

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2nd March 2026

Golden Valley Social Value Workstream:

Annual Review

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

The Social Value workstream remains a core component of the Golden Valley Development (GVD), underpinning the Council's ambition to maximise community benefit throughout the project lifecycle. As the development moves closer to Phase 1 construction, the Golden Valley Team has requested a formal presence at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide a progress update, maintain transparency, and to answer any questions the Committee may have. For context, Phase 1 includes the Innovation Centre (now called *Idea*) the Mobility Hub (now called *Router*) and the associated infrastructure. A reserved matters planning application is currently being considered for Phase 1 by the local planning authority.

Given the scale, duration and strategic importance of the GVD, ongoing oversight will help provide assurance that Social Value commitments are being met, aligned with Council priorities, and continue to evolve in response to community needs.

2. Summary of the Issue

At last year's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Golden Valley Social Value Strategy was presented and endorsed as the guiding framework for how the programme will deliver social value. This strategy is fundamental to the programme, without it, the GVD would not be able to deliver one of its key outputs, ensuring meaningful, measurable benefits for local communities. Over the past 12 months, this strategy has remained a central focus and has shaped the development of two key documents now progressing for Phase 1: the Social Value Plan for construction and the Social Value Charter for future occupiers.

2.1 Social Value Plan – Phase 1 Construction

With B&K now formally appointed as the construction contractor, the development of the Phase 1 Social Value Plan has become a primary focus. This plan will outline the practical actions, commitments and measurable outcomes that B&K will deliver over the next two years during the construction phase.

The Plan will prioritise activities that generate the greatest benefit for neighbouring communities, including:

- skills and employment opportunities for local residents,
- targeted workshops and engagement with schools and colleges,
- support for local community groups and voluntary organisations,
- and wider initiatives aligned with education, inclusion, and community wellbeing.

The Social Value Plan is being developed collaboratively with B&K and HBD to ensure it is deliverable, targeted, and aligned with the wider ambitions of the Golden

Valley programme and CBC's corporate priorities.

2.2 Social Value Charter – Phase 1 Occupiers

In parallel with the construction-focused plan, work is nearing completion on the Golden Valley Social Value Charter for future Phase 1 occupiers. The Charter will set out clear annual commitments that all occupiers will be expected to deliver once they move into the buildings, ensuring that social value continues into the operational life of the development.

The Charter will focus on key themes including:

- inclusive employment and fair access to opportunities,
- engaging with the local supply chain,
- support for community and VCSE partners,
- sustainability and responsible business practice,
- and ongoing collaboration with local stakeholders.

The Charter has been developed to ensure occupiers are meaningfully embedded within the Cheltenham community and contribute positively to the area from the outset. It will go live once occupiers begin to take up space in Phase 1.

Together, the Social Value Plan and Charter will ensure Social Value is embedded throughout both the construction and operational phases of the project, aligned with wider Council priorities and responsive to the needs of local communities.

3. Summary of evidence/information

Over the past year, the Golden Valley Social Value Team has significantly

strengthened local engagement, supported community programmes, and expanded education and skills opportunities across Cheltenham, which has helped developed the direction of the Social Value Plan and Charter. The following summary provides a snapshot of key activity delivered between January 2025 and February 2026.

Engagement & Collaboration

- Regularly meeting local community groups such as West Cheltenham Partnership, Common Ground, VSCE partnership, ITSA and Lives of Colour.
- Hosted a major multi-stakeholder GVD Social Value workshop in October 2025, attended by 50+ community partners to discover the local needs and where GVD can support during phase 1 construction.
- Coordinated a presentation from Henry Boot's Community Investment Group, working with CBC's Community Investment Team to identify funding and resource support opportunities
- Bowmer & Kirkland (B&K) presented to the Social Value workstream members (July 2025).
- Facilitated a shadowing session of GCHQ's outreach programme at Hester's Way Primary School (January 2025)
- Held 14 monthly Social Value meetings, representing 15 permanent members including Gloucestershire County Council and GCHQ.
- Supported HBD's membership on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Board, which commenced in September 2025.
- Planned a knowledge-exchange workshop between NCLB and HBD's innovation

partners in South Yorkshire for March 2026.

- In February 2026 HBD delivered a presentation on Golden Valley to the Construction Excellence forum with a general update and a focus on Social Value
- In February, the Golden Valley Development provided funding to Cleeve School to support their Distribution Hub for the next academic year, a key part of the Cyber First initiative. The hub loans educational cyber equipment to primary and secondary schools, helping young people across Gloucestershire develop digital skills and confidence.

Community Support

- Launched a digital food pantry at St Thomas More ('Tommies') to improve digital inclusion and access to affordable food.
- Issued four community newsletters to over 40 stakeholders throughout 2025.
- Enabled 37 free community events, promoting local engagement, wellbeing, and connectivity.

Education & Skills

- Funded 97 primary school children, across five Cheltenham schools, to participate in extracurricular coding clubs.
- Held multiple meetings with local primary and secondary school head teachers, building relationships to inform future skills, careers and curriculum-based activities linked to the innovation district.

3.2 The Social Value workstream brings together a diverse and collaborative group of partners, reflecting the breadth of expertise needed to deliver meaningful,

place-based impact for the GVD. Its 15 permanent members include representatives from GCHQ, who bring deep community knowledge and frontline insight; Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), providing strategic alignment across education, skills and county-wide priorities; Plexal, offering innovation-led perspectives and experience in supporting businesses and emerging talent; and wider Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) community and project leaders, ensuring strong local leadership, governance and delivery capability. This diversity enables the workstream to make well-informed decisions, rooted in both community need and strategic opportunity.

4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider eg potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

The Social Value workstream will now focus on developing the Phase 1 Social Value Plan in partnership with B&K and HBD, ensuring it fully aligns with our community-first approach. This work will prioritise two of the most deprived areas in Cheltenham, Hester's Way and Springbank which stays consistent with the ambitions set out in the original business case five years ago, recognising these areas will also be most directly affected during construction. We will continue to strengthen relationships with local community partners and establish a set of clear, measurable KPIs to guide, track and report delivery throughout Phase 1. This will ensure our commitments remain transparent, achievable and grounded in the needs of the communities we serve.

Focus for the Next Period

The Social Value workstream is moving into a delivery-focused phase for 2026, with a clear, milestone-driven programme of activity designed to demonstrate structured

planning, strong engagement, and measurable outcomes. Key priorities include:

- **Finalising the Social Value Charter** and submitting it through the CBC approval routes so it can be incorporated into Phase 1 lease documentation.
- **Completing the Phase 1 detailed, targeted Social Value Plan** with B&K and HBD.
- **Publishing the first 2026 Golden Valley community newsletter** in March, led by HBD, to maintain transparent communication with community groups and partners.
- **Delivering the first Golden Valley Social Value Networking Event** in May at The MX, bringing together local charities, community groups, and industry partners.
- **Sustaining engagement with community partners and education providers**, ensuring strong links with local schools, colleges, and the VCSE sector.
- **Continuing to fund free places for Cheltenham school children** to attend JamCoding after-school sessions, supporting digital inclusion and skills.

Background Papers**Social Value Charter****Contact Officer**

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Accountability

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