



Helensburgh Waterfront Development Project

Helensburgh Community Council

Pre-Application Consultation

Community Survey Results

20th May 2018

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2 Introduction

This document summarises the results obtained by Helensburgh Community Council in its community survey about Argyll and Bute Council's Waterfront Development proposal. This survey was carried out between March and May 2018, during the Pre-Application Consultation phase.

HCC supports the replacement of the existing swimming pool on the Pierhead and our overriding aim in this consultation has been to establish how the community views the proposed development so that this opinion can steer the planning process.

As a Community Council, we are grateful to our constituents for taking the time to give us over 1100 opinions and we commend this report to A&BC's Waterfront Development project team. In addition to this community input, we will provide a separate submission from HCC's Architecture and Design Helensburgh with professional opinion about the design aspects of the proposal.

We are also grateful to Andrew Collins, project manager of the Waterfront Development team, for his assistance and open communications during the Consultation phase. We look forward to the project team's response addressing these comments from the public, and the resulting input into the Waterfront Development planning application.

Signed, with the support of Helensburgh Community Council:



Peter Brown, Vice-Convener

20th May 2018

3 Executive summary

Helensburgh Community Council carried out a survey of local public opinion about Argyll and Bute Council's Waterfront Development proposal for a leisure centre, car park and sea defences. We polled 1109 responses, with 2360 comments, and the headline figure is that **55% of respondents disapproved of the overall proposal**.

We have distilled the survey results, and the public's detailed comments, into a set of recommendations as to why public opinion is against the proposal, and what needs to change to make the community more positive about the plans.

The recommendations, and the reasons behind them, are detailed in Section 6 and are summarized here.

- **Recommendation 1: The leisure centre must be positioned as per the 2012 Masterplan Addendum, aligned north-south beside the pier, to avoid flooding.**
- **Recommendation 2: The designers should incorporate the high priority leisure and functional elements identified by the community to ensure that the building meets the needs of its users. These elements, ranked in priority order from the comments, are:**
 1. Fun elements for families, etc.
 2. Slides for the studio pool.
 3. Flumes.
 4. Viewing area for parents/carers.
 5. Spectator seating.
 6. Multi-use sports hall.
 7. Larger pool or gym.
 8. Soft play area.
 9. Wave machine.
 10. Step access to the studio pool.
 11. Café.
 12. Skate park.
 13. More changing facilities/showers.
 14. Climbing wall.
 15. Tourism, such as a museum.
 16. Skating/ice rink.
 17. Outdoor pool.
 18. Hot tub.
 19. Diving board.
 20. Sea view from the pool.
 21. Bowling alley.
 22. Improvements to the pier.
- **Recommendation 3: There must be a café facility, rather than just vending machines.**
- **Recommendation 4: The designers should be asked to look again at the question of spectator seating and consider how it can be located without adding significantly to the volume of the pool hall.**
- **Recommendation 5: The designers should consider all possible options to create a distinctive design statement that inspires the community.**
- **Recommendation 6: Car parking must be reviewed for the whole of the town centre and, if the analysis shows a need for more parking, then the area marked for retail development should be rezoned for parking.**
- **Recommendation 7: The area currently designated for retail must, at least, be reduced in size to the area agreed in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum and, preferably, other uses for this area should be explored – as prioritised by the community – such as a skatepark.**

4 Context

On 26th February 2018, Argyll and Bute Council (A&BC) issued a Pre-Application Notice for the development of a leisure centre, flood defences, car park and public realm at Helensburgh pierhead. The project aims and objectives, from the A&BC website at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/helensburgh-waterfront>, are as follows.¹

4.1 Project Aims

The Helensburgh Waterfront Development project is all about creating a vibrant and attractive waterfront for the town. The main feature of the project will be a new leisure facility incorporating a swimming pool, with associated parking and public realm to meet the needs of the local community and attract day visitors to the town. At the same time the flood defences will be increased to address current flooding issues in the area. The new leisure facilities will be run on behalf of the council by the newly formed trust LiveArgyll.

4.2 Project Objectives

- *To deliver a new leisure facility and swimming pool which meets the needs of the Helensburgh and Lomond community*
- *To encourage new businesses to open up in the town and to provide existing businesses with more opportunities.*
- *To add to what has been achieved through other projects such as CHORD and Hermitage Park, which have created an attractive, vibrant and contemporary Town Centre that helps attract residents, businesses and visitors to the area.*
- *To create a safe, comfortable and, accessible public space to provide a visible link to and from Colquhoun Square, which is the main outdoor event space and the town centre.*
- *To show the town of Helensburgh at its best and encourage additional private sector investment in the waterfront area and town centre.*

4.3 Review of previous history

The Helensburgh Pierhead site has been the subject of several masterplans and proposals in recent decades, and we summarise this context here to establish how the current proposal relates to previous work.

4.3.1 Prior to 2009

Safeway proposed a supermarket on the Pierhead site, which was rejected in 2001-02 at a public inquiry ruling. The Scottish Reporters' conclusion was that the site was unsuitable for a single retail supermarket.

In 2008, the Scottish Reporters' findings on the A&BC Local Plan inquiry identified a requirement to balance retail, commercial, residential and recreational uses.

¹ It is of regret to HCC that we were only given access to the Project Initiation Document shortly before the submission of this report. It would have been useful to us, and the community, if the full context for the design had been circulated in advance of the consultation to fully establish the aims and constraints of the project.

4.3.2 2009 Pierhead Masterplan

The Helensburgh Partnership was charged with attracting private sector investment and facilitating the regeneration of Helensburgh. In October 2008, they consulted local stakeholders (36 people) about the overall layout of the site.

Four broad scenarios were proposed and presented at drop-in sessions that were held in December 2008 and which 300 people attended. The community's priorities that were derived from this were:

- An extension of the town centre with its balance of pubs, restaurants and residential was appropriate.
- It was important to ensure movement through the site and to the waterfront.
- Modern retail facilities were desired to complement/respond to the existing town centre.
- There was a need for a leisure facility on the Pierhead or relocated within the town centre.

The preferred option by Turley Associates, which became the 2009 Pierhead Masterplan was "The Diagonal", as pictured below, incorporating:

- 7000m² retail ground-floor space with 138 residential units above
- A 35-room boutique hotel at the south west corner of the site
- 342 car parking spaces along a north-east to south-west diagonal
- A replacement swimming pool at the south-east corner.



The key uncertainty, at the time of the housing market crash, was whether the commercial market could sustain the retail and residential space that would be created.

4.3.3 2010 Helensburgh Swimming Pool and Leisure Facility – Stage C Design Report

In 2009, A&BC appointed Gareth Hoskins Associates to create an Outline Business Case for the provision of a replacement leisure centre facility. The outcomes in this report were:

- The Pierhead was the preferred site for the building.
- The new building should accommodate a wider range of facilities to create a “community hub”.

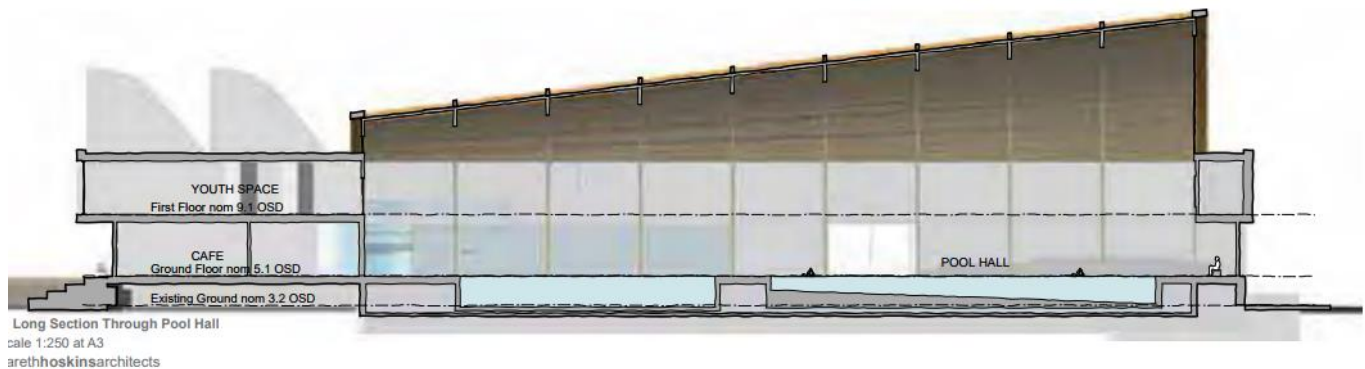
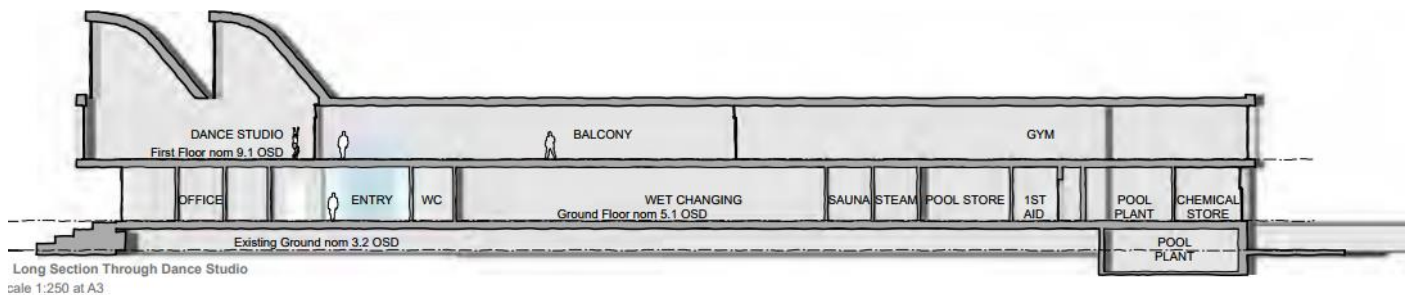
In 2010, A&BC appointed a team to develop the design to RIBA Stage C (which is an outline design) as input to an updated Outline Business Case.

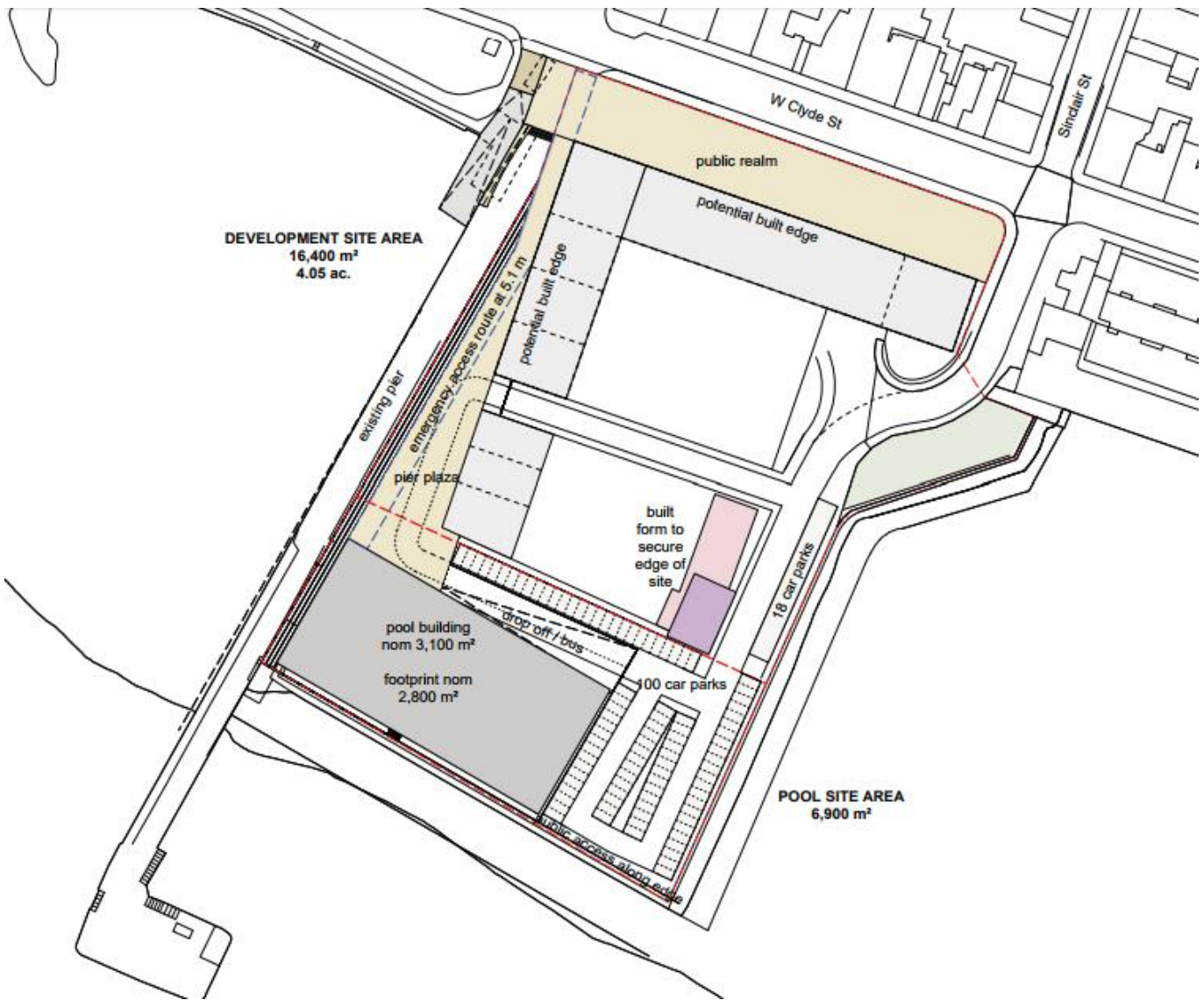
There was no public consultation during the creation of this report.

The report documented the key strategic relationships about the site:

- Between the swimming pools and the sea
- Location of the café to “activate” the pier and access views to the wider landscape
- Defining the arrival point and presence of the building to the town.

The preferred design option was termed the “Vault” – a 2-level structure:





The key features of this design were:

- The leisure centre building was to be sited at the seaward end of the pierhead.
- There was to be an “L”-shape of retail buildings along West Clyde Street and the pier side.
- The car park was to be reduced and located at the seaward end of the site.
- The pools were to be on the seaward side of the building, with the gym and dance studios overlooking them.
- The café was to be at the south-west corner of the building, looking to the sea and the pier.

4.3.4 2011 Proposed Pierhead Masterplan Addendum

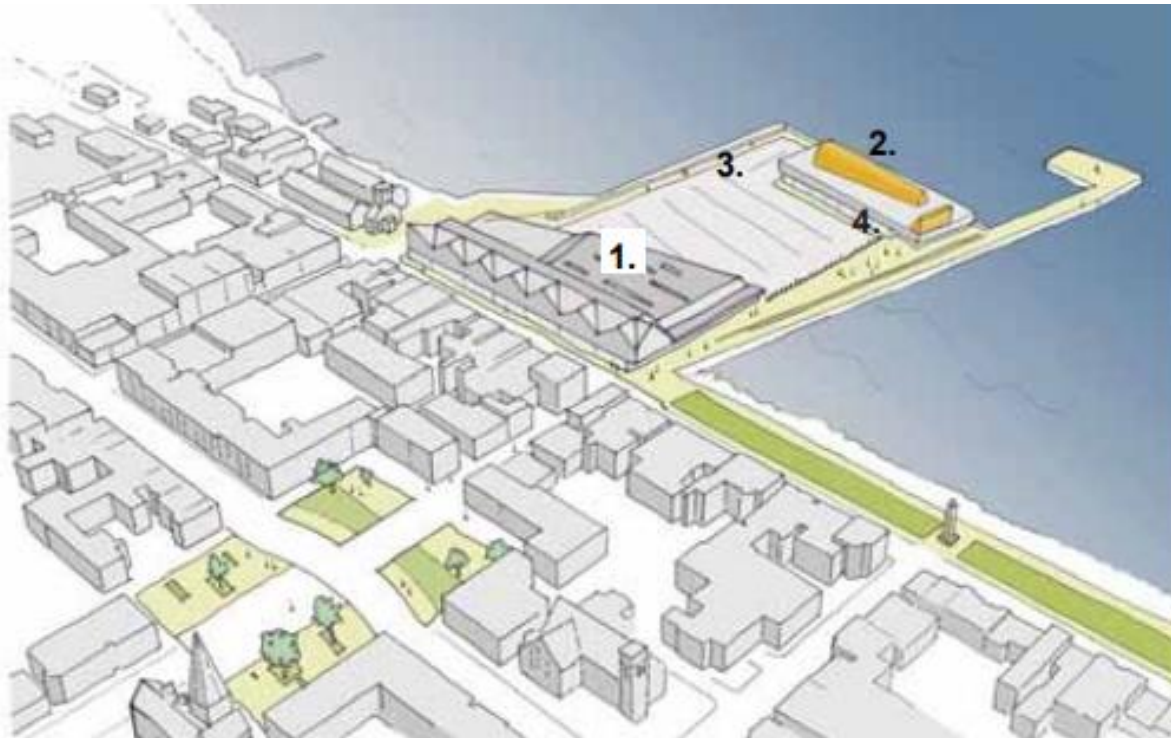
The 2009 Pierhead Masterplan, as above, was approved by A&BC as Supplementary Planning Guidance for the site. By 2011, however, economic conditions had changed and A&BC wanted the 2009 plan updated in light of contemporary market conditions. In November 2011, A&BC asked Gareth Hoskins Associates to produce Masterplan Addenda for both the Pierhead and Hermitage Academy former site.

The public were consulted about a plan which incorporated:

- The 2010 Stage C Design Report for the leisure centre.

- Mixed-use retail development: food retail of 54,000sqft, other retail of 1000m² and 16 housing units.
- Parking
- Public space in front of the new leisure centre building.

The plan that was presented to the public in 2011 is below.



Public consultation comprised:

- Two focus groups, a total of 26 people, in December 2011.
- Two open days in January 2012 at Victoria Halls – an exhibition, survey and presentations to specific interest groups.
- Face-to-face interviews with 371 local people.

There was a total of 1200 responses.

The survey questions focused on the location, and desirability of retail and residential development, rather than on the content of the leisure building. The responses can be summarised as:

- The majority felt that a new pool should be located on the Pierhead, rather than elsewhere.
- If possible, the pool should be built whilst the existing pool remain in operation.
- 55% did not want a large supermarket on the Pierhead – the contemporary Waitrose proposals for the East end of Helensburgh were regarded as preferable.
- 55% did not want residential development on the Pierhead.
- There were concerns about the loss of convenient parking, loss of public realm and open views across waterfront.

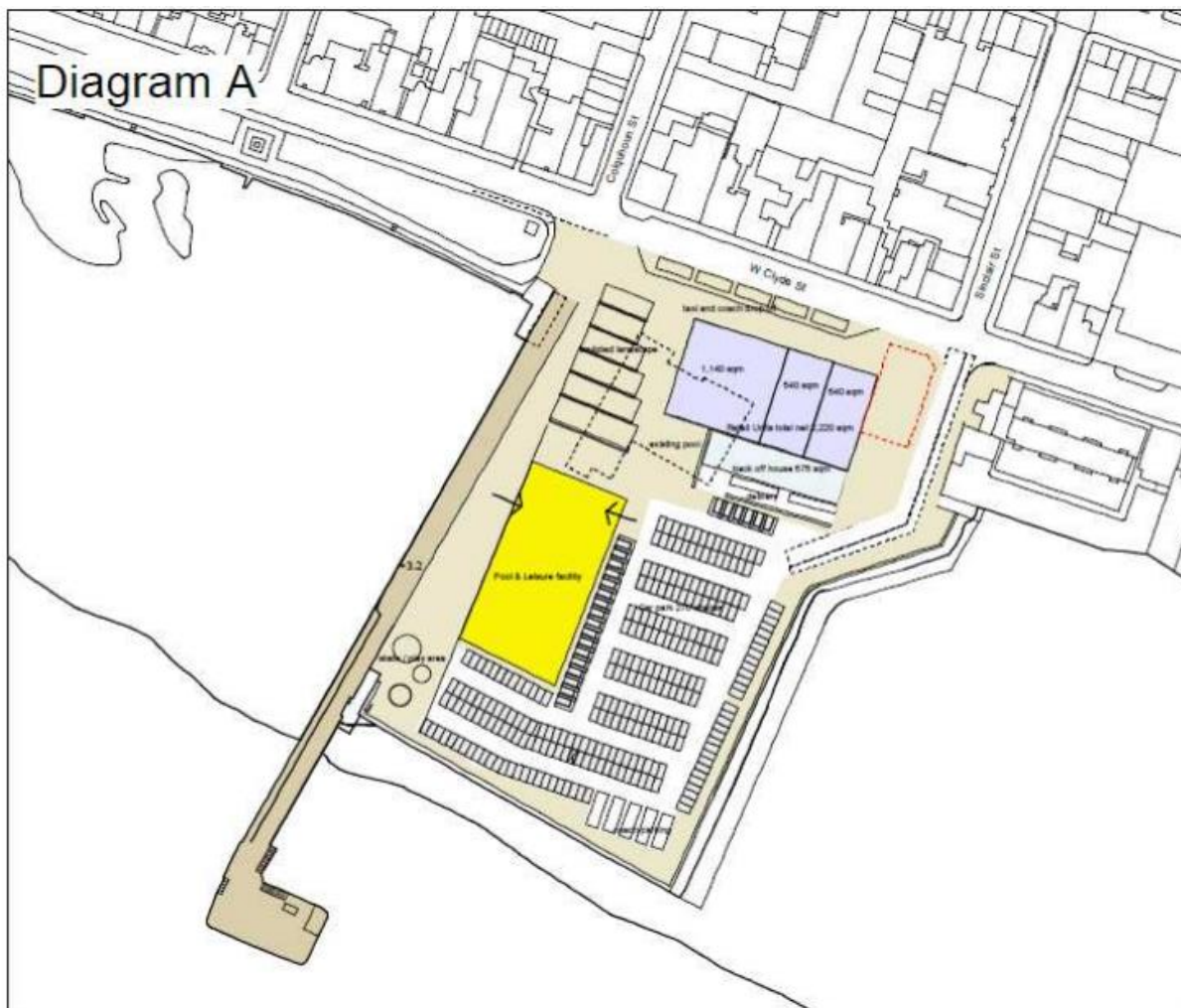
Overall, 55% of public feedback on this proposed Masterplan Addendum rejected the Council's Option 1 (as per the design above).²

The A&BC executive recommended, therefore, that a new Masterplan Addendum be created as follows:

- The scale and mass of retail units be substantially reduced.
- The larger scale supermarket be deleted from the Masterplan
- The new pool/community leisure centre be built on the Pierhead in a changed position to reflect concerns with regard to flooding/exposure, etc.
- A site be set aside to be landscaped, and spaces provided for parking of coaches.
- The retail units be restricted in size and set back along West Clyde St to lessen their visual impact.
- That the requirement for residential units be deleted from the Masterplan.

4.3.5 2012 Pierhead Masterplan Addendum

A&BC approved the following diagram as the Masterplan Addendum for the Pierhead site in February 2012.



² Per A&BC Supplementary Pack 2, 2nd Feb 2012, item 10: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/b12522/Supplementary%20Pack%20Executive%20Feb%202012%20Thursday%2002-Feb-2012%2010.00%20Executive.pdf?T=9>

This layout incorporates:

- A leisure centre building that is aligned north-south along the pier, and which is sited back from the seawall.
- Car parking to the east and south of the leisure centre building.
- Retail units on West Clyde Street, leaving space for public realm/landscaping between the leisure centre and West Clyde Street.
- A play area between the leisure centre and the pier.

These changes were sufficiently significant that A&BC approved another round of public consultation that happened in September 2012. This was simply a free-form survey question: "Please tell us your views on the Finalised Helensburgh Pierhead Masterplan" and no drop-in sessions or other consultation were held.

The outcome was that only 29 submissions were returned on this final plan.³

HCC wrote to A&BC at the time and this is documented by A&BC as *"expressing their concern that the consultation was insufficient to adequately understand local peoples' views. Council officers did however make every effort to get people involved through local media and use of the council's web site in accordance with the consultation arrangements set out in the report to the council that approved the release of the Finalised Masterplan. It is considered however, given the feedback received, that the public generally appear to accept that the views expressed at earlier consultations were taken into account and reflected in the Finalised Masterplan and no further comment was necessary."*

This layout was described in more detail in Gareth Hoskins' Masterplan Addendum document of May 2012 as follows:



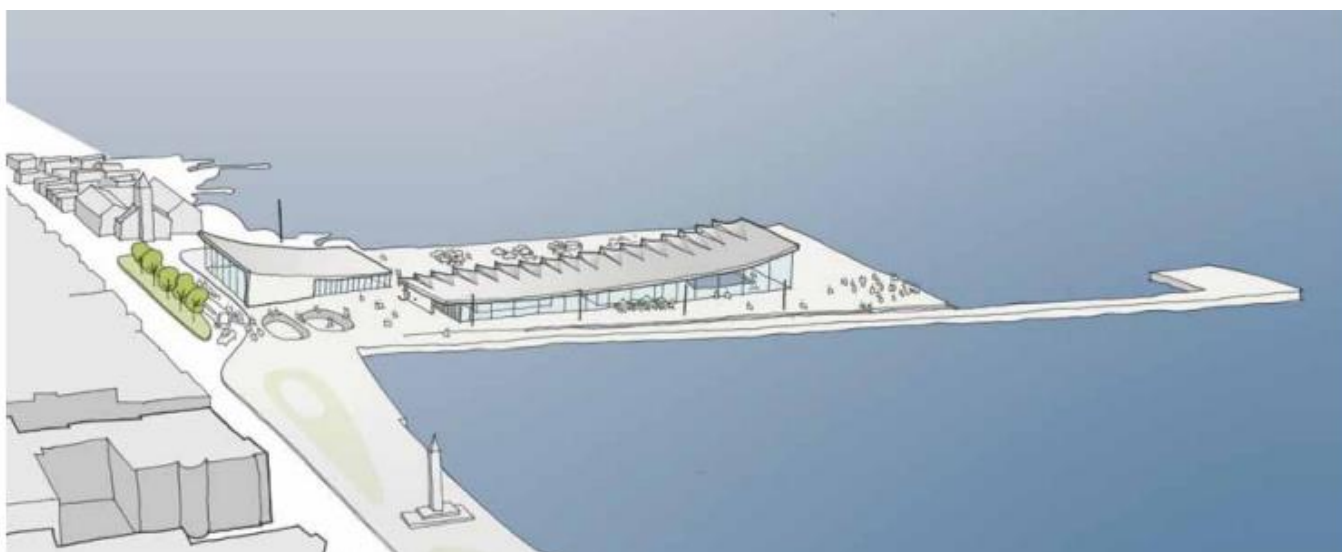
The areas on this diagram were labelled as:

³ <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s70114/Helensburgh%20Pierhead%20Masterplan.pdf>

1. Footprint of existing pool.
2. Retail units.
3. Pool and leisure building, with potential extension (3b).
4. Landscaping / skate park / play park.
5. Coach and taxi drop off.
6. Public space in front of pool building.
7. Public walkway around site.
8. Parking for pool (100 spaces).
9. General public parking (165 spaces).
10. Coach parking.
11. Mariner's site.

This approved layout therefore included space for a skate park/play park, as well as coach parking.

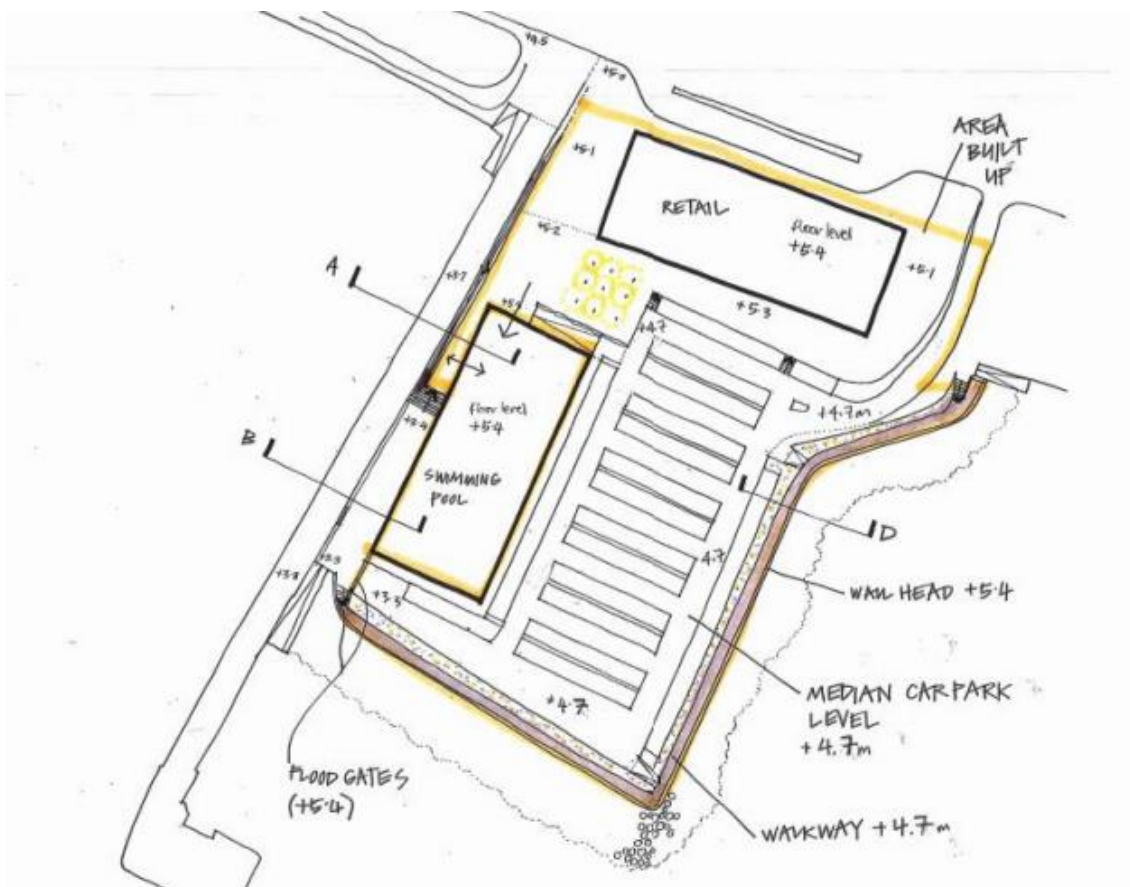
An aspirational idea for how the layout of the Finalised Masterplan Addendum could be realised was memorably sketched in Gareth Hoskins' document (below), although no costing was done on this idea.



4.3.6 June 2016 Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee

The Area Committee was presented with five options for the footprint of the site, primarily to identify which flood defence approach should be taken in terms of levels of the car park and seawalls. The leisure centre in each option was either in the 2012 Addendum position (aligned north-south beside the pier) or on top of the existing swimming pool's footprint. None had the swimming pool at the seaward end of the site.

The option selected by the Area Committee was Option 5 (below), with the car park at +4.7m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), and a seawall of +5.4m AOD. This base level is 1.4m above the existing level of the car park, and the seawall is 2.1m above the existing level of the car park.



This, therefore, was broadly in-line with the 2012 Masterplan Addendum.

4.3.7 December 2017 Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee

In December 2017, after the appointment of Darnton B3 as the designers to the project team, the H&L Area Committee were given recommendations in a position statement from the project team. In this, the project team said, on the location and orientation of the leisure centre:⁴

The expectation has been that the Leisure Centre would be located on the western edge of the pier head with the principal elevations running north to south.

However visits to other similar facilities, discussions with Live Argyll Trust and advice from Darnton B3 have led us to reconsider this. A key factor in this deliberation has been:

- *A desire to minimise and/or control solar glare and its effects on swimmers and the pool environment as far as practical*
- *The opportunity to make the best possible use of the building's iconic location with its panoramic views over the River Clyde, and thereby affording building users the maximum opportunity to appreciate them*
- *To make the most operationally efficient use of space within the building's layout.*

Recommendation 1

⁴ <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s122807/Helensburgh%20-%20Waterfront%20Development%20-%20Position%20Statement.pdf>

We have therefore concluded that the most efficient location and orientation for the main elements of the Leisure Centre would be as follows:

- Leisure Centre located at the southern end of the pier head
- Main elevations to run west to east
- Swimming Pool and Learner Pool located at Ground Floor level on the northern elevation
- Reception Area, Staff Accommodation and Wet Changing facilities located at Ground Floor level on the southern elevation
- Fitness Suite, Studios and Dry Changing facilities located at 1st Floor level on the southern elevation to take advantage of the views along the River Clyde.

When the current proposals were made public in February 2018, this revised site layout matched closely with the 2010 Stage C Design Report that was rejected by the public consultation in 2011 and did not align with the, subsequent and publicly approved, 2012 Masterplan Addendum.

4.3.8 Additional recommendations from Dec 2017 H&L Area Committee

In the position statement from the project team, there were two further recommendations that are relevant for our survey.

Community Swimming Pool / 150 spectators seating

The 2016 Project brief included for the provision of a Competition Pool and 150 dedicated poolside spectator seating. The Helensburgh Swimming Pool currently hosts five Argyll and Bute swimming galas per annum. These galas comprise of club and school galas and although the quantity of these gala may increase, the design and provision will remain the same. As such the Live Argyll Trust is confident that a community pool with a multi-purpose seating specification will suffice.

Low level galas such as school and scout galas can be held in any pool. Obviously there are the practicalities of accommodating participants and spectators but there are no specific regulations governing the facilities to be provided.

For a purpose built swimming pool where its business case is predicated on holding regular Licenced/Accredited competitions then dedicated spectator seating is a pre-requisite. However providing dedicated spectator seating within a Community Pool environment has a number of distinct financial and environmental disadvantages, including:

- The temperature in the spectators area must be kept at a constant temperature equal to the temperature of the pool water +1 C
- Given that out with peak periods (e.g. school holidays) the pool is generally underutilised on weekdays, this means that for large periods of the week the area will be heated whilst it is empty. This has significant cost implications in terms of building energy management and efficiency.
- Heating a large area when it is empty takes significantly more energy than heating it when it is full, again with cost implications
- When it is not in use the spectator area is effectively dead space as it cannot be used for any other activities.

The Live Argyll Trust does not consider that swimming galas will form a significant proportion of their business activities and their preference is therefore for a multipurpose spectator area, instead of a dedicated area with 150 fixed seating.

Recommendation 2

The swimming pool should be designed on the basis of it being a 'Community' facility and the requirement for a fixed seating spectator area at the poolside should be removed and replaced with the capability for a multi-purpose spectator area.

Moveable Floor to learner pool

The Live Argyll Trust Management's preference is for the provision of a moveable floor within the Learner pool as this will provide increased flexibility to cater for a wider demographic and varied user groups.

This flexibility can often improve programming and increase participation and therefore the operational business case. At other recently constructed leisure facilities, the business case identified that the expenditure on the moveable floor made the facilities much more affordable overall in business case terms despite the initial capital expenditure.

The main advantage that a moveable floor brings is that it opens up much more options for the different user groups and the types of water based classes that can be offered. The inclusion of a moveable floor will further negate the perceived need for a splash pool as the variable depth capability will then allow for the safe and fun depth required for the younger users. The floor offers a further advantage that in the event of an emergency it can be used to assist a disabled person out of the pool. A pool with a moveable floor does not require any additional pool hall area or filtration, so running costs are considered to be reasonable.

As the moveable floor is out with the project budget, Live Argyll Trust will be looking to secure separate funding circa £250k through its Service Asset Management Plan in FY20/21. This funding would then allow for the delivery of the moveable floor through the main construction contract. The costs associated with the maintenance of a moveable floor over a 25 year period have been estimate at £200k (or an average of £8k/p.a.) These additional maintenance costs would need to be borne by Argyll & Bute Council and therefore further consideration and agreement that these cost were affordable and represented VfM would need to be reached.

Recommendation 4

The requirement for a 'splash pool' should be replaced with a 'learner pool', equipped with a moveable floor, subject to the Live Argyll Trust securing capital construction costs and agreement on funding future maintenance cost.

4.4 Pre-Application Consultation

A&BC's pre-application consultation (PAC) consisted of the following strands.

1. Focus Groups

On 30th and 31st January 2018, prior to the official PAC period, the Project Team hosted 4 focus groups and an informal drop-in event for organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the MOD, Lomond & Clyde Tourist Association, Helensburgh Shorefront Development Project and the Scottish Submarine Museum.

The focus groups comprised:

- Specific Need Groups (Grey Matters, ENABLE and parents of children with autism)

- Users of the existing building (e.g. swimming and kayak club)
- Staff of the existing Leisure Facility
- Helensburgh & Lomond Community Council conveners.

A total of 36 people attended these sessions.

2. Plan displays

The proposed plans of the Waterfront Development were displayed by A&BC at Victoria Halls, the swimming pool and the library for the duration of the PAC.

3. Public drop-in sessions

A&BC's project team hosted three drop-in sessions at which the public could talk to the designers of the current proposal. These were all on Mondays at Victoria Halls:

- 26th March: 11am-7pm
- 30th April: 11am-9pm⁵
- 14th May: 11am-7pm.

4.5 HCC community survey

4.5.1 Paper survey at drop-in sessions

HCC volunteers attended each drop-in session and set up a stall in the foyer of Victoria Halls to ask members of the public to fill in a survey form on their way out. We received the following forms at, or immediately after, each drop-in session:

- 26th March: 134
- 30th April: 100
- 14th May: 61.

4.5.2 Online survey

HCC made the same survey questions available online via Survey Monkey (<https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HCCWaterfront>) and publicised this via the Helensburgh Advertiser, the HCC Facebook page, local Facebook groups and on the HCC website. We asked people to share the link to their friends and colleagues by email and Facebook.

After the first drop-in session, HCC asked the project team to prepare a flyer containing the last two drop-in session times and the HCC survey link. We distributed this to local shops, cafes and businesses to broaden awareness of the drop-in sessions and the survey.

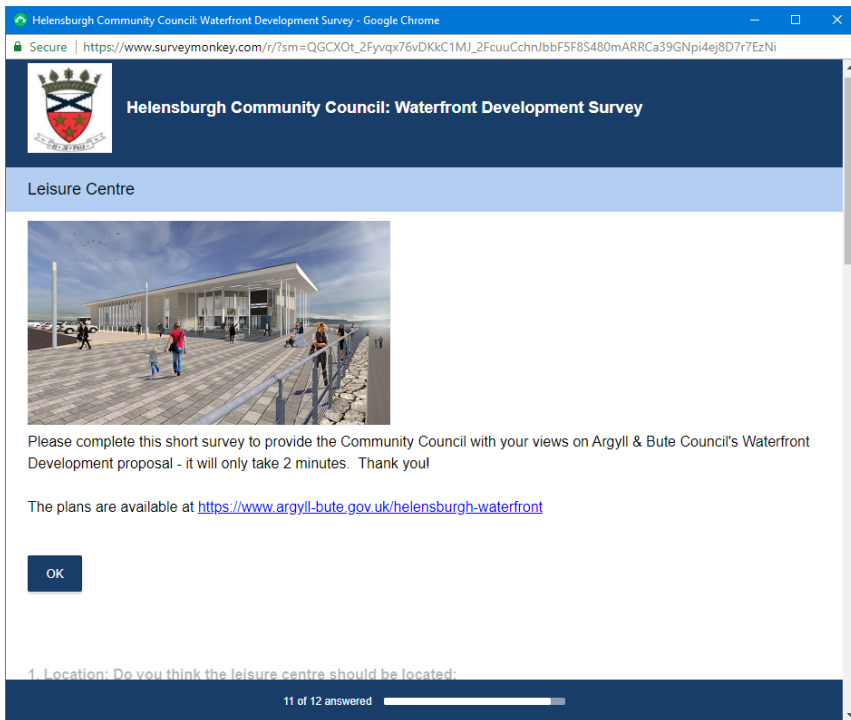
HCC obtained 816 online survey responses, and numerous comments.

⁵ HCC sought agreement from the project team to extend the session on 30th April that was originally scheduled to end at 7pm, with support from HCC volunteers, to make the sessions more accessible to shift workers and commuters.

4.5.3 Survey questions

The paper form of the survey is included on the next page.

The same questions were asked in the Survey Monkey version, with the addition of a brief introduction which linked to the A&BC Waterfront Development webpage to provide respondents with information about the proposal:



Helensburgh Community Council



Waterfront Development Project

Community Survey : Spring 2018

LEISURE CENTRE

Location on the site

- Do you think the leisure centre should be located:

- At the seaward end of the carpark
- Closer to the town?

Interior

- Does the proposal for swimming pools, gym, studios, etc., adequately meet your needs?

- Yes
- No

If "no", what is missing?

- Are you in favour of the full height glass wall between the studio pool and the café?

- Yes
- No

- What sort of snack provision would you prefer?

- Vending machines
- Café

- Do you think the planned provision and location for spectator seating is sufficient?

- Yes
- No

Exterior

- Does the appearance of the building do justice to the prominence of the site?

- Yes
- No

CAR PARK AND PUBLIC REALM

- The current waterfront car park has circa 504 spaces; the proposal is for circa 265 spaces. Do you think this is sufficient parking provision?

- Yes
- No

- Are you content with the site by West Clyde Street being designated for retail development?

- Yes
- No

If "no", what would you like to see there, e.g. public domain, leisure provision (crazy golf, skatepark, etc.)?

OVERALL

- Do you approve of the overall plan as proposed?

- Yes
- No

Why?

ABOUT YOU

- Your postcode prefix, e.g. "G84 7":

- Your age range:

- Under 12
- 12-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-60
- Over 60

Is there anything you would like to add?

5 Survey respondents

5.1 Total responses

HCC received 1109 survey responses, along with 2360 comments from the free-form text boxes. The full text of these comments is contained in a second HCC document – “Pre-Application Consultation Community Survey Results – Appendix of comments”, dated 20th May 2018.

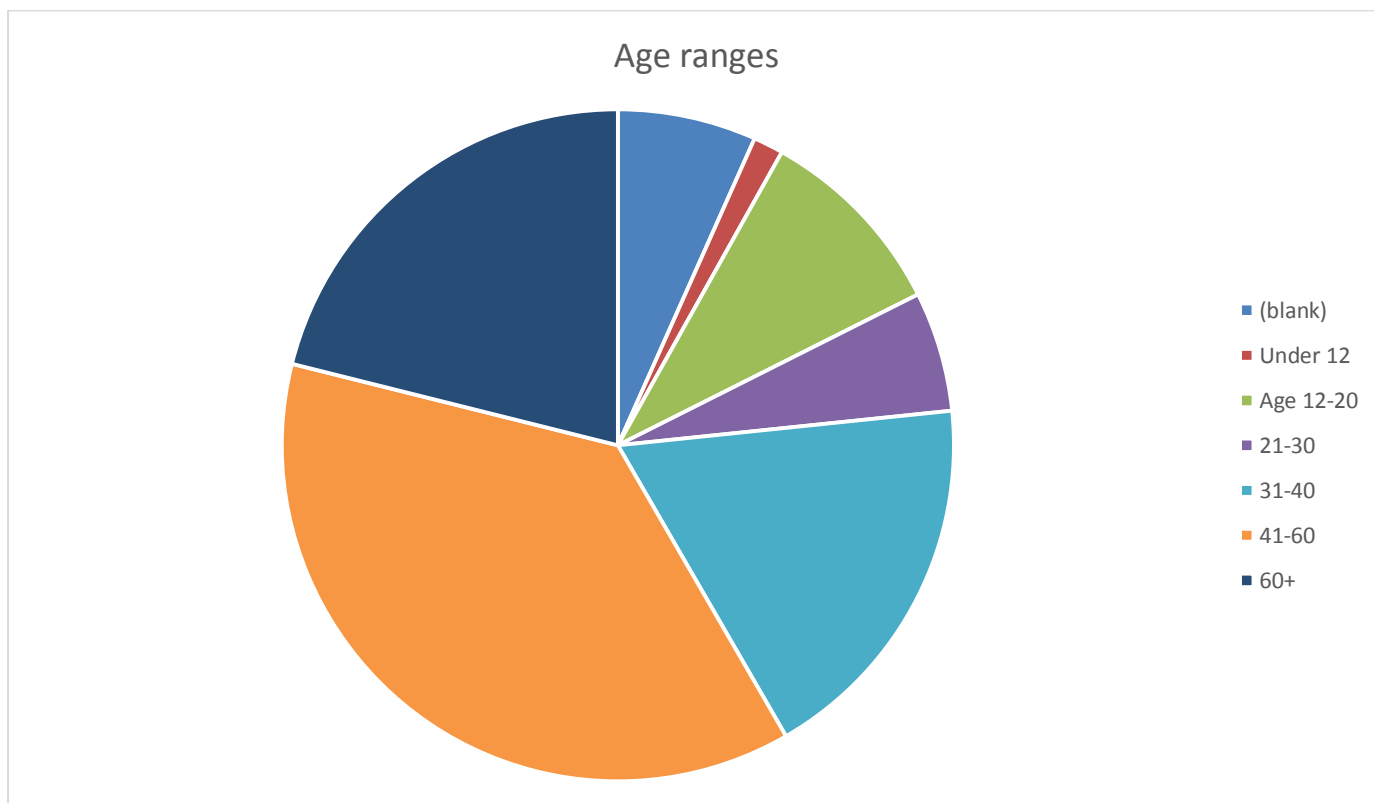
5.2 Demographic of responses

5.2.1 Age range

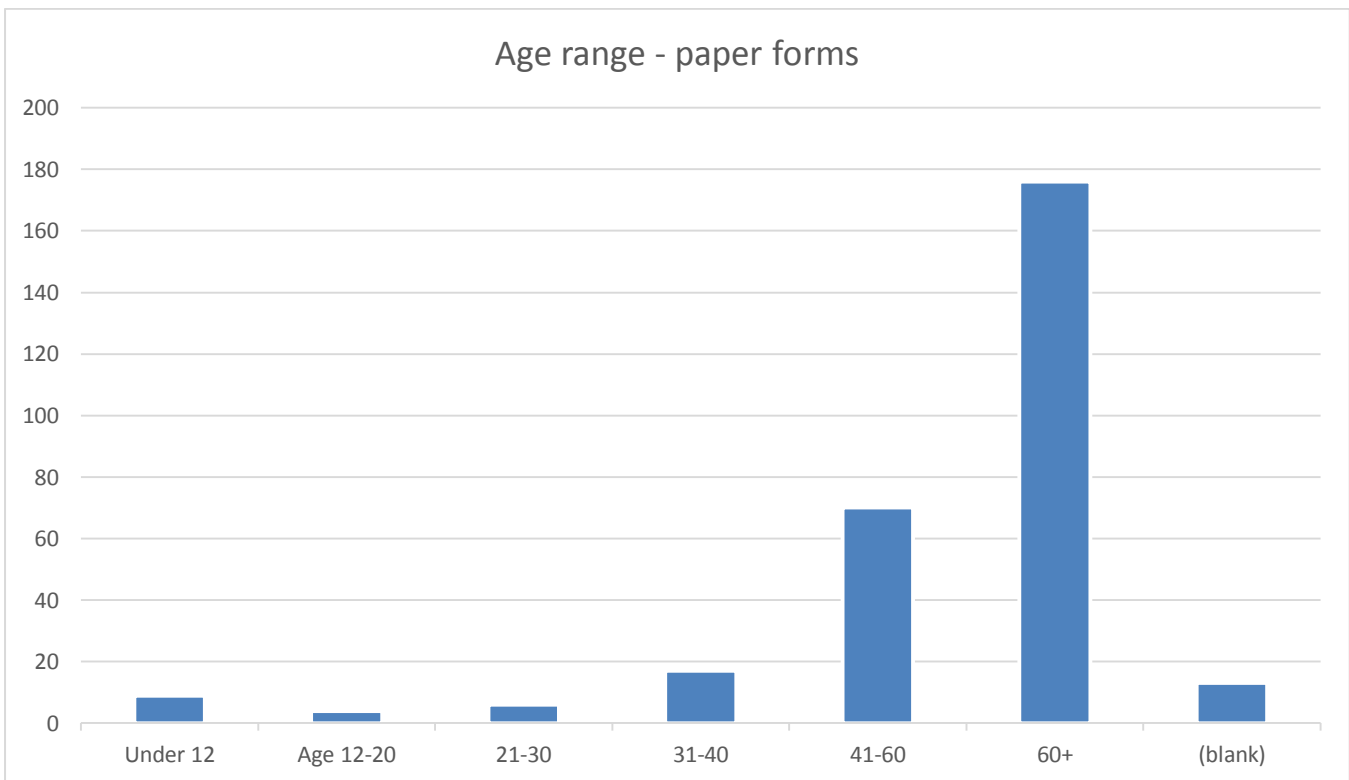
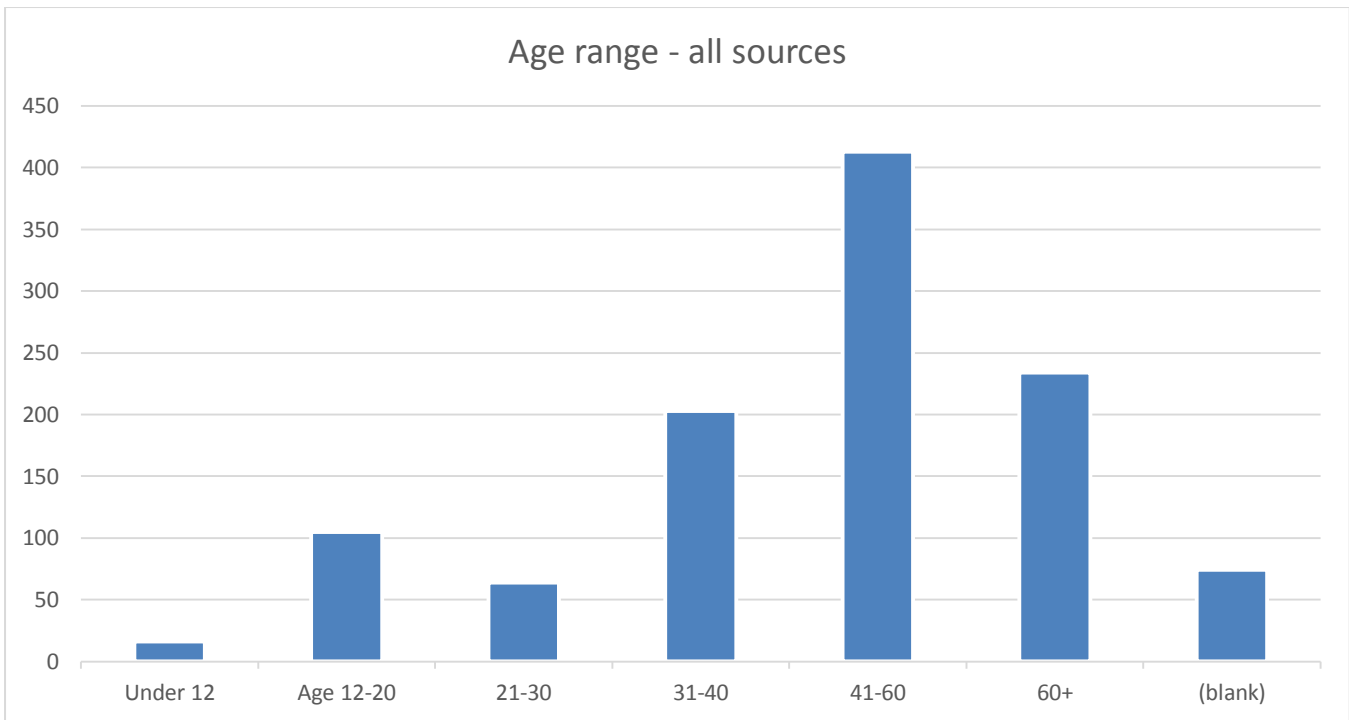
The graph below shows that we had a broad age range in the submissions to our survey.

