

Social Value Toolkit for Contractors

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1. Purpose of this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help bidders and contractors understand what good social value means to Solihull Council. It will help you respond to social value questions in your bids and explain what you need to do to ensure delivery of social value commitments following the successful award of a contract.

Due to the wide range of services provided by the Council, there is no “one size fits all” model and therefore this document should be considered alongside any supporting tender documents and corporate policies.

We hope that this toolkit will support you by demystifying what social value is and help you to better understand what it is that Solihull looks for at tender stage and beyond.

2. What is social value?

Social value is about creating additional social benefits. It is created when contractors go above and beyond legal and contractual requirements.

What does social value mean to Solihull Council?

Solihull Council is committed to making Solihull a better place where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and more prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all.

Each year, Solihull Council spends approximately £200m through commissioning and procuring of goods and services. We need to ensure that we work with contractors who operate responsibly and meet the needs of our communities. We want to create positive outcomes for society, above and beyond the immediate requirements of our contracts.

We also want our public services to be delivered by organisations that value the environment, our communities, and the wellbeing of their employees.

We therefore incorporate social value requirements into the procurement exercise where it is appropriate to do so.

If a bidding organisation can demonstrate that they will not only deliver the contract efficiently, but also create a social benefit and contribute positively to the borough, then this will be recognised and evaluated as part of our contract award criteria.

Social value can include:

- Creating employment opportunities for long term unemployed, people with disabilities or who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs).
- Reducing carbon in line with our Net Zero Action Plan, and demonstrating environmental stewardship
- Volunteering in our local community and supporting local causes
- Creating skills and training opportunities for local small businesses and charitable organisations
- Providing career advice and work experience for young people
- Offering curriculum support to local schools and colleges

Social value contributions made by contractors should be delivered with the local context in mind. Where possible, it should directly complement existing community activities in the borough.

Our Social Value Policy

[Solihull Council's Social Value Policy](#) details how we:

- embed social value into our procurement processes
- are consistent in our approach
- ensure that we are using our role as a procurer to deliver social benefits in line with the strategic priorities outlined in the Solihull Council Plan.

3. How is social value measured at Solihull Council?

Solihull Council uses a customised version of the National TOMs Framework, a framework for measuring and reporting social value. The acronym “TOMs” stands for Themes, Outcomes and Measures. The founding principle of the TOMs is to provide the connection between a broad vision for social improvement (“Themes”) with strategic objectives (“Outcomes”), which in turn can then be expressed as measurable activities (“Measures”)

The Solihull Council TOMs provide bidding organisations with a list of practical things that they can do to create social value which is aligned to the needs of the borough.

Each measure in the TOMs framework has an associated financial value (proxy value) and these are used to calculate the overall “value” of each commitment.

The framework is also used to calculate the social value delivered by contractors through their contract delivery. It provides a measurement and reporting standard for all bidders and contractors that use it, ensuring consistency and transparency.

The Solihull Council TOMs are listed in our Social Value Policy.

Guidance on how to use National TOMs can be seen [here](#)

4. Our priorities

Solihull Council's Social Value Themes

[Solihull Council Plan](#) explains how the Council will improve the lives of everyone who lives in, works in and visits Solihull. The following table shows how the themes of the Solihull Council TOMs are underpinned by Solihull Council's Social Value Policy and the National TOMs:

National TOMs Theme	Solihull's TOMs theme in our council plan	Solihull's TOMs applicable to this theme
Jobs: Promote Local Skills and Employment	Improving skills and access to good work This theme aligns with the current Solihull Council Plan inclusive growth priorities of 'People and Communities' and 'Improving skills and access to good work' and encourages local employment opportunities for local people.	NT1, NT1b, NT1c, NT3, NT4, NT6, NT8, NT11, NT12.
Growth: Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business	Building a Strong Economy This theme includes people, business and the environment benefiting from opportunities being created by UKC and HS2, including increased access to good work, helping the local economy to be more resilient and creating safe, welcoming town and local centres where businesses can thrive.	NT14, NT15, NT16, NT18

Social: Healthier, Safer, and more Resilient Communities	Enabling communities to thrive The current priorities covered by this theme are improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull; good quality, responsive and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it; and taking action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.	SOL2, NT28, NT29
Environment: Decarbonising and Safeguarding our World	Actioning our climate change declaration This theme covers opportunities to work with local organisations to build a circular economy and be mindful of increasing recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions across the Borough.	NT47, NT67, NT70, NT72
Innovation: Promoting Social Innovation	Promoting and delivering social value The Council understands contractors may already be engaged in delivering their own social value interventions and wants to see these built upon. The 'ask' of this theme shouldn't be seen as an obligation of delivery, but as a chance to maximise opportunities.	NT50, NT51, NT52, NT53

5. How should a bidder demonstrate their social value offer?

The most important thing to remember when submitting a response to **any** procurement is to **read the documentation carefully**.

The tender documents we send out contain full details of our requirements and will clearly explain how to complete and return your bid.

Getting social value ready

Follow the five-step process below to help make sure you have everything in place to submit a good tender and deliver your social value.

Step 1: Get ready

- Take time to develop your social value strategy ahead of any tender.
- Understand our needs, by reading the Council Plan, State of the Borough Reports, Social Value Policy, and Procurement documents (ITT).
- Look at the Solihull TOMS and map them against what your business already does.
- Explore our community's needs and priorities for employment, wellbeing and the environment

Step 2: Get involved

- Attend one of our market engagement events to make sure customers know what your offer is.
- Come along to one of our supplier engagement events to find out more about the Solihull TOMs and the values linked to each of them.

Step 3: Get writing

- Answer the question that has been asked, not the one you wish had been asked!

- Only commit to what you know you have the capacity and capability to provide.
- Don't just concentrate on the figures. The evidence and justification of those figures is just as important with 50% of the marks.
- If your quantitative offer equates to more than 80% of the contract value, double check it – it may be unachievable, and you may be liable to that amount if you don't deliver what you have promised.

Step 4: Get delivering

- Once you are awarded a contract, make sure you deliver what you promised to deliver.
- If you are struggling, come and talk to us, we might be able to help.

Step 5: Get reporting

- Put in place robust management and reporting processes to demonstrate you have delivered what you proposed. The TOMs guide (available from the Social Value Portal website) will confirm the evidence required for each measure.
- Write a case study - this could be useful for your next tender, it will help you improve as well as celebrate and share your success so others can learn from it.

Submitting your social value offer – best practice

Remember that social value is about creating additional benefits – do not offer anything that is already a requirement of the core contract.

For example: If the contract involves supporting people back to work, you cannot claim social value for getting people back into jobs, as that is a part of the core contract requirement.

Only report social value activity that will be delivered because of this specific contract.

Ensure that your social value offer is relevant and proportional to this contract and are not based on any other social value projects, initiatives, or wider Corporate Social Responsibility/social value activity.

For example: If you organise a mental health and wellbeing activity at your head office, you cannot claim this to be social value as it has not been delivered locally and specifically for this contract.

Do not 'double count' your social value activity.

Only claim social value once for a specific initiative.

For example: If hours spent volunteering in the local community are claimed, these same hours cannot also be claimed under hours volunteering to improve green infrastructure, or to provide expert advice to SMEs.

Only include committed local spend in your supply chain.

In estimating the level of local spend, bidders must only include projections of spend that occur because of this contract and can be influenced by their own spending decisions.

Provide evidence of how you will deliver your social value offer.

When making your social value offers you need to consider how you are going to evidence your delivery. A weak qualitative response will reduce the coherence of the offer and our confidence that you can deliver the targets you have set.

Provide a breakdown per year of your social value offer when submitting your entire offer.

You should enter the total number of units delivered for the entire length of the contract (excluding any potential extensions) and provide a breakdown in the comments box. This should include the total target for the length of the contract, target per year and a breakdown per activity if applicable.

Example: You are offering to deliver 28 hours of volunteering per year for a 3-year contract. Please enter the total figure of '84' on the portal and add the breakdown in the comments box on the right (i.e., 28 hours of volunteering per year = 84 hours for the length of the contract).

