

Ethical city supply rules approved

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City council has approved a policy that encourages suppliers to meet high ethical and environmental standards.

The sustainable environmental and ethical procurement policy, developed over two years, asks suppliers to meet standards set out in local and international agreements.



Owen Tobert

Even though costs of the policy won't be known until budget talks in November, council members gave it the go-ahead earlier this week.

"We can set a tone that we expect businesses to operate in an ethical manner," said Ald. Druh Farrell, who noted the same type of policy in Vancouver cost less than \$2,000.

Ald. Barry Erskine added: "It's about time we're doing it."

But several aldermen were opposed to the policy, with some suggesting it doesn't seem necessary.

"This report has mystified me," said Ald. Dale Hodges. "Up until this point in time, did the City of Calgary believe in unethical procurement?"

"No," answered city manager Owen Tobert, who suggested the policy would make the city a leader in ethical and environmental standards.

Calgary is following a trend among North American cities setting similar standards.

The city's intent is to encourage suppliers to meet the criteria set out by its supplier code of conduct, which covers issues ranging from workplace safety to pollution control. Suppliers would also be responsible for ensuring their subcontractors are compliant with the code.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has warned the proposal would harm small firms by forcing them to invest in costly investigations of their supply chains.