

**JOINT PROCUREMENT BOARD**

**JOINT PROCUREMENT STRATEGY  
2024 – 2030**

**CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# About this strategy

## Our vision for procurement

We will help deliver the councils' strategic priorities through the management of the councils' £100m spend through market engagement, excellent procurement and effective contract and relationship management.

## Why we need this strategy

This joint procurement strategy sets out the strategic direction of the Shared Procurement Service during the period of 2024 to 2030. The service is a small, shared resource between Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council Mid Sussex District Council and Mole Valley District Council which provides professional procurement advice and leads on the letting of key corporate contracts.

The four councils spend around £100m per year to buy the goods, works and services we need to do our work. This spend is crucial to the way we deliver our core and discretionary services to our local communities and the outcomes achieved. How the councils' source and deliver these services has a direct impact on the ways in which local people, communities and businesses judge the value that we provide and the quality of outcomes that we achieve.

This strategy sets out our aspirations for the development of our service over the next six years, so that the Shared Procurement Service can:

- Contribute directly to the delivery of the councils' strategic policies and direction
- Enable measurable improvements to value for money outcomes that we achieve in our contracts, set against the context of large increases in the cost of living and volatile supply chains
- Drive social value, carbon reduction, sustainability, and use of local and SME suppliers
- Develop our skills to enable us to effectively support service areas to be able to respond to economic, financial and social challenges
- Maintain highest standards of accountability, probity and transparency and compliance with Procurement legislation and government guidance and policy

## Why procurement matters

The four councils' expenditure with third party suppliers and service providers was c£100m in 2022. This expenditure contributes directly to:

- **Councils' infrastructure** including council buildings, social housing, leisure centres, depots, community centres, pavilions, theatres, flood defences.
- **Environmental services** including street cleansing, waste collection and management, car parking.
- **Community services** including playgrounds, leisure facilities, rough sleeper accommodation, wellbeing, culture and tourism.
- **Parks and open spaces** including Tilgate Park, Beech Hurst Gardens, Horsham Park, grounds maintenance
- **Supporting equipment and services** including technology and equipment and materials to maintain our infrastructure.
- **Economic regeneration** including construction and design of future works, Crawley's Station Gateway, Transform Leatherhead and Burgess Hill Regeneration.

Contract failure or underperformance can negatively impact on our reputation, budgets and erode our ability to fulfil our commitments to local communities.

Equally we need to ensure that we manage our third-party expenditure effectively and in a fully transparent way to ensure that we:

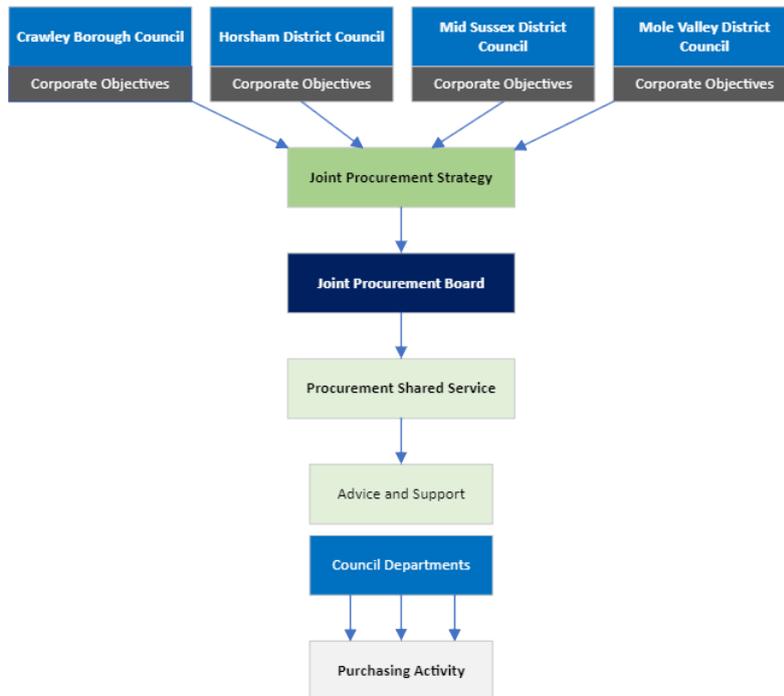
- attract the best possible suppliers whilst encouraging greater opportunities for SMEs and local businesses, VCOs and social enterprises, even as sub-contractors
- ensure the delivery of high-quality services and maintain high standards of contract performance
- stay on budget and deliver efficiency and added value in our contracts
- address the declared climate emergency and take sustainability and carbon reduction considerations into account, working in collaboration with our suppliers
- embrace innovation and opportunities to do things differently

# Ownership and scope

Councils that form the shared service manage strategic procurement through a Joint Procurement Board, consisting of the section 151 Officer from each council and the Shared Procurement Service Manager. The Joint Procurement Board is responsible for agreeing priorities and managing the workload of the Shared Procurement Service.

Procurement activity in the four councils is devolved with the appropriate Head of Service usually responsible for the delivery of new procurement projects. The Shared Procurement Service provides professional advice and support to departmental purchasing officers both directly and through guidance documents (available via council intranet sites) and monitor procurement activity across the councils through a joint work programme, spend analysis and through the councils' Contract Registers.

The diagram below illustrates the structure of the professional procurement support across the four councils:



The Joint Procurement Board is the strategy owner and the Shared Procurement Service's Manager will oversee the actions associated with ensuring its successful implementation.

This strategy has been formally approved by each council and sets the framework within which each council's rules and regulations apply. The strategy should be read in conjunction with each council's own procurement procedure rules (also known as the Procurement Code), contract standing orders and the procurement guidance hosted on the councils' intranet sites.

The strategy should be applied by all staff and members involved in a procurement process and applies to all acquisition of all third-party goods, works and services, regardless of whether they are through new / existing contracts or their funding source.

# Shared Procurement Service

## Purpose, Vision and Values

<b>Our Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the Shared Procurement Service is to provide a flexible, customer-focused, high quality and friendly service.</p> <p>We will support corporate priorities and strategy by utilising best practice in procurement, commercial thinking, with the aid of technology to achieve cost-effective, legally compliant decision-making which protects the environment and delivers social and economic benefits to our communities.</p>
<b>Our Vision</b>	<p>We will apply strategic thinking to our procurement processes to achieve the best possible solutions for the councils and the wider communities.</p>
<b>Our Values</b>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be open minded, honest, friendly and accountable ensuring decisions that we make are fair and transparent</li><li>• ensure we achieve value for money and best possible service delivery outcomes from compliant procurement activities</li><li>• listen, respect and collaborate with service users and partners to maximise resources and shape future services</li><li>• be innovative and aspirational in our vision for the future, for our organisations, local people and communities</li></ul>

## Our strategy

### Our 2030 Procurement Vision

We will help deliver the councils' strategic priorities through the management of the councils' c£100m spend through market engagement, procurement and effective contract and relationship management.

### We will realise this vision by:

- Embedding commercial, innovation and sustainable principles into our procurement processes
- Maintaining sound governance, transparency, accountability and probity in our operational processes
- Ensuring procurement processes are carried out in accordance with all relevant procurement legislation, government guidance and case law
- Working effectively with delivery partners including local business, voluntary and community groups to shape and inform our thinking and grow our local economy. We will

engage with local and SME suppliers to ensure they are supported to be able to work with the councils.

- Using digital technologies to improve processes, procedures, access to our services and engagement with local businesses
- Making the most of our people, further increasing their knowledge and skills on all aspects of procurement, contract and relationship management.
- Ensuring that we further develop our existing Procurement Team through training and professional development to ensure we are in a position to implement latest procurement thought

**We will do this by delivering on the following objectives:**

- Obtaining social value, sustainability and addressing the climate emergency
- Prioritise local, regional and SME spend
- Making procurement accessible
- Being commercial, innovative and adding value
- Strengthening contract and risk management

# What we will focus on

## 1. Obtaining social value, sustainability and addressing the climate emergency

The way we spend our money and the organisations that we do business with is known to be a major contributor to the fulfilment of our local, ethical and sustainability priorities including local economic regeneration, protecting our environment and gaining more by the way of social value and community benefit (responsible procurement). We recognise that this cannot be achieved in isolation and are therefore keen to work in partnership to increase our impact.

The Shared Procurement Service will work with service areas to:

- Ensure that all new procurement activities consider responsible procurement criteria as part of their sourcing, selection and award processes and in contract management. Ensure that those procurement activities are aligned with the relevant council's Sustainable Procurement / Social Value Charter.
- Ensure that social value is understood and sought in appropriate contracts with outcomes successfully achieved and that outcomes are effectively and appropriately monitored and recorded
- Ensure that the councils' commitments to being carbon neutral – CBC (2040) HDC (council by 2030; district by 2050) MSDC (2040) MVDC (2030) – are considered in every procurement exercise.
- Reduce waste, improving resource efficiency and contributing to a more circular economy
- Identify and prioritise opportunities in sustainable procurement to deliver additional environmental benefits, for example enhanced biodiversity, through the delivery of the contract
- Ensure that new procurement activities incorporate the relevant council's living wage policy

## 2. Prioritise local, regional and SME spend

A thriving local economy is a key part of increasing prosperity and wealth creation and reducing inequalities. The National Procurement Policy Statement (2021) sets out national policy which we have used to develop our strategy.

As the Shared Procurement Service is based across West Sussex and Surrey, careful consideration needs to be given to 'local' procurement to ensure successful outcomes. The districts and boroughs share some borders which enables some joined up local engagement and each council's procurement rules reflect more local arrangements. This ensures that they align with the council's strategies and each borough's / district's demographics.

We would like to create more diverse supply chains to deliver the councils' contracts which will better support start-ups, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) in doing business on public sector contracts.

The Shared Procurement Service will work with service areas to:

- Increase the % of expenditure spent locally by engaging with local suppliers to provide them with development opportunities so that they have the right level of bidding capacity to participate in tendering activity for our contracts
- Engage with local suppliers to develop local sourcing opportunities to enable a positive impact on the local economy
- Ensure that there is sufficient time is built into tender processes, wherever possible, to allow SMEs sufficient time to galvanise their resources to be able to bid for the service
- Pay suppliers as quickly as possible to support their cash flow liquidity

The Shared Procurement Service will:

- Pro-actively promote the councils' SE Shared Services Portal with local businesses, assist with and encourage tender submissions from smaller local businesses
- Work with Economic Development and Regeneration colleagues to determine how a "one-stop shop" for advice could be developed and then roll it out across the four councils
- Make use of any appropriate and compliant "lotting" strategies wherever possible, to allow SMEs and / or VCSEs to compete for bidding opportunities and encouraging contract managers to allow sufficient time in the procurement process to form consortia
- Work with Finance and Legal colleagues to promote fair payment terms throughout the supply chain and embedding suitable and proportionate criteria within any qualification processes. Also ensuring suitable terms and conditions are contained in contractual agreements
- Facilitate relationships between SMEs / VCSEs and some larger providers, with assistance from the councils' Economic Development teams
- Offer appropriate assistance and advice with bid writing / advising on the procurement process, participating in market engagement events and specific bid events and ensuring our communication channels are easy to understand and accessible
- Gain knowledge and understanding of our local communities and internal services to help shape our future approaches and policies and target our resources accordingly
- Work with the councils' legal departments to embed local policies in the procurement codes
- Ring-fence certain opportunities for local / SME / VCSE organisations

### **3. Making procurement accessible**

Tendering and local government procurement can be complex, time-consuming, resource-intensive and difficult to understand, particularly at the more operational lower levels of spend. Therefore we would like to level the playing field for suppliers and officers to enable efficient and effective procurement is undertaken in the councils.

The Shared Procurement Service will:

- Simplify processes, templates and instructions to suppliers wherever possible
- Make procurement accessible to our internal customers and to the public through the simplification of procurement documents (templates, internet and intranet pages for example), wherever possible, and the use of plain English

- Provide our procurement advice in a jargon-free and straightforward manner
- Align, standardise and streamline procurement processes as much as possible for the four councils we work for, accepting the differences within those councils and ensuring compliance with all legislative requirements
- Explore digital technology solutions to assist us to make most efficient and effective use of procurement and wider council resources
- Operate a 'learning culture' whereby we will be open to new ways of working and taking opportunities to continuously improve. This will be through obtaining feedback from our customers and stakeholders and from continuous professional development (CPD)

#### **4. Being commercial, innovative and adding value**

The councils continue to face financial pressures along with all other organisations due to many factors including the impact of Covid-19, changing government priorities and significant increases in the cost of living.

The effective management of the councils' expenditure is a key contributor of this strategic goal. This is not about who controls budgets and authorises expenditure but the way we plan ahead, engage with, help to shape markets and manage our contracts effectively.

