



“Somewhere to hang out” Teenagers’ Outdoor Recreational needs in Celbridge. A partnership perspective

Dr Carol Barron, Dr Karinda Tolland and Ms Mary-Jane Emmett



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank and acknowledge all the teenagers in Celbridge who took part in this project and gave generously of their time, knowledge and experiences of teenage play and recreation in Celbridge.

The authors wish to acknowledge and thank the Steering Group on this project for their invaluable contributions throughout the lifetime of the project. The Steering Group Members are

Simon Wallace, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent at Kildare County Council (Project Funding Organisation)

Emma Berney, Coordinator, Kildare Children & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), Tusla – Chair of Steering Group.

Celbridge Community Council – Liam O'Dwyer & Thelma Strong

Celbridge Leixlip Municipal District – Cllr Ciara Galvin, Cllr Vanessa Liston, Cllr Joe Neville

St Wolstan's Parents Association – Jim Burke

In Sync Youth & Family Services – Joyce Brennan

Foroige – Darren Shanahan & Ayisha Lightbourne

Kildare County Council Community Department – Valerie Devaney

The research and consultation to provide Outdoor Facilities for Young People in Celbridge was funded by LPT Funding provided by the elected members of the Celbridge/ Leixlip Municipal District'

The authors also wish to acknowledge and thank the following schools for facilitating the Consultation workshops in their premises: St. Wolstan's Community School, Celbridge; Salesian College, Celbridge; Celbridge Community School, Celbridge; and, Scoil Mochua, Celbridge. Additionally, we acknowledge and thank the Celbridge Scouts Group and the Youth Drama Club for also enabling us to run workshops during their meetings.

The authors acknowledge and thank Liam O'Dwyer and Victoria Smyth from the O'Reilly Library at Dublin City University for their invaluable assistance with ArcGIS and StoryMap.

Abbreviations

CYPSC:	Child and Youth People’s Services Committees
LAP:	Local Area Plan
LEAP:	Locally Equipped Areas for Play
MUGAs:	Multi Use Game Areas
NEAP:	Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play
OSI:	Ordnance Survey Ireland
Tusla:	Child and Family Agency
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WHO:	World Health Organisation

To cite this report we suggest: Barron, C., Tolland, K., Emmett, M-J. (2022) *“Somewhere to hang out” Teenagers Outdoor Recreational needs in Celbridge. A partnership perspective.* Dublin. Dublin City University. ISBN: 978-1-911669-44-9

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was carried out on behalf of Kildare County Council to investigate what type(s) of outdoor youth facility teenagers living in Celbridge, Co. Kildare want and their preferred locations for the facility within the town.

Teenagers have the right under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ^[1] to be heard on any issue which impacts their lives, such as an outdoor youth facility(s). In total 541 teenagers took part in the consultation process which is approximately 22% of the teenage population (11 – 18 Years) in Celbridge.

At the time of the last census for which published data is available in 2016, the post-primary population in Celbridge across the three post-primary schools was 1,544. Six years later, using the Department of Education published enrolment figures, this has increased to 2,203, an increase of 659 pupils or just under 43%.

The provision of outdoor play spaces for younger children has received considerable attention in research, policy and planning, however, the topic has not been given the same level of consideration in relation to teenagers. Teenagers need places that offer opportunities to socialise, be with peers and explore their emerging independence. This is an important dimension for the development of their sense of identity and belonging.

Providing outdoor spaces for teenage play and recreation and engaging them in consultation and design processes helps to create stewardship, ownership, respect and a sense of pride in their community. This has the potential to facilitate broad societal benefits including improved community relations between adults and teenagers, a reduction in anti-social behaviour, and environmental and community improvements.

Main Findings

Teenagers in Celbridge informed us that the town does not have any outdoor facilities specifically for their age group. The lack of teen-specific resources in Celbridge forces teenagers to appropriate existing spaces, such as playgrounds or car parks. Teenagers see a link between the lack of youth facilities and anti-social behaviour and therefore want a safe,

teen-specific space with multiple functions. They want an outdoor youth facility to be accessible to them, by being within walking distance of their homes and having cycle paths to improve independent mobility.

Teenagers overwhelmingly requested a space to hang out. To facilitate this, seating was suggested as the most important aspect of an outdoor youth facility, which was followed by shelter. Teenagers requested other features for the outdoor youth facility, such as outdoor gym equipment, charging ports, WIFI and zip lines. Other than hang-out spaces, skateparks, ball parks and teen playgrounds were the most requested types of facilities by teenagers.

Teenagers would prefer to have multiple outdoor youth facilities rather than one big one. They reasoned that having multiple facilities would allow for ease of access and reduce overcrowding and would provide a better chance of appeasing the wants and needs of teenagers of all ages. Willowbrook was the most frequently suggested place to install an outdoor youth facility, followed by the grounds of Castletown House, as these are places where they already naturally migrate to. These locations can provide passive surveillance, which increases teenagers' sense of safety, they are situated near shops which teenagers also requested. These locations are aesthetically pleasing, with grass and trees. Hazelhatch is another location where teenagers would like an outdoor youth facility. Teenagers told us there aren't any existing resources for teenagers here and they would have to travel far to get to a facility close to the centre of the town.

There is a growing design movement that seeks to provide outdoor spaces that meet the unique needs of teenage girls. Common themes in relation to making outdoor spaces more welcoming to teenage girls include offering a range of smaller spaces, social seating, exercise bars and swings; improving safety with better lighting and good sightlines, making sure paths have no dead-ends and putting facilities in well-frequented areas; and providing facilities, such as public toilets. Carefully designed, more playful and more inclusive spaces work for all teenagers.

Teenagers believe that adults in Celbridge have a negative attitude towards them, and report feeling excluded or unwelcome within the town by adults. They feel that Celbridge was built as a commuter town for adults, and teenagers' needs have never been taken into account. One of the most important factors in the provision of outdoor space for teenage play and recreation is the need for societal change and far greater recognition of their right to occupy the public domain.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The preliminary population figures from the 2022 Census indicate that Kildare is one of the counties with the highest population growth (+11%), with the population of Kildare increasing from 222,504 to 246,977 people resident in the county ^[2]. Celbridge has experienced rapid growth over the past 70 years from a population of 567 persons in 1951 to a population of 20,288 persons in 2016 ^[3]. In the 2016 Census, the last census for which we have published figures, there were 2,442 children between the ages of 5 – 11 years who in 2022 are now aged between 11 – 17 years, the age cohort which is the focus of this research. At the time of the 2016 census, the post-primary population in Celbridge across the three post-primary schools was 1,544. Six years later, this has increased to 2,203, an increase of 659 pupils or just under 43%. This tells us that the age profile of Celbridge includes a high percentage of children and teenagers. A recurring theme in the policy documents is the lack of appropriate play and recreation provisions for teenagers. Kildare County Council now wishes to develop an outdoor youth facility in Celbridge as a pilot scheme to inform the development of other play facilities in County Kildare as recommended within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2028 ^[4].

This research was carried out on behalf of Kildare County Council to investigate what type(s) of outdoor youth facility teenagers living in Celbridge, Co. Kildare want and their preferred locations for the facility within the town. The data was collected over 2 months across primary and secondary schools and various youth groups in Celbridge. A total of 541 teenagers in Celbridge between the ages of 11 – 19 years took part in the study, accounting for approximately 22% percent of teenagers in Celbridge. This included 19 participatory consultation workshops with 350 teenagers lasting 40 – 80 minutes; an online survey with 191 teenagers; and two go-along interviews with four teenagers. The term “participation” in this context is “about individuals and groups of individuals having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity” ^[5].

1.1 Key Organisations and Personnel as Participation Allies

The provision of public play and recreation resources and facilities in Ireland comes largely under the remit of city and county councils, specifically; all public parks, playgrounds, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), skate parks, communal green areas in housing estates, public beaches and other green spaces. In addition, city and county councils have a major influence on the built environment in which children live their lives, from granting or refusing planning permissions for the design and delivery of housing developments, roads, traffic calming measures, shopping hubs and so forth. Children occupy all of these spaces and places in meeting their play and recreational needs.

Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) are a key structure identified by the Government to plan and coordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. Their age remit spans all children and young people aged from 0 to 24 years. The purpose of the CYPSC is to ensure effective interagency coordination and collaboration to achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people in their area, aligned with the 5 National Outcomes identified in the National Policy Framework for Children & Young People: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures ^[6].

One of the key priority areas of focus for Kildare CYPSC is youth facilities and activities. One of the key objectives in the Kildare CYPSC 3-Year Plan ^[7] is to support the development of appropriate play, recreation and cultural spaces for teens. There is a specific action in the Plan *To pilot the development of innovative teen play space in the county*. Kildare CYPSC has partnered with Kildare County Council and local stakeholders to realise the goal of outdoor facilities for teens in Celbridge.

1.2 Play and Recreation: United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

In 1989 the child's right to play and recreation was acknowledged as a universal right under Article 31 of the UNCRC ^[1]. In 2013, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

adopted a General Comment (General Comment No. 17) that clarifies for governments worldwide the meaning and importance of Article 31. A General Comment is an official statement/quasi-legal document providing guidance on the actions required by governments to ensure the implementation of an Article relating to the UNCRC.

1.3 Public Space

Through the General Comment, the UN Committee is concerned about the way that public spaces (see Figure 1) are designed as they tend to provide little that meets the needs and rights of children and teenagers to play and meet with friends. The General Comment stresses that children need access to inclusive spaces that are free from inappropriate hazards and close to their own homes, as well as opportunities for independent mobility as they get older and more confident being out and about in their neighbourhood and wider community.

Figure 1. Public space in Celbridge



Homes, schools, residential streets, local neighbourhoods, city or town centres and cyberspace are all key environments in the everyday lives of teenagers and these spaces have a very significant impact on their sense of belonging, levels of self-esteem and their social and emotional wellbeing. Teenagers' desire for social interaction, to be with friends and part of a crowd, is a strong motivator for their use of places like town centres. For those not yet old

enough or unable to venture further afield, residential streets and other places like shops in and around local neighbourhoods also provide important environments for gathering together.

1.4 Teenagers

The Committee emphasises that greater recognition of the forms and locations of play and recreation preferred by teenagers is particularly necessary. Teenagers need places that offer opportunities to socialise, be with peers and explore their emerging independence. This is an important dimension for the development of their sense of identity and belonging (see Figure 2. Teenagers in classroom taking part in Consultation workshop.)

As children grow older, their needs and wants evolve from settings that afford play opportunities to places offering opportunities to socialise, be with peers or be alone. They will also explore progressively more opportunities involving risk-taking and challenge. These experiences are developmentally necessary for adolescents and contribute to their discovery of identity and belonging ^[1].

Figure 2. Teenagers in classroom taking part in Consultation workshop



How adults think about teenagers will therefore have a significant impact on older children's ability to find time and space for playing with their friends. In General Comment 17, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child raises concerns about decreasing tolerance towards children and teenagers' presence in public spaces ^[1]. It emphasises that this is a particular problem for teenagers who, largely as a consequence of negative media coverage, are perceived as a threat and therefore discouraged from using public spaces. Teenagers are likely to withdraw from public spaces if they feel threatened or unwelcome, leading to a sense of disconnection from society. Also, a decline in children's time, space and permission for play may play a role in the significant increases in adolescent mental health problems.

The term 'adolescent', 'teenager', 'young people' and 'youth' are often used interchangeably. The term 'teenager' or 'teen' is predominantly used in this work where possible as this is the term specifically used by the teens themselves.

1.4.1 What counts as 'play' for teenagers?

The play behaviours of teenagers do not receive as much attention as younger children and the focus is often placed on their interest in competitive and organised sports or other recreational activities. A common feature of teenage play and recreation is often the mundane and everyday ways in which they make use of their environments. This 'other stuff' teenagers do when left to their own devices can be summarised as "hanging out with friends", "having banter" or "messaging about". While they may not always call it "play", it shares many of the characteristics commonly associated with playing.

1.4.2 Gender differences in play and recreation

General Comment 17 identifies a range of barriers for girls, such as parental concerns for safety, lack of appropriate facilities and cultural assumptions imposing limitations on the expectations and behaviour of girls, particularly in the teenage years. Given the widespread barriers impacting girls' opportunities to play, the UN Committee urges governments and policymakers to take action to challenge gender stereotypes that heighten discrimination and opportunities for girls to have equal access to opportunities for play and recreation.

Given the projected population growth for the Kildare region and the increasing teenage population in Celbridge over the coming decade, it is clear that the provision of youth facilities is a priority for future planning for the county. Children and teenagers have differing needs, and

the places where they play and socialise will have different characteristics, space and location requirements. The following section discusses the best practice in providing outdoor spaces for teenage play and recreation and the broad benefits associated with this.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter sets out the literature on teenage play and recreation including the benefits of outdoor space for teenagers and also the wider community. This review also outlines the key policies informing and supporting the delivery of an outdoor youth facility(s) in Celbridge.

2.1 Adolescence

Adolescence is a distinct period of life between childhood and adulthood that begins with puberty and spans roughly 10 – 19 years old ^[8]. This maturational period is characterised by rapid and profound physical, cognitive, social and psychological changes that are pivotal for the life course ^[9]. Some of the most important changes that occur during adolescence involve the further development of the self-concept and the development of new attachments. This is accompanied by a call for independence and privacy, along with establishing close relationships with peers and other people beyond family. As a result, parent attachment and adult supervision generally decrease and teenagers gradually extend their range of movement, pursue their own interests and expand their social relationships, all of which are crucial for their development and wellbeing ^[10, 11, 12].

Studies have shown that teenagers may engage in behaviours that risk their health and wellbeing, including but not limited to, decreased physical activity and increased sedentary behaviour ^[13]. This is a contributing factor to the global epidemic of childhood overweight and obesity and the myriad health ramifications associated with obesity-related conditions. Adolescence is also a time of rising incidence of psychiatric illnesses with mental health problems among teenagers increasing on a global scale ^[14, 15].

2.2 Benefits of Outdoor Space

There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that the experience of the outdoors has the potential to confer a multitude of benefits on teenagers' physical development, emotional and mental health and wellbeing, and social and educational development, which may have long-lasting effects into adulthood. Outdoor spaces in particular facilitate many vital everyday activities that contribute to teenagers' health and wellbeing (see Figure 3 Open, green space

in Celbridge) via opportunities for play and recreation, socialising and restoration^[16,17, 18].

Figure 3. Open, green space in Celbridge



Through their social interactions in public outdoor spaces, teenagers develop a sense of belonging and connectedness which is formative for their identity and contributes to their psychological wellbeing ^[19, 20]. Additionally, despite adolescence being a period of declining physical activity ^[13, 21], play and recreational opportunities are a motivating factor for teenagers to venture outside ^[22] and physical activity generally increases outdoors ^[21]. This makes it an important mediator between time spent outdoors and physical health. Despite this, urbanisation and new lifestyles revolving around the home and digital technologies are changing teenagers' access, use and relationship to outdoor spaces ^[23]. There is mounting evidence that teenagers are now spending much time indoors in sedentary activity with negative consequences for their health and wellbeing ^[24, 25].

