

Appendix A – Procurement Strategy Actions Update 2026

It should be noted that within the following tables only the column titled ‘2026 update’ has been introduced and edited since the inception of the strategy. The numbering within said column correlates to the column containing proposed actions and the bold wording demonstrates continued or new action going into the second year of the strategy.

1. Theme: Economic growth

Overarching priority: Contracting authorities should drive economic growth and strengthen supply chains by giving SMEs and VCSEs a fair chance at public contracts, creating high quality jobs and championing innovation.

Priority	NPPS supporting statement	Opening Council statement	Council proposed action(s)	2026 update
Maximise procurement spend with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs).	Small businesses and social enterprises are more likely to generate diverse and thriving local economies, creating jobs and economic growth. Increasing procurement spend with these suppliers is a national priority to drive economic growth. This Government wants to maximise every opportunity for these suppliers by opening up competition in public contracts and removing the barriers to participation they face, as set out in section 12(4) of the Act.	The Council shall actively seek SME and VCSE engagement in our procurement processes, balancing several evaluation factors e.g. proximity, cost, environmental factors and social value. Whilst some services require local delivery, other areas e.g. building works could be provided by more distant operators, but with local delivery chains. Our ability and opportunities to work with VCSEs also needs further exploration	1. Continue to engage, track and improve the Council’s strategic working relationship with SMEs and the voluntary sector with an emphasis on local suppliers.	1. Supported by the new Procurement Regulations, the team has made positive change in this area, with a key emphasis on preliminary market engagement. The team and wider services now have much better communication with the market to support this happening and are using the events to their full potential. We will continue to emphasise this approach with a focus on SMEs and VCSEs. In October of 2026 our procurement system was updated which has supported a more streamlined means to

		and we must explore opportunities to build our relationship and opportunities to work with VCSEs as strategic partners for delivery.	2. Set evaluation criteria aimed at encouraging SMEs and the voluntary sector whilst not disadvantaging other sectors.	communicate with the market. At the same time the way we ask for documentation has become more consistent with other authorities, reducing barriers these suppliers face. 2. The team works with services on a project-by-project basis to ensure the right markets are being appraised and opportunity is generated where possible. This is being supported and will be fully fleshed out with the proposed introduction of supplier location restrictions, due to be presented to Cabinet in Q3 of 26/27.
Ensure their suppliers are committed to providing high quality jobs, safe and healthy working conditions, fair pay, opportunity and	Suppliers that benefit from taxpayers' money should be expected to deliver public contracts in a way that benefits the country, delivering growth and fairer outcomes for all. Good jobs and a high-skilled workforce will help to drive growth and productivity, so public contracts should consider fair working conditions, appropriate pay, progression	We need encourage and facilitate high quality employment, both academic and vocational skills based. We will develop SMART measures which have a strong focus and emphasis on social value, weighted to development of skills, retention of graduates in local employment and high-quality jobs.	1. Include the importance of sustainability in supply chains within our tenders and evaluate accordingly.	1. Sustainability is a key consideration in our tenders. It's important that as a public body we not only seek the most competitive quotes today but pave the way for their continuation. Sustainability links back to our market engagement, ensuring what we are asking for is cost effective and manageable. As we transition to more in depth whole life cost modelling, we

progression for workers.	and provision of skills opportunities throughout the commercial lifecycle.			can constructively challenge pricing and prevent financial pressures substantiating. Our approach to Social Value continues to support employment and training opportunities and continues to be adopted on every project. 2. All our tenders include Social Value and within that we ask bidders to detail what opportunities they will provide for the local community. We continue to explore how these stories are captured to support wider engagement and build from their success. We are working with other teams to explore how our tenders can be leveraged for wider benefit and are reflecting that within our Social Value model as and when appropriate.
Work collaboratively across policy, delivery and	Innovation is key to driving economic growth and raising productivity and is an important strand of the	We have already undertaken a step change towards output-based specifications and started to look	2. Continue developing SMART measures (such as provide meaningful further education opportunities and paying the national living wage) that support the attainment and sustainability of local employment. 1. Consistently undertake preliminary market	1. Our approach to PME has been met positively. We facilitate better buyer and supplier discussions to ultimately

commercial functions to develop a 'pro-innovation mindset', defining challenges to solve rather than solutions to buy, and engaging early with the market to consider innovative products and services.	Government's Industrial Strategy. Procuring innovative solutions can both improve public sector performance and provide revenue for innovative UK companies by supporting the pull-through and adoption of new technologies. Early market engagement is critical in supporting the development of innovative solutions and allows contracting authorities to understand the maturity of potential solutions, as well as identifying risks and challenges.	holistically at our procurement activity to harness greater economies of scale. We need to embrace the new regulations and preliminary market engagement to broaden our awareness and ask. For example, are there more innovative ways in delivering our primary outputs that we may also gain secondary and tertiary outputs. Risk management is key in this area, so a supportive governance process reflective of proposals and perceived benefits is important	engagement (PME) on all appropriate projects with an emphasis on engaging SMEs and the voluntary sector. 2. Support the organisation's approach to risk management and ensure it's being consistently applied to all contracts.	support the creation of better specifications and contracts. Whilst mentioned often within this document, it must not be understated the positive impact this has had on our tenders. We will track SME engagement to bolster engagement and continue to reflect on and introduce best practice as it becomes known. 2. When we consider risk management, our approach is collaborative and transparent. We are collating and discussing our risk registers with the market to seek practical solutions. As we transition through LGR, we expect these conversations to become more complex, so we will continue to constructively work with the market to support this wider process. As an organisation our approach to procurement related risk is transparent and well received by the market.
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2. Theme - Delivering social and economic value

Overarching priority: Contracting authorities should deliver social and economic value that supports the Government's missions including by working in partnership across organisational boundaries.

Priority	NPPS supporting statement	Opening Council statement	Council proposed action(s)	2026 update
Secure social and economic value which supports delivery of the national missions taking into account priorities in local and regional economic growth plans (where available) and working in partnership with other contracting authorities, the private sector and civil society in the exercise of their procurement	In carrying out a procurement covered by the Act, a contracting authority must have regard to the importance of maximising public benefit. Applying social and economic value requirements in procurement can have a significantly positive impact by broadening the public benefits that are delivered through the life of the contract. By focusing on these outcomes throughout the commercial lifecycle and by co-designing requirements with customers, front line workers and communities, contracting authorities can achieve greater social and economic value benefits for the people and places that most need them, including creating opportunities in areas of deprivation.	Social value measures are included in all tenders. We will better define Social Value by moving away from a one size fits all approach to a more nuanced directorate-based approach. All relevant officers must now complete the government commercial college's contract management training, leading to increased accountability through the supply chain. Social Value measures will be collaboratively identified with directorates/ services, reflecting that social value deliverables for C&A will be slightly different to regeneration projects.	1. Develop directorate specific social value outcomes that are measured in all tenders.	1. Directorate specific social value outcomes have not been developed. We've reached an informal impasse where feedback to date has centred on the Social Value policy already covering what teams would be looking for. Whilst not progressed, by the time anything could be introduced at this juncture, teams would otherwise be focused on LGR preparations and there would be insufficient time for any meaningful records to be made. As this stage, it is recommended that this action is deferred to the new authority, should they wish to develop this whilst noting that the current model is continuously delivering strong outcomes for the local community.

functions. This includes the mission aims and outcomes outlined at the beginning of the Statement.			2. Champion the attainment of contract management certification and proper application within all corporate contracts.	2. The number of colleagues achieving contract management certification continues to grow and as a result our conversations and approach to preparing to contract management is improving. What we see and what we will continue to develop are SMART KPIs, ensuring our needs are fully being met and any gaps in delivery can promptly be addressed. This approach to contract management will prove invaluable as we support LGR and has already started to support some of the prep work.
Ensure their suppliers are actively working to: tackle bribery, corruption, fraud, modern slavery and human rights violations, environmental impact (including	The Government expects the highest standards of integrity, ethical conduct and environmental sustainability in business practices from suppliers delivering public contracts. This includes the procurement of food; the Government wants to increase the proportion of food purchased across the public sector that is certified to higher environmental	Prior to the award of any contract officers will conduct due diligence, effectively clarifying any anomalies with prospective suppliers that may mean they are unsuitable to contract with. To ensure we maintain the highest levels of diligence, on all tenders we use the government's standard selection questionnaire. This ensures	1. Implement a system that mandates periodic checking of supplier eligibility post award for better decision making. Suppliers failing these subsequent checks will have	1. Suppliers to the public sector must not appear on the central debarment list. This system is a central repository for all suppliers to register their company and demonstrate their practices - on an annual basis this system is checked for continued eligibility. Our contracts are tiered, and those rated highest are periodically checked. Whilst

reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising waste in their operations); comply with their tax, employment law and other legal obligations, and stamp out late payment of invoices in their supply chains.	standards and which high-quality producers, including local suppliers, are well placed to meet.	that all national requirements are addressed and local needs (such as insurance levels) and accreditations are consistently obtained and checked. However, to expand our reach we need to put the same or a similar level of scrutiny on their supply chain, not simply requesting the information, but working towards proportionate validation. We will increase periodic diligence to ensure compliance through the award period. The council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and thus we will require and scrutinise our prospective partners Carbon Reduction Plans (CRP) for those requiring one.	their contracts terminated. 2. Work with colleagues to implement a proportionate approach to checking Carbon Reduction Plans.	there is more work to be done, it comes with a resourcing pressure. As part of LGR is it proposed that this becomes a core part of the new procurement function and will be discussed with partners. 2. This was introduced as PPN008 and went live when the new Procurement Act went live in Feb 2025. As per the action, Medway had an ambition to deliver against this, but no progress has been made due to resourcing limitations. Medway was out of scope of this PPN (it was being introduced voluntarily), but we will explore how, as part of North Kent conversations, this can be bedded into the new authority. Carbon Reduction Plans aren't simply a yes/no, but a full account of a supplier's emissions, which requires internal validation to have any merit.
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3. Theme - Building commercial capability to deliver value for money and stronger outcomes

Overarching priority: Contracting authorities should ensure the right commercial capability and standards are in place to procure and manage contracts effectively and to collaborate with other contracting authorities to deliver best value.

Priority	NPPS supporting statement	Opening Council statement	Council proposed action(s)	2026 Update
Apply commercial best practice including the principles and policies in the Government's Playbook series (where appropriate) and make decisions based on value for money and service quality when assessing delivery models and outsourcing decisions.	Value for money will be achieved if: - public sector organisations normally acquire goods and services through fair and open competition; - efficient and effective policies and processes are in place to manage commercial delivery with a focus on delivering sustainable, long-term outcomes; and - the individuals undertaking the procurement and managing the contract have the right level of capability, skills and expertise to make informed decisions. Government guidance (e.g. the Commercial Playbook	The council's open and transparent approach to procurement has instilled confidence with the market resulting in a continuously expanding supplier base commonly bidding for contracts. Our contracts consider whole life benefit and future needs. Officers continually explore how to improve service with the resources they have. Our staff are well trained; we often explore and roll our government approved programmes to support the workforce in various aspects of procurement. For example, to support the effective roll out of the Procurement Regulations officers at all junctures of the procurement cycle were	1. Introduce the working principles of the sourcing playbook within Council procurement documentation.	1. Upon reflection many elements of the sourcing playbook already existed and as part of the 2026 tender documentation refresh a couple of more principles were bolstered, but generally the documents were in a strong position. As we transition into and through LGR, an emphasis of the playbooks is on partnerships across organisations. This will inevitably become a focal point and one well underway with the pan-Kent contracts register to support consistent decision making and opportunity identifying. We will continue to apply the principles of the sourcing playbook with a particular emphasis on getting the most out of LGR.

	series) emphasises the importance of partnership across organisations and sectors to effectively manage markets and strengthen supply chains. This collaborative approach, underpinned by principles like outcome-based delivery and early supplier engagement, helps assess market health, address weaknesses, and promote suitable, competitive environments that deliver value for money. The Commercial Playbook series also sets out key principles, best practice, and guidance on sourcing services and assets. The Playbooks on Sourcing, Construction, Digital Data and Technology, and Consultancy provide sector-specific guidance.	required to complete some form of training to assist their knowledge and prepare. More recently contract management training has been mandated for new projects to ensure contract management, and long-term benefits are embedded upfront. At the heart of our tenders sits the aspiration for delivering value for money as well as wider council objectives. The Government's sourcing playbook forms a larger part of what we do and we plan to make better use of this going forwards, notably the playbook on sourcing initially and wider ones when the foundation is set.	2. Create and champion a training programme for officers to undertake the sourcing playbook training courses, hosted by the government's commercial function.	2. What the team reflected on was not so much mandating other officers attend such courses, but more so how these principles could be entwined in already existing corporate training programmes (my core responsibilities, introduction to procurement). We will continue to explore how these principles are known to all relevant officers and what additional training could benefit delivering sustainability using the cohort of officers who have already expressed an interest and whom we are already working with.
Benchmark their organisational capability and workforce capacity to ensure they have the appropriate	To support commercial capability, the Government has provided a programme of free training to procurement teams on the new flexibilities in the Act as well as training on contract management skills. Capability in contracting authorities should	The training provided by the Government has thus far had positive impact within the organisation and it's noted there are many further facets that can be explored. The consideration here is merging the roles and responsibilities and	1. Continue to actively engage in the Central Buying Consortium sessions to share and learn from other	1. The Central Buying Consortium continues to act as a community of practice and is a constructive gateway to discuss with likeminded colleagues the ways in which we can improve our approach.

procurement and contract management skills and capacity necessary to deliver value for money.	go beyond legal compliance with the Act, to also include how the new flexibilities can be used to deliver greater efficiency, better commercial outcomes, and mission delivery. New ways of working may be needed across contracting authorities to understand how procurement can contribute to local outcomes and priorities, adopting a whole organisation approach so that policy and strategy engage earlier with commercial teams. There are also a number of professional standards against which contracting authorities can choose to benchmark their commercial capability including the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework produced by the Government Commercial Function with NHS England, and the National Procurement Strategy Toolkit produced by the Local Government Association. This includes mitigating supply chain and national security risks by	therefore skillset of officer under the previous regulations against what is expected under the Procurement Regulations 2024. In particular we need to remain mindful that commercial skills such as negotiation and dialogue were historically stemmed through a lack of use, but the new regulations permit their use more widely. This creates an inevitable knowledge and confidence gap between regulation which officers need further practical application of. A key theme within the team is how contract management is developed into a proactive activity rather than reactive, although it's accepted that when things go wrong the activities remain reactive. Proactive contract management therefore looks at the future and considers how we can prepare ourselves or pre-emptively mitigate risk and/or have controls in place if things do	procurement functions. a. Currently partaking in contract management, LGR, procurement leadership, risk management. 2. Build the new procurement system around lessons learnt and the future of the procurement function with enhanced functionality and decision-making tools.	As part of LGR preparations, procurement colleagues from all Kent authorities have been working together to support sustainable solutions for the new authorities. In doing so capability and resourcing pressure have been identified and discussions regarding how to bridge those. We will continue to work closely with these colleagues and develop and attend training sessions where appropriate. 2. The new procurement system went live in October 2025. The system brings with it more collaborative functionality, supporting all involved colleagues with their procurement activities. Since inception we've fostered a good working relationship with the supplier and continue to test new ways of working in the system. We will continue to work closely with the site hosts to ensure the system meets our evolving needs.
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	ensuring appropriate controls are in place such as the Cyber Essentials standard for cyber security, and by following the Government Security Function's guidance on Tackling Security Risk in Government Supply Chains.	go wrong. The team uses a common system with all procurement functions in Kent, which is to change supplier in October 2025, the team is approaching this system anew, considering what gripes the organisation has with the current and how we can automate functions where possible to ensure the organisation always has the right information at its disposal. Once this system goes live and the standardised data is available, we can then explore how we utilise the continuous improvement framework as a potential cornerstone of governance for future decision making and scrutiny to enable officers and members alike a comparative picture of the national landscape rather than our services in isolation.		
Use collaborative procurement agreements,	Contracting authorities can often ensure value for money by using collaborative procurement arrangements	When a need arises, we adopt an options hierarchy, operationally this means we explore solutions which	1. Regularly review our options hierarchy and	1. The options hierarchy continues to work well and has not required any further amendments.

where appropriate for the requirement and the market, to ensure value for money (as long as those agreements are operating in accordance with relevant procurement legislation and good practice).	established by public sector centralised procurement authorities such as the Crown Commercial Service. These agreements aggregate spend for common goods and services and enable selected suppliers to be contracted quickly on agreed terms and with competitive maximum pricing. However, there are currently too many similar agreements across the public sector, leading to unnecessary transactional costs for suppliers and confusion for contracting authorities. In addition, some agreements are operated by private companies not in accordance with procurement legislation. Contracting authorities should ensure any collaborative arrangements they use are transparent about the provider's ownership and the fees they charge and that this represents good value for money when compared to other agreements.	already exist to meet our need prior to approaching the open market. What this allows us to do is focus time and resources on the outcome rather than the procurement activity itself. It should be noted however that although frameworks exist, they may not be appropriate and therefore time and resource go into appraising pre-existing solutions, most notably with most benefit to recurring needs, such as IT systems or outdoor play equipment. By using frameworks that exist we don't only cut our own procurement cost, but also that of our supplier base as they are pre-vetted. For certain requirements i.e. statutory requirements, a preferred option may also be establishing our own requirement, this balances the trade-off between outsourcing, risk, and supplier relationship management to create a	refine where necessary. 2. Continue analysing our spend data to firstly irradiate spot purchasing where possible and then to implement frameworks, where practical, to support organisational need.	What the team will explore in the next 12 months is the public interest test and insourcing strategy in line with the national policy, with a recommendation supporting how the organisation approaches procurement activity. 2. The team hasn't had a noticeable uptake in framework establishment over the past 12 months but has adopted better use of those available to use. As we transition through LGR, we are keen to work with pan-Kent colleagues and explore frameworks that can suit all needs.
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