

Priority 1 - Contributing to reducing the Council's carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2030

Theme	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
<p>Understanding the carbon footprint of the Council's purchased goods, services and works to ensure our carbon reduction activity is targeted where it can have the biggest impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline the carbon footprint of our Scope 3 purchased goods, services and works in accordance with Welsh Government guidance • Provide devolved Service Areas with access to Scope 3 carbon data • Work with Service Areas to identify high carbon areas and consider opportunities to reduce carbon through challenging demand, requirements and/or service delivery models • Identify and engage with high-carbon suppliers, contractors and service providers to understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ whether they would be able to supply us with more accurate CO2e baseline data ○ what steps they are taking to reduce the carbon footprint of the goods, services and or works we procure from them and their supply chains. ○ what steps we could take to reduce the carbon footprint of the goods, services and or works we procure from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope 3 Report provided annually in September 2023 to the Council's Carbon Reduction Team in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance. • Since 2023 Spend Dashboards have been available in PowerBI, they are published on a quarterly basis. They provide each Directorate with the ability to review their spend data, including 'their' carbon footprint and identify their high carbon contracts. It also allows the carbon footprint for key procurement spend categories to be analysed. Quarterly • In all new tenders, carbon reduction will need to be considered. Ardal has developed Guidance Notes to support the Procurement Team and Officers within Directorates to do this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Procurement Guidance Note (issued November 2023) ○ Ardal Buying Responsibly Guidance issued on Ardal website in June 2024. ○ Carbon Reduction Plan Guidance – issued in March 2024. This was developed by Ardal in partnership with the Southeast Wales Procurement Network and adopted by all 10 Councils in the Cardiff Capital Region. It contains a standard set of tender Carbon Reduction Plan questions to signify to the market our collective intention to work with suppliers who are working to be net zero by 2050 at the latest. • South-East Wales Procurement Network Project contacted all major suppliers (top 100 in terms of spend) in early 2024 to ask them to complete a carbon reporting spreadsheet. To date the response has been poor, we are now working on strategies to increase the response rate, including by making carbon reporting a contractual requirement on larger value contracts and working with Business Wales to enhance supplier carbon development. As information is received from contractors it will

		<p>be shared across all participating Councils so that their carbon footprint for each Council can be calculated.</p>
<p>Working with our elected members, staff, partners and contractors to ensure that carbon reduction is fully considered throughout the procurement cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate Council policy decisions and good practice guidance (e.g., single use plastics, food, fleet, new buildings, etc.) into a single climate change procurement policy document • • Develop and rollout Buying Responsibly Guidance and Training to ensure that it addresses carbon reduction and incorporate Carbon Reduction consideration into Pre-Tender Report • Deliver training to decision makers and those staff responsible for specifying the goods, services and works the Council consumes to help deliver smarter, more carbon and climate responsive specifications and to embed Circular Economy thinking • Review our Contract Forward Plan to ensure carbon reduction opportunities are considered early and throughout procurement cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See response above. Two key pieces of Ardal Guidance have been developed, published and are being implemented. From March 2024 all tenders for over £5m now include a requirement for a Carbon Reduction Plan in line with the Ardal Guidance. • The Ardal Buying Responsibly website pages are also available to all Council staff and include a range of Guides to support Directorates through the procurement process based on the value of what they are buying. • WRAP Cymru provided three 1-hour Lunch and Learn Training sessions in the summer of 2023. These were recorded and available to view. • A further Ardal/WRAP carbon reduction workshop for 2024/25 is being finalised and due to start in late October 2024 and recommendations reported in February 2025. This will look to bring officers together from across the Ardal Councils for 3 high carbon spend categories and will be based around 3 workshops. The methodology is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online survey to be developed for key contractors/suppliers working in the 3 chosen categories exploring action taken / planned to be taken to reduce their carbon impact. • Introductory meeting to discuss information & data required, processes and contract structure with pipeline of future procurement activity and how this links sustainable procurement with low carbon impacts. • Outline on specific training and procurement categories with standardised processes, risk assessment and carbon literacy, data evaluation and interpretation • Areas of focus and impact with a strategic approach/prioritisation to be implemented and rolled out across the Ardal Procurement group.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the inclusion of Carbon Reduction Plans into tenders in line with WG guidance and best practice Review suitability and applicability of available sustainability risk assessment tools Develop and agree a whole-life cost approach to tender evaluations which incorporates carbon accounting considerations Develop a communication strategy to communicate and engage with suppliers and the wider market about the Council's low carbon requirements and expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRPs required on all tenders above £5m and as market develops we will look to lower the threshold that we ask for a CRP down to £1m. In line with the Ardal Guidance, we are continuing to use the Irish Green Public Procurement and WLGA Sustainability tools when developing tender documentation. WRAP Cymru have issued Whole Life Costing Guidance which is referenced in the Ardal Carbon Guidance and will be addressed in the Ardal/WRAP workshop programme in 2024. The Ardal Socially Responsible Procurement Policy aims to spell out to the market each Ardal Council's commitment to a range of policy areas, including Reducing Carbon Emissions and Enhancing the Natural Environment and Biodiversity. The online survey as part of the Ardal/WRAP Carbon Programme for 2024 will question key suppliers in the 3 spend categories around what they are currently doing to reduce their carbon footprint and what they plan to do.
Collaborating with, and learning from organisations across the public, private and third sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to WG, WLGA and PSB Climate Emergency decarbonisation working groups, and share best practice and insight Be an 'early adopter' of Welsh Government Guidance, Tools and Training targeted at procurement professionals and Council decision makers throughout the procurement lifecycle Investigate opportunities for Public Sector collaboration and market engagement to signal changed requirements from suppliers (Cardiff Capital Region) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As set out above Ardal has led a programme of work in the Cardiff Capital Region to develop Carbon Reduction Plan Guidance which has already been recognised as good practice by the Welsh Government. We have presented the work that Ardal are undertaking on Carbon Reduction to Welsh Government Conferences in North and South Wales. Ardal Staff are regular contributors to carbon networks run by the WLGA and Welsh Government. This includes the Local Government Climate Strategy Panel (CSP) - Procurement Decarbonisation Group. We are also establishing regular meetings with Natural Resources Wales to share learning and look at common issues. We have started dialogue with Business Wales, Voluntary Sector Councils and others to ensure that the market is ready to report on actual carbon footprints and not carbon footprints based on proxy data. Ongoing processes whereby we will look to learn from others and best practice as it emerges in this constantly developing area. The Procurement Team are already working with WRAP

Cymru and are members of Welsh Carbon Reduction working groups aimed at developing expertise.

Priority 2 - Making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and third sector

Theme	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
Increasing the availability, visibility and timeliness of opportunities for small businesses and the third sector to supply the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish our Contracts Register and Contract Forward Plan on the Council's website so businesses are aware of the likely procurement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good progress being made and on schedule to publish Contract Register and Contract Forward Plan in late 2024. A new online Contract Forward Plan Form has been developed to enable Directorates to add to the CFP, this was rolled out in early September 2024, where we will continue to develop and refine further. Buying Responsibly pages launched on the Ardal website which clearly set out the 4 procurement routes for all contract values. This sets out where Sell2Wales and Proactis must be used to advertise opportunities...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the number of opportunities being advertised by the Council through Sell2Wales to identify opportunity to increase. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update standard tender documentation to ensure it encourages our suppliers and contractors to buy locally and where appropriate make it a requirement for contractors to advertise supply chain opportunities through Sell2Wales and to hold Meet the Buyer Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract Procedure Rules already mandate that local suppliers must be invited to submit a quotation up to the value of £75,000, above this value tenders must be openly advertised. All processes and procedures will be updated in late 2024 to reflect new legislation. As part of the work preparing for the implementation of the Procurement Act from late February 2025 an updated set of Contract Procedure Rules will look to go as far as legally possible to provide opportunities for local suppliers. The publication of the Contract Forward Plan will be aligned to an ongoing communication campaign to publicise opportunities to local businesses. We are also resourcing an Ardal "Selling to the Council Guide" that will be communicated in early 2025.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update key systems to allow reporting on the number of local businesses bidding for and winning Council contracts 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an analysis of spend data to better understand where there are supply voids and opportunities to increase use of local supply 	

