

Clydebank Business Park Planning Guidance

1. Introduction

Clydebank Business Park is an area designated primarily for business, general industry, and storage and distribution uses, however the Council has and continues to receive interest from more diverse range of uses to locate within Clydebank Business Park. Planning applications and enquiries have been received for the change of use of existing premises to uses such as nurseries, soft play, gymnasiums, and dog grooming and training premises. This has raised issues about whether these are suitable uses to locate within a business/industrial area in terms of their impact on existing uses and the impact on the availability of property for industrial and business uses.

This document offers additional guidance on how the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP2, as modified 2020) should be applied when considering proposals for such uses. It will assist the Council in determining applications and will also provide greater certainty to potential applicants. It also takes account of the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4).

2. Alternative Uses: Defining the Issue

This Guidance uses the term 'industrial/business uses' to refer to the following uses from the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997:

Use Class 4 – Business

Use Class 5 – General Industry

Use Class 6 – Storage and Distribution

This guidance uses the term 'residential/accommodation uses' to refer to:

Use Class 7- Hotels and Hostels

Use Class 8 & 8A - Residential Institutions and Secure Residential Institutions, e.g. nursing home, hospital, prison

Use Class 9 – Houses

Sui Generis flats and student accommodation

All other uses will be referred to as 'alternative employment uses'.

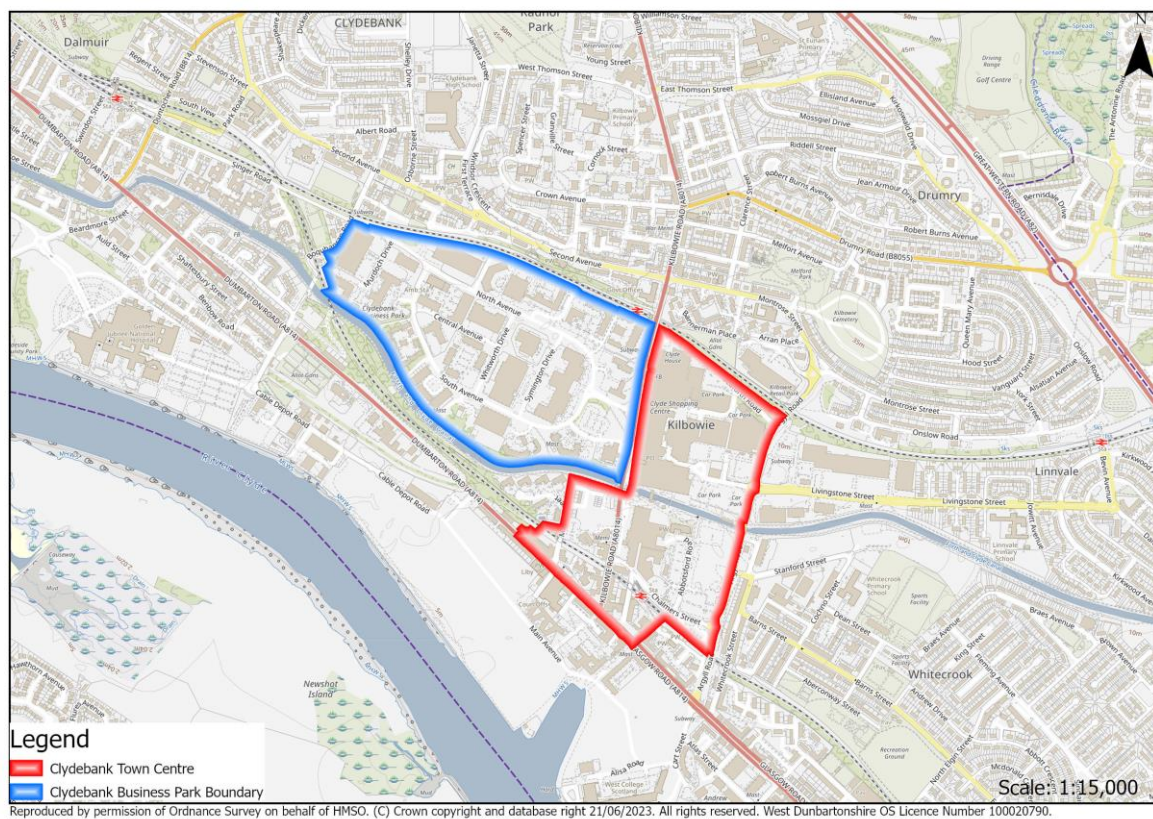
3. Clydebank Business Park

Clydebank Business Park was built on part of the site of the former Singer Sewing Machine factory which closed in 1980. The site was identified as an Enterprise Zone in 1981 and the Business Park developed to provide industrial and business accommodation.

It is located centrally within Clydebank, adjacent to the town centre and Clyde Shopping Centre. It is easily accessible by public transport with Singer rail station sitting immediately adjacent to the north, and Clydebank rail station within walking distance to the south. A frequent bus service runs along Kilbowie Road at the eastern entrance to the Business Park, with more services available within walking distance from locations within the town centre.

Road access is also good with Kilbowie Road linking to the A82 and A814 which provide access to the rest of Clydebank and the West Dunbartonshire area, Glasgow City Centre and via the Erskine Bridge and Clyde Tunnel to the wider trunk road network.

Map1: Clydebank Business Park location and transport links



The Business Park is predominantly occupied by Business (Use Class 4), General Industry (Use Class 5) and Storage and Distribution (Use Class 6) uses. Business types range from small local businesses to national and international organisations such as the Clydesdale Bank and Northern Marine. Business units range in size from under 100sq.m up to 8,000 sq.m.

The Business Park is in multiple ownership, with business units and common areas in different private ownerships. The Council does not own or manage property within the Business Park.

4. Policy context

Policy 26 of NPF4 describes the type of development that is acceptable in on land allocated for business and industry uses. Part c) of the policy states: “Development proposals for business and industry uses will be supported where they are compatible with the primary business function of the area. Other employment uses will be supported where they will not prejudice the primary function of the area and are compatible with the business/industrial character of the area.”

Policy E1 of LDP2 designates the Business Park as an existing business and industrial area and directs development in Use Class 4, 5 and 6 to these areas.

Policy E2 is intended to manage the level and type of alternative employment uses within business and industrial areas. Proposals for alternative uses will be assessed with regard to the following criteria in E2:

- a) There is no adverse impact on the operation of existing uses or the potential for future business, industrial or employment use within the area;
- b) The proposal protects and enhances the attractiveness of the area as an industrial and business location;
- c) The proposal is ancillary to the industrial and business uses;
- d) There is no unacceptable detrimental impact on the availability of employment land; and
- e) The economic benefit that the proposal can bring to the area is demonstrated.

Policy 27 of NPF4 also identifies town centres as the preferred location for uses attracting significant number of people including retail and commercial leisure, offices, and community, sport, cultural facilities and public buildings.

Policy SC1 of LDP2 (and the accompanying Table 4) states that town centres are the preferred location for new leisure uses. The Plan’s strategy for Clydebank town centre includes support for strengthening and diversifying the town centres role as a hub for retail, leisure, cultural, civic, and office uses.

5. Current situation

Alternative uses

The predominant existing uses within the Business Park are industrial and business (Use Classes 4/5/6). However a number of non-industrial/business uses have been established including a café, dog care/training service, sport/fitness uses, children’s nursery and a soft play centre. Table 1 and Map 2 show the number and spread of these non-industrial uses.

Table 1: Breakdown of alternative uses

Use	Count of Premises	Percentage of premises
1A – Shops and professional services	5	4%
3 - Food and Drink	1	1%
4 - Business	70	59%
5 - General Industry	9	8%
6 - Storage and Distribution	2	2%
8 - Residential Institutions	1	1%
10 - Non-residential Institutions	1	1%
11 - Assembly and Leisure	7	6%
Sui Generis	9	8%
Vacant	14	12%
Total	118	

Of the nine sui generis uses, four are dog grooming or dog day care businesses, two are vehicle hire, one is a taxi office, one is the ambulance depot, and one is a car storage and appointment only showroom.

Map 2: Use Classes in Clydebank Business Park



Unit sizes and vacancies

There are a range of different unit types and sizes in the Business Park. Table 2 identifies the number of units available within different size bands. Vacancies exist in greatest number and at the highest rate in the 150-250 sq.m size band and the highest vacancy rate is within the 250 – 800sq.m size band. Vacancies exist in all the other size bands but in less number and not as high a rate. Vacancies are spread throughout the business park

Table 2: Breakdown of unit sizes (February 2023)

Size band (sq.m)	No of units	Vacant unit	Vacancy rate
<150	22	3	14%
150 - 250	42	5	12%
250 - 800	18	4	22%
800 - 1500	16	1	6%
>1500	20	1	5%
Total	118	14	12%

Floorspace information was unavailable for four units. When compared to the floor space of similar size, three of these buildings likely exceed 1000 square meters and one most likely falls within the 100 – 499 square meter size bracket. Additionally, office buildings that are subdivided into different floor space areas which are then let are counted as one premises. They are counted as occupied here, but there was some vacant floor space during the survey, evidenced by advertisements for office space available to let.

Overall there is a higher level of occupancy in the business park in 2023 than the previous survey in 2016.

6. Research

Survey of Business Park businesses

The Council undertook a survey of Clydebank Business Park businesses in April 2023, to update the previous survey undertaken in September 2016. This involved an online questionnaire, with a letter delivered to all businesses in the business park advising of its availability and purpose. Responses were received from seven businesses and four employees. The survey results provide information on the attitude of existing Clydebank Business Park businesses towards alternative uses and vacancies within the Business Park. Full details of the survey and the results are set out in Appendix 1. Some headline findings are included below. These results were also compared to previous survey results to indicate any changes in attitude towards alternative employment uses.

Alternative uses

- Overall, alternative uses were generally seen to provide convenient services for businesses and employees, with the exception of residential, which was not seen to provide useful services to the business park. Hotels had a mixed response to this question, with most respondents being neutral on them, and roughly even positive and negative responses.
- Alternative uses were generally not seen to detract from the character of the business park. Residential and hotels received a more mixed response to this question, with responses to residential uses leaning towards that they would detract from the character.
- There was general agreement that alternative uses helped fill vacant units.
- There were some mixed views on whether alternative uses caused traffic conflicts, but generally that they did not was the most common response. The exceptions to this were hotels, retail and residential, where more respondents strongly agreed that they did cause traffic conflicts with existing businesses.
- There were mixed views as to whether there were other operational conflicts caused by alternative uses. Overall it was generally considered that child related uses did not cause conflict, but this was not unanimous. Opinions on hotels, pet grooming and day care, and residential were split roughly evenly, both in favour and against.
- It was generally agreed that alternative uses contributed to a lively and active business park, with the exception of hotels and residential which received more mixed views.

Vacancies

- The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that vacant units detract from the character of the business park, attract anti-social behaviour and vandalism and present a negative image to customers and clients.

Other Issues

- On street parking is causing difficulty for other road traffic.
- There was a request for businesses to have industrial bins

Conclusions from survey

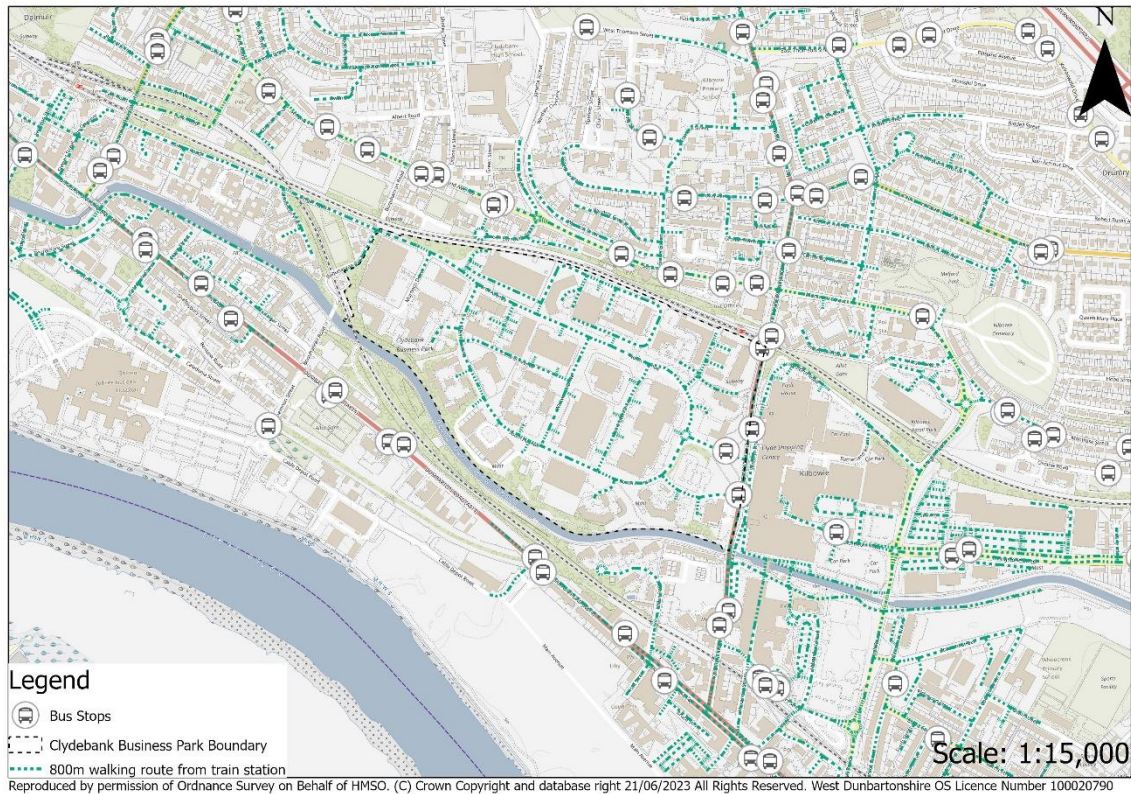
The survey indicates a majority opinion within existing businesses in favour of alternative employment uses within the Business Park and support for vacancies to be addressed. There are concerns around on-road parking within the Business Park, although this is not specifically connected to alternative uses.

