

Southwark Procurement Commission - GoodPeople recommendations

1. How can social value provisions in council procurement processes, or planning requirements (e.g. s106), support improved employment opportunities for local people?

Improving access to good work for local residents remains one of the most effective means of investing in local communities and increasing social mobility. Effective approaches to realising social value focus on creating circular economies within a local authority area - encouraging all stakeholders to invest and support local people, communities, and organisations wherever possible. LB Southwark are rightly seen as a council with a good track record in supporting local people into good work through doing just this, but there are opportunities to push this even further, in collaboration with existing local actors.

The three primary levers for achieving this within the influence of a local authority are

- planning-related requirements such as Section 106 agreements,
- social value-driven commissioning and procurement practices, and
- collaborating with the borough's anchor institutions (including the Council itself as an employer) to enable engagement and employment of local residents.

With a significant number of newly unemployed residents, these levers represent a significant opportunity to support local communities with a progressive approach to employment and skills.

Section 106 agreements - Section 106 agreements represent an opportunity to work collaboratively with developers to ensure their contributions to the local area support residents into fulfilling and gainful work. There is opportunity to expand the boundaries of this work beyond just construction roles, and beyond only unemployed residents - but also those in insecure or low-skill roles, or supporting young people into the world of work during a particularly volatile and uncertain period. There is also an opportunity to use other forms of strategic intervention in order to support residents. By working to involve Southwark's employers interested in supporting local people, it is possible to unlock powerful forms of employer-supported career advice, work experience opportunities, peer to peer support and mentoring, and training and development programmes. GoodPeople's work with employers in the South Bank, in partnership with the South Bank Business Improvement District, demonstrated a clear desire by employers to engage, support and employ more local residents in this way.

Social Value Commissioning - Procurement represents an opportunity to incentivise and encourage council commissioned services to be investing in talented local people for work within the borough. This has been successfully deployed by other councils elsewhere - Preston's approach to social value, for instance, has its first objective as *"promoting training and employment opportunities for the people of Lancashire"*, and counts the aim of building fair employment and just labour markets as one of their 5 pillars of Community Wealth Building. They have found that *"as large employers, the approach that anchor institutions take to employment can have a defining impact on the prospects and incomes of local people."*¹

Anchor Institutions as Key Employers - A key facet of the successful 'Preston' model, was the effective use of local anchor institutions as supporters and employers.² Public sector organisations such as local NHS Trusts, higher education institutions, housing associations and the council itself together employ a significant number of people - and have a vested interest in supporting the life chances of local people. Collaboration between these groups to help create a pipeline of local talent

¹ [How we built community wealth in Preston](#)

² [Community Wealth Building: harnessing the potential of anchor institutions in Preston](#)

to recruit from has been successfully deployed in other local authority areas and represents a huge opportunity in Southwark.

2. Can you give examples of the type of work that can be done – in Southwark or beyond – to improve local employment opportunities via procurement processes (e.g. social value requirements) or planning processes?

There are both Section 106 projects and employment support programmes already underway with key stakeholders in Southwark - that could be supported and scaled as part of the committee's findings and recommendations.

Section 106 - St Thomas Street East: The St Thomas Street East development is a collaboration between four developers (CIT, Greystar, Sellar and Edge). Each developer is currently moving through the planning process, and have signalled their desire to work together to deliver a more coherent, innovative and impactful approach to employment and skills as part of their Section 106 contribution. In particular, there is a stated desire to have a positive impact on residents across Southwark - not only in construction and end use roles, employment support and engagement more widely. GoodPeople have been selected as the preferred delivery partner for this project, and will be working with the Southwark development team over the coming weeks to collaboratively shape this offer.

A local talent pool for Southwark anchor institutions: GoodPeople have been funded by Guy's and St Thomas' Charity to look at the challenges faced by jobseekers in Lambeth and Southwark, as well as the barriers preventing employers in the area (particularly anchor institutions) from supporting and hiring more local residents. In addition, the project focuses on working with anchor institutions to identify areas for scalable pilots - where there is a clear commitment and demand for local residents, and then building a talent pool of Southwark residents to meet that demand. If LB Southwark can work with GoodPeople and Guy's and St Thomas' to identify a selection of roles that could be opened up to local people (for instance an upcoming procurement contract, commissioned service or a significant skills gap Southwark need to fill), this project can be used to build the local talent pipeline to match them with need.

3. Are there major barriers to using procurement or planning processes to improve employment opportunities for local people? How can these be addressed if so?

One of the key challenges in building local employment targets into social value commissioning - is having access to the widest possible pool of talented relevant local candidates to match with these opportunities.

It's realistic and appropriate to encourage employers to hire from the local community, provided hiring of the local workforce is made simple and easy. Without a means of connecting with Southwark talent at scale, large and small employers alike will struggle to be able to satisfy these new criteria - due to limited options to recruit Southwark residents - apart from those that are unemployed.

Whilst supporting Southwark's unemployed jobseekers into work need to remain a key focus, employers demand can be met by other groups, eg young people transitioning into work, those in lower skilled roles, or indeed residents suffering from the effects of in-work poverty thanks to insecure or uncertain work. A broader definition of those who can benefit - beyond solely unemployed residents offers an opportunity to support all Southwark residents, and offers additional benefits for employers.

As mentioned above, one way of addressing both of these challenges is to build a shared job advertising and 'talent pool' platform - that brings together a broad range of Southwark jobseekers in one place. This talent pool would be easily accessible by employers as well as make it easier for

brokerages such as Southwark Works to connect talent to a wider range of opportunities, and the use of a digital platform would allow outcomes to be tracked far more easily. This tech already exists, and our project with Guy's and St Thomas' Charity is focused on rolling it out in the Lambeth and Southwark area.

4. Could you clarify how any of the above differs from or complements existing Southwark Council initiatives such as Southwark Works and apprenticeship requirements?

The Southwark Works model of connecting and matching unemployed jobseekers with opportunities in the area is an effective one. But as unemployment spikes as a result of COVID-19 (the unemployment rate is already estimated to be higher than the peak during the 2009 recession³), support is needed to bolster and augment services like this, to help and prepare residents for the future and connect them with opportunities at scale. Southwark Works could therefore use the type of service solution and platform already identified as a way of connecting their referred clients to local opportunities, easily, reliably and for free.

³ <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/coronavirus-impact-on-labour-market-ies/>