



Procurement Strategy

2026 – 2031



Foreword

In Brent, we're lucky to have a vibrant and diverse local economy, with many small, medium and large organisations and individuals choosing to do business here. We're also lucky to have a large and diverse number of community and voluntary sector organisations working hard every day to improve the lives of Brent's residents. Despite that, there are challenges. We have higher than average unemployment, barriers to progression, and low median wages. The cost-of-living crisis continues to be a significant challenge for many of our residents.

In this context, it's more important than ever that the impacts of economic activity in Brent are felt locally. We need to make sure that economic activity is improving the prosperity and wellbeing of our residents and supporting them to live their best lives.

Brent Council has significant spending power. We spend approximately £659m annually across a wide supplier base (with 78 of those suppliers being locally based) on a range of goods, services and works.

Despite that, the Council is operating in a challenging financial context. Like all local authorities across the UK, we're having to do more with less. The costs of providing essential services to residents are increasing, while our residents are feeling the pinch every time they receive another bill. All of this means we need to think carefully about how we're procuring goods, services and works.



We need to make sure that the goods, services and works we procure offer value for money, and wherever possible, save us money. We also need to ensure that the money we spend supports our local businesses to thrive and grow, enables good businesses to win contracts and avoids creating barriers to smaller businesses. We want our spend to support the creation and retention of local jobs and enable us to deliver good social and environmental outcomes. We also need to make sure that we manage our contracts robustly to receive all the benefits our suppliers have committed to deliver.

We will take a proportionate and tailored approach to delivering the Strategy. We will set high standards and work flexibly so that in partnership with our supply chain we focus on the areas and opportunities that make the biggest impact for our residents. This Strategy sets out how we'll do this. It is every member of staff's responsibility to deliver on this Strategy.

By following a One Council approach we can draw on the depth of resources, data and insights available across the organisation to support its delivery.

Executive Summary

This Procurement Strategy sets out Brent's guiding principles and priorities for our procurement activity, and how we will use our spending power to deliver value for Brent.

It is underpinned by a focus on place, people and commercial capability to enable a fairer, more equal and environmentally sustainable Brent. It is about ensuring that every pound Brent Council spends delivers maximum benefits for its residents and communities and supports a vibrant and inclusive local economy.

It is also focused on ensuring that the services Brent Council delivers are high-quality and innovative.

Our overarching vision is that innovative and high-quality procurement supports Brent Council to create opportunity, tackle inequality, drive sustainability and deliver value and good outcomes for residents.

The Strategy is grounded in the principle of Social Value and links closely with the Council's Social Value Statement. The Strategy is also underpinned by a commitment to Community Wealth Building (CWB), which is a people-centred approach to local economic and social change, which increases the flow of wealth to local communities. Procurement is one of the key levers that can generate jobs, opportunity and wealth for local people.



Our Vision

Taking into account the context Brent Council is operating in, the Council's vision for procurement is:

We will harness innovative and high-quality procurement to create opportunity, tackle inequality, drive sustainability and deliver the best possible value for Brent's communities.

To meet the needs of Brent's diverse communities, and the challenges facing them head on, it is important that we first design the right services, procure them in an effective and compliant way, and then ensure contractual commitments are fully met. This requires us to be innovative, to optimise value for money and identify opportunities for savings wherever possible – so every pound is spent wisely and we deliver value for money for our communities.

We will ensure that we use the Procurement Act 2023 to its best advantage, taking the time to carry out appropriate market engagement and other research to ensure that each project is fully considered and delivered in a timely manner.

In addition, we will ensure that procurement fosters and supports a successful, mixed and thriving local economy and voluntary sector in Brent that addresses local priorities. In turn, this will help to deliver broader social, economic and environmental benefits to Brent's residents.

Purposeful commissioning, sound governance and decisions aligned to strong commercial capability will enable and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

The Strategy's Cornerstones

The Strategy has three cornerstones, which will help us to deliver on our vision: Prioritising local suppliers and strengthening local economic participation. Under each of these cornerstones is a series of actions and priorities which will support the Council to use procurement to drive change, innovation, improvement and better outcomes for residents and the local economy.



Context

The 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 diverse communities, such as keeping streets clean, providing care and support for our most vulnerable, and building new affordable housing for residents. In 2025/26, Brent procured goods, services and works from over 2,300 suppliers. Around 25% of those suppliers are locally based.

It is important that Brent Council uses this spending power to deliver the best possible services for residents, and to deliver broader social value to its communities. It's also important that the Council thinks about how it can increase its local supplier base, to ensure that wealth is generated and stays within Brent. This Strategy provides the overall direction for how the Council will do this.

Alignment with the Borough Plan 2023 - 2027

This Strategy aligns with three of the priorities set out in Brent's Borough Plan 2023 – 2027: prosperity and stability, a cleaner, greener future, and thriving communities. It reflects commitments to ensuring that sustainability is central to the growth of the borough and local economy.

The Strategy also reflects the Council's broader commitments to changing how we're delivering services to residents to help everyone live their best lives. It reflects the Council's focus on ensuring that public services make the biggest difference with every pound spent, and our commitment to working collaboratively with partners.



Alignment with Procurement Improvement Programme

In 2025, Brent Council commissioned an independent review of its approach to procurement to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Off the back of that review, a comprehensive Procurement Improvement Programme (PIP) has been developed, to implement the review's recommendations. The PIP is comprised of five workstreams:

- Staff development, culture and capability
- Strategy and policy
- Directorate engagement, governance and compliance
- Contract management
- Procurement Operational Excellence

This Strategy forms part of the Council's work under workstream 2 – Strategy and Policy – and is intended to provide the overarching, strategic direction that guides ongoing improvement activity under each of the PIP's five workstreams.

Alignment with the National Procurement Strategy

The National Procurement Strategy (NPS) is based around four key themes. The table below maps each cornerstone of Brent's Procurement Strategy against the key themes in the NPS to show alignment and reinforce how Brent's local priorities and actions support national expectations.

NPS Theme / Strategy Cornerstone	Community Wealth Building	Effective Contract Management	Leadership and Commercial Capability
Leadership	Encourages organisational commitment to local economic development and fair work	Ensures accountable, performance-driven contract oversight	Strengthens procurement leadership, governance, and professional capability
Behaving Commercially	Supports development of strong, resilient local markets and supply chains	Drives performance, risk management, and value delivery	Embeds commercial acumen, market insight, and structured decision-making
Community Benefits / Social Value	Delivers local jobs, supports local suppliers, and builds local wealth as part of Social Value delivery	Monitors Social Value delivery through contract management	Embeds Social Value in evaluation, contract management, and performance improvement
Supporting Local Economies	Directly aligned with CWB principles of local supply chain strengthening and inclusive growth	Ensures commitments to local benefit are delivered	Uses commercial insight and leadership to commission for place-based outcomes

Underpinning Principles: Social Value, Community Wealth Building and Environmental Sustainability

Social Value

Social Value refers to the additional economic, social, and environmental benefits that procurement can create beyond the core function of procuring goods, services, or works, such as creating fair employment, reducing carbon emissions, strengthening local supply chains, and supporting community wellbeing.

Embedding Social Value throughout procurement ensures that every pound spent maximises positive outcomes for Brent's diverse residents and communities.

Across each cornerstone of this Strategy, Social Value will be a core evaluation and monitoring requirement. The organisation will set clear Social Value priorities aligned with local needs; manage contracts to ensure accountability for delivery of commitments throughout the contract lifecycle; and report regularly on Social Value achievements and the community impact. This Procurement Strategy sits alongside and is informed by the Council's Social Value Statement.

Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building is a people-centred approach to economic development that keeps wealth within local communities. It is focused on increasing local economic participation, strengthening local supply chains and ensuring fair employment and responsible business practices. Procurement is one of the key levers that can generate jobs, opportunity and wealth for local people.

Environmental Sustainability

Brent Council is committed to ensuring that its procurement activity supports positive environmental sustainability outcomes, such as mitigating carbon emissions, building resilience to the impacts of climate change, reducing waste, improving air quality, promoting biodiversity and enhancing green space.

Improving environmental sustainability throughout our supply chain is an essential component of our commitment to reduce our environmental impact and lead by example.



Cornerstone 1: Community Wealth Building

Our intent

Community Wealth Building, and delivering broader social value, is at the heart of our approach to procurement. We will look to increase local economic participation, strengthen local supply chains, and ensure fair employment and business practices. We will leverage, tailor and facilitate social value contributions made by contractors to help alleviate the impacts of the 'cost of living' crisis for Brent residents.



We will use procurement to support local economic resilience and keep public spending circulating within the local economy to increase local employment, skills and learning opportunities. We will find ways to support local suppliers to do business with us.

We will strengthen relationships to work in partnership with local suppliers, SMEs, VCSE organisations, and social enterprises to strengthen local communities and tackle inequality in Brent.

We will encourage fair work, inclusive employment practices, and green business activities.

This cornerstone of the Strategy will be tailored over time to ensure alignment with the Council's evolving approach to community wealth building.

Key Actions

To deliver on our intent we will:

1.1 Publish annually, via Cabinet, a rolling 3-year procurement forward pipeline and maintain a live contract register, to support supplier visibility and early market engagement.

1.2 Increase opportunities for local suppliers, SMEs and VCSEs through early market engagement and simplified procurement processes. This will include holding regular, local Meet the Buyer days to increase awareness of tendering opportunities and support participation.

1.3. Break large contracts into accessible lots where appropriate.

1.4. Pay 95% of valid SME and VCSE organisation invoices within 30 calendar days to improve financial stability for local SMEs and VCSE organisations, and publish monthly performance data to demonstrate transparency and reliability.

1.5. Adopt the “Freepay” approach for qualifying organisations to support the cashflow of local SMEs.

1.6. Adopt a credible Social Value measurement framework and apply a minimum 10% Social Value weighting for all medium and high-value procurements to ensure consistent, community-focused outcomes.

1.7. Require suppliers to work to the Council’s Good Work Standard and explore further options for building on and strengthening employment protections, which could be achieved through mechanisms such as a Fair Work Charter. We will continue to require all suppliers to adopt the London Living Wage.

1.8. Increase contractor collaboration on tackling poverty and inequality in Brent.

1.9. Deliver – directly or by suppliers – at least four digital procurement training sessions per year for SMEs and VCSE organisations.

Cornerstone 2: Effective Contract Management

Contract management ensures external spend delivers what the Council expects. Effective contract management improves value for money, realises Social Value and community benefits, reduces risk, and encourages suppliers to innovate in response to local needs.

Our intent

Through strong contract management we will maximise Social Value, improve resilience and oversight of risks, and drive innovation through continuous dialogue with our supplier base. This will support the Council to achieve its broader, strategic goals.

Our contract management decisions will be based on robust data, to strengthen supplier relationships and to support SMEs and VCSE organisations with proportionate requirements.



Key Actions

To deliver on our intent we will:

- 2.1. Segment contracts (over £100k value) to ensure they are resourced and managed effectively and appropriately as per their risk and value.
- 2.2. Implement quarterly supplier performance scorecards for all Platinum and Gold suppliers. Suppliers scoring below expected thresholds for two consecutive quarters will be required to have an improvement plan within 30 days.
- 2.3. Track KPIs of all Platinum and Gold contracts, including clear, measurable Social Value delivery targets, aligned with Brent's priorities by 2027.
- 2.4. Carry out robust risk assessments of major contracts, issuing regular six-monthly executive reports for Platinum contracts.
- 2.5. Adopt a one-council approach to monitoring delivery of suppliers' performance to ensure their commitments translate into measurable community and commercial benefits. This could include aligning contractual and s106 commitments and developing an approach to strategic relationship management.

- 2.6. Ensure timely decisions on whether to extend contracts with adequate consideration of alternative options, appropriate consultation and engagement.
- 2.7. Enhance the skills and capabilities of contract managers across the Council through ongoing training.
- 2.8. Improve the management of contract and spend data so that performance and spend reporting is easier, clearer and more reliable.
- 2.9. Support suppliers to deliver goods and services in low carbon and environmentally sustainable ways, consistent with Brent's procurement sustainability policy commitments.
- 2.10. Develop and deliver initiatives to support supplier development in the SME and VCSE sectors.

Cornerstone 3: Leadership, Commercial Capability and Innovation

Leadership, Commercial Capability and Innovation is about strengthening the procurement function and our approach to procurement so that it operates strategically, delivers value for money, and adopts innovative and compliant approaches that are aligned with national best practice.

