

By Email: local.plan@stroud.gov.uk

Dear Sir

**Stroud District Council
Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule**

The Cotswolds Conservation Board welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Stroud District.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board is the statutory body established in 2004 under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 with the duty to pursue two purposes:

To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and

To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board is required to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

In response to the consultation, the Board wishes to draw your attention to the Community Infrastructure Levy: Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule published by West Berkshire District Council in early 2013. A copy is attached to this response.

The proposed rates for CIL in that authority's area are set out in paragraph 5.3 of that document.

You will see that that authority is proposing a higher level of CIL for residential properties in the North Wessex Downs AONB. This is based on the findings of the West Berkshire Council – CIL Viability Study.

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32943&p=0>

This study concluded that a higher rate of CIL could be justified in the AONB because of the "higher values" and limited level of growth generally seen in rural areas and in the AONB in particular.

The Board would suggest that such factors could be shown to justify a similar approach to the CIL levels in the Cotswolds AONB in Stroud District.

I attach the Inspectors report with respect to the West Berks CIL in which he accepts the justification for a higher rate of CIL in the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Secondly, with respect to the Draft Regulation 123 List the Board would suggest the 'Open Space/Green infrastructure' description be modified to include access to the countryside (which itself constitutes green infrastructure) and also include reference to meeting the Council's duty set out in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This could be achieved by including a reference to the delivery of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan in this section.

The Board will be pleased to receive notifications of further steps in this process.

Yours faithfully

Malcolm Watt
Planning Officer
Cotswolds Conservation Board
Fosse Way, Northleach, Gloucestershire GL54 3JH