

Proposal Swanley Park Disabled Play Equipment

Applicant Swanley Town Council

Ward Swanley White Oak

RECOMMENDATION: That the **£10,000.00** applied for, as set out in the report, for scheme “Swanley Park Disabled Play Equipment” be approved for the following grounds:

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- Strong local support for the scheme.
- The CIL contribution will be matched by funding from other sources.

Introduction

- 1 Swanley Town Council is one of 31 Town and Parish Councils in Sevenoaks District. It is located in the north of the District and shares administrative parish council boundaries with Hextable, Crockenhill, Farningham and Eynsford. Swanley also shares the Kent County boundary with the London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley, as well as the Greater London Authority area.
- 2 Officers received the application for CIL funding on 04.10.2018.

Description of Proposal

- 3 The project seeks the installation of disabled play equipment in Swanley Park to provide better facilities and opportunities for those with accessibility or disability issues. This follows on from current ongoing improvements to the park following an increase in visitor numbers.
- 4 BEAMs, a local charity that operates in the Swanley area for young disabled people, helped to identify the need for the scheme. Parkhall School (an additional needs school in Swanley), local residents and disabled users also contributed to identifying the need for the scheme.

- 5 Members of the Board should note that this is a resubmission of a scheme that Swanley Town Council submitted to the Board for consideration in May 2018. The original proposal was not considered at the time due to the large amount of funding being sought (more than 80% of the total project cost in CIL funding). Swanley Town Council has reviewed the amount of funding required to complete the project and it has been reduced. Therefore, Officers are satisfied that the project qualifies for “top up” funding.

Funding

- 6 Swanley Town Council have stated that the installation of disabled play equipment in Swanley Park will cost an estimated £25,000.00. It has been confirmed that £15,000.000 of the Town Council’s reserves have been committed to the project, and states that no additional reserves or funding is available.
- 7 To meet the funding gap for the full cost of the project, Swanley Town Council has applied to the Board for £10,000.00 of CIL funding.

Representations and Support

- 8 The application submitted indicates that Swanley Town Council is not working in partnership with any other organisation to deliver the scheme. Therefore, it should be assumed that the Town Council is the sole organisation for the delivery of this scheme.
- 9 The application is supported by the following local representatives and organisations:
- Cllr. John Barnes (SDC Member for Swanley Christchurch & Swanley Village)
 - Cllr. Michael Horwood (Local Member for Swanley Town Council)

Lead Officers Appraisal of Bid

Principal Criteria met

- Strong economic, social and environmental benefits to the community
- Strong local support for the scheme.
- The CIL contribution will be matched by funding 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. This enhances the sustainability case as to whether the scheme should receive CIL funding.
- 11 The applicant has outlined a number of social, economic and environmental benefits associated to the project. Swanley Park has a substantial number of visitors visiting the park during the summer period, for leisure and recreational purposes. It is used by a mixture of individuals, social clubs and sport groups. The Town Council consider that this project has the potential to increase the potential number of visitors to the park including disabled users. These visitors may also visit the wider area and use other facilities, shops and restaurants etc, which will support the local economy.
- 12 Swanley Town Council also employ around 40 members of staff who are mainly seasonal workers who maintain the park grounds and provide other functions and services. As the patronage of the park increases, there is a perceived requirement to maintain facilities for all visitors and it is considered that this increase in patronage would also ensure the retention of employing local people.
- 13 The provision of adequate facilities for people with disabilities is not only essential in meeting legal requirements but also in promoting community activities and encouraging greater participation in out door activities and healthy life styles. This project would therefore also provide a social benefit to the community.
- 14 The proposal seeks to promote community cohesion and inclusiveness and also has the potential to benefit the local economy. As the proposal seeks to add the play equipment for the disabled to an existing play area rather than creating a new play space to entertain the new facility, the environmental and social benefits are also supported.

Strong local support for the scheme

- 15 A further key consideration when assessing applications for the CIL Board is to determine whether the scheme has local support from the local community. The applicant has received support in submitting their proposal by one of the local Ward Members, as well as the support from one Town Council member. It should be noted that the Town Council member is also an SDC Ward member, from a nearby Parish and the Kent County Councillor for Swanley.

- 16 In addition, the scheme was identified by a local charity, a local Additional Needs School and by local residents and disabled users. So it is clear that it is meeting needs identified by local residents, schools and charities.
- 17 Therefore, it has been clearly demonstrated that the application has strong local support from the local community and its representatives.

The CIL contribution will be matched by funding from other sources.

- 18 Another key consideration when assessing applications is the whether the CIL contribution will be matched by funding from other sources. Since its previous submission, the applicant has increased the amount of money that is put forward to support the scheme, and therefore 60% of the funding for the project is already been provided..
- 19 It is therefore considered that if agreed, the CIL monies in this case would be matched by funding from other sources and would therefore meet this criteria.

Other considerations

Planning Permission

- 20 An additional consideration of the criteria in which applications are assessed, is whether a proposal has the appropriate consents in place to carry out the project.
- 21 The applicant has confirmed that they have the legal right to carry out the scheme. It is considered that planning permission for the installation of disabled play equipment to an existing play area may not be required. This is because local authorities benefit from some permitted development rights under the General Development Procedure Order 2015, provided that they meet a certain set of criteria. The Town and Parish Council would however need to confirm this separately.

Management of the project

- 22 As part of the application to the Board, it has been highlighted that Swanley Town Council will oversee the management of the project as proposed location for the disabled play equipment is owned by the Town Council. Should CIL funding be granted for the scheme, it is anticipated that the project will take four weeks to complete and should be completed by the end of February 2019. There is however no information submitted in regard to maintenance.

Conclusion

- 23 Swanley Town Council has submitted an application to the Board to consider funding to install disabled play equipment in Swanley Park. The need for the scheme is demonstrated and there a number of social, economic and environmental benefits. While the proposal has not been formally identified in a plan or strategy, a number of community organisations and charities have worked with Swanley Town Council to identify the need. It is noted that a majority of the funding is coming from the Town Council's reserves and has not benefited from any CIL funding from the CIL Board or from the Town Council. There is strong local support for the scheme.
- 24 After reviewing the application and subsequent supporting evidence, it is recommended by Officers that £10,000.00 of CIL funding be approved to support the delivery of the project, as it will provide a number of benefits to the community for the amount donated by the CIL Board. It would therefore be considered to be good value for money for the amount of CIL money applied for compared to the cost of the overall project.

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| Appendices | Appendix C1 - Original bidding proforma and supporting information |
| Background Papers | None |
| Contact Officer | Simon Taylor (ext. 7134) |

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer