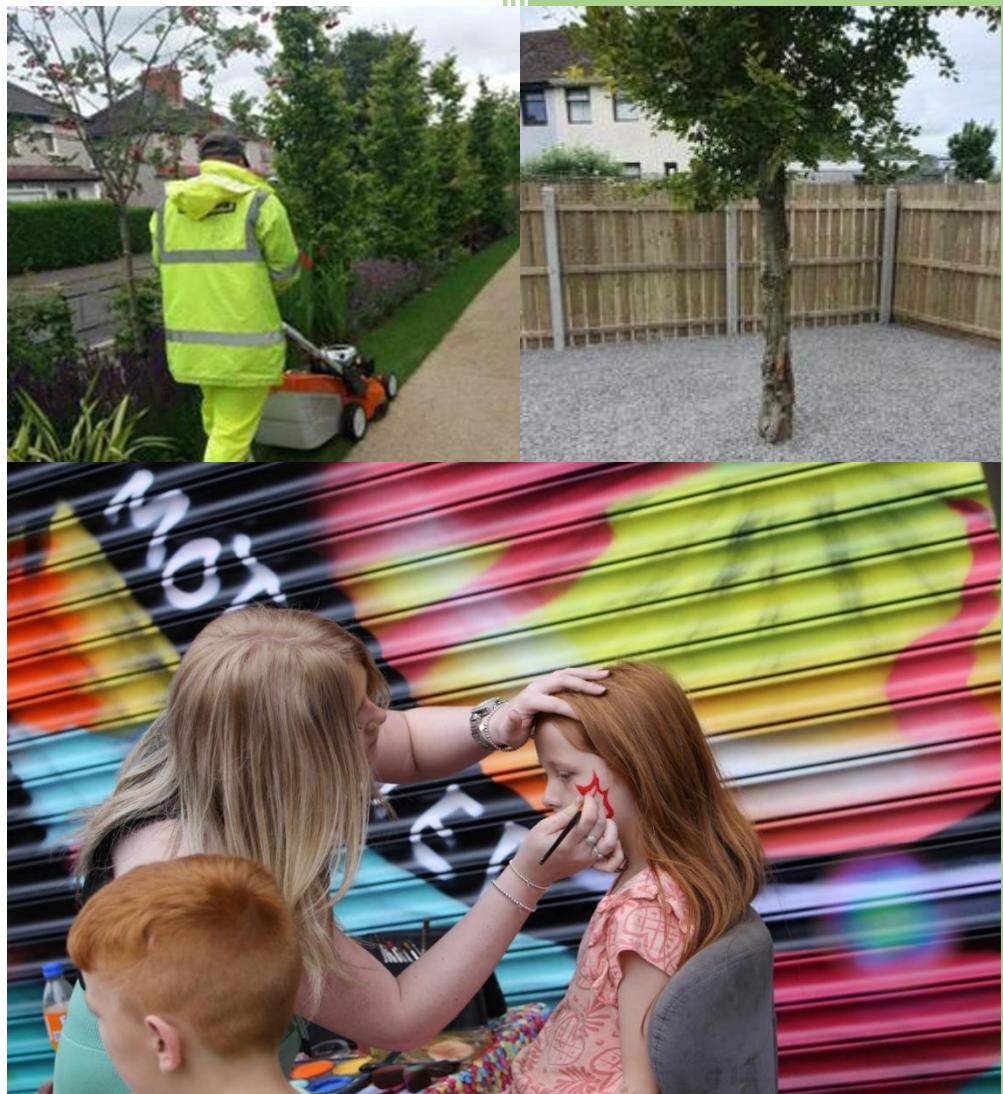


# NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE SOCIAL VALUE STRATEGY



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# 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction: Brief overview of the strategy's purpose.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is committed to delivering meaningful social value to the communities we serve. As the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, we recognise that our role extends beyond providing affordable homes, it is about fostering stronger, more resilient communities and enhancing the well-being of our tenants. In line with this, our Social Value Strategy outlines how we will embed social value principles into our contracts using Procurement as the vehicle for delivery.

This strategy sets out our vision for adhering to Government Policy while leveraging procurement as a tool to deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits. By working with suppliers, contractors, and other stakeholders, we aim to generate positive long-term impacts that enhance community well-being, create economic opportunities, and promote sustainability.

This strategy also establishes a clear framework for how we will measure and report on social value delivered through our contracts. This includes the development of key performance indicators (KPIs), an action plan for implementation, and ongoing stakeholder engagement to ensure transparency and accountability.

## 2. Objectives: Key goals of the strategy.

The primary objective of this Social Value Strategy is to integrate social value into the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) procurement processes, ensuring that every investment made through our contracts delivers tangible benefits to the communities we serve. Our goals are to:

- **Maximize Community Benefits:** Ensure that procurement activities contribute to local economic growth, job creation, and improved well-being for residents.
- **Promote Environmental Sustainability:** Integrate sustainable practices into procurement, supporting initiatives that reduce carbon emissions and promote green technologies.
- **Ensure Measurable Impact:** Develop clear metrics and reporting mechanisms to track and communicate the social, economic, and environmental value generated through our procurement efforts.
- **Build Strong Partnerships:** Work collaboratively with our Tenants, suppliers, contractors, and other stakeholders to drive innovation and create long-term social value outcomes.

These objectives are designed to guide our procurement approach, ensuring that it not only meets the functional needs of the Housing Executive but also delivers sustained, positive impacts across our communities.

### 3. Organisational Vision

The NIHE's vision is that '*Everyone is able to live in an affordable, sustainable and decent home, appropriate to their needs, in a safe, attractive, and climate-resilient place*'.

Our Social Value Strategy aligns directly with this vision by embedding social value principles into every facet of our procurement and operational activities. By doing so, our aim is to ensure that our investment contributes to maximizing positive outcomes for tenants, businesses, and the wider community. This means that, beyond delivering housing, we are focused on creating inclusive, thriving communities where people feel safe, empowered, and connected to opportunities for growth.

#### **Alignment with Strategic Priorities**

This strategy is not developed in isolation but is closely aligned with the NIHE's strategic priorities, including:

- Developing strategic partnerships to ensure that the construction industry supply chain has the capacity to help us meet our investment requirement.
- Ensuring our public procurement is a lever for delivery, particularly in driving social value.
- Ensuring that we have a workforce reflective of the community we serve .
- Further develop our Learning Academy to give us the capacity we need to meet our new build and maintenance objectives.

In summary, this Social Value Strategy is both a reflection of NIHE's commitment to social responsibility and a response to the wider policy and environmental context in which we operate. It positions NIHE to be a leading force in delivering not just housing, but tangible, long-lasting benefits via our contracts.

## 4. Legal and Policy Framework

The development of this Social Value Strategy is firmly anchored in several key legal and policy frameworks that guide public sector activities across the UK and Northern Ireland.

- **PPN 01/21 – Social Value in Procurement:** The principle PPN in relation to social value as updated in February 2025 and outlines the approach Northern Ireland contracting authorities should adopt when procuring works, good and services to ensure the maximum social benefit is realised.
- **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012:** This legislation requires public authorities to consider the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the community when procuring services, which is a fundamental principle in our strategy. While the Act directly applies to England and Wales, its principles resonate within the Northern Irish context, and NIHE is committed to embracing these standards in all its activities. At the time of the strategy also considers the proposed Northern Ireland Social Value Act.
- **Northern Ireland's Programme for Government:** The Programme emphasises inclusive growth, addressing inequality, and building sustainable and resilient communities. This strategy is aligned with these priorities, particularly through procurement activities that support local businesses, encourage sustainable practices, and foster social inclusion.
- **Northern Ireland Climate Change Act 2022:** With a strong focus on sustainability, the Act mandates actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote environmental sustainability. This aligns closely with NIHE's goals of reducing its carbon footprint and embedding sustainable practices in procurement, such as adopting green technologies and energy-efficient housing solutions.

