Overview and Scrutiny

13 January 2025

Member questions

Agenda item 8: Golden Value Social Value Strategy

1.   Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin

The second paragraph of section 5 (p25) says that the Charter will provide a clear framework for businesses to contribute to the environment, economy, and local community, supporting both their long-term success and the wider area. How does/might this align with the way the Business Innovation District (BID) operates in the centre of town?

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

The following response has been reviewed and includes input from Francesca Inman, the Chief Executive of the BID.

The Social Value Charter (SVC) in the Golden Valley Development (GVD) aligns closely with the objectives of Cheltenham's Business Improvement District (BID) in several ways:

1. Supporting the Local Economy: The BID actively promotes the local economy by fostering partnerships among businesses, encouraging local hiring, and supporting independent retailers. Similarly, the Social Value Charter emphasises local procurement, job creation, and investment in Cheltenham's community, ensuring both initiatives contribute to sustainable economic growth.

2. Environmental Responsibility: The BID aims to introduce eco-friendly initiatives in the town centre, such as waste reduction programs, energy-saving campaigns, and collaborations with local environmental organisations in the next year. The Social Value Charter mirrors this by requiring businesses in Golden Valley to adopt sustainable practices, including carbon reduction and renewable energy use.

3. Community Engagement: Both the BID and the SVC prioritise community connections. The BID's sponsorship of local events and support for charities strengthen the bond between businesses and the public. In Golden Valley, the Charter encourages similar engagement through initiatives like skills training, apprenticeships, and community project funding.

4. Inclusivity: Cheltenham BID is committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment through projects that enhance accessibility and celebrate diversity. This complements the Charter's focus on fostering

equality in employment and service provision, ensuring businesses reflect and support the diversity of the community.

In summary, while the BID focuses on the established boundary of the town centre and the Social Value Charter on the emerging Golden Valley Development, both share core principles of sustainability, community engagement, inclusivity, and economic support. Together, they offer a cohesive framework for Cheltenham's long-term prosperity, creating opportunities for collaboration between these two areas to benefit the entire borough.

2. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin

Throughout the report there is mention of "local residents" and it would be interesting to know how these are defined (apologies if I have missed this). For example, in terms of KPIs, there is mention of monitoring how often local residents use the facilities. Will this include anyone with a Cheltenham postcode, or specifically residents in the more immediate vicinity?

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

This area does require more discussion and further attention to come to a conclusion. However, local residents could potentially refer to individuals within the wider Cheltenham area, including those with a Cheltenham postcode. However, it's likely that certain aspects of the Social Value Strategy will prioritise residents from the immediate vicinity of the Golden Valley development, particularly in areas like Hester's Way and Springbank, which are highlighted as communities facing significant income and employment challenges.

In practice, it might be a mix of both, with the immediate local area receiving priority, but also a broader outreach to all of Cheltenham and the wider Gloucestershire, to ensure inclusivity in facility use and community engagement. To get a more precise answer, the project team will need to define "local" more clearly in the monitoring processes, particularly in how data on facility use, community engagement, and other KPIs will be collected and measured.

3. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin

The introduction to part 3 of appendix 2 mentions the potential to create well-lit running and cycle routes and to opening out spaces to schools, cultural groups and sports activities (p 34)……To what extent might this link with and support the council's sports and physical activity action plan?

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

Thanks for your question, Jackie. I believe you're referring to the Pitch Strategy Action Plan. The development of well-lit running and cycling routes, along with open spaces for schools, cultural groups, and sports, strongly supports the Pitch Strategy Action Plan in the following ways:

1. Improving Sporting Infrastructure: The new routes and playing spaces will encourage and increase physical activity in the community and align with the

action plan's goal of ensuring everyone has the opportunity to enjoy physical activity.

2. Improving Accessibility: Potentially opening spaces for schools and community groups makes it easier for people to access sports and recreational activities, helping to break down barriers to physical activity, especially for underrepresented groups.

3. Encouraging Participation: The focus on community use of these spaces supports the action plan's goal to increase public participation in sports and physical activity, facilitating events and fitness programs.

4. Health and Well-Being: The improved infrastructure for running and cycling directly supports the action plan's focus on physical and mental health, promoting an active lifestyle and improving quality of life.

5. Inclusive Opportunities: Making spaces and routes accessible to everyone aligns with the action plan's commitment to ensuring all residents, no matter their age or ability, have opportunities to be active.

In short, Golden Valley's development will help meet the goals of Pitch Strategy Action Plan by encouraging active lifestyles, providing additional sporting infrastructure, and promoting better health and well-being.

4. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin
With respect to part 4 of appendix 2, regarding the actions to be taken include in the social value charter, there is a section on Occupier and resident safety (p 36). Have you seen the recent report of a project undertaken by the St Giles Trust for the No Child Left Behind Partnership which listened to young voices (particularly girls) on safety and protection in Cheltenham? It may have some valuable insights.

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

Thank you for highlighting the report. I have received a copy from the NCLB team to review and assess how the findings can support or be integrated into our strategy. I haven't had the chance to read the full report yet, but I have a meeting scheduled with the NCLB team on 23rd January to discuss how Golden Valley can align with and support their objectives. Please note that NCLB is specifically referenced in the strategy and is a priority in our efforts to work with the charity to support their goals.

5. Question from Councillor Chris Day
If occupiers and tenants will have to sign up to Social Value Charter why not make contributions to the Social Value Fund mandatory rather than optional? Contributions could be in kind if burdening prospective tenants with additional financial obligations is a concern.

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

Making contributions to the Social Value Fund mandatory could ensure consistent funding for local initiatives and guarantee that all tenants are equally responsible for supporting the community. It would also allow for in-kind contributions (such as services or volunteer work), so tenants don't feel financial pressure.

However, mandatory payments might be unattractive to new tenants who prefer more flexibility. Balancing the need for consistent funding with tenant concerns about costs would be crucial to maintaining interest in the development while supporting the community. This area requires further discussion and development, which will take place over the next year.

6. Question from Councillor Chris Day

Is Social Value Charter enforceable? Isn't best guarantee of compliance a careful tenant selection process?

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

Social Value Charter can be enforced to some extent, but its effectiveness largely depends on the tenant selection process and how the commitments are integrated into lease agreements.

Enforceability:

- The Charter could be legally embedded into lease agreements, making certain commitments (such as community involvement, sustainability practices, etc.) contractually binding. However, enforcement may still require ongoing monitoring and action from the developers or local authorities to ensure compliance.
- Penalties or incentives (like public recognition) could be built into contracts to encourage compliance and reward positive contributions.

Tenant Selection:

- The best guarantee of compliance is indeed a careful tenant selection process. By choosing tenants who are already committed to social responsibility and have a history of supporting local communities, the development can attract businesses that are aligned with its social value goals from the start.
- The process could prioritise tenants that show a genuine interest in contributing to local skills training, job creation, and environmental sustainability. This proactive selection helps create a culture of commitment to the Charter, reducing the need for heavy enforcement.

In conclusion, while the Social Value Charter can be enforceable to an extent, selecting tenants who are already aligned with the development's values may be the most effective way to ensure compliance and achieve the desired social impact.

7. Question from Councillor Chris Day

What resources will be available to ensure Social Value Strategy is successfully implemented and monitored? How will these resources be funded?

Response from Amy Keates, Construction Project Manager and Paul Minnis, Director of Major Development and Regeneration

To ensure the success of the Social Value Strategy for the Golden Valley Development, the following steps will be taken:

1. Project Team
   A dedicated project team from Cheltenham Borough Council and HBD will lead the strategy and ensure it meets its goals. The team will meet monthly to review progress, actions, and updates. The team was established in November 2024.

   We will foster and maintain strong working relationships with the social value leads across the various non-tenant GV stakeholders and suppliers, including the principal contractor, estate management, resident groups, education partners, and others. We envision integrating these leads into our social value meetings at least once or twice annually to ensure continued collaboration and alignment.

2. Tracking Progress
   Progress will be tracked using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as jobs, apprenticeships, community support, and environmental care. A tool called the Social Profit Calculator (SPC) will be used to measure progress.

3. Community Feedback
   The community will be regularly consulted through meetings and discussions to ensure the development benefits everyone.

Funding:

1. Social Value Fund
   The Social Value Fund will be supported by tenant contributions (either monetary or in-kind) to fund local projects and training, as part of the Social Value Charter.

2. External Funding
   Additional funding may come from government grants, local businesses, and charitable contributions.

The strategy will be managed by a dedicated team, tracked using KPIs, and will incorporate regular community feedback.

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