

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Panel

Minutes

18 June 2025

In attendance:

Councillors:

Glenn Andrews, Barbara Clark (Chair), Ashleigh Davies, Tony Oliver and Jackie Chelin

Also in attendance:

Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community & Economic Development) and Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships)

1 Election of Chair

Councillor Clarke was elected as Chair when the Panel met to consider the applications on 04 June.

2 Welcome and introductions

The Chair introduced herself and welcomed everybody to the meeting.

3 Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Andrews, as an employee of the Everyman Theatre, one of the applicants;
- Councillor Davies, as ward councillor for St Paul's, where some of the applications are based.

4 Background and process for assessing the applications

The Chair said that this year, the Panel has £120k to distribute across unparished areas, and was delighted to have received 28 bids, totalling £257k, demonstrating the great ambition from local community organisations.

She said this funding is only available to projects in non-parished areas, with a focus on supporting community-led projects with economic, social or environmental objectives. These should deliver publicly-accessible physical improvements which address the demands that development places on a local area, and include a contribution to Carbon Net Zero.

The Panel had devised an assessment process to ensure the proposed allocations were made as fairly as possible – thanks to officers who worked hard to make the process easier – which comprised five screening questions, with the following five criteria, scored separately by individual Members:

- how well has the applicant set out that the project can deliver publicly accessible physical improvements and address the impact of development on the local area, and that the applicant can measure the success of the project?
- how well has the applicant set out the reasons why the project is needed by the community?
- can the project be realistically delivered within the next 12-18 months?
- how well does the project contribute to Cheltenham Net Zero?
- does the project represent good value for money and are the benefits of the projects sustainable beyond the end of the grant funding?

After scoring each project separately, Members of the Panel joined together on 04 June to review scores and come up with a draft list of recommendations (Appendix 3).

The Chair said the purpose of this evening's meeting was to confirm the recommendations before they are passed to Cabinet to sign off at its meeting on 15 July, and whilst acknowledging that it is sad that not every applicant could receive funding on this occasion, said this is an ongoing process, and there will be more money and meetings in future, for which unsuccessful applicants are welcome to reapply - some projects are valid and may be more appropriate for next year.

5 Assessment of the applications

The Chair proceeded to work through Appendix 3, the summary of CIL applications, describing briefly the projects, how much was requested, and the Panel's conclusion on each. She invited Members to comment further if they wished.

Regarding Project 25, Councillor Oliver said the funding request from the Pilley Footbridge Action Group was purely for investigative work to see whether the costs of repairing bridge are viable. He supported the Panel's conclusion.

The Chair noted that some applications were not very detailed, and suggested they might have stood a better chance of receiving funding if more information had been provided.

6 Recommendations to Cabinet

By a show of hands, Members voted unanimously to support the following recommendations:

- 1. To endorse the recommendations as set out in Appendix 3 as the priority list of neighbourhood projects for investment and submit these recommendations to Cabinet for approval;**
- 2. To support the intention to launch future funding rounds as and when the neighbourhood Community Infrastructure fund has built up to a sufficient level;**
- 3. To review the process used this year and build any best practice into future bidding rounds.**