

# Fakenham Community Campus

## Business Case & Feasibility Study

(Executive summary and recommendations)

September 2011



Richard Crook and Heather De Lyon

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The authors would like to thank all those who have contributed to this report.

**The Project Steering Group includes representatives from:**

Citizens Advice Bureau North Norfolk  
FADLOS  
Fakenham Archives  
Fakenham Community Centre Association  
Fakenham Learning Community  
Fakenham Town council  
First Focus  
Locality  
Norfolk County Council  
Norfolk Property Services  
North Norfolk Community Partnership  
North Norfolk District Council - officers and members  
Patient Participation forum  
Voluntary Norfolk

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## Executive summary

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### Introduction and background

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- a) Fakenham is a working market town with a population of around 8,000, and serves the surrounding villages (21 parishes). It is located in North Norfolk and served by North Norfolk District Council. It is situated 25 miles from Norwich to the southeast and twenty-two miles from Kings Lynn to the west. In the last twenty years, there has been considerable expansion around its perimeter in terms of housing, retail development and industrial estates. The northeast area of the town is experiencing new expansion of retail, restaurant and service provision, including the new Fakenham Medical Centre due to open later in 2011. The town is one of four growth towns in North Norfolk and is designated for substantial growth in housing and infrastructure support.
- b) The Fakenham Community Campus (FCC) project is important in terms of providing much needed good quality facilities for people from the town and surrounding villages. More than this, it will be a focus for public services, tourism and an economic driver in a town identified for growth but which is lacking good quality leisure and business amenities.
- c) The existing Community Centre, Connect Building, Scout hut, Fakenham Library and the site on which all these facilities are situated present a unique opportunity for the creation of an integrated, high quality, well-resourced, modern, eco-friendly campus, which could serve a wide range of needs for people resident in Fakenham and its 21 surrounding parishes, as well as for visitors.
- d) Local people are working hard, using existing resources to provide a wide range of volunteer-run, community activities, as well as setting up and running commercial ventures in the town.

## The Vision

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- a) The vision for the Fakenham Community Campus (FCC) is to create a sustainable and integrated Campus with high quality provision for the local population and tourists alike. The Campus will complement and add value to existing local amenities in Fakenham, in addition to creating new and valuable facilities.
- b) The Campus will include cutting edge environmental, sustainable technology.
- c) The FCC will be inclusive. It targets pre-school children, young people (both for organised and informal provision), older people and those with disabilities (it is a huge opportunity to be at the forefront the new “Remodelling of Care” provision), residents of Fakenham and the surrounding villages, tourists and visitors. It incorporates business use and will create better access to public and voluntary services. It substantially increases the arts and cultural activities available in the town. It attracts new business and becomes an economic driver within the town as well as offering learning/training provision.
- d) The vision is necessarily ambitious and will create a step change for Fakenham, transforming the site into a vibrant, lively, eco-friendly community campus which will meet a wide range of cultural, community, business, public service and other needs for local people and visitors.



## The Business Case

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1. The business case accompanies the proposed architectural designs and:
  - a. Identifies appropriate activities and facilities
  - b. Identifies and sets out demand for the proposed activities and facilities
  - c. Demonstrates self-sustainability
  - d. Sets out the principles of the organisational infrastructure required to run the buildings and deliver the activity programme including governance, staffing, marketing and operational issues.
  - e. Identifies the project risks, their likelihood and their management.
  - f. Sets out a project development process to ensure successful delivery.
2. The existing facilities are already well used and many local groups and individuals contribute hugely to this. The new Campus will enhance opportunities for existing users as well as creating new opportunities.
3. Central to this case was extensive consultation and research. This included detailed discussion with key stakeholders (including existing users, user groups, potential users and public sector bodies) as well as public surveys and focus groups.
4. This research showed there is considerable unaddressed demand for better quality provision of facilities and a need for more and better community resources. There was a strong feeling that public services and leisure facilities should stay in the centre of town. It particularly demonstrated a need for high quality and professional provision of arts and youth facilities as well as business support (particularly start up, micro and SME business support).
5. The current buildings though co-located, lack any sense of cohesion. The development of the Fakenham Community Campus should bring them together in a way that gives this excellent central location a sense of landmark presence in the community.
6. The achievement of the vision will depend on breaking down the barriers, which create an impression of separation of the site from the town, and helping to improve the image of Fakenham as a progressive and dynamic town for locals and tourists.
7. The new Campus will provide a range of modern high quality services, facilities and resources. This will lead to increased and broader community usage, support for new and existing small businesses, and an emphasis on artistic and cultural activities as well as income-generating opportunities. It will be a central point of contact for public services.
8. Access and signage will be improved both in the direct vicinity of the FCC and from all access points into the town in order to create a higher profile image for the town and the Campus. A new pedestrian access route through St Peter's Gardens should be introduced, which will help

break down the widely held perception that the site is away from the centre of town. Creation of additional parking and improved bus access should be explored.

9. Remodelling of Care: Fakenham Community Campus is a huge opportunity to be in the forefront of the new ethos and regulatory system supporting people with disabilities. This is a key issue for Fakenham due to its population demographic and relatively large population of older people and people with disabilities. This will improve local provision and, for example, help to move away from bussing people to larger institutions such as the Day Centre in Holt.
  10. A new model for governance of the FCC will be adopted, incorporating charitable status in order to attract significant funding to complete Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the project. A Development Trust (charitable trust limited by guarantee) is seen to offer the most appropriate way forward. This will bring a range of financial and other advantages.
  11. A membership scheme open to residents with free or very cheap membership of the FCC will encourage a sense of ownership and build an important database. Different levels of membership could be offered, giving, for example, additional Wi-Fi access or Youth discount in the café.
  12. The success of the project will necessitate much higher usage of the site with a broader range of facilities and activities for both locals and tourists. The proposed offer incorporates this and addresses the issues raised in the research undertaken. It also substantially increases income.
  13. The project is ambitious but staged. In order to take the project forward there needs to be a programme encompassing effective partnership, good governance, ownership, fund raising and programme development in advance of the main capital works.
  14. The Fakenham Community Campus project needs to be taken forward using the principles of community development that builds a sense of ownership amongst all stakeholders. The project has been developed incorporating three phases. Ideally phase one and two would be implemented together.
  15. When (if) the capital budget is agreed and supported by the entire steering group, negotiation needs to take place with the leaseholders. Norfolk County Council (the freeholder) has a policy on this kind of project and asset transfer, but has expressed the view that each project will be judged on its merits. All organisations have expressed the view that they are not prepared to add to their revenue budget. They are however prepared to discuss surrendering their leases. There are very clear restrictions on the use of the site for uses other than for community facilities which impinge on (and reduce) its value. Indicative values are available but are confidential and have been passed on to Fakenham Area Partnership.
- NNDC entered into a full repairing head lease for the Connect building for a period of 198 years with effect from the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2000. Regarding the Community Centre, NNDC currently hold the remainder of a 30-year term head lease granted in 1999, again on full repairing and restricted user terms. The property is occupied by a Community Association under the terms of an extant lease

- The scout hut is currently leased by NCC to the Scout Association from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1993 for twenty one years.
- The Library is owned and run by NCC (the free holder)

16. A new incorporated charitable Trust (called the Fakenham Community Campus Trust (FCCT) for this report until a new name is agreed by the Board) should be established with an initial shadow Board, assumed to be the Project Steering group at the outset. This shadow Board will manage the transition to a new group of selected trustees through a clearly agreed process requiring preparation of role descriptions and person specifications, external promotion to invite new applicants, and an interview and selection process.

17. The existing freeholder of the site (Norfolk County Council) needs to agree and issue a new lease (or otherwise transfer the freehold) for the FCC site to the newly established Fakenham Community Campus Trust (FCCT). This can occur once the three existing leaseholders (NNDC, Fakenham Community Association and the Scout Association) have surrendered their current leases, enabling a new combined lease to be created for the whole campus with a duration of at least forty years to enable significant external capital funding to be raised (The existing leasing situation is explained in the body of the report and Business Case appendix 5).

18. The new Trust to be made up of between 13 and 15 Trustees including:

- Three local residents
- Two business representatives
- Two or three stakeholders (including Fakenham Area Partnership)
- Three elected members from North Norfolk District Council (NNDC), Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Fakenham Town Council (FTC)
- One young person (18+)
- Two co-optees to allow for specialist skills

The detailed criteria, particularly for the stakeholders, will be defined and agreed by the Trustees.

19. The transition and development process will require a dedicated Project Development Manager, the commitment to which will be a pre-requisite to the project proceeding. A job description should be agreed by the shadow Board and a suitably qualified person recruited through an agreed (equal opportunities) selection process. The role will require strong project management and marketing skills as well as fund-raising capacity. This key development post will need to be externally funded. In the short term this post could help increase income from existing facilities but should not lose sight of its main project development and pump-priming role. The Project Development Manager will be crucial to the instigation of new activities, encouragement of new users of FCC as well as securing essential funding for the capital building stage of this initiative. It is envisaged that this post will require three years of funding.

20. Once the new Trustees and the Project Development Manager are in place a strategy can be implemented which will achieve the primary objectives:

- Expand and professionally manage the range of activities currently taking place in the existing facilities to improve the current offer and increase income. Particularly examine existing use of the Connect Centre and Community Centre.
- Build awareness of and commitment to, the idea of the new Fakenham Community Campus as well as the existing facilities. In conjunction with the Trustees, design and implement a marketing strategy to carry this out.
- Raise the capital and revenue funds to take the project forward
- Plan and manage the detailed planning and implementation of the capital works and expenditure.

21. The transition period will provide an important opportunity to substantially develop the nature and breadth of the activity programme and use of the buildings. It will be an opportunity to build a substantial database of users to facilitate the planning and marketing of the project as it progresses.

### Fakenham Community Campus

22. Parts of the existing buildings will be retained and improved. New buildings will be added to unify the site and to create a cohesive whole. Access to the site will be improved. There will be an emphasis on creating an eco-friendly, lower maintenance campus.

### Remodeling to update existing Community Centre

23. By providing a good quality stage and auditorium touring professional performance companies will be encouraged (and organised) to come to Fakenham, notably Sheringham Theatre will run a summer season. The space will be suitable for a range of community events, including the ones which currently take place. In addition it will be appropriate for conferences, (with break out rooms and catering), shows, concerts, talks, private rental for large, small or medium sized functions and receptions.

The updated and remodelled auditorium will have retractable seating, a new floor and will be situated adjacent to the new bar/café area, with newly situated toilet facilities and improved back stage provision and improved changing rooms. Good storage will be available and the possibility of outside performances will be catered for.

This will become a profit centre.

### Remodeling to update existing the old Connect Building

24. A pleasant space for use as a reception and waiting area has been redesigned which will meet the specific needs of the district council. There will be easy access to 3 sound-proofed meeting rooms for one-to-one and small group interviews. Good access to kitchenette, storage and toilet facilities.

This building has been reconfigured to provide a good quality versatile meeting room suitable for over 30 people (with additional flexible space if partition opened out). This will accommodate the needs of Fakenham Town Council and public. It will also meet the needs of the registrars as it will provide a high quality marriage room. It will also be bookable for meetings and other events.

It will have the added benefit of a pleasant view onto the garden area and will be resourced with good access to a kitchenette/drinks point and toilet facilities.

Three ground floor offices have been included which could be let on an annual or long term basis (Town Council and registrar). All have good storage facilities, natural lighting and high spec technical support.

An office/meeting room and interview room suite on the newly created mezzanine floor can be configured as appropriate to the tenant's needs. There will be lift access to this suite of facilities. This would be suitable for Citizens Advice Bureau.

A new learning and business centre has been created to offer business support, training space/room and hot desk facilities. The hot desk facilities will be very versatile and will offer space and resources for new and start-up businesses, NNDC staff and NCC staff wishing to book hot desk space – e.g. Environmental Health, Adult Education, Planning, etc. The area will provide the ideal location for the FAP staff as this will provide a modern, dynamic, versatile resource for a wide range of local people. Informal meeting and interview space will be available or a private interview room will be bookable. Learning, training, small business activity and a library point (for collection and dropping off for books etc.), sit well together in one area. The space will be very flexible and will meet many and various needs.

Job Centre plus have expressed an interest in having a range of services and activities in the business and learning centre and using other rooms and facilities on the Campus.

CCTV will stay in its existing location on the first floor.

### Bar and café.

25. This new additional resource situated in the Community Centre will provide a hub for the whole campus and will draw in new life and a vibrant atmosphere. Let commercially or run as a social enterprise. The facilities will bring users from all other parts of the campus as well as providing an income source for the project. Advantages include:

- Stand-alone café and bar in a special setting
- Will service events such as theatre etc. therefore earning additional income.
- Will service outside or inside events
- Will have access to outside garden seating very near centre of town
- Will have good parking, pedestrian access and close to public transport
- Full community access including “changing places” toilets for people with disabilities and youth discount membership scheme
- Can take advantage of the FCC membership scheme to promote use to “niche” groups such as young people.
- Will have Wi Fi (which can be tailored to generate income)

### Reception Hub

26. This will be the main entrance and provide reception functions as well as access to the various parts of the Campus. This new building will provide additional space for the café

(when needed) and will draw together the whole campus. It will have a light, high quality exhibition and demonstration space, informal interview space, and a space for users of the auditorium/conference facility (for example in breaks) and will have craft fair and event space.

### Outside Gardens and patio areas

27. Bordered by the "Crinkle-Crankle or "Serpentine" wall and the new buildings, this beautiful setting will be a special outside focus close to the town centre. It will include an outside amphitheatre which could attract tourists and raise the profile of Fakenham. It will be the only place in the county and beyond that will be able to stage events in the summer and move them inside if the weather is bad. It will have outside exhibition and useable space for events (for example Norfolk based themed events such as Cream Teas, strawberries and cream etc.). It will also be a quiet and peaceful place to sit and could have Wi Fi access.

### New Youth Building and facilities

28. Facilities for young people are a new and crucial part of the development and for Fakenham as a whole (this came out clearly from our research). There is a range of space for young peoples' activities. This includes pre-school, formal and semi-formal space (for organised activities). This will be designed to function as a dedicated youth space. It is designed to meet OFSTED requirements (approx. max 40 children) for a commercial pre-school to operate during the day, with appropriate resources, including toilets, access to appropriate secure outside space, etc. (based on discussion with OFSTED).

There will be a large room with good lighting and access to a kitchen facility. A range of varied activities will be able to take place in the space provided and a range of different youth groups will be able to hire or use it for a wide range of activities including scout meetings, dancing classes, EP Youth sessions, martial arts training, etc.

There will be provision for an office for a local youth organisation with the possibility of an annual lease. (EP Youth have expressed an interest in this facility and have the requisite funds available). There will be a wide range of secure storage facilities to enable pre-school, scouts and at least 3 different youth groups to store items on the premises.

It will be important that hanging space on the walls can be easily adapted to meet the needs of younger children and older children/teenagers. This sharing of space will allow for maximum use of the building with under 5's occupying it in the morning/day, while after-school activities for older children can take place later in the day, in the evenings and at weekends.

