

Procurement Strategy

April 2025 – April 2028

On behalf of
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue
&
The Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue
Authority

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1. About Us

Staffordshire covers an area of over 1,000 square miles with a population of 1.1 million. The County encompasses both city and rural locations, with the city of Stoke-on-Trent and the Peak District in the North, and Lichfield in the South. It also includes the districts of Tamworth, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and Cannock.

A number of transport routes run through Staffordshire including the M6, M42 and the M54, strengthening the county's links to neighbouring locations and the urban West Midlands.

There is a broad socio-economic make-up and 5% of the county is from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Fire

The service currently consists of eight whole time stations, two day-duty stations, and 23 on-call stations, with some on call watches based at whole-time and day-duty stations. This combination provides 39 front-line appliances and various special appliances, supporting both local and national resilience.

Our vision is to be recognised as a place that attracts and retains the best calibre people from across Staffordshire and beyond, and where diversity and difference are valued.

The service's priority is making sure that what all activities makes a difference to the community of Staffordshire. Whether it is responding to emergencies or educating communities, guides us is our vision and principles for a safer Staffordshire.

More information about Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service can be found on the website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Staffordshire Commissioner

The Staffordshire Commissioner is elected by the public and acts as your voice, holding the Chief Fire Officer and their service to account and making them answerable to the communities they serve.

Commissioners work to deliver an effective and efficient Fire & Rescue service while ensuring community needs are met as effectively as possible by working closely with local partners. The office works in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Commissioners do not run the Fire & Rescue services at an operational level, but they ensure that those who are in charge are doing a good job. They decide priorities for the service, detailing them in the PFCC Fire & Rescue Plan, and set their budgets.

2. Background

This document sets out the Procurement Strategy for the period of 2025 to 2028.

As a Commercial and Procurement function within our organisation our primary goal is to be fully compliant with the relevant procurement regulations. All expenditure is required to deliver best value for money within agreed budgets and delivering the required pre-defined outcomes.

The Procurement Team is to provide;

- professional, qualified procurement and commercial expertise
- advice and services for all spend with external suppliers;

In compliance with legislative requirements including the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Procurement Act 2023, the Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and any subsequent guidance.

We will procure all Goods, Services and Works, with high ethical standards by applying principles of Sustainable Procurement. Sustainable Procurement is a process whereby the for Goods, Services and Works in a way that achieves value for money (VFM) on a whole life cost basis, generating benefit with consideration to Social, Economic and Environmental factors.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this commercial and procurement delivery plan is:

- To provide the basis for how our commercial and procurement resource on behalf of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire (OPFCC) will support organisational objectives and provide added value to both front line and support activities.
- The Procurement function supports the Fire and Rescue Safety Plan and the Commissioners Fire and Rescue plan with the common themes of Supporting our People, Victims & Communities, Partnerships and building Outstanding Organisations to deliver Prevention and Protection strategies. Our policy delivers a commitment to ensuring the principles are given full consideration in all contracts alongside sustainability (social value and environmental impact), equality and diversity.

4. Procurement Objectives:

Our Vision: We are trusted experts working collaboratively to deliver commercial excellence & sustainability.

<u>Adding Value, Driving Efficiency and Increasing Transparency through Ethical Procurement</u> Enabling efficient and effective processes which will drive strategic procurement. Ensure greater transparency within procurement processes through reporting. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To act as a responsible Commercial Services function providing appropriate control over sourcing activities to ensure compliance with prevailing procurement legislation and regulations, ensuring Compliance,	<u>Compliance</u> To provide a professional and valuable service to our stakeholders ensuring that the relevant Procurement regulations and guidance are followed. To improve the awareness of the procurement service across the organisation and the obligations around engaging suppliers to ensure compliance and to achieve value for money <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that our processes are efficient, utilising a pragmatic and user-friendly approach to procurement, adopting eProcurement
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<p>Transparency, efficiency and being accountable at all times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our activities, planning and processes support the strategy for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and those of the Commissioner, acting as the owners of the end to end procurement process, from identification of need through to disposal, focusing on whole life cost not just price. • Demonstrate best value and commercial awareness at all time in our procurement activity, evaluating outcomes based on Quality, Price and Social Value, whilst maintaining an evaluated approach to Risk and Reward. Ensure value for money for all non-pay expenditure is achieved throughout the commercial lifecycle by exploiting the benefits of category management and robust work plan formulation with all Command areas. • Deliver efficiency by continuing to leverage technology to automate repetitive processes, reducing admin burden and improving accuracy. Using technology to produce real time information to enhance transparency around procurement spend. 	<p>technologies to drive process efficiency and compliance wherever possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all procurement is conducted compliantly, providing appropriate advice and guidance as trusted experts to the organisation. • Seek to influence all non-pay expenditure to ensure compliance, mitigate risk and demonstrate that value for money is achieved. • Regularly review our activities to identify areas for improvement, adherence to evolving regulations and implement best practice. • Ensure due diligence is carried out for our supply chain, ensuring compliance with the supplier debarment list whilst considering wider issues such as modern slavery and fair payments of SMEs.
<p><u>Social Value and Sustainability</u></p> <p>Social value in procurement is to ensure that what we buy creates additional benefits for society and our local communities. It recognises the social, economic and environmental benefits that can be delivered to local communities over and above the direct purchasing of goods and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a mixed economy of supply. Making use of opportunities for collaboration where appropriate as well as opening up our opportunities to small businesses, local providers and the VSME Sector. This will require proactive market engagement which is supported by the change in Procurement Regulations. • Ensure all opportunities to maximise social value and diversity are effectively and comprehensively adhered to through our procurement activity and are fully exploited and measured. Ensure sustainability and environmental impact is given full consideration through all procurement activity. 	<p><u>Developing People</u></p> <p>Our procurement team are essential in every aspect of the procurement process alongside also ensuring that value for money is delivered from non-pay expenditure. Development of a skilled procurement colleagues ensures they are able to meet the needs and challenges of the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our commercial and procurement capability matches the needs and demands of the organisation, through staff development, training and effective deployment of resource. • Invest in our people to develop the skills and capabilities within the Procurement Team to enable them to deliver an excellent service, challenge and deliver positive outcomes whilst feeling, valued and motivated. Encouraging involvement in cross commodity procurements. • Invest in attracting and encouraging new talent by committing to apprenticeships a key part of the Procurement Team structure and ensuring

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively monitor and measure suppliers progress towards net zero and social value benefits through regular contract review meetings. • Ensure social value benefits align to the organisational objectives through regular engagement with the Sustainability lead. 	<p>we develop a workforce that can deliver on behalf of the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we develop our team, identifying future leaders by maintaining opportunities to develop skills.
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5. Links to Organisational Objectives

The Procurement Team will align the organisations commercial and procurement activity to support the Fires overall strategic vision and its day-to-day operation by delivering professional procurement solutions to our stakeholders in line with the Fire and Rescue Plan and the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Fire and Rescue Plan 2024-2028

Keep Staffordshire safe	
<p>Our approach</p> <p>Community focused</p> <p>Understanding communities and recognising their different needs is essential to delivering services in their local area that build relationships, tackle the right problems and increase public confidence. I will listen to communities and ensure public expectations and concerns, alongside the service's professional assessment of risk, shape the Community Risk Management Plan. I will encourage people to get more involved through shaping priorities and services, volunteering, scrutinising the service and helping to solve problems in their community. I will challenge, scrutinise and share performance data publicly to demonstrate my expectation of the highest standards of public service.</p> <p>Prevention and early intervention</p> <p>Preventing fires, road traffic collisions and other incidents from happening in the first place reduces demand on our Fire & Rescue and other services, and reduces harm. By intelligently targeting interventions at the most vulnerable people and locations and intervening as early as possible we can prevent issues from happening in the first place or escalating so that they become even more damaging, complex and costly. So, prevention and early intervention will be central to delivering all aspects of this plan.</p> <p>Supported and equipped</p> <p>Our Fire & Rescue service must have the equipment, vehicles, buildings and technology it needs to be able to improve services, help protect the public and deliver real value for money. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service's most important resource is its people, and firefighters and support staff must have the right leadership, management, training and wellbeing support, underpinned by the right organisational culture. Recognising the Government's climate change commitment, I will also work with the service to do everything we can to reduce our impact on the environment without compromising operational effectiveness.</p> <p>Solving problems together</p> <p>The issues affecting individuals, families and communities are often complex and rarely solved by one organisation alone so we need to bring organisations together to prevent problems from escalating and protect people from harm. This means sharing resources and knowledge and aligning services to deliver more efficient and comprehensive solutions. Even better collaboration between partners including neighbouring Fire & Rescue services, other blue light services, councils, health authorities, businesses and the voluntary and community sector is essential. I will work with communities to address their local safety concerns and ensure that partners have the skills to intervene early, recognise and address vulnerability.</p> <p>Value for money</p> <p>Wherever possible, every penny in Fire & Rescue should be directed towards their core purpose of keeping people safe. This is not about cost cutting but changing the way the service works by listening to the people doing the job and learning from other organisations.</p>	<p>Our aim</p> <p>Keep Staffordshire safe</p> <p>Our priorities</p> <p>An outstanding Fire & Rescue service</p> <p>Ensure your local Fire & Rescue service continues to be accessible and responsive to changing demands so that risk is appropriately and proportionally managed, community and firefighter safety remains paramount and high levels of public confidence and trust in the service are maintained.</p> <p>Preventing</p> <p>Deliver effective and targeted prevention work that provides early help to individuals, families and communities so that we keep people safe from fires and other incidents, they feel safer and there is less pressure on fire response services.</p> <p>Protecting</p> <p>Protect people, premises and the environment through the right balance of education, advice and support and the use of regulatory and enforcement powers to keep people safe.</p>

Community Risk Management Plan 2025 - 2028



We will ensure our influence and spending power is utilised in a way which best supports the needs of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue ensuring value is delivered through contracting whilst managing, measuring and improving key strategic supplier performance.

6. Achieving our part of the Fire and Rescue Plan in Procurement.

Supported and equipped

We will continue to build our credibility and enhance our reputation acting with integrity as a professional Procurement Team. We will continue to support the whole team to undertake relevant training, actively encouraging them to work towards their CIPS qualification. Continuous Development will take place for all Procurement team members to enable delivery of Procurement best practices. We will work in collaboration with our key stakeholders both internal and external government bodies to provide procurement solutions and outcomes to aligned with procurement policy.

- Support the team to obtain or work towards Professional Qualifications including CIPS
- Create individual professional development plans for all Procurement team members using the annual PDR process
- Encourage the whole team to positively engage and contribute to Fire and Commercial goal setting workshops
- The whole team to undertake relevant modular training provided by national procurement groups with a focus on Procurement Act 2023, Social Value/sustainability and Ethical Procurement
- Positively engage with our Sustainability Lead to ensure sustainability goals are understood and delivered as part of our procurement outcomes

Solving problems together

Embed procurement programmes alongside our Partners that are developed to drive out waste and unnecessary cost, whilst maintaining and improving the quality of the service.

Strategic Partnerships - We will work closely with our Bluelight Commercial Colleagues, along with other Bluelight Service Commercial colleagues in other organisations, in order to ensure we maximise any aggregated commercial opportunity and our colleague's commercial expertise working within this function and other fire services. This in turn will help through use of data, analysis of our key spend data and monitoring against cost pressures to provide assurance that value for money is being achieved.

Communities of Practice - We will also develop closer working partnerships with commercial colleagues across other fire services and the wider public sector, sharing best practices and borrowing with pride.

