

Policy I7: Community facilities and services

New community facilities and services will be encouraged to locate within a defined settlement boundary. Proposals outside of a settlement boundary should be able to satisfy the following criteria:

- a. the use cannot reasonably be met within a settlement, and the facility:
 - i. meets an identified local need;
 - ii. where appropriate is located close to a settlement or in an accessible location; and
 - iii. its impact on landscape, environment and local character is minimised.

New development and provision of community facilities and services

New development should demonstrate that it can be adequately served by community facilities and services. Where shortfalls in the capacity of existing community facilities and services are identified, appropriate developer contributions will be sought to ensure adequate funding is available to accommodate the impacts of the development.

Where a development would generate its own pressures that would require the delivery of specific supporting community facilities and services, the Council will expect such facilities and services to be delivered on-site or close by. Alternatively, where an applicant can provide robust justification, the Council will, in the first instance, seek to secure off-site provision of the equivalent value of on-site provision and where this is demonstrated to be undeliverable, the payment of a commuted sum to the equivalent amount of on-site provision.

These requirements are set out in the sites policies and IDP.

Replacement facilities and services

Development (including change of use) that would replace an existing community facility/services, that are delivered by private sector organisations, individuals or companies for profit, with a new community facility or service will only be permitted if:

- b. the replacement is equivalent to, or an improvement on, what will be replaced;
- c. it replaces a facility(ies) or service(s) that has been proven to be no longer needed, suitable or viable; and
- d. it would provide an alternative community facility(ies) or service(s) that would support a demonstrable local need

Where the existing site is unsuitable for the current use and requires relocation, the new site must meet the criteria listed above for new facilities and services.

The impact of proposed development on the national site network (including European sites), alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will be screened for likely significant effects under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amended) (EU exit), 2019 and/or any equivalent relevant legislation and regulations. Where development is found to have a probability or a risk of likely significant effects on the national site network (including European sites) either individually or cumulative with existing or proposed development elsewhere, an appropriate assessment will be required. Applicants should provide the information required by the Council to undertake an appropriate assessment, together with full details of any mitigation measures considered to be needed to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on the national site network with their planning application, and also demonstrate that mitigation can be delivered and maintained over the life time of development.

Safeguarding existing facilities and services

Development (including change of use) that would result in the loss of existing community facilities/services will only be permitted if:

- e. the applicant demonstrates that the current community facility/service has been sufficiently and realistically marketed without success for a continuous period of at least 9 months within the 12 month period prior to submitting the planning application; and
- f. the planning application is supported by a viability assessment, which shows that the current use is no longer viable. The applicant will be expected to fund the independent verification of the submitted viability assessment by a person appointed by the Council.

Development (including change of use) that would result in the loss of existing facilities/services that are delivered by public bodies, or private bodies delivering public services, or non-profit organisations, will only be permitted where suitable evidence justifying the loss is submitted by the applicant.