



NEPO

Regional collaborative procurement

People Select Committee evidence | Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Introducing NEPO, our regional role, and how Stockton sits within the wider procurement family.

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What this evidence covers

A regional perspective, not an internal audit of Stockton's arrangements.

01 NEPO

02 Regional role

03 Stockton

04 Opportunities

The Committee asked for NEPO's role, how Stockton operates in the wider region, and any observations from that perspective.

The boundary is important

NEPO can explain the collaborative model, regional data and common good practice. Stockton's governance, constitution, internal resourcing and individual contract decisions remain matters for the Council's own officers and Members.



What NEPO is

A public-sector-owned route to collaboration, assurance and commercial leverage.

NEPO is a public buying organisation, governed by the public sector, for the public sector.

Our purpose

- deliver compliant routes to market
- unlock collective value and buying power
- reduce procurement complexity
- help public bodies achieve better outcomes

How we operate

- owned by and accountable to Member Authorities
- commercial solutions across goods, works and services
- shared digital platform and supplier support
- regional collaboration with national reach where appropriate

Procurement powered by people: commercial discipline, public purpose and practical delivery.



How NEPO sits in the regional procurement family

Local accountability remains with councils; NEPO provides the shared commercial infrastructure.



The model works when local knowledge and regional scale are both used deliberately.

NEPO does not replace the Council's role. It gives Stockton and other Member Authorities access to shared procurement infrastructure, market insight, routes to market and support that would be inefficient to replicate twelve times.



What NEPO delivers for Members

Focused on the region, strengthened by national scale.

Scale in two dimensions

MEMBER AUTHORITIES

Regional focus

£656m

Member Authority spend via NEPO solutions

£4.05m

Member rebate

£8.7m

ROI for Members

ASSOCIATE / AFFILIATE MEMBERS

National scale

£667m

Associate Member spend via NEPO solutions

627

active Associates

43

solutions accessed

Why this matters

Regional governance and accountability remain rooted in Member Authorities. Associate use brings wider supplier reach, market engagement and solution resilience. For Stockton, local ownership is supported by market presence beyond the region.



How Stockton works with NEPO

Stockton is part of a wider Member Authority system while retaining local decision-making.

Stockton uses NEPO in the same way as other Member Authorities: choosing collaborative routes where they support local need, value for money and compliance.

Stockton's role

- defines local service requirements and outcomes
- decides when collaboration is the right route
- manages local approvals and contract ownership
- draws on regional support where it adds value

NEPO's role

- provides routes to market and commercial assurance
- aggregates demand where the market responds better at scale
- supports suppliers through Open and NSPP
- shares practice across the twelve authorities
- commercialise to Associates and Affiliates

Open activity: 484 supplier registrations in the Stockton Borough Council area | 175 Council projects | 64 call-offs in the 2025/26 regional report



Observations from the regional perspective

The best procurement outcomes are created before tender and protected after award.

01

Early planning

Start with the outcome, route-to-market options and market conditions before drafting tender documents.

02

Proportionate route choice

Use NEPO, another framework, open tender or in-house provision where the route fits the requirement.

03

Supplier access

Make opportunities visible and usable for SMEs and regional suppliers without weakening compliance.

04

Social value

Use social value where it is relevant, measurable and capable of being delivered through the contract.

05

Contract management

Treat award as the start of delivery: KPIs, performance, change control and benefits tracking matter.

The regional opportunity is not simply to buy together; it is to learn together and shape better demand.



Opportunities for Stockton to consider

Practical areas where regional collaboration can support local priorities.

The question is never “NEPO or Stockton?” It is where local control and regional collaboration combine to deliver the best outcome.

01

Earlier route planning

Use NEPO insight before the route is fixed, especially for high-value or complex procurements.

02

Sharper aggregation choices

Aggregate where scale improves the market response; keep local flexibility where it matters.

03

Supplier confidence

Use Open and NSPP to make public procurement easier for local and regional suppliers to access.

04

Benefits after award

Strengthen contract management, social value delivery and benefits tracking.



NEPO's role

Support local decision-making with regional scale, public-sector governance and practical commercial assurance.

For Stockton, the strongest position is to retain clear local ownership while using NEPO deliberately where collaboration improves value, assurance, supplier access or delivery confidence.

Questions