



Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Employment and Skills SPD

Consultation Draft

March 2022

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1.0 Introduction

What is this document and why is it needed?

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Dacorum Borough Council (the Council) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.2 The SPD is driven by the Council's aspiration to see additional benefits (known as Social Value) incorporated into the delivery of housing and other types of development. Social Value is the additional economic, social and environmental benefits that can be created as part of development. By seeking to capture Social Value from major developments, whilst such schemes are at the planning stage, the Council can achieve added value for Dacorum, particularly in the area of employment and skills, to which this SPD relates.
- 1.3 Ensuring growth and prosperity is one of the six priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2025) which seeks to create a diverse choice of employment opportunities and a strong and thriving local economy where unemployment is low. Working with the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Herts LEP) and local colleges to develop skills for emerging growth sectors is a particular focus.
- 1.4 The Corporate Plan sits alongside the Dacorum Growth and Infrastructure Strategy to 2050 "Shaping the future of Dacorum" which sets out a commitment to facilitate good, high value jobs based on the skills that will sustain and develop new and emerging growth sectors.
- 1.5 These documents add impetus to the need for new development to contribute towards delivering skills and employment opportunities in the Borough.
- 1.6 The Local Plan policy context for this can be found in the Core Strategy (adopted 2013) where policy CS14 states "Initiatives that help the local workforce adjust to change and develop their skills will be supported".
- 1.7 This Supplementary Planning Document adds detail and further guidance to how this policy should be delivered on the ground by requiring developers to prepare and implement a Social Value Strategy for schemes that meet or exceed a certain threshold; such strategies will help to develop the skills of the resident workforce and provide a route to employment for local people.
- 1.8 In particular, this SPD provides detailed guidance in respect of:
 - The circumstances in which Social Value Strategies will be expected;
 - The types of development it would apply to;
 - The development thresholds that would trigger a requirement for a Social Value Strategy to be submitted with a planning application;
 - The content required in Social Value Strategies;

- Initiatives the Council would support; and
- The process involved in requesting, preparing and implementing Social Value Strategies and the expected outcomes.

Procedural matters

1.9 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material planning consideration, which means it will assist Council officers and Elected Members in reaching a decision during the determination of applications concerning major development. It will also guide applicants and their agents in drawing up appropriate Social Value Strategies.

1.10 The successful implementation of the SPD will:

- Result in increased local employment opportunities by helping businesses to improve, grow and take on more staff;
- Help businesses to find suitable and (especially) local staff and suppliers; and
- Improve the skills of local people to enable them to take advantage of the resulting employment opportunities.

1.11 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 do not require a Sustainability Appraisal to be carried out on SPDs. However, the potential requirement for a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and / or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) based upon any environmental concerns introduced or influenced by the SPD must be considered. In response, an SEA / HRA screening assessment is underway.



2. National policy and Legal Framework

National advice on planning's role in promoting economic development is provided through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The sections of the NPPF most relevant to this SPD are summarised below.

- 2.1 NPPF paragraph 8 sets out three overarching objectives contributing to sustainable development: building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and protecting and enhancing the environment. The wording of the economic development objective is as follows:

*“a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure”*

- 2.2 Section 6 in the NPPF provides guidance on ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’. The main guidance is contained in paragraphs 81-83:

“81. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

82. Planning policies should:

- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.*

83. Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for

clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”

Legal framework: Public Services (Social Value) Act

- 2.3 There are a variety of definitions of Social Value already in existence, many of which stem from the Social Value Act (2012), which highlights the additional benefits available from thoughtful commissioning of public services. Because of this, existing definitions largely consider Social Value in relation to services, rather than goods or works. This overlooks the possibility that Social Value is the broader social, environmental and economic benefits which enrich society, rather than just the social capital of a locality.
- 2.4 Although the 2012 Act applies to contracts beyond a certain minimum value only, there is evidence that it has been applied by Councils to the procurement of goods and works, as well as services. This is perhaps a reflection of the growing recognition that the Act can be used to capitalise on the broader Social Value Agenda.
- 2.5 The scope of potential outcomes that deliver Social Value is therefore widening and a growing number of Councils are looking to capitalise on this by integrating Social Value into their planning process, albeit with different approaches. The most practical opportunities, however, include the requirement for development to produce a Social Value Strategy.

Levelling Up

- 2.6 The Levelling Up agenda put Councils at the heart of delivering the Government's programme to improve opportunities and outcomes in all parts of the country. Dacorum is a divided Borough with areas of deprivation sitting alongside areas of wealth and prosperity. This SPD emphasises the Council's ambition to support the national Levelling Up agenda, working alongside local stakeholders to build forward for a prosperous and resilient future.



3. Local Policy Background

The following local documents provide the policy framework for this SPD;

- [Dacorum Borough Council Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025](#)
- [Dacorum Growth and Infrastructure Strategy to 2050](#)
- [Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan](#)
- [Dacorum Economic Recovery Plan](#)
- [Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision 2020](#)

Dacorum Borough Council Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025

- 3.1 Ensuring economic growth and prosperity is one of the six key priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, which will drive service delivery over the period of the plan. The outlined activities seek to achieve a future where "employment opportunities will be diverse and offer good choice, and unemployment is kept low, with the local economy strong and thriving".

Dacorum Growth and Infrastructure Strategy to 2050

- 3.2 The Dacorum Growth and Infrastructure Strategy '[Shaping the Future of Dacorum](#)' was prepared to help steer service delivery over the coming decades to enable the Borough to maximise on the benefits from growth, address the challenges it faces and anticipate the changes ahead. For theme 2 'Generating a vibrant economy with opportunities for all' the Strategy's vision for the economy is "A vibrant economy that makes the most of its location and its transport links, as well as offering varied high-value jobs. One that attracts businesses in emerging growth sectors, keeps unemployment low and continues to attract high levels of investment by working with the business community".
- 3.3 The Strategy continues by setting out the challenges the Borough faces, these are summarised below:
- Fostering a strong economy with a good range of employers and well-paid secure jobs for local people;
 - Ensuring land is available to build businesses;
 - Making town centres attractive and resilient to changes in retail patterns;
 - Preparing the local economy to take advantage of growing business sectors such as enviro-tech;
 - Creating the right employment base through skills and training;
 - Extending and improving digital connectivity to attract employers and enable agile work practices;
 - Creating conditions that encourage ongoing business investment; and
 - Developing Dacorum as a tourism destination.

Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan

3.4 The [Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan](#) comprises:

- [Dacorum Core Strategy](#) (adopted September 2013);
- [Dacorum Site Allocations Development Plan Document](#) (adopted July 2017); and
- [Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011](#) (adopted April 2004) (saved policies).

3.5 Dacorum Core Strategy contains the Council's strategic policy framework for delivering development and change over the plan period (2006-2031). Strengthening economic prosperity is one of the central themes of the document beneath which sits a strategic objective to promote a vibrant and prosperous economy and supporting local objectives. Section 11 sets out the Plan's approach to creating jobs and full employment.

3.6 Policy CS14 seeks to support economic development in terms of ensuring sufficient land for jobs growth and guiding new development to key locations.

Policy CS14: Economic Development

Sufficient land will be allocated to accommodate growth in the economy of approximately 10,000 jobs between 2006 and 2031.

Development that supports the knowledge-based economy, the transition to a low carbon economy, the rural economy and sustainable tourism, will be particularly encouraged.

Most employment generating development will be located in town and local centres and General Employment Areas in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS4. Hemel Hempstead will be the main focus for new economic development uses, which will be used to support the regeneration of the Maylands Business Park and Hemel Hempstead town centre. Employment levels elsewhere within the borough will be maintained to ensure a spread of job opportunities.

Initiatives that help the local workforce adjust to change and develop their skills will be supported.



- 3.7 The Council seeks contributions from developers towards the provision of infrastructure required to support growth in Dacorum via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Where applicable, the Council may also enter into an agreement (known as a Section 106) with the developer and/or landowners to mitigate the direct impacts of developments on local communities under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



Dacorum Economic Recovery Plan

- 3.8 Giving local people the opportunity and responsibility to develop new and existing skills, to ensure that they are equipped to take advantage of growth, is a key output of the work currently being undertaken by Dacorum Borough Council.
- 3.9 In October 2021, Dacorum Cabinet approved the Dacorum Economic Recovery Plan, supported by a multi-partner Economic Recovery Board. The Board has brought together local and regional stakeholders including the Herts LEP, Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry, social enterprises, West Herts College, Hertfordshire University and local businesses, to focus on six key priorities set out within the Dacorum Economic Recovery Plan. These are:
1. Ensuring a current and future workforce has the skills and opportunity to take advantage of new high skills technology employment.
 2. Engaging with and supporting businesses and develop social enterprises'/community interest companies' capacity to facilitate growth, investment and ensure longer term strategic plans meet the needs of the businesses.
 3. Supporting the growth of the existing Information, Science, Technology and Professional Services clusters and developing the growing Enviro Tech sector, linking closely with Herts Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ) and Hemel Garden Community.
 4. Identifying Dacorum's Unique Selling Point (USP) and develop the engagement with inward investors, regional and national partners to

promote the opportunities in the district and lobby for funding and investment.

