

**FORMER HERMITAGE ACADEMY SITE AND HELENSBURGH PIERHEAD MASTER
PLAN REVIEW**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 15th of December 2011 the Executive authorised the Executive Director for Development & Infrastructure to undertake a public consultation on proposed Draft Masterplans for two key development sites in Helensburgh.
- 1.2 This report contains an overview of the results of the public consultation (see attached **Public Consultation Document**) and presents the proposed Masterplans for the Executive to approve, the Pierhead for a final period of public consultation and the Hermitage as a Finalised Masterplan. These are based on a careful and full consideration of the recent public consultation and taking full account of all survey results and comments received.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive approve the proposed Pierhead Masterplan, as contained in **Diagram A** attached hereto, the detail of which is discussed and outlined in paragraph 5.4 of this report for a further period of public consultation in line with established council procedures.
- 2.2 That the Executive approve the Finalised Hermitage Masterplan, as contained in **Diagram B**, attached hereto, the detail of which is discussed and outlined in paragraph 5.4 of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The background to the need for the Masterplans was set out in the report approved by the Executive on the 3rd of November 2011. The content of the Masterplans has been further informed by careful consideration of the future deliverability of the proposals in light of current economic circumstances, discussions with Dunbritton Housing Association and the careful consideration of the considered views of focus groups held on the 23rd of November and 7th of December 2011.
- 3.2 On the 15th of December the Executive approved the Masterplans for a period of public consultation that commenced on the 16th of December 2011 and finished on the 18th of January 2012. The consultation was advertised in the Helensburgh Advertiser, the local community newsletter and on the Council's web site. Paper copies of the Masterplans were deposited in Scotcourt House and the Helensburgh,

Rosneath and Cardross libraries. A copy of the Masterplans together with a range of background information that included background studies and Council responses to frequently asked questions was also placed on the Council's web site to help inform local people of relevant issues prior to completing a survey.

- 3.3 A key part of the consultation was the holding of two open days that were held on the 13th (1 pm to 8 pm) and 14th (10 am to 3 pm) of January 2012 in the Victoria Halls, Helensburgh to allow people to examine the proposed Masterplans, view an especially prepared exhibition, including a model of the proposed Pierhead site and ask questions of both council officers and representatives of Gareth Hoskins Architects. During these days presentations were also given to specific interest groups (i.e. business community, community groups, users of the existing pool, young people etc.).
- 3.3 In addition to the above it was also decided to conduct face to face interviews with 371 local people from a wide age profile. Interviews were conducted by Hexagon Consultants (carried out from Thursday the 12th of January to Sunday the 15th of January 2012).

4.0 RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The public consultation stimulated the interest of local people together with a number of other interested stakeholders with approximately 800 people attending Victoria Halls open days and 1,200 responses submitted either on paper (515 completed survey forms and a number of additional items of correspondence), online through the Council's web site and dedicated e mail address (277 on line completed survey forms submitted) and 371 face to face interviews undertaken. A full breakdown on what people said is included in **The Public Consultation Document** that accompanies this report. It should be noted that copies of all comments received during the consultation submitted either on paper, by email and through the Council's web site have been placed in the **Committee Room 1** for their consideration prior to the Executive meeting. The main findings of the consultation are detailed below.
- That the Pierhead is primarily used for short stay parking (32% of people surveyed), use of the pool (26% of people surveyed) and recreation (15% of people surveyed).
 - The vast majority of people, of all ages, want a modern pool/leisure facility to be built as soon as possible, preferably in the accessible Pierhead.
 - The majority of people would wish to see a modern pool/leisure facility built before the existing facility would be taken out of service.
 - That 55% of people surveyed do not want a supermarket of the scale proposed in the Draft Masterplan on the Pierhead primarily due to the widely perceived detrimental visual impact, the loss of parking together with the resulting loss of the short and longer term recreational potential of the Pierhead. Strong concerns were also expressed over the possibility of added congestion and potential impact on the smaller Helensburgh stores which a number of local people perceive to cater for visitors to the town. The issue of flooding on the Pierhead and adjacent streets was also raised as a concern including the vulnerability the area to storm damage. A significant number of people also believed that the proposal by Waitrose offered a better and more immediate solution to improve the retail offer in Helensburgh including providing a new petrol station facility.

Comparison of responses to preferred Council options for the Pierhead

	Yes	No	Mixed Opinion
Paper survey submissions	13%	65%	22%
On Line survey submissions	22%	55%	23%
Hexagon Face to Face	46%	42%	12%
Total	26%	55%	19%

- The “On Street” survey undertaken by Hexagon of 371 people found that the majority of those surveyed to be in favour of the Council’s proposed development of the Pierhead; with the strongest support (76%) with the under 30 age group.
 - That 72% of people surveyed support the Council’s position that a petrol station is not suitable to be located on the Pierhead.
 - That 55% of people surveyed do not want residential flats on the Pierhead.
 - That 67% of people surveyed are in favour of housing only on the Hermitage site with 57% of people surveyed also indicating that they would be prepared to allow the pool/community leisure facility to be built at the Hermitage in the event it proved undeliverable on the Pierhead.
- 4.2 In addition to the completed survey forms a number of other interested parties submitted items of correspondence with regard to the Draft Masterplans.
- 4.3 Contributions include Helensburgh Community Council’s response, based on an analysis of recent surveys of public opinion undertaken in Helensburgh and Lomond by the Community Council and commercial operators. In particular, the Executive’s attention is drawn to the results of the Community Council’s survey, conducted as people left Victoria Halls following viewing the Council’s exhibition. This survey recorded 71% of people surveyed not wanting a supermarket on the Pierhead. The considerable effort to produce these results and indeed promote the consultation on the Draft Masterplans by Helensburgh Community Council is fully recognised by Council Officers. A full copy of Helensburgh Community Council’s comprehensive response to the consultation has been placed in the **Committee Room 1**.
- 4.4 Another significant contribution came from agents acting on behalf of four supermarket operators (Sainsburys, ASDA, Morrisons and the Co-op). Essentially while all operators indicate they are willing to work with the Council to deliver the site in such a way that it contributes to the wider regeneration of the town centre their responses all oppose the Council’s preferred option 1 for the Pierhead site. The primary driver of this is that they believe the site is not large enough to accommodate all of the proposed uses including appropriate levels of car parking for all proposed uses. Three of the operators however generally support Draft Masterplan option 2 for the Pierhead as it allows for more car parking, a larger store, and reduces the

potential for conflict between retail and leisure uses. Two of the operators also consider a petrol filling station on the pier to be a requirement. Two also indicate that while they were not opposed to residential element, it would not be their highest priority.

- 4.5 Additional contributions to the consultation were also made by a number of other community councils in the Lomond area, local organisations, individuals and a house builder with an interest in the Hermitage site.

5.0 CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE OPTIONS

- 5.1 In developing the proposed Masterplans for the Executive's approval, careful account has been taken of the results of the public consultation, as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of this report and examined in greater detail in the attached **Public Consultation Document**.

- 5.2 While the results of the public consultation clearly revealed the complex set of local opinions regarding these key development sites, with a particular emphasis on the Pierhead site, a significant majority of local people (55% of those who responded as opposed to 26% that agreed with the council's preferred option) were strongly of the opinion that the positioning of a larger scale supermarket on the Pierhead was unacceptable even where it could be demonstrated by the Council that it was necessary to deliver a new pool/community leisure facility. The main reason given for this was the unacceptable visual impact of such a large building placed on the Pierhead combined with the need to retain this site as a predominately recreational area for the benefit of local people and tourists visiting the town. Significant concerns were also raised over the need to retain car and coach parking for the benefit of town centre users, the undesirability of residential units on the Pierhead, concerns with regard to added congestion, traffic management, and the site's unsuitability for a petrol station (a point incidentally supported by the Draft Masterplan for the Pierhead).

- 5.3 An additional significant factor that is required to be mentioned is the pending decision on the Waitrose supermarket/foodstore on the outskirts of the town. While this proposal, as it currently stands, does not accord with both national and local planning policy many respondents to the consultation believe that this proposal offers a preferable and immediate solution in improving the retail offer of Helensburgh, including a much supported second petrol station.

- 5.4 Taking all of the above into account, the proposed Masterplans as contained in **Diagrams A and B**, attached hereto, are recommended for approval by the Executive.

The Pierhead

- That the Masterplan for the Pierhead be approved in accordance with **Diagram A** that is attached to the report.
- That, in an effort to take account of comments received, the scale and massing of the proposed retail units be substantially reduced on the Pierhead site, as indicated on **Diagram A** and, consequently, that the previous proposal for a larger scale supermarket be deleted from the Pierhead Masterplan.

- That the Masterplan for the Pierhead retains provision for a new pool/community leisure centre, in light of comments received, to be built on the Pierhead, albeit in a changed position, to reflect concerns with regard to flooding/exposure etc.
- That a site be set aside on the Pierhead to allow it to be landscaped and spaces provided on the Pierhead for the parking of coaches.
- That the proposed retail units be restricted in size and set back along West Clyde Street in an effort to take account of comments received, lessen their visual impact and allow for additional pedestrian space and accommodate drop off/pick up points for buses, taxis and cars.
- That the requirement for residential units be deleted from the Pierhead Masterplan to take account of comments received and help reduce the height of the proposed retail units.

The former Hermitage Site

- That the Masterplan for the former Hermitage Site be approved in accordance with **Diagram B** attached to the report.
- To take account of comments received the Masterplan in respect of the former Hermitage Site contains an option to site a new pool/community leisure facility in this location (phase 3) with both Masterplans excluding grounds currently leased by the Athletics Club.
- To take account of comments received regarding the Masterplan in respect of the former Hermitage Site that it contains provision for both affordable and private housing development.

5.5 Following approval by the Executive of the proposed Masterplans, the Pierhead site will be considered to be effective only in terms of providing a suitable site for a smaller scale retail provision than that previously proposed in the previous Draft Masterplan or indeed contained in the previously approved Masterplan. The Pierhead shall remain as a town centre site in the Development Plan. It should also be noted that Masterplans are indicative and not prescriptive allowing them to be flexible enough to meet changing needs for the 21st century in accordance with PAN 83. Any subsequent development on both of the sites will be subject to detailed planning consent. Given the scale of the proposed changes to the Pierhead Masterplan it is proposed that a further round of public consultation will be undertaken in line with council established procedures. However, given the strong support for both options of the Hermitage Masterplan no further public consultation will be undertaken.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Following approval by the Executive in December public consultation was undertaken during the specified timescales that attracted survey responses and additional items of correspondence from approximately 1,200 local people and other interested parties including agents of retail operators/potential developers of both sites. The results of the public consultation are contained in the **Public Consultation Document** that accompanies this report and copies of all comments received have been placed in the Member's Room for their consideration prior to the meeting.

Whilst in terms of land use planning the Masterplan Options developed for consultation offered many benefits, and would appear to have been supported by the majority of younger people surveyed, the overall result of the public consultation is clear in that a majority of local people do not want to see a larger scale supermarket on the Pierhead and would also prefer to see a new pool/community facility be located in this highly accessible location. The council notes and welcomes substantial support for the Hermitage site Masterplans. Consequently, this report recommends that the Executive approve the revised Pierhead Masterplan for a final period of public consultation, as detailed in **Diagram A**, as attached to this report, and approve the Finalised Hermitage Masterplan as detailed in **Diagram B** as attached to this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

Policy	– As per content
Financial	– As per content
Personnel	– As per content
Equalities Impact Assessment	– None anticipated
Legal	– As per content

Sandy Mactaggart

Executive Director
Development & Infrastructure

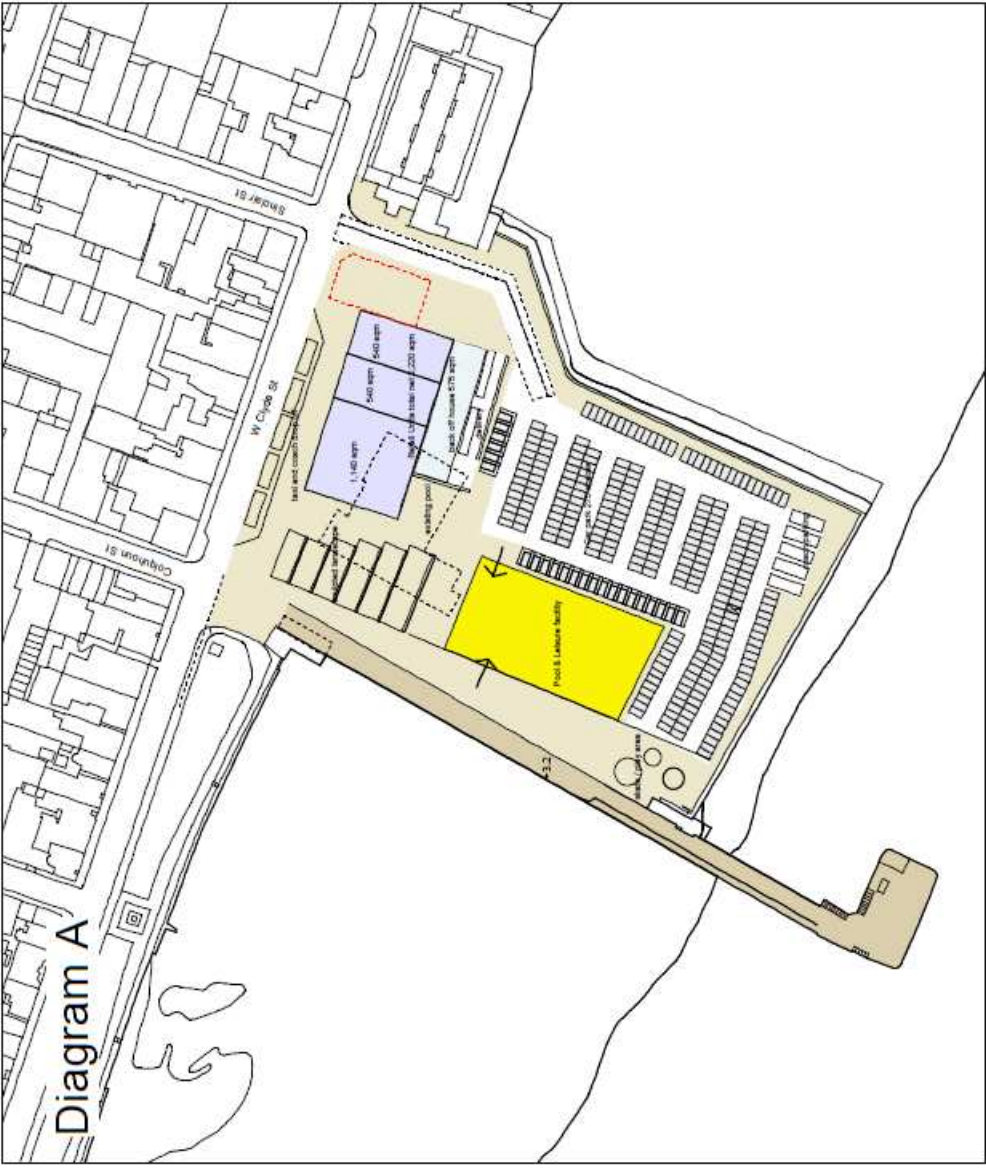


Diagram A

DIAGRAM B



PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Introduction

This document reports back on the measures taken to engage with local people and other interested stakeholders with regard to the Draft Masterplans for two key sites in Helensburgh namely the Pierhead site and the site of the former hermitage Academy.

Details of the methodology behind the Public Consultation undertaken by Council Officers and Consultants

Following approval by the Executive the public consultation commenced on the 16th of December 2011 and finished on the 18th of January 2012. The consultation was advertised on the front page of the Council's web site for the entire consultation period. Also, two adverts were placed in the Helensburgh Advertiser at the start of the consultation. A further advert was placed with the Community Advertiser which has a circulation of approximately 13,000 and the decision was also taken to include a flyer to help advertise the on line survey and open days.

The council also released a series of press releases highlighting the consultation and how the development of these key sites could help deliver economic benefits for the town, a new pool/community leisure facility and much needed new housing. Copies of these press releases can be found on the council's web site www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

In addition to the dedicated web page on the Council's web site that showed the Draft Masterplans together with supporting information paper copies were provided at Scotcourt House, Helensburgh, Rosneath and Cardross Libraries.

A key aspect of the consultation was the holding of two drop in open days on the 13th (1pm to 8pm) and 14th of January (10am to 3pm) at the Victoria halls Helensburgh. These included an especially commissioned exhibition, including a 3D model, prepared by Gareth Hoskins Architects. Members of the council's development policy team and Gareth Hoskins Architects were on hand to provide detailed information, clarify any issues and answer any questions regarding the pier head and former Hermitage Academy sites.

Paper copies of the survey form and details on how to complete the online survey were also provided at the open days. A number of presentations on the Masterplans were also undertaken to particular interest groups including Hermitage School Council, Helensburgh and Lomond Chamber of Commerce, Local Community Councils, Sports Groups and users of the pool, residents of Tower Court and parent council representatives.

In addition, the decision was also taken to commission Hexagon Consultants to undertake a face to face survey in an effort to secure a response from a wider age group. The survey was undertaken from the 12th of January to the 15th of January and the full results of this are included in this document.

The Results and Findings of the Public Consultation

The public consultation proved to be very successful attracting 1,165 responses to the survey over the 28 day period (excluding public holidays) with 522 paper copies

of the survey form completed, 272 on line submissions and 371 face to face interviews undertaken.

During the two open days nearly 800 people took part and the overall response to the consultation is best described by Councillor Walsh who stated in a Council press release that:-

“The drop in events were extremely well received, and enabled people to gain a full understanding on the issues which have informed the content of the Masterplans that are currently being consulted on before completing the survey,” and

“There was a great deal of interest, with the room packed with people from start to finish on both days. All the views expressed will be reported back to the council for their consideration prior to any decision being made, and I very much look forward to the final drafts being drawn up.”

The main findings of the consultation through speaking to people and survey results are detailed below.

- The vast majority of people, of all ages, want a modern pool/leisure facility to be built as soon as possible, preferably in the accessible Pierhead although the Hermitage and other sites could also be acceptable particularly if public transport was improved.
- That 55% of people surveyed do not want a supermarket of the scale proposed in the Draft Masterplan on the Pierhead primarily due to the widely perceived detrimental visual impact, the loss of parking together with the resulting loss of the short and longer term recreational potential of the Pierhead. Strong concerns were also expressed over the possibility of added congestion and potential impact on the smaller Helensburgh stores which a number of local people perceive to cater for visitors to the town. The issue of flooding on the Pierhead and adjacent streets was also raised as a concern including the vulnerability the area to storm damage. A significant number of people also believed that the proposal by Waitrose offered a better and more immediate solution to improve the retail offer in Helensburgh including providing a new petrol station facility.
- That 72% of people surveyed support the Council’s position that a petrol station is not suitable to be located on the Pierhead.
- That 55% of people surveyed do not want residential flats on the Pierhead.
- That 67% of people surveyed are in favour of housing only on the Hermitage site with 57% of people surveyed also indicating that they would be prepared to allow the pool/community leisure facility to be built at the Hermitage in the event it proved undeliverable on the Pierhead.

The full results of the public consultation are set out in the following pages that also include bar graphs showing all responses to the survey.

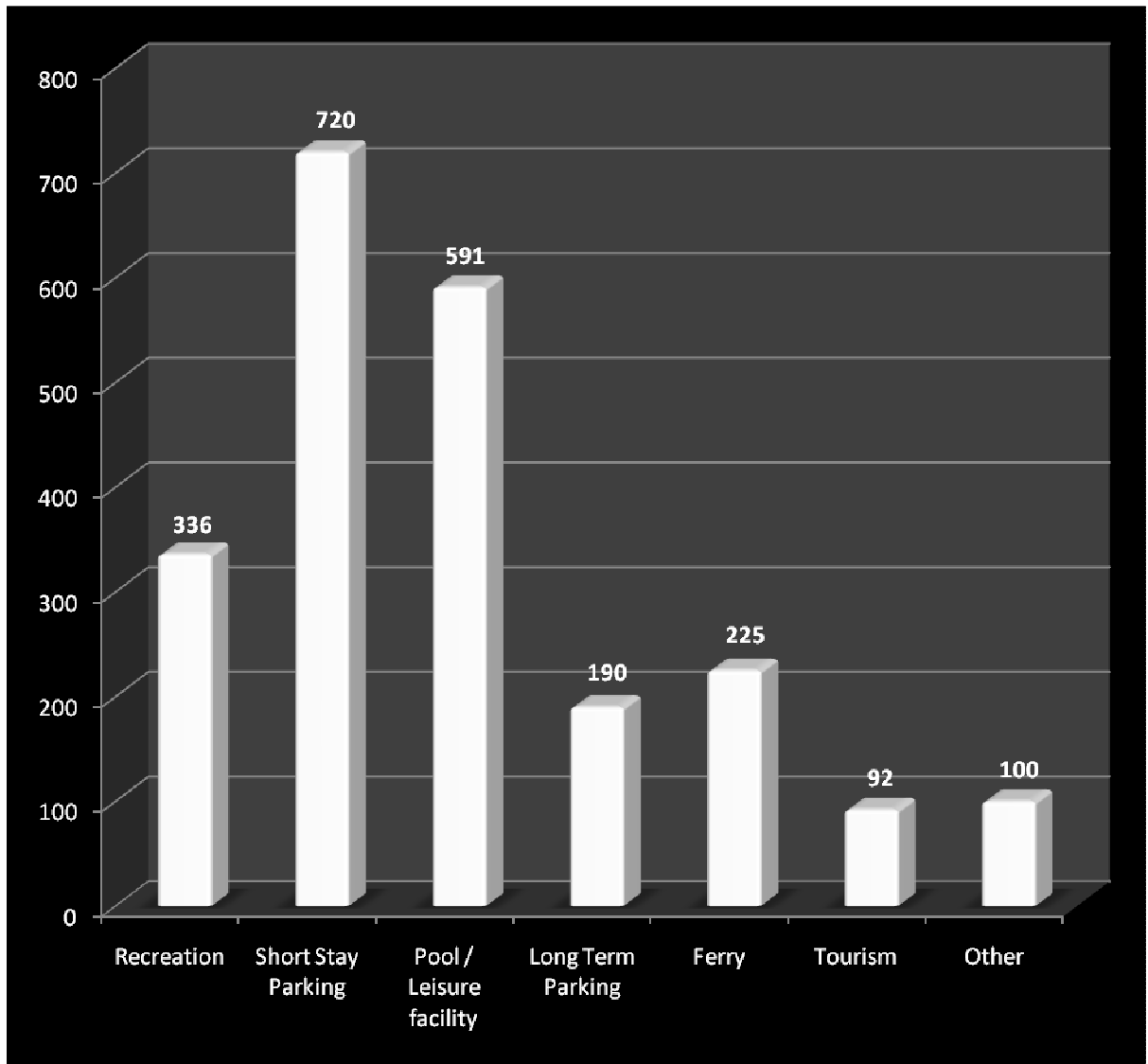
Questionnaire Responses Submitted by e-mail/post – 14
Questionnaire Responses handed in at open event - 508
Questionnaire Responses Submitted On-Line – 272
Questionnaire Responses by Hexagon Research – 371(Face to Face Interviews)

Summary of Total Responses to the Questionnaire:-

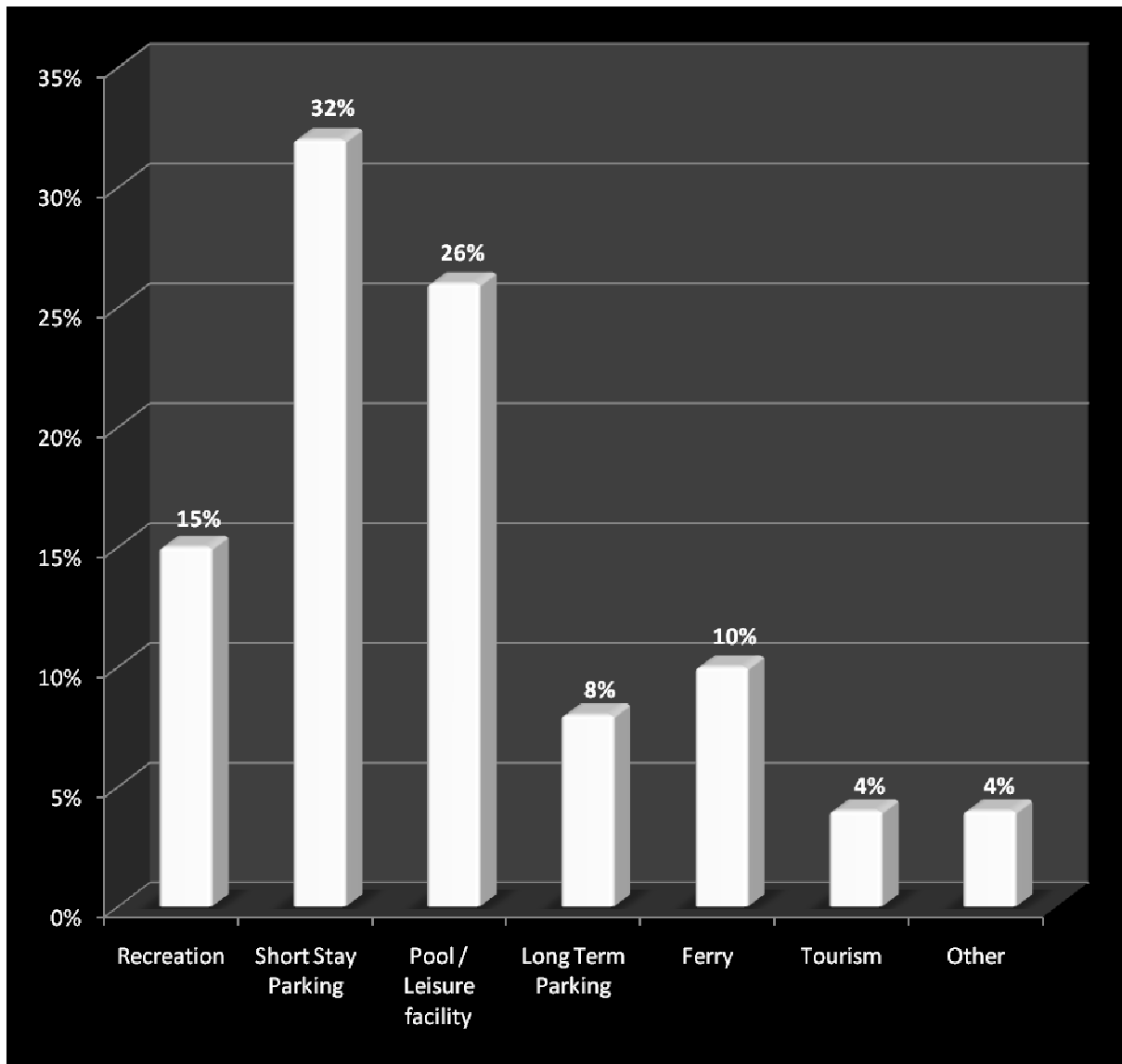
TABLE 1

Question	Yes	No	Mixed Opinion	No Answer
The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan for the Pierhead is a mixed use scheme of Retail, Recreational Space, Residential and new Leisure Facility/Pool. Do you agree with this preferred proposal for the Pierhead Site?	297 (26%)	635 (55%)	224 (19%)	8
Do you feel the Draft Masterplan provides adequate guidance on design matters for the Pierhead site? i.e. importance of maintaining views, public access around the site, scale and massing of the proposed development etc.	182*	418*	166*	23*
The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has no space allocated for a petrol filling station. Do you agree with this option?	781	309	n/a	37
The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has a limited number of residential units (minimum of 16 units) to add life to the site when commercial operations are closed and help with improving design quality. Do you agree with this option?	320	626	197	18
The Adopted Local Plan allocates the former Hermitage Academy site for 160 residential units, subject to the discretion of the Planning Authority. The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan is for the former Academy site to be residential only (affordable and market housing). Do you agree with this proposal for new housing on the former Hermitage Academy site?	761	193	184	25
<i>In the event of the preferred option to site the new pool/leisure facility on the Pierhead being undeliverable would you accept it being sited on the Hermitage (as shown in the Draft Masterplan alternative approach)?</i>	700	405	129	28

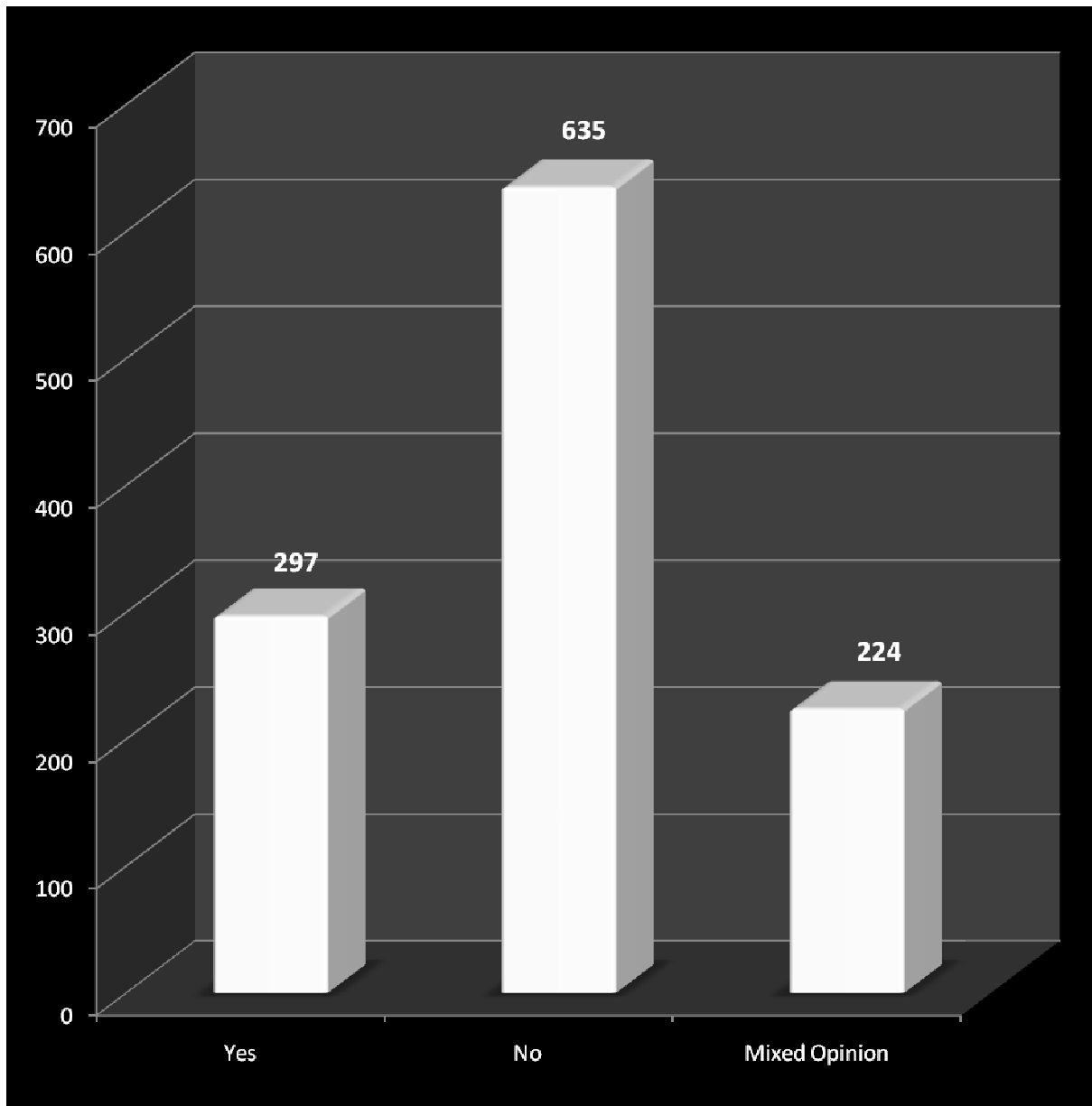
* This question was not asked in the face to face survey carried out by Hexagon.



