

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY REPORT

2024-2025



1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to present to Audit and Governance Committee the progress the Council has made in delivering its Procurement Strategy 2024-2026. The paper summarises the activities delivered within the last year as well as setting out the key actions for the next 12 months.

A copy of progress against the strategy action plan is also included in Appendix A.

2. BACKGROUND

The Council published its new Procurement Strategy for the period 2024-2026 in July 2024 to formally document the Council's priorities in relation to Procurement and to deliver against the recommendation made by the Council's financial auditors.

The publication of this new strategy ensured that the Council's priorities as set out in the Plymouth Plan and Corporate Plan were formally recognised within the Council's approach to procurement and set out organisational expectations in relation to the delivery of these priorities including measures of success.

The strategy was set for an initial two-period period only in recognition of the significant procurement-related legislative changes which were due to take place this year and to enable alignment with the Local Government Association's National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England which is due to be updated in 2026.

3. STRATEGY CONTEXT

The Council is responsible for delivering more than three hundred local services and spends on average £350 million per annum with external suppliers in the fulfilment of this duty. These external suppliers are contracted through procurement and commissioning activity (collectively hereafter termed 'procurement') and this strategy sets out the Council's approach for ensuring that these contracts meet the needs and expectations of the City and secure the best possible deal for Plymouth.

Procurement applies to a wide range of goods, services and works and is concerned with the whole contract lifecycle from identification of a business need through to contract demobilisation.

It is a highly regulated activity, governed principally by the Procurement Act 2023, (from February 2025) which places considerable statutory duties on the Council in relation to securing value for money and maximising public benefit and adhering to principles such as, transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, integrity and proportionality.

National priorities must also be considered as set out in central government's National Procurement Policy Statement and the Local Government Association's National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England such as generating local social value, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and behaving commercially.

As well as local priorities as set out in the Plymouth Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan, Net Zero Action Plan, Equality and Diversity Action Plan and Modern Slavery Policy.

To meet these obligations and deliver these priorities the Council developed a strategy visualised in the graphic below:



4. OUR PROGRESS

The Council has made significant progress in delivering against the commitments it made in the Procurement Strategy during the first year.

Strategic Themes

Value for Money

The Council is committed to putting value for money at the forefront of its procurement activities which means procuring in a way that will secure the optimum balance of price, quality, and social value. Factors to be considered when determining the optimum balance include- the subject matter, scope, frequency, estimated value, and delivery timescales of the requirement, the level of market interest, process complexity, legal compliance, resource demands and the other strategic objectives.

Within the last 12 months:

- The Council's definition of value for money has been updated to ensure processes reflect current practice,
- The expectation to undertake options appraisals to identify the best value route to market on a requirement-by-requirement basis has been strengthened,
- Whole life costing is now an explicit consideration when estimating contract values,
- The default position that the running of a competitive multi-supplier process will deliver best value for money and should be pursued wherever possible is now explicitly stated in the Council's procurement rules,
- The requirement to document robust justification where a direct award strategy is pursued has been strengthened.

33 waivers to Council procurement rules and procedures were approved during financial year 24/25 totalling £3,313,843 with an average value of £100,500. These waivers were authorised in accordance with Contract Standing Orders on the grounds of breach or conflict of statutory duty; legal hearings,

planning appeals and public examinations; reputational implications; personal welfare of service users or limited market.

Instances of non-compliance relate to sign off procedures and/or competition rules. 41 instances of non-compliance with Council procurement rules and procedures were logged during financial year 24/25 totalling £1,860,444 equating to 0.5% of the Council's total annual spend. In the context of 'Value for Money' the primary concern is ensuring officers seek the correct minimum number of quotations; the average value per instance of non-compliance was £45,500 which under Contract Standing Orders requires a minimum of two quotations.

The primary method for addressing instances of non-compliance is through training and education to ensure officers are aware of the procurement rules and to encourage early engagement with the Procurement teams to ensure sufficient time to run competitive processes. This is supported by a formal breach of Contract Standing Orders monitoring and escalation procedure.

Commercial Opportunity

The Council will consider opportunities to be commercial when undertaking procurement activity to ensure the delivery of public services is sustainable.

Within the last 12 months:

- The importance of undertaking pre-procurement market engagement has been strengthened to ensure procurement opportunities are specified in a way which is commercially attractive to suppliers,
- Continued to maximise commercial attractiveness by aggregating requirements where appropriate and possible,
- The range of factors to be considered when defining value for money for a given requirements has been made explicit to ensure sourcing strategies are appropriate and proportionate and suppliers remain interested and engaged,
- Continued to focus on output-based/ performance specifications to give suppliers the opportunity to offer innovative and added-value solutions where possible,
- Phases 1 and 2 of Procurement Self-Service has been rolled out as part of the initiative to free up the capacity of the Procurement teams to enable the selling of services.

