

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL12 September 2018Report by Director of EnvironmentEASTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to advise the Council on the outcome of the recent public consultation exercise relating to future leisure provision within the Eastwood area of the Council.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Council note the outcome of the public consultation exercise, specifically:

- (a) The consultation generated one of the highest response rates to any consultation exercise previously carried out by the Council;
- (b) Option D (Redevelopment on New Site) is the 1<sup>st</sup> preference of a majority of respondents;
- (c) Improved gym, provision of teaching pools and multipurpose studio space are the most popular additional new potential facilities; and
- (d) There is a strong desire to see theatre provision retained or enhanced at Eastwood or included in any new facility.

3. That a comprehensive report on the Feasibility and Full Business Case for a new build leisure and recreational facility and associated issues will be submitted to the full Council in due course.

**BACKGROUND**

4. In December 2017 the Cabinet considered a joint report by the Directors of Environment and Education advising on the current condition of Eastwood Park leisure centre, Eastwood Theatre and Carmichael Hall and outlining options for further consideration with regard to future leisure provision and the Eastwood Park campus more generally.

5. The report advised that the consultants had, as part of an outline review and options appraisal, considered 4 options with regard to the future of the leisure centre/campus and had carried out an option appraisal exercise highlighting the costs associated with pursuing each option. The options considered were;

- option 1 – status quo
- option 2 – address current maintenance issues
- option 3 – redevelopment on existing site
- option 4 – new build facility

6. The report highlighted that the consultant's recommendation was that the Council should take forward and develop a full feasibility study and business case for a new build facility (i.e. option 4) at an alternative location within the Eastwood area. In addition it was suggested that any proposal for a new build leisure facility should have an option for including a theatre.

7. The report made clear that option 4 related to the possible provision of a new 8000 m<sup>2</sup> high-quality flagship facility which would effectively treble the leisure space currently being provided within the existing Eastwood Park facility (2384 m<sup>2</sup>). In addition the report flagged up the indicative capital cost ( at that time )of £27.69 million of the leisure centre and the potential additional costs associated with a 2000 m<sup>2</sup> Theatre which would be in the region of £3.25 million-£4 million.

8. The report concluded that the Council now needed to consider its position with regard to the existing leisure facilities within Eastwood Park. To do this it was proposed that the Council should have all the relevant information to fully inform any future decision. In that respect it was suggested that a public consultation exercise be carried out in relation to the 4 options and that at the same time a comprehensive feasibility study and full business case be commissioned for a new facility at an alternative location within the Eastwood area. (The report recommended also that in due course a master plan with options be commissioned for the Eastwood Park campus).

9. The Cabinet;

- noted the 4 options regarding the future leisure provision within the Eastwood area of the Council
- approved the proposal to undertake a public consultation exercise with regard to the 4 options
- agreed that the Directors of Environment and Education commission for consideration by the Council;
  - a comprehensive feasibility study and full business case for the potential construction of a new build leisure and recreational facility with pool, theatre and conferencing facilities at an alternative location within the Eastwood area of the Council; and
  - a master plan with options for the Eastwood Park campus in the future

10. The Council in February 2018 made an indicative provision of £26 million within its General Fund Capital Programme.

## REPORT

### Consultation Overview

11. The consultation ran for 6 weeks between 8<sup>th</sup> May and 19 June 2018. It was extensively promoted through the local press and on social media. The consultation was covered by the Eastwood and Southside Extra, Barrhead News and Evening Times and was promoted heavily on Facebook and Twitter. While the consultation was primarily focussed at residents in the Eastwood area of the authority it was open to all residents and service users given the inclusive, open nature of cultural and leisure services provided in the existing facility.

12. Our Facebook posts had a reach of 45,825 people while our posts on Twitter had a reach of 197,201. Overall our social media posts were shared more than 200 times. The web link contained in our social media posts, which took people directly to the consultation home page, was clicked over 2,600 times.

### Response to the Consultation

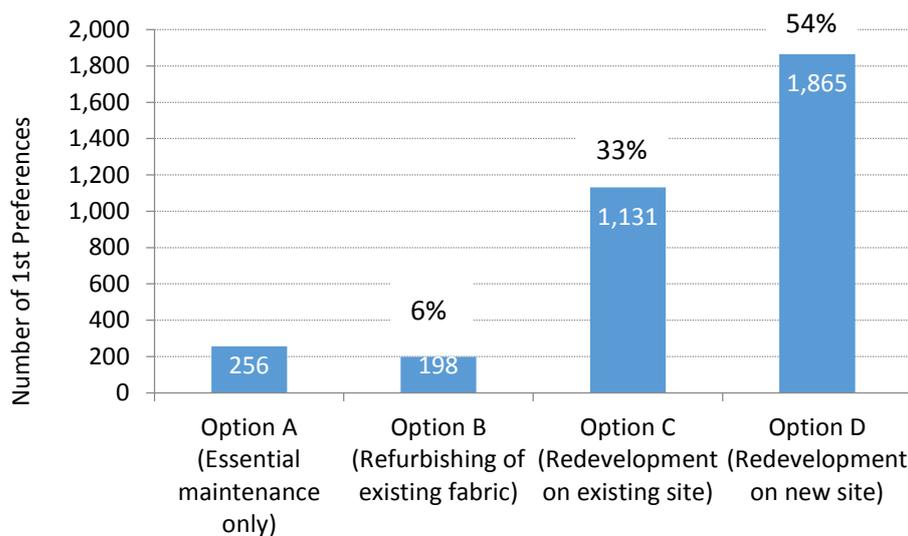
13. The consultation generated one of the highest response rates to any consultation exercise previously carried out by the Council.

