

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**26 OCTOBER 2006**

### **PROCUREMENT PROFESSIONALS LOOK TO THE FUTURE**

The year's premier conference, exhibition and awards ceremony for local government procurement professionals takes place in London on 7 November 2006, bringing together hundreds of procurement officers from around the country.

The Local Government Expo – this year entitled *Sustaining the Procurement Challenge* - is organised annually by the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO) - the UK's largest representative body for the local authority procurement community.

This year's conference will be looking at a number of different issues - however, its main aim is, as always, the improvement of procurement in local government and other locally provided services such as the police and housing.

The event provides a unique platform for both buyers and suppliers from across all areas of Local Government to meet and network and hear many thought-provoking presentations from senior personnel involved within procurement.

David Pointon, Chairman of SOPO, said the conference represented an opportunity for local government procurement officers to find fresh solutions to challenges: "We need to think to the future to ensure that the improvements we have made to service delivery through better procurement are sustained.

"The aim of this conference is to help us prepare for that by starting to think about some of the things that can contribute to that sustainability and the continuous improvement of procurement processes. It is important that we all work together to sustain the improvements we have made thus far."

In addition to the two day conference and seminar programme, delegates can also explore the dedicated exhibition space, to learn about products and services relevant to them, as well as discovering new potential suppliers and future opportunities.

The event also plays host to the SOPO Visa Awards - the only national award that is specific to local government procurement. The Awards, first introduced in 2002, recognise the variety of approaches to procurement made by local authorities and provide smaller authorities with a fairer chance of winning.

The event's media sponsor is Government Opportunities (GO) magazine, which will be also be featuring winners and nominees of SOPO Visa awards both in advance and following the event.

For more information on the event, visit [www.localgovexpo.com](http://www.localgovexpo.com)

**ENDS**

## Notes for editors:

About local government procurement:

- Local government is responsible for £75 billion of spending per year of which £27.5 billion is spent on goods and services nationally
- Local government employs one in 10 people in the country
- Central government has achieved £2 billion worth of value for money (VFM) gains in one year
- The value for money gains from Gateway Reviews in 2003-04 was £730 million
- Over 850 Gateway Reviews have been completed, covering in excess of 500 projects and programmes since the process started in February 2001
- A total of 119 separate departments, non-departmental public bodies and agencies have had a Gateway Review of their medium, high-risk or mission-critical projects and programmes
- £460 million was saved through greater collaboration between UK government departments
- £580 million was saved by departments negotiating directly with suppliers
- Approximately 21,621 contract notices and awards were published in the OJEU in the last year
- Over £1 billion has been collectively spent on the Government Procurement Card by over 62,000 users in over 420 public sector organisations since its launch in 1997

About SOPO:

- Representing over 2400 members, SOPO provides area networks and forums and produces guidance on best practice
- Its aim is to advise local authorities throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on all purchasing and supplies matters of national/general interest, and represent its members on other bodies to promote the society and its aims
- Through membership of SOPO, procurement officers join together to share best practice and influence the national agenda on how "Best Value" is to be achieved

About GO magazine:

- Contains news and features on public sector procurement, strategy, directives and developments - essential information for any company working with or within the public sector
- Reaches a target audience of more than 24000 readers
- Includes articles by and interviews with key industry personnel, including Government Ministers, MPs and procurement officers throughout the public sector
- Published by BiP Solutions Ltd, Europe's leading provider of public sector contracts information

## Useful links

SOPO	<a href="http://www.sopo.org">www.sopo.org</a>
GO Magazine	<a href="http://www.govopps.co.uk">www.govopps.co.uk</a>
BiP Solutions	<a href="http://www.bipsolutions.com">www.bipsolutions.com</a>

**Issued by BiP Solutions Ltd on behalf of SOPO**

For more information, pictures and interview requests, contact Shellie Toal on 0845 270 7088 or email [helpdesk@sopo.org](mailto:helpdesk@sopo.org)