

AGENDA

#	Item	Purpose	Paper	Action
1.	Apologies			
2.	Any Other Business			
3.	Minute of Last Meeting	Approval	Attached	NH
4.	Matters Arising			
5.	Managers Event Feedback	Discussion	Verbal	All
6.	2025/26 Business Plan	Noting	Attached	LB
7.	Procurement Strategy and Policy Manual		Attached	RMack
8.	Dundee Project Update		Attached	RMack
9.	Standby Arrangements	Update	Attached	PM
10	360 Degree Feedback – Senior Team	Noting	To follow	SD
11.	SCRA Board/Committees a) SCRA Board held on 25 March 2025 - feedback b) RNC held on 20 March 2025- feedback c) Board Development Day- Draft Agenda d) June Board Draft Agenda e) Board Report Template f) Board timetable		Attached Attached Attached Attached	NH NH PA PA
12.	SCRA Corporate Governance Framework- Update	Noting	Attached	PA
Standing Items				
13.	Finance and Resource a) General Update	Update	Verbal	RMack
14.	Practice and Policy a) General Update b) Children's Care and Justice Act	Update Update	Verbal Verbal	AH AH
15.	Information Governance a) General Update	Update	Verbal	AH
11.	Digital Programme a) General Update	Update	Verbal	DC
16.	Programme Board Update a) General Update b) Portfolio Management	Update Approval	Verbal Attached	LB LB
17.	New Risks			
18.	Forward Plan a) Senior Team Development – 16/04 b) Children's Hearings Redesign Board – 23/04			
	Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 02 nd March 2025, North Strathclyde Locality, Dumfries Office (TBC)			

Present

Neil Hunter (NH)	PR/CE
Alistair Hogg (AH)	Head of Practice & Policy
Susan Deery (SD)	Head of HR
Ross Mackenzie (RMack)	Acting Head of Finance & Resources
Douglas Cameron (DC)	Head of Digital
Paul Mulvanny (PM)	Senior Operational Manager (East & Central)
Lisa Bennett (LB)	Head of Strategy & OD
Pamela Armstrong (PA)	Governance Officer, Minute (By Teams)

	Item	Timescale	Action
1.	Apologies Helen Etchells		
2.	AOB Kilmarnock Lease – to be agreed offline		
3.	Minute of Previous Meeting Approved		
4.	Matters Arising Pay update - SD advised that clearance has not yet been received from SG on pay remit that would allow SCRA to open negotiations with UNISON. This is a cause of some frustration for both parties who are keen to avoid delay.		
5.	Draft Business Plan LB introduced draft plan which is due to be considered by Board in March. Comments have been received following Planning and Performance Committee workshop launch. Further work is being done on the detailed schedules that sit within the plan as well as the assessment of any carry forward actions (year 1) from the 2024/25 plan.		

	Item	Timescale	Action
6.	<p>SCRA Board/Committees</p> <p>a) SCRA Board – March Meeting The draft agenda was reviewed ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>b) Audit and Assurance Committee - Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding issues relate to AAC and Boards expectations on status of case sampling management action plan and Strategic Risk Register, closed risks. On Case Sampling EMT view is that this should be retained by EMT as immediate actions flow from case sampling. On Strategic Risks – agreed that EMT risk leads would propose closure of risks for AAC and subsequently Board agreement. RMack to raise with Chair of AAC before March Board <p>Planning and Performance Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issue is to allow PPC to evolve its sphere of interest and scrutiny over time rather than go to the widest extent too quickly and risk overwhelm or unsustainability. 	12/03	RMack
7.	<p>SCRA Corporate Governance Framework</p> <p>PA provided an update on the development of the corporate governance framework, which aims to consolidate various aspects of governance into a single document. The framework includes details on the SCRA's functions, accountability, and relationships with government and other bodies. A key focus was on public access to board meetings, with discussions on the need for clear guidelines on conduct and participation.</p> <p>The meeting discussed the importance of public access to board meetings, emphasising transparency and openness. PA highlighted the need for a comprehensive policy that outlines the conduct of board meetings and the limitations on public participation. The policy aims to ensure that board meetings are open to the public and staff, with certain exceptions for sensitive matters. There was a suggestion to include a provision for questions to be submitted in advance, with the chair having discretion over addressing them.</p>		

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	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To incorporate feedback from EMT members into the corporate governance framework draft. • To check with the Inclusion and Diversity Manager regarding the need for an equality impact assessment for the Public Access policy. • To review other public bodies' policies on public access to board meetings and incorporate relevant practices. 	<p>21/03</p> <p>Mar 25</p> <p>Mar 25</p>	<p>EMT</p> <p>PA</p> <p>PA</p>
STANDING ITEMS			
8.	<p>Finance and Resource</p> <p>General Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMack provided an update on the financial resources and budget planning for the organisation. The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining financial resilience and ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to support strategic objectives. RMack emphasised the need for careful budget monitoring and planning, particularly considering upcoming legislative changes and the implementation of the Children's Care and Justice Act. Provision is also included in 2025/26 draft budget for potential outcomes of review of Rpeorter job description. The organisation is committed to ensuring that financial resources are aligned with strategic priorities, and Ross outlined plans to enhance financial oversight and reporting mechanisms. <p>Climate Change Duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMack highlighted the organisation's involvement in a consultation on climate change duties statutory guidance. The consultation aims to gather feedback from various stakeholders, including leadership and officers, to ensure that the guidance reflects a range of perspectives. The consultation paper includes goals and questions for feedback, with a deadline for responses set for Friday 23rd May. The organisation is committed to addressing climate change responsibilities and ensuring 		

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	<p>that its operations align with environmental sustainability principles. This includes reporting on CO2 emissions, exploring technology solutions to reduce travel, and considering the impact of staff commuting on overall emissions. The organisation is categorised as a major organisation for environmental reporting, similar to NHS and councils, and is actively working to meet its statutory requirements.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To liaise with the Head of Property and Policy and Public Affairs Manager regarding the consultation on climate change duties statutory guidance. <p>Bankline Permissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMack provided an update on the Bankline permissions, which are crucial for managing the organisation's financial transactions. Bankline is the online banking portal used by the organisation to manage bank accounts and make faster payments. Currently, the mandate for authorising payments is limited to two staff members, which poses a risk if either is unavailable. To address this, RMack proposed expanding the mandate to include additional senior team members, to ensure continuity and resilience in financial operations. The proposal also includes increasing the limit for faster payments from £25,000 to £500,000. This change is intended to streamline financial processes and reduce the reliance on manual entry, particularly for non-invoice payments such as tax and pension contributions. The finance team will continue to maintain rigorous checks and records for all transactions, ensuring that financial processes remain secure and efficient. RMack emphasised that the changes to Bankline permissions would not affect the processes experienced by other teams when raising payment requests or invoices. The focus is on enhancing internal resilience within the finance team, allowing for more efficient processing of payments and 		

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	<p>reducing the risk of errors associated with manual keying. The proposed changes aim to improve the overall efficiency and security of the organisation's financial operations.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve changes to SCRA's Bankline mandate, with SD and PM nominated as EMT Bankline users. 		
9.	<p>Practice and Policy</p> <p>AH provided the following updates:</p> <p>Justice Act and Legislative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The discussion covered the implementation and implications of the Justice Act, which has been passed by Parliament but is not yet fully operational. AH explained that the only provision currently in effect is the prohibition of holding individuals under 18 in prison or young offenders' institutions. This has led to increased pressure on secure accommodation capacity. The Scottish Government (SG) is working to build more resilience into the system, but there have been instances of zero capacity, reminiscent of past challenges. SG has not provided a timeline for implementing other provisions of the Act, but it is anticipated that the earliest implementation could be in early 2026. The organisation is actively preparing for these changes, particularly in relation to the sharing of information with victims and the establishment of a single point of contact service for victims of harm caused by children. The organisation is also involved in a multi-agency workforce development group to ensure readiness across the system. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set up an initial meeting to start the preparation project for the Children's Care and Justice Act implementation. To continue engaging with the multi-agency group on workforce development for the act's implementation. <p>Hearing System Redesign</p>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SG has been consulting on potential legislative changes, CYCJ has been tasked with analysing consultation responses. SG has already developed policy instructions, but the analysis of consultation responses is still ongoing. SG has assured that there are no unexpected changes in the pipeline. There is a proposal that the Panel Chair of the hearing will be paid a fee, rather than being a salaried professional. SG is also considering changes to the grounds for referral process, with a focus on simplifying and improving the system. The organisation is actively engaged in discussions with SG to ensure that any changes align with the needs of children and young people. <p>Bairnshoose Projects in Tayside and Fife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has adopted a hub and spoke model, with Dundee serving as the hub and Angus and Perth as the spokes. The project has leveraged existing resources and infrastructure to provide support, with additional resources sourced from third-sector organisations. In Fife, the project has involved significant planning and project management, with a focus on upgrading facilities and exploring the possibility of establishing a dedicated house for the Bairnshoose model. The projects aim to provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting children who have experienced trauma, with collaboration across health, local authorities, and third-sector partners. The government has approved funding for the next year, but there is a need for longer-term funding commitments to ensure sustainability. <p>Age of Criminal Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AH discussed the recent work completed by the Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group, which concluded its activities at the end of the previous year. The group recommended that the minimum age of criminal responsibility should be raised to 14, with consideration for further incremental increases over time. SG is required to present this recommendation to Parliament 		

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	<p>within a year. However, it was noted that this issue is not currently a high priority, and it is unlikely to be addressed within the current parliamentary term. The group continues to work on shaping ministerial thinking and influencing policy at the agency level. Additionally, ongoing research is being conducted on children who commit serious offences, revealing that most do not reoffend within 12 months, and many have experienced significant trauma or adversity.</p>		
<p>10.</p> <p>a.</p>	<p>Information Governance</p> <p>General Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH highlighted that the organisation continues to monitor information governance issues monthly and reports to the Audit and Assurance Committee every six months. AH noted that there is a cycle of concern among new committee members regarding data breaches, which requires reassurance and education about the organisation's supportive approach to handling such incidents. The organisation prioritises understanding, reviewing, and learning from breaches rather than punitive measures. 		
<p>11.</p>	<p>Digital Programme</p> <p>General Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC provided an in-depth overview of the Digital Strategy, which is focused on enhancing efficiency and streamlining processes through the development of applications and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI). The strategy includes a continuous cycle of app development to address specific project requirements, thereby reducing complexity within the CSAS system. This approach allows for more frequent and targeted updates, ensuring that solutions are tailored to meet the needs of various projects. • Several AI projects are currently underway, each designed to improve data processing and reduce manual tasks. One such project is the "Folding Space" proof of concept in Glasgow, which aims to replace the current 		

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	<p>redaction tool with an AI-driven solution. This tool uses intelligence to determine what to redact, learning from previous actions and applying this knowledge across multiple documents and cases. The goal is to retire the existing tool, Raster's Edge, and fully implement Folding Space as a more efficient and accurate solution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another AI initiative involves the ingestion of police concern reports directly into CSAS. This project seeks to automate the process of converting unstructured data from PDFs into structured data within the system, streamlining the referral process and reducing the need for manual data entry. This initiative is expected to significantly enhance the efficiency of processing police reports and improve the accuracy of data within CSAS. • The Magic Notes project is being explored for its potential to transcribe and structure witness statements. The tool captures audio recordings and transcribes them into structured formats, such as meeting minutes or witness statements. This project aims to facilitate the creation of accurate and comprehensive reports, reducing the time and effort required for manual transcription. • The digital strategy also includes developing a digital service channel for children and families, which is a core mission. This initiative aims to provide a seamless and integrated digital experience for users, enhancing accessibility and engagement. Furthermore, the strategy focuses on enhancing partner integrations, allowing for more efficient data exchanges between systems such as social work, police, and health services. By integrating these systems, the organisation aims to reduce transactional inefficiencies and improve the overall flow of information. • Ongoing IT projects include upgrading network connections and rolling out new AV equipment to enhance connectivity and communication across the organisation. The Digital Strategy is designed to support the organisation's strategic objectives by 		

