SOCIAL VALUE POLICY

East Sussex Procurement Hub

Hastings.gov.uk Borough Council

Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the benefit of social value and guidance as to how Hastings Borough Council (the "council") intends to embed social value into as many contracts as possible.

1.2 The document will provide detail on the background of The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012; The Procurement Act 2023; social value at Hastings; monitoring and measuring strategies and a social value toolkit to help advise suppliers and officers.

1.3 Social value should be considered as a way to further support the community, with the help of officers within the council, as well as suppliers in contract with the council. It is not intended to create extra cost to the contract, but to utilise the skills available from suppliers. This could be through suppliers giving skills talks, volunteering with the local community or appointing apprentices for their work with the council. The social value toolkit of examples can be found in section 7 of this policy.

Background of The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the Procurement Act 2023

2.1 Social value is the added benefit that an activity or we as an organisation has on the community, beyond the financial or economic value. It is a way of measuring the benefits that an initiative generates for the community, such as improving the quality of life, promoting social inclusion, reducing inequality, or preserving the environment.

2.2 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires all public bodies in England and Wales to consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area. It asks public bodies to consider the ways that they could benefit society as part of each decision made.

2.3 The Procurement Act 2023, which came into force Monday 24th February 2025 introduces the National Procurement Policy Statement which mandates that contracting authorities prioritise environmental sustainability in their procurement processes. This includes reducing carbon footprints, minimizing waste, and promoting the use of clean energy and green technologies.

2.4 Social value requires officers to think about how they achieve outcomes in a more integrated way. Rather than thinking about isolated services or services in the short term, this approach requires officers to consider long-term costs, sustainability and how inclusion of additional social value outcomes can potentially reduce pressures in other areas.

2.5 Social value can help ensure as many contracts as possible are having a positive impact on the community.

Hastings Context

3.1 The Borough of Hastings is an historic seaside resort on the East Sussex coast 65 miles to the South East of London; the town covers some 7,343 acres. Hastings Borough comprises both Hastings and St Leonards-on-Sea and is an urban area with approximately 43,000 households and 86,000 residents.

3.2 While predominantly urban the borough also features a variety of 'green spaces', ranging from formal parks such as Alexandra Park, to the expansive Hastings County Park Nature Reserve. Tourism plays a pivotal role in supporting the local economy, with short breaks and day-trippers enjoying the vibrant seafront, with its mix of amusement arcades, restaurants and cafés. However, Hastings is home to a growing and diverse business community, include a strong presence of small medium Enterprises (SMEs)* and a number of specialised manufacturing firms. These businesses contribute significantly to the local economy, offering innovation, skilled employment, and export potential across sectors such as engineering, electronics and creative industries.

3.3 In the year April 2021 to March 2022, Hastings Borough Council procured contracts of an approximate value of £33.2million, which includes contracts with Small to Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We recognise that there are significant advantages of engaging with small local businesses, for both the council and the local economy. We are committed to using procurement processes that encourage such businesses to compete for opportunities. As such, we work to remove barriers to working with local authorities and keep the process as streamlined as possible.

3.4 Some examples of social value in Hastings Borough Council contracts include:

The HBC Minor Works contract included commitment to Schools and Colleges, as well as support at Community Based events as part of their social value offers. The Supplier for this contract was involved in re-vamping the Robsack Wood Primary School duck enclosure and converting to an open green space for the children to access and use throughout the year. The same supplier also contributed a number of financial donations, as well as volunteering to support local charities within the community. They also drove a decorated van around the local community to promote "Surviving the Streets" during the Christmas period.

3.5 For updated Social Value Register, please see the East Sussex Procurement Hub website under the "Social Value" tab[1].

Aims and Objectives

4.1 The aim of this Policy is to outline how the council will continue to embed social value into the procurement process, incorporating the principles of the Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030[2]. Social value considers the environmental, social and economic benefits of a contract, which align with Hastings Borough Council's priorities of ensuring that Hastings:

1) has a financially stable council that delivers high quality, responsive services in co-operation with local people;
2) is tackling homelessness and ensuring good-quality housing;
3) is tackling poverty and inequality;
4) takes action to tackle the climate and nature crisis; and
5) encourages and supports pride of place in our town.

