

**STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ALLOCATIONS
PANEL**

Minutes of the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Allocations Panel held in the Committee Room at Bexhill Town Hall on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 3.00 pm

Committee Members present: Councillors J. Vine-Hall (Chair), C.A. Bayliss, K.M. Harmer, A.K. Jeeawon and P.N. Osborne

Other Members present: Councillor Susan Prochak, MBE.

Advisory Officers in attendance: Ben Hook – Director of Place and Climate Change, Duncan Ellis – Interim Chief Finance Officer, Jeff Pyrah – Planning Policy Manager, Aaron Sams – Principal CIL Officer and Ben Yates – Planning Assistant.

CILP15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CILP16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Vine-Hall declared a personal and prejudicial interest on agenda items 7 and 8 as Chair of Sedlescombe Parish Council. Councillor Vine-Hall confirmed that he had received advice from Democratic Services and that he would not vote on these two items.

CILP17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2022

The Panel approved the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.

CILP18 REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC CIL FUNDING

Councillor Vine-Hall introduced the report and the made the following opening remarks:

Match funding: The Panel were reminded of the requirements for allocation of funding from the Infrastructure Matched Fund. It was reiterated that the money that is allocated must be no more than equal to the amount of CIL generated locally by the individual parish/town council. The Panel were informed that projects with a wider strategic benefit can be allocated greater amounts.

Supplementary document: The Panel were informed that the supplementary document which was circulated by the Principal CIL

Officer was requested by the Chair to further expand and clarify some aspects of the application assessments.

CILP19

CIL APPLICATION: BATTLE SPORTS PAVILION - BATTLE TOWN COUNCIL

The Panel considered an application for strategic CIL funding submitted by Battle Town Council. The application requests £400,000 from the Rural Matched Infrastructure Fund (RMIF) for a rebuild of the North Trade Road Sports Pavilion in Battle.

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the item and gave the Panel an overview of the main aspects of the application. This included its Assessment Score, strengths, weaknesses and its relationship to planning policy and development.

The Panel discussed the application and whether to allocate funding. This discussion included the following points:

- **Match funding:** The Panel discussed the funding which is being requested, £400,000 and the amount of CIL which Battle has generated locally, approximately £370,085.14. The Principal CIL Officer informed the Panel that, as set out in the report and supplementary information, the amount of funding allocated from the Infrastructure Matched Fund should be no more than equal to the amount of CIL generated locally. The Panel heard that this application was seeking a greater amount of CIL than has been locally generated. The Panel discussed whether the project has a wider strategic impact, as this would allow for the Panel to allocate a greater amount. The Panel felt that, while users from outside of the Town will be able to use the provision, it is primarily a local scheme. The Panel however felt that given the large amounts of housing development which has taken place in Battle and the fact that CIL receipts have not been received from the Blackfriars development, which will be significant, this project has demonstrated that locally the amount of CIL requested will have been generated soon and therefore it can be considered as meeting the match-funding requirements.
- **Demolition and rebuild:** The Panel noted that they had considered this application at their meeting in July 2022 and felt, at that time, that the applicant should address in greater detail the rationale for demolition, as opposed to refurbishment, in particular when taking into consideration the environmental impacts. The Panel felt that the new application had addressed these issues and they had a better understanding with regards to the need to build a new structure.

Panel decision making

The Panel took consideration of the officer assessment which scored the application against the Assessment Scoring Criteria which has been agreed in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. The project scored 37 out of 52 which placed the project just below the priority categorisation. The Panel noted that the project is not included in the 2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) but that the project would be in accordance with policies set out in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy. The Panel felt that the application was an improvement from the previous submission which they considered in July 2022.

The Panel were supportive of the project and felt that it addressed an infrastructure need, especially when taking into consideration the high levels of housing development in the area.

Decision

The Panel RESOLVED to allocate up to £400,000 from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Matched Fund. The funding allocated will not be more than equal to the CIL generated locally and will be payable subject to the funding requirements set out in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. Battle Town Council will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with Rother District Council.

CILP20

CIL APPLICATION: RYE FIRE STATION EXTENSION AND REFURBISHMENT - EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE (ESFRS)

The Panel considered an application for strategic CIL funding submitted by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS). The application requests £266,000 from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund (RRIF) for an extension and refurbishment of Rye Fire Station.

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the item and gave the Panel an overview of the main aspects of the application. This included its Assessment Score, strengths, weaknesses and its relationship to planning policy and development.

The Panel discussed the application and whether to allocate funding. This discussion included the following points:

- **Spending priorities:** The Panel noted that when this application was invited to apply for funding, they had requested that concerns regarding whether this project was a priority, given local spending reductions, for ESFRS. The Panel felt that this application has not addressed these concerns. The Panel were understanding of the issues that the funding sought to address, in particular the potential equalities issues regarding female

changing rooms, but ultimately felt that these issues were not a result of pressures from housing development and therefore should not be addressed using strategic CIL.

Panel decision making

The Panel took consideration of the officer assessment which scored the application against the Assessment Scoring Criteria which has been agreed in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. The project scored 28 out of 52 which placed the project into the low priority categorisation. The Panel noted that the project is not included in the 2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and that it had limited relation to policies set out in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

The Panel were appreciative of ESFRS seeking to improve their facilities in particular the female changing facilities and the equalities improvements this would bring. The Panel also welcomed that the project had already been allocated half of its overall cost. The Panel however felt that the project is not a strategic infrastructure priority and is not addressing demands placed on the area by development.

Decision

The Panel RESOLVED not to allocate funding from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund.

CILP21

CIL APPLICATION: DECARBONISATION OF SEDLESCOMBE SPORTS PAVILION - SEDLESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

The Panel considered an application for strategic CIL funding submitted by Sedlescombe Parish Council. The application requests £35,404.59 from the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund for a project to decarbonise the sports pavilion in Sedlescombe.

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the item and gave the Panel an overview of the main aspects of the application. This included its Assessment Score, strengths, weaknesses and its relationship to planning policy and development.

The Panel discussed the application and whether to allocate funding. This discussion included the following points:

Funding: The Panel were informed by the Principal CIL Officer that while projects can receive 100% of their funding from the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund, this is primarily to be reserved for projects which have a wide strategic impact. The Panel heard that this project has scored highly on its carbon reducing and environmental aspects, but that it does not truly demonstrate that it has a wider strategic impact. The Panel noted that the minimum funding amount for a strategic CIL project is £30,000 and that the total project cost is just

above this threshold, the Panel discussed whether the project was too localised to demonstrate that strategic CIL funding is required.

Strategic Need: The Panel welcomed the many positive carbon reducing and environmental aspects of the project. They did note, however, that the Sedlescombe Village Hall is scheduled to likely be decarbonised as part of the Village Halls Energy Project, which was previously funded using the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund. The Panel and officers expressed that this more strategic project is what the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund is to be used for. The Planning Policy Manager informed the Panel that, while this project has a clear environmental benefit, there are many other sports pavilions and other public buildings in Rother which could equally benefit. It would not be possible for all public buildings to be individually funded for decarbonisation, while this would be environmentally beneficial, the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund would not have sufficient funding. The Panel discussed the potential of instead letting the Fund grow and considering the best strategic use of the Fund, which could include rolling out a district wide project of sports pavilion decarbonisation, where these are publicly owned.

Panel Decision Making

The Panel took consideration of the officer assessment which scored the application against the Assessment Scoring Criteria which has been agreed in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. The project scored 31 out of 52 which placed the project into the low priority categorisation. The Panel noted that the project is not included in the 2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) but that it relates to Rother District Council's Local Plan Core Strategy Policies, in particular with regard to addressing the climate emergency.

The Panel were understanding of the application coming forward and welcomed the many positive carbon reducing and environmental aspects of the project. They did however feel that the project was not strategic enough to receive full funding from the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund.

Decision

The Panel RESOLVED not to allocate funding from the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund.

CILP22

CIL APPLICATION: TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES IN THE VILLAGE OF SEDLESCOMBE - SEDLESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

The Panel considered an application for strategic CIL funding submitted by Sedlescombe Parish Council. The application requests £73,533.00 from the Rural Matched Infrastructure Fund (RMIF) for traffic calming measures in the village of Sedlescombe.

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the item and gave the Panel an overview of the main aspects of the application. This included its Assessment Score, strengths, weaknesses and its relationship to planning policy and development.

The Panel discussed the application and whether to allocate funding. This discussion included the following points:

- **Funding:** The Panel were informed by the Principal CIL Officer that this project is seeking a greater amount of CIL than has been generated locally. The Panel did note that, as set out in a supplementary document circulated ahead of the meeting, Sedlescombe has a number of planning applications which are at an advanced stage, including those awaiting s106 signature. While no CIL liabilities have been issued in relation to these developments there is a level of certainty that these will be CIL generating upon commencement. The Panel discussed the role of the Matched Infrastructure Fund and noted that it collected receipts specifically to enable each parish to gain funding equal to that generated locally. The Panel considered whether funding could be allocated on a conditional basis with stipulations that no funding would be transferred until sufficient match funding has been generated by Sedlescombe Parish Council.
- **Need:** The Panel heard that the application has made the case that locally this provision is the single highest priority and that it is a feature of the parish council's Neighbourhood Plan. The Panel welcomed the local engagement and the positive outcome of the feasibility study which has been conducted by East Sussex County Council, who are supportive of the proposals.

Panel Decision Making

The Panel took consideration of the officer assessment which scored the application against the Assessment Scoring Criteria which has been agreed in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. The project scored 41 out of 52 which placed the project into the priority categorisation. The Panel noted that the project is not included in the 2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) but that it relates to Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Policy, in particular with regard to community and road safety. The Panel also took consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan, County and local support, and the provisions relationship to addressing demands of new and existing development.

