

# Our Social Value Strategy



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**Our Social Value**

Warrington Housing Association

## BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

For over 40 years Warrington Housing Association has been providing a broad range of affordable homes and services to customers across the borough. We are a social business committed to helping make Warrington a great place to live, in which the potential of individuals and communities can be realised.

Social value is one of the key thematic pillars of our business. Our vision is to be able to deliver on our social value commitments and crucially also be able to demonstrate the impact achieved through our efforts. This strategy sets out what we mean by Social Value, how we are going to work with our customers, colleagues and partners to deliver it and how we intend to measure its success.

## CONTEXT

In 2017 our strategic architecture was reviewed, and five key thematic pillars were identified around which our business will prosper. These pillars are used throughout our organisation to help us articulate who we are and what we want to achieve:

**Our Homes** – to remain a significant local provider of housing and housing solutions in Warrington.

**Our Customers** – to prioritise the needs of people and put the creation of sustainable communities at the heart of our work.

**Our Social Value** – to deliver and demonstrate Social Value across our whole range of activities.

**Our Viability** – to achieve sector leading performance across key indicators.

**Our Colleagues** – Treating all customers and staff fairly, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin.

Whilst Social Value is identified as a discrete pillar clearly this work is a part of all our thematic pillars. It makes sound business sense for us to understand the impact our investment decisions make to our communities as it helps us to manage and govern our organisation effectively, improve our services and be more accountable to our stakeholders.

## DEFINING SOCIAL VALUE

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 defines social value as “support or initiatives that deliver an improvement to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area”. The Act came into force on 31 January 2013. For housing associations, it applies in two important and distinct respects:

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- Housing associations are bound by the requirements of the legislation when procuring a service.
- Housing associations must be prepared to define the social and economic value and impact of the services they offer when tendering for a service from a local authority or another relevant body.

The Act applies to all public service contracts and framework agreements to which the Public Contracts regulations (2006) apply.

The Chartered Institute of Housing defines Social Value as:

- The wider non-financial impact of programmes, organisations and projects, especially on the well-being of individuals and communities and of the environment.
- The effect of an activity on the social fabric of the community and well-being of the individuals and families.

For WHA social value can be considered in a number of ways. For some of our work social outcomes are implicit, for example our core business is about creating and maintaining homes for those in housing need or the fact that our procurement process aims to deliver social value through our supply chains.

For other aspects of our work delivering social value is explicit and WHA is proud of its commitment to projects such as LifeTime, Warrington Home Improvement Agency and our flagship, award winning Gateway building.

## OBJECTIVES

By considering social value in the decisions we take as a business, including the way we operate, employ staff, engage with customers and procure services we can cultivate a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive society. This enables us to build a positive legacy and demonstrate that we can be a positive force in our community.

Our Social Value pillar covers four key objectives:

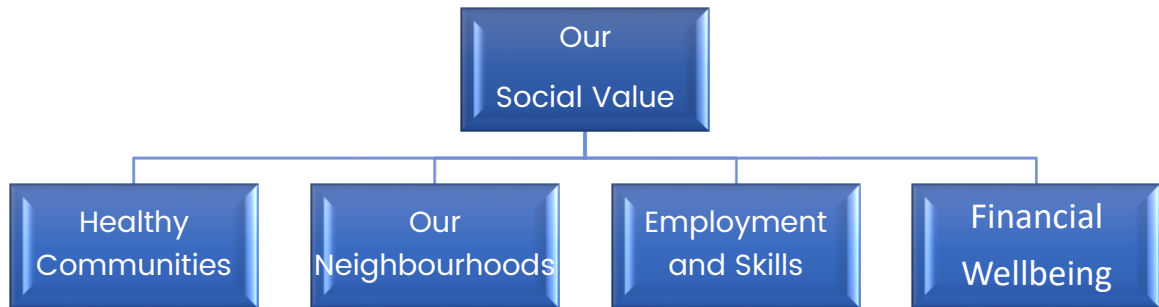
- **Healthy communities** – investing in our community services to improve resilience, capacity and social cohesion, guided by the Five Ways to Wellbeing<sup>1</sup>
- **Our Neighbourhoods** – investing in key services that contribute to sustainable communities including Warrington Home Improvement Agency and the Gateway Community Resource Centre.

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<sup>1</sup> What Works Wellbeing

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- **Employment and skills** – empowering volunteers to make a difference in our community and investing in our apprenticeship scheme.
- **Financial wellbeing** – supporting anti-poverty to reduce hardship and increase resilience and wellbeing.



Partnerships – we recognise that we can achieve the greatest impact for our customers and the wider Warrington community by creating successful and sustained partnerships in a positive working relationship.

### APPROACH AND MEASURING SUCCESS

As a locally based association our work has always had a local focus and our reputation is built on a strong social value focus. This is important to us and will continue to be a strong theme for our work.

We work actively with our local authority and other local partners to improve and shape places and services at both a strategic and operational level. This is an ethos that we will continue to focus on.

The needs of our community will mean that the projects we invest in may change over time and we will actively seek to do this to ensure that our work remains relevant and makes a difference where it is most needed. This may mean that our investment and focus changes.

We will always seek to ensure that more mature projects and services become self-supporting so that we can move towards enabling and developing new activities and facilitate new activities. Our expertise in social value can be used to facilitate as well as being the primary driver behind projects.

To make best use of our resources and manage our risks we will seek funding from other sources where there are shared objectives so that our social value programme is more

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robust and we continue to meet our wider business needs. This may include charitable sources, other stakeholders and business partners.

We commit to being closely involved in the local community, maximising our impact by,

- understanding needs of people (research, surveys, consultations, views, evidence)
- work with stakeholders to collaborate and join our efforts to further our vision and have the best outcomes.

Our approach will also include:

- Social Value metrics in our Key Performance Indicators and assurance reporting which have Board oversight.
- Publishing a Social Value Report every two years linking our performance to our objectives. This will capture our performance quantitatively and qualitatively.
- Setting targets through our annual Business Planning and budget setting process
- Understanding and managing the risks to the Association's Business Plan that are relevant to this strategy.
- Using appropriate tools and evidence to understand the impact we are making and to inform our business decisions.
- Working with stakeholders to get different perspective on our work and inform our decision making.

We will build on this approach in developing our services.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We will complete an equality and diversity impact assessment on our strands of work, our policies and projects to ensure that we are promoting equality, removing barriers and improving participation. This will be reviewed in line with this strategy and for each of the services that form part of the strategy.

## REVIEW

As a key corporate priority, this strategy has been approved by the Association's Board who are ultimately responsible for ensuring delivery. Board receive periodic updates on Strategy and specific project performance and Social value forms a key strand of our ¼ assurance reporting process.

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The Board has agreed appropriate delegations for its Committees and the Executive Team to undertake specific oversight of our activities in this area. The Board and relevant Committees will scrutinise, and challenge delivery of the strategy as required.

The strategy will be reviewed every three years and may be subject to more frequent revision in the case of regulatory change and/or financial conditions.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

This strategy covers all aspects of the Association's activities and should be read in conjunction with a range of other policies and procedures. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Our other thematic strategies
- WHA 0551 – Procurement Strategy
- WHA 0553 – Risk Management Policy

**STRATEGY OWNERSHIP:** WHA BOARD  
**STRATEGY LEAD:** Director Social Value  
**REVIEW DATE:** MAY 2026

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