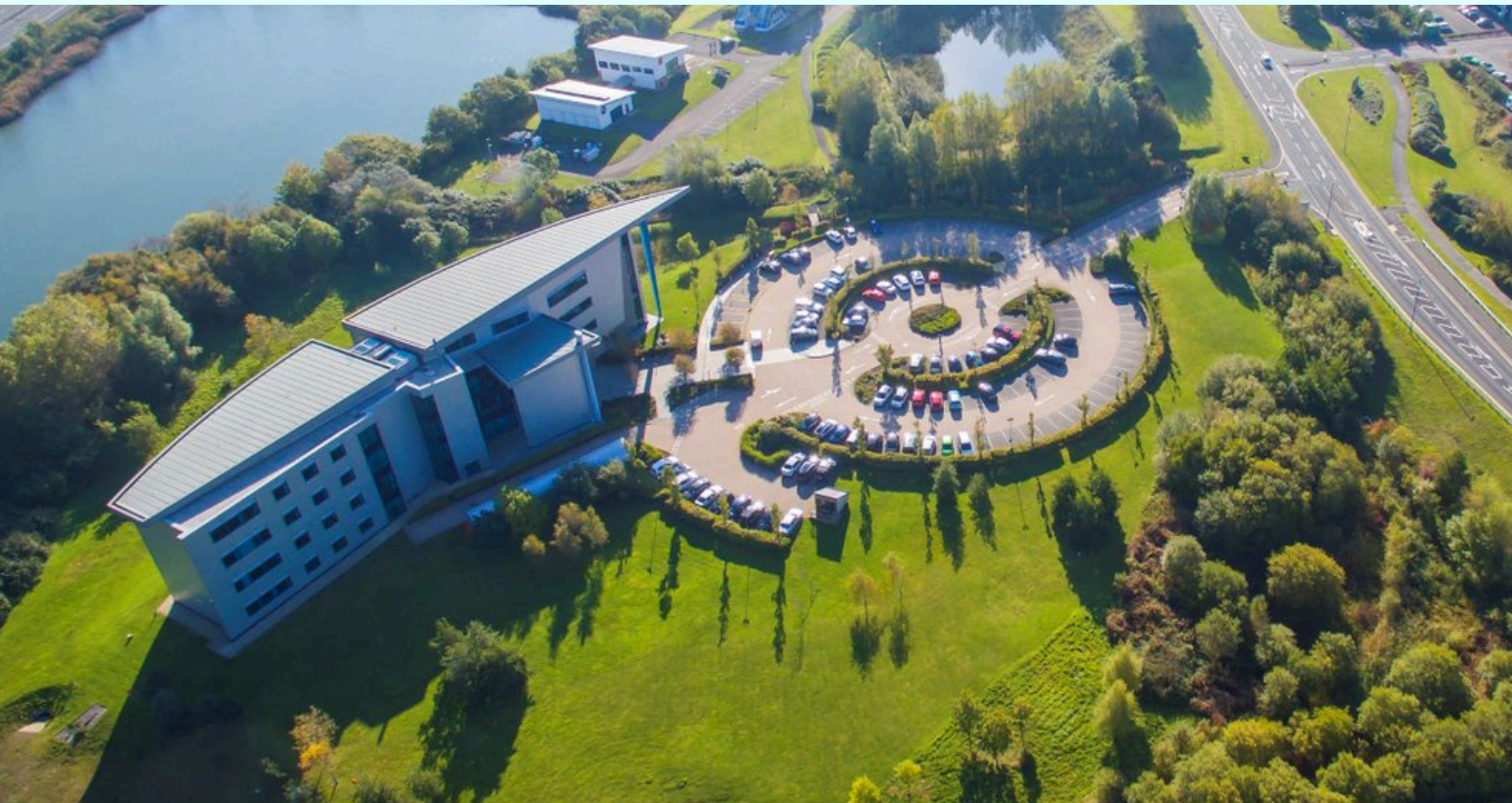




Neath Port Talbot Council

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2024-2028



www.npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

FOREWORD

The procurement landscape across the public sector has changed dramatically over the last 3 years, and will continue to change over the next 2 years, with the coming into force of procurement legislative reform following the UK's departure from the European Union, including in particular the Procurement Act 2023 and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.

A Welsh Government report published in March 2021 acknowledges that despite the unprecedented challenges facing the Welsh public sector through Brexit and Covid-19, procurement has risen to the challenge and through effective leadership and collaborative working has accelerated its progress in the procurement evolution journey in Wales.

We are faced with the challenge of ever-increasing demands and expectations for services at a time when our resources have reduced in real terms. The current operating context sees increased pressures on councils facing further restrictions on revenue and capital finances.

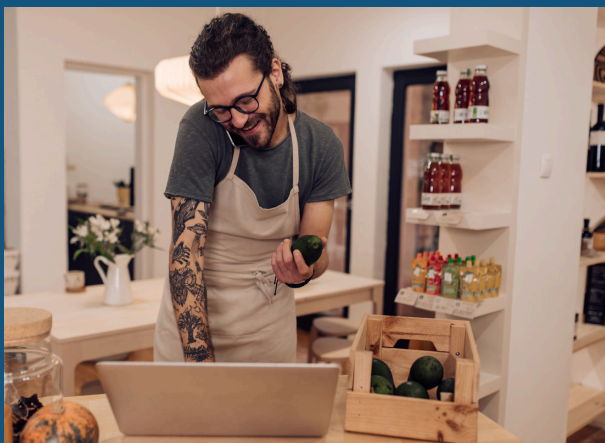
In addition, increased volume, complexity of demand and market pressures on services, particularly social care, creates further challenges. Increased costs due to

high inflation, exponentially higher energy costs, climate change emergency, disruptions in the supply chains and suppliers unable to meet contractual requirements, and global conflicts are all material to the way in which councils approach procurement.

We are committed to using procurement to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Neath Port Talbot. The council recognises that procurement is fundamental to achieving our vision, protecting our front-line services and supporting a socially sustainable economic environment.

Innovative and compliant procurement practices continue to play a fundamental role in achieving the council's vision, supporting local businesses whilst protecting our front-line services and supporting our county in a socially conscious and a sustainable manner.

We intend to enhance the council's procurement activities by ensuring that arrangements are in place to help officers to work closer together to deliver innovative solutions that offer value for money, are sustainable, efficient, and ultimately improve the well-being of the residents of Neath Port Talbot.



**Cllr S K Hunt ,
Leader of Council**



**Mrs K Jones,
Chief Executive**



INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of post EU procurement, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will undergo an unprecedented series of changes in its procurement activities, in line with UK-wide public sector and Welsh Government procurement reform.

The new procurement reforms promise greater flexibility, innovative approaches and sustainable outcomes that will generate shared prosperity for our local communities, and across our economies, on a local basis and across Wales.

There is anticipation that these procurement opportunities will seek to achieve greater value, monitoring and efficiencies while securing greater benefit to society on a local basis, and in line with Welsh Government objectives for Decarbonisation, which will place Wales as a world leader in its aims for society.

UK Government has set out the digital transparency, commercial and process driven means by which procurement reform activity is to be conducted across the public sector in the UK, releasing the potential for achieving value to the organisation and its locality. To supplement this, the policy driven social value objectives and legislation in Wales lend themselves to an ambitious set of procurement aims for public sector organisations in Wales.

In order to secure greater social value via its procurement activities, a concerted effort will be required by the council in terms of resources, ambition and willingness to collaborate and co-operate, both internally across the organisation, and additionally with external stakeholders. The desired effect of this Procurement Strategy will be the synergy of its stakeholders, in order to achieve shared aims and objectives in line with Neath Port Talbot Council's Corporate Plan, Decarbonisation Strategy, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The council's vision for procurement is to demonstrate the achievement of value for money through the responsible procurement of its current and future requirements. We will operate a mixed economy of service provision, using a diverse range of suppliers, (including small firms, social enterprises, and voluntary and community groups), and in-house resources, to ensure high quality services.



INTRODUCTION (continued)

Our Procurement Strategy at Neath Port Talbot seeks to address an organisation-wide approach to Procurement Digitisation, Social Value and Commercial operations

The specific aims of the Strategy are:

- To ensure that our procurement activity is undertaken by professionally competent staff with the aim of compliant, effective procurement. Recruiting, developing, and retaining professionally qualified staff will underpin the councils' ability to address issues and particularly issues of value.
- To ensure that our procurement activity supports the aims and aspirations of the council, as reflected in our Corporate Plan "Recover, Reset, Renew" 2022 – 2027.
- To ensure all procurement activity is conducted in a fair, open and transparent manner, allowing all potential suppliers to compete for business.
- To ensure that the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are appropriately promoted in all procurement activities.
- To ensure that principles of the Wales Procurement Policy Statement are given due regard in all procurement activities.
- Embracing public procurement transformation and innovation including making procurement accessible for bidders.
- State how the authority intends to ensure that it will carry out public procurement in a socially responsible way.
- Integrate sustainable procurement practices that minimise environmental impact, such as reducing carbon footprints and promoting the use of recyclable materials.
- Ensure ethical sourcing, including fair labour practices and the avoidance of suppliers involved in human rights abuses

This Strategy when considered with other council policies and protocols promotes:

- adding value
- fulfilling our social value priorities through procurement
- creating new businesses, new jobs, and new skills
- improving supplier diversity, innovation, and resilience
- tackling climate change and reducing waste
- building even greater connections and partnerships locally, across the public sector, with suppliers and the voluntary sector
- attracting, developing, and retaining talent
- exploiting data and technology
- effective contract, supplier relationship and supply chain management
- embracing public procurement transformation and innovation including making procurement more transparent and easier for bidders.

PROCUREMENT IN NEATH PORT TALBOT

Sustainable Procurement is defined as:

“the process whereby organisations meet their needs for good, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generation benefits to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment”

The council applies many different service delivery models across its operations, using a ‘right model for the right service’ approach. This includes single/multiple provider frameworks and contracts, use of small Lots, local, regional and pan-regional frameworks, joint ventures and many partnership operations.

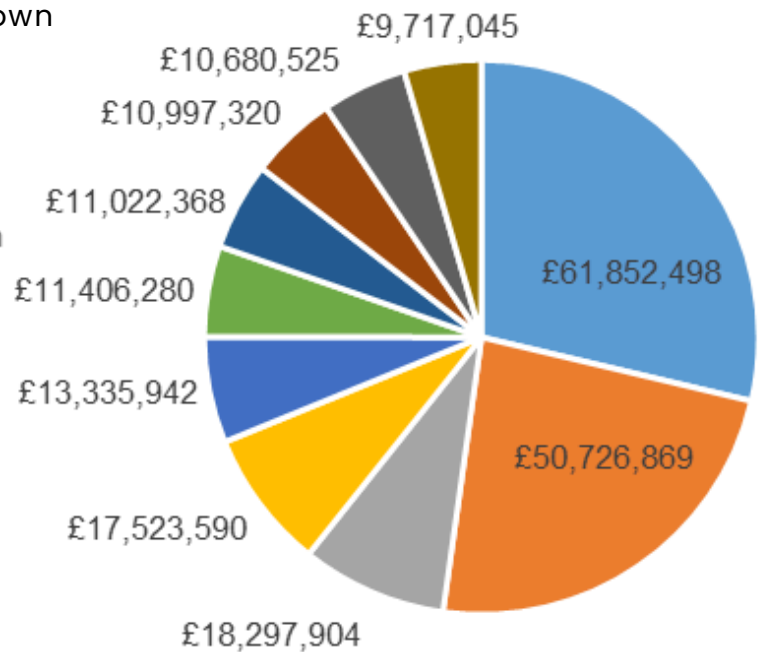
In 2022-2023 the council spent approx. £250M on procured goods and services: with the advent of the UK and Welsh Government reform this will require evidence on the part of the council as to how this spend is leveraged, to achieve greater social value, via legally compliant, transparent and properly managed spend and contractual processes.

The departments that comprise the internal structure of the organisation in terms of the council’s overall spend profile include South Wales Trunk Road Agency, as well as its schools, Education Directorate, Social Services and Environment and Corporate Services Directorates, that will each form part of the overall procurement vision and strategy for the council.

