



Communication Strategy

For the Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure
Framework

Planning

September 2024

Revision version for Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Meeting

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1 Background

- 1.1 Following the decision by New Forest District Council to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in April 2021, the council have been charging for CIL liable development since April 2015.
- 1.2 A framework for CIL expenditure has been adopted and sits alongside this Communications Strategy. This expenditure framework has been reviewed at the same time as this communication strategy.

2 Aims of the Strategy

2.1 These are: -

- To identify the key messages and ensure these remain consistent throughout all communications which this Strategy covers.
- Establish the key stakeholders and determine the communication channels and tools needed to convey the key message.
- Set out the framework for communication in terms of where and when and how to deliver key messages.
- Identify opportunities for proactive communication and address circumstances when communication is necessary to address any CIL collection and expenditure issues.
- Identify any potential risks and put in place communication counter measures to mitigate against these.

3 CIL collection

- 3.1 CIL is collected and allocated in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The council retains 5% of the total CIL income for administration of CIL. From the remainder, 15% is allocated to Parish or Town Councils (subject to a financial cap) but where there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place this figure rises to 25%.(with no financial cap)
- 3.2 Each year the council is required as a CIL charging authority to publish monitoring statistics for collection, allocation and expenditure of CIL monies by the 31st of December for each year known as the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). The statement is available on the council's website at [Infrastructure Funding Statement - New Forest District Council](#)
- 3.3 The IFS is a factual document and does not include any information where a formal decision is required. Therefore this document is published following officer signoff without a Cabinet or Portfolio decision.

4 CIL Expenditure

- 4.1 The development of a detailed framework for CIL expenditure for consideration and adoption has been devised as there is no set approach for CIL expenditure prescribed either by Central Government or through the CIL Regulations.
- 4.2 As such all CIL charging authorities have established their own schemes for how CIL monies are spent.
- 4.3 The CIL Regulations stipulate that CIL monies which are collected must be spent on infrastructure. Each Council must publish a list of infrastructure that will be all or partially funded through CIL in their annual IFS.
- 4.4 The CIL Expenditure Framework which sits alongside this 'Communication Strategy' is critical to the funding of infrastructure to support inclusive growth, sustainable development and to support climate change activities.
- 4.5 The CIL Expenditure Framework operates on an annual bid cycle, with bids sought in October each year.
- 4.6 The bids will be reviewed and scored by officers, prior to a Member task and finish group before a final decision on allocations by Cabinet.
- 4.7 Some of the information (including financial information) around the bids when submitted may be commercially sensitive. However, it is intended that basic information concerning the infrastructure to be provided by the Bid will be capable of being placed on the council's website together with outcomes both when the Bids are determined and when the infrastructure project has been completed. This information will be placed in the CIL Expenditure Programme, updated regularly.
- 4.8 The key messages of this Communication Strategy reflect this position and strike a balance between openness and transparency and the need to safeguard any commercial sensitivity that may apply.

5 Key Messages and the Framework for Communication

General

- 5.1 These will relate to CIL expenditure (including CIL collection – see section 3). They will involve the process and any specific cases where Bids are made together with the outcome following decision taking.
- 5.2 Key messages will also include details of the completion of any infrastructure projects which are the outcome of successful Bids (for Strategic or Local infrastructure expenditure) where CIL monies are spent including infrastructure projects which are the subject of a collaborative spend.
- 5.3 There will be reports provided throughout each year in the following way:
- Annual reports on CIL collection and expenditure including updates on process and detailed CIL expenditure for all District Members
 - Annual briefings on CIL collection and expenditure including updates on process and detailed CIL expenditure for all Parish and Town Councils within the Districts
 - Regular engagement with appropriate infrastructure providers as needed throughout the year to ensure that infrastructure is planned for and provided as part of a developing programme of infrastructure delivery linked to growth (funded either through s106 or CIL)

Regular Communication - Frequency and type

- 5.4 From the 1 September 2019 the CIL Regulations introduced a new requirement for the production of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) about infrastructure including s106 and CIL expenditure.
- 5.5 Details of, and payment of, Neighbourhood CIL monies from the Councils CIL income to the Parish /Town Councils and will be undertaken twice yearly (April and October).

- 5.6 Details of the CIL Expenditure Framework, (including details of the yearly cycle of Bid submission and consideration) any supporting Guidance Documents, Bid Application forms and prioritisation criteria (which will be applied to Bids) will be available on the councils' web site in order to facilitate Bid submission. Clear information of the process will also be provided on the web site.
- 5.7 In advance of the Bid Round opening, advance monthly email communications will be sent to all Infrastructure Providers and all Parish and Town Councils to advise of the Bid process being open for the submission of Bids. This will also be communicated through the web site and email notification to potential Bidders.
- 5.8 Following validation of submitted Bids, the Ward Member(s), County Councillor for that Ward and the Parish Council (via the Clerk) shall be advised of the receipt of the validated Bid via email and be given 14 days to comment upon the submitted Bid. Further details of the bid will be made available on request, in order to assist with the submission of a response.
- 5.9 A list of all validated Bids received will be placed on the website at the time that local consultation takes place containing basic information only to safeguard any commercial sensitivity.
- 5.10 For the duration of the Bid when it is validated, during consultation and whilst being assessed until decision taking, there will be no comment on individual Bids or comments made following consultation except for required communication with affected Infrastructure Providers, the District and County Councillor for the Ward and the Parish or Community Group or the author of the Bid. (This will allow resources to be directed towards consideration of and determination of the Bids). No proactive press statements will be made during this time.
- 5.11 All authors of successful Bids will receive an offer letter and a grant award form which would need to be signed and returned and which would make the terms of the Bid decision clear. The website will be updated with the decisions on the Bid and appropriate press/media coverage will be undertaken involving joined up communication for all organisations where collaborative spend is involved. When all press releases are devised, section 9 of this strategy will be taken into account and the communication will reflect the inclusion of District Ward Members and relevant Parish Councils and other key organizations (or funding bodies) particularly in the case of the latter where collaborative spend is involved.

- 5.12 The annual Infrastructure Funding Statement will contain details of CIL collection, details of all Bids approved and, any other allocated spend whether collaborative or not with details of delivery (of the infrastructure project) and timescales and any details of decisions for infrastructure.
- 5.13 Our key audience will be advised of decisions by email and the annual CIL Expenditure Programme will be made available on the website.
- 5.14 A yearly CIL Calendar will be issued outlining all the key dates in that year affecting CIL and this will also be publicised on the website.

6 Key Audience

6.1 These are: -

- Infrastructure Providers, including schools and churches
- All District Members
- County Council Members for the New Forest area
- All Parish Councils
- Community Groups where Bids are made
- Local Residents
- The Leader and Cabinet Member for New Forest District Council
- Chief Executive
- All Staff (including all Strategic Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Managers)
- Media

7 Communication Channels

7.1 These are: -

- District Council websites
- Emails to our Key Audience
- Town and Parish Council Meetings
- Leader and Cabinet Member briefings
- District Council Member Briefings
- Parish and Town Council briefings and workshops
- Media releases
- Social media (Facebook, X and LinkedIn)
- Town and Parish Council newsletter (if applicable)

8 Communication Tools

- 8.1 Many of our audience already receive a number of communications from us across a range of subjects and projects. To help ensure our communication on CIL is easily recognisable and read, it will be necessary to clearly identify the purpose of the communication at the top of the key message.
- 8.2 Templates for emails, and updates will also be developed to ensure clarity of message. Our website will identify how the process will work and when Bid submission and decision taking will occur.
- 8.3 Social media will also be a key channel for communicating with our audiences and to help ensure these messages are recognised is intended to use the CIL expenditure and CIL collection hashtag for each X and Facebook update where appropriate.

9 Spokespeople

- 9.1 For CIL collection information will be communicated through the website and this will be regularly updated subject to the other requirements in this document.
- 9.2 For Strategic Infrastructure Expenditure – which has considerable impact on each District suggest the following: -
- Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy
- 9.3 For Local Infrastructure Expenditure which has significant impact on the District suggest the following: -
- Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy
 - Strategic Director for Places, Operations and Sustainability
- 9.4 With the exception of press announcements of the decisions on the CIL Bids after determination of the CIL Expenditure Programme , every decision on submitted Bids or where Infrastructure projects are delivered, the District Ward Member for the Community where the infrastructure is to be provided must be included in the Key message. In respect of press announcements of the decisions on the CIL Bids after determination of the CIL Expenditure Programme , the lead messages will be from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy. However, when such CIL Bids are determined, Ward Members affected will also be given the opportunity to offer a quote to support the press announcement.
- 9.5 Where proactive or reactive Key messages are delivered these must be managed so that where the Bids involve collaborative spend the different organisations working in collaboration including Parishes must be part of the Key message and the key message is effective and joined up (including the Ward Member)
- 9.6 Every opportunity will be taken wherever possible to undertake joint communication messages with infrastructure providers and other funding bodies and partners including those carrying out the infrastructure project together with Parish Councils. Members must always remain involved.

10 Risks

- 10.1 The successful delivery of Infrastructure projects across the Council are important for a number of reasons. Not only are these projects aligned with a range of our key strategic priorities but the infrastructure that is provided will mitigate any harm from new development and make that development sustainable. In addition, some infrastructure projects may address current infrastructure inadequacy or deliver a Parish or community infrastructure initiative. As such they will be the focus of a great deal of interest from our key audience and may generate media interest and engagement on a wider level.
- 10.2 All this audience is invested in the outcome of these projects for a variety of reasons. (financial, social and economic). This will bring these projects under very close scrutiny and we need to acknowledge that failure to effectively communicate with our audience could have a significant impact on its success and the reputation of the Council.
- 10.3 It is also important to recognise that communication needs to be accurate and clear and there is a need to take appropriate measures to correct any factual inaccuracies should they occur.