

Procurement Strategy 2026-2031

Document Control

Document Ref:	Procurement Strategy	Date Created:	28/01/2026
Version:	1.2	Date Modified:	08/02/2026
Revision due			
Author:	R Howroyd	Sign & Date:	22/03/2026
Owning Service	Procurement & Commissioning		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1.1	08/02/2026	Amendments to draft following internal consultation	
1.2	22/03/2026	Amendments following Corporate Board	



Contents

1. Foreword.....	3
2. Executive Summary	4
3. Where does the Council Spend its Money?	5
4. Delivering best value and good governance	6
5. Embedding sustainability and climate action into all procurement activity	8
6. Providing opportunity for economic, social and environmental wellbeing	10
7. Enhancing the supply market.....	11
8. Improving contract and commercial management	12
9. Building skills and capability.....	13
10 Implementing, monitoring and tracking progress of delivery	14
Appendix 1 Analysis of Influenceable Contract Spend.....	15

1. Foreword

- 1.1 There are significant changes in public sector procurement with the UK's Procurement Act 2023 coming into force and the impact of the Provider Selection Regime (on health and some social care), creating the largest overhaul of the public procurement rules for decades. There are likely to be more changes to come. However, along with the challenges, this brings with it the opportunity to ensure our procurement activities are ambitious, robust and fit for purpose, and to take advantage of the new regime.
- 1.2 This strategy sets out the council's guiding principles and ambitions for commissioning & procurement of all goods, services and works. Whether you're a councillor, senior manager or budget holder at the council, or one of our suppliers or partners it will help you understand what the council is aiming to achieve.
- 1.3 The Strategy defines our organisational approach and provides assurance that we will continue to spend public money in a way which is fair, accountable and achieves the very best value.
- 1.4 Our vision is to ensure that all the council's procurement activity is delivered in a manner that considers our guiding principles and ambitions, not only from a procurement perspective but also considering the wider commitments in our Corporate Strategy.
- 1.5 Our procurement activity and decisions have a direct impact on the council's budget, the quality and cost of services to our residents, local businesses and other stakeholders, and delivery of our corporate and service objectives. The way in which we conduct our procurement activity also has an impact on our suppliers and potential suppliers to the council, and we hope that the strategy will enable us to provide greater transparency and consistency in our activities.
- 1.6 There are six priority themes in this strategy; delivering on the first three will ensure that we achieve our procurement and council aims and ambitions; the second three are the strong enablers that will ensure that we have the tools in place to do so. We have a devolved procurement structure and embedding the six priority themes will ensure that procurement activity is robust and consistent across all areas of the council.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 To be agreed

DRAFT

3. Where does the Council Spend its Money?

- 3.1 The Council spends over £200m per annum on goods, services and works in a wide range of markets. **Appendix 1** provides a breakdown of influenceable spend in recent years. It covers both revenue and capital expenditure.
- 3.2 It should be noted that in some cases non influenceable spend is shown, such as directly transferring grants from central government to providers for example Nursery Grants or disability access grants.
- 3.3 Redacted data relates to payments to individual for example, direct payments for adult or children's social care.
- 3.4 West Berkshire is the lead for Social Care community equipment for the whole of Berkshire spending approximately £13.5m per annum.

4. Delivering best value and good governance

4.1 Ambition

- 4.1.1 Delivering best value¹ is at the heart of procurement and is of critical importance within the wider context of financial challenges and increased demand for services within local government. Achieving best value is not just about efficiency, savings and managing risk but is also around the delivery of wider public good. The council must also pay attention to its obligations under the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) which may change over time, for example the original NPPS was focused on COVID recovery.
- 4.1.2 The Council must manage increasing commercial risk based on world events. The operating environment for local authorities has shifted significantly in recent years because of wider geo-political events, meaning less surety in the outcome of commercial contracting and greater financial risks.
- 4.1.3 The council must ensure that procurement is robustly planned, to deliver the desired outcomes, deliver best value and take advantage of collaborative opportunities available to us.
- 4.1.4 Strong governance processes will ensure appropriate oversight of the council's procurement activity, alignment with the Corporate Strategy, adherence to relevant legislation and the council's own Contract Standing Orders

