

Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 11 September 2025

Progress of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) strategic infrastructure projects

Purpose	For Review
Classification	N/A
Executive Summary	This report provides an update on the 5 strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects approved by Cabinet in October 2024. The report sets out the progress to date on each project, together with a direction of travel and estimated budgets.
Recommendations	<p>That the Panel provides comments to the Cabinet on the content of this report and supports the intended Cabinet recommendations as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the Progress of work to date and the direction of travel on the Strategic CIL projects as set out in paras 10 to 50 of this report. 2. Approve that the concept designs proceed to detailed design and tendering of full works.
Reasons for recommendations	<p>CIL is collected to mitigate the impacts of new development on its infrastructure. The CIL Expenditure Framework sets the process to spend this money and the proposals in this paper align with the framework.</p> <p>These 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

Wards	All
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director	James Carpenter – Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	<p>Dean Brunton Service Manager – Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Delivery 023 8028 5454 dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Ian Bennett Project Manager 023 8028 5643 Ian.bennett@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction

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 new and improved infrastructure that serves to mitigate the impacts on the local community and existing 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>.

Background

3. In October 2024, the council adopted a revised CIL Charging Schedule, and at this time allocated a pot of strategic CIL monies totalling £4.5m towards the following five projects:
 - Ringwood town centre
 - Milford on Sea seafront
 - Bath Road Lymington
 - Totton town centre
 - Improved walking routes between the National Park and surrounding communities

4. In approving the allocation of these monies, it was recognised that full governance would be required, alongside establishing project teams, for the successful delivery of these projects. This is enabling officers across the council alongside key partners to have input to, and an oversight of, the delivery of each project to ensure issues such as climate / emissions / culture / biodiversity / engagement issues are embedded in design/delivery.
5. To ensure that these projects are delivered in good time, a new dedicated Project Manager was appointed, funded by CIL. This new role has engaged with departments across the council, key partners and with the parishes where projects are proposed. Consultants have also been appointed to prepare indicative concept designs to enable them to be costed before being tendered.

Corporate plan priorities

6. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the vision, values, and priorities for the Council over the next three years.
7. 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. The 5 Strategic CIL fund projects will enable new infrastructure projects to be delivered, and existing facilities enhanced, therefore providing several benefits to both residents and communities.

Progress to Date and Direction of Travel

8. The approved projects follow the outline vision, values and priorities of the council from the 2024-28 Corporate Plan and have been aligned to reflect the aims as noted in [Section 26 of Cabinet – 2 October 2024 report - Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework & the use of strategic CIL](#).
9. The panel will note that the October 2024 Cabinet paper indicated a 3-year period (to 2027) to deliver these projects. However, in the context of local government reorganisation, together with a new expression of interest window open already to review further projects, officers are keen to accelerate the delivery timeframe of these projects with a view to maximising both spend and delivery before the end of 26/27.

Ringwood town centre

10. The 'Thriving Market Place' project provides opportunities to invest in strategic projects around the town centre, to reflect the proposed development in the area and opportunities to improve its vitality and attractiveness whilst reinvigorating the Market Place.
11. The project is being developed in partnership with Ringwood Town Council, Hampshire County Council (HCC) and this council, and builds on the work identified in the adopted Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan and previous work undertaken by HCC Highways and Ringwood Town Council, to reinvigorate the Market Place.
12. Salisbury-based Indigo Urban Design (partnered with local architect practice, 'Moorhouse'), have been appointed to develop a master plan concept that meets with the agreement of stakeholders, with a range of options to take forward, or identify as a future option should additional funding become available.
13. The emerging master plan approach will consider the entire Market Place and the need for a phased approach to works with limited funding, the priority being to first develop a central Thriving Market Place area between Meeting House Lane and Star Lane.
14. Improvements across the whole project could include,
 - carriageway being narrowed
 - footways widened, (footway/carriageway)
 - same level surfacing between Meeting House Lane and Star Lane
 - on street parking removed
 - accessible crossing will likely to be added
 - appropriate additional trees introduced
 - wayfinding signage standardised
 - comprehensive and coordinated suite of improvements to transform Market Place.
15. To complement the 800-year Charter Market anniversary, and in a change to the phasing approach in the initial concept work by HCC, it is likely that any initial works will likely be focussed around the Market Place area near to Meeting House Lane (the eastern extent).
16. The emerging concept plan for phase 1 centres around highways changes to the 'Market Place' and focusses on:

- carriageway being narrowed with footways widened and resurfaced
 - car parking spaces on the high street being removed
 - accessible 'raised' crossings are likely to be added
 - additional trees being introduced
 - building a wayfinding signage standardised in comprehensive and coordinated as part of a suite of improvements to transform Market Place.
17. As part of this, consideration is also being given to the wider area improvements to:
- undertake heritage improvements to fountain, lighting, wayfinding and building signage
 - ensuring events and celebrations can continue in the marketplace area
 - undertake market improvement, expansion and consolidation
 - contribute to infrastructure improvements relevant to the Market Charter 800-year celebrations
 - commissioning of public art piece to increase footfall in the area.
18. In the concept being developed, consultants are also proposing replicating parts of the original Drovers Route from the Furlong car park across the junction to add to the appeal of visiting the Market Place, whilst contributing to the success of this project to rejuvenate Market Place, with the benefit of improving pedestrian safety on the junction. This is to be proposed as a phase 1B in the concept design and potentially cost in the order of c£1m.
19. Subject to Cabinet approval, consultants will be appointed to undertake a detailed design through winter 2025/spring 2026. On completion of detailed design (estimated June 2026) an open tender for a principal works contractor is intended with the aim to begin works on site as soon as possible. In order to accommodate planned activities for the marketplace charter celebrations, a phased approach to the completion of works is likely throughout 2026 to 2028.
20. The original estimate, prepared by HCC, for the full delivery of a scheme in the area, was in the order of £2.7m. To progress this project, and enable at least an initial phase of delivery, officers

propose that c.£1m should be allocated to this project from the approved CIL funds.

21. In addition, the council also holds £505,966.13 from unspent S106 transport funds (collected from the Crow Lane development) for use to enhance non-car-based travel in Ringwood. It is proposed to seek Cabinet approval to additionally allocate these funds to the project budget.

Financial summary of Ringwood projects.

Scheme/Budget	Allocated CIL funds	S106 funds	Potential additional CIL requested	Total
Phase 1A Market Place	£1m	£505,966	0	£1.5M
Phase 1B Junction of Meeting House Lane with The Furlong	0	0	£1m	£1M
Contingency (both projects)	0	0	£500,000	£500,000
Total combined scheme				£3M

22. If the council were to proceed with both phase 1A and 1B at this time, then an additional £1.5m (to allow for a contingency) would be required.
23. Completion of highways works will be at the discretion and in conjunction with the highways authority, HCC. Initial HCC estimates for the completion for the Market Place (and Furlong Junc. option) improvements
 - concept design 2025 - 2026
 - detailed Design approval 2026 - 2027
 - planning, resourcing, tendering 2027 - 2028
 - anticipated start earliest mid 2028
 - completion late 2028/2029

Milford on Sea seafront

24. This project is taking a holistic view of this unique coastal frontage in terms of both council assets and what opportunities there may be for

developments and enhancements, taking into consideration flood and erosion risk measures as detailed in the Christchurch Bay Strategy and limited life span of council assets.

25. There are a number of constraints in the area including:

- recently refurbished the public convenience building acknowledged by NFDC Facilities Management to be in need of demolition within 3-5 years in its current location
- Needle view Café building, leased to commercial operator, with a limited F&B offering to visitors and community with a potential extensive refurbishment / replacement due at the end of current lease period 2036
- partial Sea defences at the end of life, with major disruption to any relandscaping proposed for site compounds and beach access.
- partial sea defence breach to eastern end of the promenade needing urgent repair

26. Officers have appointed Poole based architects, ECA to produce the concept design for the area. The consultants have conducted multiple engagement sessions with Milford on Sea Parish Council and other key partners which will help generate an agreed and acceptable scheme to present in Cabinet in November.

27. The emerging concept plan for the area includes:

- a sense of Place revisioning and arrival at the café building and main car park.
- wayfinding, with walking and cycling improvements
- supporting appropriate commercial opportunities through 'pop up style building's.'
- creating additional children's play areas.
- contribution to essential Sea Wall defence works at the eastern end of Milford on Sea Promenade.
- raised footpath creation alongside purposeful renaturing fit for a harsh marine environment to the eastern end of site to 'The Lighthouse' restaurant.

28. Subject to Cabinet approval, and appropriate procurement, consultants will be appointed to undertake a detailed design through winter 2025/spring 2026. On completion of detailed design (estimated May 2026) an open tender for a principal works contractor is intended with the aim to begin works on site as soon as possible. Completion of works is likely throughout 2026.
29. The total cost of undertaking this work is unclear at this time and could be heavily influenced by any contribution to associated flood defence works identified and/or replacement or relocation of near end of life span public conveniences block. However, it is proposed an indicative £1m should be allocated towards this project at this time based (not including the public convenience block or café alternations) on a spend profile as follows:
- Fees circa, £100k
 - Essential Sea Defence works contribution, £250k
 - Groundworks inc. planting above, £550k
 - Contingency, £100k
30. If the public convenience block and café were to be included a revised budget, would see an indicative £950k extra being required as follows:
- Fees circa, £100k
 - Sea Defence contribution £250k
 - Replacement public convenience block, circa. £400k
 - Café alterations, above £500k
 - Groundworks, inc. planting above £600k
31. Additional funding may be available from the Place Operations Public Convenience refurbishment budget to cover replacement of the (near end of life) conveniences on Milford Promenade, however, this is subject to separate budgeting considerations.

Bath Road, Lymington

32. The project centres around the enhancement of the existing open space at Bath Road. Initial ideas are for a new play area, combined with a splash park facility or water feature, removal of the seawater pond and bandstand, increased space provision for a new generation of regular outdoor cultural performances and music events, landscaping to break up the open space through designed planting

and sensitive tree works wayfinding, cycling and walking improvements through the Bath Rd car park.

33. Officers have appointed Poole based architects, ECA, to undertake concept designs and both parties have conducted multiple engagement sessions with Lymington and Penington Town Councillors and other key partners to move towards an agreed and acceptable scheme.
34. With Cabinet approval, and subject to appropriate procurement, consultants will be appointed to undertake a detailed design through winter 2025/spring 2026. On completion of detailed design (estimated May 2026) an open tender for a principal works contractor is intended with the aim to begin works on site as soon as possible. Completion of works is likely throughout 2026.
35. Based on anticipated £1m budget and £100k from Lymington and Pennington Town Council for the children's play area refurbishment, a scheme could be delivered centred around the pond infill, a refurbished play area and groundworks with a spend profile of:
 - Fees circa, £100k
 - Refurbished play area, £150k
 - Pond infill, £150k
 - Groundworks, inc. small water feature, £500k
 - Car park pedestrian safety improvements, £100k
 - Contingency, £100k
36. However, to deliver a scheme that will incorporate all aspirations, a further £1m would likely be required based on the following profile:
 - Fees circa, £100k
 - Pond infill £150k
 - Splash Park, £400k
 - Children play area £100k
 - Groundworks, inc. planting above £600k
 - Car park pedestrian safety improvements, £200k
 - Contingency, £100k
37. Additional future options for the Bath Road area are still being considered by officers in conjunction with HCC as Highways

Authority. These measures could, in part, be delivered using held S106 transportation contributions and options could include:

- Speed reduction and safety measures around the Captains Row area
- Widening of footway at Bath Road alongside Berthon Marina

38. At the time of this report there are no costs available for these options.

Totton town centre regeneration

39. October 2024 Cabinet approved developing a CIL funded Totton Town Centre project, however shortly afterwards this coincided Totton Partnership proposing development of a Totton Town Centre Master plan, subsequently consultants (AR Urbanism) were appointed in January 2025. This masterplan is due to deliver outputs and recommendations in early 2026.

40. To enable the currently approved £4.5m of CIL to fully considered by Members, officers have engaged the master planning consultants to prepare a proposal for delivering 2 projects in Totton Town Centre which could be delivered alongside the master planning work.

41. The consultants are preparing a concept design on two schemes to take forward, although without additional funding it is likely that only one will be delivered.

Option 1

42. New town square. A proposal to develop a new town square on space between Police Station, Library and Civic Centre and social club. Through Master Plan public consultations, consultants believe a new Town Square will provide Totton with a sense of community through a new central space, which will incorporate market and events.

43. The town Square scheme will be the first phase of master plan recommended town centre improvements for permanent restricted access, raised table, shared space the full length of Library Road. Consultants believe this will inspire shopping centre improvements and fast track redevelopment of public owned buildings in the Civic Quarter. Budget c.£1m

Option 2

44. Brokenford/town centre access improvements. A proposal to deliver town centre walking access improvements through footpath

enhancements in Brokenford Lane on the lead up to the rail foot bridge, new pedestrian footway when exiting the bridge across Maynard Rd via a new footway through shrubbery and a new designated crossing across Maynard Road.

45. This scheme enables a safe pedestrian route from the western side of Totton to Town Centre. There is currently a forced route for pedestrians on this route with no designated footway or crossing points across the busy Maynard Rd. Budget c£1m.
46. The consultants, AR Urbanism will conduct engagement sessions with town council officers, ward councillors and key stakeholders to develop 2 agreed and acceptable concept designs.
47. It is likely that a total budget of £2m (circa £1m for each) will be required for implementation of these two schemes, with a recommendation of potential additional funding to be presented to Cabinet. If either scheme is progressed it could see a principal contractor in place by mid-2026.
48. Completion timescale of either schemes will be dictated by HCC and will likely to be delivered through external consultants and highways contractors, estimated to be completed between 2027 and 2028.

Improved walking routes between the National Park and surrounding communities

49. This project includes the establishment of a wider multiuser trail network using pre-existing gravel tracks and trails to link New Forest communities and places of interest, including new wayfinding and waymarking of the trail network and the upgrade of a number of broken links to connect established gravel tracks.
50. The New Forest National Park Authority appointed a consultant to undertake a wayfinding study on the existing trails, with a report due shortly. This will help refine the project scope and the budget needed to complete the wayfinding strategy which will form basis for the budget allocated. It is proposed an indicative £500k should be allocated towards this project at this time which is based on current costing made available at this time. If further funding is required, held S106 transportation contributions could potentially be used depending on the amount and location.

Alternative options considered

51. Alternative options are currently limited in terms of the time available to allocate and spend CIL and S106 developer funds and the complexities of delivering multiple large infrastructure projects.

52. The alternative to not endorsing the direction and timing of this programme and its project would be to pause the programme, return to Cabinet at later date in 2026 after further consultation with key partners including town and parish council stakeholders. This approach could cause a major risk to ensuring CIL funds are spent in a timely manner.
53. Currently, officers are seeking Expressions of Interest for further strategic projects. This exercise runs until the end of September 2025, at which point officers will review the submissions before preparing a paper for Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel, likely in January before an options paper for Cabinet the following month. Final proposals would then be presented to Cabinet in mid-2026 with final recommendations.

Consultation undertaken

54. As part of the project scoping exercise to date a number of consultations have been carried out with both District Councillors. Internal consultation has also taken place with officers in the coastal team, health and wellbeing team, economic development team, open spaces, and parking team. Officers are also working with HCC as the highways authority to ensure aspirations and timescales for delivery are known.

Next Steps

55. Officers propose to take concept designs for Lymington, Milford, Ringwood, and Totton for decision by Cabinet (November 2025) and subject to approval, will look to secure the best route to award Detailed Design staged works.
56. Should approval be given to proceed to tender, it is intended that delegated authority be given to officers to undertake and approve the final tenders. Whilst it is important that the town/parish councils for each project are engaged in the decision making for final designs, it will ultimately be a decision for the Council as the accountable body for the CIL.

Financial Implications

57. The monies held to fund these projects is already held by the Council, therefore there would be no direct financial implications to the Council with these schemes already in the financial monitoring plan.

58. Officers are proposing to proceed at pace with these projects which may mean that finances need to be bought forward, but this in part will depend on the tender returns submitted.
59. Utilising the currently allocated £4.5m it is possible to deliver schemes for all five projects with a budget allocation as set out below. However, officers have identified further opportunities for each project for which further funding would be required. Any further funding would be subject to a further decision by Cabinet and made in light of the current EOI being sought by officers.
60. Should the tender returns indicate there is not sufficient funding available at present, officers will look at a number of options to enable delivery to still take place, including introducing/modifying phasing, looking for further grant opportunities from Government and/or town and parishes themselves. This would be alongside reviewing the proposals themselves, before considering whether a further financial ask is needed from held CIL funds.

	Allocated	Additional funds	Additional funding options
Lymington	£1m	£100,000*	£1m
Milford	£1m		£850k
Ringwood	£1m	£505,000**	£1.5m
Totton	£1m		£1m
New Forest	£500k		-
Total	£4.5m	£600,000	£4.35m

*Town funding

**s106 funding (subject to formal allocation)

Legal implications

61. Whenever the Council provides a grant 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. This programme does not offer any grant or subsidy to any party, parish, or town council to consider the subsidy control regime, and it will not be in breach should the decision to continue with this programme.

Risk assessment

62. Key risks associated with the Strategic CIL Programme have been considered and align those recorded on Cabinet report Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework & the use of strategic CIL 2nd October 2024.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

63. 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

64. 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

65. 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

66. 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

67. 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 Landscape by providing a safe trail route.
68. Additionally, with investment in other some of the other projects in the area, such as new and enhanced play parks and enhanced town

centres, this can help to take some visitor pressures from the National Park by providing alternative destinations at times.

Appendices:
None

Background Papers:

Cabinet – 4 October 2023 –
(CIL) Framework for CIL
Expenditure

Cabinet – 2 October 2024 –
Community Infrastructure Levy
Expenditure Framework and the
use of strategic CIL