

Shropshire Council Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy (2026 – 2029)



Foreword from Portfolio Holder- Councillor Roger Evans



I am pleased to present this strategy which will set out the council's guiding principles and ambitions for our **Commissioning, procurement and contract management** activity, which will in turn support the **Corporate Plan**. We are at an important time for Shropshire Council; this area has been a priority for us as we set out our Commissioning intentions and respond to the budget pressures and continuing increases in demand.

The strategy will set out our vision for commissioning and define our organisational approach to procurement which will be in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and will provide assurance that we will spend public money in a way which is fair, accountable and achieves the very best value. It not only has been developed to consider both commissioning priorities and the new procurement regulations, but also lessons learned as an organisation. Supporting the development of a local market across Shropshire is vitally important and we will look at how we support the implementation of the Accord, which is a voluntary agreement between local public sector bodies and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups and organisations. It sets out shared values, principles, and commitments to better work together to serve local people and Shropshire's communities and describes how we work collaboratively and closely with our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and local Partners.

It is essential that all of the council takes accountability and understands commissioning, procurement and contract management. We need to cultivate a culture that focuses on demand informed by data; has strong governance; defined principles and works in collaboration to set strong foundations for the council. Growing a strong, resilient market across Shropshire will be key to ensuring choice, quality and value for money services are delivered with robust contract management.

Executive Summary

This Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management (CPCM) Strategy sets out how **Shropshire Council** will plan, procure and manage goods, services, works and concessions during **2026–2029** to deliver **best value**, improved outcomes for residents and full compliance with the **Procurement Act 2023** and the **National Procurement Policy Statement (February 2025)**.

The Council faces increasing demand, ongoing financial pressures and heightened expectations around transparency, fairness and social value. At the same time, the new procurement regime provides an opportunity to modernise how services are commissioned, how markets are engaged and how contracts are managed to secure stronger and more sustainable outcomes.

This strategy establishes a clear, consistent framework to ensure public money is spent **fairly, transparently and effectively**, while supporting delivery of the Council's **Corporate Plan**, economic regeneration priorities and commitments to sustainability and community wellbeing. This is a whole-council strategy. Responsibility for effective commissioning, procurement and contract management sits across service areas, budget holders, contract managers and senior leaders, with the Procurement and Contract Management Team providing specialist advice, governance and support.

What Will Change

The strategy introduces a step change in approach by:

- Training and awareness for officers across the council to improve accountability for services
- Strengthening a **commissioning-led model**, focused on clearly defined outcomes informed by data, evidence and resident insight.
- Embedding the **Procurement Act 2023** across all relevant activity, including use of the **Most Advantageous Tender (MAT)** approach and enhanced transparency.
- Improving **early market engagement** and visibility of the Council's procurement pipeline, with stronger support for SMEs, VCS and local suppliers.
- Implementing a **consistent, risk-based contract management framework** to improve performance, assurance and value for money throughout the contract lifecycle.

- Making better use of **data, systems and spend analysis** to support informed decision-making and planning.
- Strengthening **governance and accountability**, with clearer oversight and reporting arrangements.

Strategic Focus

The strategy is built around three interconnected themes:

- **Social Value** – embedding sustainability, climate action and wider social, economic and environmental benefits into commissioning and procurement, with delivery actively managed through contracts.
- **Procurement and Contract Management** – improving commercial capability, governance and compliance to ensure contracts deliver intended outcomes and manage risk effectively.
- **Delivery** – developing the skills, systems and processes required to implement the strategy consistently across the organisation.

These themes are supported by **eight commissioning priorities** that place residents at the centre of decision-making, focus on outcomes, manage demand, shape markets and promote collaboration across services and partners.

Measuring Success

Progress and impact will be measured through a clear performance framework, including:

- Improved organisational understanding of commissioning, procurement and contract management
- Improved Commercial Continuous Assessment Framework self-evaluation compared to baseline.
- Value for money and efficiency achieved
- Compliance with legislation and Contract Rules
- Delivery of social value and sustainability outcomes
- Contract performance, risk and assurance
- Engagement with local suppliers, SMEs and VCS

Performance will be monitored through quarterly dashboards and an **Annual Procurement Report** to senior management and Members.

Governance and Review

Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the **Commissioning, Procurement and Performance Board**, with appropriate reporting to Cabinet and Scrutiny. The strategy will operate on a **three-year review cycle**, with annual reviews to reflect legislative change or organisational priorities.

Approved Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	June 2026	Laura Tyler SD Commissioning	

Commissioning



- Assess Needs
- Define Dutcomes
- Shape the Market

Procurement



- Select Suppliers
- Conduct Tenders
- Award Contracts

Contract Management



- Monitor Performance
- Manage Risks
- Ensure Value

Content

Our vision for commissioning and procurement

Commissioning priorities

Priority 1: People Focused

Priority 2: Outcomes focused

Priority 3: Effectively manage demand

Priority 4: Evidence based/data driven

Priority 5: Deliver social value

Priority 6: Market shaping

Priority 7: Commissioning culture

Priority 8: Commissioning together

Procurement

Social Value

- Embedding Sustainability and Climate Action into all Procurement Activities
- Providing Opportunity for Economic, Social & Environmental Wellbeing
- Enhancing the Supply Market

Procurement & Contract Management

- Improving Contract & Commercial Management
- Delivering Best Value & Good Governance

Delivery

- Building Skills & Capability
- Utilising and Developing Systems & Processes
- Implementing, Monitoring & Review

Good governance

1. Our vision for commissioning and procurement

Commissioning is the strategic, cyclical process of assessing community needs, designing services, and deciding what to buy, while procurement is the transactional, technical process of purchasing those goods or services from a supplier. Commissioning shapes the market and sets outcomes.

Our vision is to ensure that all of the council's commissioning and procurement activity ensures quality, value for money and meets needs. It is delivered across all areas of the council in a manner that considers our guiding principles and ambitions, not only from a procurement perspective but also considering the wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our Corporate Plan:

This is a shared corporate responsibility, with service areas, budget holders, commissioners, contract managers and senior leaders all playing a role in delivering effective commissioning, procurement and contract management.

- Sustainable, Connected and Resilient – ensuring the Council lives within its means, works closely with communities and partners, and helps build resilience so support is available when most needed.
- Financial sustainability, clear priorities and a workforce supported to excel – strengthening financial management (including procurement and contract management) so every pound spent delivers maximum benefit and impact.
- Connected communities – enabling well-maintained roads, accessible transport and the infrastructure people and businesses need.
- Safe and inclusive places with homes that meet people's needs – supporting the right mix of housing, safer communities, and prevention/early intervention with partners.
- Healthy people who can thrive at every stage of life – focusing on prevention, independence, and access to sustainable, high-quality services and support.
- A protected environment that promotes wellbeing – embedding climate action, nature recovery, waste minimisation and greener ways of working through commissioning and contracts.
- A fair and thriving economy – supporting sustainable growth, local skills and employment, investment, and improved digital/mobile connectivity (including in rural areas).

This strategy is to set out how Shropshire Council will commission, procure and contract manage goods, services, works and concessions in a way that:

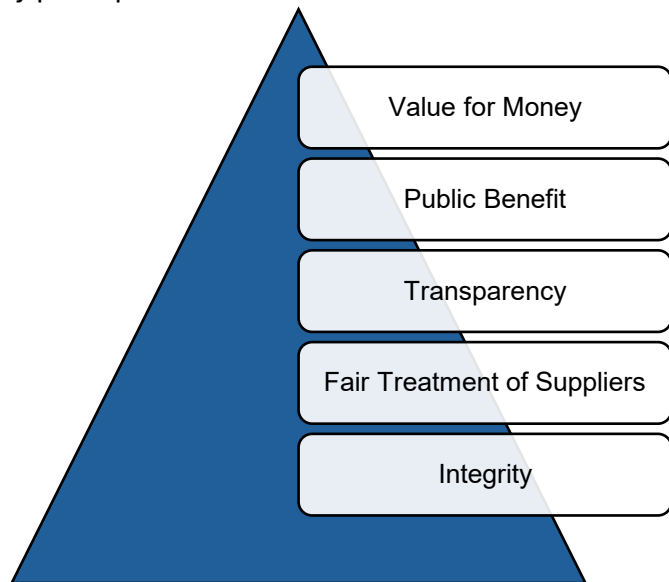
Deliver sustainable outcomes for residents, businesses, and the environment.

Complies with UK Public Procurement Act 2023

Achieves value for money (VFM).

Support the Council's wider corporate plan

Key principles include:



These principles create the foundation for delivering long-term efficiency and quality in contracts that are safe, legal and compliant with the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23) and all connected other relevant legislation:

- New contract rules for Shropshire Council
- Process and documentation in line with best practice, providing proportionate governance and controls
- Data assimilation to categories, regimes and thresholds to support visibility of spend within supply chains and data driven insight-led decision making
- Onboarding of suppliers
- Improved value for money as combined opportunities are identified
- To procure and ensure efficient and effective management of all third party spend ensuring the Council is safe, legal and compliant with PA23

This will help the council:

- build on the already committed investment into the Procurement and Contract Management function
- system integration improvements underway
- data cleansing and meeting our transparency obligations
- delivering a consistent service offer and approach with clarity across council services
- to ensure that it is compliant but also delivers the best value for money in procuring what it needs

Commissioning

Commissioning is data and evidence led, it is collaborative and supports the strategic aims to deliver cost-effective, good quality and choice of services for our residents.

Definition of Commissioning

For the purposes of this document commissioning is defined as a cycle of assessing the needs of people and communities across Shropshire. Using these to design effective services and support and influence the market to shape and secure the right services at the right price. Importantly then monitoring and reviewing the impact of those services being delivered to assess whether we can learn and improve those services for the benefit of the people and communities of Shropshire’.

Commissioning Intentions

The principles adopted in our strategic commissioning framework will support the delivery of effective and efficient services over the short, medium and longer-term through:

- a culture that supports innovation, collaboration and partnerships
- effective resourcing and governance that ensures value for money.
- A market that thrives and delivers services that meet the needs of residents
- A versatile, cost effective and sustainable market.
- Promoting and developing inclusive access to all services.
- Investing in early help, prevention and community services.



Priority 1: People Focused

Our Aim:

We will put our residents at the centre of our commissioning approach. Residents from all our communities will inform and shape future commissioning decisions and residents will have a say in the vision for their local area.

How will we achieve this?

- Embed opportunities for residents to be involved in all stages of the commissioning cycle
- There will be early involvement of existing and prospective service users to understand priorities and inform commissioning decisions.
- Embed customer experience and insights into our contract monitoring arrangements

Priority 2: Outcomes focused

Our Aim:

Through an Outcome-Based approach, we will focus on the difference we can make and not just focus on inputs and processes. We will promote innovation and make effective use of resources, specifically identifying multiple outcomes and delivering value for money.

How will we achieve this?

- Working with residents we will define the outcomes to be achieved in our Council Plan and Commissioning Intentions.
- Be clear about how the outcomes contribute to the Council's strategic priorities at the start of the commissioning process.
- Start with defining the outcomes and vision for what we are setting out to achieve before identifying the options for delivery.
- Ensure we embed robust mechanisms and monitoring processes to measure, and report based on SMART outcomes.

Priority 3: Effectively manage demand

Our Aim:

Forecasting, planning and developing a better understanding of demand for our services will be a key part of our commissioning approach.

How will we achieve this?

- Understanding what causes demand for services and identify opportunities for changing level of demand. This will be key for managing future pressures on services against available resources.
- Invest resources where it's needed
- Take a long term and strategic view of demand to avoid delivering false economy where reduction in provision in one area increase demand elsewhere.
- Understanding the impact of our intervention – what we are setting out to do and what difference has it made.

Priority 4: Evidence based/data driven commissioning decisions

Our Aim:

Data and insights play a key role in commissioning by enabling us to understand levels and types of need. We have a wealth of data – both within the Council and from our providers. We will actively harness and analyse the data at every step of the process to ensure the appropriate decisions and actions are taken.

How will we achieve this?

- Use Shropshire and Partner data to identify trends and understand demand
- Use our data to identify solutions and feed into commissioning plans and decision making
- Conduct robust review and evaluation of services commissioned before re-commissioning
- Continually review contracts and services to analyse and report on the effectiveness of our commissioning decisions
- Develop and analyse category level spend to feed into commissioning intentions

Priority 5: Deliver social value

Our Aim:

Commissioning should ensure the maximum benefit in delivering multiple outcomes for our residents. We will create opportunities that enhance our communities and improve the lives of our residents.

How will we achieve this?

We will develop a plan which sets out how we will enhance social value through our commissioning. This will include:

- Encouraging a diverse base of suppliers
- Maximising community benefits through encouraging suppliers to make social contributions to the area
- Promoting greater environmental sustainability
- Increasing employment and training opportunities through our contracts

Priority 6: Market shaping

Our Aim:

Our providers have a key role in achieving outcomes for our residents. Our aim is to take our relationship with providers, existing and new, a step further by shaping solutions with the market to respond to needs, support capacity building, encourage innovation and help build sustainable service models.

How will we achieve this?

- Regular market engagement activities with clear and coherent communication
- Analyse the current market and identify strengths, weaknesses and any gaps
- Shape the market for short, medium, and long term
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with providers, supporting them to be flexible to local needs

Priority 7: Commissioning culture

Our Aim:

Develop a ‘commissioning culture’ – empower our commissioners to be bold, ambitious and have confidence to explore new delivery models. We will not default to always procuring what we’ve had before – we will consider a full range of options.

How will we achieve this?

- Proactive management of existing contracts in order to develop innovative solutions
- We will undertake a holistic approach to forward thinking commissioning, looking at and building on good practice.
- We will support our commissioners to develop the skills and expertise required to deliver our commissioning principles

Priority 8: Commissioning together

Our Aim:

We will look to integrate commissioning (expertise, capacity and resources) across departments and with partners to maximise benefits for our residents.

How will we achieve this?

- We will develop a forward plan of commissioning activity and engage with our partners and across departments to focus on service users in a timely manner to ensure joint collaboration
- We will demonstrate open and honest communication and flexibility to work in an integrated way from planning to delivery
- We will look to avoid duplication and positively influence how collective resources are used, for example through pooled budgets or shared services
- We will work to shared values and goals and take joint responsibility for delivering outcomes

Procurement



Our vision is to ensure that all of the council's procurement activity is delivered in a manner that considers our guiding principles and ambitions, not only from a purely procurement perspective but also considering the wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our corporate plan.

Our procurement activity and decisions have a direct impact on the council's budget, the quality and cost of services to our citizens and delivery of our corporate and service objectives. The way in which we conduct our procurement activity also has an impact on our suppliers and potential suppliers to the council, and we hope that this strategy will enable us to provide greater transparency and consistency in our activities.

The council aims to deliver high-quality, value-driven, socially responsible procurement and contract management that supports Shropshire Council's strategic objectives, enhances community wellbeing, and ensures sustainable economic growth while delivering a clear Procurement Lifecycle see below:

Plan:

- Identify needs and requirements
- Conduct market research
- Develop procurement strategy
- Prepare budget and timeline

Define:

- Specify detailed requirements
- Draft procurement documents
- Establish evaluation criteria: Set criteria for evaluating bids, price, quality
- Obtain necessary approvals: Get approval from management for the procurement plan.

Procure:

- Issue procurement documents
- Receive and evaluate bids/proposals: Collect and assess bids based on the evaluation criteria.
- Conduct negotiations: Negotiate terms and prices with shortlisted suppliers.
- Award contract to selected vendor: Choose the best supplier and award the contract.

Manage:

- Monitor contract performance
- Manage supplier relationships: Maintain good communication and resolve any issues with the supplier.
- Process payments and manage invoices.
- Conduct post-procurement evaluation: Review the procurement process and supplier performance for future improvements

Procurement priorities

Principle	Description
Value for Money & Efficiency	Deliver services that balance cost, quality, and outcomes
Compliance & Governance	Ensure all procurement complies with relevant laws, internal financial regulations, and audit requirements
Fairness & Transparency	Provide clear, open, and equitable opportunities for suppliers
Local Economic Growth	Support SMEs, VCS, and local suppliers, developing local markets that deliver across neighbourhoods
Sustainability & Social Value	Embed carbon reduction, ethical sourcing, and community benefits in all procurements
Risk Management & Resilience	Identify, monitor, and mitigate any fraud or supply chain risks
Innovation & Collaboration	Identify and enable innovative solutions and partnerships with other authorities or agencies

Social Value

Embedding Sustainability and Climate Action into all Procurement Activities

Ambition

The council's spending can have a significant impact on helping the council to achieve its carbon net zero ambitions, influencing the approach to climate change mitigation and driving sustainability within the local authority area. Whilst we have made progress, we must try to do more. Therefore, the council's approach to procurement and contract management must be harnessed to support the council's plan on balancing short-term gains with long-term benefits. Our decisions about what we buy, who we buy it from and the way we buy it can have significant wider environmental, economic and social impacts, thereby contribute to achieving one of the council's corporate plan objectives.

