

Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Allocation of community infrastructure levy (CIL) to local infrastructure projects

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report seeks agreement from Cabinet for formal approval of the funding of a programme of local infrastructure projects for the financial year 2025/26, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Expenditure Framework as approved by the Council in October 2024.
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approves the list of 31 projects for inclusion in the capital programme for 2025/26 with a total budget of £998,100.87;2. Approves the opening of the local infrastructure bid windows, for bids up to £100,000, for the 2026/27 financial year for two-months during Spring 2025;3. Approves a two-month expression of interest window is opened to explore the potential for further local and strategic infrastructure projects within the district; and4. Authorises the Strategic Director for Place, Operations and Sustainability, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, to make such amendments as they deem appropriate to the approved project lists within 10% of the total budget. Any such amendments will be in accordance with financial regulations and reported to Cabinet via the financial monitoring reports.
Reasons for recommendations	CIL is collected to mitigate the impacts of new development on its infrastructure. The CIL Expenditure Framework sets the process to

	<p>spend this money and the proposals in this paper align with the framework.</p> <p>The recommendations align with priorities across the place, people and prosperity elements of the Council’s Corporate Plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Priority 1: Shaping our place now and for future generations. • People Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. • Prosperity Priority 2: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability
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Introduction and background

1. New development needs to be supported by physical, social, and green infrastructure. Developer contributions are collected to make new developments acceptable in planning terms, providing mitigation that serves to minimise the impacts on the local community and infrastructure.
2. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provides funding to help deliver this infrastructure and has been collected by this Council since 2015. Annual reports of how CIL is collected and spent is available to view at <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1891/Infrastructure-Funding-Statement>.
3. In October 2023, a CIL Expenditure Framework (hereafter ‘the Expenditure Framework’) was approved. This identified that CIL monies would in future be apportioned into three funds: recreational habitat mitigation, strategic infrastructure, and local infrastructure.

The approval also allocated £1m of held CIL funds towards local infrastructure projects. Following a successful bidding round, 26 projects were awarded funding.

4. In October 2024, the Expenditure Framework was revised to allow for further rounds of local infrastructure allocations over the course of the Corporate Plan period. Bids have subsequently been submitted from across the New Forest area for the 2025/26 period, with the bidding window closing on 13 December 2024. The Council received 79 bids in total for amounts ranging from £500 to £250,000, and the total value of all bids received was more than £2.8m.

Analysing the bids received

5. The format of reviewing the bids took two forms, a desktop review by officers followed by a Task and Finish Group meeting with cross party elected members.
6. Once bids had been received, they were validated to ensure that the basic eligibility criteria had been met. At the validation stage, 6 bids were not taken forward to screening as either they did not qualify for infrastructure funding by being a revenue project or the bid was over the £100,000 limit. The remaining projects were then scored against the criteria in para 4.6 of the [CIL Expenditure Framework](#). following questions (out of 10, except for the Local Plan which was out of 20).
7. All projects were scored fairly based on the information provided in the bidding form.
8. Following this a cross-party Task and Finish group was held in January 2025. The members of the Task and Finish group were provided with all necessary information on the bids including:
 - the project summary
 - location
 - total cost of project and CIL requested
 - officer scoring of bids against the prioritisation criteria
 - officer recommendation
9. Following the conclusion of the Task and Finish group sessions, the 31 top scoring projects were identified to be taken forward for inclusion in the 2025/26 capital programme with an anticipated allocation of £998,100.87. This forms the first recommendation of this report.

10. Whilst the geographical location of the projects was not directly considered for scoring purposes, the resulting projects do provide a good mix of projects across the New Forest.

Next Steps

11. Subject to the recommendations being approved, all parties who bid for monies will be notified in writing immediately after the decision. Those whose bid was not successful on this occasion will be offered a chance to speak to officers to discuss and explore whether the reasons for not proceeding at this time can be addressed.
12. Successful bidders will be asked to sign a grant award letter, and officers will work with them to agree the programme for delivery and to agree future communication protocols and publicity for the project.
13. Monies will only be released to the successful bidders on submission of paid invoices and satisfactory completion of works unless other arrangements are specifically agreed with the Council beforehand.
14. Where projects will have ongoing maintenance costs, officers will look to steer applications to options to reduce these costs, and with alternative funding options. Officers will also look to direct those unsuccessful bidders to alternative sources of funding available.
15. In the context of wider discussions about infrastructure needs in the future and the key corporate priorities of this Council as embedded in the Corporate Plan, it is considered appropriate to move to now quickly open up the 2026/27 bidding window for local infrastructure projects. By doing this it will give the Council the opportunity of a broader understanding of options available to spend CIL in the coming months, and give the opportunity to accelerate the approval of the next years projects and potentially fund even more deserving projects earlier. This forms the second recommendation to this report.

