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MasterCard signs up to Welsh Purchasing Card programme



The Welsh Procurement Initiative (WPI) has signed an innovative deal with The Royal Bank of Scotland that could save public sector organisations across Wales in excess of £30 million. The Welsh Purchasing Card (WPC) will now be provided by The Royal Bank of Scotland on both Visa and MasterCard platforms and will be used to manage lower risk purchases.

The introduction of the Welsh Purchasing Card into the Welsh public sector, launched by the WPI in 2002, has delivered considerable benefits to the end users, including huge cost savings, less people involved in administration, discounts due to earlier payment, better control of accounts and, as a result, more efficient operations.

The new Welsh Purchasing Card programme will build on the savings already realised through the project (which delivered efficiency savings in the region of £600,000 in 2004 alone).

On average, 80 per cent of all public sector purchases in Wales are for everyday goods and services worth less than £1000. By using the WPC, the reduction in the resulting paperwork impacts on costs and time involved in the procurement process, plus providing additional environmental benefits.

Currently 25 public sector organisations in Wales use the WPC and the WPI predicts that in excess of £12 million will be spent on goods and services via the new card by the end of 2005.

Sue Essex, AM, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services, supports the new partnership: "The Welsh Purchasing Card has already delivered significant savings with at least £1 million to come in the next year. By joining forces with The Royal Bank of Scotland we can improve process efficiencies even further which means more savings in the future."

Suppliers also achieve benefits from the increased use of the WPC with major improvements in cash flow and reduced sales administration costs for example. To assist with this, there is a central supplier recruitment drive, which aims to maximise the opportunity available for suppliers to become WPC enabled.

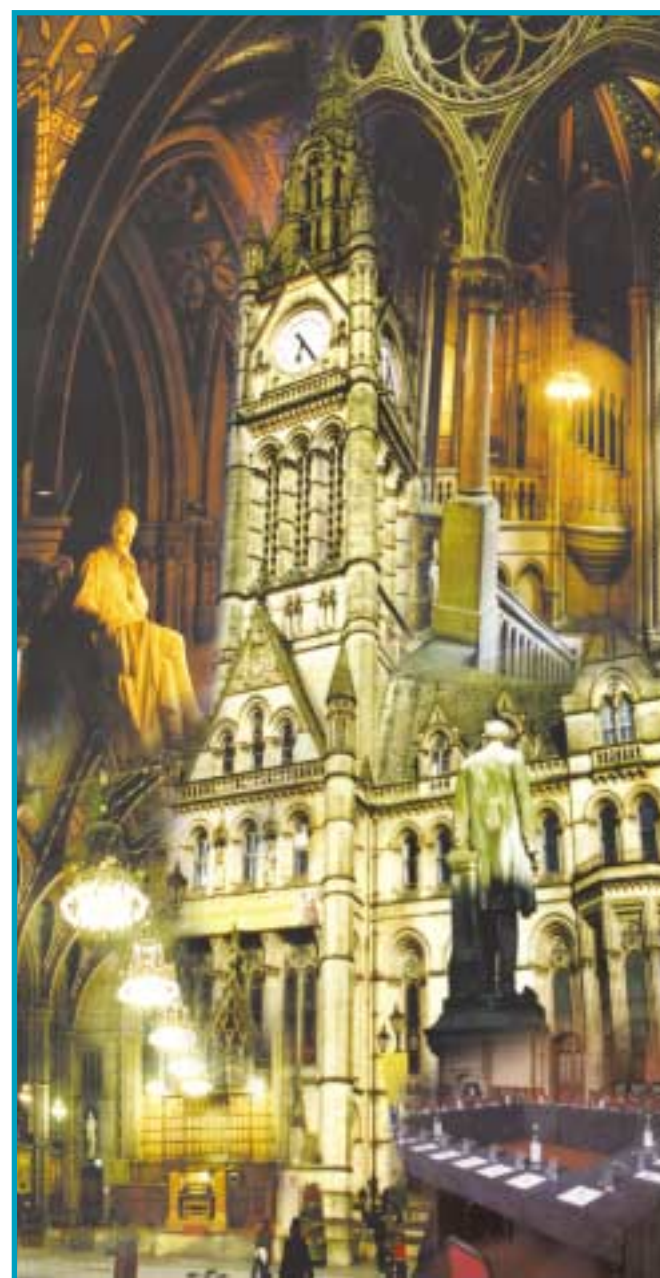
Alan Oram, WPI's Project Manager for the WPC says: "The addition of the MasterCard Welsh Purchasing Card for the Welsh public sector will allow us to realise considerable savings, both through improved procurement processes and on the supplier side. The additional benefits arising from the link with MasterCard will help drive

wider use of the card and encourage more purchasing departments across the country to use the card to its optimum capability."

Paul Ashley-Jones procurement manager, responsible for purchasing at Pembrokeshire County Council says: "We are extremely happy with the way the Purchasing Card is delivering value to our citizens. The purchasing process is now 10 times simpler than it used to be. It gives us an easy to use purchase to payment tracking device, vastly reduces the amount of paperwork required and offers state of the art security features. This has resulted in significant cost savings – the benefits of which we are able to pass to our local communities."

Speaking on behalf of the Royal Bank, Commercial Cards Relationship Manager, Paul Mindham said: "The WPC is about much more than purchasing cards. It is about taking away the many inefficiencies in today's purchasing processes and freeing up considerable amounts of money and people to improve services to the citizens. We are very pleased that the Welsh Assembly Government has chosen The Royal Bank of Scotland and MasterCard for its innovative card programme."

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