

Social Value in Greater Manchester Case study



BAM Construct UK

BAM Construct UK is part of the Royal BAM group. The parent company is based in the Netherlands and is a construction-service-group. BAM has five subsidiaries in the UK. Specialising in building, it is a national company that undertakes all aspects of building projects, including project management and sub-contracting of works, although not residential projects. Its regional office is in Greater Manchester.

1.1 Social Value

BAM's website showcases the social value that it creates and clearly lays out its commitment to this work. It is clear that the organisation's work goes wider than the contractors it works with and extends to the stakeholders across the sectors it operates in and the communities where the construction takes place. It goes beyond the legal requirements of the Social Value Act 2012, having implemented a social value framework in all aspects of its project management and in its active consideration of stakeholder views, through consultation on projects.

The company is committed to giving something back to the communities in which it operates both socially and economically. As an 'agent of social change development', it is setting a good example and ensuring its commitment to social value is shown publically to act as a model on which other organisations might copy.

BAM goes further in its belief that social value should be embedded in all areas of work through a new simplified approach. A new corporate strategy is being adopted throughout the Royal BAM group worldwide. A simple ethos within the group that everyone can follow – 'enhancing lives.'

1.2 Disseminating the concept of social value

BAM's commitment to social value extends throughout its operations and is not only shown through project management and construction but also through the large amount of work it does through charities, separate from its core work. In areas where it doesn't have expertise, BAM works in partnership with community based charities that have a good knowledge of the local area to further develop social value.

Every staff member within BAM is expected to show commitment to social value and this is further underpinned by a volunteer programme which supports staff to undertake two days of volunteer work in an area of their choice.

BAM works with clients to maximise social value in its work, from drawing up tender bids with social value embedded, to obtaining commitment from clients for sustainable social benefits for the wider community or targeted beneficiaries.

1.3 Establishing desirable social outcomes and the roles of other organisations

BAM aims to extract social value through its core business. This is done in a four stage process:

- ❑ Tendering
- ❑ Community engagement plan
- ❑ Delivery
- ❑ Reporting

BAM has been using its influence and role to work with others in developing social value standards and frameworks with local government and other construction companies, allowing the sharing of best practice, cooperation and trust.

Tenders based on the social value framework have increased from 40% of all projects to 70% over the last few years. This work is being driven by local authorities such as Manchester City Council and its requirement that 20% (of overall quality) of any bid must solely relate to increasing social value. This gives social value a weighting of its own, separate from finance and infrastructure.

BAM projects are the main way social value is reached, allowing them to take more of a dynamic and flexible approach. Work carried out to maximise social value is bespoke to each project, time and location. Working within a framework ensures continuity of thinking across its overall approach.

Once a tender is successful, BAM's community engagement plan drives how to enact the social value promised in the tender. This is split into three parts:

- ❑ Employment
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Community

Employment

There are two main focuses with employment - local employment and up-skilling. BAM works with local partners to support people to take steps towards employment. The organisation recognises that people are often not ready to move into employment without support. In a number of cases these people have gone on to gain employment with BAM's competitors following their support – this is a key part of up-skilling local people whilst supporting skills within the wider industry. A focus is placed on working with people who face multiple barriers to employment and allowing them to gain access to work experience and employment opportunities.

Education

In the context of apprenticeships and trainee roles, education can lead into employment. Education can also include anything from nursery age to university age, with specific focus given to females and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

BAM are also external stakeholders here, through such focus on education they are stimulating skills growth in their areas of work and ensuring the workforce and those wishing to pursue a career in that sector have the skills they need.

Community

BAM believes that a true commitment to the community does not always mean producing growth or financial profit but that social value is best achieved if inclusion itself is one of the main goals. Social Return on Investment is a key factor and social value activities can represent value for money particularly through public sector

contracts. While BAM must deliver on the project brief and complete the project, the community section of the community engagement plan can and should live beyond the project and its completion date.

Whereas the community and education areas of the community engagement plan can be delivered by BAM directly (through direct work in the community, schools and further education), often the employment plans must be delivered through contractors and subcontractors. Often education and employment can overlap, as is the case with apprenticeships and trainee roles.

When working with contractors, BAM encourages local employment that is also sustainable. BAM also works with other stakeholders such as charities, social enterprises, voluntary groups and schools to meet the commitments specified in the tender and community engagement plan.

BAM often works in tandem with schools and higher education institutes to offer advice, opportunities and training from pre-school age to university graduates.

BAM sees its role, as part of being located in a physical community, giving support to local charities and small organisations with infrastructure, whenever possible. For example working with the Mancunian Way charity, BAM provides fundraising, site visits and ambassadors to encourage young people to get involved in construction. In addition to this it has provided an office space to the charity to allow it to have a city centre base, rent free. This has allowed the charity to work more closely with homeless young people in the city who are highly vulnerable.

1.4 Measuring Social value

Quantifiable measuring of social value is built into the tendering process. Other measures are used in their core work such as records of employment statistics, the locality of spend and resources and environmental impact. These are actively recorded and constantly monitored throughout a project to ensure the social value outcomes are met.

1.5 Using measurements of social value

BAM uses tools such as LBG to assess its community impact and this mainly focuses on the volunteering that staff members undertake. Although SROI type indicators are considered within the tendering process (especially within frameworks) there is no specific tool that BAM uses universally.

BAM also undertakes a case study approach and personal recounting, which is more relevant because of the project based approach and because it allows it to summarise the headline results for a specific project.

The organisation believes that personal recounting allows the data to be illustrated in terms of personal experiences and brings the data 'alive', adding a human narrative that can be easier and more real for others to relate to.

Through such stories and personal challenges faced together it can show just how effective BAM can be in helping the lives of people in the community in which it operates. This method can also foster an environment where vulnerable people within a community grow to trust organisations that not only offer help but also show that they have helped. This helps to rebuild a social contract that is conducive to increasing social value.