Targeting your commitments to Solihull's needs

The best social value proposals are targeted to local issues with a clear sense of how they will be delivered in partnership with organisations and resources on the ground.

The expectation is that social value is not delivered in isolation or without an understanding of local context, but rather in consideration of what is already being delivered and, where possible, directly complementing existing community activities.

If your business is not local to Solihull you might be able to deliver some measures remotely i.e. a befriending scheme, digital skills for the elderly, online school engagement or providing educational resources, providing expert advice to local small businesses, creating a new website for a community group, fundraising for a Solihull charity, or donating excess materials.

Familiarise yourself with the area by doing some desk top research to find out what assistance is needed and where. There is lots of information on the Solihull Council website at www.solihull.gov.uk. You can also find out more about the Council's local area profiles [here](#).

All the Council's strategies and policies are on the website [here](#).

Be innovative. It should be appropriate and relevant to the tender but don't be afraid to come up with something unique.

6. Our approach to commissioning and procurement

For all procurements over £50,000, consideration of social value in specifications and evaluations is mandatory, forming a minimum of 5% of the tender score and potentially up to 20%. The weighting is communicated to bidders in the tender documentation.

All contractors, regardless of contract size, are however encouraged to consider how they could contribute towards the delivery of the Social Value Policy.

It is important for bidders to understand the specific requirements set out in the Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents. The ITT will provide specific guidance on evaluation criteria and project scope. Full instructions will be provided in the tender pack. **Please read this carefully.**

Using the Social Value Portal

In some procurements, the social value bid submission must be made via the Social Value Portal. A link to the project will be provided in the ITT to register on the Portal.

Guidance on how to use the Social Value Portal can be found [here](#).

Award criteria

Bidders will be provided with clear instructions in the ITT. This usually consists of:

- A quantified Social Value Proposal (see “Quantitative Social Value Proposal”); and
- Evidence describing how the Social Value that’s offered will be delivered against each of the measures offered (see “Qualitative Social Value Proposal”).

Details will also be provided regarding how the Social Value element of the tender will be evaluated.

Delivery Plans

In some cases, usually on larger contracts over £1million, we may ask bidders to complete a Delivery Plan. This is to provide more detail around the bidder’s overall approach to Social Value across all targets. Delivery Plans should include the following information:

Leadership and Resources
The name of the person who will be responsible for delivery of the social value offer made by your company, details of how social value delivery will be managed in the organisation and resources that will be deployed.
Clear evidence that you can identify, source, deliver and report on each target you have set.
A timeline for delivering the social value offer.
Processes
Internal processes in the event that something goes wrong i.e. how will any non-delivery of offers made, or poor quality be escalated internally and addressed?
The methodology for producing evidence/information on the delivery of your Social Value offer. How data will be collected and what evidence will be provided.
Processes for monitoring, measuring, and reporting Social Value outcomes.
For projects that extend beyond 18 months, how you will improve and expand the delivery of Social Value outcomes over the life of the project and what continuous improvement targets will be set.
Engagement
Processes for engagement and collaboration with relevant local stakeholders in the delivery of social value. Identify the key stakeholders needed to support the plan and set out detailed plans for the early phases on engagement.
How you will engage with local Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations in the delivery of your offer. (If applicable)
The broad approach under each theme and how you will make the best use of the opportunities created through the procurement to contribute to the delivery of sustainable social value outcomes.

The clarification process

Sometimes our tender documents can be confusing and sometimes there can be errors.

Don’t be afraid to ask a question if things are not clear.

You can raise a question through our e-tendering system. We will advise all other bidders that have registered, of the question and answer, so the process is fair and transparent. It will be posted anonymously.

Once the social value proposals have been opened after the tender closing date, our evaluators may require certain aspects of your bid to be clarified. We will contact you via email or the e-tendering system with the queries.

Please note that this is not an opportunity for you to increase a social value proposal or obtain a higher score. It is to ensure the proposals are compliant with the TOMs methodology.

Where Social Value Policy exceptions apply

The Social Value Policy outlines the processes that should be followed based on the estimated contract value. It also outlines the reasons why an alternative approach may be requested.

Where an exception is approved to not use the Social Value Portal or the TOMs, the Social Value element will be included as a question within the Social Value section of the procurement and will be evaluated in line with the evaluation criteria as outlined within the tender pack.

To be able to measure and report the delivered Social Value under these contracts, we may map the outputs generated to the Solihull TOMs to evidence delivery against our corporate objectives.

7. Contract management

The monitoring and measurement of social value commitments made at tender stage should be incorporated into the general performance management of the contract delivery.

As a winning bidder, the Council will expect you to regularly report on the delivery of your social value commitments either through the Social Value Portal, or by submitting monitoring forms to evidence how social value is being delivered.

Over the duration of the contract, you should discuss progress with the contract manager during regular performance meetings. If social value has not been added to the agenda, include it as an "AOB" and ask for it to be included in future meetings.

We recommend that you input your delivery data and evidence on a regular basis. This demonstrates that you are delivering social value during your contract and means we won't need to chase. If there is no data, we can't tell whether you are contributing or not and the Council is unable to report on the good work you are doing.

Once you have completed the main contract requirement, you will need to update the Social Value Portal for the last time with your final delivery figures and evidence.

The team at the Social Value Portal will review and verify the data and evidence you provide and will contact you if they require further clarification.

Once this is completed and the data is verified, the team at the Social Value Portal will release a final report to show the wonderful work you have delivered under your contract with Solihull Council.

You will be able to use this report for internal newsletters, press releases, social media updates and in future tenders.

Solihull Council may also use it as a case study.

Social Value Portal contract management

If the Social Value Portal is being used on your contract, the portal will formalise the commitments made and send their own contract and invoicing schedule to the successful bidder. A copy of this will be sent to the social value programme manager, and the contract manager at the Council.

There is a fee to use the Social Value Portal for the winning bidder and the fee is paid annually in advance of each year of the contract. Details will be included in the ITT.

The successful contractor will be required to sign a contract directly with the Social Value Portal who will provide the following services to the contractor:

- Online account with the Social Value Portal to facilitate contract management and project reporting
- Technical support with data entry (e.g. access and functionality issues)
- Confirmation of evidence required to satisfy requirements
- Quarterly reports showing progress against targets
- End of project summary report and case study

The contractor will be invoiced directly by the Social Value Portal upon award and will be responsible under the terms of the contract for payment directly to the Social Value Portal.

If you require technical support with the portal itself, please email the Social Value Portal team directly at support@socialvalueportal.com. This includes if you have forgotten your password, if you are having system difficulties, or you need advice on how to input your figures or upload evidence. The Social Value Portal Support team is available from 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Supplier engagement

Representatives from the team at Social Value Portal will be available at regular supplier engagement sessions to answer questions about social value and conduct a live demonstration of the portal. Sessions are open to all bidders and current contractors of the Council. To book a session, please click on the following links.

If you are currently bidding on a tender, please click on this [link](#).

If you are an existing supplier already contracted with Social Value Portal, please click on this [link](#).

If you have any queries or clarifications specific to a tender, they must be directed via the e-tendering portal.

8. Evidencing your social value delivery

When you complete an activity that contributes to the delivery of your social value commitments, take time to think about how you will evidence what you have done.

For each measure, there is a description of the evidence required to meet the data review requirements, please take time to review this guidance.

Update the Social Value Portal with the delivery data and evidence on a regular basis. This will make it easier for you to use the system, and it will confirm to Solihull Council that you are making progress toward your targets.

How will cases of non-delivery be managed?

Social Value is about creating additional benefits for the wellbeing of communities, and this is most often accomplished through the building of positive relationships by searching for opportunities and mutually beneficial solutions.

There may be genuine and justifiable reasons for the non-delivery of a social value offer. The most important thing is to keep the Council up to date with your delivery progress and discuss any issues you are having. In these circumstances the Council will initially seek to determine what the issues are but will expect the winning bidder to have a coherent rectification strategy. This could include other social value proposals to an equivalent social and local economic value if these also meet the contracting authority's criteria.

