

Overview and Scrutiny

Meeting date: Monday 2nd September

Member question

**Question from Margaret Cheung (Independent co-optee) to Paul Minnis,
Director Major Developments and Regeneration**

Under Phase 1 Construction, targeted workshops and engagement with schools and colleges will be included in the Social Value Plan. Could you clarify what kinds of workshops and engagement are envisaged?

Response:

The workshops and engagement activities planned for Phase 1 Construction will be targeted to local needs, with a particular focus on organisations and schools in Springbank and Hester's Way. Following recent discussions with the Head of Construction at Gloucestershire College, we are incorporating a range of practical employability activities, including CV-writing support, interview practice, and coordinated site tours for Gloucestershire College students, aligned to their academic timetable.

The programme of workshops will be developed in partnership with CBC's Training & Employment and Community Teams, as well as local organisations, to ensure activities directly reflect priorities identified through ongoing work at Springbank Community Centre and Hester's Way Community Resource Centre. Our Training & Employment colleagues are already delivering a regular timetable of employability workshops across community venues, and we will work closely with them to build on what is already in place and add value where needed. This approach ensures that the support offered during Phase 1 Construction is relevant, aligned and genuinely beneficial to local residents.

Question from Margaret Cheung (Independent co-optee) to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

How does the Social Value Plan outlined on Page 2 align with the key themes of the Charter on Page 3? If occupiers do not meet those commitments, will there be any consequences?

Response:

The Social Value Strategy, Social Value Charter and the Phase 1 Social Value Plan are designed to operate as an aligned framework, each building on the other to provide consistent direction. The Strategy sets the overarching themes and priorities for the Golden Valley Development. These principles directly informed the Charter, which translates those priorities into clear expectations and measurable commitments for occupiers. The Strategy will also guide the development of the detailed Social Value Plan for Phase 1 construction, ensuring full alignment across all stages of delivery.

To recognise that occupiers will vary significantly in size, resources and capacity to deliver social value, the Charter includes a tiered commitment structure – Bronze, Silver and Gold. This provides fairness and flexibility by allowing businesses to select a level that matches what they can realistically achieve, while still ensuring that all occupiers contribute meaningfully.

- Bronze sets a strong but achievable baseline.
- Silver represents an enhanced level of activity and community contribution.
- Gold reflects a high level of ambition and leadership in social value delivery.

This tiered model ensures that expectations are proportionate, transparent and scalable, while still encouraging occupiers to aim higher over time.

On consequences and accountability, the Charter outlines a supportive but structured process. Occupiers will report annually on their commitments, with progress reviewed through the Social Value Occupiers Board. Where commitments are not being met, proportionate actions will be agreed—this may include targeted support, corrective action plans, strengthened monitoring or,

where appropriate, rebaselining of targets. The emphasis is on enabling delivery and continuous improvement, while maintaining accountability and transparency across the development.

Question from Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

What is the best, most specific example of how community engagement has fed into the Golden Valley Development (GVD) plans and decisions?

Response:

Community engagement has played a fundamental role in shaping the direction of the Golden Valley Development (GVD), with one clear example stemming from the consultation undertaken in summer 2024. Local groups highlighted key barriers at the time, most notably the cost of hiring event space and the need for more consistent communication about the project. In response, and ahead of construction, CBC worked with The MX team to offer free space for community use, resulting in over 37 no-cost events for local charities and organisations in 2025. To address the call for regular updates, we also requested that HBD introduce a quarterly community newsletter, now reaching more than 50 subscribed groups, alongside a dedicated 'Community Impact' section on the GVD website showcasing local stories and providing an easy sign-up route for updates. These activities, along with other points raised during the 2024 consultation, directly shaped delivery for the Social Value workstream throughout 2025.

Another example of how public engagement has directly fed into GVD plans and decisions and how local feedback has shaped the planning process relates to concerns about long-term community facilities. Residents questioned whether a genuinely accessible community space would be secured and protected for local use. In response, this feedback was embedded into the planning process through a binding requirement in the Section 106 agreement, obliging the developer, HBD, to deliver a shell and core constructed multi-purpose Community Use Unit of at least 360 sqm. Additionally, there is a £210k contribution from HBD to enable the fit out of the unit, specific to the needs of the community. The agreement also safeguards long-term access by requiring the space to be leased for a minimum of 25 years to a council-nominated operator, ensuring it remains available to community groups for decades. This demonstrates how public questions about access, control and longevity were translated into enforceable commitments that guarantee delivery and sustained community benefit.

These examples are part of a wider pattern where engagement has shaped both the direction of the Social Value workstream and the outputs delivered to date. Through continued dialogue, we have ensured our approach remains aligned with community needs. At the Social Value Workshop on 21 October 2025, for instance, stakeholders again emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for nearby residents. This has since been embedded into the Social Value Charter through the introduction of postcode-based priority for employment and skills. The same workshop highlighted demand for a dedicated social value networking space, as many groups were meeting each other for the first time and identifying opportunities for collaboration.

As a result, we are now organising the first Golden Valley Social Value Networking Event for 11 May, with the intention of holding it twice a year if successful, directly shaped by that feedback. Mental health, particularly for young people entering construction, was also raised as a significant issue. We are therefore coordinating with the Lighthouse Charity to deliver mental health-focused sessions for students at Gloucestershire College, with further sessions planned for on-site subcontractors throughout Phase 1 construction.

Looking ahead, the Social Value Plan for Phase 1 construction currently in development will follow the same framework: it will be shaped by ongoing engagement and reflect the priorities identified by the community. This approach ensures that every stage from the overarching Strategy to the Charter, to the detailed Social Value Plan for Phase 1—remains firmly rooted in the needs and aspirations of local people.

. Question from Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

What are the key quantitative and qualitative metrics being monitored to assess success or failure of the social value workstream?

Response:

The key quantitative and qualitative metrics we monitor are aligned to the four core principles set out in Section 7 of the 2024 Social Value Strategy: Employment and Skills Development, Community Engagement and Accessibility, Environmental Sustainability, and Charitable Contributions and Volunteering. Across these themes, we will assess success using a blend of quantitative outputs such as the number of local people supported into employment, training hours delivered, participation in community programmes, carbon-reduction measures, or volunteering hours alongside qualitative measures, including case studies, storytelling, beneficiary feedback, and evidence of strengthened community networks.

These areas form the foundation of our performance framework and give a clear structure for how we evaluate impact. The specific KPIs for Phase 1 construction will be developed over the coming months with our development partner HBD and our construction contractor, B&K, ensuring they remain rooted in these themes while also flexible enough to evolve as community needs change. However, we are confident that these four principles will continue to be the milestone areas against which the effectiveness of the Social Value workstream is assessed.

Question from Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

When and how will assessment of the success or otherwise of the social value workstream be undertaken? How will findings be shared and/or published?

Response:

Assessment of the Social Value Workstream will take place throughout both the construction and operational phases, using the principles set out in the Social Value Strategy and the KPIs currently being developed for Phase 1. During construction, B&K will report monthly on progress against the agreed KPIs, enabling continuous monitoring of both quantitative outcomes and qualitative impact. CBC will also review progress through its internal governance processes, ensuring that delivery remains aligned to the commitments made in the Social Value Charter and forthcoming Social Value Plan.

Findings will be shared and published in several ways to maintain transparency with the community and stakeholders. Updates are already being communicated through the quarterly community newsletter and the Community Impact section of the Golden Valley website, which highlights case studies, stories and community activity. Key performance information will also be included within CBC governance reporting as part of regular programme updates.

Once the buildings are completed and occupiers have moved in, a formal annual assessment will be undertaken through the Social Value Occupiers Board. This Board meeting will provide a structured forum to review each occupier's performance against their selected tiered commitment (Bronze, Silver or Gold). This ensures that expectations remain proportionate while still enabling a transparent comparison of delivery across the development.

The annual review will highlight both strengths and areas for improvement, helping occupiers understand how they are performing against their commitments and where further support or adjustments may be needed. This process ensures that each occupier's commitment and their success in delivering meaningful social value outputs remains clearly visible and is assessed consistently year on year.

All together, these mechanisms ensure that success, or areas requiring improvement, is clearly assessed, formally reviewed, and shared openly with stakeholders and the wider community.

Question from Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

Target of 10% sourced locally / 10% of contracts: Is this measured by value of goods/services or by volume/quantity?

Response:

The 10% target for buying from local suppliers, set out in the Social Value Charter, is measured by how much money is spent, not by how many items or contracts there are. In simple terms, we look at the proportion of the occupier's total spending that goes to businesses based in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire. This approach gives a true picture of the economic benefit to the local area.

Question from Cllr Chelin to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

The snapshot of key activities delivered by the Golden Valley Social Value Team (pp 20-21 in the board pack) is impressive. The benefits of some are obvious or implicit, but it would be helpful to know, with regard to some of the others (especially in the Engagement and collaboration section), what the outcomes have been, e.g. "regular meetings with local community groups", whether these are likely to continue, and for what specific purpose.

Response:

Thank you for the positive feedback. The activities highlighted reflect a snapshot of the Social Value workstream activities in 2025 and the strong relationships we have built with local partners. Regular engagement with community groups, charities and education providers has already produced meaningful outcomes.

For example, discussions with ITSA Digital Trust highlighted how difficult it is for them to source enough donated IT equipment to meet local demand. In direct response, an action has been added to the Social Value Charter

requiring future occupiers to donate any redundant non-secure IT equipment to ITSA, creating a long-term supply route that could significantly expand their impact.

Community feedback has also shaped practical delivery. Feedback regarding concerns about the digital divide led to funding free Jam Coding after-school sessions for 97 children in the 2024/25 academic year, prioritising schools close to the GVD site. Due to positive feedback from teachers and students, this support continues and has now benefitted seven local schools: St Thomas Moore Catholic School, Gloucester Road Primary School, Hesters Way Primary School, Springbank Primary Academy, Oakwood Primary School, Gardners Lane Primary School and Rowanfield Junior School.

Also feedback from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) colleagues requesting a strengthen alignment at a strategic level, resulted in our development partner HBD now being part of the NCLB Board, ensuring monthly engagement and a consistent link to wider community priorities.

These relationships and touchpoints are expected to continue throughout Phase 1 and beyond because they serve a specific and essential purpose: ensuring that the Social Value workstream remains aligned with real community needs and continues to evolve based on lived experience. They provide a direct feedback loop into our Social Value planning, influence the KPIs now being developed for construction, and ensure that future initiatives such as the upcoming Social Value Networking Event on 11 May or the Lighthouse Charity sessions being planned at Gloucestershire College, are grounded in evidence rather than assumptions. In short, these engagements are not one-off interactions but part of an ongoing approach to understanding needs, shaping delivery and maintaining strong, collaborative relationships with the communities most connected to the Golden Valley Development.

Question from Cllr Chelin to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

It would also be helpful to know which have been the most challenging workshops/activities and why, e.g. have any people attending expressed concerns/dissent about the development and, indeed, what has been learned that might require changes to be made to the rollout of the charter.

Response:

The most challenging feedback emerging from recent workshops, particularly the GVD Social Value Workshop in October 2025, has centred on concerns from local residents about missing out on employment opportunities linked to the development. This has been a consistent theme and has shaped several practical changes to our approach. In response, we are working closely with B&K to ensure local suppliers and residents can access clear information about opportunities through “Meet the Builder” sessions, including guidance on how to apply and what roles will be available.

To help remove barriers to working on a construction site, B&K have committed dedicated funding to cover the cost of CSCS cards for local people who may not otherwise be able to access these essential construction qualifications to work on-site. We will also be co-ordinating targeted workshops to help with employability at local community centres which will be open to all.

This feedback has also directly shaped the Social Value Charter. A specific action has now been embedded requiring occupiers to “prioritise recruitment for all operational, administrative and manual roles from Cheltenham postcodes wherever possible” ensuring residents benefit from the employment created by the development.

Overall, while these conversations can be challenging, they have strengthened the roll-out of the Charter by highlighting where more targeted support is needed. They continue to ensure that our employment and skills commitments are both practical and responsive to the concerns raised by the local community.

Question from Cllr Chelin to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

On page 19 of the pack it states that “the Charter has been developed to ensure occupiers are meaningfully embedded within the Cheltenham community and contribute positively to the area from the outset”. Hopefully, this instance will not arise, but what will happen if those occupiers are deemed not to be fully compliant in this, further down the line?

Response:

The Charter has been designed to ensure occupiers are embedded within the Cheltenham community from the outset, but it also provides a clear and fair process for addressing any non-compliance. Page 8 of the Social Value Charter includes a dedicated section titled “Recourse for Non-Compliance,” which sets out the standards expected and the steps that will be taken if an occupier does not meet their commitments.

If an occupier is not fully compliant, this will be identified through their annual reporting and the review meetings held with the Social Value Occupiers

Board. The initial approach is supportive: we work with the occupier to understand the challenges, agree a corrective action plan and adjust delivery where necessary. The focus is on helping them meet the Charter's requirements rather than penalising them.

Occupiers will already have their own ESG obligations, and the Charter has been shaped to ensure our expectations are both realistic and achievable while still being ambitious for Cheltenham. To support this, we have included clear signposting throughout the Charter and will provide additional resources on the Golden Valley website such as a directory of community groups and charities across Cheltenham, which will go live once the buildings are complete. This ensures occupiers have the tools and connections they need to meet their commitments effectively.

22. Question from Cllr Chelin to Paul Minnis, Director Major Developments and Regeneration

I think I mentioned this the last time we discussed the GVD social value activities.....Some residents (and, it seems, now, some elected members, also) are referring to the GVD as a “vanity project”. As such, the social value work is really important, as are the communications that will help to explain this work. At the end of the paper (page 23 of the board pack), various communication mechanisms are mentioned and I am interested to understand more about how the impact is going to be measured and then communicated

Response:

We understand how important it is to demonstrate clear and measurable social value, particularly given some of the perceptions around the GVD. Impact will be monitored through the KPIs currently being developed for Phase 1 construction, and we will establish baseline data for each KPI so we know exactly where we are starting from and can track how the development is positively impacting Cheltenham over time and ensure this is communicated to local and national stakeholders.

Internally, progress will be communicated through:

- CBC governance reporting (Programme Board and member briefings)
- Monthly KPI returns from B&K
- The Social Value Occupiers Board once buildings are operational

Externally, we will communicate progress through:

- The quarterly GVD Community Newsletter
- Press releases at key social value milestones and social media updates
- The Golden Valley website's 'Community Impact' section
- Community engagement sessions

- The new annual Golden Valley Social Value Networking Event

These mechanisms ensure that measurable outcomes, real community stories and wider impact are communicated clearly and consistently to residents, partners and elected members.