Following our research additional facilities for young people and teenagers will include sheltered space on the corner of Oak Street (the idea of a sheltered public gathering space was repeatedly mentioned), possible membership and discount scheme for soft drinks from the café and Wi-Fi access.

It has been important to meet a range of young peoples’ needs, including provision of informal space and space for structured activities, inside and outside. This design reflects the youth usage of The Forum in Norwich, where young people use the facilities in a range of different ways.

### Future staffing

29. Once the Fakenham Community Campus is fully operational the staff will be made up as follows:

- a. Project Manager, initially with some facilities management responsibility,
- b. Facilities Manager
- c. P/T (finance and administration),
- d. Caretaker/Cleaning staff (with further support when necessary).
- e. Bar/Catering Manager (catering either provided directly or let as a concession)
- f. Sessional staff as appropriate
- g. Reception (run in conjunction with NNDC, FTC and FAP)
- h. Supported voluntary staff

Volunteers have played a crucial part in the success of the Community Centre since it was built in the nineteen seventies and must continue to play a crucial role if the project is to be successful. Volunteers will be on the Board of Trustees and the whole project will need to be as inclusive as possible. The facilities are primarily a community resource and will need to be viewed and run as this.

### Marketing

30. Effective and appropriately resourced marketing will be crucial to the success of the FCC in both the long and short terms. It will need to create a strong brand identity, gather and retain information (e.g. database of users), devise and implement a marketing strategy which will include a website, social media, clear pricing strategy and involvement of appropriate people (e.g. membership, word of mouth, cascading information etc.)

### Business Model

31. The proposed financial model is as a free standing social enterprise (charitable company) that owns or leases the capital asset – the Fakenham Community Campus. It derives income from a range of sources: hiring out spaces, running facilities and organising events. The model is flexible in order to be able to respond to demand and different market opportunities.

### Capital Budget and Funding

32. The initial capital budget estimates produced by the Quantity Surveyor for the renovation, new build and fitting out the facilities (excluding VAT and fees) are as follows:

	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,279,000</b>	<b>£549,800</b>	<b>£965,700</b>	<b>£3,794,500</b>

Given the scale of the capital budget and the current financial climate it will be crucial to have the main strategic partners fully briefed and committed in order to agree the main funding opportunities and priorities.

Although there are a wide range of potential funding sources the project will need to be positioned in order to capitalise on funding opportunities. It needs to be able to react quickly to any change in circumstances.

## Revenue Budget

33. This is to be regarded as a long term as well as a five year project and will grow over the period. Although over the five years income will grow there will be immediate short term opportunities to increase revenue and for this to be established. Once the Campus is complete there will be significant opportunity for income generation.

The core operating budget by the fifth year of operation will be around £320,000 per year.

Timescales – An eight year programme is envisaged with initially 3 years of revenue support subsidy for the new Project Development Manager. This allows time to appoint the worker, get the project off the ground and other funding in place, get the leases transferred and the building works completed.

## Fakenham Community Campus

34. As has been stated this project is ambitious. If seen in the context of it being an important growth town it could be a crucial benefit to Fakenham, the surrounding villages and North Norfolk as a whole.

