

Glasgow City Region Deal – Fostering Alignment and Collaboration to Promote Equality

This case study has been produced by the [Buying Social Justice](#) research project as part of its exploration of how public procurement is being adopted by public sector organisations to advance equality in employment. It is one of a series of case studies that feature good practice in the use of public procurement by infrastructure and transport bodies, local authorities, housing associations and universities in England, Scotland and Wales. The purpose is to present examples of good practice in how public procurement can incorporate objectives to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce. By presenting a selection of examples from public bodies of different sizes and sectors, it is intended that other organisations may consider adopting similar measures in their procurement practices.

All the case studies, together with other publications and outputs from the project, are available on the [Buying Social Justice](#) website.

Background to the organisation

In Scotland, City Region Deals are funding arrangements between the UK Government, the Scottish Government and local partners with the aim of boosting the regional economy and creating new job opportunities by promoting inclusive growth and attracting investment. Signed in 2014, the Glasgow City Region Deal, which includes a £1.13 billion Infrastructure Fund, is the largest City Deal in Scotland and among the largest in the UK. It brings together eight local authorities from the west of Scotland, namely Glasgow City, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, and West Dunbartonshire. The Deal funds are disbursed by the Glasgow City Region Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO does not carry out procurement itself but provides leadership, guidance and support to the authorities receiving the Infrastructure Fund and delivering projects in their local areas.

The City Region Deal sets out to deliver about 26 projects relating to infrastructure employability and skills and growth, over a period of 20 years. One example is a collaborative project between Renfrewshire Council, the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise to create an *Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland (AMIDS)*. The development of the AMIDS has been underpinned by City Deal investment. Funding through the Glasgow Region City Deal has delivered the enabling infrastructure, better connecting AMIDS to nearby commercial centres and enhancing walking and cycling provision, while further City Deal funding is creating improved connections between the district and the wider Glasgow City Region through the first opening road bridge over the River Clyde at Renfrew. Aiming to boost local and regional economic growth, AMIDS includes research facilities, such as the *National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS)* and a *Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre*, in Renfrewshire, located close to Glasgow Airport. Another project is the redevelopment of Motherwell Rail Station.ⁱ In addition to infrastructure projects, Glasgow City Region Deal furthermore facilitated three Innovation and Business Growth projects, a medical technology incubation facility in North Lanarkshire, *MediCity Scotland*, a project in Glasgow to support start-up SMEs, *Tontine*, and a project that aims to transfer scientific advances into economic benefits and for patients, the *Imaging Centre of Excellence*.ⁱⁱ Further projects tackle work

and employment, such as *Working Matters*, which supported health-related benefit recipients in Glasgow into employment, or *Youth Gateway*, a programme that supported young people in the City Region into employment.ⁱⁱⁱ It also provides economic intelligence and research to support the partner organisations in achieving their goals.

Glasgow City Region Deal, furthermore, places high importance on equality impact assessments. The individual authorities carry out equality impact assessments for their projects and also ask their contractors to conduct them. In addition to using the existing impact assessments, supported by the Health Foundation, the project *Economies for Healthier Lives* seeks to integrate a focus on health inequalities by developing a Capital Health Inequalities Impact Assessment Tool (CHIIA). Co-produced with stakeholders, including a community panel, this tool has the aim of reducing health inequalities in the Glasgow City Region.

Collaboration and alignment

As part of the City Deal Infrastructure Funds management arrangements work is carried out to further improve and align practices in the member organisations. The [City Deal Procurement Strategy 2015-2020](#) set out strategic objectives, which include governance, partnership working, fostering a unified approach, shared policies, the creation of shared tender documents, and promoting sustainable development. The strategy highlights the importance of aligning practices and collaboration, which “should allow us to procure the best at the best price, leading to better value and better opportunities for local business and residents, and ultimately to assist in driving greater regional economic growth.” (p. 3) In a similar vein, the subsequent Glasgow City Region’s [Sustainable Procurement Strategy](#) outlines three focus areas in relation to their work on public procurement: alignment and consistency, information gathering and distribution, and networking and engagement.

Its procurement structure facilitates sharing of good practices and experiences and exchange between the member authorities, and Scottish Government, regional anchor institutions and the Supplier Development Programme. The Supplier Development Programme is a joint project by the Scottish Government, local authorities and other public bodies that provides support to SMEs, which are based in Scotland, relating to tendering free of charge. Glasgow City Region is furthermore placing importance on engaging with stakeholders.

A Procurement Support Group has been established to offer an opportunity for exchanging good practice and experience and provides guidance and support to member authorities and beyond. It includes members from all partner organisations and meets regularly. The Group has sub-groups dedicated to different topics, one of which includes community benefits. A sub-group on advancing equalities examines practices to promote access to training and qualifications for disadvantaged groups in relation to construction. Glasgow City Region’s community benefit menu, which outlines central priorities, has been developed in consultation with stakeholders such as the Scottish Government and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). Specific contact points, often a single point of contact, exist in the different authorities to assist suppliers with community benefits.

The approach to collaboration and exchange is based on an idea to “drive progress through the groups because it's all about [...] stakeholder management, buy-in, communication and also knowledge sharing in terms of their expertise and reaching that common approach to get best practice and the highest standards we possibly can.” (Legacy Officer)

In addition to fostering collaboration, the City Region Deal partners are working towards the establishment of shared practices and transparent information. Glasgow City Region PMO has issued

dedicated guides for suppliers and buyers. To ensure coherent implementation of the sustainable public procurement strategy a detailed Buyers Guide has been developed. The guide outlines how to include community benefits and highlights the importance that targeting priority groups has within the approach of the Glasgow City Region Deal. It further covers how to include fair work practices in procurement, showing how to include fair work questions in tender documents and how to evaluate responses. The guidance also covers the requirement to include community benefits and contains a Community Benefit Menu giving details of the priority groups for whom outcomes are expected. Likewise, the [Sustainable Procurement Suppliers Guide](#) includes information about procurement process and community benefits targeted at suppliers.

Community benefits in the City Region Deal

The *City Deal Community Benefits Strategy 2015 to 2020* commits to developing a consistent approach in relation to community benefits and outlines core principles, including the development of a framework for integrating community benefits in public contracts and ensuring compliance with legal requirements. In terms of procedures, it highlights that community benefits can be integrated contractually (either as an evaluated part or as mandatory) or as voluntary benefits offered by the supplier, which are not part of consideration of contract awards. Voluntary community benefits will, as it states, “be adopted to encourage suppliers delivering on more than one City Deal contract to offer additional community benefits as a consequence of the aggregate level of City Deal spend with that supplier.” (p. 6)

Acknowledging community benefits as “a key component in maximising social, economic and environmental benefits within the City Deal programme” (p. 3), the [City Deal Community Benefits Strategy 2015 to 2020](#) defined community benefits as “contractual requirements which deliver wider benefits in addition to the core purpose of the contract” (p. 6) and provided examples for such benefits, including but not limited to targeted employment, training and vocational training, initiatives to develop supply chains, and equality, diversity and inclusion(EDI).

The subsequent Sustainable Procurement Strategy, which followed the Community Benefits Procurement Strategy, furthermore outlines that within Community Benefits and employment-related clauses, a focus is set on predefined priority groups, which the Procurement Support Group were involved in defining. These include homeless, (long-term) unemployed, care experienced people, ex-offenders, ex-services personnel, individuals with experience of substance misuse, people with disabilities (including learning disabilities), mental health issues and/or neurological conditions, parents, parents of three or more children with a disability, single parents, mothers with at least one child under the age of one and/or of less than 25 years of age, female returners, people over 50 years of age, individuals affected by an attainment gap and those not in employment, education or training (NEET), individuals from an ethnic minority, and members of an under-represented gender. Priority groups are the focus of requirements relating to employment and training opportunities and certain community benefits are reserved to them. This information on key priorities is also contained in the Sustainable Procurement Suppliers Guide and attached to the invitation for tenders.

