



ARUP



# Social Value

## A UK White Paper





**Social value**, social equity, social impact or social responsibility – whatever you call it, we know that today it is more important than ever before.

The built environment sector, including both the private and public sector, have a duty of care to the communities they work in to create places, infrastructure and cities that support and give back to those who are most in need. This is not always easy, and there is not a one-size-fits-all solution that we can just roll out across the board.

At Arup, our Social Value and Equality team has been working to develop this UK-focused White Paper, which sets out how we think about social value, and our approach to embedding it into our projects.

We believe that taking this ‘theory of change’ based approach is a useful framework to enable us to focus on real change, but we also recognise that we are at the beginning of this journey towards a greater focus on outcomes. We invite partners to work with us - and challenge us - as we seek to put people and their quality of life first.

A single approach to community development that can help us change how we understand the world around us and where we commit resources to deliver social value is missing. In this UK-focused report we outline Arup’s approach that we believe can fill the gap.



**Terri Wills**

Cities, Planning and Design  
UKIMEA Social Value and Equity Service Leader



# Tick box or true change?

In 2012, the UK Government legislated for social value in the UK [Public Services \(Social Value\) Act](#)<sup>1</sup>. Whilst this created the impetus for local authorities and wider public sector bodies to seek out social value through their contracts, the legislation was deliberately left open on how it could be interpreted, created and measured. What ensued was the publication of a myriad of complementary, but sometimes competing ideas, tools and frameworks, often changing from place to place, which industry were left to decipher and apply.

Because of this confusion and trying so hard to focus on the detail of all the different applications of the legislation, we have lost sight of what social value is really meant to be about. Are we focusing too much on measuring social value, rather than creating lasting change? Are we limiting ourselves to deliver social value activities that can be measured, to the detriment of potentially more impactful action, which does not have an obvious numeric value? And has this led to a lack of shared purpose and vision amongst communities, the private sector, infrastructure providers and local authorities?

From our work in engaging communities, working with developers, utility and infrastructure providers, and supporting local authorities on built environment projects across the UK, we are seeing that there is a need to come together and work towards what really matters – and to overcome some of the social, economic and cultural challenges we're seeing in today's society.



## Individuals and communities

The idea of delivering social value should be universally beneficial to individuals and communities, but opportunities to create meaningful social benefits are being lost, and potential impacts diluted. Typically, organisations take a broad stroke approach to delivering social value, applying the same principles and activities in one community after another. By failing to tailor approaches and interventions to the priorities of that neighbourhood, the potential to deliver impact that addresses distinct local needs is reduced. At the other end of the spectrum, is the risk of over-consulting; this can occur when communities which are in the shadow of significant redevelopment over many years and sometimes decades are asked again and again what their priorities are for the area. Sometimes this engagement pays little regard to what has been expressed to developers or authorities in previous consultations, leading to frustration amongst local people, increasing mistrust and a reluctance to engage with future developments or planning decisions.

## Local authorities

In the UK, the power of strong policy to deliver positive outcomes for local people is increasingly the focus for local, city and regional authorities, reinforced by the Public Services (Social value) Act 2012 and the Cabinet Office's Procurement Policy Note 06/20. With public sector spending contracting over the last decade, but also with social need increasing in the wake of the cost-of-living crisis, local authorities have had to expand their approach to secure benefits for their areas. Increasingly, they are using their planning powers to ensure the challenges associated with the delivery of new developments are deftly balanced to create social and economic benefits. The way in which these contributions are realised is evolving and becoming more mature as planning authorities begin to use the full breadth of their powers to secure benefits for neighbourhoods most in need. A challenge with this approach, particularly considering the Levelling-Up agenda, is that these social and economic benefits are only being felt in those areas which play host to the most significant development, leaving other areas, and those with a less compelling case for real estate development, behind.



### Infrastructure authorities

Infrastructure is essential for a functional society, that works for everyone. It provides transportation, energy supply, clean water and flood protection to both individuals and communities. The social benefits that infrastructure projects can generate, however, are not limited to their basic functionality. By embedding social outcomes into the design, delivery, and operation of infrastructure it has the potential to deliver significant social impact, as well as functional built environment assets. However, due to the increasing budgetary constraints placed on infrastructure authorities, and their responsibility for the delivery of complex projects that may involve multiple communities, it can be tricky to identify what the social value priorities should be, or how they can be addressed to best effect given limited resources.

### Real estate developers

While the UK Government has put social value into legal context, and local authorities provide the local plans and framework in which it can be manifest, it is usually private sector players that are tasked with its delivery. The pressure is on developers to deliver beautiful new pieces of urban landscape, which are commercially viable but also deliver the social and economic benefits so badly needed by communities and local authorities.

Increasingly too, they are feeling the pressure from investors and C-suite to push forward ambitions around social value for ESG (Environment, Social, Governance), to de-risk investments, and help attract and retain staff. Just as corporate strategies have moved from carbon neutral to net-zero and

climate positive in the climate space, leading organisations are now looking to move past their statutory obligations in social value terms. Investing in social value brings huge returns to corporate reputation and builds trust with local authorities and communities which helps to make future development both faster and more straightforward. Indeed, ambitious developers want to go beyond the mitigating need to make good the disruption they are causing to communities, and go 'over and above' what is required.

There are commercial benefits - creating diverse and vibrant places that people love to spend time in drives footfall and dwell time, and the environmental and social sustainability of a building can warrant a higher rental value. However, socially valuable design and long-term programmes can be time consuming and hence more expensive than traditional approaches to design in the short term, and can cause reluctance to invest if the returns are uncertain or unquantifiable.

*So how does a company define social value in a way that fits corporate objectives and also ensures value is delivered to clients, the communities impacted by their projects and society as a whole?*

This question prompted Arup to examine the real meaning of social value and seek to redefine it so we can focus on what really matters.





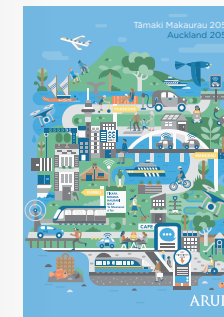
# Roots of the term

Social value has become a commonly used term in the UK for local authorities but a clear definition is still elusive.

To understand better what we mean by social value, Arup has analysed the meaning of the term in relation to the concept of value, social change, and social good, by exploring different cultures' approaches and philosophies that relate to the concept. For example, is social value a monetary value, or is it a description of what is perceived as value – or is it both?

What we learned is that its origins lie in sister concepts of social change and social good; in the role and responsibilities of government, communities and the private sector; and the balance of the needs of individuals with the needs of the community. The origins of social value can be traced back to centuries of philosophical, political, economic, sustainability, third sector, and corporate debates about improving the lives of individuals, communities, and society overall. In recent years, it has gained significance, driven by growing interest in (and scepticism about) corporate ethics and a growing focus on improving justice and equity.

Western philosophers like John Stuart Mill and John Rawls have long debated individual rights relative to the common good, focusing on the welfare, fulfilment, and overall quality of life of individuals. However, over time, the role of the private sector emerged as a critical aspect of this debate. By the 1960s, social and environmental movements pressured businesses to do more<sup>2</sup>, and the 1990s saw the emergence of social enterprises and the concept of social return on investment. The term 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) was widely adopted in the 2000s, and in recent years, social value has taken on a specific meaning regarding organisations' ability to effect positive social change, mainly through Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies.



