

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2025 - 2026



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Document Control

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Strategic Alignment

There are key requirements and duties under internal governance and external regulations and legislation that the council need awareness of in connection with "Contract and Supplier Management", including:

- **Internal:**
 - The Plan for North Lanarkshire
 - General Contract Standing Orders
- **External:**
 - The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015
 - Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014
 - The Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016
 - Public Procurement Strategy 2023-2028

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Glossary

“Community Benefits” requirements which deliver wider benefits in addition to the core purpose of a contract. These can relate to social, economic, and environmental benefits.

“Contractor” any organisation that provides Supplies, Works, or Services to the Council or on behalf of the Council.

“Economic Operators” are defined in The Act, means any person who offers the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market

“LGBF” is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support senior management teams and elected members to ask questions about key council services.

“Living Wage” an independently calculated rate based on the cost of living and is paid voluntarily by employers. The rate is calculated each year in November by The Resolution Foundation on an analysis of the wage that employees need to earn to afford the basket of goods required for a decent standard of living. This basket of goods includes housing, childcare, transport, and heating. The Real Living Wage is different to the UK government's National Living Wage which is not calculated according to what employees need to live on.

“Procurement” the tasks and decisions which secure an external Contractor to provide what we want, at a price that we can afford. Activity is focused on the period from prior to advertising a tender to signing the contract. It includes both competitive tenders and circumstances where we negotiate with a single Contractor.

“Regulated Procurements” refers to any Procurement: above £50,000 for Supplies or Services; and above £2,000,000 for Works.

“Scotland Excel” is the national centre of expertise for local government procurement; responsible for collaborating with Scottish councils to improve procurement performance and practice, and also the lead buying authority for a range of national collaborative procurement frameworks.

“Services” are those services that we buy including specialist support for vulnerable children and adults, and repairs and maintenance services, financial advice, designs, and surveys for new building works.

“Single Procurement Document” / “SPD” - means the Single Procurement Document referred to in the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015. It is a standard questionnaire the council use in higher and lower threshold regulated procurements to allow the council to identify suitably qualified and experienced bidders. It contains questions on both exclusion and selection criteria. Bidders will use their SPD response to indicate whether they can meet the requirements of the procurement.

“SME or Small and Medium Enterprises” defined by the number of employees whereby micro is 9 or fewer, small is 10-50, medium is 51-250.

“SPPN” abbreviation of ‘Scottish Procurement Policy Note’ these are the messages from the Scottish Government's procurement policy team, providing advice to public bodies on procurement policy.

“Supplies” items that we buy, such as pens and paper, or plants and seeds, or fruit and vegetables.

“Supplier Development Programme” is a public sector organisation who offer expert training, support and information to businesses develop and compete for Contracts.

“Supported Business” as defined in the procurement regulations, means an economic operator whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons and where at least 30% of the employees of the economic operator are disabled or disadvantaged persons.

“Sustainable Procurement” is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for Supplies, Services and Works in a way that achieves value for money and generates benefits, not only for the organisation but also to wider society, the economy, and the environment.

“Third Sector” is the group name for a range of organisations including community groups, charities, voluntary organisations, faith groups, social enterprises, community interest companies. Third sector organisations may be registered charities and may be registered companies. They include small, local groups and large multinational operations, and everything in between.

“Value for Money” – achieving the best balance between cost, quality, and sustainability.

“Works” is the construction works that we buy, including construction of new buildings, or extensions, and creation and improvements to roads and bridges and open spaces.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** North Lanarkshire Council (“the council”) is a unitary authority, the fourth largest in Scotland, and is responsible for the delivery of a wide and diverse range of statutory and discretionary public services.
- 1.2** The council deliver services through a mixed economy acting as both:
- a provider through direct provision of services using its own workforce and assets; and,
 - an enabler with services delivered under commercial arrangements by private Contractors, the Third Sector and Supported Businesses.
- 1.3** During the financial year 2023/24 the council spent £635 Million excluding VAT on goods, services and works to conduct our operations and delivery of public services.
- 1.4** In Scotland, public bodies with an annual procurement spend of £5 million or more are required by legislation to prepare and publish a procurement strategy or revise an existing strategy under the [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) (“the Act”).
- 1.5** The council has prepared and published Procurement Strategies since 2017 in conformance with the requirements of [the Act](#); the most recent publication was [Procurement Strategy 2024/25](#).
- 1.6** This document outlines the continuation of the existing procurement strategy with some refinements to produce our new “**Procurement Strategy 2025/26**” which shall cover the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- 1.7** [The Act](#) requires a public body which is obliged to prepare or revise a procurement strategy:
- to ensure that its regulated procurements in that year are, as far as reasonably practicable, conducted in accordance with its procurement strategy; and,
 - to publish an Annual Procurement Report as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of that financial year, but no later than six months after, with specific means to report its performance against the procurement strategy amongst other requirements.

2. Priorities and the role of Procurement

2.1 Local Priorities

- 2.1.1** In North Lanarkshire, we are making progress to transform and regenerate towns; develop high-quality, sustainable housing; create bold, dynamic, flexible places to learn and work; and create an enviable infrastructure and suitable conditions that drives investment, growth, and prosperity.
- 2.1.2** We recognise there are some challenges to overcome, such as high levels deprivation, child poverty and inequalities in our community.
- 2.1.3** [The Plan for North Lanarkshire \(“the Plan”\)](#) sets out our shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity for all, with a fairer distribution of wealth across all local communities.
- 2.1.4** Our vision is for North Lanarkshire to be the place to: Live; Learn; Work; Invest; and Visit.
- 2.1.5** [The Plan](#) sets out five priorities, providing focus for activities and resources.
- Improve economic opportunities and outcomes.
 - Support all children and young people to realise their full potential.
 - Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
 - Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities.
 - Improve North Lanarkshire’s resource base.
- 2.1.6** We have twenty-five high level ambition statements that collectively support the shared ambition, and these are aligned to our five priorities.
- 2.1.7** A five year [Programme of Work](#) (for period 2023-2028) was put in place, setting seven workstreams to support of [The Plan](#). Each of the workstream has project boards headed by our most senior leaders to keep activities aligned and on track.
- 2.1.8** An example of programmes of work in progress under the Plan are the “Town and Community Hub” and “Capital” programmes. These programmes involve multiple projects, each have requirements for procurement, and each are being conducted in alignment with this Procurement Strategy and in conformance with the specific Procurement Toolkit and Procedures covered at section 7 herein this document, such as requirements of 7.4 Contract Strategy and 7.7 Contract Award.
- 2.1.9** The council’s procurement function is seen as an enabler to all aspects of [The Plan](#) as we ensure each regulated and significant procurement undertaken corresponds to one of the priorities, an ambition statement, and to a workstream; these become embedded within contract strategies, specifications and form part of tender evaluation.
- 2.1.10** The outputs and achievements of a completed procurement are reported with reference to a priority, ambition and workstream, and the recorded results will demonstrate how the procurement has achieved value for money, and delivered economic, social, and environmental benefits.

2.2 National Priorities

2.2.1 The national priorities, captured more fully in the [National Outcomes](#), has the objectives to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

2.2.2 Recognition for public sector procurement is given as it is seen as “...*vitally important to public services, businesses and communities alike. If we are to deliver sustainable economic growth, it is essential that we continue to use the power of public spending to deliver greater public value, drive efficiencies and help public bodies achieve their overarching purpose and strategic objectives. Smart use of procurement can play a key role in building a more prosperous and fairer Scotland by promoting jobs and growth; encouraging innovation; boosting training, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities; and helping businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), third sector bodies, and supported businesses to compete effectively for contracts.*”.

2.2.3 The first procurement strategy for Scotland, [Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland 2023 to 2028](#), was published by the Scottish Government in April 2023 and seeks all public bodies to align with it.

2.2.4 The procurement strategy for Scotland confirms the need for public bodies to have regard to the [National Performance Framework](#), compliance with legislative procurement duties, and utilisation of the national procurement policies and guidance to underpin good procurement practice. These are the steps needed to achieve the national outcomes through procurement.

3. Governance for Procurement Activity

3.1 Regulations

3.1.1 The regulations applicable to our procurement activity derived from European Union Directives, and were transposed into Scots law as follows:

- [the Public Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#);
- [the Utilities Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#); and
- [the Concessions Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#).

3.1.2 These regulations ensure that public purchases are made in a transparent and fair manner, seeking to achieve efficiency in public spending while facilitating the participation of SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses.

3.2 Legislation

3.2.1 [The Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) works alongside the regulations and is the legislation that governs how Scottish public bodies buy their goods, services and works, providing a national legislative framework for sustainable public procurement that supports Scotland's economic growth through improved procurement practice.

3.2.2 [The Act](#) focuses on general duties on contracting authorities regarding their procurement activities and some specific duties aimed at promoting good, transparent, and consistent practice in procurement processes.

3.2.3 Further provisions under [the Act](#) are made through [the Procurement \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#).

3.3 General Contract Standing Orders

3.3.1 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 81 requires local authorities to “...*make standing orders with respect to the making by them or on their behalf of contracts for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works*”.

3.3.2 Our [General Contract Standing Orders \(“GCSOs”\)](#) set out the council's specific procurement procedures and responsibilities at all spend levels, covering both regulated and non-regulated approaches. [GCSOs](#) include our reporting requirements of procurement activity, including authorisation of contracts awards.

4. Requirements of the Procurement Strategy set by the Act

4.1 In accordance with section 15 of [the Act](#), the procurement strategy must detail how the council intends to carry out its regulated procurements and in particular:

- (a) set out how the council intends to ensure that its regulated procurements will:
 - (i) contribute to the conducting of its functions and the achievement of its purposes;
 - (ii) deliver Value for Money; and
 - (iii) be carried out in compliance with the general duties reference in section 8 of [the Act](#) to; treat Economic Operators equally and without discrimination, act in a transparent and proportionate manner, and to comply with the Sustainable Procurement Duty.
- (b) include a statement of the council's general policy on:
 - (i) the use of community benefit requirements;
 - (ii) consulting and engaging with those affected by its procurements;
 - (iii) the payment of a living wage to persons involved in producing, providing, or constructing the subject matter of regulated procurements;
 - (iv) promoting compliance by contractors and sub-contractors with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (c.37) and any provision made under that Act; and
 - (v) the procurement of fairly and ethically traded goods and services.

- (c) include a statement of the council's general policy on how it intends its approach to regulated procurements involving the provision of food to:
 - (i) improve the health, wellbeing, and education of communities in the authority's area; and
 - (ii) promote the highest standards of animal welfare.
- (d) set out how the authority intends to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, the following payments are made no later than 30 days after the invoice (or similar claim) relating to the payment is presented -
 - (i) payments due by the authority to a contractor
 - (ii) payments due by a contractor to a sub-contractor
 - (iii) payments due by a sub-contractor to a sub-contractor

4.2 The council must have regard to further orders and/or guidance issued by Scottish Ministers.

5. Procurement Strategy 2025/26

5.1 Procurement Strategy Objectives

5.1.1 This procurement strategy should:

- support delivery of the local and national priorities;
- confirm that our procurement toolkit and procedures, which are complemented by national tools and guidance, aim to deliver best value while giving assurance of regulatory and legislative compliance in our procurement activity;
- showcase our effective procurement function, that has excellent buy-in from leadership, with a talented network of procurement officers who we support with training and continuous professional development;
- give assurance that we use our monitoring, reporting and analysis, to then apply any learning into improving our procurement practice;
- outline our commitment, where applicable, to work with and involve those affected by our procurements;
- assure that through our robust contract award procedures, we will appoint the best Contractors who share our vision and want to collaborate with us to help us achieve our priorities and ambitions; and,
- demonstrate that we are transparent and fair in our procurement approach, wanting to attract interest and greater participation from businesses of all types and size, with purpose of generating stronger competition and getting the best possible outcomes from our regulated procurement opportunities.

5.2 Alignment with National Procurement Strategy

5.2.1 The revision to this procurement strategy ensures the council are aligned to the aforementioned public procurement strategy for Scotland, which identified four enablers:

- 1) Procurement Capability – focussing on the people in the procurement, their development and involvement as leaders.
- 2) Supplier Development – focussing on the supply chains and their development to match public sector requirements.
- 3) Engagement – focussing on the processes and tools in procurement, trying to achieve consistency for both buyer and supplier.
- 4) Collaboration – focussing on strengthening the relationships and work towards shared goals.

5.2.2 The council recognise the enablers mentioned and these are incorporated within our procurement approach detailed in this procurement strategy.

6. The Council's Procurement Function

6.1 Importance

- 6.1.1 The council are responsible for a broad range of statutory and vital public services, requiring each responsible Service Area to seek tailored procurement advice and support to help them achieve their service and/or programme of work objectives, often against a hard economic and unpredictable commercial landscape.
- 6.1.2 Having an effective procurement function, directed by a procurement strategy, is deemed essential to the council, with our procurement professionals on hand to give advice to our leaders supporting their most strategic decisions, by challenging the thinking, by developing options, and pursuing innovative and outside-the-box solutions to overcome challenges and barriers.
- 6.1.3 Procurement activity features in the council's top 25 areas of corporate risk, and as such, there is a high-level awareness of procurement across the council's corporate management team with a need for mitigation measures.
- 6.1.4 The main mitigation of procurement risk lies within having controls implemented across the procurement function, including people and process. Procurement must be carried out in compliance with the governance of procurement activity outlined at section 3 herein, making it important to have an approved procurement toolkit underpinned with guidance, policy and procedures, and an effective group of procurement professionals able to conduct procurements.
- 6.1.5 Public sector has encountered many challenges in recent years with Brexit, COVID-19 pandemic, and conflicts in various regions of the world. Each of these have contributed to destabilising the economy, impacting the reliability and availability of various supply chains, and presenting risks to the optimum delivery of public services and at an affordable price.
- 6.1.6 During the pandemic, the procurement function was a vital source of expertise to help source critical goods and services necessary to enable the first responders and front-line services to carry out essential services.
- 6.1.7 Forward looking, the council's procurement function is expected to be an enabler for delivery of the Plan, and in particular a key support in the council being "Net Zero" by 2030 as per the council's [Climate Plan ACT 2030](#).
- 6.1.8 Our procurement professionals are counted on to be the council's trusted ambassadors, representing the council through external networking, building, and developing collaborative relationships with our peers in other public bodies.
- 6.1.9 Our procurement professionals are also vitally important as the interface with the external marketplace, managing enquiries and then leading or supporting events and initiatives from which these can help to attract new interest, aid the development of Contractors and lead to improved competition.

6.2 Leadership

- 6.2.1 The procurement function has a prominent place in the hierarchy of the council's leadership model, whereby overall governance and strategic procurement responsibility resides with the Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement). The Chief Officer has a direct channel of engagement with the council's: Chief Executive; Councillors; Corporate Procurement Working Group ("CPWG"); and Procurement and Support Manager who in turn manages the Corporate Procurement Team ("CPT").
- 6.2.2 Throughout the year, the Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement) and Procurement and Support Manager have engagement and participation with strategic procurement leaders across the 'procurement network' including government, national bodies, local authority peers, collaborative partners, and other professional agencies. Relative and comparable relationships exist and are encouraged at all levels up and down the council's procurement function as we embrace procurement opportunities that can be gained through collaboration, networking, and partnership.

6.3 Devolved Procurement Model

- 6.3.1 The council operate a devolved procurement function, including:
- a small CPT comprising category managers and procuring officers, who have the predominant remit of leading or supporting strategic and regulated procurements, and management and maintenance of the council's procurement registers and procurement toolkit; and,
 - an extension of officers across the Service Areas with various levels of procurement expertise and involvement, predominantly undertaking tactical and/or non-regulated procurement, and with the main contract management responsibilities.

- 6.3.2 All procurement is undertaken in compliance with: the governance of procurement activity; has regard to the local and national priorities; and, can be linked to a category management approach.

6.4 Category Management

- 6.4.1 The council has a category management approach, which allows a commercially focused overview of the aggregate council expenditure, with tiered segmentation into common categories of spend, broken down further into commodity groups and down again into specific individual contract requirements.
- 6.4.2 CPT consolidates and uploads the council's spend data recorded periodically to a national online spend platform, which analyses and tags our data into various helpful spend classifications and groupings, readying it for further segmentation and detailed analysis.
- 6.4.3 Segmenting our spend into high level categories provides intelligence, particularly as we drill down the category into commodity groupings, showing us patterns of our wider procurement needs, and the range of known Contractors used in each. Furthermore, the category view helps to inform strategic procurement, identifying opportunities to take advantage of, such as by consolidating requirements while streamlining the number of procurements while also improving efficiency.
- 6.4.4 All categories work to common principles and rules. Under our category management approach, the council's tools and techniques are complemented further with the [online sustainable procurement tools](#) bringing methods for prioritisation, life cycle mapping and sustainability tests that help establish common needs and possibilities, particularly on the sustainable procurement measures that should feature in most procurements aligned to the category. Whatever is identified at category level can then be transferred into the contract strategy for each individual procurement, helping the

procuring officer and service lead to work together to facilitate quicker decisions and adjustments in procurement approach..

6.4.5 A key output from the category management approach is the production of Category Strategies; these will consolidate the analysis, assessments, and recommendations for progressing individual procurements. The Category Strategy will set a high-level governance and guidance, helping the procuring officers leading individual procurements to adopt already developed measures including but not limited to sustainable procurement duty; equality duty; supported business involvement; and reducing the impact resultant contracts may have on climate change.

6.5 CPWG

6.5.1 The CPWG comprises a small number of Chief Officers and representatives with interest and skills to review, provide oversight, and assist in strategic decisions on matters pertaining to the council's procurement function. The CPWG aim to meet quarterly and provide helpful influence securing council-wide buy-in and promoting the procurement strategy and procedures.

6.6 Network of Procuring Officers

6.6.1 The council's internal procurement network is a forum for procuring officers across the council, with devolved procurement responsibilities or associated procurement roles (contract managers, evaluation managers, service experts), to collaborate on procurement practice.

6.6.2 We use internal communication channels to provide access to procurement toolkits, template documents and share communications (guidance notes, policy updates etc.). These channels function as a repository for sharing examples of best practice and lessons learned.

6.6.3 The procurement network promotes opportunities for mentoring and job shadowing as a mean of developing officers and allowing skills transfer. It is a future priority to develop this network further to advance specific procurement practice, deliver essential and bespoke training suited to the individual officer and their service procurement requirements. Like the national procurement strategy, we also recognise our people as enablers of effective procurement.

6.7 Procurement Training

6.7.1 It is necessary that we have a checklist, indicating the awareness and training needs required for procuring officers and supporting roles (service leads, contract managers or contract administrators, evaluation managers and evaluators), and this features in the current procurement improvement programme.

6.7.2 Particularly for procuring officers, we need to ensure officers are aware and trained on:

- the internal procurement toolkit and procedures;
- the governance of procurement;
- sustainable procurement duty;
- the [online sustainable procurement tools](#) and;
- climate literacy.

6.7.3 The [national procurement competency framework](#) is utilised to help staff self-appraise their existing competencies and identify areas to be worked on and/or assist with their continuous professional development ("CPD").

6.7.4 There is a commitment to the development of our procurement network to maintain and raise standards across the procurement function.

6.7.5 We encourage professional qualification through the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply “CIPS” which is the professional body for procurement. CIPS members can benefit by participating in CIPS run tutorials, webinars and a range of other CPD opportunities. Learning and experience gained by our officers who are CIPS members adds value and benefit where the learning can be integrated and/or adopted within the council’s procurement function and approach.

6.7.6 We also encourage and have interest in participation with external programmes and/or groups, such as [Procurement People of Tomorrow \(PPOt\)](#), to improve the procurement and commercial skills of our officers and future talent.

7. The Council's Procurement Toolkit and Procedures for 2025/26

7.1 Overview of Procurement Toolkit and Procedures

7.1.1 The council have a comprehensive procurement toolkit and supporting procedures, maintained by CPT and mandated through the council's [GCSOs](#). These are continuously under review and development, and in place to ensure a consistent approach to regulated procurement activity, ensuring compliance with the governance of procurement, the associated general and specific duties, and mitigating procurement related risks.

7.2 Forward Procurement Plans

7.2.1 The category managers work closely with service areas to consider new and recurring procurement requirements and from this can establish forward procurement plans which are essential for resource allocation and planning of procurement activity.

7.2.2 The forward procurement plans are consolidated to complete the requirements of Annual Procurement Report, outlining the expected regulated procurements to be undertaken in the next two financial years, providing transparency for prospective Contractors interested in doing business with the council.

7.3 Contract Strategy

7.3.1 An internal Contract Strategy is the main pre-tender document from the procurement toolkit, required to be produced for all regulated and significant procurements.

7.3.2 The Contract Strategy may derive from an established Category Strategy, through inheriting any high-level practice and decisions, such as identified sustainable procurement measures, that should be incorporated into the planned procurement.

7.3.3 The Contract Strategy can also be written bespoke and/or deviate from the Category Strategy as required to meet particular contract objectives.

7.3.4 Each Contract Strategy should be tailored to reflect and achieve: the service area and/or stakeholder needs; the level of competition in the marketplace; and the choice of procurement procedure and agreement type to ensure optimum competition with objective to achieve the desired quality outcomes and best value.

7.3.5 The Contract Strategy will link the procurement to the Priorities helping the procuring officers focus on setting the desired procurement objectives.

7.3.6 This internal document has a key purpose in ensuring the preparation for procurement is made in compliance with the governance of procurement activity. The format of the contract strategy is structured with checkpoints and considerations, including but not limited to:

- risk and opportunity assessment;
- consideration for sustainable procurement duties, and for those identified, what is needed in the tender approach to achieve these targets;
- how we can influence and encourage Contractors to support the Procurement Priorities, including Fair Work Practice, reduction of waste and carbon emissions;
- establish relevant targets for Community Benefits for the procurement, such as job creation, training, and use of sub-contractors;
- make or buy decisions, and consideration of the circular economy;

- decision on procurement route with consideration given to the potential to reserve opportunities for supported businesses where it is identified they can fulfil the requirements;
- applying measures to reduce inequality and facilitate the involvement of SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses;
- encouraging innovation per guidance in [SPPN 3/2023](#);
- consider how to involve those who may be affected by the procurement;
- setting the evaluation criteria; and
- capture key decisions.

7.3.7 Contract Strategies are required to be authorised in accordance with [GCSOs](#) before the associated procurement progresses to competition.

7.4 Tender Packs

7.4.1 CPT have established tender packs for all types of regulated procurements the council may undertake, this ensures a consistent approach for procuring officers and for potential contractors. A key feature of the tender pack is the council's standard terms and conditions applicable in all contracts, which incorporates requirements set by [the Act](#) and the mandated clauses from policy guidance SPPN 2/2022 '[prompt payment in the supply chain](#)'.

7.4.2 Each tender pack will have a clear 'conditions of participation' and outline any selection and award criteria; this provides transparency and clearly informs those expressing interest and/or planning to tender the council's rules and protocols for tendering, how tenders will be checked and evaluated, and the tender opening procedures (these are also covered in [GCSOs](#)).

7.4.3 A template quality questionnaire has been created with considerations and a choice of questions to capture tenderer feedback on key areas of impact that are important to the council, including: fair work first; community benefits and social value; net zero / carbon reduction; data protection and cyber security amongst others.

7.5 Tendering

7.5.1 The council's tendering approach for regulated procurements is conducted through the national platforms:

- [Public Contracts Scotland Portal](#) ("PCS"); and
- [PCS-Tender](#) ("PCS-Tender").

7.5.2 These platforms ensure consistency for prospective contractors and should encourage participation, particularly with the national support available through the [Supplier Development Programme \("SDP"\)](#) and the [Supplier Journey](#). Furthermore, each system has its own independent helpdesk with both telephone support and a catalogue of guides.

7.5.3 The tender platforms offer transparency, facilitating questions and answers during the tender process, administering tender deadlines, and operating a sealed-bid approach where the tender post-box remains locked to ensure any bids received cannot be opened until the deadline has passed.

7.5.4 Exceptions to using the above platforms may be for bespoke procurement exercises or when we are conducting a call-off from a third-party framework or dynamic purchasing system ("DPS") and its either mandatory or beneficial to use the framework or DPS providers platform.

7.6 Tender Evaluation

7.6.1 In each individual procurement, a tender evaluation manager and team of evaluators are identified when finalising the contract strategy.

7.6.2 Any officer or individual nominated to undertake a tender evaluation role must first complete a conflict of interest and confidentiality statement prior to receiving any bids for evaluation; this ensures professionalism and integrity apply to the evaluation process.

7.6.3 The tender manager is responsible for any clarification requirements and consolidating evaluation scores and result.

7.7 Contract Award Reports

7.7.1 Contract award reports are the main post-tender document from the procurement toolkit, primarily used to detail the scoring and finalised results of tender evaluation.

7.7.2 Contract award reports will summarise the key outcomes in a procurement, from savings to benefits captured, while also explaining how best value has been achieved.

7.7.3 The Chief Officer of the Procuring Service is required to approve contract award reports, and where applicable, seek Committee approval in accordance with the procedures set out in [GCSOs](#).

7.7.4 As soon as the relevant approval(s) are given for the contract award report, the procurement can proceed to stage of finalising the contract award by formal communication of the result with the candidates and tenderers.

7.8 Notices of Decisions

7.8.1 The procurement toolkit has letter templates that the procuring officer will use to explain the procurement outcome following the conclusion of the respective stage of a procurement, informing candidates or tenderers with the required feedback under the relevant governance of the procurement.

7.8.2 Depending on the contract award value and in accordance with the procedures set out in [GCSOs](#), letters will be issued under the approval of either the Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement) or the Chief Officer of the procuring service area.

7.8.3 The procuring officer will close the procurement process with publication of the relevant contract notice and results fulfilling the relevant governance of the procurement.

7.9 Contract Register

7.9.1 The council has a [publicly accessible online contract register](#) contained within PCS which is auto-populated on publication of contract notices, with further monitoring and maintenance of the register undertaken by CPT.

7.10 Contract Management

7.10.1 The council is required to have robust contract management arrangements in place, particularly for its most strategic contracts to ensure the council works effectively and professionally with the appointed contractors.

7.10.2 Any key performance indicator and/or services levels must be considered during development of contract strategy and carried forward into the tender pack. [GCSOs](#) set out minimum requirements for contract monitoring.

7.10.3 Each contract we enter should be formed based on:

- the council's tender pack, comprising specification of requirements;
- general conditions of contract (and if applicable specific terms also);
- the accepted tenderer proposals, method statements and pricing; and
- any other pertinent detail captured and written into the final contract award letter.

7.10.4 It is important that each contract is managed as specified and agreed in the contract award.

7.10.5 While best value and other desirable outcomes may have been identified in the procurement, it is the responsibility and work through contract management that ensures that the expected outcome are achieved.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

8.1 Annual Procurement Report

8.1.1 The Annual Procurement Report 2025/26 will be produced as soon as possible after the financial year and used to report the performance and effectiveness of Procurement Strategy 2025/26.

8.1.2 The Annual Procurement Report will be produced in conformity to the Act and utilise the recommended reporting template provided in [SPPN 2/2023](#) aiming to ensure consistent reporting from all public bodies. The report measures include:

- Number of Regulated procurements
- Compliance with Procurement Strategy
- Community Benefits accrued
- Appointed Contract status with Fair Work and the Real Living Wage
- Payment Performance
- Supported Business and
- Total Spend and Savings

8.1.3 The data sources for the above information will be payments made through the council's financial system, data gathered through the procurement registers managed by CPT, and the outputs from the national online spend platform (as mentioned at 6.4.2 herein).

