

Worthing CIL Examination - Council's Opening Statement

Worthing Borough Council supports the introduction of a revised CIL Charging Schedule as a mechanism for developer contributions to help deliver key infrastructure to support new development in the Borough.

CIL was implemented in Worthing in October 2015 and has been progressing well with the amount of funds collected starting to grow over the last two years. The processes have now been established to prioritise which projects are to receive CIL funding.

To ensure that the CIL charges remain robust, and reflect the prevailing economic conditions, the Council decided to review its existing charging schedule. Although there is no set time limit on updating a charging schedule, a review at this time reflects best practice advice and allows the Council to consider and review some of the key viability challenges that have been experienced since the Council's first charging rates were established. It was also apparent that some elements of the existing charge would benefit from review, such as the nil charge Wards and the viability of large scale flatted developments.

The Council has been working towards the adoption of the revised CIL charging schedule since 2018 during which time there have been a number of changes to guidance and legislation. Despite these changes the Council is confident that the revised Draft Charging Schedule has been developed in line with guidance and in consultation with key stakeholders.

In setting the CIL rate the Council has had regard to its Development Plan (the Core Strategy), its emerging Local Plan and detailed evidence on infrastructure planning and the economic viability evidence of the development market in Worthing.

A key point here is that the Council has recognised the viability challenge of bringing forward flatted schemes on PDL and has significantly reduced the charge. However, in setting what is a nominal charge for such developments it has sought to strike the appropriate balance between viability and securing a contribution towards meeting infrastructure costs to support new development.

The Council can confirm that:

- The revised Draft Charging Schedule has been prepared in accordance with the statutory procedures set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (as amended).
- The revised Draft Charging Schedule has been prepared in consideration of the Council's existing Core Strategy, emerging Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- The revised Draft Charging Schedule has been consulted on in accordance with the consultation requirements detailed in Regulations 16 and 17 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (as amended).
- Using reasonable assumptions, the Council has produced a sufficient amount of evidence to inform conclusions about the impact of the proposed CIL rates on the viability of a number of development scenarios. The evidence which has been used to inform the revised Draft Charging Schedule (including the development scenarios tested) is proportionate, appropriate and robust.
- The evidence suggests that the overall development of the area will not be put at risk if the CIL is charged on residential and retail development at the rates proposed in the revised Draft Charging Schedule.

In summary, the Council is confident that the rates have been prepared in compliance with legislation and guidance and that full regard has been given to the available evidence. As such, it is hoped that the revised Worthing CIL Charging Schedule is approved so that it can provide a consistent and transparent mechanism to secure financial contributions from development to deliver essential supporting infrastructure.