

To: Cabinet
Date: 16 November 2022
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Corporate Procurement Strategy 2022-2025

| Summary and recommendations | |
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| Purpose of report: | To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision |
| Key decision: | No |
| Scrutiny Lead Member: | Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton, Scrutiny Committee Chair |
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management |
| Corporate Priority: | All |
| Policy Framework: | Council Strategy 2020-24 |
| Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report. | |

| Appendices | |
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| Appendix A | Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee |

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 07 November 2022 to consider a report on the Procurement Strategy 2022-2025. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 16 November 2022, recommends that Cabinet approves the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2022-2025.

Summary and recommendations

2. Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report. He explained that it set out the Council's ambitions to add value to the local economy; to reduce the carbon footprint; to support local skills; and to ensure workers are paid decently. Cllr Turner also explained that, whilst there was increased granularity in this strategy compared to earlier iterations, particularly around social value and in equality,

diversity, and inclusion, the strategy was deliberately high level rather than a detailed action plan.

3. Annette Osbourne, Procurement Manager, also attended and answered the Committee's questions. She reminded the Committee that the strategy was an external-facing document.
4. The Committee commended the strategy's emphasis on social value and sustainable procurement. However, it noted the absence of reference to international dimensions of the Council's supply chains and suggested that it could be improved by mentioning them.

Recommendation 1: That the Council gives consideration to exploring how the it could work with independent labour monitoring organisations to ensure the international elements of supply chains are monitored, specifically relating to human rights and labour rights.

Recommendation 2: That the Council gives consideration to referring explicitly in the strategy to the Council's commitment to delivering ethical and sustainable objectives in the international elements of its supply chains.

5. The Committee made reference to other councils having adopted ethical codes of conduct for their suppliers and suggested that it should be explored if the Council should also do so, for both tendering and contract management.

Recommendation 3: That the Council gives consideration to adopting an ethical code of conduct for the purposes of contracts, such as the Ethical Trading Initiative's base code.

6. The Committee recognised that the Council had a leadership role in the delivery of an inclusive economy. The Committee suggested reference could be made to the Council's keenness for the Oxford Living Wage being adopted more widely amongst employers across the City, including in the universities and constituent colleges.

Recommendation 4: That the Council gives consideration to how, through the strategy and more widely, the Council can promote its commitment to, and encouragement of, partner organisations adopting the Oxford Living Wage.

7. The Committee's attention was drawn to the 'End Fire and Rehire' motion passed by Council on 22 March 2022 whereby it resolved "For the review of future contracts, contract renewals and procurement to seek to include a commitment for employers to not use or threaten Fire and Rehire, as part of their social clause." The Committee recognised the intention of the strategy not to be overly detailed, and whilst it noted that such a commitment was already part of the Council's approach, the Committee considered it would be helpful to state this explicitly in the strategy itself.

Recommendation 5: That the Council gives consideration to referencing the discouragement of Fire and Rehire in the strategy, as part of the commitment to good quality employment practices.

8. The Committee recognised that issues related to trade union recognition were not entirely clear cut, given the Council’s commitment to working with small and independent organisations as well as larger ones, but suggested that it would be appropriate for reference to be made to the issue of trade union recognition within the strategy.

Recommendation 6: That the Council gives consideration to promoting trade union recognition within the social value element of the strategy.

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