



Listening Learning Leading



**Vale
of White Horse**

District Council

Crowmarsh Office Design Site Neighbours and Community Feedback

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

A review of the feedback received from site neighbours and the wider community on the design of the new South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils headquarters at Crowmarsh Gifford

MARCH 2019

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SUMMARY

1. This report has been produced to provide a summary of the feedback received from site neighbours and the wider community on the design of the new South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils office in the parish of Crowmarsh Gifford in South Oxfordshire

Two separate surveys were prepared, one for site neighbours and one for the wider community. Both sought to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the design of the new building.

The survey was live between Wednesday 23 January and Sunday 10 February 2019.

In total, 17 responses were received to the site neighbour survey and 71 to the wider community survey, a total of 88.

This report provides a summary of feedback from both surveys.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised the following:

Site neighbours

Approximately 120 letters with a link to a survey were hand-dropped to site neighbours (residential and businesses). A sample copy of the letter is provided in Appendix A.

Wider community

356 emails were issued with a link to a survey, including all town and parish councils in both districts, everyone on the councils' corporate database that had a residential address listed in Wallingford or Crowmarsh, and local clubs and services. A sample copy of the email is provided at Appendix B.

SITE NEIGHBOURS SURVEY - KEY FINDINGS

2. A copy of the site neighbour survey is provided in Appendix C.

We received 17 responses from site neighbours, with no responses received from neighbouring businesses. The table below breaks down the proportion of responses received from each street:

What street do you live on?		
	Response Per cent	Response total
Bellamy Way	18%	3
Benson Lane	6%	1
Howberry Farm	41%	7
Jethro Tull Gardens	11%	2
Winters Field	18%	3
Other (please specify): Newnham Green	6%	1

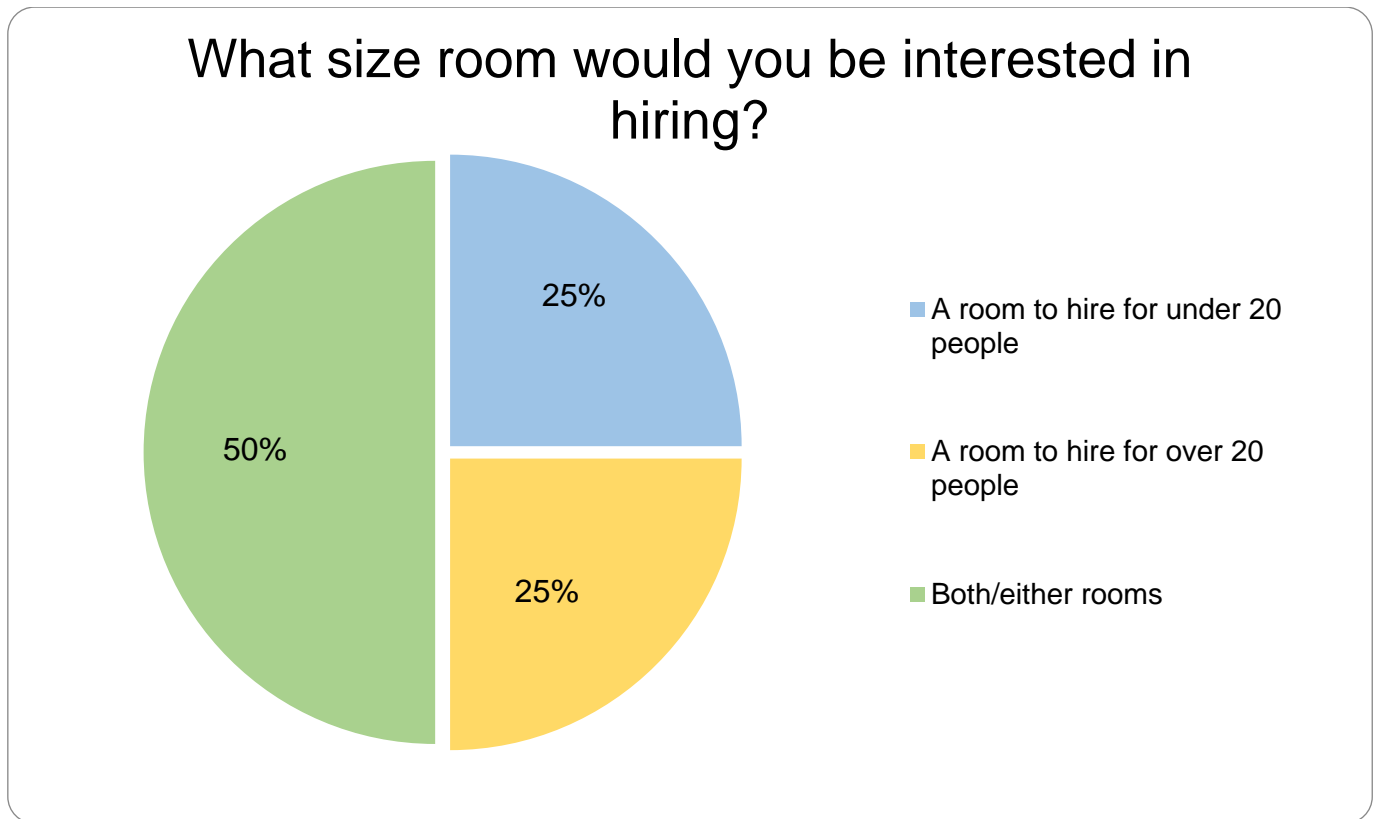
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