In addition to its focus on procurement and regulatory compliance, this Social Value Strategy places a strong emphasis on equality of opportunity and fostering inclusive outcomes as integral elements of delivering meaningful social value. We are committed to ensuring that our approach to social value actively contributes to reducing inequalities and enhancing social inclusion. This commitment is guided by our statutory equality obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, requiring public authorities to embed equality and good relations considerations into all aspects of work, including procurement.

## 5. Equality of Opportunity and Social Value

Central to this strategy is the understanding that meaningful social value cannot be realised without actively promoting equality of opportunity, inclusive economic participation and the creation of a workforce which reflects the communities we serve.

Examples of how we embed these principles include:

- **Employment and Skills Development:** Supporting job creation, for example through traineeships and apprenticeships with associated training to enable a route into work for those currently economically inactive while ensuring we remove barriers to employment for under-represented groups in the workforce.

- **Partnering:** with community organisations that represent or support disadvantaged communities.
- **Supporting Community Business's and Social Enterprises:** Ensuring that procurement opportunities are accessible to community owned businesses, social enterprises, and organisations that work to improve outcomes for underrepresented groups. Making use of the NIHE Social enterprise directory.

## Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion

In line with our equality objectives, the Social Value Strategy also focuses on fostering social inclusion and community cohesion. Through our community engagement activities, we will ensure that all residents, regardless of their background, have equal access to the benefits created by NIHE projects. This includes:

- **Promoting Inclusive Communities:** Supporting initiatives that bring different groups together, reduce social isolation, and create shared spaces for community development.
- **Addressing Health & Well-being Inequalities:** Integrating health and well-being initiatives into our projects to tackle inequalities in health outcomes, particularly in deprived areas.

## Measuring Equality Outcomes in Social Value

Our approach to measuring social value will include specific metrics related to equality and inclusion. Some of these metrics may include:

- Requiring suppliers to report the number of jobs, apprenticeships, and training opportunities provided **for individuals from Section 75 groups**
- **Inclusion in Supply Chain:** Measuring the participation of SMEs, social enterprises, and community owned businesses in procurement opportunities.
- **Community Impact:** Monitoring how our activities are contributing to reduced inequality and improved social cohesion in the communities we serve.

The Housing Executive as an employer also places an emphasis on measuring social value for example:

- Setting targets and tracking progress for directly employed entry level posts such as the number of apprentices and traineeships, particularly within Housing Executive Direct

Our approach to measuring social value will continue to be developed throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

## Community-Led Social Value Initiatives

We will actively seek input from communities, particularly underrepresented or disadvantaged groups, in shaping the social value initiatives we pursue. This will ensure that the social value generated is directly aligned with the needs and aspirations of the

communities themselves, particularly in terms of addressing local inequalities and creating inclusive opportunities for all.

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## 6. Social Value and Procurement

Procurement is a vital tool in delivering social value, enabling public sector organisations to maximize the impact of every pound spent. By embedding social value requirements into procurement processes, we can ensure that our contracts not only deliver goods, works, and services but also contribute to broader societal goals including job creation, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

### **The Importance of Procurement in Delivering Social Value**

NIHE's procurement activities represent a significant opportunity to generate long-lasting benefits for communities. By requiring contractors and suppliers to deliver social value outcomes, procurement can:

- Drive economic growth by supporting local businesses and creating jobs.
- Promote social inclusion by encouraging diverse and inclusive supply chains including opportunities for social enterprises.
- Enhance environmental sustainability by prioritising green initiatives and low-carbon solutions.
- Foster innovation by incentivising suppliers to adopt creative approaches to addressing community challenges.

To achieve these goals, NIHE has aligned its procurement practices with the guidance outlined in Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 01/21: Social Value in Procurement

### **PPN 01/21: Social Value in Procurement**

PPN 01/21 provides a framework for public sector bodies to incorporate social value into procurement, ensuring that all contracts contribute to societal benefits. Key elements of this guidance include:

**Minimum Scoring Weight for Social Value:** Applicable Works and Services Contracts must allocate a minimum of 10% of the overall score to social value, ensuring it is a significant factor in award decisions. This weighting can be increased for contracts with high social value potential.

**Specific Social Value Themes:** PPN 01/21 outlines key themes that contracting authorities should consider when scoring social value. These themes include:

- Increasing secure employment and skills
- Building ethical and resilient supply chains
- Delivering Climate Action
- Promoting wellbeing

**Clear Evaluation Criteria:** Social value proposals must be evaluated based on their clarity, feasibility, and relevance to the contract's objectives. Suppliers are required to demonstrate how their plans will deliver measurable outcomes.

**Effective contract management in relation to Social Value** and the inclusion of at least one Key Performance Indicator for the monitoring of delivery in applicable contracts.

## 7. NIHE's Approach to Social Value in Procurement

NIHE is committed to fully embedding the principles of PPN 01/21 into its procurement processes to ensure that all applicable contracts deliver meaningful social value. Our approach includes:

<b>1 Embedding Social Value Criteria</b>	
	Contracts will include specific social value requirements tailored to the needs of the community and the nature of the project. These criteria will address priority areas such as job creation, skills development, and environmental impact.
	Social value will account for at least 10% of the total evaluation score, with flexibility to increase this weighting for projects with high social value potential.
<b>2 Supplier Engagement and Support</b>	
	We will work closely with suppliers to ensure they understand the importance of social value and how to deliver it effectively. This includes providing guidance on developing social value proposals and showcasing best practices from previous projects.
	Special emphasis will be placed on engaging local SMEs and social enterprises to encourage participation and build capacity within the local supply chain.
<b>3 Measurement and Reporting</b>	
	Suppliers will be required to provide clear, measurable social value commitments as part of their bids. These commitments will be monitored throughout the contract's lifecycle to ensure they are delivered as promised.
	We will implement robust reporting mechanisms to track the social, economic, and environmental benefits generated by our contracts and share these outcomes with stakeholders.
<b>4 Focus on Local Priorities</b>	
	Social value criteria will be aligned with the specific needs and priorities of the communities we serve. For example, contracts may include requirements to create apprenticeships for young people in areas with high unemployment or to support community-led initiatives.
<b>5 Reserved Contracts</b>	
	Consideration will be given to the potential of reserving contracts to enable social inclusion through reserving the right to participate in procurement procedures to supported employment providers whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons or public service mutuals.

## 8. Stakeholder Analysis

A key component of the success of this Strategy will be effective engagement and collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders. Each stakeholder group plays a critical role in shaping, implementing, and benefiting from the strategy. Understanding their interests and contributions is essential to ensure the strategy is inclusive and impactful.

In developing this strategy, a sub-group of our Housing Community Network was established to workshop the NIHE approach to Social Value.

Meeting on a 6-weekly basis over 12 months the group consisting of tenants, key internal and external stakeholders and the NIHE Procurement team met to discuss the current approach to social value and what the future could look like.

Drafts of this strategy were shared with the group as the document evolved.

The following section outlines the primary stakeholders involved in the strategy, their roles, and how we plan to engage them throughout the strategy's lifecycle.

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## Primary Stakeholders

### Employees and Internal Stakeholders

**Role and Interests:** NIHE staff members are essential in the implementation, and monitoring of the Social Value Strategy. Their interest lies in understanding how their roles contribute to delivering social value and ensuring that internal processes are aligned with the strategy's objectives.

**Engagement Approach:** We will engage employees through internal communications, training, and workshops to ensure they are equipped to integrate social value considerations into their day-to-day work. This will include training on new procurement processes, social value monitoring, and engagement with contractors and suppliers. Regular feedback channels will ensure that staff can contribute ideas and improvements to the strategy's implementation.

### Residents and Local Communities

**Role and Interests:** The communities and individuals who live in and around NIHE properties are the ultimate beneficiaries of our social value initiatives. Their primary interest lies in improved access to quality housing, employment opportunities, social services, and enhanced community well-being. Residents have valuable insights into the social and economic needs of their local areas, making them key partners in identifying priorities and shaping social value initiatives.

