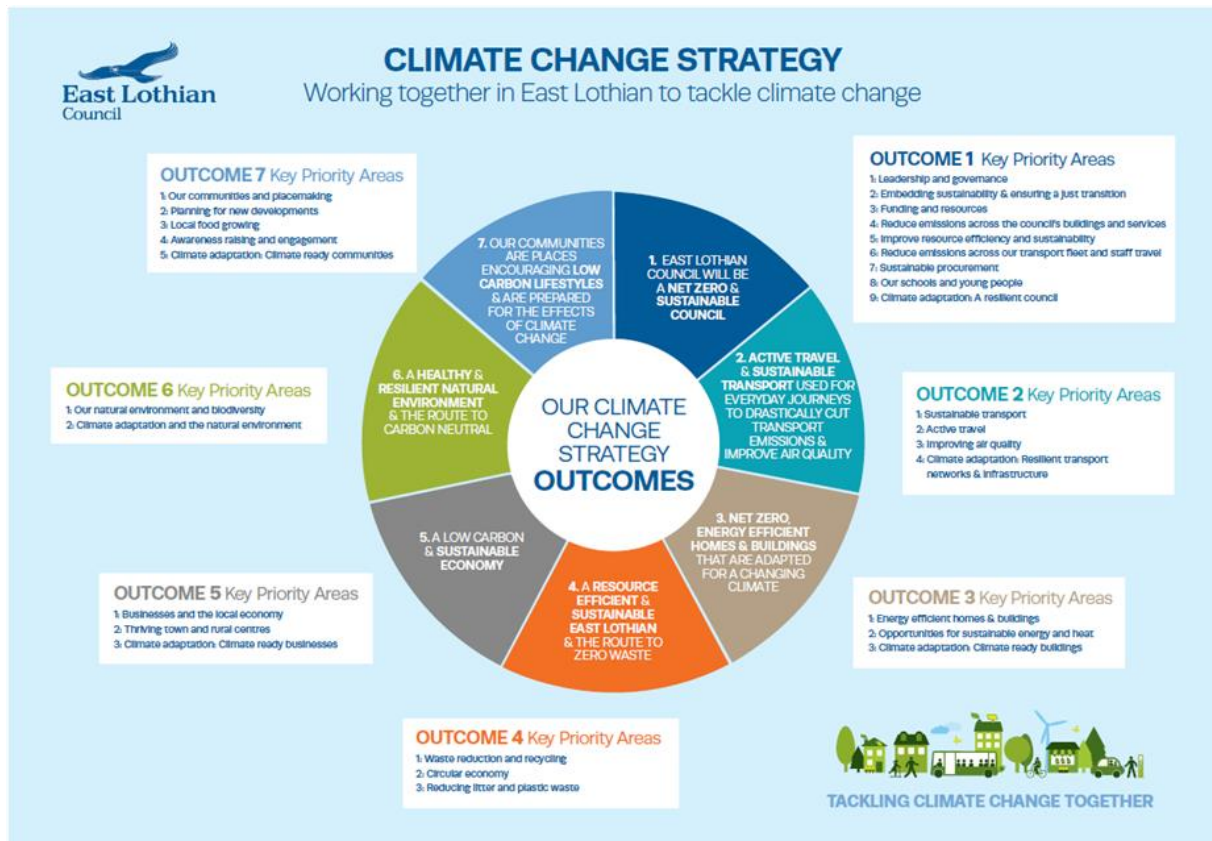


East Lothian Council Sustainable Procurement Policy



Introduction

East Lothian Council was assisted through Interreg NSR ProCirc mentoring support to develop a [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#), with a focus on minimising the environmental impact of the local authority's consumption while maximising the benefits to the local area ([link](#)).

It is envisioned that the policy will allow the service users to embed sustainability into tenders with changes rolled out in phases to ensure a smooth transition for staff and service users and maximise engagement from suppliers.

Procurement Process

The procurement process followed the stages of the Scottish Government's [Procurement Journey](#). [Tools](#) such as Life Cycle Impact Mapping and the Sustainability Test were used to capture and assess risks and opportunities in terms of environmental impact.

Results

Mikel developed East Lothian's waste management contract in partnership with Waste Services department for a kerbside household recycling service shortly after the policy was implemented. East Lothian Council successfully applied for a Recycling Infrastructure Fund with Zero Waste Scotland to support the implementation of this service. The infrastructure fund will be used to purchase vehicles and equipment such as containers and an electronic forklift to facilitate waste transfer. The service is projected to increase recycling by 2000 tonnes per annum, with a resultant carbon saving of approximately 1750 CO₂e per annum by December 2023 and a projected 5.6% increase in recycling rate. The service will be adapted to incorporate a collection of up to 1,500 tonnes of small WEEE and textiles per annum (pending successful implementation of Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme) with associated savings of 6,000-9,000 tonnes of CO₂e per annum by December 2026.

Mikel took part in a virtual cafe session with ProCirc partners in February 2021 to share his experiences of developing the household recycling tender. See the video on East Lothian Waste Services [here](#).

Lessons Learned

While historically local authorities have often had a focus on incorporating sustainability into high value contracts, there are many great opportunities to do so in relation to contracts under £50k. One great example in East Lothian was the purchase of new pianos and upcycling the old ones to make a bar for serving drinks in various settings.

Within the public sector weighting for all environmental criteria is typically 5% of the overall scoring for tenders with a value of less than £50,000. Whereas, for tenders over £50,000, typical section weighting for sustainability is 5% with another 5% allocated to community benefits. Mikel acknowledges that it is much more effective to develop the specification to take account of sustainability from the beginning and that sustainability is embedded throughout the contract. However, in reality, successful implementation can depend on organisation culture. For example, there might be a perception of increased cost and worries about delivery best value if sustainability section weighting was say 20% instead of 5%.

To implement a potential solution to these issues Mikel discussed an opportunity with senior management to differentiate between criteria relating to product / service being delivered and the performance of the supplier. Guidance could refer to both Government Buying Standards and EU GPP criteria in 'raising the bar' on environmental performance through specification of goods and services. This means that weightings can then reflect key requirements relating to the product/service being procured. 'Blanket' 10% weighting may not be required – weightings will reflect priority intended outcomes in a relevant and proportionate manner. Focus can then be given to energy efficiency, emissions reduction, waste reduction, etc in line with East Lothian Council policy on both climate change and procurement.

Capacity Building Internal Challenges

When implementing a third or fourth generation, it is important to support the internal client in maximising the benefits of new, innovative approaches, such as embedding sustainability.

To do so, you need a sustainability champion to meet regularly with internal staff to maintain momentum. Often the focus on sustainability comes from operational level, but top-down support from senior management is critical to progression. Changing the viewpoint of service managers is important. There is a need to upskill key people involved in drafting the specification. It is also very important that someone has responsibility within each team to embed sustainability. Procurement team & sustainability officer liaison is very important.

The next step is to upskill procurement managers, senior management and service managers, utilising resources such as the Climate Literacy course from Scottish Government and the Circular Procurement e-learning resource provided through ProCirc.