



**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WEST BRIDGFORD SPECIAL EXPENSES AND COMMUNITY  
INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ADVISORY GROUP  
TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2024**

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

**PRESENT:**

Councillors D Virdi (Chair), J Chaplain, P Gowland, P Matthews, A Phillips, G Wheeler and S Mallender

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
S Whittaker	Assistant Director of 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 S Dellar, R Mallender and J Wheeler

Councillor S Mallender joined the meeting at 5.45pm

**1 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Chaplain and Councillor Gowland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5, Expressions of Interest submission for Abbey Park Community Association.

Councillor Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5, Expressions of Interest submission for Stonepit Wood Scout Campsite.

**2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 March 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were approved.

**3 Special Expenses Budget**

The Head of Finance delivered a presentation on the West Bridgford Special Expenses 2024/25 in-year budget update and the budget for 2025/26.

The Group were provided with an overview that explained the provisions set out by the LGFA 1992 which covers expenses incurred on functions that would ordinarily be performed by a Town or Parish Council, for example: Parks Playing Fields, Children's Play Areas and Community Halls.

The Council's Special Expenses included West Bridgford area and expenditure on Ruddington and Keyworth cemeteries, and also includes revenue expenditure and contributions to capital works.

The Head of Finance provided an in-year update and advised the Group that as at quarter 1 the projected spend was marginally above budget and capital works were underway on various facilities. In addition, the Head of Finance informed the Group that the Devonshire Avenue Bridge annuity and the Edwalton Community Facility had been moved to 2026/27 budget and that the Edwalton Community Facility estimated annuity had increased from £15k to £30k per annum.

The Group were advised that the budget and Special Expense charge is to be agreed at the Full Council meeting in March 2025, but in the meantime is monitored at the Corporate Overview Group and Cabinet as part of the revenue and capital budget monitoring.

An illustration was provided to assist the Group with Council Tax and Special Expense for the purpose of calculating any budget increases.

The Head of Finance explained that annuity charges are historical works completed at a cost to the Council that is then charged to the Special Expenses budget annually. The Head of Finance highlighted the contribution to capital works and the in-year costs of planned enhancement works to parks and play equipment and the replacement cost of the Hook Skate Park. In addition, the Group were informed that in 2025/26 the charge will rise by £34k due to Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion enhancements and Gamston Community Hall and from 2026/27 further increases of £56k mainly due to Edwalton Community Facility annuity. These historical and future annuity charges were illustrated in the presentation to assist the Group.

Councillor Wheeler asked a specific question relating to the progress of works for Julian Cahn Pavilion and the lack of catering/kitchen provision which he highlighted were the main complaints from residents. The Communities Manager advised that the work comprises of a decarbonisation programme replacing the existing heating with a heat pump, some fabrication work to the building and Wifi connectivity, with regards to the kitchen this will be refurbished as a prep kitchen but not a full catering fitout. A planning application is going to Committee on 10 October 2024 and work is due to commence in February 2025 with completion around June 2025.

Comments were made to the Special Expenses annuity charges and the period of time to repay and whether there were similar charges to Town and Parish Council's across the rest of the Borough. The Director for Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Council's Capital Programme covers the rest of the Borough (charged annually as Minimum Revenue Provision) and parishes would charge parish residents separately via the parish precept where

expenditure of this nature is incurred.

The Head of Finance provided commentary on the variances including the significant pressure on budgets, increasing costs for providing the events held in West Bridgford, inflation plus costs to run the new Edwalton Community Facility, annuity charges rising in 25/26 and 26/27 all contributing to an account deficit increase. The Group noted that if there was to be no increase in special expense precept, the Council would need to make savings of £64k

Comments were made around the idea that West Bridgford residents were being charged for the wider Borough as well as the West Bridgford area and suggested why some elements of the events being provided were not paid by residents across the wider Borough. The Chair explained that the West Bridgford area is not a parish and the Special Expense budget, brought to this Group for comment and monitored by the Council is effectively the West Bridgford area budget. With regards to the programme of events the Director for Finance explained these are very successful and benefit the local economy and businesses within the West Bridgford area.

The Communities Manager advised the Group that the Community Development Team are in the process of securing a collaborative agreement with Nottinghamshire County Cricket at West Park which is expected to commence in 26/27. The agreement will see increased cricket facilities at West Park focusing on women's and girl's cricket.

Councillor Wheeler asked what would happen to the smaller clubs already using the facilities at West Park and would the collaboration agreement be able to accommodate them too. The Communities Manager in response explained that officers are working with all clubs on site and with the Council's other facilities at Gresham to create more space and referenced the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy for further information.

The Head of Finance highlighted the pressures and opportunities including pay costs increasing, utilities fuel and other contracts increasing, contracts and material pressures impacting on maintenance and repairs, impact of facility usage on income receipts which are currently ahead for parks and playing fields, however community buildings are down, and chargeable services are not recovering costs. It was noted that the Council need to look for opportunity savings.

The Group were provided with details and cost of the West Bridgford events chargeable to Special Expenses, including the Christmas Lights, Lark in the Park and Taste of Rushcliffe.

The Group were then asked to consider a number of cost saving options such as, reducing the event programme, reducing the number of facilities, increasing fees, increasing demand and the further use of CIL to fund some of the Capital projects.

