

TO: EXECUTIVE
DATE: 23 JULY 2019

TOWN CENTRE YOUTH CENTRE
Executive Director: People

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To advise the Executive that further to the completion of feasibility work, a property on Braccan Walk has been identified as a viable option to accommodate a new town centre youth facility.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the status of the project to create a town centre youth facility on Braccan Walk and next steps.
- 2.2 To develop a financial plan to fund the additional revenue costs of running the new centre as part of the 2021/22 budget.
- 2.3 To set up a working group to involve young people in the design of the centre at an appropriate stage.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Creation of a town centre youth facility has been a long-standing objective for the Council.
- 3.2 A town centre youth facility will provide a place for young people to go, where they can socialise and receive advice and guidance from youth workers and other professionals whose remit is to provide early help to young people. This is particularly important for the most vulnerable young people in the Borough who may be at a greater risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), gang initiation and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), including 'County Lines' when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs.
- 3.3 The new town centre is now drawing people of all ages and walks of life and has proved to be attractive to young people. However, there is currently no specific provision for young people and, without such provision, young people congregate in the town centre on an ad-hoc basis making the targeting and co-ordination of early help more difficult.
- 3.4 A site has been identified on Braccan Walk which, following consultation and a feasibility study, has the potential to deliver such a facility in close proximity to the town centre.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The nearest existing youth facility is at Coopers Hill. Through the consultation, which is detailed in section 7 of this report (and appended), young people expressed a preference for a facility which is located within the town centre.
- 4.2 The previous commitment by the Council to create a town centre youth facility has been actively pursued and the Braccan Walk proposal is presented as the most favourable option following evaluation of a number of other options that have been previously considered. These have included:
- Development of the Coopers Hill site
 - Accommodation in Princess Square
 - Co-location with the library
 - Accommodation at 14 Market Street
 - Accommodation at the former 3M building
- 4.3 On evaluation none of these options have proved to be viable in terms of either availability or location or surroundings or estimated running costs.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Braccan Walk

- 5.1 The ground floor of the Council-owned Braccan Walk car park was identified as the preferred location for the proposed new youth facility in 2018. Following structural works implemented at the High Street car park there were questions raised about the structure of the Braccan Walk building given that both car parks are of a similar age. A structural survey was commissioned from the Council's managing partner Atkins who have subsequently confirmed that there are no significant structural issues at Braccan Walk that would prevent the proposed new youth facility from being created.
- 5.2 The proposed accommodation is located on the ground floor of Braccan Walk (formerly Charles Square) car park, located on the site plan below:



5.3 The accommodation is in two parts, the smaller part of which is used as a base for the Council's street cleaning teams for the town centre, and the larger part of which was previously used as the venue for a comedy club which has been vacant for some time.

5.4 The site is in close proximity to the town centre and the proposed access arrangements are as follows;

- via the existing footbridge/escalators below the Grange hotel,
- past the former British Legion building and along Braccan Walk, subject to building a new footpath which forms part of the proposal and
- from Bracknell & Wokingham College, subject to creation of a new external footpath along the eastern and southern sides of the car park, which also forms part of this proposal.

Feasibility and Cost Report

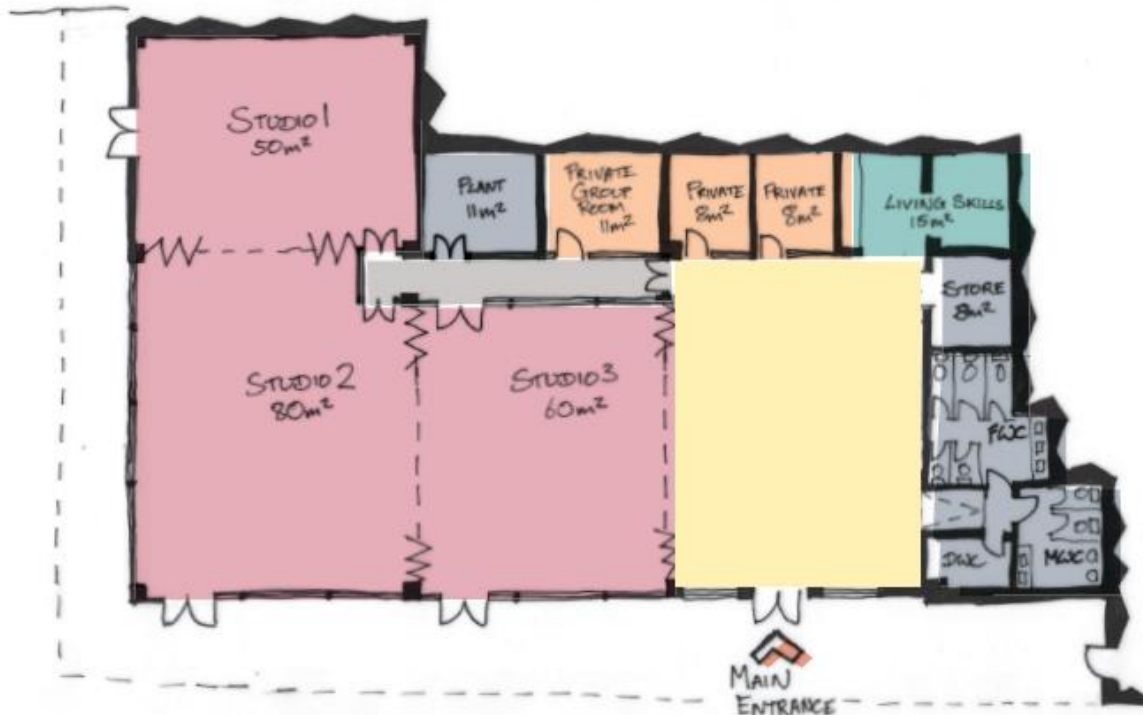
5.5 A feasibility and cost report on the creation of a town centre youth centre at Braccan Walk has been produced by the Council's managing partner Atkins. This sets out the capital costs of the proposed development.

Youth Facility

5.6 The proposal is to relocate the street cleansing teams and allocate the combined space for conversion into a town centre youth facility. The new facility would have a gross internal floor area of 355m². A series of sketch plans have been drawn up by

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the Council's managing partner Atkins and these have been used to consult with young people on the proposal and give shape to the designs. An example of what might be provided is set out on the sketch plan below. A key principle of the design is to create multi-functional, flexible spaces to ensure optimum utilisation throughout the day and in the evenings.



- 5.7 Under this proposal the existing external brick walls would be replaced with glazed curtain walling allowing light to penetrate into the interior of the building. Access to the building would be externally on the southern elevation and there would be no access from within the car park. External facilities would be provided including footpaths and spaces on Braccan Walk for pick up and drop off for those young people being dropped off by parents.

Activities to be Undertaken in the Building

- 5.8 Staffing of the proposed accommodation would be through the Council's Early Help service and supported by other statutory and voluntary sector partners providing services from the centre. The space would include small meeting rooms for one to one work with young people, a kitchen, a number of flexible spaces which enable a wide range of activities to be offered, an informal/social space and associated toilets etc.
- 5.9 The building will be used as a base for outreach work with young people in the town centre and to deliver 'targeted' work with our most vulnerable young people including Children and Young People Looked After (CLA); young carers; vulnerable and hard to reach young people, including those at risk of exploitation; young offender groups; those with Special Educational Needs and others. The base will offer a range of activities and services in partnership with other agencies and would include a focus on young people's mental wellbeing, health, training and employment. The building will

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also be a base for the Youth Council and for wider engagement of young people. Some open access or 'universal' sessions for young people will also be offered.

Accommodation for the Street Cleaning Team

- 5.10 Creation of the new youth facility at Braccan Walk will require relocation of the Council's street cleaning team, which currently occupies part of the existing building, to suitable alternative accommodation in close proximity to the town centre. The costs of this re-provision is included in the capital budget and in the project scope. The street cleaning team will need to be relocated before work can start on the new youth facility.

Timescales

- 5.11 The estimated timescale from approval of the project to opening the new facility is circa 14 months (the works will be subject to Planning permission). Officers will aim to secure final approval for a scheme in autumn/winter 2019 to ensure completion in the financial year 2020/21.

Financial Considerations

- 5.12 There will be both capital and revenue costs arising from this proposal.
- 5.13 In February 2019 the Executive approved the total capital costs which are estimated at £750,000.
- 5.14 The basis of these capital estimates is a cost plan provided by the Council's managing partner Atkins for the main works based on the preliminary sketch plans in the feasibility study, per above. These estimated costs are inclusive of construction, external works, fees, and fit out.
- 5.15 In the medium term, the cost of the capital expenditure is expected to be financed from the receipt anticipated from the sale of the Coopers Hill site. In the short term, there will be additional annual debt charges of around £0.037m to service the requested expenditure for Braccan Walk, based on the capital expenditure figures in this report.
- 5.16 The estimated revenue running costs of the building are circa £40,000 per annum to cover utilities, cleaning, business rates, maintenance and other sundry costs. The service will seek to fund the majority of operating costs within existing budgets. Further scoping work and consultation will be required to achieve this. It should be noted that revenue income can also be generated from lettings/hire of the facilities at Braccan Walk when these are not being used by young people, although this is difficult to estimate until the building is open. A proposal for future revenue funding will be brought forward as part of the 2021/22 budget build.
- 5.17 Staffing costs will be met through deploying existing youth/other Council staff and supported by other statutory and voluntary sector partners providing services from the centre.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Pursuant to section 507B of the Education Act 2006 the Council has a duty to provide facilities for education and recreational leisure time activities for all 13 to 19 year olds and some 20 to 24 year olds. This duty can be achieved either by in-house provision or under contract.

Director of Finance

- 6.2 The initial financial implications of the proposal are set out in the supporting information. There would be a time limited pressure identified on the revenue budget of around £0.037m per year based on additional capital spend funded from borrowing of £0.750m.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The new facility must be accessible to disabled persons and this is achieved through new construction being approved by Building Control which is a statutory process.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 A design risk register is included in the Feasibility & Cost report. Additionally, the following risks have been identified:

ISSUE		RISK	COMMENT
1	Planning risk	MEDIUM	The building is a Sui Generis use, therefore change of use consent will be required. It is assumed the project will not require BREEAM and there will be no requirement for out of hours working (through construction), highways works or unusual conditions or undue delays in a Planning decision.
2	Capital cost risk	LOW	Capital costs quoted in the report are estimates, and are subject to completion of the designs, any Planning requirements, and procurement.
3	Revenue cost risk	LOW	There would be additional debt charges of £0.036m per annum to fund the provisional estimated capital costs. If capital costs are exceeded this would be higher. Refer to paragraph 5.15.
4	Procurement Risk	LOW	It is assumed that the works will be procured through a competitive single stage tender with one contractor appointed to carry out the work.
5	Programme risk	MEDIUM	The project delivery would span the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 The requirement for a town centre youth facility was re-affirmed under a consultation undertaken with young people in July 2017.
- 7.2 With regard to this specific proposal, the Youth Service have facilitated a consultation with the Youth Council, and also with a representative group of our most vulnerable and hard to reach young people who regularly congregate at various locations in the town centre.
- 7.3 Young people at the other outlying youth centres in Bracknell will be consulted to understand the likely impact on demand for youth work following the opening of the new facility at Braccan Walk.

Method of Consultation

- 7.4 The 2017 consultation with young people was via a questionnaire.
- 7.5 Designers from the managing partner Atkins presented the sketch plans of the Braccan Walk proposal to a meeting of the Youth Council on 04/06/18 and took feedback.
- 7.6 The designers also presented to the town centre group of young people at a meeting organised by the Youth Service on 06/06/18.

Representations Received

- 7.7 The 2017 consultation responses are attached as appendices to this report, and it should be noted that 72% of young people thought there should be a dedicated space for young people in or around the town centre.
- 7.8 The Youth Council and young people consulted on the specifics of the Braccan Walk proposal have given feedback on the proposed designs.
- 7.9 The pattern of youth work across the Borough is likely to change following the opening of the new facility at Braccan Walk. This will be closely monitored going forwards so as to ensure that the pattern of provision across the Borough conforms as much as possible to the changing demand for these services for young people.

Future Engagement

- 7.10 It is proposed that a 'sounding board' or working group of young people is established to inform plans for the centre, and that young people will be involved in the future governance of the centre once it is operational.

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Background Papers

APPENDIX A Consultation with young people

Contacts for Further Information

Sarah Gee

Assistant Director: Early Help & Communities

01344 351447

sarah.gee@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: YOUTH PROVISION IN OR AROUND BRACKNELL TOWN CENTRE

Consultation Questionnaire

Background

In July 2017 a request was made to consult with young people about the type of youth provision they would like see developed in or around Bracknell's new town centre. In order to include informed options into future service plans.

Consultation development and distribution

Questions for a consultation paper were developed by The Youth Council and agreed with the Early Help Head of Service. This consultation was distributed by The Youth Council to secondary schools and by Berkshire Youth at The Wayz Youth Provision.

Approximately 1,000 forms were distributed (9.5% of age specific population 10.490*) 513 (51% of total forms distributed) completed consultation papers were returned.

*Stats. Share – population by single year age as at 18.09.17

Consultation timing, age range and gender

The consultation took place during the final week of the summer term. The young people consulted were aged 11 – 17 years.

Completed returns fell into the age categories below

Age	Returns
11	30
12	185
13	103
14	140
15	12
16	3
17	40

Female 250 Male 235 Not specified 27

Question 1

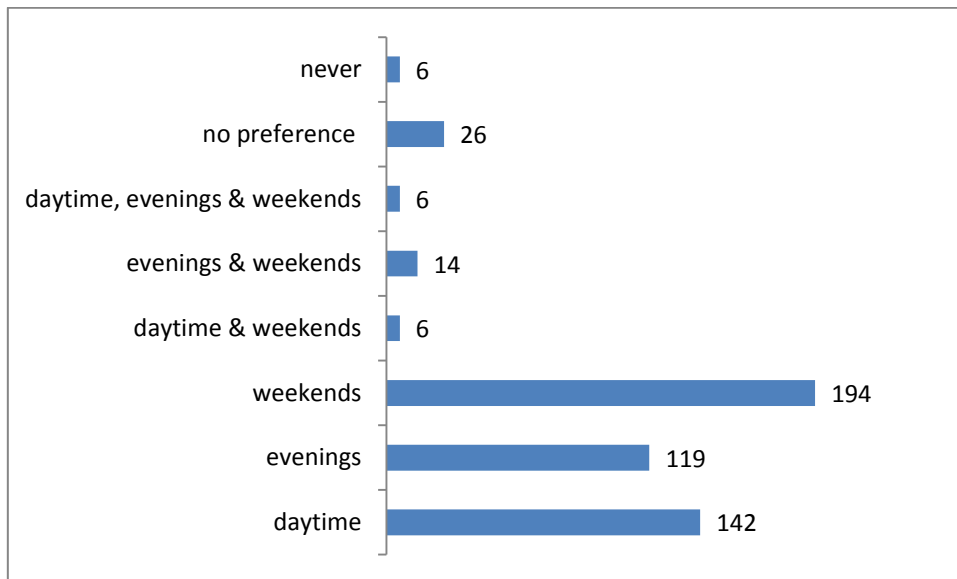
Do you think there should be a dedicated space for young people in or around the town centre?

372 (72%) said YES, however only 6 responded NEVER to the next question asking when the space should be open.

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Question 2

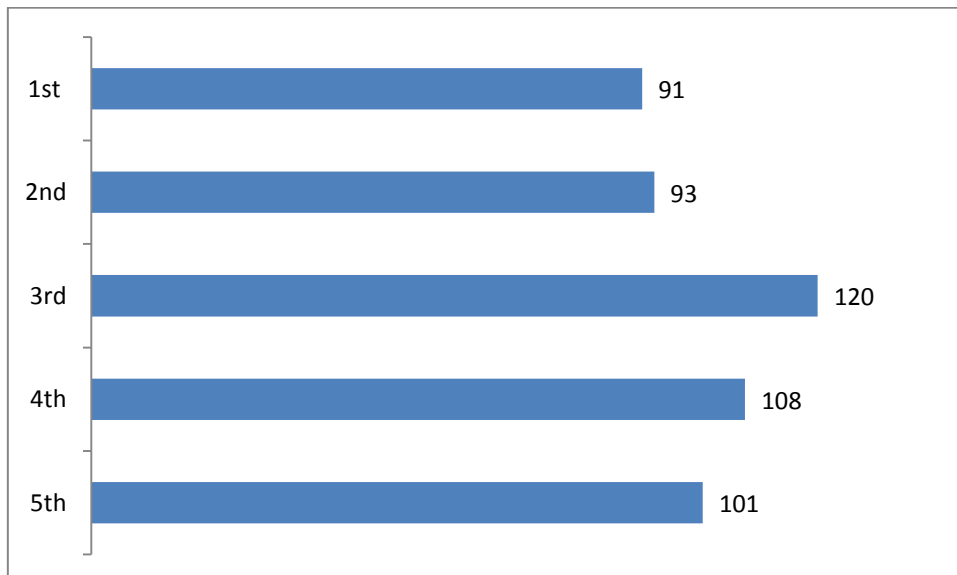
When should the space be open?



Question 3

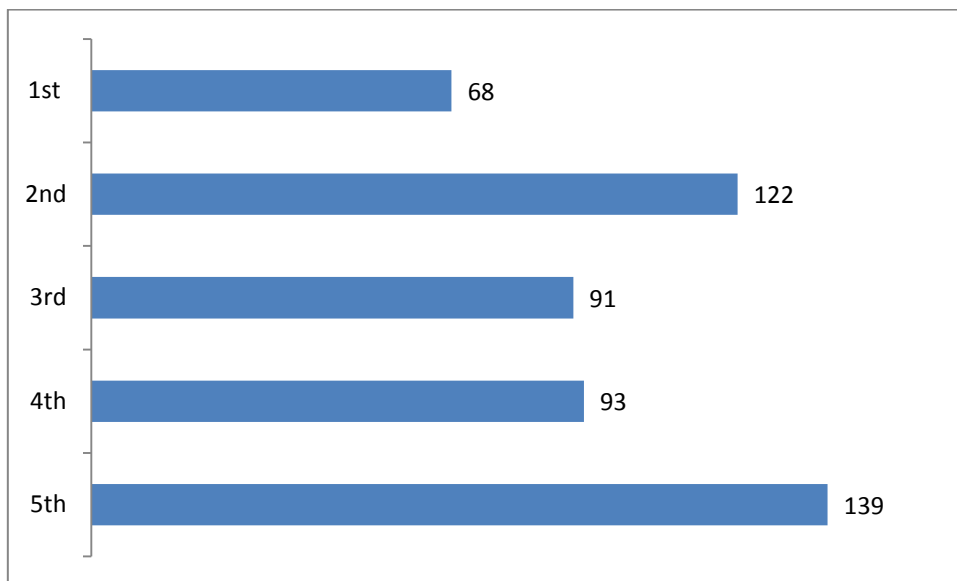
Please rate from 1-5 which of these you would most like to see on offer
(1st being highest and 5th being lowest)

Advice and guidance

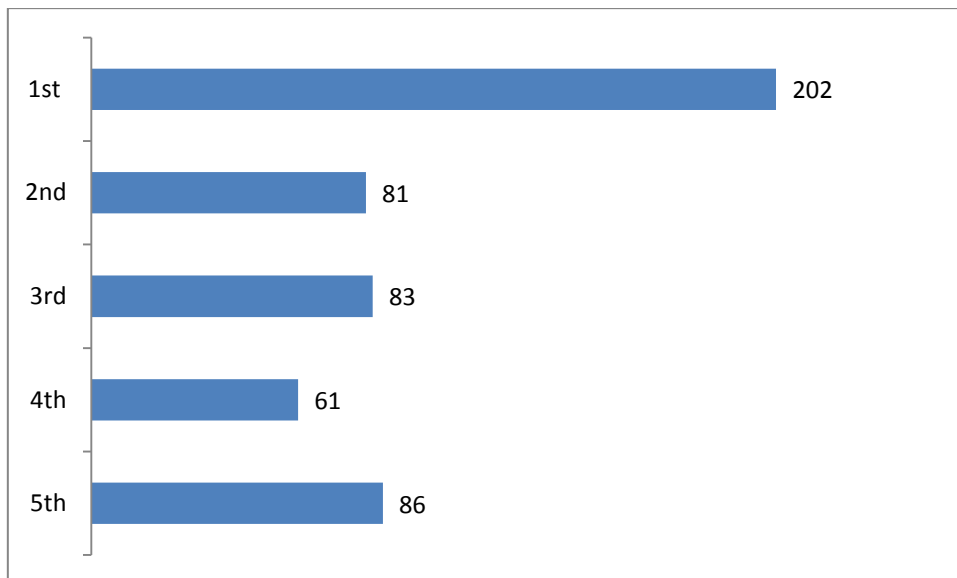


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Music, arts and performance space

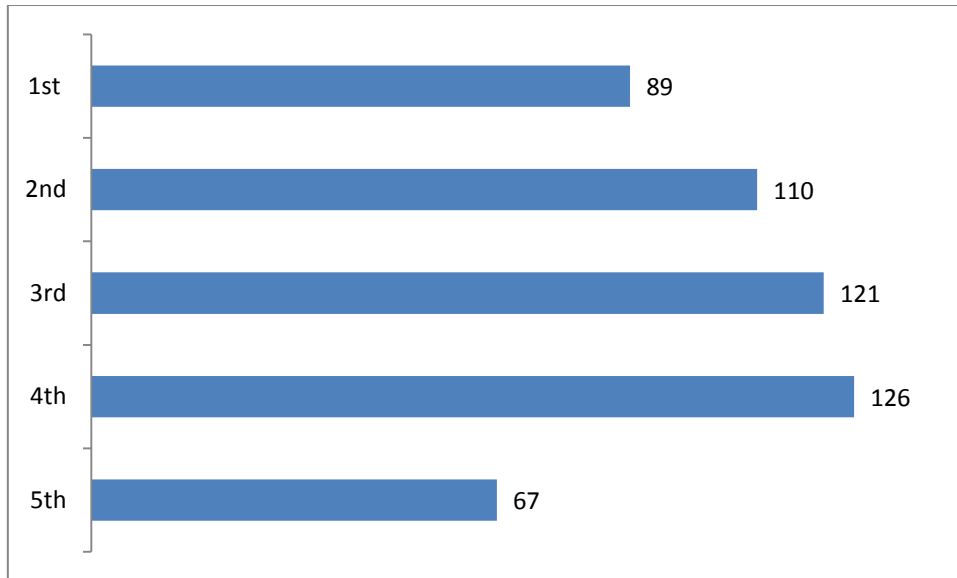


Social space

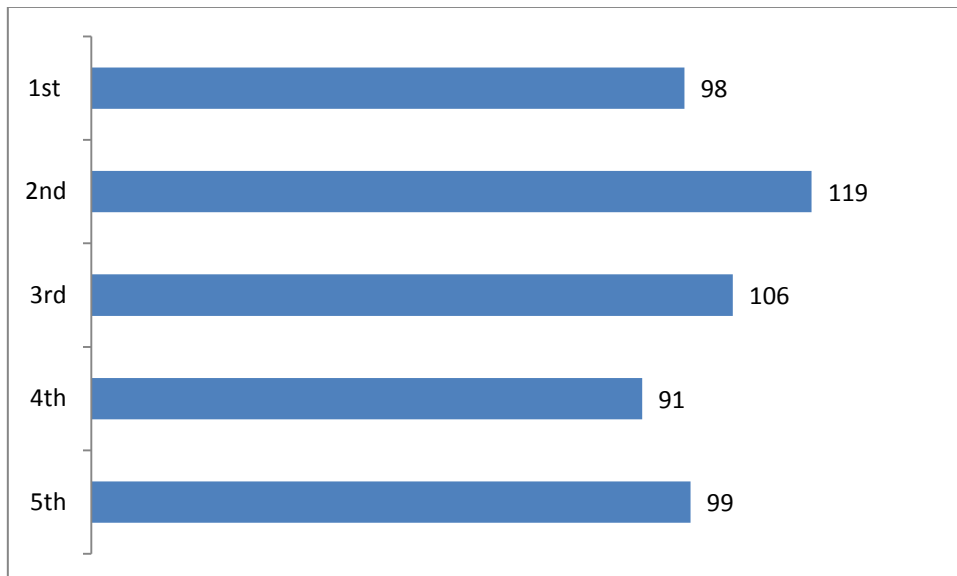


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Training to gain skills



Careers Advice and access to job vacancies



Question 4

Should the space have food and drinks for sale?

95% of young people who responded said YES (486 of 505)

Question 5

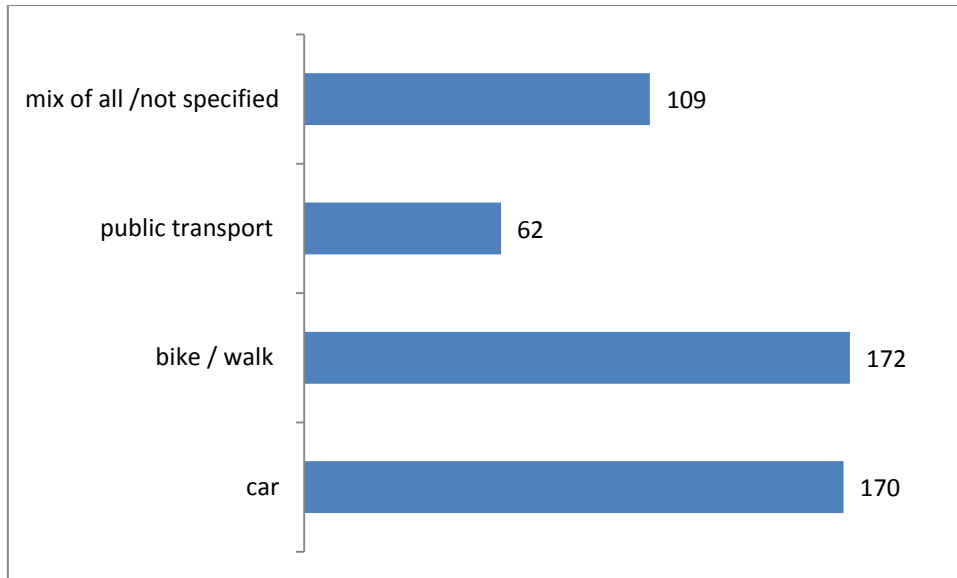
Would you require access to WIFI and the internet?

97% of young people who responded said YES (495 of 512)

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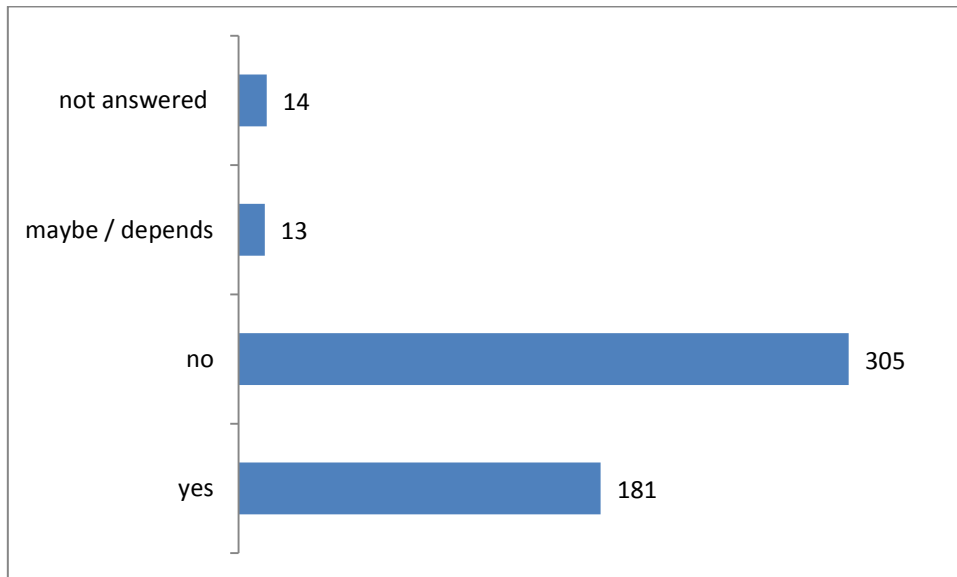
Question 6

How would you travel to the town centre?



Question 7

Would you be willing to pay for training courses on offer?



Question 8

Do you have any other comments about a space for young people in or around the town centre?

Make it somewhere that everyone wants to go, do trips away to places, have a food café, have jobs for under 18's where they get paid.

It should not be really expensive like other child clubs who sell food and drink for double the price. (multiple)

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Make it a free wi-fi Café (multiple)
Modern design, toilets
I just want a place to sit with friends x 2
No bad members/manners
What will the age range be of people who can attend?
There should be new cut out roads for people to walk there instead of walking across the roads.
No smoking or drinking alcohol and entertainment (multiple)
There should be activities like football and girl stuff. Performances at the weekend. Make sure you are safe and don't run from your parents
Make it easily available. Don't make it all about people needing help - focus on the fun.
It should be cheap so everyone like people with less money can pay.
It should be free for the first 3 months
Not religious things (multiple)
It should be there to attract young pupils and prevent them from being criminals when they age.
Fun (multiple)
The closer to the town centre the better - people might not know of it if it was outside the town centre.
It would be good if it was open most times, however not in school hours. I like the sound of training however it would be good if there was also an area where we can study.
"Parents shouldn't be there and should be kicked out"
Can there be a place to play PS4 and Xbox and chill out and watch TV
There may be bad things going on there so you have to make sure it is safe
Just for it to be a friendly place where you can meet others with similar mind sets to your own (multiple)
CCTV cameras should be in operation
Build a gaming café
It would be cool to have a place for young people only, and helpful to have courses to learn how to do helpful things in life
It should be a place where people can go to get away from their house
Not make it so babyish like for normal kids please.

Summary of findings

Young people want a safe social space of their own that would be available as universal provision. The space would be open daytimes, evenings and weekends. Ideally the space needs to be big enough to zone areas and should be modern with refreshments available/for sale and toilet facilities. WiFi is essential.

Consultation with Youth Council

A group session was also held on 4th June 2016 at Coopers Hill with members of the Youth Council, facilitated by Atkins. This followed a Youth Council visit to Braccan Walk when those on the visit had provided comments on the proposals.

Atkins design was shown on Presentation Boards and had sought to pick up on the questionnaire survey results and comments post the Youth Council's visit. The design was discussed and comments/observations explored.

Atkins Presentation

- There would be opportunity to influence the interiors and internal layout – the critical feedback was in respect of the external areas, elevational treatments and understanding the access routes to Braccan Walk.
- Atkins and the Council would welcome the Youth Council's involvement in the delivery of the project – potentially a working group would be set up to include designated Youth Council members

There was unanimous support for the sketch plan which illustrated the entrance being direct into the main social space, the higher toilet provision and the greater glazing provision to the core open areas. A number of matters of detailed design were discussed. Layouts provided for flexible use and sub division – a range of uses were discussed.

CCTV cameras internal and external were acceptable (but not in the group rooms)

Pedestrian routes were discussed at length; desire lines would always be the shortest route irrespective of BFC's desire for routes to be safe and controlled – the Youth Service & Atkins stressed that the safest route from the town centre (north, south & east approaches) was via the footbridge direct into the car park – members were going to look at this route which before the presentation they had not been aware of.

The Youth Council whilst favouring this central location and its proximity to the bus station were concerned at the lack of bus services available to outlying areas at times when the Youth Centre would be open & closing.

More signage would be required especially directional signs.

Members expressed a real interest in being involved in the project design development.

Consultation with Town Centre Youth Group

A further meeting was held on 6th June 2016 at NRG with the town centre youth group. Again the group were unanimously in favour of the sketch plan which illustrated the entrance being direct into the café/main social space, the higher toilet provision and the greater glazing provision to the core open areas.

The group's main concerns were about how the space was going to be used; how frequently it might be open as a destination for them; and not losing their much appreciated group sessions at NRG (more would be great). Feedback was similar to the Youth Council.