

West Berkshire Council Procurement Strategy 2023 – 2027



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1. Introduction

Purpose of the strategy

This strategy has been created to provide the framework and set out the way in which West Berkshire Council undertakes procurement. In addition, it will provide an overview of our governance processes and a roadmap for the way our organisation intends to conduct its procurement activities.

The strategy is designed to support the delivery of the Council's strategy through the Council's procurement processes.

The Council Strategy sets out its five Priorities; all procurement activity should support the delivery of the Council's priority areas and outcomes:

- Services we are proud of
- A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all
- Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
- A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire
- Thriving communities with a strong local voice

The Procurement Strategy focuses on meeting the needs of residents, service users and employees and delivering value for money.

2. Commissioning and procurement

Commissioning

Commissioning is defined by the Local Government Association as “the strategic activity of identifying need, allocating resources and procuring a provider to best meet that need, within available means “

It can also be described as the process of assessing, planning and prioritising needs and of developing policy directions, service models and market to meet those needs in the most appropriate and cost effective way to achieve the best outcomes.

The council has eight key areas relating to commissioning:

- Procurement
- Category Management
- Agency
- Care Quality
- Care placement
- Berkshire Community Equipment Service
- Stationery supplies
- Social Value Policy

3. Procurement

Procurement can be defined as “the formal, official process of purchasing and obtaining materials, supplies, services or equipment”. The role of the procurement department is to procure products or services at the right place, for the right price, to the right quality and quantity and delivered at the right time.

Best Value

Under the Local Government Act 1999 Section 3, authorities are under a general Duty of Best Value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”

Under the Duty of Best Value, authorities should consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value, when reviewing service provision.

Ensure governance

Processes are in place to ensure the Council is compliant with and follows due process when procuring goods, services or works. This includes meeting national regulations as well as local governance processes.

National context

Procuring contracts is currently governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 which came into force on 26th February 2015 and apply to all new procurement processes which commenced after this time.

These regulations set out the processes, rules and guidelines which contracting authorities must follow to ensure compliance at various thresholds. The thresholds are updated every two years and the Council adjusts its processes accordingly.

Local context

The West Berkshire Council Constitution Part 8 Contract Rules apply to purchases by or on behalf of the Council of works, supplies and services and applies to all contracts.

This document sets out the minimum requirements relating to purchasing and governance processes at various specified thresholds. In addition, it sets out the requirements for advertising contract opportunities and contract award notices.

Governance

All contractual spend is reported through governance boards, in line with the Council's Constitution.

The first gateway is Procurement Board, where procurement strategies are considered by a multi-disciplinary group of officers.

This group considers all aspects of contractual spend within the Council, including capital and revenue above £100,000 and exception levels above £50,000.

All projects are considered for legal risks, commercial application and probity in line with the Council's Constitution.

The second gateway (proceeding procurement process and prior to award) ensures the Board is appraised of how the procurement strategy has delivered.

In addition, the Council meets its transparency obligations as set out by the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 by publishing details of all contracts awarded in excess of £5,000 on a quarterly basis on its website.

Category management

Category Management is defined by CIPS as "a strategic approach to procurement. It's where organisations segment their spend into areas which contain similar or related products. It allows more focus on categories that have opportunities for consolidation and efficiencies."

Category management allows procurement and supply professionals to create opportunities that will drive value for the organisation, such as reduced prices and costs, supply chain risks and timescales. And improved service to customers, quality, brand, reputation through sustainable supply chains and compliance to regulation.

In 2017 the Council agreed an ambition to move forward and implement a full category management approach. Good progress has been made in some of the high spending corporate areas but there is more to do. The structure for this is still evolving and being refined.

Work continues to embed the principles of category management, with dedicated procurement officers working closely with service areas to identify spend, pipelines and opportunities for aggregation and collaboration.

Social Value

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 places a duty on all local authorities to consider how and what is being procured might improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing and biodiversity of the local area at the pre-procurement stage of public services contracts. The Council has created a Social Value policy asking that Social Value be demonstrated in all of its procurements, where relevant and proportional.

The purpose of the Social Value policy is to promote improvement in the following:

- Creating new business, new jobs and new skills
- Tackling climate change and reducing waste
- Improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience

Full details of the policy can be found at:

[Social Value Policy - West Berkshire Council](#)



4. Skills, capability and capacity of staff

The Council ensures that staff involved in Commissioning and Procurement are suitably qualified for the projects that they are involved in.

Many members of the Procurement team are either fully qualified as Members of the Chartered Institutes of Purchasing and Supplies (MCIPS) or being supported in working towards this qualification. Alternative qualifications within the team include post graduate courses in procurement and

Commercial Procurement and Supply Apprenticeship.

In addition, the team have regular knowledge sharing sessions covering new guidance from Crown Commercial Services, relevant case law and targeted training sessions.

Skills, capability and capacity are monitored through regular one to one sessions, appraisals and training needs assessments.

5. Priorities, actions, implementation

The Commissioning and Procurement team will continue to work with service areas to develop category plans and pipelines to cover as much of the potential future procurement requirements as possible.

Work will be carried out to monitor spend to ensure compliance with internal governance and procurement regulations.



6. More information and contact details

Directorates

The Council is divided into three directorates: People, Place and Resources. Each directorate is responsible for identifying the needs of its customers and working with the Commissioning and Procurement department to achieve the required outcomes within its budgetary constraints.

Commissioning and Procurement can be contacted via telephone on 01635 551111 or email on procurement@westberks.gov.uk

Further information is available at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/procurement>

Suppliers wishing to engage with the Council should register their organisation directly by visiting [West Berkshire Electronic Tendering Site](#). It is quick and easy to register and will enable suppliers to be linked to upcoming opportunities and invitations to tender. Opportunities may also be advertised via Contracts Finder and Find a Tender where appropriate.

Appendices

A. How we monitor performance

The Council has a number of Key Performance Indicators to ensure that procurements are being carried out in accordance with the governance and regulatory requirements set out.

These metrics are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis in accordance with the Council's quarterly performance reporting of key strategic measures.

B. Contract Management

As previously set out, the Council is implementing a category management approach, however currently contract management is usually devolved to the service area, with a small number of exceptions.

The Council recognises that it is possible to specify and award a good contract but, without contract management to monitor performance and ensure issues are resolved, the outcomes are unlikely to meet the Council's requirements to achieve best value across all third party spend.

Therefore the Procurement department is working towards creating defined processes and procedures in order to provide a framework for contract managers to operate within to ensure consistency across the council. Once these standards are in place, responsibility for contract management will remain within the service areas.

All staff have free access to and are encouraged to undertake the Government Commercial College's (GCC) Contract Management Foundation and Beyond Foundation training courses.

The Council has secured funding of £6,000 per person for 10 staff in key areas within the council who have contract management responsibilities to attend the GCC Contract Management Practitioner Programme which will build on the learning of the Foundation and Beyond Foundation courses and will support the relevant service areas in developing contract management practices.

Case Study May 2023

Transforming Transport and Passenger Services and Driving Social Value

After numerous years in the planning, in May 2022 the Transport Services team at West Berkshire Council launched a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to manage all planned home to school transport and community transport routes over a 10-year period.

The council sought to engage transport operators and standardise route requirements across two lots:

- Lot 1 – small vehicles – up to 17 seats**
- Lot 2 – large vehicles – 17 seats or more**

The aim of the procurement process was to achieve a number of positive outcomes:

- Move from reactive to proactive tender management
- Seeking cost efficiencies for long-term route requirements
- Standardise procurement documentation and timelines
- Engage new and existing suppliers throughout the DPS lifetime
- Flexibility to meet supply and demand
- Improve transparency for contractual arrangements
- Consistent and reliability of service for end users
- Ensure social value was embedded into the process

As part of the initial application process all suppliers were asked to provide details regarding their intentions towards:

- Reduction of carbon footprint e.g. use of electric vehicles, alternative fuels, recycling, offsetting measures, reducing waste and pollution.
- Local opportunities e.g. creation of opportunities or other benefits

for local people e.g. job and apprenticeship opportunities, training, volunteering, supporting charities or other regional economic / environmental initiatives.

There was a change management exercise undertaken to engage with suppliers to ensure the process was proportionate as many operators in this field were sole traders or small operators who were not familiar with a detailed and structured application process.

Additional resources were made available within the Transport team to support this piece of work and ensure that the opportunity was accessible to all – providing support to those operators who needed assistance in completing the application process, and that all applications were reviewed swiftly to provide prompt decisions around acceptance or otherwise to the DPS.

Procurement colleagues were available to guide and advise suppliers in the use of the e-tendering platform – to ensure relevant information could be downloaded and applications uploaded to meet upcoming deadlines.

The DPS is set up to allow additional “rounds” of applicable which enables suppliers who are unsuccessful with their first application to make subsequent applications during the lifetime of the DPS if their circumstances change and ensures accessibility for new entrants to the market.

Following its initial launch, the DPS saw 27 suppliers admitted to the framework in June 2022 and this has now grown to:

- Lot 1 – 37 suppliers**
- Lot 2 – 16 suppliers**

Since its inception, the DPS has now managed procurement for over 60 routes (valued at £10.5M) and this continues to be reported on each quarter for transparency via Contracts Finder.

The DPS is already delivering tangible social

value benefits; a year after the launch, Principal Transport Officer Emma Jameson noted: “As a direct result of this project we are starting to have conversations with operators regarding zero carbon or e-vehicle-only tenders and capacity to respond to these in the future. There is certainly a lot more that will continue to be done, but building this awareness-generation has been a critical first step and puts us in a better place for developing targets for future reviews of the Council’s ULEV strategy in relation to client passenger transport contracts.

And on a personal level, it makes me feel quite proud to see how collectively our suppliers, are not just delivering the basic minimum requirements that we ask of them in our specifications, but they are genuinely providing real-time support to their staff, local communities and the environment alike.”