Accessibility

NPF4 and LDP2 require development proposals to demonstrate they are accessible by active travel and public transport. Map 3 shows the majority of the Business Park is within 800 metres (approximately 10 minutes walk) of nearby train stations (Singer, which is immediately adjacent, Clydebank, and Dalmuir stations) and that

there are numerous bus stops on the surrounding roads and streets, including at the main entrance on Kilbowie Road.

Map 3: Accessibility to public transport



7. Application of NPF4 Policies and Local Development Plan Policy E2 criteria

Alternative employment uses will be supported in the area from the eastern entrance to the business park up to Symington Drive, as shown on Map 4. The reasons for this are:

- to ensure the business park is primarily for meeting the demand for use classes 4, 5, and 6, aligning with NPF4 Policy 26 and LDP2 Policy E2;
- the area is adjacent to the Town Centre and so the next sequentially preferred location if there are not suitable premises in the Town Centre or Commercial Centres for the proposed use, following NPF4 Policy 27;
- the area is within easy walking distance of public transport, encouraging sustainable access, following NPF4 Policy 13;

Further details on application of each of these policies, and possible exceptions are described below. Figure 1 contains a flow chart to provide an overview of how the council will assess if an alternative use may or may not be supported, but other considerations may be material.

Map 4: Area identified for the location of non-industrial/business uses



NPF4 Policy 26

The primary use of Clydebank Business Park is industry and business. Alternative uses will need to demonstrate that they are compatible with existing business and industrial uses in the business park. The council will use the criteria in Policy E2 of LDP2 in order to determine compatibility.

NPF4 Policy 27

Taking the town centre first approach, Clydebank town centre is the preferred location for town centre uses (as defined in the development plan) that attract significant footfall, followed by Clyde Retail Park and Kilbowie Retail Park. Where relevant, applicants for alternative employment uses within the Business Park should demonstrate through a Town Centre First Assessment that they have considered available premises within Clydebank town centre and retail parks.

In some circumstances it is accepted that premises within Clydebank town centre and its commercial centres may not be suitable for alternative uses, and cognisance will be given to the operational requirements of the proposed use with regard to physical requirements and hours of operation that may not make it suitable for a town/commercial centre location.

LDP2 Policy E2

a. Will there be adverse impacts on the operation of existing uses or the potential for future business, industrial or employment use within the area?

The Council shares the view of the majority of respondents that alternative employment uses have limited impact on the operations of existing businesses. Therefore, where an application is within the area outlined in map 4, and meets the other considerations set out in this guidance, only where there is clear evidence that there would be an adverse impact on an existing industrial/business use, would an alternative use be refused. However, the Council does have concerns about the safety of users of alternative employment uses within industrial/business areas, particularly of child-focused uses, and survey evidence suggests that there is a general concern with regards to parking in the Business Park, particularly on-road parking. Therefore the safety of the staff and customers of proposed alternative uses will be a consideration, as will the impact on the operations and safety of staff and customers of adjacent businesses.

Proposals should prioritise, sustainable travel, with suitable, safe walking route to the unit from public transport stops demonstrated. This includes ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities.

Any traffic impacts and parking requirements should be discussed and agreed with the Council. Consideration will be given to the need for parking in close proximity to

the unit to avoid traffic conflict. Where parking areas are shared with other uses, different hours of operation will be a consideration.

The survey showed the number of dog care, grooming, and training premises within the park has increased. Further proposals for these or similar uses will be required to demonstrate how animals will be kept securely and that any outdoor space dedicated to animals will adjoined and accessed through the unit occupied by the business.

The impact from the overall level of alternative employment uses within the business park on the operation, suitability of existing industrial and business uses will be a consideration. The primary purpose of this Business Park for industrial/business use will remain

The council will not support residential/accommodation uses in the business park as this would not conform to the character of the business park. The operation of existing buildings would likely conflict with residential/accommodation amenity.

b. will the proposal protect and enhance the attractiveness of the area as an industrial or business location?

The evidence does not suggest alternative employment uses have a detrimental impact on the suitability of an area's future for industrial/business development and that filling vacant units has a positive effect on the attractiveness of the business park. However, a consideration will be the impact of any particular alternative use, or cluster of alternative uses on the quality and character of the Business Park.

c. Is the proposal ancillary to the industrial and business use of the area?

Alternative employment uses that are primarily aimed at servicing businesses or employees operating and working within the business park will be considered favourably. In particular, retail (and other class 1A uses) and food and drink uses should not exceed 250sq.m.

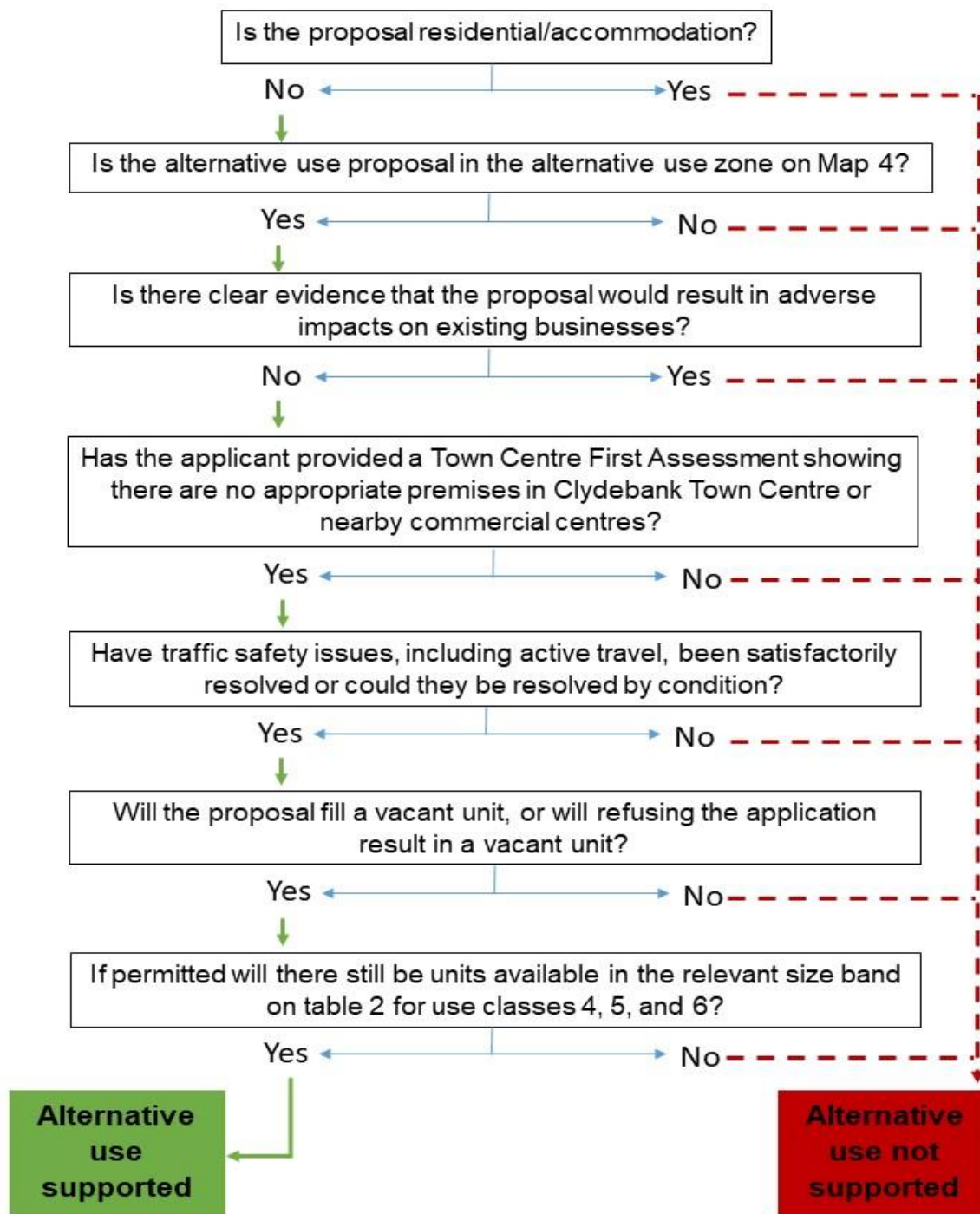
d. Will there be a detrimental impact on the availability of employment land?

The Council will seek to retain a supply of units for Use Class 4, 5 and 6 uses in preference to other uses. Therefore, the Council will not support an alternative use in any unit that would result in there being no vacant units remaining in any of the size bands identified in Table 2.

e. Is the economic benefit the proposal will bring to the area demonstrable?

There is a strong preference for vacant units to be occupied as they detract from the character of the Business Park. Therefore the occupation of a vacant unit by an alternative employment use will be viewed positively within the area defined in Map 4 for these uses and where they meet other relevant policy criteria.

Figure 1: Flow chart indicating if a proposed alternative use may be appropriate.



Note: This diagram shows the main considerations for assessing if an alternative use in the business park is appropriate, but there may be other relevant considerations material to an application not included here.

Appendix 1 – Online Questionnaire for Clydebank Business Park

The purpose of this survey was to gain the views of business managers, owners and employees within the business park regarding non-business, industry, and storage and distribution uses within the business park.

The survey was distributed in April 2023 with respondents given a month to reply to each business in the park. Letters explaining the purpose of the survey, with a link and QR code to the survey were delivered to businesses. Where possible they were handed directly to a manager or employee of the business. Where this was not possible it was posted through the door or into a mail box.

Where applicable responses were compared to the previous survey, which was part of preparing the original 2017 guidance. It should be noted that the previous survey did not ask questions on pet grooming and day care services, retail uses, or residential uses, so any comparison does not refer to these uses.

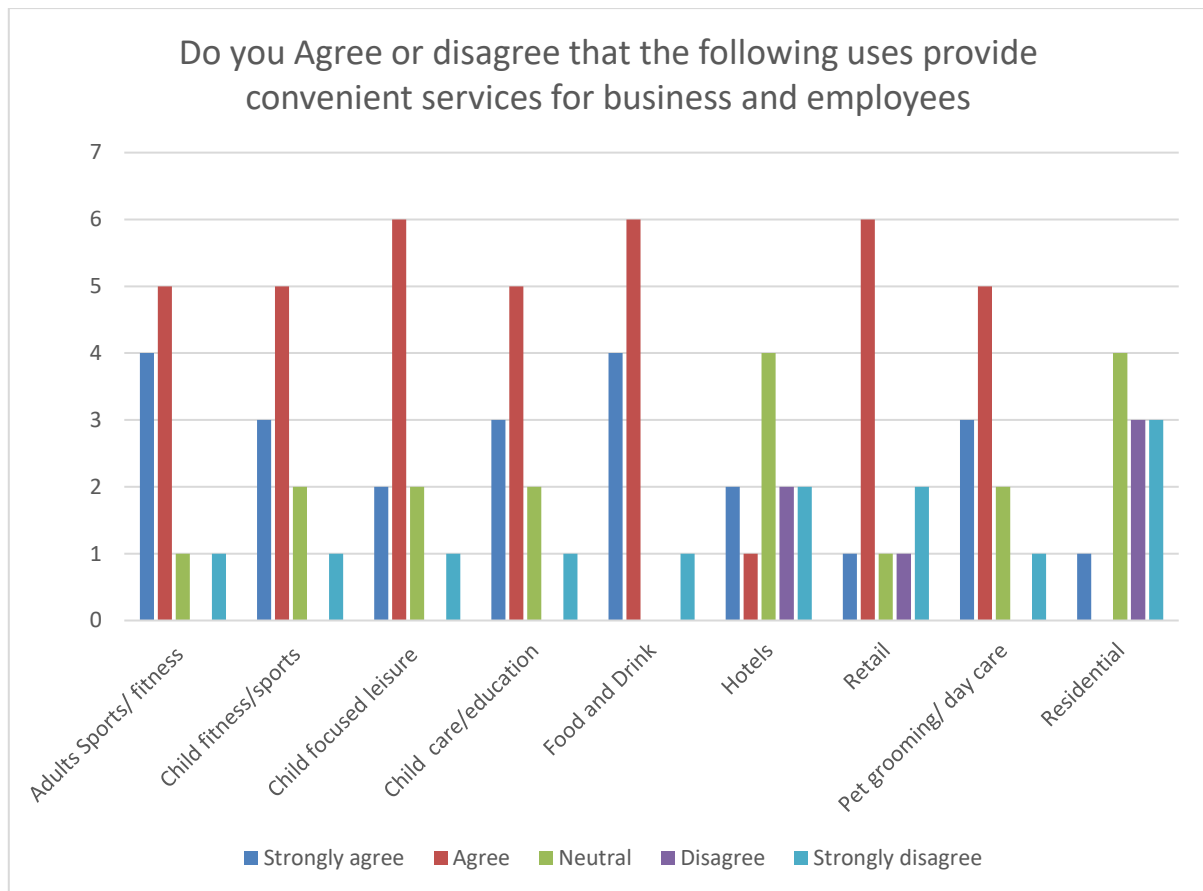
Definitions

- Adults Sports/ fitness – Use class 11 premises focussed adult fitness, such as gyms and personal training
- Child fitness/sports – Use class 11 premises focussed on activities and fitness for children, such as dance studios, and gymnastics
- Child focused leisure – Use class 11 premises focussed on leisure for children, such as soft play.
- Child care/education – Use class 10 for child care, such as crèche and nurseries.
- Food and Drink – Use class 3 and Sui Generis hot food takeaways.
- Hotels – Use class 7.
- Retail – Use class 1
- Pet grooming/ day care Residential – premises for pet grooming and day care services
- Residential – residential uses, including institutions such as care homes and student accommodation.

Number and Type of Respondents

There were a total of 11 respondents to the survey. Respondents were asked if they were responding on behalf of a business or as an employee. Seven responses were on behalf of a business as the manager or owner which represents a 4% response rate from businesses. The remaining four responses were from people who identified as employees.

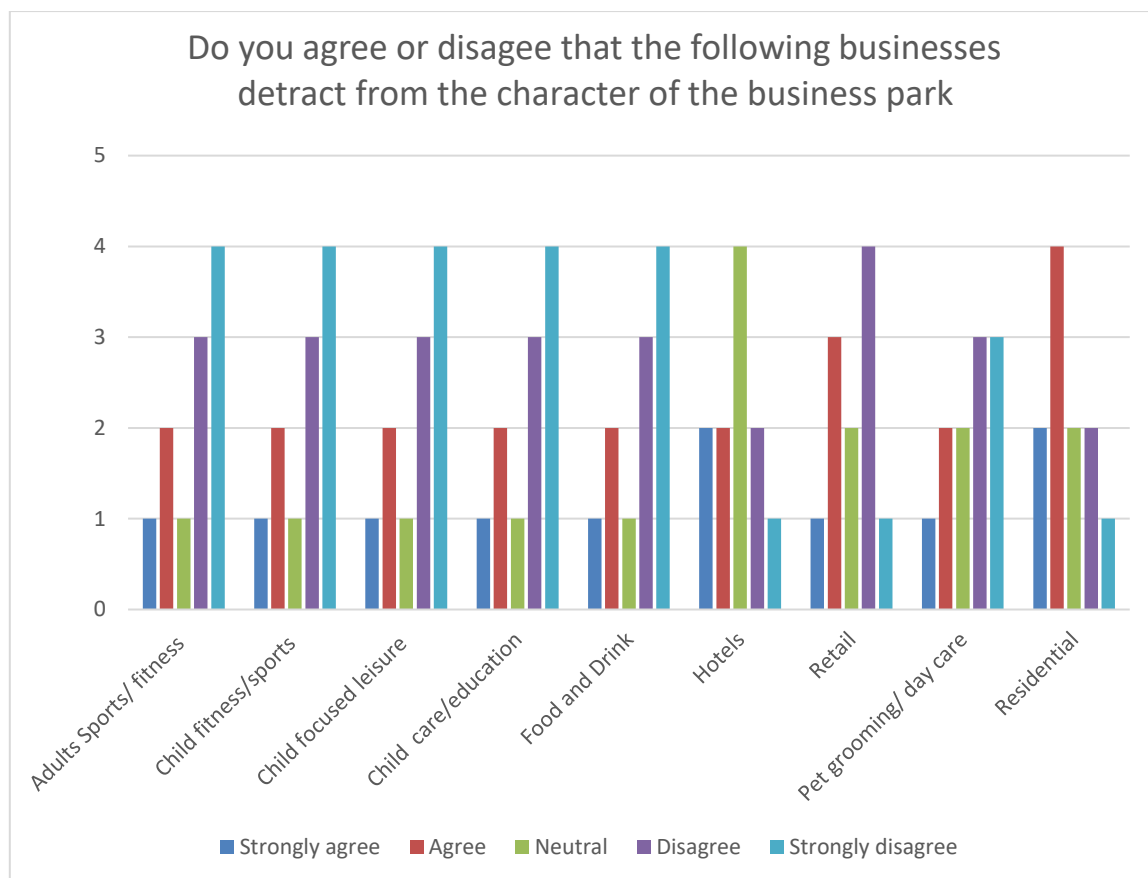
Alternative uses provide convenient services for businesses and employees



The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that sports and fitness (for adults and children), child focussed leisure, child care and education, and food and drink provided convenient services to the businesses and employees. For hotels the largest response was neutral, and overall there was slightly more disagreement than agreement that they provided a convenient service. Retail was generally considered to provide a convenient service, as was pet grooming and day care. Residential had the strongest negative response of all the listed uses, with only one respondent strongly agreeing they provide a convenient service and four giving a neutral response.

When compared to the previous survey results were similar for adult fitness, child care and food and drink, however there were more neutral or negative responses to these uses in this survey. Responses were more mixed towards hotels in this survey than the previous survey were responses were in agreement or neutral.

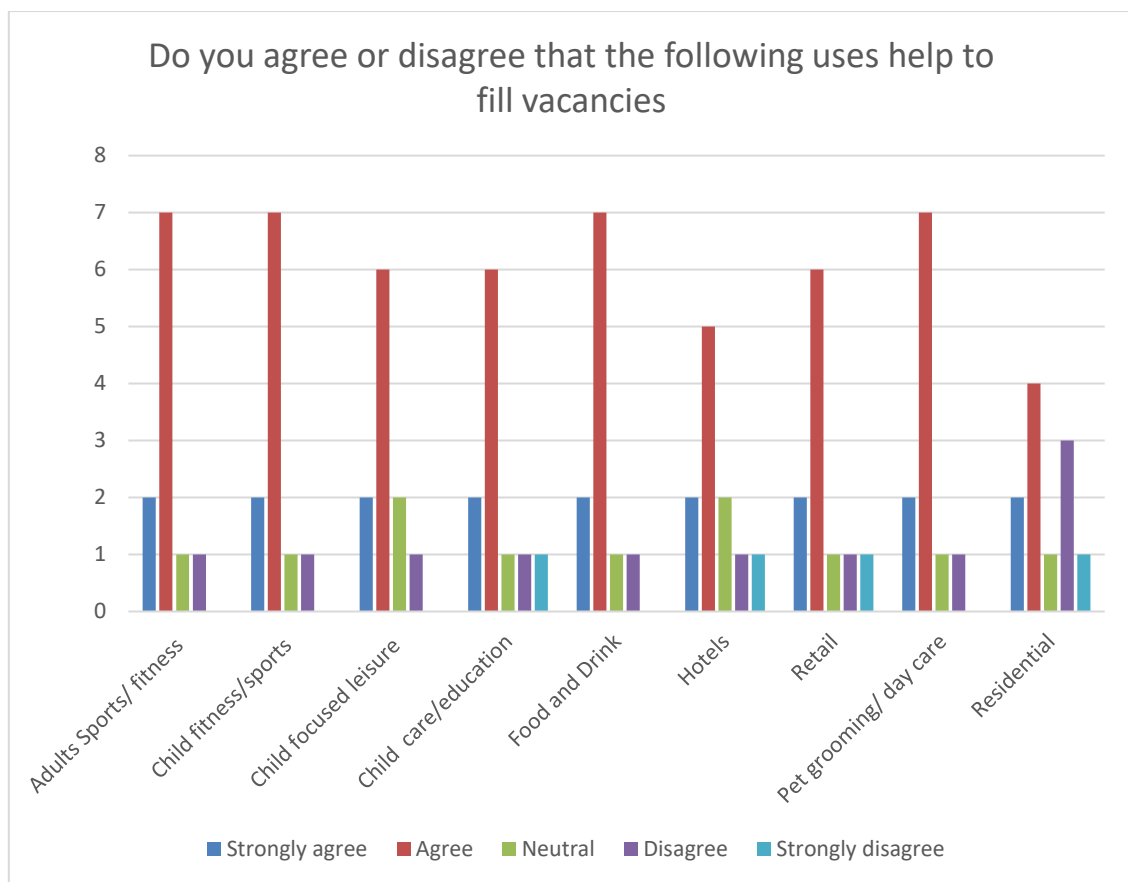
Alternative uses affect the character of the business park



Adult fitness, child fitness, child leisure, child care, and food and drink all had the same responses to this question. More respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that these uses detracted from the character of the business park than agreed or strongly agreed. Hotels received a mixed response to this question; the largest number of responses were neutral, and slightly more agreed or strongly agreed that hotels detract from the character of the park than agreed or disagreed. Retail received a mixed response, with only one more responded disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that retail detracts from the character of the business park than agreeing or strongly agreeing. The response to pet grooming and day care was generally more positive than negative.

Overall the results of this and the previous survey disagreed that adult fitness, child fitness, child leisure, child care and food and drink detracted from the character of the business park. However there was more, responses in agreement that they did detract than the previous survey. In this survey more respondents strongly disagreed than in the previous. The view on hotels is more mixed than in the previous survey, with more agreement or strong agreement that they detracted from the character of the business park.

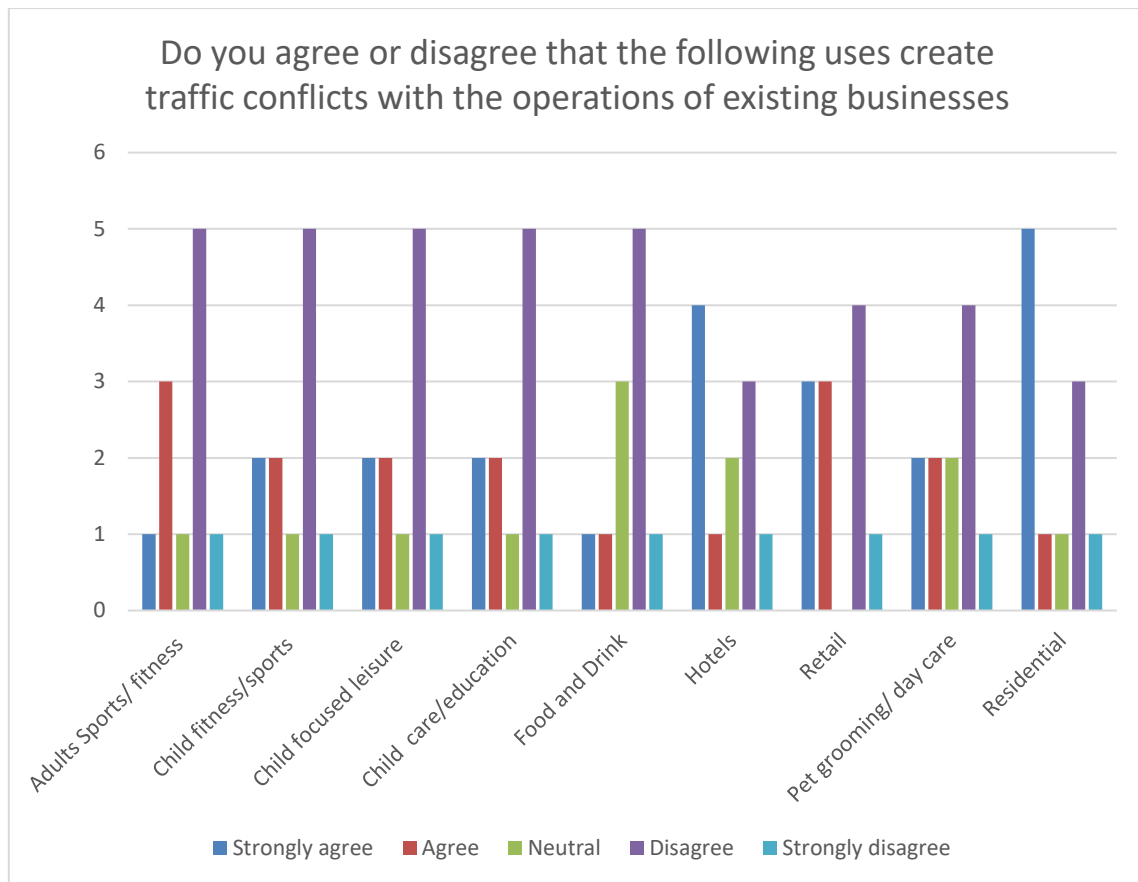
Alternative Uses and Vacancies



There was general agreement that alternative uses helped to fill vacancies within the business park, with a small number of answers being neutral, disagreeing, or strongly disagreeing. The exception to this was residential which had a more mixed response, but was slightly weighted towards agreement.

The previous survey was also in agreement that alternative uses help fill vacancies.

