




Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

Corporate Procurement Plan 2023 - 2025

 <p>Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council</p>	LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL		
	Corporate Procurement Plan 2023-2025	Ref. No.:	P/POL-005
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P/POL-005	New Corporate Procurement Plan for years 2023-2025	Procurement Officer	Finance	00	02 nd Aug 2023
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This document has been compiled by Louth County Council outlining the Corporate Procurement Plan at the Council. The official controlled version of this manual is held within the network server/ intranet and is visible to all users. All printed copies and all electronic versions, except the ones described above, are considered uncontrolled copies.

This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis at a minimum. It will be updated more frequently in the event of changes in the process, gaps identified either through auditing or general use and in the event of policy and/or legislative updates. Updates to revision number 01 do not require MTM approval as the EU limits are obligatory and set at European level. Update to revision 02 do not require MT approval as it involves the inclusion of a section that was omitted in error.

Approved by Management Team at MTM on 11th July 2023

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1.0 Background

Louth County Council is the local authority for Co. Louth. The county is divided into the three municipal districts of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee and is made up of five electoral areas: Dundalk-Carlingford, Dundalk South, Drogheda Rural, Drogheda Urban and Ardee.

Louth County Council delivers a range of social and economic services to the residents and businesses in the county. Louth County Council is considered to be a medium-sized local authority serving a population of 128,884 and employing 750 staff. (Corporate Plan 2019-2024, 2021)

Louth County Council's Corporate Procurement Plan is a three-year strategy from 2023 to 2025 and is an integral part of business-planning for Louth County Council. The Corporate Procurement Plan assists in benchmarking current procurement policies and practices and assists in identifying future procurement needs.

The importance of public procurement can readily be seen during the COVID crisis where the needs of frontline workers were met and the provision of critical services were maintained, despite the challenges presented.

2.0 Introduction

The mission statement of Louth County Council is to 'provide leadership and to deliver high-quality, citizen-focused, responsive and effective services'. The Corporate Procurement Plan focuses on conducting the procurement function in an open and transparent manner ensuring that the best possible value for public funds is obtained and that decisions are fair and impartial - whilst ensuring the delivery of high-quality citizen-focused, responsive and effective services.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has overall responsibility for procurement policy and procedures for the entire public sector. Louth County Council in turn is responsible for ensuring that public procurement activities are discharged in line with procurement rules and procedures. The OGP supports contracting authorities in this regard.

3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Corporate Procurement Plan is to set out Louth County Council's strategic approach to procurement, identifying procurement priorities. Public procurement is governed by EU legislation and national rules and guidelines. The aim of these rules is to promote an open, competitive and non-discriminatory regime which delivers best value for money.

S.I. No. 284 of 2016 European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) defines procurement as:

“the acquisition by means of a public contract of works, supplies or services by one or more contracting authorities from economic operators chosen by those contracting authorities, whether or not the works, supplies or services are intended for a public purpose”

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Openness and transparency are central to ensuring that procurement transactions and decisions are fair, equitable and achieve value for money. Similarly, good governance results in more efficient use of resources and promotes better informed decision-making. Contracting authorities have a responsibility to implement good corporate governance, of which a Corporate Procurement Plan is an important component.


Procurement requirements at Louth County Council will evolve to meet needs as they arise and can already be demonstrated through the maintenance of services during the COVID pandemic. The foreseeable future in terms of procurement will be in the areas of climate change encapsulating social, innovative, and sustainable considerations into the procurement process.

This Corporate Procurement Plan aims to:

- Plan future procurement needs and identify procurement priorities
- Outline procurement objectives and how these will be achieved
- Examine past and future spend on goods and services
- Identify and address risk
- Document existing procurement practices
- Provide basis for review and continuous improvement
- Affirm adherence to EU and national procurement legislation, circulars and guidelines
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the procurement of goods and services in the organisation's procurement function
- Support good corporate governance
- Strengthen the link between procurement and overall objectives
- Measure progress
- Enable better informed decision-making
- Improve procurement practices
- Identify future procurement needs
- Understand supply chain and risk
- Create greater openness and transparency

4.0 Scope

The scope of this Corporate Procurement Plan covers a three-year period from 2023 to 2025 for County Louth, setting out the procurement objectives in accordance with best practise and relevant legislation.

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5.0 Objectives

The key objectives of this Corporate Procurement Plan will be realised over the lifetime of the plan and inform the implementation plan later in this manual. Objectives include:

- Achieving greater value for money
- Ensuring compliance with procurement directives, legislation, circulars and other legal requirements
- Supporting service delivery and fulfilling strategic objectives
- Embedding transparency and accountability in procurement practices
- Reaffirming adherence to procurement policies and procedures
- Supporting the ongoing development of the organisation's procurement function
- Facilitating economic, social or environmental objectives through procurement

6.0 Public Procurement Foundations


6.1 The Treaty of Rome and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)

The "Treaty of Rome" is considered to be the source of the principles established by the EU Directives in the field of public procurement in the EU. It was signed on March 25, 1957 by representatives of France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy (the six founding states of the European Coal and Steel Community), thus establishing two communities: the "European Atomic Energy Community" and the "European Economic Community". The Treaty, known as the "Treaty of Rome", entered into force on 01st January 1958, following the ratification of Contracting Parties "for an unlimited period" and comprises norms with constitutional value.

According to the provisions of Article 2 of the Treaty, the aim is to promote a harmonious development of the economic activities, an accelerated growth of living standards, and economic cohesion between the member states. The means of achieving these goals were the establishment of a free common market in commercial matters and the correlation of national laws. The concept of a common market highlights "a space without internal borders" whose implementation implies both the foundation of a common commercial policy and the creation of a single system that eliminates the trade barriers between states.

Over the years, the Treaty has undergone many changes through subsequent treaties including, "The Single European Act", "The Treaty of Maastricht", "The Treaty of Amsterdam", "The Treaty of Nice" and "The Treaty of Lisbon".

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) is one of the two main Treaties that form the basis of EU law. On 01st December 2009, the *Lisbon Treaty* was significantly revised and renamed the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* (TFEU) and the *Treaty on European Union* (TEU) - the other principal EU Treaty.

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Aim of the Treaty

The aim of the Treaty was to 'lay the foundations of an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe'.


These treaties have established a number of fundamental principles (Treaty Principles) or freedoms that underpin the EU and the functioning of the single market - the most relevant in terms of public procurement are:

- a) The Free Movement of Goods - this is an important pillar for shaping the single market. Measures include aiming to prohibit import and export tariff barriers for member states, in order to strengthen the customs union and measures to regulate the elimination of quantitative restrictions on interstate commerce.
- b) Free Movement of Persons - according to Article 39 of the Treaty of the European Economic Community, the free movement of persons implies *"the elimination of any discrimination on grounds of nationality between the workers of the Member States, as regards employment, remuneration and other working conditions"*.
- c) Free Movement of Services - in applying this principle, *"restrictions on the freedom to provide services within the Community with regard to nationals of Member states established in a State other than the beneficiary of services" are prohibited*. The services concerned include artisan activities, provided by the liberal professions and those of industrial and commercial character.
- d) Free Movement of Capital - the free movement of capital is provided for as follows: *"any restrictions on the movement of capital between Member States as well as between Member States and third countries are prohibited"*. (Bălcescu, 2020)

General Principles of Law

In addition to these freedoms, some general principles of law have emerged from the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). These general principles of law are important because they will often be used by the CJEU to fill in gaps in the legislation and to provide solutions to situations that are often very complex. The most important of these general principles of law in the procurement context are as follows:

1. **Transparency:** The principle of Transparency requires openness and transparency about the procurement process, publishing clear and precise information. Information regarding forthcoming contracts and the rules to be applied should be readily available to all interested candidates and candidates should be informed of the rules that will be applied in assessing and evaluating their applications.
2. **Equal Treatment:** The principle of Equal Treatment requires that all suppliers be treated equally and with the utmost fairness at every stage of a procurement process. This means that for example the selection of candidates to tender, the receipt of tenders and the treatment of tenders must be carried out in a scrupulously fair manner. The maintenance of equality between economic operators is paramount.

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3. **Non-Discrimination:** In simple terms, the principle of Non-Discrimination means recognising all nationalities. All economic operators of EU nationality and all bids, including goods of EU origin, must be treated equally (this is the principle of non-discrimination). This concept of non-discrimination implies that any condition of eligibility or origin (based on nationality or local provenance) will automatically give rise to unequal treatment, since those conditions will, by definition, discriminate against a certain group of (foreign) economic operators or favour another group. It is worth noting that while discrimination in a given context will produce unequal treatment, unequal treatment does not always give rise to discrimination.
4. **Proportionality:** The principle of proportionality requires that the demands placed upon suppliers should be both relevant and directly related to the contract being awarded.
5. **Mutual Recognition:** The principle of mutual recognition requires that the standards, specifications, and qualifications in use throughout the EU should receive equal recognition, on condition that the products or services are suitable for their intended purpose. For example:
 - i. The acceptance of products, services and works that are legally offered on the EU market
 - ii. The acceptance of diplomas, certificates and documents issued by the competent authorities at national or international level
 - iii. The acceptance of technical specifications in accordance with national and international standards

Some of the above principles are articulated differently or combined in national legislation - for example, principles stated in legislation, such as “economy and efficiency”, “value for money”, and “probity” or “integrity”. (OECD, 2016)


These general principles of law apply to all procurement activities by public bodies regardless of value.

6.2 EU Directives

To underpin the Treaty Principles in the field of public procurement and to provide the necessary guidance to Member States, the EU has adopted a series of procurement Directives as follows:

- Public Sector Directive 2014/24/EU replacing Directive 2004/18/EC
- Utilities Directive 2014/25/EU replacing 2004/17/EC
- Concessions Directive 2014/23/EU4, which creates a new regulated regime for the award of works and services concession contracts
- The Remedies Directive 2007/66/EC with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of public contracts

These EU Directives are transposed into national legislation by way of the following statutory instruments (SI):

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- S.I. No. 284/2016 European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) – “2016 Regulations”
- S.I. No. 286/2016 European Union (Award of Contracts by Utility Undertakings) Regulations 2016 - the “2016 Utilities Regulations”
- S.I. No. 203/2017 European Union (Award of Concession Contracts) Regulations 2017 - the “2017 Concessions Regulations”
- S.I. No. 130/2010 - European Communities (Public Authorities' Contracts) (Review Procedures) Regulations 2010

Public Procurement is governed by European Law and national rules and guidelines. The aim of these rules is to promote an open, competitive and non-discriminatory regime which delivers best value for money. The rules govern the way public authorities purchase goods, works and services.

The National Public Procurement Policy Framework (NPPPF) sets out the overarching policy framework for public procurement in Ireland and comprises five strands.

1. Legislation (Directives, Regulations)
2. Government Policy (Circulars etc.)
3. Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) for Public Works
4. General Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services
5. More detailed technical guidelines, template documentation and information notes as issued periodically by the Policy Unit of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP)

The framework sets out the procurement procedures to be followed by Government Departments and State Bodies under national and EU rules. The framework supports contracting authorities, including the Office of Government Procurement, the four key sectors (Health, Education, Local Government and Defence), individual Departments, offices, commercial and non-commercial state bodies, and private entities which are subsidised 50% or more by a public body, when awarding contracts for works, goods and services. It supports and enables public bodies to adopt procedures to meet their public procurement requirements and facilitates compliance with EU and national procurement rules. (OGP, 2020)

At an EU level, the procurement directives establish clear rules with which contracting authorities in all member states must comply when awarding public contracts and there are remedies available to tenderers where contracting authorities do not comply. The rules and procedures set out in the directives typically apply to contracts above certain specified monetary thresholds. However, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) applies to all procurement activity by public bodies regardless of value. (DPER, 2019)

The general principles (transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, proportionality and mutual recognition) apply independently of the directives so that, even if the directives do not apply, the principles may still apply to the procurement and award of contracts by contracting entities. (POPA, 2020) .

Louth County Councils Corporate Procurement Plan and subsequent policies and procedures are governed by the relevant treaties, EU and national procurement legislation, circulars and guidelines.

All staff engaged in procurement in Louth County Council are required to comply with and adhere to all relevant treaties, legislation, rules and guidelines pertaining to public procurement.

The diagram below summarises and provides an overview of the foundations of public procurement.

Figure 1 Overview of the Foundations of Public Procurement




7.0 The Procurement Role at Louth County Council

Louth County Council is committed to the procurement of supplies, services and works in the most efficient and effective manner to achieve value for money whilst delivering high-quality, citizen-focused, responsive and effective services to the people of County Louth. Compliance with government guidelines and applicable EU procurement legislation is at the forefront of what is done to meet this end.

The primary procurement objectives of Louth County Council as an organisation are:

- To ensure compliance with all relevant European and national legislation, government regulations, and local and national public procurement guidelines
- To ensure that the council operates in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner in all its purchasing transactions
- To ensure that optimum quality, service and Value for Money (VFM) are achieved across all purchasing expenditure
- To ensure that the councils' documents and procedures are robust, taking into account best practise and national guidelines on procurement
- To promote a competitive tendering environment
- To promote and use centralised procurement for certain categories of expenditure
- To circulate updates and information on procurement to staff
- To provide advice, guidance and training to procurement officers within the organisation
- To minimise risk
- To facilitate economic, social and environmental objectives through procurement
- To support service, delivery and fulfil strategic objectives in the organisation's corporate plan

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8.0 Structure

The procurement function in Louth County Council falls under the Head of Finance, Support and Water Services Directorate. A dedicated Procurement Officer is appointed at Louth County Council who sits within the Accounts Payable Section of the Finance Department and reports directly to the Financial / Management Accountant.

The procurement officer's role is mainly strategic in nature, delivering procurement advice, support and guidance to management and staff, as well as promoting procurement requirements throughout the organisation through open communication channels.


The role of the Procurement Officer at Louth County Council includes:

- Promoting, guiding and supporting those involved in procurement exercises
- Developing procurement policy and procedures
- Circulating updates and developments to staff in relation to procurement
- Providing template documents including Contracts Register
- Managing Procurement Steering Committee comprising senior representatives from each department within Louth County Council
- Promoting best practice in the procurement process across the organisation and coordinating changes through the Procurement Steering Committee
- Preparing and distributing annual reporting requirements
- Managing the PSC (Public Spending Code) audit and preparing the PSC Report for NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission)
- Maintaining document repository in relation to procurement documentation and information
- Compiling Spend Data information
- Supporting the ongoing development of the organisation's procurement function

The reporting structure can be seen below.

Figure 2 Procurement Reporting Structure



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Procurement in Louth County Council is a devolved function, where procurement is managed by the relevant budget holder in each section. Some sections hold a dedicated procurement function within their remit whereas other sections will appoint a project / procurement manager to carry out the procurement function, as the need arises.

Individual sections are responsible for ensuring their sourcing requirements are met while adhering to all relevant treaties, legislation, rules and guidelines pertaining to public procurement as well as complying with this plan and the Procurement Policies and Procedures manual.

Procurement Steering Committee

A Procurement Steering Committee is in place comprising the procurement officer, senior executive officers and analogous and grade seven staff who manage and conduct procurement processes throughout the organisation. Other staff members may be invited to join the group from time-to-time.

The Committee has historically been chaired by the Financial / Management Accountant but more recently has been chaired by the Social Development Director of Service. This role is due to rotate between the Directors with each chairing for an approximate one-year period.

The Procurement Steering Committee meets circa every two months and acts as a forum for discussion on procurement matters to enhance procurement at Louth County Council. Discussions focus on procedural changes/updates, emerging information, and topical subjects.


