

Social Infrastructure responses in Questionnaire

Social infrastructure: This refers to the network of physical spaces, facilities and services (like schools, parks, libraries, community centres) that improve social well-being. What improvements would you like to see to social infrastructure in Balerno

Here's a structured summary of the responses, followed by clear, practical proposals.

Summary of Key Themes


1. Strong demand for better youth & child facilities

- Repeated calls for:
 - Youth clubs / teen spaces
 - Skate parks, bike tracks, basketball courts
 - More and improved play parks (especially for **toddlers, older kids, and disabled children**)
- General sentiment: *“There’s very little for teenagers to do.”*

 This is one of the **most dominant themes**.

2. Play parks & green spaces need upgrading

- Many parks described as:
 - “tired”, “dated”, “falling apart”
 - lacking variety (especially for ages 8+)
- Requests include:
 - More parks across the village (not just one central one)
 - Better maintenance (bins, grass cutting, repairs)
 - Inclusive equipment (disabled access)
 - Seating, lighting, paths

 People value green space highly—but want it **improved, not expanded at the cost of quality**.

3. Community hub / centre improvements

- Frequent calls for:
 - A **modern, welcoming community hub**
 - Better use of existing buildings (community centre, police station, schools)
- Desired features:
 - Classes (fitness, arts, languages)
 - Café / social space
 - Workshops, tool libraries, repair cafés
 - Multi-use flexible space

👉 There is strong support for a **“Hub model”** like nearby areas.

4. Facilities for health, fitness & wellbeing

- High demand for:
 - Gym (frequently mentioned)
 - Fitness classes
 - Outdoor gym equipment
 - Better access to swimming pool

👉 Current provision seen as **insufficient or inaccessible**.

5. Schools & education facilities need major investment

- Especially:
 - **Balerno High School** (very strong feedback: “run down”, “unfit”, “uninspiring”)
- Requests:
 - Refurbishment or rebuild
 - Reopening school facilities to the community
 - Return of evening/adult classes

👉 This is a **critical infrastructure concern**, not just a preference.

6. Library expansion & modernization

- Common suggestions:
 - Bigger space
 - More services (workshops, tools, study areas)
 - Longer opening hours

👉 Seen as a **key community anchor**, but underdeveloped.

7. Access, transport & parking issues

- Problems highlighted:
 - School congestion and unsafe roads
 - Lack of parking near amenities
 - Poor accessibility (especially for disabled users)
- Suggested:
 - Better parking design
 - Safer walking/cycling routes
 - Improved public transport to green spaces

8. Desire to protect green belt & limit overdevelopment

- Strong sentiment:
 - “Too many houses, not enough infrastructure”
 - Opposition to building on green spaces
- Priority:
 - Preserve village character
 - Maintain access to nature

9. Gaps in local services

- Requests include:
 - GP/health centre
 - Public toilets
 - Post office
 - More cafés and local shops
-

10. Maintenance & upkeep concerns

- Frequent mentions:
 - Litter
 - Grass cutting
 - Broken equipment not being fixed
 - General feeling: *existing assets aren't being maintained well enough*
-

Key Insights

- The issue is **not lack of infrastructure overall**, but:
 - Aging facilities
 - Poor maintenance
 - Lack of youth-focused provision
 - Residents want:
 - **Better use of what already exists**
 - Not just new builds
-

Proposals (Actionable Recommendations)

1. Create a Multi-Use Community Hub

- Develop (or upgrade) a central hub that includes:
 - Gym + fitness classes
 - Youth space (dedicated teen area)
 - Café/social space

- Workshop rooms
 - Model it on successful nearby hubs
-

2. Youth Strategy (High Priority)

- Establish:
 - Youth club + drop-in centre
 - Outdoor facilities (skate park, bike track, MUGA court)
 - Partner with schools and community groups
-

3. Play Park Investment Programme

- Audit all parks and:
 - Fully refurbish key sites (e.g. Dean Park, Marchbank)
 - Add:
 - Inclusive/accessible equipment
 - Facilities for older children
 - Seating, lighting, bins
 - Ensure **geographic spread** across the village
-

4. Major Upgrade or Rebuild of Balerno High School

- Prioritise as a capital project
 - Reintroduce:
 - Community access (evenings/weekends)
 - Adult learning programmes
-

5. Library Transformation

- Expand or relocate to larger space
- Add:
 - Co-working / study areas

- Workshops (skills, crafts, digital)
 - Community programming
-

6. Health & Wellbeing Improvements

- Deliver:
 - Community gym (standalone or within hub)
 - Outdoor fitness equipment in parks
 - Improve access to swimming facilities
-

7. Access & Safety Improvements

- Implement:
 - Safe school travel plan (cycling, walking routes)
 - Parking redesign near schools
 - Better disabled access to key sites
-

8. Protect & Enhance Green Spaces

- Policy:
 - No net loss of green space
 - Improve:
 - Paths, lighting, benches
 - Maintenance standards
-

9. Local Services Boost

- Explore:
 - GP / health provision expansion
 - Pop-up or shared Post Office
 - Encouraging small local businesses & cafés
-

10. Maintenance Strategy

- Introduce:
 - Faster repair response system
 - Regular cleaning/grounds schedule
 - Communicate clearly how residents can report issues
-

Bottom Line

Residents are saying:

“We like Balerno—but the infrastructure hasn’t kept up, and what we have needs modernising.”

The biggest opportunities are:

- **Youth provision**
 - **Upgrading existing assets (parks, school, library)**
 - **Creating a true community hub**
-

If you want, I can turn this into:

- a **formal report**
- a **presentation deck**
- or a **prioritised action plan with costs/impact scoring**