

Commissioning and Procurement Strategy

2024 – 2026

Creating Fair Opportunities through Community Wealth Building



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1. Introduction

This Commissioning and Procurement Strategy sets out the actions we are taking around procurement to deliver on our commitment to Community Wealth Building, a key pillar of our Council Plan, which will deliver our Borough Missions.

1.1 About Wigan Borough

Wigan Borough is the ninth-largest metropolitan Borough in England, with 329,000 residents, making up fourteen proud towns. Strategically located in the North-West between Manchester and Liverpool, we are two-thirds green space; we have a rich industrial heritage and sporting tradition.



We have the fastest ageing population in Greater Manchester. 1 in 3 people in the borough live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Life expectancy is below the national average.

1.2 Progress with Unity: A New Era for Wigan Borough

2024 marks 50 years since our borough was formed when fourteen proud towns came together. We know that the world since then has changed significantly and the challenges and opportunities that our communities are living through requires a bold response. What is clear is our borough motto 'Progress with Unity' has never been more relevant.

As a partnership between residents, businesses, public services, and community organisations we have reflected deeply on what our strengths are - but also where we have not gone far enough or had the impact we had hoped for. 'Progress with Unity' is a new movement for change for the decade ahead which is built around the successes and opportunities for our borough but also the lessons we have learned along the way. Through conversations we have designed two key missions and are committed to delivering these as a strong partnership within our borough.

Crucially, this is not the final version of our movement. Its foundations are built on the deep engagement we have carried out, but it will change and adapt over time. This is the start of a new era, and we will work as a partnership to keep listening and learning from residents and our response will continue to evolve.



1.3 We are stronger together when we...

[Our Progress with Unity Plan](#) sets out six tried and tested ways of working to achieve long lasting change. We have a unique and genuine commitment to work together as a collective for the good of the borough. The success we've had has come from our culture, behaviours, and approach to working alongside our communities. Through 'Progress with Unity' we will strengthen the way we work through the following six tried and tested ways of working to achieve long lasting change.

1.4 Our Missions

Mission 1 – Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses

We know tackling long-term inequalities within our communities is everyone's business and greater equity is in the interests of us all. This mission sees everyone in our communities, starting with our children, have the same opportunities to realise their potential and talents.

We will use every lever of power we have - procurement, recruitment, land, and assets - to foster an economy which works for local people. People will be given the opportunity to live independently for longer with health and wellness at the heart of all neighbourhoods. Community organisations will flourish across our borough so that people can live happier lives and be connected to what they enjoy doing, with the people they love, in their communities.

Mission 2 – make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them

We know the world around us shapes our health and wellbeing. This mission acknowledges that but also builds on the local knowledge and pride people have in their communities. We will ensure all residents can access good quality person-centred services close to where they live and work. Our housing offer will reflect the needs of our population and, as a well-connected borough, we will maximise our potential with accessible public transport, active travel options and ambitious regeneration schemes. We will celebrate our natural and built heritage and protect our much-loved greenspaces. We will build on local knowledge and pride giving residents and community groups much more involvement in shaping the future of the local places which matter to them and greater local decision-making. We know all these factors are key building blocks that have a generational and positive impact on people's health. Through this people will have improved connections to each other and access to the activities that make them happy and healthy.

1.5 Wigan Council Plan

As a council, we have developed a plan setting out how we will deliver against the borough missions. This is set out in [our Progress with Unity Plan](#).

There are four key pillars in this plan. They are:

- **community wealth and health building** - to retain wealth locally and to build health outcomes into all areas of the council's work.
- **High-quality, person-centred services**
- **A radical approach to neighbourhood working**
- **Transforming the way we operate through technology and AI**

1.6 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

We want everyone to experience health in a way that enables people to live their best life, no matter who they are or where they live. Our Creating Health Strategy sets the long-term direction for change to improve health outcomes. Differences in health mean that some people spend more of their life in poor health, and die earlier, than others. These health inequalities are the product of wider inequalities in society. When aimed explicitly on health, as well as economic, outcomes our Economic Strategy and Community Wealth Building approach have the potential to have a transformational impact.

1.7 Economic Strategy

Having effective and targeted support in local growth sectors will enable local companies to be in a much better position to succeed in public sector procurement processes. The benefits of this 'market shaping' will then be felt in the local economy. Our ambition is that the benefit will be especially felt in those communities where access to the employment market is the most challenging.



We will not compromise on the value to the taxpayer and the quality of the service. In fact, experience shows that a successful local approach results in better quality and service as well as achieving good value. Our procurement model will also enable different forms of business to be delivering goods and services such as social enterprises, co-operatives, and voluntary and community organisations. This will promote a plural economy that retains wealth here and invests in its people.

2.0 Our Commitment to Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth and Health Building is a key pillar of our Council Plan. In Wigan, we believe that everybody in the Borough who conducts commissioning and procurement can achieve change, to reduce inequalities and shape our place. The way we spend our money, and who we spend it with, contributes to the achievement of outcomes that can further life chances for residents, and make sure that what we buy creates an overall positive impact on our people and communities, maximising social value along the way. There is huge potential for us as anchor institutions to influence the social and economic determinants of health in the borough; working individually and collectively as partners on different projects to boost economic, social, health and education prospects for local communities.

In practice, some examples of how we can leverage investment include commissioning creatively through ethical frameworks to support the growth of local suppliers; an innovative partnership between council, Wigan and Leigh College, Edge Hill University, hospital and primary care to develop career pathways for local people; and a focus on providing high quality homes to meet housing need in a way that builds community wealth and health.

2.1 Wigan Council Spend Analysis 2022/2023

In 2022/23, we spent £415m with all suppliers. Of that, approximately £91m was with Wigan based suppliers, of which there were 981. 9% of our procurement spend was with the VCFSE sector. In our Annual Report of 2021-22 on Community Wealth Building, in partnership with CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) we recognised that in 2020 we increased our spend with local businesses by 3%.

Our Partnership for Community Wealth Building brings together Anchor partners including Wigan and Leigh College, Wrightington Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Wigan and Leigh Community Charity, Edge Hill University, and Wigan Youth Zone. In 2022 we agreed a Social Value Charter which committed all partners to using their commissioning and procurement processes to achieve a number of outcomes, including increasing the proportion of spend which goes to Wigan Borough-based businesses who share our values and are invested in and committed to the Borough.

3.0 What does Commissioning and Procurement mean?

Commissioning covers a cycle of decision-making, where a need for goods or service delivery is identified, and decisions are made about the best way to meet that need, via goods or services, and who should provide the required goods or service. If a decision is made that goods or services are not already available within existing resources, then Procurement is when we buy these from outside the Council,



selecting a supplier or partner to work with; potentially following a competitive process, depending on their value.

3.1 The Responsibilities of Commissioners

We have defined clearly the roles of commissioners within the Council:

- Decide on service priorities, together with Service Leads, ADs and Directors, through strategic Directorate Boards and Plans
- Design services to meet those priorities, and decide on how best they should be delivered
- Listen to service users, residents, families and businesses
- Engage with the market to shape specifications, evaluation criteria, KPIs, and social value measures prior to Issuing Invitations to Tender
- Engage with procurement team to identify the best route to market
- Carry out Procurement Exercises with the Procurement Team, writing specifications, assessing bids, providing feedback
- Manage democratic decision-making process in relation to contract awards and commitment of council funding
- Monitor contract delivery and performance, and manage relationships with providers, taking action where necessary
- Publish appropriate notices, following advice from Procurement Team, in relation to contracts, following PA23
- Evaluate contract delivery to feed into future service design

4.0 Purpose of the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy

This Strategy describes in detail our vision of what can be achieved through procurement; how Wigan Council will embrace the opportunities the change in legislation and the Council's New Era provides us with; and how we will improve and maximise our approach to contract management, to ensure our commitment to social value is supported by delivery.

This is a draft Strategy, which we have put in place to highlight our intent and in the context of responding to the Procurement Act, which will go live on the 28 October 2024. We recognise we have work to do to develop greater detail in our Strategy, codesigned with key internal and external stakeholders, and that we are looking to the longer-term to review and update the Strategy for 2025 – 2028.

Our aims and actions are consistent with our Corporate Plan, the Council's Constitution, Financial Procedure Rules, and Contract Procedure Rules.



The strategy will communicate our vision to all stakeholders, including Council Members, Chief Officers and Council staff, and their responsibilities in achieving this through procuring goods, works and services. It sets out how procurement will be organised and managed across the Council. It will promote effective procurement across the whole of the authority and the wider district in collaboration with our

Anchor partners, by setting a flexible framework within which procurement development can take place.

5.0 The Procurement Act 2023

This act aims to create a simpler, more flexible, and transparent system for public bodies, opening more opportunities for smaller organisations to compete for and win more public contracts. The Act introduces four Procurement Objectives:

- delivering value for money.
- maximising public benefit.
- sharing information for the purpose of allowing suppliers and others to understand the authority's procurement policies and decisions,
- acting, and being seen to act, with integrity.

The key changes will mean:

- Three routes to market – Open Procedure, Competitive Flexible Procedure or Direct Award process, which should suit our needs in terms of matching to the sector and proportionality.
- Greater scope to talk to the market prior to going to tender and to co-produce specifications and design an appropriate process.
- Greater transparency through a national platform – contract awards, contract changes, copies of redacted contracts, performance data, assessment summaries (including reasons for scoring decisions), notices regarding compliance with payment schedules, terminations.
- Increased requirements for the Council to publish notices about its procurement activities at each stage of the procurement exercise.
- Potential for increased scrutiny in terms of our decisions to award contracts and whether contracts are performing effectively – suppliers will find much more of their information is publicly available.
- A change from awarding tenders based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) to Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) which means we can put **greater emphasis on social value**.

- A national register of suppliers that we must not work with, and some to which we can apply discretion, created by a New Procurement Review Unit. However, this list is to be updated by Contracting Authorities when providers have incurred issues and had contracts terminated or poor performance.
- Opportunities to create or use new Open Frameworks that can be open for up to 8 years, which suppliers can join at various stages, and which we can refresh without having to retender in full.
- Introduction of dynamic markets (pre-approved lists of suppliers for types of goods and services), with a central register of these across the public sector available for suppliers to see.
- A duty for a conflicts of interest assessment to be prepared and revised throughout the process and the management of contracts.
- Publication of procurement pipeline notices for commissioning intentions over a financial limit.
- A central digital platform for suppliers to register and store their details so that they can be used for multiple bids and see all opportunities in one place.
- Avoid using barriers that may prevent smaller enterprises taking part in a procurement exercise.



6.0 Our Approach to Engagement

Our core way of working is that we listen deeply, working towards genuine connections, engagement, and co-production. We are committed to genuine conversations with the business and VCSFE sectors to reduce barriers for Small to Medium Enterprises to supplying the Council.

Through working with the Invest in Wigan Team, we have convened a Business Consortia meeting to which many businesses are invited to discuss key issues and identify opportunities to collaborate with us.

7.0 Our Action Plan

To take advantage of the opportunities to deliver Community Wealth Building the Act provides, we have set up a programme of work to deliver the required change, led by a Project Team. The Assistant Director for Community Wealth and Health and the Assistant Director for Legal, Governance and Elections (and the Council's Monitoring Officer) chair the meetings. The Project Team includes expertise from Finance, Internal Audit, Legal Services and Procurement with representation from commissioning services and the Invest in Wigan Team.

We have committed to producing this Strategy, along with revising our Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules, and our internal approach to contract management. We have developed an Action Plan, grouped around six key themes, as below:

