Social Value in Procurement: What Is It Really Worth?

Procurement and Supply Chain Management Made Simple.

Foreword

Public procurement spends approximately £400 billion annually across the UK public sector. That scale of expenditure creates legitimate expectations that purchasing power should deliver more than goods, works and services at competitive prices. Social value reflects this ambition, asking procurement professionals to consider what additional benefits can be generated through contract delivery. The challenge is ensuring those ambitions complement, rather than undermine, affordability, competition, and the fundamental requirement to achieve value for money.

Policy has progressively raised the stakes. PPN 026, the Government's new Social Value Model, will require in-scope central government organisations to apply minimum social value evaluation weightings of 10 per cent for contracts between £1 million and £5 million, and 20 per cent for contracts worth £5 million or more, for procurements commencing on or after 1 January 2027. At a 20 per cent weighting, social value can decisively influence which bidder wins a major public contract. Evaluation marks awarded for employment and skills commitments must therefore be earned through credible, deliverable and genuinely additional outcomes.

The Procurement Act 2023 provides the legislative framework within which social value now operates, requiring that award criteria relate to the contract's subject matter, treat suppliers equally, and be proportionate. Social value cannot, therefore, operate as an independent policy agenda, disconnected from sound commercial judgement. PPN 026 reinforces accountability by requiring commitments to be translated into contractual obligations, monitored through Key Performance Indicators and reported on the central digital platform.

The central question is not whether social value is desirable, but what level of investment it reasonably justifies and when higher costs can be defended. Jobs created, apprenticeships completed, skills developed and employees progressing into better opportunities provide stronger evidence than aspirational tender narratives. PPN 026 creates a framework in which procurement teams can pursue measurable outcomes, but commercial discipline, proportionality and opportunity cost remain essential tests throughout.

The Social Value Debate

Public procurement has traditionally been judged by its ability to secure goods, works and services at an appropriate balance of price and quality. Social value broadens that assessment by asking what economic, social, and environmental benefits can be generated through how contracts are performed. The debate is not whether public expenditure should create wider benefits — few would dispute that it should — but how far procurement decisions should prioritise them when doing so may increase costs, restrict competition or alter commercial outcomes.

The practical tension is real. Social value commitments may appear impressive during tender evaluation, but demonstrating that resulting benefits are genuinely additional can be difficult. Suppliers may already provide apprenticeships, training, employment opportunities, or workforce support through their normal business activities. Procurement teams must therefore establish what the contract actually causes to happen that would not otherwise occur. The central challenge is translating policy ambition into measurable, attributable outcomes that can withstand rigorous commercial scrutiny.

PPN 026 sharpens this debate considerably. By concentrating the Social Value Model on Good Jobs and Skills — employment creation and retention, fair working conditions, fair pay, training, in-work progression and talent pipelines — the Government is deliberately narrowing social value towards measurable labour-market outcomes directly connected to contract delivery. This focus makes social value easier to define, evaluate, and monitor, while reducing the scope for suppliers to offer loosely worded community commitments that are detached from how the contract is actually performed.

The issue is therefore how much weight social value should carry within the award decision and whether that weight is consistently justified by the outcomes secured. With minimum weightings of 10 per cent and 20 per cent applying from January 2027, procurement teams face both an opportunity and an obligation: to use purchasing power purposefully while retaining the commercial discipline and proportionality that sound public expenditure demands.

What Is Social Value?

Social value refers to the broader economic, social, and environmental benefits generated through public procurement beyond the immediate delivery of a contract. Rather than evaluating price and technical quality alone, contracting authorities consider how suppliers contribute to broader public objectives through contract performance. The Social Value Act 2012 established the statutory foundation by requiring certain contracting authorities to consider how procurement could improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing. PPN 026 refines that definition substantially for in-scope central government procurement.

Social value is not corporate philanthropy, charitable donation or an invitation for suppliers to make unrelated community promises. Effective social value must arise from how a contract is performed and remain relevant and proportionate to the procurement concerned. Under the Procurement Act 2023, award criteria must relate to the contract's subject matter, be sufficiently clear and measurable, and provide an effective basis for distinguishing between tenders. Requirements that import unrelated social objectives — however laudable — risk legal challenge and undermine the integrity of evaluation.

PPN 026 defines social value for in-scope procurements around how suppliers support communities through good British jobs, skills and opportunities. Two outcomes — Good Jobs and Skills — are supported by six Model Award Criteria covering job creation and retention, working conditions, fair pay, training and retraining, in-work progression and talent pipelines. This concentrated definition makes social value more tractable: commitments can be specified with greater precision, evaluated more objectively and monitored more robustly once contracts are underway.

The Evolution of Social Value in UK Procurement

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was the starting point, requiring authorities in scope to consider how service procurements might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the relevant area. Although its requirements were limited — applying mainly to services and requiring consideration rather than action — the Act established the principle that public purchasing decisions carry social consequences worth weighing. Subsequent guidance and Cabinet Office PPN 06/20 extended the expectation to central government and gave social value a formal minimum weighting of 10 per cent within the previous Social Value Model.

Government policy has developed considerably since 2012. The cross-government Social Value Model introduced structured themes, outcomes and evaluation criteria through which suppliers could demonstrate broader benefits. Employment, skills, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing appeared with increasing regularity within tender evaluations. The Levelling Up agenda reinforced this direction, encouraging public bodies to direct spending towards communities experiencing economic disadvantage. By 2021, social value had moved from peripheral aspiration towards a routinely scored procurement criterion, albeit applied inconsistently across authorities, sectors and contract types.

PPN 002, published in February 2025, updated the Social Value Model for procurements under the Procurement Act 2023 and aligned it with the Government's National Procurement Policy Statement. In-scope organisations could transition to the revised model from 24 February 2025, with mandatory application to relevant procurements commencing from 1 October 2025. It retained a minimum 10 per cent social value weighting while strengthening requirements for relevance, proportionality, equal treatment and contractual delivery.

PPN 026 represents the most significant revision to date, replacing earlier models with a more focused framework specifically linked to employment quality and skills development. The shift reflects accumulated evidence that broad social value criteria — spanning environmental, community and social themes simultaneously — proved difficult to evaluate rigorously or monitor effectively post-award. Concentrating on Good Jobs and Skills responds to that experience while aligning procurement policy with Government priorities around economic growth, workforce development and productive employment, particularly for people experiencing barriers to labour-market participation.

The Procurement Act 2023

The Procurement Act 2023 came into force on 24 February 2025 and provides the principal legislative framework within which social value operates across public procurement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Act requires contracting authorities to have regard to four key objectives: delivering value for money, maximising public benefit, sharing information appropriately and acting with integrity. Social value sits squarely within the public benefit objective but must be pursued within the discipline imposed by the remaining three. Authorities cannot compromise value for money or integrity by pursuing social outcomes beyond what procurement circumstances reasonably justify.

Award criteria under the Act must relate to the subject matter of the contract, be sufficiently clear to enable effective evaluation and avoid unjustified competitive advantages or disadvantages. These requirements are more than procedural formalities: they prevent contracting authorities from treating social value as an indirect means of favouring preferred suppliers, larger organisations or geographically proximate businesses. Proportionality is equally important. A social value commitment appropriate for a complex national infrastructure contract may be unreasonable, legally questionable or competitively damaging when applied to a smaller or specialist procurement.

PPN 026 operates within these statutory boundaries rather than overriding them. It requires in-scope organisations to ensure that social value award criteria relate to the contract's subject matter, remain proportionate, comply with equal treatment obligations, and respect *international procurement commitments binding on the UK. This relationship matters: PPN 026's substantial evaluation weightings increase the commercial significance of social value, but they do not remove the legal, competitive and proportionality disciplines the Act imposes. Strong social value policy and sound procurement law must operate together, not in tension.*

PPN 026 – The New Social Value Model

PPN 026, published 5 August 2026, represents a significant refocusing of the Government's approach to social value in public procurement. It aligns procurement more closely with objectives to support British businesses, promote economic growth and ensure communities benefit from public expenditure. The revised Social Value Model concentrates on Good Jobs and Skills, including employment, fair work, training, progression and talent pipelines. This more focused approach is intended to support clearer evaluation, measurable outcomes and stronger accountability throughout contract delivery.

The model comprises two outcomes supported by six Model Award Criteria. Outcome One — Good Jobs — addresses the creation and retention of high-quality employment, fair working conditions and fair pay. Outcome Two — Skills — covers training and retraining, in-work progression and development of talent pipelines. These criteria connect procurement directly with labour-market priorities: reducing economic inactivity, addressing skills shortages, improving pay and conditions, and creating routes into sustainable employment for people facing disadvantage. The focus on quality employment rather than on headline job numbers reflects evidence that sustainable outcomes require more than counting created positions.

PPN 026 does not permit social value to be pursued independently of normal procurement disciplines. Selected criteria must relate to the contract's subject matter, remain proportionate and avoid unnecessary barriers to participation. Authorities must maintain equal treatment and comply with international procurement obligations. Crucially, the policy anticipates that not all Model Award Criteria will be appropriate for every procurement: selection should reflect contract characteristics, market conditions and the communities served. Applied thoughtfully, the revised model provides a more robust commercial foundation for social value than its predecessors.

Scope, Thresholds and Implementation

PPN 026 applies specifically to in-scope central government organisations: departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies. It does not automatically impose identical obligations on local authorities, NHS trusts, housing associations or other public sector bodies, though these organisations may voluntarily adopt its approach. Other contracting authorities operating under the Procurement Act 2023 retain discretion to apply social value criteria appropriate to their circumstances, subject to the Act's general principles governing award criteria, equal treatment and proportionality.

The policy applies to covered procurements commenced under the Procurement Act 2023 with a total contract value of £1 million or more, inclusive of VAT. It does not apply to private utilities contracts or procurements whose primary purpose is overseas delivery. For framework agreements, social value should be addressed both when establishing the framework and at the call-off stage. PPN 026 signals that further guidance will clarify how these requirements apply consistently to framework procurements, where the relationship between framework terms and individual call-off awards can create complexity.

Implementation applies to procurements commenced on or after 1 January 2027, with commencement defined as the date the tender notice is published. In-scope organisations are encouraged to transition to the revised model for Procurement Act procurements commenced before that date. The previous model may continue during the transitional period, in which adopting PPN 026 would require disproportionate resources or undermine market engagement already undertaken. This transitional flexibility recognises that well-advanced procurements should not be unnecessarily disrupted, but early adoption is encouraged where circumstances permit.

Applying PPN 026 requires considered selection of criteria rather than automatic imposition of all six Model Award Criteria on every procurement. Authorities must research market conditions before selecting criteria, including whether SMEs and VCSEs are active in the relevant market, whether international suppliers are likely to participate and whether the anticipated supply base can genuinely meet proposed requirements. This research obligation prevents social value from becoming formulaic and ensures that the commitments evaluated are realistic, proportionate, and capable of generating meaningful outcomes, rather than discouraging competitive participation.

The 10% and 20% Social Value Weightings

PPN 026 establishes minimum social value evaluation weightings that give employment and skills outcomes substantial influence over contract award decisions. For procurements between £1 million and below £5 million, in-scope organisations must apply a minimum 10 per cent weighting to Social Value Model criteria. For contracts worth £5 million or more, the minimum rises to 20 per cent. At this level, a supplier's social value proposal can be commercially decisive: a five-point difference in social value scores between two bidders at 20 per cent weighting is equivalent, in its effect on overall ranking, to a ten-point gap at a 10 per cent weighting.

These weightings create important commercial dynamics that procurement teams must model carefully before inviting tenders. Where price represents 30 per cent of evaluation and social value 20 per cent, a bidder whose price is 5 per cent higher than a competitor's can still achieve the winning overall score if its social value submission is sufficiently stronger. This is not inherently problematic — it reflects a deliberate policy decision that employment and skills outcomes justify commercial weighting — but it makes the quality and rigour of social value evaluation critical to achieving defensible, commercially sound award decisions.

PPN 026 also addresses evaluation methodologies that depart from conventional percentage weightings. Where absolute approaches such as Price per Quality Point or a Value for Money Index are used, the applicable 10 or 20 per cent is applied to the non-price criteria or overall quality score. Whatever methodology is adopted, procurement teams must understand precisely how social value scoring affects tender rankings across plausible bidding scenarios. They must be able to demonstrate that the evaluation structure produces commercially defensible outcomes rather than unintended or disproportionate results.

Good Jobs – Employment, Fair Work and Fair Pay

Outcome One of PPN 026 focuses on Good Jobs, recognising that the quality and sustainability of employment matters as much as the number of positions created. UK labour market data illustrate why this distinction is important: the Office for National Statistics reports that approximately 4.2 million workers in the UK were employed in low-paid roles in 2023, with insecure work concentrated in sectors including cleaning, catering, social care and construction — areas that represent a significant proportion of public procurement expenditure. Procurement policy that drives better employment quality in these sectors can generate substantial labour-market benefits beyond headline job counts.

The first Model Award Criterion under Good Jobs addresses job creation and retention, enabling authorities to evaluate how contract delivery will create or sustain high-quality employment and support access to work for people facing employment barriers. Procurement teams should look beyond headline numbers. Ten sustainable positions with genuine progression opportunities, offered to individuals who face significant labour-market disadvantage, may deliver considerably greater social value than twenty short-term roles filled by workers who would have found comparable employment anyway. Additionality and targeting are therefore as important as volume.

Fair working conditions extend the assessment from quantity to quality of employment. PPN 026 enables authorities to evaluate supplier commitments to workforce support, flexible working, access to trade union representation and positive workplace practices beyond *statutory minima. There is evidence that better working conditions improve retention and productivity: research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development consistently links employee wellbeing to reduced absence, lower turnover costs, and improved service quality. For contracting authorities, this creates a potential alignment between social objectives and service performance that can strengthen the commercial case for weighting employment quality within evaluation.*

Fair pay completes the Good Jobs outcome, enabling consideration of remuneration above the statutory National Minimum Wage — most relevantly, payment of the Real Living Wage, calculated independently by the Resolution Foundation and currently set at £13.45 per hour (£14.80 in London). Approximately 3.9 million UK workers earn below the Real Living Wage according to 2024 estimates. Fair pay commitments in public contracts can reduce in-work poverty, improve recruitment and retention and lower the public cost of in-work benefits. However, higher wage rates increase supplier costs and may be reflected in tender prices: procurement teams must assess whether those benefits justify any resulting premium.

Outcome Two – Skills

The UK faces a significant and well-documented skills challenge. The Open University's Business Barometer 2023 found that 73 per cent of UK employers reported skills shortages, costing the economy an estimated £6.6 billion annually in higher salaries, recruitment costs and temporary staffing. Outcome Two of PPN 026 positions public procurement as a direct instrument for addressing that challenge. Rather than treating skills development as incidental supplier activity, the model connects training and development commitments directly to contract delivery, workforce requirements and the communities in which contracts are performed.

Three Model Award Criteria support the Skills outcome: Training and Retraining, In-work Progression and Talent Pipeline. Suppliers can demonstrate how contract delivery will address identified skills shortages through apprenticeships, work placements, accredited training or retraining opportunities. Apprenticeships are a particularly significant vehicle: the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education reports that Level 3 apprenticeships produce average lifetime earnings gains of approximately £77,000 to £117,000 per individual above what a non-apprentice would otherwise earn. PPN 026 encourages authorities to engage with relevant communities when designing training interventions, ensuring that proposed activities respond to genuinely identified needs rather than offering standardised initiatives designed primarily to score well in evaluations.

In-work progression extends the scope beyond initial employment entry, enabling suppliers to be evaluated on how existing workers gain new skills, advance into higher-paid roles and develop sustainable careers during contract delivery. Workforce progression is a recognised driver of productivity: McKinsey research estimates that upskilling interventions in lower-wage occupations can increase individual earnings by 20 to 30 per cent over five years. For contracting authorities, evaluating progress on commitments encourages suppliers to treat workforce development as a strategic priority during contract delivery rather than a periodic compliance exercise disconnected from day-to-day operations.

Training, Progression and Talent Pipelines

Training and retraining under PPN 026 should address genuine skills shortages rather than fulfilling a generic contractual obligation. Relevant activities include apprenticeships — with 353,500 apprenticeship starts recorded in England during the 2024/25 academic year — alongside work placements, vocational qualifications, and workplace adaptations that support people with health conditions or disabilities. PPN 026 specifically encourages solutions co-designed with communities or representative organisations, increasing the likelihood that training activities are targeted effectively and reach people who would not otherwise access these opportunities.

In-work progression requires suppliers to demonstrate how employees will develop *capabilities, undertake retraining and advance towards higher-paid or more skilled positions during contract delivery. Commitments should be specific rather than aspirational: an authority evaluating progression should seek evidence of how roles are structured to enable advancement, which qualifications or pathways will be supported and how the supplier will track and evidence outcomes. Vague commitments to "support career development" provide limited accountability. The most credible proposals connect individual development to measurable workforce metrics: roles upgraded, qualifications achieved, pay thresholds reached and employees retained beyond contract renewal.*

Talent pipelines address longer-term workforce needs by developing people — particularly in communities experiencing multiple forms of deprivation — who could meet future employer requirements. The Department for Work and Pensions reports that approximately 2.8 million people in England and Wales live in areas classified within the 10 per cent most deprived nationally, where economic inactivity rates are significantly higher than the national average of 21.9 per cent. Pre-work training, sector-specific bootcamps, placements, and educational partnerships can create practical routes into employment while addressing entrenched barriers, including poor transport connectivity, lack of childcare, low confidence, and limited prior qualifications.

These three criteria should function as a coherent progression rather than isolated activities. Training creates entry-level capability; progression ensures that capability is developed and rewarded; and talent pipelines sustain the supply of skilled workers for the future. Procurement teams evaluating social value commitments should test how these elements connect within a supplier's proposal, rather than assessing each criterion independently. Large numerical commitments — 100 apprenticeships, 500 training days — have limited value if they lack targeting, additionality and credible management arrangements. The strongest proposals provide a plausible theory of change: who benefits, how and to what measurable effect.

Supporting Local Communities

PPN 026 reflects the Government's intention that public procurement should generate visible economic benefits in the communities where contracts are delivered. This aligns with analysis suggesting that locally anchored procurement can have a significant multiplier effect: research by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies estimates that money spent with local suppliers typically recirculates within a local economy at a rate two to three times higher than expenditure with national or international businesses. For authorities procuring services with geographically specific delivery — such as housing maintenance, employment support, and facilities management — embedding local labour and supply chain expectations into social value criteria can amplify economic impact.

Local benefit, however, must not become local preference. The Procurement Act 2023 requires equal treatment of suppliers and compliance with international procurement obligations under the UK's trade agreements, including the World Trade Organisation Government Procurement Agreement and bilateral commitments. Authorities cannot specify that locally headquartered businesses must deliver contracts, require a local workforce as a precondition of bidding or structure evaluation criteria in ways that discriminate against businesses located elsewhere. PPN 026 reinforces this boundary: social value requirements must focus on the outcomes delivered within communities through contract performance, not on the origin, ownership or existing workforce composition of bidding suppliers.

Effective community-focused social value, therefore, depends on understanding specific local circumstances rather than on applying generic criteria. Authorities should examine labour market data, deprivation indices, identified skills shortages, and existing community programmes before selecting criteria. Engagement with local anchor institutions — colleges, employment charities, community development finance institutions — can reveal interventions likely to achieve meaningful results. The objective is demonstrable additionality: opportunities that improve employment access, skills attainment or economic participation for people in the relevant communities, supported by evidence that those benefits would not have occurred *through existing supplier activities or mainstream public programmes.*

SMEs, VCSEs and Supplier Accessibility

SMEs — defined for the Procurement Act 2023 as businesses with fewer than 250 staff and either annual turnover not exceeding £44 million or a balance-sheet total not exceeding £38 million — account for over 99 per cent of UK businesses and approximately 61 per cent of private sector employment. Despite their economic significance, SMEs have historically secured a disproportionately small share of central government procurement expenditure. Government policy continues to promote greater SME participation by reducing barriers to public contracts and improving access to opportunities. VCSEs — including charities, community interest companies, co-operatives and social enterprises — can similarly generate substantial social value through their operating models and community connections, but may face particular challenges in competing for larger contracts that require greater financial capacity or complex management infrastructure.

PPN 026 specifically requires in-scope organisations to research market conditions before selecting Model Award Criteria, including assessing whether SMEs and VCSEs are likely to participate in the relevant procurement. This obligation exists because social value requirements can inadvertently disadvantage smaller organisations. A requirement for sophisticated social value reporting systems, dedicated community liaison roles or large-scale apprenticeship programmes may be proportionate for a major contractor but prohibitive for a smaller specialist. Evaluation criteria designed without considering supply-market composition risk rewarding organisational scale rather than genuine social outcomes, reducing competition and limiting supplier diversity.

Proportionality is the key safeguard. Requirements should reflect what is reasonably achievable given contract value, duration, workforce size and delivery model. A VCSE providing specialist employment support services may generate more genuine social value per pound of contract expenditure than a large facilities management company offering a higher absolute number of apprenticeships — but only criteria designed to measure meaningful outcomes rather than organisational capacity will reveal this. Authorities should resist the temptation to use social value requirements as a differentiator that larger suppliers can more easily satisfy simply by virtue of their size.

Accessibility must also extend to international suppliers. PPN 026 requires authorities to consider whether procurements are likely to attract bidders from treaty states and to ensure social value criteria can be satisfied by those suppliers without imposing unjustified additional burdens. This requires care: criteria linked to UK-specific programmes — such as apprenticeship levy contributions — may inadvertently disadvantage overseas suppliers without good justification. Well-designed social value requirements should reward meaningful employment and skills outcomes achievable by capable suppliers of different sizes, structures and nationalities, rather than creating barriers to competitive participation that serve neither economic efficiency nor policy objectives.

Relevance, Proportionality and Fair Competition

Social value requirements must remain relevant to the specific procurement rather than functioning as a standard policy checklist applied uniformly. The Procurement Act 2023 requires award criteria to relate to the contract's subject matter — a requirement that cannot be satisfied by importing employment and skills commitments that have no logical connection to how the contract will be delivered. PPN 026 reinforces this: criteria should be selected based on contract characteristics, market conditions, and the communities served. A waste management contract may legitimately include training and fair pay criteria for operational staff; identical criteria applied to a highly specialised professional services contract may lack the relevance the law requires.

Proportionality demands that the burden social value requirements impose on bidders be commensurate with the contract value, scope, and the plausible capacity of the supply market.

The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply has consistently found that disproportionate social value requirements — particularly extensive narrative responses and complex reporting obligations — increase bid costs and deter capable suppliers, especially SMEs. Where bid preparation costs rise significantly relative to contract value, smaller businesses may withdraw from competitions that larger incumbents can fund more easily. The result is reduced competition, higher prices, and a supplier base skewed towards organisations with greater administrative resources rather than those with the most capable or cost-effective delivery.

Fair competition requires procurement teams to consider the cumulative effect of social value criteria on the competitiveness of each tender exercise. Requirements must not directly or indirectly favour domestic suppliers over international competitors, larger organisations over smaller ones, or existing incumbents over new entrants. PPN 026's emphasis on market research before selecting criteria is therefore not merely procedural: it is the mechanism through which authorities identify whether proposed requirements will support competitive tension or inadvertently suppress it. Social value that narrows the competitive field without proportionate justification ultimately weakens procurement outcomes and may expose authorities to legal challenge.

Does Social Value Increase Costs?

Social value does not automatically increase procurement costs. Some commitments — including improved recruitment practices, better workforce development and revised employment policies — can be implemented without materially increasing a supplier's cost base and may generate efficiencies through improved retention and reduced vacancies. Lower employee turnover can yield meaningful savings by avoiding repeated recruitment and onboarding, as well as lost productivity costs. Suppliers whose social value commitments improve workforce stability may therefore achieve efficiencies that offset, or potentially exceed, the investment required to deliver them.

Other commitments clearly require additional resources. Creating net-new apprenticeships, delivering accredited training, establishing work placements, paying the Real Living Wage above current rates, or funding community engagement programmes generate direct costs in labour, supervision, and administration. In low-margin sectors — construction, facilities management, social care — these costs are material and cannot always be absorbed. Where social value requirements increase the cost of delivering a contract, suppliers will typically incorporate some or all of that expenditure within their tender prices, transferring the financial burden to the contracting authority and, ultimately, to the taxpayer.

The weighting structure in PPN 026 intensifies the commercial incentive to offer ambitious social value commitments. At a 20 per cent weighting, a supplier willing to price in significant social value expenditure can achieve an evaluation advantage sufficient to overcome a meaningful price disadvantage. This is precisely the mechanism by which policy intends to shift supplier behaviour — but it also creates risk. Authorities that award contracts primarily on the strength of social value scores may find they have paid a substantial premium for commitments that prove difficult to deliver, are poorly targeted, or are insufficiently additional to justify the price differential.

Transaction costs compound the direct financial question. Designing appropriate social value criteria requires procurement team resource; evaluating narrative responses involves skilled assessor time; translating commitments into contract terms, establishing monitoring systems and managing KPI reporting throughout delivery all impose ongoing costs on both sides. CIPS research suggests that social value evaluation in complex procurements can add weeks to procurement timelines and thousands of pounds to bid preparation costs per supplier. Disproportionate requirements that deter SME participation may additionally reduce competitive tension, leading to higher prices that dwarf the social value benefits ostensibly being pursued.

Social Value Versus Price and Quality

Introducing a substantial social-value weighting inevitably recalibrates the balance among price, technical quality, and broader social outcomes in the award decision. Under PPN 026, social value can account for 20 per cent of the total evaluation marks for contracts of £5 million or more. In a three-criterion evaluation split between price, quality, and social value, a supplier offering the lowest price and strongest technical solution may still lose to a competitor with weaker price and quality scores but a significantly stronger social value proposal. Whether such an outcome represents sound procurement depends entirely on whether the social value premium is credibly deliverable and genuinely worth the trade-off.

This is not a hypothetical concern. Analysis by the Crown Commercial Service has found that social value weighting can produce counterintuitive outcomes when bidders strategically invest in social value commitments to compensate for weaker commercial offerings. The risk is particularly acute where social value criteria are assessed through narrative quality rather than verifiable commitments: a well-written bid may outscore a stronger delivery proposition, and the gap only becomes apparent during contract performance. Robust evaluation methodology — linking scores to specific, evidenced, contractually binding commitments — is essential to ensure that social value weighting reflects genuine comparative advantage rather than narrative fluency.

The objective should be to identify which combination of price, quality and social value delivers the strongest overall outcome from available public resources — not to treat the three dimensions as competing interests to be traded off mechanically. PPN 026's requirement for contractual monitoring and KPIs strengthens the case for evaluating realistic, evidence-based commitments rather than aspirational promises, because commitments that survive into the contract must be deliverable within the pricing structure submitted by the winning supplier. Procurement teams should therefore model tender scenarios before publication, understand how different score distributions across all three criteria affect rankings, and ensure that the resulting award decision can be robustly defended on value-for-money grounds.

Value for Money and Opportunity Cost

Value for money in public procurement is not synonymous with lowest price. HM Treasury's Managing Public Money framework defines it as the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes, encompassing cost, quality, timeliness and risk. Social value can legitimately form part of that assessment where employment, skills or community outcomes create additional public benefit not otherwise obtainable. The critical discipline is ensuring those benefits are credible, proportionate and material: social value that looks compelling during evaluation but proves undeliverable or poorly targeted during contract performance represents a failure of value for money, not an expression of it.

Opportunity cost provides a powerful analytical tool that is frequently underused in social value assessment. Every pound committed to securing social value outcomes through one contract is unavailable for alternative uses. If a £20 million facilities management procurement costs £1 million more because the winning social value proposal has persuaded evaluators to absorb a price premium, the relevant question is not simply whether those outcomes are worth pursuing in the abstract. It is whether those specific outcomes, for those specific communities, at that specific cost, represent a better use of £1 million than alternative expenditure on services, capital investment or other public priorities.

PPN 026's minimum weightings increase the commercial stakes of this judgement considerably. At 20 per cent, social value can be decisive in major contract awards. Procurement teams should therefore approach the value-for-money question systematically: what is the incremental cost of the higher-scoring social value proposal? What are the specific, evidenced outcomes it commits to deliver? What is the realistic monetary or social equivalent of those outcomes? And are they genuinely additional — would they occur anyway through the supplier's normal business operations, or through existing public programmes? Only when *these questions produce credible answers can a premium for social value be defended as good use of public money.*

Measuring Social Value

Measurement is the mechanism through which social value moves from procurement promise to verifiable public benefit. Without it, evaluation marks become disconnected from delivery, suppliers face no meaningful accountability for commitments that influenced award decisions, and authorities have no basis for determining whether additional expenditure was justified. The appropriate unit of measurement depends on the commitment: jobs created or retained; apprenticeships completed and sustained for a defined minimum period; qualifications achieved; employees progressing into roles paying at least a specified threshold; or individuals from identified disadvantaged groups accessing employment through the contract.

Measurement frameworks should be designed before procurement is launched rather than after contract award. Authorities need clear baselines — what the supplier already does and what the market norm provides — alongside specific targets, evidence standards, and reporting frequencies. PPN 026 requires that social value commitments be appropriately monitored and measured through contractual mechanisms, such as KPIs. Where suppliers deliver commitments through designated community programmes, the relevant KPIs should monitor both programme delivery and the outcomes it produces. Activity reporting — training sessions held, hours delivered — is insufficient where the policy objective is outcomes: employment secured, qualifications achieved, wage progression realised.

Social Return on Investment methodologies can provide useful comparative analysis but carry significant limitations that procurement teams should understand. SROI calculations assign financial proxies to social outcomes — reduced benefit expenditure, estimated healthcare savings, productivity gains — using assumptions that are inherently uncertain and sensitive to methodology. Identical interventions evaluated by different practitioners using different financial proxies can yield SROI ratios that vary by a factor of three or four. The HM Treasury Green Book provides a framework for monetising some social outcomes, but it explicitly acknowledges that many benefits cannot reliably be reduced to monetary values. Quantitative measurement should therefore be complemented by qualitative evidence: case studies, employer feedback, participant testimony and independent evaluation where scale justifies it.

PPN 026 strengthens measurement accountability by requiring contracts of £5 million or more to include at least one social value KPI in addition to the minimum three Procurement Act KPIs mandated where section 52 applies. Performance against these commitments must be reported at least annually through the central digital platform. This requirement closes the loop between procurement evaluation and contract performance: commitments that earned evaluation marks during tendering must be evidenced during delivery, and underperformance must be actively managed. Authorities that consistently monitor and publish social value KPI performance will, over time, build a valuable evidence base that enables them to assess which interventions produce genuine outcomes and to inform future procurement strategy.

Additionality – Would It Happen Anyway?

Additionality is the most demanding commercial test in social value assessment and the one most frequently underweighted in practice. A social benefit is additional only if it arises specifically because of the procurement — not because the supplier would have delivered it anyway, not because mainstream public programmes would have generated it independently, and not because it replicates activity that would have occurred in the absence of any contract. A supplier that already employs fifty apprentices, pays the Real Living Wage and provides extensive workforce training is demonstrating good business practice; but awarding substantial evaluation marks for continuing that practice means public procurement is claiming credit for — and potentially paying a premium for — outcomes that exist irrespective of the contract.

This distinction becomes more nuanced where existing supplier activity genuinely benefits *from, or is sustained by, the public contract. PPN 026 anticipates guidance on inherent social value, including the community benefits associated with retaining local employment that a competitor might otherwise displace. The policy position is therefore not that existing good practice should be entirely discounted, but that procurement teams must carefully distinguish between what the contract preserves, what it expands, and what it creates for the first time. Each category carries a different evidential requirement and a different claim on evaluation marks and any associated commercial premium.*

Robust additionality testing requires suppliers to disclose their baseline position: what they currently provide clearly, what will change because of this specific contract, who will benefit, and how outcomes will be independently evidenced outside routine business reporting? A commitment to create thirty apprenticeships is materially different if the supplier's current baseline is zero, ten or twenty-five. A strong evaluation methodology should require bidders to state their baseline, specify the increment attributable to the contract, and explain the counterfactual — what would have happened without the procurement. Without that discipline, social value evaluation risks rewarding the most persuasive bid narrative rather than the greatest genuine public benefit.

From Tender Promises to Contractual Commitments

Social value commitments can determine which supplier wins a public contract, making it essential that those commitments survive into contract delivery with precision and enforceability. The scale of the risk is significant: where social value carries 20 per cent evaluation weighting, a supplier may win a multi-million-pound contract partly on the strength of employment and skills proposals that subsequently prove undeliverable or are quietly abandoned post-award. This is not merely an accountability failure; it represents a procurement outcome based on misrepresentation, undermining the integrity of evaluation and denying communities benefits they were promised and taxpayers paid for.

PPN 026 directly addresses this risk by requiring in-scope organisations to ensure that social value commitments made during procurement are appropriately monitored and measured through contractual mechanisms. Commitments must therefore be translated from tender narrative into enforceable contractual obligations, supported by specific targets, evidence requirements, reporting schedules and remedies for non-delivery. This translation process requires close collaboration between procurement and legal teams: an obligation to "support local employment" that cannot be evidenced or enforced provides no contractual protection and no accountability for the outcomes that influenced the award decision.

Contractual commitments should be sufficiently precise to establish what must be delivered, by when, for whom and to what evidenced standard. Specific commitments might identify minimum numbers of apprenticeships to be created and sustained for a minimum period, qualifications to be achieved, pay thresholds to be maintained, or numbers of individuals from defined disadvantaged groups to be employed during contract delivery. Proportionality remains important: requirements should reflect the scale and nature of the contract rather than creating a compliance burden disproportionate to the outcomes sought. But precision and proportionality are not alternatives — a commitment can be both specific and reasonable.

Effective handover from procurement to contract management is the critical operational requirement. PPN 026 requires contracts of £5 million or more to include at least one social value KPI, and it specifically states that evidence of poor performance against social value KPIs can be considered when determining whether grounds exist to exclude suppliers from future procurements. This consequence elevates social value from aspirational tender content to commercial accountability with real implications for supplier relationships. Contract management teams receiving contracts must therefore understand exactly what was evaluated, what was committed, what evidence is required and when reporting obligations fall due — not merely the service delivery specification.

KPIs and Contract Management

Key Performance Indicators convert social value commitments into the measurable contract performance standards against which suppliers can be held accountable. Effective KPIs for social value should reflect the outcomes that influenced the award decision, be specific and independently verifiable, carry defined minimum performance thresholds and provide a clear evidential basis for identifying underperformance. Generic KPIs — “number of training events delivered” or “percentage of staff receiving development support” — measure activity rather than outcomes and provide limited assurance that the social benefits claimed during evaluation are actually materialising during delivery.

PPN 026 requires contracts of £5 million or more to include at least one social value KPI alongside the minimum three Procurement Act KPIs where section 52 applies. Performance must be reported at least annually through the contract performance notice published on the central digital platform. Procurement teams should establish clear KPI ownership, evidence standards, reporting frequencies and escalation procedures before contracts commence. Where social value commitments involve supply chain activities — subcontracted training, community partnerships, local employment initiatives — the KPI framework must extend to those delivery partners and not rely solely on the prime contractor’s self-reporting.

Monitoring must be active rather than administrative. Contract managers should interrogate performance data, challenge missed targets, investigate root causes, and require corrective action plans when social value delivery falls below agreed thresholds. PPN 026’s provision that poor social value KPI performance may contribute to future exclusion decisions gives contract management real commercial leverage: it creates an incentive structure in which suppliers that underdeliver on evaluated commitments face consequences that extend beyond the current contract. Consistent, rigorous contract management of social value commitments ultimately determines whether the policy ambitions of PPN 026 translate into genuine labour-market outcomes or remain primarily features of well-scored tender submissions.

Case Study – Is Paying More Worth It?

Circle Housing’s approach to rationalising its repairs and maintenance contracts in the mid-2010s provides a useful early illustration of how social value can be embedded within major housing procurement without sacrificing financial rigour. The housing association required one apprenticeship for every £500,000 of contract value while simultaneously projecting savings of approximately £80 million over ten years through contract consolidation and improved specification. The Circle Housing example demonstrates that social value and commercial efficiency are not inherently opposed: procurement designed to pursue both objectives simultaneously can achieve outcomes that neither approach would generate on its own.

The employment and skills outcomes reported by Circle Housing closely anticipate the priorities now embedded in PPN 026. One programme costing £14,000 supported 80 participants: ten entered employment (three of whom were NEET — not in employment, education or training), twenty-two completed accredited training, thirteen progressed to further education, and twenty-five entered volunteering or work placements. These outcomes directly align with PPN 026’s Model Award Criteria on job creation and retention, training and retraining, and talent pipeline development, demonstrating that procurement-led social value can deliver genuine labour-market benefits when commitments are targeted effectively and monitored rigorously.

Circle Housing also attempted to monetise those outcomes using financial proxies broadly consistent with HM Treasury Green Book methodology, calculating a Social Return on Investment of approximately £5.40 for every £1 invested. The calculation incorporated reduced Jobseeker’s Allowance expenditure, benefits attributed to supporting NEET participants, accredited qualifications and estimated reductions in healthcare costs linked to improved participant wellbeing. While SROI calculations carry inherent uncertainty — the ratio depends critically on the proxies selected, the attribution assumptions made and the duration over which benefits are projected — the methodology provided a structured basis for comparing social investment against financial return.

The cost question is instructive. Circle Housing reported that suppliers absorbed social value costs through their supply chains rather than requiring separate funding from the housing association, suggesting that where commercial relationships are structured appropriately, social value need not translate directly into higher procurement expenditure. This outcome reflects a specific contracting context: a substantial, long-term maintenance contract with sufficient volume to provide suppliers with meaningful incentives to invest in workforce development. The same outcome cannot be assumed for smaller, shorter or more fragmented contracts where suppliers have less commercial motivation and fewer resources to absorb additional delivery requirements.

The key lesson from Circle Housing is not that authorities should automatically expect social value without cost, but that thoughtful procurement design can create conditions in which social value and commercial value are complementary rather than competing. PPN 026 strengthens this logic by requiring commitments to be contractually monitored and evidenced through KPIs: the governance framework that was applied informally in early social value programmes becomes a mandatory feature of in-scope procurement. Authorities should use case studies such as Circle Housing's as evidence that the model can work, while applying rigorous additionality testing, proportionality assessment, and contract management discipline to distinguish successful outcomes from optimistic promises.

When Should Social Value Justify Higher Costs?

A higher-priced tender can legitimately represent better overall value when credible, additional and proportionate social outcomes outweigh the additional cost. The Commercial Framework published by the Government Commercial Function explicitly recognises that value for money encompasses wider public benefit — not merely lowest price. But that framework requires the comparison to be made rigorously: the relevant test is not whether social benefits are desirable in the abstract, but whether the specific outcomes committed to by the more expensive supplier are worth the specific additional expenditure required to secure them, having regard to alternative uses of those resources.

PPN 026's Good Jobs and Skills framework provides a more structured basis for making this judgement than the broader social value models it replaces. Strong commitments under the revised model might include creating net new sustainable employment for people facing identified barriers, providing apprenticeships above the supplier's existing baseline, delivering accredited qualifications that address recognised skills shortages, or establishing talent pipeline programmes in communities with high levels of economic inactivity. These outcomes are specific, measurable and — if additional — represent genuine public investment in labour-market capacity. The case for accepting a cost premium is strongest when each of these conditions is met: specificity, measurability, additionality and relevance to identified needs.

Scale and proportionality remain critical. An authority considering whether a tender priced £200,000 higher than the next competitor should be preferred on social value grounds should attempt to quantify — even roughly — the value of the commitments offered. If the additional social value commitments credibly generate outcomes worth more than £200,000 in terms of reduced public expenditure on benefits, healthcare or skills programmes, or improved economic participation by target communities, the premium may be justified. If the relationship is unclear, uncertain or unfavourable, the additional cost is difficult to defend. Monetary proxies have limitations, but structured assessment is substantially more defensible than awarding social-value marks and accepting cost premiums without analytical scrutiny.

PPN 026 should not be interpreted as permission to pursue social outcomes irrespective of cost. Its substantial evaluation weightings increase the commercial significance of social value. At the same time, its requirements for proportionality, contractual monitoring, and KPIs reinforce the requirement that commitments be deliverable within the commercial envelope submitted by the winning supplier. The legitimate justification for a higher-cost award is precisely evidenced: additional employment and skills benefits, of defined scale and quality, for identified communities, monitored contractually and evidenced throughout delivery. Where *that case cannot be made robustly, social value scores should not substitute for sound commercial judgement.*

Best Practice Recommendations

Social value should be embedded from the earliest stages of procurement planning rather than appended to standard tender documentation shortly before publication. Pre-market engagement provides the most reliable basis for identifying appropriate criteria: understanding which suppliers are active in the market, what workforce practices they already follow, what communities the contract will affect and what skills shortages exist locally. This intelligence enables procurement teams to select Model Award Criteria under PPN 026 that are genuinely relevant, proportionate and capable of producing additional outcomes — rather than importing standard questions that may be commercially appropriate for one contract type but unsuitable for another.

Evaluation design should prioritise outcome specificity over narrative volume. Tender questions that invite open-ended descriptions of social value intentions typically reward well-resourced bid teams rather than the most capable social value delivery. More effective questions require bidders to state their current baseline, specify what they will do differently as a result of this contract, identify who will benefit and explain how outcomes will be evidenced. This approach creates a direct link between evaluation scores and contractual commitments, reduces the scope for aspirational statements disconnected from delivery reality and provides contract managers with a clear basis for holding suppliers accountable post-award.

Authorities should model evaluation scenarios before publishing procurement documents to understand how plausible score distributions across price, quality, and social value criteria could affect rankings. A 20 per cent social-value weighting can produce large swings in overall scores between bidders whose social-value proposals differ substantially. Pre-publication modelling reveals whether the chosen evaluation structure could produce commercially perverse outcomes — for example, allowing a bidder whose price is 15 per cent higher to win because of a marginally stronger social-value narrative — and enables authorities to recalibrate weightings, scoring methodologies, or evidence requirements before the competition opens.

SME and VCSE accessibility should be a design requirement rather than an afterthought. Procurement teams should assess, as part of pre-market engagement, whether proposed social value criteria can realistically be satisfied by smaller organisations active in the relevant market. Where requirements favour organisations with dedicated bid teams, sophisticated reporting infrastructure or large workforce volumes, they may reduce competitive tension without proportionate justification. Criteria should be capable of rewarding meaningful social outcomes achievable by organisations of different sizes: a VCSE employing fifteen people can deliver significant social value relative to its scale, but will be systematically disadvantaged by criteria benchmarked against prime contractor capacity.

Every material social value commitment influencing evaluation marks should be transferred into the contract as an enforceable obligation. PPN 026 requires appropriate contractual monitoring and measurement mechanisms; in practice this means specific targets, defined evidence standards, named reporting responsibilities, agreed escalation procedures and clear remedies for non-delivery. Procurement and contract management teams need a structured handover process to ensure that evaluated commitments, KPI requirements, and reporting obligations remain visible throughout the delivery phase. Social value that wins contracts but disappears post-award represents both a procurement integrity failure and a waste of public resources — the most commercially significant risk in social value procurement.

Finally, authorities should systematically evaluate the social value delivered against original commitments and expenditures, using the findings to inform future procurement strategies. Which interventions generated genuine, attributable outcomes? Where did delivery fall short *and why? Did the social value premium, where applicable, produce outcomes worth the additional cost? Building this evidence base — through consistent KPI reporting, post-contract reviews and, where appropriate, independent evaluation — creates the foundation for progressively improving social value practice. The cycle of identify, procure, monitor, evaluate and improve is what distinguishes organisations that use social value as a genuine procurement tool from those that treat it primarily as a compliance exercise.*

The Future of Social Value

PPN 026 signals a clear directional shift: social value in public procurement is moving from broad aspiration towards concentrated, measurable, contractually accountable outcomes. The model's focus on Good Jobs and Skills reflects accumulated experience that wide-ranging social value frameworks — spanning environmental sustainability, community cohesion, supply chain diversity, and employment — proved difficult to evaluate rigorously, monitor effectively, or attribute reliably to procurement decisions. Greater concentration on defined labour-market outcomes should produce stronger accountability, more meaningful evaluation and better evidence of what procurement-led social value can genuinely achieve at scale.

Measurement and reporting infrastructure will become increasingly important as the central digital platform develops. The requirement to report social value KPI performance annually through the platform will, over time, create a publicly accessible dataset that enables comparative analysis of social value outcomes across in-scope procurements. This transparency creates accountability pressure on both authorities and suppliers: authorities whose social value criteria consistently produce poorly evidenced outcomes may face scrutiny, while suppliers with strong delivery track records can distinguish themselves through verified performance data rather than tender narrative alone. The emergence of this evidence base represents a significant structural development in how procurement-led social value will be assessed and improved.

Further guidance anticipated within PPN 026 — on sub-criteria, evaluation methodology, inherent social value and framework application — will require careful development. The policy's treatment of inherent social value, acknowledging that retaining local employment through contract award carries community value even without specific additional commitments, represents a conceptually important development. Getting the evidential framework right is critical: guidance that is too permissive risks validating claims that lack genuine additionality; guidance that is too restrictive may overlook legitimate social value that procurement decisions can preserve. Practitioners will need clear, consistent standards that enable them to distinguish among the preservation, expansion, and creation of social value in their evaluations.

The longer-term challenge is maintaining the balance between social ambition and commercial discipline as policy expectations develop. Social value has matured from a peripheral aspiration into a commercially significant procurement criterion carrying substantial evaluation weight. Its continued development depends on demonstrating that the outcomes secured justify the expenditure, competitive adjustments and administrative investment required to pursue them. PPN 026 provides a stronger framework for making that case than its predecessors — but its success should ultimately be measured not by evaluation weightings or the sophistication of tender commitments, but by verified improvements in employment quality, skills attainment and economic participation in communities where public contracts are delivered.

Summary – Is Social Value Worth the Cost?

Social value can justify additional procurement expenditure, but only where benefits are credible, additional, proportionate and sufficiently evidenced to withstand commercial scrutiny. Given the scale of UK public procurement, even modest improvements in outcomes from existing expenditure could yield significant economic and social benefits. PPN 026's concentration on Good Jobs and Skills provides a more focused framework for pursuing that *potential, but its effectiveness ultimately depends upon rigorous evaluation, proportionate requirements and effective contract management.*

The 10 per cent and 20 per cent minimum weightings established by PPN 026 give employment and skills outcomes substantial influence within major contract awards. This creates both opportunity and responsibility. Public purchasing power can improve employment quality, address skills shortages and create sustainable pathways for people facing disadvantage. However, evaluation marks should reward specific, evidenced, and deliverable commitments rather than persuasive narratives, particularly where stronger social value proposals could lead taxpayers to accept higher overall contract costs.

The strongest social value does not necessarily require paying more. Employment initiatives, workforce development, fair pay and targeted skills programmes can sometimes improve retention, productivity and service quality alongside wider social outcomes. Where costs increase, however, opportunity cost becomes critical: money committed to securing social value through one contract cannot simultaneously fund services, capital investment or other priorities. Additional benefits must therefore be sufficiently substantial, durable and attributable to demonstrate that the expenditure represents better overall value.

Delivery ultimately matters more than promises. PPN 026's emphasis on contractual monitoring, social value KPIs, and performance reporting strengthens accountability from tender evaluation to realised outcomes. Suppliers receiving evaluation credit for employment and skills commitments should remain accountable for delivering them, while authorities should use performance evidence to improve future procurements. Effective contract management should identify interventions that produce genuine benefits, address underperformance, and eliminate requirements that create administrative or supplier burdens without delivering proportionate social value.

Social value is worth the cost when it creates outcomes that would not otherwise occur and those outcomes justify the resources required to secure them. PPN 026 provides a more focused and accountable framework for achieving that objective, but policy intentions and evaluation weightings cannot replace commercial judgement. The ultimate test remains straightforward: did spending public money differently create sufficient additional public benefit to justify the difference? Where rigorous evidence demonstrates that it did, social value represents sound public procurement.

Additional articles can be found at Procurement and Supply Chain Management Made Simple. This site examines procurement and supply chain management issues to assist organisations and individuals in improving the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of their product and service supply, to the customers' delight.

Sources and Further Reading

- *Cabinet Office – **PPN 026: The Social Value Model**.*
- *UK Government – **Procurement Act 2023**.*
- *UK Government – **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**.*
- *HM Treasury – **Managing Public Money**.*
- *HM Treasury – **The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation**.*
- *Government Commercial Function – **Commercial Framework**.*
- *Cabinet Office – **Government Procurement: The Scale and Nature of Central Government Procurement** and associated public procurement expenditure data.*
- *Office for National Statistics – **Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)** and UK labour-market statistics.*

- *Office for National Statistics – **Labour Market Overview** and Labour Force Survey economic inactivity data.*
- *Living Wage Foundation / Resolution Foundation – **Real Living Wage rates and research**.*
- *Department for Education – **Apprenticeships and Traineeships Statistics** and research on apprenticeship costs and benefits.*
- *Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education – research on **apprenticeship outcomes and earnings returns**.*
- *Department for Business and Trade – **Business Population Estimates for the UK and Regions**.*
- *Cabinet Office – guidance and data concerning **SME participation in public procurement**.*
- *Department for Work and Pensions / Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – **deprivation and employment-related statistics**.*
- *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – research on **employee wellbeing, recruitment, retention and workforce productivity**.*
- *The Open University – **Business Barometer**, including research on UK skills shortages.*
- *McKinsey Global Institute – research on **workforce development, skills and occupational progression**.*
- *Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply – research and guidance concerning **social value, supplier accessibility and procurement practice**.*
- *Centre for Local Economic Strategies – research on **community wealth building, local procurement and local economic multiplier effects**.*
- *Crown Commercial Service – guidance concerning **social value evaluation and public procurement**.*
- *World Trade Organisation – **Agreement on Government Procurement**.*
- *Circle Housing / Clarion Housing Group – published case-study material concerning **social value in repairs and maintenance procurement**, including apprenticeships, employment, training, projected savings and Social Return on Investment.*