5. Repurposing Hemel Hempstead town centre and introduce new work spaces and employment opportunities.
6. Developing the International Dacorum brand, promoting export and developing international partnership links.

3.10 The Dacorum Economic Recovery Board have commenced work on delivering actions to achieve access to opportunities for all residents in Dacorum. Activities under theme 1 of the Recovery Plan, Skills and Employment include:

- Develop an Employer Engagement Plan (to be linked with the Business Growth proposed Employer Engagement Plan and the Herts Local Skills Improvement Plan) aimed at using employers as consultees when developing the skills offer.
- Create Social Value from development and developer's Employment and Skills Plans. Develop a process to attract skills and employment opportunities from large developments and procurement.
- Track destinations from Further Education and Higher Education to identify student's successes and challenges when taking up employment after study.
- Work with Herts Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ) and others to investigate skills gaps and to identify opportunities to address them across existing and new provision.
- Target young people not in education or employment (NEETS) to ensure access to Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

3.11 These activities aim to deliver the following key outcomes

- Increased number of apprenticeships across key employment sectors (targeting skills shortages within the Borough of Dacorum).
- Increased inclusion of hard-to-reach groups such as long term unemployed, residents with disabilities and ex-offenders.
- Dacorum has a flexible and highly skilled workforce to enable future economic growth and economic wellbeing of its residents.
- All residents have access to and knowledge of a coordinated skills offer and available career paths to enable them to take advantage of future jobs.

3.12 The implementation of attracting Social Value in the form of skills and employment opportunities from developments, will contribute greatly towards achieving the aims of the Dacorum Economic Recovery Plan.

3.13 The Council is also in the process of developing a Dacorum Social Value Framework as a tool to support the development of skills and increase in residents' economic wellbeing.

4. **Justification and Context**

The need for Social Value Strategies

- 4.1 The Borough is likely to experience significant change and growth over the next 15 years with plans for some of the most ambitious development programmes within Hertfordshire.
- 4.2 This will create a period of unprecedented opportunity and it is important that local residents are able to access the jobs created by growth. Doing so will help to address existing barriers to employment that are reflected in the current proportion of Dacorum residents who are not economically active and who lack any qualifications.
- 4.3 In June 2021 (ONS), there were over 15,000 economically inactive residents and 5,000 residents with no qualifications in the Borough. This represents a major untapped resource for the Borough of residents whose lives could be transformed through support and access to job opportunities that would increase their economic well-being.
- 4.4 Low levels of educational attainment is an issue facing the Borough. A breakdown of the number and proportion of residents with various levels of qualifications is shown in Table 1 below. This compares educational attainment levels in Dacorum Borough with that of the wider Hertfordshire County and, in doing so, it reveals that the Borough has a greater proportion of its workforce with no qualifications.

Level of Attainment	Dacorum Borough Council (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	National (%)
NVQ4 and above	42.8%	47.2	43.1%
NVQ3 and above	52.8%	64.3	61.3%
NVQ2 and above	76.6%	79.9%	78.1%
NVQ1 and above	86.8%	85.5%	87.7%
Other qualifications (NVQ)	7.9%	5.8%	5.9%
No qualifications (NVQ)	5.3%	4.7%	6.4%

Table 1: Qualifications of Dacorum Borough Residents

Source: NOMIS y Dec 2020



- 4.5 Compared to the Hertfordshire averages, Dacorum has fewer residents who have gained higher qualifications and more residents with lower qualifications. In Dacorum, 42.8% of residents have NVQ4 and above compared to the Hertfordshire average of 47.2% and 5.3% of residents in Dacorum have no qualifications compared to 4.7% in Hertfordshire.
- 4.6 Failure to address this low skills base would inevitably slow the growth of the local economy adding more urgency to the need to maximise the development of skills and thereby improve the employment prospects of local people.
- 4.7 There are pockets of deprivation throughout Dacorum, including wards that are within the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas¹ in Hertfordshire in each of Hemel Hempstead, Tring and Berkhamsted.
- 4.8 Average wages provide a further clear indicator that resident's economic wellbeing is reduced, with workplace earnings averaging £30,666 in 2020, lower than the Hertfordshire average of £32,541. This shows the challenge facing Dacorum's residents in being able to access high skilled and high paid jobs in the Borough as well as the lack of access and career paths.
- 4.9 In addition, many residents are employed within low paid sectors that have been affected by the pandemic and where future automation is expected.
- 4.10 The recovery from the Pandemic will be slow as the change in the labour market will create mismatches with employees from affected sectors needing to retrain to access employment in sectors with job opportunities. This is particularly true for young people, aged 18 – 21, where across the UK 3 out of 5 have lost their

¹ Super Output Areas cover around 125 households. SOAs are built from groups of OAs and replace the previously used electoral ward/divisions as the standard geographic hierarchy for reporting small area statistics in England and Wales.

jobs as a result of COVID-19. Unemployment for this group is currently at 6.6% in Dacorum.

- 4.11 While some areas of the economy might start to recover, young workers are under-represented in these sectors, and the industries that typically employ them are likely to be impacted more. Longer-term structural changes in the labour market such as automation and the introduction of new technologies are likely to reduce job opportunities for those young people who do not have support to improve their skills.
- 4.12 These factors drastically reduce the likelihood of local residents being able to access opportunities to improve their economic wellbeing. As a result, intervention is now needed to ensure local residents can take full advantage of new opportunities and the changing needs of the labour market, through access to reskilling and new career paths.

Circumstances in which a Social Value Strategy will be requested

- 4.13 The Council will expect developments that meet or exceed the thresholds set out in Table 2, to submit a site-specific Social Value Strategy:

Use Class	Development	Threshold for Social Value Strategy
C3	Residential (Dwelling houses)	30 or more dwellings
B2	General industry	Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more
B8	Storage and distribution	Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more
C1	Hotels	Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more
E	Commercial, business and service	Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more
F1	Learning and non-residential institutions	Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more
F2	Local Community	Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more
Sui generis		Building(s) of 1,000m ² or more

Table 2: Thresholds for Social Value Strategy requirement

For the avoidance of doubt, the Social Value Strategy should cover the construction phase of all residential and commercial development in the Borough that meets or exceeds the threshold. In addition, where appropriate, commercial development should also include a commitment to target local residents when recruiting for employment opportunities that will be created by the end-use occupation (see 4.21).

Content of a Social Value Strategy

- 4.15 The Council will provide prospective developers with a Social Value Forecast on request to enable the applicant to prepare a Social Value Strategy for submission with their application. The targets in the Social Value Forecast must be generated using an industry approved model that calculates Social Value requirements according to planning class uses and then applies regionally specific information, such as CITB Construction Skills Network Data. This approach ensures that Social Value targets are relevant to specific developments and allows flexibility for genuine and sustainable outcomes to be delivered which reflect the business needs of Applicants/Developers/Contractors and their supply chain.
- 4.16 Developers are strongly encouraged to work with the Council's Approved Delivery Partner to draft and agree a Social Value Strategy. Those applicants not involved in Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) discussions are required to check the Local Validation Checklist requirements in force at the time of making an application. Contact details for the Council's Approved Delivery Partner can be obtained from the Council's Development Management Team.
- 4.17 The Social Value Strategy must reference the Social Value Target generated by the Social Value Forecast and demonstrate a clear commitment by the Applicant/Developer to achieve the target during the construction phase of the project. Where appropriate, the Strategy should also include 'end-use' (see 4.21).
- 4.18 The Council will expect the Strategy to demonstrate clear links to the Borough's needs, to include liaising with organisations and bodies such as the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal, West Herts College and local schools. Measures within the Strategy must benefit local residents, with commitments made to as many of the following as is practicably achievable;
- Targeted recruitment and training requirements, ensuring that apprenticeship and other work opportunities help to alleviate unemployment;
 - Work placements opportunities designed to support education and learning;
 - Targeted vacancy filling or maximising the use of employment support partners;
 - Supporting the integration of the local supply chain, helping to develop a wider business base both for the delivery of services and materials;
 - Provision of opportunities for social enterprises, which have explicit social, economic or environmental aims;

- Participation in the promotion of education initiatives, supporting the transition between school and work;
- Participation in forums created to promote sector development, sharing good practice to stimulate improvement;
- Participation in forums created to promote community development, maximising the benefits of a strong voluntary and community sector.

4.19 The above list is not exhaustive and discussion with the Council is recommended at pre-application and Planning Performance Agreement stage for all proposals requiring a Social Value Strategy, in order that the individual requirements for each Social Value Strategy are negotiated prior to the submission of a planning application.

4.20 A wide range of other local employment and training measures can also be secured through the Social Value Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 1.

4.21 End-use refers to the employment and skills opportunities that will be generated once the development is complete. For the avoidance of doubt, this will apply to all developments other than residential developments. All such non-residential developments must include in their Social Value Strategies a commitment to provide the Council with details of the end-user. The Council's Approved Delivery Partner and Economic Development Team will then liaise with the end-user as the project nears completion to support them with their immediate recruitment requirements. Any outcomes generated during the end-use phase of the project will be counted as additional to the Social Value Target.



5. Implementation and Monitoring

The process and typical procedures involved in the implementation and monitoring of Social Value Strategies are shown in Appendix 2.

How will Social Value Strategies be implemented?

5.1 The Council's requirement for a Social Value Strategy will be highlighted to applicants during their pre-application and Planning Performance Agreement

discussions with the Planning Case Officer. The Planning Case officer will provide details for the Council's approved Social Value Delivery Partner who will support the applicant to obtain a Social Value Forecast and draft and agree the content of a Social Value Strategy.

- 5.2 The finalised and agreed Social Value Strategy will thereafter be submitted with the planning application. Its content will then be considered as part of the application's assessment and a planning obligation (under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) secured where it satisfies the relevant tests.
- 5.3 During the construction phase of a development, delivery of Social Value Strategies will be supported by the Council's Approved Delivery Partner. The Delivery Partner will support the developer and/or main contractor to agree a Social Value Delivery Plan detailing the Social Value outcomes that will be generated by the project with the ultimate aim of achieving the Social Value Target set out in the Social Value Strategy. The Approved Delivery Partner will provide an end-to-end service for each development supporting delivery as well as monitoring and reporting of all outcomes.



How will Social Value Strategies be monitored?

- 5.4 Delivery of the Social Value Strategy will be monitored via the Council's S106 monitoring process and it will be the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the Strategy (including any monitoring requirements on the developer) is delivered in accordance with the S106 agreement. Any non-compliance relating to the delivery of the Social Value Strategy by the applicant or the appointed contractor will be reported to the Council by the Approved Delivery Partner, the Council will then take the appropriate action to ensure compliance.
- 5.5 The Council's Approved Delivery Partner will routinely monitor the delivery of all Social Value Strategies and will regularly up-date the Council on

performance and progress. The Approved Delivery Partner will submit a final report at the end of each development detailing the outcomes achieved.

- 5.6 A financial contribution to enable the Approved Delivery Partner to deliver their end-to-end service will be collected via Section 106 agreements, specifically relating to the delivery, monitoring and reporting of Social Value.
- 5.7 It will be important for the Council and the development industry, as well as its delivery partners, to evaluate the outcomes of Social Value Strategies once they have been completed. Successful examples in Dacorum Borough and elsewhere will be shared with applicants for planning permission, in order to ensure that they can be used again for the benefit of local residents.
- 5.8 The number of Social Value Strategies in operation and the opportunities provided will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) published by the Council.
- 5.9 Finally, the Council will monitor the effectiveness of this guidance and review as appropriate in the light of its performance and any future changes in planning law, national policy and guidance.

Appendix 1: Delivery Options

The range of local employment and training methods that can be secured through Social Value Strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recruitment through Jobcentre Plus and other employment agencies
- Creating new apprenticeship opportunities for local people.
- Pre-employability Support e.g. mentoring, work trials and interview guarantees.
- Work experience and work placements (14-16 years, 16-19 years and 19+ years).
- Training e.g. Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Cards.
- Work with local education providers (e.g. schools, colleges and universities) to actively promote careers in development and construction.
- Community based projects.

Where possible, opportunities should be offered to local residents who have traditionally been excluded from the employment and training cycle. In addition to unemployment, this includes residents who would like to work but are unable to do so because of factors outside their control e.g. those with a disability, sickness, caring responsibilities.

Through their Social Value Strategies, developers are also encouraged to set out how they would engage with local schools and support them to promote the skills and qualifications needed for employment amongst young people aged 11 to 16.

The Social Value Delivery Plan will contain more detail around how these outcomes will be achieved, for example;

- Career inspiration: speakers provided to schools, role models to inspire and encourage career progression, work 'taster' events.
- Employability: mentoring and support for specific cohorts of young people (e.g. under-achievers, high achievers, or young people from particular areas or estates), sessions on employer expectations, mock interviews and interview preparation.
- Curriculum support: advice on curriculum design to bring construction opportunities to life and support to design curriculum-based interventions.
- Work-based learning: workplace visits to complement classroom-based learning, work experience placements etc.

Appendix 2: The Process

DBC = Dacorum Borough Council

ADP = Approved Delivery Partner

SVS = Social Value Strategy

PPA = Planning Performance Agreement

