

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL



PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

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SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2021/22

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

Argyll and Bute Council's Procurement Commercial and Contract Management Team (PCCMT) 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 2021/22 and the Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021/22. 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 2021/22 sets out a framework which is designed to enable the Council to continue on its journey of change and innovation through:

- Build capacity and skills within the Council to continue to improve procurement, commissioning and contract management activity;
- Promoting the benefits of early procurement engagement and innovation;
- Making sure we comply with our statutory procurement duties;
- Increasing the level of collaboration both internally, between service areas, and externally with other partner organisations;
- Making sure we continue to adopt a partnership approach between internal and external partners;
- Encouraging more innovative use of community benefits requirements and ensuring that community benefit outcomes have been achieved that deliver for our local communities;
- Engaging proactively with key suppliers through contract and supplier relationship demand management to ensure that we extract maximum value and innovation from our supply base;
- To enhance contract management throughout the Council to increase efficiency and deliver better value for money;
- Focusing our procurement activity on delivering best value improvements for the people and communities in Argyll and Bute;
- Working cooperatively in everything we do to support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and the third sector organisations. Continue to improve access to public sector contracts, particularly for local SMEs, Supported Businesses, Social Enterprises, Co-operatives and Third Sector;
- Facilitating participation from local contractors in the procurement process to increase opportunity for local spend where possible;
- Ensuring procurement activity contributes towards the Council's general Equality Duty towards all stakeholders in Argyll and Bute and beyond;
- Continuing to promote sustainability, fair work practices and the importance of equality and equal treatment through procurement;

- Setting out clear and achievable strategic objectives which support delivery of the Council's wider goals and objectives; and
- Making sure we continue to investigate and develop purchase to pay systems to improve our procurement methods.

2.2 Sustainable Procurement Policy

The Argyll and Bute Council Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021/22 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 November 2020, 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 92 responses were received, 58% of which were from the general public, and 25% from Argyll and Bute Council employees as the two largest response groups. In general, although respondents found the strategy to be informative, easy to follow, comprehensive and with clear priorities appropriate for the Council; the free format responses received highlighted various areas for improvement including the length of the document. The responses relating to the Sustainable Procurement Policy were also positive, with respondents in general finding the policy to be informative, easy to read, easy to follow, comprehensive and with clear priorities. As a result of the consultation we have amended the policy documents to make them easier to read, by streamlining the documents to remove unnecessary content.

- 3.2 The majority of responses to the open-ended questions within the consultation provided feedback that included queries in relation to areas already covered in the documents or in more operational documents, as well as some feedback on areas out with the scope of the current consultation and Strategy document. 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:

The Strategy has been updated as follows:

- 3.4.1 Section 4.3 has been amended to advise that *“This Strategy also supports the delivery of the Council’s Decarbonisation Plan”*.
- 3.4.2 Section 5.1 has been amended to state *“to support delivery of these outcomes the procurement team will continue to facilitate participation from local contractors in the procurement process to increase opportunity for local spend where possible”*.
- 3.4.3 Section 5.2 which states ...For all of our procurement activity we aim to build upon the achievements and benefits derived from the Council’s previous corporate procurement strategies, with a view to... we have included the following *“to enhance contract management throughout the Council to increase efficiency and deliver better value for money”*.

The Policy has been updated as follows:

- 3.4.4. Section 1.2 has been amended to include *“The Policy also supports the delivery of the Council’s Decarbonisation Plan”*.
 - 3.4.5 Section 5.1 Priorities – Item 2: Objectives, Strategy & Communications by removing wording *“and EU Regulations”* due to the transition period ending on 31st December 2020.
- 3.5 The Procurement Commercial and Contract Management Team aims for continuous improvement in this area to reflect best practice, therefore the outcomes of this consultation have also been taken account of in the following ways:
 - 3.5.1 Discussions will be held with the Communications Team to create a Summary Document for the next consultation, covering key messages from the Strategy document which should assist in enabling consultees without a procurement background to understand the objectives of the Strategy.
 - 3.5.2 In line with feedback provided within this consultation, future consultation exercises will also include an option for respondents to decline to respond to answer questions, i.e. an “I don’t know” option.

4 CONCLUSION

As a large number of stakeholder responses were received, including many more from the general public than in previous consultations, therefore a lot of useful feedback has been provided. The amendments to the documents should reflect the requirements highlighted and make the final documents more relevant to these stakeholders. The strategy has been streamlined in response to the comments and we have ensured that all matters highlighted by stakeholders have been included.

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 STRATEGY 2021/22

The key change to the document this year is the streamlining of the key priorities and action plan. The procurement strategy by category has also been updated to reflect new plans within the categories and the financial analysis has been updated with current data. Only minor amendments have been made to the remaining sections of the document.

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 Strategy should address them.

KEY PRIORITIES:

Twelve key priorities for regulated procurements have been identified in the Strategy, in line with Section 15(5) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

5. Do you consider the activities relating to these key priorities to be appropriate for the Council?
- Yes
 - No
6. Would you propose an additional or alternative key priority or activity in relation to regulated procurements?

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2021/22

Only minor amendments have been made to this document.

GENERAL:

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

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

8. 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:

9. 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

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

COMMENTS

11. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the draft Procurement Strategy 2021/22 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021/22?

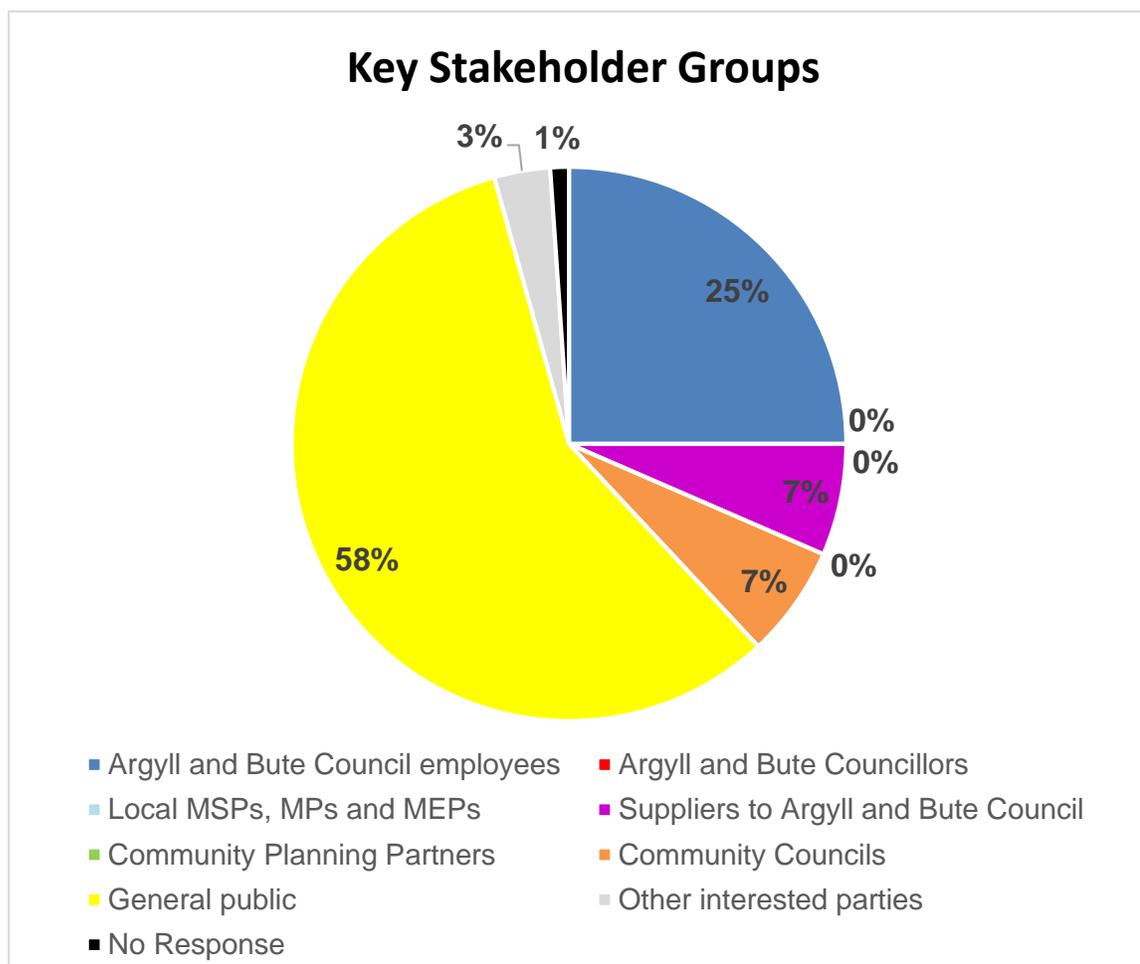


SURVEY RESPONSES

92 responses were received to the consultation survey. Last year’s consultation received 93 responses.

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

Stakeholder Groups	2020 Respondents (%)	2019 Respondents (%)
Argyll and Bute Council Employees	23	30
Argyll and Bute Councillors	0	1
Local MSPs, MP, and MEPs	0	0
Suppliers to Argyll and Bute Council	6	6
Community Planning Partners	0	2
Community Councils	6	5
Other interested parties	3	3
General public	53	51
No response to question	1	1

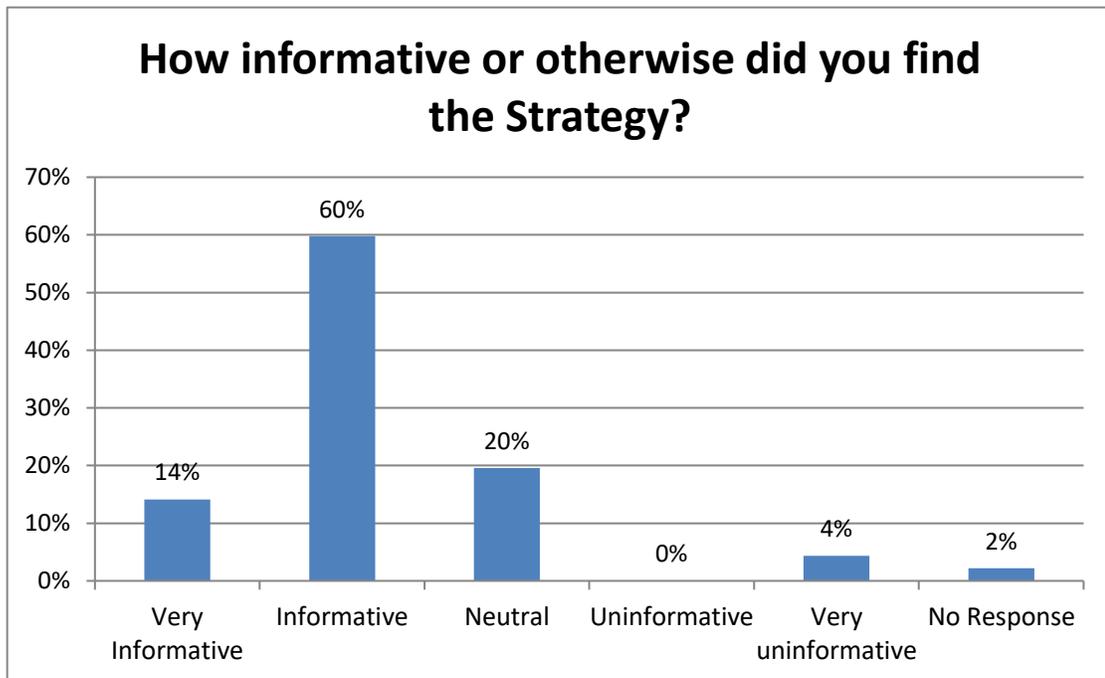


PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

GENERAL:

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

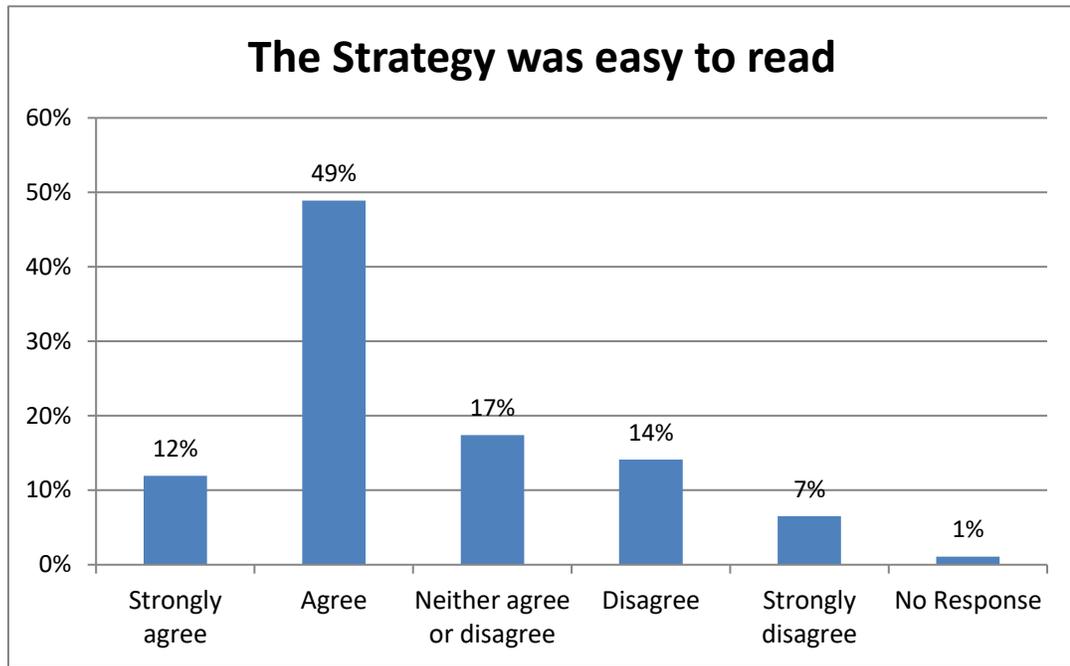
74% of respondents found the Procurement Strategy to be either informative or very informative, with only 4% of respondents stating that it was uninformative or very uninformative. This was a more positive response than last year, when 71% of respondents found the strategy to be either informative or very informative.



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

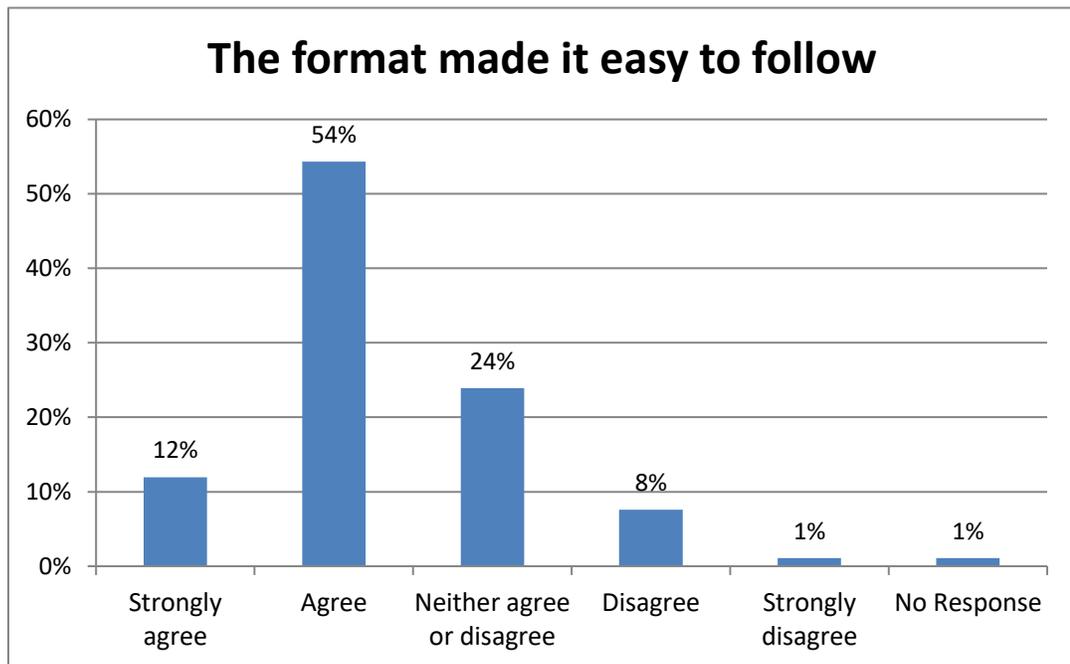
a. The strategy was easy to read

61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the strategy was easy to read; while 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 12% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



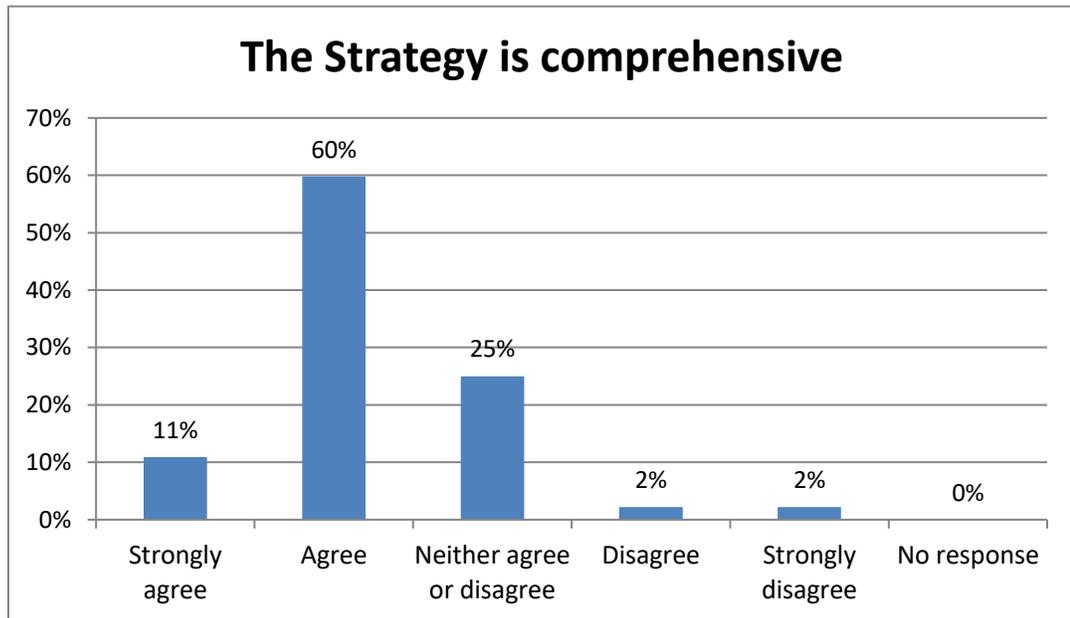
b. The format made it easy to follow

66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the format of the strategy made it easy to follow; while 9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 58% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



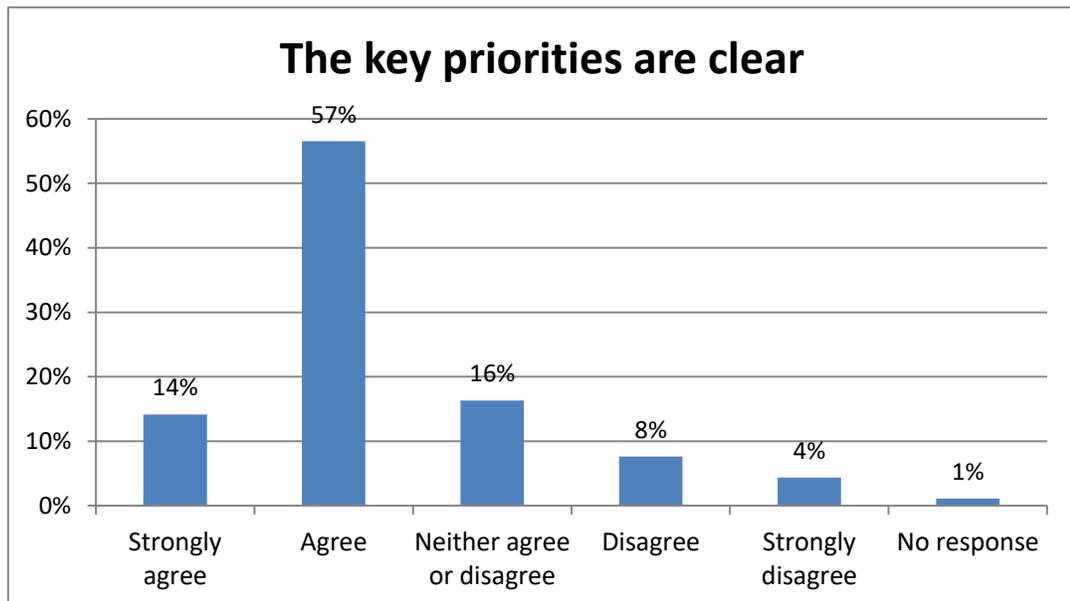
c. The strategy is comprehensive

71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Procurement Strategy is comprehensive; while 4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



d. The key priorities are clear

71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the key priorities within the Strategy are clear; while 12% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 68% 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 Strategy should address them.

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>The strategy does not address how it is resourced, and whether there is an improvement expected.</p>	<p>The Strategy is resourced by the Council's Procurement Team who are qualified procurement specialists, and who are required to meet various standards and improvements set by both the Council and the Scottish Government.</p>
<p>The empowerment agenda for schools taking into account the funding supplied to head teachers by the government to close the poverty related attainment gap.</p> <p>These funds should be allocated as the head teacher determines and should be justified on educational benefit. The procurement team protocols may actively be working against this where for example they may judge an existing service provider to be the same as a schools preferred option. This is an educational judgement and should not be subject to scrutiny below head of service level as they are ring-fenced government funds</p>	<p>The Council and its Directorates must adhere to the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, and the EU Procurement Directives. Council officers, including Head teachers, engaged in procurement activity must comply with the Council's contract standing orders and financial and security regulations as well as the approved Council Procurement Strategy and Procurement Manual.</p> <p>All purchasing must take place in accordance with the Council's statutory duty to secure best value under the Local Government in (Scotland) Act 2003. Best Value means choosing a supplier that offers the best balance between the whole life cost (from acquisition to disposal) of goods and services against predefined requirements (which include quality) and this takes into account savings from collaborating with other public bodies and from streamlining the procurement process.</p> <p>'Procurement' is the process followed when purchasing works, goods and services. This term applies to all aspects of the purchasing process, from the identification of a need to purchase, to the end of the contract or useful life of the item.</p> <p>It is recognised that Devolved Management of Resources (DMR) applies to schools. However the above requirements still apply to all education staff. Head Teachers are empowered to determine the purchasing requirements for their schools within the budgets devolved to them. Where pre-existing contracts are in place, which cover such requirements, these must be utilised on every occasion in order to ensure best value is being obtained. Head Teachers (and their authorised delegates) will be enabled to place orders under such contracts through the PECOS system. Where there are no pre-existing contracts which meet their requirements, Head Teachers are required to work with the Procurement & Contract Management Team who will provide advice, source or assist in identifying best value for the required goods, services or works on their behalf.</p> <p>The Procurement Team will ensure that suitable goods and services are sourced at best value to meet those requirements. They will co-ordinate and consolidate similar requirements across schools wherever possible in order to achieve best value.</p> <p>Certain purchases can also be made by schools through authorised purchasing card payments. This is subject to agreed limits and categories which are agreed for each card with the cardholder. Such purchases must be made in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions attached to the card's use.</p>

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>1. Unclear how contracts valued between 'low value' (<£20k) and 'regulated' (>50k) will be procured? Due to the contract value, suggested this could be addressed by Quick Quote tenders to a shortlist of 3No suppliers, say, rather than via 'full' Scotland Excel procurement.</p> <p>2. Procurement Principle No4, use of 'MEAT' evaluation, potentially conflicts with Procurement Principles No5 & No9 as it encourages a price 'race to the bottom'. Suggested that this be resolved by a suitable quality component being included in each tender evaluation, say min of 50% of score? This would encourage a focus on the outcomes, rather than just price, and should enhance collaboration, project quality and the delivery of better longer-term outcomes.</p> <p>3. Noted that references to EU standards and documents may not be applicable from 1st January 2021 onwards, subject to last-minute Brexit transition period discussions.</p>	<p>1. Contracts for Services and Supplies £0-£999: Pricing agreement should be reached prior to purchase, file note must be kept. £1k-£49,999: Invite to Quote use Public Contracts Scotland or Mini-comp/direct award from an established framework. £50k-£181,302: Regulated Contracts use Public Contracts Scotland or Mini-comp/direct award from an established framework > £181,302: Tender - OJEU notice (Open or Restricted tender) use Public Contracts Scotland or Mini-comp/direct award from an established framework</p> <p>Contracts for Works £0-£999: Pricing agreement should be reached prior to purchase, can be done verbally but file note must be kept/ Quick Quote can be carried out if required £1k-£2m: Quick Quote (ITQ or ITT depending on value and scope of works), if applicable use Vendor Rating System (VRS) for distribution list. Use Public Contracts Scotland £2m-£4,551,413: Regulated Contracts (single or dual stage tender) > £4,551,413): Tender – must be an OJEU notice (Open or Restricted Tender)</p> <p>2. The 'MEAT' evaluation requirement is a legal obligation that all procurements require to have price quality ratio included in all tender processes, ensuring that quality and outcomes are taken into account as well as price as part of a tender evaluation.</p> <p>3. Guidance received to date from Scottish Government has advised that our procurement practices and processes should be continuing in their current form from 1st January 2021.</p>
<p>When submitting additional information to building standards or planning it would be less onerous if we did not have to repeat the applicants details each time. A question asking if the applicant details were to change would be beneficial.</p>	<p>This has been noted and will be passed to our Building Standards and Planning colleagues.</p>
<p>The council has procured a fleet of vehicles costing hundreds of thousands of pounds, in my opinion the wrong type of vehicle. It would serve the council well to spend money on our children's playparks.</p>	<p>Along with other public sector organisations Argyll and Bute Council has been procuring a number of plug-in vehicles funded by Transport Scotland's Switched On Fleets initiative. Transport Scotland provided £2.5 million of grant funding to enable local authorities and their partners, including NHS Boards, emergency services, colleges and universities, to buy or lease plug-in vehicles. The Council's leasing advisors undertook a procurement process to determine the dealer used to lease the vehicles. The 4wd vehicles are advantageous for the outlying areas of Argyll and Bute. As such the monies received could not be spent on other Council services.</p>
<p>This is yet another Argyll and Bute Council box ticking exercise on behalf of the SNP controlled Scottish Government who continually have consultations instead of actually getting things done.</p>	<p>The consultation is a legal requirement that we have to carry out on an annual basis when we are updating the Council's Procurement Strategy which we are again required to do so by law.</p>
<p>There are still many entities in Argyll and Bute who have inadequate internet access as a result of poor broadband and accordingly they are not able to access the online resources increasingly relied upon in this procurement strategy. Until R100 objectives are fully delivered all procurements should be gazetted in local newspapers.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the Council does not have the budget to advertise all procurements in our local press. The Council utilises Public Contracts Scotland, as do all our 31 colleague councils to advertise our tendering opportunities. In addition to this, we have recently requested Community Councils share upcoming tender opportunities with their local communities as well as engaging via social media as we have found the majority of local businesses that we deal with have an internet presence.</p>

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>Allowing the public to inspect tenders and thereby using the skills of the general public to ensure value for money.</p>	<p>The Council utilises its various experts in their field to ensure value for money is being met via a tender process. It is worth noting that where it is appropriate to do so, the Council will invite service users to be part of the tender process/evaluation panel.</p>
<p>Given the stated aim of enabling local firms to tender, there seems to be no indication of how information about opportunities will be broadcast. What means will be used to ensure knowledge of opportunities reach those firms newly established or those which have hitherto had no experience of working with/for A&B Council?</p>	<p>The Council utilises Public Contracts Scotland, as do all our 31 colleague Councils to advertise our tendering opportunities. In addition to this, we have recently requested Community Councils share upcoming tender opportunities with their local communities as well as engaging via social media as we have found the majority of local businesses that we deal with have an internet presence.</p> <p>The Council is a member of the Supplier Development Programme which provides free tendering advice and assistance for newly established or new to Argyll and Bute suppliers to allow them to have the necessary skills to bid for our tenders. Our Council website has a dedicated page https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2017/sep/council-keeping-local-businesses-and-contractors-informed-new-opportunities which provides useful information for potential new suppliers. The main piece of advice would be to register on Public Contracts Scotland for your particular area of expertise, detailing that you would like notified when any relevant tenders are advertised by Argyll and Bute.</p>
<p>Strategy emphasises importance of encouraging people to move to the area and encouraging local businesses to tender for contracts BUT there does not appear to be an inclusion in the contracts that suppliers should include their current local staff levels or intention to recruit locally if contracts awarded. I am sure this can be worded in such a way as to encourage local employment whilst not favouring locally based companies</p>	<p>The Council is unable to require suppliers to include local staff/employment if they win a contract. However, we have a number of ways that we can encourage suppliers, if not local, to support the local economy such as delivering community benefits to the areas that they are working in, encouraging them to include local sub-contractors in their supply chain.</p>
<p>Recycle centres abusing van owners who do not use them for profit use some folk have a van to keep their car in good order</p>	<p>Thank you for this feedback. We will share this with our Amenity colleagues.</p>
<p>Not sure, I am concerned about the assessment of the procurement strategy, it seems to be insular and self-regulation always fails. At the very least use another Council's procurement team to regulate or a different agency who are proven in this arena.</p>	<p>The Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) Assessment is a national assessment of the Council's procurement practices, focusing on the policies and procedures driving procurement performance and, more importantly, the results they deliver are derived from the Scottish Model of Procurement.</p> <p>The Council's latest PCIP score is 79%, which places Argyll and Bute Council in the top banding (F1) with regards to procurement performance according to the Scottish Government bandings.</p>
<p>Define Value for money Define Value Engineering in terms of high and low risk design services. Value is often taken as cheap or inexpensive so a definition would avoid bad design or minimum compliance standard.</p>	<p>An economic assessment by the public sector as to whether a project represents value for money; the optimum combination of cost and quality to provide the required service.</p> <p>Value engineering – is the process by which value is improved in relation to function and cost. Value is not solely considered in relation to cost. It is a <u>process</u> to achieve the optimum combination of cost and quality.</p>
<p>Your form doesn't offer a Don't Know</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. This will be added to a covering report to our Senior Management Team and Councillors, and will be included in future strategies.</p>

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
More help/support for the local Communities	Our Procurement Strategy and processes are set up in such a way to enable our local communities/suppliers to bid for our contracts, eg: we will lot contracts into geographical areas and/or specialisms to ensure our local supply base are able to bid. In addition, we have just introduced our community benefit request list to support our local communities, please see link for more information https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-benefits-list .
Under H&S it only references the HASAWA, this is not wide enough for h& s compliance and also need to include environment compliance to relevant legislation.	Please note that all our tenders/contracts require our suppliers to meet all health and safety legislation that is appropriate to that particular piece of work. This is detailed in the Council's Procurement Manual which is available on the Council's website – https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents .
The strategy should lay out in more detail the criteria for the 'MEAT' so that the balance between the different elements is clear and the weighting laid out. For instance purchasing products for school meals may be cheaper from larger organisations outside Argyll but purchasing from local suppliers may contribute more to local economy / sustainability (circular economy). How would this be measured and taken into account in procurement decision making?	Every tender that the Council issues details the particular criteria that is taken into account when ensuring the most economic advantageous tender is successful. This varies according to the nature of what is being tendered for and the particular market. For example, a fresh fruit and vegetable tender, should there be a local supply base, then the tender documents will allow for lotting into geographical areas to allow the local suppliers to bid and, in addition, there would be weightings on particular questions pertaining to delivery times, freshness etc. to ensure local suppliers are given as much of an opportunity as possible where appropriate to do so.
The Council effectively acts as a procurement agent for the IJB and this is well covered in pages 20-22. It would be helpful to those who take an interest in the work of the IJB to make a reference to this relationship in the Introduction to the Strategy.	This is the Council's Procurement Strategy, we provide procurement advice and services to the IJB for their care services and Live Argyll for all their goods, supplies and services. In addition, we provide procurement services for third sector organisations in certain circumstances where government grant funding has been provided and requires specialist procurement knowledge to allow them to spend the grant.
The strategy does not address the matter of timescale in procurement action and how this may be important in some instances and should be factored in.	The Council's Procurement Manual which is available on the Council's website https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents provides details on procurement processes and procedures including timescales. This is the most appropriate document for this subject matter.
Supporting Local Economies & Community Wealth Building – Focusing on providing the maximum benefit into Argyll and Bute from every taxpayer pound that is spent Leadership - Leading the way and demonstrating initiative and resourcefulness to rise to social economic and environmental challenges that our communities are facing	The Council's procurement activity supports the development of Community wealth building and growing our local economy.
How the Council intends to support indigenous business within A&B within the framework of its other priorities	The Council's procurement activity supports the Council's priorities, for example, we carry out invitations to quote for works contracts up to the value of £2 million, where appropriate to support local contractors to be able to bid for these types of works, we lot contracts geographically to encourage suppliers within that area to bid rather than have 1 large contract and 1 large supplier bid.

