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HOW TO...

Answer the model question in the UK Government Social Value Model

A GUIDE FROM
THE APMP UK
SOCIAL VALUE
GROUP



Table 1
Version control

Version	Update/Change	Approved by	Date
1.0	New edition	Sarah Hinchliffe, APMP UK Social Value Group Chair	27th June 2023
2.0	Updated to include a model answer	Sarah Hinchliffe, APMP UK Social Value Group Chair	5th April 2025

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Context

This 'How To' guide refers to the 'model question' that public sector Buyers are advised to include in their tender documents so they can evaluate suppliers' Social Value commitments fairly.

The model question can be found in the Social Value Model guidance: Procurement Policy Notice (PPN) 06/20 and associated documents.

The Social Value Model is used by most central Government buyers (including MOD and the NHS). Local authorities and other public sector bodies may take an alternative approach. For an overview of how to respond to any public sector Social Value question, refer to our other guide: "How to tackle a Social Value response in a public sector tender."

The Social Value Model is based on five Themes. Each has one or two Policy Outcomes with Model Award Criteria (MACs), MAC Sub-Criteria and sample Reporting Metrics. The procurement guidance states that Buyers should be relevant and proportionate in what they ask. The Buyer should select one or more Themes, Policy Outcomes and MACs that relate to the contract (the Social Value Model Quick Reference Table is a handy reference).

The score you receive for your answer will depend on answering all elements of the question (compliance) and the quality, credibility and relevance of your commitments. Note that, although the policy guidance states that evaluation should be qualitative and not quantitative, the more MAC sub-criteria you can make commitments against, the better.

Purpose of the guide

In this guide, we will share bid best practice and experience from the APMP UK Social Value Group to help you answer the model question in the Social Value Model.

The guide cannot be definitive because the model question will require different answers depending on the parts of the Social Value Model and/or the space constraints the Buyer has chosen.

The model question

"Using a maximum of [insert number] characters* to describe the commitment your organisation will make to ensure that opportunities under the contract deliver the Policy Outcome and Award Criteria. Please include:

- your 'Method Statement', stating how you will achieve this and how your commitment meets the Award Criteria, and
- a timed project plan and process, including how you will implement your commitment and by when.

Also, how you will monitor, measure and report on your commitments/the impact of your proposals.

You should include but not be limited to:

- timed action plan
- use of metrics
- tools/processes used to gather data
- reporting
- feedback and improvement
- transparency

Themes 1, 2 and 4 also have this as part of the question (Themes 3 and 5 have this as a MAC sub-criteria):

- how you will influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to support the Policy Outcome, e.g. engagement, co-design/creation, training and education, partnering/collaborating, volunteering."

* Characters can be changed by Buyers to words or pages

Things to consider

Aligning your answer to what's important to the Buyer: Check with the sales team for information gathered during the Capture phase. Check if there are any Social Value areas on the Buyer's website. Read Social Value documents included in the Buyer's tender documents.

Evaluation criteria: Check how the Buyer will mark you. We have seen marking schemes that give a mark for the whole answer and schemes that give marks for each part of the model question and every MAC Sub-criteria.

Space constraints: Check if character limits include spaces. Use telegraphic headings if character or word-constrained and informative headings if page constrained.

Clarification questions: If your Buyer has thought about their Social Value needs, you may be asked a relevant and proportionate question with enough space to reply. For example, one Theme, one Policy Outcome and one MAC with a 10,000-character limit. However, you may also find irrelevance and disproportionality. For example, three Themes and five Policy Outcomes with a 4,000-character limit. If you are faced with the latter, consider asking a clarification question to help focus your answer.

For example:

- Please confirm which MAC Sub-criteria you would like suppliers to focus on.

If the answer is "all of them", then you will need to find a way to mention all the MAC Sub-Criteria in the answer. If you are space-constrained, consider using bold to indicate where you are addressing the various MAC Sub-criteria.