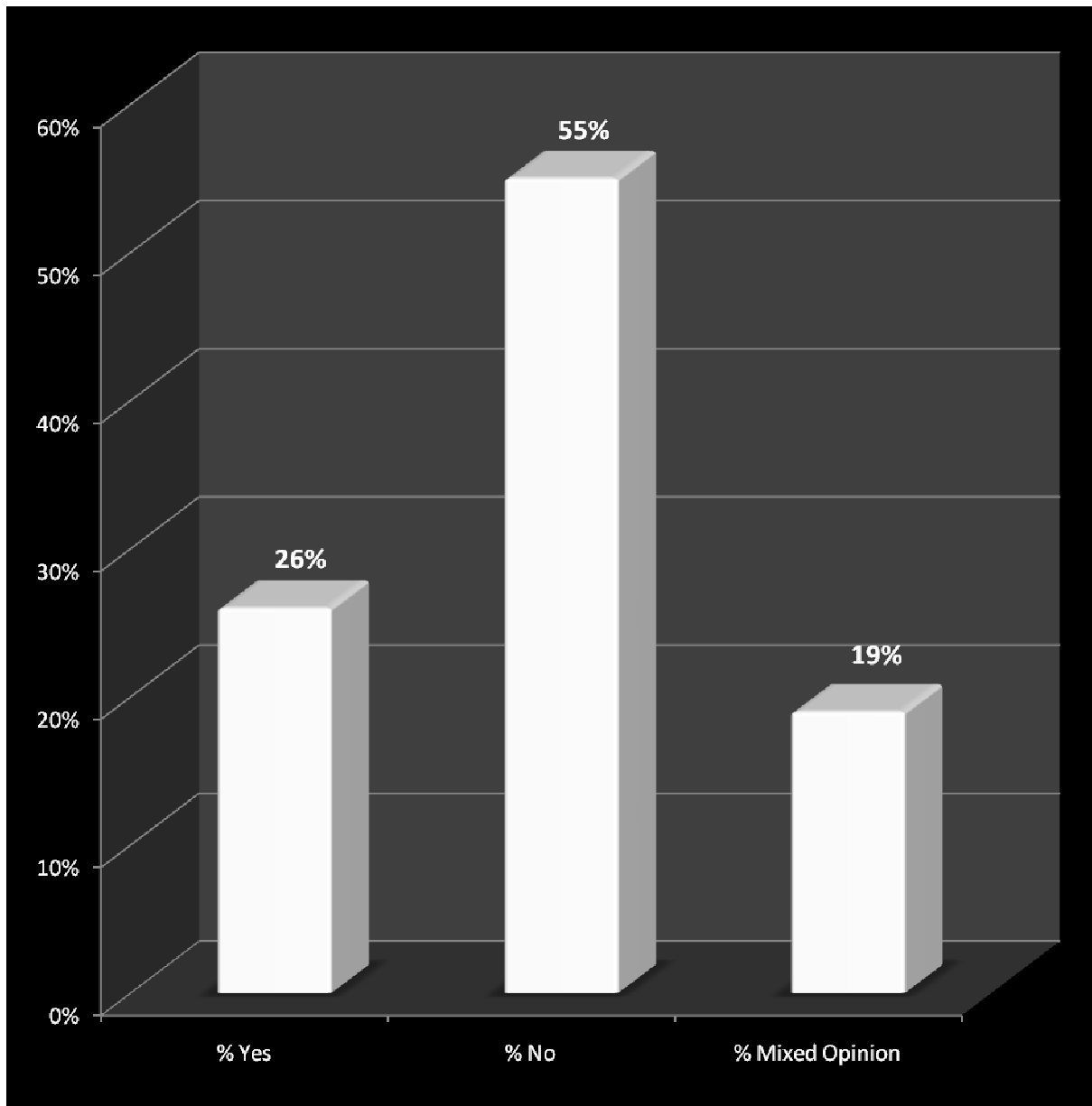
What do you currently use the Pierhead Site for?



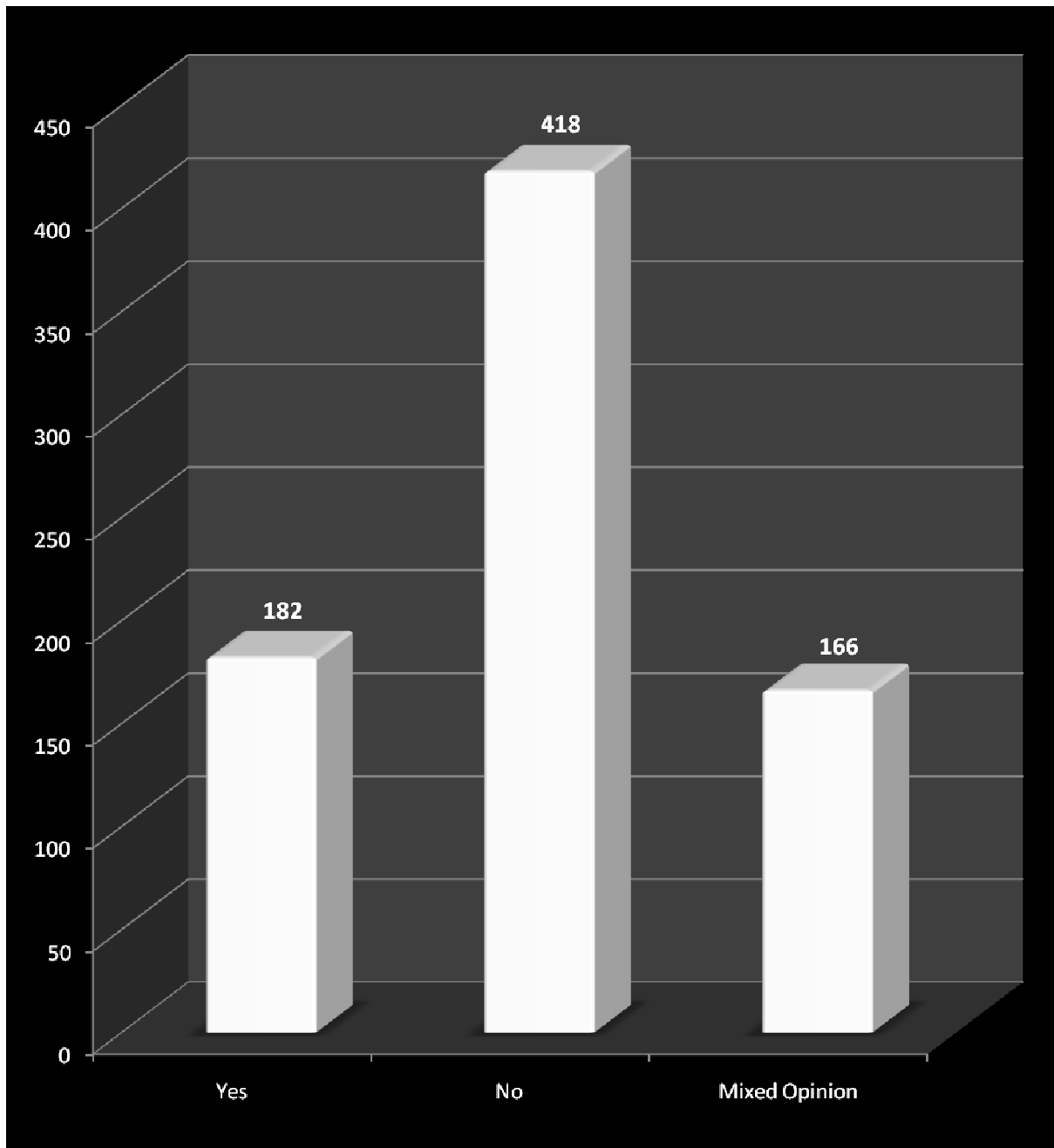
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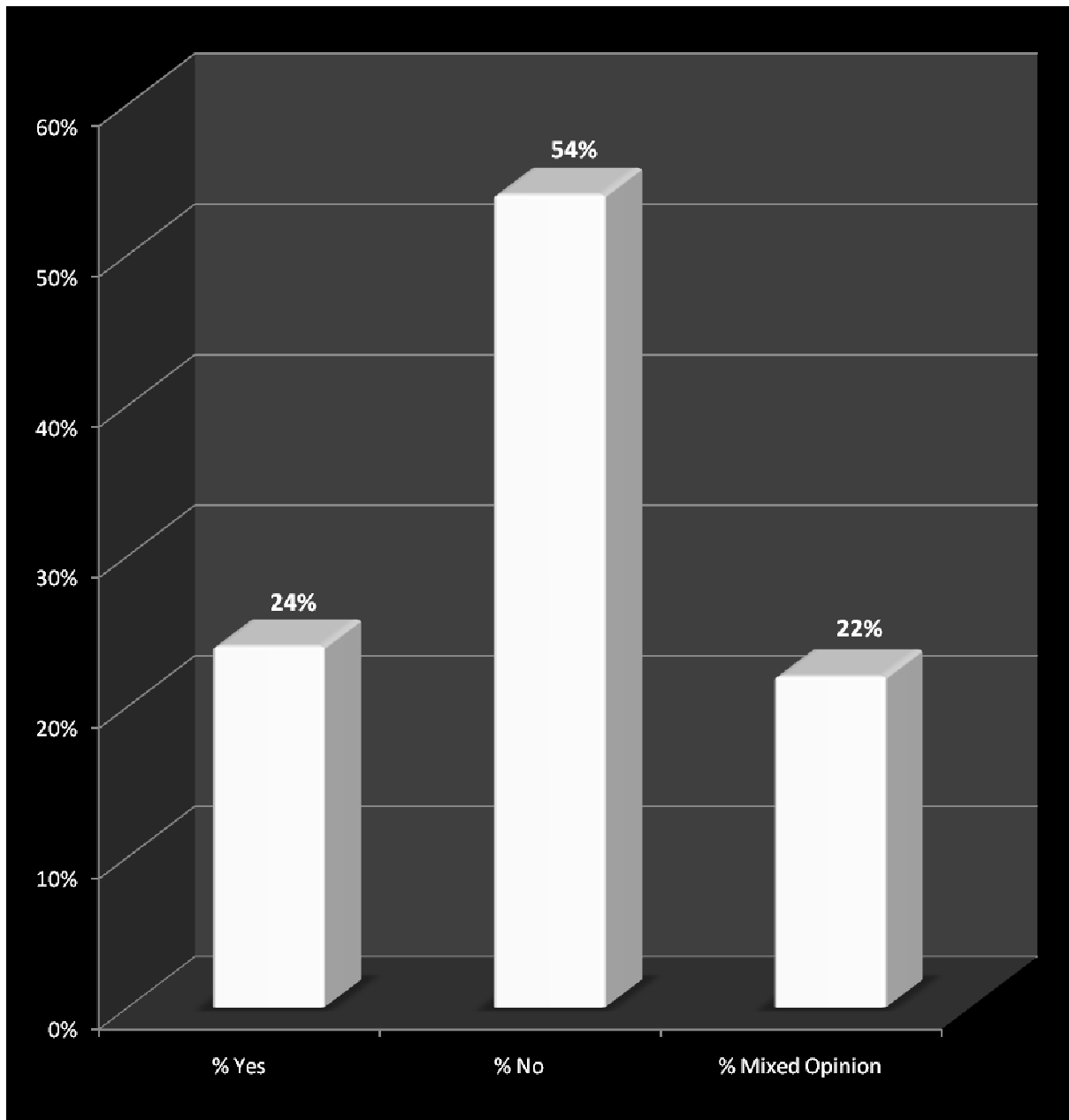
The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan for the Pierhead is a mixed use scheme of Retail, Recreational Space, Residential and new Leisure Facility/Pool. Do you agree with this preferred proposal for the Pierhead Site? (Does not include those respondents that gave no answer)



