

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ALLOCATIONS PANEL

23 January 2025

Minutes of the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Allocations Panel held at Bexhill Town Hall on Thursday 23 January 2025 at 10:00am.

Committee Members present: Councillors C.A. Bayliss, A.K Jeeawon, P.N. Osborne, R. Thomas and T.M. Killeen MBE (Chair)

Advisory Officers in attendance: Gilian Macinnes – Interim Head of Planning, Holly Harrison – Planning Policy Team Leader, Aaron Sams - Principal Community Infrastructure Levy Officer and Ben Yates – Planning Officer.

CLIP49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

CLIP50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R. Thomas declared interests as Chair of RDC Housing Company, the RDC Representative on the Board of Bexhill Museum, and as a former member of the of the RDC Bexhill Leisure Centre Steering Group.

Cllr C.A Bayliss declared an interest as a former member of the RDC Bexhill Leisure Centre Steering Group.

CLIP51 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 AUGUST 2024

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

CLIP52 UPDATE FROM HEAD OF PLANNING

The Interim Head of Planning gave the Panel background information regarding the strategic role of CIL, in order to provide context to the ongoing funding round and the funding items to be considered at the meeting. The Panel heard that the new Rother Local Plan will need to detail how strategic infrastructure, required to support its aims and policies, will be funded. This will be scrutinised at the Local Plan examination, and in addition to this, historic CIL spending could also be examined. The Panel were reminded that unlike site specific S106 funding, CIL must play a wider and more

strategic role in supporting growth and development across the district, ensuring that funding is retained for large scale items. This, the Panel heard, does not preclude CIL being used for more local items, but the Panel should always be mindful that S106 cannot fund wider strategic items, and therefore all decisions on CIL funding allocations should be made with due consideration of the impact of and need for the proposed infrastructure.

CLIP53 **REVIEW OF STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING ITEMS, EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST, AND CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED NEXT STEPS.**

The Principal CIL Officer introduced the report. The Panel heard that this was the first meeting since the adoption of updated governance arrangements, and that the first funding round under these new arrangements had begun in October 2024.

The Panel were given a recap of the new application and funding process. They heard that Town & Parish Councils had been given an 8-week period to submit expressions of interest for funding and that there had been four submitted for consideration. The Panel further heard that the non-Town & Parish Council infrastructure providers had been, as per the new process, invited to provide updates on existing items or provide new items for inclusion on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The aim of the process is to generate an Infrastructure List of items which could be CIL funded for Panel consideration.

The Panel heard that the process for infrastructure providers had not brought forward sufficient items to form a meaningful Infrastructure List. They were informed that this could be caused by a range of factors, which will be explored and reviewed in detail, but that one component is considered to be the status of the IDP. The Panel heard that further engagement with infrastructure providers is needed, to better understand the infrastructure requirements of the district and inform a review and update of the IDP. The Panel were informed that this work to update the IDP should in turn allow for the generation of a detailed Infrastructure List, which the Panel could consider at future meetings.

The Panel were informed that despite the low response rate from the infrastructure providers there had been a small number of items submitted which could potentially be suitable for inclusion on the Infrastructure List, and for strategic CIL funding. To ensure fairness and due consideration of these items the Panel heard that these have been reviewed and proposed recommendations for each have been prepared. In addition to these items, the Panel were also informed that there have been more general comments and proposals for updates and amendments to the IDP, which will be considered further by officers during the forthcoming work to update the IDP. The Panel noted that any suitable items before them at the meeting will be included on the Infrastructure List for consideration at a future meeting.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the proposals for officers to undertake further work with the aim of generating an Infrastructure List, including updating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) ahead of the next funding round.

CLIP54 **INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDER ITEMS**

The Principal CIL Officer introduced each infrastructure provider item which had come forward during the funding round. The Panel were reminded that they were only considering whether the item should be explored further and included on the Infrastructure List, not to determine whether an application for CIL funding is invited at this stage.

Project Details	Panel and Officer Discussion	Panel Resolution
<p>Bexhill Museum</p> <p>New public toilets in Egerton Park, Bexhill and new Archaeology Study Centre to be based in the current public toilet block.</p>	<p>Councillor R. Thomas, having declared an interest as the RDC member on the Board of Bexhill Museum, left the meeting during the discussion of this item.</p> <p>The Panel heard that Bexhill Museum were seeking £125,000.00 from the Rother Infrastructure Fund to convert the existing toilet block underneath the museum to create a new archaeology study centre and install new public toilets opposite, next to the Changing Places facilities in Egerton Park, Bexhill.</p> <p>The Panel considered and discussed whether this item constitutes a piece of priority strategic infrastructure, that addresses growth and supports the impacts of development within the district. The Principal CIL Officer set out that the project, while upgrading the toilet block, is not expanding or creating a piece of key infrastructure, while noting that new toilet provision would be beneficial locally.</p> <p>The archaeology study centre was also discussed, the Panel were informed that educational and cultural facilities can receive CIL funding providing they have a direct relationship to supporting growth and mitigating the impacts of development. The Panel, despite strongly supporting the museum and empathising with its efforts to expand, felt that this aspect of the project was not relevant to growth and development.</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to not place this item on the Infrastructure List.</p>

	<p>The Head of Planning informed the Panel that, while appreciative of the proposal, consideration must be given to the purposes of strategic CIL and its role in supporting growth and development. The Panel heard that, for example, a large-scale project of renewal and improvement of public toilets across the district could potentially be considered to meet this definition, however improvements to a single facility would be too localised of a proposal for strategic CIL funding.</p> <p>The Panel were supportive of the proposal and understood the constraints the project has faced in securing the funding required, but ultimately felt the item was not priority infrastructure provision which required strategic CIL funding.</p>	
<p>Martins Oak Doctors Surgery, Battle GP Partners</p> <p>New medical hub in Battle</p>	<p>The Panel heard that the GP partners at Martins Oak Surgery, Battle, have submitted a briefing on the creation of a new medical hub in Battle to supplement the Martins Oak GP practice in the town. The item does not have a specified amount of CIL being requested at this stage, but the total project cost is estimated at £2.075M.</p> <p>The Panel discussed the importance of medical provision, noting that this is always considered a priority to residents. The Panel also noted the high levels of housing development taking place within Battle and expressed their view that increased capacity of facilities will be required to support this development.</p> <p>The Principal CIL Officer highlighted the potential strategic impacts of the provision, noting that increased capacity will relieve health service pressures in other areas of the district.</p> <p>The Panel were supportive of this item and welcomed officers taking forward further work to establish how CIL could assist with delivery.</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to approve the Principal CIL Officer undertaking further research and discussions on this item, to fully understand its status, projected timelines and other sources of funding. If found to be suitable the item will be placed on the Infrastructure List for future Panel consideration.</p>
<p>East Sussex County Council (ESCC).</p> <p>Accessibility improvements (dropped kerbs,</p>	<p>The Panel heard that ESCC were seeking £200,000.00 from the Rother Infrastructure Fund to cover the full costs for a programme of accessibility improvements across Rother district. These improvements would be delivered to link with development sites and routes connecting key towns</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to approve the Principal CIL Officer undertaking further research and discussions on this</p>

<p>tactile paving and markings) across Rother district.</p>	<p>and local centres in both urban and rural areas of Rother.</p> <p>The Panel discussed whether the item was strategic, noting that while it would be beneficial across Rother, some aspects may be more suited to local funding.</p> <p>The Panel also discussed whether this item should be funded by RDC CIL or by ESCC funding, noting their view that the item would likely fall under the County Councils remit and responsibility.</p> <p>The Head of Planning informed the Panel that it would be useful to ascertain if the improvements could be linked to the new Local Plan allocations, when these are set out.</p> <p>The Panel welcomed the proposed outcomes of the project but felt that more information is required to establish whether strategic CIL is the most suitable form of funding for this item, and further information is also required regarding which locations the proposed improvements will be implemented.</p>	<p>item, with particular regard to the audit of potential measures and locations undertaken by ESCC, to establish the strategic nature of the project, or whether it may be better suited to Local CIL funding. If suitable the item will be placed on the Infrastructure List for future Panel consideration.</p>
<p>East Sussex County Council (ESCC).</p> <p>Bus stop improvements in Rother district</p>	<p>The Panel heard that ESCC were seeking £300,000.00 from the Rother Infrastructure Fund to cover the full costs for a package of bus stop improvements in Rother, including new bus stops, raised kerbs, and refurbished shelters.</p> <p>The Panel discussed the strategic aspects of the item, noting that while improvements across Rother were welcome many bus stops fell under the responsibility of Town & Parish Councils. The Panel considered whether individual Town & Parish Council's should be approached for local CIL funding for these improvements instead.</p> <p>The Panel shared examples of high costs of such improvements that they had been made aware of. They questioned whether the requested amount would be sufficient to cover improvements to the whole of Rother.</p> <p>The Panel welcomed the proposed outcomes of the project but felt that more information is required to</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to approve the Principal CIL Officer undertaking further research and discussions on this item, with particular regard to the audit of potential measures and locations undertaken by ESCC, to establish the strategic nature of the project, or whether it may be better suited to Local CIL funding. If suitable the item will be placed on the Infrastructure List for future Panel consideration.</p>