Value for money

Projects Teams - There is significant value that can be gained through Commercial Services working more closely with colleagues on the front-line of the delivery of our services. Operational leadership is critical to improving and sustaining the effective management of non-pay expenditure. Ensure Procurement leaders have direct involvement in service delivery discussions embedding a procurement first mindset.

Budget Holders - For opportunities to be realised, the Commercial Services team will be required to work with key stakeholders who have the authority to influence how all non-pay spend on goods and services are contracted for. This will enable the Commercial Services Team to effectively manage the relationships between internal stakeholders and external suppliers. Introduce regular strategy alignment meetings between Procurement and operational teams to identify potential cost savings or value-added opportunities/collaborations.

Drive value - A fundamental element of our plan and performance is to combat inflationary cost pressures, delivering efficiency and productivity gains leading to overall optimum value for money. We will challenge supplier price increase requests in a systematic and strategic manner, engaging with operational colleagues to ensure consistency and alignment of message to the supply market.

Supply chain/sourcing - Although price is a key factor in any procurement decision, it is only one element in the total cost of acquisition. It is important, therefore, that the strategic sourcing methodology and category/customer management approach applied takes account of this total cost of ownership. To deliver the best commercial outcomes and sustain quality, the Commercial Services Team will focus on the total cost of acquisition and full life costs of goods and services, rather than simply identifying the lowest price solution. This will give true value for money.

Community focused

Procurement continues to contribute to our communities to ensure they feel safe and confident. Following the principles of the procurement regulations we ensure transparency whilst delivering value to Maximise public benefit.

Transparency – To continue to publish contracts to comply with the procurement transparency requirements. To provide commercial dashboards to stakeholders and provide visibility through board meetings to demonstrate compliance.

Trust and confidence – The Procurement team to remain trusted experts in all aspects of procurement by maintaining current procurement knowledge, through structured learning and sharing best practice.

Outstanding service - Maintain a succession and training plan for the Procurement team to ensure consistent delivery across the collaborated function.

Accessible and responsive - Effective engagement with Internal and external Stakeholders and the wider bluelight procurement community.

7. Success Indicators

The successful implementation of this delivery plan will be monitored through the use of performance indicators and progress against specific targets. These will include:

- Evidence of savings delivered – alongside the BLC National Savings Report on behalf of the Home Office.
- Capturing of additional benefits delivered through contracts and contract management
- Benchmarking performance against Procurement value for money indicators in public sector corporate services including the use of spend analysis tools
- Contracts register that captures all live contracts, pipeline and robust spend data
- Monthly "Management Information" Dashboard data to measure success against key contracts
- Retention and career progression within the commercial team.

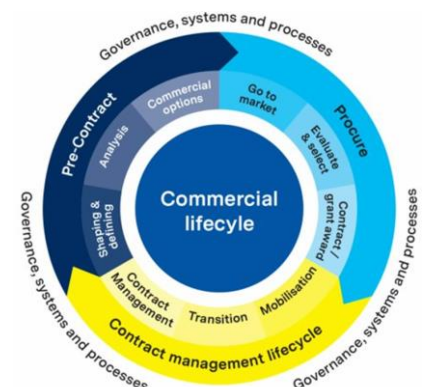
8. Contract Management

Contract Management is the continuous review and management of the contractual terms and/or service level agreement secured through the procurement process as part of the Procurement Lifecycle ensuring suppliers and partners deliver the outcomes agreed. Managing the contracts and relationships with our delivery partners, is imperative to ensure that:

- The strategic priorities agreed at the outset are delivered in a cost effective and timely manner;
- Non-compliance or variation is identified early for escalation and resolution
- Risks and costs are managed
- Contract reviews are undertaken and lessons learnt

The principles of Contract Management ensure:

- Contracts are known and understood by all those who will be involved in their management
- Be clear about the accountability, roles and responsibilities of those managing contracts
- Establish and use strong governance arrangements to manage risk and enable strategic oversight
- Adopt a risk-based approach distinguishing between critical and non-critical contracts.