The key functions of the Procurement Steering Committee include:

- Raising Awareness
- Establishing Standards
- Training and Guidance
- Legislative and Policy Compliance
- Instilling Strategic Procurement Practices
- Communicating to Respective Teams

Budget Holder

The budget holder in Louth County Council is a member of staff who has been assigned a budget allocation. The limit is based on the grade and outlined in the Procurement Policies and Procedures Manual. The budget holder is responsible for managing any procurement projects approved for their sector under their specific remit. The role of the budget holder includes the following key activities:

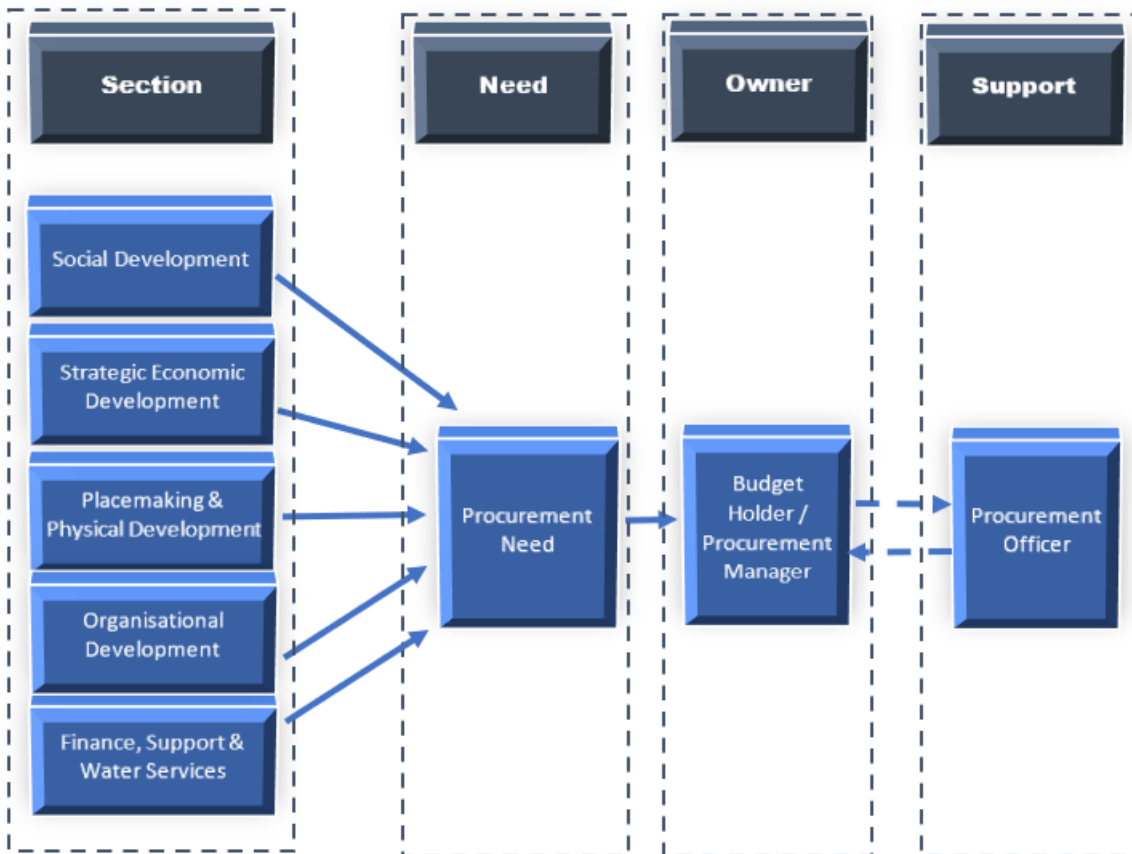
- Plan and define / specify requirements
- Check whether contracts already exist to meet requirements
- Check whether central arrangements are already in place to meet requirements and utilise, where relevant
- Ensure the requirement receives the appropriate authorisation / approval depending on the estimated value of the purchase
- Liaise with the procurement officer, where necessary
- Comply with legislation (directives/S.is), national procurement guidelines, internal policies and procedures, circulars as appropriate
- Ensure that an adequate amount of time is given to the process of quotation and tendering based on the complexity of the contract to allow suppliers adequate time to prepare tenders

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- Ensure the accuracy of contracts prior to signing
- Ensure that all purchase orders are raised before an invoice is received
- Prior to any contract extension being incurred, ensure that it is not in contravention to the signed contract with the supplier or the procurement regulations
- Save all files in an organised manner for future retrieval

The image below identifies the individual departments in Louth County Council with a central link to the procurement officer who has the function of supporting the relevant departments regarding procurement matters and to provide general oversight.

Figure 3 Procurement and Departmental Relationship in Louth County Council



The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility to ensure procurement compliance. The Chief Executive delegates budgetary and procurement responsibility to the Directors of Services who ensure that budget holders take responsibility for the compliant procurement of all goods, services and works that they are authorised to procure.

The diagram below provides an overview of the sections and their responsibilities at Louth County Council.


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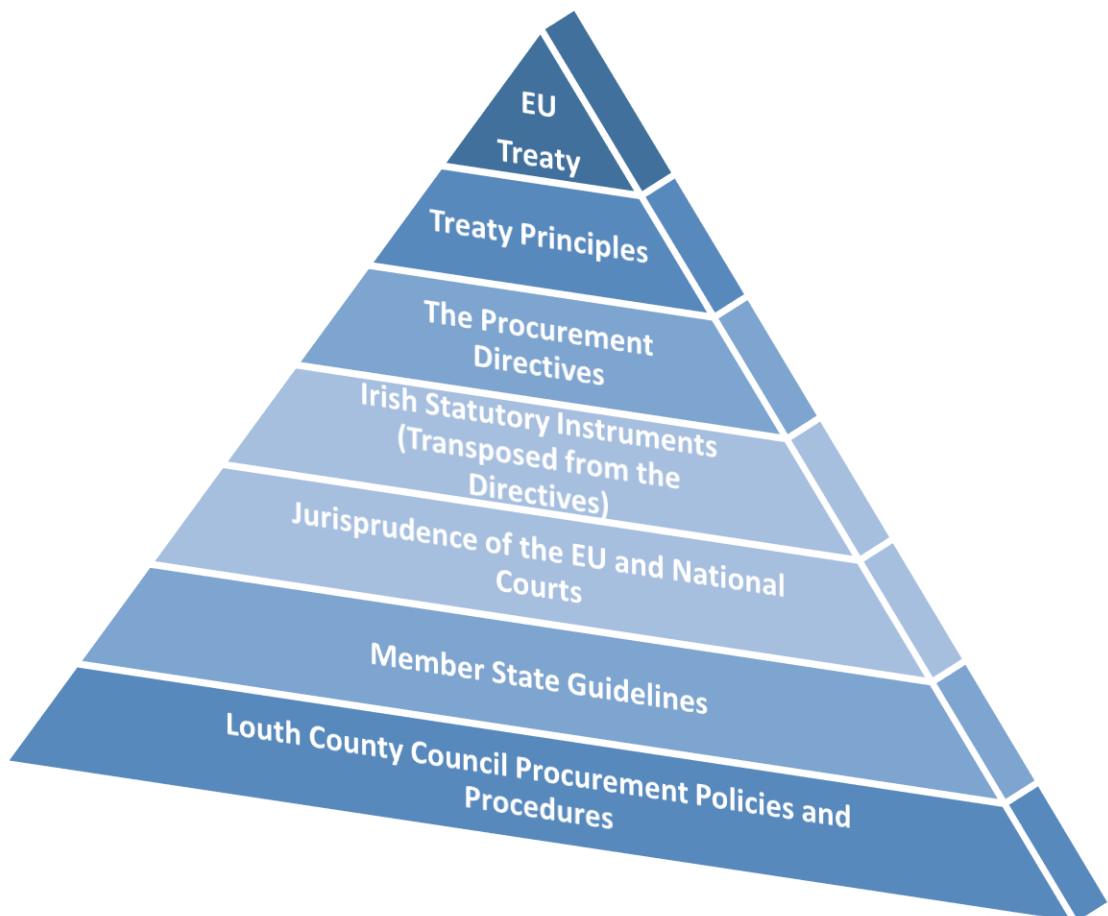
Figure 4 Sections and Responsibilities




9.0 Capacity and Governance at Louth County Council

The foundation of public procurement is discussed in detailed earlier in this plan. The diagram below outlines overall public procurement governance.

Figure 5 Public Procurement Governance



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10.0 Procurement Governance

The main stakeholders of procurement policy nationwide work to enable consistency and standardisation of approach, delivering value for money with advice and centralised arrangements.

Office of Government Procurement

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) was established in 2013 and commenced sourcing operations in 2014 and, together with Health, Defence, Education and Local Government has responsibility for sourcing goods and services on behalf of the public service. In addition, the OGP also has responsibility for procurement policy and procedures for the entire public sector. Through the central purchasing model, the public service speaks with 'one voice' to the market for each category of expenditure, eliminating duplication and taking advantage of the scale of public procurement to best effect.

The OGP manage and deliver supplier Framework Agreements (FWA), Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) and contracts for 8 categories of commonly procured goods and services:

- Professional Services
- Facilities Management
- Utilities
- ICT and Office Equipment
- Marketing, Print and Stationery
- Travel and HR Services
- Fleet and Plant
- Managed Services

Government policy is that public bodies, where possible, should make use of all such central arrangements. Where public bodies do not utilise central procurement frameworks, they should be in a position to provide a Value for Money (VFM) justification.


The OGP also work closely with the business community to promote procurement opportunities for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs). The OGP provides procurement news, guidance, legislation, and circulars under the national Public Procurement Policy Framework and operates as an office of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER).

Supplygov / Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC)

The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC), is a national shared service with responsibility for managing, developing and promoting procurement best practice under the Local Government sector-led categories of:

- Plant Hire
- Minor Building Works & Civils

It acts as a central purchasing body under the auspices of Kerry County Council, co-ordinating the establishment of national Framework Agreements and Dynamic Purchasing Systems for the procurement of works, goods and services under these categories to meet the needs of the local government and other public sector bodies. The LGOPC maintains a dedicated public procurement portal at www.Supplygov.ie (formerly LAQuotes.ie) that provides an electronic platform for Contracting Authorities to operate and manage the procurement of works, goods and services from suitably qualified suppliers in a compliant and effective manner.

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Capital Works Management Framework

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is also responsible for implementing national policy on public procurement, particularly in relation to construction procurement, which is captured under the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF). The Capital Works Management Framework is an integrated set of contractual provisions, guidance material and technical procedures which covers all aspects of the delivery process of a public works project from inception to final project delivery and review.

The structure of this strategic framework is closely aligned with and compliments the Public Spending Code developed by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform.

The Capital Works Management Framework is for use by contracting authorities involved in the expenditure of public funds on construction projects and related consultancy services. The use of the framework should result in a more cost-effective delivery of public works projects because of the more systematic and detailed approach to, among other things, planning (both preparatory and detailed), capital budgeting as well as design and construction cost control.

The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) is a structure that has been developed to deliver the Government's objectives in relation to public sector construction procurement reform. It consists of a suite of best practice guidance, standard contracts and generic template documents that form the four pillars that support the Framework, namely:

- Pillar 1 – Public Works Contracts
- Pillar 2 – Standard Conditions of Engagement
- Pillar 3 – Cost Planning and Control / Suitability Assessment
- Pillar 4 – Guidance Notes and Glossary

Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is a state agency that provides a range of services and supports to the local government sector. The LGMA is an agency of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, primarily funded by local authorities. The LGMA support the coordinated and effective delivery of local government services and policy. The work is guided by the local authorities and geared towards helping them to improve efficiency across their services; to implement change; and to make use of leading practice from inside and outside the sector.

The Local Government Strategic Procurement Centre (LGSPC) is based in the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). As the strategic centre for the local government procurement programme, the LGSPC is responsible for supporting the implementation of the Government's procurement programme in the local government sector.

The Public Spending Code (PSC)

The Public Spending Code (PSC) is a set of rules, procedures and guidance to ensure value for money in public expenditure across the Public Service. It imposes obligations on all stages of the project lifecycle on organisations that spend public money. The PSC rules apply to both revenue and capital expenditure and apply to a project, programme or contract which has an expenditure exceeding €500,000. The PSC is applicable to anyone delivering capital or revenue projects and programmes funded by public monies.


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Source	Platform	Website
OGP	Office of Government Procurement	www.ogp.gov.ie
SupplyGov	SupplyGov Procurement Platform	https://supplygov.ie/
CWMF	Capital Works Management Framework	https://constructionprocurement.gov.ie/
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency	www.lgma.ie
PSC	Public Spending Code	www.gov.ie/en/publication/public-spending-code

Emerging legislation and guidance from central government will continue to shape the approach to procurement at Louth County Council.

11.0 Systems

The provision and use of suitable systems allows for a standardised and compliant approach to procurement. There are several systems in place and utilised by Louth County Council to aid the procurement process as follows.

- Use of Standard Documents – The OGP has developed a standard suite of tender and contract documents which can be edited as appropriate to allow for tender-specific information to be incorporated. Specific documents and guidelines are available for above threshold values for goods/supplies and services on the OGP website. Specific documents and guidelines are available for above threshold values for works and works-related services on the CWMF website and on Supplygov. Standard documents are also available for below threshold procurements from the LGMA
- Electronic Tendering Platform – eTenders is the Irish Government’s electronic tendering platform administered by the OGP. The platform is a central facility for all public sector contracting authorities to advertise procurement opportunities and award notices (OJEU & non-OJEU). Suppliers need to register on eTenders to be made aware of procurement opportunities by contracting authorities. The platform contains the facility for attaching documentation and receiving tenders confidentially and securely via the Tender Post-box. The platform is due to change from eTenders to European Dynamics in 2023. The new platform will be similar to the current platform in many ways but will also include new and improved functionality. Additional information is provided on the electronic tendering platform in Table 2 below
- Centralised and Collaborative Procurement Arrangements – the activation of all collaborative arrangements established by the OGP/SupplyGov (centralised contracts/frameworks) or other public bodies which Louth County Council is eligible to use should be reviewed and assessed prior to embarking on a procurement procedure. Where staff fail to utilise, they should be in a position to provide a justification for not doing so incorporating a value for money justification also
- Use of Financial Management Systems – Louth County Council uses the Agresso Financial Management System. In early 2022, the Council upgraded the system from ‘Milestone 4’ to Agresso ‘Milestone 7’ to derive benefits in terms of improved capabilities, updates, technical improvements, and workflows.
- Controlled Document System / Procurement Portal - the official controlled versions of documents to be used in procurement exercises are held within the network server/ intranet, which is visible to all users. All printed copies and all electronic versions, except the ones

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described above, are considered uncontrolled copies. Documents can be circulated internally via a link rather than attaching documents to emails. This central repository for documents will be expanded upon in time so that the most current documents are readily available for use. Standard documents and templates from CWMF will continue to be sourced from the relevant website and will not be replicated in the intranet at Louth County Council. The procurement portal will be continuously developed and improved upon to make the information readily accessible to all users in a user-friendly manner. For this reason, it is likely that headings and content will change over time