3. Respondents were advised that we are considering how the new office could be used by the local community and businesses, and asked what kind of use they would be interested in from a set of options, plus an opportunity to provide their own thoughts. Respondents could indicate multiple answers.

The table below shows that a variety of uses are of interest to the respondents, with gardens/seating being most popular (65 per cent). Seven people provided their own thoughts, requesting available community space for a variety of clubs including baby groups (2 mentions) and Scouts (3 mentions). Other comments included requesting parking for recreational events taking place locally, residential use for the elderly and a specialist recycling centre.

Option	Response per cent	Response total
A room to hire	24%	4
A café	47%	8
Gardens/seating	65%	11

The following set of questions looked to identify what types of rooms would be of interest to the respondents and the demand for them. It should be noted that 13 respondents skipped the question, with only four respondents completing this section so limited weight can be given to demand from this sample size. The pie chart below shows that there is interest from the four respondents in hiring a variety of small and large rooms.



The next question presented a matrix of options to allow respondents to highlight the proposed frequency they would utilise rooms to host a certain amount of people. Responses were received from three respondents, who indicated the frequency that the following rooms sizes would be of interest:

Two to four times a week	Once a week	Once every two months	Once every six months	Once a year
21-40 people	1-4 people	41-60 people	100+ people	5-10 people
	11-20 people			
	21-40 people			

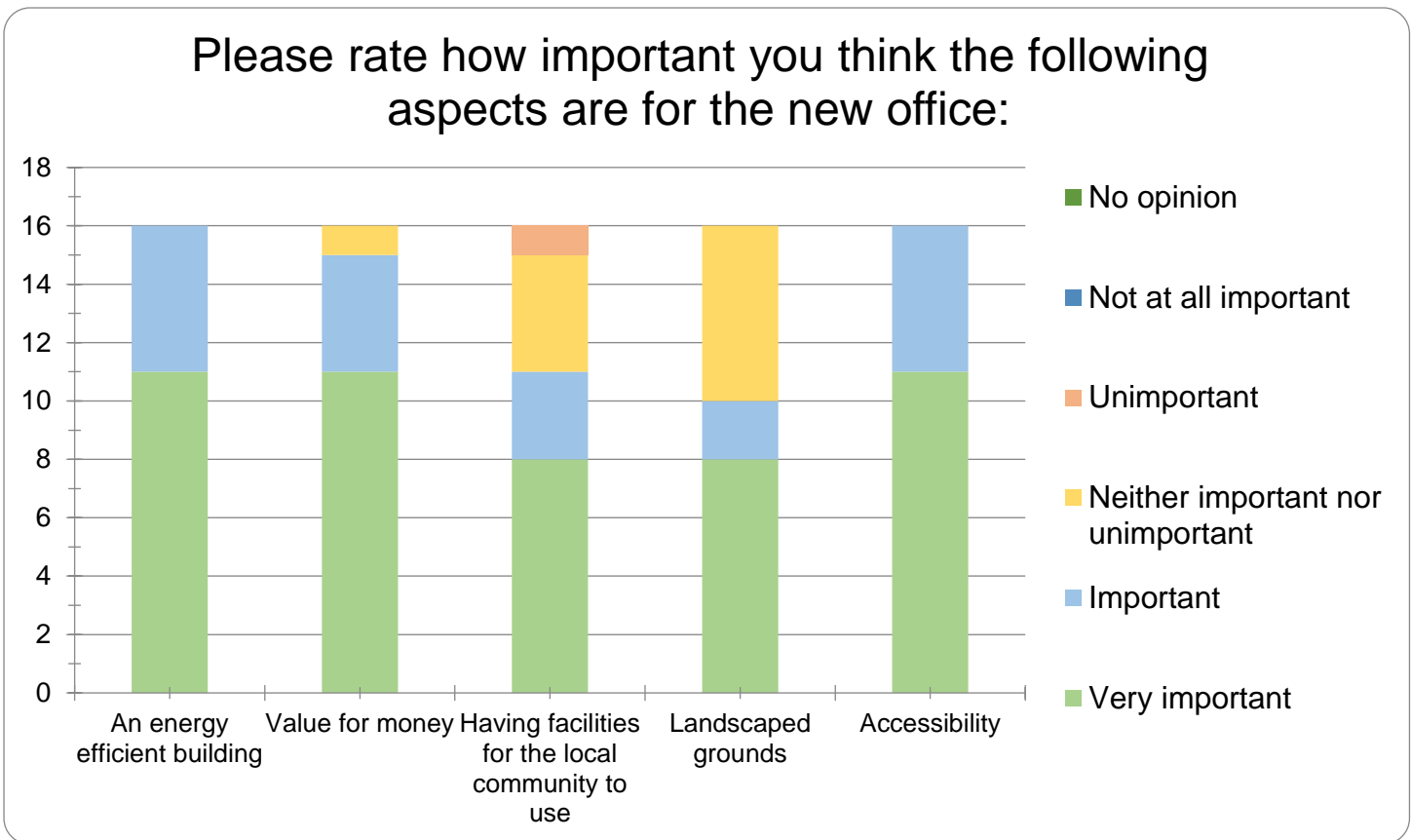
IMAGE

- The next question encouraged respondents to think about how different building styles have different characters and personalities. We asked respondents to identify words that they thought would best describe what a council HQ should look like. Fifteen people answered the question,

with the most common responses being “modern” (8 mentions, 53 per cent), sustainable and eco-friendly features (6 mentions, 40 per cent) and it being “welcoming” (3 mentions, 20 per cent).

Five respondents suggested that the building should be sensitive to the site neighbour boundaries and how it overlooks the surrounding area, specific reference was made to the height of the building and that it should be reflect the community it sits in in terms of height, design, materials and the landscape. Additional comments also referenced security and how the previous kitchen caused noise and unwanted smells to a site neighbour.

Respondents were then asked to rate how important they thought certain aspects of the new office were. This was expressed through a matrix of multiple options and answers. Respondents could indicate multiple answers:



Sixteen respondents answered this question, with the most important aspects being an energy efficient building, accessibility and value for money. Of least importance was landscaped grounds, however it should be noted that only one resident ranked any of the options as unimportant.

LIKES, DISLIKES AND GENERAL IDEAS

- The final section of the survey asked site neighbours for their likes and dislikes about the previous council office building on the site in Crowmarsh. Comments that were raised more than once are summarised below. A full list of comments is provided at Appendix D.

Respondents indicated the following likes:

- Good parking (free and ample so users did not park in nearby streets) (4 mentions)

- Low level (height) and not intrusive to residential properties (4 mentions)
- Easy to access/convenient to local areas (e.g. town and recreation ground - 3 mentions)
- Welcoming, light and airy reception (2 mentions)
- Good landscaping (2 mentions)

Respondents indicated the following dislikes:

- Design of building (4 mentions)
- Location of certain facilities e.g. bin storage caused disruption (3 mentions), kitchen causing noise and smells (1 mention), smoking area on public footpath (1 mention) and overall building should be moved further from Howbery Farm (1 mention)
- Needed better security (2 mentions)

6. The final section of the survey asked for thoughts, comments and suggestions for the new office building. Ten people responded, their responses are provided below (copied as written but split in to key themes):

<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>Needs to set the lead in having designed and built it from the start: thermal tubes on the roof for hot water; PV panels for generating electricity (preferably enough for export so that the building pays for itself); rainwater harvesting; systems for office waste to be readily sorted from source into different types for recycling; etc. Building materials should reflect local ecology and set an example for sustainability, efficiency, and beauty; e.g. thermally modified wood; and of course high-grade double or even triple glazing.</p> <p>The council office should be a flagship building; reflecting the aspirations of the Local Plans in promoting sustainability and community. It should strive to have a positive legacy for generations to come.</p> <p>Would like the building to be environmentally friendly.</p> <p>Be innovative and in the theme of conservation have multi purpose buildings! Let's not have to keep building on our green spaces with new community rooms if we can effectively use 'office space' which isn't used at evenings and weekends!!</p>
<p>Overlooking</p>	<p>I just think it is important to replace the old building with something of a similar height as it backs on to residential buildings. We do not want to be overlooked by offices. Or have that as a view from our tiny garden. It should be no more than a two storey as the last building was.</p> <p>Utilise the land better to position new building over other side, away from Howbery Farm.</p> <p>Would like the building to not be an eyesore as back onto it.</p>

