

# East Sussex County Council Social Value Policy



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## About this document:

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This policy is aimed at all officers that commission, procure or contract manage on behalf of East Sussex County Council. It documents how the Council will incorporate Social Value going forward and ensure that benefits are being maximised for residents and communities.

## Introduction

Social Value has been a priority for the council for some time. Our suppliers have been helping to deliver apprentices, community value and engaging with skills initiatives for many years. To underpin this activity, in 2012 the government brought into law the Public Services (Social Value) Act to ensure the application and consideration of social, economic or environmental benefits when commissioning and procuring goods, services and works.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires the Council to consider:

1. How what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area where it exercises its functions, and
2. How, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

The Act is a tool to help commissioners maximise value gained from their procurement project. It drives better commissioning by encouraging officers to engage with their local providers and communities to design better services, often finding innovative solutions to difficult problems.

## What is Social Value, and why should we consider it?

Social Value

- Is not just 'social' – it means generating social, economic and environmental impact
- Involves a measurable change for the better
- Is achieved by sharing resources and working together
- Redefines 'value for money' from cost-saving to value adding

The term 'Social Value' is increasingly used across all sectors to describe the total positive impact of an organisation or a project in the area they operate.

At East Sussex County Council, we don't just deliver services. Increasingly we work with communities to design solutions together and support existing projects and initiatives with our resources, networks and expertise where possible. Social Value in this context means working together and using all our resources to maximise our impact.

The key benefits of embedding Social Value into the council's culture include;

- Delivers better value for money by requiring our suppliers to do more than *just* deliver the core services.

- Increases local spend by rewarding local organisations or those that employ a local supply chain (especially with the use of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)/Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs)
- Increases opportunities for disadvantaged people and promotes social mobility
- Promotes a responsible supply chain
- Leads to greener / cleaner areas and cities
- Leads to greater innovation and long-term thinking
- Helps to address specific skills gaps within a variety of sectors.

## **Our Vision**

Our ambition is for Social Value to be weaved into the Council's ways of working and deliver real benefits to our communities and residents through *Good Commissioning*, *Good Procurement* and *Good Contract Management*.

## **East Sussex County Council's Priorities and Social Value**

Social value is based upon the four main pillars of Sustainability, Social, Economic and Environment. These are intrinsically linked to the Council's four overarching priority outcomes;

- Driving sustainable economic growth
- Keeping vulnerable people safe
- Helping people help themselves
- Making best use of resources for the short and long term

The Council has a corporate target for Social Value, which is to secure an additional 10% of a contract's value as Social Value. The performance against this target is reported through the Council's Quarterly Monitoring and Portfolio Planning Process.

By engraining Social Value in the culture of the Council, we will be better placed to support the Council in meeting its priorities and we will do this through the following:

### **Good Commissioning**

- Consider Social Value at the early stages when Commissioning – "How can this requirement be better shaped to bring wider benefits to the area?"
- Think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure additional benefits for the residents of the county.

### **Good Procurement**

- Engage with commissioning colleagues early in the contracting lifecycle to provide guidance and identify opportunities and strategies to secure Social Value.
- Procurement will use Social Value in the evaluation criteria, aligning to the Council's Goals and Priorities in the contract.

### **Good Contract Management**

- Robust Contract Management – consistently monitoring and managing contracts to ensure Social Value commitments are met.

## Aligning with National Priorities

The national priorities for public procurement as set out in the National Procurement Policy Statement requests that all contracting authorities 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, and
- Improving supplier diversity, innovation, and resilience.

The outcomes of the National priorities are linked our own Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) which are used in procurement to help evaluate social value commitments. These themes incorporate;

- Developing a strong and competitive local economy
- Supporting the health, wellbeing and independence of local residents
- Protecting and preserve the local environment and natural resources in the county.

## When Should we Consider Social Value?

- When it's relevant and proportionate to the contract.
- As early as possible in the Commissioning cycle.

Our guiding principles regarding Social Value should form the basis of all considerations during the Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management cycles.

1. The Social Value proposed should be of direct benefit to the local community in which the contract is performed (i.e. East Sussex) and;
2. It should be a benefit that has been derived directly as a result of the particular contract being awarded to a supplier.
3. It should be relevant to the contract matter and relate to community/societal, economic or environmental considerations.

Social Value plays an important role in allowing the council to deliver not just financial or service specific benefits but also aligning its activity to deliver real value against the organisation's aims and objectives. When commissioning, specifying and procuring a contract it is important that all officers consider how Social Value can contribute towards both service and corporate level objectives.

## Our commitment

We want Social Value to be in the culture of the Council and to do this we must consider it in Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management. To enable this, we will:

- Support and enable Commissioners to identify social value in their projects from the outset.
- Aid commissioners in building and designing it into the specification.
- Support Procurement by providing the tools and support to embed social value in the procurement process.

- Support our Suppliers by helping them to understand our current priorities and areas of focus.
- Empower our Suppliers and Partners to contribute to delivering social value – charities/communities/enterprises working together
- Strive to have social value considered in all appropriate council strategies to help build better communities and improve the wellbeing of East Sussex residents.

## **How will we support our Officers to measure success and ensure delivery?**

- By providing guidance that can be used by officers to understand the needs and priorities of certain sectors. This will be reviewed quarterly, drawing insight from the Social Value Review Group.
- By providing a suite of case studies to demonstrate practical approaches for securing and delivering Social Value.
- By defining outcomes and Key Performance indicators in our contracts.
- By monitoring and measuring commitments and deliverables.
- The Social Value Measurement Charter will continue to be used to provide an open, fair and transparent method for evaluating the social value commitments submitted by bidders during the tender process.
- By celebrating our successes, showcasing the benefits and sharing best practice and strategies to achieve more in the future.
- By ensuring Contract Managers understand the importance of Social Value in the management of the contract.
- By ensuring Social Value commitments offered by our suppliers are monitored over time.
- By constantly reviewing and adapting our approach to securing and delivering Social Value to ensure the mechanisms used are appropriate and that the changing needs of our communities are understood.

## **More Information**

For more detail on how to get involved, examples of what it looks like in practice and practical steps we can take:

- Visit our Social Value webpage
- Download our detailed guidance
- Get in touch at [Social.Value@EastSussex.gov.uk](mailto:Social.Value@EastSussex.gov.uk)