

CIL

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SUMMARISED:



Strategic Planning
Devon County Council
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
EX2 4QD

20th August 2012

Dear Mr Williams,

RE: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule

Thank you for the invitation to make representations on the draft CIL charging schedule. The County Council has worked closely with the District in identifying the infrastructure necessary to deliver the adopted planning strategy for the area and it welcomes the joint working that has taken place in developing positive and effective arrangements for the governance of the future CIL process.

As expressed in its previous submission, the County Council's main concern relating to establishing CIL is to ensure that, subject to evidence on viability, CIL makes a full contribution to the delivery of the critical infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development within Mid Devon.

In the context of the above, Mid Devon's proposed CIL rate, reduced from the preliminary draft rate, is an issue for the County Council. It is understood that the new viability evidence supports the new £90/m² but it is not clear whether the reassessment has tested the implications of alternative higher levy rates. Given the potential shortfall in funding for critical investment, it is important to ensure the viability evidence supporting the new proposed rate is retold through the examination process.

Lowering the CIL rate will have an impact on the delivery of infrastructure, which concerns the County Council. Paragraph 2.8 of the Draft Charging Schedule needs to be updated as it quotes figures relating to the preliminary draft CIL rate, and the funding gap will be larger with the lower proposed levy. Key elements of infrastructure required to deliver sustainable growth in the district are identified in Table 6 in the Infrastructure Plan for Mid Devon. If CIL is unlikely to deliver half of the potential funding gap for these schemes, alternative funding streams would need to be identified to ensure growth continues to occur in a sustainable way.

On a matter of detail it is noted that there is a statement within the Peter Brett viability report regarding the potential inability of the urban extensions to be able to bear the costs of strategic infrastructure needed to deliver them (in addition to paying CIL). It is accepted that the comment was made in the context of the generic viability assessment but it has previously been recognised in the Development Plan that in some cases, such as the

Tiverton eastern urban extension, a reduced level of affordable housing may be appropriate in order to ensure development viability. This is agreed to be an appropriate response to the need to secure development viability while ensuring that development is also acceptable in planning terms.

More generally, it is important to recognise the influence affordable housing rates have on CIL viability. While the delivery of affordable housing is an objective that the County Council supports, development has to be supported by critical infrastructure if it is to be sustainable and acceptable in planning terms. The approach to determining the form and level of affordable housing provision must therefore be sufficiently flexible not to prejudice the acceptability of a development in planning terms, ensuring the capability to provide the infrastructure necessary to mitigate its impact.

The County Council welcomes the commitment to undertake review of the charging schedule but it would be helpful to include a clearer identification of the factors that will be monitored in order to determine the timing of such a review.

Reviewing the examples provided of instalment policies, the County Council appreciates that deferring payments could improve development viability; however this needs to be balanced against the ability to accumulate CIL receipts. It is important that adoption of an instalment policy does not adversely affect the ability to achieve the timely delivery of infrastructure required to support new development.

The County Council would welcome the opportunity to be present at the forthcoming examination of the proposed Charging Schedule.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Keech
Head of Strategic Planning