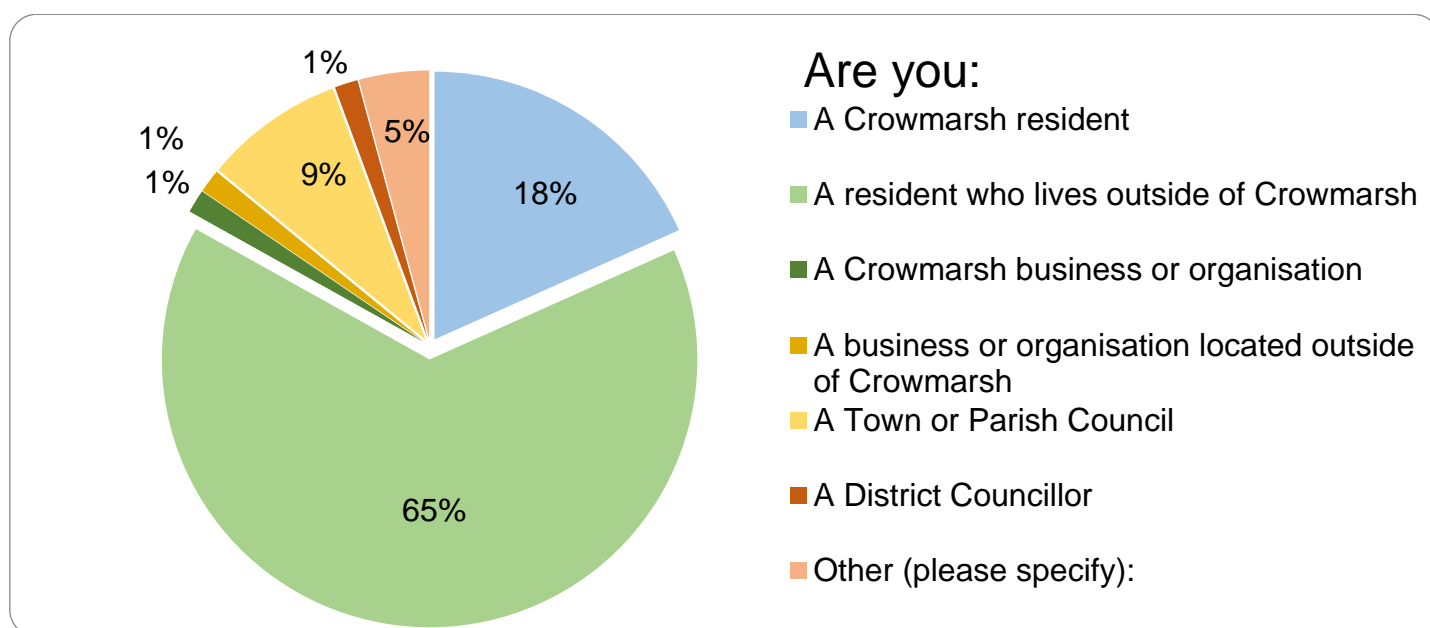
Smoking area	Perhaps allocate a smoking area for employees so that the park is not used for this.
Drainage / sewerage	<p>The council to take the responsibility for their own drains within their boundaries in the event of sewage flooding.</p> <p>We also have existing and ongoing drain/sewerage problems which affect my neighbours even more than me as they have drain covers in their garden and they have had to call people out when SODC drains are overflowing next to their property; this really needs to be addressed as already a health hazard. Hoping maintenance staff will be keeping an eye on this much more vigilantly and drains and plumbing works are not going to add to our problems, sorry for negativity but you did ask and this is what we have lived with, for many years and in my neighbours case decades!</p>
Design (community facilities)	<p>Preference would be for provision of rooms and indoor sports facilities (e.g. indoor badminton/tennis/football, larger birthday party venue than village hall) to hire rather than café or other facility that may cause more noise/disturbance, especially at weekends.</p> <p>Have several different rooms for different clubs, groups and conferences to use.</p> <p>Possible space for library facilities or local play group meeting point. A community room that could be use flexibly.</p> <p>I would love it to have a large community hall and café that looks onto the recreation ground, There is such a shortage of community space and with all the new house building we need more! If people are good enough to volunteer to provide Scouting, baby groups, youth groups the least we can do is give them a space!! Let's not have empty buildings at weekends - bring the council building into the community!</p> <p>Would like the building to be community and disabled friendly with some multi purpose function rooms.</p>
Other	<p>That the comments are taken into consideration .</p> <p>Not over budget and the grounds to be well managed.</p> <p>Think outside the box for the good of a community as well as tax payers!!</p>

COMMUNITY SURVEY - KEY FINDINGS

7. A copy of the community survey is provided in Appendix E.

The survey received 71 responses from a variety of different individuals, organisations and businesses. A high number of respondents were residents who live outside of Crowmarsh (65 per cent). Responses were also received from Crowmarsh residents (18 per cent) and town/parish councils (9 per cent). Two responses received were from local businesses or organisations (Festival Vision and CAB International).

'Other' responses (5 per cent) included a former district councillor and a resident who lives in neighbouring Vale of White Horse district.