Outcomes

- The climate and sustainability impact of the council's spending decisions are fully considered and appropriately built into procurement requirements, driving down carbon emissions and contributing towards the net zero ambition.
- Measurable sustainability and climate data is available in contracts and is used to improve services and drive change.
- Council contracting considers the changing climate and takes action to reduce detrimental impacts, influencing emission reductions from outsourced and contracted council services.
- A supply base that is aware of and embraces the council's declarations, policy and strategy in relation to sustainability, passing that commitment on to other organisations and supporting delivery.

Activities

- Explore the establishment of a methodology for measuring and reporting of climate and sustainability targets and impacts during contract delivery, creating data that can be used to improve services and drive change.
- Embed the effective use of sustainability led Social Value themes, outcomes and measures (TOMs) in procurements to capture and evaluate supplier commitments and ensure delivery.
- As part of our market engagement activities and plans we will work with our supply markets to ensure they are aware of our ambitions and learn from them what constitutes current sustainability best practice.
- Align procurement outcomes with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Council's climate and inclusion priorities.

Providing Opportunity for Economic, Social & Environmental Wellbeing Ambition

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was enacted to ensure public sector organisations are taking the social, economic and environmental value delivered by their contracts into account. The Act places a duty on the council to "consider, prior to undertaking the procurement/ commissioning process, how any services procured might improve economic, social and environmental well-being".

Whilst we operate in a challenging environment, in which savings will always be a factor for consideration, we need a strategy which also focuses on achieving additional outcomes from our procurement activity, at no extra cost. By leveraging our procurement expenditure and engaging with suppliers we can help the council enhance outcomes for our communities through increased social, economic and environmental value. This will directly support the overall priorities of the council as set out in the Corporate Plan.

Outcomes

- A proportionate and effective approach to Social Value, with supporting methodologies / toolkit, is embedded across the council.
- The council is able to record and track Social Value outcomes delivered through contracts with third parties.
- Procurement processes consistently consider Social Value and are designed to ensure suppliers make worthwhile and deliverable Social Value commitments through the tender process.

- The council seeks to improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing from our contracts, over and above the delivery of the services directly required by exploring how those activities can deliver the council's wider strategic outcomes at no extra cost.
- Expenditure on contracts is leveraged, and suppliers are engaged to enhance our communities through increased social value.

Activities

- Review and re-launch the social value policy.
- Create a series of methodologies to follow in order to seek, evaluate and confirm delivery, of SV.
- Implement a clear impact measurement mechanism, for delivery of Social Value and wellbeing outcome.
- Ensure that Social Value is built into Contract Management processes, so that commitments made by suppliers during tender processes are delivered during the contract term.
- Explicitly link Social Value to the Corporate Plan to create a clear strategic link between council aims and outcomes.
- Require suppliers to demonstrate commitments to local employment, community engagement, and sustainability.

Enhancing the Supply Market

Ambition

Shropshire Council's external spend is in excess of £480m per annum. We recognise the importance of a supply market that has developed to meet our needs, and understand that by directing our spend effectively, and engaging with the market appropriately, we can help the market grow and create a vibrant and sustainable marketplace that can create innovative and lasting service solutions. We will seek to maximise the benefit offered by our local supply base, supporting our Corporate Plan:

Outcomes

- All suppliers are able to access opportunities to apply to work for the council if they wish to do so.

- The council works with our local supply market, helping to develop “a prosperous new economy”, in support of the council's Partnership plan and to support delivery of the council's sustainability targets, seeking to take advantage of legislation updates where appropriate.
- The supply market has early visibility of upcoming opportunities and a good understanding of how they access these opportunities.
- Supplier markets are appropriately engaged during the pre-tender phase, allowing input and development of Procurement Strategies and encouraging innovation that drives best value.
- The council engages with, and influences, the supply market and potential suppliers in order to drive innovation and develop new ideas around service delivery.

Activities

- Shropshire will regularly update and publish a pipeline of upcoming procurement opportunities and work with partners such the Economic Development Team to raise awareness across the market, Chambers of Commerce etc.
- Commissioners and procurers ensure an appropriate level of early market engagement is included in projects when developing Procurement Plans – Now a legislative requirement under the Procurement Act 23 for many procurements.
- Conduct a review of procurement documentation and processes to ensure suitability for all markets and suppliers.
- Analyse and assess the council's supply base to understand market pressures and composition.
- Maximise the opportunities offered by the Procurement Act 2023 in respect of engaging with local supply market where appropriate.
- Support SMEs, VCS, and local suppliers through simplified bidding processes and supplier engagement events.
- Promote supplier diversity and resilience by encouraging innovation and fair working practices.
- Use strategic supplier management to build long-term partnerships and mitigate market risks.

