



Ballymacash Rangers Football Club

Consultation Findings Summary
Forsythe Consulting
September 2017

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Ballymacash Rangers FC are planning to develop a new multi-purpose Community Sports Hub, sited at the existing Bluebell complex. As a club long established in the area, we want to continue to serve the community. As part of our ambitious club development plans, we have made efforts to speak to local residents of the area about the proposed plans.

Our development plans include improved facilities will serve the needs of the local community.

Central to the delivery of the clubs aspirations is the creation of community football and sports complex integrated into a football ground comprising:

- Community Gym Facility & Community space / rooms
- Car parking and landscaping
- A new full size floodlit artificial grass pitch (AGP)
- Four changing rooms and two officials' changing rooms

The Club will increase community use of the site by working in partnership with local youth and community organisations, the governing body (Irish Football Association) and other agencies such as Disability Sport NI. This development will create a genuine community facility that will enable community use of football, sports and non-sports educational and community facilities.

Ballymacash Rangers FC would thank the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for funding through Community Cohesion programme to resource this community consultation.

METHODOLOGY

The responses to this community engagement exercise were accumulated on Sunday 27th August. The consultation was carried out in conjunction with the Ballymacash Rangers Community Open Day held on the same day. Representatives of the Club asked members of the public in attendance at the event to complete a short questionnaire containing the following eleven questions:

1. Do you think that a new community sports hub is needed in the Ballymacash area?
2. Would you and your family use a new community sports hub?
3. Do you think that there are adequate sports facilities in the area at present?
4. If a community sports hub were to be developed, do you believe that local charities and community groups would avail of the facility?
5. Please tell us what activities you would like to see included within the proposed community hub.
6. What would you like to see improved in the Ballymacash area?
7. Do you believe that developing a Hub as a community asset will bring the community together?
8. How would you describe your general fitness?
9. Do you find it difficult to access sport or exercise facilities at present?
10. If yes, what are the main restrictions?
11. What would particularly attract you to use a new sports hub?

A total of 100 responses to this questionnaire were collected, the results of which will be presented in this report.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Q1: DO YOU THINK THAT A NEW COMMUNITY SPORTS HUB IS NEEDED IN THE BALLYMACASH AREA?

Question One sought to gauge public opinion regarding the proposed development of a community sports hub in the Ballymacash area. All 100 respondents answered this question, and all 100 respondents agreed that a new community sports hub in the Ballymacash area was needed.

This outcome demonstrates an overwhelming appetite within the Ballymacash community and from those directly associated with the Club for investment in the physical sporting capital of the area.

Q2: WOULD YOU AND YOUR FAMILY USE A NEW COMMUNITY SPORTS HUB?

Question Two aimed to establish the estimated usage of a new community sports hub from those residing in the vicinity of the proposed site for redevelopment. Of the 100 respondents, only 1 stated that they would not find any benefit in the creation of such a facility.

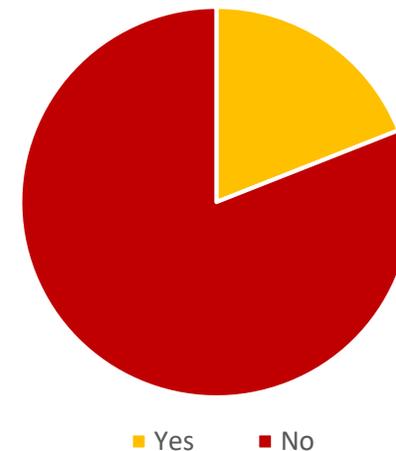
The feedback provided for this question indicate that the creation of a new community sports hub in Ballymacash would be welcomed by those living in the local community, and that it would receive high utilisation across all age and gender demographics. This factor would greatly contribute to the long term financial and operational sustainability of any new Hub.

Q3: DO YOU THINK THAT THERE ARE ADEQUATE SPORTS FACILITIES IN THE AREA AT PRESENT?

The third question of this stakeholder engagement exercise strove to gain an understanding of the satisfaction levels held amongst local people regarding the current quantity and quality of sports facilities that are available for regular use in the Ballymacash area.

This question received 100 responses, 81 of which indicated that the sports facilities in the area **were not adequate**. The answers provided to this question therefore highlight a need for the sports facilities in the Ballymacash area to be enhanced.

Do you think that there are adequate sports facilities in the area at present?



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Q4: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT LOCAL CHARITIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS WOULD AVAIL OF A NEW COMMUNITY SPORTS HUB?

Similar to Question Two, Question Four was designed with the estimated usage and sustainability of any new facilities in mind. Question 4 however was concerned with the utilisation of new facilities by active community organisations and charities in the area, as opposed to individuals.

This question received 100 responses. 99 of the respondents stated that they believed that the new facilities would be welcomed by local third sector organisations, and that they would make use of them.

The responses provided indication⁴ that the creation of a community sports hub in Ballymacash would have benefits that would be enjoyed by the entire community, including locally based community organisations as well as individuals and the members and players of Ballymacash Rangers FC.

Q5: PLEASE TELL US WHAT ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PROPOSED COMMUNITY HUB.

Question Five was an open-ended question, by which respondents could provide suggestions as to which services they would most like to see delivered at a new community sports facility.

65 respondents provided their thoughts and listed a wide range of amenities. The answers have been summarised as follows:

- Gym (x=25, 38.5%);
- Football (x= 21, 32.3%);
- Function Rooms (x=9, 13.8%);
- Fitness Classes (x=8, 12.3%);
- Rugby (x=8, 12.3%);
- 4G Pitch (x=7, 10.7%);
- Youth Club (x=7, 10.7%);
- 5-a-side pitch/MUGA (x=6, 9.2%); and
- Tennis (x=5, 7.7%).

There were a large number of other activities put forward by smaller numbers of respondents. These included:

4 respondents: Provision for girl's sports; snooker/pool tables and netball; and sports development/educational initiatives.

3 respondents: Basketball; hockey; and squash.

2 respondents: Darts; circuits training; sports open days; use by community organisations; Xbox/PlayStation; disability services; table tennis; sports hall; and live sports on TV.

1 respondent: Cricket; community support services; badminton; spa; bubble football; dance classes; weights training classes; and play area for kids.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The breadth of activities listed in Question Five illustrate an overall enthusiasm for sport in the area as a whole. The most salient responses highlight a high demand for basic sporting amenities such as a gym, fitness classes and a multi-use games area (MUGA). Given the nature of the consultation and the sporting background of the project promoter, Ballymacash Rangers, it is unsurprising that football and related activities also featured as common responses to this questionnaire.

It should also be noted that the creation of a multi-purpose indoor sports hall would cater for the wishes of a wide range of the sporting activities listed.

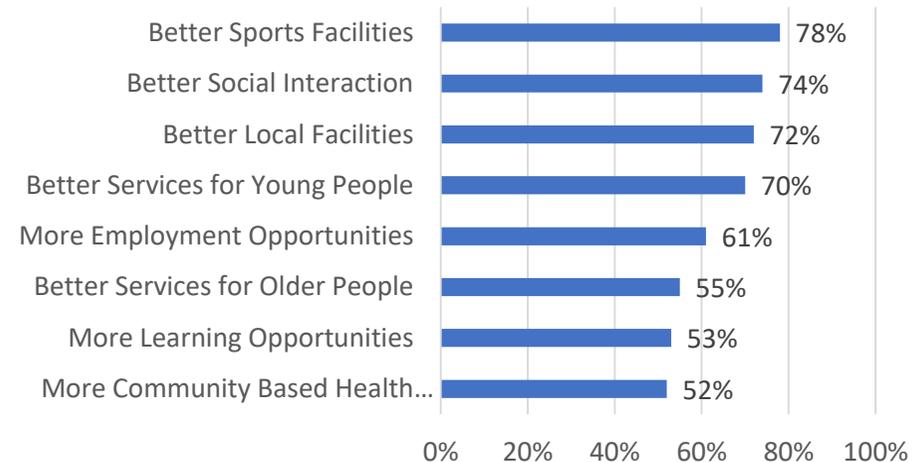
Q6: WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED IN THE BALLYMACASH AREA?