Glasgow City Region member authorities engage with suppliers and aim to support them in delivering community benefits. The Suppliers Guide also includes contact information for community benefit support for the individual member authorities and a link to Employability Scotland. Another approach that is prominent in the City Region Deal Region is the development of Community Wish Lists. Community Wish Lists are digital applications, websites, that allow members of the community to add specific ‘wishes’ to improve their community. Based on this input from communities, wish lists aim to identify particular aspects that communities would like to see addressed and that can

serve as a guide for suppliers, who may choose to address specific points from the wish list as part of their contract bid.

Assuring that community benefit requirements are monitored is a key component of good practice. In the framework of the Glasgow City Region Deal, this is facilitated through a shared system for monitoring and reporting that gathers information pertaining to community benefits that are part of the contracts (Sustainable Public Procurement Policy). To facilitate monitoring and reporting and align existing practices, Glasgow City Region Deal develops a shared monitoring and reporting framework, including standardised reporting templates and a dedicated IT system, Cenefits, which facilitates capturing community benefits included in contracts as well as monitoring and reporting on their delivery throughout the programme.

Community benefit outcomes

Glasgow City Region regularly reports on performance, including regular reporting on community benefit achievements. According to the *Glasgow City Region Annual Performance Report 2022/2023* by the end of March 2023, 1,733 community benefits were secured, including 870 skills and training (496 of which were delivered at the date of the report) and 222 vocational training opportunities (of which 185 delivered), 309 jobs and apprenticeships (184 delivered), and a total of £152,000 for community projects (£97,100 delivered). The Annual Performance Report provides a more detailed breakdown, most importantly it details different measures and provides the number of specific Community Benefits for members of priority groups. It shows that individuals from the priority groups accounted for the majority of beneficiaries of community benefits relating to recruitment and employment practices. Among the 309 secured community benefits in the category targeted recruitment and employment, 171 went to individuals from priority groups. More specifically 83 new entrants and 31 new graduate entrants were from priority groups and 57 new start apprentices. Among the 184 recruitment and employment related community benefits that had already been realised at this point, 107 came from priority groups (56 new entrants, 20 new entrant graduates and 31 new apprentices). Further secured community benefits included 396 work experience placements, 190 careers events and 34 taster session, 187 workplace visits, 56 mentoring and enterprise programmes, 6 volunteering opportunities for priority groups, and 1 training programme.

Good practice highlights

Key highlights of good practice identified are:

- A dedicated approach to collaboration and exchange across public bodies and with stakeholders. A particularly positive approach is the Procurement Support Group, which makes space for regular exchange.
- Use of Equality Impact Assessments and development of a tool for assessing the impact of projects on health inequalities.
- A focus on priority groups who have been identified as those facing particular disadvantage, whether in employment or other areas, as a way of targeting equality action, for example by prioritising ethnic minorities, an underrepresented gender, single parents, among other groups, in assessing community benefit contributions.
- Standardisation and transparency, including the development of shared practices across local authority boundaries to facilitate the implementation and reduce the burdens placed on bidders and suppliers.
- The availability and standardised sharing of information on community benefits and the provision of contact information, which lessens burdens for suppliers.

- The development of Community Wish List to align community benefit opportunities with local needs.
- Regular reporting on community benefits realised through procurement.
- The development of a shared IT system for monitoring and reporting, including of community benefits.
- Publicly available reporting on how many recruitment and employment related community benefits benefitted individuals from priority groups.

ⁱ A summary of the infrastructure projects can be found here: <https://glasgowcityregion.co.uk/city-deal/projects/infrastructure/>

ⁱⁱ A description of these project can be found here: <https://glasgowcityregion.co.uk/city-deal/projects/innovation-business-growth/>

ⁱⁱⁱ An outline of work and employment related programs can be found here: <https://glasgowcityregion.co.uk/city-deal/projects/skills-employment/>