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	leveraging technology to improve service delivery and operational efficiency.		
12.	Programme Board		
a)	<p>General update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LB provided updates on the Program Board, noting the progress of various projects and tests of change across localities. The target operating model is in its first version, with efforts to present it in a more accessible format. The focus is on delivering benefits and aligning projects with strategic goals. Various tests of change are being conducted across the country, with the aim of freeing up capacity and improving service delivery. The program board continues to monitor and support these initiatives, ensuring alignment with organisational objectives. 		
b)	<p>Portfolio Management Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LB introduced the proposal for a Portfolio Management Framework to provide a comprehensive view of all organisational activities, including business plans, operational services, and improvement programs. The framework aims to prioritise and monitor resources effectively, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and legislative changes. The approach involves assessing current practices, learning from existing programs, and establishing governance structures. The framework will be implemented over the next year, with a focus on integrating business as usual with strategic initiatives. The goal is to enhance organisational agility and responsiveness to change. 		
15.	<p>New Risks</p> <p>No new risks were identified.</p>		
16.	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The forward plan was reviewed.</p>		
	Date of Next Meeting		

	Item	Timescale	Action
	Wednesday 02 nd April 2025, LD&G Locality, Dumfries office.		

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

REVISION OF CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY & POLICY MANUAL

Accountable Director: Head of Finance & Resources

Report Prepared By: Procurement Officer **Date:** 02 April 2025

Recommendations:

1. To approve SCRA's revised Corporate Procurement Strategy in line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) which further aligns SCRA with Scottish Public Sector best practice.
2. To approve SCRA's revised Procurement Policy Manual in line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) which further aligns SCRA with Scottish Public Sector best practice.

Reason for Report:	For approval
Resource Implications:	Not applicable
Strategy:	In accordance with approved Procurement Policy
Consultation:	Scottish Procurement Directorate (Scottish Procurement)
Equalities Duties:	Due to the minor revisions, an equalities impact assessment has not been prepared
Document Classification:	Not protectively marked

1. CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy was first published in May 2020. Under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, we are required to revise this Strategy annually before the start of each new financial year. This was last updated in March 2024 to cover the period 2024-27. A copy of the latest update is attached at Appendix 1 to cover the period 2024-27 (page 4).

1.1. Main Changes

1.1.1 The main changes to the Strategy were to update the following:

- 5.1 – to update Priority 1 – Fair Work first updated by SPPN 1/2024
- 5.2 – to update Priority 2 – Construction Policy Note (CPN) 1/2024 & 2/2024 – both requiring annual updates and publishing of Construction retentions applied by SCRA, as well as a compliance statement.
- 5.5 – to update Priority 5 – PCIP healthcheck completed April 2024 – including creation of an SCRA Action Plan
- 5.6 – to update Priority 6 – revised Cyber Security process embedded into Tender documents
- 6.1.8 – to add in new SCRA Retention policy, created to support priority 2 above
- 6.2.3 – updated to amend our change of thresholds agreed at EMT in Sept 2024
- 8.1 - to update the expenditure profile to reflect 2023/24 spend figures

1.1.2 The updated Strategy is required to be published and a copy sent to the Scottish Ministers.

1.1.3 The Strategy will also be sent to all Delegated Purchasers, the Digital Programme Director and Head of Property and will be placed on the Procurement page of Connect and SCRA's website so that it is accessible to SCRA staff at all levels of the organisation and also to external readers and suppliers.

1.2. Continuous Improvement

1.2.1 The Procurement Officer has continued working with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager to further improve the wording of our diversity monitoring questions in our tender documents to ensure an inclusive approach to procurement. The current revision will be implemented in 2025.

1.2.2 The Procurement Officers will continue to work with the Head of Property to implement the actions required to assist SCRA to meet its net zero targets.

1.3 Recommendation

1.3.1 To approve SCRA's revised Corporate Procurement Strategy in line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act and Scottish Public Sector best practice.

2. PROCUREMENT POLICY MANUAL

Introduction

SCRA's current Procurement Policy was first published in November 2016 and last reviewed mid-year in September 2024 due to a number of changes. This has been further reviewed and updated in line with the revised SG Procurement Policy Manual to ensure compliance with latest best practice and is attached at Appendix 2 (page 25).

2.1 Main Changes

2.1.1 The main changes to the Policy were:

- to update section 4.6 to include integration of CPNs into our policies and procedures
- to update section 4.7 to include the process for purchases over £5K using SCRA's new supplier form
- to update section 6 to include Scottish Government Construction Policy note 3/2024 regarding abnormally low tenders
- to update section 8.3 to refer to Fair Work First Scottish Government e-learning availability
- to update section 12 to include the use of a Declaration of Interest form ahead of any Tender evaluation taking place in line with best practice
- to update the Glossary (Annex A) to include CPNs

2.1.2 The Policy will also be emailed to all Budget Holders and Delegated Purchasers, and will be placed on the Procurement page of Connect and SCRA's website so that they are accessible to SCRA staff at all levels of the organisation and also to external readers and suppliers.

2.2 Continuous Improvement

The Procurement Officers now carry out annual reviews of the Policy to reflect future changes to legislation and best practice guidance.

2.3 Recommendation

To approve SCRA's revised Procurement Policy Manual in line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act and Scottish Public Sector best practice.

Procurement in SCRA

Corporate Procurement Strategy 2024 – 2027

Published April 2025

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION NO.	REVISED BY	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES	DATE
1.0	Helen Mora	First Issued Version	29/04/2020
2.0	Helen Mora	Annual Review	31/03/2021
3.0	Helen Mora	Annual Review	24/02/2022
4.0	Helen Mora	Annual Review	24/02/2023
5.0	Helen Mora	Annual Review	14/03/2024
6.0	Christina Thomson	Annual Review	24/03/2025

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Appendix A: Glossary

FOREWORD BY NEIL HUNTER, PRINCIPAL REPORTER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Effective and efficient procurement is very important to all public bodies and SCRA is no different in that regard. This strategy, which has been reviewed and approved by SCRA's Board, sets out how our procurement work in SCRA will benefit Localities and Head Office by ensuring that the goods and services that we consume and rely on in our day to day work represent the best value in terms of quality and price.

Accountability

SCRA Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve Corporate Procurement Strategy
Principal Reporter/Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibility to ensure that procurement activity is carried out in accordance with the Scottish Public Finance Manual
Head of Finance & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponsor of the Procurement Strategy
Procurement Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibility for delivering the Procurement Strategy• Ensure full compliance with Public Sector Regulations• Ensure services purchased are safe for children, their families and staff to use
Delegated Purchasers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support delivery of the Procurement Strategy
Business Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Procurement Team• From across the organisation but particularly Property, Digital/IT, HR, and Business Development.

Approach

A solid approach to procurement, captured by this strategy, allows Localities and Teams across the country to have the kind of access to specialist support and advice they need, now and in the future, to make wise, best value decisions about goods and services, to benefit from the scale of national contracts and to vision future ways of making things ever more efficient, responsive and adaptable to our changing needs.

I know the team will really appreciate you taking the time to consider this strategy and for your continued engagement with them on this important aspect of SCRA's work.

Kind regards



Neil Hunter

Principal Reporter/Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About SCRA

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is a national body focused on children (aged under 18) most at risk. SCRA was formed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 and became fully operational on 1st April 1996. Our main responsibilities as set out in the Act are:

- To facilitate the work of Children's Reporters,
- To deploy and manage staff to carry out that work,
- To provide suitable accommodation for Children's Hearings.

The Children's Hearings System provides the operational setting in which SCRA and its partner agencies work. The aim is to provide a safety net for vulnerable children, and deliver tailored solutions which meet the needs of the individuals involved, while helping to build stronger families and safer communities.

1.2 Procurement Vision

Our vision for the future is one where the approach to procurement and contract management is inclusive and fully integrated into our business strategies and a culture of best practice is embedded which will deliver legally compliant procurement processes, ensuring value for money, sustainability, quality services and continuous improvement.

Our inclusive approach will increase supplier diversity by:

- Eliminating unnecessary barriers to the procurement process to give Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), minority-owned businesses, third sector, social enterprises and other different organisations fair and equal access to opportunities.
- Working proactively to encourage these organisations to participate in the procurement process.
- Seeking feedback on the procurement process to ensure the process is as accessible as possible to as many as possible

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This document updates SCRA's 2020-24 Procurement Strategy which was originally published in May 2020 and revised in February 2023.

We need to review our Strategy each year and make changes to it where appropriate. This update is the outcome of our fifth review. It sets out how we plan to carry out our procurements for this financial year, 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, providing focus on some of those policies that we aim to support through procurement. We will publish this Strategy on our [website](#).

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires a contracting authority with expected annual procurement spend above £5 million to produce a Procurement Strategy.

The SCRA Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the changing environment in which the organisation will operate, with a particular focus on the impacts of the Children (Care and Justice) Act being implemented, national roll-out of successfully tested improvements such as child-friendly scheduling and internal improvements such as development of our Target Operating Model.

The procurement strategy, which is evolving to reflect developments including Fair Work First, Inclusive Procurement, Climate Change Call to Action and Cyber Security, will support delivery of the Corporate Plan's aims, objectives and values and will ensure compliance with national policies, legislation, tools and guidance including:

- Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014;
- Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016;
- Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015;
- Concessions Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016;
- The Equality Act (2010) and associated Regulations
- Scottish Procurement Policy Notes;
- The Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland
- Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP)
- The Scottish Public Finance Manual
- The Construction Procurement Handbook
- The Sustainable Procurement Duty tools developed by Scottish Government
- Case Law; and
- SCRA's Procurement Policy Manual

SCRA Procurement follows the "Scottish Model of Procurement" using the Scottish Government's Procurement Journey as the basis for our policy and procedures.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 15(5) OF THE PROCUREMENT REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014 AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

In compliance with Section 15(5) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and published Statutory Guidance, SCRA is required to set out how it will ensure its regulated procurements will:

- Contribute to the carrying out of its functions and achievement of its purposes
- Deliver value for money
- Be carried out in accordance with the General Duties and the Sustainable Procurement Duty
- Ensure payment of invoices are made no later than 30 days after the invoice relating to payment is presented.

4. STRATEGIC AIMS

The principal aims of SCRA Procurement are to:

- Deliver a professional and flexible procurement service to both internal managers and external suppliers through an inclusive procurement approach, ensuring that SCRA receives best value for money in the procurement of all goods, services and works in order to deliver an effective and efficient service to children, and families.
- Contribute to SCRA carrying out its functions and the achievement of its purposes by ensuring that suitable contracts are in place, in particular to allow the dissemination of information and data and to ensure we have adequate premises for hearings to take place.
- Ensure full compliance with UK legislation and Public Sector Regulations, in accordance with the General Duties and Sustainable Procurement Duty, giving due regard to SCRA's needs and requirements to ensure operational effectiveness is maximised.
- Ensure SCRA's procurement practices contribute to the Scottish Government's objective for sustainable economic growth and contribute to the achievement of relevant National Outcomes.

5. KEY PRIORITIES

In order to achieve the above aims, SCRA Procurement has identified the following six key priorities for the period 2024 to 2027. These align with the Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland published in April 2023 and their 7 Public Procurement Priorities of Sustainable Economic Recovery, Maximise Impact of the Sustainable Procurement Duty, Climate Emergency, Achieving Professional Excellence, Leadership & Visibility, Supply Chain Resilience, and Using Systems to Drive Sustainable Outcomes and Support Reporting.

5.1 Priority one: Implementation of Fair Work First Criteria

In accordance with Scottish Procurement Policy Notes (SPPNs) 03/2021 and 1/2024 (with 06/2021 being replaced by 1/2024), and the Statutory and Best Practice Guidance, we will continue to embed Fair Work in our organisation through our supply chain by applying the seven Fair Work First criteria in our regulated procurement processes where relevant and proportionate to do so. We will do this by asking suppliers bidding for our contracts to commit to progressing towards adopting the following seven criteria:

- Appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition
- Investment in workforce development
- No inappropriate use of zero hours contracts
- Action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- Payment of at least the real living wage
- Offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment
- Oppose the use of fire and rehire practices

SCRA will update our policy to reflect the Fair Work First criteria and continue to incorporate evaluation of other workforce matters in our tenders for regulated procurements where the use of labour is key to the delivery of the contract.

We are also committed to promoting the use of Fair Work Practices, including payment of the Real Living Wage in our non-regulated procurements by including a statement in our tender documents.

5.2 Priority two: Working with Suppliers (including SME's, Supported Businesses & Third Sector)

To ensure transparency and to assist prospective suppliers, existing suppliers and other stakeholders, SCRA has a section for Procurement on its website, www.scra.gov.uk, where SCRA publish the Strategy, Procurement Policy and standard Terms & Conditions and has a link to SCRA's profile on Public Contracts Scotland. This information will help suppliers to forecast when contracts will be procured and assist them in bidding for SCRA work.

Further to publication of [CPN 2/2024](#) we now include a return of the Pipeline forecast tool via Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) bi-annually. In response to [CPN 1/2024](#) – Retention in Construction contracts, SCRA has created a general Retention Policy, and a mandatory compliance statement, which are both published on our external website and will be reviewed annually.

SCRA is committed to reviewing and updating Procurement Policies and procedures to ensure that SCRA contributes to improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing where relevant in our regulated contracts. This on-going review will ensure that SCRA remains an inclusive organisation and encourages a diverse range of suppliers including SMEs, Supported Businesses and the Third Sector. SCRA's tender strategies are designed to promote SME participation wherever possible and tender documentation is written in a manner which is easy to understand. SCRA will continue to identify and reserve appropriate contracts for Supported Businesses.

We will work with the Head of Digital Development and Head of Property to build long term resilience into our supply chains.

SCRA has signed up to the Supplier's Charter. Further information about this and practical information for suppliers on bidding for public sector contracts can be found using this [link](#).

5.3 Priority three: Ensuring Inclusive Procurement

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 as amended, we consider equality, diversity and inclusion throughout tender processes and comply fully with legislation. Where relevant and proportionate in our regulated procurements, we carry out an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) at procurement stage and where relevant, suppliers are required to provide details of any equality policies and systems that they have in place and that will be utilised when delivering the contract. This is further addressed in SCRA's standard Terms & Conditions.

To monitor the use of SME's we currently request information from Suppliers on the size of their organisation. We add this information to our Procurement Contracts Register relating to our awarded contracts, as well as noting any suppliers/contractors who are Supported Businesses. Our Equality Diversity information is currently being updated by our Inclusion & Diversity Manager.

Also addressed in SCRA's standard Terms & Conditions is the Employment Relations Act 1999 (Blacklists) Regulations 2010 which addresses blacklisting activities. This is also covered in the Single Procurement Document (SPD - Scotland).

On completion of a procurement, we offer a debrief to all suppliers to help them improve their competitive performance and this will include any issues specifically pertaining to inclusion and diversity.

In line with our updated General Policy on Consulting and Engaging with those affected by procurements (see 6.1.2) we include as standard in our letters to Suppliers that we welcome feedback on the procurement process to ensure the process is as accessible as possible to as many as possible.

5.4 Priority four: Realising Sustainability

In response to the Sustainable Procurement Duty included in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, our Procurement Policy sets out how SCRA will meet this duty including adopting best practice, meeting legal and financial obligations, securing wider economic, social and environmental benefits, including the use of community benefit clauses, and encouraging the procurement of low carbon options to support the development of a low carbon economy.

In response to the Global Climate Emergency and SPPN 1/2021, we will contribute to SCRA's commitment to reduce indirect emissions of greenhouse gases by:

- Carrying out a further review of our procurement pipeline to prioritise where to focus resources to reduce emissions, support biodiversity or a circular economy.
- Continue to assess contracts for sustainability opportunities by completing a Sustainability test for all regulated procurements or others with scope to reduce emissions.
- Drive compliance through use of Frameworks which have already considered climate change.
- Reviewing historical consumption patterns to help prioritise where to best focus resources internally to influence demand management, consumption and associated internal policies and ways of working.
- Implementing priority actions from our Sustainable Procurement Action Plan (Flexible Framework)
- Contributing to SCRA's mandatory environmental reporting by completing the procurement section of the annual Climate Change Report.

We will continue to consider the whole life cost and environmental impact of construction projects as appropriate, encouraging recycling and the reuse of materials through waste management plans in order to minimise waste to landfill, look to the use of low energy equipment and environmentally friendly chemicals, and maximise use of materials from sustainable sources in accordance with government buying standards.

Further, SCRA will procure fairly and ethically traded goods and services in accordance with current legislation.

5.5 Priority five: Continuous improvement

Our processes are continuously reviewed to take account of revisions to legislation, Scottish Government Procurement Policy Notes and best practice. SCRA undertook the Scottish Government PCIP health check in April 2024 with a very favourable outcome. We created, and shared with SG, our action plan to manage improvements required. Procurement Officers meet regularly with key business teams including Property, Digital/IT, Human Resources and Business Development.

All new Delegated Purchasers are given training before being given Delegated Purchasing authority. This includes a section on inclusive procurement and social, environmental and economic wellbeing, with a particular focus on reducing inequality, however, our training is continuously reviewed to ensure it is adequate and relevant to the Delegated Purchasers. Refresher training is carried out every three years. Our latest training was successfully completed in September 2024.

We are further embedding our approach to savings and benefits by implementing recommendations from the previous PCIP review in 2019, including reviewing the Benefits Reporting Guidance to better understand the potential savings which could be claimed and recording the softer benefits from the use of frameworks (e.g. sustainability) and reviewing reporting of Best Practice Indicators (BPI's) on the Observatory.

Our most recent PCIP review in 2024 sought to imbed Climate Change education amongst our staffing group, and the Procurement team created an Action Plan to address other recommendations. SG request updates of the Plan periodically and it is a standing item at our 6-weekly full Procurement Team meeting to review progress.

The Procurement Competency Framework has been completed and will inform training requirements for the Team over the remainder of this Strategy period.

More regular dialogue with the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team has taken place to raise the profile of Procurement within SCRA.

We will develop our use of the Procurement Hub to support regular reporting on procurement activities to SCRA's Senior Management Team, the Board and Scottish Government.

SCRA Procurement work closely with the Scottish Government's Procurement Team and other public sector organisations. SCRA collaborates with other public sector organisations through membership of a multi-agency Cluster Group which facilitates the sharing of knowledge, encourages partnership working and assists the group so that the public sector can deliver value for money, pool resources and expertise and better meet the needs of their internal customers. SCRA has participated and will continue to participate in the use of Scottish Procurement collaborative frameworks as a representative of public sector organisations. SCRA has undertaken collaborative procurement with other organisations including Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS)

and as part of the normal procurement process complete Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessments.

5.6 Priority six : Information Governance

We will continue to ensure that all procurements comply with existing information, governance legislation and internal policies, including the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by reviewing compliance with GDPR requirements and file destruction.

Following the withdrawal of the Cyber Security Procurement Support Tool (CSPST) the Procurement team has now embedded into our procurement processes the need for project leads to complete a Buyer Risk Questionnaire to identify risk levels, and for preferred suppliers to complete a Supplier Assurance Questionnaire (SAQ), to improve the cyber security and resilience of our Suppliers.

6. SCRA'S PROCUREMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

SCRA's Procurement Policy Manual was revised in March 2025 to further align it to the Scottish Government Policy.

The following policies are embedded into existing procurement processes and procedures in SCRA and are intended to assist decision making, management and administrative functions. Where appropriate, monitoring, review and reporting of the effectiveness of a policy is a key part of ensuring continuous improvement. In our drive for continuous improvement in our procurement activity, SCRA introduced a Procurement Compliance Check process which is carried out at key stages of a regulated procurement. The Compliance Check looks to identify areas of policy and procedure non-compliance and put in place improvement action plans as necessary.

In addition to the national policies and legislation mentioned in section 3 Strategic Context, SCRA staff are required to take account of the following when undertaking any procurement activity:

- The requirement to have an appropriate level of Delegated Purchasing Authority;
- SCRA's Business Case and Capital Proposal procedures;
- SCRA's Risk Management Framework;
- Specific SCRA Procurement Policy, including the requirement for procurement activity above £20k to be underpinned by an approved Procurement Strategy;
- The prompt payment of invoices for goods, services and works in line with the Scottish Government's 30 day payment policy, including the adoption of this approach in the procurement of contracts by the inclusion of clauses to ensure the same approach is adopted throughout the supply chain; and
- The requirement for suppliers to comply with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, such as the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

The Procurement Team comply with SCRA's policies listed at section 7 including Fraud & Corruption, Equality & Diversity and Gifts, Hospitality & Other Inducements. They maintain the highest standard of integrity in all business relationships by rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper, never using their authority or position for their own financial gain, declaring any personal

interest which might affect, or be seen by others to affect, their impartiality in decision making and never breaching the confidentiality of information received in a professional capacity.

SCRA promote the eradication of unethical business practices by undertaking due diligence, where relevant, in relation to modern slavery and other human rights and by continually developing knowledge of these issues.

6.1 Local Policies

In compliance with Section 15(5) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, SCRA must include a statement on its General Policies. SCRA's response to this requirement is summarised below:

6.1.1 General policy on the use of community benefits requirements:

Policy: SCRA requires that the potential for community benefits to be delivered is considered at procurement preparation stage for regulated procurements, prior to approval of the project procurement strategy.

When developing any contract specification, consideration must be given to the suitability of including community benefit clauses, such as the requirement to provide targeted recruitment and training for disadvantaged groups.

The delivery of community benefits is a contractual commitment which will provide opportunities for targeted training and recruitment, including training and jobs for long-term unemployed people, development of the skills and qualifications of the existing workforce, apprenticeships and job start positions and professional graduate training opportunities.

Monitoring, Reviewing & Reporting will include:

- Including details of any community benefits agreed in our contract award notices for regulated procurements;
- Contract management to ensure delivery in accordance with contractual requirements;
- Internal data collection to identify and analyse for trends, consistency and to inform regular lessons learned reviews to identify any improvement opportunities;
- Procurement Strategy Compliance check to provide assurance that the requirements identified at development stage were carried through to the contract;
- The outcome of the above will be summarised in SCRA's Annual Procurement Reports, as per the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

6.1.2 General policy on consulting and engaging with those affected by its procurements

Policy: Consultation and engagement with key stakeholders affected by our procurement activity is embedded in our processes, both during project development and any subsequent procurement activity.

