Dialogue Process**

In the case of particularly complex contracts, purchasers may be well be aware of their needs but may not know in advance what is the best technical, legal or financial solution for satisfying those needs. The council may also want to allow innovative solutions or may be unable, objectively, to assess what the market has on offer. In this case, the Competitive Dialogue Process would be used between purchasers and suppliers in order to identify the solution or solutions that best meet their needs. Competitive Dialogue can only be used with the most economically advantageous award criteria and this must be stated in the contract notice or accompanying descriptive document, along with a statement of the purchaser's needs.

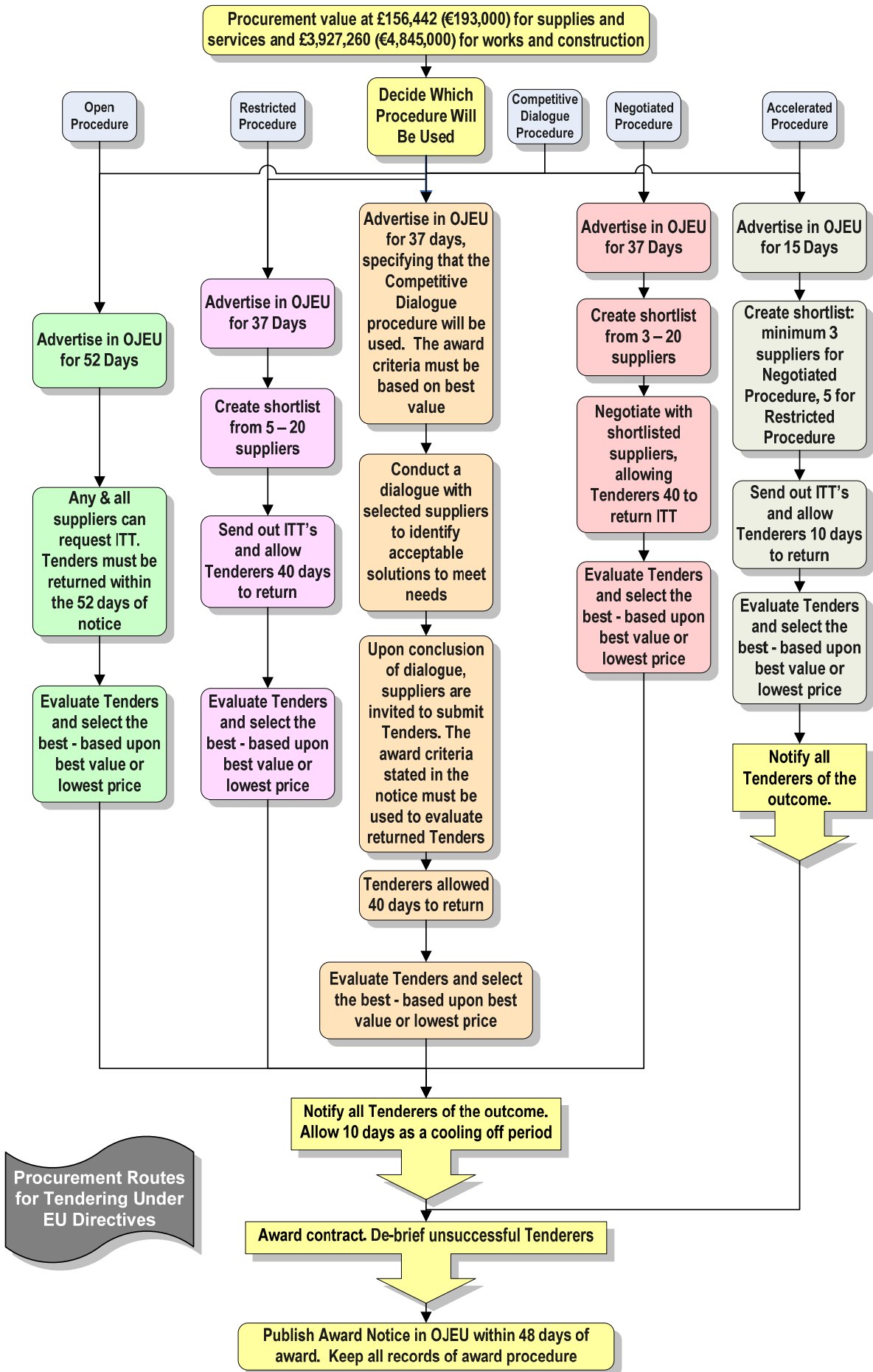
## **The Negotiated Tender Process**

This process is only used in exceptional circumstances. For example, where the nature of the goods or services is such that the specification cannot be established or where an open or restricted procedure was discontinued because of irregular tenders. The negotiated tender process can also be carried out without prior publication of a contract notice in OJEU in certain circumstances.

## **The Accelerated Process – Restricted or Negotiated**

Accelerated time scales may only be used where normal time frames are rendered impractical by extreme urgency. In order to use the Accelerated - Restricted or Accelerated - Negotiated routes, officers must first get approval from Lambeth Legal Services in advance. The process used is similar to either the Restricted Process or the Negotiated Process, with the difference being that the time for advertisement of tenders is reduced to 15 days.

The chart on the following page outlines the different procedures and time frames for tendering under EU Directives.



## **National Rules**

Our procurement activity must also comply with English law. This means that we must follow all relevant law, legislation and advice from HM Government. For example, the Local Government Act places a duty on all councils to achieve 'best value' from their procurement activities.

## **Council Policy**

The council has its own set of policies, guidelines and regulations which should also normally be followed. This includes financial regulations and standing orders, along with levels of authority within the council to approve all purchases.

## **Corporate Contracts**

The council has a number of corporate contracts and supplies arrangements for goods or services which are used commonly throughout the council (e.g. for stationery). All council departments are required to use these corporate contracts; therefore officers should not use the Approved Supplier List for goods or services which are covered by a corporate contract. Current corporate contracts include:

- Stationery, paper & computer consumables
- General electrical including white goods (cookers, fridges, microwaves etc)
- Office & domestic furniture
- Cleaning services and supplies
- Print, reprographics and photocopiers
- Staff catering and hospitality
- Protective clothing
- Watercoolers
- Desktop hardware & software
- Managed service for temporary staff (Matrix manage the service on our behalf. If your organisation supplies temporary staff and you would like to be a part of the managed service arrangement please contact the Managed Service Support Team on 020 7926 0276 for further information)
- Legal services contracts (there are 8 of these for various types of specialist legal work)

**Purchase Order Numbers**

It is a fundamental requirement that all supplier invoices quote a valid purchase order number – without it Lambeth staff cannot pay your invoice. Before goods or services are purchased from a supplier a purchase order will be raised using our Oracle finance system and the officer will obtain approval for the purchase. You will then be advised of the purchase order number which you should quote on your invoice for those goods and/or services.

## **Finding Contract Opportunities**

Tenders for our contracts are advertised in a number of places. Where we generally advertise and when are described below.

### **OJEU – The Official Journal of the European Union**

Where the value of the contract exceeds the European Thresholds (aside from exempted services) we advertise our contracts in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Current thresholds are £156,442 (€193,000) for goods & services and £3,927,260 (€4,845,000) for construction, works & maintenance. In some circumstances if the value of the contract is **below** the EU threshold we may choose to advertise here. For example, if there are a limited number of suppliers in the UK. The notices will appear in the supplement to OJEU. This is available in electronic form only via the internet at [www.ted.eur-op.eu.int](http://www.ted.eur-op.eu.int); advertisements can be viewed free of charge.

Business Information Publications Ltd (BIP) is a service Lambeth uses and they offer an EU Tenders Service that is very helpful to both suppliers and buyers. Information can be had for free on their website:

Business Information Publications Ltd  
Phone: 0141 332 8247  
Mail: [bip@bipcontracts.com](mailto:bip@bipcontracts.com)  
Web: <http://www.bipcontracts.com>

### **Trade Journals & Local and National Press**

We may advertise our contracts in specialist trade journals and in appropriate circumstances we may also advertise contracts in the national or local press – for example, the South London Press: <http://www.southlondonpress.co.uk/tn/index.cfm>.

### **The Lambeth Web Site**

Current contract opportunities are advertised regularly on the procurement, tenders and contracts section of the Lambeth website here: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Business/TendersContracts/>.

Here you can find details of current tenders and contracts which will come up for re-tender in the next 3 years.

## **Exor: The Approved Supplier List**

Lambeth has an approved supplier list which is managed on our behalf by Exor Management Services Ltd. They are an independent accreditation body for suppliers and contractors to the public sector. If you would like to join the list please contact Exor Management Services Ltd directly. They will send you an application form and full details of the scheme including annual subscription costs. Their contact details are as follows:

Exor Management Services Ltd  
Innova House  
4 Kinetic Crescent  
Innova Park, Mollison Avenue  
Enfield EN3 3XH  
Phone: 01992 707 272  
Mail: [customerservices@exorgroup.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@exorgroup.co.uk)  
Web: [www.exorgroup.co.uk](http://www.exorgroup.co.uk)

The approved supplier list has a limited number of places within each category on the database.

### **The Exor Pre-Qualification Process**

All suppliers on the Exor database are required to pre-qualify by completing a business questionnaire. The standard vetting includes checks on the following:

- Finances
- Equalities
- Health & safety
- Insurance
- Permits & licences
- Customer references
- Professional associations
- VAT registration
- Tax exemption certificates
- Quality management systems
- Criminal offences

The above list is not exhaustive and the vetting criteria depend on factors such as category, company size and trading history.

## **How the Approved Supplier List Works**

Once you have been accredited by Exor your details will be added to the council's approved supplier list. A work category is assigned to each supplier on the list. A work category is a simple way of classifying the services you provide, for example, "electrical – air-conditioning". This also makes it easy for council officers to search the database for suppliers by using these work categories.

The approved supplier list provides details of suppliers who have been pre-approved to provide the goods or services. Organisations registered on the approved supplier list range from small businesses/consultants to large corporate organisations. We use the approved supplier database for all our normal procurement activity, unless any of the exceptions apply (detailed below).

The council has the right to suspend or remove suppliers from the list. This would occur for example where there has been poor performance, problems with the quality of the services/goods or issues re financial viability which affect your ability to provide the work in that category.

## **Exceptions – When We May Not Use the Approved List**

Officers will use the approved supplier list where the value of the contract falls below the EU threshold. If the estimated value of the contract exceeds the EU threshold the contract will need to be advertised in OJEU. Where this occurs any eligible suppliers on the approved supplier list will be advised that the contract will be advertised in OJEU.

If there are no suppliers registered in the work category then officers will probably need to advertise the services to find suppliers to tender.

Although the suppliers on the list have been pre-approved council officers cannot just pick an organisation from the list to award the business to – there must be an element of competition. Usually officers will ask for quotes from at least 3 suppliers. However if there are only a few suppliers registered for the work category the officer may need to supplement the work category with additional suppliers prior to inviting tenders. Tenders will be evaluated against pre-determined criteria and awarded on a best value basis taking into account quality and price.

Council policy also requires that any major contracts over £100,000 should be advertised to supplement the Council's approved supplier list unless officers are sure that the database provides adequate and up to date coverage of the relevant market.

### **Supply 2 Gov – The Government Procurement Portal**

Launched in June 2006, Supply2.gov.uk is the only official government lower-value contract opportunity portal, created specifically to provide small businesses with visibility of public sector contract opportunities typically below £100,000. The portal is the first major initiative to unite buyers and suppliers in a single location, making it easier for business and government to work together. Since its launch, Supply2.gov.uk has provided small businesses throughout the UK with visibility of in excess of 160,000 contract opportunities nationwide. The site link is here: <http://www.supply2.gov.uk/>

Supply2.gov.uk is FREE for public sector buyers to advertise lower-value contract notices and FREE for private sector suppliers to access UK-wide lower-value contracts via the Online Contract Search. Suppliers can additionally benefit from the Contract Alert service in a free location of their choice.

The Supply2.gov.uk Contract Alert is an annual subscription-based service which provides quick, hassle-free notification of new contract opportunities via a Daily Email Alert – delivered each working day, directly to a supplier's inbox. Once registered, suppliers can upgrade to receive contract alerts in a wider geographic area – saving you vital time searching online for contract opportunities. Subscriptions start from £70 per annum.

### **CompeteFor**

CompeteFor is a free service that enables businesses to compete for contract opportunities linked to the London 2012 Games and other major public and private sector buying organisations.

With a particular focus on supply chain opportunities, CompeteFor acts as a brokerage service, matching buyers with potential suppliers. It also facilitates access to focused business support, through the national Business Link network, helping to boost the long-term competitiveness of your business.

Registering on CompeteFor will bring you closer to accessing new business opportunities relevant to your sector. This service is delivered through a partnership

between public and private sector organisations, working closely with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA). Lambeth businesses can register on CompeteFor for free, at the following link: <https://www.competefor.com/business/login.jsp>.

# How the Lambeth Procurement Process Works

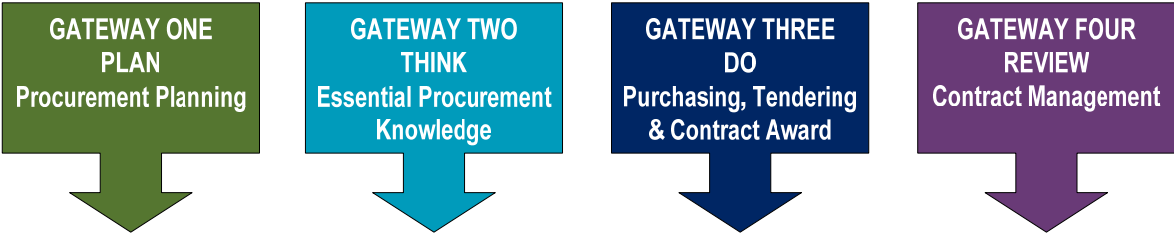
Council officers can procure goods, services or works via a number of different processes. This will usually depend on the nature of the goods or services to be procured and the total value of the contract. As mentioned earlier, we have a duty to obtain best value from all our procurement activities.

## The Lambeth Procurement Gateways

A gateway process in procurement is a mechanism to review procurement projects at critical points in their development, before key decisions are made; the processes within each gateway enable procurement officers to progress through their various stages. The purpose of the process is to introduce a series of ‘health checks’ into the procurement project timetable, which is designed to ensure that the project is soundly based, well planned, involves all appropriate stakeholders and achieves its objectives. It also helps ensure a consistency of approach across all procurement activity.

The gateway process at Lambeth includes all procurement processes – from commissioning, purchasing and tendering through to contract management. Each gateway consists of a series of questions and activities designed to test the robustness of the procurement project. Evidence is documented and submitted to the relevant procurement boards or managers to demonstrate that the topics covered by the gateway questions have been adequately addressed, before the project is allowed to progress to its next stage.

The Lambeth Gateway Process employs four gateway or decision points, throughout the procurement process. Each is numbered sequentially and joined with the “Plan, Think, Do, Review” methodology of project management:



For guidance purposes the chart on the following pages shows the relationship between the Lambeth Gateway processes and procurement and shows how relevant information can be found in the Lambeth Procurement Guide.

An outline is given below of the different procurement approaches available to officers, when they would be used and a worked example.

**Procurement Processes – Methods Available**

For lower value procurements, officers will request quotes from suppliers; for higher value procurements we will follow a more formal tendering process:

**1. A Request for Quote**

Normally officers will issue a *request for quotation* to suppliers registered on the Approved Supplier List. This procurement method is used for low value purchases which fall below £25,000. The minimum number of quotations that must be received is either 1 or 3, depending on the total aggregate value. The supplier who has submitted the best value quotation will be awarded the contract.

**2. An Invitation to Tender**

Officers will issue an *invitation to tender* for contracts in excess of £25,000. This procurement method will also be used where the value of the contract exceeds the EU thresholds, currently at £156,442 (€193,000) for goods & services and £3,927,260 (€4,845,000) for construction, works & maintenance.

A summary of the procurement processes & when they are used can be found in the table below:

<b>Contract Value (total aggregate value)</b>	<b>Procurement Process</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>£0.00 - £500.00</b>	<b>1 Quote</b>	We usually seek a quote that represents VFM from a supplier on the Exor Approved Supplier List, or perhaps a supplier we have used in the past.
<b>£500.00 - £25,000</b>	<b>3 Quotes</b>	We usually seek quotes from at least 3 suppliers on the Exor Approved Supplier List. If adequate competition is not available we may advertise the requirement on the Lambeth website.
<b>£25,000 - £100,000</b>	<b>Formal Tendering</b>	We normally use the Exor Approved Supplier List and advertise the tender on the Lambeth website and with Supply2gov.
<b>Over £100,000</b>	<b>Formal</b>	In addition to the above, council policy also

	<b>Tendering</b>	requires that any major contracts over £100,000 should be advertised externally to supplement the Exor Approved Supplier List.
<b>£156,442 (€193,000) for goods &amp; services and £3,927,260 (€4,845,000) for construction, works &amp; maintenance</b>	<b>OJEU Tendering</b>	Where required, contracts for services and supplies at these higher values must be advertised to the EU. We will also advertise in UK sources. Details of all published OJEU notices may be obtained from <a href="http://www.ted.eur-op.eu.int">http://www.ted.eur-op.eu.int</a>

## Procurement Under EU Directives

Contracts will be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) if the value of the goods or services is above the EU threshold; aside from exempt services these are currently £156,442 (€193,000) for goods & services and £3,927,260 (€4,845,000) for construction, works & maintenance. If we advertise in OJEU we must follow EU procurement rules. This means that contracts advertised in OJEU will be tendered using either an open, restricted, negotiated or competitive dialogue tender process. The EU rules also stipulate time frames for each stage of the procurement process which we must follow. Further detail about the EU rules is given in The Rules and Regulations We Follow section of this guide.

## Worked Example – OJEU Open Tender Process

This is the most common procurement process for contracts advertised in OJEU. As previously stated we normally use the restricted procedure and the open procedure less frequently. The key steps in the procurement process are usually:

1. Advertise contract
2. Tender documentation issued
3. Evaluation
4. Contract award
5. Unsuccessful suppliers advised
6. Contract management

An explanation of each of these steps is given below.

### Advertise the Contract

The contract will be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Businesses interested in tendering for the contract will respond to the advertisement.

## **Business Questionnaire**

We use a Business Questionnaire (or “BQ”) for pre-qualification of contractors, consultants and suppliers. The Lambeth BQ contains completion sections and guidance sections, as below:

### Instructions

- A Organisation Profile
- B Grounds for Exclusion
- C Insurance
- D Financial Information
- E Health & Safety
- F Equality & Diversity
- G Technical Capacity
- H References
- I Undertaking
- J Business Statistics
- K Banker’s Reference Letter Template

Business Questionnaire Evaluation Form (To be completed by Lambeth)

Lambeth Business Questionnaire: Supplier Completion Guidance

You will also be required to complete a declaration that the information you have provided is correct and to allow us to carry out financial and reference checks. Under the European rules evaluation of the pre-qualification submissions is based on the economic and financial standing and technical capacity of firms applying. Those firms who successfully complete the Business Questionnaire will normally be invited to tender.

**Suppliers will be required to successfully complete a Low Value Business Questionnaire for purchases and contracts valued from £0.00 - £25,000. For purchases and contracts valued at £25,000 and greater, a more detailed Business Questionnaire will need to be completed; both versions of the BQ can be found on the Lambeth website here: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Business/TendersContracts/TheLambethPre-qualificationProcess.htm>.**

## **Tender Documentation Issued**

If you respond to the advertisement we will send you the full set of tender documentation.

The ITT (or Invitation to Tender) will usually include the following:

- Invitation to Tender letter (details when & where responses are due)
- Tender document (instructions for how to tender)
- Specification (details our requirements for the services/goods)
- Pricing document (for you to complete)
- Contract terms and conditions
- Quality requirements/method statements (for you to complete each method statement question)
- Tender evaluation model (how we will evaluate the tenders)
- Business questionnaire (information you provide about your business)

**It is most important that we receive your tender submission on time. Tenders that arrive late will not usually be considered.**

## **Evaluation**

Once the due date for tenders has closed, the tender responses will then be reviewed and evaluated. This is normally carried out by a panel of officers. Each bid will be evaluated against the pre-determined set of evaluation criteria as set out in the tender documents.

A score will be assigned to the bids for each evaluation criteria. The scores will then be tallied and a total score assigned to each bid. The bidder with the highest score will then be offered the contract.

In some instances we will ask bidders to attend an interview or give a presentation. This provides us with the opportunity to ask questions to fully understand, clarify and explore your bid. Your responses will be taken into account in evaluating your tender.

Officers have a duty to obtain best value from our contracts. This means getting a balance between price and quality. Therefore each evaluation criteria will be given a weighting. For example, an evaluation may be 60% quality and 40% price. The weightings for the evaluation criteria will depend on the nature of the goods/services. The evaluation criteria and any weightings will be set before the tenders are received. You will be notified of the key areas for evaluation in the tender pack and should take this into account when preparing your tender response.

An example of evaluation scoring criteria and weighting is given below:

**Example of Evaluation Scoring Criteria & Weighting**

[CONTRACT X] - SCORECARD CONTRACTOR: ABC Ltd

DATE:

Criteria	Weighting (1-5) (A)	Score 0-4* (B)	Weighted Score Column (A) x (B)	Remarks
Technical Capability	5	3	15	
Delivery times	5	3	15	
Relevant Experience	3	2	6	
Equality and Diversity	3	4	12	
Health and Safety	3	3	9	
Customer Care	3	1	3	
Value added services	3	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>60/100</b>	

**SCORE POINTS:**

- 0 = poor/unacceptable**
- 1 = acceptable**
- 2 = good**
- 3 = very good**
- 4 = excellent**

**Contract Award**

The supplier with the highest evaluation score will normally be offered the contract. If you are successful we will write to you to notify you of this and ask you to sign the contract documentation.

**Advice for Unsuccessful Suppliers**

Once the successful bidder has accepted and signed the contract we will then advise the other businesses that they have been unsuccessful on this occasion.

If you have been unsuccessful you should not be discouraged. Competition for our contracts is usually quite strong. We will always give you the opportunity for feedback so you can see which areas scored highly and the areas that scored lower than the winning tenderer. Please note that this feedback will always be given in a comparative and general way and we cannot disclose information about other bidders which is commercial in confidence.

### **Contract Management**

If you have won the contract officers will be in regular contact with you throughout the term of the contract. We will monitor and manage the performance of the contract to ensure it is running smoothly from your perspective and ours. We will always work with our suppliers to find ways of doing things better and to continuously improve the service wherever possible.

It should be noted that all process and examples set out in this document are indicative only and potential tenderers should not take these to be matters of policy.

## Public Sector Procurement & Equality

Lambeth Council is genuinely committed to achieving best practice in equalities and diversity and promoting equality through procurement. This means:

- Recognising that everyone is different and treating these differences with equal respect.
- Valuing the diversity of people.
- Delivering services openly and fairly, and in ways which suit our customers.
- Investing in a skilled, stable and diverse workforce.
- Challenging discrimination in all its forms.

All groups in our communities, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation have a right to expect that public money is spent on local services that meet their specific needs and that it is spent in a way which promotes equality of opportunity and delivers high quality goods and services.

The council aims to achieve a consistent approach to equality in the delivery of all our services. We also expect people working on our behalf to practise equal opportunities and comply with our equal opportunity policy.

Lambeth's Equal Opportunity Policy is available on our website at [www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk).

## **Responsible Procurement at Lambeth**

Sustainable procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis. This generates benefits not only to the organisation but also to society and the economy, while minimising damage to the environment; at Lambeth this is known as Responsible Procurement.

In Responsible Procurement we strive to make sustainable procurement decisions to achieve the best outcome for all our customers. This includes: buying recycled products, reducing carbon emissions in services we contract for, collaborating with other authorities and government bodies to improve efficiency and working with local suppliers, SMEs and Third Sector Organisations.

### **The Sustainable Procurement Charter**

Procurement at Lambeth is committed to the achievement of value for money, standards of excellence and best practice in the procurement of supplies, services and works which help deliver the Council's key corporate objectives. We believe in procurement practices that balance the needs of the economy, the environment and society and have established our aims and goals in the Lambeth Sustainable Procurement Charter. The Charter details how our procurement activity will reflect best practice in sustainability practice and how we will implement a programme of measures designed to improve our sustainable procurement capability.

