



 **sport aberdeen**
Charity no SC040973

Procurement Strategy 2026/27-2028/29

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This procurement strategy sets out the strategic approach, principles and priorities that will guide how procurement activity is planned, governed and delivered over the period 2026/27 to 2028/29.
- 1.2 The strategy applies to all employees involved in the commissioning, procurement and management of goods, services and works.
- 1.3 Sport Aberdeen is an arms-length external organisation (ALEO) of Aberdeen City Council and a registered charity. In carrying out procurement activity, Sport Aberdeen must comply with relevant procurement legislation while also supporting the strategic priorities of Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen.
- 1.4 This strategy supports compliance with:
 - the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014
 - the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations
 - relevant Scottish procurement policy and guidance

It also aligns with Sport Aberdeen's business plan and wider organisational priorities.

2 Organisational Context

- 2.1 Sport Aberdeen delivers sport and physical activity services across Aberdeen, supporting health, wellbeing and community outcomes.
- 2.2 Procurement plays an important role in ensuring that public funds are used effectively to deliver high-quality services.
- 2.3 Sport Aberdeen has annual third-party procurement expenditure of in excess £5 million (excluding staffing). This exceeds the threshold for regulated procurement activity under Scottish procurement legislation and requires the organisation to publish a procurement strategy and annual procurement report.
- 2.4 Procurement activity within Sport Aberdeen covers a broad range of goods, services and works required to support service delivery. This includes areas such as facilities management, utilities, ICT systems, leisure equipment and contracted operational services.
- 2.5 A proportion of this activity involves engaging with small businesses, sole traders and self-employed fitness professionals and sports coaches, reflecting the nature of service delivery within the organisation and its focus on sport and physical activity.
- 2.6 Some of these areas involve higher-value, longer-term or more complex arrangements and therefore require more structured procurement approaches, stronger contract management and appropriate governance oversight.
- 2.7 As an ALEO, Sport Aberdeen:
 - works in partnership with Aberdeen City Council
 - contributes to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
 - may make use of council and national procurement frameworks

3 Procurement Vision and Principles

3.1 Vision

To deliver high-quality, cost-effective and sustainable services through fair, transparent and well-managed procurement.

3.2 Principles

All procurement activity will be:

- **Value focused:** considering whole-life cost and quality, not price alone
- **Transparent and fair:** open, consistent and auditable processes
- **Proportionate:** appropriate to the value, risk and complexity of the procurement
- **Compliant:** meeting legislative and governance requirements
- **Sustainable:** supporting environmental and social outcomes
- **Collaborative:** working with partners and frameworks where beneficial
- **Community Focused:** recognising the role procurement plays in supporting local communities, participation and delivery of sport and physical activity services

4 Strategic Objectives

4.1 Over the life of this strategy, Sport Aberdeen will:

- Deliver value for money across all procurement activity
- Ensure procurement is compliant, transparent and auditable
- Support local economic development, including SMEs, sole traders, third sector organisations and self-employed providers where appropriate
- Embed sustainable and low-carbon procurement practices
- Promote fair work and ethical employment practices
- Strengthen contract and supplier management
- Improve planning, visibility and control of procurement activity

5 Governance and Decision Making

5.1 Procurement activity operates within Sport Aberdeen's governance framework.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Board of Directors:** overall oversight of procurement governance and performance
- **Corporate Governance Committee:** scrutiny and monitoring of procurement activity
- **Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team:** operational accountability
- **Finance Team:** oversight of controls, compliance and reporting

5.3 Detailed approval levels and delegated authority arrangements are set out in the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures.

5.4 Relationship with Aberdeen City Council

As an ALEO:

- Sport Aberdeen may access Aberdeen City Council procurement frameworks
- Council approval may be required for certain capital or strategic procurement decisions
- procurement activity must support Council priorities and reporting requirements

6 Procurement Framework and Approach

- 6.1 Sport Aberdeen will ensure all procurement activity is undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and good practice.
- 6.2 Before undertaking any regulated procurement, Sport Aberdeen will consider how procurement can:
- improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Aberdeen area
 - reduce inequalities
 - support SME, third sector and supported business participation
 - promote innovation
 - comply with the sustainable procurement duty

6.3 Procurement Routes

Procurement may be undertaken through a range of compliant and proportionate routes, including:

- open tendering via Public Contracts Scotland (PCS)
- use of framework agreements, including those available through Scotland Excel and other public sector bodies
- proportionate competitive processes
- direct award, where permitted and properly authorised

Where available and appropriate, Sport Aberdeen may also make use of dynamic purchasing systems or other compliant procurement arrangements.

