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**DAO (DFP) 05/08**

**29 May 2008**

**Dear Accounting Officer**

**GUIDANCE ON EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT**

***Purpose***

1. The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to new guidance on how equality of opportunity and sustainable development can be incorporated into public sector procurement.

***Background***

2. The guidance has been prepared by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and DFP's Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), under the auspices of the Procurement Board. Its purpose is to support public authorities<sup>1</sup> as they embed equality of opportunity, including good relations, and sustainable development in their procurement practice. It will assist policy and decision makers, as well as people who work directly in procurement and project management. This guidance sets out what is expected of all those involved in public sector procurement, provides practical advice and case studies.

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<sup>1</sup> The guidance uses the term public authority throughout, meaning a public authority designated under s 75 and/or subject to the s 25 duty, rather than contracting authority in procurement terms. It recognises too, that a responsible public authority may not always be the contracting authority, for example, in bundles of projects.

3. The guidance has been approved by both the Procurement Board and the Northern Ireland Executive.

### ***Launch and promulgation***

4. In addition to this Dear Accounting Officer letter, promulgation of the guidance will be supported by a comprehensive programme of training and awareness sessions for both policy makers and procurement professionals across the public sector.
5. Separately, and as a matter of routine, the Equality Commission will issue the guidance to all District Councils and Public Authorities to bring the matter to their attention.
6. The guidance, and a supporting stand alone summary document, can be accessed via the CPD website at [www.cpdni.gov.uk](http://www.cpdni.gov.uk)

### ***Action***

7. Accounting Officers are asked to draw the contents of this letter and the guidance to the attention of staff within their departments, agencies, NDPBs and other sponsored bodies. The guidance should be taken into account, where appropriate, in the preparation of business cases.

### ***Queries***

8. If you have any queries regarding the guidance itself, please contact Aileen Edmund on (028 90816234 [aileen.edmund@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:aileen.edmund@dfpni.gov.uk)) or Susan Dornan (028 90816855 [susan.dornan@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:susan.dornan@dfpni.gov.uk)).

**Yours sincerely**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Thomson". The "D" is a large, stylized capital letter with a horizontal stroke extending to the left. The name "Thomson" is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

**DAVID THOMSON**