Procurement & Contract Management

Improving Contract & Commercial Management

Ambition

Many of the council's key services are delivered by third-party suppliers. It is therefore vitally important to effectively manage these commercial relationships, ensuring that the organisation delivers better services, mitigates risk and has improved control over costs. Failure to manage contracts properly may lead to inefficiencies, poor contractor performance or commercial failure which can seriously damage the council's reputation and ability to deliver effective services, support our communities and deliver against our corporate ambitions and priorities. We will embed improved contract management throughout the contract lifecycle, providing the framework and tools to comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and to manage the exposure to commercial, contractual and reputational risk and focus on areas such as implementation of contracts and termination activities.

Outcomes

- Contracts with third parties are robustly managed by the council, using an established and consistent corporate approach to contract management which includes the tiering of suppliers ensuring proportionality.
- Introducing a new contract management framework will improve contract management across the council with clear lines of reporting and responsibility, ensuring that contracts are delivering or exceeding their quality, service and cost targets.
- There is visibility of contract performance in relation to the council's key contracts and improved assurance on delivery.
- Contracts are proactively managed to ensure that the value secured through the procurement process is retained, continuous improvement is realised, and additional value is unlocked where possible.

Activities

- Introduce a consistent, risk-based contract management framework with accompanying tools, comprehensive training and support for all officers who are involved in managing contracts with third parties.
- All key contracts have a named contract manager who has clear responsibilities and understands the contract performance reporting requirements and the importance of developing appropriate relationships with suppliers.
- Contracts are based on terms and conditions which allow for appropriate and proactive contract management.
- Ensure that data on contract performance is reported on corporately for the council's key contracts. Introduce a consistent approach to commercial risk management using established tools and techniques.
- Improving Contract & Commercial Management by:
 - Appropriate training to build commercial capability and standardise best practices
 - Conducting regular performance reviews and risk assessments to ensure service quality and contract compliance.
- Develop Proportional Contract Management Frameworks covering:
 - Risk rating (High, Medium, Low).
 - Lifecycle stages: Mobilisation, Performance Monitoring, Risk Management, Change Management, Exit & Transition.
 - Performance tools: KPIs, SLAs, audits.
 - Relationship management: Strategic supplier partnerships, joint innovation.
- Provide Commercial Risk & Assurance by:
 - Risk Register for all major contracts.
 - Financial standing checks
 - business continuity planning
 - insurance and indemnity alignment.

Delivering Best Value & Good Governance

Ambition

Delivering best value is at the heart of procurement and is of critical importance within the wider context of financial challenges and increased demand for services within local government. Achieving the very best value is about more than efficiency, savings and managing risk. The operating environment for local authorities has shifted significantly in recent years as a result of wider geo-political events, meaning less surety in the outcome of commercial contracting and greater financial risks. The council must ensure that procurement and contract management activity is robustly planned, to deliver the desired outcomes, deliver best value and to take advantage of collaborative opportunities available to us. Strong governance processes will ensure appropriate oversight of the council's procurement activity, alignment with the Corporate Plan, adherence to relevant legislation and the council's own Contract Rules.

Outcomes

- The expertise of the Procurement and Contract Management Team is currently focused on higher value, higher risk procurement processes, working with services across the council. The ambition is to gain visibility and control over the lower value spend, and 'touch' all procurement over £5,000 in order to be able to satisfy Transparency requirements, create consistency and aggregate for savings and efficiencies.
- Identify and optimise opportunities for contract consolidation, the creation of formal corporate contracts to leverage economies of scale to deliver best value to the Council.
- Council contracts are awarded and managed to optimise council funding, considering cost, delivery and whole life benefits.
- Verified spend data is starting to be used and informs our future procurements and current contracting in an appropriate and proportionate manner.
- Internal processes and procedures will need to be optimised and efficient, enabling the council to procure effectively.
- Opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities and public bodies will in time be explored and taken where appropriate.
- Improved visibility and transparency of council procurement options and decisions, to increase the opportunity for scrutiny and market engagement.

