Cyngor sir ddinbych denbighshire County Council

Rhyl Coastal Defence Phase 2 - Children's Village Summary Consultation Report September 2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

Rhyl Children’s Village Proposals

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Rhyl Children's Village Proposals

Executive summary

A public consultation was undertaken on the emerging proposals for the Rhyl Children's Village area. The consultation asked respondents for their initial feedback on the proposal and what, if anything, they would like to change or improve.

The consultation data contains 69 substantive responses. All 69 respondents provided initial feedback on the proposal, and 65 respondents also answered the question "Is there anything you would like to change or improve?". Not every respondent answered every question. Despite articles in the Rhyl Journal this level of response is perhaps lower than expected.

Feedback was mixed, although the strongest recurring messages were concerns about creating an additional flexible events space when the existing Events Arena is perceived to be underused; requests for more attractions and activities for children, families and young people; requests for water-based play; and a desire for kiosks, cafés, toilets and other facilities that would encourage people to stay longer on the promenade.

There was also positive feedback. Some respondents welcomed investment in the area, supported the removal or redevelopment of the existing Children's Village, liked the waterside garden and landscaped public space, or considered the relocation of the fair to be beneficial. However, even supportive responses frequently raised questions about long-term maintenance, safety, accessibility and how the space would be programmed and used throughout the year.

Consultation overview

The consultation sought views on proposals for improvements to the current Children's Village area in Rhyl. The responses show that people considered not only the proposed site itself, but also its relationship with the wider promenade, the existing Events Arena, Queen's Market and the town centre.

The two open questions allowed respondents to provide detailed comments in their own words. This report summarises those comments thematically. The themes overlap, so a single response may contribute to more than one theme. The figures in the thematic

analysis should therefore not be added together as if they were mutually exclusive categories.

Response rate

A total of 69 substantive consultation responses were received. All 69 respondents answered the initial-feedback question, and 65 respondents (94.2%) answered the changes-and-improvements question.

Summary of findings

Initial feedback on the proposal

The initial-feedback responses ranged from strong support to strong opposition, with 7 respondents totally against the project, with some others raising non related issues such as cleanliness elsewhere in the town, state of the shops etc. A number of respondents described the proposals as attractive, modern or a welcome improvement to an area they considered tired or underused. Positive comments specifically referred to the waterside garden, additional places to sit, the flexible space and the potential relocation of the fair.

The most frequent concern was whether Rhyl needs another events space. Respondents repeatedly referred to the existing Events Arena as underused and questioned the case for creating a further flexible events area. Some suggested that investment should instead be directed towards improving, programming or making better use of the existing arena.

A second strong message was that the scheme should contain more reasons for people to visit and stay. Respondents asked for attractions and activities serving children, teenagers, families, residents and visitors. Suggestions included play areas, roller skating, bowling, climbing, sports facilities, an expanded fair and other all-weather or year-round leisure uses.

Water-based play was a particularly recurring suggestion. Respondents referred to splash pads, dancing fountains, paddling pools, a lido and other free water attractions. Several comments linked this to Rhyl’s history as a seaside resort and to the desire for a free family attraction.

Long-term upkeep was another significant concern. Respondents questioned whether planting, gardens, seating and other public-realm features would be adequately maintained in a coastal environment. Several referred to previous public spaces which, in their view, had deteriorated over time.

Suggested changes and improvements

The improvement suggestions broadly reinforced the concerns raised in the initial-feedback question. Respondents frequently asked for practical facilities alongside the public realm, including kiosks, cafés, ice-cream or refreshment outlets, toilets and opportunities for mobile or seasonal traders. These were seen as ways of increasing dwell time and supporting activity on the promenade.

A number of respondents wanted the proposals to provide more for children and young people. Suggestions included larger play areas, facilities for teenagers, outdoor games, table tennis, sports courts, skate or pump-track facilities and free-to-use attractions. Some respondents specifically highlighted the need for activities that local young people could use regularly rather than facilities aimed only at seasonal visitors.

Respondents also raised the wider town-centre context. Comments referred to the condition and occupancy of the High Street, cleanliness, parking, empty premises and the need for a more joined-up vision for Rhyl. Some questioned whether improvements to the Children’s Village site alone would materially increase footfall without addressing these wider issues.

Several respondents asked for a stronger sense of place in the design. Comments suggested that the scheme should feel recognisably connected to Rhyl, Wales and its seaside or Victorian heritage rather than appearing generic. Suggestions included higher-quality materials, distinctive design, planting suitable for the coastal environment and a consistent identity across the promenade and town centre.

Key themes

The following themes were identified from the two open-text questions. Counts are indicative respondent-level coding across the 69 substantive responses and are intended

to show the relative prominence of themes; responses can appear in more than one theme.

More attractions and activities

Summary of feedback

Around 31 response records referred to a need for more attractions, activities or leisure opportunities. This was the most prominent theme in the feedback. Respondents particularly wanted uses that would attract families and visitors while also providing year-round value for local residents and young people.

