

Supporting Outline Planning Statement

Iwade Village Hall

Origins

The existing village hall has been extensively used since it was opened in 1957 and is now in everyday use, not only by the residents of Iwade, but by various clubs and groups from the surrounding local area.

The relatively few residents, in 1957, were instrumental in raising the money for the hall's construction both by public subscription and fund raising events, coupled with a generous gift of land. When it was first opened the population of Iwade consisted of about 300 residents.

Usage

Currently Iwade consists of 1216 dwellings and with the on-going and known proposed future developments this figure will shortly amount to some 1700+ dwellings in total. The corresponding population will then be greater than 6000 people; a twenty fold increase in population from when the hall was first opened in 1957.

Apart from minor additions and updates the hall today remains much as it was when originally built.

The morning, afternoon and evening sessions are regularly filled Monday to Friday throughout the week; the single booking left available is for an evening session on the 4th Wednesday of each month. The weekends are available for bookings and these include many private and public functions plus a regular monthly village market.

Construction

The hall construction, while it was built to the standards of the day, will be faced with the problem of modernisation and the corresponding monetary difficulties that this entails when replacement becomes due.

The roof is of light construction and the main hall floor is sustaining damage from wear and tear and is wearing thin. Both of these will require major work and there are other constructional issues present.

Even assuming these requirements could be financed, access and the use of the hall would be lost during the refurbishment for the residents and various clubs, organisations, etc. that use the hall on a regular basis and there is no suitable alternative accommodation available.

Further to this, any such refurbishment would not create additional space.

Accommodation

The total accommodation offered by the hall consists of the main hall, a small stage, (having to be used for storage), kitchen, small bar area and toilets.

This greatly limits the potential use of the hall whereby any activity, whether for 10 or for 110 people, can only take place in the main hall and other concurrent activities cannot be accommodated.

In addition to this, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet the demands of OFSTED In relation to providing the facilities and operating conditions for the nurseries that are held daily at the hall.

Charity Commission

Iwade Village Hall has been a registered charity since 1991. When the hall relocation was first mooted, earlier this year, the Charity Commission were contacted regarding any restrictions that may exist on the relocation proposal. An extract from their response was:-

'..... the trustees are able to fall back on the statutory powers of disposal within the Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1998 - where the intention is to apply the proceeds of disposal towards the purchase of new land to be held on the same charitable trusts'.

Their response is entirely in keeping with both the Iwade Village Hall Trustees and the Iwade Parish Council, particularly in regard, that all monies raised through the sale of the present village hall site shall go entirely towards the provision of a new village community centre.

It is also a requirement, of both the Village Hall Trustees and the Parish Council that the new centre be ready for occupation before the current hall is vacated and that the new building and all associated land is held freehold as it is at present, by Iwade Parish Council, as Custodial Trustee's.

New Iwade Community Centre

Site

It was noted that, as a condition of planning consent from Swale Borough Council, the Hillreed Homes Ltd development at Coleshall Farm, Iwade were required to provide a small sports pavilion with changing rooms, showers and toilets, kitchen and a small club room on the sports field site in School Lane. Further, that on completion, the pavilion and land, including that of the sports field, was to be handed over to the authorities.

Informal enquiries were then made to the developer, to consider whether a new community centre could be built on the site that would also incorporate the proposed sports pavilion facilities. The developer is in general agreement to this proposal and has been most helpful.

The broad informal agreement is that the community centre would be paid for by 'Iwade' and the developer would contribute its pavilion cost to the construction. On completion, the developer would hand over their ownership to whoever was designated, prior to the existing hall site being vacated.

Finance

Given a formal acceptance with Hillreed Homes Ltd together with their transfer of the pavilion costs; plus the sale of the village hall site; a significant, but not entirely sufficient, sum of money, would be available for the construction of a new village community centre and the incorporated pavilion.

It is anticipated that the sum of money available would be adequate to construct the new building although further funding would be sought for final fit-out. Even though the country is in a severe economic situation, funding is available from a number of sources e.g. The Big Lottery Funding offers funding of £100,000-£500,000 specifically for new community centres in specific areas which does include Iwade. Additionally as this project would raise a significant amount of money through the sale of the existing site and the pavilion money, it opens up the possibility of match funding, which has a far higher chance of success.

It should also be noted that a new build community centre is zero VAT rated.

Sports Field

The current sports field site consists of a children's play area and two football pitches. The new community centre, would of necessity, have a greater footprint to that currently proposed for the pavilion and a need for increased parking. The size and positioning of the new centre is not yet

known as the design stage will be as a consequence of the successful sale of the village hall site. However, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction to the area of the football pitches whereby one and a half pitches would remain available e.g. leaving one pitch for matches and the half size pitch available for 5-a-side football, general training, netball or other ball games.

The feasibility of providing a cricket field within the site will also be investigated, as will other activities.

Iwade Herons FC is the local football club who have members aged between 5 and 17. Only two teams, the under 11's and under 13's, play matches at School Lane, all other matches are played at Iwade Primary School, King George's and Kemsley Fields.

Enabling

Iwade Village Hall is a non-profit making organisation and has been a registered charity since 1991, its declared charitable objects are:-

'The provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Iwade without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants'.

Prior to applying for outline planning permission, a consultation questionnaire was hand delivered to each of the 1216 Iwade dwellings and further copies of the questionnaire were available at the Post Office, School, Village Hall and shop.

The questionnaire sought opinion on the present hall facilities; views and comment on hoped-for improvements and on activities not currently available; location and data concerning the population to be served.

Eight per cent of the questionnaires were completed and the responses analyzed; of these, to the single specific question; **'In principle, do you support a new village hall for Iwade'?**

The percentage in favour was **72%**; against **25%** and **3%** don't know.

The outline planning application, accompanying this statement, enables these declared wishes of the inhabitants of Iwade for a modern community centre suited to present day needs that caters for the increasing population of Iwade.

Any such monies raised from the sale of the village hall site will entirely benefit the residents in accordance with the stated intent of the Village Hall Trustees, the Parish Council and the requirement of the Charities Commission.

Summary

Swale Borough's Local Plan: Policy C1

This outline planning proposal provides for the replacement of Iwade village hall and is entirely in accordance with Policy C1; it also reflect the wishes of the Iwade population.

Swale Borough's Local Plan: Policy C2

The provision of a new improved village community centre does, of itself, constitute a substantial monetary investment and contribution. It delivers important new and improved community services and facilities and is therefore entirely in keeping with the aims of Policy C2.

It is submitted that the combined proposals comply with the aims and intentions of Swale Borough's Local Plan: Policies C1 and C2. Therefore, any additional provision of, or any contribution towards, new or improved further community services and facilities would not be appropriate.