

Appendix 6 - Social and Community Uses

Social and Community Uses

1) Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of any premises resulting in the loss of social or community facilities, assets of community value, or services that support the local community, will not be permitted unless:

a) A replacement facility is provided on-site, offering a level of accessibility and standard of provision at least equal to that of the existing facility which would continue to meet the need of the local population; or

b) The facility or service concerned will be adequately supplied or met by an easily accessible existing or new facility in an appropriate alternative location, served by sustainable modes of transport; or

c) It can be demonstrated that there is no current or forecast future demand for the use or an alternative social or community use through provision of marketing information and an impact assessment to show why the site cannot support the social or community use and identify impacts on users; And

d) The premises or site cannot readily be used for, or converted to, any other community facility.

2) Where a use is no longer economically viable, the Council will require supporting information setting out reasons as to why the use is no longer viable and cannot be made viable in the foreseeable future. This may include details of previous use, accounts and marketing information demonstrating that the premises has been marketed for use as a community facility for a reasonable length of time and that no suitable user has been/or is likely to be found.

New Provision and Enhancement

3) The council will support proposals to provide new and/or extended or enhanced social and community infrastructure facilities and their co-location with other social and community uses, subject to an assessment against all relevant Local Plan policies.

4) Social and community infrastructure will be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or section 106 planning obligations (as appropriate). In addition, new and/or extended on-site provision of social and community infrastructure may be required as part of the supporting infrastructure for significant new housing and mixed-use development proposals where it is necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development on local services and meet the needs of occupiers.

5) Development resulting in the provision of new social and community facilities which are not generally accessible or available to the public, such as school sports facilities, will be required to enter into Community Use Agreements to allow and promote access by local communities to the facility.

6) Proposals for new or improved social or community facilities, including extensions to existing facilities will be supported where they are in accordance with relevant objectives and other policies of the Local Plan and:

a) Are located in areas convenient for the community they would serve and be accessible by a range of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport;

b) Provide spaces and buildings which are inclusive, accessible, flexible and sustainable and which meet the needs of intended users;

c) Are designed and sited to maximise shared use of the facility; and

d) A strategic or local need can be identified for the new/improved social or community facility.

Reasoned Justification

6.1 It is vital that all residents have good access to community, leisure and cultural facilities and it is recognised that the loss of these facilities can have a detrimental impact upon an individual's quality of life. Social and community facilities, whether publicly or privately owned, can be subject to development pressures from alternative uses. It is therefore important that where appropriate such facilities are retained within the local community.

6.2 In addition, ensuring that new development is supported by a suitable level of social and community infrastructure is important not only for the quality of life of residents in new developments, but also for the existing population who should not see a reduction in the quality of their services, their health and wellbeing or their experience of living in Three Rivers.