

# Halton Borough Council Social Value in Planning SPD

April 2026





**Social Value in Planning (SPD)**  
*April 2026*

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## Disclaimer

*The information in this report is provided in good faith and is as accurate as records permit, no guarantee is given regarding any possible errors.*

## Supporting Documents

- Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- This SPD forms part of the Halton Local Development Framework. It has not been necessary to prepare a SA as there is no requirement to do so under current Regulations the SPD does not introduce any additional requirements beyond those set out in the LDF and therefore will not cause any significant environmental effects arising from its implementation.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report
- A SEA and HRA Screening has been undertaken in accordance with the regulations, the SEA Screening Report will be consulted upon alongside this Draft SPD.

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## 1. Introduction and Aims & Objectives

### 1.1. Purpose of this document

This document has been prepared as a 'Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD) by Halton Borough Council (the Council). Its purpose is to assist with the interpretation and implementation of policies found in the Deliveries and Allocations Local Plan, to incorporate Social Value practices into Planning processes. It supplements policies including, but not limited to:

- CS(R)1: Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CS(R)7: Infrastructure Provision
- ED2: Employment Development

Once adopted, this SPD will carry full weight as a material consideration in the determination of major planning applications.

The SPD's aim is to define the role of Social Value in planning applications and outline the process in which this value can be captured and delivered. It will set out the thresholds in which Social Value Contributions will be expected and provide guidance in how these can be implemented, in order to maximise the social value gain from new development.

Maximising social value contributions is intended to deliver employment, upskilling strategies and training of local people, helping to deliver a strong, highly skilled workforce in Halton. In doing so, these strategies can also help to address a national skills shortage in the construction industry, directly supporting the rate of housebuilding in a time of unprecedented demand.

Therefore, this SPD will aim to add clarity to the broad policy requirements of the DALP, and provides specific guidance on:

- The circumstances in which Social Value Strategies will be provided
- Potential content and deliverables from developers in creating Social Value Strategies
- The development thresholds that would trigger a requirement for a Social Value Strategy to be submitted with a planning application.
- The process which contains requesting, preparing and implementing Social Value Strategies.

### 1.2. What is social value?

Social Value is a consideration of how a proposed development might also provide opportunity for the wider social, environmental and economic well-being of that area. Social Enterprise UK<sup>1</sup> define this as '*if £1 is spent on the delivery of services, can that same £1 be used to also produce a wider benefit to the community?*'.

By incorporating this into the planning process, there is a significant opportunity to capture value from development, which can be input back into the community. It goes beyond financial value and considers how local benefit can be maximised to support the Council's aspirations of inclusive growth. The

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<sup>1</sup> [The Social Value 2032 Programme from Social Enterprise UK](#)

process of securing social value contributions through the planning process can significantly aid with the boroughs need for upskilling, and employment need specifically in the construction industry.

Successful implementation of the Social Value SPD aims to achieve:

- More opportunities in the construction industry.
- Increased number of qualification attainment
- Upskilling of the current workforce leading to higher productivity.
- Sustainable growth measured throughout the borough.

## **2. Policy Context**

### **2.1. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

The Public services (Social Value) Act 2012<sup>2</sup> ('the Act') introduced the requirement for Local Authorities to consider economic, social and

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<sup>2</sup> [Public Service \(social value\) Act 2012](#)

environmental well-being when commissioning public services. In doing so, this should be related to the area in which the public service contract is intended to be made.

The Act is usually applied to the procurement of services, however a growing agenda for Social Value means that there has been success in other Local Authorities for the procurement of goods or works, in addition to services. This can be seen as growing recognition that the act can be used to benefit the broader social value agenda in the areas that need it.

## 2.2. NPPF 2024

The NPPF<sup>3</sup> provides national policies on all aspects of planning, in the aim for local needs to be addressed. Therefore, the scope of social value in this is extremely relevant, as a policy to promote employment and education.