4.2 The Council will work to achieve these priorities with the support of Social Value initiatives in the following ways:

Environmental

- The council's commitment to achieving Net Zero, through support of green initiatives, including the promotion of sustainable transport within the town, the use of reusable resources through our contracts and within the community. The Council will also work toward improving green skills within the community and keeping the streets of Hastings clean.

- Although social value can incorporate environmental benefits (e.g. through suppliers giving energy saving talks to residents and rewilding of green spaces), this priority is mainly met through our Sustainable Procurement Policy commitments[3].

Social

- The council's focus on reducing inequality, working with local charity organisations and creating community spaces accessible and safe to all. The development of skills training opportunities and promoting the town and community.

- This can be met through voluntary days, support and donations to local community groups, and community repairs for example.

- The Council working directly with local voluntary groups and other customer facing departments can also help identify the current needs of the community and where we can direct our social value.

Economic

- The council's commitment to tackling poverty, creating fair employment, including support for migrants, as well as age-friendly and anti-poverty strategies. Opportunities for higher education and work experience, as well as supporting and promoting local businesses.

- Social value can be obtained through suppliers providing apprenticeships and work experience opportunities and help develop skills within the district.

- Within our Procurement and Contracting Rules[4], the council is also committed to using procurement processes that encourage local SMEs to compete for opportunities and help to remove barriers.

- The adoption of Community Wealth Building principles, which is a people and community led approach to local economic development. This approach focuses on ensuring wealth flow within the community and utilises local SMEs and the voluntary sector, involving local community and other departments in the decision-making process.

Council commitments

5.1 The council will:

General

- Collaborate with voluntary and community sector including HVA, to stay up to date with the current needs within the community.

- Work in collaboration with other public sector organisations within the local area, to help maximise social value opportunities, including: other authorities within the East Sussex Procurement Hub - Wealden District Council and Rother District Council; as well as other authorities in the area, including East Sussex County Council; and Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils.

- Support local SMEs to bid for work and provide social value proportionate to the project.

- Consider the Social Value Policy in all applicable procurements.

- Regularly update the East Sussex Procurement Hub website with social value suggestions to support officers and suppliers. Also provide a social value 'theme' which supports the aims of the council and helps guide suppliers on possible social value offers.

- Regularly review this policy to ensure it is up to date, reflecting relevant legislation and council priorities.

- Contribute to the development of a Circular Economy, which refers to the focus on prevention of waste through reuse, repair and remanufacture methods and maximising resource efficiency.

- Support the adoption of the principles of community wealth building, by:

    - designing tender questions around local knowledge, e.g., asking what specifically suppliers can contribute to the local area;

    - working towards bridging the gap between the need of the community and the available resources by linking voluntary groups with relevant contracts to deliver Social Value;

    - determining social value which is focused on the identified needs of the area, e.g., to help lessen the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, we can work with relevant suppliers to offer energy saving talks to residents within Hastings;

    - develop local skills including suppliers offering apprenticeships and work experience opportunities in different sectors and for all ages.

<u>At project initiation stage</u>

- Officers to consider how the proposed procurement could benefit from social value where appropriate, and in line with the priorities of the council as laid out in the Council Strategy.
- Any social value applied to a project should be proportionate to the scale and length of the project and incorporate the skills, resources, and expertise of the project area.
- Procurement Business Partners to encourage consideration of social value at initial project meeting.

<u>At tender and evaluation stage</u>

- Lead officer, with the support of the procurement team to consider appropriate questions in the Technical Questionnaire to identify relevant social value, this can be a question on its own or an additional part of an existing question.
- Where social value is applicable, commit to a minimum 10% of the quality weighting for social value questions. Include an appropriate scoring criterion to ensure strong social value commitments.
- Signpost suppliers to resources to support with the identification of suitable social value, including through internal resources, such as the East Sussex Procurement Hub website.

