

Area South Committee - 4 June 2014

8. Section 106 Obligations

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Purpose of the Report

Section 106 Officer to provide information on signed Section 106 agreements relating to development within Area South. Agreements containing financial contributions will be presented within the monitoring report (Appendix A), **however if any further detail was required on any other agreement it was agreed that this would be undertaken directly with the officer.**

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 ensure 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 that

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

An Audit review of the 106 processes was carried out in early 2014. The outcome of this review was very positive and we received a “substantial assurance” for the areas tested.

In addition a separate audit review was commissioned by the Audit Committee to review the process for the Discharge of Planning Obligation (DPO). The audit concluded that internal controls are in place and operating effectively and risks against the achievement objectives are well managed. “Substantial Assurance” was also given in respect of process audited.

Members may wish to note that the main projects delivered/under way as a result of appropriate collected S106 monies since the last report submitted before them are:

Strategic Facilities:

- Westfield Academy 3G AGP
- Westfield Sports Centre – New cricket nets
- Preston Sports Centre – Funding towards fitness centre, sports hall and pitch improvements

Play & Youth Facilities:

- Birchfield Park - New zip wire and activity hub
- Preston Park – Improvements including new all ability slide
- King Arthur Drive – Work commenced on play area

Pitches & Changing Provision:

- Turners Barn Lane – Improvements to changing rooms

Members please note that I have omitted details of the Lyde Road, Lufton and Brimsmore developments from my monitoring report as it is my intention to do a separate update on these three 3 major schemes at a later committee due to their significant nature.

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