Arrangements with external suppliers are in place for both statutory and discretionary public services and continue to be delivered to a sufficient standard.

Social Value

The Council will look to maximise the benefit of its spending for the local economy, community and environment beyond the basic cost and quality of a contract which is known as 'Social Value.'

Examples of social value include- tackling climate change, promoting local skills and employment, and supporting healthier and safer communities.

Within the last 12 months:

- Council procurement rules and associated procedures and templates have been refreshed to ensure the importance of securing social value is embedded,
- Robust justification is now required where social value is not included within procurement activity even where inclusion is discretionary,
- Additional monitoring has been introduced to capture all instances of where social value has been included as a contract award criterion, not just in relation to the formal Themes, Outcomes, Measures (TOMS) framework approach,
- A social value contract management template has been introduced.

The TOMs framework approach was used within the procurement of 12 awarded contracts totalling £22.5 million in financial year 24/25 with supplier social value commitments equating to 38.08%. This is 18.08% above the 20% target. Within these procurements social value was allocated a contract award criteria weighting of 7.17% on average, 2.17% above the minimum Social Value Policy expectation.

Buy Local

The Council will look to 'keep the pounds in Plymouth' where possible through its procurement activity by engaging directly with local businesses.

The Council's definition of 'local' is 'PL Postcode' on the basis that investment in the local economy and benefits to the city are not only delivered through direct spend with central Plymouth businesses but are also a result of spending with the wider economic area. For example, the substantial number of Plymouth citizens who work for companies out of the Council boundaries.

Within the last 12 months:

- Council procurement rules and associated procedures and templates have been refreshed to further emphasise the importance of buying locally,
- The requirement to document robust justification where the buy local agenda has not been met has been strengthened,
- The management of the 'Plymouth Supplier Directory' as hosted by the Council since 2021 has been transferred to the Chamber of Commerce. As part of the transfer the directory has been significantly enhanced and is now branded 'Find It In Plymouth',
- Low value procurement activity processes and templates have been significantly simplified to support local suppliers.

Of the Council's £373.5 million total procurement spend in financial year 24/25, £213.5 million was spent with PL postcode suppliers equating to 57.10% of total spend. This is 2.1% above the 55% target.

Of the 2,935 unique suppliers the Council did business with, in financial year 24/25 1,548 were PL postcode suppliers equating to 52.74% of the Council's total direct supply chain.

SME, Co-op, Mutual, VCS & SE Engagement

The Council is committed to supporting small and medium enterprises; micro businesses; co-operatives and mutuals; social enterprises; and the voluntary and community sector.

Within the last 12 months:

- Council procurement rules have been refreshed to embed the 'SME Agenda' and set out explicit expectations on SME engagement,
- Low value procurement activity processes and templates have been significantly simplified to reduce the barriers to doing business with the Council.

Of the Council's £373.5 million total procurement spend in financial year 24/25, £111.5 million was spent with SME suppliers equating to £29.86% of total spend. This is 2.86% above the 27% target.

Of the 2,935 unique suppliers the Council did business with in financial year 24/25, 1,276 were SME suppliers equating to 43.48% of the Council's total direct supply chain.

Equality and Diversity

The Council will demonstrate as part of the contracts it procures and the suppliers it does business with, its commitment to valuing, promoting, and celebrating equality, diversity, and community cohesion.

Within the last 12 months:

- Continued to consider equality and diversity when assessing the suitability of suppliers to deliver Council contracts where relevant and proportionate,
- The requirement to consider the equality and diversity when undertaking procurement activity has been made explicit,
- Continued to set equality and diversity related contract award criteria where relevant and proportionate,
- Continued to require contracted suppliers to comply fully with the Equality Act,
- The completion of equality impact assessments as part of procurement governance processes has been made explicit,
- The procurement equality and diversity intranet page has been refreshed to make it more accessible,
- Procurement equality and diversity guidance has been refreshed to ensure care experience is clearly identified as a protected characteristic.

All procurement-related actions within the Council's 2024-2025 Equality and Diversity Action Plan have been delivered as part of the above.

Climate Emergency

The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has made a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. Procurement has a key role to play in reducing scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions both directly, by the Council controlling what and how it decides to procure and indirectly, through influencing its supply chain.

Within the last 12 months:

- Continued to consider environmental management and carbon reduction plans when assessing the suitability of suppliers to deliver Council contracts where relevant and proportionate,
- The requirement to consider the climate emergency when undertaking procurement activity has been made explicit,
- From March 2025 the inclusion of climate contract award criteria, linked to a Climate Impact Assessment is a mandatory consideration,
- The completion of climate impact assessments as part of procurement governance processes has been made explicit,
- The requirement to document robust justification where climate considerations have not been included in a procurement has been strengthened.
- The procurement climate emergency intranet page has been refreshed to make it more accessible.

