

Public/Confidential(Part2)*

Key Decision – Yes/No

* Delete as applicable

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: CIL Governance – Phase 2 (Strategic Allocation)

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny – Performance & Growth 4th February Cabinet – 10th February

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources (BM), Executive Councillor for Planning (TS)

Report by: Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director (Place) (MG), Interim Corporate Director (Finance and& Resources) and Section 151 Officer (S151) (LM)

Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report sets out Stage 2 of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Governance Review, building on the Statement of Intent agreed in June 2024.

It proposes a strategic, programmed approach to the allocation of the strategic proportion of CIL, ensuring that funding decisions remain evidence based, aligned with the Council's strategic priorities, and responsive to the evolving context of planning reform and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Significant national changes—including the introduction of Spatial Development Strategies, potential Mayoral CIL, and the Government's intention to accelerate planning and infrastructure delivery—create a need for the Council to refine how it utilises CIL to support growth.

At the same time, the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2046, alongside the Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy, identifies major infrastructure requirements that will rely on CIL in combination with other funding sources.

The report proposes two complementary approaches:

1. Strategic Allocation of CIL: establishing a transparent, annually published pipeline of strategic scale infrastructure projects that unlock or support growth, align with corporate and place based strategies, and demonstrate strong evidence of need and deliverability.
2. Use of CIL towards Council Capital Programme Projects: enabling CIL to be applied more flexibly to eligible Council led schemes, reducing reliance on borrowing and reserves, improving long term financial sustainability, and allowing forward funding where appropriate.

Both approaches preserve the existing mechanisms for collecting CIL, protect the meaningful proportion due to Towns and Parishes, and maintain opportunities for local stakeholders and infrastructure providers to bid for funding through ongoing CIL rounds. A minimum CIL balance will also be retained to ensure continuity of funding for local projects and short-term infrastructure needs.

In the context of LGR, these proposals provide a pragmatic route to maximising the use of CIL for the benefit of Huntingdonshire ahead of the establishment of new unitary authorities in April 2028; and future changes including Mayoral CIL and the Spatial Development Strategy which will be vested with the CPC. The recommendations seek to balance responsiveness to growth pressures, financial prudence, and the need for clear governance, while ensuring transparency and alignment with regulatory requirements.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the paper, and the alignment of the approach with the existing CIL Governance arrangement;
2. Agree the approach to the Strategic Allocation of CIL funds as set out in this paper forms the Strategic Priority Programme to be delivered as part of the next stage of CIL Governance (approved in 2024).
3. Agree the suggested approach in respect of use and assignment of CIL funding, or 'forward funding' towards projects which form part of the Council's wider Capital Programme; where those projects would align with the adopted CIL Governance.
4. Agree to retain a minimum level of CIL funding of £3-5m, in order to maintain a level of funding available to support future funding rounds.
5. Note that the use of CIL funds does not preclude the Council from utilising other funding approaches for future projects should this be required in future; in all cases, this would be subject to detailed assessment at the relevant time.

6. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) and the Corporate Director (Finance and Resources and Section 151 Officer) in consultation with the Leader, Executive Councillor for Finance, and Executive Councillor for Planning to determine the level of allocation of CIL funding to be awarded towards projects which form part of the Councils agreed Capital Programme, based on the principles set out in this paper.
7. Delegate to the Corporate Director (Finance and Resources and Section 151 Officer) to undertake all necessary actions to ensure that appropriate governance and financial reconciliation measures are in place.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to confirm the Council's updated approach to the strategic allocation and use of CIL, ensuring decisions remain evidence-based, aligned with strategic priorities, and responsive to planning reform and Local Government Reorganisation.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

2.1 On the 18th June 2024 Cabinet resolved that the recommendations set out in the CIL Governance review, as set out [here](#). The new CIL governance arrangements are based on a 'Statement of Intent' as set out in that report, and associated appendix, and hereafter referred to as Stage 1, as per that report. Following the Stage 1 governance review it was agreed that further work to refine the use of CIL to meet Corporate and Growth priorities would be prepared, hereafter referred to as Stage 2.

2.2 In preparing this report, and since June 2024, a number of proposed changes to strategic planning powers have been tabled, alongside other reforms, and will be progressed through 2026. The English Devolution White Paper was published on the 16th December 2024. That paper introduced the theme of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) upon which Members are well versed, as a result of other recent Council meetings, and set out a range of proposals to devolve powers across a range of areas to the regions with elected Mayors. Importantly, this introduced the proposal for Mayors to be able to charge Mayoral CIL (MCIL), in addition to Local CIL. On 11 March 2025, the Government introduced the Planning and Infrastructure Bill into Parliament with a promise to speed up planning decisions and 'get Britain building'. The Bill sets out the framework for Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) by introducing the following new provisions into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004). Further detail will be introduced through regulations. SDSs will be prepared by combined authorities, combined county authorities, upper-tier county councils, and unitary authorities. In December 2025 the English Devolution White Paper was updated by way of the English Devolution and Communities Empowerment Bill. At the time of drafting this report work has not yet commenced on the preparation of a SDS or MCIL. While a number of planning reforms have been laid before parliament, it is expected they will come into practice through 2026, and beyond, alongside government decisions in respect of LGR.

2.3 By way of background, Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) implemented CIL in May 2012. In line with legislation local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure to support the development and growth of their area. Up to 5% of CIL receipts each financial year may be retained for administration costs. 15% - 25% of CIL receipts – the 'meaningful proportion' – are passed to parish/town councils in line with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the Localism Act 2011 and the total amount transferred to parish/town councils has increased each year in line with receipt increases. The remaining 70-80%, the strategic proportion, is available for Huntingdonshire District Council as the charging authority to

spend on the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, or maintenance of infrastructure to support the growth/development of its area. The LPA operates a number of CIL rounds per financial year whereby Parishes, stakeholders and infrastructure providers can submit bids for CIL funding to deliver infrastructure where it supports the growth agenda. Full details of the approach to CIL funding can be found [here](#).

- 2.4 CIL Regulations 2019 mandate that Local Planning Authorities must publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) detailing CIL receipts, Section 106 developer contributions, and how these funds (money and in-kind) are allocated and spent on infrastructure projects for the preceding financial year. This must be published on the Council's website by December 31st annually. Regulation 121A(1)(a) requires the infrastructure funding statement to include: A statement of the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the charging authority intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL (other than CIL to which regulation 59E or 59F applies) ("the infrastructure list"). The IFS 2024/25 ([here](#)) identifies a number of themes to support the growth of the district including: strategic transport infrastructure, infrastructure priorities identified within the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) in support of the HLP2036, HDC's Corporate Plan, the Huntingdonshire Place Strategy, the HDC Economic Growth Strategy and the CPCA Local Growth Plan.
- 2.5 In January 2023 an update to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036 (HLP2036) commenced. On the 17th December 2025 consultation on the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2046: Preferred Options (HLP2046) closed. In preparation of the HLP2046, and to demonstrate a deliverable plan, a number of evidence basis are prepared across a range of themes including (but not limited to) housing, economy, infrastructure, climate and ecology. These can be found [here](#). The HLP2046 will be submitted to the Secretary for State no later than December 2026 and it is anticipated to be adopted in 2028, subject to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) timeline to undertake the Examination in Public (EiP). Full details of the HLP2046 timeline can be found within the published [Local Development Scheme](#).
- 2.6 On the 10th December 2025 the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority adopted their Local Growth Plan (LGP). That plan is an ambitious plan to accelerate growth across the region. It sets out how the region can unlock its economic potential with the right investment, including in key infrastructure gaps like transport, housing, water and energy. The LGP identifies 6 priority sectors including defence. It also proposes 4 Opportunity Zones, including the North Huntingdon Growth Cluster.
- 2.7 Delivery of infrastructure and projects of significant scale often have considerable lead-in times, require multiple layering of funding, and can be susceptible to wider economic impacts such as changes in cost of materials, labour, or interest rates. We have seen more recently, that the Government has through the re-branding of the National Wealth Fund, and the forthcoming introduction of the National Housing Bank, a shift in approach from simply looking to grants to pay for such schemes – with

funding coming from a variety of sources, including public or private borrowing. Delivery of CIL related projects is no different.

2.8 Similarly, the Council has to ensure a prudent use of resources to deliver projects; set against the backdrop of changing interest rates; borrowing rates; use of Reserves; and the Councils Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The recent Peer Review also highlighted, through discussions, the high levels of CIL being held by the Council. Thus, it is important to ensure that in delivering Council projects which could be applicable for CIL, that a rounded view of the most prudent approach to financing is taken and the most appropriate view taken by the S151 Officer based on the full financial picture.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1 The Councils CIL pot has built up over time as a result of development delivery. Strategic projects, the type of which CIL was intended to fund, often take many years to come forward from concept to delivery. This can result in the Council holding significant sums of money, unspent, despite the intention to do so, to contribute to, offset, or forward fund strategic development such as new roads, schools etc.

3.2 Paragraph 2.4 clarifies future priorities for CIL spend to unlock growth. Paragraph 2.5 clarifies that the HLP2046 is not anticipated for adoption until 2028, which coincides with the proposed timeline for implementation of the new unitary authority as a result of LGR.

3.3 Since the topic of LGR first arose, Members have expressed views wishing to understand how the Councils CIL pot could be impacted by LGR and ensure that the funding is best utilised to maximise the benefits for Huntingdonshire, as opposed to being determined by the new unitary post LGR. Notwithstanding the changes proposed under LGR, the Council must continue to make sound, evidence-based decisions and seek to ensure that public funds (including CIL) are used in accordance with best value and other legislative requirements. Noting of course that CIL is a cost to development, and its underlying principles relating to growth.

3.4 This paper does not seek to provide a definitive list of projects or interventions to be funded via CIL, nor the amounts to be identified against particular projects, but seeks to provide a strategic direction of travel.

3.5 The Council has a statutory responsibility, through the Section 151 Officer, to ensure that all resources, including CIL, are utilised prudently, proportionately and in a manner that represents best value. This requires a rounded assessment of funding options at the point decisions are taken, taking account of the relative costs and risks associated with the use of CIL, reserves and borrowing, as well as the Council's wider financial position.

3.6 The approach set out in this report is intended to support that assessment by enabling CIL to be considered alongside other funding sources in a

flexible and responsive manner, rather than being treated as a funding stream that can only be deployed at fixed points in time. This ensures that infrastructure delivery is not delayed unnecessarily, whilst maintaining appropriate financial controls and oversight

- 3.7 The approach also creates opportunities for the Council to be an exemplar in the use of CIL funding, particularly in respect of potential 'forward funding'. This is bold and ambitious and reflects the general direction of supporting growth that will bring about benefits to the District, as well as responding to regional and national challenges, all of which are important in the context of LGR.
- 3.8 All future development at scale (200+ dwellings) will also require a S106 agreement to provide the infrastructure necessary to make those schemes acceptable. Currently for schemes <200 S106 contributions are limited to Affordable housing, provision of bins and open space. This will be in addition to CIL payable at that time. S106 agreements are subject to viability discussions across all infrastructure and Affordable Housing requirements and delivered in a phased approach in line with build out rates and/or viability outcomes. Given the timeline for strategic infrastructure to be delivered, an innovative approach to use of existing CIL funds would be to forward fund infrastructure in anticipation of the ambitious growth agenda identified in the CPCA Local Growth Plan, echoed in chapter 9 of the emerging HLP2046 to support, and accelerate economic growth driving increased GVA for Huntingdonshire while delivering better outcomes for existing and future residents. It is therefore expected that future development will continue to provide all necessary infrastructure via S106 agreements.
- 3.9 A local example of this approach would be Godmanchester Surgery. In financial year 2019/20 £107,341 was allocated to Godmanchester Surgery to accommodate growth in that area. Part of that allocation included forward funding £48,278.20 which was expected as part of S106 agreements pursuant to 18/00532/OUT and 19/00489/OUT. This approach enabled the surgery to carry out all expansion works for expected growth, achieving best value, supported by an agreement to repay the monies secured by S106 at the time of housing delivery in accordance with the phased approach as part of the S106 agreement. That money has now been repaid to the CIL charging authority.
- 3.10 **There will be no change to the mechanism of collecting CIL, nor in the distribution of the meaningful proportion of CIL to Towns and Parishes.**
- 3.11 **The approach would not interfere, nor undermine the continued approach to supporting Parishes, Stakeholders and Infrastructure Providers delivering their infrastructure ambitions to support growth through bids to the strategic CIL 'pot'.** Parishes and Stakeholders are actively encouraged to continue to forward plan infrastructure needs to meet the growth agenda as set out in the LGP, HLP2046 and Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy.

