

Social Value in Planning SPD Consultation Statement

March 2026



1. Introduction

Halton Borough Council (HBC) adopted its Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) in 2022 and this is a 15-year plan (2022-2037). The plan sets out Halton's strategic vision for the future which encompasses all the necessary strategic policies to support the borough and its growth ambitions. Along with the DALP (2022) the council is required to produce a number of new Supplementary Planning Documents. Once adopted, these SPDs will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the Borough. The Social Value in Planning SPD has been scoped and are currently being drafted:

The Social Value in Planning SPD will be the first adopted iteration of its type.

2. Consultation Process

A 4-week targeted scoping and screening consultation was undertaken on the proposed draft SPDs between Monday 9th February to Friday 6th March, 2026. Following the screening process, and due to a HRA and SA/SEA having been undertaken for the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) up to 2037 (2022) that included the identified likely effects of policy at that stage, it was concluded that none of the proposed draft SPDs would have significant environmental effects beyond those considered by the Local Plan HRA and SEA; therefore, they did not trigger the need for either a HRA or SEA.

In accordance with Regulation 12 of The Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the Council carried out a 4-week statutory consultation from Monday 9th February to Friday 6th March, 2026.

The Council notified all statutory consultees by email, letter and public notice (including Parish Councils, Ward Councillors, neighbouring authorities and members of the public, agents, developers and organisations contained on the Planning Policy Consultation Database) about the consultation. The list of all statutory consultees are listed below.

The consultation was available to view online at [Supplementary Planning Documents](#). The Communications Team posted articles on the Council's various social media outlets and in the local press. Comments were invited via online form, email or by post. Copies of all related documents were deposited in all libraries and Halton Direct Link's within the borough, for the public to view.

Prior to the public consultation, the Planning Policy Team liaised with various internal Council departments, including Development Control, Legal Services and Economy, Enterprise and Property.

3. Representation Summary

Overall, a total of 10 stakeholders responded to the three draft SPDs. This includes representations from the following:

- National Highways
- David Barton – Community Campaigner
- Natural England
- Coal Authority
- HBC E2E
- The Mersey Forest
- Halton Health Improvement Team
- Sport England
- Historic England
- Halton Employment, Learning and Skills Team

National Highways, Natural England, Coal Authority and Historic England did not have any specific comments to make on the consultation documents. All other representations were welcomed and considered.

A table is provided within each section, which summarise the responses that were received during the consultation period and include the Council's response to each of the comments.

4. Consultation Summary

The Social Value in Planning SPD is a new document, intending to complement the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) 2022 and provide additional guidance for major development in providing additional 'social value' to development. Its aim is to prioritise and maximise the local benefits of projects in the brough, providing employment, skills and training to those who need it.

This supports the ethos of the Council's corporate plan, with specific focus on building a strong, sustainable local economy¹. This supports the Local Plan's policies and supplementing evidence documents which aims to provide employment and education opportunities.

Overall, a total of 10 responses have been received on the Social Value in Planning SPD

- 6 all of which were from statutory stakeholders.
- 4 from non-statutory stakeholders / other interested parties.

The following tables summarise the responses received during the consultation period and include the Council's response. The below tables identify any changes or mitigation proposed for the SPD as a result of comments received and / or for further clarity or additional legislation updates.

¹ [corporateplan.pdf](#)

5. Consultation Responses

RESPONDENT (NAME/ORGANISATION)	SUMMARY OF COMMENT	RESPONSE
National Highways	'Given the scope of the proposals, National Highways anticipates minimal impact to the SRN and therefore raises no comments to the Halton SPD (Social Value in Planning).'	<i>No response required</i>
David Barton – Community Campaigner InYourArea for Southport	Submission of 'umbrella representation' relating to the subjects of Design Codes, Designated & Non-Designated Heritage Assets, Conservation Areas, Climate Change, Historic Buildings, Traditional Vernacular Architecture	<i>Whilst the Council supports the protection and enhancement of local character, urban design, heritage and other associated cultural importance, these subjects are not relevant to the context of the Social Value SPD, and is unlikely to impact the proposed outputs of the SPD.</i>
Natural England	Whilst we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment.	<i>No response required</i>
The Coal Authority	Our records do not indicate the presence of any recorded coal mining features at surface or shallow depth in the Halton Borough area. On this basis the Planning team at the Coal Authority have no specific comments to make on this SPD.	<i>No response required</i>
HBC Education to Employment Team	I can see in the Appendix 1 table that there is clear reference to activities with local schools and college, but I felt these were less clearly referenced in previous tables. I appreciate the table on page 16 comes from a national document. If there is room for amendment, I would like to see more reference to school/college work in the tables on page 14 and page 16	<i>Tables on pages 14 and 16 have been edited to add further emphasis to school and college activities.</i>
The Mersey Forest	The Mersey Forest Plan is the long-term and strategic guide to the work of The Mersey Forest team and partners, extending to 2050 and beyond. It has recently been refreshed with input from all local authority partners. Halton Borough Council are a core partner in The Mersey Forest. Under paragraph 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework: "Community Forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns and cities, by upgrading the landscape and providing	<i>Whilst the council appreciates that the Mersey Forest is important in providing environmental and health wellbeing, the Social Value in Planning SPD needs to include measures that can meet the tests set out in regulation 122 of the</i>

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

	<p>for recreation and wildlife... An approved Community Forest Plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications. Any development proposals within... Community Forests in the Green Belt should be subject to the normal policies for controlling development in Green Belts". It is important that Local Plans and SPDs recognise and refer to The Mersey Forest Plan, to enable it to contribute to place making, new development, regeneration and restructuring. Whilst we recognise that the social value of green infrastructure, and associated jobs and skills for its creation and management, are not at the core of this SPD, we think that there is a case for its inclusion. Social value can also be delivered through incorporating trees and other green infrastructure into new developments. This includes both skills and jobs, as well as social value for local communities through for example improved health and wellbeing from living in a greener environment. The Mersey Forest has a number of tools that could be useful for measuring social value. We have recently developed a Social Value Calculator with Steer Economic Development. This is a bespoke, Excel-based tool designed to quantify the broader benefits of environmental and community-led projects. We also have a Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit, designed to help quantify and communicate the diverse benefits of green infrastructure. We would be happy to discuss their use with you further.</p>	<p><i>CIL regulations. As a result, it is unlikely that social value contributions which relate to the Mersey Forest are unlikely to meet these legal tests.</i></p> <p><i>The important of the Mersey forest has however been noted, and can be taken into account when considering the wider social value strategy within the council.</i></p>
<p>Halton Health Improvement Team</p>	<p>The SPD sets out thresholds, Section 106 mechanisms and monitoring arrangements draft for consultation Social V... providing a robust structure for delivery. To complement this, the SPD could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise workforce health and wellbeing initiatives as eligible social value contributions where appropriate. Encourage major commercial developments to consider a workforce wellbeing approach within their Social Value Strategy. Promote early dialogue with relevant council services during pre-application discussions to ensure deliverable and reasonable commitments aligned to the scale of development. Support clear and practical reporting of agreed wellbeing activities. <p>The Health Improvement Team</p> <p>The Council already delivers a structured Halton Healthy Workplace Awards programme, providing a clear bronze,</p>	<p><i>the Halton Health Improvement Team has been noted for its importance in aiding in workplace health, delivering a structured Healthy Workplace Awards programme.</i></p> <p><i>The One Halton Health and Wellbeing strategy has also been noted for its importance, and the SPD has been checked to ensure it aligns with such policy.</i></p>

	<p>silver and gold framework tailored to organisations of different sizes Halton Healthy Workplace Awards.</p> <p>The workplace service offers employers the opportunity to complete a Workplace Health Needs Assessment, access on-site NHS Health Checks, engage leadership teams, develop workplace health champions and participate in targeted public health training. The programme also includes defined evidence requirements to demonstrate progress and impact. This established framework provides a practical, scalable and evidence-based mechanism to support the delivery and monitoring of workforce wellbeing commitments linked to Social Value Strategies.</p>	
<p>Sport England</p>	<p>It is noted that although the Draft document relates to social value in planning, it concentrates on the construction process and the potential for social value contributions ‘intended to deliver employment, upskilling strategies and training of local people, helping to deliver a strong, highly skilled workforce in Halton.’ Sport England has guidance relating to social value outcomes from sport and physical activity as significant contributors to health and wellbeing. The relevance is either around the social value that could be impacted/reduced by a development and also the social value which can then be generated from a development in terms of sport and recreation particularly through S.106/CIL outcomes and Active Design solutions.</p> <p>https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design Sport England would welcome a broader approach so that a social value assessment in planning could be applied to wider cultural and community facilities in the SPD.</p> <p>https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/research/social-value-and-returninvestment-sport-and-physical-activity Both Sport England’s and the Government’s models of measuring social value from sport and physical activity provide a robust and detailed understanding of how community sport and physical activity improves lives, delivers wider value to society and contributes to the nation’s economy. This evidence is crucial for making the case for continued investment in sport and physical activity, ensuring these benefits reach those who need them most. Detailed guidance on the</p>	<p><i>Our current developer contributions and s106 approach already addresses open space and uses a calculator to understand the need for sports pitches etc, therefore this does not fall into the remit of the Social Value SPD.</i></p> <p><i>With regard to social value outcomes from sport and physical activity, the Council agrees that this is an important social outcome, however with reference to how this can be achieved through the measures outlined in the social value SPD, it is not likely that this will meet regulation 122 of the CIL regs.</i></p> <p><i>The comments will be assessed with regard to the wider social value strategy, and the importance of sport and physical activity has been noted in this regard.</i></p>

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

	<p>importance of having robust and up-to-date assessments of sports facility needs for underpinning local plan policies is set out in Sport England's 'Planning for Sport' https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-andplanning#planning-for-sport-11182</p>	
Historic England	<p>Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for. Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above document. At this stage we have no comments to make on its content.</p>	<i>No response required</i>

6. Conclusions following Social Value in Planning SPD consultation:

Halton appreciates and acknowledges the comments made on the draft Social Value in Planning SPD.

The majority of the responses that were received provided useful for the Council's wider social value strategy, however due to the nature of this SPD in particular, and its regard to regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations 2010, the type and scope has to be considered carefully. As a result, the social value scope largely includes the provision of skills, employment and training for the local population. Whilst additional considerations around community, greenspace and heritage are welcomed, they are to be considered in other relevant policies either in the DALP or in future SPDs.

Appendix A: Table of Changes for Social Value in Planning SPD

Original Chapter and Page no.	Current Paragraph wording	New Chapter and Page no.	Change (deleted text in strikethrough ; new text underlined and bold; changes to diagrams, tables etc. described in <i>italic</i> text).
14	(addition to table)	14	<u>Activities to support schools and colleges' careers programmes including age appropriate work experience opportunities.</u>
16	Percentage of women or BAME (FTE) employed on the contract	16	Percentage of women, BAME <u>or people with disability</u> (FTE) employed on the contract

