

Blackpool Council Social Value Policy

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Introduction

Blackpool Council encourages organisations to operate and provide works, goods and services in a way that offers maximum social, environmental and economic benefit to Blackpool residents and communities.

We find ourselves in an era of actively confronting both global and local challenges. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to offer support and guidance to businesses and individuals, ensuring our efforts are directed towards solutions that enhance our resilience. Securing social value is critical to support effective delivery of corporate priorities. Stakeholders are closely observing how organisations positively impact the world around them. Thus, a concerted effort towards generating positive impact and fostering sustainability is not merely advisable but essential for fostering a thriving and sustainable future.

The Council remains steadfast in its dedication to bolstering the local economy and fostering thriving communities, the concept of social value emerges as a pivotal instrument in addressing entrenched inequalities and ensures that all Council endeavours uphold principles of equity, kindness, and sustainability. In this endeavour, the Council is actively seeking collaboration with like-minded organisations and suppliers who are aligned with its values, placing a premium on making meaningful contributions to society at large. Moreover, the Council is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, underscoring its dedication to environmental stewardship.

The Council has established guiding principles that Blackpool Council will follow. We also encourage our contracted suppliers, the broader business community, other public sector bodies, and third sector organizations to adopt these principles.

The Council Suppliers Charter sets out six key principles which seek to embed the duty of the Public Services (Social Value) Act alongside the Council's aspiration to ensure all of its partners and suppliers adopt corporate social and ethically responsible policy and practice.

Aligned with these principles, the Council, together with its partners across Blackpool, articulates shared areas of focus for social value in the Council's Suppliers Charter, Suppliers Guide and the Blackpool Town Prospectus. These guiding documents are designed to galvanize efforts towards green and inclusive economic growth throughout the town. Through these concerted efforts, the Council aims to cultivate a community where prosperity is not only measured in economic terms but also in terms of environmental sustainability, social equity, and inclusivity:-

- **Local employment** – Create the employment and skills opportunities that Blackpool need to build back better
- **Local supply chains** – Request greater spend with locally based supply chains
- **Good employer** – Fosters a positive work environment, values and supports employees
- **Green & sustainable** – Embrace environmental consciousness, adopt sustainable practices
- **Best practice processes** – Work in an optimal way to produce good outcomes in engagement and delivery
- **Supporting our communities** – Contribute to the wellbeing and development of nearby neighbourhoods

Background

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 places an obligation on local authorities and other public bodies to consider the social good and wider impact that can come from the procurement of services before they are embarked upon. The effect of the Act, now supported by the National Procurement Policy Statement has been to alter the commissioning and procurement processes by ensuring that Councils give consideration of social value in all purchasing and disposal procedures.

For over a decade Blackpool Council have been proactive in promoting social value within the supply chain and continually strives to adapt, respond and support stakeholders to maximise the social benefit that is possible. Having a policy on the significance of social value ensures consistency, clarity, and accountability in the Council's endeavours. It offers a framework for continuous improvement both within the Council and in its interactions with external stakeholders, helps ingrain the commitment to social value, and strengthens relationships with stakeholders. In essence, it ensures that the Council stays proactive and effective in maximising the positive social impact of its operations and procurement activities, and encourage a philanthropic approach for the betterment of Blackpool.

Definition

Social Value is understanding how it is possible to contribute to delivering social, environmental and economic outcomes and evidencing the value this creates for the wellbeing of local people, communities, economies and wider society. Social Value helps to understand the contribution to reducing inequalities, levelling up, place-making, and creating a long term legacy and impact from what businesses do and the projects or services delivered.

Since the implementation of the Social Value Act 2012, Blackpool Council has made good progress to create social value through its procurement processes, internal operations, and broader engagements with organisations throughout the town. While acknowledging the accomplishments thus far, the Council recognises the ongoing need for further efforts. Accomplishments to date include:

Creating employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds

Providing opportunities to improve confidence, skills, and work opportunities via gaining meaningful work experience, training, employment and vocational studies through teams such as Positive Steps, More Positive Together- managed by our wholly owned company Blackpool Coastal Housing, The Platform and Project Search.

- The setting of our net-zero ambition producing programs to steer our approach: - Climate Action Plan, Adaption Strategy, Green and Blue infrastructure strategy and Ocean recovery strategy. To help reduce the Council's own emissions and those of the supply chain to reduce their carbon footprint and make the Council greener.

A Climate Emergency Working Group has been established to maximise the Council's potential to be sustainable across departments and wholly-owned companies.

- Signing up to the Care Leaver covenant, along with similar initiatives, aimed at creating employment and other opportunities for people who are disadvantaged.

The Care Leaver Covenant is funded by the Department for Education and delivered by Diversity & Inclusion specialists, Spectra. Working with large companies and organisations to improve support for care leavers. They offer exciting opportunities, and local young people have been to work and attended Latitude Festival, and work experience with ITV to name but a few.

- Well established volunteering and charitable giving programmes, supporting Blackpool communities.

Suppliers have supported numerous local charitable giving programmes- from youth homelessness to supporting access to mental health counselling- enabling services to continue and expand.

- Networks of organisations across the town that the Council works with to help create value for the residents and communities of Blackpool.

The FYI directory is administered by Blackpool Council and is funded by a partnership between Blackpool Council and Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS integrated care board. The FYI directory is an information resource for people and professionals across Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. It brings together information about a wide range of local health and Council services, community clubs, social groups, wellbeing activities and events into one comprehensive source. It also includes Blackpool's Local Offer for Children and Young People with Special Education Needs or Disabilities.

- The Council's procurement encompasses the acquisition of goods, services, and capital works. The Council maintains a well-established and evolving strategy to promote social value throughout its supply chain. By integrating key performance indicators (KPIs) for social value, weighted at 20% of the award criteria into procurement decisions, the Council contributes to generating a positive societal impact and fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

Supporting Reasons

In light of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis, social value has become an even higher priority due to their economic and social impacts. Research shows (Ref: 1a) that the impact has fallen particularly hard on certain groups, including but not exclusively those with underlying health conditions. Young people, especially those with low or no qualifications, who face significant barriers to a very challenging labour market, and Blackpool's business, tourism and hospitality sector.

Economic recovery is a key component of the Council's plan and acknowledges there is opportunity within Net zero regeneration, creating sustainable development practices that aim to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact while fostering economic and social benefits.

From an economic standpoint, social value has the potential to generate fresh opportunities through initiatives such as renewable energy projects, adoption of green technologies, and the development of energy-efficient infrastructure. Socially, it fosters job creation, enhances community well-being, and promotes inclusivity by prioritising sustainable practices that improve quality of life. This approach contributes to building a more resilient and equitable society by addressing environmental challenges and advocating for a circular economy, ultimately ensuring long-term economic and social value for the town. Moreover, the Council aims to collaborate with local anchor institutions to maximise benefits, thereby enhancing community development and overall well-being.

The Council aims for this policy to;

- Promote collaboration with a diverse array of suppliers within our Blackpool communities, encourage the involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and VCSE organizations, increase local spending and improve engagement with our local communities to understand what matters most.
- Advocate for equitable employment practices: Ensuring workforce equality and diversity throughout supply chains.
- Provide a variety of apprenticeships, training programs, and opportunities for developing green skills, in addition to employment opportunities.
- Optimise opportunities for Blackpool organisations to engage in the Council's supply chains and motivate suppliers to make social contributions to the local area.

- Maximise the utilisation of local supply chains while concurrently reducing the carbon footprint associated with the supply chain, thereby retaining financial resources within the Blackpool economy.
- Promote ethical sourcing practices, encompassing adherence to UK and international standards, promotion of Fairer Trade and pricing policies, addressing issues such as corruption, child/slave labour, blacklisting of union members, and other related social concerns.
- Promote greater environmental sustainability by minimising waste and pollution, supporting carbon reduction initiatives, advancing energy efficiency, enhancing local biodiversity, improving access to green spaces, and implementing other sustainability programs.

The Council's Approach

The Council will aim to integrate social value at both pre-procurement stages and throughout the procurement process, and subsequently ensure its fulfilment through robust contract management practices.

The Council's aim is to;

- Collaborate with suppliers and markets to enhance awareness and comprehension of social value, with a particular focus on the social value priorities for Blackpool. This entails ongoing development of toolkits for suppliers, organising supplier engagement events, and conducting pre-procurement briefing events.
- Actively seek input and understanding of the needs and aspirations of residents, businesses, and community organisations, integrating social value considerations into every stage of the procurement process. This proactive approach ensures that social value becomes inherent to Council decision-making, starting from pre-procurement stages and continuing throughout the procurement process. Through this holistic approach, the aim is to not only deliver goods and services efficiently but also to catalyse positive social change and contribute to the long-term well-being of the Blackpool community.
- Collaborate with Council colleagues and partner staff to cultivate internal knowledge and understanding of social value, while identifying additional opportunities to bolster the town's green and inclusive recovery through supply chain activity.
- Enhance understanding of the diversity present within the Council's supply chain.
- Integrate social value outcome objectives, aligned with the supplier's charter, as a fundamental component of specifications for contract opportunities undergoing a tender or similar process. These specifications may emphasise specific social value outcomes tailored to the nature of the contract.
- Encourage suppliers to sign up to the Council's Supplier Charter and adopt its principles.

Evaluation and Weightings

Social value is integrated into the procurement process, and social value proposals are assessed as part of tender evaluations.

- Tenders issued by Blackpool Council include dedicated questions regarding the social value outcomes that bidders will deliver, as well as how they intend to execute and monitor these outcomes.

- 20% of the tender evaluation process is allocated to assessing Social Value proposals; case studies and evidence of benefit are required via our contract management process.
- There is a focus on soliciting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) commitments from bidders, which can be tracked through contract monitoring. Blackpool's social value framework serves as guidance on key areas of support.
- Social value commitments, including KPIs, are documented in contracts and constitute an integral aspect of ongoing contract management.

Monitoring

Contract managers are tasked with overseeing the delivery of social value as an essential component of their contract management responsibilities, and require evidence to back up claims.

To help with monitoring, officers will further develop social value KPIs, building on the experiences from suppliers within the construction industry who were early adopters of social value indicators.

Governance and Oversight

A Social Value Corporate Group, consisting of senior officers, supervises the development and implementation of social value initiatives across the Council. Ongoing efforts will aim to affect change at a grassroots level by collaborating with commissioners to integrate social value considerations at the pre-procurement stage. Additionally, the Council will maintain external partnerships, such as with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES UK), to monitor progress and collaborate on the advancement of social value innovations.

Review and Next Steps

The Council acknowledges that there is always more that can be accomplished in this comprehensive area.

Improved Monitoring and reporting

The Council is committed to integrating the delivery of social value into a comprehensive contract monitoring framework and will introduce a social value monitoring and reporting platform. This initiative will bolster the Council's ability to benchmark and audit its social impact, fostering a deeper understanding of the benefits generated.

Focus

This policy will undergo periodic reviews to ensure alignment with changes in procurement regulations, future legislation, and evolving priorities. The Council remains committed in fostering partnerships and collaborations with businesses, residents, internal stakeholders, community organisations, and anchor institutions, working collectively to achieve shared objectives.

Links:

References

- 1a. NOMIS population data 2021 2 Census 2021 3 NOMIS population data 2021 4 Blackpool Health Profile 2021 5 Census Data 2021

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