

**The Stevenage Borough Revised Community
Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, Submission
Draft August 2025 Examination**

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Examination Website:

<https://www.hwa.uk.com/projects/stevenage-revised-cil-examination/>

5 February 2026

**Inspector's Agenda and Guidance Notes for the Stevenage
Borough Revised Community Infrastructure Levy Charging
Schedule hearing session to take place on 18 March 2026**

Introduction

The Stevenage Borough Council (the Council) Revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, Submission Draft August 2025 (CID1) was submitted for examination on 15 August 2025. I have been appointed to carry out its independent examination.

The Council adopted a CIL charging schedule in 2020 (the adopted CIL charging schedule) which seeks to contribute towards the delivery of infrastructure needed to facilitate the development proposed in the adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 (the adopted Local Plan).

However, CID1 was submitted alongside the partial update to the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 (the partial update¹) which is also currently being

¹ The Council undertook two consultations under Regulation 19 of the Regulations in (November 2024 and August 2025) on schedules of changes it proposed to make to the adopted Plan (CD2c and CD2b). These documents together, when read alongside CD1 are the partial update. For full details see the partial update examination website at: <https://www.hwa.uk.com/projects/stevenage-local-plan-partial-update/>

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examined. Consultation on a schedule of proposed main modifications to the partial update plan is taking place between 18 February 2026 and 31 March 2026. Some of those main modifications have implications for the viability of development in the Borough and are relevant to the examination of CID1.

The examination of CID1 will assess whether the CIL Schedule complies with Section 212 of the Planning Act 2008 and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the CIL regulations), with particular regard to:

- Regulation 14 – which sets out how a charging authority must determine the CIL rates in its charging schedule.
- Regulation 16 – which governs the formal publication requirements before a draft charging schedule can proceed to examination.
- Regulation 34 – applies where CIL liability must be divided between different material interests in the relevant land.

In this context responses are invited to a number of main issues and questions (MIQs). I set these out below in advance of a hearing session which is scheduled to take place over one day, virtually over Microsoft Teams between **1000 and 1700 on Wednesday 18 March 2026**.

My questions have arisen from my initial assessment of the submission documents and representations, and may evolve through the examination, not least following on from any responses the Council or others make on these matters prior to the hearing session.

All those who wish to speak (participate) at the CIL hearing session should confirm this in writing with the Programme Officer by **1700 on Wednesday 25 February 2026**. The deadline for receipt of written statements in response to these MIQs to be considered at the hearing session is **1700 on Wednesday 11 March 2026**.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR

MAIN ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Legal and Procedural Requirements

Main Issue 1 – Whether the Revised Charging Schedule has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the procedural requirements of the CIL Regulations.

- Q1. Has the Council complied with the requirements of the CIL Regulations (as amended) prior to submission of the schedule for examination?
- Q2. How were the representations received during the Draft Charging Schedule consultation (responses to Draft Charging Schedule Consultation, February 2025) (CID3) considered? How have they informed CID1?
- Q3. The Council has not proposed any post-submission changes to CID1, is this still the case?

Appropriate Available Evidence

Main Issue 2 – Whether the Revised Charging Schedule (CID1) is supported by appropriate available infrastructure planning evidence?

NOTE: The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, September 2024 (CID5) was updated in October 2025 (CID14). This update took place after the CIL Charging Schedule (CID1) was submitted for examination.

- Q1. What are the main changes between CID5 and CID14 and does CID1 require any modification to reflect the updated evidence in CID14?
- Q2. Have CID5 and CID14 been developed through appropriate engagement with relevant agencies involved in the delivery of infrastructure?
 - a) Has Hertfordshire County Council been appropriately engaged as a consultation body?
 - b) Has Hertfordshire Constabulary been appropriately engaged? Should "facilities and equipment for emergency services" be recognised as "essential infrastructure" in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan?
- Q3. The Council's Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement, December 2024 (CID6) identifies an infrastructure funding gap. Is this based on robust evidence and has the infrastructure funding gap been recalculated in light of CID14?

Main Issue 3 – Whether the Revised Charging Schedule (CID1) is supported by appropriate available viability evidence?

NOTE: The Council's viability evidence comprises the Local Plan & CIL Review Viability Assessment – Main Report, October 2024 (CID7) and Viability Addendum Report November 2025 (CID15).

- Q1. Has the Council's viability evidence (CID7 and CID15) been prepared in accordance with the Viability Planning Practice Guidance (viability PPG¹)?
- Q2. Does the viability evidence (CID7 and CID15) require updating in any way to reflect the main modifications proposed to the partial update Plan?

The Charging Rates

Main Issue 4 – Whether the proposed CIL rates for development in the Borough are informed by and consistent with the evidence?

NOTE: CID1 sets out the following levy rates for development:

- a) Market housing in Zone 1 (Stevenage Central) £50 per square metre (increased from £40 per square metre)*
- b) Market housing in Zone 2 (Everywhere else outside Stevenage Central) £120 per square (increased from £100 per square metre)*
- c) Sheltered housing £120 per square metre (increased from £100 per square metre)*
- d) Extra care housing £50 per square metre (increased from £40 per square metre)*
- e) Retail Development £75 per square metre (increased from £60 per square metre)*
- f) Industrial Development £40 per square metre (new levy rate not included in the adopted charging schedule)*

- Q1. Is each levy rate justified by appropriate available evidence, having regard to the viability PPG and local infrastructure needs arising from the development plan for the area?
- Q2. How has each levy rate been derived from the Council's viability evidence and does that evidence show that each proposed rate would not prejudice the delivery of development in the Borough?

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability>

Modifications

Main Issue 5 – Whether modifications are necessary to ensure compliance with the CIL Regulations.

Q1. Are any modifications to CID1 required?

Appendix – Detailed Guidance for Virtual Hearing Participants

Joining the Virtual Hearing as a Participant and Participating

1. I will assume that participants are familiar with Microsoft Teams. You will be responsible for making sure your IT kit is functional and that you have everything in place and working to enable you to join the hearing via Microsoft Teams. The PO will email participants with an invitation to join the virtual hearing session. Participants should join their session using the electronic link in their invitation.
2. At the start of the hearing session I will take appearances in the usual way. I will lead the hearing, and ask specific questions. If you wish to respond to a question, please use the 'raise hand' facility in Microsoft Teams to indicate your desire to speak.
3. I will give everyone who has raised their hands an opportunity to have their say. Although all participants may be able to see each other only one participant may speak at a time. I will ask that all participants are on mute until invited to speak. When you are invited to speak unmute your microphone, and state your name and, if any, your organisation if it is your first time speaking during the session.
4. Please make sure your response is brief and focused on the questions posed. You won't need to repeat your full case, or give any formal presentation, as I will have read all representations. I may ask questions about aspects of your verbal or written submissions. The format will be a structured discussion, there will not be any cross examination, and responses should always be directed to me.
5. I will ask the Council for their comments on the main points raised and will terminate the discussion on any topic when I have enough information. I will end the session and ask all participants to exit the meeting. The online meeting will be terminated by the PO.
6. If you are in a room with other members of your team, please ensure that only the microphone of the person speaking is on at any one time to prevent feedback or other disturbance.
7. If you are unable to join, or lose connection during the hearing, try again to join using the link provided in your invitation. The hearing may continue in your absence. Transferring from Wi-Fi to mobile data or making a Wi-Fi hotspot using a mobile phone are other contingencies that you may wish to use. Please let the PO know if you are unable to join the event or cannot reestablish connection so that she can make me aware.

Conduct, documents, evidence and presentation

8. The CIL examination is a formal event. All participants, their views and evidence are treated with fairness and consideration, and participants do not interrupt each other. I expect all participants to treat others with dignity and respect, even where you may not share the same views.
9. To make the best use of the hearing time and to avoid disruption, the virtual hearing will start strictly at **1000** on **18 March 2026**. You will receive an invitation from the PO. You must join the hearing on Microsoft Teams at least 10 minutes before the start of the hearing, no later than **0950**. The PO is responsible for admitting participants into the hearing session, you must wait to be admitted. You will be held in a waiting lobby until you are admitted into the hearing by the PO. Attempting to join the hearing after the time indicated on the programme will not be acceptable and you may not be admitted.
10. Do not forward your invitation to another participant as that is likely to affect the running of the event. In confirming or requesting participation, representors should advise the PO of the name and contact email of the representatives so that an invitation to the hearing can be provided. The PO will maintain a list of those expected and will not allow access to anyone who hasn't pre-notified of their interest.
11. You should have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that your working environment is quiet, and that the hearing (and your ability to concentrate on it) is not disrupted by external noise and unnecessary distractions.
12. Please ensure that your camera is positioned to provide a clear, front-on view of your face and avoid sitting where you are silhouetted in front of a window or light.
13. You must make sure that you attend the hearing from start to finish. Leaving midway through a session, coming and going are not respectful to the hearing, and you may miss the opportunity to speak, hear other people's contributions, and listen to Inspector announcements.
14. When adjournments are announced, please make a careful note of the resumption time and be back at your screen before that time. If you need to leave early for any reason, please inform the PO as soon as possible.
15. The chat facility in Microsoft Teams must not be used under any circumstances. It does not form part of the formal hearing procedure. Any attempt to post anything will not be considered. You should consider whether you are likely to need to confer with another person (Agent, Legal Representative etc) during the

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event. If so, agree how you intend to achieve this outside of the Microsoft Teams meeting e.g. SMS, Email, WhatsApp etc before the event.

16. The examination website contains all the relevant examination documents. These are available to us, all other participants, stakeholders and the public. The hearing will not use the document sharing facility available on Microsoft Teams. Nor should you hold any document in front of your camera.
17. New documents should only be submitted during the hearings at my invitation. This is to ensure fairness to all participants. If I request a new document from any party, for example a statement of common ground, it should be emailed straight to the PO so that she can pass it to us and post it on the Examination Website.

Privacy

18. The hearing will be conducted in line with the Councils data protection policies and processes. You can turn your camera off if you don't want your image to be viewed. Do not forget to mute yourself once you have finished speaking.
19. You must ensure that no-one else appears on your camera unless it has been otherwise agreed, and you should clear your background of personal information. If you prefer, Microsoft Teams allows you to blur your background, but please do not use any of the other backgrounds that are available on Microsoft Teams. You must also not share any personal information during the hearing, either yours, or anyone else's.