



Media Release

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PROVING VALUE OF VILLAGE HALLS

ANYONE who has ever been involved in providing village community facilities will tell you how difficult they are to finance. But a current review of Harrogate Borough Council's policy on funding provided from developers for public open space may be extended for use on building or improving village halls.

Over £2.5 m has been provided since the council introduced a scheme some 12 years ago requiring housing developers to contribute to the cost of new recreation areas and to improving existing public open spaces.

Under new planning powers, the council can now extend this to village halls.

There are over 70 village halls in the district and the council is currently surveying local communities in those villages to gauge opinion on the quality of the existing facilities and what part they play in providing a focus for their local community.

Councillor Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Amenity Services said: “We have to carry out this review so that we can use the results to demonstrate local need and the level of provision offered by the village halls. This link is a requirement under the government's new planning policies and will help us in our proposals to secure money from developers who are currently required to make contributions to provide public open space. “

The council is currently carrying out this review via an independent market research company QCL.

The results will be used to develop a new policy within the Local Development Framework which will replace the District Local Plan in 2006.

The adoption of new open space areas provided by new housing have seen the completion of several major schemes including Prospect Park, Starbeck; Killinghall Moor, Harrogate, Scotton Banks, Knaresborough and Hell Wath Playing Fields in Ripon.

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FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Pat Jones is available for comment on 01423 872466. Further technical information is available Mr Patrick Kilburn, Head of Parks and Open Spaces on 01423 556704.