

**ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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<b>Equality screened/Rural Impact Assessed by</b>	<b>Zoe Vennard / Dominic Donnelly</b>
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## 1. Background

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council require goods, services, construction works in order to deliver services on behalf of ratepayers and residents. “Procurement” is the process of acquiring goods, works and services via a contractual arrangement after public competition to meet the needs of the Council. The process spans the whole cycle from the identification of needs, through to the end of the useful life of an asset or the end of service provision.

Procurement can be either operational or strategic in nature. Operational procurement concerns routine purchases of goods and services required to maintain Council’s day-to-day business activities. Strategic procurement is associated with long-term projects or high value, high risk contracts such as large capital projects e.g. delivery of a new leisure centre. It balances legal compliance and risk management with other considerations such as inclusive growth, social value outcomes and commercial opportunities.

All procurement exercises follow a clearly defined process i.e. applying effective and up-to-date procurement procedures. This policy will promote a proportional approach to the procurement process, enabling lower value purchases to be processed with minimal intervention and a higher degree of involvement from the Procurement team in strategic or higher value projects.

In the context of a procurement process, obtaining “best value for money” means choosing the bid that offers the most advantageous combination of cost (consideration of whole life cost); quality (meeting a specification which is fit for purpose and sufficient to meet customer requirements); and sustainability (economic, social and environmental benefits, where possible).

The Policy takes account of current UK and EU legislation and NI Public Procurement Policy and incorporates the objectives of delivering value for money; maximising public benefit; sharing information; and acting, and being seen to act, with integrity. The Policy is also guided by the NI Public Procurement Policy Principles as follows:

1. Accountability	7. Integration
2. Competitive Supply	8. Integrity
3. Consistency	9. Informed Decision Making
4. Effectiveness	10. Legality
5. Efficiency	11. Responsiveness
6. Fair-dealing	12. Transparency

## 2. Aim

The Corporate Plan outlines the theme of ‘Service Delivery’ which focuses on reviewing and improving our processes to ensuring the delivery of quality services through clear, robust and accountable processes.

This policy aims to support the delivery of this approach in a consistent manner, making efficient and effective use of resources to achieve best ‘Value for Money’ while enabling Council to respond to an evolving public sector procurement environment.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all Council Officers and Agency workers involved in the procurement of goods, services and construction works. The adoption of this policy will ensure that all individuals undertaking procurement activity have a clear understanding of their role, and what is required of them.

All Consultants working on behalf of Council who are involved with procurements must ensure that their procurement documentation complies with this policy.

Officers are expected to follow the policy at all times. Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff are familiar with this policy and to ensure adherence to it. Failure to comply with internal procurement policy, guidance and external legislation or any breaches in procurement controls may lead to disciplinary action.

### **4. Objectives**

The main objective of this procurement policy is to obtain best value for money spent on goods and services having due regard to the needs of the organisation/service i.e., to procure the right quality of goods and services in the right quantity, at the right time; delivered to the right place from the right supplier and at the right price.

### **5. Supplementary Objectives**

- a) Compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and associated national local regulations, and other relevant legislation and guidance.
- b) Promote best practice procurement within the Council
- c) Cost control of the organisation is improved
- d) Minimise risk associated with poorly-conducted procurement activity
- e) Procurement activity provides the foundations for good contract management throughout the organisation
- f) The Council is committed to sustainable development and integrating social value into its procurement practices, where and when possible.
- g) Open up procurement opportunities for local suppliers

## 6. Policy Detail

### *Application of Procurement Process*

Procurement activity undertaken by Council Officers should ensure that it provides value for money, meets the business requirement and complies with all relevant legislation / regulations. The Financial Regulations identify various thresholds for procurement activity as follows:

<b><i>Estimated Value</i></b>	<b><i>Process To Be Used</i></b>
Where estimated cost does not exceed £1,500	No quotation required but reasonable effort must be made to obtain value for money. Officers must retain evidence of efforts made to obtain value for money e.g. screen dumps of relevant sites, notes of companies contacted, the name of the person contacted and the telephone number called as well as dates and times.
Where estimated cost is £1,501 - £7,500 (Lower Threshold Quotation)	A minimum of 3 written competitive quotations required or use of a Framework contract.
Where estimated cost is £7,501 - £20,000 (Upper Threshold Quotation)	A minimum of 4 written competitive quotations required or use of a Framework contract.
Where estimated cost is £20,001 - £30,000	A minimum of 4 invited tenders issued via eTenders NI or use of a Framework contract approved by the procurement team.
Where estimated cost exceeds £30,000	Public advertisement required via eTenders NI or use of a Framework contract approved by the procurement team. Spend above the UK Public Procurement Thresholds will be advertised via the Find a Tender Service.

Responsibility for spend less than £20,000 is delegated to the relevant service area with Procurement support available. Template quotation documents for Lower and Upper Threshold Quotations are available on the Staff Intranet under 'A – Z Forms' and must be used when carrying out a quotation exercise.

All spend over £20,000 is channelled through the Procurement function. In the first instance, this will be on receipt of a completed Procurement Pipeline and Officers are expected to be cognisant of potential timeframes for tendering activity to ensure contracts are renewed or in place when they are needed. Ad-hoc requests for Procurement will only be facilitated where there is available resource. The most appropriate route to market will be agreed with the service area and Tenders will only be issued upon receipt of correct and signed documentation. All templates will be provided by the Procurement section.

Where an Officer is involved in the evaluation of a Tender, they must make themselves aware of the Conflict of Interest Policy (currently in draft form) and ensure that evaluations are carried out in a transparent, equal and consistent manner. Further information in relation to conducting evaluations is available in the Procurement Handbook, available on the Staff Intranet under 'A – Z Forms'.

Tenders will only be awarded upon receipt of a signed Delegated Authority Report as per the Scheme of Delegation.

### *Award of Contracts outside of the approved Procurement Process*

A Single Tender Action (STA) is where officers propose expenditure without obtaining the required quotations or tendering as required within the financial regulations (for spend in excess of £1,500). This should only happen in exceptional circumstances and only after discussion with the Procurement Team and approval as per the Financial Regulations.

There are a limited number of circumstances where this is permitted and Officers should refer to the 'Single Tender Action Guidance' available on the Staff Intranet under 'A – Z Forms'.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Procurement Team will:

- Support Officers to achieve Best Value for Money in all procurement activity
- Ensure effective procurement is at the heart of decision making and service planning
- Provide a modern and efficient procurement service by applying consistent and proportionate practices and procedures while maximising the use of technology
- Comply with relevant legislation, regulations and guidance
- Offer regular procurement refresher training to departments
- Monitor corporate procurement expenditure to better co-ordinate procurement activity
- Collaborate and share best practice with other Councils and government bodies

The requesting Officer will:

- Ensure procurement activity is conducted in accordance with all applicable governance documents including this policy and the Financial Regulations
- Comply with all Legal requirements relating to procurement activity
- Maximise Value for Money for Council from third party spend
- Seek early engagement with Procurement Services for advice and support in the delivery of their requirements

## **8. Related Policies**

Council Constitution 2021

Financial Regulations

Procurement Handbook

Single Tender Action Guidance

Conflict of Interest Policy (Draft)

Contract Management Policy (Draft)

Procurement Policy Note 01/21 (Thresholds and Inclusion of VAT)

Procurement Act 2023

## Appendix 1 – Equality Screening

### Policy Scoping

Policy Title:  Procurement Policy 

**Brief Description of Policy (please attach copy if available). Please state if it is a new, existing or amended policy.**

This policy will provide background information on the need for procurement, ensure Officers are aware of legislative requirements, identify the various procurement thresholds, and define roles and responsibilities for both the Procurement section and Council Officers.

**Intended aims/outcomes. What is the policy trying to achieve?**

This policy aims to support the delivery of a consistent procurement approach in a consistent manner across all Departments, making efficient and effective use of resources to achieve best 'Value for Money' while enabling Council to respond to an evolving public sector procurement environment.

### Policy Framework

Has the policy been developed in response to statutory requirements, legal advice or on the basis of any other professional advice? Does this affect the discretion available to Council to amend the policy?

The Procurement Policy makes reference to the Procurement Act 2023 which applies to all tendered spend over a specified threshold value. The rest of the policy is guided by best practice procurement across the public sector and in particular Northern Ireland Public Procurement policy, although this is not applicable to local authorities.

**Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, please outline.**

In compliance with the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Central Procurement Directorate, the relevance of the statutory equality duties will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives, the specification, when writing the project documentation and during the performance of the contract. Questions relating to the statutory equality duties are included in the Tender Request Form.

**Who initiated or wrote the policy (if Council decision, please state). Who is responsible for implementing the policy?**

Who initiated or wrote the policy?	Procurement Manager
Who is responsible for implementation?	The Council, Procurement Manager and Heads of departments

**Are there any factors which might contribute to or detract from the implementation of the policy (e.g. financial, legislative, other)?**

No

### **Main stakeholders in relation to the policy**

Please list main stakeholders affected by the policy (e.g. staff, service users, other statutory bodies, community or voluntary sector, private sector)

Members and Staff, rate payers

**Are there any other policies with a bearing on this policy? If so, please identify them and how they impact on this policy.**

Council Constitution 2021  
Financial Regulations  
Procurement Handbook  
Single Tender Action Guidance  
Conflict of Interest Policy (Draft)  
Contract Management Policy (Draft)  
Procurement Policy Note 01/21 (Thresholds and Inclusion of VAT)  
Procurement Act 2023

### **Available Evidence**

Council should ensure that its screening decisions are informed by relevant data. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories. For up to date [S75 Borough Statistics](#)

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Religious belief	The Policy takes account of current UK and EU legislation and NI Public Procurement Policy and incorporates the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, proportionality and transparency. In compliance with the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Central Procurement Directorate, the relevance of the statutory equality duties will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives, the specification, when writing the project documentation and during the performance of the contract. Questions relating to the statutory equality duties are included in the Tender Request Form.
Political opinion	As above
Racial group	As above
Age	As above
Marital status	As above
Sexual orientation	As above
Men and women generally	As above
Disability	As above
Dependants	As above



## Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information gathered above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories in relation to this particular policy/decision?

Section 75 category	Needs, experiences and priorities
Religious belief	In compliance with the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Central Procurement Directorate, the relevance of the statutory equality duties will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives, the specification, when writing the project documentation and during the performance of the contract. Questions relating to the statutory equality duties are included in the Tender Request Form.
Political opinion	As above
Racial group	As above
Age	As above
Marital status	As above
Sexual orientation	As above
Men and women generally	As above
Disability	As above
Dependants	As above

## Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 categories?

Category	Policy Impact	Level of impact (Major/minor/none)
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None
Age	None	None
Marital status	None	None
Sexual orientation	None	None
Men and women generally	None	None
Disability	None	None
Dependents	None	None

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		N/A
Political opinion		N/A
Racial group		N/A

Age		N/A
Marital status		N/A
Sexual orientation		N/A
Men and women generally		N/A
Disability		N/A
Dependents		N/A

**3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?**

Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact (major/minor/none)
Religious belief		None
Political opinion		None
Racial group		None

**4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		No – procurement decisions are made solely on the basis of information returned
Political opinion		
Racial group		

**Multiple Identity**

Generally speaking, people fall into more than one Section 75 category (for example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; young lesbian, gay and bisexual people). Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant s75 categories concerned.

N/A – procurement decisions are made solely on the basis of information returned.

**Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006**

Is there an opportunity for the policy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

N/A – procurement decisions are made solely on the basis of information returned.

Is there an opportunity for the policy to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

N/A – procurement decisions are made solely on the basis of information returned.

## Screening Decision

### A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY

Please identify reasons for this below

Procurement decisions are made solely on the basis of information returned. The Procurement Act 2023 is based on the objectives of: 1. delivering value for money 2. Maximising public benefit 3. sharing information 4. acting, and being seen to act, with integrity.

In compliance with the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Central Procurement Directorate, the relevance of the statutory equality duties will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives, the specification, when writing the project documentation and during the performance of the contract. Questions relating to the statutory equality duties are included in the Tender Request Form.

### B: MINOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AS IMPACT CAN BE ELIMINATED OR MITIGATED

Where the impact is likely to be minor, you should consider if the policy can be mitigated or an alternative policy introduced. If so, an EQIA may not be considered necessary. You must indicate the reasons for this decision below, together with details of measures to mitigate the adverse impact or the alternative policy proposed.

N/A

### C: MAJOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA REQUIRED

If the decision is to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

## Timetabling and Prioritising

If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment, please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3 with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

### Policy Criterion

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations  
Social need

### Rating (1-3)

Effect on people's daily lives

The total rating score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the council in timetabling its EQIAs.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? If yes, please give details.

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### Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help the authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy. It is recommended that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced to mitigate adverse impact, monitoring be undertaken on a broader basis to identify any impact (positive or adverse).

Further information on monitoring is available in the Equality Commission's guidance on monitoring ([www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)).

Identify how the impact of the policy is to be monitored

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### Approval and Authorisation

A copy of the screening form for each policy screened should be signed off by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The screening recommendation should be reported to the relevant Committee/Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Zoe Vennard	Procurement Manager	07/02/2025
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date
Dominic Donnelly	Head of Finance, ICT & Procurement	02/06/2023

Please forward a copy of the completed policy and form to:

[equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

who will ensure these are made available on the Council's website.

The above officer is also responsible for issuing reports on a quarterly basis on those policies "screened out for EQIA". This allows stakeholders who disagree with this recommendation to submit their views. In the event of any stakeholder disagreeing with the decision to screen out any policy, the screening exercise will be reviewed.

## Appendix 2 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

### SECTION 1

#### Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Procurement Policy

1C Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to:

Developing a

Adopting a

Implementing a

Revising a

Policy

Designing a Public Service

☐

Delivering a Public Service

☐

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above

Procurement Policy

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

To provide background on the need for procurement, ensure officers are aware of legislative requirements, identify the various thresholds, define roles and responsibilities of procurement section.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition

☐

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below)

☐

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable

☒

## Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

The main objective of this procurement policy is to obtain best value for money spent on goods and services having due regard to the needs of the organisation/service i.e., to procure the right quality of goods and services in the right quantity, at the right time; delivered to the right place from the right supplier and at the right price.

### **SECTION 2**

#### **Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

**2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?**

Yes

☐

No

☒

If response is No go to 2E

**2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

**2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.**

**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

Rural Businesses

☐

Rural Tourism

☐

Rural Housing

☐

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas

☐

Education or Training in Rural Areas

☐

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas

☐

Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas

☐

Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas

☐

Poverty in Rural Areas

☐

Deprivation in Rural Areas

☐

Rural Crime or Community Safety ☐  
Rural Development ☐  
Agri-Environment ☐  
Other (Please state)

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

This policy is for internal use only. However, the relevance of the statutory rural duty will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant, to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives and the specification in writing project documentation and during the performance of the contract.

### **SECTION 3**

#### **Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes ☐ No ☒ If response is No go to 3E

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders ☐  
Consultation with Other organisations ☐  
Published Statistics ☐  
Research Papers ☐  
Surveys or Questionnaires ☐  
Other Publications ☐  
Other Methods or Information Sources ☐  
(include details in Question 3C below)

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

**3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?**

This policy is for internal use only. However, the relevance of the statutory rural duty will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant, to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives and the specification in writing project documentation and during the performance of the contract.

**SECTION 4**

**Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

**4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

N/A

**SECTION 5**

**Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

**5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?**

Yes

☐

No

☒

If response is No go to 5C

**5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

If the response to Section 5A was YES go to 6A.

**5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

This policy is for internal use only. However, the relevance of the statutory rural duty will be considered by the commissioning department before procurement begins and then, if relevant, to the procurement exercise will be included in the planning, scoping, deciding the strategic objectives and the specification in writing project documentation and during the performance of the contract.



## **SECTION 6**

### **Documenting and Recording**

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by: ☐ Zoe Vennard ☐

Position: Procurement Manager

Department / Directorate: ☐ Finance, ICT & Procurement ☐

Signature: Zoe Vennard

Date: 07/02/2025

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by: ☐ Dominic Donnelly ☐

Position: ☐ Head of Finance ☐

Department / Directorate: ☐ Deputy Chief Executive ☐

Signature: Dominic Donnelly

Date: 07/02/2025