



FOI REF:	15593
RESPONSE SENT:	03/06/2025

## Request

### Freedom of Information Request: The Procurement Act 2023 and Local Government Association Transformation Guidance

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to your organisation's response to:

1. The implementation of the Procurement Act 2023, and the National Procurement Policy Statement effective from 24 February 2025.
2. The Local Government Association's (LGA) Transformation Guidance and associated outcomes.

#### 1. The Procurement Act 2023

We understand that, from 24 February 2025, all public sector bodies are required to align procurement activity with the Procurement Act 2023.

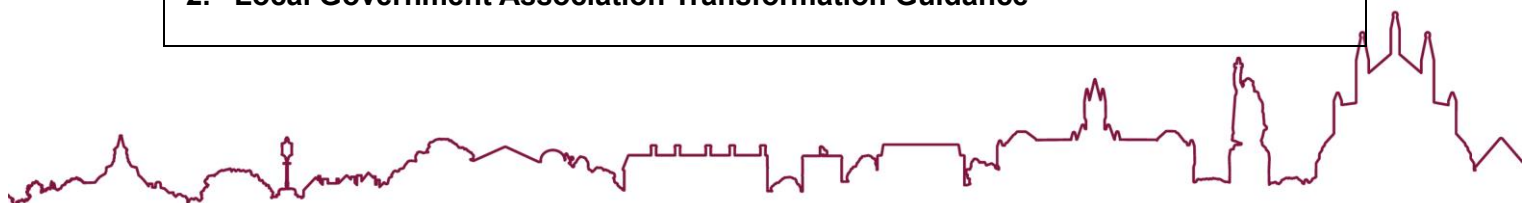
These core changes require contracting authorities to ensure that **all** procurement and tendering activity is undertaken in a manner that benefits prospective suppliers of all sizes, **particularly small businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises.**

Whilst we are aware that public sectors are required to formally publish Pipeline Notices, that detail forthcoming public contracts with an estimated value of over £2m, of which are accessible to prospective tenderers, in conjunction with their registration of the Central Digital Platform and various e-tendering services, for example, Pro-Contract, In-Tend, Coupa etc.,

In light of this, we request:

- a. Details of the preparations, processes, and procedures your organisation has implemented to specifically meet the requirements of inclusive procurement as outlined above.
- b. Contact details of the teams or individuals responsible for early engagement with small businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises, to ensure these groups are not disadvantaged in public procurement opportunities.
- c. Information on how your organisation plans to manage, monitor, and measure performance in these areas.
- d. Details of the e-tendering solution you use.

#### 2. Local Government Association Transformation Guidance



The LGA is actively promoting transformational change in local government, with a focus on improving systems, processes, workforce skills, and overall service delivery. These efforts have strong links to procurement strategy and Pipeline Notice planning.

Please provide the following:

- a. Contact details of your key Transformation Leads.
- b. The processes and procedures these leads follow to ensure that small businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises are considered as potential support or delivery partners.
- c. Details of major transformation strategies and initiatives undertaken in the past 12 months, including whether any have upcoming additional or secondary delivery phases.
- d. Information on key transformation outcomes or milestones your organisation is targeting over the next two years.

## Response:

### 1. The Procurement Act 2023

- a. Details of the preparations, processes, and procedures your organisation has implemented to specifically meet the requirements of inclusive procurement as outlined above.

Response:

The council has implemented a range of preparations, processes, and procedures to support inclusive procurement, in line with the requirements outlined. These include:

#### Reducing Barriers for SMEs and Social Enterprises

Procurement documentation is carefully reviewed by relevant officers to ensure it does not create unnecessary barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups, or social enterprises. For example, insurance requirements are tailored to match the actual risk and scale of the contract.

#### Contract Lotting

Where appropriate, large contracts are divided into smaller Lots. This approach increases accessibility for SMEs and voluntary sector organisations, enabling them to bid for work that matches their capacity.

#### Pre-Market Engagement

Officers are encouraged to engage with the market early. Guidance is provided on how to conduct pre-market engagement to identify potential suppliers and encourage wider participation.

#### Inclusive Guidance Development

We collaborate with external organisations to ensure our procurement guidance is inclusive. For instance, the Council's sustainability guide was reviewed by the Federation of Small Businesses to ensure it is accessible and relevant to smaller suppliers.

#### Leveraging the Procurement Act



The increased transparency and flexibility introduced by the Procurement Act are embraced to promote fairness and encourage diverse supplier participation. The new procedures are more adaptable than traditional tendering processes, making them more suitable for SMEs and social enterprises.

#### Local and Third Sector Consideration in Quotations

When seeking quotations, officers must consider whether the opportunity may interest local suppliers or third sector organisations. If so, at least one such organisation should be invited to quote.

#### Partnerships with Local Business Networks

We work with local organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses and the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce to share opportunities with their members. We also draw on the expertise of the Council's Economy Team for advice and support.

#### Support Beyond Procurement

Beyond procurement-specific actions, the Council actively supports local businesses and start-ups. For example, we run digital skills workshops to help them grow and compete more effectively.

- b. Contact details of the teams or individuals responsible for early engagement with small businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises, to ensure these groups are not disadvantaged in public procurement opportunities.

#### Response:

There is no single designated individual or team solely responsible for early engagement with small businesses, start-ups, or social enterprises. Instead, this responsibility is shared across the organisation as follows:

#### Contracting Managers:

Each service area within the Council is responsible for engaging with potential suppliers relevant to their specific procurement activities. The Contracting Manager leading the procurement is the primary point of contact for early engagement.

#### Procurement Team Support:

The Council's Procurement Team provides guidance and support to Contracting Managers to ensure that early engagement activities are inclusive and aligned with best practices.

- c. Information on how your organisation plans to manage, monitor, and measure performance in these areas.

#### Response:

The council recognises the importance of tracking and improving performance in inclusive procurement. While some monitoring practices are already in place, such as local supplier spend tracking further development is being considered in response to the Procurement Act 2023.

- d. Details of the e-tendering solution you use.

#### Response:



The council uses Mercell (EU Supply) UK Complete Tender Management Portal  
<https://uk.eu-supply.com/login.asp?B=WCC>

## 2. Local Government Association Transformation Guidance

- a. Contact details of your key Transformation Leads.

Response:

Amy Tranah, Head of Programme – Transformation

- b. The processes and procedures these leads follow to ensure that small businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises are considered as potential support or delivery partners.

Response:

As per the response to **1. The Procurement Act 2023**

- c. Details of major transformation strategies and initiatives undertaken in the past 12 months, including whether any have upcoming additional or secondary delivery phases.

Response:

Information and progress of our Transformation Challenge 2025 programme (TC25) is reported via Cabinet and these reports are publicly available:

[CAB3444 General Fund Budget 2024-25.pdf](#)

[CAB3483 General Fund Budget Options Medium Term Financial Strategy.pdf](#)

[CAB3494 General Fund budget 25-26.pdf](#)

[CAB3469 Q1 Quarterly monitoring report.pdf](#)

[CAB3476 Q2 Quarterly monitoring report.pdf](#)

[CAB3493 Q3 Quarterly monitoring report.pdf](#)

- d. Information on key transformation outcomes or milestones your organisation is targeting over the next two years.

Response:

See info in above reports but please note that the next phase of our Transformation Programme is currently being reviewed to ensure alignment with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).