Activities

- Build upon and promote the use of spend data dashboards in the development of reports, business cases and options analysis across the whole council.
- Utilise Spend Analysis techniques to inform us of current spend and any future Procurement Pipeline projects to ensure we improve our contract management activity. The pipeline will allow us to interact with Service Managers and the supply market earlier to understand the latest offerings and enhance the planning of our opportunities and tendering programmes.
- Introduce Category Plans, Gateways, Procurement Decision Reports and Contract Award Reports into the governance processes to ensure all relevant factors are considered and relevant parties are engaged before spending decisions are taken.
- Implement procurement tools and methodologies for council officers, ensuring that they are able to maximise opportunities to deliver best value outcomes through the procurement lifecycle.
- Develop a series of operational KPI's to measure performance of the P&CM team and wider P&CM activity across the council.
- Adopt the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) approach under the Procurement Act 2023, balancing cost, quality, and social impact.
- Use data-driven insights to assess supplier performance and market competitiveness
- Promote early market engagement and robust business case development to ensure optimal procurement outcomes.
- Embed the Council's Contract Management Framework and Contract Rules across all departments.
- Maintain a single, accurate contracts register to support strategic oversight and compliance.
- Strengthen internal controls and audit trails to ensure transparency, accountability and safeguard resources.

Delivery

Building Skills & Capability

Ambition

Public procurement is a skills and knowledge grounded discipline which requires regular development to maintain an up-to-date skill set. We will ensure that we have a skilled and engaged procurement workforce that have the right skills and capabilities to support the council appropriately and effectively. We must attract, recruit, and retain excellent employees that yield results and deliver value for money. The Procurement and Contract Management Team will provide advice, guidance and wider training to organisation to increase procurement and contract management skills and knowledge levels across the council, improving our overall compliance, governance and contracting strategies.

Outcomes

- All Officers are clear on their roles and responsibilities and accountable for services
- The Procurement and Contract Management Team have a clear understanding of their capabilities and development plans in place to support ongoing development of technical skills.
- The organisation has a good understanding of the Procurement Act 2023, is able to harness the opportunities presented by the new legislation and has embedded the requirements across the organisation.
- All Officers involved in procurement and contract management activity apply a commercial mindset, harnessing opportunities to secure best value and maximise added value in contractual relationships.
- Utilise technology, select and develop systems (such as finance and procurement systems) facilitate the correct approaches to procurement.

Activities

- Ensure that the team is right sized to the P&CM requirements of the council, and that roles and numbers of staff are adequate to perform those requirements.
 - Develop clear multi-year training & development plans for the Procurement and Contract Management Team.
 - A full suite of guidance, templates, advice and training is developed and made easily available for use.
 - Team members keep fully abreast of the Procurement Act 2023 changes, become familiar with the new requirements and are able to provide support and guidance to stakeholders to ensure we maximise the opportunities and meet the various requirements of the legislation.
 - Establish a structured training and development programme for all staff to improve understanding and compliance
 - Use the National Procurement Strategy Toolkit and the LGA's maturity index to assess and improve team capability.
 - Promote cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing across departments and with regional partners, with staff learning from and sharing knowledge with their counterparts in other organizations. Looking 'Up and Out'.
-

Utilising and Developing Systems & Processes

Ambition

With the fast pace technological change, the Council needs to be aware of new opportunities to improve service efficiency both within our supply chains and internally.

- Utilise technology/systems that streamline workflows, improve transparency, and reduce administrative burden, while ensuring compliance to required legislation.
- Integrate procurement systems with financial and performance management tools for real-time monitoring.
- Ensure systems support flexible procurement procedures under the new regulatory framework.
- Centralised Contract Register linked to the Finance System.
- AI-driven spend analytics and supplier risk monitoring tools.

Outcomes

- More efficient systems with greater control to ensure the council can satisfy its legislative requirements.

- Systems that complement the teams' skills, and which provide guide rails via comprehensive workflows for developing team members.
- Ultimately, the aim is to enable many operational tasks in the Procure-to-Pay cycle to become automated and / or self-service

Activities

- Determine the requirements for an eProcurement platform.
- Comprehensively review the existing eProcurement platform against the requirements, identify deficiencies and whether they can be addressed through development.
- Review all market leading eProcurement platforms and identify options.
- Deliver a new eProcurement solution that supports and is compliant to the requirements laid out in PA23 through the full procurement lifecycle

Implementing, Monitoring & Review

Ambition

- Provide oversight by the Commissioning, Procurement and Performance Board, reporting to the Leadership Board and cabinet.
- Provide Performance Metrics that include VFM achieved, social value delivered, supplier diversity, contract compliance rates.
- Ensure the strategy is aligned with budget planning and service delivery priorities.

