

	Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 4 November 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy
	Lead Member - Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power (Councillor Jake Rubin)
Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One: Appendix A – Draft Social Value Policy
Background Papers:	Social Value Toolkit for Cooperative Councils - Cooperative Councils Innovation Network
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the case for a new approach to social value, rooted in national policy developments and Brent's local priorities. It proposes a shift from a narrow, procurement-only focus to a whole-council, place-based model that embeds social value in everything we do.
- 1.2 The report also responds to feedback from the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee (February 2025), Procurement Peer Review (April 2025) and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, which highlighted the need for a more consistent, strategic and outcomes-focused approach to social value across the Council.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the proposed direction for social value, testing whether it reflects the right level of ambition and alignment with Brent's priorities.
- 2.2 Provide feedback on the draft Social Value Policy, particularly the emerging priorities and guiding principles, to inform its final version.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 Social value has always been at the heart of how we work in Brent – making sure that every pound we spend delivers something more for our residents, communities and local economy. Over the past few years, we've made real progress embedding this principle across the council's work. But the world has moved on, and so must we.
- 3.1.2 This refreshed approach builds on what we've learned and responds to new opportunities under the Procurement Act 2023, as well as the feedback from the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee earlier this year. It moves us towards a more flexible, outcomes-focused model that reflects the diversity of our communities and the different ways value can be created locally.
- 3.1.3 The new framework will make social value more practical and proportionate, while keeping people and place at the centre of how we measure success. It combines the rigour of recognised national frameworks with a collaborative, co-operative approach that works for Brent.
- 3.1.4 We're also strengthening the foundations that make this possible – from the Match My Project platform and the Social Progress Index to new guidance, training and a forthcoming Social Value Charter that we'll co-create with partners. These tools will help us make social value something everyone in Brent can deliver and benefit from.
- 3.1.5 Thank you to all officers, partners, and community organisations who've helped shape this work so far. Together, we're building a stronger, fairer and more connected borough – one where social value isn't just an outcome of what we do, but the way we do it.
- 3.1.6 This policy supports delivery of the **Brent Borough Plan 2023-27** by embedding social value as a driver of inclusive growth, health equity, environmental sustainability, and stronger community participation. It provides a practical framework for turning the Borough Plan's ambitions into measurable outcomes and ensuring that every pound spent by the Council contributes to local prosperity, wellbeing, and resilience.

- 3.1.7 The Council undertook a LGA **Corporate Peer Challenge** held in January 2025, with the following recommendation / key feedback around procurement and commissioning, highlighting the need for a stronger focus on social value:

“Commissioning, procurement and contract management are key areas for development. The peer team identified a cautious approach, with low appetite for risk and limited innovation in procurement practices. To address these challenges, there is a need to foster greater professional curiosity and innovation within procurement and commissioning, ensuring that the council takes a more strategic, market-aware and forward-thinking approach. There remains a significant opportunity for the council to secure greater levels of social value and drive efficiencies through commissioning [and contract management] – an increasingly important factor given the council’s growing financial pressures.”

- 3.1.8 The proposed Social Value Policy responds directly to the feedback and recommendations made by the **Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee** (February 2025), which highlighted the need for a more consistent, strategic and outcomes-focused approach to social value. The Committee highlighted the importance of embedding social value beyond procurement, strengthening governance and measurement, and aligning the Council’s work with wider community wealth building ambitions.
- 3.1.9 The work also responds directly to the findings of the recent **Procurement Peer Review** (April 2025), which highlighted the need for a refreshed Social Value Policy aligned with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council’s wider Embrace Change Portfolio. The review recommended adopting a more flexible, tiered, and locally focused approach to social value, clarifying roles and responsibilities for delivery, and ensuring that benefits are designed in away that genuinely supports the borough rather than increasing supplier costs. The new policy reflects these recommendations and strengthens the link between procurement, contract management, and community wealth building.

3.2 Background

What is social value?

- 3.2.1 Social value means the wider social, economic, and environmental outcomes we achieve through the way we work, spend, and collaborate (for example by supporting local jobs, community organisations, or environmental improvements) beyond the core purpose of a service or contract.

Current approach to social value and drivers for change

- 3.2.2 The current approach is based on the 2020 Social Value and Ethical Procurement Policy. Social value is applied as a standard 10% weighting in all procurements over £100k, with suppliers required to select a minimum of three KPIs from at least three categories. This universal model has ensured consistency but has also led to a “one size fits all” approach that limits flexibility across different contract types and values. The Procurement Peer Review

found that while the policy was considered strong at the time, it is now out of date and not fully aligned with the Procurement Act 2023 or new national best practice. It also identified several areas where a more flexible and proportionate approach would add value, including clearer roles for delivery, better alignment with contract value, and stronger links to community outcomes.

3.2.3 Research and engagement with social value experts across London (through the Social Value Network) and nationally, including practitioners from Birmingham and Manchester, as well as respected organisations such as the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), have identified several key drivers for change:

- Social value should extend beyond procurement teams to every service area.
- “One size fits all” approaches fail to reflect local needs; Brent’s approach should be data-driven and community-informed.
- Smaller suppliers, voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations and local businesses must be supported to contribute meaningfully without excessive bureaucracy.
- Counting activities (such as training sessions or jobs created) is less important than measuring how they improve lives and neighbourhoods.

In response, Brent’s new policy proposes adopting a wider definition of social value:

“Transforming communities and creating positive lasting impact for Brent’s people and places through the way we work, spend, lead and collaborate – above and beyond the core purpose of a service or contract.”

Leading approaches to social value across the UK

3.2.4 Across local government, two main approaches have shaped how councils deliver and measure social value: the National TOMs framework (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) and the Cooperative Councils’ Innovation Network (CCIN) collaborative model.

3.2.5 The National TOMs framework developed by the Social Value Portal with support from the Local Government Association, provides a consistent national structure for planning and reporting social value. It includes:

- Five overarching themes (e.g. jobs, social, environmental)
- A menu of outcomes and measures, each with proxy financial values to help quantify benefits
- Comparability across contracts and suppliers which enables councils to benchmark performance

This structure has helped many councils build a clear evidence base and demonstrate accountability. However, it can also feel too rigid or “one size fits all” applying the same measures to very different services or local priorities.

That can make it harder to capture the full value of more community-led or place-based activity.

3.2.6 The CCIN model promotes a collaborative, people-centred approach to social value. It looks how councils work with communities, local business, and partners to create long-term impact. This approach focuses on:

- Co-design with communities and partners and shared ownership
- Place-based impact where activity is tailored to local circumstances, focusing on what matters most to residents
- Relationships and recognising the social benefits that come from trust, participation and local ownership.

This approach works best for complex or community-led activity, where co-design with local residents can make social value commitments more relevant, sustainable, and rooted in place. It can however be harder to evidence or compare between projects.

3.3 Proposed Approach for Brent

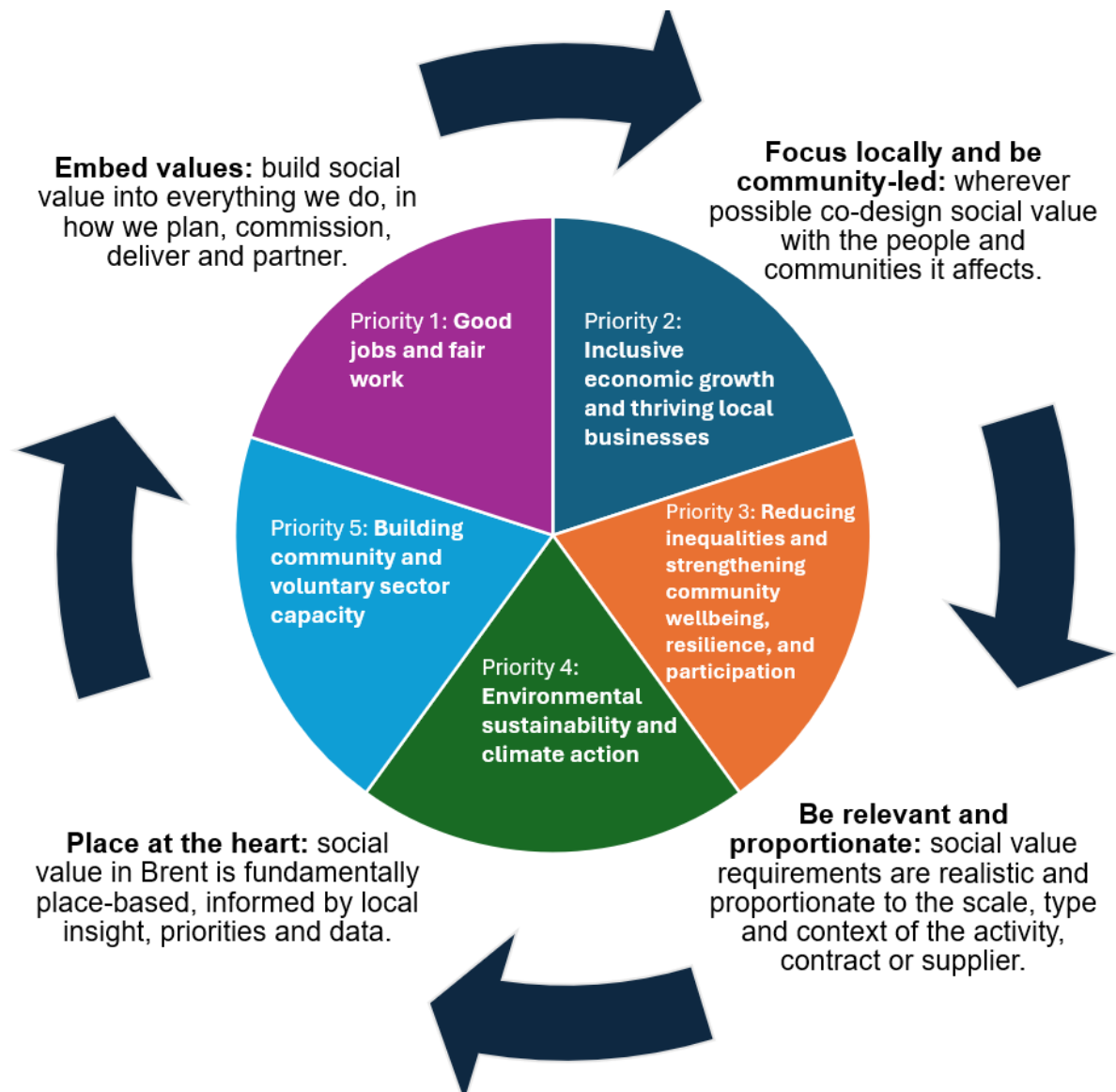
3.3.1 The proposed model combines CCIN principles (collaboration, inclusivity, community co-design) with the TOMs-style framework adapted for Brent. The model embeds social value as a core way of working rather than an add-on to procurement. It is supported by new tools and clear principles to guide officers, partners and suppliers.

