



Basingstoke
and Deane

Community Buildings Policy

November 2025



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Portfolio Holder foreword and vision

Community buildings play a vital role in connecting people with place. With over 100 community buildings, including 23 council owned community centres, the borough benefits from having physical focal points, anchors in the community, that provide an incredibly diverse range of activities. Community buildings facilitate the provision of valued services and promote social engagement. They are buildings that are open to all. This is essential for social inclusion and for the building of the partnerships upon which our communities rely.

This policy recognises the contribution of the volunteers and the community associations, without whose dedication and hard work, we could not make this borough a place where people can take pride in their communities.

The policy will both guide and provide a basis for sound and transparent decision-making regarding the maintenance of existing and the development of new facilities in the future as the borough grows and changes.

Cllr John McKay, Cabinet Member for Communities, Partnerships and Inclusion

Introduction and scope

Glossary

Community Association	Charitable organisation delivering charitable objects/community benefit to a defined place-based community, which leases and manages council-owned community centres.
Community Building	A building that is open to the whole community, run for public benefit, is a focus for neighbourhood activity and involvement and hosts a range of locally based social, recreational, cultural and educational activities and volunteering opportunities. This includes council-owned community centres and buildings outside of council ownership, such as village halls or church halls.
Community Centre	Council-owned community centre delivering a variety of services and activities to residents within a place-based local community.
Community Facilities	Buildings and services which encompass a range of community, recreational, cultural, sport and leisure uses as defined in the Local Plan and its policies. This includes community buildings.

This policy sets out the council's approach to the provision of community buildings and additions/improvements to existing community buildings in the borough to 2042.

There are over 100 community buildings in the borough, managed and run by various community organisations, including town and parish councils and village hall committees. Of these, 23 are council-owned community centres, provided for the benefit of local place-based communities. These are leased to community associations and registered charitable organisations. Six of these are within parish/town council areas, with the others located in more urban areas.

Community buildings are a crucial resource for local communities, providing essential, accessible services and encouraging community cohesion. The wide range of services and activities that run from community buildings support the individuals attending sessions and events and provide a positive impact on the wider local community. Community buildings can also provide safe havens during extreme events.

As the borough's population grows, and needs change, it is important to ensure that new purpose-built community buildings are provided in the right place, to meet local need, and to offer value for money. An important principle is that those organisations managing community buildings for the benefit of their local communities should be provided with the appropriate level of support and advice.

Context and evidence base

This policy complements the council's Strengthening Communities Strategy 2022-2027. It replaces the Community Buildings Strategy 2017.

The policy has been developed in line with the wider Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report (see Appendix 1). It will inform the implementation of the existing policies relating to community infrastructure in the council's adopted Local Plan, and those of the new Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan, which will cover the period until at least 2042.

There are no national standards for the provision of community buildings and there is no single organisation which has a dedicated role to safeguard them (unlike sports facilities, which are supported by Sport England). Therefore, the council must consider as wide a range of local factors as possible in developing and applying this Community Buildings Policy.

The principles for community building provision in the borough have already been established through:

- Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029
- Strengthening Communities Strategy 2022-2027

The Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report (at Appendix 1) provides an evidence base to inform standards for the provision of community buildings.

Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011-2029)

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council adopted its current Local Plan in May 2016. This outlines the council's vision and strategy for the development of the area until 2029. Growth is proposed in and around Basingstoke and the larger settlements of Whitchurch, Overton, Bramley, Kingsclere and Oakley.

The adopted Local Plan aligns with the 2025 National Planning Policy Framework to "*plan positively for the provision and use of...community facilities*" and aims to create a 'Connected and Vibrant Place' where residents have the opportunity to come together and foster local community spirit.

- *Policy CN6: Infrastructure* establishes the general principle that new development will be expected to provide and contribute towards the provision of additional services, facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs arising from that development. Infrastructure should be provided on-site.
- *Policy CN7: Essential Facilities and Services* supports provision of services and facilities which are essential for underpinning community life and ensuring that members of the local community are able to meet their day-to-day needs. It aims to protect against loss of community facilities and encourages their retention, improvement or re-use.

- *Policy CN8: Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities* seeks to retain, maintain and improve existing facilities which are valued by the community. Where opportunities exist, the policy supports the co-location of community, leisure and culture facilities and other local services.

The adopted Local Plan policies are supported by guidance in the Planning Obligations for Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (2018).

The Local Plan is currently being updated. This policy, together with the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report, will inform the updated Local Plan policies.

Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment (LRNA) Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report

This report was commissioned by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to assess the level of current community building provision and to inform the needs for future provision linked to development.

The report found that the current spatial provision of community buildings per person in the borough is good and that community needs are being met, in that there are generally sufficient opportunities to book sessions at the appropriate time.

The recommendations included a minimum set of policy standards as well as the need to implement mechanisms to ensure local communities and community buildings can thrive and succeed. This includes support for sufficient staffing, to enable the initial set up and establishment of new community buildings, and support towards their future maintenance.

Strengthening Communities Strategy 2022-2027

One of the three priorities of the Strengthening Communities Strategy 2022-2027 is to maximise community buildings, including a commitment to seeking contributions from developers towards community infrastructure according to planning policy. Where the scale of the development does not justify a new community building, the council will, at its sole discretion and only if in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022, direct contributions towards extending or enhancing existing community buildings, to respond to the needs of the new development.

The following are out of the scope of this policy as separate policies and/or processes apply:

Assets of Community Value¹

Under the 2011 Localism Act, community groups and parish councils can ask the council to list certain buildings or land that they believe are important to their community's social wellbeing or social interests. If these assets come up for sale, there is then a six-month window to allow the community to prepare a funding bid before the property comes on the open market.

Policy for Letting Council Investment Properties to Voluntary and Community Organisations²

The policy sets out the principles and processes to be applied by the council when renting council-owned buildings held within its commercial investment portfolio to voluntary and community organisations.

Community Centre Leases and SLAs³

The council is also progressing the implementation of a new approach to the asset management and monitoring of council-owned community centres, which will include introduction of updated leases and a new service level agreement.

¹ [Community Right to Bid](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/community-right-to-bid) – www.basingstoke.gov.uk/community-right-to-bid

² Adopted 18 March 2025

³ Cabinet Report, Council owned community centres: revised lease and service level agreement approach, 9 January 2024

Aims and objectives

Aim of the policy

To have a network of community buildings across the borough that enable the delivery of services and activities to meet community needs and contribute to wider community outcomes.

Objectives

1. To have a network of community buildings that are in the right place.
2. To support the provision of community buildings that are fit for purpose.
3. For community buildings to be viable and be developed and managed to respond to the needs of the local community.

For the purposes of this policy the definition of a community building is:

*a building that is open to the whole community, run for public benefit, is a focus for neighbourhood activity and involvement and hosts a range of locally based social, recreational, cultural and educational activities and volunteering opportunities.*⁴

The activities and services hosted in community buildings are varied and could include:

- Pre-school provision
- Youth clubs
- Older people's clubs/activities
- Adult and community learning/life skills, such as CV writing, cooking on a budget
- Support groups such as for bereavement and addiction
- Health clinics, and activities promoting healthy living
- Social gatherings such as coffee mornings
- Community meetings and events
- Provision for special interest and faith groups

This Community Buildings Policy does not typically apply where the sole purpose of the asset is:

- A sports facility (council owned or otherwise)
- A school or educational facility
- A healthcare facility
- A religious venue
- An arts or cultural facility e.g., theatres, studios
- A park or other public open space
- A commercial enterprise e.g., public house, retail

⁴ Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report

- A council-owned investment property⁵
- Focussed on one particular community group, interest or faith rather than to provide wider benefit to the local place-based community.

However, the policy does recognise that community services are often delivered from a wide range of venues using different models and that there are often opportunities for the co-location of community-based services. Where appropriate, co-located services will be encouraged.

Achieving the objectives

Objective 1 – A network of community buildings in the right place

It is important to ensure that community buildings are in an appropriate location, which is suitably close to where people live and in accordance with the principle that, ideally, everyone in the borough should be able to access a community building within 15 minutes, either by walking (urban areas) or driving (rural areas), as defined by the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report at Appendix 1.

New housing development may shift the distribution and characteristics of the local population, meaning existing facilities are no longer in the best location or may not serve the changing needs of the community. Regeneration schemes may have a similar impact.

Location of new community buildings

The adopted Local Plan specifies a number of development allocations where new community buildings will be provided. These are:

- North of Popley Fields
- Upper Cufaude Farm
- East of Basingstoke
- Manydown
- Basingstoke Golf Course
- Hounsome Fields

The emerging new Local Plan proposes additional site allocations. Community buildings will be planned to take into account the cumulative needs arising from these sites, including the size and type of provision required. New community buildings should be sited on sufficient land, with adequate ancillary space (such as

⁵ As noted above, the council has a separate policy adopted on 18 March 2025 which covers its approach to the letting of properties within its investment portfolio to community and voluntary sector organisations.

outdoor space and parking) and should be designed so that reconfiguration and/or expansion could be achieved with relative ease to meet changing future demands.

Where planned development results in a need for new community buildings these will be identified through the new Local Plan's site allocation policies and detailed in the council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Where sites are located close to each other or in multiple land ownerships, the new Local Plan will require them to be masterplanned comprehensively. This will ensure that there is a coordinated approach to the delivery and phasing of the infrastructure and facilities that takes into account the cumulative needs arising from those sites.

The council will take a proactive approach to the production of masterplans to guide proposals, and where relevant, developers will be required to produce infrastructure plans to demonstrate how their proposal would contribute to that area's total infrastructure requirements being met. This will ensure that sites are planned comprehensively and brought forward in a co-ordinated manner, ensuring cohesive communities and a joined-up approach to the delivery of infrastructure.

The preferred delivery approach is that developers build new community buildings, based on community need, with input from the council on design, orientation and location. It is expected that community buildings will form an integral part of site master planning and take into account the locational principles set out in Table 1. In planning provision, consideration should be given to how best to meet the needs arising from neighbouring developments and accommodate future demand.

Whilst every effort will be made to maintain the 15-minute distance threshold, a degree of flexibility may be applied.

Extensions and additions to existing community buildings

Where planning policy permits, and needs could not be met by existing infrastructure, the council will meet the needs arising from smaller developments by seeking opportunities to enlarge and/or improve existing and proposed community buildings.

Assessment of requirement for new/additional community buildings

The amount of floorspace to meet needs will be calculated using a ratio of 200sqm per 1,000 additional persons, as informed by the council's LRNA (2022), with the population derived from the borough's average household size.

A minimum floorspace standard of 350sqm will be considered for a standalone building. However, to ensure long term viability, and 'futureproof' delivery, the ideal minimum for a standalone building is c. 500sqm+, where justified by the scale of development.

It is noted that, in most instances, larger buildings (c. 500sqm+) will provide more flexible spaces for community use, be more viable to operate and maintain and more agile to respond to future demand. However, smaller buildings will be considered where these will deliver demonstrable benefits for the local community. Masterplanning will be carried out to enable a comprehensive and strategic approach to be taken to development and the infrastructure required.

Where planning policy permits, requirements for new community buildings and additional community floorspace will be assessed as follows:

<p>1,000 dwellings and above (taking into account the cumulative scale of planned new development)</p>	<p>New standalone community building (if existing nearby infrastructure is remote and/or cannot be sufficiently extended or enhanced).</p> <p>Building and land to be transferred to the council, including ancillary land (outdoor space, parking etc.) and land which may be required for expansion.</p> <p>Index-linked contribution towards maintenance of the building for an initial period (c. the first ten years).</p> <p>Index-linked contribution towards initial costs to establish the community association (or other operating model) running the building to support community cohesion and the building’s viability. This support should not be required beyond the first three years, after which the incumbent would be expected to remain viable.</p>
<p>Below 1,000 dwellings</p>	<p>To expand or otherwise improve the most appropriate community building (or buildings) within the relevant 15-minute catchment area.</p> <p>If the development is less than 1,000 dwellings but part of a larger strategic site or adjoining other development sites, consideration should be given to a new standalone community building (minimum of 350sqm) to meet the needs of residents across multiple sites in line with the masterplanning approach set out in the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Extension/enhancement could include provision of a ‘satellite’ building where appropriate.</p> <p>Where the development is remote from existing infrastructure, or the capacity of existing infrastructure could not be increased, consideration should be given to a new building (minimum of 350sqm) to support the development.</p>

Developer contribution requirements

Community buildings are a key local resource and are important for community cohesion and wellbeing. Where new community buildings are required, the council will expect developers to directly build and fit-out community buildings, in consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders and to agreed timelines and specifications.

However, it is recognised that developer-delivery may not be feasible in all cases. If, as an exception, the council agrees to take a contribution in lieu of on-site delivery (and in other circumstances where planning policy permits a developer contribution), this must take into account:⁶

- Design costs, professional fees and necessary permissions and consents (e.g., planning and building regulations, architecture, and landscape design fees).
- Construction of the building to appropriate standards/in line with agreed specification, including finishing of access and services (e.g., water, electric, broadband etc). To be based on latest Building Cost Information Services (BCIS) costs or similar industry standard.
- Fit out of the building to agreed standards and provision of relevant fixtures, fittings and equipment (e.g., IT, kitchen, toilets, storage etc).
- Legal expenses related to the creation and ongoing operation of the community building (e.g., land titles, dedication of funds and ownership arrangements).

Where contributions are considered necessary, and comply with the planning tests for planning obligations, they should cover all fair and reasonable costs relating to the demand generated by the development.

Objective 2 – To enable the provision of community buildings that are fit for purpose

The fundamental aim is that community buildings are designed and built to effectively serve the community in their catchment area. To best meet community need, the council will encourage developers to directly deliver community buildings, in line with agreed timelines and specifications.

Community halls would not typically be required to accommodate sports such as badminton, volleyball, or football as these are best suited to purpose-built sports halls; however, halls suitable for martial arts, short mat bowls, table tennis, dance, fitness sessions and similar activities should be considered as part of any feasibility studies.

⁶ Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report

Table 1 sets out the design principles that should be used when developing new community buildings, or upgrading or extending existing community buildings, to ensure that these are fit-for-purpose, meet the needs of the local community and are sustainable over the longer-term.

Objective 3 – To ensure community buildings are viable, and developed and managed to respond to the needs of the local community

Uses

Where appropriate, the council will work with developers to maximise the potential viability of community buildings by seeking to integrate a range of suitable uses, as outlined in the aims and objectives of this policy.

For example, this may include exploring opportunities to include pre-school provision or co-locating with sports changing rooms to provide operational efficiencies.

It will be important to carefully consider uses to maximise opportunity and minimise potential conflicts. Community buildings should provide a balanced programme of activities that serve the wider community, on a regular basis, rather than a sole use which excludes the potential for other uses at the same time.

Scale

To help ensure operational viability, the minimum area of internal floor space for a standalone community building is recommended to be c. 500sqm unless this serves an isolated community or can act as a satellite to a larger building (where a minimum of 350sqm can be considered). The ideal size for a standalone building is in the region of 750sqm.

Sufficient ancillary space, including designated outdoor space and parking, should also be provided. Where there might be a co-location of facilities with a pre-school additional space will be needed (both internal and external) to accommodate. The size of the additional space will be informed by relevant standards⁷.

Smaller interim buildings may be considered where later developments are expected to deliver more comprehensive community building provision.

Ownership

Where new community buildings are provided as part of a development, the council will normally take ownership of the building. However, there may be circumstances where ownership by another organisation is a preferred option. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Ownership of new community buildings is open to incorporated, non-profit community organisations, provided that the asset is held for the benefit of the local

⁷ As informed by Hampshire County Council

community in perpetuity and that this provision is included in their objectives. Forms of incorporation could include Community Benefit Society, Community Interest Company or Company Limited by Guarantee.

Appropriate ownership arrangements could include:

- Community/voluntary organisation
- Parish/Town Council
- Non-profit organisation
- Community Association cluster or Trust
- Joint ownership of, for example integrated community building and early years facility

Where a third party has ownership and/or management of a community building funded fully or in part through developer contributions, they will need to demonstrate that they understand and respond to local community need. The council will also ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place to ensure that the building and land is protected for community use over the longer term.

Management and operation

Operation and management of council-owned community centres is open to community and voluntary organisations who can demonstrate that their core purpose is to serve all communities within the specified neighbourhood by co-ordinating a wide range of locally based activities and services in response to local need. Their organisational objectives and structure must ensure that they have a wider membership to represent the local place-based community, including voting members, in addition to the charity trustees. The governing document must also ensure that any financial surpluses are not distributed to owners or members but are spent on serving the organisation's core purpose in serving the place-based community. Priority will be given to those organisations with a track record of successfully running a community centre.

When a new community centre becomes available, where appropriate, the council will seek expressions of interest from existing community associations operating primarily for the benefit of residents in the locality. Where appropriate, and depending on the location of the building, other existing local community groups or organisations, with similar objectives that benefit all residents in the area, may also be approached and/or developed. If there is no interest from existing community or residents' associations, or opportunity to develop local resident groups, the council may advertise the opportunity and invite applications from relevant charitable organisations. Organisations will be expected to apply using a set application form provided by the council.

To ensure that community centres can meet the needs of, and be accessible to, the whole local community, single-focus groups will not be eligible to apply to manage a council-owned community centre. However, they would be eligible to hire space within it, where agreed by the managing organisation and where lease terms allow.

The successful organisation will be granted a lease of the facility and will be responsible for day-to-day management, with repair and maintenance responsibilities shared between the council as landlord, and the organisation as tenant. The lease is accompanied by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to ensure organisations understand their responsibilities and compliance requirements, and performance can be measured and tracked.

Council-owned community centres are leased on a peppercorn rental basis, provided they comply with the provisions of the SLA and the council deems it remains in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Centres where the organisation runs a permanent bar/social club/café, or other trading activities which require a trading subsidiary to be created⁸, will receive a 75% rent discount against market value, provided they comply with the provisions of the SLA and the council deems it remains in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Organisations may apply for a 100% discount if they can demonstrate clear separation between the community organisation and trading arm that manages the bar/social club or commercial activities and can provide evidence that the trading arm regularly passes funds over to contribute to community benefit. Relevant clauses will be included in the lease and/or SLA.

Organisations responsible for community centres should be supported to obtain relevant information and advice to assist their governance, management arrangements and business planning; such support is currently available through the council, websites, local training programmes and community networks.

⁸ Council-owned community centres will not usually include permanent bar facilities for use as trading arms.

Table 1: Design principles for developing new, or upgrading existing, community buildings⁹

<p>1.</p>	<p>Accessibility Community buildings should be welcoming and inclusive spaces and easily accessible by all, including people with additional needs.</p>	<p>A range of appropriate measures should be considered to help ensure equality of access to, and within, the building and address any barriers, in line with relevant legislation including Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings, Volume 2 – Buildings other than dwellings.</p> <p>This may include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and appropriate signage • a visible and well-located entrance • suitable lighting and contrasting decoration to assist people with visual impairments • appropriate surface treatments and changes of level • ramps or handrails and stair or passenger lifts • provision of accessible toilets and adult changing facilities • width of corridors and entrances • inclusion of initiatives such as an induction loop, automatic or self-closing doors.
<p>2.</p>	<p>Location Community buildings are integral to local communities and their appearance and positioning should celebrate their role as a focal point in the local community. These should be conveniently located and easy to get to.</p>	<p>In applying the Local Plan standards of provision, consideration should be given to how people get to the building to encourage ‘walkability’ and promote sustainable forms of transport. There should be a network of direct and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes to the community facility and, where feasible, facilities should be close to bus routes.</p> <p>Suitable and well-designed vehicle and cycle parking should be provided, in line with the council’s Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (July 2018), or any successor document.</p> <p>Where practical, community buildings should be located alongside/in proximity to other community provision to create a community ‘hub’. This may</p>

⁹ A separate guidance note for developers has been developed which sets out the council’s requirements and minimum expectations - *Community Centres – general principles and preferred minimum requirements*. This guidance note is a working document that will be reviewed and updated by officers on a regular basis to ensure this reflects changes in legislation, regulations and policy.

		<p>include shops, health providers, nursery or pre-school provision and/or sports facilities as appropriate.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to layout of, and access to, communal facilities, such as parking, to avoid conflicts between users.</p> <p>Community buildings should incorporate external spaces where people can gather. These should also be closely linked, where practical, to public open spaces, such as an urban square, public green spaces such as a Neighbourhood Park and/or other local play and sports facilities, such as a multi-use games area or kickabout area.</p>
3.	<p>Design and appearance</p> <p>Community buildings should be well designed and of high architectural quality.</p>	<p>Community buildings should respond sympathetically and appropriately to their location and consider local distinctiveness.</p> <p>They should be designed so that the impact of any disturbance associated with the use of the premises on surrounding residents is minimised. They should include natural surveillance of the building and its surrounding spaces to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>A high quality of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments should be provided as part of the development of the facility.</p> <p>All proposals must comply with Local Plan Policy EM10 (Delivering High Quality Development), and the guidance in the Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (July 2018), or successor documents.</p> <p>Where a new community facility would be located in a Conservation Area, or would affect the setting of a Conservation Area or any other heritage asset (such as listed buildings), proposals must comply with Local Plan Policy EM11 (The Historic Environment) and the guidance in the council's Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (March 2019) (or successor documents).</p> <p>The visibility of refuse stores and servicing bays in public views of the community building should be minimised.</p>
4.	<p>Meeting community need</p> <p>Design of community buildings should be informed by an up-to-date assessment of need, considering the potential for complementary uses and any opportunities for co-location.</p>	<p>Community buildings should offer flexible and adaptable spaces, which can deliver a range of services that meet the needs of local people across all ages, abilities, and interests. The precise design and uses of the building should be determined through engagement with residents and stakeholders to ensure that the building can be used effectively for a wide range of community activities.</p>

		<p>Consideration should be given to the inclusion of WIFI and broadband to support connectivity.</p> <p>Community buildings should be appropriately ‘future-proofed’, with the potential for further expansion of the building’s footprint and ancillary spaces, such as open space and parking, and diversification of income streams.</p>
5.	<p>Storage</p> <p>Community buildings should consider and incorporate adequate storage to meet a range of users’ needs.</p>	<p>Sufficient internal storage should be provided within buildings (minimum 10% of floorspace) to allow for groups using the space/s to store equipment. Storage should also be provided for tables, chairs, events equipment etc. Pre-schools will need additional storage space to pack equipment away each day.</p>
6.	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Community buildings should be exemplars of sustainable development and their design and operation should reflect the council’s Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy, Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document and Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document.</p>	<p>A range of sustainable measures should be implemented to help mitigate environmental impact and increase financial and operational sustainability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimising energy use through the layout, orientation and design • maximising the fabric efficiency of buildings, and designing and specifying efficient building systems with fossil-free heating • maximising on-site renewable energy (such as solar panels) and energy storage • use of other sustainable technologies, such as reduced water consumption, rainwater harvest, heat pumps and LED lighting, to reduce on-going impact and running costs • provision of on-site recycling facilities • inclusion of electric vehicle charging points • limited use of non-standard fixtures and fittings to aid replacement and reduce on-going maintenance costs • fixtures and fittings which easily enable sustainable measures to be integrated/introduced in future • use of landscaping to improve buffering, enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure and safeguard habitat and protected species in line with the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document (December 2018) (or successor documents)

**Appendix 1 – Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment
Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report**

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

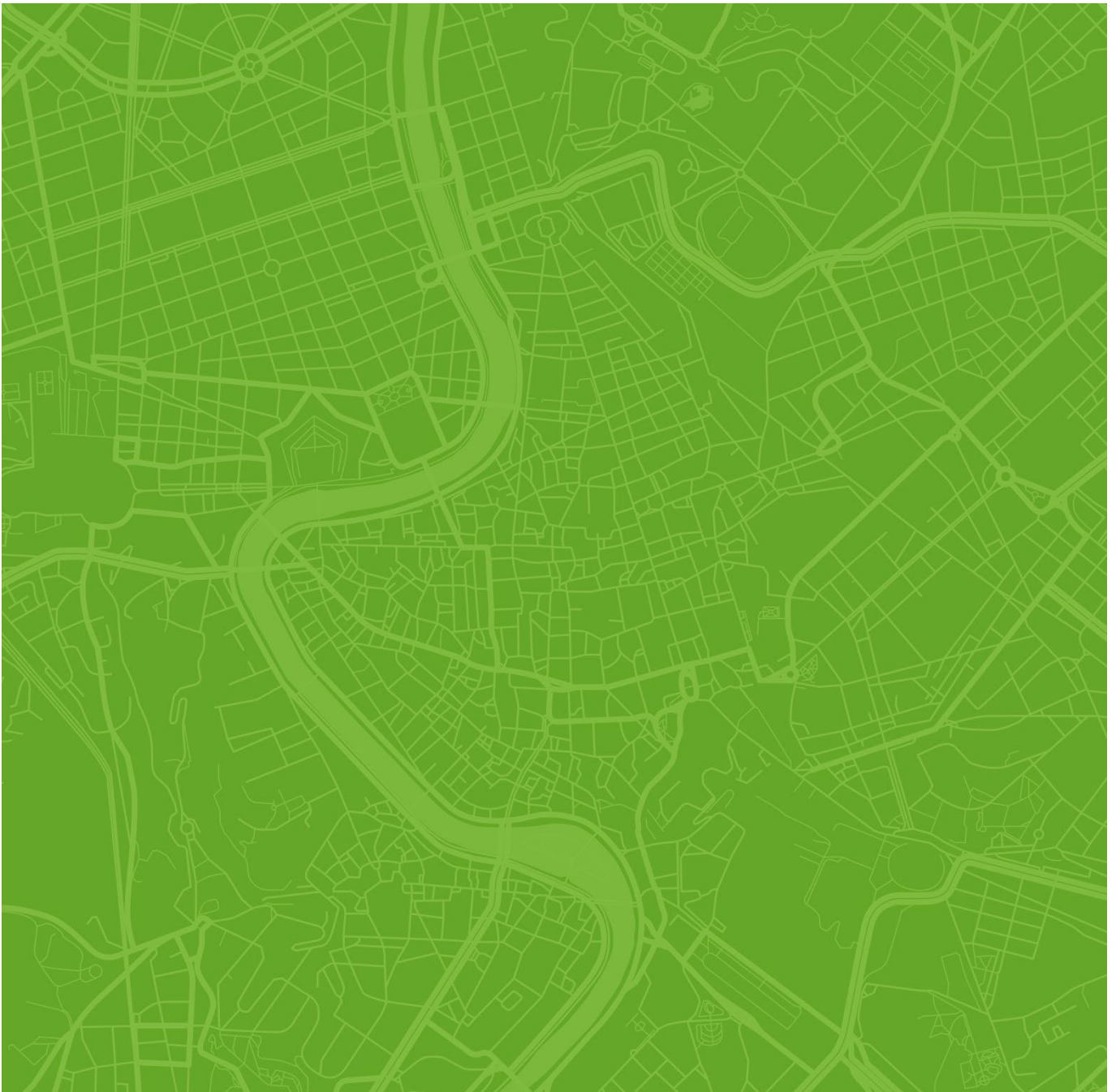
Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report

Community, Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment - Executive Summary

Final report

Prepared by LUC

August 2022



Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Update 2022: Part 2 Community Buildings Report Community, Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment - Executive Summary

Project Number
11221

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1.	Draft report	A. Hardie-Brown S. Langer S. Newman S. Temple	P. Smith	P. Smith	08.03.2022
2.	Final report	S. Langer	S. Langer	P. Smith	17.05.2022
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4.	Minor amendments	P. Smith	P. Smith	P. Smith	26.08.2022

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Appendix A

Developer contributions decision-making flow chart **A-1**

Chapter 1

Executive summary

Introduction

1.1 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council commissioned a community buildings assessment in August 2020. The purpose of this was to assess the current provision of community buildings and make recommendations to guide decisions on the future of community buildings within Basingstoke and Deane Borough. The assessment was prepared as part of the wider Basingstoke and Deane Community, Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment. It covers the time period of 2022-2040, in line with the wider Community, Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment and emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Update¹ (which will cover the period until at least 2038).

1.2 The Borough area, which is also the study boundary for this report, is set out in **Figure 1.1**.

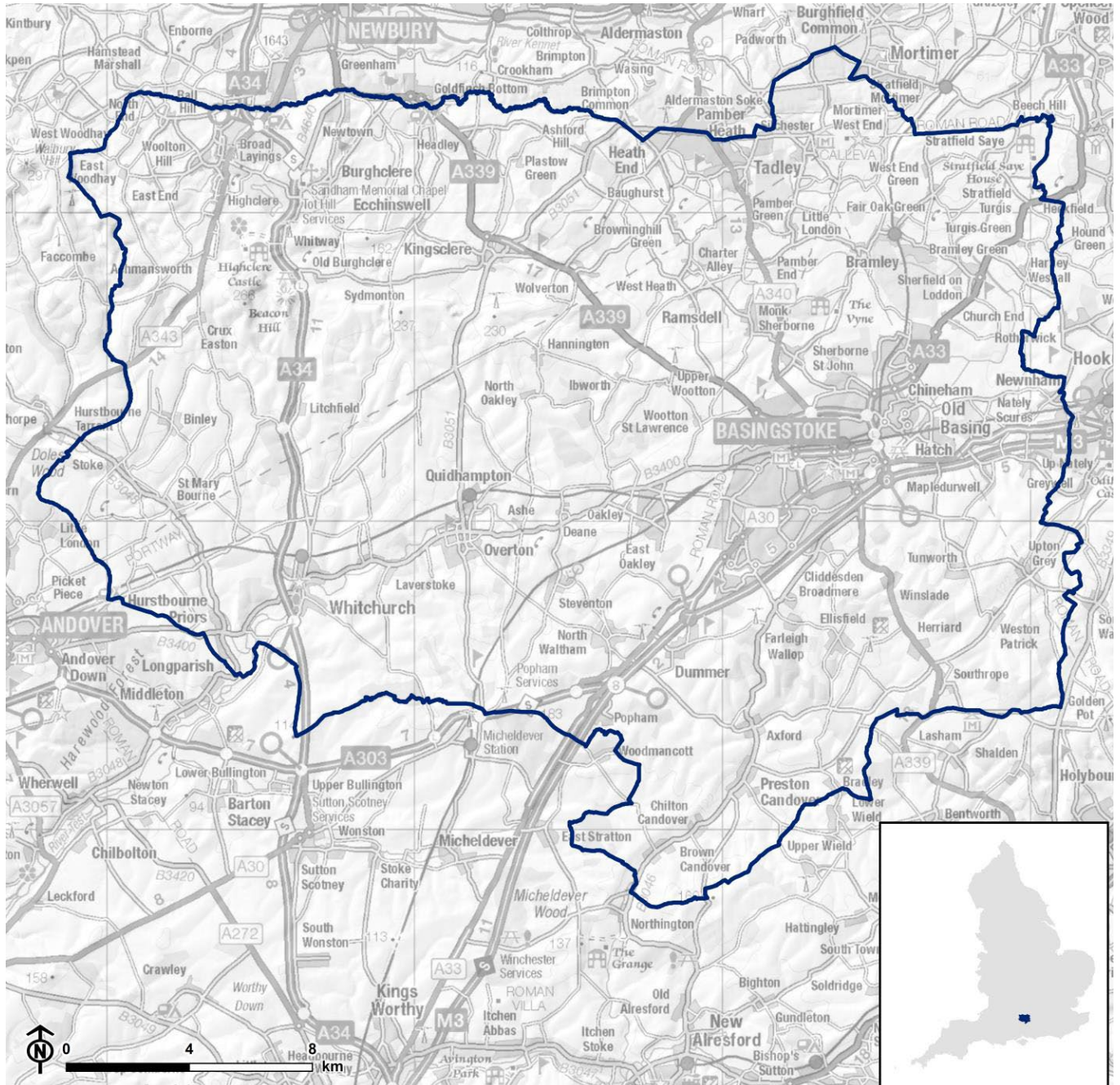
1.3 This report is the first of its kind to be provided in relation to Basingstoke and Deane – the first to provide a comprehensive spatial evidence base and review of the current provision and issues, as well as identifying aspects to consider for the future. It is also the first assessment to recommend an approach for ensuring that the demands arising from new development set out in the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (and the emerging local plan update) can be met, supported by appropriate levels of developer contributions. The key context to this is that there are no national standards or for the provision of community buildings; furthermore, there is no one organisation which has a dedicated role to safeguarding them (unlike sports facilities which are supported by Sport England). This creates challenges in coming up with a community buildings standard as local factors are key.

1.4 Furthermore, it is important to note that each community building is different – each has its own history, level of demand, community focus, funding provision, management arrangements and availability of local skills, making the context of each community building, and the issues they individually face, somewhat unique. This report provides a review at a snapshot in time, and it is understood that the council intend to update it in future to support future iterations of the local plan.

¹ Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (no date) About the Local Plan Update [online] Available at:

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/about-lpu>

Figure 1.1: Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council boundary



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CB:DM EB:Hardie-Brown_A LUC FIG1_11221_r0_Study_Area_A4P 09/02/2022
Source: OS

The intended audience for the community buildings assessment report

1.5 Anyone who has an interest in community buildings is welcome to read the assessment report. However, the key stakeholders for whom it has been written are those who:

- Have a role in preparing planning policy through the local plan preparation process;
- Have a role in deciding planning applications which may affect community buildings, for example housing developments which may place greater demand on community buildings;
- Have a role in designing and proposing new developments which may affect community buildings;
- Those who have a role in managing community buildings in the Borough.

Definition of community buildings

1.6 The interpretation of the term 'community buildings' can be wide, for example it can be interpreted as buildings with an element of public access or buildings in private ownership which are occasionally used for community events. In order to provide a focus, the assessment is concerned solely with buildings which fall within the following definition:

Definition of a Community Building

A community building is a building that is open to the whole community, run for public benefit, is a focus for neighbourhood activity and involvement and hosts a range of locally based social, recreational, cultural and educational activities and volunteering opportunities.

1.7 Community buildings that fall into this definition within Basingstoke and Deane typically fall into the following typologies:

- Church halls;
- Community cafes;
- Community centres;
- Community schools;
- Village / parish / town halls;
- Youth facilities.

Key policy context

1.8 Paragraph 93a of the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² sets out that a key role of the planning system is to “*plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments*”.

1.9 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council adopted its current local plan in May 2016, which outlines the Council's vision and strategy for the area until 2029. It seeks to create a 'Connected and Vibrant Place' where residents are able to have the opportunity to connect and foster local community spirit. This aim is supported by Policy CN6: Infrastructure, Policy CN7: Essential Facilities and Services and Policy CN8: Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities. Policy CN6 seeks to ensure that development proposals clearly identify how they will accommodate growth, and the provision of the necessary infrastructure in the creation or enhancement of sustainable communities. Policy CN7 seeks to ensure access to essential facilities and services for all residents and businesses. It sets out that new developments will be approved if they provide facilities to improve the vitality and viability of communities. This is considered to include community buildings given their critical role in supporting communities. Policy CN8 seeks to ensure facilities and services which enrich and ensure the vitality of communities are protected, supported and facilitated.

1.10 In accordance with the above policies, the assessment report reviews the current provision of community buildings and sets out where new development is likely to result in increased pressure upon those facilities, and therefore where financial contributions from developers would be appropriate. It is important to note that such contributions are only expected from residential developments of ten or more homes only, as the government advises against taking contributions from schemes of 9 or fewer homes.

Key socio-economic context

1.11 The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane covers an area of over 63,000 hectares (245 square miles) of north Hampshire, with Basingstoke Town and the adjoining parishes of Chineham and Rooksdown comprising the main settlements in the Borough and the focus for key services and employment.

1.12 The main urban area is Basingstoke Town, which is located in the east of the Borough. Tadley is also a significant

² Gov.uk (no date) The National Planning Policy Framework [online]

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policyframework>

urban area within the Borough, located in the north. The remainder of the Borough is relatively rural, consisting of smaller towns, villages and hamlets within a wider countryside setting. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers a significant portion of the Borough, recognising the high value of the natural environment and landscape.

1.13 According to census data, the number of residents in the Borough has steadily increased since Basingstoke’s designation as an Expanded Town in the 1960s. According to data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the population stands at around 177,760³. Hampshire County Council (HCC) prepares population forecasts for all the districts / boroughs within Hampshire⁴ and according to these, the population of the Borough is forecast to increase by around 6% in less than a decade, which is a significant amount of growth, and the increase in population will place more pressure on services, creating demand for community buildings.

Assessment methodology

1.14 The assessment involved different elements of research and analysis, as shown in **Figure 1.2**.

Figure 1.2: Project methodology



1.15 The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant implications for all community buildings due to the need to close buildings and, on re-opening, restrict their capacity to accommodate social distancing requirements. This created challenges in undertaking the community buildings assessment, because community buildings were largely closed when the consultation was begun and because of the continuing uncertainty around how community buildings would / will be used following the pandemic. Where data from before the pandemic is used, this is made clear within the report.

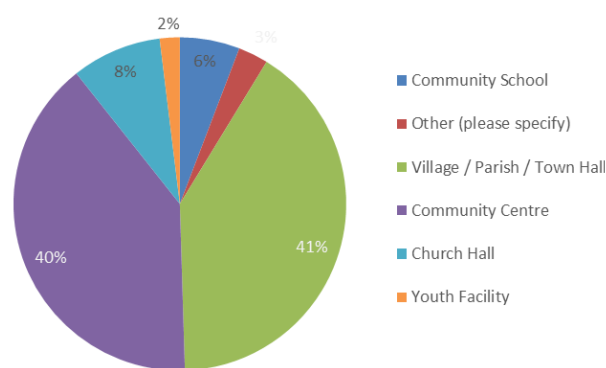
Audit of community buildings

Overview

1.16 The audit of community buildings was based on the information reported in the managers / trustees and users survey, desk based research, site visits and surveys.

1.17 There are 103 community buildings within Basingstoke and Deane which fall into the definition of ‘community buildings’ set out above. These are mainly concentrated in Basingstoke as the largest urban area in the Borough. Of these, and as shown in **Figure 1.3**, village / parish and town halls are the most common type of community building, closely followed by community centres.

Figure 1.3: Community buildings by typology, on the basis of pre-pandemic use



1.18 The users survey reported that the most common activities are social and physical activities such as fitness classes, social meetings and special events.

³ Office for National Statistics (2020) Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukeng>

landandwalescotlandandnorthernireland
⁴ Hampshire County Council (2020). Population estimates and forecasts [online] Available at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/factsfigures/population/estimates-forecasts>

1.19 The significant majority of community buildings in the Borough (62%) were built between 1960 and the present day. The trend of building shows significant building of new community buildings from this time peaking in the 1980s-90s. This is likely to be as a result of new housing estates formed after the Second World War and a renewed focus on social infrastructure.

Demand

1.20 Respondents to the managers / trustees survey set out when their main halls were in greatest demand. The results of this show that weekday afternoons (2pm-6pm) and Saturday mornings (opening until 12pm) are identified as the most popular times for use of community buildings, whilst Sunday mornings (opening until 12pm), lunchtimes (12pm-2pm) and evenings (6pm until closing) are the least popular times. Centres in Basingstoke tend to be busiest. Generally, the highest times of demand are on weekdays and Saturdays.

1.21 Although demand is high, only 5% of user survey respondents said that they could not book community building spaces when they wanted to, suggesting that there is generally sufficient provision across the Borough as a whole to meet the needs of the population.

Creating high quality community buildings

1.22 The users survey asked what users consider to be important to making a community building attractive to use. The respondents identified that a well maintained, clean facility and affordable prices are considered to be the most important features of a community building. Parking was also seen as important, which reflects the high use of travel by car.

Accessibility

1.23 Through the managers / trustees survey, the majority of respondents self-reported that their building(s) provide accessible main halls and toilets with handrails. A smaller proportion of facilities offer disabled or parent and child parking, baby changing facilities and hearing loops. Only a very small number of the buildings have a portable ramp, lift or stairlift and measures to assist the partially sighted (e.g. Braille signage). This highlights a significant shortfall in the provision of accessible buildings, and raises concerns that the lack of widespread accessible buildings will prevent certain demographics with particular needs from accessing activities and events (e.g. the visually impaired).

1.24 The survey also asked whether community building managers / trustees were considering any alterations to their facilities to make them more accessible. Answers that some were planning the installation of ramps, automatic doors, lift access, hearing loops, the removal of overgrowth to widen footpaths and larger disabled toilet facilities. However, it is important to note that not many community buildings were considering these, as only 24 answered (around a quarter of the total number of buildings in the Borough).

Management of community buildings

1.25 Responses to both the users survey and managers / trustees survey identified that the key issues that cause problems in relation to the operation and management of community buildings include the lack of parking, lack of storage space, poor conditions of toilets and heating systems. Parking was the most commonly cited issue by far, demonstrating that this is a crucial matter.

Energy efficiency and climate change readiness

1.26 56% of respondents to the managers / trustees survey said that there are opportunities to improve energy and resource efficiency in the building(s) which they manage. Further detail was provided by some in relation to how this could be achieved, and responses included installation of new heating systems, double glazing, increasing insulation provision, reducing the height of the hall, heat pumps, installing more energy efficient lighting, movement sensors on lighting and solar panels.

1.27 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019. It agreed that action must be taken towards making Basingstoke and Deane a carbon neutral Council by 2025 and a carbon neutral Borough by 2030. The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan⁵ seeks to tackle emissions from buildings by procuring renewable energy to power and heat operational buildings, for which the Council is responsible for the utility contracts. Additionally, it seeks to determine options to reduce energy consumption in buildings and to ensure new council building development is as energy efficient as possible. In addition, it is understood that the Council will be seeking to support residents and communities to take action, including those managing community facilities.

1.28 The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan also includes actions to investigate mobility options within Basingstoke Town Centre, such as e-scooters and bike hire and the rollout of electric vehicle charging points. On this

⁵ Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (2020) Climate Emergency Action Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/65005/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan%2020-21.pdf>. Update (2021) available at:

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/68697/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan%202021-22.pdf>

point, it should be noted that most of the community buildings in the Borough do not have electric vehicle charging points (the managers / trustees survey reported that approximately 97% of community buildings do not provide electric vehicle charging – based on 47 responses). It is important that community buildings help to support the objectives to tackle the climate emergency and offer low carbon opportunities for people to access them, and this is one particular point where community buildings are considered able to improve.

Travel to community buildings

1.29 In order to understand the current travel distances of people to community buildings from their homes, the community buildings users survey asked participants how far they travel in miles to reach them. 377 responses to this question were received. 175 users (46% of respondents) travel up to 1 mile maximum to reach the facility they visit. 84 users (22% of respondents) travel 2-5 miles to reach the facility they visit, closely followed by 78 users (21% of respondents) who travel 1-2 miles. Only a small proportion of respondents (5%) travel over 10 miles to reach their facility.

1.30 Although there is a high number of visitors coming from a short distance away, responses to both the users and managers / trustees survey revealed that at least half of journeys to community buildings are made by car. A large proportion also said that they walk to their local community building, although the responses to the users' survey and managers / trustees survey differed on this, with the users' survey respondents suggesting that walking was more popular than the managers / trustees. The high proportion of people travelling by car is likely to be the reason that the perceived lack of parking is considered to be a key issue which causes management issues at community buildings. The users survey also asked respondents why they use the car rather than more sustainable modes of travel. 54% of those who use the car stated that they choose to use the car due to personal preference, and 43% of those who use the car said that they used the car because there are barriers which prevent them from using other ways to travel. This suggests that there is scope for a significant shift to allowing people to use more sustainable travel to get to community buildings.

1.31 Survey responses identified that public transport and cycling were not very popular ways to get to community buildings. On this point it was noted that only around 30% of community buildings offer cycle secure parking which may be a reason that cycling is not a popular way to travel to community buildings. Other respondents set out that there is a lack of direct public transport journeys or that services do not run at the right times.

Financial viability

1.32 Information was gathered in the managers / trustees survey about the financial status of community buildings in the Borough. According to the responses, over half make a financial surplus, around 7% of facilities report a typical financial loss and the others reported that it varies year to year. These findings relate to the pre-pandemic situation.

1.33 When asked whether there are sufficient funding opportunities, only 50% of respondents to the managers / trustees survey said that there were sufficient capital grants available, with the others stating that either there were not, or that they did not know. This suggests that there could be more demand for such funding than is available or that such funding sources could be better advertised.

1.34 As part of the community buildings users' survey, respondents were asked whether they consider the hiring fees for spaces within community buildings 'Affordable', 'About right', 'Expensive' or 'Too expensive'. 61% of respondents consider the hiring fees to be 'About right', while 27% of respondents consider the hiring fees to be 'Affordable'. Only a small number of survey respondents consider the hiring fees to be 'Expensive' (8%) or 'Too expensive' (4%). This is on the basis of pre-pandemic rates and suggests that community buildings are felt to be affordable.

1.35 The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a turbulent time for community buildings as they were subject to enforced closures, social distancing measures, staff and volunteer illnesses and a general public who were wary of meeting in large groups.

Staff

1.36 The managers / trustees survey collected data about whether staff are full time / part time and employed on a paid or voluntary basis. The information collected identified that the majority of staff running the facilities across the Borough are volunteers, with just under half working part time. However, there is a proportion of paid staff employed, with the majority of these being full time (see **Figure 1.4**). This is based on pre-pandemic conditions.

Figure 1.4: Response to the managers / trustees survey question “how many people are employed at your facility and what role do these people undertake?”



Implications of COVID-19

1.37 The managers / trustees survey collected information about how community buildings responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community buildings responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by furloughing staff, introducing staff hiring freezes, reducing their general capacity to facilitate social distancing and undertaking maintenance work to the building.

1.38 Whilst the impacts of COVID-19 will vary for each individual community building across the Borough, the general impacts identified from the managers / trustees survey are as follows:

- Use of the facilities generally dropped across the Borough, as a result of lockdowns and social distancing measures. As a result, there was a decline in the uptake of new users.
- Staff and volunteer availability reduced, preventing the facilities from operating as normal.

1.39 Despite the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 60% of the 46 respondents to the managers / trustees survey stated that their facility is financially viable and is likely to remain so. However, around 30% of respondents believe that the future of their facility is uncertain, whilst 4% stated that their facility has poor financial prospects. This has therefore highlighted that a significant proportion of community buildings across the Borough may be under threat in the future.

1.40 However, the user survey asked whether respondents would be more or less likely to use community buildings post-COVID. 19% said they would use community buildings more, and only 5% less. Use of community buildings is understood to be less than before the pandemic but increasing. The

survey results suggests that eventually financial prospects may improve that and demand for community buildings may also increase.

Expanding, enhancing and providing new community buildings

Standards for the provision of new community buildings

1.41 The population of Basingstoke and Deane Borough is set to increase, which will place more demand on community buildings. It is important to ensure that where population growth is anticipated, community buildings are expanded or that new buildings are provided in order to accommodate the increased demand. Setting out standards to inform discussions around the provision of community buildings needed to accommodate a growing population is considered to be helpful and was one of the key requirements of the community buildings assessment.

1.42 Although there are no standards at present, the Basingstoke and Deane Planning Obligations for Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document sets out that “*where new community buildings are required to support new development, including at the strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan, they will be secured through planning obligations*”. The identification of a standard will be helpful to all parties in identifying the number of community buildings which are needed, their location and the facilities that they should offer. This section reviews the current provision and provides the reasoning for a set of new standards for Basingstoke and Deane. The recommended standards are as follows:

Quantity standard

1 new community building (or equivalent in floorspace provision by extending existing buildings) should be provided per 1,726 persons.

1.43 The quality standard is based on the current provision of community buildings per person in the Borough. The surveys identified that there are generally sufficient opportunities to book sessions at the appropriate time. Based on this, maintaining the current level of provision (per person) is considered to be suitable.

Travel time standards

Urban

All homes in the urban parts of the borough should be located within a 15-minute walk of their nearest community building.

Rural

All homes in the rural parts of the borough should be located within a 15-minute drive of their nearest community building.

1.44 It is important to ensure that community buildings are in an appropriate location which is suitably close to where people live. In accordance with 20-minute neighbourhood / 15-minute city principles⁶, it is appropriate to create a standard that focuses on walking, as this is the most sustainable form of transport, and therefore within the urban parts of the Borough it is proposed that the travel time provides for walking only, accepting that there will always be some people who drive.

1.45 It is recognised that in the rural parts of the Borough walking is not always a viable option due to the distances between homes and the community buildings as well as other factors such as lack of pavements. As such it is considered that a travel time standard for the rural areas of the Borough should account for driving as this is the most popular mode of travel and is likely to continue to be so throughout the current local plan period to 2029.

1.46 Mapping of the recommended travel time standards identifies that generally these reflect the current provision of community buildings in the context of the settlement pattern within the Borough. Shorter travel time standards would identify a deficiency in many parts of the Borough, which, according to the survey results, does not appear to be the case; longer travel time standards would suggest that there may be too many community buildings, which also, does not appear to be the case according to survey responses.

1.47 Office of National Statistics (ONS) has produced a dataset of urban and rural areas⁷. 'Urban' areas are defined as those with a resident population of 10,000 persons or more, and all remaining areas are defined as 'rural'. The dataset from ONS was applied to the lower layer super output areas in the Basingstoke and Deane Borough, and community buildings were identified as either 'urban' or 'rural' according to which area they lie within.

1.48 It is important to note that many of the development sites allocated in the current local plan and being considered in the emerging local plan update are on greenfield sites which are currently identified as rural. Given that the form of these allocations is anticipated to be 'urban' in nature once built out,

the 15-minute walking catchment area (rather than driving) is applied to allocated and emerging development sites.

Meeting the needs of planned development

1.49 The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan was adopted in 2016 and covers the period from 2011-2029. The local plan sets out the number of additional homes which are to be provided to meet anticipated population growth and includes large scale allocations setting out where the majority of new homes will be located. The majority of these have planning permission already. The planning obligation agreements for these developments were reviewed in order to understand their provision in relation to community buildings and revealed that eight new community buildings will be provided and three will be expanded. This level of provision is considered appropriate.

Meeting the need of future developments

1.50 For the emerging Local Plan update, additional land parcels are being considered for allocation as development areas. These have been considered and recommendations are as follows.

- For site BRAM011 (Land West of Upper Cufaude Farm), it is recommended that the proposed community building within the current local plan allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm is made larger to accommodate the needs of this site, however this will be subject to renegotiating the existing developer agreement.
- For sites NWAL001 (South West Basingstoke) and OAK001 (Manydown), it is likely that at least two new community buildings will be needed by 2038 (the end of the local plan update period), but it is also important to note that this new community will eventually be larger and as such will need to consider the final design size when determining the overall provision and phasing of community buildings.
- Sites OLD001 (Land East of Basingstoke), OLD002 (Land at Lodge Farm), SOL008 (Land at Sheffield Hill Farm), SOL010 (Land to the North of Redlands Farm) and SOL011 (Redlands Lodge), should be served by the community building, which is already required at the Land East of Basingstoke site (allocated in the current local plan). It may also be possible to expand Sheffield Park Community Centre, although this should be

⁶ Town and Country Planning Association (2021). Guide: The 20 Minute Neighbourhood [online] Available at: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/guide-the-20-minute-neighbourhood> and RTPi (no date) 15 Minute Cities [online] Available at: [https://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-english-regions/rtpi-](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-english-regions/rtpi-london/london-calling-newsletter/15-minute-cities20-minute-neighbourhoods/)

[london/london-calling-newsletter/15-minute-cities20-minute-neighbourhoods/](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-english-regions/rtpi-london/london-calling-newsletter/15-minute-cities20-minute-neighbourhoods/).

⁷ Office for National Statistics (2011) 2011 Urban / rural classification [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/ruralurbanclassifications/2011ruralurbanclassification>

reviewed in the context of the segregating barrier formed by the A33.

- For site SSJ004 (Land west of Marnel Park), the new community building already required at the North of Popley Fields allocation (in the current local plan) should be expanded to meet the needs of more homes in this area.
- For sites SSJ011 (Weybrook Golf Club) and RO001 (Land adjacent to Weybrook Golf Course), it should be investigated whether Rooksdown community building can be further expanded / improved to provide for more capacity or whether a satellite facility could be provided within the development areas.
- For site STE001 (Popham Airfield), new community buildings are recommended to be provided by the developer or using developer contributions.
- For town centre areas 6 and 7, expansion or remodelling of existing community buildings is recommended in order to increase capacity.

Securing appropriate contributions through the planning system

1.51 Planning obligations are legal agreements between the developer and local planning authority. Generally, they involve financial payments from development or a requirement to provide an element of infrastructure (such as a new community building), as well as defining other matters as to how a development will be undertaken. They are a key tool for mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms.

1.52 Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. As set out in regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations, planning obligations must be:

- a. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b. directly related to the development; and
- c. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

1.53 New residential development places demand on services provided by nearby community buildings. If this demand is not met by increasing the provision of community buildings within Basingstoke and Deane, this would lead to a shortage of opportunities for residents to access key community services, which is considered to be an unacceptable situation.

1.54 Where contributions are considered necessary, they should cover all fair and reasonable costs (relating to the demand generated by the development) including land costs, design costs, professional fees, costs of relevant consents, building, fit out and initial staffing and initial maintenance costs.

1.55 In order to set out where contributions from residential development are appropriate, a recommended approach to decision-making for planning applications has been prepared (**Appendix A**). Key points in relation to this recommended approach are set out below:

Ensuring accessibility:

1.56 The key consideration is whether residents of new homes will be able to access community buildings. This is why the travel time standards above were developed and all new developments should be reviewed to understand whether the residents of the proposed homes will be able to access community buildings according to the standards, depending on whether they are in a rural or urban location. All local plan allocations are recommended to use the urban standard, even if located in an area identified at present as rural, as they will be large scale 'urban' developments.

Expansion / enhancement of existing, or new provision?

1.57 New community buildings involve a significant amount of set-up resource including land, funding for construction, staffing to ensure proper management and operation and income generation for ongoing maintenance and various activities or initiatives undertaken at the building. For this reason, expansion or other improvement of existing community buildings is considered to be more efficient and this is the preferred option. The exception to this is where new development levels are so significant that the existing community building or buildings would not be able to expand sufficiently, due to, for example, land constraints or operational reasons. In these cases, provision of new buildings should be sought.

Temporary or 'meanwhile' provision

1.58 In some instances, it may be the case that community buildings cannot be provided in their final location during the early stages of a development (for example if the most appropriate location for the community building in the long term is not near the initial development phase, which will usually be based on where site access can be gained. In such cases temporary provision to serve the early stages of development should be secured through developer contributions. This could take the form of modular buildings or the use of a building which will eventually have a different use, such as a retail unit. Portacabins and shipping containers

have also been used for this purpose⁸, although it will be necessary to ensure that these are suitable in terms of the general character of the area.

Floorspace calculation

1.59 In order to help inform how large new community buildings should be an assessment was made in relation to general financial viability and the size of community buildings in the Borough. Of the facilities that provided information in relation to both matters, the size of facility and whether this is likely to affect viability was considered. Community buildings which reported consistently making a surplus, the average size of building was 348 square metres. Although there were buildings of varying size this demonstrates that generally, as expected, smaller facilities find it more challenging to be financially viable.

1.60 In terms of the current provision of community buildings and the size of spaces, the manager / trustee survey responses reported the types of spaces which are found within each community building and the size of these. The responses in relation to the 'community centre' typology only were considered in relation to this, because it is likely that new buildings provided will be of this typology (rather than as village halls for example, given the need for new community building primarily comes from large scale development sites).

1.61 In order to provide a facility that is suitably equipped to be able to provide long term revenue generation it is considered that all new community buildings will need to provide, as a minimum, the following:

- A main hall;
- Meeting rooms;
- Drink and snack making facilities for staff and volunteers; and
- Storage space.

1.62 Clearly the size and final area given to these individual spaces should be suited to the final design of the building but based on the average sizes of these areas in the existing community centre buildings, a minimum floorspace provision of around 383 square metres would be appropriate for a standalone building providing these facilities. This could be reduced if the community building was provided as part of a larger public building (such as a school or sports facility) by, for example, combining staff facilities.

1.63 Taking account of the current size of community buildings and the average size at which buildings tend to be more reliably viable, a minimum floorspace standard of 350 square metres for a standalone building is recommended. This is also consistent with recent s106 agreements, for example at Manydown. Should more facilities, such as a second hall, outdoor space, a café or changing rooms be needed then the floorspace provision should suitably increase.

1.64 As set out elsewhere in this report, there is currently one community building per 1,726 persons. Retaining this level of provision creates a floorspace requirement in new community buildings of 0.203 square metres per person (350/1,726), or 203 square metres per 1,000 persons. For the purposes of informing an approach to planning applications 203 is rounded down to 200 square metres per 1,000 people (0.2m per person).

1.65 Where a development is within a 15-minute catchment of an existing community building (or buildings), this standard can inform how much the existing community building(s) should be expanded to accommodate the new residents – although it should be noted that other enhancements which do not involve providing more floorspace can also increase the capability of a community building to accommodate more activities / people (such as removal or reconfiguration of staging, internal modifications or sound insulation).

1.66 Setting a floorspace requirement per person also enables an assessment of when a development site is likely to be able to support a new standalone community building that provides all of the features needed to help ensure ongoing viability (as set out above). Development sites that are of sufficient scale to justify a new standalone facility will be in the region of 750 dwellings.

1.67 The ONS provides household projections⁹. These set out that the average household size in 2028 (the closest year to the end of the plan period) will be 2.31. This can be used to calculate the number of dwellings a site would need to provide to be able to support a standalone facility. Although the equation result is 758, the threshold of 'approximately' 750 is considered to be a more appropriate and straightforward figure to use for the purposes of an approach to development contributions.

Design of community buildings

1.68 Co-location of buildings with public or semi-public uses is recommended to save overall costs in relation to land,

⁸ North Somerset Times (2020) School searches for final £2k to purchase and build library and creative space [online]. Available at: <https://www.northsomersettimes.co.uk/news/clevedon-school-children-search-for-final-2k-for-project-xenia-4534190>

⁹ Office of National Statistics (2020) Household projections for

England [online]. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/householdprojectionsforengland>

building and maintenance. However, it is important that community spaces have their own identity and are designed to be flexible.

1.69 Community involvement in the design of new buildings is also essential, to ensure that the desires and needs of the local community are taken into account.

Improvement or expansion to meet maintenance and operational needs in the Borough

1.70 Through the managers / trustees survey, information was collected in relation to maintenance needs and potential ways in which buildings could be made more accessible. This requested the nature of the maintenance needs, the likely cost and the amount of funding that had been secured for this work already. The information submitted sets out that there is at least £1,089,094 of maintenance required within the community building estate across the Borough. Funding sources for some of this work has been identified, for example using community buildings revenue from fundraising and hiring out space, as well as grants secured from the council. Taking into account the maintenance needs where funding has been identified there remains a funding shortfall of at least £623,274. It is important to note that this information is based on the managers / trustees survey and therefore does not contain all of the maintenance needs as some community building managers / trustees did not respond. The figures are largely indicative at this time as they were rounded, and it is of course possible that additional maintenance needs will be identified in future. The actual costs for maintenance needs are likely to be significantly higher than the figures in the main report suggest.

1.71 It is understood that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has also conducted a condition survey of the buildings which it manages within the last 12 months which it can also draw on to inform its maintenance plans where it is their responsibility.

1.72 Operational pressures have been identified at the following community buildings:

- The Carnival Hall;
- East Woodhay Village Hall;
- Kingsclere Village Club;
- North Waltham Village Hall;
- Upton Grey Village Hall;
- Westside community centre;
- Clift Meadow Pavilion – Bramley;
- Newtown Village Hall;

- Tadley - The Point Youth Facility;
- Ambrose Allen Centre, Tadley;
- Bishops Green Community Centre;
- Ellisfield Memorial Hall;

Conclusions and next steps

1.73 The provision of community buildings in the Borough is currently adequate but more community building space should be provided to meet the needs of population growth. In addition, any opportunities to help address specific community buildings with maintenance burdens, and where operational challenges have been identified, should be explored.

1.74 It is important to note that the community building assessment report has been prepared at a specific point in time and has identified issues which should be followed up in future. Key recommendations for next steps for the council and those owning and managing community buildings are set out below.

- Follow up maintenance issues identified in surveys with the affected community buildings and explore opportunities for support.
- Follow up the operational challenges identified through the surveys, such as financial viability, high demand and low demand, to explore opportunities for support.
- Undertake further investigation about how people travel to community buildings and where they come from, and support community building users to travel more sustainably, helping to address the perceived lack of parking and reduce carbon emissions associated with transport.
- The Council to take forward the recommended approach to planning contributions and advice on what makes a high quality community building set out within the assessment report.
- Continue to monitor use of community buildings to ascertain whether popularity of community buildings is increasing following the COVID-19 pandemic and whether there are implications for this in terms of the overall demand for community buildings.
- Increase efforts to collaborate and co-ordinate with community buildings within the Borough, particularly those which did not respond to the survey.
- Provide information on the location of community buildings on an up to date map on the council's website, thereby increasing the ability of the general public to find them.

Appendix A

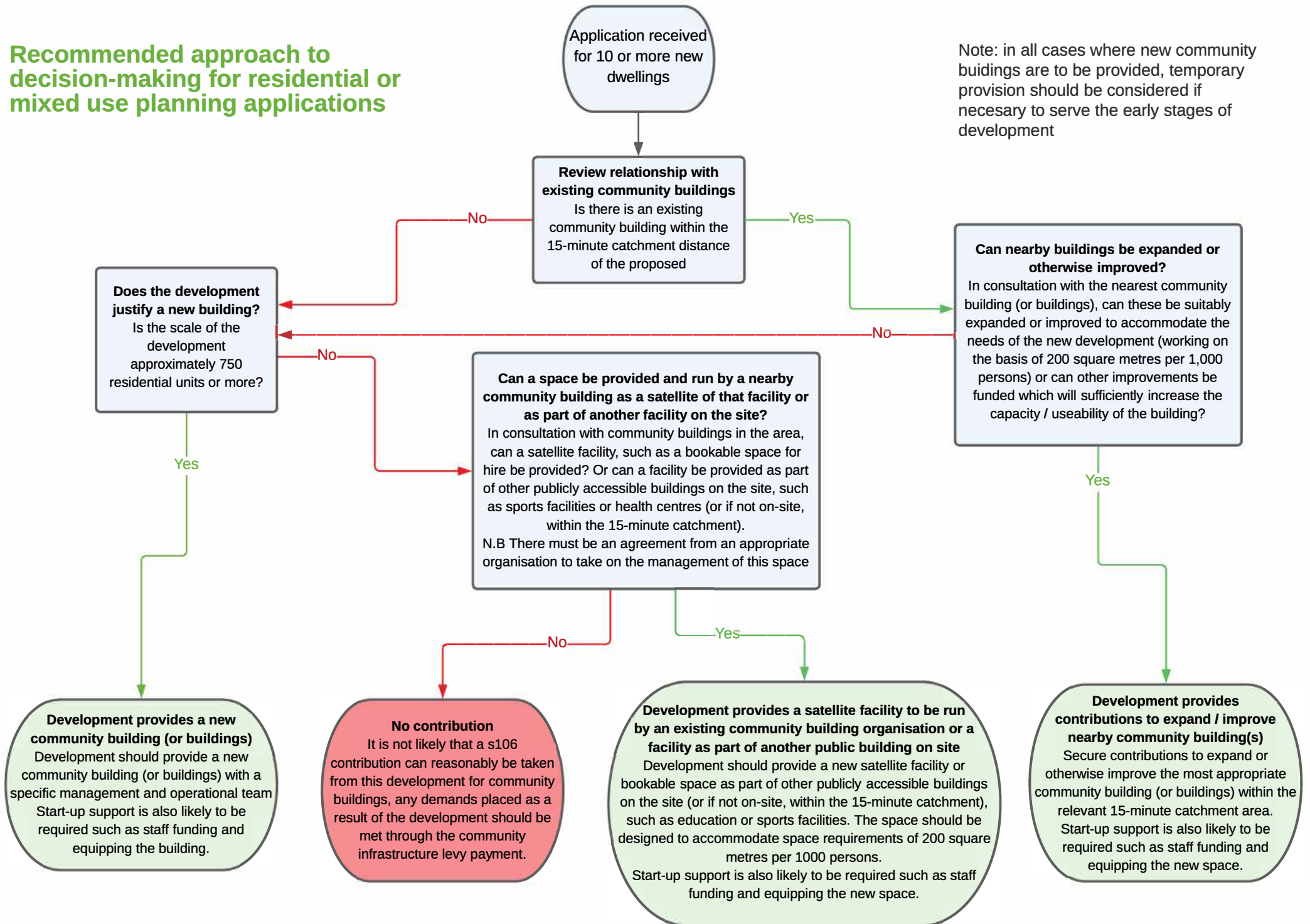
Developer contributions decision-making flow chart

A.1 The following flow chart sets out the decision making process recommended when applications for planning permission are submitted. Note, these recommendations relate only to sites of ten or more new homes because developments under this size are not required to provide developer contributions.

A.2 For regeneration schemes the net number of new homes should be considered (for example if a site with 30 homes is being redeveloped to provide 50, then the net figure of new homes to consider is 20).

Recommended approach to decision-making for residential or mixed use planning applications

Note: in all cases where new community buildings are to be provided, temporary provision should be considered if necessary to serve the early stages of development



Appendix 2 – Maps

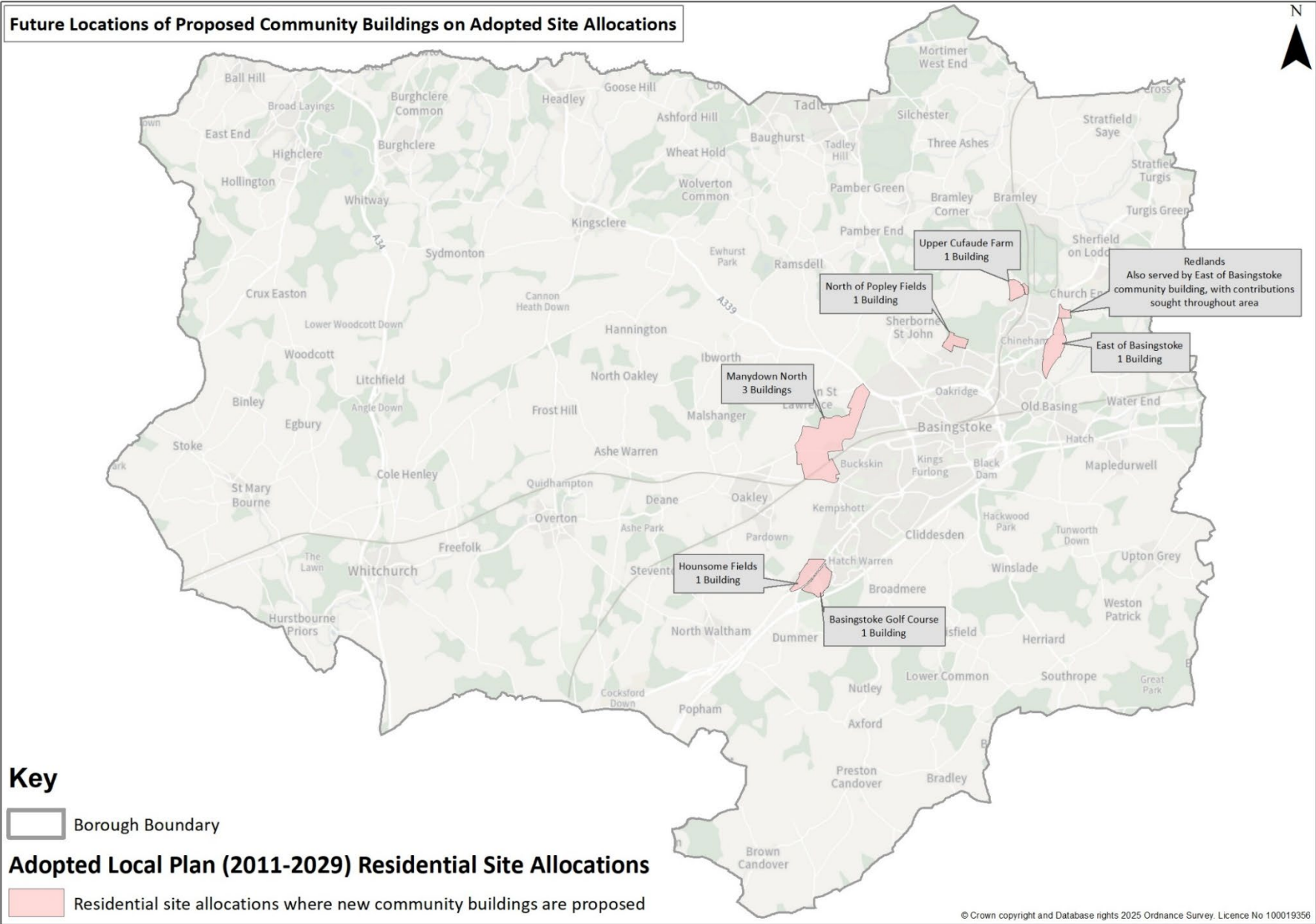
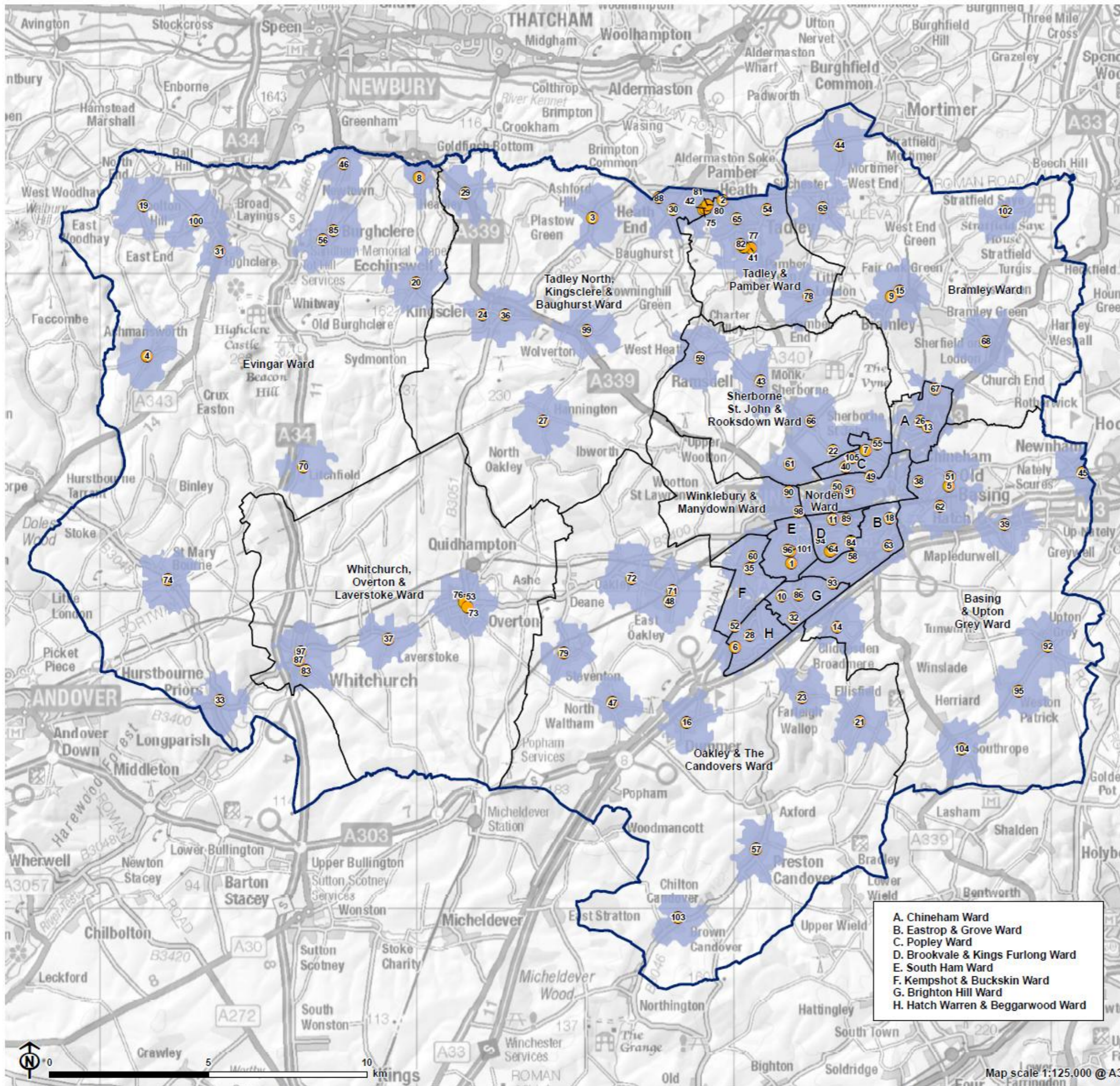


Figure B5: Travel catchment areas - walking

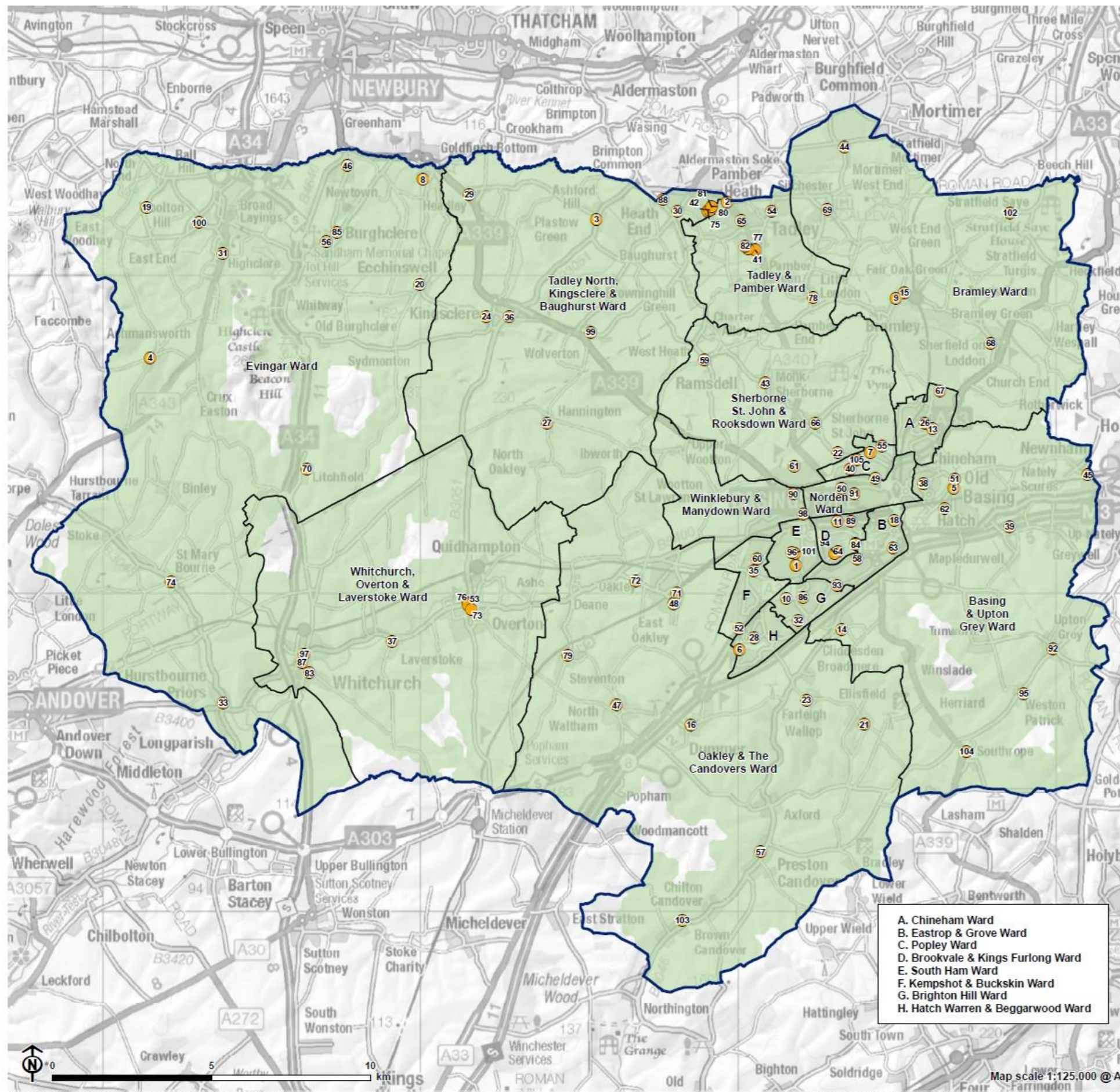


- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Ward boundaries
- Community buildings
- 15 minute walk time catchment

- A. Chineham Ward
- B. Eastrop & Grove Ward
- C. Popley Ward
- D. Brookvale & Kings Furlong Ward
- E. South Ham Ward
- F. Kempshot & Buckskin Ward
- G. Brighton Hill Ward
- H. Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Ward



Figure B6: Travel catchment areas - driving



- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Ward boundaries
- Community buildings
- 15 minute drive time catchment

- A. Chineham Ward
- B. Eastrop & Grove Ward
- C. Popley Ward
- D. Brookvale & Kings Furlong Ward
- E. South Ham Ward
- F. Kempshot & Bucksdown Ward
- G. Brighton Hill Ward
- H. Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Ward

Map scale 1:125,000 @ A3

For further advice or information see
www.basingstoke.gov.uk/community-centres
email community.development@basingstoke.gov.uk
or call 01256 844844.

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