<p>Making it easier for small businesses and the third sector to do business with the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and promote our Selling to the Council Guide to help businesses understand how to do business with the Council and the wider public sector in Wales. Undertake a survey of local businesses and third sector to understand barriers to doing business with the Council Informed by survey, review systems, processes and documentation to seek to simplify where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to update the Selling to the Council Guide has started but will be completed in early 2025 to enable full consideration of the new legislation and the Guidance issued. Survey of local businesses undertaken as part of the Cwmpas questionnaire in 2023. Under 25% of respondents to the Cwmpas Survey identified barriers to procurement, these included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of understandings about where tenders advertised. Resources required to submit a quotation/tender. Work is ongoing to review how other Councils are reducing barrier to local businesses, including the use of social media to promote low value opportunities. As part of the response to the new Procurement Act we will be simplifying the quotation processes for low value opportunities and will look to reduce the burden of information required from bidders.
<p>Working with partners to develop the capability and capacity of small businesses and the third sector to secure public sector contracts</p>	<p>Engage with partners such as Business Wales, Business in Focus and South Wales Chamber of Commerce to improve the skills of local SMEs to access public sector business opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial discussions have taken place with Business Wales and the updated Selling to the Council Guide will signpost organisations to the support available, particularly around carbon reduction. We are aiming to work with these organisations to publicise opportunities on the Contract Forward Plan to secure additional business.

Priority 3 - Improving Fair Work, Equity and Safeguarding practices adopted by suppliers		
Themes	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
Ensuring that tenderers and contractors are aware of the Council's commitment to working with organisations that will support the Council to meet equality, fair work and safeguarding duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish a modern slavery statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Slavery Statement updated and currently with the Safeguarding Team where progress will be heard by the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group before being signed off by SLT in early 2025. Real Living Wage – Cynnal Cymru are in discussion with the Council and Ardal team to look at progressing accreditation in 2025. The Socially Responsible Procurement Policy sets out the Council's position in relation to "Fair Work Practices" and what it expects of its contractors. Publication of statutory guidance by WG has been delayed – SRPP Act unlikely to go live until late 2025 which is impacting on policy drafting.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a briefing paper for Cabinet on becoming a Real Living Wage accredited organisation 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish a "Fair Work Practices" Statement which reflects the Council's position and takes into account Welsh Government guidance in support of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill 	
Using our tendering process to ensure that our suppliers are committed to support the Council to deliver its equality, fair work and safeguarding duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop fair work criteria and contractual clauses for inclusion within our tender and contract documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Ardal Standard question set has been developed and contains a range of ethical employment questions that are embedded within the tender. Initial discussions with Ardal procurement and the Council's Safeguarding Team to develop and roll out specific fair work supply chain training. Social care tenders and contracts ensure all providers of care and support services have the necessary safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place. This is checked as part of the tender process and during the management of the contract. An Ardal Contractor Safeguarding Policy and supporting Guidance for Council staff has been drafted and discussions will
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver fair work training and awareness to Council staff involved in procurement and bidding organisations 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current arrangements to ensure that all providers of care and support services that the Council purchases for its service users have the necessary safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place and where required be registered with the appropriate registration body 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Contractor Safeguarding policy and approach to safeguarding which ensures it is considered throughout the tender process 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Fair-Trade products suitable for Council purchasing and work with service areas to increase usage 	<p>take place to assess the appetite for adoption within Monmouthshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of Fair-Trade products is encouraged by the Ardal Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Procurement Guidance and is actively promoted across the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy
<p>Working with our suppliers and contractors to ensure that they adopt and promote fair work practices and safeguarding within their organisation and supply chain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop contract management arrangements to ensure suppliers provide equality training and have flexible working practices, LGBTQ+// Gender reassignment friendly work policies which are inclusive in their equality training. • Have the ability to identify abuse or exploitation and take responsibility for reporting concerns in an appropriate and timely way. • Deliver Council commitments to modern slavery and construction industry practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ardal Procurement Safeguarding Assessment Guide has been developed to support both Directorates and the Procurement Team to ensure that Safeguarding is included within tenders and contracts are managed in a consistent way that is proportionate to the risk. The Guide will be fine-tuned in consultation with the Safeguarding Team prior to planned implementation in late 2024/early 2025. • Online Modern Slavery training has been developed by Ardal and discussions are ongoing around the best route to target this at key staff working across the Council.

Priority 4 – Increasing equitable community benefits and social value delivered by suppliers

Theme	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
Adopting a consistent approach to securing and managing delivery of community benefits and social value which is understood by the Council and its contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot use of the Welsh TOMs Social Value Measurement Framework as a scored element in suitable tenders over £250,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalising documentation and the process for rolling out the use of the Welsh Themes, Outcomes & Measures (TOM's) across the Council following an initial pilot on a number of projects including Green Waste with Community Well-being Meeting being held with the contractor and contract manager to ensure delivery. Ardal have appointed Thrive as the software platform for the measurement and reporting of Social Value which is scheduled to go live from late 2024. Initial conversations held (September 2024) between Ardal Social Value lead officer and devolved procurement officers to deliver targeted Social Value returns, with the input from Economy, Employment & Skills Team. Ardal Community Well-being Guidance and standard tender documentation has been developed. The new Thrive system is more user friendly for officers and contractors and so training is anticipated to be minimal. This will be kept under review. A wider communication piece will be undertaken to highlight the benefits of Thrive and a Quarterly Well-being Newsletter will start to be published in early 2025.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the TOMs Social Value Measurement Framework and update to reflect the Community & Corporate Plan priorities and develop tender documentation 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, publish and deliver Community Benefits and Social Value guidance and training for Council officers and suppliers 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness and education of Community Benefits and Social Value through early engagement in tender opportunities 	
Co-ordinating the community benefits and social value approach by working with Council services, our communities, partners and contractors to inform priorities and facilitate their delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a cross-Directorate Social Value Delivery Group to raise awareness, inform priorities and co-ordinate delivery across the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Economy, Employment & Skills team are currently in discussions with the procurement function to develop a Delivery Group to identify and resource the promotion of Social Value through external contract opportunities. Initial conversations will be held with the Economy, Employment & Skills Team later this year to better understand whether there are any merits in a collaborative venture. Construction Academy has developed Guidance around local employability support which is being consulted on with the local Employability Teams across the Cardiff Capital Region prior to Council sharing with works contractors. The Guidance is scheduled to be shared with Local Into Work
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunity to align with Torfaen County Borough Council 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with employers, training providers and employment services to promote and co-ordinate access to local employment and training opportunities. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with communities and interest groups to identify local opportunities / projects seeking support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams, Careers Wales and Job Centre by October 2024 so that all parties are aware of how to access opportunities for local people. Local engagement has been undertaken to date on larger projects to identify how best community well-being benefits can be delivered. This learning is now being progressed through the Council with the Green Waste pilot. Further discussions are planned with the Economy, Employment & Skills Team to align Social Value with future procurement requirements. The new Thrive system will enable improved reporting on committed and delivered CWB this from late 2024.
<p>Reporting on achievements, promoting success and sharing good practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on secured and delivered Community Benefits and Social Value Raise awareness of the 'added value' delivered through Community Benefits and Social Value to Council staff, including development and publication of a knowledge bank of case studies to demonstrate the 'art of the possible' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ardal Newsletter developed (April – June 2024) and communicated through the Ardal website as well as to as to local contractors.