Question Six sought to determine which amenities local people believed their area was deprived of, and which they would like to see introduced. All 100 respondents answered this question, and were able to select more than one option. The results are as follows:

- Better Sports Facilities – 78 respondents
- Better Social Interaction – 74 respondents
- Better Local Facilities – 72 respondents
- Better Services for Young People – 70 respondents
- More Employment Opportunities – 61 respondents
- Better Services for Older People – 55 respondents
- More Learning Opportunities – 53 respondents
- More Community Based Health Services – 52 respondents

These figures from Question 6 are presented graphically below:

What would you like to see improved in the Ballymacash area?



As can be clearly seen, the social issues that local residents believe are most in need of addressing in Ballymacash include, 'Better Sports Facilities,' 'Better Social Interaction,' and 'Better Local Facilities.'

This indicates a need for the provision of local sporting services to be enhanced in the area. The development of sporting facilities at Ballymacash Rangers FC could also provide lasting solutions to the identified need of increased community cohesiveness, as well as the need for improved community facilities as a whole.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Q7: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT DEVELOPING A HUB AS A COMMUNITY ASSET WILL BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER?

Question Seven entailed respondents providing feedback as to whether or not they believed that the creation of a community sports hub in Ballymacash would have wider social benefits. None of the 100 respondents skipped this question, and 93 agreed that the proposed improvements would lead to increased social cohesiveness within the Ballymacash Community.

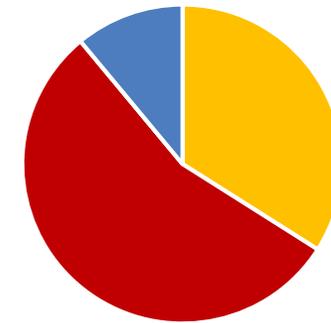
The answers provided to this question indicate further the potential social benefits that the capital development plans proposed by Ballymacash Rangers FC could impart on both local people and community organisations.

Q8: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR GENERAL FITNESS?

Assessing the general health of those who stand to immediately benefit from a comprehensive revamp of the facilities at Ballymacash Rangers FC, Question Eight allowed the adjacent profile of the physical wellbeing of a sub-section of 100 local people to be compiled.

At 66%, just under two thirds of people surveyed failed to state that they were in good health (average – 55%, poor – 11%). This statistic is a further validation of the outstanding need for increased health and wellbeing initiatives to be delivered in the Ballymacash area.

How would you describe your general fitness?



■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor

Q9: DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCESS SPORT OR EXERCISE FACILITIES AT PRESENT?

Estimating the availability of sporting facilities that those living in the vicinity of Ballymacash Rangers FC currently enjoy, Questions Nine and Ten asked respondents if they experienced any hindrances in availing of sporting and exercise opportunities locally, and for those who do to provide further details.

Of the 100 participants in this consultation exercise, 71 proclaimed that they had difficulty in accessing the facilities that they desire.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The 71 respondents who answered 'Yes' to Question Nine were asked to provide further insights into the main restrictions that limit their participation in sport and regular exercise. The most common prohibitions are listed as follows, and respondents could select more than one option:

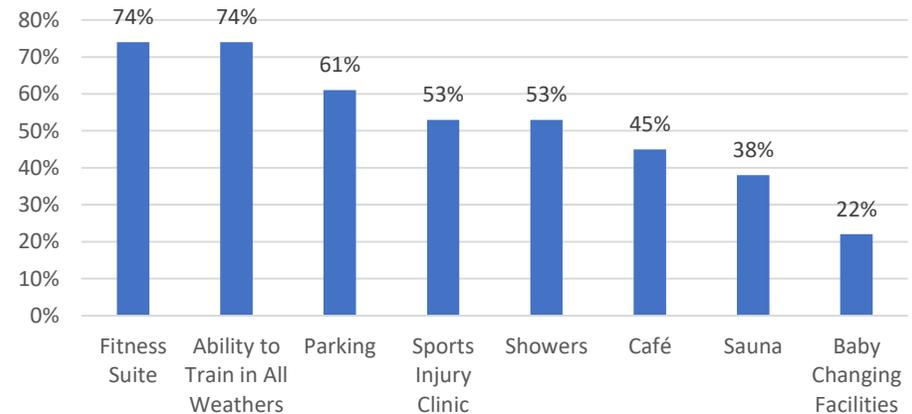
1. Lack of suitable local facilities (x=55, 77.5%);
2. Cost (x=30, 42.3%);
3. Childcare (x=24, 33.8%);
4. Transport (x=23, 32.4%);
5. Lack of information about what activities exist (x=23, 32.4%);
6. Opening Hours (x=20, 28.2%); and
7. No-one to go with (x=11, 15.5%)

The outcomes from Questions Nine and Ten again indicate dissatisfaction amongst those living in Ballymacash with the availability and standard of sporting facilities that they may freely avail of. The cost of using facilities currently open (public leisure centres, private gyms etc.) are also discouraging wider use from within this community, and is a consideration that should be noted in further development stages of this initiative.

Q11: WHAT WOULD PARTICULARLY ATTRACT YOU TO USE A NEW SPORTS HUB?

The final question on this survey was designed with the aim of identifying which features of a new community sports hub would most attract local people to avail of the services delivered from it. Once again, respondents were permitted to choose more than one option. The responses are summarised below:

What would particularly attract you to use a new sports hub?



The aspects of a community sports hub that would emerge as the biggest attractions are a Fitness Suite and the Ability to Train in All Weathers, which were each chosen by 74 of the 100 respondents. Chosen by 61% of respondents, the availability of car parking was also an amenity that potential users would welcome. This outcome reflects the results of Question Five, where both a gym facility and multi-use/all weather facilities were also popular responses.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

Analysing the responses provided during this stakeholder engagement exercise, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Community Demand for Enhanced Sports Facilities

Throughout all questions posed to respondents throughout this consultation, a key emerging theme has been the demand from local people for improved sporting and community facilities in the Ballymacash area. Evidence to support this is presented in Question One, where 100% of respondents agreed that a new community hub was needed in the Ballymacash area. Further indications of this sentiment were displayed in Question Three as 81% of respondents reported that the current standard of sports facilities in the area were inadequate.

Furthermore, 78% of respondents stated as a response to Question Six that 'Better Sports Facilities' was one of the improvements that local people would like to see made to their area. At 72%, the need for better community facilities was also highlighted as an aspect of social life in need of improving.

Utilisation and Sustainability:

Several questions that made-up this questionnaire were in relation to the use of a new community sporting hub that could potentially be developed at Ballymacash Rangers FC.

All questions regarding usage received overwhelmingly positive responses. For example, only respondent stated that they would not make use of a new community sports hub in Ballymacash when asked in Question Two. This figure was replicated in Question Four, which indicated that such a facility would also be beneficial to the operation and organisation of charities and community organisations who are active in the area.

Features of a New Community Sports Hub and Activities Organised:

Survey participants were given the opportunity to put forward activities and services that they would like to see established, should a new community sports hub in Ballymacash be created. The responses received largely indicated a desire for a community gym and fitness classes to be established. Improvements to the training facilities used for football, such as a 4G pitch, also received a lot of support.

Overall:

Taking into consideration all elements of this public consultation exercise, it can be said with some confidence that the creation of a community sports hub in Ballymacash would be both welcomed and utilised by those associated with the sporting activities of the Club, by individuals and families from within the local community, and by a range of third sector organisations who are located in the wider Lisburn area.