

# 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 the Disabled People's Partnership 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?



## Disabled People's Partnership Workshop

In response to question 1, (what do you currently use community facilities for?), there were a total of 11 answers, identifying a variety of different uses, including parties, crafts, meetings, vaccinations, and awareness. 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. Community
  - People wrote that facilities were key to the community.
  - Comments included “places that bring people together” and “chance to meet people, businesses and volunteer at events”
2. Accessibility
  - People responded that accessibility of community facilities was a positive.
  - Comments included “sensory - good to be able to use different rooms” and “accessibility 1 level”
3. Size
  - People wrote that the size of facilities was beneficial.
  - Comments included “halls are big enough” and “space”.
4. Facilities
  - People wrote that internal facilities were a benefit
  - Comments include “kitchen facilities” and “good lighting”

## 5. Room variety

- People noted the multi-functional aspect of community facilities.
- Comments included “meeting room” and “community café”.

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

### 1. Accessibility

- People wrote that the accessibility of local community facilities can be an issue
- Comments included “difficult to manoeuvre around - very dark, disorienting”, “signs hard to understand”, and “echo - if the room is empty - for people who are neuro diverse”

### 2. Modernise

- People responded that community facilities could be modernised and updated.
- Comments include “Crosfield feels a bit sad” and “flooring - too much noise for people who are neuro diverse”

### 3. Transport

- People responded that transport to community facilities could be a limited factor.
- Comments included “limited parking at venues” and “difficulty travelling back from places like Crosfield - no reliable buses”

### 4. Toilets

- People wrote that the toilet facilities could be a challenge in using community facilities
- Comments included “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. Accessibility

- People overwhelmingly responded that accessibility concerns should be included in future community facilities.
- Comments included “easy read signage i.e. words and pictures”, “level entrances”, and “new lighting = not strip lighting”

## 2. Suggestions for future uses

- People answered with ideas of different uses for future facilities.
- Comments included “facilities to teach independent living skills (washing machine)”, “community garden”, and quiet spaces - safe spaces (for when feeling overwhelmed)”

## 3. Facilities

- People responded that having improved internal facilities would be beneficial in future community facilities.
- Comments included “disabled inclusivity to the kitchen i.e. adjustable sink and work tops”, and “hearing loops”

## 4. Sports

- Multiple responses highlighted future community facilities could have ore provisions for sports.
- Comments included “trampolining facilities”, “space for dance” and “outside sports”

## 5. Parking

- People wrote that parking at facilities could developed.
- Comments included “parking - 1 disabled bay for large disabled vans and the ability to book the parking bay”

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. Accessible

- People responded that existing facilities could be made more accessible.
- Comments included “make doorways truly accessible” and “level access”.

### 2. Entrance

- People responded that the entrances community facilities could be developed.
- Comments included “entrance into annex – larger” and “change entrance door”.

### 3. Modernise

- People responded that community facilities could be modernised and updated
- Comments included “look at flooring - so it's not noisy” and “change lighting - not strip lighting”.

#### 4. Future uses

- People wrote that the facilities could be used for different activities
- Comments included “painting” and “community larder”.

#### 5. Facilities

- People wrote that internal facilities could be developed
- Comments included “parking - a disabled bay for larger vans” and “disabled toilets”.

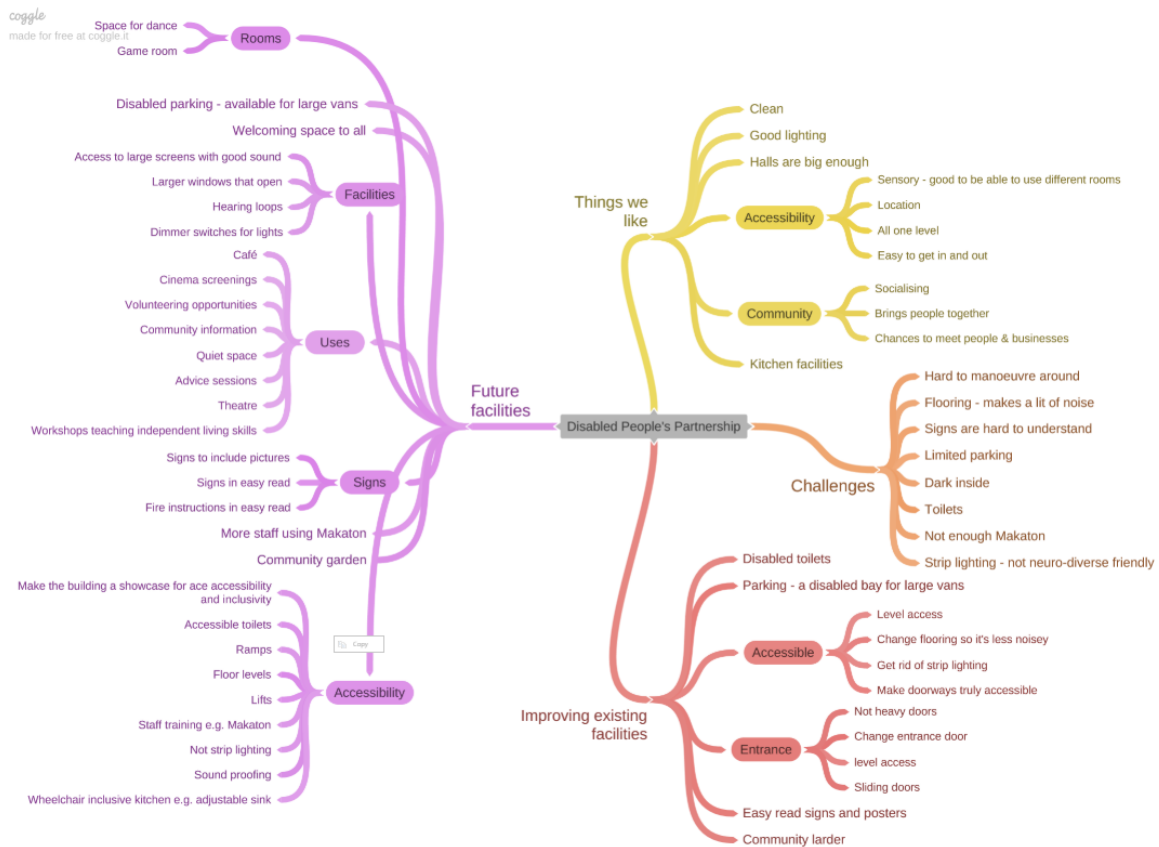
### **Citizens' Assembly – July & September**

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 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.