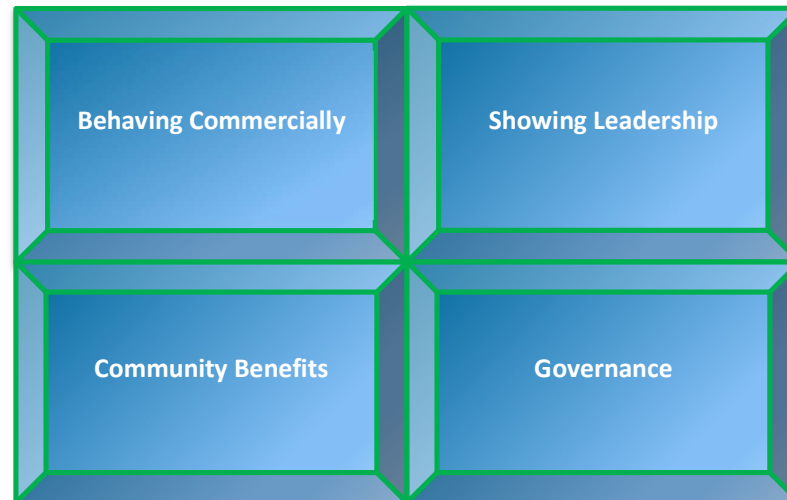




Procurement Strategy 2026-2030



- 1.1 The importance of effective procurement in local government has never been greater. Demand for public services is increasing and the financial environment within which the Council operates continues to be very challenging. The Public Procurement Act 2023 (in force from 24th February 2025) introduces updated procedures, transparency obligations and flexibilities to support better outcomes for the local economy and wider community of Halton.
- 1.2 Procurement is integral to delivering commercially advantageous and innovative solutions to meet public expectations, supporting delivery of both frontline and support services.
- 1.3 Delivery of the strategy will support the continuous improvement and development of the Council's procurement function and therefore contribute to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-29 and Priorities.

The Corporate Plan's 6 key priorities are:

- Improving Health, promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
- Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
- Supporting Children, Young People and Families
- Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
- Working Towards a Greener Future
- Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

- 1.4 In 2024/25 the Council's revenue spend was £133.3M across 1606 different suppliers. Over two thirds of the Council's suppliers are Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs). £27M was spent with 280 Halton based suppliers, representing 20 per cent of total revenue spend. This demonstrates the importance and significance of the Council's procurement activity and the impact that it has on the local economy and the wider community of Halton.

- 1.5 This strategy has been developed with reference to the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England, which focuses on three themes:
- Showing leadership
 - Behaving commercially
 - Achieving community benefits
- 1.6 The strategy also includes a further fourth theme relating to 'Ensuring Governance'. This relates to the need to maintain robust systems and procedures to ensure that procurement activity is undertaken with appropriate levels of control, probity and transparency and is compliant with the Council's own procurement standing orders and wider legislation.
- 1.7 This strategy sets out the Council's vision for procurement and the priorities for 2026-2030, together with a delivery plan, measures and reporting arrangements.

2.1 This strategy builds upon the successful delivery of the 2023-2025 Procurement Strategy. This has put the Council in a strong position with efficient and innovative procurement arrangements that are firmly embedded. These arrangements include:

- A full category management approach embedded within the Procurement team providing structure and specialist expertise within defined areas of spend.
- Automated and Integrated procurement processes and procedures that are employed and well understood across the Council.
- Pipeline planning providing visibility of forthcoming requirements, with procurement work plans aligned to frontline commissioned services and third party spend.
- Risk-based sourcing assessment embedded within the procurement process, with an ongoing commitment of spend above £25k being advertised via The Chest and the Government Central Digital Platform. This opens the supply market to a wider range of potential suppliers, such as local companies, micro-businesses, SMEs and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE).
- Early engagement taking place between the Procurement team, Commissioners and client departments to align pre-procurement activity and planning strategies. This helps to ensure that the most effective route to market is identified when considering the service needs and outcomes.
- Social value being routinely applied where relevant and appropriate to do so, with established systems in place to monitor the delivery of social value commitments made by suppliers.
- Procurement objectives included within the Council's Climate Change plan
- Collaboration being well established across the Liverpool City Region, providing opportunities for greater efficiency and best use of resource in terms of procurement activity.