All procurement-related actions within the Council's 2024-2025 Net Zero Action Plan have been delivered as part of the above.

Modern Slavery

The Council is committed to taking steps to ensure that the practices and conditions which may allow modern slavery to occur do not take place in the delivery of Council contracts or through its wider supply chain.

Within the last 12 months:

- Tender templates have been updated to include additional optional modern slavery questions aligning with central government good practice,
- Tender templates have been updated to enable the Council to investigate modern slavery concerns as part of challenging abnormally low tenders,
- Guidance on how to consider modern slavery effectively and appropriately at each stage of the procurement cycle has been published,
- All procurement professionals remain up to date with CIPS Ethics training.

Most procurement-related actions within the Council's 2024-2025 Modern Slavery Action Plan have been delivered as above. The actions related to tender templates have been delivered over and above the Action Plan. The action to complete the Modern Slavery Assessment Tool pilot and consider further roll out has been moved to 2025-2026 due to the complexity of the activity and the prioritisation of compliance work related to the Procurement Act 2023.

Compliance

The Council will comply with all procurement-related legal requirements, primarily being the Council's Contract Standing Orders, current statutory provisions including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 and The Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 and future statutory provisions such as The Procurement Act 2023.

Within the last 12 months:

- The Council's Contract Standing Orders document has been refreshed to make it more comprehensive and more user-friendly,
- Contract Standing Orders and associated processes and templates have refreshed to ensure existing governance procedures are clear and new procedures have been introduced where gaps existed. E.g. explicit emergency procedure.
- To ensure compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 which went live on 24 February 2025 the following actions have been taken:
 - Contract Standing Orders and all associated procedural notes have been updated,
 - Existing processes and templates have been updated and new processes and templates created where necessary,
 - Procurement professionals have undertaken central government training,
 - The Corporate Management Team and decision-making teams across directorates have been briefed,
 - Departments are being offered tailored briefing sessions and individual officers are receiving training as and when procurements arise,
 - Supplier representatives such as the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Plymouth Social Enterprise Network have been briefed, and communications have been issued to suppliers via the Council's e-procurement portal,
 - A Procurement Pipeline has been published in accordance with the mid-May 2025 deadline,
- A dedicated Commissioning procurement team has been set up, responsible for Social Care and Healthcare procurement activity,

- Statistics related to the Council's application of The Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 for the period 1 January 2024 – 31 March 2025 have been published on the Council's website in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations,
- Self-service procedures have been introduced to ensure procurement activity is only undertaken by officers who have the necessary pre-requisite training and authorisation.

The Council received 1 formal legal challenge during financial year 24/25 which was subsequently retracted following the Council's decision to abandon the procurement process in question and run a new procurement activity.

Instances of non-compliance relate to sign off procedures and/or competition rules. 41 instances of non-compliance with Council procurement rules and procedures were logged during financial year 24/25 totalling £1,860,444 equating to 0.5% of the Council's total annual spend. In the context of 'Compliance' the primary concern is compliance with Procurement legislation, none of the instances of non-compliance related to a breach of Procurement legislation but the Council's internal Contract Standing Orders only.

The primary method for addressing instances of non-compliance is through training and education to ensure officers are aware of the procurement rules and to encourage early engagement with the Procurement teams to ensure sufficient time to undertake compliant procurement activity. This is supported by a formal breach of Contract Standing Orders monitoring and escalation procedure.

Enablers

Partnership Working

The Council's philosophy to delivering successful outcomes through procurement activity is based on a 'one team' approach, bringing together Council departments and organisations as well as collaboration with local and regional partners. This is to ensure that service needs are recognised, visions and strategic priorities are understood, expert knowledge is shared, resources are used efficiently and culminate in the design and implementation of public services which meet the City's needs and expectations in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Within the last 12 months:

- The Council has continued to be an active member of the South-West Procurement Board,
- The Council has continued to be an active member of the Devon and Cornwall Procurement Partnership,
- The Council has continued to be an active member of the 'Anchor Institutions' working group,
- The Council has continued to support and actively engage with the Council's family of companies, particularly those with TECKAL status,
- The requirement for Council departments to collaborate and co-design when undertaking procurement activity has been strengthened,
- Service area procurement dashboards have been developed,
- A new 'Civic Engagement Agreement' between The Council, the University of Plymouth, Babcock and University Hospital Plymouth NHS Trust has been signed.

Developing Talent

A Council's ability to ensure taxpayers money is spent effectively and efficiently and address commercial challenges and issues of value is predicated on the talent management, recruitment, and retention of Procurement professionals

Within the last 12 months:

- 7 Procurement professionals are actively studying towards their Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply qualifications,
- 1 Procurement professional is actively studying towards a BSc Hons degree in Professional Management Practice.

Digital Transformation

Data is the cornerstone of Category Management and access to and rapid analysis of data, particularly spend data, is critical for understanding how to manage procurements and contracts. The Council needs to ensure that appropriate digital systems and processes are in place to gather sufficiently transparent and granular data which will enable procurement officers to gain the insights necessary to make the best professional recommendations

Within the last 12 months:

- Procurement has been identified as a key enabler for the Council's 'Prevention First Transformation Strategy' and a 'Supply Chain and Contracts Management' workstream was launched in May 25.

Contract and Supplier Relationship Management

The effective management of contracts and maintaining appropriate relationships with suppliers is vital to the successful delivery of public services by ensuring that costs are controlled, the quality and timeliness of agreed outcomes and performance levels are met, and the occurrence of risks are minimised.

Within the last 12 months:

- Contract and supplier relationship management is a central focus of the Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream of the Council's Prevention First Transformation Strategy as launched in May 25.

Risk Management

The Council's procurement activity is diverse ranging from low value, low risk transactional purchases right up to multi-million-pound complex strategic partnership arrangements across seven unique categories. This diversity means it is not appropriate to take a 'one size fits all' approach to procurement, instead decisions must be made on a requirement-by-requirement basis taking into consideration relevant information on a proportionate basis. This naturally places risk management at the heart of procurement activity by putting expectations on officers to identify and assess internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities to determine the procurement sourcing strategy that will deliver the best outcome, whatever that looks like for a given requirement. This includes putting in place risk mitigations where necessary.

Within the last 12 months:

- The Procurement operational risk register continues to be maintained with clearly defined mitigations for active risks,
- The requirement to consider risk management throughout the procurement cycle has been strengthened.

Framework

The Council's chosen strategic procurement framework is Category Management which is where an organisation segments its spend into areas which contain similar or related characteristics for the purposes of managing procurement activity. Category Management is widely held in the profession to be the most effective and efficient approach to Procurement

Within the last 12 months:

- All actions related to the implementation of Category Management form part of the Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream of the Council's Prevention First Transformation Strategy as launched in May 25.

5. NEXT 12 MONTHS

In the next 12 months the Council plans to take the following actions to deliver the remaining commitments of its Procurement Strategy:

Strategic Themes:

Modern Slavery

- Strengthen the consideration of modern slavery when assessing the suitability of suppliers to deliver Council contracts where relevant and proportionate,
- Modern Slavery- Complete the Modern Slavery Assessment Tool pilot and consider further roll out,

SME, Co-op, Mutual, VCS & SE Engagement

- Explore to what extent the Council can capture spend broken down into more discreet groups and use this information to further reduce and remove barriers,
- Review SME and supply chain payment terms

Equality and Diversity

- Explore to what extent the output of equalities impact assessments including impact related to care experience can be incorporated into procurement processes,

Compliance

- Develop new procedures to ensure compliance with statutory requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 due to go live Autumn 2025,
- Continue the review of access to the undertaking of procurement activities to officers who have the necessary pre-requisite training and authorisation,

Social Value

- Refresh the Council's Social Value Policy to strengthen requirements,
- Work with Anchor partners to develop a joint procurement statement and explore alignment of approach,

Enablers

- Developing Talent - identify new training needs as a result of the Procurement Act 2023,
- Digital Transformation- pursue digital efficiencies as part of the Supply Chain and Contracts Management enabling workstream of the Council's Prevention First Transformation Strategy,
- Contract and Supplier Relationship Management- develop a corporate contract management framework for the organisation,

Framework

- Implement a full category management approach as part of the Supply Chain and Contracts Management enabling workstream of the Council's Prevention First Transformation Strategy.
- To consider how Procurement resource can be monitored as part of the Strategy to ensure capacity meets organisational demand.

Appendix A- Action Plan Progress Update

The update against the Procurement Strategy Action Plan is set out below, presented by both 'Strategic Themes' delivery and actions against the 'Enablers' and 'Framework' as set out in the original strategy.

Actions have been 'RAG rated' as follows:

- Business as usual activities are white
- Completed actions are blue
- In progress/ ongoing actions are green
- Delayed actions are amber
- Actions which are overdue and are not currently progressing are red
- Programmed actions/ scheduled to begin at a later date are grey

All actions are owned by the Head of Procurement.

Value for Money

The Council is committed to putting value for money at the forefront of its procurement activities which means procuring in a way that will secure the optimum balance of price, quality, and social value. Factors to be considered when determining the optimum balance include- the subject matter, scope, frequency, estimated value, and delivery timescales of the requirement, the level of market interest, process complexity, legal compliance, resource demands and the other strategic objectives.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
VFM1	Setting corporate procurement rules and procedures which are designed to deliver value for money as standard,	Refresh Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) to ensure processes reflect up-to-date definition of value for money	24/25	Q2	Complete
VFM2	Where appropriate, undertaking procurement options appraisals to identify the route to market which will deliver best value on a requirement-by-requirement basis,	Refresh CSOs to strengthen this requirement	24/25	Q2	Complete
VFM3	Considering the whole lifecycle cost of a product, service or works when undertaking a procurement activity,	Refresh CSOs to make this approach explicit	24/25	Q2	Complete

VFM4	Holding the default position that the running of a competitive multi-supplier process will deliver best value for money and should be pursued wherever possible,	Refresh CSOs to make this approach explicit	24/25	Q2	Complete
VFM5	Requiring robust justification where a direct award strategy is pursued.	Refresh CSOs to make this approach explicit	24/25	Q2	Complete

Commercial Opportunity

The Council will consider opportunities to be commercial when undertaking procurement activity to ensure the delivery of public services is sustainable.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
CO1	Gathering market intelligence to ensure procurement opportunities are specified in a way which is commercially attractive to suppliers,	Refresh CSO to strengthen the importance of pre-procurement market engagement	24/25	Q2	Complete
CO2	Maximising commercial attractiveness by aggregating requirements where appropriate,	—	BAU	—	BAU
CO3	Developing sourcing strategies that are appropriate and proportionate for a given requirement to ensure suppliers remain interested and engaged,	Refresh CSO to emphasise the need to consider the nature and value of a requirement when defining best value for money and correspondingly enable flexibility in process selection	24/25	Q2	Complete
CO4	Focusing on output-based/ performance specifications to give suppliers the opportunity to offer innovative and added-value solutions,	—	BAU	—	BAU
CO5	Income generating/ cost recovery through delivering procurement services for the Council's family of companies.	Roll out procurement self-service to free up the capacity of the Procurement teams to enable the selling of services	24/25	Q4	Complete

Social Value

The Council will look to maximise the benefit of its spending for the local economy, community and environment beyond the basic cost and quality of a contract which is known as 'Social Value.' Examples of social value include- tackling climate change, promoting local skills and employment, and supporting healthier and safer communities.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
SV1	Embedding social value into the Council's standard rules and procedures	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure the importance of social value is emphasised	24/25	Q2	Complete
SV2	Procuring in accordance with the Council's Social Value policy	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to capture instances of non-compliance with policy	24/25	Q2	Complete
SV3	Including social value criteria in procurement activities even where is it discretionary to do-so within the Council's policy, where is it relevant to the subject matter of the contract and proportionate	Refresh the Council's Social Value Policy to ensure social value is included in procurement activity wherever possible REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q4 Q3	This action has been purposefully delayed to align with the Anchor Institution work to avoid multiple policy updates
SV4	Including social value criteria in procurement activities even where is it discretionary to do-so within the Council's policy, where is it relevant to the subject matter of the contract and proportionate	Begin to monitor all instances of where social value has been included as an award criterion not just in relation to the TOMs framework	24/25	Q3	Complete
SV5	Embedding social value into the Council's standard rules and procedures	Work with the Anchor Institutions Working Group to develop a joint social value statement and explore alignment of procurement policies REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q4 Q3	A new Civic Engagement Agreement has been signed. The supply chain workstream had its first meeting on the 27th June and developing a joint social

					value definition it the first priority
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Buy Local

The Council will look to 'keep the pounds in Plymouth' where possible through its procurement activity by engaging directly with local businesses. The Council's definition of 'local' is 'PL Postcode' on the basis that investment in the local economy and benefits to the city are not only delivered through direct spend with central Plymouth businesses but are also a result of spending with the wider economic area. For example, the substantial number of Plymouth citizens who work for companies out of the Council boundaries.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
BL1	Embedding a 'Buy Local' Agenda into the Council's standard procurement rules and procedures which looks to maximise local business engagement in procurement activities where possible,	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure the importance of buy local is emphasised	24/25	Q2	Complete
BL2	Procuring in accordance with the Council's 'Buy Local' Procedural Note,	Refresh Procedural Note	24/25	Q2	Complete
BL3	Developing a Directory which aims to bring local business buyers and suppliers together,	Transfer of PCC owned Plymouth Supplier Directory to 'Find it in Plymouth' platform owned by Chamber of Commerce	24/25	Q3	Complete
BL4	Looking to reduce and remove barriers faced by local businesses to maximise their chances of success,	Simplify below threshold procurement processes and templates	24/25	Q4	Complete
BL5	Requiring robust justification where the Buy Local agenda is not delivered as part of procurement activity where appropriate,	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to capture instances of non-compliance with policy	24/25	Q2	Complete

SME, Co-op, Mutual, VCS & SE Engagement

The Council is committed to supporting small and medium enterprises; micro businesses; co-operatives and mutuals; social enterprises; and the voluntary and community sector.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
E1	Embedding an 'SME Agenda' into the Council's standard procurement rules and procedures which looks to maximise the engagement of these businesses and organisations in procurement activities where possible,	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure the importance of supporting SMEs is emphasised	24/25	Q2	Complete
E2	Looking to reduce and remove barriers faced by these businesses and organisations to ensure there is a level playing field in competing for public procurement opportunities e.g. the letting of contracts,	Simplify below threshold procurement processes and templates	24/25	Q4	Complete
E3	Looking to reduce and remove barriers faced by these businesses and organisations to ensure there is a level playing field in competing for public procurement opportunities e.g. the letting of contracts,	Explore to what extent the Council can capture spend broken down into more discreet groups e.g. charities, co-ops, social enterprises etc	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3
E4	Pursuing policies and implementing measures which recognise the particular complexities and challenges faced by these businesses and organisations e.g. 15 days SME payment terms.	Explore reducing SME payment terms further where the Council directly contracts with an SME and explore to what extent we can insist that such terms are passed onto SME sub-contractors	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3

Equality and Diversity

The Council will demonstrate as part of the contracts it procures and the suppliers it does business with, its commitment to valuing, promoting, and celebrating equality, diversity, and community cohesion.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
ED1	Consideration of equality and diversity when assessing the suitability of suppliers to deliver Council contracts where relevant and proportionate,	—	BAU	—	BAU
ED2	Including equality and diversity related expectations and standards in contract specifications where relevant and proportionate,	Refresh CSO to ensure equality and diversity is an explicit consideration	24/25	Q2	Complete
ED3	Setting equality and diversity related contract award criteria where relevant and proportionate,	—	BAU	—	BAU
ED4	Requiring contracted suppliers to comply fully with the Equality Act,	—	BAU	—	BAU
ED5	Monitoring supplier performance in relation to equality and diversity as part of contract management,	Roll out social value contract management template	24/25	Q4	Complete
ED6	Embedding equality impact assessments into Procurement decision-making where appropriate,	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure EIAs are explicitly mentioned	24/25	Q2	Complete
ED7	Embedding equality impact assessments into Procurement decision-making where appropriate,	Support the Policy and Intelligence Team to improve the EIA process and subsequently develop a methodology for incorporating	25/26	Q1	Action dependent on completion of EIA review which has just been

		the output of the assessment into procurement processes REVISED TIMELINE:	25/26	Q2	completed. Procurement is working with Policy team to move this action forward.
ED8	Officer guidance on how to consider equality and diversity effectively and appropriately at each stage of the procurement cycle.	Refresh Procurement intranet pages to make guidance more accessible	24/25	Q3	Complete
ED9	Officer guidance on how to consider equality and diversity effectively and appropriately at each stage of the procurement cycle.	Templates and guidance are reviewed to ensure care experience is clearly identified as a protected characteristic	25/26	Q1	Complete

Climate Emergency

The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has made a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. Procurement has a key role to play in reducing scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions both directly, by the Council controlling what and how it decides to procure and indirectly, through influencing its supply chain.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
CE1	Consideration of environmental management and carbon reduction plans when assessing the suitability of suppliers to deliver Council contracts where relevant and proportionate,	—	BAU	—	BAU
CE2	Including environmental expectations and standards in contract specifications where relevant and proportionate,	Refresh CSO to ensure the Climate Emergency is an explicit consideration	24/25	Q2	Complete
CE3	Setting environmental related contract award criteria where relevant and proportionate	Embed a contract award weighting for climate change into standard procurement processes	24/25	Q4	Complete

CE4	Monitoring supplier performance in relation to environmental impact as part of contract management,	Roll out social value contract management template	24/25	Q4	Complete
CE5	Embedding climate impact assessments into Procurement decision-making where appropriate	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure CIAs are explicitly mentioned	24/25	Q2	Complete
CE6	Requiring robust justification where climate considerations are not included in procurement activity where appropriate,	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to capture instances of non-compliance with policy	24/25	Q2	Complete
CE7	Officer guidance on how to consider the environment effectively and appropriately at each stage of the procurement cycle.	Refresh Procurement intranet pages to make guidance more accessible	24/25	Q3	Complete

Modern Slavery

The Council is committed to taking steps to ensure that the practices and conditions which may allow modern slavery to occur do not take place in the delivery of Council contracts or through its wider supply chain.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
MS1	Consideration of modern slavery when assessing the suitability of suppliers to deliver Council contracts where relevant and proportionate,	Develop modern slavery-related suitability assessment questions	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3
MS2	Requiring contracted suppliers to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act,	Templates to be updated to reflect additional requirements introduced under the Procurement Act 2023	24/25	Q4	Complete

MS3	Putting mechanisms in place to challenge abnormally low-price tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the supplier practising modern slavery,	Templates and guidance to be updated to make explicit mention of modern slavery when challenging abnormally low tenders	24/25	Q4	Complete
MS4	Developing Officer guidance on how to consider modern slavery effectively and appropriately at each stage of the procurement cycle,	Develop and publish guide	24/25	Q2	Complete
MS5	Developing Officer guidance on how to consider modern slavery effectively and appropriately at each stage of the procurement cycle,	All Procurement professionals to complete CIPS Ethics training module (annual requirement)	24/25	Q3	Complete
MS6	Exploring use of the government's Modern Slavery Assessment Tool with contracted suppliers.	Complete Modern Slavery Assessment Tool pilot REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q4 Q3	Due to the complexity of the requirement and the need to prioritise Procurement Act action has been moved to Year 2.
MS7	Exploring use of the government's Modern Slavery Assessment Tool with contracted suppliers.	Analyse the results of the Modern Slavery Assessment Tool pilot and consider further roll out REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q4 Q4	Dependent on action MS6 completion. Moved to Year 2.

Compliance

The Council will comply with all procurement-related legal requirements, primarily being the Council's Contract Standing Orders, current statutory provisions including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 and The Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 and future statutory provisions such as The Procurement Act 2023.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
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C1	Ensuring the Council's Contract Standing Orders are comprehensive and up to date but also user-friendly.	Refresh CSOs	24/25	Q2	Complete
C2	Maintaining robust governance procedures to ensure that compliant practices and processes are adhered to.	Refresh CSOs and associated processes and templates to ensure existing governance procedures are clear and introduce new procedures where gaps currently exist	24/25	Q2	Complete
C3	Maintaining robust governance procedures to ensure that compliant practices and processes are adhered to.	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure they comply with the Procurement Act 2023 <u>PHASE 1</u> requirement due to go live February 25	24/25	Q4	Complete
C4	Maintaining robust governance procedures to ensure that compliant practices and processes are adhered to.	Refresh procurement processes and templates to ensure they comply with the Procurement Act 2023 <u>PHASE 2</u> requirements anticipated to go live Autumn 25	25/26	Q2	Procurement consultancy firm V4 have been engaged as part of the Prevention-First enabling Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream with the intention of developing a new Target Operating Model for Procurement which will incorporate new compliance requirements
C5	Maintaining dedicated Procurement teams who are responsible for providing expert advice and guidance and facilitating procurement activities where appropriate.	Set up dedicated Commissioning Procurement team	24/25	Q2	Complete

C6	Ensuring procurement professionals within the Council remain up to date with relevant legislative changes, procurement case law and other evidence of best practice.	All Procurement professionals to complete Procurement Act 2023 training	24/25	Q3	Complete
C7	Restricting access to the undertaking of procurement activities to officers who have the necessary pre-requisite training and authorisation.	Refresh CSOs and develop a self-service procedural note	24/25	Q2	Complete
C8	Restricting access to the undertaking of procurement activities to officers who have the necessary pre-requisite training and authorisation.	Review officer access levels to Civica purchasing and put in place clear governance requirements	24/25	Q4	System access continues to be reviewed on a department-by-department basis but due to capacity restrictions is taking longer than planned.
		REVISED TIMELINE:	25/26	Q3	

Enablers

Partnership Working

The Council's philosophy to delivering successful outcomes through procurement activity is based on a 'one team' approach, bringing together Council departments and organisations as well as collaboration with local and regional partners. This is to ensure that service needs are recognised, visions and strategic priorities are understood, expert knowledge is shared, resources are used efficiently and culminate in the design and implementation of public services which meet the City's needs and expectations in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Ref.	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
PW1	Maintain a strong relationship with the Southwest Procurement Board	BAU	—	BAU
PW2	Maintain a strong relationship with the Devon and Cornwall Procurement Partnership	BAU	—	BAU
PW3	Lead the Plymouth Public Sector Partnership Group	BAU	—	BAU
PW4	Actively engage with the 'Anchor Institutions' working Group	BAU	—	BAU
PW5	Support and actively engage with the Council's family of companies with specific reference to CATER ^{ed} , Arca and PAL. Also including DELT but to a lesser degree due to procurement independence	BAU	—	BAU
PW6	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to emphasise the need for co-design and collaboration when undertaking procurement activities	24/25	Q2	Complete
PW7	Release new strategic and service area procurement dashboards REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q3 Q4	Feedback on pilot dashboards was that their value was limited due to only showing retrospective data. Dashboards will be revisited as part of the Prevention-First enabling Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream with view to showing live data

Developing Talent

A Council's ability to ensure taxpayers money is spent effectively and efficiently and address commercial challenges and issues of value is predicated on the talent management, recruitment, and retention of Procurement professionals.

Ref.	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
DTa1	Support all Procurement professionals to complete the CIPS programme in accordance with role profiles	BAU	–	BAU
DTa2	Assess additional training needs in light of Procurement Act 2023 and identify courses for completion REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q4 Q3	Additional training needs have been identified but courses for completion have yet to be explored due to capacity restrictions

Digital Transformation

Data is the cornerstone of Category Management and access to and rapid analysis of data, particularly spend data, is critical for understanding how to manage procurements and contracts. The Council needs to ensure that appropriate digital systems and processes are in place to gather sufficiently transparent and granular data which will enable procurement officers to gain the insights necessary to make the best professional recommendations

Ref.	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
DTr1	Develop business case for the provision of a corporate contract management software system in light of Procurement Act statutory requirements and in response to recommendations from various audits REVISED TIMELINE:	25/26	Q1 Q2	Procurement consultant V4 have been contracted as part of the Prevention-First enabling Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream to undertake the initial piece of spend analysis which will inform the business case. Due to be completed July/August 25
DTr2	Resecure intelligent automation resource in light of Procurement Act statutory requirements REVISED TIMELINE:	24/25 25/26	Q4 Q3	In progress but minor slippage- part of the Prevention-First enabling Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream

DTr3	Explore moving procurement forms to Firmstep REVISED TIMELINE:	25/26	Q1 Q3	In progress but minor slippage- part of the Prevention-First enabling Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream
DTr4	resecure subscription to spend analysis software as described in Framework section		–	See framework section

Contract and Supplier Relationship Management

The effective management of contracts and maintaining appropriate relationships with suppliers is vital to the successful delivery of public services by ensuring that costs are controlled, the quality and timeliness of agreed outcomes and performance levels are met, and the occurrence of risks are minimised.

Ref.	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
CMI	Develop a corporate contract management framework for the organisation	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3

Risk Management

The Council's procurement activity is diverse ranging from low value, low risk transactional purchases right up to multi-million-pound complex strategic partnership arrangements across seven unique categories. This diversity means it is not appropriate to take a 'one size fits all' approach to procurement, instead decisions must be made on a requirement-by-requirement basis taking into consideration relevant information on a proportionate basis. This naturally places risk management at the heart of procurement activity by putting expectations on officers to identify and assess internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities to determine the procurement sourcing strategy that will deliver the best outcome, whatever that looks like for a given requirement. This includes putting in place risk mitigations where necessary.

Ref.	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
RM I	Maintain operational risk register	BAU	–	BAU

RM 2	Refresh CSO and associated processes and templates to ensure consideration of risk management is embedded throughout the procurement cycle	24/25	Q2	Complete
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Framework

The Council's chosen strategic procurement framework is Category Management which is where an organisation segments its spend into areas which contain similar or related characteristics for the purposes of managing procurement activity. Category Management is widely held in the profession to be the most effective and efficient approach to Procurement.

Ref.	Commitment	Description of Action	Strategy Year	Target Completion	July 25 Progress update and RAG
F1	Data Analysis- to make insights and overall better-informed decisions	Resecure subscription to spend analysis software REVISED TIMELINE:	25/26	Q1 Q2	Procurement consultant V4 contracted as part of enabling Supply Chain and Contracts Management workstream of Prevent-First Strategy to undertake the initial piece of spend analysis work. Due for completion July 25
F2	Categorisation- Developing expertise and market knowledge to discover opportunities to be commercial and for innovation	Review and refresh where necessary the Council's spend categories.	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3
F3	Segmentation- to inform prioritisation and make best use of resources	Develop a Council contract/spend segmentation model (links to wider contract management framework)	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3
F4	Aggregation- Securing reductions in costs including purchase price by increasing volumes and reducing transactions	identify and categorise existing Council contracts + pipeline procurements (Procurement Act)	24/25	Q4	Complete

F5	Standardisation- Achieving consistency and assurance of policies/ procedures	Develop category management templates	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3
F6	Supplier Relationship Management- Building appropriate relationships with suppliers to ensure the successful delivery of outcomes, and pursue continuous improvement	Develop a Council supplier segmentation model	25/26	Q4	Scheduled to commence 25/26 Q3