

For Eco-Connect:

## Social Value: Explore, Challenge, Apply

Social Value has been on the radar for many of the procurement teams that we have worked with over the past year. Although current legislation (The Social Value Act (2012) is limited in scope (applying to public sector procurements subject to The Public Contracts Regulations (2015)) and has been focused on those commissioning social care, there are indications this will be extended during 2020.

NETpositive Futures has always championed an approach to sustainability that includes socio-economic elements and followed developments related to social value with interest.

Then, we met the team behind the Social Value Engine, and we decided to roll up our sleeves.

Along with an elite group of procurement leaders, we are spending early 2020 exploring practical ways to consider and measure social value in context and will be sharing our learning widely.

The Social Value Act has been stimulating discussions about how sustainability is embedded and measured within procurement process and practice. Specifically, how it contributes tangible benefits to the wider community.

‘Social value’ discussions have tended to focus on the question ‘if £x is spent on delivering an activity, what is the value of that same £x in terms of wider social impact?’ Calculating financial value is always interesting to those responsible for ensuring value for money and we are interested in helping procurement practitioners understand what lies behind these calculations.

The narratives around social value are immature and there is no single approach to calculating social value that is robust, transparent and being consistently applied. We want to create some space for procurement teams to make sense of the challenge and opportunity that thinking about sustainability in terms of social value presents.

The Social Value Engine is one of a range of tools and techniques for measuring social value that have emerged since 2014 and these are providing a useful mechanism and support for measuring social value.

### About the project: Who is involved...

The project group consists of:

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Barnsley Metropolitan Council
- Durham University
- Newcastle University
- The University of Birmingham
- The University of Manchester
- Yorkshire and Humber Police
- YPO

Working in partnership provides us with opportunity to explore how social value can support sustainable procurement ambitions.

## About the project: What is involved...

We are working with each of the procurement teams to ensure that they are fully engaged with both sustainable procurement and social value thinking. We are then taking 3 simple steps:

1. Using the Social Value Engine to experiment with calculating social value in context
2. Considering the best ways to include social value considerations in procurement process
3. Sharing learning across the group

In Spring 2020 we will publish learning from the project. A report will be launched at our NETpositive Forum on 22 April 2020 (<http://netpositivefutures.co.uk/netpositive-forum/>) and will be shared widely with support from YPO.