BUILDING
A BETTER FUTURE

Employment & Skills Plans Topic Paper

November 2026



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Employment & Skills Plans Topic Paper

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to provide background justification to the inclusion of Policy 59: Employment Skills Plan within the Building a Better Future Plan.

1.2 The following sections will provide an outline of the national planning policy background, demonstrate why Employment Skills Plans are needed within the context of Havant and the benefits they can bring. Finally, the Topic Paper will explain how the policy would be implemented.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) does not directly reference the need for training, however, it strongly supports economic growth, which in turn requires skilled local workforce. The NPPF sets out overarching objectives for a sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

2.2 The economic objective focuses on building "a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;"

2.3 The relevant sections include:

Paragraph 85:

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. 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 the challenges of the future. (…).

Paragraph 86:

Planning policies should:

a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the national industrial strategy43 and any relevant Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;

c) pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy (…).

d) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and
e) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, and allow for new and flexible working practices and spaces to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

Paragraph 87:

Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (…).

3. Background: Economic, Skills and Health Context in Havant Borough

3.1 Latest published evidence shows that Havant generated approximately £2.85 billion in gross value added in 2023 and recorded labour productivity of around £61,900 GVA per filled job, below the England and UK averages on this measure (ONS subregional productivity and regional GDP datasets, as summarised in Hampshire County Council's *Hampshire Local Authority District Profiles: Havant*, July 2025)[1]. This indicates an ongoing need to support higher-value employment, raise workforce skill levels and increase the proportion of economic value retained locally. For Local Plan purposes, the evidence supports policies that improve access to quality employment and embed skills and social value outcomes through development.

3.2 Havant continues to have relatively low job density. The latest published estimate records around 46,000 jobs in the borough and a job density of 0.63 in 2023, indicating materially fewer jobs than working-age residents (ONS/Nomis *Jobs density* dataset, 2023 revised estimates, and Hampshire County Council's *Hampshire Local Authority District Profiles: Havant*, July 2025). This remains below wider comparator areas and points to a structural imbalance between the resident labour force and the local employment base. In planning terms, this provides a clear justification for measures that secure additional employment opportunities and improve residents' access to local jobs across a range of skill levels.

3.3 Skills attainment is a key component of economic resilience and inclusive growth. Existing evidence identifies persistent concentrations of lower qualification levels in

[1] Annex 4vii - District Profile Havant.pdf

parts of the borough, particularly in Leigh Park, where socio-economic disadvantage is more acute (ONS/Nomis Census 2021 qualifications tables and related ONS local area indicators for Havant). Lower skill levels are associated with reduced access to higher-paid employment and weaker productivity outcomes. The borough therefore has a strong policy interest in using development to support training, work experience, apprenticeships and progression routes into employment, particularly for communities less able to benefit from growth without targeted intervention.

3.4 Recent national deprivation evidence shows that parts of Havant experience significant disadvantage and that deprivation is concentrated in specific neighbourhoods, including within Leigh Park (English Indices of Deprivation, latest release, and ONS local indicators, October, 2025[2]). This is relevant to plan-making because poorer economic outcomes are often closely associated with health inequalities, lower educational attainment and reduced long-term labour market participation. The Local Plan can therefore play a supporting role by seeking development outcomes that improve access to training, employment and wider social value benefits.

3.5 Labour market conditions have improved since the pandemic peak, but challenges remain. The most recent annual population data indicates that the borough's employment rate remains below Hampshire and England comparators, while unemployment is above the Hampshire average (ONS Annual Population Survey and model-based unemployment statistics, accessed via Nomis *Labour Market Profile – Havant*). Claimant count data also continues to show higher levels of labour market disadvantage in some parts of the borough than the borough-wide average. For plan-making purposes, this supports a proportionate policy response that uses development to widen access to jobs, training and progression opportunities for residents furthest from the labour market.

3.6 The Council has a clear interest in improving outcomes for young people and other groups facing labour market disadvantage. Enabling residents to access local employment, apprenticeships and accredited training can support inclusive growth and may contribute indirectly to improved long-term health and life chances. In this context, Employment and Skills Plans provide a practical mechanism to connect major development with targeted opportunities for local communities.

3.7 Access to skills in growth sectors provides an important means of addressing the issues outlined above.

3.8 Construction is an important sector for policy intervention because it creates direct and indirect employment, offers multiple entry routes into work and training, and can generate measurable social value through the development process. Local and national evidence also points to continuing recruitment and skills pressures across parts of the construction industry (Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), *National Skills Academy for Construction* and related client-based approach guidance). This makes the sector well suited to an Employment and Skills Plan

[2] English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK

approach, through which development can help secure apprenticeships, work experience, training weeks, careers engagement and local labour opportunities.

3.9 The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) supports the preparation, monitoring and delivery of Employment and Skills Plans through the National Skills Academy for Construction client-based approach, with the aim of embedding social value through construction projects and helping to address long-term skills shortages.

3.10 Procuring authorities and planning authorities across Hampshire and the Solent commonly require Employment and Skills Plans on larger schemes, with Hampshire County Council acting as the upper-tier authority for Havant. Employment and Skills Plans have therefore been implemented across the borough and wider county for at least a decade.

3.11 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public bodies to consider wider economic, social and environmental wellbeing in connection with relevant service contracts. In practice, this has contributed to a growing expectation within parts of the construction sector that social value commitments, including Employment and Skills Plans, should form part of project delivery and supply chain arrangements.

3.12 Havant is a relatively constrained authority area with limited residential and employment land compared with some other parts of the county. This increases the importance of setting appropriate thresholds for social value requirements and maximising opportunities for residents to access skills, employment and new routes into the local construction labour market. Not requiring Employment and Skills Plans would place the borough at odds with established practice across comparable projects.

3.13 Between 2019 and 2023, government-backed construction training investment in Hampshire exceeded £3 million, in addition to more recent Skills Bootcamps. Programmes including the Construction Skills Fund, Technical Construction Skills for the Unemployed and Construct Your Future have used skills academy models linked to live construction activity.

3.14 Collectively, these programmes have provided entry-level construction training opportunities for large numbers of Hampshire residents. A case study of delivering construction training through leveraging S106 Employment & Skills Plans can be read here Hampshire County Council: Construction Skills Fund | Local Government Association, and case studies of individuals that benefitted from the programmes can be found here Construction Skills Training | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk).

3.15 During the 2019 to 2023 period, relatively few Havant residents accessed this externally provided training offer. Thirteen residents were trained in total, of whom seven moved into employment and six into apprenticeships through Fareham College's Civil Engineering Training Centre. This indicates that where provision is accessible, training can produce positive progression outcomes for local residents.

3.16 During this period, the Council relied primarily on Employment and Skills Plans secured through development, alongside a limited amount of externally provided training. The outcomes achieved through the small number of residents trained suggest that stronger links between development activity and accessible local training provision could increase the benefits secured for Havant residents.

3.17 In implementing the Building a Better Future Plan, the Council intends to align Employment and Skills Plans more directly with external training provision so as to maximise benefits for local residents.

3.18 The Council therefore intends to support future construction training initiatives led by the upper-tier authority or government departments by requiring Employment and Skills Plans on qualifying construction projects, including residential development of 50 dwellings or more and employment development of 2,000 square metres or above.

3.19 Local access to higher-skilled employment opportunities remains more limited in Havant than in some regional and national comparator areas. This contributes to entrenched patterns of deprivation in parts of the borough and reinforces the need for interventions that connect residents to better employment outcomes.

3.20 Employment and Skills Plans have been used across Hampshire for a number of years to support training, employment and progression opportunities linked to development. A consistent policy approach in Havant would help ensure that planned growth contributes more directly to improved skills, wider access to local opportunity and stronger long-term economic inclusion, particularly for communities experiencing persistent disadvantage.

4. Case Study: A journey into construction

4.1 Havant Thicket Reservoir project in Havant is a major, multi-skilled project expected to contribute over £50 million, create 84 construction jobs, and support 15–20 apprenticeships during construction.

4.2 Employment & Skills commitments linked to the Havant Thicket Reservoir helped create an apprenticeship route into construction for a young person who left school without qualifications and wanted a practical career.

4.3 After starting out in roofing labouring, he then joined Mackley as a Level 2 Groundworker Apprentice. This early step gave him his first real pathway into the industry and a strong foundation for future progress.

4.4 Through his apprenticeship, he attends Fareham CTEC once a month and has completed dumper and roller tickets, along with gaining his green CSCS card. This has enabled him to take on more work on site at Havant Thicket Reservoir.

4.5 He has supported works on the Northern access road and pipes connected to the culvert, and is proud to see completed sections of the project. He also values additional opportunities, including water and plasma courses.

4.6 Looking ahead, he wants to complete his apprenticeship, build further site experience, gain his digger ticket, and progress towards becoming a foreman.

4.7 He commented that:

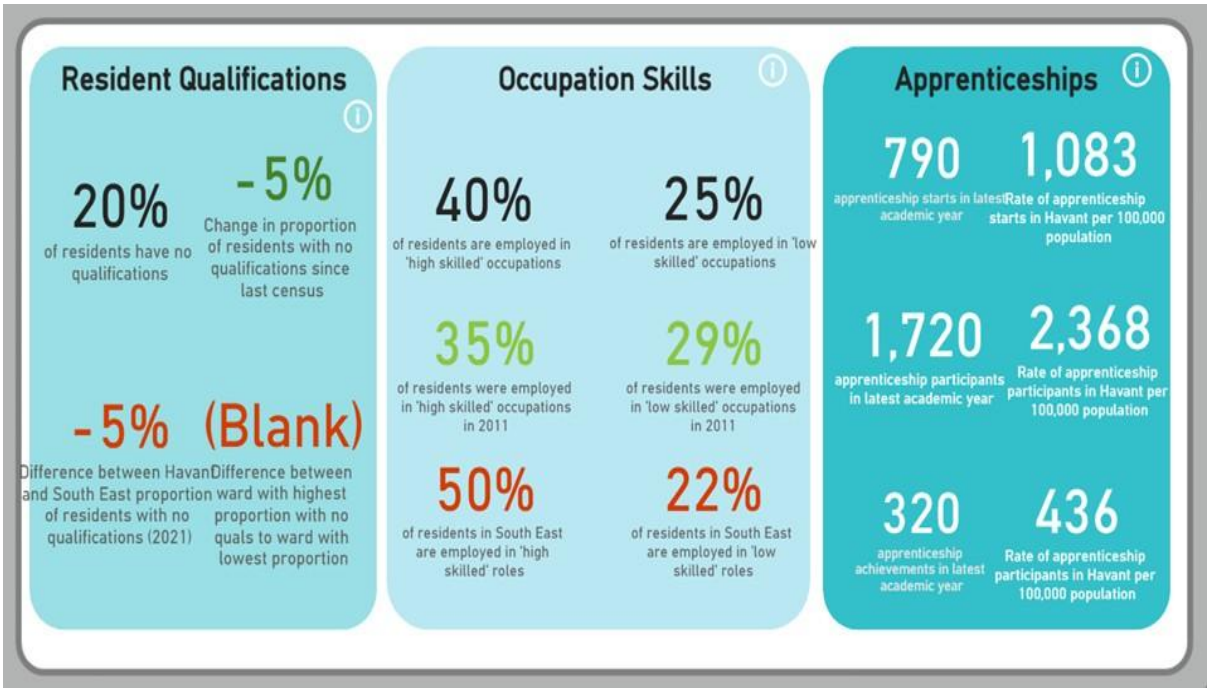
"*This apprenticeship gave me the confidence to get started in construction and begin building my future*."

4.8 Whilst the above case is only a single case, it demonstrates that Employment & Skills commitments can not only change people's lives but also significantly enhance the employability of the local residents contributing towards the local economy.

Local Plan Policy

5.1 The supporting text to the Policy provides a summary of why the Policy is needed, as follows:

ONS data indicates that 20% of residents in the Borough have no qualifications. There is also a significant difference in the percentage of residents employed in high and low occupations between Havant and the South East region. Therefore, there is a clear need to reduce this gap by maximising opportunities to improve residents' qualifications and occupation skills.



The Council has worked with developers operating in the Borough to improve educational attainment and skills for many years, raising aspirations and improving job prospects. This has led to a significant amount of apprenticeships and training courses as well as tangible improvements to the Borough's communities.

Ensuring that residents of the Borough have the skills to succeed in work is a key objective of the Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy, to be delivered through apprenticeship and Sector-Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), and providing quality work experience and career information and guidance for potential new local entrants to the construction sector, especially school aged children and young people.

5.2 From this, the main policy text reads:

Development proposals for residential developments of 50 dwellings or more (gross) and commercial developments of at least 2,000 sqm floorspace (gross external area) will be permitted where they provide a site specific Skills and Employment Plan to support the Borough's residents to access employment and skills training.
How the policy will be implemented.

5.3 In terms of implementation, the supporting text to the Policy clarifies that it would be the Council's Economic Development Team that would write site-specific Employment and Skills Plans, in consultation and in agreement with the developer to ensure that they are aligned to local need and stakeholders' aspirations. This could involve securing on-site apprentices and educational opportunities for young people.

5.4 Where on-site measures would not be possible, the Council would agree to a suitably scaled financial contribution to enable an equivalent programme of training to take place off-site, which would be calculated from KPIs from the Social Value Portal or a suitable equivalent if this is replaced. The Council's Developer Contributions Guide provides further information.

6. Reg 18 Local Plan Consultation and viability

6.1 During the Reg 18 Local Plan Consultation, one representation has been received raising concern that this requirement would potentially create additional cost and delay.

6.2 The policies in the Local Plan have been a subject of a whole plan viability assessment. A range of development scenarios have been tested, including residential and commercial development on previously developed land, greenfield sites and a mixture of the two. The viability study has shown that the policies in the Local Plan, including in relation to Employment and Skills Plans, would not make development unviable.

References

Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district* and regional GDP datasets (latest available releases covering 2023), as summarised in Hampshire County Council, *Hampshire Local Authority District Profiles: Havant*, July 2025 – source for Havant GVA (£2.85 billion) and GVA per filled job (£61,911).

ONS/Nomis, *Jobs density* dataset (2023 revised estimates, released 2025) and Hampshire County Council, *Hampshire Local Authority District Profiles: Havant*, July 2025 – source for total jobs (46,000) and job density (0.63).

ONS Annual Population Survey and model-based unemployment statistics, accessed via Nomis *Labour Market Profile – Havant* (latest available annual data) and ONS local labour market indicators for Havant – source for employment and unemployment comparisons.

ONS/Nomis Census 2021 qualifications tables and ONS local area indicators for Havant – source base for qualifications evidence.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government / Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *English Indices of Deprivation* (latest release) and ONS local indicators – source for deprivation evidence affecting parts of Havant and Leigh Park.

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), *National Skills Academy for Construction* and *Client-Based Approach to Developing and Implementing an Employment and Skills Strategy on Construction Projects* – source for the Employment and Skills Plan / client-based approach references.

Hampshire County Council, *Construction Skills Training*, and Local Government Association, *Hampshire County Council: Construction Skills Fund* – source for Hampshire construction training programme evidence.