



STRATEGY



Wigan Council

Mission-driven procurement in Wigan Borough

Wigan Council is harnessing the power of procurement to advance a collective mission to tackle local inequalities. The council's 'mission-driven approach to procurement' has been co-designed with businesses and partners and is based on ethical values which will build community wealth.

In 2024, a new movement for change was launched in Wigan Borough called 'Progress with Unity'. It sets out two core missions that people and organisations across the borough will unite to tackle in the decade ahead.

These missions are to break down the barriers that create inequalities and help towns and neighbourhoods thrive.

Building community health and wealth is a central way for the council and partners to deliver on the two missions.



Wigan's 'Progress with Unity' Missions

In 2022/23, the Council spent £415m on external suppliers and £91m on Wigan-based suppliers.

By maximising community wealth building and social value through how it leverages its money, the council can improve outcomes for residents and positively impact on people and communities. To help do this the council has launched Mission-Driven Procurement – Building Community Wealth Together.

This is a framework which sets out the key values expected of suppliers.

These go beyond meeting the requirements of the law in terms of appropriate wages and the working environment.

Supportive employers are expected to nurture and develop their workforce, provide high standards of training at no additional cost to employees, invest in prevention, and tackle ill health.

The high employer standards help drive up the local economy and are in line with the requirements expected of contracting authorities outlined in the Government's National Procurement Policy Statement.

This approach in setting non-negotiable "imperatives" for potential partners builds on internal best practice previously recognised by the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network, in the way Wigan Council developed its ethical homecare partnership.

This resilient and collaborative care system generates extensive economic, social and environmental value for the borough.

Mission-Driven Procurement builds on this success.

Suppliers are expected to evidence specific commitments to the borough when they bid for work, and the council is working to ensure that social value is consistently managed and treated formally alongside the delivery of quality services.

A proposed menu of social value considerations and options is included, which is provided in the context that commitments should be made in proportion to the size and value of the contract, and include a legacy to communities, evolving over time.

The framework sets out how the council is weighting social value in evaluation of tenders at 15%. As part of their overall approach the council has also made key changes internally to prepare for the Procurement Act.

These include updating contract procedure rules, raising awareness of the changes through learning sessions and updates for specific teams and supporting the Cabinet Office with the development of the central digital platform by early testing.

The council worked hard to share information about the platform with suppliers and specifically the VCFSE Sector.

This included sharing publicity on social media and circulating specific information about the platform to every payee recorded on their ledger, and giving presentations to a social enterprise network and VCFSE group.

The central procurement team have regularly engaged with the local business consortia who have given very positive feedback.

To support council commissioners and contract managers with the changes and improve quality and consistency in planning ahead for tenders, the council has developed an internal guide to buying goods, works and services.

This outlines the responsibilities of all council staff to ensure that taxpayer money maximises public benefit and offers support to preparing effective tenders with the aim of building skills and capacity across the council, formalising the mission-driven approach.

The team have also developed a 'thinking tool', to be used prior to procurement, to help commissioners think through their requirements, the problem they are trying to solve, how it relates back to the missions and how to maximise impact.

Commissioners are supported to think about what expectations are proportionate to the size and value of the contract, working to the strengths of SMEs and the VCFSE sector and maximising contribution and impact on the borough through high value contracts.

The council has begun to develop a contract management workbook, to encourage a principle-driven approach to developing relationships with providers, and which considers how listening, co-design, and evidence-based practice can be applied.

Alongside this important policy work are projects in Wigan Borough which are forging new relationships between businesses, the VCFSE sector and the public sector to build community wealth.

The Community SOS initiative connects local community groups with teams of businesses wishing to give back to local people and organisations.

The support can range from redevelopment, repairs and maintenance works to financial advice or training.

The project has already had some fantastic success stories and are making real Wigan Borough's 'Progress with Unity' missions to address inequalities and support our towns and neighbourhoods to thrive.



Community SOS Wigan Council - Wigan Borough's businesses, community organisations and public sector are working together to build community wealth and health, such as this partnership between a building company and food pantry.

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