

 Brent	Cabinet 9 March 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Service Reform & Strategy
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Community Action & Community Power (Councillor Jake Rubin)
Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2030	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix A: Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2030
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Rhodri Rowlands, Director of Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement 020 8937 1738 Rhodri.Rowlands@brent.gov.uk Nigel Kletz, Procurement Consultant Nigel.Kletz@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet’s approval of Brent Council’s new Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2030.
- 1.2 The Strategy sets out the guiding principles and priorities for procurement activity in Brent, and how the Council will use its spending power to deliver value for Brent’s residents and communities. The Strategy recognises the need for the Council to ensure procurement is delivering value for money, given the significant financial pressures facing the Council, while also ensuring that procurement delivers wider benefits to residents.

- 1.3 The Strategy is based on three key cornerstones or pillars, which are 1) Community Wealth Building, 2) Effective Contract Management, and 3) Leadership, Commercial Capability and Innovation.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves the Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2030.

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 Brent Council has significant spending power. Every year the Council spends £659 million on a range of goods, services and works from a diverse supplier base. It's important that the goods, services and works that we procure on behalf of residents are good quality and delivered to a high standard, so that they meet residents' needs and support them to live their best lives. It's also increasingly important that the goods, services and works we procure represent value for money, given the cost pressures facing the Council and our residents.
- 3.2 Communities across the country are facing a range of social, economic and environmental challenges – and Brent's communities are not immune. Therefore, we need to think about how we use our spending power more strategically to deliver a wider range of benefits to our communities to help them address challenges head on, such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions, more local jobs and development of a diverse and vibrant local VCSE sector. It's this wider approach to delivering social value and building the wealth of local communities that underpins our new Procurement Strategy.
- 3.3 The Procurement Strategy supports delivery of the **Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 2027**. It aligns with three of the priorities in the Borough Plan: Prosperity and Stability; A Cleaner, Greener Future; and Thriving Communities. It reflects the Borough Plan's commitment that sustainability is central to the growth of the borough and local economy.
- 3.4 The Council participated in the **LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge** in January 2025, which provide the following feedback/recommendations around procurement:

“Commissioning, procurement and contract management are key areas for development. The peer team identified a cautious approach, with low appetite for risk and limited innovation in procurement practices. To address these challenges, there is a need to foster greater professional curiosity and innovation within procurement and commissioning, ensuring that the Council takes a more strategic, market-aware and forward-thinking approach. There remains a significant opportunity for the Council to secure greater levels of social value and drive efficiencies through commissioning [and contract management] - an increasingly important factor given the Council's growing financial pressures.”

3.5 The Strategy responds to this feedback as well as to the findings of the **Procurement Peer Review** (April 2025), which highlighted the need for the Council's previous Procurement Strategy to be updated to reflect the current needs of the Borough and changed circumstances.

3.6 The Strategy is consistent with the Council's broader commitments to change the way that it delivers public services, so that they deliver the most value for residents and support them to live their best lives. It is also consistent with the Council's commitment to work more closely with partners to deliver good outcomes for residents and communities.

4.0 Background

4.1 Brent Council spends approximately £659m annually across a wide supplier base on purchased goods, services and works. This expenditure supports the delivery of statutory and essential services to meet the needs of Brent's communities. As well as ensuring value for money, it is important that Brent Council uses this spending power to deliver the best possible services for residents and deliver broader social, economic and environmental benefits to communities.

4.2 Brent Council's previous procurement strategy covered the period 2020-2023. Since then, the legislative context for procurement has evolved significantly. The Procurement Act 2023 and accompanying Procurement Regulations 2024 came into force in February 2025 and represent a major shift towards enhancing efficiency, flexibility and transparency across the procurement lifecycle. The key objectives of the Procurement Act 2023 are:

- Creating a simpler and more flexible commercial system which better meets the government's national objectives.
- Opening up public procurement to new entrants such as social enterprises and small businesses.
- Embedding transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle

4.3 The National Procurement Strategy 2022 focuses on three core themes: showing leadership, behaving commercially and achieving community benefits.

4.4 In February 2025 the government released the National Procurement Policy Statement. This sets out the government's wider procurement policy objectives, which local authorities are required to have regard to and use as a strategic guide. It identifies three key priorities:

- **Driving economic growth** and strengthening supply chains by giving SMEs and VCSEs a fair chance at public contracts, creating high quality jobs and championing innovation.

- **Delivering social and economic value** that supports the Government's missions including by working in partnership across organisational boundaries.
- **Ensuring** the right **commercial capability** and standards are in place to procure and manage contracts effectively and to collaborate with other contracting authorities to **deliver best value**.

4.5 This legislative and policy context has informed the development of the Council's new Procurement Strategy.

4.6 In early 2025, Brent Council commissioned an independent peer review of its procurement service. The findings and recommendation to implement a Procurement Improvement Programme (PIP) were endorsed by CMT in May 2025. The PIP commenced in mid-2025 and is focused on five improvement workstreams:

1. **Staff Development, Culture and Capability:** A new interim Head of Procurement has been in post since July 2025, and six new permanent appointments have been made for previously "hard to fill" vacant roles. A series of culture workshops are underway with staff.
2. **Strategy & Policy:** A stream of work focused on developing this Procurement Strategy, the an accompanying Social Value Statement and other initiatives such as Match My Project to broker supplier social value capacity against local needs.
3. **Improve Directorate Engagement:** Two Directorate Procurement Groups have been established, each covering two directorates to strengthen relationships with service areas. These forums are used to consult on ideas for improvements, clarify roles and responsibilities and act as a channel for two-way communication and feedback between Procurement and service areas.
4. **Contract Management:** Over 70 Council contracts have been "segmented" into tiers to determine the most effective level of contract management. The highest risk/highest profile contracts – deemed Platinum – are reported to executive level. Practitioner training is to be provided for 19 contract managers funded by the Cabinet Office. A new, more robust contract register is being implemented to better manage contracts and improve visibility of expiring contracts.
5. **Operational Excellence:** This workstream is focused on modernising procurements through improvements to processes, monitoring performance through KPIs, and analysing waivers and contract extensions to identify underlying causes to address.

4.7 In addition, Brent's new Procurement Strategy has been informed by:

- Work undertaken by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) in 2025 to identify how Brent Council could enhance and progress work to embed a community wealth building approach.
- Work to develop a Social Value Statement for Brent.

4.8 The Strategy (Appendix A) sets out the Council's overarching vision for procurement, and three key cornerstones or pillars for achieving the vision, which are:

1. Community Wealth Building
2. Effective Contract Management
3. Leadership, Commercial Capability and Innovation

4.9 The Strategy is intended to sit alongside the Council's new Social Value Statement (which is in development), which will set out how the Council will work in a way that delivers wider social, economic and environmental outcomes beyond the core purpose of a service or contract. Social value underpins the approach and priorities set out in the Procurement Strategy.

5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 The Procurement Strategy has been informed by the independent peer review of Brent's procurement function and approach that was undertaken in 2025. As part of this review, there was extensive engagement with members, officers and a small number of suppliers.

5.2 The Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Community Power and Leader of the Council have been engaged throughout the development of the Strategy.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 The Procurement Strategy commits to new training, systems, governance structures and data improvements. These upfront investments can be contained within existing budgets. In the medium term, these measures, including contract management improvements, will result in savings and cost avoidance for the Council through tighter supplier performance management and greater control of risk and scope creep.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 The Procurement Strategy must comply with, and be delivered in accordance with, all applicable UK legislation and guidance, including the Procurement Act 2023, the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the Equality Act 2010.

7.2 Officers in Legal Services will continue to provide support and guidance in the implementation of the Procurement Strategy, and any necessary amendments to contract and tender documents.

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Council also internally recognises care experience and socio-economic status as protected characteristics.
- 8.2 The strategic intent of the draft Procurement Strategy strengthens the Council’s commitment to EDI, with the explicit purpose of using procurement to support the local economy and increase local employment, skills and learning opportunities. This will strengthen local communities and help to tackle inequality in Brent. One of the key actions of the new Strategy is to increase contractor collaboration on tackling poverty and inequality. Suppliers for Platinum, Gold, and Silver contracts will be required to complete Modern Slavery and EDI due diligence. Non-compliance will constitute a material breach of contract, emphasising the Council’s commitment to ensuring that contractors uphold these commitments in practice.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 9.1 The Council is committed to adopting a sustainable approach for all products and services it procures and to harness its purchasing power to help tackle climate change holistically, in alignment with the key themes within the Borough’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy.
- 9.2 The Council has adopted a stand-alone Procurement Sustainability Policy, which underpins this approach. It also utilises the West London Sustainable Procurement Charter as a mandatory section for all suppliers to complete as part of major procurements.
- 9.3 The new draft Procurement Strategy references the significance of environmental sustainability within the new cornerstones and underpinning principles.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 Following the adoption of the Strategy, it will be worked into a designed version for publication. There will be communication with officers so that they understand the contents of the Strategy and what it means for them. There will also be communication with residents, key suppliers, prospective suppliers, VCSE organisations and other partners about the new Strategy, including via the Council’s website and other communications channels.

Report sign off:

Rachel Crossley

Corporate Director of Service Reform & Strategy