## Recommendations

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- a) The buildings, gardens and associated spaces which make up the site for the Fakenham Community Campus (FCC) provide a unique opportunity to create a high quality integrated Campus, providing first point access to public services as well as an arts and cultural centre. The existing buildings should be brought together as a single coherent and integrated whole to provide community, business and public services to the people of Fakenham, the surrounding villages and to develop tourism.
- b) The proposed design scheme should be adopted to present a significant paradigm in both design and facilities that will enable full community participation and encourage the growth of tourism and the local economy.
- c) North Norfolk District Council (NNDC), and Norfolk County Council (and the Scout Association) should be encouraged to fully embrace the project and be encouraged to surrender their leases to enable the issue of a twenty five year new lease to a Charitable Trust and NCC to give due consideration to the potential for Asset Transfer of the freehold of the site to the local charitable Trust.
- d) A new Charitable Trust to be established with appropriate trustees to take the lease for the new FCC site and to develop and implement the project as a social enterprise.
- e) Funding to be sought for a Project manager (within equal opportunities guidelines) to be appointed, to develop the project, including procuring secure additional funding, increased usage to a broader range of people and groups, business support, a broader and more ambitious programme of events and activities, increased commercial room hire for private events and the management of the establishment of the first few years of the project.
- f) Current usage and occupancy rates of the Community Centre, Connect building and scout hut should be reviewed, with the aim of increasing and expanding usage and ensuring that where commercial activities are taking place in the premises that an appropriate commercial rent is charged, while community activities are charged at a much lower, affordable rate.
- g) The site on which the current buildings sit should be brought into more active use, through its development to enable more community, commercial, eco-friendly and arts-focused use.
- h) Additional funding sources are explored including through private, public, charitable and social investment.
- i) Although not currently seen as a primary tourist destination it is important that strategies are developed to bring more tourists and visitors to the town. The economy of the town must be developed to enable local people to be financially able to support commercial aspects of FCC.
- j) Car parking spaces should be increased, rationalised and managed in an income-generating way.

- k) The specific needs of young people need to be considered and met through youth-focused initiatives and youth-friendly buildings, designed to meet their unique needs and interests. There should be a strong youth presence in the FCC management structures (possibly in an advisory role) and young people should be encouraged to take a sense of ownership and responsibility for the customised youth provision, while ensuring that they are equally integrated into the whole campus. All FCC users should be encouraged to work in harmony and co-operation with each other.
- l) Clear policy and protocols need to be developed to distinguish between community, commercial, statutory/civic and business use of the facilities to ensure smooth, harmonious operation and partnership between the diverse groups, organisations and individuals using the complex.
- m) An FCC brand needs to be developed, together with high quality, fit-for-purpose, extensive marketing, publicity and communication. These are essential. Regular use of press, radio, website, emails, social networking, etc. will ensure that there is not a gap between the initial feasibility study being completed and the commencement of the first development stage of the project.
- n) All aspects of the FCC must be designed and taken forward with maximum flexibility, design flair and eco-efficiency.
- o) Further discussion and negotiation needs to take place with the Library Service to satisfy their concerns and bring the Library into the early stages of the project. Also there would be the establishment of a Library Point in the Business/Learning Centre and possibly also in the Café/Reception Hub in stage one.
- p) Current users of the centre should be encouraged to play an active role in the FCC, while at the same time the new vision should be embraced and adhered to as the buildings are currently underutilised and cannot continue to be viable in the future. A step change is required to move Fakenham and its community provision and resources into the 21st century.
- q) Provide regular information to residents and stakeholders.
- r) Review and market test the name "Fakenham Community Campus".
- s) Increase cultural and arts events through links with Sheringham Theatre (particularly Rep season). to offer a summer season with professional touring theatre. Run pilot of three days in August 2012 which will need to be planned and agreed in Dec 2011.
- t) Provision of a high spec business and learning support facility with hot-desking and business support will be provided. Fakenham Area Partnership will provide a presence.

- u) The existing freeholder of the site (Norfolk County Council) to agree and issue a new lease (or otherwise transfer the freehold) for the FCC site to the newly established Fakenham Community Campus Trust (FCCT. This can occur once the three existing lease holders (NNDC Community Association and the Scout Association) have surrendered their current leases, enabling a new combined lease to be created for the whole campus, with a duration of at least forty years to enable significant external capital funding to be raised (The existing leasing situation is explained in the body of the report and Business Case appendix 5).
  
- v) Agree an eight year plan which includes an initial 3 years of revenue subsidy to support the new Project Development Manager and allows time to get leases, capital funding and building work completed.