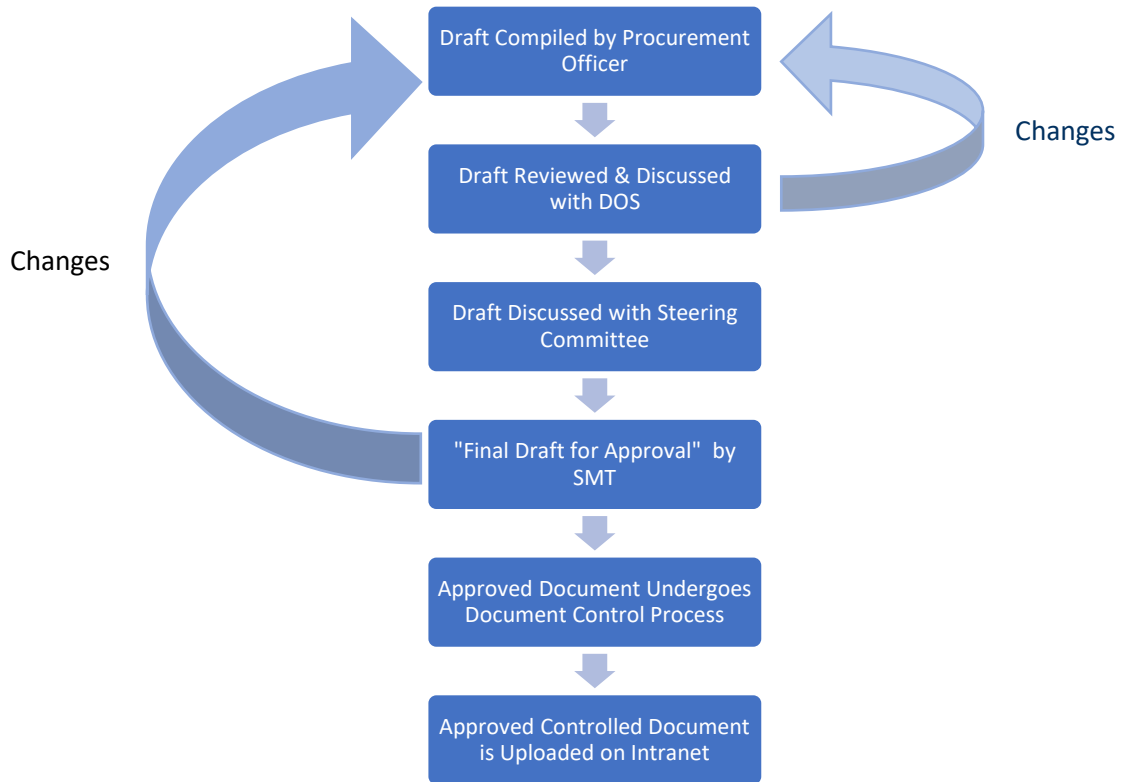
- Contracts Register Database – a centralised contracts register is in place for which sections are responsible for registering all contracts with a value greater than €25k, including RFQs. This requirement applies to goods/supplies, services, works and works-related contracts
- Green Public Procurement Tools – GPP tools and calculators are becoming more widely available from the OGP, and other bodies focused in this area. A current link to these tools is available on the intranet entitled “GPP Tools and Standards”. This will be regularly reviewed and updated, and emerging tools and standards will be brought to the fore at the Procurement Steering Committee
- eForms - eForms are electronic documents designed to capture, validate, and submit data. In public procurement, eForms refer to the digital procurement notices already in use by public buyers. These include Prior or Periodic Information Notices, Contract Notices, Contract Award Notices, Contract Modification Notices and Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notices. eForms Implementing Regulation 2019/1780 came into effect on 23 September 2019. Because of this, Ireland must transition from using the existing notices to using the new eForms. These must be used in all above threshold competitions subject to national Regulations and the Classical, Utilities, Concessions and Defence Directives. The Implementing Regulation sets out the timeline for eForm implementation. Procurement notices currently in use will be available until 24 October 2023. New eForms will come into effect on 25 October 2023.

Table 2: System Platform Contact Information

Source	Platform	Website	Support
eTenders	‘Old’ Electronic Tendering Platform	https://irl.eu-supply.com/login.asp	etenders@eu-supply.com
eTenders (European Dynamics)	‘New’ Electronic Tendering Platform	etenders.gov.ie	irish-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com

Louth County Council have internal Procurement Policies and Procedures capturing legislative requirements as well as the internal requirements. Addendums have been introduced, where necessary, to capture new and emerging procurement requirements and information. These addendums will be added to the Procurement Policies and Procedures manual in due course. All procurement documents go through a formal process before being approved for use. The process is described below.


Figure 6 Overview of Document Control Process – Procurement-Specific



New procurement documents and/or updates to current documents are carried out in a controlled manner at Louth County Council. New procurement documents and/or updates are implemented in response to gaps in the system or in response to new requirements. A draft document is initially compiled by the procurement officer and reviewed with the Director of Service. Amendments may be made at this point and then the draft is discussed at the Procurement Steering Meeting. Where input is required from the Procurement Steering Meeting, the draft document is circulated to the committee in draft format. Following review, the draft document is upgraded to “Final Draft for Approval” and issued to the Senior Management Team for approval. If changes are required at this point, the document is returned to the procurement officer for updating. Following this, the document undergoes the document control process whereby it is issued with a unique reference number, the date of issue and a revision number. This process is controlled by the procurement officer, who logs the information by means of a “Document Control Register”.

In the event of a document being no longer required, it will be made obsolete. This process involves changing it from a status of “New” or “Update” to “Obsolete” on the “Document Control Register” and saving it to the “Obsolete” folder on the drive. The obsolete version is also deleted from the Procurement Portal so that it is no longer available for use.

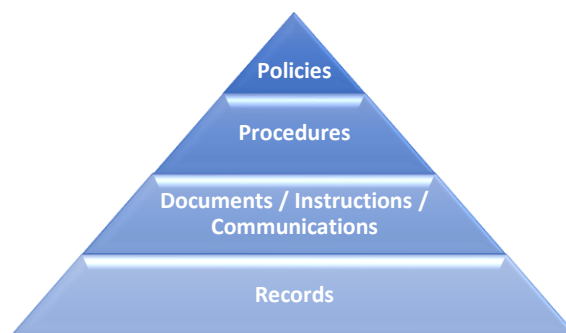
All controlled documents are uploaded on the Procurement Portal which is held within the network server/ intranet and is visible to all users. All printed copies and all electronic versions are considered uncontrolled copies. Controlled documents are only issued via link after uploading documents on the intranet.

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Procurement policies and procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis at a minimum. Reviews will be conducted more frequently in the event of changes in the procurement process, gaps identified either through auditing or general use and in the event of updates from the LGMA or other government bodies.

An overview of the internal hierarchy of documents can be seen below.

Figure 7 Hierarchy of Documents at Louth County Council



This area is evolving at Louth County Council and so may be subject to change, but the overall system will remain as is and the “Document Control Register” will contain the live situation in operation.


12.0 Processes

Procurement transactions and decisions must in all respects be fair, equitable and ensure value for money (VFM). Contracting authorities must be able to justify decisions made and the actions taken. Procurement practices are subject to audit and scrutiny under the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993, and the Local Government Reform Act 2014, and Accounting Officers are publicly accountable for expenditure incurred. Contracting authorities are responsible for establishing arrangements for ensuring the proper conduct of their affairs, including conformance to standards of good governance and accountability with regard to procurement.

When conducting a procurement procedure, the responsibility for compliance with EU Directives, national Legislation/Guidelines/Circulars and Louth County Council Policies and Procedures, rests with the employees who are conducting the procurement process.

A procurement manager / project manager is appointed by the relevant section to coordinate all aspects of the procurement process for the project. Overall responsibility for the project, including procurement aspects of the project will remain with the budget holder.

All staff undertaking procurement activities are required to ensure that their activities are conducted in a manner that is compliant with public procurement obligations and the procedures and practices set out in the Louth County Councils Procurement Policy, Rules and Procedures Manual, relevant directives, legislation circulars and other legal and guidance documents.

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Compliance verification at Louth County Council will be managed through annual auditing of procurement procedures and reporting on findings to the Chief Executive.

Prior to embarking on a procurement procedure, staff should establish if an opportunity exists to utilise a central procurement framework from the OGP or LGOPC (SupplyGov). If a central purchasing framework does not exist, staff should proceed to conduct the procurement process in accordance with Louth County Councils' Procurement Policies, Rules and Procedures Manual.

Where staff fail to utilise existing national frameworks then they should be in a position to provide a value for money justification.

Where Central Frameworks or other collaborative tendering opportunities are not utilised, Louth County Council must advertise all other tender competitions on the eTenders website, when seeking Goods, Services or Works-Related Services contracts exceeding €50,000, and/or Works contracts exceeding €200,000 (all ex-VAT).

Different criteria need to be followed depending on the procurement type i.e. whether procuring goods/supplies, services, works or works-related items.

All procurement processes above the EU threshold must comply with EU Directives / Statutory Instruments in place. The principles apply to all procurement activities irrespective of value.

The tables below provides an overview of this process.

