

Cabinet

9 October 2025

Developer contribution funding for community facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury

For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Bartlett, Planning and Emergency Planning

Local Councillor(s):

Cllr Jeanes, Cllr Beer

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

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Statutory Authority: Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 On the 15th October 2024, Dorset Council Cabinet decided to award Shaftesbury Town Council up to £876,278 of s106 developer contribution funding for the purpose of building and operating a Community Hub and landscaped open space and recreational facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury. The award was subject to condition with the appraisal of further information required by condition delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning.
- 1.2 Since the award was agreed, the Town Council has been making progress towards satisfying the conditions, but several key conditions including those associated with budget and project delivery remain partially completed, therefore failing to meet in full the milestones that were set. Due to the nature of the issues raised through the appraisal of conditions, the matter has been referred to Cabinet by the delegated officer. This report provides an update on progress with the project, setting out the main findings of the appraisal of conditions.

- 1.3 One of the reasons for milestones not to have been reached has been the need to further develop and refine the design to be clearly costed. It is recognised that for a project of this scale and complexity, there needs to be financial investment in the preparation of detailed plans to help take the project forward. Key detail such as the clarification of build cost requires further design investigation and refinement. To date, the Town Council has invested £27.8k in the proposal and requires further investment of £58.3k to reach technical design stage (Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 4. With s106 funds being a key component of the overall budget, the situation requires there to be capability for an 'early drawdown' proportion of the award to be available to the Town Council to cover the costs associated with the work undertaken to date and with work required going forward.
- 1.4 This report seeks to introduce amended milestones to support the progression of the project, along with provisions to enable early drawdown of a proportion of the award.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Part 1 - To extend the previously set timescale milestone for the award of s106 funding to Shaftesbury Town Council, as follows:

a) timescale condition requiring the completion of all necessary information required by condition, extended to: 9 June 2026

b) commencement of work on-site, extended to: 9 July 2026

That the appraisal of further information required by the conditions is agreed by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning, and any subsequent transfer of funds (and land) is made under the relevant officer delegation in accordance with the s106 protocol process. Failure to comply with either milestone extension would result in referral to Cabinet for further consideration.

Part 2 – To make provision for up to 10% of the current total award value of £919,563 to be available for early drawdown prior to the new milestone deadlines, to support the recovery of costs to-date and future expenditure relating to the refinement of the design.

Any further expenditure which requires payment via the early draw down must be agreed in advance with Dorset Council. To ensure that the amount spent against the 10% early drawdown is monitored and not exceeded.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To increase the level of flexibility in the award of s106 funding to Shaftesbury Town Council to support delivery of important community infrastructure at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury.

3. The report

- 3.1 On 15th October 2024, Cabinet was presented with the findings of a comprehensive appraisal of separate bids for s106 funding to deliver community facilities on allocated land at Mampitts Green in Shaftesbury. The Town Council's bid was approved, subject to condition. The proposal included a community hub with associated public amenity space. At ground floor level, a community café was proposed within the hub alongside community venue space to support local groups and activities. On the first floor, dedicated office space was earmarked for community use.
- 3.2 The variety of community and income generating uses within the proposal was recognised positively for it provided greater confidence in the sustainability of the project. With that and other reasons, Cabinet decided to approve the award of s106 funding to Shaftesbury Town Council subject to the following conditions:
- Timescale
 - Operating Plan
 - Project Costings and Project Delivery Plan
 - Ringfenced Bank Account for Community Hall
 - External Funding Grant Applications
 - Evidence of Engagement with Community Groups
 - Contingency Budget
 - Land Ownership
- 3.3 The timescale condition required all additional information required through condition (to be provided) within 6 months of the Cabinet decision (15 April 2025), and to commence work on-site no later than 12 months of the date of Cabinet (15 October 2025), subject to land transfer.
- 3.4 Table 1 below shows current progress against each condition. This indicates that one condition is fully complete, five conditions are partially complete, and two are not relevant at this stage of the project. Key areas requiring the provision of further supporting information are project cost and project delivery.

Table 1. Progress against conditions

Condition	Progress
Timescale	<i>Not met</i> – varying degree of partial progress made against all conditions.
Operating Plan	<i>Partial</i> – operating plan submitted in draft, currently forming a ‘live’ document. Cafe operator not yet determined (subject to expression of interest process which concluded mid-Sept). Final operating plan dependent on several key factors coming together.
Project Costings and Project Delivery Plan	<i>Partial</i> – construction costs remain estimated but have been validated by a Quantity Surveyor. Increase in cost estimate since 2024. Further progress needed to pursue design and refine build cost. Budget currently heavily reliant on stakeholder contributions and grants. Project risks underestimated and needing attention including the application of suitable contingencies and funding sources.
Ringfenced Bank Account for Community Hall	<i>Completed</i> – evidence provided to demonstrate creation of ringfenced account.
External Funding Grant Applications	<i>Partial</i> – strong evidence of research but further progress required to apply and secure funding to ease risks with deliverability. Shortlisted grant options include: • National Lottery – Reaching Communities England Fund. • Dorset Council Low Carbon Fund • Dorset Council Capital Leverage Fund • Tree Council’s Branching Out Fund
Evidence of Engagement with Community Groups	<i>Partial</i> – some detail of engagement provided but evidence of interest from potential groups expected. Roundtable meetings held with Architect and stakeholders. Mampitts Advisory Committee involved in refinement of design.

Contingency Budget	Further s106 for neighbourhood hall facilities with a value of approximately £200,000 has been identified by the Town Council as a potential further funding source, although the Town Council has expressed a preference to see those funds support the redevelopment of Wincombe Recreation Ground.
Land Ownership	<i>Not applicable at this stage</i>

Project cost

- 3.5 Since October 2024, the Town Council has sought to further boost the community value and sustainability of the project by pursuing health and wellbeing facility options within the envelope of the main building. Initial conversations have taken place with Dorset Council over the creation of a Family Hub on the first floor of the building to provide a single place offering support for children, young people and families, though nothing is confirmed. In respect of the ground floor café, the Town Council has engaged with different operators inviting expressions of interest.
- 3.6 These conversations, along with engagement that has taken place with other community stakeholders, have led to a change in design approach. The design changes are largely limited to the configuration of internal features such as rooms and staircases on the ground and first floor. These internal design changes also respond to the requirements of relevant building regulation.
- 3.7 As a result of these changes, the project now has an estimated cost of £1.44m, an increase of approximately £0.5m on the cost position at October 2024. S106 funds now make up 65% of the cost, with a capital investment of £45,000 from the Town Council representing 3% of the budget requirement. Approximately 32% of the budget is expected to come from external grants or other contributions, yet to be secured.
- 3.8 The Town Council has identified several value engineering opportunities and contingencies to address the current budget shortfall. These include securing value engineering through the choice of building materials, the competitive tender process to secure a builder, and/or the scaling down of the scope of the building, for example the extent of first floor works.
- 3.9 In addition to the grant funding opportunities already explored, the Town Council has identified other sources of funding in order of preference, including several tenant and commercial contributions, the potential

availability of additional s106 funds earmarked for neighbourhood hall facilities, public works loan and precept.

Project delivery

- 3.10 With such a significant rise in budget, clarity is needed over the true value of these costs, alongside evidence of commitment from the parties involved, and timeframe for investment. This includes evidence of bids for grant funding, as well as the identification of alternative sources of funding should grant funding or other investment be unsuccessful.
- 3.11 Refining the design and securing confirmation or otherwise of important grant funding is likely to take time and require the extension of the milestone for the commencement of work. The Town Council has prepared a project plan which indicates commencement taking place in Summer 2026. It is proposed that the milestone for commencement of development is extended to meet this programme, though it will be contingent on the satisfaction of conditions associated with project costing, including evidence to demonstrate that the project has full confirmation of funds necessary to proceed.
- 3.12 Within the external elements of the scheme, the Town Council are investigating the potential to alter the location of the proposed parking area to address concerns raised by local residents about highway safety. This alteration would see parking provided away from the street to a dedicated parking area north of the community building. This alteration would require amendments to the current planning permission. It is expected that securing additional consents would be achievable within the amended timeframe.
- 3.13 Given the extended programme of milestones and the work required to fulfil this, it is important to closely monitor progress to ensure that the project remains on track to meet the proposed new milestones. Officers from Dorset Council will continue to liaise with the Town Council and their project management representatives to address the requirements of the project.
- 3.14 Once the project has reached the milestone of commencement, it is important that there are further review stages through the main drawdown process to ensure that suitable progress is being met. It is proposed that delegation with the appropriate officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning is retained, with the added arrangement to recall the matter back to Cabinet if required.

Early drawdown

- 3.15 It is acknowledged that further development and refinement of the proposed design is needed to reach a stage where detailed technical drawings, specifications and schedules are produced to guide construction and allow for

accurate tendering and pricing by contractors. The Town Council estimates that the investment of is required to develop the project to a technical design stage (RIBA Stage 4).

- 3.16 In addition to this, work to-date to develop the request for s106 funding has resulted in a cost of £27.8k. The Town Council wishes to secure an early drawdown of the s106 award to recover the cost of expenditure to date as well as secure funds to reach technical design stage. It is proposed that up to 10% of the current award value of £919,563 is available to draw down early in advance of the milestones set in this report in order to enable the project to move forward through this next key stage.
- 3.17 If suitable progress has been made prior to the new milestone for commencement, main drawdown can take place. As indicated in the previous Cabinet report, this will be facilitated through the appropriate officer delegation in consultation with Cabinet Member for Planning. A funding agreement between Dorset Council and the Town Council will facilitate this process providing suitable assurance and governance safeguards.

4. Alternative options considered

- 4.1 Options include the withdrawal of the funding offer. This would reset the process for applying for s106 causing significant delay to the delivery of development. Given the already prolonged history to this project, further substantial delay would have knock-on implications for build cost and other associated cost increases, adding further risks associated with delivery.

5. Legal considerations

- 5.1 Advice has been sought on whether the 15 October Cabinet decision provided sufficient flexibility to agree partially completed milestones and/or extensions to condition milestones under officer delegation. That advice confirmed that whilst delegation exists to consider the material submitted to meet the condition, it would not enable any authorisation to change to the actual conditions, milestones, or funding amount (except for any interest added to the funding amount, that would be standard practice in s106 award).

6. Financial implications

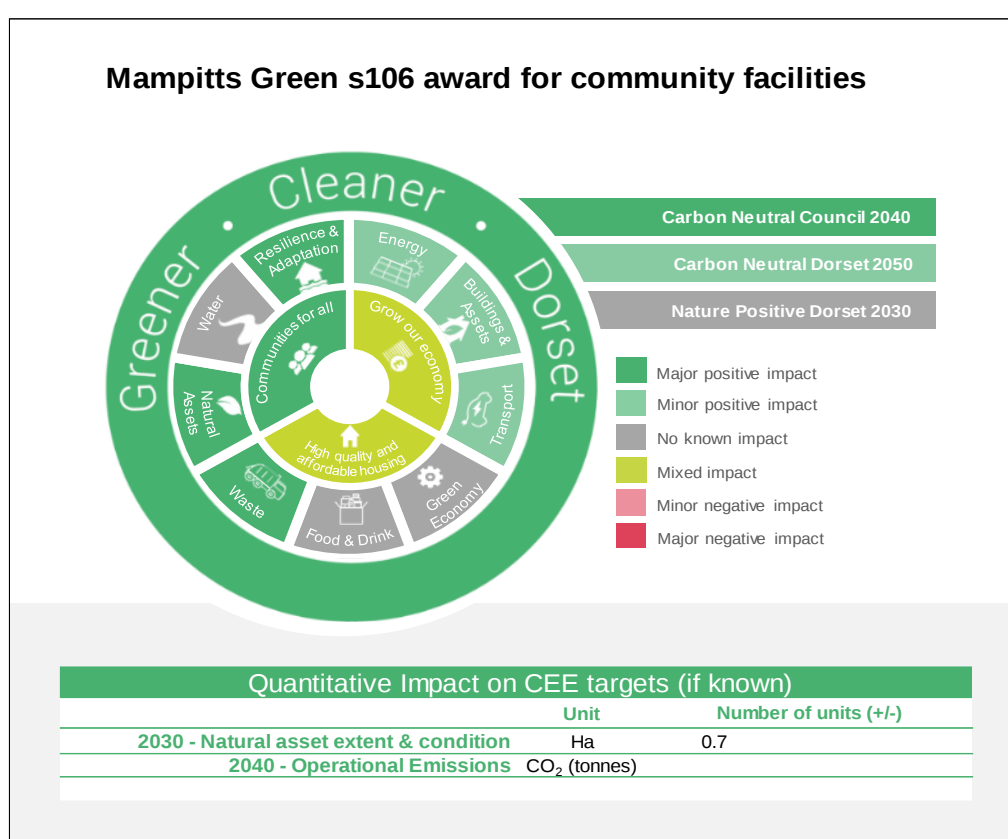
- 6.1 Cost estimates provided show that the total cost of the project is now approximately £1.44m, which represents a 60% increase on the s106 funds available at the time the award was made (October 2024). Since that time, interest has accrued to the held balance resulting in a s106 budget of £919,563, with the total project cost representing a 53% increase.

7. Well-being and health implications

- 7.1 Proposals will provide new community facilities to support healthy activity and lifestyle. These facilities will help meet the needs of wide range of people of all ages and abilities. If secured, the inclusion of a Dorset Council Family Hub would further enhance the health and wellbeing merits of this proposal.

8. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

- 8.1 It is considered that that long term effects of this proposal are positive in terms of impact on the environment. The construction materials and inclusion of renewable energy technology will reduce the requirement of external power sources.



9. Other implications

- 9.1 Proceeding with this project will be reliant upon the transfer of land from Persimmon Homes to Dorset Council initially.

10. Risk implications

- 10.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium/Low

11. Equalities

- 11.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. The proposals set out in the Cabinet report conform to the requirements of planning policy providing a range of community facilities which meet the requirements for which associated planning obligations were established in 2007.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix A – Accessible Table of Impacts and Table of Recommendations

13. Background papers

- 13.1 Allocation of s106 funding for community facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury – 15th October 2024.

14. Report sign-off

- 14.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)