Village and Community Hubs

Updated guidance for 2026

Think of the environment. Please avoid printing this A4 document unnecessarily.

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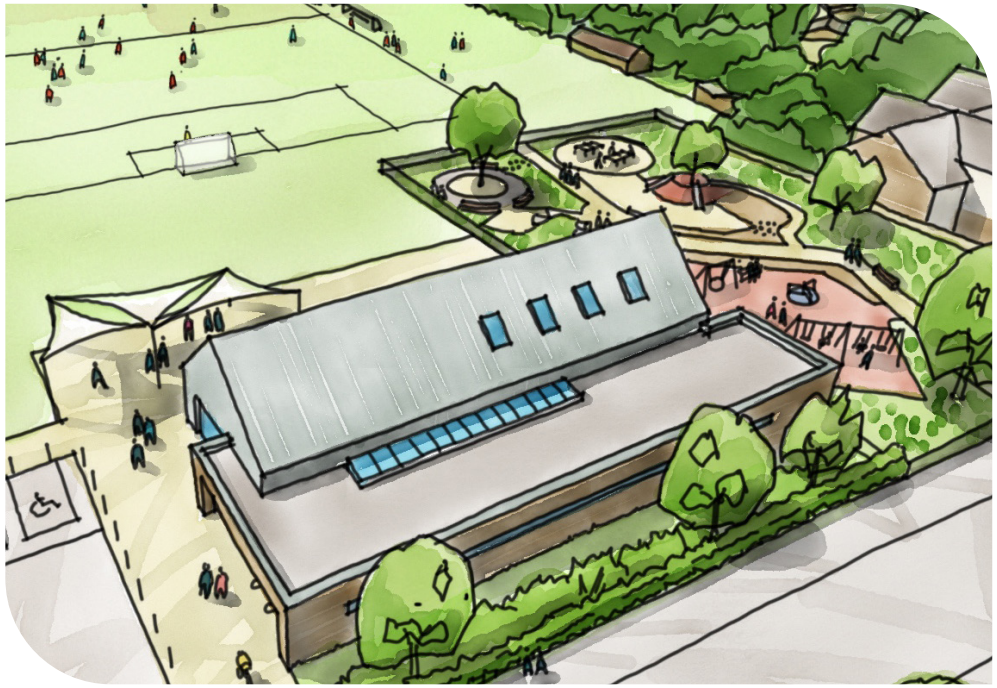
Sport England's design guidance notes aim to:

- **Increase awareness of good design;**
- **Help built environment professionals, clients, user representatives and stakeholders to follow best practice;**
- **Encourage well-designed facilities that meet the needs of sport and physical activity and are a pleasure to use.**



Document Accessibility

This document has been designed for comfortable reading at A4 and on a laptop screen but can also be printed at A3 for large print versions. The pdf is accessible and has been tested to work with text readers.

User Guide

Before using this design guidance for any specific projects, all users should refer to the on-line User guide which explains when and how to use the guidance as well as understanding the limitations of use.

Click here for **User guide** and other **Design and cost guidance**

Foreword

Community facilities play a vital role in supporting active, healthy and connected lives. When well designed, large or small, village and community hubs become effective, multi-purpose environments where the whole community can take part in activities, access services and feel a sense of belonging.

High quality facilities enhance neighbourhoods, deliver social and environmental value, and improve the experience of all users.

This updated guidance builds on the previous 2001 edition and reflects the significant changes in how community spaces are used today. It responds to developments in legislation, rising standards and expectations around accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability, and the growing need for local, flexible places where people of all ages and abilities can be active close to home.

This guidance sets out the fundamental principles of good design for village and community hubs. It highlights the critical factors that contribute to successful places — from flexible layouts that support a wide range of activities, to environmentally responsible construction, to thoughtful design that removes barriers and encourages participation for all ages and abilities. It also emphasises the importance of integrating social spaces where people can meet, connect, and build stronger communities.

The document signposts further technical resources, specialist advice and best practice examples to support organisations, design teams and local partners in making informed, evidence-based decisions at every stage of a project.

Good design enables active lifestyles, and the benefits extend across the wider community. Local groups, designers, stakeholders and developers can work together to create facilities that are welcoming, sustainable, accessible and inclusive that continue to meet local needs well into the future.

> ***"This technical guidance reflects our belief that great places can change lives.***
>
> ***Our Village and Community Hubs are more than buildings, they are expressions of Sport England's mission and our commitment to creating the conditions for every community to be active, connected, and able to thrive. By championing sustainable, inclusive, and deeply place-rooted design, these principles set a clear direction for how we shape environments that welcome everyone, reflect local identity, and unlock the potential of people and place. They show what it means to design with purpose: to create spaces that inspire movement, strengthen belonging, and support healthier futures for generations."***
>
> Lisa Dodd-Mayne, **Executive Director, Partnerships & Place**

How this document relates to other guidance

The Village and Community Hubs guidance should be read alongside the latest version of related Sport England guidance and other key statutory requirements, and the links highlighted below:

Sport England Technical Guidance

Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF)	Click here
Active Design guidance	Click here
Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports	Click here
Biodiversity Net Gain guidance	Click here
Clubhouses	Click here
Community Leisure Hub	Click here
Environmental Sustainability: Check list for sports and physical activity facilities	Click here
Every Move: Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan	Click here
Fitness and Exercise Spaces	Click here
Leisure Local	Click here
Natural Turf for Sport (NTS)	Click here
Sports Halls Designs and Layouts	Click here

Other Key References

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE): Village & Community Halls - A Net Zero Design Guide	Click here
BS 8300 Design of an Accessible and Inclusive Built Environment	Click here
Building Regulations Approved Documents	Click here
England and Wales Cricket Board: Sustainability Plan for Cricket	Click here
PAS 6463:2022 Design for the Mind. Neurodiversity & the Built Environment	Click here
RIBA Plan of Work and Inclusive Design Overlay to the RIBA Plan of Work	Click here
SportScotland: Sport and Climate Change Framework and Self-Assessment	Click here

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of document

This guide outlines the key briefing considerations for the development of village or community hubs. These are centred around a multi-purpose hall capable of accommodating a range of recreational level physical activities, as well as social, cultural, and artistic pursuits. It includes detailed accommodation requirements and example layouts for facilities of varying scales, which may be adapted to suit identified community needs and diverse site contexts. Where the design of a new facility is intended to primarily provide changing facilities for outdoor sports, reference should be made to Sport England's **Clubhouses Design Guidance Note**.

The Village and Community hubs document also provides guidance on the creation of a sustainable public facility that is well-constructed, maintainable, fully accessible and inclusive, and designed to operate efficiently over the long term. Emphasis is placed on minimising running and operational costs to ensure the facility remains financially sustainable and does not impose a burden on public resources. Business planning and operational strategies are also important aspects to consider when developing a new facility, which is something a specialist can be appointed to help with.

This guidance note is intended as an introductory design reference for clients, developers, and designers, highlighting the principal design considerations and offering illustrative examples to support conceptual development. It should not be regarded as a definitive or prescriptive design manual.

1.2 Community consultation

Attractive, well-functioning facilities play a critical role in attracting and retaining users. The quality of the design directly influences how welcoming the building feels and how effectively it operates. Accordingly, investing time and effort in developing a robust and well-informed project brief at the outset is essential to the long-term success of the facility.

Design, management, operation, and maintenance should be approached with the end users in mind. A user-centred perspective ensures that the facility meets the practical, health, and emotional needs of the community it serves.

Comprehensive community consultation is a fundamental component of the briefing process. Engaging with prospective users and stakeholders enables project teams to gain a clear understanding of local requirements, expectations, and aspirations. This dialogue informs the development of the brief and helps determine the type of spaces and amenities that should be provided. A well-considered consultation process fosters community ownership and ensures the facility is relevant, inclusive, and responsive to its intended audience. Guidance relating to stakeholder engagement can be found in Sport England's **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part G**.

Sport England offers best practice guidance across many aspects of facility development, including strategic planning, design, and operational considerations. Their support can be particularly valuable during the planning process. Early engagement, ideally prior to the planning pre-application stage, can help ensure that proposals align with best practice and benefit from Sport England's extensive experience and resources. Engagement with a local Active Partnership can also be valuable in understanding needs, community characteristics and potential user groups.

1.3 Sport England's planning function

Sport England's Planning Function covers every local planning authority in the country and offers a pre-planning application service, whether it affects existing playing fields, proposes new playing fields or proposes or affects facilities where communities are physically active. We encourage you to consult our planning function if the proposal is for a village or community hall to support playing fields or another facility that facilitates physical activity.

1.4 Health and Safety considerations

Clients should be aware of their duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and the Building Safety Act 2022, which place clear responsibilities on clients to make suitable arrangements for managing health and safety and compliance with statutory requirements throughout the project, including the appointment of competent designers and contractors and the provision of relevant information. The design must also take account of the standards set out in the Health and Safety Executive's Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (Approved Code of Practice and guidance, 2013), ensuring that the completed building provides safe access, adequate lighting, ventilation, sanitary facilities and overall user wellbeing.

Safeguarding considerations are essential given the wide range of community users, often including children and vulnerable adults. Therefore layouts, visibility, and management strategies should actively support safe supervision and appropriate separation where needed.

While not a statutory requirement, clients are encouraged to consider the provision of a publicly accessible defibrillator, reflecting growing best practice in public and community facilities.

Community consultation is essential to ensure that new facilities reflect the needs and aspirations of those they serve. Early engagement with local users and stakeholders helps shape a relevant and inclusive brief, fosters a sense of ownership, and supports the success and long-term sustainability of the project.

2. Project Type

There are many different ways to develop a Village or Community Hub, some of which are briefly discussed below. The main focus of the guidance contained in this document is written with a new build in mind, although most of the guidance is still relevant to the other project types.

2.1 New build

For new build projects, site selection is key. Ideally, the location should support active travel, be accessible by public transport and situated near shops and other community amenities. If the proposed site lies within a conservation area, additional planning restrictions may apply. The surrounding context, including the type and character of neighbouring properties, should also be carefully considered. Reference should be made to Sport England's **Active Design Guide** when assessing the location and designing a new facility.

Provision for outdoor sports, such as multi-use games areas (MUGAs), tennis courts, cricket pitches, and grass fields for football or rugby, should be factored into the brief. This may influence the building's design, potentially incorporating pavilion functions or independent changing facilities to support outdoor activities and overall accessibility.

Practical considerations include proximity to existing roads, availability of utilities (electricity, water, and drainage), and ensuring adequate space for car parking, cycle parking and landscaping.

2.2 Co-location

Where feasible, co-locating a new community hub with existing facilities such as schools, sports pavilions, clubhouses, health centres, places of worship, or leisure centres, can offer significant benefits. Shared use of infrastructure and utilities may reduce overall project costs, while co-location with non-sporting facilities may encourage more use by those not comfortable with visiting conventional sports facilities.

2.3 Refurbishment

Refurbishing an existing building can enhance functionality, accessibility, improve environmental performance, and reduce operational costs. Extensions may be added to support a broader range of activities. Refurbishment benefits from existing community ownership, familiarity and engagement.

New build | Co-location | Refurbishment | Extension | Conversion

Project types

Project type

Key considerations include whether the current location remains viable, whether the upgrade is practical and will deliver future needs, and whether refurbishment offers the best value for money and long-term sustainability.

2.4 Extension

Extending an existing community centre or village hall can provide additional space and functionality while leveraging existing infrastructure. This approach is often cost-effective and maintains continuity for the local community. Extensions may be combined with refurbishment to deliver a comprehensive upgrade.

Planning feasibility and site capacity should be assessed early to ensure the extension is achievable.

2.5 Conversion

Repurposing an existing building for use as a community hub may be a viable option. The building must be accessible and in a suitable location, with sufficient external space for the required activities including parking and landscaping, and adequate internal floor area and ceiling heights to accommodate key functions.

When evaluating a building for conversion, it is important to ensure that it is accessible and suitably sized with flexible spaces that can be accommodated without expensive structural, utility and services alterations. A change of use may be required and should be discussed with the local planning authority.

Another option for conversion is to re-use a modular building which could be relocated from another site. This can be both environmentally beneficial and can significantly reduce build costs.

Getting the right advice

Every project is unique, so it is important to consult with expert designers at an early stage of the project. For optimum environmental performance and servicing key decisions should be carefully considered, for example:

- What shape, size, and orientation best serves the needs of the building? Can passive measures such as natural light or ventilation be optimised?
- How will the building be used? What are the typical opening times and occupancy? How should the building respond to peaks in occupancy or external conditions?
- Who will use the building? What technologies can be considered without making building operations too complex or maintenance too onerous?
- What capacity does the local utilities infrastructure have? What capacity upgrades in the local electrical grid will be required to support a fossil fuel free building?

3. Typical Internal Facilities

The facilities listed below have been included as they provide a typical facility mix for a village or community hub. As each location is different and the needs of the local community will vary from place to place, the list should be developed to suit the local circumstances and identified need. An absolutely minimum provision for a hall would be a main hall, equipment store, and a toilet, but this only offers a very limited benefit to the local community when compared to the accommodation listed below, although it may be considered when co-located with other facilities.

3.1 Key facilities

The following accommodation forms the core of the community hub, and can be considered the minimum requirement for any standalone Village or Community Hub:

- Entrance foyer
- Main hall
- Equipment and furniture store
- Kitchen, with servery
- Accessible and inclusive toilets
- Cleaning store
- Plant room

3.2 Additional facilities

The basic accommodation can be enhanced with a range of additional facilities that could include:

- Office space
- Accessible and inclusive changing facilities with showers
- Baby changing
- Community rooms
- A second, smaller hall
- Stage for the main hall
- Licenced bar
- Changing rooms for external pitches
- Equipment storage for external pitches
- Meeting rooms
- Fitness suite or studio
- First aid facilities
- Quiet and restorative spaces
- Multi-faith facility

Additionally, a secondary function could be incorporated into the community hub such as:

- Village shop
- Café (Business, Social Enterprise or Volunteer led)
- Post office, or self-service parcel lockers
- Community healthcare facility
- Public library
- Theatre or arts facility
- Childcare facility
- Offices for local organisations, such as the Local Parish, community groups, and active partnerships

Typical internal facilities

3.3 Entrance foyer

The foyer provides an entrance, a meeting place, and a location for club and community notices to be displayed and should provide access to the main hall and toilets. External shelter and a draught lobby should be considered, and barrier matting provided at the entrance. Buggy and wheelchair parking should be provided off the main circulation area close to the entrance and reception area.

A reception desk can be provided in this space if required for busier facilities. If a café is part of the brief, co-location with the entrance foyer should be considered, otherwise vending machines within the entrance foyer should also be a consideration. Further guidance on accessible entrances, reception areas and internal circulation routes can be found in Sport England's **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part C.**

Entrance foyer

3.4 Main hall

The central space of any facility is the main hall. It should be a large, flexible, robust space that can accommodate a wide variety of physical activities as well as non-sporting community uses. A minimum size of 18 x 10m is recommended to allow for a single badminton court and provide for other uses, while larger halls will increase the potential for additional activities. Where accommodating social badminton as part of the brief, a 6.1m minimum clear height over playing areas is recommended.

A stage can be included either as a temporary feature within the hall, using modular staging platforms, or as a permanent fixture in addition to the minimum hall space, although this may prove to be less flexible. Suitable step-free access should be provided to any raised platform or stage areas.

The hall should be accessed from the entrance foyer for day-to-day use and may have direct external access in addition where required for special events and deliveries. To ensure flexibility, the hall needs to have direct access to suitable storage. Curtains or blinds should be considered to allow the hall to be blacked-out for certain uses, if necessary, and lighting suitable for playing badminton, and other sports, should be included.

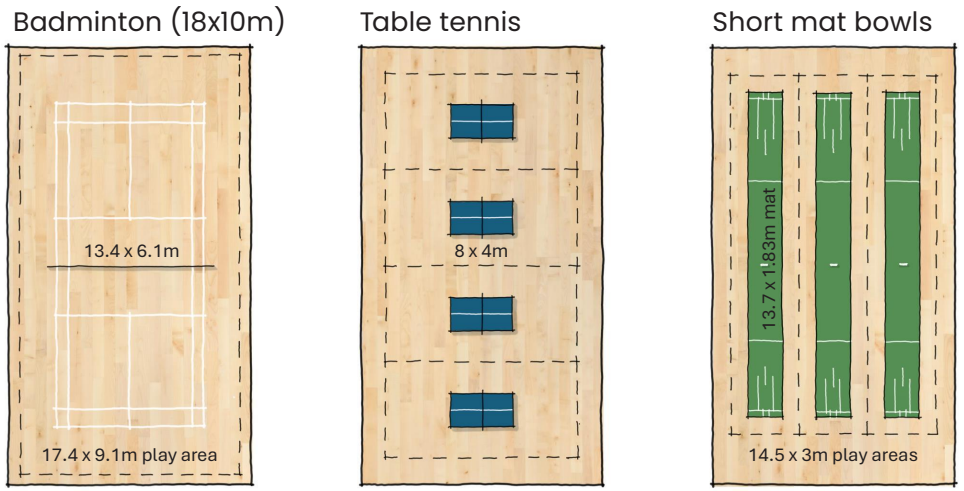
The Sport England publications **Affordable Sports Halls** and **Developing the Right Sports Hall** contain useful information regarding layouts for a number of sports, as well as guidance on design considerations including sizes, clear heights, detailing, suitable materials, flooring, colour contrasting, and acoustic design.

Typical internal facilities

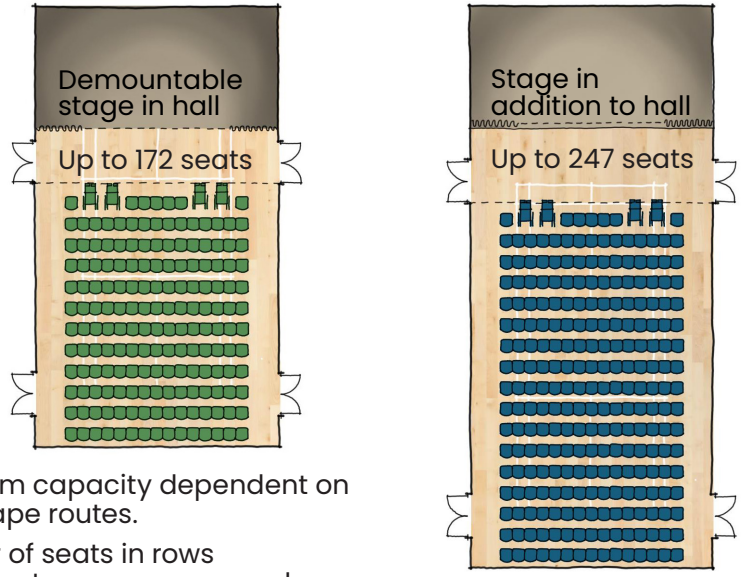
Activities that may take place in the hall include:

- Badminton
- Short mat bowls
- Table tennis
- Gymnastics
- Yoga
- Judo
- Martial arts
- Aerobics/ Keep fit
- Short Tennis
- Pickleball
- Five-a-side (soft ball)
- Fencing
- Dance
- Club or society meetings
- Conferences
- Concerts
- Drama
- Film viewing
- Receptions
- Private functions
- Auctions
- Discos
- Training sessions
- Voting
- Jumble sales
- Charity events/ Fetes
- Roller Discos
- basketball

Main hall



Example layouts in main hall



Maximum capacity dependent on fire escape routes.

Number of seats in rows dependent on gangways and row spacing.

Seating layouts in main hall

Typical internal facilities

3.5 Kitchen

The kitchen should be located so that it can directly link to the main hall with a servery hatch, and preferably to another space such as the entrance foyer, a community room, or small hall, if present. A separate entrance to the kitchen from outside is desirable for deliveries and for refuse removal. An external servery hatch can also be considered as this could provide a useful extension to the use of the kitchen.

Consideration of the types of regular activities that are to be catered for is required when deciding on the size and type of kitchen, and what equipment is needed. A large, robust domestic kitchen will be suitable for most instances, improving usability by the community.

Key design considerations include external access, hygienic surfaces, sufficient storage, access to bins, provision of a separate wash hand basin, and suitable ventilation.

3.6 Storage

Stores should be provided for the main hall, small hall, and for all community spaces, directly accessed from these spaces, in order to store sports and play equipment and furniture, to ensure the maximum flexibility of use.

Insufficient storage can have a big impact on users and should not be underestimated. As a minimum the main hall should have a 40m² store and the small hall a store of at least 10% of its floor area.

Doors should be wide and high enough to easily move the largest equipment safely. Fire protection, smoke detectors and fire alarms will be required for the hall storage. Dedicated ventilation may also be required depending on the use.

3.7 Toilets

For most facilities, a minimum toilet provision of male, female, ambulant accessible and all-gender wheelchair accessible toilets should be provided in accordance with the Building Regulations (Approved Document M, Volume 2 and Approved Document T) and British Standard BS6465-1. It is also recommended that at least one self-contained all-gender toilet is provided. These should be located close to the entrance foyer. If only a single hall is being provided then a single all-gender accessible toilet may be an appropriate minimum provision.

Additional toilets should be provided where there are changing rooms and children's toilets should be provided adjacent to rooms used for playgroups or other childcare areas. Baby change facilities can be in male and female toilets, or in a separate baby change room. Externally accessed toilets should be considered, especially where access to toilets when the building is closed is a consideration.

Consideration should also be given to the provision of a Changing Places toilet for use by people with complex and multiple impairments who require up to two assistants.

Toilets should be durable and easy to clean. Taps should be thermostatic mixer lever taps or preferably consideration should be given to installing automatic sensor taps to minimise the chance of taps being left on.

Detailed layouts for standard, ambulant accessible, wheelchair accessible toilets, Changing Places toilets, and baby change facilities are included in Sport England's **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D**.

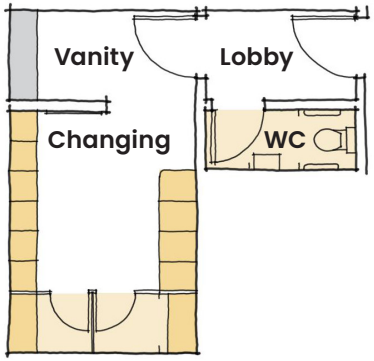
Typical internal facilities

3.8 Changing and shower facilities

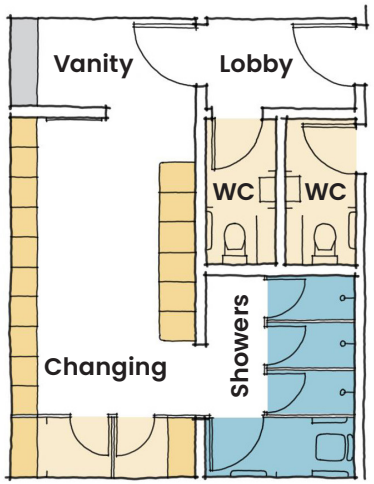
Flexible, accessible, and inclusive changing facilities should be provided to support hall activities where required by the brief. These should include appropriate benches, showers, vanity areas, lockers, toilets, and wash basins. Depending on community consultation, consider incorporating Wudu or other faith-specific wash facilities.

Where changing rooms support outdoor pitches, they may need to be separate from internal facilities, particularly for natural turf pitches. Check local league and governing-body requirements for the size, number, and type of changing rooms, including those for officials. Changing rooms for cricket should face the square. Also consider how external changing rooms can be accessed when the main building is closed.

Further guidance, including layout examples, can be found in Sport England's [Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D].



Smaller / Junior team changing layout, above, and Team changing with showers, right, based on AISF Part D Figures D38 Example 1 and D39 Example 1.



Changing room layouts

3.9 Secondary hall

In addition to the main hall, a second, possibly smaller hall can greatly increase the range and number of activities accommodated. A small hall of 10 x 10m with a 3.5m high ceiling is suitable for many activities including fitness classes, some martial arts, table tennis, drama workshops, yoga, club meetings and playgroups.

3.10 Community/ meeting rooms

Smaller multi-function community or meeting rooms provide a useful facility for the local community. The number and size of these rooms should be based on the local demand, which can be determined during the consultation and briefing stage. These rooms can be designed to have flexible uses, further adding to the potential activities on offer.

Typical internal facilities

3.11 Office space

A small office should be considered if there is a requirement for more than the minimal staffing. This can be used as a staff base, reception point, records store and as a location for heating and lighting controls. In some instances, a reception point with lockable storage may be sufficient, while in larger facilities there may be a requirement for an office and reception.

The office should be located adjacent to the entrance foyer and have a view of the entrance.

3.12 Bar

A licensed bar can generate additional revenue but introduces strict operational and security requirements. As a bar may deter some groups on religious grounds, its inclusion should be carefully considered through local community consultation. If provided, it should be located next to at least one main community space, with an adjacent bar store or cellar, ideally with direct external access for deliveries.

For smaller halls, a temporary bar with an occasional licence may offer a suitable alternative.

3.13 Plant room

A plant room will be required for even the smallest facility, to house heating and ventilation plant and incoming utilities and meters. Separate external access is preferable and security, ventilation, temperature control, noise, and fire safety are all key considerations in the design.

More than one plant room may be required depending on the requirements of the building services design. Larger buildings generally have separate mechanical (water, heating and ventilation) and electrical rooms. If battery storage is needed, this may require a separate plant room.

Plant rooms should be situated on external elevations to facilitate natural ventilation for heat dissipation and should have easy access to outside to enable safe maintenance and replacement of large plant items.

Where plant such as Air Source Heat Pumps are located externally maintenance, security and acoustics should be carefully considered. Locating plant in a space outside the main building footprint can make the installations more complex, particularly in smaller scale buildings.

4. Accessibility and Inclusion

4.1 Accessible and inclusive design

All village and community hubs should be designed to be accessible and inclusive, supporting the widest possible range of users, and provide an attractive and welcoming facility that encourages everyone to be more active. Everyone should feel welcome when using a facility, regardless of their faith, culture, disability, gender or age.

Sport England's **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF)** sets out advice and expected standards for community sports and leisure facilities.

Entrance foyer and circulation

4.2 Key design considerations

The key design considerations for an accessible and inclusive facility include:

- The location of parking, set-down/ pick-up points, secure cycle parking and mobility scooter parking.
- External approach to building including wayfinding, pedestrian routes, surface materials, level step free access, ramps and steps (where unavoidable), handrails and guarding, and lighting.
- Landscaping and outdoor facilities.
- Wide entrance with level access, easily operated external doors, suitably sized entrance lobby and, where provided, an accessible reception desk.
- Sufficient space for circulation, wide and easily used doors. Stairs and a lift if more than one level.
- Tables, counters, and a servery that can be used by wheelchair users.
- Finishes including acoustic requirements.
- Clear wayfinding and signage for all users.
- Emergency evacuation
- Building services including lighting, switches and controls

The design should consider what activities and sports are likely to take place in the village or community hub and factor in any additional spatial requirement for people using larger sports wheelchairs or mobility aids.

Accessibility and inclusion

A minimum accommodation provision will include ambulant accessible WCs, a wheelchair accessible WC, and baby change facilities. Where changing facilities are included, wheelchair accessible changing, showers, storage and lockers should also be provided. A Changing Places toilet should be considered as should Wudu and faith washroom provision depending on the local community.

The **Building Regulations Approved Document M (AD M)** and **BS 8300** give recommendations on designing buildings to accommodate users with the widest range of characteristics and capabilities.

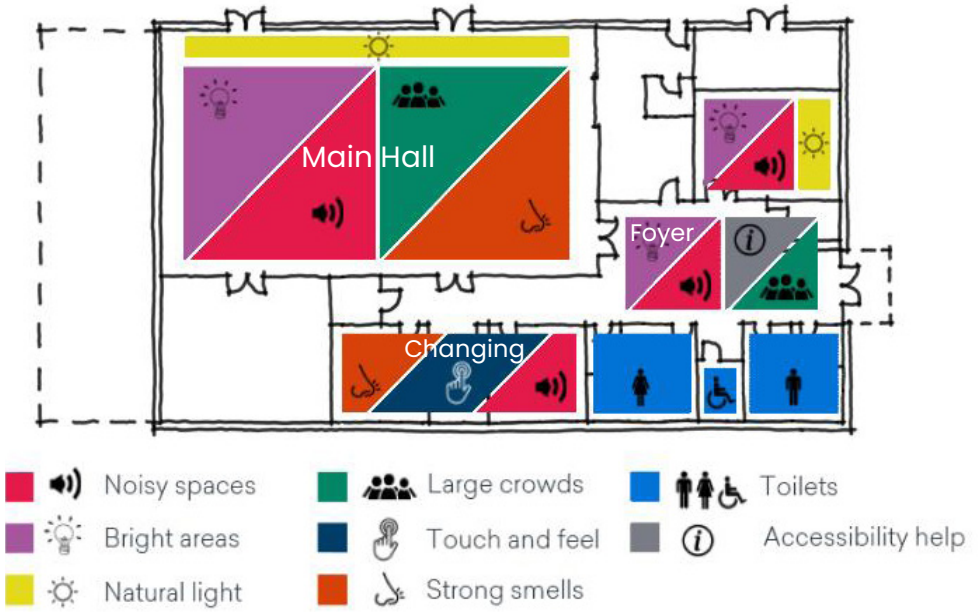
4.3 Neuro-inclusive design

In addition to meeting spatial and functional requirements, the design of community and village hubs should consider the sensory experience of all users. A significant proportion of the population are neurodivergent or have sensory processing differences which can have a significant impact on how they experience buildings. Incorporating neuro-inclusive design principles into the design helps to create environments that are comfortable, calming, and accessible to a wide range of individuals, including those with sensory sensitivities, neurodivergent conditions, or cognitive impairments.

Key design considerations include building layout, wayfinding, lighting, acoustics, surface finishes, choice of furniture, fittings and use of patterns. Materials and finishes should be selected not only for durability but also for their tactile comfort and visual warmth. The use of natural light, soft textures, and muted colour palettes can contribute to a more soothing environment.

To support user understanding and comfort, consideration should be given to sensory mapping, a resource that outlines the sensory characteristics of different spaces within the building. This may include information on lighting levels, noise expectations, surface textures, and potential smells. It is also useful to highlight any quiet rooms or restorative spaces provided in the building that people can retreat to if needed. This information can empower users to make informed choices about how they engage with the space and can significantly enhance accessibility and wellbeing.

Detailed guidance on neuro-inclusive design can be found in **PAS 6463:2022 Design for the mind – Neurodiversity and the built environment**.



Sensory Guide Example

5. Example Layouts

There are many possible combinations of facilities and therefore many possible layouts that would provide the solutions to meet a communities needs. The following three example layouts have been developed in alignment with the principles outlined in this guidance and are intended to illustrate potential design approaches.

These examples are indicative only and should not be interpreted as prescriptive templates for future developments.

The smallest layout (Example 1) represents a minimal provision for a standalone building, comprising a single hall with essential support spaces. The medium sized layout (Example 2) introduces a flexible community room and more generous ancillary spaces, enabling a broader range of activities. The largest example (Example 3) incorporates a second, smaller hall, offering increased flexibility for programming and multi-use functionality.

Where funding constraints limit the scale of the initial development, future phases should be considered and accommodated in the site and facility layouts. Well considered traditional or modular approaches will allow for the construction of core facilities in the first phase, with additional elements added as resources become available, supporting phased growth and long-term adaptability.

These examples are indicative only and should not be interpreted as prescriptive templates for future developments.

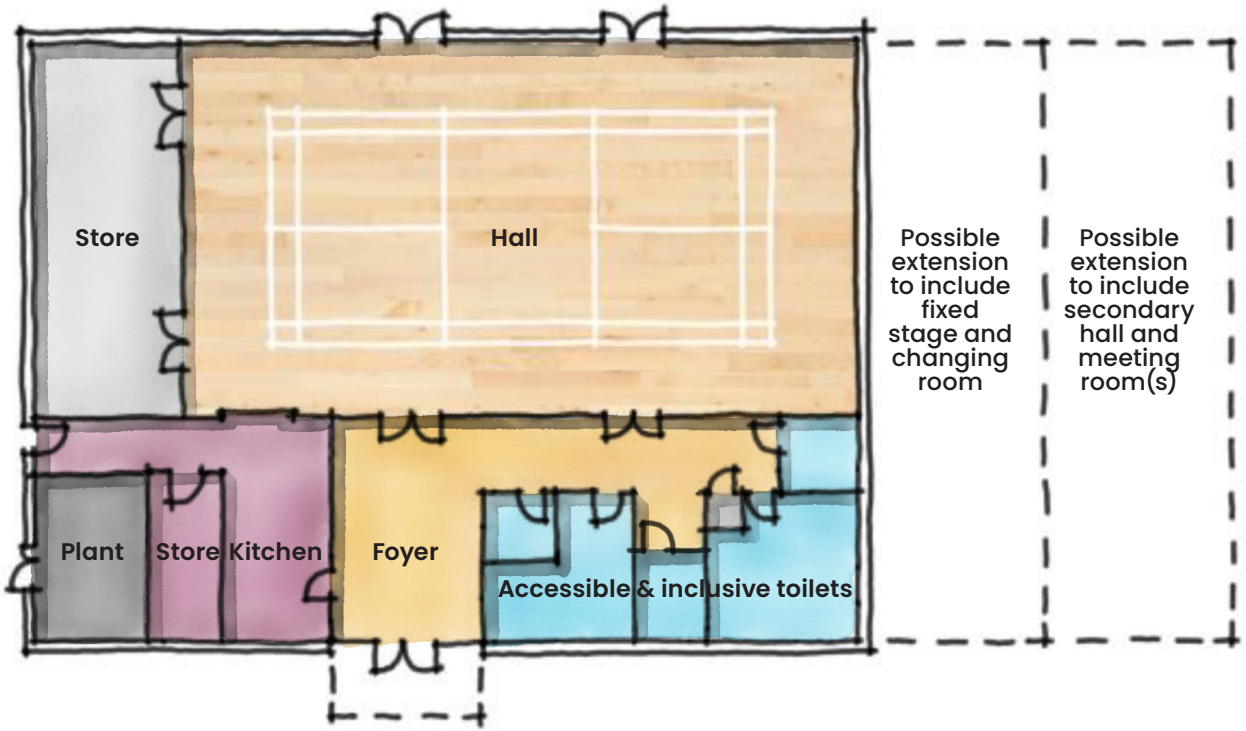
5.1 Example 1 - Small

Key features include:

- Easy to navigate layout with compact form
- Accessible and inclusive layout
- Multi-purpose hall (18x10m)
- Entrance foyer
- Accessible and inclusive toilets
- Kitchen

Other activities can be accommodated within the hall, which could be subdivided into more than one space, or in additional activity spaces added to the plan.

Approximate gross internal floor area (GIFA) – 330m²



Typical Layouts

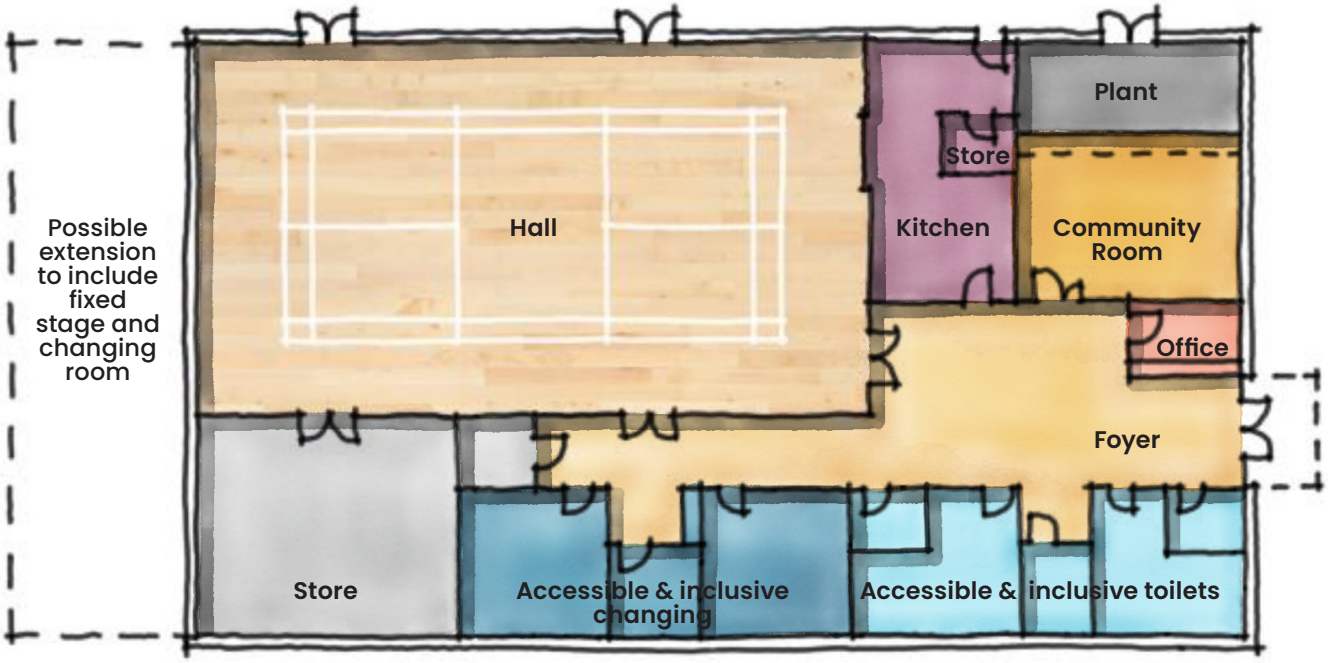
5.2 Example 2 - Medium

Key features include:

- Easy to navigate layout with compact form.
- Accessible and inclusive layout
- Multi-purpose hall
- Flexible community room
- Entrance foyer, reception and office
- Accessible and inclusive changing and toilets
- Kitchen

Other activities can be accommodated within the hall, which could be subdivided into more than one space, or in additional activity spaces added to the plan. Access can also be provided to external activity spaces, although separate dedicated changing for grass pitches would be recommended.

