



## Langstane Housing Association

### Procurement Strategy 2023-27

Updated February 2025

<b>Board of Management / Committee name</b>	Performance Committee
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<b>Version</b>	<b>Date approved</b>	<b>Changes</b>
Version 1	9 January 2017	First issue
Version 2	25 March 2019	Full rewrite
Version 3	12 April 2022	N/A
Version 4	07 March 2023	Updated with changes to legislation limits, spend for financial year 2021-22 and revised Action Plan.
Version 5	21 May 2024	Business Plan info updated, updated spend and revised action plan
Version 6	4 March 2025	Updated figures, added additional legislation for reference only, updated sustainability section

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## 1. Introduction

This strategy is aimed at promoting effective procurement throughout the Langstane Group, comprising Langstane Housing Association and its subsidiaries Langstane Property, Langstane Developments and Langstane Maintenance. It aims to strike a balance between setting out a high-level framework for the delivery of excellent procurement and delivering a detailed plan which will address specific targets.

The key objectives of this strategy are to:

- Make sure our procurement practice reflects our vision, values and strategic priorities
- Secure commitment to excellent procurement from employees across the organisation
- Provide a point of reference and focus for procurement matters
- Plan the way forward on improving our procurement activities
- Deliver demonstrable savings as part of an organisation wide efficiency / value for money drive
- Ensure we meet our sustainable procurement duty
- Ensure our procurement is carried out in full compliance with legislation.



### **Our Mission**

To provide homes and services that make a positive difference to people's lives

### **Our Vision**

To empower our People, Customers and Communities to be the best they can be

### **Our Values**

We value people  
We aim high  
We are proud of our roots  
We rely on teamwork  
We are prudent financial managers  
We are open and accountable  
We move with the times

Our business plan sets out our vision. This is to 'empower our people, customers and communities to be the best they can be' and for Langstane that means focussing on continuous improvement of the services our tenants most want and need.

Good procurement underpins this - done well, it can deliver savings, increase the quality of goods and services, reduce maverick spend, and improve approaches to contract and supplier management.

Langstane Housing Association Ltd is a registered Scottish Charity No. SC 011754, a registered Property Factor No. PF 000666 and a registered Letting Agent No. LARN2001005



## 2.0 Context

### External context

Defined as a “Public Body Governed by Public Law”, Langstane has procurement duties placed on it by a number of different pieces of legislation:

#### Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

- A duty to publicly procure services / goods contracts over £50,000 in value and works contracts over £2m in value (values are exclusive of VAT)
- Duty to act in a transparent and proportionate manner and to carry out regulated procurement in a way that treats economic operators equally and without discrimination
- Duty to comply with sustainable procurement obligations
- Where procurement spend will exceed £5m in any year, a duty to publish a Procurement Strategy and review it annually
- Where regulated procurement spend has exceeded £5m in any year, a duty to publish an Annual Procurement Report reviewing our procurement activities in that year against our procurement strategy
- A duty to publish regulated procurement opportunities and contract awards on the Public Contracts Scotland website
- A duty to consider community benefit requirements for all procurement with an estimated contract value over £4m
- A duty to provide feedback to unsuccessful tenderers
- The duty to keep and maintain a publicly available contracts register.

#### Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015

- A duty to publicly procure services / goods contracts exceeding the GPA threshold of £214,904 (inc. VAT) (£179,087 ex. VAT) and works contracts exceeding the GPA threshold of £5,372,609 (inc. VAT) (£4,477,174 ex. VAT). In addition there are limits on supplies and services (except subsidised service contracts), subsidised service contracts, light touch regime for services (unchanged), small lots – supplies and services (unchanged) and small lots – works (unchanged).
- A duty to carry out the procurement in accordance with the requirements set out in the regulations which covers:
  - How contract value is estimated
  - Types of procurement (open, restricted, negotiated etc.)
  - Contract process (PIN, contract notices, splitting contracts into lots etc.)
  - Procedures for awarding contracts
  - The process for tenderers to raise proceedings against a contracting authority.

## Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016

- A duty to carry out public procurement of contracts with a value over £50k for good / services and £2m for works but below the thresholds<sup>1</sup> (see below) in accordance with the requirements set out in the Regulations which cover:
  - How contract value is estimated
  - Contract process (PIN, contract notices, splitting contracts into lots etc.)
  - Rules for awarding contracts without competition
  - Mandatory and optional reasons for excluding tenderers
  - Rules for preparing technical specifications.

This procurement strategy makes sure Langstane complies with the duties inferred on it by the various Regulations and Acts, and its approach to compliance follows best practice.

### Internal context

In July 2018 Langstane's approach to procurement was assessed by Scotland Excel, using their 'Procurement & Commercial Improvement Programme Lite' (PCIPL) tool.

The PCIPL assessment considered Langstane's approach to procurement across four key areas – leadership and governance, tendering, contract management and purchasing processes – and placed Langstane on the 'blue' performance band of the scale below.

The PCIPL assessment recommended the following improvements:

- Procurement action plan required to drive improvements
- More focus on sustainable procurement
- More detailed spend analysis to identify and reduce maverick spending
- Segmenting of contracts by spend / risk with different levels of contract management applied to each category

These recommendations informed our procurement priorities and accompanying action plan.

Since the assessment was carried out, we have worked tirelessly to improve our procurement processes. Scotland Excel has built on the success of its PCIPL programme and launched Continuous Improvement Programme for Procurement (CIPP) to help housing associations meet the new requirements for grant funding through the Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

The published updates to the programme's process and procedures outlines the core requirements that will be assessed as part of a procurement improvement programme (now a condition of grant funding).

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<sup>1</sup> Although the UK exited the EU on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the tendering thresholds will continue to apply. The UK now follows the World Trade Organisation Government Procurement Agreement and procurement rules will shift to fall in line with the GPA. GPA thresholds mirror the EU thresholds so there will be no change to procurement thresholds.

The CIPP assessment uses an evidence-based assessment tool that develops procurement capability, identifies financial savings opportunities, and focuses in on the additional social, economic and environmental benefits that can be delivered for communities through procurement projects.

The assessment focuses on the policies and procedures driving procurement performance and the results they deliver. Scotland Excel will conduct a review using a standard set of questions that meet the Scottish Government requirements. The assessment creates a benchmark of current performance which are contained within a bespoke improvement report.

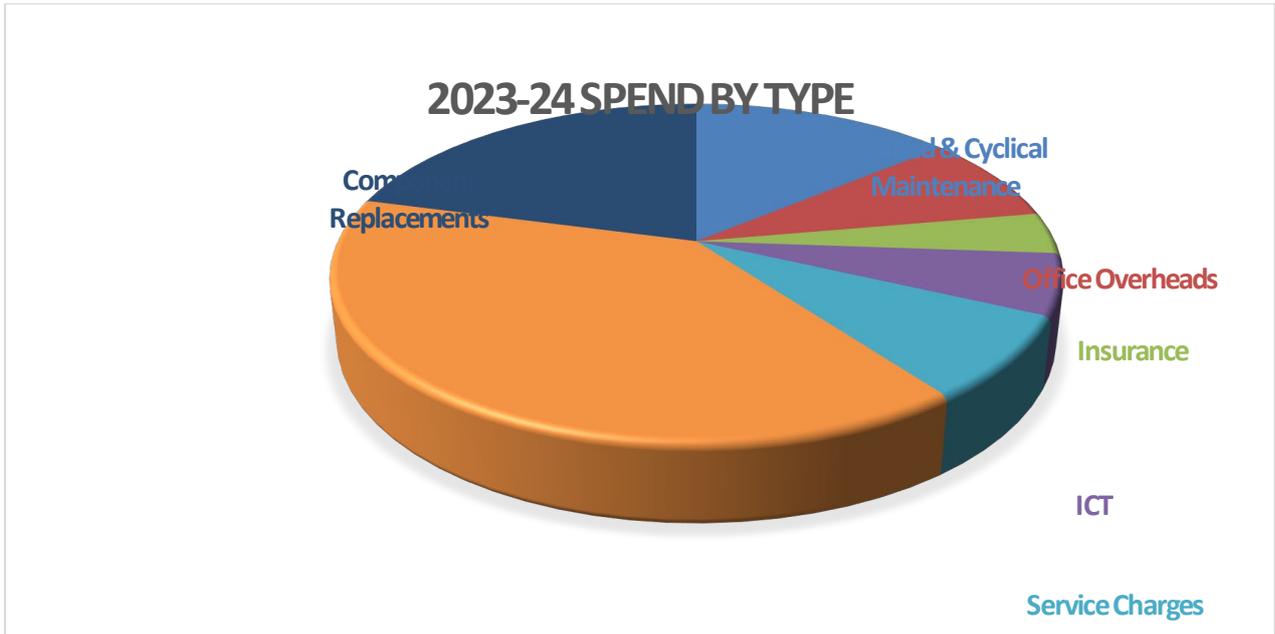
This report can be used by each organisation to plan a continuous procurement journey and achieve best practice. It allows housing associations to set objectives for improving procurement capability, determine the priorities for the coming year, and allocate resources to deliver these.

It is proposed that Langstane participates in this continuous improvement programme for procurement (CIPP) which will also help Langstane meet the new requirements for grant funding through the Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme when we develop.

## Spend analysis

Langstane already manages a considerable amount of procurement – in the 2023-24 financial year our spend on goods, services and works (excluding employee costs and loan repayments) totalled £9.1m (up from £6.1m in 2022-23). An analysis of this spend showed:

- We spent money with 291 suppliers (up from 257).
- Of these suppliers we spent less than £2,000 (our quotation threshold) with 120 (41%) suppliers (2022-23 - 101 (39%)).
- We spent between £2,000 and £20,000 with 117 suppliers (40%). (2022-23 - 105 (41%)).
- We spent between £20,000 and £50,000 with 27 suppliers (9%). (2022-23 - 23 (9%)).
- Of these 27 suppliers, 16 provided works or services under procured contracts and / or one-off procured tenders. (2022-23 - 23 and 16).
- Of these 27 suppliers, spend with 7 could be described as 'off-contract' – meaning that one-off small value jobs are being instructed from these suppliers, but the suppliers have not been publicly procured – showing there is potential scope to aggregate spend on small value items and procure contracts that offer better value.
- We spent over £50,000 with 27 suppliers (9%). The majority of this spend was on works and services, utility and IT costs.
- The most spent with a single supplier was £2,222,959 (2022-23 - £1,891,830) which was spent with a works contractor.
- The biggest spend areas for the Association are component replacements, reactive and voids maintenance and planned and cyclical maintenance.
- 2023-24 spend breakdown by type is shown below:



A report was produced to identify spend that requires further investigation to establish if further tender processes require to be advanced in 2025-26.

**3.0 Procurement vision**

*“To deliver consistently well-managed, compliant procurement activities that result in, competitively priced goods, services and works contracts that meet customer expectations”*

**4.0 Procurement priorities**

Our procurement strategy has been developed to enable delivery of our procurement vision. This strategy makes sure that procurement makes a sustained contribution to the achievement of our business plan, and to the successful delivery of our asset management, development and community investment strategies.

Our procurement strategy has four core priorities:



**Good practice and compliance** – to consistently apply good procurement practice across the organisation.

Activities:

- Adhere to our procurement manual which clearly sets out our expectations for procurement activities
- Train in-house procurement champions who will provide advice and support to less experienced procuring employees
- Develop a procurement training matrix to ensure employees and board members receive procurement training appropriate to their role
- Progress the activity of the procurement working group (PWG) with representation from across the Group. The purpose of this working group is to make sure the Strategy action plan is achieved
- Use external support where appropriate
- Achieve bronze level PCIPL assessment by the end of the Strategy period.

**Value for money** – explore options for delivering financial savings, quality and social value and be able to demonstrate the benefits of procurement activities.

Activities:

- Identify opportunities for collaborative procurement with other bodies to maximise purchasing power and increase value for money through economies of scale
- Use existing procurement frameworks where beneficial to the Association
- Allow sufficient time and resource to make sure procurement is conducted strategically and procurement outcomes are clearly identified and understood
- Where appropriate, involve stakeholders in procurement activities to ensure the procured works, goods or services, will meet expectations
- Implement a 'benefits tracking' methodology in order to measure the benefits and savings associated with newly tendered / retendered contracts.

**Planning, monitoring and reviewing** – to understand current and future procurement requirements and to continuously monitor and improve our procurement performance.

Activities:

- Identify all current / future procurement requirements through collation of current contracts and spend analysis to identify new procurement opportunities
- Maintain a procurement programme to monitor and record progress of procurement activities
- Categorise procurement activities on the procurement programme by risk to the Langstane Group to allow early identification of supplier and contract management requirements
- Preparation of pre-procurement plans for all procurement activities over £50,000 to ensure appropriate planning is undertaken prior to progressing individual procurement activities
- Monitor all regulated contracts through key performance indicators (KPIs) and regular meetings with suppliers throughout the life of the contract
- Monitor customer satisfaction with contracts
- Monitor and assess community benefit outcomes
- Publish an annual procurement report as required.

**Sustainable procurement:** to help improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing in our geographical areas of operation.

