

Review of SG LSD7: Community facilities

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to review the current Local Development Plan (LDP) policy approach to community facilities and make recommendations in light of changes in national policy and the local context. In this case the policy under review is Supplementary Guidance, SG LSD7 Community facilities.

2. Approach

- 2.1 The aim of the policy is to support the provision of new community facilities or services, both public and private owned, to enhance a community. These may include buildings such as halls which can be used by community groups and areas of formal open space which will encourage recreational and sporting pursuits, may increase biodiversity and contribute to a sense of place. A legal agreement may be required to ensure that private facilities are available to all members of the community on a regular basis. The policy also protects existing facilities within settlements where it must be demonstrated that they are surplus to requirements due to the provision of new or improved facilities before these facilities can be put to an appropriate alternative use.

3. Background

National Context

- 3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) does not specifically refer to community facilities such as halls, pavilions and other buildings which form part of what may be considered to be crucial elements of a community. However SPP specifically confirms the importance of open space and sports fields on the well-being of the general public. Access by all members of society to well designed areas of open space should be supported and the open spaces themselves should provide opportunities for sport, recreation and enhanced biodiversity. Development should not generally be supported on sports and leisure pitches.

Strategic/Regional Context

- 3.2 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 promotes development which meets the needs of the entire community. In the Strategic Growth Area community facilities *must* form part of new developments.

4. Drivers of Change

- 4.1 Government policies continue to promote the importance of placemaking within communities, and the overall vision of sustainable communities reinforces the need to provide for social and community infrastructure. The aim of the policy facilitates these approaches.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 There have been no changes to the aims and approach taken on community facilities since the adoption of the LDP. As such it is not considered necessary to amend the policy. Due to organisational changes within the Council the Reasoned Justification needs to be amended to reflect the re-naming of the Education, Leisure and Learning department to Education and Learning.

6. Summary of Main Points

6.1 SG LSD7 allows the provision of new facilities or services which enhance the social fabric of a community. These may include buildings such as halls and open space such as parks and sports fields. Where existing facilities within settlements are considered to be surplus to requirements due to new or updated facilities, they can be put to an appropriate alternative use. As the guidance and aims of the Government has not changed it is considered that the policy remains current. The following minor amendments are required:

- The Reasoned Justification needs to be amended to reflect the re-naming of the Education, Leisure and Learning department to Education and Learning;
- The Reasoned Justification needs to be amended so that the policy “supports”, not encourages the provision of new facilities.

Bibliography

Aberdeenshire Council (2012) *Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2012*

Scottish Government (2010) *Scottish Planning Policy*

Scottish Government (2009) *National Planning Framework for Scotland 2*