

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

13 March 2007

**Local Authorities who use Becta framework may breach European Procurement Regulations**

---STARTS---

Public procurement lawyers at the leading European firm Taylor Wessing, having examined the complaint submitted in January by Alpha Learning about Becta's Learning Platform Procurement Framework, have concluded that there is a serious matter to be investigated by the European Commission and that there is prima facie evidence that there are breaches of the public procurement regulations.

Taylor Wessing have now written on behalf of Alpha Learning to the European Commission with further information to urge that there be a full investigation with a view to formal infraction proceedings being brought against the United Kingdom.

If the complaint about the framework is upheld then it would not be legally open to other public bodies to call off under the Becta framework. Each public body will have to conduct its own procurement exercise.

--ENDS---

---NOTES FOR EDITORS---

Details of Alpha Learning's original complaint along with a more recent letter of advice from Taylor Wessing, are available at [www.alphalearning.co.uk/ojeu.htm](http://www.alphalearning.co.uk/ojeu.htm).

Local Authorities and Regional Broadband Consortia who would like more information on the basis of Alpha Learning's complaint are invited to write to Crispin Weston at Alpha Learning, New Barn Studios, West Milton, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3TN.

One hundred and thirty Members of Parliament have signed John Pugh's Early Day motion, criticising Becta's 'outdated purchasing frameworks'; and the Shadow Chancellor, George Osborne, in a speech to the Royal Society of Arts on 9th March, criticised the government's IT procurement practices for failing to support interoperability, stifling competition and hampering innovation.

The European Commission is not expected to consider the complaint until after Easter.

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