

# Social Investment Impact Report 2023/24



**Social Investment  
and Property**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

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# 1. Introduction

We are committed to becoming the best Council for our residents. However, it is a challenging time across local government with many councils, including ours, facing budget pressures while demand for vital services is increasing. In this context, the role of social investment in ensuring social benefits and financial returns is more important than ever.

It is critical for us to get more value for money for our residents from our spending on goods and services and the use of our resources, including property, parks, and leisure centres. In the Social Investment Strategy (July 2023), we set out to do this by providing a framework and process to generate more value in the form of social, economic, and environmental benefit for our people and places.

The Council has been practicing social investment for a long time, but has only recently tried to formally measure and evaluate its impact. In the Social Investment Strategy, we committed to introducing a Social Value and Social Return On Investment (SROI) Measurement Tool and framework to assess the impact of social investment as well as producing an annual report to communicate the impact of social investment activities.

We have identified five key themes that align with priorities set out in the Council Plan, Social Investment Strategy and the Government's Procurement Policy Note 06/20 Social Value Model:



**1**  
Promoting  
fairness



**2**  
Supporting  
local  
organisations



**3**  
Health and  
wellbeing



**4**  
Employment  
and skills



**5**  
Sustainability

Our first Social Investment Impact Report evaluates the impact of activities undertaken by the Council, its suppliers, and the voluntary and community sector in the 2023/24 financial year.

This report reflects a small number of activities and initiatives that are generating social value for residents in Kensington and Chelsea and is a baseline from which we can build and improve.



## 2. Background and methodology

Social investment is how we describe our work to get the best possible social return from the goods and services we buy, and the property, parks and housing which we manage on behalf of our residents.

We do this by investing in our voluntary and community sector through grants and the use of property, by building partnerships with anchor institutions and businesses, and procuring goods and services to benefit our residents in a meaningful way.

Since the Grenfell Tragedy, the Council has committed to change. The bereaved families and survivors have set us a challenge to be the best for our residents and communities in Kensington and Chelsea. This challenge acknowledges that in the past, the Council sometimes looked at buildings, places and spaces as things of purely financial value. The social investment approach seeks to achieve the right balance by embedding social value in decision making.

Considering social value during the decision-making process is not a replacement for evaluating the value for money or quality of our core services, or the need to raise money from our commercial property to support public services. Instead, it is something we want to consider alongside those factors in the decisions we take.

**Kensington and Chelsea has many resources that can be leveraged through the social investment approach to achieve the outcomes set out in the Council Plan. The six resource areas originally identified to encompass the projects that sit within the social investment programme are:**



### **In summary, this approach is about:**

- Making the most of Council resources to benefit our residents
- Remembering that financial considerations are still a significant priority
- Enabling and enhancing social investment activities that are already happening in the Council
- Not trying to do everything at once and continuing to learn and improve

## What is social value?

Social value is an umbrella term to describe the variety of individual, community and other secondary benefits derived from public assets and public spending on projects and services. In Kensington and Chelsea, social value describes the impacts a project or service has made to beneficiaries, communities, local economies, and society as a whole. It understands each of these in terms of their impact on the quality of life, life satisfaction and wellbeing of the people, communities, and places we serve.

### How do we measure social value?

Our measurement approach includes:

1. Using **HM Treasury's Magenta Book** for managing activities and ensuring social impact.
2. Applying the **Green Book's social cost-benefit analysis** to understand savings and benefits.
3. Using **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** to monetise outcomes like confidence, community cohesion, and access to green spaces. This calculation considers the money spent on a particular project, as well as the social value it produces, in order to create a ratio. For example, libraries in 2023/2024 provided £6,090,738.86 in social value, and a return of £2.82 for every £1 spent.
4. Conducting **Economic Impact Analysis** to see how local spending boosts economic growth and job opportunities.
5. Using **Environmental Impact Analysis** to evaluate contributions to sustainability goals.
6. **Assessing Operational Social Value** to understand long-term impacts of projects on social, economic, and environmental factors.

Using a combination of these approaches helps the Council to make the right decisions based on the needs of our residents, communities, and businesses.