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Table 3: Overview of Procurement Processes

GOODS/SUPPLIES & SERVICES (01st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2025)			
Level	Thresholds (Exclusive of VAT)	Contract Type	Process Summary
Local	Less Than €5,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	<p>Seek verbal or written quotes (RFQ*) from one or more interested & competent suppliers (best practice is to seek a min. of 3 written quotes) [National Guidelines & Cir 05/2023]</p> <p>Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) of having sought these and of responses.</p> <p>Requisition request and budget holder authorisation is required⁵.</p>
	€5,000 to <€50,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	<p>Direct invitation. Seek a minimum of 3 written quotes/tenders based on appropriate specification from interested & competent suppliers, where no suitable central framework in place.</p> <p>Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic).</p> <p>May advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics.</p> <p>Should advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics if near the upper limit.</p> <p>Simplified Procedure (formerly Quick Quotes) facility on eTenders is recommended for contracts between €5,000 and €50,000 (ex. VAT).</p> <p>Requisition request and budget holder authorisation is required⁵.</p> <p>Publish contract award information for all procurements over €25K⁴</p>
National	Between €50,000 & €221,000 ¹	Goods/Supplies & Services	<p>Public Advertisement (Open Procedure^a) – eTenders/European Dynamics, where no suitable central framework in place.</p> <p>Public advertisement on OJEU is optional.</p> <p>Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic).</p> <p>CE Order⁵ / Delegate Order required (depending on value).</p> <p>Publish contract award information for all procurements over €25K⁴</p>
EU Thresholds	Above €221,000	Goods/Supplies & Services	<p>Public advertisement - OJEU /eTenders/European Dynamics, where no suitable central framework in place.</p> <p>Public advertisement on OJEU is <u>obligatory</u> (Official Journal of the European Union – conducted through eTenders/European Dynamics)</p> <p>Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic).</p> <p>CE Order⁵ / Delegate Order required.</p> <p>Publish Contract Award Notice (CAN) and EU report.</p>

*Request For Quotation


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Table 4: Procurement Thresholds and Process Summary for Works

WORKS (01st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2025)			
Level	Thresholds (Exclusive of VAT)	Contract Type	Process Summary
Local	Less Than €200,000	Works	<p>Direct invitation. Seek a minimum of 5 written quotes (RFQ*)/tenders based on appropriate specification from interested & competent suppliers/contractors, where no suitable central framework in place. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). May advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics. Should advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics if near the upper limit. Requisition request and budget holder authorisation is required⁵. Publish contract award information for all procurements over €25K⁴</p>
National	Between €200,000 & €5.538m ²	Works	<p>Public Advertisement on eTenders / European Dynamics, where no suitable central framework in place. Public advertisement on OJEU is optional. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). CE Order⁵ / Delegate Order required (depending on value). Publish contract award information for all procurements over €25K⁴</p>
EU Thresholds	Above €5.538m ²	Works	<p>Public advertisement OJEU /eTenders/European Dynamics, where no suitable central framework in place. Public advertisement on OJEU is <u>obligatory</u> (Official Journal of the European Union – conducted through eTenders/European Dynamics) Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) CE Order required. Publish Contract Award Notice (CAN) and EU report.</p>

*Request For Quotation


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Table 5: Procurement Thresholds and Process Summary for Works-Related Services

WORKS-RELATED SERVICES (01st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2025)			
Level	Thresholds (Exclusive of VAT)	Contract Type	Process Summary
Local	Less Than €50,000	Works-Related Services	<p>Direct invitation. Seek a minimum of 5 written quotes (RFQ*)/tenders based on appropriate specification from interested & competent suppliers/contractors, where no suitable central framework in place. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). May advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics. Should advertise on eTenders/European Dynamics if near the upper limit. Requisition request and budget holder authorisation is required⁵. Publish contract award information for all procurements over €25K⁴</p>
National	€50,000 - €221,000	Works-Related Services	<p>Public Advertisement (Open Procedure^a)- eTenders/European Dynamics, where no suitable central framework in place. Public advertisement on OJEU is optional. Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic). CE Order⁵ / Delegate Order required (depending on value). Publish contract award information for all procurements over €25K⁴</p>
EU Thresholds	Above €221,000	Works-Related Services	<p>Public advertisement OJEU /eTenders/European Dynamics, where no suitable central framework in place. Public advertisement on OJEU is <u>obligatory</u> (Official Journal of the European Union – conducted through eTenders/European Dynamics) Retain all documented evidence (paper and electronic) CE Order⁵ / Delegate Order required (depending on value). Publish Contract Award Notice (CAN) and EU report</p>

*Request For Quotation

ICT-Related Expenditure


An email received from the OGP regarding the advertising threshold for **ICT** goods and services confirms that it too has increased to **€50,000** in line with circular 05/23. (LGMA, 03rd Apr 2023 (email)). This supersedes the value of €25,000 that is specified in Circular 02/16: Arrangements for Digital and ICT-related Expenditure in the Civil and Public Service. Circular 02/16 is still current in all other respects.

Notes:

¹ The EU threshold changes every two years and the current EU threshold, applicable from 01st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2025, for supplies/goods and services is €221,000

² The EU threshold changes every two years and the current EU threshold, applicable from 01st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2025, for works is €5,538,000

³ The EU threshold changes every two years and the current EU threshold, applicable from 01st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2025, for works-related services is €221,000

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⁴ In situations where the procurement competition was managed outside of eTenders /European Dynamics, contracting authorities are required to manually create a record of the award on eTenders/European Dynamics and complete all relevant fields for contracts over €25,000 (exclusive of VAT)

⁵The engagement of ALL consultants requires a CE order regardless of value.

Circular 05/2023 replaces Circular 10/2014.

As per Circular 05/2023, Contracting Authorities are required to publish contract award information for all procurements over €25,000 (exclusive of VAT), including any contract awarded under a Framework Agreement, on the eTenders/European Dynamics website on completion of the award whether the procurement was advertised on eTenders or not (for example, via email). Contracting authorities do not need to take additional actions to fulfil this requirement for all contracts awarded from competitions managed on eTenders (including Quick Quotes) once the contract finalisation management module has been concluded.

For tenders above the relevant EU threshold, a Contract Award Notice (CAN) must be published within 30 days of the award of the contract.

As per Circular 05/2023, Contracting Authorities “should use the open procedure, where reasonable and without compromising efficiency and value for money, for contracts valued below the EU advertising threshold in the case of advertised contracts for general goods and services”. “Above this threshold, contracting authorities should decide which tendering procedure is most appropriate in each case”.

Low Value Purchase Cards

Low Value Purchase (LVP) cards are point-of-sale cards that can be used for purchasing one-off items below a pre-determined value and issued in a controlled and limited manner at Louth County Council. LVP cards remove the need for multiple purchase orders and payments for minor or infrequently purchased items. The use of LVP cards reduces the administrative costs and burdens associated with the high volume of very low value transactions that can arise.

Purchase Orders

A Requisition is firstly raised by the person who intends to make the purchase. The requisition requires internal approval at the pre-determined approval levels. Once approved, a PO will be raised by Accounts Payable. Invoices must be assigned a GRN (Goods Received Note) status before payment is made. GRN status means that the section has confirmed that the item/task was received / completed.

13.0 Procurement Profile

Past Expenditure

Knowing what goods and services were purchased in the past is fundamental to planning future procurement. Spend analysis provides an opportunity to review historic expenditure with a view to improving future spending. This information for Louth County Council has been captured and presented in the table below.

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Table 6: Louth County Council Expenditure Analysis 2020 to 2022

Acc Element(T)	Acc Element	2022 Spend	2021 Spend	2020 Spend
		(€)	(€)	(€)
Agency Services - Non Local Authorities	69360	17,174,822	13,288,592	13,397,092
Minor Contracts- Trade Services & other works	65500	16,401,082	11,818,501	9,890,955
Capital Contracts Expenditure	69300	6,940,272	9,452,391	7,521,681
Insurance	71000	4,127,252	4,836,417	5,826,143
Energy/Utilities	86000	3,073,539	2,180,004	2,021,807
Materials	70000	2,440,134	1,479,005	1,434,092
Consultancy/Professional Fees and Expenses	79900	1,300,512	1,155,213	1,266,736
Management Fees & Service Charges to Non-Las	85250	1,237,984	210,496	84,231
Computer Software and Maintenance Fees	75000	694,499	611,571	640,303
Repairs & Maint - Plant	69200	583,598	535,009	476,680
Cleaning	85200	430,066	319,605	418,190
Communication Expenses	76000	396,913	339,306	400,611
Training	78000	375,644	300,175	261,675
Legal Fees and Expenses	79000	310,268	141,119	244,281
Repairs & Maint - Other Equip	69260	309,529	230,155	374,548
Hire (Ext) - Plant/Transport/Machinery & Equipment	69000	290,485	325,552	345,422
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	74500	283,277	83,924	58,777
Repairs & Maint -Computer Equip	69250	267,335	237,789	71,937
Printing & Office Consumables	81000	202,600	255,817	239,766
Non-Capital Equip Purchase - Fire Services	66500	172,055	201,253	204,386
	TOTAL	€ 57,011,866	€ 48,001,893	€45,179,313

The table above focuses on the top 20 expenditure items over the previous three years. Looking at 2022 figures, the top ten categories account for 95% of expenditure. The highest spend i.e. Agency Services – Non-Local Authorities accounted for 30% of the overall expenditure in 2022.

Future Expenditure

Planned future spend is also captured (refer to the tables below) and seeks to contribute towards continued implementation of key objectives with investment in areas like Housing and Urban Regeneration in the Capital Programme and substantial funding for areas around Climate Change and Tourism.

The capital budget for 2023 provides for expenditure of €213.2 million subject to grant funding and captures areas like housing CALF-payment and availability, energy fabric upgrades for social houses grant, energy costs and payroll and pension increases. The balance is grant-funded projects spread over all sections.



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Table 7: Louth County Council Planned Capital Procurement 2023-2025

	Year	2023	2024	2025
		Expenditure €	Expenditure €	Expenditure €
Housing				
Approved Social Housing Projects		€ 73,028,407	€ 37,870,345	€ 35,865,707
AHB Housing Projects		€ 30,853,046	€ 9,885,312	€ 4,264,467
Other Capital Projects		€ 948,301	€ 88,897	€ -
Roads				
National Road Improvements		€ 1,660,000	€ 11,369,000	€ 16,618,000
National Road Surface Renewal		€ 500,000	€ 500,000	€ 500,000
Regional and Local Road Improvements		€ 17,532,043	€ 29,465,229	€ 25,232,222
Parking and Public Transport		€ 195,000	€ -	€ -
Strategic Road Schemes		€ 23,431,600	€ 87,500	€ 3,000,000
Footpaths, Cycleways and Greenways		€ 13,459,400	€ 36,268,250	€ 18,875,250
Public Street Lighting		€ 3,212,500	€ 3,212,500	€ -
Town Projects				
Town Projects		€ 10,456,972	€ 7,936,113	€ 2,852,876
Buildings				
Corporate Buildings and Schools		€ 19,091,604	€ 5,326,246	€ 873,932
Operations				
Operations		€ 6,955,944	€ 1,170,000	€ 1,110,000
Surface Water, Flooding & Coastal Erosion				
Surface Water, Flooding & Coastal Erosion		€ 2,628,000	€ 2,247,000	€ 12,115,866
Climate Action and Environment				
Climate		€ 420,238	€ 1,100,000	€ 1,200,000
Landfill		€ 1,327,060	€ 1,044,018	€ 408,331
Recreation & Amenities				
Recreation and Amenities		€ 7,519,569	€ 1,236,500	€ 1,127,500

Table 8: Louth County Council Planned Revenue Procurement 2023

	Year	2023
		Estimated Expenditure €
Housing		€ 57,155,409
Road Transport and Safety		€ 27,351,783
Water Services		€ 8,619,590
Development Management		€ 23,666,110
Environmental Services		€ 20,837,205
Recreation and Amenities		€ 10,343,434
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare		€ 1,468,858
Miscellaneous Services		€ 9,037,142
TOTAL		€ 158,479,531

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14.0 Procurement Supply and Risk

Louth County Council has recognised the risks associated with its procurement spend, which are outlined in the risk register. The council has developed strategies to mitigate risk in critical areas. Past and current risks have been taken into account below.

Brexit

The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020 as per the terms set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. The uncertainty around Brexit continues to create a challenging environment for Louth. Helping to prepare local businesses for its potential impact continues to be a key priority for the Council's Local Enterprise Office (LEO). Supply chain issues and implications for VAT and customs paperwork are the main challenges.


Louth County Council will continue to offer a wide suite of Brexit-specific supports to local small businesses into 2023. These include:

- Brexit conferences and seminars to highlight issues of concern to business, in conjunction with InterTrade Ireland, the local Chambers of Commerce and other State stakeholders
- Brexit and Export Portfolio review with over 200 of LEO's key clients
- LEO Louth will continue to deliver Brexit advisory appointments in 2023. Small business owner/managers in all sectors can meet a specialist mentor on a one-to-one basis for specific advice in relation to how Brexit may/is impacting their business
- Brexit assessments of business using the Brexit Scorecard and the Brexit Preparedness Checklist will continue to be utilised by small businesses to assess their exposure to Brexit
- Ongoing delivery of 'Prepare Your Business for Customs' Training Workshops - specialist customs Imports and Exports training workshops will continue to be provided. The aim of the workshops is to help small businesses on customs imports and export procedures

COVID Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the free movement of goods within the internal market. The free movement of goods, services and people was affected by restrictions imposed by Member States and at EU level. The flow of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other healthcare-related goods was addressed in great detail, and suggestions were made as to how EU coordination on public procurement and the free movement of goods should be centralised in the event of future crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency measures taken to mitigate it have had a significant impact on the finances of local authorities. This has resulted in a reduction in and uncertainty over various income sources, together with increased levels of unexpected expenditures. Reductions in income have also had a bearing on the cash flow of the local authority and their ability to deliver services. COVID-19 had a major impact on general government revenue and expenditure overall, especially the targeted government supports and public health measures. The global economic shock created by the COVID-19 pandemic has been faster and more severe than the 2008 financial crash and it will be some time before there is any clarity on the overall cost of the pandemic or the financial impact on local government funding and projects for local authorities. Local authorities have continued to provide services during this period supporting individuals, communities and businesses as part of a national effort to respond to the economic and social challenges arising from the pandemic.

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The long-term repercussions of COVID-19 will become more apparent over time such as in the case of commercial rates base, vacancy levels in town centres, business closures and car parking and other local income sources. In the wider economy, the longer-term impact on jobs, commercial activity and businesses will have to be considered, particularly when Government supports for businesses and local authorities are wound down. Some sectors may not recover as quickly as others from this pandemic, and this may impact on the income levels available to local authorities to achieve the required service delivery in the medium and longer terms into 2023 and beyond.

Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to have major implications. Ireland's housing system is being further tested by the refugees who have arrived, as well as record fuel and energy prices.

Ireland has committed to facilitating as many refugees as necessary from Ukraine, with the Department of Justice projecting that up to 80,000 plus could arrive in Ireland for the duration of the conflict.

The economic ramifications from the conflict globally cannot be overstated, with Ukraine exporting 40 per cent of the world's supply of grain, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. Furthermore, the disruption of the flow of Russia's oil and gas, and the inflation crisis, which arose amid the supply chain crisis arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, has been exacerbated and has resulted in record fuel and energy prices.

Ireland is following the European Union's implementation of comprehensive sanctions against Russia and Belarus as a backlash to the invasion, which are intended to curtail the importation of 90% of oil imports from Russia. The EU announced that all crude oil imports from Russia will be phased out by February 2023, as well as a ban on insuring ships which carry Russian oil taking effect from December 2022. Furthermore, with the Russian economy experiencing 15% inflation and a deep recession, the EU has banned investment or participation in projects co-financed by the Russian Direct Investment Fund, as well as transactions related to the management of assets and reserves of the Russian Central Bank, and the Belarusian Central Bank.

The European energy market has to find new means of making Europe energy independent, which will include a temporary increase of German coal-powered energy, as well as emphasising the long-term importance of ensuring a reliance on renewable energy. (Eolas, 2022)

Louth County Council continues to support the comprehensive sanctions on Russia.

Climate Action

Climate change is now recognised as a global challenge with policy responses required in terms of both mitigating the causes of climate change and in adapting to the now inevitable consequences of our changing climate. Action at local level is vitally important to help reduce the risks and impacts of climate change across communities

For considerable time, local authorities have been taking a range of actions across all functions and services to tackle climate change, as outlined in "A Profile of Local Government Climate Actions in Ireland" (2020). The sector is at the front line of climate adaptation and mitigation, community engagement, sustainable development and emergency planning.

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“Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030” sets out six high level strategic goals, summarised below:

- i. Foster governance, leadership and partnerships for climate action
- ii. Achieve carbon emission and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050
- iii. Deliver on climate adaptation and climate resilience
- iv. Mobilise climate action in local communities
- v. Mobilise climate action in enterprise and support the transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy
- vi. Achieve a ‘just transition’ particularly for communities that may be economically disadvantaged by decarbonising projects

Louth County Council are aware of the climate challenges and have expressed their commitment to driving and leading this change by signing the Local Authority Climate Action Charter. This strategy, “Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030” is a roadmap to deliver on those commitments. It applies a common vision and sets out solid objectives for local authorities to work towards in order to maximise their collective impact on Ireland’s national climate targets.


15.0 Strategic Procurement

Particular attention must be paid to the public procurement Directives 24/2014/EU and S.I 284/2016 European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) 2016 Regulations which require tenderers to comply with applicable obligations in the fields of environmental, social and labour law that apply at the place where the works are carried out or the services provided that have been established by European Union law, national law, collective agreements or by international, environmental, social and labour law. Circular 20/2019 Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement highlights the potential to support wider social and environmental aims through public procurement. This Circular, inter alia, requires Departments to incorporate relevant green procurement measures into their planning and reporting cycles. The key factors in the consideration of such issues in public procurement are set out in the OGP’s Information Note on Incorporating Social Consideration into Public Procurement. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the Green Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector, which provides step-by-step instructions and criteria for the implementation of green public procurement.

Training will be provided to relevant staff in the area of climate change and climate action incorporating green public procurement, social considerations and sustainability.

Some key climate focus areas for Louth County Council include:

- Delivering Louth’s Climate Action Strategy
- Working to deliver Ireland’s Climate Action Strategy
- Continuing to develop as exemplars for energy efficiency and awareness
- Combatting the flood threat in Drogheda and Dundalk and other areas in partnership with the Office of Public Works
- Being part of the local authority public lighting energy efficiency project
- Developing and pursuing strong policies on biodiversity
- Working with key stakeholders throughout County Louth to improve sustainable transport options

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The newly revised housing Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme is now in the second year of a ten-year programme which is expected to grow to meet the Programme for Government retrofit commitment. The new programme sees a significant up-scaling (from ‘shallow’ to ‘deep retrofit’) on what has been completed by local authorities to date. The Council received an initial allocation of €3.654 million which was increased to €5.238 million, to retrofit a minimum of 164 properties in 2022.

Sustainability

Article 11 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states: “Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union’s policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development”. Under the 2016 Regulations contracting authorities can refuse to award a contract to the operator submitting the most economically advantageous tender where it does not comply with certain minimum social and environmental obligations set out in Annex X of Directive 2014/14/ EU. There are a number of areas where EU or national legislation creates specific environmental obligations which must be taken into account in public procurement:


- Construction Works: Environmental Impact Assessment, Energy Performance of Buildings, Construction Products, Waste Management and many other areas
- IT Equipment: minimum energy-efficiency standards
- Timber, Wood and Paper Products: EU prohibits timber/wood products which cannot be traced to legal sources in the country of origin
- Food and Catering Services: regulations dealing with waste management and packaging
- Vehicles: emissions standards and noise levels, tyres, lubricants and other aspects
- Cleaning Products and Services: regulations around harmful properties of chemicals and detailed health, safety and environmental information and advice about their products
- Energy: the generation and use of electricity is governed by a number of EU Directives. Energy-using products such as lighting and white goods are subject to mandatory labelling requirements.
- Uniforms and Textiles: the chemicals, dyes and treatment agents used to produce textiles are subject to regulations that limits the use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (OGP, 2019)

16.0 Measurement of Results

A detailed implementation plan is outlined in this Corporate Procurement Plan. The key deliverables of this plan will be reviewed and monitored regularly at procurement meetings with the Head of Finance. The implementation plan can be viewed in Appendix A at the end of this document.

A Quarterly Procurement Measurements Report has recently been formally implemented and presented on a quarterly basis to the senior management team. The report may be subject to change and review as part of the continuous improvement cycle at Louth County Council. The report currently captures:

- Internal Audits
- Conflicts of Interests
- Contracts Register
- Non-Competitive Procurement

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17.0 Continuous Improvement


Continuous improvement is of paramount importance and will be captured through various channels including audit reports, changes in policy and/or legislation, feedback from procurement steering meetings and other meetings as well as routine reviews of the Corporate Procurement Plan.

18.0 Implementation and Review

The Corporate Procurement Plan will be controlled as per the document control process in place at Louth County Council and will be circulated through the organisation via the procurement steering committee and through publication on the intranet. It will go through a process of continuous improvement as outlined above.

19.0 Governance and Approval

This Corporate Procurement Plan was approved by the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team on 11th July 2023. This Corporate Procurement Plan was updated on 12th January 2024 to incorporate the new EU thresholds only. This update does not require MTM approval as the EU limits are obligatory and set at European level. This Corporate Procurement Plan was updated on 17th June 2024 to include the Finance, Support and Water Services section which was omitted in error from Fig. 3. This change does not require MT approval.

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Appendix A

Implementation Plan 2023-2025

Goal	Action	Timescale	Owner
Co-ordinate the Procurement Steering Committee	Work with each Director appointed as Chair on rotational basis. Compile, organise and present procurement information so that latest news and up-to-date information is available to the organisation. Compile and issue "Top 3 Take-Aways" from each Procurement Steering meeting. Adhere to bi-monthly meeting schedule	Bi-monthly	Procurement
Review and update Louth County Councils' Procurement Policies & Procedure Manual	Review in full at least annually. Where new legislation or policy evolves, compile addendum to the Policies & Procedures Manual. Communicate the information via the Procurement Steering Committee and the intranet	Q2, 203	Procurement
Procurement Reporting	Compile and issue Quarterly Procurement Measurement Reports to the Management Team	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2023; Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2024; Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2025	Procurement
Promote, support and guide all sections in the procurement process	Maintain up-to-date procurement knowledge through continuous professional development in the procurement field	Q2 2023	Procurement
Develop a library of procurement documents and templates	Ensure up-to-date procurement documents are available on the intranet. Re-design the procurement tab on the intranet to make more user friendly	Continuous	Procurement
Improve procurement knowledge in the organisation	Develop and deliver internal procurement training for staff and liaise with training department and Procurement Steering Committee on external procurement training options	Continuous	Procurement; Budget Holders; Training Team;
Encourage utilisation of national / central frameworks	Provide access to relevant frameworks via the provision of access to the various buyer sections of OGP and SupplyGov, as requested	Continuous	Procurement; Budget Holders;
Contracts Register	Improve awareness of the necessity for contract register completion and CAN (Contract Award Notice) publications	Q2, 2023	Procurement; Budget Holders;




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Goal	Action	Timescale	Owner
Transition from eTenders to European Dynamics	Work with the LGMA/OGP/European Dynamics and attend required training sessions to transition to the new platform	Q3, 2023	Procurement; Budget Holders;
Regional Meetings	Attend the required regional procurement meetings to remain current and develop in line with other local authorities	As required 2023, 2024, 2025	Procurement
Sustainable Public Procurement	Promote green procurement for goods, services and works to support environmental and wider sustainable development objectives to assist in balancing cost effectiveness and sustainable development, representing both short term and long-term value for money	Continuous	Procurement; Budget Holders;
Compilation and publication of a new Corporate Procurement Plan for Louth County Council	Compile in line with the Information Note – Corporate Procurement Plan from the OGP	Q2, 2023	Procurement
Spend Data	Compile spend information in line with the LGMA process and system and issue in timely manner to the LGMA as per their requirements	Q2, 2023	Procurement
Procurement Enhancement in Agresso	Enhance procurement in Agresso through various projects in conjunction with appropriate project teams	Q4, 2023	Procurement; Agresso Team; Project Team
The Public Spending Code (PSC)	Complete 4/5 steps of the quality assurance aspect of the PSC, manage the PSC audit and compile the NOAC Report before end of May each year	Q2, 2023, 2024, 2025 (end May)	Procurement
Contract Modification Process	Implement a robust and compliant process. Presentation from A&L Goodbody in February 2023 will bring further clarity	Q2, 2023	Procurement; Infrastructure; Steering Committee
Compliance	Update of Procurement Policies and Procedures manual and all associated documents to reflect in the changes in procurement values as implemented by Circular 05/2023	Q3, 2023	Procurement;
eForms	New eForms to be introduced by OGP in late 2023. Training and information to be obtained.	Q4, 2023	OGP; Procurement; Steering Committee

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