Outdoor spaces for teenage play and recreation also have the potential to contribute to the health and happiness of the wider community. For instance, numerous studies have shown that those associated with vandalism and other delinquent activities of public outdoor space are largely teenagers, particularly males ^[26, 27]. Boredom, lack of play and recreational

opportunities and facilities, exclusion/alienation from public space, and family and community breakdown are commonly cited causes of this behaviour [27]. Providing outdoor spaces for teenage play and recreation, and engaging them in consultation and design processes, helps to create stewardship, ownership, respect and a sense of pride in their community. This has the potential to facilitate broad societal benefits including improved community relations between adults and teenagers, a reduction in anti-social behaviour that affects others and environmental and community improvements [28].

2.3 Where do Teenagers ‘Hang Out’?

Research has shown that teenagers value environments for the range of behaviours (rather than the specific behaviours) they support and that the richest opportunities for play are provided in environments that include other people [29]. This suggests teenagers will seek out places where they can meet and adapt the environment to their own interests and desires.

Figure 4. Local shop in Celbridge



Teenagers also often choose outdoor spaces to hang out with friends away from the adult gaze. They perceive shops, parks, streets, rivers and recreational facilities (e.g. sports fields, skate parks) as appealing places to visit to hang out and socialise with friends [30, 31] (see Figure

4. Of a teen ‘hang out’ space in Celbridge). Engaging in cyberspace is also an everyday experience for many teenagers with social media acting as an alternative to more traditional forms of communication. It is not surprising therefore that access to WIFI has been identified as a key consideration in the design of spaces for teenagers.

It is known that outdoor spaces specifically designed and allocated for teenagers are not the norm. Furthermore, research into the provision of outdoor space for teenagers is minimal, compared to children, who have been given more consideration. Teenagers’ appropriation of existing public spaces, such as parks, playgrounds and streets is frequently viewed negatively by adults, with passive and active strategies employed by adults to exclude them [32, 33]. It is noteworthy that a key finding from a comprehensive consultation with teenagers in Kildare previously reported that teenagers felt that they were ‘not welcome’ in certain public places (e.g. playgrounds, shops): ‘Young people growing up in Kildare feel a strong sense of exclusion from public and community spaces by virtue of being ‘a young person’’ [34].

It is crucial that society be engaged in a dialogue that builds a more positive relationship about the use of public outdoor spaces for play and recreation across generations and age groups so that teenagers are accepted and valued as users of community spaces and the public realm more generally [1].

2.4 Key policies informing and supporting an outdoor youth facility(s) in Celbridge

Numerous national, regional and local policies were consulted for this review which support the delivery of an outdoor youth facility(s) in Celbridge including:

Teenspace: The National Recreation Policy for Young People; Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Well Being 2013 – 2025; Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014 – 2020; Kildare County Council Open Space Strategy 2011; Kildare County Council Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2021 – 2031; Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023; Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2028; County Kildare Access Strategy 2020 – 2022; Kildare County Council Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024; County Kildare Integration Strategy 2014 – 2019;

Kildare Local Economic & Community Development Plan 2016 – 2021; The Kildare Children and Young People’s Services Committee Plan (2019 – 2021); Kildare County Play Strategy 2018 – 2028; Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023; Celbridge Town Renewal Plan (Youth Survey) 2021 [4, 6, 7, 35- 45].

There are obvious links and overlap of objectives and suggested outcomes between the policies. For this reason, a brief synopsis of only the key policies and objectives which specifically inform the delivery of an outdoor youth facility(s) in Celbridge is provided.

2.4.1 Teenspace: The National Recreation Policy for Young People (2007)

The National Recreation Policy [35] provides a strategic framework for the promotion of positive recreational opportunities for young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years. The policy objectives are broadly concerned with developing youth-friendly and youth-safe environments, underpinned by the voice of young people in designing and implementing local recreation policies and facilities. The stated aim of the policy is for ‘An Ireland where the importance of recreation is recognised so that young people experience a range of quality recreational opportunities to enrich their lives and promote physical, cultural, mental and social wellbeing’ [46]. From the public consultation conducted with young people for the National Recreational Policy the most frequently reported barriers to participation in recreation were a lack of recreational facilities and activities, money, transport difficulties, time, lack of volunteers to act as leaders and coaches, lack of information on recreation and the weather.

Improved recreational opportunities for young people at a local level are viewed as an important factor in determining the success of the National Recreation Policy. Local authorities have a wide range of responsibilities under this policy from the development of MUGAs, adopting a ‘Home Zone’ approach in planning new developments, reviewing the operation of the skateboard park scheme, to involving local communities, developing partnerships and consulting with young people.

2.4.2 Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025

Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing [36] is the national framework for the whole of Government and whole of society action to improve the health and wellbeing

of people living in Ireland. The vision of Healthy Ireland is a country where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility. The Framework sets out four central goals and details actions under six thematic areas, in which society can participate to achieve these goals. Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life; Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities across Irish society; Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing; Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

Ireland, like many other developed countries, is facing serious challenges within its health system. Healthy Ireland ^[36] reports that the current health status of people living in Ireland and their lifestyle trends are leading us toward a costly and unhealthy future. The Healthy Ireland policy has a strong focus on the creation of healthy generations of children, who can enjoy their lives to the full and reach their full potential as they develop into adults, which is critical to the country's future. Under Theme 1, Governance and Policy, reference 1.9, there is a clear action to 'Draw up specific proposals in relation to the potential role of local authorities in the area of health and wellbeing, having regard to the principles set out in Paragraph 2.5 of the Action Programme for Effective Local Government'.

Under Theme 3, Empowering People And Communities, reference 3.10, the action states that 'In creating 'activity friendly' environments: cycle lanes, playgrounds, well-lit paths, etc, local authorities will engage with local communities, schools and other stakeholders to plan facilities that are appropriate to the needs of the community'. Thus, specific links between this national policy amongst many others to Local County Council plans and policies are already in existence.

2.4.3 Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020.

At the central government level, Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People ^[6], represents the first overarching national children's policy framework comprehending the age ranges spanning children and young people (0 – 24 years). This document sets the government's key commitments to children and young people and is rooted in a determination to make Ireland a good place to be a child. The vision is for 'all

children and young people to enjoy growing up in Ireland, to enjoy school, play, family and community’.

A strong message in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures is that children growing up in Ireland should have the opportunity for play and recreation. It aims to ensure that children and young people are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing. There are five National Outcomes within the national policy and Outcome 1. deals with children and young people being active and healthy encompassing physical and mental wellbeing. Outcome 1 identifies that children and young people should be ‘Enjoying play, recreation, sport, arts, culture and nature’. The Policy points out that play, recreation, sport, arts, culture and the natural environment are essential to the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and promote the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence and self-efficacy, as well as physical, social, cognitive and emotional strength and skills ^[47] . The Irish Government recognises the multiple social, emotional, physical, psychological and cognitive benefits of play and recreation. Within Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the government also committed to continuing to develop play and recreation spaces for both children and young people, from playgrounds (for multiple age ranges) to youth cafés, and sports and leisure centres, and where possible look to weatherproof these spaces.

Outcome 3. deals with keeping children and young people safe and protected from harm. Outcome 3 is specifically related to crime and anti-social behaviour. The Government explicitly recognises the importance of providing safe, friendly recreational spaces for older children and young people as a protective factor in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour. Outcome 5 (Connected, respected and contributing to their world) is also very important as a protective factor in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour. This outcome speaks to friendships and belonging, having positive self-esteem and personal resilience, growing independence and personal agency, having a voice, and engaging with friends, community, society and the democratic processes. Outcome 4. deals with economic security and opportunity. Outcome 4 is that children and young people should be able to live and grow up in a safe, healthy, sustainable and child-friendly environment that supports their developmental and learning needs. The Government recognises the role of Local Government in developing physically safe, sustainable communities, ensuring areas that are safe for walking and cycling, and the provision of outdoor green spaces for play and recreation.

It is worth noting that in the Government's consultation for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, children and young people wanted more playgrounds; have playgrounds suited for older children; have monkey bars, swings and slides in schools; increased security in existing playgrounds to prevent vandalism and have more time for play. Young people wanted to have more places to 'hang out' in a safe environment; more youth clubs and cafés; more adventure and skateboard parks; air-soft ranges and paintball facilities; and more fun places to go.

2.4.4 Kildare County Play Strategy 2018 – 2028

It was identified through the Kildare County Play Strategy ^[43] that resources for teenagers need to be prioritised moving forward. An associated action of the Council is to 'Develop an outdoor teen facility in Celbridge as a pilot scheme to inform the development of other play facilities in County Kildare'.

Kildare County Council developed a Play Strategy, via extensive consultation with various age groups of children and with the public, to inform the provision of outdoor play and recreation in Kildare over a ten-year period. The Play Strategy was established in recognition of the importance of play and recreation to support the development of healthy, active children and teenagers in county Kildare and the fact that over 35% of the population is aged between 0 – 18 years. The overall vision for the county is to have Kildare recognised as a child-friendly county and a leader in public play & recreation provision. Building on this vision, there are five themes relating to Public Awareness, Education and Communication; Public Realm & Play, Recreation Infrastructure; Health & Wellbeing; Environment, Culture & Heritage; and, Partnerships & Collaboration. A series of objectives and actions have been developed under each theme. Objective 2.5 'Ensure that the built environment is child friendly and accessible for children'. Objective 2.6 'To develop appropriate play and recreation spaces for older young people (teens) in which they feel welcome and safe'. Especially relevant to the development of an outdoor youth facility in Celbridge is the associated action to objective 2.6 to 'Develop a pilot scheme in the county in relation to play and recreation spaces for teens'.

2.4.5. Kildare County Council Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2021 – 2031

Accessible and usable outdoor amenity space close to homes and communities is a fundamental component of healthy placemaking and a healthy lifestyle (37). For the Kildare County Council Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2021 – 2031, ‘Open Space’ is defined as space that is accessible to the public, is open-air, and may be in public or private ownership (when accessible to the public), the primary use of which is for outdoor recreation and amenity.

The key goals of the Open Space Strategy are to create a vision for open space and outdoor recreation provision in Kildare; to determine the supply and demand for open spaces and recreational amenities; to assess the play and recreation needs of a growing population across all age groups; to identify existing deficiencies and future opportunities; to optimise natural resources and green infrastructure; and, to guide the future provision of open spaces throughout County Kildare, by informing policies and objectives in the Kildare County Development Plan and Local Area Plans. The vision of the Open Space Strategy is to ‘advance a network of accessible, inclusive and safe open spaces to sustain the recreational, environmental, health and wellbeing needs of the community for current and future generations’.

As a result of extensive public consultation, the Open Space Strategy identified a deficit of facilities for teenagers across the County, and also that more facilities (with WIFI and covered seating) are required, along with more children’s playgrounds, specifically in Celbridge and Newbridge.

The Open Space Strategy outlines an extensive list of recommendations and actions, some of which directly relate to teen space. A short-term action of the Strategy, to be carried out in 1 – 3 years, is a requirement for ‘teen space to be considered as part of the public open space provision in large new residential developments’ (Action 30). Other key actions within the Strategy are to implement an innovative pilot consultation project with teenagers in Celbridge to inform and develop appropriate outdoor youth facility(s) in the community. And to identify additional appropriate locations in the County for skatepark facilities.

A specific initiative within the Open Space Strategy is to build on the proposed teen space

consultation exercise and deliver a bespoke teen space in Celbridge as a pilot project and roll it out to other appropriate locations in Kildare's towns and villages. Regarding open space and recreational standards, the Strategy acknowledges that the Field in Trust (2015) document provides a good example of a recent review and application of open space provision, particularly relating to outdoor sports and play facilities.

2.4.6 Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029

The Kildare County Development Plan ^[4] is the key strategy document that structures the proper planning and sustainable development of land use across County Kildare over a six-year period. The Development Plan seeks to address the physical, economic, social and environmental needs of the community, in terms of supporting structured new development, protecting the environment, and enhancing valued assets and amenities.

Chapter 10 deals with community infrastructure and creative places. The aim is to provide for or facilitate the development of healthy, sustainable, inclusive communities through a wide range of community, social, educational, recreational, and cultural facilities where accessibility and social inclusion are provided for. It is an objective of the Council to 'Increase the quantity and improve the quality of children's play facilities across the county, particularly in areas where a lack of provision has been identified (e.g. play areas should be within a 10-minute walk of new and existing residential areas) (SC O23). This links with other objectives of the Council to 'Identify deficiencies of play space for children and teenagers as part of the Local Area Plan process to ensure provision is made in future developments to cater for the projected population' (SC O24). And to 'Integrate, where possible and practical, the design of youth space facilities as part of all newly planned and proposed extensions to community facilities in the county (SC O25).

Chapter 13 deals with landscape, recreation and amenity. The aim is to support the provision of high-quality and accessible recreational facilities, amenities and open spaces, in recognition of the contribution of all forms of recreation to quality of life, personal health and wellbeing. The Development Plan acknowledges that this is likely to become more significant as the population increases and land becomes more valuable and pressure from competing land uses becomes more intense. A specific objective of the Council is to 'provide or facilitate the development of suitable sites of appropriate scale for recreational and amenity use, through this Plan and the

Development Management process in accordance with The Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy (2004); TeenSpace: National Recreation Policy for Young People ^[35] and the forthcoming National Outdoor Recreation Strategy. An associated action of the Council, linking with the Kildare County Play Strategy is to ‘Develop an outdoor teen facility in Celbridge as a pilot scheme to inform the development of other play facilities in County Kildare’ ^[43]. The Development Plan acknowledges that local networks of high-quality, well-maintained open spaces and recreational facilities help to enhance the urban environment and should be planned to be easily accessible to all.

2.4.7 Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023

The Celbridge Local Area Plan ^[44] sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Celbridge in the context of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022. The Local Area Plan is underpinned by a strategic vision, which is intended to guide the future growth of Celbridge in a sustainable manner, recognising its assets, and enhancing the town’s character, heritage and amenities. Strategic objectives include the development of high-quality, integrated residential neighbourhoods and delivering social and community infrastructure and facilities in tandem with new housing. Policy COM2 specifically relates to community and recreational facilities. It is an objective of the Council to ‘ensure that adequate and safe amenity and recreational open spaces are available for all groups of the population at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work’. Another objective is ‘to support and facilitate the provision of play facilities in Celbridge, including playgrounds and a skate park, for children of all ages, having regard to children with special needs’.

It is also the policy of the Council to support the vision of the Celbridge Integrated Services Programme to encourage a sustainable and socially cohesive community, which meets the needs of all residents (COM3). In particular, the Local Area Plan will support the delivery of facilities for children and teenagers, which the Integrated Services Programme ^[48] has previously identified as being undersupplied in Celbridge.

2.4.8 Celbridge Town Renewal Plan (Youth Survey) 2021

The key objective of the Celbridge Town Renewal Plan is to deliver pedestrian-focused public spaces and liveable streets. The aim is to ‘put the pedestrian and cyclist at the heart of design solutions for the town and to create fully accessible, inclusive and age-friendly public spaces’.

A key finding from the public consultation was the need for community facilities (e.g. playgrounds, child/youth-friendly spaces), which accounted for almost half of all comments received.

A Youth Survey ^[45] was carried out as part of the Celbridge Town Renewal Plan, the aim of which was to gain an understanding of the spaces where young people in Celbridge like to meet up and what they would like to see for their town. A skate park was the most requested outdoor youth facility, followed by public basketball courts. The development of facilities for teenagers is a core objective of the Celbridge Town Renewal Plan and this research project is helping to achieve that objective.

