

# West Berkshire Council Social Value Policy



West Berkshire  
COUNCIL

# INTRODUCTION

The goal of this policy is to generate greater positive economic, environmental and social outcomes for West Berkshire from the public contracts the Council commissions and tenders. It aims to achieve this by providing the principles that will allow Social Value considerations to be embedded in our procurement contracts. Finally, it enshrines a firm commitment to place Social Value at the heart of our procurement practice.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL VALUE?

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (“the Act”) places an obligation upon all Councils to consider how they can secure social, economic and environmental benefits at the pre-procurement stage of public services contracts. We want to go beyond that by asking that Social Value be demonstrated in all of our procurements, where relevant and proportional.

Reinforcing the work already started on Social Value nationally through the 2012 Social Value Act; the government has issued a new National Procurement Policy Statement that sets requirements for local authorities to consider the following national priority outcomes alongside any additional local priorities in their procurement activities:

- creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills
- tackling climate change and reducing waste
- improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience

Social value outcomes must be considered at the pre-procurement stage of a tender, they must be relevant and proportional to the contract in question and Councils must continue to observe equal access for suppliers.

The Act does not provide a definition of Social Value itself, so this policy will lay out West Berkshire Council’s local definition and the approach we choose to take. For us, Social Value is about maximising the wider benefit to be gained through meeting our needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the Council, but also to West Berkshire, it’s residents and the economy, whilst minimising the damage to the environment.

By adopting a Social Value Policy here in West Berkshire, we recognise there is significant scope to do things differently and make positive changes for the district as a whole by encouraging the creation of job opportunities for local people, supporting young people into apprenticeships and ensuring that local suppliers (and in particular SME businesses) are represented in the Council’s supply chain. Many opportunities also exist to innovate and generate environmental benefits in support of the delivery of the new Environment Strategy 2020 -2030.

The scope of this policy and the level of resulting change that could come as a consequence of having it in place cuts across all social, environmental and economic boundaries and is very much in line with the direction of travel overall of West Berkshire Council’s ambitions for the district.

***“we recognise there is significant scope to do things differently and make positive changes for the good of the district as a whole.”***

## PRINCIPLES

This policy creates a link between the strategic priorities of the Council and our procurement practice in order to ensure that our spending compliments those priorities and helps to deliver key outcomes. It is closely aligned with the Council Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and Environment Strategy, with a particular focus on the Council's aims of supporting everyone to meet their full potential, supporting businesses to start, develop and thrive and maintaining a green district.

We will realise Social Value in our procurement practises according to the following principles:

- Consider the Social Value Policy in all procurements
- Take a proportional and relevant approach to applying Social Value considerations
- Apply it in a way that generates positive outcomes without also creating barriers for SME and third sector suppliers
- Ensure transparency and equality of treatment in the application of the Social Value considerations

## COVID-19

The severe impact of Covid-19 upon national public health and the economy has worsened or exacerbated issues in many of the areas in which this policy aims to make positive contributions, such as employment and social inequality. Although the aims of the policy were highly relevant before the pandemic, it is now more important than ever to ensure that our procurements lead to the most beneficial possible local outcomes.



# PURPOSE OF THE POLICY: GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The purpose of this policy is for the Council's contracts to, where possible, contribute towards the following key areas:

## ECONOMIC

- Creating employment opportunities for local people
- Creating training and education opportunities for local people
- Supporting local micro, small and medium enterprises by increasing their opportunities to access our direct and indirect spend

## ENVIRONMENTAL

- Reducing carbon emissions to help achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and beyond
- Seeking to reduce air pollution or eliminate where possible
- Contributing to the protection, restoration and enhancement of West Berkshire's natural environment
- Resource efficiency and up to date processes for re-use and recycling
- Encouraging local innovation and skills to help tackle climate change in West Berkshire

## SOCIAL

- Supporting the reduction of social exclusion, isolation and inequalities
- Generating education, training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups excluded from the workplace.
- Designing services which take account of different needs including disadvantaged groups
- Engaging the local voluntary and community sector
- Generating positive health outcomes for local people



# IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL VALUE IN A PROCUREMENT

The key deliverables that the Council wishes to achieve are set out in the contract specification or scope of services or works. Inclusion of social value criteria in a tender process will add further economic, environment and social benefits to the service. This is known as 'Additionality' or 'Added Value' and would not have occurred without the inclusion of social value as part of the tender evaluation criteria.

For example, a specification may require a building contractor to be carbon neutral by 2030. If the contractor commits to reaching that requirement by this date this would not be added value. However if that contractor makes a voluntary commitment to be carbon neutral by 2025, this would be considered added value.

