

## Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)



Name of proposal	Revised Social Value policy
Directorate and Service Area	Finance Strategic Procurement and Supplier Relations Service
Name of Lead Officer	Matt King

### Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

#### 1.1 What is the proposal?

Social Value is about seeking 'Value for money' in its widest sense, by asking whether every £1 spent on the delivery of services can also produce a wider benefit to the community. Social Value advocates moving beyond making decisions based on financial cost and core quality alone: by also considering wider social benefits (involving people, culture and interactions), economic benefits (such as money flow and financial resources) and environmental benefits (involving the place in which people live, the planet and use of resources) as well. Social Value can therefore play a supporting role in meeting the Council's strategic objectives and priorities.

The Council's current Social Value policy (adopted Jan 2019) sets out how Social Value should be taken into account when making procurement decisions, and went beyond the Council's legal obligations as set out in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

However, considering Social Value could bring benefits to other decisions made by the Council too (not just procurement).

Therefore the proposal is to update the Council's policy to apply Social Value considerations to other decisions the Council makes, such as grant allocations, investments and decisions about asset utilisation.

The key aims of the new policy are to:

- Reduce poverty and inequality;
- Increase the city's resilience and environmental sustainability; and
- Enhance community economic and social wellbeing.

To deliver on those aims, the policy sets 10 key objectives:

Focussing specifically on **reducing poverty and inequality**, we will:

1. Support the creation, sustainability and growth of local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
2. Support the creation and retention of high-quality, sustainable jobs for local people which pay at least the living wage
3. Support local people with opportunities for life-long learning, skills development and experiences of work

Focussing specifically on **enhancing community economic and social wellbeing**, we will

4. Support the creation, sustainability and growth of local community groups, voluntary groups and social enterprises, in alignment with the VCSE strategy
5. Promote the involvement of local people and organisations in active citizenship such as volunteering and foster caring
6. Promote the mental and physical health and well-being of local people
7. Support the creation of high quality, affordable and sustainable homes and inclusive public spaces

Focussing specifically on **increasing the city's resilience and environmental sustainability**, we will:

8. Reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases (both direct emissions and those embodied in any supplies and services)
9. Reduce and reuse waste, particularly waste that is harmful and/or sent to landfill
10. Support Bristol becoming a more ecologically resilient and biodiverse city

A pragmatic approach is proposed and the detail of exactly how particular types of decision should be made is left to be defined by the decision makers.

However, the policy does set out:

- The sorts of decisions Social Value should start to be applied to:
  - Service delivery improvements

- Non-Treasury investments
  - Enhancing / Securing inward impact investments
  - Procurement
  - Partnerships
  - Community led housing
  - Community Asset Transfers / land proposals
  - Regeneration, construction and physical development activity
  - Grant awards and grant applications to other bodies
- 8 guiding principles for how Social Value should be applied: Aligned, Relevant, Proportionate, Accessible & Inclusive, Consistent, Transparent, Robust and Monitored.
  - An indication of the maturity path that each area of decision-making is expected to progress along in developing and improving the approach we take to Social Value is also outlined.

The planned impact of the policy is therefore to:

- Encourage, challenge and reward partners, suppliers and projects which deliver wider economic, social and environmental benefits for Bristol and its citizens, through the way they work.
- Take wider impacts into account during decision-making, and so secure additional benefits (jobs, training, support for community groups, etc) for local people – focussing specifically on disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

## Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

### 2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

This proposal is about making changes to some Council decision-making processes to have positive social impact on people or the planet, rather than one specific decision itself. Target area of focus will be to contribute to addressing inequalities in the 3 priority areas outlined :

- Reduce poverty and inequality;
- Increase the city's resilience and environmental sustainability; and

- Enhance community economic and social wellbeing

The details of who could be affected will therefore depend on the particular decisions that will be taken using any revised decision-making process. However, overarching aim of the Social Value policy is to support Bristol with building back better from the effects of the Covid pandemic – including tackling inequality and marginalisation.

When seeking to apply Social Value to a particular area of decision-making (e.g. awarding grants, procuring contracts, forming partnerships, etc), the policy has an emphasis on this being a process of maturity for each type of decision. The need to develop the best approach based on both stakeholder engagement and equalities data is stressed: including experimentation and evaluation where there are significant uncertainties or gaps in the evidence base about differential impacts on communities or persons with protected characteristics.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have published a report showing how coronavirus has affected equality and human rights (updated Oct 2020) [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equality\\_and\\_human\\_rights\\_commission\\_how\\_coronavirus\\_has\\_affected\\_equality\\_and\\_human\\_rights\\_2020.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equality_and_human_rights_commission_how_coronavirus_has_affected_equality_and_human_rights_2020.pdf)

### **Citywide data**

Bristol [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) and citywide data available from [Open Data Bristol](#) shows that Bristol is a thriving and diverse city, but its success is not shared by everyone, and inequality is growing. Bristol has 41 areas in the most deprived 10% in England, including 3 in the most deprived 1%. The greatest levels of deprivation are in Hartcliffe & Withywood, Filwood and Lawrence Hill. In Bristol 15% of residents - 70,400 people - live in the 10% most deprived areas in England, including 18,900 children and 7,900 older people.

Bristol has a relatively young age profile with more children aged 0-15 than people aged 65 and over. The median age of people living in Bristol is 32.5 years old, compared to 40 years in England and Wales.

The population of Bristol has become increasingly diverse and some local communities have changed significantly. There are now at least 45 religions, at least 180 countries of birth and at least 91 main languages spoken.

The proportion of the Bristol population who are not 'White British' in census records increased from 12% (2001) to 22% (2011).

**Health inequality in Bristol:** Life expectancy for women is 82.8 years and for men 78.7 years, both are significantly worse than the national average. In the past five years life expectancy for women has not increased and has risen by less than 0.5 years for men. The inequalities gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in Bristol is 9.6 years for men and 7.1 years for women.

### **Affected groups**

There are potentially a wide range of people who could be affected in some way by the policy. Key examples include:

- Applicants or organisations who are affected by the Council decision – who could be based in Bristol or elsewhere. Examples could include suppliers bidding for a contract, VCSE organisations bidding for a grant and community groups seeking an asset transfer.
- VCSE organisations who might benefit from support – for example from the council's suppliers
- Bristol citizens who run businesses or could be taken on or retained in jobs with Council suppliers, subcontractors of Council suppliers and/or VCSE groups.
- Bristol citizens who are seeking experiences of work or training
- Bristol citizens who are involved in active citizenship (volunteering, foster caring, etc.) – or who could be encouraged to do so.

### **2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?**

As above, the above is an indication of affected groups, rather than a complete list, as the affected parties will depend on the specific decision being made.

We know there are gaps in national and citywide equalities data for some protected characteristics e.g. sexual orientation, especially where this has not historically been included in statutory reporting.

### **2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?**

Communities and affected groups will be involved in two ways:

- It is stated in the policy that when a Council service area is carrying out a consultation or co-design regarding a significant decision, Social

Value considerations should be included as part of that (alongside the core objectives)

- When decisions are being made about how Social Value considerations should be generally applied across a set of decisions (e.g. setting out how Social Value should normally be applied to procurement decisions), then the policy states that there should be consideration of equalities data, as well as appropriate stakeholder engagement.

An example of how consultation has worked in practice is a review of how Social Value is applied to procurement decisions, where the following stakeholders were consulted:

- 120 suppliers were invited to feedback on the existing policy, of which 65 took part – including several in-depth interviews
- 3 workshops with Councillors from the Resources Scrutiny Commission
- Feedback from 65 Officers affected by the policy
- Federation of Small Business
- VOSCUR
- Bristol Equalities Network
- EmbRACE staff-led group

In addition to the above, the following groups have been invited to feedback on the overarching policy document itself:

- Councillor working group
- FSB
- VOSCUR
- EmbRACE staff-led group
- Bristol Equalities Network

### **Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?**

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

The policy specifically aims to have a positive impact on equality in the city.

