



Amey Hays Social Enterprise Initiative Summary Report

July 2024



The first year of the Amey Hays Social Enterprise Initiative has evidenced that corporations can play a key role in accelerating the impact of the social enterprise sector.

Whilst numerous support programmes already exist for social enterprises, the tailored, functional business support that Amey and Hays shared with four Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations (VCSEs) has proven to significantly accelerate the chances of the VCSEs' successes.

The results of the first year demonstrated that acceleration initiatives can play a pivotal role in accelerating the growth of social enterprises. Specifically:

- › **Supporting VCSEs to secure future work:** The initiative empowers social enterprises that exhibit strong potential to secure future work within the Amey and Hays supply chains.
- › **Utilising partners expertise:** Amey and Hays actively assisted one social enterprise in overcoming business growth pains, by providing them with topic expertise and practical support that they currently did not have in their team or could afford to outsource.

This specific programme serves as a blueprint for Amey and Hays, and others looking to support the VCSE sector, to enhance and expand their impact going forward as a Social Enterprise Supplier Accelerator.

To conclude the first year of the initiative, Social Enterprise UK produced a report that provides an overview of the initiative, the impact it has made to the participating VCSEs and recommendations for improving the programme. This paper provides an overview of the key information from the report.

Background

The 2012 Public Services (Social Value) Act and the Procurement Act of 2023 have transformed public service commissioning in the UK, mandating a focus on enhancing local economic, social, and environmental well-being.

Voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations (VCSEs) play a crucial role in driving social value, innovating in sustainable and low-carbon products, and reinvesting in community infrastructure. The report **Social Value 2032: Creating a Social Value Economy** by Social Enterprise UK (SEUK), a leading membership body for social enterprises, emphasises private sector collaboration with social enterprises to build capacity, provide contracting opportunities, and facilitate access to finance. Initiatives like SEUK's **Buy Social Corporate Challenge** underscore the private sector's role in supporting social enterprises, with a public commitment from 30 high profile UK businesses, such as Amey, to spend one billion pounds with social enterprises by 2026. In June 2024, SEUK announced that the group has spent £477 million with social enterprise to date.

Social Value 2032: Creating a Social Value Economy

Buy Social Corporate Challenge



The Amey Hays Social Enterprise Initiative

The initiative extends a long-standing partnership between Amey and Hays, two companies in the infrastructure and workforce solutions sectors.

Both organisations operate in the supply chain of public procurement, supporting and delivering social value outcomes, spearheaded by the requirements of the Social Value Act.

Both Amey and Hays were keen to use their partnership as a social impact collaboration opportunity. With shared commitments to support an inclusive economy, they looked to the VCSE sector as organisations they wanted to both champion and scale.

Together they created the Amey Hays Social Enterprise Initiative.



Core elements of the initiative

- › **Closing the Gap:** The initiative centred around a 12-month relationship between selected VCSEs and Amey and Hays. The intention was to offer targeted support to VCSEs seeking to scale up their operations.
- › **Tailored Roadmaps:** Selected VCSEs in infrastructure and engineering received customised roadmaps, including mentoring and subject matter expertise sessions, alongside access to Amey and Hays wider and diverse stakeholder networks. They were also provided with a £10,000 grant for discretionary use, without formal expenditure reports.
- › **VCSE Selection:** With the support of SEUK, four VCSEs were selected to participate in the inaugural programme.
 - › **The Community Driving School CIC:** They change lives through back-to-work training and driving courses, making people more employable.
 - › **Morgan Developments:** A socially driven enterprise that delivers inclusion across public and private infrastructure sector frameworks.
 - › **Rising Stars Property Solutions CIC:** Providing practical work experience, relevant training, and employment opportunities to marginalised groups who are furthest from the job market.
 - › **Standing Tall:** Their mission is to change the public perception of people experiencing homelessness and help them discover their hidden potential. They match people experiencing homelessness into stable jobs in responsible businesses.
- › **Social Value Fund Creation:** Through a unique partnership with social value at its core, Amey and Hays jointly established a Social Value fund to finance the initiative.

Inputs and outputs



I felt I could use my skill set to really generate higher value. We talk about social impact (volunteering) days at my organisations, which are great, and people can volunteer for a day at places like a charity shop for example, but I really feel the value I can add is a lot higher by actually using my skill set. So, I would prefer to use my time in initiatives like this.

The initiative's approach and selection process:

The initiative aimed to create a tailored roadmap for each of the four VCSEs, which was a plan of mentoring and subject matter expertise sessions. The VCSEs were selected based on criteria such as their social and environmental commitment, inclusive recruitment, and their ethical approach. Support was also sought from SEUK who helped identify and target potential participant organisations.

The project management and the discovery sessions:

Project Leads were assigned to the initiative. They facilitated discovery sessions to explore the VCSEs' strengths and weaknesses, and to identify opportunities for support. The sessions also aimed to connect the VCSEs with prospective purchasing decision makers.

The mentors and subject matter experts:

The Project Leads were also responsible for assigning the VCSEs to mentors and subject matter experts, who could provide guidance and advice on specific operational skills or knowledge. VCSEs were paired with industry related mentors where possible.

In total 145 hours of support was provided as follows:

73 hrs

of mentoring received by VCSE beneficiaries

65.5 hrs

of subject matter expertise received by VCSE beneficiaries

6.5 hrs

spent supporting community-led events

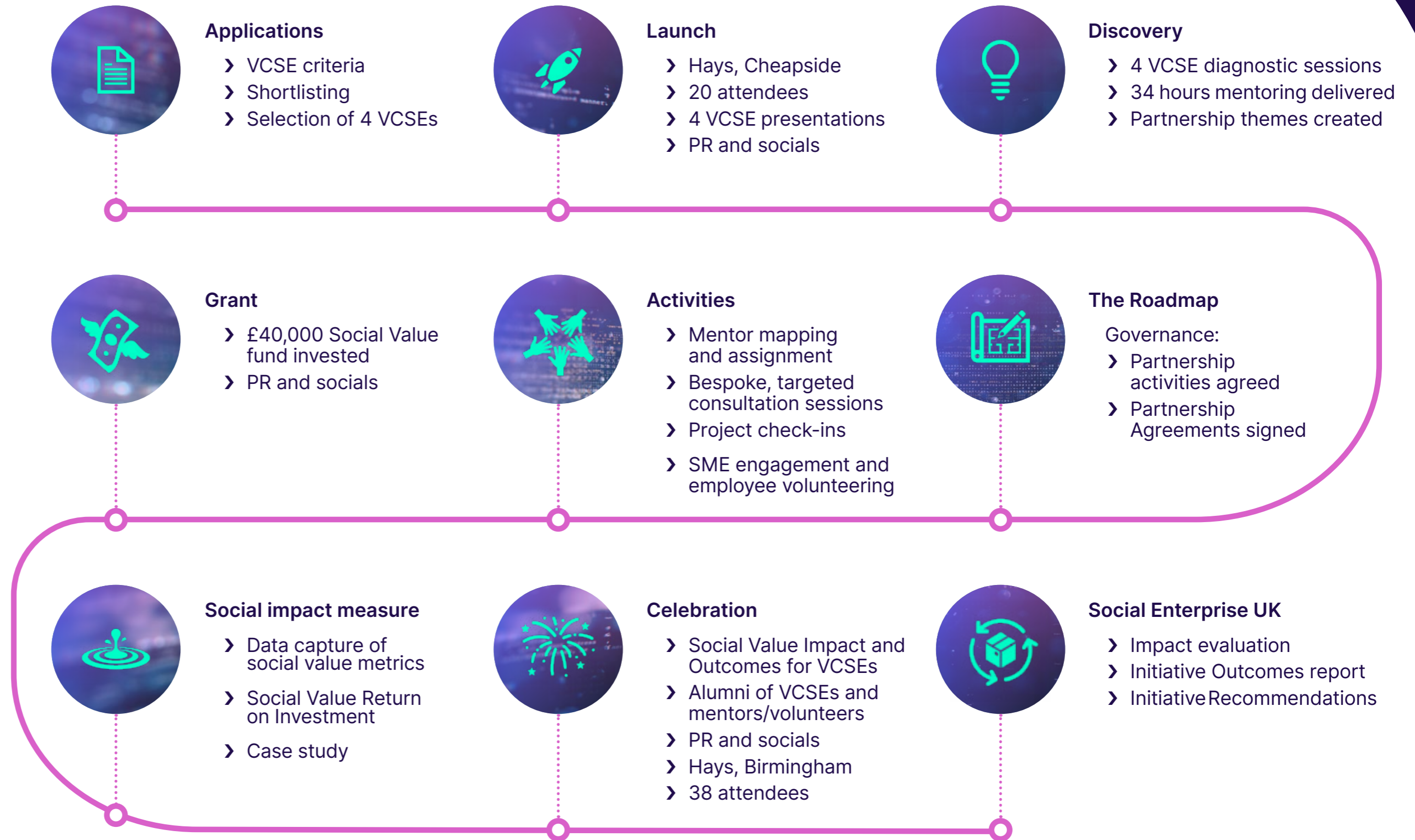
Each participating VCSE was given a £10,000 grant:

The purpose of the grant was to help cover any costs incurred from participation in the programme and to go towards any business improvement opportunities identified through the programme.

In total **£40,000** was given in grants to the VCSEs.

Using the Thrive Platform (calculated using the Impact Evaluation Standard), the programme enabled the generation of **£104,334** social value.

Amey Hays Social Enterprise Initiative approach



Impact and Outcomes



Amey and Hays have helped us in lots of practical ways to improve what we do; our contracts, payment terms improving our cash flow, build our CRM system and they've introduced me to a range of Hays Account Managers with the possibility of more jobs with employer partners. Amey's videographer is helping us with our videos, and they've also given 2 jobs to us over the next 12 months.

Christy Acton
Standing Tall, Founder and CEO



To understand the impact of the programme to the VCSEs, against the programme objectives, SEUK was identified to independently evaluate the impact of the Amey Hays Social Enterprise Initiative. Incorporating an independent review of the programme was important to both Amey and Hays, to get an honest understanding of the strengths and challenges of delivering the programme, to ensure the initiative makes a genuine impact on the VCSE sector.

Evaluation Methodology and Objectives

SEUK reviewed the impact against a variety of initiative objectives which broadly covered four areas:

1. Enabling business growth and sustainability
2. Developing a tailored roadmap focused on winning work
3. Expanding mission outcomes
4. Increasing employee development and engagement

SEUK used a combination of documentation and processes reviews, interviews both to all VCSEs and the project leads, mentors and topic experts, and observation methodologies to assess outcomes for both the VCSEs and the volunteers from Amey and Hays.



Impact and Outcomes



We've been able to focus on our core strengths, which are recruiting driving instructors who understand our beneficiary needs. We've put the grant toward getting someone trained as well as utilising toward investing in a new car. I have really enjoyed working with Amey and Hays, being part of a family. They understand social value, they understand the difference it can make to human lives.

John Nicholson
Community Driving School CEO

Impact and Outcomes for VCSEs

The initiative yielded varied results for the VCSEs, with one clear success story and three worthwhile, albeit less measurably transformative cases. Notable outcomes include:

- › **Improved knowledge and skills:** VCSEs reported enhanced knowledge, confidence, and skills across various business areas—sales, marketing, finance, and operations.
- › **Emotional and practical support:** Delivered by initiative mentors, subject matter experts and project leads.
- › **Contract success:** One VCSE secured a contract with Amey, demonstrating the initiative's impact; Amey is an employer partner with Standing Tall, who we have given two jobs at a total value of £7,000 to the social enterprise.

The following factors were considered key to contributing to VCSE success:

- › Industry-related mentors and experts
- › A tailored support roadmap which was flexible and evolving, as opposed to a one size fits all programme of support for each VCSE
- › Strong connections to prospective buyers within Amey

Impact and Outcomes for Volunteers

Employee skills-based volunteering offers significant social value. It empowers VCSEs with strategic insights and in-demand skills while fostering employee growth and job satisfaction. Volunteers from Amey and Hays reported:

- › Increased job satisfaction
- › Professional development growth
- › Positive engagement with social value, making a 'genuine impact' to the social enterprises

Accelerating Social Enterprise Growth

The results of the first year demonstrated that the initiative can play a pivotal role in accelerating the growth of social enterprises. Specifically:

- › **Winning future work:** The initiative empowers social enterprises that exhibit strong potential to secure future work within the Amey and Hays supply chains.
- › **Expertise contribution:** Amey and Hays actively assisted one social enterprise in overcoming business growth pains, by providing them with topic expertise and practical support that they currently did not have in their team or could afford to outsource.
- › **Blueprint for Impact:** This specific intervention serves as a blueprint for Amey and Hays to enhance and expand their impact going forward as a Social Enterprise Supplier Accelerator.

Recommendations for improvement

The evaluation conducted by SEUK, resulted in a number of recommendations for improving the delivery of the next cohort of this initiative. Amey and Hays have decided to produce this summary of these recommendations, to share with organisations that may wish to carry out similar initiatives.

The following recommendations are:

Refine the selection criteria, to work with VCSEs where Amey and Hays can make the most impact to:

Amey and Hays made the biggest impact to VCSE growth when they worked with mentees from the same industry, that had a product or service that could hypothetically fit within the Amey and/or Hays supply chain and had a clear understanding of their organisational limitations whilst missing the expertise inhouse to resolve.

Enhanced expectation management:

The VCSEs that saw the biggest transformation were willing and able to put in the time and effort required to make their involvement in the programme a success. In the future, the Project teams and VCSEs should be aware of the time, effort and commitment that is required. There should be an openness to share information about how their business is operating, to understand where the support is needed.

Focus on functional, high-value support for VCSEs:

Whilst it is useful for VCSEs to receive a wide range of business support, Amey and Hays could focus on giving technical expertise the VCSE would usually find difficult to access. For example, one of the VCSEs implemented a new piece of software with the guidance from a Hays volunteer, when software is typically expensive and complicated to implement.

Connect VCSEs to business development opportunities:

A direct route to business growth is by growing an organisation's sales pipeline. Working with VCSEs that could hypothetically fit within the Amey and Hays supply chain is key. Keep using connections at Amey and Hays to create opportunities for VCSEs to meet and build relationships with buyers and decision-makers. This will help VCSEs understand what they need to do to become suppliers for Amey and Hays.





Contributors and organisation links

The following have contributed to the content of this paper:

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