

Proposal Westerham Public Toilets
Applicant Westerham Town Council
Ward(s) Westerham & Crockham Hill

RECOMMENDATION: That the £21,662.00 funding applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Westerham Public Toilets Refurbishment” be approved on the following grounds:

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- Majority of project cost secured through match-funding

Introduction

- 1 Westerham Town Council is one of 31 parished areas in Sevenoaks District. Westerham shares its administrative parish boundaries with Edenbridge and Brasted. It also shared a District boundary with Tandridge District and the London Borough of Bromley. 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 funding was received by Officers on 29.11.2018.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The proposal are the public toilets located on Fullers Hill, Westerham. The facility was passed onto the Town Council by Sevenoaks District Council and has been described as “beyond economical repair” by Westerham Town Council. It has been stated that there are no alternative facilities in the town centre for residents and tourists to use.
- 4 The proposal is to remove the existing toilets with the associated equipment/fixings, and replace with a prefabricated module into the existing shell. This will include a unisex/disabled toilet and baby changing facilities within the module.
- 5 In the original CIL application, it was anticipated that the project would be completed by July 2018, with the funding in place prior to the completion date. Since the submission of the original CIL application, Officers have not

received any additional information to indicate a revised timetable to complete the proposal.

Funding

- 6 Westerham Town Council have estimated that the total cost of the public toilet refurbishment will cost approximately £61,662.00. This includes contingencies and pre-commencement costs (e.g. asbestos removal) but these costs are unknown until the internal works have begun.
- 7 The application has identified the following additional funding sources and grants to support their application to the Board:
 - Westerham Town Council (reserves): £10,000.00
 - Westerham Town Council (CIL neighbourhood portion): £30,000.000
- 8 No additional funding sources have been identified or secured for the purposes of this project.
- 9 To meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, Westerham Town Council has applied to the Board for £21,662.00 of CIL funding.

Representations and Support

- 10 Westerham Town Council is the only organisation working on this proposal. There are no additional partners or organisations that are helping to deliver this proposal.
- 11 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
 - Cllr. Diana Esler (SDC Member for Westerham & Crockham Hill)

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- Majority of project cost secured through match-funding

Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

- 12 One of the key criteria for the assessment of bids is that proposals should demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits of the scheme. This includes whether there are significant benefits for the economy, community and social impacts and how the proposal benefits the environment and mitigates any impacts.
- 13 The case for improving the facility on Fullers Hill is based upon the needs of the town, in terms of economic, social and environmental requirements.

Westerham Town is described by the applicant as a “sustainable, tourist, visitor, event and shopping” market town. As such, the provision of public toilets helps to provide amenity, to keep people within the town for employment and leisure.

- 14 The public toilets are valued by the community. In a survey attached to the submitted CIL application, 80% of residents who responded believe that the provision of public toilets are essential to the town, while 92% for respondents believe that the facility is essential for visitors for tourism. It was also pointed out in the survey that public toilets are important as they are frequently used by the elderly, young families who need baby changing facilities and those with disability. Therefore, making the facility more accessible to the public is important.

Majority of project cost secured through match-funding

- 15 The Council has determined that the purpose of CIL funding is to be a “top-up”, to be used in meeting any funding deficiencies or gaps in order to deliver the project. This funding should only be used for “capital” investment, as opposed to being used for “revenue” spend.
- 16 The applicant has stated that the funding which has been secured for the proposal is from Westerham Town Council through committed funding from their reserves and CIL funds which have been passed from Sevenoaks District Council.
- 17 Members should note that the CIL funding committed from Westerham Town Council is a result of the CIL contributions that the Town Council is entitled to receive under the CIL regulations. This is known as the “neighbourhood portion” of CIL.

Other considerations

Planning Permission

- 18 An additional consideration of the criteria in which applications are assessed against is whether a proposal has the appropriate consents in place to carry out the project.
- 19 Westerham Town Council has confirmed that it has sought pre-application advice for whether the works to refurbish the facility would require permission. It has been stated in the application that planning permission is not required, as the work to the toilets are internal.
- 20 It is also noted that access requirements from a neighbouring, adjacent property to inspect the routing of the utilities and to provide ongoing maintenance. As the facility was transferred from Sevenoaks District to Westerham Town Council, there are no issues with land ownership

Management of the Proposal

- 21 The management of the scheme will be conducted by DANFO, the preferred supplier for Westerham Town Council. The ongoing maintenance of the public toilets will be Westerham Town Council.

Conclusion

- 22 The public toilets in Westerham are an important asset to the community for residents, visitors and tourists alike and are well used, especially during events. There are no other alternative facilities in the town and are described as beyond economical repair. The proposal seeks to refurbish the toilets internally, resulting in no requirements for planning permission. Westerham Town Council is carrying out the proposal by itself with its preferred supplier, with no other partnership organisations involved. A majority of funding is being provided by the Town Council itself through its own reserves and CIL monies (automatic entitlement) that have been passed over from Sevenoaks District Council.
- 23 As a result, the recommendation is to approve funding for this project.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Applicant's original pro-forma

Background Papers

None