8.1.4 To finalise the production of the Annual Procurement Report, prior consultation and approval will be sought from the CPWG members, committee, and the Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement). This will be published in an accessible format on the council's website and shared with Scottish Ministers.

8.2 Local Government Benchmarking Framework ("LGBF")

8.2.1 The council contribute to the national reporting metrics and indicators, which includes a procurement measure attached to the focus area of Economic Development:

- Proportion of procurement spent on local enterprises.

8.2.2 Data to produce this metric will be gathered from the same sources as 8.1.3 above.

8.2.3 This metric will be published in an accessible format on the [LGBF website](#).

8.3 The Council's Strategic Performance Framework

8.3.1 The council use a platform of performance metrics in all services to keep track and focus of how each service and team are performing, these are:

- Procurement spend - % through collaborative contracts with other publicly funded bodies.
- Procurement spends - % with contracted suppliers.
- Procurement contracts - % qualifying contracts >£1m containing a community benefit requirement.
- Procurement contracts - % qualifying contracts awarded to clients who meet fair work criteria.
- Procurement assessment score - procurement and commercial improvement programme (PCIP)
- Procurement contracts - % qualifying contracts in reporting period to local organisations
- Procurement contracts - % qualifying contracts in reporting period to small medium enterprises

- Procurement spend - % awarded to local organisations.
- Procurement spend - % with small medium enterprises.

8.3.2 Data to produce these metrics will be gathered from the same sources as 8.1.3 above.

8.3.3 These metrics will be reported by the Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement) to the relevant council committee annually and publicly available from the council's '[Committee: Meetings, Agendas and Minutes](#)' system.

8.4 Audits

8.4.1 The council's Internal Audit department provides independent and objective assurance to the council's senior management that systems and controls are fit for purpose. The most recent audits related to Procurement were focussed on:

- Contract and supplier management and
- Procurement – Best Value Approach

8.4.2 These audits are welcomed to provide critical review and recommendations, adding focus for procuring officers and sharpening the procurement toolkit and procedures.

8.4.3 Progress on actions arising from audits are reported to the council's audit and scrutiny panel, which ensures continuous management until the action is completed.

8.5 Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme ("PCIP")

8.5.1 The council is committed to improving procurement performance and practice of its overall procurement function, therefore we feel it is essential to participate in the [National PCIP assessments](#).

8.5.2 Local Authority PCIP assessments are conducted by Scotland Excel, usually every two years, but the assessment programme encountered some disruption due to COVID19 pandemic and recovery period.

8.5.3 Following each assessment, Scotland Excel provide the council with a formal output report, outlining what has been identified as strengths and areas where the council have scope for improvement.

8.5.4 The council has undergone three PCIP assessments in 2017, 2019 and 2024.

8.5.5 The council's 2024 PCIP assessment report is being used by CPT to set a "procurement improvement plan" for the procurement function to address across the period of Procurement Strategy 2024/25 and Procurement Strategy 2025/26.

9. Procurement Strategy 2024/25

Guided by Requirements of the Act

9.1 Ensuring Regulated Procurements Contribute To The Carrying Out Of The Council's Functions And The Achievement Of Council Purposes

9.1.1 All regulated procurements will be conducted using the procurement toolkit and procedures set out at section 7 herein. For clarity, it is expected a pre-tender contract strategy will be completed and a post-tender contract award report will be produced; both documents require the council priority, ambition statement and programme of work priority to be identified, and both require authorisation to be finalised per [GCSOs](#).

9.1.2 With the checkpoints in place in the respective procurement toolkit documents, CPT can log the impacts of each procurement into our procurement registers allowing us to produce a compliance report to verify expected outcomes and compliance with the Act.

9.2 Ensuring Regulated Procurements Deliver Value for Money

9.2.1 All regulated procurements will be conducted using the procurement toolkit and procedures set out at section 7 herein. For clarity, it is expected a pre-tender contract strategy will be completed and a post-tender contract award report will be produced.

9.2.2 The contract strategy will set out the options appraisal and tender evaluation criteria chosen with the ultimate aim to deliver value of money; this document will require approval before the tender pack is produced and the procurement is published.

9.2.3 The contract award report will outline the evaluation results validating how the tender of the preferred bidder represents value for money; this document will require the relevant approval to enable the next stages in contract award process.

9.2.4 With the checkpoints in place in the respective procurement toolkit documents and procedures, CPT can log the impacts of each procurement into our procurement registers allowing us to produce a compliance report to verify expected outcomes and compliance with the Act.

9.3 Ensuring Regulated Procurements Are Carried Out In Compliance With The General Duties To; Treat Economic Operators Equally And Without Discrimination, Act In A Transparent And Proportionate Manner, And To Comply With The Sustainable Procurement Duty

9.3.1 All regulated procurements will be conducted using the procurement toolkit and procedures set out at section 7 herein.

9.3.2 The contract strategy provides an appraisal on the procurement route, and will consider maximising competition, reducing barriers to entry, and ensuring complying with the principles of procurement.

9.3.3 Considerations on sustainable procurement duty are initially carried out within the category strategy making appraisals with use of the [online sustainable procurement tools](#). Those measures identified at category level transfer into the contract strategy for full use or adaptation to suit the individual contract requirement.

9.3.4 The contract strategy will require approval before the tender pack is produced and the procurement is published.

9.3.5 The notifications of contract awards decisions will provide successful and unsuccessful candidates and tenderers comprehensive feedback to the extent provided by the relevant governance of the procurement.

