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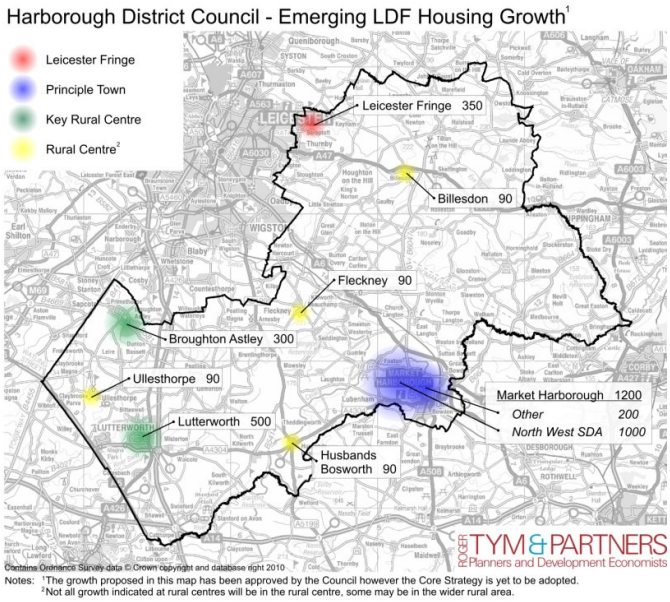
Harborough District Council

Assessment of Local Community Provision and Developer Contribution



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need to do this work has been prompted by changes in legislation and the questioning of the legitimacy of the current standards used for community infrastructure charging.

The main changes in legislation recently affecting infrastructure funding relate to the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) in April 2010[1] and making the 'Necessity Test' a statutory requirement. A planning obligation must now meet all three of the following elements of the test:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development, and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

In view of the introduction of CiL, the revised role of S106 planning obligations is intended to be considerably reduced, with some transitionary arrangements whilst Cil is being developed. It is anticipated that the Government is likely to make changes to the Cil arrangements in the near future.

Set against this context, the focus of this study has been to conduct a swift assessment of local community facilities to provide interim guidance on developer contributions charging policy and inform the preparation of the LDF Core Strategy policy.

We have sought to answer the following study questions:

- What community infrastructure will the charging policy relate to?
- Where is the development in the District likely to take place?
- What is the capacity or deficit of community infrastructure in the direction of growth areas?
- What additional community infrastructure is likely to be needed to meet the needs of the additional growth?
- How should the charge be developed and refined over time?
- What is the likely delivery mechanism and method for collecting and distributing developer contributions?

Our response to these questions is summarised here:

Defining community infrastructure

- Our definition of community infrastructure has been based on developing a developer contribution policy. It has focused on capital infrastructure which offers the widest range of community facilities that can be readily identified by the community as a 'community facility'. We have agreed with the client team to focus effort on community / village hall indoor venue and indoor sports venues.

[1] Introduced in the 2008 Planning Act and became statute on 6th April 2010

Determining where growth is likely to take place

- Articulating the direction of growth where new development is likely to take place and charting this on figure 1.1 was essential in order to assess the 'locally specific' infrastructure capacity and need generated by growth[2].

Determining the capacity of existing community infrastructure

- We assessed current peak capacity based on a combination of structured interviews with community infrastructure providers, and assimilating the findings in the Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facilities Strategic Framework Report findings and undertaking consultations with key stakeholders. Our survey evidence identified that all existing community infrastructure is at capacity, and in some instances there are waiting lists (indicating a deficit in provision), thus any new development will need to contribute towards the provision of additional capacity.

What Community Infrastructure is required?

- Our assessment of requirement was based on detailed consultations with a range of stakeholders, current provision, sub regional research findings and a working session with lead members. The requirements were also informed by the role of the settlement within the overall settlement hierarchy identified in figure 1.1. The requirement for each settlement varies.
- For each of the four rural centres, new development is required to contribute towards refurbishment of facilities to improve capacity and efficiency. Though it may also include some extension work in locations such as Billesdon which are currently in deficit mode.
- There is greater provision envisaged for the Key Rural Centres / Leicester Fringe, with the requirement for a new indoor sports facility for Broughton Astley and at an accessible location in the Leicester Fringe area to serve as a hub for the northern rural settlements as well as meeting growth requirements. Lutterworth is well provided for in terms of meeting space and leisure facility and the community infrastructure requirement here is for performance / drama space.
- The Strategic Development Area in the north west of Market Harborough is required to provide a community hub with a minimum of two court badminton hall internal floorspace, with complementary facilities of changing rooms, kitchen, meeting rooms etc.
- The rest of growth in Market Harborough is required to contribute towards the cost of extending the existing indoor sports provision.
- Where new build is required (e.g. Market Harborough North West SDA, Broughton Astley and Leicester Fringe), the developer will be required to provide the land to meet

[2] It should be noted that the growth proposed in figure 1.1 has been approved by the Council however the Core Strategy is yet to be adopted.

this provision in addition to the developer contribution towards the delivery of the infrastructure.

Cost, Funding and Charging Policy

- The final cost of individual schemes will vary according to the delivery option pursued. We have a number of cost estimates from Sport England, other village hall schemes and the RICS. Much will depend on the local circumstances, scope to expand, availability and site mitigation costs.
- As there is not a national standard cost for village halls, for a pragmatic way forward, we have assessed space and cost standards using RICS information and compared our findings with other local authority charges and space requirements to ensure that a fair approach is adopted.
- However, if the developer is not satisfied with the method of calculating this cost, it is possible, at the time of detailed planning application, to develop full detailed costs estimates and revise the charge accordingly[3].
- Developer contributions have been calculated using the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for community centres and a space standard based on the figure adopted for the Leicestershire Infrastructure Study 2009[4].

This yields the following developer contribution per person:

BCIS cost of community centre per m2 in October 2010[5], (including the Leicestershire locational factor of 0.93) results in a cost of £1,082.52 per m2.

Leicestershire Infrastructure Study indoor village hall space per person is 0.4m2.[6]

Thus the cost per person is £1,082.52 x 0.4 = £433 per person.[7]

- Developer contribution must be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. This has been taken account of and the study includes different charging levels for different sized properties.
- In most cases (apart from the SDA) the developer contributions are unlikely to cover the full cost of new provision or extension in most cases. Funding of the community infrastructure is likely to come from a variety of sources, including developer contributions, local and County council, parish council, and other organisations.

[3] However, the developer should then be prepared to pay a higher contribution, as actual cost calculations could result in a higher total cost.

[4] This has formed the evidence base for a number of Leicestershire Authority LDF Core Strategies which have been found sound.

[5] This can be updated on a regular basis.

[6] This was compared to a number of other similar authorities; Rutland has a space standard of 0.5m2 per person.

[7] As a comparison, the Rutland and the Leicestershire Infrastructure Study cost per person is £600.

Policy, Monitoring and Review

- The Council should include a policy on developer contributions in the LDF Core Strategy that seeks to meet the needs arising as a result of the development. Within the supporting text of the policy, the type of community infrastructure to be provided should be made clear.
- It is likely that delivery of infrastructure, particularly the 'bigger elements' could take longer than five years. We suggest the LA should be able to hold onto developer contributions funding for some seven to ten years and if scheme is not completed by then, the funding will need to be returned back to developer.
- Given the focus on delivery based on local needs assessment, then a clear monitoring mechanism will be required to ensure that funds collected for a specific infrastructure proposal are clearly used for that purpose and if it is not, these contributions will need to be returned to the developer.
- There is also a need for regular review to ensure that the cost estimates keep abreast of changes in inflation and costs changes via a regular review of the BCIS cost estimates.

Delivery and Study Recommendations

- An important recommendation from this study is the need for the Council and its Partners to put in place a delivery plan that will show how '*identified deficiencies resulting from new growth will be catered for*'[8]. As part of the study assessment, discussion on delivery options have already commenced with key stakeholders and lead members. The task now is to follow though the delivery actions discussed for each of the directions of growth requirement. The report includes a number of specific recommendations relating to delivery.

[8] Inspector's comments – see paragraph 2.4.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Roger Tym & Partners have been appointed to carry out a simple and swift assessment of local community facilities to provide interim guidance[9] on developer contributions charging policy in the light of recent legislative changes and to support the preparation of planning contribution policy of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

1.2 The need to do this work has been prompted by changes in legislation and the questioning of the legitimacy of the current standards used. In section 2 we expand further on the legislative changes that have resulted in this work.

1.3 The key point to note is that it is no longer suitable to have a generalised S 106 charge, particularly one that pools resources for an unknown scheme. The charge will need to be:

- Supported by a policy and standard that justifies a particular level of community facility provision.
- Backed with evidence of need / shortfall in existing capacity.
- Demonstrates how the identified facility will be delivered.

Study Questions

1.4 In order to provide the Council with evidence to support drafting of the Core Strategy policy on community facilities and develop a charging policy to reflect future growth and current legislation, we seek to answer the following study questions:

- What community infrastructure will the charging policy relate to?
- Where is the development in the District likely to take place?
- What is the capacity or deficit of community infrastructure in the direction of growth areas?
- What additional community infrastructure is likely to be needed to meet the needs of the additional growth?
- How should the charge be developed and refined over time?
- What is the likely delivery mechanism and method for collecting and distributing developer contributions?

Study Approach

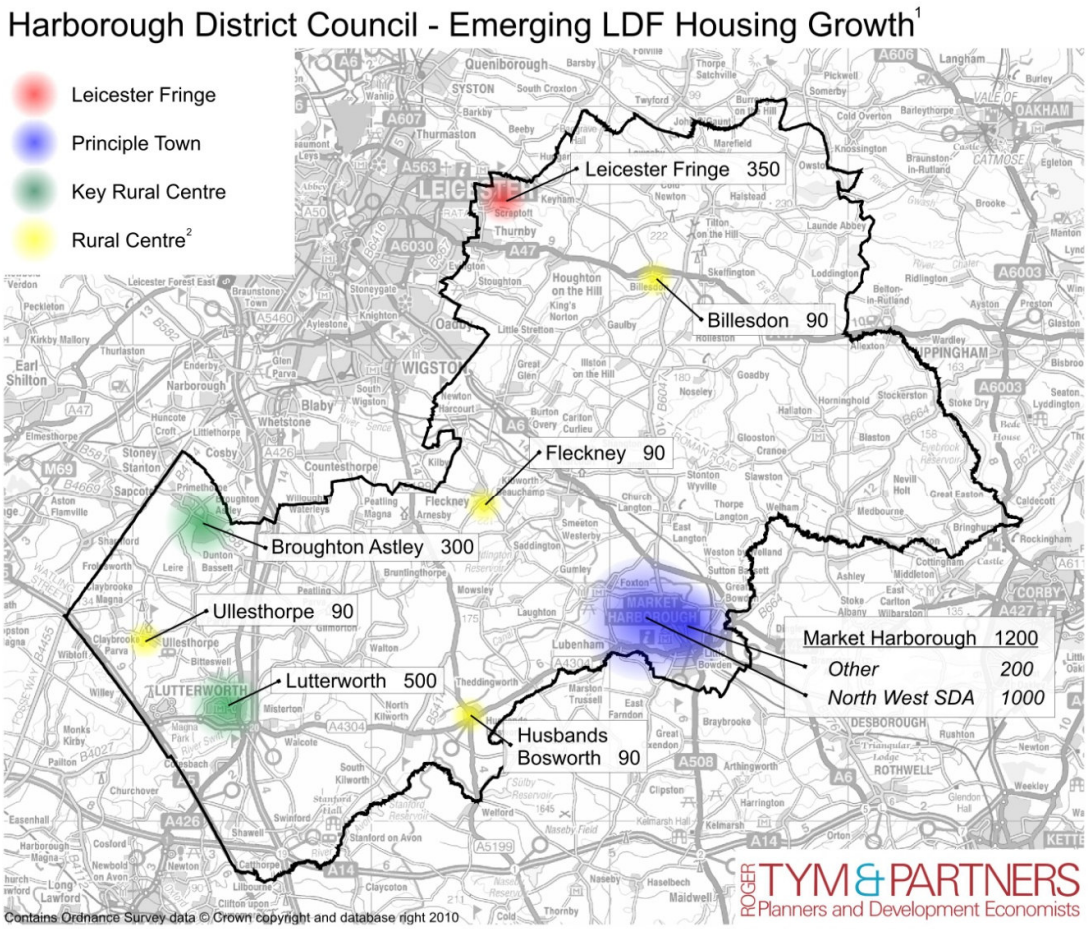
1.5 Our approach involved a process of:

- Articulating the direction of growth where new development is likely to take place and charting this on a plan (see figure 1.1) was essential to assess the 'locally specific' infrastructure capacity and need generated by growth. It should be noted that the

[9] The Council are considering preparing a developer contributions SPD, thus this study is intended as an interim measure.

growth proposed in figure 1.1 has been approved by the Council however the Core Strategy is yet to be adopted.

Figure 1.1 Emerging Housing Growth Hierarchy



Notes: [1]The growth proposed in this map has been approved by the Council however the Core Strategy is yet to be adopted.
[2]Not all growth indicated at rural centres will be in the rural centre, some may be in the wider rural area.

- Assessing existing community facilities in the direction of growth areas to determine their scope in meeting the additional needs generated by new growth. This was based on a combination of structured interviews with infrastructure providers, assimilating the findings in the Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facilities Strategic Framework Report – 2010 and undertaking consultations with key stakeholders.
- Articulating the community infrastructure requirements based on the 'top down' Sub Regional Sports Study findings and 'bottom up' survey of current infrastructure capacity and requirements (see appendix two) and stakeholder input (see appendix one for list of stakeholders interviewed). We have used the hierarchy shown in figure 1.1 as a

basis to inform the development of 'standards[10]' based on size of settlement, existing capacity and the likely delivery of new infrastructure.

Defining Community Infrastructure

1.6 There is no single agreed definition of what constitutes 'community infrastructure' for planning obligations purposes. It may help to consider how others define community facilities. The London Borough of Bexley Planning Obligations SPD (2008) defines it as:

1.7 "Local community facilities and services cover a range of facilities and services provided across the Borough by both public and private sectors. They include community centres, libraries and mobile libraries and places of worship and may also include other services such as family centres, childcare and play facilities, adult learning facilities, youth and voluntary services. The definition for local community facilities and services can incorporate any facility or service for which a need is generated by development."

The starting point for this study is to define what we include as community infrastructure

1.8 The study brief was specific that we are to consider 'community facilities' that are not already covered by other elements of the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance such as libraries, education, outdoor recreation, play areas etc. Our definition of community infrastructure has been based on developing a developer contribution policy and so has focused on capital infrastructure which offers the widest range of community facilities, that can be readily identified by the community as a 'community facility'. We have agreed with the client team to focus effort on community / village hall indoor venue and indoor sports venues.

1.9 Frequently in rural communities, village halls serve as indoor sports, arts and community meeting space, it is not always viable to operate separate buildings for these uses and joint use of facilities is often the norm in smaller settlements.

Other community buildings also serve an important role

1.10 In the urban areas like Market Harborough inparticular, there is not a single readily identifiable 'community venue'; instead, there is a full leisure facility and a variety of community venues e.g. church buildings which are available for wider community use. It is not possible, within the study resource to identify existing deficiencies and determine likely development requirements in advance of applications coming forward for such infrastructure[11]. For the purpose of this study, we have focused attention on main provision, and acknowledge the importance of the wider facilities in meeting the requirements of growth.

[10] Note this is in the absence of any other local sports standards currently available, though these may be updated in the future when a full sports infrastructure assessment is undertaken.

[11] The current pooling methodology is better suited for serving expansion needs of this type of provision.

Report Structure

1.11 The rest of this report has been structured under the following section headings:

- Section two - Legislative Context – this explains the legislative context that determines the developer contribution charge and recent changes.
- Section three – Community Infrastructure Research Findings - Sub Regional Study findings highlights Harborough's deficit issues and requirements.
- Section four - Standards, Capacity and Requirements – articulates the standards, capacity and growth requirements.
- Section five - Costs, Delivery and Study Recommendations – Estimates infrastructure costs, developer contributions, delivery and study recommendations.

There are a series of important caveats attached to this work

1.12 We have agreed a number of caveats to this study:

- The study has been based on information assessed for the emerging direction of growth areas[12];
- This estimation cost and funding information will provide a very useful start towards negotiating requirements, however, there is likely to be a need for some refinements on specific proposals based on community consultations and more specific information relating to progress on other funding to deliver the infrastructure.
- We are interviewing those responsible for village halls and indoor sports but not the wider community, though some consultation on this was undertaken by the Council as part of developing thinking on the Core Strategy.
- Given the time, resources and level of information known about the likely direction of growth, our focus on community infrastructure has been restricted to indoor community facilities including village halls and indoor sports provision. It is acknowledged that there are a number of other similar indoor facilities in the District, e.g. church halls, Scout halls and Masonic halls. This is particularly the case in Market Harborough where the main form of public meeting space tends to be via church venues. However, due to the complexity to develop a charging formula for such a wide and disparate range of buildings, these have not been surveyed individually.
- We have agreed with the client team to exclude facilities that are not truly accessible to the community (e.g. private member's facilities e.g. Ullesthorpe Court Hotel and Club, or school facilities).
- We are not required to undertake any viability assessment of the overall charging policy as the Council has a policy on procuring independent viability assessments where necessary.

[12] This growth has been approved by the Council however the Core Strategy is yet to be adopted.

2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 An understanding of the approach to charging adopted to date, recent legislation and appeal decisions is useful in helping to explain the approach adopted for this study. This is outlined below and then used as a basis for explaining our approach to this study.

Current Charging Policy

2.2 Harborough District Council (the Council) have to date implemented a standard contribution charge for community facilities, using development cost information relating to the Lutterworth Sports Centre. The resulting charge of approximately £735 per dwelling has been pooled and distributed via a grant system to a range of community groups towards infrastructure schemes such as sports pavilions and changing facilities for sports, including improvements, changing facilities, village halls, skate parks and church buildings.

2.3 Although the means of arriving at the charge is not strictly in keeping with the S106 necessity test, the approach adopted by the Council has to date been unchallenged. This approach has considerable merit in terms of flexibility, and although not earmarked for specific infrastructure, it has been effective in helping to serve the emerging needs for community infrastructure, which can vary considerably between communities.

Inspector rules on a requirement to show a clear link between infrastructure need and obligation

2.4 Some of Harborough's charging schedules have now been questioned. The Inspector, upholding the appeal for land off Glebe Road, Market Harborough[13], highlighted in the appeal decision, at paragraph 30 that:

"there was no assessment of the state of local infrastructure in respect of community facilities, civic amenities sites and libraries able to serve this development indicating where deficiencies lie and how they would be catered for. …I do not believe the Council has established a need for these facilities that is directly related to the impact of the proposed development. Obligations should not be used to secure contributions to the achievement of wider planning objectives that are not necessary to allow a particular development to proceed."

2.5 The Inspector is right in highlighting the points above, however; this is precisely how many local authorities have been treating S106 funding (i.e. creating a standard tariff approach). However, for some years now this move towards a 'standard tariff' has been under scrutiny and other alternative charging measures have been explored. The key reason for coming to a head as it has in recent years is most likely to be due to the impact on development viability and the scope provided by the tightening of legislation.

[13] Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/A/09/2114425 – Inquiry held in January 2010

Development viability is leading to more challenges

2.6 Generally, providing the total charge (for all infrastructure requirements) sought does not impact on development viability then in most cases a developer is unlikely to challenge the request for a contribution. However, in the recent economic climate, and with a growing list of policy requirements in addition to developer contributions (e.g. code for sustainable homes, design standards, affordable housing requirements), has resulted in a number of challenges nationally on the use of S106 charging policy. The key to any charging policy in the current climate is likely to rest on development viability and adopting a pragmatic approach.

Recent and Future Changes in Legislation

2.7 There have been some important changes in legislation recently affecting infrastructure funding. This includes the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) in April 2010[14] and making the 'Necessity Test' a statutory requirement. The CiL is intended to provide a transparent way of contributing to the cost of infrastructure requirements. To avoid double counting of infrastructure funding, the role of S106 planning obligations is intended to be considerably reduced as CiL is introduced, with some transitionary arrangements whilst Cil is being developed.

The Necessity Test is now a statutory requirement giving developers greater scope to dispute planning obligation policy

2.8 The Necessity Test for planning obligations is now a statutory requirement, and an obligation must now meet all three of the following elements of the test:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development, and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

2.9 This Necessity Test now provides an even stronger basis for developers to dispute planning obligations policy that breaches these criteria. This test is intended to reinforce the use of planning obligations to be used only when seeking essential contributions to allow the granting of planning permission, than more general contributions which are reserved for CiL.

2.10 Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, which came into force on 6 April 2010, makes it unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account in determining a planning application if it does not meet the three tests set out in Regulation 122.

2.11 The Secretary of State or the Inspector will need to assess the extent to which these tests are met by any planning obligation which is submitted in an appeal case, even where the parties are satisfied with the obligation. In accordance with Regulation 122 Inspectors will

[14] Introduced in the 2008 Planning Act and became statute on 6th April 2010

not take into account any obligations which do not meet all of the statutory tests. The parties to the appeal should therefore ensure that the necessary evidence is provided to enable this assessment to be made.

Good Practice Note on Planning Obligations

2.12 The Planning inspectorate has published a Good Practice Advice Note[15] on what local authorities should include when submitting draft planning obligations at appeals. The document states '…the following evidence is needed to enable the Inspector to assess whether any financial contribution provided through a planning obligation (or the LPAs requirement for one) meets the Circular 5/05 policy tests and the statutory tests in Regulations 122:

- The relevant development plan policy or policies, and the relevant sections of any SPD;
- Quantified evidence of the additional demands on facilities or infrastructure which are likely to arise from the proposed development;
- Details of existing facilities or infrastructure, and up to date quantified evidence of the extent to which they are able to meet those additional demands;
- The methodology for calculating any financial contribution which is shown to be necessary to improve existing facilities or infrastructure, or provide new facilities or infrastructure, to meet the additional demands; and
- Details of the new facilities or infrastructure on which any financial contribution will be spent'.

