

Shaping our New Communities 2014-2026

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Shaping Our New Communities: 2014 to 2026

Help create strong, sustainable new SDL communities that are vibrant and well integrated with surrounding towns and villages

	Involve the community in discussions about SDL development	Support creation of thriving, community facilities that can sustain themselves in the long term	Help make the new communities strong, vibrant and well-integrated with the rest of the borough	Find the best ways to run community assets for the benefit of local people in the long term
In the next 3 years we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link consultation and engagement work with SDL and Community Forums Communications Plan • Provide on-going support to SDL Parish and Community Forums • Increase understanding of local people's aspiration and need • Support Neighbourhood Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to prove need for Community facilities • Learn from similar developments in UK and further afield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that facilities provided work for local people and can sustain themselves financially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a plan is in place to resource community development support in each SDL area from first build phases • Support new communities in engaging with their new built, social, and cultural environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Voluntary and Community Sector groups to expand services to support new communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local people and organisations to find the best option for each SDL area • Support development of local groups that are able to run community assets
We will have succeeded if, by 2015:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People feel positively about the opportunities to get involved • SDL development reflects aspirations of Neighbourhood Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding has been secured for good quality community facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community facilities are well used and financially viable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New residents feel positively about their new community and feel welcomed and supported • Community facilities are being well used and there is local cultural and social activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary sector is active within new communities and residents are aware of services and opportunities to contribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community facilities are being managed in the community's best interest, or a robust plan is in place for this to happen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community led groups are establishing with an interest in managing community assets

I. Introduction

Wokingham is a picturesque and prosperous Borough with a strong heritage. It enjoys excellent national and international transport links, high employment and continues to be regarded as one of the best places to live in the Country. It is characterised by outstanding schools, historic market villages and areas of outstanding natural beauty and is one of the safest places in the Country.

Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy 2010 set out a vision for how the borough should develop in the period to 2026 and how the council aims to protect and enhance the good quality of life enjoyed in the borough. The strategy was the result of extensive consultation. A key message from the community was that development should be concentrated in a few locations in order to i) protect the character of the existing residential areas, and ii) ensure the resulting communities would be of high quality and infrastructure rich.

The Core Strategy, its accompanying Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and the subsequent Managing Development Delivery Plan Document (Revised July 2013) identify four Strategic Development Locations which will accommodate the majority of 13000 further homes to be built across the borough to 2026. In addition to homes, these areas will also provide the infrastructure required to support and make a success of these new developments, and offset their impact on existing local communities.

The purpose of the Shaping Our New Communities strategy is to formalise Wokingham Borough Council's position on how we:

- i. continue to involve the community in planning stages of the four SDL communities
- ii. support community development within SDLs and their integration with neighbouring communities
- iii. Provide the right community facilities for the new SDL neighbourhoods, with a particular emphasis on proposed multi-use Community Centres
- iv. develop options for future management of these facilities

This strategy sets out a framework for establishing strong, vibrant and integrated communities in each of the four new development areas. It has been developed with significant input from relevant service areas across the council, and draws on learning from local and national experiences as well as local consultation to provide a series of recommendations and proposals for further work.

Whilst the emphasis of this strategy is focussed on and around our four SDL communities, it is recognised that this work sets a precedent for ways of working with our evolving communities across the wider Borough in the future.

II. Aims and Objectives

Aim: Facilitate the development of strong, sustainable new SDL communities that are vibrant and well integrated with surrounding towns and villages

Objectives

1. Involve the community in discussions about SDL development
2. Support creation of thriving community facilities that can sustain themselves in the long term
3. Help make new communities strong, vibrant and well-integrated with existing communities
4. Identify appropriate approach for sustainable community asset management

The strategy summary sheet on [page 2](#), above, details the aims, objectives and outcomes we seek to achieve through the implementation of the action plan attached as Appendix A.

III. The local policy context

Wokingham Borough Council's Vision: The aims and objectives of this strategy align with the following priorities and underpinning principles of the Council's Vision:

Priority 2. Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth We will work with residents, businesses and partners to develop and deliver an affordable program of regeneration in our towns and villages across the Borough.... We will assist our communities increase trade and provide amenities in the villages that people value. We will focus on supporting business growth.

Priority 3. Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development: We will concentrate our efforts to plan and deliver services which will support appropriate design and development, creating thriving communities.

It further fits with the vision's underpinning principle of : *Improv[ing] health, wellbeing and quality of life*

Core Strategy and its Policy on Inclusive Communities (CP2) focuses on the need for new development to take account of groups of particular shared characteristics, such as age, special needs, and black and minority ethnic groups.

Managing Development Delivery Plan Document (Revised July 2013) which builds on the approach and objectives set out in the Core Strategy including an aim to protect the underlying character of the Borough through improvements to the built environment, ensure good design in keeping with the area and maintain distinct identities of the Borough's settlements.

Health and Well Being Strategy (2013): Wokingham Boroughs Council's (draft) Health and Wellbeing Strategy states:

*"The health of our community is influenced by many factors including feeling safe; the ability to live an active life; ...opportunities for social interactions... Health and wellbeing in the Borough will be approached from a broad perspective with both the physical environment and community infrastructure being key themes throughout."*¹

The emphasis of this Shaping Our New Communities strategy on both physical, built community facilities and support for the "softer" aspects of facilitating social infrastructure,

¹ Wokingham Borough Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-14 (Draft)

demonstrates its potential to contribute across all 4 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy's key themes:

- Promoting good health throughout life; Building health and wellbeing into new communities
- Improving life chances
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Older people and those with long term conditions

Further WBC Context: This strategy has been developed in the context of the development of WBC's Corporate Asset Planning discussions, Open Space and Sports Facility Strategy (2013), Review of Children's Centres and Youth Provision, and the development of Primary and Secondary School Briefs and Specifications.

IV. National Context

Localism: The Localism Act 2011 sets out a series of measures which aim shift influence from central government and instead empower local people and their locally elected representatives. These include: new freedoms and flexibilities for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals; reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective, and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally. Specific initiatives include the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning, and Community Rights to Bid and Build.

The act sets a strong backdrop for the objectives of this strategy which sets out proposals for how the Council can optimise opportunities for community stakeholders to influence the planning and delivery of community infrastructure and services.

21st Century Garden Cities and Suburbs: Since 2011 momentum has been building around a policy shift towards planned new large scale developments which build on learning from 20th century experiences of Garden Cities and post war New Towns. There is clear connectivity between themes emerging from Garden Cities learning and the aspirations of this strategy which are picked up throughout the document.

Garden Cities are considered to have been among the first attempts at sustainable development of new communities. Key Garden City Principles are outlined in Appendix B.

The TCPA's report, "*Creating Garden Cities and suburbs today*" suggests that in many cases similar principles can be applied to large scale urban extensions (of greater relevance to three of our four development areas). It makes the case for:

- New communities offering "a powerful opportunity to introduce structures that put local people at the heart of community governance and in ownership of community assets"²; and
- the value of Community Development in helping new communities to establish and develop social networks, the initial lack of which has been identified as being a key contributing factor to the New Town Blues phenomenon in post war New Towns.

² *Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs Today*, TCPA, May 2012, p9.

Although a more recent development, the recommendations of the 21st Century Garden Cities literature is an opportune fit with Wokingham's own aspirations to create exemplary new communities and offers useful guidance which is drawn on throughout this strategy.

V. Methodology:

Stage 1: National Learning - Overview of good practice research

Our first step in approaching this strategy was to carry out research into learning from other developments in recent years. In the course of this research we have considered learning from more than 17 new development sites across England. Predominantly this was a desk research exercise, with follow up email and phone contact to those examples that seemed most relevant to Wokingham's situation. This work is referred to throughout the strategy, but a more detailed summary of case studies is available in Appendix C. The main body of this work was carried out between October and December 2012.

Further approaches have been made to a number of other Local Authorities in relation to specific aspects of this strategy work (such as evidence for the size of community buildings, income generation models and further research into Community Development Trusts). These approaches sit outside this original piece of work and are referenced throughout the strategy, rather than in the main case study report.

Stage 2: Stakeholder Consultation

Due to the nature of this strategy and its firm emphasis on supporting communities it was considered appropriate to carry out extensive stakeholder consultation in the early stages of its evolution. The majority of this consultation took place between January and April 2013, and sought to engage WBC Officers and members, the general public, key community and voluntary organisations, Parish Councils, and other organisations and bodies involved in delivering or commissioning relevant public services. In this way we hope to have ensured that the strategy has evolved to reflect stakeholder views, aspirations and requirements wherever practicable. A summary report on the approach taken to this engagement is appended to this document as Appendix D.

This strategy has been compiled to draw on the research and stakeholder consultation outlined above and combines it with:

- our own expertise and local learning experiences
- the context of proposals for the SDL communities as already determined by Wokingham Borough's Core Strategy 2010 and its subsequent Supplementary Planning Documents, and associated planning consents granted to date (End of May 2013).

VI. Structure of this document:

Within this strategy document, each objective has a dedicated chapter which considers the issues in relation to local experiences, national research and consultation findings, and closes with conclusions, recommendations, and identified areas for further work. A table summarising conclusions and recommendations is provided under section 5 to provide ease of cross reference, and areas of further work are incorporated into an action plan attached as Appendix A. This will form a live document to be progressed primarily via the SDL Leisure and Community Facilities Officer Group, with *quarterly* progress reports to the Sustainable Communities Implementation Working Group.

VII. Resourcing Challenges:

This document sets out aspirations for developing successful newly expanded communities within the Borough's four SDL areas and in doing so raises a number of resourcing challenges. It is recognised that we will need to identify creative solutions to these challenges, without Council budget growth. Ultimately major costs will be covered within S106 and CIL contributions.

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Objective 1: Involve the community in discussions about SDL development

1.1 Context

Involving and empowering new communities is a central theme of the 21st Century Garden Cities approach. It recommends that community representation should be considered from the outset, *“whether it be a local authority strategic board or a separate delivery vehicle... This will help to build social capital by supporting interaction and involving local people in planning as well as in running services”*³, and goes further to suggest that a community company established in the early stages could gradually develop into a long term management organisation⁴, an idea which is further explored under Chapter 4, section 4.2.6 of this Strategy.

1.2 SDL Community Involvement to date

Core strategy and masterplanning: WBC has taken significant steps to consult and engage community stakeholders which date back to the extensive public consultation which accompanied the development of the Core Strategy.

1.2.1 SDL Communications Plan: An SDL and Community Forums’ Communication Plan was developed in 2012 to ensure the appropriate communications methods are used “to support the development of strong and successful communities within Wokingham Borough that are integrated with existing towns and villages”.

The plan proposes a range of formats and methods that can be used to target various stakeholder audiences for different purposes. A key part of the communications approach taken has been the establishment of SDL Parish and Community Forums (see details below), and the Communications plan formalises a commitment to use the Forums as a vehicle for information sharing.

1.2.2 SDL Parish and Community Forums: In 2012, SDL Parish and Community Forums were established to facilitate ongoing dialogue between existing community stakeholders, WBC Councillors and Officers, and the development consortia. Initially established for invitees only, attendance has now been opened up to the general public. Meetings are held quarterly at a local venue and provide opportunities for information sharing and public debate of issues in relation to the developments as planning applications come forward and more detailed decisions need to be taken. However, the forum has no formal influence or decision making powers. Final decisions are taken by WBC in negotiation with the development consortia.

1.2.3 Neighbourhood Planning: Currently Neighbourhood Development Plans are in development in areas that incorporate part or all of two of our SDL areas: Arborfield and Barkham, and Shinfield (South of M4) respectively. In Shinfield themed Working Groups have been discussing issues and proposals which are often pertinent to the SDL

³ *Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs today, A Guide for Councils, TCPA, March 2013*, p12, Creating a sense of belonging

⁴ *Ibid*,

development, particularly in relation to sports and recreational facilities. These have been beneficial in providing an additional, independent forum for wider community discussions. However, these groups currently lack a formal link with either the South of M4 SDL Community Forum, or decision making processes within WBC more broadly. In some cases this has already led to frustration on the part of community stakeholders, who feel issues have already been discussed.

1.2.4 The steps indicated above show a willingness to inform and listen to ideas and concerns from local stakeholders. However, it is important to acknowledge that all decision making power rests with WBC. Current arrangements do not significantly empower community stakeholders in their own right.

1.3 National Learning: Models of Community Engagement in planning stages of new communities

In many of the examples we researched, information on this aspect of the development process was the hardest to obtain of four Strategy objectives we were researching against. However, a handful of examples did emerge and are presented below:

- **North Littlehampton** – A one off Community Planning weekend initiated discussions, resulting in the establishment of North Littlehampton Community Forum as an open public meeting to discuss regeneration proposals as they developed. The Forum was accompanied by a newsletter produced by the developer, providing information and Q&As from the Forums, as well as publicising public events, such as next forum meetings and public exhibitions.
- **Wixams, Bedfordshire** – A Community Worker from Bedfordshire Rural Community Charity facilitated a series of feasibility events with local stakeholders and set up a residents group made up of people from surrounding existing communities, including parish council representatives, churches, and existing community facilities. This group worked closely with the developers and Local Authority planners to contribute to the “shaping” of the villages.
- **Caterham Barracks, Surrey** – Public involvement in planning future uses began when the MoD first publicised its withdrawal in the mid/ late ‘80s. The campaign was driven by local councillors and site was designated a conservation area, prior to the land being sold. By the time a Community Planning weekend was held in the mid ‘90s the community had already been consulted on models for land use. 1000+ people attended the weekend events. Continued community involvement was a key recommendation from the weekend:
 - A Steering Group was established and expanded into sub groups which worked up recommendations for re-use and management of various buildings which closely influenced S106 agreements⁵.
 - Establishment of a Community Development Trust was agreed. Developer conveyed buildings and pump priming money to CDT to develop them.

⁵ The Current Chief Executive of the Caterham Community Development Trust, described these groups as effectively “writing the S106 agreements”.

- **Whitehill Bordon Eco Town, East Hants.** A complex but highly participative model of a Delivery Board⁶, supported by five themed Specialist Groups⁷, and a Standing Conference⁸. The groups work up proposals relating to their specialism to discuss with the Standing Conference (acts as a sounding board) prior to proposals being submitted to the Delivery Board.

1.4 Stakeholder Feedback

For details of the Shaping Communities consultation process please refer to the Methodology section of the Introduction at page 7 above, and detailed consultation findings report attached as appendix D.

Suggestions were made for a wider range of communication methods, from traditional methods of mailshots, leaflet drops, newsletters and posters at key meeting points (local shops, etc) to more electronic contact via emails, e-newsletters, improvements to the WBC websites and better use of social media. An important suggestion included one centralised point of contact which holds information on each of the developments rather than across various websites (Parishes, Neighbourhood Planning, Residents Groups, Developers and WBC)

The need for the outcome of consultations/ influence on decision making to be fed back to residents/ stakeholders came out across various consultation sources, and more transparency around the plans. These came out particularly strongly in the Arborfield and SoM4 areas.

Interestingly, a significant number of respondees still expressed a general lack of awareness of information on the SDLs.

Specific Feedback from Town and Parish Consultation:

Community Forums: Initial approach of invitation only felt exclusive, some parishes were missed and started the forums on a bad footing; Sense of being talked at rather than engaged with on an equal footing (Parish Councils would prefer opportunities for working meetings as colleagues), and still often felt that points raised are not listened to or taken seriously. Concern that Community Forum discussion duplicates discussions within the Neighbourhood Planning process (Shinfield)⁹.

Statutory Planning Consultation: Timescales are often short and more time would be useful where possible. General desire to build relationships and work co-operatively with

⁶ Delivery Board Membership: Homes and Communities Agency; 2x District Councillors, Whitehill Town councillor, Project Director for the Eco-town (District Council employee), County councillor, Ministry of Defence, Chair of the Whitehill & Bordon Town Partnership, Chair or Vice Chair of each of 5 Specialist Groups

⁷ Anyone with an interest in the themes can be a member of a Specialist Groups: Economic Development, Sustainable Development, Housing, Infrastructure and Transport, Community facilities and amenities

⁸ Standing Conference membership: Up to three members of each of the five Specialist Groups; Up to five members from Town Council; All District Councillors for the affected ward; Seven members from non-government organisations not included in the above; One member from each of the eight parishes surrounding the town; One district councillor from each of the parishes listed above (total of eight district councilors); Around 10 spaces for interested individuals, groups or organisations not represented. E.g. Women's Institute or faith groups

⁹ See also discussion of this issue under 1.2.3 Neighbourhood Planning section above.