This consultation can include, for example, consultation with internal stakeholders, children and families, other public bodies, e.g. Children's Hearings Scotland, and suppliers via market engagement and meetings.

The appropriate level of consultation and engagement for a project will be identified at development stage. This may include consultation with SME's, minority owned businesses, third sector, social enterprises and other different organisations. Where relevant, Supplier Engagement Days are arranged to inform our procurement strategy. These will now include discussion on inclusive and diverse practices and corporate social responsibilities.

Feedback from consultation during preparation for procurement will be reported in the procurement strategy to provide assurance that an appropriate level of consultation has been undertaken prior to approval to proceed.

Information about the progress of major projects is supported by an appropriate communications strategy. This includes the use of SCRA's Intranet site, (Connect), Team Briefs and specific project websites to provide progress reports and other information of interest to SCRA's employees.

SCRA advertises up and coming tender opportunities for regulated procurements through the Public Contracts Scotland portal and, those valued at over the relevant World Trade Organisation Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO GPA) threshold are also advertised through the PCS-Tender service. Where relevant, an advert should also be placed on SCRA's website.

In addition, SCRA's Procurement Team regularly meet with key business leads to review current and future contract requirements, challenge the need for contracts and identifies areas where savings and benefits can be achieved.

SCRA's Procurement Officers share best practice with delegated purchasers.

Monitoring, Reviewing and reporting will include:

- Lessons learned review to identify any complaints regarding a failure to consult;
- Compliance checks to review level of consultation undertaken versus that stated in the procurement strategy.
- Recording of any complaints about failure to consult on any of our contracts.

6.1.3 General policy on Fair Work Practices in Procurement

Policy: This policy should be considered as early as possible in the procurement process. This makes sure that where it is relevant to how the contract is carried out, assessing a business's approach to fair employment, including the real Living Wage, can be an important part of the procurement exercise.

Guidance is available to staff on what should be included, however, consideration should be given to the following for each individual contract:

- To what extent the quality of the delivery of the contract can be affected by those working on it.

- Is there is a risk that suppliers use unfair employment practices? This has mostly been in sectors where low pay is widespread and the Real Living Wage is not paid, or where, for example, the inappropriate use of zero hours contracts might be used in delivering the contract.

Monitoring, Reviewing & Reporting will include:

- A commitment in a tender to pay the Real Living Wage, will be recorded in the contract award notice and SCRA's benefits tracker. It will form part of the contract and be monitored through contract and supplier management processes.
- Information on which SCRA contractors pay the Real Living Wage will be included in the Annual Procurement Report.

6.1.4 General policy on promoting compliance by contractors and sub-contractors with the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (c. 37) and any provision made under that Act

Policy: Health and Safety risks are taken into consideration at the design stage of a project and again during preparation for procurement. Factors pertaining to specific health and safety requirements are recorded in the procurement strategy as these will vary depending on the nature of the works, services or goods being purchased.

The supplier will be required to provide information within its tender that provides assurance to SCRA that the necessary legislation will be complied with.

Monitoring, reviewing and reporting will include:

- Contract management to ensure delivery in accordance with contractual requirements;
- Internal data collection to identify and analyse for trends, consistency and to inform regular lessons learned reviews to identify any improvement opportunities;
- Procurement Strategy Compliance check to provide assurance that the requirements identified at development stage of regulated procurements were carried through to the contract;
- The outcome of the above will be summarised in SCRA's Annual Procurement Reports, as per the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

6.1.5 General policy on the procurement of fairly and ethically traded goods and services

Policy: Consideration of specific requirements and availability in relation to fairly and ethically traded goods and services will be considered at project development stage and recorded in the project Procurement Strategy for approval prior to commencement.

The use of the SPD as standard for regulated procurements allows consideration of whether a potential supplier has been convicted of certain offences and/or committed any acts of professional misconduct and allows suitability to be assessed.

Monitoring, reviewing & reporting will include:

- Contract management to ensure delivery in accordance with contractual requirements;
- Internal data collection to identify and analyse for trends, consistency and to inform regular lessons learned reviews to identify any improvement opportunities;
- Procurement Strategy Compliance check to provide assurance that the requirements identified at development stage were carried through to the contract;
- The outcome of the above will be summarised in SCRA's Annual Procurement Reports, as per the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

6.1.6 General Policy on how it intends to approach regulated procurements involving the provision of food to:

- (i) Improve the health, wellbeing and education of communities in the authority's area, and
- (ii) Promote the highest standards of animal welfare

Policy: Not applicable to SCRA contracts as there is no requirement to purchase food via a regulated procurement.

6.1.7 General Policy on Prompt Payment in the Supply Chain

Policy: This policy should be considered as early as possible in the procurement process. Further information on Prompt Payment is available in various sections of the Procurement Journey.

SCRA's standard payment terms are payment within 30 days, however, where possible, SCRA will endeavour to meet the Scottish Government's payment target of payment within 10 working days of receipt of a valid invoice. Our standard Terms & Conditions of contract include a prompt payment standard clause.

We are committed to ensuring contracts are awarded to bidders who have good payment history and have systems in place so that their full supply chain is paid on time and in accordance with the terms of the contract.

Prompt payment of the supply chain is not only the ethical and socially responsible thing to do, it is critical to the sustainability and resilience of our supply chains in delivering goods, services and works to, or on behalf of, the people of Scotland.

Mechanisms have been put in place to assess and monitor payment performance of the supply chain throughout the lifetime of the contract.

Monitoring, reviewing and reporting will include:

- Monitoring answers during the Selection & Award Stages
- Reviewing Prompt Payment as part of the Contract & Supplier Management process – this can be done using a Prompt Payment Certificate
- Ensuring bidders provide an Improvement Plan where required
- Reporting payment performance information, including payment of invoices to sub-contractors down the supply chain within the Annual Procurement Report.

6.1.8 General Policy on Retention in our Services/Works contracts

Policy: This retention policy has been developed and derived from Chapter 17 in Handbook 1 of the Client Guide to Construction Projects. We additionally take advice from professional Consultants who we have engaged to assist us, and will consider alongside their advice what, if any, retention should be applied.

Retention is an amount deducted and withheld from each progress payment made to a contractor or subcontractor to secure obligations under a construction contract and ensure defects are remediated without the holder becoming liable for costs arising from unmet contract performance.

[CPN 1/2024](#) (released in June 2024 by the Scottish Government) implements a further two recommendations, agreed by Scottish Ministers, from [the report of the short life working group on retentions](#). They are incorporated into the [Retention in Construction Contracts](#) chapter of The Client Guide to Construction Projects with the following aims:

- to raise awareness of retention use in the public sector
- to promote transparency among public bodies
- to facilitate knowledge, understanding and decision-making among contractors

SCRA's overall strategic approach is to reduce or remove the need for retentions and for our contractors to deliver zero defects through our effective planning, procuring and contract management of projects. Application of retention is not currently applied to all construction projects and each project is reviewed on a case by case basis including evaluated risks and, is proportionate and fair, whilst undertaking our own Financial due diligence.

The use of retention takes into account factors such as project type/value/duration and complexity.

Monitoring, reviewing and reporting will include:

- Contract management to ensure delivery in accordance with contractual requirements;
- Procurement Strategy Compliance check to provide assurance that the requirements identified at development stage were carried through to the contract;
- The outcome of the above will be summarised in SCRA's Annual Procurement Report, as per the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014;
- SCRA's policy will be reviewed on an annual basis prior to 31st August every year with our Statement being published on Connect, our external website and a link sent to Scottish Government;
- A batched Compliance Statement for each construction contract awarded will be published, no later than 20th February each year, and will show all projects from the preceding 12 month period. This Statement will also be published on Connect, our external website and a link sent to Scottish Government.

6.2 Local Procedures

SCRA has a range of procurement procedures dependent on the value and nature of what is being purchased:

6.2.1 Non-Regulated Procurement (Below £50k)

Where SCRA is seeking quotes for commissions below £50,000, invitations to quote will be sent to a minimum of three appropriate suppliers, where possible through the “Quick Quote” section of the national advertising portal, [Public Contracts Scotland](#) (PCS).

SCRA has a Delegated Purchaser based in each Locality and a number based within Head Office teams. Delegated Purchasers have authority to purchase up to a total contract value of £10K using Route 1 of the Procurement Journey. Contract requirements over £10K or of lower value and more complex nature are passed to Procurement Officers to be competed.

6.2.2 Regulated Procurement (Goods & Services over £50k)

SCRA’s policy, where possible, is to advertise tender opportunities over £50,000 on the national advertising portal, [Public Contracts Scotland](#) (PCS). These may also be advertised on SCRA’s website, www.scra.gov.uk Interested suppliers must formally apply for these opportunities through the portal, and applicants will be considered in terms of their capacity and capability to meet SCRA’s requirements.

SCRA’s Contract Register can be viewed on PCS and interested suppliers can apply to receive automatic notifications of any future SCRA contract opportunities that may be of interest and those of many other Scottish public sector organisations.

During early strategic procurement discussions with Project Managers, options available will be discussed and agreed to ensure the most appropriate route is developed to meet their needs and ensure value for money is achieved. SCRA uses Scottish Procurement frameworks, Crown Commercial Service frameworks and other relevant public sector frameworks such as Healthtrust Europe, Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and Scotland Excel where appropriate.

Where there are no appropriate frameworks available, for regulated procurement (over £50k), the Procurement Team work with internal customers to design, develop and procure contracts that are fit for purpose, ensure value for money and are compliant with legislation.

SCRA uses the open procedure where appropriate for regulated procurements to open up the opportunity to suppliers, in particular, to SME’s, and reduce paperwork and timescales.

At the end of each regulated procurement, Procurement Officers complete a Tender Recommendation Report which reviews the procurement exercise and requests approval from the Budget Holder and Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer before awarding the contract.

6.2.3 Non-Regulated Works Contracts (Below £2m)

SCRA Works contracts are non-regulated due to the value. The Construction Procurement Handbook provides mandatory guidance in developing and delivering construction projects and how to take these procurements to market using the appropriate Construction Procurement Route (CPR).

The guidance recommends using CPR1 A for contracts below £2M which means they can be taken to market without advertising, for example by inviting selected suppliers to bid using the Quick Quote facility on Public Contracts Scotland, however, if an assessment of risk determines that they need wider marketing, CPR1 B will be used and where possible, we may also openly advertise contract opportunities between £1M and £2M on Public Contracts Scotland using CPR1 B. It is recommended that CPR1 B is used for all Works contracts between £1M and £2M where the risk is deemed to be High.

7. SUPPORTING POLICIES

The Procurement Strategy is supported by other policies and procedures including:

- Risk Management
- Data Protection
- Fraud Protection
- Whistleblowing
- Records Management
- Environmental Management
- Health and Safety
- Equality and Inclusion
- Gifts, Hospitality and other inducements
- Conflicts of Interest
- Anti-competitive behaviours
- Suppliers Charter

8. SPEND ANALYSIS & VALUE FOR MONEY

8.1 Expenditure profile

The Procurement Team carried out the annual spend review for 2023/24 and uploaded this information onto the Scottish Government Information Hub. The spend figures were - Contracted Spend £6,428,635 (92.73%) and Non Contracted £503,814 (7.27%).