## Why are we introducing this?

Whilst there are examples from across the Council of projects that produce social value, a long-standing challenge has been how to properly quantify this value within the communities we serve.

Introducing an objective form of measurement will help us to demonstrate the extent to which social value outcomes have been achieved for residents and allow us to set goals for future years. Using this data to inform the allocation of resources will ensure more transparency and fairness and help us to track our progress against the goals we set out in the Council Plan.

However, SROI and social value data alone cannot show us the whole picture. At its core, the purpose of social impact work is to create better places and improve lives. This means returning to the residents affected by the projects included in this report to make sure the data accurately represents their experience and to gauge the extent to which the impact of social investment initiatives has been felt.

### 3. Headline data

Project highlights:		
<p><b>Digital Inclusion</b></p> <p><b>338 residents</b> supported to develop digital skills through the DigitALL third sector partnership.</p>	<p><b>Libraries and Archives</b></p> <p>Libraries in Kensington and Chelsea produced <b>£9million</b> in social value.</p>	<p><b>Financial Inclusion</b></p> <p><b>550 residents</b> given financial advice and support through the Money Cafes.</p>
<p><b>Employment and Skills</b></p> <p>Engagement with businesses and residents generated <b>£363k</b> in social value, with a return on investment of <b>£3.31</b> for every £1 spent.</p>	<p><b>Lancaster West</b></p> <p>The Money MOT pilot project provided cash grants, employment assistance, and financial support to <b>39 residents</b>.</p>	<p><b>Community Catalysts</b></p> <p>A Social Return on Investment forecast shows <b>£4.27</b> in social value for every £1 spent by the Council.</p>

Social value through procurement activity:	
<p><b>Suez Waste Contract</b></p> <p>Suez produced <b>£7.7million</b> in additional social value between April 2023 and March 2024.</p>	<p><b>Housing Management</b></p> <p>The social value produced through contracts in 2023/24 in the housing investment programme was <b>£470k</b>.</p>
<p><b>GLL Leisure Contract</b></p> <p>27 per cent of the workforce in Kensington and Chelsea leisure centres are residents of the borough, and currently <b>3,588 residents</b> hold active leisure centre memberships. <b>364 children</b> benefit from discounted swimming.</p>	<p><b>Idverde Parks Contract</b></p> <p>Idverde welcomed <b>6,198 corporate volunteers</b> and <b>1,085 resident</b> volunteers in 2023/24 to help maintain our parks and green spaces. The contract with Idverde produced <b>£1.2million</b> in additional social value.</p>

Social investment leases:	
<p><b>The Children’s Book Project</b></p> <p>Since June 2023, the Children’s Book Project has gifted <b>35,586 books</b> to <b>10,041 children</b> in Kensington and Chelsea.</p> <p>For every £1 given in rental discount to the Children’s Book Project the organisation produced <b>£2.07</b> in social value for residents of Kensington and Chelsea.</p>	<p><b>Worlds End &amp; Lots Road Big Local</b></p> <p>Between January and March 2024, WELR Big Local ran <b>116 activities</b> for residents of the Worlds End and Lots Road area.</p> <p>We forecast that WELR Big Local will produce a Social Return on Investment of <b>£3.12</b> for every £1 given in rental discount.</p>



## 4. Promoting fairness

In the 2023-2027 Council Plan, we committed to doing what we can to make life fairer for people who face the greatest disadvantages and challenges, so that everyone, regardless of who they are or where they live, can make the most of what this borough has to offer.

### We can achieve this by:

- Targeting our services to those most in need
- Building partnerships with local businesses, voluntary sector organisations and community groups
- Providing employment and skills support
- Utilising the social value commitments of contractors, and our property portfolio

This section of the report highlights our efforts to foster an inclusive environment where every individual can thrive, regardless of background. These initiatives are designed to address inequities, support underrepresented groups, and create pathways to success for all residents. By prioritising equality, we aim to build a borough that reflects the rich diversity of its people and ensures that every voice is heard and valued.

### Digital Inclusion

The Digital Inclusion team supports residents who are digitally excluded to meet their life needs online. The team's services deliver benefits including improved health and wellbeing, employment outcomes and access to training opportunities, and reduced financial inequality and social isolation. They also increase engagement with Council, NHS and other services online.

