

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cheltenham Community Infrastructure Levy – Neighbourhood Panel

18 June 2025

Recommended allocations of neighbourhood CIL funds

Accountable member:

Councillor Mike Collins, Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control

Accountable officer:

Tracey Birkinshaw, Director of Communities and Economic Development

Ward(s) affected:

Non-parished areas

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

In December 2022, Cabinet agreed to establish a Cheltenham Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Neighbourhood Panel which would provide a process for the allocation of neighbourhood CIL funds held on behalf of the non-parished areas (areas without a parish council) of Cheltenham.

The first funding round took place in 2023 and £128,355 was allocated to 16 projects.

Neighbourhood CIL receipts for the non-parished areas have now built up to create a new pot for 2025 of £119,839.02.

In March 2025, the council went live with a new bidding round. Not-for-profit organisations with a formal constitution including voluntary and community sector groups, social enterprises, councils and other public sector organisations and

schools across non-parished areas were invited to apply for neighbourhood CIL funding for projects with an economic, social or environmental objective which deliver publicly accessible physical improvements and address the demands that development places on the local area, including contributing to carbon net zero.

The bidding round closed on 19 May 2025 and a total of 28 applications were received, requesting a total of £257,361 in funding.

The five members of the CIL Neighbourhood Panel met informally to assess the applications and to make preliminary recommendations which are now the basis of this report and are set out in **Appendix 3**

This report seeks formal endorsement from the CIL Neighbourhood Panel to agree these recommendations on priority projects ahead of the Cabinet on 15 July when the final decisions on neighbourhood CIL awards will be made.

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.**

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Contributions from developers are and will be held in a holding account and used to fund neighbourhood infrastructure when required. As at 22 May 2025, £119,839.02 was available for unparished areas.

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets (Deputy Section 151 Officer), gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

Regulation 59F of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 provides that where all or part of a chargeable development is in an area which is unparished,

those CIL receipts that would have been otherwise passed to a Parish Council may be used by a charging authority to support the development of that part of the charging authority's area that is not within the area of a local council.

The law does not prescribe a specific process for agreeing how the neighbourhood portion should be spent, but the national Planning Practice Guide states that in cases where the charging authority will retain the neighbourhood portion, the charging authority should engage with the communities where development has taken place using existing community consultation and engagement processes and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding.

Further that, charging authorities should set out clearly and transparently their approach to engaging with neighbourhood, with consultation at the neighbourhood level proportionate to the level of levy receipts and scale of the proposed development to which the neighbourhood funding relates.

Signed off by: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

As part of the application process, all applicants were required to detail in their application how their project will help to mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change and one of the 5 criteria that applications were scored on was how well the project contributes to Cheltenham net zero. Applicants for projects applying for £10,000 or more were also required to submit a climate change impact assessment. 6 organisations have submitted assessments which show how well the projects will support the council's climate impact ambitions.

A summary of the environmental and climate change implications for the projects awarded funding will be included in the cabinet report.

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham #netzero by 2030
- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity

The recommendations regarding the Cheltenham Neighbourhood Panel will also support the council deliver its statutory function as Local Planning Authority.

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

The recommendations as set out in **Appendix 3**, if agreed by Cabinet, will see funding awarded to a number of organisations. Each of the grant recipients will manage the funding in line with their own equality and diversity policies.

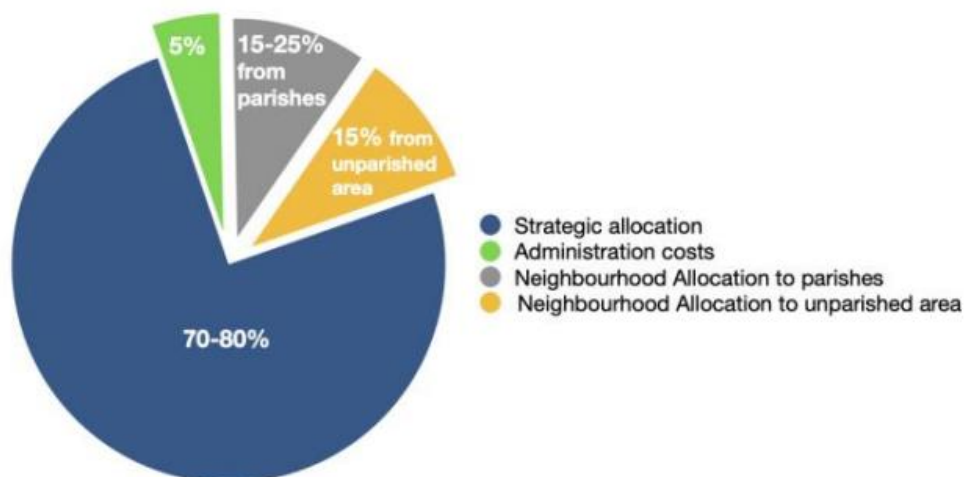
The panel have been mindful to ensure that there is a fair distribution of funding across the non-parished areas and a map of the recommendations is attached as **Appendix 4**.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

The activities of the Cheltenham CIL Neighbourhood Panel will be reviewed by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which local authorities can place on developers to help fund infrastructure needed to support new development in their areas. CIL is governed by the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). Under these Regulations, Cheltenham Borough Council is a CIL charging authority and approved the introduction of CIL October 2018 with the commencement of charging on planning applications granted permission on or after 1st January 2019.
- 2.2** Since 2019, the CIL pot has been slowly growing and values received reported annually via the councils statutory Infrastructure Funding Statement, submitted to government at the end of each year.
- 2.3** In line with CIL regulations, CIL is allocated along the following split.



2.4 This report relates to the Neighbourhood Allocation to ***non-parished areas*** as highlighted in the orange segment in the diagram above. Where funding relates to parish councils, the council transfers this direct to the relevant body. However, where there is no parish council then the council retains this element to be spent on relevant neighbourhood projects.

2.5 As detailed in the summary, the council allocated £128,355 in neighbourhood CIL funding in 2023 and this report relates to the allocation of the second round of funding in 2025.

3. Governance Arrangements – The Neighbourhood Allocation

3.1 One of the purposes of CIL is to encourage communities to support development and recognise that development can bring clear and identifiable benefits to an area. The CIL Regulations provide that a proportion of CIL collected from areas may be spent to address “the demands that development places” on a local area. In respect of the non-parished element of the Neighbourhood Allocation, the council should seek to address the demands that development approved places on that area.

3.2 This does not preclude investment from this neighbourhood allocation within a parished area, but it must be on an exception basis and clearly bring demonstrable benefit to the non-parished areas.

3.3 There is some flexibility on the use of the Neighbourhood Allocation, provided it supports:

- The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area

3.4 In December 2022, Cabinet agreed to establish the Cheltenham CIL – Neighbourhood Panel which would provide a process for the allocation of CIL funds to priority community-based projects in line with the terms of reference for the panel.

3.5 The first funding round took place in 2023 and £128,355 was allocated to 16 projects.

3.6 In March 2025, the council went live with a new bidding round. Not-for-profit organisations with a formal constitution including voluntary and community sector groups, social enterprises, councils and other public sector organisations and schools across non-parished areas were invited to apply for neighbourhood CIL funding for projects with an economic, social or environmental objective which deliver publicly accessible physical

improvements and address the demands that development places on the local area, including contributing to carbon net zero.

- 3.7 Information was provided on the council's website, with a link to apply online via Microsoft Forms. An information session for applicants was also held on 9th April and a presentation on the fund made to the VCS Forum.
- 3.8 The bidding round closed on 19 May 2025 and a total of 28 applications were received, requesting a total of £257,361 in funding.
- 3.9 The five members of the CIL Neighbourhood Panel met informally to assess the applications, scoring them against the criteria in the application guidelines and have made the preliminary recommendations as set out in **Appendix 3**.
- 3.10 The application and assessment process for 2025 will be reviewed to inform future bidding rounds.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The panel recommendations will be presented to Cabinet on 15 July for review and final decision-making on the awards to be made from the Cheltenham CIL neighbourhood fund.
- 4.2 Once decisions are made about the level of funding for each project, a grant agreement will be entered into with each party, which will include relevant monitoring arrangements.

5. Key risks

- 5.1 There are two key risks identified in the risk assessment in **Appendix 1**:

- Potential misuse of the grant
 - If a grant recipient becomes insolvent or winds up before the grant is used
-

Report author:

Helen Down, Participation and Engagement Lead
helen.down@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

- 1. Risk Assessment
- 2. Equality Impact Assessment
- 3. Recommended allocations for neighbourhood CIL
- 4. Map of recommended allocations

Background information:

[Cabinet – 20th December 2022: Cheltenham Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Panel](#)

[Cheltenham Neighbourhood CIL call for projects](#)

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

| Risk ref | Risk description | Risk owner | Impact score (1-5) | Likelihood score (1-5) | Initial raw risk score (1 - 25) | Risk response | Controls / Mitigating actions | Control / Action owner | Deadline for controls/ actions |
|----------|---|------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Potential misuse of the grant | Helen Down | 3 | 2 | 6 | Reduce | Ensure due diligence has been undertaken with each provider. | Helen Down | 31.3.24 |
| | If a grant recipient becomes insolvent or winds up before the grant is used | Helen Down | 3 | 2 | 6 | Reduce | <p>Endeavour to pay out funds in arrears to minimise financial risk to the council.</p> <p>Ensure due diligence has been undertaken with each provider.</p> | Helen Down | 31.3.24 |

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening – to be included in all Cabinet and Council reports)

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

| | |
|---|---|
| Officer responsible: Helen Down | Service Area: Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships |
| Title: Participation and Engagement Team Leader | Date of assessment: 22.5.25 |
| Signature: H Down | |

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Choose an item.

If other, please specify: Allocation of grant funding

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Allocation of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy funding

Is this new or existing?

Already exists and is being reviewed

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

This is the second round of Neighbourhood CIL funding and this is the allocation of this year's funding.

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Aims | To support community projects in non parished areas of Cheltenham which deliver publicly accessible physical improvements and address the demands that development places on an area. |
| Objectives: | To allocate Neighbourhood CIL funding appropriately and fairly. |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Outcomes: | Community based projects are able to take place that make physical improvements in non parished areas. |
| Benefits: | Residents in non parished areas will benefit from publicly accessible physical improvements within their neighbourhoods that have a social, environmental or economic objective. |

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| e. What are the expected impacts? | |
| Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers. | No |
| Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative? | No impact expected |
| Please provide an explanation for your answer: | |
| The projects being funded have demonstrated that there is community support for them to take place and will be beneficial but will not impact on the lives of people. | |

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| f. Identify next steps as appropriate | |
| Stage Two required | No |
| Owner of Stage Two assessment | |
| Completion date for Stage Two assessment | |

Please move on to Stage 2 if required ([intranet link](#)).