

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

9 DECEMBER 2021

Report Title	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - SPENDING ALLOCATIONS FOR 2022/2023			
Purpose of Report	Stroud District Council implemented its CIL Charging Schedule in April 2017 and has been collecting payments on planning permissions implemented since this date. CIL should be used towards providing for any additional demand placed on the local environment and services created by new growth. Project Bids have been received from organisations wishing gain funding support to deliver infrastructure that aligns with planning policy. This report sets out the officers funding recommendations for projects requesting support in 2022/2023 financial year.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RECOMMENDS to Strategy & Resources that funding commitments are agreed according to the report.			
Consultation and Feedback	1. CIL Bids were passed to Council Officers with a specialist in that particular subject field who were able to pass comment on the contents of bids received and quality of proposed projects. 2. An informal members' information session was conducted through Zoom on 11 th November 2021 where the CIL process was explained and project proposals outlined.			
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Options	Options are: 1. Approve the proposed CIL spending allocations; or 2. Amend the proposed CIL spending allocations, or 3. Delay the proposed CIL spending allocations for further internal discussion.			
Background Papers	The following papers have been placed on the Members Hub: 1. CIL Strategic Funding Guidance Notes for applicant organisations 2022/23 2. Copies of Bids received in this years 2021 funding application round An Information Sheet has also been provided to Environment Committee which provides an update on projects approved in previous CIL funding rounds.			
Appendices	Appendix A – Summary of Funding Recommendations 2022/23 Appendix B - Infrastructure Needs Identified in next 5 years			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced by government in 2010 as a mechanism to fund the infrastructure required to deliver new development achieved under Local Plan growth strategies. Stroud District Council adopted and implemented the CIL charge from April 2017. CIL only partially replaces the S106 arrangements which continue to be used only for the very large strategic sites identified in the Local Plan.
- 1.2** Since the Council first started collecting CIL, the Strategic Infrastructure Budget has received £923,485 (April 2017 to March 2021). For the last two years, the Council has invited partner delivery organisations to bid for CIL funding through a formal bidding process which is explained in the schemes Guidance Notes and accompanied by a Bid Proforma. So far (in 2019 and 2020) £386,050 of strategic CIL has been formally allocated to eligible infrastructure projects; a summary of their progress to date has been provided to Environment Committee.
- 1.3** Earlier this year, the council opened up its 2021 Bidding round. This year's income of £400,787 together with amounts purposefully retained from last year, means the Council have a total available Strategic Infrastructure Budget of £537,435 to commit to priority infrastructure projects.
- 1.4** Copies of this year's bids have been provided to elected Members through the Members Hub. In November, CIL Officers have also lead two informal information sessions for members on the CIL process and the content of this years Bids.
- 1.5** This report covers the results of this year's assessment mechanism and sets out a recommended spend for next financial year 2022/23.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The projects that CIL can be spent on are broadly grouped into capital infrastructure items such as education, social infrastructure, transport and strategic flood risk. These are outlined in the Councils Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) and related Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). Projects must also strongly align with the strategic planning objectives set out in the Councils adopted Local Plan.
- 2.2** CIL income will not be sufficient to meet all the district's infrastructure needs. Instead, CIL should be viewed as one aspect of a number of infrastructure funding streams available to providers. CIL Strategic funding cannot be used to support current existing funding programmes or deficiencies but instead should mitigate the impact of new development.
- 2.3** Strategic infrastructure providers who deliver these service types were contacted with information on the CIL strategic funding opportunity. These providers included the County Council (for Education, Highways, and Libraries), the Environment Agency, local colleges, Emergency Services, Wildlife and Environmental organisations, and certain service areas within the District Council especially those known to deliver unique capital infrastructure projects.
- 2.4** The CIL Funding Scheme Guidance Notes provide a comprehensive overview of the schemes intentions and conditions. In addition to strongly aligning with essential Planning Policy, the Guidance Notes stress the importance of projects being 'strategic' in scope, and that they must be well defined, deliverable and offer value for money.

- 2.5** Following the closing date for Bids in September 2021, the Council received nine formal bids requesting funding for next financial year April 2022- March 2023. A panel consisting of Planning Managers and CIL Officers then scrutinised the bids according to the assessment matrix previously approved by Council in December 2018.
- 2.6** The assessment process also involved consultation with other specialist officers within the Council who were able to further assess the merits of individual applications. Where necessary applicant organisations received requests for further information.
- 2.7** Of these projects, four strongly aligned with priority planning policy, evidenced strategic need and were accompanied by thorough project/business plans. These are all recommended to receive their full funding requests, these are:
- Nailsworth Flood prevention and drainage scheme (£52,500)
 - Archway School 3G AstroTurf Pitch (£150,000)
 - Stratford Park's Outdoor Pool heat exchange (£20,000)
 - Cainscross Cycle Scheme Feasibility Study (request for project variation of last year's £75,000 commitment).
- 2.8** The Nailsworth Flood Prevention and Drainage scheme provides for a critical missing link in what is a huge undertaking by the Environment Agency (EA) and GCC in the Nailsworth Valley area. EA funding primarily focusses on protecting residential dwellings, whereas this CIL funded project (that would otherwise miss out on support), focusses on alleviating key blockages to water drainage within the town centre. Affected businesses, key transport routes, and the communities' ability to access the town centre will be particularly positively affected by these proposed works.
- 2.9** The 3G AstroTurf Pitch at Archway School is a very exciting opportunity not only for the pupils of the school who would greatly benefit, but also for the wider community of Stroud who are invited to use the facility outside school hours. This kind of sports pitch has been identified as a priority need within the Councils Local Plan and Health and Wellbeing Sports Strategies. This state-of-the-art facility is due to benefit from £600k Sports England Funding if a commitment from CIL is secured. This is a time-critical opportunity which would turn what was an 'expression of interest' into a project promising delivery next year.
- 2.10** Stratford Parks Outdoor Pool is a popular and iconic recreational destination for people of the Stroud District, with a visitor reach far beyond Stroud Town. This project will utilise waste heat from the CHP to help heat the outdoor pool by around 3 degrees. The current temperature of the pool is well known to be very cold, which heavily restricts its use despite interest. This project promises quick delivery and a great value return for the investment.
- 2.11** The Bid for the 'Cainscross Cycle Scheme Feasibility Study' is slightly different in that that is requests the re-purposing of the project Bid approved in last year's CIL funding round. The former Bid requested £75k towards soft cycle segregation measures along Cainscross Road, which is a key travel route but notoriously dangerous for cyclists. Since the Bid was approved however, the Government introduced new cycle legislation meaning that the approved proposal was non-compliant. GCC have requested that the money be used to create a feasibility study which would enable design schemes that could be implemented. After detailed consideration and consultation, it is recommended that this request be approved as it will undoubtedly help unlock solutions to what is a critical area of need and will contribute towards increased cycle use.

2.12 Whilst the other 5 Bids were welcomed, the Bids themselves either did not fully meet the Schemes conditions or criteria, or had important elements in need of further development. These included GCC's Educational places at Tilsdown, GCC's Stroud's Fire and Rescue Station Community Hub, GCC's Relocation of Stroud Library, Stroud Subscription Rooms and Stroud Valleys Project Tree Planting. All project groups will be provided with constructive feedback on where the Bids could be improved and will have the opportunity to re-apply next year.

2.13 Of course with CIL partially replacing S106 agreements, the County Council has indicated a significant need for investment schools, libraries, highways improvements and sustainable travel provision. There is also a growing need to provide for strategic waste treatment sites, flood risk management infrastructure, social infrastructure, the canal and health and wellbeing projects. A list of these forthcoming investment areas is given at the end of Appendix B. The ability for CIL to accommodate forthcoming priority infrastructure projects will be an important consideration in deciding this year's CIL allocations.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 It is proposed that payments are made to infrastructure providers in accordance with the recommendations made at Appendix A. The suggested CIL project investment for 2022/23 is £222,500, which will come from the secured CIL budget of £537,435 available.

3.2 Not all of the available funding is proposed to be spent this year; instead, it is considered prudent to retain £314,935 in recognition of the important projects that have expressed an interest in CIL but are currently in the stages of more detailed development.

3.3 Whilst these future infrastructure needs are supported through the Councils Planning Policies, the level of financial support required is likely to be far in excess of what can be collected by Stroud District Council's CIL. Those organisations must understand the limitations of Stroud District Councils CIL income and the need for them to seek additional funding from other sources.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report as the CIL budget is already secured. Any additional match funding by the Council would have to be considered as part of a separate report.

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4.2 Legal Implications

CIL contributions may only be spent on infrastructure projects in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The levy can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools hospitals and other health and social care facilities pursuant to Section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008 and Regulation 59 of the Regulations.

The levy can, therefore, be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare facilities,

academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This flexibility gives the Council the ability to choose what infrastructure it needs to deliver the Local Plan.

Charging authorities may not use the levy to fund affordable housing.

The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.

Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed in line with adopted policy.

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4.3 Equality Implications

CIL funding is based on growth and infrastructure requirements set out in the Local Plan, which has been subject to EIA. Consequently, there are no actions in or as a result of this report that will have a negative impact on Equalities or any groups recognised in an EIA.

4.4 Environmental Implications

The recommended projects invest in infrastructure that promise to bring significant positive benefits to the Environment. Facilities that reduce the need for motorised travel, supporting public transport and promoting clean travel (walking and cycling) and flood management schemes.

There are no perceived negative implications that would directly result from supporting any of the projects and environmental considerations are promoted throughout the scheme.