

Community Facilities Strategy

Wycombe District Council

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TwentyTwenty Solutions Ltd

PO Box 2908

Reading

Berkshire RG1 9LB

0118 324 2020

www.2020ltd.com

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1. Executive Summary

This report has been produced for Wycombe District Council and provides a Community Facility Strategy for the authority. It has been prepared by Deborah O'Brien of TwentyTwenty Solutions Ltd, who were commissioned by Wycombe District Council to produce this strategy.

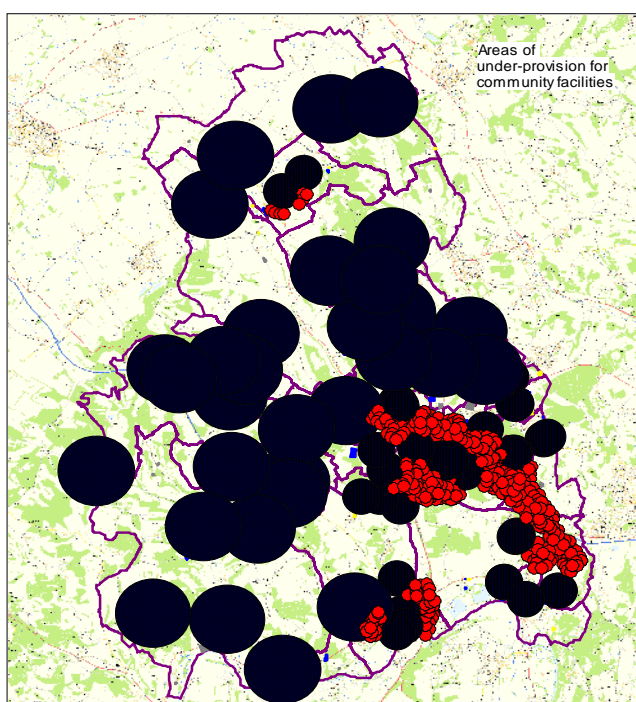
There are 383 community facilities within Wycombe District Council; 204 of these are available to hire, and of these, 69 are dedicated community facilities, whose *primary purpose* is to provide facilities for the use of the communities they serve. All these facilities are mapped on a database.

Using catchment areas for every dedicated community facility, maps have been produced showing provision in the WDC area. One map has been produced for each of the 28 wards in the district.

The report shows that particularly in some urban wards, there are fewer facilities than expected, using numerical analyses.

In particular there are three wards where there is no dedicated provision, and these wards are adjacent to wards where using straightforward numerical analysis, there is also under-provision.

Using geographical analysis there are still gaps - even in wards where numerically the provision looks good – this is because facilities are clustered almost on top of each other, leaving no provision in other areas.



On the map, the circles show the catchment area of the dedicated facilities. The **red** shows populated areas outside of these catchments.

The report provides analysis ward-by-ward and also refers to facilities in neighbouring wards when appropriate. Provisions in neighbouring authorities have not been identified.

The data for the analysis was collected by a variety of means: surveys were sent to each of the 551 facilities on the database, Ward and Parish Councillors were asked for their views by means of an electronic survey, visits were made to a few facilities, and neighbouring authorities were asked for information about how they had conducted analysis of community facilities in their areas.

Wards that should be considered for priority action are:

Abbey, Bowerdean, Disraeli, Terriers & Amersham Hill, Ryemead, Oakridge & Castlefield, Marlow North & West and Marlow South East (which should be considered as a whole), and Totteridge.

NOTE: Although some areas of The Risboroughs fall outside of the catchment for a dedicated community facility as shown on the map there are other facilities locally which are available for community use.

2. Introduction

In order to secure Section 106 monies for community facilities as part of new developments in the district, it is vital that the District Council has accurate and robust information about the current levels of provision and any deficiencies that exist. This strategy gives the Council a clear plan for developing facilities in the future as well as providing the justification for Section 106 contributions requested from developers.

Background

The Local Plan refers to Community Facilities as comprising public halls, schools, places of worship, libraries, day nurseries and health centres, and says that additionally, public houses, corner shops, post offices, recreation and green space also have an important role in communities especially in rural areas.

In the Submission Core Strategy community facilities are listed as including:

- Public halls (including community/youth centres and village halls), church halls
- Schools and non-residential and training centres
- Places of worship
- Libraries
- Day nurseries, crèches
- Health centres, clinics, consulting rooms (including doctor's surgeries and dental practices)
- Museums, art galleries, exhibition halls
- Public houses
- Post offices
- Local shops (within both urban and rural areas)
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities

Prior to this study starting in November 2008, Wycombe District Council had already started to establish a Community Facility Database and had collated data relating to known community facilities. Over the course of the study, this data was added to and several amendments to the data were made. In addition, when 265 survey forms were returned, the database was updated with new information.

This data was also linked to MapInfo, a software programme which produces maps from the data on the database.

It is these maps and associated data that form the basis of this report.

3. Methodology

The overall methodology was to provide a gap analysis of community facilities for Wycombe District Council, to identify areas of deficiency and to produce an action plan which will direct future work towards meeting shortfalls in specific geographic areas.

In order to achieve this, a number of approaches were used:

- Councillors and Parish Councillors were asked for their views in November 2008 by means of an electronic survey¹. This produced responses² from 19 of the 28 wards.
- All the community facilities that are known to WDC were sent questionnaires³ in order to carry out the community facility audit. 551 were sent out and 265 received back. This represents a 48.1% response rate. A vast amount of data was collected from these responses, and information is stored on a database about the structure of the building, whether it complies with DDA legislation, availability of hire together with any restrictions, user groups, facilities that are available (e.g. bar, kitchen), hire costs and room sizes, together with any uses that the building could be put to in the future (e.g. meetings, sports or polling station). This data has not been shown in this report, but is available for scrutiny when considering either gaps in provision, or possible alternative uses for existing facilities.
- Information was also sought from neighbouring authorities⁴ – these responses are shown in Section 5 of this document
- In addition, visits were made to selected community facilities where written responses to the questionnaire had been received. Facilities to visit were selected on the basis of size, and geographical location; responses were sought in both urban and rural areas. The community facilities approached were two from each of the Bucks County Council local community areas which have been used for analysis purposes for the Wycombe District Council Open Spaces project –
 - the north of the District including Princes Risborough
 - the south-west including Marlow
 - The east of the District and
 - The High Wycombe un-parished area

A list of the facilities visited can be found in the appendices (Community Facilities visited)

- Responses from all the above questionnaires and visits were input into the Community Facilities database .
- The database was linked to MapInfo, a mapping analysis tool. Facilities were then mapped on the database

¹ See SNAP Survey for Members in the Appendix

² A list of respondents can be found at 'Responses from Councillors to consultation in November 2008' in Appendix

³ See Community Facility Audit in Appendix

⁴ See "Views from Neighbouring Authorities"

- Catchment areas for dedicated community facilities were then mapped, using a catchment area of 720m in urban areas and 1,440m in rural areas. Justification for using these measures is shown below
- 'Dedicated community facilities' are those where their primary purpose is the provision of community facilities. Typologies are Village Halls, Community Centres and Meeting Halls
- Meetings were held with WDC Planning Department to understand how this strategy dovetails into their work, to inform of progress and to obtain both statistical and MapInfo information

Level of Provision

In considering the level of provision that would be appropriate for a district of this size, best practice has been considered in the form of the guidance outlined in the publication "Neighbourhoods: A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality"⁵ a handbook for planners, designers, developers and community groups. The book focuses on the physical fabric of neighbourhoods, and it is known that the book has been used by other local planning departments, for example in the study carried out by the Borough of Broxbourne in their 'Community Facility' report; a study which, from current information, most closely resembles the study undertaken by Wycombe District Council.

This Guide suggests that the catchment population required to sustain one community centre is around 4,000 people. It should be noted that there are no specific national standards for the provision of community facilities.

The population of Wycombe District Council (2006) of 161,326⁶ would support 41 community centres using this catchment measure. There are actually 69 dedicated community facilities in the district – but this figure disguises the fact that some areas are deficient in the provision of facilities.

In rural areas, the sense of community is closely aligned to village life – there are many dedicated community facilities that serve village populations, although there may be fewer than 4,000 people in these rural communities.

Using the figure 1:4000 as a guide, the available data may be analysed in many different ways; straightforward numerical analysis by ward based on best practice, a combination of numerical analysis and gap analysis by either ward or geographic areas, or a more complex analysis taking into account three-dimensional landscape together with numerical and/or gap analysis.

Conclusions are based on a combination of numerical analysis and gap analysis, and results by both ward and local community area analysis areas have been considered.

The data used was the most up to date available as at 1st March 2009. However, it is acknowledged that the data changes rapidly as either facilities close, lettings policies change or buildings fall into states of disrepair.

When planning applications are received, it is recommended that further detailed analysis be carried out in that particular locality to ascertain the currency of the existing data with regard to the number, quality and availability of facilities.

⁵ Shaping Neighbourhoods – A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality – Hugh Barton, Marcus Grant and Richard Guise

⁶ 2006 Ward Population estimates for England and Wales. Source: Officer for National Statistics. This is in line with the Registrar General's estimate for 2007 which is 161,417. Accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

The data used has been checked using website information and telephone contacts where possible, and visits have been made to a few facilities – however there are gaps in the data as it has not been possible to ascertain key information for a number of facilities. There are numerical differences between the number of community facilities available and the number available for hire. The reasons for this are either a) that the data has not been able to be verified at the time of writing, or b) that the facilities do not hire out their premises.

It should be noted that not all community facilities are available seven days a week – some are not available at certain times during the day, they may not be suitable for a specific activity, or are in a poor state of repair. Some have restrictions about who may hire them (for example not for teenage parties, nor at weekends) and some facilities are too big, too small or too expensive for use by community groups.

It should also be noted that we have not attempted to define what is meant by use of community facilities, and the concept of "community use" is really diverse. People want access to community facilities for a wide range of reasons such as small meetings, indoor sport, arts and craft activities, dances, open public meetings, brownies/guides, conferences, parties etc. The facilities identified in this report are also very varied in terms of size, accessibility, potential uses, cost, permitted uses etc. This strategy has only been able to look at provision in a very generic way and when there is the opportunity to develop new community facilities or make improvements to existing ones, there will still need to be a more detailed analysis of local provision. From research carried out, people using community facilities at the time of visits varied from a community coffee morning, toddler group, ballet class, swimming lessons for youngsters, elderly folks lunch and social meeting, babies clinic and ladies badminton – often requiring very different types of provision in terms of accessibility, room size, and cost.

There have been no checks on the quality of the structure of the available facilities – these will need to be checked by a surveyor. Facility users in 1:1 interviews were asked in the questionnaire whether they considered the community facility to be in great shape, good shape, reasonable shape or poor shape. These responses provide guidance, but not a professional opinion as to the state of repair of facilities.

Catchment areas

In looking at the most suitable catchment areas for community facilities, the measures that other authorities or planners had used were considered to ascertain whether these calculations fitted with the results.

There is a huge variation in travel time that people are prepared to make – actual findings varied from those who were extremely local to the facility ("It's just over the road, so I pop over for a coffee") to people prepared to travel over 30 miles to reach a specific class ("We come here for the dance class as the teacher is marvellous").

The distance people are prepared to travel to reach a suitable community facility varies enormously – the Public Transport Accessibility plan states that "most people are prepared to walk 500m to a bus stop" and the Countryside Agency in determining their catchment areas, recommend that ideally people should be "within 4 km of bank / cash point, within 4 km of a doctors surgery, within 2 km of primary school, and within 4 km of secondary school."

Broxbourne Borough Council's 'PPG 17 Technical Study and Sub-strategy Action Plans' looked at how far respondents were willing to travel to access indoor community facilities. For the two types of provision for which there was an overall preference for walking, (indoor youth clubs and playgroup spaces), the 75% threshold level was a 15-minute walk time. The remaining types of

indoor facilities had a 15 minute drive time, with the exceptions of medium and large hire facilities where the expected drive time would be 20 minutes.

The assumptions based on walk time catchment areas were that:

- Average walking speed is 3 miles per hour
- National guidelines reduce actual distances into straight line distances by 40%. This reflects the fact that routes are not always straight-line distances. The 40% reduction is based on robust research by FIT (Fields in Trust) in numerous areas using a representative sample of pedestrian routes.

A 15 minute walk time translates to a distance of 0.75 miles or 1,200 metres. National guidelines reduce actual distance into straight-line distances by 40%, which gives a distance of 720 metres.

Consultants PMP who produced the Open Space Standard Setting Study for Wycombe District Council (based upon the Scott Wilson Open Spaces Study of 2005) also used a 15 minute walk as a catchment for outdoor facilities. For the sake of consistency and ease of comparison with this study, this distance has also been used as the catchment area for community facilities within the urban areas of Wycombe.

It is recognised that rural facilities will have a larger catchment area as people are prepared to travel further to them (as the consultation highlighted). A limited number of interviews with facility users in rural areas within Wycombe District Council, showed that 28% of people were prepared to travel up to one mile to visit a community facility, with a further 32% prepared to travel up to two miles – far exceeding the 720 m catchment used in urban areas. It is proposed therefore that 1.5 mile radius (30 minute walk time) would be more appropriate for rural areas. This translates to a 1,440m catchment.

Measures that other authorities have used are shown below:

Lancashire County Council policy states: “Where substantial new developments of over 150 dwellings are proposed, developers will be expected to contribute to any new capital investment where there are no community facilities within a *safe 30 minute walk time or 2 mile radius* plus funding of the first 2 years' revenue costs.”

Broxbourne Borough Council used either a 15 minute walk time or a 15 minute drive time – the determining factor being the type of facility that was visited.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (Leicestershire) in their Local Development framework state that their standard access time is a 10 minute walk time to a small hall or community venue, with access to a larger sports hall being a 10 minute drive time, with youth provision being a 15 minute walk time.

Dacorum Borough Council use an 800 m straight-line distance for access to community halls.

In the ‘Shaping Neighbourhoods Guide’ the minimum accessibility standard suggests a community centre within an 800m ‘walkable area’ in an area where there are 40 persons per hectare (ppha). All but three⁷ Wards in Wycombe District have populations less dense than this.

Using this best practice research, the two wards which have significantly higher density (Bowerdean and Oakridge & Castlefield) could expect a community centre within 600 m, using this recommended guidance. At present the provision of facilities in each of these high density

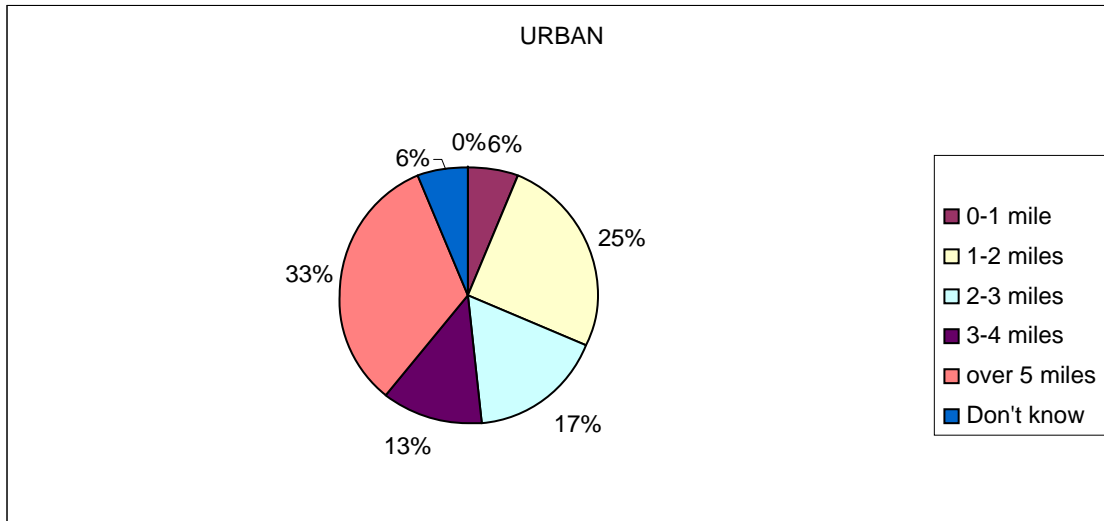
⁷ Totteridge (44ppha), Bowerdean (74ppha) and Oakridge & Castlefield (78ppha).

wards is deficient using any measure, and the priority in both wards would in the first instance be to at least meet minimum standards.

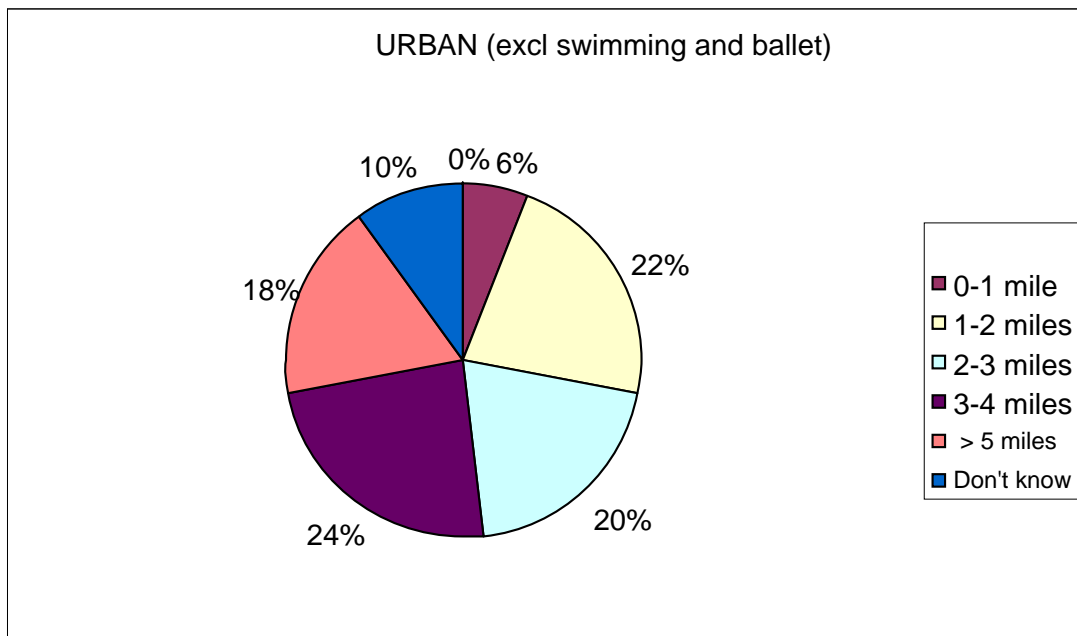
The community facilities in rural areas within Wycombe District provide reasonably good access for those living in the countryside using the 30 minute walk catchment; the main areas of community facility deficiency in the district are not within rural areas, but lie within the urban areas, principally in the non-parished areas of High Wycombe.

How far are people prepared to travel?

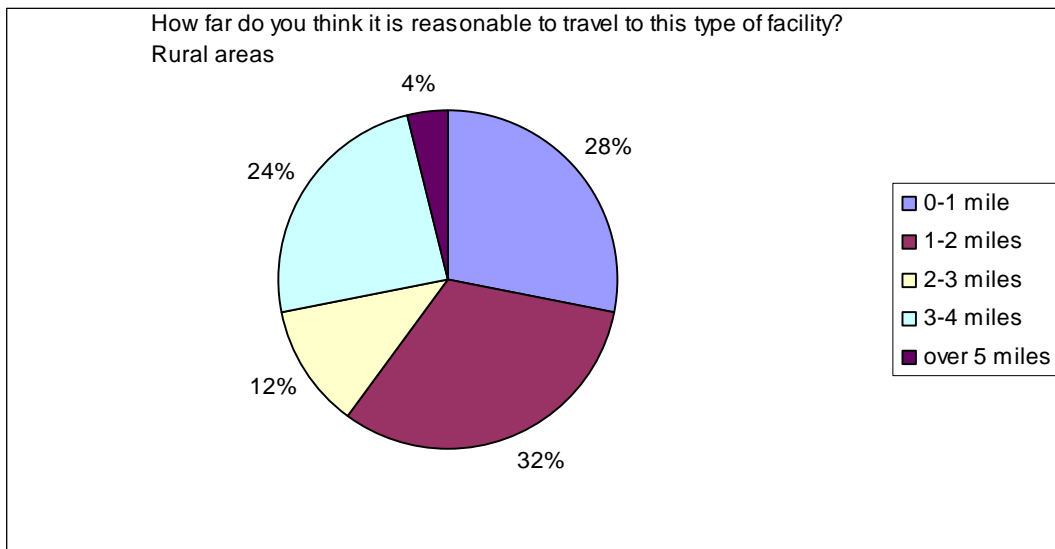
The diagram below shows the distances people from four urban areas said they were prepared to travel to a community facility similar to the one they were using on the day of the survey. Responses are from people in Hazlemere, Micklefield, Marlow North West and Abbey wards. The responses are from a total of 63 respondents.



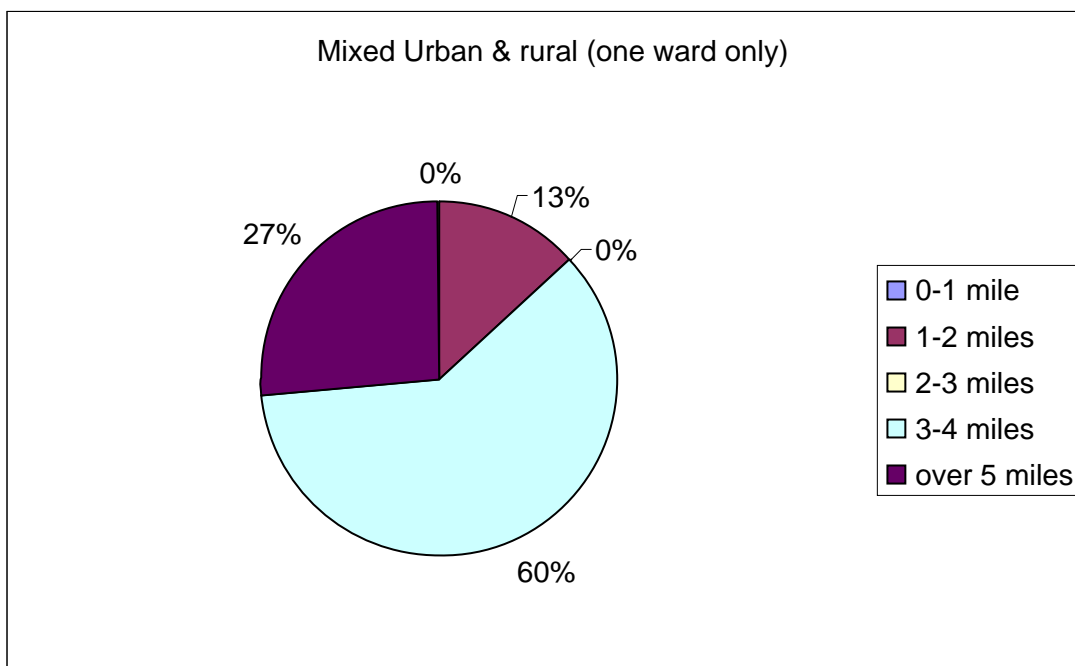
These responses included respondents who were attending specialised activities, namely swimming lessons and ballet lessons. If these respondents are excluded from the sample, the result is as shown below. (The respondents from the ballet class in particular skewed the results as they had all travelled over 30 miles to the class).



The responses from two rural areas (Ellesborough and Lacey Green wards) are shown below. The number of respondents was 25.



In the one ward which is a rural and urban mix (Wooburn Green), the results from 15 respondents were as follows:



The above result was from one community facility; St Paul's Church Hall (CFTHW004).

| All the survey findings above use small samples and as such may not be representative.

4. Findings

Responses from returned surveys indicated that there were no community meeting spaces in health centres, clinics, or doctor or dentist consulting rooms. The information available for these

types of facilities has been recorded in the database, but has not been shown on the mapping information.

Public houses similarly, offered few real community meeting spaces – their main purpose is as a business. However, in seven examples there is recognised usage for the community, and these results have been included on the maps. Otherwise, public houses are excluded from the maps, but are included on the database.

Post offices have been subject to a recent local review by Royal Mail, so although this typology was included in the original brief, these facilities were not included in this study.

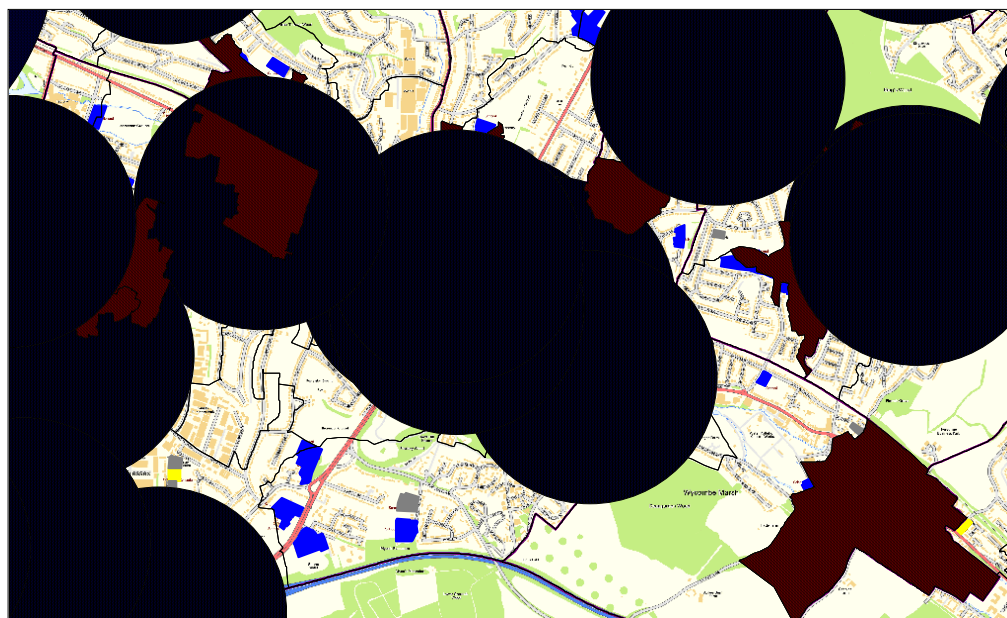
Local shops were also not included on the maps, as use for purposes other than commercial transactions was not found.

Museums, galleries and heritage facilities have been mapped, although all but two do not provide any facilities for general community use.

Findings – highlights

The wards of Bowerdean, Disraeli, and Terriers & Amersham Hill have no dedicated community facilities within their boundaries. Parts of all three of these wards fall within the 10 most deprived areas in Wycombe District, and the lack of facilities may be acutely felt here. Part of Disraeli ward is within the most deprived 25% of SOAs (Super Output Areas) in England.

Oakridge & Castlefield ward is similarly disadvantaged in terms of community facilities, having two dedicated community centres, but also having three parts of its ward featuring in the 10 most deprived SOA areas in Wycombe, together with the highest level of economic inactivity in the district, standing at 37.9%. One part of Oakridge & Castlefield falls in the most deprived 25% of SOAs in England.



*The 10 most deprived SOAs in Wycombe (shaded red) with the dedicated community facility catchment area circles. Red shading **not** covered by a catchment area circle shows particular deficiencies.*

Marlow North and West ward, having a population of 8,540 and economic inactivity standing at 29.5% has only one dedicated community facility.

Abbey Ward, although having the largest number of community facilities of any ward in the district, has geographic gaps in provision, as many facilities are clustered close together. These gaps are mainly to the east in the Abbey Barn/Daws Hill area.

Totteridge does have a dedicated community centre but it is in a very poor state of repair and needs considerable investment to ensure a long term future.

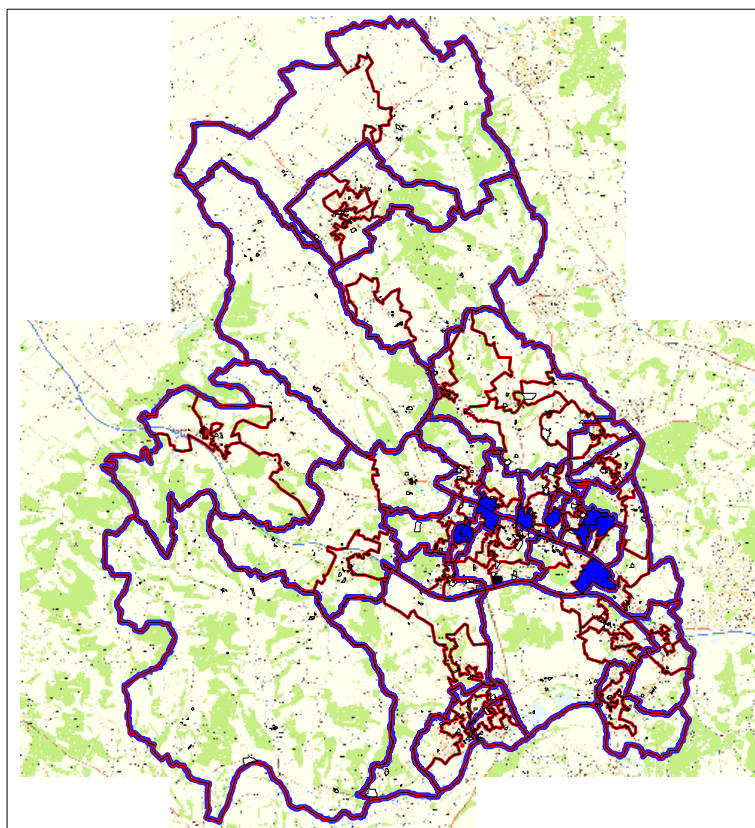
The five wards with the highest level of community facilities per head of population are:

- Hambleton Valley
- Chiltern Rise
- Lacey Green, Speen and The Hampdens
- Icknield
- Stokenchurch

The five wards with the lowest level of community facilities per head of population are:

- Bowerdean
- Disraeli
- Terriers and Amersham Hill
- Oakridge and Castlefield
- Marlow North and West

The map below shows the 10 most deprived areas in Wycombe (out of 107) using Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)



Three deprived areas are in Oakridge & Castlefield; two in Micklefield and one each in Disraeli, Bowerdean, Ryemead, Terriers and Amersham Hill and Totteridge.

Information showing economic inactivity for each ward is found in the appendices⁸.

⁸ Economic Inactivity by Ward
www.2020ltd.com

Bucks County Council local community areas - analysis

Results of the surveys and analysis have been considered by ward and by geographic area in order to provide both detailed and more general analysis.

Findings have also been produced using the same analysis areas as the Bucks County Council local community areas which were used for analysis purposes (by consultants PMP) for the Open Spaces Standard Setting Study:

- the north of the District including Princes Risborough (Icknield, The Risboroughs, Bledlow & Bradenham, Lacey Green, Speen and The Hampdens and Greater Hughenden)
- the south-west including Marlow (Stokenchurch & Radnage, Chiltern Rise, Hambleden Valley, Greater Marlow, Marlow North & West and Marlow South East)
- The south east (Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow, Bourne End-cum-Hedsor, The Wooburns, Tylers Green & Loudwater, Hazlemere North and Hazlemere South)
- The High Wycombe un-parished area

The results of analysis by the four areas above are as follows:

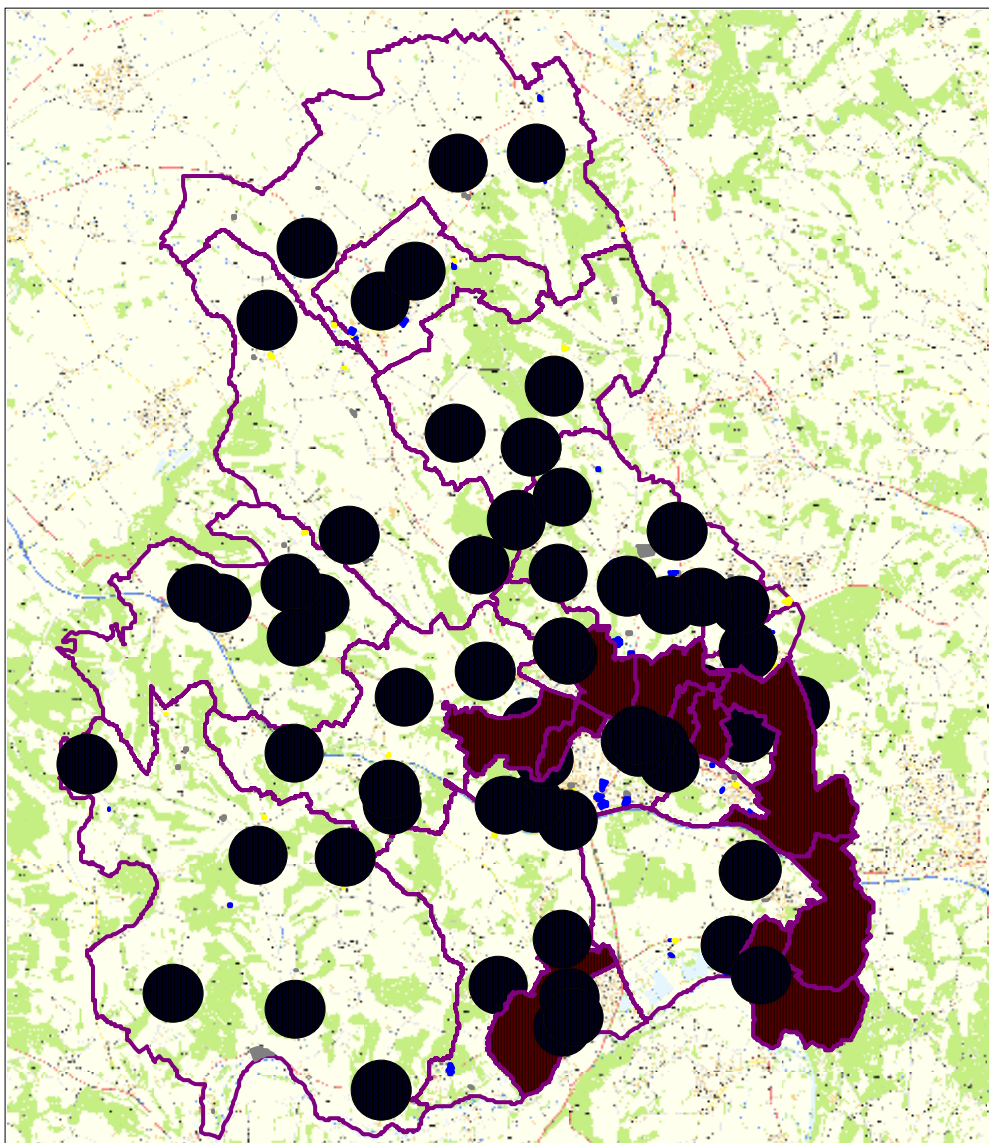
	Estimated ward population (2006)	One Community Centre per 4,000 population =	Number of community facilities available to hire (per database March 2009)	Dedicated community facilities		
				N° of village halls	N° of meeting halls	N° of Community Centres
Risborough and the North	24,558	6.14	47	14	0	2
High Wycombe un-parished area	68,831	17.21	68	2	9	8
South West and Marlow	32,341	8.09	51	14	7	4
South East	35,596	8.90	38	3	3	3
Total	161,326	40.43	204	33	19	17
Total	161,326	41		69		

- Every ward in the north of the district has *more* dedicated community facilities in each ward than expected (using the calculation of one community centre for each 4,000 population)
- Every ward in the south west except one (Marlow North & West) has *more* dedicated community facilities than expected
- Every ward except one (Flackwell Heath) in the south east has *fewer* community facilities than expected

- The picture in the High Wycombe unparished area is mixed. Six wards have fewer dedicated community facilities than expected (Sands, Disraeli, Terriers and Amersham Hill, Bowerdean, Totteridge and Oakridge & Castlefield). Micklefield and Ryemead have the number of facilities expected to support these populations, although there are caveats. Booker and Abbey wards on the face of it have more dedicated community facilities than expected but again there are caveats. Further explanation is available under the analysis of each ward.

In rural areas, a higher number of community facilities per head may be expected. The justification for this is that a village hall supports the population of that village, which is often below 4,000.

A map of the whole district, focusing on the areas where there are fewer community facilities than expected, shows that several deficient wards are clustered together, adding to the pressure on the facilities that do exist.



Findings – by ward

Each section contains the major findings for each ward, plus a ward map showing the location of community facilities within that ward. The dedicated community facilities (village halls, community centres or meeting halls) are shown with their catchment areas.

Interviews with facility users within the wards were undertaken using a short response form⁹ which was generally undertaken on a 1:1 basis.

The overall results for every ward are shown below (ordered by the number of dedicated facilities they have).

Ward	Total number of community facilities	Number available to hire	Number of Village Halls, Meeting Halls & Community Centres
Bowerdean	2	1	0
Disraeli	3	2	0
Terriers & Amersham Hill	13	9	0
Bourne End-cum-Hedsor	10	4	1
Hazlemere North	8	5	1
Hazlemere South	9	5	1
Marlow North & West	16	6	1
Sands	7	4	1
The Wooburns	9	2	1
Totteridge	9	4	1
Bledlow & Bradenham	12	4	2
Downley & Plomer Hill	7	7	2
Greater Marlow	11	6	2
Micklefield	7	3	2
Oakridge & Castlefield	7	2	2
Ryemead	17	7	2
The Risboroughs	27	14	2
Tylers Green and Loudwater	13	9	2
Booker & Cressex	13	7	3
Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow	20	13	3
Icknield	20	7	3
Lacey Green, Speen & The Hampdens	13	6	3
Marlow South East	10	7	3
Stokenchurch & Radnage	16	9	5
Abbey	33	22	6
Greater Hughenden	25	16	6
Hambleden Valley	25	9	6
Chiltern Rise	22	14	8
	383	204	69

⁹ See Questions for Community Facility Users in the Appendix
www.2020ltd.com

More use of community facilities may be expected in the most deprived SOAs in terms of employment – these areas are shown in the following table:

1	E01017857	11UFGR1001	Disraeli
2	E01017839	11UFGK1004	Abbey
3	E01017905	11UFHF1003	Oakridge and Castlefield
4	E01017926	11UFHL1002	Totteridge
5	E01017901	11UFHE1003	Micklefield
6	E01017906	11UFHF1004	Oakridge and Castlefield
7	E01017923	11UFHK1005	Terriers and Amersham Hill
8	E01017845	11UFGM1003	Booker & Cressex
9	E01017844	11UFGM1002	Booker & Cressex
10	E01017902	11UFHE1004	Micklefield

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5. Views from neighbouring Authorities

In November 2008, neighbouring authorities that are geographically or demographically similar to Wycombe District Council were contacted with a view to finding out what measures they used in calculating where to spend section 106 monies from developers.

Overall response indicated that few authorities had a policy for determining where section 106 monies should be spent, although many authorities said they would be interested in seeing the results of this research.

A list of the councils contacted¹⁰ is shown below together with the letter¹¹ that was sent

Responses were received from the following six authorities;

Dacorum Borough Council –

“We have carried out a Social and Community Facilities study in-house. This study is being used to inform the LDF rather than to develop a developer contributions action plan / charging mechanism. The document can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1884> A Hertfordshire wide piece of work is however underway which will look at this issue in the context of developing a future charging mechanism /Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is called the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Investment Study (HIIS). We are due to have the initial results in February 2009. The study should help us to assess and cost out existing deficits as well as assess the likely level of future provision required to support growth.

“We do not have any particular methodology for identifying catchment areas - we tend to look at the neighbourhood level for Hemel Hempstead (as this town is structured on the neighbourhood New Town principles) and on the town / village wide basis for other settlements. In terms of schools etc, we obviously discuss with the service provider what the appropriate catchment area is for the facility and plan on that basis.”

Horsham District Council

“Essentially, we have an adopted Planning Obligations SPD which takes a 'tariff approach' to community facility contributions. However, need is established by nothing more sophisticated than our (aging) PPG 17 Assessment. Therefore, although the vast majority of applicants have been prepared to pay contributions, there have been challenges that have found sympathetic ears with some Inspectors. Your work seems to be far in advance of our position and should help avoid the pitfalls.

You can see our Planning Obligations SPD at the link below. The actual contributions calculations are...

http://www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning/LDDS/local_dev_documents_4541.asp

Recommended quantity provision = 0.15 sq metre per person (Horsham District PPG 17 Assessment)”

¹⁰ See List of Authorities contacted in Appendix

¹¹ See Letter to nearest neighbours in Appendix

Test Valley Borough Council

"We haven't undertaken a study but in seeking community buildings the specification is based on previous experience of large sites and best practice advice from our housing & community development officers. We are about to adopt an SPD on developer contributions which may be of interest. The school element we are guided by advice from Hampshire County Council as education authority."

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

"With regard to S106, we took a paper through to Cabinet some years ago that outlined how the council met the then governments national planning framework. This was set against the REYS standards. From our perspective we simply have applied ours as youth service facilities and we took the Resourcing Excellent Youth Services REYS document as our starting point. We mapped our current provision against meeting the standards set out in REYS used that as our basis for developing our S106 and update it against current new national guidelines. With regard to the community facilities, with the exception of two of our centres which have under-leases that don't allow us to use them for adults all of the centres are for youth and community usage. Whilst meeting the standards set out in REYS for young people we are also meeting the needs of the wider community. In the two buildings that have the restrictive under-leases, there is a community facility adjoining the youth centre or close by."

Bedfordshire County Council

"Details we use are attached relating to schools, early years, libraries. But do look at Mid Beds web site - they did an infrastructure audit and then incorporated our info into a standard charge covering all areas of community facilities...their policy and background papers are on line. We would be interested to see the results of your strategy when published."

Bedford Borough Council

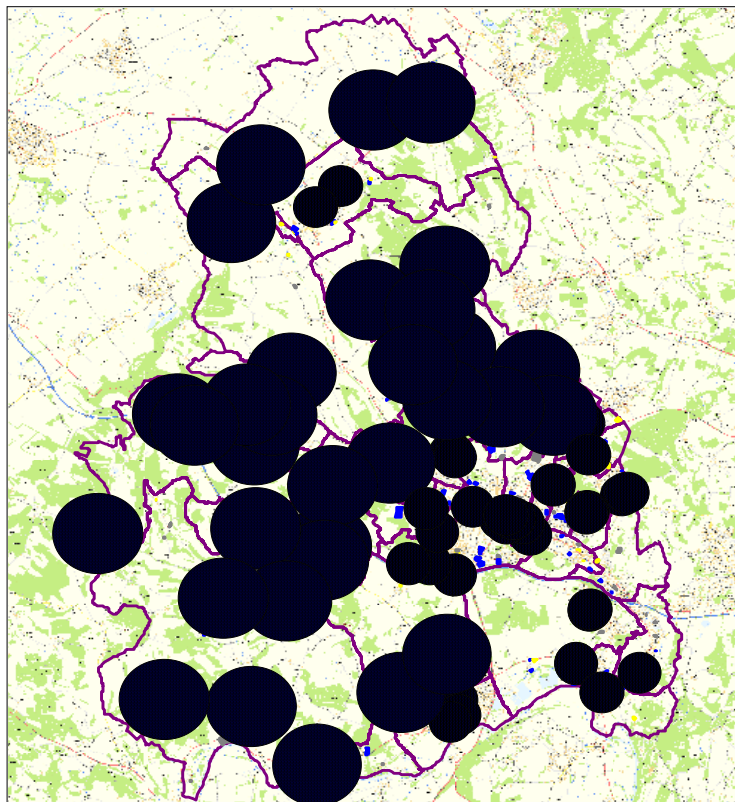
"We don't use any best practice standards for the uses you list, or have any of our own, but would be interested to see the results of your strategy when published."6.

6. Conclusions

Three hundred and eighty three (383) community facilities in the Wycombe District Council area have been identified; 204 of these are available to hire, and 69 are dedicated community facilities – this means that they are classified as either village halls, meeting halls or community centres whose prime objective is to provide facilities for the community.

Provision in rural areas is generally good, with five rural wards having the highest number of community facilities per head of population. Generally, all but the most remote rural areas are within a catchment area.

The five areas with fewest community facilities per head of population are all in urban wards.



There are exceptions where residents cannot access a community facility within the recommended catchment threshold – the largest number of people affected are in the wards of Bowerdean, Disraeli, Terriers and Amersham Hill, Oakridge & Castlefield, (all of which are within the Wycombe un-parished area), and Marlow North and West.

Bowerdean, Disraeli and Terriers & Amersham Hill have no dedicated facilities at all, and lie adjacent to each other, creating pressures elsewhere.

Ryemead ward has no dedicated facilities to the east of the ward, and adjacent Tylers Green & Loudwater ward has no dedicated provision to the south in Loudwater, effectively creating a ribbon of non-provision.

Ryemead's neighbour to the east, Abbey ward, has sparse facilities outside the immediate town centre area. Totteridge only has one facility which is in need of upgrading

The wards for priority dedicated provision (in no particular order) are therefore:

Abbey	Oakridge & Castlefield
Bowerdean	Ryemead
Disraeli	Totteridge
Terriers & Amersham Hill	Tylers Green & Loudwater
Marlow North & West (although this ward should be looked at with neighbouring Marlow South East)	

It is important to consult with local communities to ensure that any additional facilities meet the needs of residents, as well as meeting standards in terms of quantity, size and quality of provision.

7. Recommendations

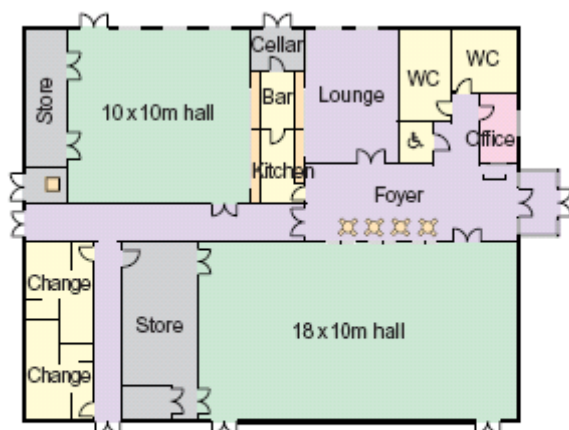
Design of Community Facilities

Where new community buildings are developed, it is recommended that the report “Village and Community Halls”¹² by Sport England is considered. This report outlines best practice in the design of new community buildings, highlights the most effective layouts for a range of sizes of community facility, and considers every important aspect of community hall development.

The report shows a number of different sizes of buildings accommodating various facilities. All buildings should also contain toilets, changing facilities, a kitchen, foyer, store and office.

- i. 10m x 10m hall – total building size = 280 sq.m
- ii. 18m x 10m hall plus a community room – total building size = 350 sq.m
- iii. 18m x 10m hall plus a stage area and a community room - total building size = 520 sq.m
- iv. 18m x 10m hall with an additional 10m x 10m hall plus a lounge/community room - total building size = 575 sq.m
- v. 18m x 17m hall with a stage - total building size = 700 sq.m

Where new provision or improvements to local community meeting facilities are required, it is recommended that the minimum standard should be a building which can accommodate a range of activities and provide for many different community groups. Using the Sport England design guide this would mean a centre with a main hall, a secondary hall and a lounge/community room, as shown in iv) above. A building this size would be around 575 square metres – example shown below.



Centre with a second hall and a lounge/meeting room served by a bar as well as a kitchen.

¹² ISBN 86078 130 6 £10 Sport England SE/1038/5M/01/01 www.english.sports.gov.uk
http://www.sportengland.org/se_facilities_village_halls.pdf
www.2020ltd.com

Standards for community facilities

Milton Keynes Council, English Partnerships and Sport England have looked at best practice and Oxford Brookes University have carried out a national pilot study. Part of the project was to determine various standards of provision for sports and community facilities in that locality¹³.

Research into the calculation used by other authorities is varied. For example, Horsham District Council uses a calculation of 0.15 sq m per person, Taunton Deane uses 0.2 square metres per person for village halls, Reigate & Banstead uses 0.2 sq m per person (0.5 square metres per dwelling, based on an average of 2.4 people per dwelling) and Bracknell Forest uses 0.13 sq m per person for a community centre (0.33 square metres per dwelling based on 2.4 people per dwelling).

The current calculation used for developer contributions at Wycombe District Council is 0.3 sq m of community facility space per person. This calculation has been based on the standard used by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

The revised standard for Wycombe District Council is 0.14 square metres of community facility floor space per person. This is justified in the table below.

Community facilities	
Existing standard	Recommended standard
0.3 square metres of community facility per person	0.14 square metres of community facility per person
Justification	
Using the Sport England 'Village and Community Halls' design guide, the minimum size of building required in new developments is 575 square metres. Dividing this by the 'Shaping Neighbourhoods' Guidance of 1 centre per 4,000 population, this gives a standard of 0.14 square metres per person.	

However, it is recommended that existing provision is not decreased as there are already gaps in provision. The new recommended standard relates to contributions for new facilities.

A prioritised action plan highlighting wards where provision needs to be increased or upgraded will be produced annually. This will be used to inform the Council's Developer Guide.

¹³ They concluded that for Community Centres / Meeting Halls the standard provision in Milton Keynes should be 61 square metres per 1,000 people (0.061 sq m per person). However, Milton Keynes is more a more urban area than rural Wycombe District Council, and the local authority in MK manages (either directly or indirectly) many community buildings. In addition the council states that... "the provision of local community facilities is seen as vital to enabling increased participation in physical activity. The current design standards and standards of provision are however outdated and do not result in facilities which are of sufficient size to be financially viable and therefore revised criteria which result in larger more flexible (space) is required."

Community facilities	
Existing level of provision	Recommended level of provision
0.44 dedicated community facilities per 1,000 population	0.44 dedicated community facilities per 1,000 population
Justification	
Provision of community facilities in Wycombe District Council is currently above the 'Shaping Neighbourhoods' Guidance. However, there are specific wards which fall below this and these wards should be brought up to standard.	

