**CB4(VSO), Executive Director CVS(M)**

Speaker Key:

CM Interviewer

IE Interviewee

CM How difficult is as a VSO to get commissioning contracts for social value?

IE It shouldn’t be. Hem, we are in something called Compact which is effectively an agreement between the council and third sector about how we work together. An element of that is about commissioning, ehm, and in there it talk about the social value. The council has a social value, it is called (…), with very senior people in the council, which are saying yes, the social value matter, we want social value in our tenders, and we think that could be up to 20% of value of the contract, ehm, so it makes all those lovely noises, which are the right things to say, but there is still, it does not percolate down to the actual tenders that are putting at. The higher profile, (unclear) and they got something like refuse collection like social value elements, so there are pockets where it happens and they are pockets where it doesn’t happen, and it tends to be the staff that affects the charities and the non-profit sector but it doesn’t happen in the way it should. And actually we are relaying on that. Because most of our voluntary sector in the borough are quite small. There are massive national providers and social value is a way for us to show the value of the local and we cannot do that if it is not there, and it makes easier for the national providers to take work from the smaller local providers, because they have local economies of scale and they tend to be cheaper, and because they are big they normally will have something like ISO, EFQM, ISO 9001 so they can have a score in these places. The only place where we can pretty much score in is on social value, and if it is not there, it puts us quite a big disadvantage in comparison of the big national players. So that’s way quite it matters to us.

CM What is your experience with the local social value policy?

IE They have done that for years. There is a more emphasis now, because you have obviously there is the D group which are trying to make sure that these pockets where it doesn’t happen is actually it happens. But I suspect it is probably going to take at least another year for everybody, everything that they commission to have a social value element into it. And because the council is too big, what the senior managers say, doesn’t percolate down to what the very junior people do all the time, sometimes it does, but it doesn’t work all the time and I think because they are given a lot of commissioning freedom for small projects like 2000 pounds, a commissioner can just ask one organization to bid for that, and that’s quite.. And also, up to 3 thousand to 100 thousand, that’s great, but those ones, those particularly are not seeing any social value.

In a way is not a problem because they are going to local people, local organizations, but there needs to be some sort of rewarding within a cluster of local organizations for those who add more social value. So for us, they need to enable in everything that they do, there must be an element of social value. It is coming, to be fair the council have committed to it and, people like Z. are very very, she is honest, and she said that will do it and she will try to do it. (…. ) She gets it. It is 4-5-6 layers down the management chain that isn’t quite getting it. So, that’s takes time; I worked for bigger organizations, so I understand that pressing the bottom here takes a lot of time for the effects to happen over here, so, it’s coming, but needs time.

CM What about the fund?

IE It is being extended not because the council want to extend it or because they intend to replace it, moving from grants to contracts, and let’s say it’s has been badly handled. It has been, it has been presented as something that was co-production, where you design it with clients of the organization, but was more consultation old style and the new gov trying to paint on it. That has stopped, so the replacement from the mainstream grants will be co-produced and they are looking for clusters for things that belong together, so like English is the second language and advice services that are more are more co-production together, brilliant, but there is a lot of pain in getting to that point. Ehm, and when those go out to contract, they all will have social value in, because we are heavily involved in writing the specs and we are briefing everyone in the sector and make sure that there is actual social value element in there. The argument for us is to make that meaningful, rather than 5%, we want it meaningful, we want it 10, 15% because the local things where specialist knowledge of a client group or award (unclear) actually really matters, having reached in a community where there is people with disabilities (unclear) or people leaving in Bengal town, where the population is Bengali, the ability to reach into those communities it is very important, the social value is one of a way (unclear) that recognize that reach. Another thing about social value is that would be the next speck battle. I used to work for a national charity, we wrote brilliant social value text, and we scored higher than the locals, but the difference was, we might not work saying – (unclear), we know what commissioner want on social value – so we will write, we aim to, we promise, we expire, we will. The local providers can say, we do, we have been, we always, there is no differential in the scoring, so you need to find the scoring mechanism that scores that social value activity that’s actually happening higher than social value activity that it is been promised but it doesn’t actually exist yet, and that is not happened. So, I used to write locally bids for the locals as I knew exactly what to write in, but there were full of things like, that actually we promise, we expire, we hope to, we aim, we will, that’s very different to we have been, we do, it is a massive difference. And one thing what happens in the tender, who is going to police me, you know, what I put there, because the commissioners what to know, a number of advised interventions – it is due to advanced interventions, yes, what’s the outcomes? Good! (…) They have managed on– do I get value for money, is the quality service, is the feedback that the service is good, are the outcomes good, it saves us money, that’s the staff that matters, social value, well, is nice if you have it, but those are the things that matter. So for us, that differentiating marking is quite important because nobody is making the people who promised to deliver, and it happens lots of time, I can give you lots of examples in the borough when people promised staff, is enough, I done it. And I see the local and national providers. It is just endemic. It is just something that you promised to get through the tendering process to win the work.

CM How is the supervised monitoring of the project happening?

IE Supervised, no! What is supervised is the hard targets, so things that are easy to measure, did you support 200 people with housing advice? (unclear)- yes, we did, and 70 percent of those avoided eviction, that’s what the council wants to know, and what’s the big costs for all these big interventions, 212 pounds, lovely, to a degree you know, to offering volunteering spots to someone as part of their work, could be the social value offer, - I’m interested, and if we don’t do it, the weights of, we did all the interventions, that they were fantastic in terms of outcomes, and it is really cheap, again, did you get a volunteer spot, who cares?, that’s the next bridge we have to cross and get social value recognised in the process, then we have to get social value in sort of monitoring and then policed after the contract has been won. But let’s get in the contracts first because in the borough is kind of rough, so that’s the journey for us, but it is quite important.

CM What your opinion on the current workshops shaping the commissioning service specifications and the VSOs engagement?

IE Yes, when you co-design and co-produce a service, the best part to do it is to co-design and co-produce the specification, so what you have been asked to do, when, where, how, how much of it, to do the things that becomes the contract that means you have the ability as part of that co-production process to sort of agitate formal – we want social value in here, it is part of your commitment with the sector, then what is happening is not arguing on whether is going to be social value, it is how much of the score of the 100 percent you will allocate to social value and there is that conservatism within commissioners, how you can do 5%, we give you 5% score for social value, but we are saying because the services are very dependent on the localness, and the reaching of communities, the social value is more important here, particularly in the types of contracts that the council has with the charity sector. So we would argue, you know, we want 10, 15, 20% for social value, we will come to a messy compromise, you know, some of them will be 10%, some of them maybe 15, I can’t see 20%, even though in theory they have signed up that is a possibility, there is still the political (unclear) that kind of councillors that are accountable effectively for the running of the council, so they wants to see things like value for money, score high, they want to see quality scored high, so you know, if you get 15%, say 20% for social value and you got 80% for value for money and performance and for quality and the council might be not happy with that they might be say- the social value is lively, 10% we can leave with, but actually the things that maters for services (unclear) is the quality, we want to score 70% of that quality and just 20% for price, so there is a lot of competing agendas, (unclear) councillors in one place, the council officers in another, and it is not a good place, the council officers are very good. Our sector wants to be in a different place again and is trying to arrive at triangulating a solution that divides us the least (unclear) in the figures for social value that’s meaningful but doesn’t compromise what the council want or maybe what the officers want. And to be fair, for the bigger contracts I have seen, not charity ones, but things as collecting bins and so on, they have been risings social value elements in, but only at 5%. Because when is coming to collecting the bin from your house, it happens on the right day that is emptied, every time is not missed, those quality and price issues, because the value of a contract with 30 million pounds a year, for 10 years, that’s a lot of money. So value for money becomes incredibly important, and they may not be a local bin provider so and the social value, yes is nice, and takes something back into the community (unclear) apprentices, the big social value for those contracts is, you will have apprentices, but we got to a point where particularly in CW where the building sites are, where they can do staff with the providers there, and they are not taking any more apprentices, and an organization can only handle so many apprentices with nothing meaningful for them to do. We can write it down; we do apprentices but we don’t have nothing meaningful that they can do. So, the other side of the coin, if you go for social value on everything you may be in a position where you end up, having silly outcomes like doing apprentices, that you don’t need, just to meet the social value requirement of the council on the council contract and that has happened. And the providers are saying to the council, actually no, no more apprentices for God sake! Because the council says, we want apprentices- *No! more apprentices*! We are bored, you have to find something else.

CM So the focus of the contracts been mainly on jobs creation?

IE For the bigger contract, jobs have been a big theme. But if you look at the council strategy, so, at its key aims, clever providers will look at what best priorities are for the council and often offer some things around social value that align to those priorities. So the job is the easy one, housing is another, education is another, so they will align things to match what’s in the council priorities, that’s a good thing, but they go for the easy ones which is the apprentices and other (unclear). But there are other (unclear) form of social value and giving something is not necessarily the only way to measure social value, so for example we will be going to be doing some strategic grants which will go to be published and people can bid for them. And one of them is the community transport service, now, his contribution to social value is on paper, nothing, but actually when you dig and you talk to him he does a huge amount of social value, because what he does is - all the smaller charity in the borough that are having their own transport, so can take people to a lunch club, or take disable people to a day centre, he maintains all their busses, he manages some of those buses, he keeps them around the road, he train their drivers, for free. So, on paper you can just be contracting, well we want to have 16 buses in the borough, that do take people around the borough (unclear), well fine, but actually his social value is, I do all of these things to help all of the other charities to support day centres, to support, older people's wellbeing and so on, that’s social value. And that’s the kind of staff that we want to get recognised more, not so much…because we get asked, as an grants recipient, as I used to work (…), how many apprentices are taken on, no, we because we are largely volunteer based, how many volunteers you have get, how many hours do the volunteers do, so, it is that capturing public benefit, which is fine, but there is three or four things and the public benefit that people can have, like signing on the buses, those questions are asked, so we need to have the framework for social value in a way that you are not prescribing, you must put social value in terms of kind …it gets people freedom to say, well, my social value contribution to the borough is that I get everyone’s buses going, that’s perfect, because without him that will be crises in the day care of the borough. Because if he wasn’t there tomorrow (unclear) it wouldn’t function, next door were there are family projects, will not function, there will be some (unclear) that wouldn’t function, and that will have a massive impact in the borough, particularly if people with learning disabilities (unclear). The services will stop because if they don’t get a service there is not service.

CM How the small VSOs dealing with evidencing social value?

IE They are getting better. And some of that is driven by the fear with the grants that bigger organizations will want to take their work and they know that they are valued and they have to commit things like social value training to understand how to represent social value in their grants applications and in their conversations with commissioners and in their monitoring meetings and I guess they are getting much better but the biggest problem is that they are really small organizations who don’t have a lot of people, where English might not be the first language, so first language might be Chinese, Bengalis, Spanish whatever, and their communication gap is certainly so big, it is really difficult for them to articulate the social value that they offer. I mean, for me, part of the social value is the fact that they communicate with a specific community with whom you can’t communicate in English but try to explain that to them, is quite a difficult thing to do and getting them to articulate it, we asked them to do in writing in English, that’s really hard. So, we designed a small grants program for the council, and we are saying we don’t ask them to write it down, they can just do a video. So, everyone is got face time and whatever, skype – so you don’t need to write it down because for a lot of the small community connected organizations, it is the writing is the problem. So we try to put ways around, and actually we can do the monitoring by skype as well, so instead of asking them how many people you have got we do the video– you know, 26 people they consented to be videos so actually that does exits, is 26 of them and it is every Thursday. So, we try to look at new ways to make it easier for very small organizations, a) to access grants and b) to be able to report back and show the social value in a way that enables them to show it. Because writing it down on the council web portal in English is too hard for them.

CM What impact has the transition to commissioning on the local VSOs?

IE Very difficult, that’s way the grants has been extended, because the way the council tended to do it was not intelligent, it wasn’t involving people enough and that is been now and because a lot of small organizations are quite connected with the council, because the council officers are trying to move in this direction. The small ones they went to the councillors and stood in front and told- no, no, no, the people that voted for me don’t like this, don’t do it, and there were too many people going to many councillors….and changed the mayor, the mayor stopped, because the mayor was taking flag, everywhere he went – to wellbeing centre, people were saying – we don’t like this, don’t do this, it is ridiculous, we can do business, and the mayor sort of saw – this has no support in the sector not so whoever, we have to stop we have to start again, so he is the one that brought us in (unclear). We went to Z. and told we are not going to work 150 organizations to move them from grants to contracts, is not to happen, you will have a huge amount of pain, are you ready for the pain? The mayor was giving the same message, well he was experiencing the pain face to face (unclear) and all that went to the council officers, so yes it will be very painful, but that will be less painful than was going to be, because if we are going to co-produce, say the people which provide teaching for the second language, like Bengali, to improve their language skills. There are all kind of 10-12 grant recipient voluntary organizations, they were siting all together and they will talk to their students, to their council and they will shape how the borough will look in 1 –2 years' time, they will write the specification, so they will say for entry level community level, we go to schools, we go to community centres (unclear), for level two because that requires a lot of expertise, actually only these 2 centres will work here, or you go to the college and trying to come with a system that might work for the people who do language because college ….(Explaining about the college programs and transfer of the children, the timing is important. I. providers could do training in schools, so leaves the opportunity to do the training till a certain hour and they go to pick the kid directly from his classroom). So that local provision works like for everybody works. The different patterns of delivery is kind of works, and then lets write that in the spec, otherwise the spec will say- we must deliver 50 classes per week, so what will happen? The College will bid for work and will win them all, because they can do it cheaper, they are masters they are the larger I providers. They provide I. in half the city. So when I might get to go to the college when it is on the opposite side of the borough to do a I. and in terms of costs they are much cheaper than the local providers, however, what they offer - everybody goes to the college (unclear) so people which are taking those course in the school, they are not going to the college and they will not be closer to the job market, except the local providers providing the skills. So, they get to shape how this should look so that there is an offer of cake for them in terms of money to survive, the offer will work for the parents, the parents will choose what is near of their home (…) so writing a spec that reflect everybody that are good at. So, everybody could have what they want to have. So that’s the idea of the coproduction workshops.

CM When started the workshops?

IE They are going to start. The council is having a conversation. So is starting from us, these workshops has started with advice, so we have about 11 service providers, (…) All of those providers have agreed to call themselves advisers, they are going to design with people that will design services, a model of delivery and standards that work for people, that will then return into a specification for a contract, that’s will go to the tender or city grant, whatever, and because they get to shape it will do a number of things, one is a good service because is what people want and who use the service, and say how it should look like and would be a good service because they are the people that are going to deliver this, because they helped shaped it, and the other thing, because they know the locality, the clients, when you put all of that into the mix it will make it difficult for big national providers, as you will probably say something like- we want to have some provisions over languages particularly around immigration, we want to have some local provision, so would like to have a (unclear) hub of each of the words or need (unclear) local area partnerships where ….or a combination of two or three words, we would like to have a single telephone number for all of the provision, it is a lot of specialism in there, not all the national providers can do all those specialisms.

CM What are the top barriers with commissioning thresholds?

IE Yes, so you got two things that are crushing into each other, one is the local council would like an ideal world were probably not to have any urge rules that allow them to be more local, if that makes sense, but the reality is that the urge rules exists, however, in an ideal world it would like to commission probably each these providers individually, but it can’t, and the reason it can’t, is twofold, one is it wants to have a single contact person for advice which means those advice has to come together anyway, and the second thing is, every contract that the council awards has a monetary impact in terms of resources so it needs to have a contract monitoring officer or a commissioner who supervises what happens.(…). So there is a financial driver to take all the tinny little contracts, where they have a relationship with each other to bring them together as one contract with one lead provider, because then what realistically happens, the responsibility for managing the contract it isn’t relay the contract management officer, it is the lead provider, so all of that burden and that risk leads down to the lead provider because they have to produce the report. They are accountable if the targets are nor met so they are the ones that are chasing the individual partners to make sure that they produced the 50 cases each quarter and the contract management officer then just reads the report to know where there are things in and why, so we need to do better, your 50 cases are short this quarter and we need to do better in the next quarter. The contract officers are not doing any work, is the lead provider that is doing all the work. So for the council, it makes huge amount of sense, because they are cheaper, and secondly you are bringing all the people, say providing English like a second language together, it is a single service, so you only need one leaflet, you only need one website. At the moment for the advice sector there is a lot of providers, 11 websites, 11 market materials, they well get some money for finance officer, they all get money for the CEOs, they all get money from everything under the sun, and the council can say, even if we just having a marketing budgets and have one, will save some money. So again there is driver for single point of contact, should mean a better experience for the person using the service, for the client, and a single point of contact is going to save money elsewhere.

This model is everywhere expected here, it started to be here so you got, for example, you got local link, which is a partnership that provides all of the advocacy and direct payments, brokerage and direct payments support and services in the borough, you are getting the advice providers and they are creating advise channels with other providers, at some point they are going to come together and they will be one thing. Because there is all the information, advice, support, brokerage and sign posting to help to be in the entire borough, 1 number, one website, one leaflet. It is cost effective, and a better experience. (…)

CM What is your opinion by the local council efforts to build capacity of the VSOs in service delivery?

IE Yes, I think, the evolution is not universally welcomed, a lot of our sector doesn’t like it. But they are realists, because this borough (unclear) we have the government commissioners it made the things that happened over the last years of austerity didn’t happen here. So we are a bit behind, so everywhere is no grants, here we still, the grant 3 million pounds, so there is a lot of grants and things that wouldn’t exist in the other boroughs, so people has seen what is happened elsewhere and they know is going to happen here so there is a sort of reluctance acceptance that is going to happen. The think that is slightly different here is that the commissioners are saying now, finally, and I think the real conversion is only probably happened in the last 3 to 6 months, actually we know that this is going to be a painful journey, but we should turn this in a positive, lets co-produce, so the people like coproducing and they did something with carers last year, which was coproduced with people who care for others. It went brilliantly, they have a better service, they cost less money, and the carers are people that are happy, it worked. And there is one in mental health calling (unclear) so there is 9 providers that do a lot of services around people with mental health so they go day shopping’s, they run peer support networks, to give the employment pathways to help the people of mental health to get back into work, all that staff is done together and they currently are re -co-designing for the second contract because they have done 3 years of co-design and co-production, and co-delivery because they used people from mental health to deliver parts of their service. Which is really good. So that’s a really good, successful, fantastic example, it is not the local council, (…) so the people who fund all the GPs, nurses, so there is really good examples and people who have contacts from these examples, yes, this could work for us.

So, we had a really challenging conversation, with the advice providers because they said that we don’t want to do commissioning we don’t have time for contracts, we just want grants, we don’t want the world to change, so we spent two hours in this room, saying – we can tell the council right that we are not going to do it, why we don’t instead try to make this work for you. What do you mean? So well, if you are a bit worry, because some national organizations will take all your work, let’s do the co-design in a way that the people who use our service, (….)

CM What’s your opinion on the local co-production approach?

IE Yes, the co-production is critical. Because if they don’t design the speck, the council staff will design the speck, and will not reflect what clients necessarily want and because is less detailed it makes it easier for people outside the borough to bid for it, more general, generic. So we are trying to have a conversation, we are trying to create a consortia, so we are doing one with people and the charities that it’s for people with the visual issues, people are blind or partial sighted, we are doing something around, we gather people together which run services and opportunities for people with sort of quite significant disabilities, we try to get them in a single room, we know that is coming, we wrote the cabinet paper from 2 years ago, this thing is coming. A lot is in there right now, you will hate and you will hate it, however, is going to happen so what about we sit down together and completely redesign it. We know that they are only doing this so they can get a, b and c, but we can sit down with our clients and work out how we get a, b, and c, in a way that works for us, and the clients, so when the council eventually says, we would like to re-design, actually we already some of the staff that they want to being seen, we got this beautiful thing, we want to do co-production to make sure that actually works, can we do that.

So, we are trying to move ahead of the local council commissioning program and talk to the people we know it would be affected to try to find ways where this is going to happen and work for them. It is hard, and we are going to make them published the commissioning schedule. So I was in one meeting this morning with a gentlemen, because he promised me, the boards that meets now, it is on the second meeting, which is all the senior people of the council on side and representatives of all of the key forums for not for profit sector in the borough, so we have health and wellbeing forum, forum, someone from the interfaith forum, someone from the community and safety partnerships, somebody who represents the volunteering agenda for the borough so is about 10 people from the council, so we got the council to agree that they are going to give us the commissioning timing table and we are going to publish it, (…) and also they promised us, this will be next week, that they will give us the procurement guidance and we are going to publish it, because that way when we see things that aren’t in line with the Compact, that don’t match the council public commitments, we can point towards the procurement guidance that has been broken and say we cannot do that. Now we can’t, because we never seen it. These documents will be published next week.

(…)

CM How do you see the process progressing with social value policy?

IE It is not working as it should be, but to be honest, the topic in the local council people do want to work, and that overtime will, that’s a good thing. What will be worse, if the junior staff want to do it and the top people don’t, then that wouldn’t happen. So it has to have the willingness of the top first, and having a directly elected mayor, that is a big difference because he is very responsive to the people in (caseB) who voted him. So he is very responsive. So, he puts a lot of pressure, being voted by 60 thousand people, it is a very good mandate and puts a lot of pressure on the officers to do things that works for people in (caseB). So social value, is not arguments, the mayor things is a good idea, …., the next line managers down I think they got is bad, they didn't know what it meant, which it is quite funny, when we started commissioning, and we do some training, it meant to be for the charities sector, coproduction, this is what co-production means you know, come to some training, and we had 60 people at the training, full time, 40 (or 14) there we the council managers, because they didn’t know what it meant. So that good when you have 40 more people that know what it means, but that’s quite symptomatic of, it took a bit of the disaster for the local council to realise we don’t really know what this means and found out (unclear) ...

CM There is openness and willingness?

IE Yes, and we are going well. I mean the council people here are enlighten, they are not the enemy they are pretty good. And yes, they try to do stupid things sometime but you can actually talk to them and say, this is stupid because of the a, b, c and then arguing a little bit ….unclear…I think there is a nice case study why b is very true, OK, we haven’t thought of that, and they will go and try to fix that. So, at the moment then we had big issues with the premises, so I was talking to you about, so, there are people that are very old fashion and a tight definition of state under the EU rules, so we can give you a rent reduction, even if we didn’t gave you any in your contract, if you put it into a market rent, we can’t give you the rent reduction we promised, because we substitute under the legal subside under the EU law, now there are lots of cases, like …lot of cases that public sector giving money to a private company, can be a subsidy in vary circumstances, and it is really funny because (…..) *unclear…another case that not been able to transcribe.*

Shops, so they collect all the money from the rent from the shops and they help pay for the maintenance of their offices. … They started to do community engagement in these stables, so yes, we rent the shops but …… that means to get money for no consideration, oh shit. And they get but to their legal team, at this point they decided to get new legal advice (…)

` So they are about to get their policy …so there is that flexibility and the willingness to learn, but they are very scared because of what happened …because everything has to be done really really really properly, there is no appetite for risk, and is starting to change, because this is used to be a really very innovative borough so lots of things like locality or community engagement, lots of things that are known nationally very exciting programs started here but nothing new has started here for about 8 years, because of what happened, so there is a really fear of doing anything that’s different, or risky or innovative, because of what happened, the commissioners coming in and people got sucked because of the things here were a bit doggy, so there is a real fear. It is changing again but that fear, the legal team reflecting (unclear) whereas if they got outside which doesn’t have the experience, the council staff that we have here- of course (unclear)….

So the fact that the council want to find and those works around this means that there is a good attitude, there are … they get the social value …. …and that soft willingness to try things will be really important to us actually, going forwards because that is giving them demonstrating their social value to us if that makes sense.

CM How do you articulate and define the social value?

IE I think that the Act gives us a wider definition to pretty much call anything social value if we wanted. It is the local interpretation of what the social value means, that’s the problem, because it gives you too much freedom. So that thing about the apprentices is a real good example that a sort of mythology builds up about, on what social value is, the people do not read the Act, they don’t see that the Act is giving you quite a lot of freedom, they read the interpretation of the Act by the legal team, or the way the act was reflected, what was asked in terms of social value by a lead commissioner, if they want apprentices we will do that, so is the practice for me that perverts or prevents the full realisation of social value. Because it is kind of, in a way that is quite a blank piece of paper …. (unclear) you don’t find vacuum is nature, so the first person that populates that with something, everyone copies it, and that what we have found as our experience. The two or three people that were able to put something in that space, everyone else that works in that space, is like you go into a room, it is empty, and then you go into a room, it is got a TV or whatever, see that’s what room looks like, or the next set of rooms you are going to see, is just have a TV and (unclear) because that’s rooms are like. So that, to our impression, is that what happens, because is too blank, I mean it don’t give you guidance on how social value could be represented by bang bang bang and the government doesn’t do that guidance to give you a framework, what is moved in to fill the space of the framework is what people are comfortable with, at the local level. So like this in (caseB), which is been things like apprentices, give a few computers, and is becoming quite common now, so you know, those sort of easy to count, easy to measure, very visible, social value once. You could have a construction company, because go in the train every morning, he is done something quite funky and ….and they are doing a huge project on the river, part of the main work, and their social value that the council got charge of it, they have to do community cohesion work, that has outcomes, so isn’t you produce a community cohesion work or any works, they even told them the value, they told we want these outcomes, and the measurable on these estates. There you go… (unclear). …. that particular will be funky for a charity, while for a private company that is French, that is a real bloody challenge …….so we need to do this, what kind of resources do we need to do that, and they had the conversation and now they are funding a number of VSOs to go out and produce those outcomes. That’s better. Because the other thing that you find is that they particularly developers and ….and have this problem, but just give you cash, that’s not social value, just cash, there has to be something more tangible with long lasting effects than cash, which ticks the box anyway. Having apprentices that harder, for 18 months, we will find him something to do … cost me health and safety issues, you know, easy things, cash. In a way we like cash. But the council doesn’t want cash, council needs social value that is in a different format than cash. …. cash all the time, but…is construction….we don’t understand this social value nonsense, can we just give you 50 grant. What you want, look to our priorities, and that how you end up looking at things like apprentices.

CM How social value is linked to the co-design and co-production processes?

IE I think that the local council should be looking at what are the needs in the borough, so for examples could be something that has to do with bins, and we say we will want to set a centre of excellence for co-design and community engagement, patient and public involvement in health, but you have the money, we have no money, what we will like the social value ….. they will support the development. They will create a community engagement to co-production, centre of excellence for the next two years. Because that’s what the borough needs. As part of the social value we commit that we will take, you got enough money to say…., we will take two returners to work, some people way for the job market, so two returners to work as part of our commitment, staffing like this, and other social outcomes that you can pull out of this, and we will support 5 commissioning things, so you got the support to improve the service that people wants in the borough, you got two people going out in the work, the construction company will have something quite funky to showcase the social value, so when they do the construction awards they have to do something strict to social value, and they win an award... they won,…., we just have to be more creative, no cash, no apprentices, not bloody computers.

CM This process of shaping the services by VSOs is linked to social value policy?

IE We are not shaping that at the moment, we are shaping the strategy, which is what we are doing, we want to do social value, why? - because it makes sense, but how it operates in terms let’s say they are doing a big council tender for IT, how the social value will look like for that contract, we haven’t been asked, and that’s where the council is missing the trip, because we will be far more creative about what that might look like, we might say to them, we like you to support returners to work, young Bengali moms with IT classes in schools.

CM In your opinion is there any gap?

IE Yes, we are just starting to move beyond. If you look at this borough it has more single B, then anyone else, and that’s because the B man do not like their wives to go to work. And that’s the biggest cause of poverty in the borough. While in majority of borough …. work, not here. So, if the other person in the households was working there will be sufficient income to them out of poverty. But culturally that’s a challenge. So, if you build the skills, I got job because I can do all these things.

And if you do this and then giving placements and experience in the workplace and then a path in the workplace with a gradual process, we will find that the people will go to work, who normally don’t go to work. And it needs to happen, because there is a big drive for poverty in the borough.

CM There is a need of a cultural shift in the barriers?

IE It is difficult, but the people that are doing the I. in the schools…There is a willingness, and that’s the problem, is the husbands. So, you get at a point of influence. There are a lot of faith charities in the borough. (…explaining the dynamics). So, I would like us to be more creative about in terms of what we ask in terms of social value contribution elements for the big contractors in the borough. But we don’t get to shape that. We get to shape what is going to have it but not what it is. That’s up to council’s officers. We will ask them… corporate meetings in the next weeks, which we want to be involved in that, as they are pointing the staff at us, and we don’t necessary to pointing at us. …. we want to coproduce the solutions, so ya.

CM You are taking a vibrant position in the relationship with the council?

IE We want to work in partnership, I think we are nearly there. If you were asking me 5 years ago, when I first used to work here, the relationships were very paternalistic relationships, the council know best, we know best so …whereas now is more partnership approach because the positive journey.

Our journey now is to make the council more accountable, because we want procurement guidance, commissioning timetable ….we want to challenge, without information we cannot as we don’t know what they are trying to do… so we want to turn the light on…

We have something like (case B) Partnership, I sit on the board and on that board, are the council, the local hospitals, CCG, police, fire brigade, (…) So, the partnership of working together has vastly improved over the last 2-3 years, and is in a much better place, but is a journey, and will get better.

CM Thank you very much.