It is about building strong leadership with skilled commercial professionals, embedding robust governance processes, and engaging early with insight-led, innovative and digital solutions across the organisation. This isn't just about improving the Council's procurement teams – improvements in commercial capability will be driven across the whole organisation.

Our intent

We will strengthen our leadership and commercial capability across the organisation by building a confident, skilled and commercially astute procurement and commissioning workforce. As part of this, we will release strategic capacity within our procurement teams, by devolving more power to commissioners and services – particularly for low value/low risk requirements.

We will enhance organisational governance, transparency and accountability in procurement and contract management. We will ensure strong compliance with national standards, digital platforms and evolving legislative requirements.

We will embed social value, ethical practice and environmental responsibilities in our commercial decision-making. We will promote innovation, market insight and forward planning to drive better outcomes and improved value for money.



Key Actions

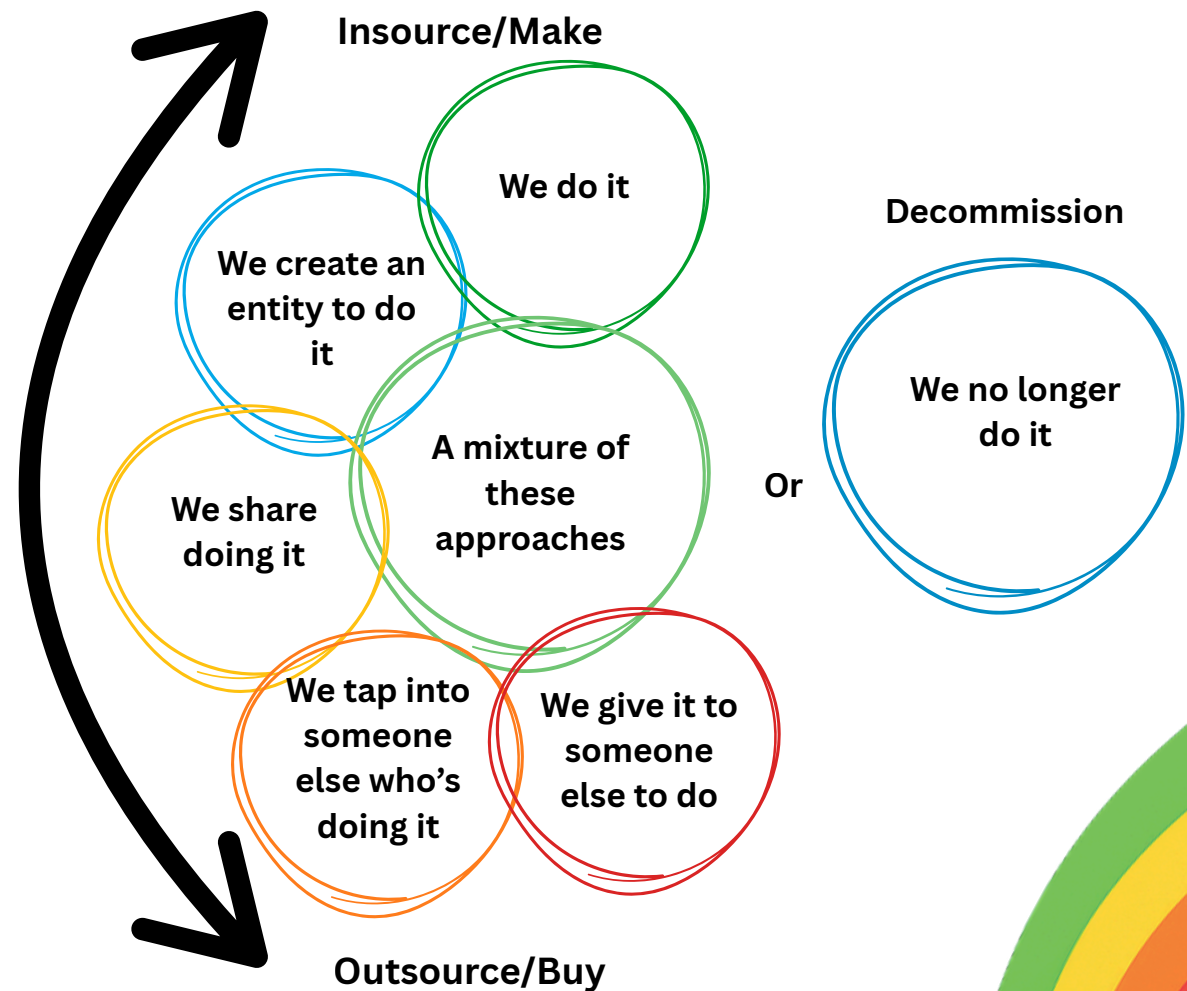
To deliver on our intent we will:

- 3.1 Ensure that all staff involved in procurement and commissioning receive accredited commercial training every two years, to develop their technical procurement skillset, leadership capabilities and category knowledge.
- 3.2. Transition to a centralised Contracts Register by Q2 2026/27, improve data use to inform procurement insights and deliver training to improve procurement efficiency and data-driven decision-making.
- 3.3 .Strengthen procurement governance frameworks, delegated authority processes and decision-making assurance.
- 3.4. Deliver continual annual improvement in value for money through stronger commercial practices.
- 3.5. Ensure all suppliers of Platinum, Gold and Silver contracts complete Modern Slavery, EDI and human rights due diligence prior to contract award. Non-compliance will be considered a material breach of contract. This ensures procurement reflects national and community expectations around fairness, equality, and ethical practice.
- 3.6. Carry out full options appraisals for all major procurements in our three-year procurement pipeline to ensure we deliver the right outcomes for our residents. We will aim to optimise affordability and value for money, ensure the delivery of high-quality services, and secure the delivery of community benefits. When analysing the procurement pipeline, and considering new opportunities to procure goods and services, we will explore the potential to deliver services differently and in ways that will drive social value outcomes.

There are many potential service delivery options that fall into the following broad categories:

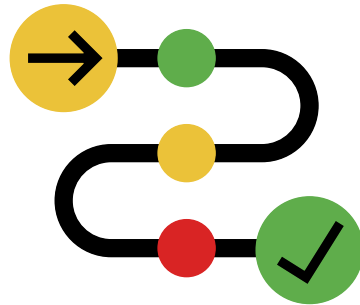
Driven by the procurement pipeline, the Council's approach is:

1. To initially evaluate the option of in-house delivery
2. If this is not viable, then explore the capacity within the VCSE sector and joint commissioning with other public bodies as delivery options.
3. If this is not viable, then explore more broadly within the private sector.



Operational Implementation

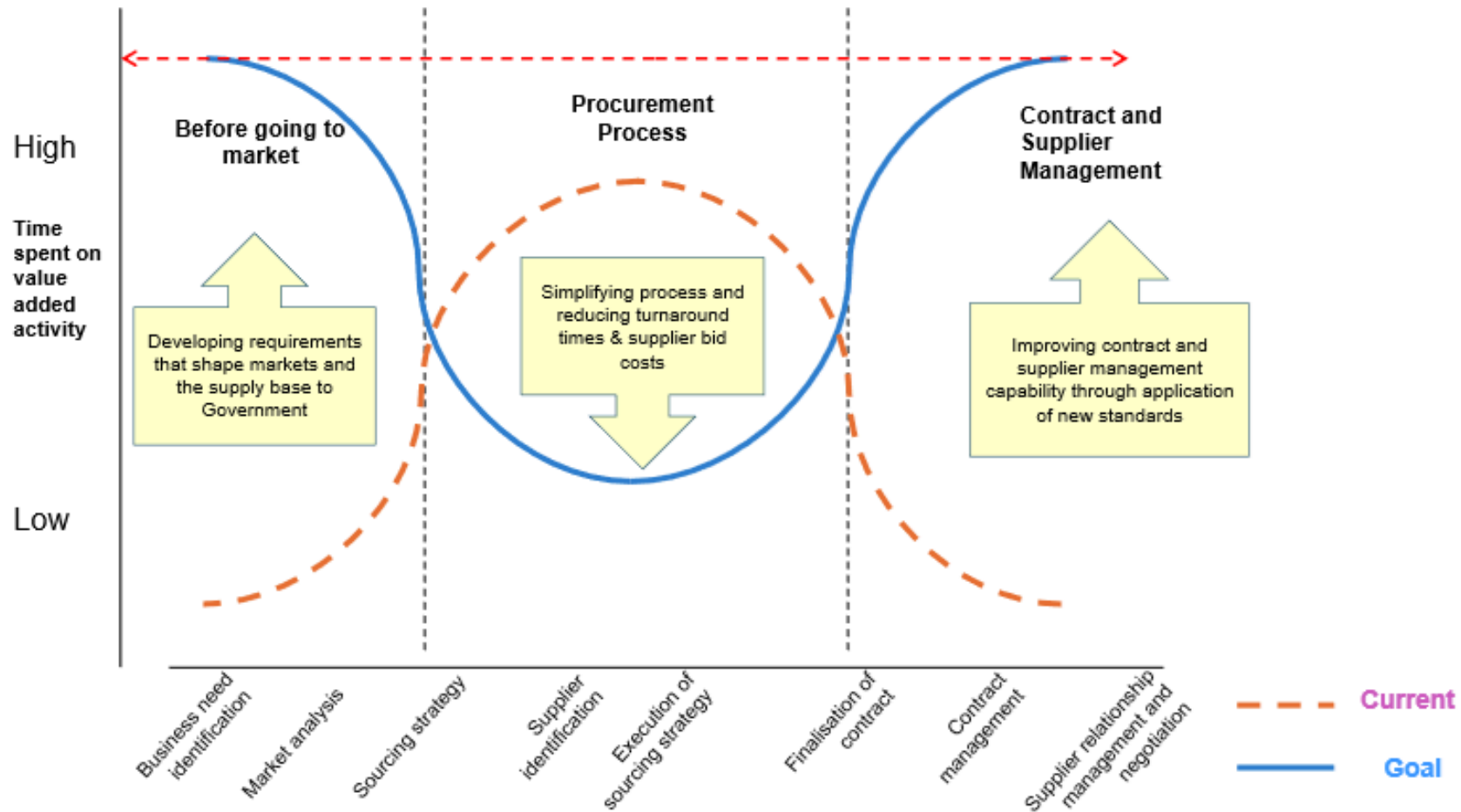
We will embed this Strategy throughout the commissioning and procurement cycle to provide the greatest impact possible, while ensuring that our suppliers are clear about their role and prepared to make any necessary improvements.



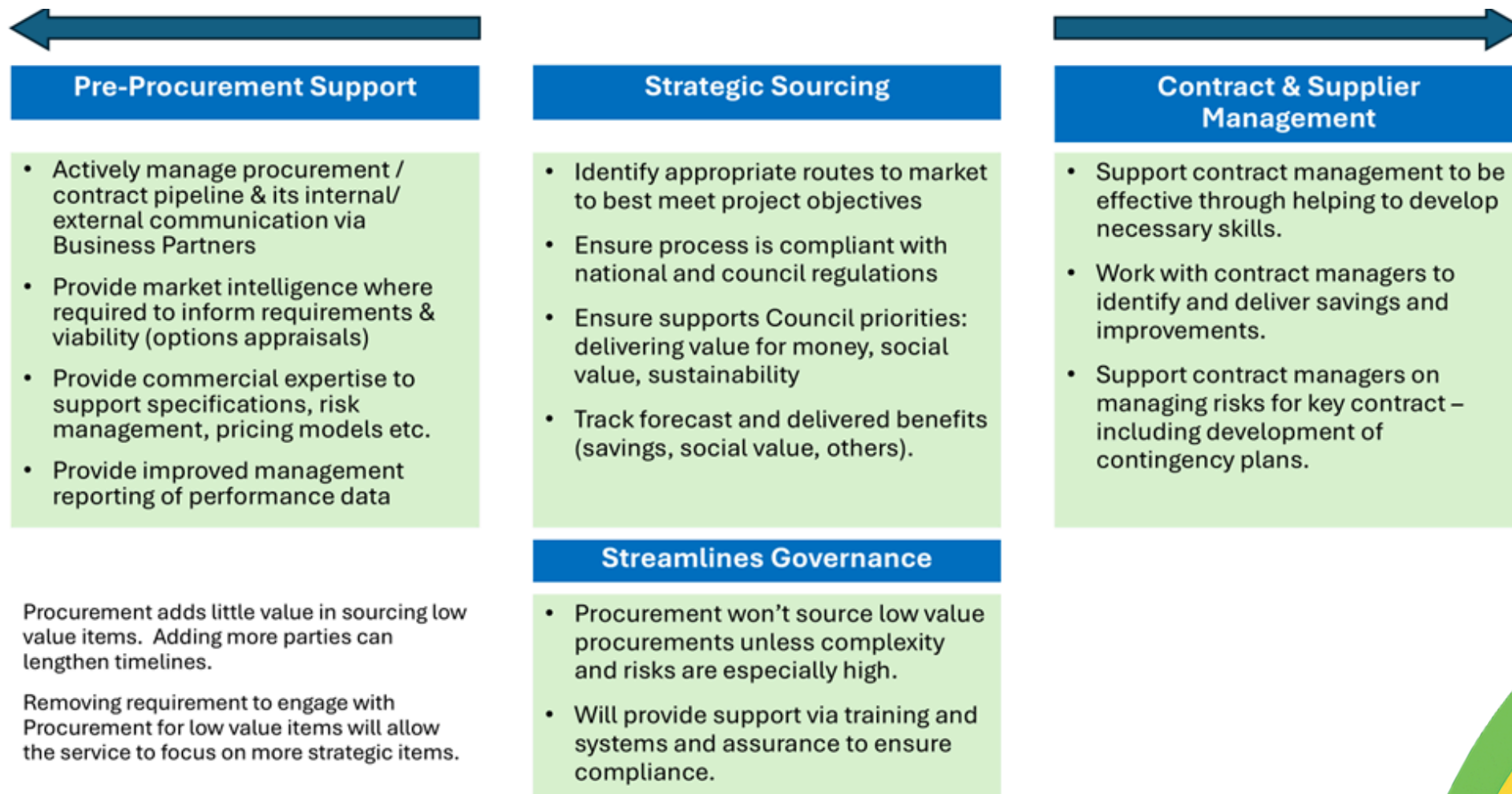
The improvements arising from the Procurement Improvement Programme provide a sound basis to establish and grow enduring relationships to ensure delivery of community benefits and value for money. These include:

- Directorate Procurement Groups to advocate for and lead change within services
- A contract management community of practice to drive continuous improvement and share best practice
- A programme of ongoing learning and development for staff involved in procurement and managing contracts
- Increased focus in pre- and post-procurement activities to focus where value creation or the risks of value loss are greatest, as depicted in the following diagrams.

Future Focus for Procurement Activities



Broadening Procurement's Offer



What this strategy means for...

Brent Residents

- Exposure to a wider range of job opportunities.
- An increase in the number of jobs available to Brent residents.
- Better protection of your employment rights.
- More opportunity to start a sustainable business in Brent.
- A cleaner, greener borough.

Suppliers

- A better understanding of the goods and services Brent is looking to procure – so you can plan more effectively.
- A closer and more strategic working relationship with the Council.
- More support from the Council to embed Social Value across your business.
- Stronger monitoring of contract performance.

Brent Council Staff

- More opportunities to get involved in procurement and manage relationships with suppliers.
- More training and development opportunities.
- Stronger use of data and digital solutions to support good outcomes.
- More opportunities to innovate and work with community-based partners.

SME's and VCSE organisations

- More opportunities to provide goods and services to the Council.
- Increased opportunities to connect with the Council and understand its needs.
- More support from the Council to embed social value across your organisation.
- Easier ways of doing business with the Council.

Monitoring and measuring success

The Council is committed to monitoring its progress on this strategy – and reporting on that transparently.

An Annual Procurement Outcome Report will summarise the previous year's achievements. This will be published in the first quarter of each financial year.

A range of Procurement KPIs will be implemented to track the Council's performance and drive improvements. These may cover:

- Addressable Council Spend with SMEs, VCSEs and local suppliers within the Borough of Brent and the West London Alliance area.
- Contracts are segmented and managed to the required standard.
- Delivery of savings through procurement and contract management, including through Fasttrack.
- Positive environmental sustainability outcomes delivered through procurement.
- Sustaining and building upon the improvements from the Procurement Improvement Programme.

The Council's Commissioning, Procurement, Contract Management and Assurance Board (CPCMA) will monitor progress on delivering the Strategy.

Delivery of this strategy will also contribute towards wider Brent corporate and borough plan objectives and outcomes. It will also demonstrate how we are contributing the national procurement strategy themes.



