Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision

October 2016

1. Introduction

Community centres are a mechanism through which Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council achieves its aim of promoting well-being and community cohesion. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has developed this Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision in order to have a framework that will guide Council's approach to supporting the provision of community centres in the Borough. The Framework has been designed as a tool and an aid to decision making however it is important to acknowledge that it cannot be a definitive guide as each community in the Borough is unique and has its own set of very local issues.

1.1 Background

Ballymoney Borough Council. Coleraine Borough Council, Limavady Borough Council and Moyle District Council came together to form Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in April 2015. Community Centres were provided and supported in the legacy Councils through the Council's statutory function in terms of community and leisure under the **Recreation and Youth Service Order (Northern Ireland) 1986.** "Each district council shall secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities".

The four legacy Council's of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle had various approaches to provision of Community Centres in terms of the numbers of community centres they provided in their respective areas and also in how these were operated.

An Audit of Community Centres and Halls was carried out in Spring 2015 by the 4 legacy Councils of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle in association with Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (Audit of Community Centres and Halls Mar 2015 Blu Zebra). The Audit highlighted that there are 20 community centres across the Borough that are owned by Council; 6 of which are operated by community organisations under lease or other management arrangements. There are a further 35 multi-use community centres owned and operated by community organisations across the Borough. There are also a large number of church halls, Scout halls, Orange halls, sports club buildings and other facilities that provide venues for a range of community activities that weren't included in the audit.

The Report showed that there was a need to carry out a wider audit of facilities in the entire area in order to get a full picture of the level of community activity and opportunity that lies in existing buildings, in order to reduce duplication, promote sharing and increase service provision in local areas. The Report also highlighted the need for a Community Centres Policy Framework that would guide how Council supported the provision of community centres in the Borough.

1.2 Purpose of Strategic Framework

The purpose of the strategic framework is therefore to:

- Provide an agreed pathway to proactively identify gaps in community centre provision in the Borough

- Guide Council decision making in relation to capital investment in community centres - both the existing stock of Council owned Centres and also applications from the community/voluntary sector through the Capital Grants Programme

- Guide how Council operates the community centres that its owns and manages and how these can be developed as hubs of community activity

- Guide how Council supports community centres that are operated by voluntary organisations across the Borough

2. Strategic Context

There are a number of regional and local strategies to take into consideration when developing the Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision, in order to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity and additionality:

- The Draft NI Programme for Government 2016-21
- Regional Development Strategy 2035
- Department for Communities Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework 2013
- Department of the Environment's Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) 2015
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Strategy 2015-19
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Community Development Strategy 2015-18
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Leisure Strategy
- Causeway Coast and Glens Local Development Plan

Full details of the strategies and the context for the Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision are provided at Annexe A.

3. What is the role of a Community Centre

A 'Community Centre' is defined as:

> *a multipurpose centre available for community use and or service provision by a range of user groups or for public hire. It is a facility which offers opportunities for the community to meet, stay active, learn new skills and volunteer.*

A community centre can provide a base for a wide range of activities and services:

social and recreational

health and well-being

education and training

information and advice

and the resultant benefits for a local community are:

- a local place to come together to socialise,
- creates community cohesion and sense of belonging
- reduces isolation and increases participation of the most excluded
- a place where a range of different services can be delivered by different bodies under the same roof
- provides an alternative learning environment
- encourages participation and engagement
- supports the development of community-led activities to meet local needs
- motivates local people to volunteer and builds citizenship

4. Statutory Guidance

There is little official guidance on minimum standards for the provision of community facilities in local councils in Northern Ireland or indeed in the rest of the UK, unlike for sports facilities. There are however two guidance documents which we have used for reference and to help with the development of a strategic framework for community facility provision in Causeway Coast and Glens:
- Sport England's Village and Community Halls – Design Guidance Note (2001)
- Shaping Neighbourhoods - A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality– Hugh Barton, Marcus Grant and Richard Guise (2013)

4.1 Sport England – Village and Community Halls - Design Guidance Note (2001)

Where new community buildings are developed in England, it is recommended that the report "Village and Community Halls"[1] by Sport England is considered. This report outlines best practice in the design of new community buildings, highlights the most effective layouts for a range of sizes of community facility, and considers every important aspect of community hall development.

The report shows a number of different sizes of buildings accommodating various facilities with different layouts based on the principles outlined in the Sport England document. All buildings should also contain toilets, changing facilities, a kitchen, foyer, store and office.   Floor plans for a range of typical layouts prepared by Sport England are included at Annexe B to give a sense of the different types of rooms required in a range of different community halls with different functions, and indeed catchment populations.

4.2 Shaping Neighbourhoods – A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality

In considering the level of provision that would be appropriate for local areas, best practice has also been considered based on guidance outlined in "Shaping Neighbourhoods: A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality"[2] a handbook for planners, designers, developers and community groups.

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1 ISBN 86078 130 6 £10 Sport England SE/1038/5M/01/01 www.english.sports.gov.uk
http://www.sportengland.org/se_facilities_village halls.pdf
2 Shaping Neighbourhoods – A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality – Hugh Barton, Marcus Grant and Richard Guise - 2nd Edition, Barton, Grant and Guise, 2013 (Routledge)

The guide focuses on the physical fabric of neighbourhoods and suggests that the catchment population required to sustain one community centre in a neighbourhood is around 4,000 people. These are minimum accessibility standards for compact settlements by density. Thresholds are based purely on catchment populations needed to support the facility and ensure its sustainability.

The table below illustrates the typical population densities and catchment populations, according to the report, that are needed to support particular facilities alongside different gross densities.

Local Facility	Illustrative Catchment Populations[3]	Minimum reasonable accessibility standards at different gross densities (assuming bendy routes)			
		40 ppha	60 ppha	80 ppha	100 ppha
Community Centre	4,000	800m	600m	600m	500m

Accessibility standards are used to ensure that facilities are as walkable as possible. The actual standard chosen cannot just reflect the distance people are willing to walk. It also needs to recognise the scale of the facility, the number of people required to support it, the density of the area and the nuances of geography.[4]

The report highlights that there are a number of reasons for the difference between places such as the level of car ownership (which is affected by income and location); the distinctive culture of the area and the physical form and land use pattern – e.g. rural and urban. In some situations, culture or attitude or preference can be very influential. It suggests that access to local facilities is fundamental to the concept of a neighbourhood.

This is more a neighbourhood 'urban' type of measure and as such needs to be used sensitively and appropriately when considering rural provision, which is particularly important in Causeway Coast and Glens and also the unique context of Northern Ireland communities in terms of religious makeup.

