

*Chapter Thirteen*

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

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## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### INTRODUCTION

**13.01** A wide range of community services and facilities is provided in the District by public, private and voluntary agencies. Hospitals, health centres, homes and support centres for the elderly and disabled, schools, technical colleges, libraries, fire and police stations, prisons, churches and village halls all fall into this category.

**13.02** PPG12 states that local plans must make suitable provision for community facilities. PPG13 states that public facilities should be located so that they are well served by public transport and are accessible to those people who need to use them. The Council takes the view that improvements to these services should be positively encouraged and, therefore, it will adopt a sympathetic approach when new or extended facilities are proposed.

### Existing Situation

**13.03** The provision of many community facilities and services is not the responsibility of the Council. However, the Council does assist through grant aid towards village halls and funding is also available from other sources. Information regarding the adequacy of community facilities within the District is limited. Within the East Kent Rural Development Area (RDA), which in the District includes 13 wards plus part of Mongeham, there is a reasonable distribution of community facilities. However, in some villages such facilities are lacking and, in others, existing facilities are in need of refurbishment and/or enlargement. The County Council has undertaken a household survey to establish the views of local communities concerning future development in the RDA and to seek more information about the need for additional community facilities. The results of the survey will be used to support bids for funding through the SRB process.

**13.04** In addition, major changes are occurring in the way in which many providers of community facilities operate and deliver services. These changes have created some uncertainty as long term planning by public agencies is replaced by internal markets where the provision of services is more demanded. These include:-

- (a) the move away from institutionalised accommodation towards care in the community;
- (b) the change in education through the establishment of grant maintained schools;
- (c) the reorganisation of health services through the establishment of trust status for providers; and
- (d) the increasing role of private and voluntary agencies in the sector.

### Applying the Plan's Aims and Objectives

**13.05** Aims 1 and 3 provide the framework for this Chapter. The need to protect the countryside, enhance the built environment, reduce the need to travel and encourage the provision of basic services in the District's villages is reflected in Objectives 1, 8, 13 and 12, respectively. The need to improve access to facilities for all sections of the community is reflected in Objective 22.

### Community Facilities Strategy

**13.06** Based on the existing situation and the Aims and Objectives, the Community Facilities Strategy seeks to allow for the provision of an appropriate level of community facilities to meet the communities needs.

**13.07** This chapter identifies the known service requirements. Policy CF1 establishes the criteria against which unprogrammed proposals to establish community facilities will be assessed. The need to provide a

range of community facilities arising from the proposed expansion of Aylesham is considered in Chapter 14. Chapter 10 considers proposals for institutional residential accommodation.

## SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

### Education

**13.08** The County Council, as Local Education Authority, carries out an ongoing review of land and building requirements for education. Over recent years funding mechanisms have been changed by central government. There is now an expectation that other sources such as contributions from residential developers, will supplement traditional methods, as well as central government schemes.

**13.09** A number of schools in Dover District have had additional or upgraded accommodation provided since the drafting of the Local Plan. Further expansion is planned at Archers Court (Dover) and Sandwich Technical College, as well as a new building to replace a large number of mobile classrooms at Walmer Secondary School. The Government's scheme to reduce Key Start 1 class sizes will result in additional provision at St Margaret's at Cliffe Primary School and St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Dover.



*New primary school, Deal*

**13.10** Following the ending of grant maintained status by the Government, the Local Education Authority has again become responsible for all school provision planning. However increasing devolution of funds to schools means that schools may initiate minor development proposals. Policy CF1 will apply to such proposals from private sector schools, as well as any proposals from private sector schools, playgroup and nurseries. The Council's policy towards the use of mobile classrooms is outlined in paragraphs 13.24-25.

### Health Services

**13.11** The East Kent District Health Authority came into being in April 1994. The Health Authority purchases health services from a number of new NHS trusts which were established at the same time.

**13.12** The South Kent Hospitals NHS Trust is responsible for the management of Buckland Hospital in Dover. Subject to necessary funding being made available, on site expansion of Buckland Hospital may take place during the Plan Period.

**13.13** South Kent Community Health Care NHS Trust is responsible for the management of the Victoria, Deal, Walmer and District Memorial Hospital, and in Dover, the Health Centre, Coleman House - mental health centre, Cairn Ryan - learning disabilities team base and Crabble Clinic. At the Victoria, Deal, Walmer and District Memorial Hospital there are plans to refurbish some of the existing buildings. At Dover, it is the Trust's intention to transfer some services to the Health Centre from Crabble Clinic.

**13.14** The Canterbury and Thanet Community Health Care NHS Trust is responsible for the management of Eastry Hospital, the Aylesham Health Centre and the Moat Sole Clinic in Sandwich. At Eastry, the number of residents at the hospital has been reduced and the majority of buildings closed. A detailed policy for the site is set out in Chapter 15. Proposals for Aylesham are considered in Chapter 14. The Trust has no plans to increase service provision in Sandwich.

**13.15** In the interests of sustainable development, the ideal location for health facilities is close to where most people live. Policy CF1 reflects this approach and will apply to all health services, including proposals for doctors' surgeries and privately funded health centres or hospitals.

## Social Services

**13.16** The County Council's Social Services Department is carrying out a number of joint initiatives with the District Council's Health and Housing Department. These initiatives will provide affordable rented housing for people with special needs, thereby closing an identified gap in provision. With regard to support services, the emphasis is placed on preventative activities which provide help to more vulnerable sectors of the community. Where new services are established, this usually involves the re-use of existing buildings rather than new built development. In Dover, a family centre and a mental health centre have been established. No other specific proposals are programmed for the Plan Period, but should the need for extra support services be identified, then Policy CF1 will apply.