You can read the full Charter and find out more about sustainable procurement and Responsible Procurement on the Lambeth procurement web pages here: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Business/TendersContracts/SustainableProcurement.htm>.

## **eProcurement**

### **What is eProcurement?**

eProcurement is the term used to describe the use of electronic methods in every stage of the purchasing process from identification of requirement through to payment, and potentially to contract management. Electronic enablement of the purchasing process can be more specifically identified as:

- eSourcing - for contractual processes. Tools include eTendering, eRFQs (Request for quotations and evaluations) and eAuctions.
- eProcurement - for transactional processes. Tools include marketplaces using techniques such as eCatalogues and punch-out.
- ePayment - Tools include virtual or embedded GPC (Government Procurement Credit Card), eInvoicing and self-billing.

### **Lambeth and eProcurement**

The London Borough of Lambeth has implemented the Oracle iProcurement module, which automates the requisition, approval and ordering process between the London Borough of Lambeth and the supplier.

This system improves the turn around time of invoices and payment processes in order to make improvements to the back end performance. It allows Lambeth to leverage economies of scale, lower operating resource costs and increase efficiency by removing paper based purchase orders and invoices.

### **What Does This Mean to the Supplier?**

Electronic ways of working will be included in the London Borough of Lambeth's future Invitations to Tender (ITT) and the contractual terms and conditions. Some of the advantages to the supplier are:

- Speedier payment
- Ongoing control over products and pricing
- Tighter control over maverick spend
- Better compliance to preferred supplier contracts
- More accurate management information
- Lower transaction costs

## **Further Information**

For further background information please visit the national eProcurement project website at <http://www.nepp.org.uk/>

## Helpful Tips & Useful Contacts

1. Regularly review our contract opportunities. These are advertised on the Lambeth website, in local papers and in the supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union.
2. Review the Council's Three Year Procurement Plan here: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Business/TendersContracts/3YearCommissioningPlan.htm>. Here you can see the details of procurement activities planned by the council over the next three years. This list will tell you which contracts are coming up for tender and when.
3. Register your business with us by joining the Exor Approved Supplier List. This is a list of pre-approved suppliers which officers use to select suppliers to quote or tender for contracts. Please note that although joining the list will enhance the likelihood of you winning a contract it is no guarantee of business as a best value selection process will still be used for each contract.
4. You are eligible to apply for contract opportunities in other EU countries. England is part of the European Union and therefore the EU procurement rules apply to us. These rules give bidders from other countries the right to apply for English contracts where certain conditions are met. These rights are reciprocal which means that suppliers in England may be eligible to apply for contracts in other EU countries.
5. Ensure you complete all tender documentation in full and submit it on time. Tenders that are incomplete may be deemed non-complaint and will not be evaluated. Tenders that are received late will usually not be considered for evaluation.
6. You do not have to be based in Lambeth to do business with us. Our contract opportunities are open to all suppliers and will be awarded on the basis of best value.
7. Business Link for London (see below) offer free training and workshops for small businesses on how to tender for public and private sector contracts.
8. If you have been successful in winning a contract remember that you must quote a purchase order number on all your invoices. This number will be generated by the council at the start of the contract and you will be advised of

the purchase order number to quote. Without a valid purchase order number Lambeth staff cannot pay your invoice.

9. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce or Business Link for advice, guidance and assistance.
10. If you are unsuccessful do not be discouraged. Competition for our contracts is usually quite strong. Take the opportunity to receive feedback from us to find out which elements of your bid were your strengths and how you compared with the other bidders. (Please note however that we can only do this in a comparative way that does not reveal any commercially sensitive information about the other bidders).

### **Other Useful Contacts**

There are a number of organisations that can provide you with useful information:

South Bank Employer's Group <http://www.sbeg.co.uk/>

One London <http://www.gle.co.uk/onelondon/>

Business Link for London [www.businesslink4london.com/](http://www.businesslink4london.com/)

London South Central <http://www.londonsouthcentral.uk.com/>

South London Business <http://www.southlondonbusiness.co.uk/>

The Prince's Trust <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

Cross River Partnership <http://www.crossriverpartnership.org>

Supply London [www.supplylondon.com](http://www.supplylondon.com)

Supply Cross River <http://www.supplycrossriver.co.uk/>