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3 To be adapted to local policies and conditions
4 Shaping Neighbourhoods – A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality – Hugh Barton, Marcus Grant and Richard Guise - 2nd Edition, Barton, Grant and Guise, 2013 (Routledge)

5. Background research

5.1 CCG Audit of Community Centres and Halls

An Audit of Community Centres and Halls was carried out in Spring 2015 by the four legacy Councils of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle in association with Community Foundation NI.[5] The Audit mapped out the location, scale and use of those community facilities that fitted the 'community centre' definition i.e. "a multipurpose centre available for community use and or service provision by a range of user groups or for public hire". A range of other community facilities were not included in the remit of the Report such as church halls, parish centres, Orange Halls, Scout halls, GAA halls etc. From a council perspective, it demonstrated that the following community centres **stock and supply** in the area as:

Type of Centre	Number
Council owned and Council managed Community Centre	12
Council owned and community managed Community Centre	8
Category C: Community owned and managed Community Centre (with eligibility for supported through small grant from Council)	35
Total	**55**

Two of the community operated Council owned centres have since returned to Council ownership. A map of the facilities is available as a separate Annexe C.

5.2 Audit of Need and Options Appraisal in relation to Community Facilities in Ballymoney Town

An Audit of Need in relation to community facility provision in Ballymoney town was carried out in December 2015 in order to assist Council in decision making in relation to capital investment in two legacy projects from the former Ballymoney Borough Council (Ballymoney Social Centre and Ballymoney Music Centre).[6]

An audit was undertaken of all facilities in the area that were available for the community to use in order to map supply in the area. Given the town status of Ballymoney, the Shaping Neighbourhoods Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality was used as a guide in terms of the catchment population required to sustain one community centre (neighbourhood based), regarded as 4,000. Projected

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[5] Audit of Community Centres and Halls (Mar 2015) Blu Zebra

[6] Audit of Need and Options Appraisal in relation to Community Facilities in Ballymoney Town (Dec 15) Blu Zebra

population growth was also considered, as was Sport England's minimum standard in terms of size and what a facility should include

This was viewed as a test case from which the learning and decision making could help inform the development of a Framework for decision making in relation to community centre provision at a strategic level. The Report demonstrated that there were 48 facilities in the town, of which c.14 are were available for anyone to use.

A survey was undertaken of local groups in Ballymoney, which had 37 group responses, and the following were identified as important issues in relation to satisfaction with community facilities:

- o Cleanliness
- o Maintenance
- o Affordable
- o Safety and security
- o Reflect community needs and promote community involvement
- o Fit for purpose
- o Accessibility (by foot, bus, car)
- o Opening hours
- o Caretaker present/ welcoming staff
- o Range of activities
- o Ease of booking
- o Parking
- o Bicycle storage
- o Refreshments
- o Signage
- o Value for money
- o Shared

Objective evidence indicated that the most viable option was not to proceed with investment and to meet the needs of users by making better use of existing facilities. Council decided not to proceed with acquiring Ballymoney Music Centre; the decision making process is ongoing in relation to Ballymoney Social Centre.

5.3 Mapping of community facilities in a sample of settlements

In addition to the two previous pieces of detailed research, additional mapping exercises were conducted to get a sense of the type of facilities of a randomly selected settlement from each level of the settlement hierarchy in the CCG area. This involved mapping the range of facilities in each one and some information about user groups, occupancy etc. The four settlements chosen were:

- Town (Hub): Ballymoney
- Large village: Cushendall
- Village: Macosquin
- Small Settlement (Hamlet): Artikelly

The results of this analysis are outlined in Annexe D. The exercise demonstrated, as per the larger town hub, that there is invariably more than one community facility available in local towns, villages or hamlets, some which are open to all while others are restricted in their use; some of which fit the Council's definition of a community centre while some do not. Even the smallest hamlet surveyed had more than one facility and a population of just 360 – in fact it had four facilities, two of which were restricted in their access and two of which were open to all.

5.4 Survey of users of Council owned centres

Following some desk research and through guidance from Shaping Neighbourhoods, it was clear that some data needed to be gathered in relation to accessibility and the catchment areas of community centres. A survey was undertaken of user groups in relation to distance travelled etc. of those centres owned by the Council was undertaken. There were 491 respondents to this survey with responses from 15 centres. There was a mix of both urban and rural centres in the survey. The results are detailed in Annexe E.

Some key findings:

Distance travelled
- 39.2% travelled one mile or less
- 57.5% travelled between 2-3 and 10 miles
- 5.4% travelled more than 10 miles
- The distance thresholds are wider for rural facilities than they are for urban facilities
- People are prepared to travel further for particular activities.

Mode of transport
- 77% travel by car
- 19% walk
- Just 5% rely on public or community transport
- This indicates a significant reliance on the car

6. Vision for Community Centre Provision in Causeway Coast and Glens

Further to all the research that was carried out and workshops with local elected representatives, the following vision for community centre provision in Causeway Coast and Glens has been developed:

"To have shared, welcoming, accessible, fit for purpose community centres which provide a range of activities and services to address the needs of all sections of the community"

7. Standards

In moving forward, in order to achieve the vision and to be able to assess if an area is catered for in terms of provision of community facilities then standards of provision needed to be set. While external guidance documents are useful it is important that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council develops its own local standards, reflective of its own area and local circumstances. There also needs to be an element of flexibility built into these standards to take account of very local circumstances.

7.1 Quantity

If a qualitative approach were to be taken in order to assess the standard of provision then Causeway Coast and Glens area would appear to have an oversupply of community centres. Taking in to account the research and mapping exercises carried out the ration of community facility provision per 1000 head of population for the case study settlements is as follows:

> Ballymoney (pop. 10,355) - 14 facilities open to all community use = ratio of 1.35 community facilities per 1,000 people
>
> Cushendall (pop. 1360) - 3 facilities open to all = ratio of 2.2 community facilities per 1,000 people
>
> Macosquin (pop. 614) - 2 facilities open to all
> = ratio of 3.26 community facilities per 1,000 people
>
> Artikelly (pop.309) – 2 facilities open to all = ratio of 6.47 community facilities per 1,000 people
>
> *(Note, the population are for the settlements only and do not take account of the wider catchment areas. Some rural settlements have significant rural catchment areas)*

The settlement hierarchy for the Borough based on the classifications in the Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements (2015) NISRA is attached at Annexe F This is based on 2011 population statistics.

As can be seen, there is more overall supply of other facilities in rural villages than in the larger town of Ballymoney for instance. In many cases there are facilities which are not open to all. There is a need to ensure that the framework takes account of local needs ensuring that a quantity standard was not counter-productive to creating a vibrant local area and so there is a need to have flexibility particularly in terms of rural and urban differences.

The availability of all the facilities in an area should be taken into account, but they should be open and accessible to all. Collectively all the facilities in an area might provide for the needs of that community. However there is a need to look beyond the amount of provision and to look at the accessibility of the community facility provision in an area and to the quality of that provision.

7.2 Accessibility

Community facilities, based on their function, should be located at the hub of local communities. They should be easily accessible by local people and create opportunities for engagement and the development of local connections and cohesion within local areas. Likewise, local people should feel welcome in these facilities. Facilities should be free from any paraphernalia that would preclude the usage by specific groups of local people. The occupancy levels of local facilities are also a factor in any decision about future provision, with a focus on maximising the usage of existing facilities before investing in new facilities.

It was agreed that this standard should include three main elements

a. **physical access - travel time**- that is, the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport
b. perception of being open and welcoming – an assessment as to whether or not people perceive a facility to be open and welcoming to all
c. occupancy – the level of usage and availability of a current facility

a. Travel time

It is important to define what is meant by an **accessible distance** to a local facility, which may also differ from place to place on the basis of geography and in rural areas in comparison to urban areas.   Distance thresholds are also influenced by socio economic factors like car ownership, income levels or where you live.

An average person has a stride length of approximately 2.1 to 2.5 feet. That means that it takes over 2,000 steps to walk one mile and 10,000 steps would be almost 5 miles. A sedentary person may only average 1,000-3,000 steps a day.   Indicative walking distances are outlined below but should also take account of local circumstances and obstacles:

- 250 m = 2-3 minutes' walk
- 400 m = 5 minutes' walk
- 800 m = 10 minutes' walk

- 1,200 m = 15 minutes' walk
- 1,600 m = 20 minutes' walk

Another important factor is the **modal choice** - i.e. whether the user uses a car, walks, cycles or the bus to access the facility. In rural areas, there are less choices and generally greater distances. The availability of available transport should also be considered.

b. Perceptions of being open for all / Neutral / Shared

Facilities can be inaccessible to people because they are only open to members or perhaps the congregation of a church hall. In other cases there may be particular paraphernalia displayed in a facility that may put people off attending the facility. Simple questions around accessibility therefore need to be asked namely:
  - o   Is the facility is open to all people or is there is restricted access for members only?
  - o   Do people perceive the facility to be a shared and welcoming space?

c. Occupancy/ availability

Some community centres and other facilities may be underutilised   as highlighted in the recent Ballymoney Audit which demonstrated that existing council owned facilities had the capacity to accommodate more use or new users, with in some cases an occupancy level of c20-25%. However other community centres may be oversubscribed and if a centre does not have any slots available to book at peak times then intervention may be needed in terms of possible extension or opening up other facilities in an area.

7.3 Quality

Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users on the one hand and the design, management and maintenance on the other. Issues such as the cost of hiring the centre, the types of spaces available within the facility and the programme of activities that takes place are all important to consider.

7.4 Standards for Community Centre Provision in Causeway Coast and Glens

Based on the research and workshops with elected members, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has therefore identified the following standards as a way of helping to shape Council's approach to supporting community centre provision in the Borough.

In terms of the whole population of an area the ideal standards in terms of community centre provision are as follows:
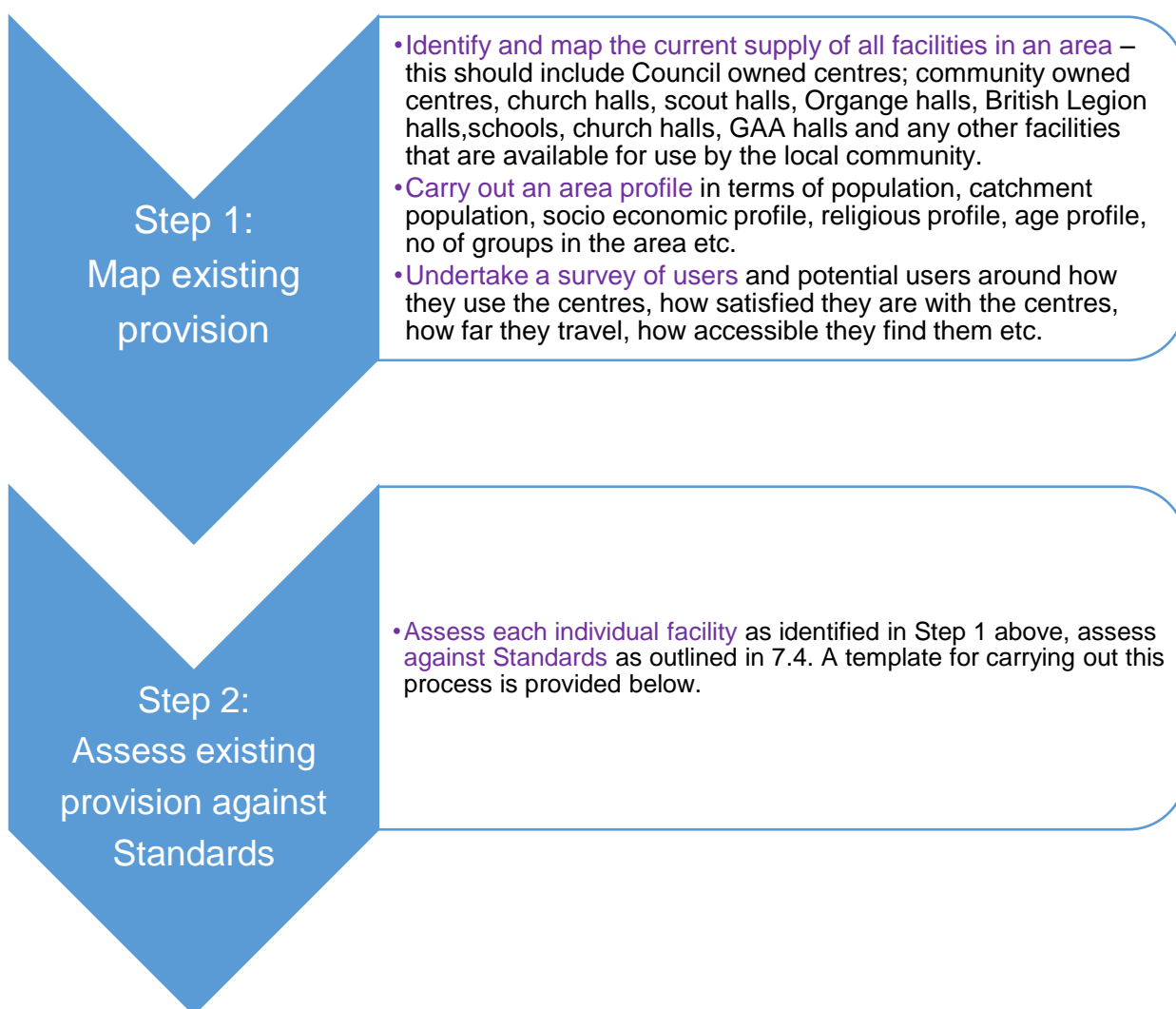
Standard 1	Travel time:	A community centre located within 10 minutes' drive time in a rural area or 10 minutes' walk time in an urban area of every settlement
Standard 2	Open to all section 75 groups:	A Community Centre that is open and available for use by all sections of the community
Standard 3	Neutral/shared/welcoming:	A centre with no emblems, murals or paraphernalia that would be generally perceived as unwelcoming
Standard 4	Available:	A centre which is available to use/book and is not constantly oversubscribed
Standard 5	Affordable:	The rate of hire does not preclude anyone who wishes to use the centre from doing so
Standard 6	Fit for Purpose:	A community centre with suitable and quality spaces for the activities/services that are needed in the area and also in a good state of repair
Standard 7	Activity programme:	A community centre that is not just a hall for hire but within which a range of services and activities is provided

8. Assessing Current Provision

In order to take a proactive approach and assess if there is satisfactory community centre provision in a specified area it will be important to consider the current community facility provision in an area and assess it against the Standards that have been defined.

8.1 Steps to assess current provision

In order to assess current provision in an area, the following steps should be taken:

**Step 1:
Map existing provision**

- Identify and map the current supply of all facilities in an area – this should include Council owned centres; community owned centres, church halls, scout halls, Organge halls, British Legion halls,schools, church halls, GAA halls and any other facilities that are available for use by the local community.
- Carry out an area profile in terms of population, catchment population, socio economic profile, religious profile, age profile, no of groups in the area etc.
- Undertake a survey of users and potential users around how they use the centres, how satisfied they are with the centres, how far they travel, how accessible they find them etc.

**Step 2:
Assess existing provision against Standards**

- Assess each individual facility as identified in Step 1 above, assess against Standards as outlined in 7.4. A template for carrying out this process is provided below.

8.2 Template for Assessment of existing community centre provision in a specified area

Causeway Coast and Glens Standards for Community Centre Provision Template for Assessment of existing community centre provision in a specified area					
Settlement Name:					
Community facilities in area: Facility 1: Facility 2: Facility 4: Facility 5:					
	(Y = Yes) (N = No) (M= Maybe)	Facility 1	Facility 2	Facility 3	Facility 4
S.1	Is the facility located within 10 minutes' drive time in a rural area or 15 minutes' walk time in an urban area of the settlement identified	Y/N/M	Y/N/M	Y/N/M	Y/N/M
S.2	Is the facility open and available for use by all sections of the community?				
S.4	Does the facility have available booking slots at times of high demand?				
S.5	Is the facility viewed as neutral/shared and welcoming?				
S.3	Is the facility available at a rate of hire that does not preclude anyone who wishes to use the centre from doing so?				
S.6	Is the facility fit for purpose with spaces for the activities/services that are needed in the area and also in a good state of repair				
S.7	Is there a diverse activity programme provided at the centre?				
Are there any local circumstances that should be taken into consideration from Area Profile and survey of local users:					

9. Options for Provision of Community Centres

As a result of the mapping exercise and the assessment of the facilities in an area against the Standards for Community Centre Provision in Causeway Coast and Glens it may be found that even though there are a number of facilities in the area that don't fit the definition of a community centre, they may collectively be meeting the needs of the local community.

Alternatively there may be gaps in provision and in the event that a need is identified for increased community centre provision in an area then careful consideration needs to be given as to how best to address the gap.

There may be no need for new buildings – there may be underutilised community facilities in the area; there may be issues with affordability or capacity of operating groups and many of these issues can be addressed with support from Council's Community Development unit.

The presumption would not be in favour of Council building any new community centres, however in the event of a need being identified that can only be addressed by the building or renovation/ extension of premises then Council would consider supporting third provision through possible support through a Capital Grants Programme and/or support to third parties such as community groups in identifying and securing financial assistance.

Council has a responsibility in relation to its existing stock of community centres and prior to any investment decisions about renovation of its centres, a full audit of need and business case process should be followed.

9.1 Table of Options for Provision of Community Centres

The following six options have been identified by Council in relation to decision making around Community Centre provision in the Borough:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Open up existing facilities in an area to new users	Providing programming support to existing centres	Support community provision through subsidising running costs	Provide capital grant to third party community centre provision	Capital investment in existing Council owned community centre	Dispose of the asset
Improve the accessibility and quality of existing facilities in an area and ensure they are better utilised through support provided by Community Development team to voluntary community centre providers who wish to open up and promote their facilities to new users.	Support groups to increase the engagement of people in their facilities and create increased demand through developmental programming. Provide support to voluntary management groups in relation to management and governance and financial viability of the facilities.	Provide financial support through Community Development Support Grant to subsidise running costs of community provided centres in order to ensure that facilities are affordable to use and able to develop improved programmes of activities/service. Provide financial support to local groups towards the cost of venue hire for their activities.	Consider the provision of financial assistance to voluntary organisations through Council's Capital Grants Programme for renovation/extension of existing space or new build. Provide support through Community Development/Funding Unit to source full funding package for community buildings. Provide support through Community Development to voluntary organisations to ensure good governance in the operation of the new/renovated/extended centre.	Council has a responsibility for its existing stock and renovates/extends existing Council owned centres and promotes the use of the centre through engagement with local community. The focus here should be on multi-functional facilities and building relationships with other services providers to widen the usage of these facilities.	If a need has not been identified and there is a surplus in the supply of facilities and a Council owned facility becomes not fit for purpose then an option to dispose of the asset should possibly be considered

9.2 Applications to Council's Capital Grants Programme

Assessment criteria have been developed for Council's Capital Grants Programme and the Standards for Community Centre Provision will be used to help gauge if there is a need for increased or improved community facility provision in the areas that applications are received from.

Competing applications for funding could be prioritised based on:

- Level of deprivation – based on multiple deprivation measure, and also any individual measures that show high levels of deprivation in terms of education, unemployment, health crime, access to services etc.
- How poor the level of provision is in the area - increased priority could be given to areas that have no other provision than ones that have some but limited provision in the area
- Population size of area and catchment population
- Age and social structure
- Local evidence showing demand (surveys etc.)
- Organisational capacity of group to operate centre
- Range of services that will be delivered/facilitated in centre
- Sustainability and governance of the centre
- A proactive approach being taken to the engagement of the wider community in the planning and usage of the centre and the services that it offers
- Partnership approach is promoted in terms of the delivery of multiple services being delivered in the centres

10. Moving Forward

The Charity Commissions' Village Hall review in 2014 in England and Wales[7] demonstrated that Village hall charities in particular are faced with the need to adapt their services and their property. There is evidence of a move away from the traditional village hall concept to a community based ethos of charities combining to provide a broader service; a kind of 'community hub'.

As a general rule, active, vibrant governance and an active, vibrant village hall or community centre go hand in hand. Their research demonstrated a clearly identifiable link between the ability of village hall and community centres to attract users, their ability to attract trustees and other volunteers, and their ability to generate funding. Many of the successful centres reviewed in this survey identified had a 'cradle to grave' policy of offering something for everyone and were pro-active in understanding their responsibilities and in ensuring that their charity provides activities that meet local needs. Further details of the Charity Commission's report are provided at Annexe G.

There are opportunities to link in with the Community Planning agenda in Causeway Coast and Glens as community centres and other community facilities provide a base for community activity, collaboration between agencies and service delivery. In addition an area planning approach and a partnership approach is important when looking towards the future of community centre provision in Causeway Coast and Glens.

Further to the development of the Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision there are some key piece of work to progress:

i.   Mapping of all the community facilities for all the settlements in the Borough including an analysis of the facilities and the views of the local communities;

ii. Linking with Peace IV and Good Relations around promotion of community centres and other community facilities as shared spaces in local communities;

iii. Provision of support through the Community Development Strategy to voluntary organisations running community centres and other facilities, in terms of financial sustainability, good governance in the operation of the facility and good community engagement and programme development;

iv. A baseline survey of the satisfaction of Council owned and operated community centres followed by proactive engagement and programming with local communities to develop Council's centres as hubs of community activity;

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[7] Village Halls and Community Centres – Charity Commission -2004

v. Consideration of capital investment in community provided facilities via Council's Capital Grant Programme subject to need being identified development of satisfactory business case;

vi. Provision of support to voluntary organisations to source and acquire other sources of capital funding for new build/ renovation of community centres;

vii. The development and gathering of data that can be used as potential indicators for the levels of provision community centres in the area in terms of quantity, accessibility and quality such as % of the population (through random sampling) feeling they have access to a centre that is a shared and safe place or the % of the population (through random sampling) who are content with the quality of their local community centre.

Annexe A: Strategic Context

There are a number of regional and local strategies to take into consideration when developing the Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision, in order to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity and additionality:

The **Draft NI Programme for Government 2016-21 Framework** contains 14 strategic outcomes which, taken together, set a clear direction of travel and enable continuous improvement on the essential components of societal wellbeing. They touch on every aspect of government, including the attainment of good health and education, economic success and confident and peaceful communities. The CCG Strategic Framework for Community Centres will focus on the role that these centres have in helping to address these outcomes.

Regional Development Strategy 2035

There are a number of policies within the RDS which also have a bearing on the new Framework. The Regional Development Strategy sets out eight aims, which are based around the three themes of environmental, economic and societal. One of the aims is: To promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities. The RDS recognises that improved health and well-being is derived not only from easy access to appropriate services and facilities, although this is important, but also from the creation of a strong economy set within a safe and attractive environment.

RDS - RG6: Society - **Develop integrated services and facilities.**
RDS 12: Grow the population of hubs and clusters of hubs
RDS - SFG13: Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countrysideRDS 2035 - SFG 14: Improve accessibility for Rural Communities

Department for Social Development's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy (URCD) Framework (July 2013) sets out the strategic direction for the delivery of urban regeneration and community development policies and programmes in Northern Ireland both before and after the Reform of Local Government. The policy is structured around four policy objectives which aim to address the underlying problems of urban areas and maximise the impact of

community development. These are deliverable through four supporting actions which will help develop a more conducive policy and financial environment to support the policy objectives:

> To develop more cohesive and engaging Communities;
>
> To tackle area based deprivation;
>
> To improve linkages between areas of need and areas of opportunity; and
>
> To strengthen the competitiveness of our Towns and Cities

The Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision will guide future community centre provision and support which will in turn contribute towards developing more cohesive and engaging communities.

Department of the Environment's Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) 2015

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement acknowledges the opportunity that the provision of public services has in the creation and enhancement of shared space for everyone, recognising the economic advantages of maximising shared space and the intangible benefits that come from a more diverse, enriched environment (page 18). It also acknowledges the importance of creating well-linked, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, with opportunities for communities to share access to local employment, shopping, leisure and social facilities.

The Regional Strategic Policy Section (page 95) states that the new Local Development Plans (LDPs) should allocate sufficient land to meet the anticipated needs of the community in terms of health, education and other public services.

The core planning principles of the new two-tier planning system are:
Improving Health and Well-being;
Creating and Enhancing Shared Space;
Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth;
Supporting Good Design and **Positive Place Making**; and
Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Strategy 2015-19 sets the direction and standards for the Council to take over the next four years. Five Strategic Themes have been set:

> Leader and Champion
> Accelerating Our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
> Innovation and Transformation
> **Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities**
> Protecting and Enhancing Our Environments and Assets

In achieving the outcome of Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities, Council will work to support healthy lifestyle choices for all citizens, ensuring that citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health as well as working to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough.

The Community Centre Framework will contribute towards ensuring the effective use of community centres as tools in the creation of cohesive and shared communities and in the regeneration of local areas, helping place communities at the heart of decision making.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Community Development Strategy and Action Plan 2015-18 was approved in March 2015 as a result of the identification of common issues and needs, alongside a number of potential areas for greater collaboration. Fifteen key actions across four strands of community development are identified for the CC&G:

Strand 1: Promotion of Core Community Capacity Building
Strand 2: Promotion of Productive Engagement
Strand 3: Targeting of Deprivation and Evidenced Need through Partnership Working
Strand 4: Supporting Community Infrastructure to maximise Sustainability

One of the key strategic priorities within the strategy is 'Supporting Communities to achieve their maximum level of sustainability', which includes facilitating the strategic development of a Community Centre Policy for the Council which will put forward Council's position in relation to the provision of and support for community centres. As such, there is a need to make decisions about investment in Council's own stock of community centres.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2015 is set within the context of service delivery for the Health Well-being & Sport Unit and its service level mandate – namely a high quality service provision that is based on need, is affordable and sustainable and improves not only the lives of our community and visitors to the area, but also the way in which we do things. It also links directly with the strategic aim for the unit;

To ensure leisure and sport contributes to making the new Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council a healthy, vibrant and inclusive community by; Ensuring the facilities and services on offer meet the needs of the community and visitors to the area for the betterment of their health and well-being and provides the opportunity to increase existing participation levels. Providing accessible and quality facilities and services for residents and visitors to the area which operate in an efficient and effective manner. Developing and improving partnerships designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

It is important that the Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision links closely with Council's agreed approach to the provision of Sports and Leisure Facilities, particularly since many community centres are adjacent to football pitches and changing facilities and also because many leisure activities take place within community centres.

Causeway Coast and Glens Local Development Plan

From a planning and sustainability perspective, the planning of community facilities should be undertaken within the context of the emerging Local Development Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens. This is guided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035.

Annexe B: Sport England – Village and Community Halls – Design Guidance Note (2001)

 "Village and Community Halls"[8] Guidance Note (2001) by Sport England outlines best practice in the design of new community buildings and highlights the most effective layouts for a range of sizes of community facility.

Floor plans for a range of typical layouts prepared by Sport England are provided below in order to give a sense of the different types of rooms required in a range of different community halls with different functions, and indeed catchment populations.
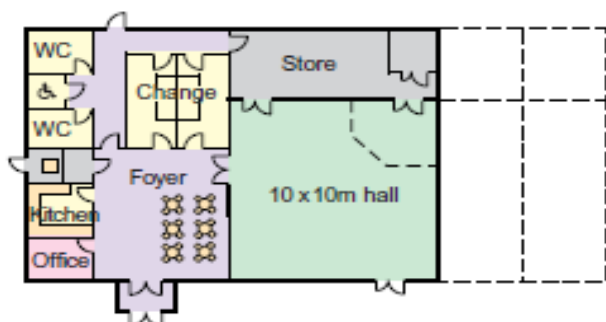
A building of the absolute minimum size would include:

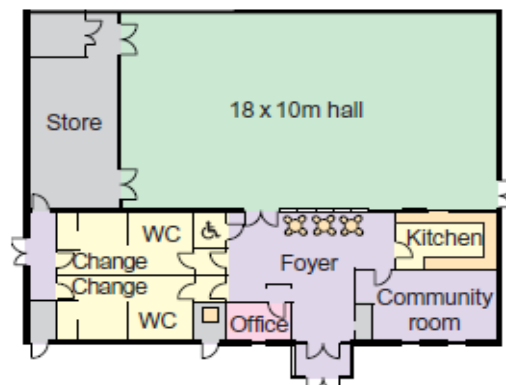|	
• main activity and assembly space	• toilets, including facilities for disabled people
• entrance foyer	• changing provision
• equipment and furniture store	• cleaner's store
• kitchen	• boiler or plant room

The various hall configurations are outlined below.

I. 10m x 10m hall – total building size = 280 sq.m

II. 18m x 10m hall plus a community room – total building size = 350 sq.m

III. 18m x 10m hall plus a stage area and a community room - total building size = 520 sq.m

IV. 18m x 10m hall with an additional 10m x 10m hall plus a lounge/community room - total building size = 575 sq.m

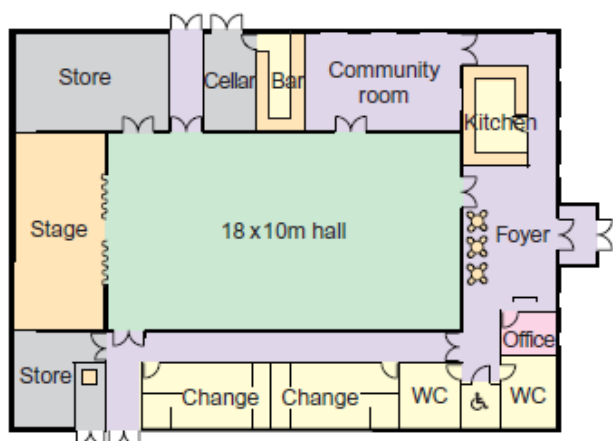V. 18m x 17m hall with a stage - total building size = 700 sq.m

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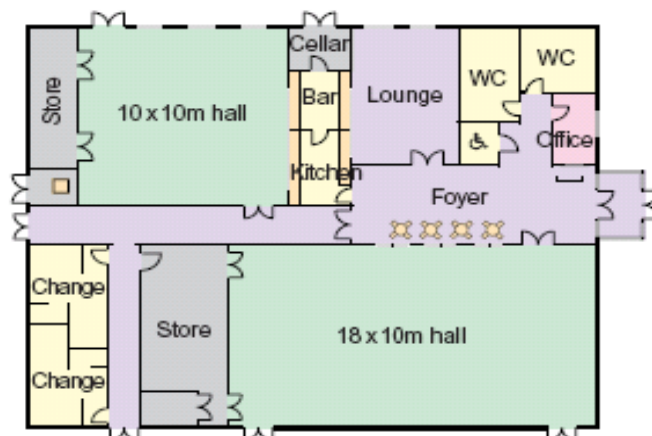# "Village and Community Halls"[9] Guidance Note (2001) Sport England

Smallest hall with the minimum support accommodation shown with potential extensions.

One-court badminton size hall with compact ancillaries including combined WCs and changing.

Symmetrical support accommodation around a hall with a separate stage.

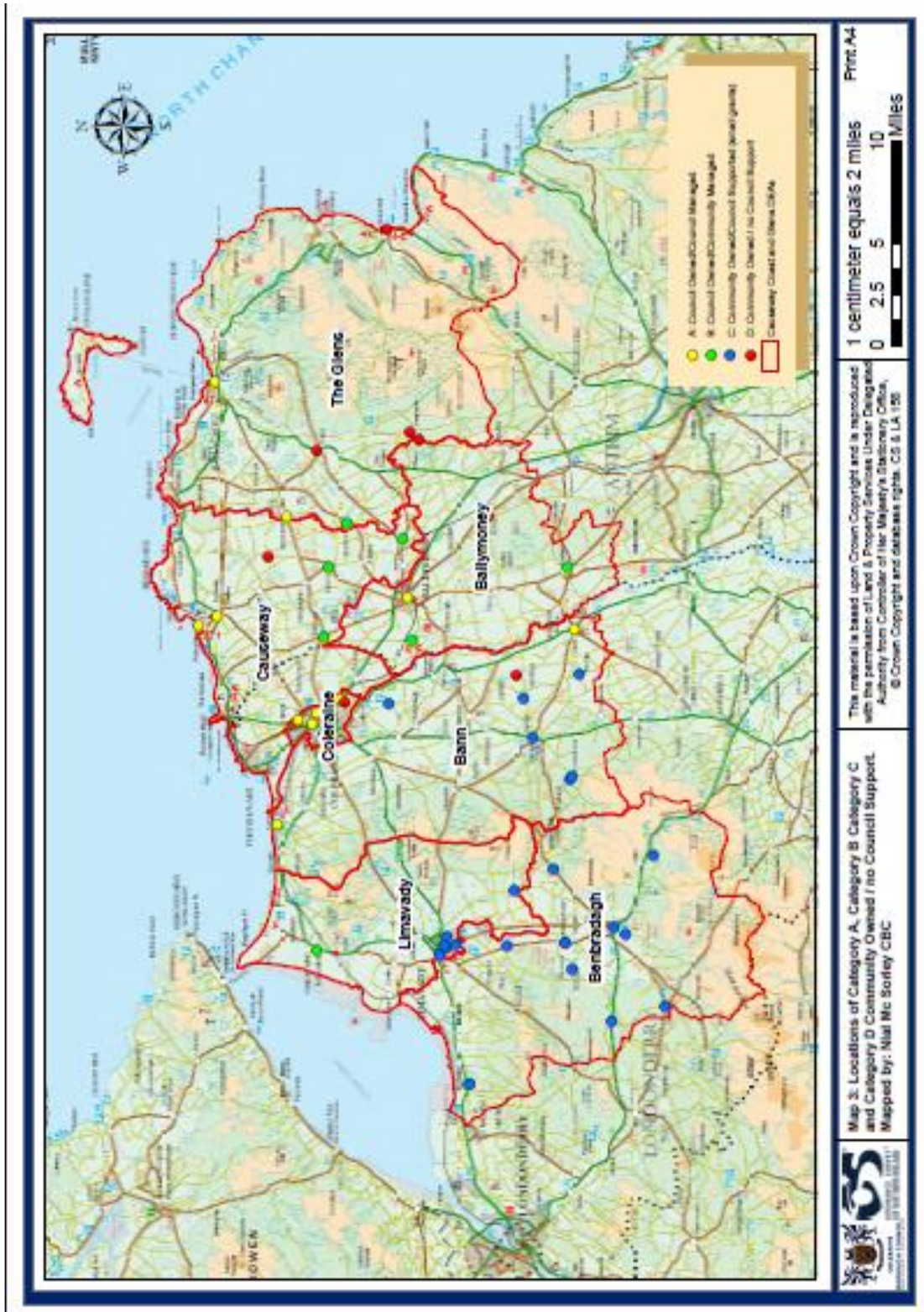Centre with a second hall and a lounge/meeting room served by a bar as well as a kitchen.

Two-court badminton size hall with separate stage and a lounge/meeting room.

[9] ISBN 86078 130 6 £10 Sport England SE/1038/5M/01/01 www.english.sports.gov.uk http://www.sportengland.org/se_facilities_village halls.pdf

Annexe C: Map of Council owned and community operated Community Centres in Causeway Coast and Glens (at March 2015)

Annexe D: Mapping of community facilities in a sample of settlements

1. Town Hub: Ballymoney

According to the Regional Development Strategy 2035[10], Ballymoney has a population of around 10,500 and is the administrative, commercial and educational centre for the rural hinterland and it serves a much wider catchment area; with a population in the region of 31,000 people[11]. The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) identifies Ballymoney as a local hub sitting strategically along the Northern corridor which links Belfast to Londonderry. As such, the town has excellent road and rail links to all parts of the region and to the national ports and airports.

The following data was collated as part of the Audit of Need in relation to facilities for community use in Ballymoney: Number and location of facilities that were available for community use and or service provision by a range of user groups or for public hire; Whether or not the facility was open and accessible to all or had some sort of restricted access; The quality of the facility in terms of being fit for purpose ; The types of users and times of usage of each facility ; The occupancy level of the Council owned facilities. A survey was also carried out of all the voluntary and community groups in the town in relation to what facilities they used and if their needs were being met.

The audit showed that there are 48 facilities in Ballymoney that are available for the use of the local community:

Church hall or faith based centres 17
School facility 8
Sports/recreation clubs 4
Community centres 2
Community houses 2
Orange Halls 2
Town hall 1
Leisure centres 1
College 1
Scout hall 1
Youth club 1
Community resource centre 1
Library 1
British Legion 1
Masonic Lodge 1
Other community/ voluntary facilities 4

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[10] Regional Development Strategy RDS – 2035 – Building a Better Future
[11] Extracted from Ballymoney Master Plan 2014

Of these:

- o Approximately 14 are open to the public broadly without restrictions – 3 of these are Council facilities (Ballymoney Town Hall, Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre and Social Centre on Edward Street)
- o 12 are open to the public but are restricted in their use as they are membership or congregationally based facilities but which would consider usage by others
- o 10 are not open to the public at all and are restricted in their usage as they are membership or congregationally based facilities
- o 11 we could not access any information about, many of which, we would assume would be restricted in their usage
- o 1 was not open - Music Centre
- o The Council facilities have an average of 25% occupancy (relates only to rooms for hire for community use within Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre and Town Hall).

2: Large Village: Cushendall

Cushendall is located on the A2 coast road midway between Larne and Portrush, and lies within the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.The village has a population of 1360 (2011 Census) with a seasonal increase and a larger rural catchment. The town originated as a small landlord village and further developed as a place for visitors to the Glens to stay. Cushendall functions as the 'capital' of the eastern Glens. It is a resort for visitors as well as a small service centre for its rural hinterland.

The following facilities are available for community use in Cushendall:

1) Old School house – community office and conference room and offices to let
2) St Mary's Parish Centre - new built church hall
3) Glens Youth Club – part of former school, renovated – used for youth and recreational activities
4) Ruairi Og's Hurling Club House and Changing Facilities
5) Primary school

3: Village: Macosquin

Macosquin is located immediately west of Dunhill Road, part of the Northern Transport Corridor, 4 kilometres south of Coleraine. Therefore, Macosquin has excellent road links with most of County Londonderry and Mid-Ulster. However, it is only served by a limited bus service. Following rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s, the village had a peak population of over 800 in the 1970s, but subsequently has declined to a 2011 population of 614. After an almost total absence of development in the 1990s, there has been an increase in private house building, strengthening the village's residential function.

The following facilities are available for community use in Macosquin:
1) Community House – 2 former NIHE properties which houses playgroup and community meeting space upstairs
2) Orange hall
3) 2 x Church halls
4) Primary school – beginning to be used for come community activities

4: Small Settlement/ Hamlet Artikelly

Artikelly is located 1 kilometre north east of Limavady and adjoining the major employment area at Aghanloo. Its proximity to the Limavady bypass has improved accessibility not only to Limavady town, but also to the regional city of Londonderry and the Main Hub of Coleraine. Artikelly had a 2011 population of 309, but it has only a limited range of retail and recreational facilities.

The following facilities are available for community use in Artikelly:
1) Aghanloo Community Hall
2) Orange Hall
3) Church hall
4) Roe Valley Enterprise Agency – conference space available to let but not used by community

Annexe E: Survey of users of Council owned centres

A survey was undertaken of 15 of the Council owned community centres in order to get a sense of how far people travelled to use the centres, their mode of transport, how often they used the centre and what for. Questionnaires were carried out with sample user groups at various times of the day during the same week. There were 491 respondents to this survey.

Times of Usage

Analysis of the surveys showed that peak times of usage is in the evening.

Morning	34.1%
Afternoon	30.4%
Evening	44.0%

How often users use the venue

Survey results showed that most users are weekly visitors to the facilities with 83% of users visit at least once per week.

Every day	11.0%
A few times a week	24.1%
Weekly	47.6%
Once a month	13.1%
Every Quarter	4.2%

Types of activities in the centres

Survey analysis showed that there were 43 different activities that people attended in the centres. Top activities are listed below:

Playgroup/Pre-school/Parent & Toddlers	27.1%
Arts and Crafts	7.7%
Gardening/flower arranging	6.7%
Exercise/Circuit Training	5.6%
Lunch Club	5.4%
Bowls/Bowling	5.0%
Football	4.0%
Singing	3.8%
Pilates	3.3%
Womens' Institute	3.3%

Distance travelled

The survey showed that while 16.5% of respondents travelled less than ¼ mile, 68% travelled between 1 and 10 miles.

	Average	Rural Centres	Urban Centres
Less than a quarter of a mile	16.5%	18.0%	13.6%
A quarter of a mile	2.5%	3.1%	1.2%
Half a mile	8.9%	8.7%	9.3%
Three quarters of a mile	1.4%	2.2%	0.0%
1 mile	9.9%	8.1%	13.6%
2-3 miles	27.7%	26.1%	30.9%
4-5 miles	14.5%	17.4%	8.6%
5-10 miles	15.3%	14.9%	16%
More than 10 miles	5.4%	3.1%	9.9%

Mode of Transport

The results of the survey showed that a vast majority **(**77%) of people attending the centres travel by car, either driving themselves or getting a lift and that 19% walk.

Walk	19.3%
Public Transport / Bus	1.4%
Community Bus	4.6%
Bicycle	2.1%
Get a lift with someone	20.7%
Drive myself	56.5%

Annexe F: Settlement Hierarchy in the Borough

Settlement Type	No per settlement type
Band C - Large Town (Population 18,000 +)	1
Band D - Medium Town (Population 10,000 – 17,999	2
Band E – Small Town (Population 5,000 – 9,999)	3
Band F – Intermediate Settlement (Population 2,500- 4,999)	1
Band G – Village (Population 1,000 – 2,499)	10
Band H - Small village, hamlet and open countryside	44

Classification	Settlement	2011 Census Population	No of households
Band A- Belfast	-		
Band B- Derry City	-		
Band C – Large Town	Coleraine	24,630	9,838
Band D – Medium Town	Limavady	12,047	4,353
	Ballymoney	10,393	4,766
Band E – Small Town	Portstewart	8,029	2,821
	Portrush	6,442	3,345
	Ballycastle	5,238	2,146
Band F – Intermediate Settlement	Dungiven	3,286	1,170
Band G – Village	Ballykelly	2,103	**758**
	Kilrea	1,679	**667**
	Greysteel	1,454	**526**
	Cloughmills	1,309	**514**
	Bushmills	1,292	**600**
	Castlerock	1,287	**563**
	Cushendall	1,276	**485**
	Garvagh	1,274	**535**
	Dunloy	1,215	**389**
	Rasharkin	1,114	**394**

Band H	Ballybogy	539	209
	Balnamore	900	342
	Bendooragh	622	217
	Bushvale	115	42
	Corkey	202	59
	Derrykeighan	136	45
	Dervock	714	302
	Dunaghy	391	149
	Finvoy	187	52
	Loughguile	396	128
	Magherahoney	77	29
	Stranocum	297	110
	Articlave	920	370
	Ballytober	62	29
	Boleran	142	47
	Boveedy	72	29
	Castleroe	470	179
	Clarehill	139	52
	Drumagarner	59	21
	Glenkeen	86	33
	Glenullin	177	61
	Macosquin	614	247
	Portballintrae	601	306
	Ardgarvan	108	48
	Artikelly	309	111
	Bellarena	332	125
	Burnfoot	239	92
	Dernaflaw	299	90
	Drumsurn	459	161
	Feeny	690	243
	Foreglen	261	88
	Glack	244	86
	Gortnahey	278	104
	Largy	162	55
	Armoy	498	189
	Ballintoy	150	61
	Ballyvoy	167	65
	Church bay	52	26
	Cushendun	149	62
	Glenariff bay	168	61

	Knocknacarry	187	54
	Liscolman	226	90
	Moss-side	297	134
	Waterfoot	524	204

Annexe G: Village Halls and Community Centres – Charity Commission -2004

Research undertaken in England and Wales demonstrated that there were over 9,000 village halls and community centres recognised as charities in England and Wales. It demonstrated that the Government recognises that village halls, community centres and other charities that provide space and facilities for community services and activities can make an enormous difference to the well-being of their communities.   These charities are an extremely important resource with a crucial role to play, not only in the economic and social regeneration of their local communities, but also in their contribution toward the Government's agenda.

The Strategy Unit paper "Private Action, Public Benefit" recognised the value of small charities (which includes many village halls and community buildings) by describing them as "a vehicle for community involvement, they contribute to diversity; they develop new approaches to local problems, they identify new needs quickly"[12]

The report also identified that:
- Village halls and community centres exist with the purpose of meeting the needs of users and beneficiaries within their community - needs which are rapidly changing.
- Social and economic factors are altering the demographics of many villages, towns and cities
- People's interests and tastes also change.
- The challenge for trustees of these charities is to adapt to reflect such changes in the way they operate.

The report demonstrates that some village halls and community centres are struggling to survive because of falling demand for the services they provide due to:
- Ageing rural populations
- Lack of interest among younger people
- Lack of interest among new residents in commuter villages
- Competition from nearby towns and cities that are now easier to reach due to improved accessibility and transport links

Difficulties also often arise in
- Funding the maintenance of these properties
- Income from the use of the hall is not sufficient to fund its up-keep with the services and facilities that many local people rely upon being threatened
- funding the modernisation of the property to comply with changes in regulations such as disability access and health and safety

This is also emulated in Northern Ireland and many of these issues are also prevalent in the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

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[12] Cabinet Office, (2002) "Private Action, Public Benefit: A Review of Charities and the Wider Not-For Profit Sector".

Village hall charities in particular are faced with the need to adapt their services and their property. There is evidence of a move away from the traditional village hall concept to a community based ethos of charities combining to **provide a broader service; a kind of 'community hub'.**

As a general rule, a**ctive, vibrant governance and an active, vibrant village hall or community centre go hand in hand. Their research demonstrated** a clearly identifiable link between the ability of village hall and community centres to attract users, their ability to attract trustees and other volunteers, and their ability to generate funding. Many of the successful centres reviewed in this survey identified had a 'cradle to grave' policy of offering something for everyone. It demonstrated that the charities that thrive are those in which trustees are **pro-active in understanding their responsibilities and in ensuring that their charity provides activities that meet local needs**.

The research demonstrates that a successful village hall or community centre charity usually has:
- A governing document that is workable and up-to-date, containing provisions for everything that the trustees need to do.
- A trustee body that is diverse, knows the extent of its role, responsibilities and powers and presents potential new trustees with a realistic picture of what is involved.
- A building that meets legislative requirements and that can facilitate a range of activities.
- An effective means of communicating and consulting with the local community to ensure that its needs and interests are understood and that the community knows about the charity's activities and plans.
- A funding regime that is sustainable and diverse enough to allow trustees sufficient flexibility to direct their activities in accordance with local needs and interests.
- A strategic plan, however simple, that takes account of the impact of proposed changes on all aspects of the running of the charity.