2.4.9 Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee, Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021

The purpose of the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) is to secure better outcomes for children and young people through more effective co-operation and collaboration by existing services and through interventions at local level. CYPSCs work towards the five national outcomes for children and young people in Ireland. These are that children and young people

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing
2. Are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Are safe and protected from harm
4. Have economic security and opportunity
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world

Kildare CYPSC bring together the main statutory, community, and voluntary providers for services to children and young people. They provide a forum for joint planning and co-ordination of activity to ensure that children, young people, and their families receive improved and accessible services. Kildare County Council work closely with Kildare CYPSC to implement actions and address key priority areas of work such as the provision of youth facilities and activities outlined in the 'Kildare Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021' that respond to children and young people's needs in the County.

This brief synopsis of numerous relevant national and local strategies and policies provides evidence directly supporting the delivery of an outdoor youth facility(s) in Celbridge. The following section discusses the design considerations of teenage spaces for play and recreation.

CHAPTER 3. URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS, TEENAGERS AND BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The WHO ^[8] supports the provision of spaces where teenagers can meet in safety ^[49] and socialise with their peers. This calls for providing teenagers with legitimate public space, designed in such a way as to make them feel welcome to congregate with their friends, and where they can have access to play and recreational opportunities. It has been highlighted that one of the most important factors in the provision of outdoor space for teenage play and recreation is the need for societal change and far greater recognition of their right to occupy the public domain ^[1, 28].

3.1 Design Considerations for Teenage Space

Good practice for design considerations for teenage space that can be reviewed is the London Legacy Development Corporation ^[50] which provides guidelines for the provision of teen space in and around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The guidelines were measured against the experience of local teenagers during a process of consultation. The guidelines recommend that teen space should be located a safe walking distance from residential units and also near to retail, educational or leisure property, or main routes through open space; some privacy will be valued by teenagers; however, a teen space should not be isolated by large expanses of open space or severed from the rest of a neighbourhood by physical barriers such as busy roads; there should also be a degree of natural/passive surveillance to discourage gang culture/bullying but no physical barriers are needed, and there should be a permeable boundary to the space; there should be opportunities for risk-taking, as play that encourages teenagers to take risks means they will be less likely to seek risk-taking activities elsewhere; the separation of different age groups should be blurred, but not rigid; also, teenagers benefit from being able to engage in play and recreation in natural/outdoor environments as they tend to be more active and it supports positive mental health.

Fields in Trust's benchmark standards, or the local guidance derived from them, are widely used by local authorities in the United Kingdom and are used for information purposes. The most recent 'Fields in Trust Guidance' ^[51] draws out new recommendations for accessibility, the application of standards and the minimum dimensions of formal outdoor space. The

standards also no longer differentiate between urban and rural areas; thus, the following information can be applied to both urban and rural areas. In relation to Equipped/Designated Play Spaces specifically, Fields in Trust use the following terminology throughout their recommendations and the acronyms appear in subsequent tables

- ◆ Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) aimed at children who can go out to play independently
- ◆ Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) aimed at older children. These can be complemented by other facilities including MUGAs and skateboard parks etc.

Table 1 sets out Fields in Trust Benchmark Guidelines for a variety of open space and equipped play areas. Accessibility guidelines are also provided as walking distance from dwellings. Indicative walking distances can be determined from the accessibility guidelines as set out below.

250m = 2–3 minutes' walk

400m = 5 minutes' walk

800m = 10 minutes' walk

1,200m = 15 minutes' walk

1,600m = 20 minutes' walk

Table 1 Fields in Trust recommended benchmark guidelines – formal outdoor space

Open space typology	Quality Guideline [1] (hectares per 1,000 population)	Walking Guideline (walking distance: metres from dwellings)	QUALITY GUIDELINE
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards. ◆ Located where they are of most value to the community to be served. ◆ Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community. ◆ Appropriately landscaped. ◆ Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance. ◆ Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary. ◆ Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment. ◆ Provision of footpaths. ◆ Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime. ◆ Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for playing pitches, taking into account the level of play, topography, necessary safety margins and optimal orientation. ◆ Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using the Children’s Play Council’s Quality Assessment Tool.
All outdoor sports	1.60	1,200m	
Equipped/ designated play areas	0.25	LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m	
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m	

The guidelines are recommended to relate to residential and mixed use developments involving non-specialist residential use (i.e. the standards should be reviewed where there are high levels of student housing, or sheltered accommodation) using average household sizes for the relevant local planning authority.

Table 2 sets out recommended benchmark guidelines for the provision of equipped/designated play space. These should be provided on-site and in accordance with the minimum sizes set out in Table 3.

Table 2 Recommended Application of Quantity Benchmark Guidelines – Equipped/Designated Play Space

Scale of Development	Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
5–10 dwellings			
10–200 dwellings			Contribution
201–500 dwellings		Contribution	
501+ dwellings			

Table 3 Recommended minimum sizes – formal outdoor space

Open space typology	Minimum sizes		Minimum dimensions	Buffer[2] zones
Equipped/designated play areas				
	LEAP	0.04ha	20 x 20 metres (minimum activity zone of 400sqm)	20m minimum separation between activity zone and the habitable room façade of dwellings
	NEAP	0.1ha	31.6 x 31.6 metres (minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures & a hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football))	30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	MUGA	0.1ha	40 x 20 metres	30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings

High quality green spaces go a long way to encouraging people to use facilities positively and actively. Fields in Trust favours the use of durable equipment to reduce the burden and cost of maintaining open spaces and recommends that management and maintenance regimes be put in place to ensure repair and replacement can be facilitated over time as necessary to maintain the standard of quality ^[51].

- Quantity guidelines should not be interpreted as either a maximum or minimum level of provision; rather they are benchmark standards that can be adjusted to take account of local circumstances.
- Buffer Zones - A suitable relationship can be created by using the minimum buffer zones for specific facilities. These off-set distances ensure that facilities do not enable users to overlook neighbouring properties, reducing the possibility of conflict between local residents and those at play.
- Quantity guidelines are provided as minimum guidelines and should not be interpreted as maximum levels of provision, and it is recommended that they are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

It is important to reiterate that outdoor spaces should support teenagers' sense of belonging and their healthy development by providing for their social activities and the ways in which they engage in play and recreation ^[1]. Provisions that can support this include stages and pavilions to provide the opportunities to perform (e.g. dance, play music) as well as space to retreat; structures that support risk-taking or physically challenging forms of play (e.g. climbing, acrobatics, parkour); multiple seating options so teenagers can hang out with friends; different topographies to support activities like skating and parkour and, for younger teenagers, imaginative play; age-appropriate play equipment (e.g. swings, see-saws) including equipment that is large enough to share (e.g. basket and snake swings); space for and permission to play informal sports and games (e.g. public outdoor chess boards or table tennis). These common aspects of teenage play and recreation also hold appeal to other ages. Therefore, designing for teenagers as a primary concern can have broader benefits for the wider community ^[28].

3.2 Gender Differences in Teenage Outdoor Recreation

The provision of public outdoor space for teenage play and recreation tends to be dominated by wheeled play (e.g. skate parks, BMX tracks) and ball game areas (e.g. football pitches, MUGAs). Though popular, these spaces are almost entirely used by boys ^[52]. It is noteworthy

that there are plenty of girls who do want to play football or skateboard; however, they are excluded for numerous reasons, including the design of the space and the behaviour of the boys ^[53].

There is a growing design movement that seeks to provide outdoor spaces that meet the unique needs of teenage girls. A small number of outdoor spaces designed in the UK and Europe (see, for example, Hayburn Park in Glasgow; Rösens Rodda Matta in Malmö, Sweden; Einsiedler Park, Vienna), have reported common themes in relation to making outdoor spaces more welcoming to teenage girls. These include offering a range of smaller spaces, social seating, exercise bars and swings; improving safety with better lighting, and good sightlines, making sure paths have no dead-ends and putting facilities for teenage girls in well-frequented areas; and providing facilities, such as public toilets ^[53]. Again, there are benefits for the wider community here. Carefully designed, more playful and more inclusive spaces work for all teenagers. Additionally, a safer public outdoor space (e.g. park/playground) with better facilities such as toilets benefits women and older people also. The key recommendation to improve inclusivity in outdoor spaces however is to ask teenage girls themselves what they want from the places in which they live ^[53].

3.3 Hang Out Shelters

‘Hang out’ or ‘teen’ shelters are also widely used as provision of public outdoor space for teenagers. These work best when sensitively located and close to other facilities, rather than being placed in isolated or exposed positions, and also when designed with the teenagers who will use them ^[52]. Experts in developing play opportunities for teenage play and recreation have cautioned that many shelters are a quick or ‘lazy’ fix, with suppliers in effect providing a token offer that supposedly meets teenagers’ needs ^[54]. For instance, most hang out/teen shelters are part of a fixed equipment playground catalogue range, rather than bespoke and unique. A key principle for designing more inclusively is to think about shelter, rather than ‘a shelter’ – or a separate facility, which is more than likely to be claimed by the most dominant group ^[53]. Bredäng Park, Stockholm, Superkilen Park, Copenhagen and Fremantle Esplanade Youth Plaza, Western Australia provide good examples of outdoor youth facilities where shelter is integrated, and where a range of spaces for different groups are provided for.

3.4 Irish Case Studies

The following discussion describes various outdoor youth facilities that have been developed in recent years for teenagers in Ireland.

3.4.1 South Dublin County Council

South Dublin County Council's Teenspace programme provides a number of contextually relevant case studies of outdoor space/facilities for teenage play and recreation ^[35]. The key recommendations to arise from the South Dublin County Council's Teenspace survey, based on countywide consultation of approximately 500 teenagers, were to create a series of hangout/meeting places for teenagers including places to sit and chat and access to play facilities (e.g. swings, climbing, zip lines). Other requests in these spaces were for free WIFI, shelter, a place to play music, toilets and water fountains. Another key recommendation from the Teenspace survey was to create areas for play and recreation such as all-weather pitches, skateparks and basketball courts.

The survey results were clear with over 90% of teenagers requesting spaces for hanging out and for play and recreation, as opposed to only 5% asking for more sports facilities. This shows that there is a fundamental need and interest in teenagers just hanging out and socialising, and that hanging out is a desirable activity in itself and is not a result of having nothing to do. It should be highlighted that similar findings and recommendations have also been reported here with the vast majority of teenagers in Celbridge requesting outdoor space where they can have fun, socialise and hangout with their friends. This form of play and recreation is most important to teenagers.

South Dublin County Council's Teenspace programme has delivered multiple outdoor spaces/facilities for teenage play and recreation in park areas across the county in recent years (see, Collinstown Park, Clondalkin; Griffeen Park, Lucan; Ballycragh Park, Rathfarnham; Tandy's Park, Adamstown). Each of these facilities has been designed to reflect the play and recreation needs of teenagers and incorporates a variety of options including, for example, seating areas and the provision of WIFI; ball walls and Teq ONE table (teqball); DJ post for music/dancing; water fountains; 'legal graffiti walls' to allow teenagers to express themselves freely through public art; as well as specialised facilities and other large play type equipment for teenagers (e.g. bike tracks, skate parks, callisthenics and parkour facilities, MUGAs). The

Council has since extended and altered some of the outdoor spaces/facilities to improve inclusivity (e.g. incorporating basket swings and enhancing a ball-wall meeting area). They are also currently investigating the provision of cafes/coffee pods in parks (near teen facilities). These would provide a service to all park users but would be particularly beneficial to teenagers as a social outlet.

Laurence Colleran ^[55], Senior Executive Parks Superintendent at South Dublin County Council, commented that local communities have been extremely welcoming of the teen facilities, viewing them as positive outlets for teenage play and recreation. A follow-up survey is currently underway to gather opinions from teenagers who are using the current facilities and to check what other facilities they might like to be included in any future outdoor teen spaces.

3.4.2 Dublin City Council

Dublin City Council Annual Playground Capital and Upgrading Programmes involves public consultation with children and teenagers in the design and planning of new and upgrading of existing play facilities. It was identified that the teen playground in Ringsend Park would be the focus of upgrading and repair and a major renewal works programme was developed. It is envisioned that the space will become a destination site for teenagers providing age-appropriate challenging, interesting, accessible and inclusive opportunities for teenage play and recreation (aged approximately 12 – 16 years).

The Dublin City Council Ringsend Park teen playground upgrading proposal includes a street workout area; parkour wall; large circular trampoline with six separate components; V-Bridge; hammock swing; amphitheatre seating around the trampoline play unit including oak sleepers to create an informal/social viewing space for teenagers; picnic benches; as well as incorporating the natural landscape in the overall design of the space. Additional elements are intended to be added to the youth space (pending additional funding) such as a concrete foosball table and Teq ONE table (teqball).

CHAPTER 4. DEMOGRAPHICS

4.1 Historical Development of Celbridge

Celbridge has grown rapidly over the past 70 years from a population of 567 persons in 1951 to a population of 20,288 persons in 2016 ^[3]. Expansion since the 1950s has taken a suburban form extending out from the historic core. Development has occurred to the north of the Liffey, between Main Street and the M4 Motorway. Development to the south of the Liffey is focused along the Hazelhatch and Ardclough Roads with development over the last ten years taking place in the south of the town, in the areas of Primrose Gate, St. Wolstan's Abbey, and Hazelhatch Park. With the exception of the Crodaun and Castletown housing estates which were constructed in the mid-1970's the historic demesnes of Castletown, Donaghcumper and St. Wolstan's to the east of the town have remained free from development.

Celbridge is situated in the Metropolitan area of Dublin and is identified as a 'self-sustaining town', within the meaning of the RPGs and the County Settlement Hierarchy. The RPGs state that self-sustaining towns in the Metropolitan area of Dublin – have high levels of population growth with a weak employment base. So, the aim of the next County Development plan is to increase employment in the Town.

4.2 Census 2022 - Preliminary Results

The preliminary data population figures from the 2022 Census is 5,123,536. This is historically the first time the population exceeds 5 million in a census since 1851 ^[2]. The population increased by 361,671 persons, or 7.6%, since April 2016. The average annual population increase in the six years since Census 2016 was 1.2%.

The population in every county increased between Census 2016 and Census 2022, the counties with the highest population growth were Longford (+14%), Meath (+13%), Fingal and Kildare (+11% in each), with Kildare having an overall increase from 222,504 in 2016 to 249,977 in 2022 ^[3].

4.3 Population of Celbridge

Census 2016 [2] provides the most recent published breakdown of population by age. The age profile of Celbridge includes a high percentage of children, young people and people in the working age cohorts. The 0 – 24 age cohort made up 37% of the population relative to 33.2% nationally, while the 25 – 44 age cohorts made up 31% of the population compared to 29.5% nationally. In contrast, approximately 6.5% of the population was over 65 years compared to almost 13% nationally. One can infer from the low percentage of the 65 years population, that Celbridge does not have a high rate of multigenerational families, nor the support these structures provide.

4.4 Child and Young Person Population

In the 2016 Census, again, the last census for which we have published figures there were 2,442 children between the ages of 5 – 11 years who in 2022 are were aged between 11 – 17 years, the age cohort which is the focus of this project. As these original figures are 6 years old, a more accurate method to examine the teenage population in Celbridge in 2022 was to examine the post-primary school attendance figures published by the Department of Education to achieve more accurate figures for this population (see Table 4).