Content planning: Always take the time to plan your answer. Make sure you have a section for every part of the answer and plan to balance your character or word count across the different parts and in proportion to any allocated score percentages. If you have a page count, do a mock-up to visualise how much space you can give each part.

Question repetition: Bid best practice is to answer the question in the order set out by the Buyer. However, the model question contains repetition, which makes this challenging especially if you have a tight space restriction.

The table below explains further:

Model question component	Question meaning & repetition	Guidance
Using a maximum of [insert number] characters describe the commitment your organisation will make to ensure that opportunities under the contract deliver the Policy Outcome and Award Criteria.	This instruction seeks WHAT you will commit to.	Answering these two instructions separately introduces repetition and risks wasting space. You may want to set the response up with useful background information to show you have done your research. Then give a broad statement of what you will commit to followed by details of the commitments against the MAC(s) and a description of how you will deliver your commitments. Refer to policies, processes and procedures.
Your 'Method Statement', stating how you will achieve this and how your commitment meets the Award Criteria.	This instruction asks HOW you will deliver your commitments and how they map to the MAC(s).	For example: • You might commit to employing 10 people with lived experience of the criminal justice system. • You will do this by working closely with the New Futures Network and Local Prison CFO Hub to find and select suitable workers. Remember, commitments should be new initiatives or extensions to existing initiatives specific to the contract.

Model question component	Question meaning & repetition	Guidance
A timed project plan and process, including how you will implement your commitment and by when	This instruction is about WHEN you will deliver your commitments and HOW you will implement them.	This timed project plan can be done in a bulleted list, a table or Gantt chart depending on the page/word/character limits. The timed project plan should have sufficient tasks and actions to show the progression of activity. It should also cover the period of the contract. If using a table, have columns showing actions by month 6, month 12 and then annually. Consider a column showing the target metric. Continuing the example from above: • Show an action to implement your commitment by developing a specialist induction programme with St Giles Trust, who provide support for those who employ people with Lived experience. • Show that you will run this annually to recruit one new starter per year for the length of the contract.
How you will monitor, measure and report on your commitments/the impact of your proposals. You should include but not be limited to: • Timed action plan • Use of metrics • Tools/processes used to gather data • Reporting • Feedback and improvement • Transparency	This instruction is clear and straightforward apart from the request for a “Timed action plan” which is the same as the “timed project plan” in the previous component.	Cover the points in the question: • How you will monitor: Who will be responsible, what steps will they follow to monitor performance and impact and when. Consider referring to the timed project plan to address the time action plan point. • How you will measure: What measurement tools and processes will you use to gather data and analyse performance and impact. If you included metrics in the timed project plan, you may be able to refer back. • How you will report: What reports will you produce, who will produce them, when, who will receive them. Once you have done this, you will be left with: • Feedback and improvement: Explain what methods and forums you will use to gather feedback and how you process feedback to improve your performance. • Transparency: Make a statement about how you will communicate and share all information transparently. Address all the points in the list individually if you have space. Otherwise, write a paragraph and consider highlighting keywords to show you have covered each point.

Model question component	Question meaning & repetition	Guidance
This is a question component in Themes 1, 2 & 4 and a MAC sub-criteria in Themes 3 & 5. How you will influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to support the Policy Outcome, e.g. engagement, co-design/creation, training and education, partnering/collaborating, volunteering.	This instruction is clear and does not repeat any other question component.	Address STAFF, SUPPLIERS, CUSTOMERS and COMMUNITIES separately or grouped if involved in the same activities.

An example of a social value response

Social Value Commitment

The Department of Social Mobility will achieve its desired social value outcome with FictionCo's committed strategy to create a 100% local workforce within six months.

To meet the Department of Social Mobility's (DSM) chosen Social Value theme of Tackling Economic Equality - Policy Outcome: Creating New Businesses, New Jobs and New Skills, FictionCo will support Chiphampton's growing service economy. The town has suffered from a lack of investment for decades – the local population is amongst the most deprived in the region with unemployment running at 15%. The Wintex industrial park is an ambitious new development attracting major industry and public sector relocation including the DSM.

FictionCo's Social Value Plan for the three-year DSM Clean and Maintain (C&M) contract will create local jobs with a 25:75 mix of re-located and new local staff. Local staff will be 50% employed by FictionCo and 50% via a local supply chain of six start-ups and/or established small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The C&M contract requires technical IT support skills in short supply, so this is an ideal opportunity to build vital new skills in this area.

Method Statement

FictionCo's published Social Value Policy is sponsored by our Operations Director. We implement the policy using our ISO-certified Integrated Management System (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 27001 and ISO 45001), which includes methods, processes, policies and governance, covering all aspects of supply chain management, recruitment, retention and training.

To provide a single point of contact, we will appoint a Social Value (SV) Delivery Manager who will report operationally to the C&M Contract Delivery Manager and provide monthly updates to the Operations Director. The SV Delivery Manager will develop a detailed Social Value Plan and metrics on contract award.

Below, we explain how we will meet our Social Value commitments against each MAC and our proposed metrics:

Guidance notes

Ideally, include an opening Theme Statement tying a key benefit to a unique aspect of your social value commitments.

Use this introductory paragraph to paint a picture of the current situation. Align it with the buyer's strategy, show you have conducted research and demonstrate you understand what they are trying to achieve.

Include facts and figures such as local demographics and show how you will improve the situation.

Summarise your commitments up front.

- **MAC 2.1 Entrepreneurship, growth and business creation:** The C&M contract comprises different activities (including cleaning, preventative maintenance, repair, IT support, grounds maintenance).

Our management and resourcing strategy defines the workshare we will outsource. We will advertise supply chain opportunities through Contracts Finder and encourage new and growing businesses to apply through social media campaigns and Meet the Buyer events. We will pay all invoices within 30 days in line with the Prompt Payment Code.

Metrics:

- Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities created under the contract from local SMEs (target 45).
- Percentage of the workforce fulfilled by local SMEs (target 37.5%)
- Payment to supply chain within 30 days (target 100%).
- **MAC 2.2 Employment:** To recruit 45 new FictionCo staff, we will target a wide range of diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups by advertising through diversity and inclusion specialists, Deiti Group, and through our own website where we advertise our Disability Confident Leader status and our Equality and Diversity Policy. Our recruitment paths are carefully designed to be fair, welcoming and accessible. All candidates who apply receive a response, including those not selected for interview. A minimum of three FictionCo managers who are trained in non-bias assessment conduct each competency-based interview including at least one female. .

To provide additional entry points to employment, our workforce will include six apprenticeships (18 years+; two per year) recruited from Chiphampton senior schools and colleges focused on developing skills in mechanical, engineering and plumbing (MEP), grounds maintenance and IT support. We will also offer two six-week paid summer work experience opportunities each year for 16-18-year-olds.

The five foundational principles of the Government Good Work Plan will underpin our retention strategy.

Metrics:

- Number of apprenticeship opportunities created under the contract (target two per annum).
- Number of work experience hours completed under the contract (148 hours per annum).
- % of females in the workforce (target 50%).
- % of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the workforce (target 35%).
- % of disabled people in the workforce (target 15%).
- **MAC 2.3 Education and training:** we have developed a comprehensive training programme to cover all aspects of the C&M contract and identified local colleges and online courses from the Udemy training platform. All new recruits will undergo a Training Needs Analysis and have a personal development plan detailing the courses they will follow as well as a FictionCo mentor for their first six months.

Guidance notes

Align with the client, if possible, using a quote from their annual report, strategy or other background data.

Align with any client objectives.

Metrics:

- Number of people-hours of learning intervention delivered under the contract (target 10 hours per person minimum, total 900 hours).

All our partners will have clear roles and responsibilities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in their contracts including building a diverse workforce. We will cascade our recruitment and retention practices to our SME partners and provide coaching to help them develop their operational practices in line with industry standards.

