

Welton Village Hall - Feasibility Study Overview

Welton Village Hall, Welton, Lincoln, LN2 3LU

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The Project Brief

Welton Village Hall Trust (WVHT) wishes to develop the site of the village hall to become a community hub for the growing settlement of Welton. Its vision is to provide a multi-use, sustainable focal point for community life where Welton residents can enjoy a range of activities and access a range of services on one site.

Community hubs are now an established part of the social infrastructure in many UK communities, and they play a vital role in promoting social cohesion, supporting local economies, and improving the health and well-being of local residents.

“Local Trust” and “Power to Change” have defined a community hub as a building or space that is:

- Open and accessible to the local community
- Providing services that the local community wants and needs
- Where formal decisions about running and managing the hub are taken by people who come mainly from within the local community

The most common main activities are:

- Community hall or meeting space
- Health and well-being activities
- Educational activities
- Skills and employment training
- Community café

Activities delivered by others, using the community hub include:

- Health and well-being activities
- Educational activities
- Sports or fitness activities
- Other arts or cultural activities



Nettleham Community Hub - incorporating a combined village library and cafe space.
Credit - Nettleham Community Hub

The Benefits of a Community Hub in Welton

A community hub in Welton by Lincoln could have a range of potential uses that build on the existing user groups who already use the hall facilities. A development of the wider site could expand these uses to include:

- **Social and leisure activities:** The hub could provide a space for social and leisure activities, such as sports clubs, dance classes, art groups, book clubs, and other hobbies and interests. This could help to bring people together and foster a sense of community.
- **Health and well-being:** The hub could offer health and well-being services, such as exercise classes, mindfulness sessions, health checks, and support for people with mental health issues. This could help to improve the health and well-being of local residents and reduce social isolation.
- **Community services:** The hub could provide a range of community services, such as a library and cafe and advice and support on a range of issues, such as housing, benefits, and debt. This could help to make essential services more accessible to local residents.
- **Education and training:** The hub could provide education and training opportunities, such as adult education classes, vocational training, and workshops on a range of topics, including finance, digital skills, and career development. This could help to improve the skills and employability of local residents.
- **Business support:** The hub could offer support for local businesses and entrepreneurs, such as advice and mentoring, networking opportunities, and access to funding and resources. This could help to stimulate the local economy and create new jobs and opportunities.

Overall, a community hub in Welton could be a valuable resource for the local community, helping to bring people together, improve well-being, and support economic and social development in the area.

Developed Brief

Phase 1, The Hall:

This will include the existing building and the extension to replace the nissen hut and will continue in its use with existing organisations. It will primarily incorporate uses concerned Social and Leisure activities and Health and Well-Being. The brief for accommodation in the hall includes:

- Main Hall, Monce Room, Kitchen, Bar and toilets are all to be retained
- A new room to replace the nissen hut, that has a public face, as well as opening to the garden area
- Incorporate the existing nissen hut storage spaces into the extended building
- Explore options for upgrade the main hall to improve its appearance
- Explore options to retain outdoor plan space for Busy Hands

Phase 2, Village Hub:

This part of the developed site will contain some of the spaces that will frequently be used by the wider community including Community Services and Employment and Training and should incorporate:

- Cafe and Library as a combined facility
- Space for the Parish Council offices, some of which may be shared with other organisations
- Rooms of varying sizes that can be used by volunteer and training organisations
- Additional toilets as required for increased capacity
- Options should explore both the retention and relocation of the scout facilities

Phase 3, Employment Hub:

The Employment hut will have less frequent usage by the residents of Welton and may incorporate:

- Hot desk space for small businesses
- Business Start-up units
- Small Workshop spaces
- Rooms available for hire for therapy rooms and mentoring
- Community Larder

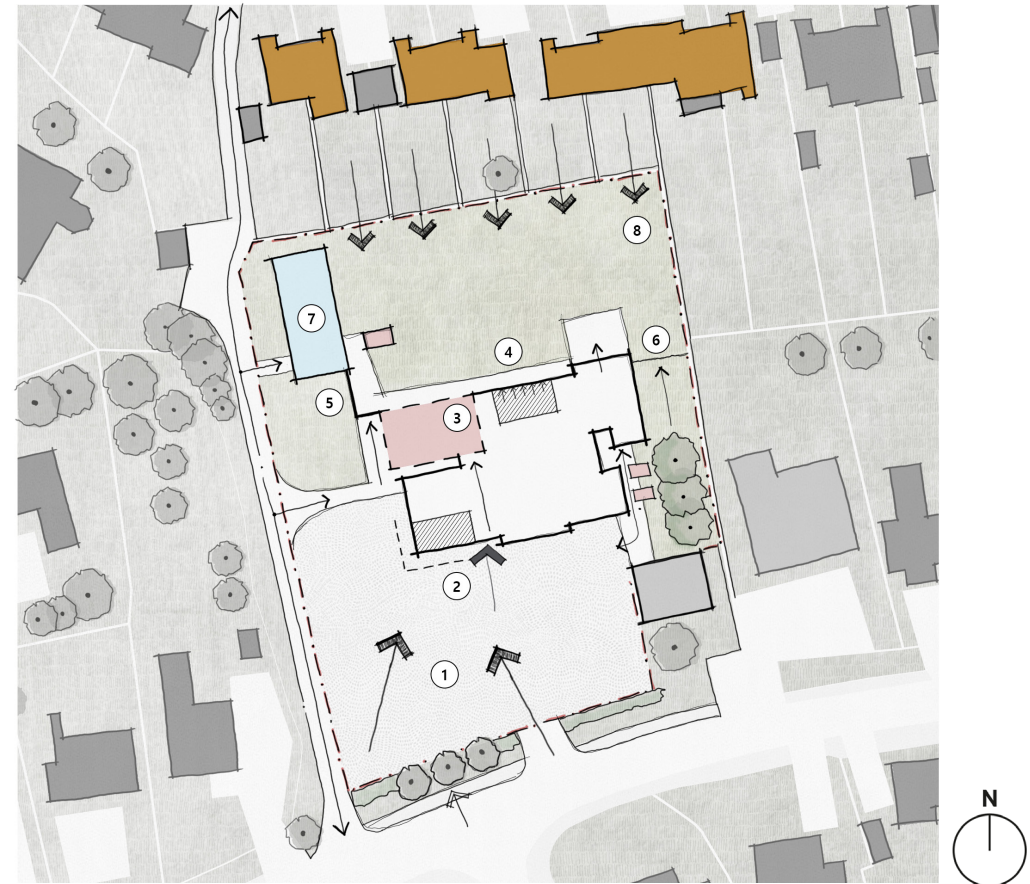
Existing Site Constraints

The existing building and surrounding site has various constraints that could impact its development. Approaching from the centre of Welton, users of the hall first encounter the toilets and boiler room at the leading corner. There is little to signpost the potential uses of the building other than the lettering high on the front gable.

Internally, the building has very little circulation space. This leads to people passing through the hall to reach the Monce Room. The alternative access to the Monce Rooms is tucked well away from public view.

At present, the three main rooms have little view of the garden space to the north. Only the Monce Room has access to the garden, but this is mainly used for the external play areas associated with the Busy Hands playgroup. The layout of the existing building would make it difficult to extend to the north as a single building while retaining a sensible circulation. An alternative to extending the building may be to construct new buildings within the garden area.

The grassed area to the north is little used, with poor access. Rather than being used as a public space, it is currently viewed as a maintenance issue, with regular grass cutting required in the summer months. A locked palisade fence restricts access for the local community, while the ageing scout hut occupies a prime position at the western end of the open space. To the north of the open space, there are residential properties with south-facing rear gardens. Any proposed buildings should be kept back from this boundary and their height restricted to prevent overshadowing and loss of amenity to the neighbouring properties.



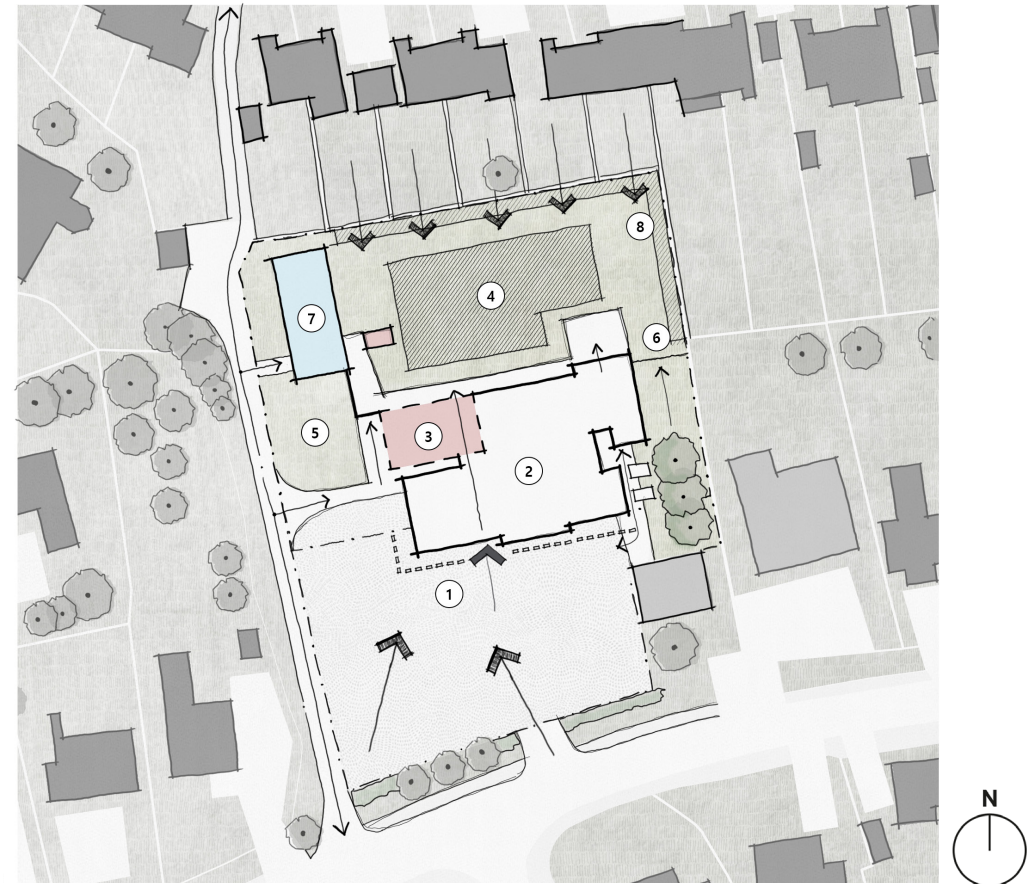
- ① Unattractive appearance from key public approach / access.
- ② Toilets and boiler situated in prime location adjacent to the main building entrance.
- ③ Nissen Hut is in poor condition and is to be demolished.
- ④ Location of stage restricts potential views and access to garden.
- ⑤ Palisade fencing restricting access to garden.
- ⑥ Poor access to secondary building entrance and rear garden.
- ⑦ Scout Hut has a limited life expectancy, it may be retained or incorporated into the scope of the development.
- ⑧ Development is to be managed to prevent overlooking of adjacent two-storey properties / gardens.

Existing Site Opportunities

The key opportunity for the site is to develop the grassed area to the north to provide additional community uses on the site, allowing Welton Village Hall to become a true Community Hub. The area of grass is large enough to house extensions and new buildings, as well as a landscaped garden or courtyard area.

If the Scout Hut was to be incorporated into the site, there may be opportunities for any new development on the site to open up to the more public western edge of the site.

Opportunities should be taken to connect the main entrance to the hall with any new development to the north, without having to pass through other public spaces.



- ① Opportunity to improve key public facing corner of the site with improved public access / entrance.
- ② Existing main hall building to be retained with potential refurbishment opportunities.
- ③ Nissen Hut is in poor condition and is to be demolished.
- ④ Large private garden to rear of main hall is suitable for development with space to accommodate a number of community uses.
- ⑤ Unused grass area provides opportunity for improved landscaping and access to site from the West.
- ⑥ Garden space with ornamental trees provides opportunity for better access to rear of site.
- ⑦ Scout Hut may be retained or incorporated into the scope of the development.
- ⑧ Green margin retained around site perimeter to restrict views to and from surrounding residential properties.

Development Option 1

This option explores how the village hall could be developed while retaining the scout hut.

The nissen hut is replaced with a new extension containing the cafe/library space. This room can have large windows opening to the west to make this public use more visible, attracting more people to the wider hall facilities.

Access to the rear uses could be either from an improved entrance to the main hall, or from the courtyard. Access to the courtyard could be controlled at night by gates at the side of the scout hut.

With the retention of the scout hut, a long low building along the northern boundary will have south facing windows to make the most of the light, allowing uses to spill into the landscaped space at the centre of the development. The most appropriate use for this prime position would be the new multi purpose room.

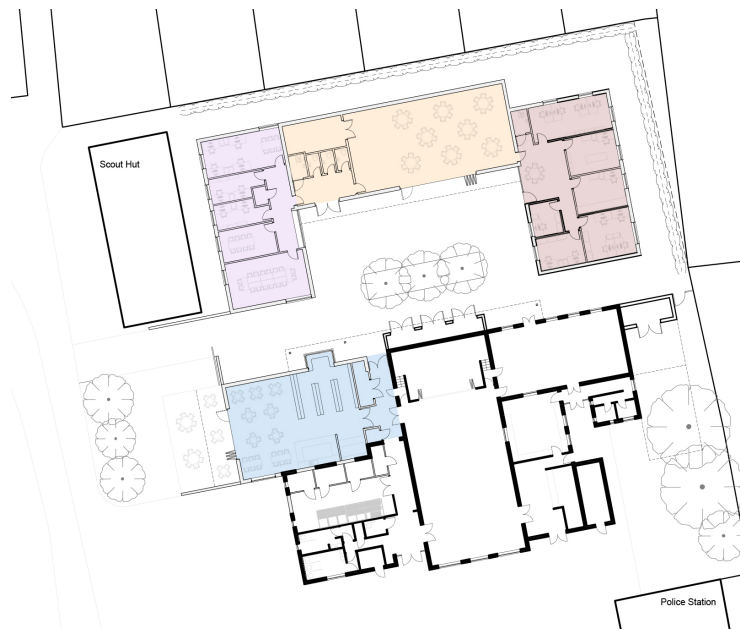
The new landscaped space would be flanked by the Village Hub admin uses and the Business Hub furthest from the entrance to the courtyard. Longer views from these smaller rooms would be less important.



