

## **Statement from Nick Gregory, Chair, Dorset Business Mentors**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this report. I lead the Dorset Growth Hub and am Chair of Dorset Business Mentors. In both of these roles, I strongly welcome the priority being given to economic growth and the notion of working more closely with businesses set out in this report. What doesn't perhaps come across so clearly is the excellent work already going on across the county to engage, educate and network businesses. Every week, myself and my team at the Dorset Growth Hub are running courses and events to give businesses access to the insights, new skills and networks they need to grow their businesses.

Dorset has a thriving business community. However, with something like twice the national average of small and micro-businesses in the area and coming off the back of a particularly tough time, these events have been vital in supporting businesses and helping them grow. The work we have been doing has been funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, funding that will end in Q1 2025. This a model that really works and I hope you'll find a way to continue with it post-SPF.

Turning to idea of an economic growth board (p1.8), myself and the President of Dorchester Chamber, Steve Bulley, recently set up a Business Growth board, with a view to folding local businesses into decision making and creating a pathway between business and local government. The first meeting took place in September, and the next is scheduled for early November. Cllr. Biggs would be welcome to attend.

Finally, I want to mention the stellar work of Dorset Business Mentors. For those who don't know it, in Dorset, we have a group of around 100 high-calibre volunteer business mentors who work with businesses at all stages to guide them towards their objectives. The service has been running since 2005 and is unique nationally and something for us to celebrate. In Dorset, we have found an approach that really seems to work. Dorset Council has supported the programme all the way along, so I wanted to record my thanks for that. But also, to say, given the renewed priority on growth and business, can we see them continuing their work and for it to be officially recognised as part of our strategy towards prosperity for the area.

## **Statement and request by Peter Yeo, Chairman of The Mampitts Lane Community Land Trust CIO and East Ward Shaftesbury Town Councillor:**

Dear Cabinet Members,

Please do not vote to give this s106 land and funding to Shaftesbury Town Council (STC), but instead to The Mampitts Land Community Trust CIO, or at least require both applicants to submit new applications addressing issues.

The CLT's proposal is supported by a petition to Dorset Council of 720 local residents, makes good use of the overall site, has safe and sufficient controllable parking, a versatile hall with a separate community café room, includes an Air Ambulance landing area, complies with the s106 Planning Condition of Community

Use and will be self-funding and sustainable as a charity with volunteers and minimal paid support.

The STC proposal was launched with the malintent of stopping the residents' proposal after the CLT presented their excellent scheme to STC as required by the DC s106 Protocol. The STC has no petitioned support, no local support, has many objectors, ignored the residents' objections to the design and urbanisation of their 'village green' and the dangerous, insufficient and uncontrollable parking proposal. It does not comply with the s106 planning conditions of Community Use for the site and would be an entirely Commercial operation that the residents did not request and which has no hope of generating enough income to pay for the large full time days only work force, will be closed in the evenings and urbanises the much loved village green area with a building that blocks out views to the Cranborne Chase AONB and parking and makes no intelligent use of the main field of the site and cannot be used by the Air Ambulance.

As the DC Officer notes, The CLT's proposal is the only one which has been properly costed with a cost model based on real quotes and estimates from a builder and contractors with regards to the delivery and that the STC architect's guess at their project delivery cost is about £200,000 less than expected. The CLT have a team of highly competent trustees and an architect who is also a RIBA client advisor to ensure success in delivery and operational success using the proven method of running the facility as a charity and using minimal paid staff. As a Charity they are allowed to have some of their income generated by a commercial operation running the community café part of the facility which will aid to ensure sustainable self-funding operation of the facility. The CLT do not have the record of failure to deliver community facilities that Shaftesbury Town Council have, STC having given up on delivering a similar community hall in central Shaftesbury in 2018 after squandering £18,800 of s106 fund and then declaring it unfeasible.