

If Helsinki can refuse to deal with companies with tax ...

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This [fascinating report comes from Helsinki](#). I discussed the issue when there in June:

The Helsinki City Council on Wednesday debated a proposed strategy of global responsibility under which the city "considers it important to fight against tax havens and to avoid collaboration with companies with links to tax havens".

The City Board is to get a report by the end of February on ways to avoid collaborating with such companies. The City Board is also expected to study ways to ascertain if a company has links with tax havens.

The idea of the strategy of global responsibility is to promote equality and diversity in city acquisitions and in bids for tenders. Another aim is to raise consciousness among those responsible for city acquisitions on issues of human trafficking and the exploitation of foreign labour. The programme also commits Helsinki to target the grey economy and to fight climate change.

The proposals raised some controversy in the City Council. The programme was praised as necessary on the left side of the chamber, while some on the right were severely critical. The Helsinki City Council will vote on the strategy in its next meeting.

I rise the point for three reasons. First, I support the policy.

Second, this is an issue whose time is coming. As Simon Hughes noted [during yesterday's House of Commons debate](#) on tax havens and tax evasion:

Will [the Parliamentary Accounts Committee] ensure that no company that does business with the Government can use offshore tax havens in any part of its ownership arrangements? That is currently very common, particularly among public utilities such as water companies and others that supply key, nationally important infrastructure.

Third, and most important, [the law to allow for decision making on this basis](#) already exists and becomes effective next April. Now, who wants to trial it in the UK? I'm willing to help.