

Proposal	Refurbishment of Playground on King George's Field, Westerham
Applicant	Westerham Town Council
Ward(s)	Westerham and Crockham Hill

RECOMMENDATION: That Westerham Town Council have applied for £15,000, as set out in the report, for the refurbishment of King George's Field play area in Westerham. The bid should be approved for the following reasons:

- Strong economic and social benefits to the community;
- The scheme supports local infrastructure
- Partnership working with other organisations;
- The scheme forms part of a planned strategy/plan
- Funding from other sources has been maximised
- Evidence has been submitted to show that the scheme will be delivered
- Strong local support for the scheme;
- Clear public benefit

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 for CIL funds 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 applicant is seeking CIL money to replace the current playground equipment and resurface the play area, with the addition of accessible and inclusive equipment.
- 4 The additional housing that has been approved locally has led to an increasing demand for recreation and play spaces. This proposal helps to provide for this need.

Funding

- 5 The Town Council state that the overall cost of the project is £70 000. They are seeking a contribution of £15 000, which is 21% of the overall cost of the project.
- 6 They have identified the following additional funding sources to support their application to the Board:
 - Town Council Reserves
 - Town Council CIL reserves
 - Wolfe Garage
 - Westerham Society
 - Westerham Town Partnership

Representations and Support

- 7 The application submitted indicates that the applicant is working in partnership with the Westerham Society and local businesses and consultation groups.
- 8 The application is supported, in writing, by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Chairman of the Westerham Society
 - Letters of support from Local Residents
 - Wolfe Garage
 - Westerham Town Partnership
- 9 The applicants have also carried out a number of consultations in regards to the priorities for the town and specifically on the redevelopment proposals.

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong social, economic and environmental benefits to the community
- Strong local support for the scheme.
- Partnership working with other organisations
- The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan
- Clear public benefit
- Sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme.

Principal Criteria not met:

- Not a strong Environmental Benefit
- Not strong Net Zero ambitions

Appraisal

Strong social and economic 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.
- 11 The proposal is a local piece of infrastructure that would bring economic and social benefits to the local community.
- 12 In terms of economic needs, Westerham's economy is heavily based on visitors and tourism and improving the facilities will widen the population attracted to them. It is likely that people will visit the facilities and also visit other places in Westerham. It will also retain and re-attract those who currently take children to playgrounds in other towns.
- 13 In terms of social benefits it will provide equipment suitable for use by disabled children. In terms of being accessible for all, the current equipment does not comply with the new accessibility regulations, but the new equipment will. This project therefore makes sure that the new equipment can be used by all children and meets the current requirements. It is the only play equipment in the Town and it is therefore important to the Town Council that this is of a high quality as it will enable children's physical and social development. Westerham is not served well by public transport and the ability to be able to walk to good facilities will be critical for the local population and it will also be available for new residents and will therefore support growth.

- 14 It is therefore considered that this proposal will clearly provide towards the social and economic needs of the locality and also wider and growing population so there is a clear public benefit to this scheme.

Strong community support for the project

- 15 As stated above the bid is supported by a number of organisations.
- 16 In addition to this, the applicant has also carried out a number of public surveys. The consultation specifically on the redevelopment proposals ended in January 2022 of the 500 responses received 89% supported the play area refurbishment.
- 17 The applicant has therefore provided sufficient evidence to show that the scheme has local support.

There is sufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.

- 18 Another key criterion for assessing the application is determining how the project will be delivered and whether any additional partners are included in the project delivery.
- 19 There applicant has provided evidence that they are working in partnership with the following people:
- The Westerham Society
 - Westerham Town Partnership
 - Wolfe Garage
 - Parent/Carer Consultation Group
- 20 Some of these partners have also made financial contributions. Therefore, it is considered that it has been demonstrated that there is partnership working to facilitate the delivery of this proposal.

The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan.

- 21 The applicant has made it clear that the project is in keeping with the aims of the Local Plan. SDCs Town Centre strategy highlights the important part of the proposed King George's playing field in achieving the vision for Westerham 2040. It also is in accordance with SDC's open space strategy and the priorities of the SDC community plan. Westerham Town Council's 4 year

strategy developed in consultation with residents, identifies the redevelopment of King George's Field as its major priority.

- 22 It is therefore considered that that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project is clearly identified in an adopted strategy or plan and will support growth in this area.

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

- 23 The project has been the subject of ongoing discussions with SDC planning officers. The applicant has received confirmation that the redevelopment of the King George's field (including the playground refurbishment is part) is covered by permitted development rights. In addition to this, they have also appointed a project manager who will report to 2 committees. They also and submitted a detailed delivery plan and will provide progress reports.
- 24 It is therefore clear that the project is well managed and the scheme will be delivered.

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

- 25 As part of their submission, the applicant has specifically identified developments in the area that have created a need for this project including developments on the London Road, Croft Road and Westerham Hill for example.
- 26 Therefore, it is considered that the submission has addressed this criteria.

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:
- *Insufficient evidence has been provided to show strong environmental benefits to the community.*
 - *Insufficient evidence has been submitted to show that the scheme helps assist the Council's Net Zero ambitions*
- 28 Whilst it is noted that the proposal will provide towards a local environmental need by improving the site, there is not a strong wider benefit.
- 29 In addition, the proposal does contribute to the Movement and Green travel theme, it scored lower under this criteria against other bids as there were not specific carbon neutral technology used and the approach was more general.

Conclusion

- 30 Westerham Town Council has submitted an application to the Board to consider the redevelopment of the St George's Play area.
- 31 The need for the scheme has been clearly demonstrated and there are a number of social and economic benefits. The proposal includes working in partnership and is supported by the local community. It is noted that the applicant has sought to maximise funding for other sources.
- 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.

Background Papers

Appendices Original bidding proforma and supporting information

Background Papers None

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