TOP 10 SPEND

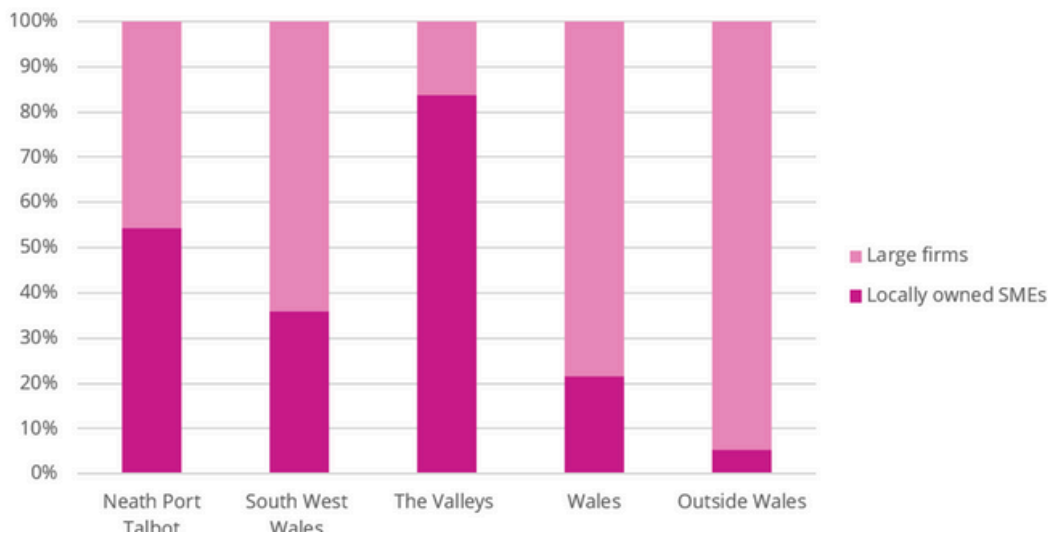
The top 10 categories contributing to the total spend in the Financial Year 2022/2023 are shown below.

- Works - Construction, Repair & Maintenance
- Social Community Care Supplies & Services - Adult
- Social Community Care Supplies & Services - Children
- Financial Services
- Building Construction Materials
- Public Transport
- Education
- Utilities
- Human Resources
- Environmental Services



The council’s overall spend includes expenditure from the South Wales Trunk Road Agency (SWTRA), which was £52,009,980 in the Financial Year 2022/2023. Excluding this spend, 53% (£110,245,290) of total expenditure was in Wales, and 47% (£51,514,418) of the Welsh spend was within the locality of Neath Port Talbot. The NPT spend as a percentage of overall spend was 25%.

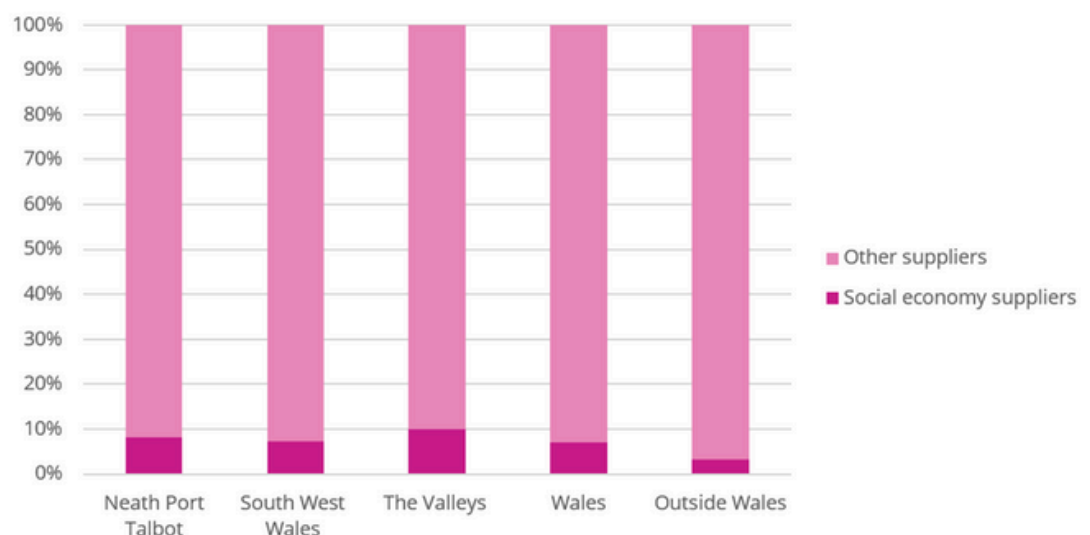
Looking at the size of suppliers, 54% of spend with Neath Port Talbot based suppliers is with SMEs, however this drops to 22% for suppliers across all of Wales. In terms of the Valleys, whilst total spend in this area is relatively small (5%), a significant proportion (84%) is spent with SMEs.



From a regional perspective, 36% of spending is with locally owned SMEs in South West Wales, which is higher than the (England) average - according to Tussell data (England only) in 2021, on average 26% of spending went to local SMEs and VCSEs, but there was large variation (18% - 31%) between regions.

Looking more specifically at social economy businesses (charitable organisations and industrial and provident societies) in the supply chain, 8% of spend with Neath Port Talbot based suppliers is with social economy businesses, and the figure is similar (7%) for suppliers across all of Wales.

Whilst this type of analysis provides a useful baseline it should also be recognised that suppliers based outside of Neath Port Talbot may also employ locally and/or subcontract with locally based suppliers.



To estimate these local multipliers, we carried out a targeted supplier survey (again, of the top 300 suppliers, by value) in order to estimate their local employment and re-spend in the local economy. This survey was also an opportunity to ask suppliers about their perceptions of engaging with the procurement process in Neath Port Talbot.

For the responses analysed:

- For every £1 spent with responding suppliers, 19.7 pence was re-spent in the local (Neath Port Talbot) economy.



Of this:

- 11.67 pence on local employees / 7.99 pence on local suppliers

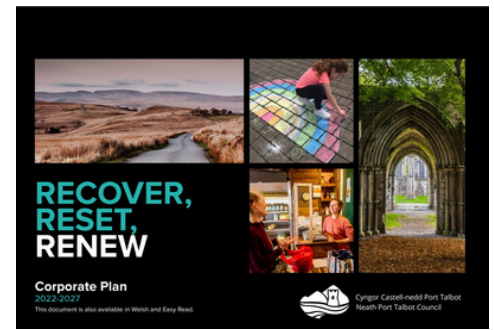


NEATH PORT TALBOT'S STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Corporate Plan

The council's key well-being objectives are:

- All children get the best start in life.
- All communities are thriving and sustainable.
- Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
- Local people are skilled and access high quality, green jobs.



