

Proposal: West Kingsdown Village Hall Car Park

Applicant(s): West Kingsdown Village Hall Management Committee

Ward(s): Fawkham & West Kingsdown

RECOMMENDATION: That the **£17,000** applied for, as set out in the report, for the scheme “West Kingsdown Village Hall Car Park” be approved on the following grounds:

Principal criteria met:

- Strong social benefit to the community;
- Good partnership working;
- Significant public benefit;
- Funding maximised from other sources;
- Clear evidence to show that the scheme will be delivered;
- Strong local support;
- The scheme does not already benefit from CIL funding.

Introduction

- 1 An application for CIL funding has been submitted for the refurbishment of West Kingsdown Village Hall Car Park. This has been submitted by the West Kingsdown Village Hall Management Committee.
- 2 The application was received before the application deadline closed on 15th September 2023. This proposal has not been previously considered by the CIL Spending Board.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The applicant, West Kingsdown Village Hall Management Committee, is seeking CIL funding to improve the village hall car park. The project involves resurfacing the car park to be even and use of more resilient materials to prevent the hall from flooding in future.
- 4 The project proposes a fit for purpose car park to serve users of the hall, Gamecock field and Community Cupboard, a charity offering residents food, groceries and friendly signposting to other support services.

Funding

- 5 The applicant has estimated the project will cost a total of £38,000.
- 6 The following funding sources have been identified to support the application to the Board:
 - West Kingsdown Parish Council: £9500 (agreed in principle)
 - West Kingsdown Village Hall: £8500 (agreed)
 - KCC Member fund: £3000 (agreed) (please note this update on funding was received after the submission of the application pro forma)
- 7 Therefore, to meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, the applicant has applied to the Board for £17,000 of CIL funding. This equates to 45% of the total project cost.

Representations and Support

- 8 The application submitted indicates that the applicant is working in partnership with West Kingsdown Parish Council to deliver the scheme.
- 9 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Councillor Emily Bulford (Fawkham and West Kingsdown)
 - Councillor Lynda Harrison (Fawkham and West Kingsdown)
 - West Kingsdown Parish Council
 - Alzheimers and Dementia Support Services
 - The Community Cupboard
 - West Kingsdown Active Retirement Group
 - West Kingsdown Badminton Club
 - Zan Shin Kai Karate
 - Saturday morning exercise class
 - Thursday Art Group
 - West Kingsdown Walking Netball
 - West Kingsdown Boxing Club

Officer's Appraisal of Bid

- 10 Assessment criteria met:
 - Strong social benefit to the community;
 - Good partnership working;
 - Significant public benefit;
 - Funding maximised from other sources;
 - Clear evidence to show that the scheme will be delivered;
 - Strong local support;
 - The scheme does not already benefit from CIL funding.

11 Assessment criteria not met:

- Weak economic and environmental benefits to the community;
- Weak link between new development and the scheme;
- The scheme is not identified in an adopted strategy or plan;
- The scheme does not contribute towards the Council's commitment to tackling climate change.

Appraisal of strongly performing criteria

Strong social benefit to the community

- 12 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.
- 13 The provision of an even car park surface improves safety and ease of access for users to integral community facilities, particularly during evenings. The representations of support provided from community group representatives state that the existing car park is not fit for purpose and there are safety concerns for users. After rain, the car park will become muddy and sandy resulting in users transferring this into the hall. Subsequently, this then requires cleaning by the users before they can vacate the hall. An improved car park would enable users of the hall, food bank and field to enjoy their recreational time without needing to consider the element of the existing difficult car park. Therefore, it is considered the project performs strongly on this criteria.

Good partnership working

- 14 The applicant is working in partnership with West Kingsdown Parish Council to deliver the project. The Parish Council has agreed to contribute 25% of the cost (£9,500) and the parish clerk will be involved in the daily management of the project. Therefore, the project meets this requirement.

Significant public benefit

- 15 The village hall and Gamecock field lie at the heart of the community and are a hub of community activity and recreation. The applicant notes that these provide residents with a much needed location for social interaction and maintenance of good mental wellbeing especially for older residents. The field is identified as amenity green space in the Open Spaces Study (2018), site reference 757. This study assesses the field's quality under several factors as good. The field provides an opportunity for informal recreation and a place to enjoy green open space. Users of the hall also extend beyond the community with bookings received from residents in Gravesend, Borough Green and Swanley. The proposal would be beneficial to local users alongside the wider

public who travel to use the hall. Therefore, it is considered that the scheme would provide significant public benefit.

Funding maximised from other sources

- 16 The application pro forma states an application to Award for All Lottery Fund was unsuccessful due to other submissions having high priority. A grant of £3,000 from the KCC Member fund contribution was successful. The applicant will be using a portion of their own funds and West Kingsdown Parish Council has agreed to use its CIL towards the project. Both of these funds are limited due to other budget commitments.
- 17 The requested amount of £17,000 equates to 45% of the overall project costs. The applicant has demonstrated pursuing other sources of funding and so it is considered that there is sufficient evidence to show funding has been maximised.

Clear evidence to show that the scheme will be delivered

- 18 The applicant has the legal right to carry out the scheme. The applicant states that planning permission or any other consents are not required to proceed with the project. In the application submitted, it has been stated that the West Kingsdown Parish Clerk and Secretary of the Village Hall will project manage the scheme which is anticipated to take 2/3 weeks. The ongoing maintenance has been considered with funds and a grounds contractor in place. Therefore, it is considered the project is likely to be delivered efficiently and would be well-managed in the longer term.

Strong local support

- 19 In the applicant's application for CIL funding, it is evident that there is strong community backing for this scheme.
- 20 Both ward members for Fawkham and West Kingsdown express their support for the project noting that use of the hall has increased since its opening and the existing parking facility is not designed for parking use.
- 21 Consultation for the project has been carried out with users of the hall and site. Support from a range of community and sports groups have been supplied. Representatives for groups involving members with mobility issues highlight that an even surface car park would be advantageous and safer. This sentiment is reiterated by the other community and sports groups. Therefore, after careful consideration, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project has strong local support for the scheme.

The scheme does not already benefit from CIL funding

- 22 The scheme has not previously been considered by the CIL Spending Board so has not previously received SDC CIL funding.

Other considerations

CIL exemptions

- 23 The applicant has 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.
- 24 Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the applicant has not previously and would not benefit from a CIL exemption for the proposal.

Appraisal of weakly performing criteria

Weak economic and environmental benefits to the community

- 25 The provision of an improved car park is likely to make the hall a more attractive location for events, increasing use of the hall from hall users and users outside of the local vicinity, thereby increasing its income. It is considered that these are fairly localised benefits, therefore, it is considered that the project does not perform as strongly on this criteria.
- 26 The applicant notes that the environmental benefits will be localised in nature and unlikely to provide a wider environmental benefit. The resurfacing of the car park will help prevent the hall from flooding which it previously has in heavy rain. Therefore, it is considered whilst there is local environmental benefit, the project does not perform strongly on this criteria.

Weak link between new development and the scheme.

- 27 The applicant has not made reference as to how the proposal will support new development in West Kingsdown or the wider area, or how new development has created a need for the project. Therefore, the project does not perform strongly on this criteria.

The scheme is not identified in an adopted strategy or plan

- 28 The need for the project has not been identified in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure Funding Statement. It should be noted that CIL funding can be allocated to projects outside of these plans. The project is not identified in an existing strategy or plan.

The scheme does not contribute towards the Council's commitment to tackling climate change

- 29 In terms of tackling climate change, the benefits here are similarly localised in nature as the aforementioned environmental benefits. The benefit will be helping residents stay local and avoiding the need to travel further away.

Therefore, it is considered whilst there is local benefit in helping to tackling climate change, the project does not perform strongly on this criteria.

Conclusion

- 30 West Kingsdown Village Hall Management Committee has submitted an application to the Board to consider funding the improvement of West Kingsdown Village Hall car park.
- 31 There would be great social and public benefit improving safety for users and making the car park fit for purpose. The project is well supported by the local community and sufficient detail demonstrates it would be deliverable and well managed. The applicant has pursued other funding sources and the project has not benefitted from CIL previously.
- 32 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £17,000 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.

Appendices

Applicant's original bid pro-forma and supporting information

Background Papers

None

Contact Officer(s): Emma Henshall Ext. 7358; Carlyn Kan Ext. 7246

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Planning & Regulatory Services