Table 4 Primary Enrolment Figures for Celbridge 2021 -2022

Primary School Enrolments 2021-22	Female	Male	Enrolment per Return
Primrose Hill NS	57	51	108
Scoil Naomh Brid NS	293		293
Scoil na Mainistreach	45	350	395
Aghard's NS, Scoil Mochua	346	321	667
North Kildare Educate Together NS	208	205	413
Scoil Naomh Padraig	175	218	393
Totals	1124	1145	2269

4.5 School Aged Population in Celbridge for the School Year 2021 – 2022

In the school year of 2021 – 2022, there were 4,472 school aged children within the town of Celbridge. There were 2,269 children enrolled within the six primary schools in Celbridge (see Table 4) and there were 2,203 teenagers enrolled within the three post-primary schools in Celbridge for the school year 2021 – 2022 (see Table 5)

Table 5 Post-primary Enrolment Figures for Celbridge 2021 -2022

Post-Primary School Enrolments 2021-22	Female	Male	Totals
Celbridge Community School	346	364	710
Salesian College		753	753
St. Wolstan's Community School	740		740
	1,086	1,117	2,203

At the time of the last census in 2016, the post-primary population in Celbridge across the three post-primary schools was 1,544. Six years later, this has increased to 2, 203 an increase of 659 pupils or just under 43%

At the time of the last census in 2016 for which figures are available, the primary population in Celbridge across the six primary schools was 2,528. Six years later, this has decreased to 2,269, a decrease of 259 pupils or approximately 10%.

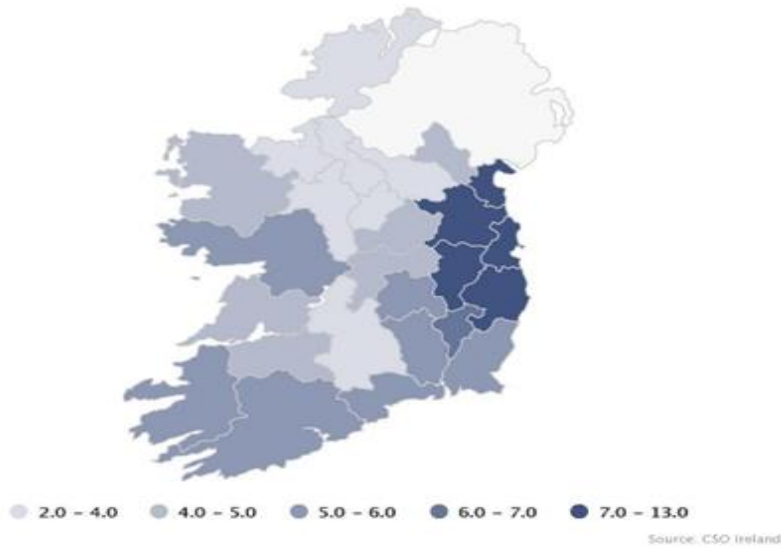
4.6 Housing Stock and Changes

A total of 2,124,590 permanent dwellings were counted in Ireland during Census 2022. This is an increase of over 120,000 units (6%) between 2016 and 2022. In Kildare and Meath, the stock of habitable dwellings went up by 12%, Wicklow was up 9%, and in Louth and Dublin,

the housing stock rose by 7% (see Figure 6). In Kildare, the housing stock increased from 80,158 in the 2016 Census to 89,668 in the 2022 Census, and the number of dwellings that

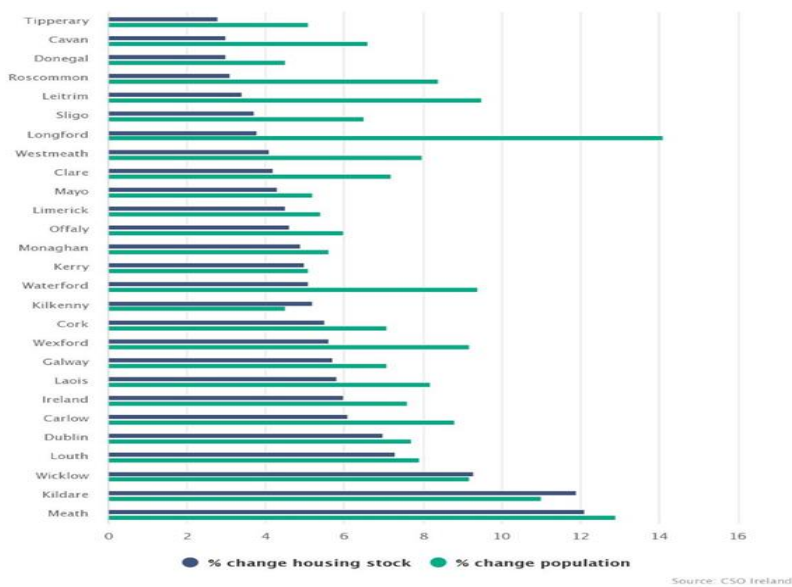
were occupied went up at a similar rate. These are all areas with some of the lowest levels of vacancy in the State.

Figure 5. Housing Stock % Change 2016 - 2022



On an annual basis the increase in housing stock is equivalent to an average 1% rise per year between 2016 and 2022 while the population has risen by 1.2% per year over the 6 years. Figure 6 shows relatively high levels of both population and housing stock growth in several Leinster counties. In Kildare, the population increased by 11% between 2016 and 2022, while the housing stock grew by 12% (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Percentage Change in Population and Housing Stock by County 2016-2022



Properties which were not fit for habitation were not included in the housing stock or vacancy figures for Census 2022. These included properties which were under construction, derelict and commercial only at the time of the census field operation. This includes existing housing developments within Celbridge.

4.7 Residential Development Type and Occupancy Rates

Residential development in Celbridge predominantly comprises medium-density detached or semi-detached houses. Census 2016, the last census for which data is available, indicated that houses represent 89% of the housing stock, while apartments represent 10.3%. The housing stock of Celbridge town was 6,544 units in 2016. Households in Celbridge have an occupancy rate of two to four persons predominantly, reflecting the high proportion of young families and is typical of the county average in 2016. Residential development in Celbridge predominantly comprises medium-density detached or semi-detached houses. Census 2016 indicates that houses represent 89% of the housing stock, while apartments represent 10.3%.

4.8 Community Facilities

There are three main community facilities currently operating in Celbridge

- ◆ Mill Community Centre
- ◆ Slip Hall
- ◆ The ACRE

The Mill Community Centre is a large (63,000 square feet) multi-level centre, in the ownership of Celbridge Community Council Limited, used by people from Celbridge and the surrounding areas. The centre is located on Clane Road and includes a number of general purpose rooms and a gym (with sauna, steam room, and changing facilities). Rooms are used regularly by sports groups, clubs and other projects and programmes.

The centre employs a full-time manager and operates a FAS community employment scheme involving 25/26 staff to support the running and maintenance of the centre. The historic nature of Celbridge Mill Community Centre provides an important link between the town's heritage and creates a more active and inviting town centre. Slip Hall is owned by the Church of Ireland and is located at Castletown Gate. This historic building, which was refurbished in 2004, is

used by a Montessori group, a scouts group, a camera club, a senior citizens group and for community meetings and can seat up to 90 people.

The ACRE project ('A Community Rethinking Education') is based in a standalone building on the Salesian College site, Maynooth Road. This is an eco-friendly community and horticultural project for the students of Salesian College and the local Celbridge/Straffan/Leixlip community. The main focus is a community garden project which offers a variety of programmes under FETAC and other part-time courses.

Additional community facilities exist in Celbridge, which include a public library, sports clubs, two playgrounds and a public recreation area. This enables a reasonable level of community engagement, further education and recreation. This LAP will seek to support the continued operation of the facilities and the development of new facilities. The existing Community Facilities are identified in Table 6

Table 6 Existing Community Facilities

Category of Community Facilities	List of Existing Facilities
Education	3 Second Level Schools 8 Primary Schools
Childcare	13 no. full day care facilities, sessional, after-school, Montessori, Pre-School (Crèche) and Day Care facilities
Playgrounds	2 (Celbridge Abbey and Willowbrook)
Parks	Castletown Demesne
Healthcare	5 No. Medical Centres (Private) North Kildare Doctors on Call
Religious Facility	Christ Church St Patrick's Church Celbridge Christian Church
Garda Station	Maynooth Road
Library	Library with exhibition spaces

Sport facilities	Celbridge GAA Ballyoulster AFC Celbridge Town AFC Celbridge Tennis Clubs Elm Hall Golf Club MU Barnhall Rugby Club.
Other Community Facilities and Organisations	Derrybeg Community Supported Farm The Mill Community Centre Slip Hall The ACRE

Celbridge has a wide variety of community facilities, services and active community groups spread throughout the town that provide an important support network to the residential population. However, it should be noted that apart from sports groups and organisations, many of these services and active community groups focus on adults' and not teenagers' needs.

CHAPTER 5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Teenage Participation: Nothing About Us Without Us

Teenagers' recreation and leisure form part of 'normal' childhoods and is a right protected under Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ^[1]. Teenagers also have the right under Article 12 - The right of the child to be heard and to be consulted on any issue which impacts them, such as an outdoor youth facility(s). Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

The inclusion of children and young people in decision-making about issues that affect their lives is supported in Ireland from the Government to the local setting. To support the Irish Government and its numerous departments in converting their legal commitments under the UNCRC into practice and policy development, the Irish Government published the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making*. Underpinned by the Lundy model ^[56], this strategy sets out a plan for the implementation of a child's right to participate across all government departments and was employed in the design and execution of this research with teenagers. The Lundy model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC and has four distinct, though interrelated elements.

This model (see Figure 7) provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus decision makers on the distinct but interrelated elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order

Space: Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view.

Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their view.

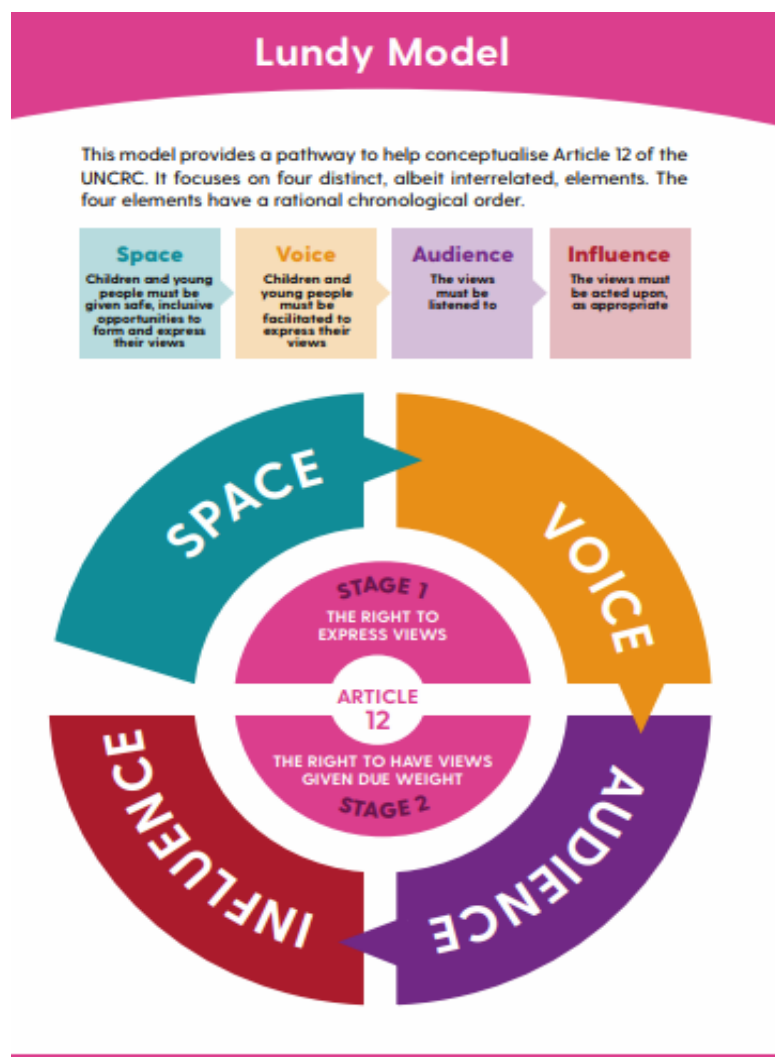
Audience: The view must be listened to.

Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

For Ireland's National Strategy, Professor Laura Lundy (in consultation with a subgroup)

developed a checklist on participation. The Strategy details that "this checklist aims to help organisations, working with and for children and young people, to comply with Article 12 of the UNCRC and ensure that children have the space to express their views; their voice is enabled; they have an audience for their views, and their views will have influence".

Figure 7. Lundy Model of Participation (2021)



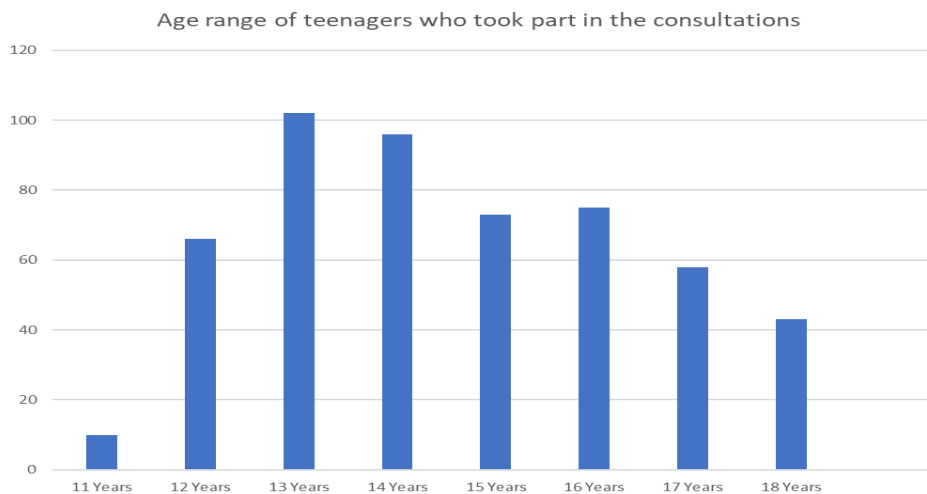
The use of participatory methodologies with children and adolescents has been foregrounded as the key to unlocking their potential to contribute rich and useful perspectives to inform research into their lives [57]. The participatory methodologies examined in this paper are well established [34, 58, 59] and followed Lundy and McEvoy's [60] guidelines to ensure that children's participation in research adheres to the following principles: be voluntary and safe; be creative and child-centred; ensure children's views are carefully listened to and acted upon; ensure that children receive feedback and are engaged in research outcomes. Within child research, certain minority voices can be

'absent'; one of the main groups in this context are children who are differently abled. Teenagers with communication disorders, congenital disorders, emotional difficulties, sensory deficits, learning difficulties and behavioural issues all took part in the face-to-face consultations. The strength of employing a range of participatory methodologies was that all teenagers were able to contribute their views and experiences.

5.2 Teenager Involvement

350 teenagers took part in face-to-face consultation workshops which took place in primary and secondary schools as well as activity centres, e.g. drama groups and scout groups across Celbridge. All consultation workshops with teenagers were delivered face-to-face except for the consultation with the four Celbridge members of Comhairle na nÓg which was conducted via zoom. Of these teenagers, 122 were males and 228 were female and ranged in age from 11 – 18 Years (see Table 7). To provide an opportunity for more teenagers to take part, an online survey was developed and launched which provided another 191 teenage perspectives, of which 91 were male and 102 were female. In total 541 teenagers took part in the research which is approx. 22% of the teenage population (11 – 18 Years) in Celbridge.

Table 7 Age range of teenagers in the face-to-face consultations



5.3 Consultation Workshops

We ran 19 separate participatory consultation workshops, 12 of which were 1 hr 20 minutes and 7 were 40 minutes. Each workshop divided the teenagers into smaller groups of 3 – 5 with an average of 4 per group with 3 or 4 researchers present per workshop. In total, we ran 21 hours of workshops but in person-hours this amounted to 83 hours of face-to-face participatory

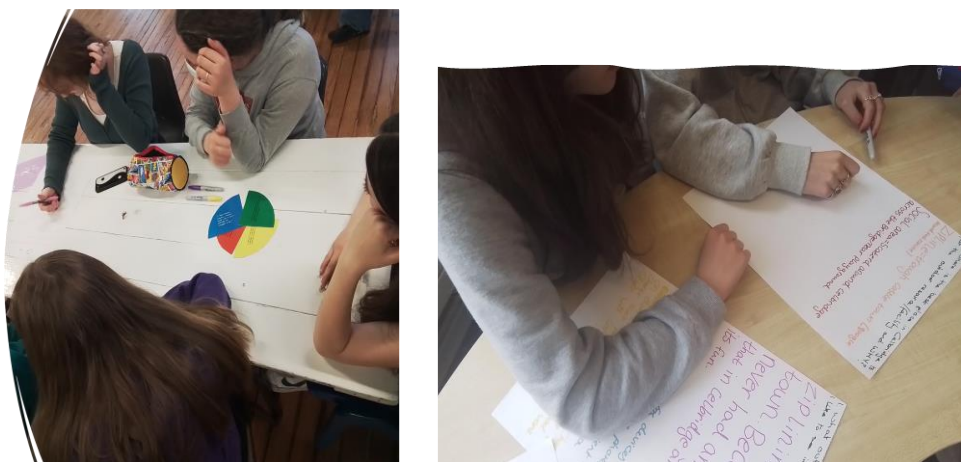
consultations. A range of methodologies were employed to elicit first-hand data from teenagers on their perspectives and views about an outdoor youth facility for Celbridge and where it should be located.

5.3.1 The Wheel Exercise

The project team introduced the concept of ‘the wheel’ which is a large image of a circle divided into quarters with one question per quarter (see Figure 8). Working in small groups (ranging from 3 – 5), the teenagers discussed and recorded their written answers to the following questions:

1. What outdoor youth facility I would like to see in Celbridge
2. Which outdoor youth facility do I think would be the best for the majority of teenagers in Celbridge
3. Where I think this facility should be situated within Celbridge
4. What other small changes to Celbridge could Kildare County Council implement to improve my ability to ‘hang out’

Figure 8. Teenagers working on the wheel exercise



The teenagers were then given the opportunity to ‘vote’ (teenagers had one vote per question) on the most popular and realistic answer per question, thus narrowing down both the particular facility and its location. This ‘voting’ proved very enjoyable to the teenagers and allowed them to see everyone else's thoughts, opinions, and views (See Figure 9). All 350 teenagers undertook the wheel exercise. 12 workshops did all 4 questions, and 7 workshops did 2 questions.

throughout the town of Celbridge. 350 teenagers took part in the mapping exercise and 90 separate maps were utilised (3.88 participants per map).

Mapping can enable participants to become co-researchers, offering a participatory framework through which different views can be articulated ^[61]. For example, teenagers in this study examined the OSI maps of their town to discuss and decide where outdoor youth facilities should be located based on available space, the centrality of the location, nearness to shops and cafes, within the independent mobility of teenagers aged 11 to 18 years, the physical size of the town and the location of the residential housing estates and schools.

The mapping from home location to the various hang out spots within the town was overlaid/transcribed into an electronic version of the Ordnance Survey Map of Celbridge to identify patterns and trends in mobility. Independent mobility in relation to distance was calculated using Google Maps.

5.3.3 Group Interviews

Teenagers took part in large focus group interviews, of which there were 18 in total which concentrated on:

- Their views of teen resources in Celbridge
- What an ideal teen resource would include
- The rationale for their choice of location

All interviews offered the teenagers the opportunity to voice any point they felt had not been addressed to date in the consultation process. The interview transcripts were recorded and transcribed verbatim and then analysed using Braun and Clarke's ^[62] reflexive thematic analysis.

5.3.4 Additional Methodologies Employed: Go-Along Interview

The go-along method is a form of in-depth qualitative interview method that, as the name implies, is conducted by researchers accompanying participants on outings in their familiar environments, such as a neighbourhood or larger local area ^[63]. In this study, go-along interviews were used, whereby teenagers took the researchers on a child-directed walking 'tour' of Celbridge. As such, the go-alongs were separate from the consultation workshops;

however, they were conducted to further examine teenage play and recreation preferences identified in the workshops, and to enhance the richness of data. The objective of the go-along was to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of teenage play and recreation in local neighbourhoods and the wider built environment and to further examine the most optimal site for an outdoor youth facility) in Celbridge.

Go-along interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher following each interview. Teenagers also produced visual data (i.e. photographs) of the places that became a focus of conversation during the go-along. To map the route taken, the app MapMyWalk was used, which provided GPS data and a spatial map of the go-along interview (see Figure 11). Go-along interviews were undertaken during the daytime, and on weekdays after school. The interviews began at the teenager's school and were concluded at a location of the teenagers choosing within Celbridge.

Figure 11. GPS data and spatial map of go-along interview



Four teenagers aged between 14 and 18 years took part in the walking interviews. The total distance covered was 9.69 kilometres, and the duration was between 54 to 73 minutes. During the go-along interviews, a total of 55 photographs were produced. The interviews were analysed using Braun and Clarke's ^[62] reflexive thematic analysis and a thematic map was

produced to illustrate the relationships between themes and sub-themes, which is presented in Chapter Five. The photographic data were used to support and contextualise the interview data.

5.3.5 Online Survey

We developed an online survey using Qualtrics in order to gather teenage participants which we might not have reached otherwise. The survey ran for just over a month, from May to June 2022. The survey had 18 questions, which were designed to gain insight into what type of facility(s) teenagers wanted in Celbridge; what location they want it in; when they would most likely use it; and, what they do in their free time in Celbridge. The results from the survey were transferred into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and then analysed. The survey gathered 191 participants. Most participants were aged 14 (19.4%), 15 (18.3%) and 13 (15.2%). 14.7% of participants were aged 18, 12% were 17, 11.5% were 16, 5.2% were 12 and 3.7% were 11. The majority of our participants were female (53.4%), followed by male (37.2%), non-binary/third gender (5.7%) and some preferred not to say (3.7%) (see Table 8 below)

Table 8 Ages of respondents to the online survey

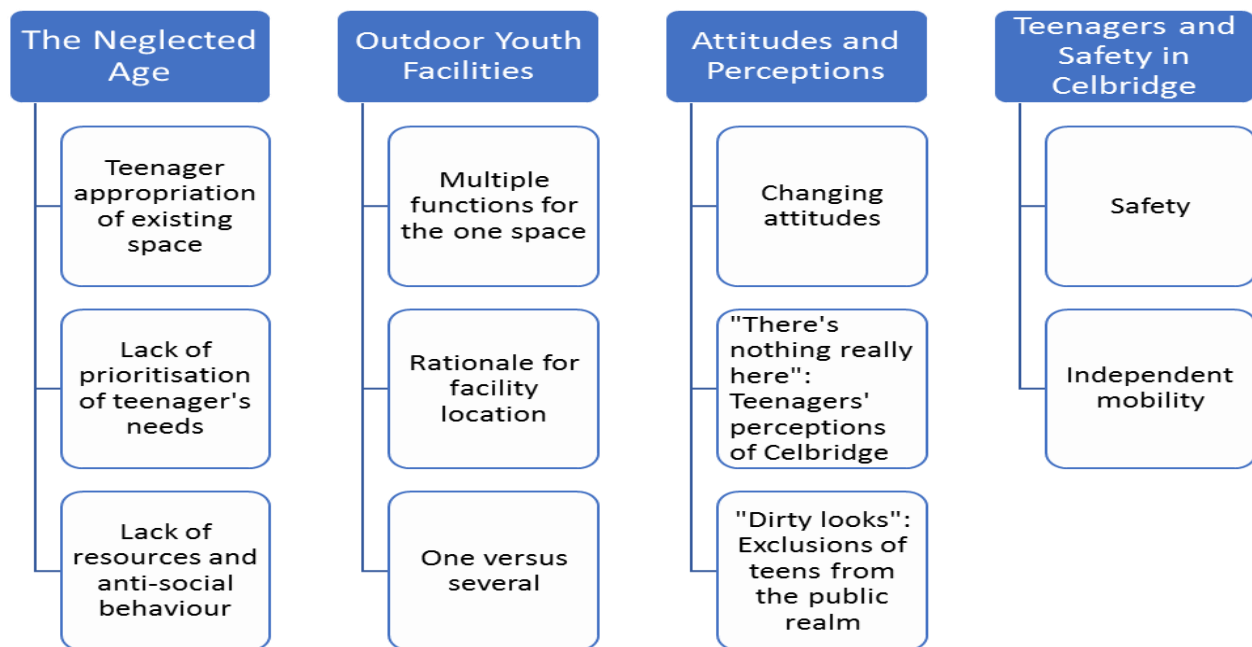
	11 Years	12 Years	13 Years	14 Years	15 Years	16 Years	17 Years	18 Years	
Boys	1	28	36	11	12	9	15	10	122
Girls	2	28	38	53	28	47	21	11	228
									350

CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS

6.1 Teenagers' Views and Experiences

Through a combination of interviews conducted during the consultations, and survey responses, four dominant themes emerged, including (1) The neglected age; (2) Outdoor youth facilities, (3) Attitudes and perceptions; and (3) Teenagers and safety in Celbridge. Each of the themes has several sub-themes (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Thematic map of findings



6.2 Theme 1: The Neglected Age

6.2.1 Teenager appropriation of existing space

Due to a lack of teen-specific facilities, teenagers are still using facilities dedicated to younger kids: “We need a playground for us. Like not for little kids, for older kids” (Boy, 13 years). The lack of teenage specific resources results in a competition for resources, not necessarily because they want it or like it, but because there is nowhere else for them to go: “It makes it very difficult for children to use the resources made for them. I know there’s a playground down by Aghards, like the primary school, and a lot of teenagers would hang out there because there are no other resources for us; which obviously means the children can’t avail of a resource primarily because there is a lack of resources for us” (Girl, 17 – 18 years). Numerous teenagers (across all age cohorts) reported using the trolley bays in Tesco car park (see Figure 13) because it provides shelter: “People do hang around, like definitely Tesco mainly, but that’s because there’s isn’t other places to hang out ... like they’re just talking with friends under the shelter because it’s pouring rain” (Girl, 18 years). Teenagers transform and appropriate places into a hangout space simply by going there.

Figure 13. 'Hang out' space - Trolley Bay



6.2.3 Lack of prioritisation of teenagers' needs and requested facilities

Teenagers are very clear that Celbridge does not currently have any teenage-specific facilities. They put this down to the rapid development of the commuter town: "The problem with Celbridge is that it was such a tiny village and then it was created as a commuter town" (Boy, 17 years); and, an increase in housing stock: "It's taken up with housing. All new housing" (Boy, 17 years). Teenagers spend a significant proportion of the day in school and they feel that the opening and closing hours of facilities do not take this into account: "Most places close by the time people get out [of school]. So, then it's like really annoying when you get out and then there's nothing to do at all" (Boy, 13 – 14 years). Teenagers explain that even with the newest housing developments, the infrastructure has not caught up: "There's nothing to do on the train station side of Celbridge, over the bridge, like Hazelhatch" (Boy 17 – 18 years). In order to address the lack of facilities for teenagers, we asked them, both through consultations and the survey, what specific type of space they would like. The most common request was for a skate park, with 35 teenagers from the consultations and 65 teenagers from the online survey requesting one. Teenagers wanted a skatepark because there aren't any nearby: "There are loads of skaters all over Kildare whose only options for skateparks are 40 minutes' drive away and it's a great way for teens and young adults to get exercise and be with friends without causing trouble" (Boy, 15 years). However, it is important to note that during the consultations, when teenagers were asked if they themselves skate, the majority said they did not. A skatepark was often suggested because it is a type of facility teenagers were aware of. Often during the consultation, teenagers said they wanted a skatepark because it was somewhere teenagers could go and simply hang out.

The second most commonly requested space was a ball park, with 68 teenagers mentioning this. Teenagers wanted a ball park as it would give them an activity to do, and a location that would be teen specific: "Keep teens active and give us something to do for free" (Boy, 18 years). These ball parks were predominantly for basketball and football but also tennis. This may reflect contextual issues as there is already a tennis court in one of the secondary schools. Ball parks were requested by both genders. This finding lends some evidence to the importance of MUGAs. Specific activities and equipment were mentioned by 48 teenagers during the consultations and 164 teenagers through the survey. The most common requests were for table tennis/ping pong tables, a graffiti wall/designated art area, mini/crazy golf, and climbing walls. Teenagers also mentioned swimming pools, a safe swimming spot on Liffey, and an

outdoor theatre/performance stage. A teen playground was also suggested by 15 teenagers during the consultations and 15 on the online survey. Teenagers wanted a place specifically for them, not for younger children. They wanted a place they “won't be looked at as dangerous or rude for wanting to just sit on a swing and be with friends” (Girl, 18 years). Outdoor gym equipment was mentioned by 12 teenagers during the consultations and by 11 teenagers through the survey. Whilst it is known that adults do not use outdoor gym equipment, this is not the case for teenagers. Teenagers cannot afford gym memberships, so free equipment would be useful for them. They have also seen or used existing outdoor gym equipment in other locations and are therefore familiar with it. Charging ports were requested by 11 teenagers during the consultations. Both boys and girls wanted charging ports within the outdoor space, mainly to charge their mobile phones. Similar to charging ports, WIFI was specifically requested by ten teenagers during the consultations. They wanted to be able to access the internet while socialising with their peers outdoors. Ziplines were mentioned by 8 teenagers during the consultations. They were mainly mentioned as being a part of a playground designed specifically for teenagers.

6.2.3 Lack of resources and anti-social behaviour

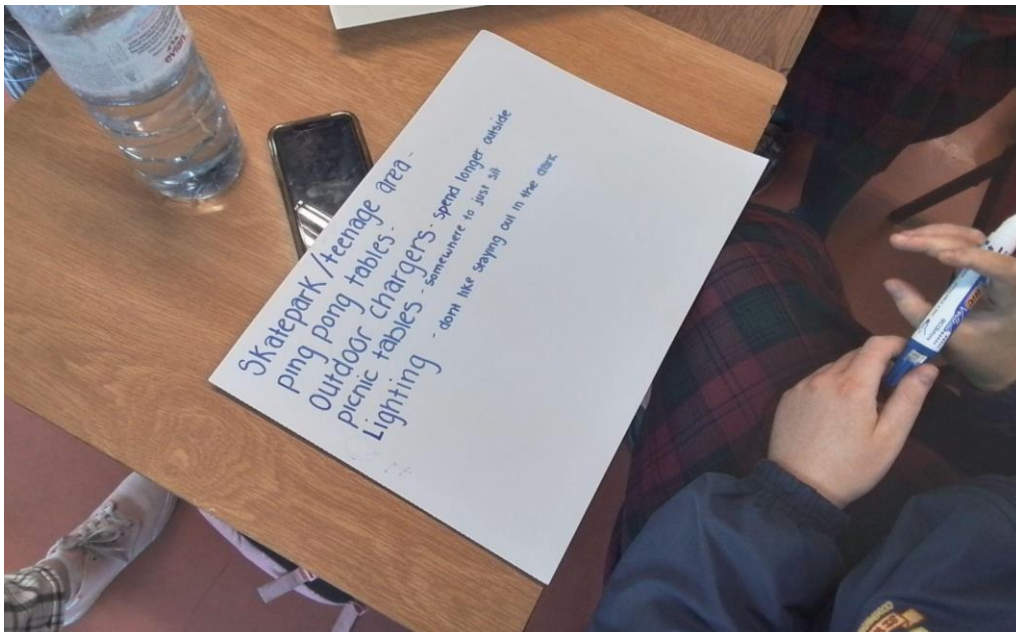
Teenagers in Celbridge see a link between lack of facilities and anti-social behaviour. Boredom is consistently referred to as a trigger for anti-social behaviours: “You can't really stop it [vandalism]. Sometimes you're just bored and want to do it for the craic” (Boy, 16 – 17 years). There is a history of vandalising playground equipment by fire in Celbridge: “There's a few dodgy ones. There are scumbags that destroy stuff. The scumbags get bored” (Boy, 16 years). There is a clear consensus across teenagers of all age cohorts and genders that Celbridge is lacking in facilities for them: “If you had more things that teenagers can actually do – like occupy them. Like somewhere to go and something to do” (Boy, 16 years). The majority of adults see graffiti as a form of vandalism, for teenagers, graffiti is more predominantly viewed as an art form and expression of their identity: “You could graffiti your own space and it makes everyone feel a part of it. So that makes it look cooler as well” (Boy, 17 years).

6.3 Theme 2: Outdoor Youth Facilities

6.3.1 Multiple functions for the one space

It is very clear that teenagers want a personalised space with multiple functions (see Figure 14). The most dominant function would be to socialise with friends. This could be enhanced with features such as seating, benches and/or shelter and with technology incorporated: “You want to go to a place where you can go and meet your friends...You want somewhere to go you can sit down and have a chat while being on your phone” (Boy, 12 years). The facility should also incorporate opportunities for unstructured activities: “Somewhere you can play games and also sit down (Girl, 12 years). It is important to note that when referring to a facility type such as a skatepark, the socialising element is still important: “I don’t skate at all but they’re [skatepark] nice to hang out in” (Girl, 18 years). When asked about features of the space, teenagers told us that seating was the most important aspect of a teen-specific facility. Fifty-three participants mentioned seating during the consultation workshops, and thirty-one participants mentioned this in the online survey. Teenagers wanted more seating and benches

Figure 14. Suggestions for the outdoor youth facility



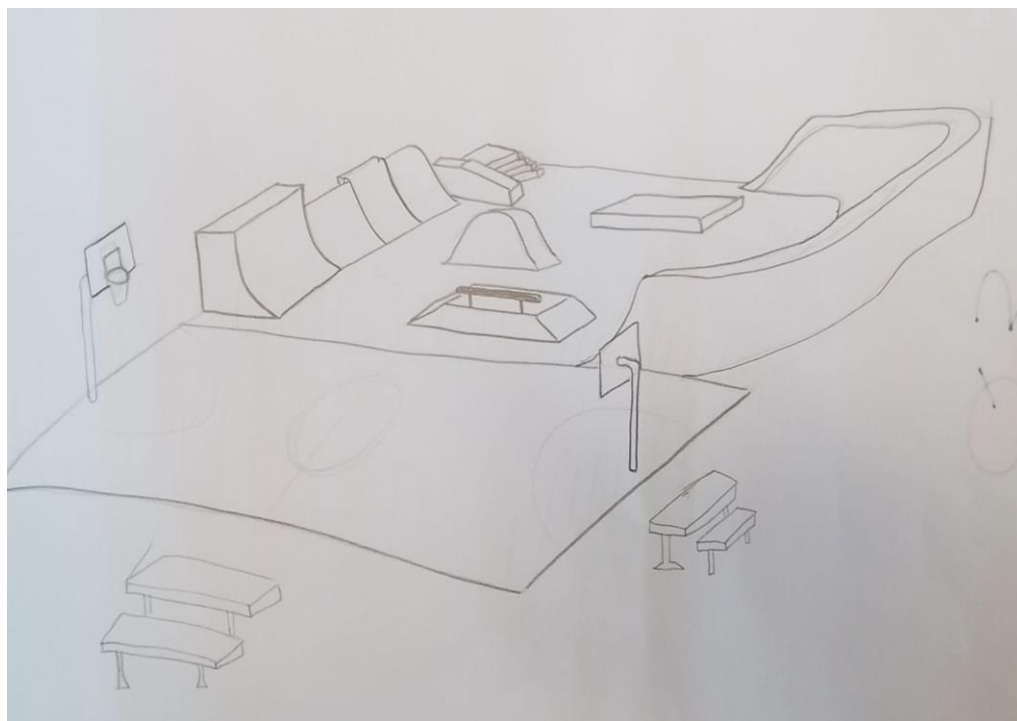
throughout the town, usually to sit and hang out with friends: “Just somewhere to sit down with a bit of shelter so we don't have to just walk around” (Girl, 16 years). Forty-five teenagers during the consultations and 31 teenagers through the survey also mentioned wanting the space to have shelter. Teenagers thought it important to be protected from the elements while hanging out: “A sheltered area with some benches and some space not too far from the village” (Non-

binary, 17 years). Thirty-one teenagers mentioned wanting a 'hang out' space during the consultations and 21 teenagers mentioned this in the survey. These teenagers predominantly want a space to hang out with their peers, which is a main activity of adolescents: “Just a place where people can hang out, somewhere with places to sit, somewhere located near shops or having an inexpensive food stand, a well-maintained area with bins, free WIFI to communicate with friends and play games, surrounded with nature, just a generally calm place for friends to hang out” (Girl, 14 years). Teenagers are very aware of environmental issues and five suggested putting bins into the outdoor youth facility, and also more bins throughout the town.

6.3.2 One vs Several

There was full consensus from teenagers across all age cohorts and genders that several smaller spaces are preferable to one bigger facility. It is noteworthy that during the consultation workshops when asked if there should be one large outdoor youth facility for teenagers or several smaller spaces, all groups in all consultation workshops opted for multiple smaller facilities or spaces. This unanimous decision included boys and girls from the age of 12 – 18 years. Some of the rationale for this was to do with overcrowding: "Cause if it's just one big thing, loads of people will be in there" (Girl, 15 years).

Figure 15. Teenager drawing of a possible outdoor youth facility



Teenagers recognise that different ages and genders have different wants in terms of a space/facility, so several would be better: “Because different people like different things” (Girl, 13 years). Older teenagers in particular are aware that younger teenagers do not have the same geographical mobility as them, so one single site would deny them access: “If we wanted to accommodate everyone you would need to have two separate spaces because Celbridge is quite long in a way and getting over the bridge it would take about 40 minutes to get to my friend's house, so it's a decent distance away” (Girl, 18 years). See Figure 15 for a teenage visual interpretation of their ideal outdoor facility

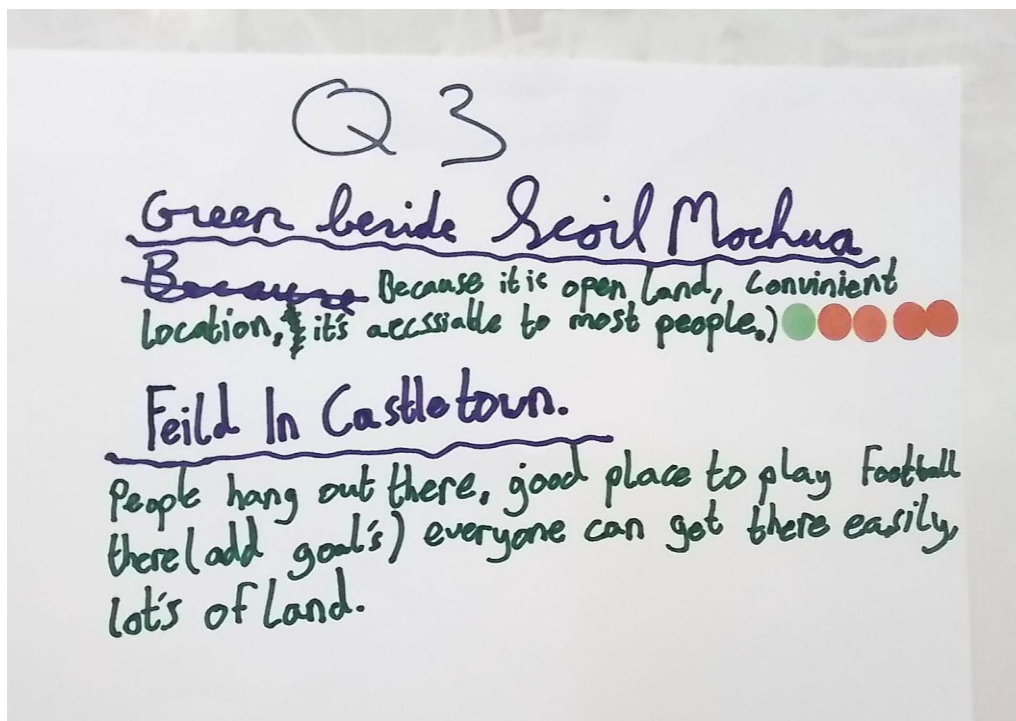
6.3.3 Rationale for facility location

Teenagers from the consultations and the online survey gave us two clear preferred locations within the town (see Figure 16). Willowbrook received 30% of 1st place locations, followed by Castletown with 24%. In third place, was somewhere on Main Street or in the centre of the village, with 7% of teenagers suggesting this, followed by a location near to shops (5%), 5% for the field behind Oldtown Mill and 5% for Hazelhatch. The field near St. Wolstan's School was suggested by 3% of teenagers, as well as the field near Celbridge Community School. Finally, Abbeyfarm was suggested by 2% of teenagers and the field near Salesians School was requested by 1%. The majority of teenagers named physical locations throughout the town which coincided with the locations named in the wheel exercise. Teenagers, both through the consultations and the survey, came up with many reasons for their choice of location. Aesthetics played a part in the teenagers' decision-making process: “The Abbey is closed. It's a beautiful area” (Girl, 17 – 18 years). Castletown was partly chosen for its aesthetics: “Good walking trails, the forest is cool to escape the rain and historical landmarks such as the house are cool to sit near” (Non-binary, 16 years) and because of its central location: “It is centrally located” (Boy, 12 years) and “It's close to everyone” (Girl, 13 years).

Passive surveillance by adults was acknowledged as beneficial in reducing anti-social behaviour: “There are lots of houses around in case of an emergency” Girl, 17 years). Willowbrook, was identified as an area where teenagers already hang out and therefore is a natural choice for an outdoor youth facility: “This is where teens mostly meet up, hang out. So, if it was a safe, monitored, designated area surrounded by houses and not isolated” (Girl, 12 years). The site's ease of access, central location and proximity to shops as well as safety was deemed important by older teenagers: “Central and close to shops and home” (Boy, 14 years). Hazelhatch was identified as a possible location due to its lack of existing outdoor facilities or resources: “Everything to do is on the other side of the bridge (where Main Street is), it would

be nice to have something to do on the side of the bridge I live on” (Girl, 18 years). This view was echoed by other teenagers who live in this location: “Nothing on this side of the village” (Boy, 15 years).

Figure 16. One group’s location suggestion for an outdoor youth facility



6.4 Theme 3: Attitudes and Perceptions

6.4.1 Changing attitudes

Teenagers believe that adults living in Celbridge have a negative attitude towards them: “We’ve got a bad rap without a doubt” (Boy, 16 years). Teenagers think that adults have a much more positive view towards younger children and feel left out: “Adults made space for the younger kids that are there, but every time [teenagers] are in a space, they get kicked out or demonised” (Girl, 18 years). Teenagers are also particularly aware that being in a group with their friends is seen as threatening to adults: “It’s really like a stereotypical American movie where people are like ‘oh those punk teens’, but they are literally the most harmless people” (Girl, 18 years). Another practical demonstration of this exclusion of teenagers is that as teenagers enter estates, they are assaulted by the noise of mosquito alarms, designed to be uncomfortable to

their age groups' sensitive ears: "They have really high pitch noises that only teenagers can hear, so they deter you from things" (Girl, 18 years). One of the main activities of teenagers is to hang out with their peers, however teenagers believe that adults in Celbridge don't like this hanging out, and their behaviour instead gets labelled as loitering: "But you see, teenagers do loiter because they have nothing else to do. They loiter in harmless ways – like just hanging out – and people don't like it. People do hang around, like definitely Tesco mainly, but that's because there aren't other places to hang out and normally, they are harmless" (Girl, 18 years). Nine teenagers on the online survey mentioned being concerned that the outdoor youth facility won't be given the consideration they are hoping for, "I'm worried that nothing will happen with this and we will still have nowhere to go (Girl, 11 years)".

6.4.2 'There's nothing really here': Teenagers' perceptions of Celbridge

Teenagers in Celbridge feel that the town was built for adults and didn't consider teenagers' needs: "It's not for us. It's built for commuters" (Boy, 16 years). Teenagers compare Celbridge to other towns and villages that they know in Ireland, which they feel do address teenagers' needs more effectively: "In some towns, even in like small tiny villages, I'll see that they have like a small square in the middle of the town. There is absolutely nowhere in Celbridge, where we have even a square where people can sit down" (Boy, 17 years). Survey participants told us that the second most important aspect of an outdoor youth facility is that it could simply be a place to be with their friends. They also told us that if their friends didn't go there, it would be a barrier to their usage of the facility. There is a worry among teenagers that Celbridge won't manage to change in order to accommodate an outdoor youth facility: "I'm concerned I will be an adult before this is complete" (Girl, 12 years).

