

Hart Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
Consultation on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule
5th November 2021 to 17th December 2021



Response Form

	Personal details (if applicable)*	Agent's Details (if applicable)*
First Name	N/A	Graham
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Organisation <i>(where relevant)</i>	The Basingstoke Canal Society	
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*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Name and Organisation boxes to the personal details but complete the full contact details of the agent. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.

Part B – Representations

The Council is consulting on:

- Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (setting out the proposed CIL rates)

You may also comment on the supporting evidence base:

- CIL Viability Assessment September 2021
- Hart Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update October 2021
- Infrastructure Funding Gap Assessment October 2021

Your Comments

1. INTRODUCTION

The Basingstoke Canal Society (“BCS”) wish to comment on the **Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule** (setting out the proposed CIL rates) and **Hart Infrastructure Delivery Plan** Update October 2021.

The BCS have no comment on the **CIL Viability Assessment** September 2021 and the **Infrastructure Funding Gap Assessment** October 2021.

As the Council will be aware, the BCS is listed as a ‘general’ consultation body with the Council’s Statement of Community Statement. The society is also a member of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee (of which the Council is also a member) and we take a very close interest in any proposals which may affect the landscape, heritage value or ecology of the Basingstoke Canal.

2. PRELIMINARY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that *Plans should: “take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure”*.
The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) proposes that; “*The Community Infrastructure Levy may be a potential mechanism for securing and funding green infrastructure.*”
The Council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy recommends; “*Adopt CIL and incorporate GI within the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.*”

However, there is no reference to Green Infrastructure (which includes canals), within “**The Mechanisms for Delivery of Various Types of Infrastructure**” table.

2.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy report dated 3rd September 2020 confirms the benefit of CIL and that the levy can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, education, health, indoor and outdoor sport, play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces.

2.3 Furthermore, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils (referred to in the CIL Viability Assessment and the report dated 3rd September 2020) Local Plan 2036 (2016 – 2036) Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan states;

“Green infrastructure is a critical part of sustainable urban design it can help reduce flood risk, provide health and wellbeing benefits for people, habitat for wildlife, clean air, reduce heat islands, and enhance biodiversity”.

3. HART INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN - UPDATE OCTOBER 2021

3.1 Proposed Infrastructure by Parish

The relevant Parish Neighbourhood Plans (see below) recognise the importance of the canal to the community. However, despite the canal being valued as an important recreational resource and the Neighbourhood Plans proposing that funding should be secured either through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or through planning obligations, no projects involving the canal are proposed within this section.

3.1.1 Fleet Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2032 - Adopted Plan

1.47 Basingstoke Canal and Fleet Pond provide precious space for walking and enjoying wildlife. The Canal and some of the adjoining areas are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Basingstoke Canal Conservation Order came into force in 2009. The Canal is unusual in not being owned by the Canal & River Trust, but by Hampshire and Surrey County Councils, and is funded by a mixture of County, District and Parish grants. The continued maintenance of Basingstoke Canal has been raised as an important issue and donations, fund raising, and voluntary work continue to provide much needed additional support.

3.22 The Canal provides an attractive green corridor running through the built-up area of Fleet used by many people for leisure and recreation, as a route for cycling, walking, pleasure boating and angling. It provides an attractive and tranquil route through an otherwise busy urban area.

3.23 The towpath further provides a pedestrian/cycling link to shops, schools, services and some of Fleet’s other green space attractions such as Basingbourne Park, Calthorpe Park and Fleet Pond.

3.1.2 Crookham Village Parish Neighbourhood Plan – 2016-2032 (Submission Version)

Aspects of the parish particularly valued by residents and visitors alike are the unique character and appearance of the Old Village settlement, the Crookham Village and Basingstoke Canal Conservation Areas and this stretch of the canal in particular is noted as one of the most important areas for biodiversity conservation nationwide, with an exceptionally diverse flora and fauna including multiple

nationally scarce higher plant species, and at least two nationally rare dragonfly species.

3.1.3 Dogmersfield Parish - Neighbourhood Plan - 2016-2032 (Adopted September 2019)

5.35 The Canal is an important recreational resource and forms a link in the public access network with permitted use by cycles.

3.1.4 Winchfield Neighbourhood Development Plan - For the period 2015 through 2032 (Adopted Version)

The Basingstoke Canal runs near the southern boundary of the parish and is well used by narrow boat enthusiasts and canoeists. The towpath is unspoiled and peaceful, used and enjoyed by walkers and anglers.

3.1.5 Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014 – 2032

The canal is highly valued as a recreational amenity in addition to its status as a Conservation Area and SSSI. The Neighbourhood Plan's consultation process identified support for proposals to maintain and develop the canal's use for recreation, for example the adaptation of towpaths where feasible to accommodate the needs of both cyclists and walkers and proposals such as a boat basin at Hatchwood or a visitor centre.

3.1.6 Despite the canal being valued as an important recreational resource and the Neighbourhood Plans above proposing that funding should be secured either through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or through Planning Obligations, no projects involving the canal are proposed within this section.

3.2 DISTRICT-WIDE PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

3.2.1 The Council's policy RUR 32 - "recreational, navigational and ancillary facilities will be permitted along the Basingstoke Canal where the local planning authority is satisfied that the proposal would conserve the historic and ecological character of the waterway and its setting" states;

"The restoration and ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Basingstoke Canal is a major project which will continue for several years. It is the policy of the local authorities to encourage its maintenance and use for navigational and recreational purposes following restoration, and to provide facilities in selected locations provided that the character of the canal is protected." and

3.2.2 The Council's Planning Obligations (S106 Agreements) Policy – Principles and Priorities states;

"The canal has other important functions, being especially highly valued as a linear public park providing recreation and amenity. It forms a linear country park in

which the towpath is much frequented by walkers and provides a traffic-free 'green corridor' in urban, suburban and rural areas. The canal's easy public accessibility is particularly valuable because it runs through areas in which other accessible green spaces are limited and decreasing. Availability as a quiet and safe place to walk, cycle, picnic and exercise dogs is probably overwhelmingly the canal's greatest asset, in terms of numbers of people and hours spent along the waterway." and records that "There are therefore a series of significant on-going programmes involving canal towpath upgrades proposed along the whole length of the canal including local schemes. These will all increase the capacity of the towpath to accommodate additional access pressure created by new development."

3.2.3 The Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy states;

"There is significant potential to enhance the Basingstoke Canal, to maximise its contribution to access and recreation, plus water management and Hart's heritage. Green buffers either side of the Canal should be maintained where possible to help with water management and contribute to biodiversity through connectivity. There is potential to increase the quality, appeal and use of the Canal, including widening the towpath to enable better sharing of space so that walkers and cyclists can pass each other, and signposting between the Canal towpath to nearby community hubs such as schools, shops and other community centres. This should be secure through nearby development, particularly that along the Canal, which should also be required to contribute positively to the Canal setting and sense of place."

3.2.4 Delivery

However, page 62 of the HART INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN proposes the timing/phasing of works to the canal as Long Term, which we believe contradicts the Council's policies referenced above.

Overall, this document is woefully silent on canal-related projects and yet identifies such minutiae as power-washing tennis courts, repainting white lines and help refurbish changing rooms at RAF Odiham.

3.2.5 CIL AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

We believe that there is scope to retain s106 obligations in addition to CIL particularly for developments close to the canal which would have a discernible impact on the canal (e.g. condition of towpath surfaces, etc) and where CIL may not be providing any infrastructure enhancements.

There may also be circumstances where the canal should benefit from both CIL and s106 contributions - i.e. where so-called 'double-charging' is justified/appropriate.

The Types of Infrastructure Table on Page 16, under Biodiversity illustrates a situation where both s106 and CIL could be justified even though it could be described as "double charging".

There might be small developments i.e. less than 400 units to which the above comments apply.

5. SUMMARY

The Basingstoke Canal is a very special waterway of national importance for its unique water chemistry and the range of plants and invertebrates that it supports.

It rightly has statutory protection for much of its length. It is a popular feature of the district, linking Greywell in the west and Fleet in the east. The towpath is a Greenway and the canal is used for walking, cycling, boating, canoeing and fishing.

The Council's policies above identify Developer Contributions as a funding sources However many of the developments that meet these criteria such as Edenbrook, Hartland and Netherhouse Copse, which use the canal in their promotional material to market their properties, have to the best of the BCS's knowledge provided no funding for the canal.

Consequently, the BCS requests, in view of PPG guidance that "*Green Infrastructure will require sustainable management and maintenance if it is to provide benefits and services in the long term*" and that works to maintain and enhance this valuable Hart asset are both incorporated in the Parish Plans and recognised as immediate and ongoing projects and not "Long Term" projects.

The Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) who manage the day-to-day operation of the Basingstoke Canal on behalf of the owners, Hampshire & Surrey County Councils have identified that the capital works to the canal required in the period 2021- 2024 within Hampshire are under funded by £2,245,000

Date: 15th December 2021