

Seminar: Social Value in London

Speakers

**John Bacon, Business Director,
and
Neely Mozawala, Social Value Lead,
Compass Group**

**Lindsay Mann,
Director, Strategy & New Business,
Ingeus**

**Justin Mendelle,
Senior Partner,
Sharpe Pritchard LLP
(Chair and Facilitator)**

**Polly Persechino,
Head of Economy, Skills and Employment,
South London Partnership**

**Tim Rudin,
Head of Responsible Procurement,
Greater London Authority**

In March 2023 the BSA, in collaboration with London Councils and [Sharpe Pritchard LLP](#), organised a seminar looking at the application of social value across London.

Local and devolved government leaders across the capital had given priority to the promotion of inclusive and sustainable growth, and the development of social value frameworks in order to achieve this.

The seminar looked at the progress being made to date in developing policy in this area, what best practice looked like in how these policies were drawn up, and the priorities for further action. It then progressed to looking at how these policies and social value frameworks were being implemented on the ground, and the results.

Justin Mendelle opened the discussion, and reflected both on the higher priority now given to social value across the board and on the greater consistency in its application.

Tim Rudin then set out how the Greater London Authority had approached the issue of social value in relation to its suppliers.

The GLA Group's Responsible Procurement Policy had five strands, all supported by wider GLA policies.

These were: improving supply chain diversity; embedding fair and inclusive employment practices, supported by the Good Work Standard and including the London Living Wage; enabling skills, training and employment opportunities; promoting ethical sourcing practices, including Modern Slavery considerations; and improving environmental sustainability. Tim set out the thinking and policy approach behind each.

Procurement was an essential tool for achieving objectives in all these areas. The GLA Group Responsible Procurement Implementation Plan allocated a minimum 10 per cent weighting for social value, and had specific targets in areas like apprenticeship starts, SME spend, the Good Work Standard and carbon reduction. The GLA also worked with an Anchor Institutions Network and the London Responsible Procurement Network to coordinate procurement activity, and used London TOMS as a set of metrics.

Lindsay Mann was the first speaker to provide a supplier perspective. Lindsay looked at progress made to date in the sectors where Ingeus as a human services organisation worked, in particular helping people into work in London and beyond, and said a huge amount of progress had been made by suppliers and commissioners alike.

Lindsay then asked how greater local social value collaboration could be achieved; how commissioners could provide greater specificity of social value priorities while still encouraging innovation; whether some social value targets should be mandatory for all government suppliers; and about the role of intermediaries.

For example at present suppliers tended to lead on identifying need, prior to submitting bids, but greater co-ordination of local priorities, and then ongoing feedback, might maximise return and avoid duplication of effort.

These contributions were followed by discussion involving all participants, relating first to some of the questions Lindsay had raised, starting with collaboration to identify social value priorities. The community and voluntary sectors could help, both in identifying need and in knowing about local small and micro-businesses in an area, in terms of developing supply chains.

There was also discussion of particular service sectors, and how to differentiate additional social value in people-related services which were intrinsically all about social value. This led to discussion of the role of TOMS, and the respective roles of quantitative and qualitative measurements.

Finally there was emphasis placed on the importance of contract management and of making sure that social value commitments were monitored.

The second session, focusing on the practical outworking of social value on the ground, was opened by John Bacon and Neely Mozawala. They asked what the best ways were to achieve social value; how things could be improved; and what were the long-term legacies we should aim for. They looked at how social value was being embedded in businesses, and gave several case studies of Compass Group's work in London in respect of community support projects, apprenticeships, and working equitably with supply chains and helping to build up SMEs and social enterprises.

John and Neely set out five ways in which further improvements could be made: data capture and measurement to learn from success; making social value the norm and part of the routine, through continuous work; public sector bodies understanding the 'art of the possible' through collaboration; learning continuously; and harnessing the power of SMEs.

The final speaker was Polly Persechino, who explained the progress the South London Partnership was making with the five London boroughs it represented. Polly gave several case studies of this work, focused on achievements in Community Wealth Building and strengthening supply chains, and of collaborating through Anchor institutions. She gave as a case study work in employment and skills support, matching job-seekers with local jobs and training opportunities in the construction sector. This work would be ongoing.

There were three recent drivers of change: policy changes, the pandemic highlighting and identifying need, and cost of living increases. Key principles were the importance of long-term legacy; bringing real value; and driving impact which could be measured qualitatively and quantitatively. Challenges were local differences, a need for innovation, suppliers taking responsibility for achieving KPIs and outcomes on social value, and the need to make use of all available local and supplier resources in achieving social value outcomes.

Justin then opened the seminar to wider discussion, starting with the importance of legacy - which led to a debate on the importance of collaboration to achieve such a legacy. First this related to collaboration between local authority areas, with a view to a long-term legacy being achieved, including in areas like training and apprenticeships so people who were trained in one area were not excluded from jobs in neighbouring areas at the end of a contract. Different areas inevitably had different priorities, and were inevitably focused on their communities, but this didn't preclude collaboration.

Second there was the question of collaboration between stakeholders, including between service providers working in different sectors in the same locality - for example companies with job vacancies working with employment support providers so those looking for work were matched with the jobs available. Employment support suppliers in London were also joining together to provide work placements through a GLA initiative, which illustrated the potential for social value to be provided outside the procurement process.

Collaboration between authority and supplier also needed to continue in-contract, as lessons were inevitably learnt as contracts progressed; there needed to be the flexibility to accommodate these.

Frameworks also provided a mechanism for longer term relationships with networks of suppliers in support of social value.

There was also a need to make sure smaller service providers were included in these conversations.

The discussion ended with an emphasis on the importance of involving communities themselves in determining priorities and then co-producing on delivery.

This was the latest in a series of regional seminars on social value and related issues, and the themes would continue to be covered in further discussions.