3.3.2 Key features

Area	Current position	Proposed change
Focus	Procurement-led	Whole-council, place-based
Scope	Supplier obligation only	Council-wide, including in-house services and partnerships
Measurement	Quantitative	Balanced approach using both metrics and qualitative outcomes
Engagement	Transactional with suppliers	Co-designed with communities and VCSEs where appropriate
Accessibility	Limited SME/VCSE participation	Tiered, proportionate expectations

3.3.3 Priorities and Guiding Principles

This new approach is underpinned by a set of priorities and principles which have been tested through early engagement and so far feel broadly right reflecting both Brent's local priorities and wider best practice emerging across local government.



3.3.4 Proposed approach in practice: **Delivery of social value in South Kilburn through the Single Delivery Partner appointment**

3.3.5 The appointment of a Single Delivery Partner to deliver the comprehensive redevelopment of the remaining sites at South Kilburn, including the delivery of over 1,600 homes across a 10–15 year period, presents a significant opportunity to embed social value at scale. This partnership offers the potential to deliver a coherent, long-term programme of initiatives rooted in the needs, aspirations and priorities of the South Kilburn community, creating lasting and transformational impact for local people.

3.3.6 In line with Brent's principle of embedding social value into everything we do, social value in South Kilburn will not be treated as a standalone deliverable but as a cross-cutting requirement across all aspects of the programme, from placemaking and meanwhile uses to estate management, stewardship and the response to the climate emergency. While the overall programme contributes to a wide range of outcomes, the South Kilburn Social Value Framework

focuses particularly on people-centred, place-based measures such as income, employment, education, health and wellbeing, and community safety.

3.3.7 The success of the South Kilburn regeneration will ultimately be measured by the legacy it leaves for both place and people. Social value will be achieved when the community that emerges from the regeneration is empowered, resilient and able to address local challenges through its own skills, knowledge and networks.

3.3.8 The learning from South Kilburn will be invaluable in refining Brent's overall approach to social value. It provides a live opportunity to test the new principles in practice, understand what works at scale and in partnership with communities, and apply those insights to strengthen implementation across other programmes and projects.

Supporting tools to embed social value delivery across the Council and with partners

3.3.9 Several tools and resources are being implemented to embed the effective implementation of the Brent's new approach, once it has been endorsed:

Tool/ Resource	Purpose	Status
Match My Project platform	Connects suppliers with local community initiatives so that social value commitments deliver tangible benefits for Brent's people and places.	Operational – currently in testing phase with selected projects.
Social Progress Index	Uses local data to identify and target the areas of greatest need and opportunity.	Developed and in use.
Social Value Guidance	Practical toolkit to be co-produced with officers, suppliers and community partners, ensuring a consistent and proportionate framework across the Council.	Planned – to be developed following endorsement.
Training and support offer	A series of bite-size lunch and learn sessions and practical resources to build understanding and confidence among staff, suppliers and VCSEs in applying the new model.	Planned – to be designed following endorsement.
FREEPAY	A product that helps local SMEs receive early payments at no cost to them, supporting vital cash flow within the local economy.	Planned – we've agreed with Oxygen Finance to support and introduce the product.
Cross-sector Social Value Charter	A borough-wide statement of shared commitment to social value, cocreated through the Social Value Summit.	Planned – development of the Summit to begin with cross-sector steering group in October 2025.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The development of the new Social Value approach builds on previous engagement and feedback from members and stakeholders. In February 2025, Scrutiny considered and supported the direction of travel towards a more flexible social value approach. The draft approach was also shared with the procurement consultant who led the Peer Review, to test alignment with its recommendations and emerging national best practice.

Stakeholder	Purpose of engagement	Status/Timing	Key points/desired outcomes
Officers across the Council (including Procurement, Legal, and Regeneration)	To share drafty policy for comment and endorsement, and to identify any room for improvement.	Ongoing Summer/Autumn 2025	To implement feedback received.
Commissioning Community of Practice	To ensure proposed priorities are aligned with those identified by commissioning officers.	Complete	Officers helped shape proposed priorities.
Directorate Procurement Groups	To act as Social Value Champions and support implementation within their service areas.	Initiated Draft shared in Autumn 2025, online sessions scheduled for 30 October.	Group will help embed social value across services.
Cross-sector steering group	To be reconvened to codesign and deliver a cross-sector Social Value Summit.	Initiated Group reconvening October 2025	Will guide development of the Social Value Charter and strengthen partnership working across sectors.
Corporate Management Team	To provide senior oversight and ensure corporate alignment.	October 2025	Draft approach and enables considered; feedback to be reflected in the final version.
Workshop at the Base	Open consultation workshop inviting key officers from relevant services with wider participation encouraged across the Council.	November 2025	
Scrutiny Committee	To test and challenge the proposed approach and priorities.	November 2025	Broad support for a more flexible approach to social value.

CVS Brent and VCSE Organisations	To identify barriers to VCSE participation in procurement and seek feedback	November-January
Elected Members and Cabinet	To seek feedback and input and raise awareness of the new approach and gather local insight on community priorities.	November-February
Senior Management Group	To embed understanding of the new approach and identify opportunities to apply it within service planning and delivery.	January
Brent's SMEs	To identify barriers to SMEs participation in procurement.	Post-endorsement
Social Value Summit	Cross-sector event to inform the development of the Social Value Charter and strengthen shared ownership of Brent's social value priorities.	TBC 2026

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 The proposed approach to social value does not create direct financial implications at this stage. Implementation will be supported through existing resources within the Procurement and Community Wealth Building teams. Over time, stronger monitoring and targeting of social value outcomes are expected to generate greater local benefit from the Council's spend and support more effective use of resources.
- 5.2 Any future proposals with direct financial implications, such as the commissioning of new digital tools or additional training activity, will be subject to separate business case approval.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The approach has been developed in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and the emerging National Procurement Policy Statement, ensuring compliance with the legal framework governing public procurement.
- 6.2 Legal Services have reviewed the draft policy to confirm that it remains consistent with the Council's statutory duties and internal governance requirements. Further advice will be sought as the supporting guidance is developed to ensure ongoing compliance.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The proposed approach strengthens the Council's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion by embedding these guiding principles in procurement and commissioning practice. It encourages suppliers to create opportunities for Brent residents who face barriers to employment or participation and supports

a diverse local supply chain, including small businesses and VCSE organisations.

- 7.2 The approach also contributes to reducing health and socio-economic inequalities through locally targeted initiatives aimed at high need areas, informed by the Social Progress Index.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 Environmental sustainability and climate action forms one of the core priority themes within the proposed model. Suppliers will be encouraged to demonstrate measurable contributions to the Council's Climate and Ecological Strategy (2021-2030) and associated Climate Programmes. This could include, but not be limited to, carbon reduction initiatives, waste and resource minimisation and promotion of circular economy principles, sustainable travel initiatives and infrastructure, enhancements to biodiversity and green spaces, infrastructure and initiatives to support climate adaptation and resilience.
- 8.2 The revised approach will also promote local delivery with the intention of minimising the environmental impact of contracted services across the whole supply chain.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 There are no direct human resources or property implications arising from this report. Staff training needs will be met within existing resources.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 A communications plan will be developed following endorsement to promote the new Social Value approach internally and externally. This will include clear messaging for staff, suppliers and partners, supported by bite-size learning sessions and guidance materials.
- 10.2 Public communication will focus on highlighting how social value commitments are delivering benefits for Brent's residents and communities.

Related document for reference:

[February 2025 – Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee – Commissioning, Procurement, Community Wealth Building and Social Value](#)

Report sign off:

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