



SCOTTISH

CHILDREN'S REPORTER

ADMINISTRATION

Procurement in SCRA

Corporate Procurement Strategy 2024 – 2027

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Appendix A: Glossary

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 is revised in February/March each year.

We need to review our Strategy each year and make changes to it where appropriate. This update is the outcome of our sixth review. It sets out how we plan to carry out our procurements for this financial year, 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027, 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.

This Strategy document has been EHRIA (Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment) assessed by our Inclusion & Diversity Manager in conjunction with the Procurement Team, and covers all Procurement activities over the coming 12 months. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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) [SPPN 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.

SCRA's Procurement team successfully completed the Fair Work First and Procurement e-learning module on the Sustainable Procurement Tools website in 2025.

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 continues to try to identify and reserve appropriate contracts for Supported Businesses and awarded our first reserved contract to start in December 2025 with a possible longstop contract term of 4 years.

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](#).

SCRA also attends the National Procurement Conference on an annual basis for insight into future planning, reporting, innovation and AI updates, as well as engage with many suppliers.

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. This is further addressed in SCRA's standard Terms & Conditions. Where relevant and proportionate suppliers are required to provide details of any equality policies and systems that they have in place and any that will be utilised when delivering the contract.

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 have embedded 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.

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. A more robust solution such as Supply25 is being trialled currently by the Scottish Government and was showcased at the October 2025 Procurex conference.

6. SCRA'S PROCUREMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

SCRA's Procurement Policy Manual was revised in February 2026 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, and maintain the highest standard of integrity in all business relationships by rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper, never using any 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, supported businesses, social enterprises and other different organisations. Where relevant, Supplier Engagement Days are arranged to inform our procurement strategy. These will now include discussion on equality, diverse & inclusive 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 Intranet project webspace 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 identify areas where savings and benefits can be achieved.

SCRA's Procurement Officers share best practice with delegated purchasers, as well as CSMs, any relevant Manager or Team.

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](#) 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 excl VAT, 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).

Where SCRA can utilise suitable Frameworks for commissions below £50,000, we will seek to award contracts in this manner in accordance with the Frameworks Buyers Guide guidelines.

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 (£20K for Property and Digital DPs) 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 [Client guide to construction projects - gov.scot](#) 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 SG 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 where possible. SCRA Policy is to openly advertise contract opportunities between £1M and £2M on Public Contracts Scotland using CPR1 A should the risk be deemed to be Low-Medium risk, but use route CPR1 B for all Works contracts between £1M and £2M where the risk is deemed to be at High risk level. Exceptions to SCRA's policy, but below SG thresholds, must have written approval by SCRA's Head of Finance & Resources at Project Strategy level, prior to proceeding with the Procurement process.

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, Diversity 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 2024/25 and uploaded this information onto the Scottish Government Information Hub. The spend figures were - Contracted Spend £7,827,805 (94.22%) and Non Contracted £480,049 (5.78%).

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 the Policy Manual 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

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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 ongoing 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.