



East Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Audit 2013



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Executive Summary

A Community Facilities Audit was carried out by Cambridgeshire ACRE on behalf of East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) during the summer of 2013. The purpose of the Audit was to assess the provision of community facilities in East Cambridgeshire against a set of standards derived from best practice guidance.

Community halls are important to rural areas and residential neighbourhoods for promoting health and well being, sustainable communities and community cohesion. They often provide the only place to meet within a rural community, offering vital and diverse support to improve quality of life, particularly for those who are least able to travel to more distant centres of activity.

The audit process undertaken in this study entailed an evaluation of the quantity, quality and catchment areas of indoor community facilities across East Cambridgeshire.

The review of current provision identified that although overall there is a slight surplus of community facility space across the district as a whole, 22 settlements have a deficit. Whilst no wards are without a community facility, six settlements have no community facility provision at all.

However, based on future population forecasts, this current slight surplus across the district will decrease to a 19% shortfall of community space by 2031 if no new community facilities are provided.

With regard to quality of provision, only 8 of the 35 venues included in the Audit do not meet the quality standard, the others all exceed it. However, despite this respondents to the questionnaire state that 26 of the community facilities included in the Audit require investment to improve the internal condition of the facility and 24 require investment to improve the external condition.

Just under half (49%) of settlements with a primary indoor community facility meet the catchment standard. Of the 17 (51%) settlements who do not meet the catchment standard, 4 have other indoor community facilities.

None of the 6 settlements without an indoor community facility fall within the catchment area of a facility within another settlement. This equates to 2% of the population of the district who live in a settlement with no community facility as defined by this audit.

The Audit highlights a number of issues affecting the future viability of some community facilities with 10 operating at a loss and 10 being used for less than 10 hours a week.

12 settlements/facilities meet all three standards. Black Horse Drove Community Centre, Fassage Hall, Lode, and Wicken Mission Hall are the only facilities that meet the quantity, quality and catchment standards and also generate surplus income.

Hall operators cite decreasing revenue streams and difficulties in funding building repairs and maintenance as major issues affecting the future of their facilities.

The District Council will continue to support efforts by local communities to provide and improve community buildings, community centres and community halls, as it has for many years, especially where there is identified unmet need for such facilities or potential to extend the range of uses or

services and existing building can accommodate. Based on the findings of this Audit, a number of recommendations are proposed:

- Retain the District Council's current standard for community facility provision - 111 m² per 1,000 people.
- Prioritise spend in the areas of greatest need as identified by the Audit.
- Update the audit every 5 years, conducting the next Audit in 2018.
- Produce an action plan based on the recommendations which could include the following actions:
 - Assist community facility management committees in accessing support and external funding.
 - Encourage community facilities to maximise the potential for private hire.
 - Work with Parish Councils to inform their priorities for their meaningful proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
 - Help raise awareness of community facilities and ensure that access to them meets the needs of the community.

Aims, outputs and outcomes

Aim

The purpose of the Audit is to provide the Council with a comprehensive list of community facilities within the district and information about their quality, size and usage.

This will provide the necessary evidence to ascertain whether current provision targets are being met and where future developer contributions might need to be targeted. It will also provide a formal document for community facility governance groups to use as a tool for raising funds and developing business plans, using local examples of best practice.

Outputs and outcomes

The Audit sets out to achieve the following outputs and outcomes:

- To compile a comprehensive list of all community facilities in East Cambridgeshire.
- To identify and produce population threshold, quality and accessibility standards for the provision of community facilities in the district.
- To analyse the current provision of, and access to, community facilities in settlements within the district, against the standards produced and identify areas where there is a surplus and deficit.
- To understand how existing facilities are being used, what services they offer, their quality and their needs.
- To help identify priorities of future ECDC Facility Improvement Grant scheme and provide an evidence base to help parish, city and town councils identify their priorities and bid for external funding.
- To produce a set of recommendations for community facility provision in East Cambridgeshire, based on the outcomes of the Audit.

Introduction

What is a community facility?

For the purposes of this Audit, a community facility is defined as a building or space where community led activities for community benefit are the primary use and the facility is managed, occupied or used primarily by the voluntary and community sector and should:

- Have a meeting space that any community group can access at all times including evenings and weekends.
- Have the necessary ancillary facilities to provide adequate services to the user group.
- Be open to all groups and community members regardless of faith, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and actively promote equality and diversity.
- Have a reasonable hire rate for the community to ensure costs do not prohibit community use where possible.

Buildings used by the community as secondary to their main purpose such as single interest group buildings (WI, clubs, Cub/Scout and Guide huts etc), church and school halls, licensed premises etc are excluded.

Why do community facilities matter?

Community facilities make an important contribution to the quality of life offered by the district. Therefore, protecting, improving and making provision for new community facilities will help to maintain and improve the quality of life enjoyed by the district's residents.

Community halls are important to rural areas and residential neighbourhoods for promoting health and well being, sustainable communities and community cohesion. They often provide the only place to meet within a rural community, offering vital and diverse support to improve quality of life, particularly for those who are least able to travel to more distant centres of activity.

The Government recognises that village halls, community centre and other facilities or communities can make an enormous difference to the well being of their communities. They are an extremely important resource with a crucial role to play, not only in the economic and social regeneration of their communities, but also in their contribution toward the Government's Civil Renewal agenda.

The benefits of community facilities

A community facility can be an invaluable asset to a rural settlement, providing a venue for a range of community uses.

An enormous diversity of activities can take place within community facilities including parent and toddler groups, IT training, bingo, dancing and meetings of community groups. The benefits that accrue from these activities come in promoting health and wellbeing, education and training and helping to reduce anti social behaviour. These facilities further raise quality of life through creating community cohesion, reducing isolation, reducing fear of crime and creating opportunities for information sharing and participation in community activity.

In addition, providing these facilities at a local level, in convenient locations, increases their accessibility for users and reduces the need to travel.

Context

National

There are no national standards for community halls, as there are for open spaces and sports facilities. However, there are a number of national and local policies relating to provision and retention of community facilities.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Paragraphs 69-78 set out the Government's views on 'promoting healthy communities'. Paragraph 70 states that in order to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

NPPF paragraph 73 makes reference to the need for up to date and robust assessments for the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is required.

The Localism Act 2011

This Act passes significant new rights direct to communities and individuals, making it easier for them to get things done and achieve their ambitions for the place where they live.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced 'Assets of Community Value' (also known as Community Right to Bid). The legislation enables local groups to nominate a building or piece of land that is important for the social well-being of the area for inclusion on the local authority's 'List of Assets of Community Value' and bid for it if it comes up for sale.

Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act also introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood forums and parish councils can use new neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. These are described legally as 'neighbourhood development plans.' In an important change to the planning system communities can use neighbourhood planning to permit the development they want to see - in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications. These are called 'Neighbourhood Development Orders.

ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)

ACRE is the national body for the 38 rural community councils who make up the ACRE Network. ACRE runs an information and advice service for village halls through its nationwide network of rural community councils. On the national stage, ACRE speaks up for village halls, ensuring Government policymakers are aware of the challenges faced by volunteers who are often struggling with red-tape and the demands of managing a community building.

ACRE operates a quality standards scheme for village halls, Hallmark, which is available in 20 counties to reward and recognise good practice. ACRE also manages the £700,000 Defra Rural Community Buildings Loan Fund which helps community groups with renovation, refurbishment and building projects.

At a local level, Cambridgeshire ACRE has a dedicated village halls advisor and provides support for village halls with these things. However, support is only available to halls that take out annual membership. Membership currently costs £54 per year for a community building/parish council. Of the 35 community buildings considered in the audit, only 14 are currently members. 3 further buildings on the list are run by parish councils who are Cambs ACRE members and who would therefore be able to access our village halls support, advice and information sheets. So less than half of halls have taken up the opportunity to have the 'safety net' that membership of Cambs ACRE provides.

Local

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policies

Policy COM 3: Retaining Community Facilities: The Local Plan seeks to prevent the loss of services and facilities unless there are exceptional reasons to justify it.

Policy COM 4: New Community Facilities: The Council will support improvements to existing facilities and the development of new ones where there is local need.

ECDC Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions (March 2013)

The East Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Developer Contributions provides guidance on the District Council's approach to mitigating the impact of development through the use of planning conditions, planning obligations (Section 106 agreements) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Guidance is provided on the type and nature of planning obligations which may be sought and the basis for any charges. New residential development will be required to contribute to the provision of community meeting facilities.

Summary of Context

Whilst the importance of community facilities and the vital social inclusion role they play, particularly in rural communities, is recognised at both the national and local level, the availability of grant funding from local authorities and government continues to diminish leaving a gap in funding, particularly for major capital projects such as extensions, refurbishments and new builds.

ACRE's Village Hall Policy Position Paper 2014 states that the key to the continuing survival of Britain's village halls are the volunteer management committees who have to deal with an increasing burden of legislation yet, manage to keep their halls financially sustainable mostly by earning their own income and local fundraising.

It is in this context that the East Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Audit 2013 is being conducted. It provides an opportunity to make some critical decisions about the allocation of resource based on need, for example Community Infrastructure Levy monies. For this reason most of the audit is broken down to settlement or parish area to inform communities of local need.

Local evidence supporting the need for community facilities

District profile

East Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district located to the north-east of Cambridge within the county of Cambridgeshire. The district covers an area of 655km² and has a population of almost 85,000. The population has increased significantly in recent years and growth is expected to continue. The population and services are centred in the three market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport.

The landscape and economy of East Cambridgeshire can be broadly defined into two subareas. The northern part of the district is predominantly intensively farmed fenland, with many settlements located on higher ground on the old 'islands' in the fen. The area contains the three market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport, and a range of scattered villages and hamlets. Here incomes are lower and deprivation is more marked than the southern part of the district.

The south of the district consists of elevated chalk and heath land and contains a range of attractive villages and hamlets. The local economy and landscape is dominated by the horseracing industry with large areas of farmland converted to stud use. Residents mainly look to Newmarket and Cambridge for services and facilities.

The district contains many special landscape, natural and built heritage features, including Ely Cathedral, The National Stud, The July Racecourse, Wicken Fen and Anglesey Abbey.

According to a 2012 survey, East Cambridgeshire's residents have the best quality of life of any rural area in Great Britain. In particular, health and life expectancy levels are amongst the highest of rural areas.

Recent high levels of growth have placed pressure on local services and facilities including health, education and leisure. The retention of local services is a key issue, particularly for rural communities. The challenge is to resist the loss of important facilities and support the delivery of new ones alongside growth. This will be especially important in the context of the district's ageing population, and the dispersed rural nature of the district.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2010) - Barriers to Housing and Services Domain

This domain measures geographical barriers to services, such as distance, along with wider barriers relating to access to housing such as affordability.

Of the 68 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that fall within the most deprived 20% nationally, Cambridge has 10, East Cambridgeshire has 12, Fenland has 7, Huntingdonshire has 21 and South

Cambridgeshire has 18. East Cambridgeshire's LSOAs are scattered with some in the market towns of Soham and Littleport, and others in more rural areas such as Dullingham Villages.

20 most deprived LSOAs in Cambridgeshire for Barriers to Housing and Services within East Cambridgeshire

County Rank	LSOA Name/ward	National Rank (out of 32,482 where 1 is the most deprived LSOA)
3	004A Ely East	361
8	002A Downham Villages	557
12	010A Cheveley	1085
13	010D Dullingham Villages	1338
14	006C Soham South	1384
15	001C Littleport East	1599

Car ownership

According to the 2011 Census, 13% of households (4,510) in East Cambridgeshire have no cars or vans in the household. These people are likely to face particular challenges to accessing key services and amenities.

In the most deprived wards, Littleport East and West, this figure rises to 15% and 17% respectively of households having no access to a car or van.

Audit of Community Facilities in East Cambridgeshire

Methodology

During the summer of 2013 Cambridgeshire ACRE were commissioned by East Cambridgeshire District Council to conduct an audit of community facilities in the district. For the purposes of the Audit a community facility was defined as one where community led activities for community benefit are the primary use (see page 6 for full definition).

The audit comprised three stages:

1. Pre identification audit: To identify facilities within the district that meet the Council's community facility definition via a telephone questionnaire (see Appendix 1).
2. Site visit (full audit): A site visit and face to face consultation was used to gather the quantitative and qualitative data required. Measurements taken to determine the area of floor space of the internal areas.
3. Questionnaire: A questionnaire was completed by the facility manager or appropriate representative during or following the site visit to capture further information. A copy of the questionnaire forms appendix 2.

Stage 1 identified 35 community facilities that fit the criteria set out on page 6.

Setting provision standards

There are no national provision standards for community space as there are for open spaces and sports facilities, so the Audit utilises Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation, which states that the local standards of provision should include:

- A **quantitative** component (how much provision is needed. This is generally expressed in terms of the number of people served by each facility type (e.g. sq m /1,000 people).
- A **qualitative** component (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing sites). The development of objective, measureable quality standards is important in determining where improvements are most needed.
- An **accessibility/catchment** component (principally concerned with distance thresholds to a site).

This guidance was superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (CLG, 2012). The NPPF provides a similar stance in that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. It states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to date assessments of the needs for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new facilities.

Quantitative standard

The District Council's current standard for Community Facility provision, as set out in the Councils Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions (March 2013), is 111 m² per 1,000 people.

As part of the auditing process the internal floor area of all facilities was measured. These measurements were taken from the primary hall and any additional space (meeting rooms, second halls, etc). As the figures make no allowance for kitchen space, storage, toilets, changing rooms or other ancillary facilities, a general allowance of an additional 20% has been included for these areas.

Qualitative standard

Assessment of the quality of community facilities across the district was made by Cambridgeshire ACRE who visited each hall as part of the audit process.

The condition of the main hall, secondary hall, meeting room, equipment, office, kitchen, toilets, changing facilities, lounge, bar area, storage space, flooring, heating and electrical system was assessed and rated as excellent, very good, good or poor. The external condition of the hall was also evaluated, as was the accessibility provision.

Consideration was also given during the audit process to any improvements the facilities may need to make them more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

In terms of a qualitative standard, community halls (and external areas, ancillary facilities and equipment) should be in 'very good' condition, achieving at least 50% using the scoring method below.

Amalgamated quality score

For the internal and external elements of the audit, the ratings given have been given a numerical value whereby excellent = 4, very good = 3, good =2, poor =1.

The accessibility and environment elements were also given a numerical value, full details of the breakdown can be found on page 19.

Catchment standard

The catchment standard is the measure of distance that households should be from a community facility. Catchment areas provide a means of identifying the extent to which there is adequate geographical coverage of the District.

The Council has adopted the Fields in Trust standards for its play areas. Given the variation in the age of users of community facilities, the fact that the primary purpose of community halls are as local facilities, to which the majority of users will, or should be encouraged to, walk to, a catchment standard for community halls equating within 15 minutes walking time i.e. 1,000m walking distance or 600m straight line distance has been used.

Key 2013 Audit findings

Response rate

The pre-identification audit identified 35 community facilities that fit the criteria set out on page 6. Some of the committees submitted an incomplete questionnaire so we have been unable to include information about these facilities in this report.

Quantitative Provision

The total area of the facilities audited across the district is approximately **9413.63m²**.

Using the 2012 mid-year estimate population of district which is 84,700 and applying the 111 m² per 1,000 population standard, in order to achieve the standard there has to be 9317m² of indoor community space across the district.

As the total space measured across the district in this audit was 9413.63m², the district has a current surplus of 96.63m² (1%) community space for the district.

Given the Audit findings that the current level of community space is still regarded appropriate for the district and that there are no areas with a significant deficit of community space when other community facilities not included in this audit are taken into consideration, the 111 m²/1,000 standard will continue to be used for the purposes of determining the level of developer contributions required

The largest facilities in East Cambridgeshire in terms of total hall/meeting space are the Ellesmere Centre at Stetchworth and the Arkenstall Village Centre at Haddenham. The smallest are Swaffham Bulbeck Pavilion and Aldreth Village Centre. The average main hall space is 269m².

21 settlements have a surplus of indoor community space and 26 settlements have a deficit. 14 of these have no audited provision, but may have other community facilities within the settlement. Details of the amount of indoor community space within each settlement can be found in Appendix 3. Appendix 4 lists the settlements with a surplus of community space, Appendix 5 details those with a deficit.

Settlements with greatest surplus of indoor community space

Settlement	Surplus against standard (m ²)	Surplus against standard as %
1. Stetchworth	3324.73	4257
2. Westley Waterless	67.59	768
3. Coveney	150.34	570
4. Brinkley	197.54	449
5. Black Horse Drove	84.61	427

Settlements with greatest shortfall of indoor community space

Settlement	Shortfall against standard (m ²)	Shortfall against standard as %	Notes
1. Ely	1949.12	92	Other indoor community facilities available
2. Soham	974.19	83	Other indoor community facilities available

3. Stretham	159.07	78	Other indoor community facilities available. Hall is used for less than 10 hours a week.
4. Littleport	602.82	70	Other indoor community facilities available
5. Fordham	183.92	60	Other indoor community facilities available

Although some settlements show a deficit, this is due to the definition of community facility used for the Audit. There are, in most cases, community facilities within the settlement that serve the community as a meeting/event venue.

In some settlements where there is a venue but a deficit according to the space standard, the hall is used less than 10 hours a week, suggesting either that there isn't demand locally for a community facility, the community use an alternative venue in the area or that the hall isn't suitable.

However, there are some settlements with a deficit who have capacity issues particularly weekday evenings. This results in Littleport, Burwell (Mandeville Hall), Swaffham Prior, Soham and Witchford halls turning away bookings. This could suggest that these are very active communities.

Settlements with no audited provision

Settlement	Shortfall against standard (m ²)	Shortfall against standard as %	Notes
=1. Barway	7.7	100	Population (70 people) unlikely to be sufficient to make a facility viable. No desire expressed within the Barway Village Vision to reopen the former village hall, but there is a proposal to redevelop the site to provide community woodlands with play area and seating.
=1. Bottisham	239.8	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottisham Village College • Royal British Legion Social Club Additional facilities not identified as priority in the Bottisham Village Vision.
=1. Chettisham	18.7	100	The small population (170) would make viability a challenge. A new community/village hall was identified as a priority by residents of Chettisham in the Chettisham Village Vision. No growth planned so funding may be an issue.
=1. Kennett	37.4	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sports Pavilion Provision of a community/village hall identified as a priority in the Kennett Village Vision. S106 funding has been secured to extend to Kennett Pavilion to serve the

			communities of Kennet and Kentford. A business plan is now being developed that will in turn inform the specification for the building works.
=1. Newmarket Fringe	104.5	100	School and football club but no venue to hire as community facility. Population (950) dispersed over a wide area, some of which fall within the Ellesmere Centre catchment. Indoor Community facilities in this area not identified as a priority in the Woodditton Village Vision.
=1. Pymoor	37.4	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pymoor Cricket and Social Club • Pymoor Methodist Church Additional facilities not identified as priority in the Pymoor Village Vision.
=1. Saxon Street	31.9	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodist Church Hall Additional facilities not identified as priority in the Saxon Street Village Vision.
=1. Snailwell	20.9	100	The small population (190) would make viability a challenge. The top priority identified by the residents of Snailwell through the Village Vision process. Either a separate building or proposal to convert part of the church into a space for village activities. No housing growth planned so funding may be an issue.
=1. Stuntney	18.7	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuntney Social Club Improvements to existing Social Club, or relocation of the Social Club closer to playing field with car park identified as priority in the Stuntney Village Vision. A new village shop to be incorporated into new village hall scheme or stand alone venture.
=1. Upware	7.7	100	Population (70) unlikely to be sufficient to make a facility viable. Indoor community facilities not identified as priority in the Upware Village Vision.
=1. Wardy Hill	14.3	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wardy Hill Social Club

			A community/village hall is identified as priority in the Wardy Hill Village Vision.
=1. Wentworth	22	100	Other facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wentworth Village Hall located within St. Peters Church Improvements to the Village Hall at St Peter's Church is identified as a priority in the Wentworth Village Vision.
=1. Wilburton	149.6	100	Opted not to participate in Audit. Facilities available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Hall (St Peter's) Wilburton Community Baptist Church Improvements to the Village Hall in terms of parking provision is identified as priority in the Wilburton Village Vision.
=1. Woodditton	33	100	Population (300). Woodditton is within the Ellesmere Centre catchment. Indoor community facilities not identified as a priority in the Woodditton Village Vision.

With the exception of Barway, Chettisham, Newmarket Fringe, Snailwell, Upware and Woodditton, all of the above settlements have some kind of indoor community facility in the area, but which do not fit the required criteria. Where there is not, the catchment component will highlight if there is sufficient provision within an appropriate distance.

The Ellesmere Centre was established to serve to the inhabitants of the seven local parishes of Stetchworth, Dullingham, Woodditton, Kirtling, Burrough Green, Brinkley and Westley Waterless and may account for the deficit in community space in these areas.

Additional Demand for Facilities

Public consultation which would typically be used to explore latent demand among the general population has not been undertaken as part of this Audit. There has been no consultation with settlements without a primary facility so any quantitative shortfalls in these communities might not be immediately evident.

Those settlements with a primary facility were asked via the questionnaire if they were aware of any particular demand for facilities or activities in their community (question 34). 24 respondents either didn't reply or answered no. 11 gave the responses set out below:

Settlement	Issue
Ashley Pavilion	Lack of storage space.

Black Horse Drove Community Centre	Film night - no equipment. Yoga, Ceroc
Cheveley Pavilion	Demand for a village/community hub offering wider facilities.
Ely Beet Sports and Social Club	We have been approached on regular occasions by outdoor teams who could use our tennis courts, which are currently being refurbished as a MUGA and tennis court. However, due to lack of lighting we are unable to assist. We also often get asked to produce meals etc. but our kitchen is not up to catering standard for large events.
Kirtling Village Hall	Better car parking facilities because it gets very muddy in winter.
Little Thetford Village Hall	Amateur Dramatics. Current hall facilities do not allow these to take place. No changing rooms and only one entrance to stage has led Am-Dram Group to move elsewhere. Kitchen is very small and not suitable for sit-down meals unless served cold.
Littleport Village Hall	Regular requests for booking on weeknights when we already have long term bookings.
Mepal Village Hall	Youth Club could grow if more space was available including storage space for their equipment including pool table and table tennis tables.
The Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth	The majority of our activities take place in the evening and at weekends. Sometimes it is difficult to fit groups in between 6-9pm. Our squash court is underused and the Centre would benefit greatly from changing this into a multipurpose room by insulating the roof and adding heating. This would then be able to be used as an additional meeting room or for small dance and exercise groups.
Walter Gidney Pavilion, Soham	Community Facilities Audit 2008 identified the need for a modernised building together with new hall to accommodate c150 people for social events including theatre etc. but facilities that were also attractive for those organising private functions.
Witcham Village Hall	Possible pensioner lunches and meetings but the management committee are overstretched.

There are also issues around capacity at particular times – e.g. week day evenings, even in settlements where the figures indicate a surplus of space.

Future demand for community facilities

Population forecast data is only available at ward level but this has been used to determine whether wards will have a surplus or deficit of community space as the population increases up to the year 2031. Appendix 6 sets out future demand for community facilities by ward.

The current slight surplus across the district will decrease to a 19% shortfall of community space by 2031 if no new community facilities are provided. An increase in community space is planned for Soham, as is an extension to Kennett Pavilion for the benefit of Kennett and Kentford residents, but further additional floorspace will need to be provided across the district.

It is projected that Bottisham, Downham Villages', Haddenham, Isleham and Sutton wards will maintain a surplus of space despite the increase of population. Burwell, Cheveley, Ely, Fordham Villages, Littleport, Soham, Stretham, Soham and The Swaffhams will see their deficit increase as the

population grows if no additional space is created. Though in both instances this may not be the case for the individual settlements that make up those wards.

Chettisham, Kennett, Queen Adelaide, Snailwell, Swaffham Bulbeck and Wardy Hill all identified additional community space as a priority in their Village Vision section of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Ashley and Mepal highlighted the need to extend their existing facility.

Qualitative provision

Assessment of the quality of community facilities across the district was made by Cambridgeshire ACRE who visited each hall and assessed and scored each component of the venue as either excellent = 4, very good = 3, good =2, poor =1.

For the accessibility elements a numerical value has been given as below:

- Full wheelchair access =2
- Some wheelchair access =1
- No wheelchair access =0
- Accessible toilets: Yes = 1 no = 0
- Facility to assist partial sighted: Yes = 1 no = 0
- Dedicated disabled parking: Yes = 1 no = 0
- Hearing loop: Yes = 1 no = 0

The environmental element was scored thus, no improvements to facility required =2, some required =1.

Internal condition of building

Overall the majority of community facilities are considered to be in either a good or very good condition in most aspects, very few elements were rated as poor.

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Main hall	5	17	10	3
Second hall (9 community facilities have a second hall)	2	5	1	1
Meeting room (16 community facilities have a meeting room)	3	8	4	1
Equipment (1 no response) (tables, chairs and kitchen equipment i.e. fridges, cookers etc)	3	16	14	1
Office (4 community facilities have an office)	0	3	1	0
Kitchen	6	14	15	0
Toilets	8	14	11	2
Changing Facilities (10 community facilities have changing facilities)	2	2	4	2
Lounge (5 community facilities have a lounge)	2	1	2	0

Bar area (12 community facilities have a bar)	2	3	6	1
Storage space	3	10	15	7
Flooring	4	15	13	3
Heating	4	14	15	2
Electrical	3	18	12	2

External condition of building

In terms of the general external condition of the facilities (the car park, building structure, roof etc.), 3 halls were rated excellent, 13, very good and 20 good. No halls were considered to be in poor condition.

Availability of car parking

Only 2 halls, Reach Village Centre and Stretham Parish Rooms do not have a dedicated car park.

Accessibility

Just over half (51%, 18) halls have wheelchair access throughout, with a further 14 halls (40%) having some wheelchair access. Cheveley Pavilion, the Sidney Taylor Hall in Dullingham and Swaffham Bulbeck Pavilion have no wheelchair access.

Only 3 buildings do not have accessible toilets, Cheveley Pavilion, the Sidney Taylor Hall in Dullingham and Swaffham Bulbeck Pavilion.

12 venues (34%) have dedicated disabled parking spaces in their car parks

The 'facility to assist partially sighted' referred to in this instance was the décor used in the toilet facilities at Littleport Village Hall and The Beeches, Isleham. They were a particularly good example of how a strong colour contrast in décor can help the partially sighted with using a facility and therefore the person carrying out the audit thought it worth drawing attention to these as they were such a superb example.

9 halls have a hearing loop. The Glebe in Sutton has a stair lift, The Beeches, Isleham, has automatic doors and accessible toilets and showers in the changing rooms.

Investment needs

This Audit provides a snapshot of the needs highlighted in 2013. Some issues may have been resolved and others emerged. Appendix 7 gives full details of the investment needs for each community facility.

Internal improvements

Of the 35 halls surveyed, 26 require investment to improve the internal condition of the facility. The most common improvements required are refurbishments of kitchens and toilets, replacement of hall floors and installation of more efficient heating systems.

External improvements

Of the 35 halls surveyed, 24 require investment to improve the external condition of the facility. The most common improvements required are creating a hard surface car park, repairs/replacement roofs and repairs to or replacement of fascia and guttering. A few of the halls require major renovations; the estimated costs of these are several tens of thousands of pounds.

Accessibility improvements

Access to and within the community halls is mixed and improvements are needed to 17 halls to ensure they are fully accessible. In particular providing accessible toilets where there are none and in existing ones including contrast paint and visual alarms to assist the partially visually impaired. Improvements to paths and ramps and addressing the lack of handrails are also required to aid access to the building.

Environmental Improvements.

Consideration was also given during the audit process to any improvements the facilities may need to make them more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. Of the 35 halls, 21 were judged to need some sort of improvement, such as loft insulations and/or draught proofing, double glazed windows/door and new heating systems to replace current old/inefficient ones.

Amalgamated quality score

In terms of a qualitative standard, community halls (and external areas, ancillary facilities and equipment) should be in at least 'very good' condition, achieving at least 50% using the scoring method below. As the table below shows, 8 community facilities in the district do not meet this standard.

As each element is given a value, the maximum score for each building will depend on the number of facilities it has. For example a hall with only a main hall, kitchen and toilets will only be able to score a maximum of 12. Whereas a hall with all the above facilities will be able to achieve a maximum internal score of 56.

The total scores were calculated as a percentage and categorised as follows: 0-25% = poor, 26-50% = good 51-75%= very good, 76+%= excellent.

The Beeches, Isleham and Littleport Village Hall scored the highest in terms of quality achieving 97% and 94% respectively. Cheveley Pavilion and Reach Village Centre received the lowest scores.

Facility	Internal score (max depends on facilities available)	External score (max=4)	Accessibility score (max=6)	Environmental score (max=2)	Overall Score	Rating
Aldreth Village Centre	25/32	3	3	1	32/44 = 73%	Very good
Arkenstall Centre, Haddenham	26/44	4	5	1	36/56 = 64%	Very good
Ashley Pavilion	21/40	2	4	1	28/52 = 54%	Very good
Black Horse Drove Community Centre	22/36	2	3	1	28/48 = 58%	Very good
Brinkley Memorial Hall	20/32	2	2	1	25/44 = 57%	Very good
Burrough Green Reading Room	25/36	3	3	2	33/48 = 69%	Very good
Cheveley Pavilion	15/36	2	0	1	18/48 = 38%	Good
Chippenham Village Hall	27/36	2	3	2	34/48 = 71%	Very good
Coveney Village Hall	24/40	2	2	1	29/52 = 56%	Very good
Ely Beet Club	40/52	3	4	1	48/64 = 75%	Very good
Fassage Hall, Lode	26/36	3	4	1	34/48 = 71%	Very good
Fordham Victoria Hall	20/36	2	5	2	29/48 = 60%	Very good
Gardiner Memorial Hall	15/32	2	2	1	20/44 = 45%	Good
Kirtling Village Hall	27/36	3	3	2	35/48 = 73%	Very good
Little Downham Village Centre	25/40	3	4	1	33/52 = 63%	Very good
Little Thetford Village Hall	24/40	4	2	2	43/56 = 77%	Excellent
Littleport Village Hall	35/44	3	3	2	49/52 = 94%	Excellent
Mandeville Hall, Burwell	40/40	3	4	2	28/44 = 64%	Very good
Mepal Village Hall	23/32	2	2	1	33/48 = 69%	Very good
Prickwillow Village Hall	25/36	3	4	1	26/48 = 54%	Very good
Queen Adelaide Village Hall	19/36	3	2	2	36/52 = 69%	Very good
Reach Village Centre	29/40	2	3	2	18/48 = 38%	Good
Sidney Taylor Hall, Dullingham	14/36	3	0	1	21/48 = 44%	Good
Stretham Parish Rooms	15/32	2	3	1	21/44 = 48%	Good
Swaffham Bulbeck Pavilion	18/36	2	0	1	21/48 = 44%	Good
Swaffham Prior Village Hall	29/40	3	5	2	39/52 = 75%	Very good
The Beeches, Isleham	55/56	4	5	2	66/68 = 97%	Excellent
The Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth	25/52	2	3	1	31/64 = 48%	Good
The Glebe, Sutton	34/44	2	4	2	42/56 = 75%	Very good
The Pavilion, Sutton	24/36	2	4	1	31/48 = 65%	Very good
Walter Gidney Pavilion, Soham	21/40	2	2	2	27/52 = 52%	Very good
Westley Waterless Village Hall	22/44	2	2	1	27/56 = 48%	Good
Wicken Mission Hall	32/40	2	3	1	38/52 = 73%	Very good
Witcham Village Hall	30/40	3	2	2	37/52 = 71%	Very good
Witchford Village Hall	30/44	3	4	1	38/56 = 68%	Very good

Catchment Standard

All the community facilities included in the Audit have been mapped using the Councils Geographical Information Systems (GIS) programme. This allows analysis of the geographical coverage of the community facilities.

Maps illustrating the locations of the audited community facilities and their catchment areas form Appendix 8. The catchment circles indicate the 'within 15 minutes walking time' i.e. 1,000m walking distance or 600m straight line distance which has been used as the standard. It should be noted that only primary facilities have been mapped, other community facilities exist in some settlements.

Just under half (49%) of settlements with an indoor community facility as defined by this audit, meet the catchment standard. 11 of the 16 settlements have a population of 500 people or less and are smaller villages.

Of the 17 settlements who do not meet the catchment standard, 4 have other indoor community facilities.

None of the 6 settlements without an indoor community facility fall within the catchment area of a facility within another settlement.

Many settlements are linear in structure and even if the community facility was located at the centre of the village, areas would still fall outside the catchment area.

Settlement	Meets catchment standard?	Comments
Aldreth	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Ashley	No	Residents to the north of the village would be unable to walk to Ashley Pavilion within 15 minutes.
Black Horse Drove	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Brinkley	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Burrough Green	Yes	Although Burrough End falls between the catchment area for Burrough Green and Westley Waterless.
Burwell	No	Central and northern areas of the village fall outside the catchment areas for the Gardiner Memorial Hall and the Mandeville Hall. However, there are other indoor community facilities in these parts of the village.
Cheveley	No	Residents to the south of the village would not be able to walk to Cheveley Pavilion within 15 minutes.
Chippenham	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Coveney	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Dullingham	No	Residents to the north of the village would be unable to walk to the Sidney Taylor Hall within 15 minutes.
Ely	No	The majority of the city falls outside the catchment area for Ely Beet Club. However, there are other indoor community facilities in the city.
Fordham	No	Residents to the north west of the village would be unable to walk to the Fordham Victoria Hall within 15 minutes.

Haddenham	No	Southern and western areas of the village fall outside the catchment areas for the Arkenstall Centre.
Isleham	No	Residents to the north and east of the village would be unable to walk to The Beeches within 15 minutes
Kirtling	No	Although the village Hall is reasonably centrally located within the village, given its linear structure those properties of the edge of the village fall outside the catchment area.
Little Downham	No	Areas to the north east, south east and west of the village fall outside the catchment area for the Little Downham Village Centre.
Little Thetford	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Littleport	No	Areas to the west, south and other outlying areas of the village fall outside the catchment area for Littleport Village Hall. However, there are other indoor community facilities in these parts of the village.
Lode	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Mepal	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Prickwillow	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Queen Adelaide	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Reach	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Soham	No	Areas to the north west, south east and other outlying areas of the town fall outside the catchment area for the Walter Gidney Pavilion. Although there are other indoor community facilities in the town, properties in the Downfield area fall outside their catchment area.
Stetchworth	No	A number of properties on the northern edge of the village are not within the catchment area.
Stretham	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Sutton	No	A number of properties on the western edge of the village are not within the catchment areas of both The Glebe and The Pavilion.
Swaffham Bulbeck	No	The properties at Commercial End fall outside the catchment area for Swaffham Bulbeck Pavilion.
Swaffham Prior	No	A number of properties on the north eastern edge of the village are not within the catchment area.
Westley Waterless	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area. Although Burrough End falls between the catchment area for Westley Waterless and Burrough Green
Wicken	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Witcham	Yes	Only a few outlying properties are not within the catchment area.
Witchford	No	Areas to the west and north of the village fall outside the catchment area for Witchford Village Hall.

A new community/village hall was identified as a priority by residents of Chettisham and Snailwell in their respective Village Visions. The nearest settlements to Barway are Soham and Stuntney. Although they both have a shortfall of community facilities as defined by this Audit, other indoor community space is available. Depending on the location, if a community facility is provided as part of the North Ely development, Chettisham may fall into its catchment area.

The nearest settlements to Snailwell are Chippenham and Fordham. Although Fordham has a shortfall of community facilities as defined by this Audit, Chippenham has a surplus of community space available.

These findings illustrate the importance of locating any future community facilities in areas served by public transport and of ensuring sufficient car parking spaces are provided. This is especially important for those hoping to secure evening bookings for private hire.

Viability of community facilities

The Audit included questions about the financial position of the facilities, asking whether facilities make a surplus, generally breakeven, or incur a slight or significant deficit.

Half (14) of the facilities generally breakeven, a further 4 make a slight surplus. 10 facilities operate at a loss, 6 of these incurring a significant deficit. 7 did not provide a response to the question.

Surplus	Breakeven	Slight deficit	Significant deficit
Black Horse Drove Community Centre	Aldreth Village Centre	Burrough Green Reading Room	Arkenstall Centre, Haddenham
Fassage Hall, Lode	Ashley Pavilion	Ely Beet Club	Brinkley Memorial Hall
Fordham Victoria Hall	Chippenham Village Hall	Swaffham Bulbeck Pavilion	Cheveley Pavilion
Wicken Mission Hall	Kirtling Village Hall	Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth	Coveney Village Hall
	Little Thetford Village Hall		Sidney Taylor Hall, Dullingham
	Littleport Village Hall		Stretham Parish Rooms
	Mepal Village Hall		
	Prickwillow Village Hall		
	Queen Adelaide Village Hall		
	Reach Village Hall		
	Swaffham Prior Village Hall		
	Walter Gidney Pavilion, Soham		
	Westley Waterless Village Hall		
	Witcham Village Hall		

There is no set definition or criteria for what makes a viable community facility. However, when comparing the Audit feedback from those facilities that make a profit or breakeven with those that incur a deficit, some patterns do emerge; see Appendix 9 for more details.

In terms of generating income, hall hire charges vary across all facilities from £6 per hour to £20 per hour during the day. Those making a profit or breaking even do not consistently charge more than those incurring a deficit.

30% of those operating with a deficit have net running costs of £10,000 or more, compared to 17% of those in profit or breaking even, although 2 of the 4 facilities making a surplus have their insurance premium paid by the local parish council. 40% of those incurring a deficit pay their staff compared with 22% of those in profit or breaking even, who rely on volunteers.

Comparing performance against the quality standard reveals that 89% of community facilities making a profit or breaking even meet or exceed the quality standard. 50% of those making a deficit meet or exceed the standard.

30% of the main halls within facilities incurring a deficit were rated as poor, 0 were rated as excellent. None of the facilities making a surplus or breaking even had a main hall rated poor and 17% were rated excellent. Those venues incurring a deficit appear to have more facilities available than those making a profit or breaking even, which could result in higher running costs.

Comparing the facilities which either breakeven or make a surplus with those that incur a deficit; 50% of those in profit have wheelchair access throughout, compared with 40% of those incurring a deficit, 30% of which have no wheelchair access at all. All the profit making or breaking even facilities have accessible toilets compared with only 30% of those making a loss.

In terms of usage, 60% of the facilities incurring a deficit are used on average less than 10 hours a week. 25% (1 – Black Horse Drove) of those in profit or breaking even are used less than 10 hours a week. Comparing the facilities which either breakeven or make a surplus with those that incur a deficit; 78% of those in profit or breaking even have regular bookings compared to 50% of those with a deficit. 5 (28%) of the facilities making a profit or breaking even turn away bookings, compared to just 1 of those making a loss

Although many did not respond to the question about estimated number of people using the facility looking at the figures available it appears that the facilities incurring a deficit are used by more people than those making a profit or breaking even.

22% (4) of the facilities making a profit or breaking even serve smaller populations of up to 300 people, (Aldreth Village Centre, Black Horse Drove Community Centre, Queen Adelaide Village Hall, Westley Waterless Village Hall). 10% (1) of those incurring a deficit serve this size of population. 11% (2) of the facilities making a profit or breaking even serve larger populations of 5000+ people, 20% (2) of those incurring a deficit serve this size of population.

72% of facilities making a profit or breaking even are located in parishes with a surplus of community spaces, compared to 50% of those making a loss.

Comparing the sizes of the facilities; 6% of facilities making a profit are smaller than 50sqm, 22% are 200sqm or bigger. 30% of facilities making a loss are smaller than 50sqm, 40% are 200sqm or bigger.

The Audit questionnaire also included questions relating to management and use of the buildings which were answered by those operating the community facilities. The responses to these questions can be found in Appendix 10.

Analysis of key 2013 Audit findings

21 settlements have a surplus of indoor community space ranging from 3324.73 m² to 11m².

26 settlements have a deficit of community space; of these 6 have no provision at all. The other 20 have access to an indoor community facility that does not meet the definition used for the purposes of this Audit but is still available for community hire to some degree.

The tables show the significant variation in provision across the district. The general trend is that provision is better in smaller settlements, whilst the larger settlements in term of population have the greater deficits.

Although Haddenham, Lode & Longmeadow and Prickwillow all record a surplus of space against the standard, there are capacity issues, particularly on weekday evenings, resulting in the venues turning away bookings. Similarly, some with a deficit such as Littleport report being oversubscribed on weekday evening also resulting in them turning away bookings.

The growth planned for the district will have implications for the current community facility infrastructure. The local Plan provides for an additional 11,500 dwellings will be built up to 2031. This means that the current slight surplus across the district will decrease to a 19% shortfall of community space by 2031 if no new community facilities are provided

Analysis of the quality of community facilities suggests that, of those facilities visited, most are of a reasonable overall quality. However, almost half of halls are not fully accessible by wheelchair, and the overall high quality scores mask a number of investment needs.

Of the 35 halls surveyed, 26 require investment to improve the internal condition of the facility and 24 require investment to improve the external condition of the facility. Many of the improvements needed are large scale such as refurbishments of kitchens and toilets, replacement of hall floors and installation of more efficient heating systems and repairs to roofs. 21 community facilities were judged to need some sort of environmental improvement, such as loft insulations and/or draught proofing, double glazed windows/door and new heating systems to replace current old/inefficient ones.

Just under half (49%) of settlements with a primary indoor community facility meet the catchment standard. 11 of the 16 settlements have a population of 500 people or less and are smaller villages. Of the 17 settlements who do not meet the catchment standard, 4 have other indoor community facilities.

None of the 6 settlements without an indoor community facility fall within the catchment area of a facility within another settlement. This equates to 2% of the population of the district who live in a settlement with no community facility as defined by this audit.

However, whilst some key issues are highlighted by the PPG17 Companion Guide, which stresses the need for localised provision, it is also recognised that those living in rural areas will not always be able to access (particularly by walking) the same array of facilities as those in urban areas:

“Residents in rural areas cannot realistically expect to have the same level of access to the full range of different types of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities normally available in more

densely populated urban areas. This means that residents of rural areas usually have to travel further than most urban residents to some forms of provision”

Half (14) of the facilities generally breakeven, a further 4 make a slight surplus. 10 facilities operate at a loss. 7 did not provide a response to the question.

All of the community facilities that make a surplus are rated ‘very good’ in terms of quality. There are mixed levels of usage ranging from 20-30 hours a week to less than 10 hours. 2 of the 4 facilities making a surplus have their insurance premium paid by the local parish council (including the facility used for less than 10 hours a week).

7 generally breakeven (Aldreth, Chippenham, Little Thetford, Mepal, Prickwillow, Queen Adelaide, and Witcham) and 2 incur a significant deficit (Brinkley and Coveney).

10 facilities do not cover their running costs, 5 of these failed to meet the quality standard. 5 are used for less than 10 hours a week, 2 for 10-20 hours, 1 for 20-30 hours and 1 facility is used for over 30 hours a week, yet still operates at a deficit.

Of the 6 operating at a significant deficit, 3 do not meet the required quality standard, 1 facility scored 56% and another 57% (the quality standard threshold is 50%). Two facilities that make a significant deficit failed to reach the quality standard and are also used less than 10 hours a week.

This implies that the quality of a community facility as well as its usage may impact on the financial viability of the premises.

12 settlements/facilities meet all three standards these are Aldreth, Black Horse Drove, Brinkley, Chippenham, Coveney, Little Thetford, Lode, Mepal, Prickwillow, Queen Adelaide, Wicken and Witcham.

Black Horse Drove Community Centre, Fassage Hall, Lode, and Wicken Mission Hall are the only facilities that meet the quantity, quality and catchment standards and also generate surplus income. Appendix 11 gives details of how all facilities compare against the standards.

Appendix 12 gives a summary of the audit feedback on each community facility.

Recommendations

The District Council will continue to support efforts by local communities to provide and improve community buildings, community centres and community halls, as it has for many years, especially where there is identified unmet need for such facilities or potential to extend the range of uses or services and existing building can accommodate.

As such a number of recommendations are proposed based on the findings of the Audit:

- Retain the District Council's current standard for community facility provision - 111 m² per 1,000 people.
- Prioritise spend in the areas of greatest need as identified by the Audit.
- Update the audit every 5 years, conducting the next Audit in 2018.
- Produce an action plan based on the recommendations which could include the following actions:
 - Assist community facility management committees in accessing support and external funding.
 - Encourage community facilities to maximise the potential for private hire.
 - Work with Parish Councils to inform their priorities for their meaningful proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
 - Help raise awareness of community facilities and ensure that access to them meets the needs of the community.