Timed Action Plan

Action	Months 1-3	Months 4-6	Months 6-9	Months 10-12	Year 2	Year 3
Set up Social Value Plan and Governance						
Run supplier days						
Select initial supply chain partners						
Set up sub-contracts and KPIs						
Provide coaching to supply chain partners						
Recruit new staff						
Apprentices in the workforce						
Summer paid work experiences						
Training Needs Analysis and plans						
Run staff and supply chain training						
Supply chain annual reviews and audits						
Publish annual performance & impact reports						

Monitoring, measuring and data gathering

On contract award, the SV Delivery Manager will plan the social value commitments and agree on the metrics with the C&M Contract Delivery Manager and the DSM C&M project team. FictionCo subscribes to the Social Value Impact Model online app, where the SV Delivery Manager will set up the commitments and metrics for ongoing measurement. Data will be gathered and input manually by the C&M Team Leaders (who monitor individual and team performance daily) or securely transferred by our HR and Learning Services departments (who monitor workforce composition and learning intervention hours). All data will be protected according to GDPR/UK Privacy regulations per our ISO 27001 processes.

Reporting and transparency

The SV Delivery Manager will agree on the reporting formats and frequencies with the DSM Project Manager at the contract start. We understand this will include monthly operational reports and reviews, quarterly impact reports for the DSM Project Steering Committee and an annual progress and impact report published to the DSM and FictionCo Boards.

All data and reporting will be fully transparent to nominated DSM stakeholders through collaboration tools and open communication. The annual report will be publicly available through both organisations' websites.

Guidance notes

There are many ways to represent a Timed Action Plan. Consider pasting in a Gantt chart - check if this would be included in a word count.

Be sure to check all the actions mentioned above are covered. Be as granular as space allows.

If you have enough space, you could have separate sections for each of these points (and for reporting and transparency. If short of space, combine them all together.

Be specific about how you gather data.

Be sure to cover both points.

Continuous improvement

The Team Leaders and SV Delivery Manager will encourage every staff and supply chain member to look for continuous improvement and suggest ideas at weekly team meetings or through an online suggestion board. The SV Delivery Manager will take new ideas to the monthly operational review meetings. They will be empowered to make tactical changes to improve the service. At an annual review with senior DSM and FictionCo management, the SV Delivery Manager will present strategic improvement ideas for the next operating year(s). On a similar contract with the Department for Environmental Affairs, FictionCo's team recommended setting up a buddy scheme for apprentices to help them increase confidence and skills. Every new initiative follows our Continuous Improvement Implementation process, including staff training.

Influencing staff, suppliers, customers and communities

Workforce staff will be fully integrated into FictionCo's ongoing Social Value Awareness programme. This is designed to regularly influence our staff to identify and contribute to social value initiatives. We communicate via intranet bulletins and monthly 'Town Hall' meetings, have an open Social Value Ideas online area and give every staff member a three-day annual volunteer allowance. Contract induction packs and team meetings will include the contract-specific social value commitments so every workforce member can support successful outcomes. On the Environmental Affairs contract, this led to two excellent apprenticeships referrals, one of whom was top of his class in 2024.

Social value will be integrated into supply chain sub-contracts. In addition, we will coach and support them to understand social value principles and develop robust strategies, policies and working practices to embed social value within their companies. We will run quarterly workshops to celebrate successes and share updates.

To influence our wider customer base, we will publish monthly blogs on our social value successes and participate in industry forums to share our experiences and help others grow and mature. This equips them to pay knowledge forward to their customers and communities.

Within the Chiphampton community, we will build a high and positive profile through quarterly volunteering initiatives to improve the local environment with tree-planting, landscaping public places, litter-picking and park cleaning.

Guidance notes

Provide a relevant example of continuous improvement.

Note that Theme 3 (Fighting Climate Change) and Theme 5 (Wellbeing) do not have this as part of the Model Question. Instead, the same or similar point is made in MAC 4.2, 7.2 and 8.2, respectively.

Be sure to address each part of the question - staff, suppliers, customers and communities.

Consider including an image and caption of a previous workshop.

Consider including images with captions of previous initiatives if there is space.



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