



Helping you take your thinking forward

Local Authorities Supplier Portals Market Review: Current Status Report

Prepared for National e-Procurement Project

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SUMMARY

- This report, compiled for the National e-Procurement Project by The Imaginist Company, reviews supplier portal systems in use in the local authority sector.
- 42% of the larger English local authorities claim to have a Supplier Portal of some kind on their websites. However what this means varies widely. Only 14% provide a full tender alert facility.
- For a supplier portal to work, it needs to serve the needs of both sides of the buyer-supplier relationship, but there is an inherent tension between these roles. It has therefore been useful to recognise two types of portal:

Business Portals, an e-sourcing tool for larger councils and groups of LAs for managing their **higher value** tenders and publishing (mainly) OJEU notices

SME Portals, where companies can register interest and receive tender alerts for primarily **lower value** (below the OJEU threshold) opportunities.

- Some e-tender and contract management systems do have tender alert facilities and could be used to support SME suppliers, however in practice the data that is loaded is often out of date and limited to the largest contracts.
- Portals that do actually address the issue of local SME inclusion are often part of an economic development and sustainability initiative, such as the West Cumbria Supply Chain Portal and DTI/SBS's national Supply2gov Opportunities Portal.
- An approach that incorporates good practice would be to:

Create SME Portals as part of sub-regional sustainable community 'Buy Local' initiatives.

Link the SME Portals to the national Supply2gov SME Opportunities Portal and standardise registration and profiling, so that companies only have to register once.

SME portals to be used by buyers for sourcing informal tender suppliers in those authorities with policies to support their local business communities.

Business portals (being implemented by local authorities as part of their modernisation of tender and contract management processes) to:

use the supplier registration and tender alert facilities provided by Supply2gov or to standardise their approach based on Supply2gov

link suppliers to the national portal so they don't have to register more than once

channel all tender notice publication through Supply2gov.

Consider implementing an online 'shopping mall' for local residents and businesses as part of the SME Portal. Link this to any public sector marketplace initiative so that local authorities can request quotes and place orders online from e-commerce enabled local SMEs and set up a KickStart scheme to support this.

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1. Introduction

This report was compiled for the National e-Procurement Project by The Imaginist Company. It was commissioned to establish the current status of Supplier Portals in the English local authority sector and, at an interim stage in its findings, to provide a basis for discussion at the local e-Government EXPO on 5/6 April.

The review covers supplier portal systems in use in the local authority sector. It is based on desk research and a number of telephone or face-to-face interviews with service providers and authorities. The statistical data is drawn from a parallel telephone survey carried out during February 2006 for NePP on the status of the larger authorities in implementing supplier adoption.

This review did not set out to be exhaustive in its coverage of available portal solutions or to describe solutions in detail. A high level functional specification of Business and SME Portals is provided at Appendix B to assist managers in carrying out their own comparative exercise.

2. Definition of a Supplier Portal

In the private sector the term Supplier Portal is normally used as an alternative term for 'Business Portal' and comprises 3 key elements:

- A sourcing tool – usually a managed supplier list that provides details for buyers to select and contact suppliers, an online e-tendering tool that enables collaborative tender build, document handling and publication, evaluation and award and often a contract management tool that enables the monitoring, management and renewal processes online.
- An e-marketplace transacting tool – enables Request for Quote and e-Ordering from suppliers and receipt of invoices from them. Can include an e-marketplace portal.
- An integrating tool – links suppliers' systems into corporate processes to provide both with real-time data and to enable them to take over functions formerly carried out in-house, eg forecasting demand and scheduling delivery.

Suppliers on these portals will normally only be those invited to participate – either having an existing contract or having preferred supplier status. There is typically no provision for other potential suppliers to use the portal to find out about work or register their interest. In most cases the suppliers are larger companies serving national or international markets. Smaller specialist suppliers may be included but mostly SMEs would be expected to be 2nd or 3rd tier in the supply chain.

When people talk about Supplier Portals in the public sector, they (mostly) don't mean Business Portals – e-marketplace and e-tendering tools are already out there - and in fact definitions vary quite widely according to who is using the term.

As a minimum, a local authority supplier portal is where businesses can find information about:

- Forthcoming tenders – OJEU and below-OJEU
- Guidance on how to trade with the public sector organisation
- What is expected of suppliers in order to comply with EU regulations, government best practice and the organisation's own requirements

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It can also include:

- Self-registration for suppliers
- Self-accreditation – providing unvalidated pre-qualification information
- Opportunity to create profile for tender alert facility
- Tender alert via email and SMS
- Details of major contractors and the work they have been awarded, for sub-contract opportunities

Less commonly, links to:

- Online supplier list
- Request for Quote and e-Ordering systems
- Online contract register
- Contract management and e-tendering systems

The last set of features would integrate the portal into the authority's e-procurement system and into its sourcing and buying processes and would represent a coming together of the business and supplier portal definitions.

There are authorities and groups of authorities planning and implementing Business Portals which have some supplier portal characteristics eg NEPO and a number of authorities that are developing or providing supplier portals aimed very specifically at SMEs in their locality eg East London Online. There are also initiatives sponsored by public sector business support organisations focused on helping SMEs to find and bid for public sector work, such as Supply2gov and a number of regional portals, many of which are focused on specific sectors, such as West Cumbria Supply Chain Portal (nuclear sector).

This survey sets out to look at those supplier portal systems being used by local authorities, establish where they lie in the 'landscape' described above and at what stage they are in development and take-up. It also proposes a blueprint for moving towards a more coherent approach.

3. The dynamics of supplier portals in the public sector

For a supplier portal to work, it needs to serve the needs of both sides of the buyer-supplier relationship.

Suppliers need to be able to find useful and relevant information about forthcoming work on the system. One of the key reasons for a supplier portal is to embody EU fair trade rules and government's policy to encourage use of SME suppliers. SMEs need to know about lower value work, not just OJEU tenders, but most systems only provide OJEU contract notices – an obvious mismatch. The problem in extending the scope of the portal to include lower value opportunities is getting the buyers to put up the information. What is in it for them?

Buyers want an easy life – they don't want lots of companies contacting them or bidding for work. So there needs to be some buffering or filtering in the system eg only allow access to companies that have registered and gone through some form of accreditation.

They also don't want the extra work of publishing notices about below-OJEU tenders, so it ideally needs to be part of a process they have to go through anyway, and that means linking the portal in some way to the procurement process.

Buyers might welcome the system if it was the easiest way to locate and contact a quality supplier (or the only permitted route), so, again, accreditation is key and so is direct access to the supplier via their website or email.

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But **Procurement Managers** want to prevent buyers going out to new suppliers if the authority already has contracted or preferred suppliers on their books. So the system also needs to be linked to a contracts register and preferred supplier list. Then self-accredited suppliers would be 3rd choice, but at least they would be visible to buyers who can't find what they need from existing suppliers.

As with the private sector, shared service e-procurement and aggregation of lower value spend will accelerate the trend, already visible from latest statistics, to using larger suppliers in favour of smaller companies.

In which case, smaller firms need to know which of these larger companies are being awarded council business so they can explore sub-contract opportunities. Some portals do already include details of major contract awards and the appropriate contacts for this purpose, but there is resistance to this:

- There is a fear that publishing this information would mean that the supplier has to field a lot more enquiries and will pass this on in higher prices next time around.
- There is also the fear that featuring the supplier on the authority's website as an accredited company might raise demand for their services with other potential customers and this would also lead to higher prices.

These issues have not been played out yet in the public sector market and it is too soon to tell how they will be resolved. However it is important that they are addressed, if Supplier Portals are to add real value to both buyers and suppliers (which many are clearly not doing at present) and not just a tick in the box for conscientious authorities.

Many of the larger councils are extending their ERP systems to encompass Business Portal features and the Procurement Managers in these councils may have little interest in providing help for smaller suppliers. And this is the nub of the problem: although Supplier Portals are seen as part of an authority's e-Procurement programme, those portals that do actually address the issue of local SME inclusion are often part of the region's or local authority's wider economic development and sustainability objectives, which in most councils lie uneasily alongside their procurement efficiency objectives. This is not an ideal environment for influencing buyers to submit lower value opportunities.

One approach is to recognise the conflict and develop separate strategies for the two objectives, as described in the next section.

4. Business Portals vs SME Portals

4.1 Business Portals

High-value tenders (OJEU threshold and above) need quite skilled management and these contracts are more suited, in the main, to larger suppliers. An authority that has sufficient volume of these contracts (mainly the larger non-District councils) needs the tools to enable proper, cost effective management of the tendering and contacting of such work.

This means implementing an e-sourcing tool, a managed supplier list, a contract management system – in other words, a Business Portal.

Smaller councils are unlikely to have many of these contracts, so a shared Business Portal solution is likely to serve their needs and this is where Business Portals play a role in shared service procurement – larger, regional suppliers that have contracts with two or more councils are likely to be included, local SMEs are not. And while the larger councils will have web access to the suppliers via their ERP systems, a shared service procurement solution might also feature an e-marketplace for transacting the contracts (call-off ordering etc). Because e-marketplaces have been around for longer than the other aspects of Business Portals, there will need to be some integration to achieve this, but that step does look inevitable, in time.

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4.2 SME Portals

Lower value tenders is where an SME Portal might usefully function. But here we are faced with a very confused picture, with wide variation in the thresholds for discretionary, informal and formal tendering and no consistency in the way councils are planning to deal with these under e-procurement.

Ideally, an SME Portal would encompass all this spend, as it is at these lower levels that local SMEs would find most of their work. However, buyers are very unlikely to volunteer to publish informal tender opportunities unless the council had a firm policy on this – the best that one could hope for would be that they would access a list of registered suppliers to send out requests for quote.

So the SME Portal might:

- publish formal tender opportunities, primarily below the OJEU threshold *
- provide SMEs in the locality with the opportunity to register their interest in supplying the local authorities in their region or sub-region
- alert registered companies when formal tender opportunities arise *
- give buyers access to self-qualified suppliers for informal tender requests for quote
- provide information and support to help local SMEs compete for business.

Note the overlaps (*) between the SME Portal and some elements of a fully featured Business Portal. Note also that this list only focuses on an SME Portal in relation to public sector purchasing – a community based SME Portal might extend this to offer companies access to, and visibility by, private sector customers as well – both these issues are discussed below.

A functional specification of the two types of portal is shown in Appendix B.

5. The reality today

5.1 Survey results

42% of the larger English local authorities (non-districts, ie the 148 Counties, Metropolitan and Unitary authorities) claim to have a Supplier Portal of some kind on their websites ^{Note1}. However what this means varies widely.

Most councils have developed a Selling to the Supplier Guide on their website or are in the process of doing so, sometimes as part of a Regional Centre of Excellence initiative.

Just over half the non-district authorities have started publishing their OJEU tender notices on their websites and some of these also include below-OJEU tender opportunities but that information is patchy and not always up to date. Only 18% also include information about awarded contracts.

Self-registration is a feature on 35% of non-district authorities' supplier portals (although often this does not seem much used, so one wonders how well it is being promoted) and 23% also provide an online pre-qualification form, but only 14% provide a full tender alert facility.

Note 1 Supplier Adoption Survey, NePP 2006: <http://www.nepp.org.uk>

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5.2 Review of local authority portal websites

Most of the supplier portal websites looked at for this review were under-developed. Typically, they appear to have been designed mainly to satisfy the authorities' NPS targets, with little obvious understanding of what suppliers, particularly the smaller companies, need in order to find it worthwhile participating:

- Most do not allow suppliers to see the level of business that might be on offer before registering – for example we were unable to see into many of the systems without registering first.
- When you do get in to see what's on offer it is often disappointing. Many sites are not currently interactive, simply acting as pointers to contacts or general information on the authority's website.
- Some are building up information about contracts – basically a yellow pages directory – but the data that is loaded is often out of date and limited to the largest contracts.
- Self-registration processes are reasonably easy but some self-completion pre-qualification and profile systems are clumsy and longwinded.

An analysis of the websites reviewed is given at Appendix A. It is based on desk research, reading public documents and logging into systems as suppliers.

5.3 Examples of systems

Systems reviewed ranged across the two types of portal, with some hybrid solutions developed specifically to address the relationship between them. Some examples (not an exhaustive list) include:

a) Business Portals with tender alert facilities

- Alito (Yorkshire region) and Due North (Devon, NEPO etc) provide e-tendering and contract management systems that have been developed to include a full list of SME Portal functions intended to serve the SME supplier community. The two systems are very different and neither has resolved issues such as the lack of lower value contracts being advertised, but they probably represent the current 'cutting edge' in supplier portals for the local authority sector.
- IDeA/EGS (Slough) has developed a Business Portal solution for use in association with its marketplace which aims to be inclusive for SME suppliers. It sends out tender alerts to suppliers for any contracts being let and enables contract managers to go back into the system after the end of a contract to enter feedback on a supplier's performance. There was however little evidence of active use by either buyers or suppliers in the Slough implementation.
- Millstream Associates' myTenders system (Aberdeen) enables procurement managers to create, publish and manage their procurement notices (OJEU and non-OJEU) and includes a tender alert service for suppliers, on a subscription basis.

b) SME Portals

- Scientia (with Nimis) provide sector portals, such as the West Cumbria Renaissance supply chain portal (nuclear sector), specifically to serve the needs of the sector communities. They offer access to tender notice alerts as part of a more comprehensive supply chain support service.

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- BIP have for some years offered tender notice management services and they recently became the service providers for DTI/SBS's Supply2gov portal, a stand-alone national system developed specifically to provide tender alerts and a standardised core pre-qualification form for SMEs. Supply2gov offers online self-registration and profiling and promises to feature opportunities under £100,000 as well as OJEU notices. Supply2gov is free to suppliers if they only want information about 'local' opportunities. An annual subscription fee is charged for regional and national information. Supply2gov is designed to interoperate with councils' websites and regional portals such as NEPO. As well as hoping that public sector buyers will submit tender opportunities (which will require considerable pressure and marketing), BIP research all tender notices published in the UK and will be adding these to the database.

In summary, the systems we have reviewed are geared to meet the authorities' needs, often with less focus on helping SME suppliers. In particular, there is a potentially crucial mismatch between the smaller suppliers the portals are said to be intended to help and the level of opportunity advertised on the portals (with the exception of the Supply2gov portal, if it takes off).

6. Developing a blueprint for SME Portals

A supplier portal will only work if both buyers and suppliers participate.

6.1 Encouraging supplier participation

One way to ensure there is good take-up by local SMEs is to provide the SME Portal as part of a community focused 'Buy Local' initiative for all residents and businesses in the area, as well as the public sector.

The portal would be an online business directory where anyone could locate a supplier and, if marketplace technology is incorporated into the solution, a shopping mall to order catalogue goods and request quotes for services online. This would ensure that the smaller companies would be able to promote themselves and gain online access to both private and public sector local markets.

The associated marketplace system would provide multi-tier pricing and restrict visibility to a core contracted set of catalogue items, if required, which means that councils could use the portal for their lower value e-procurement needs.

Under EU regulations, opportunities over OJEU thresholds must be available for all European suppliers and in practice this would apply to all opportunities offered on a public portal, so the information and self-registration on supplier portals has to be seen to be open to all. The focus on local companies therefore needs to come primarily from the way the portal is branded, marketed and promoted. This is the real key to the successful participation of the local business community and therefore suggests that an SME Portal should not be simply an appendage to the local authority's Business Portal solution, but should sit in within an economic development and regional development programme.

6.2 Encouraging buyer participation

The two main concerns are: how to get buyers to notify suppliers registered on SME Portals about opportunities, OJEU and non-OJEU, and how to get buyers to use SME Portals for sourcing their tenders.

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6.2.1 Publication of Notices

We have said that the only realistic way that notification would work is if buyers had to publish their formal tender opportunities as an integral part of the tendering process. So that suggests the need for:

- Clear guidance to authorities on how to incorporate this process into their procurement activity
- development of a workflow-governed tender publication process for authorities to use for non-OJEU tenders, possibly as an extension of an OJEU workflow system. Electronic Business Portal solutions would provide the mechanism for this.

If every authority's (or group of authorities') Business Portal solution was required to interoperate with the national Supply2gov portal, as described above, any opportunities issued by the authority would be notified as part of the tender alert service.

6.2.2 Using SME Portal for sourcing

Buyers preparing OJEU tenders need to follow normal publication procedures ^{Note 2}, which we have suggested should be extended to all formal tenders.

Work and goods required below the authority's formal tender threshold do not have to be advertised but can be dealt with by requesting informal quotations from suppliers. In these cases, buyers need to be able to search for quality suppliers. Where the authority has developed a managed procurement process and/or implemented a Business Portal, buyers will be encouraged to first look at their existing contracted and preferred suppliers list. Then, if a wider choice of companies is required or it is the authority's policy to include local SMEs with relevant capabilities wherever possible, they would look for companies not currently being used by the authority, (ie search the SME portal supplier list).

In order to enable buyers to source suppliers from the wider list, the authority would need to link the Business and SME portals in some way, either using a technical link or by providing an easy point of access to the SME portal list and encouraging buyers to use it. Selection behaviour can be influenced by the way that systems present information and choices, but technical integration between Business and SME Portal solutions have not yet appeared and it was not clear from documented information or from discussions with portal providers how this would be tackled. (These discussions are ongoing).

6.2.3 Tier 1 suppliers

Many authorities have outsourced work to private sector partners and there are some good examples of authorities working with these Tier 1 suppliers to ensure inclusion of local suppliers as sub-contractors to ensure sustainability in the local economy.

For authorities where economic sustainability is an issue, the use of an SME portal for sourcing should be extended to Tier 1 suppliers, who would then be accessing the SME supplier list on behalf of the public sector client. This raises issues for portal providers, as these companies cannot have full access to other suppliers' details. One approach is for these companies to be recognised on the system as an outsourced supplier with access to the facility to publish opportunities but not the search facilities available to the public sector buyers.

^{Note 2} except for Restricted Tenders which do not have to be advertised under EU rules.

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6.3 A joined-up approach

Leaving the development of SME Portals to individual authorities and regional groups of authorities, which is where the onus is currently, has a significant drawback. Companies, even the smallest, may be interested in opportunities outside their immediate area. The prospect of having to register on all the portals, each with different registration forms and requirements, is not one that makes any sense.

A national portal, linked to the regional and sub-regional portals, would in principle be an attractive solution and so the launch of DTI/SBS' Supply2gov system is a welcome development. Its once-only registration and standardised core pre-qualification features could, with sufficient support from ODPM and OGC, become accepted by all public sector bodies. Interoperability (available at any one of five levels of integration) would allow exchange of data and access by suppliers to opportunities below £100,000 as well as OJEU notices, locally, regionally and nationally, from one website.

The charging policy (imposed on BIP by DTI) means that there is potential conflict between some regional and sub-regional portals who will wish to offer free access to opportunities in their region, and the national system which charges for anything outside a NUTS-defined local area ^{Note 3}. One answer would be get DTI to change the policy and make regional searches and alerts free. Another approach (and one that is probably more likely to succeed) would be for Regional Development Agencies to negotiate a subsidised service for their local companies to access opportunities within the region.

Incidentally the BIP solution does provide a 'white label' option (Tier 3 level interoperability) for authorities to use instead of creating and maintaining their own supplier websites, which regions could also investigate if all they want is a portal to post public sector opportunities. However there is no reason why sub-regional portals need to share common technical platforms, provided the systems are interoperable, ie capable of sharing data.

6.4 Conclusion

An approach that incorporates good practice would be:

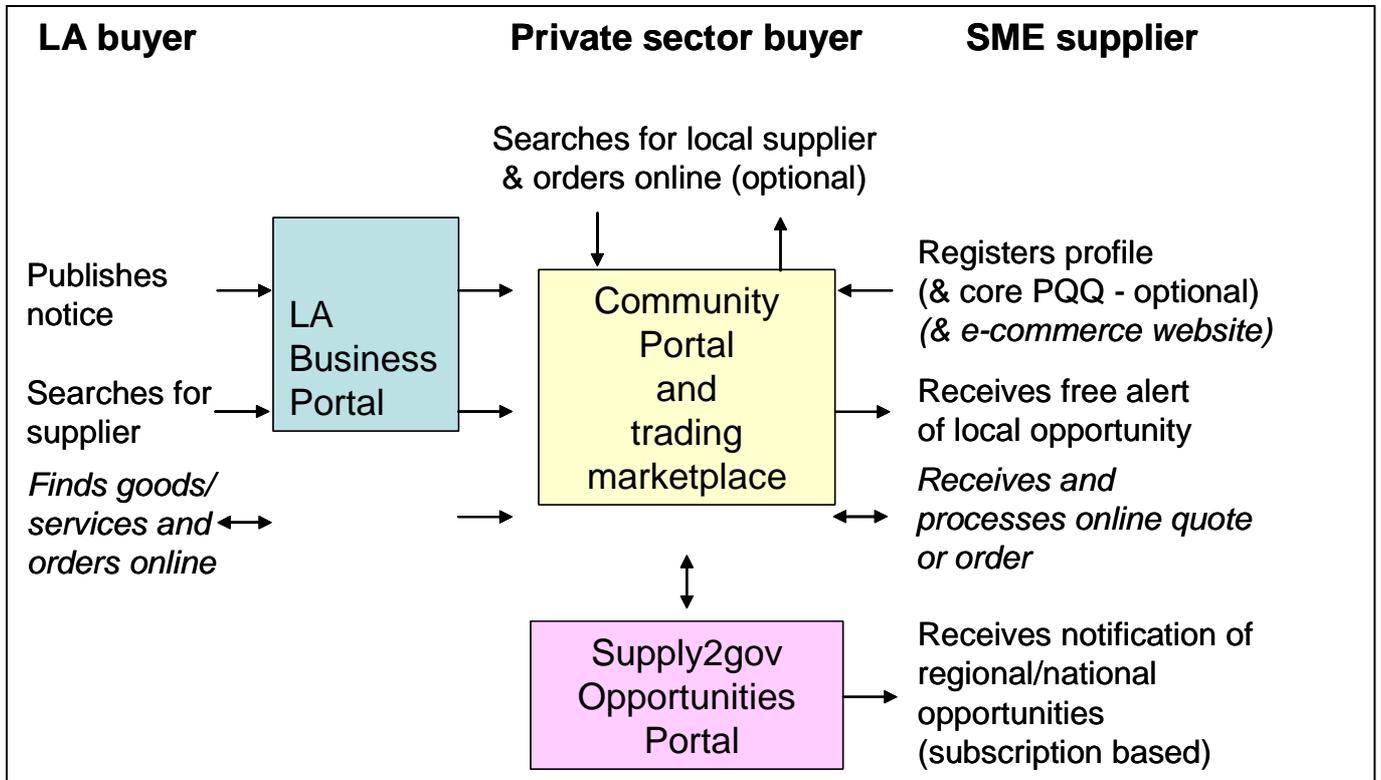
- Create SME Portals as part of sub-regional sustainable community 'Buy Local' initiatives.
- Link the SME Portals to the national Supply2gov SME Opportunities Portal and standardise registration and profiling, so that companies only have to register once.
- SME portals to be used by buyers for sourcing informal tender suppliers in those authorities with policies to support their local business communities.
- Business portals (being implemented by local authorities as part of their modernisation of tender and contract management processes) to:
 - use the supplier registration and tender alert facilities provided by Supply2gov or to standardise their approach based on Supply2gov
 - link suppliers to the national portal so they don't have to register more than once
 - channel all tender notice publication through Supply2gov.
- Consider implementing an online 'shopping mall' for local residents and businesses as part of the SME Portal. Link this to any public sector marketplace initiative so that local authorities can request quotes and place orders online from e-commerce enabled local SMEs and set up a KickStart scheme to support this.

An illustration of this is shown overleaf.

³ NUTS = Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – an EU classification system. Supply2gov uses NUTS2 boundaries, equivalent to Counties or groups of unitary authorities.

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Fig 1: Joined-up blue-print for SME Portals



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Appendix A: Review of Portals

(Data derived from desk research into public documents and websites, logging on as suppliers)

Portal host	Contract register	Tender register	How to do business	Council contacts	Supplier registration	Supplier qualification	Supplier help systems	Collaborative for councils	Comment
NEPO/DueNorth	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	y	Most all round system including user collaboration. Has the ability to integrate with other applications in-house and @UK PLC.
Slough/EGS			Y	y					Very little available to suppliers. We understand that the system is being rewritten but from the councils point of view. In essence this means being led by their marketplace requirement.
St Helens OneForm					Y	Y	Y		Developed to be bolted onto other applications in order to avoid multiple PQQs, particularly from the public sector. Limited availability for accessing the system as a new supplier, simple list style with council contacts. It should not be seen as a portal offering two way interaction. Mainly for complying with NPS targets.
St Helens OneForm	Y	Y			y		Y		Limited availability for accessing the system as a new supplier, simple list style with council contacts. It should not be seen as a portal offering two way interaction. Mainly for complying with NPS targets.
Essex BIP	Y	Y		y				Y	Mainly used as a pointer to the Essex Agency limited downloads. Access is mainly through the Agency website and has some capability. One feels that new suppliers are not seen as a requirement.
East London	Y		Y	y	y	y	y		This site seems somewhat elusive as the feeds into it seem to come from the council's site. It covers many of the issues and has a high profile for e-Procurement based on the @UK PLC model.
Derbyshire	Y	Y	Y	y			y	Y	Basically an advertising list based upon Counties. This is the first of a strategy recommended by EMCE and is the basis of a roll out through out the East

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Portal host	Contract register	Tender register	How to do business	Council contacts	Supplier registration	Supplier qualification	Supplier help systems	Collaborative for councils	Comment
									Midlands counties. It is a yellow pages style system that builds up a profile of contracts over time. Will not be viable in a fast moving market place. No cost to either party.
SOPO									No opportunity to access the site as an outsider. Therefore SMEs will not be interested without seeing something that inspires them.
Sell to Wales	y	Y	Y		y	y	y	Y	Clunky and mainly used for large contracts OJEU. The only site that has responded to registration by proactively sending opportunities. However the registration mechanism is insufficiently designed to make the proposition worthwhile. It appears not to be very active within the authority market in Wales and relies mainly on national advertised contracts.
Haringey									Site not fully available for investigation
YPO				y					Too simplistic, offering no support to suppliers
Norfolk/Suffolk/ESPO	y								Mainly providing a front for ESPO, not a real effort. Registration for SMEs does not exist - mainly a telephone contact list. ESPO concentrates on large frameworks aimed at CC and Unitaries.
Supply2gov	y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Under construction when research undertaken. PQQ may be too detailed for small providers.
Zanzibar									Site not available. It is understood to be comprehensive but will probably be geared to central government.
West Midland	y	Y			y				Appears to be little used and is believed to be being considered for upgrade or replacement.

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Function	Business Portal	SME Portal
LA users to be able to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop tenders collaboratively online, manage process 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build standardised rules, EU regulations etc into workflow 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issue OJEU notices and sub-OJEU contract opportunities 	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruit suppliers to corporate approved supplier list 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • search for and alert preferred suppliers (restricted tenders) 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alert registered suppliers when an opportunity arises, as dictated by their profile 	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive expressions of interest 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publish ITT and supplementary PQQ if required, issue hard copies if required 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive and manage formal tenders 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate responses using online tools 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publish award of contract 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • search online contracts register 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage awarded contracts, financial and risk reporting 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage effective communication to/from suppliers via email / letter 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be alerted to contract milestones, reviews, renewals etc by an online scheduler 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • track supplier performance, feedback to supplier and sourcing process 	✓	

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Function	Business Portal	SME Portal
Suppliers to be able to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access 'How to trade with us' guidance and council contacts 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • register on the portal 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and maintain profile for tender alerts 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive tender alerts via email 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive tender alerts via SMS 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete core PQQ online or via download 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • register interest in specific contract opportunities 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • search for details of opportunities 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see details of awards and who to contact for sub-contract opportunities 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to ITT, complete supplementary PQQ, online or via download 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online support and help 		✓

Business Portal system to be able to interoperate with suitable SME portal eg Supply2gov