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Many cultures and religions emphasise the role of the collective and community. For example, Te Ao Māori's principle of kotahitanga, which prioritises [community, shared amenities, and facilities for the health and well-being of all](#)<sup>3</sup>, and the Inuit notion of inuuqatigiitsianiq, which refers to living well together through cultural norms of [helping, sharing, and caring for others](#)<sup>4</sup>. In 1972, Bhutan created the concept of '[Gross National Happiness](#)' (GNH), emphasising the holistic well-being and happiness of individuals and society as a whole<sup>5</sup>. The GNH framework recognises that economic development alone does not guarantee happiness or well-being, and other factors such as social, cultural, environmental, and spiritual dimensions are also essential. One of the GNH framework's key aspects is the idea that individual wellbeing is closely linked to the community's strength and collective wellbeing.

Moreover, work in international development communities in the Global South evidences the significant role of community strength in withstanding shocks and stresses and forging overall well-being. Theories of Change began to develop in the 1990s to understand the effectiveness of community initiatives, popularised by Carol Weiss<sup>6</sup>, which explains how a logic model can be used to illustrate the connections between activities and short-, medium-, and long-term results.

Through all this history it became clear the origins of the term and perhaps its future lies in an understanding that social value is not static, nor linear – but dynamic. It is not solely about the individual or the community but about the interplay between the two, with shared responsibilities of the private sector, government, and communities. And it is also about deepening our understanding of what makes lives better and ultimately what is of value to individuals and to communities.



# The Arup social value approach



Learning from this complex history, our decades of work in international development, planning and design, and driven by our member-owned corporate structure and the vision of our founder Sir Ove Arup to do work that is “socially useful”, we believe we need a more comprehensive and meaningful understanding of social value.

This starts with a few key principles:

**Creating social value and equality should ultimately be about improving people’s lives – enhancing quality of life**

The best measure for enhancing people’s lives is quality of life; when looking at this through a collective lens, this means creating a more inclusive, equitable and just society.

**It must start with identifying the long-term outcomes that the community themselves want**

Social value is created through meaningful engagement, active participation, listening and co-creation. Each project must start with understanding the long-term outcomes the project can deliver, determined collaboratively with the individuals who are meant to benefit. These individuals must also be the ones to say whether social value has been created. By

adopting this approach, the social value interventions and outputs of a project will be specific to an area, helping to create a lasting and meaningful impact on people’s quality of life.

**We should create assets that are valued by and strengthen the community**

These assets can be hard or physical infrastructure, such as the right kind of housing and green space, programmatic, socio, cultural, economic and governance initiatives, such as awareness creation, empowering communities, inclusive economic growth and behaviour change. Assets will vary, and be valued differently, from community to community, project to project, and should be prioritised through working with the communities involved.

**Social value should be about change long into the future**

Social value should be about creating a positive impact on society that lasts for a long time, even after a project or initiative is completed. It’s important to think about social value as a continuous journey, where even small positive impacts can be a good start, but we should aim to create deeper and more



significant impacts in the long run. When creating social value, it's important to think about the future and not just focus on what can be achieved in the short-term. To do this, we need to work with the community in the process and use strategies that can continue to create positive impacts in the future, long after completion of the project.

**Social value and equality will benefit individuals, and then spread to the wider community**

When creating social value one must consider the quality of life of individuals, in parallel with the wider societal benefits. The intervention, or input, must create benefits for individuals most impacted by a project, whilst at the same time ensuring that it will support greater justice, equity and inclusivity at the community scale.

***A just society***

Seeks to ensure fairness in light of historical injustices, between people who are privileged and those who are disadvantaged or excluded by their circumstances.

***An inclusive society***

Is actively inclusive of all, helping everyone to feel they are supported and they belong. This means enabling the same access to opportunity for all and achieving universal quality of life.

***An equitable society***

Goes beyond treating everyone the same to treating everyone fairly, accounting for different opportunities, burdens and needs.

Drawing on these key principles, Arup believes that:

**“Social value is the enduring, systemic change created within communities that leads to improved quality of life for individuals and more just, inclusive and equitable societies.”**

The Arup approach is best expressed by thinking of social value as a dynamic ‘theory of change,’ unique to every project, place and neighbourhood - a model for how focused actions can create positive change in the communities we work in. Starting with the ultimate impact we are seeking to achieve; we can work back to determine how we allocate enough time and resources, as well as deploy methods and tools to achieve the priorities outcomes.

The steps below describe how our theory of change enables project stakeholders to identify the outcomes, develop the outputs that form their foundations, and choose the inputs and levers best suited to enhance life quality and create the long-lasting change desired. With the right tailored approach, every project can create social value.





# Arup's social value approach

## A theory of change

### Inputs Levers & initiatives



### Outcomes Quality of life



### Impact A more just, equitable & inclusive society

-  **Community engagement and long-term governance**
-  **Inclusive design and activation of spaces**
-  **The power of cities**

### Outputs Creating social value assets

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Accessible and quality homes, transport, technologies, goods and services</li> <li>2 Safe, connected, and proud communities</li> <li>3 Inclusive, accessible, and active community spaces</li> <li>4 Representative and enriching culture and heritage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 A healthy, natural, and climate resilient environment</li> <li>6 Empowering and just governance and partnerships</li> <li>7 Local and inclusive economic growth</li> <li>8 Relevant and empowering training and education</li> <li>9 Decent jobs, workforce equality, and diversity</li> </ul> |
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## Outcomes: Focusing on quality of life

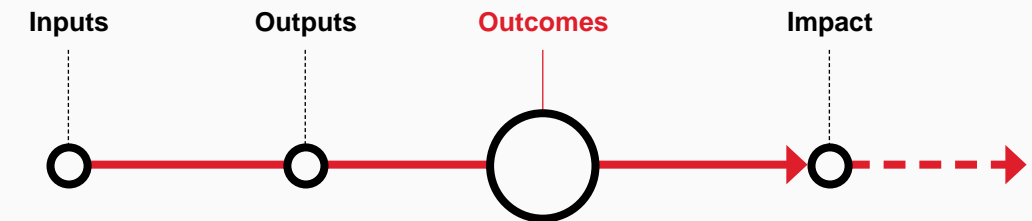
We believe the ultimate goal of any project should be an improved quality of life for the people and communities that are affected. Social value must be about how we are impacting lives for the better. The best way to look at this is through the lens of quality of life.

Assessing social value through this lens helps to shift the focus away from short-term financial gains or narrow economic metrics towards a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities.

We have drawn on significant research into the concept of quality of life to identify the key indicators that sit behind it. These include health, time-use, and education, as well as social and cultural factors like psychological wellbeing and social connectivity. By assessing performance against these, we can gain a more holistic understanding of the impact of projects on individuals.

### How do we judge 'quality of life'?

Our approach draws on the [UN's Human Development Index](#), which brings together indicators of health, education and living standards<sup>7</sup>, supplemented by [European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#)<sup>8</sup> frameworks that cover civic empowerment, social connections, leisure time and sense of community. Ultimately, an individual's quality of life is strongly influenced by their surrounding community and society. We have identified seven quality-of-life indicators to measure social value.