3.12 The current balance of the CIL ‘pot’ (less commitments) is £38,068,192. It should be noted that a further round of CIL is under consideration and will be presented to Cabinet for final decision in March 2026 and will impact on this figure. In order to enable continued engagement with Towns/Parishes and stakeholders is recommended that no less than £3-5m is retained to support short term infrastructure delivery.

3.13 In line with the June 2024 changes to CIL Governance, improvements are continually being made to improve the efficiency of the process and the quality of the bids. Since June 2024 2 funding rounds have been completed, with a further round to be completed in March 2026. Officers continue to make improvements towards the aspiration for an “always open” approach to CIL bids being made and determined; and improvements to delegations (such as approval of those bids under £100k) are part of this picture. It should be noted that there are already facilities available for bids to come forward on an exceptional basis where there are factors which demonstrate a need for submission and a decision outside open funding windows; and the team continues to work with stakeholders to ensure that there is an awareness of the processes and to find solutions to barriers.

Why are the approaches being brought forward?

3.14 Firstly, the Council completed phase 1 of the renewal of CIL Governance in 2024 with the statement of intent, and since then has been operating CIL rounds.

3.15 The work undertaken by Inner Circle did highlight the need to move to embedding a *“more programme-led, evidence-based approach towards allocating CIL through producing a ‘Strategic Priority Programme’ which would set out the priority projects the Council wishes to fund through CIL”*.

3.16 This approach would be similar to that which exists in many places and would have resulted in an effective pipeline of projects against which CIL would be indicatively allocated. This would have multiple benefits including where and how money would be indicated for large projects; as well as taking a strategic scale approach to support for projects which would unlock further growth, or manage the impact of growth at scale, for example the delivery of key highway infrastructure, a school, or leisure centre.

3.17 Thus, the approaches here seek to close out the end of that initial CIL Governance renewal and establish a direction for the coming years in light of the changes which are happening within Planning reform and within Local Government.

3.18 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is happening, and since its announcement Members have consistently queried what the intention is regarding the Councils established CIL funds. Namely, there are concerns that as a result of LGR, those established funds, if not spent or allocated could be absorbed by a future unitary who will determine how and where those funds are spent. This is clearly a risk. Given the Governments

published timescale for LGR, and the creation of new unitary Councils from 1st April 2028, wherein the HDC would cease to exist, the approaches set out in this paper seek to strike an appropriate balance. They seek to maintain the agreed direction established by the CIL Governance review – to a programme-led, evidence-based approach for funding projects at scale and creation of a pipeline; whilst also recognising that the Council must continue to ensure best value, and best use of resources (including CIL) prior to and during the LGR transition. The proposals in this paper seek to provide the balance between funding award, allocation, and direction of travel; without seeking to undermine the Councils previously agreed governance approach, and the general need to ensure timely, and effective use of CIL funding in the wider public interest and to support growth including that identified within the HLP2036 and emerging HLP2046.

What are the approaches?

Strategic Approach –

- 3.19 The Strategic Approach seeks to fulfil stage 2 of the CIL Governance review, with a view to moving to a *“more programme-led, evidence-based approach towards allocating CIL through producing a ‘Strategic Priority Programme’ which would set out the priority projects the Council wishes to fund through CIL”*.
- 3.20 It seeks to recognise that in order to facilitate, or support growth at scale, strategic approaches to infrastructure delivery may be required; this will take the form of strategic scale projects which benefit more than an immediate locality, and which have much wider benefits or outcomes, including benefitting the District as a whole. This is in line with the original intent of CIL as set out in legislation.
- 3.21 The approach seeks to build upon the key principles which were set out in the statement of intent:
 1. The primary use of CIL is to fund infrastructure that is directly linked to supporting or mitigating the impact of growth and new development.
 2. CIL funded projects can also contribute towards achieving the outcomes identified in the council's Corporate Plan and Place Strategy
 3. CIL should be used in a way which leverages other sources of funding for greater impact.
 4. The use of CIL should be considered alongside other developer contributions to maximise site-specific benefits (for example: Affordable housing).
 5. A new approach to allocating CIL should follow a programme-led, evidence-based approach.

6. A new approach to CIL should recognise the Importance of working with partners to deliver infrastructure.
7. There should be greater alignment between local and district-wide priorities.

3.22 To be considered as a strategic project, it must be one which demonstrates that it can meet the above objectives and be of a scale which delivers at more than an immediate locality basis – for example a school which will serve a much wider catchment. Most notably, there must be a clear, direct correlation to supporting or unlocking further growth at scale; and the project must align with wider strategic aims of the Council (ie Place Strategy, Corporate Plan, Local Plan) and potentially other partner agencies such as the CPCA. There should also be a clear, evidence-led case, and demonstrable outputs; along with demonstration of the ability to layer funding or indeed recycle funding back to the CIL charging authority.

3.23 The published IFS 2024/2025 identifies a number of strategic priorities, including strategic transport priorities such as the A141, East West Rail (EWR) and the A1. In addition, it is recognised that CIL will enable delivery of infrastructure on support of the HLP2036, as development in accordance with the HLP2036 continues until the adoption of the HLP2046 (2028). This may involve strategic stakeholders with responsibility for infrastructure submitting future bids for CIL to unlock transport or education infrastructure (among others) to enable growth. Further, in the event of viability challenges which may impact delivery of Affordable Housing, the Council may wish to negotiate delivery of infrastructure to maximise delivery of on-site Affordable Housing.

3.24 Importantly, it recognised the role CIL will play in delivering the ambitions identified within the Councils adopted Corporate Plan, Place Strategy, Economic Growth Strategy and the CPCA Local Growth Plan (LGP). In respect of the HLP2036 most allocations have planning permission and are the subject of S106 agreements to mitigate the impact of those developments. Moving forward, the HLP2046 is not anticipated for adoption until 2028.

3.25 The CPCA and the Council have set out an ambitious economic-led growth agenda via the LGP and the HLP2046, in particular the North Huntingdon Opportunity Zone, and the potential of a defence cluster - with defence infrastructure and associated uses and sectors, at its core. These are strategic ambitions which would be enabled and supported by infrastructure such as the A141 and a potential new railway station. Transport projects (Roads) come under the remit of the CPCA in their role as the statutory stakeholder for transport and support the delivery of the A141. Further, the case for a new train station on the ECML at Alconbury Weald is in concept development.

3.26 As set out elsewhere in this report, an Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (IDS) is being prepared to justify and evidence deliverability of that HLP2046. The HLP2046 is reliant on CIL (alongside S106 contributions) to fund strategic infrastructure but it is important to note the

timelines are not immediate. While some HLP2046 sites will submit planning applications through the LP process, the expected delivery of strategic infrastructure is later in the plan period, post LGR.

- 3.27 The aforementioned documents will form the evidence base to inform the pipeline, with key projects such as the A141 and a station at Alconbury Weald being headline propositions due to their importance.
- 3.28 The pipeline will also be informed by engagement with stakeholders such as the County Council and other agencies, and an understanding of need and impacts of growth. In addition to these projects, there will be others which will seek to secure significant CIL investment, alongside other funding sources, in a desire to ensure that there are sufficient facilities to either accommodate further growth, or indeed support growth which has occurred.
- 3.29 There is also no reason why strategic projects which form part of the Councils Capital Programme cannot be part and parcel of the Strategic Approach – for example Hinchingbrooke Country Park investment and/or the One Leisure Huntingdon scheme - where there would be benefits to the whole District, not just Huntingdon and its surrounding area, as a result of the provision of facilities which can be utilised by all residents, and visitors.
- 3.30 The Strategic Approach seeks to develop a high-level pipeline of these projects, based upon evidence, and indicate at a high level that in principle, CIL will be utilised to support them. The aim is to provide a direction of travel towards key projects which can be funded via CIL and ensure that this is articulated and understood. This approach also seeks to provide an appropriate balance between holding CIL funding over the long term, versus utilising available funds to support projects which will make a difference over the medium term. This is particularly important, to ensure that there is a direction of travel during the transition period relating to LGR as set out elsewhere in this report. This pipeline will be published at least annually and will be available on the Councils website and within the IFS.
- 3.31 Importantly the approach seeks to go beyond a place-specific approach and think about the needs of the District in its wider sense. This is particularly relevant given the connections between our established Market Towns, and the role they play in supporting much wider areas.
- 3.32 Members may wish to note that the Strategic Approach outlined is reflective of other similar examples being used by other Councils – but it is noted that in many of those cases the projects which form part of the pipeline are generally schools and highway infrastructure. For the purposes of HDC's approach, we do not envisage this level of restriction, in order to allow a flexible, agile, and pragmatic approach which responds to particular growth needs.

Use of CIL towards projects in the Councils Capital Programme

3.33 The Council establishes its Capital Programme via the Cabinet on an annual and ongoing basis; and Treasury and Capital Management Group is responsible for its oversight and delivery. Projects within the Capital Programme respond to a range of factors including operational needs, but also aspirations aligned to the Council's wider strategic objectives such as the Corporate Plan and Place Strategy.

3.34 Council projects, where they support and enable growth, are able to access CIL funding, as other stakeholders' projects are, and there is no reason that the Council cannot award itself CIL funding. Indeed, the Council has done so in the past to support. To date £30,764,532m CIL has been awarded. 59.24% has been awarded to HDC-led projects - to be delivered by HDC, or by CCC for HDC in their role as the statutory responsible body. For the avoidance of doubt, this excludes the pending March 2026 consideration of CIL bids by the Cabinet.

- These include (but not limited to)
 - Ramsey 3G Pitch - £120k
 - St.Ives Park Extension - £80k
 - St. Neots Improvements - £4.83m
 - Hinchingbrooke Country Park Improvements - £1.495m

3.35 St Neots and Huntingdon have seen the highest level of CIL awards; reflecting their roles as significant market towns, which not only accommodate their own growth, but also provide facilities which serve growth over a wider area.

3.36 The Council's duty is to the whole of the District and has clear and established strategic policies and objectives to seek to benefit the District.

3.37 It is proposed that where projects within the Council's Capital Programme would align with CIL principles (for example linked to growth) and align with the Council's strategic policies and ambitions:

- CIL is to be deemed as awarded; and
- CIL shall be used efficiently and effectively with regard to other forms of funding. The extent of CIL funding to be awarded shall be determined by the Council's S151 Officer (who has the statutory responsibility to ensure best use of Council resources – including CIL).

3.38 The approach enables the S151 officer to review the funding of capital projects in a rounded way and best determine what sources of funding are best suited for the project demands whilst also looking at the Council's wider financial position. It would also enable the ability for projects to effectively be 'forward funded'; and other solutions such as retaining the Council's borrowing and reserves for other activities or future projects.

3.39 This approach enables an agile, responsive and responsible approach to the application of CIL funds towards projects which would benefit the District. It would also support the effective delivery of the Council's Capital Programme. There is established governance in place pertaining to the capital programme, and the CIL team would also retain involvement in

projects that are funded as they are now. Regular updates on the capital programme are also provided regularly to Members via financial reports; and the Council would continue to report these projects within the annual IFS. As such, there are satisfactory governance controls in place.

Time period – date of decision of 31st December 2028

- 3.40 Given the proposed LGR timeline, with new authorities being established from 1st April 2028, the approach here can only be for a time-limited basis so that it does not bind the future authority post LGR when HDC ceases to exist. It is considered reasonable to allow a level of transition in relation to the approaches suggested here, albeit decisions post 1st April 2028 will be for the new authority.
- 3.41 It is therefore recommended that the approaches set be taken from the date of decision, to 31st December 2028 to allow an appropriate period for transition.

How do the proposed approaches align with those within the CIL Governance agreed in June 2024?

- 3.42 The table below seeks to summarise and correlate the established principles (column 1) with the Strategic Allocation approach (column 2) and the Capital Programme approach (column 3).

	Key principles / 'statement of intent' for the council's agreed governance and approach to CIL are:	Strategic Allocation of CIL (formerly known as Strategic Priority Programme)	Use of CIL towards projects in Councils Capital Programme
1	The primary use of CIL is to fund infrastructure that is directly linked to supporting or mitigating the impact of growth and new development.	ALIGNED – The proposed approach maintains this as a core principle, to unlock or support growth and its impacts. These projects will do this at greater scale.	ALIGNED – CIL would only be awarded to applicable Council projects which support growth, unlock growth, or manage impacts.
2	CIL funded projects can also contribute towards achieving the outcomes identified in the council's Corporate Plan and Place Strategy	ALIGNED – Strategic projects at scale are more likely to be aligned to achieving aims of strategic policies and outcomes.	ALIGNED – Projects within the Councils Capital Programme should already have this alignment; and there are significant projects which the Council seeks to deliver against these strategies which benefit the district as a whole, whether that is residents and immediate communities, visitors within and to the district, or our businesses. The Council has previously granted CIL funding towards applicable Council projects. Eg Hinchingbrooke Country Park. CIL would continue to be awarded to applicable Council projects that respond to these.
3	CIL should be used in a way which leverages other sources of funding for greater impact.	ALIGNED – Strategic projects are often going to require a mix of funding sources; new and innovative models may be required including the National Wealth Fund, and National Housing Bank; as well as other forms of patient capital or Government funding. Some projects may require forward funding to unlock development, which then repays towards upfront investment in infrastructure or facilities.	ALIGNED – Projects within the Councils Capital Programme require investment from the Councils owned funds, and sometimes this is from Reserves or Borrowing. The Council also seeks to secure external funding where it is possible – for example Sport England. These principles would continue to be attributable. From a wider financial aspect, utilisation of CIL funding (even as forward funding), as opposed the Council borrowing, offers the Council wider financial scope to do other things and maximise impact, as well as aligning with the efficient and effective use of resources in the Corporate Plan.

	Key principles / 'statement of intent' for the council's agreed governance and approach to CIL are:	Strategic Allocation of CIL (formerly known as Strategic Priority Programme)	Use of CIL towards projects in Councils Capital Programme
4	The use of CIL should be considered alongside other developer contributions to maximise site-specific benefits (for example: Affordable housing).	<p>ALLIGNED – As with the above, strategic projects at scale require differing models to ensure delivery. One such example would be funding of highway improvements, in exchange for a greater level of Affordable Housing delivery on site in order to balance viability.</p> <p>Housing delivery in particular on large sites is well documented as being challenging in viability terms due to up-front investment required, this strategic approach allows housing delivery to be supported.</p>	<p>ALLIGNED – These principles would continue to be attributable. Delivery of projects within the Councils Capital Programme (for example investment in sports or play facilities) may mean that the approach to future S106 agreements will be on a case by case basis with a view to maximising infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery across those sites.</p> <p>Another example is the potential working with health partners to invest in our Leisure estate and facilitate health opportunities, thus reducing requests from health partners to offset growth impacts – or secure specific improvements through S106s.</p>
5	A new approach to allocating CIL should follow a programme-led, evidence-based approach.	<p>ALLIGNED – This approach responds to this key principle, but also respects the changing context created by LGR; and the emerging Local Plan; as well as national changes and reform of the Planning system.</p> <p>It is also responsive to the additional requirements being placed on the CPCA, including the Local Growth Plan, and potential for future Mayoral CIL.</p>	<p>ALLIGNED – Projects within the Councils Capital Programme are strategy-led, evidence-led and programme-led and align with the HLP2036 and HLP2046. The Council endorses its Capital Programme annually, with minor additions in year. Large projects forming that pipeline undergo rigorous appraisal of alignment, need, deliverability, and impact; as well as consideration of all other business case factors such as affordability. Projects then form part of the Councils wider project and programme management approach to ensure efficient and effective use of resources.</p> <p>These principles would continue to be attributable.</p>
6	A new approach to CIL should recognise the importance of working with partners to deliver infrastructure.	<p>ALLIGNED – Strategic projects at scale are more likely to require a range of partners, and aligned to achieving collective aims.</p>	<p>ALLIGNED – Alongside the comments in line 2, projects within the Councils Capital Programme often include working with partners internally and externally.</p> <p>The Council has strong external partnerships, and some of the Capital Programme projects include outcomes sought by other partners. Such as Sport England on 3G pitch investment; Education providers at Sawtry Swimming pool; Health partners at One Leisure sites; and Environmental partners at Hinchingbrooke Country Park.</p> <p>These principles would continue to be attributable.</p>