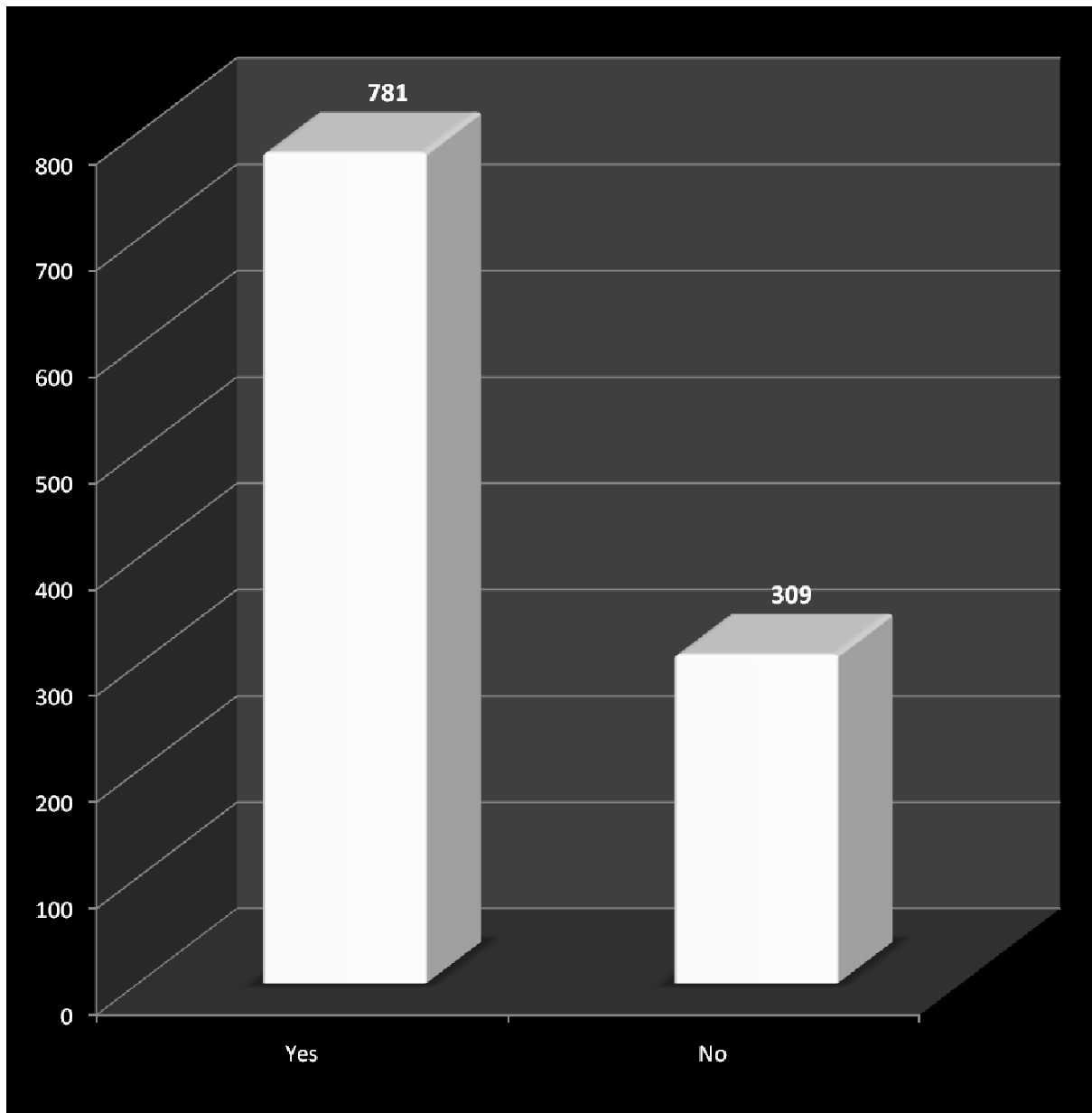
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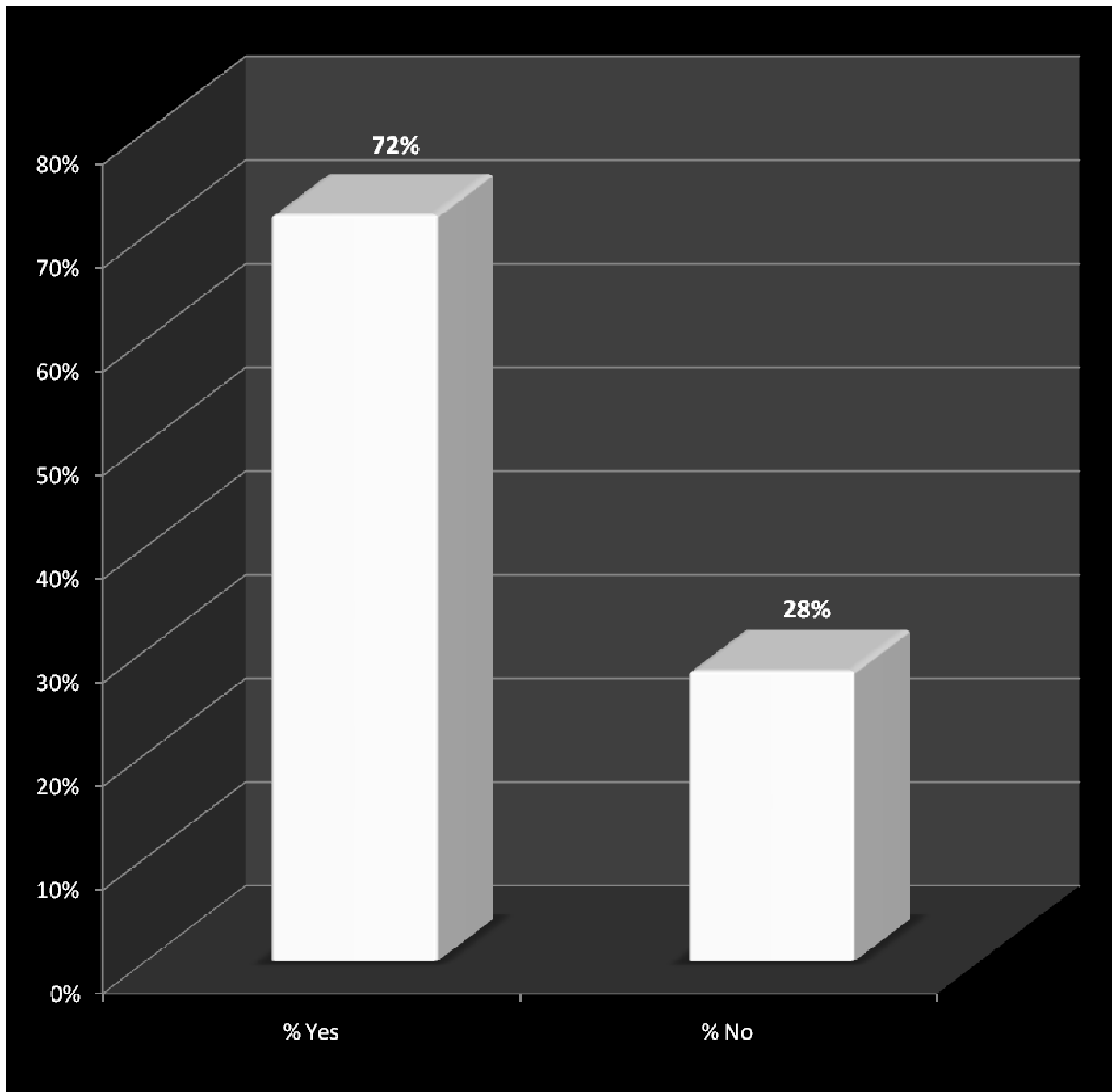
Do you feel the Draft Masterplan provides adequate guidance on design matters for the Pierhead site? i.e. importance of maintaining views, public access around the site, scale and massing of the proposed development etc. (Does not include those respondents that gave no answer) This question was not asked in the face to face survey carried out by Hexagon.



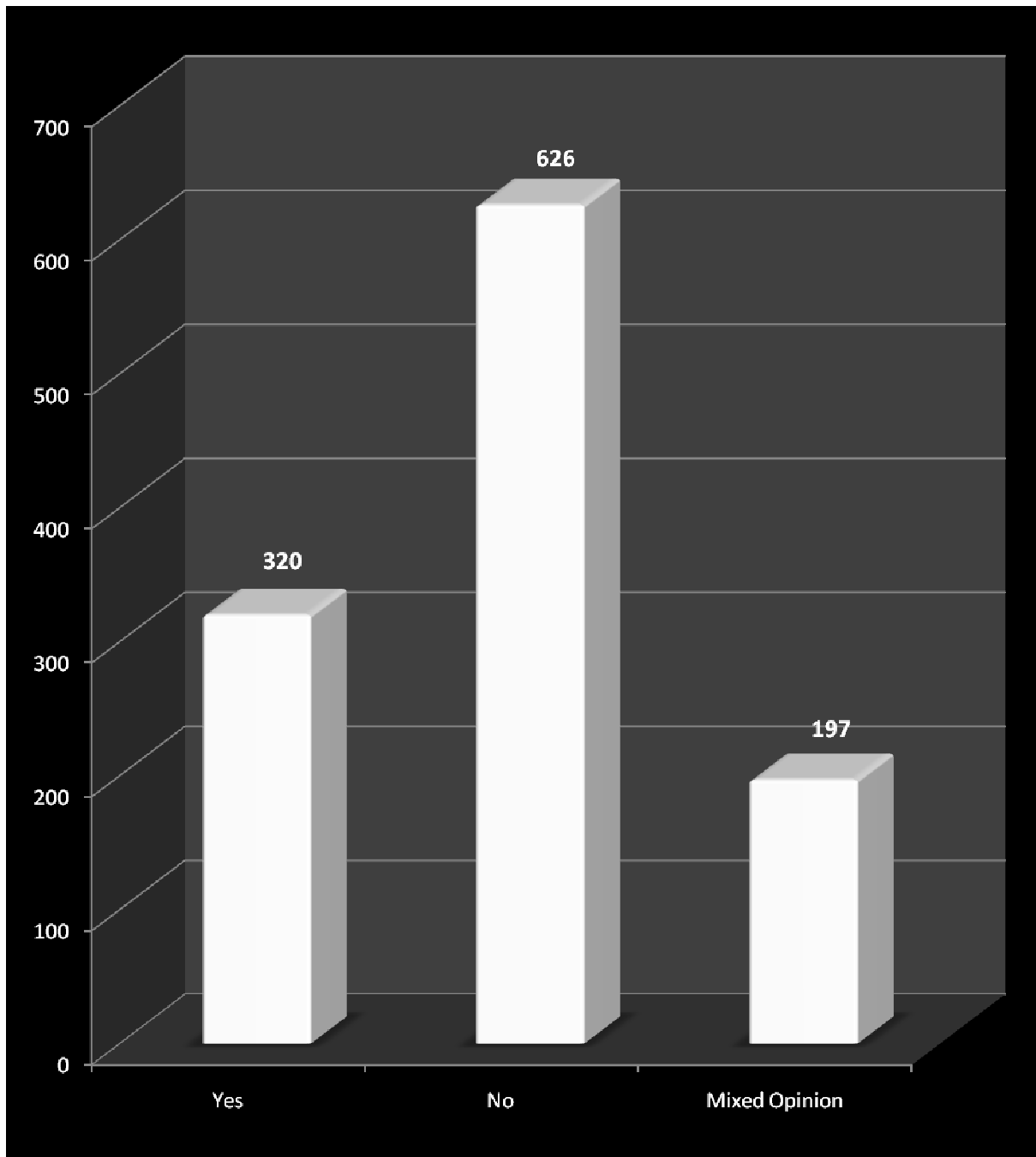
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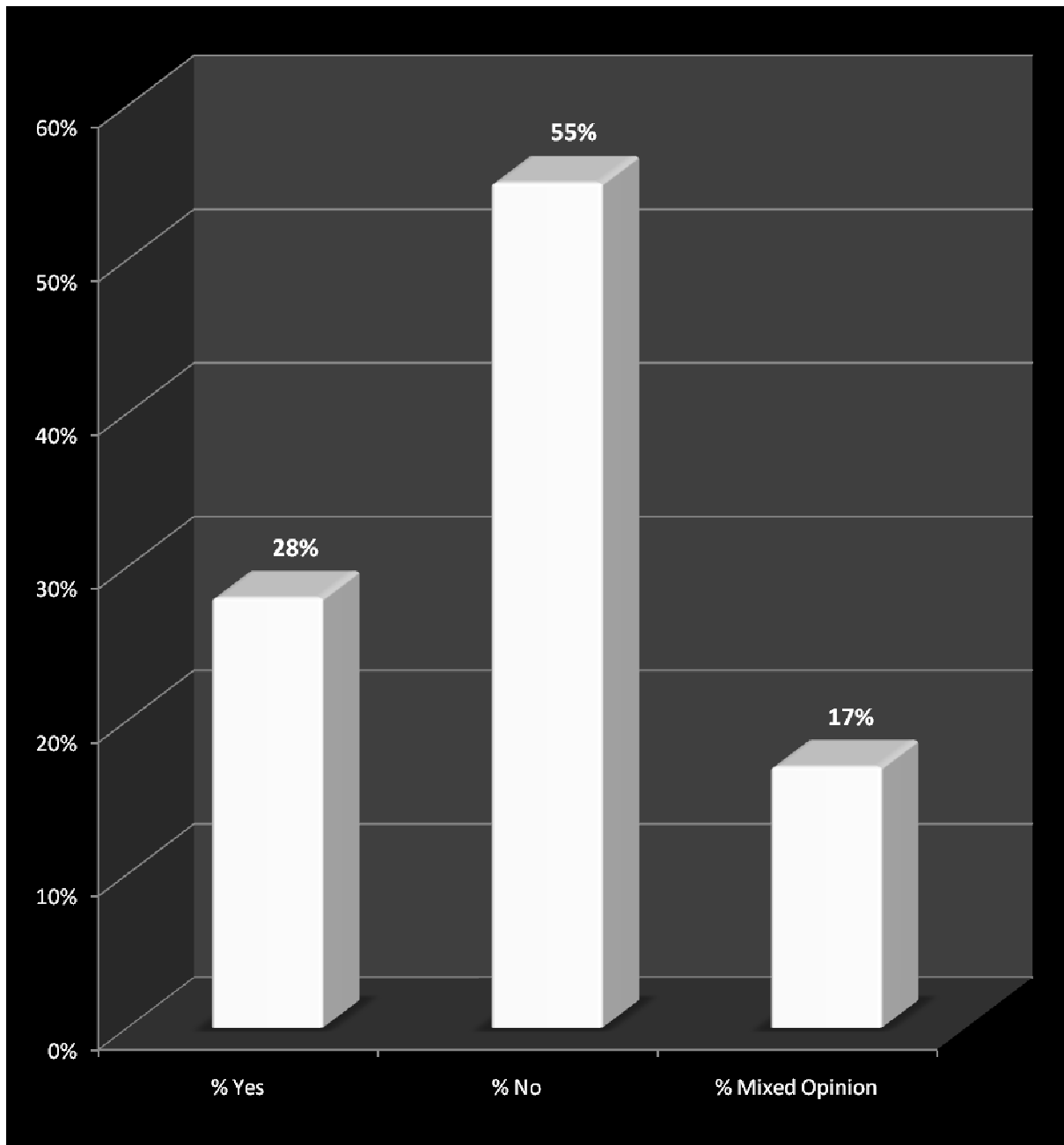
The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has no space allocated for a petrol filling station. Do you agree with this option? (Does not include those respondents that gave no answer)



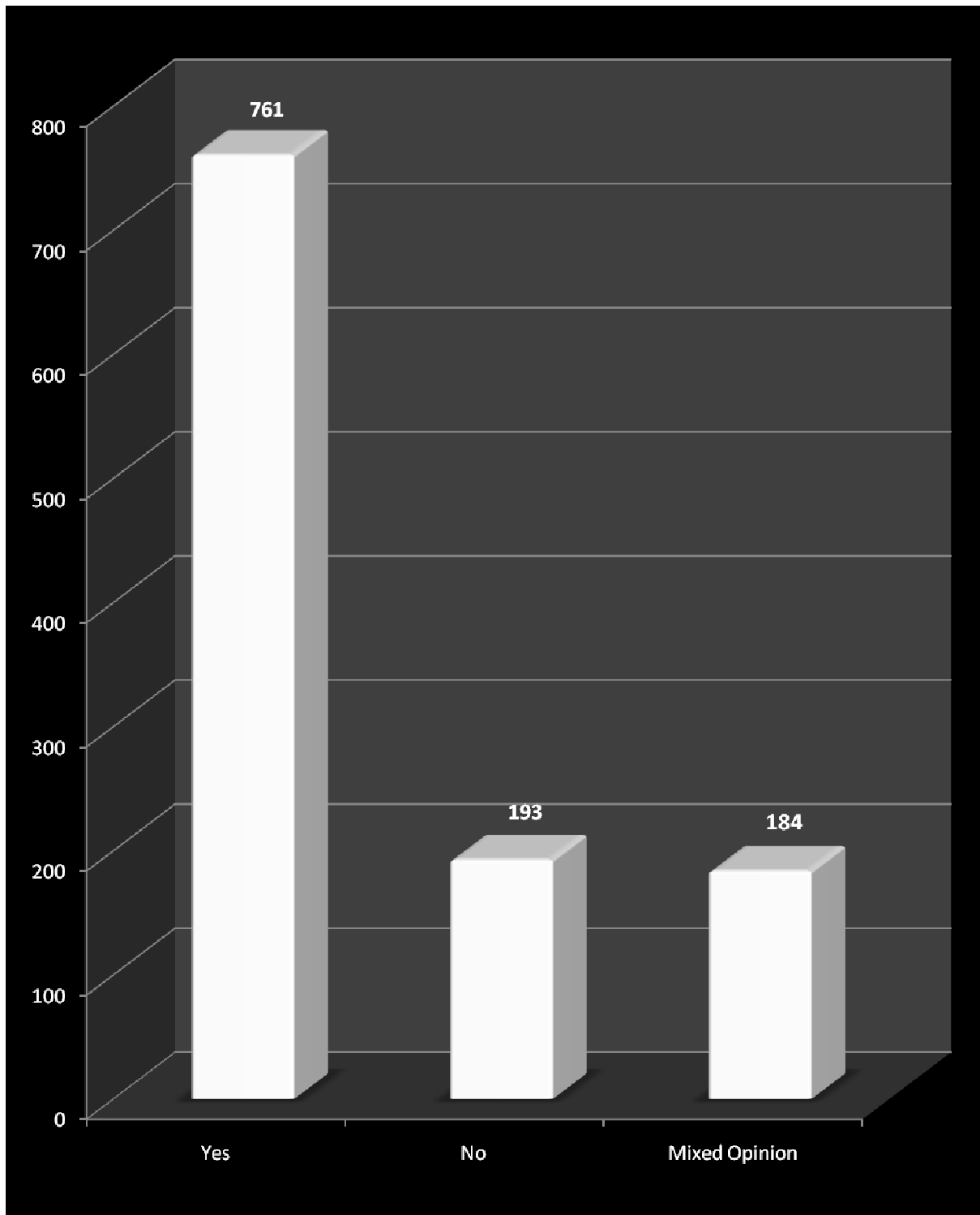
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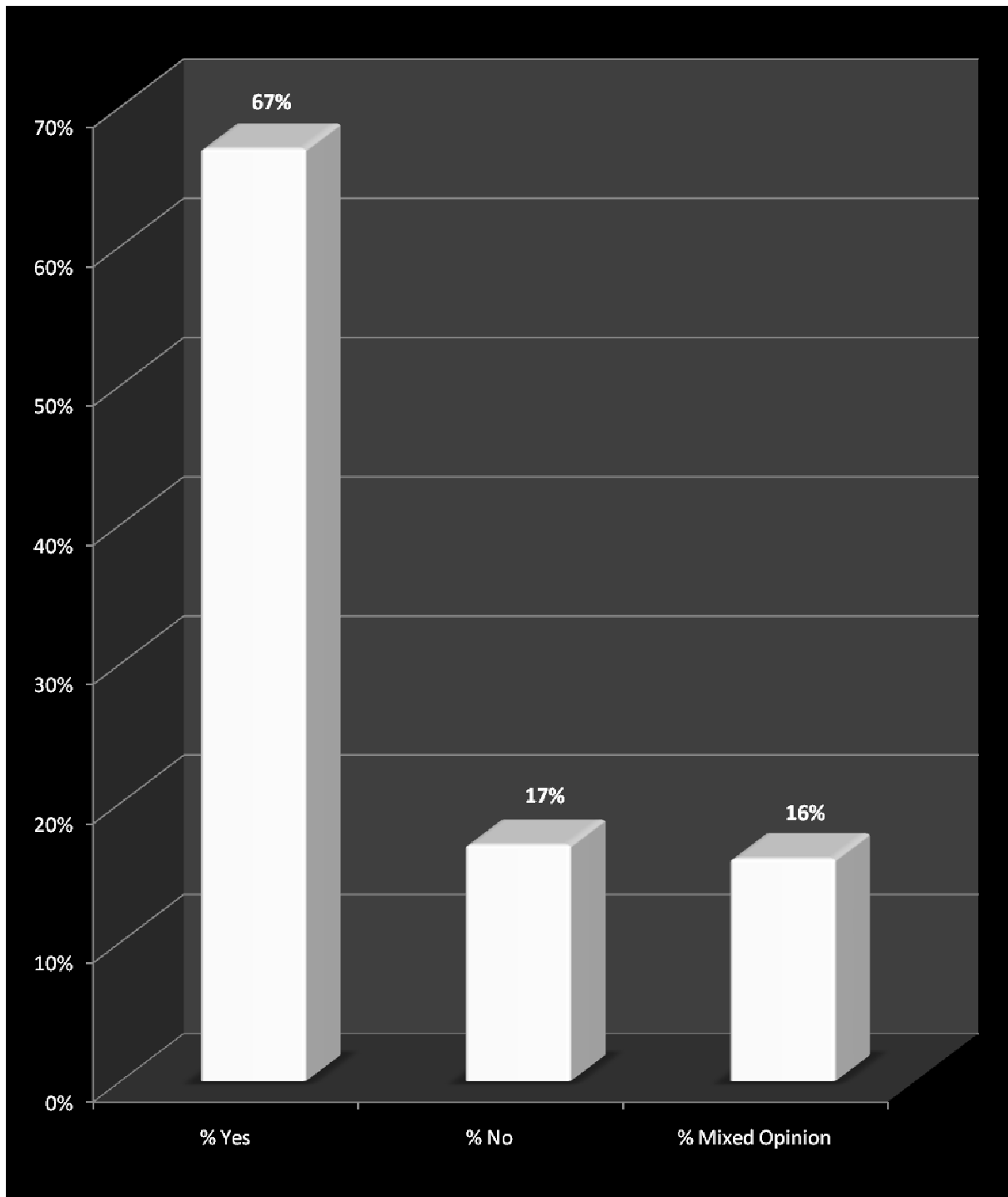
The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has a limited number of residential units (minimum of 16 units) to add life to the site when commercial operations are closed and help with improving design quality. Do you agree with this option? (Does not include those respondents that gave no answer)



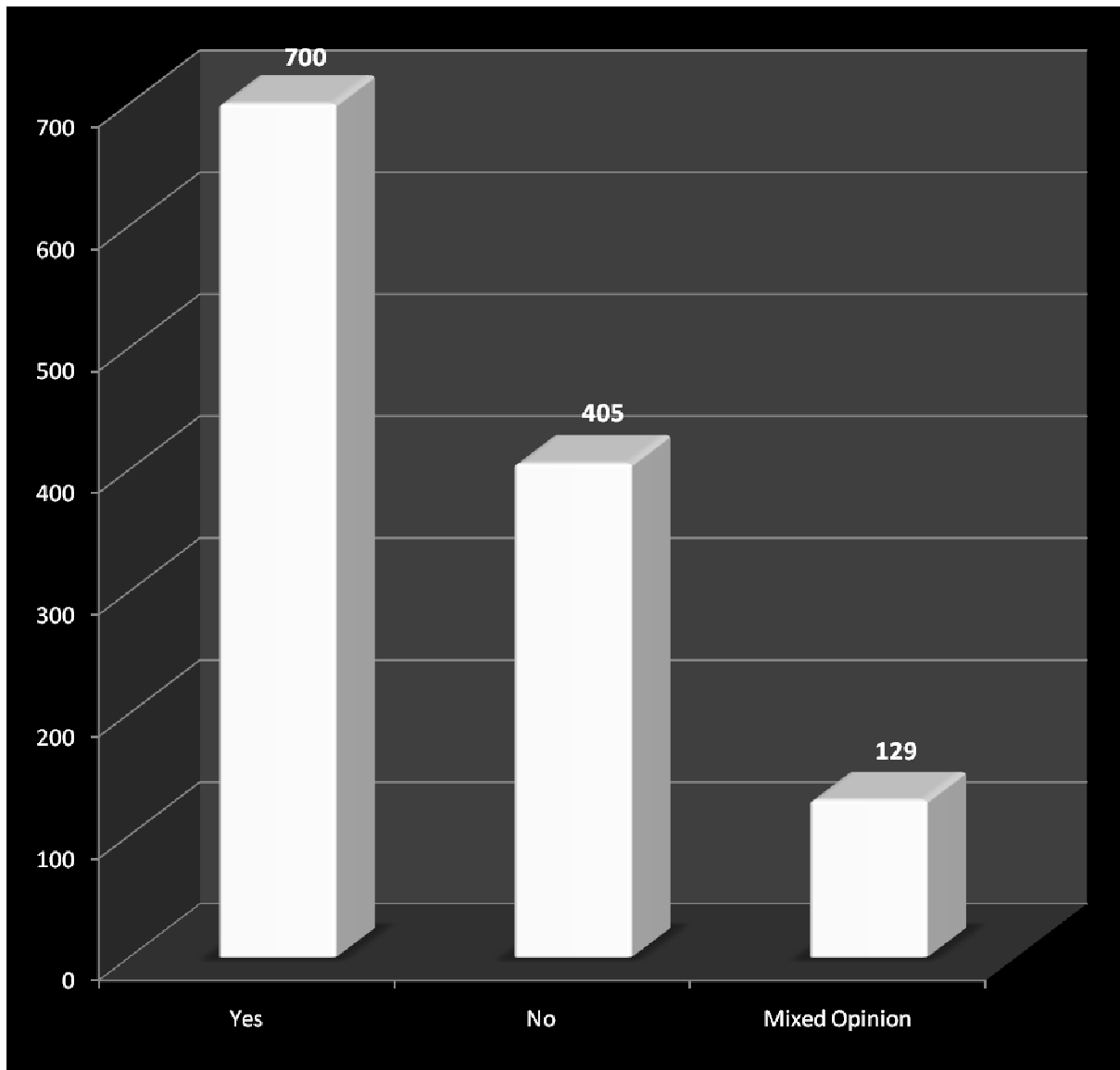
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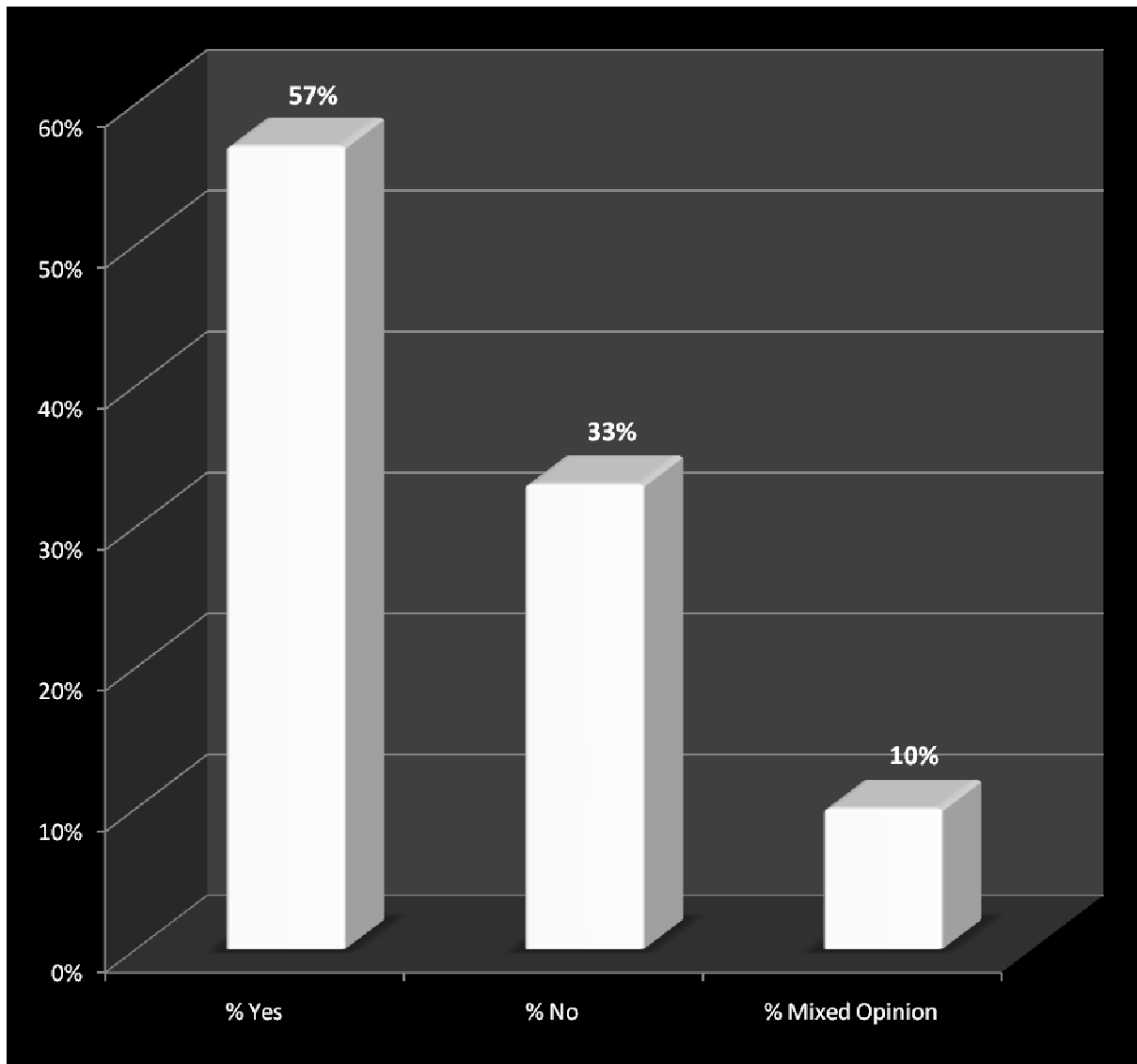
The Adopted Local Plan allocates the former Hermitage Academy site for 160 residential units, subject to the discretion of the Planning Authority. The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan is for the former Academy site to be residential only (affordable and market housing). Do you agree with this proposal for new housing on the former Hermitage Academy site? (Does not include those respondents that gave no answer)



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In the event of the preferred option to site the new pool/leisure facility on the Pierhead being undeliverable would you accept it being sited on the Hermitage (as shown in the Draft Masterplan alternative approach)? (Does not include those respondents that gave no answer)



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Table 1 and accompanying bar graphs show the full results of the consultation. The responses to the consultation can be broken down into three parts however given three principle methods were used to ascertain views of local people and interested stakeholders.

ON LINE RESPONSE

Firstly, people were encouraged as far as possible, to submit their response on line though the survey and in total we received 277 responses which compares very favourably with other on line consultations carried out by the council.

Council Budget consultation	– 76
Local Housing Strategy consultation	– 4
Social care commissioning strategy consultation	– 15
Children and Families grant funding consultation	– 1

The web pages also had 1,209 unique views (discounts return visits by the same computer), excluding council staff, which shows that we did reach a wide audience with the web survey.

ON LINE RESULTS

The main use of the area at the moment as recorded by the online survey is for short stay parking and using the pool with the next use of the Pierhead for recreation purposes.

In terms of results they largely mirror the findings of the paper responses that were mainly handed in during the Victoria Halls open days albeit the yes vote at 22% for the Council's Masterplan for the Pierhead is far more positive than the 13% saying yes on the paper copies (largely handed in at the open days at the Victoria Halls).

In terms of the preferred use for the Pierhead 55% stating no to the Pierhead Draft Masterplans, 22% saying yes and 23% with a mixed opinion. It should be said at this point that a significant number of the people with mixed views wanted to see development happen at the Pierhead but without a supermarket.

In terms of the petrol station on the Pierhead 74% of local people agreed with the council that it should not be located there with a number of sites being suggested as an alternative. Many people suggested reusing the closed site on East Clyde Street (former ESSO site or Old Consort Garage). It should be noted though that this site has recently been sold and the selling agents believe it would not be commercially viable to site a petrol station there pointing to planning consents for petrol stations in Dumbarton not being implemented despite a number of years on the market and the relatively low turnover of petrol in the operational ESSO site in Helensburgh.

In terms of the housing sited on the Pierhead, again the results mirror the trends shown by the other elements of the consultation with 55% against residential on the Pierhead and 25% saying yes with 20% mixed in their opinion.

A wide variety of reasons were also provided through the on line survey with 100 pages of comments gathered. A copy of all comments received has been placed in the Member's Room for the attention of Members.

To help illustrate why people felt this way a number of quotes have been selected from the online response. These responses also reveal the wide variety of local opinion for the future of the Pierhead site and the challenge the Council faces in providing a solution of this important area of the town.

“I don’t want a supermarket on the waterfront. I think it should be retained for car parking and recreational and leisure use. I would much prefer the Waitrose proposal for a store at the approaches of the town and I think it would have a much less adverse impact on the two existing supermarkets”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“The seafront is not a place for a supermarket. Helensburgh is essentially a tourist destination and tourists do not come here to go shopping in a supermarket”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“It is an inappropriate place for a supermarket”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“The Pierhead should be used to encourage more small independent retailers and grow the reputation of Helensburgh as a place to come for an unique shopping experience”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“ I fully support the use of the Pierhead for recreational activities including a pool and leisure centre and a limited retail facility to support this. I see no need for a residential element”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“The pool must stay in the town centre, and no large supermarket is suitable for this site, only small shops”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“I am in favour of a comprehensive refurbishment of the Pierhead site, with public open space, a new swimming pool/leisure facility and provision for car parking. However I do not support provision for a new supermarket on this site as I think that it would have an adverse impact on existing shops in the town centre. Traffic congestion would also be an issue”.

Online comment submitted by local resident

“Helensburgh needs to be brought into the 21st century with facilities that reflect the needs of the people of all ages not just the retired”

Online comment submitted by local resident

“It seems to be a win-win-win situation for Helensburgh – local people benefit from new, modern facilities, easier access to shops, employment etc. – local businesses will benefit from having more people staying to shop in the town, and the developers and new retailers will win obviously too, from accessing this market.”

Online comment submitted by local resident

In terms of the Draft Masterplans for the Hermitage site the public response was far more positive to the Council's recommended approach.

“As a member of the local community at Colgrain housing was what was expected and will best enhance the area with improved road infrastructure”

Online response by local resident

“The surrounding area is residential and the use of this site for further residential development would seem appropriate”

Online response by local resident

“Helensburgh needs more 2 and 3 bedroom houses, the more the better”

Online response by local resident

However some people also believed the site could accommodate the pool/community leisure centre.

“I think the housing proposal is a good one but the site doesn't have to be only residential – putting a pool here would be a great attraction”

Online response by local resident

Concerns were also put forward over the need for flats on the site and internal road issues and the request for more affordable housing. It was explained that there was a proposal coming in from Dunbritton Housing Association for planning consent where people will be entitled to have their say.

The online response results are as follows:-

1	What do you currently use the Pierhead Site for?
Recreation	90
Short stay Parking	189
Pool/Leisure facility	163
Long term parking	55
Ferry	60
Tourism	25
Other	23
2	Do you agree with this preferred proposal for the Pierhead Site?
Yes	59
No	148
Mixed opinion	64
3	Can you please tell us why you feel this way?
Left Blank	16
User entered value	256
4	Q3 do you feel
Yes	74

No	124
Mixed Opinion	69
5	Can you please tell us why you feel this way?
Left Blank	100
User entered value	172
6	Do you agree with this option?
Yes	196
No	69
7	Can you suggest another location for a petrol filling station in Helensburgh?
Left Blank	34
User entered value	238
8	Do you agree with this option?
Yes	66
No	148
Mixed opinion	54
9	Can you please tell us why you feel this way?
Left Blank	58
User entered value	214
10	Do you agree with this proposal for new housing on the former Hermitage Academy site?
Yes	155
No	54
Mixed opinion	62
11	Can you please tell us why you feel this way?
Left Blank	64
User entered value	208
12	What would you like to see in terms of the type, size and quality of the new housing on the former Hermitage Academy site?
Left Blank	64
User entered value	208
13	Q 8 options
Yes	148
No	92
Mixed opinion	29

14	Q 8 feel this way?
Left Blank	67
User entered value	205

PAPER RESPONSES

In terms of the paper responses to the survey the Council received 514 of these with the vast majority (508) handed in at the Victoria Halls open days that were held on the 13th and 14th of January 2012.

The results from the Victoria Halls Open Days are shown in **Table 2:-**

TABLE 2

Question	Yes	No	Mixed Opinion	No Answer
The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan for the Pierhead is a mixed use scheme of Retail, Recreational Space, Residential and new Leisure Facility/Pool. Do you agree with this preferred proposal for the Pierhead Site?	65 (13%)	323 (65%)	112 (22%)	8
Do you feel the Draft Masterplan provides adequate guidance on design matters for the Pierhead site? i.e. importance of maintaining views, public access around the site, scale and massing of the proposed development etc.	106 (22%)	290 (60%)	90 (18%)	22
The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has no space allocated for a petrol filling station. Do you agree with this option?	385 (81%)	92 (19%)		31
The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has a limited number of residential units (minimum of 16 units) to add life to the site when commercial operations are closed and help with improving design quality. Do you agree with this option?	111 (23%)	289 (59%)	90 (18%)	18
The Adopted Local Plan allocates the former Hermitage Academy site for 160 residential units, subject to the discretion of the Planning Authority. The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan is for the former Academy site to be residential only (affordable and market housing). Do you agree with this proposal for new housing on the former Hermitage Academy site?	302 (62.5%)	90 (18.5%)	91 (18.5%)	25

<i>In the event of the preferred option to site the new pool/leisure facility on the Pierhead being undeliverable would you accept it being sited on the Hermitage (as shown in the Draft Masterplan alternative approach)?</i>	273 (57%)	138 (29%)	69 (14%)	28
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Percentages shown discounted no answer response

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS

In addition to the paper and on line consultation responses 371 face to face interviews were conducted by Hexagon Consultants and a full copy of their report is appended to this document. The findings are more positive for the council's preferred option for the Pierhead with 46% agreed with the preferred option while 42% disagreed. A further 12% had mixed views or were not sure. The level of support for the preferred option varies significantly by respondents' age, peaking at 74% among those aged under 30 while falling to only 28% among those aged 65+. This is a significant finding and seeks to demonstrate a growing divide between the younger generations of Helensburgh and Lomond and older people who were more evident at the Victoria Halls open days, albeit no recording of age profile was undertaken for this event or when submitting forms on line. In general the rest of the findings by Hexagon mirror the findings gained through paper surveys and on line responses with very strong support shown for the Hermitage Masterplan options. Please see embedded report for full details.



Helensburgh Draft Masterplans
Report on a Survey of Helensburgh and Lomond
Residents

by



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1. Introduction

This document presents the findings to emerge from a survey of residents of Helensburgh and Lomond on the Draft Masterplans for the Pier Head and former Hermitage Academy sites in Helensburgh.

In our report:

- Section 2 presents the background to and objectives of the assignment
- Section 3 summarises our approach
- Section 4 presents the level of support for the preferred option for the Pier Head site
- Section 5 presents the level of support for the preferred option for the former Hermitage Academy site
- Section 6 sets out our concluding comments

2. Background and Objectives

On 3 November 2011, Argyll and Bute Council's Executive required that the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure undertake a detailed appraisal of certain options that were reported to the Executive. These options were:

Option	Description
1	Do Nothing
4a(1)	Joint Offer Leisure Facility along with Food Retail/Supermarket on Pier Head with very limited residential and outdoor public space Residential Housing development including Dunbritton at Hermitage site
4b(1)	Joint Offer Food Retail/Supermarket on Pier Head wrapped with shop frontage retail, some residential and outdoor public realm space Leisure Facility at the former Hermitage site, with further private residential housing development including Dunbritton

As part of the detailed appraisal and communication strategy, the views of specified local stakeholders as well as members of the Citizens' Panel were assessed to help formulate Draft Masterplans for both sites which set out the Council's preferred options:

- Pier Head – a mixed use scheme of Retail, Recreational Space and Residential and new Leisure Facility/Pool
- Former Hermitage Academy - to be used for residential only (affordable and market housing)

The Council is currently carrying out an extensive consultation exercise on the Draft Masterplans and to support this Hexagon Research and Consulting was commissioned to carry out a survey of residents of Helensburgh and Lomond on the preferred options.

3. Our Approach

To provide the Council with a robust measure of residents' views on the preferred options for both sites, the following approach was agreed.

Survey Method

Face to face interviewing was used to enable the use of visual materials to help explain the preferred options set out in the Draft Masterplans. On street interviewing was proposed as this is much quicker to organise and is well suited to the short type of survey exercise which was proposed. To ensure consistency with the other consultation events being run by the Council, the questionnaire was based on the questionnaire posted on the Council's website and issued in hard copy format (although the open ended questions were removed to make street interviewing more practical). A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1.

A team of professional fieldworkers from The Progressive Partnership (see Appendix 2) were assigned to carry out the interviews from Thursday 12th January to Sunday 15th January inclusive. Between four and five interviewers worked at town centre locations over these four days.

Sample Size

Given the timescale for reporting, it was agreed interviewers would aim to achieve a target of approximately 300-350 interviews. This sample size will provide a 95% probability that the final survey results can be quoted with a maximum sampling error of $\pm 5\%$. In other words, if 50% of the sample agrees with a preferred option, the 'real' figure (based on interviewing the entire Helensburgh and Lomond population) would be within a range of 45%-55%.

By the end of the fieldwork period, 371 interviews had been completed, ensuring sampling errors will not rise above $\pm 5\%$. Of these respondents, 85% lived in Helensburgh and the remainder lived elsewhere in Helensburgh and Lomond.

Representativeness

To ensure the final response to the survey is fully representative, the survey data was reweighted to accurately reflect the age and gender of the adult population of Helensburgh and Lomond (based on National Records of Scotland 2010-based Small Area Population Estimates, which are the most up to date available).

4. Pier Head

Respondents were initially asked what they currently used the Pier Head site for. Short stay parking accounted for the greatest use of the site (44%) while a third (33%) used the pool/leisure facility on the site and 19% for other recreation use. Recreational use of the site is particularly high among younger respondents.

What do you currently use the Pier Head site for?

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Male	Female	All Respondents
Recreation	33%	19%	15%	14%	27%	11%	19%
Short stay parking	22%	48%	56%	39%	46%	42%	44%
Pool/Leisure facility	40%	52%	29%	18%	32%	34%	33%
Long term parking	4%	6%	7%	1%	5%	5%	5%
Ferry	0%	0%	9%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Tourism	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	7%	8%	13%	21%	11%	14%	12%

The preferred option set out in the Draft Masterplans for the Pier Head site is for a mixed use scheme of Retail, Recreational Space and Residential and new Leisure Facility/Pool.

As illustrated in the table below, 46% agreed with the preferred option while 42% disagreed. A further 12% had mixed views or were not sure. The level of support for the preferred option varies significantly by respondents' age, peaking at 74% among those aged under 30 while falling to only 28% among those aged 65+.

Agree with the preferred option for the Pier Head Site?

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Male	Female	All Respondents
Yes	74%	51%	41%	28%	49%	42%	46%
No	17%	33%	49%	58%	40%	45%	42%
Mixed opinion/Not sure	9%	16%	10%	14%	11%	13%	12%

A majority of respondents (51%) agrees with the preferred option for no space for a petrol station on the Pier Head site, while 39% disagree and 10% have mixed views or no opinion. Yet again, a higher proportion of younger respondents agree with the preferred option (65% of those aged under 30 and 61% of those aged 30-44).

Agree with the preferred option for no space for a petrol station the Pier Head Site?

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Male	Female	All Respondents
Yes	65%	61%	38%	52%	52%	50%	51%
No	20%	25%	52%	43%	38%	39%	39%
Mixed opinion/Not sure	15%	14%	10%	5%	10%	11%	10%

Almost half of respondents (49%) do not agree with the preferred option for a limited number of residential units for the Pier Head site, while over a third agree (38%) and 13% have mixed views or don't know. Opposition to this preferred option is particularly high among older respondents. For example, almost three quarters (72%) of those aged 65+ disagree. Conversely, 70% of respondents aged under 30 agree with the preferred option.

Agree with the preferred option for residential units for the Pier Head Site?

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Male	Female	All Respondents
Yes	70%	44%	33%	15%	45%	31%	38%
No	13%	43%	56%	72%	47%	51%	49%
Mixed opinion/Not sure	17%	13%	11%	13%	8%	18%	13%

5. Former Hermitage Academy Site

The Adopted Local Plan allocates the former Hermitage Academy site for 160 residential units, subject to the discretion of the Planning Authority. The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan is for the former Academy site to be residential only (affordable and market housing).

The vast majority of respondents (81%) agree with the preferred option for the former Academy site, with support remaining high across all age groups. Only 12% disagree and a further 7% have mixed views or don't know.

Agree with the preferred option for the former Hermitage Academy site?

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Male	Female	All Respondents
Yes	81%	80%	81%	83%	83%	79%	81%
No	13%	14%	11%	11%	13%	12%	12%
Mixed opinion/Not sure	6%	6%	8%	6%	4%	9%	7%

Respondents were asked if the option to site the new pool/leisure facility on the Pier Head was not deliverable, would they accept it being sited on the Hermitage. Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) said they would accept this alternative, while only 19% disagree and 8% have mixed views or don't know.

Accept the new pool/leisure centre sited on the Hermitage?

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Male	Female	All Respondents
Yes	74%	84%	74%	59%	72%	73%	73%
No	22%	10%	20%	25%	19%	20%	19%
Mixed opinion/Not sure	4%	6%	6%	16%	9%	7%	8%

6. Concluding Comments

The Residents' Survey was commissioned to contribute to the extensive consultation being run by the Council on the Draft Masterplans for the Pier Head and former Hermitage Academy sites in Helensburgh. The key conclusions to emerge for this include:

- **Opinion divided on the preferred option for the Pier Head** – overall, respondents are fairly evenly divided on the preferred option for a mixed use scheme of retail, recreational space and residential and new leisure facility/pool on the Pier Head. A slightly higher proportion is in agreement with the preferred option (46%) compared to 42% who disagree
- **High level of support from younger respondents** – support rises significantly for the preferred option for the Pier Head among younger respondents. For example, almost three quarters (74%) of those aged under 30 and almost half (51%) of those aged 30-44 support the preferred option
- **Majority agree with no petrol station on the Pier Head site** – just over half (51%) agree there should be no space for a petrol station on the Pier Head site, rising to almost two thirds of younger respondents
- **Mixed views on residential units for the Pier Head site** – almost half of respondents (49%) do not agree with the option for a limited number of residential units on the Pier Head site, rising to 72% of those aged 65+. Conversely, 38% agree with this option, with greatest support among those aged under 30 (70%)
- **High level of support for Hermitage preferred option** – 81% of respondents agree with the preferred option to have residential only on the Hermitage site
- **Support for pool/leisure centre on the Hermitage** - almost three quarters of respondents (73%) said they would accept the pool/leisure centre on the Hermitage if it could not be delivered on the Pier Head

Appendix 1
Survey Questionnaire

Helensburgh Draft Masterplans Public Survey

Argyll and Bute Council is seeking people's opinion on the future development of two key sites in Helensburgh (there is also a formal consultation process which can be accessed on the Council's website as well as open days at the Victoria Halls on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th January).

The development of these sites, the Pierhead and the site of the former Hermitage, have the potential to support the further regeneration of Helensburgh Town Centre and deliver key community facilities including a new pool/leisure facility, mainstream and affordable housing.

Q1. First of all, do you live within the Helensburgh and Lomond area?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Helensburgh | Elsewhere in Helensburgh and Lomond | Outwith Helensburgh and Lomond |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Continue | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Continue | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Thank respondent and end interview |

Q2. What do you currently use the Pierhead site for?

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Short stay parking | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Pool/Leisure facility | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Long term parking | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Ferry | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |

The Pier Head Site Preferred Option

Q3. SHOWCARD 1. The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan for the Pier Head is a mixed use scheme of Retail, Recreational Space, Residential and new Leisure Facility/Pool.

Do you agree with this preferred proposal for the Pier Head Site?

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes | No | Mixed opinion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |

Q4. The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has no space allocated for a petrol filling station on the Pier Head site.

Do you agree with this option?

Yes
 1

No
 2

Mixed opinion/Not sure
 3

Q5. The Council's preferred option shown in the Draft Masterplan has a limited number of residential units (minimum of 16) to add life to the site when commercial operations (shops) are closed and to help with improving the design quality.

Do you agree with this option?

Yes
 1

No
 2

Mixed opinion
 3

Former Hermitage Site Preferred Option

Q6. SHOWCARD 2. The Adopted Local Plan allocates the former Hermitage Academy site for 160 residential units, subject to the discretion of the Planning Authority. The preferred Council option shown in the Draft Masterplan is for the former Academy site to be residential only (affordable and market housing).

Do you agree with this option?

Yes
 1

No
 2

Mixed opinion/Not sure
 3

Q7. SHOW CARD 3. In the event of the preferred option to site the new pool/leisure facility on the Pier Head being undeliverable would you accept it being sited on the Hermitage?

Yes
 1

No
 2

Mixed opinion/Not sure
 3

Q8. SHOWCARD 4. To help ensure the survey is based on a representative sample of residents, can you say which of these age bands you fall into?

18-24 1 25-29 2 30-44 3 45-59 4 60-64 5 65-74 6 75+ 7 Refusal 8

Interviewer instruction: Record gender

Male 1

Female 2

Appendix 2
The Progressive Partnership

The Progressive Partnership is the largest independent market research agency in Scotland. They are accredited to ISO 20252 which is the highest industry standard for market research companies. The aim of ISO 20252 is to set international standards to establish a common level of quality for market research.

In addition to meeting the requirements of ISO 20252, all Progressive interviewers work to the guidelines set out by the Market Research Society's Interviewer Quality Control Scheme - an industry standard to ensure companies operate to a professional level and maintain the quality of market research interviewing. These standards include:

Code of Conduct - Progressive adheres strictly to the Code of Conduct outlined by the Market Research Society, including its recommendations on client confidentiality. A copy of the Code is available on request

Interviewer Standards - All recruiters are thoroughly screened, continuously trained and appraised to Interviewer Quality Control Scheme standards

Back checking – The accuracy of survey data is checked by re-contacting respondents and re-administering part of the questionnaire. The industry's minimum requirement is that 5% of respondents be re-contacted. However, Progressive re-contact 25% ensures to ensure a high standard is achieved

OPEN DAYS RESULTS

The Victoria Halls attracted 773 people through the door during the two days to view the exhibition and model. Council officers and Gareth Hoskins architects were on hand to answer questions. A number of presentations were given to specific interest groups during both days and a presentation to the Hermitage Academy School Council (approximately 20 pupils) was given at 11 am at the school on the Friday.

In terms of the Pierhead response was the most negative to the Council's preferred option 1 and 2 shown in the Draft Masterplans with only 13% of people surveyed saying yes to this and 65% against with 22% mixed opinion.

In terms of the council's stance on the petrol station 81% of people surveyed agreed with the council's position to not site a petrol station on the Pierhead. Many people suggested other sites with the former site on East Clyde Street being cited many times as a preferred location (see the council response to this on regarding the online results).

In terms of the residential units on the Pierhead the response was very much against this option being taken with 59% against the idea for a variety of reasons such as blocking views, not being a suitable site for residential flats, no parking for them, unpaid security guards etc.

Turning to the options for the Hermitage site 62.5% were in favour of the councils preferred option with housing as the only use provided there was a range of affordable, well designed houses and a good traffic system put in place. Some people had other options for the site such as a petrol station, retail and some were against flats on the site but it was pointed out this is what Dunbritton Housing Association intend to do and their availability of funding is very limited for larger scale properties albeit they are planning to provide a range of these type of properties. In terms of positioning the pool on the Hermitage 57% stated that they would accept this with many people saying public transport needs to be improved if this is to happen to improve accessibility.

The following quotes indicate the strength and ranges of opinion on the issues raised by the survey sent in on paper survey forms particularly for the Pierhead site.

“This is not the best place for a large supermarket due to flooding, car access and traffic management”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“I like the Pierhead the way it is now”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“No. The area is prone to flooding, loss of parking, prime site should be used for leisure/recreation only”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“It will completely spoil the view from Sinclair Street and from the water. It needs to have something that will encourage tourists”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“The Pierhead in my opinion not a suitable site for locals and visitors to the town it should be for leisure (pool etc) parking only”.

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“Building too imposing”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

However a number of people were for or had more mixed views

“It is paramount that the supermarket has to be in the town centre”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“I feel very strongly that we need a leisure facility on the Pier site”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“The town could benefit by a large competitive supermarket and improved retail outlets to attract local and incoming trade”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“My real concern is a supermarket I feel this site could be hugely benefited by iconic structure which does not include supermarket. Other forms of retail are acceptable”.

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“The pool design is excellent, a real focal point for the town. Current Pierhead is an eyesore”

Paper survey form submitted by local resident

“Do not agree with high buildings on Pierhead e.g. flats above shopping area, although I agree with retail, recreational space and new leisure facility/pool much needed for the town of Helensburgh”

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SUBMITTED BY POST AND E MAIL

Turning now to some of the correspondence received during the consultation. Responses were forthcoming from a number of individuals and community groups including:- The local tourist organisation **Love Loch Lomond** who have provided three responses to the survey.

These can be summarised as follows:

- They would like to see the redevelopment of the pier focus on leisure and recreation,
- The pier has an important function providing free car parking and coach parking for visitors which should be retained and enhanced.
- Additional flood/sea defences are required, and the opportunity should be taken to improve access for ferries/The Waverly and potentially for short stay visiting yachts, as well as extending the promenade. Also see retention of funfair as a potential element of upgrade/enhancement of upgraded leisure/recreation use.
- Agree that it is not an appropriate site for a petrol filling station, and consider that such a facility along with a supermarket would be better opposite the Hermitage.
- Consider that more housing could be an option on the pier head, particularly if this would help facilitate funding for tourist related development on the pier.
- Would support swimming pool on the old Hermitage site, with uses outlined above on the pier.

Council Response

Obviously as a tourist organisation they are supportive of the Pierhead being used for leisure and recreation. The council's draft Masterplan showed upwards of 300 hundred free, albeit time limited spaces, on the pier with an alternative location for coach parking in West King Street. The development proposed was designed to deliver new flood defences there is no money in the current capital budget to address this. There are no funds available to extend the promenade except through the CHORD investment and the organisation seems alone in calling for the return of the funfair and an increase in residential flats. The council now considers that residential on the pier would not be commercially viable on its own merit. Housing would not subsidise any tourist development on the Pierhead. The point raised about the pool is noted.

Rhu and Shandon Community Council

- Do not support either of the options for the pier put forward by Argyll and Bute Council, preferring instead the option 3 put forward by Helensburgh Community Council.
- At the old Hermitage Academy site Housing and an open space park area is preferred. The swimming pool and leisure centre here is not supported.

- A new pool and leisure centre should be built at the pier, as it is most accessible to residents of the wider area, and if of good quality might attract visitors in its own right.
- Concerned that even a 1.5 metre rise in height may not prevent flooding, and that the effect of this on views to the pier from the wider area have not been fully described.
- A petrol station on the pier is strongly opposed.
- A large supermarket on the pier, is unlikely to achieve a suitable high quality design, create traffic congestion, undermine existing retailers in the town, and raise concerns over availability of car parking.
- A supermarket, other shops and residential units fronting West Clyde Street would block views, create a tunnel, with the residential units not seen as adding anything to the area.

Council Response

It is noted that Rhu Community Council does not want a supermarket on the Pierhead and that their preferred place for the pool/leisure facility is on the Pierhead. The intended flood measures is based on a professional report that recommends raising the Pierhead by an average of 1.5m which effectively means it will be raised higher the further it projects into the Estuary up to a level of 1.8m. The point about the petrol station is noted and welcomed. The comment regarding the design is noted, the question of added congestion was dismissed by the reporter at the original enquiry to the supermarket in 2002. It is currently national and local planning policy to seek effective sites for supermarkets in town centre locations as this is where it is considered there will be less impact on town centre shops rather than out of town supermarkets. The car parking issue is noted see frequently asked questions section in document. While the preservation of prominent public views is a planning consideration this can be mitigated together with any perceived impacts on local character. The point about residential flats is noted.

Helensburgh Community Council

- Helensburgh Community Council carried out its own survey of those attending the public consultation events at the Victoria Halls, they have based their response on their analysis of the feedback to their survey.
- **70% did not want a supermarket on the pier site at all, 21% supported option 1, and only 9% supported option 2 with the new leisure facility at the old Hermitage site.**

Their main conclusions are:

- The majority want a new supermarket at Colgrain, and don't see the need to have a new supermarket on the Pier in order to pay for a new leisure centre there. Concerns expressed that the Council is railroading the people of Helensburgh in to agreeing something they do not want, and that funding for a new leisure centre should not be dependent on selling land at the pier head for supermarket development.
- There would be a need for good design, any building fronting West Clyde Street should harmonise with those with adjacent. The leisure centre should

be stand alone and be of excellent landmark quality. Residential element not necessarily seen as promoting better design.

- There are concerns about traffic management issues associated with a supermarket development on the pier, in particular the junction with West Clyde St/Sinclair St. and conflicting needs of long and short term car parking, and either multi-storey or undercroft parking could be investigated. Also provision for coach parking required.
- Flooding issues require to be considered carefully and communicated to the public in an easily understood format, further land raising may be required.
- Any buildings on the pier should seek to minimise impacts on views over the Clyde.

Helensburgh Community Council full response is annexed to this report including their exit survey attached to this document with **70% of people surveyed not wanting a supermarket on the Pierhead.**

Council Response

While the council fully understands the point made about the out of town supermarket this survey concerns the Draft Masterplan consultation. The council rejects any accusation that it is “railroading” anything through and points to the consultation process as evidence to the contrary. The reasons behind siting a supermarket on the Pierhead is explained in the frequently asked questions section that is attached to this document which was also made available on the council web site and the exhibition held in the Victoria Halls.

The comments made with regard to funding is noted by is not an issue that this consultation can answer. However, that is essentially a matter for the council to consider albeit the reasons for why the Masterplans were issued for consultation are included in the frequently asked questions section. The points about design are also noted but it is not accepted that there is a need to “harmonise” with adjacent buildings to produce good design. The point about the inclusion of the residential element is also noted. Traffic management would be a perquisite of any planning consent. The reporters findings with regard to the 2002 refusal noted that issues with regard to congestion and the management of traffic was not grounds for a refusal at the same junction that is being proposed to be used to access the Pierhead. Multi storey car parking is unsuited to the Pierhead and undercroft car parking was ruled out on grounds of cost at an early stage in the options process. Flooding issues have and are being carefully considered through the commissioning of a flooding report. While the preservation of prominent public views is a planning consideration this can be mitigated together with any perceived impacts on local character.

1. 13/14 JANUARY A&BC MASTERPLANS EXHIBITION – HCC SURVEY RESULTS

HCC surveyed as many as possible of those attending the 13/14 January 2012 A&BC Exhibition in Helensburgh’s Victoria Halls on its revised draft Masterplans for the Pier and Old Academy Sites. 593 people responded and we would like to thank

them for taking the time to make their views known. They were asked to choose one of 3 Options – Nos 1 and 2 from Argyll & Bute Council and No 3 from the HCC

Level of Support

Option 1 : A supermarket + leisure centre, plus some shops and flats, on the Pier Site	124	21%
Option 2 : A supermarket, plus a café along with the shops and flats on the Pier Site. The leisure centre would go to be the old Hermitage Academy site.	53	9%
Option 3 : No supermarket on the pier site	416	70%

2. RESPONDENTS – BY POSTCODE BREAKDOWN

The analysis of respondents by postcode breakdown showed they were fairly evenly spread across Helensburgh with relatively few coming from outside the town:

G84 7	25%	86
G84 8	35%	121
G84 9	31%	107
G84	7%	25
Others	2%	6

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its Survey HCC is asking Argyll & Bute Council to :

- 1. Withdraw its draft Masterplan and write a new one much more in line with local resident opinion**
- 2. The Waitrose application is approved for its proposed store and petrol station at Colgrain (provided the design is improved)**
- 3. Seek alternative ways to fund the leisure centre on the Pier Site**
- 4. Find a way of keeping the existing pool open until the way ahead for funding the new leisure centre is agreed**

Rosneath & Clynder Community Council

- Unsuitability of the Pier site for either option. It is too small for the size of the commercial development proposed.
- Loss of long stay parking for commuters from rural areas who work in Helensburgh.
- Loss of convenient disabled parking.
- Loss of parking for visitors embarking on the Waverly or the Ferry and other tourists visiting Helensburgh.
- This proposed supermarket development does not allow for a petrol station/garage facility on site.
- Helensburgh relies on its tourist trade during the summer months and particularly the seafront with its uninterrupted views across the water. This development would destroy this important tourist attraction and is unsympathetic with this part of the town.
- It is not possible to comment on the two proposals shown to us regarding the development of the Old Hermitage site until the decision is made on the Pier, However, the two sets of plans shown seemed to be a sensible use of the land for mixed purpose housing/leisure centre.
- The communities of Rosneath and Clynder's preferred option is a supermarket development with petrol station/garage on the site opposite the New Hermitage Academy

Council Response

The comments about the size of the site and the scale of development are noted, however, a balance has to be struck between size of development and economic viability. Traffic management would be a prerequisite of any planning consent. However the scope to increase parking provision is limited as multi storey car parking is unsuited to the Pierhead and undercroft car parking was ruled out on grounds of cost at an early stage in the options process. While the council fully understands the point made about the out of town supermarket this survey concerns the Draft Masterplan consultation.

Helensburgh Study Group

The Helensburgh Study Group responses to the Draft Master Plans for the Pier and Former Hermitage Academy sites are summarised as follows:

- The Councils preferred option is the best way forward in current circumstances
- Option number two is not acceptable, the former Hermitage Academy site should only be used for housing, with potentially more than 25% affordable housing, and any blocks of flats located towards the rear of the site.
- In developing the pier the focus should be on promoting a cohesive town centre and waterfront, ensuring uses are complimentary and that there are good pedestrian linkages.

- Any supermarket should be no larger than medium size (36,000 sq.ft. gross), with a smaller foot print allowing other smaller shop units and / or provide space for public toilets.
- Really high quality design of buildings and structures on the pier is essential, this means more than merely adding frills to a supermarket box. A council appointed architect should be required to work in partnership with the successful developer. Excellence in design is not just the buildings but also how they relate to the landscape within which they are placed.
- Parking and access requirements should be reassessed, and include parking for coaches, long stay, and shorter stay carparking, with as much of this concealed as possible. Coach drop off points should be provided on West Clyde Street, and the design of the access altered in order to reduce possible congestion, consideration should also be given to provision of a secondary emergency exit from the site.
- New Public Toilets should be provided, and these should be located close to the coach drop off points.
- Additional information on flood mitigation should be included in the master plan, such as finished site levels, and details of sea wall / protective wall to the perimeter walkway.
- The Pool / leisure facility building should be move slightly further inland to allow room for a wide perimeter walkway and for the sea wall and any future increase in size which may be required.
- There should be no petrol filling station on the Pier, alternative sites to the west of the town centre are preferred.

Council Response

The council welcomes the study groups broad support for its preferred option on the Pier. The comments with regard to integration with the town centre are noted, as are the comments on the size of store and mixture of uses proposed on the Pier. The points about high quality design is also noted but it is not accepted that there is a need for the Council to appoint an Architect to work with any future developer. The Masterplan will lay the foundations for good design, and the normal development management process can be used to adjudicate the proposals. Traffic management would be a prerequisite of any planning consent. The reporters findings with regard to the 2002 refusal noted that issues with regard to congestion and the management of traffic was not grounds for a refusal at the same junction that is being proposed to be used to access the Pierhead. Multi storey car parking is unsuited to the Pierhead and undercroft car parking was ruled out on grounds of cost at an early stage in the options process. Flooding issues have and are being carefully considered through the commissioning of a flooding report. The Master Plan is intended to be indicative, and there would be scope to amend the siting of the swimming pool and leisure centre to allow for a wider walk way and to accommodate anticipated sea defences.

Retailers

Responses to the Helensburgh Master Plan consultation exercise have been received from agents acting on behalf of four supermarket operators (Sainsbury's, ASDA, Morrisons and the Co-op).

The responses all oppose the Council's preferred option 1, on the basis that the site is not large enough to accommodate all of the proposed uses and provide appropriate levels of car parking for these uses. Three of them therefore generally support option 2 as it allows for more car parking, a larger store, and reduces the potential for conflict between shopping and swimming pool uses. One who is currently represented in the town is primarily concerned with the amount of car parking available to support both the proposed store and the existing town centre uses.

- Two of the operators consider a petrol filling station on the pier to be a requirement.
- Two indicate that while they were not opposed to residential element, it would not be their highest priority.
- All have indicated that they would be prepared to work with the council to deliver the site in a way which contributes to the wider town centre and regeneration.

Council Response

The Council has embarked on a Master planning exercise in recognition of the sites importance to the town centre and community of Helensburgh as a whole. It recognises that there are a range of uses which could be accommodated on the Pierhead site and the Masterplan is seen as a way of indicating the most appropriate range and mix of uses for the area, given its important town centre location. The consultation exercise has reconfirmed that the people of Helensburgh value the role which the area plays in providing recreation and leisure facilities as well as the important role which it currently provides for town centre parking. However the council also recognises that there is capacity to support further retail floorspace within the town centre in order to reduce leakage of both convenience and comparison expenditure from the town and its catchment, thereby reinforcing the town centre's important role as the retail centre for the Helensburgh and Lomond area. It accepts however that it is not possible to accommodate all of the potential uses and associated demands for parking on the site, hence the reason for not including a site for a petrol filling station on the Pierhead and recognising that there is a need for flexibility on car parking requirements, given its town centre location and accessibility by a wide variety of means of transport.

By way of response to many of the comments put down by members of the public both on line and on paper the **Frequently Asked Questions** that were published on the council's web site and at the exhibition in Victoria Halls and the pool are re stated here in the public consultation report.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Council preparing Masterplans for both of these sites?

While both of these important development sites are zoned for specific purposes in the current Development Plan the council considers there is a need to take forward Masterplans to help deliver new community facilities and much needed new development on the ground in the most challenging of economic circumstances.

In terms of the Pierhead this town centre site has an existing Masterplan in place that envisaged a substantial level of development. However, due to sustained market conditions this Masterplan has proved to be ineffective and consequently there is a need to amend it to deliver new development that supports the council's CHORD investment in the town centre (£6.5 million due to commence in January), a new pool/leisure facility and helps protect the vitality and viability of the town centre.

In terms of the Hermitage this site forms a major housing allocation in the current development Plan with capacity for 160 new houses. The new Masterplan seeks to retain this site for housing incorporating the new proposal for affordable housing from Dunbritton Housing Association with the rest of the site identified for mainstream housing without any affordable housing requirement. There may also be a possibility of the new pool/leisure facility being located on this site and comments on the suitability of this option are called for.

Why is the Council consulting on the content of the Masterplans?

As part of any council led Master planning process it is a requirement to consult with local people on the suitability, or otherwise, of its content before it is finalised.

Why does the Council not just build a new pool/leisure facility on the Pierhead without the need for commercial development?

While the council remains fully committed to provide a new pool/leisure facility for the people of Helensburgh and Lomond it is not statutorily obliged to build or operate a new pool/leisure facility for the Helensburgh and Lomond area. It does however fully recognise, following a major consultation exercise, that the majority of local residents desire a new, modern pool and leisure facility with the preferred site being the Pierhead. In 2009 the Council instructed officers to take forward the delivery of this new facility on the clear understanding that the Council has insufficient capital funding to build a new pool/leisure in Helensburgh unless funds can be obtained through the development of key sites such as the Pierhead and Hermitage. In other words without raising a sales receipt from the private sector from the sale of under utilised Council assets a new pool/leisure facility will not be built, the recent witnessed flooding problems on the pier head will not be addressed and this

significant opportunity to maximise the economic development potential of the town will be lost.

Has the Council entered into an agreement with a preferred developer for the Pierhead?

No, it has not. The council intends to market both sites following confirmation of the Masterplans and approval of the full business case for taking forward development.

Why is the Council proposing to site a supermarket on the Pier?

Through the process of preparing these draft Masterplans the council has consulted the retail industry on appropriate scales of retail development to address the leakage of retail expenditure leaving Helensburgh and help deliver the requirements of the council. Consequently the scale of retail units proposed for the Pierhead are considered to be the minimum necessary to satisfy this. The Pierhead is also zoned as a town centre site in the Development Plan and is the only available site in terms of the sequential test that is applied to larger scale retail developments.

Previous attempts to place a supermarket on the Pierhead have failed. What has changed?

In 2002 a supermarket on the Pierhead was rejected primarily on design and massing grounds by Scottish Government Reporters following a call in. In 2009 following the adoption of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan the Pierhead was re-designated to a town centre site that was to be informed by a Masterplan to help guide future development. At the time the Reporter appointed to undertake the PLI endorsed the Pierhead as a town centre site but made a reference that the site was not suited to a single supermarket. It is for this reason the preferred option for the council is to deliver a mixed use scheme involving retail, residential and recreation in the form of a new pool/leisure facility informed by Gareth Hoskins Architects.

Why do we need to change the current Masterplan for the Pierhead?

This Masterplan, approved by the council in 2009, envisaged a considerable scale of development well in excess of the current proposals and consisting of a smaller pool, retail, 150 residential units, commercial/office space and undercroft car parking. Unfortunately this Masterplan has proved to be completely undeliverable in its current form due to sustained market conditions and now needs to be amended albeit taking forward the established principles of retail, residential and recreation.

Why is the Pierhead the only option being considered for a supermarket in the town centre?

In terms of what retailers require in terms of floor space and accessibility the Pierhead site is the only effective site available of the required size in the town centre. It should be noted that placing a supermarket on the Pierhead was not the only option looked at within the town centre which has been subject to extensive searches by the retail industry for suitable sites over a number of years.

Why is the Council proposing to site the retail units at the front of the Pierhead?

In terms of urban design, proximity to existing shops and the requirements of the retail industry it is considered that the best position for retail is at the front of the site with car parking placed behind any new buildings. The council understands people's concerns over the need for high quality design on the Pier and the Masterplan seeks to ensure that this is fully recognised by any potential developer including the highly sensitive West Clyde Street frontage.

Does the approval of the Masterplans mean there is no need to apply for planning permission?

No, any development will have to apply for planning permission on both of the sites.

Why is the Council proposing residential units on the pier?

The original Masterplan covering the Pierhead contained a significant level of residential development with up to 150 units envisaged. The Council considers that retaining an element of housing will help achieve a better overall design and help retain a presence on the site when commercial activity closes for the night. That said, the number of units proposed has been substantially reduced and the consultation will ask if there is a need for any form of residential development on the Pierhead?

The Pierhead is valued for its parking. How will the Council ensure that people can still park in the town centre?

The Council fully understands the importance of parking to the future economic success of Helensburgh Town Centre and the current role the Pierhead plays in this. Consequently, any new development on the Pierhead will have a substantial level of free parking, albeit time limited to ensure best use, to allow local people and visitors to the town to access the new development and the rest of the town centre.

In addition to the above the Council has commissioned AECOM to undertake a feasibility study to look at:

- potential new sites in the town centre for coach parking;
- increasing the supply of on street parking in association with the new CHORD investment;
- opportunities to enhance off street parking; and
- to explore options for the expansion of park and ride facilities at Craigendoran.

AECOM are due to report on their findings mid February 2012. An interim report will be available in January.

To date, the following opportunities have been identified:

Coach parking - a drop off point for 4/5 coaches adjacent to Colquhoun Square. Sites at the edge of the town are currently being considered for coach parking.

On street parking – parking options have been identified adjacent to the CHORD boundary area and on the edge of the town centre for implementing “End On” kerbside parking whilst maintaining two-way access. As “End On” parking is a current feature in the town which works well, it is felt this is both an efficient and cost effective option for compensating for any loss of car parking spaces from the development of the Pier Head. The details for this proposal are currently being worked-up but it is estimated that up to 100 car parking spaces may be created.

The Pierhead site is vulnerable to flooding how can the Council allow new development to take place here?

As recent events clearly demonstrate the Pierhead is subject to flooding at times. Consequently, the Council will require any future developer of the Pierhead to raise land levels by 1.5m together with associated improvements to the perimeter sea defences. It is only by allowing development on the Pierhead that these much needed improvements to prevent future flooding events will be undertaken as the Council has no provision in its capital programmed to implement these works.

Why is the Council considering the option of placing the new pool/leisure facility on the Hermitage?

The preferred Council option for the new pool/leisure facility is to place it on the Pierhead and this has been supported by feedback from recent focus groups. The Council is also aware that local people do not wish to see the existing pool closed for a significant period and the placing of the new pool/leisure facility may not therefore be deliverable on the Pierhead in terms of affordability. Consequently, the Council believes it was important to show an alternative position on the site of the former Hermitage School. While this site is not ideal in terms of accessibility there may be an opportunity to build this facility before the existing pool is closed and comments from local people are sought on this possible option if the preferred site for the pool/leisure facility cannot be delivered.

What will happen to the skateboard park?

The council recognises that an alternative location for the skateboard park will have to be found if the development proceeds.

Where can a new petrol station go in the town?

The Council is aware of local people’s desire for an additional petrol station in Helensburgh. Following feedback from focus groups the Pierhead, given its prominent position is not considered an appropriate place to site a new petrol station. Consequently the Council has identified a couple of sites that have the potential to site a new petrol station on the main routes entering the town and are asking people to comment on this issue.

What would happen if no supermarket was allowed on the Pier?

This would mean that the current Pier Masterplan would continue to be the aspiration for this site and that the current zoning of the Old Academy site would be unaltered. As the Council has said elsewhere there has been a clear message from our discussions with the Property Development Sector that the existing Pierhead

Masterplan is undeliverable in the current economic climate. It also would imply that there is no practical development site in the town centre (or on the edge of the town centre) and that applying the Government's sequential test for location of supermarkets – an out of town site would be able to be considered and would in all probability be approved. This, then, would mean that the marketability of the pier site would be severely compromised and the building of a new pool/leisure facility, on any site, would become unachievable in this decade.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

CONCLUSIONS

The public consultation on the Draft Helensburgh Masterplans has proved very successful in bringing forward a substantial response from local people and interested stakeholders with approximately 1,200 people submitting survey forms in paper format or electronically together with additional items of correspondence, all of which has been studied by council officers and also placed in the Members' Room for their consideration prior to the Executive meeting on the 2nd of February. It should also be known that officers gained a full understanding of local peoples' concerns at open day presentations and face to face meetings in the Victoria Halls on the 13th and 14th of January; an event that attracted almost 800 individuals over the two days.

A wealth of information and opinion has been gathered through a variety of means to try and ensure a response from as wide a section of the community as possible. Interestingly, the different ways of gathering information gained different results with the face to face interviews conducted by Hexagon over four days in January producing a positive result for the council's proposed option for the Pierhead with 46% of the 371 people interviewed in favour of the Council's proposals; and most notably 76% of people under 30 voicing their support for these plans. Evidence that there is a greater acceptance amongst the younger generation for change in the town centre is also supported through presentations to the younger generations of Helensburgh who seemed to have little relationship with the Pierhead and are anxious to see a new pool/community leisure facility built as soon as possible.

The most negative response to the Draft Masterplans was gathered at the open days with 65% of local people being strongly against options 1 and 2. Despite every attempt to attract people of all ages to this event through advertising widely and press releases it was mainly an older age group that came and gave their views.

This strongly held view with regard to the proposed Masterplan for the Pierhead also influenced a strong rejection of any residential element for a variety of reasons. On a more positive note the council's proposal not to have a petrol station on the Pierhead was strongly supported although two of the interested retail operators signalled that a petrol station would be a key part of their offer.

The council used Frequently Asked Questions (published on our web and at the exhibition in the halls and the pool) to address commonly perceived issues such as:

- Why are we doing this?
- Why can the council not just build a new pool?
- Why we are proposing housing on the Pierhead?
- Parking provision,
- High quality design,
- Need for a supermarket,

- Flooding,
- Views,
- Congestion,
- Loss of skateboard park

Many of the comments received still raised these questions and concerns. It has also to be said that while considerable effort was made to focus the debate on the issue at hand, namely the future of two key development sites in Helensburgh, public opinion was undoubtedly influenced by a number of factors including:

- A feeling by some local people that the level of public expenditure in Helensburgh and Lomond is less than in comparison to other areas of Argyll and Bute.
- The belief that the Council has not yet explored all avenues for funding of the new pool/leisure facility prior to consideration of a commercial deal.
- A negative public reaction by some to the CHORD project in Helensburgh and the questioning why the money could not be spent paying for a new pool/leisure facility?
- The recent severe flooding events on the Pierhead.
- The publication of a number of articles and letters during the consultation that influenced public opinion on matters such as 'other towns have a new pool why not Helensburgh?'
- The pending Waitrose application decision and its offer of a high quality food store with petrol facilities.
- The pending Sainsbury's application that raised interest through their consultation on a proposed new store for the pier.

In terms of the Hermitage site there was much more consensus with a clear majority supporting the need for mixed housing on the site albeit some local concerns expressed on matters of design and traffic circulation that would need to be taken into account. There was also strong support demonstrated for siting the pool/leisure facility on the Hermitage site albeit there was a need to improve public transport. A number of other uses were also proposed including the possibility of retail, including the possibility of a large supermarket by one operator, and a possible site for a petrol station.

In terms of substantive planning arguments raised during the consultation, none in themselves are considered to be compelling on their own merit provided adequate mitigation is undertaken. For example, the visual impact of the supermarket/retail store can be reduced by lowering its height, reducing its length and position in the streetscape; the loss of long stay parking can be replaced by additional spaces at Craigendoran; the argument that that the Pierhead is a recreational area can be countered by the fact it is zoned for town centre purposes in the Local Plan and it is clearly shown (by the survey response) that it is mainly used for short stay parking and for the pool with recreation a distant third; the argument that the town centre supermarket will have a greater impact on town centre shops than an out of town supermarket can also be countered by both national and local planning policy that states the opposite is true.

Although the Hexagon 'on-street survey' was supportive of the Masterplan options, a substantial majority of local people are strongly against a larger scale supermarket on the Pierhead and also residential uses. To ignore overwhelming public opinion for a Masterplan promoted by the Council is very risky strategy which could undermine future public consultation. The views of commercial operators, expressed through their agents, that the Pierhead is too small for the council's preferred option is also a compelling piece of information as is the strong community desire for a new pool/community leisure facility to be sited on the Pierhead evidenced by previous council studies and submitted comments. The existing poor condition of the Pierhead, battered by recent storms, and subject to an increasing incidence of flooding also calls for an alternative solution to bring life and activity back to an area of the town which is highly valued by local people and tourists. Leaving the Pierhead as it is cannot be considered as an option.

It is for these reasons the council is proposing to make substantial amendments to the proposed Masterplan for the Pierhead. While retail units are proposed to be retained on the Pierhead the size of the retail offer will be substantially reduced in scale and floor area, specifically excluding the possibility of a larger scale supermarket and setting the proposed retail units back to reduce the perceived "corridor effect", open up vistas particularly from Sinclair Street and create a wider pedestrian space along West Clyde Street together with an opportunity for a drop off/pick up point including coaches. The council also intends to remove the requirement for residential units on the Pierhead allowing the buildings proposed for West Clyde Street to be constructed as a single storey structure again aiming to retain views from Sinclair Street and retaining the pool/community leisure facility on the Pierhead with the rest of site utilised for improved public realm, car and coach parking to serve the uses on the Pierhead and the town centre. Crucially however it is also proposed to move the pool/leisure building forward on the Pierhead in recognition of the exposed nature of the site and allowing the building to better capitalise on seafront views and incorporate improved landscaping together with an alternative location for the skate park if required. A proposed **Diagram A** has been attached to the Executive Report that shows the principle features of these amendments. Given the scale of the changes proposed it is anticipated that the Pierhead Masterplan will undergo another public consultation in line with established council procedure.

If it becomes clear that the capital receipts from the retail development proposed for the Pierhead will not meet the full costs of the new pool/community leisure facility then the council will seek to review the funding of the project at that time. The council remains fully committed to actively pursue the procurement of a new leisure facility in accordance with the council's budget decision in 2009 and as amended in 2010 in order to level economic growth and town centre regeneration.

A number of minor amendments are also being put forward for the Hermitage site with two phased options still shown, one with a mixed housing scheme and a second option for siting a new pool/leisure facility (see **Diagram B**) including a third phase that shows the possibility of siting a pool/community facility or housing. Both phase 3 options now exclude the Athletics club facilities. Given the overwhelming positive reaction to either of these options the Masterplan for the Hermitage will not be going out for another round of public consultation. The full details can be seen in the

council report that accompanies this document and is scheduled for approval by Members on the 2nd of February.