
AMBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS GUIDANCE

For Officers — Municipal Year 2026

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1. Introduction

This guidance is issued by the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to assist all officers of Ambridge District Council in complying with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (Appendix 3 to the Constitution) and the Procurement Act 2023, which came into full effect on 24 February 2025. It replaces the Procurement Guidance issued in 2024.

All officers involved in commissioning or procuring goods, services, or works on behalf of the Council must read and comply with this guidance. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action and may expose the Council to legal challenge, financial loss, or reputational damage.

2. Key Principles

All procurement activity by the Council must comply with the following mandatory principles derived from the Procurement Act 2023:

Value for money — achieving the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay

Transparency — publishing procurement information as required by the Act and the Council's Publication Scheme

Integrity — ensuring all decisions are taken honestly and impartially, free from conflicts of interest

Fair treatment — treating all potential suppliers equally and without discrimination

Non-discrimination — ensuring procurement does not discriminate on grounds of nationality or

other protected characteristics

Equal treatment — applying the same standards consistently across all procurement exercises

3. Procurement Thresholds and Methods

Value of Contract	Procurement Method	Approval Required	Advertising
Up to £5,000	Direct award	Budget Holder	Not required
£5,001–£25,000	Minimum 3 written quotes	Budget Holder + Finance	Not required
£25,001–£100,000	Minimum 5 written quotes or mini-competition	Director + S151	Council website
£100,001–£213,477 (services/supplies)	Formal tender process	Cabinet (if key decision)	Find a Tender + website
Above £213,477 (services/supplies)	Full OJEU/Act compliant process	Cabinet	Find a Tender Service
Above £5,372,000 (works)	Full Act compliant process	Cabinet	Find a Tender Service

Note: These thresholds are reviewed annually by the Cabinet Office. Officers must check for current thresholds before commencing any procurement exercise.

4. The Procurement Cycle

4.1 Planning

Before commencing any procurement, the responsible officer must complete a Procurement Planning Form (available on the intranet). This form captures the business need, the market assessment, the proposed route to market, the evaluation criteria, the commercial strategy, and the equality impact. For contracts above £100,000, the form must be approved by the Director and the Procurement team.

4.2 Specification

A clear and unambiguous specification or statement of requirements must be prepared before going to market. Specifications must describe the outputs or outcomes required rather than prescribing how they are to be achieved, wherever possible. Specifications must not be written around a particular product or supplier.

4.3 Evaluation

All tenders must be evaluated against pre-disclosed award criteria. The weighting of criteria must be published in the tender documents and must not be changed after tenders have been received. Evaluation panels must include at least three officers; where a contract is above £200,000, a Member observer shall be invited.

4.4 Award and Standstill

For contracts above the relevant thresholds, a mandatory standstill period of 8 working days applies between notifying the outcome and entering into the contract. During this period, unsuccessful tenderers may challenge the decision. Officers must not make any commitment to the winning supplier during the standstill period.

5. Conflicts of Interest

All officers involved in a procurement exercise must complete a Conflicts of Interest Declaration before the exercise commences. Any actual or potential conflict must be reported immediately to the Procurement Manager and the Monitoring Officer. Officers with a declared conflict must be excluded from the evaluation process.

6. Social Value

In accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the Council's Social Value Policy 2026, all procurements above £100,000 must include a social value element in the evaluation criteria, weighted at a minimum of 10%. Officers should refer to the Social Value Evaluation Guide on the intranet when designing social value questions.

7. Contact and Support

The Procurement team provides advice and support on all aspects of procurement. Contact: procurement@ambridge.gov.uk or extension 5420. Training is available via the Council's learning management system.

Issued by Janet Simmons, Section 151 Officer, and Andrew Osei, Monitoring Officer. June 2026. Review date: June 2028.