

# SECTION 106 & *the community*



## Introduction

A section 106 (S106) agreement allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally binding agreement with a developer. Within S106 agreements there are planning obligations that enable a council to secure contributions to services, infrastructure and amenities. As the borough continues to grow it is vitally important that community infrastructure grows and improves with it. This report looks at the many projects that S106 payments have contributed towards in the 2018/19 financial year and looks ahead.

These range from small community projects to large infrastructure works. S106 contributions are an important revenue source that helps support sustainable growth and enhances communities within the Ashford Borough.



## Housing

### *(Affordable & ABC construction)*

The council continues to negotiate robustly on S106 agreements to deliver affordable homes across our borough. Homes secured this way are then built by developers and managed by the Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing who operate in the Ashford borough. The council's housing department plays an active role in enabling S106 homes to come forward, working with a range of internal and external stakeholders (including our legal and planning teams, developers, architects, parish councils, borough councillors and RPs) to ensure delivery.

In 2018-19, 99 affordable housing units (a mixture of affordable rent and shared ownership) were handed over by developers to RPs. In addition to that the council built 46 homes that it added to the stock it owns in its housing revenue account, and also completed on the purchase of 10 on-street properties to add to our stock.



## Victoria Park

Ashford Borough Council has been awarded more than £3 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund to revitalise Victoria Park.

The funding, thanks to National Lottery players together with S106 funding means the council can deliver its exciting plans to redevelop and restore one of Ashford's oldest and most-loved

green spaces, working with the local community, volunteer groups and the Friends of Victoria Park.

Proposals include a new children's play area, improvements to the river, improved lighting across the park, and a new community hub building with café, and new toilets. The iconic Grade II Listed Hubert Fountain and the surrounding piazza area will also be restored and repaired.



## Tenterden - Homewood School 3G

This project provided a brand new full-size 3G Artificial Turf Pitch for the local community based at Homewood School. The dual-use facility benefited from a S106 contribution for outdoor sports pitches from TENT1 with the support of Tenterden Town Council. The contribution represented 50% of the build costs of the new facility.

The contribution was granted on the understanding that the pitch would be available for hire by the local community at affordable rates. A formal Community Use Agreement has been entered in to between the Council and Homewood School.

The pitch has been a great success and is proving very popular with the local community with a strong level of bookings.



## Hamstreet – Victory Hall Play Park

Officers in the Cultural Projects team worked in partnership with the Victory Hall Playground Committee using S106 funds of £134,000 from the new development on Lancaster Close to design a brand new play area for the village, replacing the old equipment of 20+ years old.

Consultation events were held with residents, the local school and the parish council to plan out and give direction to the design specification. The play area includes equipment for young people

up to 16 years old, has been zoned for different age groups and provides inclusive play experiences for all abilities. The site was completed and opened by the Mayor in October 2018 to a large village attendance. Feedback from residents has been hugely positive and the site is now used on a daily basis with a large footfall of visitors, not just from the village, but also the surrounding villages and Ashford town centre. The Victory Hall Playground Committee is delighted with the outcome of the project and the village will benefit a new site that will last for many years.



## Town Centre Developments

Housing delivery along and adjoining the Victoria Road and Leacon Road 'corridor' is progressing at pace. This will help regenerate the town centre as well as supply much needed homes on brownfield land. Alongside other contributions to mitigate impacts, the completed schemes will make a total of £460,000 S106 contributions towards improvements to Victoria Park located a short walk or cycle away.

The first 74 homes at the Powergen development will be ready for occupation in Autumn 2019. Homes are already occupied on one half of the former Travis Perkins site on George Street with the other, riverside half, nearing completion. The first apartment block comprising 16 homes at Victoria Point (opposite the Curious Brewery) is nearing completion helping to deliver an impressive entrance to the eastern end of Victoria Road.



## Designer Outlet contributions

The S106 agreement sets out a number of obligations. It requires an annual Town Centre Contribution to be made to the Council. The first payment has been received and will assist the comprehensive programme of measures that have been agreed by the Cabinet to help strengthen the role and attractiveness of the town centre. The S106 agreement also requires an agreed specification for a dedicated Visitor Information Unit within the Designer Outlet to

promote attractions within the town centre and within the borough more widely. Officers in Cultural Services are working closely with the centre's management to finalise this specification. Contributions towards route enhancements to Ashford International are also secured by contributions and good progress has been made towards finalising an agreed scheme; first stage works to the underpass have already been implemented.

