SUPPLY CHAIN SUSTAINABILITY SCHOOL

Procurement Leadership Group Meeting (Q2)

18th September 2025

Meeting Actions

Actions for group members:

- Prepare and submit business planning proposals using the template form by Monday 17th November 2025
- Provide feedback on the proposed CSRD/UK SRS e-learning module by Monday 17th November 2025
- If you were unable to attend the meeting and are interested in volunteering for user testing of the Sustainability Assessment, please confirm your involvement with Sarah Chatfield by Monday 17th November 2025

Welcome and Agenda

Sarah Chatfield began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and providing an overview of the agenda for the meeting.

Priority: Understanding and Managing Legislative Complexity

Sarah shared progress to date and planned activities relating to this priority:

- Deliver a virtual conference focusing on The Procurement Act 2023
    - Virtual conference delivered 24th July 2025, 10:00-12:00
    - 1,301 registered; 605 attended (47% attendance) — note: this level of attendance is fairly typical for online public events on the School
    - Q&A was highly engaging and well-received
    - Content and speakers praised for clarity and usefulness, especially practical sections like the Procurement Act and SMEs/VCSEs
    - Suggestions included more regular updates, simpler content for non-specialists, and greater coverage of social value
- Deliver a webinar on the Building Safety Act in collaboration with Building Safety Regulator (BSR)
    - This has been scheduled for December 2025, we will begin planning in earnest early October
- Adopting the Irish School's CSRD e-learning module for the UK School

- o The School reviewed the current CSRD e-learning module in the Irish school, based on the Voluntary SME Standard
- o Due to ongoing changes, including the EU Omnibus package and updates to reporting standards (first vote expected October 2025; updated standard expected January/February 2026), translating the existing module for the UK was felt could be considered premature
- o In addition, the UK SRS consultation recently closed; standards are expected to be published in December 2025 and implemented from 2026
- o Proposed solution: defer the e-learning module to 2026–27 and collaborate with the Irish school to develop a combined module covering both UK SRS and CSRD. This will help organisations operating across both jurisdictions understand similarities and differences and support compliance. Collaboration leverages expertise and optimises budgets
- o A vote conducted during the meeting showed majority support for the proposed solution. Members not present can provide feedback via the circulated meeting minutes before finalising the route forward
- Create an e-learning module focusing on The Procurement Act 2023
  - o This activity is currently tentative, pending mid-year budget assessments expected autumn 2025
  - o Budget availability will be determined based on the outcome of the CSRD/UK SRS e-learning module discussions
  - o Once the CSRD/UK SRS approach is finalised, budget adjustments will be made to assess feasibility and confirm development of the Procurement Act 2023 module

Priority: Early Supplier Involvement

Sarah shared progress to date and planned activities relating to this priority:

- Deliver a webinar on Early Supplier Involvement (ESI) in collaboration with Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)
  - o Scheduled for March 2026

- o Engagement with CECA has slowed; support from the procurement group was requested to reconnect with relevant contacts to help progress webinar planning

Priority: Sustainability Assessment Standard

Sarah shared progress to date and planned activities relating to this priority:

- Continue supporting the development of the Sustainability Assessment in collaboration with Once for All, and, once launched, support its management
  - o Amendments following industry review have been completed; platform configuration and verifier guidance queries are being finalised. Once complete, the full assessment content will be circulated to leadership groups
  - o Development time is allocated for Q1 2026 (January–March), with a planned launch in Q2 2026 (April–June)
  - o An open feedback channel will be maintained through Autumn/Winter 2025 and into Q1 2026, allowing minor amendments during development
  - o User testing: volunteers from the group, including previously expressed participants and additional members who volunteered during the meeting, will support interface testing. The opportunity to participate remains open for those unable to attend

Priority: Common Assessment Standard (CAS)

Sarah shared progress to date and planned activities relating to this priority:

- CAS version 5.0 launched in July 2025. Sarah will catch up with Build UK to determine if further involvement from the School is required

Discussion: Further Reforms to Public Procurement Consultation

The group discussed the consultation, which closed on 5 September 2025. Key points included SME/VCSE targets, payment transparency, and exclusion of suppliers from large contracts for non-compliance:

- SME targets were generally seen as helpful to maintain engagement, though challenges exist around VCSE capacity, regional coverage, and potential unintended consequences

- Publishing payment data was supported in principle, but concerns were raised about clarity, practical usefulness, and risks for smaller suppliers affected by delays from larger organisations

- Excluding suppliers from large contracts could improve payment practices but may unfairly penalise smaller organisations beyond their control

- Overall, participants agreed on the value of measurement and monitoring but emphasised balancing ambition with practical realities.

Discussion: UK Sustainability Reporting Standards Public Consultation

The group discussed potential benefits, challenges, and support measures related to UK SRS, noting alignment with CSRD in Europe:

- Benefits include providing a consistent reporting framework, increasing visibility of performance, and integrating sustainability into organisational decision-making

- Challenges include collecting data from SMEs in supply chains, updating internal systems and processes, and ensuring a level playing field amid inconsistent compliance

- Suggested support includes developing e-learning modules, providing practical guidance to supply chains, liaising with intermediary organisations to reduce duplicate reporting, and engaging SMEs to understand challenges and feedback

- While the consultation initially focuses on public sector organisations, reporting expectations are likely to cascade across the supply chain, impacting private sector participants as well.

Update: Business Planning Proposals

- Members are encouraged to submit proposals in advance using the linked template

- Proposals should focus on key challenges anticipated in 2026–27, such as upcoming reporting standards in the UK and EU, which could include engagement with SMEs through the School to fully understand their challenges

- Group chairs and managers will review submissions to identify key themes, overlaps, and opportunities for collaboration across other School groups

- A shortlist of feasible proposals will be circulated in advance of the 11th December 2025 meeting for review and discussion

- The process is intended as an early notice to allow members time to consider how the School can maximise impact and address organisational challenges for the coming year.
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- The process is intended as an early notice to give members time to consider how the School can maximise impact and address organisational challenges for the coming year

Any Other Business (AOB)

The following points were discussed under AOB:

- PlantWorx:
  - Alex Priddle (Prolectric) submitted an AOB in advance of the meeting to inform the group of the School's sponsorship of the Site Sustainability Showcase at PlantWorx on 23–25 September. Members interested in attending PlantWorx were asked to contact Yasmin Chatt or Sarah Chatfield via email
- Summit Feedback:
  - Yasmin Chatt (the School) noted the summit appeared to be very successful; final statistics and data will be shared once available
- Q3 Meeting:
  - The group discussed the possibility of holding the Q3 meeting in person at Cadent's facilities in Coventry
  - Initial interest was expressed by several members, and a tentative meeting space has been identified, but assume the meeting will be held online unless we inform you otherwise