When it has been established that Social Value considerations should apply to a contract, the procuring officers should begin by thinking about the broad strategic themes that apply to it. From here relevant and proportionate outcomes should be identified that the procurement could contribute towards, and these should be embedded in the tender as questions.

For example, under the broad theme of 'promoting local employment' a relevant outcome might be more local people in employment. A practical question relating to this outcome is the number of local employees hired on a contract. In this example you would need to use a standardised definition of 'local'.

Flexibility and discretion is needed for procuring managers to be able to consider Social Value in a proportionate and transparent way. Therefore all decisions around weighting and indicators should be made on a case by case basis with a focus on achieving positive outcomes without creating barriers for suppliers.

The following steps should act as a guide for considering Social Value outcomes in a tender:

**Step 1:**  
Identify Council strategies and category plans relevant to the procurement

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**Step 2:**  
Identify relevant Social Value outcomes

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**Step 3:**  
Add evaluation questions to the tender

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**Step 4:**  
Define the weighting of those questions and publish as part of tender documentation

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**Step 5:**  
Tender evaluation process

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**Step 6:**  
Review and ongoing monitoring of outcomes and benefits

## REDUCING BARRIERS FOR SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises)

It is paramount that in implementing the Social Value Policy we do not make the bidding process onerous for SMEs or third sector organisations. The following should be considered to support small, medium and third sector suppliers:

- All information requested to underpin the bid should be relevant and necessary, avoiding requesting onerous amounts of information if possible
- Social Value evaluation questions should consider the size of the contract and not be written in a way that excludes smaller suppliers from providing effective answers
- Pre-tender consultation process and meet the buyer events to give bidders a chance to understand requirements of the tender as well as help shape the specification
- Examples of best practice to be shared with bidders

### IN SUMMARY

Third parties (such as suppliers) will be monitored as part of ongoing contract management by service areas on the delivery of the Social Value commitments that they have made to the Council. These commitments will be set out as key performance indicators. Any challenges forecast in the delivery of these commitments will initially be subject to discussion between service departments and the suppliers to see if there are any measures that can be put in place to aid the realisation of the agreed commitments. It may be necessary

in some instances to review the Social Value agreed outcome and amend to a suitable alternative before moving to more formal processes such as action plans or default notices.

We will work closely with our partners to further build upon our Social Value agreed outcome and amend to a suitable alternative before moving to more formal processes such as action plans or default notices.

We will work closely with our partners to further build upon our Social Value offer and refine the metrics used to measure outcomes. This is a learning process for all parties and the West Berkshire Social Value Policy is a live document. We will regularly review our Social Value methodology continuing to involve our partners as it evolves.



# APPENDIX ONE

## EVALUATING SOCIAL VALUE

- 1.** Social value is 'Added Value or 'Additionality' that would not have occurred without the inclusion of social value as part of the tender evaluation criteria. This forms the basis of the evaluation criteria. Model evaluation questions are included below as guidance.
- 2.** All tender processes, where relevant and proportionate should incorporate social value evaluation criteria within the tender evaluation process.
- 3.** It would usually be the case that Social Value will be attributed to up to 10% of the evaluation criteria in a tender process (if applicable). In exceptional circumstances a higher weighting may be used, with sign off from the Procurement Board.
- 4.** Where appropriate Social Value outcomes are to be published in the tender documentation, included as contract KPI's and be reviewed as part of the contract management process.

# APPENDIX TWO: EXAMPLE SOCIAL VALUE QUESTIONS

The following example questions are meant as a non-exhaustive guide for addressing Social Value in a tender only where appropriate, proportionate and does not result unequal treatment.

## ECONOMIC THEMES / TENDER QUESTIONS & SCORING

ECONOMIC	Priority Area	Sample Question/s	Sample Scoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating employment opportunities for local people</li> </ul>	<p>Please provide details of how you will work to increase the opportunity for local people to apply for employment opportunities.</p> <p><i>*Local refers to people who reside within West Berkshire</i> (500 words maximum)</p>	<p><b>Score range 0-2</b> A <b>POOR</b> response will show that the organisation have not considered, or will make no attempt to support people from West Berkshire to engage with the employment opportunities offered on the contract.</p> <p><b>Score range 3-4</b> A <b>GOOD</b> response will show that the organisation have a plan in place and are committed to draw from the local employment market. They may have undertaken this support in other areas can show how they will deliver this through the contract.</p> <p><b>Score range 5</b> An <b>EXCELLENT</b> response will show that the organisation will show a commitment to create additional employment opportunities for local people and improve this over the life of the contract.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating employment opportunities for local people</li> </ul>	<p>Please provide details of any new apprenticeships that you will offer on this contract that will be available to local people.</p> <p><i>*Local refers to people who reside within West Berkshire</i> (500 words maximum)</p>	<p><b>Score range 0-2</b> A <b>POOR</b> response will show that the organisation has not considered offering apprenticeships as part of this contract and is unable or unwilling to explore the possibility.</p> <p><b>Score range 3-4</b> A <b>GOOD</b> response will show that the organisation have considered apprenticeships on the contract and are supportive, but they may not have specified vacancies in mind. Better answers may include some consideration of how they will engage with local apprenticeship stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Score range 5</b> An <b>EXCELLENT</b> response will show that specific new apprenticeship vacancies are planned as part of the workforce on the contract, and the organisation will have a clear plan in place for how to engage local stakeholders and to make these opportunities accessible for local people</p>	



## ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES / TENDER QUESTIONS & SCORING

ENVIRONMENTAL	Priority Area	Sample Question/s	Sample Scoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reducing carbon emissions to help achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and beyond</li> </ul>	<p>Will you be implementing or contributing to a carbon offsetting scheme related to this contract? What steps is your organisation taking to reduce carbon emissions? (Please provide details) <i>(500 words maximum)</i></p>	<p><b>Score range 0-2</b> A <b>POOR</b> response will show that the organisation will not be implementing any carbon offsetting as part of this contract and do not express any plans to develop a scheme.</p> <p><b>Score range 3-4</b> A <b>GOOD</b> response will show that the organisation has a plan in place and a firm commitment to offset some of the carbon emissions related to delivery of the contract. The plan should provide some insight into the activities being offset and the approach for doing so</p> <p><b>Score range 5</b> An <b>EXCELLENT</b> response will show that the organisation have a detailed plan in place to offset a significant proportion of the carbon emissions related to delivery of the contract. They will have detailed their internal process for doing so, or where this is not appropriate or feasible they will provide a detailed plan for using a bona fide carbon offsetting scheme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resource efficiency and up to date processes for re-use and recycling</li> </ul>	<p>Do you have a waste reduction and/ or recycling policy which has been implemented and will be utilised as part of this contract, if so, please provide the details. <i>(500 words maximum)</i></p>	<p><b>Score range 0-2</b> A <b>POOR</b> response will show that the organisation does not have a waste reduction/ recycling policy and it has no plans to implement one as part of the contract.</p> <p><b>Score range 3-4</b> A <b>GOOD</b> response will show that the organisation has a waste reduction and recycling policy in place and it demonstrates how this will be applied to the contract in question with consideration given to reducing waste at source.</p> <p><b>Score range 5</b> An <b>EXCELLENT</b> response will provide a comprehensive policy. It will demonstrate how the bidder strives to reduce waste at source and the end destination of each waste stream may be described. Careful thought has been given on how this will be applied to the contract in question to ensure that as little waste as possible is created.</p>	

## SOCIAL THEMES / TENDER QUESTIONS & SCORING

SOCIAL	Priority Area	Sample Question/s	Sample Scoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the reduction of social exclusion, isolation and inequalities</li> </ul>	<p>Please provide details of any schemes that your organisation will implement to reduce exclusion, inequality or isolation for vulnerable groups as part of the delivery of the contract. Feel free to reinforce this with examples of similar initiatives undertaken. <i>(500 words maximum)</i></p>	<p><b>Score range 0-2</b> A <b>POOR</b> response will show that the organisation does not have any plans for implementing a relevant initiative as part of the contract, or the plans provided lack detail.</p> <p><b>Score range 3-4</b> A <b>GOOD</b> response will show that the organisation has a detailed plan in place to implement such initiatives in the contract with a clear understanding of how to address inequality or isolation for vulnerable groups, including how they will resource such initiatives.</p> <p><b>Score range 5</b> An <b>EXCELLENT</b> response will show that the organisation have made a firm commitment and have a highly detailed plan in place to embed and support such initiatives in the contract. They may have allocated a dedicated resource towards this and may provide relevant examples of other initiatives they have implemented successfully.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging the local voluntary and community sector</li> </ul>	<p>How will your organisation actively engage or support local voluntary and community groups as part of this contract? <i>(500 words maximum)</i></p>	<p><b>Score range 0-2</b> A <b>POOR</b> response will show that the organisation does not have any plans to widely engage with local voluntary or community groups. There will be little or no exploration of the value of consultation and no plans to offer support to such groups.</p> <p><b>Score range 3-4</b> A <b>GOOD</b> response will show that an organisation has some plan in place to consult with local voluntary and community groups, they may either plan to support groups with resources or staff time, or actively engage them as part of the contract. The organisation may be seeking to encourage wider participation in these activities – but work is not yet fully embedded..</p> <p><b>Score range 5</b> An <b>EXCELLENT</b> response will show how the organisation is committed to work closely with local voluntary and community groups as part of this contract. There will be a clear, detailed plan in place for active engagement and support, and there may be dedicated resource in place.</p>	