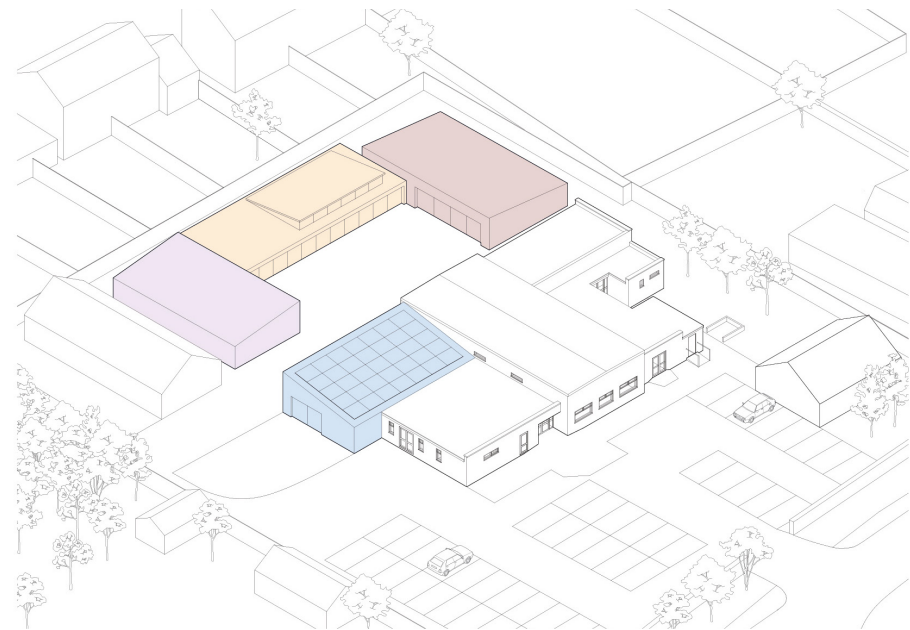
Option 01 - Sketch Site Layout

Development Option 01

- The developed floor plan gives some indication of the sizes of the proposed spaces, relative to the existing hall.
- A new corridor passes alongside the main hall, connecting the existing entrance to the rear courtyard.
- The former Welton Room could be converted to contain storage for the chairs and tables, along with several large cupboards.
- The new library and cafe open out to the green area to the west, with outdoor seating taking advantage of the afternoon sun.
- The village Hub, new multipurpose room and the Business Hub are all accessed from the courtyard and interlinked, enabling the use of shared toilets.
- The outdoor storage and external play area for Busy Hands Playgroup has been moved to the side of the Monce Room where new doors can provide access.



Option 01 - Developed Floor Plan



Option 01 - Proposed Massing

Development Option 2

Option 2 explores bringing the scout uses within the developed hall accommodation could benefit the wider development.

Replacing the scout hut with a new construction opens up a much greater part of the new construction to the community. Rather than just the replacement of the nissen hut being visible, there are now opportunities for two rooms to open to the west, potentially the cafe and a new multipurpose room.

Activities could spill out from the new rooms to a newly landscaped garden area to the west.

The Village Hub and Business Hub uses are still placed around a landscaped courtyard.

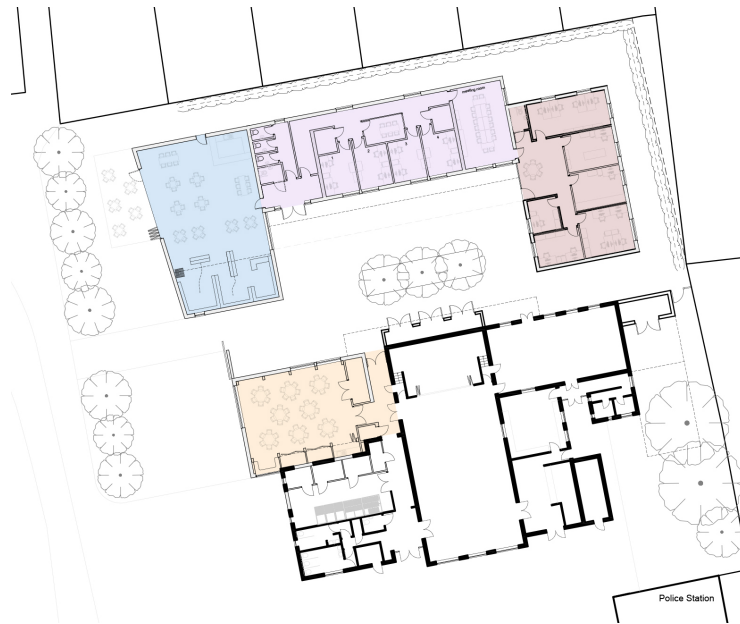


Option 02 - Sketch Site Layout

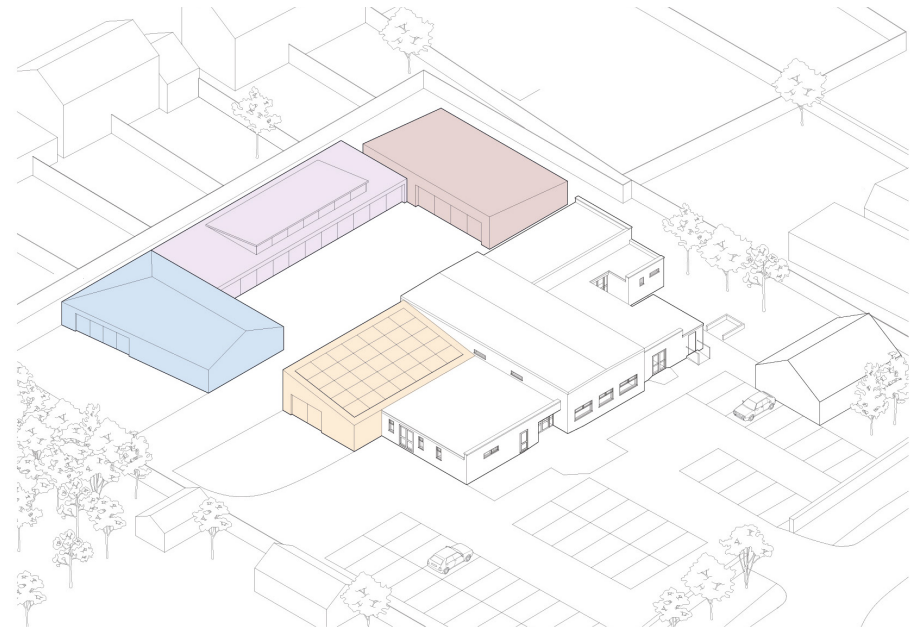
Development Option 02

The developed floor plan for Option 2 builds on the principles established with the Option 1 layout:

- A new corridor allows access from the front door to the new multi purpose room with large windows or doors to the west to showcase the new space.
- The cafe/library is also kept in a visible location, visible to the wider community and with a landscaped terrace for sitting out in the afternoon sun.
- The Village Hub uses are now placed centrally at the rear of the courtyard, while the Business Hub remains to the east side.



Option 02 - Developed Floor Plan



Option 02 - Proposed Massing

Development Option 3

Option 3 explores the potential of restricting the development to the underutilised land to the West of the existing village hall.

Restricting the development to this parcel of land allows for a reduced footprint of the proposed development with less visual impact on residential properties to the Northern boundary of the site.

There is scope to extend this proposal to incorporate a business hub to the retained green space to the North of the hall.

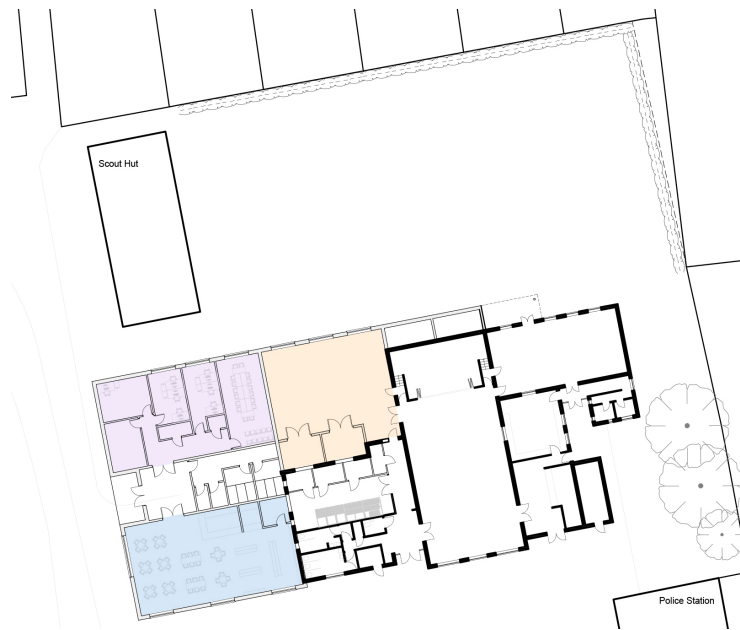


Option 03 - Sketch Site Layout

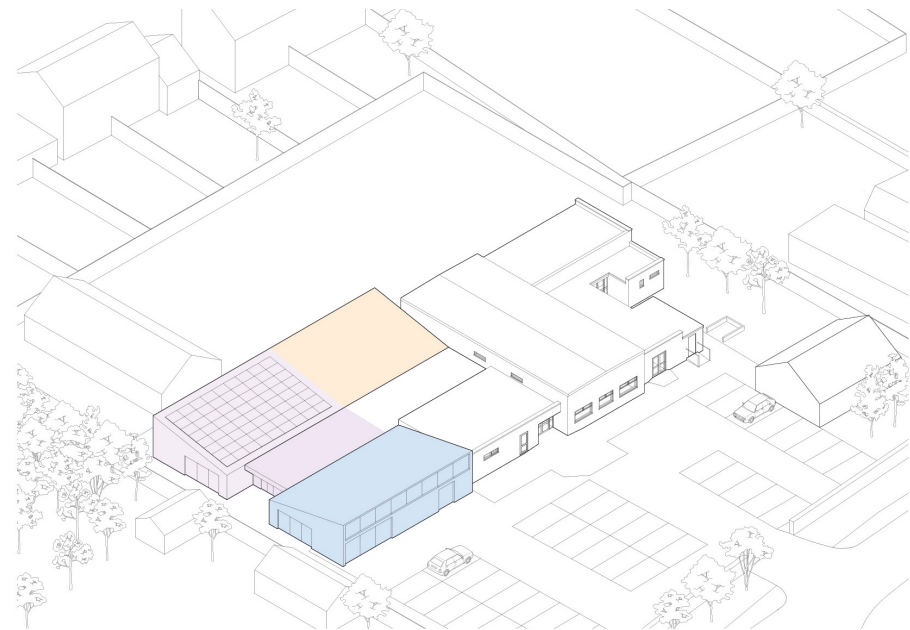
Development Option 03

The developed floor plan for Option 3 aims to reduce the footprint of the development whilst maintaining the principles established in options 1 and 2:

- A new corridor allows access from the front door to the new multi purpose room with large windows to the west and south, although the limited space around would not permit activities to extend to external spaces, as with the first two layout options.
- The cafe/library is situated in a prominent position to the corner of the site.
- Offices are located to the rear of the proposed cafe library, with a new entrance providing access from the pedestrian footpath to the West of the site.
- This option retains the scout hut and preserves the garden for future development as a community garden, or for the construction of further buildings.
- The layout indicated does not include a business hub.



Option 03 - Developed Floor Plan



Option 03 - Proposed Massing

Development Option 4

The existing village hall has been extended a number of times in a piecemeal fashion and no longer caters for the requirements of a growing village. Rather than starting to add further extensions to this sub-standard building, it may be better to consider its replacement with a completely new structure.

This would have advantages including:

- A net zero building that is cheap to operate and maintain
- Purpose designed to meet the needs of the community
- A compact design over two stories that occupies less of the site
- Freeing up additional space for car parking

The building could sit at the rear of the site, as indicated, or it could be sited closer to Ryland Road with the car parking kept to the rear.

A complete new building would however be significantly more expensive than the previous options to provide extensions and would mean considerable disruption to user groups during the construction.



Precedents - Village Hall / Community Hub & Cafe



John Morden Centre - Mae Architects



The Point - Ayre Chamberlain Gaunt



Broadhempston Village Hall - VESP



Sands End Arts & Community Centre - Mae Architects



The Larick Centre - Collective Architecture

Next Steps

- Consult with all existing users of the village hall
- Finalise preferred uses for site and buildings
- Determine amount of accommodation required
- Develop design
- Obtain accurate costings
- Explore options for funding