	<p>Key principles / 'statement of intent' for the council's agreed governance and approach to CIL are:</p>	<p>Strategic Allocation of CIL (formerly known as Strategic Priority Programme)</p>	<p>Use of CIL towards projects in Councils Capital Programme</p>
7	<p>There should be greater alignment between local and district-wide priorities.</p>	<p>ALLIGNED – The approach maintains this principle, linked to point 2. But it does not preclude continued funding of more localised projects which can continue to come forward through CIL rounds.</p>	<p>ALLIGNED – The Council has an anchor institution role, working in the best interests of the whole of the District. The Capital Programme evolves annually, and includes various projects which benefit the District, beyond specific areas – for example investment in Fleet (such as refuse freighters) responds to growth across all areas.</p> <p>Alongside the comments in line 1, projects within the Councils Capital Programme should already have this alignment; and seeks to deliver benefit to the district as a whole, whether that is residents and immediate communities, visitors within and to the district, or our businesses.</p> <p>For example, CIL has been awarded to schemes within the Market Towns Programme previously (which also fall within the Capital Programme) which will not only benefit immediate areas (eg St Neots) but offer facilities which can be accessed by other residents who visit those areas; visitors from beyond the District; and businesses on a direct and indirect basis.</p> <p>These principles would continue to apply.</p>

What are the benefits of the approaches?

Benefits	Strategic Allocation of CIL (formerly known as Strategic Priority Programme)	Use of CIL towards projects in Councils Capital Programme
Completes existing work on CIL Governance improvements – including a programme-led, evidence-led, strategic approach.	Yes	Yes
Clarity of allocation, award of funding process pre-LGR structural order and during transition	Yes	Yes
Efficient and effective use of resources to deliver projects which deliver outcomes at scale; support growth; compliment the District and align with agreed strategies.	Yes	Yes
Ability to transparently demonstrate that the Council is not holding large levels of CIL funding with no identified intention or purpose.	Yes	Yes
Prudent financial management by the Council	Yes	Yes
Respects and recognises the Councils role in responding to the needs and demands of the District as a whole, including supporting growth, and delivering outcomes.	Yes	Yes
Positions HDC as a forward thinking innovative Council, seeking to ensure infrastructure delivery to support an ambitious growth agenda.	Yes	Yes
Provides solutions at scale, which support the Corporate and Place Strategy objectives for the benefit of the District as a whole.	Yes	Yes

How would funding work?

3.43 The Council is progressing a number of ambitious capital projects that will support economic growth across the district through the provision of infrastructure required to accommodate future development. If these projects were to be funded wholly through borrowing, the associated financing costs would be substantial. Although such costs would be affordable, they would materially reduce the net income generated by these schemes, limiting the resources available to deliver wider long-term benefits for residents.

3.44 PWLB interest rates remain elevated at close to 6%, although forecasts indicate that rates may fall to circa 2% over the coming years. By way of illustration, borrowing £10m at current rates would result in annual interest costs of approximately £0.6m. If borrowing could instead be deferred until

interest rates reduce as expected, the annual interest cost would fall by around £0.4m, representing a significant recurrent saving.

- 3.45 In addition to interest costs, local authorities are required to make an annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to ensure that the principal element of borrowing can be repaid at the end of the loan term. MRP is charged over the estimated useful life of the asset being financed, which for major infrastructure is typically around 50 years. On this basis, the annual MRP associated with £10m of borrowing would be approximately £0.2m. The combined annual revenue cost of interest and MRP would therefore be in the region of £0.8m per £10m of borrowing at current rates.
- 3.46 The Council currently holds approximately £38m of unallocated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts. While there are plans for their future use, it is not anticipated that a significant proportion of this expenditure will be required for several years. The proposal to utilise CIL funding to a greater extent than has typically been seen as precedent, in support of the Council's capital programme, would materially reduce the requirement to fund schemes from either reserves or borrowing. This, in turn, would strengthen the Council's future financial flexibility and improve its options in relation to the timing and scale of any future borrowing.

How would infrastructure be funded if CIL is insufficient/unavailable?

- 3.47 There may be concerns that the allocation of CIL through the proposed approach could reduce available balances to a level that limits the Council's ability to fund other infrastructure at a particular point in time. This is a valid consideration. However, the alternative risk is that the Council continues to accumulate increasing CIL balances while awaiting specific projects that may not materialise for a number of years, resulting in funds being held without delivering timely benefit. A balanced and proportionate approach is therefore required, as set out elsewhere in this report.
- 3.48 Importantly, the use of CIL in this way does not prevent future CIL-funded schemes from progressing. CIL receipts will continue to be replenished through ongoing development, and any future funding shortfall can be addressed through alternative means, including borrowing at a time when PWLB interest rates are expected to be materially lower than those currently available. The Council also retains flexibility to offset or effectively repay CIL deployed in the short term through increased revenue generated by the assets delivered, or by leveraging that enhanced revenue profile to support future borrowing where appropriate.
- 3.49 The range of funding models available to local authorities continues to evolve, particularly in the context of reduced Government grant funding. In addition to the use of CIL and reserves, this includes public-sector borrowing (e.g. PWLB), public-private partnerships, and private investment supported by guarantees or future income streams. The appropriate funding model will be determined on a project-by-project basis, informed by the relevant business case. There are now well-established examples of councils forward-funding infrastructure and

repaying that investment over time through mechanisms such as Section 106 contributions or additional development-related income, including business rates.

3.50 Overall, this approach supports prudent financial management by reducing exposure to adverse interest rate movements and avoiding the inefficiency of borrowing at historically high rates while holding significant balances that are not generating tangible benefits for the district. The use of CIL funding in this context does not preclude the Council from deploying alternative funding approaches for future projects, all of which would remain subject to detailed appraisal and approval at the appropriate time.

What minimum level of CIL funding

3.51 There may be concerns that the approach here could result in the level of CIL funds that the Council holds being diminished in a relatively short timescale, and that this would hinder the ability of other projects to come forward which would deliver against strategic or local aims.