- Strong leadership and support for the procurement function. The Corporate Services portfolio holder is the Council's procurement champion, and the Audit and Governance Board provides elected member oversight of the Council's procurement arrangements.

2.2 **With a sound foundation upon which to build, the Council's approach to procurement continues to be influenced by:**

- The need for the Council's procurement arrangements to be well governed and respond to any future legislative changes as it is enacted, into our procurement processes.
- The ongoing need to ensure that value for money is obtained for the public purse from planned strategic procurement and commercial arrangements at a time of continuing financial challenges.
- Embrace new technologies to enhance reporting capabilities and ensure we meet our strategic targets.
- The recognition that there are benefits and opportunities offered by collaboration with wider public sector partners.
- The need to continue to drive efficiencies through shared learning, strategic sourcing and competitive activity.
- The need to continue to ensure that the Council's procurement processes are efficient and reliable, thereby allowing procurement activity to be supported by a small core team.

3.1 The approach set out in this strategy is based around the following four key objectives to further consolidate and develop the Council's procurement arrangements:

Objective 1: Showing Leadership

We do this by:

- Using the skills and expertise of the Procurement team in contributing to reports to the Executive Board on procurement related decisions.
- Procurement training and advice provided to Councillors and Senior Management on Procurement legislation and relevant policies.
- Procurement pipeline planning and provision of support to client departments through early engagement.
- Developing working relationships with procurement partners, particularly across the Liverpool City Region.
- Engaging with the Council's strategic suppliers at local, regional and national level.
- Further develop engagement with the supply market at the early stages of planning.
- Develop digital and AI capability within procurement leadership

Objective 2: Behaving Commercially

We do this by:

- Further developing collaboration with partner organisations to identify new commercial opportunities, encouraging shared learning and joint initiatives, particularly across the Liverpool City Region.
- Proactively shaping markets to maximise commercial opportunities.
- Identifying and exploring revenue generating opportunities from procurement related activity.
- Identifying best route to market and most effective and efficient procurement procedure to optimise commercial opportunities.
- Maintaining visibility and planning of pipeline opportunities.
- Supporting client departments in developing the approach to contract management.
- Managing risk effectively through robust procurement contract documentation and procedures when awarding contracts.

Objective 3: Driving Community Benefits

We do this by:

- Continuing to explore opportunities for additional social and community benefits that can be delivered through procurement without increasing costs.
- Contributing to further develop and embed social value across procurement and commissioning with a focus on place-based outcomes, where relevant and proportionate in line with the Councils Social Value Policy.
- Deliver our Social Value Policy, with a focus on market engagement to improve place-based outcomes and supplier awareness.
- Continue to evolve our ways of working and approach to ethical and sustainability issues such as modern slavery, the national minimum wage, and climate change ensuring supply chains are ethically managed and compliant with employment law
- Continue to develop an approach to enable carbon reporting mechanisms for suppliers to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of the contract delivery and contribute to our net zero targets.
- Operating procurement processes that remove barriers and encourage micro-businesses, SMEs and VCSEs to compete for work and to benefit from the Council's spending.

Objective 4: Ensuring Governance

We will do this by:

- Keeping abreast of changes in legislation and the wider external environment, ensuring the Council responds appropriately and embeds the principles of transparency, integrity, accessibility and removal of barriers to market participation within its procurement processes.
- Reviewing and maintaining Procurement Standing Orders and contributing to the Council's Constitution to ensure procurement activity is undertaken with appropriate control, probity and transparency.
- Providing effective oversight of procurement activity and ensuring stakeholders are kept informed, supporting accountability, transparency and consistent decision-making.
- Ensuring the Procurement team maintains the skills, capacity and capability to provide robust advice and guidance, supporting compliant, informed and effective procurement and commercial decisions.

