

APPLICATION B

Proposal: Four Elms Playground

Applicant: Hever Parish Council

Ward(s): Cowden & Hever

RECOMMENDATION: That the £3,000.00 funding applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme "Four Elms Playground" be approved on the following grounds:

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community;
- Partnership working with other organisations;
- Majority of project cost secured through different match-funding sources.

Introduction

- 1 Hever Parish Council is one of 31 Parish Councils in Sevenoaks District. It is located in the rural south of the District and shares administrative parish boundaries with Edenbridge, Cowden, Chiddingstone, Brasted and Westerham.
- 2 The application for CIL funding was received by Officers on 13.11.2017.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The Four Elms Playground is located to the south of Four Elms Primary School, towards to the back of the school playfield. The playground is located adjacent to the Four Elms Recreation Ground to the west.
- 4 The proposal seeks to fund the removal of the existing, underused playground equipment and replace it with new accessible play equipment which would be suitable of 0-15 year olds. The scheme would also include renovation of the ground surface for the playground, while also providing additional seating, bins and landscaping.
- 5 The original application to the CIL stated that the anticipated completion date for the scheme was May 2018. As the Board is meeting for the first time in May 2018, it is likely that the timetable for the project's delivery will be revised. Maintenance and delivery will be with Hever Parish Council.

Funding

- 6 Hever Parish Council estimates that the total cost of the Four Elms Playground project ranges between £20,000.00 to £40,000.00.
- 7 Hever Parish Council has identified a number of additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
 - Hever Parish Council reserves: £5,000.00
 - Kent Community Foundation Grant: £3,000.00
 - Tesco Bags of Help Grant: £2,000.00
 - Waitrose Community Fund Grant: £430.00
 - Hever Trust Grant: £1,000.00
 - Combined Members Grant: £3,000.00
- 8 To meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, Hever Parish Council has applied to the Board for £3,000.00 of CIL funding.

Representations and Support

- 9 The application states that Hever Parish Council is looking to work in partnership with Four Elms Primary School during the course of the scheme, as the school exclusively uses the land everyday during term-time.
- 10 In addition, residents of Four Elms have been supportive of the scheme and are fundraising to support the scheme.
- 11 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Cllr. Matthew Dickens (SDC Member for Cowden & Hever)
 - Hever Parish Council

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community;
- Majority of project cost secured through different match-funding sources.

Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 12 There are strong economic, social and environmental arguments for the scheme. The applicant highlights the need for high quality play equipment

in the parish as it is the only playground serves Hever Parish and is the only accessible public space for the village of Four Elms. The facility is frequently used by the primary school during term time, but there is a suggestion that the current playground is used by the wider general public during the weekends and outside of the term time calendar. The desire to create an accessible play area for all, supports the claim for greater social benefits.

- 13 The applicant mentions a number of policies which supports the protection and enhancement of outdoor, recreation and community facilities to support the application. At the national level, the NPPF looks to protect and enhance the rural landscape and to improve the existing local open green spaces of community or of environmental value. In addition, current local planning policies look to protect and enhance local open space and recreation grounds.
- 14 The Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan. Planning policies are subject to change following the review of the Local Plan as well as additional changes to the NPPF in the summer.
- 15 Finally, Hever Parish Council recognises the impact of potential development within the District as a result of the Council trying to meet its Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing. The application makes it clear that the improvements to the Four Elms playground would have greater environmental and social benefits to the local and wider community.
- 16 After reviewing the material submitted, I conclude that there are sufficient social and environmental benefits to the scheme. The economic benefits of the scheme are unclear at this stage, but should not interfere with the decision to release funding to the project.

Majority of project cost secured through different match-funding sources

- 17 The Council has determined that the purpose of CIL funding is to be a “top-up”, to be used in meeting any funding deficiencies or gaps in order to deliver the project. This funding should only be used for “capital” investment, as opposed to being used for “revenue” spend.
- 18 The application made clearly demonstrates that additional funding sources have been sought and secured for the project. This includes a mix of the Environment Agency’s own funding grants, as well as contributions from scheme partners as well as central Government grants (i.e. Defra support grants).
- 19 It should be noted that the applicant has sought any additional CIL funding from Edenbridge Town Council to help fund the scheme. However, it is unclear whether (a) the bid to Edenbridge Town Council was successful and (b) if the bid to the Town Council was successful, how much was secured by Hever Parish Council.

Other considerations

Planning Permission

- 20 The assessment criteria states that preference of CIL funding will be given to those which have permissions or consents in place before funding is given. Hever Parish Council have confirmed that the project would not require planning permission, as it can be conducted under permitted development. Confirmation of this has been provided by the Council's Planning department.

Management and Use of the Proposal

- 21 The applicant has stated that the playground is only used by the wider general public outside of term time and at weekend. The majority of the time the playground is in constant use by the school. It is clear that the applicant has an aspiration to create a more useable and accessible recreation facility that the community can use.
- 22 Furthermore, the management and maintenance of the current playground is the responsibility of Hever Parish Council, not Four Elms Primary School. Should the funding be granted for the scheme, the playground will continue to be maintained by Hever Parish Council.

Conclusion

- 23 The proposed scheme from Hever Parish Council supports the growth of the community by supporting recreation facilities and open space for residents and the primary school. The existing playground facility is shared between the wider community and the primary school, with access to the public only being granted outside of term-time and at weekends. The proposal demonstrates that a number of funding sources have been identified to fund the project, resulting in a small amount for CIL funding for the Board to consider.
- 24 Therefore, the recommendation made is that the Board consider fully funding the request made by the applicant for £3,000.00.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Applicant's original bid pro-forma

Background Papers

None