



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

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Social Value Statement

September 2026



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What is Social Value?

Social value refers to the positive impact that actions, organisations, or policies have on people, communities, and the environment, beyond financial or economic outcomes.

Social value is fundamentally about changes in people's wellbeing and the broader societal impact of decisions or activities, whether intended or unintended, positive or negative, and measured from the perspective of those affected. Unlike economic value, which focuses on money, or environmental value, which focuses on natural resources, social value emphasizes human and community outcomes, such as access to education, health services, employment opportunities, social inclusion, and community cohesion.

Our Commitment and Approach

Westmorland and Furness Council exists to improve the lives of the people, communities and places we serve. Every decision we make, every pound we spend and every service we deliver has the potential to create wider economic, social and environmental benefits.

We believe that social value is not something that is delivered solely through procurement. It is created through the way the Council operates as a whole organisation and through the influence we exercise across Westmorland and Furness. All businesses are capable of realising social value, and as a Council we can take a lead to encourage good growth where businesses grow through investing in good work and investing in their communities

As one of the largest employers, commissioners, landowners and investors in our area, we recognise our responsibility as an anchor institution. Anchor institutions are organisations that are rooted in place, unlikely to relocate, and able to use their economic and social influence to strengthen local communities and improve outcomes for local people.

Our ambition is to ensure that public resources generate the greatest possible benefit for residents, both now and for future generations. We will commit to publishing information on our progress and the social value generated through Council activity and procurement.

This Statement sets out how we will maximise social value through our role as:

- Employer
- Commissioner and procurer
- Investor and funder
- Steward of property assets
- Planning authority
- Community leader and partner

Our refreshed approach to social value reflects recognised good practice in Community Wealth Building and the work of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), which highlights the role of anchor institutions in creating fairer and more resilient local economies through their employment practices, purchasing power, assets, investment and leadership.

We will seek to maximise social value through the five pillars of the CLES framework:

1. Progressive Procurement - Using our purchasing power to strengthen local supply chains, create opportunities for local businesses, social enterprises and voluntary organisations, and deliver wider community benefits.
2. Fair Employment – Providing good quality employment, investing in workforce development and supporting people facing barriers to employment.
3. Socially Productive Land and Assets - Using Council land, buildings and infrastructure to support communities, enterprise and prevention.
4. Financial and Investment Decisions - Using investment and financial decisions to support local priorities wherever possible.
5. Inclusive and Local Ownership - Supporting social enterprises, community organisations, cooperatives and other locally-rooted forms of economic activity.

Maximising social value is a shared endeavour. The Council will work with public sector partners, businesses, educational institutions, social enterprises, community organisations to strengthen collective impact and promote a consistent approach to social value, good work and community wealth building across Cumbria.

Through the **Cumbria Anchor Collaborative**, we will work with NHS organisations, education providers and other anchor institutions to develop a Good Work Charter with the Cumbria Combined Authority and to identify opportunities to align procurement, investment and asset decisions to maximise local economic, social and environmental benefit. We will also work with the Cumbria Anchor Collaborative to support the development of guidance and support for all.

The VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise) sector in Cumbria is one of our defining strengths and provides many of the prevention services that our communities depend upon, and without which there would be additional financial burdens on public sector organisations. Yet, the VCFSE sector faces increasing challenges around financial sustainability, made more challenging by a competitive short-term funding operating environment. The introduction of the Opportunities Library seeks to respond to this challenge.

We are committed to meaningful market engagement with local businesses, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. Where possible we will do early market engagement, host supplier events and undertake market development activity and seek to ensure that procurement and commissioning approaches are informed by the knowledge and experience of the market.

In summary, Westmorland and Furness Council will use its influence, resources and leadership to maximise social value in everything we do. By acting intentionally as an anchor institution, we will prioritise:

- Skills, employment and inclusive growth
- Health, well-being and prevention
- Environmental sustainability and climate resilience

Our Social Value Priority Outcomes

Westmorland and Furness is a place of significant strengths, thriving communities, outstanding natural environments and a strong VCFSE sector. However, we also face challenges including:

- Economic inactivity and barriers to employment.
- Skills shortages in key sectors.
- Health inequalities and rising demand for public services.
- Social isolation and loneliness.
- Climate change and environmental pressures.
- Rurality and dispersed communities
- Increasing financial pressures on public services.

