Infrastructure Delivery

Background

New development can place additional demands upon physical, social and green infrastructure and it is vital that sufficient infrastructure is available to serve new and existing communities. It is a well-established principle that new development should contribute towards the provision of such infrastructure to ensure existing communities are not disadvantaged by any increased pressure on facilities from new development and that new communities are served adequately by new infrastructure as required.

Local Planning Authorities can secure funding from developers towards necessary infrastructure including through a Section 106 agreement as introduced by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended. This is the mechanism that the council currently uses and an Infrastructure Funding Statement is published annually to provide a summary of financial contributions the council has secured from new developments for off-site infrastructure works and affordable housing, and highway works completed as part of new developments.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into force in April 2010 and allows local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area, to help fund infrastructure. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2015, Herefordshire Council developed a preliminary draft charging schedule in 2016 which introduced charge variations by geographical zone.

However in 2017 the Government published a white paper Fixing the Broken Housing Market which proposed to examine the options for reforming the system of developer contributions including ensuring direct benefit for communities. In 2018, given the uncertainty surrounding changes to CIL, the Council took the decision to pause progressing the adoption of CIL locally. In 2020 the Government published a White Paper on Planning for the Future for public consultation. This included further proposals to reform the Community Infrastructure Levy with a consolidated Infrastructure Levy. However the white paper has not progressed further and the more recent Levelling Up White Paper proposes reforms to, amongst other things, the system of developer contributions to infrastructure.

Policy Approach

As there is still uncertainty over the future mechanism for developer funding at this stage it is not possible to set out in any detail how the Local Plan update may address this issue.

However, Policy ID1 remains broadly relevant as a strategic approach to setting out the principle of ensuring that new or enhanced infrastructure will be provided to support development and sustainable communities. Until there is a clear guidance from the government on the new approach to funding mechanisms it is not possible to say whether a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will still be required as included in Policy ID1.

The council understands the concerns of residents about the need to ensure suitable infrastructure and services and it is committed to ensuring that an extensive range is provided to support the new development. The council will work closely with infrastructure providers and the community as the Local Plan update is progressed and the location of new development is decided.