#### Between May 2023 and March 2024:

- 218 residents have received 1:1 support with their digital skills and confidence from Council staff volunteers at 88 library drop-ins
- More than 45 staff have been trained as Digital Helper volunteers
- 34 staff have attended at least one Digital Helper session
- There were 27 active Online Centres in the borough, which secured over 600 free SIM cards for residents in data poverty  
More than 120 free home broadband packages were allocated to social housing tenants
- More than 120 free home broadband packages were allocated to social housing tenants
- The Council has secured and donated over 150 refurbished devices to residents in need and provided more than 160 new public access devices in community centres and libraries from April 2023, as well as securing over 25 devices from private companies for local VCS organisations
- In the 2023/2024 financial year, hundreds of ex-Council devices were donated to Get Online London for recycling, and some equipment was gifted to voluntary and community organisations in the borough

## DigitALL pilot project

The DigitALL pilot project led by Open Age and covering Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham supported older adults and adults with learning disabilities to achieve personalised digital inclusion goals through device and data provision, personalised skills assessment and 1:1 or group support. It has resulted in 338 Kensington and Chelsea residents receiving sustained, tailored digital skills support along with devices and data.

## SROI calculation

Using SROI methodology to calculate the return on investment from the DigitALL pilot project and the Digital Helper volunteers, digital inclusion generated:

- A total social value of more than £700k in 2023/24
- A return on investment of £3.40 for every £1 spent
- The DigitALL pilot project alone generated a Social Return on Investment of £2.83 for every £1 invested

## Financial Inclusion

The financial inclusion Money Cafes initiative was launched in April 2023 in Housing Management to provide financial advice and cost of living support to residents. Our four Money Cafes are accessible, community-based venues where residents can receive comprehensive financial support and guidance.

The project's support includes welfare and debt casework, financial health checks, digital inclusion, period products, food pantries and Universal Credit migration workshops.

In the financial year 2023/24, our Financial Inclusion team has:

- Provided advice and support to 550 residents at Money Cafes
- Gifted 85 SIM cards
- Facilitated broadband connections for 30 residents
- Offered comprehensive advice on welfare and finances, including casework such as tribunals and debt management, to all attendees
- Awarded crisis payments to residents with no income and distributed £350,000 in tenancy support payments
- Provided period products, Oodies, blankets, gloves, energy-saving light bulbs, dehumidifiers, and more

This support produces wellbeing outcomes such as relief from the burden of debt, the ability to pay for essentials, and the ability to learn strategies for better money management.

## Money MOT at Lancaster West

In North Kensington, the Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team (LWNT) is developing an integrated, estate-based housing service for residents. In 2020/21, rent arrears on the Lancaster West Estate (LWE) increased to £253,000 with 199 cases, compared to £220,000 in the 2019/20 financial year.

LWNT launched the Lancaster West Money MOT project with a £20,000 grant from the Housing Advisers Programme. Partnering with Nova New Opportunities, the project engages residents early, offering tailored interventions to manage finances, reduce debt, and prevent homelessness.

The pilot's success secured an additional £53,000 from Fusion21 Foundation in November 2023.

## Approach

Our approach to supporting residents in a perpetual cycle of financial pressure prioritised resident engagement, information sharing and collaboration through estate-based support at LWE.

Another priority has been understanding and addressing barriers faced by residents such as limited English proficiency, IT skills, and the impacts of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. To address these and develop trusting relationships, we prioritise building consistency through our presence, accessibility, and collaborative efforts with Nova and Council staff.

## Statistics from the 2023/24 pilot project

- Engaged 39 residents out of 46 referred (85 per cent engagement rate)
- 15 residents were in rent arrears, totalling £26,756.93 (average of £1,783.80 per resident)
- 18 residents had utility debts totalling £21,838.80 (average of £1,213.26 per resident)
- 12 residents had other debts, totalling £28,609 (average of £2,384.08 per resident)
- 21 residents were unemployed
- Provided cash grants, employment assistance, benefit application support, housing and debt support, and referrals to additional services

## SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, the Money Cafes generated:

- £173k for residents of Kensington and Chelsea
- A return on investment of £4.83 for every £1 spent on its delivery

**Case study:** Resident x had to leave their job due to physical and mental health challenges, facing significant debt: £2,303 in rent arrears and £3,950 in utility debt. They received support in navigating the benefits system, applying for contribution-based ESA and PIP, and securing Council Tax Reduction. They set up payment plans for council tax and rent arrears and received a grant from their energy provider to cover utility debt. Additionally, they received a £150 cash perk for immediate needs. As a result of this support, their monthly income increased by £463, providing much-needed financial relief.

## 5. Supporting local organisations

Our voluntary community sector, businesses, strategic partners, and statutory agencies are among the most valuable assets in our borough. Building and maintaining meaningful relationships and partnerships is one of the most impactful ways we can harness social investment to provide greater community benefit for our residents and communities.

Supporting the voluntary sector is a key component of our strategic direction for Social Investment. Moving forward, we will prioritise standardising our leasing arrangements with the voluntary sector to ensure fairness and transparency.

One of the ways in which the Council directly supports the voluntary sector in Kensington and Chelsea is through our voluntary sector support fund (VSSF). The VSSF distributes only a fraction of the funding provided to VCS organisations by the Council and gave **£1.7million** in grants to **35** voluntary sector organisations in 2023/2024. This funding supported local organisations to continue providing vital services to communities including families with complex needs, residents with hidden disabilities, and Black, Asian, multi-ethnic, and migrant communities.

### Leighton House Museum

In October 2022, Leighton House – one of two public museums owned and operated by Kensington and Chelsea Council – reopened following a major refurbishment which completed the restoration of the historic house and created new facilities, learning spaces, and resources to sustain it through the 21st century.

The project won the Architects' Journal Award for a Cultural Project in 2023, an RIBA London Award 2024 and was highly commended in the Civic Trust Awards. The museum was a finalist for the Art Fund Museum of the Year Awards 2023.

The museum offers free activities, workshops, classes, and tours aimed at people of all ages interested in learning more about the arts, including workshops for children and young people who may not have previously had access to activities like these or who may experience a museum environment as uncomfortable. The museum works extensively in partnership with local organisations.

Social value is produced through the museum's engagement with schools and local community groups, the public programme it delivers for adults, young people and families, and through the local tourism that it facilitates. In 2023/24, the museum ran activities including:

- A free concert for care home residents and their carers resident in Kensington and Chelsea
- Free stitching circles and outdoor yoga classes intended to promote health and wellbeing
- Free drawing classes for young people
- Free outreach activities in collaboration with Kensington and Chelsea libraries as part of the Warm Winter Spaces campaign



## SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, Leighton House Museum generated:

- A total social value of more than £3.2 million
- A return on investment of £2.57 for every £1 spent

The wellbeing benefits are highlighted by the testimony of one teacher who brought a group of year 6 school children to watch a concert by Maya Youssef at Leighton House:

*“There was at least one real shift in the way they see the world and their place in it. He said to me ‘I don’t belong here’ as we were standing to go in to the concert. He’d never been to anything like it. Then the music started, and it was familiar to him in ways he felt but couldn’t explain and suddenly he felt a part of something.*

*“When we were walking home, I asked him again about not belonging, and he said he realised he felt like that because it was all new, but it had been such a great experience it made him want to try lots of different things in life and not be afraid to.”*



welr.org.uk Local Trust Big Local

**THORPE PARK**  
Wednesday 3rd April

Please to provide dinner and to take 500 Biscuits and Pastry to school children.

This trip is only open to Big Local residents  
To make it fair only 2 children per household.

**BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS**

We are delighted to offer residents another Basic Digital Skills course! From Thursday 18th February until the end of March from 1-3pm.

JAGUR will be delivering these sessions for people age 55 and over! Please note this is for people that have not attended any previous Digital Skills with us.

**BEATED MOVE TO MUSIC**

will be held once a week on the following dates:  
Thursday 27th January  
Thursday 20th February  
Thursday 14th March  
Thursday 13th April

From 1.30 - 3.30pm

This is a great opportunity for you to come along and enjoy music & exercise.

