

# Social Value Policy

April 2024

## 1. Introduction

Supporting our many and varied communities is at the heart of everything we do. Local authorities and public sector bodies around the UK, are facing significant financial challenges, brought into even sharper focus by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which means we have to find new and innovative ways of providing that support.

One way of doing that is by achieving Social Value outcomes. Social Value is the added value generated for communities over and above core business functions. It includes anything that positively contributes towards social wellbeing, the economy or environment.

The Council recognises the important role it can play in achieving Social Value through its procurement activity, contracts management arrangements, but also by supporting other businesses across the Borough to deliver their own social value outcomes.

Social Value can take many forms, from staff volunteering in communities, allowing free use of buildings to host community activity, contributing resources or funding donations towards projects, committing to supporting local young people through apprenticeship schemes, creating jobs and skills development, or pledging to use local suppliers and using practices that help to reduce carbon impacts.

However it is delivered, Social Value can play a part in helping engage with our community – including those who are least often heard from – and in supporting local businesses and our arts, culture and heritage sector.

Used correctly, it can help us build cohesive and resilient communities, a stronger local economy, and a cleaner, greener Borough.

Each partner has something different to offer us in terms of adding social value, and our commitment through this Policy and associated documents sets out how we will work with them to ensure we maximise Social Value outcomes, thereby improving the lives of our local communities and contributing to the delivery of the overall aim of our Corporate Plan to deliver a Gravesham to be proud of.

Together – A Proud to be Gravesham

[Corporate Plan \(gravesham.gov.uk\)](https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/corporate-plan)

## 2. Social Value Principles

This policy follows 3 key principles: -

1. To champion social value, building a shared understanding both within the organisation and with our partner and local organisations
2. To achieve local social, economic and environment wellbeing for the Borough and our communities, at no extra cost
3. To comply with legislative requirements by being open and transparent in procurement and formally and consistently considering social value

## 3. Procurement

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into force in January 2013 cementing the responsibilities of a contracting authority when procuring services contracts subject to public

procurement regulations to take into account the “economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the relevant area” in its procurement activity.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 states:

The authority must consider:

- a. how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area
- b. how, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

Requiring suppliers to deliver social benefits while they deliver the main element of their contract means that there is a magnified benefit for the Council. Incorporating social value into our commissioning and procurement process is not difficult and can make a tangible difference to people in the community, to service delivery and to the council's spending plans as a whole.

Adoption of this policy can provide the following benefits:

- Encouraging a diverse base of suppliers - promoting supplier diversity; including the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) and 3rd sector organisations, and local suppliers in general
- Promoting fair employment practices - ensuring workforce equality and diversity within supply chains
- Meeting targeted recruitment and training needs - offering a range of apprenticeship, training and skills development opportunities as well as employment opportunities
- Community benefits - maximising opportunities for local 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.

In practice this Policy will be applied as follows:

- 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 should also seek social value benefits from contracts.
- ii. The standard weighting for social value will be a minimum 10% of the overall evaluation score and where it is feasible, this may be higher.
- iii. An appropriate mechanism will be used to capture Social Value 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 that individual contract.

## **4. Contract Management**

Gravesham Borough Council intends to further commit itself to the Act by going beyond the Act's requirements and implementing this policy into all aspects of its contract management e.g. service level agreements and grant funding, where it is practicable to do so.

Whilst the level of value for Service Level Agreements and grant funding will be relatively low in comparison to procurement contracts, there is still scope to explore what additional social value benefits could be achieved over and above the funded work.

It will be the responsibility of the officer responsible for managing these agreements to discuss social value with the recipient and agree opportunities. In many cases, whilst these recipients may not be in a position to deliver outcomes alone, there may be opportunities to join up with other delivery partners to achieve greater benefits and deliverables.

## **5. Voluntary Social Value**

The Council recognises the role it has to play in supporting organisations across the Borough to achieve their own Social Value outcomes. Through this Policy and associated work streams we will work with others to help develop an understanding of community wants and needs and assist other organisations in delivering positive outcomes. As with contract management arrangements, external organisations will not necessarily be in a position to deliver outcomes alone, but through collaboration, significant benefits can be achieved.

Our role will be to broker those opportunities and monitor outcomes.

### **Measurement and Reporting**

- i. Where contracts have been awarded with commitments to Social Value, third parties (such as suppliers) will be monitored and held to account for the delivery of those commitments. This will be monitored via individual contract managers and fed into central performance reporting.
- ii. For Social Value delivered through other contract management arrangements e.g. service level agreements or grant funding awards or voluntary arrangements, this will be recorded by the Community Involvement Team and fed into the reporting process to enable visibility of the overall value and benefits derived for the community.

Combined reporting on achievements and performance management will be presented to the Council's Management Team and the Special Cabinet Advisory Committee.