

**Proposal**      Improvements to Weald Recreation Ground

**Applicant**    Weald Parish Council

**Ward(s)**       Seal and Weald

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the **£91,000** applied for, as set out in the report, for improvements to the Weald Recreation Ground be approved on the following grounds:

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community;
- The project helps to achieve the Council's Net Zero Ambitions;
- Partnership working with other organisations;
- The scheme is identified in an adopted strategy or plan;
- Evidence has been submitted to show that the scheme will be delivered;
- Strong local support for the scheme; and
- Clear public benefit

## Introduction

- 1 The Weald recreation area 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 for CIL funds was received before the application deadline closed on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022. This proposal has not been previously considered by the CIL Spending Board.

## **Description of Proposal**

- 3 The applicant, Weald Parish Council is looking to improve the Weald Recreation Ground. The project includes the provision of a parking area for the recreation ground to improve road safety, to provide mains electricity at the ground replacing an inefficient and out dated diesel generator and to tarmac the access track to the ground.
- 4 The aim is to make the use of the recreation area safer and more efficient, to serve local residents and attract visitors.

## **Funding**

- 5 Weald Parish Council state that the overall project will cost £121,000 and they are asking for £91,000 towards the cost of the project.
- 6 The Parish Council identified the following additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
  - £30,000 from Weald Parish Council.
  - Other applications are being progressed which they will update us of at the CIL Board
- 7 Therefore to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, the Parish Council has applied to the Board for £91,000 of CIL funding, this equates to 75% of the total project cost.

## **Representations and Support**

- 8 The application submitted indicates that the applicant is working in partnership with Weald Cricket Club, Weald Stoolball and Weald Wolves Football club. They have also provided written letters of support.
- 9 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
  - A number of local residents
  - A Local Member

## **Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid**

*Principal Criteria met*

- Strong social, economic and environmental benefits to the community
- The projects helps to achieve the Councils net zero ambitions.
- Partnership working with other organisations
- The project is identified in an adopted strategy/plan
- Evidence has been submitted to show that the scheme will be delivered
- Strong local support for the scheme.
- Clear public benefit

Principal Criteria not met:

- Funding does not appear to be maximised from other sources.

## 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.
- 11 The proposal includes some infrastructure projects that would bring a clear local benefit to the clubs, local community and also the wider community.
- 12 In terms of economic needs, the recreation ground provides a local and cost effective facility for clubs and the community. This project would ensure that membership would be retained, delivering community development and would preserve the volunteer network which has huge economic benefits to the village and local area. By making the access and parking safer and providing mains electricity it will attract more users inc. children's football and other sports camps which will bring economic benefit to the village.
- 13 In terms of social benefits, the project will provide a safer facility for the residents and will make the site more accessible for those with additional needs and wheelchairs. It will also increase the use of the recreational area and encourage community cohesion. It will also support the wellbeing and health of many visitors.
- 14 In terms of environmental benefits, improving these local facilities will reduce the need for car travel. The creation of the new car parking area will reduce the need for cars to park on the road, which currently causes significant erosion of verges and impacts on hedgerow habitats. The new parking is designed to blend in with its surroundings. The replacement of the ageing inefficient generator will have significant environmental benefit. The regular patching of the access track is extremely inefficient. This new surface will allow this area to remain untouched.

- 15 It is therefore considered that sufficient evidence has been submitted to satisfy this criteria and that there is a clear public benefit to the scheme.

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

- 16 One of the new priorities for CIL Spending, as laid out in the Councils Infrastructure Funding Statement, encourages projects to contribute to the Council achieve their Net Zero ambitions.
- 17 Part of this project will involve the replacement of an old inefficient generator, which is an improvement and of local benefit. This will reduce emissions from the current inefficient generator and also make the use of the facilities more efficient.
- 18 The project therefore meets this criteria.

*There is sufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.*

- 19 Another key criterion for assessing the application is determining whether any additional partners are included in the project delivery.
- 20 There is evidence in the application that the proposal will involve a number of sports clubs and support from local residents.
- 21 Therefore, 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.*

- 22 The applicant has identified that there are a number of local and Kent wide strategies that this scheme supports. The Sevenoaks Community Plan includes objectives to support community assets and community activities. The SDC Health Inequalities Action Plan states the need to provide sporting facilities to promote a healthy lifestyle for children and help develop healthy communities. The SDC Economic Development Strategy states the need for infrastructure to service the health of our communities. The Kent and Medway integrated care system also recognises the need for people to support their physical and mental health in preventing illness. The local facility provided by Weald recreation ground is essential for supporting the health of the community.

- 23 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*

- 24 The Parish Council state that planning permission is not required for the scheme. In addition they have the legal right to carry out the scheme and have indicated that progress will be provided monthly to coincide with parish council meetings.
- 25 It is therefore clear that the project is well managed and the scheme will be delivered.

*Strong community support for the project*

- 26 As stated above the bid is supported by a number of sports clubs, it has some letters of support from local residents and also the Local Member.
- 27 The applicant has therefore provided sufficient evidence to show that the scheme has local support

**Application Considerations - Weakly Performing Criteria**

- 28 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 that funding has been maximised*
- 29 From the information provided the applicant has made it clear that they are requesting that 75% of the project is funded through the CIL Board. Due to this large amount, it is considered that the project does not meet the requirements of this criteria. However as the project meets other criteria more closely and it is a strong bid, it was decided that it should be put through to the CIL Spending Board for consideration.

**Conclusion**

- 30 Weald Parish Council has submitted an application to provide a parking area for the recreation ground, tarmac the new access and replace an out dated

generator. The Parish Council have stated that the proposal will improve safety, improve the environment and will provide a better facility for local residents as well as attracting more users. It will also replace an old inefficient generator, which will provide a more efficient and less polluting power source.

- 31 Whilst it is noted that the scheme is asking for a large amount of CIL money compared to the total cost of the project, the need for the scheme has been clearly demonstrated and there are a number of social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 32 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £91,000 of CIL funding be approved to support the delivery of the project. This should be subject to confirming that planning permission is not required for the works and ensuring that all sources of funding are maximised before the money is released.

#### **Background Papers**

**Appendices** Original bidding proforma and supporting information

**Background Papers** None

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