

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Brian Collins, Deputy Leader of the Council

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00032

Executive Decision – key**26/00032 – Adoption of the Kent County Council Winning for Kent:
Procurement with Purpose Policy 2026-2028**

Decision:

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I agree to:

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- (a) approve the adoption and implementation of the Winning for Kent: Procurement with Purpose Policy 2026-2028.
 - (b) Delegate authority to the Chief Procurement Officer in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to refresh and make non-material revisions to the policy where changes do not alter policy intent or require additional governance.
 - (c) Delegate authority to the Chief Procurement Officer to take all necessary actions, including but not limited to, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision
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Reasons for decision:

To modernise, simplify and standardise how Kent County Council uses procurement to support Kent's economy, Kent businesses and Kent communities. The Policy sets out a proportionate, business-friendly framework for delivering wider public benefit (Social Value) through procurement, meaning that Social Value requirements are scaled to the size, value, risk and complexity of the contract, ensuring expectations are appropriate, achievable and do not create unnecessary barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations (VCSEs). This policy fulfils statutory duties under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement. It also puts into practice the ambitions of KCC's Strategic Statement and Commercial Strategy.

Social Value is about using public spending to deliver wider benefits for Kent, alongside the core goods, services or works the Council is procuring. In practice, this can include creating local jobs or apprenticeships, supporting Kent-based businesses and supply chains, and delivering community benefits that respond to local needs.

Initial reviews and supplier feedback have highlighted the need for greater consistency in and certainty around the wider public benefit that the Council expects suppliers to deliver when contracted with the authority. This Policy provides greater clarity, improves accountability, and ensures procurement activity delivers stronger outcomes for Kent residents and businesses.

This decision will authorise the publication of the Policy and initiate implementation, including performance monitoring and supplier engagement and officer training, delivered within existing resources.

How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement:

The Policy directly supports the Council's commitment to using Kent's buying power to support local jobs, strengthen local supply chains, and retain economic value and investment in the county. It strengthens the Council's ability to leverage procurement to create local employment opportunities, develop skills, grow responsible Kent-based businesses, and encourage suppliers to re-invest through local supply chains. By embedding proportionate and outcome-focused requirements into all relevant procurements, the Policy ensures that public spending has the greatest possible benefit for Kent's residents and communities.

Financial implications:

Adoption of the Policy is expected to be cost neutral. Training, guidance, and implementation will be delivered within existing budgets and absorbed within current officer roles and responsibilities. Activity relating to awareness-raising, proportionate data capture, and contract monitoring will be embedded into existing procurement and contract management processes rather than creating new standalone requirements.

The Policy supports Best Value by strengthening how the Council defines, assesses and evidences Value for Money, moving beyond cost alone to consider the wider economic and social outcomes achieved through Council spending. Where Social Value activity is delivered by suppliers, it is expected to be delivered within the agreed contract value not anticipated to result in additional cost to the Council. Any supplier commitments secured through the procurement process are intended to represent demonstrable added value rather than additional financial pressure.

While there may be indirect impacts associated with implementation – such as officer time for contract management, measurement, or reporting – these are expected to be managed within existing resources, systems, and tools. Embedding Social Value monitoring into established financial and performance management processes will help strengthen assurance and provide a clear audit trail, supporting evidence of Value for Money in procurement activity.

Officers will continue to exercise professional judgement, informed by their understanding of the market and what it can realistically deliver. They will retain flexibility to scale and tailor Social Value requirements where cost, capacity, or

market maturity considerations arise, ensuring that Value for Money remains central to procurement outcomes.

Legal implications:

The Policy supports the Council in meeting its statutory duties under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which requires public bodies to consider wider social, economic, and environmental benefits when commissioning and procuring services. The Policy also ensures the Council is compliant with the Procurement Act 2023, including duties relating to transparency, value for money, and public benefit, and aligns with the expectations set out in the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS).

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed, and no significant adverse impacts have been identified. The Policy promotes inclusive procurement and supports SMEs and VCSEs, helping to ensure fair access to opportunities and broader community benefit. The Policy is expected to create positive impacts by encouraging supplier diversity, supporting community-focused Social Value commitments, and reinforcing ethical, transparent, and equitable practices across procurement and contract management.

Data Protection implications:

No Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required. The Policy does not involve the processing of personal data and poses no material data protection risks.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 2 July 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1: Do Nothing / Maintain Status Quo – Not progressed

Rejected as it would perpetuate inconsistent approaches across services, provide limited clarity for suppliers, and miss opportunities to maximise social value for Kent. It would also limit the Council's ability to demonstrate compliance with the Procurement Act and meet increasing expectations for transparency and accountability.

Option 2: Incremental Improvement – Not progressed

Rejected as minor changes to existing guidance would not deliver the consistency, clarity, or accountability of a formal policy. It would continue to result in variable practice, constrain wider public benefit, and provide insufficient assurance of compliance, leaving ongoing risk of challenge and limited ability to evidence impact.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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Signed

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Date