Outcomes

- Create a compliant set of rules process and guidance that supports the Procurement & Contract Management Team and internal stakeholder in deliver the requirements laid out in PA23
- To support Council's wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our Corporate Plan.

Activities

- Define Roles & Responsibilities through the Procurement and Contract Management Lifecycle by regimes and thresholds, in partnership with service areas.

- Provide an Annual Procurement Report to CMT and Cabinet/Scrutiny Overview Committee.
- Develop and Issue Quarterly dashboards for contract performance and risk.
- Undertake a 3-year review cycle of strategy, with interim updates.
- Develop KPI's that show:
 - % of spend with local SME/VCS.
 - % of contracts with embedded social value.
 - Reduction in procurement cycle times.
 - Savings and cost avoidance achieved.
 - Supplier satisfaction and relationship health.
 - Progress towards net zero and sustainability goals.
 - Number of exemptions

Good governance

This section summarises the key actions the Council will take to address internal governance and learn from audit recommendations to strengthen the control environment for commissioning, procurement and contract management. It focuses on embedding clear accountability, consistent application of Contract Rules, improved record keeping and transparency, and a risk-based approach to monitoring and assurance so that decisions and outcomes are demonstrably compliant and deliver best value. Good governance depends on shared accountability across the organisation

The Council will implement the following good-practice enhancements to improve governance, compliance, transparency and assurance across commissioning, procurement and contract management activity:

Clear governance and decision-making controls

The council has established clear delivery groups and a board which now oversee commissioning and procurement. Establish and maintain consistent governance “gateways” across the procurement lifecycle (plan / define / procure / manage), including documented business cases and clear decision points and approvals proportionate to risk and value.

Introduce/strengthen the use of standard Procurement Decision Reports and Contract Award Reports to ensure key decisions are evidenced, auditable, and aligned to Contract Rules and the Procurement Act 2023.

Contract Rules compliance

Keep Contract Procedure Rules under active review to ensure they are legislatively compliant, clear to officers, and consistently applied and decisions are documented and risks understood and mitigated where possible.

Robust contract documentation

- Ensure all contracts are formally agreed and signed in a timely way, with clear ownership for contract completion and storage of the signed version.
- Strengthen controls to ensure contract terms support effective ongoing management (including performance measures, change control, pricing, remedies, and exit/transition provisions).
- Ensure all key contracts have a named Contract Manager with clear responsibilities and reporting expectations.
- Embed a risk-based contract management framework (tiering/segmentation) for stronger oversight, performance review, and assurance.

Improved transparency, audit trail and management information

Maintain a single, accurate Contracts Register to support transparency requirements, management oversight, and audit assurance. Improve the quality of contract and supplier data to support reporting, assurance, and statutory transparency obligations. Develop and use dashboards and reporting to provide visibility of performance, risk, compliance, and delivery of benefits.

Supplier performance monitoring and assurance

Standardise performance monitoring expectations (KPIs, service levels, review cycles) and record outcomes of review meetings and actions.

Use proportionate assurance activity (e.g., targeted checks/audits, financial viability checks where appropriate, and review of delivery against social value commitments).

Capability building and consistent practice.

Provide training, templates and guidance to ensure officers apply Contract Rules and the Contract Management Framework consistently.

Build commercial and contract management capability across the organisation, focusing on roles that manage contracts outside the central procurement function.

In summary, these actions will strengthen the Council's commissioning, procurement and contract management control environment and provide clear evidence of continued and sustained improvements.

Implementation will be embedded through updated rules, guidance and training, supported by accurate data and consistent documentation, and monitored through routine reporting and escalation routes. Progress will be reviewed through established governance arrangements to ensure continuous improvement, sustained compliance and delivery of best value.

More importantly it aims to change the culture of the council to train, upskill officers across the organisation to understand commissioning, procurement and contract management where appropriate and only then collectively will ensure good services, reduction of spending and wider market development. This will be essential to reduce the current budget deficit and put the council on a balanced and sustainable financial position.