Priority 5 – Securing value for money and managing demand		
Theme	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
Reviewing and challenging what the Council spends its money on to reduce demand and identify opportunities to deliver efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and present procurement spend and assurance reports to Senior Leadership Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing quarterly updates to SLT that reflect current spend analysis, legislation, governance and policy updates as well as training support. Buying Responsibly Guidance launched on Ardal website in June 2024. Officers are now able to access operational buyers guides and legislative procurement updates that reflect the pending Procurement Act and the Social Partnership & Public Procurement Act (Wales) Ardal Operational procurement specialists use the Council's Contract Forward Plan and knowledge gained by procuring goods, services and works for Cardiff Council to better inform the Monmouthshire's outcomes and where possible help to create better economies of scale given the aggregate spend.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Buying Responsibly communication and education initiative to inform and challenge staff 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work across Ardal Councils to identify collaborative opportunities, to standardise demand and drive efficiencies. 	
Demonstrating value for money and considering the whole life cost of the decisions we make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a Contract Forward Plan to allow effective management of resources and early consideration of opportunities to deliver improved value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new and revised Contract Forward Plan has been developed to mirror the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 and the requirement to publish a Pipeline Notice of all current and future public contract opportunities that will be published in late 2024. The Council's Supplier Directory is now live and hosted as part of the Ardal website. Additional collaborative and MCC specific contracts will be added over the coming months.
	<p>Establish and maintain a Supply Directory of contractual arrangements</p>	

Priority 6 - Ensuring Legal compliance and robust and transparent governance

Theme	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
Regularly reviewing and updating procurement documentation, processes, systems and controls to ensure they reflect regulatory changes, best practice and provide corporate oversight and assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a review of Contract Procedure Rules in response to the Procurement Reform and Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act requirements • Implement the digital Pre-Tender Report and Contract Award Report and associated guidance and documentation for all new tenders over £75,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardal stakeholder group (Including Legal & Internal Audit) are currently assisting the procurement teams in developing a fit for purpose set of Contract Procedure Rules. It is anticipated that these will be in operation by February 2025 • Electronic Pre and post tender award reports have been embedded within all tender processes in excess of £75,000 to promote transparency. This ensures that all above threshold procurements are challenged and that consideration for Social Value, safeguarding, carbon reduction and localism are where appropriate delivered as part of the award of contract.
Training officers in the procedures and policies which must be considered to ensure legislative and governance requirements are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Contract Procedure Rule training for all devolved staff involved in procurement and contract management activity • Develop and implement a Buying Responsibly communication and education initiative to signpost staff to guidance and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across 2023 a number of live and interactive training sessions were developed and rolled out where 118 officers attended. A pre-recorded session is also available on the Council's procurement SharePoint pages for all staff. • In July 2024 Ardal rolled out a "Buying Responsibly" website. To date the contents includes, collaborative framework opportunities, detailed buyers guides as well as videos on the pending procurement regulations changes and templates to aid understanding for devolved procurement officers. This will be updated in February 2025 to support the Procurement Act go live date..
Providing oversight and assurance to the Council's leadership team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish an annual procurement report in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance. • Rollout Procurement Spend and Assurance information to Service Areas through PowerBI reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the pending Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 we will have a duty to produce and publish an Annual Socially Responsible Procurement report in order for Welsh Ministers to assess the extent to which we are meeting our Socially Responsible procurement and well-being goals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and present quarterly procurement spend and assurance reports to Senior Leadership Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing quarterly updates continue to SLT to reflect current spend analysis and assurance.
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Priority 7 - Promoting innovative and best practice solutions

Theme	Actions	Progress Update Headlines
Challenging existing procurement arrangements and seeking examples of market innovations and sharing models and best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early engagement, working with service areas to consider innovation options Share best practice and seek market innovation opportunities Review the procurement forward pipeline to identify innovative opportunities and ensuring early and ongoing service area engagement to scope and deliver their requirements. Work with service areas to challenge existing procurement arrangements, to identify savings and service improvement opportunities and plan forward work programmes. Support the consideration, evaluation and implementation of alternative service delivery models, including in-sourcing, where considered appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of more definitive Contract Forward Plans allows greater dedicated time for procurement professionals to liaise with operational technical leads to discuss options and undertake soft market testing if there is an opportunity for innovation, current examples include Domiciliary Care. Procurement challenge is provided within all tender opportunities via the introduction of the Pre-Tender Report, where the questions are documented to provide the Council an element of challenge to help promote value for money and innovative solutions.
<u>Encouraging outcome/ problem-based procurement approach to stimulate creative and innovative solutions and engaging early with markets</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage early with markets through publication of our contract forward plan and early market engagement events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently resourcing Contract Forward Plan and publishing late 2024. We anticipate that identifying procurement requirements earlier will alert supply chains to the opportunities across the Council's spend.