

# 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 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024, Romsey Future hosted a workshop with the Romsey and District Society in Romsey's Town 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.

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*'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

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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.

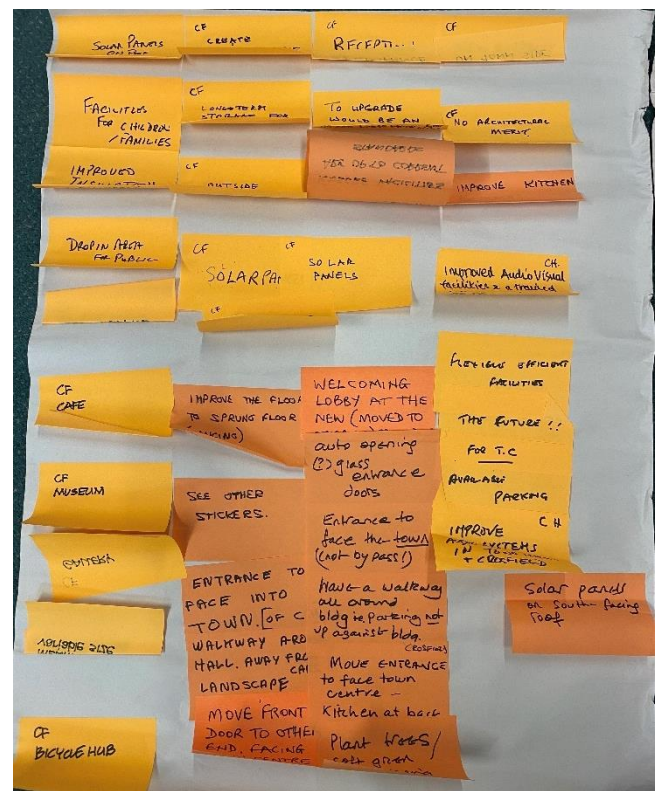
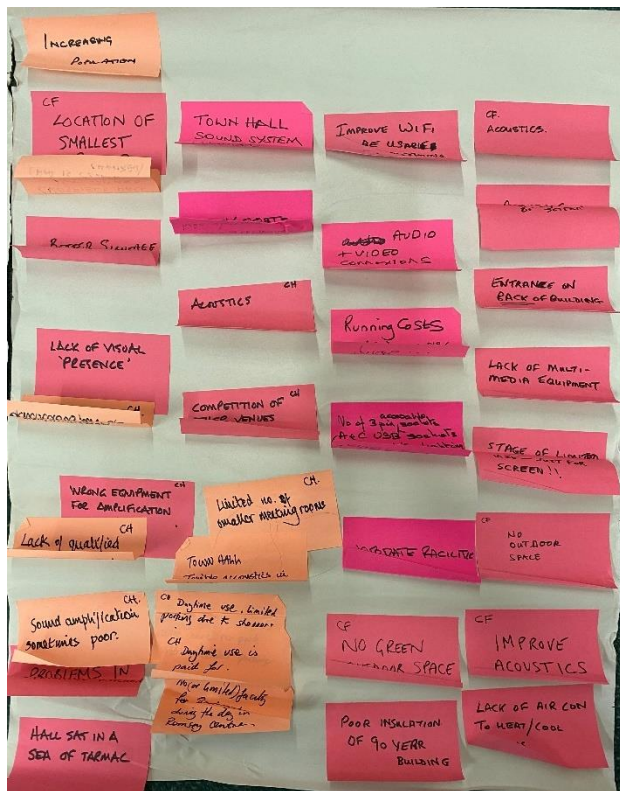
## The Workshop Structure

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 RDS workshop.





- People responded that the proximity to public transport links (like the train station and bus station) was something good about the current facilities they use.
- Comments include “adjacent to bus station” and “walking distance from train station”.

#### 5. Kitchen

- People wrote that having access to a kitchen was a real benefit.
- Comments included “good catering kitchen” and “kitchen available for tea/coffee making facilities”.

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

#### 1. IT/ Technology

- People responded that issues with technology and IT equipment made facilities harder to use.
- Comments included “improve Wi-Fi to be usable for streaming and zoom” and “lack of multi-media equipment”

#### 2. Energy efficiency

- People wrote that energy efficiency was not addresses in current facilities.
- Comments included “poor insulation of 90-year-old building” and “energy costs - lead to increased hire charges”

#### 3. Modernise

- People responded that existing facilities were out of date.
- Comments included “update facilities” and “good quality lighting needed”

#### 4. Noise

- People wrote that existing facilities faced issues with acoustics.
- Comments included “acoustics could be better”

#### 5. Parking

- People responded that parking at facilities could be difficult
- Comments included “daytime use limited parking due to shoppers using same car park, not dedicated parking”

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. Suggestions for future uses
  - People answered with ideas of different uses for future facilities.
  - Comments included “bicycle hub”, “heritage centre display space” and “outdoor theatre”
2. Location
  - People wrote that the location was an important feature of any future facility.
  - Comments included “location in heart of town, north of bypass” and “easy access on foot”
3. Room variety
  - People responded that having rooms of different sizes, for different uses would be valuable.
  - Comments included “meeting rooms of various sizes with separate accesses” and “flexibility - use of different adjoining rooms”
4. Size
  - People wrote that size was an important factor.
  - Comments included “large hall” and “hall large enough for major events and 500 people - craft fairs etc.”
5. Efficiency/ environmental
  - People responded that energy efficiency was significant and should be considered for any future facility.
  - Comments included “solar panels on roof” and “better insulation”

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. Energy efficiency/ environmentally friendly
  - People responded existing facilities should be made more environmentally friendly/energy efficient
  - Comments included “improved insulation/efficiency” and
2. Entrance
  - People responded that the entrance of the Crosfield Hall should be moved or adapted.
  - Comments included “move front door to other end, facing town centre” and “entrance to face the town (not bypass!)”

### 3. Future Uses

- People wrote that the future needs of the town were significant to consider.
- Comments included “museum” and “facilities for children/families”

### 4. Outside space

- People responded that the space outside existing facilities could be worked on.
- Comments included “walkway around hall away from cars” and “outside green space”

### 5. Kitchen

- People wrote that the kitchen could be improved
- Comments included “improve kitchen (replace)” and “kitchen at back”

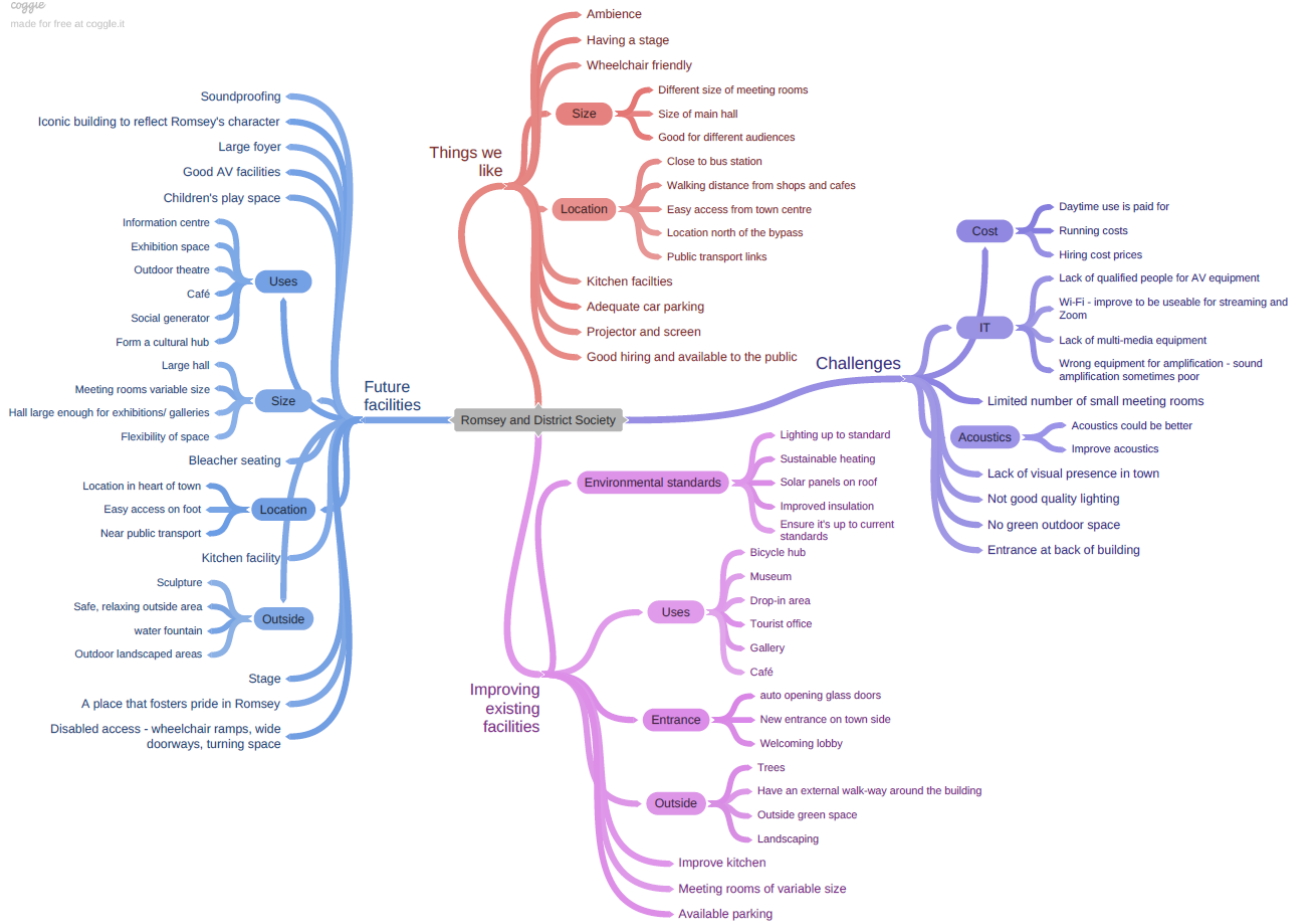
## **Citizens' Assembly – July & September**

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 RDS 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.