3.52 This should be balanced with the general direction that Councils should not be 'sitting' on unspent S106 and CIL funds. There has been recent research undertaken by the Home Builders Federation (HBF) [Unspent developer contributions](#) as well as some relevant press articles: [Councils holding billions in unspent section 106 contributions](#), [Home Builders Federation report claims / How Councils Hoard Unspent Developer Contributions while Infrastructure Crumbles \[October 2025 Update\]](#) - [Urbanist Architecture - Small Architecture Company London](#)

3.53 It is clearly a balance between spending funding and holding funding pending the need and ability to deliver more costly schemes, which may unlock more growth opportunities. Due regard also should be given to delivery rates and the CIL income collected year on year. As set out above if the approaches in this paper are adopted, a balanced approach can be taken forward.

3.54 It is proposed that a provision of £3-5m should be retained as a minimum figure in order to maintain a level of funding available to support future funding rounds. It is suggested that this is reviewed by the S151 at least annually based on income received through housing delivery and the emerging pipeline of projects (Council or external). This would manage the financial exposure; enable a regular review; and allow for forward financial planning should borrowing, forward funding or other funding be required to deliver the pipeline and support growth.

3.55 Retaining a figure in this order would also allow sufficient scope for more localised projects to come forward through funding rounds (these are often smaller in ask), as well as allowing for the administration of CIL (for which the Council can draw down 5%).

Delegations

3.56 There is already an existing delegation in place pertaining to CIL funding applications, where the value is less than £100k. This is working well. This enables decisions to be taken in a robust, efficient and effective way. This has appropriate oversight from both Place and Finance perspectives, as well as consultation with the administration of the Council via the relevant portfolio holders.

3.57 The Councils Corporate Director (Finance and Resources and Section 151 Officer) has operational and technical oversight and statutory responsibility for the management of the Councils funds (including reserves and CIL) within the overall strategy and policy framework agreed by Council. Where projects form part of the Councils agreed Capital Programme, the responsibility rests with the S151 Officer to facilitate, and manage financial implications, including how projects are funded, whether that is by Reserves, borrowing or other avenues.

3.58 In respect of the use of CIL towards projects in Councils Capital Programme; these projects will have been endorsed by Council as those which the Council wants to deliver. Typically, it would then fall to the S151 to find the most appropriate avenue to fund them. There is no reason, where those fit with the CIL approach as set out, that the Council could not utilise levels of CIL funding, as opposed to use of Reserves or borrowing. Each of these would continue to be subject of a worked-up business case which would be reviewed by the S151, as per the Councils existing, internal capital project management arrangements. It is therefore considered reasonable for how CIL funding is applied to eligible projects on the Councils Capital Programme to be determined by the S151 Officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance and resources.

3.59 As an extension of this, consideration of which Council Capital Programme projects may benefit from funding, and the extent, based on outcomes and strategic alignment also requires input from the relevant areas of the Place function. Projects will still be appraised against the CIL criteria by the CIL team (within Planning) and that team will remain responsible for administering and monitoring CIL. As such, it is considered reasonable, and reflective of the existing delegation for under £100k applications, that the Corporate Director – Place, along with the Chief Planning Officer, Leader and Portfolio Holder for planning should be involved in final decisions regarding which Council projects are funded.

3.60 A delegation provision is recommended as an efficient and effective measure; it enables an ability to be agile and ensure that the agreed Capital Programme is delivered in an effective way. Risks are appropriately managed through the internal checks and balances with the CIL approach, as well as the agreement process (including consultation with Members). These also represent formal decisions which will be communicated transparently – noting that all CIL awards are reported via the IFS and updates to Cabinet etc. Further, the Capital Programme is regularly reviewed by Members and updated annually. This approach would negate the limitations that currently exist with CIL projects where they are beholden to specific consideration windows and the O&S and Cabinet cycles. For example, if a proposal needs to increase its funding

award, the only method to do so is via this meeting process. This is cumbersome, creates an additional burden, and can hinder capital project delivery where prices can fluctuate in a short space of time. When the risks and rewards of this approach are considered in the round, there is no reason why such a delegation should not be considered.

- 3.61 Cabinet would continue to see those non-Council projects, or Council projects which fall outside of the agreed Capital Programme where there is a value of over £100k (existing delegation limit); and O&S can review these if they wish.
- 3.62 The Council is also required to publish annually its Infrastructure Funding Statement, which includes CIL monies received and awarded, and project delivery. As such, this adds a further level of transparency as this is provided to Government for review.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 The key impact from not reviewing the governance process will be the potential for certain infrastructure projects not being delivered due to CIL funding not being available or allocated appropriately and in a timely manner
- 5.2 Subject to the recommendations in this report being supported, the key risk elements are likely to include, but not limited to:
- 5.3 **Budget Management Risk:** It will be important to ensure spend is within appropriately set cost parameters for each step of the programme. This will be considered against the overall programme funding profile with oversight by the Chief Planning Officer where necessary. Funding will be from the CIL Admin 'pot' as permitted within the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The S151 also has overall technical and operational responsibility for ensuring the prudent and compliant use of all Councils resources, and will retain overall responsibility in this regard.
- 5.4 **Engagement with partners:** The Council has a positive and proactive approach to partnership working, supported through the Corporate Plan and Places Strategy. It is recognised that partners, both internal and external, are experiencing many resourcing and priority pressures and so a structure programme of engagement will be established to look at bringing this into all partners business as usual work, recognising the corporate priority for this work. Any issues will be reported back to the Chief Planning Officer.
- 5.5 **Legislation changes:** The government has announced that CIL could be replaced by a new Infrastructure Levy, as outlined in the Levelling-up and

Regeneration Act 2023. In addition with proposed Mayoral SDS and MCIL there will be an impact on local CIL collection. More information is expected though 2026.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 To be implemented immediately, and run until the 31st December 2028 to align with LGR timescales. With new authorities being established from 1st April 2028, the approach here can only be for a time-limited basis so that it does not bind the future authority post LGR when HDC ceases to exist. It is considered reasonable to allow a level of transition in relation to the approaches suggested here, albeit decisions post 1st April 2028 will be for the new authority.
- 6.2 It is therefore recommended that the approaches set be taken from the date of decision, to 31st December 2028 to allow an appropriate period for transition.

7. LINK TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES, THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

(See Corporate Plan)(See Huntingdonshire Futures)

- 7.1 The proposals would align with and continue to facilitate the overall strategic vision as set out in the Place Strategy.
- 7.2 In respect of the Corporate Plan, considerations relating to CIL in the context of this report cut across all of the 3 key themes of the plan. In particular regard has been had to the following:
 - Improved housing - 27. Maintain the level of new housing delivery, which meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing).
 - Forward-thinking economic growth - 39. Influence delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies
- 7.3 As per comments elsewhere in the report, the proposal has been drafted in such a way that compliments the existing and emerging Local Plans; as well as aligning with the ambitions of the CPCA Local Growth Plan.
- 7.4 The proposed approaches are consistent with, and will be delivered through, the Council's existing financial governance framework, including the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Capital Strategy. The use of CIL to support eligible projects within the Capital Programme will be considered alongside other funding sources as part of the Council's annual budget-setting and capital planning processes, ensuring affordability, sustainability and alignment with medium-term financial planning assumptions.

- 7.5 Decisions on the application of CIL funding will therefore complement the Capital Strategy's objectives of minimising revenue financing costs, managing borrowing prudently, and maintaining financial resilience, and will be reflected in updates to the MTFS and Capital Programme as appropriate.
- 7.6 Finally, the proposals would have alignment with the ambitions of "Option E" which is the Council's preferred approach in respect of LGR; as the proposals link to the delivery of ambitious growth within the District. Reputationally, the proposals would also continue to demonstrate that the Council is aligned with addressing significant national challenges, such as those relating to the delivery of housing and provision of infrastructure.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Regulation 59 (1) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) requires a charging authority to apply CIL to funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area. It may also, under Regulation 59 (3), support infrastructure outside its area where to do so would support the development of its area.
- 8.2 Passing CIL to another person for that person to apply to funding the provision, improvement, replace, operation and maintenance of infrastructure is also permitted under Regulation 59 (4).
- 8.3 Section 216 (2) of the Planning Act 2008 as amended by Regulation 63 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended) states that infrastructure 'includes [and is therefore not limited to]: (a) roads and other transport facilities (b) flood defences (c) schools and other educational facilities (d) medical facilities (e) sporting and recreational facilities (f) open spaces.'
- 8.4 The Strategic levy may not be used to fund affordable housing.
- 8.5 The Council enters into contract arrangements with any organisation that is allocated CIL funding. A template contract has been reviewed with the Council's legal team and continues to be engaged with new contracts as they are developed.

9. FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposals set out in this report have no immediate adverse impact on the Council's revenue budget. The application of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding towards eligible capital projects where they align with growth objectives reduces the Council's reliance on borrowing and reserves, thereby limiting exposure to financing costs and supporting the efficient use of available resources.
- 9.2 Where CIL is utilised in support of the Council's Capital Programme, this will be managed within the existing capital governance framework and

overseen by the Section 151 Officer, ensuring that funding decisions reflect overall affordability, cash flow and medium-term financial sustainability. The approach supports the objectives of the Capital Strategy by reducing the need to borrow at a time of elevated interest rates and by preserving borrowing capacity for future priorities.

- 9.3 The Council will retain a minimum CIL balance to support future infrastructure funding rounds and short-term priorities, with the level of this balance subject to ongoing review as part of the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement, MTFS and capital planning processes.
- 9.4 Any future borrowing required to support infrastructure delivery will be considered in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, taking account of prevailing market conditions at the time. All decisions relating to the use of CIL, reserves or borrowing will remain subject to detailed financial appraisal and Member oversight through established budget and capital programme reporting arrangements.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 It is considered that there would be no greater resource implication than currently exists. The administration of CIL is funded via the CIL receipts as per the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to supporting residents through a positive and ongoing working relationship with local communities. Delivery of certain infrastructure projects could support the health and wellbeing of our new, and existing, communities such as through health facilities or sports development. Such capital initiatives that support development would also directly contribute to positive health outcomes

12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that we continue to promote environmentally positive and sustainable projects supporting positive place-making. The new arrangements can play an important role in influencing the applications for CIL funding to tackle climate change at the same time as enabling sustainable growth within their infrastructure proposals.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 13.1 The proposals within the paper represent Stage 2 of the CIL Governance proposals which were approved in June 2024.
- 13.2 The proposals respond to the changing landscape created by planning reform, and LGR; and seek to propose an approach which continues to

align with the core principles of the CIL Governance that has been approved.

- 13.3 The Strategic Approach seeks to establish a programme-led, evidence-led process for funding projects at scale and creation of a pipeline; and would also allow scope for 'forward funding' of infrastructure, and other solutions to funding approaches.
- 13.4 The use of CIL for projects in the Councils Capital Programme represents an agile, responsive and responsible approach to the application of CIL funds towards projects which would benefit the District; and the best use of money that is available to the Council to support the District. The approach would allow scope for the use of Council funds (including CIL) to be looked at in the most appropriate way, to ensure best use of public funds; and would also allow different solutions to be found, including forward funding.
- 13.5 The proposals would not change mechanism in collecting CIL; in the distribution of the meaningful proportion of CIL to Towns and Parishes; nor interfere or undermine the continued approach to supporting Parishes and Stakeholders delivering their infrastructure ambitions to support growth through bids to the strategic CIL 'pot'. Smaller projects (under £100k requests) can also continue to come forward and be determined quickly.
- 13.6 For the reasons set out throughout the report, the proposals and recommendations seek to provide a solution for the coming 2 years, during the transition connected with LGR, to the strategic allocation of CIL and the distribution of CIL towards projects which will benefit the District through the Councils Capital Programme.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[CIL Funding - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

[Community Infrastructure Levy Governance](#) – 18th June 2024

[Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024-25 \(CIL/S106\)](#)

[Local Plan Update - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

[Local Development Scheme – HLP2046](#)

[Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

[English Devolution White Paper : Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)

[English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill - GOV.UK](#)

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