

Westminster Neighbourhood CIL Application Form



City of Westminster

City
for
All

FAQs

1 What is CIL and what can it be spent on?

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge on new development to help fund strategic and neighbourhood infrastructure in Westminster. This can include new or improved facilities for health, education, open spaces, sports and leisure, utilities and waste, transport and the public realm, and other social & community facilities.

Under CIL legislation, the neighbourhood portion must be spent on:

- the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area. This could include things such as new open space, cycle/pedestrian routes, strategic transport infrastructure and community facilities.

2 How much is my area entitled to?

Each designated Neighbourhood Area has a say over 15% of the CIL receipts collected in its area (capped at £100 per council tax paying dwelling). This rises to 25% of receipts (uncapped) where a Neighbourhood Forum has successfully adopted a neighbourhood plan for the area.

The council will retain the neighbourhood portion of CIL but must consult with local communities on how to spend it, in line with local priorities. This application form will help the council decide how to spend this portion of CIL in your area.

3 What will the council agree to fund in my area?

The council has agreed a CIL Spending Policy Statement that sets out the criteria against which it will judge applications. To be approved for funding, projects must:

- Be in line with Westminster's priorities and policies – they must address the principles and policies set out in Westminster's development plan and other relevant strategies.
- Support growth – they should support the growth of the Neighbourhood Area and Westminster as a whole.
- Be supported by the community – they should have demonstrable support from a cross-section of the community.
- Be cost effective – they should represent value for money and be delivered in a timely manner.
- Be supported by infrastructure providers – they should be supported by the organisation who will be delivering the project, including the relevant council department.

When you have completed your form, please email to cils106projects@westminster.gov.uk or post it to us at CIL application, Westminster City Council, Planning Policy, 17th floor, 64 Victoria Street, SW1E 6QP

If you have any questions, email the team at cils106projects@westminster.gov.uk

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Please provide details of your organisation and a named contact so we can inform you of the outcome of your application.

Applicant details

Neighbourhood Forum/ Community Organisation Details

N.B. where a designated neighbourhood forum exists, applications must be made by that body.

Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum

Named Contact

Nick Bailey

Email Address

baileyn@westminster.ac.uk

Telephone No.

02075804917

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Please set out how you have consulted with other community groups in your area on your proposal.

Consultation

Westminster Ward Councillors

Please give details of WCC ward councillors you have engaged on this proposal.

Cllr Tim Barnes, West End ward Councillor

Cllr Eoghain Murphy, representing Bryanston and Dorset Square ward. N.B. Cllr Murphy is standing in West End ward in May for the Conservative party. Soho Poly is in West End ward.

Businesses

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and/or individual businesses

The Fitzrovia Partnership

Residents

Residents' Associations or other residents groups

Middleton Place Residents Association

Amenity Societies/ Other Community Groups

Any amenity societies or other community groups in your area

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association

Please give details of your proposal including proposed timescales

Project Name and Location

The Soho Poly Theatre, 16 Riding House Street, Fitzrovia London -

Project Summary

(300 words max)

From 1972 to 1990, the Soho Poly was London's leading Alternative Theatre venue. It was a pioneer of 'lunchtime theatre', dedicated to widening access to the arts, and giving voice to underrepresented playwrights and performers, particularly women and those from BAME and LGBTQ+ communities. The theatre hosted an amazing collection of playwrights, actors and directors, such as Caryl Churchill, Timberlake Wertenbaker, Hanif Kureishi and Simon Callow. Many BBC producers from the nearby Broadcasting House also commissioned works first showcased at the Soho Poly.

Sadly, the much-loved basement venue was abandoned in 1990. In 2012, however, the space was rediscovered by playwright and Head of Creative Writing at the University of Westminster Dr Matt Morrison. Over the past decade, he and co-Creative Producer Guy Osborn have explored the Soho Poly's public engagement potential through pop-up festivals, new plays and exhibitions. This work has been supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the British Academy-sponsored Being Human festival, and many other arts organisations.

Already, the Soho Poly has forged dynamic relationships with local businesses, arts organisations, and community partners across Fitzrovia and beyond. It has also delivered outreach work to schools through its National Lottery-funded heritage projects. During lockdown it worked with Open Age and The Fitzrovia Centre, reducing isolation through a programme of online creative workshops.

A fully revived Soho Poly will build on this work to create a vibrant community hub for cultural exchange, inclusivity and wellbeing within Fitzrovia and the wider borough of Westminster. It will support the next generation of arts practitioners and enhance access to the arts in local communities.

To achieve our vision, the venue must be health and safety compliant. Capital works are urgently required to realise the enormous potential of this historic site as a major centre for London's post-Covid arts recovery and cultural revival.

Proposed Start Date

1 August 2022

Proposed Completion Date

1 October 2022

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CIL funding amount

Please give the amount of CIL funding you are applying for and any other funding that has been identified.