## Quality of life outcome measures

### Standard of living

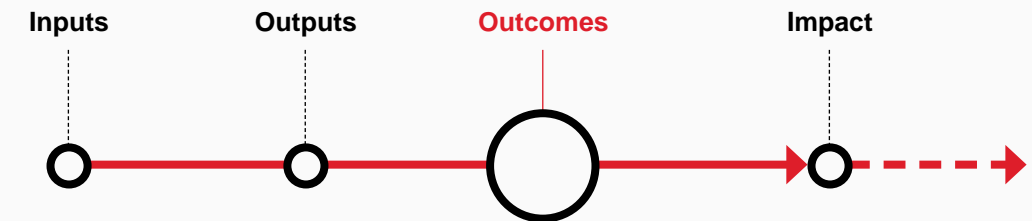
Is a foundation for wellbeing, and physical and mental health, and includes access to physiological needs such as housing, food, safety, energy for warmth, cooling and cooking, sanitation and drinking water. Without access to these basic needs, individuals may struggle to achieve a sense of security and stability, which can negatively impact their psychological wellbeing and quality of life. Access to a decent standard of living can also lead to greater resilience, leaving people and families with an ability to cope with unexpected events.

### Health

Is also a priority outcome and can be measured as self-reported physical and mental health, healthy life expectancy, and the extent of limitations in activity. Health can also be assessed objectively, using indicators such as life expectancy and incidence of communicable (cold, flu, HIV) and noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular, diabetes, cancer). Surveys have found that, alongside relationships and standard of living, people attach the highest value to physical and mental health<sup>9 10</sup>.

### Psychological wellbeing

Is ultimately the feeling an individual holds about their experience of life. It is subjective, and can be influenced by external factors – community, environment, standard of housing – as much as it can be by physical and mental health. [The WHO-5 Wellbeing Index](#) examines feelings of ‘good spirits’<sup>11</sup>, and life being filled with interest. The OECD’s Better Life Index uses survey data to measure life satisfaction, focusing on a person’s assessment of their life as a whole. Psychological wellbeing is important to quality of life because it influences how individuals perceive and experience their lives, including their relationships, work, and personal goals. It can also impact physical health and overall life satisfaction.



### Social connectivity

Assesses the quality and density of individuals’ support networks, their sense of trust in neighbours, and their sense of safety, loneliness or conviviality. By nature, humans are social creatures, and having positive social connections can provide a sense of belonging, emotional support, and happiness. There is strong evidence for the contribution that [social connectedness makes to individual mental health](#)<sup>12</sup>, on top of which, stronger social networks locally are likely to boost social good such as a sense of community safety in an area

### Education and lifelong learning

Underpins economic activity and access to opportunity. It empowers individuals to access opportunities, make informed decisions, and develop problem-solving skills. Moreover, lifelong learning promotes personal growth and fulfilment by expanding one’s knowledge, perspectives, and abilities, leading to a more meaningful life. Regardless of age, the ability to continue learning and training throughout life is crucial for maintaining social and economic relevance and achieving personal goals.

### Time use

Considers how far people feel able to integrate work life, family and friends, leisure activities, volunteering and community life. Extensive research has shown that overwork can lead to physical and mental illness, and poorer performance at work<sup>13</sup>. The autonomy an individual has over time allocation and job content, has most impact on health (and therefore quality of life).

### Civic engagement

Reflects the extent to which people feel legally and culturally empowered to engage in civic and political life, as well as the degree of trust in institutions, and freedom from discrimination. Civic participation creates better governance and better social institutions, which creates and enables a better quality of life for all



# Outputs: Creating community assets

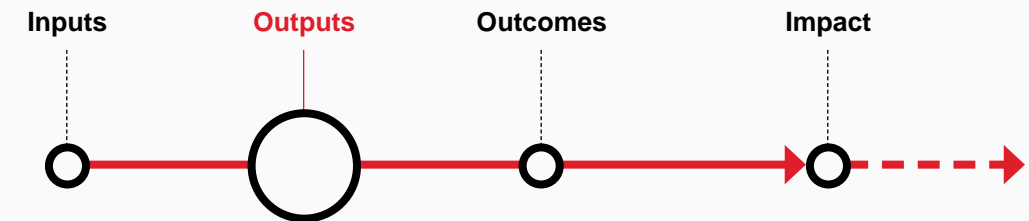
Creating social value in any project requires the identification of the right outputs to build lasting and widescale change within communities that support better quality of life for its people. Social value is created when the right assets are put in place to build lasting and widescale change within communities. We will stress again here the importance of creating assets that deliver beneficial change long into the future. Benefits such as short-term employment lasting the duration of a construction project are only one aspect of the model.

As referenced earlier, assets can take the form of hard, physical infrastructure, or 'soft' infrastructure, such as processes to empower governance and inclusive economic growth. Both are critically important in developing social value.

Every location, its people and their needs, is different. It is critical to hear local voices, and work with community representatives to prioritise which assets are important for each community. Consideration must be given to how assets can be maintained over long periods to ensure social value is lasting and not just created during the construction phase of a built environment project.

Not every natural or built environment project will be able to develop and implement all the social value assets outlined here, but stakeholders should work together to deliver as many of them as possible.

- 1 Accessible and quality homes, transport, technologies, goods and services
- 2 Safe, connected, and proud communities
- 3 Inclusive, accessible, and active community spaces
- 4 Representative and enriching culture and heritage
- 5 A healthy, natural, and climate resilient environment
- 6 Empowering and just governance and partnerships
- 7 Local and inclusive economic growth
- 8 Relevant and empowering training and education
- 9 Decent jobs, workforce equality, and diversity



**Social Value Assets:**  
the outputs of social value.





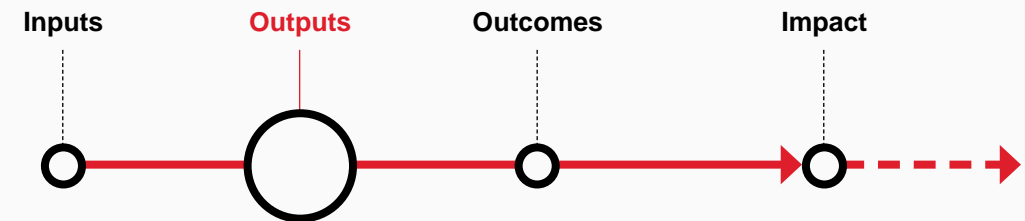
**1** **Accessible and high-quality housing, transport and other goods and services.**  
 In the modern world, access to housing and goods and services such as quality healthcare and affordable broadband are essential enablers of economic and social life. Access to decent transport– is also critical: a recent evidence review found that transport was an important facilitator of social inclusion, wellbeing, and access to economic opportunities<sup>21</sup>. In many countries, digital exclusion is growing as a community challenge as it excludes often already disadvantaged groups and households from access to work, school, and socialising.

**2** **Safe, connected and proud communities**  
 With rich connections between people, a sense of trust and safety, and pride in what is shared. The [UK's Health Security Agency](#) has identified direct links between community life and social connections, and health and wellbeing<sup>14</sup>. [Community pride can help form stronger communities, which can take a lead in transforming places](#)<sup>15</sup>.

**3** **Inclusive, accessible, and active community spaces**  
 From formal community centres to the pocket park on the street corner, space enables people to feel connected to, engaged with and proud of their communities. Ensuring the interests of the community are considered when shaping spaces will contribute to inclusive and accessible spaces which meet the needs of different individuals. Community spaces which are active and bring individuals together contribute to quality of life, empty ones do not. These spaces should not be 'over-designed' - communities should be empowered to use the 'blank canvas' spaces creatively and according to their own specific needs.

**4** **Representative and enriching culture and heritage**  
 Numerous studies demonstrate that culture and heritage enrich lives and improve and promote quality of life. European policymaking has focused on culture and heritage as an important factor in creating social cohesion<sup>16</sup>. As we strive to address historic and structural inequalities, and celebrate diversity, representation assumes increasing importance.

**5** **A healthy and climate-resilient natural environment**  
 The natural environment is a fundamental building block for life, and quality of life, underpinning everything from food supply to personal safety. Promoting environments where people breathe clean air, benefit from access to nature, and which contribute to limiting global heating can promote physical health and mental wellbeing, and help to protect individuals and communities from the hazards and subsequent impacts of climate change.



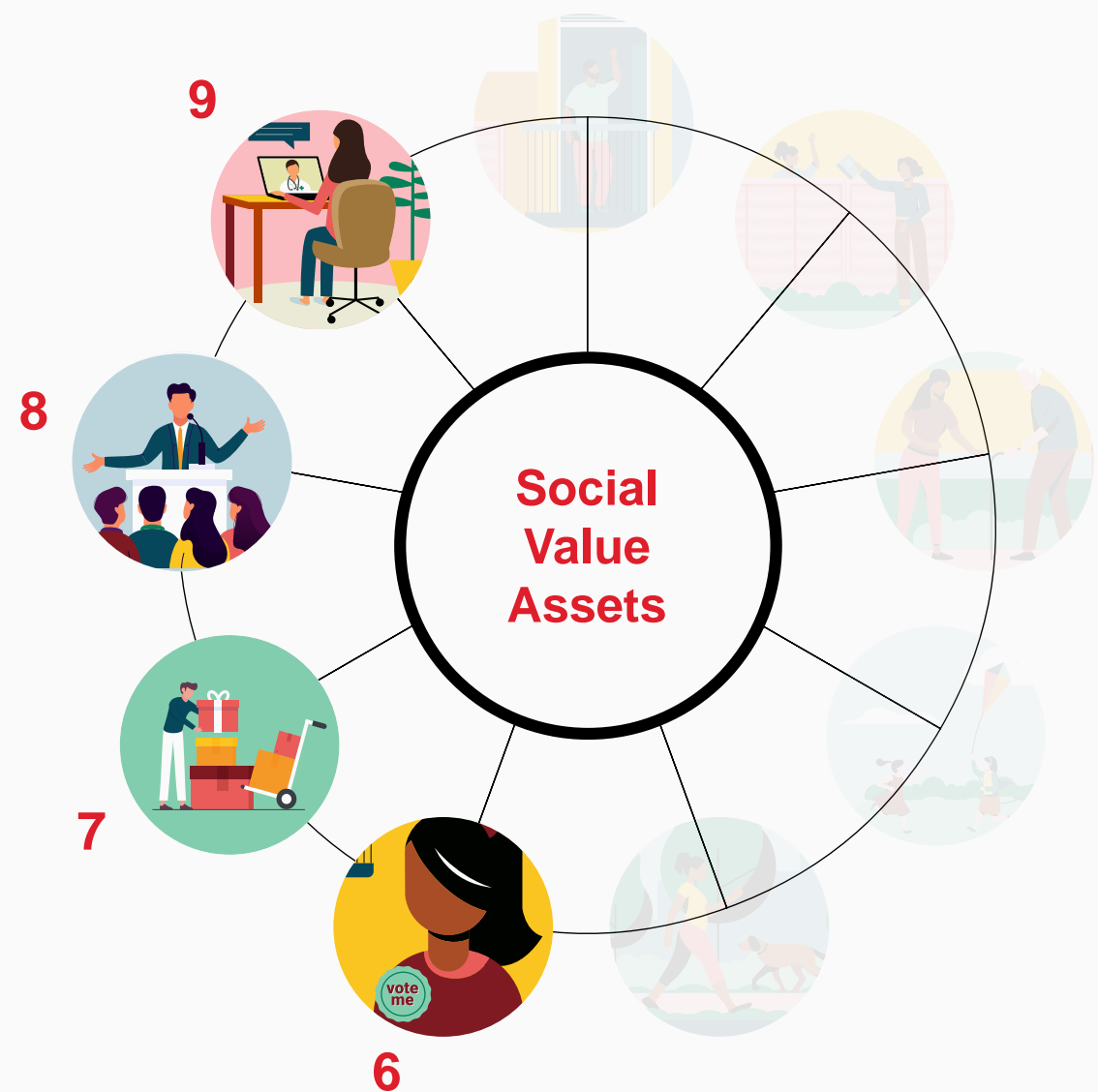
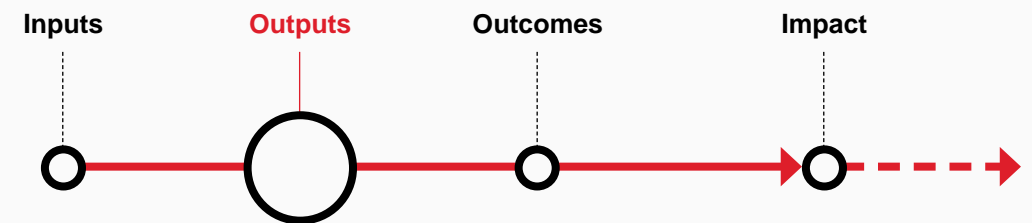


**6 Empowering and just governance and partnerships**  
 By enabling individuals to access their needs, and lead fulfilling lives as members of their community, we allow those who wish to do so to participate meaningfully in politics and ensure government and private bodies seek to involve communities in decision-making. Advocates for community participation in decision-making include the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>17</sup> and the Carnegie Trust<sup>18</sup>, and recent research in Spain has underlined the extent to which participative and efficient governance supports a better quality of life<sup>19</sup>.

**7 Local and Inclusive Growth**  
 The OECD defines ‘inclusive growth’ as “economic growth that is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunities for all”. In the context of built environment projects, local growth is important, as well as sustainable supply chain requirements. Individuals and communities want to see the economic growth promised by the large projects in their neighbourhood positively impacting them.

**8 Relevant and empowering training and education**  
 Helps people to access opportunity but has deeper impacts too; education can boost mental health and social capital and acts as a tool of empowerment for disadvantaged groups. Training can have tangible benefits too, but it must be relevant to what people want, and what will help them to find long-term employment. For example, in the context of the built environment, we often see construction apprenticeships offered as part of social value procurement and programmes, but sometimes those offerings are not based on the identified interests and long-term ambitions of individuals or the community. True social value assets are education and training opportunities that fulfil and empowers and set people up for decent jobs.

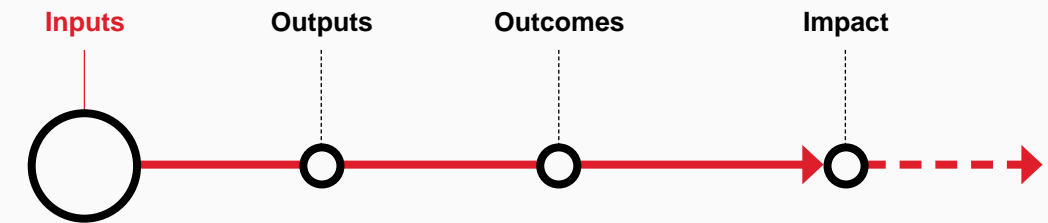
**9 Decent jobs, workforce equality and diversity**  
 This is not just about creating productive employment opportunities but also includes workforce equality to support under-represented groups, such as disabled people and people from minority ethnic communities into jobs. Not only does this help create more inclusive communities, but a recent government review also showed that more diverse companies were significantly more financially successful than their industry average which can have further impact on economic growth<sup>19</sup>. Critically the focus should be on creating lasting employment opportunities that long outlive the construction phase of a project.





# Inputs:

## Levers and activities for change



If we know the outcomes we want, and the social value assets that will help us achieve these outcomes, how do we go about creating the change? In other words, what are the inputs required?

Arup's approach sees the inputs as the levers and tools for change: what the private sector, cities, community organisations and government policy can do to ensure the right social value assets are created in every project.

These levers and tools are on a scale - some are 'bottom up', co-delivered with the communities they impact, while others focus on utilising existing powers and top-down influence that can drive the desired change. The levers can be broadly categorised into three buckets:



**Community engagement and long-term programming**



**Inclusive design and activation of spaces**



**The power of cities**





### Community engagement and long-term governance

The involvement of the community at the outset of any project or programme is key to delivering social value, not just during the project's planning and delivery, but to drive longer-term buy-in and even stewardship by local people and stakeholders after the project is complete. By working in partnership with local people, businesses, tenants and other stakeholders, the social value creation, initiated during project design and delivery, can be sustained into operation.

#### Community engagement

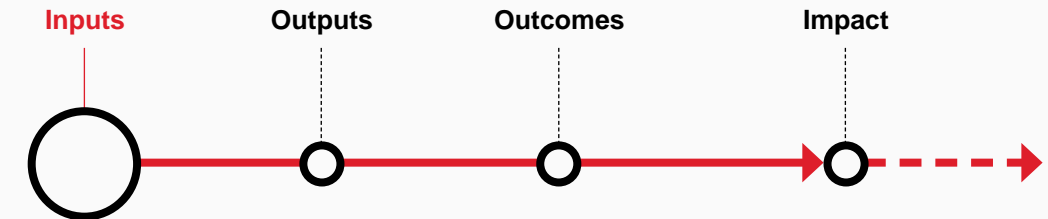
“Gold standard” community participation processes can achieve deep engagement, taking advantage of community knowledge and local expertise to shape proposals, rather than simply seeking reactions to them<sup>22</sup>. More formal mechanisms such as residents' ballots for estate redevelopment projects can act as a ‘backstop’ – ensuring high quality and meaningful engagement. Community engagement is not just a moment in time, but should be an ongoing process that needs to be supported by open and clear communication.

### Longer-term governance arrangements

Beyond project inception, planning and delivery, there are other arrangements that can be drawn up between stakeholders (e.g. government institutions, academia, developers, civil society organisations) which can ensure that each of them have a meaningful and longer-term stake in the project, and can be used to formalise responsibilities. Sometimes, social value activities, despite best intentions, can be side-lined or peter-off as a project continues. By establishing governance arrangements early on, even in an informal way, social value becomes the shared responsibility of multiple parties, and is more likely to be successfully delivered.

#### Social value delivery bodies

These panels or groups can be formed between multiple parties, including developers, infrastructure providers, local authorities and delivery parties such as skills and employment agencies or community groups and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises. By bringing together the shared ambitions of all these stakeholders, and establishing things like steering groups, regular meetings, monitoring and reporting protocols, and clear roles and responsibilities, social value has a greater chance of being created. An example of this is the social value compact at the British Library Extension, which is being convened by the developer Stanhope, and was designed by Arup.



#### Social or community pledges

These are increasingly being used by developers, and some local authorities, to build trust with local people by being transparent about their ambitions and commitments to an area or scheme. They are published and made available to local people, which can help to hold parties to account when delivering a scheme. Examples include British Land's social regeneration charter at Canada Water, the social values charter for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, and London Borough of Southwark's social regeneration charter for the Old Kent Road opportunity area.

#### Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

CLTs can acquire assets, often from public authorities at peppercorn rates. Transferring assets directly to community ownership empowers them to take charge of developing affordable housing and other community amenities such as shops or pubs. By placing ownership in the trust, changes in asset value are reinvested for the community's benefit. The governance structure of CLTs ensures that assets are perpetually dedicated to serving the community's best interests. An example is London [CLT](#), in collaboration with Lewisham Citizens, successfully delivering Citizens House—an 11-home housing project and the first of its kind in London achieved through a community land trust model<sup>23</sup>.





### Community Improvement Districts

(CIDs) provide community stakeholders with opportunities to engage in the operational and strategic decision-making within their neighbourhoods. These structures, built upon the success of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), ensure a level playing field where all local stakeholders have an equal say in the stewardship and development of their communities.<sup>24</sup>Power to Change UK is piloting varied CID structures across seven locations in England, from convening existing organisations, expanding BIDs to include community participation, and establishing independent community-led partnerships<sup>25</sup>.

### Leasing models

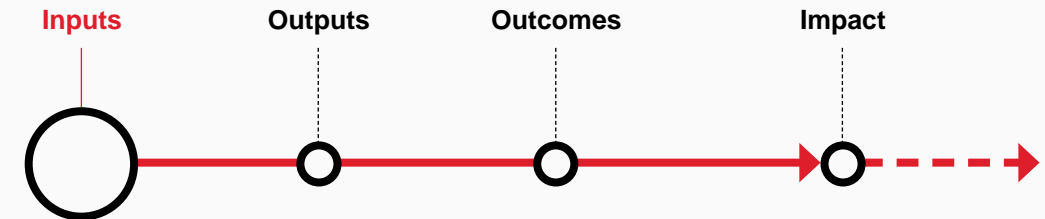
In larger developments, space can be leased on a low-cost, short-term basis to community groups and social enterprises. This brings life to sites by diversifying tenants, strengthening the 'ecosystem' of a scheme, and providing a testing ground for community start-ups<sup>26</sup>. There is also opportunity to integrate long term social value through leasing agreements, such as affordable

### Social value leases

Social value leases can help incentivise commercial activities to 'give back' to the community when gaining favourable access to public resources. For example, in Haringey, a community wealth building lease has been used to quantify social value delivered by a tenant, and then discounts this value against an agreed market rate rent. Social value leases are a natural evolution from green leases, which are clauses in leasing agreements where tenants agree to environmental sustainability interventions, and we believe social value leases will become more ubiquitous in the top end of commercial leasing. By establishing good links with local partners throughout the delivery of the project, developers can encourage tenants to continue to work with and engage in local outreach with these groups. They can ensure that the impact of social value activities delivered through planning and delivery, which can otherwise be lost, are maintained. Equally, the leases act as 'Plug and play' community outreach programmes, ready for tenants to jump into as soon as they occupy a building.

### Programmes and partnerships

Programmes and partnerships can be used to ensure the benefits of development reach local communities, in the form of economic opportunities, community, and cultural programmes running concurrently alongside the other leavers. In many cases, partnerships with local community groups and non-governmental organisations will be the most effective way to ensure community engagement and build longer-term capacity. These include:



#### *Education and skills programmes*

Have been widely adopted in major projects – they offer a structured way for local people to develop skills and find work on the project as it progresses. Training can be delivered through apprenticeships, less formal in-work training, and complemented by career advisory services.

#### *Employment programmes*

Include job brokerage schemes, which help match unemployed workers with employment opportunities. These schemes can be advantageous, particularly where they provide intense support to the most disadvantaged and take a long-term 'pipeline' view of opportunities, so that training can be put in place.

#### *Support for social enterprises*

Can also help to embed benefits locally, not only providing income for the duration of the contract, but also offering local enterprises the opportunity to grow and develop their business.

#### *Cultural programmes*

Boost quality of life in numerous ways: creating employment and opportunities for participation, connecting people with each other and with their heritage, boosting skills, and creating a focal point for civic pride<sup>27</sup>.



### Inclusive design and activation of spaces

The second set of tools promote social value in the processes through which places are designed, planned, built and adapted. If community engagement has been conducted in the right way, it should drive truly inclusive design, where the diverse needs of all members of the community are catered for in project design.

### Human-centred design

Human-centred design is attaining greater currency, as architects, planners and urban designers seek ways to put human beings at the centre of city design, where a growing majority of the global population live, while also working towards net zero.

### Inclusive and accessible design

Inclusive and accessible design is about good design for everyone. Embedding EDI principles and perspectives into design is vital for a socially and ethically sustainable project. By considering how all groups might use a space or a neighbourhood – people of all ages, genders and ethnicities; those from the LGBTQ+ community, or those who have a physical or mental impairment – you will be able to deliver tangible benefits for the whole community.

### Wellbeing-led design

The physical and social environments of urban life can contribute both positively and negatively to mental health and wellbeing. Cities are associated with higher rates of most mental health issues. Attention should be given when designing both outdoor and indoor environments to ensure user comfort

and health, which can ultimately support their motivation, cognitive capability, productivity and wellbeing. Designing for play and active mobility, as well as for better access to nature, are good ways to enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of communities.

### Place-making and place-shaping

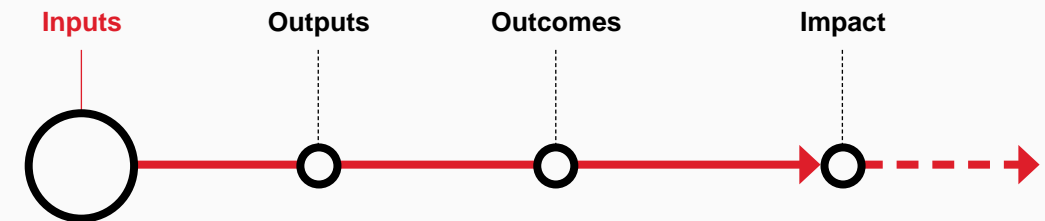
The integration of multiple layers of site systems which come together to achieve better and more equitable places which contribute to the broader social, economic and environmental resilience of the city. By combining design elements and activities, a strong sense of community can be established, founded on multiple aspects such as culture and the intrinsic quality of the landscape our built environment sets in.

### Meanwhile activation

The meanwhile use or activation of vacant space can be used to transform a site, provide local amenity, increase positive environmental impacts and deliver social value for the actors and communities involved; such spaces have also been shown to enliven areas and draw footfall during construction, and can be maintained once the project is complete, resulting in longer term economic benefits for the area.

### Transport-oriented development

This is helping transform cities, allowing citizens to live without car ownership, thereby reducing carbon impacts. Community vitality and a boost to local economies is also being achieved. Creating infrastructure that promotes active travel and public transport is good for people and the planet.



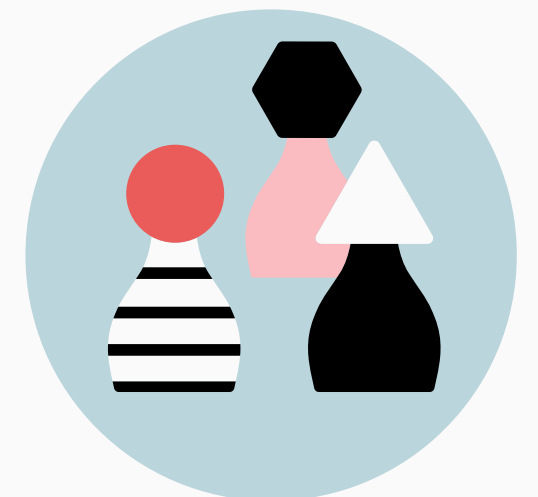
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### The power of cities

Cities now have considerable power to act as catalysts in the creation of social value. They have distinct levers that can be applied to encourage and require other parties, such as private sector companies, to create social value and meet local needs and opportunities.

### Procurement

The UK's Social Value (Public Services) Act 2012 has focused interest on the potential of public sector procurement to secure social value, and the more recent [Procurement Policy Note 06/20](#)<sup>28</sup> has set out greater ambition on social value and climate for UK central government departments, and arms-length bodies. Manchester City Council, for example, now apply a weighting of 20% to social value on all tenders with an additional 10% on environmental sustainability, significantly increasing the focus of suppliers on delivering wider benefits to support the city in tackling inequality and levelling up.

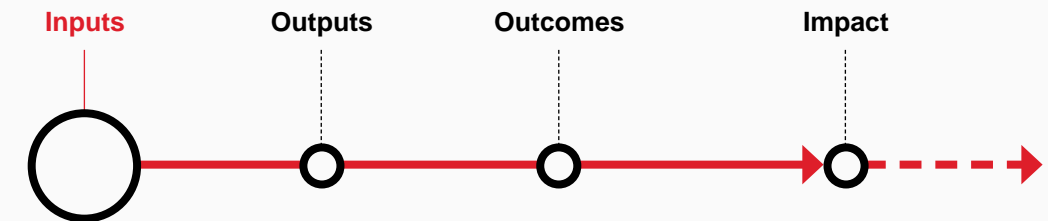
### Planning

Planning can be a force for change via mechanisms such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 contributions, affordable housing and workspace requirements, and social value policy requirements in Special Planning Documents (SPDs) and some Local Plans. Beyond statutory requirements however, local planning authorities are increasingly working in collaboration with developers to come together on issues such as social value and take a partnership-based approach to securing benefit for local people. Whilst this may be a less formal agreement, it can ensure a broader approach is taken,

enabling long-term change. Salford City Council state their ambition to deliver a Fairer Salford through the implementation of their Local Plan. In its Revised Draft Local Plan, the council state: "All major developments shall submit a Social Value Strategy at the planning application stage for the approval of the city council. A condition will be included on all relevant planning permissions to ensure the implementation of any approved Social Value Strategy, including requiring compliance with the relevant parts of the strategy to be confirmed prior to the commencement and the occupation of the development."

### Extending public decision making

Some authorities have gone further in allowing public decision-taking through participatory budgeting and resource allocation processes, ranging from grant allocations to larger-scale decision-taking on local government programmes; the [London Borough of Tower Hamlets](#)<sup>29</sup> has adopted such a model. In Thamesmead, community-led committees have been set up to take decisions on local grant funding decisions, culture programming, and art commissions.



# What does success look like?

We believe social value represents a transformative way of thinking and operating, that fundamentally changes the relationships between project stakeholders and enhances project processes. Not all the organisations and schemes delivering social value are at the same point. We can see a continuum of social value in the marketplace, spanning from evolving to mature.

There are many ways for organisations to move along on their journey towards deep social value, from:

## Short-termism to long-term change

To create a legacy of community infrastructure and social value that lasts much longer than a single project if, for example, we look at training and knowledge transfer for long-term employment opportunities rather than just jobs during construction.

## Consultation to co-production

If the dialogue with local communities starts early and continues consistently, they can play an active role in designing new places and infrastructure. Empower communities through inclusion and active engagement, rather than simply offering reactive feedback on proposals developed elsewhere.

## Siloed programmes to systemic value creation

Through standing back from the detail of projects, and considering what outcomes are needed rather than rushing to import generic programmes from elsewhere, infrastructure of social value can be built, enabling individual quality of life and a better society, building in long term resilience and sustainability.

## Measuring outputs to assessing outcomes - how people were affected

Taking a long term view can enable assessment of the real difference projects can make to peoples lives.



## Unlocking unexpected opportunities

Thinking about the potential of projects early and engaging with local communities can unlock unexpected opportunities and create long-term social value.

## Add-ons to inherent social value

Social value is best achieved when it is considered inherent to the project aims and designs, and not merely tacked-on later, as a superficial add-on.



# Applying the approach

The Arup social value theory of change approach enables us to assess the results of our interventions, not just measure whether they were delivered. But it is only a starting point; there remains huge opportunity to work collaboratively with partners to apply it in a more sophisticated way to enhance social value outcomes and build trust between critical stakeholders.

## Benefits to the theory of change approach

The potential benefits to those who adopt the theory of change approach are significant. The deeper an organisation goes in creating social value, the greater the likely benefits:

- 1 For local authorities**  
It can build public support and improve the agility of the working relationship with the community, which can boost ability and programmes, and builds trust and a sense of confidence between communities and their local authority. This in turn builds in resilience, enabling a community to withstand shocks, and reduces the need for interventions later which can be costly and more challenging for the community.
- 2 For the private sector**  
It can increase trust and relationships with communities, making it easier to address issues and pursue other goals and projects, leading to the financial benefits this can bring. It can also help create support for the project, and reduces risks of delaying project delivery (e.g. through protests or community objection) which in return reduces the risk of making a loss on the project
- 3 For all organisations**  
It can enhance reputation, increasing opportunities for new projects and investment, as well as potentially improving staff engagement, retention and performance. It helps create innovative ideas and solutions, demonstrating organisational thought leadership.

As social value is still a relatively nascent discipline, there are still challenges that require further development as our understanding evolves:

- First, if our focus is on outcomes, we must measure across a longer period than the typical development project timeline. Whilst this can be a greater challenge than measuring the outputs of what is delivered in the short term, the insights from measuring outcomes or impacts are far more insightful. Linked to this, is the challenge of attribution; whilst we understand the links between outputs and outcomes anecdotally, it is often difficult to determine these links robustly, and even more so being able to attribute an impact directly to a specific project or intervention.
- Secondly, the basis of how to create meaningful social value is largely down to insights from local people, gathered through engagement and co-design. However, these practices can be exclusionary, with the hard-to-reach, busy or disillusioned communities being left out of those conversations.
- Finally, we must investigate, and set out clearly, how social value responsibilities are shared amongst stakeholders. How can local authorities and developers share responsibilities around, for example, skills and employment? How can a developer work with tenants to bring them on board to take over on social value delivery?

These are some of the key questions and issues that we are eager to answer with our partners. We must bring together our experience and ideas to innovate and move this discipline forward, to ultimately improve the social outcomes we are all committed to delivering.

Arup is excited to collaborate with clients, third sector and academia to better understand cause and effect correlations. By developing more sophisticated systems of measurement, we can better support the case for more ambitious and, perhaps, equitable social value creation. Some of these measurements may take many years to complete. There are also tensions to unravel and understand. *Will national public policies be at odds with local quality of life outcomes? How can we overcome economic barriers and continue to bring social value to the communities that most need it? How can we continue to work with our social value levers to ensure lasting social value is created?*

There are no limits to how much social value can be delivered. Our theory of change approach will continue to innovate and evolve. Coupled with the right skills, aptitude and the human will to deliver it, it can help transform communities, putting people and their needs at the centre of urban development and creating a lasting legacy for towns and cities.



# British Library Extension

Case Studies



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# British Library Extension

## Case Studies

### Social value Brokerage for the British Library Extension, SBML Developments

The British Library is more than just a national knowledge and research institution; it sits at the heart of London's Knowledge Quarter, within proximity to major science and research institutions around St Pancras, and the new Crossrail HS2 development in Kings Cross. Moreover, it is located adjacent to the diverse communities in the Somers Town area.

The extension of the library represents an unparalleled opportunity to achieve a development of international significance and far-reaching impact on education, commerce, and tourism, alongside extensive local benefits. The client, SBML, along with stakeholders including Camden Council, TfL, and the British Library, recognised the opportunity to build on the institution's legacy as a space for all, through the creation of high-quality public spaces, a new library, exhibition spaces, and commercial space for business and research.

The client and stakeholders were keen to leverage the extension as a force for further integrating the library into its wider surroundings and breaking down barriers by improving accessibility. They wanted to capture a clear image of the overall social impact that the extension would have on the people living in Somers Town and in the wider Camden Borough.

Arup's Social Value team was brought in as part of multi-disciplinary design service being provided to SBML on the British Library Extension project.

The team led a programme of engagement with the client, design team members and local cross-sector partners to capture existing social, economic and environmental commitments and identify opportunities for additional delivery. An extensive local needs analysis was also conducted to better understand the gaps and priorities in the project's impact area. The findings from these activities were coordinated to develop a comprehensive social value framework that met the community's socio-economic needs and could be delivered across the design, construction, and occupation of the new space.

The social value framework not only captured the various education activities, training, outreach, and human-centred design considerations that were being developed alongside the extension, but sought to quantify, and in some cases monetise, their outcomes.

Arup and SBML also created a new and innovative mechanism known as a Social Value Compact. This compact set out clear governance for co-delivering these social value activities by occupiers of the library's commercial space. Future occupiers are also expected to opt into the Compact and would be encouraged to actively deliver and support its objectives.

Arup's work provided the client and stakeholders with a clear understanding of the social impact of the once-in-a-generation transformation, identifying £27.2m of social value generation during construction and first three years of occupation.

SBML Developments has since achieved outline planning permission for the library extension. This success can be attributed in no small part to the clear strategy and realistic delivery plan for social value that the framework and Compact provided.



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# Thamesmead Evaluation

Case Studies





# Thamesmead Evaluation

## Case Studies

### Long term evaluation of impacts in Thamesmead, Peabody

On behalf of Peabody, Arup and The Social Innovation Partnership are currently undertaking a five-year programme of evaluation, measuring the impact of regeneration in the Thamesmead estate, in south-east London.

Thamesmead has undergone many transformations over the years. Built on a former marshland, the area was redesigned in the 1960s to include modernist designs – elevated homes and high-level walkways – which were eventually replaced by traditional blocks of flats and walkways which had become littered and abused. Peabody took over the site in 2014, now owning 50% of the land and one third of the housing.

