

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 March 2023

Draft Minute 73 - Community Infrastructure Levy SIP2 Assessment Process

The Committee received the report on Community Infrastructure Levy SIP2 Assessment Process. The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery thanked officers for their work on the methodology and process and invited Members to ask questions on the report. In response, the following clarifications were provided:

Bids from the previous round of bids SIP1

Several of the bids from the previous round were not deliverable or the original bidders chose not to deliver. No bids were carried over into the current round, so this increased the amount of strategic CIL funding available for the current bids.

Deliverability

In responding to the failure of these previous bids, the new assessment appraisal criteria gave a much higher ranking to certainty and effective delivery, reducing somewhat the criteria of Value for Money and Match Funding. Progress on funded projects would continue to be reviewed and assessed on an annual basis.

Assessment of business plans

In assessing bids there had to be a balance between the information provided and work undertaken by the Council at the initial bidding stage. Analysis of applicants' detailed business plans was not part of the initial bid process; business plans and other matters such as legal requirements would be followed up and assessed as part of the ongoing monitoring of implementation.

Scoring strategy

Assessing the "need" for a project on an individual basis was complex and difficult, and this is why a range of different criteria had been adopted. Additionally, the Council was looking to benefits being delivered to the wider community, reflecting a wider definition of needs.

Annual review

There would be an annual process to check what was being delivered against what was expected, and the status of projects.

Funding

It was confirmed that funding was drawn down as each project progressed, and that further analysis of projects would take place before money was paid over, to maintain confidence that the project could be delivered, and that any match-funding or any other funding was in place. Continuing checks would also be made on delivery and deliverability.

Applicants would need to ensure that their bids built in appropriate contingencies into their costings. It was confirmed that the Council retained an overall 10% CIL contingency budget.

Comments

The Committee welcomed the focus on deliverability so that "quick wins" could be made and the benefits of CIL be visible to residents. However, there was some

concern that an over-emphasis on delivery could be to the disadvantage of larger and more complex projects which might give greater long-term benefit to the community.

Members suggested holding a reserve list or pipeline for possible projects which could be introduced should one of the approved bids falter or when better information was available.

It was noted that Members of Overview & Scrutiny would like more involvement in the CIL process in future.

RESOLVED – that the Committee

- i. Noted the approach taken by officers in the assessment of funding bids for the Community Infrastructure Levy Strategic Infrastructure Programme 2023-2027.
- ii. Made the observations set out above to the Executive when the proposed funding allocations for Strategic Infrastructure Programme 2023-2027 is scheduled for agreement.