9.3.6 With the checkpoints in place in the procurement toolkit, CPT can log the impacts of each procurement into our procurement registers allowing us to produce a compliance report to verify expected outcomes and compliance with the Act.

9.4 The Council's General Policy on The Use of Community Benefit Requirements

9.4.1 Whilst a national model for [Community Wealth Building](#) is being developed, the council's contracts can still help realise a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits, including better employment, training and sub-contracting opportunities. The council has recently approved a [Community Wealth Building Statement](#), with next steps to implement and monitor progress.

9.4.2 Community benefits delivered by our contracts have been shown to contribute to local and national outcomes relating to employability, skills development, and local regeneration.

9.4.3 If there is an opportunity to benefit the community, the council include appropriate requirements in our contracts in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance, best practice and [GCSOs](#).

9.4.4 For any contract awarded in which community benefits are part of the proposal, CPT will log the expected requirements within the procurement register. Under the contract management approach, the responsible contract officer will manage the Contractor to ensure the benefits are delivered. CPT will at least annually contact all contract officers to gather feedback on community benefits realised, again logging to the procurement register which will allow comparison between those expected compared with what has been delivered.

9.4.5 The council's overall performance on community benefits will be reported in the Annual Procurement Report.

9.5 The Council's General Policy On Consulting And Engaging With Those Affected By Its Procurements

9.5.1 The council recognises that it is important to consult and engage with those affected by our procurements, and where relevant and proportionate, to allow the views of those affected to be considered. The procurements must accurately reflect need and opportunity, and take account of the wider context, including the local and national priorities.

9.5.2 In each individual procurement, the contract strategy development will therefore prompt consideration of those affected.

9.5.3 The council engage outward with stakeholders through many formats and channels, tailored to the procurement and its objective. Examples include but are not restricted to: online surveys; public and community consultations; and targeted engagement with affected stakeholder groups for the specific procurement being sought.

9.5.4 The council encourages its procuring officers to undertake pre-tender engagement with the marketplace, particularly when it has complex requirements and/or when through analysis it anticipates that the level of competition is low which would then impact on the competitiveness of the procurement.

9.5.5 The council will consider a trauma informed approach where is it relevant to do so, allowing those procurements to integrate the knowledge and experience gained through lived experience of both adults and children. The process of including lived experience involves working with people through the tender design, evaluation and implementation, fully adapting processes, paperwork and systems to promote diversity, inclusion, support and recognition of trauma.

9.5.6 In April 2023, the council established the contract “Counselling for Care Experienced Young People”, where the procurement approach involved a representative group of care experienced young people to co-produce the service specification and help design the evaluation parameters. The tender evaluation process included a lived experience panel to evaluate tender proposals; this was facilitated in a format that was bespoke to their needs, and this ensured their voice was heard and their views were part of the contract award decision. Other procurements of health and social related services have since been undertaken with effective involvement of people who use the services, and all regulated procurements for adult health & social care consider best practice principles for ethical commissioning.

9.5.7 The council complies with its duty to respond to requests received under freedom of information and there is an online [Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure](#).

9.6 The Council's General Policy On The Payment Of A Living Wage To Persons Involved In Producing, Providing Or Constructing The Subject Matter Of Regulated Procurements

9.6.1 The council has made a commitment to Fair Work First and the [councils website](#) details our approach with our own workforce and operations.

9.6.2 Furthermore, the council are an [accredited Living Wage employer](#); this is a clear commitment to pay at least the [real Living Wage](#) for all staff we directly employ. .

9.6.3 The council encourages the Contractors we work with and want to attract, to pay the [real Living Wage](#) as part of a package of fair work practice. It's our experience that those which have a diverse workforce and whose staff are well rewarded, well-motivated, well led and who have appropriate opportunities for training and skills development, are likely to deliver a higher quality of service. A positive approach to fair work practices can

have a positive effect on the quality of the services, supplies and work delivered on our contracts.

9.6.4 Our tender opportunities seek information on the potential Contractors position on fair work and Living Wage.

9.6.5 Where conditions of the national guidance on payment of the [real Living Wage](#) can be legally mandated, we will follow such approach including model tender evaluation questions available from the [online sustainable procurement tools](#).

9.6.6 Should the council award a contract to a Contractor who is making commitment to pay the [real Living Wage](#), this will form part of the contract, and it will be monitored through the Contract Management arrangements.

9.6.7 The council will report the number of [real Living Wage](#) Contractors appointed in our Annual Procurement Report.

9.7 The Council's General Policy on Promoting Compliance by Contractors and Sub-Contractors with The Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974 (C.37) And Any Provision Made Under That Act

9.7.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that nothing purchased by us is at the expense of the health and safety of those who are involved in delivering our contracts whether directly or as part of the supply chain.

9.7.2 It is important that those bidding for our contracts can demonstrate that they are responsible Contractors who keep to their legal duties, including duties relating to health and safety.

9.7.3 It is a standard condition of our contracts that the contractor must keep to all laws that apply, the requirements of regulatory organisations, and good industry practice. This includes any relevant health and safety law. Health and safety criterion forms part of the evaluation for all relevant contracts.

9.7.4 Whenever Contractors' staff are on our premises, under the terms of our standard contracts they must keep to our own health and safety requirements.

9.7.5 The council will revise our standard contract management arrangements to make sure that we include information about health and safety incidents relating to delivering our contracts and any measures we take to put things right.

9.8 The Council's General Policy on The Procurement of Fairly and Ethically Traded Goods and Services

9.8.1 The council takes a robust approach in its procurement processes and work with its collaborative procurement partners and agencies to tackle criminal activity in line with the [national serious organised crime strategy](#), and use the SPD and tender questions to prevent human trafficking and exploitation, modern slavery, corruption and fraud. It is our objective to promote positive employment practices..