Respondents that stated that they live outside of Crowmarsh were asked to indicate where they live. The vast majority were from Wallingford and the table below provides a full breakdown:

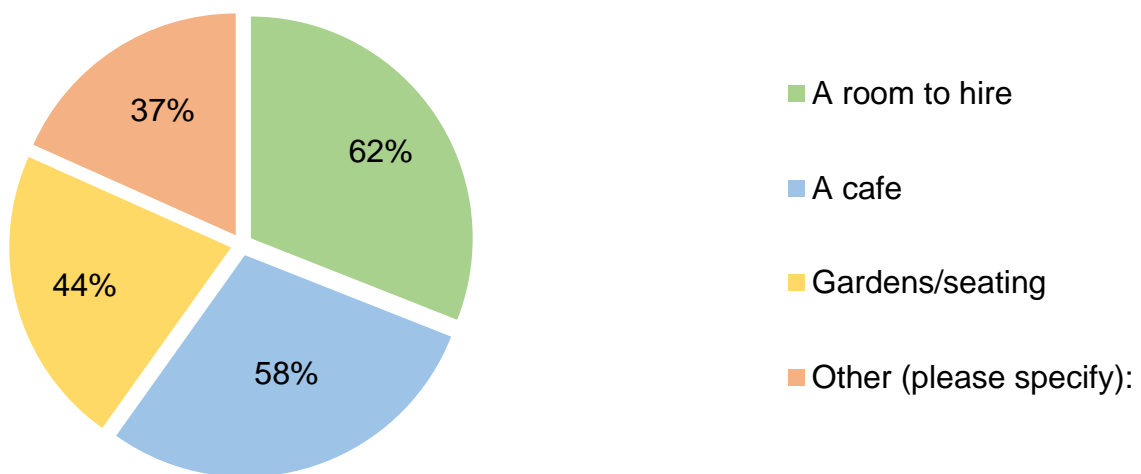
Abingdon	1	Roke	1
Benson	1	South Stoke	1
Berinsfield	1	Steventon	1
Berrick Salome	6	Stonor	1
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	1	Thame	1
Cholsey	2	Wallingford	18
Faringdon	1	Watlington	1
Harwell	1		
Idstone	1		
Kingston Blount	1		
Milton	2		
Mongewell	1		
North Stoke	2		
Preston Crowmarsh	1		

COMMUNITY ACCESS

8. Respondents were advised that we are considering how the new office could be used by the local community and businesses. They were asked to choose what kind of use they would be interested in from a set of options, plus an opportunity to provide their own thoughts. Respondents could indicate multiple answers.

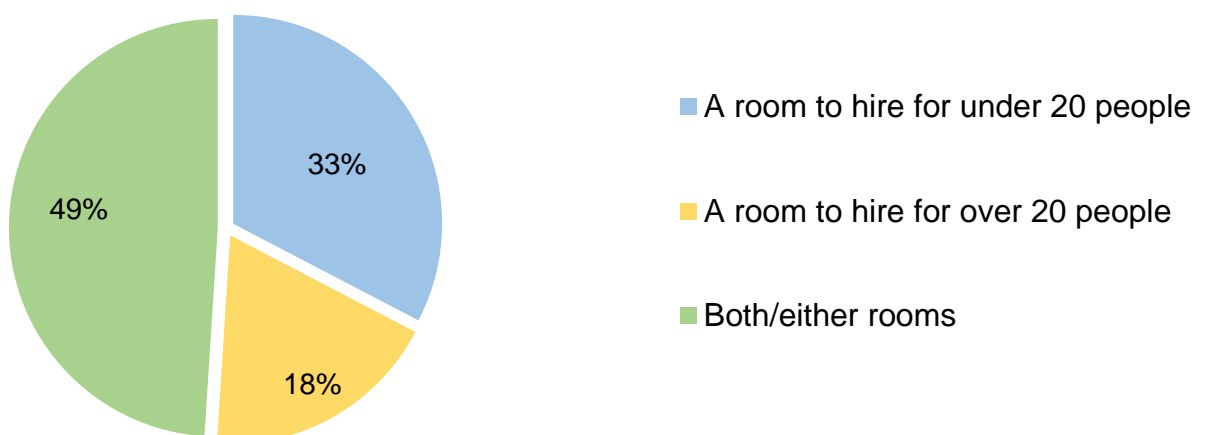
The pie chart below shows that a variety of uses would be of interest to respondents, with a room to hire being most popular (44 mentions). 'Other' comments most commonly referred to requesting additional flexible working spaces, accessible to a variety of individuals, organisations and groups to offer services or work from (12 mentions) and possible access to sports or leisure facilities such as a gym or pool (5 mentions). All comments received can be found in Appendix F.

What kind of uses would you be interested in?



The following set of questions looked to identify what types of rooms would be of interest to respondents and the demand for them. It has been noted that 22 respondents skipped the question, while 49 respondents completed this section. The pie chart below depicts that there is interest for a variety of small and large rooms to be available for hire:

What size room would you be interested in hiring?



9. The next question presented a matrix of options to allow respondents to highlight the proposed frequency they would utilise rooms to host a certain amount of people. Responses were received from 28 respondents who indicated the frequency that the following rooms sizes would be of interest:

Two to four times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Once every two months	Once every three month	Once every six months	Once a year
1-4 people	5-10 people	1-4 people	1-4 people	1-4 people	1-4 people	1-4 people
	11-20 people	5-10 people	5-10 people	5-10 people	5-10 people	5-10 people
	21-40 people	11-20 people	11-20 people	11-20 people	11-20 people	11-20 people
	41 – 60 people	21-40 people		41-60 people	41 – 60 people	21-40 people
	100+ people			61-100 people	100+ people	41 – 60 people
						61-100 people
						100+ people

IMAGE

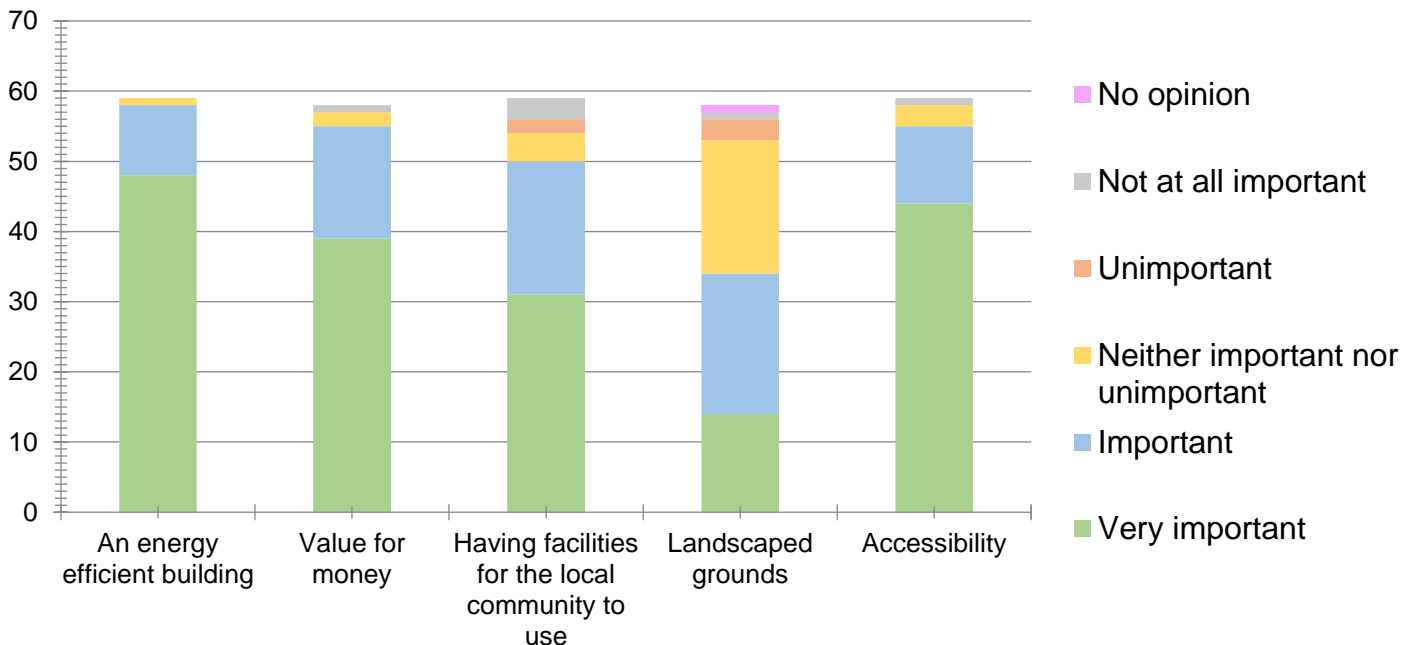
10. The next question encouraged respondents to think about how different building styles have different characters and personalities. We asked respondents to identify words that they thought would best describe what a council HQ should look like.

Forty five respondents answered this question, with the most common answers including “modern” (14 mentions, 30 percent) and ‘welcoming’ (6 mentions, 34 per cent). Other comments referred to the building being mindful to the local surroundings and taking consideration to landscaping to ensure the building fits in. Additional comments also referred to the mindfulness of materials used, energy efficiency and disabled access. All comments can be viewed in Appendix G.

Respondents were then asked to rate how important they thought certain aspects of the new office were. This was expressed through a matrix of multiple options and answers. The bar graph below depicts the answers indicated. Respondents could indicate multiple answers.

The graph shows that the energy efficiency and building and accessibility of the building were most important, closely followed by the building being value for money. Five respondents did not think that landscaping was important.

Please rate how important you think the following aspects are for the new office:



FEEDBACK – LIKES, DISLIKES AND GENERAL IDEAS

11. The final section of the survey looked to draw feedback from respondents on their likes and dislikes of the previous Crowmarsh office building.

Comments that were raised more than once have been grouped into themes and provided below. All comments received can be viewed in Appendix H.

Respondents indicated the following likes:

- Free large car park (12 mentions)
- Welcoming front of office (7 mentions)
- Low rise building (6 mentions)
- Accessible location (6 mentions)
- General design comments (e.g. welcoming, modern, not offensive - 4 mentions)
- Traditional design (2 mentions)

Respondents indicated the following dislikes:

- Not very attractive or inspiring (12 mentions)
- Poor reception area (2 mentions)
- Council chamber needed to be improved (2 mentions)
- Building too grand (2 mentions)

- Not in-keeping with surrounding properties and not enough landscaping in winter to screen from adjacent houses (2 mentions)
- Car park at front of site (2 mentions)
- Dark exterior aspects (2 mentions)

12. Respondents were also given the opportunity to share additional thoughts and ideas. Additional comments were received from 30 respondents. A brief summary has been provided below, however all comments can be viewed in Appendix I.

Design

- Building should be in-keeping with area and environment (4)
- Needs to be sustainable and eco-friendly (6)
- Quality landscaping with places for people to sit (4)
- Built to last (2)
- Include a swimming pool / keep fit facilities (4)
- Showers to encourage cycling to work and exercise at lunchtime (2)
- An appropriate building for staff (2)

Car parking and traffic

- Improved car parking for the public
- Parking available at weekends
- Sufficient parking
- Consideration to Wallingford and surrounding roads (2)

Community uses

- Positive general comment about community uses (4)

SITE NEIGHBOUR AND WIDER COMMUNITY - CONCLUSIONS

13. There is a clear consensus between the responses received from site neighbours and the wider community that the building should be designed to be in-keeping with the local community. Many responses stated that the building should be low-level and energy efficient.

It is also clear from both surveys that car parking is important. From the site neighbours' perspective, responses indicated that it helps to keep the roads clear. From the community's perspective, it appears to provide a local community facility.

When asked about the building's image, both survey results demonstrated that people thought the building should be modern, welcoming and sustainable / eco-friendly. Respondents from both surveys also thought that the height and positioning of the building should be mindful of the immediate local community.

HOW WE HAVE USED RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

14. Thank you to everyone who participated in these surveys.

The responses are being reviewed by officers and the wider design team and we will provide a response to the key themes in due course.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about these surveys or the results presented in this report, please email the Community Engagement Team on haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk

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