

Appendix 4

Background Information about Potton and its demographics

Potton is a growing town of approximately 5000 residents from 2277 households (in March 2016) with plans agreed for a further 478 new houses. By 2021 this will represent a 21.1% increase in the number of new houses in Potton. The town sustains a range of retail and catering/hospitality outlets, as well as a Post Office, library, dental and veterinary surgeries. There are many other small businesses. It has a Lower and Middle School, with the majority of Upper School pupils having to travel to Sandy or Biggleswade for schooling. It is also home to a traveller site with 14 pitches (with provision for expansion to 16).

The proportion of people working full-time, as well as those in professional or managerial occupations, is relatively high – as is out-commuting. Potton's location some distance from main line rail and road connections (4 miles), however, has meant that it has traditionally been a difficult location to attract new jobs. Many of its residents therefore travel to work in the larger centres nearby such as Biggleswade, Sandy, Cambridge, the centres in north Hertfordshire and London. Likewise due to limited leisure facilities many people travel out of town for entertainment or leisure activities.

Most of Potton statistically has good access to services. However, this is not the case for some of the rural parts of Potton parish (the area covering the east and Wrestlingworth fell within the 10% most deprived in 2010 for geographical barriers to access to services). Any older people without their own transport in these areas would be particularly isolated. There is no railway service and buses do not run in the evening or on a Sunday. 220 households (10.7%) in Potton do not have a car. This also applies to 159 single pensioner households (44.5%) in Potton and the surrounding villages (data not available at lower level of geography). Having additional facilities within walking or cycling distance gives these people more opportunities for engagement in community life.

Older Residents¹

There has been a clear ageing on average of the Potton population over 10 years between 2001 and 2011 (the proportion of those aged 45+ has risen from 38.0% to 45.3%). 250 (11.8%) out of 2,080 households in Potton Town were single pensioner households. 170 (8.0%) were composed of people all aged 65 and over.

"The needs of Older People in Potton, and how to address them", consultation in 2013 has shown that for this increasingly aging population there is a growing demand for a wider range of services and activities to promote independence and reduce social isolation. The new Hall will be able to host a much wider range of activities than is currently available, which will help meet this need.

¹ Potton Housing Needs Survey, 2014 Potton Consolidated Charity