**Engagement Approach:** We will engage residents through our Housing Community Network while also facilitating community consultations, surveys, and workshops to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected in our strategy. Specific attention will be given to marginalised groups within communities, such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, older residents, young people, rural communities and those facing economic hardship, to ensure their voices are heard and included in decision-making processes.

### Contractors and Suppliers

**Role and Interests:** Contractors and suppliers are key to delivering the outcomes set out in our Social Value Strategy, particularly in relation to embedding social, economic, and environmental goals into the projects they undertake on behalf of NIHE. Their interests include understanding the social value requirements within contracts and how they can meet or exceed these expectations while maintaining profitability and efficiency.

**Engagement Approach:** We will work closely with our contractors and suppliers to ensure that social value criteria are clearly communicated and integrated into the procurement process. This includes providing guidance on how they can deliver social value in practice, such as by employing local people, offering apprenticeships, reducing environmental impact, and supporting local community initiatives. Ongoing collaboration and feedback will ensure that suppliers are equipped to contribute to NIHE's social value objectives effectively.

### Local Businesses and Social Enterprises

**Role and Interests:** Local businesses and social enterprises stand to benefit from the opportunities created through NIHE's procurement activities. They are critical partners in delivering on our commitment to generating economic and social benefits for the community, such as job creation and local investment. Social enterprises, in particular, may offer innovative solutions that align with our social value objectives, such as training disadvantaged groups or promoting sustainability.

**Engagement Approach:** We will create opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises to participate in our procurement processes, with a focus on ensuring accessibility and encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to compete for contracts. Additionally, we will run supplier engagement events, provide guidance on tendering for public contracts, and collaborate with business support agencies to ensure that businesses have the capacity to deliver social value.

### Charities and Community Groups

**Role and Interests:** Charities, and community organisations often work directly with vulnerable sections of our community and have a deep understanding of local social needs. They can be valuable partners in delivering social value initiatives, particularly those related to social inclusion, health and well-being, and community cohesion. Their interest lies in maximizing the impact of our projects to address key social issues such as poverty, homelessness, and mental health.

**Engagement Approach:** We will collaborate with Charities and community groups to identify local needs, co-develop social value initiatives, and implement projects that address key social challenges. These partnerships will ensure that NIHE's social value activities are aligned with the needs of the communities and have the greatest possible impact. This engagement will take place through formal partnerships, regular meetings, and consultation processes.

## Key Engagement Methods

To maintain effective communication and engagement with all stakeholders, NIHE will utilise a range of methods:

<b>Consultation and Feedback Sessions</b>	Regular consultation with our Housing Community Network, community groups, and contractors to gather input and feedback.
<b>Supplier and Business Forums</b>	Events and forums to engage suppliers and local businesses, providing guidance and fostering partnerships.
<b>Partnership Working Groups</b>	Establish working groups with charities, government bodies, and community representatives to co-design and implement social value initiatives.
<b>Public Reporting and Transparency</b>	Regularly publishing updates and reports on the social value outcomes achieved, ensuring accountability and transparency to all stakeholders.
<b>Surveys and Research</b>	Conducting surveys to understand the impact of our social value initiatives and refine our approach based on community needs

By recognising the unique roles and contributions of each stakeholder group, NIHE can create a collaborative, inclusive, and responsive Social Value Strategy. This ensures that the social, economic, and environmental benefits generated by our procurement and housing activities are maximized and aligned with the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

## 9. Responding to Social and Environmental Challenges

The challenges faced by our communities are diverse and complex, ranging from economic inequality and unemployment to environmental concerns such as climate change and resource depletion. By embedding social value into our procurement practices, we aim to address these challenges head-on, creating opportunities for local businesses, improving employment prospects for disadvantaged groups, and supporting sustainable development initiatives that enhance the long-term resilience of our communities.

This section outlines the key social and environmental challenges NIHE faces and how this Social Value Strategy responds to these challenges.

### Economic Inequality and Unemployment

**Challenge:** Northern Ireland continues to experience high levels of unemployment, particularly in certain areas, with long-term unemployment, youth unemployment, and economic inactivity being persistent issues. Many communities also face economic deprivation, which is closely linked to social inequality. Skills shortages in the construction industry is a particular focus for NIHE and our ability to deliver works contracts.

**Response:** Our Social Value Strategy seeks to tackle economic inequality by embedding job creation and skills development opportunities into our procurement processes. We will work with contractors to provide apprenticeships, training programs, and local employment opportunities, particularly targeting disadvantaged groups, such as long-term unemployed individuals, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and individuals with disabilities. We will also prioritise opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises, ensuring that economic benefits remain within the communities we serve.

### Health and Well-being Inequalities

**Challenge:** Northern Ireland continues to experience significant health disparities, with residents in deprived areas suffering from higher rates of chronic illnesses, mental health issues, lower life expectancy and limited access to healthy living environments exacerbate these health inequalities.

**Response:** Our Social Value Strategy includes a focus on improving health and well-being through better housing and community environments. We will integrate health-related outcomes into our projects by promoting green spaces, safe recreational areas, and access to health and social services. We will also partner with health-focused organisations to deliver programs that address mental health, social isolation, and physical well-being, particularly in deprived communities.

### Climate Change and Carbon Emissions

**Challenge:** The construction and housing sectors are significant consumers of resources, and unsustainable practices can lead to increased waste, pollution, and environmental degradation. Efficient use of resources and the reduction of waste are critical to supporting long-term environmental sustainability.

**Response:** NIHE will promote the use of sustainable materials, recycling, and waste reduction in all construction and maintenance projects. Our procurement processes will require contractors to adopt environmentally responsible practices, including reducing construction waste, sourcing materials responsibly, and minimizing water and energy use during project execution.

Through this strategy, NIHE seeks to address the root causes of social and environmental challenges, not just the symptoms. By embedding social value principles into our operations, we will contribute to build stronger, more resilient communities that are better equipped to face the challenges of the future.

## 10. Measurement and Evaluation of Social Value

To ensure the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) delivers meaningful and measurable social value, a robust framework for data collection, analysis, and evaluation is essential. This framework will leverage reliable data, proven evaluation models, and technology to track progress, ensure accountability, and inform continuous improvement.

Over the course of this strategy NIHE will explore and implement a centralised technology approach to collating delivery of Social Value data and agree a preferred measurement tool using a recognised methodology.

### Key Principles of Measurement and Evaluation

#### **Data-Driven Decision Making:**

Comprehensive data collection and analysis will be central to understanding the impact of social value initiatives and guiding future strategies.

#### **Standardisation and Comparability:**

The use of standardised evaluation models and metrics will ensure consistency and comparability across contracts and projects.

#### **Transparency and Accountability:**

Clear reporting mechanisms will provide stakeholders with confidence in the delivery and outcomes of social value.

#### **Continuous Learning and Adaptation:**

- Insights gained from evaluation will be used to refine and improve social value delivery.

### Key Components of Measurement and Evaluation

Data collection will be integrated into all stages of project delivery to provide a clear picture of social, economic, and environmental outcomes. We will explore a range of assessment methodologies that align to our organisation values around the concepts of Social Return on Investment and Impact Assessments.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

**Overview:** In line with PPN 01/21 KPI will be developed for oversight of contract performance around social value. However, a set of KPIs will also be developed to assess performance across all our activities and against strategic priorities.

#### **Examples of KPIs:**

- Number of local jobs and apprenticeships created through procurement contracts.

- Percentage of procurement spend with SMEs, social enterprises, and community owned businesses.
- Carbon reduction metrics, such as energy savings and emissions avoided.
- Resident satisfaction scores from community initiatives.
- Number and diversity of individuals participating in training programs.

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## 11. Action Plan

The Action Plan provides a structured approach for implementing NIHE's Social Value Strategy. It outlines specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) actions that will ensure the strategy's objectives are met effectively and efficiently.

### Key Focus Areas

The Action Plan is structured around three main pillars:

- 1. Embedding Social Value into Procurement**
- 2. Delivering Tangible Benefits for Communities**
- 3. Measuring, Monitoring, and Reporting Impact**

### SMART Actions (Dates to be updated following consultation process)

This updated Action Plan ensures NIHE's Social Value Strategy is implemented in a structured and impactful way, with clear accountability and measurable outcomes for each action.

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-Bound
<b>Co-design community-specific social value initiatives with residents in at least 4 priority areas annually.</b>	Host a minimum of 4 community workshops each year to gather input.	Partner with Housing Community Network for effective engagement.	Ensure social value initiatives reflect local needs and priorities.	Complete 4 community workshops by <b>December 2026</b>
<b>Conduct a comprehensive review of social value assessment methodologies such as Social Return on Investment (SROI), THE Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) framework, a bespoke approach and other assessment models to determine most suitable approach for NIHE.</b>	Select and formally adopt a standardised assessment methodology	Engage internal stakeholders, external experts and public sector partners to evaluate options and identify best practice	Ensure that NIHE has a consistent and credible framework for measuring and reporting social value outcomes across all contracts and initiatives.	Agree approach by <b>June 2026</b>

<b>Develop a practical guide for NIHE procurement &amp; tender evaluation teams staff to help them evaluate social value proposals effectively.</b>	Publish and distribute the toolkit to 100% of procurement staff	Collaborate with other public sector bodies for best practices.	Provide a consistent framework for assessing social value in procurement.	Complete and implement by <b>June 2026</b>
<b>Develop and implement a comprehensive set of KPIs to measure social, economic, and environmental outcomes.</b>	Finalise a KPI framework	Consult stakeholders and align with PPN 01/21 and NIHE's strategic objectives.	Ensure outcomes are trackable and transparent.	Begin reporting against KPIs by <b>Q4 2025/26.</b>
<b>Create a cross-functional team responsible for the delivery of the Social Value Action Plan and aligning procurement processes with the needs of customers and communities.</b>	Recruit and onboard team members with representation from procurement, community engagement, and strategy departments	Leverage existing internal resources and expertise while providing training for team members to understand social value principles and objectives.	Ensure a focused and coordinated approach to embedding social value into all procurement and operational activities, directly supporting community priorities.	Form the team and hold the first planning meeting by <b>June 2026</b>
<b>Develop an online system for reporting on social value delivery.</b>	Ensure 100% of Social Value delivery is co-ordinated through a central system.	Integrate reporting requirements into contract terms.	Improve transparency and accountability in social value delivery.	Launch the system by <b>December 2025.</b>
<b>Publish a detailed report outlining the social value outcomes achieved each year.</b>	Report on metrics such as jobs created, carbon reduction, and community initiatives.	Use data from the reporting system to inform the publication.	Demonstrate accountability and share progress with stakeholders.	Publish the first report by <b>June 2026</b>

## 12. Conclusion

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Social Value Strategy sets out a clear and ambitious roadmap for how we will deliver lasting, meaningful benefits to the people and communities we serve. Grounded in our vision that "everyone is able to live in an affordable, sustainable and decent home, appropriate to their needs, in a safe, attractive, and climate-resilient place," this strategy reaffirms our commitment to using our resources, influence, and partnerships to generate social, economic, and environmental value across Northern Ireland.

By embedding social value at the heart of our procurement and operational activities, we aim not only to meet our statutory and policy obligations but to go further—tackling inequality, promoting inclusion, supporting local economies, and addressing the urgent challenges of climate change. This strategy provides the structure and tools we need to deliver on that ambition, supported by a detailed action plan, a robust measurement framework, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Success will require collaboration. We will work closely with our suppliers, partners, tenants, and wider stakeholders to co-design solutions, share learning, and build collective impact.

We recognise that social value is not a one-time outcome—it is a long-term, evolving commitment to doing more with what we have, and ensuring that every contract, every investment, and every action contributes to a stronger, fairer, and more sustainable society.

Through this strategy, NIHE is not only delivering homes—we are delivering hope, opportunity, and resilience for communities across Northern Ireland