Council response

While the grant funding has defined objectives, detailed design decisions remain informed by community feedback as much as possible and therefore an overarching aim of the project is to create a space where these sorts of activities can be planned for the future.

Kiosks, cafés, vendors and toilets

Summary of feedback

Around 30 response records referred to kiosks, cafés, food or drink vendors, stalls, toilets or similar supporting facilities. Respondents often linked these facilities to making the promenade more convenient and encouraging people to spend longer in the area.

Council response

The Council has carefully noted your comments. Further information will be shared as the design process progresses, including updates through the press and other communication channels.

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Water-based play

Summary of feedback

Around 25 response records referred to a splash pad, fountains, paddling pool, lido, outdoor pool or another form of water play.

Council response

Many described this as a free family attraction that would complement Rhyl's seaside setting. The Council recognises that there is strong public interest in the provision of water play facilities. Unfortunately, due to the constraints associated with the underground car park beneath the site, and concerns around the impact of wind-blown sand from the beach, a water play feature cannot realistically be incorporated as part of this particular project. However, the feedback received through the consultation has been noted and will be considered when opportunities for future projects are explored via other funding streams.

Existing Events Arena

Summary of feedback

Around 22 response records questioned the need for another events space or referred to the perceived underuse of the existing Events Arena. This was a consistent concern across both consultation questions.

Council response

The Council recognises the comments received regarding the existing Events Arena. However, the current facility has a number of significant infrastructure limitations, including acoustic constraints and insufficient power capacity. These issues affect the range and scale of events that can be accommodated and have contributed to difficulties in attracting promoters to use the venue. The feedback we have received is that to make the current events arena viable it will require significant funding over and above what's currently available.

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Maintenance and durability

Summary of feedback

Around 19 response records raised maintenance, upkeep, cleanliness, durability or the ability to sustain landscaped areas over the long term. Respondents wanted reassurance that any investment would remain attractive and usable after completion.

Council response

While revenue funding sits outside the scope of this capital grant, maintenance implications are being carefully considered.

High Street and wider regeneration

Summary of feedback

Around 17 response records referred to the High Street, town centre, shops, parking or wider regeneration. These comments indicate that some respondents view the success of the site as dependent on wider improvements and stronger connections across Rhyl.

Council response

While the scheme focuses on Children’s Village enhancements, it forms part of broader regeneration efforts taking place across Rhyl, most specifically the LRF Public Realm and Highways schemes which all aim to link the beach with the Town Centre – a key objective.

Design, identity and consultation imagery

Summary of feedback

Around 14 response records commented on the design character or the consultation images. Concerns included the images not appearing representative of Rhyl, the proposals feeling generic or bland, and a desire for a stronger seaside or local identity.

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Council response

While the grant funding has defined objectives, detailed design decisions remain informed by community feedback as much as possible. In the actual consultation event, once officers were able to have one to one dialogue with residents, these concerns were alleviated.

Safety and antisocial behaviour

Summary of feedback

Around 11 response records raised safety, antisocial behaviour, policing, drug or alcohol-related concerns, lighting or the need to avoid hidden areas. One response specifically asked for the design to consider the safety of women and girls.

Council response

The scheme aims to create inclusive, welcoming spaces for all users. Issues relating to antisocial behaviour will continue to be addressed in partnership with relevant agencies. Most particularly we are in discussion with North Wales Police Design Out Crime Officer.

Fair relocation

Summary of feedback

Views on the fair were mixed. Around 7 response records specifically discussed whether the fair should be relocated or retained. Some supported relocation to improve visibility, while others considered the current location preferable or were concerned about the visual impact of moving it to the former SeaQuarium site.

Council response

The Council recognises that the current location of the fairground has experienced a number of issues relating to anti-social behaviour over the years. Relocating the fairground would provide an opportunity to help address these concerns, while also releasing the existing site for regeneration. This would support the wider ambition to create a more

attractive, welcoming and accessible area, strengthening the connection between Rhyl town centre and the beach.

Accessibility

Summary of feedback

A smaller but important group of responses raised accessibility. Comments included the width of routes for multiple wheelchairs, the needs of visually impaired people and people with mobility difficulties, and the provision of accessible facilities such as a Changing Places-style facility.

Council response

The scheme aims to create inclusive, welcoming spaces for all users. These considerations will inform detailed layout and landscaping decisions. We will be undertaking a Walkability and Accessibility audit in the near future.

Conclusion and next steps

Summary of feedback

The consultation demonstrates a clear appetite for investment in Rhyl, but also a strong expectation that investment should create practical reasons for residents and visitors to use the area. The most consistent message is that attractive public realm alone is not considered sufficient by many respondents. People want activity, family and youth provision, supporting facilities and confidence that the area will be safe, accessible, well maintained and actively used.

Council response

The Council would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation, and we would like to assure everyone that your comments have been carefully noted and considered. Further information will be shared as the design process progresses, including updates through the press and other communication channels.