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10 June 2019

Thank you for your contribution during the debate on Thursday 23 May, on increasing social value in public procurement. In particular, I am writing to respond to the point you raised about whether any changes aimed at increasing social value in procurement would be mandatory for local government.

As set out in the Civil Society Strategy, the Government's long-term vision is for the principles of the Social Value Act to be applied to the whole of government spending and decision-making, including goods and works, such as building projects, as well as services. The change that we are making to extend the application of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 ('the Act') in central government departments, their executive agencies and non-departmental bodies for procurements subject to Part 2 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 is a voluntary one. It is being conducted through a change in domestic procurement policy, and will be mandatory for central government and its related bodies only.

To make corresponding changes aimed at increasing social value in procurement mandatory for local government would require a change in the Act. We do not plan to carry out these changes in the current legislative timetable.

In the longer term, the government will explore the suggestion that the Social Value Act should be applied to other areas of public decision-making, such as planning and community asset transfer. Meanwhile, the Government will continue to engage with local government representatives to provide guidance, share knowledge, and encourage good practice and compliance with the best value duty.

I trust the above responds to your question, but please do not hesitate to contact me should you require anything further. I will also place a copy of this letter in the House library.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lord Young of Cookham'.

LORD YOUNG OF COOKHAM