
Consultation Findings

Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry Neighbourhood



Neighbourhood Plan: Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry

This document summarises your communities' response to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.

How have we arrived at these findings?

Throughout the summer, we have been out in the community talking to residents, voluntary organisations, schools, community groups and residents associations – asking them what their priorities are for their neighbourhoods, and what they would change, given the chance.

A range of methods were used to gather residents' opinions in this area, including;

- An online and paper questionnaire
- Focus groups and presentations with resident and community groups
- A dedicated Neighbourhood Plan 'hotline' for residents to leave their views
- Events and open days throughout the community

These consultation findings are the result of those conversations.

- 1) Over 1300 people completed the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. We also held or visited over 250 events throughout August and September.
- 2) We also met with many community groups from this area, either to give a presentation on the project or to conduct a detailed Focus Group. Many organisations also submitted a group response. A full list of these organisations is provided at the end of this document.

The contents of this document will, once you have approved it, become the Neighbourhood Plan for your area. At this event, we are inviting you to make final comments and suggestions on its contents before it is accepted.

What will happen next?

The approved consultation findings will become the Neighbourhood Plan for Birkenhead Tranmere and Rock Ferry, and Wirral Council will report back to the Forum in February with the final plan and 'Actions' for your area – to show you how your priorities will be delivered.

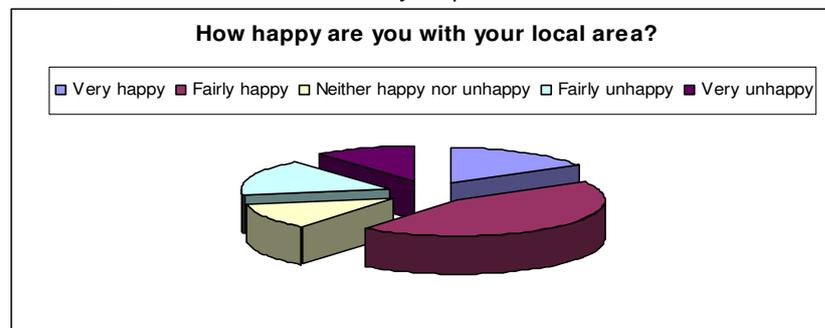
Thank you for taking the time to get involved – it will make a difference.

Your Neighbourhood

The street where you live

What is good about living in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry?

We asked people how happy they were in their local neighbourhood. This is how people from Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry responded:



This question shows clearly that a majority of people are either 'very' or 'fairly' happy with their local area. However, a sizeable minority of approximately 28% said they were either 'fairly unhappy' or 'very unhappy'. We also asked: 'What do you like about your neighbourhood?' The responses to this question were extremely varied, but four leading categories were: neighbours and community spirit, amenities, transport and parks.

- 1) **Neighbours and Community Spirit:** The highest response related to the good relationships that residents have with their neighbours. For some respondents this clearly translated into a sense of community spirit. A number of mentions were made of vibrant community groups and residents associations. Members from Courtney Park Resource Centre in Rock Ferry said:

"The community spirit – everyone knows each other and you know what's going on in the community".

- 2) **Amenities:** The proximity of services, in particular, the shops was regularly highlighted. Birkenhead market was also quoted as "as piece of history (which) should be protected".
- 3) **Transport:** Good transport links gained approval from a number of residents. In particular, public transport provision, including buses as well as the train service were popular answers to this question.
- 4) **Parks:** The closeness to local parks, as well as proximity to Birkenhead Park, is liked by many residents. Some residents are clearly proud of "the world's first public park".

Your Neighbourhood

The street where you live

What would you change about Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry?

Initially, we gave residents a list of issues and asked them to state whether they were not a problem, an occasional problem, a problem or a major problem.

According to the majority of responses, the following issues are not a problem in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry: street lighting, maintenance of parks and open spaces, empty or derelict properties and safety of parks / open spaces.

Based on the responses, the biggest problems in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry are:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Underage drinking
- Drug dealing
- Dog fouling
- Litter

Action against anti-social behaviour, underage drinking and drug-use were consistently raised by a significant number of residents. These issues were summarised by a resident who wrote:

"It comes down to tackling anti-social behaviour. Not just the actual behaviour but also the structural problems behind it: breakdown of traditional family structures, poor parenting, generational unemployment and high levels of NEETs. There are also particular issues with drugs and alcohol in our area - although the Police and partners (including the Council) are active, turning our community around for the long-term will also require increased employment opportunities to give people something positive to aim for. Too many people end up frustrated, angry and negative in our community - and this leads to trouble".

A significant numbers of residents also raised the issue of housing and regeneration schemes. Some disappointment was expressed regarding the delay in completing the regeneration schemes such as those in Tranmere and Church Road. One resident requested:

"All the demolished shops in Tranmere to be replaced as promised in the renewal plan".

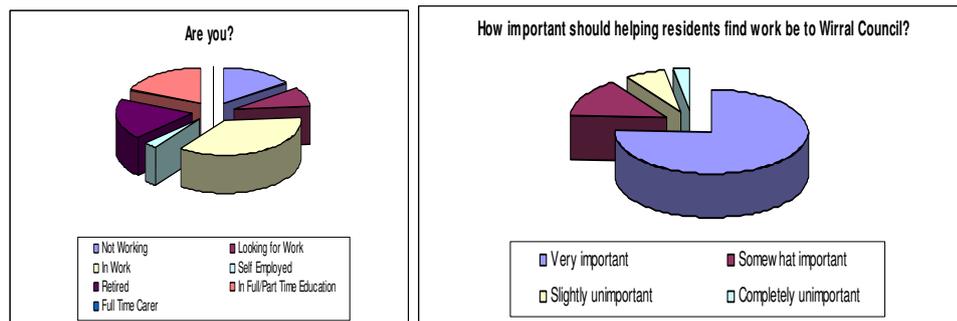
Residents from Rock Park, Rock Ferry, also highlighted a number of concerns including street lighting and, particularly, the condition of the Rock Park Esplanade. These residents have submitted a detailed group response to the consultation for consideration.

Your Economy

Jobs, Skills and Training

What is important to Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry residents?

This section of the consultation focused on how residents believed the Council should support the economy, particularly in terms of helping people find work. We initially asked people to indicate a) whether they were in work themselves and b) how much importance the Council should place on helping residents get back into work. These are the results of those questions;



The results of these questions clearly show that respondents were, in the majority, either in work or retired. The respondents also overwhelmingly believe (over 90%) that helping people find work is either 'very' or 'somewhat' important for the Council. We also asked people what they felt stopped people finding work in the area. The results of this question were more varied, but people generally believe the following issues were the main barriers:

- 1) Lack of skills and qualifications
- 2) Lack of jobs
- 3) Age

Issues such as dependency on benefits, lack of motivation, low aspirations and apathy were also regularly mentioned as barriers preventing people from finding work in their area.

Your Economy

Jobs, Skills and Training

What can be done to help?

After identifying what people believed to be the barriers to finding work, we then asked for your ideas – how should the Council help people to find work? Again, we received lots of responses to this question. Generally, they could be split into the following areas:

Opportunities for affordable training, re-skilling and work experience

Many of you believe more could be done to ensure people in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry are helped to improve their skills through increasing local opportunities for training and getting work experience. Many residents felt that there should be a greater focus on providing the correct skills to enable individuals to find employment. It was also clearly important that training must be affordable to individuals. Some residents also said that more emphasis should be given to local businesses being encouraged to provide work experience opportunities. One resident suggested that people would be more likely to find work:

“By making training opportunities real. Focussing on defined skill sets that are meaningful and vocational that will not only make someone more employable but also give them real skills for the job”.

Assistance to individuals to improve their job-searching skills

Residents suggested that greater assistance should be provided to individuals to improve their job-searching skills, for example, help with CV's and mock interviews. One respondent suggested that the Council should:

“Offer support programmes to people on benefits, addressing their holistic needs, which will enable them to have the confidence to attend college, training or work”.

A number of respondents in the Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry area also felt that, whilst the Council and partners were working hard to provide information and advice about work opportunities on the internet and through local media, more could be done to make relevant information available.

Develop more effective regeneration strategies to help create more local jobs

When we asked what was stopping people from finding work, one of the most popular answers was 'a lack of jobs'. When people were submitting their ideas for helping people back into work, supporting local businesses to start up and grow was mentioned several times. This was linked to making Wirral more attractive for business relocation and developing more effective regeneration strategies.

Your Family

Children and Young People

Is Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry a good place for children to grow up?

There were a huge range of varied responses to this question. However, the main reasons were related to the parks and play spaces, local youth and leisure facilities and the nearby schools. However, this question also generated a substantial response to make it very clear that more needs to be done to make the area a better place for children / young people to grow up.

Children in this area have access to a number of parks, including Mersey and Victoria Parks as well as more local parks and open spaces which were highlighted positively. The proximity of Birkenhead Park was also emphasised.

"We have Mersey and Victoria parks but I don't think that they are used as much as they could be".

"There is a good selection of schools and in my particular area we have a park at both ends of the street which is good for both parents and children".

Closeness to leisure and youth facilities, such as the Viking Youth Club were highlighted as positive aspects to the area. A number of residents also commented on the good schools in the immediate and surrounding areas.

However, the need for more to be done for children in the area was underlined by residents who wrote:

"There are a few parks for children but a lot of these parks are used for underage drinking. There is a lot of anti-social behaviour and the police are called out a lot".

"Some play facilities (exist), but I wouldn't feel safe sending my children to them if I had any. Main issue is with youths hanging around."

Your Family

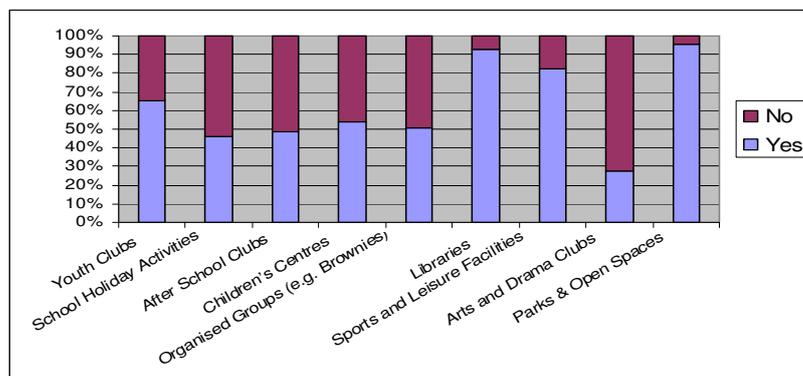
Children and Young People

Is Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry a good place for children to grow up?

What needs to be improved?

In the questionnaire, we asked residents to tell us if they were aware of a range of services that may or may not be available in their local area. These are the results of this question:

Are you aware if these facilities are available in your area?



From the chart above, it is clear that residents know they have access to libraries, parks and open spaces, sports and leisure facilities and youth clubs. People do, however, seem to be less aware of services such as arts / drama clubs, school holiday activities and after school clubs, organised groups (such as brownies, scouts) and Children's Centres.

We asked residents to tell us what would make Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry a **better** place for children and young people to grow up. A key theme was the need for a safer environment for children to play and for teenagers to meet. Respondents also emphasised the need to reduce underage drinking and anti-social behaviour in the area. Residents suggested:

".....more facilities and activities for them to do in a safe and fun environment".

"No activities for young people and young families. Birkenhead Park had sports coaches in to play with the children and families. This should be available every holiday time".

Section D

Your Family

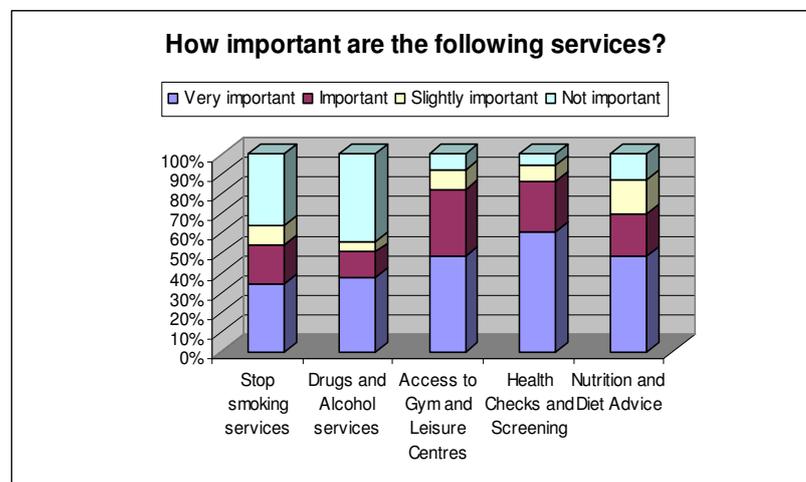
Health and Wellbeing

How can we improve the health of Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry residents?

What health issues are most important?

Generally, people in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry seem happy with the health services available to them. Most people responding to this section of the questionnaire commented on their GP surgery and most, but not all, found their local surgeries to be accessible.

We asked a number of questions related to Health and Wellbeing. One of the questions was designed to find out what services were most important to local residents, in relation to their health.



We also asked people to tell us what their 'top 3' priorities were in relation to health. The majority of people chose being physically active, having a cleaner / greener neighbourhood, access to decent housing and the opportunity to lose weight. The least popular answers were debt and benefit advice and stopping smoking.

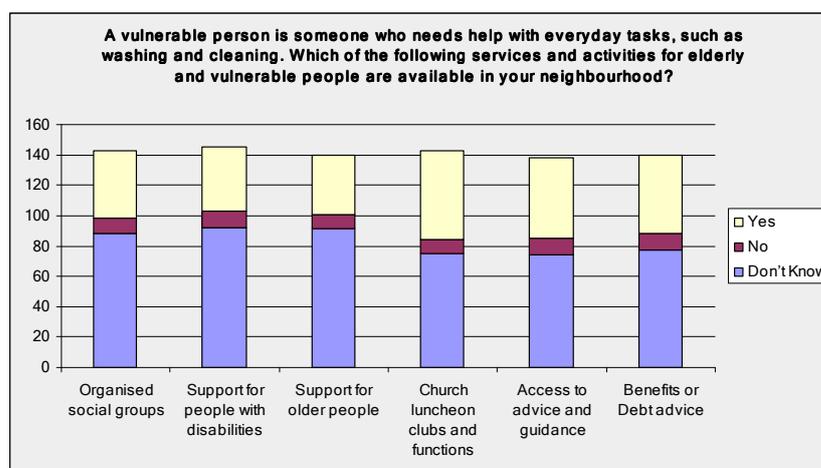
When looking at these responses together with those shown on the chart above it is clear that people in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry value services such as health checks, and sports and leisure facilities much more than they do services designed to help people stop smoking, or address drug and alcohol problems.

Your Family

Health and Wellbeing

Taking care of the most vulnerable

A 'vulnerable person' is someone who needs help with everyday tasks, such as washing and cleaning. We asked people if they knew of services in their area that are available for vulnerable people.



As well as this question, we asked residents what could be done differently to better provide vulnerable people with better care, support and protection. The largest response related to the safety of vulnerable and elderly people and resulted in requests for a more visible police presence. One resident noted that:

"Vulnerable people can be victimised or marginalised even further in a community where there are high levels of anti-social behaviour"

A large number of comments also related to more services being available in the community. In particular, it was suggested that there should be additional supported living to enable more vulnerable people to remain in their own homes for longer. Some residents suggested that the voluntary sector could have a greater role in that provision. A resident proposed:

"Encouraging responsible members of the community (that is, those who are members of accredited community groups) to become more aware of people in their own neighbourhood with vulnerability issues via a 'neighbourhood watch' type scheme"

Your Council

Local services

How is the Council performing in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry?

What should the Council's priorities be?

We asked people to pick five things from a comprehensive list which should be the Council's priorities; the table show what the top five priorities were for Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry residents.

1	Reducing crime & anti-social behaviour	65.7%
2	Encouraging job creation & skills	48.9%
3	Street cleanliness & road maintenance	47.4%
4	Services for children & young people	43.8%
4	Support for vulnerable adults	43.8%

How good is our Customer Service?

We also asked residents if they had contacted the Council in the last six months and, if they had, how they would rate the level of customer service they had received:



The results of this question show that, generally, people contacting the Council had either an 'excellent' or 'good' level of customer service. Only on the website was the service rated as 'OK'.

Your Council

Local services

How can the Council improve in Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry?

We asked: 'If you could change one thing about the way the Council delivers services in your neighbourhood, what would it be?' The responses to this question were very varied. As indicated above, the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour was highlighted by a number of residents. The arrangements for rubbish collections, including requests for more frequent bin collections, also featured along with street cleaning.

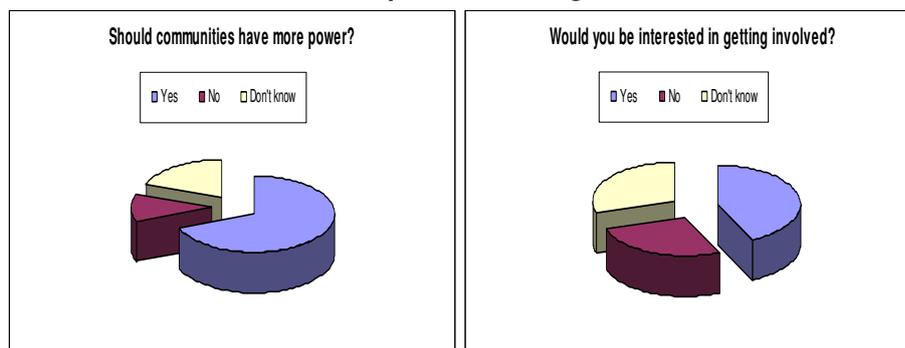
"We used to get the streets cleaned once a week, something which during the last 12 months, has seen the local streets looking so much cleaner. This recently changed and now the area is looking untidy".

A number of residents also commented on the need for greater community involvement in the Council's decision-making processes. One resident said:

"Be more open to people in the neighbourhood and listen to their opinions. Include the residents of the neighbourhood more in deciding where Council resources are spent".

Following on from these points, we also asked residents if they believed communities should have more power in deciding where Council resources were spent, and also if they personally would like to become more involved in decision making.

Should communities have more power in making Council decisions?



The results of these questions show an overwhelming majority of people believe that local people should have more power in deciding how Council resources are spent. Less would like to play a personal role in making those decisions.

Your Neighbourhood Plan

Have we got it right?

We will use these findings to develop Neighbourhood Plan for your area, to tackle many of the issues mentioned and build upon the positive activities and features you have told us about.

Do you agree with the findings?

Have we got anything wrong, or missed any issues?

Please tell us by emailing engage@wirral.gov.uk, visiting www.wirral.gov.uk/neighbourhood or calling into any One Stop Shop or Library and filling out a 'Comments' card. Thank you for taking the time to read this plan.

With thanks to...

This consultation would not have been possible without the help, support and input of the residents of Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry and the following community groups...

Blind and Partially Sighted Association
Rodney Street Residents Association
Courtney Park Resource Centre
Mental Health Forum
Forum Housing Association
Pedestrian Forum
Advocacy in Wirral
Rock Residents Association
Church Road Neighbourhood Resource Centre
Cycling Forum
Resident Association for Meadow and Prescot Streets

Wirral Change Womens Group
Lairdside Communities Together
Tranmere Residents Association
Birkenhead Youth Hub
Tranmere Methodist Luncheon Club
Birkenhead Lions
Christchurch Primary School
Wirral Multicultural Organisation
Rock Ferry Waterfront
Lairdside Together Partnership