

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, both Councils have been charging for CIL liable development since 11th April 2016. A scheme for CIL expenditure has been devised and reviewed each year and sits alongside this Communications Strategy. Both the CIL Expenditure Framework and the CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy scheme were approved by both Councils in April 2018 and amended through the first review and adopted by both Councils in March 2019. Since then, a cross party cross Council Joint Member Panel has reviewed both documents each year (2020-2026) leading to this current version.

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 (subject to a financial cap) but where there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place this figure rises to 25%(with no financial cap).
- 1.3 Each year both Councils are required as 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). The CIL Regulations 2019 introduced a requirement for both Councils to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) containing both section 106 and CIL expenditure and allocation and expenditure of Neighbourhood CIL together with a list of infrastructure projects for both Councils (known as the Infrastructure List). The first one for each Council was considered by each Council's Cabinet in November 2020 and published on the web site for both Councils in December 2020. Under the CIL Regulations of 2019 it is a requirement to produce a yearly review of each Councils Infrastructure Funding Statement; these are published each year for both Councils on the Councils web site.

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.
- 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 has published a list of infrastructure projects known as the "Infrastructure List" within each Councils Infrastructure Funding Statement.(IFS) These lists are infrastructure projects that are largely but not

wholly derived from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. However, it is intended that they will all be partially/wholly funded through CIL or s106 or other funding means. The Infrastructure List taken from each Councils Infrastructure Funding Statement are not identical for both Councils.

- 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 adopted in April 2018. The scheme was launched on the 27th April 2018 and the first Bid round commenced in May in 2018 (for the whole calendar month). The second Bid round took place in October 2018 (also for the whole calendar month). Thereafter the scheme operated on a twice-yearly Bid round with the Bid rounds held during the calendar months of May and October each year. However, the seventh review of the CIL Expenditure Framework and this associated Communication Strategy considered whether it was necessary/appropriate to continue with CIL Bid rounds on the grounds of whether they were responsive to the needs of all Infrastructure Providers and effective in terms of submission of CIL Bid applications for infrastructure projects. **It was agreed during the seventh review to cease all CIL Bid rounds after the last one was held during May 2025. This would allow the development of, and agreement to all Infrastructure projects for CIL funding with Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure officers using the CIL Project Enquiry form which continues to be capable of submission all year around. Once a project has been developed in this way and agreed in principle and detail, a CIL Bid application can be made and submitted (now throughout the year).**
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 Whilst some Bids will be determined on a delegated basis (and be subsequently noted by each Council's Cabinet), some Bids will be determined by the Cabinet of the 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 CIL Expenditure Programme including details of emerging infrastructure projects (issued and updated at least twice yearly).
- 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 counter measures 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 Infrastructure Fund, Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund or Local Infrastructure Fund expenditure. These infrastructure projects are likely to include different funding streams including CIL and are referred to in the CIL Expenditure Framework as collaborative spend. (see CIL Expenditure Framework)
- 3.3 There will be regular briefings each year in the following way for the following key organisations and people: -
 - Continuation of three briefings each year to be given to Members and Parishes on CIL collection/processes of CIL expenditure/project development/use of Exacom – to improve knowledge and facilitate expenditure of District and Neighbourhood CIL. This will allow Members to attend with their Parish/Town Council if desired. It was agreed in the sixth review (and endorsed again in the seventh review) of the Strategy by both Councils that any training of Exacom with Parishes will be held on a “cluster of parishes” basis so that maximum reach to parishes can be enabled as effectively as possible.

- The Joint Member Panel recommended that one Member briefing session be held in the forthcoming year as a joint briefing session with officers of SCC and Infrastructure Officers so that the roles and responsibilities for SCC for pupil placement and the role of Academies together with the changes coming forward to Early Years settings can be more fully understood by Members. (SCC Officers have agreed to this suggestion.) It was also agreed that this Member Briefing session would be shared with colleagues from the Integrated Care Boards so that the provision of health infrastructure could be more closely understood.
- Inclusion of Parish Investment Infrastructure Plans – (PIIPs) and People and Place Plans (PPPs) into the subject matter for Member and Parish briefings each year
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Officers will hold regular meetings with appropriate infrastructure providers as needed throughout the year to ensure that infrastructure is planned for and provided as part of a developing a programme of infrastructure delivery linked to growth (funded either through s106 or CIL or other funding mechanisms).

Regular Communication - Frequency and type

- 3.4 As stated in paragraph 1.3 above, from the 1st September 2019 the CIL Regulations introduced a new requirement for the production of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for both Councils including s106 and CIL income and expenditure. In addition, the IFS for both Councils also includes the allocation and expenditure of Neighbourhood CIL for each Council together with a list of Infrastructure projects for each Council. These “infrastructure Lists which are different for both Councils are largely but not wholly informed by the Councils Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 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 (by the 28th of April and by the 28th October each year). 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 affected. All Parishes (via the Clerks) and all Ward and District Members will be advised twice yearly of the allocation of these monies via email with the relevant CIL allocation reports being published on the Web site (each April and October). All Babergh and Mid Suffolk staff will be notified either by email or through an internal newsletter.
- 3.6 Details of the Councils’ CIL Expenditure Framework, supporting Guidance Documents, Bid Application forms and prioritisation criteria (which will be applied to Bid determination) will be available on the Councils’ web site. A Key CIL date calendar will also be produced each year to facilitate CIL Bid

submission and determination. Clear information of the process including a flow chart will also be provided on the Councils' web site.

- 3.7 Following validation of submitted Bids, the Ward Member(s), Division County Councilor for that Ward, and the Parish Council (via the Clerk) shall be advised of the receipt of the Bid via email and be given 14 days to comment upon the submitted Bid. This will include the application form and a location plan in order to assist with the submission of a response. An officer site inspection will take place in respect of all CIL Bids (where photographs will be taken)
- 3.8 For the duration of the Bid when it is validated, during consultation and whilst being assessed until decision taking, there will be no comment on individual Bids or comments made following consultation except for required communication with affected Infrastructure Providers, the District and County Councilor for the Ward and the Parish or Community Group or the author of the Bid.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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).
- 3.11 This will allow all to be kept updated on progress and determination of CIL Bids and outcomes
- 3.12 All authors of successful Bids will receive an offer letter (for a 2-year period) and an acceptance form which would need to be signed and returned and which would make the terms of the Bid decision clear. 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 7.2 and 7.3 will be taken into account and the Communication will reflect the inclusion of District Ward Members and relevant Parish Councils and other key organisations (or funding bodies) particularly in the case of the latter where collaborative spend is involved.**
- 3.13 At least twice yearly, a CIL Expenditure Programme will be presented to each Council's Cabinets for consideration to allow CIL Bids to be determined. However, CIL Bids will be capable of determination throughout the year using the delegated decision process with presentation of those CIL Bids to Cabinet for their decision (and noting when delegated) and the timing of this will occur to meet need.

- 3.14 The CIL Expenditure Programme will contain details of CIL collection, details of all Bids approved or otherwise, any Bids carried forward for particular reasons, any allocated spend whether collaborative or not with summary details of delivery of infrastructure projects. In addition, it will also include basic information on emerging infrastructure projects (CIL Bids). Our key audience will be advised of decisions by email and each CIL Expenditure Programme will be made available on the Councils web site.
- 3.15 A yearly CIL Calendar will be issued outlining all the key dates in that year affecting CIL and this will also be publicised on the web site.

4.0 Key Audience

4.1 These are: -

- Infrastructure Providers (including Officers of Babergh and Mid Suffolk)
- All District Members
- County Council Members (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
- 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 Cabinet Member 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 processes 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, it 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 Fund Expenditure – which has considerable impact on each District suggest the following: -

- BDC Cabinet Member for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure

• MSDC Cabinet Member for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure

For Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund Expenditure – which has considerable/significant impact on each District suggest the following: -

• BDC Cabinet Member for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure

• MSDC Cabinet Member for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure

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

• BDC Cabinet Member for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure

• MSDC Cabinet Member for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure

7.2 **With the exception of press announcements of the decisions on the CIL Bids after determination of the CIL Expenditure Programme by both Councils Cabinet, 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.**

7.3 **In respect of press announcements of the decisions on the CIL Bids after determination of the CIL Expenditure Programme by both Councils Cabinet, the lead messages will be from the Cabinet Members for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure of both Councils. However, when such CIL Bids are determined, Ward Members affected will also be given the opportunity to offer a quote to support the press announcement.**

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 including Parishes must be part of the key message and the key message is effective and joined up (including the District Ward Member)**

7.5 **Every opportunity will be taken wherever possible to undertake joint communication messages with Infrastructure Providers and other funding bodies and partners including those carrying out the infrastructure project together with Parish/Town Councils. Members must always remain involved.**

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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Edition Amendments (March 2019) – First Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- Delete yearly event for all Infrastructure providers to regular meetings with Infrastructure providers as needed to devise a programme of capital expenditure for Infrastructure with each provider
- Publication of a yearly Key CIL date calendar
- Addition of three early email communications instead of Email communications (to reflect the recommendation of Overview and Scrutiny on the 19th November 2018)
- Consultation - the addition of an application form and a location plan in order to assist with a response.
- An officer site inspection will take place in respect of all CIL Bids when valid (where photographs will be taken)"
- Retain quotes in press statements for every Ward Member about successful projects except for the reporting of Business plan decisions (twice yearly) where quotes from the Cabinet Member for Planning is to be used instead with other Ward Members affected being given the opportunity to submit a quote.

Edition Amendments - April 2020 – Second Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- Introduction of changed monitoring arrangements of s106 and CIL but the production of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (including an Infrastructure List) by both Councils in the CIL Regulations 2019
- Reference to the CIL Position Statements and their impending replacement by the Infrastructure Funding Statement (including an Infrastructure List)
- Deletion of requirement for a general press communication for Bid submission – this is done via email
- Change of consultation time period from 21 days to 14 days
- Every opportunity will be taken to undertake joint communication messages with infrastructure providers and other funding bodies and organisation including Parishes. Ward Member must remain involved

Edition Amendments – March 2021 – Third Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- Abolition of the CIL Position Statements and their replacement by the Infrastructure Funding Statement (including an Infrastructure List) for each Council
- Inclusion of the Infrastructure Funding Statement on CIL Expenditure for Member Briefings.
- Alteration of wording to reflect that Parish Briefings will take place in a virtual setting (with the deletion of references to those Briefings being held in different locations within both Districts)
- Inclusion of specific dates for the allocation of Neighbourhood CIL in April and October each year.

Edition Amendments –July 2022 (Mid Suffolk) and October 2022 (Babergh) Fourth Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- Change from twice yearly briefings for Members to three briefings each year on CIL collection and the detail/processes of CIL expenditure.
- Change from twice yearly briefings to three briefings each year on CIL collection and the detail/processes of CIL expenditure for all Parish and Town Councils within both Districts (by holding Parish Briefings /Liaison meetings for both districts). Members will be invited to these sessions so as to allow the opportunity for Members to attend with their parishes.

Edition Amendments – March 2023 – Fifth Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- **Consultation on CIL Bids** - Consultation will occur with the District Ward Member the Division County Councillor for the Ward affected and the Parish Council for that ward (except where the Parish Council is the Bidder for the Infrastructure project). The Consultation will occur by email and 14 days will be allowed for the submission of comments. (Should extensions of time be sought they will be granted). A copy of the CIL Bid application form and a location plan will be sent to the consultee. **CIL Bids no longer need to be valid for Consultation to occur.**

- **Three briefings each year to be continued on CIL collection and the detail/processes of CIL expenditure for District Members** – to improve knowledge and facilitate expenditure of District and Neighbourhood CIL.
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Edition Amendments – March 2024 – Sixth Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- Continuation of three briefings each year to be given to Members and Parishes on CIL collection/processes of CIL expenditure/project development/use of Exacom – to improve knowledge and facilitate expenditure of District and Neighbourhood CIL. This will allow Members to attend with their Parish/Town Council if desired. The Joint Member Panel suggested that any training of Exacom with Parishes be held on a “cluster of parishes” basis so that maximum reach to parishes can be enabled as effectively as possible.
 - The Joint Member Panel recommend that one Member training session be held in the forthcoming year as a joint briefing session with officers of SCC and Infrastructure Officers so that the roles and responsibilities for SCC for pupil placement and the role of Academies together with the changes coming forward to Early Years settings can be more fully understood by Members. (SCC Officers have agreed to this suggestion.)
 - Inclusion of Parish Investment Infrastructure Plans – (PIIPs) and People and Place Plans (PPPs) into the subject matter for Member and Parish briefings each year
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Edition Amendments – June 2025 – Seventh Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

Key changes

- Cessation of CIL Bid rounds (with the last one being May 2025) with a reliance on the development of and agreement to CIL Bid applications coming forward through the use of the CIL project enquiry form which should make the delivery of infrastructure and the processes involved more responsive and effective
 - Change of title from Cabinet Lead for Planning to Cabinet Lead for Heritage Planning and Infrastructure
 - Where a Ward Member/County Councillor has indicated support for an infrastructure project, it is not necessary to reconsult.
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Edition Amendments – September 2025 – Eighth Review - The CIL Expenditure Framework Communication Strategy

- No Key changes made as part of the 8th review.
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