



CIL FUNDING PROGRAMME 2018/19

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK SUMMARY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2017

Introduction

West Lancashire Borough Council invited comments on the CIL Funding Programme proposals between 5 October and 3 November 2017. The consultation sought comments on how the unallocated strategic CIL monies received 2017/18 should be spent in 2018/19, and on what projects they should be spent on.

Note that unallocated CIL monies collected between 2014 and 2017 have been set aside to enable CIL funds to build up and thereby support the delivery of much larger, costlier projects in the future. Any monies from 2017/18 not allocated to funding in 2018/19 will then also be added to this funding pot. It is considered that this strikes an appropriate balance between the delivery of short-term, local projects and much larger, strategic schemes in the long-term.

65 responses were received through the consultation; a summary of which are outlined through this feedback report. This report also sets out the Council recommendations stemming from the responses. The consultation responses received are contained within the appendix to this report.

Summary of Representations

Question 1.

Do you agree with our shortlist of projects? What do you think are the greatest priority to deliver? Why?

Of those respondents who chose to answer this question, all agreed with the shortlist of projects and some offered other schemes for suggestion. These are detailed below.

Cheshire Lines

Respondents supported improvements to the Cheshire Lines to increase their use, encourage tourism and to provide multiple benefits for health and wellbeing. Cycle infrastructure was seen by several respondents as important, particularly for communities with few bike/pedestrian friendly routes available to them. The ecological importance of the Cheshire Lines as a Biological Heritage Site (BHS) and wildlife corridor was also emphasised. It was considered that access should be improved as there is currently poor surfacing, poor signage and no park furniture (such as benches and bins). It was felt that improvements would help improve the value of the Cheshire Lines to local and outlying areas, which would in turn make people more likely to use the facility and to protect it – for example by reporting water pollution or vandalism.

Hunters Hill

Respondents supported the proposed improvements to Hunters Hill to help attract more visitors and make it visitor friendly. It was considered the site is of biological importance, particularly for certain habitats and invertebrates. It was felt important to create more 'breathing spaces' for humans and wildlife and such a scheme would help deliver this.

Tawd Valley

Respondents considered that the Tawd Valley has the potential to be an important area but it is in need of significant upgrades to achieve this. Extensive local consultation has already been undertaken, and a Masterplan funded, and it was thought that CIL funds would provide an important impetus to the project which would then help lever in more match funding. Some said that work to the Tawd Valley would help improve local ecological and heritage assets whilst improving the value to local communities and creating a sense of place. Works would also help improve water quality and the water environment. However, one respondent raised an objection to the use of CIL funds on this project until plans are firmer and more cost controlled.

Mere Sands Wood

Mere Sands Wood was also highly supported by respondents. They outlined that Mere Sands Wood is a strategic facility that attracts visitors from a wide area, including that outside of the Borough. It is an SSSI and has an important role to play in conservation. Respondents considered that Mere Sands Wood is a valued educational and recreational facility with worn out resources which subsequently threatens its existence and development. The project would help broaden the appeal of the centre and support the continued management of the conservation site. It would also assist Mere Sands Wood to create local jobs (through the café) and support volunteering. Compared to other projects on the CIL funding shortlist, respondents felt that this would be a strong investment, requiring just 10% of the total project cost in order to unlock considerable match funding elsewhere. The first phase of the project received CIL monies in 2017/18, and so awarding CIL monies to the second phase would help to further support this project via CIL.

Martin Mere

This project received some support, although at lower levels than those projects detailed above. Respondents considered that the project would help enhance biodiversity and improve habitat at the existing Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) site, and would also help improve water quality and water environment. Martin Mere is recognised as a good visitor attraction, generating income and tourism to the local area and providing employment and volunteering opportunities. The concerns of WLBC, as set out in the consultation document, were noted by consultees and received one registration of support. However, the Environment Agency argued that without external investment, there remains a risk that the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust would not be able to hold onto this land and it could be sold for intensive agricultural purposes.

Ormskirk allotments

Some respondents supported the Ormskirk allotments because they advocate healthy living – enabling people to grow their own food, exercise in open air and help facilitate mental and physical wellbeing. Respondents stated that there is a current waiting list for plots and requested that any new provision take account of site security (fencing). Others considered that this project should be a low priority as no site has yet been identified.

Chequer Lane

This project received some support, including from Sport England. The project would help support local disability sports.

Whittle drive

Again, there was a small amount of support for this project through the consultation. It was highlighted that the quality of facilities are preventing the club from expanding and providing healthy outdoor activities for adults and children. There was support for maintaining reasonable standards of leisure facilities.

Council Response

To acknowledge that the largest levels of support were received for Hunters Hill, Tawd Valley, Cheshire Lines and Mere Sands Wood. Lower levels of support were received for Martin Mere Filtration Reed Beds, Ormskirk allotments and the Chequer Lane and Whittle Drive facilities.

Question 2.

Are there any other projects on the IDS you think should be considered for CIL funding?

Question 3.

Can you suggest any other infrastructure schemes that you think could be included on the IDS? Why should they be included?

Respondents made the following suggestions:

- Flooding alleviation (*see point i below*)
- Skelmersdale Rail (*see ii below*)
- Railway station improvements and modernisation (*see iii below*)
- Upgrade of Ormskirk bus station (*see ii below*)
- Pedestrian improvements and signage in Skelmersdale (*see i and iii below*)
- Bickerstaffe Colliery Cycle Trail – including insurance and litter picking (*see i, iii and iv below*)
- Heathfields Bridge and Briars Lane, Burscough (*see iv below*)
- A5147 Haskayne (*see iv below*)
- Sumner Ave car parking (*see i and iv below*)
- Ormskirk dog park (*see iv below*)
- Road resurfacing (*see i, ii and iv below*)
- Wiggins Lane, Holmeswood play area (*see iii below*)
- Appley Lane South playing fields (*see iv below*)
- Tanhouse Bowling Green (*see iii and iv below*)

Council Response

Many of the schemes suggested are not appropriate for CIL funding because they:

i) are not an item listed on the R123 list / are not "infrastructure"

The Regulation 123 list (R123) sets out what the Council must spend CIL on, and is designed to prevent Councils from double-charging developers for infrastructure. Flood defences are excluded from the R123 list and so CIL monies cannot be used to deliver flood mitigation, instead it must be secured through planning conditions or planning obligations on specific sites. Subsequently, CIL cannot be used to fund flood mitigation or prevention.

CIL must be spent on infrastructure required to support new development. Therefore it cannot be used to remedy existing infrastructure deficiencies, unless they would be made worse by new development. In addition, some of the suggestions received do not fall within the definition of infrastructure. CIL cannot be used to tarmac resident parking areas, nor can it be used on signage, or insuring existing leisure areas, or to pay for litter picking.

ii) will not require CIL funds

Skelmersdale Rail, and improvements to Ormskirk Bus Station, are both recorded as projects on the IDS, but will not require CIL funds because the money will be provided through other revenue streams. Therefore, these projects cannot be assessed for CIL funding.

Highway surfacing is a matter for Lancashire County Council.

iii) have insufficient information provided to assess them / are not in keeping with strategy

Some suggestions, such as the Wiggins Lane play area, do not accord with the Council's "bigger, better, fewer" Leisure Strategy and would therefore be unlikely to be assessed favourably for CIL funding. Other suggestions, such as railway station improvements, lack sufficient details to be currently included on the IDS as there is no indication of costs or delivery requirements.

The proposal to extend the footpath/cycle path between Beacon Lane and Elmers Green Lane has been added onto the IDS (project #132) although there are insufficient details regarding costs and delivery to allow this scheme to be shortlisted for any CIL funding at present.

iv) are not justified as necessary to support new development

Some suggestions are already listed on the IDS but lack the justification to explain why they are required to support new (and not existing) development. For example, the A5147 improvements in Downholland are already listed on the IDS as project #103, but there has been limited new development in Downholland to justify use of CIL for those improvements. The comments on road safety improvements will, however, be passed to Lancashire County Council, as the highways agency, for their consideration.

Similarly, Appley Lane South playing fields are included on the IDS (#98) but there has been very little development in Appley Bridge to justify a local need arising from new development and it lacks information on funding and delivery. To enable its inclusion on the IDS, the proposed 'dog park' would require further information to be supplied to explain why this project is needed as a direct result of new development, and the levels of demand for such a project along with costs and

delivery information.

v) could be funded through alternate means

CIL cannot be expected to fund every infrastructure item required to support new development, and is instead designed to lever in match funding, where appropriate. The Council are keen to maximise the cost benefits of CIL by ensuring projects with other funding means are encouraged to use those sources instead of CIL. This includes those projects which could be funded using neighbourhood, or local, CIL receipts. [15% of CIL receipts are allocated for local uses, in the area in which they are collected from. Monies are passed to the Parish Council or, in the absence of a Parish Council, retained by the Borough Council for expenditure in consultation with the local community. This means that even those non-parished areas will receive 15% of CIL funds to use on local projects in their local area.]

The IDS already contains a Heathfields Connectivity Plan which aims to improve access and connectivity between the canal, Heathfields and local amenities, and provide a pedestrian bridge over the canal (Project #120). The Parish Council are seeking £10,000-£15,000 initially to fund a feasibility study into the proposals, which would provide greater detail on the costs and delivery of the project. However, Burscough Parish Council are already in receipt of over £58,000 of neighbourhood CIL monies which they could use to fund the feasibility study and enable CIL monies to be used elsewhere.

Question 4.

Which of the four options do you support most? Why? Which projects do you think that option should include?

- ***Option One (Allocate funds to one large project, and a number of smaller projects)***
- ***Option Two (Allocate funds to one large project only)***
- ***Option Three (Allocate funds to a number of smaller projects)***
- ***Option Four (Save CIL for larger infrastructure projects in the future)***

Opinion varied on the most suitable option as to how CIL monies should be spent in 2018/19. 13 representations expressed support for Option One, 20 representations for Option Three and 1 representation for Option Four. Option Two had no support registered.

Respondents felt that Option Three would enable money to be fairly distributed across the Borough to deliver more projects. The use of CIL was supported to help unlock additional financial support for projects from other sources. It was suggested that the availability of financial support can help evidence wider based support for the project. Respondents felt that Option One helped get CIL monies spent.