

Local First Policy

2013 -14

The Policy Objectives:

In order that Swale's residents benefit, we will think and go local first in order to:

- Maximise the proportion of our spend that is retained locally;
- Deliver social value in the Swale BC area; and
- Support and enable local businesses, Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector to bid for contracts and services.

Introduction

Swale Borough Council has developed this Policy to show we are committed to **Local First**. Our commitment started with [our local prospectus of services](#) which was launched in 2012. This set out the services which other organisations might be interested in taking on responsibility for - providing local services to residents on behalf of the council.

This Policy goes further to expand the council's concept of 'Local First'. The Policy has been developed to support local businesses, Town and Parish Councils (TPCs), and the Voluntary and Community (VCS) sector, but also as an **aid for council staff when commissioning and procuring services**. As such, this Policy should be considered in conjunction with the council's [Commissioning Framework](#) and [Procurement Strategy](#).

The council has adopted corporate priorities within [Swale First](#), our corporate plan. It has **localism** at its heart and wants to encourage local organisations that have bright ideas about improving service delivery to work in partnership with us. We want to promote community empowerment and civic responsibility in the borough to help build a 'Big Society' and encourage people to come together to create a stronger and more cohesive Swale. We are **open for business** and champion freedom and enterprise, opening up our services and transforming how we work. We are keen to 'grow our own' and support local businesses, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to stimulate local employment. We are keen that the conditions for local growth and jobs are created and spend is retained locally. We aim to maximise business rate retention to get a multiplier effect resulting in a more prosperous and sustainable Swale. This Policy will help the council deliver these priorities.

Local First will help make our Vision for the borough a reality - **Swale a better place for its residents**.

Strategic and Legislative Context

The council needs to operate within legal frameworks such as Best Value, EU procurement rules, and the Public Contract Regulations 2006. It must also ensure that value for public money is considered. Procurement regulations mean we need a competitive element to any procurement, to follow due diligence in tender processes, and can only enter into agreements with properly constituted bodies.

However, the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and Public Service Act 2011 provide us with the opportunity to develop Local First through the new set of community rights and the 'general power of competence'. These provisions allow us to be more innovative and work more creatively to meet local needs.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 also provides a stimulus for us to emphasise the local and to maximise social value outcomes that support the local well-being of our area when commissioning and procuring. It complements the national Compact, which sets out government's relationship with the VCS in which it is ensured that social value forms a standard part of designing, developing and delivering policies, programmes and services. Locally, we have translated this into the [Kent Partners' Compact 2012](#) which Swale BC has signed up to via [OPEN First – our Charter for Engagement](#).

This means we can set a policy that sets out our aims to support local businesses, TPCs and the VCS, and help to even out the 'playing field' as compared with larger non-local providers, and so give local organisations the best opportunity to be successful through competitive tendering processes.

This is important to us because it means that local businesses, TPCs and the VCS have a fair opportunity to:

- thrive, succeed and prosper;
- be involved in the way forward for improvements and reshaping of services;
- contribute their knowledge to help meet the needs of local residents as often local knows best;
- reach those most in need of support as being rooted in communities at a local level they understand local needs;
- be better placed to compete and win contracts;
- enter the market, form part of a supply chain and form partnerships;
- help us create maximum social benefit for residents;
- help shape and contribute to local social benefits; and

- improve the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the services residents receive.

Our Social Value Outcomes

Social value contributions will be included - as part of the specification and as part of the assessment criteria - when we commission and procure services throughout 2013/14 to ensure we achieve social benefits locally. These benefits could be provided directly through suppliers, or indirectly through their supply chains. It will be for the suppliers to articulate what their local contribution to Swale will be.

No one size fits all so the contributions used in each case will depend on the service that is being commissioned or procured. We have made suggestions in Table 1, but these are not intended to be prescriptive. There may be others not included that may be more relevant and deserve inclusion. A degree of flexibility is therefore required. The contributions have been developed, through our consultation on this policy, as contributions that are valued and matter most too local people in Swale. The table will be included in the documentation the council issues for future procurement exercises.

Table 1: Social Value Contributions

Economic	Environmental	Social
Number of local jobs created and sustained	Contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation targets	Increasing volunteering opportunities
Number of apprentice positions	Championing and using environmentally friendly goods and services	Enabling community development and engagement
Number of work placement schemes for school age residents	Reducing carbon footprint and food miles	Encouraging social integration and community cohesion (social capital)
Number of people taken out of 'out of work' benefits	Protecting biodiversity	Enhancing and celebrating local culture and heritage
Number of training	Waste minimisation,	Contributing to health

opportunities	reuse and recycling	improvement programme and addressing health inequalities
Ensuring fair working conditions and payment	Reduced pollution	
Ensuring ethical supply (eg Fair Trade)	Water use minimisation and energy efficiency	
Adopting corporate social responsibility policies and commitments	Contributing to the targets and commitments of Climate Local Swale .	

2013/14 is the first year that the council will be including specific social value contributions as part of its commissioning and procurement. We will use this year to set a baseline, working to support staff to be confident when they carry out the commissioning and procurement process to suggest appropriate contributions to potential tenderers to set targets specific to the service being commissioned/procured which staff can then monitor as part of contract monitoring.

We will evaluate in March 2014 the impact from a qualitative and quantitative point view to determine whether social value is being achieved in Swale.

The Policy Aims:

- Embed 'local' and 'think local first' when commissioning and procuring.
- Ensure a consistent approach to commissioning and procurement across the council.
- Integrate social value into the Commissioning Framework and Procurement Strategy.
- Be clear and explicit on what social value can be achieved for Swale by all organisations.
- Be proportionate in our process of commissioning and procurement on lower value contracts to support our Local First aspiration.
- Ensure that where local businesses, TPCs and VCS can deliver our services we make them aware of opportunities, support them to understand what is required, and remove barriers to the commissioning and procurement process.
- Ensure commissioners involve local businesses, TPCs and the VCS in service design and pre procurement stages.

- Ensure a consistent and objective assessment of tenders and business plans.
- Support and enable local businesses, TPCs and the VCS so they are in a position to submit competitive quotations and tenders.
- Support local businesses, TPCs and the VCS to be able to demonstrate and contribute to social value.

Policy Delivery

In 2012/13 our actions supported and enabled over 187 local Businesses, Town and Parish Councils and VCS organisations to better understand the commissioning and procurement process, governance requirements, business planning and to evidence value. We:

- agreed Open First – our Charter for Engagement;
- supported the Swale Community Empowerment Network;
- delivered ‘Starfish and Spiders’ – two community partner days that focused on improving relationships and understanding between the VCS, TPCs and public sector bodies on the theme of commissioning;
- delivered Going Local – a celebration of Swale’s localism journey so far, culminating in a best practice brochure and a conference;
- ran the Keeping it Real programme, comparing our approach to localism with that of other ambitious councils nationally;
- linked in with national support eg from SIB, DCLG, Locality and NAVCA;
- established a local loan fund scheme;
- acted as guarantor for VCS organisations taking on community assets, eg Drill Hall, West Faversham Community Centre;
- provided grant support to VCS organisations eg Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee, SATEDA, Swale Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Swale Mediation;
- provided ‘Grantfinder’ via Swale CVS to assist organisations to secure funding;
- enabled local organisations to secure external grant funding eg Sport England, High Street Innovation Funding, Big Local;
- ran Pitch Perfect – two 10-week programmes of capacity building to support the VCS and TPCs;
- ran a Trustee recruitment pilot project;
- analysed our external spend to identify who our major suppliers are and opportunities to target that spend more locally;

- delivered a programme of business support via Kent Invicta;
- provided consultancy advice to assist with business planning, eg to Swale Community Leisure Ltd and Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee;
- provided officer support to constitute Trust/ Friends of Groups eg at Milton Creek Country Park Trust, Sheerness Town Team, KSRC;
- arranged officer support to organisations submitting/ developing business plans eg Court Hall;
- provided specialist service support, eg around finance and HR, to a number of TPCs that requested it;
- supplied staffing resource to support asset transfer projects eg Alex Centre, Queenborough Harbour Trust;
- delivered ‘Localism Live’ – community action planning pilot at Iwade;
- supported Neighbourhood Planning, specifically for the Faversham Creek pilot, but also more generalised discussions with a number of interested TPCs;
- launched a council community action day scheme;
- developed a council volunteer procedure; and
- created a web portal for [localism](#).

To ensure our policy is implemented, we will build on the activities we have delivered in 2012/13 to tailor and develop our activity for 2013/14. Table 2 sets out the action plan for 2013/14.