## Youth Facilities

**13.17** The County Council provides youth facilities in the District, including Archers Court Youth and Community Centre in Dover, Deal Youth Centre, and Aylesham Youth and Leisure Centre. It has also set up a mobile information unit which provides support for young people throughout the District. In addition to County Council run facilities, there is a range of other youth facilities in the District, including a youth centre at Sandwich.

**13.18** The County Council has no programmed proposals for new built facilities but a scheme for a new community centre is being pursued by Eythorne Parish Council. The project is at its early stage and is dependent upon necessary funding being secured. There is agreement in principle between the Parish Council and Tilmanstone Miners Welfare Organisation that part of the land not used for recreation purposes at the Recreation Ground at Eythorne be used as the site for the new community centre.

**13.19** The site which falls within the North Downs Special Landscape Area is located between Eythorne and Elvington and lies adjacent to existing recreation facilities and the primary school. The Council would support a proposal for a new community centre on the site subject to its siting, design and access. Policy CF1 would apply.

## Libraries

**13.20** The County Council is responsible for library provision. In the District, there are main libraries at Dover, Deal and Sandwich and part-time libraries at Whitfield, St Margaret's, Ash and Aylesham. Additionally, a mobile library service serves the rural population. The central libraries in Dover and Deal have been refurbished. At Dover, the alterations have made it more accessible for the disabled. Aylesham library has relocated from temporary accommodation to the new community centre at the former Aylesham High School.

**13.21** The library service has developed an archive centre at White Cliffs Business Park. This facility stores material for East Kent and provides public access for research.



*Dover Library*

## Emergency Services

**13.22** The Police Station in Dover is subject to various operating constraints. A new or extended police station, to serve the Dover area and provide back-up for the Channel Tunnel police, is planned by the Kent Police Authority. A site close to the town centre, which will have good public transport access and access to the new A20(M20) link to Folkestone and to the A2, is required. Various options are being considered, and for this reason, no site has been allocated. The fire service has no plans to provide new or extended facilities during the Plan Period.

## ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

**13.23** Although no specific proposals are brought forward in the Plan for new community facilities, the Council wishes to encourage the provision and enhancement of community facilities. To this end Policy CF1 adopts a positive approach to such provision. Planning permission will be given to proposals for community facilities which are well related to the community which they are intended to serve in terms of size and location. In addition to planning permission, proposals will also need to meet the registration requirements of the appropriate licensing authorities.

### **Policy CF1**

**Proposals for the establishment or expansion of community facilities will be permitted provided that they are well related to the community which they serve.**

### ***Environmental Appraisal***

*The policy works positively towards Objectives seeking to protect the countryside, reduce the need for travel, allowing development in rural settlements consistent with their size and function, and minimise pollution. No Objectives are adversely affected.*

## MOBILE CLASSROOMS

**13.24** Many schools in the District make extensive use of mobile classrooms. However, these structures are often unsightly and, although initially intended to be used for a temporary period, tend to remain for many years. While the Council accepts that there may well be instances where short term problems can justifiably be dealt with through the use of temporary buildings, it considers that the aim should be to provide proper purpose built facilities. The Council, therefore, supports the provision of permanent facilities.

**13.25** Mobile classrooms do not always require planning permission if the building is under a certain size and sited to comply with permitted development rights granted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development ) Order 1995. When planning permission is required at County Council controlled schools, it is the responsibility of the County to determine planning applications for mobile classrooms. At schools not controlled by the County Council, permission is required from the District Council. In both instances, the Council will expect schools to assess whether existing accommodation could be better used and clearly demonstrate that there is a short term need for additional teaching accommodation. Short term need may be justified when permanent accommodation is being constructed or planned to meet a predicted peak in school rolls. In any event, temporary accommodation should not be intended to be used for longer than five years. When a demonstrated need exists, mobile classrooms should be sited so as to minimise their visual impact and avoid the loss of, or damage to important trees. Where it is likely that trees will be an issue, applications should be accompanied by a detailed tree survey.

### **Policy CF2**

**Planning permission for mobile classrooms will only be granted where:-**

- (i) there is a proven short term need;**
- (ii) they are located so as to minimise visual harm; and**
- (iii) their siting would not result in the loss of or damage to important trees.**

### ***Environmental Appraisal***

*The policy only has limited relationships with the Objectives. Where the policy has an environmental effect this is positive in that it sets out to control the impact of mobile classrooms on landscape features. No Objectives are adversely affected.*

## DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

**13.26** There is a need to ensure that there is adequate provision of social and community facilities, including health and education, to meet both current and future needs in the District. The Council expects the service providers, including especially the Health Authorities and the County Council, to ensure this, and where necessary, plan for increased provision through their future investment programmes. However, public expenditure controls have a significant effect on the ability of the County Council and other public sector agencies to provide community facilities and services. Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Circular 1/97 on legal agreements allows local planning authorities to legitimately seek a developer to construct new facilities or make a contribution towards social, educational or other community provision where such facilities are necessitated as a direct result of development. The Council will be dependent upon the service providers to demonstrate that there is genuine need for new, extended or improved community facilities.

**13.27** The need to provide necessary community facilities and services is set out in Structure Plan Policy S9. Residential development proposals can place extra demands on local community facilities and services. In considering new residential proposals, the Council will, as appropriate, seek legal agreements to ensure a contribution towards, or direct provision of necessary facilities.

### **Policy CF3**

**When proposals for residential development would give rise to a need for new, improved or extended community facilities the Council will seek a legal agreement with developers to contribute towards or provide them.**

### ***Environmental Appraisal***

*The policy has no direct relationship with the Objectives.*

