

Meeting date: 14th April 2021
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:

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To agree the allocation of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 To agree the allocation of the NCIL funds as set out in paragraph 3.9 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 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. It is also tested to ensure that it will not affect the overall viability of the development. Solihull's levy rates are set out in an adopted Charging Schedule, 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%¹ 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, the responsibility lies with the council as the Collecting Authority.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The charging authority should engage with the communities where development has taken place and agree how best to spend the neighbourhood funding.
- 3.6 In November 2019, projects were presented to the Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board and then recommended for approval to the Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities. Recommendations have been carried forward for the scoring of bids this year.
- 3.7 Following consultation with Members, at the Stronger Communities and Partnerships Cabinet meeting on the 30th January 2019, the scoring matrix and bidding process were agreed. In March 2020, a review was carried out following the funding allocations made in 2019. 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.
- 3.8 In September 2020, following publicity and communication, 26 bids were received for the new round of funding. Of those, 13 bids were allocated funding (£178,485 out of a possible £359,085).
- 3.9 A number of the bids received did not pass the initial screening questions as robust project plans and quotes were not provided. However, the bids were considered to be good, community-based projects that may benefit from NCIL funding. On that basis, following the allocation of funds in December 2020, it was agreed at the Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities decision session that some bids would be invited to provide further information to support the assessment of their project. Of the five bids invited to resubmit information, the following accepted the opportunity to return:
- Knowle Allotment Society (Knowle Allotments Security Fencing £3,000)
 - Solihull Round Table (Langley Hall Park Natural Play Area £5,000)

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

- Shirley Old People’s Welfare Committee Limited (Extend dining room at Elizabeth House care home £20,000)

3.10 Proposed allocations:

- 3.11 Of the 3 bids that returned with updated information, and using the scores from the approved matrix, all are recommended for approval and funding.
- 3.12 A summary of the scores for each project is set out in Appendix C. A breakdown of the assessments and scores for each application are detailed in Appendix B.

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

- 4.1 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. Following the assessment of bids using the approved scoring matrix, the following options still remain:
- (a) To fund the bids that were resubmitted this year. This is the preferred option.
 - (b) To follow the original timetable (bids received in the Summer, allocated in Autumn/Winter) therefore deferring the awarding of these funds until later in 2021.
 - (c) Where funding cannot be (fully) secured through the Neighbourhood CIL fund, it may be appropriate that these other sources of funding should be pursued.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 As the bidding process in 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is considered appropriate to fund the 3 bids assessed at this time, rather than the date originally envisaged.

6. Implications and Considerations

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

Priority:	Contribution:
Economy: 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2.	There is no significant impact arising from the projects recommended for approval in this report.

<p>3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing.</p>	
<p>Environment:</p> <p>4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment.</p> <p>5. Improve Solihull's air quality.</p> <p>6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions.</p>	<p>A proportion of the projects recommended for funding have the ability to deliver enhancements the natural environment at a community level.</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <p>7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>8. Enable communities to thrive.</p> <p>9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs.</p>	<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 to be more self-reliant and working together in local areas to solve problems.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 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.

6.2.2 As part of the process, the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum were consulted and asked to comment on the bids that lie within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The KDBH Neighbourhood Forum's response is incorporated into the scores for bids in the Knowle and Dorridge ward pots.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 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.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 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.

6.5 Risk implications:

6.5.1 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.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 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.

6.6.2 An advantage 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.

6.6.3 In some wards in the north of Solihull, where NCIL in non-parished, funding is not available due to a zero levy, it is especially important that additional targeting of other sources of funding is carried out.

6.6.4 Overall, NCIL should benefit communities within the borough, however, it will be important to continue to review the process for allocating the NCIL in non-parished areas over the coming years.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Scoring Matrix and Guidance

7.2 Appendix B – Individual Project Scores

7.3 Appendix C – Summary of Scores

8. Background papers used to compile this report

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

8.2 Report to Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities and Partnerships – Summary and Assessment of Bids for funding to the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy, 10th December 2020.

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None