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Contents

1. Introduction

This Procurement Strategy outlines Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils' approach to purchasing goods and services in an effective, transparent and sustainable manner. It aligns with the contract procedure rules and sustainable procurement policy of both councils as well as the national Procurement Act 2023. This Strategy also has regard to the National Public Policy Statement which sets out the Government's strategic priorities for procurement. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure procurement is undertaken to a consistently high standard, achieving high value for money, while delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for our communities.

Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils (the councils) recognise the broad impact that local authority spending can have on the local economy, environment and communities. Both councils have announced a climate emergency and outlined plans to become carbon neutral by 2030. This strategy aligns with the Lewes District Council Climate and Nature Strategy and the Eastbourne Borough Council Sustainability Strategy. It also aligns with Lewes District Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy, which encourages more spending with local suppliers to retain wealth and create jobs in our regional economy.

Committing to a sustainable approach to procurement is part of meeting the councils' climate objectives and wider environmental ambitions, but it is also about generating local wealth for the economy and providing opportunities for community groups in a way that is interconnected.

2. Strategy Objectives

- **Delivering Value for Money**: cost-effectiveness over the lifecycle of contracts.
- **Promoting environmental sustainability:** Procurement processes have been highlighted as a key lever in delivering low carbon goods and services, through good ecological and environmental practice, from its supply chain, therefore contributing towards the target of making its own operations Net Zero by 2030
- **Ensure compliance with legal, internal and ethical standards**: aligning with national Procurement Act 2023 and Contract Procedure Rules while maintaining fairness and openness in all purchasing activities.
- **Support local businesses and economic development:** encouraging local suppliers within Sussex to apply for procurement opportunities to create and retain wealth in the region
- **Social Value & Community Wealth**: to identify and deliver projects that benefit communities in terms of facilities, public realm, job creation and education

- **Supplier Diversity**: engagement with a range of small and medium size enterprises, local suppliers, and social enterprises to enable them to bid for council contracts.
- **Action Plan**: we have identified gaps in our current processes for monitoring and reviewing procurement activity across the council so as part of this strategy we have outlined a number of actions in each section to address these gaps.

Actions		Purpose
1	Revise Contract Procedure Rules to incorporate the new Procurement Act 2023 which came into force in February 2025 and amendments to current processes and thresholds.	To ensure that the councils have up to date Contract Procedure Rules outlining the formal process and rules or our procurement.
2	Regularly review spend data on a quarterly basis	To identify expenditure not under contract and any opportunities for efficiencies.
3	Ensure Sustainability measures are included in all tenders	To deliver on objectives in Sustainability Policy, Lewes District Council Climate and Nature Strategy and Eastbourne Borough Council Sustainability Strategy
4	Develop a methodology for recording and reporting savings	To monitor efficiency in terms of value for money in procurement
5	Provide training on the new Procurement Act and Contract Procedure Rules.	To ensure that budget holders and everyone carrying out procurement on behalf of the councils are aware of latest rules and guidance arising from the 2023 Procurement Act which came into force in February 2025.
6	Ensure Social Value and Community Wealth are included in all tenders.	To retain wealth in our local economy, create jobs and deliver benefits to public spaces and community groups.

3. Governance and Accountability

This section outlines the overall roles and responsibilities of members, senior management, the Strategic Procurement Manager and budget holders. The councils' model of procurement is decentralised, with one Strategic Procurement Manager acting as the central point of contact across both councils, and many budget holders across different services carrying out their own procurement, in line with this strategy. Given the decentralised structure of the procurement model, there is a need to provide training to budget holders to ensure that they have the knowledge and capabilities to make purchases on behalf of the council in line with this strategy.

In order to provide central oversight of procurement activities a procurement oversight group will be established (membership to be determined). This group will monitor Key Performance Indicators and the Contracts Register to ensure procurement is carried out with high standards.

Member responsibilities

- Cabinet is responsible for authorising this Procurement Strategy and setting and upholding the overall principles and objectives of the strategy.

CMT responsibilities

- Setting strategy and leading by example in governance of procurement.
- Ensuring the Procurement Strategy aligns with corporate objectives and vice versa.
- Overseeing the arrangements for procurement and to ensure they are operating effectively.

Strategic Procurement Manager responsibilities

- Support Budget Holders and their delegates in procurement activity.
- With the Legal Department, provide procurement training including Contract Procedure Rules and use of the procurement portal.
- Develop and maintain procurement documentation.
- Spend analysis to identify efficiency savings and spend not under contract.
- Manage the Councils Contracts Register to adhere to transparency requirements and support future planned procurements.

Budget Holders responsibilities

- Budget Holders and their delegates are responsible for ensuring they have the right level of knowledge and skills to deliver effective procurement activity for their service area.
- For all high value or high-risk contracts, where the current Procurement Act 2023 thresholds apply, Budget Holders and their delegates should engage with the Strategic Procurement Manager and Legal at the earliest opportunity.
- Budget Holders and their delegates involved directly with the purchase of goods, services and works must ensure they comply with this strategy, and the Contract Procedure Rules'
- Policies on conflicts of interest and transparency should be adhered to as outlined in the compliance and ethical considerations section of this report.

Code of conduct for employees covers conflicts of interest which budget holders need to be aware of.

Actions		Purpose
7	Introduce a Procurement Oversight Group	To monitor and report on procurement performance. This oversight group will ensure that procurement activity is aligned with meeting objectives and standards outlined in this strategy.

4. Contract and Supplier Management

Contract management is the process of managing agreements, from their creation through to their execution, and to the eventual termination of the contract. A single designated officer must be appointed to act as the contract manager for each contract.

An effective Contract Manager requires a range of project management, administrative, decision making, problem solving and interpersonal skills. Once a contract is awarded, the Contract Manager will be expected to:

- Maintain regular contact with the suppliers
- Monitor the supplier’s performance against agreed terms and standards
- Motivate the supplier
- Work with the supplier to resolve performance or relationship issues
- Challenge and seek resolution

There will be times when the contract is not performing and the Contract Manager will be responsible for problem solving. The following types of interventions will be used as appropriate to tackle any issues that arise

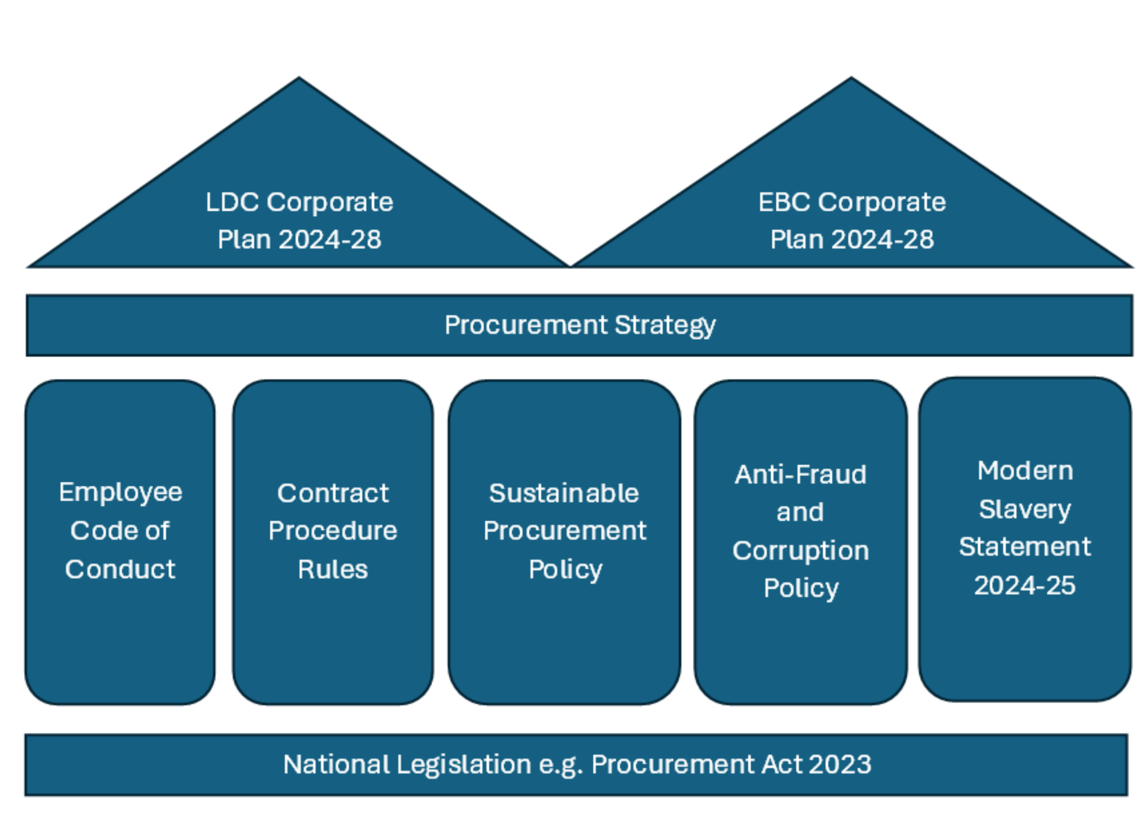
- Check the contract to see if there is provision for such circumstances and follow the appropriate requirements.
- Notify the supplier as soon as possible and hope they can resolve it on their own
- Listen to the supplier - some challenges are really difficult to fix as the council may be able to help
- Document everything in writing, be open and transparent
- Ask the contractor what they may need from the council to assist iEscalate issues to line management in a timely manner
- Evaluate if the service is still needed or whether a change/variation is required

- **Area 1**: Planning and governance - Preparing for contract management and providing oversight
- **Area 2**: People - Ensuring the right people are in place to carry out the contract management activities
- **Area 3**: Administration - Managing the physical contract and the timetable for making key decisions
- **Area 4**: Managing relationships - Developing strong internal and external relationships that facilitate delivery
- **Area 5**: Managing performance - Ensuring the service is provided in line with the contract
- **Area 6**: Payment and incentives - Ensuring payments are made to the supplier in line with the contract and that appropriate incentive mechanisms are in place and well managed
- **Area 7**: Risk - Understanding and managing contractual and supplier risk
- **Area 8**: Contract development - Effective handling of changes to the contract
- **Area 9**: Supplier development - Improving supplier performance and capability
- **Area 10**: Supplier relationship management - Having a programme for managing and developing relationships with suppliers
- **Area 11**: Market management - Managing the wider market issues that impact on the contract, but lie beyond the supplier

Actions		Purpose
8	Ensure all contracts have relevant KPIs	To ensure that contracts are targeted at delivering specific measurable benefits for residents where possible.
9	Ensure that all new contracts are uploaded onto the In-Tend platform	Using the In-Tend e-sourcing platform will help us to make improvements in cost, efficiency and transparency of procurement processes:
10	Regularly review contracts against spend data.	Budget holders should monitor their contract to track underspend or overspend.
11	Review contracts that are due to expire at least 12 months in advance.	To provide sufficient time to prepare tendering process for new contract and explore opportunities to deliver improved value for money, environmental, local spend or social value in new contract.
12	Work with HR to implement mandatory Contract Management Training.	To share updated knowledge of procurement process in line with Procurement Act 2023 and this strategy with budget holders and anyone making purchases on behalf of the council
13	Develop a process for approving and managing requests for Contract Increases	Currently, there is little visibility of contract increases as they are often agreed at a local level and not formally agreed at the time of a contract award. Therefore, impact to budgets may not be known and planned.

5. Compliance and Ethical Considerations

Procurement is carried out by services across a wide range of the council's activities. It has a large impact on the local communities and economies. Consequently, it is important that the council carries out its procurement in an ethical and responsible manner. There are five key policies, procedures and guidance documents that underpin our responsible procurement framework: Sustainable Procurement Policy, Contract Procedure Rules, Employee Code of Conduct, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Rules and Modern Slavery Statement.



[Employee Code of Conduct]

Our Employee Code of Conducts sets out how council employees are required to act with honesty and without corruption, and the following are some key points relevant to procurement.

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the appropriate manager. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the selection process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

If staff engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, they should declare that relationship to the appropriate manager.

Contract Procedure Rules

The Contracts Procedure Rules set out the key responsibilities and actions that Council staff must follow when undertaking procurements. They support staff to meet legislative requirements, and to meet the Council's ambitions for procurement, the Council's procurement policy, and related policies and procedures. They support staff to deliver effective procurement.
All officers responsible for purchasing or disposal must comply with these Contract Procedure Rules. Accordingly, all procurement or the disposal of assets carried out by the Organisation must:

Have regard to the importance of:

a) delivering value for money

b) maximising public benefit

c) sharing information for the purpose of allowing suppliers and others to understand the Organisations procurement policies and decisions.

d) acting and being seen to act with integrity.

Sustainable Procurement Policy

Both councils have announced a climate emergency and outlined plans to become carbon neutral by 2030. This Policy aligns with the Lewes District Council Climate and Nature Strategy and the Eastbourne Borough Council Sustainability Strategy.

A key part of delivering this sustainable and interconnected way of procurement is to engage with communities and contractors, from the outset, but also during the course of the procurement, to identify practical opportunities for council contracts to add environmental, economic or social value to the area, or to mitigate potential adverse impacts where they might arise.

Environmental factors to consider during procurement could include:

a. climate change mitigation and adaptation;

b. sustainable resource use including travel considerations;

c. prevention of pollution;

d. and protection and restoration of biodiversity.

In order to meet our Net Zero Carbon Commitments by 2030, the Councils aim to procure low or carbon neutral energy where possible.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

Both Lewes and Eastbourne councils have anti-fraud and corruption policies which set out responsibilities and processes to protect public funds against fraud and corruption.

The Council is committed to operating systems and procedures that incorporate effective internal controls. Internal controls are the means by which managers ensure that systems and procedures work properly. Controls can include policies, plans, instructions, supervision, checking, review, reconciliations, performance monitoring, budgets and a sound organisational structure in which systems can operate as they should. The effectiveness of these controls is independently monitored by Internal Audit.

Modern Slavery Statement

This statement sets out the councils' commitment and steps taken to preventing slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains. It includes due diligence of suppliers, employee code of conduct, equality, diversity & inclusion policy, recruitment policy, pay scheme, whistleblowing policy, safeguarding policy, health and safety policy, grievance procedure, dignity at work policy and training to build capabilities in complying with these policies.

6. Performance Measurement and Reporting

Procurement KPIs are metrics that can be used to analyse internal and external procurement and supply activities. They can help organisations manage and optimise efficiencies in areas such as value, time, quality, and cost, helping procurement functions stay on track with their goals. There are contract level KPIs which may vary from project to project, and there are procurement program level KPIs which are as follows:

1. Percentage of contracts within the relevant thresholds where 3 quotes have been received
2. Percentage of contracts within the relevant thresholds where a tender process is followed
3. Contracts above £25,000 that have a valid contact
4. Contract spend against initial quote/tender budget
5. Increased percentage of contracts with sustainability and environmental considerations included.
6. Value of spend with local (Sussex region) suppliers and percentage of total spend with local suppliers
7. Social value delivered

Actions		Purpose
14	Monitoring and KPI report will be reviewed quarterly by the Procurement Oversight Group and reported to CMT	To track progress in delivering objectives in the procurement strategy
15	Report a complete and accurate record of all waivers raised and approved to the Procurement Oversight Group	To provide oversight on waivers as part of the councils' procurement
16	Develop a process for approving and managing requests for Contract Increases	To standardise and track contract uplift agreement so that these can be factored into budgets

Risk Management

The risks of not having effective procurement strategy and processes are:

- financial risks of not getting value for money in purchases which could limit the standard of services delivered by the councils on behalf of residents;
- strategic risks of not making efficient use of our resources to meet strategic objectives outlined in the corporate plans of both councils;
- reputational risks if sufficient standards in procurement are not met and performance impacts the councils' public reputation; and legal risks if procurement is carried out in a way that is not in accordance with the law, leaving the councils at risk of legal challenge and sanctions.

The processes and governance structures outlined in this strategy are intended to mitigate these risks as well as provide means of identifying contract specific risks where they might arise. This will be one of the functions of the new procurement oversight group which will monitor performance and risk management. The contract management section outlines good practice in managing procurement at a service level and should help to mitigate the risks outlined above.

7. Local Government Reorganisation

As part of the Government's Local Government Reorganisation process, Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council may become part of a new unitary authority along the geographic boundary of East Sussex County Council in 2028. In order to prepare for this in terms of procurement, we will ensure that we consider suitable contract lengths as well as any opportunities to procure jointly with partners in other authorities within East Sussex.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

The Strategy applies until the Councils know the outcome of the Local Government Reorganisation and will need to be reviewed as part of the potential process of merging procurement strategies.

The actions will be reviewed on quarterly basis by the procurement oversight group and updated as appropriate.

9. Action Plan

Action number	Action	Date
1	Revise Contract Procedure Rules to incorporate the new Procurement Act 2023 which came into force in February 2025 and amendments to current processes and thresholds	Q1 2025/26
2	Regularly review spend data to identify expenditure not under contract and opportunities for efficiencies	Quarterly
3	Provide training on the new Procurement Act and Contract Procedure Rules	Q2 2025/26
4	Develop a methodology for recording and reporting savings	Q1 2025/26
5	Ensure Sustainability measures are included in all tenders	From Q2 2025/26 onwards
6	Ensure Social Value and Community Wealth are included in all tenders	From Q2 2025/26 onwards
7	Develop a Procurement Oversight group to monitor and report on Procurement Performance	Q2 2025/26
8	Ensure contracts have KPIs, where relevant	At each procurement initiation
9	Ensure that all new contracts are uploaded onto the In-Tend platform	At completion of the procurement exercise
10	Regularly review contracts against spend data	Quarterly
11	Review contracts that are due to expire at least 12 months in advance	Quarterly
12	Work with HR to implement mandatory Contract Management Training	Q3 2025/26
13	Monitoring report and KPIs will be reviewed quarterly by the Procurement Oversight Group and reported to CMT	Quarterly
14	Update Procurement Hub website with relevant links to policies and guidance and other documents	Q1 2025/2026
15	Report a complete and accurate record of all waivers raised and approved to the Procurement Oversight Group	Quarterly

16	Develop a process for approving and managing requests for Contract Increases	Q2 2025/2026