



Wycombe Development Framework

# Community Facilities Supplementary Planning Document

October 2011



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local facilities are recognised as an essential part of our communities. They provide social and wellbeing opportunities and support the sustainable development ethos.

The importance of community facilities is already recognised in national and local planning policy. In particular, Core Strategy policy CS15 (Community Facilities and Built Sports Facilities) sets out the Council's general approach to the provision of community facilities and built sports facilities whereby the loss or change of use of community facilities or land will be resisted by the Council unless it can be demonstrated that there is no need for the community facility or any other, in the local area.

This SPD puts forward a methodology to be followed in order to ascertain the community need for the facility and others in the local area. The first stage of assessment is dependent on whether the community facility is a shop or, if not, whether the community facility is located in an urban or rural area. If the facility: -

- is a SHOP then the assessment of needs procedure stated in Local Plan policy S6 will be followed.
- is not a shop and in an URBAN area, the Council produced 'Community Facilities Strategy' will be relied upon for the assessment of needs with the outcome informing whether additional analysis is required to assess the acceptability of the loss of the facility.
- is not a shop and is in a RURAL area, a Community Needs Assessment will be required which should include consultation with the local community, particularly the Parish Council, to ensure that an up-to-date and accurate account of the 'real' community needs of the local area is considered.

If the assessment of needs shows that there is no community requirement for the community facility proposed to be lost or any other within the local area, the principle of the loss of the facility is likely to be accepted by the Council. Where there is a need for the facility, the loss of the facility will not be accepted and where there is a need for a different community facility in the local area, the Council would like to see this accommodated on site. If this is not possible (due to site constraints etc.) then the Council may consider that off-site provision (or a financial contribution to off-site provision) may be an appropriate alternative.

This SPD also provides clarification on uses that constitute community facilities and the types of projects a financial contribution (to mitigate the loss of the community facility) could contribute towards.

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of SPD

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out how the Council will consider the issue of losing/reproviding a community facility within Wycombe District, in line with policy CS15 of the Wycombe Development Framework (WDF) Core Strategy. Policy CS15 is set out at Appendix One.

This SPD is a material planning consideration in the

determination of all planning applications received by the Council on or after the date of adoption. The SPD has been through the statutory process required by legislation in order to become an SPD including a public consultation between 24<sup>th</sup> June and 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011. Comments received during this time were considered and the draft SPD amended accordingly.

### Background

There is growing awareness of the need to establish sustainable communities and it remains an essential planning objective to give everybody the choice to use local community facilities. Within our District, there is a wide range of community facilities from shops to church halls. Whilst the Council is not directly responsible for the majority of these facilities, it is committed to ensuring (as far as possible) that these types of facilities remain available for community use where required - a crucial task given the cost of land and the inevitable likelihood that once a community facility or land previously used for such is 'lost', a replacement community facility is unlikely to be re-provided, without formal intervention.

The importance of this issue is increasingly being tested given the unfavourable economic conditions we are experiencing. For example, in Britain, public houses are currently closing at a rate of 25 per week<sup>1</sup>. A number of these sites inevitably come up

for redevelopment, given the uplift in land value should it be used for an alternative use, particularly residential. Whilst the Council does not want to restrict the re-development of land, it wants to ensure that the amenities of the community would not be detrimentally affected, should the community facility (building or land) be lost, as local community facilities, whilst serving a practical function, also provide a number of supplementary benefits:-

- Health benefits by virtue of an increased likelihood to walk or cycle to a local facility.
- Reduced car use also provides environmental sustainability benefits.
- Reinforce a sense of community by the holding of events or by casual meetings that occur on the journeys to and from the venue.
- Provide local jobs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> British Beer & Pub Association (2011)

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<sup>2</sup> H Barton, M Grant, R Guise (2003 p. 96)

## Objectives of the SPD

This SPD:

- Provides the policy context behind this topic;
- Clarifies how Policy CS15 should be applied;
- Clarifies the uses considered to be community facilities;
- Discusses the methodology to be implemented to assess whether there is a need for the community facility and resulting likely response to the principle of losing/ reprovding the community facility; and
- Discusses the circumstances where off-site provision (or a financial contribution towards this) may be considered appropriate.

This SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications received from the date of adoption of this SPD and it will complement the Developer Contributions SPD. However, this document may require revision in light of the production of other documents, in particular the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and also DCLG proposals such as the 'Community Right to Buy' (assets of community value).

By providing this guidance, we aim to minimise uncertainty and time spent on negotiating

individual planning applications. It will enable a consistent and transparent approach to be taken, highlighting at which stages Parish Councils and local communities could and should get involved with the assessment of the needs of their local area.

This SPD covers the principle surrounding the loss/ reprovision/ change of use of a community facility only. Any planning applications for these would still be subject to additional policies within the Wycombe Development Framework and Wycombe Local Plan.



## POLICY CONTEXT

This guidance draws on national and local planning policy and guidance.

### National Planning Policy:

#### *PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development-*

This document provides guidance on the Government's objectives for the planning system, including sustainable development. It asserts that Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of development by making suitable land available to improve people's quality of life; good access to key services is also important, contributing to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities.

#### *PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth-*

This affirms that the Government's overarching objective is sustainable economic growth. Therefore this document aims to ensure and support the provision of a range of facilities and services throughout rural and urban areas, day and evening.

#### *PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas-*

The Government seeks to raise the quality of life and environment in rural areas and promote more sustainable patterns of development. Reasonable access to a range of services and facilities is expected in rural areas which should be facilitated and supported by Planning, maintaining community vitality.

#### *PPG17: Planning for Open space, Sport and Recreation-*

This document recognises the importance that recreational facilities can have in improving people's sense of wellbeing and the opportunities they can provide for social interaction, as well as the inherent health benefits brought about by the use of open spaces, sports and recreational facilities.

#### *Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations-*

For a planning obligation (such as that to mitigate the loss of a community facility) to be considered lawful, it must meet the following tests:

- (i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (ii) directly related to the development; and
- (iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

### Regional Planning Policy:

The South East Plan (SEP) is the Regional Strategy for South East England. Whilst the SEP is still extant at the time of writing, it is the Government's intention to abolish regional strategies in the very near future.

## Local Planning Policy:

### *Core Strategy policy CS15: Community Facilities and Built Sports Facilities-*

This policy sets out the Council's general approach to the provision of community facilities and built sports facilities, with part 2 stating that the Council will resist the loss or change of use of buildings with an existing planning use as a community / built sports facility, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no community need for the facility.

The supporting text to policy CS15 discusses the importance of safeguarding community facilities given that land is scarce for such uses and encourages discussion with the Council at pre-application stage, the nature of other community needs (for facilities) in the area. In addition, the supporting text confirms that where consultation with the community is required, it is expected that this should include consideration of the need for other community and sports facilities in the area.

Where it would be of community benefit for such facilities to be provided in another form the policy confirms that this should be either on-site or on another site offering no less community benefit. In appropriate circumstances, a proportionate contribution to an off-site solution may be sought. Therefore the principle of the loss of a community facility will not be supported by

the Council unless it can be demonstrated that there is no need for the facility in its current/ most recent use or in another community facility use, although if an appropriate off-site solution could be provided (physically or through a financial contribution) then the principle of the loss of the facility may be considered acceptable. Complete policy wording is in Appendix One.

### *Core Strategy policy CS21: Contribution of Development to Community Infrastructure-*

This policy states that developers will be expected to provide or, where unable to individually or directly make such provision, make a proportionate contribution to the overall cost of such provision, where implementation would create a need to provide additional or improved infrastructure, amenities or facilities or would exacerbate an existing deficiency in provision.

### *Local Plan policy S6: Local Shops-*

This policy requires proposals to safeguard the provision of shopping facilities which meet the day to day needs of local residents. Therefore in determining applications resulting in the loss of shops, regard is had to:

- i) the number and range of existing retail facilities within the area;
- ii) the degree of customer attraction to the proposed use;
- iii) the suitability of the unit for shopping in relation to its size and/ or servicing arrangements.

Complete policy wording is in Appendix Two.



## WHAT ARE COMMUNITY FACILITIES?

The supporting text to policy CS15 defines community facilities as those which form part of use class D1<sup>3</sup>, in addition to public houses, corner shops and post offices, especially in rural areas. Box 1 adjacent, taken from the supporting text of policy CS15, provides further information on uses the Council considers to be community facilities. Uses *akin* to the community facilities explicitly mentioned also serving a community function (for example a shop attached to a village petrol station) are also likely to be considered community facilities by the Council along with land ancillary to a community facility. Consequently, these uses would also be subject to policy CS15 and this SPD.

### What are Community Facilities?

- Public halls (including Community/Youth Centres), church halls
- Post Offices
- Local shops within both urban and rural areas
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities
- Schools and non-residential education 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

Box 1: Types of Community Facilities



<sup>3</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)

# EXISTING INFORMATION HELD ABOUT COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND NEED

## Community Facilities Strategy:

The Council’s Community Services Team prepared a Community Facilities Strategy in 2009. This is currently being updated (2011). The strategy provides information about the current levels of provision of ‘primary purpose’ community facilities in each Ward such as village halls, meeting halls and community centres. These are mapped out in order to visually demonstrate where any deficiencies may exist.

To formulate the Community Facilities Strategy, surveys were sent to community facilities, Ward and Parish Councillors were asked for their views and visits were made to several facilities.

It is expected that the Community Facilities Strategy will be updated regularly, on a bi-annual basis.

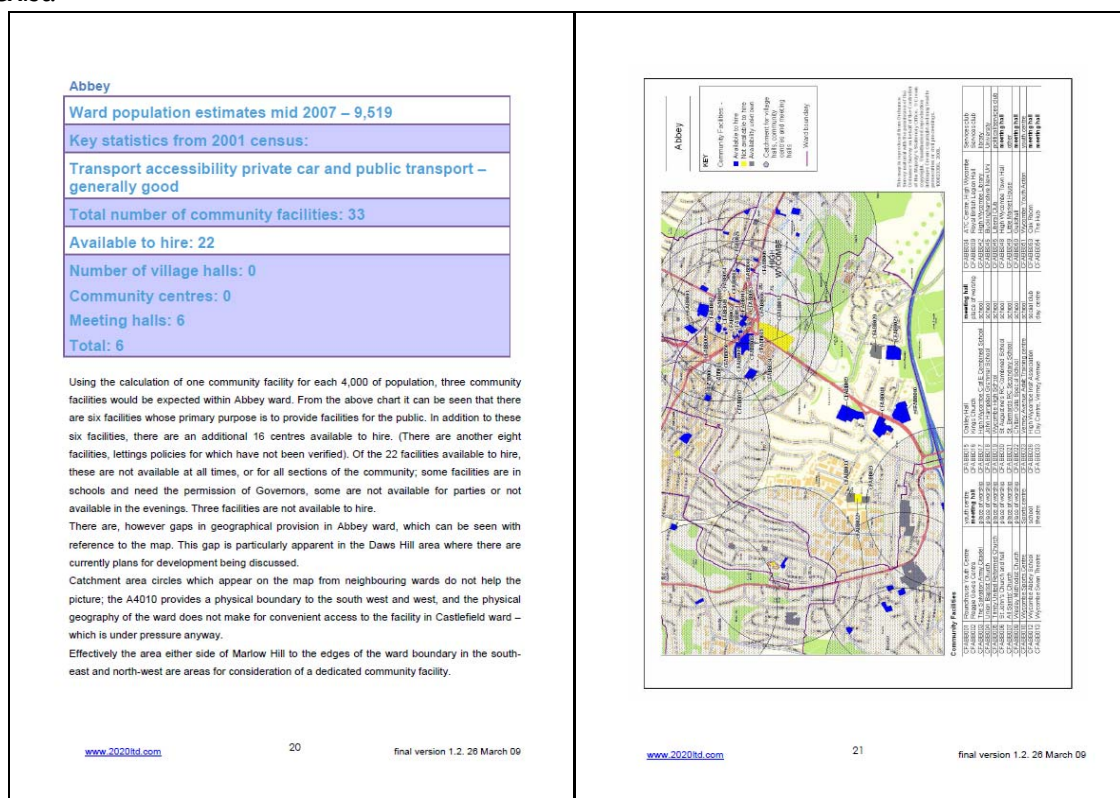


Figure 1: Example pages from the Community Facilities Strategy (2009)

## HOW DO WE ASSESS WHETHER THE LOSS OR RE-PROVISION OF A COMMUNITY FACILITY IS ACCEPTABLE?

### Stage One: Initial Assessment of Community Need

Losing a community facility will only be accepted where it can be demonstrated that there is no community need<sup>4</sup> for community facilities in the local area, or where appropriate mitigation is proposed. Change of use to another community facility use will not be subject to assessment.

The applicant will be expected to engage in pre-application discussions with the Planning Department at an early stage for assistance in assessing the impact of the proposal on community needs. Information on the Pre-Application Advice service can be found on the Council's website<sup>5</sup>.

Dependent on the type or location of the facility, the extent of assessment will likely consist of:

<b>Shops:</b>	<b>Facilities in Urban Areas<sup>6</sup>:</b>	<b>Facilities in Rural Areas<sup>7</sup>:</b>
<p>In the case of shops, Local Plan policy S6 (Local Shops)<sup>7</sup> requires proposals to safeguard the provision of shopping facilities which meet the day to day needs of local residents and sets out a number of tests to be met for the principle of the loss of a shop to be considered acceptable.</p> <p>This policy is considered to sufficiently safeguard the provision of shopping facilities and therefore in the case of shops, no additional assessment of community need (above and beyond the tests in policy S6) is considered to be required.</p> <p>NB: Policies S6 and CS15 are not considered to apply to ANY shops which are within a Local District Centre or Town Centre boundary<sup>8</sup>.</p>	<p>Where a community facility to be lost is located within an urban area as defined in Appendix 3, the Council's Community Facilities Strategy (CFS) will initially determine whether the loss of a community facility would be acceptable.</p> <p>If the facility to be lost is not in an area with a deficiency (nor would consequently create ANY type of deficiency in ANY Ward area, i.e. would not result in the loss of a named community facility<sup>9</sup> in the CFS AND would not reduce the number of facilities in the Ward to less than the required number OR would not create a geographical deficiency OR a size deficiency), the principle of the loss of the community facility is likely to be accepted.</p> <p>If the facility is in a Ward with a community facilities deficit (or its loss would consequently create a deficit), the principle of the loss of the community facility is unlikely to be accepted prior to a Stage Two assessment and evaluation of needs.</p>	<p>In rural areas identified in Appendix 3, Stage Two (detailed assessment and evaluation of community need including the production of a Community Needs Assessment) will be required in ALL circumstances where the loss or re-provision (with a smaller community facility and/or curtilage) is proposed.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Considered to be a deliverable and viable community requirement

<sup>5</sup> Link to relevant page on website: <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-buildings/planning-applications/pre-application-advice.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> As set out in the map in Appendix Three

## Stage Two: Detailed Assessment and Evaluation of Community Need (including Production of a Community Needs Assessment)

Facilities identified as requiring a Stage Two assessment and evaluation of community needs should follow the steps listed below in figure 2.

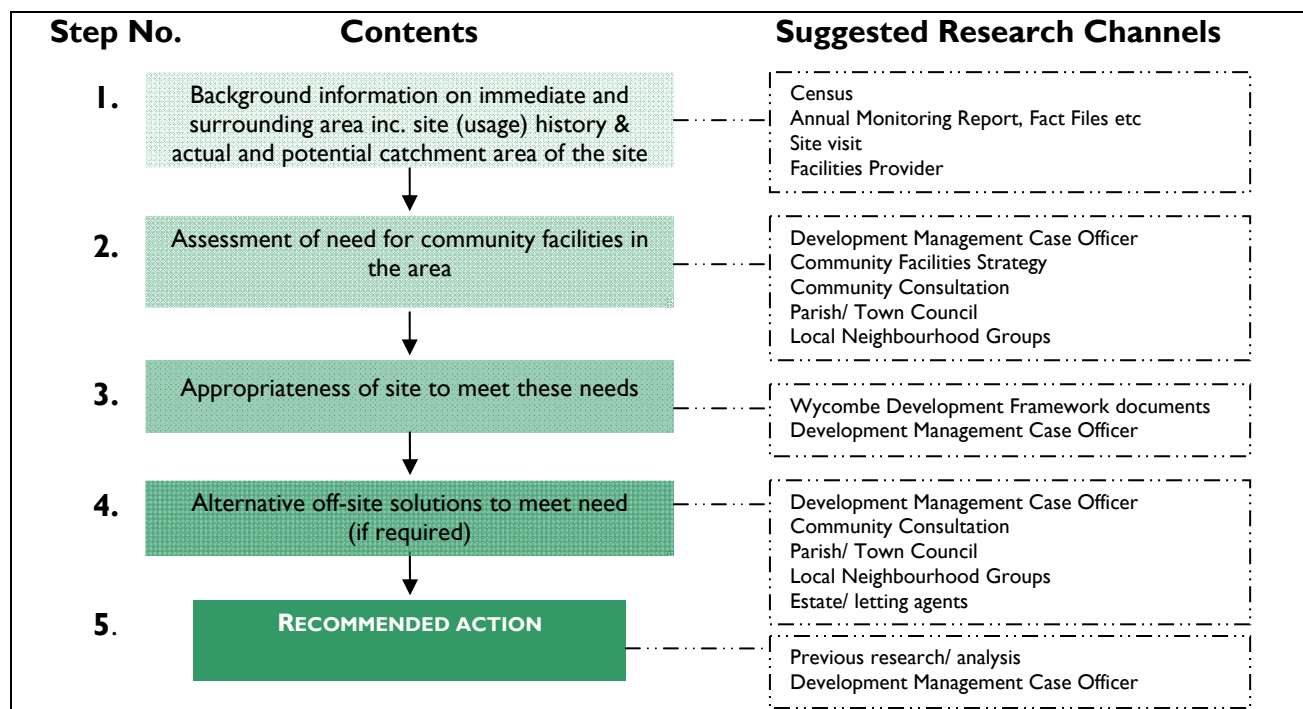


Figure 2: Workflow of Assessment and Evaluation

### Step 1:

Background topographic and demographic information for the site and surrounding area should be considered in order to understand the physical constraints of the area and aid understanding of local community needs. The usage history of the site (groups etc) should also be considered. The assessment should identify situations where the existing use has been discontinued by the site owner but the community need is still in existence.

If the community facility to be lost is within an Urban Area<sup>10</sup>, this section need only be brief.

### Step 2:

The assessment of needs should be based at village level in rural areas (Ward in urban areas), unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority. It is imperative that the local community is involved in the Assessment, particularly the Parish/ Town Council and any other

<sup>7</sup> Please see Appendix Two

<sup>8</sup> See proposals map

<sup>9</sup> As listed and referred to in the Community Facilities Strategy

<sup>10</sup> As per Appendix Three

neighbourhood groups, which should be able to provide assistance on the needs of the local community. In addition, the Development Management Case Officer may be able to provide further guidance if required.

### **Step 3:**

In areas identified in the Community Facilities Strategy as having a community facilities deficiency and in all rural areas<sup>11</sup>, loss or reduction in the quality of community facilities will not be accepted *unless*:

- i) it can be demonstrated that the type of community facility required can be suitably located on the site, albeit possibly as part of a mixed use development (THIS IS THE PREFERRED SOLUTION), or
- ii) a site offering no less overall community benefit can be secured as an alternative, or
- iii) if the community facility in need cannot be located on site, nor an alternative site secured by the applicant, a financial contribution to mitigate the loss of the community facility may be accepted.

Therefore this Step should consider whether the community facility in need could reasonably physically be located on the site and if the site would be an appropriate location for the facility.

### **Step 4:**

As stated above, where it is not possible to accommodate the community need on site, off-site provision (physical provision or a financial contribution towards an off-site facility) may be considered appropriate. Therefore this Step is only required where on-site provision is NOT possible or appropriate.

If this Section is required, it should propose and assess alternative options available, utilising the knowledge of local communities.

### **Step 5:**

As a result of the information gathered and analysed in previous Steps, a clear and concise recommendation should be provided stating if the community facility could be lost without having a detrimental impact on the amenities of the local community and if so (and if necessary) how its loss should be mitigated.

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<sup>11</sup> As per Appendix Three

## OUTCOME OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF NEED

### **NO Community Need for the Facility or Site:**

Should the assessment and evaluation process demonstrate that there is no community need for the facility or site, the principle of the loss of the facility will likely be accepted by the Council.

### **Community Need for the Facility or Site:**

#### **On-Site Provision:**

Where it is considered that there is a community need for the facility or the community need can be effectively met and provided for on site, the application for development should reflect this. It is likely that a condition will be used to ensure the early provision of the facility on-site.

Where it is considered that there is a community need for a facility but there has not been any serious interest in the use of the site or buildings for a community facility use, the Council may consider that an off-site solution may be appropriate. The applicant will be required to demonstrate that the site has been marketed for a sufficient period of time (at least 12 months), using appropriate advertising methods and at a reasonable price for a community facility use (stripping out any residential hope value) and unencumbered by any sales agreement which gives priority to prospective developers or renders the site unavailable to other prospective purchasers in the market. Advertising methods should ensure that the local community is aware of

the availability of the site for community facility use such as through the use of advertising boards and contact with the Parish Council and other neighbourhood groups. Please contact the Development Management Case Officer for more information on this, if required.

#### **Off-Site Solution:**

##### *Physical Provision*

Where it is considered that an off-site solution exists, a Grampian condition<sup>12</sup> or planning obligation may be used to ensure this.

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<sup>12</sup> This is a planning condition attached to a decision notice that prevents the start of the development until off-site works have been completed.

- *Financial Contribution*

Where a financial contribution to mitigate the loss of the community facility is considered appropriate, this will be secured by a planning obligation which will likely be triggered by the demolition of the community facility (if applicable). The size of the financial contribution should reflect the size of site to be lost and the cost of re-providing a community facility. However, we accept that the costs associated with a development may be such that this cannot be fully addressed without the scheme becoming unviable. In these circumstances, an 'open book' approach may be adopted whereby the development finances are shared with Council Officers and

a financial viability assessment carried out by an independent valuer (such as the District Valuer Services) at the applicant's cost, in order to ascertain a viable figure. Please contact the Development Management Case Officer for more information on this, if required.

It is considered that contributions could be spent on the provision of new local community facilities or improving existing local community facilities to make them more accessible or flexible for community use. Contributions could also be spent on supporting local community-led ventures.





## CONCLUSION

The Council acknowledges that these are difficult times facing owners of community facilities, particularly those which are commercial ventures. However, it is important that community facilities and land available for such is retained to enable the opportunity for services required by the local community to be provided.

The methodology put forward in this SPD seeks to define the process the Council considers should be undertaken in order to

ascertain the community need for the facility and others in the local area. Whilst it is expected to be followed in all circumstances where a community facility is to be lost/reduced in size or quality, in some circumstances, as advised by the Development Management Case Officer, the methodology should only be used as a guide in order to ensure that the most appropriate assessment of need is undertaken, relevant to the application and facility to be lost.

## MONITORING & REVIEW

We will regularly review this guidance to take account of:

- Changes in government guidance;
- Changes in Legislation;
- Preparation and adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy for the District;
- Adoption of new local development documents in the WDF, and
- Experience gained through dealing with such applications.

The Council is currently in the process of preparing a Charging Schedule in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2012. Once adopted, this SPD will be

reviewed to take account of the Community Infrastructure Levy as this may have implications on how we collect and spend financial contributions in relation to community facilities.

In addition, the Government has recently consulted on a community right to buy assets of community value initiative. This would build in extended timescales in the sale process to enable community groups to bid for community facilities which are on a List to be formed and held by the District Council. Should this proposal be adopted, this document is likely to be updated to reflect the impact of this initiative.



## CONTACT POINTS

Planning Policy Team-

Tel: 01494 421158

Email: [spatial\\_planning@wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:spatial_planning@wycombe.gov.uk)

Development Management Team-

Tel: 01494 421219

Email: [planning@wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:planning@wycombe.gov.uk)

Community Services Team-

Tel: 01494 421820

Email: [leisure@wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@wycombe.gov.uk)

## REFERENCES

Barton, H, Grant, M, Guise, R (2003). *Shaping Neighbourhoods- A guide for health, sustainability and vitality*. London: Spon Press.

British Beer and Pub Association. (2011). *Pub closures running at 25 per week – new national and regional survey*. Available: [http://www.beerandpub.com/newsList\\_detail.aspx?newsId=393](http://www.beerandpub.com/newsList_detail.aspx?newsId=393). Last accessed 16th May 2011.

## APPENDIX ONE: CORE STRATEGY POLICY CS 15

### Policy CS 15

#### Community Facilities and Built Sports Facilities

1. The provision of new community facilities and built sports facilities will be supported in principle in the following locations:

- Sites allocated for such purposes, or as part of a mixed use allocation
- In town centres, district centres or local shopping parades subject to the detailed policies in other local development documents
- In existing residential areas in identified towns and villages excluded from the Green Belt (or settlements beyond the Green Belt with defined settlement boundaries) where there is no adverse affect on the amenities of neighbouring properties
- In settlements in the countryside beyond the Green Belt where the facility is needed to serve the immediate local area and could not be provided elsewhere
- In general business areas and on scattered business sites subject to the detailed policies in the Allocations Development Plan Document
- In identified areas of deprivation where the facility would contribute towards addressing that deprivation

2. Unless it can be demonstrated that there is no community need for the facility the Council will resist:

a) the loss or change of use of buildings with an existing planning use as a community/built sports facility and

b) the development for other purposes of land allocated for such facilities.

Where it would be of community benefit for such facilities to be provided in another form this should take place either on-site or on another site offering no less overall community benefit. In appropriate circumstances a proportionate contribution to an off-site solution may be sought.

#### Indicators

- Amount of new community facilities provided per year (numbers of schemes, land area and net floorspace change)
- Amount of land currently or previously in community use lost to other uses

#### Delivery

- Through identifying sites for new community facilities in the Site Allocations DPD, where needed
- Through the development control process
- Through Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document
- Through involvement in the community planning process to understand local needs
- By working closely with agencies providing community facilities such as the Primary Care Trust, NHS Trust, Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire County Council.

4.81 The provision and retention of community facilities and built sports facilities is integral to sustaining viable communities.

In planning ahead for community facilities it is essential that we work with other agencies as they develop their plans, to help ensure the necessary new facilities are provided in the right locations. Those plans will emerge at different times over the lifetime of this Core Strategy and as such Policy CS 15 'Community Facilities and Built Sports Facilities' provides a positive policy framework within which emerging proposals will be considered for those facilities. The accessibility of such facilities by a wide range of travel modes is essential, particularly where the facilities are likely to attract people from a wider area than the local community in which it is located.

**4.82** Key issues that need to be addressed are replacing the Wycombe Sports Centre and its outdoor facilities and resolving issues relating to Adams Park, home of Wycombe Wanderers & London Wasps. Wherever possible the Council will allocate sites to assist. In addition new developments may be able to contribute towards the provision of new community infrastructure (see Policy CS 21 'Contribution of Development to Community Infrastructure'), particularly where there are known deficiencies.

**4.83** Community facilities are defined as a use which forms part of the Use Class D1 (non-residential institutions) and also includes public houses (see Box below). In addition corner shops and post offices, especially in rural areas, function as community facilities. Policies in other local development documents will address these other uses.

#### **What are Community Facilities?**

- Public halls (including Community/Youth Centres), church halls
- Post Offices
- Local shops within both urban and rural areas
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities
- Schools and non-residential education 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

**4.84** Policy CS 15 'Community Facilities and Built Sports Facilities' also sets out the approach to safeguarding community facilities and built sports facilities, since land is scarce for such uses. Where an applicant is seeking to redevelop or change the use of the land away from its existing community or sports use, they should discuss with the Council at the pre-application stage the nature of other community needs (for facilities) in the area. In addition, where in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, the applicant has undertaken pre-application consultation with the community, this consultation should include consideration of the need for other community and sports facilities in the area. The outcome of that consultation should be shared with the Council prior to submitting a planning application.

**4.85** In addition it is recognised that green space, including outdoor sport and recreation facilities, allotments and cemeteries are also essential community facilities. Policy CS 15 'Community Facilities and Built Sports Facilities' sets out the broad policy protection for these areas, and the designation of individual green space areas for protection will be set out in a future Allocations development plan document. Government policy also sets out strong policy protection for these areas. Proposals for improvements to or provision of new open space, including outdoor sport and recreation facilities, will be developed in the context of the outcomes of the Open Spaces Study and other relevant studies, together with any area specific proposals in this strategy.

## APPENDIX TWO: LOCAL PLAN POLICY S6

### Local Shops

5.43 Local shopping parades, corner shops and village stores are found throughout the District and provide an important component of residents' shopping facilities by catering for the day to day needs of their neighbourhoods. They provide a vital service for the less mobile, including elderly people, people with disabilities, parents with young children and people without access to a car. Shops in rural locations and in residential areas away from main shopping centres are especially valuable in these respects.

5.44 The Council wishes to retain the attractiveness of shopping parades as places to shop and in applying Policy S6 will have regard to the cumulative effects of the loss of shop units. It will be a matter of judgement for the Council whether or when the overall number of non-shop units has reached a level at which further changes should be resisted. Uses which result in a substantial customer attraction to a unit within a local shopping parade or area may be acceptable provided that a sufficient number of retail outlets remain. A use falling within Classes A2 and A3 of the Use Classes Order such as a bank or restaurant may therefore be acceptable. Such uses should complement the main retail function of the local shopping area. Other uses are likely to be only acceptable where they would result in no loss of customer attraction or are proposed in units which make no contribution to the overall attractiveness of the local shopping facilities. Where a parade is large, some loss of shop units may be acceptable, as may the change of use of units which are close to, but not well related to, other shops. The change of use of units unsuitable for retailing will be acceptable where the new use has a degree of customer attraction which would complement the existing facilities.

5.45 Shops standing by themselves

frequently provide the only retail service to a local area. Therefore the Council will resist the loss of such facilities unless it can be demonstrated that there are satisfactory alternative facilities in the vicinity.

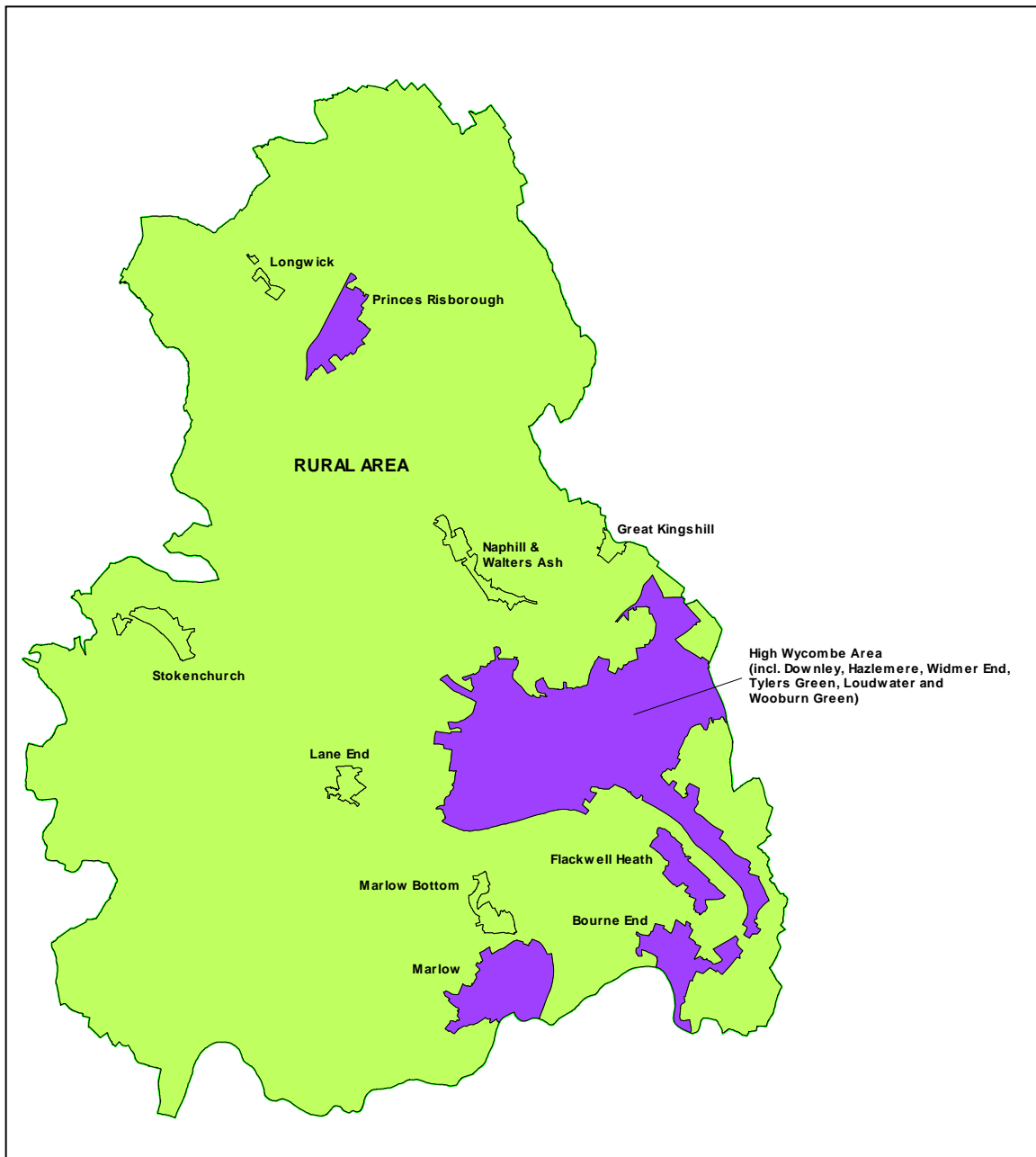
### POLICY S6

- (1) **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE EXPECTED TO SAFEGUARD THE PROVISION OF SHOPPING FACILITIES, WHICH MEET THE DAY TO DAY NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS.**
- (2) **IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF SHOPS IN LOCAL SHOPPING PARADES TO NON-SHOP USES THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:**
  - (a) **THE NUMBER AND RANGE OF EXISTING RETAIL FACILITIES WITHIN THE AREA;**
  - (b) **THE DEGREE OF CUSTOMER ATTRACTION TO THE PROPOSED USE;**
  - (c) **THE SUITABILITY OF THE UNIT FOR SHOPPING IN RELATION TO ITS SIZE AND/OR SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS.**
- (3) **THESE FACTORS WILL ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN ASSESSING THE CHANGE OF USE OF AN A2 OR A3 USE TO A USE OUTSIDE PART A OF THE SCHEDULE TO THE USE CLASSES ORDER 1987.**
- (4) **THE CHANGE OF USE OF SHOPS NOT IN A PARADE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE LOCAL SHOPPING FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE IMMEDIATE LOCALITY.**

## APPENDIX THREE: PLAN OF RURAL/ URBAN AREAS

Plan showing extent of rural and urban areas in order to ascertain the type of assessment required (see Stage One: Initial Assessment of Community Need, page 11).

N.B. this plan is consistent with the Community Facilities Strategy which uses the same rural/urban area boundaries in order to define catchment area sizes for community facilities.



**Key**

- Urban Area
- Rural Area

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