This is particularly relevant to the NPPF's overarching aim of achieving sustainable development, referenced in paragraph 8 social objectives as 'fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being'.

Importantly it also notes that the three dimensions of sustainability, Economic, Social and Environmental are mutually dependent. Social value runs through the heart of these dimensions.

With reference to local employment needs, paragraph 80 of the NPPF (2024) states that: '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 challenges of the future.' A national shortage in appropriately skilled construction workforce is one of the challenges that has been addressed.

The NPPF (2024) also states that:

'Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community'.

This supports the discourse that developers should be notified at the earliest stage possible in order to develop the most effective outcome for Social Value Contribution.

## 2.3. Planning Practice Guidance 2019 (PPG)

Social Value contributions are to be sought via a planning obligation, or Section 106 agreement. The PPG (2019) outlines that planning obligations must only be sought when they meet all of the following tests (in line with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

<sup>4</sup> PPG Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 23b-002-20190901

- a. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- b. directly related to the development; and
- c. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

#### 2.4. Liverpool City Region – Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023 (LSIP)<sup>5</sup>

Construction has been selected by the LSIP as a priority sector for improving skills, identifying that the current workforce is smaller than the expected future demand. The plan identifies that there are two employer requirements: to increase the workforce of required skilled workers; and provide additional skills to the existing workforce through upskilling, both of which can be achieved through social value contributions.

#### 2.5. Delivery and Allocations Local Plan 2014 - 2037 (DALP)

The Halton Delivery and Allocations Plan<sup>6</sup> identifies a lack of employment opportunities, as a result of the major restructuring and decline of the traditional manufacturing industries that once dominated both Runcorn and Widnes, leading to the outward migration of young working age adults.

This is encompassed in policy CS(R)1 Halton’s Spatial Strategy, encouraging approximately 180 ha of land for employment purposes. Implementing social value in both construction and end use occupation to these projects will be essential in bridging this gap.

Additionally, policy CS(R)7 refers to the method of delivering locally identified priorities, including social infrastructure including community services and facilities, using planning obligations to do so.

#### 2.6. LCR Long Term Skills Plan 2025<sup>7</sup>

The Liverpool City Region Long Term Skills Plan sets out a long-term vision for transforming and better integrating post -16 employment and skills needs across the Liverpool City Region.

The plan sets out four strategic objectives, driving sustainable economic growth, by:

1. Improving technical education outcomes for young people
2. Enabling access and to second chance support learning and help to get into work
3. Developing the skills that employers need
4. Providing people with the skills to progress

With a focus on long term career growth, the use of social value strategies in planning and construction can significantly contribute to these aims.

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<sup>5</sup> [LCR Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Halton Delivery and Allocations Plan](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Appendix 1 - Liverpool City Region Long Term Skills Plan.pdf](#)

## 2.7. Planning Obligations SPD

The Planning Obligations SPD outlines the expectations of developer contributions for each specified matter. It details the process in which they can, and can't be requested, and how they will be monitored. As social value will be requested as a planning obligation, this information is relevant for all stages of delivery.

## 2.8. Corporate plan 2024-2029

The Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan<sup>8</sup> identifies a priority to tackle inequality, helping those who are most in need, namely by 'continuing to remove barriers to education and employment', with its underlying principles being "Our Community, Our Priorities, Our Future".

The Corporate Plan's 6 key priorities are:

- Improving Health, promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
- Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
- Supporting Children, Young People and Families
- Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
- Working Towards a Greener Future
- Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

## 2.9. Halton Borough Council Social Value Statement

The Halton Borough Council Social Value Policy Statement<sup>9</sup> provides a commitment to use contributions strategically to meet the needs of the borough.

The council wide social value policy addresses four corporate priorities: Social, Business Support, Jobs Growth, and Environmental. The Social value SPD aims to support Jobs Growth and Business Support through provision of employment and training opportunities, supporting the wider social value context.

Any further documents on social value can be found on the Council's website<sup>10</sup>.

# 3. Spatial context and justification for Social Value

## 3.1. The need for Social Value contributions through Planning

Halton can be seen as an active and productive borough, with 78% of its residents economically active between July 2024 and June 2025<sup>11</sup>. This exceeds the north west regional rate of 77.3% and is almost equal to the national economic activity rate of 78.8%.

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<sup>8</sup> [Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan](#)

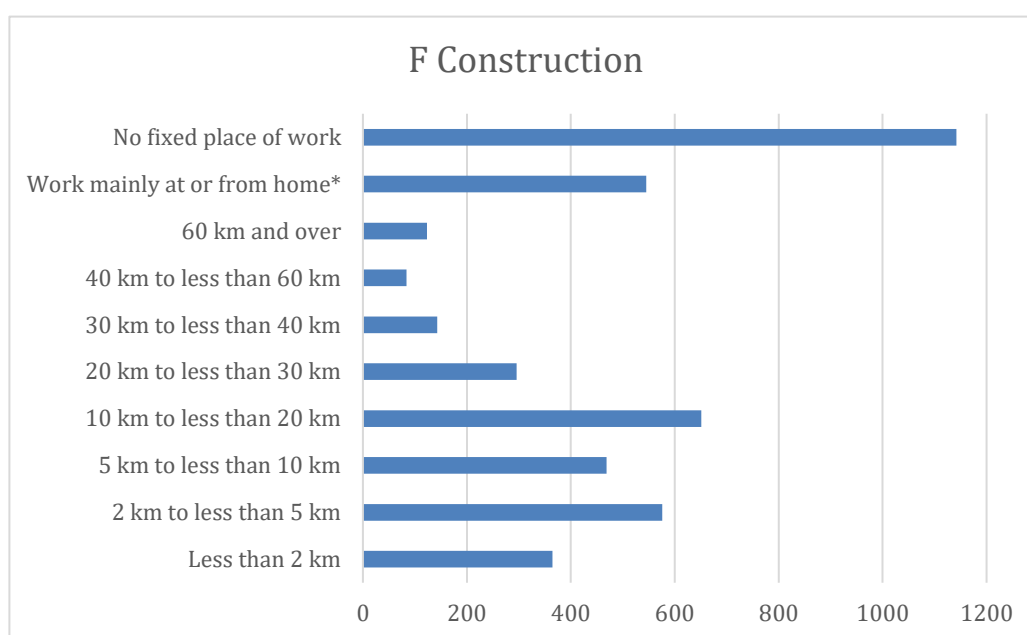
<sup>9</sup> [Halton Borough Council Social Value Statement](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Halton Borough Council social value Documents](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

With regard to the construction industry specifically, there is a significant shortfall of skilled individuals, with only 5.2% of the population employed in this industry, compared to the regional average of 8.1% in 2024-2025<sup>12</sup>, showing a large gap in skills at this level. Therefore, despite the high level of economic activity, there is a clear demand for construction skilled professionals in Halton, which can be delivered through Social Value strategies.

There is consideration however, that Halton does not have any significant ongoing construction projects, compared to regional comparisons, and therefore there is a smaller demand for construction skilled workers. It is important to enhance the opportunities that are available within the borough as a result of this. Despite this, there should also be consideration that these skilled workers are unlikely to work solely within Halton, so once again it is a priority to gain the maximum value from local work that does take place.



*Distance of commute in the Halton Borough for construction workers, showing a trend of travelling out of the borough.*

Level of Attainment	Halton %	North-west %	England %
No qualifications	21	19.5	18.1
Level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications (GCSE – A Level)	46.9	40.9	39.9
Apprenticeship	5.5	5.9	5.3
Level 4 and above	23.9	31.2	33.9

<sup>12</sup> [ONS annual population survey 2024/2025](#)

<b>Other qualifications</b>	2.6	2.5	2.8
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*Table 1: level of qualification attainment in the Borough of Halton*

*Source: ONS annual population survey 2024/25 (% is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64)*

	<b>Halton (%)</b>	<b>North west (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>
<b>RFQ4 and above</b>	34.8	42.4	47.2
<b>RFQ3 and above</b>	54.3	63.6	67.6
<b>RFQ2 and above</b>	84.8	85.0	86.5
<b>RFQ1 and above</b>	87.9	87.4	88.9
<b>Other qualifications</b>	<i>No data</i>	4.4	4.3
<b>No qualifications</b>	9.6	8.2	6.8

*Table 2: ONS annual population survey 2024/2025 (% is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64)*

Evidence shows that currently, there is an identified skills gap. The percentage of Halton’s population with no qualifications is higher than both regional and national percentages. Similarly, the percentage of people with higher qualifications (level 4 qualifications +) is significantly lower than that of the north west and England. There is an identified need for upskilling because of this.

Opportunities in construction can often be significant in terms of career advancement and professional development in what is fast becoming a dynamic industry. Therefore, although the skills and qualifications in this industry are less likely to be at a higher level, the economic benefits of upskilling in this sector remain crucial to delivering a robust local economy.

It is also noted that apprenticeships starts and achievements are higher than the national average. This is an evident strength in the borough and can be promoted through upskilling and other apprentice success.

Failure to address the low skills base can have impacts of slowing economic growth in the borough. Seeking planning obligations to deliver skills, training and employment opportunities is essential to ensure that future development is economically and socially sustainable.

The DALP has identified a need to increase the number of skilled workers and appropriate qualifications into the borough. Employment land allocations predicts that number of jobs are expected to rise, providing an opportunity to raise local levels of educational attainment through these planning applications and processes.

## 4. Implementation

### 4.1. Circumstances in which a Social Value strategy will be requested

In order to reduce the risk of being placed on smaller developments, social value strategies will only be requested from major developments reaching the specific thresholds.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015<sup>13</sup> identifies a major development as:

- 10 or more dwellings
- Building / buildings where the floor space created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more

However, there is a concern of smaller 'major developments' becoming unviable due to the requirement of social value strategies. Therefore, the most appropriate threshold would be **30 or more dwellings**, representing more substantial development, in order to avoid barriers to development.

Securing social value contributions through section 106 will require an approach which is tailored and proportionate. The contribution (which will meet legal requirements in terms of compliance with legislation and guidance) is intended to be practical, proportionate and not burdensome. This is in line with the Councils generic social value policy, ensuring that smaller developers are not disadvantaged by the contribution.

### 4.2. Process of notification and agreement

To effectively integrate social value into planning, there is a requirement for a formal process of notification to reach an agreement, as set out in the thresholds.

1. The application is submitted to the Council.
2. Development is flagged when it is received by the planning officer if the threshold is met.
3. The application is processed and the council representative for social value is notified.
4. An agreement is made between the developer and the council. A section planning obligation and/or section 106 agreement will be used to secure provision of social value contributions.

### 4.3. Social Value Delivery Model

Once an application is validated and received by the planning officer, the social value council representative is notified should the development meet the thresholds.

The social value representative will then contact the applicant at the earliest point possible. This process will then confirm the commitments that the developer has agreed to deliver.

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<sup>13</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#)

Once an outcome has been agreed, the applicant will be expected to deliver either:

- A Plan stating how the agreed social value contributions will be delivered; or
- A monetary value proportionate to the scale of development

The preferable delivery model will be for a Social Value Plan to be produced by the applicant, which will then be submitted to the Council to be approved, as in line with the regular process of planning conditions.

The applicant will then work in partnership with the social value coordinator to deliver the agreed plan.

#### 4.4. Thresholds for Social Value requirement

New development in Halton can significantly contribute towards the provision of employment and training opportunities for residents. This is expected to be clearly demonstrated within the developer's social value strategy if the development falls within the thresholds below:

Use Class	Development	Threshold for Social Value Strategy	Scope of Social Value Strategy
<b>C1, C2</b>	Hotels, Residential Institution	Buildings with a floor space of over 1,000m <sup>2</sup>	Construction Phase End use occupation
<b>C3</b>	Residential	30+ dwellings	Construction phase
<b>B2, B8, E(G) i,ii,iii, Sui Generis</b>	General Industrial; Storage or Distribution; Commercial, Business and Service; Sui Generis	Buildings with a floor space of over 1,000m <sup>2</sup>	Construction phase End use occupation

#### 4.5. Types of Employment, Skills and Training opportunities

There are two key areas for employment skills and training opportunities: the construction phase for all large developments; and the end use occupation for commercial development only.

Options for implementation of social value strategies may include, but are not limited to:

Construction phase	
Skills and Training	Skills workshops including co-delivery with developer

	Mentorship
	Training equipment and materials
	Purchase of personal safety equipment
	Appropriate site safety licences
	CV and interview training
	Mental health awareness and training
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training
	Activities to support schools and colleges' careers programmes
Site specific	Construction apprenticeship places
	Guaranteed interviews
	Attendance at jobs fairs
	Site experience for construction specific schools or colleges including age appropriate work experience opportunities.
	Contribution to 'Halton People into Jobs/ Halton Employment Partnership'
	Local public realm improvement
	Local procurement and supply chains
	Site inductions
<b>End use occupation</b>	
Employment recruitment	
Sector specific training e.g. food hygiene or customer service for the construction of retail or hospitality services	
Sector specific apprenticeship places	
Purchase of job specific equipment e.g. PPE or safety shoes	
Relevant apprenticeships or professional construction specific courses e.g. RICS	

Supervisor, leadership and management training
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#### 4.6. Value of contributions

##### **Residential**

Should a social value plan not be viable, the alternative expected contribution for dwellings should amount to £150 per unit (see appendix 1).

##### **Commercial**

The size of contribution should be relative to the size of the development regarding commercial development.

Large scale commercial development is defined as developments with a floorspace of over 1000 square metres.

Therefore, social value contributions for commercial development is expected to be £100 per 1000m<sup>2</sup>, for development over 9,000 square metres.

## 5. Monitoring

### 5.1. Monitoring of social value strategies and opportunities

Delivery of the social value strategies will be monitored via the councils S106 monitoring process and the council's social value representative. It will be the developer's responsibility to ensure that the strategy is delivered in accordance with the S106 agreement, which is legally binding.

Any non-compliance relating to the delivery of the social value strategy will be reported to the council, and the appropriate action will be taken to ensure compliance. The council, in partnership with the social value coordinator will monitor the progress and delivery of the obligations.

The report of the delivery of social value strategies, including the number of strategies, opportunities created, and employment growth will be reported in an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which tracks contributions made through section 106 agreements.

## 5.2. Measurement of investment

National guidance from the Social Value Taskforce has provided a national framework for social value in local authorities, named the 'National TOMs' (Themes, Outcomes and Measures). This framework can help provide a financial impact value to social value strategies.

Theme	Outcomes	Measure (including but not limited to)
<b>Jobs: Promote Local Skills and Employment</b>	More local people in employment	Number of local residents in FTE for one year / duration of the contract
	More opportunities for disadvantaged people	Percentage of women, BAME or people with disability (FTE) employed on the contract
	Improved Skills for local people	Number of hours of support provided to unemployed people through career mentoring and guidance via open or schools and college routes
	Improved employability of young people	Number of weeks of meaningful work placements or pre-employment courses
	Improved skills	Number of weeks of apprenticeships on the contract to completion of level 2, 3, or 4+.

*Social value TOMs – adapted from National Social Value Taskforce (2021)*

The measures can then be identified per unit (e.g. number of hours, or number of FTE) and multiplied by its proxy value (e.g. value of staff hours spent on training, or value of work placements) (see appendix 1)

## 6. Services available for social value contributions

Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. If co-operation with social value delivery mechanisms such as local employment, skills and training is unfamiliar, it is encouraged that the pre-application service is used to clarify the expectations from the applicant.

Support from the council is available for developers or contractors who need to provide a social value contribution or integrate social value into their working operations, such as Halton Employment Partnership and HBC Health Improvement Team.

## 7. Information Required for Planning Application Submissions

Major planning applications should be submitted with the standard requirements for validation. The developer is then to be notified if the development falls within the threshold for a social value strategy and will be notified at the earliest opportunity possible when the application is received by the planning officer.

## **8. Planning Conditions and Section 106 Agreements**

### **8.1. Legal viability**

Planning obligations are to support the mitigation of planning applications to make them acceptable. In line with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, they must be:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

### **8.2. Use of Planning Obligations and Section 106**

As stated, a planning obligation relating to social value will be requested for all developments over the threshold of 30 dwellings for residential development, or more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> for commercial development. This will then follow the same process of approval as for any planning obligation.

In order to integrate Social Value policies into S106 agreements, the Council has developed a robust policy background to assist with the implementation of Social Value in Section 106 agreements. Therefore, the Council has provided policy evidence (incorporated herein) that is explicitly linked to new development and will support the future local plan, making it necessary for all relevant planning applications to go through the relevant assessment process of social value contributions.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1: value, measurement and proxy of social value contributions *Expected units and measurement of social value contributions (adapted from National Social Value Taskforce TOMs 2021<sup>14</sup>)*

Measure	Unit	Proxy
No. of residents (FTE) from the listed sub-localities employed directly or through the supply chain as a result of your procurement requirements on the contract for one year or the whole duration of the contract, whichever is shorter	Number of people FTE	<b>£31,461</b> 100% value for individual
Percentage of local employees (FTE) on contract.	Percentage of employees	Record only
No. of employees (FTE) hired on the contract who are long term unemployed (unemployed for a year or longer)/ homeless / ex armed forces / care leavers as a result of a recruitment program.	Number of people FTE	<b>£20,481</b> 91% Value for individual 9% value for government
No. of hours of support into work provided to over 24 y.o. unemployed people through career mentoring, including mock interviews, CV advice, and careers guidance.	Number of hours * number of attendees	<b>£105.50</b> 100% value for individual

<sup>14</sup> [Appendix B - National TOMs Framework.pdf](#)

No. of staff hours spent on local school and college visits e.g. delivering career talks, curriculum support, literacy support, safety talks (including preparation time).	Number of staff hours	<b>£16.09</b> 100% value for community
No. of weeks of training opportunities on the contract (BTEC, City & Guilds, NVQ, HNC, apprenticeship) that have either been completed during the year, or that will be supported by the organisation until completion in the following years - Level 2,3, or 4+	Number of weeks	<b>£286.47</b> 100% value for individual
Support a 'just transition' for workers by supporting those in 'traditional' high carbon industries to retrain.	Number of hours * number of attendees	<b>£105.50</b> 100% value for individual
No. of weeks spent on meaningful work placements or pre-employment course; 1-6 weeks student placements (unpaid).	Number of weeks	<b>£168.72</b> 100% value for individual
Meaningful work placements that pay Real Living wage according to eligibility - 6 weeks or more (internships)	Number of hours * number of attendees	<b>£332.50</b> 100% value for individual
No. of armed forces veterans employees (FTE) hired on the contract as a result of a recruitment program who are disabled and are facing specific barriers to transitioning to civilian employment (e.g. physical injury, medical discharge, psychological condition)	Number of people FTE	<b>£16,420</b> 90% value for individual 10% value for government

\*The National TOMs social value proxies (the Proxy Values) are developed from adaptations of cost benefit analysis and appraisal techniques outlined in the Treasury Green Book and other relevant public-sector guidelines (See Bibliography). In technical terms, the Proxy Values require the valuation of “non-market goods and services” and the National TOMs approach aims to be consistent with the relevant techniques outlined in these guidelines.