



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 5 SEPTEMBER 2024
Subject	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY AND SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE SPENDING 2024
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing, Interim Executive Director Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Jasper Lamoon – Infrastructure Delivery Lead Email: jasper.lamoon@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	For Cabinet to review officer recommendations on external bids for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (Cotswold Beechwoods SAC) funds held by the Council.
Annexes	Annex A – Scoring Matrix
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to fund the following bids:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bid 1 – Kemble to Steadings Greenway (Sustrans)• Bid 2 – Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link (GCC)• Bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (GCC)• Bid 4 – Footpath in Moreton-in-Marsh (GCC)• Bid 5 – The Forum Interchange Hub (GCC)• Bid 7 – Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access (National Trust)2. Note bid 6 – Moreton-in-Marsh Transport Hub / Interchange and Station Improvement Works (MiM TC/GWR) and encourage resubmission once the issues raised at paragraph 8.3 have been resolved.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to the Climate Emergency



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Supporting Communities
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees	None



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 From March to May 2024, the Council invited bids from infrastructure providers and other relevant partners to access available Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation) funds.
- 1.2 The Council received seven bids for CIL monies:
- Bid 1 – Kemble to Steadings Greenway from Sustrans
 - Bid 2 – Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link – Cirencester End from Gloucestershire County Council
 - Bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub from Gloucestershire County Council
 - Bid 4 – Footpath in Moreton-in-Marsh from Gloucestershire County Council
 - Bid 5 – The Forum Interchange Hub from Gloucestershire County Council
 - Bid 6 – Moreton-in-Marsh Transport Hub/Interchange and Station Improvement Works from Moreton-in-Marsh Town Council/Great Western Railways (joint)
- 1.3 The Council also received one bid for the SANG fund: Accessibility improvements at Sherborne Park from the National Trust (bid 7).
- 1.4 All the bids received would create projects that the Council supports. The officers' panel recommends that the Council funds bids 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 as they all scored the minimum of 70/100 or above and enough funds are available.
- 1.5 In regards to bid 6, although the Council is supportive of a 'Transport Hub/Interchange and Station Improvement Works' in Moreton-in-Marsh, full engagement with the Council's development management team is required before such a bid could be funded.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From March to May 2024, the Council invited bids from Infrastructure Providers and other relevant partners to access available Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (Cotswold Beechwoods SAC) funds.
- 2.2 The available CIL funds are known as 'Strategic CIL' which is the remainder of collected CIL after the deduction of the admin portion (5%) and the 'Neighbourhood CIL' (15% or 25%). At the end of the 2023/24 financial year, the 'Strategic CIL' held by the Council was £3.3 million. The Council has split the 'Strategic CIL' into two funding pots:
- 2.2.1 A *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund* aimed at delivering essential and critical infrastructure identified in Cotswold District Council's adopted Local Plan (90% of the 'Strategic CIL' available).



- 2.2.2** A *CIL Climate and Ecological Emergencies Infrastructure Fund* to help deliver actions related to the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergencies (10% of the 'Strategic CIL' available).
- 2.3** The CDC Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Fund is funded from financial contributions from planning applicants. These contributions are provided in order to deliver the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Recreation Mitigation Strategy, ensuring that new development does not lead to increased recreational impacts on this internationally important wildlife site. The Fund is aimed at delivering mitigation that will encourage potential users of the SAC to visit other sites and not the SAC itself. Not only will this help prevent impacts on the SAC but should also benefit biodiversity and local communities by creating new and improving existing greenspaces that will be accessible to all.
- 2.4** The Council received seven bids in total:
- Three bids from Gloucestershire County Council, one bid from Sustrans and one joint bid from Moreton-in-Marsh Town Council/Great Western Railway to access funds from the *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund*.
 - One bid from Gloucestershire County Council to access funds from the *CIL Climate and Ecological Emergencies Infrastructure Fund* and;
 - One bid from the National Trust to access funds from the *CDC Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Fund*.
- 2.5** The bids were assessed by an Officers' panel consisting of Sophia Price (Heritage and Design Manager), Matthew Britton (Forward Planning manager), Adrian Harding (Head of Planning Services), Charlie Jackson (Assistant Director- Planning and Sustainability), David Stanley (Deputy Chief Executive), Alan Hope (Strategic Housing Manager) and Jasper Lamoon (Infrastructure Delivery Lead).
- 2.6** A scoring matrix was used to assess the bids, this matrix had been made public in advance for transparency. A completed matrix showing the scoring for each bid can be found in Annex A.
- 3. Bid 1 – Kemble to Steadings Greenway (Sustrans)**
- 3.1** A bid was received from Sustrans for £180,301 from the *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund*. These funds will be used to produce deliverable outline designs for the greenway from Kemble train station to the proposed Steadings development to the south of Cirencester.
- 3.2** This bid is linked to the second bid from GCC which provides the link between Steadings and Cirencester town centre.
- 3.3** Re-using the former railway line between Kemble and Cirencester for cycling is listed as an essential project in the current Local Plan and the project is listed in the Infrastructure Funding Statement as something the Council expect to put CIL funds towards. The current



proposal would not yet deliver the cycle path, but it is a necessary step towards the delivery.

- 3.4** To fund concept designs through CIL, officers have to be satisfied that the current project would lead to a project that would deliver physical infrastructure. Although this is not guaranteed, officer deemed the information provided to be sufficient evidence that this is indeed likely.
- 3.5** The bid scored a total of 70/100 and for this reason, officers recommend funding the bid.

4. Bid 2 – Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link – Cirencester End (GCC)

- 4.1** A bid was received from Gloucestershire County Council for £100,000 from the CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund. These funds will be used to produce 'Developed Concept Design work' for the Cirencester end of the Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link.
- 4.2** This bid is linked to the first bid from Sustrans which provides the link between Kemble and the Steadings.
- 4.3** Re-using the former railway line between Kemble and Cirencester for cycling is listed as an essential project in the current Local Plan and the project is listed in the Infrastructure Funding Statement as something the Council expect to put CIL funds towards. The current proposal would not yet deliver the cycle path, but it is a necessary step towards the delivery.
- 4.4** To fund concept designs through CIL, officers have to be satisfied that the current project would lead to a project that would deliver physical infrastructure. Although this is not guaranteed, officer deemed the information provided to be sufficient evidence that this is indeed likely.
- 4.5** Officers did raise concerns with the amount requested as this is a round figure with no further breakdown provided. To fund the project, the Council would expect to receive either a fully costed breakdown of the project, or otherwise invoices that evidence relevant expenditure.
- 4.6** The bid scored a total of 70/100. However, given the concern raised above, officers recommend conditional approval of the bid, subject to above issue being resolved.

5. Bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (GCC)

- 5.1** A bid was received from GCC for £137,700. Although the form was completed as requesting funds from the *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund*, pre-submission discussion had identified this project as being best suited to the *CIL Climate and Ecological Emergencies Infrastructure Fund* and the bid has been assessed as such. These funds would be used to upgrade the current arrangement of three bus stops in the centre of Bourton-on-the-Water.
- 5.2** The bid was originally for four bus shelters; this was revised to three as one of the proposed shelters was not deliverable.



- 5.3 Bourton-on-the-Water Parish Council is supportive of two of the proposed upgrades as they serve the main bus route from the village. However, they object to the third proposed stop (opposite the War Memorial) as they feel it is not suitable to place a modern bus shelter, which serves more local bus routes, in the historic centre of the village,
- 5.4 As these bus shelters will be located on Highways land, they fall under permitted development and do not require planning permission. The objection from the parish council was raised with GCC, but they did not feel it was appropriate to remove the proposed shelter from the bid on these grounds.
- 5.5 The project delivers infrastructure that would support the sustainable development of Bourton-on-the-Water. It will be 50% match funded by GCC.
- 5.6 The bid scored a total of 85/100 and for this reason, officers recommend funding the bid.
- 6. Bid 4 – Footpath in Moreton-in-Marsh (GCC)**
- 6.1 A bid was received from GCC for £146,030.17 from the *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund*. These funds would be used to extend the new footpath on the eastern verge of the A429 south of Moreton-in-Marsh as well as creating a pedestrian crossing at the garden centre. This would create a pedestrian link from the garden centre to Moreton-in-Marsh town centre.
- 6.2 GCC currently holds £25,000 in S106 funds collected in 2020. However, the project had stalled since then as these funds are not sufficient to deliver the footpath. CDC officers therefore suggested this to GCC as a possible project that could benefit from CIL funds.
- 6.3 The CIL bid was originally for a footpath on the western verge of the A429 (at a cost of £328,648). However, there were several ownership issues with the proposed path as well as opposition from the Environment Agency regarding the existing culvert which would need to be piped.
- 6.4 The bid scored a total of 85/100 and for this reason, officers recommend funding the bid.
- 7. Bid 5 – The Forum Interchange Hub (GCC)**
- 7.1 A bid was received from GCC for £66,300 from the *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund*. These funds would be used to upgrade the current bus stop facilities at the Forum in Cirencester.
- 7.2 The works would involve *'replacing the two existing bus stops (one new and one old) on the western side of South Way with an 8-bay bus shelter to accommodate the high number of services and demand in this area. 2 real time departure information displays will be installed in the 8-bay shelter and 1 real time departure information displays will be installed in the existing Eastern side of South Way. The street lighting will be replaced along South Way with the latest design to both conserve power and improve the spread of light to pedestrians and road users.'*
- 7.3 The project can be linked to the Cirencester Masterplan and can therefore be considered as essential to the current local plan. It will be 50% match funded by GCC.
- 7.4 The bid scored a total of 75/100 and for this reason, officers recommend funding the bid.



