

Proposal	Swanley Transport Interventions
Applicant	Kent County Council - Highways
Ward(s)	Crockenhill & Well Hill Hextable Swanley Christchurch & Swanley Village Swanley St. Marys Swanley White Oak

RECOMMENDATION: That the **£1,000,000** applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Swanley Transport Interventions” be approved on the following grounds:

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan
- Strong evidence has been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme

Introduction

- 1 Kent County Council (KCC) holds a number of statutory functions which includes its role as the Local Transport Authority (LTA). The LTA oversees roads, drainage, streetlights, school transport and working with public transport bodies and companies. KCC also has a role in the planning process by advising Borough and District Councils on planning applications on transport matters, as well as Local Plan allocations.
- 2 The application was received before the application deadline closed on Monday 30 September 2019. This proposal has not been previously considered by the CIL Spending Board.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The Swanley Transport Interventions Fund (STIF) is described as a package of measures that will help improve accessibility and connectivity in Swanley and the surrounding villages. Poor connectivity and accessibility has been attributed to traffic congestion on the local and strategic road networks

(SRN), which is having significant impacts on business confidence and economic growth opportunities.

- 4 Possible mitigation measures will focus on public realm improvements, which will help improve desire lines and increase options for more sustainable transport choices for short door-to-door journeys. The STIF will also deliver physical infrastructure improvements within Swanley Town Centre as well as key interchange points to facilitate multi-modal journeys using public transport, walking and cycling.

Funding

- 5 Kent County Council has estimated that the total cost of the project to carry out the works will be approximately £5 million.
- 6 Kent County Council has stated that it would expect funding would be made available from developments being brought forward in the new Local Plan from developer contributions.
- 7 It should be brought to the attention of Members that as a CIL charging authority, planning obligations will only be asked for where there is site-specific or off-site specific improvements as detailed within a Section 106 legal agreement.
- 8 The applicant has not applied to the CIL Spending Board before and has not approached the relevant town and parish councils for CIL funding either. For clarity, the three town and parish councils are applicable to this scheme are the following:
 - Swanley Town Council
 - Crockenhill Parish Council
 - Hextable Parish Council

The reason that these town and parish councils are applicable to the funding application is that the parish areas of Swanley, Hextable and Crockenhill formed the study area for the Swanley Transport Study.

- 9 Therefore to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, Kent County Council has applied to the Board for £1 million of CIL funding. This equates to 20% of the total project cost.

Representations and Support

- 10 The application submitted indicates that Kent County Council will be working in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council. This is due to joint partnership

working on producing the transport evidence based documents to support the new Local Plan. The transport evidence base includes the Swanley Transport Study Stages 1 & 2 (May 2018) and the Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment (December 2018).

11 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:

- Cllr. Michael Horwood (Kent Member for Swanley and Swanley Town Councillor)

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan
- Strong evidence has been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme

Appraisal

Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 12 When considering an application for CIL funding from the Board, it must be demonstrated that there are clear economic, social and environmental benefits to the scheme proposed. This enhances the sustainability case as to whether the scheme should receive CIL funding.
- 13 The proposal has a strong benefits which not only aids site-specific improvements to development but also the wider area of Swanley and the surrounding villages. Improved pedestrian and cycling facilities and linkages would reduce traffic and congestion, allowing residents to choose more sustainable modes of transport for short door-to-door journeys. This creates a better environmental benefit to the area as reduced traffic and congestion improves air quality, as well as improving resident's health and well-being. Furthermore, reduced congestion can also improve journey times for public transport (i.e. buses).
- 14 There are also social and economic benefits to the scheme. The applicant has stated that the measures proposed in the STIF would benefit the economy due to its close proximity to the M20, the M25 and the A20. Swanley also has excellent rail links into London, benefiting from regular services to London Victoria and London Blackfriars. The station was also included within the Transport for London (TfL) travel area allowing commuters to use

Oyster/contactless technology. By reducing congestion in the area would improve the connections to the town, unlocking growth and regenerating the town.

The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan

- 15 As submitted in the funding application, it is stated that Swanley is the District's second largest settlement and is recognised as an area of potential growth through the preparation of the Local Plan evidence base, namely the Swanley Transport Study Stages 1 and 2 (May 2018).
- 16 The Stage 1 report for the Swanley Transport Study identified approximately 30 specific issues within the study area. All issues identified in Stage 1 were considered to be existing problems and were validated in consultation with local Members. The report concluded that future growth and regeneration of Swanley would be inhibited in a "do-nothing" scenario.
- 17 The Stage 2 report for the Swanley Transport Study considered a range of intervention and mitigation measures to deal with the identified issues from Stage 1. Almost 100 measures were identified initially before being reduced to a definitive list of 62 measures.
- 18 The lists of existing issues and mitigation measures can be found in the Swanley Transport Study. A number of mitigation measures have also been included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 19 Therefore, after careful consideration, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project is identified in an adopted strategy or plan.

Sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme.

- 20 As part of their submission, the applicant has identified developments in the area that have created a need for this particular scheme.
- 21 Whilst preparing the Swanley Transport Study, and the Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment, a number of committed or permitted developments were identified, as well as a number of sites that were submitted for the new Local Plan. This also included residential, employment and other forms of development.
- 22 A number of sites have been allocated in Swanley for the new Local Plan. Therefore, it is likely that a number of site-specific transport and highway improvements will be required (subject to the granting of planning

permission) as well as off-site improvements for the wider area. This is demonstrated through the new Local Plan and the evidence which supports it.

- 23 The applicant has therefore sufficiently identified evidence to demonstrate that there is a strong link between the new development and the project, which is seeking funding.
- 24 Therefore, after careful consideration, the need for the scheme has been adequately demonstrated through the submitted application.

Other considerations

Funding of the scheme

- 25 Whilst the issue of funding has been discussed in paragraphs 5 to 9 of this report, it should be brought to the attention of Members that the applicant is dependent on development coming forward to fund the appropriate works as set out in the Swanley Transport Study. It is not clear how developer contributions (both Section 106 and CIL) will be used, and therefore this provides a degree of uncertainty with regards to funding.
- 26 Members may wish to consider the implications of developer contributions coming forward to fund the scheme proposed.

Project management

- 27 Whilst the project is in its early stages, Kent County Council have confirmed that the Council would manage the project as the Local Transport Authority. A project management timetable has been provided with the application which clearly demonstrates how the project will be managed and expected timeframes to complete the scheme. It is expected that the scheme will begin at the end of 2020 with the anticipated completion of the project being the end of 2021.

Requirement for Planning Permission

- 28 An additional consideration of the criteria is which applications are assessed is whether a proposal has the appropriate consents in place to carry out the project.
- 29 Given the scale and the type of development proposed, planning permission is not required under the powers that Kent County Council have as the Local Transport Authority.

Implications for the Local Plan

- 30 It should be drawn to Members attention that the proposal should be seen in the wider context of site allocations proposed in the emerging Local Plan.
- 31 The Council submitted its Local Plan to the Planning Inspector for Examination in April 2019 and Hearings have taken place in September/October 2019. It should be noted that the Council received an initial response from the Planning Inspector in mid-October which set out concerns about the Local Plan in its current form. The Council will continue to monitor the situation with the Local Plan Examination, and will provide updates to Members and the public when further information becomes available.
- 32 Members should note that if any site is formally allocated in the Local Plan following Examination by the Planning Inspector, it does not mean that the proposal is automatically granted planning permission. The purpose of the allocation is to establish whether the principle of development in this location is acceptable. The proposal is then subject to the Development Management process through a separate planning application. Any planning obligations would be negotiated through the Development Management process.

Application Considerations - Weakly Performing Criteria

- 33 When carrying out the assessment of this funding application, Officers felt that the application did not perform strongly against the following criteria:
- Limited partnership working
 - The scheme not maximising funding sources / CIL funding from the relevant town or parish council(s)

Conclusion

- 34 Kent County Council has submitted an application to the Board to consider funding for a package of transport intervention measures in Swanley and the surrounding area. The need for the scheme has been clearly demonstrated and there are a number of social, economic and environmental benefits. The proposal is formally identified in a number of plans and strategies and is supported by the local community. It is noted that the applicant is asking for a comparable amount of funding in comparison to the total project cost, and has not benefited from CIL funding previously. However it recognised that the applicant is dependent on planning obligations being made available to fund the improvements from development within Swanley.

- 35 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £1,000,000.00 of CIL funding be approved to support the delivery of the project. Whilst the project does not maximise all sources of funding, it is considered to provide a clear public benefit and approving this bid would provide good value for the amount of CIL money applied for compared to the cost of the overall project.

Appendices Original bidding proforma and supporting information

Background Papers None

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