	<p>establish whether strategic CIL is the most suitable form of funding for this item, and further information is also required regarding which locations the proposed improvements will be implemented.</p>	
<p>Rother District Council (RDC)</p> <p>King Offa – Leisure Centre development, Bexhill-On-Sea.</p>	<p>The Panel heard that RDC had submitted a briefing regarding funding for a Wet & Dry leisure facility in Bexhill-On-Sea at the King Offa Site. The item does not have a specified amount of CIL being requested at this stage, but the total project cost is estimated at £22m and there is an approximately £7.4m funding shortfall.</p> <p>The Principal CIL Officer updated the Panel on the history of the site and various decisions which have been made with regard to its development. The Panel heard that in April 2024 Levelling Up Funding (LUF) of £9m was awarded to this project, which is time restricted and therefore the development was now seeking to move forward at pace. The Panel heard that the development, of a proposed new leisure centre and swimming pool, has Outline Planning Permission which also includes a housing development of approximately 52 dwellings. In addition to this RDC has ownership of the site and various demolition works have taken place in anticipation of the development progressing.</p> <p>The Panel agreed that the provision is clearly strategic and an example of infrastructure that would have a range of benefits across Rother. They also welcomed the potential for the Climate Emergency Bonus Fund to be utilised to ensure the project would be environmentally sustainable.</p> <p>The Panel noted the large shortfall in funding and welcomed the fact that the scheme cost is currently under review to see if the projected capital costs can be reduced while still delivering the anticipated outcomes.</p> <p>The Panel welcomed the item, which they noted is already listed on the IDP, and felt that further work should be undertaken to establish timescales, and the role strategic CIL could play in delivery of the provision.</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to approve the Principal CIL Officer undertaking further research and discussions on this item, regarding the funding which will be requested and the timescales for these requests. The item will remain on the IDP, and the Panel will be updated on the current status of the project and any CIL requests at their next meeting.</p>

The Principal CIL Officer introduced each EOI to the Panel. The Panel were reminded that, as per the funding process, at this stage they were being requested to consider whether to invite items to submit full applications.

EOI Details	Panel and Officer Discussion	Panel Resolution
<p>Battle Town Council (BTC)</p> <p>North Trade Road Recreation Ground, Battle, Sports Pavilion replacement</p>	<p>The Panel heard that BTC were seeking £250,000.00 from the Rural Rother Matched Infrastructure Fund towards an estimated £950,000.00 project to demolish and rebuild the sports pavilion located in the North Trade Road Recreation Ground, Battle. The replacement pavilion would be larger in scale and include improved toilet and changing facilities.</p> <p>The Panel noted that this item was allocated £400,000.00 of strategic CIL in March 2023 and at the time of that decision the estimated total cost was approximately £788,000.00. The Panel, in reviewing the EOI, noted that these costs have now risen considerably and that other sources of funding, including a bid to the Football Foundation, have not been successful. In addition to this a bid to the national Community Ownership Fund has not materialised as this UK Government fund has been put on hold indefinitely following the General Election. BTC are therefore returning to the Panel to request an additional £250,000.00 to complete the provision.</p> <p>The Panel discussed the item and expressed their understanding of the increased costs and lack of alternate funds. The Principal CIL Officer informed the Panel that BTC have secured, in addition to the £400,000.00 strategic CIL, £20,000.00 from the Rural Community Infrastructure Fund. They have also allocated £280,243.73 from their own funds, including their portion of Local CIL.</p> <p>The Panel expressed their continued support for the provision but discussed the amount of CIL that would be allocated to this project if they were to invite another funding application and then allocate the funding. The Principal CIL Officer, along with the Head of Planning, set out potential options on how this item could progress. The Panel heard that they</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to invite BTC to submit a funding application and approve the Principal CIL Officer undertaking investigations and seeking legal advice on whether RDC could loan the required money to BTC from the Rural Rother Matched Infrastructure Fund, with this being paid back using the BTC portion of Local CIL. The Panel can then, at their next meeting, assess the full application and officer recommendations, and decide on whether to provide the additional funding directly, or, if found to be feasible, to loan the money to BTC.</p>

	<p>could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inviting a full application and the allocation of the full requested amount. • request that officers explore the potential to loan the requested amount to BTC from the relevant CIL fund, with this being paid back via their Local CIL portion; or • Consider an allocation of a smaller amount of funding upon consideration of a full application. <p>The Panel expressed their view that all funding options should be open for consideration and that in the meantime BTC should be invited to apply to avoid any delays.</p>	
<p>Bexhill-On-Sea Town Council (BoSTC)</p> <p>Sculpture on Glyne Gap Roundabout, A259, Bexhill-On-Sea.</p>	<p>The Panel heard that BoSTC were seeking £75,000.00 from the Bexhill Matched Infrastructure Fund to fully fund a sculpture on the Glyne Gap roundabout on the A259 entering Bexhill-On-Sea. The sculpture would be in the theme of the birthplace of British motor racing and would seek to improve the attractiveness of the one of the main entrances to Bexhill-On-Sea.</p> <p>The Principal CIL Officer informed the Panel that in 2020, prior to the formation of the CIL Panel and the formation of BoSTC, RDC Cabinet allocated £150,000.00 of CIL towards the Ravenside Gateway Roundabout project, which in addition to a proposed sculpture included various drainage and other improvements to the roundabout. Due to a lack of progress, in 2022 Cabinet removed this funding allocation and re-allocated the funding to form part of the £210,000.00 towards public convenience improvements in Bexhill.</p> <p>The Panel discussed and considered whether this item truly amounts to a piece of infrastructure provision which could be funded using strategic CIL. The Principal CIL Officer informed the Panel that public realm improvements could be considered under the umbrella of transport and public infrastructure works, but these would need to be directly related to supporting growth and</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to not invite BoSTC to submit a full application for funding, but to recommend that they use their portion of Local CIL and/or other funding sources for the item.</p>

	<p>development of the district, for example by easing congestion or improving accessibility. The Panel were informed that the EOI before them is not considered to meet these requirements.</p> <p>The Panel heard that under the CIL Regulations there is a greater flexibility to spend the local portion of CIL, which is passed directly to town & parish councils for local infrastructure needs. The Regulations, while requiring funding to be spent on infrastructure provision also allow for spend on 'anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area'. This additional flexibility means that BoSTC could explore spending their local portion on this provision.</p> <p>The Principal CIL Officer also informed the Panel that a requirement of the Matched Infrastructure Fund is that at least 50% of the total cost is put towards the project, apart from in cases where an item has wider strategic outcomes. The Panel heard that this item is seeking full funding from strategic CIL and that it does not have the wider strategic outcomes to warrant full funding. The Panel agreed that the item is essentially a local item which should instead be funded via the BoSTC local CIL portion, or some other form of funding.</p>	
<p>Camber Parish Council (CPC)</p> <p>Johnsons Field Refurbishment project, Camber.</p>	<p>The Panel heard that CPC were seeking £30,000.00 from the Rural Matched Infrastructure Fund towards a £80,000.00 project of improvements and refurbishments to the Johnsons Field Recreational area in Camber. This would include the removal of the existing skateboarding area and replacement with a pump track, static gym equipment and replacement benches. The improvements would also include new lighting and CCTV being installed.</p> <p>The Principal CIL Officer informed the Panel that the project has 50% match-funding from CPC local CIL and that additional funding from Capital Grants was being sought.</p> <p>The Panel discussed the level of development in Camber and the Planning Policy Team Leader set out the anticipated levels of growth in the coming years. The Panel noted that while housing development is low in the area, the local infrastructure is put under pressure by high levels of</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to not invite a funding application from Camber Parish Council.</p>

	<p>tourism during the summer months.</p> <p>The Panel discussed whether the project is too localised for strategic CIL funding and whether using Local CIL receipts would be a more suitable source of funding, while noting that due to lower levels of development it may take CPC significant time to generate the amounts required.</p> <p>The Panel were supportive of the project and felt that RDC should be encouraging and assisting as much as possible with these types of local infrastructure improvements, however, the Panel ultimately agreed that the item is too localised and that the area has not had significant levels of development to justify the allocation of strategic CIL funding.</p> <p>The Panel requested that the Principal CIL Officer informs CPC of the Panel's personal support for the project, and that where possible, assistance is given in sourcing other forms of funding.</p>	
<p>Fairlight Parish Council (FPC)</p> <p>New sewage system for the Fairlight Village Pavilion.</p>	<p>The Panel heard that FPC were seeking £40,000.00 from the Rural Rother Infrastructure Fund towards an £80,000.00 project to install a new sewage system at the Fairlight Village Pavilion. The EOI set out that a new foul sewer run is required to have surface water soak away from the Pavilion.</p> <p>The Principal CIL Officer informed the Panel that there is limited information provided in the EOI, such as for example, whether the Pavilion is currently operational due to the works required.</p> <p>The EOI, the Panel heard, refers to the Former Market Garden housing development in Fairlight, but it does not explicitly set out how the proposal relates to supporting development and growth in the area.</p> <p>The Panel discussed whether this item would be suitable for strategic CIL funding. It was noted that CIL can be used for maintenance and improvements of existing infrastructure, providing these are required to support development and growth.</p> <p>The Panel felt that they required more information to</p>	<p>The Panel RESOLVED to not invite a funding application. The Panel requested that Fairlight Parish Council are advised to make a more detailed EOI at the next funding round.</p>

	be able to determine whether to invite a funding application. They agreed that FPC should be recommended to return with a more detailed EOI at the next funding round.	
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The meeting closed at 11:25am.