For mid-range procurements of £15,001 to £50,000, a proportionate competitive process, such as a mini competition or structured request for quotation, should be used to ensure fairness, transparency and value for money.

6.4 Proportionality

Procurement processes will be proportionate to the value, risk and complexity of the contract. Lower value procurements will follow quotation-based, best value approaches, while higher value procurements within the sub-threshold range will require a more structured competitive process.

Detailed thresholds, processes and requirements are set out in the Financial Procedures.

6.5 Market Engagement and Specification

Where appropriate and proportionate, Sport Aberdeen may carry out early market engagement to:

- understand market capacity
- shape specifications
- encourage competition
- improve accessibility for smaller suppliers

Specifications will:

- focus on outcomes and performance
- avoid unnecessary barriers
- support innovation
- incorporate sustainability, equality and accessibility considerations

7 Procurement Pipeline and Planning

- 7.1 Procurement activity will be planned in line with organisational priorities, budgets and service delivery requirements.
- 7.2 Sport Aberdeen will:
- maintain a rolling procurement pipeline covering at least two to three years
 - identify upcoming contract renewals and key procurements
 - align procurement with business planning and budgeting
 - ensure sufficient time is allowed for appropriate procurement processes
- 7.3 This approach will support early engagement, improved market awareness and more proportionate procurement planning.

8 Sustainable Procurement and Climate

- 8.1 Sport Aberdeen is committed to environmentally responsible procurement.
- 8.2 We will:
- consider environmental impact in procurement decisions
 - reduce waste and promote efficient resource use
 - consider lifecycle costs where appropriate
 - work with suppliers demonstrating sustainable practices

9 Fair Work and Ethical Procurement

- 9.1 Sport Aberdeen is committed to promoting fair and ethical procurement.
- 9.2 We will:
- promote Fair Work First principles
 - encourage payment of the real Living Wage
 - consider workforce practices when evaluating suppliers
 - support ethical sourcing where relevant

10 Community Benefits

- 10.1 Community benefits will be considered for all procurement activity and applied proportionately to the value, risk and nature of the contract.
- 10.2 This may include:
- training and employment opportunities
 - support for local businesses and supply chains
 - community engagement and development opportunities
- 10.3 Community benefits will be applied proportionately and monitored through contract management. As a general principle, community benefits will be expected for regulated procurements (above £50,000), with more structured requirements for higher value or capital projects.

- 10.4 In addition, Sport Aberdeen's approach to procurement and service delivery inherently supports local economic and community outcomes through engagement with small businesses, local suppliers and self-employed individuals, particularly in the delivery of coaching and physical activity services. This contributes to local employment, skills development and inclusive economic growth.
- 10.5 Specific expectations and guidance on community benefits will be set out in supporting procedures and procurement documentation.

11 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 11.1 Procurement will support inclusive economic growth.
- 11.2 Sport Aberdeen will:
- promote access for SMEs, third sector organisations and smaller or individual providers, including sole traders where appropriate
 - ensure procurement processes are fair and accessible
 - consider equality impacts where appropriate

12 Digital, Data and Cyber Considerations

- 12.1 Where procurement involves digital systems or data, Sport Aberdeen will ensure:
- data protection requirements are met
 - suppliers meet appropriate cyber security standards
 - risks are identified and managed effectively

13 Contract and Supplier Management

- 13.1 Effective contract management is critical to delivering value.
- 13.2 Sport Aberdeen will:
- apply a risk-based approach to contract management
 - set clear performance expectations
 - monitor delivery against agreed outcomes
 - maintain effective supplier relationships
- 13.3 Procurement decisions will be based on a proportionate assessment of price, quality and fitness for purpose, with the level of evaluation reflecting the scale and risk of the procurement.
- 13.4 Any contract extensions or variations will only be made where permitted and appropriately approved.

14 Collaboration and Use of Framework Agreements

- 14.1 Sport Aberdeen will use collaborative procurement arrangements where they provide value and efficiency.
- 14.2 This may include:
- Scotland Excel frameworks
 - Crown Commercial Service frameworks
 - NHS and other public sector frameworks
 - Aberdeen City Council frameworks

15 Risk Management and Compliance

- 15.1 Procurement risks will be actively managed.
- 15.2 This includes:
- financial, legal and reputational risks, including risks associated with higher-value contracts, reliance on key suppliers and critical operational services
 - conflicts of interest
 - fraud prevention and detection
- 15.3 All procurement activity must be appropriately documented to provide a clear audit trail, including:
- procurement route selection
 - evidence of competition
 - evaluation decisions
 - approvals and governance
 - contract management records

16 Transparency and Reporting

- 16.1 Sport Aberdeen is committed to transparency in procurement activity.
- 16.2 The organisation will:
- maintain an up-to-date contract register
 - publish contract award information where required
 - make appropriate procurement information available
- 16.3 Where applicable, Sport Aberdeen will produce and publish an annual procurement report in line with legislative requirements.

17 Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- 17.1 Procurement performance will be monitored through:
- annual procurement reporting
 - internal reporting to corporate governance committee
 - monitoring of supplier performance and delivery outcomes

18 Implementation and Continuous Improvement

- 18.1 This strategy will be supported by:
- Financial Procedures
 - procurement guidance
 - standard templates and practical tools to support consistent and proportionate application of procurement processes
 - staff training and awareness
 - ongoing monitoring and audit activity
- 18.2 Procurement practice will be continuously improved based on:
- audit findings
 - feedback from staff and suppliers
 - changes in legislation and policy

19 Review and Ownership

- 19.1 This strategy is owned by the Chief Executive, with operational responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review resting with the finance team.
- 19.2 It will:
- be reviewed every three years
 - be updated as required
 - be approved by the corporate governance committee or board of directors

20 Related Documents

- 20.1 This strategy should be read alongside:
- Financial Regulations
 - Financial Procedures
 - Scheme of Delegated Authority
 - Contract Register
 - Rolling procurement pipeline or procurement work plan
 - Relevant budget, business planning and governance documentation
- 20.2 These documents set out the detailed operational, financial and governance arrangements that underpin this strategy.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
ALEO (Arms-Length External Organisation)	An organisation that operates independently but works closely with a local authority (e.g. Aberdeen City Council).
Audit Trail	A clear and complete record showing how a procurement decision was made.
Community Benefits	Positive impacts resulting from procurement activity, such as local employment, skills development or support for local businesses.
Conflict of Interest	A situation where personal interests could influence, or be seen to influence, a procurement decision.
Contract	A formal agreement between Sport Aberdeen and a supplier outlining what will be provided, on what terms, and at what cost.
Direct Award	Awarding a contract to a supplier without competition, where this is permitted and properly justified.
DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System)	A procurement route where suppliers can apply to join an approved list at any time.
Fair Work First	A Scottish Government policy that encourages fair pay, good working conditions and inclusive employment practices.
Framework Agreement	A pre-approved arrangement set up by a public body (e.g. Scotland Excel) that allows organisations to purchase goods or services without running a full tender.
ICT (Information and Communication Technology)	Technology systems, software and services used to manage and support digital operations.
Mini Competition	A structured process where multiple suppliers are invited to submit proposals against the same specification and are assessed on price and quality.
PCS (Public Contracts Scotland)	The national online portal used by public bodies in Scotland to advertise contracts and procurement opportunities.
Procurement	The process of purchasing goods, services or works from external suppliers.
Quotation (Quote)	A price or proposal provided by a supplier in response to a request for goods or services.
Regulated Procurement	Procurement that must follow formal legal requirements due to the value of the contract (generally £50,000 or more for goods and services).
Service Delivery Contract	A contract for delivering services directly to customers or communities (e.g. coaching or programme delivery).
SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprise)	A small or medium-sized business, typically defined by employee numbers or turnover.
Sole Trader / Self-employed Provider	An individual operating as a business who provides services (such as sports coaches or instructors).
Specification	A clear description of what is required, including scope, quality, outcomes and timescales.
Supplier	An organisation, business or individual that provides goods or services to Sport Aberdeen.
Sustainable Procurement	Considering environmental and social impacts, alongside cost and quality, when making procurement decisions.
Value for Money	Achieving the best balance between cost, quality and effectiveness over the full life of a purchase.
Whole-life Cost	The total cost of a purchase over its lifetime, including purchase, operation and maintenance.



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and changing lives through sport and
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