

Review to improve Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) process

Applications are now open for the discretionary review of historical CIL payments

Communications team 24 May 2024

UPDATE: Applications are now open for the new CIL Householder Review Scheme. Please apply here: [Discretionary CIL Householder Review Scheme application form](#). You will also find information on the eligibility criteria and how applications will be assessed on that page. If you have any questions or difficulty completing the form please email cilreview@westberks.gov.uk for assistance.



Earlier this year, West Berkshire Council announced plans to commission a review aimed at improving the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Customer Journey.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a legislative charge requiring developers to make payments towards infrastructure needs created by new development. While self-builders, residential annexes, and home extensions may be exempt from CIL payments, they must first complete the necessary paperwork for formal exemption. Incorrectly completed paperwork has resulted in some householders being liable for CIL charges and subsequent enforcement action.

The Planning Officers Society (POS) conducted a review of the CIL customer journey at West Berkshire after complaints were received regarding the CIL process since the policy's adoption in 2015. This was presented to the Council's Executive on 23 May 2024. While the POS Review found no evidence that the Council acted contrary to the legislative framework, it made several recommendations that will allow the Council to embed a more customer-friendly approach to CIL.

Five priority recommendations were made:

1. Urgently post a prominent note on the website clarifying that exemptions must be applied for by the applicant as per the regulations and outlining the repercussions of non-compliance.
2. Report to the Executive on the benefits of not processing CIL liable domestic extension applications, considering the risks of non-compliance with regulations.
3. Report to the Executive on adopting a more lenient approach to self-build claims for genuine self-builders.
4. Review the current website content to improve signposting and prominence of CIL matters for residents and applicants.
5. Introduce a training program for officers, members, parishes, and agents to improve understanding and implications of CIL.

Recommendations 1 and 2 have already been implemented, and recommendation 5 will be addressed through an action plan which will be developed and presented to the Council's Executive in the future. To address recommendations 2 and 3, the Council's Executive has agreed to adopt a new CIL Enforcement Policy for Householder Applications, allowing greater flexibility in enforcing CIL liabilities where genuine homeowner mistakes have occurred.

Cllr Jeff Brooks, Leader of West Berkshire Council, said:



"Previously, some residents faced significant CIL liabilities due to simple errors on complex CIL paperwork. This review allows us to implement a fairer approach, immediately applying changes to enforcement policy for pending and future householder CIL cases."

"Any householder previously subject to CIL liability can request a discretionary review by the Council from 1 June 2024 until 31 May 2025."

"As outlined in our Council Strategy, we continue to listen to our residents and treat everyone fairly, and these changes are reflective of this new vision."

Further information on the POS review can be found here: [West Berkshire Council Decision Making](#).

Applications for a discretionary review of historic cases where CIL payments have been made by householders can be found here: [Discretionary CIL Householder Review Scheme application form](#).

Last modified: 13 June 2024

[← Prev](#)
[Expanded Bus Services Link Newbury to Basingstoke](#)

[Next >](#)
[Veolia's Orchard project is a blossoming success!](#)

Is this useful?

Please give us feedback