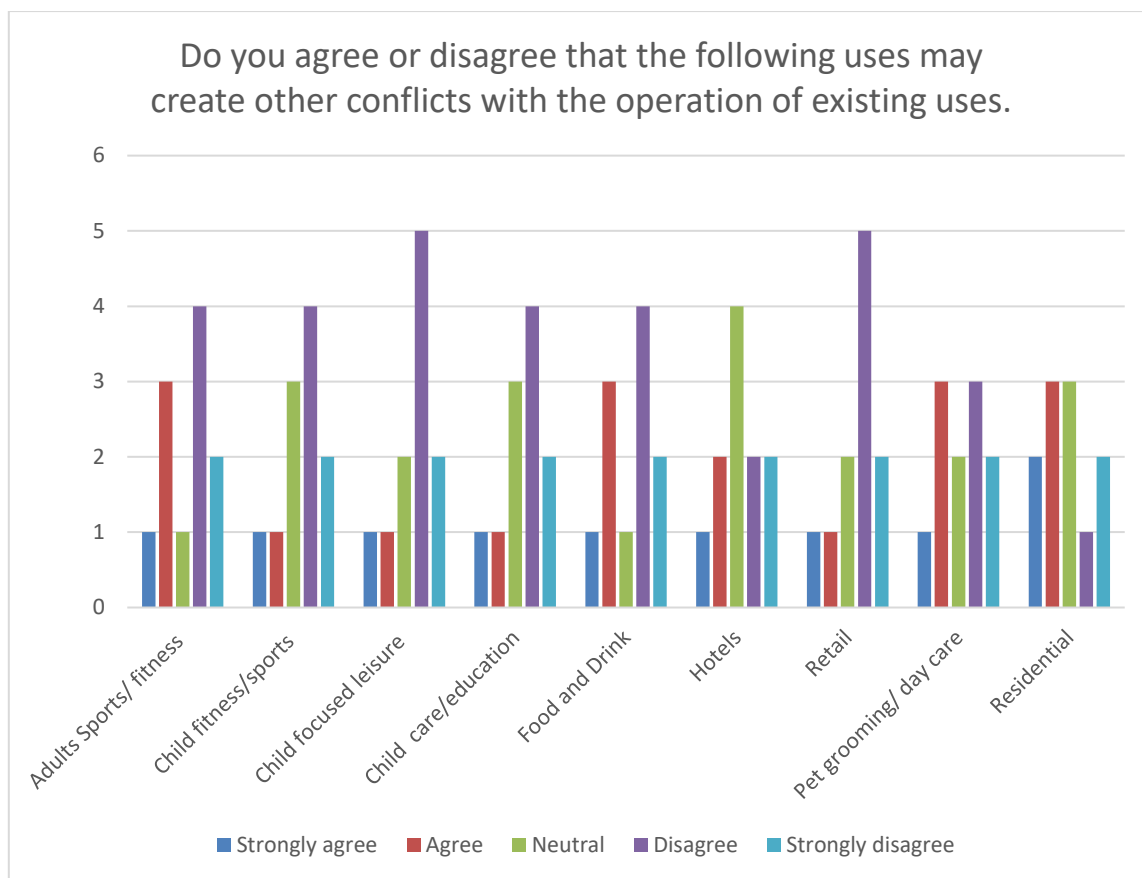
Alternative uses and traffic conflicts



Adult fitness, child fitness, child leisure, child care, and food and drink all had similar responses to this question; “disagree” was the most common answer among all these uses, however some responses did agree or strongly agree that these uses created traffic conflict. Residential and Hotels had the largest “strongly agree” responses, respectively, and this was the most common response for these uses, however this was followed by “disagree” in most cases. Retail had a mixed response, however more respondents agreed or strongly agreed than disagreed or agreed. Pet grooming and day care had a very mixed response, but the most common response was “disagree”.

Where applicable, responses from the previous survey are comparable to responses to this survey. Hotels are an exception to this, which received more responses in strong agreement than previously.

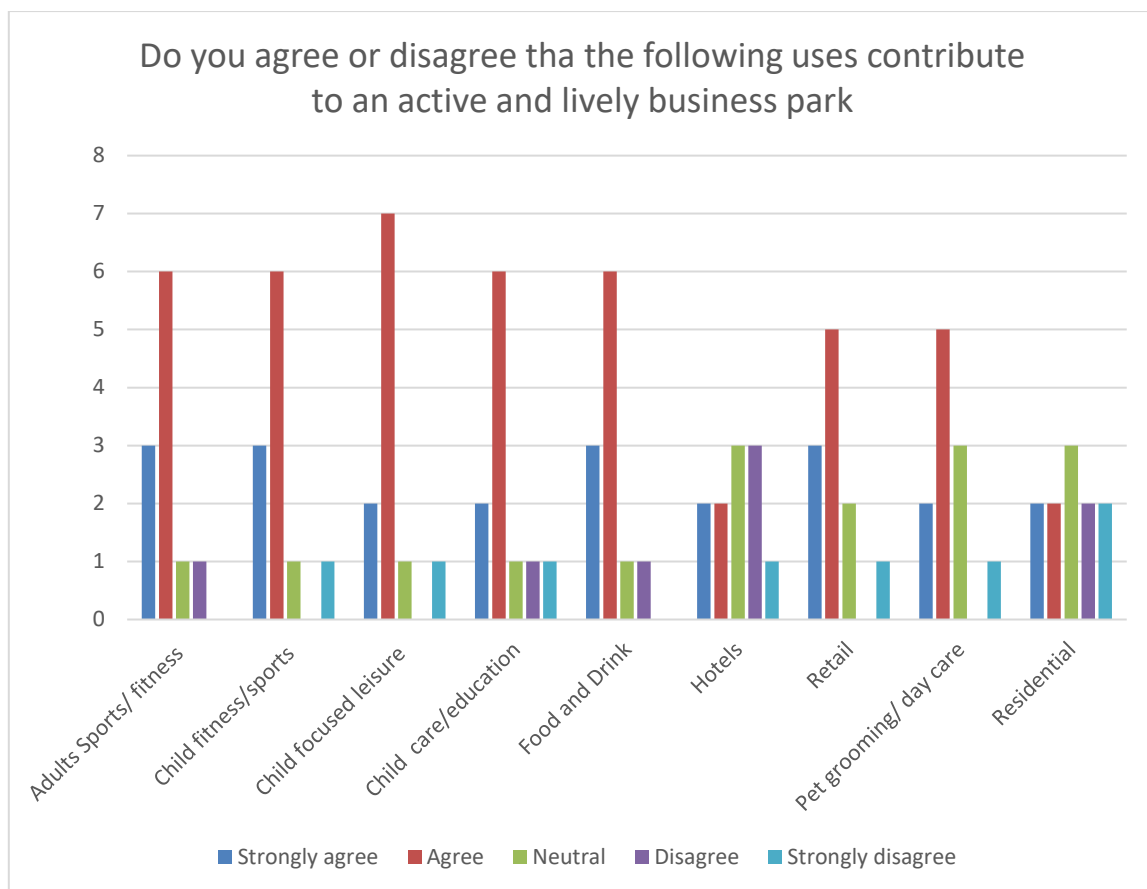
Alternative uses and operational conflicts



Overall, respondents disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were neutral that child fitness, child leisure, child care, and retail uses did not create operational conflicts or responded neutrally for these uses. Other uses received more mixed results. Adult sports and fitness, and food and drink were considered by more respondents to cause operational conflicts than those uses listed above, but more views stated they disagreed or strongly disagreed they created conflict than did agree or strongly agree. Opinions on hotels, pet grooming and day care, and residential were split roughly evenly.

In the previous survey there was general disagreement that alternative uses cause other operational conflicts with existing businesses. Disagree was still the most common response in this survey, the response overall was more mixed, particularly with adult fitness and food and drink.

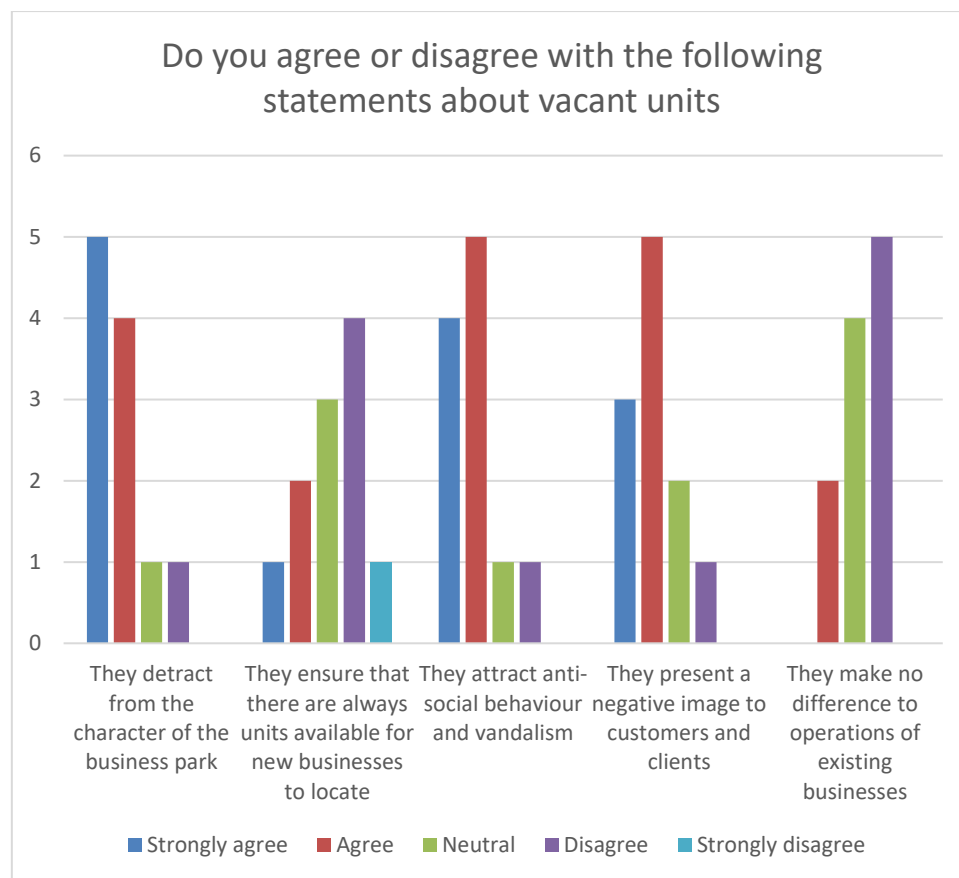
Alternative uses and contributing to a lively business park



The majority of responses either agreed or strongly agreed that other uses contributed to a lively and active business park. The exceptions to this was hotels and residential. For hotels more respondents had a neutral response or disagreed, though there was still some agreement that hotels contributed to an active and lively business park. Residential received a mixed response, with the most common response being neutral and an equal number of responses that agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

This generally aligns with responses from the previous survey, however there was some more disagree or strongly disagree responses than in the previous surveys.

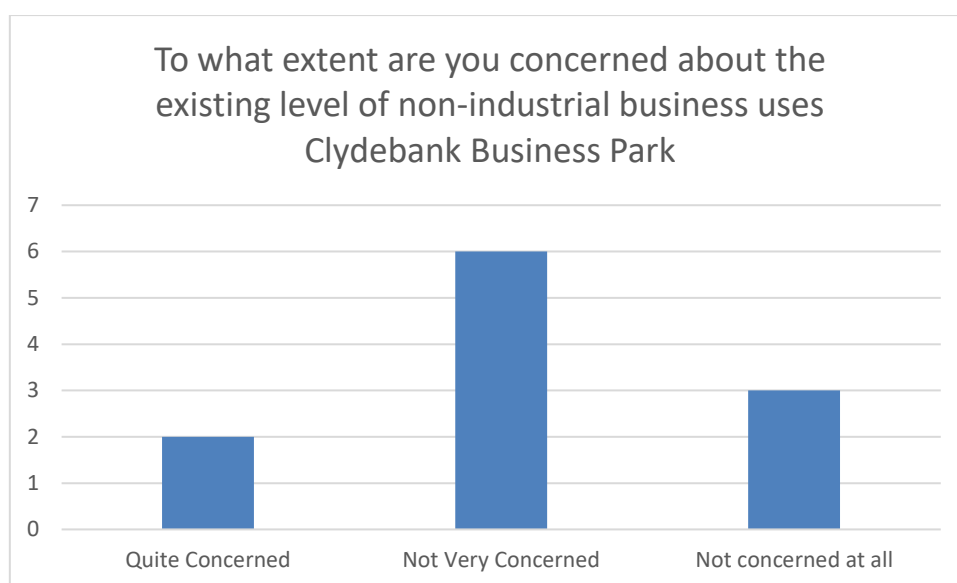
Vacant Units



Respondents generally agreed that vacant units detracted from the character of the business park, vacant units attract anti-social behaviour and vandalism, and present a negative image to customers and clients. Respondents generally disagreed that they make no difference to the operations of the business park. There were mixed views, but general disagreement that vacant units always ensure there are units available for new businesses to locate.

This survey generally aligns with the previous survey.

Concern about non-industrial business uses



Most respondents were not very concerned about non-industrial uses in the business park. Two respondents were quite concerned and three were not at all concerned.

A larger proportion of respondents selected “not very concerned” compared to the previous survey, with a small proportion of respondents being quite concerned or not at all concerned.

Other uses in the business park you would like to see

Respondents were asked if there are any other uses in the business park they would like to see. There were three responses suggesting the following uses:

- Trade stores, e.g. Screwfix
- More food uses
- Hair dresser or nail technician

Other Comments

When asked if they had any other comments on non-industrial uses in the business park the following responses were received:

- Could we have industrial bins
- I think any business that attract people into the Business Park is good and also feel landlords should be doing all they can to ensure units remain in use and that might mean assistance from the Council to keep rent and service charges affordable while ensuring all roads are in a satisfactory condition which is not the case withing the Business Park at the moment.
- In 2016 we moved into the business park by the skin of our teeth after very strong opposition from some councillors. 7 years later (even after the pandemic and being forced to close for 15 months) we are still here welcoming families, Employing 23 members of staff and contributing to the

local community/economy in many small ways. I don't see any reason to leave units empty when they could be filled with thriving business's? I'd like to thank those councillors who had the foresight to have faith in us.

- We (UK) are moving to, or have moved to years ago, service led businesses. Manufacturing et al is no longer congruent or pivotal with a modern growing economy..
- You just have to look outside any school / nursery or even local activities centres at start finish times to see the chaos brought to any area by inconsiderate and often dangerous parking and blocking of lanes, Some of the parking at weekends with the 1 current play centre is bad enough
- Parking lighting and safety are concerns.
- Traffic and parking is ready a nightmare

Key Points from Survey

- Overall, alternative uses were generally seen to provide convenient services for businesses and employees, with the exception of residential, which was not seen to. Hotels had a mixed response to this question.
- Alternative uses were generally not seen to detract from the character of the business park. Residential and hotels received a more mixed response to this question, with responses to residential uses leaning towards that they would detract from the character.
- There was general agreement that alternative uses helped fill vacant units.
- There were some mixed views on whether alternative uses caused traffic conflicts, but generally that they did not was the most common response. The exceptions to this were hotels, retail and residential, where more respondents strongly agreed that they did cause traffic conflicts with existing businesses.
- There were also mixed views as to whether there were other operational conflicts cause by alternative uses. Overall it was generally considered that child related uses did not cause conflict, but this was not unanimous. Opinions on hotels, pet grooming and day care, and residential were split roughly evenly.
- It was generally agreed that alternative uses contributed to a lively and active business park, with the exception of hotels and residential which received more mixed views.
- Overall it was felt that the presence of vacant units had a detrimental effect on the business park.
- There is some concern as to the number of alternative uses within the business park.