



Report to High Wycombe Town Committee

Date: November 21 2023

Title: **Local** Allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

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Recommendation:

That Town Committee recommend schemes to be funded from the local allocation of CIL to be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the CIL Local Allocation funds that are available to be allocated as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. It provides an update on projects previously funded by the CIL Local Allocation and advises the funds newly available to allocate (£300,500.70).
- 1.2 A number of schemes or projects have been put forward by Council services that are within the unparished area and that need funding to go ahead. Projects from local community organisations that are seeking funding are also highlighted. Members are asked to recommend which projects should receive funding.

2. Background

- 2.1 Town and Parish Councils usually deal with local functions including cemetery and play areas. The High Wycombe Town area is unparished, but of course still has these facilities, provided by Buckinghamshire Council.
- 2.2 The role of High Wycombe Town Committee is to consider and advise the Council, the Cabinet or relevant Committee on any issues affecting the High Wycombe Town area.
- 2.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fixed charge levied on new development to fund infrastructure to support the development of the area.
- 2.4 Government guidance (at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy#spending-the-levy>) specifies what the CIL can be spent on. This includes funding a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities. It may also include funding play

areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare facilities, academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities.

2.5 The guidance says that:

'Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed. The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.'

2.6 The Council also has a duty to pass funds to town or parish councils ('local councils') which must use funds within five years of receipt. This is known as the local allocation and amounts to 15% of CIL funds collected in a given area (or 25% where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan). In the unparished area of High Wycombe, the local allocation is ring-fenced for use within that area.

2.7 The Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) (May 2022) notes that:

'In relation to the unparished area of High Wycombe, the High Wycombe Town Committee recommends schemes to be funded from the local allocation of CIL collected within that area.'

2.8 In terms of governance the recommendation to Cabinet is via the Corporate Capital Investment Board (CCIB), which in turn makes recommendations on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) onto Cabinet and Council.

2.9 The Council is setting a budget against a very constrained financial backdrop. Hence it will be necessary to prioritise spending and it is expected that only essential schemes will be funded. The recommendations of Town Committee about which schemes are to be funded from CIL will be taken into account in setting the Council's budget.

3. Main Report

CIL Local Allocation Expenditure

3.1 During 2022/23 a total CIL expenditure of £76,613.90 was drawn down from the local allocation of CIL. This comprised £33,789.00 for the East Wycombe Panoramic Walkway and £42,824.90 for the Cemetery.

3.2 No further amounts have been drawn down since 1st April 2023.

Funds Presently Available

3.3 During the 2022/23 financial year the local allocation collected within the unparished area amounted to £335,763

- 3.4 £776,542 was brought forward so the funds held at 31 March 2023 amounted to £1,112,305.
- 3.5 Between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2023, a further £249,173.66 has been collected.
- 3.6 Hence a total of £1,284,864.76. is held at present. This position is summarised in Table 1 below

Table 1. Funds Presently Available

	Amount
Collected/Invoiced 22/23	£335,763
Balance bought forward from March 22	£776,542
Total collected since 1 April 2023	£249,173.66
Expenditure in 22/23	-76,613.90
Total held at present (30 September 2023)	1,284,864.76

Existing and Completed Commitments

- 3.7 There are a number of projects that have had funding allocated following the recommendation of the Town Committee. These are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of Commitments and funds available

	Amount Committed	Expenditure	Remaining Commitment
Cemetery	£95,560	£42,824.9	£52,735.1
Bull Lane Service Yard Gates	£15,000	-	£15,000*
East Wycombe Panoramic Walkway (now complete)	£35,000	£33,789	
On Street Parking Review	£593,000	-	£593,000
Local Centres Public Realm Improvement	£75,000	-	£75,000
Improvements to Arnison Avenue shopping parade	£50,000	-	£50,000

Replacement and refurbishment of two play areas (Shelley Rd Rec and Totteridge Rec's over 8's)	£147,000	-	£147,000
Coates Lane Traffic Calming and Parking	£17,752	-	£17,752
Traffic Calming Measures on Bowerdean Road	£35,088	-	£35,088
Total commitments	-	-	£985,575.10
Total available before commitments	-	-	£1,284,864.76
Residual available from East Wycombe Panoramic Walkway for recommitment	-	-	£1,211
Funds available to allocate			£300,500.70

**Funding incorporated into the wider project budget for the White Hart St/Bull Lane public realm enhancement project. Delivery of this project is being reported through Highways Board.*

Anticipated funding in future years

- 3.8 While funds secured vary year to year, based on current information we anticipate that upwards of around £300,000 of local allocation funding may be secured in the unparished area each year.
- 3.9 The Government has consulted on the possibility of a new national Infrastructure Levy. No final decision has been taken, and the implications for this funding stream and the timing are unknown.

Update on Commitments

Penn Road Cemetery

- 3.10 The majority of this project is now complete with just one outstanding project. The final amount to be spent is £15,000 within the children's burial section. The intention is to create an environment within the section to support those who have experienced the loss of a baby or child by creating an area of tranquillity and peace using planting, stepping stones and a sculpture based on a children's bereavement

book. The bed has been designed and officers are currently engaging with an artist to design a sculpture.

East Wycombe Panoramic Walkway

- 3.11 In early 2023 resurfacing and vegetation clearance works were completed on identified sections of footpaths (Hatters Lane, Hennerton Way, Hazelbury Road). As noted in table 2 the project was completed, slightly under budget.

On Street Parking Review Project

- 3.12 Based on the funding allocated, Parking Services are undertaking a review of on-street parking restrictions across the unparished area. A Parking sub group of members and officers has been set up to set the direction, agree priorities and make decisions.
- 3.13 To date the focus has been on three priority areas (around 'Poets Corner', Deeds Grove, and Green St), as well as the town centre. Following informal consultations the focus will be on implementing parking restrictions at problem areas, such as corners and junctions where these are appropriate. The issues in the town centre are more complex and are being considered further.
- 3.14 The detailed scope and duration of the project will depend on the priorities to be agreed by members. The project is likely to run for several more years, and the allocated funding covers the costs of drawing up proposals, consulting and making new parking and traffic regulation orders, as well as putting in place signs and lines as need be.

Local Centres Public Realm Improvement and Improvements to Arnison Avenue Shopping Parade

- 3.15 The Communities team recently visited Arnison Avenue to assess the issues at Arnison Avenue and to scope priority improvements that can be delivered, taking account of feedback from local stakeholders and residents. Depending on this assessment the input of different services such as street cleansing, ASB, local area technician, and highways will be established. An update will be given to Town Committee separately on these issues by the Regeneration team.

Replacement and Refurbishment of Specified Play Areas

- 3.16 The £147,000 previously allocated is available for repair/replacement of play areas funded from special expenses (comprising £63,000 for Shelley Road and £84,000 for Totteridge Rec over 8's play area).

Traffic Calming Measures on Bowerdean Road

- 3.17 The estimated cost of the project was £56,142 in February 2022. 50% from the Community Board and the other 50% funded from the Local CIL allocation (as well as a 25% contingency.) This funding has been put in place and the project is proceeding.
- 3.18 A speed survey has just been completed to assist with the design which is progressing. The results are to be sent to the Network Safety Team shortly for a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. A new project manager has recently been appointed and will be producing a full programme once the audit is complete. Buckinghamshire Highways intend to provide programmes for all Community Board schemes during November 2023.

Coates Lane traffic calming and Parking

- 3.19 These improvements were costed at £28,404 with 50% funded from the Local CIL allocation with an additional 25% contingency (£3,550) (so a total of £17,752 from the CIL local allocation.)
- 3.20 The project is about to be assigned to an engineer to commence the design and to produce a full programme. Again Buckinghamshire Highways intend to provide programmes for all Community Board schemes during November 2023.

4. Options to use CIL within the unparished area

- 4.1 A summary of funding requests received is set out in table 3. In considering allocating funds members may wish to consider giving weight to schemes and projects that are the responsibility of the town committee.



Table 3. Summary of funding requests received

Council Service	Project	Overall Cost estimate £'000	Funding Sought £'000
Parks and Green Spaces	Play areas repair and replacement	252	Up to 252
Economic Growth and Regeneration	Public Realm schemes in the Southern Gateway (incl. Swan Theatre and Abbey Way underpass)	Final costs will be confirmed following feasibility and design	150
	Desborough mini-master plan	50 for initial master plan	50
Transport	Castlefield traffic calming	Final costs will be confirmed following feasibility and design.	Not specified
Transport	Keephill Woods path	Up to 800	100
Transport (via Local Community Board)	Pedestrian crossing on Bellfield Road High Wycombe	Feasibility study cost 6.094 Implementation cost. Up to 100	Between 6 and 106
Property and Assets (cemeteries)	Hampden Road Cemetery	108	108
External requests	Project	Overall Cost estimate £'000	Funding Sought £'000
St Andrew's Church		900	150
Chiltern Rangers	Relocation of the Kingsmead depot and creation of a new community hub at Daws Hill	1000 -2000	Not specified
Chiltern Rangers	Kingsmead Recreation ground natural habitat and accessibility improvements	150	75

Funding Requests from Council Services

- 4.2 The following services or improvements have been identified as requiring funding in the unparished area:

Parks and Green Spaces - Play areas

- 4.3 The Parks and Green Spaces team request that funds are allocated for the repair/ replacement of the play areas at Booker Rec and Totteridge Rec for under 8's, as shown in table 4. These are scheduled for works in 2025/26 and 2026/27 respectively. Play areas are regularly inspected. If equipment fails inspection and funds are not available to replace, these they are removed.

Expected timescale for replacement	Play area	Estimated cost
2025-26	Booker Rec (NEAP) (Booker, Cressex and Castlefield ward)	£168,000
2026/27	Totteridge Rec under 8's (part of NEAP when combined with over 8's) (Terriers and Amersham Hill ward)	£84,000

Economic Growth and Regeneration

- 4.4 The recently adopted High Wycombe Regeneration strategy highlights a wide range of regeneration opportunities and challenges. Action is now required to ensure the town centre remains successful, including supporting business growth, improving public realm and planning for increased demand for urban living. The Strategy acknowledges these challenges and seeks to ensure the town centre adapts to ensure it remains relevant, lively and a vibrant place that is well used and delivers for local people and businesses. In response to the Strategy a detailed programme is being developed in partnership with the High Wycombe Regeneration Group (which includes Town Committee representation as a key partner). Funding is required to bring forward initiatives; the short term priorities, as set out in the strategy highlight the following schemes that currently require investment:

- a) Desborough (mini master plan, considering council assets and future vision for this key gateway into the town centre). This scheme is at feasibility stage.
- b) Abbey Way Underpass (public realm scheme). This underpass is a key active travel gateway for Abbey Ward. It connects the town centre to the BNU campus and currently suffers from poor lighting and attracts anti social behaviour. Exciting creative and innovative improvement options are being developed in collaboration with BNU. There is an opportunity to better connect this underpass with the Swan Theatre. Public Realm improvements

will help activate this space, bringing more green space to echo other areas currently being developed and improved (such as the White Hart St public realm Scheme). This scheme is at feasibility stage.

- c) Southern Gateway (incl. public realm around the Swan Theatre). Swan Theatre public realm improvements would include Red Lion Way lighting (improving wayfinding and activation) and substantial greening and links to the river at the front of the theatre. These culture led regeneration schemes are at feasibility stage.

Other schemes will also require funding and the Regeneration Team will continue to work with the HWTC and other key partners to ensure the regeneration strategy ambitions are realised.

Transport

- 4.5 The Transport Strategy team have highlighted two priority projects which need additional funding to go ahead.
- 4.6 Castlefield traffic calming – area traffic calming is proposed for this residential area in Booker, Cressex and Castlefield ward to slow down traffic and to create a more liveable and healthy neighbourhood. The scheme is at the concept stage and funding would enable a design to be developed and consulted upon. The scheme cost are to be confirmed following feasibility and design.
- 4.7 Keep Hill Woods path – the proposal is create an active travel link between the Pine Trees development in Abbey ward and the Rye in Ryemead and Micklefield ward. This is an important link to provide residents with a traffic free route to the valley floor within which the Rye, town centre and Wycombe Marsh are located. £563,000 of funding has been secured towards this scheme comprising c.£435,000 in external grant and c.£128,000 in developer contributions. The scheme is at the development stage and engagement has been carried out with local members to consider options.
- 4.8 Pedestrian crossing on Bellfield Road High Wycombe (Downley ward) – this proposal via the LCB would link the town centre out to Hughenden Park, and serve Star and Garter and other residents as well as Hughenden via the Spindle and Thread Public House. A pedestrian controlled crossing is already in place at every road crossing, on this route, except Bellfield Road. Many residents feel that they cannot cross an increasingly busy uncontrolled road.
- 4.9 Following the completion of the Star and Garter residential home, and Extra care accommodation (in total there are well over 400 elderly and/or mobility impaired new residents), the completion of the new business units (planning ref 18/05323) and the proposals for 68 new dwellings, there will be additional traffic alongside

increased use by pedestrians. There is also permission (18/08330) for an egress from the Morrison car park directly out onto Bellfield Road adding to the traffic.

4.10 **Property and Assets (cemeteries)**

- 4.11 Hampden Road Cemetery in Terriers and Amersham Hill ward- £108,000 is sought to fund the removal of existing handrails to the retaining walls at the cemetery and replace with new handrails conforming to current legislation. The aim is to prevent a fall from height by members of the public visiting the graves within the cemetery. At present the railings are as such that a child or individual could fall through them.

Other Funding Requests

St Andrew's Church

- 4.12 The Local Community Board has passed on a funding request from St Andrew's Church in the Totteridge and Bowerdean ward to support the costs of its Nexus project. This overall project cost is estimated at £900,000 with a current funding gap of £306,000. Donations from church members amount to £474,000 while other grants, fundraising and legacy have raised 120,000.
- 4.13 The project aims to provide a new spacious and well equipped kitchen, a coffee bar area meeting area, a new multipurpose meeting room, new toilets and to re-locate the office right at the front of the church to enable the building to be accessible throughout the day.
- 4.14 St Andrew's church is situated in Totteridge and Bowerdean ward. Together with the adjoining ward of Ryemead and Micklefield these areas have a wide number of social issues and have high levels of deprivation around Children, Loneliness and Older People.
- 4.15 Opportunity Bucks has identified Totteridge and Bowerdean, Ryemead and Micklefield as being in the top 10 wards experiencing the poorest outcomes across multiple indicators of inequality within Buckinghamshire
- Income Deprivation affecting Children is amongst the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
 - Income deprivation affecting Older People is amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
 - Education, Skills and Training remains an area of concern with the neighbourhood amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- 4.16 The aim is to

‘better serve current and new community groups, by providing more flexible space. This area of High Wycombe has been identified as having very little community building provision. A wide consultation with the community identified a pressing need was a place to meet together with others, rooms to hire for family events and for community groups. The only local pub has now been converted to a local Tesco store.’

‘St Andrews have forged strong partnerships with Buckinghamshire Council services, NHS services and GPs, local schools and VCSE partners and successfully provide support, events and activities for the community focusing on early years, youth, mental health and counselling, building support networks and reducing social isolation. They are key members of the Opportunity Bucks ward partnership.’

Chiltern Rangers

- 4.17 The Chiltern Rangers were created in September 2013 as a not for profit social enterprise taking over the woodland management service for Wycombe District Council. They have highlighted two projects for which they are seeking funding and ask that the Town Committee consider these.
- 4.18 Project 1. Relocation of the Kingsmead depot and creation of a new community hub at Daws Hill in Abbey ward. This would provide a new operating base for the Chiltern Rangers who manage the Council’s woodlands, and free up the existing (council owned) depot for redevelopment. If the Chiltern Rangers were to close, the new depot/hub would become a council asset/liability. The project cost is estimated at £1m to £2m, with fund raising expected to take several years. The Council has previously contributed £150,000 of CIL which has contributed to design and feasibility work.
- 4.19 Project 2. Chiltern Rangers are working with a few partner organisations to look at two inter-linked projects improving natural habitat and accessibility on Kingsmead Recreation ground especially the River Wye (main river and back stream) an internationally rare and important chalk stream and its wetland environs. The project supports a number of strategies including that of the Buckinghamshire Natural Environment Partnership and the Chilterns Conservation Board's Management Plan. The project aims include ‘saving iconic local habitats and species, and enhancing residents health and well being.’
- 4.20 Key deliverables include a proper path along the river wye completing a circular route around the mead and making it more accessible to all. There will be habitat enhancements such as felling and pollarding some river side trees (Sycamore & Ash) coppicing willow and hedge laying - allowing more light in and making it feel safer. This work will deliver biodiversity benefits and opportunities for volunteer engagement. Ideally the project will also improve the entrance from Fennels Road

Car Park with a welcome to Kingsmead interpretation board and possibly a community notice board.

- 4.21 The estimated overall project cost is £125,000 to 150,000. External funding is being sought, including lottery funds. Local funding increases the prospects of a successful bid.
- 4.22 Kingsmead Rec is situated in Tylers Green and Loudwater ward. The project would involve working with the community including Ash Hill, Beechview, Loudwater & Highcrest schools and other community groups.

Other Options?

- 4.23 Members could consider or put forward other options to be funded from the local CIL allocation as part of the MTFP. The MTFP funding template is attached as an Appendix to indicate what information is required to support a bid. Any bid must also be supported by the Head of Service responsible for delivering that proposal.

5. Next steps and review

- 5.1 The recommendations of High Wycombe Town Committee will be considered by Cabinet in 2024. Schemes that are supported by Cabinet will be included in the MTFP to be approved by Council.

