

4 July 2014

## **LEP backs Government campaign to help businesses sell to the public sector**

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is backing a Government campaign to help small businesses provide services to the public sector.

The Government wants to make it easier for small businesses to access some of the £230bn of annual public sector spending. The aim is for 25 per cent of central government spending to be with small firms by 2015.

The Government has set up an informal, anonymous Mystery Shopper service allowing businesses to raise concerns, such as late payment or unfair or overly bureaucratic procurement practice, and highlight the barriers they encounter when bidding for, or working on, public sector contracts. This will help Government determine when and where it needs to improve the buying of goods and services.

A new twitter handle @GovMysteryShop went live on 1 July.

The LEP has been working with Cornwall Council to become the first in the country to use webinars to support local businesses to win more contracts from public sector organisations.

Business in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly can access the webinars through Business Pulse (<http://www.business-pulse.co.uk/advice/selling-to-the-public-sector>), where the LEP provides guidance on selling to the public sector, including a 'Procurement jargon buster'.

LEP Board Director Simon Tregoning said: "We know that the bureaucracy around public sector procurement is a major problem for small businesses. The LEP is committed to removing barriers to business growth, which is why we support the Government's moves to make it easier for businesses sell to the public sector. I encourage local businesses to engage with the Mystery Shopper service and also make use of the resources we have made available on Business Pulse. By working

with Cornwall Council and supporting this national initiative, we aim to help our businesses compete and create more local jobs”

Alex Folkes Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said: “The Council is working hard to support small and medium sized local businesses, including spending more than 50% of our procurement budget with Cornish firms for the first time. But we are always happy to try to do more and welcome this service to help us improve further.”

In 2012 / 2013 public sector organisations in Cornwall spent £1.5 billion purchasing a wide range of services ranging from social care to waste management. Cornwall Council spent around £460 million of this total, with contracts varying in value from a minimum of a few thousand to many millions of pounds.

**Ends**

**Copy ends  
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**Note to editors:**

### **Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership**

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was launched in May 2011. Private sector-led, it is a partnership between the private and public sectors and is driving the economic strategy for the area, determining local priorities and undertaking activities to drive growth and the creation of local jobs.  
[www.cornwallandislesofscillylep.com](http://www.cornwallandislesofscillylep.com)

Follow the LEP on Twitter @LEPCornwall\_IoS

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