

Phase 1A workshops summary: Overview

Six targeted stakeholder workshops were held between 2nd – 16th April 2025 in the following areas across East Lothian: Haddington & Lammermuir, Musselburgh, Wallyford & Whitecraig, North Berwick Coastal, Fa'side, Preston Seton Gosford, and Dunbar & East Linton.

Please note the below is a high-level summary of the main themes discussed across all workshops to date attended by building managers, service providers and community representatives. A detailed review of all feedback received during both the Phase 1A Stakeholder workshops and Phase 1B Public Engagement will be included in a report which will be made available following the conclusion of this initial phase of engagement.

Summary of main themes raised across all workshops

Affordability & Access

- Awareness of available space/facilities is limiting community access
- Variable room hire pricing to improve affordability
- Existing booking systems identified as potential blockers and would benefit from improvement
- Limited opening hours means current use is not reflective of potential demand or opportunities

Celebrate Success Stories

- Opportunities to share resources, initiatives and learnings to build a networked support system
- Benefit of recognising success and impact beyond financial or quantitative measures

Community Building & Social Infrastructure

- Food-related amenities such as cafés and food banks can act as hubs, helping to bring people together
- Culturally and historically significant buildings serve as important local landmarks and gathering places
- Some buildings have potential as destination spaces with investment, upgrades and promotion

Staffing & Volunteers

- Staff shortages are limiting opening hours
- Acute recognition of the contribution made by volunteers, but fatigue and burnout is a concern; council support for volunteer networks is needed

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Interest & Uncertainty

- Interest exists for CAT of community-led space
- Lack of clarity around CAT processes and funding remains a barrier
- Opportunities for income-generating uses such as local businesses or cafés to support space viability

Council Relationships & Support

- Enhanced council support with existing facilities management, staffing, booking systems, and communication
- Opportunities to establish more collaborative and cohesive relationships with the council

Inclusion & Future-Proofing

- Need for community spaces to stay relevant to existing and newly expanding communities
- Opportunity to create early intervention dementia strategy by building on or establishing 'dementia-friendly' spaces to support an ageing population
- Future strategy should be sustainable long-term, with clear direction and purpose reflective of community needs