



# GM Procure

## Assurance statement: added-value activity 2009

### Introduction

GM Procure commissioned Corporate Citizenship to undertake an assessment of its added-value activities during 2009, updating an initial review conducted in 2008.

The 2008 review identified a number of strengths in GM Procure's added-value programme. It also highlighted a number of areas to address in the future. Our objectives for the current review were to:

- Assess GM Procure's progress during 2009, and;
- Apply the assurance process to assess any new or developed activities

Our assessment is confined to GM Procure's performance during the year to November 2009. Detailed findings have been provided to GM Procure in a management report along with recommendations for action in the short and longer-term.

### GM Procure's added-value programme

GM Procure undertakes a number of added-value activities focussed on the following areas:

- Employment, training and skills development opportunities for **trainees**
- Support for **small businesses** (micro non-traditional contractors)
- Creation of and support for **social/community enterprises**
- Funding **Sense of place** projects adding value to areas already being regenerated by its clients
- A programme of **tenant involvement**, to ensure that the views and interests of tenants, as customers of GM Procure, are effectively represented in key decision-making processes

## Progress in 2009

In our opinion GM Procure is to be commended on continuing to develop its added-value programme as well as for taking on board and acting on a significant number of the recommendations made as a result of last year's review.

GM Procure continues to identify and undertake activities that are **material** to the business and its key stakeholders (tenants, contractors, registered social landlords and the wider community where it operates) and which enable it to increase the level of social value it adds through its operations. The substantial development of its programme of tenant involvement during 2009 shows how GM Procure has increased the way it **responds** to stakeholder interests and issues, and **includes** key groups by actively seeking and enabling their views and participation. These are key indicators of an organisation that operates in a socially responsible manner.

It is encouraging that several activities that were in the planning stage last year have been successfully launched and embedded into the added-value programme and the wider business. There is also clear evidence that the team responsible for delivery of the programme continually reviews and assesses the programme to increase effectiveness.

## Looking ahead

The review has also identified certain considerations that GM Procure should address to ensure it can achieve its objectives consistently, particularly as it and its commitments grow. These include:

- Filling gaps in documented information in key areas (e.g. the tenant representative selection process), this will increase the transparency with which it operates and also address the risk of gaps in knowledge should key personnel change
- Communicating GM Procure's added-value objectives and the performance it achieves more openly and comprehensively to provide audiences, both within and outside the GM Procure network, with a clear understanding of its performance and achievements against its added-value objectives
- Working with its partners to measure the impact of activities, such as *Sense of place*, to ensure that the degree to which achievement against key objectives, such as delivering noticeable benefits to the community, is thoroughly monitored

We have provided GM Procure with detailed feedback about these and other more specific considerations in a management report along with recommendations for action in the short and longer-term. We look forward to learning how GM Procure acts on these in future.

## **About Corporate Citizenship**

Corporate Citizenship is a specialist management consultancy advising organisations that seek to improve their economic, social and environmental performance. A detailed note describing our relationship with GM Procure and the process we have adopted appears at the end of this statement.

## **Forming our opinion**

In forming our opinion we have used a set of assessment criteria developed to establish that GM Procure's approach to achieving its objectives, along with any processes and systems it employs to do so, are effective. In developing the criteria we have had regard to external standards on responsible business practice, such as the Good Corporation Standard as well as the principles underlying the international assurance standard AA1000as 2008 (particularly with regard to the principles of materiality, responsiveness and inclusivity). As noted, this process is outlined in more detail at the end of this statement.

Corporate Citizenship  
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## **Note on our relationship with GM Procure and on the assurance process**

### **Our relationship with GM Procure**

We have not worked with GM Procure any time during the period covered by this review, other than on this limited assurance project.

### **The assurance process**

As there are no statutory guidelines for the assessment in this area, we have formed our judgements based on emerging best practice among other companies, the principles of the assurance standard AA1000, the approach of the Good Corporation Standard, the stated views of principal stakeholders and our own professional expertise and experience.

A team of three, led by a director, undertook the assurance and commentary process. The team has a variety of professional and technical competencies and experience. The work was commissioned in September 2009 and was completed in January 2010. Detailed records were kept of meetings, assurance visits and correspondence relating to the assignment, as well as to technical matters relating to the accuracy and presentation of data.

Our external assurance and commentary has involved the following elements:

1. Meetings and discussions with a targeted section of GM Procure's managers dealing with added-value performance.
2. An analysis of best practice among other companies, the principles of the Good Corporation Standard and AA1000as.
3. An assessment of the internal processes, notably the procedures adopted to ensure that added-value performance is tracked, targets are set and that the data is accurate.
4. Direct engagement with stakeholders to seek their views on GM Procure's added-value performance and its effectiveness.

Our work therefore did not extend to a complete audit of the GM Procure's added-value performance, or of its wider social responsibilities, beyond that mentioned above. We have not been responsible for devising the internal management and reporting systems that yielded the performance data.

The opinions expressed in this external assurance statement and commentary are intended to extend understanding of GM Procure's added-value performance and should not be used or relied upon to form any judgements, or take any decisions, of a financial nature.