- 4.1 The Strategy will be delivered through the Procurement Action Plan (Appendix 1) that sets out the activities, developments and work to be undertaken to deliver the objectives of this strategy.
- 4.2 Delivery of the Strategy will be led and co-ordinated by the Procurement team working with client departments, commissioners and wider partner organisations.
- 4.3 Implementation of the planned actions contained within this Strategy will help ensure that the Council continues to deliver compliant, flexible, efficient and effective procurement activity that supports the Council in achieving its wider vision and corporate priorities.
- 4.4 Progress against the Procurement Strategy will be reported to the Audit and Governance Board on an annual basis.

Objective 1: Showing Leadership

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Engaging Councillors and Senior Managers	Using the skills and expertise of the Procurement team in contributing to reports to be presented to the Executive Board on procurement related decisions	• Procurement support and feed into reports to Executive Board and Audit and Governance on procurement related decisions. • Continue to engage with elected Councillors and senior management championing the impact of good procurement practice. •
	Procurement training and advice provided to Councillors and Senior Management on Procurement legislation and relevant policies.	• Ongoing training for Councillors and Senior Management on relevant procurement legislation • Member training programmes include procurement and relevant policies.
Working with Partners	Procurement pipeline planning and provision of support to client departments through early engagement.	• Maintaining and improving engagement between the procurement team, client departments and commissioners at the early stages of a project • Pipeline planning with client departments and commissioners for revenue and capital projects.

Appendix 1

ACTION PLAN

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
	Developing working relationships with procurement partners, particularly across the Liverpool City Region	- Continuing to develop and share knowledge to influence procurement activity across the Liverpool City Region - Continuing to support programme management of, and participate in, the Liverpool City Region Procurement Workstream
Engaging Strategic Suppliers	Identifying and engaging the Council's strategic suppliers at local, regional and national level	- Engage with client departments and support supplier review meetings - Identify and engage with common strategic suppliers within the Liverpool City Region and wider partners.
Market Engagement	Further develop engagement with the supply market at the early stages of planning.	- Preliminary Market Engagement discussed with client depts. and commissioners - Facilitating Preliminary Market Engagement with the supply market
Digital and AI Leadership	Develop digital and AI capability within procurement leadership	- Develop training programmes to enhance digital literacy and AI awareness. - Collaborate with IT and partners to embed emerging technologies

Objective 2: Behaving Commercially

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Creating Commercial Opportunities	Further developing collaboration with partner organisations to identify new commercial opportunities through encouraging shared learning and joint initiatives, particularly across the Liverpool City Region.	Further developing partner relationships with: • Liverpool City Region – Heads of Procurement • LCR Combined Authority (CA) • Other wider partner organisations • Participate in Communities of Practice and shared initiatives.
	Identifying and exploring revenue generating opportunities from procurement related activity	• Increase spend via the Council's card programme to generate rebate income • Explore expansion of the Council's Early Payment Scheme participation with suppliers.
	Identifying best route to market and most effective and efficient procurement procedure to optimise commercial opportunities	• Identify compliant Frameworks open to the Council • Identify and select optimal procurement routes in line with legislation and commercial objectives.
	Maintaining visibility and planning of pipeline opportunities	• Publish pipeline notices and maintain forward planning with client departments and commissioners

Appendix 1

ACTION PLAN

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Market Shaping and Innovation	Proactively shaping markets to maximise commercial opportunities	• Undertake market analysis and early supplier engagement to influence market development. • Explore innovative procurement approaches and delivery models • Benchmark commercial practices with other organisations, particularly across the Liverpool City Region.
Managing Contracts and Relationships	Supporting client departments in developing the approach to contract management	• Include review meetings with suppliers within the terms and conditions of the contract • Reduce off contract spend and use spend data and management information from suppliers to further improve performance.

Appendix 1

ACTION PLAN

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Managing Strategic Risk	Managing risk effectively through robust procurement contract documentation and procedures when awarding a contract	• Review contract documentation and procedures in line with legislation • Ensure contract documentation includes robust clauses that include, mobilisation, future proofing and exit plans • Conflict of Interest monitored and recorded throughout the whole lifecycle of the contract • Apply risk-based sourcing to all opportunities over £25,000

Objective 3: Achieving Community Benefits

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Obtaining Social Value	Continuing to explore opportunities for additional social and community benefits that can be delivered through procurement without increasing costs	• Strengthen relationships with both internal stakeholders and suppliers to improve understanding of Social Value. • Develop skills and knowledge across the Council to identify Social Value place-based outcomes for the community.
	Deliver our Social Value Policy, with a focus on market engagement to improve place-based outcomes and supplier awareness.	• Continue to support early market engagement to improve supplier awareness. • Embed social value in procurement processes where relevant to do so. • Contribute to the monitoring and recording of social value achievements against supplier commitments. • Use insights to continuously improve procurement approaches.

Appendix 1

ACTION PLAN

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Ethical, Sustainable and Environmental supply chains	Continue to evolve our ways of working and approach to ethical and sustainability issues such as modern slavery and climate change ensuring supply chains are ethically managed and compliant with employment law Continue to develop an approach to enable carbon reporting mechanisms for suppliers to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of the contract delivery and contribute to our net zero targets.	- Engage locally, regionally and nationally to develop learning and awareness of emerging best practice - Ensure contract documentation is updated appropriately to reflect the Council's requirements in terms of ethical and sustainability issues - Support and contribute to the delivery of the Council's Climate Change plan.
Engaging local SME's, micro-businesses and VCFSE's	Operating procurement processes that remove barriers and encourage local SMEs, micro-businesses and VCSEs to compete for work and to benefit from the Council's spending.	- Simplify procurement processes and documentation - Provide clear guidance to suppliers. - Publish opportunities over £25,000 on The Chest and promote accessibility.

Objective 4: Ensuring Governance

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Responding to changes in the external environment	Keeping abreast of changes in legislation and the wider external environment, ensuring the Council responds appropriately and embeds the principles of transparency, integrity, accessibility and removal of barriers to market participation within its procurement processes.	• Update procurement processes, documentation and templates in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations and policies. • Embed legislative principles consistently across all procurement activity. • Maintain and continuously review internal procurement systems to ensure compliance and best practice. • Provide clear, user friendly guidance and communications to support understanding and consistent application.
	Reviewing and maintaining Procurement Standing Orders and contributing to the Council's Constitution to ensure procurement activity is undertaken with appropriate control, probity and transparency.	• Review and update Procurement Standing Orders at least annually. Ensure alignment with wider financial regulations and budgetary control mechanisms.

Appendix 1

ACTION PLAN

Sub-Objective	Area of Focus	Planned Actions
Ensuring accountability and transparency	Providing effective oversight of procurement activity and ensuring stakeholders are kept informed, supporting accountability, transparency and consistent decision-making.	• Sharing intelligence to demonstrate progress on procurement activity • Providing annual updates to the Audit and Governance Board on progress against the Procurement Strategy • Publish and communicate procurement activity in line with legislative transparency requirements
Maintaining skills, capacity and capability	Ensuring the Procurement team maintains the necessary skills, capacity and capability to provide robust advice and guidance, supporting compliant, informed and effective procurement and commercial decisions	• Provide continuous professional development and training opportunities for procurement staff. • Develop and maintain commercial, technical and legislative expertise within the team. • Review and maintain the capacity required to deliver effective procurement.