

Championing Social Value

Mike McNally

Job Title: Community Benefits Programme Manager
Organisation: Glasgow City Council
Department: Development and Regeneration Services
Time in Post: Four Years



Background

Mike McNally is one of the longest-serving Community Benefit 'Champions' currently active in Scotland's public sector. Taken on as part of Glasgow's Commonwealth Games legacy strategy he was given the task of maximising Community Benefits from direct public investment in the physical infrastructure associated with the 2014 Games.

Responsibilities

Mike is now responsible for Glasgow City Council's Community Benefits Programme. This involves.

- Maximising the scope and volume of Community Benefit clauses introduced to procurement exercises.
- Co-ordinating and facilitating internal systems and support to enable Community Benefit in procurement.
- Developing and managing external relationships with external partners and other contractors.

Over time the scope of the job role has developed somewhat, bringing involvement in wider procurement and economic development issues. This has kept the job fresh, varied, and fulfilling.

Personal attributes

Mike brought with him to the role a background as an operational manager in the private sector as well as experience in managing the city's successful bid to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games. This provided the required project

management skills, a familiarity with the planned investment in the Games, and existing relationships with senior figures across Glasgow's public sector.

Mike has also identified other attributes instrumental in enabling him to maximise social value through procurement:

- An ability to foster and manage productive working relationships, both internal to the Council and externally.
- A willingness to learn, experiment and push the boundaries of what is possible within a public authority.
- The perseverance needed to tackle cultural and organisational barriers to change.
- A basic but quickly growing knowledge of procurement processes and the economic development landscape.
- A commitment to improving the social and economic prospects of Glasgow.

Enablers

Beyond his personal attributes, there have been a range of factors that have enabled Mike to deliver results. These have included:

- Unwavering political and corporate leadership, with Community Benefit high on the Council's agenda.
- The freedom to develop and innovate in relation to Glasgow's approach to Community Benefit, with no constraining operational targets or bureaucratic processes imposed.
- Excellent corporate support from across Council functions, most critically Procurement and Legal.

- A strong supporting cast of partners that have brought technical expertise and commitment.

Challenges

While Mike has had a strong impact in a relatively short space of time, there were a number of personal and organisational challenges to overcome. These included:

- The personal learning curve associated with developing a detailed knowledge of procurement processes and the economic development agenda.
- The protracted process of agreeing and fine-tuning the detail of contractual clauses, which were to become standard in major public contracts.
- Maintaining focus and momentum during the lengthy lead-in time to plan and design contract specifications, and to see the benefits eventually realised during contract delivery.

Achievements

Mike has now helped to introduce and deliver Community Benefits in a wide range of public contracts. For him the key achievements have been:

- Developing an approach virtually from scratch and translating this into a routine part of Council procedures.
- Building strong professional relationships with Council staff, partners, and contractors.
- Seeing through the implementation of contractual clauses in almost 20 major contracts, including £271m of direct public sector investment in 2014 Games infrastructure alone.
- Giving others within the Council the confidence, knowledge and tools to embed Community Benefit requirements.

Ambitions

Mike is now well established in his role as Community Benefits Programme Manager, with a range of achievements under his belt. His ambitions now are to:

- Drive forward the community Benefit agenda, ensuring that quickly it becomes a routine part of all major goods, works, and services contracts.
- Encourage other public agencies in the city to adopt the approach, as a way of realising a much wider set of priority outcomes for Glasgow.
- Internalising the process more, ensuring through adequate guidance and support that staff are able to introduce and implement contractual clauses without his direct involvement.

Advice

Based on his experience in Glasgow, Mike offers some words of advice for others in position to secure added social value through public procurement:

- Be pragmatic about what can be achieved (and how quickly), going 'with the grain' and capitalising on opportunities as they arise.
- Tackle internal concerns about the approach at an early stage, and with robust argument and case evidence.
- Test the process in one or two contracts quickly to build confidence in the approach among others.
- Acknowledge your own limitations, and seek out the relevant expertise from colleagues where gaps exist.
- Recognise the need for constant refinement of the approach, guidance and template clauses.
- Learn from your mistakes and share this learning with others to maximise the benefits across departments.

For further information, contact:

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