

Taunton High Street Fund bid and Community Infrastructure Levy allocations

Executive Summary

This report seeks input from Chartered Trustees on the allocations of Community Infrastructure Levy funds held in the Taunton Unparished Area Fund, to support Somerset West and Taunton's Future High Street Fund bid for Taunton. The Taunton Unparished Area fund currently holds £107,062.74 in CIL funds and it is proposed that these funds be committed to support key projects in the Taunton Future High Street Fund bid.

Community Infrastructure Levy Background

The former Taunton Deane Borough Council introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1st April 2014. The Community Infrastructure Levy is a tariff charged on residential development (excluding Taunton town centre and Wellington) and retail development outside Taunton and Wellington town centres.

Somerset West and Taunton (as the charging authority) is required to pass on a proportion of CIL receipts collected in each parish to the relevant parish council (15% in the absence of a neighbourhood plan and 25% if a neighbourhood plan has been adopted). However where CIL receipts are collected in an area where no parish or town council exists, such as the Taunton unparished area, Somerset West and Taunton has agreed to consult the Taunton Chartered Trustees on the spend of the CIL proportion (ie 15%).

In terms of the spend of CIL receipts, the regulations state that the charging authority (in this case Somerset West and Taunton in consultation with the Chartered Trustees) may use CIL 'to support the development of the relevant area by funding— (a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or (b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.'

Further information about CIL is available at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/cil/>

Future High Street Fund Background

Somerset West and Taunton Council is due to submit the Taunton High Street Fund business case to MHCLG on 30th April 2020. The key projects featuring in the Taunton Future High Street Fund bid are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Future High Street Fund bid projects

Future High Street Fund bid projects:
Coal Orchard Development
Firepool Development (including a multi-purpose venue)
Taunton Town Centre Cycle and Pedestrian Improvements including:
Firepool Boulevard linking to station and river crossing
River crossing linking to the Coal Orchard development
St James Street - High Street - Vivary Park
Town centre cycle parking infrastructure

In order to ensure alignment with the Future High Street Fund objectives, the majority of the Government investment sought will be to support the delivery of key town centre sites (Firepool and Coal Orchard). These projects seek to increase residential density and improve the cultural and leisure offer, with a view to increasing footfall and dwell time in the town centre.

Government funding is also sought for the provision of additional cycle parking in the town centre and the creation of a new pedestrian & cycle route running from the railway station, through Firepool and Coal Orchard linking to St James Street, North Street and High Street to Vivary Park. This was a key project identified in the draft Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and seeks to increase cycling and walking to help reduce traffic in the town centre.

These CIL allocations are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Community Infrastructure Levy allocations to support Future High Street Fund bid:

	2022/23	2023/24
Taunton town centre cycle and pedestrian improvements to include:		
Firepool Boulevard linking to station and river crossing		
River crossing through Coal Orchard		
Improvements to St James Street, North Street, High Street	£500,000	£500,000
Improvements to pedestrian crossing at High Street/Vivary Park		
Town centre cycle parking infrastructure		
Multi-purpose venue at Firepool		£500,000

In order to support the funding bid, the Council is required to identify match funding to support project delivery. The Council is also required to confirm co-funding is legally committed, subject only to formal confirmation of a grant award

from the Future High Streets Fund. A report is being taken to Somerset West and Taunton Council on 27th April to seek approval for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations to support the Taunton Future High Street Fund bid.

<https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=325&MId=2284&Ver=4>

Options:

Chartered Trustees input is sought on how they would like to see the Taunton Unparished Area CIL fund split to support the Future High Street Fund bid for Taunton. Possible options include:

1. Allocating all the £107,062.74 towards one of the two projects outlined in Table 2 above ie town centre cycle/pedestrian improvements or multi-purpose venue.
2. Splitting the £107,062.74 between the two projects, eg. 50/50 split or an alternative split.

Kate Murdoch

k.murdoch@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Strategy Specialist