The Planning Inspectorate is looking for evidence on 'Needs Test'

2.13 It is clear from our discussions with the Planning Inspectorate and the recently issued good practice advice note that Planning Inspectors are looking for a coherent approach to requirement, charge and delivery. Thus, it is no longer suitable, under current legislation to seek contributions to a 'general pot'; there must be a clear relation between need, charge and delivery. What is not clear at this point is the level of detail that Inspectors are looking for (i. e. are they expecting precise cost figures for new infrastructure or estimations – the former is difficult to do until the exact nature of development is known, and often can lead to abortive work if the development does not then proceed).

2.14 What the advice does suggest, is that the historic supplementary planning documents based on a creating a single tariff for planning obligations is no longer suitable and will be challenged by Inspectors (even where all parties are satisfied with the charge) . There will need to be greater analysis about the requirements resulting from development, the capacity of existing infrastructure in which the development is taking place, describing the methodology for calculating the financial contribution and taking account of development viability.

[15] Planning Inspectorate *Good Practice Advice Note 16/2010*, Submitting Planning Obligations – May 2010

The pooling of contributions will be restricted to five developments from 2014

2.15 On the adoption of a local CiL or nationally after a transitional period to 6th April 2014, the CiL regulations[16] restricts the use of pooled planning contributions towards items that may be funded via CiL. However, where an item of infrastructure is not locally intended to be funded by CiL, pooled planning obligation contributions may be sought from no more than five developments (intended to mitigate the cumulative impacts of a small number of developments).

Further changes in legislation are expected – single unified local tariff?

2.16 During March 2010 there was a detailed consultation by the DCLG titled 'new policy document for planning obligations' the consultation on this ended in June 2010, the intention at the time was to replace current policy in circular 05/05. However, with the change in Government it is not clear where this now stands. The Conservative Party Planning Green Paper (Feb 2010) proposed the abolition of CiL and to replace this with the single unified local tariff (SULT). The interesting element of the SULT is that there is likely to be a proportion of the tariff revenue that would be handed to the community in which the development takes place (without knowing the details, this sounds similar to the current Harborough approach to community infrastructure).

Concluding Comments

2.17 The current legislation favours the use of CiL to allow the flexible charging mechanism to pool resources for a range of infrastructure and seeks to restrict and limit the use of S106 agreements.

2.18 Be aware that after the 2014 transition period, the use of planning obligations to pool funding will be restricted to five developments.

2.19 Any charging policy for planning obligations will need to ensure that there is an evidenced relation between the proposed infrastructure charge and requirement and delivery mechanism for this infrastructure. It is too early to tell what level of detail Inspectors are willing to accept.

2.20 It is possible that the new Coalition Government could introduce changes to replace the current CiL with a SULT.

[16] CiL – An Overview March 2010 paragraph 68 - DCLG

3 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Before considering specific local requirements for community infrastructure, it is helpful to briefly consider the findings from the Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facilities Strategic Framework (2010 – 2013) commissioned by Leicester-Shire & Rutland County Sport Partnership (CSP).

Sub Regional Study

3.2 The Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facilities Strategic Framework (2010 – 2013) (referred to as the sub regional study in this report from now on) has undertaken a comprehensive audit of existing sports facilities and identified high level gaps in provision.

3.3 The study states that the definition of 'community use' is not clearly articulated or consistently interpreted. Different organisations come at this from varied levels of understanding and interpretation. Facilities have been developed and community use identified as a requirement of the planning permission, however, in some circumstances, once built, facility operators are reluctant to fully engage with the local authority and local communities to facilitate community use. This is particularly an issue in relation to education infrastructure which may be classed as for community use, but is often limited in its availability. For the purpose of this study, until further work is undertaken to reach clear agreements on community use and opening hours, education infrastructure is not included, as there is little control in ensuring the provision is clearly available for the wider community[17].

Settlement Hierarchy Indicated

3.4 There is a hierarchy of sports facilities included in the study, which includes the following:

- Major sports facilities of a national or regional significance.
- Sub regional facilities: those that meet sub regional community and competition.
- Key local sports facilities: that meet the needs of a large section of a community e.g. sports hall of at least 2 badminton court size, swimming pool, fitness studio etc..
- Neighbourhood facilities: those that meet a smaller community need e.g. village halls of 1 badminton court.

3.5 This settlement hierarchy provides a starting point for developing a more locally specific hierarchy that takes account of local provision, need, population, geography and access. We have used the hierarchy included in Figure 1.1 as a basis for informing the settlement hierarchy standards for this study.

[17] Note that we did consider the existing schools that are available, and these were currently at capacity in terms of availability or in poor condition and not appropriate for inclusion as they are.

Headline Issues Identified by Sub Regional Study

There is an projected shortfall in sports hall provision by 2026 in Harborough

3.6 Based on an assessment of current capacity and future projections in demand, Harborough is forecast to have a shortfall in sports hall provision by 2026 of over 20%.[18] This is based on the assumption that the current supply of sports halls will remain constant up until 2026. Once quality of existing provision is taken account of, a number of existing provisions included in the assessment will be at risk in the future. The study highlights the need to increase the provision of sports halls and invest in currently poor quality activity areas to improve capacity.

3.7 The study has identified that Harborough has a current deficit in swimming provision and this deficit is forecast to worsen by to 59% by 2026 based on 'Active Places' assessment standards[19]. The Amateur Swimming Association supports this view and identifies a current deficit in swimming of 6 lanes 25m pool just to meet current deficit.

3.8 Harborough's rurality and the importance of local community sports facilities in rural areas is recognised as playing a significant role in providing rural communities with accessible sports facilities. Our stakeholder consultations with the CSP highlighted the need to create rural sports facilities in the northern part of the District and in other parts where there is already a current deficit or capacity issue.[20]

3.9 To meet specialist sports needs, England Netball have identified the need to improve facilities at Market Harborough Leisure Centre for netball to accommodate junior netball and Gymnastics England have identified the potential to develop grass roots gymnastics in the north of the District to serve the District and Rutland.[21]

[18] Based on Active Places, Sub regional study for CSP pg 55.

[19] Note this does not take account of additional demand that might be created from cross border use, particularly from Northamptonshire, which in 2004 was estimated to account for 40% of the demand for Harborough Leisure Centre or new provision created at Leicester Grammar School (as this is not clearly for community use).

[20] These have been captured in the sports standards for this study.

[21] These requirements are not factored into the planning obligations aspect of this study but could form part of a future CiL or SULT if the authority wished to develop this type of sub regional infrastructure.

4 STANDARDS, CAPACITY AND GROWTH REQUIREMENTS

Community Infrastructure Standards

4.1 The findings from the Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facilities Strategic Framework Report (2010) provided a starting point for establishing the community facilities standards for the Harborough settlement hierarchy[22].

Settlement hierarchy used to inform standards

4.2 The settlement size and catchment affects the requirement of the type of indoor community infrastructure that is likely to be viable in terms of capital investment and longer term revenue costs for operating the facility. For the purpose of this assessment, we adopted the settlement hierarchy provided by the client, as shown in Figure 1.1. We took account of existing population and the direction and scale of growth to determine an average population growth for the area[23].

Proposed Community Infrastructure Standards

4.3 The following standards have been developed specifically for Harborough based on assessment of infrastructure, use, and likely requirement. They are based on general recommendations stemming from Sport England, and local requirements for the proposed settlement hierarchy.

- Population less than 1000 – Village hall with 1 court badminton hall.
- Population of 2000 – 6000 – Village hall including a 2 court badminton hall.
- Population of 6000 – 10,000 – Village hall, 4 court badminton hall and other facilities.
- Population of > 10,000 – Various community and sports facilities, including pool, arts facilities and community meeting halls.

