

AGENDA ITEM NO 8

TITLE: East Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Audit 2013

Committee: Commercial Services

Date: 18th June 2015

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[Q14]

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider the findings of the East Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Audit 2013.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are requested to:

- i) Note the findings of the audit.
- ii) Retain the District Council's current standard for community facility provision, (111 m² per 1,000 people) as set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions (March 2013).
- iii) Instruct Officers to produce a Community Facilities Action Plan.
- iv) Commit to updating the audit every 5 years, conducting the next audit in 2018.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A Community Facilities Audit was carried out by Cambridgeshire ACRE on behalf of East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) in 2013. This provided the Council with a comprehensive list of community facilities within the district and information about their quality, size and usage.
- 3.2 The aim of the audit was to provide the necessary evidence to ascertain whether current provision targets are being met and where future developer contributions and other funding might need to be targeted. The audit report will also be a formal document for community facility governance groups to use as a tool for raising funds and developing business plans.
- 3.3 For the purposes of the 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. The audit identified 35 community facilities that matched the criteria.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The audit found that there is currently a small surplus of 96.63m² (1%) of indoor community space in the district. 21 settlements have a surplus of community space and 26 settlements have a deficit. Whilst 14 of the settlements with a deficit have no facilities that meet the audit criteria, 8 of them have other indoor community facilities within the settlement. Only 6 settlements in the district do not have any indoor community facilities. However, using Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group population forecasts, 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.
- 4.2 Analysis of the quality of community facilities suggests that, of those facilities visited, most are of a reasonable overall quality and only 4 do not meet the quality standard. But almost half of halls are not fully accessible by wheelchair and the overall high quality scores mask a number of investment needs.
- 4.3 Just under half (49%) of settlements with a community facility as defined by the audit meet the catchment standard. 11 of the 16 settlements have a population of 500 people or less. Of the 17 settlements who do not meet the catchment standard, 4 have other indoor community facilities. Across the whole district this equates to 34% of settlements who meet the catchment standard.
- 4.4 Half of the facilities that responded to the question (14/28) generally break even, a further 4 make a slight surplus. 10 facilities operate at a loss, 6 of these incur a significant deficit. Although many did not respond to the question about the 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.
- 4.5 Comparing financial performance with the quality standard reveals that 89% of community facilities making a profit or breaking even meet or exceed the quality standard, whilst 50% of those making a deficit meet or exceed it. This implies that the quality of a community facility as well as its usage may impact on the financial viability of the premises. But hall operators cited decreasing revenue streams and difficulties in funding building repairs and maintenance as major issues affecting the future of their facilities.
- 4.6 12 settlements/facilities meet the quantity, quality and catchment 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 only facilities that meet all 3 standards and also generate surplus income.

4.7 The audit makes the following recommendations:

- Retain the District Council's current standard for community facility provision - 111 m² per 1,000 people.
- Prioritise ECDC community grant 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 a Community Facilities Action Plan 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.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Developing and Implementing the action plan will be met within the existing Leisure and Community Services budgets. Any refresh of the Community Facilities Audit will be an additional cost to the Council.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix B.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A: East Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Audit 2013.

6.2 Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
None	Room 012 The Grange, Ely	Sally Bonnett Infrastructure and Projects Officer (01353) 616451 sally.bonnett@eastcambs.gov.uk