

Section 106 Obligations

Assistant Director: *Martin Woods (Economy)*
Service Manager: *David Norris (Development Manager)*
Lead Officer: *Neil Waddleton*
Contact Details: *Neil.Waddleton@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462603*

Purpose of the Report

Section 106 Officer to provide information on signed Section 106 agreements relating to development within Area North. Agreements containing financial contributions will be presented within the monitoring report (Appendix A). **If any further detail is required on any specific agreement members should contact the officer directly.**

Public Interest

Section 106 Obligations are a key aspect of most major planning development approvals granted by the Authority however they are also necessary to provide additional control in relation to smaller schemes. The items captured within Section 106 Obligations usually deal with the additional infrastructure costs that will be incurred within the area of the Authority arising from the completion of a development. Depending on the scale of the proposed development the sums of money associated with a Section 106 Obligations can be considerable.

This may take the form of changes to highways, contributions toward increased schools provision, creation/maintenance of open spaces, recreational areas and so on. The costs arising from these are often significant and require negotiation and settlement between officer and the developer, through the use of nationally agreed formulae.

There is a variety of ways in which these requirements can be delivered. Normally the developer makes a payment to allow the relevant authority to provide the requirement e.g. Schools or Play areas. Alternatively, the developer may be charged with completing the work directly for example a new highway junction.

By their very nature Section 106 Obligations require specified actions/payments to take place within a pre-defined timescale or event (known as 'triggers') and it is essential that the Section 106 officer has a system and processes in place that ensures the agreements are effectively managed.

Members will appreciate that the level of contribution that was secured from each development was dependent upon several factors, particularly the 'formula' that was being used for calculating the Sports, Arts and Leisure, Education and Highway contributions at the time of each application. It is also important to emphasise that it is very difficult to make meaningful comparisons between obligations that were sought on different developments, as each scheme has to be considered on its own merits.

Recommendation:

Members note and comment on the report and verbal update and endorse the actions taken in respect of the monitoring and managing of Section 106 Planning Obligations.

Background

A Section 106 Officer was appointed on 1 April 2010. This post sits within the planning team with the specific responsibility for ensuring that all requirements of S106 obligations, including the collection and spending of financial contributions are monitored and managed.

Additional Information

Since my last report there has been a significant legislation change that will affect the way that we seek financial planning obligations. Members may recall that when I was at the July 2015 Committee I highlighted a change to the way in which the District Council could be securing planning contributions/obligations from developers. In short, the government introduced guidance that sought to prevent local authorities requiring S106 contributions from schemes of 10 dwellings and below. This was subsequently challenged and the High Court decided that the government had not followed the correct procedures and this guidance was rescinded. The government challenged the High Court judgement at the Court of Appeal and they were successful in getting this ruling overturned.

This ruling means that sites of fewer than 10 homes will no longer have to make an affordable homes contribution, and in addition the council will not be seeking contributions towards local community and leisure projects from these smaller schemes unless there is clear and robust evidence to justify an exception.

CIL Regulations (2011, amended 2013 & 2014)

From April 2015, no more contributions may be sought/collected in respect of a specific infrastructure project or a type of infrastructure through a S106 agreement if 5 or more obligations have been entered into since April 2010 and it is a type of infrastructure that is capable of being funded by CIL.

In Area North this legislation change will mean that no more contributions will be sought for swimming pool or sports hall enhancements at Huish Academy through future application processes.

Audit

We have been awarded “substantial” assurance from a recent Audit undertaken of the processes and controls for S106 management.

Projects

Members may wish to note that the main projects delivered/under way or priorities as a result of appropriate collected S106 monies are:

Langport/Huish Episcopi

- Huish Academy AGP opened September 2015.
- Project plan scoping improvements at Huish Academy Leisure Centre following condition survey.

- Swimming Pool improvements including automatic chlorine dosing system installed. Monies towards larger project of covering the pool, changing rooms and spectator area committed. Work to commence September/October 16.
- Langport play area refurbished.

Ilton

- Cope Lane play area refurbished and opened August 2015.
- Agreement securing new recreation ground & contributions currently being drafted.

South Petherton

- Landscape architect to develop master plan for the sports facilities project.

Curry Rivel

- Community Health & Leisure working with the Parish Council on an application to deliver play and youth projects.

Norton sub Hamdon

- Site survey commissioned and new play equipment installed at Minchingtons by the end of 2016.

Financial Implications

No direct financial implications from this report however members will be aware that ineffective management of planning obligations does have the potential to require the district council to refund contributions to developers.

Corporate Priority Implications

The effective management of planning obligations will be beneficial in achieving all of the Councils Corporate Priorities

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Section 106 Planning Obligations have a key role in delivering sustainable communities thereby contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions and helping to adapt to climate change.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Section 106 Planning Obligations have a key role in delivering sustainable communities thereby ensuring access to facilities, homes and services for all members of our community.

Background Papers: None
