

Communities count – *the four steps to unlocking social value*

Social value is about identifying and making the most of public and other spending so that people, their communities and society feel the maximum benefit of that investment. For Britain's future, it is increasingly important to promote economic growth alongside social wellbeing and minimising environmental damage.

Housing associations and local authorities are well positioned to create this future. With billions of investment in new homes and a growing need to transform services, there is a significant opportunity to create social value: more jobs, stronger local economies, healthier residents and vibrant communities.

We wanted to find out if the Social Value Act has made a difference to seizing that opportunity, and how every public body can truly build social value into their organisation. To that end, we interviewed 77 local authorities and 123 housing associations – the most comprehensive survey to date into how they are seeking to create social value.

The report aims to provide clear ways to meet this challenge by indicating: key **steps** to follow, **findings** to support and inform, and practical **recommendations** to action.

We have concluded that there are **four steps to unlocking social value**:



1) Define the vision

Organisations who are best placed to achieve social value have a clarity

Key findings: trends and insights

1) Social value can deliver cost savings – and better services. More than half of respondents (52%) said delivering social value leads to cost savings, and more than two-thirds said it led to 'better service delivery' (71%) and 'opportunities for innovation' (70%).

2) Social value improves external relationships. 82% of those surveyed reported that delivering social value had led to an 'improved image of their organisation', while 78% said it had led to 'better community relations'.

3) Only a third of organisations are not considering social value across all services. 66% of organisations currently consider social value across *all* the services they procure.

4) Social value leadership is crucial. Two thirds of respondents said their organisations have a nominated lead for social value: these organisations face fewer challenges in delivering and measuring social value.

5) The Social Value Act has had limited impact so far. The Act has created step-changes in how some

organisations consider social value: but only 39% said it has had a high impact.

6) Current priorities are employment and job-creation. 80% of respondents stated employment as a key local social value priority.

7) Social enterprise is a route to social value. 90% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied that social enterprise was a route to delivering social value.

8) Measurement is the biggest challenge.