



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST BRIDGFORD SPECIAL EXPENSES AND COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ADVISORY GROUP
MONDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2023**

Held at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford

and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors D Virdi (Chair), R Mallender, D Polenta, G Wheeler, J Wheeler and L Plant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
S Whittaker	Service Manager - Finance
D Hayden	Communities Manager
J Bate	Team Manager - Planning, Monitoring and Implementation
M Sawyer	Planning Contributions Officer
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors J Chaplain, S Dellar, P Matthews and A Phillips

5 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 November 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

Councillor Plant referred to the meeting scheduled for February 2023 which was cancelled as there was nothing to update the Group at this time regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy.

7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Update

The Planning Contributions Officer delivered a presentation to update the Group on the west Bridgford Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a charge local authorities can apply to new development to help fund infrastructure to support the development of its area.

The Group were advised that a set proportion of CIL (Neighbourhood CIL) collected in the Borough is passed to the Borough Council and can be applied

by the Council to a broader range of projects. In areas without a Town or Parish Council, such as West Bridgford, CIL funds are spent by the Borough Council in consultation with the local community and it is the purpose of the CIL Advisory Group to manage this process for West Bridgford.

As well as the Neighbourhood CIL, a supplemental amount of Strategic CIL is reserved to wards eligible projects covered by the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS).

The Planning Contributions Officer provided a financial update of CIL collected for West Bridgford since the last meeting in November 2022 and advised the Group of the prospective future figures based on granted planning permissions, where known, but were reliant on them being implemented.

The Group were advised of the infrastructure list as follows:

- Provision of Park and Ride along the A52 corridor and bus priority measures in West Bridgford
- Provision of or improvements to playing pitches and ancillary facilities
- Provision of or improvements to indoor leisure provision
- Provision of additional secondary school places across the Borough through new provision or extension to existing provision
- Provision of health facilities across the Borough through new provision or extension to existing provision

The Planning Contributions Officer reminded the Group of the discussions and proposals made at the last meeting in November 2022, whereby Expressions of Interest forms were to be completed by community groups, considered by officers to ensure eligibility for funding, agreed by the CIL Advisory Group in principle and then consulted on by local residents to establish the level of community support. However, the Group were advised that due to lack of response to this exercise and proximity to the election period, the February meeting was deferred.

The Planning Contributions Officer explained that officers have considered how to improve engagement and raise the profile of CIL funding and have taken feedback from the UKSPF procedure and the approach other authorities use of non-parished CIL funding.

The Group were advised that the updated process will look to gather information at an earlier stage, establishing whether there are specific areas local residents want to see improvements to. The Group noted additional information/resources would be available on the Council's website to support groups with Expressions of Interest (EOI) requests. An action timeline for EOI's was provided as follows:

- October 2023 – Readvertise EOI's - seek responses by end of November 2023
- December 2023 – Review EOI's - Officers to consider submitted EOI's and agree a shortlist of projects through the CIL Advisory Group
- January 2024 – Public Consultation - EOI projects published on Council website - 4 week consultation period

- February 2024 – Agree Funding – funding approved by CIL Advisory Group

An ongoing process would continue with EOI publicity each April and October.

The Chairman reminded the Group of a Councillor training session on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and encouraged members to attend.

Councillor J Wheeler expressed his frustration at the convoluted process and suggested a simpler more streamlined approach be considered.

Councillor Plant referred to the previous consultation and lack of response from the local community and asked whether what was being considered at this meeting is any different to what was done previously. She also suggested that ward member involvement might be an option to look at areas in West Bridgford that might benefit from CIL support.

The Planning Contributions Officer explained that the process needs to demonstrate community involvement and community consultations. In respect of the EOI these need to be deliverable and from different demographics across the West Bridgford area. The Team Manager (Planning, Monitoring and Implementation) explained that the process cannot be rushed and adding a meaningful period (4 weeks) for consultation allows residents to comment. In addition, the Group were advised that officers have approached nearby local authorities to ask what they have done.

The Group discussed what the funding could be spent on and what areas of West Bridgford were being looked at. The Group asked for examples of projects and ideas and suggested this be included in the EOI guidance so that community groups wishing to submit an EOI have a clear understanding of how the funding can be spent. In respect of Ward Councillor support it was suggested a list of local community groups be shared and some clear guidance be provided in respect of how the funding can be spent.

It was made clear that officers are not there to submit EOI for community groups. Support and guidance will be made available via the Council's website and media channels.

In concluding the Chair addressed the urgency in which the process needed to happen and suggested an interim meeting or briefing in December for the CIL Advisory Group to be updated on all EOI submissions that have come forward.

8 **West Park Update**

The Group considered and noted the item.

9 **Special Expenses Budget 2024/25**

The Service Manager – Finance delivered a presentation to inform the Group of the West Bridgford Special Expenses Overview and Budget requirements for 2024/25.

The Group noted the provision set out by the LGFA 1992 which covers

expenses incurred on functions that would ordinarily be performed by a parish council for example parks and playing fields, children's play areas and community halls, it also includes the West Bridgford area expenditure and Ruddington and Keyworth cemeteries and includes revenue expenditure and contribution to capital works.

The Group were informed that the Council's budget and Special Expense charge is agreed at Full Council but as part of the capital and budget monitoring it is also monitored by the Corporate Overview Group and Cabinet at their in-year budget update in autumn. The Special Expense charges collected are reviewed against expenditure at year end and any surplus /deficit is held as a notional ring-fenced balance (currently £127k revenue deficit).

The Service Manager – Finance demonstrated the correlation of Council Tax and Special Expenses and why special expenses are included for the purpose of calculating the maximum increase in Council Tax and provided a summary as follows:

- Increase in Special Expenses charges reduces the permissible increase to the Council's Council Tax Band D
- Overall reduction in the Council's receipts
- Not only impacts on current year but each year going forward

With regards to Capital the Group were advised of the annuity charges for historical works completed at a cost to the Council that is then charged to the Special Expenses budget annually. Contribution to capital works covers an in-year costs of planned enhancements to parks and play equipment and the replacement costs to the Hook Skate Park. The Group noted no increase in 2024/25, but in 2025/26 the charge will rise due to Sir Julian Cahn and Edwalton Community facility Annuity charges.

The Group were asked to consider the proposal for the West Bridgford Budget for 2024/25 and noted the draft budget breakdown for Community halls, parks and playing fields and West Bridgford town centre.

With regards to variances the group were advised that there are significant pressures on the Council's budgets including, increasing costs for the activities held in West Bridgford and reduced income and maintenance charges at Council run community halls.

The Group noted there is no increase to annuity charges for 2024/2025 but this is due to rise 2025/26 and onwards. Overall, there will be an increase of £3.26 (5.83%) to West Bridgford residents which the Group were advised was less than current inflation. A historical comparison table was provided from 2017/18 to 2024/25.

The Communities Manager presented the financial details relating to the council's community halls at; Gamston Community Hall, Lutterell Hall and Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion and informed the Group that fees are expected to increase to pre-covid levels from 2023/24 and in the case of Sir Julien Cahn

Pavilion after some minor repairs. However, it was noted that the cost of living crisis had impacted on some of the bookings.

The group were reminded of the West Bridgford events chargeable to special Expenses including, Christmas Lights, Lark in the Park and Taste of Rushcliffe and the increasing costs for delivering these events.

The Group were asked to consider the options of reducing the events and the impact this may have on resident satisfaction and the support these provide to the West Bridgford Economy. Another option is to reduce the number of community facilities or increase fees, however this may impact usage and appetite in the current economic climate.

The Communities Manager advised that a marketing campaign is already under way and officers are looking at other income or expenditure efficiencies. It was also noted that Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) funds could support some capital projects.

The Chairman referred to the key considerations and the cost pressures highlighted by officers and the resulting increase of Council Tax for residents being necessary to deliver quality events that are popular with residents across the Borough.

The Group approved the marketing campaign, particularly in the case for the Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion, where bookings had been reduced due to maintenance and improvements.

The Group questioned the large increase of costs for putting on events and asked whether a more detailed breakdown of costings including staff costs as well as infrastructure costs could have been provided.

With regards to maintenance costs in respect of community halls it was suggested an analysis of charges be explored to see if there were opportunities to optimise savings.

In concluding the Group approved in principle the budget and the £3.26 Council Tax increase. The Officers recommendations were also noted and approved in respect of supporting an improving community hall usage by promoting community facilities, including social media campaigns.

The Director – Finance and Corporate Services reminded the Group that as part of the Council's budget process workshops will be delivered early December 2023 to provide Councillors with a greater understanding of the budget process.

The meeting closed at 5.43 pm.

CHAIR