Call us on 07743303586 for more information.  
No need to book!  
Unit 9/10 Worlds End Place  
SW19 0HE

**FRIDAY 5TH APRIL**  
FROM 10 - 4PM

Would you like to have a stall at our indoor sale? Do you have new items you would like to sell? Maybe you have handmade items?

If the answer is yes, please get in touch!

Unit 9/10 Worlds End Place  
SW19 0HE  
T: 0207 349 9448  
F: 07748 370386  
£3.00 per table

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**ZUMBA CLASS**

We are looking into delivering a weekly zumba class - if this would be something you would like to attend, please let us know!

POP IN TO REGISTER  
WITHOUT A CALL  
07748 370386  
020 7461 3100

**CSCS COURSE**

At Worlds End we are proud to be able to deliver another CSCS course if that is something you would like to attend and will support you in your career path.

Call us on 07743303586 for more information and get the course!

Call 07743303586  
0207 349 0284

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## Social investment leases

Another way the Social Investment team supports local organisations is by using some of the Council's commercial properties to design and grant social investment leases. These provide organisations, projects and businesses a base from which to operate in support of the community – and often to help rejuvenate high streets and local areas – by granting leases where a less-than-full market rent is charged in return for tangible social value outcomes delivered by the tenant.

## World's End and Lots Road Big Local

World's End and Lots Road (WELR) Big Local organises regular, free exercise, skills, and activity sessions for people of all ages in the south of the borough.

The group has proved so popular that it needed a bigger base – and found it through a social investment lease which provides favourable terms, allows Big Local to double the number of people able to attend in-person sessions and means a Council asset is used to improve the prosperity and wellbeing of residents.

### **Vanessa Kelly, Programme Manager at WELR Big Local, said:**

*“This is a much nicer space and because of the extra room we have effectively been able to double our capacity. We run a Christmas party which we could usually have around 20 people at, but last year we had room for 45. We're also able to hold classes here rather than renting external rooms and can use the money we save to run extra services.*

*“What's so important is that this is in the heart of the community. We're here, we're right on people's doorsteps and I think that encourages more people to come along and get involved.”*

Between January and March 2024, WELR Big Local ran 116 activities for residents of the World's End and Lots Road area, with 54 of these sessions focused on improving health and wellbeing.

Further sessions are developed based on feedback gathered directly from residents.

## SROI calculation

Using data from the beginning of the social investment lease in December 2023 to March 2024 and based on the positive social outcomes produced for residents, we can forecast that WELR Big Local will generate:

- A total social value of £314k
- A return on investment of £3.12 for every £1 spent



## The Children's Book Project

The Children's Book Project was founded in North Kensington and redistributes thousands of new and preloved books across London and the UK to children and their families. Having already supported the Children's Book Project into a meanwhile space on Lots Road, Chelsea, the Council worked with the charity to find new previously unused premises on a discounted social investment lease.

The charity's book gifting activities give children who may not have access to books at home the opportunity to choose books they would like to read. Research from the National Literacy Trust has shown that children who read regularly are three times more likely to be happier, healthier and experience better mental wellbeing and self-esteem than those who don't. As such, the Children's Book Project produced £83,867.11 in social value outcomes for children Kensington and Chelsea.

The Children's Book Project supports the most socio-economically disadvantaged families in London, as categorised by extremely high percentages of children in receipt of free school meals, school-based food bank usage and schools aiding displaced families or those seeking asylum.

Since June 2023 the Children's Book Project has:

- Gifted **35,586** books to **10,041** children in Kensington and Chelsea
- Gifted books to **53** organisations in Kensington and Chelsea through book gifting events
- Welcomed **3,568** in-person volunteers, as well as **55** virtual volunteers

Since moving to its new home, the charity has celebrated gifting its one millionth book. The one millionth book was among books given to children at Barlby Primary School, the school where it all began for the organisation 10 years ago.

## SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, the Children's Book Project generated:

- A total social value of £83,867
- A return on investment of £2.07 for every £1 given in rental discount

## 6. Health and wellbeing

In Kensington and Chelsea, there are inequalities in the health and wellbeing experienced by residents in the borough. From specialised support services to activities that promote social engagement and independence, we want to create a compassionate and supportive community for all.

### Community Catalysts

Community Catalysts is a social enterprise set up to help local people who want to do something for their community to think about their strengths and talents, and then start their own business or enterprise.

The project is aimed at older people, those with dementia, and people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

In 2023/24, Community Catalysts looked at how it could support micro-enterprises in Kensington and Chelsea. The group has recruited two catalysts who will support residents to overcome these challenges and start their own micro community enterprises.

### SROI calculation

Using SROI calculations, we forecast that over the course of the project, the Community Catalysts will generate:

- A total social value of more than £1 million
- A return on investment of £4.27 for every £1 spent

The Community Catalysts programme will receive funding from Kensington and Chelsea Council until 2026.



## Libraries and Archives

Kensington and Chelsea is home to six libraries, which welcomed over half-a-million visitors between April 2023 and March 2024.

Our libraries serve our residents in several ways. In addition to the many mental and physical wellbeing benefits of being able to access books and other reading materials, libraries can help alleviate social isolation, and offer safe spaces for residents to access support and advice locally. Digital Inclusion sessions are run from our libraries, supporting residents to get online and stay connected, in turn allowing them to access online services and apply for jobs.

Volunteering opportunities provided by the libraries also help to improve the wellbeing of volunteers, support them with gaining valuable work experience and improve their confidence.

## SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, we calculate that our libraries generated:

- A total social value of more than £9 million
- A return on investment of £2.82 for every £1 spent

## Leisure Management contract – GLL

GLL is a charitable social enterprise and workers cooperative that operates Kensington Leisure Centre and Chelsea Sports Centre in the borough.

The leisure management contract in Kensington and Chelsea has significantly enhanced social value through various inclusive and community-focused initiatives.

Kensington and Chelsea residents are offered free membership cards, providing activity discounts of up to 30 per cent off non-member prices and up to 50 per cent for concessions. Currently, 3,588 residents hold active memberships. A range of swimming sessions is available for children, with those aged nine-to-15 charged just £1, and all children under eight swimming for free. In 2023/24, 364 children benefited from this scheme.

To improve disability participation, the contract offers free access for helpers, which has increased opportunities for those with disabilities. A total of 279 people are utilising the inclusive membership programme. In collaboration with the Council, ten community programmes are run annually, and community sports clubs using the leisure centres benefit from an annual subsidy.

Currently, 27 per cent of the workforce reside in Kensington and Chelsea. GLL offers apprenticeships and fulfils 91 per cent of volunteer opportunities annually across customer service, lifeguard and leadership roles. It also engages with Community Champions steering group meetings.

Overall, these efforts collectively enhance the well-being and opportunities for all residents, particularly targeting those with disabilities and low physical activity rates.

## 7. Employment and skills

Empowering residents with the skills and opportunities needed for meaningful employment is a cornerstone of our work as a Council.

Kensington and Chelsea experiences higher levels of employment and education deprivation than the London average towards the north of the borough in Dalgarno, Golborne and Notting Dale. In addition, the unemployment rate of people with a long term or work-limiting disability is significantly higher than the London average (11.3 per cent vs 7.4 per cent).

Through targeted training programmes, career support services, and partnerships with local businesses, we are equipping people with the tools they need to succeed in a competitive job market. Our initiatives aim to bridge the skills gap, reduce unemployment, and promote lifelong learning.

This section of the report highlights the results of our employment and skills programmes and our commitment to building a prosperous and resilient workforce.

### Economic development

In partnership with Cadogan, Kensington and Chelsea Council has employed an Employment Opportunities Co-ordinator to support residents into work. Along with the Construction and Partnerships Advisor, they engage with residents that have experienced barriers to employment including individuals who were not in education, employment, or training to help them find training, work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities in construction and other sectors.

Between April 2023 and March 2024:

- 116 residents were engaged about roles in construction
- 6 of that number found employment in the sector, with 12 holding positions for six months or longer at the time that data was collected
- A further seven found apprenticeships and nine did work experience in the sector. In other sectors, 262 residents were submitted to employment opportunities, with 37 finding employment and 13 holding the roles for six months or longer

Being able to access this support locally also results in increased confidence and self-esteem, as well as raised aspirations and the ability to gain skills.

Other positive outcomes included increased business productivity and the fiscal saving and treasury benefits of people being sustainably employed or moving into apprenticeships or work experience.

### SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, we calculated that the work of our Employment and Skills team generated:

- A total social value of £363k
- A social return on investment of £3.31 for every £1 spent





## Building Future Skills

Building Future Skills took place in May 2023, engaging 11 girls and two boys from Kensington Aldridge Academy and St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College.

Over the course of three days, the young women created a sustainable design, local to their schools, for the development site at Holland House. Each member of the group was assigned a different role for the task, and they built a 3D model of their design. Group presentations were held on the final day to showcase their designs to a panel of industry professionals.

Along the way, students took part in engaging activities including a CV and transferrable skills session, networking with industry professionals, mock interviews and an apprenticeship Q&A.

By the end of the programme, all the participants had a complete CV and improved their knowledge of built environment careers and employability skills.

One participant said: *“Hearing from different people who are doing apprenticeships and visiting the sites/offices gave me a good understanding of the careers in construction and inspired me.”*

Through Building Future Skills, Suez helped improve outcomes for local young people by providing employment and skills support that they otherwise wouldn't have access to. By hosting CV workshops and donating to local charities, Suez contributed to the social value of the contract and demonstrated its commitment to the community.

## The waste management contract – Suez

The Suez group currently holds the contract for waste management in Kensington and Chelsea.

From April 2023 to March 2024, Suez committed £40k in donations through a community fund, £30k of which was donated to The Clement James Centre, an education charity based in North Kensington, and £10k was donated to Refettorio Felix, a drop-in centre and community kitchen serving vulnerable people at St Cuthbert's Church in Earls Court.

### SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, we calculated that Suez generated £7.7 million in additional social value through volunteering, employment support, creating new jobs, and donations.

## CV workshop, The Clement James Centre

Around 18 people trying to get back into work attended a CV workshop hosted by Suez in February 2024.

A representative from Suez said: *“Everyone went away from the session with a positive attitude and new skills to help them find a job that is right for them. They said we were passionate about what we did, and they learnt new tips to finding work and they felt really inspired going forward.”*

Feedback from Clement James:

*“People who attended said they gained more insight into preparing for job applications and more motivation and preparedness to look for jobs.”*

## Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team (LWNT) worked with 13 contractors to deliver £86,930 in social value commitments and agreed £1,128,337 in new social value commitments.

Social value highlights included three Lancaster West residents being employed by contractors and a series of new employment and training initiatives to upskill residents, such as an Employment and Training Hub opened in May 2023 thanks to £45,000 worth of social value contributions. To date, 15 delivery partners have delivered 18 types of courses from the Hub, ranging from maths classes for parents supporting children with homework, to photography and filmmaking sessions.

In January 2024, an employment and training fair was made possible through social value commitments and the participation of contractors, offering live vacancies and employment support. Over 200 residents attended, with 56 per cent of surveyed attendees describing it as “excellent”. Outcomes included residents entering employment, finding mentors, and having their art displayed in a local showroom.

## Rebel Business School

In November 2023, Rebel Business School ran a pop-up course in Notting Dale, upskilling more than 90 entrepreneurial Kensington and Chelsea residents. The course was made possible through social value contributions by Amber Construction and was so popular that LWNT now runs entrepreneur meet-up sessions for the attendees.

Over 90 residents participated throughout the week, with 57 per cent of attendees being unemployed, and 65 per cent receiving government benefits. They attended sessions such as “Getting Business Online” and “Legal Stuff”, and 86 per cent said the course improved their confidence and business network.

**One attendee said:** *“Within 40 minutes of the first session I was recommending all my friends to join the course in their area. There was much information taught that was so different to what we’ve been taught before. It had been an eye-opening experience that you can start where you are rather than waiting for business loans or products.”*

Throughout the year, contributions from Travis Perkins and United Living also saw improved facilities for local businesses in Baseline Studios.



## 8. Environment and sustainability

Our sustainability efforts are motivated by a vision of a greener, healthier, and more resilient community. Through innovative programmes and strategic partnerships, we are addressing climate change, fostering environmental stewardship, and ensuring that our natural resources are preserved for generations to come.

This includes listening to feedback from residents and fostering partnerships with community organisations in order to improve the usability of our green spaces. We have teamed up with Westway Trust and Everyone Active, who operate Westway Sports & Fitness Centre, to open two football pitches to members of the community whenever they are not booked. The Council contributed to funding the new scheme to address consultation feedback which revealed that some residents – and particularly young people – felt excluded from physical activity.

This section of the report highlights the strides social investment projects are making towards sustainability, eco-friendly practices and our ongoing dedication to nurturing a sustainable and vibrant Kensington and Chelsea that is accessible to all.

### Parks and leisure

Kensington and Chelsea is home to 28 parks, two cemeteries, over 60 highway sites, grass verges, planters and more which are maintained by Idverde on behalf of the Council.

To help maintain these spaces, Idverde has welcomed 6,198 corporate volunteers and 1,085 resident volunteers between April 2023 and March 2024. One of the resident volunteers has become an employee with the Council's community garden team.

In the 2023/24 financial year, Idverde employed three apprentices and two interns.

Providing volunteering opportunities and apprenticeships produces significant wellbeing outcomes, including increasing self-confidence, reducing isolation, improving physical health, and providing skills and experience that are valuable for employability. Apprenticeships also provide qualifications and raise personal career aspirations.

Through the community kitchen gardens outlined in a case study on page 26, residents benefit from an improved diet, and growing fresh fruit and vegetables provides carbon savings to help improve our sustainability.

### SROI calculation

From April 2023 to March 2024, we calculated that Idverde produced £1.2 million in additional social value through volunteering, work experience placements, creating new jobs, and community projects.



## Community kitchen gardens

Research shows that gardening is good for physical, social, and mental health and wellbeing, helping reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and improve health conditions such as obesity. Spending time in nature can also help reduce depression and anxiety, decrease stress levels, and help tackle social isolation.

As there are no allotments in Kensington and Chelsea, the community kitchen garden scheme was started in 2009. This project transforms under-used, neglected, or disused areas of land into allotment-style gardens where residents can grow their own fruit and vegetables. Each plot is approximately three metres square, providing a small but manageable area for food growing.

The project continues to grow; currently there are more than 50 community kitchen gardens and over 700 residents involved in the scheme. Some gardens are located within social housing estates with plots reserved only for residents, while others are open to applications from anyone living in the borough.

An essential part of the kitchen garden project is providing free gardening support, advice and training to plot holders and interested residents. Our Community Gardeners run a programme of garden workshops and events and provide gardening support, allowing plot holders to plan what they want to grow and receive free expert advice and practical gardening tips. They also work with plot holders to maintain the garden sites and provide opportunities for residents to engage in food growing and horticulture, providing a space to learn new skills, connect with nature and develop meaningful connections with others. The community kitchen gardens produce £107k in social value.



## 9. Looking forward

This report is the Council's first attempt at communicating the social value that has been generated through the projects identified in this report, but does not represent all the social value being generated in Kensington and Chelsea. What it does do is provide us with a baseline understanding of our impact in the borough to grow and improve upon year on year.

Through this report we aim to set the standard for how social investment at the Council will be measured and evaluated. This includes more effective measurement of social impact and outcomes using social value and SROI methodologies, which in turn will aid us in delivering on the commitments made in the Council Plan and Fairer Action Plan to focus on inequality in the borough and the Council's role in supporting equality of opportunity. This approach will allow for more transparency and fairness in decision making about the allocation of Council-owned assets and funding, which will become particularly critical as budget pressures increase and difficult decisions around resource allocation must be made.

Over the next 12 months, we will introduce Kensington and Chelsea's first Social Value Policy and Toolkit for procurement and commissioning activity, as well as pilot and implement the use of the Social Value and SROI Measurement Tool which will allow us to calculate an overall figure for the social value we have generated as a Council. We will continue to invest in the voluntary sector through our leasing arrangements, broaden our collaboration with more service areas, and continue fostering dialogue and partnership across different Council teams and partners in the borough to increase the number of activities being monitored and evaluated in this way.