The Panel were supportive of the provision and felt that it was an infrastructure priority for the area. While the Panel understood that the match-funding requirements had not yet been met they felt that the project should be supported. The Director of Place and Climate Change suggested to the Panel that, if they were minded allocating funding, then this could be ringfenced for a fixed 4-year period to allow

for the developments to progress and for the parish council to generate sufficient local CIL to meet the match-funding requirements.

The Panel RESOLVED to allocate £73,533.00 from the Rural Infrastructure Matched Fund. The funding will be ringfenced for a period of 4 years from the date of allocation to allow for Sedlescombe Parish Council to generate sufficient local CIL to provide match-funding for the project. If match-funding has not been achieved within this period, then the allocation will be withdrawn. The funding is conditional and subject to the funding requirements set out in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol.

CILP23

CIL APPLICATION: CAMBER SANDS VISITOR FACILITIES - ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Panel considered an application for strategic CIL funding submitted by Rother District Council. The application requests £715,854.00 from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund and £227,447.00 from the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund. The total combined funding sought is £943,301.00.

The project seeks to refurbish and extend the tourist infrastructure at Camber Sands. This includes a single storey extension to the Camber Central block to house improved staffing facilities, increasing the toilet capacity and including a gender-neutral provision, relocating the foot wash facilities and external showers to mitigate the impacts of sand on the toilet provision, new drainage and surfacing. The proposal also seeks to reduce carbon and address environmental concerns by installing solar panels, grey water harvesting and introducing educational signage.

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the item and gave the Panel an overview of the main aspects of the application. This included its Assessment Score, strengths, weaknesses and its relationship to planning policy and development.

The Panel discussed the application and whether to allocate funding. This discussion included the following points:

- **Changes from previous application:** The Panel had previously considered a similar application which focused primarily on improving the public conveniences at their meeting in July 2022. At that time, the Panel requested the applicant reapply with clearer costings and environmental aspects included. The Director of Place and Climate Change informed the Panel that this new application is a materially different scheme to the one considered previously. This project is focused on improving the overall offer within Camber Sands and seeks to address the demands placed on the provision. The Panel welcomed the

scope of the project and were supportive of the incorporation of RNLI storage and upgraded first aid provisions.

- **Charging for toilet access:** The Panel noted that this project does not include plans for charging for toilet access. The Panel expressed that given the large amounts of funding being requested it would be beneficial for the provision to generate income, which they felt would be significant. The Director for Place and Climate Change informed the Panel that the decision they were taking as a Panel should be focused on whether they feel that the provision is a strategic priority, and that the issues around toilet charges would be addressed at a different decision making body, likely to be Cabinet, and that a range of options would be considered. The Chair of the Panel was supportive of this view and felt that charging should not be part of the decision-making process of the Panel as it did not materially alter the proposal.

Panel Decision Making

The Panel took consideration of the officer assessment which scored the application against the Assessment Scoring Criteria which has been agreed in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. The project scored 45 out of 52 which placed the project into the priority categorisation. The Panel noted that the project is not included in the 2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) but that it relates to Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Policy, in particular with regard to Policy EC6: Tourism Activities and Facilities. The Panel expressed that this was a required upgrade to an existing piece of Rother District Council infrastructure.

The Panel noted that Planning Permission must be granted in order for this project to receive funding.

The Panel RESOLVED to allocate up to £715,854 from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund and £227,447 from the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund. This funding is conditional upon the project being granted Planning Permission and subject to the funding requirements set out in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol.

CILP24

CIL APPLICATION: BATTLE HILL (A2100) PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITY - EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

The Panel considered an application for strategic CIL funding submitted by East Sussex County Council. The application requests £162,000.00 from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund for provision of a signalised pedestrian crossing on the A2100 outside of the Tesco Express and ESSO petrol station in Battle.

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the item and gave the Panel an overview of the main aspects of the application. This included its Assessment Score, strengths, weaknesses and its relationship to planning policy and development.

The Panel discussed the application and whether to allocate funding. This discussion included the following points:

- **Costs:** The Panel expressed some concern regarding the overall project cost, which has been estimated to be £442,000.00. They acknowledged that the project has many aspects including, footway widening, street lighting, road signs and drainage, but still felt that the overall cost was high and that the project, while beneficial for the town, was seeking a large amount of CIL.
- **Strategic need:** The Panel discussed the strategic need of this provision. They were understanding that the project would have local benefits and that it would support the new development at Blackfriars. However, the Panel also noted that this project has already been allocated £130,000 of funding from a financial contribution via s106 from that development. The Panel felt that the project did not have a strategic benefit and was too localised to be funded from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund.

The Panel took consideration of the officer assessment which scored the application against the Assessment Scoring Criteria which has been agreed in the Governance and Decision-Making Protocol. The project scored 34 out of 52 which placed the project between the low and the priority categorisation. The Panel noted that the project is not included in the 2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) but that it does relate to Rother Local Plan Core Strategy BA1: Policy Framework for Battle.

The Panel felt that the project would be beneficial for the local community, however, it was requesting a large amount of funding and in order to allocate the Panel felt that the project would need to demonstrate a wider strategic impact.

The Panel RESOLVED not to allocate funding from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm