
EVIDENCING SOCIAL VALUE

The Elephant in the Room

Current state of play

- Local authorities have made good progress in putting processes in place to implement social value.

- Strong commonalities emerged at our 15/01/14 roundtable:
 - SV not being pursued in isolation – it's part of response to cuts, securing efficiency savings, managing service demand.
 - Trend seems to be for going beyond the legislation:
 - Applying SV to goods as well as services.
 - All contract values – not just above EU thresholds.

Current state of play / 2

- Not all have adopted SV policies but many are working towards ‘charters’ which have the same function.
- Existing corporate priorities are being used to establish ‘frameworks’ for SV – following all emerged as strong drivers:
 - Targetted employment, apprenticeships, training.
 - Strengthening local economy.
 - Keeping business local, not ‘exporting jobs’.
 - Making the local pound work harder.
- Existing policy drivers – e.g. Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility – are forming the ‘tools’ that will help to realise SV.

Evidencing

- But **evidencing social value** is the least developed part of the process – a number of key issues:
 1. Still some doubt about what commissioners / purchasers want to know:
 - Just counting social value ‘outputs’...
 - Or assessing impact derived from additional social value?
 2. Are there transferable existing practices from other services – e.g. Supporting People?

Evidencing / 2

3. How compare widely differing forms of SV?
4. How digest and summarise evidence for meaningful reporting?
5. Purchasers and providers lack standardised methods of stating, measuring, presenting and reporting SV.
6. Inability / reluctance of providers to invest in SV measurement and reporting 'system' – can't afford to make the wrong choice.

Not unique problems...

- These problems are not unique to social value in procurement – also evident in:
 - Social investment:
 - But a new network of Bham ‘social angel’ investors are saying keep it simple, just tell us key headlines that help us understand your impact.
 - Social Impact Bonds and payment by results:
 - The first SIB – HMP Peterborough / MoJ – has been abandoned.
 - It’s about reducing reoffending by 10%.
 - Relatively small Bond but significant investment (time, IP and money) in its design.
 - Changes in probation may have made the SIB redundant – but reports suggest that methodological problems have also played a part

Key questions

1. Do you know what you want to evidence and do you have a plan?
2. Are there transferable practices for evidencing already 'in the system'?
3. Is a standardised **cost-effective** method of measuring and reporting SV possible / desirable?
4. What would make a 'meaningful report'?

Resources

Three good reports on 'social value – one year on...'

BSSEC <http://bit.ly/1ofR8Tp>

Social Enterprise UK <http://bit.ly/1ksmjlv>

Cabinet Office <http://bit.ly/1um3niS>

All BSSEC resources on social value – including Anthony Collins
Solicitor's free legal guide

<http://bssec.org.uk/useful-resources-on-social-value/>