

## Charney Bassett Parish Council

### Comment on Vale of White Horse District Council Draft Community Infrastructure Levy Strategy

#### Summary

The District's CIL strategy is directed towards benefiting only those local communities that are hosting new developments. It does not have to be so. The strategy should be amended so there is opportunity for smaller communities to benefit from CIL where they are likely to be affected by new development.

#### Background

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a financial charge on new development collected by the District Council<sup>1</sup>. Its purpose is to help pay for infrastructure that becomes necessary to support new development. CIL is calculated per square metre of floorspace in accordance with an approved charging schedule (e.g. a dwelling of 100 sq.m. currently gives rise to a payment of £12,000). CIL is non-negotiable: it must be paid. A total of £3 million is expected in the District each year<sup>2</sup>.

#### District Council Draft CIL Spending Strategy

The District Council is required to adopt a CIL spending strategy and is consulting on its strategy for 2019-20. The documents can be found at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/delivering-infrastructure/community-infr-3>.

Under CIL Regulations, the District Council is required to pay to a Parish Council 15% of all CIL payments raised in its area (or 25% where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan). The District's CIL strategy looks at how the remaining portion of the payments will be administered. The proposal is set out below.

#### Vale of White Horse District Council

##### Proposed distribution of CIL funds (excluding payments to Parish Councils)

Organisation	Spending Purpose	Percentage CIL allocated
Oxfordshire County Council	Education and Transport Infrastructure	50%
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	Community Health Care	20%
Vale of White Horse DC	Sports and Leisure Facilities	20%
Vale of White Horse DC	Green Infrastructure/Biodiversity	5%
Vale of White Horse DC	Public Art and cultural heritage/public realm	5%

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<sup>1</sup> Since November 2017

<sup>2</sup> Para 9 of Consultation Paper

Half of the fund is to be passed to the County Council and the District Council intends a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with OCC to determine how this is used (no details are presently available). Another 20% is to be passed to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

The District Council will administer the remainder (30%). The District advises that this could be used “to mitigate the impact of an individual development *as well as* the overall cumulative effect of development”<sup>3</sup>. However, it believes that “...public pressure may require funds to be spent as much as possible in the location that the CIL revenues were generated”. So the District appears to have decided that its CIL fund will be spent only on those communities directly affected by development (i.e. in those areas within which new development will take place).

### **Relevance of CIL to Charney Bassett**

Charney Bassett is classified in the District’s adopted Local Plan (Part 1) as ‘open countryside’. As a result, very little new development can be anticipated so few direct CIL payments to the Parish Council are likely. Like many others, Charney Bassett is a settlement close to areas where significant development will take place and where the effects will be felt - in particular through increased traffic.

There are some 32 identifiable settlements in the District that, like Charney Bassett, are classified as ‘open countryside’. Identifying their total population is difficult, but Appendix 1 indicates that they account for at least 4,000 residents and, in all likelihood, in excess of 5,000. Collectively these settlements account for at least 3% – 4% of the District population<sup>4</sup>.

Charney Bassett has an adopted Community-led Plan<sup>5</sup>. Residents’ main concern was road safety. The village is a known ‘rat run’ for traffic seeking access to (and from) A420 and beyond from the south – principally Wantage/Grove. Several stretches of road in the village have no footpaths. The Parish Council paid for a traffic volume and speed survey in 2018 that established notable peak traffic flows with vehicles persistently travelling above the 30 mph limit. With so much growth still planned nearby, traffic volumes and speeding violations will only continue to increase. Verge and road damage, particularly to edges, is a growing problem.

In discussion with OCC a number of initiatives to help improve road safety have been identified (Appendix 2) but their funding is well beyond a small Parish Council and the County Council has apparently not maintained a road safety budget since 2010. There is nothing in the consultation paper to suggest that CIL will help villages such as Charney Bassett mitigate the impacts of development nearby – in our particular case much needed improvements to road safety.

Finally, the village is used as an official alternative route where the A420 has to be closed following a vehicle accident. This may only be occasional, but large volumes of traffic can be involved and it is important that the village road system is made as safe as possible to cater for such occasions. The strategy for the A420 in the County Council’s Local Transport Plan (LTP4) recognises a need for the road to operate efficiently in order to avoid rat running on minor roads. One solution put forward is a

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<sup>3</sup> Para 5 of Consultation Paper

<sup>4</sup> District population 128,738 in 2016 according to District Data Analysis Service

<sup>5</sup> May 2016

need for mitigation measures<sup>6</sup> on minor roads to help cope with rat running, but the only way put forward for funding such measures is for planning applicants to bring forward such measures as part of their planning applications. As already pointed out, Charney Bassett is not an area where new development can be anticipated so it is most unlikely that any necessary funding will come directly from planning applications.

### **Proposed Alterations to the District CIL Strategy**

There needs to be better recognition that the considerable development that is taking place in the Vale impacts on the whole District – not just the Town/Parish in which they are located. Smaller communities who will not receive CIL funding directly (because they are classified as “open countryside) should have access to a proportion of the funding being administered by the District and County Councils.

In the particular case of Charney Bassett, the process of Village -Led Community Planning is in danger of being undermined if properly thought out and realistic proposals to counter the consequences of nearby housing developments cannot be properly funded. CIL provides a means to overcome this, but not without a change in the way it is proposed to be administered. Failure to offer some support for communities like ours affected by the considerable development taking place in the Vale is likely to make it very difficult to get public involvement and engagement when the Community-Led Plan is next updated. A relatively small amount of funding could have a potentially significant benefit to communities like Charney Bassett in terms of mitigating the negative impacts of large new developments nearby.

One way forward would be for a small percentage of the District CIL fund (perhaps 3% - or £90k) to be held back for bids from the type of communities we have identified. This should be taken from the 10% of funds identified for green infrastructure, green infrastructure and public art etc. and made available for initiatives that would help mitigate the impact of new development. Because a common concern will be road safety, the fund should be made available for such spending, notwithstanding this is normally a County function (Appendix 1 highlights the settlements particularly affected by through traffic)<sup>7</sup>.

Alternatively, the intended District/County MoU should include provision for a specified proportion of the CIL funds that are passed to OCC to be ring-fenced for bids by Parish Councils that host the communities listed in Appendix 1 – and particularly those highlighted. In this case the fund would be administered by the County Council and not the District Council. If this approach is preferred, the County Council share of CIL might be increased to 53% to accommodate this. The MoU could alternatively commit a proportion of the County’s CIL spending to a dedicated road safety budget – but that would not guarantee to adequately benefit the communities identified, so is not preferred.

6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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<sup>6</sup> LTP4 says these should include local traffic calming and traffic/speed management measures, to be agreed with the relevant local communities.

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that this is the intention behind the ‘public realm’ spending fund identified in the proposals table. But this seems unlikely - given the District’s stated overall approach to CIL. Whether this is the case or not, the intention behind this element of the fund needs to be made much clearer in any event.

## List of Villages designated as Open Countryside and to which no development is specifically targeted

Name of Settlement where population known	Population <sup>8</sup>	Name of Settlement where population not known
Baulking	115	Bayworth
Bourton	315	Besselsleigh
Buscot	175	Boars Hill
Charney Bassett <sup>9</sup>	335	Eaton
Compton Beuachamp <sup>10</sup>	225	Eton Hastings
Denchworth	185	Gainfield
Fernham	225	Ginge
Fyfield (and Tubney)	505	Gozzards Ford
Garford <sup>11</sup>	230	Idstone
Goosey	150	Kingston Winslow
Hatford	165	Lockinge
Hinton Waldrist	330	Netherton
Kingston Lisle	215	Thrupp
Letcombe Bassett	160	
Lyford		
Pusey		
Sparsholt	310	
West Challow	225	
Woolstone		
Total	3,865	

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<sup>8</sup> Source: District Data Service

<sup>9</sup> Includes Pusey

<sup>10</sup> Includes Woolstone

<sup>11</sup> Includes Lyford

**Charney Bassett****List of Highway Safety initiatives**

Initiative	Estimated Cost (£)
Entrance Gates (Longworth Road; Lyford Road; Denchworth Road)	7,000.00
Moving 30 mph limit (Buckland Road) <sup>12</sup>	5,000.00
Entrance Gates and shark's teeth (Buckland Road)	4,000.00
Pavement extension (Old School, New Road)	10,000.00
Bell Curb (New Road/Buckland Road junction)	2,500.00
Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS)	3,000.00
MVAS – on-going costs (per 3 years) – battery + service contract	1,400.00
MVAS mounting poles	3,000.00
20 is Plenty Campaign	150.00
White Lining (Main Street/New Road junction) <sup>13</sup>	1,000.00

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<sup>12</sup> Cost of public consultation, legal cost of laying Order and moving 30 mph signs

<sup>13</sup> Possibly included in OCC programme for 2019-20