

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 18 April 2023

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local – Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 In March 2022 the Place Scrutiny Committee established a Review Board to examine the Council's approach to social value in procurement and Buying Local initiatives.

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 Place Scrutiny Review addressed the following lines of enquiry:

- How can we improve the current approach to Social Value and Buying Local?
- How can Social Value and Buying Local be used to achieve the Council's objectives and support action on climate change and a sustainable local economy?

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local. The review makes nine recommendations which address the areas covered by the review. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 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 the 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, that may in turn help support our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and deliver the Council's objectives. 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 Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 9 May 2023. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on this Cabinet meeting agenda (item 5b) there is a separate report by the Chief Operating Officer commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None