

Fitzrovia West neighbourhood CIL meeting

Tuesday 15th February 2022 6:00 PM at the Fitzrovia Centre

Introduction

Julia Haythorn (Forum Executive) chaired the meeting. Julia thanked the Fitzrovia Centre for providing the room and briefly introduced the topic of CIL. The neighbourhood plan has been adopted. As a result the Forum is able to apply for up to 25% of CIL money generated in the Neighbourhood Area. We have set up a CIL sub committee which will look at applications and assess them in accordance with Westminster Council criteria and will assist applicants. We have a draft protocol for this process which will be put on the website once it has been formally approved.

The purpose of today's meeting was to gather ideas for CIL projects. These would be put up on the website. Any other suggestions can be made via the website or by the CIL committee.

Amit Mistry, Principal Policy Officer of Westminster Council

Amit gave a full explanation about how CIL works:

(1) General. The purpose of CIL was to relieve pressure on the Area resulting from development. That is some £550,000 awaiting application in the Area. The council takes a pragmatic view of the eligibility requirements. CIL can be applied to a broad spectrum of infrastructure. Applications need to be on the correct form and endorsed by the Forum. Anyone can propose a project providing they can demonstrate that they have the support of the Forum and a consensus that the project is for the benefit of the community. Amit reviews applications for admissibility. The Westminster Council CIL committee then decides whether to grant them. It is a quarterly process and the next deadline is the 7th of March 2022.

(2) What can CIL be applied for? Successful applications have included the Mayfair green route; improvements to school classrooms; road crossings; the writing of

neighbourhood plans; and Paddington rec. Possible other candidates would be: other types of open space; children's play areas; cycle stands; widening pavements; new bins; notices on bollards giving the times of collection of rubbish; a study for a low traffic neighbourhood; an air quality survey if it was part of structural funding (possibly); playgrounds and sports grounds; refurbishing local benches; road bollards.

(3) **Unsuccessful applications** have been few but have included an application where on private land with no match funding and an application by a church to restore a piano which did not amount to infrastructure. Public art is not considered to be infrastructure.

(4) **Maintenance** would not normally be funded by CIL but rather by the Council (if the project is on the Highway or Council land) or the landowner (if the project was on private land). Maintenance. The Committee may attach a condition requiring revenue funding to be provided by the applicant but the award might extend to maintenance if there were extenuating circumstances. CIL can however be applied to maintenance in the sense replacing existing defective infrastructure such as old school windows. It cannot be applied to salaries, ongoing cleaning or the running of a cafe. It cannot be applied to past expenditure.

(5) **Delivery and payment.** Traffic crossings or road repairs, the highways department would deliver. Payment may be made directly to a contractor. If the applicant pays for the work Westminster will discharge the invoices.

(6) **Match funding.** Westminster council's preference is for match funding if the project costs exceed 50,000 pounds but match funding is not a necessity except where the project is on private land where it is essential.

Julia thanked Amit for attending.

Existing or pending CIL applications

Gwilym Harbottle (Forum Executive) explained the Forum's current CIL application to place 12 planters at 6 sites on New Cavendish Street, which will be determined on 21 February.

Nick Bailey explained that there is another application which is for the refurbishment of the Soho Poly theatre in Riding House Street. The school in that street is preparing an application to make the playground more sustainable. The school is trying to get match funding.

Donna Yay, the Director of the Fitzrovia Centre explained that it indicated that the Centre was considering making an application or the creation of a cafe using pro bono design from Arup.

Other updates

Nick Bailey (Forum Executive) explained the current position on Riding House Street. This is a school street which is supposed to be closed to traffic during the day. However, there is no physical barrier to traffic going through and there have been difficulties with drivers driving along the street at the wrong times. Nick explained that the traffic order could not be reviewed until the end of the six month period.

Nick also mentioned that the Oxford Street district project remains suspended for the time which means the plan for refurbishment and greening in Market Place is also on hold.

Julia Haythorn updated the meeting that the pocket park at the corner of New Cavendish St and Cleveland St will be refurbished by Westminster university.

Suggestions from the meeting for the application of CIL

- Cycle racks modelled on Banja Luka
- Planters with cycle racks attached
- Planting around the tree on Carburton Street
- Replacing the planters near Holcroft court.
- Upgrading the cycle racks near the Almost Saturday cafe.
- A children's playground (if a location could be found)
- Green walls
- Benches with green walls built into them (solar powered)
- Small on-street waste bins

- Rain gardens
- Trees on buildouts
- Cultivation of tree pits
- Opening up the school for the benefit of the community
- A corridor through the Fitzrovia Centre to the garden behind
- Refurbish the old swimming pool behind the Fitzrovia Centre (expensive)
- Notices on bollards giving the times of collection of rubbish
- A study for a low traffic neighbourhood
- An air quality survey
- Refurbishing local benches
- Road bollards.
- Pop ups of various kinds

Julia agreed to display these on the website and reminded people that it was open to them to make further suggestions once they had had time to consider what they had heard today.

GH

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