



Ashford Borough Council

Social Value Policy

JULY 2026



Introduction and Context

Definitions

Social Value has been defined as the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning/procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes.

Local Government Association

The Council recognises the important role it plays in enabling social value through its procurement and contract management activities. Social value refers to the additional benefits to the community that arise from commissioning and procurement, over and above the direct purchase of goods, services, or outcomes.

In line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (which came into force in January 2013), the Procurement Act 2023, the National Procurement Policy Statement (February 2025), and our own corporate goals, we are committed to considering how our procurement activities will improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the borough of Ashford.

Our published contracts register currently reflects an overall expenditure of £286m on the procurement of goods, services and works. This significant investment helps to justify our commitment to delivering both value for money and social value, and will be used as a targeted approach, to help improve outcomes for our residents and address some of our local challenges.

This responsibility and our commitment to social value is set against an ever-changing external environment shaped by local government reform, inflationary pressures, and global geopolitical challenges. Despite these, and through our forward-thinking entrepreneurial approach, careful planning, and working in conjunction with local and regional partners, we remain committed to delivering efficient, effective and good value for money services to our residents. These efforts will also support a sustained economic, cultural and green recovery and ensure the greatest potential benefits to our local communities.

The Council's priority themes and outcomes aligned with the Ashford Specific Themes and Outcomes (TOM's) Framework will be embedded within our procurement activities. During the tender evaluation process, preference will be given to contractors/suppliers/partners who can demonstrate their commitment and capacity to deliver our social value outcomes.

Our SV Priorities

We have aligned the national Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) to our ambitions and priorities, the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement 2025 and developed a set of Ashford specific TOMs to be used as the key priorities to be measured under the policy. These priorities are grouped under our three strategic themes: People, Place and Planet.

ABC Corporate Themes	Theme	Outcome
People Listening and serving the Ashford community is our philosophy; we will make best use of available resources to build an equitable and fair society	Jobs <i>Promote Local Skills and Employment</i>	More local people in employment
		Fair work
		More opportunities for disadvantaged people
		Improved skills
		Improved skills for disadvantaged people
		Improved skills for a low carbon transition
		Improved employability of young people
		Removing barriers to entry for youth and underrepresented groups including people with protected characteristics and care leavers
		Encouraging suppliers to recruit from groups that struggle to access employment opportunities
		High quality jobs that offer fair wages and good working conditions
	Growth <i>Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business</i>	More opportunities for local micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs)
		Improving staff wellbeing and mental health
		Reducing inequalities
		Ethical procurement is promoted
		Cyber security risks are reduced
		Social Value embedded in the supply chain
Place Planning for the future of our community to make Ashford a place people are pleased to call home and love to visit	Social <i>Healthier, Safer and More Resilient Communities</i>	Crime is reduced
		New - reducing crime by providing support to organisations that strengthen community cohesion, awareness raising and action
		Creating a healthier community
		Vulnerable people are helped to live independently
		More working with the community
		Supporting good physical and mental health by providing high quality jobs and encouraging suppliers to recruit from economically inactive cohorts
	Innovation <i>Promoting Social Innovation</i>	Social innovation to create local skills and employment
		Social innovation to support responsible business
		Social innovation to enable healthier safer and more resilient communities
		Social innovation to safeguard the environment and respond to the climate emergency

ABC Corporate Themes	Theme	Outcome
Planet Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating places for nature will be at the heart of everything we do	Environment <i>Decarbonising and Safeguarding our World</i>	Air pollution is reduced
		Sustainable water management
		Safeguarding water quality
		Resource efficiency and circular economy solutions are promoted
		Sustainable procurement is promoted
		Accelerating to net zero, reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UK national carbon budget
		Taking account of environmental risks and ensuring suppliers are committed to high environmental standards and protecting natural habitats and biodiversity.

Embedding Social Value in Procurement and Contract Management

The Council is committed to fully embedding social value considerations within all procurement and contract management activities. We are looking beyond just considering the core service being delivered to focusing on recognising the overall value of outcomes delivered.

We will work to ensure that our supply chain and partners deliver meaningful social benefits alongside their main contractual obligations, so that there is a maximised benefit for the borough.

Incorporating social value into our activities should not be viewed as difficult or onerous, instead setting a standard both for our supply chain and partners as well as our staff. It will drive additional value which will make a tangible difference to community outcomes, service delivery and the Council's priorities.

Through this social value policy, the Council aims to secure measurable and reportable benefits including but not limited to:

Encouraging a diverse base of suppliers

- Promoting supplier diversity; including the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SME's), social enterprises and third sector organisations, and local suppliers in general;
- The latest Public Sector reforms covered in the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement aims to make specific provision for SMEs resulting in more SMEs being able to access public sector contracts.

Promoting fair employment practices

- Ensuring workforce equality and diversity within supply chains;

Meeting targeted recruitment and training needs

- Encouraging a range of apprenticeship, training and skills development opportunities as well as employment opportunities;

Community benefits

- Maximising opportunities for 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.

How we will achieve it

The Council is committed to maximising additional value through its procurement and contract management activities. We will work collaboratively with suppliers, partners and stakeholders to ensure that social, economic, and environmental benefits are embedded throughout the procurement lifecycle. To support this commitment, the following requirements apply:

I. **Inclusion of Social Value in Procurement Activity**

All procurements over £100k will be required to include social value metrics in the scoring and evaluation process. Where feasible, this will also apply to contracts below this threshold.

II. **Evaluation Weighting for Social Value and Environmental Measures**

A proportionate and flexible approach shall be applied when determining the weighting allocated to social value within tender evaluations. We will apply a standard weighting for social value of up to 10% of the overall evaluation score and where it is appropriate, this may be increased. This also applies to environmental measures including carbon reduction.

III. **Use of the Ashford Themes and Outcomes (TOMs) Framework**

The Ashford specific themes and outcomes (TOMs) shall be adopted as the standard measuring tool. It will be used to capture social values offers from bidders to ensure offers can be evaluated in an open, fair and transparent way.

IV. **Contract Management Responsibility for Social Value Delivery**

Once a procurement exercise is concluded, the responsibility for monitoring, managing and ensuring that the committed social value benefits are actually delivered will fall to those officers responsible for the contract management. Officers overseeing individual contracts must ensure that all agreed social value outcomes are effectively tracked, evidenced, and reported in line with corporate requirements.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account:

- Any updates to the Procurement Act 2023 and related regulations
- Revisions to the National Procurement Policy Statement
- Changes in Council priorities and emerging community needs