Infrastructure Spend Plan – Frequently Asked Questions

(Maidstone Borough Council's document)

What is an Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP)

An ISP is a list of the projects that are of priority to your community. It should address the key issues that are important to the area. It should contain a description of each project / piece of infrastructure that is needed. If possible, it should include the reasons why it has been chosen.

Projects can be large or small, capital or revenue. Only projects that meet the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) prescribed criteria will be eligible for CIL funding, all other projects will need to apply to other funding sources as appropriate. An ISP can contain both strategic needs (captured in the MBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and local needs, but only local needs will be funded from the non-strategic portion of CIL. Ideally the ISP should have initial costings alongside each project, where possible and an indication as to whether you wish to see it delivered in the short, medium or long term. The amount of detail you provide is your choice. It is your document to support your area's ability to react to financial opportunities as they arise.

What are the CIL criteria that projects must meet to have CIL spent on them? –

The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) state that CIL 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.

Is there any money available to spend on creating an ISP?

There is no specific budget available from the Council. However, the CIL money collected from development in your area could contribute towards it, if it meets the above criteria.

What should an ISP be based upon?

Ideally it needs to look at the infrastructure currently provided in your community and assess what additional infrastructure / facilities are required to enhance and improve the area. It could also look at the potential impact any new development will have on existing infrastructure and whether anything new is needed to mitigate the impact of the new development or whether the existing can be updated. It should identify the specific projects that will help address these issues.

Should an ISP include evidence to support the projects?

Where known, this would be useful to include as it will provide the justification for the project and it won't look like a wish list with no evidence as to why it was chosen.

Is an ISP compulsory?

No, it is discretionary. You don't have to do one.

Who could prepare one?

Parish Councils, neighbourhood forums, resident associations which cover a significant area and/or ward representative are encouraged to prepare one. Areas that know that they will receive a significant amount of development or who are adjacent to development areas are strongly advised to produce one. It will assist you in identifying your priorities so that you can react when funding sources such as CIL become available. Parish Councils will be responsible for receiving and spending CIL to improve the local area. A plan can be made by the Parish Council or by an individual/ organisation / group of people collaborating with the parish council or by one of these devising the plan on behalf of the Parish Council. An ISP will ensure that you feel confident that you know the priorities for the area and that they are supported by the community.

What should it look like?
The document can be anything from one page of A4 with a list of project ideas to a comprehensive brochure. It's your plan, to help you. There is no prescription.

What should it include?
The Council recommends that it includes:
- The geographical area covered by the ISP.
- A list of the projects and schemes you would like to see in the area.
- The location of each project (if applicable). Either the address or shown on a map.
- A brief description of each project.
- A brief justification with evidence for each project.
- A priority weighting for each project (as there will always be more demands than there are resources).
- This does not have to be numerical it could be short/medium/ long term or essential/desirable.
- An indicative cost for each project if known
- Details of any other funding that has been secured for the project from elsewhere should be included for example; how much; for which part of the project and from which organisation.
- The timescale, if known for when you would like to see it delivered by.
- Any known constraints i.e. will it need planning permission, landowner consent etc.
- Whether the project is a short, medium or long term project
- Whether the project is a capital or revenue project

Is there an example of what an ISP should look like?
The Borough Council hasn't produced a working example as the size and style of the document will vary depending on resources you have and the type of projects that are included. The CIL team are happy to support the development of your plan sand meet for informal discussions should you feel this would beneficial.

What is the advantage of an ISP?
It provides transparency as to the priorities for the area. Once produced you can then use it to consult with your local community, build consensus and have more support for the projects you want to deliver.

What should we do with the ISP once we have prepared it?
The Council advises that you make it a public document, to gain your community's support for the proposals within it. If you have the capacity, carrying out a consultation exercise will give it more weight. It can then be used to lever in matched funding and other forms of investment such as lottery grants and grants from local and national bodies.

What is a consultation exercise?
The aim of a consultation exercise is to inform as many people as possible who may be affected by any of the projects identified in your ISP. It demonstrates that you have engaged with the community which can be beneficial for when you come to deliver schemes as you will feel confident that you are following the wishes of the community. It can be as wide and as thorough as you feel suits the value of the projects you have identified and how well you think they will be supported. It can be a display on notice boards or information in a public place such as a local library or community hall, or a one off display at a summer fair for example. As a minimum the Council suggests it is put on your organisations's website (if you have one). If you need more guidance please contact the CIL team. Please note there are no specific funds available to do a consultation exercise.

What is the difference between an ISP and a neighbourhood plan?
An ISP has no weight in the planning process it is merely suggested as being a useful tool to provide the detail behind the vision of a neighbourhood plan, should you have one. You do not have to have a

neighbourhood plan to produce an ISP. It looks at the detail of what is needed to achieve the neighbourhood plans objectives and places them in an order of priority, ideally with costings etc.

How often should and ISP be reviewed?
As often as you feel it is necessary to keep it relevant. This will depend on the amount of development that takes place in your area. When there is a change in circumstances such as significant development being granted planning permission this may be an opportune time to revisit your ISP.

How and where should the ISP be published?
If you have a website, publishing it there will allow people in your area to find it easily. It is also recommended that a copy of the ISP is sent to Maidstone Council's CIL Team. The Council will then have a record of your intentions.

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