However, there are two potential unintended consequences that could happen if we do not take steps to mitigate against them:

1. Social Value could be included into application or bid processes in a way that unintentionally excludes people on the basis of their protected characteristics (e.g. wording used is unnecessarily complicated, meaning that applicants whose first language is not English find it too difficult to apply for funding or a contract).
2. Social Value may be included into an application or bid process in a way that disproportionately puts off (or otherwise disfavours) an applicant who would otherwise deliver the best service for service users. This could result in another applicant winning, resulting in a worse service being delivered to particular protected characteristic groups or communities of interest. In particular an unwieldy or time consuming process may deter smaller charities and SMEs. Local research<sup>1</sup> has highlighted how long-term underinvestment and lack of equity in funding and procurement has eroded the local Voluntary and community sector – in particular for Black and minority ethnic led organisations. 30% of the organisations surveyed stated to operate on an annual budget below £5,000, and an additional 18% operated on below £25,000. 42% of the organisations sampled had no paid staff at all and fully relied on volunteers to deliver their activities and services.

### 3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

These potential unintended impacts can be mitigated by ensuring that Social Value is applied to decision making in a proportionate, accessible and inclusive way.

The policy specifically states that when we are designing how Social Value should be incorporated into each decision-making framework, we should do so in a proportionate, accessible and inclusive way.

Actions to ensure this happens in practice may include:

- Completing an EQIA when setting up a specific decision-making framework
- Using data (e.g. on equalities and deprivation) to set targets for the diversity of applications we should and would like to attract – including characteristics protected under the Equality Act.
- Consulting on and (where appropriate) co-designing decision-making processes (including any wording, guidance, scoring, etc)

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<sup>1</sup> [Black South West Network: 'We want to change, and they have the power', 2018](#)

- Piloting approaches to applying Social Value in consultation with potential applicants, as well as representatives of groups with protected characteristics
- Training and communicating: provide clear guidance and support for applicants in a number of different formats (e.g. in-person, written, videos, etc as appropriate) – as well as considering ways in which we can attract a diverse range of applicants (e.g. targeted advertising, getting messages out via partners)
- Building consistency and familiarity: trying to maintain consistency in the way that Social Value is included into processes (where possible) – in order to help applicants become more familiar and comfortable with the process
- Seeking feedback from applicants and potential applicants on a regular basis: both on their attitude to the process and on suggestions for improvements – and respond to that feedback
- Evaluating the success of the approach, for example:
  - using monitoring and reporting to check that we are receiving applications from a diverse range of individuals and organisations – and the outcomes of those applications is in-line with this.
  - Flagging and clarifying/changing any parts of the application or decision-making process that create misunderstandings

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

Yes: as above, the policy specifically aims to deliver tangible additional benefits for marginalised groups.

For example, the current application of Social Value assessment within procurement already prioritises and rewards suppliers who take positive action to ensure good representation of employees who are Black, Asian and minority ethnic; disabled; and who live in areas of multiple deprivation.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

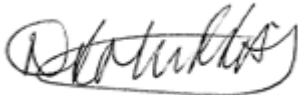
Maximising these benefits will happen in two ways:

1. Using deprivation and demographic data to prioritise and target Social Value outcomes which have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics, and on marginalised groups more generally
2. Involving and developing stakeholders in how best to include Social Value consideration within decision-making, in a way that is accessible but results in positive commitments being delivered for Bristol



#### Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?	
This prompted a revision of the draft policy to strengthen consideration of accessibility of the decision-making processes, and consideration of Equalities impacts - making this more explicit.	
4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?	
As above.	
4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?	
Stakeholder feedback will be gathered, as well as data on what Social Value has been committed and delivered in relation to equalities groups.  In addition, there is further work being done in procurement to assess the accessibility of procurement processes and the diversity of the Council's supply chain, with the aim of trying to measure and promote under-represented groups.	
Service Director Sign-Off: 	Equalities Officer Sign Off: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>
Date: 26/02/21	Date: 11/2/2021