

**Liverpool**  
City Council

# **Sustainable Procurement Strategy 2026 - 2029**

April 2026



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# Foreword



As the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and Transformation, I am pleased to introduce our Sustainable Procurement Strategy. This strategy represents our dedication to responsible and ethical procurement practices. As we navigate the challenges of the modern world, it is imperative that we adopt sustainable solutions that benefit both our community and the environment. I invite you to explore this document and join us in our journey towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

**Councillor Ruth Bennett**  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance,  
Resources and Transformation



## 2. Executive Summary

Liverpool City Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy sets out a bold commitment to harnessing the power of procurement to create a fairer, cleaner, and more resilient city. With an annual spend exceeding £860 million, the Council is uniquely positioned to drive positive change through every pound invested.

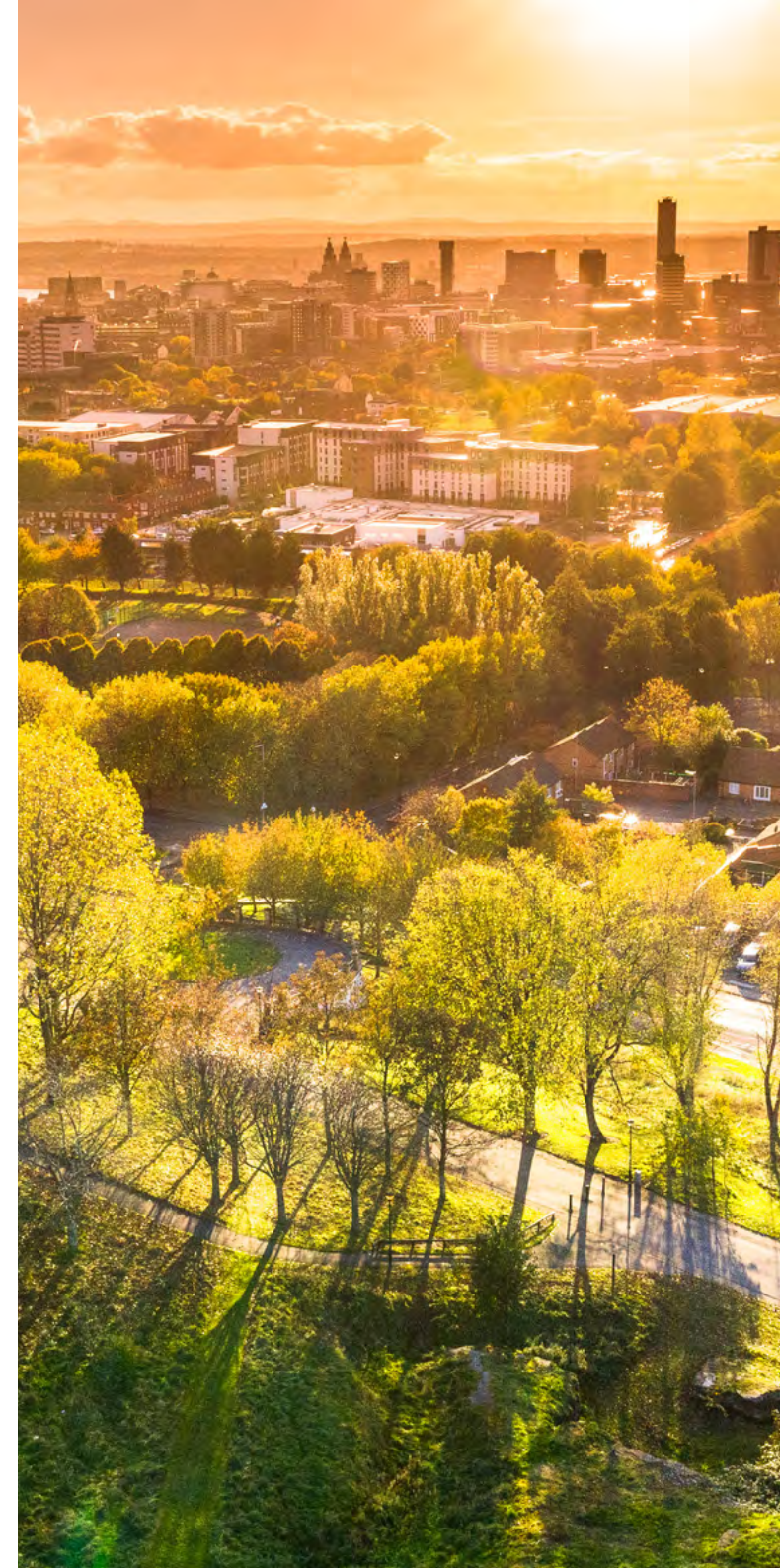
This strategy is designed to ensure that procurement becomes a catalyst for inclusive economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social value across Liverpool. It underpins the delivery of the Council Plan's six pillars, helping to realise a future where high-quality public services are provided efficiently, ethically, and inclusively for all our communities.

Our vision is clear: to deliver procurement that not only achieves value for money but also leaves a lasting legacy; socially, economically, and environmentally. By embedding best practice and working closely with local SMEs, voluntary and community sector organisations, and diverse suppliers, we will champion innovation, strengthen contract management, and enhance commercial capability across all Directorates and services.

Guided by the Procurement Act 2023, the National Procurement Policy Statement (2025), and our own local priorities, this strategy will maximise the Council's impact by:

- Delivering tangible social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits for Liverpool's residents and businesses
- Supporting smaller enterprises and under-represented suppliers to thrive
- Embedding ethical, inclusive, and accessible procurement practices for all
- Driving innovation and improving service outcomes
- Strengthening contract management and commercial skills
- Ensuring best value and long-term financial sustainability

Through this strategy, the Council is embracing procurement as a strategic lever for transformation, ensuring that every procurement decision contributes to building a stronger, fairer, and greener city for generations to come.



## 3. Context

### 3.1 Cost pressures

The council is facing significant and growing financial pressures, as outlined in its Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Key challenges include:

- **Rising Demand:** Increasing need for adult and children's social care, services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and support for a growing number of homeless individuals and families.
- **Escalating Costs:** Unit costs for these services are rising faster than inflation.
- **Operational Pressures:** Inflation-driven increases in supplier costs and nationally agreed staff pay settlements, which must be funded locally.
- **Investment Needs:** Ongoing funding required to improve services for residents and businesses.

Given these financial constraints, a robust and forward-looking procurement strategy is essential, and can significantly support financial sustainability for the council, by aligning purchasing decisions

with long-term economic, social, and environmental goals. It will drive value for money, leverage economies of scale, and ensure contracts deliver wider benefits such as social value. Strategic supplier management, demand control, and commercial innovation are also critical tools in maintaining service quality while managing rising costs.

By taking a total cost of ownership approach and mitigating risks relating to resource volatility, regulatory compliance, and supplier instability, long-term budgets can be stabilised and supply chain resilience enhanced. Furthermore, sustainable procurement can also stimulate the local economy by encouraging local sourcing and SME participation, which further strengthens economic resilience.

This procurement strategy will therefore be embedded as a key enabler of the Council's financial sustainability and transformation agenda.

### 3.2 Local Plans

The Sustainable Procurement Strategy is underpinned by the Council Plan and the Liverpool 2040 Plan, both of which share a vision of creating a fairer, cleaner, and stronger city.

#### 3.2.1 The Council Plan

The Council Plan is structured around six strategic pillars and three cross-cutting principles - climate action and environment, inclusion and equalities, innovation and transformation, with procurement recognised as a key strategic enabler which will drive value, foster innovation, and enhance public trust in support of these goals.

Procurement is not just about acquiring goods and services, it can shape behaviour, incentivise outcomes, enable partnerships, and drive innovation. Appendix 1 demonstrates how this strategy can specifically help contribute to each pillar of the Council Plan.

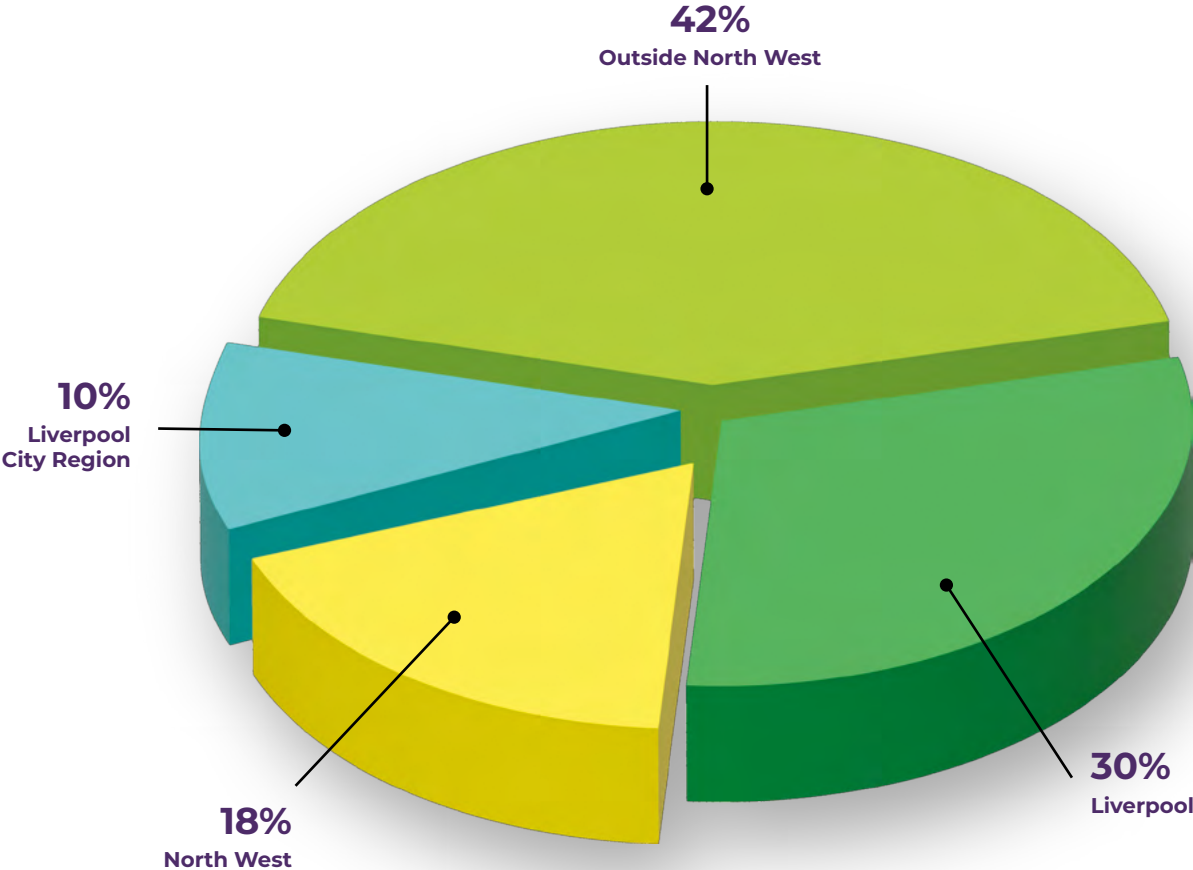
### 3.3 Supplier Landscape and Market Trends

As part of ongoing due diligence, we will continue to assess the supplier landscape which will include more in-depth examination and evaluation of the available suppliers to understand their capabilities, market position and how they compare to one another.

This will support the identification of market entrants, trends and pricing, and it will also support the assessment of the size of the supply market, including the number of suppliers and their geographical spread.

During the sourcing process, procurement professionals will also look to perform the appropriate levels of due diligence on the markets we wish to influence. This will include spend data, market trends and latest innovations. The size of the opportunity will be assessed to ensure maximum value in our resultant contracts.

Geographical representation of suppliers (2024/25)



### 3.4 Regulatory Environment

The strategy is fully aligned with the newly launched Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement (2025). Also, the Provider Select Regime (PRS).

#### 3.4.1 The Procurement Act 2023

This marked a major reform of UK public procurement, streamlining four separate regimes into a single, flexible framework. Effective from February 2025, the Act introduces the Competitive Flexible Procedure, replacing rigid EU-based processes and allowing contracting authorities greater freedom in designing tenders. It enhances transparency through a central digital platform and expanded publication requirements, including pipeline and performance notices. Contracts over £5 million must include KPIs, with at least one linked to social value where applicable.

The Act shifts contract awards from Most Economically Advantageous Tender to Most Advantageous Tender, enabling broader consideration of community benefits,

sustainability, and national priorities. It also strengthens supplier performance management through expanded exclusion grounds and a new debarment list and introduces mandatory 30-day payment terms to support SMEs and subcontractors.

Overall, the Act aims to deliver better public value, promote innovation, and ensure procurement contributes meaningfully to social, economic, and environmental outcomes (See Appendix 2 for further detail)

#### 3.4.2 The National Procurement Policy Statement

The NPPS outlines the UK Government's strategic priorities for public procurement, aiming to maximise public value, drive economic growth, and embed social and environmental outcomes. Closely aligned with the Procurement Act 2023, it requires contracting authorities to "have regard" to its principles when carrying out procurement.

#### Key priorities include:

Authorities must also ensure suppliers uphold ethical standards, including tackling modern slavery, reducing environmental impact, and ensuring prompt payment across supply chains. (See Appendix 3 for further detail)

- **Driving economic growth:** Supporting SMEs and VCSEs through fair access to contracts, promoting high-quality jobs, and encouraging innovation.
- **Delivering social and economic value:** Embedding social value throughout the procurement lifecycle, aligned with national missions and local growth plans.
- **Building commercial capability:** Encouraging early market engagement, collaboration, and a pro-innovation mindset.

### 3.4.3 Provider Selection Regime

The Provider Selection Regime (PSR) is a new set of rules governing how healthcare and public health services in England are procured by organisations termed “relevant authorities” (Authorities) which includes local authorities. They will only apply to healthcare and public health services and not the procurement of goods or non-health care services (which includes social care services) unless they form part of a mixed procurement where the higher value of expenditure is on the health care service element.

#### Local and national drivers



## 4. Strategic Vision and Objectives

### 4.1 Vision

The council is committed to delivering efficient, effective, ethical, and inclusive procurement that delivers high-quality public services, drives value for money, and creates lasting social, economic, and environmental benefits for our communities. Through collaboration with residents, colleagues, suppliers, and partners, we will lead with a progressive approach to commissioning, procurement, and contract management.

### 4.2 Scope

This strategy applies to all procurement activities across the council, encompassing all Directorates, services and all procurement activity related to Goods and Services, Works and Commissioning.

### 4.3 Purpose

This strategy serves as a foundational document, guiding all procurement activities undertaken by the council. It aims to provide a clear framework for decision making, ensure compliance with relevant legislation and best practice whilst driving continuous improvement in how we commission and purchase goods, services, and works. It will be a driver for compliance, transparency of council processes and procedures, and will also provide a platform to support the Council's objectives around sustainable solutions, social value, Net Zero, equality and economic growth.



## 5. Target Operating Model

An organisation-wide operating model for commissioning and procurement will ensure a cohesive and efficient approach across all services. This model will emphasise the integration of procurement strategies and commissioning processes to achieve optimal outcomes for the entire council. By adopting a unified approach, we can then leverage economies of scale, enhance supplier relationships, and ensure consistency in service delivery.

Key components of this model include:

- **Centralised Procurement Function:** Significant investment to increase capability and capacity within the Procurement Service was approved to meet the council's current levels of demand. This included: A new, Policy Performance and Compliance Team, a dedicated Social Value Manager and a strengthened Business Partnering Function.
- **Business Partner Model:** A business partner approach is now in place with Directorates and service areas as part of the new Target Operating Model (TOM) for procurement. This is supporting enhanced relationships together with a deeper understanding of Directorate strategies and objectives and where procurement activity fits into those plans.
- **Integrated Commissioning Processes:** Commitment to aligning commissioning processes across all services to ensure a standardised approach. This includes developing common frameworks, tools, and methodologies to support effective commissioning.
- **Strategic Supplier Partnerships:** Building and maintaining strategic partnerships with key suppliers to ensure the delivery of high-quality services. This will involve regular performance reviews, collaborative planning, and joint problem-solving initiatives.
- **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the performance of procurement and commissioning activities. This will help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the organisational objectives are being met.
- **Capacity Building and Training:** Investing in the development of staff capabilities through targeted training programs. This will ensure that all officers have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to the commissioning and procurement processes.

# 6. Strategic Pillars

pillars, all of which will be underpinned by the council's Contract Management Framework and refreshed Social Value Policy (2026) to drive success.

Adopting and embracing the principles and practices outlined in this strategy will deliver benefits such as better procurement outcomes, enhanced service delivery, reduced costs, improved supplier relationships, greater social value by delivering stronger procurement outcomes, reduced environmental impact, increased local economic activity, and a strengthened reputation for responsible and impactful public spending.



## Sustainable Procurement Strategy Pillars

Fairness & Equality	Environment	Society, Community & Economic	Compliance & Improved Service	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real living wage</li> <li>• Ethical employment practices</li> <li>• Equality, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• Tackling modern slavery</li> <li>• Increasing supplier diversity</li> <li>• Commissioning services that are accessible and inclusive</li> <li>• Reducing inequalities in our services and supply chains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of council operations 2030 net zero target</li> <li>• Reducing air pollution</li> <li>• Encourage circular economy solutions such as reuse, recycling, and waste reduction.</li> <li>• Promote use of green technologies that reduce environmental harm.</li> <li>• Encouraging resource efficient practices.</li> <li>• Protecting natural habitats and biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise both inherent and added social value throughout the entire commissioning cycle.</li> <li>• Enhancing the resilience and capacity of local suppliers, SMEs and VCSEs to improve access to contracts and promote inclusivity.</li> <li>• Encouraging local suppliers to participate</li> <li>• Building meaningful partnerships to deliver greater value</li> <li>• Tackling health inequalities</li> <li>• Promoting social innovation</li> <li>• Corporate Parenting</li> <li>• Driving inclusive economic growth</li> <li>• Increased engagement with key stakeholders, including service users, residents and diverse communities to meet their needs.</li> <li>• Leveraging funding and investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving Best Value</li> <li>• Ensuring Competition</li> <li>• Internal processes and skills</li> <li>• Contract management</li> <li>• Monitoring KPIs and outcomes (including social value and equality where applicable)</li> <li>• Data and reporting</li> <li>• Systems and technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative leadership with suppliers</li> <li>• Member-led</li> <li>• User/resident focus</li> </ul>

### Contract Management Framework

### Social Value Policy (Refreshed 2026)

## **6.1 Fairness and Equality**

The Council is committed to embedding fairness and equality at the heart of its procurement strategy and will leverage its purchasing power to drive social value, promote ethical business practices, and build a more equitable and inclusive society, while fulfilling its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **6.1.1 Fair Employment Practices**

As a Real Living Wage employer, the Council actively encourages its suppliers to adopt fair employment practices, ensuring that workers across its supply chains are paid fairly and treated with dignity. This commitment extends beyond wages to include safe working conditions, reasonable hours, and the protection of fundamental rights such as freedom from discrimination, child labour, and forced labour.

The Council also takes a proactive stance against modern slavery, in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It requires suppliers to report on their efforts to identify and eliminate modern slavery risks within their operations and supply chains. This

includes conducting audits, implementing robust sourcing processes, and educating staff and contract managers on how to identify and respond to potential risks. Safe and accessible reporting channels are established to protect vulnerable workers and uphold ethical standards.

### **6.1.2 Ethical Sourcing**

Ethical sourcing is a cornerstone of the Council's procurement activity. It seeks to work with partners who uphold high ethical standards, not only in how they treat their workforce but also in how they impact the environment and local communities. Suppliers are expected to operate sustainably, minimising carbon emissions, conserving resources, and managing waste responsibly, while also contributing positively to the communities they serve.

Transparency across the supply chain is essential, ensuring that the origins of materials and the conditions under which products are made are known and verifiable. Integrity is non-negotiable, with zero tolerance for bribery, corruption, or unethical business practices.

### **6.1.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Implementing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in local authority procurement is a legal requirement in the UK (under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010) and is crucial for maximising public value, improving service quality, and fostering local economic growth. EDI is integrated throughout the Council's commissioning and procurement processes, by considering it at every stage; from strategic planning and supplier selection to contract management, the Council will ensure that services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all residents. Procurement decisions are made with a clear focus on promoting equality and avoiding any breach of legislation. Suppliers are also expected to reflect the Council's EDI values and demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility.

Supplier diversity is another key priority for the Council, ensuring that all suppliers, regardless of background, have a fair opportunity to compete for contracts. This will involve removing barriers for smaller

businesses, improving the accessibility of tender information, and engaging early with the market. Special attention will also be given to supporting businesses owned or operated by individuals from underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities, women, disabled people,

LGBTQ+ individuals, veterans, and care-experienced people. The aim is to foster an inclusive environment where diverse suppliers feel valued and supported, enabling them to thrive within the Council's supply chain.

6.1.4 Challenges and Mitigation	
Challenge	Mitigation
Suppliers may not voluntarily adopt the Real Living Wage or fair employment standards	Include robust fair employment clauses in tender documents and contracts
The authority itself, may treat EDI as a tick-box exercise rather than a genuine commitment, leading to superficial policies with no impact.	Avoid binary questions and ask for statements in the tender responses that demonstrate how their EDI principles will be applied in practice for a specific contract.
Local authorities often lack the baseline data on the diversity of their existing supply chain or the local business community, making it hard to set targets or measure progress.	Increased spend analytics. Review all vendor and set up documentation. Standard mandatory fields in systems e.g. diversity classification.
Exclusion of SMEs and Diverse Suppliers Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and businesses owned by underrepresented groups	Simplification of requirements including specifications. Lotting structure in procurement activity including proportionate requirements. Streamlining documentation. Robust market engagement. Procurement pipelines and procurement planning.
Workforce EDI in the Supply Chain, and the difficulty in effectively monitoring and enforcing the contractor's internal EDI policies (e.g., in recruitment, equal pay, or training) throughout the life of a contract.	Contractual and pre-qualification to include robust steps. Clearly stating the contractors' responsibilities. KPI's and robust contract management. Relevant training within the organisation.

## 6.2 Environment

The strategy is a powerful lever in supporting the transition to net zero. With the UK's legally binding commitment to achieve net zero by 2050, public sector organisations like ours have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead by example. Procurement decisions are no longer just about cost and quality; they are also about shaping a more sustainable future.

By embedding environmental considerations throughout the procurement lifecycle, we will influence markets, encourage innovation, and promote low-carbon solutions. This begins at the earliest stages of strategic planning, where net zero should be treated as a “golden thread” running through project design, specification, and delivery. Early engagement with the market will allow us to signal our demand for greener alternatives, helping suppliers align their offerings with our sustainability goals.

When designing specifications, we will prioritise sustainable outcomes; whether

that's through the use of energy-efficient technologies, low-carbon materials, or renewable energy sources. We will also adopt whole life costing approaches, ensuring that procurement decisions reflect the full environmental and economic impact over the lifespan of a product or service.

Supplier selection will be guided by clear evaluation criteria that give meaningful weight to environmental performance. For larger contracts, suppliers will be required to submit Carbon Reduction Plans, providing transparency on their emissions and their strategies for reducing them. We will also seek to build collaborative relationships with suppliers, offering guidance and support to help them meet our sustainability expectations.

Once contracts are in place, we will monitor performance closely. Environmental commitments will be embedded in contractual clauses, with regular reporting requirements and mechanisms to track progress, and where appropriate, we will include incentives or penalties to ensure accountability.

Ultimately, our procurement strategy is not just about compliance, it's about best value and leadership. By integrating net zero and sustainability considerations into every stage of the procurement process, LCC can help shape a greener economy and deliver lasting environmental benefits for our communities.

### 6.2.1 Challenges and Mitigation

While the integration of net zero objectives into procurement presents a significant opportunity to drive environmental progress, it also brings several practical challenges that must be carefully managed.

Despite these challenges, the opportunity is clear; Procurement is a powerful tool for accelerating the transition to a net-zero economy, and by embedding sustainability at every stage of the process, the Council can not only meet its environmental obligations but also influence market behaviours and drive innovation across the supply chain.

## 6.2.1 Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge	Mitigation
Greener products and services can be more expensive initially, particularly when adopting new technologies or materials.	Costs can often be offset through whole life costing, which accounts for long-term savings in energy efficiency, maintenance, and disposal.
Complexity of aligning procurement practices across diverse public bodies and ensuring consistency in approach and interpretation of environmental requirements can be difficult.	Clear guidance, shared frameworks, and collaborative working across departments to build capability and consistency.
Supplier readiness, especially for smaller businesses that may lack the resources or expertise to develop Carbon Reduction Plans or implement sustainable practices	Offer support through supplier engagement, training, and phased requirements that allow time for adaptation.
Measuring the impact of sustainable procurement, particularly carbon savings, can be technically complex.	Developing robust reporting mechanisms and using standardised metrics will be essential to track progress and demonstrate value.

### **6.3 Society, Community & Economic**

This strategy will transform procurement into a tool for tackling inequality, supporting disadvantaged communities, and achieving both the Council Plan and Liverpool 2040 Vision, making procurement not just a commercial activity, but a driver of lasting societal impact across the city. For example, a Corporate Parenting approach will be applied to purchasing decisions, taking a collective responsibility to ensuring the well-being and development of care experienced young people or children in the council's care.

By embedding social value throughout the entire commissioning cycle, from planning and design to procurement, contract award, and performance management, the Council will ensure that every pound spent contributes to inclusive growth, community wellbeing, and economic resilience.

Social value has been defined in two ways:

- Inherent value, built into service specifications based on local needs and stakeholder engagement.
- Added value, offered by suppliers through initiatives like local employment, community investment, and environmental improvements.

Underpinning the Sustainable Procurement Strategy will be a refreshed Social Value Policy due to be launched in 2026, which will ensure contracts over £25,000 will include a dedicated social value weighting (10–20%), where relevant and proportionate, with tailored Liverpool-specific measures aligned to strategic pillars. To ensure its success, internal stakeholders and suppliers will be supported through clear guidance, engagement forums, and training to help them deliver meaningful outcomes.

As part of the consultation phase for this strategy, a webinar with local businesses was hosted so that we could demonstrate how this strategy aims to deliver quality and value for money solutions, as well as

gaining valuable feedback from them on the strategic pillars and how we can improve processes to engage more local businesses in the future. Some further sessions were also held jointly with local partners including the Federation of Small Businesses, Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and the Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services, to engage with an audience of experienced organisations and feed into discussions about our new Social Value Procurement Policy.

### 6.3.1 Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge	Mitigation
<p>Inadequate ownership and understanding of Social Value</p>	<p>Develop comprehensive training programs that include real-life case studies and interactive workshops to ensure a deeper understanding of Social Value among stakeholders.</p> <p>Assign specific roles and responsibilities related to Social Value to key personnel within each directorate to ensure accountability and ownership.</p>
<p>Directorates don't give Social Value the consideration it needs in procurement requirements</p>	<p>Continue to educate and raise awareness of the importance of appropriate social value consideration in procurements.</p> <p>Use performance metrics to highlight areas of good and poor social value practice.</p> <p>It should be accepted that Social Value can be driven through wider council activity not just commissioning and procurement</p>
<p>Poor planning often hinders the inclusion of social value in procurement activity</p>	<p>Creation of robust procurement pipelines that will support better consideration and enhanced pre-market engagement.</p>
<p>Poor contract management means delivery can't be monitored effectively</p>	<p>Implement advanced contract management and monitoring tools that provide real-time insights into contract performance and Social Value delivery.</p> <p>Conduct regular audits and reviews of contracts to ensure compliance with Social Value commitments and identify areas for improvement.</p>

### 6.3.1 Challenges and Mitigation

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Poor contract management means delivery can't be monitored effectively	Better procurement planning will give the time to consider all procurement options through robust market due diligence. Ensure procurement processes are transparent and open, providing equal opportunities for all suppliers and reducing the need for direct awards.
Prolific use of frameworks and direct awards	Better procurement planning will give the time to consider all procurement options through robust market due diligence. Ensure procurement processes are transparent and open, providing equal opportunities for all suppliers and reducing the need for direct awards.

## **6.4 Compliance and Improved Service**

The Procurement Service has undergone a strategic transformation to elevate both compliance and service excellence. Through the adoption of the new council-wide Target Operating Model, it will expand its remit to deliver a fully integrated commercial service that supports the entire commissioning lifecycle. This evolution will be underpinned by a relationship-led approach, proactive engagement, and forward-thinking planning.

This strategic pillar will support this by implementing rigorous performance monitoring, robust contract management practices, and fostering consistency and capability across the organisation. Furthermore, Procurement will serve as a key delivery mechanism for policy, ensuring alignment with Contract Standing Orders, Social Value objectives, and Ethical & Sustainable Procurement principles.

Delivering “Best Value” remains a statutory obligation for local authorities, and the

Procurement Service is committed to delivering continuous improvement in strengthening its commercial capability and capacity. Strategic, outcome-focused procurements will be aligned with the council's broader corporate goals, emphasising whole-life costing and the most advantageous tender criteria, and early stakeholder and market engagement will be central to co-producing services and contracts that deliver meaningful outcomes.

To enhance competition and inclusivity, the service will adopt best practices such as flexible specifications, streamlined bidding processes, and tailored support for SMEs and local suppliers. Evaluation criteria will also be proportionate and relevant, ensuring fairness and transparency.

The service will prioritise process optimisation and workforce development, including conducting skills gap analyses and implementing targeted training pathways to upskill contract managers and embed effective contract management strategies. Monitoring mechanisms will also

be strengthened to ensure accountability and performance.

Data and analytics will also play a pivotal role in this transformation, with a commitment to building a data-driven procurement environment, with improved spend reporting, social value tracking, and standardised data protocols. Automation, system integration, and enhanced governance will also underpin smarter decision-making and innovation in service delivery.

By professionalising procurement, leveraging technology, and cultivating strong supplier relationships, the service aims to significantly enhance contract management maturity and deliver greater value for public funds.

### 6.4.1 Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge	Mitigation
<p>Reactive procurement does not support the Business Partner model or enable good procurement outcomes</p>	<p>Early engagement, to ensure business partners are embedded in project planning from the outset; involved in needs assessments, specification development, and appropriate market engagement. Implement stakeholder training outlining the benefits of early procurement involvement and collaborative planning.</p> <p>Strengthen strategic forward planning, by continuing to enhance the rolling procurement plans and pipeline reviews to anticipate needs and align procurement activity with organisational objectives.</p>
<p>Procurement staff will just be processing tenders instead of utilising strategic sourcing skills to help leverage better value from procurement</p>	<p>Continue to invest in continuous professional development for procurement staff, focusing on strategic sourcing, negotiation, and commercial acumen.</p> <p>Clearly define procurement roles across the organisation with an emphasis on value creation, market analysis, and supplier relationship management.</p> <p>Set clear KPIs that evidence performance against strategic contributions (e.g., cost savings, social value delivered, innovation).</p>
<p>Current systems do not give us the required amount of intelligence to better target uninfluenced areas</p>	<p>The councils ERP replacement project will enable better integrated procurement and contract management systems that provide real-time data and analytics.</p> <p>Power Bi will be utilised to further develop interactive dashboards and reporting tools to identify spend patterns, contract coverage, and areas of non-compliance or maverick spend.</p> <p>Enhance existing systems to introduce self-service, monitor supplier performance, social value, and sustainability outcomes.</p>

## **6.5 Leadership**

Effective leadership is fundamental to shaping and delivering successful procurement outcomes across the Council. Leaders play a vital role in setting the strategic direction, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that procurement activities are aligned with the Council's broader vision and objectives. By championing a culture of openness, innovation, and continuous improvement, leadership can drive real value for both the organisation and the communities it serves.

### **6.5.1 Member-Led Support**

Strong support from elected members and the Corporate Management Team is crucial to embedding procurement as a strategic priority. This will ensure that procurement objectives are fully aligned with the Council's vision and priorities, and that members are empowered to provide oversight, challenge, and advocacy for best practice across the organisation.

