

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: **Draft Social Value Policy**

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation**

Date response requested:² **24 February 2026**

Response to report: Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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¹ Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

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Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That any policy on supporting social value through procurement should form part of a wider policy on generating social value and supporting community wealth building across all the Council's functions, and that the Cabinet should commit to a holistic approach.	Accept	The policy sets the Council's procurement and commissioning mechanism for delivering wider benefits through contracts, aligned to local priorities and wider corporate commitments. While procurement is one lever among many, the approach supports consistent practice through themed questions, delivery planning, contract management and annual reporting. This provides a foundation that can complement wider place-based and community wealth ambitions across the Council's functions. A nominated officer (HO Commercial and Procurement) will be placed to lead the linking up of social value across the organisation and with external stakeholders. One action being taken forward is a social value prospectus from the councils service areas. Actions will also be taken to ensure policies such as Community Asset Transfer feature the same themes to give a cohesive approach which can be easily understood by internal and external stakeholders.
2. That in developing and implementing its new social value policy, the Cabinet should draw on the experience of best-practice councils including Durham, Manchester and Preston, as well as the 2023 commissioned report from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies.	Accept	The Council has drawn on external learning in developing the in-house approach and will continue to benchmark and improve over time. This includes that of Durham, Camden and Preston. The policy includes a commitment to periodic review so it remains current with changing legislation, market conditions and local priorities. The revised approach is intentionally streamlined to reduce administrative burden and improve uptake, while maintaining clear expectations and accountability for delivery. Actions on this are to include: Continue horizon scanning and

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		benchmarking; incorporate learning through periodic review and refreshed guidance.
3. That the Cabinet considers, when developing a new set of Themes, Outcomes, and Measures (TOMs) for application in Oxfordshire, how these reflect its commitments to putting climate change at the heart of everything it does as well as safeguarding the wellbeing of future generations.	Reject	The Council is not proposing to develop a bespoke TOMs framework. Instead, the in-house approach uses five local priority themes and contract-specific questions, with SMART measures that remain clearly related to the subject matter of each contract and proportionate in application. This provides flexibility to embed climate considerations where relevant, while retaining a practical approach for suppliers and contract managers.
4. That the Cabinet considers how its new social value policy can support delivery of the Council's Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	The Council can support local nature recovery through the environmental and place-based outcomes that can be sought under the 'Local Area Regeneration' theme, where relevant to the contract. The themes enable service areas to frame questions that reflect local priorities and ensure deliverability through market engagement. This is complemented by the Council's ethical and sustainable procurement requirements, which strengthen expectations on environmental performance across the supply chain. Suppliers will be directed to the LNRS mapping tools and other resources to maintain a localised approach to any delivery.
5. That the Cabinet should set targets and make available to organisations proven, impactful projects which focus on the key priorities the Council would like to address in relation to social value	Partially Accept	The policy establishes five priority themes to provide a consistent framework linking to the strategic priorities of the council, whilst allowing service areas to drill down into more specific, contract-relevant asks through the procurement process. For each qualifying procurement, service areas select two themes to maintain focus. Questions are then developed to suit the contract and the market, supported by pre-market engagement to ensure the ask is deliverable. Suppliers are required to submit a Social Value Delivery Plan with SMART measures, milestones and estimated costs, enabling delivery to be monitored through

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		contract management and reported transparently. This will be reflected in an annual social value report.
6. That the Cabinet specifically considers the opportunities to support social value through the disposal of land and property and ensure policy is developed around this, especially around Community Asset Transfer.	Reject	The Council recognises the importance of land and property decisions in delivering community benefit. However, the Social Value Policy is designed specifically for procurement and commissioning activity. Opportunities relating to land, property and Community Asset Transfer are best addressed through the appropriate property governance routes, including a new CAT policy which is under development. This policy development has worked closely to mirror the priorities outlined in the social value policy to maintain consistency. Next steps are to ensure links between approaches are reflected through appropriate property governance and policy development routes.
7. That the Cabinet should work alongside fellow anchor institutions in the public (and private sector) to align their procurement policies to maximise social value generation and their collective impact on the wider Oxfordshire economy through their purchasing power.	Accept	The Council supports working with partners and anchor institutions to maximise the collective impact of local spend and delivery. The in-house approach provides a clear, locally aligned framework that can be shared and discussed with partners, whilst ensuring award criteria remain lawful, contract-relevant and proportionate. The Council will continue to progress this through existing partnership routes and will be working pre and post LGR with relevant anchor institutions in shaping the wider social value approach of Oxfordshire.
8. That the Cabinet should work with anchor institutions in the public (and private sector) to adopt a shared understanding of social value and work together to direct contributions to support schemes which have a long-lasting impact on Oxfordshire residents and their communities.	Accept	The themed approach provides a shared structure for social value, while allowing service areas to tailor specific asks to local need and market capability through pre-market engagement. Delivery is secured through Social Value Delivery Plans and monitored through contract management. Where non-delivery persists after remediation, the approach allows for service credits that are ring-fenced and reinvested against the Council's social value themes, supporting targeted and transparent use of funds. The next steps for building out our relations with anchor institutions include developing clear comms for partners on themes, delivery planning

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		and reporting; explore options for shared understanding through OIEP and other anchor institutes around Oxfordshire and working on our social value prospectus for exempt contracts from the main social value workflow.
9. That the Cabinet considers having a light-touch set of social value requirements for smaller contracts	Reject	The new approach is already designed to be proportionate. Social value tender weighting applies by default only for procurements above £100,000, with defined exemptions where applying the standard approach would not be appropriate (for example, short-duration contracts and certain VCSE markets). For lower value contracts, officers can still secure appropriate outcomes through contract design and ethical requirements without introducing unnecessary process or cost for smaller suppliers. Ongoing actions will be to embed proportionality and exemptions through guidance and templates and support service areas to apply the approach consistently.
10. That the Cabinet reconsiders the proposed social value weighting which is currently set at the statutory minimum of 10%.	Reject	The proposed weighting of 10% is intended as a proportionate baseline that supports consistent application and reduces barriers to participation, particularly for smaller suppliers, while maintaining appropriate balance with price and quality. This approach was chosen to allow more focus on quality and cost, whilst maintaining excellent social value. Some of the sustainability elements have now been embedded into contract specifications through the ethical procurement policy, allowing for a lower weighting of social value. This will be monitored for supplier uptake and contract management success.
11. That the Cabinet should ensure that its choice of social value measures incentivises inclusive forms of ownership, including co-operatives and social enterprises.	Partial Acceptance	The Council recognises the contribution of social enterprises, co-operatives and SMEs, and the policy supports proportionate application and avoids undue barriers for such organisations. While the Social Value Policy necessarily provides a consistent structure to support improved delivery of social value, the Council's wider social value action plan incorporates ambitions to further

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		reduce barriers to entry for VCSEs and SMEs, and to seek routes to ring-fencing specific opportunities for those types of organisations that inherently support the Council's social value ambitions. This is therefore out of the scope for further action under this policy.
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