



## LEEDS CITY COUNCIL SWITCHED ONTO SUSTAINABILITY

**Leeds City Council has shown that it is ahead of the game when it comes to sustainability and it wants the businesses it works with to follow suit. As one of the first high profile organisations to sign up to CAESER\* a brand new online toolkit designed to help companies self assess how sustainable their business practices are, Leeds City Council hopes to ensure a supply chain of socially responsible businesses.**

The council believes that if the government's vision for a sustainable future is to become a reality, then each and every body needs to stand up and take responsibility and it is challenging its suppliers to do just that with an innovative new programme called CAESER, (Corporate Assessment of Economic, Social and Environmental Responsibility). By way of an online data capture process, CAESER helps companies to measure the impact that they are having on society and the environment, which can then be passed down the supply chain.

CAESER is a web-based product that allows companies to measure their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability performance and so help demonstrate that they are taking the issue seriously. Whilst many companies adopt an ethical and responsible approach, there are some who engage in harmful business practices, such as poor recycling practices. CAESER helps the good set themselves apart from the competition with its CSR certification mark.

CAESER is the only officially licensed user of AccountAbility's AA1000 AP (2008)\* standard in a web-based application for assessing corporate social responsibility and sustainable development. This internationally recognised standard emphasises the principles of stakeholder engagement (inclusivity), materiality, completeness and responsiveness.

Leading the way in sustainable procurement, Leeds City Council is encouraging businesses throughout its supply chain to take part in the online data capture process. Whilst it accepts that some businesses have their own methods of evaluation, the council wants to understand and assess its supplier's activities in order to achieve government sustainability targets; with a set and consistent structure, CAESER can help to achieve this.

Ian Hodge, Procurement Initiatives and Projects Officer for Leeds City Council, says: "As the second largest local authority in the country we procure more than £800 million worth of goods, works and services per annum. Corporate Social Responsibility is integral to the council's strategic objectives and this is reflected in the council's plans, strategies and policies. It is essential that this money is spent in a way that contributes to delivering the

council's key objectives. CSR is now embedded within the procurement process and Leeds City Council is seen as a leader in sustainable procurement. We are keen to influence our supply chain and CAESER provides us with a framework to assess all of our suppliers and identify areas for improvement. Through CAESER we are investing in our supply chain and encouraging and supporting our suppliers while they take important steps to improve upon their social and environmental impact."

Chairman of the CAESER Assessment Centre, John F McClelland C.B.E. comments; "The importance of the sustainability agenda has been growing for some time, but without a straightforward way for companies and organisations to assess their own economic, social and environmental impact, we realised that it would become impossible to formally measure the success of the campaign. CAESER has been developed to address this issue and with the backing of the Leeds City Council and other government departments such as the Home Office, we are confident that it will help encourage continuous improvement."

CAESER has been developed in co-operation with and has the full support of The University of Bath's world renowned Centre for Business Organisations and Society (CBOS). It is the only official licensed implementation of AccountAbility's AA1000 AP standard for assessing corporate social responsible and sustainable development in a web based format.

## **Ends**

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### **Notes to editor**

\*CAESER (Corporate Assessment of Environmental Social and Economic Responsibility) is the only interactive AA1000APS CSR web based questionnaire licensed by AccountAbility, the Institute for Social and Ethical Accounting.

CAESER enables any organisation to both comply with the new CSR directors duties as required by the companies' act 2006 while contributing to the Governments sustainability agenda.

Based around responsible business practice, organisations are asked to explore their fundamental policies and practice in areas ranging from C02 reduction to data handling & assurance.

Bath University together with NQC Ltd, the creators of CAESER, brings together many years of public sector procurement knowledge and research on the impact of business in society and supports the collaborative efforts of the public and private sector on many areas that are challenging our world.

For more information go to the CAESER website at [www.caeser.org](http://www.caeser.org) or call the CAESER team at 0845 299 2994.

For more information on NQC Ltd go to [www.nqcconsulting.com](http://www.nqcconsulting.com).