Approximate gross internal floor area (GIFA) – 450m²



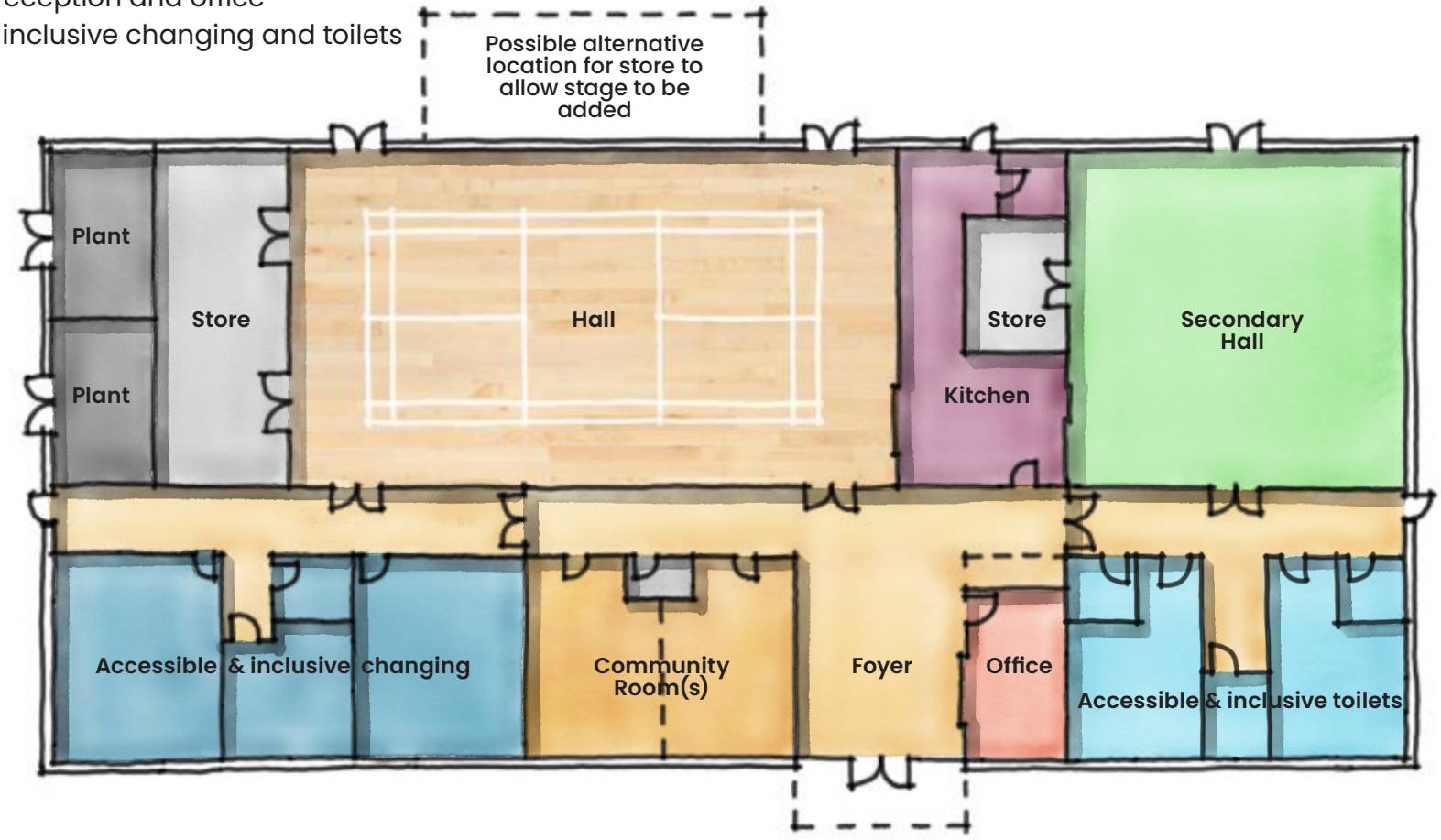
5.3 Example 3 - Large

Key features include:

- Easy to navigate layout with compact form.
- Accessible and inclusive layout
- Multi-purpose hall
- Second smaller multi-use hall or studio space
- Flexible community room
- Entrance foyer, reception and office
- Accessible and inclusive changing and toilets
- Kitchen

Other activities can be accommodated within the hall, which could be subdivided into more than one space, or in additional activity spaces added to the plan. Access is also provided to external activity spaces, with changing for two teams and a flexible accessible changing space provided.

Approximate gross internal floor area (GIFA) – 660m²



6. External Areas

The external environment surrounding a village or community hub plays a vital role in shaping the overall character, accessibility, safety, and functionality of the facility. A thoughtfully designed landscape scheme can enhance the building's integration with its surroundings, create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and contribute to environmental sustainability and Biodiversity Net Gain. Connection with nature and the incorporation of biophilic design principles into a design has also been found to have a profound positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Strategic planting and landscaping can soften the visual impact of hard surfaces such as car parks, improve privacy and security through natural screening while maintaining passive surveillance, and support biodiversity. Native and low-maintenance species should be prioritised to ensure long-term viability and reduced upkeep. Landscaping can also be used to define entrances, guide movement, and create outdoor spaces for informal gathering or programmed activities.

6.1 Parking

Provision for car parking, set-down/ pick-up points and cycle parking should be included in accordance with local authority parking standards and the Building Regulations, with accessible bays located closest to the main entrance. Further guidance can be found in Sport England's **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part B**.

Consideration should be given to future-proofing the site by including electric vehicle charging points, as well as facilities for electric bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters. The integration of photovoltaic panels above parking bays can provide shade and shelter while contributing to the facility's renewable energy generation, and green roofs over secure cycle parking stands can add biodiversity.

6.2 Multi-use games area (MUGA)

External sports provision can significantly enhance the versatility of a village or community hub. A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), typically a fenced, all-weather surface sized for a netball court or five-a side football court is recommended. However, an area the size of a single tennis court can still support a wide range of recreational and physical activities and sports if a larger court is not possible. Where permitted, and the need identified, sports lighting can be included to extend usability into the evening.

Where provided outdoor sports areas should be connected to changing facilities via accessible paths with surfaces suitable for studded footwear. Covered seating and standing areas should be considered as this can significantly improve the use of a MUGA when wet and can provide shade in hot weather.

For further information refer to **Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports** guidance from Sport England.

6.3 Grass pitches and artificial grass pitches

Grass and artificial pitches should be designed with appropriate access, orientation, drainage, lighting and fencing to meet the standards of play and optimise play conditions. For cricket pitches sightlines need to be carefully considered.

As with the MUGA, changing rooms and officials' rooms should be connected to the pitches with an accessible path, with a surface suitable for people wearing studded boots, and consideration should be given to providing covered areas for shade and shelter.

For further information and detailed guidance refer to Sport England's **Natural Turf for Sport** and **Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports** guidance.

6.4 Children's play

Play areas should be securely fenced and clearly visible from the building, ideally located on the sunny side of the building and adjacent to a café or social space if present. Placement should avoid interference with formal sports areas. Safety is paramount, with attention to gate design, surfacing, and equipment layout.

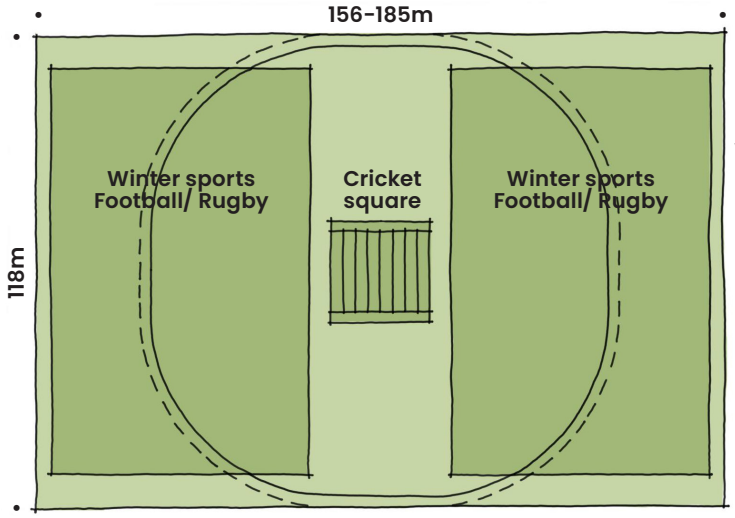
Stakeholder consultation is important in the design of play areas and equipment that should be designed to be as accessible and inclusive as practicable.

6.5 Other external areas

Additional external spaces may include kitchen gardens, raised planters, orchards, flower beds, or community gardens. These features can support educational programmes, promote health and wellbeing, and encourage community stewardship. Their inclusion should be guided by local interest and available space. Careful consideration should also be given to the pedestrian routes between external space and any changes in level across the site to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.

Co-location with skate parks can further extend facilities for young people and provide passive surveillance to discourage anti-social behaviour. Outdoor table tennis can also be considered as an additional outdoor activity.

When air source heat pumps (ASHPs) are the preferred solution, they must be installed in a suitable external location with adequate airflow, avoiding confined spaces that restrict circulation and impair performance. Careful consideration must also be given to ASHP placement to minimise acoustic impact on the hub, neighbouring uses and surrounding properties. Where ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) are being considered, placing ground arrays beneath playing fields should be explored as an efficient



Typical layout of cricket field and winter games pitches.

Recommended pitch orientation.

Pitch layout and orientation

7. Building Construction

When considering how a new village or community hub is to be constructed, it is important to take into account a lot of different factors including the local vernacular, planning, sustainability targets, robustness, and how much the building will cost to build, maintain and operate.

7.1 Form of Construction

Modern construction methods provide a wide variety of different solutions in addition to traditional construction methods, and these should all be considered before deciding on which will provide the best solution for any individual situation. A brief summary of possible approaches is included here but is not intended to be exhaustive.

Traditional construction

This may consist of insulated masonry cavity walls (brick and/or concrete block), concrete floor, timber roof framing with some steelwork for the larger spans such as over the hall. Concrete block partitions with painted plaster finishes.

Traditional methods of construction are robust, familiar to local contractors and should have a long life span, but have a high embodied carbon footprint, are slow to respond to heating, and take longer to construct due to the high reliance on wet trades.

Timber framed construction

Timber framed construction utilises a timber frame to form walls and roofs above ground floor level and can be built with a concrete ground floor slab or with a suspended timber floor. The external walls can be finished with brickwork, timber cladding or a number of other finishes to suit the location and design. As with traditional construction, steel framing can be utilised for larger spans, but glulam beams or hybrid timber and steel structures can also be used for large spans.

Timber framed buildings are typically quicker to build, have lower embodied carbon, are easier to insulate, are more flexible, and respond quickly to heating. Downsides can include a lack of robustness if not detailed and built correctly, and a susceptibility to rot and fungal decay if not well maintained.

Modular off-site construction

This is a form of construction where building components such as walls or roofs, or whole building modules, are manufactured in a factory and assembled on site. A simple version could be pre-assembled timber frames for walls, floors and roofs being constructed off-site whereas a more comprehensive version could be entire wall panels complete with windows, insulation, external cladding, internal plasterboard linings and first fix electrical components all included when delivered for assembly on site.

The advantages to this approach include increased speed, reduced time on site, factory quality control, reduced waste and improved safety. Further advantages come from using modular units no longer required elsewhere. Disadvantages may include lack of understanding from small and medium sized contractors, and increased cost, although this can be mitigated by using standard modular components.

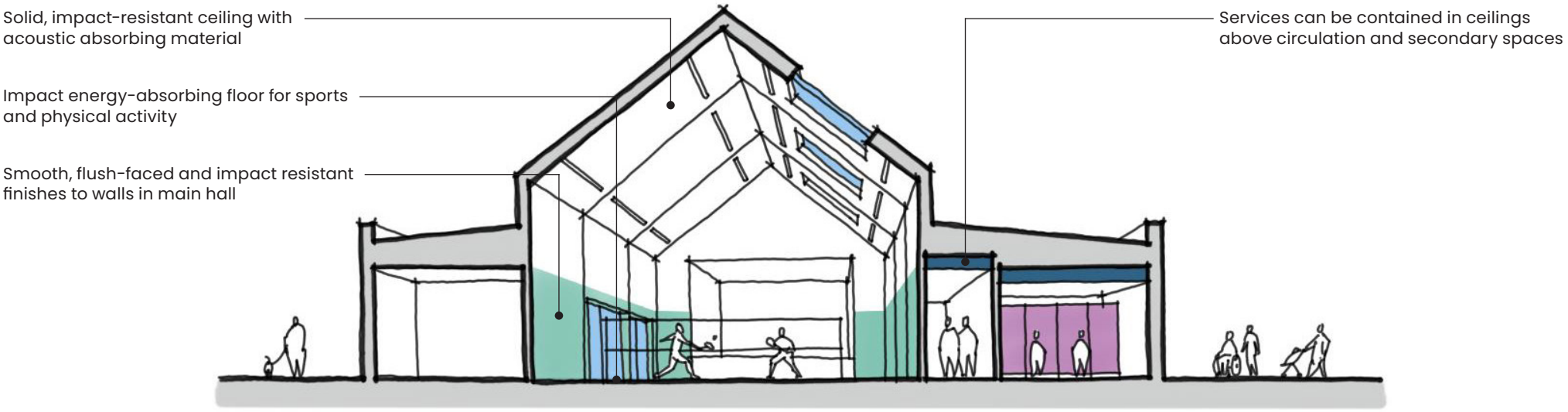
7.2 Interior Finishes

The materials and finishes used need to provide a suitable environment for all potential uses while being robust, easy to clean and durable.

The main hall, and small hall if present, need an impact energy-absorbing floor for sports and physical activity use which also provides a safe surface for play. A semi-sprung floor should be used and can be constructed in a range of materials which provide good multi-sports floors including various solid or engineered timbers and various synthetic materials. Some amount of slip is desirable for sport and fitness uses but the floor should not become dangerous or damaged from drink spillages. Sport England design guidance **Floors for Indoor Sports** provides guidance on suitable floors.

Wall surfaces in the halls should be smooth, flush-faced and resistant to impact. The finish should ideally have a light reflectance value of 50%. Doors and glazing should be designed with safety in mind with external doors opening outwards and internal doors fitted with vision panels. All doors should be fitted with flush ironmongery. Safey glazing should be used, and sills, frames and architraves should be flush or splayed to minimise risk of injury.

Ceilings should be generally solid, impact resistant and lined with acoustic absorbing materials to minimise noise reverberation within the spaces. White ceilings are recommended for the halls as these minimise the contrast between the lights and the ceiling. If the structure is exposed in the hall, this should be carefully detailed to minimise the possibility of shuttlecocks and balls becoming stuck. Sport England Design guidance **Sports Halls** provides guidance on internal finishes.



Building construction

8. Environmental Design

8.1 Statutory Compliance

All new community facilities must meet the minimum environmental performance standards set out in the Building Regulations. These include requirements for energy efficiency, ventilation, overheating mitigation, and life safety with new buildings expected to be zero carbon ready.

In addition to national regulations, many local authorities have embedded enhanced sustainability targets within their planning policies. These may exceed the baseline requirements of the Building Regulations and could involve achieving third-party environmental accreditations such as BREEAM. It is essential to review all relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) issued by the local planning authority to ensure full compliance with local sustainability expectations.

The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements in 2024 represents a significant shift in planning policy. Under the statutory framework, most new developments are required to deliver a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value compared to the pre-development condition of the site. This can be achieved through on-site enhancements, off-site biodiversity units, or statutory biodiversity credits. A Biodiversity Gain Plan may need to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development. Please refer to the **Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Document** and other Sport England guidance on BNG.

Early engagement with Sport England is strongly recommended, ideally at the pre-application stage. Sport England can provide valuable advice on sustainability, facility design, and planning strategy, helping to ensure that proposals align with best practice and benefit from sector-specific insights.

8.2 Climate Emergency

In response to the climate emergency, legislative requirements have been moving towards a higher level of sustainability, as well as public perception.

Generally, this means prioritising resource efficiency, low energy and minimising carbon emissions as part of Net Zero Carbon.

An effective design strategy is to:

- Be lean: use less energy. Reduce energy use through an efficient design and thermally efficient envelop (efficient layouts, u-values and air permeability)
- Be clean: supply energy efficiency. Use highly efficient plant to deliver heating and cooling with the smallest amount of energy
- Be green: use renewable energy. Use onsite renewables (PVs, Air source heat pumps etc) to deliver on site solutions
- Offset. Use green energy suppliers.

This is reflected in the Sport England **Environmental Sustainability Checklist**.

8.3 Sustainable Building Design

Sustainable design does not mean increased complexity or more technology. Focus on the big wins: design strategies balance maximum environmental benefits, costs and long-term sustainability.

A fabric-first approach with low embodied carbon materials should be targeted. This means designing and building the most efficient building fabric (walls, floors, roofs, windows and doors), orientation (solar gain control) and layout (maximising spatial efficiency) before relying on technology to reduce energy. Capital costs and ongoing operational and maintenance costs should be considered holisticallyAlso important is designing to simple volumes, with the smallest possible ratio of envelope to internal volume and thermally efficient and air tight building fabric.

Examples of fabric-first design approaches	Benefits
High-quality insulation. Airtight construction. Minimizing thermal bridging.	Reduces heat loss in winter (and gains in summer) and improves comfort by removing draughts and cold surfaces.
Installing thermally efficient windows and doors of carefully considered proportions. Optimizing natural light and solar gain.	Helps reduce heat loss in winter. Glazing of the right size placed at the correct orientation means excellent daylight without excessive heat gains. Glass specified with solar control helps further reduce risk of summertime overheating

Successful implementation of fabric first design principles helps to lower energy bills, reduce carbon emissions and improve indoor comfort. Furthermore it allows less reliance on mechanical systems which reduces both capital and maintenance costs.

Buildings that are intermittently occupied benefit from lightweight structures that are quick to respond when needed. Timber structures are more suited to this than steel and concrete structures. Lightweight timber framed walls and partitions should be considered ahead of traditional brick and/ or concrete block walls and partitions. Heavier weight buildings (e.g. Masonry walls) can be effective in summertime when accompanied by night time cooling but care needs to be taken not to create a less responsive building.

Rainwater and greywater recycling for use in the building are unlikely to provide much benefit due to the limited demand for water and relatively high cost of installing and maintaining these systems. Rainwater harvesting for the irrigation for pitches and other external areas could be beneficial and is likely to become more important with dryer summers.

Green roofs and living walls are a very visible sign of a sustainable building, and should be very carefully considered before inclusion due to the significant maintenance commitments.

For further information and guidance, refer to Sport England's **Every Move: Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2024** and **Environmental Sustainability: Check list for sports and physical activity facilities 2020**. Additional guidance is also available from SportScotland (**Sport and Climate Change Framework and Self-Assessment**) and from the England and Wales Cricket Board (**Sustainability Plan for Cricket**).

8.4 Approaches to Certification and Accreditation

Possible accreditations to consider include BREEAM, Passivhaus, UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard (UKNZCBS), WELL, and Fitwel.

The direction of travel for local planning requirements and building regulations is towards exemplar sustainability targets. Given the long-time horizons of construction projects, the sustainability certification strategy needs to be forward-looking enough to position the project for an outcome that is considered sustainable and responsible upon completion, as well as during design. Adopting a pioneering approach during design is likely to become merely 'best practice' in three to five years' time.

Committing to a certification scheme such as BREEAM or the more recent UK Net Zero Carbon standard can offer a robust framework to deliver sustainable buildings. Certification schemes use third-party quality control to ensure delivery on a comprehensive spectrum of sustainability aspects. Certification may also be a requirement of external funding.

Where Certification is not mandated, the suitability of available schemes should be carefully reviewed for a given project, to ascertain whether costs of delivery present good value and improve the overall outcome for the building. For small scale developments the costs of registration, certification and additional consultancy can become disproportionate, and mandatory requirements may not present best value.

The sustainability certification approaches available can be broadly categorised as: holistic, energy, and wellbeing. Holistic certification addresses the overarching sustainability strategy, covering all aspects of the new building and the wider implications for the site.

Scope	Certification
Holistic	BREEAM Bespoke Client Targets
Energy & Carbon	Passivhaus (or EnerPHit for refurbishments) UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard (UKNZCBS)
Wellbeing	Well Fitwell

Scheme Characteristics

BREEAM

Under BREEAM a proposed development is assessed against the following categories: Management, Health & Well-being, Energy, Transport, Water, Materials, Waste, Land Use & Ecology and Pollution.

There is also an Innovation category, where additional credits can be awarded for exemplary performance and any innovative features of the building project that are not assessed as standard in other environmental sections.

BREEAM is a well-known scheme within the construction industry and is generally considered to provide a comprehensive approach to Sustainability. Not every building scale or typology fits well into this framework; if this is the case many clients can develop bespoke Sustainability targets and 'self-certify'. This does offer more flexibility and can be more cost effective but requires a commitment to not only meet agreed targets but also to communicate these to building users and the wider community.

Environmental Design

Passivhaus

The Passivhaus scheme (EnerPHit for refurbishments) focuses primarily on Operational Energy. It sets absolute targets for the operational energy of a building and aims to make this as low as possible. This can be beneficial for both environmental reasons and for reducing running costs but needs to be balanced against the increased project costs. Schemes like Passivhaus, which have well developed quality assurance processes during design, construction and commissioning, have been widely demonstrated to reduce the gap between aspiration and actual energy use.

UKNZCBS

While Passivhaus focuses on reducing operational energy, the UKNZCBS standard is broader, as it also sets targets for the wider whole life carbon aspects of a new building. The UKNZCBS aims to instil more thorough approaches to reducing energy demand through design, construction and post occupancy evaluation. The standard also includes metrics and targets for embodied carbon of the building, materials selection, renewables, refrigerants, water use and carbon offsetting.

Fitwell and WELL

Schemes focusing on Wellbeing are also available; Fitwell and WELL are well established. More commonly associated with office accommodation, these schemes prioritise the quality of public spaces; greenery and access to nature; ease of personalisation; and feelings of ownership of a building.

Bespoke sustainability strategies

Projects may combine elements of multiple schemes or pursue a standalone strategy.

Key principles to address include Longevity, Inclusivity, Climate Resilience, Biodiversity, Energy and Carbon Reduction.

A sustainability champion should oversee implementation through design and construction.

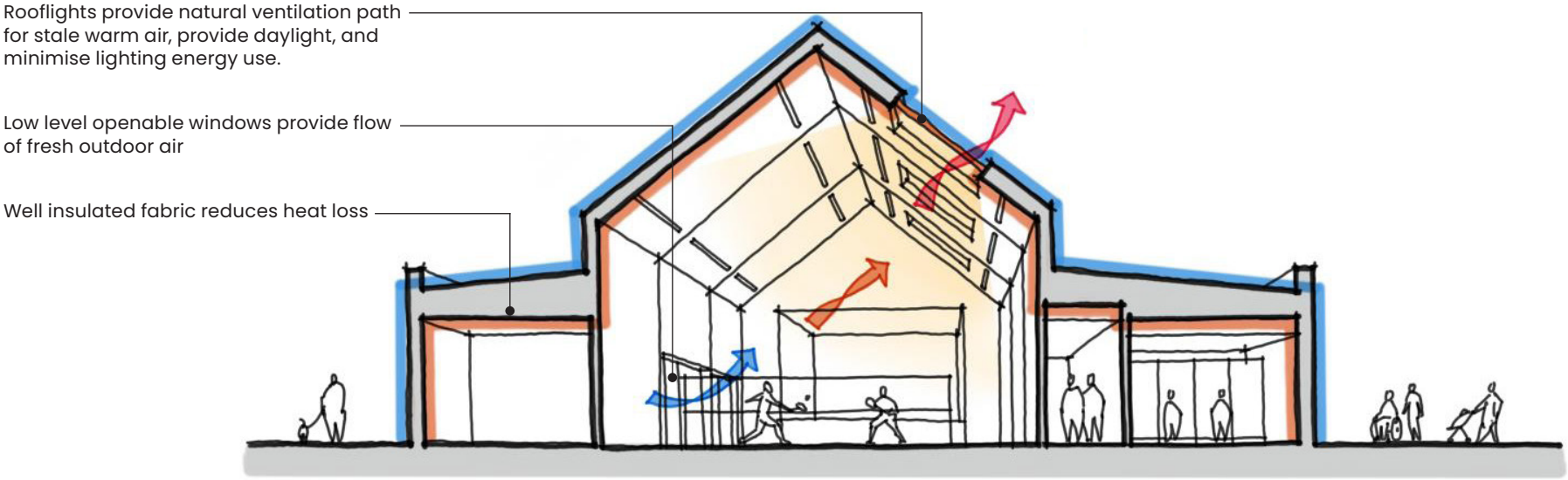
Key principles	Design approach
Longevity	Design for flexible layouts, change of use, and extendibility. Ensure services are accessible and adaptable. Provide clear building user guidance and training.
Inclusivity	Go beyond accessibility by consulting diverse community groups. Address neurodiversity and wider social value goals. Use intuitive lighting and controls to ensure safe, inclusive use.
Climate change resilience	Conduct a climate risk assessment (e.g., using UKGBC guidance). Design for extreme weather: heatwaves, cold snaps, storms, floods, droughts. Consider future proofing capacity (e.g., rainwater systems) and filling potential community roles (e.g. cool/warm respite spaces).
Biodiversity and nature-interaction	Engage an ecologist early to guide design and maximise biodiversity gains. Incorporate nature connection features such as planted entrances, community gardens, and inviting outdoor spaces.

Environmental Design

8.5 Energy and Carbon Reduction

Three aspects should be considered as part of a holistic approach to energy and carbon reduction: upfront, in-use and end-of-life carbon.

Key principles	Design approach
Minimising Upfront Carbon	Prioritise retrofit over new build where practical. Reuse materials from demolition; treat existing buildings as material banks. Optimise structural efficiency; avoid unnecessary spans and waste. Choose recycled content materials where feasible.
Minimising In Use Carbon	Create efficient, robust, low maintenance buildings. Avoid natural gas; electric systems benefit from grid decarbonisation and on site renewables.
Minimising End of Life Carbon	Choose materials that can be reused or recycled. Design for disassembly and future recovery of components.



Environmental considerations

9. Building Services

Building services should be designed to be simple to operate and to understand. Ease of maintenance should be prioritised, by ensuring that adequate space is allowed for access and plant replacement.

9.1 Heating

Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) paired with radiators or underfloor heating are a cost-effective and low-impact heating option for most buildings. Radiant panels—either direct electric or hot-water fed—can also be used. Temperature differences between adjacent spaces should be minimised, particularly in changing and shower areas where present, and radiators should be positioned carefully to avoid being damaged and covered when not specific low-surface-temperature models.

Ground or water source heat pumps can be located indoors so offer acoustic and visual benefits, but they have significantly higher capital costs and no longer have an efficiency advantage over ASHPs. They also require suitable ground conditions and large external areas which could add to project risks.

Air-to-air heat pumps (VRF/VRV systems) provide reliable and cost-effective heating and cooling using refrigerant which requires installation and maintenance by F-gas certified contractors.

For thermally efficient, lightweight buildings used intermittently, direct electric heating can be a low-cost, low-maintenance option. However, higher running costs of direct electric make heat pumps a more efficient long-term choice where heat demand is greater.

Heat Pump System Design

The efficiency of ASHPs can vary greatly depending on the design of the heating system. Maximising efficiency is essential for controlling operating costs due to the high cost of electricity.

Key heat pump system design considerations include:

Key principles	Design approach
System sizing	Select a heat pump that is closely matched to the heating load of the building to avoid system cycling and associated reduction in efficiency.
Low system flow temperatures	The best efficiency comes from systems designed for low flow temperatures (around 35-45°C), with heat emitters sized appropriately to meet building loads.
System zoning	If there is a need for different parts of the building to be heated independently, provide this control by separating the system into separate pumped branches.
Outdoor unit location (air source heat pumps)	ASHPs should be located with consideration for the manufacturer space requirements to ensure adequate airflow through the unit. If enclosures are to be used to screen the ASHPs from view, these must be carefully designed to avoid reducing the system efficiency.
Ground conditions (ground source heat pumps)	The thermal energy available from the ground varies significantly with local geology. Thermal response testing should be carried out at the site to ensure that conditions are suitable.
Array sizing (GSHP)	The ground collector array must be sized to prevent excessive heat extraction, which can freeze the surrounding soil and drastically reduce system efficiency.

Additional Considerations

Heat pumps using refrigerants with low Global Warming Potential (GWP) should be selected to minimise the environmental impact in the event of a refrigerant leak. While modern HFC refrigerants such as R32 have much improved GWP, consideration should be given to natural refrigerants such as R290 (Propane) which have very low GWP.

Domestic ASHPs can be considered for smaller buildings. As a mature technology, domestic systems generally have space efficient, low noise outdoor units and control packages that are intuitive for building operators. This avoids the need for a full Building Management System (BMS). Control systems with online connectivity should be selected to allow operators to remotely monitor the heating system, activate it in advance of a booking and deactivate it after the booking.

Modern units are generally low noise, but assessments should be carried out to ensure that local noise regulations are met. Acoustic screening can be used to reduce the noise from ASHPs, but these need to be carefully designed to avoid impacting the heat pump efficiency.

9.2 Ventilation

Natural Ventilation

Natural ventilation via manually opened windows is a low cost, highly intuitive and easy to control system for occupants. Low and high-level openings should be provided to maximise the flow of air, taking advantage of the height of the building via the 'stack effect'.

Automatic control of window openings can be a source of irritation for occupants due to the lack of direct control and the noise caused by the window actuators.

When using natural ventilation, the impact of noise breakout to the surroundings must be considered, as well as noise break in from the surroundings, and security.

Mechanical Ventilation

Mechanical ventilation systems may be suitable when a natural ventilation system would lead to problems with noise break-out or break-in, or in areas where increased security is required. Additionally, when used with heat recovery, mechanical ventilation can result in much lower heating energy consumption. Mechanical ventilation systems do however have higher capital costs and require significant space for plant.

Toilets, showers and kitchens should be mechanically ventilated to control moisture and odours and comply with the Building Regulations.

Kitchen ventilation requirements vary significantly depending on the use of the space. This can have a major impact on the energy demand of the building. The brief for the kitchen should be established early on so that the ventilation system can be designed accordingly.

9.3 Lighting

Daylight should be supplemented where necessary by artificial diffused lighting, using simple LED systems with intuitive switching. Adjustable lighting is often helpful, particularly in smaller buildings where the main spaces serve a wide variety of purposes. Being able to adjust the lighting will support more types of activities requiring bright daylight type lighting for crafts and some sports to warmer lighting for other activities, such as an evening dance or performance.

The design of lighting is important to create a comfortable environment and avoid the creation of confusing glare, shadows and reflections. Consideration should be given to aspects such as lux levels, illuminance gradient/ uniformity, colour rendering and colour temperature.

Dimmable light fittings are commonplace and can help when commissioning or tailoring light output, however care should be taken to ensure drivers and dimmable LEDs are compatible and do not cause flicker. Having an electronic lighting control system with some pre-programmed scenes can make building operation more convenient but needs to be balanced against increased complexity.

Passive Infrared Sensors (PIRs) should be used in WCs and stores to switch lights off when spaces are unoccupied to save energy and reduce operational burden. PIRs can be used in other spaces, but consideration should be given to the possibility of nuisance switching if a space is likely to be used by stationary occupants. In toilets and changing areas, lighting can be provided on thermal sensors, so they are not dependent on movement for activation.

Emergency lighting will generally be needed in all key space and should be provided by standalone fittings with integral battery back-up for ease of maintenance and replacement.

For detailed guidance on designing lighting for people with sensory hypersensitivity, experienced by many neurodivergent people, reference can be made to **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part C**, by Sport England and **PAS 6463:2022 Design for the mind – Neurodiversity and the built environment, Section 11.**

For all projects refer to Sport England's **Artificial Sports Lighting Design Guide.**

9.4 Water

Cold Water

Some amount of cold water storage is generally required for all but the smallest of buildings. An assessment should be carried out in line with industry guidance including CIBSE Guide G. Pressure boosters can be considered in buildings with high simultaneous demand, for example several showers.

Hot Water

For smaller buildings with low hot water demand, direct electric hot water tanks are an efficient means of providing hot water. These can be located in cupboards local to where hot water is used and avoid the heat losses from long runs of hot water pipework. Ongoing maintenance is required but is relatively minimal.

For larger buildings with a higher hot water demand, particularly showers, a centralised hot water system with larger storage may be needed to meet the peak demand. Air Source heat pumps offer a low carbon way to heat hot water stored in a central hot water tank. For high load situations it can often be more effective to have a dedicated heat pump for hot water.

Thermostatic mixing valves should be used to avoid scalding risk at outlets.

Building Services

9.5 Power

Power requirements need to be assessed, considering not only power to meet the main hall activities but also the electrical demand from heat pumps, hot water and kitchens.

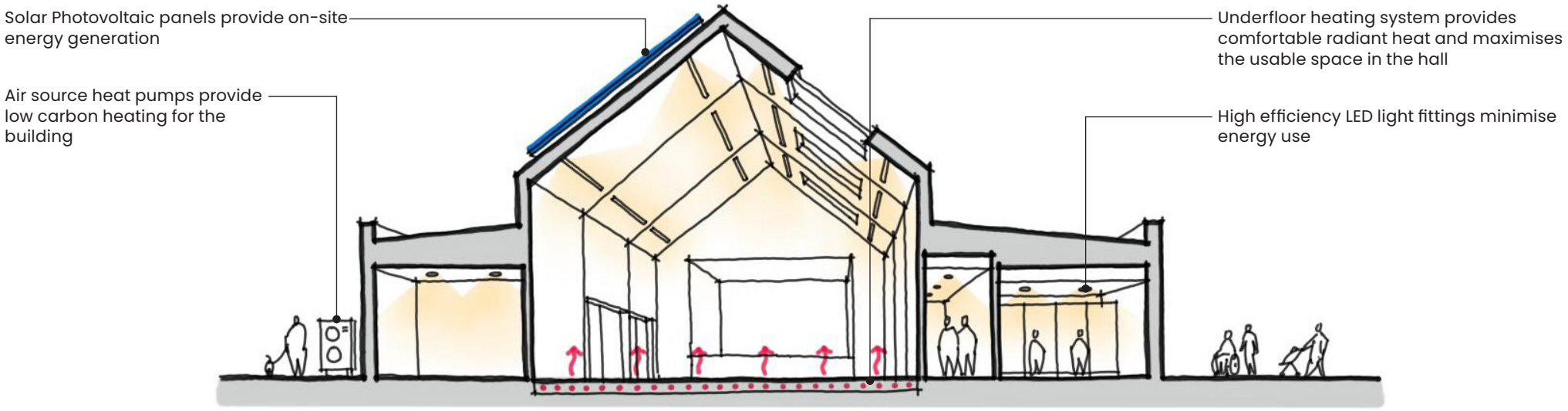
It is imperative to consult the local electrical DNO (Distribution Network Operator) at the outset of the project to assess local network capacity and advise on any reinforcement necessary. This can add a significant capital cost and programme risk to a project. An electrical designer can assist with developing outline peak demand estimates.

Suitable electrical sockets should be provided to allow the spaces to be used flexibly.

9.6 Renewable energy generation

Solar Photovoltaic panels can help offset the electrical demand of a building. When aligned with the base load of a building this can help reduce running costs as well as carbon emissions. Optimum output and efficiency of a photovoltaic array depend on careful location; both to ensure access to sunlight but also to ensure ongoing maintenance is straightforward.

The sizing of any PV array should be carefully considered. An oversized PV array will export energy to the grid diminishing the financial benefit. PV are most productive during sunny periods of the day, when the energy demand of a facility (for lighting and heating for example) may not be at a peak. Misalignment of energy generation and demand can be helped by using battery storage, but currently this is likely to significantly increase capital costs.



Indicative Building services

Building Services

9.7 Security

Thoughtful, vandal resistant design that includes passive surveillance, and a clear distinction between public and private spaces, can contribute to improved security. Security can also be provided in the form of Physical Security (e.g. Integrated Shutters), and/or intruder detection alarms, CCTV and electronic access control.

Intruder detection alarms can be wired or wireless and generally include magnetic contacts on doors and low-level windows and passive infrared detectors at main entry points to the building (or more). Building planners should consult insurers to determine any specific requirements.

Where a local community feels ownership of a facility, there is less likelihood of intentional damage. Incorporating murals or other works by local artists is one way that a building can be integrated into the locale.

9.8 Fire Detection and Alarm

Modern buildings generally include an automatic fire alarm system; the classification of the system will vary depending on factors including building use and occupancy.

9.9 Other considerations

An internet connection should be included, for Wi-Fi and to connect systems such as the fire alarm, security systems and building management.

A structured cabling installation should be provided to serve Wi-Fi Wireless Access Points and coverage to main activity areas, offices and meeting rooms at a minimum.

Lightning protection may be required, depending on the size and location of the building.

Internal acoustics are an important consideration. These include speech intelligibility, noise transfer between spaces, reverberation time within spaces and noise break-in and break-out, to support the identified uses and programming of the spaces. If the site is in a busy urban area, close to a main road or other external noise source, then the acoustic impact on natural ventilation will have to be very carefully considered with suitable mitigation strategies employed.

A specialist Audio Visual (AV) company should be appointed to design stage lighting, sound installations and projection if these are a requirement.

10. Cost

10.1 Capital Costs

An overview of the capital costs for the three example layouts is given in the following table based on benchmark data and respective gross internal floor areas (GIFA).

General Assumptions

- Indicative Building costs at 3Q2026
- A flat level site with no abnormal ground conditions
- The works are competitively tendered to local contractors via an industry standard procurement route
- External works are included as a notional allowance (Example 1 £80K, Example 2 £120K, Example 3 £220K)
- Incoming services are assessed as a notional value, assuming availability from existing infrastructure with sufficient capacity
- Preliminaries are based on an unrestricted site with a construction period ranging from 24 weeks to 52 weeks.

Exclusions

- Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- Professional fees
- Statutory fees
- Land acquisition costs
- Furniture, fittings and equipment, including sports equipment
- Inflation and market fluctuations due to global conflicts and other events.

Example	Facility description	GIFA	Indicative Cost
1 - Small	A single multi-purpose hall with essential support spaces including stores, kitchen, foyer, and male, female, accessible and all-gender toilets.	330m²	£912k
2 - Medium	Based around a single multi-purpose hall and flexible community room, with support spaces including a flexible and accessible changing zone, stores, kitchen, foyer, and male, female, accessible and all-gender toilets.	450m²	£1.33m
3 - Large	A two-hall arrangement with a main hall and smaller secondary hall or studio space, flexible community room, with support spaces including a flexible and accessible changing zone, stores, kitchen, foyer, and male, female, accessible and all-gender toilets.	660m²	£2.0m

* Costs are indicative and do not reflect abnormal impacts on market conditions.

10.2 Life Cycle Costs

It is important to consider the full life cycle of a building when making key design decisions for a building.

Generally, a 'fabric first' approach to reduce operational energy demand can be advantageous and reduces demand on resource. It is important to consider the cost, embodied energy and carbon of any measures to ensure that the savings outweigh the investment.

Innovative technologies can be adopted but complexity of systems should be carefully considered. If maintenance, and replacement are difficult for the building owner to manage or fund in the future this will generally lead to poor performance and premature failure which is not a sustainable outcome.

For the new build options in particular, the cost consultant should produce an outline, entire asset elemental life cycle cost (LCC) plan in line with 'Standardised method of life cycle costing for construction procurement' PD 156865:2008. This elemental LCC plan will provide an indication of future costs over a period of analysis as specified by the client (typically 30 or 60 years), and will include service life, maintenance, operation and replacement costs estimates.

A Component Level Life Cycle Cost Option Appraisal can be carried out during RIBA Stage 4 – Technical Design, with the Cost Consultant working with the design team to produce a component level LCC option appraisal in line with PD 156865:2008.

The Design Team and Cost Consultant will consider all elements of the construction, covering all of the following components:

- Envelope, e.g., cladding, windows, and/or roofing
- Services, e.g., heat source, cooling source, and/or controls
- Finishes, e.g., walls, floors and/or ceilings
- External spaces, e.g., hard landscaping and boundary protection.

The outcome of a component level option appraisal will assist the project team and influence the building and MEP systems design and specification to minimise life cycle costs and maximise long term value.

Document Accessibility

This document has been designed for comfortable reading at A4 and on a laptop screen, but can also be printed at A3 for large print versions. The pdf is accessible and has been tested to work with text readers.

Contributors

Sport England, David Morley Architects, MGAC, and Max Fordham. All drawings and illustrations by David Morley Architects.

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User Guide

Before using this design guidance note for any specific projects all users should refer to the User Guide to understand when and how to use the guidance as well as understanding the limitations of use.

Click here for **User guide** and other
Design and cost guidance

Issue Tracker

001 – Former publication: Village and Community Halls: January 2001
002 - Reformatted, updated and amended Village and Community Hubs publication: July 2026

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