

**Proposal:** Weald Memorial Hall maintenance and renovations

**Applicant:** Weald Memorial Hall

**Ward(s):** Seal and Weald

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the **£15,000** applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Weald Memorial Hall maintenance and renovations” be approved on the following grounds:

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community;
- There is strong community support of the scheme.
- Clear community benefit
- There is sufficient certainty the scheme will be delivered.

Principal criteria not met:

- Insufficient evidence has been provided to show that funding has been maximised.
- Insufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.
- The project is not identified in an adopted strategy/plan.

### Introduction

- 1 Weald Memorial Hall falls within the Parish of Sevenoaks Weald. The parish is one of the 31 that are located within the Sevenoaks District. It is located in the south of the district sharing its administrative parish boundaries with Brasted, Sevenoaks and Leigh. It also shares a border to the east with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.
- 2 The application was received before the application deadline closed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. This proposal has not been previously considered by the CIL Spending Board.

### Description of Proposal

- 3 The proposal is to provide maintenance and renovations to the village hall. This entails replacing original windows with energy efficient double-glazed windows, replacement of front entrance double doors, enhanced insulation and interior updating and redecorating.

## **Funding**

- 4 The applicant, Weald Memorial Hall, has estimated that the total cost of the project to carry out maintenance and renovations to the hall is £30,000.
- 5 The applicant has identified the following additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
  - Funding to be provided from Weald Parish Council - £15,000
- 6 Therefore, to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, Weald Memorial Hall, has applied to the Board for £15,000 of CIL funding. This equates 50% of the total project cost.

## **Representations and Support**

- 7 The application submitted indicates that the applicant is working in partnership with Weald Parish Council to deliver the scheme.
- 8 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
  - Weald Parish Council
  - Weald Horticultural Society
  - Weald News
  - Weald History Group
  - Women of Weald
  - Baby Explorers

## **Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid**

### *Principal Criteria met*

- Strong social, economic and environmental benefits to the community.
- Strong local support for the scheme.
- Clear community benefits.
- There is sufficient certainty the scheme will be delivered.

### *Principal Criteria not met*

- Insufficient evidence has been provided to show that funding has been maximised.
- Insufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.
- Insufficient evidence has been submitted to show that this scheme is part of an existing strategy or plan.

## Appraisal

### Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 9 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.
- 10 The proposal demonstrates clear social benefits to the community. The hall is a vital location serving as a base for a number of local groups and societies in addition to events for residents. The proposed works would ensure that the hall could continue to be used sufficiently by the public. The applicant has noted there is reduced bus services in Weald further reiterating the importance of a local base for social activities.
- 11 The application form states that several local businesses hire the hall regularly. This helps to support local employment and so contributes to the economic benefits to the community. It is considered that the economic benefits are localised in nature and there will not be a wider economic benefit to the proposal.
- 12 The applicant has stated the hall is one of the few local meeting places for residents, which reduces the need to travel outside the village. In addition to this, there is reduced bus services and so residents are more likely to travel by car when leaving the village. The proposed double-glazed windows and enhanced insulation will improve the hall's energy efficiency. It is considered that the environmental benefits are localised in nature and there will not be a wider environmental benefit to the proposal.
- 13 On balance of the information submitted, it is clear there is strong local benefits to the community resulting from this scheme.

### The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan.

- 14 Whilst this project is not listed as a priority in the Infrastructure Funding Statement. However, this document does state that one of the Council's priorities for infrastructure, for the next year, should be to partially fund local community or infrastructure projects that show a clear public benefit or support a clear local need. It is considered that the scheme demonstrates a clear public benefit and supports the local need for a village hall.

- 15 The applicant has advised works to the village hall will be included as part of the evolving Village Design Statement. This is currently on hold due to COVID-19 pandemic and the delay of Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan. Although this has not been completed, it is of note that works to the village hall have been identified to be of importance to the village.
- 16 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan does not refer to the proposed scheme.
- 17 Therefore, after careful consideration, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project is identified in an adopted strategy or plan, but it does not perform strongly under this criteria as other than the IFS insufficient evidence has been submitted to show it is part of any other plan/strategy.

*Strong community support for the project*

- 18 A further key consideration when assessing applications for the CIL Board is to determine whether the scheme has local support from the local community.
- 19 The applicant has confirmed that local support has been received from Weald Parish Council. In addition to this, emails of support have been provided from five community groups that use the hall.
- 20 The application form shows that Weald Parish Council carried out a village consultation where the hall was identified to be of vital significance to the village.
- 21 Therefore, it has been clearly demonstrated that the application has strong local support from the local community and its representatives.

*Sufficient evidence has been provided to show that this will provide a strong community benefit.*

- 22 The applicant has set out a number of community benefits the scheme can bring to the community. The hall provides a location for activities, programmes and events to take place. It is of particular significance to residents who cannot or do not wish to travel outside of the village. There is also an increasing number of young families in Weald who would benefit from activities of their local hall. Information of the usage statistics for the first 12 weeks of 2020 has also been provided. This states that 119 events took place during this period ranging from fitness classes to social activities.

It is considered that the village hall is a vital building to support the community and the community groups.

*Sufficient information has been submitted to show that the scheme will be delivered*

- 23 It is important in the assessment of the bid to consider the likelihood of the scheme being delivered if the CIL monies are granted.
- 24 The application form has not demonstrated a project plan is in place. The applicant has advised the project timeline will be looked into once funding is in place.
- 25 However, the proposed works are not of large magnitude and the applicant has shown the timings of the scheme have been considered. The applicant notes that each individual project should have a short time frame, approximately less than a week. Planning permission is not required for the proposed works. In addition to this, the applicant has the legal right to carry out the scheme.
- 26 On balance of the information submitted, it is reasonable to conclude that the scheme is likely to be delivered.

**Application Considerations - Weakly Performing Criteria**

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

*There is not sufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.*

- 28 Another key criterion for assessing the application is whether any partnership working is included in the project delivery.
- 29 The application form does not indicate that the applicant will be working in any formal partnership with organisations to deliver the project. However, it is indicated the applicant will be working with the Weald Parish Council to deliver the project. Furthermore, the Parish Council have agreed to commit CIL funds to the project. It is also indicated that there is a great deal of support from local groups.

*Insufficient evidence has been provided to show that funding has been maximised.*

- 30 The applicant has shown the funding will be coming from Weald Parish Council's CIL funds. It is not shown on the application form whether other sources of funding have been applied for. While it is positive to see that funding has been agreed by the Parish Council, it is not clearly demonstrated whether any other funding sources have been maximised to meet the project cost in full.

### **Conclusion**

- 31 Weald Memorial Hall has submitted an application to the Board to consider the proposed maintenance and renovation works to the village hall. It is clear there are a number of social, economic and environmental benefits to the local community. In addition to this, the scheme is identified in adopted plans and supported by the local community. The applicant has not benefitted from CIL funding previously.
- 32 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £15,000 of CIL funding be approved to support the delivery of the project. It is clearly demonstrated that the scheme provides public benefits to the community. Approving this bid would provide good value for CIL money applied for, compared to the cost of the overall project.

### **Background Papers**

<b>Appendices</b>	Original bidding proforma and supporting information
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	Claire Pamberi ex 7221/Carlyn Kan ex 7264
<b>Richard Morris</b>	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services