

Somerset County Council Social Value Policy Statement

1. Summary:

Social value is a case of asking the question: “If £1 is spent on the delivery of services, can that same £1 be used to also produce a wider benefit to the community?” It’s about how we secure wider benefits to society as well as financial value from our contracts. By doing this we hope to get better value for money and benefit the local community, the local environment and/or the local economy. It is different from added value, which is when a provider is able to increase the amount of what they are already providing at no extra cost.

It is a legal requirement (The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012) for SCC to consider social value in certain circumstances. SCC goes further than the legal minimum and expects social value to be considered every time we buy something (procurement) because we see one of our key roles as helping to ensure value for money (including social value) across whole systems. However, to meet the requirements of the act, only criteria which are relevant to the subject matter of the contract may be considered. Where criteria are used in relation to social value within a contract they must be proportionate. The objective the criteria seek to promote must be within the scope of the aims of the Public Services (Social Value) Act and the criteria should not go further than is necessary to achieve the objective required.

This Social Value Policy Statement outlines how SCC will embed social value and demonstrates the County Council’s commitment to delivering social value benefits through its commissioning and procurement arrangements. The policy builds on existing commissioning and procurement practices and underlying principles of:

- Sustainable Procurement.
- Taking a value for money approach when assessing contracts.
- Considering the most appropriate form of consultation, accounting for requirements of people and organisations being consulted, size of procurement, and likely impact of procurement. Including consulting supply markets, as appropriate, before formal procurement to develop robust and intelligent specifications.

2. A definition of social value:

Somerset County Council recognises that social value is about maximising the impact of public expenditure. Social value is defined as ‘the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning / procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes.’¹

Through thinking about how everything we commission can generate wider benefit for the community, we can achieve added value from our spending through third parties and enable a more joined up approach.

3. How Somerset County Council will embed social value:

- i. SCC commissioners and all those involved in externally sourcing contracts will consider, as part of commissioning and the pre-procurement stage:
 - a. how what is to be procured may improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of a relevant area;
 - b. how they might secure any such improvement; and
 - c. whether there is a need to undertake consultation on these matters.
- ii. It is recognised that there can be no 'one size fits all' model. Under the requirements of the Act consideration needs only be given to 'matters that are relevant to what is proposed to be procured and, in doing so, commissioners must consider the extent to which it is proportionate' and so tailored to reflect the service or goods to be procured.
- iii. It is the role of commissioners to consider, on a contract by contract basis, the potential social value outcomes that could be delivered through the procurement process and the most appropriate procurement strategy to achieve this.
- iv. Commissioners will be expected to evidence that social value has been considered as part of commissioning intention plans, SCC decision making process and any associated impact assessments.
- v. Social value priorities for the commissioned service area should be embedded throughout procurement activity and be clear in adverts and tender specifications. Commissioners will be responsible for agreeing social value criteria, as well as being open and transparent in terms of defining how social value elements will be weighted in the evaluation and decision-making processes.
- vi. As appropriate, local communities should be engaged in shaping / deciding what is important to them, as well as engaging with the market to understand their ideas for how they can contribute to social value.
- vii. The manner in which evidence of social value outcomes are to be provided is not prescribed by the Act or this policy. Dependent on the requirements of each procurement exercise, SCC may choose to specify requirements explicitly within a tender or ask potential providers to come up with their own innovative ideas.
- viii. Applications to provide services from organisations should demonstrate their and, where appropriate, their supply chains', ability to add economic, social and environmental value above and beyond simply providing the tendered service and provide evidence demonstrating this.
- ix. Measures should be put in place to ensure that agreed social value activity is monitored and tracked as part of any contracting arrangements.
- x. To improve transparency, wherever possible and practicable, steps should be taken to enable SCC to report centrally on added social value achieved across the Local Authority through commissioning and procurement arrangements.
- xi. Examples of best practice from both within the Local Authority and other local authorities should be developed to inform future commissioning activity.

4. Social Value Priority Areas for Somerset:

1. Developing employment, skills and training opportunities, particularly for hard to reach/ disabled/target groups

Examples: Providing mentoring support, apprenticeships, work shadowing, volunteer opportunities for individuals not in employment, education and training, children in care and care leavers, armed forces veterans, people with disabilities and long term unemployed. Supporting skills development/progression and better-quality employment.

2. Improving health and wellbeing, maintaining independence and reducing inequalities of local residents and employees

Examples: Setting up employee health and wellbeing schemes, supporting initiatives which encourage individuals and communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

3. Helping build community capacity and playing an active role in the local community, especially in those areas and communities with the greatest need

Examples: Allowing community groups to use premises / facilities, allowing employees to volunteer or be trustees, providing specialist pro bono business support to organisations.

4. Creating opportunities for micro-providers, the voluntary sector, small and medium enterprises to be part of supply chains which support Somerset County Council priorities and service delivery.

Examples: Investing in local suppliers, organisations and communities.

5. Actively encouraging and working with partners, suppliers and customers to adopt measures to reduce / cut their use of single use plastics.

Examples: Adopting a no single use plastics policy within a catering contract. Creating community refill initiatives.

6. Reducing air pollution, particularly in urban areas

Examples: Low emission vehicles in fleet; incentivising staff to travel to work on foot, by cycle or on public transport; any diesel vehicles acquired to be Euro6/VI standard.

Updated by:

Vikki Hearn, Strategic Manager, Commissioning Development.
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