

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL: Procurement Strategy 2025-2028

The Vision, Goals and Priorities set out in this Strategy illustrate the contribution that effective procurement can make to ensuring the Council is able to meet its legislative and statutory responsibilities as well as contributing to the aims and objectives of the Corporate Strategy.

Our Procurement Vision

Our vision is for procurement to be core to the Council's provision of good quality, value for money, services for our community to meet our Corporate Strategy, regarding the following priorities:

- Sustainability will be at the heart of our decision-making; throughout the procurement cycle.
- Plan and invest for the long-term benefit for the people and environment of the district; by ensuring 'whole life costing' and 'Cost verses benefit' analysis are key to pre-procurement business cases.
- Good governance and transparent decision-making; is undertaken and recorded throughout the procurement cycle.
- Use data, including insight from our customers, residents, businesses, and visitors to help us make the right decisions; with regard to Contract implementation, replacement and improvements.
- Social value and inclusive growth will underpin the investments we make throughout the district to help ensure all our communities prosper.
- Consultation and engagement with stakeholders will be used to help inform and shape how we deliver improvements and change through Preliminary Market Engagement ahead of all Sourcing activities to help inform and shape contract improvements and identify innovation and efficiencies.
- We will evaluate how we make the best use of resources to offer the best service at the best value; by ensuring project resource planning throughout the procurement cycle and awarding best value contracts.

What do we mean by Procurement?

Procurement encompasses the whole cycle involved in acquiring goods, services and works; from the initial concept and definition of the business need, sourcing the right provider, management of the arrangements we put in place, and ultimately through to the end of the useful life of an asset or the end of the service.

The framework within which public sector procurement is undertaken is complicated, comprising of UK legislative requirements from the Public Contract regulations 2015, the Procurement Act 2023, the Procurement Regulations 2024, as well as laws placed on Local Government. Within the Council this is supplemented by local requirements contained within the Council's own Constitution.

To make the legislative framework workable for Officers and Members, summary requirements are detailed in the Council's Code of Procurement Practice and Financial Code of Practice. These codes, together with procurement guidance issued by the Procurement function, form the framework within which officers and members undertake procurement activity. All officers and members are required to observe the rules, regulations and guidance contained within this framework for any procurement activity they undertake or are involved with, and selective auditing of compliance is undertaken to ensure this.

Our Procurement Goals

The Council spends approximately £75m each year on purchased goods, services and works. Spending this money wisely through effective procurement is fundamental to achieving organisational success for the Council, and delivering our corporate priorities while securing good quality, affordable services that meet the needs of the residents of Warwick District and the users of our services.

The Council recognises the wider impact that procurement can have and the importance of defining value as a balance of cost and quality of the goods, services and works that it procures. Our procurement goals are:

1. To deliver Value for Money – A proportionate, cost effective, and efficient route of procurement and the delivery of the service or goods procured.
2. Make it achievable for staff to procure goods, works and services in an effective and efficient way while being able to demonstrate integrity to ensure the highest standards of probity.
3. To ensure that the Council complies with all legal requirements as per the Procurement Act 2023 and associated objectives (fair treatment of suppliers, risk management and regulations; as well as its obligations under the Local Government Act 1999 to seek continuous improvement in the services it provides.
4. Sharing information to ensure openness, fairness and transparency throughout the procurement cycle.
5. Maximise public benefit through supporting a circular economy and delivering Social Value through contracts, including having regard to Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Voluntary Community Sector

- Enterprises (VCSEs) and local businesses and communities.
6. Enhance procurement capability within the Council, in particular regarding commissioning and contract management, to relieve pressure on the central procurement team.

Procurement within our Council

The Council has implemented a devolved structure for Procurement, with purchasing activities being undertaken by service areas to reflect the Council's financial strategy of delegated budgets and local service management.

Service areas are supported by a small, centralised Procurement function, led by the Strategic Procurement & Creditors Manager. The function is responsible for:

- Advising Members and Officers on procurement related matters.
- Establishing and promoting compliance with procurement strategy, policy and process.
- Identifying collaborative and consolidative procurement opportunities.
- Strategic procurement leadership on high value and/or high-risk Procurement projects.
- Developing procurement skills and competence across the Council.
- Supporting Services in their transformation and savings agendas.
- Providing advice and guidance on good practice contract management and commissioning.
- Enforcing the use of E-procurement solutions throughout the Council
- Monitoring commercial creditor financial.
- Ensuring legislated transparency obligations are met, including oversight of the Council's contract register, published on the Council website.

The Council works in collaboration with 7 local Councils in the advertisement of Procurement opportunities. All Council opportunities are advertised through the Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull e-tendering portal (CSW-Jets).

Our Procurement Initiatives

The Council has prioritised 7 key initiatives to support the achievement of its Procurement vision and goals:

1. To elevate procurement in the Council from an operational process to a strategic priority, by:

- Embedding the Code of Procurement Practice across the Council.
- Evaluating and continually refining our approach to contract management.
- Embedding our approach to all projects to ensure the adoption of procurement best practice

- Seeking out innovative solutions to service delivery
- Developing a centralised set of contract KPIs to improve contract performance oversight

2. Support the Council in delivering its social priorities by capitalising on supplier Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) offerings, by:

- Reviewing and launching the Council's Procurement Policies to support the Procurement Act 2023 and recognition of the National Procurement Policy Statement (to be updated from time to time).
- Embedding the Council's policy aspirations into procurement process and practice.
- Supporting the Council to deliver its Climate ambitions.
- Undertaking sustainable sourcing wherever possible.
- Develop contracted suppliers and their supply chains to support them in becoming net zero carbon.
- Introduce performance management measures for supplier and supply chain carbon emissions by utilising carbon monitoring tools and carbon action plans.

3. Ensuring that the council's officers and members have the necessary knowledge, tools and support to undertake effective procurement, by:

- Developing and delivering a portfolio of training for officers and members.
- Relaunching the procurement self-service interactive toolkit.
- Introduce increased flexibility in procurements below £50,000 excluding VAT.
- Continually review all procurement related documentation and guidance to support best practice and meet user needs.

4. Maximising commercial opportunities through effective collaboration, by:

- Effective networking with the right people at the right time.
- Actively seeking collaborative opportunities both internally and externally to the Council.
- Maximising the opportunities to work jointly with councils.

5. Maximising contract opportunities through effective contract management, by:

- Develop a corporate approach to contract management, embedding corporate performance measures and monitoring to facilitate council oversight and the achievement of strategic targets.

- Installing appropriate resources to ensure effective contract management across the Council.
- Ensuring all contracts utilise and report on indicators that drive performance.
- Providing appropriate training and guidance for officers.

6. Supporting the council to meet its commercial and environmental objectives, by:

- Encouraging the exploration of new and innovative methods for providing services, goods and works.
- Ensuring that specifications and contracts are written with a commercial and environmental slant.
- Through effective contract management ensuring that value for money and outcomes are achieved and contract performance is high.

7. Seek to maximise Council procurement opportunities for local businesses, SMEs and VCSEs, by:

- Being plugged into and aware of the relevant networks and forging effective relationships with them.
- Facilitating early engagement events and having constructive dialogue with the sectors.
- Promoting the benefits of local supply and a thriving voluntary and community sector through procurement training and procurement guidance.
- Consider all opportunities to remove barriers to the participation of SMEs, and third sector suppliers on procured contracts. Embedding the use of electronic tendering across the council.

Continuous Improvement

The Council is committed to continuously reviewing and improving practices and procedures throughout the course of this strategy. We will seek to achieve best practice for procurement through networking and benchmarking. We will attempt to always be responsive and aim to simplify the complexities of public sector procurement for those that matter most – the end customer, service users and our suppliers.

A series of key measures and targets (KPIs) are being identified to measure the key themes of the strategy.

1. **Social Value inclusion for contracts valued at £50,000 excl VAT and above** - The contractor works effectively with the employer to meet their Social Value commitments and Carbon reduction plan
2. **Cost of delivery** - The contractor works effectively with the employer to maintain costs at an acceptable level.

3. **SME supplier engagement** – The Council engages with and supports SMEs for Council contracts.

These KPIs will be monitored and reviewed on a bi-annual basis in order to ensure that performance against targets are delivered. The Procurement Champions and SLT will have delegated authority to amend the KPIs to reflect any changes in the sector or the council's corporate objectives. A bi-annual report will be presented detailing progress against the action plan.

This Procurement Strategy has been developed based on the 'known' current climate and is achievable based on existing capacity.

Code of Procurement Practice

For further information on the minimum expectations regarding undertaking Procurement on behalf of the Council.