Total Project Cost

£398,400

CIL sought for allocation

£50,000

Other (non-CIL) funding identified to deliver project [please state source]

The University has paid substantially for complete architectural renders, designs and construction consultants' costs from Fulkers Bailey Russell. The total cost of the Soho Poly restoration is £398,400, and the University has already approved internal funding of £184,000 towards the renovation in addition to £22,000 in charitable donations, secured from The John Coates Charitable Trust and The Behrens Foundation. In November 2021 the University pledged a further £100,000 of internal support, on the provision that we raise the shortfall of £92,400 externally. With £50,000 of CIL funding, this would take us much closer to meeting the outstanding shortfall of £42,400 by August 2022, which is when we expect to commence building works.

The University cannot commit further funds at present, as it prioritizes our students' needs, and upgrading campuses and accommodation in this post-Covid world. However the University's financial commitment so far demonstrates the confidence of our Executive Board in the huge potential of our restored heritage theatre, to become a Community Hub and force for good for underrepresented and disadvantaged communities, and dramatically enhance our student employability. We were awarded funding of £88,300 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in April 2021 for our Soho Poly outreach and activities project; Soho Poly: Inspiring Future Generations, to save and record the theatre's intangible history for the future. This one-year community engagement project, led by Project Leads Matt Morrison and Guy Osborn, began in September 2021, and is working with 3 partner schools and the older people's charity Open Age.

Please provide details as to how your application matches the criteria we have set out in our CIL Spending Policy Statement.

Project Compliance with WCC CIL Spending Policy Statement

a. Be in line with Westminster's priorities and policies – how does your proposal address the principles and policies set out in the development plan for the area (including neighbourhood plans) and any other relevant strategy documents?

N.B. Westminster's development plan includes: the London Plan (2016); Westminster's City Plan (2016) and the accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (2007). 300 words max

This application is fully consistent with the following priorities and policies:

The London Plan includes policies such as HC5 (Supporting London's culture and creative industries), HC6 (Supporting the night-time economy) and S1 (Developing London's social infrastructure).

In the Westminster City Plan policy 17A and B (Community infrastructure and facilities) is the most relevant. Paragraph 17.1 offers the following definition:

17.1 / Community infrastructure and facilities are integral to supporting people's everyday lives, being used by residents, workers and visitors, and are a vital resource to support successful places and communities. Community infrastructure and facilities consist of:

- Health facilities e.g. hospitals, GP surgeries.
- Education facilities e.g. schools, nurseries, universities and colleges.
- Sports and leisure facilities e.g. leisure centres, swimming pools, outdoor playing pitches and Multi-Use Games Areas.
- Cultural facilities e.g. theatres, museums and art galleries.
- Social facilities e.g. meeting halls, public houses, libraries and places of worship

This application will increase the provision of cultural facilities and social facilities.

The Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Plan includes policy PR3 on Tourism, Arts, Culture and Entertainment Uses and PR4 on Retaining and Expanding Community Uses. PR4 (3) states 'development proposals for new community, health and sports facilities with access arrangements to meet the needs of all user groups and sections of the population will be supported'.

This application will regenerate a theatre which has not operated for 25 years and will thus attract visitors to the area and thus support the night-time economy. It will also provide a valuable venue for other public events such as meetings, lectures and readings of particular interest to residents and local businesses.

b. Supporting growth – how does the proposal support the growth of the neighbourhood area, and Westminster as a whole?

N.B. Proposals will not be considered for funding that are seeking to remedy pre-existing deficiencies, unless these are made more severe by new development.

300 words max

The Soho Poly will expand the cultural and social infrastructure in the Fitzrovia West locality and across the borough of Westminster, generating an immediate audience to the local area, benefiting bars, restaurants and other businesses in the neighbourhood.

The Soho Poly will be a non-profit organization ensuring that professional practitioners and community groups are able to use the space for no or minimum cost in return for the 'quid pro quo' offering of workshops, work experience and mentorship opportunities to the University and its partners.

Our 'quid pro quo' approach will offer a lifeline to local struggling companies and community groups which have seen budgets slashed in the wake of Covid-19, placing a reinvigorated Soho Poly at the forefront of the capital's arts recovery. This will offer opportunities to fledgling production companies, which have a need for affordable performance venues that are otherwise out of reach.

Local community organisations will benefit such as Open Age, the Fitzrovia Centre and Opening Doors London. Open Age are keen to host performing arts workshops in the Soho Poly for their members, and we aim to cater for 96 older people from Open Age, every 5 weeks, as part of our Wellbeing Week. Opening Doors London are interested in holding social events in the theatre, for their older LGBTQ+ members in addition to their Dementia groups. We will offer pupils at our diverse partner schools (32% in receipt of free school meals) – Careers Guidance and Performing Arts workshops, enhancing their aspirations for Higher Education.

A fully-operational venue - which is health and safety compliant with disabled access, is expected to generate attendance numbers up to 12,000 in its first year of operation, and more in future years. This is based on the 50 seat capacity, with 5 performances a week catering for 250 people.

c. Supported by the community – Is the proposal supported by the community? Please give details of how you have consulted with the groups named in section 2 and how such groups have expressed support for the proposal.

N.B. Support of at least two relevant WCC ward councillors will be required for funding proposals to proceed to allocation.

300 words max

We are delighted to have the support of Councilors Tim Barnes and Eoghain Leo Murphy and can request formal letters of support if necessary.

We held a drop-in session for local residents living in the area around the Soho Poly on the 26th January, to showcase our plans for the restored space. Over 20 people attended, and the session was overwhelmingly positive and well received by all attendees.

Project leads – Matt Morrison and Guy Osborn led the session – outlining our vision for the restored Soho Poly – as a vibrant community hub for inclusivity and wellbeing within Fitzrovia and wider borough of Westminster. Tim Robinson - representing our architects Rock Townsend showcased our proposed modifications to the space, so the Soho Poly can become a fully-operational venue – and open to the wider public, ensuring health and safety compliance with disabled access. Jordan Scammell and Jules Attanayake from the Development Team then led on our fundraising strategy to secure the necessary external funding required, and our outreach project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund – Soho Poly: Inspiring Future Generations. A recording of the presentation, along with the Q&A session can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IscxmPPxclw>

One attendee who brought her young son to the event commented:

“Firstly - I want to say we need more people like you guys in our community, because it’s very exciting what you’re doing, and it’s going to be absolutely great. It will be a fantastic resource for people who might be shift workers/ single parents living on their own who want to get out and meet people.”

Another attendee said:

“A friend asked me to ask you if you’d be prepared to rent out the space for a book launch?”

Matt Morrison’s response was:

“That’s exactly the type of event we’d like to run - and are really hoping that people come with creative social ideas in such a joyful collaborative way. We have run internal book launches before- and it was a wonderful coming together of creative people – so absolutely. Once we’re open and functioning – we will encourage people to come to us with ideas to benefit the community.”

d. Cost effective – does the proposal represent value for money and will it be delivered in a timely manner?

N.B. Proposals should show whether the allocation of funding could leverage additional resources to ensure it is delivered, and that the proposal can be sustained in to the future. Where appropriate, feasibility studies may be required to demonstrate that proposals can be carried out within 12 months of the allocation of CIL funding.

300 words max

The University will incur all overheads in the Soho Poly such as heating and lighting costs, as the space is part of our Little Titchfield Street campus.

The revived Soho Poly will be a non-profit organization used to maximum effect for our partners, professional practitioners and local community groups, who will have use of the space for no or minimum cost in return for the 'quid pro quo' offering of workshops, work experience and mentorship opportunities to the University community and its partners.

The support from CILS funding will act as leverage and be key to unlocking funding from Charitable Trusts and Foundations that the University already has a relationship with. In particular we would highlight CILS funding in our upcoming application to the Garfield Weston Foundation for £39,840 – as they generally award 10% of the total capital costs required. We have a good relationship with this Foundation, as they previously supported the restoration of our historic Grade II listed Regent Street Cinema in 2012 (the birthplace of British film) with a grant of £75,000.

Support will also unlock and add gravitas to our other funding applications, such as to The Clore Duffield Foundation and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation which donate largely every year in the UK to arts and heritage organisations, which foster community-led art and creativity, strengthening community relationships and bringing people together.

CILS funding will mean that our funding shortfall of £42,400 becomes immediately more achievable by August 2022, which leaves us the necessary lead-in time to commence the delivery stage and building works in August. Building works are forecasted to take approximately 6 weeks, with the restoration being completed by the end of September, with a view to opening the Soho Poly in October 2022.

e. Supported by infrastructure providers – is the proposal supported by infrastructure providers who will deliver the proposal, including the relevant council service area?

Please give details of the infrastructure providers or council officers you have engaged with on your proposal.

300 words max

We had an informal meeting with Alan Lynagh, who is a licensing officer with WCC. We then paid for the licensing pre-application service, which entailed a visit by Anil Drayan, an EHO with WCC followed by a recommendations report. Both of these were focused on the premises licence rather than the change of use app.

The University consulted with Anil Drayan from Westminster City Council's environmental health team to progress the project as part of their licensing pre-application service. He was supportive of the plans and provided some useful feedback for the licence application around capacity figures and sound escape.

We anticipate our change of use decision within the next 8-12 weeks.

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Decision Making

For completion by WCC staff.

Date application received

Name

Date Approved

Ward Members

CIL / Infrastructure Officer Group Project Sponsor

Cabinet Member

WCC Project Manager:

Email:

Telephone:

Project director / Project manager's line manager