4.4 Note that when we refer to badminton court size, this is the minimum court area, and other facilities will also be required within the community facilities e.g. changing, storage, toilets, kitchen, meeting rooms etc. See Sport England web site[24] for further guidance on village and community hall layout and size.

4.5 With regard to indoor swimming pool infrastructure, we have acknowledged the findings of the sub regional study which identifies a substantial forecast shortage in capacity

Community infrastructure Capacity

4.6 The existing capacity and condition of village halls and indoor sports facilities in the direction of growth areas were surveyed to determine their scope in meeting the additional needs generated by new growth. This was based on structured interviews with village hall

[22] Note there is not an up to date PPS 17 of local leisure facilities capacity so we had to use sub regional data, survey evidence and stakeholder input to prepare the standards for this study.

[23] Based on an average household of 2.44 persons per dwelling.

[24] www.**sportengland**.org/facilities__planning/putting.../idoc.ashx?...

operators to assess current capacity and usage, condition of building and scope for accommodating future growth. Service operators of the leisure centres in Market Harborough and Lutterworth also provided an input of usage into this assessment, and the Active Places survey carried out by Sport England was reviewed to inform the condition of the leisure centres in these settlements. The findings are summarised in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Existing Community Infrastructure Capacity

Parish/Settlement	Sports hall peak useage	Village hall peak useage
Market Harborough	90% used	Various
SDA	none	none
Lutterworth	80% used	80%
Broughton Astley	none	100%
Fleckney	75%	100%
Billesdon	none	100%
Leic Fringe - Scraptoft	none	80%
Leic Fringe - Thurnby & Bushby	none	90%
Husbands Bosworth	none	90%
Ullesthorpe	none	80%

Source: Survey by RTP 2010

4.7 Any site used at 75% or more during peak period is classified as being at capacity. All of the areas in the proposed direction of growth are, based on the criteria, already at capacity, and any additional growth in these locations will be required to contribute towards the cost of indentified community infrastructure provision.

Treatment of Swimming Pool Infrastructure

4.8 Although the sub regional study shows a current deficit for swimming pool infrastructure which will worsen over time, (see paragraph 3.7), we have not included swimming pool requirements as part of developing the charging requirements as much more work is required in considering how such infrastructure will be provided, how its longer term operating costs are to be met and recognising that the contribution from the proposed growth is likely to be a 'drop in the ocean' in terms of meeting the full capital cost of provision. Thus it has been agreed that swimming pool provision will be considered more fully by the Council and the CSP.

Community Infrastructure Growth Requirements

4.9 To help inform future growth requirement, we have already determined that the existing community infrastructure in the proposed directions of growth areas is already at capacity;

however, to determine the level of contribution per dwelling stemming from the growth, it is helpful to use the standards set out earlier to inform new infrastructure requirements.

4.10 We used the assessment undertaken to date to develop a range of requirement[25]. These were further refined at a working session with lead members and client team[26] to reflect local need, access and delivery issues.

Table 4.1 Community Infrastructure Requirements

Sub Regional Centre

Requirement: various additions to main facilities and stand alone provision

- Market Harborough – North West SDA – minimum two court size village hall as part of wider community hub and land
- Market Harborough – 'other' – contribute to upgrade existing indoor sports facilities.

Key Rural Centre

Requirement: provide a minimum of four court indoor sports hall for population of around 10,000 and / or upgrade existing community facility.

- Broughton Astley – Provide a new four court hall and land to meet current and new growth.
- Lutterworth – expansion of leisure centre to incorporate community arts and drama provision to serve the community.

Leicester Fringe

Requirement: provide minimum of two court indoor sports hall or improve facilities serving the northern area of the District

- Leics Fringe - provide a new two court hall and land at one of the central locations easily accessible to the rural northern settlements of the District.

Rural Centres

Requirement: look to provide two court indoor sports hall or upgrade community hall facility

- Billesdon - village hall is at capacity, upgrade / expand existing facility to accommodate additional requirement.
- Fleckney – village hall is at capacity, options to upgrade / expand village hall or Fleckney sports hall to accommodate additional requirement.
- Husbands Bosworth – village hall comfortable for present population, additional growth, will require upgrade of existing facilities.
- Ullesthorpe – village hall comfortable for present population, additional growth, will require upgrade of existing facilities.

Concluding Comments

4.11 This section has developed community infrastructure standards, evidenced that existing infrastructure is at capacity, and used this as a basis for informing future requirements for local community infrastructure based on the settlement hierarchy shown in figure 1.1.

[25] Requirements are based on an assessment of existing provision, the survey findings, sub regional study assessment and input from key stakeholders to create a range of agreed standards.

[26] Meeting held on 22nd September 2010 at Harborough District Council.

4.12 This study has made considerable progress by working with the Lead Members, the client team, Sub Regional Sports Partnership, the Council's Leisure Services Manager and infrastructure operators, to arrive at a considered view on current capacity and likely future investment priorities.

4.13 Showing likelihood of delivery will be an important element of planning obligation requirements as S106 funds cannot be 'pooled for general infrastructure'. Therefore the findings from this study will need to be considered as part of the Council's long term investment strategy for community / indoor sports provision and 'approved / adopted' by elected members to show commitment to delivery.

4.14 Once these requirements have been approved / adopted by the Council, these requirements should be incorporated into the Core Strategy Policy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan and used as part of an implementation plan to effect delivery.

5 COST, DELIVERY AND STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The final cost of individual schemes will vary according to the delivery option pursued. We have a number of cost estimates from Sport England, other village hall schemes and the RICS. However, much will depend on the local circumstances, scope to expand, availability and site mitigation costs.

5.2 Where new build is required (e.g. Market Harborough North West SDA, Broughton Astley and Leicester Fringe), the developer will be required to provide the land to meet this provision in addition to the developer contribution towards the delivery of the infrastructure.

Developer Contributions

5.3 As there is not a national standard cost for village halls, we have assessed space and cost standards using RICS information and compared our findings with other local authority charges and space requirements to ensure that a fair approach is adopted. However, if the developer is not satisfied with the method of calculating this cost, it is possible, at the time of detailed planning application, to develop full detailed costs estimates and revise the charge accordingly[27].

5.4 Developer contributions have been calculated using the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for community centres and a space standard based on the figure adopted for the Leicestershire Infrastructure Study 2009[28].

This yields the following developer contribution per person:

- BCIS cost of community centre per m2 in October 2010[29], (including the Leicestershire locational factor of 0.93) results in a cost of £1,082.52 per m2.
- Leicestershire Infrastructure Study indoor village hall space per person is 0.4m2.[30]

Thus the cost per person is £1,082.52 x 0.4 = £433 per person.[31]

5.5 Alternatively, the developer can, (where appropriate) provide the community infrastructure (e.g. indoor sports provision or extension of village hall) as part of the development, (based on an agreed specification) and so remove the need for any financial contribution.

[27] However, the developer should then be prepared to pay a higher contribution, as actual cost calculations could result in a higher total cost.

[28] This has formed the evidence base for a number of Leicestershire Authority LDF Core Strategies which have been found sound.

[29] This can be updated on a regular basis.

[30] This was compared to a number of other similar authorities; Rutland has a space standard of 0.5m2 per person.

[31] As a comparison, the Rutland and the Leicestershire Infrastructure Study cost per person is £600.

The Developer Contribution must be fairly and reasonably related in scale to the development

5.6 One of the S106 Developer Contribution Tests requires that the any developer contribution must be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Thus a one bedroom property is likely to require less village hall facilities than a five bedroom property and we need to create a charge that reflects the difference in scale. This is done in the following table, using information provided by the District Council on the number of assumed residents for various sized dwellings.

5.7 Cost of refurbishment is likely to be less than new build, and should be fairly reflected in contributions charged. Based on consultation with developers, we consider it appropriate to seek a 50% this reduction in contributions where internal refurbishment is to take place to improve capacity and efficiency of facility.

Table 5.1 Contributions reflecting scale and scope of development

No of bedrooms	1	2	3	4	5+
Assumed no of residents[32]	1.5	2	2.3	3	4
Charge per dwelling (per person charge of £433) for extension or new build	£650	£866	£996	£1,299	£1732
Refurbishment Costs assessed at 50% of extension / new build cost	£325	£433	£498	£650	£866

Funding

5.8 The developer contributions are unlikely to cover the full cost of new provision or extension. Funding of the community infrastructure is likely to come from a variety of sources, including developer contributions, local and County council, parish council, Sport England, CSP and other funding sources yet to be identitified. We understand that the CSP and the Council are about to embark on a more detailed assessment of infrastructure delivery, and this is likely to include a means of prioritisation and funding.

Policy Suggestions for Draft Core Strategy

5.9 The findings from this study will support the development of the Core Strategy and developer contributions policy, as it provides an assessment of existing capacity, need, new standards of requirements and delivery options for proposed new development[33].

[32] Based on information provided by District Council (basis used for outdoor sports facilities charge).

[33] Note this will only relate to community infrastructure researched as part of this study and does not include wider community infrastructure provision such as libraries, education, outdoor sports etc.

5.10 The authority should include a policy on developer contributions in the LDF Core Strategy that seeks to meet the needs arising as a result of the development. Within the supporting text of the policy, the type of community infrastructure to be provided should be made clear. The findings in table 4.1.setting out the requirements for each settlement could be included within the accompanying infrastructure delivery plan for the emerging LDF Core Strategy.

5.11 The council may wish to include a note within the policy text stating that it will be at the discretion of the Council to decide, with reference to evidence of identified needs, what community infrastructure requirements will have priority when determining planning applications.

5.12 It is likely that delivery of infrastructure, particularly the 'bigger elements' could take longer than five years. We suggest the LA should be able to hold onto developer contributions funding for some seven to ten years and if the scheme is not completed by then, then the funding will need to returned back to developer.

Monitoring and Annual Review

5.13 Given the focus on delivery based on local needs assessment, then a clear monitoring mechanism will be required to ensure that funds collected for a specific infrastructure proposal are clearly used for that purpose and if it is not, these contributions will need to be returned to the developer.

5.14 There is also a need for regular review to ensure that the cost estimates keep abreast of changes in inflation and costs changes via a regular review of the BCIS cost estimates

Delivery and Study Recommendations

5.15 An important recommendation from this study is the need for the Council and its Partners to put in place a delivery plan that will show how '*identified deficiencies resulting from new growth will be catered for*'[34]. As part of this study assessment, discussion on delivery options has already commenced with key stakeholders and lead members. The task now is to follow though the delivery actions discussed for each of the directions of growth requirement. The following table lists the main study recommendations for taking forward the delivery plan:

Table 5.2 Taking Forward Delivery - Study Recommendations

1.Member Agreement and Delivery Plan
An early task as part of the development and review of the LDF Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan, will be to seek agreement to the proposed infrastructure requirements identified in this study as part of the Council investment plans and set up a clear remit for key stakeholders who have been involved in this study to develop the delivery plans further in preparation for implimentation as growth need arises.
2. Rural Centres – Careful Timing of Intervention Required

[34] Inspector's comments – see paragraph 2.4.

For the rural centres, detailed development requirements stemming from growth for the community infrastructure will be developed at a pre –application stage by the local authority in partnership with the Parish Councils and the appropriate management agent of the facility. There is a balance between obtaining and developing detailed costing information too early and raising community concerns / expectations too soon and preparing for detailed planning applications in a timely manner. In most cases the requirment will be to refurbish existing provision to make more efficient use of space and accommodate more users.

3. For the Rest – Further Assessment Work will Help Shape Delivery Plans

For the rest of the growth in the key rural centres such as Broughton Astely, Lutterworth, and the Leicester Fringe and Market Harborough sub regional centre, the infrastructure requirement stemming from the growth entails either improving (extending) or creating additional new indoor provision. Here the delivery process is likely to be led by the Council with a range of appropriate partners.

Further work is needed in assessing various delivery options[35] for each 'location', taking account of scope to expand existing provision, new stand alone provision and how best to optimise the location of any new provision to ensure the catchment is best served and delivery will be sustainable/ self financing in the longer term.

4. Delivery and Managament Options Require Futher Thought

The delivery options will need to explore management options for the infrastructure, such as the creation of a social enterprise, or extension of the Harborough District Leisure Trust / Serco or parish council as responsible body for the infrastructure. It will be important to ensure that new infrastructure will be capable of absorbing revenue / management costs created by the expanded / new facilities.

5. Review Charging Mechanism Over Time

Over time, the Council may also wish to consider developing a different charging mechanism that provides greater flexibility. As explained in Section 2, the current plans are to gradually 'phase out' S106 contributions in favour of the CiL (or SULT), and so after 2014, there will be a limilation on the pooling of infrastructure contributions from five developments. However for the timebeing, a charge per dwelling is set out in table 5.1 reflecting the scale of development.

6. Development Economics and Viability Could Lead to some Difficult Prioritisation

It is also important to note, that the charge stemming from this assessment is one of many other charges, and the Council may, in the current economic climate, have to prioritise what infrastructure is considered essential and must be delivered within any developer contributions.

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[35] We have already discussed various options with the leisure services manager.

APPENDIX ONE

List of Consultees

We are grateful for the time and input provided by the following consultees in informing the study findings.

Organisation /Venue	Contact Name	Interviewed
Harborough District Council - Client Team	Michael Freeman & Steve Pointer	Various
Billesdon - Coplow Centre	Christine Mann	03/09/10
Broughton Astley Village Hall	Christine Lord	01/09/10
Fleckney Village Hall	Karen Preston	02/09/10
Husbands Bosworth - Turville Memorial Hall	Claire Kennedy	01/09/10
Lutterworth Town Hall	Ann Sykes &Tim Fisher	08/09/10 16/10/10
Scraptoft Village Hall	Mrs Poulton	01/09/10
Thurnby & Bushby Community Centre	Violet Armstrong	02/09/10
Thurnby Memorial Hall	Carol Branson	09/09/10
Ullesthorpe Memorial Hall	Chris Dodd	27/08/10
Lead Members - Harborough District Council	Jeanette Ackerley & Amanda Burell	22/09/10
Leicestershire & Rutland Sports Partnership	David Stock	Various meetings
Harborough District Leisure Services Manager	Jayne Wisely	Various meetings
Leicestershire & Rutland Rural Community Council	Kevin Butcher	12/10/10
Sport England	Steve Beard	September 2010

APPENDIX TWO

Village Hall Survey Summaries

Billesdon (Rural Centre)

Indoor community facilities at Billedon are comprised of the Coplow Centre which provides a sports hall and meeting rooms and the Baptist Chapel and Old School which also provide smaller meeting rooms.

The Coplow Centre was opened in 1996 on Uppingham Road and provides a main hall and a separate lounge/meeting room. There is a bar, kitchen and two changing rooms with showers. The main hall can seat up to 150 people and the lounge up to 37 and sports hall is single badminton court size. The facility provides 40 parking spaces.

Groups currently using the centre include the Brownies, Women's Institute, Drama Society, Pantomime Group and Mums and Tots. The centre is also used for art classes and a variety of sport and exercise groups including tennis lessons, bowling, circuit training and keep fit. The main hall can be fitted with a marquee lining for functions including parties and wedding receptions.

The centre opens between 9am and 11pm everyday of the week. There is a very high level of usage meaning that bookings are being turned away particularly on weekday evenings when the hall is at 100% capacity during peak times. The period between September and December is also generally very busy. The centre could take more bookings but only on one weekday afternoon and at weekends.

The conditions of the facilities at the Coplow Centre were generally rated as good by our interviewee. The overall condition of the building was described as "excellent". The interior has been redecorated this year and the exterior was re-painted in 2008. However, the centre does suffer from a shortage of space for storage and the kitchen, though well equipped, is considered to be too small. The centre has previously proposed an £80,000 extension to provide additional storage space and to extend the kitchen area. However, this was dependent on a Lottery grant of £50,000 which the centre was unable to secure. A much smaller extension is now being considered of approximately 1.8m by 3.6m to provide additional storage. The committee would also like to improve the changing room areas and replace the existing showers.

Billesdon Parish Plan (2006) identified that a third more of the Parish residents would use the Coplow Centre if it extended the range of facilities – the shortage of space was identified as an issue in meeting greater demand. A range of new activities including sports, learning, dance, music and singing were identified.

Summary: **The Coplow Centre in Billesdon** is a very popular and important facility with identified demand for more provision. The Centre is operating at capacity and is struggling to meet existing demand from the local community. Any growth will need an extension of the Centre to provide additional meeting space and enlarged kitchen

facilities.

The indoor sports provision will need to increase from the current single court hall to a two court hall to serve the current and expanding needs of the settlement. This may necessitate expanding upwards as there does not appear to be scope to expand at ground floor level.

Broughton Astley (Key Rural Centre)

Broughton Astley is a key rural centre with an existing population of nearly 9000. Indoor community facilities are provided at the modern village hall which serves as a joint sports hall and meeting rooms. There is also a Scouts Hall within the village.

The large, purpose-built Broughton Astley village hall on Station Road was opened in 1995. It comprises two halls and 2/3 meeting rooms. The largest hall can seat a maximum of 180 people and measures 16.50 metres by 9.92 metres. The smaller hall measures 8.72 metres by 8.75 metres and can seat up to 80 people. Meeting Room 1 can hold 40 people and Meeting Room 2 up to 20 people. A third meeting room can accommodate 8 people. There are bar and kitchen facilities with 53 spaces to the car park.

The village hall is used by a wide variety of groups including a Pre-School group, Mums and Tots, the Women's Institute, a Youth Club and Weight Watchers. There are also marshall art classes, a football club and a number of dance lessons including two ballet groups, salsa and line dancing. The hall is also used for public meetings and functions, including children's parties and wedding receptions.

The hall is open for hire between 8am and 11.30pm every day of the week. There are currently problems in accommodating demand and groups and individuals seeking weeknight bookings are frequently turned away. Use of the hall at peak times is almost 100%. The hall has a waiting list of five groups who are seeking to use the facilities. Additional bookings can only realistically be accommodated at quieter weekend times.

Our interviewee rated the size of the venue, it layout, the condition of the building and disabled access as very good and thereby meeting nearly all existing needs. The condition of furnishings and equipment, kitchen and toilet facilities were considered to be adequate. Overall the existing facilities are considered to be adequate for existing needs and there are currently no plans for refurbishment or extension. However, a bid has previously been made to the Big Lottery Fund to finance an extension and the hall committee are mindful of further demands that might be placed on the hall by the future growth of Broughton Astley.

Summary: The Village Hall at Broughton Astley is well used and any growth of the settlement is likely to require the provision of additional space for indoor community use. The Hall is currently at capacity and is not always able to meet the requirements of local groups.

This key rural centre of this immense size has no existing sports facilities, and this gap has been identified as a key priority for future delivery from all stakeholders. The overall recommendation is to provide a four court hall that will serve existing and new growth proposed at Broughton Astley and free up some space at the village hall..

Fleckney (Rural Centre)

Fleckney is served by the village hall which provides meeting and function rooms and the Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre provides a sports hall at Leicester Road.

The village hall is located on School Street and offers a main hall, two meeting rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities and car parking. The entire venue can hold up to 250 people with the main hall seating a maximum of 150, the larger meeting room 70 people and the smaller meeting room 20 people.

The hall is very well used by a playgroup, Rainbows, Beavers, Brownies and Guides, by a music group, worship group, kitchen club, toddlers group, drama group and history society. A range of keep fit classes are also held including Marshall Arts, circuit training and two Yoga groups. The hall also takes bookings for meetings, events and functions. Opening hours are 8am to 12pm every weekday and facility is in use most of the time, meaning that some requests cannot be accommodated and the booking clerk would struggle to fit in any more regular bookings. Peak time usage is therefore at 100% capacity.

The standard of the facilities at the hall are considered to be good in terms of its size and layout, its furnishings, facilities and access. The condition of the building itself is rated as adequate given its age.

Fleckney Parish Plan (2010) identifies the need for more community facilities, especially those targeted at young people and for leisure use. This included demand for a youth shelter / meeting place for young people which is identified as a high priority in the action plan.

Summary: The Village Hall in Fleckney is well used and any growth of the settlement is likely to require the provision of additional space for indoor community use. The Hall is currently at capacity and is not always able to meet the requirements of local groups.

The village has a one court sports hall facility, and the aim will be to encourage the refurbishment of the current village hall to cater for the new growth proposed at Fleckney and look to expand the current sports facilities too...

Husbands Bosworth (Rural Centre)

The Turville Memorial Hall and the Church Hall on Honeypot Lane both provide meeting and function rooms for the use of the local community in Husbands Bosworth. The Memorial Hall, built at the turn of the twentieth century, is the main community facility within Husbands Bosworth. It provides two rooms, a main hall that can accommodate around 100 people and a meeting room for up to 30 people. There are kitchen and toilet facilities together with parking for 20 vehicles.

Groups that regularly use the Memorial Hall include the Rainbows, Brownies, the Historical Society, craft groups, a ballroom dancing group, exercise classes. The Hall is also used for badminton and bowls. There are currently no regular evening slots available for new groups and events and we estimate peak time usage to be at approximately 90%.

The size of the venue, its toilet and kitchen facilities are rated as being good in that they meet nearly all the needs of existing users. The layout of the building, its condition and the condition of furnishings and equipment were described as being "adequate" for existing needs. Disabled access to the Hall was rated as poor on the basis that the gravel path to the exterior is difficult for wheelchair users. The Hall has existing plans to provide a new hard surfaced path to improve disabled access. The committee has secured a grant to replace the windows of the Hall and would like to carry out internal refurbishments. An extension to the Hall is considered to be possible but may not be feasible due to the need to maintain access.

Summary: The Memorial Hall at Husbands Bosworth is at capacity at peak times, and additional development will need to contribute to refurbishment to improve the efficiency of the capacity of hall.

Lutterworth (Key Rural Centre)

Lutterworth is the second largest settlement within the District and is served by a range of indoor community facilities. The historic Town Hall provides meeting and function rooms, as does the Masonic Hall. Lutterworth Sports Centre provides a sports hall, swimming pool and fitness suite. Other public meeting spaces are available at the Methodist and United Reformed churches, the Cricket Pavillion and at the One Stop Shop in Lutterworth town centre.

Lutterworth Town Hall is a nineteenth century building occupying a prominent position in the Market Square. It is Grade II Listed. It provides two meeting rooms – the Hansom Room at first floor and the Denbigh Room at ground floor. The Hansom Room has a wooden sprung floor and can accommodate up to 100 people standing. It measures approximately 15 metres by 10 metres. The Denbigh Room is smaller and can hold 20-30 people seated or 50 standing. There are also kitchen and toilet facilities whilst the first floor is served by a lift which can be used by wheelchair users.

The Town Hall is used by a wide variety of groups. The most regular uses are Age Concern which use the facilities all day Thursday and hold drop in sessions on Fridays, St Johns Ambulance and the Co-op who organise art classes and whose Women's Guild use the venue. There are also several dance classes, Pilates, Yoga, indoor bowling, coffee mornings, the Town Band and Rotary Club events. The Hall is also used by a Community Church, for political surgeries and wedding receptions.

Bookings are occasionally turned away due to high demand (week day evenings). During peak times the town hall is in use approximately 90% of the time.

The size of the Town Hall, its layout, the condition of furnishings and equipment, kitchen facilities and disabled access were all rated as very good. The condition of the building and the toilet facilities were considered to be adequate. Recent work has been carried out to refurbish the kitchen, replace equipment and carpets, and paint the interior of the building. Plastering work is also scheduled to deal with damp, the building being vulnerable to flooding.

The Lutterworth Town Plan (2010) indentified the need to provide leisure facilities for all age groups and the preparation of a youth strategy. A key requirements stemming from Lead Members knowledgeable about the area is the need to compliement the existing community facilities with a performance / drama space, possibly as an expansion of the new Lutterworth Leisure Centre. Further work will be required to fully assess this requirement.

Summary: The Town Hall in Lutterworth is well used for a range of community uses, and there are a number of other similar meeting hall type community facilities in the town, there is also a relatively new leisure and sports centre.

Based on our consultation and desk review, the community infrastructure requirement in Lutterworth is to provide drama space as an extension of the leisure centre.

Thurnby, Bushby and Scraptoft (Leicester Fringe)

Thurnby and the adjacent villages of Bushby and Scraptoft are served by three venues that provide meeting and function rooms at the Thurnby and Bushby Community Centre, Thurnby Memorial Hall and Scraptoft Village Hall.

Thurnby and Bushby Community Centre

The Thurnby and Bushby Community Centre opened in 2006 on the site of the former Hill Court flats. It forms part of a large scheme comprising 24 flats and a surgery. The centre provides a main hall measuring approximately 9m by 4.5m and a smaller meeting room of 3 m by 3m. There are also kitchen and toilet facilities. The centre hosts a games afternoon, Sunday Tea, beading workshop and meetings of the Neighbourhood Watch. The police use the smaller meeting room as an office.

All facilities are rated as good except the kitchen which is noted to be small. The condition of furnishings and equipment is also thought to be adequate rather than good. The community centre is part of a shared building including residential flats and therefore it is unlikely that extension or redevelopment would be possible at any future point.

Thurnby Memorial Hall

Thurnby Memorial Hall provides two halls and two meeting rooms with kitchen and toilet facilities and two car parks. The largest hall will hold up to 150 people, the smaller hall 60 and the meeting rooms 25 and 30 people each. Three of the rooms are located on the ground floor with the fourth at first floor. Children under the age of 8 are unable to use the room at first floor due to health and safety issues with the stairs. The hall was extended in 1989 to provide the second meeting room.

The Memorial Hall is used by a variety of groups. The Church hold their Sunday School there and social events. There are two art groups, a table tennis group, Yoga, Bingo, and flower group whilst the Womens Institute, Mothers Union and Ladies Monday Club use the Hall for meetings. The venue is also available for parties and other private functions. Weeknights are the most popular times and the smaller of the halls is particularly busy. Peak time usage equates to approximately 90%. Bookings are occasionally turned away;

usually because the facilities are not suited to the proposed activities. The Hall has been unable to accommodate indoor bowls and a tap dance class on this basis.

Our interviewee rated the size of the venue as being adequate though not always big enough for some private functions. The layout of the building was considered poor in part due to the limited access to the first floor room. The condition of the building and its furnishings were considered to be generally adequate, as were the kitchen facilities. The toilets were noted to be in good condition and disabled access was generally adequate although there are outstanding issues with an emergency exit that exits into the grounds of the neighbouring school. The Hall also suffers problems with residents and parents of school children using the car park.

Both the kitchen and toilets have been upgraded over the last few years though the former is still lacking in some equipment. A new boiler has been installed and works have been carried out to repair the chimney. Works that are noted to be required at present include new windows to the back room and replacement of the dormer windows, painting of the interior, security improvements, new flooring to the first floor and some repairs to the roof. It is not considered that it would be feasible to extend the Hall as there is no available space within the plot and it is also noted that the building is located within a Conservation Area.

Scraptoft Village Hall

Scraptoft Village Hall is located on Scraptoft Rise and provides two rooms the largest of which can hold between 65 and 70 people. There are kitchen and toilet facilities but no dedicated car parking. The Hall is currently used for Yoga classes, by the Wine Circle, Craft Group, for a Whist Drive, Boogie Babies, the Women's Institute, the Parish Council, public meetings and functions. At peak times the hall is in use approximately 80% of the time.

All the facilities at the Village Hall were considered to be good and meeting nearly all existing needs. A new kitchen has recently been installed, there is new flooring, improved disabled access, new piping for the central heating system and a Hearing Loop system has been installed in the main hall. The Hall committee are currently fundraising to provide new flooring in the kitchen and toilets. Negotiations are also at an early stage to possibly provide the Hall with some car parking on the adjacent allotment land.

Summary: **The Leicester Fringe settlements** are served by three venues that provide indoor community facilities. Across the three venues there is limited capacity to meet growth requirements and the area, being on the fringe of Leicester, is sometimes in danger of being treated as being 'served by provision in Leicester'. Our consultation and research has identified a need to provide carefully located indoor sports facility that can serve as a local hub to meet the needs of the northern rural areas, the Fringe settlements and the proposed growth. New growth will contribute towards the funding of indoor sports provision to service this 'often forgotten area'.

Ullesthorpe (Rural Centre)

5.16 Ullesthorpe is served by a Memorial Hall that provides meeting and function rooms. The Ullesthorpe Village Memorial Hall provides a main hall with stage and a separate meeting room with kitchen and toilet facilities and external car parking. The main hall can seat up to

159 people and measures approximately 25 metres by 10 metres, including the stage. The smaller meeting room measures 5 metres by 5 metres.

5.17 The Hall hosts a yoga group and baby sensory class on a weekly basis, is used fortnightly for a Whist Drive and by Evergreens and on a monthly basis by the Women's Institute. Occasional events include quiz nights, barn dances, bingo nights, Parish Council meetings, use by a Theatre Group, presentations, children's birthday parties and wedding receptions. At peak times the hall is in use approximately 80% of the time. There is capacity to accommodate additional booking outside of the busiest days which are generally Mondays and Wednesdays.

5.18 In terms of the size of the venue, its layout and the condition of furnishings and equipment, these were rated as adequate. The condition of the building, kitchen facilities, toilet facilities and disabled access were rated as good. Works that were reported to be currently required include repainting, the updating of kitchen equipment and the re-surfacing of the car park. Equipment is currently being stored in sheds and a garage so an extension to facilitate additional storage would be considered ideal. The Memorial Hall's plot is of sufficient size to accommodate some form of extension to the existing building if required.

Summary: Ullesthorpe memorial hall is currently at capacity, and would benefit from, some internal refurbishment work to improve efficiency of the building and capacity at peak periods particularly to meet the needs stemming from future growth.