Thamesmead is a unique site in Peabody's portfolio due to its scale and history. The population of the area is expected to double over the next 30 years. Peabody are investing significantly in building and upgrading homes as well as community programmes, skills, and employment initiatives.

Peabody have a 30-year regeneration plan for Thamesmead and have commissioned Arup with the unique mission of demonstrating the impact they are having through robust evaluation, drawing out lessons for their next cycle of investments.

The evaluation covers five areas: lived experience; growth and regeneration; landscape; culture; and community. It is hoped that over the initial 5-year commission, Peabody will build the evaluation capacity to be able to ensure that they are going the best that they can for the local residents, take learnings

from their investments in Thamesmead and apply these to the rest of their portfolio.

The experimental nature of the commission has enabled Arup to develop a creative methodology which puts community engagement at the heart of the evaluation. From the outset, creating a strong evaluation framework which examines indicators across the five goals areas was essential to building a baseline to examine what has changed and how. This framework has allowed for the evaluation and measurement of the impact of what has changed and the process by which things have happened.

In the scoping stage of the project Arup designed a wide range of annual primary research and engagement with residents and local organisations, including individual interviews, group workshops, designing a community-wide survey, organising resident focus groups. The research is designed to provide information on a wide range of socio-economic and placemaking indicators, from perceptions of the living experience in Thamesmead through participation in cultural activities to engagement in and perceptions of the regeneration process.

Flexibility is a key component to this evaluation. Having built the framework, the evaluation would vary from year to year. Building on the findings from previous evaluations, there was an opportunity to explore different themes and topics, building on research questions.

Recognising the importance of engaging with people who live in and know the area, Arup and Peabody have been working with Thamesmead-based community researchers. They have been trained in evaluation and primary research and every year an evaluation report is produced to be used by Peabody to adjust the Plan and shape their activities in upcoming year and maximise positive social impacts.

Community researchers have also actively attended meetings and presented key findings back to Peabody leadership. Enabling the community researchers to articulate the findings directly to leadership has given them the opportunity to expand their influence in not just Thamesmead, but across the Peabody portfolio.

Beyond evaluating and reporting on the plan, Arup also provide Peabody with recommendations on key actions that could be taken. As part of the flexible structure of the framework, this type of feedback provides further inputs. For example, the research found there was confusion around the communications in Thamesmead where past attempts to share newsletters and social media had not been that successful. To rectify this, Peabody now circulate newsletter to every household in Thamesmead to ensure there is no disparity between different types of tenants.





# Birmingham Commonwealth Games

Case Studies





# Birmingham Commonwealth Games

Case Studies

## Social Value Charter, Birmingham Commonwealth Games

Following a late withdrawal by the original hosts selected to hold the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Birmingham was successfully selected as a replacement in 2018. At a deficit of 2.5 years planning time compared to the normal 6.5-year preparatory allocation, the Birmingham City Council faced significant challenge to condense planning for the games into a 4-year window.

The client was required to quickly unify and mobilise a range of teams, stakeholders, organisations, and disciplines, all coordinated under a common vision to deliver the most successful games yet and to put Birmingham on the map.

Already subject to a reduced delivery timeframe, the world was hit by the COVID-19 Pandemic which led to heavy measures of enforcement by the Government, altering the way in which the organising committee could deliver the games and adding challenge surrounding procurement constraints.

The client's vision to overcome obstacles and deliver a successful games progressed, providing a key aspiration towards bringing communities together and building a relationship with the city. Added efforts were tailored towards the delivery social value and collaborating within local communities in the city to give back and get everyone involved.

The Social Value Charter was set up as a commitment to be delivered through the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility framework to identify, and embed, opportunities for social, environmental, and local economic engagements in Birmingham. The aim was to maximise the social value created within the local community during the Commonwealth Games City Readiness project contract period.

A small team of Arup staff working on the Commonwealth Games were mobilised to lead the delivery and completion of 12 Social value Commitments. Arup staff within the wider programme team were then called up on to volunteer and support the delivery of commitments through targeted efforts to provide social value in Birmingham. A few of the key commitments included:

- Supporting young people in the most deprived wards of Birmingham to deliver Careers Fairs, STEM talks, Apprenticeship talks, CV support and Interview support workshops for students.
- Providing both 1-week work placement opportunities to school students and 10-week work placement opportunities for university undergraduate students in the Arup Solihull Campus during the City Readiness contract period.
- Providing 4 days of business support to local SME's and VCSE's.

Overall, the Birmingham City Council were able to deliver the most successful Commonwealth Games ever, both on time and under budget despite all the constraints faced which firmly put Birmingham on the map and enhanced the reputation of the Birmingham City Council with partners. From a Social value perspective, Arup delivered more than 600 hours of FTE time to generate £348k of social value to Birmingham through the delivery of the 12 key commitments; 20% more than was promised to the Birmingham City Council. A few key statistics have been recorded below:

- £348k of social value delivered - 20% more Social value than the original financial proxy of £288k agreed with the Birmingham City Council.

- 363 hours of school support was delivered to young people in Birmingham, 24% more than the agreed hours with the Birmingham City Council.
- 1 year long industrial placement student provided, 4 undergraduate students provided with 10-week work placements and 35 school students provided with a 1-week work placement all advertised through the Birmingham City Councils Jobs and Skills team.
- 4 days of business support provided to local SME's and VCSE's via an Arup Hub in the Birmingham City Centre to discuss topics such as: creating meaningful legacies, challenges surrounding decarbonisation and resilience, and creating inclusive and thriving cities.





# Walsden Social Value Strategy

Case Studies



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# Walsden Social Value Strategy

## Case Studies

### Walsden Social Value Strategy, Environment Agency

As a public body the Environment Agency (EA) have a responsibility to the UK taxpayer. Delivering social value in the communities in which they work is a key opportunity for the EA to provide value for money. The EA recognise that identifying, communicating, and delivering social value can help secure community buy in for Walsden Flood Alleviation Scheme and reduce risk. There are also potential funding opportunities that can be unlocked by clearly articulating the social value of flood alleviation works.

Arup was commissioned by the EA to conduct a Local Needs Analysis (LNA) for the proposed Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) in Walsden, West Yorkshire. The LNA included a desk review of local policies and strategies and extensive analysis of local socio-economic data gathered from the Census, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and other national data sources. After the desk-based review was complete, Arup held several stakeholder engagement sessions with Todmorden Town Council to gather local insight and feed into the LNA. The LNA identified five local social value priorities for Walsden:

- Inclusive economic growth
- Educational attainment
- Diversity
- Health and wellbeing of residents
- Access to green space

The social value priorities were included as assessment criteria in long-list and short-list design optioneering completed during the development of the FAS Strategic Outline Business Case. The priorities were also used to develop a social value outreach plan for the construction and operational phases of the scheme.

The LNA provided valuable community insight and a local evidence base for the design team. It helped them to:

- Understand the social and economic needs of the local community in Walsden.
- Ensure the FAS delivers maximum social value to the local community by embedding local social value priorities into the scheme design.

The LNA also had several benefits for the EA. It helped them to:

- Identify potential social value outreach activities that can be delivered during the construction and operation of the scheme.
- Clearly articulate the value of the scheme to the local community and secure community buy-in for the FAS.
- Open up conversations about potential partnership funding opportunities.





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