

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



**Report of:** Director of Legal and Governance Services and Director of Public Health Joint Services

**Relevant Executive Member:** Mayor

**Submitted to:** Executive

**Date:** 30 April 2025

**Title:** Social Value Charter – first annual update

**Report for:** Information

**Status:** Public

**Council Plan priority:** The contents of this report will impact positively on all four of the Council Plan ambitions

**Key decision:** No

**Why:** Report is for information only

**Subject to call in?** No

**Why:** Not applicable

Proposed decision(s)

1.1 That the Executive:

- **NOTES** the progress made in the last 12 months to implement the commitments set out in the Social Value Charter as set out in section 1 of this report
- **ENDORSES** the continued implementation of activity to embed the charter over the next 12 months, which is summarised in section 4.

Executive summary

Continued implementation of a Social Value Charter has the potential to deliver the following benefits:

- Encourage a more diverse range of suppliers to work with the Council and its

partners, including the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SME's), Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, and local suppliers in general.

- Promote fair employment practices: Ensuring workforce equality and diversity within supply chains.
- Increasing the diversity of local apprenticeship, training, and skills development opportunities as well as employment opportunities.
- Maximising opportunities for Middlesbrough organisations to participate in the Council's supply chains and encouraging suppliers to make a social contribution to the local area.
- Ensuring ethical sourcing practices, including compliance with UK, and international standards, promoting fair trade and fair pricing policies, tackling corruption, child/slave labour, 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.

The purpose of this report is to set out the activity that has been undertaken to implement the commitments within the Council's Social Value Charter for Middlesbrough Council which was adopted in April 2024 and overseen by a Social Value working group.

The report sets out the activity that has been delivered against the charter over the last 12 months and positive impact the activity has had on all four of the Council Plan ambitions.

The report sets out that the Council will continue to deliver activity against the Social Value Charter and outlines some of that planned activity over the next 12 months.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the impact of the Council’s Social Value Charter following its adoption 12 months ago. Successful delivery of the 42 commitments within the Social Value charter has the potential to have a significant impact on all of the Council Plan ambitions. Each of the 42 commitments has been aligned to the Council Plan ambition it most directly links to, with many cutting across two or more of the ambitions. The table below sets out the elements of the commitments within the Charter that have been delivered to date:

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
<b>A successful and ambitious town</b>	<p>Successfully delivering social value is most relevant to this ambition, with 22 of the charter commitments identified as having a direct link to this ambition.</p> <p>During the last 12 months the Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Launched a People Strategy for its staff and potential future staff. This has included a number of actions to support people to apply for Council positions, with drop-in community sessions held to support people with applications and promoting the Council has an employer at careers fairs.</li><li>▪ One of the ambitions within the three-year People Strategy is to remove unnecessary barriers to employment by removing unnecessary elements from essential criteria and moving towards values based recruitment. During 2025, additional capacity was secured for HR support services in order to support this work.</li><li>▪ Launched an <a href="#">Employment Hub</a>, a one stop shop to support people in the area into work. The hub can provide people with CV support, assistance with interview preparation, access to training to support a return to work and access to the work coach support available through the Department for Work and Pensions.</li><li>▪ In response to a commitment to identify opportunities to add employability interventions to the NHS Waiting Well programme, the Council has put in place an Accelerator programme and been selected as a pilot site.</li><li>▪ Developed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which will shape its approach to ongoing work to ensure there is an environment of inclusion at work, widen the diversity of its workforce. This is to be launched in 2025.</li><li>▪ Continued to work with its Race, Religion and Belief employee network group on our commitment to the Race at Work Charter and achieving the steps within it.</li><li>▪ Held engagement sessions with a number of Voluntary and Community Services (VCS) to identify opportunities to support them, looking at opportunities to locate create and cultural VCS organisations in the Town Hall. Options to progress this will be explored during 2025.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continued to deliver the <a href="#">Talent Foundry</a>, in partnership with M and G plc to support students who may not be reaching their full potential and who could benefit from targeted skills development and aspiration-raising workshops. This Skills for Life Programme support is aimed at Middlesbrough’s most vulnerable year 10 pupils.</li><li>▪ The Council continue to capture social value within every procurement opportunity where it is appropriate to do so and during the year it worked with the North East Purchasing Organisation to support the development of a new approach to procurement that embeds ‘Environmental, Social and Governance’ (ESG) impact, another name for Social Value, within procurements, using national best practice. The Council intends to learn from this work and look at develop a similar approach that also includes impact on the Council Plan ambitions to provide a clearer link between proposed social value activity by suppliers and the impact it could have on delivery of the Council Plan ambitions.</li></ul>
<b>A healthy Place</b>	<p>Whilst many of the commitments will impact on this ambition, six were identified as having a direct impact. Social Value optimisation has the potential to improve the quality of our residents’ lives through the identification and exploitation of opportunities that can lead to better outcomes within procurement and improved education outcomes. For example, inclusion of social value within procurement of products can encourage providers to offer our young people access to apprenticeships.</p> <p>During the last 12 months the Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Approved the mission-led Health and Wellbeing Strategy that builds partners commitments to social value, building social capital and developing their roles as anchor organisations to deliver social value</li><li>▪ Followed through on its commitment to ensure our local plans and policies maximise health gains. It has embedded health considerations within the work to refresh the Local Plan, a key strategic planning document that will be used to outline a vision for the future development and use of land within the town</li><li>▪ The Local Plan has also been strengthened to include a requirement for net biodiversity gains from future developments which will be utilised to improve the quality of future developments in the town</li><li>▪ The Local Plan also includes Health Impact Assessment to formalise the requirement for all major developments, and any development that we believe might exacerbate the situation further in areas experiencing the most severe health inequalities, to address the wider determinants of health and well-being (energy-efficient homes, walkable neighbourhoods, access to quality green and blue spaces) from the conception of any proposal.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Worked with the NHS and Voluntary and Community Services (VCS) organisations to redesign and collocate a number of services within the new Live Well Centre located in the Cleveland Centre, focussing on improving patient accessibility and supporting people to live healthier and happier lives. Residents can now access a wide range of services covering support on bowel cancer screening, diabetes management, community midwifery, pulmonary rehabilitation, smoking cessation, welfare rights, sexual health, healthy eating and access to a gym that is delivering a specialist GP referral support to help people recover from illnesses. This opened in December 2024.</li><li>▪ The Middlesbrough Food Partnership, led by Environment City, has secured the Gold award for Sustainable Food places as part of work to create a healthy food environment that can tackle food poverty and increase access to healthy and sustainable food.</li><li>▪ All procurement activities include a requirement to support the One Planet Living agenda, unless it is clearly not possible. The Procurement service has also put in place a system to give it visibility of the carbon impact of procurement decisions. It does not currently have capacity to develop analytical reports on this. It is currently considering options to develop the capacity to be able to do this.</li></ul>
<b>Safe and resilient communities</b>	<p>Whilst many of the commitments will impact on this ambition, six were identified as having a direct impact. Capitalising on Social Value can have a hugely positive effect on this ambition, with enhanced community engagement and cohesion, co-production of proposals for social value and increased access to economic opportunities being key characteristics of an area that successfully delivers a successful approach on social value.</p> <p>During the last 12 months the Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Begun to take steps to strengthen its focus on delivery of outcomes that can have a real, positive impact on our residents. One of the steps it has taken was to hold a Poverty Sprint challenge event. The event ran over five days and brought together Council staff, VCS organisations and Public Sector partners. The purpose of the event was to understand how the Council could maximise its potential to drive real change in tackling poverty in Middlesbrough. A series of recommendations were developed from the event which have been accepted in principle by the Council's Leadership Management Team and over the next 12 months work will be undertaken to deliver them. They include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the need to ensure tackling poverty is at the heart of everything we do' by embedding consideration of the impact of proposed decisions on poverty</li><li>- Taking steps to ensure that the policies and strategies of the Council that are in place to deliver the ambitions of the Council Plan, fully align with its commitment to tackling poverty and seizing social value opportunities</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Using the opportunities that social value can unlock as part of a wider proactive, intelligence led, prevention approach that pools resources and support to better connect it to needs</li><li>- Undertaken a fundamental review of its approach to housing and homelessness to better meet needs, reduce the numbers of people in crisis and provide better support to those who need it.</li><li>- Ensuring the emerging Neighbourhoods Model will have a strong focus on preventative services that can tackle poverty and delivery of an approach to community engagement that gives people a real voice in shaping Council services and decision making.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Launched digital neighbourhood newsletters for residents. The first <a href="#">East Middlesbrough newsletter</a> reached 7,820 residents in the East of Middlesbrough who had signed up to receive information about their area through the Council's digital MyMiddlesbrough accounts.</li></ul>
<b>Delivering best value</b>	<p>Successfully integrating Social Value principles within Value for Money considerations will ensure organisations maximise the holistic benefits that can be achieved from their spend, beyond a narrow return on investment view. This is something the public sector have been focussed on for many years and strives to ensure that whole costs and benefits from decisions are captured when assessing their impacts and 'value for money'.</p> <p>Influencing procurement activity to drive maximisation of social value opportunities is one of the key levers the Council has to drive increased social value opportunities for its residents. Impacting on best value considerations is a factor within the vast majority of the commitments in the Social Value Charter. Eight commitments have been identified as having a direct, positive impact on this ambition. During the last 12 months the Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continued to ensure that social value is captured within every contract where it is appropriate to do so, and taken steps to increase capacity within the Procurement team to improve the quality of social value that is proposed to maximise the positive opportunities available to our residents. The additional capacity will also be used to monitor compliance with commitments and provide the organisation with intelligence on generated social value.</li><li>▪ Established the Tees Valley Anchor Network which is a collaborative group of large institutions within the Tees Valley region, like universities, hospitals, and local councils, who actively work together to reinvest in their communities and address social and economic challenges by leveraging their resources and influence, essentially acting as "anchors" for positive development in the area; this concept is based on the idea of</li></ul>

