

23 October 2023

County Durham Pound Project Update

Darren Knowd, Head of Procurement, Sales and Business Services

Electoral division(s) affected:
Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) on the progress of the County Durham Pound project which was initiated following CMT approval of the Social Value and Wealth Building Report on 30 September 2020, reported to Cabinet on 13 January 2021 and the launch event taking place 29 September 2022. A previous update report was shared with COSMB on 24 October 2022, sharing the success of the launch event.

Executive Summary

- 2 On 30 September 2020, CMT considered a report on Social Value and Wealth Building. This report set out a proposal to improve the social value and local wealth building outcomes for the community in support of the Council Plan and the response to the COVID-19 outbreak via restoration and recovery objectives. The proposal included 10 initiatives to enable the Council and its local partners to support the reports objectives.
- 3 One of the initiatives was the use of a County Durham Partnership to establish a 'County Durham Family' procurement network to improve place-based procurement and local spending, collaborative sourcing and social value impact.
- 4 To help facilitate this initiative the Head of Procurement, Sales and Business services put forward a bid to obtain funding from the Contain Management Outbreak Fund (COMF) in relation to Social Value and Local Wealth Development in County Durham, designated the 'County Durham Pound'

project. The bid was successful and resulted in £260K of funding being awarded.

- 5 The funding was integral in providing the support and infrastructure necessary to initiate the County Durham Pound project in relation to the following critical elements:
 - (a) Professional services in relation to spend analysis across all partners
 - (b) Professional services to enhance knowledge and expertise in relation to social value, training/delivery of social value via procurement exercises and local needs analysis across County Durham.
 - (c) Appointment of collaborative resource to support all aspects of the programme
 - (d) Communications and marketing to promote the County Durham Pound programme
- 6 The funding opportunity and then subsequent funding availability was outlined to partners in a series of overarching County Durham Pound meetings. The first meeting in January 2021, set the scene with the next meeting in May 2021 allowing presentations from professional services partners, Social Value Portal (SVP) and Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), with the programme then gathering pace as we moved from theory to practical implementation of the project. The Council has also held 1-2-1 meetings with partners to facilitate and encourage engagement and address any areas of concern.
- 7 The County Council has also been careful, however, to ensure that this is not seen as a Council led programme but a collective collaboration between willing partners for the benefit of the residents of County Durham. Partners have been increasingly engaged and are now active participants and leaders in the project and meetings as collaboration intensifies.
- 8 The current project partners includes public sector organisations plus Northumbria Water, however over the year three organisations have left the Project; Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust, Karbon Homes and Bernicia Homes.
- 9 On 29 September 2022 a formal launch event was held at the Radisson, Durham outlining a achievements and further engaging the Durham business community through a meet-the-buyer event. The success of the event and support from COSMB gave the project confidence to move into year/phase 2.
- 10 The County Durham Pound Project moved into phase two with the aims of embedding the social value processes developed including launching the new County Durham TOMs model and developing a longer term programme of activities targeting the business community with Business Durham at the forefront to lead. The following outcomes have been delivered:

- (e) The County Durham Pound TOMs model is now operational within all partners. Initially phase 2 focussed on self-assessment of each partner organisations own social value delivery to evidence the value we bring to the Durham community.
 - (f) The assessment of partners social value delivery using the Measures within the TOMs model resulted in a independently assessed and validated (by the Social Value Portal) social local economic value of over 305m.
 - (g) The partners further embedded a range of training programmes for the local business community held through webinars. Notably many sessions were led by other partners.
 - (h) The partners learning and education greatly improved in this space, allowing Officers to return to their organisations to implement permanent changes within their procurement practices, reflective of the objectives of the Project.
 - (i) The partners worked collectively on a number of projects including Burnhope Primary School Garden, supporting the Beyond the Kitchen programme in Primary Schools and delivery of the Villa Real Mini-bus resulting in collobaritive social value promotional videos.
 - (j) We have been asked to present our work to a number of different organisations, including presenting at a number of national conferences including, the National Social Value Conference, Essex Anchor Network, NEXTGen Event Newcastle, iNetwork Manchester and a number of Local Government Authority Webinars.
 - (k) All of the above resulted earlier this year in the Project being awarded the National Social Value Award for the Best Public Sector Project with a unanimous vote from the judging panel.
 - (l) Work has been ongoing in the background on the County Durham Pound Charter which is ready to be launched in 2024.
- 11 In the second half of phase 2, we are working to launch the County Durham Pound 'Charter' which allows the private and third sector engagement in the project, allowing us to expand the reach and delivery of our social value impact. We will then consider whether resource is available to move the project into a third year and a phase 3 of delivery which will take the project to 31 March 2025.

Recommendations

- 12 COSMB is asked to:
- (a) note the success to this point of the County Durham Project culminating in the achievement of the National Social Value Award;

- (b) support the next phase of the Project and procurement activities outlined to enhance the desired project outcomes;

Background

- 13 On 30 September CMT approved the Social Value and Wealth Building Report. The report set out a proposal to improve the social value and local wealth building outcomes for the community in support of the Council Plan and the response to the COVID-19 outbreak via restoration and recovery objectives. The proposal included 10 initiatives to enable the Council and its local partners to support the reports objectives.
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- 18 The County Council has also been careful, however, to ensure that this is not seen as a Council led programme but a collective collaboration between willing partners for the benefit of the residents of County Durham.
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Outcomes and Deliverables

20 The following outcomes have been delivered (as part of the implementation of the project) and embedded within the project structure and governance.

Statement of Intent

21 A Statement of Intent has been drafted and agreed ready for signature by relevant senior management across the 9 partners to commit formally to the social value work we are collectively engaged in. This is a major step in endorsing the work and approach of the County Durham Pound and is underpinned by the following 6 commitments:



Collaborate proactively

We will share ideas and learn from each other's experience and best practice in social value



Embed relevant processes

We will develop suitable processes to ensure high quality delivery and to meet the project's objectives



Involve and empower stakeholders

We will hear the concerns and ideas of community members and other stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors



Respond to local needs

We will ensure that our social value activities address local needs and priorities wherever possible



Be transparent and accountable

We will share what we intend to do and why, plus how we are progressing, so you can hold us accountable



Track, report, learn and improve

We will track and report what we are all doing using a consistent framework so that we can drive continuous improvement

Local Needs Analysis

22 Social value is maximised when activities and initiatives are directed towards addressing local needs and priorities. Therefore, in March 2022, SVP, as part of their brief, conducted a Local Needs Analysis in conjunction with Durham County Council using data from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and other public data sets. This data was mapped to show the areas of severe, high, mild, and low deprivation across County Durham.

23 The County Durham Pound project recognises the different business strengths and objectives of each partner and respects their autonomy in choosing geographical areas and themes to focus on for their social value contributions. As outlined later in the report the Local Needs Analysis was fundamental in identifying key areas of social value criteria for inclusion in

the procurement process via the County Durham Family 'Themes Outcomes and Measures' (TOMS) toolkit.

Overarching Social Value Strategy

- 24 An overarching Social Value Strategy for County Durham Pound has been developed to act as a tool to communicate what all the partners are seeking to do via the project and how.
- 25 The strategy introduces the collective partners, maps out the strategy, and provides practical mechanisms to support the delivery of this place-based project. It contains guidance on how partners can maximise social value through various processes, provides examples of good practice and how to measure and report on social value through the County Durham Family Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) toolkit. An overview of TOMS is provided later in this report.
- 26 The strategy is an integral constituent of the project as it provides the framework and parameters under which partners will operate and the collective approach which is so important in maintaining our County Durham Family going forward.

Social Value Coordinator

- 27 A locally based Social Value Coordinator has been appointed. The coordinator has been employed by SVP but is based in the Council's procurement team to provide a collaborative resource across the project. Initially funded until March 2024, the Council's procurement team have further funded this support position until March 2025.

County Durham Family 'Themes Outcomes and Measures' toolkit

- 28 In partnership with the National Social Value Taskforce (chaired by Darren Knowd, Head of Procurement, Sales and Business Services), SVP developed the National Social Value Measurement Framework—known as the 'National TOMs' as it was built around a set of Themes, Outcomes, and Measures.
- 29 The National TOMs Framework provides a common language for measuring social value that enables consistency, comparability, and transparency. Endorsed by the Local Government Association, the Framework has been widely adopted across both public and private sectors including Durham County Council within its procurement processes.
- 30 This project required its own set of TOMs and using the National TOMs framework, the County Durham Family TOMs have been built. County Durham Family TOMs were selected as meaningful to the county by aligning them to the findings of the Local Needs Analysis, CLES analysis and the local knowledge and visions of the partners. They needed to be deliverable within the capacity of the partner organisations and proportionate to their underlying business activity.

- 31 The following activities have taken place or are due to take place in relation to the County Durham Family TOMs:
- (q) User training on the TOMs for each of the partners
 - (r) Such TOMs training can then be utilised to include TOMs within partners procurement exercises where organisationally agreed
 - (s) Each partner has been provided with access to and training for the use of the actual Social Value Portal electronic system. An individual account has been set up for each partner to record their own organisational progress against the County Durham Family TOMs
 - (t) Following the training, the Social Value Coordinator will be on hand to support partners with their reporting. Each partner will be requested to report monthly, with a minimum requirement of quarterly, to facilitate a progress report being published for the collective project every quarter.

Knowledge Hub

- 32 The project has now developed a Knowledge Hub website to keep the people of County Durham informed of the project's progress and create a space for them to send us their ideas and feedback. Going forward partners are determined the Knowledge Hub remains vibrant and dynamic with case studies outlining the progress of the County Durham Pound and the initiatives that will bring value to our communities.
- 33 Currently the Knowledge Hub contains:
- (u) An overview of each of the partners involved
 - (v) Our collective commitment and objectives in working together for the benefit of County Durham
 - (w) The Statement of Commitment as outlined earlier in the report, signed by all partners
 - (x) Case studies from partner organisations outlining their delivery of social value across the County
 - (y) An outline of the County Durham TOMs and training videos explaining how the TOMs are applied in practice
 - (z) Social Value guidance for those organisations bidding for contracts and tenders that include social value requirements
 - (aa) Contact details to allow the sharing of ideas and case studies or to become a supporter of the County Durham Pound project

