

Proposal	Westerham Parking Project
Applicant	Westerham Town Council
Ward(s)	Westerham & Crockham Hill

RECOMMENDATION: That the **£59,975.00** applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Westerham Parking Project” be refused on the following grounds:

- Funding for the scheme is not approved on the basis that other proposed schemes have been given greater priority;
- The need for the scheme (Economic) is not clearly demonstrated in the application;
- The scheme has not clearly demonstrated whether it has maximised funding sources / CIL funding from the relevant town or parish council(s)

Introduction

- 1 Westerham Town Council is one of 31 Town and Parish Councils in Sevenoaks District. It is located in the rural west of the District and shares administrative parish boundaries with Edenbridge, Hever and Brasted. In addition, it shares the County boundary of Kent with Surrey. It is ranked as one of the larger settlements in the District with a large number of services and facilities available to the community
- 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 proposal is to increase the number of car parking spaces by creating an additional 75 car parking spaces. These spaces are to be provided in four locations which have been described as some of the “worst affected areas” in the parish:
 - Costells Meadow Car Park, King Georges Field - up to **34** car parking spaces

- Madan Road, Westerham - 12 car parking spaces
- Hartley Road, Westerham - 19 car parking spaces
- Crockham Hill Playing Field, Dairy Lane, Crockham Hill - up to 30 car parking spaces

Funding

- 4 Westerham Town Council has estimated that the total cost of the project to provide 75 additional car parking spaces will be £185,926.00
- 5 The Town Council has identified the following additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
 - Westerham Town Council Asset Repair and Replacement Reserve - £20,287.00
 - Westerham Town Council CIL funds contribution - £100,664.00
 - Crockham Hill War Memorial Playing Field Trust - contribution of £5,000.00

Westerham Town Council has confirmed in their funding application that all funding and contributions have been formally agreed.

- 6 Therefore to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, Westerham Town Council has applied to the Board for £59,975.00 of CIL funding.

Representations and Support

- 7 The application submitted indicates that Westerham Town Council will be working in partnership with the Crockham Hill War Memorial Playing Field Trust to deliver this project. Westerham Town Council also notes that the scheme was drawn up in consultation with Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council.
- 8 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Cllr. Kevin Maskell (SDC Member for Westerham & Crockham Hill)
 - Cllr. Helen Ogden (Chairman, Westerham Town Council)
 - Westerham Town Partnership
 - Crockham Hill War Memorial Playing Field Trust

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
- There is strong community support of the scheme

Appraisal

Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 9 Firstly, the application sets out a number of community benefits to the area, including social, economic and environmental gains. The applicant has demonstrated that the scheme will have significant impacts not just in the local project area but also provide benefits to the wider town.
- 10 The proposal is a significant piece of infrastructure which meets an identified existing localised need. The scheme would bring significant social, economic and environmental benefits to immediate residents in the four locations as well as the wider local community. The applicant states that the creation of the additional parking provision will protect and enhance existing amenity green spaces by preventing cars from parking on it. This creates a safer environment for residents and improves the visual amenity value.
- 11 With regards to the social benefits of the scheme, the main point to consider is that it increases the amount of parking available to residents and the local community, especially where there are community events at the two playing fields.
- 12 With regards to economic benefits, the applicant describes Westerham as a vibrant tourist, market town which receives a significant number of visitors a year for community events and the retail offering that is available in the town. The applicant has stated that the additional parking will alleviate pressure on the existing Darent car park where sporting events take place on King Georges Field.

The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan

- 13 As submitted in the funding application, Westerham Town Council has supplied a number of documents to support its application including its Council's Strategy 2016-2019 which outlines the aims and objectives of the Town Council, including the ambition to increase parking provision within the town. This is further underpinned through the Westerham Parking and Amenities Policy Document (published 2013) which also outlines the Town

Council's ambitions to increase car parking provision due to residential, commercial and leisure developments coming forward.

- 14 Therefore, after careful consideration, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project is identified in an adopted strategy or plan.

There is strong community support for the scheme

- 15 In the applicant's application for CIL funding, it is evident that there is strong community backing for this scheme.
- 16 Westerham Town Council states that the issue of car parking in the parish was first raised in 2015/16 following a number of concerns and complaints from residents, as well as from public consultation on the Town Council's priorities for 2015 - 2019. The Town Council, in support with Kent County Council, developed the four proposed car parking schemes which were subjected to further public consultation with residents, local community groups, sport club users and businesses.
- 17 It was noted that there was overwhelming support for developing additional car parking provision across the parish. Westerham Town Council has included the results of its public consultations to support its CIL funding application.
- 18 Therefore, after careful consideration, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project has strong community support for the scheme.

Other considerations

Project management

- 19 In the application submitted, it has been stated that a Town Council Officer will project manage the scheme. It has also be stated that on-site management of the scheme will be undertaken by a contractor (Amey), who will be completing the works.
- 20 It is anticipated that the scheme will begin March 2020 and would be completed June/July 2020. The applicant has confirmed that no land would need to be bought to facilitate the scheme. The applicant has also stated that they would advise the CIL Spending Board when the project has commenced with the option to provide progress updates to Officers.

Requirement for Planning Permission

- 21 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.

- 22 The scheme would require planning permission, due to the nature of the works to be carried out. Westerham Town Council applied for planning permission for all four car parking schemes in October 2018. All four car parking schemes were granted planning permission in December 2018. The applicant has supplied information on the planning permissions granted as part of their CIL funding application.

Application Considerations - Weakly Performing Criteria

- 23 When carrying out the assessment of this funding application, Officers felt that the application did not perform strongly against the following criteria:

- **The need for the scheme (Social)**

The applicant has set out a number of potential social benefits in relation to the scheme. However, during the assessment process, Officers considered that it is not sufficiently clear what the direct social benefits are to the project and how this would impact the local community.

- **The scheme not maximising funding sources / CIL funding from the relevant town or parish council(s)**

The applicant has been clear the majority of funding will be coming from the Town Council reserves/asset maintenance budget as well as the Town Council's CIL funds. The applicant has also secured a minimal amount of funding from the Crockham Hill War Memorial Playing Field Trust. While it is positive to see the applicant use a majority of its own CIL funds, it is not clearly demonstrated whether any other funding sources have been maximised to meet the project cost in full.

- **Other proposed schemes put forward to the Board have been given greater priority.**

A total of 26 projects have been put forward during the latest round of CIL funding for this CIL Spending Board. Whilst the project provides locally significant infrastructure, there were other projects which were considered more strategically significant in nature.

Conclusion

- 24 Westerham Town Council has submitted an application to the Board to consider funding to create additional car parking provision within the parish, following complaints and concerns from the local community. 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 providing a large amount of its own CIL funding

towards the project. It is noted has not benefited from CIL funding from the CIL Spending Board previously.

- 25 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that the funding request of £59,975.00 be refused. Whilst the project does provide a clear public benefit, the project does not appear to have maximised all sources of funding and the application does not provide clear social benefits for the wider local community. It is was also deemed that the project is more locally significant, in comparison to other infrastructure projects which are more strategic in nature.

Appendices Original bidding proforma and supporting information

Background Papers None

Contact Officer Simon Taylor Ext. 7134

Richard Morris
Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services