The Shared Procurement Service will:

- Analyse the councils' third-party expenditure and target opportunities to save money, maximise efficiency and economies of scale and help create a vibrant supply chain
- Link the work of the procurement team to the councils' Medium Term Financial Strategies – identifying areas for savings, efficiency and collaboration
- Maintain a commercial outlook when engaging with strategic suppliers throughout the local, regional and national markets to improve performance, reduce costs, mitigate risk and harness innovation
- Enable market engagement days to engage with the wider supply base and other councils as well as ensuring contract managers have good market knowledge and benchmarking skills
- Gather relevant market intelligence enabling us to improve services, budget forecasting, timetabling and planning procurements
- Aim to align key contracts with all four councils to maximise opportunities to enable collaboration
- Seek opportunities for collaboration with external stakeholders with the intention to identify potential service improvements and commercialisation opportunities and work with local partners to consider innovative commissioning models and design joint solutions or partnership agreements to drive savings and efficiency

The Shared Procurement Service will work with service areas to:

- Contribute to the development of scalable and future-proofed new methods to modernise delivery and increase productivity.
- Ensure that a costed insourcing option is considered for all key contracts

## 5. Strengthening contract and risk management

By managing contracts from the point of award to expiry, we are able to ensure that we get what we pay for, obtain any added value and that suppliers perform well and consistently during the entire contract period. By monitoring and managing risk effectively, the councils can aim to prevent contract failure and from incurring extra cost.

The Shared Procurement Service will:

- Identify and implement methods to improve awareness amongst service managers about the importance of contract and risk management so that it becomes further embedded in the council's processes and procedures; and that is considered an essential part of the council's day-to-day business.
- Keep our Contract Management guidance updated to reflect any recent developments and will ensure that service managers utilise the guidance, focusing on developing skills around effective cost control and performance management.
- Ensure that contract managers have access, where possible, to market intelligence about contracts, supply chain issues, markets and trends in key service areas and how to effectively investigate joint service needs.
- Use the councils' Contract Registers to assist in forward planning and ensure that service managers are aware of their responsibilities to complete them through regular communication.
- Continue to record the councils' key suppliers annually and we will look to extend the picture of suppliers to obtain a fuller view of high risk and / or key suppliers and their supply chains.
- Ensure that contract managers have good strategies to manage supplier relationships effectively. We recognise that engagement should be a two-way beneficial arrangement so we will encourage contract managers to share data with suppliers, when possible, to identify solutions in collaboration for service development.

The Shared Procurement Service will work with service areas to:

- Introduce conflicts of interest and risk registers in all tender processes to ensure that we are accurately capturing and reflecting risks including financial, economic, supply chain issues, etc.
- Build on our commitments under the Modern Slavery Act, including publication of annual statements, and will aim to identify areas / contracts which are vulnerable to modern slavery.

# Strategic Context

The procurement priorities of this strategy are aligned to the ones contained in the National Procurement Strategy 2022. In addition, the strategy considers priorities from the corporate plans as well as local and national policy.

## National Policies and Legislation

- National Procurement Strategy 2022:

The themes of this strategy are “showing leadership”, “behaving commercially” and “achieving community benefits”. In addition, it includes the following “enablers”:

- Adding Value
- Developing talent
- Exploiting digital technology
- Enabling innovation
- Embedding change

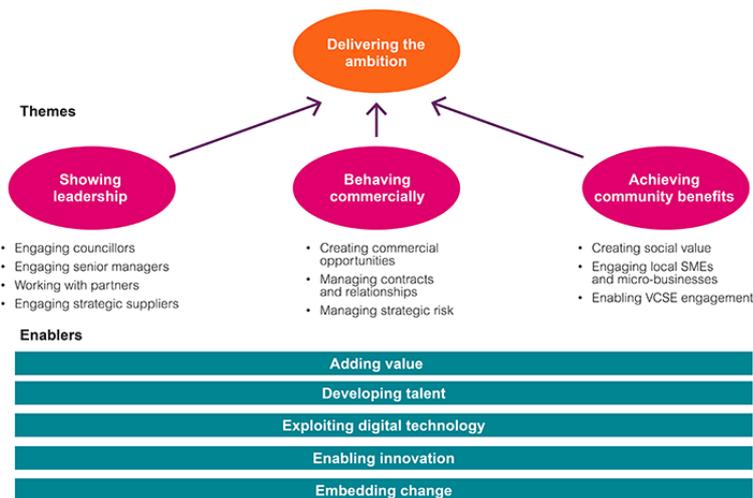


Image 1. A diagram extracted from the National Procurement Strategy 2022 document showing its themes

These themes are reflected in our aims and objectives but have been applied to a more local and council-specific context.

- **Procurement Act** (when enacted) – currently Public Contracts Regulations 2015 – provides a legal framework for procurement activities undertaken in local authorities in the UK.
- **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012** requires public authorities to have a duty to consider how our procurement activities might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our areas and how we might act to secure that improvement.
- **Equality Act 2010** sets out anti-discrimination law in the UK and the public sector equality duty applicable to public authorities and organisations contracted to carry out a public function.

- **Modern Slavery Act 2015** introduces enforcement powers and measures to enhance the protection of victims of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking offences and increase supply chain transparency and accountability for supply chains.
- **National Procurement Policy Statement** sets out the strategic priorities for public procurement and how contracting authorities can support their delivery. They are issued by the UK Government on an annual basis.
- **Bribery Act 2010** is aimed at dealing with the risk of bribery and corruption, which undermines corporate governance, the rule of law and damages economic development.
- **Criminal Finances Act 2017** targets corruption, money laundering and tax evasion.
- **Freedom of Information Act 2000** creates a general right of access to information held by public authorities (and those providing services for them), sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities.
- **Local Government Transparency Code 2015** sets out the minimum requirements for local authorities to publish open data for re-use and in a timely way.
- **Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018** sets an obligation on all public sector bodies to make their website or mobile application more accessible by making it 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'.

## Local Policies and Corporate Priorities

- Crawley Borough Council Corporate Priorities 2023 to 27
- Horsham District Council Corporate Plan (due 2024)
- Mid Sussex District Council Corporate Plan and Budget (agreed annually)
- Mole Valley District Council Corporate Strategy (due 2024)
- Crawley Borough Council's Social Value Charter, including payment of the Real Living Wage
- Horsham District Council's Sustainable Procurement Charter
- Mole Valley District Council's Sustainable Procurement Charter
- Mid Sussex District Council's Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan
- Crawley Borough Council's Modern Slavery Statement
- Horsham District Council's Modern Slavery Statement
- Mid Sussex District Council's Modern Slavery Statement
- Mole Valley District Council's Modern Slavery Statement
- Crawley Borough Council Climate Emergency declared July 2019
- Crawley Borough Council 'One Town' Economic Recovery Plan 2022-2037
- Horsham District Council Climate Change Action Strategy
- Mole Valley District Council Climate Change Strategy
- Shared Procurement Service Contract Management Guidance

# Procurement Strategy Action Plan

## 2024 - 2030

The Shared Service will by the end of:	
April 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to review procurement advice and information available on the councils' intranet and internet sites and revise and enhance as appropriate</li> <li>2. Reach out to local businesses, including the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to understand their priorities and what they want from us as councils</li> <li>3. Set up more formal strategic sharing of knowledge between Economic Development, Sustainability and Legal teams across the four councils</li> <li>4. Implement induction training in procurement for all new starters four times per year</li> <li>5. Set up a programme of shadowing key procurers to deepen our understanding of their requirements</li> <li>6. Increase awareness of the Shared Procurement Service across the four councils, where required</li> <li>7. Review current channels / media used to communicate procurement information and amend as appropriate</li> <li>8. Produce an annual procurement Work Plan for the shared service and record on savings achieved and sustainable procurement and social value benefits realised.</li> <li>9. Introduce a marketing and communications plan to advance internal customer service capability and communicate effectively with our partners and suppliers</li> </ol>
April 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Set up a digital platform to enable officers to ask questions and share procurement experiences regarding procurement, to provide signposting to advice and information and to share good practice</li> <li>11. Implement a 'one-stop shop' solution for local and SME suppliers to gain information on tendering and procuring with the councils</li> <li>12. Invest in officer training to develop commercial skills including contract management</li> <li>13. Review how supply chains' sub-contract management outcomes are reported on throughout the councils</li> <li>14. Lead on implementation, training, template and guidance documents for Procurement Act at all four councils</li> <li>15. Agree a rolling programme of service / goods category reviews</li> <li>16. Introduce stronger methods of recording and monitoring social value and sustainability performance in our contracts</li> </ol>