	<p>"anchor institutions" where major organisations actively contribute to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reviewed our approach to data and analytics to identify areas for improvement and agreed growth to support work to transform Council services through improved use of data, increase capacity to drive a performance management culture and explore predictive analytics.</li></ul>
--	--

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive:

- **NOTES** the progress made in the last 12 months to implement the commitments set out in the Social Value Charter as set out in section 1 of this report
- **ENDORSES** the continued implementation of activity to embed the charter over the next 12 months, which is summarised in section 4.

3 Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 Social Value has the potential to release millions of pounds of public money for community benefit and support regeneration of the town. It encourages smarter spending to not only deliver a proposed service but also address social, economic, and environmental issues in the local community. Continued implementation of the commitments in the Charter will ensure the Council's significant procurement spend has a positive, measurable impact on the communities it serves.

4 Background and relevant information

- 4.1 As local authorities are required to become increasingly financially self-reliant, many are looking at how to make their limited resources go ever further while still maintaining the quality and breadth of services.
- 4.2 Councils, along with the rest of the public sector are being encouraged to use procurement to achieve wider financial and non-financial outcomes, including improving wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment by making social value a decision-making criterion when awarding contracts.
- 4.3 Continued implementation of a Social Value Charter has the potential to deliver the following benefits:
- Encourage a more diverse range of suppliers to work with the Council and its partners, including the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SME's), Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, and local suppliers in general.
  - Promote fair employment practices: Ensuring workforce equality and diversity within supply chains.
  - Increasing the diversity of local apprenticeship, training, and skills development opportunities as well as employment opportunities.
  - Maximising opportunities for Middlesbrough organisations to participate in the

Council's supply chains and encouraging suppliers to make a social contribution to the local area.

- Ensuring ethical sourcing practices, including compliance with UK, and international standards, promoting fair trade and fair pricing policies, tackling corruption, child/slave labour, 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.

Embedding Social Value – implementation

4.4 The Council established a working group to oversee activity to embed the commitments within the Social Value Charter which has met every 4 weeks during 2024/5. The achievements of that group are summarised in section 1 and the table below sets out the planned activity over the next 12 months to ensure it continues to drive implementation of the Charter:

- Explore opportunities to seek a town wide systematic approach to social value exploitation within partnership working across the town through the re-established Town Board for partnership working
- Reflect the new Procurement Act Social Value obligations and within Council action to exploit opportunities and consider the national model
- Launch the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Support a bid for funding to improve support to international families to access employment opportunities by assisting them to get qualifications achieved in their home countries, recognised
- Reestablishing provision of meaningful work experience opportunities within the Council
- Use the increased capacity within the Procurement team to increase visibility of social value achieved through procurement and strengthen monitoring of compliance
- To raise our ambitions for social value within procurement by developing a Middlesbrough Council Social Value model for procurement taking inspiration from the regional and national models
- Explore good practice elsewhere including the Durham pound and the NHS access to work project
- Progress a funding bid to support the Council's Green Corridor ambitions
- Expand the services offered within the new town centre Live Well centre
- Deliver the Food Action Plan 2024-28 which has a key focus on tackling the growing issue of food insecurity
- Deliver the commitment to increase the number of homes in the town that can be used to prevent homelessness
- Continue to strengthen use of data within the Council to inform better decision-making
- Use learning from the NEPO project, launched this year, to further strengthen social value considerations within Council led procurements.
- Improve understanding of what volunteering and community action is - who volunteers, why they volunteer and appreciate the value they create. The initial



Neighbourhood structure is in place and the community development capacity within the team has been strengthened utilising grant funding. There are proposals to further increase this team, and a report is currently in draft. The existing team have reviewed the Councils volunteering model and refreshed it and this will have 2 strands. 1<sup>st</sup> it will have a clear and simple online route for members of the public who want to volunteer within the council to gain experience or to just give some time to support their community. 2<sup>nd</sup> it will reinvigorate the teams within the council who want to offer volunteering opportunities within their service area and ensure they have a full outline of the volunteering opportunities available in their teams so that the 2 parts can be linked.

- 4.5 Work with communities has identified that there is a significant number of people that want to volunteer in outdoor activities such as street cleaning/litter picking as they can see an instant benefit to their voluntary work and they get the opportunity to meet up outdoors with likeminded people and also undertake some physical activity. Volunteers can also bring children and get them involved too.
- 4.6 We are also working with community organisations and MVDA to link people up to volunteering opportunities within the community. See link: [Volunteering for Middlesbrough | Middlesbrough Council](#).
- 4.7 We know from engagement with the community that some residents want to volunteer with other parts of the council but there is currently no opportunities i.e. adult social care or work with young people and we will be developing this over the next 12 months.

**5 Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended**

- 5.1 The Council could choose not to continue to deliver the commitments in its Social Value Charter. It would still be compliant with its duties in relation to Best Value. This is not recommended as an option as the Council would miss the opportunity to deliver the wider benefits to the organisation and the town that can be achieved through social value, while still achieving Best Value from its commissioning and procurement activity.

**6 Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)**

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	The financial implications associated with delivering the Social Value Charter will be dependent upon the extent to which the existing operations of the Council are changed to meeting the requirements of the Charter. Action to deliver individual commitments will be brought forward through an appropriate decision-making mechanism, as necessary. This will include identification of financial implications.
Legal	Social value is defined through the Public Services (Social Value) Act (2013) which requires all public sector organisations and their suppliers to look beyond the financial cost of a contract to consider how the services they commission and procure can improve the economic, social

	and environmental wellbeing of an area. This charter will support compliance with that Act.
Risk	<p>Whilst not directly linked, increased social value return from the significant financial spending made by the Council will have a positive impact on several risks currently identified in the Strategic Risk Register, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Failure to maintain a balanced budget and Medium Term Financial Plan</li><li>▪ Volatility in the demand and cost of children's social care</li><li>▪ Unable to recruit and retain key staff</li><li>▪ Threats to social cohesion and democratic resilience.</li></ul>
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	Continued implementation of the agreed charter is having a positive impact by improving skills, training and employment opportunities for all. Commitments in the charter are particularly relevant to young adults, those not in employment and those from under representative communities.
Socio Economic impact	Exploitation of Social Value opportunities can have a positive impact on the socio-economic opportunities our residents can access, increasing access to employment opportunities, education and training as well as leading to improved health outcomes.
Climate Change / Environmental	The poorest are most effected by Climate Change, as such any work which aims to have a positive impact on social value, should also include consideration of addressing those measures that could impact most positively on the poorest.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The charter has a particular focus on those less able to access employment and training opportunities and includes care leavers in this group.
Data Protection	Continued delivery of the charter does not impact on data protection of GDPR issues directly. Where data needs to be gathered in order to monitor compliance with the charter, this will be completed in line with the Council's Data Protection policy and GDPR requirements.

**Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)**

Action	Responsible Officers	Deadline
Provision of a further progress report to Executive in 12 months	Mark Adams, Director of Public Health	April 2026

**Appendices**

Not applicable.

**Background papers**

Body	Report title	Date
Executive	Social Value Charter	10 April 2024

Not applicable.

**Contact:** Ann-Marie Johnstone, Head of Governance, Policy and Information  
**Email:** ann-marie\_johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk