

# **Step Places**

# **Social Value Policy**

**Policy Owner:** Step Places Executive Management Team  
**Approved By:** Harinder Dhaliwal, Managing Director  
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## Social Value/Social Impact

First Step Group trading as Step Places, fully align with the government's National Social Value standard (SVS) and its HM Green Book aligned proxy values. This enables us to maximise the qualitative/quantifiable delivery benefits/outcomes of our developments, clearly communicating results to the local stakeholder community.

We seek to ensure that the social value created through the investment of our developments are longstanding and:

- Improve the quality of lives of the people who live in the locality;
- Generate meaningful social, environmental, and economic benefits.

We believe that social value is not simply a measurement of monetary value but through a qualitative placemaking approach, that, as an organisation, we offer a wider impact of programmes/interventions that positively impact the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital and the environment.

## What Clients are Looking For

Developing our Social Value Plan principles, we will structure our response around the permanent outputs and benefits that we will deliver as a consequence of any development. We will present a detailed, specific action plan based on a local needs analysis and on the Clients nominated Social Value assessment tool. In doing so we will calculate and present quantifiable KPI's that:

- Offer tangible, quantifiable outcomes.
- Are proportionate proposals.
- Offer qualitative, measurable results.
- Are Locally delivered and have a local impact.
- Are realistic plans.
- Offer a range of delivery partners.
- Have evidence of resource support.
- Are transparent and feasible.

## How We Deliver

From a practical perspective our approach will examine opportunities around:

### Design and Environmental Benefits.

Our demonstrable delivery of high-quality sustainable buildings promotes measurable health & wellbeing benefits, setting a benchmark precedent for future development opportunities. We believe that by enjoying the spaces we live in, creates a more inclusive and liveable environment, thereby promoting a residents physical and mental wellbeing. Some of the social value outputs residents will benefit from include:

- **Tackling Financial Exclusion** – maximising the opportunity to build our dwellings so that they can be let at a **social rent** - which is approximately 25% below the Universal Credit Local Housing Allowance monthly rates set by the Dept. for Work and Pensions. This in effect will provide more disposable income for working households to spend on themselves or their families within the local economy.
- **Tackling Fuel Poverty** – By constructing buildings that adopt a fabric first approach based on the principles of the **Passivhaus**. This will involve a highly insulated external skin, enhanced airtightness, provision of onsite green energy and individual MVHR systems to each dwelling. Passivhaus Trust Data indicates that residents living in such dwellings enjoy a minimum 80% reduction in fuel costs.

We will also discuss with the energy supply chain the potential of zero energy bills if we can generate sufficient on-site renewable energy. By delivering to this standard, we are also substantially reducing the carbon footprint of the development in its' operational performance.

- **Tackling Health Inequality** – Our homes will be designed to accommodate an energy efficient MVHR system which will ensure a consistent internal temperate environment set at 21 °C, underpinned by 5 complete changes of the internal air per hour for each dwelling.

Studies have proven that in this operating environment, inorganic compounds that are the primary cause of asthma are eradicated. Equally, the homes will not be subjected to condensation which as we all know, leads to dangerous mould growth, and consequently respiratory illness problems such as pneumonia.

Tenants should expect that visits to the doctor particularly in the winter months will dramatically reduce as we minimise airborne transmitted viruses due to the constant temperate internal environment thus saving the NHS considerable time & and money.

- **Tackling Social Isolation** – Often apartment living can be quite an isolating experience for residents which can lead to mental health challenges. We have purposefully designed the apartments to enjoy some external private amenity space with the inclusion of balconies on the upper floors and small gardens for our two storey maisonettes. This is enhanced by incorporating a shared amenity space on rooftops (where appropriate), enabling residents to enjoy the outside weather without being exposed to polluting fumes from the carpark or adjoining streets.

### **Construction and Economic Benefits.**

We assess the project construction period and associated contract value of several million pounds, seeking to ensure that local people and trades benefit from our inward investment. Outputs we are prepared to commit to delivering include:

- **Local Labour** – A high percentage of all on-site roles will be recruited from within the local and wider regional areas, providing economic opportunities for people who otherwise are faced with a barrier to work.

In particular, we will focus on the medium to long-term unemployed, whilst prioritising under 25's who often become marginalised and isolated, if they cannot secure regular employment.

**Apprenticeships** – We have considerable experience in working with local further education colleges to offer apprenticeships or work placements for students looking to develop a career in construction. On each project, we intend to agree a protocol with local educational providers relating to work placements and offering apprenticeships covering the key trades of joinery, electrical installation, plumbing, plastering, and brickwork.

From experience, we can continue to offer a significant number of apprenticeships and other student biased work placements opportunities. We extend this offer by engaging with local secondary schools on their career open days and other outreach sessions to specifically target 16–17-year-olds.

- **Local Supply Chain** – We will prioritise local SMEs for sub-contracting, materials, and services wherever possible.

Once selected as the preferred developer, we seek early Client engagement to agree an employment and skills plan which would be incorporated into the future formal agreement. We would envisage that at least 10% of the total revenue of the contract sum could be invested as a minimum within the local economy.

To support this action, we will hold a meet the buyer event prior to submitting the planning application to promote the development to local trades.

- **Living Wage Employer** – FSG and our in-house contractor Aedi Construction are committed to paying the Real Living Wage as opposed to simply the National Living Wage, as we recognise the hardship people face trying to earn sufficient money to pay for rent/food/bills etc.

### **Social and Community Benefits**

From experience, our delivery of social value is underpinned through a close working relationship with the Client and the wider supply chain. Our shared initiatives will seek to deliver on a number of initiatives that might include:

- **Financial Inclusion** – Providing support for households with income maximisation, benefits advice, and budgeting support. We believe this would generate significant financial gains for residents over the life of the scheme
- **Health and Wellbeing/Community Investment** – Delivering community well-being initiatives as events, programmes, or partnerships. This might involve linking with local health practitioners/social prescribers who may run Yoga, Pilates classes etc, & that financially excludes participation from low/no-income residents.
- **Sport participation** – Providing financial assistance to local sports teams to either pay for the cost of facilities/kit or widen participation such as holding one-off events etc. We have done this quite successfully in Manchester and Bolton.
- **Community Grants** – The potential to offer one-off community grants to local organisations to help facilitate their own initiatives that benefit local residents.
- **Educational Sessions** – Working with local schools to offer opportunities to local children to visit the development site and gain some understanding of the construction process. In addition, we offer mentoring opportunities for years 10-11 students, to encourage them to view the construction sector as a potential career.
- **Youth engagement** – Providing support for youth engagement activities.

### **Measuring the Delivery Outcomes**

Our social value offer will be captured in a formal assessment utilising the Clients preferred provider ie TOMS/LOOP. The KPI's will be agreed at an early stage in the development process in order to maximise the opportunity – the implementation plan positively promoting to the community the wider opportunities of the overall scheme.

Our ethos on social value is that we do not do it to be bid compliant, but truly because it is the right thing to do.

**Harinder Dhaliwal**

**Managing Director, First Step Group**



**May 2026**