

# 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 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Romsey Future hosted a workshop with the Business Community in Romsey's 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?



- People responded that parking at community facilities was helpful.
  - Comments included: “cheap parking” and “free parking after 4pm”
3. Aesthetics and Vibe
- People wrote that the aesthetics and vibe of the facilities were a positive.
  - Comments included “beautiful, pretty environment” and “homely facility”
4. Familiarity/ Historical
- People positively referenced the historical and familiar nature of the community facilities they use.
  - Comments include “town hall is a historic building” and “social history of the building”
5. Accessible
- People wrote that the accessibility of the facilities were a large benefit.
  - Comments included “community buildings currently have disabled toilets and ramps/handrails” and “town hall lift and access”

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

1. Modernise
- People responded that existing facilities were out of date.
  - Comments included “feels old fashioned” and “needs totally updating”
2. Parking
- People responded that there could be more parking at facilities.
  - Comments included “onsite public parking when events are on” and “generally we need much more parking”.
3. IT/ Technology
- People responded that issues with technology and IT equipment made facilities harder to use.
  - Comments included “the town Wi-Fi causes issues with card machines” and “more modern technology, digital screen for example to help with presentations”
4. Toilet
- People wrote that the toilet facilities need improving.
  - Comments included “bus station toilets dated and well loved” and “poor toilet facilities”

## 5. Accessible

- People wrote that existing facilities faced issues with accessibility.
- Comments included “no self-opening doors” and “lack of ramps”

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. Multi – Function

- People answered that facilities could be more multifunctional
- Comments included “modern meeting facility”, “co-working space” and “visitor attraction to support local economy”

### 2. Future use

- People answered with ideas of different uses for future facilities.
- Comments included “facility for music/entertainment”, “sports and leisure” and “medical/diagnostic centre”

### 3. IT

- People responded that improvements in IT should be made.
- Comments included “future proof technology” and “stronger signal and public Wi-Fi facilities”

### 4. Young People

- People noted the need for more/better youth facilities
- Comments included “pre-school in the town centre” and “a new drop in centre for young people to access support”

### 5. Transport

- People responded that more parking and better public transport would be beneficial
- Comments included “more parking” and “public transport”.

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. Modernise

- People responded that existing facilities should be modernised

- Comments included “update everything” and “general internal modernisation”
2. Entrance
- People responded that the entrance of the Crosfield Hall should be moved or adapted.
  - Comments included “extra access on the town side” and “front door opens towards the town”
3. Acoustics
- People wrote that acoustics in facilities could be improved
  - Comments included “update the interior with acoustics” and “better sound”
4. Adapt
- People responded that current spaces could be adapted to improve their usage
  - Comments included “room dividers for better use of space” and “not diluting choice of spaces”
5. Communications
- People wrote that the use of facilities could be better advertised
  - Comments included “more advertising/showcase of space” and “better communication of what’s on”

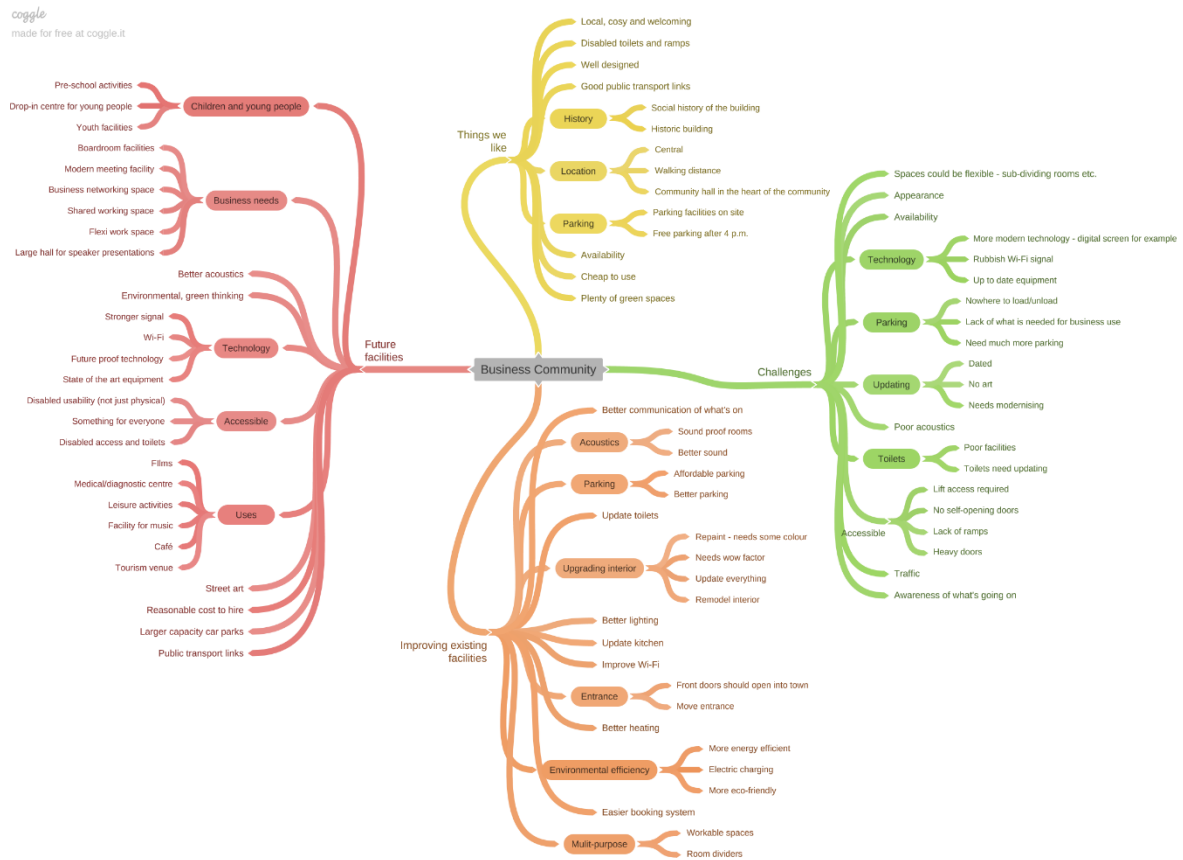
### **Citizens’ Assembly – July & September**

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 business community 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.