WBC but often feel their views are not taken on board. Also a strong concern from Arborfield/ Barkham that planning conditions should be enforced.

General Information sharing: Desire to share as much information as possible, and offers from many of the Parishes to make use of their newsletters, websites and other publications and local group contacts to assist with promotion of SDL and related news and activities. Mid to late 30s demographic was considered one of the hardest to reach – busy lives, time poor. Messages for this age group need to be succinct and targeted.

Wokingham Without Parish Council specifically requested an opportunity to influence S106 discussions with Developers.

1.5 Conclusions/ Recommended Options

- ❖ **SDL Communications Plan:** Plan may benefit from review to reflect findings from stakeholder consultation. In particular:
 - **SDL Community Forums:** Continue to increase the opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to agendas for SDL Community Forums, and to allow sufficient time for discussion. *Also consider using Exceptional meetings to ensure that time pressured matters have the opportunity to be discussed outside of the typical quarterly meeting timetable.*
 - Explore options for creating a **single online information point** which signposts to SDL information held on relevant community and developer websites
 - Further analysis of survey findings to identify best methods of targeting younger sections of the community.
 - Closing the loop – Identify new opportunities for feeding back on Stakeholder input
- ❖ **Neighbourhood Planning:** Clarify the relationship between Neighbourhood Planning Working Groups and the SDL Community Forums. This could link to the recommendation below.
- ❖ **Increase opportunity for real community stakeholder influence in line with 21st Century Garden City aspirations:** Provision of Community buildings and other community facilities, where decisions are still to be made, offer an opportunity for meaningful engagement and empowerment of community stakeholders to influence future negotiations in relation to these areas. This could include design and options for future management of the centre. See recommendations for working group proposals under sections 2,3 and 4

1.6 Areas for Further Work:

- Review SDL Communications Plan in relation to stakeholder feedback, to include: continued improvements to SDL Forums, explore options for single point of reference, targeted communication approaches to younger age ranges, and opportunities for feeding back information on stakeholder involvement has influenced decisions
- Clarify the relationship between Neighbourhood Planning Working Groups and the SDL Community Forums.
- Explore opportunities to provide greater community stakeholder influence over decision making process in relation to delivery of SDLs

Objective 2: Support creation of thriving, community facilities that can sustain themselves in the long term

2.1 Context:

Appendix 7 of Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy 2010 specifies community infrastructure requirements for the Strategic Development Locations to be funded by developer contributions. In addition to areas addressed under separate strategy work, the types of community facilities that should be provided for each SDL area are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

	Arborfield Garrison	North Wokingham	South Wokingham	South of M4
Multi Use Community Centre	Y	Y	Y	Y
Library	Y	N	N	Y
GP/ Dental surgery	Y	N	N	N
Faith provision	Y	Y	Y	Y
Neighbourhood Police Office	Y	N	Y	Y
Children's Centre	Y	N	Y	Y
Youth use	Y		Y	Y
Retail	Y	Y	Y	Y
Offices	Y		Y	Y
Supermarket	Y	N	N	Y
Early Years	Y		Y	Y

The below sections consider how we justify the requirements for facilities listed above to ensure that the end result is fit for purpose. It also considers long term viability in terms of income generation and running costs.

2.2 Evidencing community facility need:

Some facilities (libraries and sports halls) have national, per-capita standards in place. Other areas (multi-use community spaces for meeting, socialising or recreational activities and clubs such as community or village halls) have no such formal guidance, despite recognition that such spaces are invaluable to community development and cohesion, and match the 21st Century Garden Cities principle of *"strong local cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable neighbourhoods"*¹⁰. This presents both a challenge to those tasked with proposing reasonable levels of provision for a new area, and a potential weakness in the face of challenge by a developer who will be expected to fund the new facilities.

2.3 Initial WBC Officer work:

Between 2010 and 2011, a group of cross service WBC Officers developed usage projections and outline space requirements for the SDL Community Centre spaces. The

¹⁰ *Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs Today: A Guide for Councils*, TCPA, March 2013, p5

approach taken is expanded in Appendix F. However, this initial piece of work was subsequently felt to lack sufficient statistical data to support the proposed space requirements, and in one instance, the community building requested has been significantly scaled back in size on appeal. Additional work has therefore been carried out to research approaches taken by other local authorities, and to engage local stakeholders to understand what facilities existing residents value and aspirations for new facilities within the development areas. This is captured in sections below.

2.4 Local Learning: Provision of Community Facilities

In Woosehill only one of the four primary schools originally planned was delivered. This made sense for pupil numbers, but did not account for proposed dual use by the community of school premises and therefore caused gaps in community facilities which, despite subsequent developments¹¹, remains an issue, in particular for day time activities.

In Lower Earley, the lack of a focus for voluntary and community groups was quickly identified by the community and it was their campaigning which led to the establishment of the Earley Crescent Resource Centre, which is now highly valued across the Borough.

2.5 Local Learning: Costs and viability work

Wokingham Borough Council has a responsibility to ensure new Community Facilities have a minimal impact on the future public purse and are able to self-sustain once up and running.

The report in Appendix G outlines the main costs and income streams for a number of community facilities in the local area and gives an idea of typical pressures. Advice from the Community Council for Berkshire's Community Buildings Adviser outlined typical costs as: Staffing, Business Rates¹², utilities, insurances (buildings, contents, and public liability, Marketing and maintaining a website, Licences (Alcohol, Performing Rights), annual Fire Safety and fire alarm contracts and outdoor area safety (play area or recreation).

The report also compares cost per sqm across the different buildings. These ranged from £83.30/ sqm (Cornerstone Centre – Excluding staffing costs for Part Time Administrator) to £438.12/ sqm (Emmanuel Church). However, interpreting these figures requires consideration of a wide range of contextual information, and further work is need in the area.

2.6 National Learning

2.6.1 Size of Facilities

Of the 16+ new communities we researched in autumn 2012, at least 15 had provision for community meeting spaces. From the information gathered we have identified three approaches to justifying the size of community spaces:

¹¹ This includes a tennis club used also as a nursery, a community church, and very recently the Acorn Community Centre was constructed primarily as a resource for adult services but also as a community resource.

¹² *If the hall is registered as a charity it will receive 80% mandatory rate relief where uses qualify as charitable purposes*

1. *Like for Like Comparison*: Comparing provision for the new development with that of a similar sized existing settlement¹³.
2. *Size multiplier*: A number of local authorities have historically used a m² per capita or per dwelling multiplier to calculate S106 contributions for Community Centres or Village Halls as shown in Table 2 below. It is important to note that this is a crude tool which does not break down clearly around particular types of community use or allow for adjustment to reflect needs that may be specific to a local area. Comparison of these figures with proposals for SDL facilities are attached in Appendix F.

Table 2

Name	Size of Centre (m ²)	No of Dwellings	Multiplier per capita † (m ²)	Multiplier per dwelling (m ²)
Wycombe DC	Various	-	0.12	
Taunton Deane DC	Various	-	0.2	0.47
Reigate & Banstead	Various	-	0.2	0.5
Jennetts Park, Bracknell Forest BC	450	-	0.13	0.31
Examples of actual building sizes within specific developments				
West of Waterlooville (Winchester and Havant Councils)	720 community hall	3000	0.10 ¹⁴	0.24
West of Crawley, Horsham DC	700	2000	0.15	0.35
Wixams, Beds	479	c. 1000	0.2	0.48
Average			0.16	

3. A combination of comparison with existing provision and community consultation¹⁵

Learning point – consultation with existing communities: It is important to remember that the demographic of existing residents/ interest groups may not be representative of the incoming residents. New residents on the Wixams estate have since expressed disappointment that they were not able to shape their own facility. *Solution?*: A temporary community meeting space in the early stages of the development until the new community has begun to form. This would enable decisions around the design of the facility to be informed by the new community. It should also add to a sense of ownership and empowerment over local facilities.

2.6.2 Types of facilities provided

The majority were traditional village hall/ community centres consisting of main hall(s) (often divisible using folding acoustic wall), meeting rooms, office space, kitchen.