Observations on this:

- Just over half the responses came from those in the 31-60 age range.
- We had a particularly good response (of around 90 submissions) from the 12-20 age range at Hermitage Academy via promotion from our associates in the Youth Forum.
- The 21-30 age range is less well represented than the 31-40 range, which could reflect the (older) demographic of Facebook.



For comparison, we also looked at how our overall (online and paper forms) demographic compared to that of just the paper forms. The latter were completed by the public when they exited the project team’s drop-in sessions in Victoria Halls, and are therefore representative of the attendance at these drop-ins.

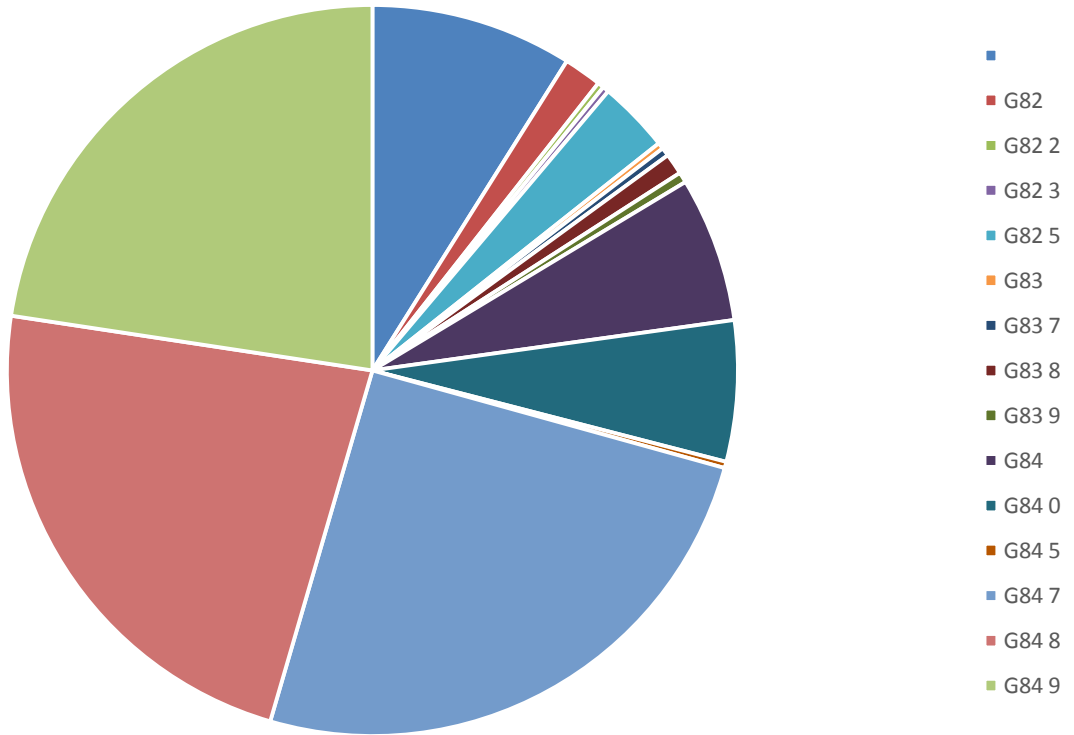


This clearly shows that our overall demographic is balanced, but the demographic of the drop-in sessions was heavily biased towards the older age range. Indeed, 60% of the paper forms were obtained from the 60+ age range. Therefore the feedback forms that the project team were issuing at the drop-ins will also be heavily biased towards this age range.

5.2.2 Postcodes

The graph below shows the postcode data provided by respondents, truncated to the first 5 characters of the postcode. This shows that approximately 25% of the responses were from each of G84 7, G84 8 and G84 9 (East, West and central Helensburgh & Lomond), and the remainder were from the surrounding locality.

Postcodes



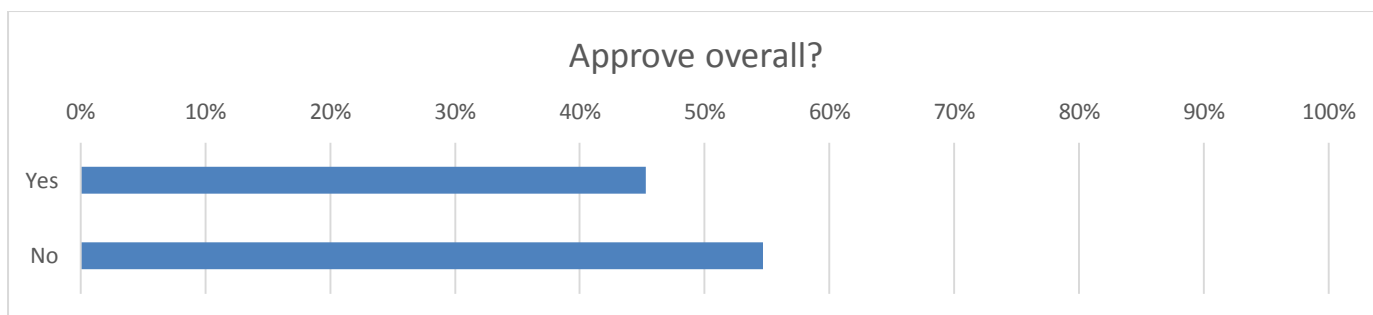
6 Survey results

6.1 “Do you approve of the overall plan as proposed?”

This question was the final one on the survey form, but it provides the crucial quantification of community opinion on the overall proposal – the leisure centre, parking, public realm and flood defences. A text box underneath prompted respondents with the question “Why?”, asking them to provide a reason for their positive or negative view.

The response to this question was:

- 55% No
- 45% Yes.

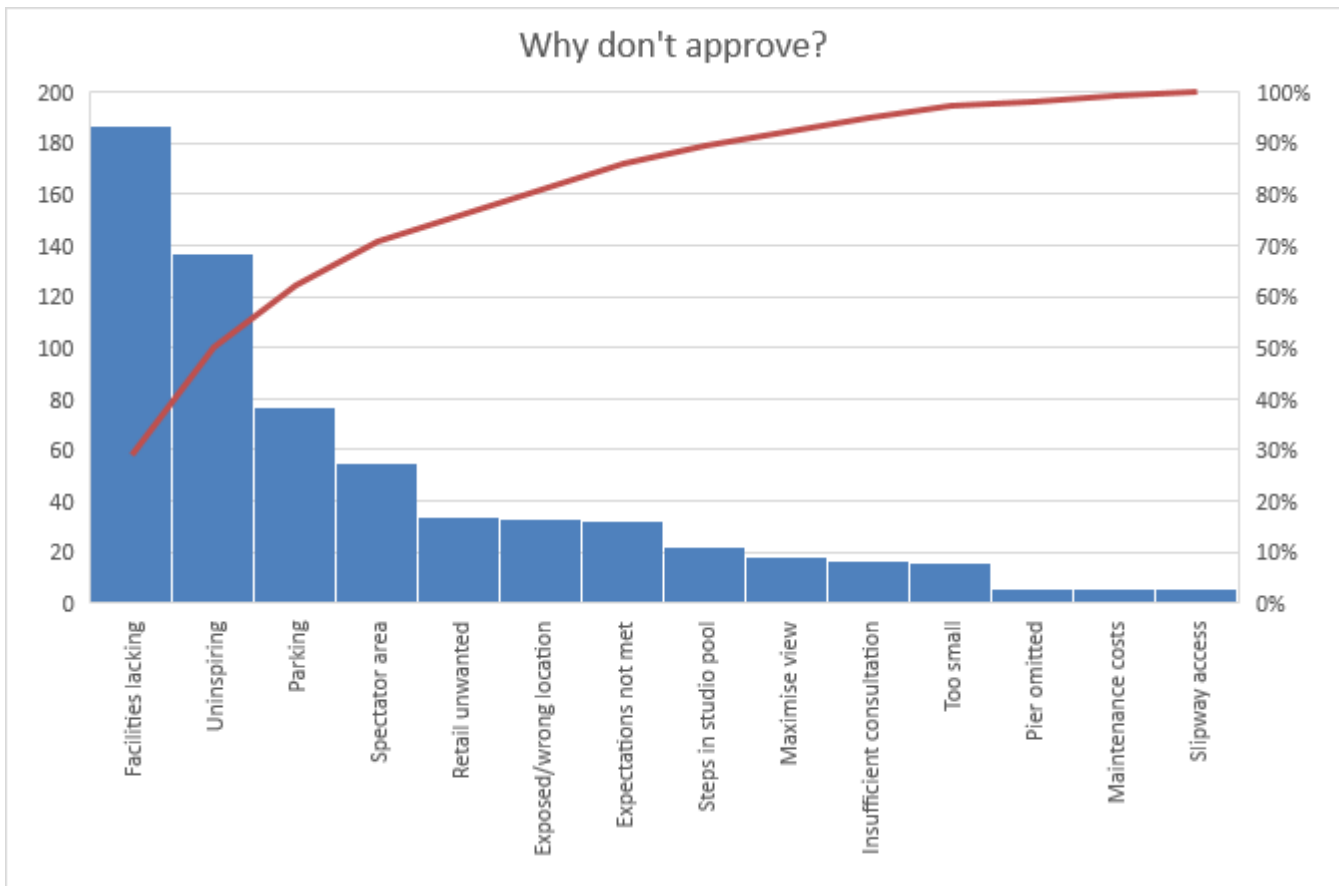


The majority of those surveyed, therefore, reject the proposed plan.

The comments provided in response to “Why?”, and the opinions given to the other questions in the survey, are therefore key to understanding why this proposal does not meet with the approval of the community. We received 683 comments on the “Why?” question – 513 from those who said “No” they didn’t approve of the proposal, and 170 from those who said “Yes” they did approve. The complete set of these comments is included in the separate document “Community Survey Results – Appendix of comments”.

Of the 513 negative comments, we identified categories of phrases in these comments – for example, references to a desire for other facilities in the building. We then graphed the frequency of these categories in a Pareto chart⁶ (below), with the intention that if the most common issues were addressed then the opinion of those respondents might be improved.

⁶ From Wikipedia: a Pareto chart contains both bars and a line graph, where individual values are represented in descending order by bars, and the cumulative total is represented by the line. The purpose of the Pareto chart is to highlight the most important among a set of factors.



The categories of concern that were identified in these comments, in priority order, were the following:

1. The facilities in the leisure centre are inadequate or insufficient. The complete comments give the full set of desires of the respondents, and more detail on these is provided in Section 6.3 which addresses the survey question about facilities, but the set mentioned includes skatepark, flumes, waterslide, soft play, wave machine, sports hall, etc.
2. The proposal and design is uninspiring. A common phrase here was that there was “nothing new” in the facilities, i.e. that no additional features were being provided above and beyond the existing swimming pool and gym. Another common phrase in this set was “missed” or “wasted” opportunity.
3. The parking provided in the proposal is insufficient.
4. The spectator area is not sufficient.
5. The designation of the area next to West Clyde Street as “retail” is not appropriate, not desired, or not necessary for the town.
6. That the site for the leisure centre at the seaward end of the pier is inappropriate, including the concern that it is too exposed. Concerns are about flooding, as well as the effect of the wind and wave action on the building, and that the entrance is in an exposed location at the north-westerly corner of the building, which means that all users must go around the corner of the building to the pier-side which is exposed in the prevailing south-westerly winds.
7. The expectations of the community have not been met by the proposals – for example that the reference to the building as a “leisure centre” is not justified by the facilities being offered.

8. That the moveable floor in the studio pool is a concern because it will reduce the accessibility for parents carrying babies, and pregnant women, who will now have to access the pool via a ladder rather than shallow steps.
9. That the design needs to maximise the use of the sea views from the site and, particularly, to allow a view of the sea from the pool.
10. That A&BC's consultation on the development has been insufficient and/or that the views expressed in the consultation will not be heeded.
11. Either the pool, or the gym, is too small for the community, and also that the population of Helensburgh is growing and that it needs to be designed for future growth.
12. That the pier itself is not included in the development proposal, and that the complete site needs to be considered as a whole to include the regeneration of the pier.
13. The design of the building, in particular the roof, will lead to maintenance concerns in the future.
14. The revised access to the slipway, which will require cars to do a 90 degree turn before reversing down a longer ramp to the water, is not practical.

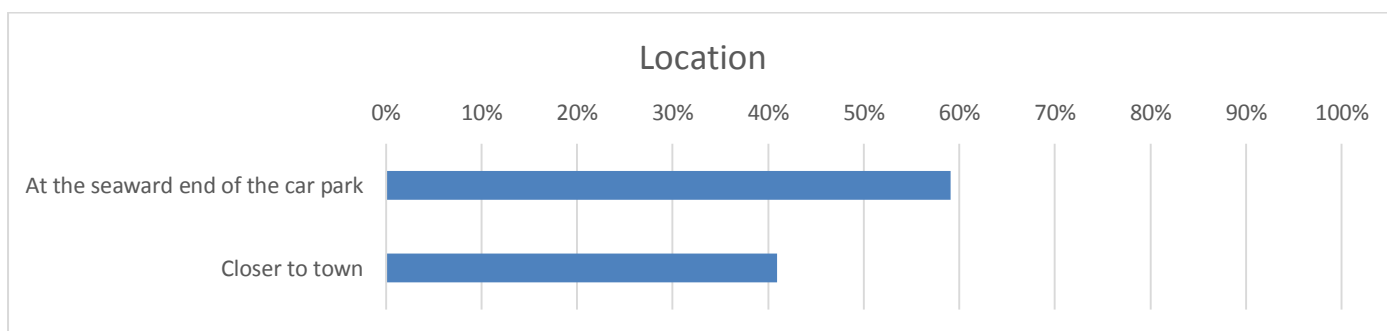
As described above, if the proposal can be amended to address at least the top priorities in this list then the proportion of people in favour of the proposal is likely to increase.

The other questions in the survey explored, in the main, these categories of issues and therefore the following sections drill into the detail of what the community likes and dislikes about the plan, and what amendments to the plan may improve their opinion of the plan. We have drawn specific recommendations from the community's opinions in the sections below.

6.2 "Do you think the leisure centre should be located: At the seaward end of the carpark/Closer to the town?"

The first question in the survey asked whether the public felt that the proposed location of the leisure centre, at the seaward end of the carpark, was appropriate or whether it should be closer to the town. The response was:

- Seaward end of the carpark: 59%
- Closer to the town: 41%



The majority of respondents were therefore keen that the building use the site such that the views are maximised from it. Indeed, as per Section 6.1, a notable proportion of the responses believe that the building could utilise the views more than it does, particularly from the pool.

A similar proportion, though, also commented that they disapproved of the plan because the location of the building was too exposed due to the risk of flooding or exposure to the wind and waves. This is an obvious concern about the current proposal because the leisure centre is immediately adjacent to the raised seawall.

To assess the evidence for this concern, HCC has reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) document that the Waterfront Development team commissioned from Kaya Consulting, as an update on the 2011 FRA undertaken by URS/AECOM. The latest FRA is not yet public, and therefore respondents to the survey would not be aware of the contents of this document.⁷

The issues identified by HCC in the Kaya document were the following:

1. When climate change is considered, the proposed seawall level, of 5.4m AOD, is not sufficient to protect the building in future years. The 5.4m seawall level is stated as being sufficient for the **still water** level in 2100 but, explicitly, that overtopping would occur when waves were introduced into the calculations. No further quantification of the amount of overtopping is included in the document but we have run our own calculations using the spreadsheet provided by SimpleCoast – full details of this are in Appendix A.

This shows that wave overtopping significant enough to damage the building (more than 1 litre per second per metre length of seawall) will occur in extreme events as early as the completion date of the building in 2021.

In Appendix A, we demonstrate that an alternative approach, of locating the leisure centre as per the 2012 Masterplan Addendum - aligned north-south along the pier - would resolve the flooding issue including climate change concerns. Significantly, this will also *reduce* the cost of the sea defences required and this could free-up some of the budget for other features to be added to the building or public realm.

2. The extreme sea level prediction for 2100 is 4.65m, expressed with a confidence interval of +/-0.5m. We assume, in the absence of any other information, that this is a 95% confidence interval. This confidence interval is not used anywhere in the document, and the mean value (4.65m) is simply used in calculations involving climate change.

The 95% confidence interval means that the sea level in 2100 will be between 4.15m and 5.15m with 95% certainty. It also means that there is less than a 50% chance that the sea level will be 4.65m or lower. Therefore, in using only the middle value of 4.65m, there is a 50% chance that this value will be exceeded and there is a 50% chance that the seawall is not sufficient to accommodate climate change.

We have left this second issue with the project team to resolve.

Recommendation 1: The leisure centre must be positioned as per the 2012 Masterplan Addendum, aligned north-south beside the pier, to avoid flooding.

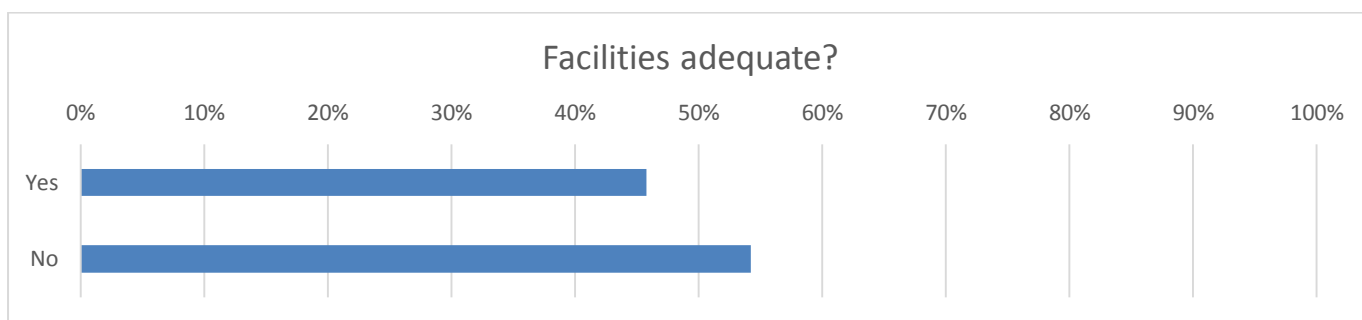
⁷ “Helensburgh Waterfront Development, Flood Risk Assessment (Amended)”, Kaya Consulting Limited dated April 2018.

6.3 “Does the proposal for swimming pools, gym, studios, etc., adequately meet your needs?”

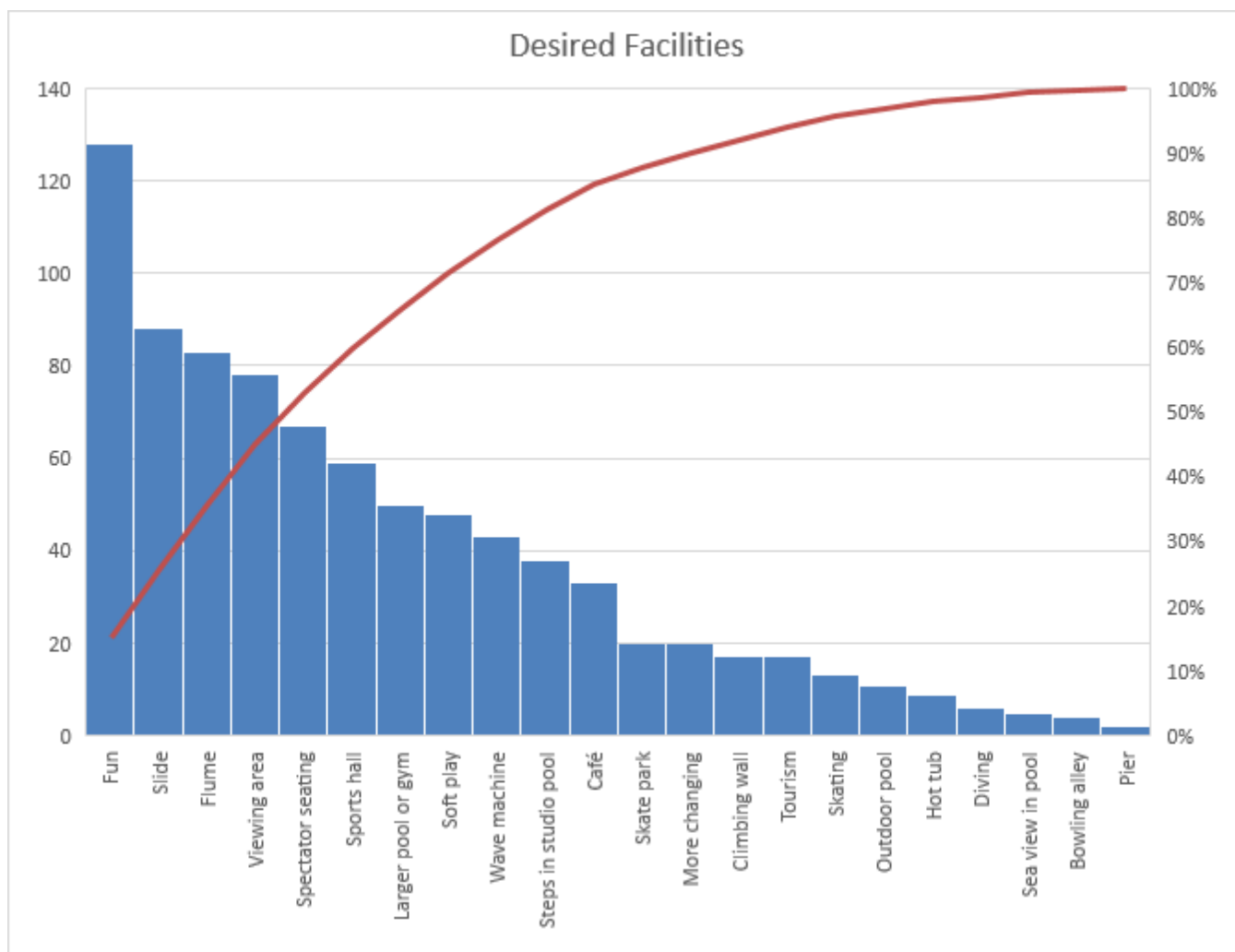
This question was to extract the desires of the community about facilities in the leisure centre. There was a follow-on free-form question which was ‘If “no”, what is missing?’.

The response to this question was:

- No: 53%
- Yes: 47%.



We received 571 comments and, again, categorised these into frequently occurring topics as follows.



The topics, in order with highest popularity first, were as follows.

1. Fun. In this category were many comments that more “fun” elements were needed to retain families, younger children and teenagers on the site rather than using the facilities at Clydebank and Greenock (which were mentioned often).
2. Slides for the studio pool (rather than flumes) were the 2nd priority.
3. This was closely followed by flumes as the 3rd priority.
4. We distinguished in our comment categorisation between a “viewing area” for parents/carers to be able to view their children in the swimming pools, and “spectator seating” for competitions/galas. In making this distinction, these comments still filled both the 4th and 5th priorities in this list.
5. 5th was spectator seating
6. In 6th position was the desire for a sports hall in which other sports could be played – netball, badminton and 5-a-side were all mentioned.
7. A larger pool or gym space.
8. A dedicated soft play area.
9. A wave machine.
10. Step access to the studio pool, rather than the moveable floor with ladders. There were a number of concerns raised here, and one comment in particular is worthy of inclusion as representative of the remainder:

There is a risk of legal proceedings under Equality Act 2010 from pregnant women in terms of access to leisure services down a narrow ladder instead of easy to use steps - there are huge health and safety implications in this. The same risk of disabled users raising the claim is not the same legal risk - the law is about access to leisure not optimal temperature for the pools. The disabled of course are a priority group but should not be the reason for a moveable floor.

11. A café.
12. Skate park.
13. More changing facilities – either more showers, or non-communal changing rooms.
14. Climbing wall.
15. Tourist attractions, such as a museum.
16. Skating/ice rink.
17. Outdoor pool.
18. Hot tub.
19. Diving board.
20. Sea view from the pool.
21. Bowling alley.
22. Improvements to the pier.

From the Pareto chart, if the project team could incorporate the first 10 of these items then they will have addressed 75% of the negative comments on this question. These can be split into two camps:

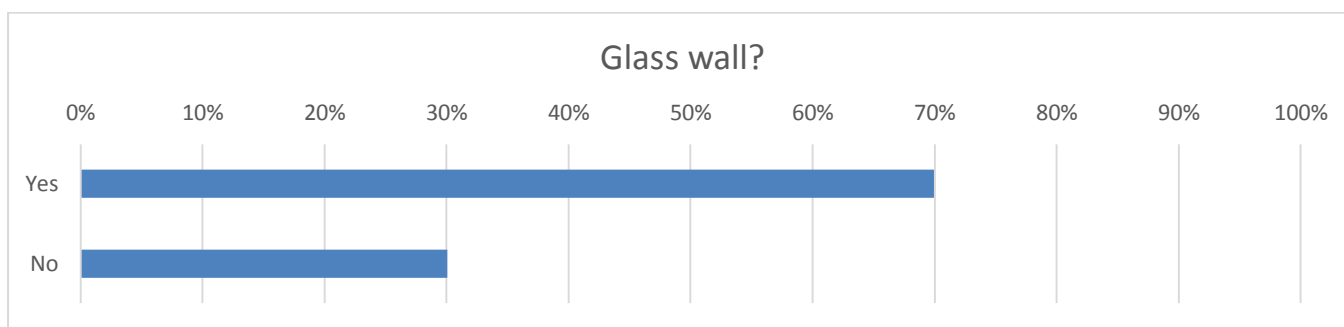
1. Leisure elements: Adding “fun”; slides; flumes; soft play; wave machine.
2. Functional elements: Viewing area; spectator seating; sports hall; larger pool or gym; steps in the studio pool (which could be a reduction in capital and operational costs).

Recommendation 2: The designers should incorporate the high priority leisure and functional elements identified by the community to ensure that the building meets the needs of its users.

6.4 “Are you in favour of the full height glass wall between the studio pool and the café?”

We asked this question to discern whether the community was happy about the lack of access from the café to the studio pool. The response was:

- Yes: 70%
- No: 30%.

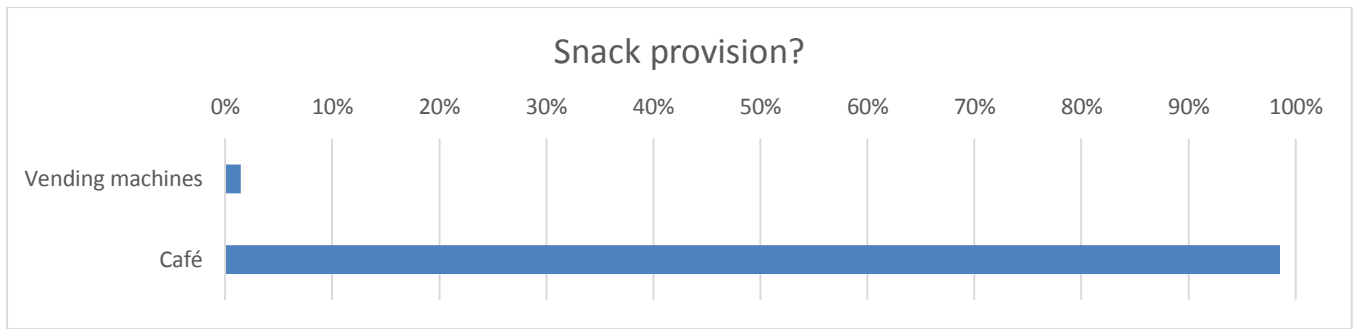


There is a clear majority in favour of the proposed wall. At the same time, almost 80 comments in the “Facilities” question requested a viewing area for parents/carers (and this does not count those asking for a spectator area). Therefore the café space is mainly regarded positively, but there is still a strong desire for this kind of access for parents/carers of children who are swimming. See also Section 6.6 below regarding spectator seating.

6.5 “What sort of snack provision would you prefer? Vending machines/café”

The response to this question was the most conclusive.

- Café: 98%
- Vending machines: 2%.



Recommendation 3: There must be a café facility, rather than just vending machines.

6.6 “Do you think the planned provision and location for spectator seating is sufficient”

As per Section 4.3.7, one of the recommendations from the project team that the H&L Area Committee approved in December 2017 was to remove the requirement for fixed spectator seating for galas/competitions. The locations for spectator seating in the proposal as it stands, therefore, are:

- The benches in the central corridor on the 1st floor level.
- To raise the base of the studio pool to floor level and for folding seats to be placed in this area, at the end of the main pool.

The issues with the former are:

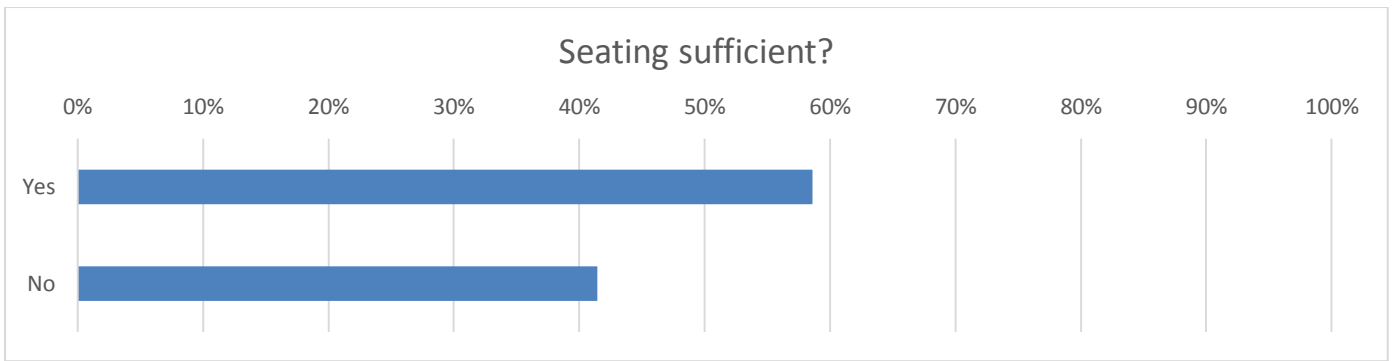
- The seating is behind a solid glass partition, so there can be little participation from the spectators.
- The bench seats are in the corridor that serve the dry changing rooms, gym and dance studios therefore there are issues about whether there is enough space for all the users of a studio to move through the corridor when the seats are in use.

The issues with the latter are:

- This seating is at the end of the main pool, and therefore the view of the swimmers is restricted.
- The seating will be on one level, and therefore only the front row will have a proper view.
- The space has to be accessed through the changing rooms, and this is neither desirable nor practical. Separate access is required for dry-shod users and swimming pool users.
- The spectators will be on the studio pool base, and therefore will bring dirt from outside onto that base – it, and the water underneath, will need to be cleaned after each use.

We therefore posed a question about whether the public felt the planned spectator seating was sufficient. The response was:

- Yes: 59%
- No: 41%



While the majority were in favour of the current plan, a significant number of the comments in the Facilities and Overall Approval questions related to spectator seating – it is clearly the deal-breaking issue for many respondents (see Section 6.3).

The objection that was raised by the project team in their December 2017 position statement regarding spectator seating was that it required a significant amount of additional air space to be heated permanently in the pool hall. We have researched this issue at other swimming pools, particularly at Kirkcaldy leisure centre, which was also designed by Darnton B3. Our observation of the pool hall there is that the spectator seating is embedded in a niche in one wall, and therefore the additional volume of space that has to be heated does not have to be significant – a picture of Kirkcaldy pool is included below.



Could this kind of embedded seating be incorporated below the central walkway?

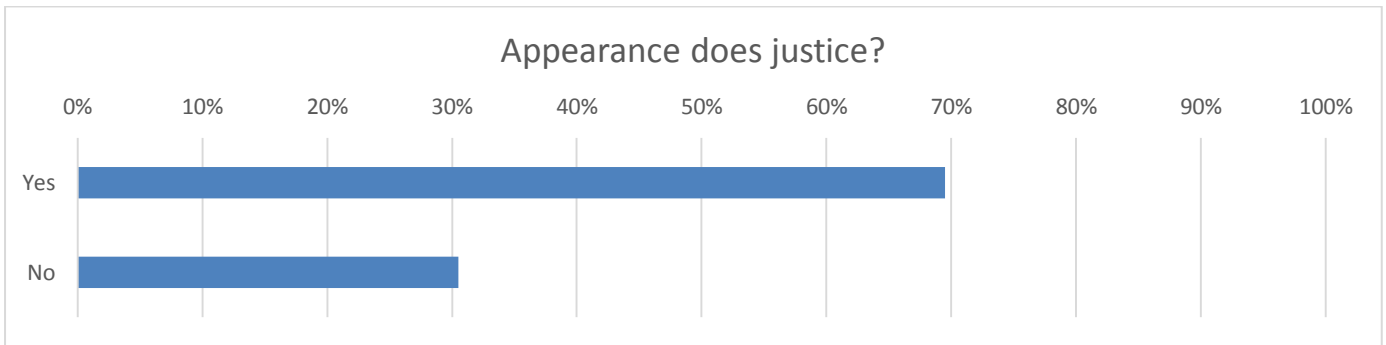
Alternatively, it may be possible to have spectator seating that has a moveable wall that separates it from the pool, and therefore the space only needs to be heated during a competition event. Section 7.2 enlarges on this.

Recommendation 4: The designers should be asked to look again at the question of spectator seating and consider how it can be located without adding significantly to the volume of the pool hall.

6.7 “Does the appearance of the building do justice to the prominence of the site?”

The pierhead site is a defining feature from Helensburgh and is visible from across the Clyde as well as within the town. We asked the public whether the current proposal does justice to the prominence of the site. The responses were:

- Yes: 70%
- No: 30%.



The community is therefore positive towards the proposed appearance of the building, and there were several positive comments in the free-form questions that complimented the modern appearance. It was also the case that several negative comments were expressed about the appearance – indeed, these contributed towards the theme of “uninspiring” appearing 2nd on the overall priority list in Section 6.1.

There is a substantial proportion of the respondents who would like to see the building make more of a statement on this site, the most significant in Helensburgh. We are aware that the designers have an alternative option for the roof of the building, which lifts up one corner, and we understand that this could be done with minimal impact on the budget.

We also note that in the public information so far, there is no detail on the finishes that will be provided to the building – either inside or out. The quality of finish will make a significant difference to how the completed building will be regarded – we would urge that the materials chosen allow the community to feel that they have been given a building worthy of the budget.