Table 2: The Local First Action Plan for 2013/14

Action	Target	Timescale	Responsibility
1. Communication of this policy to staff and wider stakeholders	All staff aware of policy 100% staff involved in procurements adopted the policy Communication Plan delivered	By 30 th November 2013	Head of Economy & Community Services/ Business & Skills Officer
2. The social value contributions Table 1 to be included in invitation to tender documents issued by the council	100% of invitation-to-tender forms issued to include request for social value measures	From 1 st December 2013	Procurement Manager
3. Social value contributions scored as part of tender assessment	A minimum of 20% of the quality score allocated to social value	From 1 st December 2013	Staff procuring services
4. Guiding principles of our expectations of a business plan which will be proportionate to the level of council investment	Principles developed and available in council's website	By 1 st December 2013	Business & Skills Officer

5. Scoring matrix to ensure a consistent and transparent assessment of business plans	Matrix produced and disseminated	By 1 st December 2013	Business & Skills Officer
6. Run training and briefing sessions in conjunction with Swale CVS and Kent Invicta for SMEs, T&PCs and VCS organisations interested in future tendering opportunities	Training sessions held	By 31 st January 2014	Community Services Officer Business & Skills Officer (working in partnership with Swale CVS and Kent Invicta)
7. Provide officer support to organisations submitting business plans	5 new organisations supported	From 1 st December 2013	ECS team (various officers)
8. Develop bespoke support to those groups we are working with to deliver/ run services	5 groups supported	From 1 st December 2013	ECS team (various officers)
9. Deliver a programme of capacity-building advice/support based on need e.g. articulating social value, forming consortiums, business planning, governance, trustee recruitment	1 tailored programme Or support for 5 individual organisations	By 31 st March 2014	Community Services Officer Business & Skills Officer (working in

			partnership with Swale CVS and Kent Invicta)
10. Deliver business support through a contract with Kent Invicta;	80 SME businesses supported	From 1 st November 2013 – 31 st March 2014	Economic Development Officer
11. Data collection to build a baseline of social value contributions included in existing council contracts	Baseline collected for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of local jobs created & sustained • No. of apprentices • No. of work-placement schemes for school-age residents • No. of people taken out of 'out of work benefits' • No. of training opportunities 	By 31 st March 2014	Business & Skills Officer, Procurement Manager
12. Include local labour clauses in appropriate Section 106 agreements monitor compliance of these clauses	Appropriate S.106 Agreements to have minimum 20% of labour deemed local to Swale	From 1 st November 2013 then on-going as and when an	Business & Skills Officer

		agreement is negotiated	
13. Work with local employers to encourage corporate social responsibility policies and commitments	2 employers engaged and incorporating CSR	By 31 st March 2014	Business & Skills Officer
14. Promote volunteering, by our own staff, the staff of other local organisations, and the community more generally	1 Volunteering event held 20.3% volunteering rate	By 31 st March 2014	Community Services Officer
15. Participation by staff in the council's community action day	5 staff participating	By 31 st March 2014	Training Officer/ Community Services Officer

Resources available to deliver

We will deliver our Policy with the use of the following council resources:

- officer time including specific Economic and Community Services Officers, but also drawing on 'technical' support, e.g. from Finance, HR, Procurement, Property etc where needed;
- the Local Loan Fund (£250,000 available in 2013/14);
- Member Grants (£105,750).
- the Localism Fund (an internal council resource £64,576 available in 2013/14);
- the Regeneration Fund (an internal council resource £394,613 available for 2013/14); and
- Learning & Skills funding towards the business support contract (£15,000).

In addition, there is a wide range of external resources and websites available which we will signpost people towards, including support, funding, training and advice through the following agencies:

- BIS;
- Businesslink.
- Community Matters, DCLG;
- Kent County Council eg Big Society Loan Scheme;
- Kent's Big Society Web.com;
- Locality;
- NAVCA;
- NCVO;
- Social Investment Business;
- Sport England, Awards for All, Big Lottery, Big Local, High Street Innovation Fund, Sported; and
- Swale CVS.

Glossary

Best Value: introduced in the 1999 Local Government Act and its provisions came into force in April 2000. The aim was to improve local services in terms of both cost and quality. Local authorities must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Big Society: Government concept with the aim to create a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a "big society" that will take power away from politicians and give responsibility to local people.

BIS: Department for Business Innovation & Skills. The Department for economic growth which invests in skills and education to promote trade, boost innovation and help people to start and grow a business.

Businesslink: a government helpline that provides a quick response service about starting or running a business.

Community Action Planning: a community action plan (or Parish Plan) is a document that sets out a vision for the future of the parish and outlines how that can be achieved in an Action Plan. It differs from a neighbourhood plan as it is not designed to deal with land use matters in detail.

Community Asset: land and buildings owned or managed by community organisations. These assets cover a wide spectrum and include town halls, community centres, sports facilities, affordable housing and libraries. Land and buildings are only community assets if they are capable of generating a profit that can be reinvested into activities that benefit the community.

Community Asset transfer: where the Council transfers land or buildings into the ownership or management of a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation or statutory body. Those bodies consist of statutory parish and town councils together with properly constituted voluntary groups, charities and trusts.

Community Matters: the National Federation for Community Organisations which champions voluntary and community action at neighbourhood level, as a means of local people taking control of issues in their area and fostering community spirit.

Community Action Day: the Council has agreed to allow all staff a day a year to participate in volunteering activity as part of their team.

Community Partner Days: community engagement events that Swale Borough Council working in partnership with Swale CVS organise to bring VCS organisations together with public sector bodies with the aim of improving relationships, understanding and sharing information.

DCLG: Department for Communities and Local Government. The Department that moves decision-making power from central government to local councils to help put communities in charge of planning, increase accountability and help citizens to see how their money is being spent.

Grantfinder: a grants and policy database which includes details in excess of 7,000 funding opportunities. The service includes access to a flexibly searchable database.

Kent Compact: a partnership agreement between the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) and the public sector in Kent. It is a jointly agreed framework for a mutual working relationship with positive benefit to the Kent community.

Localism: a shift in power away from central government and towards local people. The Localism Act 2011 sets out how this will be implemented.

Locality: a nationwide network for community-led organisations with the mission to grow the UK's leading network of multipurpose, community-led organisations, building on the strengths of our most ambitious and effective members so that every community a place of possibility – through social action, community enterprise and community asset ownership.

NAVCA: National Association for Voluntary and Community Action. The national voice of local support and development organisations in England. A charity that champions and strengthens voluntary and community action.

NCVO: National Council for Voluntary Organisations which champions volunteering and civil society and support the voluntary and community sector in England.

Neighbourhood Planning: introduced by the Localism Act 2011, it gives neighbourhoods the ability to develop a neighbourhood plan which can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood, like where new homes and offices should be built. The plan can be detailed or general, depending what local people want. Neighbourhood plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area.

Open First: Swale Borough Council's charter for engagement. It describes the Council's approach to be a listening council, committed to improving the way we engage with customers and partners.

SATEDA: Swale action to end domestic abuse. Formerly under the umbrella Swale Domestic Violence Forum, SATEDA offers impartial advice and support to those suffering from physical, sexual, psychological, financial or emotional abuse. A charity with a board of Trustees.

SIB: Social Investment Business Group, made up of the charity, Adventure Capital Fund, and its social enterprise, the Social Investment Business. A social investor which has made over 1,300 investments in civil society organisations ranging from under £5,000 to almost £7 million.

SMEs: small and medium-sized enterprises defined by the number of employees and either turnover or balance sheet total.

Social Action: activities that have a positive change to communities through practical action in the service of others.

Social Capital: the productive benefits derived from social relations and cooperation between individuals and groups.

Social Value: the wider non-financial value of programmes, organisations and interventions which will ensure the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Sported: a free membership organisation which provides support to community and grassroots organisations that deliver 'sport for development' support by providing business resources and financial assistance, so that organisations can improve the lives of disadvantaged young people through sport.

Supply Chain: a system of organisations, people, activities, information, and resources involved in moving a product or service from supplier to customer. Many of the exchanges encountered in the supply chain are between different companies that seek to maximize their revenue within their sphere of interest, but may have little or no knowledge or interest in the remaining players in the supply chain.

Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN): a network of VCS groups and organisations based in Swale who are interested in making a difference in their community. It comes together every 3 months at meetings across the borough to share ideas and network.

Time Banking: a means of exchange used to organise people and organisations around a purpose, where time is the principal currency.