

**Meeting date:** 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
**Report to:** Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities



**Subject/report title:** Summary and Assessment of Bids for funding to the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy  
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**Wards affected:**

- All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  
 Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  
 Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith's Wood |  St Alphege

**Public/private report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue of paragraph:** Select an Exemption paragraph from the Quick Parts drop-down list

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**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To agree the allocation of Neighbourhood CIL funding.

**2. Decision(s) recommended**

2.1 To agree the allocation of the Neighbourhood CIL funds as set out in paragraph 5 of this report.

**3. Matters for Consideration**

3.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in 2010 as a more transparent, flexible and fairer way of raising developer contributions as part of the planning process. It is a tariff based planning charge levied on new development by local authorities to fund infrastructure, to support the development in their area.

3.2 The level of CIL contribution is set by the local authority based on the needs identified through infrastructure planning, but is also tested to ensure that it will not affect the overall viability of the application. Solihull's levy rates are set out in an adopted Charging Schedule, which was approved by Full Council on 12th April 2016, with the levy being applied to applicable planning approvals from 4th July 2016.

- 3.3 Once funds have been received, 15%<sup>1</sup> is apportioned to either a parish fund (if the development was undertaken within a parished area) or a ward fund (if the development is undertaken within an unparished area). In parished areas the monies are paid directly to the parish council and they are responsible for spending or allocating the levy. Where there is no parish council to manage the funding, the responsibility lies with the Council as the Collecting Authority.
- 3.4 This report addresses the process to be followed for allocating the neighbourhood proportion of CIL in non-parished areas.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Proportion of the levy in a non-parished area is expected to be used to fund:
- (a) The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
  - (b) Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.
- 4.2 The charging authority should engage with the communities where development has taken place and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding.
- 4.3 2019 was the first year that the NCIL bidding process was carried out. In November 2019 projects were presented to Scrutiny Board and then recommended for approval to the Cabinet Member. Recommendations have been carried forward for the scoring of bids this year.
- 4.4 2020 is the second year that funding will be allocated to communities in unparished areas. The process will continue to be carried out as an annual cycle as follows:
- (a) April – CIL receipts for the previous financial year are analysed to determine how much funding is available in each ward
  - (b) May/June – Publicity and communication to inform communities of what funding is available.
  - (c) July/August – Funding bids are submitted to the Council.
  - (d) September/October – Bids are assessed against an agreed framework (as approved in March 2020).
  - (e) November/December – the Cabinet Member agrees allocation of funds.
  - (f) December – Outcome is incorporated into the Infrastructure Funding Statement (produced annually).

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<sup>1</sup> This local proportion is increased to 25% if the CIL liable development takes place within an area covered by a neighbourhood plan.

- 4.5 Any monies not spent in one year will be rolled over into the next funding year.
- 4.6 In 2020 there is £359,085 available for bidding, £128,044 of which was 'rolled over from 2019. The total sum available is split into the following wards<sup>2</sup>:
- (a) Dorridge and Hockley Heath - £41,960
  - (b) Knowle - £55,122
  - (c) Olton - £42,554
  - (d) Shirley East - £69,866
  - (e) Shirley South - £42,580
  - (f) Shirley West - £25,827
  - (g) Silhill - £49,403
  - (h) St Alphege - £31,773
- 4.7 Following consultation with Members, at Stronger Communities and Partnerships Cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the scoring matrix and bidding process was agreed. A further review was carried out following the funding allocations in 2019 in March 2020. This review aimed to resolve the issues that were faced in Neighbourhood CIL's initial round of bidding. A summary of the current scoring matrix and guidance is provided in Appendix A.
- 4.8 Following publicity and communication 26 bids were received by the 15th September 2020 deadline:

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<sup>2</sup> Ward pots are 'opened up' for bids if they have more than £10,000 available.

Reference	Group	Project	Amount
NCIL/20/0001/SW	Shirley Parish Parochial Church Council	Back yard refurbishment to outdoor room	£2,000
NCIL/20/0002/OLT	Kineton Green Parent Teacher Association	Toilet refurbishment for Kineton Green Primary School	£40,665 (or £8,133 per toilet)
NCIL/20/0003/SW	The Shirley Institute	Upgrading/replacing of windows	£12,695.00
NCIL/20/0004/STA	Solihull Wheels For All (SWFA)	Cycle upgrading for those with limited mobility	£10,000
NCIL/20/0005/DHH	Dorridge Scout Group	Dorridge Scout Hut Car Park resurfacing	£7,500
NCIL/20/0006/SE	Shirley Old People's Welfare Committee Limited (Elizabeth House)	Extend dining room at Elizabeth House care home	£20,000
NCIL/20/0007/SE	Shirley Old People's Welfare Committee Limited (Elizabeth House)	Extend dining room at Elizabeth House care home	£10,000
NCIL/20/0008/SW	Shirley Parish Parochial Church Council	Recovery from Lockdown Inc. computer skills club	£2,700
NCIL/20/0009/OLT	The Olton Project	Landscaping of site's outdoor space	£12,858
NCIL/20/0010/KNO	Knowle Allotments Society	Knowle Allotments Security Fencing	£3,000
NCIL/20/0011/DHH	Dorridge & District Residents' Association (DDRA)	A Path for Bentley Heath Park	£12,865
NCIL/20/0012/STA	Solihull BID	Community Seating Hub – greener spaces for all	£30,000
NCIL/20/0013/SW	Friends of Green Lane Park	Green Lane Park Development Project - enhancing of green space	£13,330
NCIL/20/0014/OLT	Solihull Round Table	Langley Hall Park Natural Play Area	£5,000
NCIL/20/0015/OLT	Olton Friary R.C Church	Tree trimming and pruning on church grounds	£1,800
NCIL/20/0016/SE	SMBC Jacey Park	Jacey Park – Increasing Access to Nature	£8,000
NCIL/20/0017/OLT	Moseley Cricket Club	Moseley Cricket club infrastructure refurbishment (roof & security external doors)	£9,640
NCIL/20/0018/KNO	Visit Knowle	Central Knowle Improvement Plan 2020-21	£17,500
NCIL/20/0019/OLT	Langley School	Provision of a covered, outdoor seating area	£14,000
NCIL/20/0020/KNO	The Knowle Society	#LoveKnowle Park - renovation of park play equipment	£35,000
NCIL/20/0021/DHH	St Phillip's Church	The New St Philips Church & Community Centre	£37,000

NCIL/20/0022/SE	SMBC Public Realm Shirley High Street	Shirley High Street – Using Green infrastructure to Improve the Public Realm	£10,000
NCIL/20/0023/SIL	Greswold Primary School	Greswold Primary School Community Access Project	£5,000
NCIL/20/0024/OLT	Olton Mere Sailing Club	Pontoon Floatation Replacement	£15,895
NCIL/20/0025/OLT	Moseley Cricket Club	Moseley Cricket club - Cricket net refurbishment	£17,070
NCIL/20/0026/OLT	Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School	Forest School installation	£10,000
			£322,853

4.9 Each project bid was assessed against the agreed scoring matrix so that:

- (a) It could be determined whether the bid reached the minimum criteria; and
- (b) In the event that there is insufficient funds within a ward pot to fund all the projects, that the projects could be prioritised based on the scoring matrix.

4.10 Each application's assessment and score is detailed in Appendix B.

## 5. Proposed allocations

5.1 Using scores from the approved matrix, the following 13 bids are recommended for approval and funding:

- Dorridge & District Residents' Association (DDRA) - A Path for Bentley Heath Park (£12,865)
- The Knowle Society - #LoveKnowle Park (£35,000)
- Olton Mere Sailing Club - Pontoon Floatation Replacement (£15,895)
- Langley School - Provision of a covered, outdoor seating area (£14,000)
- SMBC Public Realm Shirley High Street Shirley High Street – Using Green infrastructure to Improve the Public Realm (£10,000)
- SMBC Public Realm Jacey Park - Jacey Park: Increasing Access to Nature (£8,000)
- Friends of Green Lane Park - Green Lane Park Development Project: enhancement of green space (£13,330)
- Shirley Parish Parochial Church Council - Recovery from Lockdown: including computer skills club & technology to reduce isolation (£2,700)
- Shirley Parish Parochial Church Council - Back yard refurbishment to outdoor room (£2,000)

- Greswold Primary School - Greswold Primary School Community Access Project (£5,000)
- Solihull BID - Community Seating Hub: greener spaces for all (£30,000)
- Shirley Institute (Upgrading/replacing of windows £12,695)<sup>3</sup>
- Visit Knowle (Central Knowle Improvement Plan 2020-21 £17,000)<sup>4</sup>

5.2 A total of £178,485 is recommended for allocation this year. Following allocation of funds, £180,600 would remain and will 'roll over' into the accumulating pots for bidding in 2021.

5.3 A summary of the scores of each project by ward and in priority order is set out in Appendix C.

## **6. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**

6.1 The options as to how the Neighbourhood Proportion of CIL would be allocated were considered by Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities and Partnerships in January 2019. Despite this, and following the scoring assessments of the bids received, a number of options still remain:

- (a) The option to fund projects with poor project plans. This includes projects that are not fully costed, or do not provide evidence of costing, as well as those that have not identified underlying risks associated with carrying out the project.
- (b) In respect of the above, and in line with the updated and scoring matrix approved in March 2020, some bids have not met the initial screening questions by not providing quotes/shown how the project would be deliverable. There is an option to invite those projects that would be deemed 'appropriate' back to add costings and quotes to their application and secure funding from the 2020 pots.
- (c) The option to part fund a project from two ward pots where the project serves the wider community. In this particular instance, the Shirley Institute project (NCIL/20/0003/SW) has been proposed to be funded from both the Shirley West ward and the Shirley South ward, as this project would serve both ward communities. This option was raised and supported by all Councillors from Shirley West and Shirley South. An option would be to use the remainder of the funds from the Shirley West ward (£7,827.14) and 'top up' the remaining cost from the Shirley South ward (£4,867.86).
- (d) There may be occasions that there are more appropriate sources of funding within the Council. In addition where funding could not be (fully) secured through

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<sup>3</sup> Proposed to be funded by Shirley West funds and Shirley South funds. This option is considered in section 6.1c & 7.2.c.

<sup>4</sup> Visit Knowle reduced their project cost shortly after the deadline for bids. The reduced bid now amounts to £17,000, a reduction of £500. This revision to costing was supported by quotes and project plans, which the project previously lacked. It is therefore proposed that the project is included as it meets the approved criteria and scores highly.

the Neighbourhood CIL fund, it may be appropriate that these other sources of funding should be pursued.

## **7. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

7.1 The bids recommended for approval were assessed in accordance with the approved scoring matrix, which ensures the ranking of preferred bids is supported by evidence provided in application forms. This seeks to ensure that the scoring of bids is open and transparent; with robust reasoning behind preferred options for funding.

7.2 In relation to the options noted above, the following is recommended:

(a) To only fund projects that are fully costed and have robust plans will result in the spending of Neighbourhood CIL funds in an inappropriate manner, with a lower likelihood of needing to reclaim funds if not spent appropriately. By not funding those bids with less established project plans, the funding pot can accumulate further, allowing bidders to reapply next year and to allow other (and perhaps more appropriate) projects to be developed.

(b) To invite those projects that have acceptable and appropriate projects, but lacked substantial plans and quotes is recommended. This would allow those projects that have not been able to seek quotes in time, or may have been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic to re-evaluate their applications. In light of this, it is proposed that the following projects that meet all other parts of the criteria will be reviewed in the New Year by the Cabinet Member when they have had the opportunity to fully cost their project:

- Knowle Allotment Society (Knowle Allotments Security Fencing £3,000)
- Solihull Round Table (Langley Hall Park Natural Play Area £5,000)
- Shirley Old People's Welfare Committee Limited (Extend dining room at Elizabeth House care home £20,000)
- Shirley Old People's Welfare Committee Limited (Extend dining room at Elizabeth House care home £10,000)
- Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School (Forest School installation £10,000)

The above proposal would see highest scoring, fully costed bids (as noted in Section 5.1) to come forward, but to also allow other projects the further opportunity to bid for funds where there are funds remaining in 2020. The above bids would be scored against the same criteria, and will be allocated on the same basis as all other bids.

This will not seek to disadvantage those groups that have met the criteria by the deadline, with fully costed bids, but to allow some leniency to account for any disadvantage that the groups may have faced in 2020. The above bids will only be allocated if they score highly enough in relation to the other bids in their ward. The bids will be presented in a further report in the New Year 2021.

- (c) The option to part fund a project from two ward pots. In this particular instance, and given the location of the project in the heart of Shirley (sitting close to ward boundaries). The Shirley Institute serves both Shirley West and Shirley South communities.

In future, this option would be assessed on a case by case basis and will not apply to all bids. If bids are to be funded from neighbouring wards, evidence of the benefit to ward communities would need to be demonstrated (i.e. by location of the project, evidence of those who use the service).

- (d) There may be occasions that there are more appropriate sources of funding within the Council. In addition where funding could not be (fully) secured through the Neighbourhood CIL fund, it may be appropriate that these other sources of funding should be pursued. A joined up approach to funding community projects is being pursued, where officers who oversee funding opportunities within SMBC can meet to discuss potential projects on a regular basis. This would form a funding allocation support group. This would address any issues where projects may not be appropriate for NCIL funding, but may benefit from support from elsewhere.

## 8. Implications and Considerations

8.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revitalising our towns and local centres.</li> <li>2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2.</li> <li>3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing.</li> </ol>	Not applicable
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment.</li> <li>5. Improve Solihull's air quality.</li> <li>6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions.</li> </ol>	A proportion of the projects that have been recommended for funding have the ability to deliver enhancements the natural environment at a community level.
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>8. Enable communities to thrive.</li> </ol>	<p>Helping to contribute positively towards the mitigation of the impacts of new development in the Borough.</p> <p>Creating the conditions for communities to thrive and allowing to enabling communities</p>



9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs.	to be more self-reliant and working together in local areas to solve problems.
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## 8.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 8.2.1 As part of the assessment of bids, those seeking funds are encouraged to indicate what support projects have in the community and/or are supported by Members. This process has helped officers in the decision making process, whilst providing challenge to the effectiveness and deliverability of some projects that have been proposed.
- 8.2.2 As part of the process, the Knowle, Dorrige and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum were consulted and asked to comment on the bids that lie within the Neighbourhood Plan area. This was specifically to comment on whether and to what extent the bids address any infrastructure priorities identified in the adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 8.2.3 The submitted bids were reported to Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood services Scrutiny Board on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Members commented as follows:
- (a) That the draft allocations for the 2020 round of Neighbourhood CIL funding be supported.
  - (b) That further work be undertaken by Officers to aid the completion of the further incomplete funding applications be carried out and reviewed in the New Year.
  - (c) That the Cabinet Member exercises discretion, in consultation with Officers, to make any refinements to the funding allocations as deemed necessary in advance of her Cabinet Decision Session.
  - (d) That Officers continue their work to strengthen the awareness of NCIL funding within local communities.

## 8.3 Financial implications:

- 8.3.1 Up to 5% of funds collected via the levy can be retained by the Charging Authority to recover the cost of the administration and management of the levy. The costs associated with engagement work with communities, scoring of bids and writing of reports will be recovered by the administration proportion of CIL.

## 8.4 Legal implications:

- 8.4.1 Regulation 59A-59C of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 details the Council's responsibility for spending of the neighbourhood proportion of CIL. The preferred option will ensure that the Council allocates funding appropriately and meets its obligations under the Regulations.

## 8.5 Risk implications:

8.5.1 Without the appropriate spending of the levy, the Council will not be undertaking its statutory duty as a charging authority to spend funds in conjunction with communities.

## 8.6 Equality implications:

8.6.1 As part for the review of the process for allocating the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy in non-parished areas a Fair Treatment Assessment has been carried out.

8.6.2 One of the advantages of NCIL allocations being delegated to the Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities is that it helps set this opportunity in the wider context of funding availability from other sources administered through this portfolio. This allows bids and/or bidders to be redirected towards opportunities that may be more appropriate for that individual project.

8.6.3 In some wards that lie in the North of the Solihull where NCIL in non-parished will not be available due to a zero levy, it is especially import that additional targeting of other sources of funding is carried out.

8.6.4 Overall it is considered that NCIL should benefit communities within the borough, however it will be important to continuingly review process for allocating the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy in non-parished areas over the coming years.

## 9. List of appendices referred to

9.1 Appendix A – Scoring Matrix and Guidance

9.2 Appendix B – Individual Project Scores

9.3 Appendix C – Summary of Scores

## 10. Background papers used to compile this report

10.1 Report to Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities and Partnerships – Spending Mechanism for Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

10.2 Report to Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities - Summary and Assessment of Bids for funding to the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy, 25th November 2019.

## 11. List of other relevant documents

11.1 None