9. Sustainability, Social Value / CSR / modern slavery

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

We take into account economic, social and environmental impact in the way it operates as a business. Not only is Corporate Social Responsibility ("CSR ") something we take seriously, we aim to align our business values, purpose and strategy with the needs of our internal values and suppliers, whilst embedding such responsible and ethical principles in to procurement activity.

Our sustainability strategy reiterates our approach and commitment to reducing energy, manage water and energy use, and a focus on reducing our environmental impact. Through the strategy, we are working to reduce our carbon footprint and the impact on the environment. We will be working closely with our supply chain partners to introduce innovative use of materials and improved ways of operating. The procurement team will work with our Environment & Sustainability Lead to support the Commissioner's and the Fire Service's decarbonisation ambitions.

Social Value

Social value in procurement is about making sure that what we buy creates additional benefits for society. It recognises the social, economic and environmental benefits that can be delivered to local communities over and above the direct purchasing of goods and services.

Social value considers the cost of a service alongside the additional social benefit delivered across the commercial lifecycle.

We look to deliver social value outcomes as tangible benefits within the organisation from an increase in the number of apprenticeships to a reduction of CO2 footprint, or softer benefits such as reducing the risks of modern slavery in the supply chain.

We work collaboratively to refine, implement, embed and support social value within organisational process to demonstrate positive contributions through adoption of best practice tools and techniques. We believe this enhances the impact of procurement and delivers improved public services and responsible outcomes.

Modern Slavery

Procurement Regulations make certain modern slavery offences grounds for mandatory exclusion of bidders from public procurement. (This forms part of the tender evaluation exercise). Standard procurement documentation requires bidders to self certify their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We conform to The Commissioners Modern Slavery Statement in our approach and work.

We are committed to ensuring the suppliers with whom we do business understand the risks of modern slavery in supply chains, and take appropriate action to identify and address those risks, with particular focus on supporting victims of modern slavery.

Modern slavery risks will be addressed during the procurement process:

- When identifying the need, approach to be taken and the market
- When deciding the requirement
- When selecting suppliers to invite to tender
- When awarding the contract
- In the performance of the contract

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is a key component in maximising social, economic, and environmental benefits through or as a direct result of awarding contracts. The aim of this guidance is to provide suggestions and it is for institutions to tailor for their own institution and how this relates to them. There are definitive definitions as per the Act.

Equality Act 2010 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Act makes it law that every private, public, and voluntary organisation must not discriminate against their employees or the people that use their services because of their particular characteristics.

The following characteristics are protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

10. Armed Forces Covenant & Veterans

We continue our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and the promise that together we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, including the bereaved, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy, and society they serve with their lives.

We continue to promote and maintain the Armed Forces Covenant recognition as an organisation and ask our suppliers and those looking to supply to us to also commit to the principle, recognising the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces:

- Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.
- Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

11. Timeframe and Delivery

This plan covers the period April 2025 – April 2028. The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant. An internal Commercial Services Vision and Plan will be produced to support operational delivery.

12. How we communicate – CDP / Contracts Finder/BLPD

Information relating to contracts and tenders can be found on the contracting authorities website: [Contracts and Tenders - Staffordshire Commissioner](#).

Links are also available to our published contracts list with can be directly found at [Sell2](#) with current contract opportunities advertised via the central Digital Platform or via the forces e-procurement system.

Armed Forces Covenant



13. Stakeholders

- Chief Fire Officer for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue
- Police & Crime Commissioner Staffordshire
- Internal Customers & Stakeholders within Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue and the Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner
- Other Staffordshire based public sector bodies
- The Home Office
- Crown Commercial Services
- NFCC Procurement
- National Fire Chiefs Council – Procurement (NFCC)
- Bluelight Commercial
- General Public