

COUNCIL ANNOUNCES “MEET THE BUYER” DAYS FOR 2010



The Highland Council is launching its third series of meetings with businesses through out Highland, supported by both Chambers of Commerce and Business Gateway. Chair of the Council's Resources Committee, Cllr Carolyn Wilson said:

“I am happy to be able to introduce The Highland Council's new business opportunities newsletter, and also launch this year's supplier development events. We view these initiatives as important ongoing commitments, and this is the third time we've engaged in such a programme of events.”

The programme forms an important element of our engagement with the business, social enterprise, and voluntary sector communities. It is your opportunity to tell us how we can be more helpful in working with you, to learn more about the Council's procurement plans for the next few years, and to develop your “e-business” skills with support from the Council's main ICT services provider, Fujitsu. Events will run both afternoon and evening to give you the best possible opportunity to attend, and dates and locations are listed in this newsletter. Our Procurement team will be writing to invite you to one of the events and I do hope you take the opportunity to come along.”

October

4th - Newtonmore
5th - Nairn
6th - Inverness
7th - Dingwall

November

9th - Brora or Helmsdale
10th - Wick
11th - Bettyhill

December

7th - Ullapool
8th - Fort William
9th - Portree

Venues will be confirmed in the coming months

Please Tell Us What Will Help Your Business

We want to make these events as effective as possible for your business, so please tell us what would make them most useful to you. Please send your requests and suggestions to

Ashley.gould@highland.gov.uk

You Might Like to Know that in Financial Year 2008-09:

Highland Council's external spending with businesses to which it paid £1000 or more, totalled £266.4M across 2959 businesses.

Of this total, £140M was with 2481 SMEs and £12m with 638 micro businesses

A total of £112.3M was spent with 1233 Highland businesses, of which £96.5M was with 1140 SMEs in Highland

Never Miss a Chance!

Businesses sometimes don't know where the Council advertises its tender opportunities. All of our advertised tenders are published on the Scottish Government provided Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website:

www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk

You can register your business free of charge. Once you have done this you can receive alerts when relevant



opportunities arise or browse the site to see what contracts you might be interested in.

Over 47,000 businesses are already taken advantage of this simple service. In time all Scottish public sector bodies are expected to advertise on the website, providing a "one stop shop" for suppliers to find public sector contracting opportunities.

The Council also uses the "Quick Quote" facility in the website to find businesses who might be able to provide quotes for lower value work, where advertising isn't needed.

If you haven't already done so, please register your business on the website. Its free, simple to use, and the sooner you register, the better your chances of being spotted, not just by the Council but by any Scottish Public Body. Remember that newspaper advertising of contracts is tailing off due to the costs involved.

The Highland Council was an early adopter of the website, using it from its launch in October 2008. Since then we have proved to be the most regular advertiser of contract opportunities through the website.



Public Sector Moves to Standardise PQQs

We all know how frustrating it can be to have to provide the same information in slightly different formats to different organisations.

The same can be said of the different formats public sector bodies request tender information to be supplied in.

We're therefore glad to be able to tell you that the Scottish Government is developing a common Pre-Qualification Questionnaire for the whole of the Scottish Public Sector to use. It won't be available for a few months, but we'll keep you up to date with developments.

If you take part, you will need to complete the form once and upload it onto a website linked to Public Contracts Scotland. This will ensure that you only have to provide your standard business information once, removing the need for you to provide the same information again and again.

Once uploaded onto the website, you will need to make sure you keep your information up to date, but we hope that in common with other suppliers you will see this as a big step forward.



P.S. If you receive this letter by post, please don't forget to let us have your e-mail address!