

NOTICE OF MOTION	Date of Council Meeting: 11/09/24
	Mover: Councillor Paul Thorp
	Seconder: Councillor John Blackham
	Title of Motion: Targeting Community Infrastructure Levy

Summary/Background:

With the increase in housing developments, there is a significant strain on existing infrastructure in Rotherham, particularly education, healthcare and community facilities.

Prioritised use of the Strategic element of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is one of the ways the Council can fund essential infrastructure improvements, supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of residents affected by development and ensuring their basic needs are met.

The CIL bid assessment process agreed by Cabinet in July 2024 provides a framework, but decision-making in relation to approved schemes is ultimately a political choice and this should be guided by clear priorities.

Firstly, in inviting bids for Strategic CIL funding, the Council should give preference to addressing the wider impact of development in the specific Wards or areas where significant development has taken place. While Section 106 agreements and the Neighbourhood element of CIL address this in part, the Council should aim to do more and deploy Strategic CIL funding to supplement these.

Secondly, the Council should give preference to helping facilitate the construction, expansion or other improvement of fundamental services and facilities such as:

1. Healthcare Facilities: including doctors' surgeries, dental practices, and other healthcare facilities that provide essential services to the community.
2. Educational Institutions: including schools, colleges, and educational facilities to meet educational needs in growing communities.
3. Community Amenities: including facilities that directly benefit local residents, such as community centres, libraries, and recreational areas, which contribute to the social and cultural development of the area and public wellbeing.

These are core elements of our local infrastructure and central concerns of our residents, unlike bus and cycle lanes, which do not meet immediate community needs or provide general public amenity.

The current Infrastructure Development Study (IDS 2021) also identified that the improvement and expansion of these core services could be achieved far more cost effectively than active travel projects. Prioritising fundamental service improvement is also in line with common practice to first deliver schemes that can be comparatively quick, quoted and followed through. The Council can and should act as an enabler, by using Strategic CIL funding to help education, health and other partners to deliver their own planned improvements more quickly and sustainably.

Engagement with elected members is vital to forming an accurate understanding of neighbourhood concerns and securing community support for improvements. Future review by Scrutiny of the bid assessment process and implementation of chosen schemes is essential to ensure a proper and robust process for Strategic CIL expenditure.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Call on Cabinet to commit to prioritising bids for the creation, expansion or improvement of education, health and community facilities wherever possible, in preference to active travel schemes.
2. Request that officers proactively contact education and health partners in Wards where development has recently taken place or is planned, including Dinnington, Wickersley, Aston, Sitwell and many non-parished areas, to explore pursuing infrastructure improvements identified in the IDS 2021.
3. Request that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment facilitates a briefing for all elected members on the draft shortlist of schemes for Strategic CIL funding, inviting feedback on the same for inclusion in the report to Cabinet.
4. Request that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) allocate time within the 2025/26 work programme of the appropriate select commission to scrutinise the efficacy of the bid assessment process and initial implementation of the chosen CIL schemes.