



Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]

Ward(s) Affected: Worthing All

CIL Neighbourhood Fund 2023 into 2024

Report by the Director for Place

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the Worthing CIL Neighbourhood Fund programme of 2023 in advance of launching the 2024 funding round in Spring.
- 1.2. The report provides a summary of the types of organisations and projects that have been allocated CIL Neighbourhood Funds in 2023 including the levels of investment in different types of neighbourhood infrastructure and assets.
- 1.3. The report provides evaluation from 2023 including learnings about the council's role as a supporter and enabler of Worthing's diverse and generous voluntary and community sector.
- 1.4. The report proposes a number of recommendations focused on refining the 2024 funding programme and building capacity for future change.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve the following:

- 2.1.1. Continue with the same programme and governance structure used in 2023 and invite a participatory review to inform minor amendments with officers, ward members and community stakeholders in March, as detailed in paragraph 4.1.
- 2.1.2. Approve the proposed 2024 funding programme timetable, as detailed in paragraph 4.2.

The Committee is asked to note the wider need to:

- 2.1.3. Recognise that for the 2024 funding round, it is estimated that around **£200k** will be available to groups. This is less than one-third of the amount available in 2023, as detailed in paragraph 4.3.
- 2.1.4. Begin scoping on potential changes to 2025 funding round later in 2024 as detailed in paragraph 4.4.
- 2.1.5. Review any projects identified by officers as being at risk of not being delivered, as detailed in paragraph 4.5.
- 2.1.6. Consider the opportunity for the Cabinet Member for Communities and Young People to make their decision at a public meeting to increase visibility, as detailed in paragraph 4.6.

3. Context

Overview of the 2023 programme

- 3.1. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge on liable developments (such as house building). The CIL Regulations (as amended) says that 15% of all CIL funds should be spent in the neighbourhood where the development took place. Worthing Borough Council started collecting this money in 2015 and since then, 15% has been put into the 'CIL Neighbourhood Fund'. The CIL Neighbourhood Fund gives communities freedom and power to spend the money on a wide range of things that will benefit the neighbourhood, in consultation with local residents.
- 3.2. In the absence of parishes and neighbourhood plans, which is the case in Worthing, the CIL Regulations allow the Council to design its own

bespoke definition of what constitutes a local neighbourhood area for the purpose of allocating the CIL neighbourhood fund. For 2023, 'CIL Areas' were introduced (groupings of wards) to allow for a larger area of the borough to receive funding, whilst also maintaining a link back to the area where development is taking place. CIL funds were made available in 4 of the 5 CIL Areas.

- 3.3. Between the first funding round in 2021 and the second in 2023, the fund was revised to expand the scope of projects which could be funded and change the application and assessment process. In 2023, funds were used to support the delivery of projects focused on improving the lives of residents in the town including revamping green spaces, providing resources for young people, helping with the cost of living and launching new cultural activities.
- 3.4. In 2022-2023 the application and assessment process was re-designed with the aim of widening participation and involving ward councillors and community representatives in decision making. Greater emphasis was placed on communicating the CIL fund with all areas of our community.
- 3.5. Officers introduced community engagements to promote the fund and connect with our community groups. Events were held during the 'Expressions of Interest' stage in each of the 4 CIL Areas with funding available, to allow groups to attend and hear about the fund and network with each other.
- 3.6. In July, neighbourhood assessment panels were chaired by Community Works and included ward councillors from across parties and community representatives. The panels assessed and scored each application, and made recommendations on which projects should be funded from their CIL pot. These recommendations were signed off by the Worthing Deputy Leader. It was agreed that some 'town-wide' projects from the Coastal East CIL Area would be partially funded from the Coastal West and North West remaining CIL funds (as a one-off).
- 3.7. In November 2023, Officers held a celebration event at Town Hall to showcase funded projects and recognise the great contribution of the voluntary and community sector. We welcomed over 70 participants including community groups and ward councillors. Representatives from a number of groups spoke about the work that they do in the community and the benefits of receiving the CIL funding. A range of

feedback was received from those attending the event, including groups' desire to collaborate by sharing resources, partnering on projects and even helping each other apply for other funding opportunities.

Overview of the funded organisations and types of projects

- 3.8. More than £577,000 from the CIL Neighbourhood Fund was awarded to 45 applicants from the community and voluntary sectors in 2023. A range of different types of voluntary sector organisations secured funding. A large proportion of the CIL applications received were for either Coastal East or North West CIL Areas, which had the largest amount of CIL funding available. More details of all the projects which were allocated CIL funding in 2023 can be found in Appendix B.
- 3.9. 1 applicant withdrew their application and 11 were turned down funding on this occasion, but were given feedback as to the reasons why and invited to re-apply in future years, if suitable.
- 3.10. Officers have analysed successful applicants to understand where funds were allocated this year and who the intended beneficiaries of projects will be.
- Roughly £270k was allocated to 'social infrastructure' projects, which weren't covered by the CIL Neighbourhood Fund in the 2021 funding round
 - Two-thirds of the projects designed for impact on children and/or young people (over £400k of CIL funding allocated)
 - Over £288k allocated to projects which tackle inclusivity / isolation issues in the community
 - £187k of CIL funding was allocated to 'green groups' including 'Friends of Groups'.
 - 14 projects related to assets owned by Worthing BC - this includes the enhancement of public open spaces
 - 6 projects related to school owned assets
 - The large majority of projects were reliant on CIL Neighbourhood Funding for all or most of the project cost.
 - Just under £45,000 of match funding has been levered into CIL funded projects.

More detail on the allocation and distribution of funds across Worthing can be found in Appendix A, slides 2.0.-2.5.3.

Key learnings about our neighbourhoods and voluntary and community sector

- 3.11. The objectives of the redesign of the fund was:
- To widen and increase participation in the CIL fund across our communities
 - To democratise decision-making around the allocation of the funds
 - To provide greater transparency and visibility around the funding opportunity and process
- 3.12. The Council was able to widen and increase participation significantly. Not only did the number of applications increase from 12 in 2021 to 57 in 2023, there was a wider range of projects submitted. The networking and celebration events strengthened the connections between the voluntary and community sector and Worthing Borough Council.
- 3.13. Decision-making was shared with ward councillors and local community representatives. Councillors from all political parties accepted the invitation to sit on the assessment panels. These panels were chaired by Community Works, our voluntary and community sector infrastructure provider. The panel recommendations were then signed off by the Deputy Leader.
- 3.14. The Council achieved greater understanding, visibility and transparency of the fund by improving our communications and working collaboratively. The Comms strategy had clear objectives for both the policy team and comms team, as well as set timeframes. Ward Councillors and Community Works circulated the funding and networking opportunities. Applicants were also kept informed of the progress of their application at each stage of the process.

4. Issues for consideration

Recommendations for 2024

- 4.1. The council continue with the same process and governance structure used in 2023 but invites a participatory review of the programme and

process with officers, ward members and community stakeholders in March, with a focus on developing the following:

- Design of guidance and support for applicants in developing their project ideas and applications
- Design of communication and engagement strategy (to ensure groups from across areas are aware of the funding opportunities)
- Design of networking events
- Design of the application and assessment forms (informed by user experience)
- Capabilities of officers to act as hosts and facilitators
- The level of scrutiny of each application received, prior to the assessment panel
- Expectations around project commencement and completion including deadlines around any funding conditions
- Guidance on impact reporting for applicants

4.2. The council approves the 2024 funding programme timeline (which is very similar to the 2023 funding round and takes into account the 'Pre-Election' period from March-May):

Date	Stage
14th March 2024	Take report to Worthing Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) to discuss 2023 funding round and improvements for 2024
Mid-late March 2024	Hold workshops with both Officers and Ward Councillors to invite feedback on the update report with a focus on refining funding criteria further and making improvements to the scrutiny of applications and the experience of the panellists.
March 2024	Comms around the confirmed timetable for applications in 2024 and how much CIL funding is available in each 'CIL Area'
April 2024	Open up the 'Expressions of Interest' Stage - for 6 weeks
April/May 2024	Hold a series of 'Networking Events' early during the Expressions of Interest stage
May 2024	Open up the 'Application' Stage - for 6 weeks / Member briefing
June 2024	Application form closes
July 2024	Assessment Panels held in each CIL Area
August 2024	Draft notification letters sent to all applicants informing them of recommendations made by the assessment panel
September 2024	Report signed off by Deputy Leader regarding which applications are to be funded

September 2024

Send out formal confirmation letter to groups along with copy of the CIL fund agreement for them to sign

- 4.3. For the 2024 funding round, it is estimated that around £200k will be available to groups - which is less than one-third of the amount available in 2023. This is likely to be only available in 3 'CIL Areas', with two areas having larger amounts of funding - which may result in groups altering their project to meet the CIL criteria.
- 4.4. For future funding rounds i.e. 2025 onwards, council begins scoping on potential changes (for example opportunities for crowdfunding) later in 2024, taking into account the other corporate grant-giving / commissioning work that supports the local voluntary and community sector and as part of the wider Council for Community offer.
- 4.5. Funded projects which are identified as at risk of not being delivered are to be reviewed by officers with applicants in a timely and supportive manner that maintains relationships, manages expectations and safeguards funds.
- 4.6. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Young People considers making their decision at a public meeting - a report would still need to be published 5 days in advance and the decision would still be subject to the 5 day call-in period but it would be very visible with the applicants in attendance.
- 4.7. As of 25/01/2023, the following amounts of funding would be available for groups to apply to the Worthing CIL Neighbourhood Fund in 2024:

CIL Area	Amount of CIL Neighbourhood Funds (15%) available (as at 17/01/24) - rounded to nearest £1k
Coastal East: Heene, Central and Selden	£11,000
Coastal West: Marine and Goring	£86,000
North East: Broadwater and Offington	£0
North: Tarring, Gaisford and Salvington	£0

CIL Area	Amount of CIL Neighbourhood Funds (15%) available (as at 17/01/24) - rounded to nearest £1k
North West: Northbrook, Castle and Durrington	£101,000
Total	£198,000

- 4.8. The forecast CIL receipts over the next few years (up to March 2027) are for a further £680k of funding to be available in the CIL Neighbourhood Fund - dependent on which developments come forward and contribute CIL

5. Engagement and Communication

- 5.1. Regular conversations have been held between officers and ward councillors since the allocation of the CIL funds in 2023. The CIL Neighbourhood Fund is a regular agenda item at CIL Board meetings, which consist of Worthing Borough Council and West Sussex County Council officers and members.
- 5.2. Meetings are to be held with Officers and with those ward councillors who were involved in the assessment panels in 2023 to discuss feedback from the previous funding round and how some amendments can be made to the 2024 funding round.
- 5.3. The Comms team and Community Works are kept in touch around the progress of the timetable for the 2024 funding round.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The CIL funding (15% of all receipts) gives the Council the opportunity to provide funding to community groups to provide much needed infrastructure which may not otherwise be delivered. This is in line with the CIL Regulations (as amended).
- 6.2. The Council employs an Officer to administer the scheme. This post is funded from the 5% administration share of the CIL generated.

- 6.3. There would be the requirement for some Council teams to provide assistance with regards to the assessment of the 'bids' for funding which are received. This would be delivered within existing resources.
- 6.4. Currently the Council holds £4.5m of CIL receipts of which £658k are allocated to the Neighbourhood Fund.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Legislation governing the development, administration and governance of CIL is contained within the Planning Act 2008 and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has also provided CIL guidance that needs to be followed.
- 7.2. Governance arrangements that are consistent with the CIL Regulations must be agreed. If they are not then the Council runs the risk of complaints and/or challenges from developers and these could then be upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 7.3. When making decisions and exercising its functions the Councils are to have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The general duty can be found in sections 149 to 157 of the Equality Act 2010 which is supported by specific duties found in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. All decisions on spending CIL will themselves be subject to assessment to ensure the 2010 Act and regulatory duties are complied with.

Background Papers

- [Appendix A - Update Report on CIL N. Fund 2023 into 2024](#)
- [Appendix B - Worthing CIL Neighbourhood Fund Progress Report, January 2024](#)
- Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee 6 March 2023, agenda item 13 - Review of Governance and Procedures for Administering the CIL Neighbourhood Fund
- Joint Strategic Committee 2 April 2019, agenda item 7 - Worthing Community Infrastructure Levy - Governance and Procedural Matters
- Joint Strategic Committee 1 February 2018, agenda item 7 - Community Infrastructure Levy - Governance Arrangements

- CIL Regulations (as amended)

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

- The efficient collection and distribution of money collected through CIL will help to ensure that infrastructure is delivered alongside development to meet the identified needs of new and existing residents, communities and businesses.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- The efficient governance of CIL will ensure that money collected is spent on projects that provide the greatest benefit to the community.

2.2 Equality Issues

- Issues relating to race, disability, gender and equality have been considered and it is not felt that CIL will have an adverse impact on any social group. In reality, by making communities more sustainable, CIL will facilitate economic growth and help to deliver improved services. The infrastructure and services that CIL can provide (such as community facilities and transport networks) could enhance liveability for all sectors of society, and could help to deliver new infrastructure that serves different needs within the community.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

3. Environmental

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

4. Governance

- The Council has overarching responsibility for the allocation of CIL monies and reporting of monies collected and spent. The protocols proposed and being taken forward, will enhance the Council's reputation as they will ensure that CIL is managed in an open way and in accordance with the CIL Regulations.
- Without clear and robust governance arrangements being in place, the Council could be open to challenge on the basis of maladministration of CIL funds.
- The efficient distribution of money collected through the CIL Neighbourhood Fund will help to ensure that infrastructure is delivered alongside development

to meet the identified needs. This will help to contribute towards meeting many Council priorities.