

South Worcestershire Councils

Community Infrastructure Levy Examination Hearing

The Guildhall, Worcester 29 - 30 November 2016

Opening Statement

1. The South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon have been progressing towards the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), having developed it concurrently with the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), since 2013. The SWDP Vision and development strategy for the plan period includes the provision of 28,400 dwellings, 300ha of employment land and 39,500m² of retail floorspace.
2. The SWDP was adopted in February 2016 by the three local authorities. The CIL will help to underpin the strategy for growth, outlined above and ensure the delivery of the infrastructure required to support sustainable development in the SWDP plan area to 2030.
3. A recurring issue raised through the consultation on the SWDP was the perceived existing lack of infrastructure, and the need to ensure that new development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure provision so that existing deficiencies are not exacerbated. These concerns are acknowledged by the SWC and the preparation of the SWDP involved the rigorous assessment and examination of the infrastructure required to deliver the plan, initially set out in the 2013 and 2014 South Worcestershire Infrastructure Delivery Plans (SWIDP) and then updated in the July 2016 edition that forms part of the background evidence in support of the submitted CIL.
4. Since the commencement of the CIL work in 2013 the SWC have undertaken four rounds of consultation and engagement with interested parties, stakeholders and the community at the CIL Preliminary Draft Charging and CIL Draft Charging Schedule stages. On each occasion the consultation has been supported by robust and up to date evidence.
5. In testing the viability the SWC have sought professional advice, from HDH Planning and Development, to help determine the appropriate level of CIL rates. The initial viability studies published in 2013, have been updated at each consultation stage or throughout the process (2013; 2014), with the latest version produced in early 2016 to support the CIL Draft Charging Schedule consultation stage. These studies have consistently sought to strike the appropriate balance between the desirability of funding infrastructure through CIL and the potential effect these charges may have on the economic viability of development across south Worcestershire. The viability evidence is

also based on a series of high level and cautious assumptions that are appropriate for a plan-wide study of this nature.

6. The Regulation 123 List has been compiled in consultation with stakeholders, interested parties and communities, as well as being prepared in close association with Worcestershire County Council. The SWC have also adopted a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (October 2016) to support the SWDP7 Infrastructure policy and provide guidance to developers relating to how contributions will be determined and subsequently sought for development proposals.
7. The Councils propose a practical and cautious approach in setting the CIL charging rates to ensure that development across the SWDP area remains viable and achievable. Therefore the SWC firmly believe that the rates in the draft Charging Schedule are founded on a robust and credible evidence base which has taken into account the best available evidence, and up to date guidance.
8. To conclude, the SWC would commend this proposed CIL charging schedule to the Examiner. The SWC believe that it has reached the appropriate balance between ensuring the provision of funding for infrastructure to support the development set out in the SWDP, whilst ensuring that development remains viable, deliverable and sustainable.

Cllr Geoff Williams

Chairman of the South Worcestershire Joint Advisory Panel

Worcester City Council

29/11/16