

Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture)

17 September 2013

Community Infrastructure Levy – Draft Charging Schedule

Comments to Executive Board

The Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) considered the draft charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) at its meeting on 17 September 2013.

The Scrutiny Board would ask the Executive Board to take account of the following observations in agreeing the content of the draft charging schedule that will be published for formal public consultation.

Instalments policy

The Board welcomed the fact that payment of the CIL would start to be payable as soon as a development commenced on site, rather than awaiting completion of a project.

Some concern was expressed at the spread of payments over a two year period for some developments, and the potential for the infrastructure associated with the development needing to be funded before CIL payments are completed. In response it was emphasised that this extended payment period would only be available for the very largest developments, which were unlikely to be completed quickly.

Retail rates

Some members of the Board felt that consideration could be given to setting a lower retail rate for town centres in some parts of the city (for example Armley, Bramley, Chapeltown) where the council wishes to positively encourage new retail development, especially in comparison to the city centre rate, although it was acknowledged that this would reduce the total amount of CIL received.

In response it was explained that the council did not have the evidence base that would be required to support such a distinction at the formal public examination stage. Members were also reminded that there were other mechanisms that are available to encourage development in these areas.

Revised rates

We asked for reassurance that the Executive Member and officers were comfortable with the proposed reductions in some of the CIL rates from the preliminary schedule, and that these were sufficiently robust to respond to potential improvements in the economy. Within the limitations of the CIL

process being a completely new approach, we were assured that it was felt that the proposed rates could be defended at the public examination stage.

We noted that once the CIL schedule is set, any revision to rates will be required to go through a similar process of evidence gathering, consultation and public examination. It was therefore anticipated that most authorities would wait at least three years before considering any changes.

Allocation of CIL resources

We noted that decisions on spending priorities and local apportionment of the CIL is a separate workstream, for consideration at a later date.

We recommend that the Executive Board requires that the Scrutiny Board is notified of the timetable and given the opportunity to be involved in this work at the appropriate time.