14. We received 3,601 responses through the Council's online consultation tool and through hard copies which were available in libraries. In addition approximately 100 additional written communications were received including emails and letters. Residents had the ability to rank some or all of the four options in their order of preference. There were 3,450 1st preference votes cast as not every respondent gave a first preference, some provided only a lower preference or a comment.

15. Almost 90% of respondents were East Renfrewshire residents (with 96% of postcodes belonging to the Eastwood area). Overall the results for East Renfrewshire residents mirrored the total results including non-East Renfrewshire residents.

16. Our online consultation tool allows us to identify potential abuses of the system. Using this we identified and removed 123 ineligible responses, primarily individuals responding multiple times. There was no significant evidence of the use of masking tools to allow multiple votes. Ineligible responses were polarised with roughly half supporting either option A or option D. Due to the large response rate the ineligible votes would not have made an impact on the final result.

17. There was a clear desire for a new, larger facility on a new site with a wider offering of services. In total 1865 (54%) of respondents voted Option D as first preference giving it more than the other three options combined. The next most popular preference was Option C, redevelopment on the existing site, with 1131 (33%) of first preference votes.



18. The least popular 1st preference option is option B, receiving only 198 (6%) of first preference votes. Option A had the highest number of 4th preference votes (least preferred option) with 2,063 votes (62%).

19. The most popular facilities to include in any possible new facility are improved gym provision, teaching pools and a multipurpose studio.
20. Of those respondents who provided comments the most popular concerns relate to green space (often advocating against locating a new facility in a specific location) and retaining or replacing the theatre.
21. A comprehensive analysis of the consultation results is attached in Annex 1.

### **Consultants' Report**

22. The consultants have as requested now produced a draft Feasibility and Full Business Case Report for a new build leisure and recreational facility with pool, theatre and conferencing facilities at an alternative location within the Eastwood area of the Council. The report is extensive and contains a large amount of detailed information.
23. However, the report and its recommendations need further detailed consideration by the Director of Environment in the context of options regarding sites, legal issues, transportation issues, the emerging Local Development Plan 2 and the potential master planning of Eastwood Park.
24. In due course a full report including the consultant's report will be submitted to the full Council.

### **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

25. There are no financial or efficiency implications in relation to this report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

26. It is recommended that the Council note the outcome of the public consultation exercise, specifically:
  - (a) The consultation generated one of the highest response rates to any consultation exercise previously carried out by the Council;
  - (b) Option D (Redevelopment on New Site) is the 1<sup>st</sup> preference of a majority of respondents;
  - (c) Improved gym, provision of teaching pools and multipurpose studio space are the most popular additional new potential facilities; and
  - (d) There is a strong desire to see theatre provision retained or enhanced at Eastwood or included in any new facility.

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from the Director of Environment (0141 577 3036) or [andrew.cahill@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.cahill@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

September 2018

## Leisure in Eastwood: Looking to the Future



### Consultation analysis

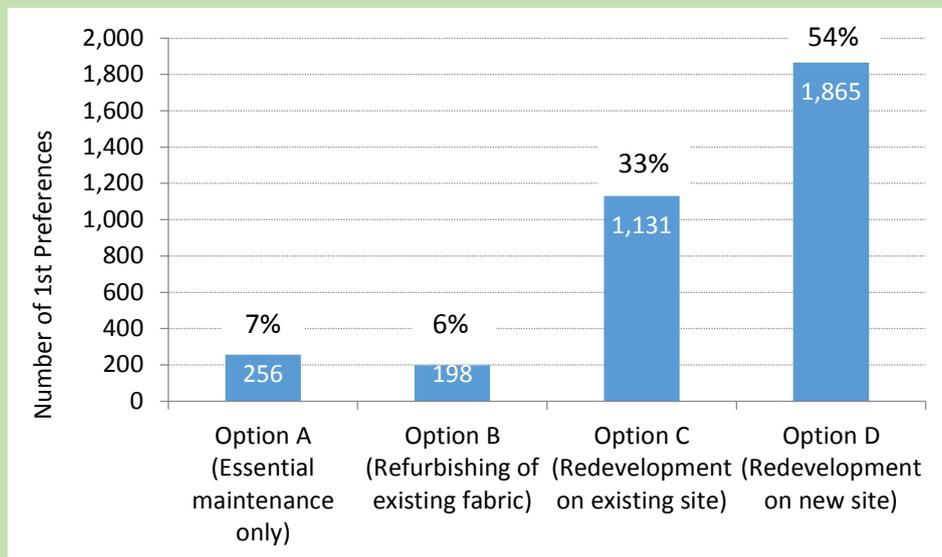
August 2018

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## Key messages

1. There was a large response to the consultation with 3,601 valid respondents. There were 3,450 1<sup>st</sup> preference votes cast as not every respondent gave a first preference, some provided only a lower preference or a comment.
2. There was a clear desire for a new facility, with 54% of respondents indicating their first preference was for a new site, meaning it had more 1st preferences than the other three options combined.



3. In terms of additional facilities, a gym, teaching pools and multipurpose studio were seen as the most desirable facilities for a possible new facility.
4. Green space and retaining or replacing the theatre were the most prevalent themes in the comments.
5. The least popular 1<sup>st</sup> preference option was option B. Option A had the highest number of 4<sup>th</sup> preference votes (least preferred option) with 2,063 votes (62%).

## **Background**

The Eastwood Park Leisure complex was built more than 40 years ago to provide facilities for residents in the former Eastwood District. Following four decades of use, the building and the swimming pool are now reaching the end of their natural lifespan. In 2014 East Renfrewshire Council commissioned Turner and Townsend to prepare a business case setting out a long-term vision for the facility.

In December 2017 the Cabinet agreed to consult residents and stakeholders on the following four possible options for the future of leisure in Eastwood:

- Option A: Reactive maintenance only.
- Option B: Refurbishment.
- Option C: Redevelopment on existing site.
- Option D: New building on a larger new site.

The consultation ran for six weeks between 8<sup>th</sup> May and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018. It was heavily promoted in our communities through the local press and social media. We generated significant coverage across the Eastwood and Southside Extra, the Barrhead News and the Evening Times. In terms of social media:

- The consultation was promoted every week throughout the six-week consultation on both Facebook and Twitter (a total of 14 posts).
- The total reach of the social media posts was 243,026 (Facebook – 45,825 / Twitter – 197,201).
- A total of 2,613 people clicked the link within the social media posts – directing them directly to Citizen Space.
- The social media posts were retweeted/shared a total of 237 times.
- A total of 55 likes were received by the social media posts.

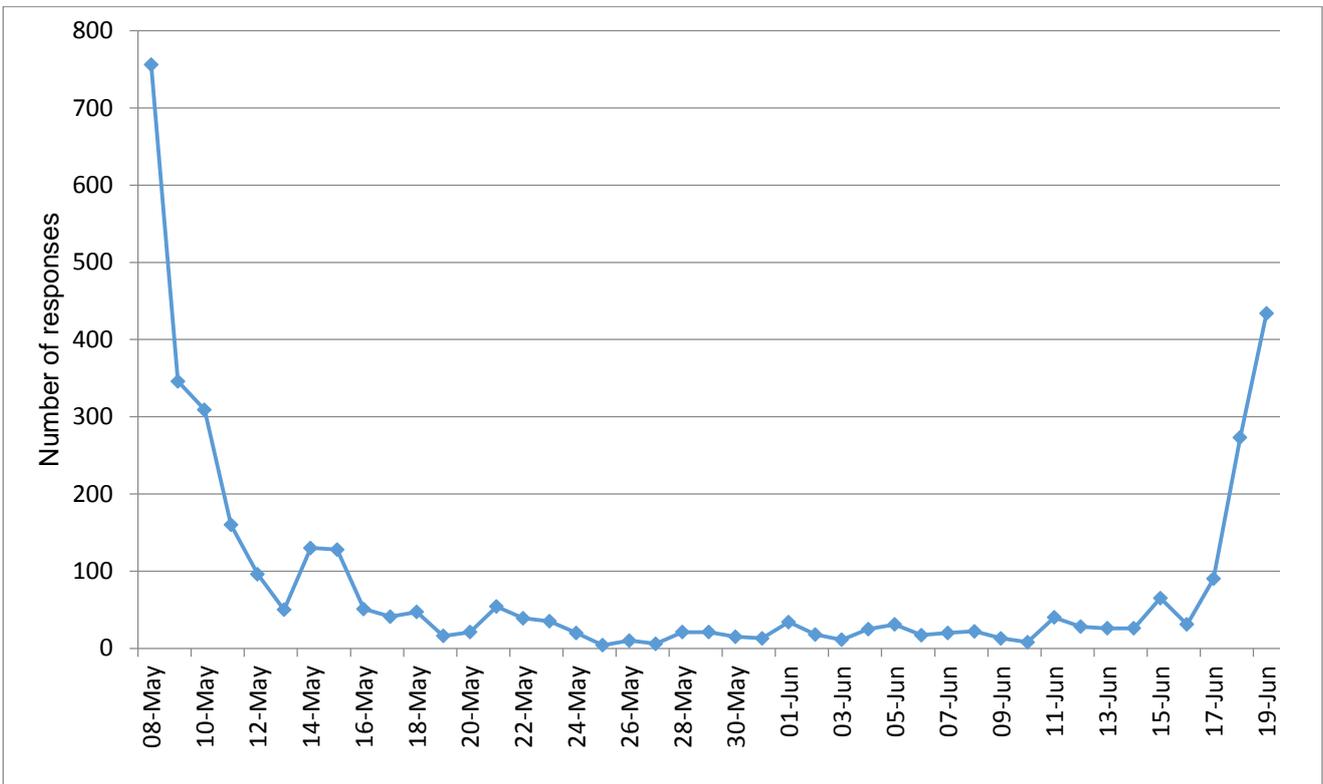
We received 3,601 responses through the Council's online consultation tool, Citizens Space and through hard copies (which were available through libraries). We also received roughly 100 additional written communications including emails and letters.

**Respondent profile**

**There was a large response to the consultation with 3,601 respondents.**

**Number of responses**

We received 3,601 responses across the public consultation, which makes it one of the highest response rates that East Renfrewshire Council has conducted.

