

Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility

This Charter is a set of guiding principles to which Birmingham City Council (BCC) will adhere to and to which it will invite its contracted suppliers, the wider business community, other public sector bodies (including schools), and third sector organisations (including grant recipients), to adopt.

Charter signatories will consider and describe how they can improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Birmingham that result from their activities. This includes indirect outcomes through commissioning and procurement.

Charter signatories will commit to the principles below, either by fully adopting the Charter at the time of signature or alternatively making a commitment to full adoption within a clear timetable.

Future commissioning and contracting decisions will take account of the principles of this charter and it will form part of the terms of new BCC contracts, and Conditions of Grant Aid (COGA). All the principles and policies of the Charter will be mandatory for organisations with individual contracts or grants over £200,000 per annum and for those that have aggregate annual contracts or grants above £500,000. Contracts and grants below these thresholds have aspects of the Charter that are mandatory and aspects that are voluntary.

Charter Principles:

- Local Employment
- Buy Birmingham First
- Partners in Communities
- Good Employer
- Green and Sustainable
- Ethical Procurement

Local Employment

Charter signatories will create employment and training opportunities for local people especially in target areas:

Mandatory for all

- Commit to create employment and training opportunities for local residents, including people with disabilities and support people into work and work experience placements.
- Adopt an approved Jobs and Skills policy and apply this policy at every stage of the procurement process. BCC's Policy Toolkit for Jobs and Skills provides an example of an approved policy approach.

Mandatory above Threshold, and Voluntary below Threshold

- Seek opportunities to work with schools to help to ensure that the young people of Birmingham are equipped with the right skills to match the requirements of the labour market.
- Support the local economy and create much needed jobs and apprenticeships by adopting procurement strategies that remove barriers to local businesses.

Buy Birmingham First

Charter Signatories will take account of the social and economic impacts of buying locally when commissioning and contracting, thereby reducing unemployment and raising the skill level of the local workforce.

Mandatory for all

- Support the local economy by choosing suppliers close to the point of service delivery where possible.
- Use Find it in Birmingham as the primary method of sourcing suppliers for contracts in Birmingham, increasing the accessibility of opportunities to local businesses throughout the Supply Chain.
- Encourage their suppliers to endorse the principle of 'Buy Birmingham First' throughout their supply chains.

Mandatory above Threshold, and Voluntary Below Threshold

- Commit to purchasing from pre-qualified businesses on the Find it in Birmingham website where possible.

Partners in Communities

Charter signatories will play an active role in the local community and community support organisations, especially in those areas and communities with the greatest need.

Mandatory above Threshold, and Voluntary Below Threshold

- Build capacity by supporting community organisations with resources and expertise in areas with the greatest need, for example mentoring and working with youth organisations and services.
- Make a local impact by improving local facilities and areas, for example staff volunteering schemes.
- Provide support to third sector organisations and work with third sector organisations to deliver services and contracts.
- Work with schools and colleges, offering work experience and business awareness to students, especially those from disadvantaged areas or communities.
- Support the Birmingham Baccalaureate as it is developed.
- Make accessible all sub-contracting opportunities to a diverse supply base including the third sector and local suppliers and provide mentoring and support to assist these organisations to tender for and deliver these supply opportunities where necessary.

Good Employer

Charter signatories will support staff development and welfare and adopt the Birmingham Living Wage within their own organisation and within their supply chain.

Mandatory for all

- Ensure that employees are given a fair reward for their labours and help foster a loyal and motivated workforce by paying the Birmingham Living Wage.
- Recognise employees' rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, including not using blacklists in recruitment processes.
- Provide a safe and hygienic working environment.
- Comply with working hours legislation and industry standards.
- Not discriminate in respect of recruitment, compensation, access to training, promotion, termination of employment or retirement based upon race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability (including learning disability), mental health issues, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation.
- Comply with employment and social security legislation;
- Not employ harassment or intimidation.
- Have and comply with a whistle blowing policy.

Green and Sustainable

Charter signatories will commit to protecting the environment, minimising waste and energy consumption and using other resources efficiently. These commitments will also apply to their supply chain.

Mandatory for all

- Eliminate unnecessary waste by adopting the “reduce, reuse, recycle” philosophy.
- Be a good neighbour, minimise negative local impacts (noise, air quality), improve green areas (e.g. biodiversity, visual attractiveness).
- Reduce Carbon footprint – be aware of main impacts on carbon emissions including the indirect carbon used in manufacturing processes and the direct impact of operations and logistics.

Mandatory for above Threshold, and Voluntary Below Threshold

- Measure carbon emissions and ensure a plan is being implemented using carbon measurement tools. Specific targets to be included in major contracts.
- Protect the environment and minimise adverse impacts and instill this approach throughout suppliers’ supply chains.

Ethical Procurement

Charter signatories will commit to employing the highest ethical standards in their own operations and those within their supply chain.

Mandatory for all

- Work to the highest standards of business integrity and ethical conduct.
- Pay their fair share of taxes
- Ensure the well-being and protection of work forces which must be supported by robust systems and procedures.
- Support the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Support the Fundamental International Labour Organisation Conventions;
- Not engage in or support the use of child labour.
- Adopt best practice when procuring goods and services e.g. procure low energy products and avoid the use of rainforest timber from unmanaged sources.
- Pay suppliers no later than the terms stated in the primary contract.