

The Community
Infrastructure Levy
Expenditure Framework
Communications Strategy

Babergh and Mid Suffolk
District Councils

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Expenditure Framework Communications Strategy

1.0 Background

1.1 Following the decision by Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils to implement Community Infrastructure Levy charging, both Councils have been charging for CIL liable development since 11th April 2016. A scheme for CIL expenditure has been devised and sits alongside this Communications Strategy

CIL collection

1.2 CIL is collected and allocated in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). Each Council retains 5% of the total CIL income for administration of CIL. From the remainder, 15% is allocated to Parish or Town Councils but where there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place this figure rises to 25%

1.3 Regulation 62 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) requires CIL charging authorities to publish monitoring statistics for collection, allocation and expenditure of CIL monies by the 31st of December for each year (on the website for both Councils).

CIL Expenditure

1.4 The development of a detailed framework for CIL expenditure for consideration and adoption by both Councils has been devised as there is no set approach for CIL expenditure prescribed either by Central Government or through the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

1.5 As such all Councils across the country where a CIL charging regime has been adopted and is being implemented have established their own schemes for how CIL monies are spent.

1.6 The CIL Regulations stipulate that CIL monies which are collected must be spent on infrastructure. Each Council is required to publish a list of infrastructures that will be all or partially funded through CIL. These lists, known as the "Regulation 123 Lists", were adopted by Babergh and Mid Suffolk and published in January 2016.

1.7 The CIL Expenditure Framework which sits alongside this Communications Strategy is critical to the funding of infrastructure to support inclusive growth and sustainable development.

1.8 The CIL Expenditure Framework for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk was considered by the Cabinets of both Councils on 5 and 8 March 2018 and adopted by both Full Councils on 24 and 26 April 2018. The implementation of the agreed CIL Expenditure Framework is scheduled to commence on..... As this expenditure for the provision of infrastructure affects both Districts communities, it is considered necessary to have a Communications Strategy to sit alongside the CIL expenditure Framework.

- 1.9 The CIL expenditures process will involve Bids being submitted for CIL Regulation 123 monies (from Infrastructure Providers including Officers of Babergh and Mid Suffolk where appropriate) and Parish Councils (including Community Groups) on a bi yearly basis.
- 1.10 Whilst some Bids will be determined on a delegated basis, some Bids will be determined by the Cabinet of the District Council where the Bid falls geographically.
- 1.11 Some of the information (including financial information) around the Bids when submitted may be commercially sensitive. However, it is intended that basic information concerning the infrastructure to be provided by the Bid will be capable of being placed on the Council's website together with outcomes both when the Bids are determined and when the infrastructure project has been completed. This information will be placed in both Councils yearly CIL Business plan (updated after the first 6 months of that year)
- 1.12 The key messages of this Communications Strategy reflect this position and strike a balance between openness and transparency and the need to safeguard any commercial sensitivity that may apply.

2.0 Aims of the Strategy

2.1 These are: -

- To identify the key messages and ensure these remain consistent throughout all communications which this Strategy covers.
- Establish the key stakeholders and determine the communication channels and tools needed to convey the key message.
- Set out the framework for communication in terms of where and when and how to deliver key messages.
- Identify opportunities for proactive communication and address circumstances when communication is necessary to address any CIL collection and expenditure issues.
- Identify any potential risks and put in place communication countermeasures to mitigate against these.

3.0 Key Messages and the Framework for Communication

General

- 3.1 These will relate to CIL expenditure (including CIL collection – see Background above). They will involve the process and any specific cases where Bids are made together with the outcome following decision taking.

- 3.2 Key messages will also include details of the completion of any infrastructure projects which are the outcome of successful Bids (for Strategic or Local infrastructure expenditure) where CIL monies are spent including infrastructure projects which are the subject of a collaborative spend (see CIL Expenditure Framework)
- 3.3 There will be regular briefings and workshops undertaken throughout each year in the following way for the following key organisations and people: -
- Twice yearly briefings on CIL collection and expenditure including updates on process and detailed CIL expenditure for all District Members
 - Twice yearly briefings on CIL collection and expenditure including updates on process and detailed CIL expenditure for all Parish and Town Councils within the two Districts (by holding Parish Briefings or Workshops in locations within both districts (which will change each year)
 - Yearly event for all Infrastructure providers (to be held on a Suffolk-wide basis if other authorities are willing and timescales allow). Otherwise Babergh and Mid Suffolk will engage once a year (on an event basis) and hold regular meetings with infrastructure providers as required throughout the remainder of the year.

Regular Communication - Frequency and type

- 3.4 Regulation 62 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) requires CIL charging authorities to publish monitoring statistics for collection, allocation and expenditure of CIL monies by the 31st of December for each year - this will be published on both Councils website).
- 3.5 Details of and payment of Neighbourhood CIL monies from both Councils CIL income to both Councils Parish Councils /Town Councils (see paragraph 1.2 above) will be undertaken twice yearly (April and October). For those Parishes where there is no Parish or Town Council in place both Councils retain the monies and spend it through consultation with the Parish. All Parishes (via the Clerks), all Ward and District Members will be advised twice yearly of the allocation of these monies via email with the relevant CIL allocation reports published on our Web site each April and October. All Babergh and Mid Suffolk staff will be notified either by email or through internal newsletter.
- 3.6 Details of the Councils' CIL Expenditure Framework, (including details of the yearly cycle of Bid submission, consideration) supporting Guidance Documents, Bid Application forms and prioritisation criteria (which will be applied to Bids) will be available on the Councils' web site in order to facilitate Bid submission. Clear information of the process including a flow chart will also be provided on both Councils' web site.

- 3.7 Email communication will be sent to all Infrastructure Providers (including officers of Babergh and Mid Suffolk) and all Parish and Town Councils who are also infrastructure providers to advise of the Bid process being open for the submission of Bids twice yearly. This will also be communicated through the Councils web sites and email notification to potential Bidders together with a general media release to encourage Bid submission.
- 3.8 Following validation of submitted Bids, the Ward Member(s), Division County Councillor for that Ward and the Parish Council (via the Clerk) shall be advised of the receipt of the validated Bid via email and be given 21 days to comment upon the submitted Bid.
- 3.9 A list of all validated Bids received will be placed on each Councils web site at the time that local consultation takes place containing basic information only to safeguard any commercial sensitivity.
- 3.10 For the duration of the Bid when it is validated, during consultation and under consideration until decision taking there will be no comment on individual Bids or comments made following consultation except for affected Infrastructure Providers, the District and County Councilor for the Ward affected and the affected Parish or Community Group or the author of the Bid. (This will allow resources to be directed towards consideration of and determination of the Bids). No proactive press statements will be made during this time.
- 3.11 After the decisions have been made on the Bids whether delegated or by Cabinet all authors of the Bids, all Parishes, all Members and County Division Councilors affected by the Bids will be advised by email of the decision of the Bids (whether approved or not and/or whether held in abeyance and carried forward to the next Bid round for a particular reason).
- 3.12 All authors of successful Bids will receive an offer letter and an acceptance form which would need to be signed and returned and which would make the terms of the Bid decision clear. The web site will be duly updated with the decisions on the Bid and appropriate press/media coverage will be undertaken involving joined up communication for all organisations where collaborative spend is involved. **When all press releases are devised – paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4 will be taken into account and the Communication will reflect the inclusion of District Ward Members and other key organisations particularly in the case of the latter where collaborative spend is involved.**
- 3.13 A yearly CIL Business Plan will be presented to both Councils Cabinet and approved within 6 months of the Bid round being opened. It will be formally updated during the following 6 months (through presentation of the updated document to both Councils Cabinets). The CIL Business Plan will contain details of CIL collection, details of all Bids approved or otherwise, any carried forward for particular reasons, any allocated spend

whether collaborative or not with details of delivery (of the infrastructure project) and timescales and any details of delegated decision or cabinet decisions for infrastructure. Our key audience will be advised by email and the CIL Business Plan and updated CIL Business Plan will be made available on both Councils web sites.

4.0 Key Audience

4.1 These are: -

- Infrastructure Providers (including Officers of Babergh and Mid Suffolk)
- All District Members
- County Council Member (of the Ward affected by any Bids)
- All Parish Councils
- Community Groups where Bids are made
- Local Residents in both Districts
- Leaders and Cabinet Members of both Babergh and Mid Suffolk
- Joint Chief Executive
- All Staff (including all Strategic Directors, Assistant Directors, Corporate Managers and Professional Leads)
- Media

5.0 Communication Channels

5.1 These are: -

- District Councils websites
- Emails to our Key Audience
- Town and Parish Council Meetings
- Leader and Portfolio Holder briefings
- District Council Member Briefings

- Parish and Town Council briefings and workshops
- Media releases
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Town and Parish Council newsletter
- Working Together, Connect.

6.0 Communication Tools

- 6.1 Many of our audience already receive a number of communications from us across a range of subjects and projects. To help ensure our communication on CIL is easily recognisable and read, it will be necessary to clearly identify the purpose of the communication at the top of the key message.
- 6.2 Templates for emails, and updates will also be developed to ensure clarity of message. Our website will identify through a flow chart about how the process will work and when Bid submission and decision taking will occur.
- 6.3 Social media will also be a key channel for communicating with our audiences and to help ensure these messages are recognised is intended to use the CIL expenditure and CIL collection hashtag for each Twitter and Facebook update where appropriate.

7.0 Spokespeople

- 7.1 For CIL collection information will be communicated through the Councils website and this will be regularly updated subject to the other requirements in this document.

For Strategic Infrastructure Expenditure – which has considerable impact on each District suggest the following: -

- Cabinet Member for Planning BDC
- Cabinet Member for Planning MSDC

For Local Infrastructure Expenditure which has less significant impact on the District suggest the following: -

- Cabinet Member for Planning BDC
- Cabinet Member for Planning MSDC

- 7.2 **With every decision on submitted Bids or where Infrastructure projects are delivered the District Ward Member for the Community where the Infrastructure is to be provided must be included in the Key message.**
- 7.4 **Where proactive or reactive Key messages are delivered these must be managed so that where the Bids involve collaborative spend the different organisations working in collaboration must be part of the Key message and the key message is effective and joined up (including the District Ward Member)**
- 8.0 **Risks**
- 8.1 The successful delivery of Infrastructure projects across both District Councils are important for a number of reasons. Not only are these projects aligned with a range of our key strategic priorities but the infrastructure that is provided will mitigate any harm from new development and make that development sustainable. In addition, some infrastructure projects may address current infrastructure inadequacy or deliver a Parish or community infrastructure initiative. As such they will be the focus of a great deal of interest from our key audience and may generate media interest and engagement on a wider level
- 8.2 All this audience is invested in the outcome of these projects for a variety of reasons. (financial, social and economic). This will bring these projects under very close scrutiny and we need to acknowledge that failure to effectively communicate with our audience could have a significant impact on its success and the reputation of both Councils.
- 8.3 It is also important to recognise that communication needs to be accurate and clear and both Councils will take appropriate measures to correct any factual inaccuracies should they occur.

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