

# Bristol City Council Procurement & Contract Management Strategy

2023–2027



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The council’s Corporate Strategy sets out the council’s contribution to the city and is our main strategic document. It informs everything we do and sets out our main priorities for 2022 to 2027. The Corporate Strategy outlines a vision of driving an inclusive, sustainable and healthy city of hope and aspiration where everyone can share the city’s success. It also describes the activities the Council must do by law.
- 1.2. The council has responsibility for an incredibly diverse range of services – including everything from caring for the most vulnerable children in our city, through to building new transport infrastructure to keep our city moving. Everything we do relies in some way on the goods, services and works we buy. This means that procurement and contract management decisions have a direct impact on:
- The council’s budget and savings proposals
  - The quality and cost of services to citizens
  - Corporate and service objectives
- 1.3. Beyond the obvious direct impacts, our decisions about what we buy, who we buy it from and the way we buy it also have significant wider environmental, economic and social impacts – both locally and globally. For example, choosing to spend money with a small local business can support local employment, help the business to grow, keep money within the local economy and may reduce our environmental impact too. This means that procurement and contract management decisions also contribute to achieving the fundamental ‘building blocks’ in our Corporate Strategy:
- Development and Delivery (e.g. community development)
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Equality and Inclusion.
  - Resilience
  - World Class employment
- 1.4. [Our Social Value policy](#) makes strong commitments to take wider social, economic and environmental impacts into account when we make decisions – including when we procure and manage contracts. This means our approach to Social Value underpins this strategy and is embedded into all four of the guiding principles set out in this strategy, rather than being a separate consideration.
- 1.5. [Our procurement rules, policies and processes](#) will be aligned to support this Strategy. Equally, this strategy also complements other related policies such as the Ethical & Equitable Investment Policy and Modern Day Slavery statement, as well as existing commitments such as to the Living Wage and Fairtrade.
- 1.6. The purpose of this strategy is therefore to support the Corporate Strategy by setting out the Council’s guiding principles and ambitions for our procurement and contract management activity for the period 2023 to 2027. Note that the Council’s schools and subsidiary companies are not bound by this document, but we’d still expect the good practice in this strategy to be relevant to them too.

## 2. Purpose and vision

2.1. The purpose of this strategy is to set out the Council’s guiding principles and ambitions for our procurement and contract management activity for the period 2023 to 2027.

2.2. This strategy will detail our vision by applying four guiding principles to our procurement and contract management activity:

- **Best Value** is about trying to get the best overall impact for Bristol from the public money we spend with suppliers. This ties into meeting our Best Value Duty as a Council, which means considering overall value, including wider economic, environmental and social value factors.
- **Fair & Compliant** highlights our responsibility as a public body to set high standards in the way we procure and manage contracts. Our aim is to maintain the trust of the public and our suppliers by acting in a fair, lawful and professional way and ensuring that we are as transparent and accountable as possible.
- **Healthy & Sustainable** focusses on trying to ensure that our activities are sustainable, even if the impacts may not always be visible to us. This includes supply chain resilience, having a positive effect on the environmental, helping people stay healthy, and trying to ensure that people involved in our supply chains are paid a sustainable wage.
- **Local Communities** focusses on the positive impact we can have on Bristol. This includes supporting local suppliers and employment, building strong local partnerships and ways in which we can have a positive impact on equality and inclusion in our city.



## 3. Overview of Procurement and Contract Management

### 3.1. Definition of procurement and contract management:

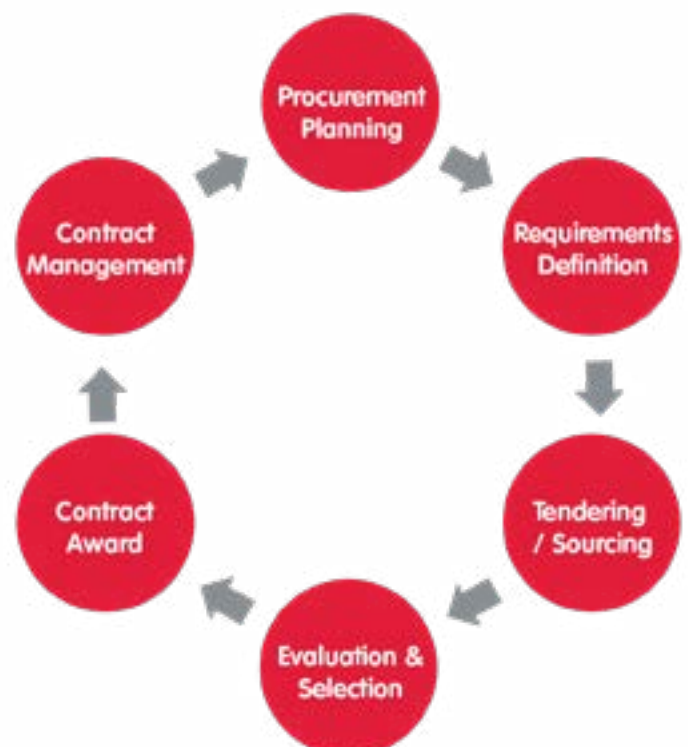
Procurement is the process of acquiring works, goods and services from suppliers. The process is a cycle, including identification and clarification of our needs, followed by a procedure to select the best offer from a supplier. A contract is then entered into and should be continuously managed to ensure our needs are met. Contract management is a continuous process that ensures suppliers – and buyers – adhere to their agreed contractual obligations, along with negotiating any future changes that need to take place.

3.2. Public procurement law applies to the council. This sets out procurement procedures we can or must follow in a range of circumstances, for example requiring most higher value contracts to be opened up to competition. It also sets out our obligations regarding delivering value for money, maximising public benefit, sharing information; and acting with integrity.

3.3. The council spends around £600 million a year buying a diverse range of works, goods and services from thousands of suppliers to support the delivery of works and services to residents, businesses and stakeholders. In 2021/22, 55.9% of our contractual spend was with micro, small and medium-sized suppliers. Approximately 40% of our spend is with organisations based in BS1-16 postcodes.

3.4. Our Contract Management Framework introduces a standardised approach to contract management across the council. Our contract management framework allows us to have:

- a standardised approach to contract management
- a way to classify contracts based on the level of risk, complexity and value of individual contracts
- better visibility on supplier performance across the council.



## 4. Aims and Objectives

4.1. The following sections of the strategy explain the objectives of each of the procurement and contract management principles, the future aims and ambitions the Council will promote within each area:

- Supplier Engagement
- Innovation and collaboration
- Competition
- Contract Management
- Data and reporting



### Best Value

- High standards
- Fair and professional
- Trustworthiness
- Transparency
- Accountability



### Fair and Compliant

- Employment
- Local suppliers
- Supplier diversity
- Partnerships



### Local Communities

### Healthy and Sustainable

- Health
- Our wider impact
- Resilience
- Environment



## 5. Best value



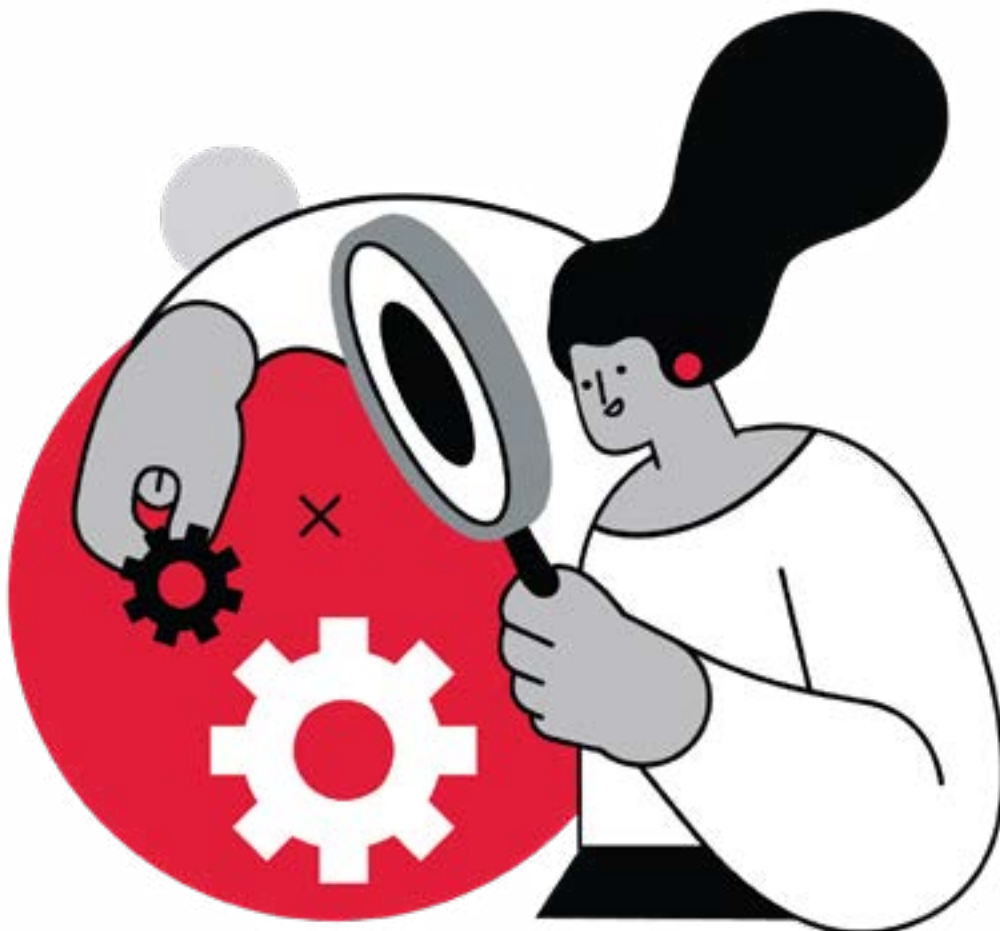
- 5.1. **Supplier engagement:** We believe early and ongoing engagement with suppliers can help us find innovative ways of delivering services and attract a broader range of options from suppliers.
- **We will** publish a forward plan of the contracts we expect to procure, to make it more likely that potential suppliers will be prepared to submit offers.
  - **We will** engage with supply markets early when appropriate, to seek new and innovative ideas understand what is possible and to choose the most effective procurement approach.
  - **We will** make our communications and processes between the Council and Suppliers as simple and accessible as we can, to encourage a diverse range of suppliers to engage and deliver services to us.
- 5.2. **Innovation and collaboration:** We believe collaboration and innovation are essential for us to deliver services in the city within budget.
- **We will** respond to market changes by using market intelligence and engagement to influence our market shaping and tender design.
  - **We will** focus on the outcome required when inviting quotations or tenders from potential suppliers, to encourage flexibility and innovation in the approach taken by suppliers to achieve our goals.
  - **We will** seek to set up flexible contracts and use proactive contract management to drive continuous improvements in cost, quality and service outcomes throughout the life of a contract.
- **We will** seek to collaborate both across our organisation and regionally with cities, towns and other local authorities to reduce duplication and stimulate innovation from our suppliers.
- 5.3. **Competition:** We believe that fair supplier competition and making the most of our economies of scale are the best ways of getting - and showing we've secured - good value for public money.
- **We will** seek to maximise the use of our e-tendering portal to advertise opportunities and encourage multiple potential suppliers to submit tenders.
  - **We will** put frameworks and organisation-wide contracts in place in order to benefit from economies of scale, enable us to react swiftly as needs arise and allow us to reduce bureaucracy for both suppliers and the Council.
  - **We will** negotiate and use cost benchmarking to ensure we are securing good value for money when competition is not possible.
  - **We will** monitor suppliers who are awarded contracts to ensure they deliver commitments made on savings, value for money and added value.
- 5.4. **Contract Management:** We believe that fair and robust contract management is essential to ensuring we get good value for public money and achieve the outcomes we need. Good contract management practice will ensure that:
- **We will** enable both the supplier and the council to understand their contractual obligations



- **We will** ensure that systems and processes are in place to ensure we are consistent and proportionate in the way we manage suppliers and contracts.
- **We will** enable arrangements are in place to allow contract managers to monitor delivery performance, and to allow either the Council or the supplier to raise and resolve any problems.
- **We will** put change and risk management processes in place to allow us to identify and manage any changes that may be needed or risks that may emerge during the life of the contract.

5.5. **Data & reporting:** We believe that high quality data and reporting are essential for us to monitor and improve the outcomes we get from our procurements and contracts.

- **We will** use data to identify lessons learned and seek to continuously improve the way we procure and manage contracts.
- **We will** ensure contract managers are responsible for tracking and reporting on contractual performance, as well as for addressing any under-performance.
- **We will** ensure that systems, processes and reporting mechanisms are in place to give decision makers clear oversight of money spent, contract management activity and contractual performance.





## 6. Fair and compliant



- 6.1. **High standards:** We believe that as a public body we have a responsibility to set and meet high standards in the way we procure and manage our contracts.
- **We will** comply with all relevant UK legislation, including public procurement law.
  - **We will** maintain our own procurement rules which will set the procurement and contract management standards for our officers and Members to follow.
  - **We will** take a professional and consistent approach to procurement and contract management, with expertise, best practice and training provided centrally.
- 6.2. **Fair and professional:** We believe that being a fair and professional customer results in more effective, resilient, and innovative service delivery from our suppliers.
- **We will** seek to pay our suppliers promptly and offer options for early payment where possible.
  - **We will** aim to work in partnership with our suppliers, whilst recognising partnership includes challenging underperformance.
  - **We will** clearly communicate the Council's [procurement rules](#) and processes and make working with the Council as easy as we can.
  - **We will** put systems and processes in place to enable contract performance to be monitored in a consistent and transparent way, so that suppliers are aware of the Council's expectations and feel the process is fair.
- 6.3. **Trustworthiness:** We believe that it is crucial that we maintain the trust of both the public and suppliers in the way the Council spends public money.
- **We will** aim to ensure that all procurement processes are run fairly and provide feedback to help all bidders understand our decisions.
  - **We will** ensure we have robust processes to deal with any conflicts of interest or allegations of favouritism.
  - **We will** ensure that higher value contracts are openly advertised whenever possible, to ensure all suppliers have a fair opportunity.
- 6.4. **Transparency:** We believe publishing data about our procurement and contract management activity will help suppliers understand opportunities to win contracts with the Council and can support appropriate scrutiny of what we do.
- **We will** comply with all relevant legal obligations to publish information about our procurement activity and contracts.
  - **We will** respond to Freedom of Information requests promptly in-line with our responsibilities.
  - **We will** seek to publish additional information about our procurement intentions and policies in order to help suppliers plan their own activities, particularly focussing on encouraging local, smaller and VCSE organisations.

6.5. **Accountability:** We believe that as a public body we must be accountable, and that scrutiny can help us improve the way we do things.

- **We will** aim to ensure that the appropriate Council officer or Member is able to make a timely, informed and auditable decision before we start a procurement process, enter into a contract or make changes to a contract.

- **We will** ensure that we will recognise and seek to learn from any instances when we do not meet the high standards we set ourselves.

- **We will** provide data, insights and training to support Directors in fulfilling their accountability for compliance in the service area they are responsible for; and enable Members to scrutinise our performance.

## 7. Healthy and Sustainable



7.1. **Health:** We believe we can have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Bristol's citizens.

- **We will** consider and promote the health and well-being of people in Bristol through our Social Value Policy.
- **We will** help ensure good food is served in Bristol by asking for all our Food and Catering providers to achieve the Bristol Eating Better Award.
- **We will** contribute towards a better quality of air for Bristol by requesting compliance with the Clean Air Zone, where possible.
- **We will** enable contractual requirements regarding health to be monitored as part of contract management.

7.2. **Environment:** We believe the Council's suppliers have an essential role to play in helping the Council reach its target of being a [carbon neutral, climate resilient and wildlife rich city by 2030](#).

- **We will** deliver on the commitments made in our [Healthy and Sustainable Procurement Policy](#) to identify and consider opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of the Council's supply chain.
- **We will** take a targeted approach to determine the categories of works, goods and services with the highest impact upon the environment and take this into account when evaluating suppliers and awarding contracts, whenever it's appropriate and possible for us to do so.
- **We will** build environmentally sustainable delivery into our contracts and contract management processes.

7.3. **Our wider impact:** We believe we have a responsibility to consider the impact that the goods, services and works that we buy might have on people around the world, even if it is not always visible to us.

- **We will** support the commitments made when Bristol became a Fairtrade City in 2005, by specifying Fairtrade products in our tenders where applicable.
- **We will** meet our obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to seek to ensure slavery, human trafficking and forced or compulsory labour does not occur at any point of the supply chain.
- **We will** ensure the suppliers we spend with support the Council's [commitment to tackling modern day slavery](#).
- **We will** enable contractual obligations regarding Fairtrade and modern day slavery risks to be monitored as part of contract management.

7.4. **Resilience:** We believe we'll need increasingly resilient supply chains to deliver services in Bristol, due to climate change and the complex interconnections between communities and businesses across the world.

- **We will** assess potential suppliers and engage with our key suppliers about their business continuity and disaster recovery plans during contract management.
- **We will** make our supply chains shorter and more local, when it's appropriate and possible to do so.
- **We will** monitor trends and risks in our supply chains and take them into account when making decisions about service delivery and procurement activity.



## 8. Local communities



8.1. **Employment:** We believe that local people being in high quality employment can transform the lives of individuals, families and communities.

- **We will** recognise and reward commitments by our suppliers to use local employees to deliver our contracts – particularly focussing on securing employment in areas of the city that are less well-off.
- **We will** use our approach to Social Value to seek commitments from our suppliers to employ local apprentices and provide training and development opportunities to their local employees.
- **We will** deliver on our commitments to support Bristol to be a Living Wage City.
- **We will** enable delivery of commitments to local employment and the Living Wage to be monitored during contract management.

8.2. **Local suppliers:** We believe we have highly skilled and competitive suppliers in Bristol, and so trying to use them where possible helps these organisations to grow, develop and create more local employment.

- **We will** use our Social Value approach to recognise and reward commitments by our suppliers to use Bristol-based suppliers to help deliver our contracts – and will monitor delivery of these commitments.
- **We will** ensure that local and regional suppliers are given more opportunities to tender for our contracts, particularly focussing on micro, small medium enterprises (MSME's) diverse suppliers and VCSEs.

- **We will** work with local suppliers to build their knowledge and experience (e.g. in relation to the needs and priorities of public sector customers), which should help them grow by winning contracts with other organisations.

8.3. **Engagement:**

- **We will** make a particular effort to involve community stakeholders, voluntary and community sector organisations and other interested parties when we consult on what service is needed and how it should be delivered.
- **We will** work with suppliers and representative groups to help local suppliers understand our procurement processes, decide if public sector contracts are right for them, if they are ready to tender and how they can submit the best possible bids.
- **We will** actively seek feedback from suppliers to understand and reduce barriers that may prevent suppliers from winning contracts with us, as well as seeking their views on changes to our policies and processes.
- **We will** actively seek feedback from suppliers who win contracts with us to seek their views on our contract management processes.

- 8.4. **Supplier diversity:** We believe it's important that the suppliers who deliver services to Bristol support our equality and diversity aims and reflect our city.
- **We will** ensure that before we procure a contract, we will meet our responsibilities to consider diversity and how we can both positively affect equalities and put plans in place to reduce or remove any risks - and we will ensure that our suppliers share our commitment to these values.
  - **We will** provide suppliers who are owned by or employ people from communities who've experienced economic inequality and disadvantage with targeted support and encouragement to bid for work with the Council.
  - **We will** recognise and reward suppliers who commit to recruit and employ local people to deliver our contracts – with particular focus on people who are likely to find it more difficult to find work.
  - **We will** track our progress in improving supplier diversity.
- 8.5. **Partnerships:** We believe that as part of our One City Approach, we can only achieve our goals for Bristol by working even more closely with a wide range of private, public and voluntary organisations.
- **We will** seek to play a strong role in collaborating with partner organisations - particularly in Bristol and the South West - focussing on knowledge sharing, joint policy development and procuring joint contracts to reduce duplication and take advantage of greater economies of scale.
  - **We will** recognise and reward suppliers who make commitments to support local voluntary and community groups when we assess Social Value during a tender exercise.
  - **We will** try to help smaller local suppliers to meet and learn from each other, as well as potentially encouraging suppliers to bid for our contracts together as a consortium.

## 9. How this P&CM strategy will deliver against the Corporate Strategy

9.1. The way we envisage this procurement and contract management strategy will help align and deliver our corporate strategy and goals is set out below:

| Corporate Principles   | Procurement & Contract Management Ambitions  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Development and delivery</b><br/>Develop people, places and partnerships to improve outcomes. Deliver quality public services while releasing the expertise and resources of empowered communities, individuals, community groups and city partners to help shape and deliver city priorities.</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consistent and rigorous contract management using the Councils Contract Management Framework</li> <li>● Ambitious, innovative and customer-focused approach to procurement</li> <li>● Collaboration with partners in the best interests of our city.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Environmental sustainability</b><br/>Tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergencies while inclusively growing the economy, maximising our positive environmental impacts and avoiding or mitigating negative ones wherever possible. Build our climate and ecological resilience</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Health &amp; Sustainability requirements embedded into contracts</li> <li>● Develop a Carbon Reporting methodology</li> <li>● Embed Social Value and monitor its delivery to commitments using the Council’s standardised metrics approach</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Equality and inclusion</b><br/>Pro-actively and intentionally improve equality and inclusion across the city by designing it into everything we do. Work to make sure that everyone in Bristol feels they belong, has a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular Supplier Engagement workshops at a local level, with particular focus on diverse suppliers, MSME’s, Voluntary Sector</li> <li>● Design and improve our approach to ‘Go Local’ by simplifying procurement quote processes to enable opportunities to be awarded to local community suppliers.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Resilience</b><br/>Build Bristol’s city resilience through early intervention, minimising our contribution to future environmental, economic or social shocks and stresses. Build our ability to cope by learning from our past, taking a preventative approach and planning for long-term outcomes that support resilience.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Achieving optimum value ensuring delivery of social value commitments</li> <li>● Contract delivery within tendered budget</li> <li>● Planning and responding to market changes, fluctuations and failures</li> <li>● Shorter and more local supply chains.</li> </ul>   |



| Corporate Principles   | Procurement & Contract Management Ambitions  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Development and delivery</b><br/>Develop people, places and partnerships to improve outcomes. Deliver quality public services while releasing the expertise and resources of empowered communities, individuals, community groups and city partners to help shape and deliver city priorities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consistent and rigorous contract management using the Councils Contract Management Framework</li> <li>● Ambitious, innovative and customer-focused approach to procurement</li> <li>● Collaboration with partners in the best interests of our city.</li> </ul> |

## 10. Governance and Responsibility for Procurement

10.1. The Council's Cabinet\* is responsible for setting the overall Procurement & Contract Management Strategy. \*The Councils political constitution changes from May 2024 to a Committee System so appropriate approval will be decided.

10.2. The Council Officers are responsible for implementing the Council's Procurement & Contract Management Strategy. The Procurement & Contract Management Service provide policy and process direction to Service Managers (and their nominated Contract Administrators) for procurement projects.

## 11. Delivery and Monitoring

11.1. The delivery of this Strategy will be managed through a Service Plan approved by the Councils Director of Resources with progress reported on an annual basis using the Councils Performance Matrix for key organisational priorities.

11.2. The Service Plan will include detailed actions and KPIs based on:

- Compliance with Procurement Rules and Quality
- Finance / Savings
- Contract award to Micro and SMES suppliers

11.3. All actions will be cross-reference to BCC Corporate Strategy 2022–27 Priorities, Equality Strategy — 2018–2023 and Business Continuity.



## 12. Contacts and useful links



### Email

[corporate.procurement@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.procurement@bristol.gov.uk)



### Telephone

0117 922 3456



### Post

Procurement & Contract Management Service (CH)  
City Hall, College Green  
Bristol BS1 5TR



### Website

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk>

12.1. Information about how to contact us is included below:

12.2. Links to related documents are included below:

- [The Council procurement rules](#)
- [Corporate Strategy](#)
- [Equality Strategy — 2018–2023](#)
- [Social Value Policy](#)
- [Healthy and Sustainable Procurement Policy](#)
- [Modern slavery and exploitation information for professionals](#)
- Procurement Contracts Regulations 2015: [Public procurement policy](#)
- [Ethical & Equitable Investment Policy](#)
- [Contract management handbook \(Internal Only\)](#)

12.3. Next Review scheduled April 2024