Improving every journey

Delivery plan
Supported Businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises

Published 30 October 2026



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

1. Introduction 3

2. Strategic approach to engagement 3

3. Procurement contracts awarded (April 2025 – March 2026) 5

4. Conclusion 5

Appendix 1 – Historic Data – Procurement Contracts 6

Executive Summary

Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) is committed to delivering inclusive, sustainable economic outcomes across Scotland's island communities. In alignment with Scottish Government priorities, we have developed a structured plan to enhance the involvement of Supported Businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in our procurement activity.

This plan outlines our strategic approach, engagement mechanisms, and performance monitoring framework to ensure that local and regional businesses, particularly those operating within island economies, are supported to access and benefit from CalMac contract opportunities. Through targeted outreach, transparent procurement practices, and robust governance, we aim to strengthen our supply chain, improve service quality, and contribute to the long-term resilience of the communities we serve.

1. Introduction

As the operator of lifeline ferry services across Scotland's west coast, CalMac plays a pivotal role in supporting the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of island communities. Our operations are not only essential for connectivity, but they are also a catalyst for inclusive growth, local resilience, and sustainable development.

In line with our obligations under the CHFS3 contract and the Scottish Government's priorities on sustainable procurement, CalMac is committed to ensuring that our procurement practices actively support the involvement of Supported Businesses and SMEs. These organisations are integral to the vibrancy of local economies, particularly in remote and island areas, and their participation in our supply chain contributes directly to service quality, innovation, and community value.

This section outlines our strategic approach to engaging Supported Businesses and SMEs, detailing the mechanisms we will use to improve access to contract opportunities, the partnerships we will foster, and the governance structures we will implement to monitor progress. It reflects our broader commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring that our procurement activity delivers meaningful benefits for the communities we serve.

2. Strategic approach to engagement

CalMac adopts a structured and proactive approach to engaging Supported Businesses and SMEs, aligned with Scottish Government priorities on sustainable procurement and inclusive economic development. Our plans include:

– A framework for engaging with Supported Businesses and SMEs, including where such involvement may provide opportunities to improve the efficiency, economy and quality of services.

– Specific targets for engagement, supported by a monitoring regime to ensure delivery against objectives.

– A focus on local and regional businesses, with particular emphasis on supporting island economies.

Improving Supplier Access

To ensure equitable access to contract opportunities, we:

– Publish contract notices on Public Contracts Scotland.

– Enable SMEs, third sector organisations and Supported Businesses to compete for work, either as contractors or sub-contractors.

– Reserve contracts exclusively for Supported Businesses where appropriate and in line with Regulation 21 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

We currently engage with Royal British Legion Industries T/A Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company and CCL (North) Ltd under these provisions.

Where feasible, we structure procurements into smaller, accessible lots to encourage SME participation.

Targeted Supplier Engagement Programme

To support this approach, we created a targeted supplier engagement programme comprising:

– Supplier Forums: Annual forums hosted across key locations to identify and support potential suppliers from the SME and Supported Business sectors.

– Supplier Development Programme (SDP) Partnerships: CalMac work closely with SDP Scotland to promote contract opportunities and offer guidance on the bidding process.

– Proactive Identification and Outreach: CalMac maintain a database of Scottish and UK-wide Supported Businesses, including those listed on the Scottish Government's Supported Business Framework and through Social Enterprise Scotland. Businesses are proactively contacted with early notice of upcoming opportunities aligned to their capabilities.

Monitoring & Reporting Regime

We have a robust governance framework that ensures accountability and transparency in supplier engagement:

– Quarterly Reporting: Internal tracking of spend, supplier engagement activity, and contract outcomes.

– Annual Review: A publicly available progress report highlighting successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.

3. Procurement contracts awarded (April 2025 – March 2026)

During the financial year 2025/2026, we awarded a total of 108 contracts with a combined value of £71,750,404. A breakdown of these awards is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Procurement Exercises 2025/26

	Total Number of Contracts Awarded	Total Value of Contracts Awarded
Small/Medium Enterprise (SME)	83	£62,152,789.17
Large Enterprise	25	£9,577,615.74

4. Conclusion

This Delivery Plan sets out how we at CalMac will support increased participation by Supported Businesses and SMEs within our procurement activity, ensuring that the economic benefits of our operations are shared across the communities we serve.

Through targeted engagement, transparent procurement practices and proactive supplier development, we will continue to create opportunities for businesses of all sizes to participate in our supply chain. By working closely with Supported Businesses, SMEs, Supplier Development Programme Scotland and other key partners, we will help remove barriers to participation and encourage sustainable growth across Scotland's island and coastal economies.

Our approach includes:

- A structured supplier engagement and outreach programme.
- Increased visibility of contract opportunities through accessible procurement channels.
- Support for Supported Businesses through reserved contracts where appropriate.
- Ongoing collaboration with local and regional suppliers to strengthen community resilience.
- Transparent monitoring and reporting of supplier engagement and contract outcomes.

By embedding inclusive procurement practices into our operations, we will continue to maximise social and economic value, strengthen local supply chains, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the communities that rely on our services.

This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with procurement best practice and the evolving needs of Supported Businesses, SMEs and the communities we serve.

Appendix 1 – Historic Data – Procurement Contracts

During the financial year 2024/2025, we awarded a total of 170 contracts with a combined value of £18,219,206. A breakdown of these awards is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 2 – Procurement Exercises 2024/25

	Total Number of Contracts Awarded	Total Value of Contracts Awarded
Small/Medium Enterprise (SME)	117	£6,077,116
Large Enterprise	53	£12,142,089