

Audit Wales – A missed opportunity - Social Enterprises

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What are we trying to achieve, the outcome	The Council is committed to continue to support steps to deliver a circular economy that provides local jobs, training opportunities and other community and social benefits for local social good and that help to mitigate poverty and inequality. Considering Social Enterprise can be part of our service options in the context of socially responsible procurement. This means taking action when purchasing goods, works and services, to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
Why we need to do it:	Our current Corporate Plan ' Making a Difference ' aims to create the opportunity for people and businesses to be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential. In 2020 a Vision for Social Enterprise 2020-30 was launched alongside an action plan for its delivery. Transforming Wales through Social Enterprise: vision and action plan was co-produced by social enterprises and social enterprise support agencies with the support of Welsh Government and has the potential to play a significant role in helping Public Bodies to meet the seven National Well-being Goals, and in particular a Wales of Cohesive Communities. Also, the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act which places social partnership on a statutory footing in Wales has recently gained Royal Assent. Among other things the Act promotes fair work and socially responsible public procurement.

Recommendation	Council's Response	Next Steps	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1. To get the best from their work with and funding of Social Enterprises, local authorities need to ensure they have the right arrangements and systems in place. We recommend that local authority officers use the checklist in Appendix 2 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-evaluate current Social Enterprise engagement, 	Noted The Audit Wales report identifies a number of complex and interconnected issues across a range of services. The report also included reference to our work to develop micro enterprises through our *'Community Catalyst' project, recently implemented, which offers a local and sustainable solution within social care.	The Council is considering the detail of the report so that we can more effectively maximise resources in developing our approach both strategically and locally. We will continue to use all resources, including the Audit Wales checklist, to inform and strengthen our	March 2024	Syd Denis/ Marc Crumbie/ Lesley Lawson

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<p>management, performance and practice;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify opportunities to improve joint working; and • jointly draft and implement an action plan with timeframes and responsibilities clearly set out to address the gaps and weaknesses identified through the self-evaluation. 	<p>The Council has a good track record of establishing Community Benefits through our procured contracts; has used a local Social Enterprise to deliver part of refit in our office accommodation and can point to examples of providing opportunities for training and jobs for people with disabilities including our 'Learning Curve' enterprises as well as the Award winning <u>Vision Products</u>. In 2022, we also implemented a local Social Value Measurement Framework (TOMS) through which we are able to monitor the social value of our contracts. However, we can do more to consider social enterprises in delivering our services. The Council also plays a significant role in its work with, and support, to community based social enterprises including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilising social enterprises to provide low level assistance to residents as part of a range of support options. • administering a range of funds to local social enterprises. • providing support to apply for funding. • facilitating Community Asset Transfers to local social enterprises such as 'Y Siop Fach Sero', Age Connects Morgannwg, Cambrian Village Trust. 	<p>wider approach, recognising the need to raise the understanding and profile of social enterprises and the community value they offer.</p> <p>This approach will also be in the context of our continuing work to implement the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act which has recently gained Royal Assent, and the opportunities to develop our arrangements within the new Corporate Plan which comes into effect in 2024.</p>		

APPENDIX 2a

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing projected and actual Social Value calculations on the social and wellbeing value of their activities along with a 'Social Return on Investment' calculation. 			
<p>2. To drive improvement we recommend that the local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formally approve the completed Action Plan; regularly report, monitor and evaluate performance at relevant scrutiny committees; and revise actions and targets in light of the authority's evaluation and assessment of its performance. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>The Council is currently mapping community based enterprises as part of its business as usual and is also in early discussions with a third party to scope a potential project that will establish a baseline of Social Businesses in RCT, their size and scope and the extent of their ability and willingness to engage with the Council.</p> <p>The draft Aberdare Regeneration Strategy also contains reference to early plans to engage with Social Enterprises within the context of the strategic objective '<i>To support the development of a greater variety of businesses within the town that satisfy emerging opportunities from both growing visitor demands and local needs</i>'.</p>	<p>Continue to establish the scale and scope of Social Enterprise across RCT.</p> <p>The actions arising from recommendation 1 will also support the delivery of recommendation 2.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Syd Dennis/ Marc Crumby/ Derek James/ Lesley Lawson/</p>
<p>3. To ensure the local authority delivers its S.16 responsibilities to promote Social Enterprises we recommend that it reports on current activity and future</p>	<p>Noted. *See also recommendation above.</p> <p>The 2021/22 Director's Report set out early work to develop the 'Community Catalyst' Partnership Service model to support</p>	<p>The Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022/23 will continue to</p>	<p>October 2023</p>	<p>Neil Elliot</p>

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<p>priorities following the evaluation of its Action Plan including the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.</p>	<p>people to develop small community based enterprises which is currently being piloted in North Cynon.</p>	<p>address relevant Social Enterprises input that will help to strengthen its response to meeting the requirements of Social Services and Well-being Act.</p>		