

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022 - 2026



Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

www.Bucksfire.gov.uk

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Bucks Fire Procurement Strategy (the Strategy)

Introduction

The aim of the Strategy is to set a clear framework for the procurement of goods, works and services within the Authority. The strategy supports the development of a longer-term vision of how procurement can help to deliver the Authority's aims and outcomes while working within a value for money framework and standing orders relating to contracts to achieve efficiency savings. It supports the following aims in our Corporate Plan:

- To offer best value for money to our residents and businesses & ensure that the Service is compliant with regulatory requirements and recognised 'good practice' standards and can readily evidence this at all times.
- To ensure that risk, performance, financial and management information is accurate, relevant and delivered to users in an efficient, timely, effective and secure way.
- To provide high quality, cost effective assets and equipment with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing requirements.

The Strategy has been developed with reference to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National Procurement Strategy (which is based on the Local Government National Procurement Strategy).

The Strategy focuses on three key themes, which are then further broken down into a number of key areas. The three key themes are:

- Leadership
- Commercial Practice
- Delivering Local Benefits

To accompany the NFCC Procurement Strategy, a toolkit was developed that allows services to identify their level of maturity within each of these areas and themes. The toolkit then allows services to set local goals and assess their progress against these goals.

In addition to the 'Themes', the strategy also identifies four enablers:

- Developing our Staff
- Procurement Systems & Data Transparency
- Innovation
- Embedding Change

Background

Fire Commercial Transformation Programme (FCTP)

The NFCC have implemented a package of reforms in the commercial operation of the sector under the umbrella of the Fire Commercial Transformation Programme. Fire and Rescue Services should set their local strategy recognising the principles of the FCTP:

Standardisation - developing agreed standard specifications that are developed by the sector, are evidence led and operationally driven.



Aggregation - FRS that bring larger committed volumes to market typically get better deals. Where possible, i.e. non-fire specific goods and services, consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations.

Collaborative Supplier Management - joined-up strategic engagement, supplier performance and contract management. Regardless of whether FRSs work collaboratively on procurement there is a need to more effectively manage Suppliers, we often use the same Suppliers but don't talk to each other about issues (or positive aspects such as innovation) we are having. This can be managed more effectively through managing our suppliers more collaboratively.

Duty to Collaborate

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a new duty on the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services to keep collaboration opportunities under review and, where it is in the interests of their efficiency or effectiveness, to put those collaboration opportunities into practice. The duty is deliberately broad to allow for local discretion so that the emergency services themselves can decide how best to collaborate for the benefit of their own communities.

Fire & Rescue National Framework

The Fire & Rescue National Framework includes for the first time a section on Commercial Transformation:

Each fire and rescue authority must demonstrate that it is achieving value for money for the goods and services it receives. Every fire and rescue authority should look at ways to improve its commercial practices including whether they can aggregate their procurement with other fire and rescue authorities and other local services (e.g. police) to achieve efficiencies.

Fire and rescue authorities must demonstrate and support commercial transformation programmes where appropriate. Each fire and rescue authority should be able to demonstrate full awareness of the objectives to standardise requirements, aggregate demand and manage suppliers of products and services within their commercial arrangements.

Fire and rescue authorities must ensure that their commercial activities, be that the placement of new contracts or the use of existing contracts, is in line with their legal obligations, including but not limited to the Public Contracts Regulations, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and transparency commitments.

HMICFRS

Independent inspection of fire and rescue authorities in England – and the fire and rescue service they oversee - is delivered by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The chief fire and rescue inspector and inspectors of fire and rescue authorities in England have powers of inspection given to them by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

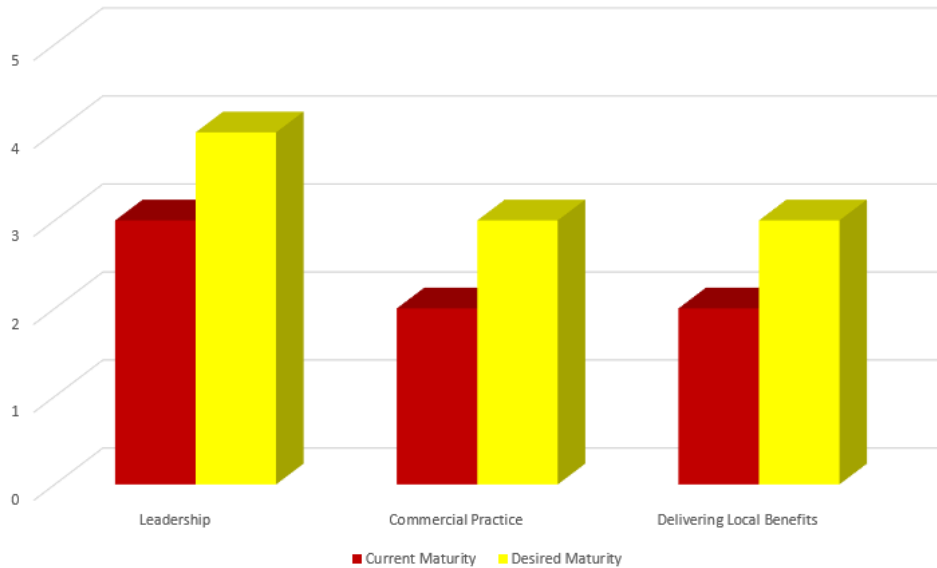
The inspectorate will provide a crucial assurance function to consider how effective and efficient fire and rescue authorities are, how well they manage their people and whether they are fulfilling their statutory obligations. The inspectorate will also highlight good practice and identify areas where improvement is needed so that remedial or constructive action can be taken.



Toolkit Self-Assessment

The chart below shows the output from the toolkit, highlighting the current maturity level versus the desired maturity level for each theme:

2018 National Procurement Strategy - Current Maturity vs. Desired (2020) Maturity



In tabular form this can be summarised as:

Theme	Current Maturity Level	Desired Maturity Level
Leadership	Mature	Leader
Commercial Practice	Developing	Mature
Delivering Local Benefits	Developing	Mature

The following sections look at each of the themes, and key areas, in more detail. The Service aspires to be assessed as mature in each of the three themes. A key part of this Strategy is the action plan on page 12 which details actions to be taken to achieve this.

Theme 1: Leadership

Key Area: Engaging Fire Authorities and Senior Managers

MATURE - Leadership engaged with commercial and procurement issues, routinely taking advice at key decision points.

This refers to the Fire Authority and the corporate management team valuing and benefiting from commercial and procurement advice at all stages of decision making including early advice on major projects. Good commercial and procurement advice (provided in-house wherever possible) can have a decisive impact on the outcome of a project. It is important that executive bodies and senior managers engage with commercial and procurement issues from the outset.

Influence & Impact	Developing - Contribution of commercial and procurement has been noted on isolated projects.
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Mission & Strategy	Mature - FRS has approved a procurement strategy aligned to corporate and service strategies.
Process	Mature - Structured approach to project management clearly defining roles and responsibilities in relation to commercial and procurement advice.
Training & Development	Developing - Some FRA members and senior managers have attended training courses.

Key Area: Collaboration

MATURE - Designing and implementing solutions as a single team in high value/high risk projects.

This refers to a one team approach to the design and implementation of solutions where Fire and Rescue Services work together as a single team to design and implement solutions. A team approach makes best use of limited resources and can lead to innovative solutions and better results.

Culture	Leader - Working as a single team is the norm when the FRS cooperates with external partners.
Process	Innovator - Peers acknowledge the transformational results being achieved through collaborative working.
Training & Development	Minimum - Training and developments programmes do not cover collaborative working

Key Area: Engaging Strategic Suppliers

DEVELOPING - The Fire and Rescue Service acknowledges the business case for improved SSRM and can demonstrate isolated activity.

This refers to the process of identifying strategic suppliers and engaging with them to improve performance, reduce cost, mitigate risk and harness innovation. Effective management of strategic supplier relationships can deliver a range of benefits including improved outcomes for the public, added social value, reduced cost, reduced risk and innovation.

Data Collection & Analysis	Developing - FRS has partial data and intelligence on its suppliers and is developing criteria it will use to identify strategic suppliers.
Engagement of Existing Strategic Suppliers	Developing - 1. Evaluating toolkits. 2. Piloting engagement with a major supplier.
Early Engagement with Future Strategic Suppliers	Developing - 1. Some information on forward plans published. 2. Experience of early market engagement on at least one FRS project.

Theme 2: Commercial Practice

Key Area: Creating Commercial Opportunities

DEVELOPING - Isolated examples of the FRS examining commercial opportunities to drive value creation and/or reduce current costs.



This refers to how Fire and Rescue Services promote value creation through the way it plans its major third-party expenditure (works, goods and services), reviews business options (make or buy) and engages with, and influences, markets and potential suppliers. Commercial opportunities can be created in many different ways, from conventional means such as increasing returns on assets to the way it engages with its partners and third party contractors.

Forward Planning	Mature - 1. Forward planning is the norm for all strategic contracts. 2. Opportunities to create new revenue streams are considered. 3. Procurement encouraged to contribute ideas for revenue generation in the forward planning process.
Options Appraisal	Developing - 1. Undertaken for high profile / high value projects and exercises. 2. Evaluation criteria sometimes incorporating commercial and social considerations.
Market & Supplier Research & Analysis	Developing - 1. Undertaken when a new requirement is sought and/or where there have been problems on an earlier contract. 2. Research sometimes includes looking for commercial opportunities or gaps in the market
Tendering	Leader - 1. Tendering is seen as a commercial process . 2. Documentation is prepared to make it attractive to take part and focused on innovation and opportunities. 3. Procurement is seen as an integral contributor to the planning phase.
Performance Reporting	Developing - 1. Performance reporting is undertaken but restricted to specific procurement exercises and some departments. 2. Summary reports are produced by Procurement for service heads on an annual basis.
Post Contract Review	Developing - 1. Post contract reviews undertaken, by most departments and/or identified categories of expenditure. 2. Seen as being an integral part of improving outcomes and identifying commercial opportunities

Key Area: Managing Contracts & Relationships

DEVELOPING - Identified the need to change and improve. Basic policies, procedures and systems in place.

Description: This refers to the effective management and control of all contracts from their planned inception until their completion by the appointed contractor(s). It covers the supporting policies, procedures and systems needed to undertake it, together with broader issues from the identification and mitigation of risk, successful and timely delivery of outcomes and performance, effective control of cost and variations and the maintenance of clear communication and operational relationships with contractors. Poor contractor performance or commercial failure can seriously damage a fire and rescue services reputation and its ability to deliver effective and efficient services to the local community.

Information Storage & Accessibility	Mature - 1. Contracts Register is dynamic and provided through a purpose built solution. 2. Full accessible to the whole FRS with read/write/edit and search capabilities 3. Complete data sets for all major third party spend.
Change Control	Developing - 1. A change control policy exists for capturing the details of any changes or variations made to some contracts 2. Standard documentation is available and used by some departments.
Savings & Benefits Delivery	Minimum - Savings and benefits are delivered from some contracts but not a part of any formal process.



Recognition & Cultural Acceptance	Developing - 1. Recognition by the FRS of value of contract and relationship management. 2. Job roles are designated as contract manager or contain specific contract and management activity in their job descriptions in some departments.
Skills & Knowledge	Minimum - Staff have limited access to any contract and relationship management skills and knowledge programmes.

Key Area: Managing Strategic Risk

MATURE - Taking a pro-active approach to strategic risk management with all vulnerable areas identified and mitigating policies and plans in place.

This refers to the impact of an external event, passing of a new statute, or illegal activity upon business as usual, reputation and/or financial health of the Fire and Rescue Service. The Service should have a series of actions and policies designed to reduce or eliminate the probability of a perceived risk occurring and minimising the detrimental effects / impacts that may occur should it materialise. The occurrence of any risk, particularly when it could be foreseen, can have a devastating impact on the fire and rescue services reputation and the lives of the people it serves, the quality of the services it provides and even its financial viability.

Fraud & Financial Loss	Mature - Systems in place to target both financial loss and fraud with a proactive approach to issues such as irregular transactions, duplicate payments, and fake creditors/invoices.
Supply Chain & Contractor Failure	Developing - FRS aware of the risks and issues involved and attempting to identify where this may occur.
Modern Slavery (Legislation)	Mature - 1. Expenditure categories/contracts with potential for modern slavery identified 2. Basic checks made with appropriate contractors.
GDPR (Legislation)	Mature - Actively identifying and reviewing contracts where data issues could occur.
External Events (e.g. Brexit)	Developing - Keeping abreast with National FRS/Central government briefings and taking appropriate action, as and when required.

Theme 3: Delivering Local Benefits

Key Area: Obtaining Social Value

DEVELOPING - Compliant with SV Act and pro-actively seeking SV engagement in a few key contracts only.

Social Value (SV) refers to wider financial and non-financial impacts of programmes, organisations and interventions. Social Value is about improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing from public sector contracts over and above the delivery of the services directly required.

Policy & Scope	Developing - No specific policy in place. Only complies with the Act (i.e. Services above UK procurement threshold)
Internal Management	Developing - No senior officer given a direct reporting responsibility for social value



Measurement: Themes, Outcomes & Measures (TOM's)	Developing - Measuring some limited form of social value e.g. SME spend.
Commissioning	Developing - Some attention given in larger contracts to commissioning for social value
Procurement	Mature - 1. Social Value requirements included in all relevant tenders as a part of quality score 2. SV weighting as a part of quality score 5-10%.
Market Engagement & Partnerships	Developing - Initial but ad hoc steps taken in market engagement around SV
Contract Management	Developing - Contracts not monitored in any coherent way for social value after award
Cross Sector Collaboration	Developing - Limited collaboration through joint occasional contract with other public sector bodies held regarding social value
Reporting	Minimum - Social value not considered important
Governance & Accountability	Minimum - No visibility of issue at FRA meetings

Key Area: Engaging Local SME's

DEVELOPING - SME's are engaged in a few key contracts only.

SME's (a business with fewer than 250 employees and turnover of less than £50m) play a major role in creating jobs and generating income for those on low incomes, they help foster economic growth, social stability, are a source of innovation and contribute to the development of a dynamic private sector.

Policy & Scope	Developing - 1. Commissioners have started to communicate what local needs are and the desired market outcomes. 2. No policy or strategy in place for addressing SMEs
Facilitating Good Relationships with SME's	Developing - Relationships between SMEs and other providers are not facilitated. It is not considered to be an area where intervention is needed or appropriate. As a result of this, there is an absence of consortia and networking in the locality.
Commissioning	Developing - 1. There is some knowledge of how SMEs' local expertise can add value. 2. A limited number of SMEs are invited to contribute to the commissioning process. 3. There are some general engagement events.
Market Engagement & Partnerships	Mature - 1. SMEs are seen as part of a diverse supply chain. 2. There is awareness of SMEs' need for support to effectively contribute to the commissioning process.
Procurement	Developing - 1. There is a prescriptive procedure for all procurement exercises and little awareness of how SMEs might engage 2. There is engagement with a limited number of SMEs ahead of notices of tenders being published.
Contract Management	Developing - Some parts of the FRS manage contracts with SMEs but this is not consistent. There is no particular expectation on how subcontracting relationships with smaller SMEs should be conducted.
Governance, Accountability & Reporting	Developing - Some analysis of SME spend is captured but no actions are taken based on the information gathered



Enablers

A number of cross-cutting issues have been identified that will need to be addressed by Fire and Rescue Services. These are referred to as the 'enablers' of the strategy.

Developing Staff

Developing – Recruits staff with professional qualifications and responds to ad hoc requests for training and development.

Where We are Now

Procurement staff competencies are maintained with ongoing training to meet Public Procurement legislative changes. Networking across UK fire service & other public procurement practitioners enables best practice is adopted within the Service.

An introduction to procurement working practices within the Service is provided as part of new Officers induction training in relation to financial regs and contract standing orders.

Future Plan

Further support and training of staff who have involvement in procuring goods & services across all levels of the organisation including a mandatory online procurement training package. The introduction of the BMKFA Contract Management Framework for staff with contract management responsibilities, supported by an online contract management training package.

Procurement Systems & Data Transparency

Mature – Use of an integrated Procure to Pay (P2P) system in conjunction with online ordering for all services/products fully automated and paperless. Comprehensive procurement, contract management and spend analysis information available online to all stakeholders with appropriate search and filtering. Use of electronic tendering and quotation system for all tenders.

Where We are Now

Electronic procurement is fully embedded and utilised for all tenders within our e-tendering portal. This enables the team to manage tenders effectively and efficiently and build resilience in this process, including the effective management and storage of all procurement documents. The market now accepts online tendering and communications as standard. The national strategy supports the wider development of e-commerce. The Authority will support this through the continued development and use of electronic tools, the virtual marketplace and sharing of knowledge through secure media collaboration platforms.

Purchase to Pay (known as P2P) – This assists the Authority to streamline its requisition through to payment processes through automated work flow, thereby, reducing transactional costs and enabling improved access to information and reporting.

Automated Budget Approval, Procurement Compliance & Supplier Management – The Integra finance system provides the Authority with a streamlined system incorporating expenditure



commitment controls, procurement compliance gateway utilising the Buyer Approval process and supplier management information and reporting.

Contract Catalogues – The Integra system supports the use of ‘catalogues’ to provide all staff can access contract information for the purchase of contracted goods and services. This ensures the correct suppliers, goods and services are purchased in accordance with approved contract terms and conditions.

Purchase cards are used for low value transactions. This arrangement is already established. Expenditure is monitored on a monthly basis within the Integra finance system. This enables officers to purchase low value commodities and services where there is no corporate contract in place and is below the threshold for competition. This reduces the transaction cost to the Authority and enables the supplier to receive immediate payment.

In accordance with Local Government Transparency Code 2015, the Authority publish the following the following transparency reports & contract information:

- *Expenditure exceeding £500*
- *Government procurement card transactions*
- *Procurement information for expenditure of £5,000+*
- *Contract Register for contracts of a value of £25,000+*

The Authority, as a sub-central body, meets the legal obligations to publish all contracts below UK procurement threshold with a value of £25,000+ on Contracts Finder, and publish above UK procurement threshold to Find a Tender Service (FTS), in accordance with Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015 and Public Procurement Notice (PPN) 09/21,

Innovation

Mature – Outcomes based procurement and market shaping are the ‘standard’ way of doing things. Innovative procurement approaches not just applied to technology but to established services.

Where We are Now

Forward planning for contracts is undertaken collaboratively to maximise leverage and commercial attractiveness to the market. Arrangements for combined group (collaboration) of FRSs joint projects provide for early commercial and procurement advice from the FRS. Contracts register is used for forward planning and financial modelling for BMKFA and collaborative projects.

Establishment of the Thames Valley Collaborative Executive Board enables FRA members and senior managers to play their role in combined group (collaboration) of FRSs projects.

Standard specification of requirements established across the Thames Valley fire services for Vehicles and operational equipment has resulted in other FRSs regarding our approach as exemplary practice and seek to learn from us.

Outcomes from market and supplier research are used in collaboration with other organisations in the wider public sector for seeking and exploiting new commercial opportunities



Embedding Change

Mature – Procurement change comprehensively applied across multiple projects and departments.

Where We are Now

Procurement procedures, policies and strategies, including the Authority's Standing Orders relating to Contracts updated in accordance with Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015 to ensure compliance with changes to procurement legislation

Procurement attendance at Business Transformation Board (BTB) and Leadership Group ensures early planning and development of projects incorporate compliance with the Authority's governance, policies, strategies and procurement legislation..

Contract changes and variations managed by procurement working with contract leads. Details used to inform impacts on budgets and assessing contractor risk / performance. Cost / time overruns reported to service leads and finance team to support budget forecasting and planning as part of the Authority's financial budget planning process. Contract catalogues for approved goods and services monitored regularly as part of ongoing contract management process with budget managers/department leads.

Future Plan

Procurement KPI's to be established and reported to the Performance Management Board (PMB).

Recognise and promote the value of EDI throughout the procurement process

Ensure sustainable procurement considerations are embedded into procurement processes to generate benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment. The Authority will build its procurement sustainability strategy around three principles:

- *Environmental: Seeking to minimise any negative environmental impacts of goods and services purchased, across whole life cycle from raw materials extraction to end of life.*
- *Social: Managing and monitoring supply chains to ensure that fair contract prices and terms are applied and that ethical, human rights and employment standards are met.*
- *Economic: This principle relates not only to obtaining value for money from contracts, across the whole life of the product or service, but also ensuring as far as possible under relevant procurement law, that local businesses, particularly Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME's) can benefit from our procurement processes.*



Action Plan

The previous Procurement Strategy covered the period 2015-2020. Publication of the latest Strategy was delayed while procurement regulations were being updated following Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union. Work has continued during the interim period, which is recorded within the Action Plan of the latest Strategy.

The action plan below has been produced following a review of the self-assessment toolkit and the actions required to be assessed overall as mature in each theme:

Year	Activity	Themes and Key Area Addressed
2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Supplier annual review and formal ‘health check’, including 3rd party suppliers. Supplier viability ‘Real Time’ monitoring by external monitoring service. • 3 year Future pipeline published to the market via NFCC. Early engagement with market via national supplier events. Publication of contracts register with future planned review dates. • A formal process in place capturing savings and accruing benefits from contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership – Engaging Strategic Suppliers - Data collection & Analysis • Leadership – Engaging Strategic Suppliers- Early engagement with Future Strategic Suppliers • Commercial Practice - Managing Contracts & Relationships – Savings & Benefits
2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement KPI’s, including benefits/savings, to be established and reported to PMB • Procurement to support Post Contract Review process • Change control policy implemented across the board for all contract changes and variations as part of Contract Management Procedures. Standard documentation to be available and used in all circumstances across all departments. • Procurement Staff to have access to regular contract management training. Contract Management guide to be made available to all staff. • Continuous improvements to the sustainability outcomes of procurement activity for both new and ongoing contracts, incorporating the three principles of Environmental, Social & Economic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Practice – Creating Commercial Opportunities - Performance Monitoring • Commercial Practice – Creating Commercial Opportunities - Post Contract Review • Commercial Practice - Managing Contracts & Relationships – Change Control • Commercial Practice – Managing Contracts & Relationships – Skills & Knowledge • Enabler – Developing Staff • Delivering Local Benefits – Social Value & Engaging Local SME’s • Enabler – Embedding Change- Promote EDI & Sustainability through procurement process



<p>2023-24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Contract Review process to be established as part of a wider organisational Contract Management Strategy • Savings captured from contracts and benefits realisation applied uniformly across the FRS and reported to CFO/Executive body level. • Contract & Relationship Management is acknowledged as a core competency. Briefings on Contract & RM are given as part of Officer induction and budget manager training. Refresher programmes are available to all staff involved in Contract & RM. • Engagement with SMEs ahead of publishing a notice of tender. There is an attempt to better understand the capacity and capability of SMEs and adapt procurement processes to reflect this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Practice – Post Contract Review • Commercial Practice - Managing Contracts & Relationships – Savings & Benefits Delivery • Commercial Practice – Managing Contracts & Relationships – Skills & Knowledge • Delivering Local Benefits – Engaging Local SME’s -
<p>2024-25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract & Relationship Management recognised by the FRS as being essential. Designated Contract & RM roles. Performance is reviewed with job holders in their annual appraisals. • Social Value policy and processes adopted across project scoping, tendering, evaluation & contract management. SV to be monitored and reported regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Practice - Managing Contracts & Relationships – Recognition & Cultural Acceptance • Delivering Local Benefits – Obtaining Social Value
<p>2025-26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Strategy following updated Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan for 2025 onward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed Strategy consistent with latest plans. Align dates with future Public Safety Plan & Corporate Plan



The Equality impact table

Does the activity have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? To complete the table ✓ the likely impact. If an EIA action plan is necessary, this can be downloaded from the Intranet.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	If negative, why and how could this be lessened (<i>use action plan if necessary</i>)
Individuals of different ages			✓	<p>Rationale:</p> <p>The Strategy specifically sets out the aim to ensure all processes are transparent, accountable and fair to all parties.</p> <p>Where specific actions are undertaken in the future as a result of this strategy, it is expected that a specific EIA will be completed as appropriate.</p>
Disabled individuals			✓	
Individuals transitioning from one gender to another			✓	
Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships			✓	
Pregnant individuals and new parents			✓	
Individuals of different race			✓	
Individuals of different religions or beliefs			✓	
Individuals gender identity			✓	
Individuals sexual orientation			✓	
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>			✓	
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>			✓	
<i>Different employee groups</i>			✓	
<i>Other</i>				