



CRANBROOK TOWN CENTRE








COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Final report

JANUARY
2024



ASH
FUTURES

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We would like to thank all the people who live and work in Cranbrook that engaged with this work so enthusiastically. Special thanks to Thea Billeter who was active and supportive throughout.



The initial stages of development in Cranbrook Town Centre have begun, with the construction of several shops, flats and a Morrison's supermarket. Further facilities are needed and will be delivered once the land has been assembled and investment obtained. This consultation was requested by East Devon District Council to help inform the master planning process for the town centre during 2024.

The approach to the consultation for Cranbrook Town Centre was set out in a stakeholder engagement strategy, agreed by the Strategic Delivery Board. The consultation itself - an online survey and a number of events within the town - took place between late September and early December 2023.

We found that the community in Cranbrook was enthusiastic, engaged and thoughtful and we had active support from almost all of the public and community organisations that we approached within Cranbrook. We had 1,397 responses to a short survey; 292 responses to a longer, more detailed survey and 50 responses to a business survey. This was a very high response rate which demonstrates the enthusiasm for the town centre development.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Of the facilities already proposed by stakeholders, residents identified a leisure centre with a swimming pool and a health and wellbeing centre (including a GP surgery) as top priorities for the town's development.
2. The community also expressed the need for a variety of other facilities, of which a more diverse range of shops and eateries and an active town square were most popular. There was a clear desire for personal care and wellness services, family and youth facilities, public and green spaces, and cultural venues.
3. To encourage more visits to the town centre, the community suggested that there should be: better access on foot; plenty of outdoor places to sit with shade and shelter; free public toilets; and activities laid on for children. Overall, they wanted the town centre to feel safe and to offer a welcoming environment, especially for young people.
4. Preferences for the town centre's design included plenty of greenery and integration with the environment (especially the Country Park); outdoor social spaces with weather protection; provision for local businesses and markets; and disabled access to all facilities. Residents wanted a modern and versatile design to enable many different uses and they wanted a safe, community feel.
5. Cranbrook residents showed a keen interest in having a regular market - at least once a week. Farmer's markets, street food markets and specialist markets were most popular. This echoed the support for Cranbrook being a 'food' town and a 'green' town - with those themes being actively supported within the town centre and beyond.
6. Sustainable development was always meant to be a feature of Cranbrook. The community put forward a range of ideas, including excellent public transport links, renewable energy on town centre buildings, recycling points, green construction, active travel, along with community orchards and food growing.
7. Suggestions for making the town centre more accessible and inclusive focused on improved pavements and footpaths, public transport, cycling infrastructure, wheelchair accessibility, traffic management, ample parking, seating, clear signage, sensory spaces, public toilets, safety measures, and community involvement.







8. Given the very young demographic within the town, the needs of young people are important. Young people are all different - and some feel the need to have some spaces where they can decide how and when to participate, without everything being controlled for them.
9. There is a small, but important, cohort of micro businesses in Cranbrook. Many of those, and others thinking of starting a business, wanted access to low cost, flexible space within the town centre. Most popular were hot desking, workshops and retail space in Cranbox (flexible and modular spaces) and market stalls - all steps on the Business Ladder.
10. The community provided various other suggestions for the future of the town centre, emphasising safety, environmental sustainability, inclusivity, cultural activities, green spaces, effective traffic management, support for local businesses and civic pride.

This report is being submitted to East Devon District Council to be used as it completes a master-planning process for Cranbrook Town Centre. It is the responsibility of EDDC and its partners to take these findings on board over the next several months.







RECOMMENDATIONS

These are recommendations to EDDC and its partners regarding the process for the following stages - leading up to the publication of the masterplan.

Keep up the momentum of talking with and informing the community

-  The community in Cranbrook is enthusiastic and keen to help make their town a success. Many of them want to be more involved. Find a range of ways to engage with them - both formal and informal. The sounding board proved a useful route and could be continued.
-  Young people are also willing to be involved. Need to work with methods and times and styles which suit them. The Student Council at the Cranbrook Education Campus may be a helpful 'way-in'
-  Transparent communication is vital. The tone needs to be informal and engaging - not bureaucratic or transactional all the time.
-  Encourage more events to draw the community together.

Making things happen

-  Do the things that people want most, first - or explain why.
-  Quick wins will go a long way to building trust (Leisure Centre, Cranbox?).
-  Some facilities may be better run by community organisations, reflecting a more organic approach which gives the community a real say over how some services are run. One model might be a community legacy company.
-  Young people are all different - and need a range of different options - some organised and some not.
-  Consider developing multi-purpose spaces to provide for different needs at different times. This might also reduce construction and running costs.
-  Some opportunities may be more viable now than when they were tried previously as the population has grown considerably and will continue to do so.

CRANBROOK TOWN CENTRE

Consultation headlines
October to December 2023



1397

responded to the survey



1107

want a leisure centre most



784

want a busy town square



50%

want outside places to
sit, chat and eat



93%

will visit town centre at
least weekly

Snippets

MARKETS

Markets are popular, with most people **(95%)** backing regular food markets and occasional specialist or seasonal markets. Seen as a way for local people to get onto the business ladder.

CRANBOX

Cranbox has a lot of support **(82%)**. Most people want it to encourage small local businesses by charging affordable rents.

MOVEMENT

People want the town centre to encourage walking and cycling and offer excellent public transport **(up to 91%)**.

FOOD AND DRINK

Food is a strong feature that will encourage people into the town centre - they want cafes and bars, take-aways and fresh food outlets **(54% to 80%)**.

SHOPPING


902 people felt that a wider range of shops was important. **856** would like plenty of places to eat.

The idea of Cranbrook as a 'food' town and a 'green' town resonated.






Ash Futures were appointed in August 2023 by East Devon District Council to consult with the Cranbrook community on the delivery of infrastructure and services in the town centre.

CRANBROOK TOWN CENTRE

Cranbrook is a new town being developed in East Devon district, approximately 7 miles to the east of Exeter City centre. Development commenced in June 2011 and today there are around 3,000 homes built and occupied out of the 3,500 consented to date.

The Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document was  adopted by the East Devon District Council in October 2022 and allocates land to expand the town up towards 8,000 homes along with other social and community infrastructure needed to support the population.

The Plan places the maintenance and improvement of good health and wellbeing as a key policy objective. This will be achieved through:

-  Development of an attractive and legible built and natural environment that links into its surroundings
-  Ensuring that the community has, and is able to have, the infrastructure to support their needs and aspirations both now and into the future
-  Ensuring that all designs, proposals and decisions are coordinated to address the wider determinants of ill-health
-  Ensuring that locations of services and land-uses in Cranbrook integrate well with the community and are within easy reach on foot and bicycle wherever possible
-  Creating well designed streets and spaces using the Healthy Streets Approach to encourage walking, cycling and social activity
-  Ensuring that civic and community buildings are accessible to all and provide facilities to meet the needs of individuals and the community
-  Ensuring that housing is designed around spaces that encourage social activity
-  Ensuring that housing typologies and resulting densities are appropriate to their locations to support vibrant economic activity and public services.

Cranbrook was previously part of the NHS Healthy New Towns programme, with its legacy carrying forward into the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot that the town is jointly part of alongside Exeter. This current Sport England Pilot is aimed at tackling inactivity, particularly among families, who are a dominant group of town residents. Census 2021 data shows that Cranbrook has the youngest population structure of any town in Devon, with significantly higher proportions of people aged 0-14 and 25-44 compared with England. This is also reflected in the birth rate in the town, which is significantly above the Devon and England Average.

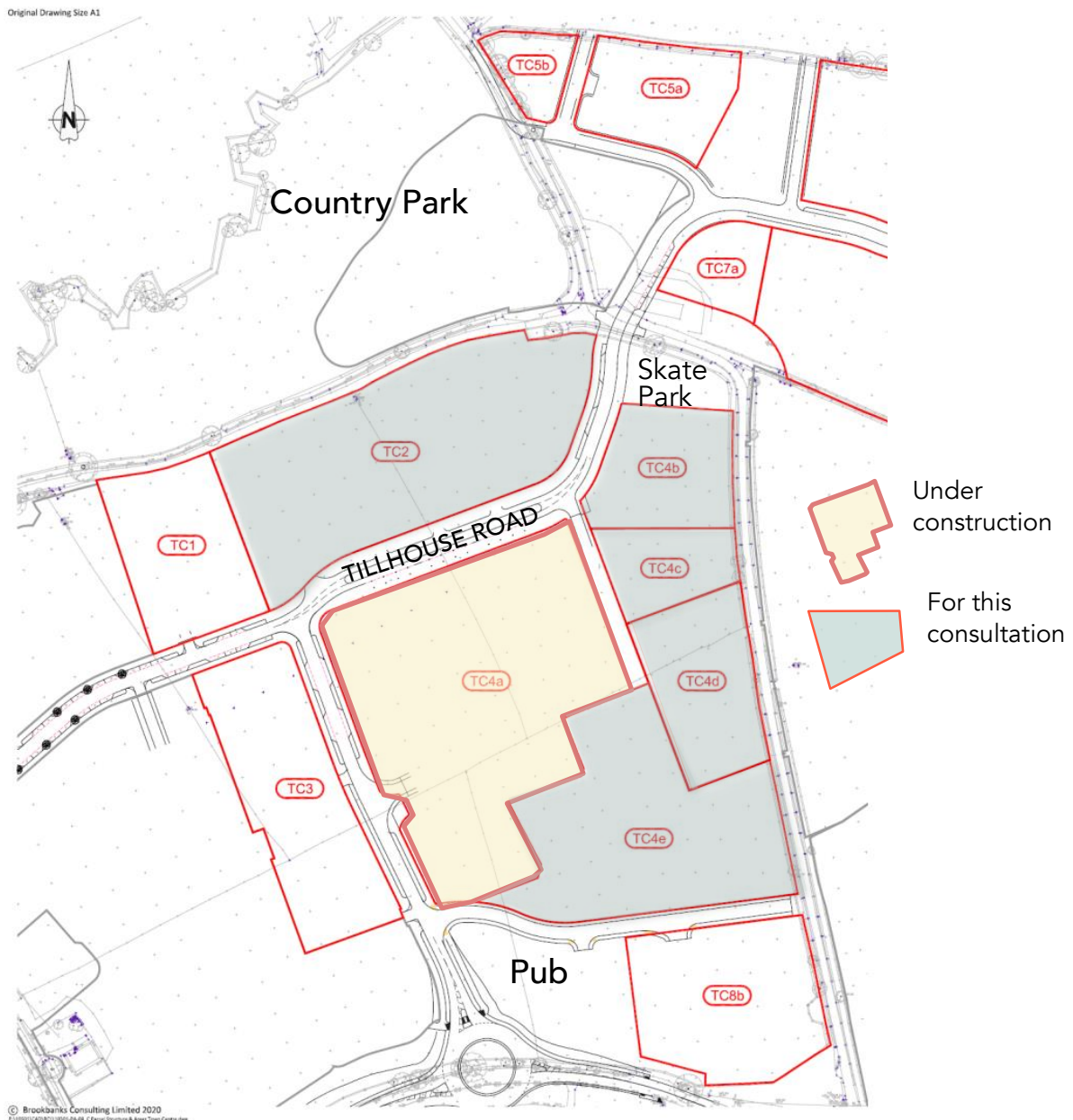
The already consented town centre land includes 3.68 hectares of land expected to end up in the control of the public sector and to be used for the delivery of new town centre and residential uses. To date the only non-residential development in the town centre to have been completed is The Cranberry Farm public house. However, work is well underway to deliver a supermarket, nursery, Public Square, eleven small retail units and twenty-six apartments with completion likely to be complete in 2024.

East Devon District Council (EDDC), Devon County Council (DCC), Cranbrook Town Council (CTC) and other Public Sector partners have a long held ambition to see a vibrant town centre that serves the community at Cranbrook and that is capable of supporting the growth of the town up to an expected population of 20,000 people.











To date, the burden of delivering the town centre has been born entirely by private sector developers. The commercial delivery model is reliant on there being sufficient population to sustain services from the point at which they are delivered, which has delayed delivery by a considerable time, leaving the Cranbrook community without key services in the meantime. This is set against a backdrop of the developers having promoted that the town centre was 'coming soon' back in the very early days of the town (c. 2014).

Private sector developers often feel unable to deliver services that do not generate income but have community benefit, such as leisure centres or buildings for cultural activity. This has prompted a more interventionist approach. In November 2022, EDDC completed the purchase of land in the town centre, funded by the Enterprise Zone, in addition to land due to be transferred to it through S106 agreements. Devon County Council will also acquire 0.9 hectares for delivery of their assets. In total, that will eventually build a Town Centre land portfolio of 3.68 hectares.










Policy CB21 of the Cranbrook Plan identifies that provision should be made for the following uses in the Town Centre:

-  A town square that can accommodate markets and events, and has seating and social space
-  Health and Wellbeing Hub
-  Leisure Centre
-  The Tillhouse (CTC building including their offices)
-  Library (DCC)
-  Children's Centre (DCC)
-  Youth Centre (DCC)
-  Extra Care Housing scheme (DCC)

Most of these facilities have some capital funding either already secured or expected through forthcoming planning agreements. However, many of them also have a funding gap that will need closing prior to delivery.

In addition to the facilities mentioned in the Cranbrook Plan, there are a number of other buildings and uses on the land that are expected or are being explored with potential investors:

-  Fire Station
-  Adaptable commercial and retail space
-  Cinema
-  Sheltered housing
-  Live/work units and other residential space above ground floor
-  Workshop space
-  Skatepark (currently being built)



On appointment, we were asked to produce a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, to be agreed by the Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) for Cranbrook. The SDB consists of three representatives each from the County Council, the District Council and the Town Council. It is chaired on a rotating basis and currently by the Town Council.

In preparation for writing the strategy and to ensure we took account of the views of local stakeholders, we held face to face online interviews with 11 stakeholders representing elected members and professionals working in and for the community. See Annex 1 for list of interviewees.

Following those interviews and having reviewed the Cranbrook Plan and other documents, we identified some **policy principles** and some **process principles** to focus and guide the consultation. We discussed these with the stakeholders and amended them in response to their comments.

Policy principles

The policy principles which the facilities should be designed to deliver are:

Health and wellbeing - a key strategic policy in the Plan, and a number of the facilities will be important in supporting health and wellbeing of residents.

Entrepreneurial identity - as outlined in the Town Centre policy *One of the main focuses for the town is to build a strong economy which also creates a strong sense of place, the emphasis is on supporting small and micro businesses, including social and community enterprises.* (para 4.49).

Sustainability - as stated in the Cranbrook Plan, any developments should exemplify best practice for new buildings, and help to make Cranbrook a more sustainable town overall. In the discussions with stakeholders, other key issues identified were equality and levels of deprivation in the town, and the need to actively build the community. The following principle was therefore added.

Accessibility and community building - It is important that developments and facilities should be physically accessible and welcoming to all. They should also provide flexible opportunities for community events and activities.

Process principles

The process principles which we will use to design the consultation are:

Youth focus - stakeholders agreed that it is important that the consultation is structured in a way which recognises the young demographic of the town.

Co-creation - Ash Futures were asked to co-create the engagement with the local community. To achieve this, we will establish a small Sounding Board, without decision making powers, consisting of local residents. This approach was supported by stakeholders, and will help address the distrust discussed below

Maximising engagement - The stakeholders agreed that the consultation methods should maximise engagement with hard-to-reach groups/quiet voices. This will include taking account of accessibility for those with specific needs. In the interviews, several stakeholders commented that many consultations have already been held, and there is significant distrust of the consultation process. We therefore added this additional principle.

Taking account of 'consultation fatigue' - To address this, we will work closely with those already active in the community to deliver consultation events, and provide a range of opportunities for concerns to be expressed. In our communications we will make it clear that the consultation is



focussing on delivery of the town centre, and is building on previous work. We will also design communication mechanisms so that residents will be able to check the progress and outcomes of the consultation.

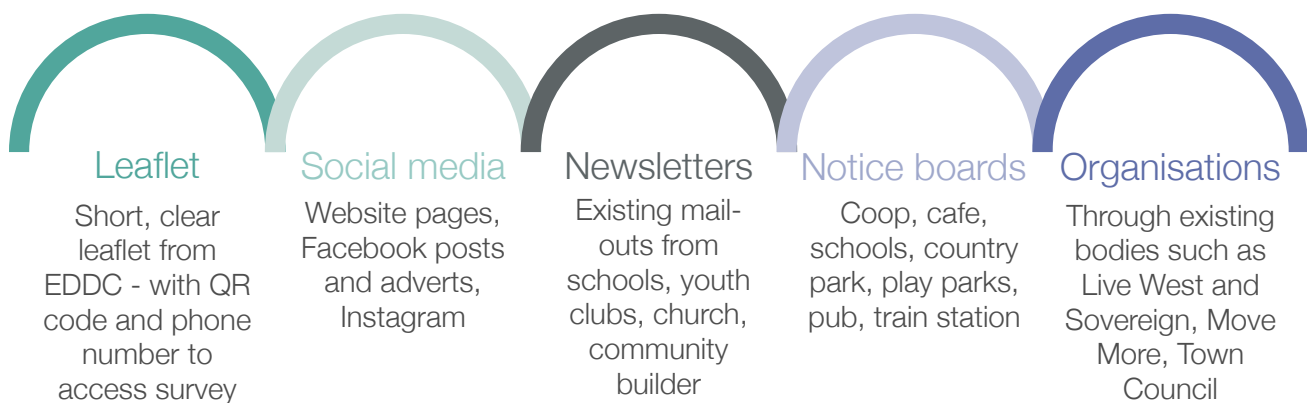
CONSULTATION METHODS

We proposed a number of consultation methods and routes by which we might encourage local people to engage with the consultation process. These were designed to give people different ways of engaging and allow us to explore views in different ways.

METHODS








CONDUITS











ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

During October and November 2023, we undertook a range of actions designed to maximise engagement with residents of Cranbrook. These included:

-  Establish a Sounding Board of residents (plus attendance by some community workers), including involvement of young people – to help us
-  Town-wide leaflet drop promoting the consultation (QR code for survey)
-  Survey to explore priorities for the Town Centre (online and paper)
-  Online engagement - through posts on local Facebook sites and webpages (eg Enterprise Zone, District Council). 



-  Communication through existing mechanisms such as newsletters and mail-outs (eg from school, running club).
-  Youth engagement through secondary school and youth-focussed social media
-  Pop-up engagement outside both schools
-  Drop-in events, at different times, in Younghayes and the Cranberry Farm pub
-  Two workshop) with key stakeholders
-  Half-term event developed with EX5 Alive, targeted at parents
-  Existing events that promoted the survey, such as the Harvest Festival
-  Ongoing promotion through web and social media – letting people know about our progress

SOUNDING BOARD

The purpose of the sounding board was to work with Ash Futures on designing and delivering the community engagement process. We worked with local people who reflected different interests and needs in the community and others who have an important role in the local community - the Community Hub Manager, the Community Builder, the Community Connector and the Education Campus Principal. A total of ten people took part.

We held two meetings and a workshop with the sounding board, and established a WhatsApp group to allow easy communication. In addition to helping design the consultation events, a member of the group produced a very effective video promoting the consultation and some members also helped deliver consultation activities.

SURVEY

The online survey (paper copies were also available on request) was promoted with a door-to-door leaflet drop to every home in Cranbrook; through the various events that we ran and via local websites, newsletters and social media. We also offered a small incentive - offering two £50 vouchers drawn randomly from those completing the initial, short, survey.

The survey provided the main route for capturing the views of Cranbrook residents. The following section presents the findings from the survey. The survey was in three parts. The first part was kept short and straightforward to ensure it could be completed in just a few minutes. Respondents could then opt to complete a second, more detailed survey and/or a short business survey.

Formally, the survey and leaflet were from East Devon District Council. They were keen to explain why the consultation was happening and to manage expectations, given the past history of slow progress on delivery of town infrastructure. The survey covered these issues at the start.

Why are we consulting now?

East Devon District Council now owns much of the land behind the supermarket that is being built. The Council and Devon County Council are also due to be transferred more land in the town centre and eventually we will own around 9 acres of land between us.

Legal agreements are also being drafted that will see the developers contributing millions of pounds towards helping to build things in the town centre, such as a new library, leisure centre and health and wellbeing hub.

We want to make sure that Cranbrook has a town centre that meets your needs.



What will happen next?

Once the consultation finishes, a report will be written about what was said. This will then be used by the Council and its partners to draw up a town centre masterplan in Summer 2024. The masterplan will contain maps, images and words to describe how the town centre will develop.

Some projects will happen more quickly than others, because funding may be easier to raise or because there is a greater need for it to be built. Alongside the masterplan we will also put together a delivery plan that will say how, when and by who we expect each project to be delivered.

YOUR IDEAS MATTER

Complete our short survey and you could win one of two £50 prizes. Survey closes 10 November. Go to eastdevon.gov.uk/cranbrook-town-centre

Keep an eye on these websites for events and other ways to get involved:
cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk
[facebook.com/evsallivehub](https://www.facebook.com/evsallivehub)
[eedez.com/cranbrook](https://www.eedez.com/cranbrook)

To ask for a different format or language, please phone 01395 571687 or email cranbrooktowncentre@eastdevon.gov.uk

East Devon Council

See inside →

WE ARE ASKING YOU ABOUT THESE AREAS OF CRANBROOK

The pieces are coming together. Now we need you.

Legal agreements are being written that will see developers contribute millions of pounds towards facilities and spaces in the town centre, like a library and leisure centre.

We want your ideas to help decide what else should be included, what should be built first and where it should be built.

Your views and ideas will then be used by the council and its partners to create a long-term town centre masterplan in summer 2024.

East Devon District Council are in the process of taking ownership of this land

Land for extra care housing

Supermarket, shops and nursery under construction

Land for Devon County Council

Land for skate park

East Devon District Council now owns most of this land

FEEDBACK

Despite the warnings we had about consultation fatigue and distrust from residents, we found that the community in Cranbrook was enthusiastic, engaged and thoughtful. We also had active support from most organisations within Cranbrook.

In the end, we had 1,397 responses to the short survey; 292 responses to the more detailed survey and 50 responses to the business survey. For context, there are approximately 3,100 households in Cranbrook - giving a very high response rate. ★

OTHER EVENTS ★

In addition to the survey, we undertook a range of other consultation activities, as described above. They were designed to promote the survey and the consultation process as well as providing other ways for residents to have their say. We engaged directly with over 200 people through these events and selected quotes from the events are included in this report.

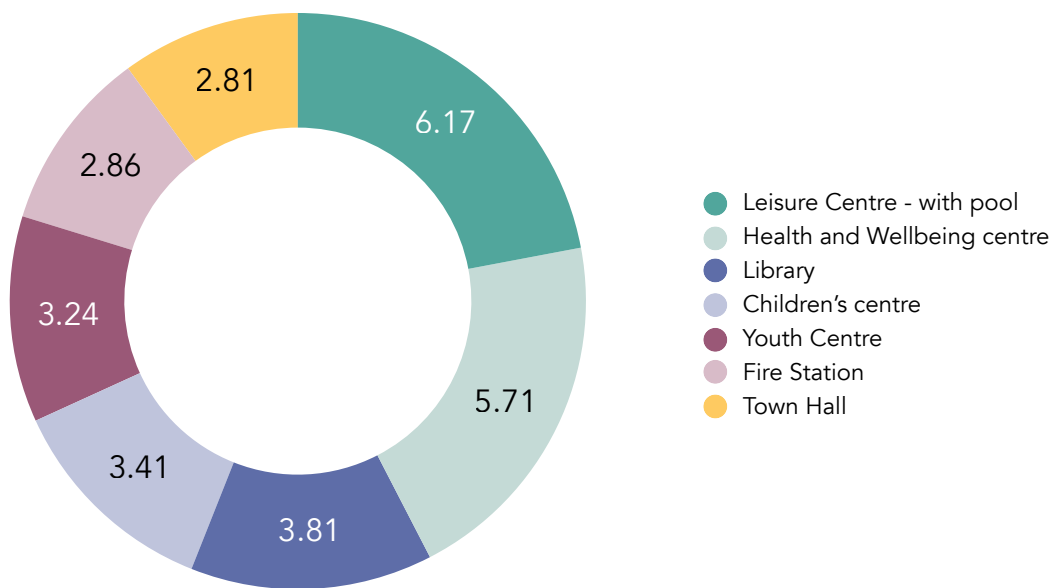
“My teens just want somewhere indoors and safe to spend free time, possibly with activities every now and again.”



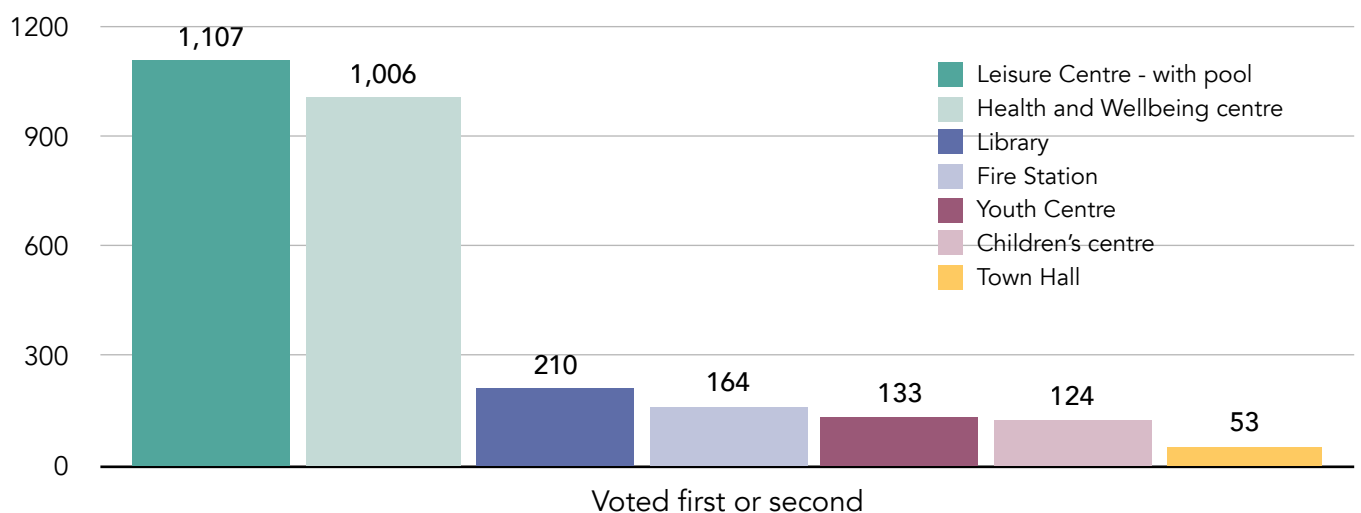
There were a number of questions in the first, short survey which aimed to find out what facilities residents wanted to see in the town centre, what design issues were important to them and what might make them use the centre more. Each issue is set out as it was asked in the survey. 1,397 people answered at least one question.

Core facilities

This first question is about buildings that we and other public organisations already plan to build. Which are most important to you? Sort from most to least important.



Weighted score - averaged (n=1399)



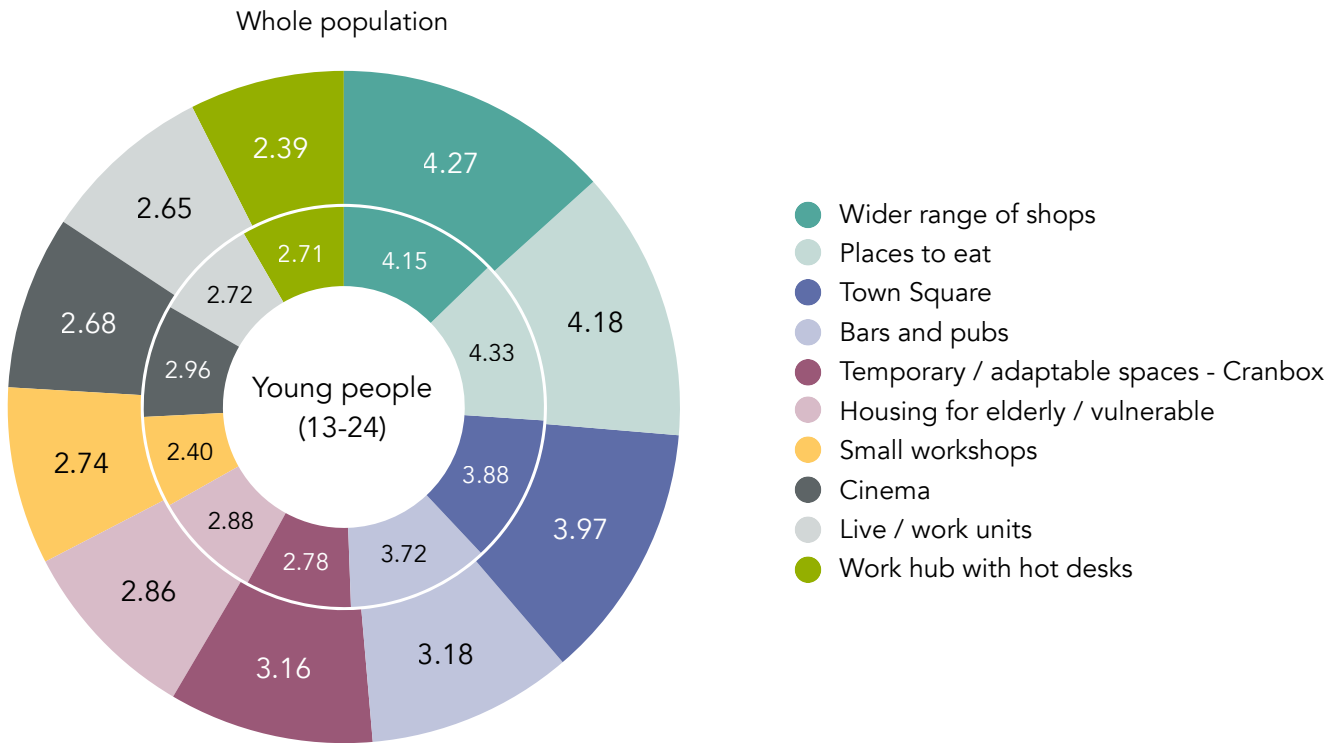
The two most popular choices, by far, were the Leisure Centre (preferably with a swimming pool) and the Health and Wellbeing Centre. In discussions at face to face events, most people understood that a swimming pool might be expensive - but a leisure centre was a must have.



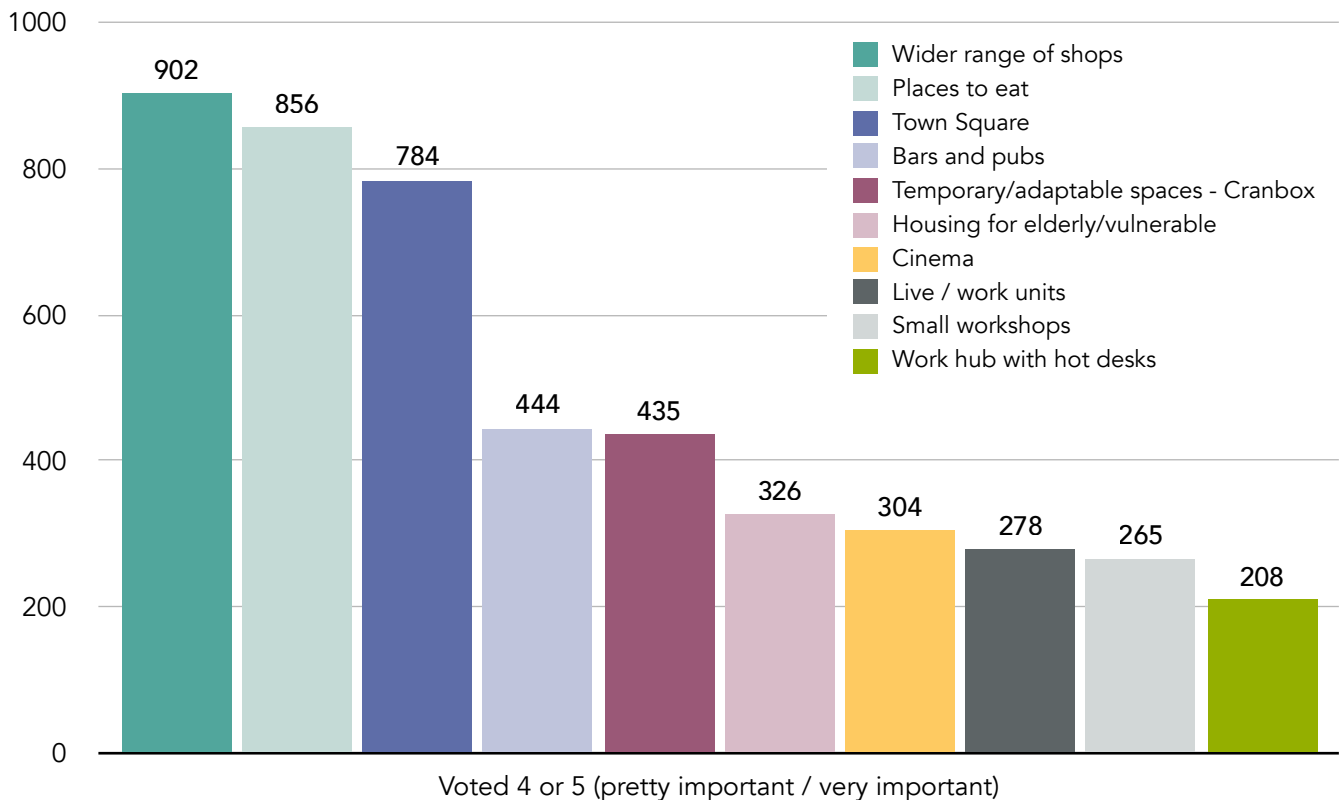
Other facilities

How important to you are other facilities that may be suitable for Cranbrook town centre?










Please rate each of these facilities from not important at all (1) to very important (5).



Ave. score (1=not important; 5= very important)



We also asked an open question about other facilities that people would like to see in the town centre.

-  **Health and Wellness Services:** There's a strong desire for more accessible healthcare facilities such as dentists, NHS services, opticians, and physiotherapists. As noted above, people are also interested in having a gym, leisure centre, and swimming pool.
-  **Beauty and Personal Care:** Numerous mentions of hairdressers, barbers, and beauty salons indicate a need for personal grooming and care services.
-  **Family and Youth Facilities:** Suggestions like soft play areas, nurseries, activities for teens, and leisure facilities for all age groups reflect a community interested in family-friendly and youth-oriented spaces.
-  **Food and Retail:** There's a demand for various specialist and independent shops like bakeries, butchers, greengrocers, and independent cafes, as well as general retail stores and local markets.
-  **Public and Green Spaces:** Requests for green spaces, outdoor exercise areas, and community gardens show a desire for public areas that promote community engagement and outdoor activities.
-  **Cultural and Entertainment Venues:** People are looking for cultural enrichment and entertainment options such as an arts centre, live music venues, and a community hall for performances and events.
-  **Infrastructure and Public Services:** There's a need for more infrastructure like a police station, better transport hub, and improved traffic management. Some also suggest a focus on sustainable and eco-friendly options.
-  **Community Buildings:** Many suggestions focus on facilities that could serve as community hubs, such as a community hall, community theatre, and spaces for clubs and classes.
-  **Utilities and Maintenance:** Services like a laundrette, dry cleaner, petrol station, and facilities for practical needs like shoe repairs and key cutting were also mentioned.

The responses reflect the community's desire for a well-rounded set of services and facilities that cater to the health and care needs of families and young people; that provide a rich mix of food and other retail, and that offer cultural activities and public services that promote community cohesion.

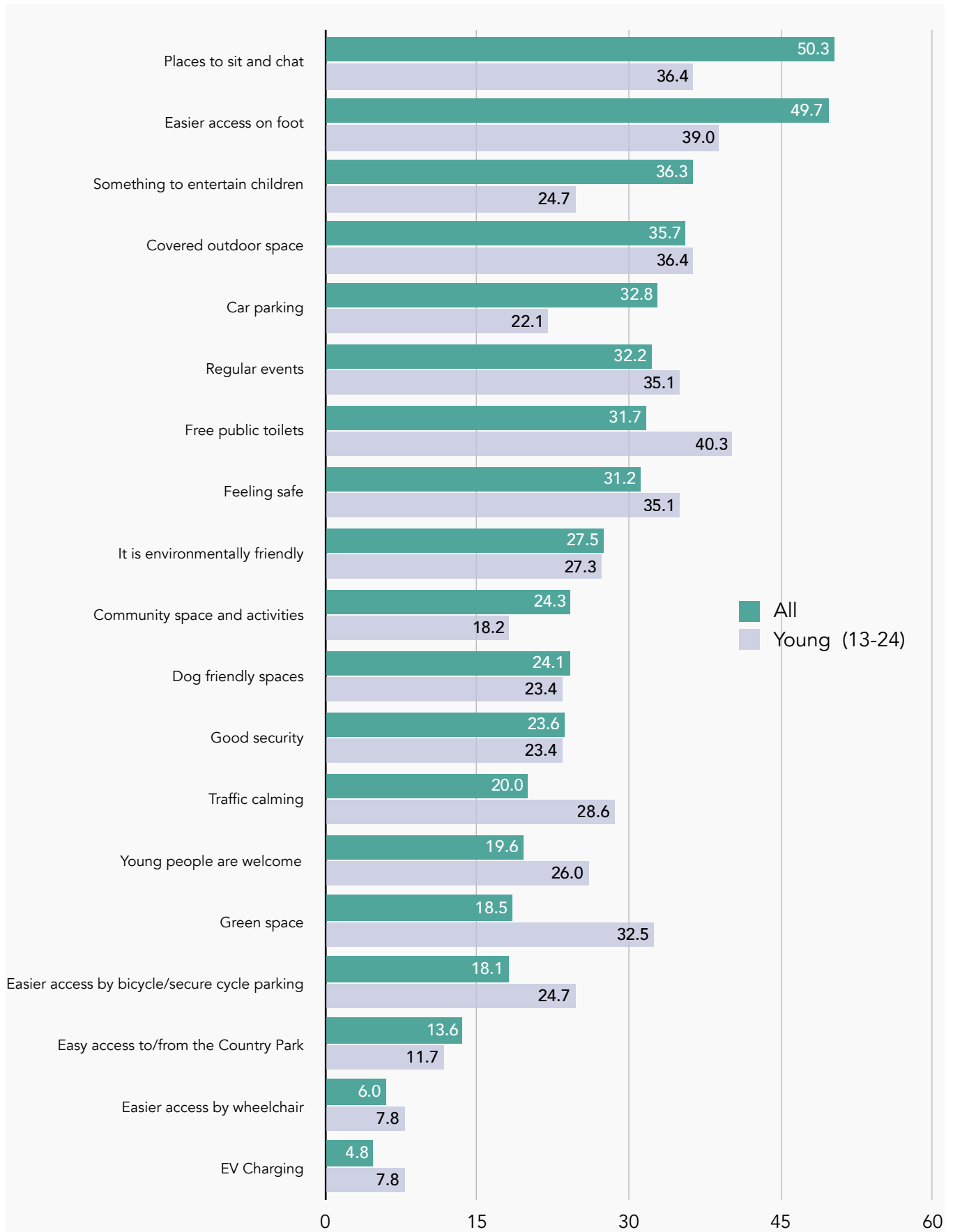
Young people (13 - 24) had broadly similar views to the public in general. Perhaps understandably, there was a higher proportion of young people wanting pubs, bars and places to eat. More also wanted a work hub and a cinema.

“I'd like to see a vibrant, multi functional town centre with independent shops and facilities that support the community.”















Attracting people to the centre

*As the town centre develops, what would make it more likely for you to visit the town centre?
Select up to 5 options.*



Again, an open question allowed people to add or reinforce views. Many of these reiterated the points in the main question.

-  **Covered Outdoor Space:** There is a significant preference for areas that provide shelter from weather, suggesting that people value having outdoor spaces that can be used year-round.
-  **Safety:** The importance of feeling safe in the community space is repeatedly emphasised, indicating that design elements that promote safety are crucial.
-  **Community Space and Activities:** Many responses highlight areas for community gatherings and activities, reflecting a need for communal engagement.
-  **Green Space:** Greenery is a recurrent theme, showing that the community places a high value on nature and landscaped areas within urban spaces.
-  **Regular Events:** The mention of regular events suggests a desire for a dynamic and engaging environment where ongoing activities can take place, providing entertainment and reasons to visit the space frequently.
-  **Free Public Toilets:** The need for accessible public toilets without charge is clearly important, indicating a priority for basic amenities that support comfort and ease of use.
-  **Easy Access to/from the Country Park:** There's a desire for seamless integration and easy transition between the town centre and adjacent green areas.
-  **Traffic Calming and Car Parking:** There are concerns about vehicle traffic and the need for sufficient parking.
-  **Dog-Friendly Spaces:** Some areas where dogs are welcome reflects the wishes of some active pet owners.
-  **Seating Areas:** There's a clear preference for places to sit and relax.
-  **EV Charging:** Some mention electric vehicle charging points reflecting an environmentally conscious community.
-  **Accessibility Considerations:** Accessibility features like easy pram/pushchair access, wheelchair access, and secure bicycle parking are important.

These themes reflect the Cranbrook community's desire for inclusive, safe, and engaging public spaces that offer natural beauty, facilities for social interaction, and consideration for both pedestrian and vehicular access.

Seven of the top ten issues are shared by older and younger people alike.

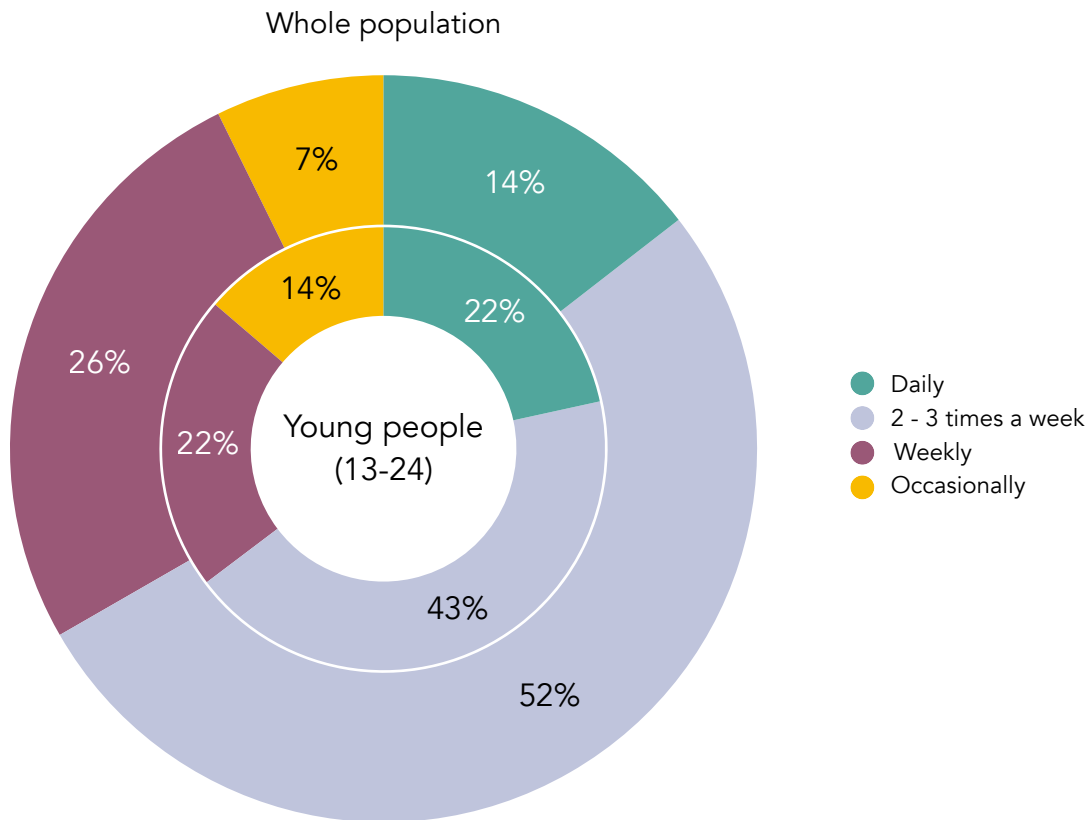
Young people seem to be more committed to environmental issues; feel more need for public toilets and want to feel safe - whereas the wider population are keen to have activities and entertainment for children and want more car parking.



Regular visits

How often are you likely to visit the town centre?

Select one option



This is an optimistic finding for businesses who will have a presence in the town centre. Over 90% of respondents said they would visit at least weekly. Creating the attractive space that residents seek, along with a good mix of retail space and public buildings will help make the centre a vibrant, welcoming place.

“ Moving here in 2013, one of the earliest achievements of the town was, of course, the country park and green spaces and, as we enter this new chapter, I think it's important we take lessons from that and incorporate green space into the town centre and beyond.”





77%

76%

OUTDOOR SEATING AND CAFES



71%

63%

SHADY TREES AND SEATING



49%

49%

LIVELY STREET MARKET



42%

55%

COVERED SPACES



33%

24%

MODULAR AND SOCIAL SPACE

NARROW AND COLOURFUL



22%

16%



12%

10%

PERFORMANCE SPACE

Look and feel

We asked a question about the 'look and feel' of the town centre, drawing on examples from elsewhere.

This question is about town centres and features that you like.

Cranbrook town centre won't entirely replicate any of these places but we want to understand what it is that makes you enjoy a town centre.

Which of these pictures of town centres do you prefer? Select up to three.

What do you like most about your favourite image?










- All weather
- Outdoor social spaces
- Greenery and nature
- Family friendly
- Lively
- Adaptable to changing needs
- Safe and inclusive
- Not too much concrete
- Support for local businesses
- Diverse architecture

The responses to this question strongly reinforce the answers to question 3. Cranbrook residents want a town centre which offers safe and sociable outdoor spaces, lots of greenery, shelter from the weather and allows for diverse interests.

- xx% Whole population
- xx% Young people (13-25)



Some people expanded on their ideas using an open question box.

-  **Greenery and Nature:** There's a clear preference for integrating nature into the community space, with frequent mentions of trees, green spaces, and outdoor seating. This suggests a desire for an environmentally friendly atmosphere.
-  **Social Spaces:** Many responses highlight the importance of socialising areas, including cafes and seating where people can gather, indicating a desire for a communal and family-friendly town centre.
-  **Market and Local Business:** Respondents are interested in markets that feature local produce and crafts, suggesting a support for local businesses and artisans, and a desire for a space that fosters economic activity.
-  **Outdoor Experiences:** There is a strong preference for outdoor experiences, including cafes, socialising, and entertainment, which suggests a community-oriented approach to town centre activities.
-  **Modern and Versatile Design:** Some responses show an interest in modern, eco-friendly designs and flexible spaces that can be used for multiple purposes.
-  **Shade and Weather Protection:** With an emphasis on shade and weather protection, the community expresses a practical concern for comfort and usability of outdoor spaces throughout the year.
-  **Community Feel and Safety:** Respondents wish for a space that fosters a sense of community, is safe, and where anti-social behaviour is discouraged.
-  **Accessibility and Open Spaces:** There's a call for wide, open spaces that are accessible and not overcrowded, which could cater for events and markets without feeling cramped.
-  **Integration with the Environment:** Many responses indicate a desire for the community space to blend with the environment, preserving the local character and prioritising pedestrian spaces over vehicles.

These themes, collectively, suggest a vision for a community space that is green, social, vibrant and accessible, while maintaining the features and practical services of a traditional local town.

“I hope that it will become a place that sustains the area enough so that Cranbrook residents won't need to leave every weekend.”

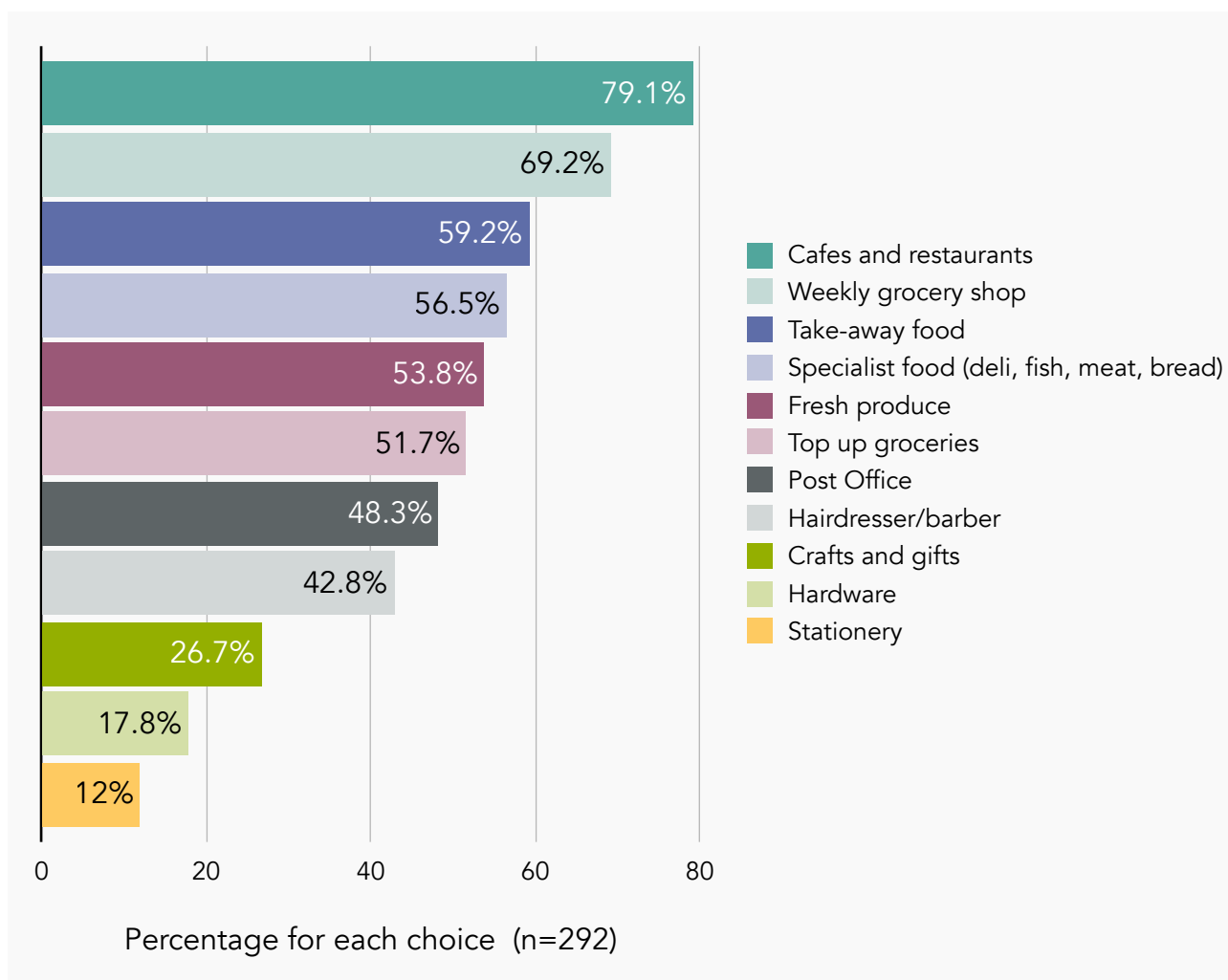


MORE DETAILED QUESTIONS

These questions were included in a second, longer and more detailed survey, with 292 people completing at least some of the questions.

Shopping needs

What kind of things would you shop for/visit in the town centre? Select one or more options



We asked if there were other things that would make people visit the town centre. Many simply reinforced earlier choices, however, additional ideas included: bank or building society, charity shops, book and music store, clothes and shoe shop, pet food, car mechanics, zero waste shop, pet food, dentist, optician, pound shop, Asian supermarket, parcel lockers, printing services and florist.

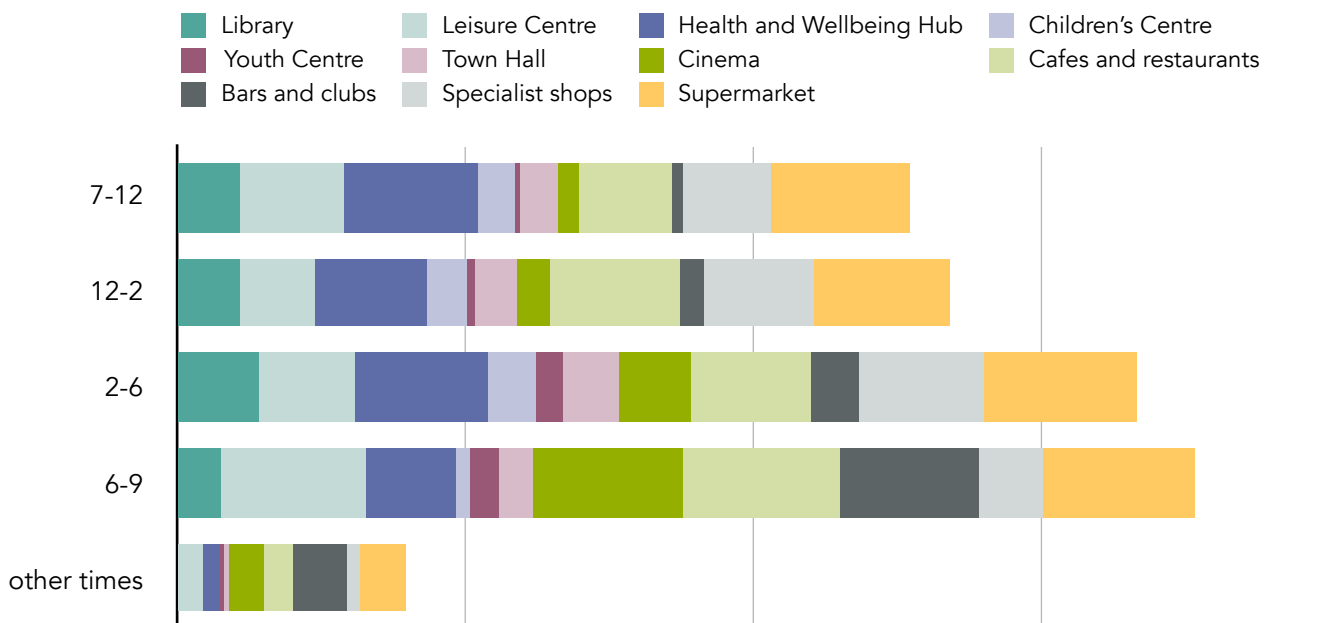
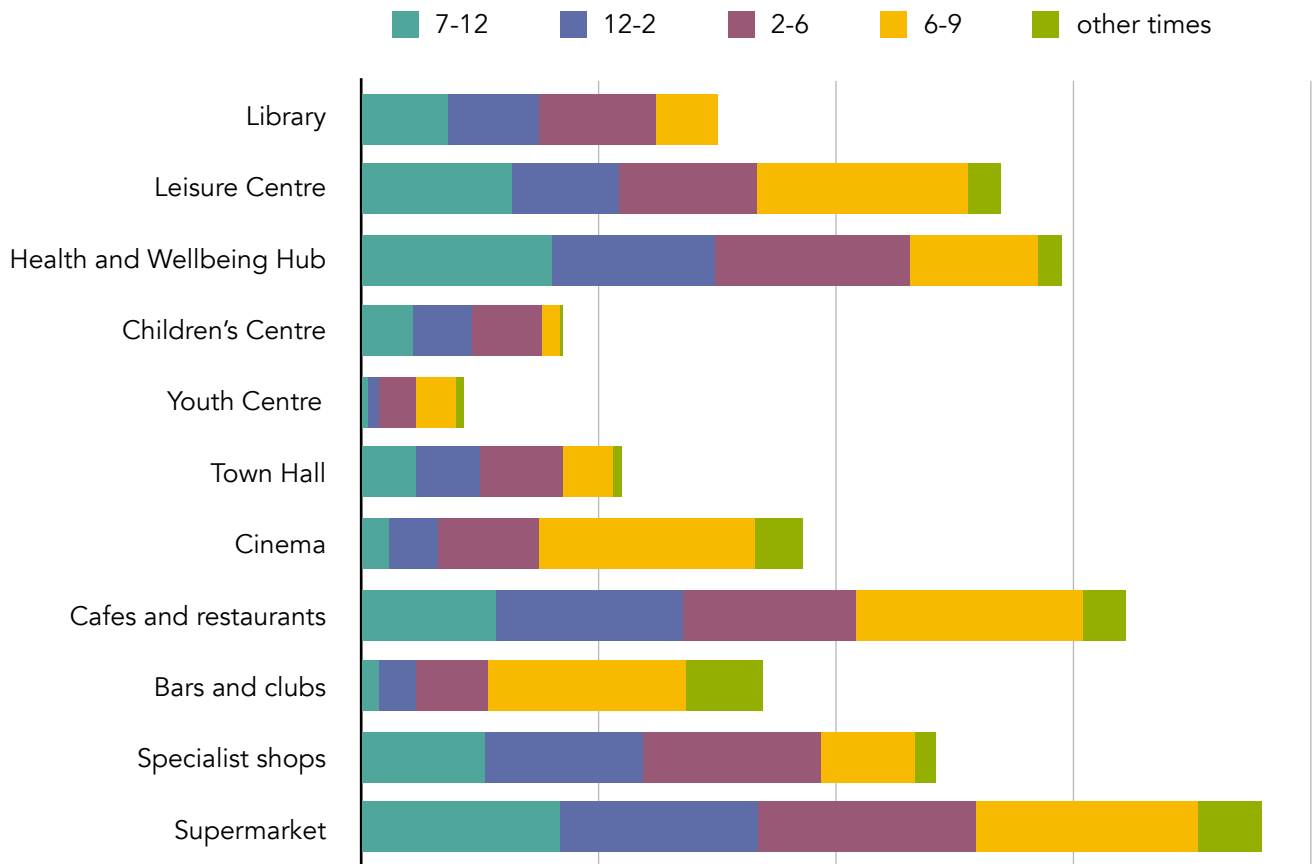
Several people mentioned other facilities, discussed earlier, such as leisure centre, gym, library, live music and event/art space.

Overwhelmingly, people want a good choice of high quality food to buy, as well as consume, in the town centre. Significant numbers access want fresh and specialist food. Many of the less popular choices could well be included within other stores.



Visiting times

What times of day would you most likely use the following facilities? Please select all that apply.

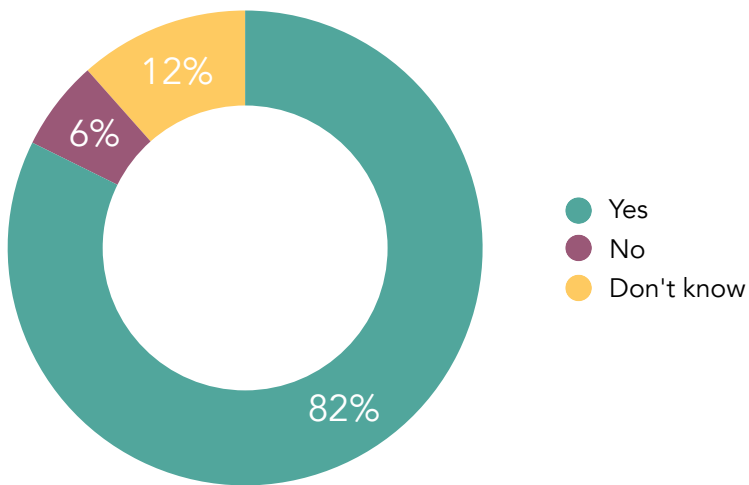


Unsurprisingly, people generally wanted key services, such as the supermarket, Health and Wellbeing Centre and cafes to be open throughout the day and evening. Leisure facilities, such as the Leisure Centre, cinema, bars and restaurants were expected to be open later in the day and into the evening.



Cranbox

Do you support the idea of a Cranbox style development in the town centre? Select one option



Support for Cranbox (n=277)

“ I rather like the idea of Cranboxes, as they would allow affordable rents and could give social enterprises an opportunity to engage with the community. Also it would bring in small business. It would simply give us a wider range of facilities.

Residents shared various opinions and suggestions regarding Cranbox, a concept for a flexible and modular retail space in Cranbrook Town Centre - originally outlined in the Our Place Plan in 2015.



- Although **most residents express support** for the idea and its potential to support local businesses, **some have concerns about its aesthetics** or potential impact on the town centre.
- Many residents emphasised **the need for rent levels to be affordable** for local and small businesses - crucial to attract a diverse range of services and businesses.
- A few residents had concerns about the design and aesthetics of Cranbox, suggesting that it should be made to **look attractive and fit well with the surroundings**.
- Several residents stress the need for it to be **environmentally conscious** and energy-efficient, perhaps incorporating solar generation.
- There is a clear desire for Cranbox to **focus on supporting local businesses**, and promoting entrepreneurship.
- Accessibility is a concern, with calls for **Cranbox to be wheelchair-friendly** and to ensure that people with mobility challenges can easily access the space.
- A few residents emphasised the need for **sufficient parking**.
- There is a recognition that Cranbox could serve as **a unique selling point (USP) for Cranbrook**, potentially attracting visitors to the town.
- Some residents offer **specific suggestions for Cranbox**, such as bike shops or communal spaces. A couple suggested that businesses should change annually to keep the offerings fresh

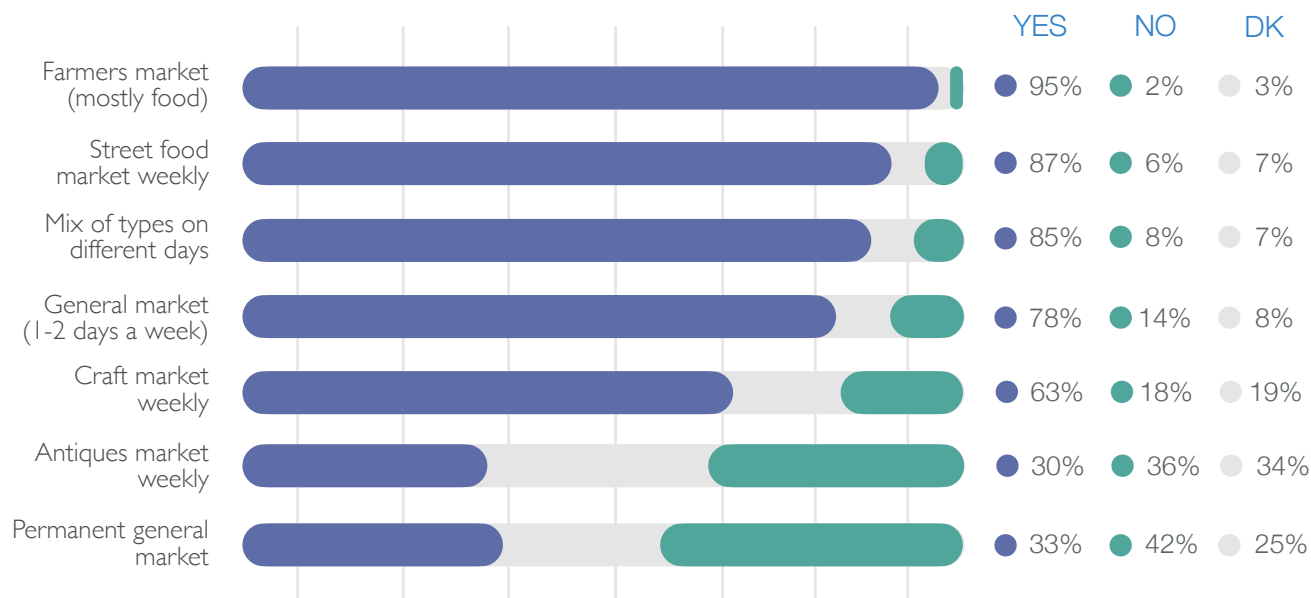
Although not defined as clearly as some would have liked, there is considerable support for the idea. Most residents see the potential benefits of Cranbox in supporting local businesses and enhancing the town centre's offerings.

Prices for shipping containers has fallen dramatically since 2020 which would make the Cranbox concept more affordable. At our face to face sessions, several people suggested that Cranbox could offer a quick win while the other facilities are being developed.










Market place

What types of market would you like to see?



Are there other types of market that you would like to see in Cranbrook?

-  **Specialist Markets:** There is interest in occasional specialist markets, such as toy fairs, pet markets, fish markets, baby clothes markets or sweet and cake markets.
-  **Seasonal Markets:** Seasonal markets, including Easter and celebration-themed markets, were suggested.
-  **Car Boot Sales:** Some residents mentioned car boot-type markets, which can offer a variety of second-hand items.
-  **Space for Resident Sellers:** Creating opportunities for residents to sell their items or products occasionally was suggested, where a proportion of stall space is available every week.
-  **Community and Eco-Oriented Markets:** Some residents proposed community-oriented markets, where people can sell or swap unwanted items. Eco-friendly markets or initiatives like a community tool library and repair stalls were also mentioned.
-  **Night Markets:** A night market with music and food stalls during the summer was suggested as an attractive option.
-  **Permanent Food Hall Market:** Some residents suggested establishing a permanent food hall market, similar to the one in Tavistock, which includes butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers, florists etc.




Markets in the town square were a popular choice in the main survey. This offers more clarity on the types of markets that residents would like to see. Various types of food markets are clearly what most residents want to see. However, the range of other suggestions points to the potential of occasional themed markets during the year.



Demand is only one side of the issue. It can be hard to find a good range of stall-holders on a regular basis - at least until the market becomes established.



Town identity

Please rank these ideas for the town, putting the one you like most at the top.

-  A 'food' town
-  A 'sports' town
-  A 'craft' town

-  A 'music' town
-  A 'green' town

Percentage who voted 1st or 2nd



We also explored these themes at some of the face to face sessions and people suggested ideas for how they might be managed within Cranbrook. Some of these activities have been tried before and some are still happening within the town.

A food town. More allotments; community orchards; tool sharing; apple and cider days; pop-up food stalls; specialist food shops; guerrilla gardening; farmers markets.

A green town. More cycle lanes; more bike and scooter hire; renewables on all public buildings; local food growing; community cafe; EV chargers; tree planting (esp fruit).

A sports town. Build on existing activity(eg parkruns); establish more clubs; host big sports events (cycling, X-country, marathons); build gyms - indoor and in park.

A music town. Formal and informal performance spaces; busking championships; instrument loan scheme; day concerts and festivals; town orchestra and bands.

A craft town. Craft market; workshop spaces for rent; maker conventions; East Devon craft centre; more art and craft classes; public art on street and in park

This question was trying to find out what people in Cranbrook would want the town to be known for. The issue here is how to plan the town centre bearing in mind the preferences shown to the different themes. Of course they are not mutually exclusive.

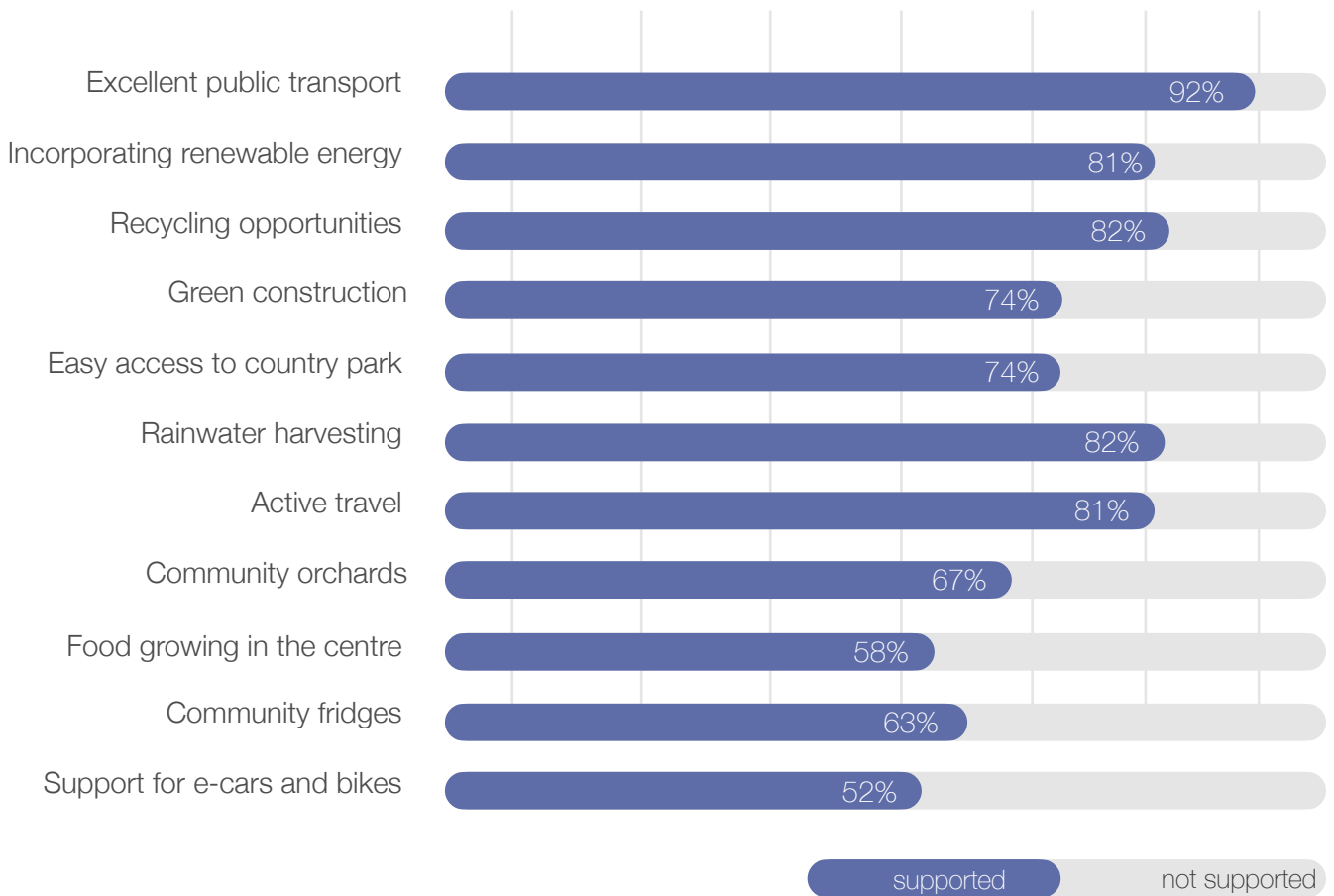
The survey reinforces the interest in good quality, local food - as shown in the questions about types of markets and shops wanted.



Sustainable Cranbrook

The Cranbrook Plan states that new development should be sustainable. Which of these ideas for the town centre are important to you?

Voted 4 or 5 - somewhat important / very important



“ The library could be a safe good place for teens to play games, film nights, craft activities, coffee mornings, toddler sessions- check out the Exeter library for teen section and cultural events.












The final three questions on this, more detailed, survey were open. We asked for ideas that might improve the town centre for certain groups.

Young people

What could be done to make the town centre more appealing for young people?

The key messages regarding how to make the town centre more appealing for young people in Cranbrook were:

-  **Youth-centric activities:** A variety of activities for young people, such as live music, sports, cinema, skate parks, and gaming centres. Include creative and cultural activities, such as art clubs and theatres, for young people interested in the arts; and physical activities for health and wellbeing.
-  **Safe spaces:** Ensuring that young people have safe and supervised spaces to socialise and engage in activities is a priority. This includes the establishment of a youth hub or centre where they can decide on and participate in the activities. Youth clubs and organisations can be positive and reduce boredom
-  **Affordable entertainment:** Young people appreciate affordable entertainment options, including restaurants, cafes, and street food vendors. Providing reasonably priced products and services is essential.
-  **Transport:** Improving public transport options, especially during evenings, can encourage young people to visit the town centre and participate in activities.
-  **Involvement and empowerment:** Engaging young people in the planning and decision-making processes for the town centre can help them feel more included and invested in their community.
-  **Safety and deterrence:** Measures to deter criminal elements, like graffiti and vandalism, are important for creating a safe and appealing environment for young people.
-  **Outdoor spaces:** Outdoor spaces with seating, greenery, and facilities like basketball courts or sports fields are suggested to attract young people. Some residents suggest limiting free seating areas to discourage gatherings of youths.
-  **Community engagement:** Encouraging participation in community events and involving local schools and students in community events and activities that can encourage young people to participate and feel a sense of ownership in the town centre.
-  **Accessibility:** Ensuring that the town centre is accessible to young people of all ages and abilities is essential to promote inclusivity.
-  **Employment opportunities:** Providing opportunities for part-time jobs, especially in unique or "cool" shops, can be appealing to young adults.

While these were mostly the views of adults, they point to the tension between allowing young people to have spaces that feel 'theirs' where they can decide how and when to participate and controlling their activities in ways that might prevent them feeling that the town centre was welcoming for them.

Of course, young people are all different - so, probably, the most important response is to offer a variety of activities and spaces, including some where they feel more involved.









Accessibility






What could be done to make the town centre more accessible?

The survey responses provided a number of suggestions for ensuring a more accessible town centre:

MOVING AROUND

-  **Proper Pavements and Footpaths:** Ensure well-maintained, flat, and wide pavements throughout the town centre - making sure to include safe crossing points such as zebra or pelican crossings with wheelchair-accessible drop kerbs. This will enhance pedestrian safety, including those with wheelchairs, pushchairs, and scooters.
-  **Public Transport:** Improve and expand public transport options, including more frequent buses, reliable train services, and better connections to surrounding areas.
-  **Cycling Infrastructure:** Create dedicated cycle lanes, bike storage boxes, and secure bike racks to encourage cycling as an alternative mode of transportation.
-  **Wheelchair Accessibility:** Ensure wheelchair ramps, wide doorways, and accessible entrances to public buildings, as well as automatic doors with wheelchair buttons. Ensure designated parking for people with disabilities, along with proper enforcement to prevent misuse.
-  **Traffic Management:** Implement traffic calming measures and restrict on-street parking to prevent congestion and improve road safety. Consider pedestrian-only areas to encourage walking and cycling, creating a safer and more pleasant environment.
-  **Parking:** Provide ample parking spaces for both vehicles and bicycles, making it convenient for shoppers and visitors to access the town centre. Manage parking better around the school campus.

IN THE CENTRE

-  **Seating:** Install plenty of seating options, including benches with spaces for wheelchairs next to them, to accommodate those who may need to rest.
-  **Signage:** Use clear and accessible signage with large print, high-contrast markings, and braille for the visually impaired.
-  **Sensory Spaces:** Include sensory spaces for individuals with sensory processing needs to ensure an inclusive environment.
-  **Public Toilets:** Provide public restrooms with baby change facilities, as well as water fountains for both humans and pets.
-  **Safety Measures:** Install CCTV to deter antisocial behaviour and improve security, particularly during nighttime hours.
-  **Regular Maintenance:** Regularly maintain paths, pavements, and landscaping to keep them in good condition.
-  **Community Involvement:** Involve the community and gather input to tailor accessibility improvements to the needs and preferences of Cranbrook's residents.

By implementing these suggestions and improvements, Cranbrook can create a more accessible, safe, and welcoming town centre for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.












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Three or four key themes emerged - traffic needs to be well managed and alternatives encouraged; the needs of people with a range of disabilities should be taken into account at the design stage; well designed spaces work for everyone.



Is there anything else you would like to say about the future of the town centre in Cranbrook?

From the comments provided, several important issues and suggestions about the future of the town centre in Cranbrook can be identified:

-  **Safety:** Many comments emphasise the importance of ensuring that the town centre is a safe space for residents, which includes addressing issues related to crime and antisocial behaviour. Suggestions include patrolling by police, a police station, or using CCTV for security.
-  **Leisure Facilities:** Several comments mention the desire for a leisure centre with a swimming pool, indicating a need for sporting amenities, such as indoor bowls, skittles, badminton, snooker/pool and space for table games.
-  **Environmental Sustainability:** A recurring theme is the importance of environmental sustainability, reducing the carbon footprint, and keeping the town centre "green" with provisions for public transport, walking, and cycling.
-  **Inclusivity and Community:** There is an emphasis on creating a town centre that caters to people of all ages and fosters a sense of community. This includes providing spaces for socialisation, activities for teenagers, and facilities for pensioners.
-  **Business Support:** The affordability of business rates and support for small businesses are mentioned as critical factors in the success of the town centre.
-  **Connectivity and Infrastructure:** Comments touch on the need for adequate mobile coverage, improved road infrastructure, safe crossings for schools, and access to places like the Airport.
-  **Cultural and Recreational Activities:** Suggestions include hosting arts events, theatres, music, and bars to enhance the cultural and recreational offerings in the town centre.
-  **Green Spaces:** Several comments emphasise the importance of maintaining green spaces, running and fitness areas, and benches for all residents to enjoy - so disabled friendly.
-  **Balanced Development:** There is a call for balanced development that caters to various age groups and does not focus solely on the young population. When the unit for older people is in place, there needs to be consideration as to how that fits in with a young town.
-  **Creating a shopping mall:** this was thought to be a useful proposal to manage traffic and provide a wider range of shops on one site.
-  **Traffic Management:** Concerns about traffic congestion, parking, and road improvements are raised, along with suggestions like traffic wardens, yellow lines, and better traffic management.
-  **Local Businesses:** Encouraging local businesses, retailers (both large chains and independents), and creating low-cost spaces for entrepreneurs is suggested to stimulate economic growth.
-  **Civic Pride:** Some comments express the desire for the town centre to be aesthetically pleasing, pride-worthy, and well-maintained.
-  **Public Facilities:** Requests for facilities such as a library, pet shop, tennis courts, and a church are mentioned.
-  **Accessibility and Public Amenities:** Adequate waste bins, pedestrian-friendly spaces, and accessibility features for individuals with different needs are highlighted.
-  **Efficient Development:** There's a sense of urgency expressed in some comments to expedite the development process and avoid frequent plan changes.

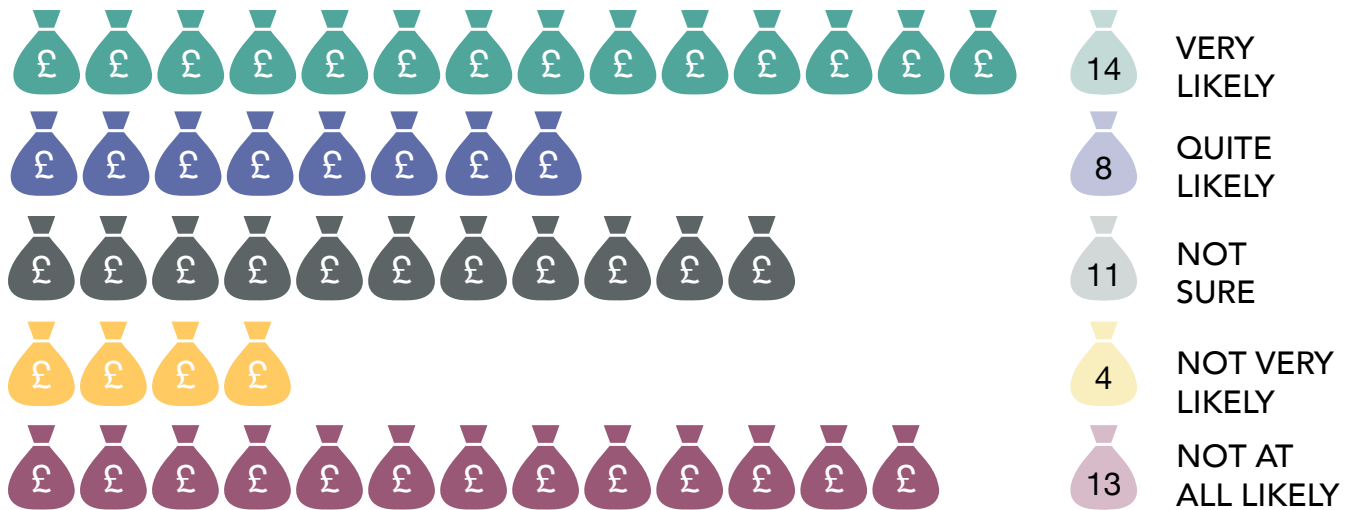
It's essential for planners and policymakers to take into consideration these various concerns and suggestions alongside the responses to other survey questions. Continuing public input and engagement is crucial in shaping the future of a vibrant and inclusive town centre that meets the needs and expectations of the Cranbrook community.



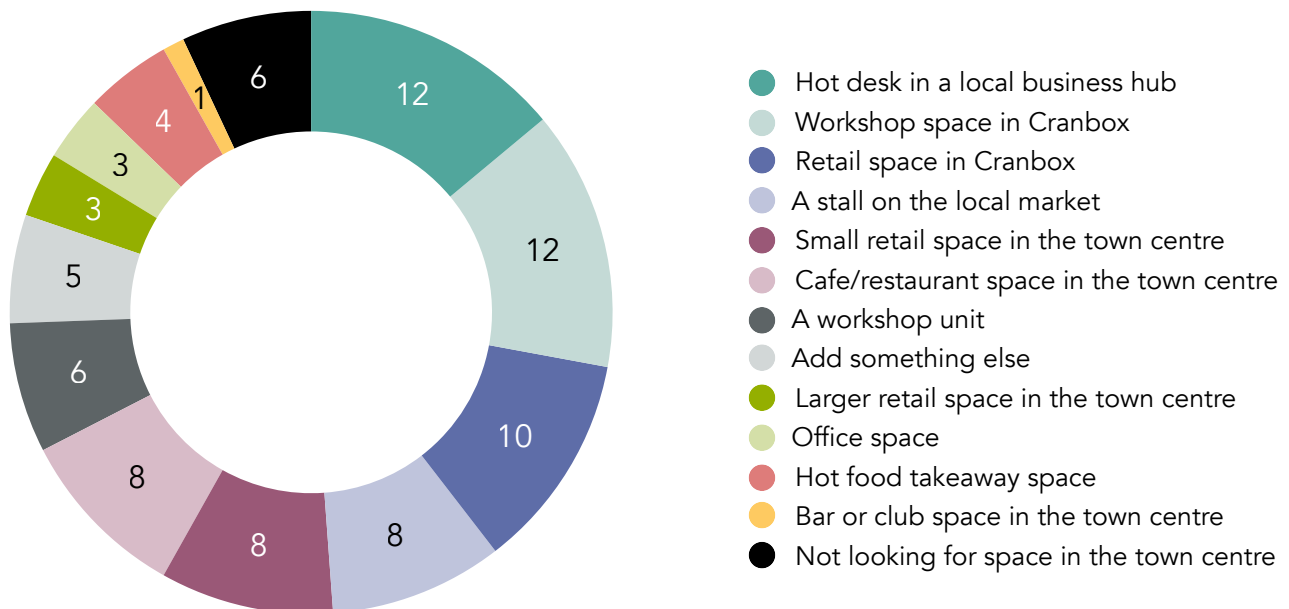
BUSINESS SURVEY

This survey was chosen by those who run or may run a business. Questions were answered by up to 50 businesses. It was designed to get an indication of the demand for different types of business premises by residents of Cranbrook.






How likely are you to want to have space in the town centre to run your business from?



If you run, or are hoping to run a business from Cranbrook, what sort of space might you be looking for in the town centre? Could choose more than one.

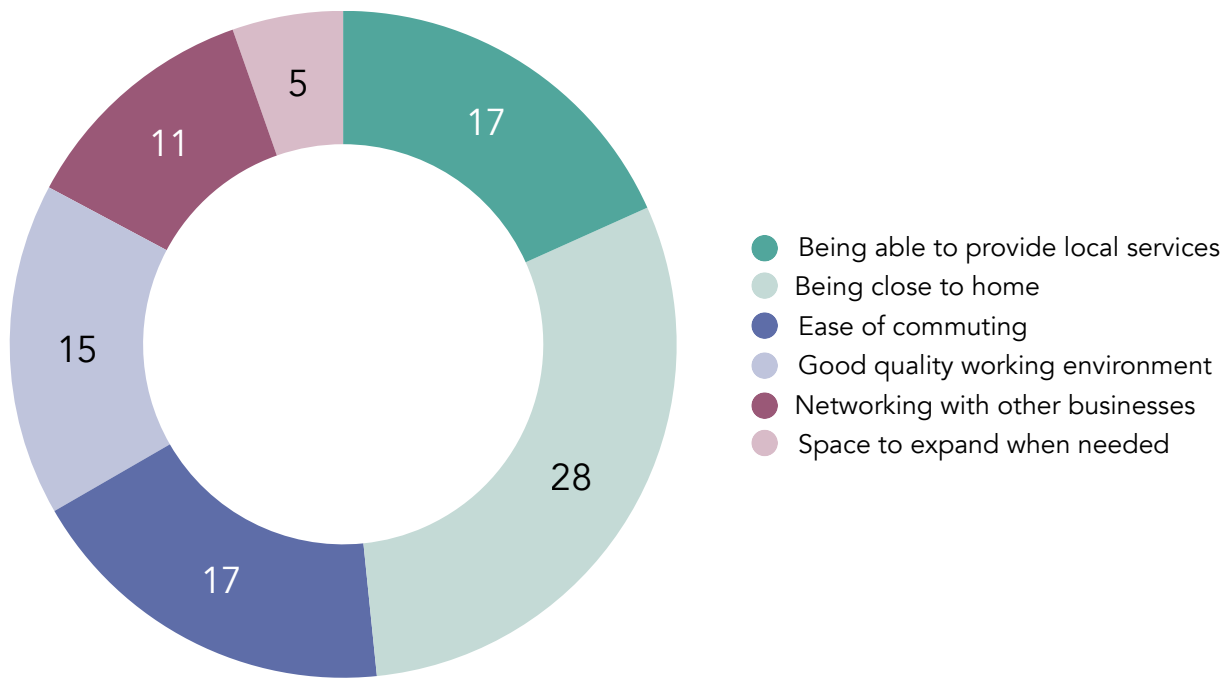


Respondents were also able to add comments:

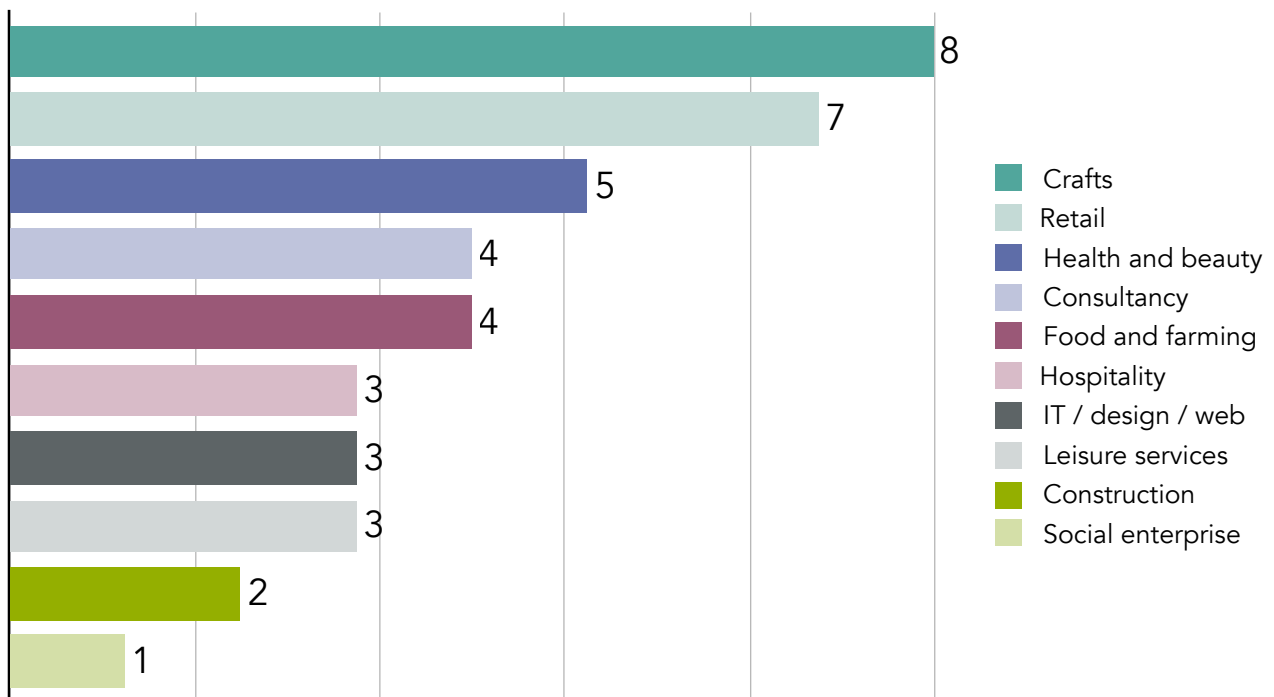
-  A place to hire meeting rooms
-  Would love to run a hair salon but when I enquired the prices were too high so not sustainable.
-  Practice for delivering health services
-  A space for a clinic room and studio (Physiotherapy clinic)
-  Space to run a children's club. Current space impractical and costly



Why would you be interested in running your business from Cranbrook town centre? Could choose more than one.



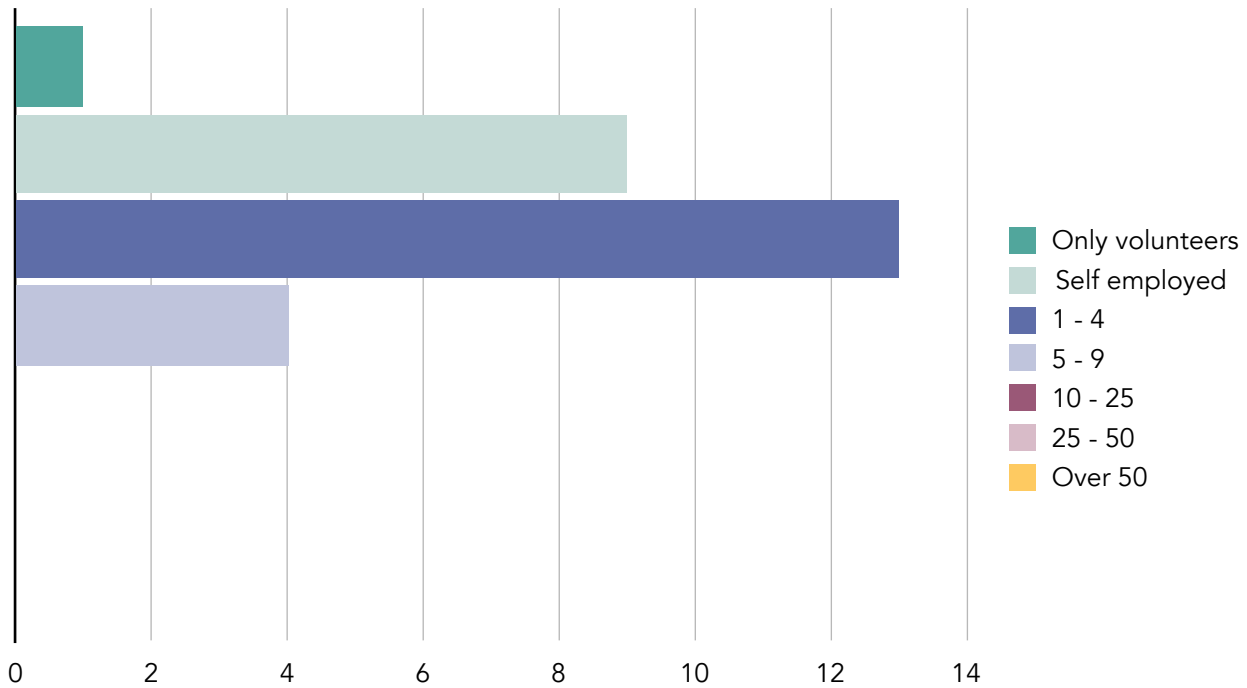
What sort of business do you run?



Others included - event technology, flooring sales and installation, physiotherapy and financial services.




How many people does your business employ?



All the business who responded would be classified as micro businesses.

There is a small but important business base in Cranbrook. Some already operate from premises beyond the town or at home. However, there is a demand for more local space from which to run their business.

Unsurprisingly, there is more enthusiasm for hot desk space and units within Cranbox than is evidenced from the wider survey. The desire for local space reinforces the idea of the Business Ladder, first suggested in the 2015 Economic Development Strategy for Cranbrook. 

“ It would be great to have a social/commercial building that supports the country park. Great for the location, great for encouraging people to get in the park for exercise. Park run has over 150 participants weekly that would double with the sort of facilities this type of building could provide, which in turn would bring in extra revenue for those running it..



OTHER CONSULTATION EVENTS

In addition to the survey, a range of other consultation activities were undertaken. These activities were designed to promote the survey and the consultation process as well as providing other ways for residents to have their say. We engaged directly with over 200 people through these activities.

Family Fun Day

Early in the consultation process we worked with the Community Hub Manager to run this event in half term. She was instrumental in promoting and running the day. The idea was to encourage parents to come with their children, so we could speak to them about the town centre. We provided a bouncy castle and other activities such as crafts and games, along with refreshments. Approximately 250 parents and children attended. It also provided an opportunity for the Town Council ranger and the Community Builder to engage with parents. Other support was provided by Inspiring Connections South West who helped in the kitchen, and the Thelma Hulbert Gallery who provided craft activities.

Drop-in events

We ran two events - at Younghayes in the afternoon and evening and at the Cranberry Farm in the evening. They provided a different setting for residents to find out more and have longer conversations with the consultation team.

Engagement with young people

We were very keen to engage directly with young people during this consultation. We publicised the survey and consultation through the newsletters and mailouts from St Martins Primary School, the Cranbrook Education Campus and Clyst Vale Community College (with about 100 Cranbrook students on the roll). A member of the Education Campus Student Council took part in the sounding board. We also engaged directly with secondary students at the Cranbrook Education Campus in the atrium during the morning and lunch breaks. To encourage students to speak to us, we ran a 'treasure hunt.' We asked them to place a sticker on a map of the town centre, and offered two small cash prizes for those who got closest to the 'treasure' location. This then gave us the opportunity to find out what they would like to see in the new town centre.

Through the sounding board, the Cranbrook Community Association ran a 'pop-up' speaking to parents waiting to collect their children outside St Martin's Primary School. The consultation team spoke to parents outside Cranbrook Education Campus.

We also offered a focus group for Cranbrook students, but were unsuccessful in getting enough participants. However, we recommend that in the next stage of the process, direct engagement be undertaken with the Student Council, as this may be a better route to engaging students. Another future opportunity for engagement with young people is through the Scouts and Guides. A scout leader took part in the sounding board, but we were not able to attend one of their meetings within the time frame of this consultation.

Workshops




To enable the sounding board themselves to have their say we ran a dedicated online focus group for them. We also ran two stakeholder workshops to get initial feedback on the headline conclusions from the survey. Sounding board members were also invited to these workshops.



Summary of responses from other activities

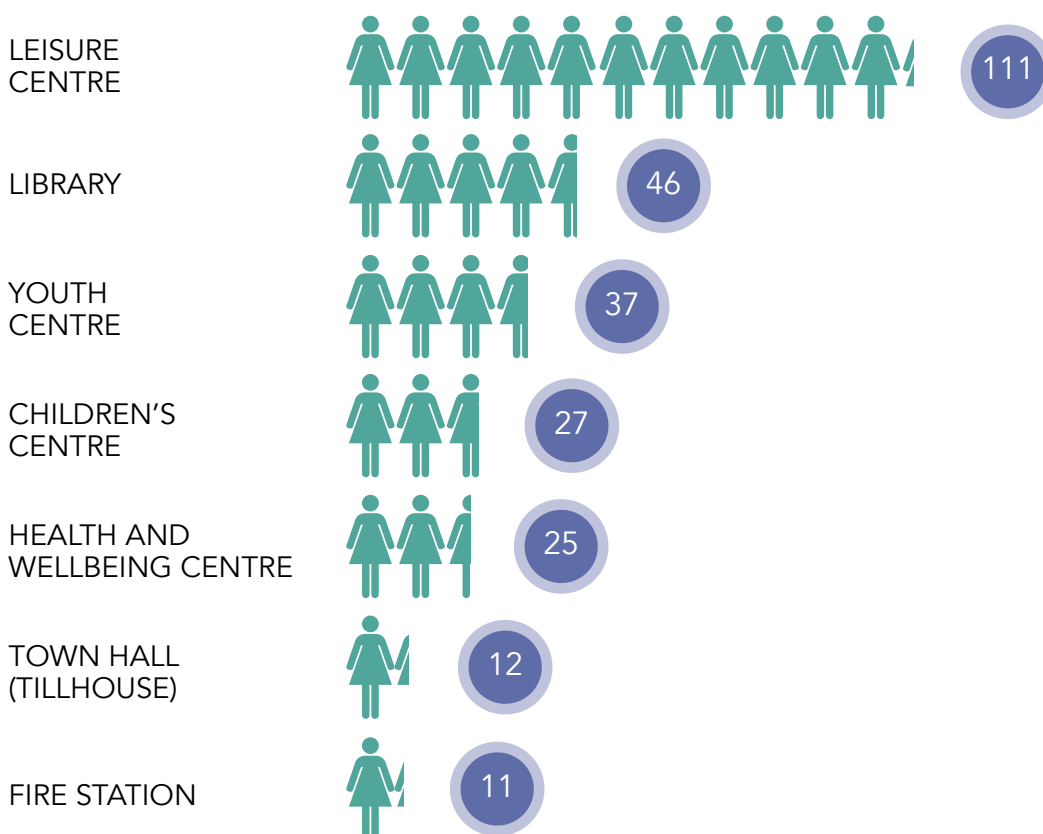
In order to open the conversation about the town centre, at each of these activities except the workshops we asked people to 'vote' on their priorities for buildings and facilities for the town centre. We did this by giving each person up to five coloured dots (for events) or asking them to choose from a list on a clipboard (for pop-ups). Not everyone used the five 'votes' so the results need to be treated as qualitative data, but they give an impression of the priorities amongst those we spoke to. The results are shown in the two graphs below.

They show that the priorities are broadly similar to those expressed in the online survey. Three key differences are:

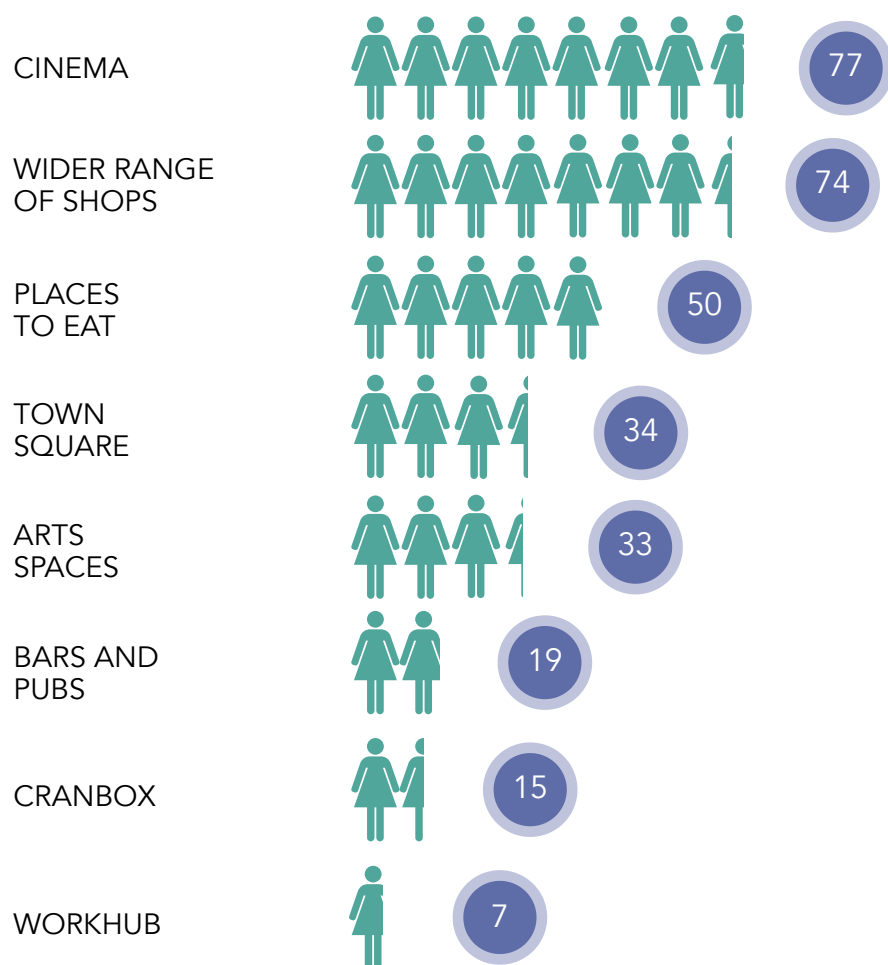
-  The library was given a higher priority
-  The Health and Wellbeing Hub was given a lower priority
-  A cinema was given significantly higher priority.

It is likely that these differences arise from the fact the additional events were mainly focused on parents and young people.







'Votes' for core buildings - at consultation events



'Votes' for other facilities - at consultation events



Other comments made during consultation events

-  In comments and discussions about the needs of young people, a strong theme was a need for a safe space which does not have too much adult control.
-  The needs of older people also should be considered. Although they are small in number (approx. 300-400 over 65) they tend to feel marginalised due to Cranbrook being so young.
-  Improving communications with local residents came up at many of the events, including the workshops. In the workshops, it was considered that communications should be co-ordinated between authorities. Some felt that more effort needs to be put into explaining how long it takes to develop the facilities. Others emphasised the important of a tone that is informal and positive.
-  A number of people commented on the need for spaces for formal and informal social interaction. This theme was developed by individual comments and discussions at workshops about the value and potential of multi-purpose flexible spaces. It was suggested that a multi-purpose space could provide workspaces, cinema, arts activities, The role of the library specifically was discussed in this context.
-  There was also enthusiasm for more cafes, including some with healthy eating options. It was suggested that temporary spaces such as Cranbox could fill this need.
-  There was enthusiasm for a farmers' market and street food market as in the survey responses.



- As with the survey, there was support for the visions of a green town, food town and sports town. A number of comments promoted a sustainable town centre with green space, plenty of trees, and wildlife friendly spaces, and the value of this to mental health was pointed out.
- The importance of the country park was stressed by a number of people. In discussions this was linked with the need to build on the successes of the park by creating links with the town centre.



CONCLUSIONS

These conclusions reflect the key findings detailed in the previous sections





1. Of the facilities already proposed by stakeholders, residents identified a leisure centre with a swimming pool and a health and wellbeing centre (including a GP surgery) as top priorities for the town's development.
2. The community also expressed the need for a variety of other facilities, of which a more diverse range of shops and eateries and an active town square were most popular. There was a strong desire for personal care and wellness services, family and youth facilities, public and green spaces, and cultural venues.
3. To encourage more visits to the town centre, the community suggested that there should be better access on foot; that there should be plenty of outdoor places to sit with shade and shelter; free public toilets; and activities laid on for children. Overall, they wanted the town centre to feel safe and to offer a welcoming environment, especially for young people.
4. Preferences for the town centre's design included plenty of greenery and integration with the environment (especially the Country Park); outdoor social spaces with weather protection; provision for local businesses and markets; and accessibility to all facilities. Residents wanted a modern and versatile design to enable many different uses and they wanted a safe, community feel and safety.
5. Cranbrook residents showed a keen interest in having a regular market - at least once a week. Farmer's markets, street food markets and specialist markets were most popular. This echoed the support for Cranbrook being a 'food' town and a 'green' town - with those themes being actively supported within the town centre and beyond.
6. Sustainable development was always meant to be a feature of Cranbrook. The community put forward a range of ideas, including excellent public transport links, renewable energy on town centre buildings, recycling points, green construction, active travel, along with community orchards and food growing.
7. Suggestions for making the town centre more accessible and inclusive focused on improved pavements and footpaths, public transport, cycling infrastructure, wheelchair accessibility, traffic management, ample parking, seating, clear signage, sensory spaces, public toilets, safety measures, and community involvement.
8. Given the very young demographic within the town, the needs of young people are important. Young people are all different - and some feel the need to have some spaces where they can decide how and when to participate, without everything being controlled for them.
9. There is a small, but important, cohort of small businesses in Cranbrook. Many of those, and others thinking of starting businesses, wanted access to low cost, flexible space within the town centre. Most popular were hot desking, workshops and retail space in Cranbox and market stalls - all steps on the Business Ladder.
10. The community provided various other suggestions for the future of the town centre, emphasising safety, environmental sustainability, inclusivity, cultural and recreational activities, green spaces, effective traffic management, support for local businesses and civic pride.









RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are essentially a series of reflections drawing on the engagement we had with people in Cranbrook.

Keep up the momentum of talking with and informing the community

-  The community in Cranbrook is enthusiastic and keen to help make their town a success. Many of them want to be more involved. Find a range of ways to engage with them - both formal and informal. The sounding board proved a useful route and could be continued.
-  Young people are also willing to be involved. Need to work with methods, times and styles which suit them. The Student Council at the Cranbrook Education Campus may be a helpful 'way-in'
-  Transparent communication is vital. The tone needs to be informal and engaging - not bureaucratic or transactional all the time.
-  Encourage more events to draw the community together.

Making things happen

-  Do the things that people want most, first - or explain why.
-  Quick wins will go a long way to building trust (Leisure Centre, Cranbox?).
-  Some facilities may be better run by community organisations, reflecting a more organic approach which gives the community a real say over how some services are run. One model might be a community legacy company¹.
-  Young people are all different - and need a range of different options - some organised and some not.
-  Consider developing multi-purpose spaces to provide for different needs at different times. This might also reduce construction and running costs.
-  Some opportunities may be more viable now than when they were tried previously as the population has grown considerably and will continue to do so.

¹ Legacy companies give local communities a stake in their place and their future. Established as Community Interest Companies or Charities they can develop, own and manage open space, community facilities, housing and employment space. They are a tried and tested way to raise funds, empower residents and place assets under community control.

