

REPORT TITLE: WINNALL FLATS OPEN SPACE PROJECT - COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) FUNDING

23 JUNE 2021

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cabinet Member for Environment – Councillor
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WARD(S): ST BARTHOLEMEW WARD

PURPOSE

In December 2019 the Council approved an outline business case for a new residential development at the Winnall flats site in Winnall Manor Road, Winchester.

Detailed proposals have now been developed and the final business case for progressing the scheme towards implementation is included elsewhere on this agenda (CAB3300).

Part of the overall scheme includes proposals for significant improvements of the open spaces at the Winnall Flats site, including a community park with a play area for younger children, meeting areas and food growing beds.

The purpose of this report is to consider the open space element of the scheme and it is recommended that £755,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funding be allocated to help provide a public open space in association with the proposed new development. The funding will come from the 'district' pot of the City Council CIL fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve an allocation of £755,000 to help fund the provision of a new public open space in association with the provision of new development at Winnall Flats. The allocation of funds will be conditional on the approval of the business case for the New Build housing scheme.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1. Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District
- 1.2. The infrastructure which can be funded using CIL, supports projects which deliver improved open space, and improved community facilities to help enable better walking and cycling routes. This helps to reduce carbon emissions in both the city and around the district.
- 1.3. Homes for all
- 1.4. The allocation of CIL funding will support infrastructure for areas where new housing has been provided, which will enhance community and recreation facilities and open space for both new and existing residents.
- 1.5. Living Well
- 1.6. The allocation of CIL funding to recreation facilities and improved open space promotes community cohesion, and greater participation in physical activities, which supports healthier lifestyles, as well as helping to support biodiversity.
- 1.7. Your Services, Your Voice
- 1.8. A consultation event was held in July 2018 to invite the views and comments of the existing residents of the flats. This event helped to shape the proposal for the improvement of the open space, and to provide the main elements of the scheme which were important to the residents.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. The Council has collected approximately £16.8m in CIL receipts since April 2014, when CIL charging came in to effect. The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations allow up to 5% of CIL income received to be used to administer the fund, which includes the collection, monitoring, reporting and allocation. A further 15% of funding collected is transferred to the relevant Parish Council where a particular development is occurring. (25% where a Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan, which currently is only Denmead). This is also the case in the Winchester Town area where the Town Forum receives 15% of the CIL collected from developments with the town area. Until September 2018, 25% of the CIL remaining was transferred to Hampshire County Council, as a main provider of infrastructure in the district. However this arrangement is no longer in place. (CAB3071 refers)
- 2.2. To date, of the remaining CIL retained by the City Council (approximately £11.8m) c£5m has either been spent or allocated to infrastructure projects, which leaves approximately £6.8m which has yet to be allocated. In a report to Cabinet in March 2021 (CAB3293 refers) a number of emerging

infrastructure projects were identified which would likely require funding in future, which included Winnall Housing Development Open Space Improvements.

- 2.3. A request for Community Infrastructure Levy funding has since been received which seeks an allocation of £755,000 for the provision of an improved public open space in association with the proposed residential development at Winnall Flats. The bid for CIL funding represents approximately 4% of the cost of the whole scheme.

3. LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy funds must be in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (and subsequent amendments). CIL may be used to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of an area, including open space provision and green infrastructure, so the proposal for the use of CIL funding to provide a new and improved open space as part of the larger scheme for new housing, complies with the regulations in principle.
- 3.2. The bids for CIL funding are considered in line with statutory procedures by members of the Informal Panel, consisting of the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Well Being, the Cabinet Member for Sport Leisure and Communities, and members of the Executive Leader Board. Funding recommendations are made by the panel for Cabinet to consider and decide whether to approve.
- 3.3. The recommendation of this report is in keeping with the procedures set out by statute and is in line with the spending protocol previously agreed by cabinet (CAB3071).

4. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None

5. PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None requiring consideration by this report.

6. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1. Bids for funding whether from community organisations or from departments within the city council are considered by an Informal Panel, as per the agreed protocol (CAB3071 refers). The panel consists of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Well Being, and members of the Executive Leaders Board. At a meeting of the Informal Panel on the 9th June 2021, the allocation of £755,000 of CIL funding was considered, and the panel members agreed that the scheme for the open space improvements, including landscaping, a playground and new pedestrian and cycling links would be of benefit to both the residents of the flats and the wider Winnall

community. Therefore the funding as requested was agreed for recommendation to Cabinet.

- 6.2. A large scheme such as the one proposed for Winnall Flats will go through a number of stages of consultation, from inception to completion, albeit not specifically relation to the use of CIL income, with funding decisions always requiring approval by Cabinet in line with the agreed spending protocol. Details regarding engagement events undertaken in association with the development of this project are set out in CAB3300 included elsewhere on the agenda.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. There are several elements of the open space improvement project which will provide positive environmental outcomes, including the planting of more trees, the opportunity for residents to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers and the improvement of the links for cycling and walking from the site to the wider area. The specific environmental impact will be more thoroughly considered as part of the individual assessment of the whole project and as part of the planning application process for the whole development.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1. Officers have had regards to the council's duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Equalities Act 2010. There is no adverse impact through the allocation of CIL funding to anyone with a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 or with regards to human rights.
- 8.2. The project to improve the open space as part of the development of the new flats, will provide more accessible footways and links both within the site and to links beyond the site to enable wider community inclusion and engagement

9. DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1. None required.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<p><i>Property</i> Increasing the density of the housing without improving the open space could lead to pressure on existing local facilities and potentially an increase in antisocial behaviour.</p>	<p>Providing a pleasant and functional open space will encourage community cohesion and to integrate the new development into the Winnall neighbourhood with benefits for current and new residents alike.</p>	

<i>Community Support</i> Failure to deliver a scheme to improve the open space could harm the council's reputation amongst local residents.	Improving the open space for new and existing residents will encourage community cohesion and will provide wider benefits for Winnall.	
<i>Timescales</i> The project will not be delivered within a reasonable timescale	The project will be linked to the larger development scheme to ensure delivery is achieved	
<i>Project capacity</i> Lack of resources could hinder the use of CIL funding to deliver projects	Up to 5% of the CIL collected is used to provide support for the collection, allocation monitoring, and reporting of CIL funded projects	
<i>Financial Exposure / VfM</i> The cost of the scheme will exceed the CIL income allocated	The scheme is allocated a fixed amount, and prioritised within budget limits in accordance with agreed protocol. The Council will manage the budget allocated for the implementation of open space improvements as part of the wider project.	
<i>Exposure to Challenge</i>	There is a specific protocol agreed by Cabinet to determine how CIL funding should be allocated and spent. All bids for CIL funding are subject to this agreed protocol	
<i>Legal</i> None		
<i>Innovation N/A</i>		
<i>Reputation</i> Failure to deliver schemes using CIL income could damage the council's reputation	Allocating CIL funds to the project will enhance the support from the community.	The funding from CIL gives the opportunity in Winnall to provide better quality open space.
<i>Achievement of Outcome</i>	The proposed community park will deliver a pleasant and improved outdoor space but it will be for the residents to	

	make proper use of the opportunity that it has to offer.	
Other N/A		

11. SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1. The proposal for 76 new homes (both one and two bedroom flats, and three new two bedroomed houses) will be built within the existing site at Winnall Flats on Winnall Manor Road. This will add to the existing 156 flats, making a total of 232 homes. The new flats will be built in two blocks on existing open space, with three houses on space currently occupied by garages.
- 11.2. To help mitigate the effects of building on the current open space around the existing flats it is proposed to re-route the link road in to the site, which currently runs predominantly to the south of the site and leads to the parking areas. The new link road will be diverted through the centre of the site, and the 'old' route of the road will be removed to enable a community park to be created. A survey of the whole site revealed that the proposed location of the community park is in an area which receives the most sunlight throughout the day, and would therefore be suitable for planting trees, and providing food growing beds, as well as seating areas and a children's playground.
- 11.3. New accessible pedestrian routes are proposed to link the community park and both the new and proposed residential blocks, with a route to Winnall Manor Road, where there are bus stops for a bus route to the city centre. There will be a new pedestrian 'spine' footway running from east to west through the site to the north of the proposed community park, which will be straight, wide and well-overlooked. The path to Tesco, known locally as Black Path will also link to the development, as will the Sustrans National Cycle route N23, which runs through the site to Winnall Manor Road and on to the city centre. This will encourage active travel choices for the residents of the flats as well as those living in the wider local area by providing pleasant and safe routes through the site to the surrounding facilities.
- 11.4. During the Covid 19 pandemic, the various restrictions brought by the lockdown highlighted the desire for easily accessible outdoor space. The residents of the flats do not have private gardens and a community garden, such as that proposed, would provide a good quality easily accessible outdoor amenity for a range of ages. This will also help to foster community cohesion with the introduction of seating areas for residents to meet and food growing beds. The proposal meets the criteria for CIL funding in a number of ways. It contributes to the provision of enhanced open space (Policy CP7 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1) and greater opportunities for active travel which are priorities for living well in the Council Plan. The proposed open space and park with the links to the nearby footways and cycleway to local facilities, maximises the development

potential of the site, which is in line with Policy CP14 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 regarding the effective use of land. The provision of additional housing on the site at Winnall Flats will help to meet the demands for social housing across the district, and the new park and improved access routes will help assimilate the proposed development into the existing area whilst creating wider benefits for this area of the town.

11.5. Conclusion

11.6. The proposal to provide an improved open space and community park in conjunction with the provision of 76 new homes on the existing site at Winnall Flats, will create a pleasant and healthy environment, which should help to enhance community cohesion and the well-being of new and existing residents. The provision of new homes supported by high quality open space is considered an appropriate use of CIL funds and the allocation recommended, will enable a much better provision to be realised which will cater for different age groups and recreational activities. The improved connectivity of the site with pedestrian routes, cycle routes and the bus route beyond the site which links to the city centre and other amenities, such as Tesco, will encourage more sustainable modes of travel for the residents of the new and existing flats, Winnall and wider area.

11.7. Although the proposed development will be within the site of the existing Winnall Flats, the proposed open space will also be available for wider use by other residents of Winnall and together with the improved access for pedestrians and cyclists, delivers on a number of policies and strategies contained within the adopted Winchester District Local Plan and Council Plan.

12. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1. It is possible for the residential development for the new housing to go ahead without the new and improved open space, which CIL funding supports. The CIL allocation only forms part of the overall funding for the scheme.

12.2. However, it is considered that an opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment in this area of the city would be missed if the open space around the flats were not improved. The planned enhancements would provide a good quality amenity space, as the proposed park would bring health and well-being benefits for existing and new residents alike. For this reason it is proposed to support the request for funding so that these improvements can be delivered.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3292 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Future Funding Priorities and Monitoring Update – 10th March 2021

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Plan of proposed pocket park

Appendix 2 – Proposed site plan