4.2 Outcomes

- 4.2.1 The expertise of the Procurement & Commissioning Team is focussed on high value, high risk procurement activity, working with services across the council.
- 4.2.2 Training, guidance, frameworks and approved lists will be put in place to allow increased self-service for commonly purchased lower value goods & services which ensure the council continues to obtain value for money by using its purchasing power.
- 4.2.3 Council contracts are awarded and managed to optimise council funding, considering cost, delivery and whole life benefits.
- 4.2.4 High quality spend data is used to inform our procurement pipeline and current contracting in an appropriate and proportionate manner.
- 4.2.5 Internal processes, procedures and Contract Standing Orders are optimised and efficient, enabling the council to procure effectively.
- 4.2.6 Opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities and public bodies are explored and taken where appropriate.
- 4.2.7 Improved visibility and transparency of council procurement options and decisions, to increase the opportunity for scrutiny and market engagement

4.3 Activities

- 4.3.1 Introduce and promote the use of spend analysis in the development of reports, dashboards, business cases across the whole council.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-value-standards-and-intervention-a-statutory-guide-for-best-value-authorities/best-value-standards-and-intervention-a-statutory-guide-for-best-value-authorities>

- 4.3.2 Implement revised gateways and proportionate processes that align to relevant legislation into the governance arrangements to ensure all relevant factors are considered and relevant parties are engaged before decisions are taken.
- 4.3.3 Work with local partners, neighbouring councils and other public bodies to develop and deliver collaborative purchasing arrangements with outcomes recorded.
- 4.3.4 Establish procurement tools, guidance and methodologies for council officers, ensuring that they can maximise opportunities to deliver best value outcomes throughout the commissioning, procurement and contract management lifecycle.
- 4.3.5 Introduce new Contract Standing Orders that support compliance with all relevant legislation and ensure effort and resource is focussed on the high-cost and high-risk commercial relationships.

5. Embedding sustainability and climate action into all procurement activity

5.1 Ambition

- 5.1.1 West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and updated its Environment Strategy in 2025 with a focus on embedding sustainability in the corporate Strategy. A key ambition within the Environment Strategy is to achieve Net Zero by 2030 for council-controlled activities. In parallel, we will continue to work with partners and communities to get the wider district to Net Zero at the earliest practicable time.
- 5.1.2 The council's spending can have a significant impact on helping the council to achieve its carbon net zero ambitions, influencing the approach to climate change mitigation and driving sustainability within the local authority area and beyond. Whilst we have made progress, we must try to do more.
- 5.1.3 The council's approach to procurement and contract management must be harnessed to support the council's strategy.
- 5.1.4 Our decisions about what we buy, who we buy it from and the way we buy it can have significant wider environmental, economic and social impacts, thereby contribute to achieving one of the council's core policies: tackling the climate and ecological emergency (Priority 3).

5.2 Outcomes

- 5.2.1 The climate and sustainability impact of the council's spending decisions are fully considered and appropriately built into procurement requirements, driving down carbon emissions and contributing towards the net zero ambition.
- 5.2.2 Measurable sustainability and climate data is available in contracts and is used to improve services and drive change.
- 5.2.3 Council contracts consider the changing climate and takes action to reduce detrimental impacts, influencing emission reductions from outsourced and contracted council services.
- 5.2.4 A supply base that is aware of and embraces the council's declarations, policy and strategy in relation to sustainability, passing that commitment on to other organisations and supporting delivery of a Greener and more sustainable West Berkshire

5.3 Activities

- 5.3.1 Explore the establishment of a methodology for measuring and reporting of climate and sustainability targets and impacts during contract delivery, creating data that can be used to improve services and drive change, including (but not limited to) utilising the existing baseline data for Scope 3 emissions.
- 5.3.2 Engage with the Environment Delivery team to provide expertise to service teams in procurements and ensure standard documentation contains minimum standards for supplying to the council.
- 5.3.3 Develop and deploy workable models in conjunction with the Environment Delivery team for use in procurement evaluations to allow assessment of climate and sustainability issues. The Council has already determined that projects above £100,000 in value should complete the Sustainable Assessment Tool (SAT) as part of the governance process. This will help senior leaders and project teams to assess whether their projects or activities are achieving the most practicable environmental benefits and are suitably mitigating any adverse impacts. The use of the SAT can be further embedded into the Council's procurement processes, so that potential suppliers can give greater consideration to the environmental and social impacts associated with the sourcing and use of their goods and services.

- 5.3.4 As part of our market engagement activities and plans, we will work with our supply markets to ensure they are aware of our ambitions and share knowledge about what constitutes current sustainability best practice.
- 5.3.5 We will ensure that the achievement of sustainability and environmental objectives by suppliers is continually tracked as part of benefits realisation and lessons learned exercises linked to projects and procurements. Historically, there can be a gap between what tenderers propose as “added value” and what is delivered after contract award.
- 5.3.6 Create a database of case studies of suppliers who are exemplars for delivering positive environmental outcomes, especially where these are over and above their core contracted services and responsibilities. These suppliers will be highlighted within internal and external communications, where appropriate. The celebration of good practice will hopefully inspire other suppliers to learn from and hopefully match these aspirations.

DRAFT

6. Providing opportunity for economic, social and environmental wellbeing

6.1 Ambition

- 6.1.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was enacted to ensure public sector organisations are taking the social, economic and environmental value delivered by their contracts into account.
- 6.1.2 The Act places a duty on the council to "consider, prior to undertaking the procurement/ commissioning process, how any services procured might improve economic, social and environmental well-being".
- 6.1.3 Whilst we operate in a challenging environment, in which savings will always be a factor for consideration, we need a strategy which also focuses on achieving additional outcomes from our procurement activity, at no extra cost.
- 6.1.4 By leveraging our expenditure and engaging with suppliers we can help the council enhance outcomes for our communities through increased social, economic and environmental value. The NPPS places further obligations on contracting authorities such as West Berkshire to seek both social and economic value through its contracting arrangements.
- 6.1.5 Changes to section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 (LGA 1988) will also allow some contracts to be restricted to local VSCs and SMEs to boost the local economy.
- 6.1.6 Aligning the council's procurement activity to the social value requirements will directly support the overall priorities of the council as set out in the Corporate Strategy.

6.2 Outcomes

- 6.2.1 A proportionate and effective "Think Local" Social Value policy, with supporting methodology/toolkit, is embedded across the council.
- 6.2.2 The council can record and track Social Value outcomes delivered through contracts with third parties.
- 6.2.3 Procurement processes consistently consider Social Value and are designed to ensure suppliers make worthwhile and deliverable Social Value commitments through the tender process.
- 6.2.4 The council seeks to improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing from our contracts, over and above the delivery of the services directly required by exploring how those activities can deliver the council's wider strategic outcomes at no extra cost.
- 6.2.5 Expenditure on contracts is leveraged, and suppliers are engaged to enhance our communities through increased social value.

6.3 Activities

- 6.3.1 Launch a new "Think Local" social value policy and model, including provision of templates, processes and training to all relevant officers.
- 6.3.2 Implement a clear impact measurement mechanism, for delivery of Social Value and wellbeing outcomes and impact to be reported on.
- 6.3.3 Ensure that Social Value is built into Contract Management processes, so that commitments made by suppliers during tender processes are delivered during the contract term.
- 6.3.4 Explicitly link Social Value to the Corporate Strategy to create a clear strategic link between council aims and outcomes, including (but not limited to) consideration of the efforts to reduce health inequalities.

7. Enhancing the supply market

7.1 Ambition

- 7.1.1 West Berkshire's spends over £200m each year We must ensure we have a market that can deliver current as well as future needs.
- 7.1.2 We recognise the importance of a supply market that has developed to meet our needs and understand that by directing spend effectively and engaging with the market appropriately we can help the market grow and create a vibrant and sustainable marketplace who can create innovative and lasting service solutions.
- 7.1.3 We will seek to maximise the benefit offered by our local supply base, supporting our Corporate and Economic Strategies.

7.2 Outcomes

- 7.2.1 All suppliers can access opportunities to apply to work for the council if they wish to do so.
- 7.2.2 The council works with our local supply market, helping to develop "a prosperous new economy", in support of the council's Economic Strategy and to support delivery of the council's sustainability targets, seeking to take advantage of legislation updates where appropriate.
- 7.2.3 The market has early visibility of upcoming opportunities and a good understanding of how they access these opportunities.
- 7.2.4 Supplier markets are appropriately engaged during the pre-tender phase, allowing input and development of Commissioning and Procurement Plans and encouraging innovation that drives best value.
- 7.2.5 The council engages with, and influences, the market and potential suppliers to drive innovation and develop new ideas around service delivery.

7.3 Activities

- 7.3.1 West Berkshire will regularly update and publish a pipeline of upcoming procurement opportunities and work with partners such as the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the council's Business and Skills Team to raise awareness across the market.
- 7.3.2 Services will ensure an appropriate level of early market engagement is included in projects when developing Commissioning and Procurement Plans.
- 7.3.3 We will conduct a review of business case and procurement documentation & processes to ensure suitability for all markets and suppliers.
- 7.3.4 We will assess and review West Berkshire's engagement with supplier groups, including but not limited to SME and VCSE organisations, to develop an action plan for improved market access.
- 7.3.5 We will analyse and assess the council's supply base to understand market pressures and composition.
- 7.3.6 Maximise the opportunities offered by the PA23 and amendments to LGA1988 in respect of engaging and using the local supply market where appropriate
- 7.3.7 The Council will develop Adult Social Care and Children's Commissioning Strategies that reflect the relevant markets and the needs of service users

8. Improving contract and commercial management

8.1 Ambition

- 8.1.1 Many of the council's key services are delivered by third party suppliers. It is therefore vitally important to effectively manage these commercial relationships, ensuring that the organisation delivers better services, mitigates risk and has improved control over costs.
- 8.1.2 Failure to manage contracts properly may lead to inefficiencies, poor contractor performance or commercial failure which can seriously damage the council's reputation and ability to deliver effective services, support our communities and deliver against our corporate ambitions and priorities.
- 8.1.3 We will embed improved contract management throughout the contract lifecycle, providing the framework and tools to comply with the PA23 and to manage the exposure to commercial, contractual and reputational risk.

8.2 Outcomes

- 8.2.1 Contracts with third parties are robustly and proportionately managed by the council, using an established and consistent corporate approach to contract management which includes the tiering of suppliers.
- 8.2.2 A contract management framework THAT improves contract management across the council with clear lines of reporting and responsibility, ensuring that contracts are delivering or exceeding their quality, service and cost targets.
- 8.2.3 There is visibility of contract performance in relation to the council's key contracts and improved assurance on delivery.
- 8.2.4 Contracts are proactively managed to ensure that the value negotiated through the procurement process is retained, continuous improvement is realised, and additional value is unlocked where possible.

8.3 Activities

- 8.3.1 Introduce a consistent, risk-based contract management framework with accompanying tools, comprehensive training and support for all officers who are involved in managing contracts with third parties.
- 8.3.2 All key contracts have a named contract manager who has clear responsibilities and understands the contract performance reporting requirements and the importance of developing appropriate relationships with suppliers.
- 8.3.3 Contracts are based on terms and conditions which allow for appropriate and proactive contract management.
- 8.3.4 Ensure that data on contract performance is reported on corporately for the council's key contracts.
- 8.3.5 Introduce a consistent approach to commercial risk management using established tools and techniques.

9. Building skills and capability

9.1 Ambition

- 9.1.1 Public procurement is a skills and knowledge grounded discipline which requires regular development to maintain an up-to-date skill set. We will ensure that procurement officers have the right skills and capabilities to support the council appropriately and effectively.
- 9.1.2 The Procurement & Commissioning Team will provide advice, guidance and supporting documentation to increase procurement and contract management skills and knowledge levels across the council, improving our overall compliance, governance and contracting strategies.
- 9.1.3 As procurement will be increasingly undertaken by officers outside the Procurement & Commissioning team, appropriate skills and understanding must be shared and developed across the council.
- 9.1.4 Councillors understand their role in procurement and commissioning process and the complexity of Public Sector procurement legislation.

9.2 Outcomes

- 9.2.1 The council is supported by a skilled and knowledgeable Procurement & Commissioning Team who can offer support, advice and guidance on procurement activity.
- 9.2.2 Officers influencing procurement outside of the Procurement & Commissioning Team are appropriately trained and can access guidance, documentation, templates, training and advice to support their procurement activity.
- 9.2.3 The Procurement & Commissioning Team have a clear understanding of their capabilities and development plans in place to support ongoing development of technical skills.
- 9.2.4 The organisation has a good understanding of the Procurement Act 2023 (and where appropriate the Provider Selection Regime), can harness the opportunities presented by the legislation and has embedded the requirements across the organisation.
- 9.2.5 Officers involved in procurement and contract management activity apply a commercial mindset, harnessing opportunities to secure best value and maximise added value in contractual relationships.
- 9.2.6 Councillors have a clear role in the procurement process and understand the constraints in the legislation.

9.3 Activities

- 9.3.1 Develop clear multi-year training & development plans for the Procurement & Commissioning Team.
- 9.3.2 A full suite of guidance, templates, advice and training is developed and made easily available for council officer use.
- 9.3.3 Training is provided to Councillors on procurement and Contract Standing Orders
- 9.3.4 Procurement & Commissioning Team members keep fully abreast of the Procurement PA23 changes, become familiar with the new requirements and can provide support and guidance across the organisation to ensure we maximise the opportunities and meet the various requirements of the legislation.
- 9.3.5 Consider the impact of any changes to the organisation's commissioning approach and structure, and the subsequent implications in respect of procurement related skills and capability.

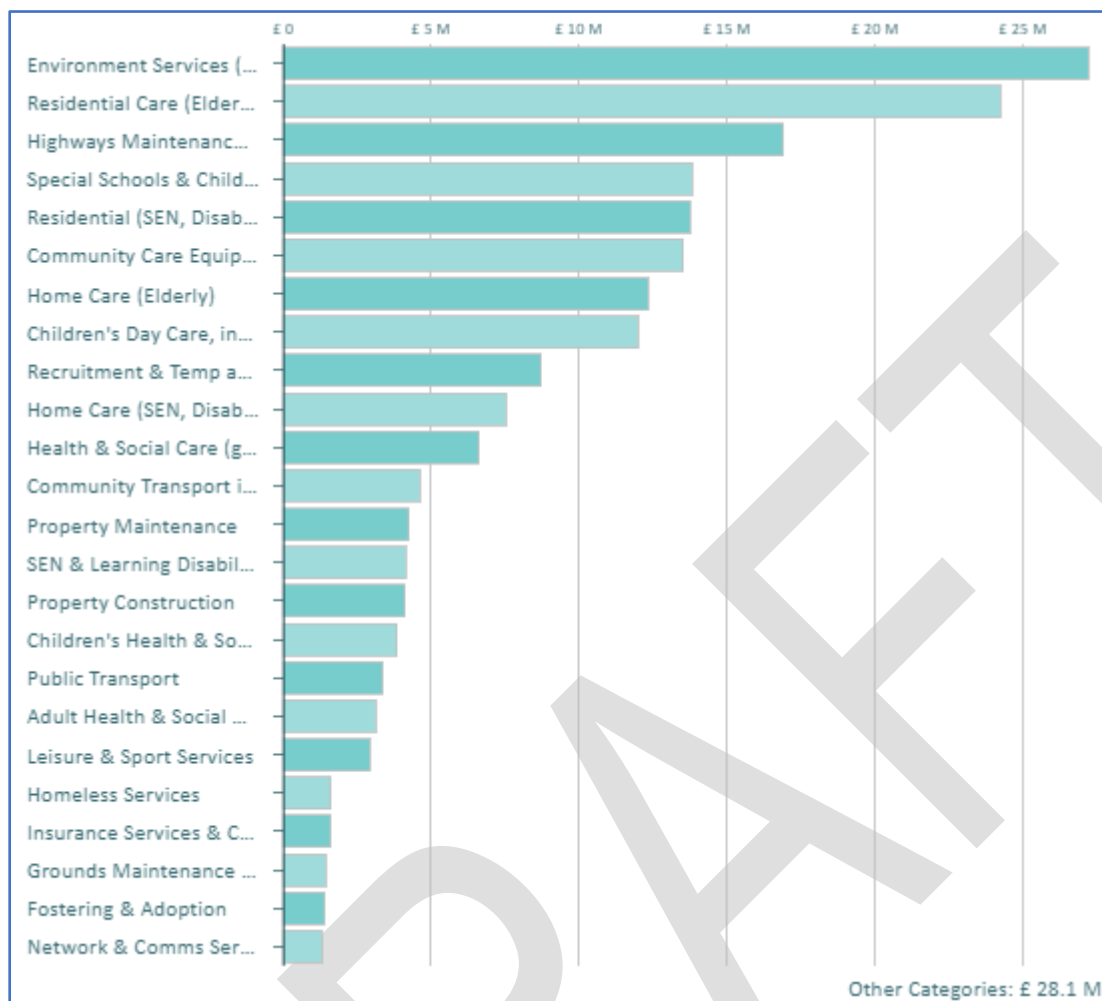
10 Implementing, monitoring and tracking progress of delivery

- 10.1 We will develop a realistic and achievable Delivery Plan which will include metrics to evaluate the progress of the activities contained in the strategy. The timeframes for delivery will be subject to various factors such as level of appropriate resources and organisational readiness.
- 10.2 The Delivery Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be reported to the Procurement Board for oversight.

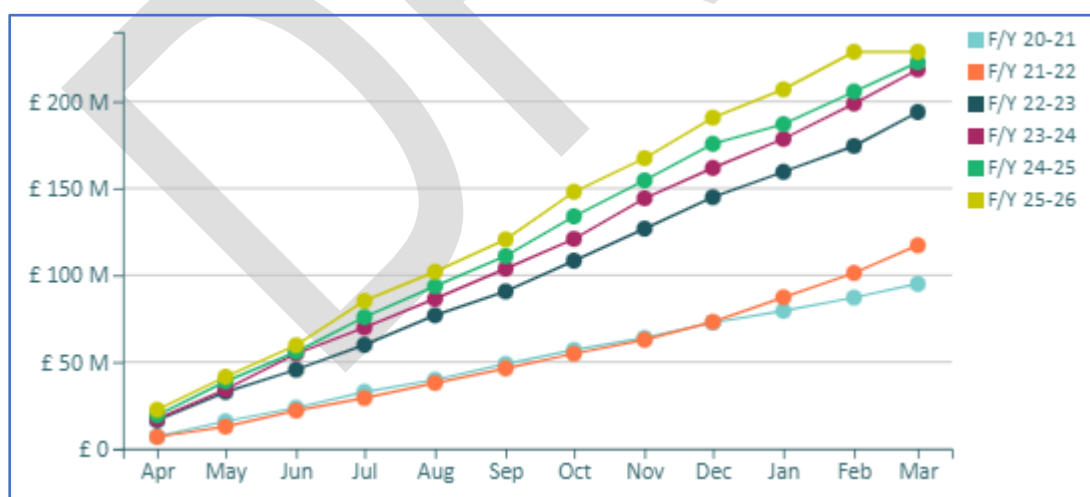
DRAFT

Appendix 1 Analysis of Influenceable Contract Spend

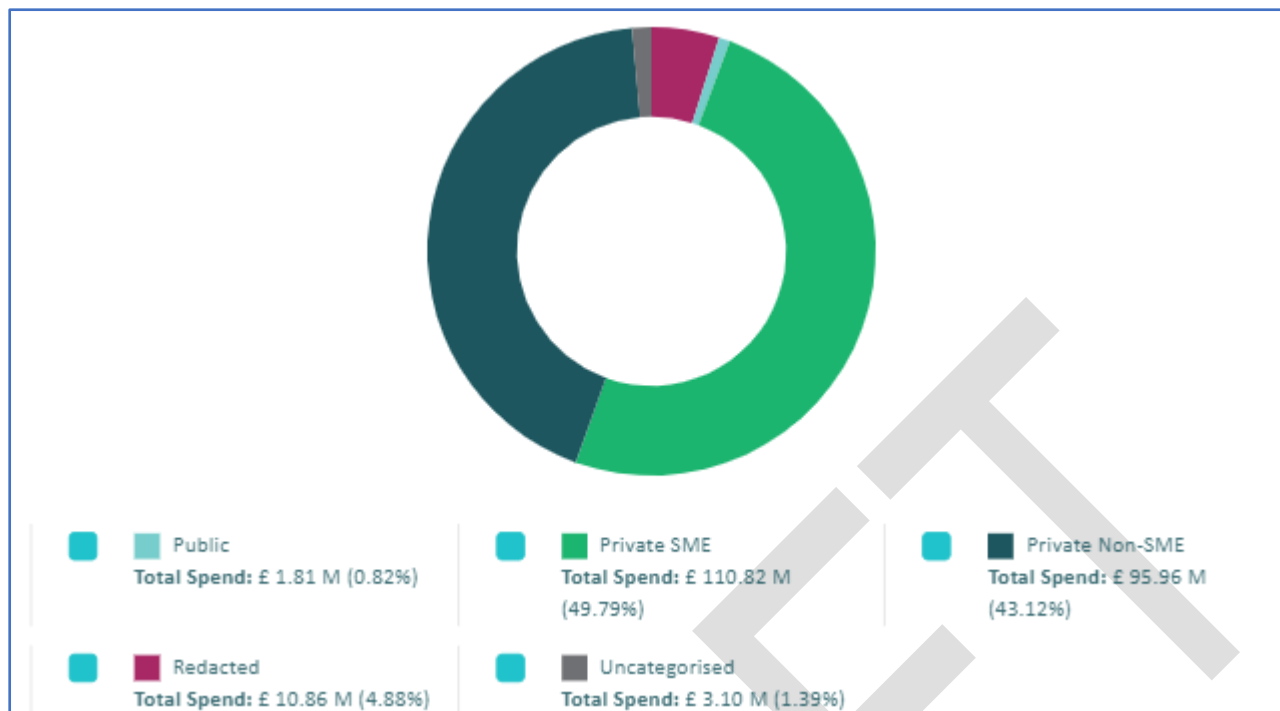
Spend by Category 2024/25



Spend 2021 to 2026



Supplier Size 2024/25



Supplier Region 2024/25