- 34 A link to the Knowledge Hub is provided to allow an exploration of the current information held [County Durham Pound – Social Value Knowledge Hub](#)

Internal Awareness and Coordination Across Durham County Council

- 35 Given the size and scale of the County Council itself, it is critical that the organisation is aware of the work being carried out via the County Durham Pound Project.
- 36 The Council's procurement team have therefore engaged across the following areas:
- (bb) Inclusive Economic Strategy – regular engagement has taken place between officers involved in both projects to ensure synergy across the work being undertaken. Procurement will now be attending future Economic Inclusion meetings. This engagement has led to the potential of the NHS now joining the County Durham Pound project.
 - (cc) Community Wealth Building – the procurement team work closely with colleagues within the group ensuring sharing of information to support the objectives. Although operating on different strands the work of the County Durham Pound is becoming increasingly cross-cutting through the working groups objectives.
 - (dd) The new build of Belmont Primary School has provided the opportunity to outline the Council's social value approach, including the County Durham Pound Project, with the Council's Principle Project Management Office and the Area Action Partnership.
 - (ee) Poverty Action Group (Workplaces Project) – the Councils procurement team are engaged and supporting of the working group. This aligns with initiatives being developed via the County Durham Pound Project and activities will be coordinated going forward.
 - (ff) Climate Emergency Response Plan / Ecological Emergency Response Plan – the Council's procurement team are active in both areas of the key Council Plans and starting to bring this to the attention of the County Durham Pound Partners.
- 37 In addition the Council continues to engage and work closely with key teams of the Council, including Durham Enable, DurhamWorks, Durham Pathways and colleagues in the Community Enterprise Team (Armed Forces for example) to ensure a joined up approach through a range of partners and activities.

Promotion and Celebration of the County Durham Pound Project

- 38 A series of promotional videos by 3Point Media, a locally based provider, have or are in the process of being developed which will highlight social value delivery including collaborative projects involving collective engagement between partners. Such videos include:
- (gg) An overview of 200 hours of social value delivered by the Council's Digital Service's team following a successful tender exercise by the team at Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
 - (hh) Construction video has been produced which highlights the delivery of social value by the Council's supply chain, Chapter Homes and the Council itself.
 - (ii) Wingate Primary School – a collaborative project, via the County Durham Pound Project, between Believe Housing and Durham County Council to deliver a community garden at the school (being finalised).
 - (jj) Villa Real Bus Video – a project led by Durham County Council which highlights the possibility of collaborative social value contributions.
 - (kk) The Launch Video & the End of Year One Success Video
- 39 The members of the Project continue to promote the County Durham Project brand online using hashtags and specific online posts which generate thousands of views and in most cases dozens of comments of support.
- 40 To ensure the continued progression of the County Durham Pound Project quarterly meetings of the County Durham Pound Working Group have been set up with representation by partners to ensure we meet the projects outcomes and deliverables.
- 41 A Communications and Marketing Strategy has also been developed with support from the Council's Marketing and Communication Team. A key set of principles is now embedded across the team which is led by the Council.

Conclusion

- 42 The work to date has created an infrastructure around the project which has allowed the organisations involved to enhance the social value delivery within their own organisations. All organisations have provided positive feedback of their involvement in the Project, some of which had never considered social value as a procurement concept previously.
- 43 Although three organisations have left the Project the current attendance and appetite from remaining members is strong. The well attended quarterly meetings, events held and projects undertaken are testament to the drive of colleagues involved.
- 47 Having implemented all of the governance, obtaining Senior Leadership buy-in and generating the tools to embed social value, phase one focussed on the assessment of our own organisation in delivering social value. An

independently validated 305m of social, local, economic value of that assessment demonstrates the power of the collective and this group.

- 48 Phase two involves the partners continuing to measure the organisational delivered social value however the launch of the County Durham Pound Charter will engage the private and third sector to explore their social value impact on the Durham Community.

Background papers

- 31 January 2021 Social Value and Wealth Building Cabinet Paper
- 14 September 2022 County Durham Pound Project Update Cabinet Paper
- 23 October 2022 COSMB Update Report

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Current compliance with the Social Value Act 2012 and future compliance with the Procurement Bill 2023 considered in this approach.

Finance

Social Value delivery is additionality to the main contract delivery and is of no extra cost to contract budget holders. Future funding post March 2025 may be an issue to the project continuing.

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with Members (previous COSMB) and regular briefings to Members have been made on progress to date. All positively received.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

Environmental and sustainability considerations are addressed within the TOMs outlined in the report which have been formulated in conjunction with the Low Carbon Team and expanded to now include the Ecological Team.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Procurement resource will be utilised to support ongoing and future social value delivery until March 2025 with a Social Value Coordinator appointed to support the County Durham Pound Project as outlined in the report.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Social Value assessment criteria is managed with the procurement process risk profile.

Procurement

Current compliance with the Social Value Act 2012 and future compliance with the Procurement Bill 2023 will be addressed via the County Durham Pound Project and the Council's own ongoing social value activities.
