

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Consultation Portal

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Wandlebury Country Park
Cambridge CB22 3AE

Phone 01223 - 243830
www.cambridgeppf.org

Response to Consultation on Draft Community Infrastructure Levy

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxtton Watermill.

Question 1: Who are you responding on behalf of?

Other - Civic Society

Question 2: Do you wish to participate in the CIL examination?

No

Question 3: Do you agree that the Council should introduce CIL?

Yes, in principle. The CPPF supports the introduction of a CIL to ensure that small-scale developments, which currently escape significant contributions under Section 106, contribute to the area's infrastructure. However, our support is contingent on the levy being used as a holistic funding tool rather than a narrow mechanism for specific transport projects

Question 4: Do you agree that the Council has demonstrated a funding gap?

Yes. There is a clear and documented funding gap for essential infrastructure. However, we are concerned that the current proposal focuses almost exclusively on transport infrastructure to fund Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) projects. A true assessment of the 'gap' must equally prioritise health, education, and green infrastructure, which are currently sidelined in this proposal.

Question 5: Do you agree that the Council has used appropriate evidence to inform the proposed rates?

No. While we acknowledge the intent to capture revenue from commercial developments that currently pay nothing, the evidence used to set the residential rate appears flawed:

- Insufficient Residential Levy: The proposed £60/sqm for housing is significantly too low. It generates approximately £4.2k per dwelling, which pales in comparison to the £35k average currently secured via Section 106.
- Infrastructure Shortfall: This rate fails to meet the actual costs of major infrastructure. For example, the Grange Farm A11 bridge requires roughly £10k per dwelling, a figure the proposed CIL cannot meet.

Question 6: Do you agree that the Council has struck an appropriate balance between additional investment to support development and the potential effect on the viability of developments?

No response

Question 7: Do you agree that it is clear how CIL will operate alongside Section 106 Planning Obligations?

No. The current proposal creates a "bun fight" where transport infrastructure is positioned to receive its funding slice first. This creates an inequitable system where:

- Transport is prioritised at the expense of other essential services.
- Health, education, and green infrastructure remain reliant on Section 106, which will continue to fail to capture contributions from smaller sites. We argue that for a 'balance' to be struck, all infrastructure types must be funded equitably to address existing service shortfalls.

Question 8: Do you agree that the draft instalment policy strikes the right balance between income and developer cashflow?

No response

Question 9: Do you agree that the Council has met all regulatory requirements?

No response

Question 10: Do you have any comments on how you feel the neighbourhood portion should be distributed?

The neighbourhood portion must be distributed transparently to ensure that the communities directly impacted by development see tangible benefits. Given the proposed low CIL rate for housing, there is a significant risk that the neighbourhood portion will be too small to fund meaningful local improvements, further highlighting the need to revise the £60/sqm rate upward.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer