# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **The Way Forward for Procurement Reform in Wales** |
| **DATE** | **18 August 2021** |
| **BY** | **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government** |

Procurement is one of the most important levers we have to support the more equal, more sustainable and more prosperous Wales we all want to see over the next few years. It can help us build the modern infrastructure we need to get to net zero; it can support a green recovery and it can contribute to our shared ambition for a Wales of Fair Work.

As a Welsh Government we are committed to harnessing those opportunities and to working with partners across Wales to develop a modern and sustainable approach to procurement.

Procurement is a complex landscape and one that is changing following the UK’s departure from the European Union. As a Welsh Government we have been engaging with stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors, to understand how reform needs to take place with consideration given to what changes need to take place at a UK level and what needs to happen using legislation developed here in Wales.

The Welsh Government has always been clear - decisions on the policy outcomes we want from procurement should only be made here in Wales. We have very different views to the UK Government about both the value and the role that things like fair work can and should play in procurement and it is why we have been preparing an ambitious Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill that will help enshrine those commitments in law.

Nevertheless, there is an opportunity to use UK Government legislation as we leave the EU to reform the basic processes underpinning procurement. The UK Government has set out its proposals in the UK Government’s Green Paper [“*Transforming Public Procurement”*](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/green-paper-transforming-public-procurement) and has presented Welsh Government with the option to use Westminster legislation to reform those processes.

The Welsh Government has considered the way forward. In doing that we have sought very clear safeguards that in joining UK legislation we would not fetter our ability to achieve the important policy outcomes we seek through the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill. That is why we have sought written guarantees from the UK Government along these lines, ones I am pleased to say that have now been received from the UK Cabinet Office.

Having considered the risks, benefits, resources, and the assurances provided, I have therefore decided that provision for the Welsh Contracting Authorities to be made within the UK Government’s Bill.

To help ensure that any reform fully reflects the Welsh Ministers’ policy priorities for public procurement, my officials will be working closely with the UK’s Procurement Reform Bill team to develop the Bill, making sure the commitments we have secured are honoured.

In the meantime, retained EU law will continue to provide the statutory framework for procurement in Wales. This legislation will remain effective until any new legislation comes into existence, thereby providing continuity and certainty to both buyers and suppliers.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.