

Introduction

Under the Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2012, Brighton and Hove City Council, as a public sector buyer, has an obligation to consider how its purchasing power can be used to secure wider economic, social and environmental benefits for its area and/or stakeholders.

This means that whenever we procure something, we need to think about:

- how what is being procured may improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area where the contract is being delivered; and
- how the procurement process can secure those improvements.

We are looking to work with organisations who behave responsibly and ethically and who go beyond the technical requirements of contracts, (beyond “business as usual”), to create positive outcomes for our local communities.

The below information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede the tender documents themselves. Please always follow the instructions in the invitation to tender.

Our bidders’ guidance for creating a strong Social Value submission

1. Get to know Brighton and Hove / participate in Pre-market engagement sessions

If you are unfamiliar with the city and its diverse communities, please [read the Council plan](#) to understand our priorities and [the demographics of the city](#). Take a moment to [examine each focus area](#) and the matching Social Value outcomes and sample outputs.

When we have the capacity to do so, we try and engage with suppliers at the pre-procurement stage. This is a good opportunity for us to get feedback on our approach, and for our supply chain to help shape the process, so do take part if you can.

2. Read the Specification and Invitation to Tender carefully

In the Specification document we will set out which Social Value outcome(s) we seek from the contract, as well as examples of activities/outputs that could help you achieve them.

In the Invitation to Tender, we will provide the scoring methodology used to evaluate the Social Value criteria. This scoring methodology is specific to the Social Value question. Please read it and keep it in mind when drafting your response.

3. Understand the outcome(s) and research how your organisation could achieve them

Unless specified otherwise in the tender documents, the suggested outputs are there for guidance, and the list of outputs is not intended to be exhaustive. If the outputs suggested are not something you can deliver, please consider whether you have other projects/activities ongoing that would meet the outcomes. We encourage innovation and creativity. You may already have initiatives ongoing at your organisation that would also be suitable .

4. Engage with the local community/third sector

Check that the intended beneficiaries of the Social Value you are proposing to deliver have a genuine need for the output(s) you have chosen to deliver as part of your contract.

Look at where the contract is to be delivered. Which schools, charities, social enterprises are active in that area? If you are proposing to donate equipment or services to a charity, it is a good idea to contact that charity and check that donation meets their needs. You will need to demonstrate in your response that this step has been completed.

Remember that most charities operate on limited capacity and may receive numerous emails from bidders. In your initial approach, it may be a good idea to mention what you can offer the charity as well as what you want from them, so that you can build a genuine, mutually beneficial partnership.

Generic Social Value offers which are not deliverable in Brighton and Hove or which do not meet the needs of the local community/third sector will not score well.

For example, charities are often offered a team of volunteers for a single day or week but may benefit more from having a single member of your staff supporting them in a specific way over the longer term e.g. strategic planning or communications.

Conversely, if you are a bidder from the VCSE (Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise) sector, remember that the evaluating panel will not automatically know how your organisation delivers the Social Value outcomes highlighted in the tender. You should be in a great position to show the social value that would be created as a result of you winning the contract, and the positive impact it would make locally, but it is important to remember to illustrate how you will do this in your answer and link back to the outcome(s) in the tender.

5. Establish a delivery plan

Think about what you will need to deliver your chosen outputs/activities (“Who will be responsible for delivery? What will they need to do?”), and what evidence you will need to demonstrate that the outcome has been achieved.

For example, if you offer work placements for students, your response will score higher if you indicate who is responsible for managing the process, how they will locate

suitable candidates, when and where the placements will occur, and what evidence you will need to give the contract manager to show that they have happened.

If you offer your staff a percentage of their time to volunteer, explain what percentage that is, how you promote the initiative to your staff, how it will be used to deliver the chosen outcome in Brighton and Hove, and how you will monitor and evidence the impact.

This should form the main body of your response/method statement. The panel of evaluators need to feel confident that the activities proposed will be delivered, and that you have a robust delivery plan to do so. In addition, we need to see a clear link between the activities proposed and how they meet the outcome sought.

Your response is expected to contain as best practice:

- Where your social value commitments will be delivered, and who the beneficiaries are, for example; young people or a specific ward or wards
- What evidence you will provide to the council to demonstrate delivery of your social value commitments
- Details (name/legal structure) of local organisations the bidder proposes to involve in the delivery of social value and whether you have contacted them ahead of submission
- An action plan and timeline for the delivery of the selected social value commitments (see step 6).

6. Fill in the Social Value Action Plan template

This is a short and snappy summary of what you will have explained in the main body of your answer. It will be used to monitor delivery of outputs and outcomes once the contract is live and will help you in your reporting to the contract manager.

7. Last but not least...

It is always a good idea to sense-check your bid by asking someone who did not participate in writing the bid to score your response against the scoring methodology and to check it against the dos and don'ts list.

Dos and Don'ts social value response

Do

- Make specific commitments that you can (and will) deliver. Provide a clear method statement with realistic KPIs (key performance indicators) for social value activity. Non-delivery of social value commitments is currently an increasing challenge for public sector buyers. It is essential that you demonstrate how you will monitor and track activity internally and report on progress to the contract manager.
- Make commitments that are relevant, proportionate and deliverable locally.
- Ensure your response sets out how you will demonstrate delivery of your commitments. (Use the Social Value Plan as a guide to draft your

answer.) Outline how will you track and monitor your progress, over what time frames, and what outputs you will deliver to meet your commitments.

Don't

- Be non-committal or make vague, unspecific commitments. The Panel does not want to see aspirational, non-specific pledges. “We hope,” “We aim to,” “We could consider” and “We would be delighted to discuss” will all negatively impact your score.
- Include anything which does not answer the question. It is not simply about meeting the word count. Think of it like doing an exam: if you do not answer the question, you do not score well.
- Waffle and make vague, high-level statements about what a great organisation you are and how important social value is to you.
- Avoid referencing generic, corporate level policies. If a policy or strategy is relevant to the question, explain what that means in relation to delivering the outcome(s). For example, “Our Modern Slavery Policy provides guidance to all staff to ensure they manage and mitigate the risk of modern slavery in our supply chain. It is updated annually and published online on our website. Measures outlined in the policy which will be implemented on this contract include [list the measures].”
- Offer to donate equipment to a school in another part of the country. Social Value is about creating value locally to the contract, and that means for the city of Brighton and Hove.
- Offer free trials of your services as Social Value. Your commitments should be about creating value for the local community not upselling your services.