The plan sets out what we want for the people of Neath Port Talbot and what steps we will be taking to achieve this. Priorities contained within Wellbeing Objective 1, whilst linked to our service provision, do not have a procurement focus.

Well-being Objective 2: All communities are thriving and sustainable

People live healthy, long and good lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another.

Next 12 months - Continue to promote and develop our 'NPT Buy Local' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local businesses.

In 3 years - Deliver training to council staff so they understand the principles of community development and have the skills and confidence to put those principles into practice.

In 20 years - Every community is thriving and inequalities in health, economic and social outcomes have reduced.

Well-being Objective 3: Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations

Natural processes are restored, and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change. People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

Next 12 months - Work with the community, local partners, funders and other stakeholders to set a new strategic direction for heritage and culture and for tourism/destination management.

In 3 years - Develop a clear understanding of how the environment, heritage, sport and culture can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy.

Increase the proportion of the Council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods and services and which are sourced locally and within the region, strengthening our foundational and circular economy.

Promote the benefits of buying local to residents, businesses and partners.

In 20 years - The area will be a destination of choice for people to live, work and spend their leisure time. Will have built a reputation for excellence in the way it promotes a strong sense of belonging through heritage, the arts, sport and culture and supports everyone to connect to the natural environment and to enjoy a high quality of wellbeing.

NEATH PORT TALBOT'S STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Well-being Objective 4: Jobs and Skills

Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and help local people acquire the skills they need to access those jobs.

Next 12 months - Further develop council procurement arrangements to ensure that the money spent by the council supports the employment of local people and the development of local businesses to the maximum extent possible. Strengthen the council's business support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers to adapt learning provision to keep pace with the changing needs of employers. Develop an investment programme to enable the expansion of sites and premises across the county borough that can support the development and growth of local businesses. Support local businesses in their recovery, providing financial support when available and helping businesses to diversify so that they are more resilient to future economic shocks. Develop a local investment plan that establishes clear priorities against which we can use the Shared Prosperity Fund. Establish the mechanisms to implement the actions set out in the Local Economic Development Plan.

In 3 years - Work with local businesses to increase access to public service contracts and new inward investment. Strengthen partnership arrangements at the local level to develop the economy ensuring business and communities have a strong voice in shaping future plans. Increase capacity within the economic development, business support and regeneration teams to better position the council to bid for funding and develop the local economy.

In 20 years - There is a strong and diverse SME base in the county borough which benefits from well-coordinated support, premises and finance.



NATIONAL LEGAL & STRATEGY DRIVERS


In 2024 we will witness a 'once in a generation' procurement legislation reform. This will bring significant change in how we procure, along with exciting opportunities to further place value for money, social value and community benefits at the heart of our procurement activities. Increased transparency requirements will hold us further to account for the decisions we make, the impact they have on suppliers and the Public and the economy.

These include:

Current UK Legislative Context

- The EU Public Sector Procurement Directive 2014 was transposed into UK Law by the **Public Contract Regulations 2015** and this is now retained law (with some minor amendments) following the UK's departure from the EU.
- The UK Government have introduced the new **Procurement Act 2023**, which is currently intended to come into force in October 2024. This new Act intends to create a simpler and more transparent procurement system that is not based on EU Directives. The Act in its current form covers 13 parts and has 11 schedules and will repeal over 350 individual regulations and create a single framework for public procurement.
- In addition to the Public Contract Regulations the council needs to ensure that its procurement policies and practices adhere to a range of additional legislative requirements including the **Equality Act 2010**. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) through all its functions and services by eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. Equality is considered throughout our procurement cycle and we ensure the PSED is applied to all contracts regardless of value, aiding us in undertaking procurement in a socially responsible way. Where applicable, we will work with contractors to ensure they meet the requirements of the PSED and ensure that all contractors take steps to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Current Welsh Legislative Context

- The Welsh Government's **Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023** will also see procurement processes being reformed in parallel with UK Government's Act with a focus on socially responsible public procurement. There will be an overarching duty, the 'socially responsible procurement duty'. This means that a contracting authority will have a duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by carrying out public procurement in a socially responsible way. This duty will apply throughout the whole procurement process.
- 

NATIONAL LEGAL & STRATEGY DRIVERS

Current Welsh Legislative Context (continued)

- The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** is focused on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The guidance states, “the role of procurement will be an important part of how a public body allocates resources under the Act.”
- The **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014** introduced a duty on local authorities and local health boards to promote the development (in their area) of not for profit organisations to provide care and support for carers, and preventative services. These models include services across the range that make up the third sector – social enterprises, co-operative organisations, co-operative arrangements, and user-led services.
- The council will be required to carry out procurement in a socially responsible way by taking action, in accordance with the **Sustainable Development Principle**, aimed at contributing to the achievement of – (a) the well-being goals listed in section 4 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and (b) the fair work goal (within the meaning given by section 4), referred to for the purposes of this Part as the “socially responsible procurement goals.” A council must set and publish objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the socially responsible procurement goals.
- The process of self-assessment under the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** and how procurement functions links into that work.
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 enacted under the **Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015**, which means that the council has a duty to consider the Welsh Language when it is procuring goods and services.

