

## CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

<b>Title of item:</b>	Procurement Strategy 2026 - 2031
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal and the Welsh Language
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Arwel Evans, Procurement Manager
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	20th of January 2026

### 1. Decision sought

- 1.1. To accept and approve the Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2031 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2. Approval is requested to grant the Head of Corporate Services the authority to make operational adjustments to the Strategy as the need arises to ensure compliance with statutory guidance.

### 2. The reason why the Cabinet must make the decision

- 2.1. The current Strategy is outdated, and public procurement requirements have changed considerably in recent years. It is therefore necessary to publish a new Procurement Strategy in order to convey the Council's vision and meet the Council's needs now and over the next five years.
- 2.2. Approval of the Strategy will put the Council in a firm position in preparation for new national legislative requirements (the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act) which are expected to come into force in 2026. Failure to create and publish a procurement strategy will breach statutory requirements.
- 2.3. The Welsh Government intends to publish guidance to accompany the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act, which will detail the requirements for Welsh contracting authorities regarding the content of procurement strategies. Although this guidance has not yet been finalised, it is not anticipated that significant changes will need to be made to the proposed Procurement Strategy as a result. However, minor operational adjustments may need to be made following the publication of the guidance and during the Strategy period to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act and statutory guidance. It is therefore requested that the

Head of Corporate Services be granted the right to make operational adjustments to the Strategy in order to comply with the legislation and guidance once these have become clear.

### **3. Introduction and Rationale**

#### **3.1. Background / Introduction**

- 3.1.1. Procurement is the process of securing goods, services or works. Procurement plays a key role in all of Cyngor Gwynedd's activity. Indeed, without appropriate procurement processes, the Council would not be compliant with statutory requirements when procuring and awarding contracts for goods, services and works, which would lead to the inability of our officers to provide services to the people of Gwynedd.
- 3.1.2. Through procurement activity, the Council spends around £200 million a year on services, goods and works such as, but not limited to, care to adults and children, transport, waste and recycling, fleet, buildings, systems and much more.
- 3.1.3. The Strategy will set the strategic direction for all those who procure in the Council, and will ensure that our contracts are procured correctly and appropriately, and that our expenditure provides the best value for money while delivering the best benefit to the residents of the County.
- 3.1.4. By developing a procurement strategy, the Council provides the vision for how securing services, goods or works will have an impact on the County's residents – e.g. making every effort to keep the benefit local or supporting the Council to reach its net zero aim. As well as delivering the services, the Council has the opportunity to maximise additional benefits, such as social value, from the expenditure through procurement. The Procurement Strategy aims to maximise these additional benefits.

#### **3.2. The rationale and justification for recommending the decision**

- 3.2.1. The previous Procurement Strategy no longer reflects current priorities and needs. The new Strategy is designed to reflect and support the recent procurement reform changes as well as the current requirements and priorities of local and national policies.
- 3.2.2. The context of the priorities and policies that are relevant to the Strategy, such as the Wales Procurement Policy Statement, the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan, the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan are noted in the Strategy.

- 3.2.3. As a local authority that spends public money, our procurement activity is heavily regulated, and there are several legal requirements that the Council must comply with when procuring. This Strategy outlines those laws and regulations and they have been fully considered in the development of the Strategy to ensure that all of the Council's procurement activity is correct, appropriate and complies with all relevant rules.
- 3.2.4. The Strategy will bring together procurement requirement and priorities by establishing priority fields for the next Strategy period, which is the next five years.
- 3.2.5. Through consultation with procurement experts across the Council, seven priority fields have been identified as key areas in the context of procurement in Cyngor Gwynedd, in order to maximise the benefit of procurement activity.
- 3.2.6. For example, by raising local businesses' awareness of procurement opportunities and using social value measures that can be evaluated in part on the basis of local employment, we can keep the benefit local as much as possible. Or by ensuring that clauses within contracts require supplier to operate in an environmentally friendly manner and reduce the carbon footprint, procurement can help the Council reach its zero-carbon goal.
- 3.2.7. The seven priority fields are listed in alphabetical order (please note the English version lists the priority fields in the order that they are listed in the Welsh version, as the English copy of the Strategy and this report is a translation of the Welsh copy), and include:
- **Local benefit – supporting local business to thrive**  
Raising awareness of procurement opportunities and reducing barriers for local businesses and enterprises to bid for work with the Council
  - **Carbon zero – undertake a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero**  
Develop the understanding of the Council's contracts' carbon emissions and working with Council services to help reduce the organisation's carbon emissions
  - **Value for money – ensuring value for money**  
Ensuring that all money spent through procurement activity delivers value for money for the Council and for the people of Gwynedd
  - **Social value – maximising social value through procurement activity**  
Maximising the economic, social, environmental and cultural value that derives from contracts and procurement activity to support Gwynedd's local communities

- **Technology – supporting and enabling the Council to make the best use of technology**  
Maximising the opportunities that are created by developments in the field of technology to provide a strong foundation for procurement
- **Governance arrangements – implementing effective governance arrangements**  
Ensuring that our internal procedures, understanding and expertise of procurement and contract management arrangements enable us to act appropriately and effectively
- **The Welsh Language – promoting the Welsh language**  
Ensuring that the Council's procurement activity promotes the Welsh language and that the Welsh language has a clear place in our processes

3.2.8. In developing and publishing the Strategy, we will set a unified strategic direction for all procurement activity in the Council, ensuring that everyone is working towards the same goals and priorities, strengthening the Council's procurement outcomes and ensuring maximum benefit for the people of Gwynedd.

3.2.9. The publication of the Strategy now will put the Council in a strong position for new legislative requirements due in 2026 (Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023) where public bodies will be required by statutory to prepare and publish a procurement strategy.

3.2.10. The Council also has a Sustainable Procurement Policy. The Strategy sets out the vision and priorities at a strategic level, while the Policy covers the operational details. Once the Strategy has been approved, we intend to review and update the Council's Procurement Policy, aiming for it to be effective from 1st April 2026, to ensure that the Council's operational procurement arrangements are robust.

### **3.3. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

3.3.1. Procurement can make a significant contribution to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, particularly when guided by the principles of sustainability and social value.

3.3.2. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was given full consideration in the drafting of the Strategy, and it can be seen which of the well-being goals that each priority field addresses in the Strategy.

- 3.3.3. **Collaboration** – we worked with procurement officers in various departments within the Council to consider relevant issues and perspectives when developing the Strategy. We will continue to work with relevant officers and services in the Council to implement the aims of the Strategy. Collaboration with other external organisations, such as other local authorities, is an important part of the Strategy to ensure that we share experiences and practice.
- 3.3.4. **Integration** – in developing the Strategy, we have assessed the impact of each priority field in the Strategy on all of the well-being goals, and it is possible to see which of the well-being goals the priority fields addresses in the Strategy.
- 3.3.5. **Involvement** – as noted in the Strategy, the involvement of all relevant stakeholders is crucial and a key part of ensuring the implementation of the Strategy. We included a range of stakeholders in the development of the Strategy and their input was vital to ensure that we received and considered a range of perspectives.
- 3.3.6. **Long-term** – the Strategy sets a direction to aim to ensure that, when procuring goods, services or works for short-term needs, we do our best to minimise any long-term negative impact and ensure that we are able to meet long-term and future needs, such as the priority field of undertaking a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero.
- 3.3.7. **Prevention** – the Strategy aims to improve our procurement results and thereby seek to prevent any problems. The priority field 'Implementing effective governance arrangements' sets a goal of ensuring that procurement rules and procedures are correctly implemented across the Council to ensure that the most is made of procurement and lays a solid foundation for future procurement activity. Also, by maximising social value in our procurement activity, suppliers and providers can contribute to preventing social, economic and environmental problems as well as offering benefits to Gwynedd's communities.

### **3.4. Impact Assessment**

- 3.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to accompany the Procurement Strategy – a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is attached to this report (Appendix 2 – Impact Assessment).
- 3.4.2. The assessment has not shown any significant impacts. In general, the Strategy has no negative impact, but there is a positive impact to be seen on some characteristics, such as on the Welsh language and socio-economic elements.

- 3.4.3. The Strategy is considered to have a positive impact on the Welsh language – promoting the Welsh language is a priority field in the Strategy, and we promote the Welsh language in our procurement processes, whether that be when dealing with Welsh or non-Welsh companies. The Strategy also maximises the use of social value, which in turn promotes the Welsh language as some of the Council's social value measures reflect the Well-being of Future Generations Act's aim of 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.
- 3.4.4. The Strategy also has a positive impact on socio-economic elements, with the priority field of maximising social value through procurement activity increasing the likelihood of delivering social and economic benefits to Gwynedd through Council spending with contractors, such as local employment, supporting young people and disadvantaged individuals into employment, supporting efforts to promote health, support for the disadvantaged, reducing crime, building stronger communities and efforts to protect wildlife and culture.

### **3.5. Consultation**

- 3.5.1. In developing the Strategy, the opportunity was taken to consult with several services across the Council in order to receive input and reflect the views and opinions of different departments that will be using and implementing the Strategy.
- 3.5.2. These services included the Environment Category Team (Highways, Engineering and YGC Department), the Corporate Category Team (Environment Department) and the People Category Team (Leadership Team Department). The content of the Strategy was also discussed with the Economy and Community Department.
- 3.5.3. Following the receipt of comments and discussion around those comments, adjustments were made as the Strategy was developed to reflect the comments.
- 3.5.4. The Procurement Strategy was presented before the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16th October 2025. There was a productive discussion regarding the proposed Strategy and what is new in its content compared to the previous strategy, as well as discussion around the priority fields, such as the challenges and current progress with regards to decarbonisation.
- 3.5.5. Questions were raised about the implementation of the Strategy and monitoring arrangements. Information is included in the Strategy (page 23) on how the Strategy is intended to be implemented, including creating an action plan which will be used to manage and monitor progress.

- 3.5.6. One comment was made regarding the Welsh language in procurement and contracting. Discussions were already underway with the Member concerned outside the Committee and it was confirmed that legal advice had been received by the Department in relation to the enquiries, and shared with the Member. The legal opinion confirms that the Council is doing as much as possible, within legislative limits, to fulfil its duty to protect and promote the Welsh language in its procurement processes, and the Strategy is in line with that legal opinion. Indeed, promoting the Welsh language was an important factor when originally developing the Strategy, and it is included as a priority field. It was confirmed to the Committee that further work is underway to explore new opportunities to strengthen the use of the Welsh language in order to achieve one of the Welsh Language aims within the Strategy, namely that the Welsh language is promoted and encouraged in the Council's procurement and contracting processes.
- 3.5.7. The Scrutiny Committee decided to accept the Strategy and report, and asked the Cabinet Member to ensure that everything possible, within constraints (such as the boundaries of the public procurement legal framework), is done to try to keep the benefit local, support small companies, maximise social value and to support the Welsh language.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

- 3.6.1. It is therefore recommended that the Cabinet accept and approve the Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2031, enabling the Procurement Service to publish the Strategy, in order to set a unified strategic direction for all procurement activity within the Council, strengthening the Council's procurement outcomes and ensuring maximum benefit for the people of Gwynedd.
- 3.6.2. It is also requested that the Cabinet grants the Head of Corporate Services the right to make minor operational adjustments to the Strategy during its period to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act and Welsh Government statutory guidance.

### **3.7. Next steps**

- 3.7.1. If approval of the Procurement Strategy is received by the Cabinet, the next steps would be to publish the Procurement Strategy and communicate the change with all relevant stakeholders.

- 3.7.2. Once the Strategy has been approved, we as a central Procurement Service will lead on the formulation of an Action Plan, which will outline the steps to be taken to realise the vision and priorities of the Strategy, working collaboratively with the Category Teams and the Council's procurement officers in its preparation. We will also consult with any other relevant service and department within the Council as the need arises.

## **4. Views of the Statutory Officers**

### **4.1. Chief Finance Officer**

As set out in the Strategy, the Council spends around £200 million annually through procurement activity with a range of suppliers. A robust but flexible Procurement Strategy is a key step for the Council in setting direction so that everyone who purchases goods or services on behalf of the Council does so wisely and in a way that provides the maximum possible benefit to Cyngor Gwynedd and the local community. This document provides valuable guidance, and I support the decision sought. Finance Department officers will provide support as required across the Council to realise the implementation of the Strategy.

### **4.2. Monitoring Officer**

I welcome this review of the Procurement Strategy. The report notes that the previous Strategy is outdated. In addition, the statutory framework that maintains the procurement regime has undergone significant change and continues to evolve. Having an up-to-date Strategy is key to ensuring that the way the Council procures gets the best results from the process to achieve its objectives and deliver the best value for the county. The Legal Service has supported and advised on this work and I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought.

## **Appendices List:**

Appendix 1 – Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2031

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment