

## CIL Spend Proposal

### Business, Buildings and A Sustainable Framlingham

Framlingham Town Councillor Carl Bennett has been tasked to liaise between the Town Council and the Framlingham Business Association, attending breakfast networking events and committee meetings. In March 2023 he was elected Chair of the Business Association.

Although fortunately shop retail premises are rarely uninhabited in the town, the business community has faced a tough few years and the future poses challenges exacerbated by the geodemographics of the area. The lack of employment opportunities and lack of affordable housing for people growing up in the area points to an at-best static community. A more likely outcome is economic and social decline, as an ageing population reduces its spending and sells up or dies

This paper puts forward a spending plan to improve the vibrancy and sustainability of the Framlingham business community and at the same time providing affordable starter homes for local people. There are two options for the spend.

1. With a growing number of houses being built there is a commensurate growing need to provide more jobs and more affordable housing for young people in Framlingham. A flourishing FBA could and should try to encourage both things.
2. As it is, FBA is not flourishing. It lacks its own office, it has no full-time staff and it has few assets in the bank to call on. Although many of the well-established businesses in the town are members the overall numbers are small.
3. The Town Council has acknowledged the need to build and improve communication between the council and the local business community. There is a current proposal to use ESTI funding to do precisely that; but with a maximum of £10,000 allocated to the project its application and timescale will necessarily be limited. There is a lot to do; currently neither FTC nor the FBA knows exactly how many businesses are in the town.
4. Unconnected with any of this, the local Scouting groups have outgrown their premises in Badingham Road. Estimates of around £1.2 million have been mentioned as sufficient to provide suitable replacement premises. At the same time, the existing site, surrounded by fairly recent flats and older houses has the potential to be developed for building. There are rumours that there has been a planning application to build three or four houses on the site but a search of the East Suffolk website has not shown any formal application.
5. Framlingham Town Council has to spend between £300,000 and £400,000 of CIL funding by the end of 2024 or give it back.

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### Spend Option One:

FTC could grant the CIL money to FBA specifically to buy the land on which the current Scout hut sits. This would mean FTC and FBA would have to apply for more money from East Suffolk to support the next phase of the development: Once in possession of the Scout hut land FBA would build small starter flats for the sole purpose of renting them to local people looking for affordable homes.

This would achieve several objectives:

- A) The Scouts would get their new premises;
- B) Local young people would get a local place to live at a rent they could afford (for example, 40% of the local market rent, subject to locality and/or age criteria being met). The use of this land for small residential builds would be completely
- C) FBA would have an ongoing revenue stream to support obtaining an office and a full-time member of staff who could fulfil the liaison between FBA and FTC and develop business interests and representation within the town.

### Spend Option Two:

FTC manages this development without the involvement of FBA. This would deprive FBA of ongoing revenue unless alternative funding could be arranged from FTC.

### Current Status:

FTC RFO Alan Davidson has spoken to the ESC CIL team and outlined this proposal. Their response has been positive, agreeing that in principle the concept would align with CIL regulation 59c:

“b) Anything ...that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.”

He added: “ESC would like infrastructure projects to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan or in our case the Framlingham Infrastructure Investment Plan, so you would need to get your proposal added to the next edition of the FIIP, otherwise ESC may challenge it.”

This year’s CIL application deadline has come and gone, so there is one “CIL year” left to put the existing CIL money to good use or return it.

Buying the Scout hut land and building affordable flats to rent on that land would provide significant benefits to the town, the business community and to local residents.

I would like to recommend this proposal to the SAD committee for urgent consideration.

Cllr Carl Bennett