

Cheltenham Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy: Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs are designed to support those interested in developing proposals to bid for funding via the Cheltenham Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Panel. Read alongside the Expression of Interest form, this offers some information on the things that are needed to understand how the process of infrastructure planning operates, who is eligible for the fund and the types of infrastructure that could be funded.

What is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)?

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge, introduced by the Government through the Planning Act 2008 to provide a fair and transparent means for ensuring that development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure it will rely upon, such as schools and roads. The levy applies to most new buildings and charges are based on the size and type of new floorspace.

How much CIL is available?

The amount of CIL raised depends on the amount of development starting construction following the grant of planning consent within Cheltenham, which is liable for CIL. We report annually on the amount of CIL available via our Infrastructure Funding Statement, which we report on via Cabinet each December ahead of submitting our data to government as part of our wider statutory responsibilities on CIL.

It should be noted that CIL is paid in instalments upon commencement of development so it may be some time following the granting of planning permission that CIL funds are made available.

What is infrastructure?

The following is the definition of *'infrastructure'*, according to the Town and Country Planning Act 2008.

Typically, there are three broad categories of infrastructure:

- Social infrastructure: e.g. art and culture, sports halls, education, health, social care, emergency services, community centres, village halls
- Physical infrastructure: e.g. pavements, cycleways, flood defences, highways, transport links
- Green infrastructure: e.g. play areas, public open space, woodlands

What is Neighbourhood CIL?

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations provide that a proportion of CIL collected by a charging authority may be spent to address *"the demands that development places"* on a local area. This proportion, which is called Neighbourhood CIL, may be spent on non-infrastructure items. The regulations established the "meaningful proportion" for the Neighbourhood element, as being 15% for areas without a Neighbourhood Plan and 25% for areas with a Neighbourhood Plan.

The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out how the government expects local authorities to approach the spending of the neighbourhood portion. Where there are areas where there is no parish or town council, as is the case in Cheltenham, the guidance provides that the local authority must consult with the community, on how best to spend 15% of the CIL collected from developments. This 15% of local CIL receipts is capped each year at £100 (indexed from the year of the adoption of CIL) per Council tax dwelling located in the neighbourhood area, according to the formula in regulation 59A of the CIL Regulations. If the neighbourhood area has a neighbourhood plan in place, the allocation for Neighbourhood CIL rises to 25% without the cap. The regulations also place a duty on the charging authority to balance neighbourhood wishes with wider requirement to ensure growth and relief of cumulative impacts from developments are managed across the borough.

The Neighbourhood Portion is a fund generated from the overall CIL and its purpose is reinvest back into improving local facilities.

Cheltenham CIL Neighbourhood Panel

On 20th December 2022, the Cabinet of the Cheltenham Borough Council agreed the establishment and terms of reference of a new CIL Neighbourhood Panel which would engage with local communities about how Neighbourhood CIL should be invested and provide recommendations on the spend of Neighbourhood CIL to Cabinet for decision making on the allocation of the funds. The purpose of the Neighbourhood CIL Panel is to work with communities that fall outside the parished areas; those areas of Cheltenham eligible for funding are as set out below:

Wards that are entirely non-parished:

All Saints
Benhall and the Reddings
College
Hesters Way
Lansdown
St Marks
St Pauls
St Peters
Springbank

Wards that are partly non-parished and eligible are as follows:

Battledown
Charlton Park
Oakley
Park
Pittville
Swindon Village
Warden Hill

What can Neighbourhood CIL be spent on?

By law, CIL money must be spent on:

1. The provision, improvement, replacement, operation, or maintenance of infrastructure needed to support development.

2. CIL can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, and specifically in regards to the neighbourhood portion of CIL
3. anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area

This gives considerable freedom to spend the neighbourhood proportion of CIL on the things that address the impacts of development on their area, if that is necessary to support development.

Below are some examples of projects that would meet CIL criteria:

- prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour
- public realm enhancements
- art and culture
- transport/highways, e.g. signage, lighting, junction improvements to improve pedestrian safety, electric charging rollout, cycle docking stations, refurbishment
- open spaces, parks landscaping and new or improved play areas
- health facilities
- community facilities
- sports and leisure facilities
- digital networks
- utilities/waste, for example drainage improvements, street markets utilities improvements.
- feasibility studies and research to enable the identification of eligible infrastructure projects.
- It is possible for the CIL Neighbourhood Portion to be spent on affordable housing as it is not omitted from the infrastructure that can be supported, but the larger portion of CIL cannot be used for this purpose. To be funded by CIL, a project must meet the requirements set out in national legislation and regulations.

Where can Neighbourhood CIL money be spent?

We want to see the Neighbourhood CIL funding available to be spent in those non parished areas of Cheltenham.

What do I need to think about when developing a proposal to present to the Neighbourhood CIL Panel?

In broad terms, when we think about infrastructure and meeting the impacts arising from development, we look to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which guides us as with the following:

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”

As a stakeholder in your community, you know the pressures of your area best and through the set-up of the Cheltenham CIL Neighbourhood Panel we want to invest the funding available in interventions that make a real difference. To do this we will take into account evidence, local views and aspirations for a neighbourhood area and the impact of new development on infrastructure.

A starting point for this may be for you to think about:

- the priorities for your area within the context of the objectives above, make a list and prioritise,
- are there other stakeholders and agencies that could support you?
- is there match funding available, do other infrastructure delivery bodies need to be approached about the possibilities for investment?
- is this a short, medium or longer term project?
- Do you need professional advice?
- Are there any issues with the feasibility or deliverability of your proposal - for example, have they been designed and costed?

Who can help me in preparing a proposal?

The first point of contact in thinking about a proposal is your ward councillor, contact details can be found [here](#). You and your ward councillors know your area the best and therefore this is the starting point. These FAQs and the Expression of Interest form guides you through the information you will need to think about, however, if you have any further queries, please contact communityservices@cheltenham.gov.uk

Where can I find more information?

[The Cheltenham Plan](#)

[Cheltenham Community Infrastructure Levy](#)

[Planning Portal – Community Infrastructure Levy](#)

[Planning Advisory Service on Developer contributions](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning – Understanding Community Infrastructure Levy](#)

[The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010](#)

[National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

There are other websites and sources of additional information on the Community Infrastructure Levy. This may be useful for those who want some additional background papers, documents or further information regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy, but there may be further web pages or sites that provide relevant information for your intended purposes. Therefore, this list is not exhaustive.

This page will be refreshed as new sites are identified as being useful links, or where the identified web pages are out of date.

