

Application E

Proposal	Eynsford new village hall with associated car parking and improved football pitch.
Applicant	Eynsford Parish Council
Ward(s)	Eynsford

RECOMMENDATION: That the £260,000 applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Eynsford new village hall with associated car parking and improved football pitch” be approved on the following grounds:

Principal Criteria met:

- Strong partnership working;
- Strong community benefit;
- Strong social and environmental benefit to the community;
- Strong Net Zero benefits; and
- Strong partnership working.

Introduction

- 1 CIL money is sought to fund a replacement village hall in Eynsford. The proposal also includes a new car park and improved football pitch.
- 2 Eynsford Parish Council are working in partnership with Eynsford Village Hall Trustees to deliver the project.
- 3 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

- 4 The proposal is to build a new village hall in Harrow Meadow, Eynsford with associated car parking and to create an improved football pitch.
- 5 The applicant has advised on the application pro forma that the existing village hall was built in 1905 and has structural deficiencies, which require major works to preserve it. The existing village hall is situated in a residential area and partially within a flood plain. It is considered that relocating the village hall to a more suitable location is a better option than rebuilding the existing village hall due to the aforementioned issues.
- 6 The new facilities will offer an improved village hall fit for modern times with new outdoor space suitable for events such as weddings and parties. The improved football pitch will provide a more suitable and well-equipped pitch for players and the community to use.

Funding

- 7 The applicant has estimated that the total cost of the project to Eynsford new village hall with associated car parking and improved football pitch is £1,947,000.
- 8 Eynsford Parish Council have identified the following additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
 - Eynsford Parish Council: £120,000
 - Eynsford Village Hall Trustees: £350,000
 - Eynsford Village Hall Trustees: £500,000
 - National Lottery Community Fund: £200,000
 - Kent County Council (KCC): £20,000
 - KCC Village and Community Halls grant: £10,000
 - KCC Combined Members Grant: £5,000
 - Local fundraising and donations: £122,000
 - Eynsford Parish Council Public Works loan: £300,000
 - Other grant applications: £60,000
 - Eynsford Parish Council CIL: £1000
- 9 It should be noted that not all of this funding is secure.
- 10 Therefore, to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, the applicant has applied to the Board for £260,000 of CIL funding. This equates to 13% of the total project cost.

Representations and Support

- 11 The application submitted indicates that the applicant is working in partnership with Eynsford Village Hall Trustees to deliver the scheme.
- 12 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - a. Councillor Alan Cheeseman (Eynsford)
 - b. Eynsford Village Hall
 - c. Riverside Players
 - d. Eynsford Village Society
 - e. Councillor Roger Gough (KCC Leader of the Council)
- 13 The need for this project has been identified by the local community some time. With many local people working to bring forward the project over the years.

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong social and environmental benefits to the community;
- Strong community benefits;
- Strong Net Zero benefits;
- Strong local support for the scheme;
- Strong partnership working.

Principal Criteria not met:

- The project is not identified in an adopted strategy/plan;
- No strong link between new development and the scheme;
- Not all funding for the scheme is secure.

Appraisal

Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 14 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 case as to whether the scheme should receive CIL funding.
- 15 The proposal demonstrates clear social benefits to the community. The village hall is a key hub of social activity for the locality reducing the need to travel outside of the village. Numerous groups and clubs are based in the existing hall. The proposal for a new and improved village hall will facilitate the retention and growth of these groups and clubs. The relocation of the

hall to Harrows Meadow would allow for additional outdoor space with enough space to accommodate larger events such as weddings and parties. The applicant notes that approximately 30% of Eynsford's population are over 60 years old and community events are important to enable social interaction and maintain good wellbeing.

- 16 In addition to this the provision of more parking spaces in Eynsford is essential, there is currently very limited parking for residents and visitors in and around the village. This scheme will therefore help to solve a big local problem. The proposed car parking would also be more convenient for hall users and residents compared to the existing hall, which is located in a residential area with minimal parking. Users of the hall need to park in residential neighbouring streets impacting the residents residing there. The applicant refers to the Eynsford Conservation Area appraisal, which identifies a lack of parking in the village. Furthermore, it is proposed for electric charging points to be included in the car park, which would provide a location for those without off-street parking to charge their electric vehicles. This would all bring positive changes to the community.
- 17 The applicant notes that the existing pitch is on a slope meaning that it is unsuitable for higher league games. A levelled pitch would provide a local facility, which is much more usable for more people and would create a much better facility for the local community to use. The level pitch will ensure it is suitable for a range of levels and better meet the football demand in Eynsford. The pitch improvement would also enable more participation from groups such as people with disabilities, women and the younger population.
- 18 In terms of economic benefits, it is considered that these are localised in nature and there will not be a wider economic benefit to the proposal. The applicants notes that those running events in the village hall are local small businesses. The proposal of a new village hall with outdoor space would enable greater use of the hall for events such as weddings and parties. It is also proposed the new hall may be an attractive base for school groups visiting the village for geography and history trips. It is considered the proposed village hall would assist the local area's economy.
- 19 Furthermore, building a new hall allows for greater environmental benefits from the use of up to date technology, such as photovoltaic panels and more use of renewable energy sources. The creation of an improved football pitch alongside the village hall would allow the project organisers and design team to consider ground source heat pumps, laying the new piping under the football pitch. The applicant notes this is the first choice but if not

feasible, air source heat pumps would be used. The applicant is also considering the best planting around the village hall to enhance biodiversity in the area. As mentioned earlier, the car park is proposed to include electric charging points as well.

- 20 This therefore shows that the needs of this criteria have been met through this proposal.

There is sufficient evidence to show strong partnership working.

- 21 The applicant is working in partnership with Eynsford Village Hall Trustees for the project delivery. This is a formal arrangement with a memorandum of understanding being created between the two parties. Therefore, sufficient evidence has been shown that there is partnership working.

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

- 22 Another key criterion for assessing the application is how the project will be delivered.

- 23 The applicant has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the proposal will be delivered. Planning permission has been received for the proposal and conditions have also been discharged. A business plan has been submitted to support the application and details the management for the main elements of the project. It is therefore clear that the applicant has considered the operation of the project.

Strong community support for the project

- 24 The applicant has carried out extensive consultation, as shown in the submitted business plan and appendices, which has shown clear public support for the proposal. The majority of those surveyed in 2021 expressed support for a modern facility, improved sports pitch and a new village hall at Harrow Meadow. There was also support expressed for a larger car park in the survey.
- 25 Emails of support from the local member, groups, and a member of the public have also been received expressing support for the project. An email of support was also received from Councillor Roger Gough (KCC Leader of the Council) after the bid deadline.

26 Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there is strong community support for the project.

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

27 The applicant has set out a number of community benefits the scheme can bring to the community. The new village hall is a key asset to the village for social activities, sports and groups serving a range of residents. The improvement of the football pitch would also provide a better surface allowing more usage than the existing pitch.

28 There is an identified lack of car parking in the village which would be alleviated by the new car park. This would provide new spaces for visitors of the hall to park in and the relocation of the village hall would alleviate issues of village hall users parking in surrounding residential streets.

29 Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there is strong community benefit for the project.

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

30 The applicant has advised that the use of new technologies will reduce the existing carbon footprint of the hall from 10.3 tonnes CO2 per annum to 1.7 tonnes CO2 per annum. This is a substantial decrease of carbon emissions per annum.

31 The proposal also provides charging points for electric cars, which will also help the Council achieve its Net Zero targets. These will assist visitors to the area and will also provide additional public charging points for the parish.

32 Therefore, it is considered that the proposal sufficiently contributes to the Council's Net Zero targets.

Is there sufficient evidence to show that the applicant has previously benefited from or exemptions.

33 The applicant has stated on the application pro forma they have not benefitted from any CIL exemptions as laid out in the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Other considerations

Requirement for Planning Permission

34 Planning permission has been granted for the proposal in July 2020. This permission expires after three years and so is still extant.

Application Considerations - Weakly Performing Criteria

35 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 submitted to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the scheme.

36 There has been no information submitted to indicate how the proposal meets the need from new development and so the proposal performs weakly on this criterion.

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

37 It is considered the proposal does not perform as strongly in this criterion in regards to security of funding.

38 The proposal is projected to cost £1,947,000. The applicant is requesting £260,000 of CIL funding. This equates to 13% of the total project cost.

39 The applicant has identified numerous sources of funding ranging from fundraising to grants, to contribute towards the project cost. It is however noted that these are not all secure. Members of the Board may also want to consider adding a condition to ensure that all the sources of funding as laid out in Section 12 of the application pro forma are secured before the money is released.

The project is not identified in an adopted strategy/plan.

40 The proposal is not an identified project with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure Funding Statement. However, it is noted that CIL may be spent on projects outside of these projects.

41 It is however noted that the retention of the football pitch at Harrow Meadow has been identified in the Sevenoaks Playing Pitch Strategy 2018.

Conclusion

- 42 Eynsford Parish Council has submitted an application to the Board to consider a new village hall with associated car parking and improved football pitch.
- 43 It is evident that the proposal would bring a number of social, economic and environmental benefits to the community. The proposal is supported by the local community. It has good management in place and shows strong partnership working. 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.
- 44 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £260,000 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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