As a summary to draw together these views of the exterior of the building, Architecture and Design Helensburgh provided this succinct statement:

1. The Leisure Centre should be of a distinctive design which:
 - enhances the quality and enjoyment of the Helensburgh Seafront
 - takes full advantage of its prominent site in the heart of Helensburgh
 - shows Helensburgh at its best and adds to the character of Helensburgh
 - promotes physical exercise and recreation for all ages and abilities.
2. There should be some form of reference to Helensburgh’s history (and site development)

Recommendation 5: The designers should consider all possible options to create a distinctive design statement that inspires the community.

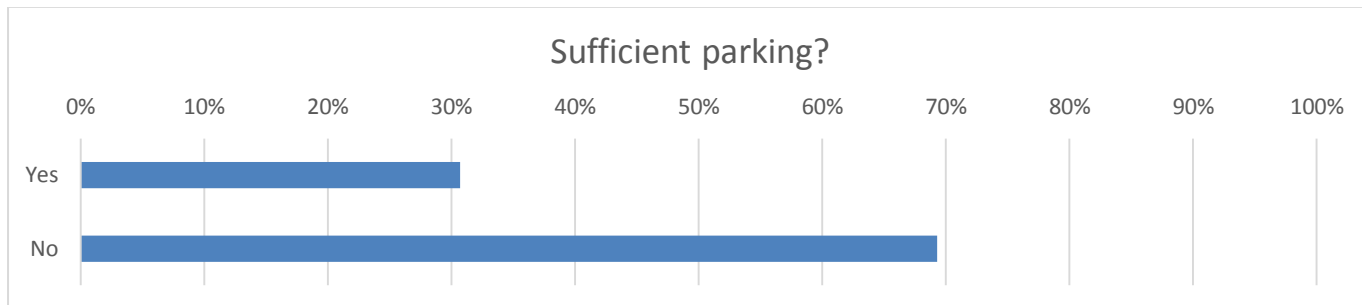
6.8 “The current waterfront car park has circa 504 spaces; the proposal is for circa 265 spaces. Do you think this is sufficient parking provision?”

Parking in Helensburgh is a significant issue – we live in a Victorian town that was never designed for the volume of traffic that now uses the town centre, and the population of the town will grow significantly in the near future. The Pierhead carpark is the largest one near the town centre, and it is currently used by a combination of swimming pool users,

shoppers and longer-term users. It is currently divided into a paid space and a free space (to the south of the existing pool).

The response to our question about the proposal – Do you think this is sufficient parking provision – was:

- No: 69%
- Yes: 31%.



This demonstrates clear opposition to the proposed parking scheme, and there were many concerns raised in the free-form comments. Among these concerns were:

- The reduction in the number of spaces at the pierhead will have an adverse effect on the town centre – shoppers will be put off from visiting the town if they cannot easily park, and cannot park close to the shops on West Clyde Street.
- If the new car park will not have a free area (and there has been no indication of what the charging regime will be) then this deter visitors to the town, and will also impact local residents on West Clyde Street.
- There is insufficient bus and coach parking on the plan. In addition, the plan does not show a feasible route for buses to navigate through the car park.

The project team have stated that the car park has been designed for the size of the leisure centre (which would require 150 spaces) plus spaces for shoppers. This design was in advance of the parking review that is currently being conducted by A&BC about Helensburgh town centre, and therefore we do not know what that report will conclude. What we can say is the following.

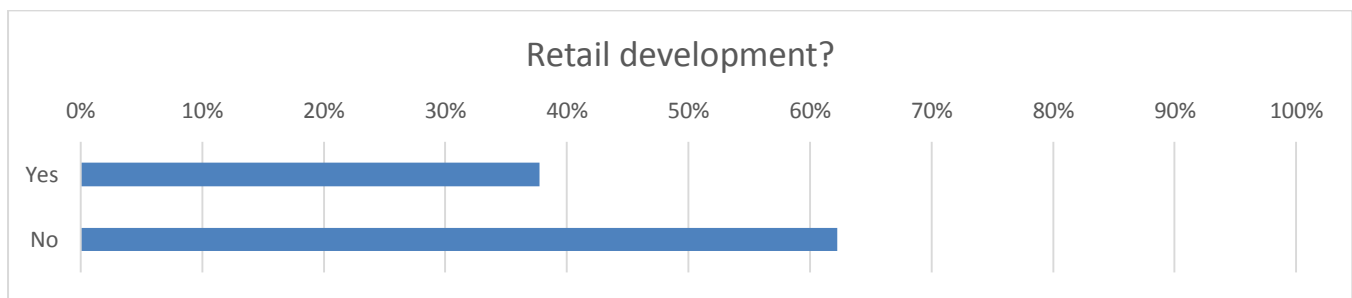
- The community has a strong view that there is not sufficient parking, and reducing the number of spaces on this site will not help the situation.
- Parking in Helensburgh town centre needs to be considered as a whole, not just on this site, and the A&BC parking report is crucial to that consideration. The A&BC parking report must be made public at the earliest opportunity.
- HCC is in partnership with A&BC under the Community Empowerment Act 2015 on all roads and parking issues in the town. HCC must be brought into consultation over car parking.
- The whole or part of the additional space on this site, which is currently zoned for retail, should therefore be considered as additional parking to alleviate the issue (see Section 6.9 about this subject).
- The issue of parking and additional disruption during the construction of the development must be considered. Memories of the CHORD project are still fresh and the aim, this time, must be to keep normal life in the town going for the duration of the construction process.

Recommendation 6: Car parking must be reviewed for the whole of the town centre and, if the analysis shows a need for more parking then the area marked for retail development should be rezoned for parking.

6.9 “Are you content with the site by West Clyde Street being designated for retail development?”

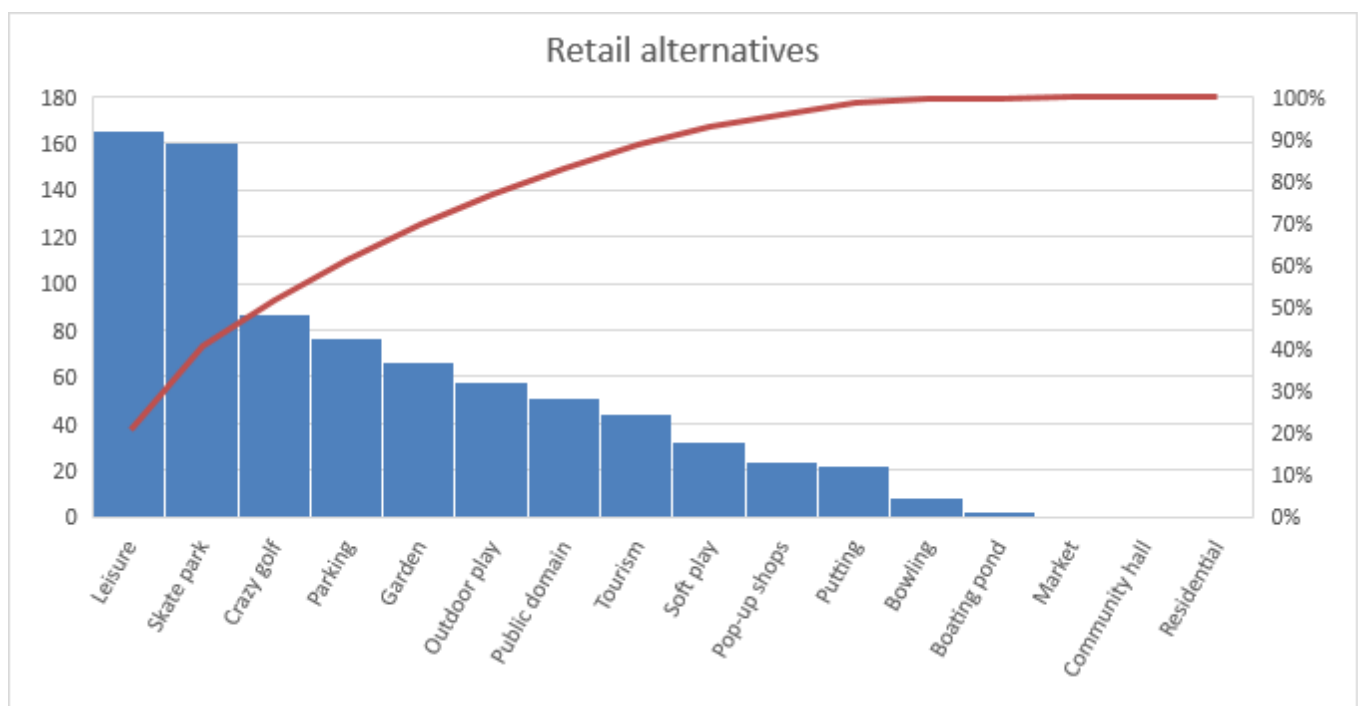
The area marked (3) on the current proposals is designated for future retail development. This does not form any further part of the current plan and, as several public comments said, this makes it hard to approve of this designation. We asked whether the public were content with the designation of this site for retail development, and the response was:

- No: 62%
- Yes: 38%.



The community’s strong preference, therefore, is that this area is *not* designated for future retail development. This is a similar percentage to the public response in 2012, when 55% of the 1200 respondents disapproved of a large supermarket being built in this area.

We asked, as a follow-on question, ‘If “no”, what would you like to see there, e.g. public domain, leisure provision (crazy golf, skatepark, etc.)?’ and received a wide range of suggestions. We have again categorised these into topics and created a Pareto chart of the result:



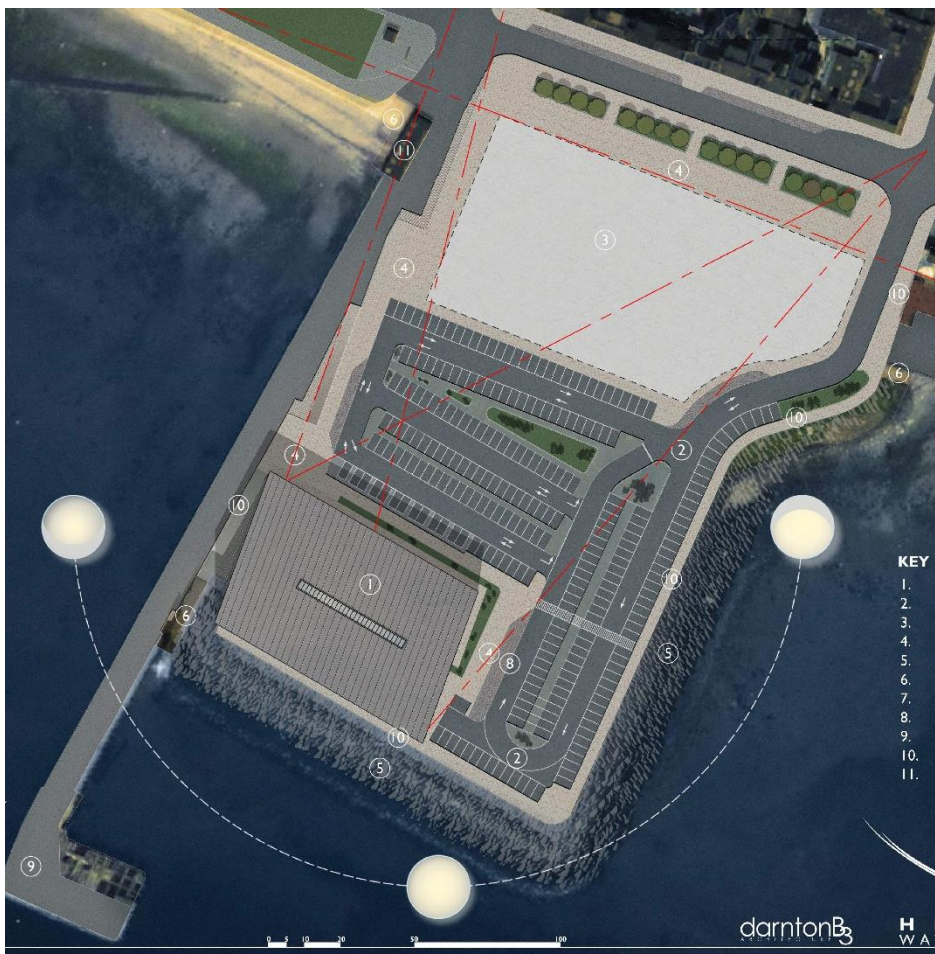
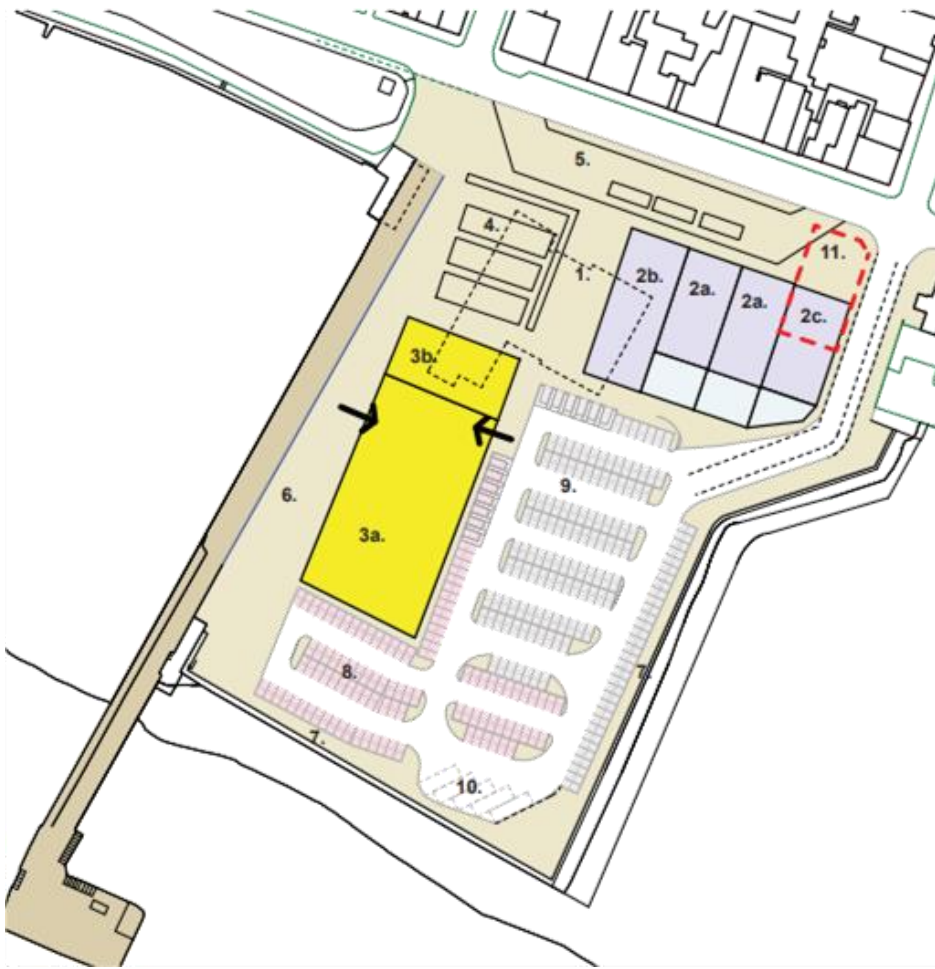
The list of items stated by the community in priority order were:

1. Leisure provision
2. Skate park
3. Crazy golf
4. Parking
5. Garden/park space
6. Outdoor play – children’s playpark or adult outdoor gym
7. Public domain
8. Tourism
9. Soft play
10. Pop-up shops/kiosks
11. Putting
12. 10-pin bowling
13. Boating pond
14. Market
15. Community hall
16. Residential (lowest priority, with 1 comment)

Almost all of these public suggestions were leisure-oriented, such as a skate park or garden/park features, and a few were functional. For example, over 70 comments recommended that the area be used for parking – which is why we recommended that in the previous section. There were also a small number of positive comments for pop-up shops or a market, i.e. smaller retail opportunities.

The desire for leisure opportunities matches items that were included in the approved 2012 Masterplan Addendum (Section 4.3.5) – where there was a designated area labelled for skate park / play park / landscaping. It is informative, therefore, to compare the approved 2012 layout with the current proposal:

2012 approved Masterplan Addendum (top); Current proposal (bottom):



It is clear that the area designated for retail in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum is significantly smaller than the area proposed in the current plan, and the 2012 retail space followed A&BC's design to reduce the mass and scale of the retail space following the 2011 public consultation. Also, in reducing the retail footprint, the 2012 Masterplan Addendum leaves room for leisure space (landscaping, skate park and/or play park) to the west of the retail area.

Both of these aspects – the smaller retail area, and the leisure provision, are likely to satisfy some of the negative comments raised about the current proposed retail space. Therefore we would urge A&BC to follow their own guidance on this area of the site in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum. This may reduce the income from the retail space, but this could potentially be countered by the suggestions of either:

- Using the area for chargeable car parking space.
- Adding “pop-up” shops to the west of the retail space (as defined by the 2012 Masterplan Addendum) – small shops that have a temporary/transient nature, but which may fulfil the usual criteria of seaside retail – tourist gifts, ice cream, kids’ funfair rides, etc.

Further, the community have a significant number of clear suggestions for how this area should be utilised – as per the prioritisation in the chart above. If the highest priority items in this list could be adopted, then the concerns of a significant proportion of the community would be addressed.

Recommendation 7: The area currently designated for retail must, at least, be reduced in size to the area agreed in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum and, preferably, other uses for this area should be explored – as prioritised by the community – such as a skatepark.

7 Consolidated recommendations

The seven recommendations presented above would each, individually, make a difference to the community's view of this proposal. As several of the public commented, though, it is important to look at the site as a whole and therefore important that we consider the overall impact that these recommendations would make when taken together.

To recap, the recommendations were:

1. The leisure centre must be positioned as per the 2012 Masterplan Addendum, aligned north-south beside the pier, to avoid flooding.
2. The designers should incorporate the high priority leisure and functional elements identified by the community to ensure that the building meets the needs of its users.
3. There must be a café facility, rather than just vending machines.
4. The designers should be asked to look again at the question of spectator seating and consider how it can be located without adding significantly to the volume of the pool hall.
5. The designers should consider all possible options to create a distinctive design statement that inspires the community.
6. Car parking must be reviewed for the whole of the town centre and, if the analysis shows a need for more parking then the area marked for retail development should be rezoned for parking.
7. The area currently designated for retail must, at least, be reduced in size to the area agreed in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum and, preferably, other uses for this area should be explored – as prioritised by the community – such as a skatepark.

7.1 Site and realm recommendations

Recommendations (1), (5), (6) and (7) concern the site as a whole – they affect the location of the leisure centre, the exterior of the building, car parking and the use of the area currently zoned for retail.

7.1.1 Building location recommendation

Primarily due to the flood risk assessment detailed previously, the leisure centre is recommended to be located as per the agreed 2012 Masterplan Addendum – this is indicated in the following modification of the Darton B3 plan:



The benefits of moving the leisure centre to this location are:

- There is a connection established between the building and the town centre. It no longer sits in isolation at the end of a car park but instead has an affinity with West Clyde Street, and the proposed retail space.
- The views from West Clyde Street towards the south are impacted as little as possible – the building presents its smallest dimension to the north which keeps as much of the existing open vista as possible.
- The views from the building – from the gym, café and swimming pool – can be maximised. Specifically, the café can now look south over the Clyde towards the Rosneath peninsula, Inverclyde and the Cowal hills, and the swimming pool can have a (suitably tinted) window that looks west along the line of the Helensburgh beach front. It is the waterfront which is vibrant, with people walking on the promenade, and therefore this would match the desire to create a connected “vibrant” space.
- The west side of the leisure centre provides a protected walkway along part of the pier, thereby ensuring the connection between the building and the pier.
- The existing slipway access at the southwest of the site is undisturbed and therefore access to the slipway is easier.

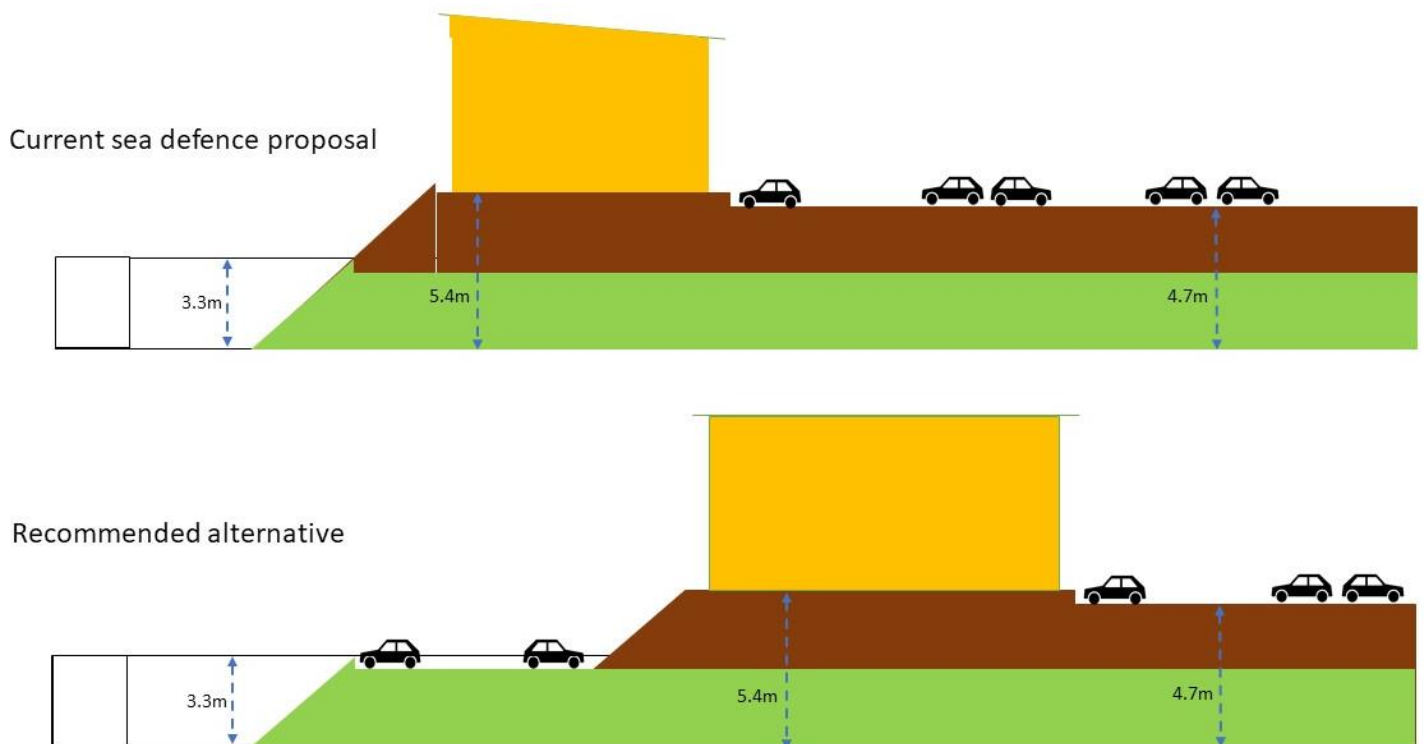
The extent and cost of the sea defences and infill can be *reduced* because of this relocation of the leisure centre by:

- Not raising the level of the southerly seawall above its current level.
- Retaining the portion of the car park to the south of the new location of the leisure centre at the same level as currently.

- Adding a slope up from the 3.3m AOD south car park to 5.4m AOD for the base level of the leisure centre.

The current proposal for sea defences and this alternative recommendation are pictured in cross-section in the diagram below. This is not to scale, but demonstrates the reduction in volume of the infilling required at the seaward end of the site. These view the pierhead in cross-section from the east, and show:

- The pier in outline, with the height of the pier at 3.3m AOD.
- The existing sea defence and car park area in light green.
- The proposed infill and additional sea defences in brown – the alternative recommendation has significantly less infill.
- The leisure centre building in yellow, aligned differently in both pictures.



The benefits of this alternative recommendation over the current proposal are:

- The sea defences will be sufficient to address forecast climate change. From the calculations in Appendix A, these modified sea defences are sufficient to protect the leisure centre allowing for the effect of climate change with waves in 2100.
- Approximately 1/3rd less infill material is required. A&BC's figure for the infill required in their proposal is 24,000m³ but this can be reduced by approximately 8,000m³. This will save the cost of infill, the cost of transporting the infill and the number of lorries required during the construction phase (by about 570 lorry journeys).
- There will be no need to add to the sea defences at the south side of the site, which will eliminate the requirement for barges to create additional defences, which would be a significant cost.
- The infilled mass of the car park will be less, and therefore the leisure centre building and its foundation will not appear to be so substantial from West Clyde Street, East Clyde Street and from seaward.

7.1.2 Exterior building appearance

As highlighted previously, the exterior appearance of the leisure centre has positive approval from the community. At the same time, there was as high proportion of comments that described the proposal with words that fell into the category of “uninspiring”. We have no prescriptive advice here, but the overall desire is that the designers make the building as inspiring to the community as possible.

The two design assessments from HCC’s Architecture & Design Helensburgh provide further focus on improving the appearance of the building itself and on the site overall. HCC would like to discuss these in detail with the Project Design Team.

7.1.3 Retail and car parking recommendations

If the area currently zoned for retail is reduced to the region denoted as retail units in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum then the area north of the leisure centre can be used as a “leisure boulevard” consisting of a walkway between the leisure centre and West Clyde Street (in green in the plan above). This area can be used for the some of the key non-retail purposes identified by the community:

- Skatepark devices – benches, steps and ramps for skateboards.
- Outdoor play structures – children’s play park equipment and outdoor gym equipment for adults.
- Pop-up shops – kiosks that can sell tourist gifts, ice cream or other traditional seaside fare.

A similar public boulevard was envisaged for Hastings in the picture below:



The remaining area that is currently zoned for retail can then be used for the other purposes that are strongly preferred by the community over retail:

- Car parking: the use of this space for parking would alleviate the reduction in spaces proposed on the site, and the receipts from this parking space would go some way to offset the loss of income from the proposed retail space.
- Leisure provision and public realm: crazy golf or putting, green space and seating, or even soft play.

7.2 Leisure centre recommendations

Recommendations (2), (3) and (4) focus on improving the content of the building – adding more leisure and “fun” elements into the facilities, adding a café servery and spectator seating.

HCC’s Vice Convener has submitted alternative sketches of the interior of the leisure centre building to the project team which, using the orientation of the building as above, demonstrate how additional features could be added to the building. The key purpose of these was to show how features could be added to the building footprint as currently envisaged and, crucially, without increasing the floor area of the building. This ensured that the cost of the building need not increase while allowing additional new features with minimal changes to the existing design.

The features that these diagrams demonstrate can be incorporated are:

- One dance studio is now a full-height sports hall that could hold two badminton courts, or other sports within that space. The full-height space of this hall provides scope for a climbing wall.
- This sports hall is on the ground floor of the building, and one wall on the pool side is envisaged as opening/sliding doors to provide spectator seating for galas. This space for spectator seating does not permanently increase the volume of air in the pool hall that must be heated.
- The pool hall window now looks west along the beach (in fact, with the orientation of the pier, this is slightly north of west, which is not a significant angle for glare). This will give views from the pool towards the beach and Rosneath peninsula. To resolve the residual issue of glare, this window could be tinted in the way that the south-facing windows in the current swimming pool are covered with a tinted film. Alternatively, the window could be frosted in the way that the swimming pool at Kirkcaldy (as pictured in Section 6.6) previously designed by Darnton B3 is – this has a large window that looks out over the sea above the main pool and is directed to the south-east.
- The gym retains its views across the Clyde by now sitting over the café (which removes the void, heated, space above the vending area) and the studio pool.
- The other dance studio is still at the south end of the building, and therefore also retains its views across the Clyde.
- Due to the re-orientation of the building, the café is now at the south-west corner of the building and therefore has maximum views to the south across the Clyde and west along the beach. The café area is envisaged with a servery.
- Due to these changes, the plant room is on the first floor and therefore would require exterior doors at this height for forklift-style access for maintenance of plant machinery. We have asked a question separately of the project team as to whether the proposed plant room needs to be so large – the recommendation from Sport England is that the pool water treatment plant room should be between 15-30% of the water area that it serves.

These plan modifications are with the project team for further review and discussion. The key objective is to look at the existing plans with an open mind as to which of the community’s priorities for additional facilities could be incorporated with minimal intervention.

8 Reviewing the objectives

It is important to look at the community's opinion in context – how successfully has the proposal met the project's objectives in the context of the community's feedback? These objectives are as stated by A&BC in Section 4.2:

1. *To deliver a new leisure facility and swimming pool which meets the needs of the Helensburgh and Lomond community*
2. *To encourage new businesses to open up in the town and to provide existing businesses with more opportunities.*
3. *To add to what has been achieved through other projects such as CHORD and Hermitage Park, which have created an attractive, vibrant and contemporary Town Centre that helps attract residents, businesses and visitors to the area.*
4. *To create a safe, comfortable and, accessible public space to provide a visible link to and from Colquhoun Square, which is the main outdoor event space and the town centre.*
5. *To show the town of Helensburgh at its best and encourage additional private sector investment in the waterfront area and town centre.*

Assessing these objectives in order:

1. The majority of the community (53%) feel that the facilities of the leisure centre and swimming pool do not adequately meet their needs, and they have provided details of what features would change their opinion.
2. The additional retail space proposed has been turned down by a significant majority of the community (62%), with a large number of comments expressing the opinion that the empty shop units in town need to be filled before more units are created.
3. The community is positive about the exterior appearance of the building, and therefore the project can be regarded as attractive and contemporary. As to creating a vibrant space, though, public opinion is also clear that both the internal and external aspects of the site require more “fun” elements to match that objective.
4. The proposal includes a walkway beside the pier, but squeezed between the pier (which is not to be developed) and the retail space and car park. This objective can only be completely met by providing a space like the “leisure boulevard” envisaged in Section 7.1.3.
5. As per (3), the community is positive about the appearance of the building but, as per (2), the additional retail space is not desired.

The result of this review is somewhat mixed, therefore. In summary, the community is not satisfied with how the proposal implements these objectives and, as per the 55%/45% disapproval ratio, is looking for an improvement in the execution.

9 Conclusions

Helensburgh Community Council thanks the community for giving it the opportunity to represent them on this development proposal.

The overall disapproval of the community towards the current proposal is clear – 55% of those surveyed disapprove of the proposal. The overall objective of creating “a vibrant and attractive waterfront” has our full support, but the current implementation falls short of meeting the expectations that the community has for this site.

We, of course, want the community to feel that the leisure centre and the pierhead site will be an asset to the town. We have laid out in this document a set of seven recommendations that are distilled from the comments which we received from the community in our survey. These provide a positive direction as to how the community would like the proposals to be modified, and if sufficient action is taken on these recommendations then it is likely that the community’s opinion will become more positive.

We urge the project team and Argyll and Bute Councillors to act on the recommendations in this report, and we look forward to their response. The Community Council and the community will re-evaluate the development when the planning application is submitted, and will expect that their Pre-Application Consultation submissions have been addressed.

10 Appendix A - Wave overtopping analysis with climate change

The Kaya Consulting Flood Risk Assessment report states that the still water level predictions at the site, for the extreme events that are expected to happen every 1 in 200 years, are:

- 4.06m AOD currently (2018)
- 4.48m AOD in 2080
- 4.65m AOD in 2100.

Hence the report states the “200 year still water level at site is expected to rise by 0.42m by 2080 and by 0.59m by 2100”.

The significant wave direction for the site is from the south-west, where a fetch of 16.0km from the direction of Innellan is given in the document. The resulting predicted wave height for a 1-in-200 year event is 1.94m.

The Kaya report then states “It is likely that wind generated waves would be affected by climate change. For this, an uplift of 15% of the predicted waves was assumed”. The resulting future wave height is $1.94\text{m} + 15\% = 2.23\text{m}$ from the south-west.

These figures are used in the report to create the following table: a “joint probability analysis of still water levels and waves – 2080”. This is the standard approach for assessing which combination of extreme sea level events and extreme wave heights need to be considered for forecasting purposes.

Joint probability for 200 year, Scenario No.	Sea level		Wave Height	
	Return Period (Years)	Level (m AOD)	Return Period (Years)	Wave Height (m)
1	0.5	3.37	200	2.23
2	1	3.43	106.7	2.17
3	2	3.58	53.3	2.10
4	5	3.78	21.3	1.95
5	10	3.93	10.7	1.94
6	20	4.07	5.3	1.74
7	50	4.27	2.1	1.56
8	100	4.38	1.1	1.50
9	200	4.48	0.5	1.45

Hence the most significant extreme sea level and wave height combination that needs to be considered, allowing for the climate change forecast for 2080, at the south end of the site is 4.48m sea level and 1.45m wave height.

The Kaya report does not do this – Section 5.5 of that document (Wave Overtopping Estimation) only considers the extreme sea level and wave height that will occur in 1-in-200 year events in the present day. The overtopping rate, i.e. the amount of water which will come over the top of the planned sea defence per second per metre of length of sea defence, is given as 1.11 litres/s/m. This is stated as being acceptable for people, vehicles and buildings behind the sea defence. (Guidance given earlier in the document indicates that the critical figure is for buildings immediately behind a sea defence, which will sustain damage if overtopping is greater than 1 litre/s/m).

The report explicitly states, on page 39:

Comments on wave overtopping estimates:

- *The proposed defence level has been determined based on the projected 2100 still water level. The type of defence (i.e. rock armour) and profile have been assessed for the present-day wave conditions.*

- *For future still water level and wave combinations (i.e. including climate change), higher overtopping rates may be experienced. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that defences are designed to be adoptable to potential future changes in still water level and wave heights.*

Hence the report has only confirmed that the proposed sea defence is sufficient for:

- extreme sea levels and waves in the present day (2018).
- extreme **still** sea levels (excluding waves) in 2100

and, further, is explicit that the significant proposed investment in sea defences to protect the leisure centre at the most exposed location on the site may not be sufficient to avoid flooding and that the sea defences would need to be “adoptable” (sic) for climate change.

HCC identified this significant risk to the project and flagged it to the project team in April 2018.

Here we have gone further to address:

- In what year, with the UK’s current forecast for sea-related climate change (UKCP09), the proposed sea defences will cause damaging levels of flooding to the building.⁸
- Whether there is an alternative approach to the southerly sea defence that requires no increase in the defences (and indeed reduces the infilling significantly) and still ensures that the leisure centre will not flood when climate change is considered for 2080 and beyond.

We used the spreadsheet provided by SimpleCoast – a project financed by the Water Partnership Program, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (The World Bank)⁹; SimpleCoast provides simple and freely-available tools for the assessment of coastal engineering problems. Their spreadsheet models wave overtopping according to the equations in the standard EUROTOP manual (2007).

The following were used as input parameters to the spreadsheet:

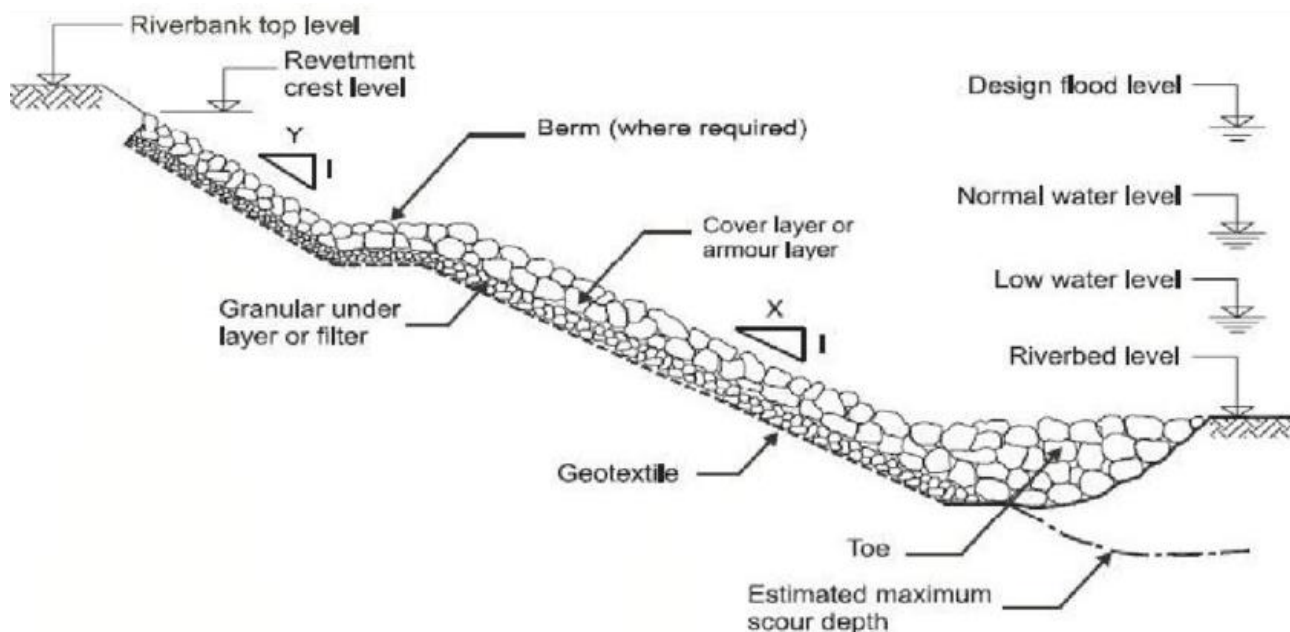
- Slope roughness factor: 0.5, which matches the reduction factor for “random quarrystone”. Any higher value than this, i.e. more fitted or smooth, would cause more overtopping.
- $\tan(\alpha)$ = slope of structure = 0.34625355, i.e. $\tan(1/3)$
- Safety factor wave overtopping rate = 1.5
- Water depth at toe of sea defence, h_o = 1.2m, as per the Kaya report
- Crest height, R_c = 5.4m
- Wave period, T_{mean} = 3.7, as per the Kaya report
- Wave incidence angle = 0, i.e. waves directly approaching the shore

⁸ Note that UKPC09 is due to be replaced by new climate change guidance in UKPC18 in November 2018. The Kaya report expects an uplift in the climate change forecast in UKPC18, and increases the recommended base level of the buildings by 0.15m accordingly (to the level of 5.4m assumed here).

⁹ www.simplecoast.com

The following factors were varied as inputs to the spreadsheet:

- Maximum water level = surge + tide + wave setup = extreme sea level as indicated in the table above.
- Significant wave height offshore and significant wave height at toe: these two parameters were set equally, following the Kaya report’s advice that the depth of water at the toe of the sea defence at extreme sea levels would be deep enough to allow offshore waves to reach the seawall.
- F_{Berm} factor: a berm is a horizontal plateau in a sea defence – as indicated in the middle of the diagram below. The proposed sea defence has no berm, and therefore this input was set to 1 for the initial set of calculations.



First, to verify that our calculations matched those of the Kaya report, we recalculated the figures in Table 10 (p31) of the report:

Sea level		Wave Height		Overtopping Rate (l/s/m) per Kaya report	Overtopping Rate (l/s/m) per new calculations	Impact		
Return Period (Years)	Level (m AOD)	Return Period (Years)	Wave Height (m)			People	Vehicles	Buildings
0.5	2.92	200	1.94	0.17	0.12	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
1	3.01	106.7	1.87	0.19	0.13	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2	3.16	53.3	1.80	0.27	0.20	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
5	3.36	21.3	1.71	0.44	0.33	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
10	3.51	10.7	1.68	0.71	0.57	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
20	3.67	5.3	1.52	0.87	0.69	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
50	3.85	2.1	1.36	1.07	0.92	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
100	3.96	1.1	1.21	1.05	0.91	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
200	4.06	0.5	1.11	1.11	1.02	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The red column above is the values calculated using the SimpleCoast spreadsheet, and this demonstrates that our figures match closely with those of the Kaya report. They will not be identical because a different “safety factor overtopping rate” may have been used.

The spreadsheet was then used to calculate overtopping rates for the proposed sea defences in 2080, incorporating wave effect (which, as above, had been excluded by the Kaya report) on top of the extreme still water levels. The decision about whether an amount of overtopping was acceptable was based on the tables in p30 of that report, for H_{m0} (wave height) = 2m.

Sea level		Wave Height		Overtopping Rate (l/s/m) calculated	Impact		
Return Period (Years)	Level (m AOD)	Return Period (Years)	Wave Height (m)		People	Vehicles	Buildings
0.5	3.37	200	2.23	1.28	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
1	3.43	106.7	2.17	1.40	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2	3.58	53.3	2.1	2.10	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
5	3.78	21.3	1.95	3.27	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
10	3.93	10.7	1.94	5.71	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
20	4.07	5.3	1.74	6.60	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
50	4.27	2.1	1.56	10.32	Unacceptable	Boundary	Unacceptable
100	4.38	1.1	1.5	14.61	Unacceptable	Boundary	Unacceptable
200	4.48	0.5	1.45	20.44	Unacceptable	Boundary	Unacceptable

As can be seen, most of these scenarios cause a level of overtopping that will be damaging to people on the seawall, vehicles next to the seawall or buildings next to the seawall. While people and vehicles can be moved from the seawall, the location of the building next to the seawall is the critical item.

These figures are for wave overtopping in 2080. That's a long time in the future, and longer than the projected lifespan of the leisure centre (which is 40 years). We therefore used the spreadsheet to indicate when the proposed sea defences would fail within the lifespan of the building. We took the scenario that caused the most overtopping in the joint probability analysis above – that of the 1-in-200 year sea level and 1-in-0.5 year wave height – and interpolated the climate change effect on sea levels and wave heights between now and 2080.¹⁰

Year	1-in-200 Sea level (m AOD)	1-in-0.5 Wave Height (m)	Overtopping rate (l/s/m)	People	Vehicles	Buildings
2018	4.06	1.11	1.02	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2021	4.08	1.13	1.22	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
2025	4.11	1.15	1.53	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
2030	4.14	1.18	1.98	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
2040	4.21	1.23	3.30	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
2050	4.28	1.29	5.51	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
2060	4.34	1.34	8.36	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
2070	4.41	1.40	13.35	Unacceptable	Boundary	Unacceptable
2080	4.48	1.45	20.44	Unacceptable	Boundary	Unacceptable

This clearly shows that the overtopping rate becomes unacceptable (>1 litre/s/m) for buildings located close to the seawall as early as 2021, which is when the leisure centre is due to be completed. Thereafter, the projected overtopping in extreme storms will become even worse through the lifespan of the building.

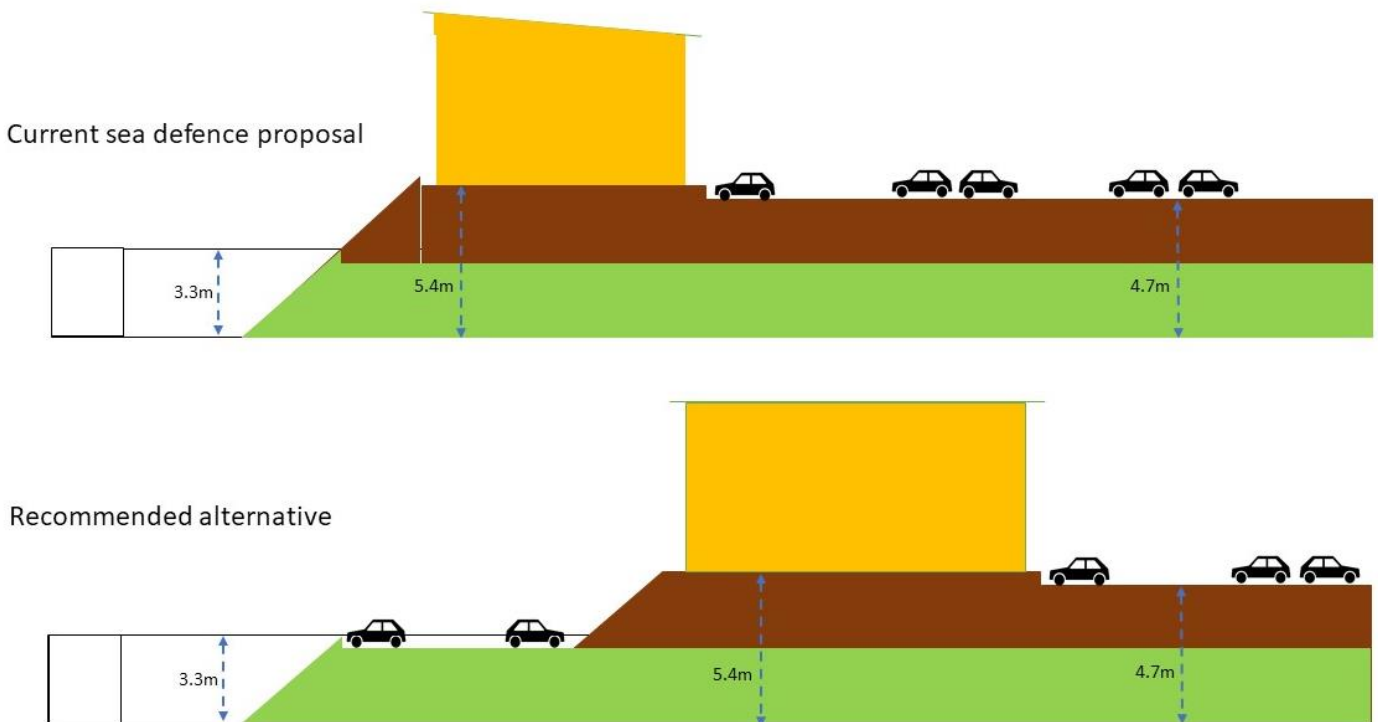
In A&BC's consultation report of 2011, the concern of flooding was one of the reasons why the proposed 2011 Masterplan Addendum (Section 4.3.4) was rejected by 55% of the community, and why A&BC revised this to move the leisure centre footprint away from the seawall in the approved 2012 Masterplan Addendum. The current Flood Risk Assessment, with the additional calculations above, clearly demonstrates that this was a valid concern and reinstating the leisure centre in the 2010 position is not sustainable.

There are two potential solutions to this flooding issue.

¹⁰ This straight-line calculation is slightly pessimistic in the near-term because climate change is expected to accelerate over this period, but this gives an upper-bound on the impact.

1. Raise the seawall even higher. In our calculations, the crest has to be raised to 6m AOD (a further 60cm above the proposed level) to reduce overtopping to 1.4 l/s/m in 2080. This level of crest, though, would mean:
 - Even higher sea defences and more infilling to raise the seawall and (most likely) the base level of the buildings to match this level. Both would mean more expense.
 - The car park would be 1.3m below the level of the seawall, which would substantially restrict views from the car park. To alleviate this would require much more substantial (and costly) infilling across the extent of the car park.
2. Place the leisure centre in the location agreed in the 2012 Masterplan Addendum, and approved by the H&L Area Committee in June 2016. Moving back to that location then gives the opportunity to leave the southerly end of the car park at its existing 3.3m AOD level, and this portion of the car park would act as a “berm” in the sea defence. This lower section would flood in current extreme weather events – approximately once a year – but, by being to the weather side of the leisure centre, it will assist the sea defence.

This is enlarged on in Section 7.1.1, but consider for now the cross-section sketch below (not to scale) of the proposed sea defences and this alternative recommendation.

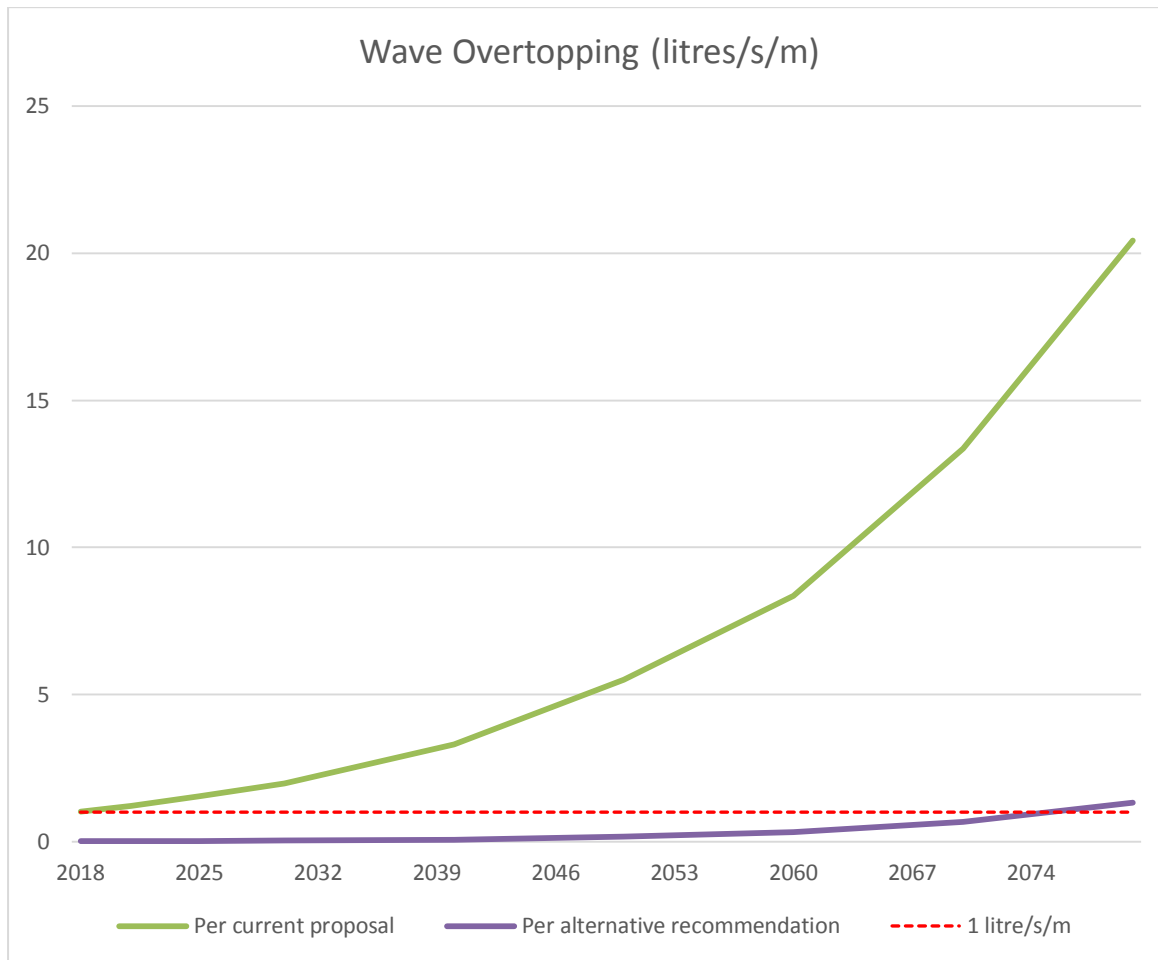


The (left-hand) south-facing lower portion of the car park in the alternative plan can be considered as a wide berm in the seawall, and therefore the F_{berm} parameter in the spreadsheet can be set to 0.6. On doing so, the overtopping rate is dramatically reduced, to acceptable levels – see the re-calculated figures below.

Year	1-in-200 Sea level (m AOD)	1-in-0.5 Wave Height (m)	Overtopping rate (l/s/m) with wide berm	People	Vehicles	Buildings
2018	4.06	1.11	0.01	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2021	4.08	1.13	0.01	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2025	4.11	1.15	0.02	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2030	4.14	1.18	0.03	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2040	4.21	1.23	0.07	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2050	4.28	1.29	0.16	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

2060	4.34	1.34	0.31	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2070	4.41	1.40	0.67	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
2080	4.48	1.45	1.32	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable

These figures, for the proposed sea defences and the alternative recommendation, are graphed below against a line which indicates the key limit (of 1 litre/s/m for a building close to a seawall):



In conclusion, the project team’s position statement to the December 2017 H&L Area Committee recommended that the leisure centre be put at the southerly end of the site. At that stage, they were not aware of the Flood Risk Assessment document, or of our concerns about that document. We submit that, with this new awareness, the building will only be protected for the future by moving it towards the town and, as per Section 7.1.1, there is substantial savings that can be gained by doing so.