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>Given I felt that one needed a degree in procurement to be able to follow the document - unlike other consultations I have been involved in where being a member of the public meant you could make intelligent comments - I may be making points that have been covered.</p> <p>Does the strategy take account of another Council high priority and that also of the Scottish Government of having regard to reducing the impact of climate change? I would have thought that would be many opportunities in procurement to make that an objective - from lightbulbs to type of vehicles. I am concerned about evaluation of contracts in terms of wastage - eg stock management of dated stock (we all saw this with England's PPE fiasco), food wastage, contract dates missed and ones where things were done very efficiently - would those suppliers get a preferential chance next contract? I was also concerned about payment periods as having an emphasis on using more local suppliers does imply often smaller contractors and suppliers who might become unsustainable through a change to lengthen payment periods.</p>	<p>The consultation and strategy is governed by the Scottish Government processes and requires us to follow a template, which is why the document is set out the way it is to ensure consistency across all public sector organisations. The Procurement Strategy and our procurement processes support all the Council's priorities including social, economic and environmental issues. This is detailed in the Sustainable Procurement Policy. Everything the Council purchases takes whole life costs, quality, and waste into account to ensure best value is being delivered. We have strict payment periods within all our contracts ensuring that our contractors are paid on time and, in addition, that they pay their sub-contractors on time.</p>
<p>Very minor procurements, of values more in the region of hundreds rather than thousands. If the council have a contract with a very large company but it is possible to get a smaller amount for a much reduced price, can this be done and if not why? Can't such a situation be written into the original contract?</p>	<p>Yes it can be done, the Council has many contracts, for example, our stationary contract is a national contract that we access. This means that we can buy items from the contractor and get free delivery on them at a much reduced price than we would do should we be paying them off contract, as the contractor provides us with discounts since every local authority uses them.</p>
<p>There is considerable reference to working collaboratively, but targeting cost savings and specification reviews to drive efficiencies and demonstrable value for money appear to be missing.</p>	<p>Best value is at the heart of the Procurement Strategy. Procurement benefits and cost savings are part of the day to day work that the Council carries out. For example, contracts/spend are reviewed on a quarterly basis to determine best value and any cost savings that can be made in the next quarter. In addition, when a contract is due to be retendered a full review is carried out on the specification based on the previous spend and contract to ensure best value continues to be delivered.</p>
<p>There are few, if any, specific targets for 3 to 5 year's time and therefore there will be no way of knowing whether you have delivered your strategy in future years. Specifically there should be measurable targets for each of the strategic goals and processes in place to show progress towards them. There should also be improvement targets for each of the services which require A&B and the suppliers to work together to deliver productivity improvements year on year.</p>	<p>Section 7.5 in the strategy sets out the key performance indicators or targets that we have to meet, these are set on an annual basis as per the requirements of the Council and Scottish Government. We have to report on these and our performance over the year in our Annual Procurement Report which is available on the Council's website https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents. This is a legal requirement for all public sector bodies.</p>

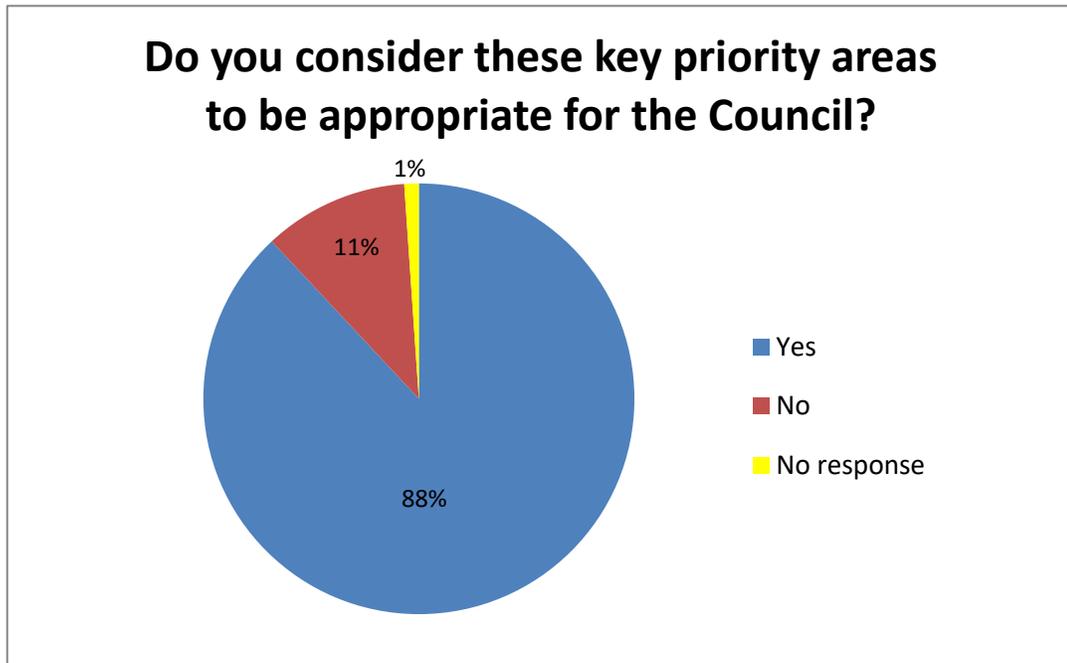
Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>The cost of centralising suppliers through the PECOS system in education. This limits the ability of individual schools to pursue/bid for best value products, e.g. buying second or through bidding on Ebay.</p>	<p>The Council must also adhere to the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, and the EU Procurement Directives. Council officers, including Head teachers, engaged in procurement activity must comply with the Council's contract standing orders and financial and security regulations as well as the approved Council Procurement Strategy and Procurement Manual.</p> <p>All purchasing must take place in accordance with the Council's statutory duty to secure best value under the Local Government in (Scotland) Act 2003. Best Value means choosing a supplier that offers the best balance between the whole life cost (from acquisition to disposal) of goods and services against predefined requirements (which include quality) and this takes into account savings from collaborating with other public bodies and from streamlining the procurement process.</p> <p>'Procurement' is the process followed when purchasing works, goods and services. This term applies to all aspects of the purchasing process, from the identification of a need to purchase, to the end of the contract or useful life of the item.</p> <p>It is recognised that Devolved Management of Resources (DMR) applies to schools. However the above requirements still apply to all education staff. Head Teachers are empowered to determine the purchasing requirements for their schools within the budgets devolved to them. Where pre-existing contracts are in place, which cover such requirements, these must be utilised on every occasion in order to ensure best value is being obtained. Head Teachers (and their authorised delegates) will be enabled to place orders under such contracts through the PECOS system. Where there are no pre-existing contracts which meet their requirements, Head Teachers are required to work with the Procurement & Contract Management Team who will provide advice, source or assist in identifying best value for the required goods, services or works on their behalf.</p> <p>The Procurement Team will ensure that suitable goods and services are sourced at best value to meet those requirements. They will co-ordinate and consolidate similar requirements across schools wherever possible in order to achieve best value.</p> <p>Certain purchases can also be made by schools through authorised purchasing card payments. This is subject to agreed limits and categories which are agreed for each card with the cardholder. Such purchases must be made in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions attached to the card's use.</p>
<p>The environmental and social impact of the service/product and the procurement/delivery strategy, not just as a byproduct of procurement (community benefits clauses) but through the choice of what's procured. SG developing a hierarchy for place based infrastructure investment building on the Place Principle. Such thinking should figure strongly in the strategy and actions that flow from that.</p>	<p>The Procurement Strategy and our procurement processes support all the Council's priorities including social, economic and environmental issues. This is detailed in the Sustainable Procurement Policy. Everything the Council purchases takes whole life costs, quality, and waste into account to ensure best value is being delivered. In addition, our Council's Procurement Manual which is available on the Council's website https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents details how we do this via our sourcing/commodity strategies which detail how we are procuring the goods/services/supplies and works that are required.</p>

KEY PRIORITIES:

Twelve key priorities for regulated procurements have been identified in the Strategy, in line with Section 15(5) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

5. Do you consider the activities relating to these key priorities to be appropriate for the Council?

88% of respondents agreed that the key priority areas are appropriate for the Council; 11% of respondents disagreed. The response to this question was more positive than last year, when 82% of respondents agreed that the key priority areas were appropriate.



6. Would you propose an additional or alternative key priority or activity in relation to regulated procurements?

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Would like to see greater focus on best value and what the actions will achieve in terms of improvement	Best value is at the heart of the Procurement Strategy. Procurement benefits and savings are achieved in our procurement activity. Section 7.5 details the key performance indicators that the Procurement team have to meet, these are reported on an annual basis via the Annual Procurement Report which is required to be completed by law. This sets out what we have achieved in the previous year and any improvements that we wanting to achieve in the following year.
Additional item under Priority No1 for Quality of outcomes. Project-specific KPIs to be defined and measured during procurement and delivery. Poor quality on a previous project should have consequences. Suggested this includes review of tendered cost vs final outturn cost, where a high difference is traditionally due to 'bid low, claim high' confrontation mindset. Not sustainable and doesn't align with other stated Priorities / Principles.	This forms part of contract management, all contracts have service specifications within them which will included key performance indicators that the supplier has to meet in terms of the contract. The council officer who is responsible for managing this contract will regularly meet with the supplier and ensure that the contract is delivered as per the requirements in the service specification. If the supplier fails to deliver what is expected of them, the contract can be terminated. If, however, the contract delivers on its requirements but the quality of the works/services are poor, then this is reported to the supplier and the procurement team for noting for future procurements. At the end of the contract, the council officer supported by their finance officer will carry out a review of the tendered cost vs the final cost to determine best value.
Although working with 3rd sector mentioned, spend more to develop up and coming organisations that deliver services that people want	The Council does this via the Supplier Development Programme. We are members of this programme which allows new suppliers including 3rd sector suppliers to develop their business and learn how to grow it, and bid for contract opportunities. In addition, services will engage with people to determine what services are required, as part of their project prior to going to tender.
Argyll and Bute Council has too many different suppliers. The Scottish Government should be purchasing goods and services for all local authorities throughout Scotland and obtaining a best price using economies of scale. This is how prices in Tesco are a lot lower than the Co-operative stores including the one in Lochgilphead. There are too many separate Co-operative Societies throughout the U.K. with reduced purchasing power compared to one Co-operative Society based in Manchester.	The Scottish Government do this already and we benefit from this. Scotland Excel carry out the tenders for mainly goods/supplies that all public bodies will buy ensuring economies of scale and delivering best value for the Councils. For example, stationery, education supplies, cleaning and catering materials etc.
Use local tradespeople who live and work in Argyll and Bute more	The Council does use local tradespeople within Argyll and Bute. Our procurement methodology for works contracts means we are able to invite local suppliers to bid for contracts where appropriate up to the value of £2m, to enable them to bid for work with us instead of putting the individual works jobs together and out as a large contract, thus shutting off the local market.
Public involvement	The public are involved in procurement activity at the early stage of the process, when our service colleagues will be engaging with their service users to determine what is needed.
Supporting local youth employment	The procurement activity supports local youth employment by requesting community benefits be delivered from our contractors where it is applicable to do so. This may be apprenticeships, work placements etc.
As a member of the general public with no other interest than seeing value being delivered, I struggle to match your procurement strategies to the basic key priorities of A&B Council.	The Procurement Strategy and procurement activity that we deliver supports all the key priorities of the Council.

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Don't know. I have no experience with A&B	Noted
As a member of the public in this area I find the task of assessing this, as your email requested, impossible.	Noted
The council has highlighted the need to save costs. A key priority should be to achieve cost savings from existing contracts through the tendering process.	Procurement benefits and cost savings from the tender process and procurement benefits and cost savings from existing contracts are the main stay of the procurement function. The council officer responsible for the management of the existing contract will be ensuring that the contractor delivers on what is required of them as set out in the service specification and it is delivered within the budget and tendered price
That more attention to the size and location of suppliers is tracked so that longer term impacts of council procurement could be measured and improved over time (and where existing legislation precludes this that the legislation is then reviewed based on evidence of areas of concern or where create disincentives to buy locally). Looking at the council within the wider situation in Argyll is vital rather than just as an institution on its own.	Community wealth building and encouraging more public sector bodies to partner with us to jointly tender will support the local economy. We measure the number of local suppliers, and size of suppliers that bid, win and are unsuccessful in our tender processes to see how we can support them. We have set up the Supplier Development Programme to provide them with free advice, and assistance on tendering for contracts, we have set up meet the buyer events where they can come and meet council officers to discuss their requirements and we actively set out our tender documents in such a way that where appropriate to do so, we lot contracts into geographical areas so that local suppliers can bid to deliver services in their own area.
The impact of failure to procure either at all or in a timely manner	The procurement process is governed by procurement law which deems it necessary to carry out procurements within a specific timescale for specific goods, works or services.
Supporting Local Economies & Community Wealth Building – Focusing on providing the maximum benefit into Argyll and Bute from every taxpayer pound that is spent Leadership - Leading the way and demonstrating initiative and resourcefulness to rise to social economic and environmental challenges that our communities are facing.	The Council's procurement activity supports the development of community wealth building and growing our local economy.
Really need to review the tendering process for local businesses many of whom I'm sure look at the tendering requirements and stop at that point. To encourage SME's the current 20% figure of successful awards would not be a positive indicator. That's 1 in 5 - and assuming 5 compliant bids are received (not sure if that is too high or low in the context of the Council procurement profile) that gives overall a 4% success rate. Very low?	The procurement process is set up in such a way to encourage local businesses to bid for work that does not mean they do bid. Many businesses do not wish to work for the public sector due to the various legal requirements that they have to meet. However, we ensure that all our tenders where appropriate are set out to enable local businesses to bid for them and offer them free advice and assistance in completing the tender documents.
The key activities are appropriate but, as outlined above, with no specific targets there will be no way of knowing whether the strategy has been delivered.	Section 7.5 in the strategy sets out the key performance indicators or targets that we have to meet, these are set on an annual basis as per the requirements of the Council and Scottish Government. We have to report on these and our performance over the year in our Annual Procurement Report which is available on the Council's website - https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents . This is a legal requirement for all public sector bodies.
Conflict between priorities, what is the over-riding choice and how is it to be resolved	Contracts are put in place on behalf of the various Council services in order to meet the Council's priorities.

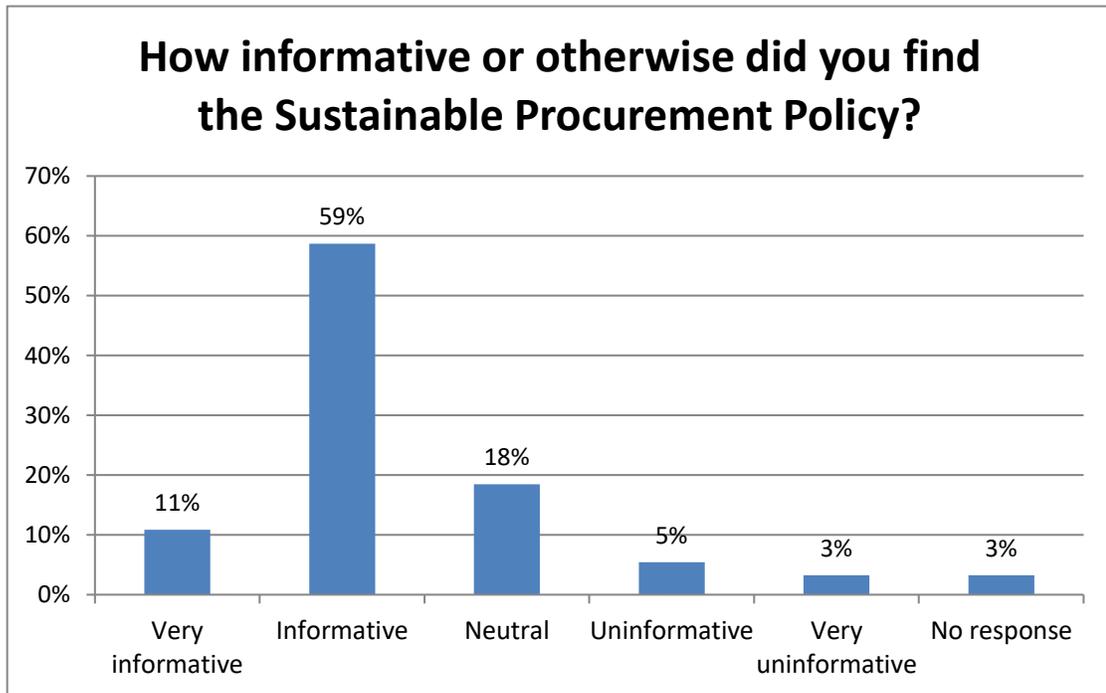
Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Increased emphasis on 'whole life costs' to buy the best, not the cheapest. This ensures sustainability and financial savings in the long term.	Agreed, MEAT or most economic advantageous tender is required by law i.e. all public sector bodies must take into account quality, which can include whole life costs and price when determining best value, as the cheapest is not always best value.
Insufficient leadership in what's purchased, it reads as all about the how.	There are formal processes in place, prior to any new contracts being placed, to ensure what is being spent meets the Council's priorities.
The whole thing must be radically simplified.	The Procurement Strategy is required by law and its layout is based on a template that the Scottish Government requires all public sector bodies to use to ensure consistency. The procurement processes we have in place are simplified and support is also given to suppliers who are new to the process via the Supplier Development Programme.

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2021/22

GENERAL:

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

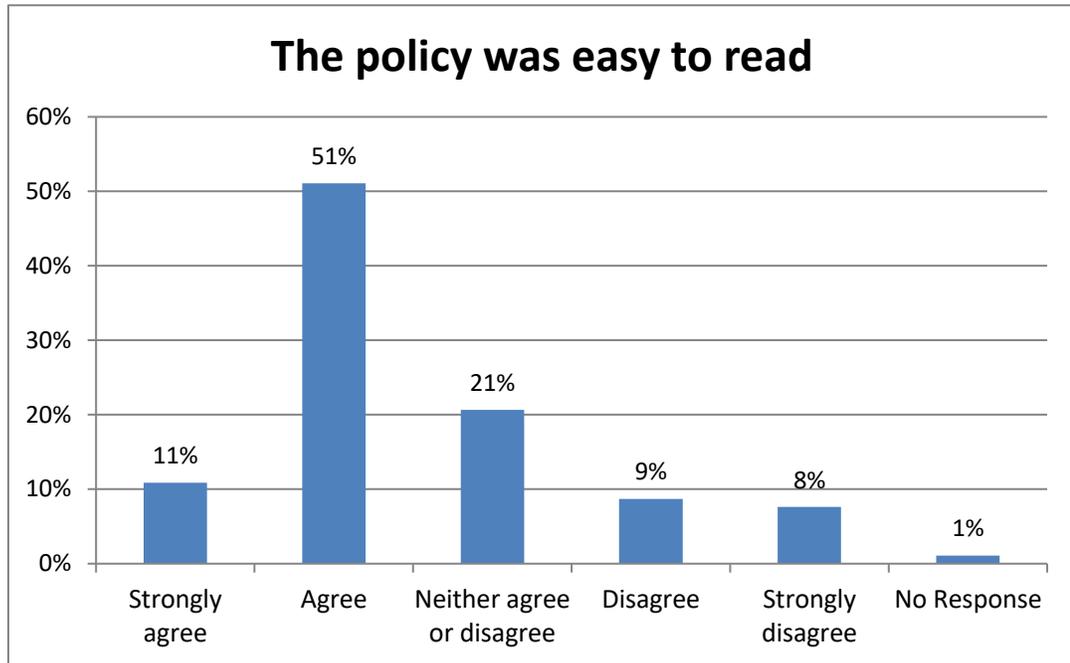
70% of respondents found the Sustainable Procurement Policy to be either informative or very informative; only 8% found it to be uninformative or very uninformative. This was a more positive response than last year, when 67% of respondents found the policy to be informative or very informative.



