

Proposal: Greatness community pavilion

Applicant(s): Sevenoaks Town Football Club and Sevenoaks Town Council

Ward(s): Sevenoaks Northern

RECOMMENDATION: That the **£787,500** applied for, as set out in the report, for the scheme “Greatness community pavilion” be approved on the following grounds:

Principal criteria met:

- Strong social, economic and environmental benefits to the community;
- Strong link between new development and the scheme;
- Good partnership working;
- The scheme is identified in an adopted strategy or plan;
- Significant public benefit;
- Funding maximised from other sources;
- Clear evidence to show that the scheme will be delivered;
- Strong local support;
- The scheme contributes towards the Council's commitment to tackling climate change.

Introduction

- 1 CIL funding is sought for the construction of a new community pavilion at Greatness recreation ground.
- 2 The application was received before the application deadline closed on 15 September 2023. This proposal has not been previously considered by the CIL Spending Board.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The proposal is to construct a new two-storey community pavilion containing multi-purpose activity spaces, treatment room, gym and associated facilities, at Greatness recreation ground.
- 4 The pavilion will provide a new community space focused on health and wellbeing. It is proposed that the pavilion will be open to the public seven days a week. It will support all users of the recreation ground through the provision of modern and fit for purpose facilities to host community group exercise,

counselling, support and information sessions. It will also provide Sevenoaks Town Football Club with improved facilities and enable the Club to continue running and expand its community football programme with a particular focus on underrepresented groups and those most in need.

Funding

- 5 The applicants, Sevenoaks Town Football Club and Sevenoaks Town Council, estimate that the total cost of the project is £1,975,000.
- 6 The following additional funding sources and grants have been identified to support the application to the Board:
 - £800,000 – Football Foundation
 - £150,000 – Stadium Improvement Fund
 - £150,000 – Sevenoaks Town Football Club match funding
 - £87,500 – Sevenoaks Town Council
- 7 Therefore, to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, the applicants have applied to the Board for £787,500 of CIL funding. This equates to 40% of the total project cost.

Representations and Support

- 8 The application submitted indicates that the applicants are working in partnership with the Football Foundation to deliver the scheme.
- 9 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Cllr Leaman (Sevenoaks Northern)
 - Cllr Shea (Mayor of Sevenoaks)
 - Sevenoaks District Council Health Team
 - Kent Football Association
 - Head in the Game
 - Sevenoaks Samaritans
 - Omnifit Sevenoaks
 - Hope Church & Sevenoaks Larder
 - ManVFat

Officer's Appraisal of Bid

- 10 Assessment criteria met:
 - Strong social, economic and environmental benefits to the community;
 - Strong link between new development and the scheme;
 - Good partnership working;
 - The scheme is identified in an adopted strategy or plan;
 - Significant public benefit;

- Funding maximised from other sources;
- Clear evidence to show that the scheme will be delivered;
- Strong local support;
- The scheme contributes towards the Council's commitment to tackling climate change.

11 Assessment criteria not met:

- None.

Appraisal of strongly performing criteria

Strong social, economic and environmental benefits to the community

- 12 When considering an application for CIL funding it must be demonstrated that the project would deliver clear social, economic and environmental benefits. This is crucial to the sustainability of the scheme and a key consideration in determining whether the project should be awarded CIL funding overall.
- 13 The project would see the creation of a new community facility providing modern, attractive and fit for purpose activity spaces offering a wide range of services and classes focused on the health and wellbeing of the local community and wider public.
- 14 The applicants have set out that this is a community project designed to maximise collaboration with local organisations to ensure that much needed services are provided to the members of the community that require the most help in a sustainable and cost effective way. This will be done through securing innovative partnership arrangements that secure ongoing discounted access to the facility in return for providing free sessions to target groups, whilst also promoting paid sessions to a wide database. The health and social benefits of exercise and providing spaces where people can meet are well documented and can have a positive impact on people's lives. Further to this, it is noted that northern Sevenoaks is densely populated with some pockets of deprivation and potential for regeneration, which has been identified in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan. It is considered that through providing a new community pavilion the project will positively contribute towards the health and wellbeing of northern Sevenoaks residents and the wider community.
- 15 Turning to the economic benefits, the pavilion will generate an ongoing income. On the community use side, this will be from paid sessions. The pavilion will also be used to support the users and activities of Sevenoaks Town Football Club, including the provision of changing rooms, a kitchen / refreshment area, clubhouse and storage facilities. It is expected that the new facility will generate increased visitor numbers and therefore income through ticket receipts and refreshments. The applicants state that jobs will be created in hospitality, catering and management. It is considered that the anticipated income generation and creation of jobs will assist the local economy, and whilst it is a

fairly localised benefit, providing some or all of the income is reinvested into the facility, it has the potential to create a longer term economic benefit.

- 16 The project seeks to be environmentally friendly through the design of the pavilion, which incorporates a green roof and a living wall, providing important microclimates for wildlife and helping to reduce surface water run-off.

Strong link between new development and the scheme

- 17 Northern Sevenoaks is a focus for development in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan and in the emerging Local Plan, including the large scale redevelopment of the Sevenoaks Quarry. The project provides for both existing and future residents therefore future proofing the facility for years to come.

Good partnership working

- 18 The applicants are working in partnership with each other and with the Football Foundation to deliver the project, showing a good example of partnership working.

The scheme is identified in an adopted strategy or plan

- 19 The project is not identified in either the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure Funding Statement. However it is noted that CIL may be spent on projects outside of these plans.
- 20 The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan 2020-38 sets out an objective to 'deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town', supported by the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan. It is considered that the application therefore meets this requirement.

Significant public benefit

- 21 As set out in paragraphs 13-16 above, a new pavilion for both community use and the use of Sevenoaks Town Football Club would provide significantly improved facilities to those that currently exist. The scope of the uses proposed is wide, but primarily focus on ensuring underrepresented groups and those most in need are not excluded through the promotion of free and/or affordable classes and sessions. There is no doubt that such a facility will have a significantly positive impact within the local community, and is highly likely to attract users and visitors from further afield. As such, it is considered that the public benefit of this project is significant.

Funding maximised from other sources

- 22 The applicants have identified four sources of funding outside of this application for CIL funding. This includes £150,000 already granted from Sevenoaks Town Football Club and £87,500 from the Sevenoaks Town Council CIL pot. £950,000 from the Football Foundation and Stadium Improvement Fund has been applied for but yet to be granted, although both organisations have lent

their support to the project. Members of the Board may wish to consider adding a condition to ensure that funding to cover the full cost of the project is secured before any CIL funding is released.

- 23 The requested amount of £787,500 equates to 40% of the overall project costs. It is considered that funding opportunities have been maximised to support this application.

Clear evidence to show that the scheme will be delivered

- 24 Sevenoaks Town Council is the joint applicant and landowner. The joint applicant is therefore in a good position to see the project delivered and has the legal right to do so.
- 25 The applicants have committed to keeping the District Council updated with progress on a quarterly basis and have set out clear timescales for the delivery of the project. Planning permission for the project has been granted and all conditions discharged. The project is estimated to take 6 months and is planned for mid 2024. It is therefore considered that clear evidence has been submitted to show that the scheme will be delivered.

Strong local support

- 26 The project is identified in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan which underwent public consultation throughout its production. The planning application for the project also included a period of public consultation. The applicants have reached out to a number of underrepresented groups and community organisations in the local area to understand any specific needs and gaps in current community provision. In addition a local consultation was undertaken in Summer 2023 to obtain views on this project and wider improvements to Greatness recreation ground. Over 98% of respondents supported the proposals showing clear local support.

The scheme contributes towards the Council's commitment to tackling climate change

- 27 As set out in paragraph 16 above, the project seeks to be environmentally friendly through the design of the pavilion, which incorporates a green roof and a living wall, helping to reduce the occurrence of flooding. The District Council is committed to tackling the challenge of climate change, including through adaptation and mitigation, and it is considered that this is an important consideration in determining whether the project should be awarded CIL funding.

Other considerations

CIL exemptions

- 28 The applicants have confirmed that they have not previously benefitted from a CIL exemption for the project. In accordance with the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL is chargeable on the following developments: residential, supermarkets and

superstores and retail warehousing. The proposed works would not fall within these remits and as such would not be subject to a CIL charge.

- 29 It is therefore considered that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the applicant has not previously, and would not, benefit from a CIL exemption for the project.

Appraisal of weakly performing criteria

- 30 It is considered that there are no weakly performing criteria in respect of this application.

Conclusion

- 31 Sevenoaks Town Football Club and Sevenoaks Town Council (the applicants) have submitted an application for CIL funding for the construction of a new community pavilion at Greatness recreation ground.
- 32 The need for the project has been clearly demonstrated as the existing facilities are inadequate and unable to cope with the population growth that is planned in the northern Sevenoaks area. The project will bring significant social, economic and environmental benefits to the local area with wide public benefit, providing modern, attractive and fit for purpose health and wellbeing facilities with a particular focus on underrepresented groups and those most in need. The project has been identified in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan 2020-38 and benefits from local support. It is noted that the applicant is asking for 40% of the total project cost, and has not benefited from CIL funding previously.
- 33 After reviewing the application and supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £787,500 of CIL funding be awarded to support the delivery of the project, subject to a condition that ensures that funding for the full cost of the project is secured before the CIL funding is released. It is considered that the scheme provides significant public benefit and represents good value for money, therefore demonstrating appropriate use of CIL funds.

Appendices

Applicant's original bid pro-forma and supporting information

Background Papers

None

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