8. Bid 6 – Moreton-in-Marsh Transport Hub/Interchange and Station Improvement Works (MiM TC/GWR)

- 8.1** A joint bid was received from Moreton-in-Marsh Town Council and Great Western Railway for £2,216,000 from the *CIL Strategic Infrastructure Fund*. These funds would be used to enhance station facilities at Moreton-in-Marsh station to create a new transport hub/interchange.
- 8.2** The core elements of the project include enhanced car parking, a new public transport hub/interchange, a refreshed ‘gateway’ to the town and improved station capacity at the entrance.
- 8.3** Although officers are supportive of the overall proposal, there are three issues with the current bid:
- 8.3.1** Although the importance of the railway station is mentioned in the Local Plan, the need for improvements were not identified in the current Local Plan or Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). Spending a large proportion of the available CIL funds on this project would therefore not be supported by the Council’s current policies. The Council has appointed Prior and Partners to update the IDP in light of it’s green to the core agenda. This work is expected to be completed by Spring 2025 and could include the railway station and interchange hub. This in turn would greatly increase the score this bid would receive.
- 8.3.2** There has been no engagement with the planning department regarding all elements of this project prior to the submission of this bid. It would not be appropriate for the Council to make a spending decision on something that it has not yet granted planning permission for (or pre-application advice at a minimum). Council officers would be happy to engage with the bidding organisations to help progress the project.
- 8.3.3** Part of the project regards the creation of additional/enhanced car parking spaces. This would likely be a profit-making element for the developer and therefore it is not appropriate to use public funding for this element.
- 8.4** Without planning permission in place, the project can currently not be considered deliverable and scored 45/100. Officers therefore recommend that the Council shows support for the project and recommends the bidder to submit a revised bid in future years once the necessary permissions are in place.

9. Bid 7 – Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access (National Trust)

- 9.1** A bid was received from the National Trust for £30,000 from the CDC Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Fund.
- 9.2** The funding would be used to improve accessibility across the Sherborne Estate as part of the National Trust’s Sherborne Big Nature Better Access project. The proposed works include improving footpaths, provision of benches and the installation of new interpretation. This should attract more visitors, drawing potential visitors away from the Cotswold Beechwoods.
- 9.3** Officers recommend funding the bid.



10. CONCLUSIONS

10.1 All the bids received would create projects that the Council supports. The officers' panel recommends that the Council funds the following bids as they all scored the minimum of 70/100 or above and enough funds are available:

- Bid 1 – Kemble to Steadings Greenway (Sustrans)
- Bid 2 – Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link – Cirencester End (GCC)
- Bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (GCC)
- Bid 4 – Footpath in Moreton-in-Marsh (GCC)
- Bid 5 – The Forum Interchange Hub (GCC)
- Bid 7 – Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access (National Trust)

10.2 In regards to bid 6, although the Council is supportive of a 'Transport Hub/Interchange and Station Improvement Works' in Moreton-in-Marsh, full engagement with the Council's development management team is required before such a bid could be funded.

10.3 The total amount of funding proposed is £630,331 in regards to CIL and £30,000 in regards to SANG.

10.4 Officers will continue to work with potential partners to develop further SANG projects.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct financial implications on the Council's base revenue budget as a result of this report.

11.2 Funding is held by the Council from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the purpose of capital infrastructure works and will be used in conjunction with major infrastructure providers and any proposed scheme as those detailed in this report. The report proposes to allocate £630,331 in CIL funds.

11.3 Funding is held by the Council from financial mitigation contributions received under the habitats regulations assessment legislation. The funding will be used for the purpose(s) made in point 2.3 of this report. The report proposes to allocate £30,000 in SANG funds.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None other than those identified elsewhere in this report.

13. RISK ASSESSMENT

13.1 The recommendations seek to remove the risk of legal challenge by ensuring that funds are only spent on projects compliant with CIL Regulations.

13.2 If no suitable SANG projects come forward (or the Council does not agree to support suitable projects from the Fund) the Council will not be able to show that potential recreational impacts on the SAC are being mitigated and therefore, under the relevant legislation, planning applications may have to be refused.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

(END)