

South Downs National Park Authority

Procurement Strategy 2021-2026

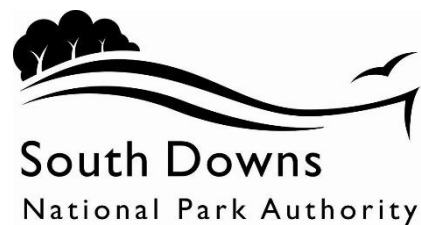
Version 1.2

Review date	September 2026
Responsibility	Procurement Manager
Created	September 2021
Approved by	SDNPA

DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version No.	Originator of change	Date of change	Change Description
1.2	Hayley Madgwick	25/07/24	Draft of updated strategy containing Action Plan for Yr 4: 2024-2025, for approval by P&R Committee
1.1	Hayley Madgwick	15/8/23	Draft of updated strategy containing Action Plan for Yr 3: 2023-2024, for approval by P&R Committee
1.0	N/A	30/9/21	Strategy approved by P&R Committee
0.01	Alan Brough	16/08/21	First draft of Strategy template sent to SMT for review

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I. Introduction and background

- I.1 SDNPA procures goods, services and works from outside bodies to the value of between £5m and £6m each year. The Procurement Strategy provides a vision for what procurement can achieve, and the methods that will be used to deliver the vision.
- I.2 SDNPA is established as a 'lean' organisation; one that is comfortable with outsourcing and working with partners and this is reflected in both what we procure and how we run procurement.
- I.3 Our Procurement Strategy is important to help demonstrate how we and our partners are delivering the PMP and how the SDNPA is delivering our purposes and duty which are:

Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area

Purpose 2: To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public

Duty: To seek to foster the social and economic well being of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

- I.4 This is through achieving best value for SDNPA in everything we purchase, which is core to everything we do. It is also ensuring that we buy from organisations, who by their actions, add capital to the environment, equality, social and cultural value.

2. Our vision for Procurement

- 2.1 Procurement is firstly about delivering best value for SDNPA in every purchase we make.
- 2.2 SDNPA will be as accessible to contractors and suppliers as any public sector organisation can be.
- 2.3 Wherever we can, SDNPA will use procurement to meet wider environmental, social and economic goals in the community.
- 2.4 SDNPA will only deal with suppliers who trade ethically, abide by the laws of their country and have regard to equalities.
- 2.5 SDNPA will treat suppliers and contractors fairly and with respect. We will always seek to learn from the knowledge and expertise of our suppliers and contractors.
- 2.6 SDNPA will manage the risks associated with procurement. We will understand the risks involved and seek appropriate ways of sharing risk with suppliers and contractors.

3. Value For Money in Procurement

- 3.1 Value for money in procurement terms, is not the lowest price. It is procuring the right product, on the right terms, at the right price, using a total cost approach to evaluate all the costs associated with the good or service being procured over the lifetime of the contract.
- 3.2 To procure the right product, SDNPA will produce specifications for procurement, which will include details of the product, location and timescale for each contract.
- 3.3 SDNPA will engage specialists to design and manage major contracts, where we do not have the expertise in-house to do so.
- 3.4 SDNPA acknowledges that the supplier community is a major source of expertise on the supplies, services and works procured by SDNPA, and that using suppliers' expertise can increase value for money. We acknowledge this by;
 - Consulting with suppliers before finalising specifications,
 - Making specifications outcome based, and allowing suppliers to tell us the best way to deliver the outcomes.
- 3.5 SDNPA will seek competitive bids for all significant purchases and will assess those using quality / price ratios. The ratio of price to quality will be determined on an individual contract basis, by assessing the potential value of each.
- 3.6 SDNPA will seek to maximise value during the term of the contract, by active contract management, continuous improvement and building business relationships with long-term contractors.
- 3.7 In each succeeding contract, SDNPA will learn the lessons from the previous contract, building on what went well and remedying identified weaknesses.

4. SDNPA as an accessible customer

- 4.1 SDNPA will provide clear, unambiguous specifications for the purchase we are intending to make. The specification will, where possible, be outcome based and will allow the supplier to use their skills and knowledge to provide the optimum solution.
- 4.2 Market testing or sounding will be undertaken by SDNPA on any novel aspects of a specification before it is released for tender. This will help to ensure that it is deliverable and doesn't contain any unnecessary requirements.
- 4.3 Suppliers will be given as much advance notice of potential tendering opportunities as SDNPA can realistically provide. Advance opportunities will be advertised on the SDNPA website, and through national portals for high value contracts.
- 4.4 Contract opportunities will normally be advertised through the SDNPA website. Suppliers who register with the SDNPA Procurement portal can receive notifications when relevant tenders are advertised. When contract opportunities with a value of over £25,000 are advertised, the notice will also appear on Contract Finder, the public procurement portal for England. In practice, many opportunities with a lower value are also placed on Contract Finder.
- 4.5 SDNPA procurement systems are fully electronic and are accessible free of charge to suppliers. Suppliers have the opportunity to ask questions during the tender process, and will upload their tender response electronically.
- 4.6 Other than for general due diligence, SDNPA will not ask suppliers to provide information that is not relevant or proportional to a specific contract.

5. Environmental and Social Goals

- 5.1 As part of the preparation of specifications for tenders, we will consider the environmental and social implications of the purchase we are proposing and make improvements where we can.
- 5.2 The approach we take to checking the environmental and social credentials of suppliers will be proportionate to the value of the contract, to ensure that this does not impact on the accessibility of SDNPA contracts. We understand that providing this information, particularly when it is tailored to individual contracts, is expensive, particularly for smaller organisations.
- 5.3 SDNPA will make wide use of social value clauses within significant contracts and will include social value within the criteria for evaluation of tenders.
- 5.4 SDNPA will build links with local suppliers who share our environmental and social goals, informing and equipping them to bid for SDNPA and other public sector contracts.
- 5.5 We will develop a more detailed sustainable procurement policy over the next twenty-four months and this will be incorporated into the SDNPA Procurement Strategy from 2023 onwards.

6. Ethical Trading

- 6.1 SDNPA intends only to trade with suppliers and contractors who respect the environment, comply with the laws of their own countries, respect human rights and reject modern slavery, and trade fairly themselves. This means respecting their own sub-contractors and suppliers and not engaging in fraud, bribery or corruption.
- 6.2 All procurement staff in SDNPA will hold the CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply Certificate and this will be updated on a yearly basis. This will help us identify any issues with non-ethical behaviour in our supply chains.
- 6.3 SDNPA will expect suppliers not only to behave ethically in their own operations but to take active steps to ensure that ethical practice is maintained through their supply chain.

7. How SDNPA Treats our Suppliers

- 7.1 SDNPA will provide suppliers with a clear specification of work at the outset of the contract and will make sure that suppliers understand what is expected of them.
- 7.2 SDNPA will nominate a 'contract owner' for each contract awarded. This person will provide a single point of contact within the organisations for contractors seeking assistance or further information.
- 7.3 SDNPA will endeavour to answer any requests for further information from a contractor promptly,
- 7.4 SDNPA will agree a schedule of payments with suppliers at the beginning of the contract. SDNPA will make stage payments in all but the shortest term contracts, and will link those to clear and measurable deliverables within the contract.
- 7.5 For SME's when a payment is triggered within the contract, SDNPA will aim to place the funds in the contractor's bank account within 10 days.
- 7.6 At the end of each contract, SDNPA will ask suppliers for their views on their experience of SDNPA as a client and ask suppliers to score our performance. Those scores will form part of SDNPA's overall performance reporting.
- 7.7 Where suppliers have submitted a bid for an SDNPA contract and not been successful, SDNPA will inform them of the award decision promptly and will include information on how we reached the decision. Unsuccessful bidders will be able to access additional feedback on their bid, on request.

8. Managing Risks in Procurement

- 8.1 SDNPA will carry out due diligence on suppliers as part of the procurement process. In carrying out this process we will not discriminate against smaller sized suppliers as long as they have the resources to complete the contract they are bidding for.
- 8.2 SDNPA will not discriminate against newer suppliers and will take alternative evidence of financial viability to previous year's accounts where necessary. SDNPA will always try to be open to giving new suppliers the opportunity to trade with us.
- 8.3 In construction contracts, SDNPA will seek to use SOR / Bill of Quantities and one of the recognised contract forms (JCT / NEC) to establish a basis for risk sharing, rather than transferring all risk to the contractor by way of fixed price contracts.
- 8.4 SDNPA will not expect suppliers / contractors to carry unrealistic levels of insurance cover and will seek to tailor our requirements to the insurance risk of a particular activity.

9. Development of annual Action Plan

- 9.1 We will develop an **annual action plan** detailing the initiatives and actions that we will undertake in each financial year to strengthen our achievement of the procurement vision for the SDNPA. This will also be reviewed every September to plan for the following year.
- 9.2 We will review this Procurement Strategy at least every five years, or at such times as it becomes necessary to update it.

10. References

Public Contracts Regulations 2015

[The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

[Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

SDNPA Contract Standing Orders

[SDNPA Contract Standing Orders](#)

II. Appendix I: Outline Action Plan

- The **South Downs National Park Authority Procurement Action Plan** will be reviewed annually by the Senior Procurement Officer and released on 30 September each year. Performance against the strategy and action plans will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis, using a set of key indicators.
- In **Years 1-2**, our focus was on improving information to suppliers on forthcoming tenders.
- In **Year 3**, our focus was on improving sustainability in our supply chain and reviewing our process to take into account the emerging legislation enacted as a result of the Procurement Bill.
- In **Year 4**, our focus will be on ensuring we are compliant with the new legislation, and using opportunities from this legislation to strengthen sustainability within our contracts and lowering barriers to ensure we are not excluding smaller suppliers from bidding for our contracts. We will be working on how we can measure our baseline scope 3 emissions.
- In **Years 5-6**, we will draft for approval in 2026 the Sustainable Procurement Strategy and ensure our procurement policies and procedures remain fit for the future.

Our proposed Action Plan from **September 2024-September 2025** is detailed below.

	Task	By when
1	Review and update policies or procedures, including guidance, as required as part of the procurement process to ensure compliance with the new legislation.	December 2024
2	Use the opportunities provided through the new Procurement Legislation to improve sustainability within procurements and contracts (for example the use of restriction below threshold procurements to specific counties (ie those that fall within the National Park) to benefit the SDNP economy and reduce carbon emissions).	September 2025
3	Measure the baseline Scope 3 emissions for SDNPA contracts. This will enable us to measure how the new sustainable procurement strategy will contribute over time to SDNPA's carbon Net Zero ambitions. Network with internal groups (Climate Action Group) and external colleagues (procurement colleagues in other National Parks and Local Authorities) to research best practice	September 2025
4	Research – to further strengthen our social value contributions to the National Park community through the tendering process.	September 2025