

By: Henry Swan, Head of Procurement  
To: Commissioning and Procurement Select Committee  
Subject: Commissioning and Procurement Topic Review

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Summary: Overview of How the Strategic Sourcing and Procurement Team is working to improve Commissioning and Procurement at KCC, with specific reference to supporting Kent organisations.

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## 1. Introduction

KCC commenced radically changing its approach to Commissioning and Procurement in September 2011 with the appointment of a Commissioning Director for Social Care and a Head of Procurement for the Council as a whole.

As Head of Procurement I will focus on Procurement.

Key Aims from Bold Steps for Kent are:

- Deliver value for KCC by reducing cost or improving results for the same cost
- Manage risk through developing clear processes and appropriate governance (not being risk averse but risk aware)
- Help the Kent Economy Grow through helping local business to realise their full potential

Over the last 2 years we have been working to improve procurement to deliver these goals.

## 2. Terms of Reference Responses

a) to determine what KCC needs to do to become a better commissioning authority.....

By working to support Kent organisations Kent in 2013 spent more than 50% of external spend with Kent based organisations, of this 77% was with SMEs. We also spent more than 10% of our total spend with Kent based third sector organisations.

For all procurements over £50k a procurement plan must be produced which requires the question of how to support Kent Business has been addressed. This includes breaking work into smaller packages, looking at the necessity for financial checks etc.

We have also introduced the Kent Business Portal ( [www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk](http://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk) ), which we use to advertise all opportunities over £50k and some below, we have also allowed all other Kent governmental

organisations to have free access for advertising opportunities and this is currently being used by Medway, Kent Fire, Maidstone and Shepway.  
We have also been working with the Federation of Small Businesses to get their views on our documentation

- b) to consider if the authority is using its commissioning processes to ensure it meets its duties under the Social Value Act

The current requirement of the Social Value Act is that we consider this when formulating our procurement plan, but we can not use this for evaluation as this is not allowable under European Regulations although this may change in the refresh of the rules which is due this year.

- c) to examine how, in becoming a commissioning authority the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) can play a more important role in the provision of KCC services

In developing new service provision we need to engage with the VCS sector to ensure that we are making the most of them, but also that they are providing what we require, there is a belief that in supporting the VCS organisations they will deliver what we require, however we can not assume this and to get best value out of the VCS we need to be clear what we are trying to achieve and that this is translated into what the VCS deliver.

- d) to make recommendations around the role of KCC as a commissioning authority and the programme of activity through Facing the Challenge that will move the authority to have a commissioning focus and improve how we do commissioning.

As part of Facing the Challenge there is a proposal to review Commissioning and Procurement to ensure we have the correct resources in the correct places and roles and responsibilities are clear.

There is also a requirement for training to bridge the skills gap particularly around contract management.