6.4.3 "Dirty looks": Exclusion

All ages of teenagers reported feeling excluded or unwelcome within the town by adult actions, even younger teens when using the playground: "Even if we're not like troublemaking or like swearing, like still adults will still be like giving us dirty looks like when we're like on the swings and we're just trying to have fun really and we're not bothering anyone (Girl, 12 years). The exclusion can be undertaken by individual adults: "You can't sit down on anything – adults just tell you to go away" (Boy, 13 years). Equally the exclusion can be undertaken by groups, specifically the Celbridge Facebook page: "They complain about us on the Facebook

group....Every three or four posts, some teenager was doing this? Oh, no. Oh no, a teenager was standing at Tesco” (Boy, 16 – 17 years). Teenagers relayed that adults were angered by their presence in public spaces: “You’re waiting for your friends to go to Castle Town, there’ll be a big group of you and you’ll get given out too. Like, we’re just waiting for our friends” (Boy, 17 years). The size of the teenage group has an impact on their inclusion or exclusion from public spaces: “I remember like we went out the back of my estate a while ago and we played a big game of football and we got really bad, like loads of looks off people” (Boy, 17 years). Teenagers were very aware of the impact of the growing population and development within Celbridge and its negative impact on the spaces and places they can use: “Because there are so many more people, the population has just exploded, but then resources haven’t changed so now there’s a lack of it so I think they just need to develop the town in every aspect. Like obviously there need to be houses but then you need to have other things alongside that like sports centres, playgrounds and facilities” (Girl, 17 years).

6.5 Theme 4: Teenagers and Safety in Celbridge

6.5.1 Safety

The issue of safety was discussed by teenagers concerning their personal safety which varied from issues such as traffic congestion: “We need a second bridge. It’s very congested with so much traffic. That’s so dangerous. It’s awful” (Boy, 16 - 17 years) to harassment by adults: “The Security Guard at Tesco, he doesn’t let us in. He has a picture of me on his phone” (Boy, 17 years). If a specific location gets a negative reputation or is perceived as 'dangerous' in any way, teenagers tend to visit it less: “There’s a forest in Craudon that leads you to Castletown. That’s where teenagers go but it’s not very safe or anything. I don’t like wandering the forest in Castletown that much” (Girl, 15 years). Safety was highlighted as an important aspect of a potential outdoor youth facility by many teenagers both during the consultations and through the survey. Twenty-one teenagers, of whom most were girls, wanted better lighting within the spaces where they hang out in order to feel safer. When survey participants were asked about characteristics of a teen space that would potentially prevent them from using one, the most common answer was if they didn’t feel safe there. Similarly, survey participants told us that the safety of a teen space was the third most important aspect of the space itself. They suggested that better lighting could be a way to enhance the safety of the space: “Needs to be free, safe, well-lit so no bullying or drugs” (Boy, 13 years). Passive surveillance was also suggested as a

way to improve safety: “Would need some sort of supervision otherwise could just be used by a select few (Girl, 13 years)”.

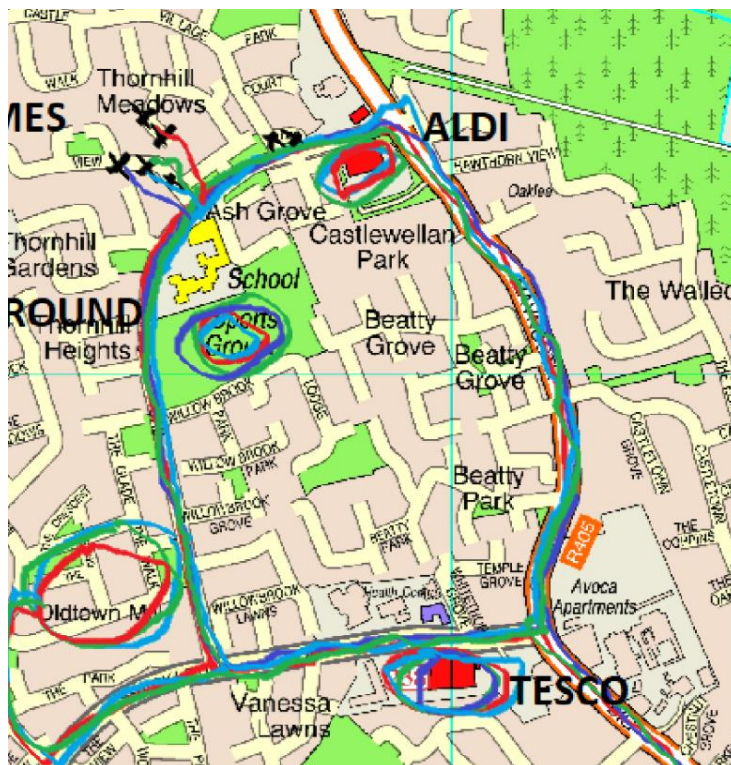
6.5.2 Independent mobility

It is very clear that there are different levels of independent mobility depending on the teenager's age, with the younger teenagers having less independent mobility: “I'm not allowed anywhere further than my road” (Girl, 12 years). Issues of independent mobility came up during the consultations and the survey. Cycling facilities were mentioned by 9 teenagers during the consultations, of which most were boys, with teenagers requesting more cycle paths within the town as well as the addition of more bike racks. When survey participants were asked about important features of an outdoor youth facility, they told us that the facility being within walking distance of their home was the most desirable aspect. Similarly, the fifth and seventh most influential barriers to a facility's usage, were if the facility took longer than 10-15 minutes to walk to, and if there was no cycle path to get there. There is high traffic congestion in Celbridge and without cycle lanes or paths, this acts as a barrier to children's independent mobility: “The road is really busy with parked cars and cars moving so you can't really get anywhere fast. So, like cycle lanes would be nice” (Boy, 13 years).

6.6 Results from Mapping Exercises

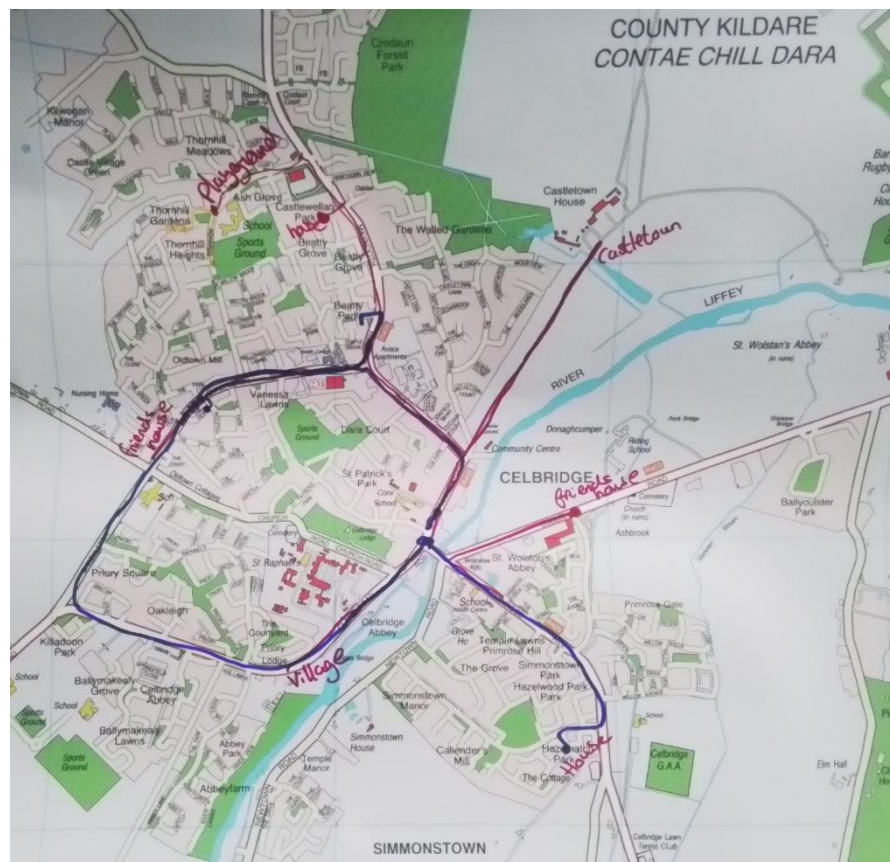
All the 12-year-olds (56 in total) lived in housing estates surrounding a specific primary school predominantly in Celbridge. They “mapped” 4 main common destinations - Aldi, Tesco, Playground and the School. Taking eight differing housing estates, the children's independent mobility ranged from 180 metres to 1400 metres to all four sites (1.4 km) with a Mean of 740 metres (see Figure 17). It is clearly evident that

Figure 17. Independent mobility of 12 Yr Olds in Celbridge



young teenagers have a small "loop" of independent mobility that is geographically close to their home

Figure 18 Independent Mobility of 13 - 14 Yr Olds in Celbridge



13 to 14 Yr olds (60 in total) have higher independent mobility than the 12-Year-olds. This may be partially explained by the transition from primary to secondary schools which are geographically a further distance than the primary school (see Figure 18). There was minimal difference in the independent mobility of the boys and girls. Similar to their younger peers, these teenagers are still going to the playground and the same

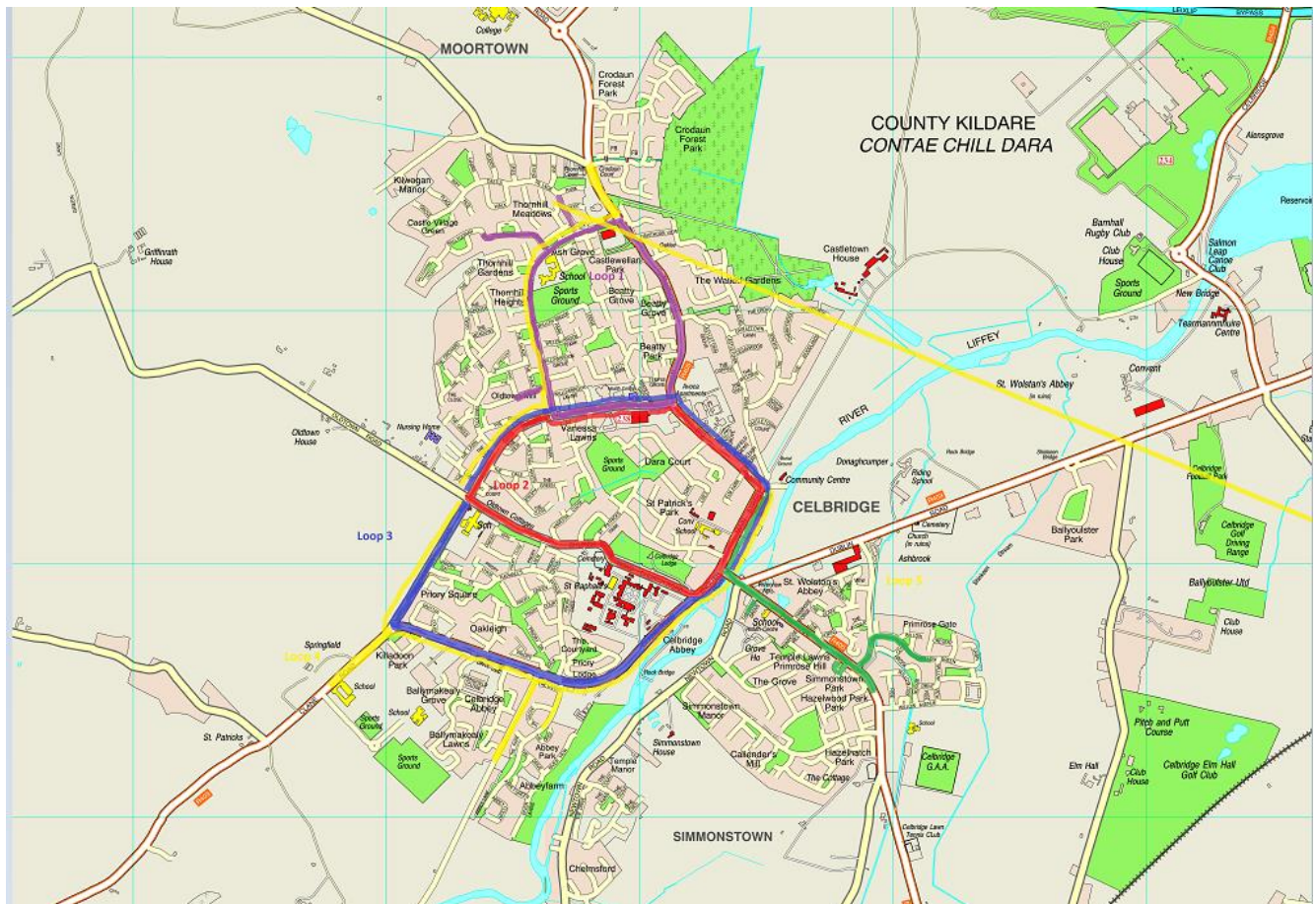
shops as the 12-year-olds so the same "loop" is evident, however we also see the beginnings of teenagers going to their friends' houses and new locations such as Costa which are nearer the secondary school. Taking 18 separate home locations, the independent mobility ranged from 22 - 2700 metres with a Mean of 1371.

16 year-old teenagers (51 in total) are cycling which increases their independent mobility. Visiting friends' houses is very popular, especially for the girls whilst the boys describe "hanging out" in "abandoned houses", "random walls" to sit on and the "trolley [bays] thingies". The Main Street, shops, cafes and Castletown House are favoured spaces and places to meet friends and "hang out". Of 19 home locations the independent mobility ranged from 550 to 3500 metres with a Mean of 1688 metres.

6.6.1 Loops upon Loops

It was very evident from the teenagers' mapping that the majority follow a "loop" onto major roads in Celbridge and this is the artery by which they travel from minor roads to main roads and off the main road again to their destinations. The loop used by the teenagers is dependent on their home location and their chronological age with older teenagers having more independent mobility

Figure 19. 'Loops' of teenager's independent mobility



CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study, on behalf of Kildare County Council, set out to gather information from teenagers in Celbridge about the type of outdoor youth facility they wanted and where they wanted it. We heard from 541 teenagers, which accounts for one out of every five teenagers living in Celbridge. We employed a mixed methods approach with a dominant focus on participatory research methods. We conducted face-to-face consultations in with 350 teenagers in every secondary school in Celbridge, as well as a drama group and a scouts group. Separate to the consultation workshops, we conducted in-depth walking interviews through the town. Finally, we developed and delivered an online survey which we promoted throughout the schools in Celbridge to ensure we heard from teenagers whose voices we might otherwise have missed.

Our analysis of the data we collected shows clear findings. Teenagers are aware that Celbridge was developed in recent decades for workers commuting to Dublin. They feel that adults' needs are addressed, but teenagers' needs are not considered. Many of the teenagers also feel excluded by local community development committees and residents' associations and are not involved in any of the planning processes in their areas. Teenagers themselves suggest that if they had their own space where they felt safe and weren't judged for doing normal adolescent activities such as 'hanging out', anti-social behaviour would be reduced, and therefore improve their relationship with the adults of the town. Teenagers in Celbridge want several smaller facilities, rather than one facility. Overwhelmingly, they want these outdoor facilities placed in Willowbrook and the grounds of Castletown House, which are both centrally located, close to shops, aesthetically pleasing and locations where teenagers naturally go to. These facilities might be skate parks, ball parks or teen playgrounds, but above all, they want these facilities to be spaces for them to hang out with their friends with permanent seating, shelter and Wifi access in these spaces.

7.1 Recommendations

1. A primary recommendation of this research is that any new outdoor youth facility(s) should be a joint effort between design professionals and teenagers themselves. By being actively engaged in the planning and design consultation process, teenagers can feel like they have an investment in their community, and they can develop a strong sense of ownership in these places. This has the potential to facilitate broad societal

benefits including improved community relations between adults and teenagers, a reduction in anti-social behaviour and environmental and community improvements.

2. We recommend that an educational piece/ promotion of teenagers' rights and need for outdoor resources is provided when working in partnership with residents' associations to implement the outdoor youth facilities. It is crucial that local community groups / organisations are engaged in a dialogue that builds a more positive relationship about the use of public outdoor spaces for play and recreation across generations and age groups so that teenagers are accepted and valued as users of community spaces and the public realm more generally ^[1].
3. We recommend that serious consideration is given to the inclusion of teenagers on local committee's to ensure the views and opinions of teenagers are heard and acted upon in line with Article 12 of the UNCRC

Type of Facility

4. We recommend installing multiple smaller facilities, rather than one large one. We recommend placing these facilities so that teenagers in all parts of Celbridge live within walking distance of at least one of the facilities, and that cycle paths are introduced for teenagers to travel to the facilities safely.
5. Teenagers want a space with multiple functions. The most dominant function is to socialise with friends; however, an outdoor youth facility should also incorporate opportunities for unstructured physical activities. In terms of the type of facility, many teenagers requested skateparks, ball parks/MUGAs and teen playgrounds (with age-appropriate play equipment). These types of outdoor youth facilities can support risk-taking and physically challenging forms of play, which confer a multitude of benefits on teenagers' physical development, emotional and mental health and wellbeing, and social development, which may have long-lasting effects into adulthood.
6. We recommend that no matter what type of facility is chosen, it should have certain characteristics such as multiple seating options, shelter, WIFI and charging ports, lighting and/or well-lit paths, bins and bike racks.

7. Based on the teenagers feedback, other specific activities and equipment that could be included within an outdoor youth facility are table tennis/ping pong tables, a graffiti wall/designated art area and climbing walls. We recommend designating outdoor youth facility(s) specifically for teenagers' use.

Location of the Facilities

8. We recommend installing facilities in more than one location throughout the town. The two most favoured locations by teenagers in Celbridge are the field in Willowbrook, and the grounds of Castletown House.
9. Other possible locations we recommend for installing an outdoor youth facility are anywhere on Main Street or in the centre of the village, locations with a shop nearby, the field near Oldtown Mill and Hazelhatch.
10. We recommend installing an outdoor youth facility in Hazelhatch, as there is a complete lack of facilities for teenagers in this area.

These locations were chosen for numerous reasons; the site's ease of access, central location and proximity to shops and amenities, the aesthetics of the place, and the fact that these are the places that teenagers in Celbridge already naturally migrate to. These locations are also ideal as they provide natural and passive surveillance, which increases teenagers' sense of safety.

Design Considerations

11. We recommend providing teenagers in Celbridge legitimate outdoor public space, designed in such a way as to make them feel welcome to congregate with their friends, and where they can have access to play and recreational activities. We recommend adhering to London Legacy Development Corporation ^[50] and Fields in Trust's Guidance ^[51] when considering good practice for design considerations.

12. We strongly recommend designing an outdoor youth facility(s) that provide accessible and inclusive opportunities for teenage play and recreation, including acknowledging gender differences. Many of the common themes in meeting the unique needs of teenage girls are aforementioned such as providing a range of smaller spaces, social seating, improving safety and lighting and putting facilities in well-frequented areas.

13. We recommend that the examples of good practice in designing inclusive outdoor spaces from the UK and Europe, as well as Ireland, as outlined earlier in this report are taken into account when designing the outdoor facility (s)

14. We recommend that climate and seasonality are taken into account when designing outdoor facilities for teenagers to maximise usage throughout the year and in all seasons.

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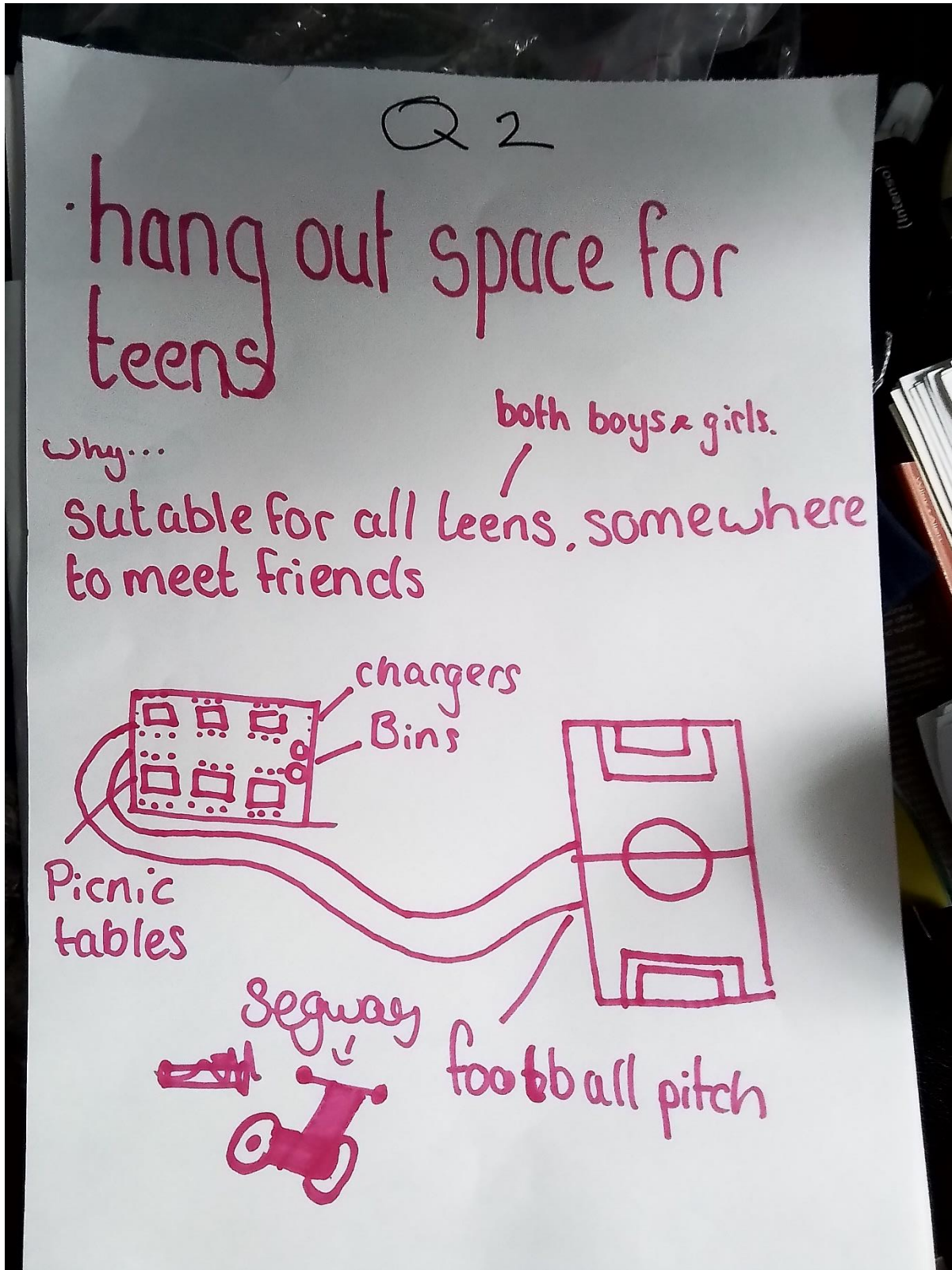
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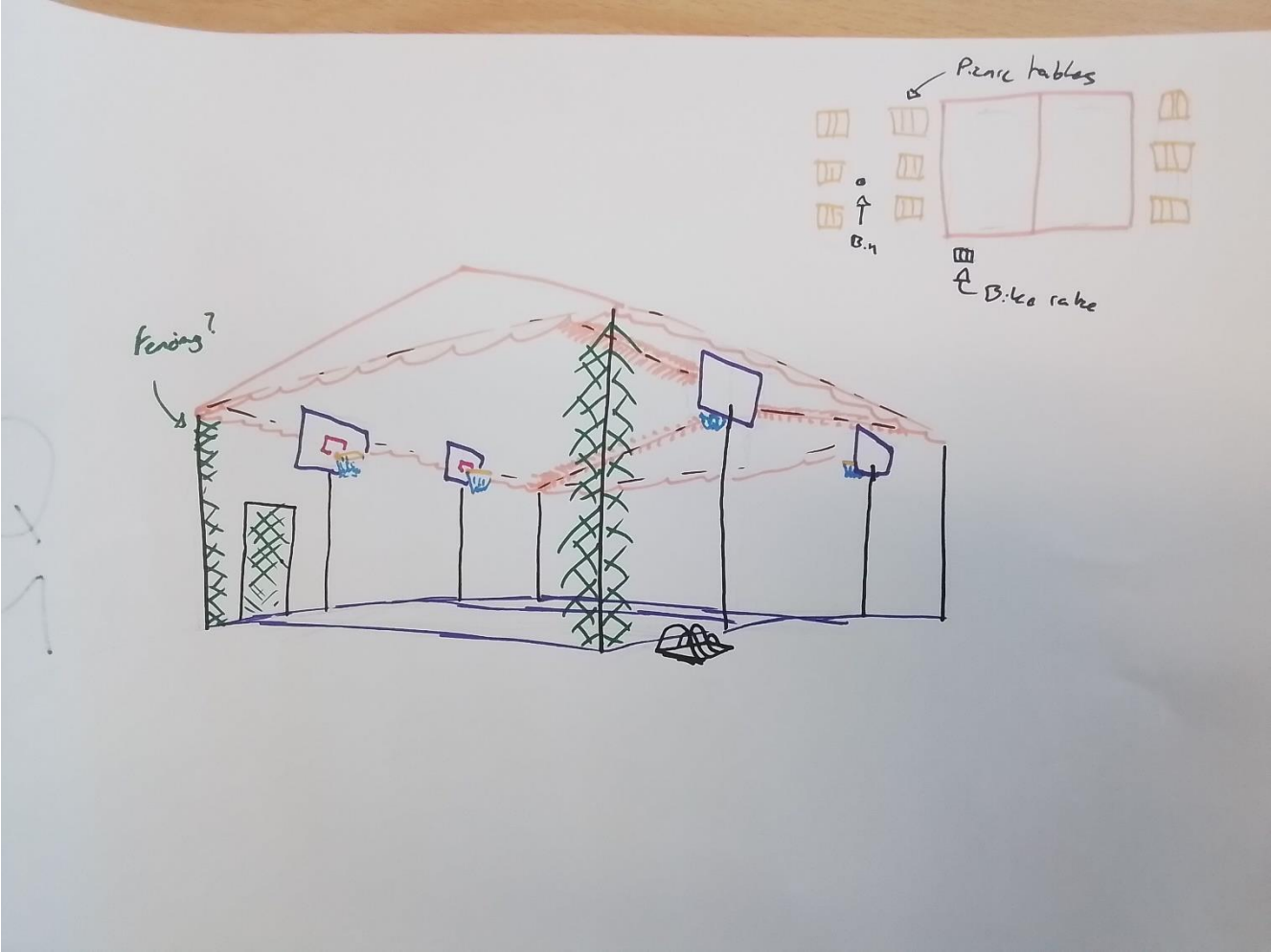
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Appendix 1. Images of Outdoor Teen Spaces

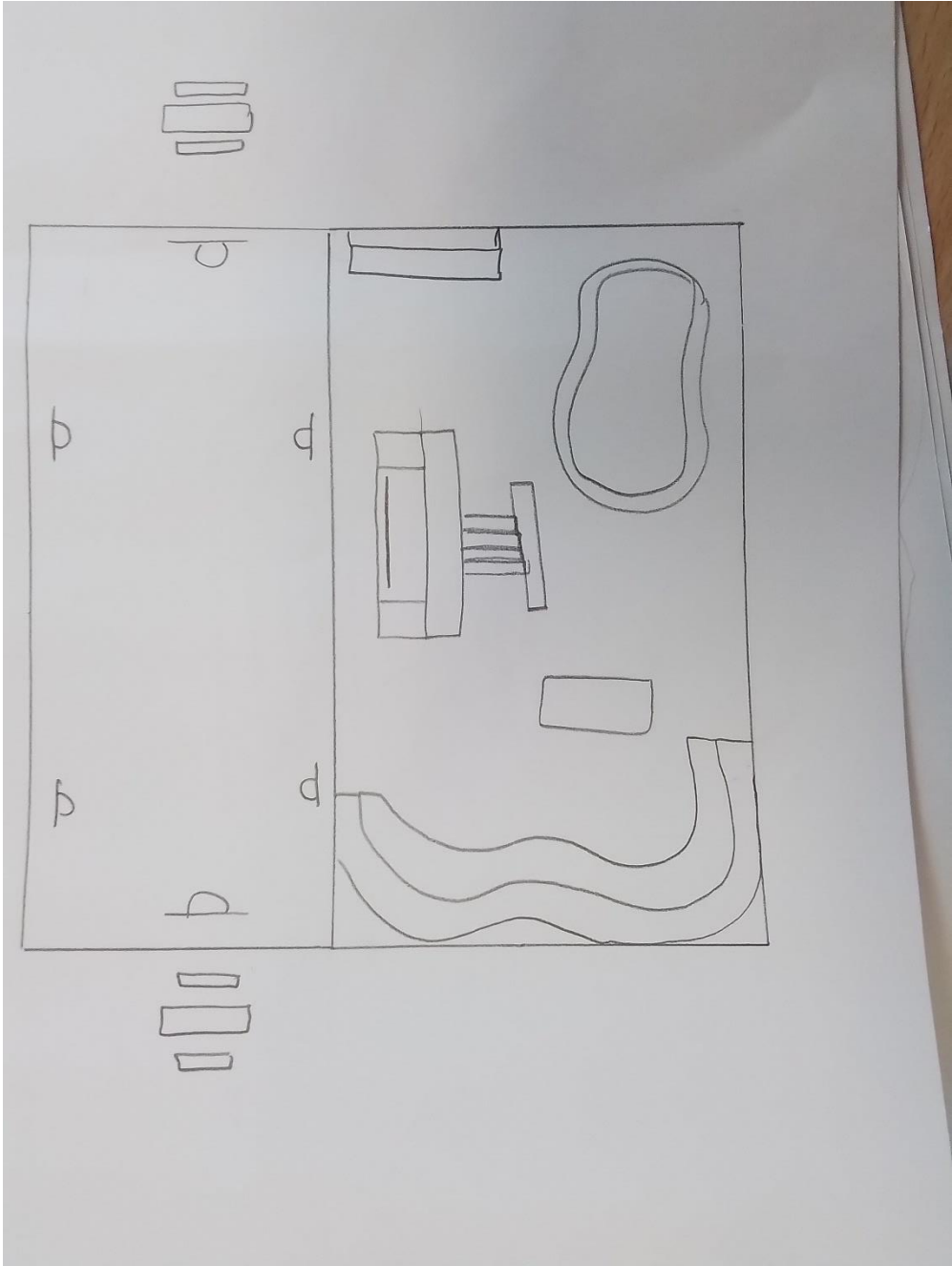
Example 1. Outdoor Teen Spaces



Example 2 Outdoor Teen Spaces



Example 3 Outdoor Teen Spaces



Example 4 Outdoor Teen Spaces