9.8.2 The regulated procurement procedures we follow involve assessing a potential Contractors suitability to be awarded the contract. This process includes checking for exclusion grounds per the regulations and [the Act](#), such as convictions, breaches of duty, offences or acts of professional misconduct.

9.8.3 The council's standard terms and conditions of contract allow the council to end a contract if the Contractor or sub-Contractor fails to keep to their legal duties in the areas of environmental, social or employment law when carrying out that contract.

9.8.4 The council were awarded "Fairtrade Zone Status" in recognition of the support and awareness the local schools, churches, businesses, and communities have given to Fairtrade products. This a clear commitment to consider the relevant and proportionate application of fair and ethical principles in our procurement activities.

9.8.5 The council commits to considering the purchase of fairly and ethically traded supplies if available to meet our requirements through the contract strategy, which includes seeing how best to integrate with the specification of requirements and evaluation process.

9.8.6 The APR for this strategy will include a statement about the effectiveness of our procurement procedures.

9.9 The Council's General Policy on Regulated Procurements Involving the Provision of Food

9.9.1 The council recognises food and drink as a key industry sector where major sustainability wins can be achieved. The procurement of food and catering services is a high-ranking area because there are major social, economic, and environmental impacts. It can have benefits on community health, wellbeing, and social justice through access to good nutrition including fresh and seasonal produce.

9.9.2 The council's approach to its contracts involving food, which are under our direct control, is to make sure that it keeps to all relevant Government policies on healthy eating and nutrition, promoting fresh and seasonal and local produce, and on fairly and ethically traded produce. These standards take account of a range of factors, including production, traceability, authenticity, origin, ethical trading, animal welfare, environmental standards, and health and waste.

9.9.3 The council continue to consider available Scottish products that we source through initiatives such as the Red Tractor assurance scheme and through engagement with the Food for Life programme we aim to increase the amount of locally sourced and produced food for our schools.

9.9.4 Keeping to the policy commitment is part of our Contract Management arrangements for all food contracts.

9.10 The Council's Approach to Prompt Payment Performance in The Supply Chain

9.10.1 The council support the national policy and agree with the position that prompt payment is necessary for local and national economic recovery and longer-term wellbeing. Prompt payment of the supply chain is ethical and socially responsible, and critical to the

sustainability and resilience of our supply chains who in turn are supporting us with our service delivery and priorities.

9.10.2 Following [SPPN 2/2022](#), the lead procuring officer will design the selection stage (SPD) for a regulated procurements with a standard statement as means of understanding the payment performance history and payments systems of bidders; this allows an informed contract award decision and ability to reject a candidate that does not comply with the requirement.

9.10.3 The council's standard terms and conditions, as mentioned at 6.8.3.1 herein, uses the recommended clauses to mandate all aspects of prompt payment in our contracts. We have also included an escalation process should any Contractor or Sub-Contractor be in dispute that prompt payment has been complied with.

9.10.4 Monitoring of compliance with prompt payment is covered within our guidance on Contract Management and within [GCSOs](#).

10. How to do Business with North Lanarkshire Council

10.1 The council welcomes interest and competition in our contract opportunities from all businesses. We have an ambitious plan for North Lanarkshire, and we recognise the innovation and expertise that can be procured from the supply base can help us to meet our objectives.

10.2 Any potential Contractor who are seeking access to our contract opportunities are encouraged to be registered on:

- the national advertising platform [Public Contracts Scotland Portal](#) (“PCS”); and,
- the national e-Tendering system “[PCS-Tender](#)”

these online platforms provide automated notifications to Contractors (based on their business areas they have matched their PCS profile to) providing alerts when the council advertise open opportunities. These platforms facilitate our competitive quotations or tenders.

10.3 The council has a [buyer portal](#) which sits within PCS; this is a public resource that acts as an online directory featuring links to:

- the council’s contract register;
- displaying notices for our open contract opportunities; and
- displaying notices of our previous contract awards.

10.4 The council’s [contract register](#) holds current contract details; this helps any Contractor determine opportunities, when current contracts expire and when the council are likely to re-tender.

10.5 The council produce an [Annual Procurement Report 2023/24](#) which has a dedicated section setting out the expected contract opportunities for suppliers to get involved in over the next 2 financial years.

10.6 Further links to the council’s procurement activity and publications can be found on our [website](#).

10.7 For construction projects, in progress or coming soon, the council provide additional updates on our activity through the “[Scottish Pipeline Forecast Tool](#)”. This acts as a further resource that may be of assistance to potential suppliers looking for subcontract opportunities.

10.8 The corporate procurement team and procuring officers across the council’s Service Areas support the Lanarkshire and National “Meet the Buyer” events, which are generally the key networking days our procuring officers where we have time dedicated to liaising with potential Contractors.

11. Implementation of Procurement Strategy 2025/26

- 11.1** This procurement strategy will be under constant review to ensure that the council are flexible in adopting emerging guidance and polices into its procurement function.
- 11.2** There will be continued engagement with key stakeholders and access to appropriate accredited training for relevant staff.
- 11.3** Independent audit and assurance will be sought to challenge and assess on a sample basis, both the procurement strategy content and intentions, and our compliance with it; this will help to identify and provide a process to correct any weakness.
- 11.4** The council's procurement performance against this procurement strategy will continuously be monitored, with the associated reporting to be produced following the end of the financial year (2025/26), with the output report expected to be approved and published by 30 September 2026.

This document can be made available in a range of languages and formats, including large print, braille, audio, electronic and accessible formats.

To make a request, please contact Corporate Communications at:
corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

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