Key considerations that emerged from discussions were:

- Design in maximum flexibility of spaces to enable uses to change
- Storage is crucial and is almost always under provided.

¹³ Sherford, in East Hams, shaped their projected needs on the basis of direct learning from Ivybridge, a similar sized and type of community located nearby which had recently enhanced their community facilities in response to identified need.

¹⁴ Nb: Community Hall provision is to be supplemented by a further 1500m² nursery/ children's centre and additional office and retail space which could form part of the same building.

¹⁵ West of Waterlooville, combined knowledge of local provision with consultation with a local residents association to shape proposals for their new community facility. Wixams, Bedfordshire, a Residents Group worked with developers and planners on shaping the Village Hall. The developer's architects came up with drawings and the group then worked with the developers to inform the internal "shape" of the building over a long period of time

- Location, access, parking and appearance impact on usage levels
- Income generating/ cost minimising options will impact on the location, design and types of spaces required within the building.
- Future management arrangements will also likely impact on the types of accommodation required.

2.6.3 Income Generation Activities

Enterprise activities have been undertaken elsewhere in the country, often by Community Development Trusts (CDTs), which could be accommodated within a community building. Examples are as follows, with greater detail available in Appendix C:

- **Conference and events:** For many community facilities their main income stream is room hire for a combination of community, public and private sector uses. A number of examples can be shown to have taken a targeted approach to optimise to high income generating activities¹⁶
- **Community Arts and Entertainment Spaces:** These features included community cinemas¹⁷, theatres and art workshops, soft play and café/ bistros¹⁸, with the latter two features expected to generate most income to subsidise activities of greater community value.
- **Support for local business and enterprise:** Includes Enterprise Centres¹⁹ and Co-working Work Space²⁰. Private sector models include combining Co-working office space with onsite flexible childcare²¹, and small business centres, offering ready-to-use, flexible spaces with short term leases²².
- **Holiday rentals:** Holiday accommodation for tourists²³

Learning points:

No assumption can be made that such models would be successful in the Wokingham or individual SDL context and a business plan would be required for each.

- Most facilities have a scale of Room Hire rates to support affordability for community use. These usually range from “community” to “commercial” users. It is important to strike a balance to ensure that income generation pressures do not unduly interfere with community uses of the building.
- Attractive, well designed and high spec facilities will support higher hire rates. However, need to consider the potential impact on running and maintenance costs.
- The location of a facility will impact on its appeal to different markets for the range of enterprise ideas set out above.

¹⁶ The Lauries Centre in Birkenhead¹⁶ – corporate functions; Barcombe Village Hall and Gill Nethercroft Centre, Whitchurch, Hampshire

¹⁷ Gill Nethercroft Centre, Whitchurch, and Barcombe Village Hall - further research required to understand the profitability of these ventures.

¹⁸ Gorebridge Community Hub, Midlothian (Soft play and café) and Caterham ARC (Arts and Recreation Centre)

¹⁹ Caterham CDT manage a dedicated enterprise centre accommodating 19 small businesses

²⁰ Moseley CDT runs the Moseley Exchange, which incorporates a model of more traditional meeting and conference rooms to hire, teamed with a modern, dedicated co-working space available for use by local businesses, home workers and entrepreneurs

²¹ Putney based company, *Third Door*, <http://www.third-door.com/>

²² Space Business Centre, Wokingham. In 2013 when larger business parks are struggling to let large offices, this micro business park is 92% let

²³ Coll Bunkhouse, adjacent to the new Community Centre on Isle of Coll provides hostel accommodation www.collbunkhouse.co.uk

2.7 Stakeholder Engagement:

For details of the Shaping Communities consultation process please refer to the Methodology section of the Introduction at page 10 above, and detailed consultation findings report attached as Appendix D.

2.7.1 General Findings:

- Public survey indicates highest demand for community halls, cafes and childcare (good quality, accessible and affordable) high across all areas, followed by provision of space for worship and businesses.
- Consider dual use of new local schools which should be designed with community use in mind
- **Ideas for new community centres:**
 - Contribute to a **sense of place** and community focal point offering local information.
 - **Multi-functional**, catering for all ages, flexible shared spaces
 - **Avoid duplication:** consider integration with existing provision
 - **Good IT facilities** to future-proof and optimise hire potential
 - Offer advice, support links and space for small **businesses** and start ups.
 - **Accessibility:** In relation to disability, affordability and culture
 - **Income ideas:** Room hire and Functions, relocation of WBC staff to create a critical mass of business, Business sponsorship; Subscription; Offer Pay-as-you go admin services to small businesses.
 - **Costs:** Community led provision has cost benefits (rate relief); use sustainable building practices to keep running costs low (green energy, grey water, etc).
- **Establish Local Community Buildings Network:** Link new facilities with existing facilities to offer advice, share ideas and avoid duplication

2.7.2 Voluntary Sector

- Limited response for space requirements at this point in time. This is in part considered to be due to the short to medium term financial uncertainty that many organisations are grappling with, and which takes priority over the longer term planning of 5 to 12 years that it will take for most of the facilities to become available.
- Feedback from Voluntary Sector Forum and Community Council for Berkshire expressed the need for more information about the demographics of the areas that a facility would serve in order to understand likely requirements/ usage, and more information on existing facilities in the neighbouring areas.
- VSF representatives expressed concern about the capacity of the sector to deliver to enlarged communities without additional resources for further capacity building (See further discussion of this under Objective 3).

2.7.3 Area specific findings:

Arborfield

Parishes → Suggested facilities (possibly within a new community building) included: early provision of health facilities; a library with combined café; serviced offices with childcare and small/ start up business units. Numerous existing local community/ interest groups may

wish to engage with discussions to shape the Community Centre. The need to avoid heavy reliance on schools as community facilities²⁴. A small degree of concern was expressed about potential loss of business from some of the existing village/ parish halls to a brand new facility once it was up and running.

Survey results: The potential of re-using existing facilities were made a number of times, plus references to the REME museum and its value to the area.

Community Buildings Workshops:

- provision of amenities “everyday life” facilities including children’s centre, post office, banking and health provision.
- Concerns regarding implications of recent MOD decision to retain existing homes in relation to which existing facilities would be retained and potential to reuse existing health and dental facilities.
- Strong (Christian) faith emphasis. Discussed potential for faith management of a new facility (particularly Church of England parishes). Questions included how a multi-denominational facility might run, what extent of faith would be represented and should or would one denomination take a lead? The look and feel of the worship place was important. Linked to faith facilities were requests for burial space, and facilities for weddings, funerals and baptisms.

North Wokingham

Town Council → Health: Concerns that proposals for expansion of new town centre GP surgery would be inadequate for the growth in homes. Provision of a satellite surgery should be considered. Uses for the Community Centre included: a venue for Scouts, a base for the community worker, and possibly childcare facilities. The design of the centre matters as the box like appearance of Woosehill Community Centre was thought to affect its appeal to potential users.

Community Building’s Workshops: Given the relatively low spend allocated for a multi-functional facility, in this area, the group discussed ways of how this amount could stretch further and a recommendation of the group was that consideration should be given to considering enhancing what was already available in the community. The groups suggested that East and West ends of the SDL were not naturally oriented to each other, but to existing communities to the south, and separate collaborations in each of these areas may be the preferred way forward. Additional points included:

- In light of proximity to town centre, need to ensure new facilities service local needs, rather than town-wide. e.g. community halls, doctors.
- Income generating through collaboration with a commercial enterprise²⁵.
- Concerns that any delay to provision of community facilities might risk it not happening.

South Wokingham

²⁴ Suggestion drew on personal experience of a former resident of Woosehill where only a school was provided in the early phases. See Appendix E for further detail.

²⁵ example given of Wokingham Town Council which leases space in the Town Hall building to a restaurant

Town and Parish Councils: As for North Wokingham, plus concern from Wokingham Without PC that provision of facilities should not be left until the latter stages of the development. To address this they have suggested that the Section 106 Agreement include the opportunity for the Community facilities to be developed by another party (e.g. the Parish Council by means of a Public Works Loan) to be repaid by the Developer when the critical number of properties are built and occupied. A portakabin was suggested as a potential temporary meeting place in the short term²⁶.

Faith: Potential interest from ecumenical group of Church leaders in a community facility. Discussions with key contacts are still ongoing

Community Buildings Workshops: The need for more access to health facilities particularly those that will help prevent the need for acute services and reduce social isolation among older people was discussed. Also that new facilities would need hi-tech equipment to allow them to take advantage of potential revenue streams and ensure that it remained attractive to users in the long-term (future-proofing)

South of M4

Parish Council: Possible interest in office space for expanding parish services within the new centre. Interest in archive space required for local history group, and office space for community taxi service. Very keen to coordinate discussions with wider stakeholders, and quickly due to pace at which planning applications are progressing.

Community Buildings Workshops: Issues raised were about the positioning of the proposed community centre, sports and recreational facilities in relation to the existing Shinfield Parish Hall.

2.8 Conclusions/ Recommended Options

- ❖ **Bespoke:** Each SDL area is unique and will require bespoke modelling.
- ❖ **Size of Community Centres:** Based on comparative research the average m²/per capita ratio for community building provision proposed for Arborfield, South of M4 and Wokingham South are relatively low (see Appendix F). We can be confident, therefore, that levels of provision requested are not unreasonable.
- ❖ **Early provision of facilities/ meeting space:** some space should be provided early in the development, even if only temporary.
- ❖ **Community Centres:** National learning and stakeholder consultation support the value of providing accessible, inclusive community centres with flexible spaces, and storage. Cafés and libraries were a recurrent theme.
- ❖ **Additional facilities** with broad community support include provision of childcare, youth, family and leisure facilities within the new SDL areas. Health facilities were also a concern in North & South Wokingham, and Arborfield. Dual use of Schools and other assets for community use should also be optimised. Further work is required to explore needs data and options for provision of health, youth and childcare where there are identified gaps.

²⁶ Jennets Park, Bracknell took this approach

- ❖ **4 strands:** Decisions on provision of community facilities, including Community Centres should be informed by 4 strands:
 1. Service stakeholder (public and third sector) requirements based on need where known
 2. Existing local provision
 3. Objective assessment of what works in practice based on local and national research, and projected future trends as far as possible
 4. Community stakeholder consultation

All four of these strands then need to be considered against cost and viability.

- ❖ **Working groups:** Strong interest from community stakeholders to be involved in further discussions about community buildings. This should be harnessed through the establishment of Working Groups for each of the SDL areas, and be affiliated to either the SDL Community Forums, or possibly Neighbourhood Planning structures where appropriate. Their remit should be to shape details of community facilities based on the four informative strands outlined above in the context of costs and income opportunities.
- ❖ **Additional analysis** should be carried out in relation to both community building costs and income opportunities to inform working group discussions
- ❖ **Revenue to “Open the doors”:** resources will be required to fit out and meet initial running costs until it is generating revenue. No current provision has been made for this and further work is required to identify levels of funding and potential sources.

2.9 Areas for further work

- Research to fill gaps in knowledge of local community centre provision, to augment existing understanding of national best practice, and future projections in changes to Community Centre usage.
- Additional consultation required with key service stakeholders in the areas of Health, Social Care, and Childcare.
- Further work into detailed breakdown of running costs and overheads for community buildings
- Establish working groups of key stakeholders to progress initial detail required for early planning permission submissions, on the understanding that:
 - a. proposals are kept as flexible as possible to adapt to future needs
 - b. where detailed design is in a later phase of development (probably Arborfield, South Wokingham) new residents are involved with the process as soon as possible.

Objective 3: Help make new communities strong, vibrant and well-integrated with existing communities

3.1 Context

Development of the four new communities outlined in the 2010 Core Strategy is likely to result in a large influx of residents to new housing estates, many of whom may have few or no social links with the immediate area. If we truly want our new developments to be more than more than bricks and mortar, and to be exemplary new models of high quality, successful, thriving communities in keeping with existing communities across the wider Borough, provision of quality physical community infrastructure is unlikely to be sufficient on its own.

Research findings both support the value of a wide variety of social networks in building strong social capital²⁷, and attribute most of the “New Town Blues” experienced by residents of the post war new towns to a lack of social networks, rather than delays in or under-provision of infrastructure²⁸. Based on the latter findings, the TCPA’s report, “*Creating Garden Cities and suburbs today*”, makes the case for the value of Community Development in helping new communities to establish and develop social networks. This has the potential benefit of saving the public purse in the longer term by preventing the escalation of social issues such as anti-social behaviour and crime, mental health and its related impact on individual and family support needs, and wider health concerns. These all impact on the social and economic prosperity aspired to in Priority 2 of our Council vision.

There are two potentially interrelated forms that this intervention may take:

- Community development support, often in the form of a community worker
- Investment in the community and voluntary sectors to build capacity and/or incentivise activities and service provision within new communities from the early stages.

The *Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions* Supplementary Planning Document recommends that funding is sought from planning obligations towards a Community Manager for each of the developments.

The rest of this chapter draws on local and national experience and findings of local consultation to further support the case for such a worker, and to explore what other support may be beneficial to the community and voluntary sectors to support the establishment of integrated and vibrant communities.

3.2 Local Experience

3.2.1 Developing New Communities

The need for more than just provision of facilities is supported by our local experiences in Woosehill, Lower Earley, and Norreys where no community development or community sector support was initially targeted at the new developments, resulting in a lack of a sense

²⁷ Check Putnam’s assertion reference (2001:19)

²⁸ Findings of Colin Ward in his publication *New Town, Home Town: The Lessons of Experience*

of community (Woosehill), an identified lack of community facilities (Lower Earley and creation of the Crescent Centre), and community fragmentation (Norreys). The experiences of these areas detailed in Appendix E.

If we are to plan successfully for thriving communities, learning suggests that more could be done to plan and provide for residents from the outset to ensure that our new communities are supported to integrate and thrive.

3.2.2 Recognised local Value of Community Development

Wokingham has a strong track record in investing in communities in response to identified need and establishing support and stability. WBC's 2013 Community Development Impact and Evidence report sets out the case for Community Development by examining how its principles fit with national policy context and local priorities, and by evidencing the impact Community Development has had within the Borough. This report is attached as Appendix H, and is prefaced by a summary which relates the report findings directly to the Objectives of this Strategy in greater detail.

A community development programme within our new communities is anticipated to benefit the community in the following ways:

1. to help establish the social links (or glue) so essential to functional communities,
2. to support integration across the new and existing community areas.
3. to help identify needs of new communities as they establish, and prevent the escalation of issues through early, lower scale intervention.

In addressing these issues, development workers should assist in the establishment of a positive neighbourhood identity and reputation, features which establish early on in a development. These should contribute to a general sense of belonging, ownership and wellbeing for residents, and to the marketability of the development.

3.3 National Experience

Approaches to supporting the softer aspects of community infrastructure varied significantly across the different new developments we approached, ranging from instances of no support over and above provision of physical buildings/ facilities, to the gifting of land and buildings and pump priming money to Community Trusts. These are detailed in pages 26-32 of Appendix C, *Good Practice Research for Shaping Our New Communities Strategy*, but findings are summarised below:

3.3.1 Dedicated Workers

- **Community Development workers**²⁹ - Purpose includes: engaging with and integrating new and existing residents; Develop grass roots community capacity; Facilitate interface between residents and the developers in relation to ongoing build process.
- **Facilities management** - role of workers to manage and promote community facilities to maximise potential use and benefit for local residents, and generate income³⁰.

²⁹ Wixams, West of Waterlooville, Ironstone and Lawley, and Yours Kings Lynn

³⁰ Sherford and Caterham

- **No quick fix** - community development is a long term process, as is delivery of developments. The longer the term of the worker, the greater the impact and potential benefit to residents in the later phases.
- **Work and meeting spaces** - Being located within the new community is seen as key success factor but can prove problematic in early stages before facilities are built. Prior agreement of workspace and temporary meeting facilities was strongly recommended³¹.
- **Management/ Hosting of workers** - Workers employed by a range of organisations from Community Trusts or Management companies³², Housing Association³³, Long Term Stewardship Community Management models³⁴ to Local Authorities³⁵.
- **Facilitating community initiatives**: Seen as facilitating a sense of belonging and ownership in residents, these ranged from traditional newsletters, welcome packs and Neighbourhood Watch schemes to tree planting schemes for every new child born within the community³⁶.