Activities:

- Continue to seek to add value to procurement activities through the inclusion of proportionate community benefit requirements
- Understand the environmental impact of procurement decisions and identify opportunities to save energy and resources, and reduce waste
- Continue to increase the use of e-tendering and work towards e-invoicing with all suppliers to reduce paper use
- Adhere to our sustainability policy
- Facilitate the involvement of SMEs<sup>2</sup> and local suppliers, third sector organisations, and supported businesses, in our procurement activities
- Achieve Level 2 (embedded) on the Scottish Government's flexible framework tool for assessing performance in sustainable procurement.

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<sup>2</sup> SMEs = Small to medium sized organisations

## Action Plan

The activities outlined in Section 4 have been collated into an action plan (see Appendix 1). This sets out timescales and responsibilities for each action.

### 5.0 Mandatory obligations

This section documents our approach to meeting the mandatory requirements for a procurement strategy as set out in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

#### Achieving our purpose

We will regularly analyse our spend to identify 'GPA regulated procurements' and 'lower value regulated procurements' and ensure these are effectively planned and managed.

We will place regulated procurements into procurement categories (routine, managed and strategic). These categories will align individual procurement activities with our aims and objectives by taking account of the risk of the procurement to our organisation and our customers. This will in turn help us consider the appropriate level of contract and supplier management for each procurement activity to ensure it helps us to achieve our purpose of *'providing homes and services that make a positive difference to people's lives'*.

#### Delivering value for money

Value for money as defined by the Scottish Model of Procurement (see figure 1) is not just about cost and quality but about the best balance of cost, quality and sustainability.

We will, through our procurement policy and the preparation of individual pre-procurement plans for each procurement activity, seek to identify the best balance of cost, quality, and sustainability, for each procurement activity depending on the particular commodity, category and market.

We will make sure the value for money of contracts is measurable, using appropriate key performance indicators to measure cost, quality and sustainability requirements.

#### Treating relevant economic operators equally and without discrimination

Equal treatment and non-discrimination are fundamental procurement principles of the GPA ([government procurement](#)) and we adopt these principles in all of our procurement activities. We do this by:

- Ensuring our regulated procurement is advertised publicly, currently this is on PCS (Public Contracts Scotland)
- Advancing the use of recognised frameworks where appropriate
- Advancing transparency by tendering non-regulated items electronically or through recognised frameworks, for example on PCS Quick Quotes
- Considering breaking requirements into lots to facilitate the involvement of smaller suppliers
- Planning procurement activities so they place the minimum burden possible on tenderers in order to encourage greater participation from potential suppliers.

### Acting in a transparent and proportionate manner

We will ensure we engage widely with the local supply market on an on-going basis. We will promote the use of clear and unambiguous language in our specifications and ensure contracts are awarded using appropriate quality, risk, sustainability and cost factors according to declared score weighting specific to each contract.

We will take active steps to make it easier for smaller and local businesses to bid for contracts through:

- The use of Public Contracts Scotland and Quick Quotes, frameworks, and / or other procurement methods that align with contractor preferences but still allow open competition and best value to be demonstrated
- Early engagement with the market through the use of PIN notices and gathering of supplier feedback where appropriate
- The provision of training and / or information on third party training opportunities, to build suppliers' capacity to navigate the public procurement process
- Publication of our contracts register to highlight contracts that local suppliers may be interested in bidding for.

We will ensure contract requirements are proportionate and don't unfairly penalise small and medium sized organisations (SMEs) – in particular requirements for annual turnover, insurance cover and available resources are proportionate to the size and complexity of the procurement activity.

### Engaging with our customers

Procurement impacts our customers in many ways. This includes the quality of a planned upgrade, the reactivity of the repair service, or the standard of communal works. The effectiveness of all the services customers receive will ultimately be impacted by how well the initial procurement of that service was managed.

We will consider each procurement activity; the customers affected by the resultant contract, and ensure appropriate consultation is carried out. Consultation might range from asking customers to provide feedback on proposed specifications or quality standards, through to involving customers on interview panels.

### Sustainability

In addition to the economic impact of our procurement activities, we consider the environmental, social and governance (ESG) impacts. We will consider ways, on a contract-by-contract basis, we can encourage the involvement of SME's, third sector businesses, and supported businesses, in our procurement activities. We will consider how we can use procurement to reduce energy use and resource waste, and we will look to introduce whole life costing into procurement processes.

To support compliance we will make use of available tools, in particular the Scottish Government's Flexible Framework tool.

### **Community benefits**

We are committed to identifying opportunities to include community benefits within our procurements, not just for those contracts with a value in excess of £4m but also lower value contracts where proportionate to do so and in accordance with our Community Investment Strategy.

Community benefits will always aim to improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of our tenants, the communities they live in and the wider north-east region.

### **Scottish living wage**

We recognise the value of a well-motivated and dedicated workforce both within our own organisation and those of our suppliers. We pay the real living wage to our directly employed employees and have been an accredited Living Wage Employer since 2020.

When procuring, in compliance with the Act we consider whether it is relevant and proportionate to include a question on fair work practices along with other relevant criteria, whilst ensuring the appropriate balance between the quality and cost of the contract.

### **Promoting compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**

We are committed to only contracting with suppliers that comply with all appropriate and relevant legislation, including health and safety legislation.

Where appropriate, and contract by contract, we will assess the legislation applicable to each procurement exercise and take steps to ensure bidders comply with such legislation.

### **Fairly and ethically traded goods and service**

We support the sourcing of goods which are fairly and ethically traded.

Where it is relevant to do so, we make use of appropriate standards and labels in procurements to take account of fair and ethical trading considerations as well as considering alternative equivalent offerings from suppliers that can demonstrate they meet the specified criteria without necessarily having the specific certification.

### **Payments to Contractors and sub-contractors**

We recognise the importance of paying suppliers promptly once a service has been performed, goods delivered or works completed and late payment is detrimental to suppliers, particularly SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses. We will regularly review our payment timescales to suppliers to ensure they are within our standard 28-day payment terms.

Where it is appropriate to do so, for instance where a strategically important contract is reliant on subcontractors, we will review contractors' payments to their sub-contractors.

## Appendix 1 – Procurement Action Plan

Priority	Action	Owner	Timescale	Progress
Good practice and compliance	Publish Procurement Strategy annually and notify Scottish Government as required	DoFCS	March each year	Complete for 2024
	Review Procurement Manual to ensure employees across the Association are procuring in a consistent and complaint manner	DoP	Complete	Internal audit of procurement complete
	Retain external procurement services to provide advice and support to procuring employees	DoFCS	Ongoing	External advice used on strategic or complex procurements and for general advice
	Develop a training matrix for employees and board members with procurement involvement and ensure required training is provided	DoFCS	Ongoing	Complete for employees – Board Member training as required
	Set up a Procurement Working group to ensure a cross-organisation approach to procurement	DoFCS	Ongoing	To be progressed in 2024-25
	Complete the Continuous Improvement Programme	PWG	March 2026	
	Develop a 'benefits tracking' methodology to assess value for money of procurement activities	PWG	December 2025	Procurement Working Group to advance
Value for Money	Maintain procurement programme which clearly shows future procurement requirements	DoFCS	Ongoing	In progress
	Procurement requirements to be categorised based on complexity and risk to the Association	DoFCS	Ongoing	In progress
	Pre-procurement plan template to be developed for use on all procurements over £50,000 in value	DoP	Complete	Complete – forms part of the Procurement Manual
	Develop a means of regularly reviewing key contracts at a high level to assess contract performance, customer satisfaction, community benefit delivery etc.	PWG	March 2025	Delay until PWG has capacity to take this forward
Planning, monitoring and reviewing				

Priority	Action	Owner	Timescale	Progress
	Publish annual procurement report and notify Scottish Government as required	DoFCS	June each year	Ongoing – however, not exceeded threshold for reporting
Sustainable procurement	E-tendering to be used for at least 75% of all procurement activities between £20k and £50k	PWG	Ongoing	Almost 100% being tendered through PCS unless specialist – occasionally tendering outwith PCS where there is a lack of interest via PCS
	E-tendering to be used for at least 75% of all procurement activities between £5k and £20k	PWG	Ongoing	The majority of work goes through PCS Quick Quotes although, as above, experiencing a lack of interest via Quick Quotes and so occasionally tendering out with QQ where required.
	Aim to be e-procuring 100% of all regulated procurement activities or procuring from frameworks and all other procuring where feasible to do so	PWG	August 2024 Ongoing	Challenge in terms of lack of interest from contractors for some work, particularly in Moray. We get better response if we issue tenders by email.
	Research e-invoicing options and make decision on preferred option	DoFCS	Complete	Contractor portal for integrated housing and finance system allows for electronic invoicing
	Maintain Sustainability Policy	DoP	Ongoing	
	Achieve level 2 of Scottish Government's Flexible Framework	PWG	March 2027	

DoFCS – Director of Finance & Corporate Services

DoP – Director of Property

PWG – Procurement Working Group