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Social value policy

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1.0 Purpose

This policy sets out the legal context for social value and the seven social value objectives that Blackpool Council has agreed to deliver through commissioning and procurement activities.

The policy will be supported by our supplier's charter and social value guide, which sets out the expected outcomes for each objective and provides examples of how suppliers could contribute towards these outcomes.

2.0 What do we mean by social value?

Social value is the added value secured from the delivery of local services and supplies that can help to deliver additional social, environmental or economic benefits. By leveraging our spend to deliver social value, we can ensure it further contributes to delivering the two priorities of the 2019-2024 Council Plan: maximising economic growth and creating stronger communities.

Blackpool Council provides services and secures supplies to support the delivery of these strategic outcomes, which often deliver more than the originally specified outcomes and outputs. Such additional benefits frequently create a positive impact for local communities at no additional cost.

Tangible benefits can be delivered in line with the procured service but could include providing jobs, apprenticeships and internships for local people especially from disadvantaged groups; supporting local growth through increased spend with SME's and VCSE groups; increased spend in the local supply chain; encourage sustainable travel and reporting on carbon targets and progress; supporting the council in their efforts towards being zero carbon neutral by 2030- through a variety of programmes and initiatives; pay the Joseph Rowntree living wage, and provide training support and mentoring programmes; help build resilient communities by improving well-being and mental health ;free training for volunteers to help build community resilience, or taking measures to mitigate pollution such as planting trees, all practical examples of what can be described as Social Value.

For the purposes of this policy, social value is defined as,

'A process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.'

We can get added value from our investments and we recognise that our providers and suppliers also share our ambition to improve the lives of our Blackpool community.

3.0 Why do we think it is important?

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into force on the 31 of January 2013. It is a legal obligation for local authorities and other public bodies to consider the social good that could come from the procurement of services before they embark upon it. With further investment administered via the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership to help increase productivity within the Lancashire area; it's now more important than ever to maximise the additional value from public funds; and to understand that by using social value appropriately we can stretch the Blackpool pound and extract considerable social, economic and environmental value from our contracts by identifying and capturing activity that is of little or no cost to a supplier/provider but high strategic importance to Blackpool.

This social value policy will help Blackpool Council achieve more of its strategic aims with the same money. It recognises the role that staff, stakeholders, citizens, suppliers and providers can play in achieving better and greater outcomes; from reducing the number of individuals not in education, employment and training, or greater support to vulnerable residents, to spending money within the local economy, and increasing the level of apprenticeships within Blackpool. Social value provides the policy context to take advantage of new and creative opportunities to work with others, and to extract the maximum value of the aims of Blackpool Council as set out in the council plan.

Our social value priorities are to:

- **Promote employment and economic sustainability** - tackle unemployment and facilitate the development of skills. Creating better employment and up skilling opportunities
- **Raise the living standards of residents** - suppliers to work towards paying the Joseph Rowntree living wage, maximise employee access to entitlements such as childcare and encourage suppliers to source labour from within Blackpool
- **Promote participation and citizen engagement** - encourage resident participation and promote active citizenship, contributing to a sense of pride in the town
- **Build the capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector**- practical long and short-term support for local voluntary and community groups. Free training for volunteers and community groups
- **Promote equity and fairness** - target effort towards marginalised groups or which are facing the greatest disadvantage, and tackle deprivation across the borough
- **Promote sustainability** - reduce wastage, procure materials from sustainable sources, source as local as possible
- **Deliver environmental benefits** - reduce energy consumption, reduce carbon emissions; contribute towards the councils 2030 0% net carbon target via using electric vehicles, local supply chains, endorse and support use of public transport, supporting green schemes such as our tree planting scheme, switching energy providers to green energy

4.0 How will we use social value?

We need to proactively identify and capture social value within commissioning, procurement/sourcing, and contract management activity, and in the way we work internally as an authority. Consideration of social value will help providers and suppliers to identify opportunities to deliver to multiple council outcomes.

For example, could a social care service be used to create work opportunities for school leavers?

Could a large waste contract be shaped to offer support to local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) providers by offering free bid writing training to the sector? Could a Blackpool wide public health contract be delivered on a carbon neutral basis? Could a corporate stationary contract encourage a supplier to ring fence a percentage of its supply chain requirements for Blackpool (and The Fylde) businesses?

It is our intention to exceed the statutory requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act. We will work towards considering and

capturing social value within any requirement, for goods, works and services. We will do this in the following ways:

1. Internally: We will become more proactive on our use of social value to deliver multiple outcomes. As examples, we will consider social value when comparing different delivery channels, embed social value in our wider policies and procedures, consider how grants can both capture and support existing social value initiatives, and use partnership working to encourage a consistent approach to social value across partner organisations
2. Throughout the commissioning process: By engaging and working with stakeholders, partners, suppliers, providers and citizens (as appropriate) to ask 'how this requirement could better be shaped to bring wider benefits for Blackpool? Additionally, we will develop the use of health impact assessments to maximise our social value opportunities and inform both decision-making processes and specifications
3. At the procurement stage: Through either the use of social value requirements as award criteria to evaluate the merits of respective bids, and/or stipulating social value performance requirements that align with the council's strategic outcomes within the contract. It is not the intention of the council to impose social value requirements on suppliers and providers that will create additional cost
4. During contract management: Through closer contract management of our suppliers and providers, we will seek further opportunities for them to provide increased social value

4b Embedding our approach to considering social value

To maximise social value at Blackpool Council, every commissioning and procurement exercise, including tendering, service redesign and any other commissioning review will ensure that:

1. There is a focus on service redesign that considers social value from the outset
2. There is a focus on commissioning for 'outcomes', meaning the long-term changes that services and other activities achieve for the beneficiaries
3. The approach to social value is 'bespoke' for each exercise
4. At the start of the process of considering a commission, council officers will consider social value and include discussions with providers, service users and stakeholders to assess the related and most effective approach to embedding social value in any procurement process
5. Every tendering exercise shall include at least one social value outcome as part of the award evaluation criteria
6. Social value priorities will be relevant and proportionate for each situation, with appropriate and proportionate measures set out as part of the specification
7. Bidders will be scored on their responses to the question(s) about how they will deliver these social value outcomes
8. Procurement officers and commissioners will report on how they have considered social value in the commission and note how social value will be monitored as part of performance monitoring
9. Support for SMEs, social enterprises and community and voluntary organisations will be provided wherever possible, including access to supply chains

For significant procurements, the council, or the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Groups) will produce a specific plan showing how key stakeholders (existing and potential providers, service users) will be involved. This would include how social value would be considered for that procurement.

4c Contract management

The implementation of social benefits can only be as successful as the monitoring and review mechanisms contained in the final contract. Effective contract management is vital.

To ensure that social value objectives are delivered, it must be possible to measure and quantify the outcome they pursue. Where social benefits have been used as award criteria, a carefully drafted method statement can be adapted for use in a contract. Where open questions are adopted, or proposals are modified during competitive dialogue thought must always be given to how proposals can be measured and managed during the contract.

Robust monitoring against defined key performance indicators (KPIs) must also be included. KPIs should be clearly drafted, achievable and reflect the importance of the social benefit to the project as a whole. The data collection exercises should not be unnecessarily onerous, and the associated costs should be proportionate to the value of the contract. There will be a need to conduct frequent reviews and include appropriate incentives and disincentives to encourage compliance.

Effective and fair contract management mechanisms can also foster a 'partnership culture' with a supplier, bringing additional 'soft' benefits to project delivery.

5.0 What do we want to achieve?

By proactively working to secure social value within our work, the intention is to help deliver the council's key priorities as defined in the council plan. In addition, the intention is to develop the Blackpool market, from small charities and businesses to social enterprises and beyond. It may be necessary to support organisations to a position where they are able to participate in the market. This may entail consortia approaches as well as looking at ways to enhance co-operation and collaboration.

6.0 Covid recovery - helping to build back better

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an acute impact upon people and organisations across the public, private and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors. It has led to dramatic challenges associated with health, the economy, employment, provision of essential goods and services, and public sector finances. The crisis has also occurred in an era of global climate emergency. With the increasing job losses across all sectors; it is vital to focus on improving employment opportunities to not only improve the economic development of the town but for health, social and community development reasons that help reduce the demand on essential services and to increase resilience, ensuring people can withstand times of crisis; and reduce the need for more public spending. Social Value is a driver to help initiate positive change and to ensure that we can respond and support our communities effectively in times of need and plan for the future.

Many organisations have responded positively to these challenges. We have seen changes in the behaviour of large businesses as they seek to become more socially responsible; greater levels of cooperation between organisations across sectors; increased cycling and walking, with subsequent health and environmental benefits; cleaner air in our towns and cities, and a growth in citizen activism, with a commensurate desire amongst communities to improve their places. As we move forwards and begin to look beyond the pandemic, there is an appetite not to return to the old ways of doing things, but instead to accelerate and augment these positive changes.

Areas where positive change will have the greater effect will have greater focus such as.

- Provide the best employment that you can
- Keep the clean air in Blackpool
- Create the employment and skills opportunities that we need to Build Back Better
- Be part of a strong local community
- Make your organisation greener
- Develop a local, Fylde based and resilient supply chain

These objectives align strongly with the Blackpool Strategy, but have been lifted out as being relevant and achievable as 'social value', backed up by accessible brokerage and support, and having increased priority as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

7.0 How are we going to capture and measure social value?

At strategic level the effective use of social value will contribute towards the outcome measurements detailed in our council plan, and at operational level individual contract management data will evidence any social value related continuous improvement. As we become more experienced in our use of social value, we will.

1. Create a database that details the social value outputs we have captured at the procurement or contract management stage of the procurement cycle. This will be regularly distributed both internally and externally to ensure that social value outputs are utilised to their maximum potential.
2. Build a suite of case studies to practically demonstrate a range of approaches and outputs we have achieved with social value.
3. Communicate successes widely; encouraging good practice and improve public confidence.
4. Consider and trial social value measurement (combining narratives with statistical data), which will ultimately allow more sophisticated use of social value returns within both commissioning and procurement processes.

8.0 Our commitment

We will always work to ensure that our social value related activity is aligned to the council's plan and is compliant with all the relevant legal requirements. Whilst we consider social value to be about improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing, we will ensure that all our actions meet with the council values of openness and transparency, trust and respect, positivity, and flexibility.



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