3.3.2 Other types of beneficial community resourcing:

The following types of resourcing were also identified and recommended:

- **Facility Start up and initial engagement costs**: Funding to cover final fit out and initial costs to “get the doors open” and support the facility until it is able to break even and generate income. More modest resources are also required for any planned programme of community engagement/ development in an area.

Approaches identified include:

- o Using **commuted sums**³⁷
- o **Community or Management charges** levied on residents of new properties (included in covenants) are a potential means of securing a regular annual income³⁸.
- o **Parish Council Precept**³⁹
- **Transfer of physical assets to community ownership**⁴⁰

3.3.3 Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector

Less information was forthcoming on this aspect but examples included:

- developmental support to new residents associations and community interest groups
- accommodation and access to administrative facilities via Community Centres, for community groups (e.g. facilities management committees⁴¹, or community/ parish councils⁴² often at a peppercorn rental value.

³¹ Examples of these issues include Sherford, Lawley and Ironstone, Wixams, West of Waterlooville

³² Caterham and Sherford

³³ Wixams, Loves Farm and Orchard Park

³⁴ Lawley and Ironstone

³⁵ West of Waterlooville

³⁶ Lawley and Ironstone

³⁷ **Wixams**, Bedfordshire: c£320k commuted sum secured from developer for running Village Hall (479m²), including potential employment of staff; **Sherford**, Nr Plymouth, £910k funding set aside for Community Trust to employ staff with emphasis on managing and engaging the community with the new community facilities to be provided

³⁸ Examples include Caterham, Sherford and *The Poplars Estate*, Littlehampton

³⁹ Wixams, Bedfordshire: Local Parish has agreed to ringfence c£2k p/a of precept for Wixams Village 1 community activities.

⁴⁰ See further discussion of alternative asset management models under Section 4, and also Appendix J on Community Trusts.

⁴¹ Great Notley and Wixams

⁴² Orchard Park, Cambridgeshire, and Sherford

3.4 Stakeholder Consultation

For details of the Shaping Communities consultation process please refer to the Methodology section of the Introduction at page 10 above, and detailed consultation findings report attached as Appendix D.

3.4.1 Common themes across all areas of consultation:

What would help new and existing residents feel supported and integrated?:

- *Shared facilities and community initiatives* Recurrent suggestions included: newsletters welcome packs; Community activities; Residents groups and Neighbourhood Watch schemes.
- *Provide services early on* (health facilities/ GP surgeries/ bank/ post office, etc).
- *Avoid an overdependence on schools* to foster social infrastructure
- *Provide a community hub or central information point*
- *Creating sense of place and identity*⁴³

Community Worker:

All seven Town and Parish Councils involved in the consultation supported the idea of a community worker. Discussions points included:

- The likely complexity of the role, covering a larger area than existing Community Development Workers.
- Length of term of the post. 5 years was considered a relatively short period of time in relation to the scale of the developments and projected build periods
- Parishes did not wish to be expected to fund the post.

3.4.2 Voluntary Sector

- Concern re: capacity to deliver more in tough funding climate
- Extensive uncertainty means long term planning is challenging.
- investment needed to build capacity for grassroots community groups to take advantage community asset management opportunities, to include advice and training.

3.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.5.1 Community Manager Role

- Provision of a Community Manager with a community development remit was widely supported by stakeholder consultation and fits the 21st Century Garden Cities approach, and preventative aspects of our Health and Wellbeing agenda. WBC's continuing Community Development programme sets a strong local precedence for successful work of this kind. Key points to note:
 - Geographic scope of this post would be significantly wider than that of existing geographically based community development workers. Likely elements of the role are summarised at Appendix I.
 - No strong preference emerged from stakeholder consultation over who the post should be employed and/ or managed by, and no clear recommendation from national practice. WBC has an established Community Development team so maintaining at least a virtual link is important.

⁴³ came out particularly strongly for Arborfield and linked to the need to understand future governance issues.

- Post should be located onsite from the beginning in order to be accessible to the community. Temporary accommodation should be identified and secured in advance, either alongside developers, or within another community facility.
- A small budget to resource start up community activities should be provided

Recommendations:

- Basic terms and responsibilities to be developed to inform all 4 Community Manager remits, and should be agreed with the working group proposed under section 2.
- Further consideration should be given to the relationship between the Community Manager and their work programme and working group/ any subsequent Community Management entity. NB: in Arborfield there may be links to be drawn with the Community Covenant⁴⁴ in relation to integrating new and existing communities.

3.5.2 Creating an identity for Arborfield SDL: The closest to the development of a new village, consultation suggests that work to create a new identity for the former garrison site, and to understand boundary and governance options should be undertaken quickly.

3.5.3 Voluntary and Community Sector Capacity Building In order for the opportunities presented by the development of new community buildings within our SDL to be fully realised by potential community and voluntary groups, careful consideration should be given to the provision of capacity building support in the form of advice (as a minimum) and any additional ways of incentivising expansion of beneficial services within our newly expanded communities.

3.6 Recommendations:

- Develop preferred support package in consultation with Voluntary and Community Sector partners and identify potential resourcing options. This could include:
 - Development of a borough-wide community buildings support network to ensure that there is peer support (offers received from Crescent and Parish Councils)
 - Training package to be offered to all potential management group members⁴⁵

3.7 Areas for further work

- Work with local stakeholders to create a new identity for the former garrison site, and progress future boundary and governance options
- Explore and agree future relationship of Community Manager post and local working groups, including potential links with Community Covenant for Arborfield.
- Draft a Community Manager job description and review with the local working groups recommended under Objective 2

⁴⁴ Arborfield Community Covenant – a statement of intent signed by WBC to support military families who will remain resident in the existing 325 living quarters to be retained within the Arborfield SDL site.

⁴⁵ Community Matters, the National community buildings specialist offers a two day Community Asset Management training course

- Develop preferred support package in consultation with Voluntary and Community Sector partners and identify potential resourcing options.

Objective 4: Find the best ways to run community assets for the benefit of local people

4.1 Context:

Delivery of the community infrastructure proposed in Appendix 7 of the Council's Core Strategy 2010 and its supporting Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD will result in the creation of a host of new community assets. These will take the form of buildings and land designated for various recreational uses, including allotments, play areas, and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS), across all four SDLs.

In a climate of tightening pressures on public sector budgets, it is appropriate that we consider a range of options for the future management of these assets, rather than assume their adoption by WBC.

Due to work already underway within the Council to consider future management options for our existing cultural and recreational facilities, the information below focuses specifically on future management options for the multi-functional community buildings that are proposed for each SDL area. However, it is anticipated that management responsibilities could be expanded to a range of assets.

4.2 Local and National Learning – Management Models

Local Authority or Parish/ Community Council owned and managed: Local examples of both include WBC's Rainbow and Acorn Centres at Winnersh and Woosehill, respectively, and numerous Parish managed Halls and facilities including those at Swallowfield (Village Hall) and Woodley (Oakwood Centre). In the new developments we researched we found no examples of local authority management of new facilities, but there were some examples of Parish or Community Council ownership or management, often with their offices co-located within the community facility⁴⁶.

Learning points

- Local Authorities' income from central government and council tax is curtailed by cuts and caps on annual Council Tax increases. Teamed with competing demands on resources in the context of rising costs, these factors pose significant challenges for long term resourcing and investment in community assets of this nature.
- Parish Councils currently have fewer restrictions on their ability to raise funds via precept, but face the same rising costs. However, national policy on capping parish precepts may be set to change.

⁴⁶ Orchard Park, Cambridgeshire

- Both types of council tend to have staffing of some level, but this can vary hugely for Town and Parish Council's depending on their size and remit.

Community (Centre) Management Group or Committee: Already common within our Borough and nationally⁴⁷, a community organisation leases an asset from a Local Authority, Parish Council or other facility owner and takes on management responsibility. Legal organisational forms can range between types of charitable trusts to companies.

Learning points:

- The facility is **locally managed** by members of the community and/or building users
- If registered as charities, management groups should be entitled to **business rate relief**⁴⁸,
- These groups may be able to **access alternative sources of external funding** not available to Local Authorities, although these have been diminishing in recent years.
- **Informed advice and support** is recommended at the start, as it is a serious legal commitment for volunteers, so there needs to be a **willing volunteer base available**
- In many cases these groups **employ paid staff** (caretakers/ administrators/ centre managers)
- Any **income generated can be reinvested for community benefit**, either into the facility itself or associated activities, however without a **good business plan** many may struggle to cover basic running costs, and experience suggests that longer term repairs/ equipment replacement is frequently under budgeted for.
- The extent to which Management Groups are responsible for longer term **capital repair and investment** in the building varies greatly on the type of lease agreed.

Community Trusts: The term "Community Trusts" does not apply to a single type of organisational structure, and can vary widely in aims and beneficiaries⁴⁹. However, references to Charitable and Community Trusts were made in a number of national examples (Sherford and Great Notley) and a local example might be the Charitable Trust, Earley Community Association, that owns and runs the Earley Crescent Community Resource Centre and the MICE bus.

Learning points:

- As for Community Management Groups or Committees above.

Owned and Managed by Faith Organisations: No examples of this emerged from our national research into new developments but there are several examples within Wokingham Borough, including: The Cornerstone, Wokingham, and Finchampstead Baptist Centre (FBC), Ramgarhia Sabha Sikh Centre, on the Earley Reading/ Wokingham Border.

Learning points:

- Often benefit from strong and enthusiastic existing volunteer bases
- May have additional resources to augment community provision

⁴⁷ E.g: Wixams – Original Community Trust proposal failed, but a residents group has evolved into a Village Hall Management Group and established itself as a Limited Company, with a 99 year full repairing lease.

⁴⁸ extent of rate relief will be dependent on the amount of 'charitable' activity that takes place in their buildings.

⁴⁹ It could be a community of interest, rather than a geographic community.

- Possible access to alternative sources of external funding not available to Local Authorities
- Associating a building with a specific faith can be seen as a barrier to some sections of the community, particularly those of no or a differing faith.
- Timings of religious worship may compromise alternative community uses of a facility

Community Development Trusts or Development Trusts⁵⁰: Community owned and managed not for profit organisations that work towards the long-term social, economic and environmental regeneration of a defined geographic area. Trusts work towards long-term sustainability through a commitment to an enterprise model. A development trust is owned by its members (both individuals and organisations), who support the work of the trust. Many development trusts are charities with a responsibility to donors and to beneficiaries. However, there are several alternative legal organisational forms, including various forms of partnerships, associations, trusts and companies.

Key Learning points:

- enterprise models may include provision of local services, support to local enterprise⁵¹, environmental improvements
- It's a long term initiative and may take several years to break even, depending on types of enterprise and levels of investment required⁵²
- re-invests surplus in community⁵³
- Can access alternative funding
- Top down approach to developing a CDT is considered risky in terms of long term sustainability – high commitment required by Trustees/ other Volunteers⁵⁴.
- In a number of cases aspirations of Local Authorities/ Development partnerships to establish Community Trusts has failed due to lack of interest/ capacity from Volunteer base (Wixams, West of Waterlooville)
- In most of the examples we researched, Community Development Trusts own assets outright⁵⁵. However, in other examples the proposal was for a trust to be developed to lease and manage facilities.

Long Term Stewardship Model (Links to Community Land Trusts⁵⁶):

Ironstone Management Service, Lawley Village. Ironstone Management Services (IMS) is a partnership between Bourneville Village Trust (BVT) and Sanctuary Housing Association. The partnership built and manage affordable housing within the development.

⁵⁰ See further information on Community Development Trusts and Community Land Trusts plus examples in a research summary available as Appendix J

⁵¹ Caterham Community Development Trust owns and manages an Enterprise Centre and further industrial and retail units in addition to the ARC Centre (Arts and Recreation Centre) and playing fields.

⁵² Caterham Community Development Trust had to borrow heavily on top of funding and assets gifted by the developer to refurbish building assets for commercial and community use. These debts will have taken c. 20 years to clear.

⁵³ Once mortgages are fully repaid, Caterham Community Development Trust, anticipates it will be able to channel c.£300k back into the Caterham community.

⁵⁴ Locality, the national umbrella body for community development trusts, state that they may not recognise a top down model as a true CDT

⁵⁵ Caterham Development Trust

⁵⁶ See further information on Community Development Trusts and Community Land Trusts plus examples in a research summary attached as Appendix J

It now manages the estate, has an information office, and employs a full time Environmental Technician responsible for keeping the development clean and tidy, as well as a Resident Involvement and New Communities Officer. A covenant on properties within development requires payment of annual fee for Lawley and Ironstone Estates⁵⁷.

This model is similar to the approach suggested by the TCPA's 2012 report *Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs today*, which proposes the potential for a Community "company" established in the early planning stages of a development evolve into a long term management organisation of the sort suggested above. Ultimately this company will need to be composed of people living and/or working within the new community, and be financially independent.⁵⁸

Private Development Company: retains ownership of facilities or Freehold. It may retain management responsibility of assets for profit or lease to a third party (any of the previously mentioned bodies or another private company). No local examples have been identified, but two examples identified through national research included Littlehampton⁵⁹ and Sherford South Hams, nr Plymouth⁶⁰.

Learning points:

- Beyond a potential right to representation of the Local Authority or community on the company board, a private company may have limited or no accountability to the wider community and may operate solely for profit with no requirement for investment in the local area beyond maintaining existing facilities.

4.3 Feedback from Community Consultation

Due to the complexity of the options, the initial consultation was used as a means of highlighting that opportunities may be available to community and other stakeholders and inviting them to express an interest in further discussions via dedicated community buildings workshops held in March and April 2013. Additional information was drawn from developer workshops held in January and early March 2013 for Arborfield and South of M4 respectively. Management was also a discussion topic with Town and Parish Councils, Faith and voluntary sector stakeholders. Common themes emerged as follows:

- No support was expressed for private sector management with no community involvement (concern it would become too expensive and exclusive), and generally preferences were against management by WBC.

⁵⁷ Information available at www.imslawley.org.uk

⁵⁸ *Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs today: policies, practices and model approaches – a report of the garden cities and suburbs expert group*, TCPA, May 2012, p15, section 2.3.3

⁵⁹ **Poplars Estate, Littlehampton** Developer (Hargreaves) to retain ownership and management of Public Open Spaces once development is complete (includes play areas). Purchasers enter into a covenant when purchasing their homes which sets out conditions for living on the estate, including payment of an annual amenity charge (£89 for 2012/13) payable to the developer.

⁶⁰ Development company formed to deliver and manage new development from design and build to all estate and asset management, with the exception of schools, although the company has also bid to manage one of the new schools within the development. The original intention had been to establish a Community Trust or Community Management Company as a sister company to manage assets for community benefit and £912k had been allocated to this end, but to be sustained longer term through annual management charge. RedTree LLP intends to lease 10% of central Village Hall space to community organisations, including Parish Council and Citizens' Advice Bureau at peppercorn rates.

- A general preference was expressed for the community to be involved in managing new facilities wherever possible, or at least be able to influence management decisions.
- Preferred models included a paid manager/ administration supported by a volunteer base, rather than entirely volunteer dependent to lessen the burden on volunteers, and other suggestions were that management should be by an established organisation with a track record of running similar sized facilities or a partnership organisations with prior experience.
- Joint management of several local facilities could be considered to ensure they complement one another.
- Management arrangements may influence the design of the facility – requirements for office space, etc.
- Risk is a key concern in relation to long term sustainability of Community management models, both in respect of managing the centre and financing day to day running costs, and long term maintenance of the building and its facilities.
- Those already involved in Community Building management advised on the growing levels of responsibility and legislative requirements that now have to be met by community venues and warned of the negative impact that had on volunteering levels.
- Advice and training on Community Buildings management should be offered to those interested in exploring community management opportunities to ensure they are well informed and supported from the outset.
- Offers of assistance and advice in developing plans for the design and management have been specifically offered by Swallowfield PC and Earley Crescent Centre.

Area specific findings:

Arborfield: Strong interest from Church of England Church groups for community facility but mixed views from Developer led workshops as to whether a new facility should be church managed. Additional issues arose over whether a Parish office would be required/ whether a new Parish might run the facility, linking to questions regarding future governance of the development and whether there will be a boundary change.

North and South Wokingham: Church leaders have expressed an interest in faith and wider community provision within this area, and are meeting with WBC officers in late mid June to discuss ideas and opportunities.

South Wokingham: Wokingham Without Parish Council have expressed an interest in exploring options for management of the main community facility proposed south of the railway line. They have tentatively offered to consider options for potential forward funding to ensure that it is provided in the early phases of the development.

South of M4: Views were expressed for and against Parish and Church ownership/ management in South of M4 by different workshop groups⁶¹.

⁶¹ Morning workshop discussions from Developer's Neighbourhood Centre Consultation event, 9th March 2013

4.4 Conclusions & Options for Recommendations

- ❖ **Explore Community Management Models:** Given community stakeholder preferences for community buildings to be managed for community interest, and the budget pressures faced by WBC, the recommendation would be to explore a management model that is independent of WBC and gives greater influence to community stakeholders, but that also has a strong focus on enterprise and income generation. This could include management by the local Parish Council, particularly where the existing Parish has expressed an interest.
- ❖ **Adaptable approach:** It should also be noted that the needs and capacity in each SDL area may vary greatly, and any agreed approach should retain flexibility to adapt to the differing circumstances.
- ❖ **Invest in the grass roots:** In practice, top down proposals for community management groups or trusts have proved unsuccessful. A better model appears to be to invest in the development of community capacity from the grass roots up.
- ❖ **Business Planning:** Any model for community based management (where local activists emerge) will require a business plan with a strong enterprise element for how the facility is to become financially sustainable. Clarity is needed on how that process might be supported and by whom?
Options include:
 - Identify existing WBC officer(s) to further develop this work area in the short/ medium term to link closely with community stakeholders (probably through the working groups recommended under sections 2&3). Pros: If capacity can be freed up- internally there will be no/ limited additional cost. Cons: Limited to existing officer knowledge and expertise in this area, which may limit the value of the advice/ support.
 - Incorporate medium to long term aspects of this work into the Community Manager posts. It should be noted, however, that the remit of this post is already quite broad and for relatively large geographic areas.
 - Commission specialist expertise to work with potential groups. Better breadth of knowledge base. Objectivity and independence from WBC may be preferable and make discussions about responsibilities and establishing sustainable funding less contentious.
 - Explore options for local business support via Corporate Social Responsibility. Employees could become Committee members/ Trustees of management bodies bringing expertise in enterprise/ legal matters/ accounting and budgeting/ facilities management, etc.
- ❖ Any community management model is also likely to require an element of start up revenue funding, as identified under Objective 2, although external funding may be available by means of grants or loans.
- ❖ A paid manager/ administrator would help to lessen the burden on volunteers, but will add to the running costs and Trustee responsibilities/ training needs.
- ❖ If WBC has an interest in trying to facilitate a Community Development Trust (CDT) for one or more of the SDL areas, work is required to grow this from the grass roots up sooner rather than later. NB: If appropriate Volunteer base can identified, one CDT could be established across 2 or more SDLs or the wider borough, with local management groups for individual Community Centres.

4.5 Areas for further work

- Capacity building work is required now to begin to develop a potential volunteer base in the area.

- Identify resources (expertise/ finance & internal/ external?) to support business plan development for Community-led management initiatives?
- Start up funding sources should be explored
- If a Community Development Trust model is to be pursued, agree how it might fit with the proposed working groups proposed under sections 2 & 3 to support the design and future uses of individual buildings (Could be embryonic Management Committees which report to a wider CD Trust).

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5. Shaping Our New Communities Strategy 2014-26: Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ SDL Communications Plan: Plan should be reviewed to reflect findings from stakeholder consultation. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further improvements to SDL Community Forums (agenda setting, time for discussion, Exceptional Meetings). ○ Explore creation of a single online information point which signposts to SDL information held on relevant community and developer websites ○ Identify best methods for targeting SDL info at younger sections of the community. ○ Closing the loop – Identify new opportunities for feeding back on stakeholder input ❖ Neighbourhood Planning: Clarify the relationship between Neighbourhood Planning Working Groups and the SDL Community Forums. This could link to the next recommendation: ❖ Increase opportunity for community influence (in line with 21st Century Garden City aspirations): Provision of Community buildings and other community facilities may offer an opportunity for this. <i>See also recommendations for working group proposals under sections 2,3 and 4</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bespoke: Each SDL area is unique and will require community facilities tailored to local needs and circumstances. ❖ Size of Community Centres: Based on comparative research the sizes of community centre provision currently requested are below average and therefore not unreasonable, based on average m²/per capita ratio (see Appendix F). ❖ Early provision of facilities/meeting space: Meeting space should be provided early in the development, even if temporary. ❖ Community Centres: Good practice learning from national experience and local consultation recommends the provision of community centres with flexible spaces, lots of storage and a welcoming feel. Cafés and libraries were a recurrent theme of what should be provided within the facility. ❖ Local consultation identified a desire for additional facilities to include childcare, youth, family and leisure provision within the new SDL areas. Health facilities were also a concern in North & South Wokingham, and Arborfield. Further work is required to explore needs data and options for provision of health, youth and childcare ❖ Dual use of Schools and other assets for community use should be optimised. 4 strands: Decisions on 	<p>Community Manager Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provision of a worker with a community development remit was widely supported by stakeholders. <p>Key points to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Geographic scope of this post would be significantly wider than that of existing WBC community development workers. Likely elements of the role are summarised at Appendix I ❖ Management of this worker is open to discussion with stakeholders, but at least a virtual link to WBC's Sustainable Communities Team is recommended, given existing Community Development expertise. ❖ Post should be located onsite for better community access, and accommodation should be secured in advance. ❖ A small budget to resource start up community activities should be identified. ❖ Basic terms and responsibilities to be developed to inform all 4 Community Manager remits, and should be agreed with the working group(s) proposed under objective 2. ❖ Further consideration should be given to the relationship between the Community Manager, their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Explore community management models: Supported by consultation and the budget pressures faced by WBC. Any model would require strong focus on enterprise and income generation. ❖ Adaptable approach: The needs and capacity in each SDL area may vary greatly, and any agreed approach should retain flexibility to adapt to the differing circumstances. ❖ Invest in the grass roots: In practice, top down proposals for community trusts and other management models have proved largely unsuccessful. Support required is likely to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business Planning. Could be supported by: i) existing WBC officer(s) ii) Community Manager posts in medium/ long term. iii) Commission specialist expertise; (iv) Explore options for Business support via Corporate Social Responsibility ○ Start up revenue funding although external funding may be available by means of grants or loans. ❖ Paid manager/ administrator would help to lessen the burden on volunteers, but will add to the running costs and Trustee responsibilities/ training needs. ❖ A Community Development Trust (CDT) may be appropriate for one or more of the SDL areas. NB: If

- provision of community facilities, including Community Centres should be informed by 4 strands:
- Service stakeholder (public and third sector) requirements based on need where known
 - Existing local provision
 - Objective assessment of what works in practice based on local and national research, and projected future trends
 - Community stakeholder consultation

All four of strands should then be considered against cost/ viability.

- ❖ **Working groups:** Harness interest from community stakeholders through the establishment of Working Groups for each of the SDL areas, to be affiliated to either the SDL Community Forums (*and possibly Neighbourhood Planning structures where appropriate*). Their remit could include shaping community buildings based on the four strands outlined above.
- ❖ **Additional analysis** should be carried out in relation to both community building costs and income opportunities to inform working group discussions
- ❖ **Revenue to “Open the doors”:** resources will be required to fit out and meet initial running costs until new centres can generate revenue. NB: No current provision has been made for this and further work is required to identify levels of funding and potential sources.

work programme and working group/ any subsequent Community Management entity.

Creating an identity for Arborfield SDL:

- ❖ Work to create a new identity for the former garrison site and to understand boundary and governance options should be undertaken soon.

Increasing Community and Voluntary Sector Strength

- ❖ **Buildings Management Skills:** Consideration should be given to support in the form of advice (as a minimum) to boost the sector's management skills.
- ❖ **Develop a support package** in consultation with Voluntary and Community Sector partners and identify potential resourcing options.

appropriate Volunteer base can identified, one CDT could be established across 2 or more SDLs or the wider borough, with local management groups for individual Community Centres.

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