

# Transforming Neighbourhood Services

## Netherhall buildings

Findings of the focus groups and public consultation  
As at 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

*Prepared by:*

- *City Development & Neighbourhoods*
- *with the support of Transformation & Service Improvement Team*



*This report provides a summary of the findings of the focus groups and public consultation.*

*It includes information about:*

- *The issues and options under consideration;*
  - *The consultation method;*
  - *The public response and views expressed;*
  - *The proposals made in light of what was learnt.*
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report summarises the outcomes of the focus groups and public consultation on draft proposals for the reorganisation and consolidation of building stock in the Netherhall area of the city, and more specifically the Armadale Youth Centre and Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre which are both located in the area, being managed as part of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) Programme.

A copy of the consultation form used for the exercise is included at the end of this document.

This period of consultation is part of a longer period of such activity as follows:

- An initial engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- Focussed engagement with residents and service users in the North East area of the city between June and July 2016 to help develop draft proposals for the transformation of the area
- Draft proposals were then developed based on the evidence received along with factual information collected from the relevant services and information around future usage from service providers and funders.
- A further period of consultation following completion of draft proposals was held prior to any decisions being made.

As a result of this process, it was clear that further consultation surrounding the use of two specific buildings – the Armadale Youth Centre and Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre was required. As a result of the initial consultations a proposal was made to relocate services from Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre to Armadale Youth Centre and to dispose of the vacated building. In feedback, residents and service users suggested an alternative approach: to swap these proposals around.

This consultation focussed on this alternative proposal and the period ran from 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017 to 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and was carried out in two main parts:

- A series of meetings, with community groups, service users and young people who use the facilities being investigated by the review
- A form available in various locations across the area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments

There were two meetings held to discuss the alternative proposals, one located at each site being consulted upon. The main messages drawn from the meetings held with groups are that:

- The proposal works a lot better for groups who are currently using the community centre as space in the youth centre is not suitable for their activities.
- Community centre is well used in the evenings and therefore timetabling will need to be revisited
- Storage at the community centre is tight – need to ensure this is considered if changes are made
- Proposal better as there is no parking at the youth centre
- There was an understanding that there will be a need for flexibility on usage
- It would be helpful there was wifi available the centre
- It made be necessary to explore and map options across the area – suggestion made about using St Mary's church hall
- The main hall at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre is a good space, but there were concerns that the facility might be damaged by some types of activity.
- There is no indoor sports hall. The outdoor ball court is available but is used more in the summer
- How could sofas and easy chairs be accommodated?
- Where could the table tennis and pool tables be stored?

## Transforming Neighbourhood Services – Netherhall buildings consultation findings May 2017

- The kitchen is a good size, and would be important for youth sessions
- A TV screen and games console could be set up in the smaller lounge area
- Access controls would need to be put into place to ensure other areas of the building were kept out of bounds
- Storage would be important – and would need to be part of the building reconfiguration
- Not convinced the space could be made to feel like it is their own
- Would the activity timetable fit with youth sessions which currently run on Wednesday and Friday nights?

Between 25<sup>th</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> May a questionnaire containing details of this alternative proposal and a 'tear-off' response form was also used to gather opinions on the proposals. At the closure of the consultation on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016, a total of 131 completed form responses were received. People were asked to identify their preferred location, which services and centres they used and the main reasons why. The majority of responders favoured the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and the main reasons for this preference were given as:

- Facilities/services and in particular the use of the Nursery facilities
- Ease of access and car parking

For the responses received in favour of using the Armadale Youth Centre, the main reasons given for this were:

- Facilities/services and in particular the use of dance studio
  - Provides an opportunity to socialise
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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Transforming Neighbourhood Services – North East Area**

The TNS programme aims to identify different ways of organising how services are delivered within the neighbourhoods of the city of Leicester, with a view to reducing the costs of delivery by around 30% while maintaining the quality of our services.

The programme has identified an approach through which the city is divided into 6 geographical areas and these are explored in turn to identify ways to transform services through opportunities to co-locate services and make better use of the assets available.

The scope of the programme covers public facing service areas. The services scoped into the North East area are:

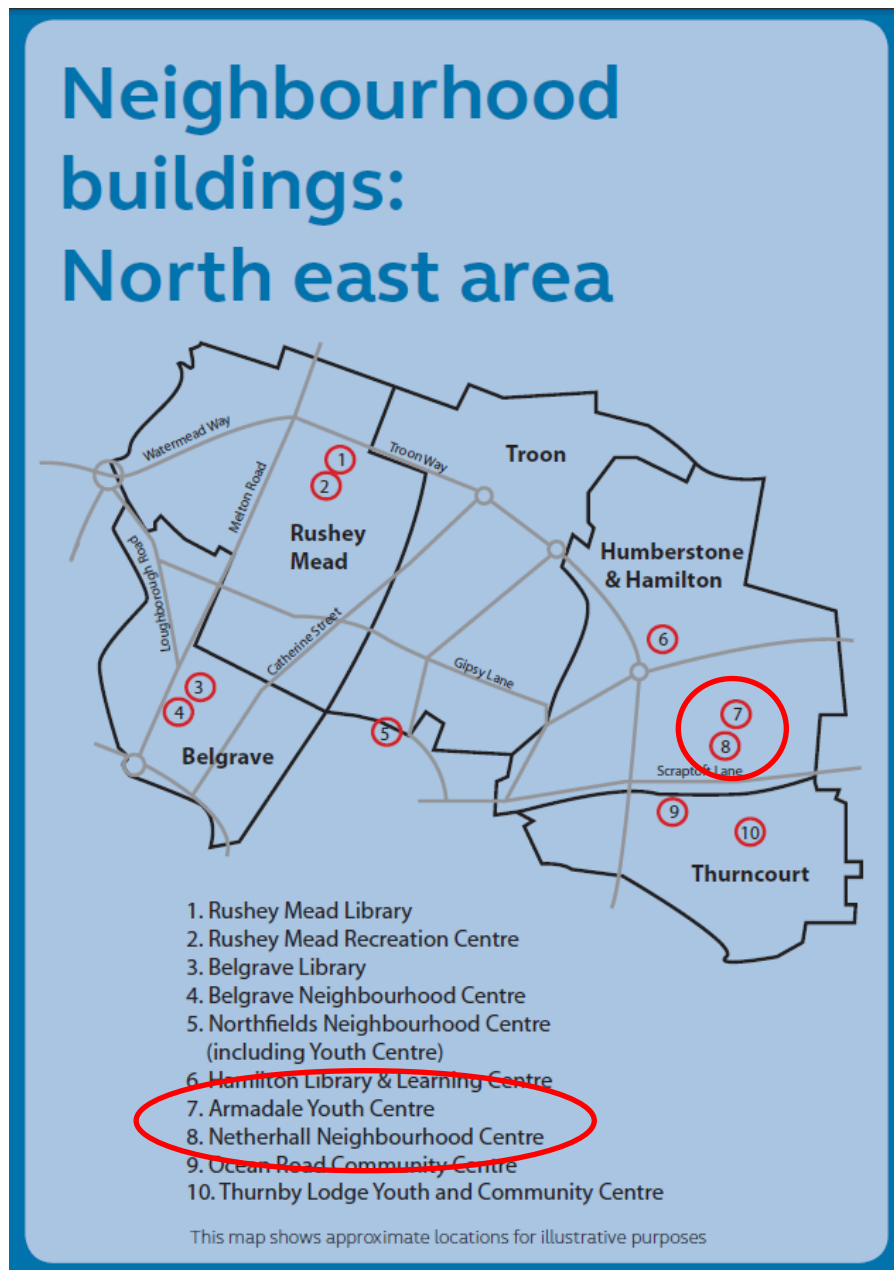
- Neighbourhood Services - Community Services and Libraries
- Adult Skills & Learning
- Youth Centres

The buildings within the scope of the North East are:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Belgrave Library
- Armadale Centre
- Hamilton Library & Learning Centre
- Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- Northfields Neighbourhood Centre
- Rushey Mead Library
- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
- Ocean Road Community Centre
- Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre

The focus of this particular report are the Armadale Youth Centre and Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre.

The location of the buildings subject to this consultation are shown on the map below:



## **CONSULTATION METHOD**

### **Objectives and techniques**

This consultation builds upon previous development and engagement work undertaken for the TNS programme as a whole with the goal to develop a model for the North East area of the city. This work included:

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided (both internally and commissioned through voluntary sector organisations), usage statistics, historical information
- An initial city-wide engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- A more in-depth and focussed engagement process carried out between 6<sup>th</sup> June and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to collect suggestions and comments from service users and residents
- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercises to construct a draft model, which was presented to the City Mayor and Executive.
- Consultation on a draft model for the North East area as whole between September and October prior to a finalised set of proposals being submitted for approval.

The decision for the buildings in Netherhall was to undertake further consultation on an alternative option which emerged from the community. This consultation is the subject of this report.

The consultation took place between 19th April 2017 to 17th May 2017 and was carried out in two main parts as follows:

- A series of meetings with residents, service users and stakeholders, held at the two sites in question.
- A form available in various locations across the area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments

In addition some groups made separate submissions which were not part of the questionnaire.

The details of the meetings held are as follows:

#### **Drop in sessions**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	Humberstone & Hamilton	25 <sup>th</sup> April, Tues	6:30 – 7:30pm
Armada Youth Centre	Humberstone & Hamilton	26 <sup>th</sup> April, Weds	6:30 – 7:30pm

## **PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **Consultation Events**

Two events were held, one at each of the buildings subject to this consultation. The views expressed at these meetings were as follows:

#### **Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Tuesday 25 April 2017 from 6.30pm to 7.30pm**

- The proposal works a lot better for groups who are currently using the community centre as space in the youth centre is not suitable for their activities.
- Community centre is well used in the evenings and will therefore timetabling will need to be revisited
- Storage at the community centre is tight – need to ensure this is considered if changes are made
- Proposal better as there is no parking at the youth centre
- Some groups may find it difficult to change long established days of use but open to flexibility
- There was an understanding that there will be a need for flexibility on usage
- It would be helpful if there was Wi-Fi available the centre
- It may be necessary to explore and map options across the area – suggestion made about using St Mary's church hall

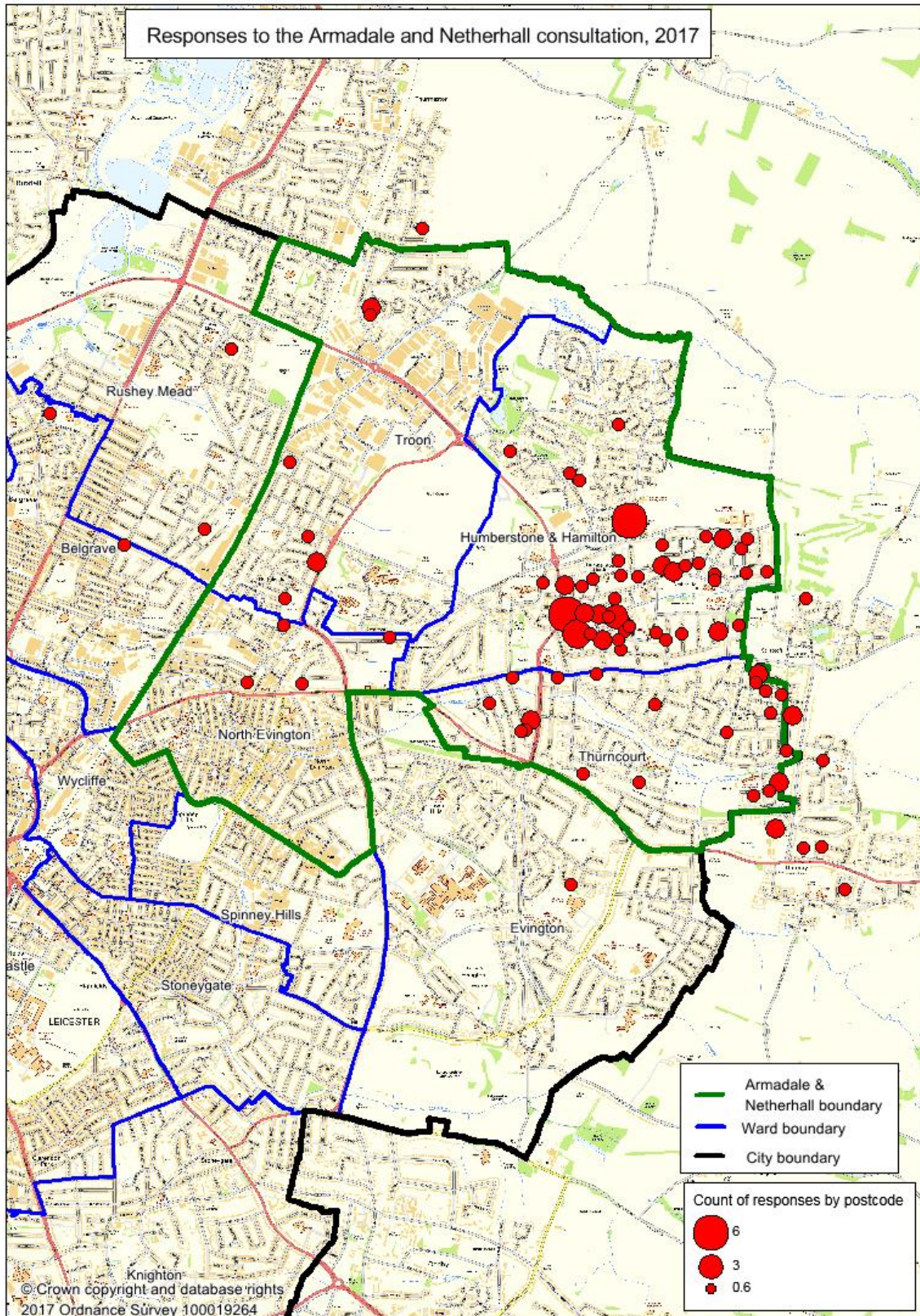
#### **Armadale Youth Centre, Wednesday 26 April 2017 from 6.30pm to 7.30pm**

- The main hall at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre is a good space, but there were concerns that the facility might be damaged by young people's activities impacting on other community groups.
- There is no indoor sports hall. The outdoor ball court is mainly used in the summer
- How could sofas and easy chairs be accommodated?
- Where could the table tennis and pool tables be stored?
- The kitchen is a good size, and would be important for youth sessions
- A TV screen and games console could be set up in the smaller lounge area
- Access controls would need to be put into place to ensure other areas of the building were kept out of bounds
- Storage would be important – and would need to be part of the building reconfiguration
- Not convinced the space could be made to feel like it is our own
- Would the activity timetable fit with youth sessions which currently run on Wednesday and Friday nights?



### Written and Online Comments and Responses

In total 131 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. The following map shows the locations of 125 respondents where a useable postcode was provided (95% of total responses):



The following table shows the breakdown of responses by their resident wards: 76% of total responses received (where a valid postcode was supplied) were from households within the North East TNS Area

**125 out of 135 responses had useable postcodes - the tables below are based on those 125 responses.**

**RESPONSES BY CONSULTATION AREA**

Armadale and Netherhall area	100
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**RESPONSES BY WARD**

DISTRICT	WARD	RESPONSES
Leicester	Humberstone & Hamilton	66
Leicester	Thurncourt	22
Leicester	Troon	8
Leicester	North Evington	4
Leicester	Rushey Mead	2
Leicester	Belgrave	2
Leicester	Beaumont Leys	2
Leicester	Abbey	2
Leicester	Evington	1
Leicester	Aylestone	1
Leicester	Fosse	1
Harborough	Thurnby and Houghton	11
Blaby	Saxondale	1
Charnwood	Thurmaston	1
Oadby & Wigston	Wigston Meadowcourt	1

**RESPONSES BY DISTRICT**

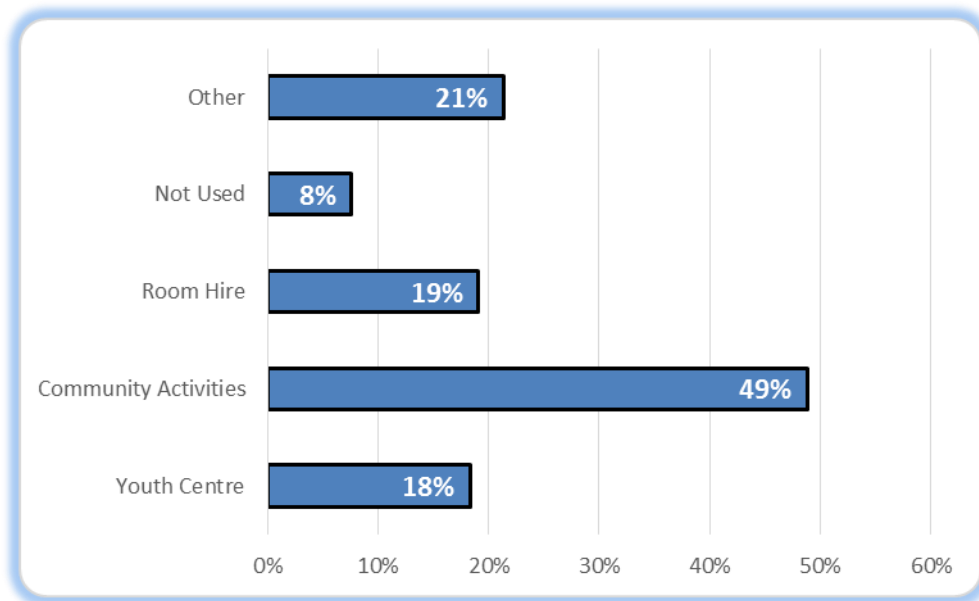
DISTRICT	RESPONSES
Blaby	1
Charnwood	1
Harborough	11
Leicester	111
Oadby & Wigston	1

## Views and comments

This section contains details of how people responded to the consultation questions. A copy of the questionnaire used has been included as Appendix A to this document. Responses to the questions asked are as follows:

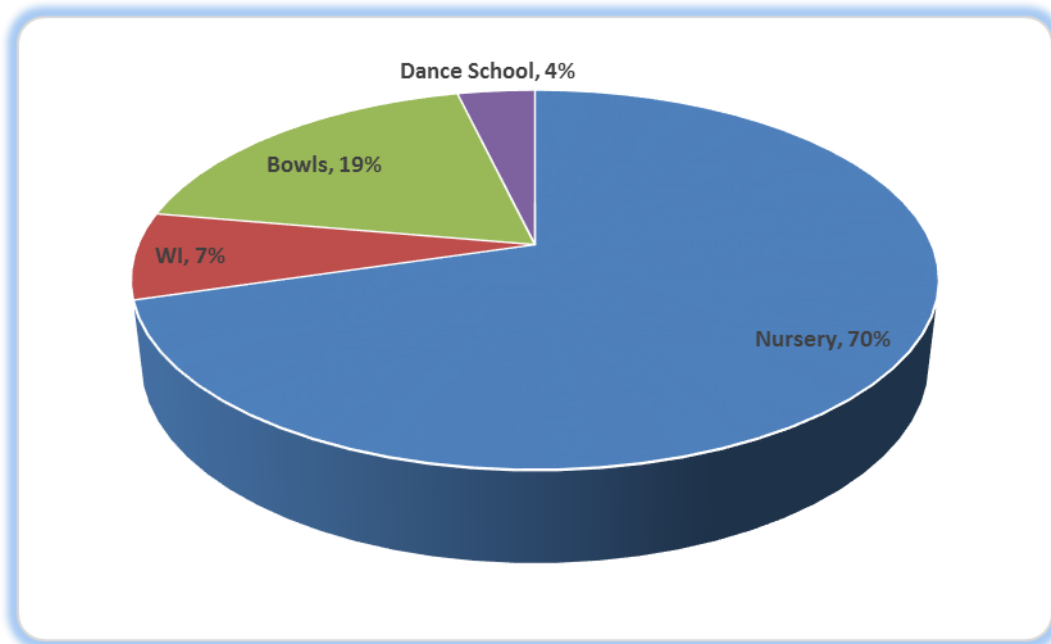
### Q.1. Which neighbourhood services do you use in these buildings?

A total of 131 respondents provided an answer to this question (100% of a total of 131 respondents), however, it should be noted that an option was to indicate that no services were used, which 132 (11%) of respondents selected. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:



- The service with the highest use of respondents was Community Activities (for example cooking, crafts, dance), with 49% of all respondents selecting this option.
- 21% of all respondents selected the “Other” category (see below for further analysis of this).
- The third highest use was “Room Hire” with 19% of respondents utilising this service.

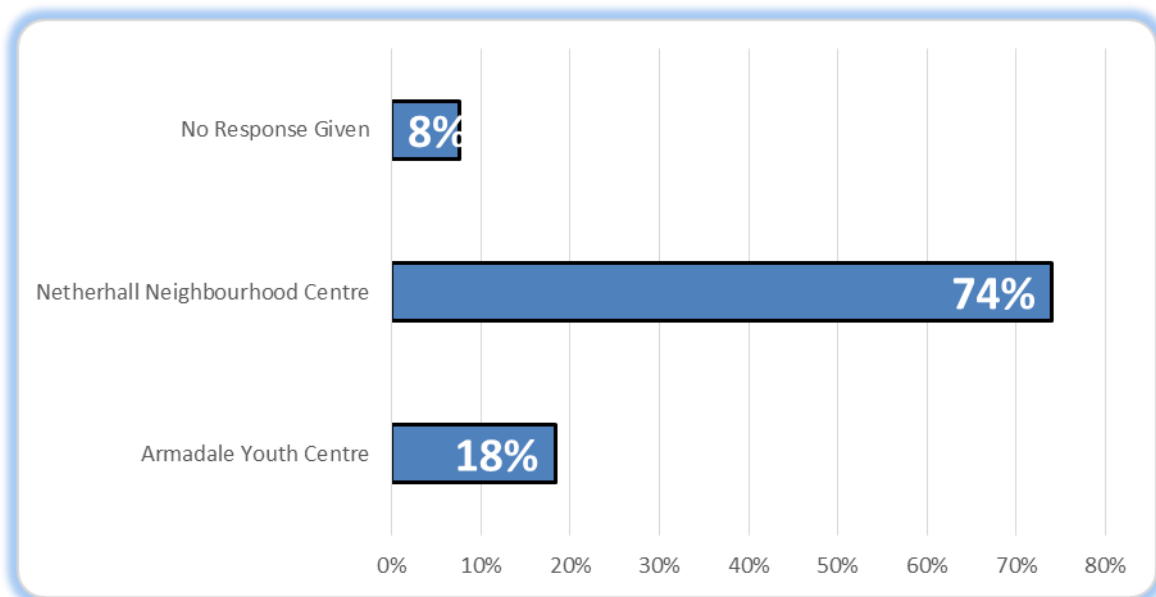
Respondents were given the opportunity to describe any other use they make of Neighbourhood Services in the area. A breakdown of the uses described by the 20% of responses relating to the ‘other’ category is shown in the graph below:



- Within “other” types of use the most popular category was the Nursery facilities with 70% of respondents indicating this
- The next most popular category was the bowls group with 19% of all those selecting “other” describing this type of use.
- Of those selecting “other” 7% said they used Neighbourhood Services for “WI”.
- The remainder of responses under the “other” category 4% were identified as “Dance School”.

**Q.2. Which centres do you use?**

A total of 121 (92%) of respondents provided an answer to this question and 10 respondents (8%) did not provide an answer to this question. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question, however, there were no responses received which had both of the options ticked. The following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:



- The majority of respondents indicated they used the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre (74% of all respondents)
- 18% of respondents indicated they used the Armadale Youth Centre
- 8% of respondents did not indicate either option and provide a response to this question

**Q.3. What is your home postcode?**

Please see section above which provides analysis on the residing location of the respondents. 125 respondents (95%) provided a home postcode.

**Q.4. How would these proposals benefit you?**

A total of 84 (64%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents.

Responses to this question can be generally categorised as follows:

Response category	Number of respondents
No change to Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	16
No change to Armadale Youth Centre	15
Other comments to keep Netherhall NC open	43
Other	10
No comments / Blank	47

A selection of the responses made to question 4 is provided below:

- Neighbourhood Centre has all the facilities needed for dance school*
- To keep my girls dancing, not lose their friends*
- This would allow my daughter and her friends to continue dancing at the neighbourhood centre*
- My children use the nursery*
- Neighbourhood Centre is a nicer building so wish to continue there*
- By meeting people and socialising*
- My children would still be able to attend dance class*
- Car Parking*
- It is convenient for our bowling group and parking*
- We are at Netherhall Centre for 10yrs plus, with our Craft group*
- Would prefer to use Netherhall Centre*
- No change as we use Netherhall at present*
- Would prefer to use Netherhall Centre*
- Would prefer Netherhall Centre*

*It wouldn't change anything for our craft group that meets on Monday morning.*

*This will benefit us as the school can operate as normal*

*I don't think that these proposals do benefit us as everything that the youth has put into the Armadale centre will have been wasted and things such as the TV, pool table, tennis tables, PS4, mini soccer table will not all fit in the new building so the youth won't want to come to the to the centre and the Armadale centre has a hall for dancers whereas the Netherhall Neighbourhood centre can not cater for everything that the Armadale centre has.*

*Activities would still run*

*My daughter attends dance classes at the Neighbourhood centre it is important the centre remains open.*

*There would be lack of space in the centre*

*If I'm honest the space is smaller and might be a little too small for people to fit in*

*Keep us out of trouble*

*Cleans my mind, releases stress, makes me have fun, and keeps me out of trouble*

*The place at Neighbourhood Centre for activities too small*

*Because it brings the youths together and it stops the youths from being outside causing problems*

*They give us something to do instead of wondering the streets*

*This is closer it keeps me off the street*

*If you close this then it wouldn't benefit me*

*Get to socialise with people*

*I would not benefit from the netherhall neighbourhood centre, because I only use the armadale youth centre*

*I get out and socialise with friends that attend my school. I talk to youth workers and get to listen to someone with an outside view. The youth sessions keep me off the streets and make sure I'm safe.*

**Q.5. Is there anything in the proposals that would stop you from using these services? If yes, please give the reason(s).**

A total of 41 (31%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents.

A selection of the responses made to question 4 is provided below:

*Armadale Centre is dark and unwelcoming*

*No if we stay here*

*Only if both were closed down*

*As long as there is sufficient space to accommodate 10 people for crafts I can see no problem*

*As long as we have sufficient room to meet + do our crafts that would be ok.*

*In order for it to benefit as we would need to be able to have access to areas suitable for dancing.*

*If more groups shared the space it would be difficult to find enough time + usable areas for everyone.*

*Combining the two buildings would make it impossible for all groups to find enough time.*

*Having to move venue*

*If it closed we would not have a WI*

*Using another centre*

*The fact it will disrupt out child's classes makes me a little upset*

*They could make it impossible for the children to carry on dancing*

*yes. No space/time for said activities.*

*Nowhere to park car*

*There won't be much room*

*I am concerned that these proposals will result in there being lack of space for the dance school to run classes as they do at the moment. This would have a deteriorated affect on my daughter.*

*Yes if you close Armadale Youth Centre*

*The youth service won't have the same atmosphere and home. Changing days will also effect us.*

*Yes, I wont use the neighbourhood centre*

*Yes I like the place*

*The neighbourhood is too crowded*

*The size of the new proposal is too small as too many youths come to Armadale Centre and the new proposal is too small*

*Netherhall centre too small*

*yes we need more space, Neighbourhood is tiny*

*Yes, it's small all of us cannot fit, we need more space*

*Yes if you close down Armadale youth Centre*

**Q.6. Do you have any other comments?**

A total of 26 (20%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents.

A selection of the responses made to question 6 is provided below:

*Main concern is parking, which is obviously better at neighbourhood centre*

*It gives teenagers and children somewhere to meet, keep fit and socialise.*

*Very happy it's staying open*

*I would really like the centre to stay open so the kids can continue to dance here*

*Would rather stay at Neighbourhood Centre*

*It would be a shame if it close's as it has been here along time and everybody who use it would miss it and have nowhere else to go*

*Plenty of car spares*

*We want to stop at the neighbourhood centre because it is newer and big windows make it brighter and nicer to play bowls in.*

*This is the only get together I get out of the house for*

*The centres both need to stay open as they serve different needs of the community*

*Dance group is a valuable community group which is very well supported there is little else in this area.*

*25-30 years bowling group we hope that goes a long way to stay where we are.*

*Neighbourhood Centre needs major alterations to accommodate everyone, not forgetting the repairs needed*

*Dancing has taken place for a long time and this would have bad consequences on the children.*

*I will prefer Armadale to be open than use Netherhall Neighbourhood*

*Keep armadale open*

*As kids we need our freedom*

*This is a good place.*

*Don't close it because the youth centre is very good and I've been coming for years*

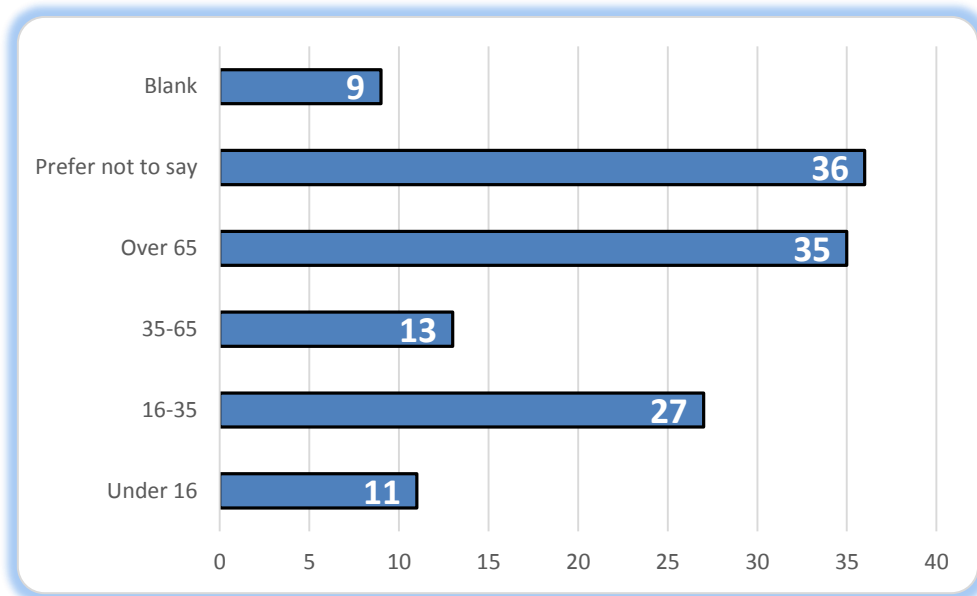
*I don't want the youth club to close as I wont have nowhere to attend.*

**Questions 7 – 11 were a section entitled “Tell Us About You:” and concerned demographic information about the respondents. The following shows the analysis of the responses provided.**

#### **Q. 7. Your Age**

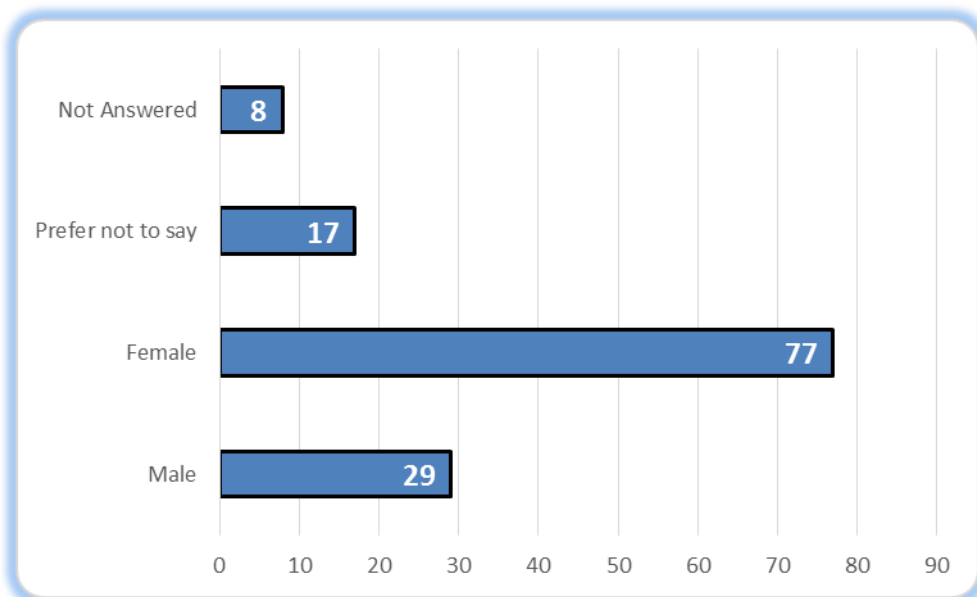
A total of 122 (93%) of respondents provided a response to this question. The following graph shows the distribution of age provided:





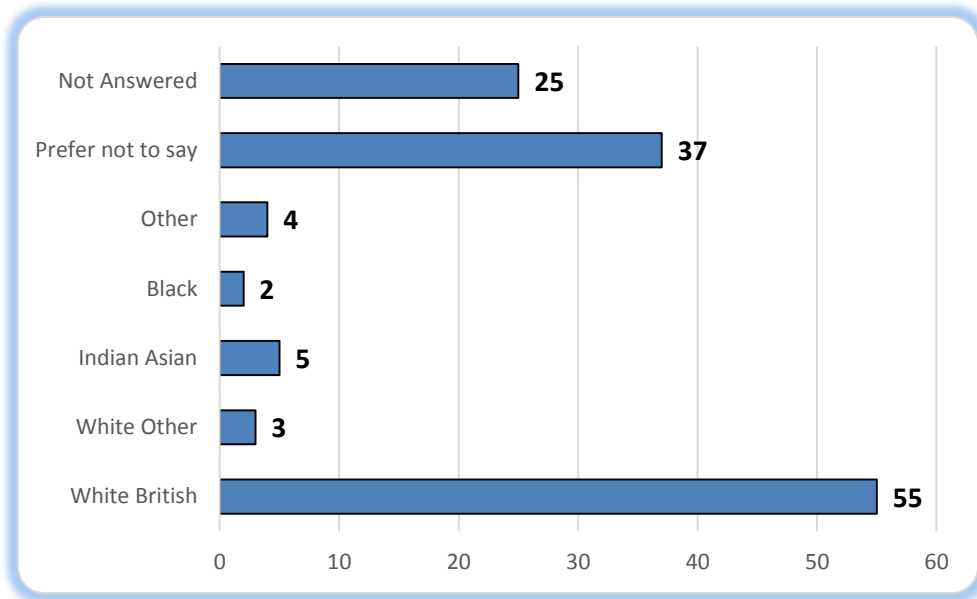
**Q. 8. Gender. Are you...**

A total of 123 (94%) of respondents provided a response to this question. The following graph shows the distribution of genders provided:



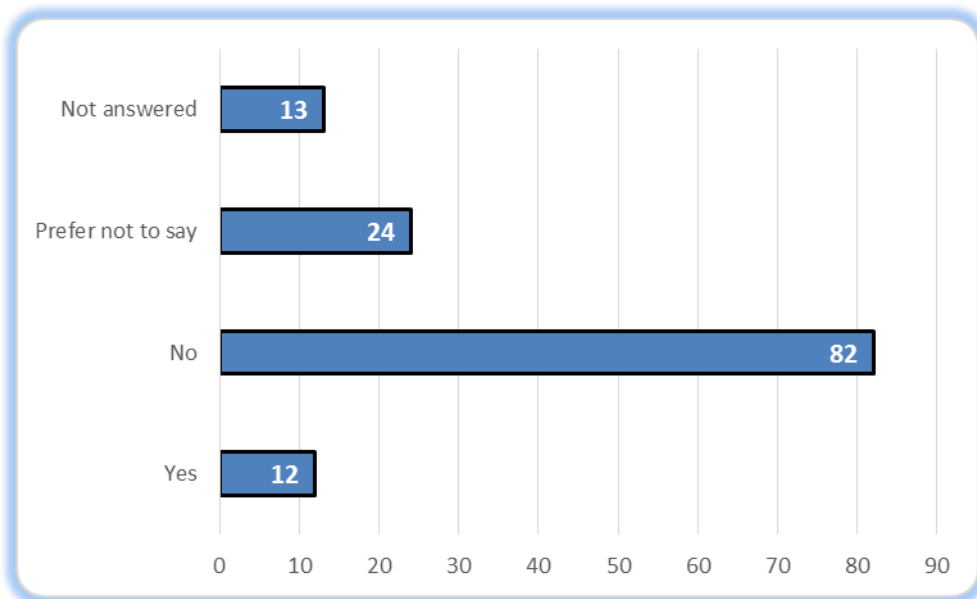
**Q. 9. How would you describe your ethnic background?**

A total of 106 (81%) of respondents provided a response to this question. The following graph shows the distribution of ethnicities provided:



**Q. 10. Do you consider yourself to have a disability of health condition?**

A total of 131 (93%) of respondents provided a response to this question. The following graph shows the distribution of age provided:

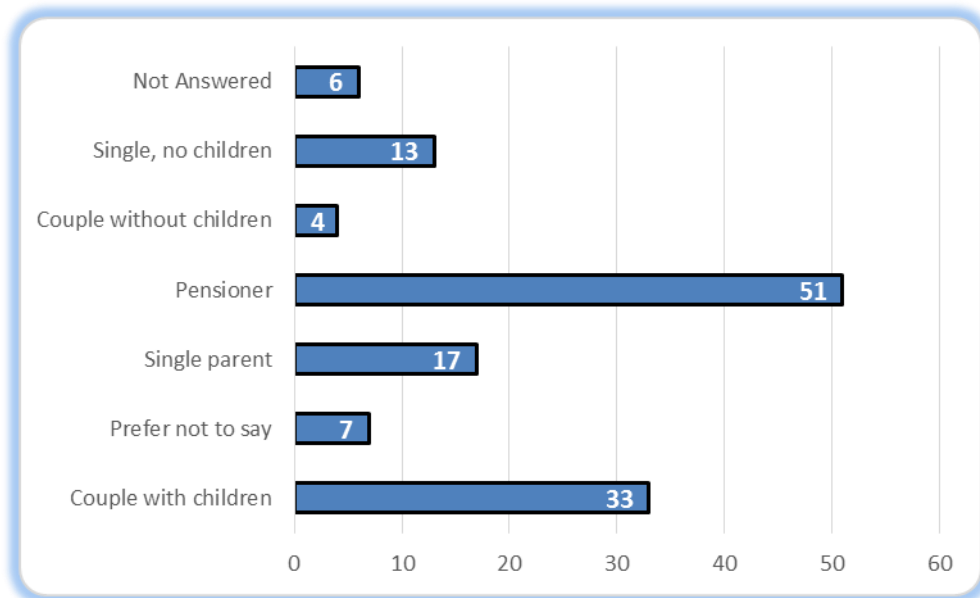


Where respondents indicated “Yes” to the above question they were asked to provide details. A total of 7 responses were provided and the following table shows the analysis of these responses:

Disability Type	No of respondents
Musculoskeletal	3
Heart Conditions	3
Digestive	1

**Q. 11. Household type:**

A total of 125 (95%) of respondents provided a response to this question. The following graph shows the distribution of household types provided:



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## **CONCLUSIONS**

This engagement is to be used to help facilitate a decision on an alternative proposal for the Armadale Youth Centre and Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre that has been proposed following a consultation exercise regarding buildings in the Netherhall area.

The method of engagement of holding drop-in sessions to promote awareness of TNS and focus groups to generate ideas has been well received by service users. This has proved a successful method of seeking points of view, suggestions for change to be taken into account and acknowledgement of the different needs of groups.

Due to the precise nature of the engagement exercise being carried out, the response rate has been relatively low compared with the wider consultations in the area. The key messages to be taken forward from this engagement period are:

- Support for the retention of the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- For young people especially, support for the Armadale Youth Centre to be retained
- Consideration must be given to how groups can work flexibly to allow the range of activities to take place
- Need for better use/sharing and more storage
- For young people especially, a safe place where young people feel they belong, and a place where they can socialise and take ownership of.
- Generally people were supportive of the buildings they currently use and there is overall willingness to make things work locally strong support for libraries and community centres

## **Lessons Learned**

- The focus groups have been very positive and have proven to be a good method of engagement with members of the public.
- The overall approach of involving stakeholders and members of the public early has proven beneficial as not only does it help to ensure that all concerns are heard, it also provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns on an evidenced basis.
- The process undertaken has enjoyed good co-operation between stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as other services.

Appendix A:

## **Proposals for Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and Armadale Youth Centre (TNS)**

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### **Overview**

In 2016 we consulted with local people in the north east area of the city to find out what they wanted from their services.

The consultation proposed to relocate services from Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre to Armadale Youth Centre and to dispose of the vacated building. In feedback, residents and service users suggested an alternative approach: to swap these proposals around.

We would like to hear your views on this revised proposal to relocate services from Armadale Youth Centre into Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre with some redevelopment of the internal space. This would allow for the disposal of Armadale Youth Centre. Closing date for the consultation is 17 May 2017.

### **Why We Are Consulting**

Now we have developed a way forward and we would like to know your views. These proposals bring services together and make savings.

We are holding two evening consultation events to discuss the proposals, details as below.

#### **Consultation Events**

Tuesday 25 April 2017 from 6.30pm to 7.30pm at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre

Wednesday 26 April 2017 from 6.30pm to 7.30pm at Armadale Youth Centre

### **The Proposals**

#### **Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre**

- Retain the centre and the ball court.
- Make minor alterations to accommodate some activities which currently take place at Armadale Youth Centre.

#### **Armadale Centre**

- Explore options for disposal of the building including lease, sale or to clear the site.
- Work with groups to find the best location for their needs.

### **Give Us Your Views**

Q1 Which neighbourhood services do you use in these buildings? (please tick all that apply)

- Youth centre
- Community activities (for example cooking, crafts, dance)

- Room hire
  - No, I don't use any of these services
  - Other (please specify)
- 

Q2 Which centres do you use? (please tick all that apply)

- Armadale Youth Centre
- Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre

Q3 What is your home postcode?

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Q4 How would these proposals benefit you?

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Q5 Is there anything in the proposals that would stop you from using these services? If yes, please give the reason(s).

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Q6 Do you have any other comments?

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**Tell Us About You:**

Q7 Your age?

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- Prefer not to say

Q8 Gender. Are you...

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q9 How would you describe your ethnic background?

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- Prefer not to say

Q10 Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If you have answered YES to the question above, please say how your disability or health condition affects your ability to access local services.

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Q11 Household type:

- Couple without children
- Couple with children
- Pensioner
- Single parent
- Single, no children
- Prefer not to say

### **What Happens Next**

We will consider all the feedback received during this consultation before taking a decision on final proposals.

Thank you for completing the consultation. Please hand in your completed questionnaire at the reception of any of our neighbourhood services buildings. Closing date for the consultation is **17 May 2017**.