Corporate plan priorities

16. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the vision, values, and priorities for the Council over the next four years.
17. The vision of the Corporate Plan is to secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest. This has been organised into the thematic areas of People, Place and Prosperity. By awarding CIL funds to a wide range of projects across the district it will enable new infrastructure projects to be delivered, and existing facilities

enhanced, therefore providing several benefits to both residents and communities.

Options appraisal

18. Options have been considered in the light of proposed local government reorganisation as to whether to pause allocations at this time or even increase the funding of £1m local infrastructure funding.
19. Officers discussed this with the Task and Finish group. It was agreed that that it was appropriate to continue with this round of local infrastructure bids in recognition of the time taken by bidders to prepare the bids.
20. Options were also considered in relation to the introduction of some smaller projects to take the proposed allocation for 2025/26 just over the £1m. This was discussed with the Chair of the Task and Finish group who agreed with the proposal to not include these, but to open the 2026/27 bidding window earlier.

Options for further projects

21. When the Expenditure Framework revisions were approved in October 2024, it was proposed that there would be an annual opportunity for 'Expressions of Interests' (EOI) for further strategic projects over and above the five agreed at that time.
22. It is recommended that an EOI is now opened for two months to understand what demand is in the district for projects and for what type. This would be open to all infrastructure providers and partners. Whilst not a formal bidding process, it would help shape the Council's thinking for future use of CIL. This forms the third recommendation to this report.
23. Whilst there would be the intention to then repeat the £1m local infrastructure funding round later in 2025 it will also allow a full review of the remaining CIL that the Council holds.

Consultation undertaken

24. All District Council and County Council Members were advised of the bids received and offered to make comments. Where comments were received this was fed back to the Task and Finish Group for their information.
25. Where a project submitted was within the New Forest National Park then the views of officers of the National Park Authority were sought and considered by officers when scoring.

26. Where a project was proposed for formal open space (or located in an area of formal open space) then the District Council's Health and Wellbeing Manager was consulted for their views.

Financial and resource implications

27. CIL is collected and allocated in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The monies proposed to be allocated are all held by the Council and therefore there will be no direct cost to the Council.
28. It is recognised that on occasions budgets may need to be amended for projects where unforeseen circumstances arise. Should this situation be encountered, and to allow the continued delivery of schemes, it is proposed to authorise the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, in conjunction with the Chair of the Executive Advisory Task and Finish Group, to make such amendments as they deem appropriate to the approved project lists within 10% of the total budget. This forms the fourth recommendation to this report.
29. At the time of bids for local infrastructure being submitted, a similar round of funding bids was undertaken for the Community Grants programme. Some bids submitted through this CIL process also sought funds through the Community Grants programme. The Task and Finish Group were made aware of these instances during the meetings. Any proposed award under CIL funds has taken account of any other grants awarded and the Expenditure Framework which states that only one bid per project per bidding round per council funding scheme.

Legal implications

30. Whenever the Council provides a subsidy, regardless of the form it takes (e.g. grant funds including CIL, loans, land at an undervalue etc) to another organisation, it needs to ensure such subsidies are permitted under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Due to the level of grants being awarded no further action is required from the Council in respect of the subsidy control regime and it will not be in breach should the decision to award the grants be made.

Risk assessment

31. There are no requirements for a formal risk assessment arising from this report, however, the following risks should be noted. These risks will be continually monitored by officers.

- Failure to allocate CIL funds to projects may not secure investment in infrastructure (schools, health, broadband, transport etc.), and making development stifled and/or unsustainable.
- Ensuring the appropriate mechanism and timescales for reporting on CIL funds is followed through publication of an Infrastructure Funding Statement by 31 December each year.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

32. The projects proposed will deliver environmental benefits as well as health and well-being and climate change benefits through enabling greater use of existing open space, the creation of new or sustainable walking routes, enhanced cultural facilities and facilitating sustainable travel for young people.

Equalities implications

33. Through investing in the local infrastructure projects identified it will enhance facilities for all communities across the district, and by enhancing these facilities it will create opportunities with consequential benefits for disadvantaged communities and those that currently do not feel that such areas are accessible to their needs.

Crime and disorder implications

34. Through investing in the projects identified it will seek to enhance facilities for communities across the district, including opportunities to positively address/design-out any existing crime and disorder issues.

Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications

35. Alongside the CIL Expenditure Framework is a series of internal governance/process notes. The initial bidding round for the allocations in 2024/25 was robustly audited by our internal audit team who found that the process was in order.

New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

36. With some of the approved projects providing upgraded and designated routes this will help conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area comprised in the National Park and National Landscapes by providing a safe trail route.
37. Additionally, with investment in other some of the other projects in the area, such as new and enhanced play parks, this can help to take

some visitor pressures from the National Park by providing alternative destinations at times.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Officer proposed schemes for CIL allocation in 2025/26 following Task and Finish Group

Background Papers:

[CIL Expenditure Framework October 2024](#)

Appendix 1 - Officer proposed schemes for CIL allocation in 2025/26 following Task and Finish Group

The following 31 projects are proposed for allocation and listed alphabetically by location.

Location	Organisation submitting bid	Proposal	CIL request
Bransgore	Thorney Hill Community Centre Association	New Play area	£25,232.00
Brockenhurst	The Brockenhurst Village Trust	MUGA	£43,200.00
Copythorne	Copythorne Parish Council	Installation of Village Gateways	£4,000.00
Damerham	Hampshire County Council	Bridleway Damerham to Sandheath improvements	£81,500.00
East Boldre	East Boldre Village Hall	Redevelopment of the Village Hall	£100,000.00
Fawley	Fawley Parish Council	Improvements to Gang Warily sports hall, new specialist floor new sockets for badminton nets and basketball hoops	£7,498.00
Fordingbridge	Whitsbury Parish Council	Introduce road markings and modify road signage	£2,900.00
Fordingbridge	Fordingbridge Town Council	Refurbished and enhanced pedestrian link between Fordingbridge Car Park and the High Street	£72,500.00
Hale	Hale Village Hall (New Forest)	Solar panels	£10,000.00
Hordle	Hordle Parish Council	Replacement upgraded MUGA and cycle rack	£70,000.00
Hythe and Dibden	Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	Play area improvements (multiple locations)	£10,433.00
Hythe and Dibden	Hythe Pier Garden	Community Garden	£1,000.00
Hythe and Dibden	Wildground Infant School	Creation of an outdoor space that offers a secure and nurturing environment	£13,704.50

Location	Organisation submitting bid	Proposal	CIL request
Lymington and Pennington	Lymington and Pennington Town Council	Sea Water Bath improvements	£35,775.00
Lymington and Pennington	Lymington and Pennington Town Council	Withy Woods project	£44,250.00
Lyndhurst	Lyndhurst Parish Council	Replace the zipwire at the Coles mead Rec Ground	£22,308.37
Lyndhurst	Lyndhurst Parish Council	New footpath at Great Mead open space	£4,725.00
Marchwood	Marchwood Parish Council	Solar panels on the village hall at Lloyd Rec Ground	£9,995.00
Milford on Sea	Milford on Sea CofE Primary School	install a lockable bike shelter with storage racks for bikes, as well as 2 scooter racks	£6,339.00
New Milton	The Friendly Dog Club	demolish and replace an old community dog training temporary building	£75,000.00
New Milton	Forest Arts Centre - Hampshire Cultural Trust	To replace the current fixed seating at Forest Arts Centre with retractable seating	£32,329.00
New Milton	New Milton Town Council/New Forest District Council	Enhanced recreational mitigation of the sensitive Nature 2000 sites – Carrick Wood	£40,000.00
New Milton	New Milton Town Council	Hollands Wood Drive public open space off Fernhill Lane – multi play unit	£41,550.00
New Milton	New Milton Town Council	Ashley Recreation Ground provision of a Sports Wall and Sensory Board.	£32,000.00
Ringwood	Hampshire County Council	promote awareness, use and enjoyment of the Castleman Trailway through signage, information boards and benches.	£20,960.00
Rockbourne	Rockbourne Roman Villa - Hampshire Cultural Trust	Reinforcement of grass car park surface	£9,672.00
Sandleheath	Sandleheath Parish Council	Traffic management improvements	£99,934.00

Location	Organisation submitting bid	Proposal	CIL request
Sway	Sway Parish Council	Drainage infrastructure improvements for Cricket Pavilion	£14,332.00
Sway	Sway Village Hall	Enhancements to Sway Village Hall; Kitchen and Sound System	£26,964.00
Totton and Eling	Totton and Eling Town Council	new pieces of accessible and sensory play equipment at seven of the existing play areas	£30,000.00
Woodgreen	Woodgreen Community Shop Association Ltd	Solar Panels	£10,000.00