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

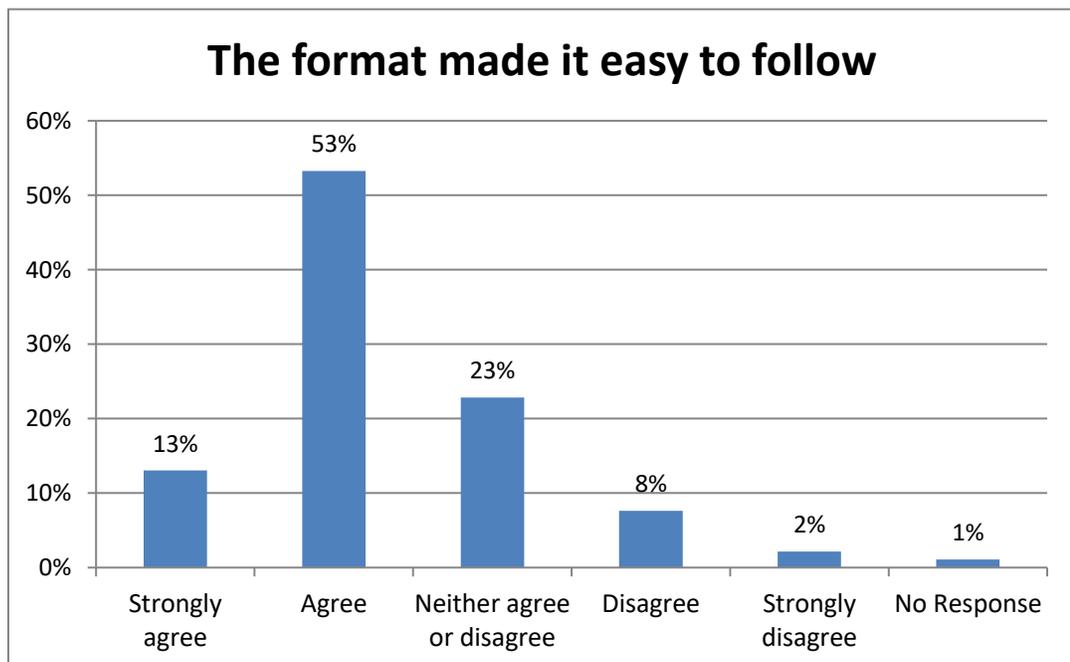
a. The policy was easy to read

62% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the Sustainable Procurement Policy was easy to read; while 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



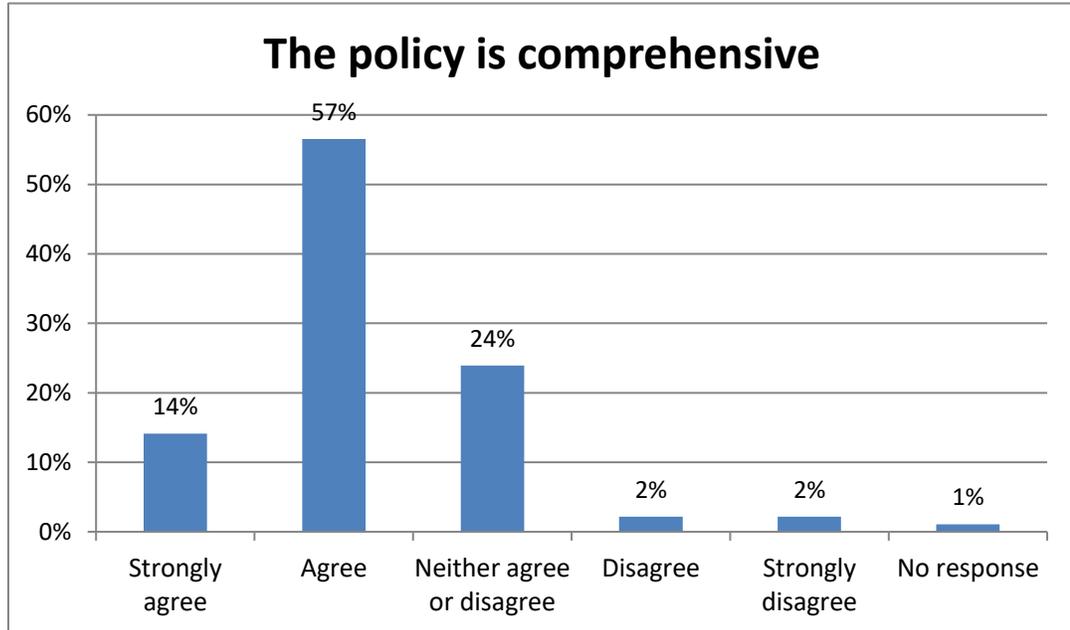
b. The format made it easy to follow

66% 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 or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



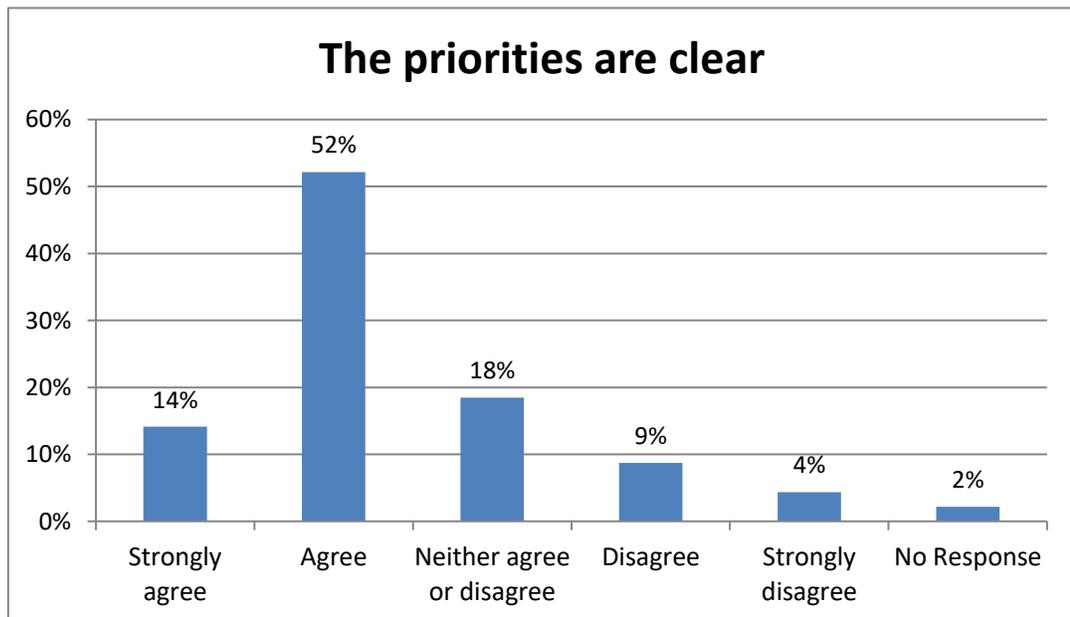
c. The policy is comprehensive

71% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the Sustainable Procurement Policy is comprehensive, while 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



d. The priorities are clear

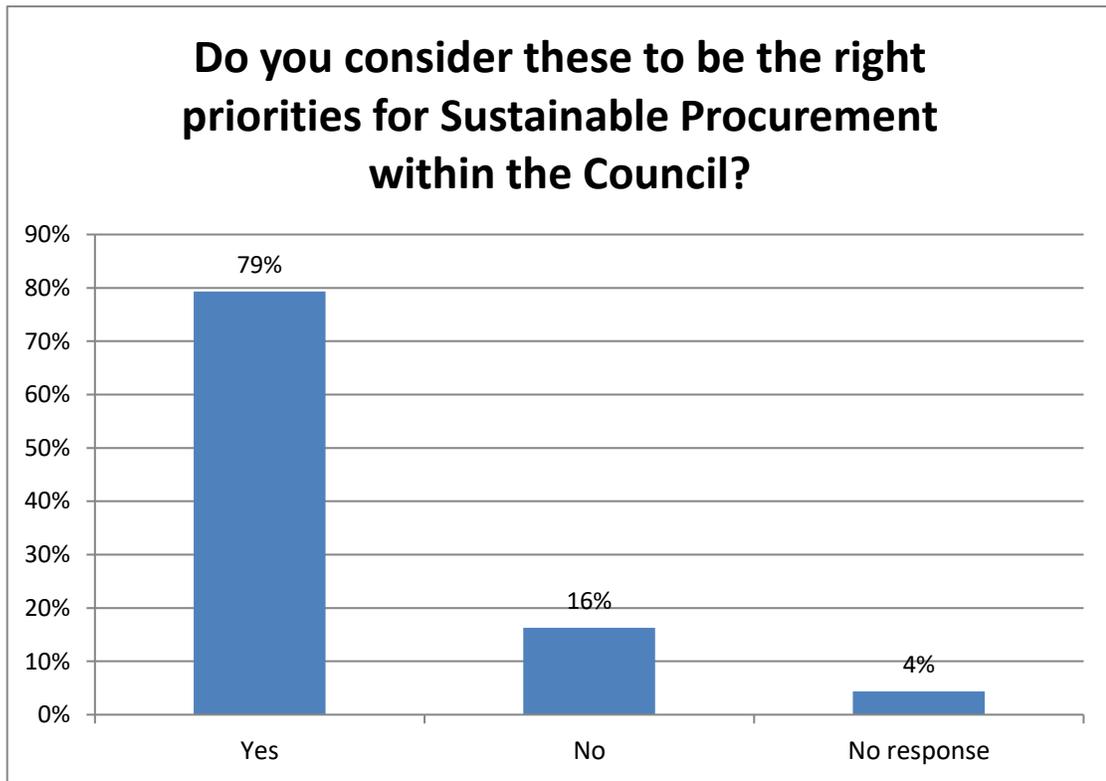
66% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the priorities included in the Sustainable Procurement Policy were clear, and 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was a less positive response than last year, when 71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



PRIORITIES:

- 9. **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?**

79% of respondents indicated that they consider the current priorities to be the right priorities for the Council, 16% disagreed. This was a more positive response than last year, when 76% of respondents agreed that the priorities were right for Sustainable Procurement within the Council.



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

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Include new actions or measures to show how the policy is improving the economy of Argyll and Bute	The Council's Annual Procurement Report details the actions and measures that our procurement activity has achieved to support the economy of Argyll & Bute.
<p>1. Reference is made to EU procurement regulations in various locations. Subject to last-minute political agreement, noted these will not be relevant in the UK from 1st January 2021.</p> <p>2. Under Priority Area No3, no mention of collaborative working principles/proposals mentioned in the Procurement Strategy document.</p>	<p>1. Guidance received to date from Scottish Government has advised that our procurement practices and processes should be continuing in their current form during this transition period. Further guidance is due to be published for future procurements after 31st December 2020.</p> <p>2. Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Procurement Strategy details our collaborative working principles and aims for the upcoming year</p>
Forget about the Sustainable Procurement nonsense and obtain the best price for goods and services purchased. It is the hard pressed Argyll and Bute Council taxpayers who are paying for this 'tree hugging' nonsense.	Thank you for your comment. The sustainable procurement duty has been embedded into procurement law for a number of years. The national aim is to create a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth and improve the wellbeing of our area. We aim to create a positive impact with every procurement exercise by considering wider social, environmental and economic impacts such as availability of jobs and training, fair work practices as well as environmental factors such as climate change. This is all done as part of the strategy process detailed in the Council's Procurement Manual.
At first read, the topic of roads management seems subsumed. This is a top priority for many Argyll And Bute residents and procured contracts should be very clear. The need to interact with the outside world would be assisted with clearer, more concise language.	Thank you for your comment. This document is a Procurement Strategy which, unfortunately, due to its very nature will be worded in such a way that may deem it difficult to understand. Please understand that we are required to complete the style/template by Scottish Government so they have a standard approach across the public sector that details how the public sector body will carry out its procurement activity over the upcoming year. Roads Management is one of the many contracts that we tender for during the year and these are concise and deliver best value based on the service specification requirements.
Measure should be made of, and priority given to reducing, "goods miles" and "service miles" to minimise the carbon footprint of delivered goods and services.	Goods and services miles are taken into account as part of the quality evaluation criteria in appropriate contracts that we have lotted into geographical areas to encourage local suppliers to bid and will assist them due to the reduced amount of miles required.
Take note when public complain, not simply dismiss complaints out of hand. I have personal experience of this with HEEPS ABS contractor BCE	Noted, the procurement team has not received a complaint in relation to the HEEPS ABS contractor BCE, however, if you would like to discuss this further with them please email procurement at procurement@argyll-bute.gov.uk . In the meantime, however, we will share your comment with the Housing Team who are responsible for this particular contract.
Increasingly, there is a need to establish what attitude, approach and protocols that firms tendering have towards climate change obligations, particularly those already embedded in legislation, but, also, those that are likely to arise as indicated by scientific projections.	Thank you for your comment. Taking sustainable procurement principles into account has been embedded into procurement law for a number of years. We have to take social, environmental and economic impacts into account prior to carrying out a tendering exercise, this is done as part of the strategy process detailed in the Council's Procurement Manual.
Waste Management	Waste management is being led by our waste colleagues who we provide procurement support/advice and assistance too.

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
Not convinced that the 5 areas will be met, seems like the cart is being put before the horse!	Noted
More support for the local Communities and for the people	The procurement team support the Council to achieve its priorities and support its local communities and citizens. The various methods of procurement that we carry out including lotting contracts, requesting fresh products, to be delivered within a certain timeframe and requiring community benefits from contractors that benefit our local communities and deliver what they want all hopefully support the local communities.
Greater attention to the way the council is an institution in the wider economy and any constraints that may then affect procurement arrangements. I would also think that there needs to be more on transparency e.g. which companies are seeing the most business (not just on size of company but on type and size of contracts).	Community wealth building and encouraging more public sector bodies to partner with us to jointly tender will support the local economy. We measure the no. of local suppliers, and size of suppliers that bid, win and are unsuccessful in our tender processes to see how we can support them. we have set up the supplier development programme to provide them with free advice, and assistance on tendering for contracts, we have set up meet the buyer events where they can come and meet council officers to discuss their requirements and we actively set out our tender documents in such a way that where appropriate to do so, we lot contracts into geographical areas so that local suppliers can bid to deliver services in their own area. in addition, contract spend information is available on the Scottish Government's Spike Cavell website which details the council's spend with suppliers, all the information is available to the public at any time they request it.
Supporting Local Economies & Community Wealth Building – Focusing on providing the maximum benefit into Argyll and Bute from every taxpayer pound that is spent Leadership - Leading the way and demonstrating initiative and resourcefulness to rise to social economic and environmental challenges that our communities are facing	Community wealth building and encouraging more public sector bodies to partner with us to jointly tender will support the local economy: 1. We measure the no. of local suppliers, and size of suppliers that bid, win and are unsuccessful in our tender processes to see how we can support them. we have set up the supplier development programme to provide them with free advice, and assistance on tendering for contracts, we have set up meet the buyer events where they can come and meet council officers to discuss their requirements and we actively set out our tender documents in such a way that where appropriate to do so, we lot contracts into geographical areas so that local suppliers can bid to deliver services in their own area. All of this is done to support the wider Argyll and Bute economy. 2. The procurement team lead the way in our procurement activity and methodology this can be evidenced by our Scottish Government assessment which places in the top centile of local authorities. However, we continue to develop and want to continue to provide benefits to support the social economic and environmental challenges that our communities are facing.
Focus on procuring items that can be mended rather than replaced and supporting maintenance of these goods (vehicles and electricals particularly) emphasis on cutting waste by buying fewer, higher quality goods, (stationery items, electricals, kitchen and office materials as well as in construction (all tools). Buying from companies that favour non-plastic packaging (especially in construction) and demanding improvements from existing suppliers in packaging.	The Council as part of its make or buy principles carries out what you are referring to. The first question that is always asked is do you need to buy.

Consultation Feedback	Procurement Comment
<p>Place principle. Developing Infrastructure Investment hierarchy in delivery strategies, using these at a place/program level, adapting systems and educating colleagues on implications of these will be key to ensuring spend achieves greatest social impact, and lowest environmental impact, not just judicious process 'considering' these factors.</p>	<p>Thank you for the comment, we will share these with our Senior Management Team.</p>
<p>If anything there are too many, and they are too complex.</p>	<p>Noted Thank you for your comment, taking sustainable procurement principles into account has been embedded into procurement law for a number of years. We have to take social, environmental and economic impacts into account prior to carrying out a tendering exercise, this is done as part of the strategy process detailed in the Council's Procurement Manual - https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents</p>

COMMENTS

11. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the draft Procurement Strategy 2021/22 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021/22?

Further comments	Procurement Comment
These documents are very similar each year and would benefit from a short section on what is new/different and what improvements are expected in the year	Noted, this is carried out in a covering report to our senior management team and Councillors, this will be included in future strategies
These policies need to take more cognisance of the devolved budget holding powers of head teachers which are set to increase. The use of pre existing suppliers will need to be examined as this is not always best value for schools or ELC settings	The Council's Devolved School Management Framework which provides guidance to all head teachers is currently being reviewed and updated with input from the procurement team. A recent audit was carried out on the procurement practices of schools and it highlighted room for improvement, therefore, the team will be working with our education senior management team to agree and deliver training to those head teachers and will require it to ensure they have a full understanding of their role and responsibility as a head teacher and Council employee.
Proposed use of a "mandatory sub-contracting clauses in all proportionate and relevant contracts" may be viewed as anti-competitive / discriminatory if a supplier can provide these services in-house. Careful wording would be needed.	Sub-contracting opportunity clauses are used where it is appropriate to do so, in particular, if there is a large contract awarded to ensure local suppliers are given the opportunity to be part of the supply chain. Use of the clauses must be compliant with the regulations, meaning they cannot be used in a discriminatory manner and careful consideration is given to their use commensurate with the nature and value of the contract. Our experience is that it is rare for a contractor to be able to deliver a full service for certain types of contracts, hence the need to utilise sub-contracting clauses to support the delivery of the contract.
It was too long and could have been condensed, sometimes less is more	The style of this report is determined by the Scottish Government as required by procurement legislation and is intended to provide sufficient and consistent detail to the Government from all public sector bodies. Our team has streamlined and condensed the relevant information within the pro forma template. Your comment is noted and we will continue to streamline where possible
Until recently, I was not only an interested member of the public but a key employee of one of your long- term suppliers. Despite being an intelligent individual, I never have and never will understand nor speak bull dung!	Thank you for taking the time to comment.
As a member of the local community, I have had past experience of absorbing this type of document. However, most people do not. If you are really serious about public consultation, you need to develop something that would be understood by all and perhaps around 2 pages of A4	Thank you for taking the time to comment. The document is a template document that we are required to complete and submit to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, however, we will look into summarising the main principles of the strategy for future consultations to see if that helps.
The documents are unnecessarily wordy. The information would be much clearer if it was more concise.E.g. you don't ever aim to be unhelpful to just demonstrate 'being helpful' and don't state 'being helpful' is your aim.	We are required by procurement legislation and Scottish Government to detail the information in the form that it is in, this is to ensure the Government have a consistent approach across all public sector bodies.
A waste of time as it is yet another 'box ticking' exercise which seems to be a growth industry at Kilmory.	Thank you for taking the time to comment.

Further comments	Procurement Comment
<p>In places, the language and structure is complex and unfriendly to the reader. Examples - P.3, 2.2 "ethicality" is simply 'ethical code'; 2.5 "a key enabling strand"?; 2.9 "by structuring tender opportunities" is actually 'opportunities to tender'; P.8 4.5 insert a triangle for Quality of Product v Years of Use?; P.10 bullet 7 "through contract and supplier relationship demand management" - really? PECOS is mentioned on Page 15, no explanation until, many pages later, the glossary helps.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Business rate payers in Argyll and Bute should have the ability to win contracts at a premium over competitors not domiciled in the county - this premium being equal to the share of their business rates relevant to the procurement exercise. This could easily be calculated pro rata based on turnover. More use of community payback labour should be made to reduce spend.</p>	<p>This is against the public procurement rules, the Council and any public body are unable to show preference to our local suppliers. However, we, by way of our procurement practices, try to ensure they are able to bid i.e. by inviting local suppliers to bid for works contracts up to £2m instead of lotting them all together and putting it out in a larger contract. Further, we lot our contracts, where possible, into geographical areas again allowing our local supply base the opportunity to bid for work in their local area.</p>
<p>Cost is clearly not the best arbiter of a contract. Council should do independent assessment of what companies exist and proactively seek for them to apply. Not use same companies time and again regardless of their competence or otherwise.</p>	<p>The Council takes best value into account when awarding a contract, this is a legal requirement and means it looks at quality and price factors, therefore, the lowest price is not an option. The Council cannot use the same companies over and over again as they are required to tender for its work. If a company has been awarded a contract for a period of time, they are contract managed to ensure they deliver what is required of them and within budget.</p>
<p>There will need to be cognition of unspecified costs in providing goods and services. So, for example, a firm based outwith A & B would have extended supply lines that place pressure on roads and increase the inconvenience to other road users within the county. This is of particular significance in spring, summer and autumn, when, ordinarily, tourism traffic is much greater.</p>	<p>The Council assesses tenders on quality and price as part of the procurement process.</p>
<p>Thank you for asking for input, a costly and complex document that I am sure the procurement team will love. Where is the executive summary for the unintended and uninvolved stakeholder. Did you check with anyone other than internal that this would make real sense. Even the instructions on the email sent out with this were misleading and factually incorrect, e.g today is the 3rd and the survey is open till the 20th. That is 17 days not 3 weeks. This does not in still me with confidence!</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to comment</p>

Further comments	Procurement Comment
<p>Being asked to review this Strategy is a bit of a joke. Sure it allows A&B C to say transparency is in place but the language and systems in use make reviewing impossible and so assessment of goals achieved cannot be done. We are left trusting your capabilities and achievements will be reviewed by others who are capable. Why offer public scrutiny when this cannot be done. I am sure the world of procurement is like everything else, it will have best practices that experts can see and review. Is this being done? Why can't a simple document be prepared that details measurable goals and their historic achievement e.g 95.5% invoices paid. This hardly seems a good target but is a good example. The target should be 100% surely, the achievement of 95.5% its measure.</p>	<p>Thank for your comment. The procurement team and Council are assessed on a bi-annual basis by Scottish Government, our results place our procurement practices in the top centile of local authorities. However, we continue to develop and want to continue to provide benefits to support the social economic and environmental challenges that our communities are facing. The Council sets their targets on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Well, I think so the PS and PP... are hard to understand and to read for the used not compact and not comprehensible format -wording</p>	<p>The Council is required to follow the templates used to be consistent with other local authorities</p>
<p>Make the documents shorter and easier to understand. They say the same thing too many times in language which is not always easy to follow.</p>	<p>Noted, the procurement team will review next year and propose a summary document to be issued along with the main documents.</p>
<p>These documents are readable but not easy to digest! To the occasional reader they contain a wealth of 'council speak' and look like they have been built up over time with regular additions to provide cover for new or neglected matters matters added periodically.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>As a document for a member of the public to comment on it is useless - procurement with associated jargon is something we feel the impact of decisions made and most of us rarely engage with it beyond that . Relating to it through our own life decisions on purchasing is no help - it is a really important area of the council's work to comment on but not via these documents</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Should this not be a 5 year plan? To review it annually when there are only minor changes/tweaks seems an unnecessary administrative burden on Procurement resources. And there is no mention of CIPS qualification as a target for training ' - level 3 NVQ would not be appropriate for the professional Procurement officers.</p>	<p>The procurement legislation requires the document to be annual, along with the Annual Procurement Report which reports on the deliverables made over the past year. All our professional procurement officers are CIPS qualified and/or legally qualified, our trainees are working through the CIPs qualifications level, we have a strong training/mentoring process in our procurement team that is recognised nationally as good practice.</p>

Further comments	Procurement Comment
<p>A good strategy has 3 main elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a clear statement of where you are now and a description of current trends. 2. a clear statement of where you want to get to and the time frame for the strategy 3. an outline plan for getting from where you are now to where you want to be. <p>Currently you have the first of these and have set directions for the future which is part of section 3. However, I see no clear and measurable vision for where you want to get to. Additionally, having a 3 to 5 year strategy is just too vague. Why not set specific 3 or 5 year goals and then take stock annually?</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Make it clear what are the differences between national and local procurement and if the Council has a choice to decide and on what basis is the choice made</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Sustainability/buying best quality and local should not be tagged on at the end. It is cheaper in the long term.</p>	<p>Best value, quality/price is the fundamental principle of procurement. Sustainability is now a legislative procurement in what we buy, the lowest price is not what we ask for in a tender, and quality is taken into account in every tender process.</p>
<p>The documents are too long which can lead to fatigue in providing meaningful feedback.</p>	<p>We are required by procurement legislation and Scottish Government to detail the information in the form that it is in. This is to ensure the Government have a consistent approach across all public sector bodies.</p>
<p>No, keep up the good work , JC</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to comment.</p>
<p>Be more ambitious for what you can achieve through this work. The language is timid (risk adverse) when we need procurement officers to be inspired by the difference they can make in helping colleagues achieve benefits through spend. We need them proactively managing risk/reward, not solely compliance.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. The Procurement Team are leaders in their field of procurement, this is evidenced in the national assessment that is carried out on a bi-annual basis which highlighted the team's strengths. By working together with our service department colleagues, we have and will continue to deliver benefits through the delivery of contracts. The Council is currently introducing a contract management framework to develop its practices and ensure consistency across all its services, which will ensure contracts are being delivered on time, on budget and provide additional procurement benefits such as community benefits, cost savings or cost avoidance.</p>
<p>I think putting it through a plain English test which is something that Microsoft word can do will help show that some of the wording can be changed to be simpler and so easier read</p>	<p>What we are detailing within the strategy is not simple nor an easy read, it has been written in such a way as to try and explain how the Council will be delivering its procurement activity to support its priorities over the next year.</p>
<p>I found these documents poorly written. Lots of admirable ideas, but unreadable and unusable. Errors of fact, spelling, syntax, grammar, internal consistency. 43 pages with no useful introduction, conclusion or summary. Is it the intention to produce something useful (professionally written) for those who will be involved in procurement and tendering, both in the council and in business?</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to comment, these are not ideas this is a document required by law to be published on an annual basis. We are reviewing the final document to pick up on any errors. The style of the document is dictated by the Scottish Government to have consistent feedback from all local authorities. The purpose of the strategy is to set out how we intend to carry out regulated procurements and meet particular policies and requirements such as value for money and sustainable duties. That means it is an internal and external document.</p>

OTHER COMMENTS

Source	Comments	Procurement Comment
Employee	Suggest highlighting both the council's procurement strategy and sustainable procurement policy will support the delivery of the council's decarbonisation plan.	Agreed
Community Planning Partner	As procurement is a pillar of community wealth-building we would like to see its importance highlighted in that way etc. Underlying this is our concerns about in-work poverty for 3rd sector workers as their remuneration is squeezed in real terms by public sector procurement practice, therefore they have reducing amounts to spend in their local economies. Also closely links to Council's Child Poverty agenda as a lot of third sector parents are low paid/part-time workers with families.	Noted, these comments will be shared with our HCSP colleagues to ensure they are aware of these concerns when reviewing any funding for these organisations.
Community Council	<p>My views on the Council's somewhat extravagant approach to procurement which would appear to be shared by many other local people in the Dunoon area. The following instances illustrate my concerns :-</p> <p>For some time one of my roles in Sandbank Community Council has been to deal with any planning issues related to the village. A few years ago there was a planning enforcement matter involving a house in a poor state which was deemed a hazard. The relevant notices to demolish the house had been served but the owner was reluctant to pay for the work. When he was advised that if he didn't carry out the demolition A & B Council would do so and charge him for the cost thereof. Shortly afterwards the owner arranged for a contractor to demolish the building. During a follow-up meeting at Milton House I recall the senior planner involved telling me that he wasn't surprised at the owner's action because the Council would have charged at least three times what the owner paid, the inference being that this would have been the norm for any contractor doing such a job for the Council. Has the Council done any sort of exercise, even surreptitiously, to find out what contractor's charge for private work as compared with what would be the case for similar Council work?</p> <p>About 18 months or so ago I was speaking to an A & B Councillor at a Community Planning Group meeting about the hugely expensive cost of renovating the relatively small Castle House gate house. We both agreed that the cost of some £120,000 was ridiculous given the size of the property. A couple of months later I met the Councillor on a quite separate occasion when he approached me, mentioned our earlier discussion and said that the cost of the renovation was not £120k but actually £140k and that the refurbishment of the interior of the building had yet to be undertaken.</p> <p>The local Dunoon Observer newspaper of 30th August 2019 carried a report of damaged railings near the junction of John Street and Argyll Street which had recently been repaired following the occurrence of the damage in early-2018. Temporary repairs were carried out by Council workers pending the final repair in August 2019. Aside from the undue delay in completing the work (over 15 months!) the choice of a different style was questioned as the original railings (two metre spans with a visibility gap at the top) were the same as the railings on the other three corners of the junction, a feature designed to ensure drivers have a better sightline. The Council advised that the new installed railings were the only ones available through its "procurement process". However, very quickly (and very embarrassingly for the Council) the local newspaper went online and discovered a "plethora" of pedestrian guardrail options available for sale including the original type complete with visibility gap, together with prices.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. In relation to price comparisons with the private sector, the Council has not done an exercise as you described, however, private sector procurement is widely known to be less formal. It does not have the same legislative requirements and constraints that we do in the public sector which will always result in lower costs. For example, we must include quality, sustainability and price in all our tenders. In relation to the renovation tender you refer to, these refurbishment works were tendered as in 2017. Due to the estimated value, 6 contractors were invited to tender, including at least 3 Argyll-based contractors. The bids that were received were very close in value which confirms that was the market value for these works at the time. Regarding the railing in John Street, a national framework contract was used in this instance. These contracts are commonly used as the sourcing route for small procurements as it aims to deliver savings for all public sector bodies due to its size and buying ability thus delivering in the main cost efficiencies. The Council does have a clear robust procurement process as detailed in our procurement manual which is available on our Council website https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/plans-policies-and-key-documents that delivers best value for our services. In relation to marking systems, we carry out an evaluation on all our tenders, this is based on quality/price and has been for a number of years as governed by legislation, although we have taken quality into consideration for years as lowest price is not always the best value. There is no system of preferred contractors or approved provider list, this is unlawful in terms of the procurement legislation. We have however, framework contracts in place for example for general/...</p>

Source	Comments	Procurement Comment
	<p>I note there is a current consultation on "Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Policy" and trust you will add my comments and observations above to the mix.</p> <p>At first sight, it's difficult to conclude that the Council has a robust procurement process which ensures best value. I don't know how its marking system operates or if there is one in place, whether there is a system of preferred contractors that can be relied upon to perform professionally at reasonable cost and, whether there is a term contractor that can carry out general maintenance for a set period of years.</p>	<p>general maintenance across geographical areas to encourage local suppliers to bid and be successful, which means that they have been evaluated both on quality and price to be relied upon to deliver these works on time and deliver best value. In addition, the Council invites suppliers to bid, again inviting local contractors where we lawfully can, who are evaluated to be deemed to be best value to carry out the works. These types of contracts are short term, however, the frameworks can be for 3, 4 or 5 years depending on the value and market.</p>

SUMMARY

Respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the **Procurement Strategy** is:

2021/22		2020/21	
74%	Informative or very informative	71%	↑
61%	Easy to read	12%	↑
66%	Format made it easy to follow	58%	↑
71%	Strategy is comprehensive	66%	↑
71%	Key priorities are clear	68%	↑
88%	Key priority areas are appropriate for the Council	82%	↑

Respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the **Sustainable Procurement Policy** is:

2021/22		2020/21	
70%	Informative or very informative	67%	↑
62%	Easy to read	57%	↑
66%	Format made it easy to follow	61%	↑
71%	Policy is comprehensive	67%	↑
66%	Priorities are clear	71%	↓
79%	Current priorities to be the right priorities for the Council	76%	↑