

6. Communities

Relevant Evidence Base

- The Coventry Council Plan (2015 update)
- Coventry Sports Strategy 2014-2028 (2014)
- Coventry City Council Indoor Facilities Strategy (2014)
- Coventry Aquatics Strategy (2014)
- Coventry University Masterplan
- University of Warwick Masterplan

Introduction

This chapter considers social, community and leisure facilities that are not defined as Main Town Centre uses by the NPPF. These include provisions for sporting uses, including swimming pools, leisure centres and sporting venues, health centres and hospitals, educational establishments including nurseries and universities, meeting places, libraries and places of worship.

The policies in this chapter set out the approach to safeguarding and improving social, community and leisure premises and providing support for the development of new facilities where there are identified gaps in provisions. The policies will support and facilitate the implementation of existing and future strategies for the provision and improvement of social community and leisure premises across Coventry.

The NPPF also promotes the creation of healthy communities and vibrant and viable town centres both of which help support local communities and provide a focal point for services over and above retailing facilities. The NPPF recognises that these two objectives can complement one another by providing for social, community and leisure uses within designated centres. Indeed, the provision of such facilities can make significant contributions to the diversification of designated centres, helping to promote sustainable development and sustainable travel through the creation of linked trips and mixed-use developments.

The Council will encourage applications that promote the re-use of existing facilities which support and enhance existing local communities, with a view to protecting those particular features of the neighbourhood valued by its residents.

New or improved social and community premises

In providing social, community and leisure services the NPPF requires local authorities to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as meeting and sports venues, cultural buildings and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. In doing so Local Plans should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, allow established facilities to develop and modernise in a sustainable way and ensure that the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services are considered and promoted in an integrated way.

New cultural and community premises (as outlined below) will therefore be considered in accordance with the sequential approach set out in policy CO1. This is with a view to locating facilities in defined centres making them easily accessible by foot, bicycle or public transport and fully accessible by all sections of the community and facilitating more integrated communities. They should be provided in buildings and facilities which are flexible and adaptable to communities' needs and sited to maximise the shared use of premises to facilitate their longevity.

Local Health Provisions

To support the University Hospital a range of health provisions have been retained and developed at the City of Coventry Health Centre, Stoney Stanton Road, whilst other new health facilities have been provided across Coventry. As the city's population continues to grow and the needs of the population change in terms of an ageing population, the Council will continue to work with the Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and The University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust. Although the city's population will remain one of the youngest across the sub-region it is still expected to age, and as such it will be important to ensure new facilities are easily accessible to those who need them.

Cultural and Community Buildings

Such facilities include sporting uses, including swimming pools, leisure centres and sporting venues, meeting places, libraries and places of worship.

The Council will seek to bring forward the recommendations of its Sports Strategy and its supporting documents to inspire more people to take up and regularly take part in sport; provide a range of high-quality sporting opportunities; and to provide a range of modern, accessible and high-quality sports facilities. This has already started with the delivery of the new swimming facility at the AT7 Centre and the planned city centre Leisure Destination. The Council is also committed to maintaining a library provision across the city as well as managing an appropriate level of other community halls and buildings.

The provision of places of worship will need to be carefully considered having regard to the needs of local communities and faiths.

Universities, Schools and Educational Facilities

Coventry's education offer is varied and successful, with a range of improving primary and secondary schools, supported by strong colleges and two of the countries most respected universities. In addition to a number of private institutions the city offers a range of State-funded schools including local authority-maintained schools (community, foundation and voluntary aided and controlled schools).

In order to support sustainable development, the Council recognises the importance of maintaining an adequate and appropriate supply of education provision. Opportunities should be taken to ensure schools are located in sustainable locations that complement neighbouring uses. They should be within easy access of local communities as well as offering opportunities to generate linked trips by being located close to other social and

community provisions and local retail and service offers as well as being easily accessible by a range of transport options.

Where possible schools and their grounds should be utilised for other community provisions such as social, cultural, leisure and indoor sports facilities. This will help to develop a school's position at the centre of the community with significant benefits to local residents. It can also help ensure the effective use of resources and help minimise travel distances for users.

The Council will continue to work with both universities to enable on-going development of their masterplans. This collaborative working will help to facilitate future development proposals and ensure they are in harmony with the overall aims of regeneration, education and investment in Coventry and the sub-region.

Policy CO1: New or improved social community and leisure premises

1. Proposals for social, community and leisure facilities will be considered through the following sequential approach:
 - a. Designated centres to support the centres hierarchy;
 - b. Where no suitable sites are available in a designated centre, an edge-of-centre location;
 - c. Where no edge of centre sites are available, a site adjacent to other associated facilities including existing schools and educational facilities;
 - d. Only where no suitable site can be identified having regard to points 1-3, will stand alone sites be supported, subject to:
 - i. The proposal addressing an unmet need within a local community;
 - ii. There being no significant adverse impact upon the role of a defined Centre;
 - iii. There being no material impact on neighbouring amenity;
2. Proposals will be considered on the basis of:
 - a. The appropriateness of their proposed location in relation to their scale and intended catchment;
 - b. Compatibility with nearby uses;
 - c. Accessibility by a choice of means of transport;
 - d. Compatibility with other Plan Policies.
3. Where proposals are in accordance with the approved Masterplans for Coventry University or the University of Warwick they will normally be approved subject to high quality design proposals.

To support compatibility with nearby uses community premises should be appropriate to their surroundings in terms of scale, character and mix of uses, and should not harm residential amenity, the environment, or result in adverse transport impacts in line with

other relevant policies. Some facilities within residential neighbourhoods can have an impact on residential amenity which may need to be carefully managed. For example, the hours of operation will need to be balanced against the needs of service providers and users of the premises against impacts on neighbouring residents. Planning conditions will be used, as appropriate, to mitigate potential adverse amenity impacts.

Proposals should promote active frontages and encourage linked trips and shared services wherever possible. They should satisfy the above sequential approach in order to ensure that centres remain as the focus for not only retailing but also community uses, which ensures that the centre has a diverse mix of uses and addresses where appropriate any unmet local need. It will also be important to locate these provisions in the most sustainable places relevant to the proposed use to generate linked trips and promote sustainable communities.

It is recognised that there may be occasions where a proposal is not suitable for an in-centre use. This may be due to a number of factors including space requirements, neighbouring uses or local amenity. The Council will require evidence and justification for the reasons why centres have been discounted and why similar uses such as educational facilities, for example, cannot be located in the same locations.