- Lead officer to determine suitable ways to monitor the fulfilment of the social value offer, with the winning supplier.

At post-tender stage

- Ensure strong contract management with collaboration between the officer and supplier to meet the social value commitments. This includes the procurement team providing training of officers across the council on contract management.
- Social value commitments embedded into contracts, with non-delivery considered a breach of contract.
- Social value commitments to be regularly reviewed in long running contracts to ensure current needs of the community are being considered and not restricted to that identified at tendering stage.
- Promote success and seek continuous improvement. Upon conclusion of a contract, review the social value offered and upheld throughout the length of the contract, and consider how this could be improved upon in future contracts.
- Continue to monitor and measure social value delivered across the council, review within the social value group and consider ways to maximise social value in future projects.

Monitoring and Measuring

6.1 As part of the contract management of a project, in accordance with the contract rules and appropriate requirements of the lead officer, social value success will be monitored throughout the contract term. This may be by using a mobilisation plan/register; regular meetings and reviews of Key Performance Indicator's (KPIs) agreed at contract signing.

6.2 In terms of measuring the overall success of social value across the council, it is difficult to commit to a single method of recording this information (e.g., monetary value) as not all social value falls into one category. The council will therefore look to record social value through a combination of time, monetary value, and community impact statements, as relevant, for each social value offer.

6.3 Using a combination of methods to measure social value also allows us to see the benefits through a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The community impact statements will help us to highlight the direct impact a project has on people within the district, supporting the mission of the council.

6.4 A Social Value Register will be regularly updated and included on the East Sussex Procurement Hub website.

Social Value Toolkit

7.1 Some examples of social value opportunities suppliers can offer include:

- Working with community groups (e.g., after school clubs, Scouts, colleges).
- Volunteering within the community (e.g., care homes, foodbanks, clothes banks etc).
- Skill talks / workshops (relevant to field) for individuals in the community, as well as local businesses, including SMEs.
- Improving skills and access to digital technology.
- Recruitment fairs/talks.
- Offering work experience/apprenticeship/voluntary opportunities (for all ages/needs).
- Employing ex-offenders.
- Support and/or donations to school groups, sport groups, local parks etc.
- Supporting the local environment including working with groups to litter pick, rewilding, plant trees and wildflowers, bird/bees/bat box installations.
- Supporting cost of living projects.
- Community repairs (benches etc).
- Homelessness referral.
- Agreement to work with HVA.
- Support for digital inclusion.
- Solar panel/EV charging support.

Glossary

Contract management – the tasks and activities which seek to ensure we receive what we have contracted to receive, at the price we contracted to receive it, taking account of agreed change and continuous improvement. Activity is focused from prior to the contract starting through to contract expiry and de-commissioning. It includes supplier relationship management and also ensures that we meet our obligations under the contract.

KPI or Key Performance Indicators – agreed indicators of progress towards the intended result.

Officer – an employee of Hastings Borough Council.

Procurement – the tasks and decisions which secure an external Provider to provide what we want, at a price that we can afford. Activity is focused on the period from prior to advertising a tender to signing the contract. It includes both competitive tenders and circumstances where we negotiate with a single supplier.

SME or Small and Medium Enterprises – firms that employ nine or fewer staff (micro), and firms that employ 50 or fewer staff (small), and firms that employ 250 or fewer staff (medium), and with a turnover of less than £50 million.

Supplier – a company in contract with Hastings Borough Council.

Sustainability – The quality of causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue over a period of time.

Technical Questionnaire – questions included within an invitation to quote or tender which forms part or all the quality assessment of a Suppliers bid.

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[1] East Sussex Procurement Hub website (The East Sussex Procurement Hub - Wealden District Council - Wealden District Council)

[2] HBC Corporate Plan 2025 (Hastings Borough Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030)

[3] Sustainable Procurement Policy (*Link tbc*)

[4] Procurement and Contracting Procedure Rules (*Link tbc)*