



Ashford Borough Council

Draft Social Value Policy

April 2024



Introduction and Context

Definitions

Social Value has been defined as the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning/procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes.

Local Government Association

We recognise the important role we play in enabling social value through our procurement activities. Our published contracts register shows that for the first quarter of 2024, we spent an overall value of £234,395,339.00 on the procurement of goods, services and works. Such large spend helps to justify our commitment to social value and will be used as a targeted approach to it, to help us transform the lives of our residents and overcome some of our challenges.

Whilst the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 which came into force in January 2013 places an obligation on us as a local authority, we are already committed to considering how our procurement activities will improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the borough of Ashford.

This responsibility and our commitment to social value is set against an ever changing external environment which presents us with many unique challenges. As a council we operate within a period which has been and continues to be challenging, from the experiences of a pandemic which is still a public concern, and now being faced with a cost of living squeeze and continued supply chain disruptions.

Through our forward-thinking entrepreneurial approach, careful planning, and working in conjunction with local and regional partners, we are committed to continue to offer effective and good value for money services to our residents, whilst supporting a sustained economic, cultural and green recovery.

Social value allows us to obtain this value and more from our supply chain and partners, to address some of the challenges and opportunities we face in our communities around these themes. We are committed to prioritising the social value outcomes tied to each of the themes of social, economic and environmental, to ensure the greatest potential benefits to our local communities.

The top themes and outcomes that are important to our organisation will be incorporated into our procurement activities. Through the evaluation process preference will be given to contractors/suppliers/partners who can demonstrate their commitment to delivering our social value outcomes. We will trial this for one year through this draft policy, before approaching Cabinet for approval.

Our SV Priorities

We have aligned the national Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) to our ambitions and priorities and developed a set of Ashford specific TOMs to be used as the key priorities to be measured under the policy.

ABC Corporate Themes	Theme	Outcome
Targeted Growth A thriving, productive local economy supporting a range of business and industry offering good work to local people and is recognised as a high quality visitor destination.	Jobs <i>Promote Local Skills and Employment</i>	More local people in employment
		Fair work
		More opportunities for disadvantaged people
		Improved skills
		Improved skills for disadvantaged people
		Improved skills for a low carbon transition
		Improved employability of young people
	Growth <i>Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business</i>	More opportunities for local MSMEs and VCSEs
		Improving staff wellbeing and mental health
		Reducing inequalities
		Ethical procurement is promoted
		Cyber security risks are reduced
		Social Value embedded in the supply chain
	Caring Ashford Towns, villages and rural communities are welcoming, safe places for all who live and work in them, offering a high quality of life where everyone is valued and respected.	Social <i>Healthier, Safer and More Resilient Communities</i>
Creating a healthier community		
Vulnerable people are helped to live independently		
More working with the community		
Innovation <i>Promoting Social Innovation</i>		Social innovation to create local skills and employment
		Social innovation to support responsible business
		Social innovation to enable healthier safer and more resilient communities
		Social innovation to safeguard the environment and respond to the climate emergency
Green Pioneer Every community and individual plays their part in becoming a carbon neutral borough, through a more sustainable way of life. And the natural environment is protected and enhanced.	Environment <i>Decarbonising and Safeguarding our World</i>	Carbon emissions are reduced
		Air pollution is reduced
		Sustainable water management
		Safeguarding water quality
		Safeguarding the natural environment
		Resource efficiency and circular economy solutions
		Sustainable procurement is promoted

In order to deliver social value and have it fully embedded in the council's procurement and contract management activities, we are looking beyond just considering the core service being delivered, to focusing on recognising the overall value of outcomes delivered.

We will look to ensure that our supply chain and partners deliver these social benefits alongside the main element of their contract so that there is a magnified benefit for the council.

Incorporating social value into our activities should not be viewed as difficult or onerous instead setting a standard both for our supply chain and partners as well as our staff. It will drive additional value which will make a tangible difference to people in the community, service delivery and the council's priorities as a whole.

Through our social value policy, we are seeking to obtain the following measurable and reportable benefits::

Encouraging a diverse base of suppliers

- Promoting supplier diversity; including the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SME's), social enterprises and third sector organisations, and local suppliers in general;
- The latest Public Sector reforms covered in the Transforming Public Procurement Green Paper December 2020, aims to make specific provision for SMEs resulting in more SMEs being able to access public sector contracts. It will also provide new rules for lower value contracts which will allow more UK based SMEs to win government business.

Promoting fair employment practices

- Ensuring workforce equality and diversity within supply chains;

Meeting targeted recruitment and training needs

- Encouraging a range of apprenticeship, training and skills development opportunities as well as employment opportunities;

Community benefits

- Maximising opportunities for organisations to participate in the council's supply chains and encouraging suppliers to make a social contribution to the local area;

Ethical sourcing practices

- Ensuring compliance with UK, EU and international standards, promoting fair trade and fair pricing policies, tackling corruption, child labour, animal welfare, blacklisting of union members and similar social issues;

Promoting greater environmental sustainability

- Minimising waste and pollution, supporting carbon reduction initiatives, furthering energy efficiency and other sustainability programmes.

How we will achieve it

We are committed to delivering additional value through our procurement and contract management activities and will work in a collaborative manner with our suppliers and partners and stakeholders to achieve the following:

- I. As a minimum, all procurements over £100,000 will be required to include social value metrics as a part of the scoring and evaluation process. However wherever possible to do so, procurements below this value can also seek social value benefits from contracts.
- II. A proportionate and flexible approach is to be taken when setting the standard tender evaluation weighting for social value. We will apply a standard weighting for social value of up to 10% of the overall evaluation score and where it is feasible, this may be higher. This also applies to environmental measures including carbon reduction.
- III. The Ashford specific themes and outcomes developed from the national themes, outcomes and measures (TOMs) will be used as the measuring tool. It will be used to capture social values offers from bidders to ensure offers can be evaluated in an open, fair and transparent way.
- IV. Once a procurement exercise is concluded, the responsibility for ensuring the committed social value benefits are actually delivered will fall to those officers responsible for contract management of the individual contract.

Review of Policy

As a result of proposed changes to the Procurement Act, and the resulting new Procurement Regulations, the policy which is currently published in draft form will remain in draft for a further year before approaching Cabinet for approval.

It will be reviewed after one year to take account of any related changes in the new Procurement legislation and any impact pertaining to the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012, and the Local Government Act. It will also be reviewed in line with any changes to the council's priorities

