

**Report to:** Place Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 28 March 2023

**By:** Chair of the Review Board

**Title:** Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local

**Purpose:** To present the outcomes of the scrutiny review and make recommendations.

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**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Committee considers and endorses the report of the Review Board, and makes recommendations to Cabinet for comment, and County Council for approval.

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## 1. Background

1.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 23 March 2022 agreed to establish a Review Board to undertake a Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local. The scope of the review encompassed an examination of the Council's approach to social value in procurement and Buying Local initiatives. In particular the review examined how the Council can improve the current approach and how social value and Buying Local initiatives can be used to achieve the Council's objectives and support action on climate change and a sustainable local economy.

1.2 The scope of the review included an investigation of various aspects of the current policy and approaches including:

- Examining how well social value principles are communicated and understood by departments.
- Examining the processes used and in particular the handover from the Procurement Team to the service department contract managers who are responsible for monitoring and ensuring the social value measures are delivered.
- Looking at the engagement with the Council's supply chain: do they understand the requirement and what we are trying to achieve; what help and support might they need.
- Exploring whether it is possible/beneficial to move away from the use of proxy values in the current quantitative approach to measuring social value to a more outcome focussed qualitative approach and what this could look like.
- Review and comment on the draft Social Value Policy.
- Examine whether narrowing down and prioritising what social value the Council asks for from suppliers, would be beneficial in achieving the Council's objectives. This may already be taking place to some extent when using the Social Value Charter (e.g. through the use of tailored advice for specific or larger contracts).
- Explore opportunities to use social value to support action on climate change and a sustainable local economy.
- Consideration of the Orbis Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy.

1.3 The desired outcomes from the review were to improve the Council's approach to social value including reviewing and endorsing the draft Social Value Policy; ensuring the approach to social value supports the Council's objectives including those on sustainability, climate change and carbon reduction; and review the arrangements for supporting the local economy by Buying Local.

## **2. Summary**

2.1 The members of the Review Board are Councillors Chris Collier (Chair), Julia Hilton, and Paul Redstone.

2.2 The review makes nine recommendations which address the areas covered by the review. Overall, the Review Board finds that a great deal of work has been undertaken to make sure the Council's social value requirements are well understood and considered at an early stage of the procurement process. However, there is more work to do on the handover to service departments and monitoring of the delivery of social value commitments.

2.3 The Council's current approach to measuring social value using quantitative measures is quite mature. The Board therefore focused on developing recommendations which improve the existing policies and procedures and recommends establishing a business case for more resources to support contract management including monitoring social value. The Board considers that there may be an opportunity now to move to a more qualitative approach to measuring social value which may provide wider community benefits, and that may in turn may help support our Voluntary and Community Sector Enterprise partners, and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. The review also makes a recommendation to conduct a trial of a more qualitative approach to measuring social value requirements in contracts, which it considers has the potential to yield benefits across the Council.

2.4 The attached report (**appendix 1**) contains the findings and recommendations of the Review Board. Copies of evidence papers listed in the report and other support documentation are available on request from the contact officer.

2.5 The Committee is recommended to receive the Review Board's report for submission to Cabinet and County Council on 18 April 2023 and 9 May 2023 respectively.

## **3. Recommendations and conclusion**

3.1 The Committee is requested to consider and endorse the report of the Review Board for submission to Cabinet and Full Council.

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS COLLIER**  
**Chair of the Review Board**

Contact Officer: Martin Jenks, Senior Scrutiny Adviser  
Tel No. 01273 481327  
Email: [martin.jenks@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:martin.jenks@eastsussex.gov.uk)

LOCAL MEMBERS: All.