### **6.5.2 Collaborative Leadership**

Fostering collaborative relationships with suppliers is essential for maximising value and encouraging innovation. Effective leadership will promote transparent, two-way

communication and actively seek to build partnerships based on trust and mutual benefit. Engaging suppliers as strategic partners enables the Council to access new ideas, co-create solutions, and deliver improved outcomes for residents.

Leaders will be prepared to challenge the status quo and support a critical review of existing procurement practices. By encouraging openness to new ideas and a willingness to adapt, inefficiencies will be identified and best practice embraced to ensure that procurement processes remain fit for purpose in a changing environment.

A key responsibility will be to champion innovation and the adoption of value-driven procurement strategies. This includes supporting new approaches that deliver enhanced social, economic, and environmental value, as well as encouraging the use of data and analytics to inform decisions and measure impact. By doing so, leadership will ensure procurement is a lever for positive change and improved service delivery.

Driving a culture shift towards strategic procurement requires visible leadership and sustained commitment. Continuous

professional development will be promoted, successes celebrated, and encouragement of a mindset focused on long-term value rather than short-term gains, is essential for delivering improved procurement outcomes and ensuring resilience in the face of future challenges.

Within our procurement due diligence all opportunities for collaboration and leverage of spend, including routes to market, will be considered. This will include regional collaboration with other LA's, collaboration with Core City LA's and other Public Bodies as appropriate.

### **6.5.3 User/Resident Focus and Community Engagement**

Central to effective procurement leadership is a strong focus on the needs of residents and service users. Leaders will prioritise procurement activities that deliver tangible benefits for local communities, from supporting local businesses to achieving social value outcomes. Engaging residents in procurement processes through consultation, feedback, or participatory initiatives, will help ensure that procurement decisions are informed by those they impact most, strengthening trust and accountability.

#### 6.5.4 Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge	Mitigation
Securing sustained member and management support	Regular engagement with elected members and the Corporate Management Team to communicate the strategic importance of procurement, sharing success stories and outcomes to reinforce commitment.
Overcoming resistance to change and innovation	Foster a culture of openness by encouraging feedback, providing training, and celebrating innovative procurement practices that demonstrate clear benefits.
Ensuring effective supplier collaboration and transparency	Establish clear communication channels, set expectations for partnership working, and promote mutual trust through consistent, transparent engagement with suppliers.
Maintaining a resident-focused approach	Implement mechanisms for regular community consultation and feedback, ensuring procurement activities are aligned with resident needs and priorities.

### 6.6 Strategic Benefits

Adopting and embracing the principles and practices outlined in this Sustainable Procurement Strategy will deliver a range of significant benefits. These include achieving better procurement outcomes, enhancing service delivery, and reducing costs. The approach will also strengthen supplier relationships, generate greater social value, lower environmental impact,

stimulate local economic activity, and improving the organisation's reputation for responsible and impactful public spending. By prioritising sustainability, the strategy also ensures that procurement decisions are aligned with both community needs and broader environmental and economic objectives.

# 7. Implementation Roadmap

To ensure this strategy is successfully implemented and embedded into the organisation, an annual action plan will be co-produced with members and key internal stakeholders. Clearly defining expectations, action owners and setting realistic target timelines to create accountability and measure performance.

The below roadmap highlights some of the key activities that will take place over the various phases of the strategy implementation.

Phase	Key Activities	Key Stakeholders
Phase 1 (2026)	Baseline spend analysis; implement supplier segmentation, define ESG criteria, commence upgrade of e-procurement platform, pilot category strategies in 2-3 major categories, strengthen contract management.	Head of Procurement and Contracts, Senior Business Partners and Business Partners, Contract Managers
Phase 2 (2027)	Roll out across all major categories, SME/local supplier support programme, embed risk assessments, begin net-zero supplier programme.	Directorate Heads of Service, Finance, Legal, Sustainability Team
Phase 3 (2027-2028)	Continuous improvement, evaluation, adjustments, scaling sustainability, achieving full digital procurement, consolidation of strategic supplier partnerships.	Senior Leadership, Audit, and Procurement Team.

## 8. KPIs and Governance

8.1 Key Performance Indicators	
Metric	Target / Baseline Ideas
% cost savings achieved vs target	1-2% of agreed baseline annually
% contracted spend through local / SME suppliers	Increase by 1% year on year
Contract compliance rate	Relevant spend being influenced by LCC or 3rd Party Arrangements
Spend Influence	% of non-pay expenditure being influenced by Procurement activity
Procurement Requests on time	Increase by 5% over financial year
All contracts to be loaded onto contract management system with recorded KPI's	Target 90% for contracts over £100k

### 8.2 Governance

Effective governance is crucial for ensuring that the full commissioning cycle operates smoothly and achieves its intended outcomes, as well as providing the framework for decision-making, accountability, and oversight throughout the commissioning process.

## 8.2.1 Commissioning Cycle



This includes setting strategic priorities for the council, allocating resources effectively, and monitoring performance to ensure that services drive best value and meet the needs of the community.

The full commissioning cycle will encompass several stages, including needs assessment, service design, procurement, contract management, and evaluation.

Each stage will include robust governance to ensure that decisions are transparent, evidence-based, and aligned with the Council Plan, and other council strategies. By maintaining strong governance throughout the commissioning cycle, the council will enhance service quality, achieve better value for money, and ensure that services are responsive to the needs of the city.

## 8.2.2 Contract Standing Orders

The council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) establish the governance framework for all procurement activities, ensuring compliance with UK Procurement Law and promoting best value, transparency, and accountability. The CSOs apply to all contracts for goods, services, and works above £25,000 (exclusive of VAT), and are underpinned by a Gateway Review Process that aligns governance requirements with risk and commercial impact. Officers must adhere to the CSOs, Financial Regulations, and the Council's Scheme of Delegation, with non-compliance treated as a disciplinary matter.

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined across the procurement lifecycle. Officers must engage with the Procurement Service for qualifying procurements, maintain accurate records, and uphold ethical standards. Senior Responsible Officers oversee strategic planning and resource allocation, while Named Contract Managers ensure contract delivery, performance monitoring, and timely renewal planning. The Head of Commercial Procurement maintains systems, monitors compliance, and leads governance oversight. Exemptions to CSOs require formal approval and justification, reinforcing the Council's commitment to robust, lawful, and value-driven procurement governance.

### **8.2.3 Gateway Process and Review Group**

Any contracts over £250,000 will also be overseen by a Gateway Review Group (GRG). The GRG will comprise of officers from the Procurement Service, Legal and Finance departments. It will review gateways related to the commissioning and procurement cycle focusing on:

- The rationale to undertake a procurement process or exercise extension options
- Identification and realisation of social value priorities
- The capture of savings arising from any procurement activity
- The smooth transition from tendering to contract management / KPI and systems readiness
- Oversight and escalation of any blockages or issues arising, including projects that are at risk of not meeting key “Gate” dates such as the contract start date.

The role of this group is to give confidence to decision makers that the proposal is evidence based, compliant and will deliver value for money. Some projects, such as construction, have industry-specific processes which will be accommodated in the gateway reviews.

### **8.2.4 Commissioning and Procurement Board**

The Council’s Procurement and Commissioning Board will oversee procurement activities to ensure effective commissioning aligned with the Council’s strategic goals, provide assurance on governance, risk management, and continuous improvement in procurement practices.

The purpose of the Board is to give assurance to statutory officers that commissioning delivers desired city outcomes through long-term planning and continuous improvement, supporting the Council’s Code of Corporate Governance. It will also scrutinise procurement plans, policies, and commercial activities aligned with strategic outcomes.

It will review key performance indicators related to procurement and contract activities, address non-compliance or lost opportunities, and escalate significant risks or issues to the Governance Board or Corporate Management Team as needed.

## Appendix 1 - The Council Plan

Council Plan Pillar/ Principle	How LCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy Can Help Contribute to the Council Plan	Specific Actions/Policies for Consideration
<p><b>A strong and fair economy for all</b></p>	<p>Procurement spend is a powerful tool to support local business, reduce inequality, and ensure economic opportunities are shared. By tailoring tenders to include fairness, local inclusion, and supporting small / disadvantaged suppliers, the Council can promote economic inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lot contracts into smaller parts so SMEs and local suppliers can compete.</li> <li>• Use social value weighting to favour bids that commit to local hiring, living wages, supply-chain local content.</li> <li>• Prompt payment terms for small suppliers.</li> <li>• Provide bid-support/training for new or minority-led suppliers.</li> <li>• Prefer suppliers with strong employment practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>High quality and inclusive education, skills and employment</b></p>	<p>Procurement can require skills, training, apprenticeship opportunities embedded in contracts. Suppliers can be required to help with developing local workforce capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include clauses for apprenticeships, work placements, internships in major service / construction contracts.</li> <li>• Require supplier proposals to show how they will help upskill local workforce.</li> <li>• Partner with training providers / colleges so suppliers can use locally trained staff.</li> <li>• Use procurement as pathway into employment for underrepresented communities.</li> </ul>

Council Plan Pillar/ Principle	How LCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy Can Help Contribute to the Council Plan	Specific Actions/Policies for Consideration
<b>Thriving communities</b>	Procurement can enhance community wellbeing, build civic pride, and ensure that services, facilities, and infrastructure meet local needs. It can also support inclusive community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include community benefit clauses (e.g. local community space, cultural contributions, accessible public realm).</li> <li>• Procure with requirements for accessibility, inclusive design, community co-production.</li> <li>• Ensure goods and services procured are resilient, support neighbourhood working, are culturally sensitive.</li> <li>• Use procurement to deliver improvements to local infrastructure (parks, libraries, leisure centres) in consultation with communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthier lives for children and adults</b>	Procurement of health and social care services, built environment, works, goods, etc., can advance health outcomes, reduce inequalities, and improve wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When procuring homes, social care, or public space, include health-impact assessment.</li> <li>• Require contractors to meet standards for air quality, low emission vehicles, safe materials.</li> <li>• Procure food services, public amenities with nutritional, hygiene and health standards.</li> <li>• Prioritise suppliers who support employee health, mental wellbeing.</li> </ul>

Council Plan Pillar/ Principle	How LCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy Can Help Contribute to the Council Plan	Specific Actions/Policies for Consideration
<p><b>A well-connected, sustainable and accessible city</b></p>	<p>Procurement can help the Council to reduce carbon emissions, promote sustainable transport, ensure accessibility, and deliver infrastructure that supports connectivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include sustainability criteria (carbon, emissions, energy efficiency) in all tenders.</li> <li>• Require suppliers to reduce their supply chain emissions.</li> <li>• Procure accessible services and infrastructure (e.g. transport, digital).</li> <li>• Use procurement to support active transport (walking, cycling), EV infrastructure, public transit.</li> <li>• Ensure goods/services procured are durable, repairable, recyclable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A well-run Council</b></p>	<p>Procurement is part of how the Council operates efficiently, transparently, ethically. A good procurement strategy helps deliver value for money, reduce waste, manage risk, ensure regulatory compliance, and support transformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardise procurement practices, tools, templates.</li> <li>• Strengthen governance: clear oversight, accountability, transparency in supplier selection.</li> <li>• Use data analytics to monitor cost, supplier performance, risks.</li> <li>• Ensure procurement capacity and capability (staff training, digital tools).</li> <li>• Embed innovation: flexible contracts, outcome-based procurement, collaborative procurement.</li> <li>• Manage supplier relationships, ethical sourcing, supply chain resilience.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2 - The Procurement Act 2023

### Changes and the Impact on the Strategic Pillars

Strategy Pillar	Impact and Strategic Implication
<b>The Procurement Act 2023</b>	
<b>Fairness and Equality</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> The Act enshrines principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, and transparency across all procurement stages. It introduces simplified procedures and a central digital platform, making it easier for SMEs and VCSEs to access opportunities, and the Debarment List allows authorities to exclude suppliers for unethical behaviour, ensuring integrity and fairness in supplier selection.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Local authorities must ensure procurement processes are inclusive, accessible, and fair, especially for underrepresented suppliers, while maintaining robust governance.</p>
<b>Environment</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> The shift from MEAT (Most Economically Advantageous Tender) to MAT (Most Advantageous Tender) allows environmental sustainability to be a core evaluation criterion. Authorities must consider public benefit, including environmental outcomes, and for contracts over £5 million, publish KPIs that often include emissions and sustainability metrics.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Local authorities can now embed climate goals and net-zero commitments directly into procurement, using KPIs and contract terms to drive supplier accountability.</p>
<b>Society, Community &amp; Economic</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> The Act strengthens the role of social value throughout the procurement lifecycle, not just at evaluation but also in contract management. It supports local job creation, apprenticeships, and community investment, aligning with the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS). Furthermore, the MAT approach enables authorities to prioritise place-based outcomes, supporting SMEs and VCSEs more effectively.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Procurement becomes a lever for local economic development and community wellbeing, requiring councils to define and measure social value outcomes.</p>

Strategy Pillar	Impact and Strategic Implication
<b>The Procurement Act 2023</b>	
<b>Compliance &amp; Improved Service</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> The Act consolidates previous regulations into a single framework, simplifying compliance. It mandates transparency notices, contract performance reporting, and annual KPI reviews for high-value contracts, and local authorities must follow new procurement objectives, including acting with integrity and maximising public benefit.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Local Authorities must update governance, assurance, and reporting systems to meet new compliance standards and improve service delivery through better contract management.</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> The Act requires organisational change, with leadership teams expected to embed procurement reform into strategic planning and governance. Senior leaders must ensure staff are trained, pipelines reviewed, and commercial strategies aligned with the new regime.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Leadership must champion procurement as a strategic tool, ensuring alignment with national missions, fostering innovation, and driving transformation across departments.</p>

## Appendix 3 - The National Procurement Policy Statement and the Impact on the Strategic Pillars

Strategy Pillar	Impact and Strategic Implication
<b>The National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS)</b>	
<b>Fairness and Equality</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> The NPSS reinforces equal treatment and non-discrimination in procurement processes, it encourages diverse supply chains, including SMEs and VCSEs, to ensure equitable access to public contracts, and promotes inclusive recruitment and fair working conditions among suppliers</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Local authorities must embed fairness into supplier engagement and contract evaluation, ensuring procurement is a tool for levelling up and reducing inequality.</p>
<b>Environment</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> It aligns procurement with the mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower, by requiring authorities to consider net zero, carbon reduction, waste minimisation, and biodiversity protection in procurement decisions, and suppliers must demonstrate high environmental standards and risk mitigation.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Local authorities can use procurement to accelerate climate action, embedding sustainability into specifications, evaluation, and contract management.</p>
<b>Society, Community &amp; Economic</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> Procurement is positioned as a strategic tool to deliver place-based social value, it encourages support for local growth, community resilience, and inclusive employment and promotes collaboration with civil society and local suppliers to maximise community impact.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Local authorities must tailor procurement to local needs, using tools like the Social Value Model (PPN 002) to measure and deliver tangible community benefits.</p>

Strategy Pillar	Impact and Strategic Implication
<b>The National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS)</b>	
<b>Compliance &amp; Improved Service</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> Introduces a statutory duty to “have regard to” NPPS priorities under the Procurement Act 2023, and encourages contract management improvements, KPI tracking, and transparency notices. It also aligns with best practice frameworks like the Government Playbooks for sourcing, construction, and digital procurement.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Councils must update governance and assurance frameworks to ensure compliance and drive service quality through better supplier performance and accountability.</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p><b>Impact:</b> Calls for strategic leadership to embed procurement reform across organisations. Leaders must ensure procurement aligns with national missions and is integrated into broader policy delivery, and it emphasises commercial capability building, including training and upskilling procurement teams. It also sets out the national priorities that leaders must “have regard to” when shaping procurement strategy.</p> <p><b>Strategic Implication:</b> Leadership must champion procurement as a strategic enabler, fostering innovation, resilience, and alignment with government priorities.</p>

# The Liverpool 2040 plan

Lever/Policy Area	How LCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy Can Help Deliver 2040 Goals	Specific Actions/Tools
<b>Social Value &amp; Community Benefits</b>	<p>Procurement is one of the most direct ways the Council can shape outcomes beyond just buying goods or services. By embedding requirements for social value, job creation, skills, apprenticeship, and inclusion into contracts, the city can help reduce inequalities, support the next generation, improve quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include community benefit clauses in contracts (e.g. contracts over certain value require X% of hours to be apprenticeship/training for locals)</li> <li>• Require bidders to show how they will contribute to the Council's priorities (e.g. healthier lives, reducing inequality)</li> <li>• Work with VCSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith, Social Enterprise) sector to ensure they can bid.</li> <li>• Use weighting in tenders for social impact, in evaluation criteria.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Sustainability &amp; Net Zero</b>	<p>Procurement can reduce carbon, waste, and environmental harm, thereby feeding into the Fair Transition to the Net Zero pillar. It can also drive innovation in green products and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require suppliers to meet sustainability criteria (e.g., low carbon, efficient vehicles, low-waste packaging)</li> <li>• Favor circular economy practices: reuse, repair, recycling</li> <li>• Use procurement to encourage sustainable construction, energy efficiency, retrofitting.</li> <li>• Include carbon/emissions scoring in tenders</li> <li>• Require long-term environmental impact assessments from suppliers.</li> </ul>

Lever/Policy Area	How LCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy Can Help Deliver 2040 Goals	Specific Actions/Tools
<b>Local Economic Growth &amp; SMEs</b>	<p>Procurement spend is large; using it to benefit local businesses (SMEs and VCSEs) helps spread economic benefits, build capacity locally, reduce unemployment, strengthen supply chains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break large contracts into smaller lots so SMEs can bid</li> <li>• Pre-market engagement with local providers</li> <li>• Provide support / guidance for smaller suppliers to meet requirements (bid writing, compliance, sustainability)</li> <li>• Ensure payment terms are reasonable to help small businesses cashflow</li> <li>• Use local labour requirements or local content where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Homes &amp; Urban Development</b>	<p>When procuring construction, housing, and built environment services, the Council can ensure high quality, sustainable and healthy housing is delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of housing contracts should require compliance with high insulation, energy efficiency, sustainable materials</li> <li>• Require contractors to meet standards related to health and safety, indoor environmental quality</li> <li>• Include retrofit criteria in tenders for work on existing housing stock</li> <li>• Use procurement to address homelessness services (housing providers, support services).</li> </ul>

Lever/Policy Area	How LCC's Sustainable Procurement Strategy Can Help Deliver 2040 Goals	Specific Actions/Tools
<b>Innovation &amp; Digitisation</b>	One aspect of Vibrant Public Services is being data-led, innovative. Procurement can help ensure that the services the Council buys are modern, efficient, digitally enabled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include requirements for interoperability, data sharing, innovation in supplier contracts</li> <li>• Procure for outcomes (rather than just inputs) so allows suppliers flexibility and encourages innovation</li> <li>• Encourage pilot projects, innovative solutions in contracts.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance, Transparency and Collaboration</b>	To achieve the vision, Council procurement must be aligned with overall strategy, with clear governance, performance metrics, and partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure procurement policy documents explicitly refer to Liverpool 2040 priorities</li> <li>• Monitor and report on how procurement is contributing to the 2040 outcomes (e.g. number of apprenticeship-hours created, emissions saved, % of spend with local/SME/VCSE)</li> <li>• Collaborate with other public bodies and anchor institutions in Liverpool Strategic Partnership to leverage collective spend, consistent standards.</li> <li>• Embed sustainable and ethical procurement best practices (e.g. as indicated in the job advert for a Senior Procurement Policy &amp; Performance Manager)</li> </ul>