8.2 Ensuring Value for Money

SCRA Procurement aim to provide a high quality service for internal customers, which is responsive, pragmatic, timely and delivers value for money. Value for money is based on the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality to meet the user's requirements. SCRA awards regulated procurements on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) which balances value for money and the required quality of goods, services or works being procured.

Working with Project managers, SCRA Procurement makes a contribution to the organisation's annual efficiency savings targets and continue to provide value for money while maintaining the required quality of service.

SCRA's collaborative savings from the use of Scottish Procurement frameworks are gathered and reported along with savings from SCRA's own procurement exercises. In addition, using Scottish Government frameworks provides a quicker, compliant procurement route for Project Managers.

9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING & REPORTING

This Strategy is implemented on a day to day basis by the Procurement Officers, supported by Delegated Purchasers. The priorities set out in the Strategy are translated into specific actions which are included in an annual Team Plan.

The Procurement function is subject to periodic Internal Audit review with any recommendations for improvement considered by the Executive Management Team (EMT) and Audit & Risk Committee (ARC).

The Strategy and Team Plan are reviewed annually and the outcome of the reviews are reported to the EMT and SCRA Board including information on key contracts awarded in the year, annual spend information and changes in legislation. This reporting format has been adapted to ensure the requirements for an Annual Procurement Report are fully met. Team Plan actions are also included in the Corporate and Business Plan process and the actions are monitored regularly.

10. ANNUAL REPORTING

In accordance with Section 18(2) of The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 an Annual Procurement Report is published annually. The Annual Procurement Report includes:

- A summary of the regulated procurements that have been completed during the period covered by the report;
- A review of whether those procurements complied with SCRA's Procurement Strategy;
- The extent to which any regulated procurements did not comply, and a statement detailing how SCRA will ensure that future regulated procurements do comply;
- A summary of any community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the period covered by the report;
- A summary of any steps taken to facilitate the involvement of supported businesses in regulated procurements during the report period;
- A summary of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years; and
- Reporting on other matters as contained within this Strategy.

11. OWNERSHIP AND CONTACT DETAILS

The owner of the Procurement Strategy will be as follows:

Ross Mackenzie

Head of Finance and Resources

ross.mackenzie@scra.gov.uk

Glossary

Term	Description
Contract Management	The process of monitoring the performance of a supplier on a contract.
Corporate Social Responsibility	The idea that a company should be interested in and willing to help society and the environment as well as be concerned about the products and profits it makes.
DPA	Delegated Purchasing Authority - Is the authority given to an individual to sign-off contracts. It is not to be confused with Delegated Finance Authority as it is important that there is adequate separation of duties between the individual who has finance authority i.e. the budget holder and the individual with purchasing authority i.e. who places the contract.
DPO	Delegated Purchaser Officer - A permanent individual with Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA).
Framework Agreement	An agreement or other arrangement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators which establishes the terms (in particular the terms as to price and, where appropriate, quantity) under which the economic operator will enter into one or more contracts with a contracting authority in the period during which the framework agreement applies.
Key Suppliers	Those suppliers identified as business critical in terms of risk/value and business continuity.
MEAT	The most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) criterion enables the contracting authority to take account of criteria that reflect qualitative, technical and sustainable aspects of the tender submission as well as price when reaching an award decision.
Open Procedure	A one-stage procedure whereby all suppliers are invited to tender for the contract or framework agreement. The organisation cannot limit the number of bids it receives.
Procurement Exercise	Full end to end procurement exercise documentation from strategy development to contract & supplier management.
Procurement function	The business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organisation needs or may need to fulfil its strategic objectives.
Procurement Journey	Revised public procurement toolkit with guidance and templates on the procurement process or Construction manual when appropriate. The Procurement Journey will be enhanced on an on-going basis with feedback from users and any other identified good practice guidance and tools where appropriate to ensure a standardised approach to the supply base.

Term	Description
Procurement Officer	Individual who spends the majority of their time working in a role that adds value to the quality, cost and effectiveness of the procurement or acquisition of goods, works and services; impacting upon commercial relationships during one or more stages of the procurement cycle and contributing towards best practice contract and supplier management.
Procurement strategy	Strategy for procurement within an organisation (can be called policy).
Public Contracts Scotland	The national advertising portal used to advertise all Scottish Government goods, services or works contract opportunities.
Retention	An amount deducted and withheld from each progress payment made to a contractor or subcontractor to secure obligations under a construction contract and ensure defects are remediated without the holder becoming liable for costs arising from unmet contract performance.
Small Medium Enterprise (SME)	The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro.
Supply Chain	All activities, resources, products etc. involved in creating and moving a product or service from the supplier to the procurer.
Supply Chain Management	The coordinated set of techniques to plan and execute all steps used to acquire raw materials from suppliers, transform them into finished goods, and deliver both goods and services to customers. It includes chain-wide information sharing, planning, resources and performance measurements.
Supported Business	Either the organisation's main aim should be the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons, or the contract should be performed within a sheltered employment programme.
Value for Money	An economic assessment by the public sector as to whether a project represents value for money; the optimum combination of cost and quality to provide the required service.
Whole Life Costing	The costs of acquiring goods or services (including consultancy, design and construction costs, and equipment), the costs of operating it and the costs of maintaining it over its whole life through to its disposal – that is, the total ownership costs. These costs include internal resources and overheads.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

PROCUREMENT POLICY MANUAL

VERSION 7.0

Version:	7.0
Issue Date:	March 2025
Changes:	Annual review of Policy
Prepared by:	Christina Thomson, Procurement Officer
Approved by:	Executive Management Team

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1. Introduction, scope & legal framework

This Manual provides guidance on the procurement policies that apply to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) procurement activity. The Manual also highlights some key legal obligations and considerations and sets out the process that must be followed for each procurement exercise the organisation undertakes.

Adherence to the policies set out in this Manual are mandatory for all staff. The Manual follows the principles set out in the SG Procurement Policy Manual but has different documented procedures and processes in place (e.g. in relation to Non Competitive Action approvals (NCA), Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA) levels etc.) This Manual should be read in conjunction with the [Scottish Procurement Policy Handbook](#) (applicable to the wider public sector, including the Scottish Government).

Public sector procurement in Scotland takes place within a framework of rules and this Manual should be read in conjunction with these rules, which includes the following:

- [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
- [The Public Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [The Procurement \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#)

And if conducting Concessions or Utilities procurements (see Glossary), then the following:

- [The Concession Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Utilities Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#)

Please note that failure to comply with the legislation and policies as set out in this Manual may result in formal challenges and complaints being brought against SCRA alleging a breach of these rules. The consequences of a successful challenge may, depending on the nature of the breach, result in SCRA being fined; the duration of a contract being shortened; award of damages against SCRA; and reputational damage to SCRA.

SCRA's Procurement Team must be notified by business areas of any correspondence from suppliers' legal representatives challenging the procurement process or contract award decision. Any such correspondence must be saved to the appropriate folder.

This Manual should be read in conjunction with the above mentioned legislation and:

- the [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014: statutory guidance](#)
- the [Public sector procurement](#) webpages, where specifically referenced in this manual
- the [Client Guide to Construction Projects](#) - which provides specific policy and guidance for public sector contracting authorities on the procurement of construction related contracts

- the [Procurement Journey](#) – provides guidance, best practice and templates for public sector contracting authorities on the procurement of goods, services and care and support services
- the [Sustainable Procurement Tools](#) - designed to help public sector organisations identify and address how they can optimise the economic, social and environmental outcomes of their procurement activity
- other guidance or tool updates issued by Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate, including [Scottish Procurement Policy Notes](#) - which provide updates on legal and procurement policy developments.

The guidance set out in this Manual and the rules set out in the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) are designed to ensure that procurement activity is:

- Focused on the delivery of Value for Money (VfM).
- Conducted to high professional standards, to relevant guidance and to the relevant legal requirements.
- Conducted by appropriately trained and authorised staff to minimise the risk of legal challenge to SCRA.

In addition, to help us achieve the aims and priorities of the Scottish Government [National Performance Framework](#), we are expected to conduct our procurement activities in a way which is:

- good for businesses and their employees
- good for society
- good for places and communities
- open and connected

These outcomes underpin the [Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland](#) (PPSS). The PPSS, which is based around the National Performance Framework, provides a high-level vision and direction for Scottish public procurement which the Scottish Government and all public sector bodies can align to and deliver against.

In addition to this Procurement Policy Manual, SCRA also has the following general policies which should be followed:

- Applying Community Benefit Requirements in our Contracts
- Consulting & involving those affected by our procurements
- Fair Work Practices in Procurement
- Health & Safety
- Procuring fairly & ethically traded goods and services
- Prompt Payment Policy
- Retention in Construction/Works contracts

2. Definitions of procurement and Contract & Supplier Management (CSM)

'Procurement' is the process of buying goods, services and works from external suppliers. The public procurement process typically includes:

- understanding customer requirements as set out in a customer specification

- reviewing existence and accessibility of current frameworks and contracts
- understanding current and evolving market capacity and capability to underpin and enable effective competition
- developing a Procurement Strategy (also known as a commodity/service strategy) or brief to maximise sustainable value, considering wider economic, social and environmental outcomes as well as cost, quality and timelines
- determining the procurement procedure and exclusion, selection, and award criteria
- issuing Invitations to Tender or invitations to quote
- evaluating bids or quotes
- awarding, implementing, and managing contracts
- obtaining and paying for purchases / orders

The purpose of CSM is to ensure the contract is successfully executed by monitoring supplier performance against the contract requirements in order to fulfil the requirement and realise the projected benefits and savings.

CSM must be considered when developing a Procurement Strategy and carried out throughout the entire life of a contract. The role of Contract Manager is usually performed by the business area for whom the contract has been awarded, however support can be provided to business areas from SCRA's Procurement Team where required.

Collaborative framework agreements are managed strategically by the Scottish Procurement & Property Directorate (SPPD). Call-off contracts under frameworks are managed by the SCRA's Contract Managers. For more information on CSM responsibilities see section 10 of this Manual.

Information on Contract Management is available in [SCRA - Contract Management Handbook V1.0 Final - March 21.pdf](#) and the [Procurement Journey](#).

3. Procurement thresholds

The estimated value of a contract determines which procurement regulations apply.

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 applies to procurements with an estimated value of £50,000 (excluding VAT) or above for goods and services contracts, or £2,000,000 (excluding VAT) or above for works contracts.

Certain regulations apply to the procurement of contracts equal to or above the World Trade Organisation's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) financial thresholds (see glossary for list of above GPA threshold regulations). These [thresholds](#) are revised every two years. Wherever VAT may be payable under a contract, an allowance for VAT must be included in the calculation of the estimated value of the contract for the purposes of determining whether the contract equals or exceeds the threshold values.

4. Procurement Roles/ Responsibilities and compliance

This section outlines the roles, responsibilities and actions necessary for procurement compliance. The Head of Finance & Resources has been charged by

the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive to determine best practice purchasing arrangements for SCRA and to seek to establish these consistently throughout.

4.1 Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA)

All procurement contracts must be awarded by an individual with the appropriate level of DPA.

DPA is an internal control whereby authority is granted to SCRA staff to enter into a contract for goods, services and works. Procurement Officers and Delegated Purchasing Officers (DPOs) are responsible for conducting the process leading up to, and including, the award of a contract and any subsequent changes to that contract.

The Principal Reporter/Chief Executive is responsible for the scheme of DPA across SCRA and has delegated purchasing authority to the Procurement Officers for this purpose. This delegation allows for further delegation to suitable staff that have responsibility for low value low risk procurements. The decision to grant DPA is based on business need and the training / experience of the member of staff concerned. The DPA granted will specify the upper limit of contract value and type which the individual is authorised to award.

The Procurement Officers will maintain a central Register of Delegated Purchasers to allow the dissemination of information and advice, the identification and development of a Procurement Training Programme and periodic reports on the number of non-procurement staff who are actively involved in the procurement process and have completed the appropriate levels of training.

DPA is:

- Required for competition of contracts where an existing contract/framework agreement does not already exist. It is also required for running competitions against an authorised Scottish Procurement framework agreement (mini-competitions) or for the modification of an existing contract.
- Granted to permanent SCRA staff, authorised in writing by the Procurement Officer. This will be based on the business need and training/experience of the staff concerned. It will specify the value of contracts (excluding VAT) that the individual will be authorised to award.
- Intended to allow Head Office/Locality Teams the opportunity to manage their appropriate purchasing requirements within their local business area.
- Awarded on a personal basis to an individual based on their role within SCRA. DPA does not automatically transfer to their successor should they leave their current position, but it can transfer with them should they take up an identical role for a new team, based on business need. Changing role will trigger a review of DPA status. If DPA is to be withdrawn by the Procurement Officer for any reason this will be confirmed in writing.

DPA is not:

- To be confused with financial/budgetary authority which is detailed in SCRA's Scheme of Delegation (available on [Connect](#)).
- Required to purchase goods, services or works from single supplier framework agreements, awarded or approved by the Procurement Team or Scottish Procurement.
- The authority to approve a contract without following a genuine and effective competition – this is known as a Non-Competitive Action (NCA) (see Section 4.8).

Individuals with DPA are known as DPOs.

Details of existing [SCRA regulated Contracts and Frameworks](#) can be found on PCS. Further details can be obtained from the Procurement Officers.

Details of existing contracts and framework agreements that SCRA may use, which were awarded or approved by [Scottish Procurement](#) or [Crown Commercial Services](#) are available using the links above. Other framework agreements are available – please contact the Procurement Officers for further details.

4.2 Commitment of a Contract

A contract is a legally binding agreement between at least two parties creating obligations enforceable by law. A procurement contract sets out the details of what is being procured, from whom, and the rights and obligations of the parties involved.

Legally binding contracts can be created by word of mouth, correspondence, or implied by the action of parties. Therefore, in discussions and correspondence with suppliers it is essential that staff take care to ensure that a commitment or contract is not unintentionally created.

All SCRA procurement contracts awarded should normally be subject to Scots Law. For goods and services contracts, this is reflected in SCRA's Standard Terms & Conditions which have been designed for straightforward or routine purchases of goods or services. These Terms & Conditions can be found on [Connect](#).

For contracts where other terms and conditions are used (e.g. works), these should also be subject to Scots Law where possible.

Any proposed change, amendment or alternative form of conditions by any party to the contract should, in the first instance, be referred to the Procurement Officer for approval before agreeing to non-standard contract conditions.

All SCRA low value/low risk contracts (below £10,000) awarded by DPO's must be in writing. A sample contract award letter is available in [Route 1](#) of the Procurement Journey.

Details of contracts awarded should be recorded by all DPO's and be readily available on request from the Procurement Officer.

All purchases made using the GPC must comply with SCRA's GPC procedures. The limit for a single transaction by GPC is £5k with a maximum monthly spend per card of £10k. The Head of Finance and Resources has the authority to temporarily suspend these limits for individual DPOs as and when required.

4.3 The Single Procurement Document (SPD)

The SPD is a standard form that includes exclusion and selection questions. It is mandated for use in all Regulated Procurements above GPA threshold, and is recommended for use in all other Regulated Procurements. The aim of the SPD is to simplify the procurement process, especially for SMEs, by enabling bidders to self-declare that they have not breached any of the grounds for exclusion, and that they meet the relevant selection criteria. SPD Modules are available in [Public Contracts Scotland](#) (PCS) and [PCS Tender](#) (PCS-T). Guidance and documentation on the SPD can be found in the [Procurement Journey](#).

When carrying out Regulated Procurements, DPOs must take account of the mandatory and discretionary exclusion grounds which apply. These can be found in [Annex B](#) of the statutory guidance and further guidance can be found in the Procurement Journey. In all cases a bidder will have an opportunity to provide evidence that it has taken remedial action to demonstrate its reliability ("self-cleansing").

4.4 Notification of acceptance and rejection of bids

Acceptance or rejection of bids to suppliers must always be in writing. For procurements above GPA threshold where a [Standstill Notice](#) must be issued, the notice must be sent to all bidders as soon as possible once the preferred bidder has been identified, which commences a standstill period.

Should a DPO wish, or be requested, to conduct a [debrief](#) meeting following issuing written notification of an unsuccessful bid then these must be carefully planned, reflect any information previously provided in any Standstill Notice or notification of unsuccessful bid, and only be conducted by experienced Procurement Officers. A record of the debriefing meeting must be securely stored.

For more information, please see the Procurement Journey [contract award](#) station.

4.5 Separation of Duties

It is SCRA policy that there are at least two defined roles in a procurement process:

- the individual with the appropriate level of DPA who is responsible for ensuring that the procurement process fully complies with procurement policy and legislation
- the budget holder/customer who identifies the need and writes the business case to obtain any necessary approval to spend, confirming that funds are available to make the purchase

Anyone holding DPA must not:

- Be responsible for any financial approvals connected with contracts that they have authority to approve
- Act as Budget Holder

Proper separation of duties is essential in order to protect staff from accusations of impropriety and to reduce any risk of fraud.

The Budget Holder should have authority to commission goods, services or works and to provide financial authority for the expenditure. The Purchaser should have the relevant authority to commit the organisation to a contract for the purchase of the goods, services or works for the full term of the contract.

The Procurement Officer must be alerted to planned or possible procurements outwith the level of the DPO's authority, or if the purchase is novel or deemed to be high risk. In the case of works contracts, roles and responsibilities are set out in the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) and the [Construction Procurement Manual](#).

4.6 Procurement Journey and the Client Guide to Construction Projects

The Procurement Journey provides step-by-step guidance and templates for the procurement of goods and services and should be referred to throughout the procurement process. It has three routes according to the estimated value of the contract:

- Under £50,000 is known as unregulated or [Route 1](#) procurement.
- Between £50,000 and up to the GPA threshold is a Regulated Procurement and sometimes referred to as [Route 2](#) procurement.
- Equal to or above the GPA threshold is a Regulated Procurement and sometimes referred to as [Route 3](#) procurement.

Where Route 1 is required for contracts above £10,000 or where Routes 2 or 3 are required, the use of PCS is mandatory and these competitions must be managed by SCRA's Procurement Officers, unless the appropriate level of purchasing authority is held.

The [Client Guide](#) provides specific guidance for construction projects including their procurement, and issue Construction Procurement Notes (CPNs) which SCRA are required to imbed into our policies and procedures. The Guide should be referred to throughout the procurement process for construction related contracts. SCRA works contracts less than £2,000,000 can still follow Route 1 if the risk is assessed as low-medium and has sign-off from SCRA's Head of Finance & Resources.

4.7 Competition and Advertising

Contracts must be awarded through genuine and effective competition unless there are acceptable and justifiable reasons not to do so (see section 4.8). Individuals with the appropriate level of DPA are responsible for identifying the most appropriate procurement process that is likely to offer the best VfM. Advice/guidance should be sought from the Procurement Officer(s).

As part of developing the Procurement Strategy, consideration should be given to any existing [contracts and framework agreements](#) which are appropriate for the procurement. The linked list is not exhaustive, and other frameworks may be available.

Caution must be exercised regarding the use of speculative frameworks. Some factors to be considered in this area can be found in [SPPN 03/2017](#).

For purchases with a value under £1,000 (ex VAT) a Government Procurement Card (GPC) may be used. It is good practice for the cardholder to obtain a quote for purchases to ascertain value for money and to inform decisions. This quote can be made by telephone or in writing from the relevant supplier.

For all purchases with an anticipated value of between £1,000 and £5,000 (both figures excl. VAT), where there is no existing contract, a GPC may be used. Purchase values between £5,001 and up to £9,999 may still be processed by DPOs but require SCRA's New Supplier Form to be completed in advance of any contract award. It is recommended that cardholders obtain a minimum of three written quotes from different suppliers. These quotes must be obtained before making a decision based on VfM and details recorded on file.

A Procurement Officer or DPO will usually use [Quick Quote](#) (an online competition process within PCS) for procurements with an anticipated value of between £10,001 and £49,999 (both figures ex VAT). However, a decision may be made to conduct an open competition for a procurement with an estimated value within this range. Quick Quote must only be used where an individual with the appropriate level of DPA:

- ensures that there is no existing contract / framework agreement which could be accessed
- satisfies themselves that using Quick Quote is a relevant and appropriate route to market
- ensures that the procurement / mini competition is for low value and / or low risk purchases

All Regulated Procurements must be advertised on PCS. The award of a contract or the conclusion of a framework agreement must also be published on PCS. Exemptions to these publication requirements apply in certain circumstances. For more information see regulation 33 and 51(6) of The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 and regulation 7(8) of The Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016. For Research & Development services (e.g., procurements for innovative services) [Pre-Commercial Procurement](#) notices and Award notices should be published.

When determining advertising obligations, the calculation of the estimated value of the contract or framework (including potential options and/or possible extensions) should be conducted in accordance with the guidance outlined in Section 3 above. PCS has more information in the [Buyers' Area](#) on how contracting authorities can meet their publication obligation. Please also see threshold and contract value estimation [FAQs](#)

PCS can also be used to advertise subcontracting opportunities to promote a diverse and resilient supply chain, opening opportunities for SME, Third Sector and Supported Businesses as appropriate. For more information please see [SPPN 5/2019](#).

The thresholds for procurement activities within SCRA are outlined in the table below:

Est. Value (ex VAT)	Proc Journey Route	Procurement Lead	Minimum Standards
<£1,000	Not Required	DPO	Can be purchased via GPC cards. Alternatively, quotes can be sought following the Route 1 procedure below.
£1,000 - £10,000	Not Required (Route 1 can be used)	DPO	Minimum of three verbal/telephone quotes. Details to be recorded on file. Payment can be made by GPC card up to the value of £5,000. Recommend using Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) Quick Quote where possible.
£10,000 - £20,000	Route 1	DPO (if relevant level of authority held) or Procurement Officer	Not less than 3 quotations must be received. Use of PCS Quick Quote is mandatory for these competitions
£20,000 - £50,000 (Goods & Services)	Route 1 or Route 2	Procurement Officer	Formal competitive tendering exercise, led by SCRA Procurement Officer. Use of PCS Quick Quote is mandatory.
Up to £1M (Works)	Route CPR1 A for Works		Use of PCS Quick Quote is mandatory if project is low-medium risk.
£50,000+ (Goods & Services)	Route 2	Procurement Officer	Formal competitive tendering exercise, led by SCRA Procurement Officer, advertised via PCS and conducted in accordance with Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016
£1M+ (Works) – WTO GPA Threshold *	Route 1 or Route 2 for Works		Formal competitive tendering exercise, led by SCRA Procurement Officer if project is High Risk, however, projects under Procurement (Scotland) Act 2014 are not required to be advertised until they reach £2M, so Route 1 may be followed provided authorisation is given by SCRA's

			Head of Finance & Resources and is documented.
>WTO GPA Threshold	Route 3	Procurement Officer	Formal competitive tendering exercise, led by SCRA Procurement Officer, advertised via PCS, and conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

* The World Trade Organisation Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO GPA) thresholds change every two years. The next change will be applied from January 2026. For details of the thresholds please contact the Procurement Officer.

4.8 Non Competitive Action (NCA)

It is SCRA policy that all goods, services and works must be bought by genuine and effective competition unless there are exceptional reasons to the contrary.

Buying goods, services or works without competition needs prior approval before any purchase is made. Approval is granted in exceptional circumstances only, where it is appropriate to depart from SCRA policy, and where obligations under procurement legislation have been considered.

[Non Competitive Action \(NCA\)](#) is SCRA's internal process for considering requests to:

- dispense with competition and award a new contract directly to a specified supplier
- modify an existing contract where there is no clear, unequivocal clause to do so within the existing contract

The decision on whether to authorise a NCA request is made on a case-by-case basis and is strictly limited to those situations where it is appropriate. It is worth noting that lack of planning, resources or effective project management (e.g. of scope, timelines, or risk) would be very unlikely to constitute sufficient grounds for approving a NCA request.

Situations where approval may be given include, but are not limited to:

- extreme urgency due to circumstances unforeseen by SCRA, covering the immediate need
- where there is only one possible supplier
- modifying an existing contract where the modification is not substantial.

A Procurement Officer or DPO must be consulted about any proposal to award a contract without competition or to modify a contract before using the application for NCA form.

- for new requirements with a value of under £10,000 (excluding VAT), NCA approval must be obtained in advance from the Procurement Officer

- all requests to proceed with NCAs for new requirements of £10,000 and above must be approved in advance by the Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer
- NCAs to modify existing contracts, regardless of the value, where there is no clear unequivocal clause to do so within the existing contract, must be approved in advance by the Procurement Officer or Principal Reporter/Chief Executive Officer.

Approval of a NCA request does not guarantee this will be free of challenge by another supplier (for higher value contracts this could include a challenge before the courts). For this reason, it is important robust, objective supporting evidence is provided as part of the request for NCA.

Please note the process involved in awarding a contract whether that be through a competitive procedure or as a result of a direct award (NCA) is very similar and so where a NCA has been approved, there is still a requirement to undertake many of the steps that would be otherwise required. These steps include carrying out the routine due diligence that should be undertaken in advance of entering into any contract on behalf of SCRA.

In all cases, the guiding principles are that NCA approval is by someone authorised to take such a decision and that person should have no other role in the award of the contract to ensure adequate separation of duties. For audit purposes, the NCA justification and approval must be formally recorded with robust supporting evidence.

4.9 Contract documentation

Documentation covering the key stages of all procurements must be retained in the appropriate folder, regardless of value. The Procurement Officer or DPO is responsible for ensuring that there is a file for each contract and for ensuring that key documents are filed promptly.

In addition to forms contained within systems, such as PCS and PCS-Tender, a number of templates and other relevant documents can be found in the Procurement Journey [Document Library](#) which can be useful to consult when planning procurements.

4.10 Contracts Register, Transparency and Data Protection

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires all public sector contracting organisations to keep and maintain a Contracts Register, and to provide an internet-based publicly viewable version of it. As a minimum this is required to include all Regulated Procurements. PCS provides functionality to produce a contracts register that meets the requirements of the Act.

This Contract Register will be maintained and updated by the Procurement Team.

It is, however, the responsibility of all DPOs to ensure that they maintain a record of all lower value contracts they award. The Procurement Team may periodically request details of contracts awarded.

Procurement Officers and DPOs must ensure their contracts and procurement processes are compliant with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). This can be achieved through the use of the SCRA's Standard Terms and Conditions, and the [privacy notice](#) for inclusion with ITT documents. More information on this can be found in [SPPN 2/2018](#).

Care should also be taken by Procurement Officers and DPOs with regards to [Cyber Security](#). For further information, please see [SPPN 2/2020](#).

4.11 Approvals

Prior to committing to a purchase, where a new supplier is being used, Delegated Purchasers must complete a [New Supplier Form](#) and send this by email to the Procurement Officer who will confirm their approval by forwarding the form to the Finance Team.

It is SCRA Policy that all procurements expected to be above £20,000 should have a Procurement Strategy completed by the Procurement Officer in conjunction with the internal customer. The Procurement Strategy should be approved by the Head of Finance & Resources before commencing with the competition.

A Capital Proposal should be prepared by the internal customer for all Capital expenditure expected to be between £5,000 and £25,000. This should be submitted to the Head of Finance & Resources for approval. A Capital Proposal [template](#) is available on Connect.

A [Business Case](#) should be prepared by the Project Owner for all Capital or Revenue projects expected to be in excess of £25,000. Internal customers must consult with all relevant Teams, including Procurement, before submitting the Business Case for approval by the Executive Management Team (EMT).

4.12 Works Contracts

It is recognised that for small works contracts (up to £10k) it is not always possible to obtain prior quotations or to use the GPC for Works contracts.

The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 sets out at Schedule 2 those activities that are defined as Works. These activities describe works that form the basis of the types of project undertaken by SCRA's Property Team.

The updated Construction Procurement Manual provides mandatory guidance in developing and delivering construction projects and how to take these procurements to market using the appropriate Construction Procurement Route (CPR).

Although the guidance recommends using CPR1 A for contracts below £2M, the Procurement Team recommend using this for contracts below £1M. This means they can be taken to market without advertising, for example by inviting selected suppliers to bid using the Quick Quote facility on Public Contracts Scotland. If an assessment of risk determines that they need wider marketing, CPR1 B will be used.

Where possible, SCRA will openly advertise contract opportunities between £1M and £2M on Public Contracts Scotland using CPR1 B if the risk is deemed to be High. Works contracts between £1M and £2M may still follow CPR1 A if the risk is low-medium, has the approval of the Head of Finance & Resources and is documented in the Procurement Strategy in advance of going out to Tender.

5. Procurement Strategy and Annual Procurement Reports

The Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland (PPSS) provides a high-level vision and direction for Scottish public procurement to which the Scottish Government has aligned its [Procurement Strategy](#). Procurement Officers and DPOs should familiarise themselves with the PPSS and SCRA's Corporate Procurement Strategy (and consider how procurement exercises will help to deliver against the Strategy).

Annual Procurement Reports explain how procurement activities have complied with a contracting authority's Procurement Strategy in any given year. Publication of an Annual Procurement Report supports increased transparency. For this reason, and wider audit purposes, it is essential that records management is conducted throughout all procurement processes.

In addition to records management, good contract and supplier management (CSM) is crucial to support the reporting process. CSM helps to not only obtain savings, increase impact and mitigate risk through the contract lifecycle, but also to ensure that information and data within the Annual Procurement Report are accurate and meaningful. For more information on CSM please see section 10 of this Manual as well as guidance provided in the [Procurement Journey](#).

6. Value for Money (VfM)

Contracts must not be awarded based on lowest price only, and contract award criteria must be specifically designed to assess and award on the basis of VfM. The award stage will identify which of the eligible tenders will deliver the best VfM. For Regulated Procurements this is established using the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) criteria. It is SCRA policy that all Regulated Procurements are awarded based on MEAT, as well as a legal requirement for all contracts equal to or above the GPA threshold.

VfM is defined as the optimum combination of whole life costs and quality (or fitness for purpose) to meet the customer's requirements.

In addition to the quality of products and services, Procurement Officers and DPOs must also consider factors such as the Sustainable Procurement Duty (for more information please see section 8 of this Manual). In this context, [Whole Life Costing and Life Cycle Costing](#) should also be considered.

Procurement Officers and DPOs must also be mindful of abnormally low tenders. Where a tender could be considered to be abnormally low, the price being proposed must be clarified by the Procurement Officer or DPO to ensure that it is valid and sustainable. For more information on abnormally low tenders please see the

[Procurement Journey](#) for goods and services contracts, or for works contracts [CPN 3/2024 Graduated Pricing Mechanism](#) guidance was released in July 2024 (also see the [Client Guide](#)) which includes a revised Price:Quality matrix tool to help encourage tenders to be appropriately priced such that works can be provided which meet the specified requirements without placing unsustainable financial pressures on either the Supplier or the Client Projects.

7. Prompt Payment

[Section 15](#) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires contracting authorities to set out in their Procurement Strategy how they intend to ensure all payments made to contractors and sub-contractors are paid within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice. SCRA is committed to paying its contractors promptly, targeting to pay valid invoices within 10 working days of receipt, going beyond the contractual commitment to pay within 30 days.

[SPPN 2/2022](#) provides guidance to ensure contracts are awarded to bidders with a good payment performance history and systems in place so that their supply chains are paid on time in accordance with the terms within their contracts.

Prompt payment should be monitored as part of the contract management activity, addressing any shortfalls with the prime contractor during the life of the contract to ensure the reliability of the supply chain. It is the prime contractor's responsibility to monitor and support prompt payment to all sub-contractors involved in delivering a public contract.

8. Sustainable Procurement

SCRA is committed to buying goods, services and works in a sustainable manner. Sustainable public procurement aims to make better use of public money, helping us to achieve our overarching purpose and strategic objectives.

SCRA will derive the greatest benefits through ensuring that sustainability is embedded and proportionately applied to all its procurement decisions and activities.

The [Sustainable Procurement Duty](#) requires that, before a contracting authority carries out a Regulated Procurement, it must consider how it can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area in which it operates, and in carrying out the procurement, to act with a view to securing improvements so identified. The duty also requires contracting authorities to consider how their procurement process can facilitate the involvement of SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses, and how the procurement can be used to promote innovation.

Information on sustainable procurement policies can be found on the [Public sector procurement policy](#) webpage.

Guidance and support are available, which includes [statutory guidance on the Sustainable Procurement Duty](#) and the [Sustainable procurement tools \(these tools include e-Learning, Guidance and Case Studies\)](#), as well as the guidance on measuring social impact in public procurement in [SPPN 10/2020](#).

SCRA will derive the greatest benefits through ensuring that, where appropriate, sustainability is embedded and proportionately applied to all its procurement decisions and activities. At the heart of this process will be [The Sustainability Test](#).

This suite of support can help identify and address opportunities to optimise the economic, social and environmental outcomes of procurement activities, and can help meet procurement obligations in the following areas:

8.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

SCRA is committed to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion through public procurement. For more information on Equality and procurement, including the [Fairer Scotland Duty](#), please see the relevant public sector procurement policy [webpage](#).

8.2 Human rights

Those we contract with should take a robust approach to human rights in any part of their business including their supply chain.

Guidance has been published for contracting authorities on reducing the risk of human trafficking and exploitation in the performance of public contracts ([SPPN 3/2020](#)).

8.3 Fair Work First (FWF)

Fair work is central to achieving the Scottish Government's priority for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. FWF is the Scottish Government's policy for driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland.

For more information on FWF procurement policy, please see the Fair work and procurement [webpage](#) including Fair Work First and Procurement e-learning (released Dec 2024 via [Sustainable Procurement](#) website) designed to help public bodies and suppliers adopt Fair Work First, and SCRA's General Policy on Fair Work.

8.4 Community benefits

Community Benefits are enshrined in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 through a specific provision to consider their use for all contracts of £4 million or more. Community Benefits in public procurement contribute towards achieving the aims of the Sustainable Procurement Duty and should therefore be considered for contracts valued lower than £4 million, wherever relevant and proportionate.

For more information on Community Benefits policy, please see the Community Benefits in procurement [webpage](#).

8.5 Climate change

The Scottish Government is committed to using public procurement to contribute towards the strategic priority of transitioning to a more resource efficient, lower carbon economy. Procurement Officers, DPOs and Environmental Ambassadors have a responsibility to be climate literate, as well as any other SCRA short to long term groups whose remit includes climate change/sustainability, and to understand how contracting activities can support net-zero aspirations throughout the contract duration and it is highly recommended they undertake the SG [Climate Literacy e-Learning](#).

Help and support in addressing climate change through procurement is available in [SPPN 3/2022](#). For more information on climate change and procurement policy, please see the Procurement and Climate Change [webpage](#).

8.6 SMEs, Third Sector Bodies, and Supported Businesses

The Sustainable Procurement Duty places an obligation on contracting authorities to consider how procurement processes can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area, and facilitate the involvement of SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses. Procurement Officers and DPOs must be mindful of this Duty when creating their Procurement Strategy.

In line with principles of equal treatment and proportionality and the general duty in [section 8\(1\) of the Act](#), it is Scottish Government policy that the costs associated with submitting a bid be kept to a minimum, and barriers to participation by small firms, the self-employed and the third sector should be removed where possible.

In order to help facilitate access to public contracts, simplicity is key, and it is important to consider all available mechanisms to encourage participation by smaller businesses, including micro-businesses. These mechanisms include simplifying specifications, breaking larger requirements into smaller requirements (lotting), the use of Quick Quotes, and the creation and advertising of subcontracting opportunities. For advice on how to apply these mechanisms, please see:

- [SPPN 9/2020](#) - supply chain resilience and diversity
- [SPPN 5/2019](#) - advertising subcontracting opportunities on PCS
- [SPPN 4/2017](#) - reserving contracts for supported businesses
- [Section 3.5](#) of the Statutory Guidance - facilitating the involvement of SMEs, the third sector and supported businesses

8.7 Innovation

Public procurement has a key role to play in enabling innovative goods, works and services. The Sustainable Procurement Duty requires contracting authorities to consider how to promote innovation in their Regulated Procurements.

PCS has innovation notices to help Procurement Officers and DPOs engage with the market as well as procure research and development contracts and provide reporting on innovation. The [Procurement Journey](#) and [SPPN 3/2023](#) have more information on how to consider research and development and how to procure innovative solutions / goods.

9. Consultancy Services

Robust procedures must be followed for the procurement of consultancy services to ensure that these resources are used sparingly, appropriately and effectively.

Before any procurement process for Consultancy Services takes place, a Business Case must be prepared by the appropriate Budget Holder/customer, based on the amount that SCRA expects to pay for the requirement, and passed to the Procurement Officer for completion of Section 4 before being submitted to EMT for approval.

The Scottish Government [consultancy procedures](#) provide guidance on the use of consultancy services.

10. Contract & Supplier Management (CSM)

Contract Management is an essential part of the contracting process. Contract monitoring procedures are the essential key to ensuring that the contractor meets the service levels set out in the contract and to ensuring continuing value for money.

In discussions with the customer (i.e. the business area) Procurement Officers and DPOs should ensure that all parties, particularly the customer, are clear on ownership of CSM activities and that a Contract Manager must be appointed and recorded on the Contracts Register which is maintained by the Procurement Team.

The SPFM requires that the Contract Manager is a permanent member of staff. CSM guidance is provided in the [Procurement Journey](#) and in SCRA's Contract Management Handbook which is available on Connect. All Contract Managers must familiarise themselves with this.

The Contract Manager must ensure that Procurement are advised and consulted on all amendments, additions and/or deletions to a contract to ensure that the Register does not contain outdated or false information.

11. Ethical standards and gifts & hospitality

Staff must preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in all dealings with suppliers and potential suppliers as detailed in SCRA's Staff Code of Conduct and the [Scottish Procurement Policy Handbook](#).

All procurement activity must be conducted with propriety and to the highest professional standards at all times, ensuring that suppliers and potential suppliers are treated fairly at all stages of the procurement process.

Procurement Officers, DPOs and all other staff involved in procurement (including Line Managers) must read and familiarise themselves with all guidance and its associated documents in this section.

All staff must exercise care if offered gifts or hospitality. When considering whether it is appropriate to accept a gift, reward, benefit, or any other form of hospitality which has been offered, refer to criteria that can be found in section 9.3 of the [Scottish procurement policy handbook](#)

Further guidance on ethical standards and expectations is detailed in the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) and [Standards of conduct](#) on Saltire.

12. Conflicts of interest in procurement

Staff are legally required to act with honesty and integrity, and must not abuse their position for personal gain, to further their own personal interests or the interests of others (e.g. family and friends). Staff also have a duty to ensure that no appearance of bias or misuse of position is given or can be inferred through their conduct.

Any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest (e.g. owning shares in a supplier, or family / friends being employed by a supplier) which arise in the course of a procurement must be declared. For procurements subject to the Scottish public procurement regulations this is a legal consideration. Procurement Officers and DPOs must also take appropriate measures to prevent, identify, and remedy conflicts of interest arising in the course of all other procurement procedures (i.e. those below the GPA threshold) to avoid any distortion of competition and to ensure equal treatment of all bidders. SCRA tender evaluators are required to complete a Declaration of Interest form ahead of any tender information being provided to them for evaluation in all cases where the contract value is £20k or above.

13. Fraud response procedures and anti-competitive practices

SCRA's policy on fraud/corruption is set out in the [Fraud/Corruption Policy](#) which is available on Connect. The Policy sets out in more detail procedures for fraud prevention, detection and the investigating and reporting of fraud or corruption.

The risk of fraud must be appropriately managed by ensuring that inherent fraud risk within procurement is identified and assessed, with specific counter-fraud controls and mitigation activity in place to minimise exposure to these risks. The Scottish Government policy on the detection, reporting and handling of fraud is available in the [Fraud - Scottish Public Finance Manual - gov.scot](#)

Procurement Officers and DPOs must also be alert to anti-competitive practices, such as collusion and conflict of interest, cartel activity and bid rigging practices.

Audit Scotland and Police Scotland have published information which Procurement Officers and DPOs can use to identify [Procurement Red Flags](#).

The Competition and Markets Authority has detailed information and a free [e-Learning module](#) which covers anti-competitive practices in procurement.

Where further advice is required in relation to any suspected fraud or irregularity, or in relation to fraud risk management and counter-fraud control, contact should be made with the [Counter Fraud Service](#).

Glossary

- **Above GPA Threshold Regulations**
namely, the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015; The Concession Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016; The Utilities Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016
- **Award Criteria**
the criteria (questions) used by the buyer to compare and score the merits of the specific bid for the contract. This must include quality and price.
- **Bidder**
used as a general term throughout the Manual to encompass bidders, tenderers and, in the case of restricted procedures, candidates.
- **Client Guide to Construction Projects**
guidance to assist public sector clients to procure and manage their construction projects.
- **Competition**
contracts must be awarded through genuine and effective competition unless there are convincing reasons to the contrary.
- **Construction Procurement Note (CPN)**
Construction procurement policy, guidance and legislation relating to public sector construction, issued by the Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate to public sector organisations and other relevant bodies.
- **Contract**
is a legally binding agreement between SCRA and one or more suppliers for the supply of specified goods, services or works. The contract sets out the details of what SCRA is buying and being delivered with and the rights and obligations of both of the parties.
- **Contracting Authority**
a term used to describe the public sector buyer who has a procurement requirement.
- **Contract Award Notice**
a publication which confirms the details of a contract which has been awarded to a supplier.
- **Contract Notice**
a publication which advertises a procurement requirement.
- **Contract Management**
the process of monitoring the performance of a supplier on a contract.
- **Contract register**
a published list of contracts put in place by a public sector organisation based in Scotland. This is a legislative requirement.
- **Contract Value**
this is an estimate of the value of a contract over the whole period of the contract e.g. if the contract is for £50k per year for 3 years the contract value is £150k. The contract value should include any extension periods.

- **Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA)**
is the authority given to an individual to sign-off contracts. It is not to be confused with Delegated Finance Authority as it is important that there is adequate separation of duties between the individual who has finance authority i.e. the budget holder and the individual with purchasing authority i.e. who places the contract.
- **Delegated Purchasing Officer (DPO)**
a permanent SCRA individual with Delegated Purchasing Authority.
- **Fair Work Practices**
employment practices that support wellbeing e.g. training and development, equality of opportunity.
- **Framework agreement**
an agreement between a contracting authority and one or more suppliers for the supply of specified goods, services or works over a period of time. The framework agreement has agreed terms and conditions, defined pricing structure and if appropriate quality requirements. The main difference between a framework agreement and a contract is that a framework does not state the quantity of the goods, services or works, or when they will be bought. Individual contracts specifying the quantity and timescale are awarded under the terms of the framework agreement.

GPA threshold

financial threshold values which are used to determine whether a public contract falls within the scope of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015, the Utilities Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016 or the Concession Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016. These threshold values are updated on the 1st of January every two years.

- **Government Procurement Card (GPC) or Electronic Purchasing Card (ePC)**
is a corporate charge card used for low value, ad-hoc purchases that are not covered by existing contracts or framework agreements for transactions of £5,000 (excluding VAT) or less.
- **Non Competitive Action (NCA)**
procurement process used in very exceptional circumstances when normal procurement rules cannot be followed.
- **Procurement**
is the process of buying goods, services or works from external suppliers.
- **Procurement Exercise**
full end to end procurement exercise from strategy development to contract & supplier management.
- **Procurement Journey**
a toolkit providing practical guidance for public sector buyers on procurement procedures.
- **Procurement Officer**
an SCRA member of staff with Delegated Purchasing Authority, who undertakes procurement as the main function of their role.

- **Procurement Strategy**
a Procurement Strategy is different to the Corporate Procurement Strategy. A Procurement Strategy is a document that a public sector buyer creates to detail and plan for a particular Procurement Exercise. This document should include: information on the team to be involved in the procurement exercise; market analysis; current contracts and spend etc. This document will be reviewed and approved (or not) by the organisations procurement management to allow the procurement exercise to proceed to the next phase.
- **Public Contracts Scotland (PCS)**
the Scottish Government's official national advertising portal used to advertise public sector contract opportunities.
- **Quick Quote**
is an online quotation facility using the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) portal which allows buyers to obtain competitive quotes electronically for low value requirements. Details of the QQ are created online and sent to a selected list of suppliers, who can then complete the required details and submit their quotation using the secure postbox. QQs are only distributed to the selected suppliers and are not made public on the website.
- **Regulated Procurement**
in relation to public contracts, procurements with an estimated value of £50,000 and above for goods and services and £2,000,000 and above for works contracts and which are not otherwise exempt from the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. Also see section 4.6 of this Manual.
- **Retention**
an amount deducted and withheld from each progress payment made to a contractor or subcontractor to secure obligations under a construction contract and ensure defects are remediated without the holder becoming liable for costs arising from unmet contract performance.
- **Scottish Procurement Policy Notes (SPPN)**
procurement policy, guidance and legislation issued by the Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate to public sector organisations and other relevant bodies.
- **Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM)**
provides guidance to Scottish Government and other public bodies on the proper handling and reporting of public funds.
- **Sustainability**
a process whereby SCRA meet its needs for goods, services, works in a way that achieves VfM on a whole life basis and generates benefits not only to SCRA, but also to society, the economy and the environment.
- **Value for Money (VfM)**
the optimum combination of whole life costs and quality to meet the customer's requirement.