Where both parties are unable to agree a reallocation or where the contractor is not able to deliver the reallocated social value obligation or otherwise commits a breach in that regard during delivery of the contract, the Council will be entitled to recover the notional value of that social value obligation as provided in the TOMS Framework.

9. Recent social value activities

It is often argued that social value is difficult to implement. It is not always easy, but when it is done right, the benefits are clear for all to see.

Below are some examples of activities that have already been delivered in Solihull that carry significant social value. All these examples are collaborative, creative ways which deliver real benefit to residents and communities. They also offer insight into the types of interventions Solihull Council would expect its contractors to aspire to in satisfying the Social Value Policy.



TIP: When evidencing the activity you have undertaken, think about the impact this activity has had on the users or attendees. Instead of just uploading figures and spreadsheets, try uploading photographs, impact statements, news articles and survey results to tell the story of how your good work has helped people. This will make your final report much more interesting. than “ticking a box.”

Telent Technology Services Ltd Signal Maintenance Contract

Expert Business Advice & Technical Support

Telent Technology Services Ltd have taken a really proactive approach to not only achieving their social value in Solihull but ensuring that it is wanted by Voluntary Community Sector Enterprises (VCSE)

Telent attended Solihull's new social value events that the Solihull Council team put on over the past year. Telent, who are based outside of our local area committed to attending these events and formed some fantastic relationships with our local community groups/charities.

Building on these relationships they found out where they could assist groups and actioned their promises. This has led to so many positive outcomes and stories and it also showcases the importance of the different ways that VCSEs can be supported in the long term.



Creation of a new website for community initiative, Cars Area Together

Telent provides opportunities for growth to voluntary, community and social enterprises, by offering free business resources to improve local services and enable access to future funding. This included the creation of an online marketing plan, copy writing and the creation of a new website to promote the initiative. This will not only help with future funding applications, but also gives the community additional ways to connect and get involved.

The website went live in December 2023 and includes features such as a full events calendar and a suggestion scheme, with residents able to easily submit their ideas and needs through the site, or sign-up to help.

Visit the site and take a look around:
<https://www.carsareatogether.co.uk>



PSL Print Management Ltd Print Service (SOLPRINT)

Employment and Skills Support in partnership with Solihull College

PSL Print, an SME based outside of the Solihull borough, has delivered a series of energetic employability workshops to students across the curriculum at Solihull College including Business, Science, Construction & Built Environment, Hair & Beauty, Accountancy and Criminology.

This included personal branding workshops & digital branding workshops which significantly enhance the experience for learners in terms of confidently and competently preparing for work.

Martyn from PSL also joined the Business and Management Advisory Board to provide expert business advice as part of their social value commitments, making invaluable contributions to the colleges plans for enhancing soft skills.

Statement from Solihull College:

"Martyn has been an invaluable asset to our Business students, significantly enhancing their educational experience through practical and engaging contributions. He has conducted CV building sessions providing students with realistic and constructive feedback, thereby boosting their confidence and preparedness for real-world job applications. His workshops on personal branding have equipped our students with essential skills to effectively present themselves in professional settings, while his guidance on public speaking has improved their communication abilities, fostering greater self-assurance."

This commitment to supporting the curriculum is linked to the colleges strong relationship with Solihull Council who steer employers via their procurement & social value process to add value locally to engage with Solihull College.



Each year we report on the total amount of Social Value that Solihull Council has produced. A copy of this report can be found here: [April 2024 - Council Wide Nov24.pdf](#)

Match My Project - Solihull

In 2024, Solihull Council started a partnership with Match My Project, an award-winning online platform that matches community organisations in need of resources for the delivery of their projects and businesses working directly for Solihull Council or in the borough. Using this tool, community organisations can post requests for support on specific projects, with businesses able to browse a curated directory of projects and make offers of support directly.

If you would like to learn more or sign up to Match My Project, please click on this [link](#).

10. Contact details and further information

For more information about anything included in this toolkit, please contact Solihull Council's Social Value team at socialvalue@solihull.gov.uk.