

Proposal Swanley new rugby pitch and associated facilities

Applicant Swanley Town Council

Ward(s) Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village

RECOMMENDATION: That the £60,000 applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Swanley new rugby pitch and associated facilities” be approved on the following grounds:

Principal Criteria met:

- Strong social and environmental benefits to the community;
- The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan;
- Strong local support;
- Sufficient evidence has been submitted to show that the scheme will be delivered.
- Sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme.

Introduction

- 1 CIL money is sought for the creation of a new rugby pitch and associated facilities in Swanley.
- 2 The application was received before the application deadline closed on 17th July 2022. This proposal has not been previously considered by the CIL Spending Board.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The proposal is to create a new rugby pitch and training area and associated facilities consisting of two changing rooms (home and away), officials changing room and toilets in Swanley. This would be located at the Olympic, a community venue.
- 4 The new facilities will offer an additional sports pitch to better meet the sports demands of the area. These facilities will support and provide better facilities to all users of the facilities, especially those who use the facilities for Rugby and Boxing.

Funding

- 5 Swanley Town Council has estimated that the total cost of the project to create a new rugby pitch and associated facilities is £210,000.
- 6 Swanley Town Council has identified the following additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
 - £75,000: Swanley Town Council
 - £75,000: Veolia
- 7 Therefore, to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, the applicant has applied to the Board for £60,000 of CIL funding. This equates to 29% of the total project cost.

Representations and Support

- 8 The application submitted indicates that the applicant is working in partnership with Swanley Rugby Club to deliver the scheme.
- 9 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Councillor Paul Darrington (Swanley White Oak)
 - Swanley Rugby Football Club
 - Swanley Town Council
 - Swanley Sport Forum

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong social and environmental benefits to the community;
- The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan;
- Strong community support;
- Strong partnership working.

Principal Criteria not met:

- No strong economic benefits to the community;
- No strong link between new development and the proposal;

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

Appraisal

Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 10 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.
- 11 The proposal would provide a new rugby pitch alleviating the strain on the Swanley Recreation Ground. This would help towards having more and suitable pitches for the existing teams and help to attract more players. The proposal would improve the sports offerings Swanley currently has and reduce the need to travel out of the town when clashes between clubs occur.
- 12 The applicant has referred to the social benefits the scheme can have including fostering a sense of community for players and better social interactions which in turn can assist higher academic performance. The health and social benefits of sport are well documented and can have a positive impact on players' lives. Further to this, it is noted Swanley has some of the most deprived wards in the district where there are health inequalities. It is considered the proposal will help alleviate and positively contribute towards reducing these.
- 13 The proposal would be located at the Olympic, a community venue. A new rugby pitch would help improve the sports facilities at the site. Swanley Bowls and Swanley Boxing club are both based at the Olympic so would also benefit from the changing room and toilet facilities.
- 14 The applicant intends to reuse the existing materials on the site. The old golf tee will be re-used for a functioning sports stand and the containers will be turned into buildings for the changing rooms, toilets and showers. This provides environmental benefit to the scheme by reducing the need for new materials. Furthermore, the new pitch would provide an additional green open space to the area making better use of the existing site and contributing to the town's green infrastructure.

There is sufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.

- 15 The applicant is working in partnership with Swanley Rugby Club to implement and deliver the project and therefore meets this requirement.

The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan.

- 16 The proposal is not identified in either the Infrastructure Delivery Plan or the Infrastructure Funding Statement. However, it is noted that CIL may be spent on projects outside of these projects.
- 17 The applicant has identified the proposal is identified in the Swanley Town Council 10-year plan and the upcoming neighbourhood plan. The Sevenoaks Local Plan is also referred to in regards to sports provision. The Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015 note the importance of open space and associated leisure facilities for health and wellbeing and the value to the local community.
- 18 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.

- 19 As Swanley is one of our larger urban areas, it is likely that there will be growth and development in the wider area. This proposal therefore provides for existing and new residents and also for any growth in the future. This proposal is future proofing these facilities for the existing and new communities.

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

- 20 The applicant notes that they own the land and so have the rights to carry out the proposal. They would be working in partnership with Swanley Rugby Club to deliver the proposal.
- 21 The applicant has proposed to provide SDC updates at the start and end of the proposed works. The applicant has provided a timescale for when works are likely to commence after the grant of planning permission. Project managers have also been appointed to oversee the proposal.

- 22 Therefore, on balance of the information submitted, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the scheme will be delivered.

Strong community support for the project

- 23 The applicant has carried out consultation with members of the Sports Forum and submitted a summary of responses received as part of their CIL application. This indicates support and desire for the new pitch.
- 24 The application has also been supported by the local member Councillor Paul Darrington and by the Sports Forum.

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

- 25 The Sevenoaks Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 states that the New Ash Green rugby pitch does not have enough capacity to meet the existing demand and is not in a sufficient condition to meet the capacity. It is suggested this is the only rugby pitch serving the North of the district. The creation of a new pitch in the North of the district may assist towards alleviating demands within the wider area.
- 26 The pitch would be located at the Olympic which is a community venue used by a number of groups. The inclusion of a rugby pitch would improve the existing appearance and help to improve the sports and recreational package the Olympic offers making it a more attractive location.
- 27 The proposal would provide a more suitable and well-equipped pitch for rugby players from a range of age groups. This would not only help towards the social benefits of participation and a sense of community but also help to increase numbers of players.

There is sufficient evidence that the applicant has tried to help us achieve our Net Zero targets

- 28 The application pro forma addendum provides information on how the applicant intends to help us achieve our Net Zero targets. The evidence submitted reiterates the environmental benefits proposed. It also proposes to implement a pocket forest at the Olympic to help mitigate emission

from the M25 which is behind the site and contribute to Swanley's wildlife areas.

Other considerations

Requirement for Planning Permission

- 29 The application pro forma notes that an application for planning permission was submitted on the 1st July 2022. This application is no longer valid and therefore not currently under consideration as of 25 July.
- 30 When considering this application for CIL funding, Members of the Board could consider whether the clear merits of the scheme outweigh the absence of planning permission.

Sufficient evidence to show that the applicant has not previously benefited from CIL exemptions.

- 31 The applicant has confirmed that they have not previously benefitted from a CIL exemption for the project.
- 32 In accordance to the CIL Chargeable Schedule, CIL is chargeable on the following developments: residential, supermarkets and superstore and retail warehousing. The proposed works would not fall within these remits and as such would not be subject to a CIL charge.
- 33 Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the applicant has not previously and would not benefit from a CIL exemption for the proposal.

Application Considerations - Weakly Performing Criteria

- 34 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 as strong economic benefits to the community

- 35 The application pro forma notes that the proposal would increase staffing needs at the Olympic assisting the local economy and jobs created through the proposal works. The application form pro forma suggests there are also some indirect benefits such as reduced healthcare costs and increased

happiness from sport. It is considered these are more aligned with social benefits.

- 36 Therefore, it is considered there are not as strong economic benefits to the scheme.

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

- 37 Swanley Town Council are contributing £75,000 of their CIL towards the proposal. A grant of £75,000 from Veolia has been formally agreed. It is not clear on the application pro forma if submissions for other grants have been applied for.

- 38 Therefore, after careful consideration, there is insufficient evidence that funding has been maximised demonstrated through the submitted application.

Conclusion

- 39 Swanley Town Council has submitted an application to the Board to consider a new rugby pitch and associated facilities.

- 40 The need for the scheme has been clearly demonstrated as Swanley's facilities are at a high demand and restricting existing clubs growth. Whilst the economic, social and environmental benefits are limited in scope, it is considered these will be beneficial to the area. 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 small amount of funding in comparison to the total project cost, and has not benefited from CIL funding previously.

- 41 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £60,000 of CIL funding be approved to support the delivery of the project. It is clearly demonstrated that the scheme provides clear public benefits and approving this bid would provide good value for CIL money applied for, compared to the cost of the overall project.

Background Papers

Appendices Original bidding proforma and supporting information

Background Papers None

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