

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL



**PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2019/20 & SUSTAINABLE
PROCUREMENT POLICY 2019/20**

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

Argyll and Bute Council's Procurement and Commissioning Team (PCT) would like to begin this report by thanking all stakeholders who took the time to respond to our consultation in relation to the Procurement Strategy 2019/20 and the Sustainable Procurement Policy 2019/20. It is important for us to ensure that our key documents and the priorities they contain reflect the concerns of our key stakeholder groups, both internal and external.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Procurement Strategy

The Argyll and Bute Council Procurement Strategy 2019/20 sets out a framework which is designed to enable the Council to continue on its journey of change and innovation through:

- Building capacity and skills within the Council to continue to improve commissioning and procurement activity;
- Increasing the level of collaboration both internally, between service areas, and externally with other partner organisations;
- Engaging proactively with key suppliers through contract and supplier relationship management to ensure that we extract maximum value and innovation from our supply base;
- Focusing our commissioning and procurement activity on delivering improvements for the people and communities in Argyll and Bute;
- Working cooperatively in everything we do to support SMEs and the third sector.
- Ensuring procurement activity contributes towards the Council's general Equality Duty towards all stakeholders in Argyll and Bute and beyond.

2.2 Sustainable Procurement Policy

The Argyll and Bute Council Sustainable Procurement Policy 2019/20 sets out the direction for the Council and builds on existing sustainability practice. The Policy covers the three strands of sustainability: environmental, social and economic and aims to meet the substantial challenges of balancing the complexities of sustainable procurement within today's economic climate and continued drive for best value.

2.3 The Council has a statutory requirement to update and publish both its Procurement Strategy and its Sustainable Procurement Policy on an annual basis following the key changes introduced by the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

2.4 The Council also has a requirement to consult with key stakeholder groups for both of these documents. The aims of the consultation were:

- To increase awareness of the Council’s Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Policy and engage meaningfully with key stakeholder groups;
- To make sure the links between the strategy and policy and other relevant strategies and plans are clear; and
- To enable a diverse range of stakeholder groups to take part and thereby influence the strategy and policy.

2.5 The consultation was completed in September 2018, via a web-based survey on the Council’s website. The consultation was publicised via emails to key internal and external stakeholders, as well as being available to the general public through the consultations section on the Council’s website. Appendix 1 details the consultation questions asked and Appendix 2 details the responses received.

3 CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

3.1 20 responses were received, 45% of which were from Council staff, and 25% from suppliers as the two largest response groups. This was a reduction from the 28 responses received for the similar consultation undertaken in 2017. In general, although respondents found the strategy easy to read, easy to follow, comprehensive and with clear priorities appropriate for the Council; the responses received were less positive than in the consultation last year. As only very minor amendments have been made to the document this year, this was an unexpected outcome. This also applied to the Sustainable Procurement Policy. Some valuable free format comments were also provided, which are listed in Appendix 2 along with the Council’s response to each. As a result of the consultation we have amended the policy documents to make them easier to read – revising the structure to reflect the feedback given on priority areas and avoiding repetition.

3.2 The majority of responses to the open-ended questions within the consultation were received from internal stakeholders, and the feedback provided included queries in relation to areas already covered in the documents or in more operational documents, as well as feedback on the structure and content of the key priorities. Procurement comments on these responses have been provided, and the team will consider the application of improvements where relevant.

3.3 Overall, the responses to the consultation have been positive about the content of the new Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Policy.

3.4 The responses outlined in Appendix 2 have been taken into account through revisions to the draft documents in the following ways:

- 3.4.1 The Strategy has been renamed as the Procurement Strategy rather than the Procurement & Commissioning Strategy, to avoid any confusion within stakeholder groups as to what the content should relate to.
 - 3.4.2 The overall structure of the Procurement Strategy has been revised and streamlined, which should provide a better flow to the content and have the sections identified as priorities covered earlier in the document.
 - 3.4.3 Priorities and actions have been updated as required, where gaps have been identified.
 - 3.4.4 The colour scheme/background formatting of the document has been revised to improve accessibility.
 - 3.4.5 The Sustainable Procurement Policy has been updated to reflect the Council's ethical requirements relating to human trafficking and modern slavery.
- 3.5 The Procurement and Commissioning team has also taken account of the outcomes of this consultation in the following way:
- 3.5.1 Future consultation exercises will include a summary overview of the key changes to the documents from the previous versions to assist stakeholders with providing feedback. The team aims for continuous improvement in this area to reflect best practice.

4 CONCLUSION

Although limited stakeholder responses were received, these included well-considered comments which we have found very valuable. The strategy has been restructured and streamlined in response to the comments and we have ensured that all matters highlighted by stakeholders have been included.

APPENDIX 1 - SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Please indicate which key stakeholder group(s) you belong to:

- Argyll and Bute Council employees
- Argyll and Bute Councillors
- Local MSPs, MP, and MEPs
- Suppliers to Argyll and Bute Council
- Community Planning Partners
- Community Councils
- Other interested parties (please state)
- General public

PROCUREMENT & COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2019/20

General:

2. How informative or otherwise did you find the Strategy?

- Very informative
- Informative
- Neutral
- Uninformative
- Very uninformative

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the Strategy?

- a. The strategy was easy to read
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- b. The format made it easy to follow
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- c. The strategy is comprehensive
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree

- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- d. The key priorities are clear
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Strategic Context:

4. Are there any strategic issues which the Strategy has not considered? If yes, please identify them below and give details of how the Procurement & Commissioning Strategy should address them.

Priority Themes:

Four key priority areas have been identified in the Strategy:

- Improve procurement processes and policies;
- Increase expertise, capacity and effectiveness;
- Ensure compliance with complex European Union Procurement Legislation, and with Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and associated mandatory guidance.
- Supporting the Council’s transformational changes

5. Do you consider these key priority areas to be appropriate for the Council?

- Yes
- No

6. Would you propose an additional or alternative key priority area(s)?

Key Priorities:

7. Within the four key priority areas we have listed various specific priorities in relation to our regulated procurements; do you consider these to be the right priorities for procurement within the Council?

- Yes
- No

8. Are there any additional priorities we should include in relation to regulated procurements?

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2019/20

General:

9. How informative or otherwise did you find the Sustainable Procurement Policy?

- Very informative
- Informative
- Neutral
- Uninformative
- Very uninformative

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the Policy?

- a. The policy was easy to read
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- b. The format made it easy to follow
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- c. The policy is comprehensive
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- d. The priorities are clear
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Priorities:

11. Within the 5 priority areas identified within the Sustainable Procurement Policy (People; Objectives, Strategy & Communications; Process; Stakeholders; and Monitoring & Reporting) we have identified various specific priorities, do you consider these to be the right priorities for Sustainable Procurement within the Council?

- Yes
- No

12. Are there any additional priorities we should include in relation to Sustainable Procurement?

COMMENTS

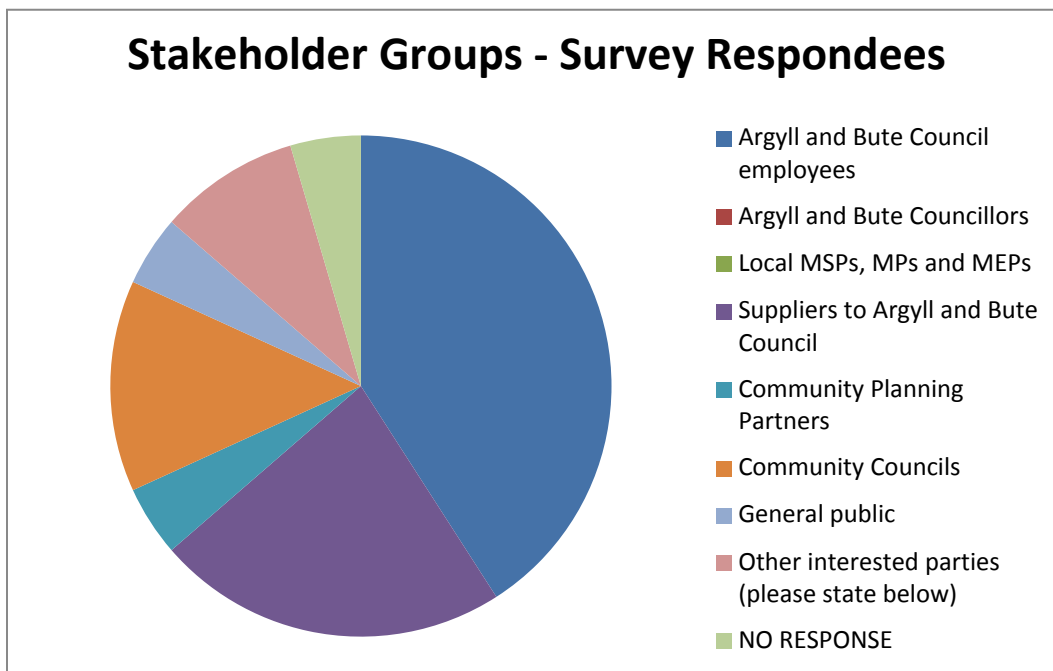
13. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the draft Procurement & Commissioning Strategy 2019/20 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2019/20?

APPENDIX 2 - SURVEY RESPONSES

20 responses were received to the consultation survey. Last year's consultation received 28 responses to the consultation survey.

1. Please indicate which key stakeholder group(s) you belong to:

Stakeholder Groups	2018 Respondents (%)	2017 Respondents (%)
Argyll and Bute Council employees	45	61
Argyll and Bute Councillors	0	11
Local MSPs, MP, and MEPs	0	0
Suppliers to Argyll and Bute Council	25	18
Community Planning Partners	5	0
Community Councils	15	0
Other interested parties	10	4
General public	5	0
No response to question	5	7

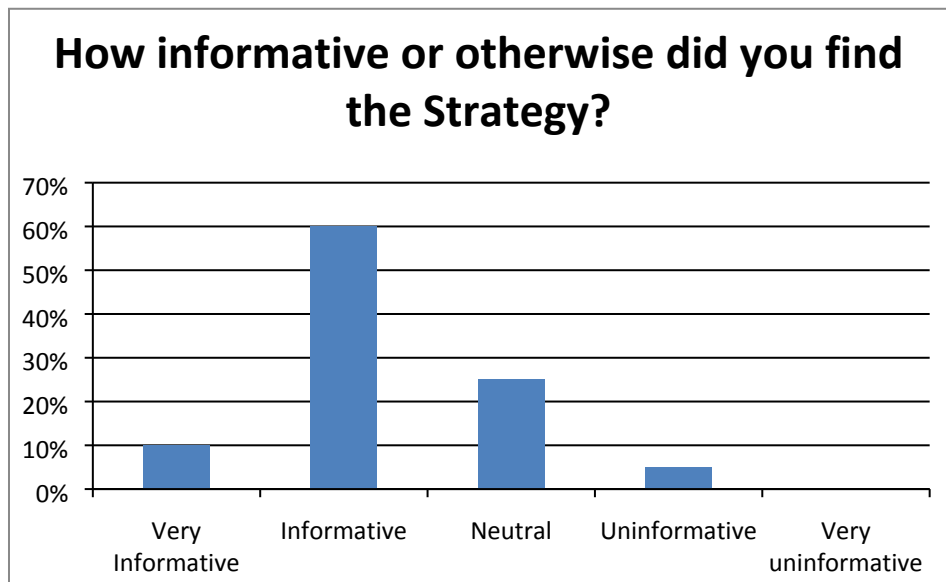


PROCUREMENT & COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2019/20

General:

2. How informative or otherwise did you find the Strategy?

70% of respondents found the Procurement & Commissioning Strategy to be either informative or very informative, with only 5% of respondents stating that it was uninformative. This was a less positive response than last year, when 96% of respondents found the strategy to be either informative or very informative.



3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the Strategy?

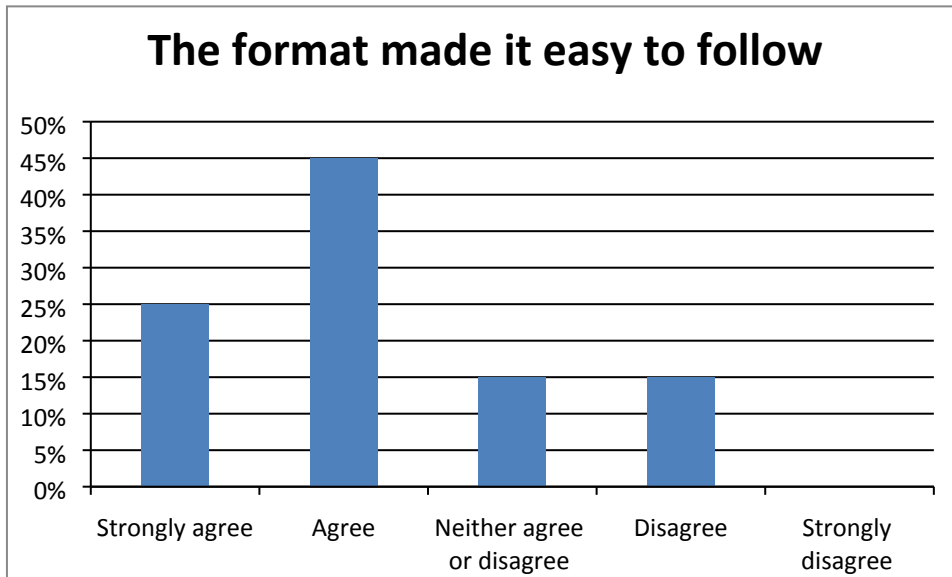
a. The strategy was easy to read

70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the strategy was easy to read; while 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Again, this was a less positive response than last year, when 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



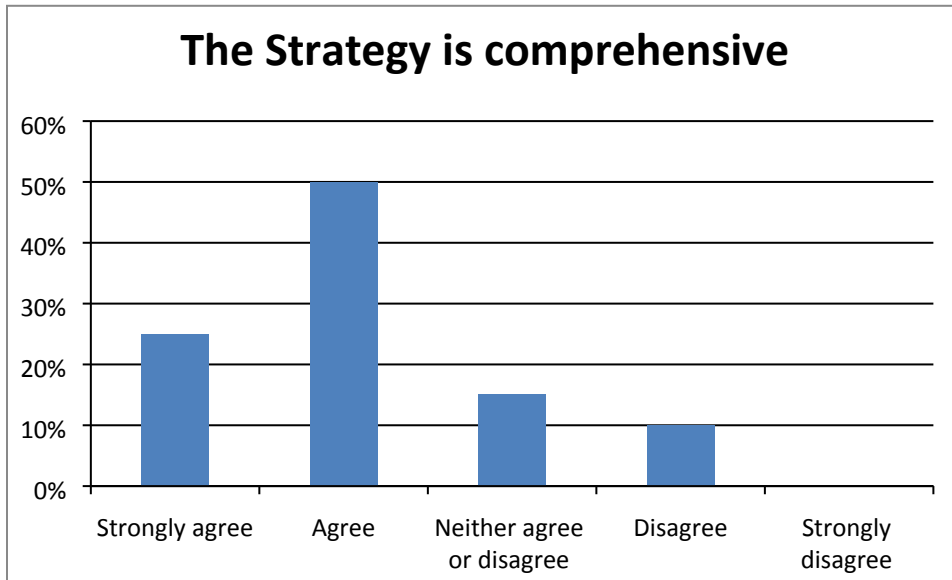
b. The format made it easy to follow

70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the format of the strategy made it easy to follow; while 15% of respondents disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



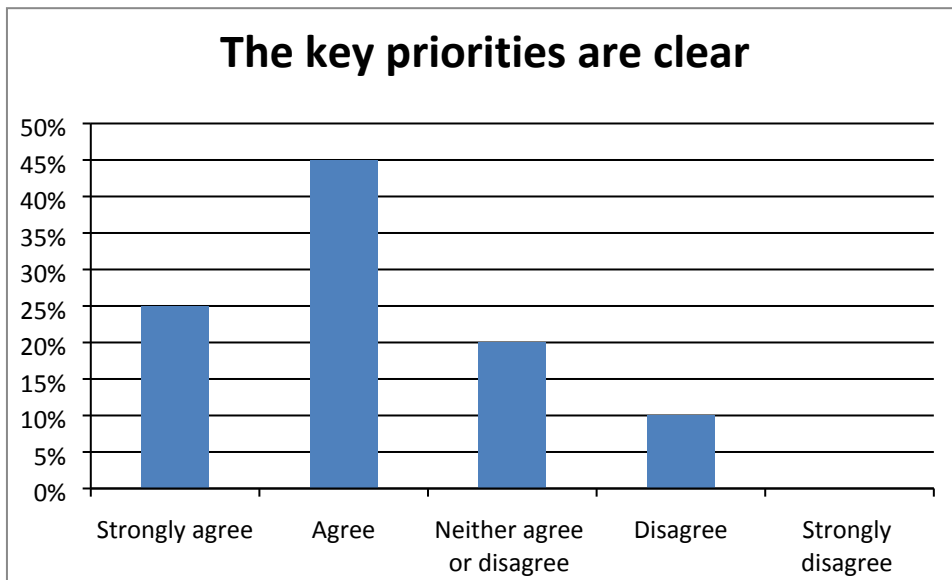
c. The strategy is comprehensive

75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Procurement & Commissioning Strategy is comprehensive; while 10% of respondents disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



d. The key priorities are clear

70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the key priorities within the Strategy are clear; while 10% of respondents disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Strategic Context:

4. Are there any strategic issues which the Strategy has not considered? If yes, please identify them below and give details of how the Procurement & Commissioning Strategy should address them.

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>The Scottish Government has set targets in relation to carbon reduction/carbon neutrality. There does not appear to be any significant mention in the strategy as to how procurement can assist with this. How to address those requirements is not easily achieved but as a starter the need to be "greener" should be at least recognised.</p>	<p>This is covered by the Sustainable Procurement Policy; the Council's Carbon Management Plan is detailed as an internal document which impacts on procurement.</p>
<p>Appears repetitive</p>	<p>The general structure of the document is provided by the Scottish Government, however we can see that the key priorities and action plan may appear repetitive - this will be restructured to assist the flow of the document and avoid repetition</p>
<p>NB first question has typo. Missing an 'un'. The first 27 pages are too generic in nature - though procurement principles should be emphasised up front. P28-35 is what we really need to see upfront to understand tangibly what we are planning to do to enact. Alternatively an exec summary on page 1 that summarises</p>	<p>As above, the general structure of the document is provided by the Scottish Government, with only minor revisals by individual organisations. We have now restructure the order of the contents of the strategy to assist the flow of the document</p>
<p>more weight should be given to sourcing from locally based businesses, more importantly locally owned business. Spend with corporate suppliers leads to more money leaving the area, which is money that then can't be used to improve the local economy.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the Council is unable to favour local suppliers in this manner. However, the Council carries out its procurement activity in such a way that encourages local suppliers to bid, whether as a main supplier or as a sub-contractor when they may not have the expertise in a particular field to be the main contractor. This has proven successful as currently we have 29% of bids from local suppliers, with 80% successful. The Council's contract plan is published on our website and is freely available to all interested suppliers.</p>
<p>With regard to health and social care, the strategy notes the EU regulations and the current Scottish Government best practice in implementing social care procurement, yet experience on the ground is that good services are still being re-tendered (when this is not a requirement of the legislation) and causing undue anxiety for people and workers.</p>	<p>The HSCP utilises the appropriate legislation regarding social care procurement to ensure our processes are person-centred and outcome-focused for individuals. This means that where possible we will utilise the light touch regime to ensure that we allow for continuity of service and individual choice.</p>

<p>Although there is reference to sustainable and ethical procurement, there didn't seem to be any detail on how that would be ensured. Also wonder how small are the small businesses who make up 36% of suppliers? Is there a breakdown of how many of these are social enterprises, and if there are positive steps to underpin the social enterprises in Argyll?</p>	<p>This is covered by the priority for "Complying with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy in relation to the procurement of fairly and ethically traded goods and services." We utilise the Scottish Government's Scottish Procurement Information Hub which is unable to provide a breakdown in relation to social enterprises. Of the 36% of spend with Small suppliers, the system has been able to break these down as follows: 2% of spend with organisations with 1-4 employees, 4% with organisations with 5-9 employees, 4% with organisations with 10-19 employees and 11% with organisations with 20-49 employees; the remainder of the suppliers did not have the employee number information available on the system, only that they were small organisations. Unfortunately, the Council is unable to favour social enterprises or any other type of organisation. Corporately, the Council has a team dedicated to providing support for social enterprises; however this is outwith the scope of this strategy.</p>
<p>This appears to be a procurement strategy, not a procurement and commissioning strategy. It lacks a link to a Market Position Statement. It does not contain a comprehensive statement of commissions intentions in key areas of spend. For the third sector, an understanding of future commissioning intentions and a clear timetable for procurement are essential. These are missing from this document. In addition, there is no mention of the Scottish Social Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan and they are not reflected in the document.</p>	<p>We note your feedback, and to avoid further confusion, we have amended the title of this strategy to the Council's Procurement Strategy 2019-20. The HSCP are responsible for their commissioning plans and strategies and we provide support to them and procure care services in compliance with this. A contract plan is available on the Council's website which is updated regularly to provide information to the extent that it is made available to the Procurement & Commissioning Team by individual departments within the Council, in relation to upcoming regulated procurements. These regulated procurements are also included within the Annual Procurement Report, to the extent that they are known at time of publication. In relation to the Scottish Social Enterprise Strategy we understand that work in beginning to develop a local strategy which will involve all relevant stakeholders, due to the timescales involved this will be referenced in our future Procurement Strategy.</p>

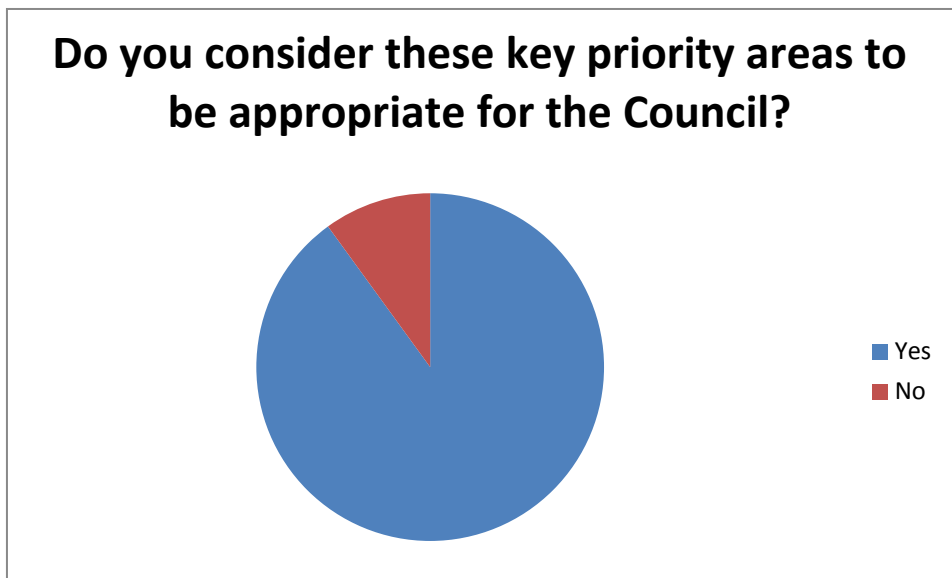
Priority Themes:

Four key priority areas have been identified in the Strategy:

- Improve procurement processes and policies;
- Increase expertise, capacity and effectiveness;
- Ensure compliance with complex European Union Procurement Legislation, and with Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and associated mandatory guidance.
- Supporting the Council’s transformational changes

5. Do you consider these key priority areas to be appropriate for the Council?

90% of respondents agreed that the key priority areas are appropriate for the Council; 10% of respondents disagreed. The response to this question was a slight improvement from last year, when 89% of respondents agreed that the key priority areas were appropriate.



6. Would you propose an additional or alternative key priority area(s)?

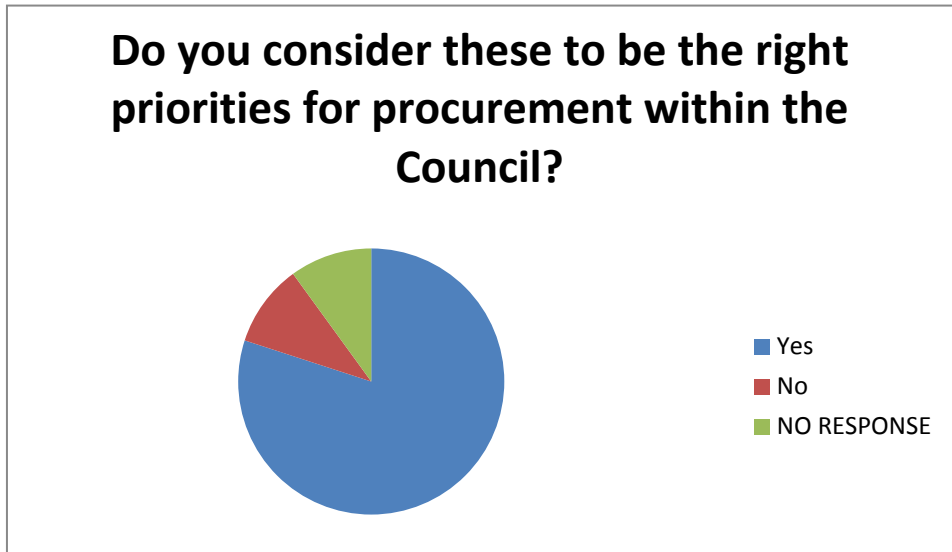
Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
As the budget gets ever lower, there will need to be more and more of an emphasis on cost of the contracts entered into.	This is covered by "Categorising areas of spend to ensure we achieve the best balance of quality and price for our regulated procurements" as it is essential to ensure overall Best Value for the Council, rather than lowest initial cost
No but it is not clear if Supporting the Council's transformational changes is measureable/SMART	It is not possible for this strategy to forward plan the Procurement Team's support to the Council's transformational changes in the same way that the other key priority areas have measurable

	activities. Procurement support is provided as required to support transformational change, with measurable actions defined at that later stage of the process.
ensure quality and value for money	The importance of achieving Best Value is embedded within the Council's overall Procurement Vision and Principles, which apply to all procurements within the Council. It is also within our strategic aims which apply to all procurements, rather than being a key priority area for regulated procurements.
Social and Environmental responsibility (these points are covered in the document but I'd like to see them highlighted as specific key points within our Procurement policy).	Activity for the "Ensuring that the Council's regulated procurements will be carried out in compliance with the sustainable procurement duty" priority will be updated to specifically include Social, Environmental and Economic considerations
Reducing red tape	This is covered by the "Reducing bureaucracy - ensuring our processes and templates are accessible as well as standard, simple, transparent and consistent in line with best practice" priority
Building up local SME interest to encourage tender returns.	A new activity has been added to the key priority of "Supporting a mixed economy of provision and developing markets, particularly local/rural markets, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), Third Sector organisations, and enterprises involving minority groups and those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010" - "Share knowledge and participate in events aimed specifically at local SMEs and Scottish suppliers, for example by publicising Supplier Development Programme events and providing assistance with the tender process through Business Gateway"
Help to support our area by keeping focus on strategic priorities. "Focusing our commissioning and procurement activity on delivering improvements for the people and communities in Argyll and Bute; " - so supporting existing network?	This strategy supports the Council's outcomes, as detailed in Section 5. The existing key priorities within the strategy cover the Council's support to the local economy, whilst continuing to strive for innovation and growth
Many 3rd sector organisations are primarily commissioned by the Health and Social Care Partnership. The strategy needs to clearly articulate how council procurement will support: 1. Integration 2. HSCP transformation, including the Quality and Finance Plan	The HSCP are responsible for their commissioning plans and strategies and we provide support to them and procure care services on their behalf in compliance with this.

Key Priorities:

7. **Within the four key priority areas we have listed various specific priorities in relation to our regulated procurements; do you consider these to be the right priorities for procurement within the Council?**

80% of respondents agreed that the priorities listed are the right priorities for procurement within the Council; only 10% of respondents disagreed, while 10% did not provide an answer. This was a less positive response than last year, when 93% of respondents agreed that the priorities were right for procurement within the Council.



8. **Are there any additional priorities we should include in relation to regulated procurements?**

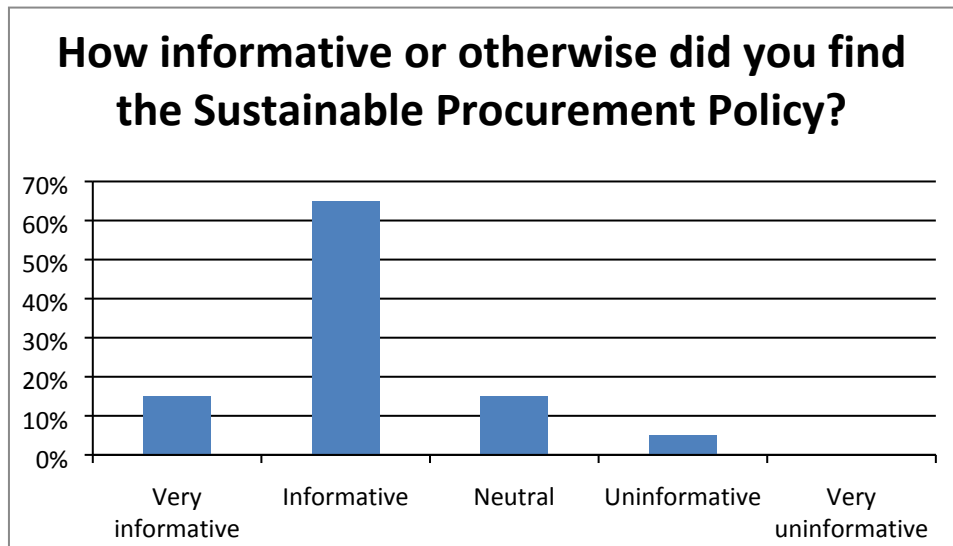
Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Supporting a mixed economy of provision and developing markets, particularly local/rural markets, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), Third Sector organisations, and enterprises involving minority groups and those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 - this is really interesting, it would be good to see more detail.	Further detail is provided in relation to this priority within the Action Plan
This is not informative for 3rd sector organisations. There is insufficient detail within these descriptions.	Based on other feedback provided, it has been decided to combine the action plan with the key priorities section - this should provide further detail on what individual priorities relate to, within the one section

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2019/20

General:

9. How informative or otherwise did you find the Sustainable Procurement Policy?

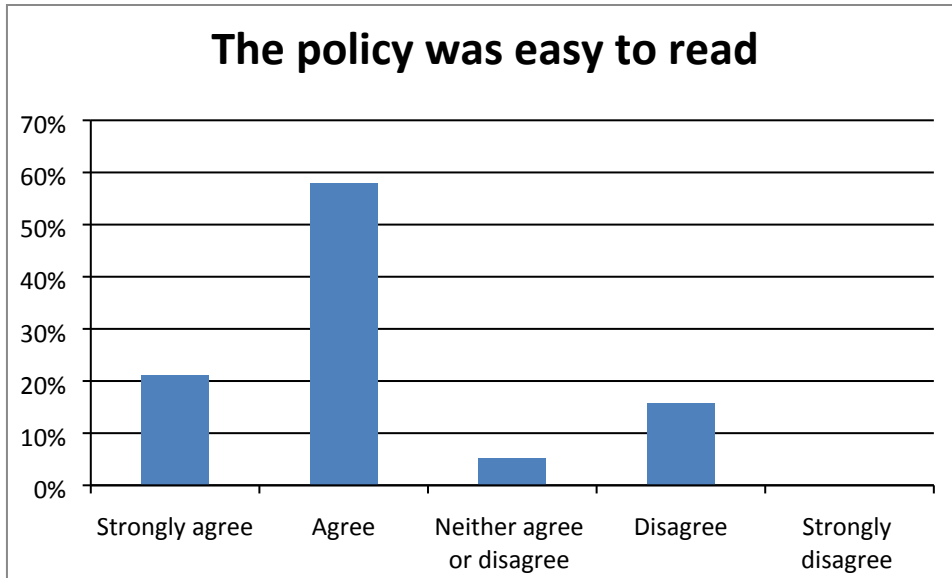
80% of respondents found the Sustainable Procurement Policy to be either informative or very informative; only 5% found it to be uninformative. This was a less positive response than last year, when 86% of respondents found the policy to be informative or very informative.



10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the Policy?

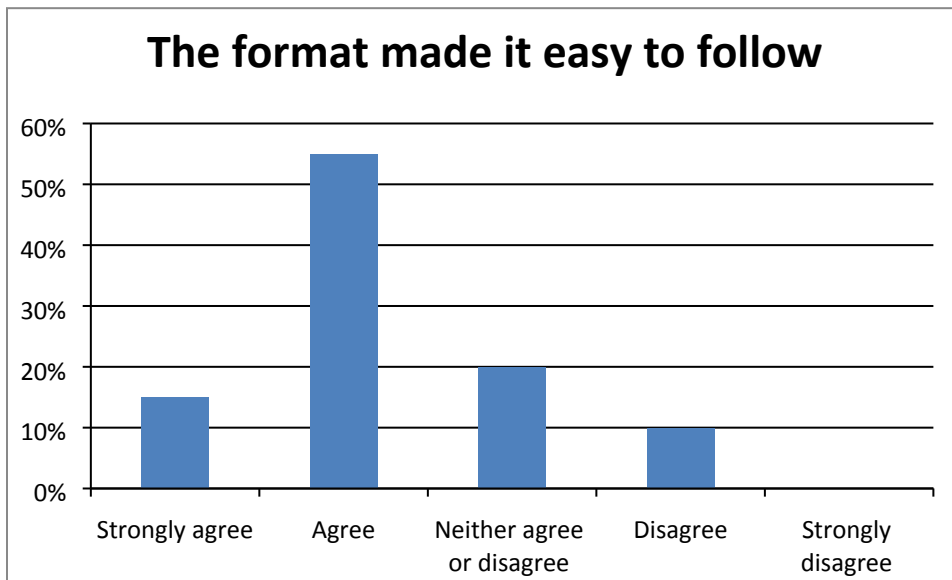
a. The policy was easy to read

79% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the Sustainable Procurement Policy was easy to read; while 16% disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



b. The format made it easy to follow

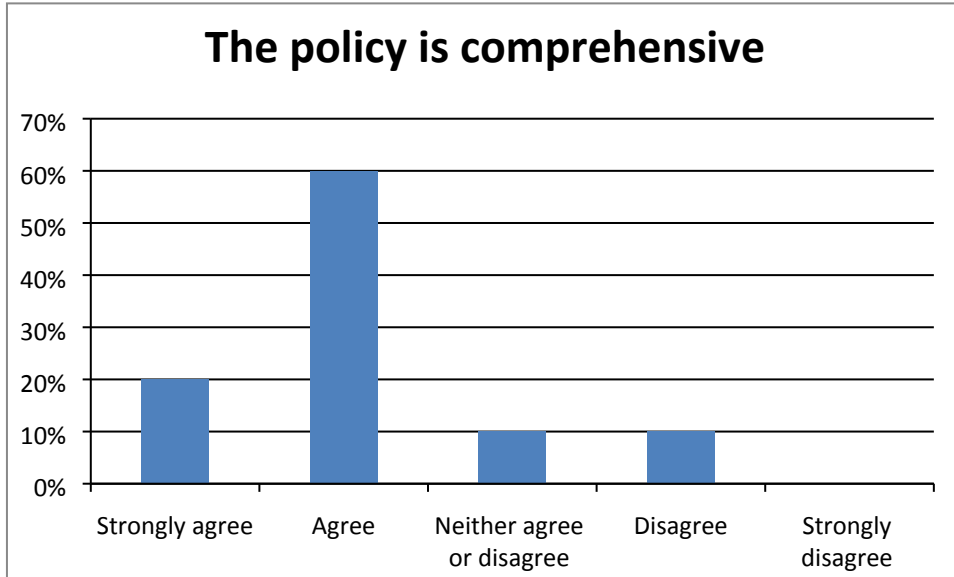
70% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the format of the Sustainable Procurement Policy made it easy to follow; while 10% disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



c. The policy is comprehensive

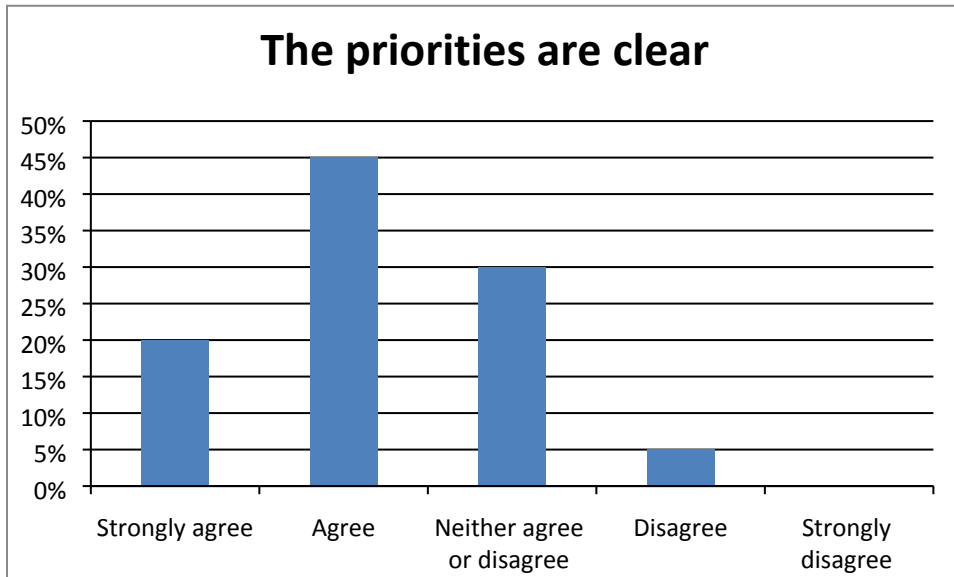
80% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the Sustainable Procurement Policy is comprehensive, while 10% disagreed. This

was a less positive response than last year, when 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



d. The priorities are clear

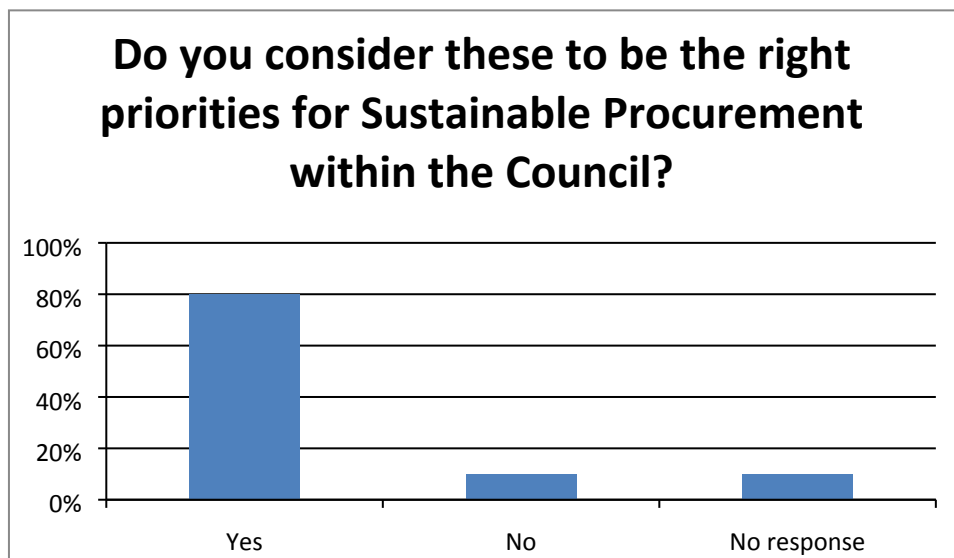
65% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the priorities included in the Sustainable Procurement Policy were clear, only 5% disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



Priorities:

11. Within the 5 priority areas identified within the Sustainable Procurement Policy (People; Objectives, Strategy & Communications; Process; Stakeholders; and Monitoring & Reporting) we have identified various specific priorities, do you consider these to be the right priorities for Sustainable Procurement within the Council?

80% of respondents indicated that they consider the current priorities to be the right priorities for the Council, 10% disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 86% of respondents agreed that the priorities were right for Sustainable Procurement within the Council.



12. Are there any additional priorities we should include in relation to Sustainable Procurement?

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Again - environment. I think the Sustainable Procurement Policy seems "tagged" on at the end of the document and appears to be an after-thought as opposed to being fully embedded within the context of how we conduct our procurement activities.	The Sustainable Procurement Policy is a stand-alone document to allow the Council to have a policy fully focused on sustainable procurement opportunities, as required as part of the Flexible Framework Assessment Tool. There are cross-references to this policy within the main strategy document, and it is included as an Appendix to the strategy to emphasise the strategic importance of the content of this document.
Are the "objectives" the strategic priorities for the area? Again it would be really interesting to see formal commitment to inward investment.	The priorities referred to for the Sustainable Procurement Policy are those detailed within Section 5 of the policy. Inward investment falls outwith the scope of this strategy, the Council's Economic Development Team are involved in this

	area.
<p>The description of stakeholders needs to be much more explicit in respect of third sector organisations including social enterprises.</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting needs to include details of how success will be measured in respect of 3rd sector participation in tenders and supply to the Council, and separately, the HSCP. There needs to be a specific measure in relation to social enterprises where Argyll and Bute underperforms the Scottish average for securing public sector contracts.</p>	<p>Engaging Stakeholders Priority b will be updated to include third sector organisations, and Priority e will be updated to include social enterprises.</p> <p>We utilise the Scottish Government's Scottish Procurement Information Hub which is unable to provide a breakdown in relation to social enterprises, therefore this cannot be included within our performance measures at present.</p>

COMMENTS

13. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the draft Procurement & Commissioning Strategy 2019/20 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2019/20?

Further comments	Procurement Comment
Please take out the background colouring that has been used in some parts of the documents - for those of us with poorer eyesight (generally an age thing) it makes the text much harder to read.	The accessibility of the document was checked by the Council's Communications Team prior to the consultation, to confirm that it met the required contrast ratio. However, based on this feedback we will revise the format of these sections.
There are some areas within the action plan where PCT will undertake some initial tasks to set up systems e.g. creating new clauses to ensure payment of sub-contractors within 30 days. Given the potential impact of transformation who will then "police" matters to ensure that the initial requirements being set up by PCT are subsequently followed?	The Council requires the Procurement and Commissioning Team to report on progress on a regular basis to ensure that they are meeting the requirements set. This coupled with internal audit carrying out various audits which involve procurement processes ensures that the Procurement and Commissioning Team are being "policed" efficiently
Both these policies are very important and it's also important that all stakeholders, the public etc be kept in the loop especially if any changes are being considered. Like the upskilling of local trades and businesses as this keeps the money in the town a win win situation	The Council works with the Supplier Development Programme to offer training opportunities for potential suppliers within Argyll and Bute, and has regular Meet the Buyer events across Argyll and Bute that are available to local organisations.
As Procurement is not something most staff will undertake on regular basis, they will not know these policies inside out and while refresher training will help it would be good to see a very shortened 'reminder' sheet of these policies - with the key points. As always staff would be guided by a	On an operational level, staff within service departments undertaking procurement work will be guided by staff within the Procurement and Commissioning Team, and will have access to the Council's Procurement Manual which covers the operational aspects of the procurement process.

<p>Procurement member of staff and hopefully they will be able to point us to the correct section if there is detail we require.</p>	
<p>A decent 1st draft document however I feel it is very cumbersome to read and doesn't flow well: the language used is too convoluted and not at all user friendly. There is a lot of duplication which I think could be condensed down quite significantly. The table of hyperlinks to other key documents is fine but where sections of the policy refer specifically to a document, I would rather have had the hyperlink inserted here so that that document could be read then if so desired and within the correct context. Hyperlinks from the header page to each specific section in the document would also be useful. Although we talk about training and developing suppliers re. sustainability etc. I think a lot of SMEs would be switched off reading this document and may feel intimidated by it which does not help with engagement and is actually contrary to what we say we are aiming to achieve. Some really good points made within the policy which need to be condensed and have better clarification.</p>	<p>The main structure of the strategy is generally standard across the public sector, with minor amendments made by individual organisations. We have now streamlined the content and restructured the order of the sections of the strategy to assist the flow of the document. Hyperlinks have also been added to the contents page which should assist readers.</p>
<p>Keep it simple. A 42 page policy document for one FY is perhaps over the top, assuming this is it's scope. Or is it intended to be more aimed at achieving by 19/20...</p>	<p>We are aware of the combined length of these 2 documents and streamlined them significantly last year. This year the overall document length was further reduced from 44 pages to 41 (now reduced to 40 pages after revisals based on consultation feedback). We will take this feedback into account when carrying out our update next year, to further streamline the contents where possible.</p>
<p>There is so much potential with procurement to support the local economy which works really well in other local authority areas, and would be great to see in Argyll and Bute. Can we develop PublicSocial Partnerships in Argyll? I think there is a real willingness in some Council departments to work with the third sector but it seems that the frameworks are not yet there to fully support this.</p>	<p>This feedback will be shared with our Economic Development Team who lead on the development of third sector groups and PSPs. PSPs will be used where appropriate, the Procurement and Commissioning Team will support any form of PSP or other innovative ideas to support the local economy, including third sector groups.</p>

This is a very disappointing strategy. There has been no involvement of 3rd sector in its development (confirmed to us in writing) despite stated intentions relating to the involvement.

In addition, the one meeting to set in motion the development of a market position statement in early 2018, where the third sector was included, was not followed through.

We request that the document is considerably strengthened before presentation to full council for approval and that improved content includes significantly more detail of future commissioning intentions (could be by way of links to other documents) and a full procurement timetable, plus alignment with the Social Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan and measures of success in relation to third sector/social enterprise activity.

It would be useful to provide links to sources of help in tendering for SME's, including third sector organisations.

The consultation held in September is considered to be the opportunity for all interested stakeholders, including the third sector, to provide feedback to and therefore become involved in the development of the strategy. Working with and consulting the third sector, and encouraging these organisations to become involved in public sector procurement is included within various priorities within the Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Policy. Work is still ongoing for the development of a market position statement, and stakeholders will be contacted shortly.

A contract plan is available on the Council's website which is updated regularly to provide information to the extent that it is made available to the Procurement & Commissioning Team by individual departments within the Council, in relation to upcoming regulated procurements. These regulated procurements are also included within the Annual Procurement Report, to the extent that they are known at time of publication. The Council works with the Supplier Development Programme to offer training opportunities for potential suppliers within Argyll and Bute, and has regular Meet the Buyer events across Argyll and Bute that are available to third sector organisations.

The Council is unable to favour third sector suppliers within the procurement process; our evaluation methodology must be open, fair and transparent. All sources of help for tendering are available on the Procurement page of the Council's website.