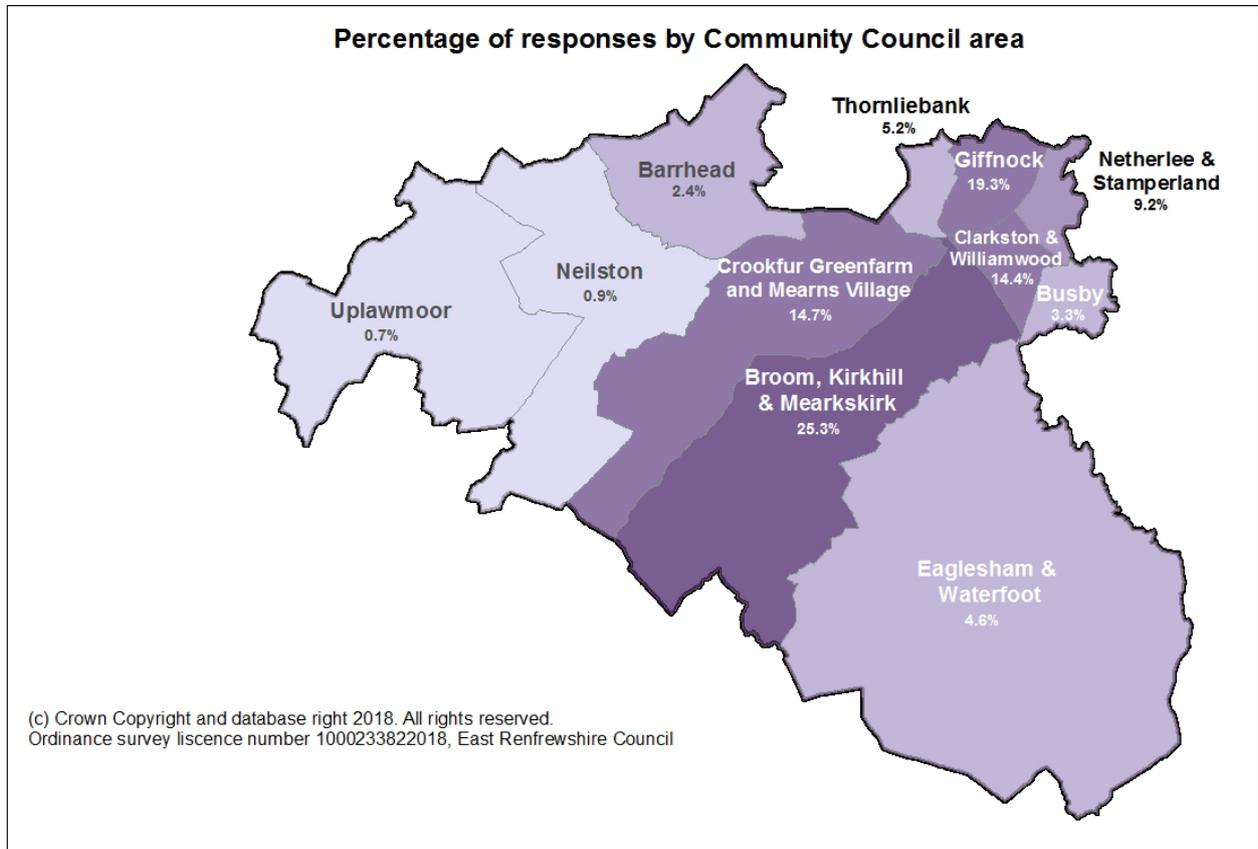
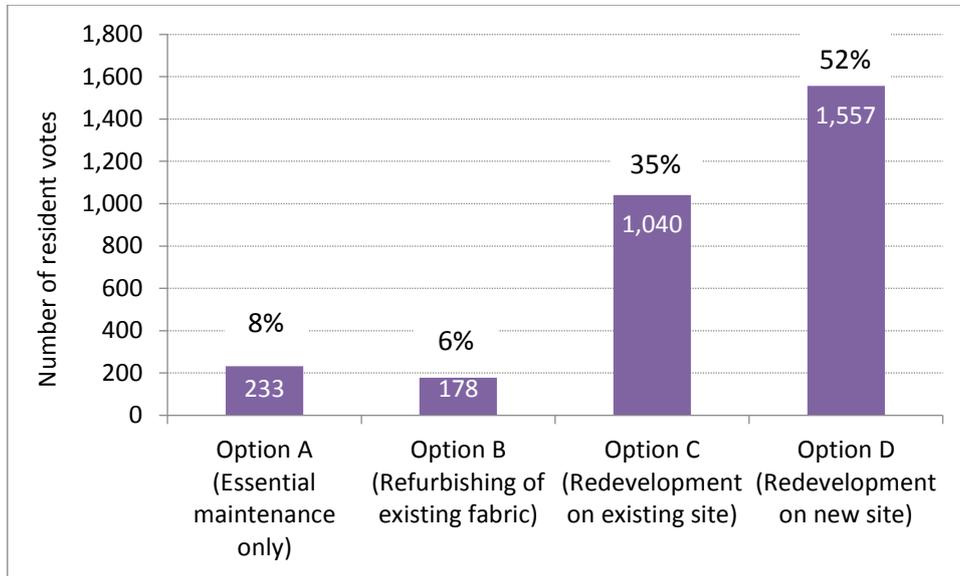


The frequency of votes over time is shown in the graph above. There were notable spikes in response levels when the consultation opened and before it ended. Smaller spikes can be linked to social media reminders.

**Respondents**

Almost 90% of respondents were East Renfrewshire residents.

When analysing first preference votes of East Renfrewshire residents only, the results mirror overall results including non-East Renfrewshire residents.



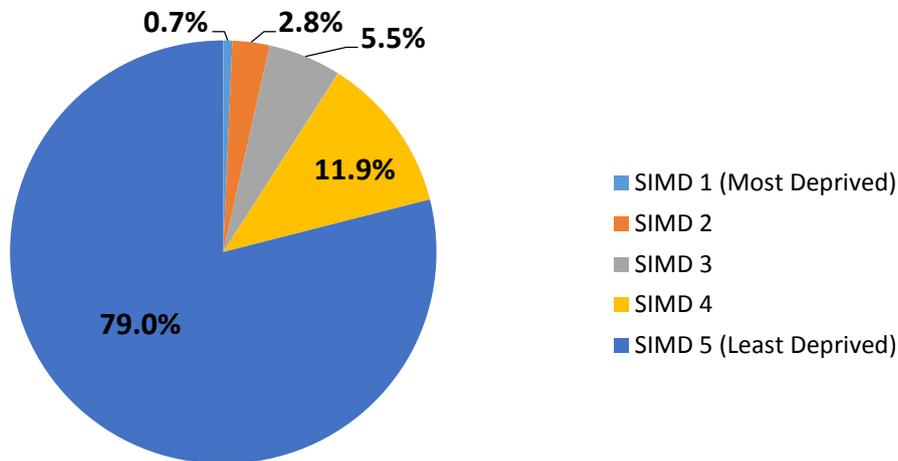
- Of the East Renfrewshire residents who opted to give their postcodes, the vast majority (96%) lived in the Eastwood side of the authority. This reflects

the close proximity of these residents to the leisure facilities with these residents perhaps more likely to be current or future service users than residents in the Levern Valley area who may access similar services at the Foundry instead.

