

Social Policy Working Group

Tuesday, 17th June, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SOCIAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty);
The High Sherriff (Councillor McAteer); and
Alderman Copeland.
- In attendance: Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Ms. N. Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement
Services;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Mr. L. Murray, Strategic Category Manager;
Ms. S. O' Regan, Employability And Skills Manager;
Ms. C. Patterson, Policy and Programme Manager;
Inclusive Growth; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

It was agreed that the Deputy Lord Mayor be elected as Chairperson of the Working Group until the date of the of the Annual General Meeting of the Council in 2026.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor I. McLaughlin and Councillor B. Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th May, 2025, were approved.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Ethical Procurement Policy

The Strategic Category Manager delivered a presentation in respect of the above-mentioned matter. He outlined the legislative framework in which the Council currently operated, its constraints and then gave examples of models of best practice across the region. The Working Group was then provided with an overview of the processes which

the Council adhered to at a pre-tender, tender and at the management stage of a contract, together with the overarching framework of checks and balances applied corporately. He then summarised the findings of several procurement benchmarking exercises which had been undertaken to examine best corporate practices across the British Isles linked to ethical procurement policies.

The Strategic Category Manager pointed out that the aforementioned exercise had established that, whilst many organisations would adhere to the legislative obligations in their procurement practices, many did not, unlike the Council, apply additional safeguards or criteria. He added, however, that some overarching policies applied elsewhere, were more specific in their standards when compared to the Council's current Social Value Procurement Policy.

The Working Group was then provided with an overview of a proposed mechanism to oversee the development of a corporate Ethical Procurement Policy that would see the development of a range of measures. Such measures may include strengthened approaches to ensuring external supply chains and businesses adhered to ethical standards. Such standards would, typically, include labour rights, environmental sustainability, fair trade practices and human rights. Such a corporate policy would be mindful of the need for a proportionate approach, whilst supporting and developing local Small and Medium Enterprises and their capabilities.

A number of Members thanked officers for the work which had been undertaken in developing the principles to oversee the emerging policy. In response to a Member's question, the Deputy Chief Executive outlined the next steps in the development of the policy and she clarified the level of engagement that would be undertaken, particularly with Small and Medium Enterprises in any development of the policy.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to approve the emerging principles to oversee the development of an Ethical Procurement Policy for the Council.

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th June with a view that it endorse the Working Group's decision to enable the further development of the policy.

Chairperson