The Council cannot address these challenges through service delivery alone. Improving long-term outcomes requires a coordinated approach that uses all of our resources, influence and partnerships to create community wealth, increase equity and build resilience. To address these challenges, we have identified three priority outcomes to focus our social value commitment on delivery of public benefit. All Council activity and procurement-related social value commitments will be aligned to the following three priority outcomes.

1. Skills, Employment and Inclusive Growth

Good work is one of the most important determinants of health, wellbeing and financial security and also central to creating prosperous local economies. We want local people and businesses to benefit from economic opportunity and for local investment to support inclusive growth.

We will seek to:

- Increase skills development, local employment and economic participation.
- Reduce economic inequalities and the proportion of the population living in poverty
- Create opportunities for young people through apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience and supported internships.
- Support care experienced young people, disabled people and underrepresented groups into employment.
- Promote good work, fair employment and workforce wellbeing.
- Strengthen local skills pipelines and address workforce shortages.
- Increase opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises.
- Retain more economic value within Westmorland and Furness through local supply chains.

2. Health, Wellbeing and Prevention

Many of the challenges facing public services arise from the wider social determinants of health. We want our investment and activities to contribute to healthier, more resilient and more connected communities.

We will seek to:

- Improve and reduce inequity in the wider determinants of health and wellbeing
- Support independent living and community wellbeing.
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness.
- Increase volunteering and community participation.
- Strengthen productivity through physical and mental wellbeing.
- Support residents experiencing poverty and financial hardship.
- Invest in preventative approaches that reduce future demand on public services.

3. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

We recognise the importance of protecting our natural environment and supporting the transition to a low carbon future. Communities will need to adapt to the changing environment and strengthen their resilience.

We will seek to:

- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Support delivery of the Council's climate ambitions.
- Increase biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Strengthen community resilience and cohesion
- Promote sustainable construction and development.
- Support green skills and employment.
- Improve resilience and adaptation to climate impacts.
- Increase the environmental value generated through public investment.



Investment Opportunities

To maximise impact against the priority outcomes, the Council will establish an Opportunities Library.

The Opportunities Library will provide a publicly accessible, curated database of investment opportunities that support the Council's three social value priority outcomes. The Library will support suppliers bidding for Council contracts to identify local opportunities through which they can deliver meaningful social value. It will also provide a mechanism for private sector organisations, investors and businesses seeking to make Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or wider community investment contributions within Westmorland and Furness, regardless of whether they hold a Council contract.

The Library will comprise a regularly updated menu of local opportunities, projects and initiatives to help enable social value commitments to be locally relevant, aligned to community priorities and capable of delivering meaningful impact aligned to our social value priority outcomes. The library will include opportunities such as:

- Employment and skills programmes.
- Apprenticeships and work experience.
- Support for care experienced young people and priority groups.
- Community wellbeing initiatives.
- Volunteering opportunities.
- VCFSE sector projects.
- Environmental improvement initiatives.
- Biodiversity and climate resilience projects.
- Place-based priorities, including regeneration programmes.

The Opportunities Library will be hosted on the Westmorland and Furness Council website and will be freely accessible to all users. The Council will enable local organisations to put forward proposals for inclusion in the library where they meet defined eligibility criteria. This creates the opportunity for community projects to be supported that may otherwise struggle to find investment. However, inclusion in the library does not guarantee that a project will be supported.

The on-line digital library will act as a council-wide opportunities marketplace, connecting community need with organisations willing to contribute expertise, resources, funding and investment.



Social Value in Procurement

The Procurement Act 2023 places a greater emphasis on delivering public benefit through procurement and requires contracting authorities to have regard to objectives including value for money, maximising public benefit, transparency and integrity. It also strengthens expectations around contract management and delivery of commitments made during procurement.

Westmorland and Furness Council will therefore ensure that social value is embedded throughout the procurement lifecycle, from market engagement and tender design through to contract management and performance monitoring.

Our approach will be guided by the principle that social value and delivery of public benefit should be:

- Relevant to the contract.
- Aligned with local priorities.
- Measurable and capable of being delivered.
- Monitored throughout the life of the contract.

We want suppliers to become partners in delivering positive outcomes for Westmorland and Furness. Social value is often seen as additional to business as usual activity but we are also interested in the inherent social value that suppliers can bring through the way their organisation conducts their business as usual and the intrinsic public benefit.

Suppliers bidding for Council contracts will be expected to demonstrate how they will contribute to our three priority outcomes. Once the Good Work Charter is agreed by the Cumbria Combined Authority, we would expect suppliers to adhere to the charter and to support the creation and safeguarding of good jobs to increase prosperity and reduce economic inactivity.

For contracts valued at £100,000 or above, bidders will be required to submit a Social Value Statement as part of their tender submission. The Social Value Statement must:

- Identify specific social value commitments linked to the Council's priority outcomes.
- Include clear measurable outputs and outcomes.
- Include named delivery actions and timescales.
- Quantify and, where appropriate, monetise the social value being offered.
- Demonstrate how local supply chains, businesses, social enterprises and community organisations will be supported.
- Explain how delivery will be monitored and evidenced and impact evaluated.



The social value statement will be assessed as part of the quality submission of the overall tender submitted. The weighting will be confirmed in each Invitation to Tender opportunity, and will be relevant and proportionate to the procurement activity. The successful bidder's commitments will form part of the contract and will be subject to ongoing contract management and performance review by the Contract's Responsible Officer.

Suppliers can make use of the Library in developing their social value statements, but it is not mandatory. Suppliers should select opportunities that are relevant and proportionate to the contract being delivered. Suppliers may propose alternative social value commitments where these better align with contract requirements and Council priorities. The quality, relevance and deliverability of social value commitments will continue to form part of tender evaluation and contract management processes. The Library therefore supports, rather than replaces, bidder innovation and responsibility for developing bespoke social value proposals.

The Council is committed to moving beyond good intentions and focusing on measurable outcomes. We will put in place a new system and processes for the recording of social value contract commitments, including the use of quantified and monetised measures where appropriate. This will enable the Council to improve monitoring and reporting and demonstrate the wider social, economic and environmental value generated through public expenditure and investment.



Measuring our Social Value Impact

This Statement supports delivery of the Council Plan and provides a framework through which procurement, employment, asset management, regeneration, commissioning and investment decisions contribute to the creation of wider public benefit. However, social value can only be realised if it is actively measured, monitored and reported. To ensure we are accountable for delivering our priority outcomes, the Council will strengthen the way social value is measured, reported and communicated.

Delivery of this Statement will be overseen through the Council's corporate governance arrangements. Progress will be reviewed annually and reported publicly through our Annual Report and as part of the Annual Good Governance Statement capturing both quantitative and qualitative evidence of social value benefits and using case studies to demonstrate impact.

We will record and report social value generated through the Council's role:

As an Employer - we will continue to promote the principles of good work and report on how our employment practices contribute to inclusive growth. We already monitor and report workforce information through statutory and corporate reporting requirements, including equality, diversity and inclusion data, workforce demographics, apprenticeships, attendance, wellbeing and workforce development. We will use this information to demonstrate how the Council contributes to good work, inclusion and opportunity.

As a Commissioner and Procurer - we will report on social value commitments secured through commissioning and procurement activity, including support for local businesses, SMEs, social enterprises, employment and skills opportunities, and wider community benefits delivered through contracts.

As an Investor and Funder - we will draw upon existing capital programme reporting and governance processes to demonstrate how Council funding, external grants and investment decisions support local priorities and community outcomes.

As a Steward of Property Assets - we maintain records relating to management of our property assets as a corporate landlord, including community asset transfers. We will use this information to demonstrate how Council assets support communities, economic development and public benefit.

As the Local Planning Authority - we will use information already published through mechanisms such as the Infrastructure Funding Statement and planning monitoring processes to demonstrate how development contributes towards infrastructure, environmental improvement, community facilities and sustainable growth.

As a Community Leader and Partner - we will draw together evidence from partnership programmes, community grants, VCFSE sector support, community wealth building initiatives and wider place-based activity to demonstrate how the Council works with others to improve outcomes for residents and communities.

Further Information

Every pound spent, every contract awarded and every decision taken should contribute to creating lasting public benefit for the people and places of Westmorland and Furness.

For further information, please visit our dedicated social value webpage on the Westmorland and Furness Council website that provides additional information including:

- The Opportunities Library
- Case studies and examples of good practice
- Demographic and local needs data and evidence
- Upcoming market engagement activity and events
- Annual report of social value impact





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