Almost 40% of respondents live in Newton Mearns.

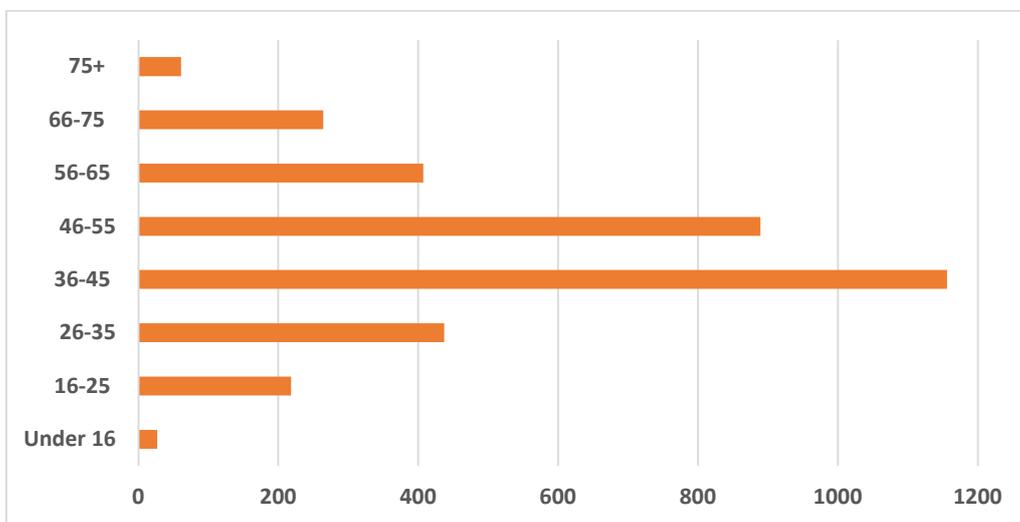
Deprivation

80% of respondents who provided their postcode live in our least deprived communities. As a comparison, roughly 60% of all East Renfrewshire residents live in our least deprived communities. Some of our most deprived communities are in the Levern Valley area. As the vast majority of responses were from the Eastwood side of the authority, this reflects a high percentage of respondents coming from our least deprived communities.



Age, Gender and Disability

- The vast majority, almost 60%, of responses were from people aged 36-55. A breakdown of respondents by age is shown in the graph below.



- 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of those who responded to our survey were female.
- Less than 5% of our respondents reported that they had a disability.

#### Religion and ethnic origin

- Over 95% of respondents were white.
- Over 55% of respondents were Christian, with a further 36% reporting they had no religion

#### Ineligible votes

Citizen Space enables the analysis of a number of factors (including but not exclusively submission data/time, IP address and respondent information) to identify potential abuses of the system.

For this consultation we identified and removed 123 ineligible responses, these were primarily examples of one individual responding multiple times. There was no significant usage of IP masking tools to allow multiple votes.

Ineligible responses were polarised with roughly half supporting either option A or option D. Due to the large response rate the ineligible votes would not have made an impact on the final result.

### Option ranking

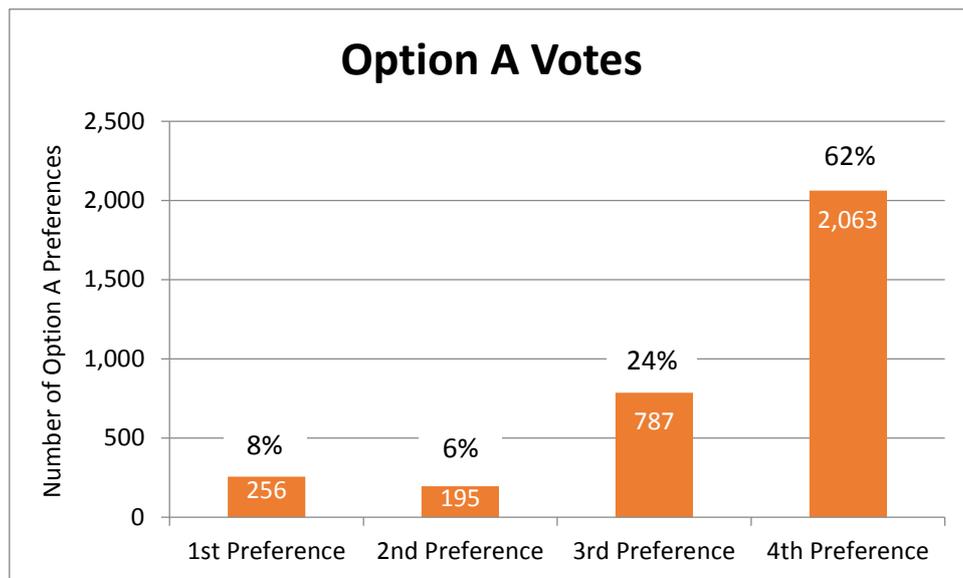
**There was a clear desire for a new facility, with 54% of respondents indicating their first preference was for a new site.**

The consultation asked residents to rank the options in their preferred order. Respondents were asked to rank their preference, where 1 represented their highest preference and 4 was the lowest preference.

### **Preferences for Options A-D:**

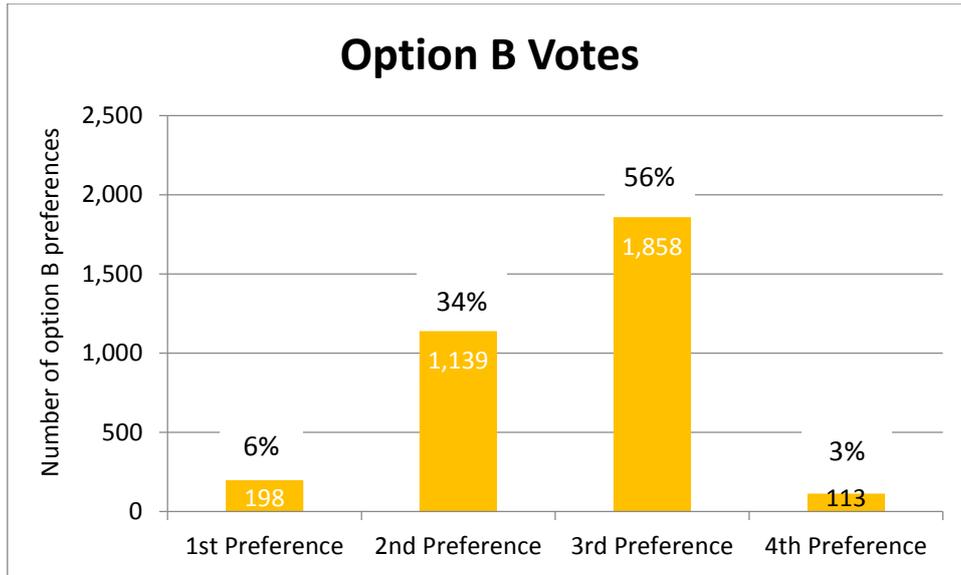
The breakdown of preference for each of the four options can be found below.

**Option A** would mean that the Leisure Centre continues to operate at its current level with only essential maintenance carried out as required



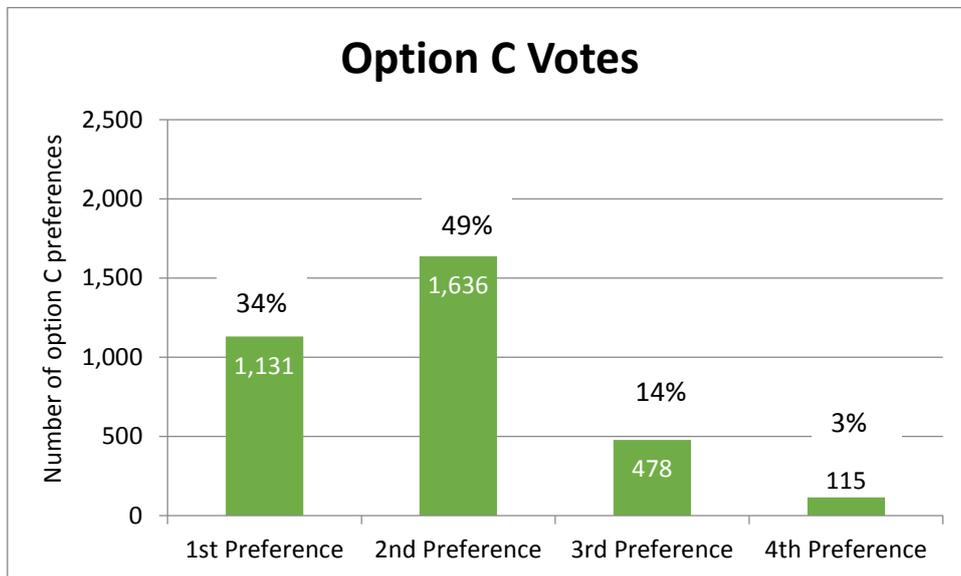
Options A (reactive maintained) was the least popular proposal with the majority of voters, almost two thirds (62%), marked option A as their 4<sup>th</sup> preference, or least preferred option.

**Options B** would include refurbishing the fabric of the building and swimming pool, it would extend the lifespan of the building for around 10 years.



Whilst more than a third of voters (34%) marked option B as their 2<sup>nd</sup> preference more than half (56%) listed this as their 3<sup>rd</sup> preference. Option B also received the lowest number of first preferences.

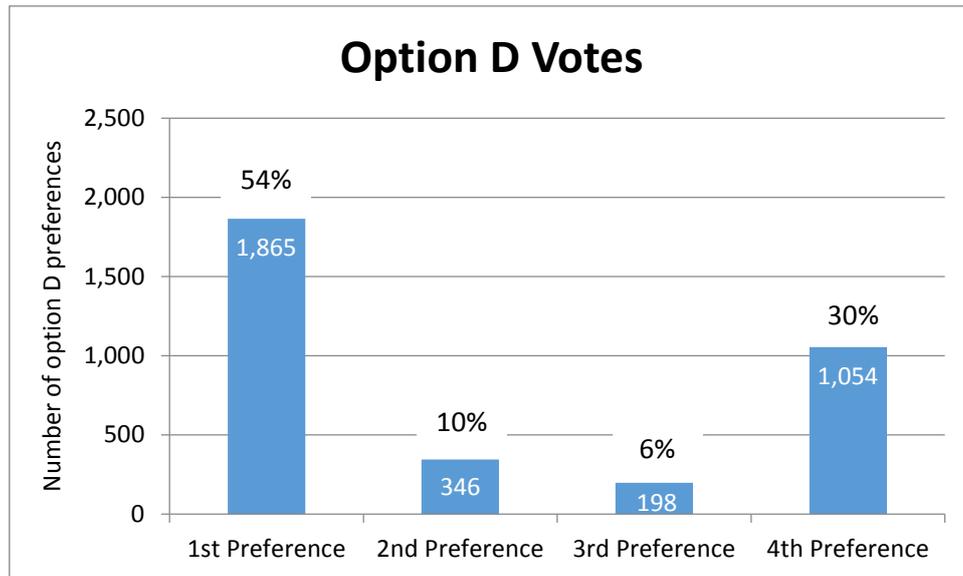
**Option C** would mean the centre would be redeveloped on the existing site, refurbishing the fabric of the building, upgrading the facilities and building an extension to allow additional facilities to be created.



Around a third of voters (34%) marked option C as their first preference. Whilst half of voters (49%) marked this as their second preference.

**Option D** proposed that new leisure centre on an alternative site within the Eastwood area would be built, ensuring that East Renfrewshire Council could deliver

a facility similar to the centres delivered by other councils in recent years and would provide future-proof facilities for the next 40 years.



Option D received the highest level of support with more than half of voters (54%) selecting it as their first preference, meaning it had more 1<sup>st</sup> preferences than the other three options combined.

Almost a third (30%) marked this as their fourth (or least preferred) option

#### Other written communications

We received 97 additional pieces of written communication. 91 of these were supplied by an elected member and passed on concern from residents opposing option D, most of these responses also highlighting their preference for an alternative option (with options C the most popular alternative identified)<sup>1</sup>. We received written letters supporting option C from:

- Crookfur, Greenfarm and Mearns Village Community Council.
- Paul Masterton MP for East Renfrewshire and Jackson Carlaw MSP for Eastwood.

We received letters of support for option D from:

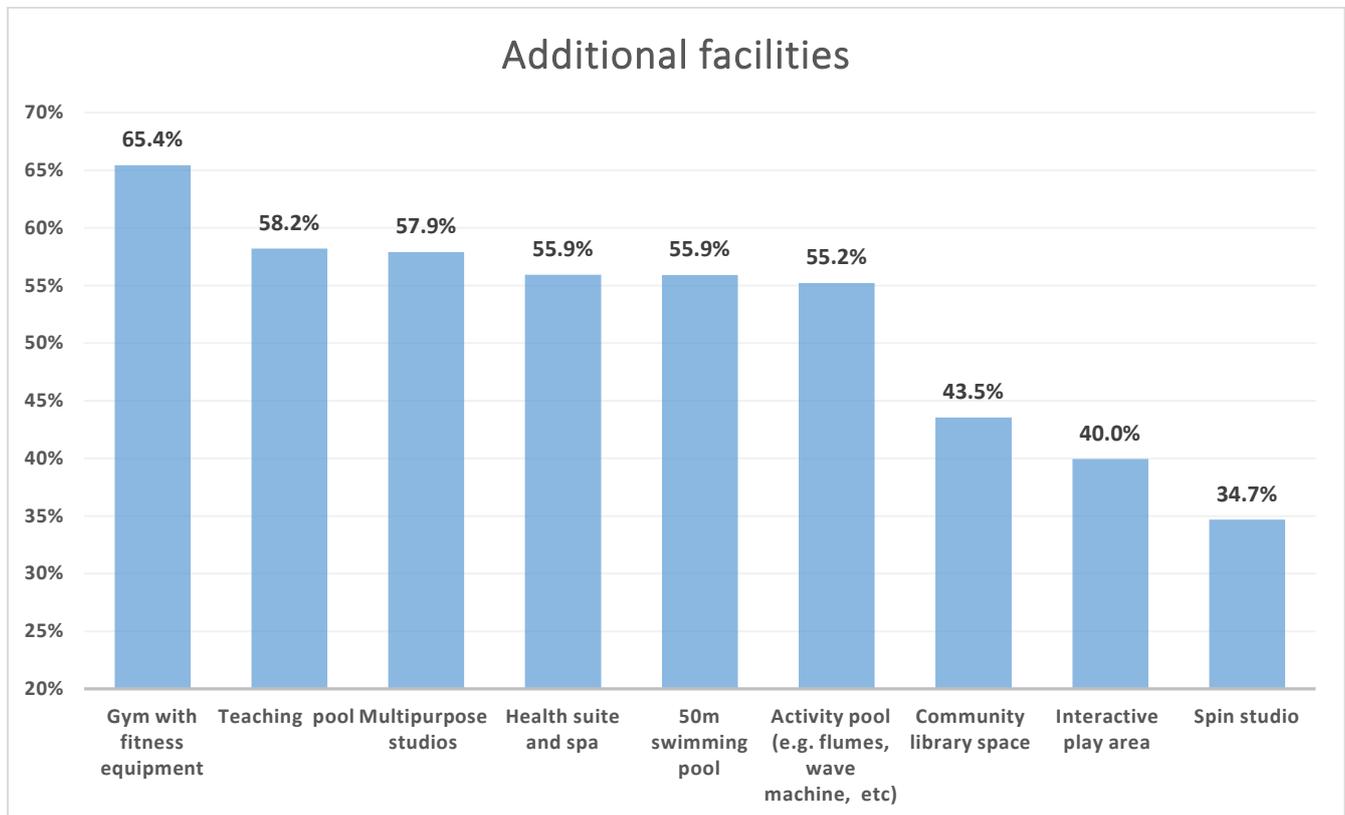
- REN96 - an amateur swimming club.
- St Ninians Parent Council.
- Diversity ER – an equalities group.
- Giffnock North Athletics Club.

#### Additional facilities

<sup>1</sup> We received one comment, which opposed option D, which was received after the consultation had closed.

**In terms of additional facilities, a gym, teaching pools and multipurpose studio were seen as the most desirable facilities for a possible new facility.**

Residents were given a list of suggested additional facilities for a proposed new leisure centre and asked to select as many they preferred.



	<b>Votes</b>	<b>% respondents</b>
<b>Gym with fitness equipment</b>	2170	65.4%
<b>Teaching swimming pool</b>	1930	58.2%
<b>Multipurpose dance / fitness / activity studios</b>	1920	57.9%
<b>Health suite and spa (including sauna and steam room)</b>	1855	55.9%
<b>50m competition swimming pool</b>	1854	55.9%
<b>Activity pool (with flumes, wave machine, lazy river etc)</b>	1831	55.2%
<b>Community library / exhibition space</b>	1444	43.5%
<b>Interactive play area</b>	1325	40.0%
<b>Spin studio</b>	1150	34.7%

As set out above the option of gym with fitness equipment was the most popular option, followed by the multipurpose studio and health suite. The interactive play area and spin studio garnered the lowest level of support.

### **Comment analysis**

**Green space and retaining or replacing the theatre were the most prevalent themes in the comments.**

There were 1,530 additional comments submitted. They covered a wide range of topics. Comments have been analysed and grouped by common themes.

There were 414 comments about green space, this accounts for 27% of those who left a comment and 11% of all responses to the survey. Within this group 251 comments mentioned a specific site, the frequency for each site is set out in the table below:

Proposed site	Number of comments	% of total comments
Shawwood Park	87	5.7%
Broomburn Park	73	4.8%
Rouken Glen Park	37	2.4%
Woodfarm Pavilion and playing fields	21	1.4%
Braidbar	17	1.1%
Overlee Pavilion and playing fields	16	1.0%
<b>Total comments mentioning specific sites</b>	<b>251</b>	

340 respondents (22%) raised concerns about the future of Eastwood Theatre. A key theme throughout the comments was a desire to retain or upgrade of the theatre.

12% of those who commented highlighted their preference for the centre to remain in its current location or be located somewhere else in Giffnock, with comments highlighting its accessibility and central location.

When discussing option C: Redevelopment, there were a number of concerns raised about the length of time that the pool would be closed.

Another common theme, raised through 105 comments (7%), concerned financing any renovation or new Leisure centre. Comments questioned the quoted costs assigned to each option or suggesting alternative priorities for investment.

Commenters also provided a number of alternative suggestions for the future of leisure in Eastwood, including:

- Changes to Eastwood Park, including moving East Renfrewshire Council HQ or St Ninian's from their current location.
- Suggesting an additional site not listed for option D.
- Splitting the theatre from the swimming pool and retaining both in separate locations.

63 commenters raised the question about the use of the site of Eastwood Park if option D is chosen, with a number of question raised about its relationship to St Ninian's High School.

There were a number of comments which related to travel and transport for the proposed new site, including:

- Ensuring that leisure services were linked to public transport. Respondents highlighted that they hoped that any potential new site would be connected to bus routes and train stations.
- Encouraging active travel to any new centre including cycling and walking routes.
- Concerns about suitable traffic management to meet possible increased demand and, correspondingly, ensuring there is sufficient Car Parking.

Residents also used the comments to suggest a number of alternative additional features. Suggestions included:

- Multipurpose outdoor pitches
- Racket Sports (including squash/ tennis/badminton Courts and table tennis)
- Swimming – (such as outdoor pool/ electronic timers for pools/ Jacuzzi/water therapy/ improve changing rooms)
- Space for cycling and skating (e.g.- skate park / bike skills area/ outdoor cycle track).
- Full size running track and space for athletics.
- Other sports facilities including: Ice rink, Climbing walls, Netball Courts, Basketball hoops, boxing facilities and space for training in martial arts
- Facilities for children (e.g. soft play/ outdoor play area).
- Consultation rooms
- Amenities such as electric car charging points and parcel drop off/collection
- Conference/exhibition/gallery/theatre/business/learning complex
- Mid-scale outdoor performance facility

Respondents also provided a number of comments about how the services are delivered in a maintained, redeveloped, refurbished or new centre. Common themes included:

- Access for disabled people (e.g. access to pools, appropriate changing areas etc)
- Opening times - ensuring that facilities are available at earlier/later times than at present.
- Inclusive charging policies (with support for unemployed and low income residents).
- Options for women only areas/times.
- Aim to reduce energy consumption.

Finally, 39 comments (2% of those who commented) criticised some element of the wording of the consultation.

## **Conclusions**

The 'Leisure in Eastwood: Looking to the Future' attracted a very high response rate. With 3,601 responses, it is one of the highest response rates for a consultation run by East Renfrewshire Council. Not all respondents gave a 1<sup>st</sup> preference, some instead commenting or providing only a lower preference. Of the 3,450 respondents who indicated a first preference, there was clear backing for option D – developing a new Leisure Centre on a new, larger site- which had more first preferences than all of the other options combined.

The least popular 1st preference option was option B. Option A had the highest number of 4th preference votes (least preferred option) with 2,063 votes (62%).

In response to a suggested list of potential facilities for a new centre, gym with fitness equipment, teaching swimming pool and a multipurpose dance / fitness / activity studios gym, were ranked as being the most desirable.

Respondents who provided comments highlighted concerns about green space and advocated retaining or replacing the theatre.

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