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Planning

Expression of Interest - Cafe Operator

Shaftesbury Town Council

F21: Social and other specific services – public contracts

Prior information notice without call for competition

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-052478

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-059080

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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Shaftesbury Town Council

Shaftesbury Town Council, The High Street

Shaftesbury

SP78LY

Contact

Billy Maddock

Email

assistanttownclerk@shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 1747852420

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKK25 - Dorset

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk/>

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Expression of Interest - Cafe Operator

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 55330000 - Cafeteria services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

Expression of Interest: Café Operator - Mampitts Community Hub

Shaftesbury Town Council invites experienced café operators to express interest in running a new café within the planned Mampitts Community Hub in Shaftesbury.

This is an early information-gathering exercise to explore potential café operations that support the community-focused vision of the hub. The café will be part of a vibrant, inclusive space serving a growing residential area of over 2,000 people.

The opportunity includes use of a fully fitted café space, external seating, access to facilities, and options to engage with community activities in the adjacent park.

Interested operators should share their background, community approach, operational needs, and any questions to help shape the project. This is not a formal procurement but will inform future stages.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 55330000 - Cafeteria services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKC - North East (England)
- UKD - North West (England)
- UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber
- UKF - East Midlands (England)
- UKG - West Midlands (England)
- UKH - East of England
- UKI - London
- UKJ - South East (England)
- UKK - South West (England)

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

1. Overview

Shaftesbury Town Council (STC) is seeking expressions of interest from experienced and community-focused café operators to manage the ground floor café space and associated external areas at the upcoming Mampitts Community Hub in Shaftesbury.

This is an information-gathering exercise, not a formal tender process, to inform the development of the operating model and lease arrangements.

2. Background

The Mampitts Community Hub is a flagship project being developed by STC, situated within a newly landscaped park in a growing residential area of Shaftesbury, home to approximately 2,181 residents (2021 Census). Currently, the only local facility is a small convenience store.

The Hub aims to be a vibrant, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable space, providing essential services, social interaction, and employment pathways. The café will serve as a central anchor within this community space, welcoming families, young people, professionals, and local organisations.

The project aligns with:

Shaftesbury Town Council's Strategic Plan

Dorset Council's 'Commissioning for a Better Life' strategy

STC aspires to fund a part-time youth support worker to ensure the hub is accessible and inclusive.

3. Description of the Procurement

Expressions of interest are to take on the ground floor of the premises and external footprint for outside seating on a lease arrangement for a period of 10 years with a mutual break clause after 3 and 6 years.

Whilst the land will still be owned [in the short-term] by Dorset Council and then Shaftesbury Town Council after 3 years, the Tenant will take on all responsibility for maintenance, insurance, utilities and operation of the unit and the outdoor space they use and be responsible for all costs in relation to this. The remaining space will be maintained by Shaftesbury Town Council with the option for the operator to discuss usage and maintenance of this space. (Further details will need to be considered and discussed with the operator regarding utilities, insurance, public liability cover, repair and maintenance responsibilities)

? Shaftesbury Town Council will be responsible for the park and any equipment ensuring that statutory compliance is undertaken.

? Building security will be the responsibility of the Tenant/s with agreement with Shaftesbury Town Council.

? A formal lease arrangement will be entered into with STC. It must be noted that sole commercial use is not permitted on this basis. The purpose of the community hub is to provide social

interaction and a mixed-use community space welcoming to all.

? The use of the site must not be for commercial benefit but can be operated to retain a surplus income which can be reinvested to secure the longer-term future of the facility and provide a community benefit, for the space which is measurable throughout the lease duration.

? STC is open to variance on the proposed operating model as long as inclusive community access for clubs and groups is assured and the facility is open at weekends throughout the year and for a minimum of 5 days a week.

? Detailed architectural plans are currently being drawn up and building to the stage of first fix is expected to be completed late 2026, with the operator being able to begin trading thereafter.

? The operator once selected will have the opportunity to engage with the Architect and Building Contractor for practical considerations and discussions as to how the building might be used within the context of existing agreements and contracts.

? The Council proposes a 10-year lease with a break clause after 3 years, with a second break clause after 6 years. This is subject to negotiation and reasonable proposals will be considered as appropriate.

4. Operating Model Options

STC offers two café fit-out approaches

A) The successful operator will fit out and decorate the ground floor to their own specification post build to first fix and a rent-free period and lower rent will reflect the capital outlay by the operator.

B) The Town Council will fit out the café and community space for the tenant to then furnish and equip. The tenant will be subject to a higher rent and paying of rent on commencement of the lease.

The prospective operator should provide in response to this Expression of Interest details on its sources funds (internal and / or from third parties) and amounts deployable toward the fit out of the facility, regardless of whether Option A or B is preferred by the respondent.

5. Key Lease Terms (Subject to Negotiation)

Lease will be outside the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954 (Sections 24-28) - no automatic renewal

No structural alterations without written consent

Noise and disruption to be minimised due to nearby residences

Operational hours and time restrictions will be agreed in lease

No compensation for tenant improvements

Land Registry registration if lease exceeds 7 years

Tenant bears Stamp Duty and legal costs

Rent deposits or guarantors may be required based on financial standing

Security arrangements must consider the open-access nature of the site

Tenant indemnifies STC against liabilities or claims arising from use

List of fixtures and fittings to be provided when finalised

Disposal of open space to comply with Section 123 Local Government Act 1972

6. Quality Weighting

Submissions will be evaluated against the following criteria:

A) Community and Social Benefit (40%)

Community engagement and partnerships

Inclusive access for all demographics

Support for vulnerable groups and children

Volunteering opportunities with training

Social value measurement methods

B) Financial Operation & Business Plan (30%)

Funding sources (start-up and operational)

Revenue model (sales, events, room hire, workshops)

Use of local suppliers and ethical procurement

Employment opportunities for priority groups

Financial sustainability and risk management

C) Sustainability (10%)

Waste reduction, recycling, energy efficiency

Carbon footprint reduction and environmental education

Ethical and local sourcing

D) Experience of Delivering Community/Charity Operations (10%)

Relevant track record and collaborations

Team skills and experience

E) Rent and/or Subsidy Considerations (10%)

Proposed rent and flexibility

Justification for subsidies if requested

Value for money and plans for subsidy reduction

7. End of Lease / Termination Conditions

Premises to be returned in agreed condition (fair wear and tear excepted)

All tenant equipment and furnishings to be removed unless agreed

Tenant liable for reinstatement costs if obligations unmet

Photographic surveys at lease start and end

Tenant to notify and settle final utility and supplier accounts

8. Timeline and Site Access

Construction expected to reach first fix by late 2026

Fit-out and operation to begin post-completion

Operator will have opportunity to collaborate with architects and contractors

9. Site Visits

Site visits will not currently be available. Please contact Shaftesbury Town Council to arrange a viewing and access architectural plans.

10. Submitting Your Expression of Interest

Please submit your EOI to Office@Shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

Submissions should include:

Organisation summary, objectives, and suitability

Last year's accounts

Bank statements for the last year

Proposal for community/charity use and timescales

Minimum 3-year business plan

Financial overview supporting the business plan

Written statements addressing each of the 5 quality weighting criteria (max 1 A4 sheet per criterion)

References or letters of recommendation

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

30 August 2026