



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET– 5 MARCH 2026
Subject	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
Wards affected	All
	Juliet Layton- Member for Housing and Planning Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Helen Martin – Director of Communities and Place Email: helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Kim Langford-Tejrar – Infrastructure Delivery Lead (Shared) Email: kim.langford-tejrar@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge levied on development to help fund infrastructure. It is a vital mechanism for supporting the delivery of infrastructure to underpin sustainable growth across the District, while also creating opportunities for projects that enhance local communities. The Council introduced a CIL charge in 2019; at which time a process for stakeholders to apply for CIL funding was put in place. Now, with experience of operating the process, is an appropriate time to review it for best practice. The existing process allows stakeholders to make ‘bids’ for CIL funding once a year, during the period of March – May. Concise guidance for making bids is available on our website. Once the bid period closes, an officer panel convenes to consider the bids, applying an existing high-level scoring system. Having now completed two strategic bid rounds under the existing process, the Council has gained valuable insights—supported by stakeholder feedback—into how the process can be further strengthened. A review by officers has identified opportunities to



	enhance transparency, engagement, collaboration, and ensure ongoing alignment with the Council's strategic priorities and the Development Plan. There are opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the bid cycle, ensuring that CIL funding continues to be allocated legally, responsibly, strategically, and accountably, and in line with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) support development of our area. The purpose of this report is to seek delegated authority for the Associate Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing, to implement a programme of enhancements.
Annexes	None.
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Planning Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing to implement a CIL Enhancement Programme detailed at Section 3 of this report.
Corporate priorities	• Delivering Good Services • Responding to the Climate Emergency • Supporting Communities
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The CIL enhancement programme will be delivered through collaborative working and active engagement with stakeholders. It will include developing a suite of new documents, guidance materials, and procedures informed by contributions from both internal and external stakeholders.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council collects funding from development through Community Infrastructure Levy. A portion of the levy goes towards a strategic fund (Community Infrastructure Levy Strategic Fund (CIL SF)), which must be used to respond to growth in our area and deliver infrastructure to meet our resident's needs. Since introducing the levy in 2019, the Council has collected circa £7 million; once CIL administration fees and Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) have been paid, this has left the Council with circa £5 million in the CIL SF fund. Under £1 million of this total has been committed to existing bids. There is no time limit to spending these funds.
- 1.2 To access CIL SF funding, the Council is open to receive 'bids' from stakeholders between March to May annually. This bidding opportunity is advertised on our website and officers also alert key stakeholders to the opening of the bid window. Once received, the bids are considered by an officer panel, which applies a high-level scoring system based on the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 (IDP), and makes recommendations as to which bid projects should receive funding. Cabinet then considers those recommendations and decides whether funding should be extended to the bidders. If successful, bidders must also sign a legal agreement before any funds are transferred.
- 1.3 The bids reviewed by the Cabinet in December 2025 were the second round of bids submitted by stakeholders since CIL was introduced in 2019. This experience, alongside stakeholder feedback, has allowed officers to review the process and identify potential enhancements. The process would benefit from:
Forward planning and fund-management via procedural alignment to the Council's capital programme,
 - A greater lead-in time for bids to allow stakeholders to seek advice and to prepare high-quality bids
 - Clearer up-front information requirements for all bids to ensure bids proactively address due diligence, meet a reasonable evidential standard and address local need.
 - Clearer and more detailed scoring, to enable bids to be prioritised and to ensure funding is balanced across; 'critical' and 'essential' infrastructure identified in the IDP as part of the Development Plan, climate and ecological emergency responses; and supporting healthy and sustainable communities.



Transparent criteria for the composition and quorum of the officer bid consideration panel

- Improved communication across the board, both internally and externally to engage and/or inform residents, stakeholders, members, service areas and officers of the process and its positive outcomes for the district.

2. BACKGROUND

This section of the report sets out the background for the CIL Enhancement Programme as set out at Section 3 of this report.

Timing and timescales for CIL bids-

- 2.1 The limited bid period (from the beginning of March until end of May) has proved challenging for bidders and has resulted in the bidding window being missed or some bids being incomplete or providing little evidence base. Stakeholder's feedback was that the window does not necessarily align with their own programmes for infrastructure projects and the period is too short to enable proper engagement with the Council. The short window for bids also creates a challenge for officers to adequately review the bids and prepare a panel to consider the bids.
- 2.2 The timing of the bid period also generated internal feedback. There is a statutory requirement that the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) be published by the end of December each year. The IFS must report on CIL receipts and spending for the current financial year (31 March – 01 April) and include a list of infrastructure projects CIL is likely to be spent on during the coming financial year. By spanning two financial years (March-May), the bid period creates uncertainty about the IFS infrastructure list and spending. Moreover, the critical work to process bids coincides with financial year-end reporting for the Council's financial team and infrastructure delivery team.

Requirements for submitting bids-

- 2.3 The current bid application form requires bidders to answer several short questions about their bid. Bidders shared that they found it difficult to understand how to maximise the scoring potential of their bid given the limited nature of the questions



and the relatively high proportion of score attributed to each (circa 20 points per question out of 100 available points). The quality of the contents of the bids varied greatly.

- 2.4 Whilst there is a robust system in place to ensure that successful bids and bidders are subject to due-diligence checks bidders are required to comply with a legal agreement after bids have been recommended for approval by Cabinet, there would be time saving and efficiency benefits to considering this information earlier in the process. Upfront minimum requirements would make the process more transparent.

Consideration of the bids-

- 2.5 The officer panel considering the bids provided similar feedback as bidders; the broad scoring requirements did not allow for prioritisation of bids beyond high-cost transport projects contained in the IDP. Moreover, the sole focus on the IDP in the current scoring system means that bids which seek to support healthy and sustainable communities or respond to climate and ecological emergencies would naturally score lower. The criteria for considering bids also does not set out parameters for when bids would be disregarded (for example, where the bid seeks more than the available funding or the lion's share of the whole fund).
- 2.6 The panel had several questions relating to match funding, timescales for delivery, project planning, planning permissions, detailed works included in the bid, delivery partners involved, strategic impacts, evidence base for need and detailed costings which could not be answered simply by reference to the questions in the application form.
- 2.7 The Council received feedback in respect of transparency in terms of the panel. Stakeholders wished to be reassured that the panel make-up reflected a wide range of expertise, whilst internal stakeholders wished to ensure appropriate and proportionate representation across service areas.

Forward planning CIL-

- 2.8 As well as ensuring the CIL bid scoring system reflects the Council's priorities for infrastructure, in line with the Development Plan, it would also be beneficial to address the overall management of CIL. In 2024 the Infrastructure Delivery Team



introduced an Infrastructure Tracker to identify potential projects which may come forward and track those underway.

Beyond this, CIL has been treated as a standalone fund outside of the Council's capital programme which can be applied as a grant to discrete projects. CIL is essentially an unapplied contribution to capital funding. The most recent successful bids have been added into the Council's capital fund. This allows for funding to be considered in the round; ensuring all funding opportunities are considered and CIL funded infrastructure projects are properly programmed.

Communication and engagement before, during and after the process-

- 2.9 Stakeholders feedback was that the website did not provide sufficient engagement on the bid process and did not alert them sufficiently to bid opportunities, but they had benefited from increased officer engagement during the most recent bid period. Many members and internal stakeholders first became aware of the bids when they were brought to Cabinet following the officer panel.
- 2.10 CIL SF funding has a positive impact on the lives of our residents and the vibrancy of our communities. The Communications Team has worked closely with the Infrastructure Delivery Team to ensure that these outcomes are captured and disseminated to members of the public, and it would be an improvement to embed this into the annual process.
- 2.11 A new approach to communications surrounding the bids could result in greater transparency and engagement both internally and externally.

3. CIL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The recommendation of this report is to seek delegated authority for the Assistant Director of the Planning Service, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to implement a CIL Enhancement Programme.
- 3.2 The Enhancement Programme will implement:
 - (a) an extended bidding period to allow bids to be submitted year-round. Bids to be considered in the third financial quarter (October-December) and officer



recommendations on funding to be considered by Cabinet and published at the beginning of the fourth financial quarter (January).

- (b) Create a validation checklist for CIL bids to be registered, ensuring a minimum standard of information, evidence and due-diligence is provided up-front.
- (c) Develop and implement a detailed scoring matrix for bids, to ensure an appropriate balance of projects can be funded. This balance is to focus on meeting the needs of our residents by prioritising infrastructure which is:
 - Identified as 'critical' and 'essential' in our Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the Development Plan,
 - Responds to the climate and ecological emergency; and,
 - Supports healthy and sustainable communities.
- (d) Introduce a minimum score for bids and disqualification criteria.
- (e) Set standards for the quorum and constitution of the officer panel.
- (f) Create a communications and engagement strategy for the process, increasing awareness of the bidding opportunity, process and outcomes.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 A CIL bid enhancement project could add value, transparency and greater opportunities for engagement in infrastructure funding. Ringfencing part of the CIL SF towards healthy and sustainable communities, as well as towards meeting the challenges of climate and ecological emergencies would have positive impacts on these areas.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a significant funding source that can be used to support the delivery of infrastructure projects across the district. CIL is not available to support the wider capital programme.
- 5.2 Whilst CIL is in effect a specific source of funding for infrastructure projects, the Council should not allocate more funding than is available. As set out in Section 5 and for the avoidance of doubt, the closing balance from the previous financial year will be taken as the maximum amount that can be allocated in the following financial year's bidding rounds.



- 5.3 Successful CIL bids will then be included in the Council's Capital Programme to ensure CIL schemes are fully financed and that CIL-related schemes are subject to the same monitoring and reporting framework that all other capital schemes are subject to as part of the wider Capital Programme

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Carrying out due-diligence at the earliest stages will underpin a robust funding and delivery process.
- 6.2 Any successful bids are to comply with relevant CIL legislation and guidance.
- 6.3 Legal services have provided legal agreements, which will be reviewed and signed/sealed before any funds are drawn down. The agreements contain requirements for reporting and monitoring to mitigate misuse or risk of loss of the relevant CIL funding, together with clawback of unspent funds.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There are no significant risks to the Council in respect of CIL SF funding, other than the potential for external factors which might stymie the delivery of the infrastructure projects being delivered by the bidders (infrastructure stakeholders). This risk is discrete and isolated, and the Enhancement Programme would decrease risk, providing mitigation as above.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 The infrastructure funded in part or in full by the CIL SF fund will meet the needs of a wide demographic of residents and none of the projects funded would be inaccessible to any groups or individuals. The CIL SF funding has a positive impact of equality, and the needs of all groups are considered in decision making.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The detailed scoring matrix for CIL funding would allow climate and ecological emergency responses to be appropriately and proportionately prioritised.



COTSWOLD
District Council

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public: n/a
- 10.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.cotswold.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic@cotswold.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)