

# Romsey Future

## Introduction

Romsey Future, in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council, commissioned a Citizens' Assembly be held on the future provision of community facilities in the town. The first phase of the Assembly was held in July 2024. Prior to the first Phase, Romsey Future consulted with a wide variety of groups during May and June 2024 and sought views on what community facilities are needed in Romsey, to meet the needs of residents now and in the future.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024, Romsey Future hosted a workshop with Older Individuals in the Crosfield Hall.

## Background

Between 2018 and 2020, extensive community engagement took place in Romsey which resulted in the creation of the South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan presented a series of development opportunities for the South of Romsey Town Centre area.

---

*'If the Crosfield Hall is not retained, adequate community facilities need to re-provided. The facilities that Crosfield Hall provides are valuable to the local community. If the building itself is no longer fit for purpose or inefficient, it is most important that enhanced community facilities are re-provided in a location or locations that are accessible and convenient.'*

- The Masterplan, on the future of the Crosfield Hall

---

For the Crosfield Hall site, the options were for car parking, retail, or residential uses to come forward on the site. However, this would only be realised if community facilities were re-provided elsewhere prior to the removal of the current facility.

The Masterplan does not conclude the future of the Crosfield Hall, but it recognises that further work will be undertaken to review community hall provision.

In 2024, Romsey Future began this further work, by commissioning a Citizens' Assembly, and planning a total of ten workshops, to gather the perspectives and experiences of different groups in the town.

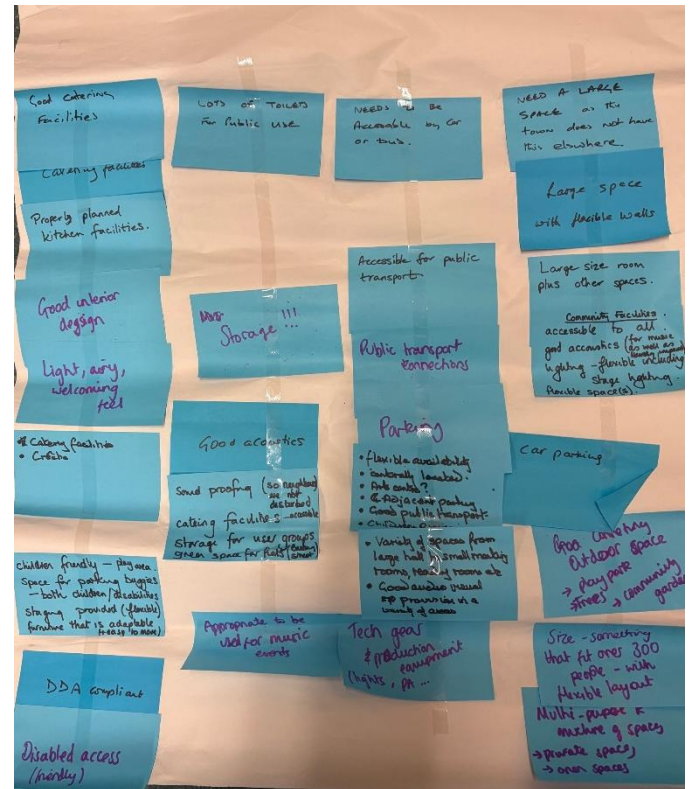
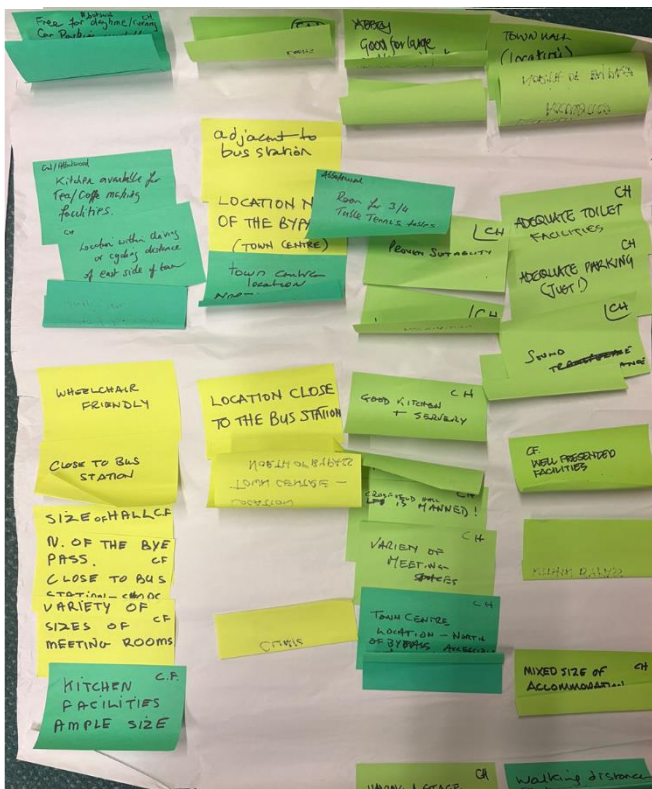
## The Workshop Structure

The workshops began with a presentation on the 2018-2020 engagement and the Masterplan, before heading into facilitated discussion on the following five questions:

1. What do you currently use community facilities for?
2. What is good about the community facilities you use?

3. What are the challenges, if any, in using these community facilities?
4. What should be included in any community facilities that are provided in future?
5. If you wish to retain the existing facilities, how would you improve them?

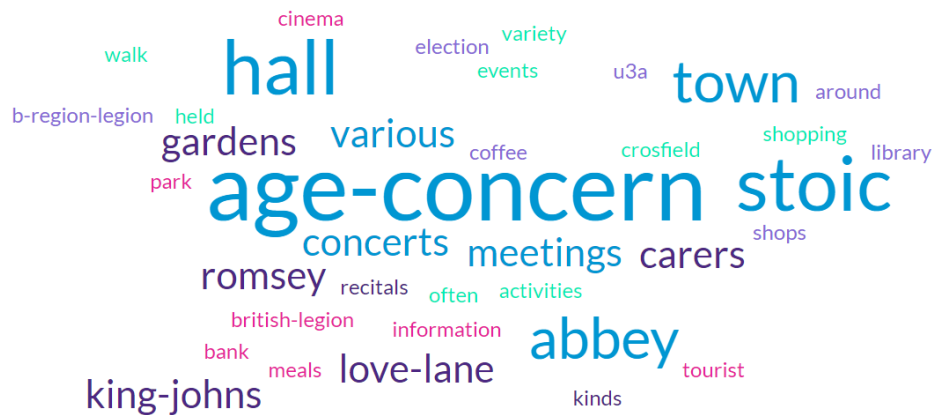
Participants wrote down their answers to the questions on sticky-notes, which were placed on the wall. Below are two of the pages from the Older Individuals workshop.



## Older Individuals Workshop

In response to question 1, (what do you currently use community facilities for?), there were a total of 34 answers, identifying a variety of different uses, including age concern, cinema, shopping, STOIC, and recitals. Below is a word cloud featuring the

most popular answers:



In response to question 2, (What is good about the community facilities you use?), the five most common answers were:

1. Location

- People wrote that the location of existing facilities such as Crosfield Hall, were central to town.
- Comments included “central location with good access (car parking, bus station etc.)” and “local - easy to get to”

2. Public Transport

- People responded that the proximity to public transport link was something good about the current facilities they use.
- Comments included “Crosfield Hall convenient - near bus stop” and “central location near to bus”

3. Size

- People wrote that the size of facilities was a positive
- Comments included “age concern - size and facilities” and “the Crosfield Hall is very central, large and convenient with its own car park”

4. Facilities

- People wrote that internal facilities such as a kitchen were beneficial.
- Comments include “Kitchen”, “well-equipped”, and “age concern - size and facilities”

5. Multi-functional

- People noted the multi-functional aspect of community facilities
- Comments included “flexible usage”

In response to question 3 (what are the challenges, if any, in using these community facilities?), the four most common responses were:

1. Parking

- People responded that parking needs to be improved at community facilities
- Comments included “parking for all” and “appropriate parking”

2. IT/Technology

- People wrote that current technology could be improved
- Comments included “age concern - technology”

3. Kitchen

- People responded that kitchen facilities needed development
- Comments included “Crosfield hall – catering”

4. Toilets

- People wrote that number of toilets at facilities could be increased
- Comments included “more toilet facilities”

In response to question 4, (what should be included in any community facilities that are provided in future) the five most common answers were:

1. Technology

- People wrote that the technology could be improved in facilities.
- Comments included “Wi-Fi”, “lighting” and “hearing loop”.

2. Suggestions for future uses

- People answered with ideas of different uses for future facilities.
- Comments included “information hub”, “dance hall” and “café”.

3. Room variety / Storage

- People responded that having rooms of different sizes, for different uses would be valuable and more storage.
- Comments included “flexible rooms” and “storage”.

4. Parking

- People wrote that parking at facilities could be developed.
- Comments included “possibly parking underneath”.

#### 5. Opening times

- People responded that community facilities could be open for longer periods of time.
- Comments included “longer opening hours”

In response to question 5, (if you wish to retain the existing facilities, how would you improve them?) the five most common responses were:

#### 1. Internal facilities

- People responded internal facilities such as kitchens and toilets could be developed
- Comments included “better kitchen facilities” and “improved toilet facilities”

#### 2. Modernise

- People responded community facilities could be updated and modernised.
- Comments included “retain Crosfield Hall but maybe updating a little – decorating” and “updating technology and redecorating”

#### 3. Character

- People responded that the any updates of characters should be kept in character with the town.
- Comments included “Crosfield in keeping with Romsey character (we love it)” and “keep in character with town”.

#### 4. Activities

- People wrote that the facilities could be used for different activities
- Comments included “weddings” and “indoor markets”.

#### 5. Management

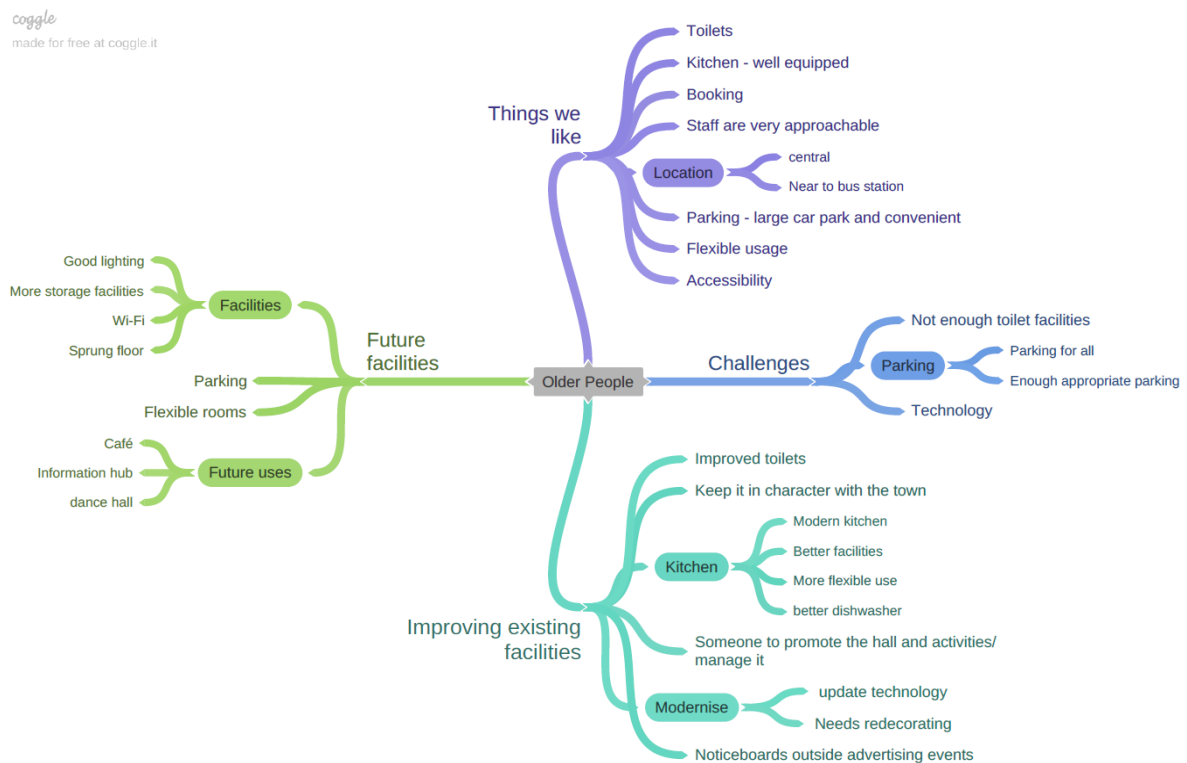
- People wrote that the management of facilities could be developed
- Comments included “someone to promote facilities to the community” and “team to manage”.

Two sessions were held at the end of July to open the Romsey citizens' assembly 2024.

The 36 participants took part in workshops and received presentations highlighting the current community facilities in Romsey. The group was randomly selected to ensure the citizens' assembly was demographically representative of the town. The assembly were asked to discuss Romsey citizens' needs, desires, and expectations for community facilities in the area south of the town centre.

Speakers from different community groups, including the RDS, were invited to present their findings from their pre-engagement workshops to the citizens' assembly. The outcomes of the pre-engagement workshops were turned into mind maps which highlighted the common themes that emerged from each session. This was an opportunity for the citizens assembly to learn more about the different needs and experiences of current community facilities.

Below is the mind map made from all of the comments at the Older Individuals workshop.



In September, the Assembly met again to discuss options for future community facilities and where they might best be located to serve the needs of the town. They were reminded of the requirements and preferences of the lived experience groups and heard from design specialists on what might be possible in different locations across Romsey. The Assembly worked together create preferences which will be given to Councillors, to form a crucial part of their decision making.

### **Conclusion**

Thank for you speaking to us about your views and experiences on existing community facilities in the town, and for sending representatives along to speak to the assembly.