



London Borough of
Richmond upon Thames

Responsible Procurement Strategy

2025 – 2030



Foreword

As the Head of our Procurement operations across the Council, I am delighted to introduce our new Responsible Procurement Strategy. This initiative marks a significant milestone in our commitment to sustainability, ethical practices, and social responsibility.

It aims to streamline our procurement processes, leverage cutting-edge technologies, and build stronger relationships with our suppliers and partners. Our goal is to not only meet but exceed the expectations of our stakeholders, ensuring that we deliver value at every step.

Our strategy is designed to ensure that every procurement decision we make aligns with our core values, and respect for the environment. By prioritising responsible sourcing, we aim to foster long-term relationships with suppliers and partners who share our vision for a better, more sustainable future.

Together, we will work towards reducing our environmental footprint, supporting fair labour practices, and promoting innovation in sustainable products and services. This strategy is not just a policy; it is a pledge to make a positive impact on the world around us. I look forward to collaborating with each of you as we embark on this exciting journey. Your dedication and support are crucial to the success of our Responsible Procurement Strategy.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence and sustainability.

Mark Glaister
Assistant Director of Procurement



Introduction

Public Sector Procurement is a powerful lever, with the power to drive innovation, improve sustainability, foster engagement with Small and Medium Enterprises and the Voluntary Sector, create Social Value, and support economic growth. For local authorities such as Richmond Council, it provides an opportunity to harness local expertise to tackle issues facing the communities the Council serves, as well as securing value-for-money for residents.

This new procurement strategy outlines the approach that the Council will take over the next five years, to support local priorities as outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan, and to meet the requirement set by national government. This ambitious approach will highlight how procurement can act as a golden thread, directly delivering on Council priorities, and ensuring better outcomes and value for residents and communities.

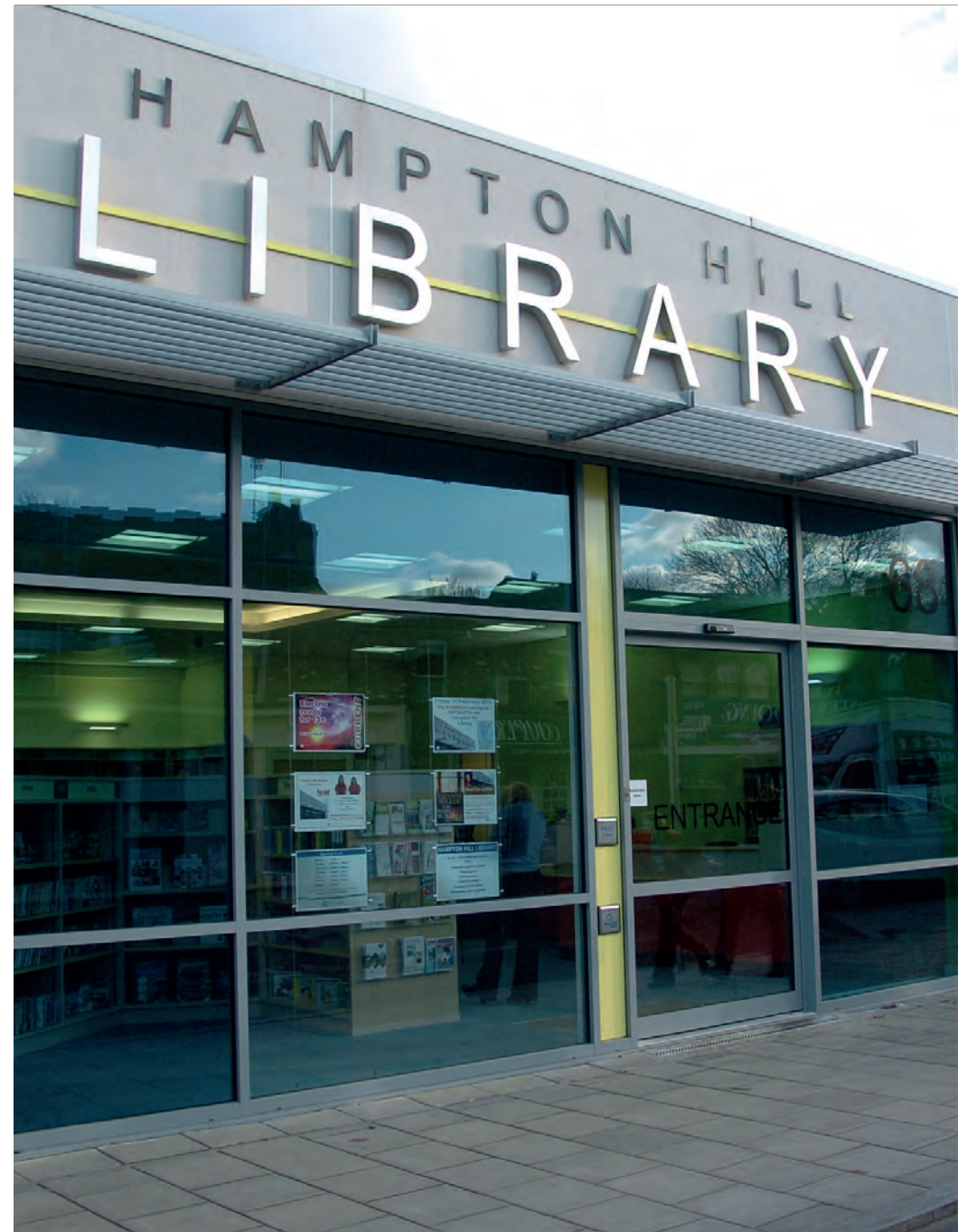
The key priorities driving this strategy are set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, as follows:

A Fairer Richmond

A Safer Richmond

A Greener Richmond

A Council run as efficiently as possible, ensuring value for money for every pound of taxpayer money spent.



The National Policy Context

The production of this strategy has been timed so that it appropriately reflects the changing national policy context, driven by the primary and secondary legislation which have come into force in 2025.

The Procurement Act (2023) consolidated previous regulations into a single, flexible regime designed to enhance transparency, fairness, and value for money. For the Council, the Act requires that we continue to deliver value for money, maximise public benefit, act with integrity, and ensure broader participation.

The National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) published on 13 February 2025 introduced a focus on mission-driven procurement, highlighting the importance of public procurement in delivering value for money and social and economic value, driving sustainable economic growth and benefits to local communities. The statement requires contracting authorities to:

- Deliver value for money by balancing effectiveness, efficiency and economy over the life-cycle of a contract, including wider socio-economic and environmental benefits and impacts.
- Drive economic growth and strengthen supply chains by giving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) a fair chance, creating high quality jobs and championing innovation, maximising procurement spend with SMEs and VCSEs.
- Ensure that the right commercial capability and standards are in place to procure and manage contracts effectively.
- Ensure suppliers are committed to providing high quality jobs, safe and healthy working conditions, fair pay, opportunity and progression for workers.

To deliver against these priorities, this strategy addresses a number of key themes:

- The Contractor Charter
- The Council's commitment to suppliers
- Social Value
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action
- Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector and SMEs



The Contractor Charter

As a responsible contracting authority, we expect the highest standards of our contractors and suppliers, just as they do of us.

To formalise these standards, we will implement a Contractors' Charter which will highlight a supplier's commitment to ensuring fair work and conditions for their employees, and good practice in other areas referred to in this strategy. By signing the charter, suppliers will be invited to commit to the following:

- The London Mayor's Good Work Standard, including:
 - Fair pay and conditions
 - Engagement, voice and wellbeing
 - Skills and engagement
 - Diversity and inclusion
- Publication of annual statements on Modern Slavery.
- Disability Confident Employer standards.
- Real Living Wage Foundation accreditation (noting that suppliers are required to pay the Real Living Wage to employees as part of the Council's Terms and Conditions).
- Fair Tax Charter.
- Data Quality Policy and Standards.
- London Healthy Workplace Charter.
- GLA Group Responsible Procurement policy.
- Cooperate and collaborate with the Voluntary and Community Sector in the Borough.
- Work with the Council to tackle the Climate Emergency, including through agreeing to the West London Alliance Low Carbon Procurement Policy and engaging to reduce emissions.
- Faithfully deliver and report on Social Value, including through the production of case studies.



What Suppliers can expect from the Council

Effective Contract and Supplier Management is crucial for ensuring that public money is spent effectively, and that services are meeting and exceeding the required standards to best serve our residents and communities.

It also ensures that suppliers are treated fairly and consistently. Ensuring that we have a robust and proportionate approach to Contract and Supplier Management is a key element of our Responsible Procurement Strategy. This strategy sets out what actual and potential suppliers can expect from the Council:

The Council will:

- Ensure that contract management is proportionate to the risk and value of the contract.
- Create a centralised view of contract performance across the Council.
- Ensure that contract managers are effectively supported and have access to the required tools, systems and training to carry out their roles and to monitor, manage and report on Key Performance Indicators and Service Level Agreements across their contracts.
- Ensure that the Council's contract register is up-to-date so that potential suppliers are informed of upcoming opportunities.
- Ensure that the Procurement team are experts in their categories, providing reliable commercial advice.
- Ensure that Council staff evaluating bids made by suppliers are appropriately trained and are aware of their roles and responsibilities to ensure a fair and robust procurement process.
- Ensure all procurement activities comply with relevant laws and regulations, including the Procurement Act 2023 and our own internal procurement rules.



- Maintain open and transparent procurement processes to prevent unfair advantages and ensure accountability.
- Uphold high ethical standards, including preventing modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Ensure that the most efficient systems and processes are in place to speed up the procurement process to reduce time spent and cost, and to keep those systems and processes under constant review.



Social Value

Social Value is a crucial element of public sector procurement, with contracting authorities required to give consideration to the wider economic, social and environmental wellbeing generated through the procurement process since 2012.

Richmond Council will continue to maximise this wellbeing through our strategy, utilising procurement activity to directly support the corporate plans of the Council.

We aim to:

- Ensure that Social Value is embedded across all procurement activity.
- Quantify, measure, and report on Social Value delivered by suppliers.
- Target Social Value delivery to address the needs of residents and communities, and to align to the Corporate Plan and Council Objectives.

To deliver this, we will:

- Continue to allocate a minimum of 10% of the evaluation criteria of a given contract to Social Value and update the Social Value Toolkit to ensure that Social Value is directly targeted at addressing the specific needs of our communities and aligns to our corporate plans.
- Ensure that Social Value bids by suppliers lead to specific, measurable targets that can be reported on and monitored as part of the contract management process, and track and monitor delivery against these targets in the form of dashboards, annual reports, and case studies.
- Set evaluation criteria for Social Value in a way that rewards local networks and expertise.
- Implement a matching platform, allowing potential suppliers to see where local VCSEs have specific needs and to directly address these when writing bids, and to connect suppliers with the VCS and wider partners.
- Continue to focus on using Social Value to target carbon emissions and other environmental concerns.
- Maximise local employment and skills through Social Value, in particular as regards to those not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) and Care Leavers, and work with the Council's employment and skills team to ensure that jobs are good, fair and have a long-term positive impact on residents.
- Foster and embed a culture of cross-department collaboration within the Council, particularly with regard to procurement, planning, and development to allow for Social Value to be considered alongside Section 106 contributions and the (Neighbourhood) Community Infrastructure Levy.

Tackling the climate emergency

Richmond Council is committed to improving environmental sustainability, declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and committing to achieving Carbon Neutrality across its operations by 2030.

The Council has produced the Richmond Climate and Nature Strategy 2025-2030 (RCNS), to guide the Council's journey to achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2030. A 2023 carbon emissions analysis found that scope 3 emissions accounted for 76% of Richmond Council's total carbon emissions. Setting sustainable procurement objectives is key to achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2030. The RCNS identifies unique challenges and opportunities for to support Richmond in becoming a greener Borough.

We aim to:

- Procure energy efficient products and services.
- Encourage the circular economy.
- Reduce emissions from existing suppliers where possible.

To deliver this, we will:

- Support the implementation of the vehicle decarbonisation strategy, encouraging the procurement of low and no-emissions vehicles wherever possible.
- Further embed the West London Alliance Low Carbon Procurement Toolkit.
- Engage with the top ten carbon-emitting suppliers to work to reduce carbon emissions.
- Formalise emissions reduction requirements for new suppliers.
- Continue to ensure that Social Value is embedded within all contracts, and work to ensure that low-carbon measures are included wherever possible.



- Utilise expertise from across the Council's departments, including the Procurement team and the Council's Climate Change team, to set appropriate specifications and conduct evaluations.
- Support the implementation of the Plastics Pledge in Richmond.

Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector and Small & Medium Enterprises

Encouraging the development of local supply chains through supporting VCSEs and SMEs will contribute to a thriving local economy.

The National Procurement Policy Statement clearly outlines the need for contracting authorities to use the procurement process to provide opportunities for the Voluntary and Community Sector and Small & Medium Enterprises at every opportunity, and the 2025 London Growth Plan highlights the City-wide ambition to accelerate work making it easier for SMEs to win public sector contracts. Support for the VCS is therefore a priority of high importance for the Council and a key element of this Responsible Procurement Strategy.

We aim to:

- Fulfil the requirements of the Procurement Act and NPPS by maximising procurement spend with VCSE and SMEs.
- Support the VCS and local SMEs to win contracts with the Council and other authorities.
- Ensure that Social Value delivery by suppliers targets the needs of VCS organisations within the borough.

To do this, we will:

- Deliver training to VCSEs and SMEs on areas such as bid-writing, social value, and the Council's e-procurement system to ensure a level playing field.
- Publish a pipeline of future tenders and quotes to enable the VCS and SMEs to plan and identify opportunities effectively.

- Conduct soft market testing with potential VCS and SMEs bidders to inform our Commissioning and Procurement strategy.
- Commit to ensuring that procurement processes are no more onerous than as required by legislation or government guidance.
- Ensure that tender and quote documents are written in plain English with clear instructions on how to respond, and host “meet the buyer” events within two weeks of issuing tender documents to clarify expectations.
- Set insurance requirements (Professional, Public Liability, and Employers) at levels consistent with the contract's risk, recognising that the Procurement Act 2023 no longer requires SMEs and VCSEs to show evidence of insurance until after they have won the contract.
- Align payment terms with the organisation's cash flow needs, and pay correct invoices as soon as possible and certainly within 30 days.
- Set evaluation criteria that align with market capabilities, including requirements for bidders to demonstrate local networks where appropriate.
- Ensure that contract terms and conditions are appropriate to the risk, deliverables and contract length.
- Inform VCSE and SME bidders on how to raise questions during the bidding process and provide detailed feedback at the contract award phase within regulatory boundaries, and offer additional guidance post-award to improve future bid success rates.
- Implement smart KPIs and evaluation criteria to ensure effective contract management.
- Where possible and economically viable, split contracts into smaller lots to encourage VCSEs and SMEs to submit bids for and to win contracts.

Conclusion

This Responsible Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 sets a clear and ambitious path towards achieving sustainability, social value, and economic growth. By embedding responsible procurement practices across all operations, we aim to create a greener, fairer borough.

Our commitment to social value, environmental sustainability, and support for the voluntary and community sector and SMEs will drive positive change within our community. Through effective contract and supplier management, skills development, and robust governance, we will ensure that public money is spent wisely and that our procurement activities deliver maximum benefit to our residents.

As we move forward, collaboration with our partners and stakeholders will be crucial. Together, we will work towards reducing our environmental footprint, supporting fair labour practices, and promoting innovation in sustainable products and services. This strategy is not just a policy; it is a pledge to make a positive impact on the world around us.

Thank you for your dedication and support in making Richmond a better place for all.