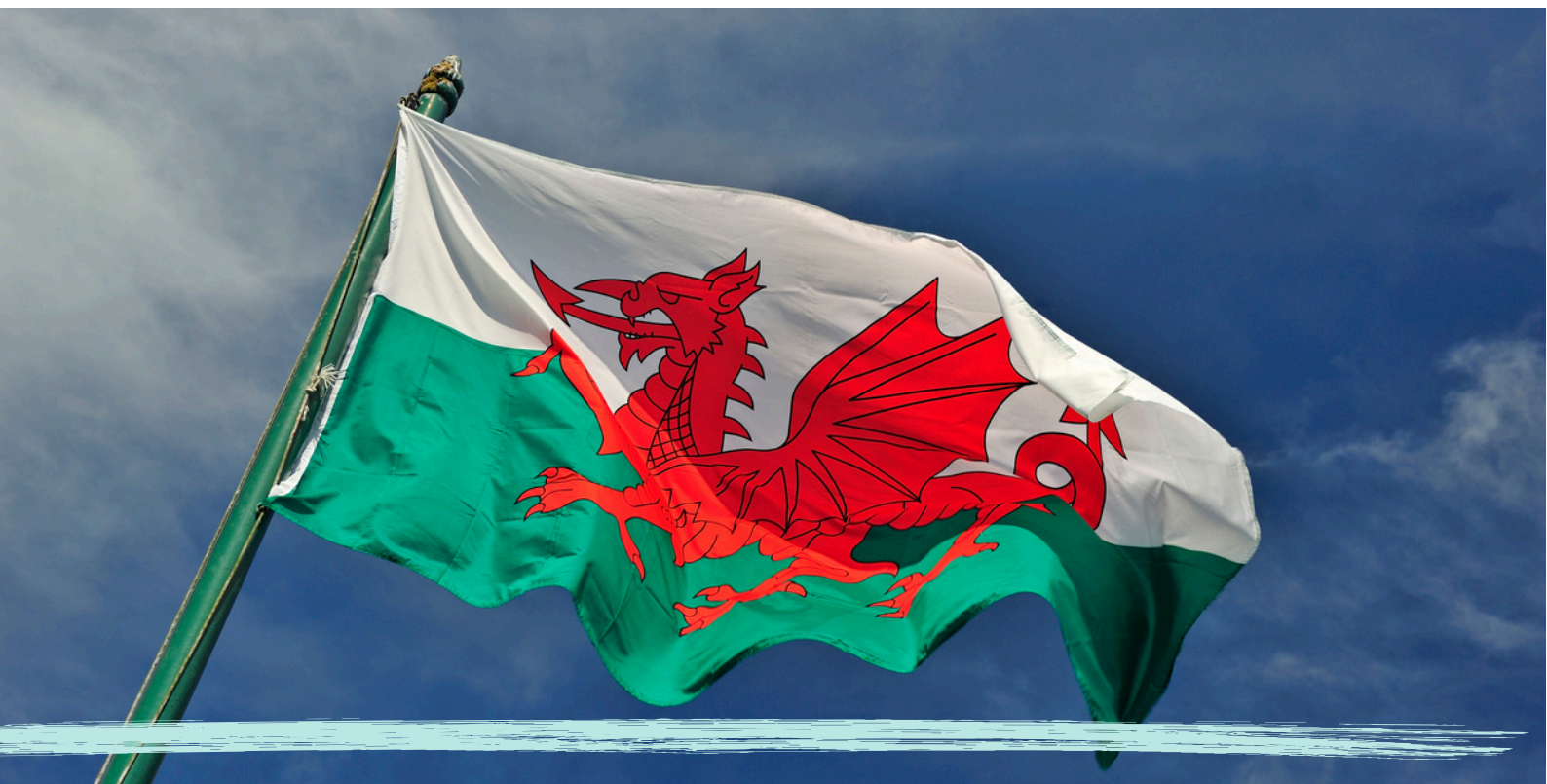
Welsh Government Initiatives

- **Community Benefits** – aimed at delivering maximum value for the Welsh pound when tendering contracts.
- **Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains** – Neath Port Talbot Council has signed up to the Code of Practice’s 11 commitments including the following employment issues:
 - Modern Slavery and human rights abuses.
 - Blacklisting.
 - False self-employment.
 - Unfair use of umbrella schemes and zero hours contracts.
- **Wales Procurement Policy Statement**
- **Wales Procurement Strategy Notes** – a series of Guidance notes for the Welsh Public sector.

NATIONAL LEGAL & STRATEGY DRIVERS

Welsh Government Initiatives (continued)

- **Opening Doors: The Charter for SME Friendly Procurement** – recognises that 99% of Welsh businesses are SMEs and their important role in the Foundational Economy. This Charter is part of a programme of actions to deliver a consistent approach to procurement across the public sector in Wales while at the same time addressing issues of particular concern to SMEs. Neath Port Talbot Council is committed to actively encourage its main suppliers to provide opportunities for SMEs to deliver elements of appropriate contracts. It is also committed to encourage its main suppliers and SMEs to embrace sustainable development ethos within their organisations.
- **WG Written Statement (2020) Progress towards the Development of a New Procurement Landscape for Wales** – recognises the role of procurement for supporting delivery against a number of important Strategy areas. It sets out 7 commitments that recognise that a new procurement approach is required in Wales and 7 commitments that the Welsh Government will take toward procurement. These are underpinned by 9 procurement transformation strands.
- **UK Steel Charter** – Neath Port Talbot Council has signed the Charter and has committed to implementing the steps when appropriate to do so, including the following:
 - Place a requirement in our appropriate contracts requiring the origin of steel to be provided.
 - Stipulate use of steel products accredited to BRE Standard BES 6001 in appropriate contracts.
 - Introduce a requirement for tender applications to include supply chain plans.



PRIORITIES AND DELIVERY

This Procurement Strategy aims to provide an overarching framework to ensure a joined up consistent approach to the delivery of our procurement goals and ensuring sustainable procurement that is socially responsible and that encapsulates the national, regional and Neath Port Talbot strategic drivers.

To do this, we have identified seven key priorities and socially responsibly procurement objectives that represent our values and beliefs and ensure we are improving the economic, social environment and cultural wellbeing of our community:

Securing value for money

Think NPT First

Contributing to making Neath Port Talbot Net Zero by 2030

Improving Fair Work and Safeguarding practices

Making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and the voluntary and community sector

Increasing social value in procurement and benefits to the community

Ensuring legal and regulatory compliance and transparent governance and be innovative in approach through the digital world



Securing Value for money

The council has in place a robust set of Contract Procedure Rules that govern the processes that need to be followed when looking to buy in goods, works and services from external suppliers. We recognise that as budgets contract, new and innovative ways of providing services such as partnering, joint working and collaboration with other public and not for profit organisations need to be examined.

Where do we want to be?

- The council routinely evidences that it considers quality and whole life cost in respect of financial and wider environmental, social, economic and cultural considerations, in particular carbon reduction and community benefits.
- Procurement contributes to the well-being objectives of the council.
- Social value is embedded into commissioning and procurement practice, tools, resources processes, strategy and a toolkit that are published.
- Ensure we are making payments due under a contract promptly and, unless this is not reasonably practicable, no later than 30 days after an invoice (or similar claim) is submitted.
- Forward planning for contracts has developed to form an integral part of the organisation's budget setting and expenditure forecasting process.
- Options appraisals include seeking commercial opportunities or collaborative contracting with others in the sector.
- New models for service delivery are developed.
- Outcomes from market and supplier research are used to shape and determine the content and timing of the procurement process used.
- Documentation is prepared to make it attractive to take part and is focused on innovation and opportunities.
- Performance reporting is seen as an integral part of the organisation's culture with reports on commercial and social benefits achieved included in a performance dashboard.
- Well-developed policies, procedures and systems in place to support contract and relationship management. Used to drive forward planning, cost control and contractor performance.
- Contracts register is dynamic, fully accessible to all who need to use it and administered by the Corporate Procurement Unit. Information is always up to date with comprehensive, complete and accurate records on all contracts. Contracts register has action or renewal alerting capabilities for contract owners and managers and in-built learning management capability.
- Standard supplier financial distress clause included in all major contracts for services.
- Regular briefings and meetings are held to brief all staff involved in contract and relationship management on commercial, developments, new initiatives and professional development.
- The organisation on a "one council basis" adding value initiatives including good practice on emerging issues, risk management, rapid data sharing including price data, talent development in commercial skills and managing contracts to gain benefits.

Securing Value for money (continued)

What are we going to do?

- Reviewing and challenging what we spend our money on and identifying opportunities to deliver efficiencies.
- Demonstrating value for money and considering the whole life cost of the decisions we make.
- Internal procurement procedures in place to underpin internal requirements
- Managing procurement demand across the council and promote a 'Buying Responsibly' campaign.
- Utilising regional and national framework agreements where they represent value for money.
- Embedding a robust and proportional contract management approach.
- Performance reporting is undertaken and includes commercial and social benefits achieved as well as savings across the council.
- Routine collection and analysis of data and intelligence on supplier performance, cost, financial status, added social value and risk, including procurement and legal risks.

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- Reporting on the percentage of spend under management by officers of the council and how procurement contributes to saving targets through effective procurement.
- Ensuring transparency of our contract processes and our forward procurement programmes and publishing the same.



PRIORITIES AND DELIVERY

Think NPT First

We will work to increase the amount of Council spend spent in local and regional supply chains where this is affordable for the Council. This will allow increased access to public service contracts and aim to attract new inward investment.

Where do we want to be?

- Ensure that procurement decisions consider how the local market can best be supported and steps are taken to ensure as much spend as possible takes place in the Neath Port Talbot area
- Assist in the development of a vibrant local economy which is capable of delivering strong and sustainable growth.
- Achieve maximum value for every pound we spend in the widest sense; building stronger and sustainable communities, reducing social exclusion and poverty and encouraging the development of our economy

What are we going to do?

- Appropriate arrangements in our procedure rules to enable locally based organisations to participate in tender processes on an equal basis with larger organisations.
- Ensure early engagement with the market and ensure transparency regarding forthcoming opportunities
- Working with partners to develop the capability and capacity of local businesses to secure council contracts and encourage our suppliers and partners to buy locally.
- Developing and then publicising a Selling to Council Guide to local businesses so they are clear about how to do business with the Council.
- Strengthen the relationship between procurement and economic development to target effective local business support

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- More locally based suppliers entering into contracts with the Council or providing services to Council suppliers and partners.
- Monitor the percentage of spend with local suppliers and develop an approach to analyse supplier re-spend in Neath Port Talbot
- Monitor, record and report Community Benefits delivered through our contracts and frameworks.
- Monitor and quantify the local economic benefits retained within Neath Port Talbot from local employment and local supply chain spend through our contracts.
- Analyse the success of supplier engagement initiatives to understand the impact on suppliers.



Contributing to making Neath Port Talbot Net Zero by 2030

The council aims to maximise the economic, social, health and environmental benefits of decarbonisation through a focus on renewable energy. To do this, we will aim to

- Reduce the carbon emissions, resulting from delivering the council's work programme.
- Lessen energy consumption and switching to energy sources that are less harmful to the environment.
- Overcome barriers to renewable energy and encouraging the use of sustainable and renewable resources.
- Manage our natural resources so that carbon sequestration is maximised, and carbon release is minimised.
- Work with partners and business, sharing good practice, assets and resources.
- Promote the benefits of cleaner energy and emission reduction to council employees and the people of Neath Port Talbot.
- Attract additional funding from Welsh Government and other relevant sources.

Achieving Net Zero requires a reduction in emissions and while we recognise the current challenge of reporting Scope 3 emissions within the supply chain, because they involve a complex web of activities throughout the value chain, we are committed to working in collaboration with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders to get a more better understanding and focussed on activity that drives down carbon within that chain. That more accurate understanding will help identify opportunities for departments to reduce their environmental impact across the entire supply chain.

Procurement decisions will ensure that regardless of what is bought, the local environment can be safeguarded and also avoid adverse environmental impacts in the supply chain. Procurement, with strong Council governance will strive to meet the challenge of safeguarding and improving both the environment and quality of life without compromising economic growth whilst recognising the potential conflicting tensions that each may have

Where do we want to be?


- We will determine best value as the optimum combination of whole life costs and benefits to meet specified requirements.
- When considering expensive power

What are we going to do?

- Understanding the carbon footprint of the Council's purchased goods, services and works to ensure our carbon reduction activity is targeted where it can have the biggest impact.

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- Annual reporting on managed spend
- Management of contract forward work plan
- Council Directorates to report on



consuming goods a lifetime cost analysis will also be undertaken in accordance with the Council's developing stance on carbon management and carbon reduction.

- We will ensure our tender specifications consider the wider environmental impact of the products we buy, and how the products are made and can be disposed of at end of life and also how the manufacturers themselves are reducing the usage of single use materials and reusing materials in order for diversion from waste.

- Eliminate unnecessary waste by adopting the “reduce, reuse, recycle” philosophy and supporting circular economy and sharing economy through ‘Think before you purchase – do you really need it, could something else be used, or could we hire or borrow it?’
- Support initiatives that raise the awareness on climate change and circular economy – both internally and with suppliers.
- Internal procurement procedures in place to enable compliant decarbonisation considerations in tender processes - carbon reduction is fully embedded in our decision making processes throughout the procurement cycle and low carbon solutions are implemented where appropriate
- Learn from best practice and work with partners to develop a carbon baselining approach.

procurement practices that have demonstrated a contribution to financial savings.

Improving Fair Work and Safeguarding practices

Fair work plays a key role in supporting the positive behaviours and attitudes of employees that can lead to improved business performance, innovation and productivity, and can lead to better quality jobs.

Safeguarding vulnerable people is one of the Council's main corporate priorities. Safeguarding children and adults at risk from harm is everybody's responsibility.

Where do we want to be?

- Ensure that fair work principles are promoted across the council and procurement processes where affordable increase fair work practices that help tackle poverty and inequality.
- Ensuring that tenderers and contractors are aware of the council's commitment to working with organisations that will support the council to meet its equality, fair work and promote the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults



What are we going to do?

- Using our tender process and contracts to ensure that our contractors are committed to supporting the council to deliver its equality, fair work and safeguarding duties.
- Supporting the implementation of the Council's Modern Slavery Statement.
- Encouraging contractors to provide equality training.
- Ensuring contractors know how to identify and report safeguarding concerns.
- Delivering against the principles of the Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains
- Commissioning Officers will carry regular reviews of expenditure and undertake a risk assessment on the findings to identify products and/or services where there is a risk of Modern Slavery within the UK and overseas
- Identify products and/or services at potential high risk of Modern Slavery and establish a process to assess the contracts and work practices via a pilot to assess a sample of suppliers to attempt to identify and address through the appropriate channels any examples of Modern Slavery

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- Provision of annual written modern slavery statement
- Data on staff undertaking modern slavery and ethical employment practices training will be kept by the Council's Training section.
- Delivery against Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains
- Annual reporting to the council's Cabinet on compliance



Making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses (SMEs) and the voluntary and community sector (VCS)

SMEs account for 80% of the local economy and play a major role in creating jobs and generating income, they help foster economic growth, social stability, are a source of innovation and contribute to the development of a dynamic private sector.

The VCS sector is diverse in size, scope, staffing and funding of organisations. It provides a broad range of services to many different client groups.

Where do we want to be?

- Small businesses and third sector organisations have visibility of and access to opportunities to bid for council contracts, find it easier to bid for opportunities to work with the council, better understand where opportunities exist to supply through the council's existing suppliers and contractors
- SME and VCS engagement is embedded into corporate Strategy.
- Commissioners engage regularly with SMEs, both on an individual basis and collectively to achieve desired market outcomes.
- There is responsive willingness to facilitate relationships between SMEs and certain larger providers.
- Procurement procedures are flexible according to the size of contract and supplier market. Prescriptive measures are only used when necessary, according to law or regulations. SMEs are fully able to respond to the process.
- Contract management processes require full monitoring of the performance of prime contractors to ensure they treat SMEs fairly (such as through prompt payments and not passing on risks) and obtain SME views when evaluating prime contractor performance.
- Commissioners and procurers have informed the market what the local need is and the desired market outcomes. VCS can make efforts to collaborate with organisations to respond to local need.
- There is responsive willingness to facilitate relationships between VCS and certain larger providers.
- Commissioners or procurers work closely with VCS to seek extensive user feedback in order to review the effectiveness of their service in meeting local need.
- Contract management structures fully monitor the performance of prime contractors to ensure they fairly treat VCS in their supply chains (such as through prompt payments, not passing on risks) and obtain VCS views when evaluating prime providers' contract performance.

Making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses (SMEs) and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) - continued

What are we going to do?

- Work with partners to develop the capability and capacity of SMEs and VCS to secure council contracts
- Developing and then publicising a Tendering and the Council Guide to local businesses so they are clear about how to do business with the council.
- Publish our Corporate Contracts Register on the council's website so businesses are aware of the likely procurement opportunities.
- Appropriate arrangements in our procedure rules to enable compliant SME/VCS considerations in tender processes.

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- Spend analysis utilised to track percentage of council spend on SME/VCS and increasing this amount
- Accurate published Corporate Contracts Register
- Undertaking regular user feedback on procurement processes with SME and VCS.



Increasing social value in procurement and benefits to the community

The council was an early adopter of the use of Community Benefits, and recognising their importance created a dedicated Community Benefits Officer post in 2015. The practice has enabled the council to introduce appropriate measures into procurement contracts, principally around construction projects, to ensure that the council secures the maximum economic and social benefits for local residents and businesses

The council is committed to promoting Sustainable Development through our policies, strategies and services, thus achieving best value for money in the widest sense. The aim is to build stronger communities, reduce social exclusion and poverty and encourage the development of the economy. When delivering infrastructure projects Neath Port Talbot are pursuing Community Benefits to contribute to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the wider community.

Where do we want to be?

- Increased value of community benefits delivered through council contracts
- Community Benefits and Social Value opportunities are maximised and aligned to support the priorities of the council and the individuals and communities it serves.

What are we going to do?

- Establish a Community Benefits Steering Group comprising key officers from council Directorates.
- Develop a social value framework.
- Develop a coordinated, consistent approach across the council.
- Internal procurement procedures in place to underpin internal requirements.
- Raising awareness of community benefits internally to address any organisational culture barriers.
- Review community benefit implementation and adapt the approach as required.
- Work in partnership with employers, training providers and employment services to promote and co-ordinate access to local employment and training opportunities.
- Seek opportunities to work with primary and secondary schools through Neath Port Talbot to equip young people with the right skills to match the requirements of the labour market.
- Maximise benefits from the City Deal, Corporate Joint Committee and other major development opportunities to create employment and training.
- Encourage suppliers and contractors to work with schools and colleges, offering work experience and business awareness to students, care leavers and NEETs, especially those from disadvantaged areas or communities.
- Inclusion of appropriate contract terms and monitoring of the same
- Adoption of a formal process for the capturing and monitoring of social value metrics.

Increasing social value in procurement and benefits to the community - continued

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- Increasing the number of tenders that ask for Community Benefits and Social Value.
- Increasing the volume and value of Community Benefits and Social Value committed to, and delivered, through Council contracts
- Successful suppliers will be required to provide regular monitoring information outlining Community Benefits delivery progress.



Ensuring Legal and Regulatory Compliance and Transparent Governance and be innovative in approach through the digital world

Public sector procurement is subject to a legal framework which encourages free and open competition and value for money, in line with internationally and nationally agreed obligations and regulations. As part of its Strategy, the council aligns procurement policies with this legal framework, as well as with its wider Strategy objective.

Procurement can be viewed as preventing innovation however effective, legally compliant and sustainable procurement can lead to improvement and create new ways of working

Where do we want to be?

- Ensure council staff and elected members have awareness of, and comply with, relevant UK Government/ Welsh Government legislation and the council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- Public procurement to be a strategic function within the council to be utilised to facilitate well-being, and wider policy, objectives
- Innovation in procurement and contract management is mainstreamed in practises and is able to harness supplier innovation.
- Support effective contract management to

What are we going to do?

- Develop legally compliant policies and procedures.
- Regularly reviewing and updating procurement documentation, processes, systems and controls to ensure they reflect legislative changes.
- Ensuring staff involved in the procurement process have the required skills, knowledge and tools to work effectively.
- Regularly reviewing and updating procurement documentation to ensure they reflect best practice.
- Ensuring procurement documentation, processes and controls are in place to ensure compliance.
- Publishing an annual procurement report
- Publishing our contract register and forthcoming procurement pipeline.
- Strong cross-council organisation governance structures
- Challenging existing procurement arrangements and delivery models and seeking relevant examples of market innovations and best practice.

How we will ensure we are getting there?

- Ensure legal impacts are considered in all reports that go to elected members concerning procurement activity
- Publishing an annual procurement report
- Monitor the % of procurement spend compliant with our Contract Procedure Rules
- Monitor the number of exception requests for approval to waiver competition to the Contract Procedure Rules we receive.

deliver value for money and successful outcomes, on time and to budget.

- Encouraging outcome / problem-based procurement approach to stimulate creative and innovative solutions and engaging early with markets
- Collaborating with Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association, Swansea Bay City Deal Region and other public sector organisations to drive innovations and greater value and share good practice.
- Continue to develop and invest in a skilled Corporate Procurement Unit to provide professional procurement guidance.
- Monitor the Continuous Professional Development of officers in the Corporate Procurement Unit and level of procurement training delivered throughout council.



KEY ENABLERS

PEOPLE

- Councillors set the council vision and strategic priorities and must be satisfied that the procurement and commercial arrangements for their delivery are robust. Councillors make key decisions, particularly in major projects, and maintain oversight of the performance of key contracts, agreeing corrective action where necessary. Councillor engagement needs to be supported through training, good procurement and commercial advice and reporting arrangements.
- Officers of the Council value and benefit from procurement and commercial advice including at the early stages of major projects. This is a two-way process requiring action by senior managers on the one hand and by procurement and commissioning advisors on the other
- We will develop a culture of innovation and ensure value for money is at the heart of all procurement
- We will work collaborative to achieve better solutions and ensure we are sharing all good practice
- Invest in training and development to ensure staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge and remain up to date with latest trends and best practice

PROCESS

- We will strive to simplify whilst still ensuring compliance and transparency are at the heart of our processes.
- We will provide standard documentation and templates to make the process of taking part in procurement as straightforward as possible.
- We will ensure that all individuals in the procurement process are trained and work in accordance with this Procurement Strategy
- We will review our financial processes to ensure payments can be made promptly and no later than 30 days after a valid invoice is submitted"
- Implement KPT's to monitor and evaluate procurement activities and supplier performance
- Undertake contingency plans to address supply chain disruption and other unforeseen challenges

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

- We will ensure the council has an eProcurement process that provides an effective infrastructure to track and manage procurement activity. Managing both low value, high volume purchases and high value, strategic purchases more efficiently and effectively whilst maintaining the necessary managerial controls will be further rolled out to council directorates
- We will ensure our processes allow for analysis of spend by identifying how much is spent on goods, services and works, with whom money is spent, who in the council spends money and on what contractual arrangements.
- We will ensure effective use of electronic data allows for identification of new opportunities for corporate arrangements and greater collaboration. The council will continue to work with Welsh Government to ensure electronic procurement tools will enable Neath Port Talbot to build upon existing eSolutions and take advantage of emerging technologies in order to drive our eProcurement function forward
- We will provide a Contract Register and Procurement Forward Programme

DELIVERY PLAN

Delivering this strategy will require strong leadership, good governance, and close collaboration by individuals and organisations from across the council, Neath Port Talbot and beyond.

To measure success, we need to know what success looks like. One key aspect of that will be the development of the Delivery Plan. A detailed Delivery Plan will set out the actions that the council will take to deliver this Procurement Strategy. This Delivery Plan will be updated on an annual basis and will be used to manage and report on progress.

The council will publish a Procurement Annual Report at the end of each financial year. The report will include:



A progress report on the implementation of the Procurement Strategy Delivery Plan.



Whether any amendments are required to our Procurement Strategy to ensure is reviewed each financial year and revised as appropriate.



A summary of the contracts awarded above Public Contracts Regulations (PCRs) 2015/Procurement Act 2023 thresholds.



Details of a review into the extent to which council contracts contributed to improving wellbeing in Neath Port Talbot.



A statement of the how the council intends to further improve the delivery of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.




A summary of the procurement the council expects to carry out in the next two financial years.



Contact:

 Procurement@npt.gov.uk

 01639 793929

Corporate Procurement Unit,
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ

Have your say on what matters to you

Would you like to become part of our Citizens Panel?

Our Citizens Panel enables residents to take part in research relating to the council. This means you will be able to tell us what you think about council policies, priorities and/or services.

All feedback helps us to understand residents' perspectives and is used to help make decisions. You do not need any knowledge of council services to become a member of the panel. You may be asked to take part in online questionnaires, informal discussions, workshops, telephone interviews and other forms of consultation.

If you would like to join up please complete the recruitment questionnaire.

We also have a number of consultation/engagement events about various services which we promote in the press and on the website which you can access via the following link: <http://www.npt.gov.uk/haveyoursay>.