

Cabinet

8 September 2026

Additional Procurement Pipeline Report – more than £500k (2026-27) and Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025-2026 For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Clifford, Resources & Finance

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:

S Cremer - Director, Resources

Report author and job title: Richard Freed, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement

Email: richard.freed@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Key Decisions

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

1. Executive summary (maximum of 500)

The Dorset Council budget for 2026/27 was approved by Full Council on 10 February 2026. A Procurement Pipeline Report for activity more than £500k for 2026–27 was approved by Cabinet on 19 May 2026. This paper follows on from those approvals and seeks Cabinet approval to launch additional procurement activity not covered in the May 2026 report, and to approve the Council's Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for 2025–2026. It also supports transparency by identifying expected tender activity where these are known in advance. This paper has historically proceeded to Cabinet twice a year and its purpose is as follows.

For procurement activity, a Key Decision, which requires Cabinet prior approval is a proposed procurement with financial cost or saving to the council of more than £500k. This report provides notice of the additional planned / known procurement activities that will need Cabinet prior Key Decision approval for 2026-27 and onwards. The Commercial & Procurement Service has worked with colleagues across the Directorates and reviewed the contract management system to establish

an additional procurement programme for 2026-27 and onwards. Procurement activities, within that programme, that are known / likely to exceed the £500k Key Decision threshold are set out in Appendix 1 for Cabinet's consideration.

Under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA), the Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) provision requires all commercial organisations with an annual turnover of £36 million or more to publish a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement each year. This report provides the annual update of the Council's Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for the financial year 2025–2026. The Council publishes an annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement, consistent with the principles of section 54 of the MSA and its commitment to transparent and ethical supply chains.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the contents of this report in respect of proposed additional more than £500k procurement activity for 2026-27 that are listed in Appendix 1 and the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement and to approve and agree:

2.1.1 the commencement of each of the procurement procedures (or variation) listed in Appendix 1 (subject to an approved and available budget, business case) to the Report.

2.1.2 to delegate authority to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder, after consultation with the relevant Director to make the following decisions:

2.1.2.1 To agree final procurement documentation developed and refined within the broad scope of the procurement briefing notes (available on request)

2.1.2.2 To agree contract award subject to an approved and available budget (through a recommendation to award report provided the tender outcome is within + 5% of the budget agreed with Finance)

2.1.2.3 To note that approval of procurement activity within Appendix 1 includes authority to establish, join or utilise framework agreements, dynamic markets, and similar procurement arrangements where identified in the supporting procurement briefing note, together with the subsequent award of call-off contracts and associated agreements in accordance with the Council's rules.

2.1.2.4 Approve the draft Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025-2026 for publication at Appendix 2.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Additional Procurement Pipeline: Cabinet is required to approve all Key Decisions with financial consequences of more than £500k. It is good governance therefore to provide Cabinet with a summary of all proposed procurements, that individually are estimated to be a total value of more than £500k, prior to procurement procedures formally commencing.
- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to delegate authority to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder (in consultation with the relevant Executive Director) to agree final procurement documentation to be used for each of the procurements listed in Appendix 1. Those procurement documents will be developed and refined, based on the information and scope set out within each of the procurement briefing notes (prepared by service officer leads in advance of this report, reviewed by the Director of Resources and Portfolio Holder and available on request). The final procurement documents may include refinements to the scope and description, term or value of the contract to be procured, or the route to market, to take account of up-to-date information including relating to the Council's transformation programme.
- 3.3 Cabinet is asked to note that while delegation of authority is granted, it is not mandatory to exercise it, and there are circumstances where it might be prudent to bring a Key Decision outlined in this paper back to Cabinet; for example, sensitive decisions, high value decisions, or decisions which would be outside of the scope of the delegation or beyond the scope of the original briefing note informing this report.
- 3.4 For the avoidance of doubt, whoever holds the delegation has authority to make the final decision; whether to decide or refer a matter back to Cabinet.
- 3.5 Whoever holds the delegation must exercise it in consultation with named consultees. They may also consult with other members such as informal cabinet or professional and service officers. The report enables Cabinet to identify whether any reports for procurement activities should be brought to Cabinet for specific executive decision, otherwise they will be dealt with under the delegation outlined.
- 3.6 Modern Slavery Transparency Statement: Publishing a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement on an annual basis demonstrates the Council's continued commitment to reducing the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking in its supply chains.

4. The report

- 4.1 Additional Procurement Pipeline: This report provides for Cabinet consideration, in Appendix 1, additional procurement activity within the 2026-2027 procurement programme (and onwards), which are known/likely to secure contracts

exceeding the £500k threshold (or variations). The Council maintains a pipeline of planned procurement activity to support good governance, market engagement, budget planning and delivery of value for money. The Council is nevertheless not obliged to launch the procurements listed or award a contract. The list at Appendix 1 should be read as an indicative pipeline: individual procurements will still be subject to the appropriate business case, budget confirmation, service approval, legal advice where required, and compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Procurement law and best practice place a greater emphasis on transparency, planning and early visibility of contracting activity. The pipeline supports market preparation by giving suppliers a forward view of likely opportunities. Where appropriate, services will be expected to consider early market engagement, suitable public sector frameworks, internal collaborative opportunities, social value, modern slavery risk, climate and environmental considerations, and proportionate contract management arrangements.

4.2 Where Cabinet approves the establishment of a framework agreement, dynamic market or similar contracting arrangement, that approval is intended to cover the creation of the arrangement up to the maximum value and scope. Subject to compliance with the Council's rules, individual call-off contracts, mini-competitions, direct awards, statements of work and task orders awarded under such approved arrangements do not normally require a separate Cabinet decision where they remain within the approved scope, value and governance framework.

4.3 Dorset Council continues its wider organisational transformation and modernisation programme to support the development of a modern, sustainable unitary authority. As services evolve, procurements will where appropriate consider future operating models and seek to build in proportionate commercial flexibility, including suitable break clauses, extension options, mechanisms to scale services up or down, collaboration opportunities, and contract provisions that support organisational change. This approach helps ensure that contracts remain fit for purpose throughout their term while supporting value for money and reducing avoidable future procurement activity. Alongside this transition, the Council will continue to review and update supporting commercial documentation, including administrative changes to the Contract Procedure Rules, Commercial Strategy and associated guidance, to ensure alignment with legislative changes, organisational priorities and lessons learned through implementation.

4.4 Modern Slavery Transparency Statement: The MSA was introduced in 2015 to provide victims of modern slavery with greater protections and police with greater powers. Section 54, The Transparency in Supply Chains Provision (TISC) of the MSA requires commercial entities with an annual turnover of £36m or more to publish annually a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement. Appendix 2 provides the proposed Statement for financial year 2025-2026 for Cabinet's consideration, as produced by a cross-directorate grouping, as a revision to the previous published

Statement. The statement summarises the Council's approach to identifying and managing modern slavery risks

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 Procurement Forward Plan: An alternative approach is for Services to continue submitting separate and standalone Key Decision procurement reports to Cabinet for approval. Services can do so, outside of the twice-yearly cycle and for decisions that they deem require additional scrutiny. It is not recommended to delay approving the additional pipeline as it could delay service delivery, reduce transparency over planned procurement activity, and limit the Council's ability to undertake early market engagement or secure value for money. Individual procurement options, including framework call-off, open competition, collaboration, contract extension or modification where lawful, will be considered as part of each procurement strategy.

5.2 Modern Slavery: Relating to modern slavery risks and actions, Cabinet may wish to consider whether the issue of a modern slavery statement warrants a dedicated, standalone report, given its significance and cross-cutting implications. Combining the matters represents a proportionate approach and reflects the relationship between procurement governance and ethical supply chains.

5.3 No other alternative options have been identified at this stage. The proposed approach is considered the most appropriate to meet the Council's objectives, ensure compliance with legal and procurement requirements, and manage associated risks effectively. The decision reflects current operational needs and strategic priorities.

6. Legal considerations

6.1 The Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the MSA 2015 and other relevant legislation, and procurement laws e.g. Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (for pre 2025 contracts) and Procurement Act 2023. Dorset Council's Legal Services have been consulted to ensure that procurement practices, supplier engagement, and policy commitments are aligned with statutory duties and evolving case law. It is recognised that some legislative areas remain untested, and the potential for legal challenge cannot be fully eliminated. The Council will continue to monitor legal developments and seek advice to mitigate risk and uphold compliance across its operations and supply chains.

7. Financial implications

7.1 Procurement Pipeline: Inclusion within the pipeline does not in itself approve expenditure. Funding and affordability will be confirmed through the relevant business case, budget approval and governance processes prior to commencement or variation. The following will be considered by the relevant accountable service project team as part of the business case / procurement project initiation and

sourcing report and rationale for each procurement: how the contract and supplier(s) will be effectively managed to deliver saving targets that are incorporated into the financial plan; governance; whether full funding is available in the budget provision, after savings have been accounted for (and incorporating break points and scale up / down provisions due to budget changes in future years); and the intended best approach to assess the contract performance and supplier relationship to manage expectations in respect of annual price increase amid a higher level of financial pressures that has not been experienced for many years.

7.2 Modern Slavery: No additional financial implications. This is a report in respect of a Statement which reflects on the Council's current position and outputs for financial year 2025-2026 regarding modern slavery.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1 Procurement Pipeline: To be considered by the relevant project team as part of the business case / procurement project initiation and sourcing report and rationale for each procurement if applicable. There are no direct environmental, climate or ecology implications arising from approval of the pipeline itself.

8.2 Modern Slavery: Not applicable. This is a report in respect of a Statement which reflects on the Council's current position and outputs for financial year 2025-2026 regarding modern slavery.

9. Well-being and health implications

9.1 Procurement Pipeline: to be considered by the relevant project team as part of the business case / procurement project initiation and sourcing report and rationale for each procurement if applicable. Approval of the pipeline does not create direct well-being or health implications.

9.2 Modern Slavery: Publishing annually a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement supports well-being and health implications within the Council's supply chains and wider communities, by ensuring transparency of the Council's policy and approach to responding to and mitigating the risk of modern slavery.

10. Other implications

10.1 None, although wider implications will be considered by the relevant project teams for each relevant procurement and for modern slavery by the relevant leads.

11. Risk implications

11.1 Procurement Pipeline: The level of risk is to be considered by the relevant project team as part of the business case / procurement project initiation and sourcing report and rationale for each procurement. The purpose is to ensure that any potential issues are anticipated and mitigated to minimise their impact on the Council's objectives and operations. Effective risk management

supports the Council in achieving its goals while ensuring compliance with regulations and maintaining financial stability. Financial pressures to the Council's budgets remain. All decisions and recommendations must therefore be mindful of the actual and potential impact of financial pressures, especially when committing future funding. Additionally, it is recognised that where legislation is untested and there will be legal challenges across the public sector. The Council has dedicated legal advice to minimise the risk although the risk cannot be eliminated. The possibility of facing such challenges can never be completely removed. Risks will be mitigated through procurement planning, Cabinet approval where required, legal and finance input, suitable route-to-market analysis, and contract management arrangements for individual procurements. The current risk is assessed as Medium because the pipeline includes high-value and potentially complex procurements subject to market, affordability, legal and delivery risks. The residual risk is assessed as Low on the basis that each procurement will be subject to confirmed funding, proportionate procurement planning, legal and financial input, and appropriate contract-management arrangements.

11.2 Modern Slavery: Dorset Council is committed to preventing modern slavery and human trafficking in all aspects of its operations and supply chains. We recognise our responsibility to uphold ethical standards and safeguard vulnerable individuals through robust procurement practices, staff training, and partnership working. This statement outlines our approach to identifying risks, promoting transparency, and ensuring compliance with the MSA.

11.3 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

12. Equalities

12.1 Procurement Pipeline: To be considered by the relevant project team as part of the business case / procurement project initiation and sourcing report and rationale for each procurement if applicable. Approval of the pipeline does not in itself change any policy, service or eligibility criteria.

12.2 Modern Slavery: Publishing an annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement is a positive policy in that it is setting out the Council's commitment to opposing Modern Slavery and acting ethically with integrity and transparency.

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1: 2026-27 Additional Procurement Pipeline where the contract value is expected to exceed £500k.

13.2 Appendix 2: Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025-2026.

14. Background papers

14.1 [Decision - Procurement Pipeline Report - over £500k \(2026-27\) - Dorset Council](#)

15. Report sign-off

15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)