Appendix 4

Meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee 23rd September 2026

Key feedback arising from the scrutiny of the Proposed North & Central CIL report

The Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee considered the Proposed North & Central Area Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) report and explored the key implications on 23rd September 2026. The committee's feedback, for submission to Cabinet, is detailed below and covers:

- CIL charging rates for data centres
- Differences in CIL charging rates across Buckinghamshire
- Exemption of wind, solar farms and battery storage facilities from CIL
- CIL training for Buckinghamshire Council Members and town and parish councillors

CIL charging rates for data centres

Committee Members were concerned about the £25 per square metre CIL charge applicable to data centres. It was understood that many of the impacts of data centres are addressed by S106 contributions. However, the CIL charge was felt to be too low given that data centres are highly profitable developments. Neighbouring authorities charge a much higher rate. Data centres can cause significant disruption to infrastructure on construction and potentially cause lasting damage to roads. In addition, data centres provide limited employment opportunities whilst potentially occupying employment land. The committee would therefore ask whether it is possible to increase this rate.

Differences in CIL charging rates across Buckinghamshire

The committee discussed the variation in CIL charges between the north and south of the county. Some Members believed that lower CIL rates in the north would lead to increased development and a lower CIL contribution overall. Officers explained that the proposed CIL rates were evidence-led and operated alongside s106 contributions. Also, CIL rates had to be linked to viability in Buckinghamshire, a county where building costs were broadly the same but selling prices varied significantly. The committee felt that a more uniform approach across Buckinghamshire was needed to balance increased development with the provision of the necessary infrastructure.

Appendix 4

Exemption of wind, solar farms and battery storage facilities from CIL

Members queried the national policy which exempts solar farms, wind farms and battery storage facilities from CIL. Mindful of the fact that these facilities are not subject to CIL in the same way as buildings, it was felt that a charge should be made to reflect the large areas of land occupied. The committee would therefore recommend that Cabinet should submit a letter to central government to highlight this concern.

CIL training for Buckinghamshire Council Members and town and parish councillors

Town and parish councils which had not formerly been in receipt of CIL would receive a proportion of CIL funds collected in their area. It was felt that town and parish council members and notably clerks, would benefit from guidance on CIL, including how it could be spent and the reporting requirements. Officers present at the meeting offered to provide training for both council Members and town and parish councillors. This would be available before any implementation of the new CIL charging structure. Committee Members welcomed and endorsed this approach.