Councillor Matthews commented on the annuity charges and the lifetime of a given asset and how long before further costs are necessary for repairs or refurbishment giving rise to further annuity increases. The Director for Finance

and Corporate Services advised that annuity maintenance is unlikely to go away unless the Council were to dispose of its community assets.

Comments were raised on the rising costs of the Christmas lights event and whether savings could be considered here, for example remove the fireworks or reducing the number of lights.

Councillor Gowland suggested better use of Bridgford Field particularly in easing pressure from football parking. The Communities Manager explained that although improvements had been made at the entrance to the field the field is not suitable for vehicular traffic during the winter months and building anything more permanent would be a challenge.

Comments were made on the occupancy rates of some of the community facilities, whether the booking system was outdated and what opportunities had been explored to increase footfall. The Communities Manager advised that a new booking system was in operation across all facilities and in particular the playing pitches had seen an increase in usage with users having to pay by card on-line in advance of the booking. In respect of the community buildings this has been less encouraging, with smaller clubs or voluntary organisations often requesting discounted rates.

In concluding the Group were advised that there would be two budget sessions scheduled in November/December which all Councillors are encouraged to attend.

The Group noted the overall increase of £4.10 (8p per week), which will be considered by Cabinet and then by Full Council in March 2025.

#### **4      Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Expressions of Interest for the Group to Consider**

The Group were reminded that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge Local Authorities can apply to new developments to help fund infrastructure to support development of an area.

The bulk of CIL funds go towards strategic items as set out in the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement, for example Education, Health and Community Facilities.

A set proportion of CIL (Neighbourhood CIL 15%) collected in an area is passed to the local Town/Parish Council for that area and can be applied to a broader range of community projects. In an area without a Town/Parish Council, as in the case of West Bridgford, the CIL funds are spent by the Borough Council in consultation with the local community.

As well as this Neighbourhood CIL, a supplementary amount of Strategic CIL (10%) is also reserved towards eligible projects covered by the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement.

The Group were advised of the current funding available totalling £111,800.00, which included the 10% element of Strategic CIL as outlined above.

The Group were then asked to consider and comment on eight Expressions of Interest for projects that had been submitted. These were discussed as follows:

### **Abbey Park Community Association – Adult Gym Equipment**

The Group were advised that S106 funding is available for this project and therefore CIL funding was no longer applicable.

The Group were advised that the Communities Team would seek S106 funding from the former depot site development to fund this project.

The application was rejected.

### **Regatta Way Sports Club – Clubhouse Refurbishment**

The Group were advised that S106 funding is available for the investment in new playing pitches, but appropriate facilities would be required to match this investment. The Group were concerned that the funding submission related more to ongoing maintenance expenses rather than supporting a particular community group.

The application was rejected.

### **Lady Bay Arts – Organisation Development and Workshops**

The Group were concerned about some aspects of the funding submission highlighting that elements of the submission related to room hire and artist fees which was difficult to quantify in respect of the project's delivery and outcomes.

The Group felt that more details were required around in respect of partnership organisations which may already be benefitting from past CIL funding.

The Group proposed the application be forwarded for community consultation with a partial award of the full project cost.

### **Lady Bay Tennis Club – Security Gates, Storage, etc.**

The Group were mindful that this application sought for improved security provision to ensure compliance with child safety/security requirements.

The Group approved the application for community consultation.

### **Breathe Balance Be – Breathwork for Wellbeing Workshops**

The Group noted this is an established community group and requested that

more information be sought with regards to the social prescribing element of the project which had already benefited from CIL funding.

The Group approved the application for community consultation.

### **Music for Everyone – Open Voice Project**

The Group noted this is an established community group seeking funding for ongoing operation, whilst the bid suggested this was to cover increased running costs the bid seems to be for the full running costs of the Group for 3 years rather than to address the shortfall. The Group requested more information be sought and proposed to fund the project in part.

The Group approved the application for community consultation

### **Positively Mindful – Community Outreach Courses**

The Group noted this is an established community group and requested that more information be sought with regards to the social prescribing element of the project which had already benefited from CIL funding.

The Group approved the application for community consultation.

### **Rushcliffe District Scouts – Tree Work**

The Group were mindful that the campsite was located outside of West Bridgford, but that the campsite was widely used by all scouting groups including those in West Bridgford. The Group approved the felling of unsafe trees with a provision for additional funding to cover the cost of replacing the trees and requested evidence that West Bridgford scouting groups used the facility and would therefore benefit from the project.

The Group approved the application for community consultation.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services requested that clearer guidance is provided at this initial Expressions of Interest stage of the funding process to make it clear what can and cannot be funded. The Chair suggested that the criteria for submissions be shared with the Group going forward.

The Chair asked a specific question relating to future funding and the likelihood of CIL funding applications being oversubscribed, adding that the criteria and supporting information for each applications needs to be clearer and more robust.

Ultimately where a funding round is oversubscribed it will be for the Group to determine what eligible projects are funded and which are not. It is not possible to advise in advance what approach might seem most reasonable under whatever specific circumstances prevail at the time of such a situation.

The Group were advised that consultation would commence within the next couple of weeks and further details would be reported back to the Group by email.

The meeting closed at 6.12 pm.

CHAIR