

CABINET MEETING

Date: Wednesday 20 December 2023
Time: 6.30 p.m.
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Burton (Chairman), Cooper, Garten, Parfitt-Reid, Perry and Russell

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Urgent Items
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members or Officers
5. Disclosures of Lobbying
6. To consider whether any items should be considered in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information
7. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 October 2023 1 - 5
8. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
9. Questions from Local Residents to the Leader or Individual Cabinet Member (as appropriate)
10. Questions from Members to the Leader or Individual Cabinet Member (as appropriate)
11. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Reconsideration (if any)
12. Issues Arising from Overview and Scrutiny - to follow
13. Matters Referred to the Executive by another Committee (if any)
14. Any Matter Relating to a Serious Service Failure or Nuisance (if any)

Issued on Tuesday 12 December 2023

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

15. Receipt of Written Representations from Members of the Council (if any)	
16. Cabinet Forward Plan	6 - 22
17. Reference from Council - Notice of Motion - KCC's Draft Minerals and Waste Plan - Inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a Further Extension to Hermitage Quarry	23 - 30
18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Update	31 - 47
19. Town Centre Strategy Update	48 - 64
20. Fees and Charges 2024-25	65 - 176

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 18 December 2023). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Monday 18 December 2023). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit the [Council's Website](#).

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2023

Attendees:

Cabinet Members:	Councillors Burton (Chairman), Cooper, Garten, Parfitt-Reid and Perry
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48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell.

49. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there was an urgent update to Item 13 – Matters Referred to the Cabinet by another Committee – Reference from Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee – Notice of Motion, Replacement Refuse Bins, which provided an updated (draft) minutes of that Committee’s consideration of the item that would contribute to item’s consideration.

50. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Jeffery was present as a Visiting Member for Item 13 – Matters Referred to the Cabinet by another Committee – Reference from Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee – Notice of Motion, Replacement Refuse Bins, Item 17 – Response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommended actions arising from the review into the Water Management Cycle, and Item 18 – Air Quality Action Plan.

51. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

52. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Cooper had been lobbied on Item 17 – Response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommended actions arising from the review into the Water Management Cycle.

53. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Cabinet Member wished to refer to the information contained within Item 21 – Exempt Appendix to Item 20 – Property Acquisition for 1000 Affordable Homes Programme, in which case the Cabinet would enter into closed session due to the likely disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

54. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

55. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

56. QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

There was one question from a Local Resident.

Question from Kate Moore to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

'With regards to the Telecoms Planning Application ref 23/501215/TNOT56 I would ask Maidstone Borough Council to consider why neither the CEO of the Trust and the Head Teachers & Governors of Valley Park, Invicta & The Science & Technology Schools in Maidstone were aware of the plans, through the proper channels, prior to approval?'

The Cabinet Member responded to the question.

Kate Moore asked the following supplementary question:

'Many 5G masts are being installed in and around Maidstone, and a number of these are situated close to schools and nurseries. The radiation from these masts is classified by the international agency for research on cancer, which is part of the World Health Organisation, as a group 2b possible carcinogen. Is Maidstone Borough Council happy that infants and young children are chronically exposed to radio frequency radiation while they are at school or in a nurse, or does it think that a precautionary approach is needed to ensure 5G masts are sited well away from these sensitive sites?'

The Cabinet Member responded to the supplementary question.

To listen to the answer to the question, please follow this link:

[Cabinet - Wednesday 25 October 2023 - YouTube](#)

57. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

There were no questions from Members.

58. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET FOR RECONSIDERATION

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

59. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny.

60. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY ANOTHER COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - NOTICE OF MOTION, REPLACEMENT REFUSE BINS

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services stated that the decision concerning replacement refuse bins was an operational matter and was under constant review. It had been agreed that the matter would be reviewed by the Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (HHE PAC) in January 2024, with data being collated to supplement the report.

The mover of the motion supported a report being presented to the HHE PAC and Cabinet for consideration in January 2024. It was felt that no further action was required at this stage and as the matter was operational in nature, any issues that arose would be addressed as required.

RESOLVED: That the presentation of a report concerning the provision of wheeled bins in January 2024, be noted.

61. ANY MATTER RELATING TO A SERIOUS SERVICE FAILURE OR NUISANCE

There were no matters relating to a Serious Service Failure or Nuisance.

62. RECEIPT OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were no written representations from Members.

63. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

It was noted that update reports on the Town Centre Strategy and the Community Infrastructure Levy process would be added to the Forward Plan for December 2023 and January 2024 respectively.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

64. RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDED ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE REVIEW INTO THE WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE

The Cabinet discussed the completed Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action Implementation Plan (SCRAIP), drawing particular attention to the following, that:

- The £100,000 requested had already been included within the capital programme to address flood mitigation measures. The funds were available for use, as opposed to the allocation of an additional £100,000 in funding, with partnership working reiterated. It was felt that this should be clarified within the SCRAIP;
- Many of the recommendations were carried out through existing building regulations, as part of the Council's daily business. An example was given of the public engagement on rainwater harvesting through the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan and Council Eco-Hub; and

The Water Companies responsibility in responding to planning applications was emphasised, alongside highlighting that the management of SUD schemes could be reviewed through future Local Plan Reviews. Where improvements could be made to rainwater run-off, these could be picked up by the Planning Committee.

The SCRAIP would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations from the 'Water Management Cycle Review', be approved, with additional clarification on the capital funds allocated to flood mitigation schemes.

Note: Councillor Perry arrived during the item's consideration at 6.55 p.m. and stated that he did not have any disclosures of interest or lobbying to declare.

65. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

RESOLVED: That the Air Quality Action Plan attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

66. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

RESOLVED: That:

1. The full Council be recommended to:
 - a. Amend the grid amounts in line with the Department of Work and Pensions annual percentage increase of welfare benefits for 2024/25;
 - b. Continue the scheme with the existing principles and percentage awards (maximum award of 80%) for 2024/25; and
2. The progress of the income banded scheme be noted.

67. PROPERTY ACQUISITION FOR 1000 AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That

1. The financial returns for the proposed acquisition as shown in Exempt Appendix 3 to the report, which supports the Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan and overall Development Strategy, be approved;
2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement to:
 - a) Negotiate terms for the purchase of the proposed acquisition for the sum as shown in the Exempt Appendix 3 to the report;
 - b) Procure and enter into all such deeds, agreements, contracts and documents which may be required to facilitate the purchase of the site, and the subsequent redevelopment works required to deliver the scheme referred to in this report. Including (but not limited to) any

related appointments such as suitably qualified consultants and a Contractor if required;

- c) Subject to satisfactory conclusion of all due diligence to negotiate and finalise and complete all legal formalities, deeds and agreements which may be required to facilitate the purchase;
 - d) Negotiate and agree any lease between The Council and Maidstone Property Holdings.
3. The Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to appoint the Solicitors required to negotiate and complete the necessary contract documentation, deeds and agreements associated with the purchase and construction works on the terms as agreed by the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement.

68. EXEMPT APPENDIX TO ITEM 20 - PROPERTY ACQUISITION FOR 1000 AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Item be considered alongside Item 20 – Property Acquisition for 1000 Affordable Homes Programme.

69. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.20 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD DECEMBER 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key and non-key decisions which the Cabinet or Cabinet Members expect to take during the next four-month period.

A Key Decision is defined as one which:

1. Results in the Council incurring expenditure, or making savings, of more than £250,000; or
2. Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough

The current Cabinet Members are:

 <p> Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910 </p>	 <p> Councillor Paul Cooper Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070 </p>	 <p> Councillor John Perry Cabinet Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741 </p>
 <p> Councillor Claudine Russell Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk </p>	 <p> Councillor Patrik Garten Cabinet Member for Environmental Services PatrikGarten@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 807907 </p>	 <p> Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Cabinet Member for Housing and Health LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 07919 360000 </p>

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision or a Part II decision may not be taken, unless it has been published on the forward plan for 28 days or it is classified as urgent:

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key and part II decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan.

Copies of the Council's constitution, forward plan, reports and decisions may be inspected at Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ or accessed from the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet which are normally held at the Town Hall, High St, Maidstone, ME14 1SY. The dates and times of the meetings are published on the [Council's Website](#), or you may contact the Democratic Services Team on telephone number **01622 602899** for further details.

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David Burton
Leader of the Council

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Cabinet Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Statement of Common Ground - Lower Thames Crossing</p> <p>To seek approval of the draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which summarises the key strategic matters between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways (Exempt Appendix 1 to the report).</p> <p>This is specifically with respect to the Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order proposal, which is currently undergoing independent examination.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 7th Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Statement of Common Ground - Lower Thames Crossing	<p>Erik Nilsen</p> <p>ErikNilsen@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Marden Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan</p> <p>To seek approval of the Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan documents for public consultation purposes.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 7 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Marden Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	<p>Jeremy Fazzaloro</p> <p>Principle Conservation Officer</p> <p>jeremyfazzaloro@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Government Consultation</p> <p>The Government has asked all local authorities in England to respond to a consultation on the figure they consider to be a suitable cap on the number of refugee households that can be accommodated after 2025 in their district.</p>	Leader of the Council	Leader of the Council	Before 15 Dec 2023	No	No	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Dec 2023	Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Government Consultation	<p>John Littlemore</p> <p>Head of Housing & Regulatory Services</p> <p>johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

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10 2nd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 8 Nov 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 14 Nov 2023</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023</p>	2nd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	<p>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Annual Update	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Annual Update	<p>Orla Sweeney, Anna Collier</p> <p>orlasweeney@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

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<p>Fees and Charges 2024/25</p> <p>F&Cs for the PAC that will be used to charge for services in 24/25</p> <p>11</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	Yes	No Open	<p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Dec 2023</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023</p>	Fees and Charges 2024/25 CS PAC	<p>Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>adrianlovegrove@m aidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Town Centre Strategy Update</p> <p>This report provides an update on the</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory	Town Centre Strategy Update	<p>Karen Britton</p> <p>karenbritton@maidst</p>

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preparation of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy and sets out the proposed next steps.						Committee 7 Dec 2023		one.gov.uk
Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on a Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). The consultation on the KCWIP runs from 1 November 2023 to 10 January 2024.	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Before 31 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	Tom Gilbert tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk
Over-arching Conservation Management Plan The over-arching Conservation Area Management Plan has been drafted to address concerns that there was limited guidance on conservation areas that	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 10 Jan 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Over-arching Conservation Management Plan	Janice Gooch JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk

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do not have either a conservation area appraisal or management plan.								
Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan 13	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 10 Jan 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Janice Gooch JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk
1,000 Homes Update This report provides a review of the progress made towards achieving the delivery of the Council's various housing development programmes	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	1,000 Homes Update	William Cornall Director of Regeneration & Place williamcornall@maidstone.gov.uk
Archbishops palace agreement for lease looking for agreement to move forward with a potential tenant for the palace	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Part exempt	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Archbishops palace agreement for lease	Deborah Turner deborahturner@maidstone.gov.uk

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<p>Bearsted Road Improvements Maidstone Borough Council Contribution</p> <p>To recommend and seek approval that the Council uses £500,000 from the North Kent Enterprise Zone (Kent Medical Campus) retained business rates to match investment from the National Productivity Fund secured by Kent Council to ensure the Bearsted Road improvement works are started and completed.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Bearsted Road Improvements Maidstone Borough Council Contribution	<p>Chris Inwood</p> <p>chrisinwood@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Procurement Strategy and Policy Changes</p> <p>Procurement Strategy for 2023 to 2026 and Policy Changes to amend the approval levels for procurement. The approval levels will need to be amended within the Constitution.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Procurement Strategy and Policy Changes	

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Elephant House A report on the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	The Leader of the Council	24 Jan 2024	No	No Part exempt	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee 24 Jan 2024	Elephant House	
Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme Report on the 1st round of CIL bidding and revised prospectus for the 2nd round of bidding with timetable/programme	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme	Carole Williams, Rob Jarman Head of Development Management carolewilliams@maidstone.gov.uk, Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk
Council Tax Base 2024/25 and Collection Fund Adjustment. Report setting what the 24/25 C/tax base and collection fund. Used to set the amount of Council Tax and is a statutory requirement.	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Council Tax Base 2024/25 and Collection Fund Adjustment.	Adrian Lovegrove Head of Finance adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk

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<p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and feedback</p> <p>Delivering the new strategic priorities for the Council in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping. A review of the themes and priorities for the Council.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and feedback	<p>Hannah Gaston</p> <p>hannahgaston@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Maidstone Leisure Centre - Leisure Services Contract A report on Maidstone Leisure Centre</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Part exempt	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 9 Jan 2024	Maidstone Leisure Centre	
<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Funding Settlement and Final Saving Proposals</p> <p>Details of the proposed budget for 2024/25. Revenue budget including savings and updates on government</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Funding Settlement and Final Saving Proposals	<p>Adrian Lovegrove, Mark Green</p> <p>Head of Finance, Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement</p> <p>adrianlovegrove@m</p>

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financial settlements and C/Tax increases. Capital programme for 2024/2029								aidstone.gov.uk, markgreen@maidstone.gov.uk
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme Detail of the 10 year capital programme for inclusion in the budget for 2024/25 onwards.	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024 Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 9 Jan 2024 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024 Overview and Scrutiny	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme	Adrian Lovegrove, Paul Holland Head of Finance, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk, paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk

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						Committee 23 Jan 2024		
<p>Provision of Wheeled Bins</p> <p>Summary of the policy for charging for replacement and new wheeled bins and review of recent developments to the policy.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	Provision of Wheeled Bins	<p>Jennifer Stevens</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services & Public Realm</p> <p>jenniferstevens@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
Parish Charter Review Review of Parish Charter	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	Not before 6 Feb 2024	Yes	No	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024	Parish Charter Review	<p>Orla Sweeney, Anna Collier</p> <p>orlasweeney@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024	3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring	<p>Adrian Lovegrove, Paul Holland</p> <p>Head of Finance,</p>

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19						<p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024</p>	Report	adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk, paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk
Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	<p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024</p>	Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	<p>James Wilderspin</p> <p>Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager</p> <p>jameswilderspin@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

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20						<p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024</p>		
<p>Discretionary Rate Relief Policy</p> <p>The Government has changed the backdating of Discretionary Rate Relief giving authorities discretion on backdating claims. This report seeks approval of changes to the policy. This will be a Full Council decision</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Discretionary Rate Relief Policy	<p>Zoe Kent</p> <p>Interim Head of Revenues & Benefits</p> <p>zoekent@swale.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>The report sets out the options for management and financial accounting of the 1,000 new affordable homes.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024	Housing Revenue Account	<p>John Littlemore</p> <p>Head of Housing & Regulatory Services</p> <p>johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Shared Revenues and Benefits Service –</p> <p>Consideration of expansion</p> <p>Report for the approval of Swale Borough Council joining the Mid Kent Revenues and Benefits Service</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Part exempt	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Shared Revenues and Benefits Service - Consideration of expansion	<p>Zoe Kent</p> <p>Interim Head of Revenues & Benefits</p> <p>zoekent@swale.gov.uk</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>Key performance indicators are reviewed annually. This report proposes the KPIs for the period 2024/25.</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024	Key Performance Indicators	<p>Carly Benville, Anna Collier</p> <p>carlybenville@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
22						<p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p>		
Preventing Financial Exclusion	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024	Preventing Financial Exclusion	<p>Orla Sweeney, Anna Collier</p> <p>orlasweeney@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

CABINET

20 December 2023

Reference from Council – Notice of Motion – KCC’s Draft Minerals and Waste Plan – Inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a Further Extension to Hermitage Quarry

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Extraordinary Council	29 November 2023
Cabinet	20 December 2023

Wards Affected	Barming and Teston
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Executive Summary

At the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023, a motion relating to KCC’s draft Minerals and Waste Plan, specifically the inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a further extension to Hermitage Quarry, was referred directly to the Cabinet for consideration.

This reference makes the following recommendation to the Cabinet:

That consideration be given to the motion relating to KCC’s draft Minerals and Waste Plan, specifically the inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a further extension to Hermitage Quarry.

Reference from Council – Notice of Motion – KCC’s Draft Minerals and Waste Plan – Inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a Further Extension to Hermitage Quarry

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 At the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023, the following motion was moved by Councillor Jeffery, seconded by Councillor English:

The full Council has not had the opportunity to express its opinion on KCC’s draft Minerals and Waste Plan, specifically the inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a further extension to Hermitage Quarry.

This area of ancient woodland covers 50 hectares, the loss of which would be the largest loss of ancient woodland this century, larger than HS2 and Lower Thames Crossing combined. The NPPF describes ancient woodland as irreplaceable and Natural England guidance states that “Planting new trees and creating new native woodland is not a direct replacement for lost or damaged trees or woodland.” According to the Woodland Trust there is no real evidence that translocation of soil is an effective mitigation.

The quarry produces around 1 million tonnes each year and 98% of it is used as crushed aggregate. Just 1% is for heritage restoration. At its current rate of production, the current quarry has 7 years left and the extension would increase this by a further 20 years. This is therefore a finite resource that will be exhausted by 2050 at the current rate.

While KCC’s Reg 18 consultation has now closed, MBC still holds a position of significant influence over this plan and needs to be clear on its majority position particularly as this is a decision with national implications. We therefore need to be sure that the right message is given to KCC.

I therefore move the following motion:

This Council states that Hermitage Quarry should not be further extended into Oaken Wood in Barming, an irreplaceable ancient woodland, and asks that the Cabinet reconsider its support for KCC’s plans.

- 1.2 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.9.2, when moving the motion, Councillor Jeffery proposed with the agreement of his seconder that the matter be referred directly to the Cabinet for consideration.
- 1.3 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.4, five Members present requested that a recorded vote be taken on the proposal to refer the matter directly to the Cabinet. The voting was as follows:

For (28), Against (21), Abstentions (2)

The motion therefore stands referred to the Cabinet.

2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND WHY NOT RECOMMENDED

Not applicable.

3. REPORT APPENDICES

A copy of the Briefing Note which was prepared to assist Members in their consideration of the motion is attached as Appendix A.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL – MEETING 29 NOVEMBER 2023**MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JEFFERY – BRIEFING NOTE**

The motion is:

Notice of the following motion has been given by Councillor Jeffery, seconded by Councillor English:

The full Council has not had the opportunity to express its opinion on KCC's draft Minerals and Waste plan, specifically the inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a further extension to Hermitage Quarry.

This area of ancient woodland covers 50 hectares, the loss of which would be the largest loss of ancient woodland this century, larger than HS2 and Lower Thames Crossing combined. The NPPF describes ancient woodland as irreplaceable and Natural England guidance states that "Planting new trees and creating new native woodland is not a direct replacement for lost or damaged trees or woodland." According to the Woodland Trust there is no real evidence that translocation of soil is an effective mitigation.

The quarry produces around 1 million tonnes each year and 98% of it is used as crushed aggregate. Just 1% is for heritage restoration. At its current rate of production, the current quarry has 7 years left and the extension would increase this by a further 20 years. This is therefore a finite resource that will be exhausted by 2050 at the current rate.

While KCC's Reg 18 consultation has now closed, MBC still holds a position of significant influence over this plan and needs to be clear on its majority position particularly as this is a decision with national implications. We therefore need to be sure that the right message is given to KCC.

I therefore move the following motion:

This Council states that Hermitage Quarry should not be further extended into Oaken Wood in Barming, an irreplaceable ancient woodland, and asks that the Cabinet reconsider its support for KCC's plans.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) identifies mineral resources that are needed, and safeguards and protects potential extraction sites in the County. All minerals and waste related developments are assessed by Kent County Council (KCC), and other types of development, including those affecting minerals and waste sites are assessed by Maidstone Borough, having regard to the KMWLP.

- 1.2 The process of developing the KMWLP is the same for any other Development Plan Document. It is subject to various public consultations during its production, as well as formal submission and then Examination in Public by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. Subject to successful examination, the document may then be adopted with relevant associated Main Modifications.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 The KMWLP was adopted in July 2016, with subsequent changes arising from an early partial review being adopted in 2020, for which KCC engaged with MBC through its statutory consultation process.
- 2.2 A new review is being undertaken. As part of this latest review, KCC has so far undertaken the following consultations to date:
- a. Reg 18 consultation in Dec 2021;
 - b. Reg 18 consultation in Oct 2022;
 - c. Reg 18 consultation in June 2023, but only on the additional changes to the proposed review of the KMWLP. Additionally, as part of this consultation, KCC also consulted on the amendments to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan – Nominated Hard Rock site allocation.
- 2.3 MBC has responded to the above, early-stage consultations on the KMWLP, and KCC may undertake further Regulation 18 consultations on the document if required. However, KCC's published Local Development Scheme currently indicates that the Regulation 19 submission draft version of the document is currently due to be published for consultation in January 2024. It is anticipated that MBC will again use this consultation as an opportunity to make representations, this time on the formalised Regulation 19 proposals.
- 2.4 A summary of issues of relevance to Maidstone and Maidstone's responses to the previous consultations are summarised below.

Reg 18 consultation in December 2021

- 2.5 The consultation document may be viewed via the following link:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kmwlpreview>

Summary of issues of relevance to Maidstone

- 2.6 Policy CSW 3 (Waste Reduction), sought to include the need for consideration of the circular waste economy in determining applications. CSW3 and its supporting text proposed a stronger requirement for waste created during development to be considered in planning applications. Notably, this included: a new requirement for the retention of existing buildings over demolition and

redevelopment; a new requirement for details of the re-use of waste materials in new development; and a new requirement for details of waste storage and how construction waste will be handled to be submitted at planning application stage. These new requirements would potentially place additional burden on the assessment of planning applications, with the possibility for a need to amend the local list.

Summary of Maidstone's response to this consultation

- 2.7 Whilst MBC was supportive of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2013-30 (refresh) and the proposed changes to waste management during delivery and operation of development, it raised the need for clarification around the proposed new wording of the policy CSW3. This proposed wording required that for applications submitted to Maidstone Borough Council, additional information be supplied at application stage. This would likely mean that MBC is required to add to their Local List a requirement for a Circular Economy Statement to accompany major applications.

Reg 18 consultation in Oct 2022

- 2.8 The consultation document may be viewed via the following link:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-minerals-and-waste-local-plan>

Summary of issues of relevance to Maidstone

- 2.9 Soft sand extraction at Chapel Farm: this site forms part of an allocation in the Maidstone Local Plan Review.
- 2.10 Policy CSW 3 (Waste Reduction) means MBC will need to add to its Local List a requirement for a Circular Economy Statement to accompany major applications.

Summary of Maidstone's response to this consultation

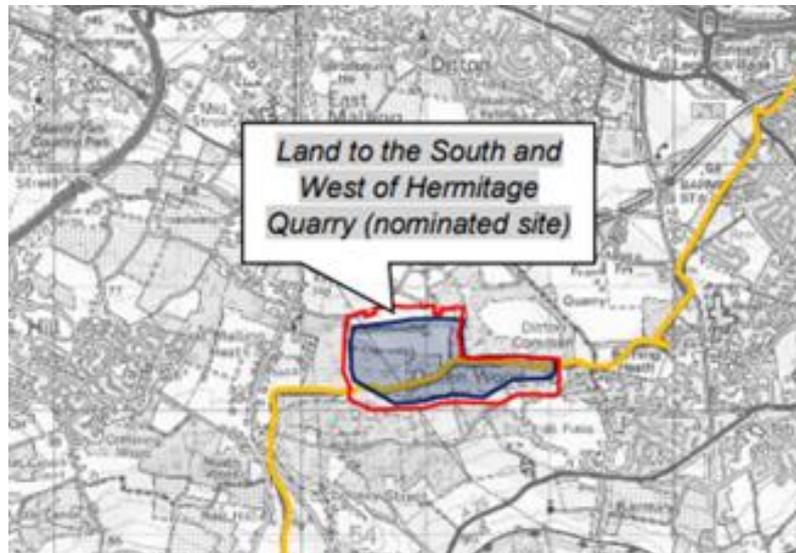
- 2.11 MBC welcome the updated position in respect to soft sand extraction at Chapel Farm.
- 2.12 Policy CSW3 requires further consideration as it represents resource implications. So will need to work with KCC to ensure resource implications are minimised.

Reg 18 consultation in June 2023

- 2.13 The consultation document may be viewed via the following link:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-minerals-and-waste-local-plan-2024-2039>
- 2.14 As mentioned above, only the additional changes to the proposed review of the KMWLP and the amendments to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan were consulted.

Summary of issues of relevance to Maidstone

2.15 The Plan period is extended to 2039 (2024 – 2039).



- 2.16 In terms of soft sand: Due to the extended plan period, the total soft sand need is increased; however, the annual need remains the same. Regarding Chapel Farm, new text has been inserted setting out need and supply but the allocation has not changed, nor has the rate of extraction.
- 2.17 In terms of hard rock: total need is increased due to extended plan period so further reserves will need to be allocated. The additional hard rock allocation (called Land to the South and West of Hermitage Quarry – map provided below) straddles the boundary of Maidstone Borough and Tonbridge and Malling Borough, with circa 2/5 of the allocation being sited within Maidstone Borough. This abuts the existing extraction site. The proposed extension lies within the Oaken Wood Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland, and is within close proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 2.18 Mineral Sites Plan: the position in relation to Chapel Farm soft sand allocation in Lenham is updated.

Summary of Maidstone’s response to this consultation

- 2.19 Maidstone Borough Council has provided responses to this consultation, and this is subject to the Motion to Full Council.
- 2.20 The key issues arising from the review of the KMWLP consultation were due to be considered at the July 2023 PIED PAC, however additional information came to light in advance of that meeting, including in relation to environmental designations.
- 2.21 A [draft response was sent on 09 August 2023](#) to meet the consultation deadline; as part of this letter, MBC noted that that these would be subject to formal ratification and that a full formal response be provided at a later date.

- 2.22 The draft response highlighted that the proposed allocation lies within an area designated as Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland and requested that any permission be subject to conditions requiring the reinstatement of habitats following completion of extraction. Additionally, the extended allocation also lies within proximity to a SSSI and MBC therefore requested that mitigations be put in place to prevent adverse impact on the SSSI.
- 2.23 The draft response was later considered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee (PIED PAC) on 6 September 2023. At this PIED PAC, Committee members raised a number of concerns with regards to the extension of the quarry, principally these rested on the impact that the development would have on the Ancient Woodland and environmental impacts. Members additionally expressed concerns that the Sites Plan and associated evidence base provide insufficient information with respect to the exceptional circumstances to demonstrate that the impact on Ancient Woodland would be outweighed by the need to identify local sites for the extraction of hard rock.
- 2.24 In light of the PIED PAC feedback, an alternative recommendation was made: That the letter be withdrawn, and a new letter sent in its place using the wording provided by the woodland trust of: 'given unacceptable habitat lost, MBC are unable to support the proposed quarry extension'.
- 2.25 The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development then signed off a [formal letter on 07 September 2023](#), which was then sent to Kent County Council.
- 2.26 This letter raised concerns that the proposed allocation lies within an area designated as a Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland, but noted that it is for the County Council to demonstrate that there exists exceptional circumstance that would meet policies set out in the NPPF, and should this be demonstrated then maximum mitigation and restoration of the site to prevent the site coming forward for residential development will be expected. It also noted that the extended allocation also lies within close proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and MBC requested that should the site be included in the adopted plan then policy should require that mitigations be put in place to prevent adverse impact on this designation.
- 2.27 The decision was then called in to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023. However, the Committee resolved to approve Option 1 of the report, that no further action was required.

CABINET

20 December 2023

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Update

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
CLT	21 November 2023
Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee	5 December 2023
Cabinet	20 December 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	CABINET
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance.
Lead Officer and Report Author	Anna Collier, Insight, Communities and Governance Manager, Orla Sweeney, Senior Policy and Communities Officer.
Classification	Public
Wards affected	ALL

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the current Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which was agreed by Cabinet in January 2023.

New actions have been developed in consultation with Officers and Members. It is important that we have an up-to-date Plan to reflect the current challenges faced by residents and staff so that the Council can deliver on its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives.

Purpose of Report

To note the update on the current EDI objectives and Action Plan.

To consider and agree the new actions for 2023/24.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Cabinet:

1. That the progress on the current EDI Objectives and Action Plan at Appendix 1 to the report and highlighted at paras 2.4 to 2.5 be noted.
2. That the recommended actions for the Equalities Action Plan at Appendix 2 to the report and highlighted at paras 2.6 to 2.13 be agreed.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) – Annual Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council’s overall achievement of its aims in the delivery of its strategic plan objectives.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The report recommendations help deliver the achievement of cross cutting objectives: Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced and Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Risk Management	Please refer to paragraph 5.1 of the report.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Financial	The majority of the proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Legal	Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council’s duties under Equality Act 2010. Failure to accept the recommendations without agreeing suitable alternatives may place the Council in breach of Equality Act 2010.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes. However, some of the actions in the revised Action Plan could result in the collection and	Anna Collier Insight Communities and

	processing of personal data. Should this be the case, the Information Governance Team will be asked to review the processing of personal data affected and the associated will be updated accordingly, including a data protection impact assessment.	Governance Manager
Equalities	Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010. Failure to accept the recommendations without agreeing suitable alternatives may place the Council in breach of the Equality Act 2010. We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore, we will complete a separate equalities impact assessments at project level.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Crime and Disorder	Training in cultural competencies is likely to have a positive impact on crime and disorder in terms of understanding challenges faced by new and existing communities.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Procurement	No impact identified.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and it has been identified that there are actions that will support delivery of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.	Anna Collier Insight Communities and Governance Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Equality Act (2010) Section 149 creates the single public sector Equality Duty and specific duties which are set out in secondary legislation. The Council is required to have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy,

reviewed every 3 years and a robust Action Plan. This is reported on and updated annually.

2.2 The Policy sets out the Council's three objectives:

- **Community Leader** – To lead by example, to ensure every individual resident is connected and supported.
- **Employer** – To lead a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the Borough of Maidstone where residents and colleagues feel safe, confident and empowered to challenge and bring about change.
- **Service Provider** – To deliver inclusive services in accordance with the Council's values.

2.3 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan is in place to deliver these objectives and is refreshed on an annual basis. It is informed by service led insight and is reflective of current workstreams. The Action Plan is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer Group.

Overview of Progress on Current Action Plan

2.4 An overview of progress made this year is outlined below and detailed in full at Appendix 1.

As a Service Provider

- The 9 protected characteristics were expanded to include Poverty and the Armed Forces to help ensure the Council considers all vulnerable groups as part of its decision making, particularly in relation to financial exclusion.
- The EqIA template document and guidance was updated to support data led decision making.
- High-level Census 2021 data was published on dashboards on the Council's website. Unit Managers, Wider Leadership Team, Inclusion Board and EDI staff group were informed on how to use Census data to understand resident need.

As an Employer

- The Council's first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Staff Survey was carried out. This survey provides a baseline understanding of the organisation's diversity and allows us to explore and respond to unknown staff need. For example, the survey identified that almost a third of staff who responded to the survey had carer responsibilities. This has been added as an action in the new Plan for exploration.
- EDI Training programme for staff delivered. Modules included: Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Hidden Disabilities.
- Mental Health Support continues to be provided. This has included training and development of Mental Health first aiders.

As a Community Leader

- Ongoing Homelessness Prevention work continued with the OneView project. This has also included working with Golding Homes to deliver hardship payments to those in financial hardship.
- Additional project areas using OneView were identified including Violence Reduction, Health Inequalities, Food Insecurity and Damp and Mould.
- The Digital training and support suite became operational at Trinity House.
- EDI staff group was expanded to include more frontline service areas to ensure the knowledge base and perspective is broadened.
- Events were delivered to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups on funding advice and guidance. External speakers at the last event included: Space Hive - Crowd Fund Kent, National Lottery, ReferKent, Shepway Community Larder and Imago Community. A further event was scheduled for November 2023.
- Two further rounds of Household Support Grant funding have led to additional funding being allocated to the VCS and Parishes, increasing access to food and fuel support for vulnerable communities.

2.5 Some actions continue into this year's Plan to meet ongoing need. For example, the 'no wrong door' project, OneView and the Welfare Officer role which is the point of contact for those experiencing immediate financial need and support.

Development of Revised Action Plan

2.6 The full Action Plan for 2023-34 can be seen at Appendix 2.

2.7 Actions to support delivery of the Action Plan which reflect the Council's roles as a 'Community Leader' and a 'Service Provider' have been informed by discussions with key service areas and reflect new or ongoing workstreams that support the Council's EDI objectives.

2.8 In addition, the current EDI Policy and Action Plan has been audited by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) for compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Whilst the findings were positive, it was identified that more work could be done to analyse service user data to ensure we can see if our services are inclusive and accessible and that this data should be published on our website.

2.9 As a result, demographic data analysed by age, ethnicity, economic activity and disability that we have collected when carrying out consultation will be available on the website and refreshed annually. In addition to this, a project is proposed to review services across the Council collecting EDI data and make publicly available. Both projects have been included as new actions in the Action Plan update (Appendix 1).

2.10 It is important that the role of elected Members, the community knowledge they provide, and the residents they represent is recognised and supported. Cabinet have considered actions to support Councillors in the role. In addition to ensuring that training such as the Cultural Competencies is available to Members, the following actions have been included:

- Implement a new Member survey to ensure all new Members have equitable access to support and resources for their role.
- Provide Members with access to profiles of their local communities to inform their work.

2.11 The EDI Action Plan states, in its overarching commitments, that the Council will take an evidence-based approach to supporting financial inclusion. This commitment was first included in the Action Plan in response to recovery from the pandemic and supported delivery of the Financial Inclusion Strategy. The current Financial Inclusion Strategy is under review. The review is data led and being informed by the LIFT Dashboard, Community Insight Tool alongside wider measurements of Poverty and disadvantage are informing the strategy aims and workstreams. The Strategy will seek to respond to the wider determinants of financial exclusion affecting residents in Maidstone.

2.12 The results of the staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey have been used to develop actions under the Council's role 'as an employer.' The survey identified areas of focus that may not otherwise have emerged for example almost a third (27%) of staff have caring responsibilities, A follow up Carer's survey is required to understand what type of support staff need at work.

2.13 The survey also identified religious and cultural diversity within the organisation. For example, for 5% of staff, English is not their first language. The existing actions relating to Cultural Competencies training and a Diversity Calendar remain in the Action Plan with some additional actions identified as next steps. This includes a team talk for staff on significant dates and how these could be celebrated.

2.14 New actions are identified in the refreshed Workforce Strategy to support Inclusion and Belonging for staff.

Next Steps

2.15 Once approved by Cabinet the updated Action Plan will be published on our website and shared with responsible Officers to ensure actions are delivered. The Action Plan will continue to be monitored by the EDI Officer Group and updates on the Plan will be reported to the Cabinet Member.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The report asks Cabinet to note the EDI Action Plan update and consider and agree the revised actions.
- 3.2 Alternatively, the Cabinet could choose to add or remove actions for the Action Plan or ask for additional work to be completed. Cabinet could choose not to have an EDI Action Plan, however this would not be recommended as it would be a significant risk to the Council demonstrating how it is delivering against its equality objectives and compliance with the public sector equality duty.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Cabinet note the EDI Action Plan update and consider and agree the revised actions. The Action Plan has been shaped by key Officers, conversations with Members and feedback from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The Council's responsibilities as a Public Sector Authority are set out in the Equality Act 2010. The Annual Update report provides an opportunity for the Council to review its progress against its objectives and ensure they are still fit for purpose. Not taking this opportunity to review progress and respond to the needs of its staff and residents could cause reputational damage to the Council and we would not be fulfilling our responsibilities under the Act.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Progress on the existing EDI Action Plan has been monitored by the Staff EDI Officer Group. The results of the staff EDI survey were used to inform discussions with Wider Leadership Team and the staff EDI Officer Group on actions to include in the Action Plan to support the 'as an Employer' objective.
- 6.2 This matter was considered by the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2023. Members thanked the Officers for a comprehensive and succinct report and supported the recommendations. It was suggested that a timeline for the delivery of the actions would be helpful, and the Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts indicated that this would be added to Appendix 2.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once approved by Cabinet the updated Action Plan will be published on our website and shared with responsible Officers to ensure actions are delivered. The Action Plan will continue to be monitored by the EDI Officer Group and updates on the Plan will be reported to the Cabinet Member.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Progress against actions 2022/23.
 - Appendix 2: Action Plan 2023/24
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Appendix 1 – Updates on actions from 2022-23.

As a Community Leader

Objective: **To lead by example, to ensure every individual resident is connected and supported**

Commitments	Action	Update
<p>We will work closely with our partners (Voluntary and Community Sector, Anchor Institutions, Parishes and Church and Faith groups) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for joined up working and improving our ability to share information to support and engage our wider communities. Increase volunteering opportunities and participation, funding and support. <p>We will undertake a review of consultation and engagement activities to ensure that they maximise resident participation and are representative of Maidstone's demographic.</p> <p>We will support and promote diversity and inclusion in the borough through our communications and events – with a focus on our seldom-heard communities.</p> <p>We will support our serving and veteran communities through our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act 2021 with guidance provided to staff across all services.</p>	Ongoing delivery of One View project.	<p>The Housing team continue to work on developing the OneView system A second advisor was recruited to support the project. Join up has been created with Housing Associations to deliver hardship payments. The project has won an award and has been identified was also recently reviewed by The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have reviewed this project and highlighted it as an example of a project using innovative technology is advancing equality of opportunity and are currently working with Maidstone to develop it as a case study. Further project areas were identified, Violence Reduction, Health Inequalities, Food Insecurity and Damp and Mould.</p> <p>This action remains ongoing in the new plan.</p>
	Implement no wrong door (local campaign to signpost to services) – increasing access to services.	<p>There is join up between several frontline services and other local service providers. For example, Housing and the CAB have undertaken a Debt advice Pilot at Trinity.</p> <p>The Welfare Officer role which supports delivery of the Council's Hardship Fund works closely with community groups, community wardens and is the point of contact for those experiencing immediate financial need and support. The role also works closely with internal services including Housing and Revenues and Benefits to maximise support and support the prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>The role is supported by Policy in Practice's Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT dashboard) which enables the Council to identify families and individuals who are impacted by Welfare Reforms, struggling financially, and could be missing out on benefits.</p> <p>This action remains ongoing in the new plan.</p>
	Provide access to digital training and support at Trinity House.	<p>The Training suite up at Trinity House is now up and running. Training and Support has been offered and a pilot with Digital Kent Volunteer Programme to support residents at Trinity House has been undertaken.</p> <p>This action is now closed</p>
	Increase response rates from underrepresented groups through us of Let's Talk Maidstone (the Council's new public engagement platform)	<p>The Let's Talk Maidstone site was launched in 2022 and provides a variety of engagement tools for Public consultation and engagement activities.</p> <p>It is recognised that there are some groups that remain difficult to reach. Analysis has been undertaken of all consultation demographics to identify those seldom heard groups. Support has been sought from the consultation institute to best approach engagement and new action has been identified for year 2023-24.</p> <p>This action has now developed in the new plan.</p>
	Expand internal Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group to provide internal direction and challenge.	<p>The group continues to meet and has informed the development of the new action plan. It has been expanded to include wider group of front-line service areas providing expertise and insight on community and seldom heard groups.</p> <p>This action has now developed in the new plan.</p>
	Annual calendar of events to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion in Maidstone.	<p>Google calendar developed for Intranet and website. Further work is required on this to embed the calendar of events both internally and externally.</p> <p>This action remains ongoing in the new plan.</p>

Appendix 1 – Updates on actions from 2022-23.

	Provide guidance to enable all staff to support Armed Forces Community	Armed Forces pages have been updated on the Website. It has been identified that Forces Connect App not sufficient in terms of information for Veterans in local community so more work needs to be done. This action remains ongoing in the new plan.
As an Employer		
Objective: To lead a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the borough of Maidstone where residents and colleagues feel safe, confident, and empowered to challenge and bring about change.		
Commitments	Action	Update
<p>We will train our staff so that they are skilled in inclusive practice, to work with communities who are less able, or willing, to participate in life in their local neighbourhoods.</p> <p>We will provide training and support to staff so they can recognise and manage unacceptable behaviours.</p> <p>We will look after the mental health of our staff and recognise when this offer needs to change</p>	Introduce Equalities Champions (including elected member and senior leadership)	A Senior Leader Champion and a Member Champion agreed. This action is now closed
	Deliver the Culture change project.	The culture change project has been delivered and new actions are identified in the refreshed Workforce Strategy to support Inclusion and Belonging for staff. This action is now closed
	Introduce Bi-Annual staff EDI survey to identify need and benchmark progress	Carried out first EDI Staff Survey (the detailed questions considered best practice are not included in the biannual staff survey). The survey is intended to provide a baseline understand of the organisations diversity and provide the basis for exploring and responding to staff need. This action is now closed
	Provide training and support for Mental Health Champions	The Staff EDI Survey suggests that employee Mental Health is better than national picture (1 in 6) however there has been an increase in Mental Health sick days and an increase in counselling referrals. There has been continued provision of Mental Health Champions (including training and development of mental health first aiders). The use of Mental Health Champions has been low and it has been identified that support is required for managers in terms of training and resilience. So further work is required here. This action remains ongoing in the new plan.
As a Service Provider		
Objective: To deliver inclusive services in accordance with the Council's values		
Commitments	Action	Updates
<p>We will use specific and meaningful language when referring to diverse communities.</p> <p>We will support access to services and support through ICT process, communication and join up with partners.</p>	Adopt of LGA Inclusive Language Guide	The inclusive language guide has not yet been released for adoption. This has been retained as an action with alternative options to be explored in place of the LGA guide. This action remains ongoing in the new plan.
	Proactively use 'neutral spaces' to increase access to support and services for residents	Face to face support has been provided at Trinity House and other sites for debt advice, and digital services. Cost-of-living events, Community Larders, Council tax, Welfare support and Housing. This action will be retained/ This action remains ongoing in the new plan.

Appendix 1 – Updates on actions from 2022-23.

<p>We will take an evidence-based approach to leading recovery supporting financial inclusion and social well-being in Maidstone, including a specific work stream on communities.</p> <p>We will review the Equalities Impact Assessment processes.</p> <p>We will review and identify our policies where we consider equalities impacts and identify how we can improve outcomes through revisions to policy.</p>	Identify emerging needs from Census data.	<p>Analysis of the Census data has been undertaken. Results have been published of all high-level data on dashboards on the Council's website. Significant engagement with Unit Managers, Wider Leadership Team, Inclusion Board and EDI staff group on how to use census to understand resident need.</p> <p>This action is now closed</p>
	Include 'Poverty' as a local protected characteristic with the EqIA process	<p>9 protected characteristics were expanded to include Poverty (and Armed Forces) to ensure we continue to look beyond existing perceptions of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>EqIA template document and guidance updated to support data led decision making. Training was rolled out to Unit managers.</p> <p>This action is now closed</p>
	Include Armed Forces Act 2021 in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	<p>Armed Forces included in revised Policy and guidance and template documents for EqIAs alongside Poverty as 'local protected characteristics.</p> <p>This action is now closed</p>
	Prioritise existing policies by review date and implement process of review for equalities	<p>The process has been reactive to date rather than priority. It has been identified that further work is required to support unit managers to implement EDI into policy and service development so this action has been broadened to include working with services to increase knowledge.</p> <p>This action remains ongoing in the new plan.</p>

Appendix 2 – EDI Action Plan 2023-24.

As a Community Leader

Objective: **To lead by example, to ensure every individual resident is connected and supported**

Commitments	Action Title	Actions	Responsible Service	Timescale for delivery
<p>We will work closely with our partners (Voluntary and Community Sector, Anchor Institutions, Parishes and Church and Faith groups) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for joined up working and improving our ability to share information to support and engage our wider communities. Increase volunteering opportunities and participation, funding and support. <p>We will undertake a review of consultation and engagement activities to ensure that they maximise resident participation and are representative of Maidstone's demographic.</p> <p>We will support and promote diversity and inclusion in the borough through our communications and events – with a focus on our seldom-heard communities.</p> <p>We will support our serving and veteran communities through our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act 2021 with guidance provided to staff across all services.</p>	Delivery of One View project - Ongoing Project	Continue to deliver the One View homelessness prevention project including exploring additional cohorts and new projects including Damp and Mould	Housing	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Implement no wrong door (local campaign to signpost to services) – increasing access to services - Ongoing Project	Ongoing project and it is important that this action remains and continues to be developed with partners in response to ongoing need.	Housing, Revenues and Benefits, Policy, Communities and Engagement.	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Develop a greater understanding of our communities through the Implementation of the Community Insight system - NEW	Provide members with access to profiles of their local communities to inform their work. Provide information and training to relevant services to help inform strategy, policy and service development, embedding a culture of community. Distribute access to local insight to our VCS partners to enable them to access community data to inform funding bids and service development	Data Analytics/Democratic Services	June 2024
	Provide access to digital training and support at Trinity House. Ongoing Project	Training suite up and running. Training and Support offered. Pilot with Digital Kent Volunteer Programme to support residents at Trinity House undertaken.	Housing/ICT/Policy, Communities and Engagement	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Increase engagement from our Seldom Heard Communities - Ongoing Project NEW FOCUS	Work with the consultation institute and successful partner to identify and implement actions to increase engagement with those groups that are seldom heard.	Policy, Communities and Engagement	First round of project to be deliver by 31/3/24 with further projects to be agreed
	Delivery of Community Grants and support to Community Groups - NEW	Continue to ensure the delivery of grants to those organisations best placed in our communities to ensure the delivery of services at a local level.	Policy, Communities and Engagement	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Develop the Equality Diversity and Inclusion officer group to provide internal direction and challenge - Ongoing Project NEW FOCUS	Group has been expanded to include wider group of front-line service areas providing expertise and insight on community and seldom heard groups. Continue to develop the group, its remit and influence to ensure it is embedded.	Policy, Communities and Engagement	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Implement the Diversity Calendar to ensure join up between our communities and key internal teams- Ongoing Project	Developing the use of a Diversity Calendar that reflects the curiosity and diversity of staff and the wider community.	Policy, Communities and Engagement	March 2024
		Dates of meaning to the organisation to be tied into existing events, community events, well-being	HR/L&D, Comms and Events, Museums, Civic	March 2024

Appendix 2 – EDI Action Plan 2023-24.

		<p>week. Internal 'celebration' – information in Inside MBC newsletter, books and art/culture recommendations.</p> <p>Develop a Team talk for Unit Managers to identify dates of meaning to the organisation to celebrate and promote diversity and inclusion.</p>	<p>team, Economic Development, Communities lead</p> <p>Policy, Communities and Engagement/HR</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>Provide guidance to enable all staff to support Armed Forces Community Ongoing Project</p>	<p>Continue to ensure the Council supports the armed force community in accordance with the covenant.</p> <p>It has been identified that Forces Connect App not sufficient in terms of information for Veterans in local community, explore more ways in which to reach and connect with local veterans in the community.</p>	<p>Policy, Communities and Engagement</p>	<p>Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update</p>
	<p>Explore structural inequality impact of climate change in Maidstone</p>	<p>Undertake a review to identify and understand areas of inequality and impacts in the borough related to the effects of climate change and explore measures for intervention</p>	<p>Policy, Communities and Engagement/ Data Analytics/ Climate Change and Biodiversity</p>	<p>October 2024</p>
<p>Connections to other plans and Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan • Communications Plan • Financial Inclusion Strategy • Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 				
<p>As an Employer</p>				
<p>Objective: To lead a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the borough of Maidstone where residents and colleagues feel safe, confident, and empowered to challenge and bring about change.</p>				
Commitments	Action Title	Actions	Responsible Service	Timescale for delivery
<p>We will train our staff so that they are skilled in inclusive practice, to work with communities who are less able, or willing, to participate in life in their local neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Provide Staff training in Cultural Competencies NEW</p>	<p>Pursue cultural competency training with the Homelessness Prevention Forum</p>	<p>Housing/Human Resources</p>	<p>October 2024</p>
<p>We will provide training and support to staff so they can recognise and manage unacceptable behaviours.</p> <p>We will look after the mental health of our staff and recognise when this offer needs to change</p>	<p>Support delivery of actions to support Inclusion and Belonging for staff in the Workforce Strategy NEW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to create awareness on EDI • Support employees to develop staff network groups i.e. carers, disabilities, LGBTQI+ • Support the outcomes of the staff survey on equalities. • Develop team talks on EDI to discuss at team meetings. • Develop creative, inclusive communication mechanisms so all council staff, including those who don't access information online, 	<p>Human Resources/ Policy, Communities and Engagement</p>	<p>– Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update and Workforce Strategy Annual Update</p>

Appendix 2 – EDI Action Plan 2023-24.

		<p>are informed of council news and developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed our values and behaviours with all staff. • Encourage staff to declare their protected characteristics confidentially through employee self-service. • Continue to analyse application and shortlisting data to identify ways to make our recruitment more inclusive and to ensure non-discrimination. • Support services to develop appropriate career grade structures for succession planning • Continue to promote the benefits package to all staff • Review our rewards and employee benefits offer to ensure its competitive with other public sector employers 		
	Ensure all new Members have equitable access to support and resources for their role. NEW	Implement a new member survey to identify needs.	Democratic Services/ Policy, Communities and Engagement	June/July 2024
	Maintain understanding of the organisation’s diversity and staff need. NEW	<p>Bi-Annual staff EDI survey to respond to need and benchmark progress.</p> <p>Staff Carers Survey to be undertaken to understand the needs of staff with caring responsibilities and how best the organisation can provide support.</p> <p>Roll out of Corporate Leadership Team ‘lived experiences of working for MBC’ listening exercises</p>	Policy, Communities and Engagement/ Human Resources	<p>Due July 2025</p> <p>July 2024</p> <p>October 2024</p>
	Provide training and support for Mental Health Champions – ongoing Action	<p>Support Delivery of Workforce Strategy Well-Being and Reward Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop initiatives to increase awareness of resilience and wellbeing. • Continue promoting national health and wellbeing initiatives. • Continue roll out of Resilience Training to managers and staff. • Increase awareness of Mental Health First Aiders. 	Human Resources	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update and Workforce Strategy Annual Update
<p>Connection to other plans Strategic Plan Workforce Strategy</p>				

Appendix 2 – EDI Action Plan 2023-24.

As a Service Provider				
Objective: To deliver inclusive services in accordance with the Council's values				
Commitments	Action Title	Actions	Responsible Service	
<p>We will use specific and meaningful language when referring to diverse communities.</p> <p>We will support access to services and support through ICT process, communication and join up with partners.</p> <p>We will take an evidence-based approach to leading recovery supporting financial inclusion and social well-being in Maidstone. including a specific work stream on communities.</p> <p>We will review the Equalities Impact Assessment processes.</p> <p>We will review and identify our policies where we consider equalities impacts and identify how we can improve outcomes through revisions to policy.</p>	Adopt Inclusive Language Guide – Ongoing Action	<p>Continue to watch for release of LGA Inclusive Language Guide</p> <p>Explore appropriate alternative options</p>	Policy, Communities and Engagement	October 2024
	Proactively use 'neutral spaces' to increase access to support and services for residents – Ongoing Action	Continue to explore new and existing spaces for Face-to-face support provision and services that it may be appropriate to provide from these spaces.	Policy, Communities and Engagement	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Understand where relevant who is accessing our services and ensure that this informs service deliver. NEW	Undertake a review of all services to identify EDI data collected and identify purpose and where relevant make improvements to data collection. Undertake analysis of demographic data to inform service development and ongoing monitoring. Create space on the website for publication of demographic data.	Data Analytics/Information Governance/ Policy, Communities and Engagement	Start date April 2024
	Support delivery of Maidstone becoming a Compassionate borough. NEW	<p>The Compassionate Maidstone Project has restarted with Heart of Kent Hospice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review bereavement policy. Explore bereavement, death and dying and its impact on service delivery and how this is addressed in policies and procedures. Work internally with relevant teams and the EDI Officer group and externally with community partners to explore how death and dying can become a part of conversation. 	Policy, Communities and Engagement/Communication and Events	October 2024
	Support delivery of the Financial Inclusion and Social Well-Being Strategy and Action Plan. NEW	<p>The current Financial Inclusion Strategy is under review. The review is data led and being informed by the LIFT Dashboard, Community Insight Tool alongside wider measurements of Poverty and disadvantage are informing the strategy aims and workstreams.</p> <p>This Strategy will seek to respond to the wider determinants of financial exclusion affecting residents in Maidstone.</p>	Policy, Communities and Engagement/Data Analytics	March 2024
	Ensure EDI is embedded in policies and service development - Ongoing Action	Prioritise existing Policies by review date and implement process of review for equalities. Work with Service Managers on understanding of the Public Sector Equality duty.	Policy, Communities and Engagement/HR	Ongoing – Update to be provided as part of EDI Annual update
	Connections to other plans			
Strategic Plan				

Appendix 2 – EDI Action Plan 2023-24.

Digital Strategy Financial Inclusion Strategy	
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Agenda Item 19

CABINET

20 December 2023

Town Centre Strategy Update

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning Infrastructure & Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	7 December 2023
Cabinet	20 December 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Alison Broom, Chief Executive Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the preparation of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy and sets out the proposed next steps.

Purpose of Report

To provide an update and enable consideration and approval of next steps in the preparation of the town centre strategy.

This report makes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That this update report be noted; and
2. That the next steps set out in Section 3 of this Report for the development of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy be approved.

Town Centre Strategy Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations enables further development of the Maidstone town centre strategy to be undertaken. The next steps will enable robust evidence to support the content of the strategy and earlier implementation of key actions to address a number of contemporary pressing issues in advance of adoption of a comprehensive strategy. The eventual adoption of the Town Centre Strategy will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve corporate priorities and contribute to preparation for the next Local Plan Review.</p>	<p>Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievement of these through the town centre strategy.</p>	<p>Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>This report is presented for information as an update report, but also for consideration of next steps. The preparation of a town centre strategy reduces economic and housing delivery risks for the area. The next steps</p>	<p>Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development</p>

	enable an objective led and evidence-based approach to decision making and thereby reduce risks to achieving improved outcomes and value for money.	
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for developing the strategy.	Head of Finance
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing and continue to use the external expertise of consultants, who are contracted to prepare the town centre strategy.	Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
Legal	The report is for noting and for next steps to be considered and approved. There are no legal implications associated with this.	Mid Kent Legal Services
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations in this report do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations in this report do not have an immediate impact on health, however once finalised, the town centre strategy and priority projects should positively impact health and individuals.	Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Crime and Disorder	We recognise that the recommendations in this report do not have an immediate impact on crime and disorder, however once finalised, the town centre strategy and projects should positively impact this. Preparation of the strategy is taking account of the Safer Streets project currently being implemented.	Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
Procurement	The consultants "We Made That" have already been procured and contracted to support preparation of the town centre strategy and associated work	Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer

Biodiversity and Climate Change	The recommendations in this report do not have an immediate impact on biodiversity and climate change, however once finalised, the town centre strategy and projects should positively impact green spaces, trees and biodiversity, reduced traffic and pollution, energy efficient lighting, and town centre flood reduction.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Maidstone has a successful town centre, but there are increasing challenges and scope for improvement. The Local Plan sets out a comprehensive description of its role, character, strengths and areas for development. Through the Town Centre Strategy our aim is to demonstrate how we can transform the offer, vitality and viability of Maidstone town centre including its employment, retail, residential, leisure, cultural and tourism functions and significantly enhance its public realm, historic and natural environment, including the riverside.
- 2.2 As the largest and most sustainable location for growth, Maidstone town centre is the focus for a significant proportion of new housing, employment and retail development in the borough. Our Local Plan identifies this through a combination of site allocations and identified broad locations. Development in the town centre will deliver in the region of 2,500 new homes by 2038, alongside complementary commercial and retail/food and drink floorspace.
- 2.3 Community, cultural and tourism facilities are a really important contributor to the success of the town centre and we will also identify opportunities to retain and enhance existing facilities, including Maidstone Museum and the Hazlitt Theatre.
- 2.4 The new Town Centre Strategy is needed to guide future development, including diversifying the economic base, ensuring that any housing growth is balanced by employment opportunities and complemented by new infrastructure, that sustainability and environmental quality are improved and to provide a canvas for activity and events to enhance the experience for town centre residents and businesses, the borough’s communities more widely and visitors.
- 2.5 As the county town, Maidstone has a strong and dynamic presence in Kent and it is important that we continue to manage and enhance what the town centre offers, so that it continues to thrive for the future.

What we want the town centre strategy to achieve

- 2.6 The purpose of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy is to establish and provide clarity on the long-term vision for the town centre to 2050 - complemented by a comprehensive delivery plan to achieve this and an

inward investment plan to enable Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to engage with current land and property owners and potential investors.

2.7 Following extensive engagement with elected members, the council established that the aim is for the strategy to guide improvements and development in the town centre with a focus on:

- Strengthening the economic base of the town centre
- Bringing about the re-invention and renaissance of Maidstone town centre as an exemplar of sustainability and design
- Heritage, arts, culture, leisure and the visitor economy, including the evening economy
- Creating a place where people want to live and feel safe, including in the public realm
- Having an equal emphasis upon the town centre as the County Town, including as a district/regional destination for those visiting it from within the borough and beyond and its role as a local centre for those who live in the town centre or in the surrounding area.

2.8 The Strategy will:

- Guide regeneration, development and investment (including directly by Maidstone Borough Council)
- Guide infrastructure provision
- In the short / medium term enable the provision of support to town centre communities and businesses in continuing to recover from, and respond to, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and a post-Brexit economy
- Enable proactive management of potential change in land uses resulting from the relaxation of national planning rules
- Be complemented in the short term by investment of resources via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (around £1m) and Safer Streets Fund (£.56m)

The Strategy will be used to:

- Complement the current Local Plan Review and inform the next plan, potentially being developed into a Development Plan Document
- Deliver actions of the Economic Development Strategy (adopted 2021) particularly Priority 5 "Destination Maidstone Town Centre"
- Inform actions and projects undertaken to achieve the future vision
- Inform future bids for funding, including through Levelling Up
- Promote inward investment into the town centre.

2.9 At the outset of developing the Strategy, the four core priorities of the Council's Strategic Plan (2019-2045) and cross cutting objectives were considered. The core priorities are:

- Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure

- Safe, Clean and Green
- Thriving Place
- Homes and Communities

Our cross-cutting objectives are:

- Heritage is respected
- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility improved
- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability are respected

2.10 Several key challenges and '**must get right**' issues were then identified that need to be addressed, as follows:

- i. Political buy-in and cross-party engagement with politicians with short-, medium- and long-term goals
- ii. Supporting, strengthening and expanding the arts and culture sector including consideration of the twilight economy
- iii. Consolidating the town centre retail offer to support footfall and the town centre offer, particularly for families; this will be achieved by identifying opportunities for strengthening the town centre retail offer by potentially relocating them closer to each other and re-purposing existing sites to other uses that would support a sustainable, vibrant town centre
- iv. Ensuring Maidstone's role as a county town, a place where existing residents of the borough, as well as new planned communities will gravitate towards for a high-quality town centre experience and offer
- v. Rich building heritage with collections of valuable listed buildings, often disjointed by infrastructure and other changes that have adversely affected the setting and coherence of the town
- vi. Activation of the river and creating a rich, diverse offer alongside it, based on recreation and leisure, including an audit of existing green space
- vii. Good transport policies but a relatively poor track record of delivery and outdated gyratory roads which create severance between different parts of the town centre; this will be addressed by producing a comprehensive movement plan that will support a sustainable and deliverable transport vision

2.11 Work to prepare the draft Town Centre Strategy to date has included a thorough interdisciplinary baseline assessment, the findings of which will be summarised in a range of documents - baseline appraisal, heritage baseline report, transport baseline report, market assessment and four strategies covering green and open spaces, lighting, movement and community infrastructure. These all form the evidence base for the draft Town Centre Strategy and when all work is completed in due course, that evidence will be made available as background information via the council's web site, sitting alongside the draft strategy.

- 2.12 The Maidstone town centre's challenge is set out below along with a summary of progress and proposed next steps. The key challenge to positively embrace future growth and create a distinct identity for the town centre as an exemplary sustainable, safe and joyful place to live, do business and visit, make the best of the town centre's wonderful built, natural and community assets including heritage complexes of national significance, the River Medway and vibrant resident and interest groups and recapture its vitality, modernise and strengthen its resilience so that it continues to be a great place to live, work in and visit.
- 2.13 The process so far has included extensive research and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders; it has enabled a better understanding of challenges and potential routes to sustaining and improving the town centre and at the same time served to demonstrate that further research, exploration of options for the future and targeted engagement would be helpful before a draft Strategy is formulated for wide public consultation.

Missions and Objectives

- 2.14 In April 2023 the Executive considered and agreed three Missions to underpin development of the Town Centre Strategy. These have been the backbone of the development of key workstreams to date and consequent strategy work covering movement/transport, green and open space, lighting and community infrastructure.

The Missions are:

Mission 1 – Become a county town for the future

Mission 2 – Re-connect beautiful, sustainable and historic places

Mission 3 - Guarantee well-being for all

- 2.15 The draft Town Centre Strategy will propose the overarching objective for each mission and what we are setting out to achieve.
- 2.16 **Mission 1 - Become a county town for the future.** The objective is for Maidstone to be Kent's most prosperous Town Centre; work has been undertaken to inform options that could
- Strengthen the retail core as a diverse, active, safe and inclusive daytime and night-time destination.
 - Create new employment and business opportunities including those which allow residents to learn new skills and businesses to form and grow.
 - Respond to the planned increase the number of people living in the Town Centre and ensure that it can provide for their everyday needs. This reflects the decisions already made by the Council and reflected first in the Local Plan adopted in 2017 and the subsequent Local Plan Review. The Local Plan Review expects in the region of 2,500 new homes to be provided in the town centre by 2038. These are to come from several identified sites within the town centre including opportunity sites with existing adopted policies at Len

House, Maidstone East, Maidstone Riverside, Maidstone West and Mote Road (a total of 1,716 new homes), as well as more generally from the town centre as a broad location (789). Also of relevance is residential development on the periphery of the town centre.

Development is already underway along the eastern riverside at Springfield with further development planned on the library site and Invicta Barracks is an established allocation for a further 1,300 homes. This creates opportunities for the town in terms of activity and potential spend and challenges in terms of the need for local services and creating a place with a good quality of life.

- Expand educational opportunities within the Town Centre, including higher education.

2.17 **Mission 2** – Re-connect beautiful, sustainable and historic places. The objective is that Maidstone’s streets, spaces and places celebrate the Town Centre’s rich heritage and to help the Council achieve its goal to be carbon neutral so that the town flourishes over the long term. Work has been undertaken to inform options that could

- Enhance the visibility and interpretation of the rich heritage of the town centre including the potential for the whole of the town centre from All Saints to Sessions House to work as one connected historic environment and exemplifying pride of place.
- Make it safer, quicker and more accessible to walk, wheel and cycle to and around the town centre.
- Ensure that the town centre is easy and desirable to visit from within the borough, county and beyond.
- Utilise current and future technologies to transform today, ready for tomorrow.

2.18 **Mission 3 - Guarantee well-being for all.** The objective is for Maidstone to be a source of pride for residents and a place that supports their physical and mental wellbeing through actions that could

- Enhance the river Medway as a destination and route.
- Transform streets and spaces to ensure a healthy and enjoyable environment in a warming climate.
- Provide best-in-county health services which cater for all Maidstone’s communities.
- Support Maidstone’s vibrant art and community group.

Link to UK Shared Prosperity Fund

2.19 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was introduced with effect from 2022/3 for the period to 2024/5 to support the UK Government’s commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the four parts of their strategy i.e.

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards, especially in those places where they are lagging.

- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
 - Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
 - Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.
- 2.20 The primary goal of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: 'By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing'.
- 2.21 Maidstone has been awarded £1,199,253 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend by March 31st 2025 and of this £417,003 has been allocated to projects associated with the Town Centre Strategy; this included £20,817 towards the appointment of consultants to develop a greening and lighting strategy for the Town Centre. £396,186 was allocated for the period 24/25 to deliver projects in the town centre on lighting and public realm. In addition, £111,298 was allocated for projects focussed on the creation and improvement of green spaces in the town centre within the same period.
- 2.22 This totals £507,484 to deliver projects from the lighting and green and open spaces strategies in 2024/25. This is a short time frame for delivery and the Council will receive funding in April 2024, which must be spent by March 2025. As the funding is allocated and agreed, the Council can spend in advance of receiving funding, and in order to ensure that all projects are delivered by the March 2025 deadline, the period between late 2023 and early 2024 will be spent prioritising, commissioning work, undertaking any feasibility works and designing schemes. A separate report is being presented to PIED PAC on 7 December 2023 on the lighting and green and open space strategy and associated project priorities for funding.

Key Workstreams to date

- 2.23 To articulate how the three Missions could be achieved, work has been undertaken so far through a series of workstreams to inform translation of the Missions into practical actions through identification of deliverable projects. These workstreams are
- Movement
 - Green and open spaces
 - Lighting
 - Community infrastructure.

The aims to date for the Movement and Community Infrastructure Strategies are summarised below. The Green and Open Space and Lighting Strategies are set out in the separate committee report.

Movement Strategy

- 2.24 The proposed aim is for Maidstone town centre to be highly accessible to the boroughs' residents and visitors offering high quality public realm which connects people, goods, and services. The transport network will offer a safe and pleasant environment which supports sustainable and active travel. It will also embrace future travel innovations to capture the benefits offered, including low carbon and low emissions, to reduce the impact vehicle traffic on people and its historic buildings. The Movement Strategy will consider all types of movement through the town centre and puts forward proposals to improve provision for walking, wheeling, public transport, motor vehicle access including looking at better management to limit congestion and impacts on air quality and enhance the look and feel of the public realm, arrangements for deliveries and servicing, car parking and consideration of potential future needs to ensure that the town centre is capable of adapting to and embracing new technologies. It is recognised that post-covid, vehicle traffic amounts and patterns within Maidstone, as with other towns, appear to have changed and this may provide opportunities to enhance the pedestrian and cyclist movement experience.
- 2.25 Draft work has been shared with Kent County Council as the transport and highway authority. Our dialogue has been productive and covered both taking a strategic approach to adapting the town centre transport systems to support our long-term strategy to 2050 and collaboration to address detailed changes over this 25+ year period at specific locations. While it is appreciated that much further work is needed to model and design changes this will need to be considered in the context of the overall transformational aims for Maidstone town centre to accentuate its role as the county town, emphasise its heritage assets, accommodate significant residential growth, diversify town centre uses to enhance prosperity and achieve excellent environmental quality and connectivity.
- 2.26 We recognise that the Movement Strategy for the town centre will also need to be aligned with the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be subject to review commencing in 2024 and the scope for this was considered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 6th September 2023.

Community Infrastructure

- 2.27 The borough's population is growing. Between 2011 and 2021 the number of residents increased by 13.3%; growth is forecast to continue and is associated with the need for significantly more housing including in and around the town centre. Complementary community infrastructure is needed to provide the venues for services for residents, including health and to lift the cultural, arts and leisure offer of the town centre for the wider population too. Achieving this will diversify the land and building uses in the town centre, strengthen the town centre economy and build its resilience for the future.
- 2.28 The draft strategy is still being developed but initial findings envisage the introduction of new health and education provision and adaptive re-use of

existing buildings to become arts and creative maker spaces. The latter would build on the latent capacity in the creative sector in the borough. In the development of the draft strategy there have already been productive conversations with key partners including the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and West Kent Health and Care Partnership (WKH&CP) , Mid Kent College (MKC), Kent County Council, the local arts forum, voluntary sector and churches network. It is encouraging to see appetite for working with MBC to secure new and improved community infrastructure.

- 2.29 We recognise that the ICB are currently developing a new Kent and Medway Estates Strategy and that the WKH&CP are doing the same for their area and that any revised or additional provision of services and the associated health estate in the town centre would need to align with the ICB's strategy. The need for an additional GP practice has already been established and provision could be made at Maidstone East; the potential need for an early treatment centre to complement existing primary care services has also been identified and the council will continue to use its best endeavours to facilitate this being established. There are also early indications of the potential for MKC to develop its offer for performing and creative arts students in the town drawing on experience of similar development in Medway.

Engagement to Date

- 2.30 Since We Made That consultants were employed in December 2022, officers have worked with them to undertake data collection and analysis to develop a comprehensive, detailed understanding of the town centre. This included initial scoping of work (stage 1) and a review of social, economic and environmental issues and engagement with key stakeholders (stage 2). This included two deep dive workshops with stakeholders on 28 February and 1 March 2023 where topics discussed ranged from the need to improve health and wellbeing generally, through to design and technology, housing, town centre uses, access and public transport. Those attending included, for example the NHS, Kent County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group. A walkabout with Cabinet was held on 18 January 2023, followed by a discussion with Cabinet on 22 February 2023 about emerging issues.
- 2.31 In mid-2023 a town centre user group was formed with attendees from town centre wards. Several walkabouts have also been held to look at key sites and areas of change - these were held with Cabinet, members of the town centre user group and with officers. These walkabouts have continued as the accompanying strategies have been developed, allowing further exploration of lighting and heritage, for example. Two local business engagement workshops were also held to explore business needs.
- 2.32 Officers have also met with key stakeholders to get a greater understanding of different organisations issues in relation to the town centre. Overall, there has been support in principle for the creation of a strategy with some specific areas of challenge or particular interest, for example:

- Mid Kent College is keen to investigate space for arts, as they are seeing increased demand for performance studies. Interest in greater support for the arts space has been echoed by voices in the faith, arts and event sectors.
- The Environment Agency is supportive of projects that enhance biodiversity and greening. Projects need to ensure wildlife corridors are maintained and any projects proposing lighting along the river need to include an impact assessment on fish.
- Historic England is particularly supportive of the aims to improve the area around the Archbishop's Palace and All Saints Church and improved connectivity to the rest of the town centre.
- Voluntary sector representatives welcomed the acknowledgement of the challenges for residents in the town centre and were keen to support engagement. They also welcomed the support for arts, but suggested there could be a start-up/support space for small charities who need space in the town centre.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 At this stage, it is important to highlight that having got this far in preparing a new Town Centre Strategy and learning more about issues as this work has progressed, we are now at the stage of reviewing work against the "must get right issues", in order to ensure we have sufficient information and evidence and have thoroughly considered everything. It is important that we get things right.
- 3.2 The following sets out some of the areas that we have already identified where more work is required before a draft centre strategy can be prepared and is ready for public consultation.

The town centre economy: it is recognised that before and since covid, our town centres nationally have been changing and so have our working and shopping habits, with increased flexible and home working and more online shopping. Town centres need to be flexible, to change and adapt. While work to date has yielded knowledge of changes in the retail, office and other economic sectors relevant to the town centre further work is required to provide a deeper dive into the impact and consequences of both historical and anticipated future changes. This includes:

- Looking further into retail change for the core of the town centre and retail located currently on the west bank of the river Medway including consideration of change to our spatial retail policy
- Further consideration of the consequences of and options for responses to any future contraction in retail floorspace in the core of the town centre
- More consideration of the actions required for diversification of economic uses and activity for sectors where significant potential has been

identified including for the introduction of creative and maker space and expansion and strengthening of the town's cultural offer.

Creating high quality town centre living; many people already live within Maidstone Town Centre and implementation of decisions already made for new homes will lead to significant growth in the town centre residential population over the lifetime of the town centre strategy. We need to further consider how new homes and spaces can be better designed and community infrastructure planned and delivered to provide high quality, sustainable and viable places to live both for our new and established town centre residents. Further work includes:

- A "Big Conversation" with councillors using case study-based learning to develop greater understanding of the viability of town centre residential development and translation of how the principles of good sustainable design can be achieved, including construction methodology considerations, in the context of Maidstone town centre.
- Further collaboration with providers of community infrastructure and services including the Integrated Care Board (with strategic responsibility amongst other things for health provision) and health care providers e.g. the Kent Community Health Foundation Trust and Primary Care Networks to secure the services that residents need.

Development of our current workstreams this will include:

- Heritage – Maidstone has a wealth of heritage assets, but these are not always used to maximum effect; the All Saints and Brenchley Gardens/Museum areas, for example provide heritage anchors to the town and these areas and their connectivity with the town centre require further consideration. The development of a heritage strategy would complement the town centre strategy to bring the town's heritage into greater focus and unlock potential funding opportunities.
- Leisure and Hospitality – licensing regulation policy needs to be considered, along with recognition of changing behaviour patterns among younger people. We need to engage younger people to seek their views on what functions they see the town centre providing in the future. We also need to recognise and consider the evolving cultural mix.
- Infrastructure, including Community Infrastructure – is vital to making a place work. A lot of work has already been undertaken to consider the infrastructure needs of residents, workers and visitors, but now is a good time, as covered above, to re-visit this issue to ensure the draft town centre strategy fully captures these needs. This will be complemented by consideration of infrastructure to support economic activity, including power and water.
- Creative and culture – work has already been undertaken to consider our creative and cultural sectors; however further work is needed to look into this in greater detail, for example is there demand for maker space in the town.

- Transport - as part of the work on movement and residential development it has become clear that we need to review our town centre parking strategy. There is also a need to focus attention on improving use of our urban traffic control system to investigate/assess more precisely how we maintain suitable traffic circulation while contemplating changes in capacity at specific junctions and improvement in provision for sustainable travel.

Stakeholder and public engagement; we will

- Build on and sustain engagement with businesses, landowners, public sector partners including Kent County Council, Kent Police, health and housing providers and community networks e.g. the churches network. After Cabinet's consideration of this update report we will also update these stakeholders.
- Engagement will be developed particularly with young people and seldom heard communities so that we capture their views, ideas and aspirations for the future Maidstone town centre.

Opportunities for member participation and engagement; these will include:

- Continuation of the town centre user group; the composition of this group will need to be reviewed after the election in May 2024 and arrangements will be made for regular monthly updates.
- Participation in workstream specific topics open to all members; in the short term these will include:
 - discussion of the future of retail and economic diversification for the town centre
 - workshops concerning the delivery of town centre homes and a great place to live.
- Business as usual consideration of recommendations to be made to the Cabinet via the policy advisory committees and overview and scrutiny committee.

The anticipated timings for the next steps during 2024 are set out in the following table, where shading signifies expected timescales for work to be undertaken and an expectation that the draft Town Centre Strategy will be ready for wider public consultation in late 2024. It should be highlighted that this is not an exhaustive list of every task but includes some key actions that are proposed. Engagement will occur throughout the preparation of this important work.

Next Steps in 2024	January – June	July - December
Town centre economy - including retail, employment and the west bank of the Medway		
High quality living - including residential viability, design and community infrastructure		
Heritage – including preparation of a heritage strategy		
Creative and culture - including looking at demand for maker space		
Leisure and Hospitality – including considering licensing and engaging young people		
Transport and Movement - including preparing a new town centre car parking strategy and investigating the urban traffic control system		
Engagement - including stakeholder and member engagement		

3.3 We also need to consider how complementary improvements could be made for the evolution and management of activity in the town alongside development and regeneration, for example this might include through review of licensing policy and enforcement. Longer term custodianship of the town, for example through establishing a Maidstone town council, could also be a consideration.

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 4.1 **Option 1** – that the report be noted, and the recommended next steps set out in section 3 of this report be approved.

The merit of this option is that a vast amount of work has already been undertaken, including informal consultation with key stakeholders. This option enables work to progress to prepare a consultation draft Town Centre Strategy. That document would then be brought back to a future meeting to recommend wider public consultation takes place, thereby enabling further input and ownership.

- 4.2 **Option 2** - that the recommendations set out in the report are supported, subject to amendments to the next steps.

The impact of this is that the recommendations to date have been developed from the information analysis and discussions that have taken place with key stakeholders. Any amendments to the next steps would need very careful consideration with respect to resources needed and delay the publication of the consultation.

- 4.3 **Option 3** – Do nothing

Much work has already been undertaken to prepare a consultation draft Town Centre Strategy, including numerous consultations informally with key stakeholders. Doing nothing more at this stage would reflect badly on the reputation of the Council and could also lead to a loss of potential future funding opportunities from outside bodies.

5. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred option, as it supports the completion of the preparation of a consultation draft Town Centre Strategy. It takes on board the need to ensure issues are fully considered and also seeks to obtain the views of young people and hard to reach groups to inform the preparation of the draft Town Centre Strategy.

6. RISK

- 6.1 The risks associated with these recommendations, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

7. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Numerous committees and Executive have considered the preparation of the draft Town Centre Strategy to date. There have also been walkabouts of the town centre during the day and after dark with members; an all councillor briefing has been held and discussions with Cabinet and ward members, as highlighted in the body of this report.
- 7.2 The matter was considered by the Planning Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 7 December 2023, with support expressed for the report recommendations.

8. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 8.1 If the recommendations are agreed, work will continue to review key issues and prepare the consultation draft Town Centre Strategy. Once drafted this will be brought back to a future meeting for consideration for public consultation on the document to commence.
- 8.2 Feedback will be provided to stakeholders in the light of the Cabinet's consideration of this report and feedback from the Policy Advisory Committee.
- 8.3 A Delivery Plan and separate Investment Plan will also be prepared, which will sit alongside the Town Centre Strategy.

9. REPORT APPENDICES

None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CABINET	20 December 2023
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Fees and Charges 2024-25

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Policy Advisory Committees	December 2023
Cabinet	20 December 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Adrian Lovegrove, Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 for all services and summarises the overall changes. Fees and charges determined by the Cabinet are reviewed annually, and this forms part of the budget setting process. Changes to fees and charges agreed by Cabinet will come into effect on 1 April 2024 unless otherwise stated in the report.

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2024/25 and setting next year’s Council Tax. Following consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 September 2023 of the draft Medium Term Finance Strategy for 2024/25 – 2028/29 the savings budget proposals for services were agreed.

The draft MTFS described how, in bridging the budget gap, the Council would need to balance the requirement to make savings and generate increased income of 5%. This 5% increase could be delivered by price increase and or volume increases. This needs to be considered in respect of any potential changes being approved by Cabinet.

This report also includes an update on the Budget Survey. Public consultation on the budget has been carried out. Details are set out in Appendices F and G. Cabinet are encouraged to review the findings and assess whether the budget proposals being presented later this year are consistent with public expectations and aspirations.

Recommendation to the Cabinet:

1. Cabinet is asked to note the contents of this report but may choose to comment on the content.
2. That Cabinet approve the Fees and Charges as detailed in Appendices A and C to E.
3. That Cabinet note the Fees and Charges Policy as detailed in Appendix B.

Fees and Charges 2024-25

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. They reflect the Council’s decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.</p> <p>The Council’s policy on charging has been developed to support corporate priorities as set out in the strategic plan and the proposals within the report have been made with reference to this.</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council’s other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the Cabinet gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report. This income will be incorporated into the councils MTFS 2024/25.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The recommendations do not have any staffing implications.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 permits best value authorities to charge for discretionary services provided the authority has the power to provide that service and the recipient agrees to take it up on those terms.</p> <p>The authority has a duty to ensure that taking one financial year with another, income does not exceed the costs of providing the service.</p> <p>A number of fees and charges for Council services are set on a cost recovery basis only, with trading accounts used to ensure that the</p>	Head of Legal

	<p>cost of service is clearly related to the charge made. In other cases, the fee is set by statute and the Council must charge the statutory fee. In both cases the proposals in this report meet the Council’s legal obligations.</p> <p>Where a customer defaults on the fee or charge for a service, the fee or charge must be defensible, in order to recover it through legal action. Adherence to the MBC Charging Policy on setting fees and charges provides some assurance that appropriate factors have been considered in setting such fees and charges</p>	
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>Privacy and Data Protection is considered as part of the development of new budget proposals. There are no specific implications arising from this report.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Equalities	<p>The MFTS report scopes the possible impact of the Council’s future financial position on service delivery. When a policy, service or function is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence-based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.</p>	<p>Equalities and Communities Officer</p>
Public Health	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Procurement	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Biodiversity & Climate Change Manager</p>

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out in financial terms how the Council's Strategic Plan will be delivered over the next five years, given the resources available. In so doing, it establishes the framework for the annual budget setting process.
- 2.2 The MTFS and relevant savings proposals for 2024/25 were presented to Cabinet 20 September 2023. Across the council, these savings and fees and charges increases of 5% overall would cover the budget gap. The 5% increase can be delivered by increases to fees and charges or by increased volumes. Any reduction to savings or F&Cs would require further savings options to be considered.
- 2.3 This assumes that Council Tax is increased up to the referendum threshold and there are no significant changes to funding when government announce the funding settlement. If there are variations to our assumptions in the MTFS we will need to review the position again.

Fees and Charges

- 2.4 The council is able to recover the costs of providing certain services through making a charge to service users. For some services, this is a requirement and charges are set out in statute, and in other areas the council has discretion to determine whether charging is appropriate, and the level at which charges are set.
- 2.5 In recent years, the use of charging has become an increasingly important feature of the council's medium term financial strategy, as pressures on the revenue budget limit the extent to which subsidisation of discretionary services is feasible. Recovering the costs of these services from users where possible helps to ensure sustainability of the council's offer to residents and businesses, beyond the statutory minimum.
- 2.6 A charging policy (attached at Appendix B for reference) is in place for charges which are set at the council's discretion and this seeks to ensure that:
 - Fees and charges are reviewed regularly, and that this review covers existing charges as well services for which there is potential to charge in the future.
 - Budget managers are equipped with guidance on the factors which should be considered when reviewing charges.
 - Charges are fair, transparent and understandable, and a consistent and sensible approach is taken to setting the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges.
 - Decisions regarding fees and charges are based on relevant and accurate information regarding the service and the impact of any proposed changes to the charge is fully understood.

- 2.7 The policy covers fees and charges that are set at the discretion of the council and does not apply to services where the council is prohibited from charging, e.g. the collection of household waste. Charges currently determined by central government, e.g. planning application fees, are also outside the scope of the policy. However, consideration of any known changes to such fees and charges and any consequence to the medium term financial strategy are included in this report for information.
- 2.8 Managers are asked to consider the following factors when reviewing fees and charges:
- The council's strategic plan and values, and how charge supports these;
 - The use of subsidies and concessions targeted at certain user groups or to facilitate access to a service;
 - The actual or potential impact of competition in terms of price or quality;
 - Trends in user demand including an estimate of the effect of price changes on customers;
 - Customer survey results;
 - Impact on users, both directly and on delivering the council's objectives;
 - Financial constraints including inflationary pressure and service budgets;
 - The implications of developments such as investment made in a service;
 - The corporate impact on other service areas of council wide pressures to increase fees and charges;
 - Alternative charging structures that could be more effective;
 - Proposals for targeting promotions during the year and the evaluation of any that took place in previous periods.

Discretionary Charges for 2024-25

- 2.9 It is important that charges are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain appropriate and keep pace with the costs associated with service delivery as they increase over time.
- 2.10 Charges for services have been reviewed by budget managers in line with the policy, as part of the development of the MTFS for 2024/25 onwards. The detailed results of the review carried out this year are set out in Appendix A and C to E. The approval by Cabinet is sought to the amended fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in the appendices.
- 2.11 Tables below summarise the 2023/24 outturn and 2024/25 estimate for income from the fees and charges. Please note that the table only reflects changes relating to fees and charges and does not include other budget proposals which may impact these service areas.
- 2.12 The Council's policy on charging states that Cabinet will consider the overall impact of all fees and charges on the council's residents and businesses. A summary of these changes is provided below, with the detail set out within Appendices A and C-E. Overall, the anticipated impact of all the proposals

represents an increase 4.0% on existing gross income budgets. This is in line with the expected level of increase to ensure we deliver a balanced budget.

CS - Fees and Charges

Service Area	2022-23 Outturn £	2023-24 Estimate £	Proposed change in income £	2024-25 Estimate £
Legal Services	113,517	60,000	53,000	113,000
Street Naming & Numbering	33,807	73,350	0	73,350
Town Hall	385	1,500	0	1,500
Total income - set by the Council	147,709	134,850	53,000	187,850

Table 1: Discretionary Fees & Charges Summary

2.13 Detailed proposals are set out within Appendix A to this report, and considerations relating to these proposals have been summarised below.

2.14 Legal Services – The fees and charges for legal services are based on recovering the cost of the service. Consideration is also given to the maximum recoverable costs per hour for court work in this area, which are set by the Ministry of Justice. The hourly chargeable rate is the same across all three authorities in the partnership. The increase is mainly driven by volumes increase of £50,000.

2.15 Street Naming and Numbering - No changes are proposed to these charges at this stage.

2.16 Town Hall – No changes are proposed to these charges at this stage.

CS Statutory Fees & Charges

2.17 Table 2 below summarises the income due from fees which are set by the government. No changes are anticipated to these charges which are set centrally by government departments.

Service Area	2022-23 Outturn £	2023-24 Estimate £	Proposed change in income £	2024-25 Estimate £
Mid Kent Enforcement Service	939,386	1,029,000	0	1,029,000
Total income - set externally	939,386	1,029,000	0	1,029,000

Table 2: Statutory Fees & Charges Summary (CS PAC)

2.18 No increase in income from compliance and enforcement fees is anticipated due to constraints on debt collection including delays in the courts service. MKES operates as a shared service, the income is gross and the net profit is shared equally between the authorities.

HHE F&Cs

Service Area	2022-23 Outturn	2023-24 Estimate	Proposed change in income	2024-25 Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Parks and Open Spaces	9,953	16,500	0	16,500
Cemetery and Crematorium	1,871,809	1,769,320	50,000	1,819,320
Environmental Health	31,642	22,420	3,450	25,870
Waste Crime & Community Protection	14,725	26,900	0	26,900
Recycling & Refuse Collection	1,524,164	1,506,950	10,000	1,516,950
HMO Licensing	30,571	20,380	12,885	33,265
Gypsy & Traveller Sites	50,359	73,860	0	73,860
Grand Total	3,533,223	3,436,330	76,335	3,512,665

Table 3: Discretionary Fees & Charges Summary (HHE)

CLA F&Cs

Service Area	2022-23 Outturn	2023-24 Estimate	Proposed change in income	2024-25 Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Museum	36,580	42,800	0	42,800
Parks and Open Spaces- Leisure Activities	55,790	44,630	0	44,630
Market	87,000	87,930	5,580	93,510
Grand Total	179,370	175,360	5,580	180,940

Table 4: Discretionary Fees & Charges Summary (CLA)

PIED F&Cs

Service Area	2022-2023 Outturn	2023-2024 Budget	Proposed change in income	2024-2025 Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Parking Services	3,405,009	3,394,500	43,400	3,437,900
Sandling Road Car Park	76,966	53,470	0	53,470
Land Charges	236,012	286,900	0	286,900
Building Control	400,542	402,540	40,000	442,540
Development and Conservation Control	1,355,924	1,636,440	200,000	1,836,440
Economic Development- Jubilee Square	0	3,500	0	3,500
Grand Total	5,474,453	5,777,350	283,400	6,060,750

Table 5: Discretionary Fees & Charges Summary (PIED)

Budget Survey

2.19 Public consultation on the budget has been carried out. Details are set out in Appendices F and G. Members are encouraged to review the findings and assess whether the budget proposals they have reviewed are consistent with public expectations and aspirations.

Services Spending Approaches

2.20 Respondents were provided with the list of mandatory services detailing the current spend for each per council tax band D household. They were asked to indicate what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering the mandatory services. Three options were provided for respondents to select from:

- Reduce the service provided
- Maintain the current service
- Don't know.

2.21 The key points from the responses are (Appendix F):

- The top three mandatory services that respondents said should be maintained were Environmental Services (96.7%), Environmental Health (84.1%) and Community Safety (82.0%).
- The top three mandatory services which respondents said should be reduced were Democratic & Electoral services (47.0%), Licensing (38.5%) and Council Tax & Benefits (34.8%).
- The top three discretionary services which respondents said should be maintained were Parks & Open Spaces (96.4%), Leisure centre (79.7%) and Car Parks (74.3%).
- The top three discretionary service which respondents said should be reduced were Civic Events (50.8%), Markets (43.3%) and Tourism (34.6%).
- Investment priorities – infrastructure including flood prevention and street scene remain the highest priority.

2.22 We have also compared the changes between the 2022 and 2023 surveys (Appendix G). There are small swings in the figures on reducing services. Those with a decrease in the percentage for 'reducing the service provided' are Environmental Services and Planning.

2.23 Those with a larger increase in the percentage for 'reducing the service provided' are Democratic and Electoral Services, Bereavement Services, Environmental Enforcement and Licensing.

2.24 The most important services were also compared across the 2 surveys. There were no changes in the priority order.

Investment Programme

2.25 Survey respondents were asked to place a list of investment programme priorities into their preferred order of importance. The result is consistent with the 2022 survey with Infrastructure (including flood presentation and street scene) the highest preference and housing the lowest.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1

The Cabinet could approve the fees and charges as proposed in Appendices A and C to E. As these proposals have been developed in line with the council's policy on fees and charges, they will create a manageable impact on service delivery whilst maximising income levels.

3.2 Option 2

The Cabinet could agree alternative charges to those set out within Appendices A and C to E. Any alternative increases may not be fully compliant with the policy, would require further consideration before implementation and may not deliver the necessary levels of income to ensure a balanced budget for 2024-25. The impact on demand for a service should also be taken into account when considering increases to charges beyond the proposed level.

3.3 Option 3

The Cabinet could agree to do nothing and retain charges at their current levels. However, this might limit the Council's ability to recover the cost of delivering discretionary services and could result in the Council being unable to set a balanced budget for 2024-25.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Cabinet must recommend to Council at its meeting on 21 February 2024 a balanced budget and a proposed level of Council Tax for the coming year. The budget proposals and Fees and Charges included in this report will allow the Cabinet to do this. Accordingly, the preferred option is that Cabinet agrees the Fees and Charges at Appendices A and C to E.

5. RISK

5.1 The Council's finances are subject to a high degree of risk and uncertainty. The draft MTFS includes an evaluation of the Council's financial resilience, from which it can be seen that it has adequate, but not excessive, reserves and is positioned well to manage the financial challenges that it faces.

5.2 In order to address risk on an ongoing basis in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each of its meetings.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Cabinet received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 26 July 2023 and it agreed the approach set out in that report to development of an MTFS for 2024/25 - 2028/29 and a budget for 2024/25.
- 6.2 PACs in September received details of the savings proposals which will be needed to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25. Outcomes of the PACs' consideration of the F&C proposals will be reported verbally at the Meeting.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The timetable for developing the budget for 2023/24 is set out below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Action</i>
24 January 2024	Cabinet	Agree 24/25 final budget proposals for recommendation to Council
21 February 2024	Council	Approve 24/25 budget

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Fees and Charges Proposals 2024/25 - Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee
 - Appendix B: Fees and Charges - Charging policy
 - Appendix C-E: Fees and Charges Proposals 2024/25 - Other Policy Advisory Committees
 - Appendix F: Budget Survey 2023
 - Appendix G: Comparison of 2022 and 2023 Service Spending Approaches.
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25
Fees and Charges.
Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2023-24	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Legal Services										
			23,757	31,600				1,580	33,180	
Business Tenancies and Leases										
*Hourly Rate	x				258.00	271.00	5.04%			These charges are the same across the partnership. * Some Leases may be charged VAT depending on the property
Council Land										
Hourly Rate	x				258.00	271.00	5.04%			
Easement										
Hourly Rate	x				258.00	271.00	5.04%			
Completion of Section 106 Planning Agreements			89,760	28,400				51,420	79,820	
Hourly rate	x				258.00	271.00	5.04%			
Variation (per hour)					258.00	271.00	5.04%			
Other Legal work (not covered by the above)										
External hourly rate	x				258.00	271.00	5.04%			
Administrative Fees (plus postage where applicable)										
A4 Documents Single Sided per page					0.50	0.50	0.00%			
A4 Documents Double Sided per page					1.00	1.00	0.00%			
Colour A4 Documents Single Sided per page					1.00	1.00	0.00%			
Copies of Legal Agreements/Deeds etc					5.00 to 50.00	5.00 to 50.00	0.00%			Price dependent on size of document.
Legal Services Total			113,517	60,000				53,000	113,000	
Street Naming & Numbering										
			33,807	73,350					73,350	No increase as budget not reached
Name change	x				30.00	30.00	0.00%			
Addition of Name to numbered Property	x				30.00	30.00	0.00%			
Amendment to Postal Address	x				30.00	30.00	0.00%			
New Build - Individual Property	x				90.00	90.00	0.00%			
Official Registration of Postal Address previously not Registered	x				55.00	55.00	0.00%			
New Development - Fee per unit/flat	x				50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Creation of New Street	x				120.00	120.00	0.00%			
Conversion of property into Flats-fee per flat	x				50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Renumbering of Development or Block of Flats - Fee per unit/flat	x				25.00	25.00	0.00%			
Street Naming & Numbering Total			33,807	73,350				0	73,350	

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25
Fees and Charges.
Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2023-24	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Town Hall											
Town Hall Lettings	No vat	x		385	1,500					1,500	
Council Chamber											
Chamber Day (Commercial) - per hour	No vat	x				36.00	36.00	0.00%			Minimum charge as for 4 hours
Chamber Day (Non-Commercial) - per half day	No vat	x				78.00	78.00	0.00%			
Chamber Evening (Commercial)	No vat	x				144.00	144.00	0.00%			
Chamber Evening (Non-Commercial)	No vat	x				102.00	102.00	0.00%			
Beauvais Room											
Beauvais Day (Commercial) - per hour	No vat	x				24.00	24.00	0.00%			Minimum charge as for 4 hours
Beauvais Day (Non-Commercial) - per half day	No vat	x				36.00	36.00	0.00%			
Beauvais Evening (Commercial)	No vat	x				96.00	96.00	0.00%			
Beauvais Evening (Non-Commercial)	No vat	x				72.00	72.00	0.00%			
Refreshments											
Tea - per pot	No vat	x				5.00	5.00	0.00%			
Coffee - per pot	No vat	x				5.00	5.00	0.00%			
Town Hall Total				385	1,500				0	1,500	
Maidstone House (Parking at MBC)											
Maidstone House (Charge for paying customers) Total	*	x		0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0	0	
Maidstone House Total				0	0				0	0	
Mid Kent Enforcement Service (MKES)											
				939,386	1,029,000					1,029,000	Possible reduction due to fixed rate mortgage ending and therefore people's inability to pay.
Compliance Fees - statutory charge		x				75.00	75.00	0.00%			No Increase applied, these are statutory fees
Enforcement Fees - statutory charge		x				235.00	235.00	0.00%			
Shared MKES Total				939,386	1,029,000				0	1,029,000	
GRAND TOTAL				1,087,095	1,163,850				53,000	1,216,850	

Maidstone Borough Council

Charging Policy

September 2023

1 Introduction and Context

- 1.1 At Maidstone Borough Council, fees and charges represent an important source of income which is used to support the delivery of the Council's objectives. Currently income from fees and charges constitutes just under a third of the council's funding.
- 1.2 The Council needs to ensure that its charges are reviewed regularly, and that they contribute towards the achievement of its priorities. It is also important to ensure that fees and charges do not discriminate against individuals or groups by excluding them from accessing council services.
- 1.3 Pressure on the Council's budgets has increased the incentive to make best use of charging opportunities and to recognise the importance of using this as a means of recovering the costs of delivering services.
- 1.4 Under the Council's constitution, responsibility for setting discretionary fees and charges is the Cabinet. Policy Advisory Committee will review the fees and charges for the services within its remit at least annually as part of the budget setting process to ensure that they remain relevant and appropriate and make recommendations to Cabinet.
- 1.5 Where the Council has the discretion to set the charge for a service, it is important that the implications of this decision are fully understood, and that decision makers are equipped with sufficient information to enable rational decisions to be made.

2 Policy Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to establish a framework within which fees and charges levied by the Council are agreed and reviewed.
- 2.2 The Council must ensure that charges are set at an appropriate level which maximises cost recovery. Unless it would conflict with the Council's strategic priorities, other policies, contracts or the law then the Council should aim to maximise net income from fees and charges.
- 2.3 The policy aims to ensure that:-
 - a) Fees and charges are reviewed regularly, and that this review covers existing charges as well as services for which there is potential to charge in the future.
 - b) Budget managers are equipped with guidance on the factors which should be considered when reviewing charges.
 - c) Charges are fair, transparent and understandable, and a consistent and sensible approach is taken to setting the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges.
 - d) Decisions regarding fees and charges are based on relevant and accurate information regarding the service and the impact of any proposed changes to the charge is fully understood.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy relates to fees and charges currently being levied by the Council and those which are permissible under the wider general powers to provide and charge for “Discretionary Services” included within the Local Government Act 2003 and Localism Act 2011. It does not cover services for which the council is prohibited from charging.
- 3.2 Fees for statutory services delivered by the council, but for which charges are set by central government, rents, leases, council tax, and business rates are outside the scope of this policy.
- 3.3 In general, charges should ensure that service users make a direct contribution to the cost of providing a service. However, there may be certain circumstances where this would not be appropriate. For example:
- Where the council is prohibited from charging for the service (e.g. collection of household waste)
 - Where the introduction of a charge would impede delivery of corporate priorities;
 - Where administrative costs of charging outweigh the potential income;
 - Where the service is seen to be funded from Council Tax (i.e. services which are provided and delivered equally to all residents)
 - Where the government sets the fee structure (e.g. pollution permits and private water fees)

4 Principles

- 4.1 The following overarching principles apply for the consideration and review of all current and future fees and charges levied by the council:
- Fees and charges should maximise cost recovery and where appropriate, income generation, to the extent that the Council’s legal powers permit, providing that this would not present any conflict with the Council’s strategic objectives;
 - Fees and charges should support the improvement of services, and the delivery of the Council’s corporate priorities, as set out in the strategic plan;
 - Where a subsidy or concession is provided for a service, this must be targeted towards the delivery of strategic priorities, for example, by facilitating access to services;
 - The process for setting and updating fees and charges should be administratively simple, transparent and fair, and for budgeting purposes, income projections must be robust and rational.

5 Process and Frequency for Reviewing Charges

- 5.1 The following arrangements for reviewing charges will be applied throughout the Council, for existing charges as well as those which in principle could be introduced.
- 5.2 In accordance with the Council's constitution, *'Discretionary fees and charges will be reviewed each year by the Policy Advisory Committee responsible for the function having considered will recommend approval to Cabinet, as part of the estimate cycle.'*
- 5.3 This annual review will ensure consistency with the Council's priorities, policy framework, service aims, market sensitivity, customer preferences, income generation needs and that any subsidy made by the Council is justifiable.
- 5.4 Heads of Service and budget managers will be asked to complete a schedule setting out all proposed fees and charges for the services in their area (including those which are not set by the council). This will usually take place in autumn for the following financial year and review the current year. By this means, any growth or savings resulting from fees and charges can be built into the budget strategy. An example schedule is provided at Appendix B. The schedule will indicate:
- The service or supply to which the charge relates;
 - Who determines the charges;
 - The basis for the charge (e.g. units or hourly rates);
 - The existing charge;
 - The total income budget for the current year;
 - The proposed charge;
 - Percentage increase/decrease;
 - Effective date for increase/decrease; and
 - Estimated income for the next financial year after introducing the change (price and volume).
- 5.5 Following this, the proposals will be collated by the Finance section into a report for each Policy Advisory Committee to consider the appropriateness of proposed fees and charges for the services within their remit. The report will clearly identify the charges for which the committee can apply discretion, and distinguish these from the charges which are set externally and included for information only. Cabinet will then receive a final report which brings together the proposals from each of the three service committees, in order to assess the overall impact of the proposed changes, and consider the potential impact on customers and service users.
- 5.6 The timing of the annual review will ensure that changes can be incorporated into the council's budget for the forthcoming financial year, although changes to fees and charges may be made outside of this process if required through a report to the relevant director or service committee.
- 5.7 It is possible that the review may lead to a conclusion that charges should remain at the existing level. If this is the case, then the outcomes of the review, including the justification for

not increasing the charge need to be documented and reported to the relevant service committee.

- 5.8 For the avoidance of doubt, periodic reviews of the rents and leases are not covered by the above. Individual reviews will be implemented by the relevant officer as long as market levels at least are achieved.

6 Guidance

- 6.1 A checklist of issues for budget managers and Heads of Service to consider when determining the level at which to set fees and charges is provided at Appendix A to this policy.
- 6.2 Below is a list of guiding principles intended to assist decision makers in determining the appropriate level at which to set fees and charges:
- a) Any subsidy from the Council tax payer to service users should be transparent and justifiable.
 - b) Fees and charges may be used to manage demand for a service, and price elasticity of demand should be considered when determining the level at which charges should be set.
 - c) Fees and charges should not be used to provide subsidies to commercial operators.
 - d) Concessions for services should follow a logical pattern and a fair and consistent approach should be taken to ensuring the ensure recovery of all fees and charges.
 - e) Fees and charges should reflect key commitments and corporate priorities.
 - f) Prices could be based on added and perceived value, which takes account of wider economic and social considerations, as well as cost.
 - g) There should be some rational scale in the charge for different levels of the same service and there should be consistency between charges for similar services.
 - h) Policies for fees and charges should fit with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and, where appropriate, should be used to generate income to help develop capacity, to deliver efficiency and sustain continuous improvement.
 - i) In certain areas, charging may be used to generate surpluses which can be used to finance other services.
- 6.3 Wherever possible, charges should be recovered in advance or at the point of service delivery. If this is not possible, then invoices should be issued promptly and appropriate recovery procedures will be followed as required. Use of direct debit should be encouraged for periodic payments where this would improve cost effectiveness and enable efficient and timely collection of income.

7 Cost Recovery Limitation

- 7.1 Generally speaking, charges should be set at a level which enables all the costs of delivering a service to be recovered, although there are some exceptions to this identified earlier in this document. This includes direct costs such as the purchase of goods for resale, as well as indirect costs such as management and accommodation costs.
- 7.2 For certain services, legislation prohibits the Council from generating surpluses through charging. The general principle is that, taking one financial year with another, the income from charges must not exceed the costs of provision. Examples where this applies include building control and local land charges.
- 7.3 Any over or under recovery that resulted in a surplus or deficit of income in relation to costs in one period should be addressed when setting its charges for future periods so that, over time, income equates to costs.
- 7.4 Councils are free to decide what methodology to adopt to assess costs. Maidstone Borough Council follows the Service Reporting Code of Practice definition of total cost, including an allocation of all related support costs, plus an appropriate share of corporate and democratic core and non-distributed costs. Further guidance and support on calculating the full cost of service provision can be obtained from the Finance section.

8 Concessions & Subsidies

- 8.1 The normal level of fees and charges may be amended to allow for concessions targeted at certain user groups to encourage or facilitate access to the service.
- 8.2 Where concessions are proposed or already in place they must be justified in terms of overall business reasons, or implementation of key strategic considerations e.g. community safety, healthy living.
- 8.3 Examples of concessions and the reasons why they are awarded are:-
- Reductions for older people or children to encourage different age groups to participate in the sport which is linked to the promotion of public health;
 - Free spaces for disabled drivers in Council car parks to support social inclusion;
 - Concessions for new casual traders at the market to stimulate new usage;
- 8.4 In some cases, it may also be justifiable to subsidise a service for all users, where it would support delivery of strategic priorities.
- 8.5 In some circumstances, it may also be suitable to implement a system of means testing for managing access to concessions and subsidies, in order to ensure that subsidy can be targeted appropriately.

- 8.6 A fair and consistent approach should be taken to the application of concessionary schemes, and decisions should recognise the Council's broader agenda on promoting equality, as set out in the Equality Policy. When considering new charges, or significant changes to an existing charge, the budget manager should complete an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA).
- 8.7 All decisions regarding concessions and subsidies should include consideration of the impact the Council's ability to generate income and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9 Introducing a new charge

- 9.1 Proposals to introduce new charges should be considered as part of the service planning process and income projections should be factored into the Council's medium term financial plan.
- 9.2 Reasonable notice should be given to customers and service users prior to the introduction of a new charge, along with advice on concessions and discounts available.
- 9.3 Proposals should be based on robust evidence, and will incorporate the anticipated financial impact of introducing the charge, as well as the potential impact on demand for the service.
- 9.4 Performance should be monitored closely following implementation to enable amendments to the charge to be made if required, and the charge will subsequently be picked up as part of the annual review process.

10 Monitoring

- 10.1 Income levels will be monitored throughout the year and reported to committees through the quarterly reporting process. Significant variances may be addressed through an amended to charges, which will require approval from the appropriate Director or Service Committee.
- 10.2 The impact of changes in demand for services will be monitored through quarterly performance monitoring reports, where this is identified as a key performance indicator.

Appendix A - Discretionary Fees & Charges Review Checklist

The below checklist may be used as a guide for managers when reviewing existing charges or implementing a new fee structure.

Have you considered the following?	Y/N/NA	Comments
1. How does the charge link to the Council's corporate priorities?		
2. Does the charge enable the council to recover all costs of providing the service?		
3. If the answer to question 2 is 'No', have you considered increasing the charge to enable full cost recovery?		
4. Has the impact of inflation on the cost of service delivery been reflected in the proposed charge?		
5. Do the administrative costs of charging or increasing the charge outweigh the potential income to be generated?		
6. Is the charge being used to deter or incentivise certain behaviours?		
7. Has there been any investment in the service to effect an increase in charges?		
8. If there is a market for the service or supply, has the impact of market conditions and competition be considered in setting the charge?		
9. How sensitive is the price to demand for the service? Is there a risk that an increase in charge could deter potential customers?		
10. If applicable, have consultation results been taken into account?		

Appendix A - Discretionary Fees & Charges Review Checklist

11. Could the charges or income budget be increased to support the delivery of a savings target?		
12. What would the impact of the change be on customers, and how does this affect the delivery of corporate priorities?		
13. Have any alternative charging structures been considered?		
14. How will the service be promoted? How successful have previous promotions been in generating demand?		
15. New charges only - are there any legal factors which impact on the scope for charging (e.g. an obligation to limit charges to cost recovery only)?		
16. New charges only - has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed?		
17. If applicable, have concessionary charges been considered on a fair and consistent basis?		

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Chargeable Service/Supply: _____

Job Title: _____

Department: _____

Appendix B – Example Schedule of Fees & Charges

Fees and Charges April 2017 - March 2018		Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	2016-2017 Actuals	2017 -2018 Current Estimate	Current Charges 2017-2018	Proposed Charges 2018-2019	% Change	2017-2018 + / - Income	2018 -2019 Estimate	Comments
EA31	Street Naming & Numbering				66,995	49,000				0	49,000	
	Name change						25.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	Addition of Name to numbered Property						25.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	Amendment to Postal Address						25.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	New Build - Individual Property						75.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	Official Registration of Postal Address previously not Registered						50.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	New Development - Fee per unit/flat						40.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	Creation of New Street						100.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	Renumbering of Development or Block of Flats - Fee per unit/flat						20.00	0.00	-100.00%			
	Street Naming & Numbering Total				66,995	49,000				0	49,000	

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25
Fees and Charges
Communities, Leisure and Arts PAC

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	Actuals	Current Estimate	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
				2022-2023	2023-24	Charges	Charges		2023-24	2024-2025	
				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Museum											
School Education Activities											
		x		26,097	24,300					24,300	No increase proposed as schools are unable to meet any increases.
First workshop		x				90.00	90.00	0.00%			
Each Subsequent workshop		x				75.00	75.00	0.00%			Per additional class.
Craft Sessions		x				75.00	75.00	0.00%			No increase as we aim to raise interest.
Lunch room hire						20.00	20.00	0.00%			School charged to use lunch room (studio/AL room) if on an unpaid for visit - only if available and not already in use by another school.
Outreach to schools											
Out with 1 staff member											
1 workshop		x				200.00	200.00	0.00%			
2 workshops		x				275.00	275.00	0.00%			
3 workshops		x				350.00	350.00	0.00%			
4 workshops		x				450.00	450.00	0.00%			
Room hire											
Glass Room - Per day		x		1,555	5,000					5,000	
Library - Per day		x				145.00	145.00	0.00%			
Museum out of hours (based on 4 hours))		x				230.00	230.00	0.00%			
		x				650.00	650.00	0.00%			
Events											
Holiday activities -per child minimum charge depending on activity		x		8,928	8,000					8,000	
						3.00	3.85	28.33%			Now £3.50 so Hazlitt 10% ticket fees are covered plus 10%
Talks (external speaker)						6.00/5.00 MMF	7.00/6.00				
Talks (external speaker) + refreshment						10.00/8.00 MMF	11.00/9.00				Increase to cover Hazlitt 10% booking fees.
Talks (external speaker + refreshment + free entry to exhibition (if charged)						12.00/10.00M MF	14.00/12.00				MMF = Maidstone Museum Foundation
Tour or film showing + refreshments						15.00/13.00M MF	16.50/14.50				
Father Christmas						10.00	11.00	10.00%			
Market - stallholders per space						20.00	20.00	0.00%			
Exhibitions											
Charged entry											
Adult						4.00	4.00	0.00%			
Child						2.00	2.00	0.00%			
Family ticket						10.00	10.00	0.00%			
Sponsored or charged to exhibitor (& therefore free visitor entry) per 4 weeks											
Large space						600.00	600.00	0.00%			
Smaller space						300.00	300.00	0.00%			

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25
Fees and Charges
Communities, Leisure and Arts PAC

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2023-24	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Children's Parties	*			0	5,000					5,000	
Per Child minimum charge depending on activity		x				13.00	13.00	0.00%			
Collections enquiries											
QORWK - enquiries (Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment)		x		0	500	20.00	20.00	0.00%		500	QORWK enquiry £15 per family history enquiry. The fee is waived for collections based enquiries or where the museum gains research/information
Museum Total				36,580	42,800				0	42,800	
Parks and Open Spaces-Leisure Activities											
Events											
Fairs and circuses - per day (min. charge)	exempt	x				635.00	665.00	4.72%			
Hire of Parks											
Fitness classes (10-70 participants) - per session (min charge) B904		x		2,860	5,200	19.95	19.95	0.00%		5,200	
All Events											
Event day fee (min charge) per day				52,930	39,430					39,430	
- up to 100 participants	exempt	x				55.00	60.00	9.09%			
100 to 499 participants	exempt	x				105.00	115.00	9.52%			
500 - 899 participants	exempt	x				460.00	485.00	5.43%			
901+ by negotiation	exempt	x									Based on multiplier of participant fees
Plus Booking and disruption fee (min charge) per day on site (including all event days and build days)											
Commercial and charity ticketed events - Mote Park		x				325.00	345.00	6.15%			
Free events - Mote Park		x				70.00	75.00	7.14%			
Additional hire fee for event parking per day (Mote Park on		x				325.00	345.00	6.15%			Price point should be in multiples of £5 for customer ease.
Commercial and charity ticketed events - All other Parks		x				165.00	175.00	6.06%			
Free events - All other Parks		x				65.00	75.00	15.38%			In line with all free events in parks
Filming companies -(min charge) per day											
- Mote Park	exempt	x				380.00	405.00	6.58%			In line with small one day event
- Brenchley Gardens	exempt	x				230.00	240.00	4.35%			
- others by negotiation											
Commercial medical units - per day		x				145.00	150.00	3.45%			
				55,790	44,630				0	44,630	

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25
 Fees and Charges
 Communities, Leisure and Arts PAC

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	Actuals	Current Estimate	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
				2022-2023	2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Market											
Office Rent C250											
Mon/Tue/Fri charge per month 1st April - 31st March	x			1,000	1,200	460.00	460.00	0.00%	0	1,200	This is per contract so F&Cs should not change
Tuesday Market Pitches C223/C226				29,732	31,310				0	31,310	
Open Market											
<u>Regular Rate Market Square</u>											
Up to 10 feet - 1 April - 31 Dec	x					15.00	15.00	0.00%			
Undercroft Rate - 1 April - 31 Dec	x					15.00	15.00	0.00%			
Saturday Market Pitches C223/C226											
Open Market											
<u>Regular Rate Market Square</u>											
Up to 10 feet - 1 April - 31 Dec						20.00	20.00				
Undercroft Rate - 1 April - 31 Dec						20.00	20.00				
Lettings General C251/D358/C227				56,268	55,420				5,580	61,000	Based on last full year bookings.
Hire of Agricultural Hall											
Standard Hire - per day - casual hire	x					525.00	550.00	4.76%			Casual hire - once per month
Standard Hire - minimum 3 hours	x					35.00	40.00	14.29%			£35.00 per hour / £105 per session to C251 changes to £40.00 per hour / £120 per session to C251
Boot Fair -When in undercroft											
10' - pitch (£10 per each additional 10' pitch)	x					10.00	10.00	0.00%			
Commercial Hire											
Per half day (maximum 8 hours)	x					550.00	550.00	0.00%			
Per day (over 8 hours)	x					1,050.00	1,050.00	0.00%			
Hire of chairs for events - per 100	x					50.00	50.00	0.00%			Charged pro rata
Farmers Market C253	x			0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0	0	
Every other Friday - daily rate											
April - March											
Market Total				87,000	87,930				5,580	93,510	
GRAND TOTAL				179,370	175,360				5,580	180,940	

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Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Parking Services										
Business Permits D043		x	5,892	12,710	100.00	100.00	0.00%		12,710	No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
Residents Permits D057		x	225,210	169,460	25.00	25.00	0.00%		169,460	
Visitors Permits D066		x			25.00	25.00	0.00%		0	
3rd Permit [resident / visitor parking]		x			50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Replacement Permits/Duplicate Permits D067	*	x			10.00	10.00	0.00%		0	
Carers Permits - Organisation D050	*	x	858	1,290	20.00	20.00	0.00%		1,290	
Dispensations and Waivers D061			23,790	27,560					27,560	No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
Waivers/Work permits [max 1 day]		x			12.00	12.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [max 1 week]		x			36.00	36.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [max 2 week]		x			45.00	45.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [max 1 month]		x			60.00	60.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)]		x			50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 1 day]		x			12.00	12.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 1 week]		x			36.00	36.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 2 week]		x			45.00	45.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 1 month]		x			60.00	60.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)]		x			50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Cones/ Suspension administration Fee		x			100.00	100.00	0.00%			
PCN Low - Statutory D042		x	856,738	864,660	50.00	50.00	0.00%		864,660	No change - Statutory charge
PCN High - Statutory		x			70.00	70.00	0.00%			
Season Tickets - Car Parks D041 RC20			108,301	132,730					132,730	No change proposed - changes in the way people work have impacted on season ticket viability
6 Month 5 days Mon - Fri	*	x			496.00	496.00	0.00%			
6 Month 7 days Mon - Sun	*	x			638.00	638.00	0.00%			
12 Month 5 days Mon - Fri	*	x			910.00	910.00	0.00%			
12 Month 7 days Mon - Sun	*	x			1,163.00	1,163.00	0.00%			
Evening (any CP) off-peak valid after 5pm and before 8am Mon - Sun-12 Months	*	x			180.00	180.00	0.00%			
Refund administration fee					30.00	30.00	0.00%			
Season Tickets - Car Parks (Mote Park Only) D041 RC23			5,866	5,000					5,000	Maidstone residents only
One Year	*	x			40.00	40.00	0.00%			

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			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>PAY AND DISPLAY</u>										
<u>Electric Vehicles</u>										
Electric vehicles (EVs) – Free parking for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) through RingGo			15,692	40,000					40,000	Free parking for BEVs when customer registers transaction through the councils cashless payment provider.
Electric Vehicle Charging (per kWh)	*	x	0	0	0.00	0.00	0%	0	0	Charged per Kilowatt hour (kWh) in line with energy supplier rate (Inc VAT) plus additional charge of 15p (+VAT) to meet supply and maintenance costs (reviewed and adjusted monthly)
					variable	variable				
<u>On Street D060</u>										
<u>James Whatman Way</u>										
30 mins		x			0.70	0.70	0.00%			No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
1 hr		x			1.50	1.50	0.00%			
1.5 hr		x			2.00	2.00	0.00%			
2 hr		x			2.50	2.50	0.00%			
3 hr		x			3.50	3.50	0.00%			
4 hr		x			4.50	4.50	0.00%			
<u>All other on-street pay and display locations</u>										
30 mins		x			0.80	0.80	0.00%			No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
1 hr		x			1.50	1.50	0.00%			
1.5 hr		x			2.25	2.25	0.00%			
2 hr		x			3.00	3.00	0.00%			
<u>Off street</u>										
<u>Short Stay</u>										
<u>Medway St</u>										
1 hr	*	x	1,741,045	1,701,750				43,400	1,745,150	Increase due to volumes (general increase and Medway Street increase in spaces).
2 hr	*	x			1.30	1.30	0.00%			No change proposed
3 hr	*	x			2.60	2.60	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			3.90	3.90	0.00%			
	*	x			5.20	5.20	0.00%			

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Brewer Street [E]</u>											
30 mins	*	x				0.65	0.65	0.00%			No change proposed
1 hr	*	x				1.15	1.15	0.00%			
2 hr	*	x				2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.60	4.60	0.00%			
<u>King Street</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.35	1.35	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.70	2.70	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				4.05	4.05	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				5.40	5.40	0.00%			
<u>Wheel Street</u>											
30 mins	*	x				0.65	0.65	0.00%			No change proposed
1 hr	*	x				1.15	1.15	0.00%			
2 hr	*	x				2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.60	4.60	0.00%			
<u>Palace Avenue</u>											
1 hr						1.30	1.30	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr						2.60	2.60	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.90	3.90	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				5.20	5.20	0.00%			
<u>Mote Road</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.20	4.20	0.00%			
<u>Mill Street</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.20	4.20	0.00%			

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Long Stay</u>											
<u>Barker Road</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.15	1.15	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.60	4.60	0.00%			
5 hr	*					5.75	5.75	0.00%			
Over 5 hours						7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<u>Brooks Place</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.15	1.15	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.60	4.60	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x				5.75	5.75	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x				7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<u>Brunswick Street</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.20	4.20	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x				5.25	5.25	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x				7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<u>College Road</u>											
1 hr	*	x				1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.20	4.20	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x				5.25	5.25	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x				7.30	7.30	0.00%			

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Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025		* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
					£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Lucerne Street</u>												
1 hr		*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%				No change proposed
2 hr		*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%				
3 hr		*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%				
4 hr		*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%				
5 hr		*	x			5.75	5.75	0.00%				
Over 5 hours		*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%				
<u>Sittingbourne Road</u>												
1 hr		*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%				No change proposed
2 hr		*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%				
3 hr		*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%				
4 hr		*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%				
5 hr		*	x			5.75	5.75	0.00%				
Over 5 hours		*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%				
<u>Union Street [E]</u>												
1 hr		*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%				No change proposed
2 hr		*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%				
3 hr		*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%				
4 hr		*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%				
5 hr		*	x			5.75	5.75	0.00%				
Over 5 hours		*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%				
<u>Union Street [W]</u>												
1 hr		*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%				No change proposed
2 hr		*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%				
3 hr		*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%				
4 hr		*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%				
5 hr		*	x			5.75	5.75	0.00%				
Over 5 hours		*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%				

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Well Road											
1 hr	*	x				1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				4.20	4.20	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x				5.25	5.25	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x				7.30	7.30	0.00%			
Lockmeadow											
1 hr	*	x				1.00	1.00	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x				2.00	2.00	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x				2.50	2.50	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				3.50	3.50	0.00%			
Up to 5 hours	*	x				5.00	5.00	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x				7.00	7.00	0.00%			
 Overnight charge all off-street car parks (6.30pm to 8am) (except Lockmeadow)	*	x				2.00	2.00	0.00%	0	0	No change proposed
Mote Park				200,176	213,000				0	213,000	
Up to 6 Hours	*	x				2.00	2.00	0.00%			No change proposed
Over 6 Hours	*	x				12.00	12.00	0.00%			
Parking Services Total				3,405,009	3,394,500				43,400	3,437,900	
Sandling Road Car Park											
				76,966	53,470					53,470	
1 hr	*	x				1.10	1.10	0.00%			No change proposed
3 hr	*	x				2.20	2.20	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x				3.50	3.50	0.00%			
Up to 5 hours	*	x				6.00	6.00	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x				6.00	6.00	0.00%			
Sandling Road Car Park Total				76,966	53,470				0	53,470	

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Development Control - Land Charges											
				236,012	286,900					286,900	
Search only (LLC1 only)			x			15.00	15.00	0.00%			No VAT on LLC1. No change to cost, in line with HMLR as at August 2023
LLC1 Only - Additional Parcel of Land			x			4.80	4.80	0.00%			No VAT on LLC1
CON29 (Including VAT)	*		x			164.00	172.20	5.00%			
CON29 - Additional Parcel of Land (Including VAT)	*		x			24.00	30.20	25.83%			
Standard Official Search (LLC1 and CON29) (Including VAT)	*		x			179.00	187.20	4.58%			5% VAT increase on CON element only
Standard Official Search (LLC1 and CON29) - Additional Parcel of Land (Including VAT)	*		x			28.80	35.00	21.53%			Includes 5% VAT increase on CON element only
Part II enquiry - CON 29 Optional Questions 4-21 (Including VAT)	*		x			16.20	17.00	4.94%			
Part II enquiry - CON29 Optional Question 22 (Including VAT)	*		x			30.00	31.50	5.00%			
Additional Questions (Including VAT)	*		x			22.80	24.60	7.89%			
CON29 - Personal Searches (EIR)											
Question											
Personal Search			x			0.00	0.00	0.00%			Free
1.1 (a) - (l) (Planning)	*		x			8.40	8.80	4.76%			
1.1 (j,k,l) (Building Regulations)	*		x			8.40	8.80	4.76%			
2.1 (b) - (d)	*		x			4.20	4.42	5.24%			
3.1 (Land for Public Purpose)	*		x			4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.3 Drainage Matters	*		x			4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.5 (Railway Schemes)	*		x			4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.7 (Outstanding Notices)	*		x			12.00	12.60	5.00%			
3.8 (Building Regulations Contravention)	*		x			4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.9 (Enforcement)	*		x			8.40	8.80	4.76%			
3.10 CIL - currently only applicable to MBC	*		x			5.70	6.00	5.26%			
3.12 (Compulsory Purchase)						4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.13 b (Contaminated Land)	*		x			4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.13 c (Contaminated Land)	*		x			4.20	4.40	4.76%			
Land Charges Total				236,012	286,900				0	286,900	

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Building Control											
				400,542	402,540				40,000	442,540	
Erection of a single dwelling house - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				1,134.00	1,269.00	11.90%			
Erection of 2 dwelling houses - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				1,489.00	1,668.00	12.02%			
Single storey heated annex - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				891.00	997.00	11.90%			
Single storey heated annex - Regularisation Charge		x				1,113.03	1,246.25	11.97%			
Unheated outbuilding - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				599.00	671.00	12.02%			
Unheated outbuilding - Regularisation Charge		x				748.77	838.75	12.02%			
Garages up to 60m ² - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				551.00	617.00	11.98%			
Garages up to 60m ² - Regularisation Charge		x				688.05	771.25	12.09%			
Garage with room over 60m ² - 100m ²	*	x				648.00	725.00	11.88%			
Garage with room over 60m ² - 100m ² - Regularisation Charge		x				809.48	906.25	11.95%			
Extension up to 40m ² - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				809.00	906.00	11.99%			
Extension up to 40m ² - Regularisation Charge		x				1,011.84	1,132.50	11.92%			
Extensions over 40m ² and up to 100m ² - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				971.00	1,088.00	12.05%			
Extensions over 40m ² and up to 100m ² - Regularisation Charge		x				1,214.22	1,360.00	12.01%			
Loft Conversions up to 60m ² - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				842.00	943.00	12.00%			
Loft Conversions up to 60m ² - Regularisation Charge		x				1,052.33	1,178.75	12.01%			
Garage or Basement Conversion under 40m ² - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				551.00	617.00	11.98%			
Garage or Basement Conversion under 40m ² - Regularisation Charge		x				688.05	771.25	12.09%			
Installation of up to 10 replacement windows - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				259.00	290.00	11.97%			
Installation of up to 10 replacement windows - Regularisation Charge		x				323.79	362.50	11.96%			
Part P electrical work or installation of heating appliance - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				324.00	363.00	12.04%			
Part P electrical work or installation of heating appliance - Regularisation Charge		x				404.75	453.75	12.11%			
Alterations up to the value of £4999 - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				356.00	399.00	12.08%			
Alterations up to the value of £4999 - Regularisation Charge		x				445.22	498.75	12.02%			
Alterations from £5000 to £9999 - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				518.00	580.00	11.97%			
Alterations from £5000 to £9999 - Regularisation Charge		x				647.58	725.00	11.96%			
Alterations from £10000 to £19999 - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				648.00	725.00	11.88%			
Alterations from £10000 to £19999 - Regularisation Charge		x				809.48	906.25	11.95%			
Demolition Notice	*	x				275.50	275.50	0.00%			
Building Control Total				400,542	402,540				40,000	442,540	

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Development Control - Planning and Conservation											
Written Pre-Application Advice											
Pre-Application Fees				239,966	532,930				200,000	732,930	
Advice for Householder Proposals											
charged for written advice on Householder applications	*	x				76.00	87.00	14.47%			
email response to follow up request	*	x				54.00	62.00	14.81%			
and with an hour long meeting with an officer	*	x				182.00	209.00	14.84%			
additional hour	*	x				54.00	62.00	14.81%			
follow up call/skype with email response	*	x				81.00	93.00	14.81%			
and with an hour long site meeting with an officer	*	x				237.00	272.00	14.77%			
additional hour	*	x				54.00	62.00	14.81%			
follow up call/skype with email response	*	x				81.00	93.00	14.81%			
Advice for Minor Development Proposals 1-9 Dwellings											
charged for written advice	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			
email response to follow up request	*	x				108.00	124.00	14.81%			
and with an hour long meeting with an officer	*	x				375.00	431.00	14.93%			
additional hour	*	x				108.00	124.00	14.81%			
follow up meeting	*	x				161.00	185.00	14.91%			
and with an hour long site meeting with an officer	*	x				482.00	554.00	14.94%			
additional hour	*	x				108.00	124.00	14.81%			
follow up call/Skype with email response	*	x				161.00	185.00	14.91%			
Advice for Major Development Proposals 10-39 Dwellings											
charged for written advice	*	x				375.00	431.00	14.93%			
email response to follow up request	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			
and with an hour long meeting with an officer at MBC Offices	*	x				643.00	739.00	14.93%			
additional hour	*	x				1,341.00	1,542.00	14.99%			
follow up call/Skype with email response	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			
and with an hour long site meeting with an officer	*	x				777.00	893.00	14.93%			
additional hour	*	x				134.00	154.00	14.93%			
follow up call/Skype with email response	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Advice for Large Development Proposals 40+ Dwellings											
and with an hour long meeting with an officer at MBC Offices	*	x				885.00	1,017.00	14.92%			
follow up call/Skype with email response	*	x				375.00	431.00	14.93%			
and with an hour long site meeting with an officer	*	x				1,018.00	1,170.00	14.93%			
follow up call/Skype with email response	*	x				375.00	431.00	14.93%			
Request for Manager attendance											
Should the applicant request the attendance of a Manager in additional to the assigned case officer, the following additional charge shall apply.	*	x									
Managers - Spatial Policy, Development Management, Major Projects - (MBC Offices or Skype).	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			
on-site	*	x				402.00	462.00	14.93%			
Head of Service	*	x				536.00	616.00	14.93%			
on-site	*	x				804.00	924.00	14.93%			
Meetings with additional Specialist Officers attending (hourly rate) (additional charges for specialist officers additional to the above pre-application charges)(heritage, spatial policy, landscape, etc)											
Meeting at Maidstone House	*	x				188.00	216.00	14.89%			
Meeting on Site	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			
Heritage Works Only Advice (EE20)				0	5,340					5,340	
Written Advice (D165)				13,749	10,260					10,260	
Written advice Householder	*	x				80.00	92.00	15.00%			
Written advice Minor	*	x				268.00	308.00	14.93%			
Written advice Major	*	x				375.00	431.00	14.93%			
Site visit/Meeting/ Fee depending type of app/onsite/office based	*	x									
Written plus Meeting Fee Householder	*	x				188.00	216.00	14.89%			
Written plus Meeting Fee Minor	*	x				215.00	247.00	14.88%			
Written plus Meeting Fee Major	*	x				643.00	739.00	14.93%			
Written plus Site visit Fee Householder	*	x				242.00	278.00	14.88%			
Written plus Site visit Fee Minor	*	x				429.00	493.00	14.92%			
Written plus Site visit Fee Major	*	x				643.00	739.00	14.93%			

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Work to Protected Tree Only Advice				0	0					0	
Works to Trees - Meeting on Site											
Written advice/response	*	x				81.00	93.00	14.81%			
Works to Trees - Site visit	*	x				161.00	185.00	14.91%			
High Hedges						510.00	586.50	15.00%			
S.106 Agreements											
<i>(The following charges do not include any charges levied by MKS Legal)</i>											
Initial email advice following planning/housing officer review of request for DoV	*	x				186.90	215.00	15.03%			
Formal request to instruct on DoV (first clause)	*	x				374.85	431.00	14.98%			
(each additional clause)						134.40	154.00	14.58%			
Confirmation of S.106 clause compliance (desktop) (per clause)	*	x				160.65	185.00	15.16%			
(additional charge if site visit required)	*	x				133.35	153.00	14.74%			
Enforcement											
Written confirmation of closure of household enforcement case and reasons	*	x				53.55	61.50	14.85%			
(additional charge if site visit required)	*	x				53.55	61.50	14.85%			
Written confirmation of compliance with household enforcement notice	*	x				53.55	61.50	14.85%			
(additional charge if site visit required)	*	x				53.55	61.50	14.85%			
Written confirmation of closure of (other) enforcement case and reasons	*	x				86.10	99.00	14.98%			
(additional charge if site visit required)	*	x				53.55	61.50	14.85%			
Written confirmation of compliance with (other) enforcement notice	*	x				96.60	111.00	14.91%			
(additional charge if site visit required)	*	x				53.55	61.50	14.85%			
Listed Building Works											
Site visit and written confirmation of completion in accordance with approval	*	x				294.00	338.00	14.97%			
Written advice only (where possible without inspection)	*	x				160.65	184.50	14.85%			

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Planning Conditions											
Written confirmation of compliance with condition (each additional condition) (additional charge if site visit required)	*	x				107.10	123.00	14.85%			
	*	x				80.85	93.00	15.03%			
	*	x				133.35	153.00	14.74%			
Other Pre-Application Fees											
Administration fees											
Research of Permitted Development Rights and Planning Histories											
Research on Planning Histories			x			116.00	133.50	15.09%			
Research on Permitted Development Rights			x			116.00	133.50	15.09%			
Planning Performance Agreements											
Development Size:											
Small						3,570.00	4,105.00	14.99%			
Medium						5,100.00	5,865.00	15.00%			
Large						7,650.00	8,798.00	15.01%			
Extra Large						10,200.00	11,730.00	15.00%			
1-5 conditions						757.50	871.00	14.98%			
6-10 conditions						1,020.00	1,173.00	15.00%			
Statutory Application Fees (currently set nationally)											
Application to discharge conditions related to a permission											
The standard fee for conditions per request; or			x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			
Where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwelling house or other development in the curtilage of a dwelling house.			x			34.00	43.00	26.47%			
Written confirmation of conditions previously discharged relating to a permission											
Per request; or			x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			
Where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwelling house or other development in the curtilage of a dwelling house.			x			34.00	43.00	26.47%			F&Cs will be amended in line with government mandates.

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				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Administration fees											
Research of Permitted Development Rights and Planning Histories											
Research on Planning Histories			x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			
Research on Permitted Development Rights			x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			
All Outline Applications				1,102,209	1,087,910					1,087,910	
£578.00 per 0.1 hectare for sites up to and including 0.5 hectares						462.00	578.00	25.11%			New Fee introduced.
£624.00 per 0.1 hectare for sites up between 0.5 hectares and 2.5 hectares			x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
More than 2.5 hectares £15,4332 + £186 for each 0.1 in excess of 2.5 hectares to a maximum of £202,500			x			11,432.00	15,433.00	35.00%			
Householder Applications											
Alterations/extensions to a single dwelling , including works within boundary			x			206.00	258.00	25.24%			
Alterations/extensions to two or more dwellings , including works within boundary			x			206.00	508.00	146.60%			New Fee introduced.
Full Applications (and First Submissions of Reserved Matters)											
Erection of new dwellings - not more than 10 dwellings houses.											
Erection of new dwellings - between 10 and 50 dwellings houses.			x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
Erection of new dwellings (for more than 50) £30860 + £186 per additional dwelling in excess of 50 up to a maximum fee of £405,000			x			22,859.00	30,860.00	35.00%			
Erection of buildings (not dwellings, agricultural, glasshouses, plant or machinery)											
No increase in gross floor space or no more than 40m ² gross floor space to be created by the development			x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
More than 40 sqm but no more than 1,000 sq m gross floor space to be created by the development			x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
More than 1,000 sqm but no more than 3,750 sqm gross floor space to be created by the development			x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
More than 3,750 sq m - £30,680 plus £186 for each 75 sqm or part thereof in excess of 3,750 sq.m to a maximum of £405,000			x			22,859.00	30,680.00	34.21%			

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			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
The erection of buildings (on land used for agriculture for agricultural purposes)										
Gross floor space to be created by the development not more than 465 Sq.m		x			96.00	120.00	25.00%			
Gross floor space to be created by the development more than 465 sq.m but less than 540 sq.m		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
Gross floor space to be created by the development more than 540m2 but not more than 1,000 sqm		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
Gross floor space to be created by the development more than 1,000 sqm but not more than 4,215 sqm		x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
Gross floor space to be created by the development More than 4,215m ²		x			22,859.00	30,860.00	35.00%			
Erection of glasshouses (on land used for the purposes of agriculture)										
Gross floor space to be created by the development Not more than 465m ²		x			96.00	120.00	25.00%			
Gross floor space to be created by the development more than 465sqm not more than 1,000 sqm.		x			2,580.00	3,225.00	25.00%			
Gross floor space to be created by the development More than 1,000m ²		x			2,580.00	3,483.00	35.00%			
Erection/alterations/replacement of plant and machinery										
Site area Not more than 1 hectares		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
Site area more than 1 hectares but not more than 5 hectares		x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
Site area More than 5 hectares max £405,000		x			22,859.00	30,860.00	35.00%			
Applications other than Building Works										
Car parks, service roads or other accesses For existing uses		x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
Waste (Use of land for disposal of refuse or waste materials or deposit of material remaining after extraction or storage of minerals)										
Site area Not more than 15 hectares		x			234.00	316.00	35.04%			
Site area More than 15 hectares		x			34,934.00	47,161.00	35.00%			
Operations connected with exploratory drilling for oil or natural gas										
Site area Not more than 7.5 hectares		x			508.00	686.00	35.04%			
Site area More than 7.5 hectares		x			38,070.00	51,395.00	35.00%			

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			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Operations(other than exploratory drilling) for the winning and working of oil or natural gas</u>										
Site area Not more than 15 hectares		x			257.00	347.00	35.02%			
Site area More than 15 hectares		x			38,520.00	52,002.00	35.00%			
<u>Other operations (winning and working of minerals)</u>										
Site area Not more than 15 hectares		x			234.00	316.00	35.04%			
Site area More than 15 hectares		x			34,934.00	47,161.00	35.00%			
Other operations (not coming within any of the above categories) Any site area		x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
<u>Lawful Development Certificate</u>										
LDC - Existing Use - in breach of a planning condition					Equivalent to full application for same works					
LDC - Existing Use LDC - lawful not to comply with a particular condition		x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
LDC - Proposed Use -					50% planning fee					
<u>Prior Approval</u>										
Agricultural and Forestry buildings & operations or demolition of buildings		x			96.00	120.00	25.00%			
Telecommunications Code Systems Operators		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
All other Prior Approval		x			96.00	120.00	25.00%			
With Operational development		x			206.00	258.00	25.24%			
<u>Reserved Matters</u>										
Application for approval of reserved a condition following grant of planning permission matters following outline approval full fee due if the full fee already paid then £462 due.		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
<u>Approval/Variation/discharge of condition</u>										
Application for removal or variation of		x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
Request for confirmation that one or more planning conditions have been complied with - householder		x			34.00	43.00	26.47%			
All other development		x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			

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			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Parks and Open Spaces										
Football										
Seniors - single let (hirer to erect nets)	*	x	9,484	15,900	54.18	60.00	10.74%	0	15,900	Income is under target, so no increase to budget proposed. Owing to materials and delivery increase charges and labour costs (annual pay rise) it has been necessary to increase all costs between 9 and 12% across all pitches. The proposed costings have also been commercially priced. Please note, that the proposed increases will be implemented from 1st June to allow sport playing seasons to complete.
Seniors - 10 or more lets (hirer to erect nets)	exempt	x			45.15	50.00	10.74%			
Juniors - 11 v 11 pitch single let (hirer to erect nets) for U13 and U14 with junior goals	*				29.35	32.00	9.04%			
Juniors - 11 v 11 pitch 10 or more lets (hirer to erect nets) for U13 and U14 with junior goals	exempt				24.45	27.00	10.45%			
Juniors - 11 v 11 pitch single let (hirer to erect nets) for U15, U16 and U18 with adult goals	*				36.12	40.00	10.74%			
Juniors - 11 v 11 pitch 10 or more lets (hirer to erect nets) for U15, U16 and U18 with adult goals	exempt				30.09	33.00	9.67%			
Juniors - 9 v 9 pitch single let (hirer to erect nets)	*				22.58	25.00	10.74%			
Juniors - 9 v 9 pitch 10 or more lets (hirer to erect nets)	exempt				18.80	21.00	11.69%			
Juniors - 7 v 7 pitch single let (hirer to erect nets)	*				15.80	17.50	10.74%			
Juniors - 7 v 7 pitch 10 or more lets (hirer to erect nets)	exempt				13.16	14.50	10.20%			
Juniors - 5 v 5 pitch single let (hirer to erect nets)	*				15.80	17.50	10.74%			
Juniors - 5 v 5 pitch 10 or more lets (hirer to erect nets)	exempt				13.16	14.50	10.20%			
Use of five-a-side football nets - per set	*				23.70	26.00	9.69%			
Juniors - hire of an adult pitch (hirer to erect nets)	*				43.34	48.00	10.74%			
Juniors - 10 or more hires of an adult pitch (hirer to erect nets)	exempt				36.12	40.00	10.74%			
Rugby										
Seniors - single let	*	x	469	600	71.67	80.00	11.62%	0	600	Income is under target, so no increase to budget proposed.
Seniors - 10 or more lets	exempt	x			59.82	66.00	10.32%			
Juniors - single let	*	x			36.12	40.00	10.74%			
Juniors - 10 or more lets	exempt	x			29.91	33.00	10.34%			
Tennis - per court per hour										
Adult - single hire	*	x	0	0	8.40	8.40	0.00%		0	No change - minimal maintenance
Adult - 10 or more hires	exempt	x			7.00	7.00	0.00%			
OAP/Junior - single hire	*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%			
OAP/Junior - 10 or more hires	exempt	x			3.80	3.80	0.00%			
Bowls - Season - Adult										
- OAP/Junior	*	x	0	0	80.00	87.50	9.38%		0	CPI uplift circa 9% -reflecting increasing grounds costs
- per Green - Adult	*	x			40.00	43.50	8.75%			
- OAP/Junior	*	x			6.00	6.50	8.33%			
- Match fees	*	x			3.00	3.25	8.33%			
	*	x			4.80	5.25	9.38%			
Use of Changing Rooms and Showers										
	*	x			20.00	22.00	10.00%			CPI uplift circa 9%
			9,953	16,500				0	16,500	

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			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Monuments			30,689	23,210					23,210	
Headstone		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Kerbstone		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Cremated remains memorial		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Tablet 12" x 12"		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Vase		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Initial inscription		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Additional inscription		x			115.00	125.00	8.70%			
Any other monument		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Memorial inspection re-instatement (standard)		x			173.00	190.00	9.83%			
Search fees										
1-5 years		x			10.00	10.00	0.00%			General searches to be priced at £10, however, should the request be particularly involved or urgent then it is suggested that the £40.00 charge be made.
6-10 years		x			10.00	10.00	0.00%			
Over 10 years		x			10.00	10.00	0.00%			
Personal search (by appointment)		x			40.00	40.00	0.00%			
Maintenance										
Earthing		x			100.00	100.00	0.00%			
Turfing		x			100.00	100.00	0.00%			
Memorials			6,728	3,950					3,950	
Mushrooms		x			97.00	97.00	0.00%			As we won't know what price increase our suppliers will make in terms of memorials, we will increase to whatever their additional charges are + 3% Dedication prices will stay the same as this financial year to retain customers
Mushrooms dedication		x			125.00	125.00	0.00%			
Benches (new location)		x			473.00	473.00	0.00%			
Existing bench		x			368.00	368.00	0.00%			
Benches dedication annual		x			75.00	75.00	0.00%			
Majestic Mausolea		x								
Majestic Mausolea dedication 30 year (new) with 4 caskets		x			2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00%			
Inscription on Mausolea plaque front (price per line)		x			36.00	36.00	0.00%			
Additional removal of plaque for additional inscription		x			52.00	52.00	0.00%			
Posy Holder for Mausolea		x								
Circular Bench		x			164.00	164.00	0.00%			
Circular Bench dedication		x			66.00	66.00	0.00%			
Cemetery Total			222,969	242,080				0	242,080	

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			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Crematorium										
Cremations			1,210,802	1,111,430				50,000	1,161,430	
Service charges	x									
Medical Referee's Fee					29.00	30.00	3.45%			£24 fee set by relevant professional body. £6 per visit to cover mileage. Medical Referees should be phased out from 01/10/24 due to change in legislation and introduction of Medical Examiners
Non viable foetus and stillborn	x				no charge	no charge				
Less than 5 years	x				100.00	100.00	0.00%			
5 to 18 years	x				115.00	115.00	0.00%			Charges recovered from Children's Funeral Fund (CFF)
Adult (18 + 1 day)	x				652.00	710.00	8.90%			
08.15 cremation only - no service and no attendees					365.00	365.00	0.00%			
08.30 cremation only - no service and no attendees	x				365.00	365.00	0.00%			
08.45 cremation only - no service and no attendees	x				365.00	365.00	0.00%			No price increase so we remain competitive.
Adult - committal slot 9.00 A.M. (includes Environmental surcharge, Medical Referee fee & Cremation Carton)	x				495.00	495.00	0.00%			
Adult - reduced cremation slot 9.30 A.M. (includes Environmental surcharge, Medical Referee fee & Cremation Carton)	x				565.00	590.00	4.42%			
Environmental Surcharge	x				73.50	75.00	2.04%			
Cremation of body parts	x				105.00	105.00	0.00%			
Use of ¹ chapel (additional item)	x				330.00	340.00	3.03%			Double ceremony slots - this is an additional 1/2 hour in the Chapel, so effectively eliminates potential fee generation from the days capacity - this increase reflects the income lost by offering a double ceremony.
Use of chapel organ	x				10.00	10.50	5.00%			
Visual Tributes for services up to 25 slides	x				45.00	50.00	11.11%			
Pro Visual Tributes for services up to 25 slides	x				70.00	75.00	7.14%			
Additional 25 slides for visual tribute	x				25.00	25.00	0.00%			
Family made video shown as tribute	x				30.00	35.00	16.67%			
Downloadable copy of visual tribute	x				40.00	45.00	12.50%			
Keepsake copy of Visual Tribute or Webcast on DVD/Blu-Ray/USB	x				55.00	55.00	0.00%			
Webcasting - live only	x				60.00	65.00	8.33%			Not offering going forward, only offering with watch again (this has proved to be an admin nightmare as they change their mind afterwards and we have to change the charges)
Webcast + 28 day viewing	x				60.00	65.00	8.33%			
Witness fee	x				42.00	42.00	0.00%			
Saturday morning supplement fee	x				830.00	900.00	8.43%			Charge reflects cost for staff premium rates + high utility costs
Service over-run fee	x				From 150.00	From 200.00				Service over-run can severely affect the days schedule - charges is levied on Funeral Directors who fail to control length of services
Containers for cremated remains										
Polytainer / Cremation carton / strewing tube	*	x			20.00	21.00	5.00%			
Pictured Strewing Tubes		x			23.50	24.00	2.13%			
Urn	*	x			63.00	63.00	0.00%			
Casket	*	x			68.00	68.00	0.00%			
Baby urn	*	x			12.75	12.75	0.00%			
Other related services										
Exhumation of cremated remains		x			295.00	500.00	69.49%			In line with Medway Crematorium in financial year 2023-24
Disposal from other crematoriums					60.00	60.00	0.00%			To satisfy VAT regulations the elements of the memorial charge are identified separately as distinct elements. Customers may provide such elements of the memorial as appropriate providing that such elements satisfy the specification set by the Bereavement Services Officer from time to time to ensure the correct management and presentation of the site and services.
Burial in individual plot		x			55.00	55.00	0.00%			

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25
Fees and Charges
Housing, Health and Environment PAC.**

Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	Actuals	Current	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
				2022-2023	Estimate	Charges	Charges		2023-24	2024-2025	
				£	£	£	£		%	£	
Memorials				438,038	415,810				0	415,810	
<u>Book of Remembrance</u>											
line entry (min 2 lines) *	*	x				110.00	110.00	0.00%	.		As we won't know what price increase our suppliers will make in terms of memorials, we will increase to whatever their additional charges are + 3% Dedication prices will stay the same as this financial year to retain customers
Flower/Crest/or Badge *	*	x				275.00	275.00	0.00%	.		
Folded Remembrance Card		x							.		
Card purchase *	*	x				10.00	10.00	0.00%	.		
per line entry (minimum 2 lines) *	*	x				55.00	55.00	0.00%	.		
Flower/Crest/or Badge *	*	x				285.00	285.00	0.00%	.		
									.		
<u>Cloister Hall of Remembrance</u>			x						.		
Wall vases		x							.		
Vase	*	x				44.00	44.00	0.00%	.		
Plot Rental - per annum		x				49.00	49.00	0.00%	.		
Stone Block vase	*	x				83.00	83.00	0.00%	.		
Plot Rental - per annum		x				49.00	49.00	0.00%	.		
<u>Cloister Hall of Remembrance</u>			x						.		
Cloister wall tablets		x							.		
Single	*	x				186.00	186.00	0.00%	.		
Plot Rental 10 year dedication		x				210.00	210.00	0.00%	.		
Double (2 inscriptions)	*	x				372.00	372.00	0.00%	.		
Plot Rental 10 year		x				260.00	260.00	0.00%	.		
Refurbishment per letter - re-gild	*	x				4.00	4.00	0.00%	.		
Refurbishment per letter - repaint	*	x				4.00	4.00	0.00%	.		
Second inscription	*	x				186.00	186.00	0.00%	.		
		x							.		
<u>Memorial Hall</u>			x						.		
Leather plaques	*	x				71.00	71.00	0.00%	.		
Plot Rental -5 year		x				95.00	95.00	0.00%	.		
Added inscription	*	x				71.00	71.00	0.00%	.		
									.		
<u>Gardens of Remembrance</u>			x						.		
Stone effect plaque	*	x				125.00	125.00	0.00%	.		
Stone effect plaque for bench	*	x				125.00	125.00	0.00%	.		
Stone effect plaque on spike	*	x				125.00	125.00	0.00%	.		
Plot Rental 10 year		x				240.00	240.00	0.00%	.		
Added inscription	*	x				125.00	125.00	0.00%	.		
Refurbishment	*	x				28.00	28.00	0.00%	.		
Plaque						99.00	99.00	0.00%	.		
Plaque rental						24.00	24.00	0.00%	.		
Heart shaped plaque						150.00	150.00	0.00%	.		
Heart shaped plaque renewal						24.00	24.00	0.00%	.		

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25
Fees and Charges
Housing, Health and Environment PAC.**

Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals	Current	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Gardens of Remembrance</u>		x								
<u>Sanctum Vault</u>		x								
5 year lease		x			1,085.00	1,085.00	0.00%			
10 year lease		x			1,640.00	1,640.00	0.00%			
20 year lease		x			2,610.00	2,610.00	0.00%			
30 year lease		x			3,310.00	3,310.00	0.00%			
<u>Family Sanctum Vault (From Jan 15)</u>		x								
5 Year lease					1,155.00	1,155.00	0.00%			
10 year lease		x			1,710.00	1,710.00	0.00%			
20 year lease		x			2,680.00	2,680.00	0.00%			
30 year lease		x			3,380.00	3,380.00	0.00%			
<u>Gardens of Remembrance</u>		x								
Bench & Plaque	*	x			285.00	285.00	0.00%			
Plot Rental - 5 years		x			375.00	375.00	0.00%			
Plot Rental - bench and SE Plaque - Annual		x			75.00	75.00	0.00%			
Added inscription	*	x			72.00	72.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 5 years					885.00	885.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 10 years		x			1,280.00	1,280.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 20 years		x			1,970.00	1,970.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 30 years		x			2,470.00	2,470.00	0.00%			
Barbican		x			214.00	214.00	0.00%			
Barbican - annual renewal		x			26.00	26.00	0.00%			
Woodside Sundial		x			214.00	214.00	0.00%			
Woodside Sundial annual renewal		x			26.00	26.00	0.00%			
Granite bench x 2 plaques		x			160.00	160.00	0.00%			
Granite bench		x			20.00	20.00	0.00%			
Illustration, photo plaques etc.		x			P.O.A.	P.O.A.				
Chapel Lawn Planter		x								
Plaque with inscription	*	x			123.00	123.00	0.00%			
Plus 10 year dedication		x			220.00	220.00	0.00%			
Birdbath Memorial	*	x								
6" x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			123.00	123.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			19.00	19.00	0.00%			
7 1/4" x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			133.00	133.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			20.00	20.00	0.00%			
8 1/2 " x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			143.00	143.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			21.00	21.00	0.00%			
9 3/4 " x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			153.00	153.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			22.00	22.00	0.00%			
11 " x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			163.00	163.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			23.00	23.00	0.00%			
<u>Woodside Walk Book</u>		x								
Plaque with inscription	*	x			69.00	69.00	0.00%			
Plus 10 year dedication		x			160.00	160.00	0.00%			

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Fees and Charges
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Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals	Current	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Woodside Walk Mushrooms</u>		x								
Tablet with inscription	*	x			97.00	97.00	0.00%			
Plus 10 year dedication		x			250.00	250.00	0.00%			
3 tablet Family Mushrooms (New Memorial)	*	x			291.00	291.00	0.00%			
3 tablet Family Mushrooms (New Memorial) dedication					75.00	75.00	0.00%			
5 tablet Family Mushrooms (new memorial)	*	x			388.00	388.00	0.00%			
5 tablet Family Mushrooms (new memorial) dedication					100.00	100.00	0.00%			
Blossom Valley Barbican (new memorial)	*	x			214.00	214.00	0.00%			
Blossom Valley Barbican (new memorial) dedication	*	x			26.00	26.00	0.00%			
Standing Stone (new memorial)	*	x			312.00	312.00	0.00%			
Standing Stone (new memorial) dedication	*	x			30.00	30.00	0.00%			
<u>Gardens of Remembrance</u>		x								
<u>Memorial shrubs in beds</u>		x								
Shrubs with Stone Effect Plaque on Spike Annual	*	x			99.00	99.00	0.00%			
Adoption renewal (Shrub only)	*	x			120.00	120.00	0.00%			
Adoption renewal (Shrub & Plq) only)					245.00	245.00	0.00%			
Added inscription	*	x			99.00	99.00	0.00%			
Adoption renewal annual (standard Rose no plq)	*	x			25.00	25.00	0.00%			
Adoption renewal annual - Individual rose no plaque	*	x			25.00	25.00	0.00%			
Rose and Plaque	*	x			197.00	197.00	0.00%			
Tree and SE Plaque - Annual	*	x			49.00	49.00	0.00%			
Plot rental - annual Tree					137.00	137.00	0.00%			
Acer & Plaque on stake	*	x			49.00	49.00	0.00%			
Adoption renewal					185.00	185.00	0.00%			
					70.00	70.00	0.00%			
<u>Search fees</u>		x								
1-5 years		x			10.00	10.00	0.00%			
6-10 years		x			10.00	10.00	0.00%			
Over 10 years		x			10.00	10.00	0.00%			
Personal search (by appointment)		x			35.00	35.00	0.00%			
Crematorium Total			1,648,840	1,527,240				50,000	1,577,240	

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25
Fees and Charges
Housing, Health and Environment PAC.**

Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals	Current	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Environmental Health										
Food Hygiene			5,442	3,570					3,570	Service provided when requests are received.
Voluntary Surrender of unsound food (certificate)		x			229.00	247.00	7.86%			
Food Export certificate		x			135.00	146.00	8.15%			
Food Export certificate (New Business)		x			280.00	302.00	7.86%			
Export Health Certificate for transit to destination country - New charge		x			39.00	42.00	7.69%			
Admin Charge for changes to certificates, re-issue of certificates		x			27.00	29.00	7.41%			
Food business pre-opening advice, sampling etc. (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			Inflationary pressures.
Charge for Re-Visit and Re-scoring under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - C045		x			183.00	205.00	12.02%			Re-evaluation of time spent, and costs associated with inspections.
Contaminated Land			5,865	4,000					4,000	
Contaminated Land search fee per hour		x			26.00	27.00	3.85%			
Requests for Enhanced Environmental Information for Contaminated Land and Professional Opinion	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			see above
Pre-Application Consultation for Environmental Health Advice for Acoustics, Air Quality, Contaminated Land Assessments and S.61 Control of Pollution Act 1974 agreements (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			see above
Private Water Risk Assessment - per hour - (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			The charge setting arrangement has transferred to district authority from central government.
Private Water Sampling Charge - (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			The proposal is to cover costs based on an hourly officer charge, increase due to a review of officers charges. Increase based on likely inflation rates.
Private water Authorisation Charge - (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			
Private Water Investigation Charge - (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			
Derogation Request (hourly rate)	x	x			79.00	85.00	7.59%			
Analysis – Group A		x								The local authority undertake and arrange sampling, with cost of laboratory charges to owner/occupier/person requesting sample.
Analysis – Group B		x								
Tattooing, Electrolysis, Acupuncture & Ear-piercing - C205			11,935	7,550				3,450	11,000	Based on 22-23 income from registrations and the Tattoo Extravaganza, Detting.
Skin Piercing/Tattooing Registration		x			338.00	354.00	4.73%			
Additional registration of tattoo/piercing or other beauty treatment		x			61.00	64.00	4.92%			Fee charged for amendment/ increase in variety of treatments for previously registered practitioners.
Tattoo & other beauty treatment Events		x			205.00	222.00	8.29%			Event organisation review, administration, inspection.
Per New Artist & Practitioner at Events		x			27.00	35.00	29.63%			Individual artist's fee attending the above event.
Pollution Control										
Statutory Fees for 48 Pollution Prevention Control Processes - C061		x			*	*				Note fees set by Defra. Number of processes limited to industrial processes in the Borough. Reducing fee base as pollution levels reduce and technical capabilities improve. This is not a growth area, no uplift in budget can be guaranteed.
			8,400	7,300					7,300	
Environmental Health Total			31,642	22,420				3,450	25,870	

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25
Fees and Charges
Housing, Health and Environment PAC.**

Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2023-24	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
Community Safety Charges										
Road closure application		x	825	0	75.00	125.00	66.67%		0	Standard fee to cover the cost of trained operatives displaying signage and an administration fee based on current costs.
CCTV Footage request (insurance companies etc.)		x			0.00	0.00				These are considered to be subject access requests and we cannot charge for them.
Fixed Penalty Fines			360	0					0	
Public Space Protection Order (Dog Control) Fixed Penalty Notice		x			100.00	100.00	0.00%			Set by Order
Public Space Protection Order (Town Centre) Fixed Penalty Notice		x			100.00	100.00	0.00%			Set by Order
Community Protection Total			1,185	3,900				0	3,900	
Recycling & Refuse Collection										
Bulky Collection			146,935	154,320				0	154,320	
1-4 items		x			29.00	30.00	3.45%			
5-8 items		x			39.00	40.00	2.56%			
Fridge/Freezers		x			21.00	21.00	0.00%			
Clinical Waste Collection		x	240	0				0	0	
2 collections annually- No charge					0.00	0.00	0.00%			
Per collection more than 2 collections annually					5.00	5.00	0.00%			
Garden Waste Service			1,193,388	1,144,400				10,000	1,154,400	The fee increase in income includes bringing forward the implementation of the Garden Waste Charge Increase when approved by Cabinet. This is within the savings proposals.
140 litre bin hire		x			40.50	43.50	7.41%			
240 litre bin hire		x			45.00	48.00	6.67%			
Green Bin delivery charge										
Per Delivery		x	0	20,000	10.00	10.00	0.00%	0	20,000	
Trade Waste			183,601	188,230				0	188,230	
Sack collection - refuse only		x			2.40	2.55	6.25%			
240 litre bin - refuse only		x			9.90	10.50	6.06%			
500 litre bin - refuse only		x			23.50	23.50	0.00%			
1100 litre bin - refuse only		x			27.50	29.50	7.27%			
Sack collection - with recycling		x			2.20	2.30	4.55%			
240 litre bin - with recycling		x			8.80	9.25	5.11%			
500litre bin - with recycling		x			18.15	19.25	6.06%			
1100 litre bin - with recycling		x			22.00	23.50	6.82%			
£1 charge per 240 litre bin or weekly sacks collection - for paper/cardboard		x			1.00	1.10	10.00%			
Recycling & Refuse Collection Total			1,524,164	1,506,950				10,000	1,516,950	

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25
Fees and Charges
Housing, Health and Environment PAC.**

Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals	Current	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
			2022-2023	Estimate 2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
HMO Licensing										
Mandatory HMO Licensing			30,571	20,380				12,885	33,265	
Initial Licence Fees										
Landlord Accreditation Status										
Accredited landlord on application					720	760	5.56%			(These fees are applicable on first application for a licence, or where a licence has been revoked or has lapsed for whatever reason.)
Non-accredited landlord	x	x			700	740	5.71%			
Renewal Licence Fees										
Landlord Accreditation Status										
Accredited landlord on application		x			650	685	5.38%			(These fees are applicable on application for a licence renewal, where a licence remains in force at the time of the application.)
Non-accredited landlord		x			670	705	5.22%			Estimate based on 20 HMO's renewals in 22/23 year. Note that new applications cannot be predicted and renewal licensing for HMO's only occurs every 5 years. Values are based upon average renewal charge.
Variation application licence fees applicable										
Charge for enforcement under S49 of the Housing Act 2004										(These fees are applicable as appropriate in relation to the service of enforcement notices, and taking enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004.)
Enforcement Action										
Service of Improvement Notice under s11 and/or s12	x				560	590	5.36%			
Service of Prohibition Order under s20 and/or s21	x				560	590	5.36%			
Service of Hazard Awareness Notice under s28 and/or s29	x				560	590	5.36%			
Taking Emergency Remedial Action under s40		x			560	590	5.36%			Charge In addition to cost of works plus administration fee of 30% (minimum £100)
Making of Emergency Prohibition Order under s43		x			560	590	5.36%			
Works in Default of Enforcement Notice		x			COST +	COST +	N/A			Cost of works + 30% (minimum of £100)
Immigration - housing inspection and accommodation certificates										
Fee for inspection	*	x			240	255	6.25%			
Housing Register Application Medical Fee					75	75	0.00%			
HMO Licensing Total			30,571	20,380				12,885	33,265	
Gypsy and Travellers Sites										
Gypsy & Traveller Site Plot fee										
Stilebridge Lane		x	20,676	31,860	58.77	58.77	0.00%	-	31,860	
Water Lane		x	29,683	42,000	68.37	68.37	0.00%	-	42,000	
Gypsy & Traveller Site Total			50,359	73,860				0	73,860	
GRAND TOTAL			3,533,223	3,436,330				76,335	3,512,665	



BUDGET SURVEY

September 2023

ABSTRACT

Summary of the results of the 2024/25 Budget Survey.

Consultation@maidstone.gov.uk

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Findings

- The top three most used mandatory services were Environmental Services (91.8%), Democratic & Electoral Services (70.3%) and Council Tax & Benefits (60.6%).
- The top three mandatory services that respondents said should be maintained were Environmental Services (96.7%), Environmental Health (84.1%) and Community Safety (82.0%).
- The top three mandatory services which respondents said should be reduced were Democratic & Electoral services (47.0%), Licensing (38.5%) and Council Tax & Benefits (34.8%).
- The top three selected 'most important' mandatory services were Environmental Services 91.3%, Community Safety (45.8%) and Environmental Health (33.5%).
- The top three most used discretionary services were Parks & Open Spaces (87.9%), Car Parks (78.7%) and Museums (49.8%).
- The top three discretionary services which respondents said should be maintained were Parks & Open Spaces (96.4%), Leisure centre (79.7%) and Car Parks (74.3%).
- The top three discretionary service which respondents said should be reduced were Civic Events (50.8%), Markets (43.3%) and Tourism (34.6%).
- The top three selected 'most important' discretionary services were Parks & Opens Spaces (84.4%), Car parks (39.0%) and Leisure Centre (30.7%).
- The majority of respondents were not in favour of increasing fees and charges for Car Parking (77.7%), Garden Waste (66.5%) or leisure facilities (58.9%).
- The top priority areas are unchanged with all areas ranked in the same order in 2022, with Infrastructure the top priority and new homes the lowest priority.
- Satisfaction with the local area a place to live declined from 57.8% in 2022 to 50.9% for this year – a decline of 6.9%.
- The proportion of people who said they were proud of Maidstone Borough has declined from 50.7% in 2022 to 43.8% - a decline of 6.9%.
- The most common theme from the Budget Comments was the Council Budget itself with people disappointed they did not have the option to select increase services as well as feeling Maidstone should get a bigger proportion of the Council Tax. There were also comments within this theme about money being wasted and suggestions to reduce or get rid of the number of Councillors (both Parish and Borough).

Methodology

The survey was open between 30th June and 28th August 2023. It was promoted online through the Council's website and social media channels. Residents who had signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation.

There was a total of 646 responses to the survey.

As an online survey is a self-selection methodology, with residents free to choose whether to participate or not, it was anticipated that returned responses would not necessarily be fully representative of the wider adult population. This report discusses the weighted results to overall responses by demographic questions to ensure that it more accurately matches the known profile of Maidstone Boroughs population by these characteristics.

The results have been weighted by age and gender based on the population in the 2022 Mid-year population estimates. However, the under-representation of 18 to 34 year olds means that high weights have been applied to responses in this group, therefore results for this group should be treated with caution.

There was a total of 531 weighted responses to the survey based on Maidstone's population aged 18 years and over this means overall results are accurate to $\pm 3.6\%$ at the 90% confidence level. This means that if we repeated the same survey 100 times, 90 times out of 100 the results would be between $\pm 3.6\%$ of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 3.6% above or below the figures reported (i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 46.4% to 53.6%).

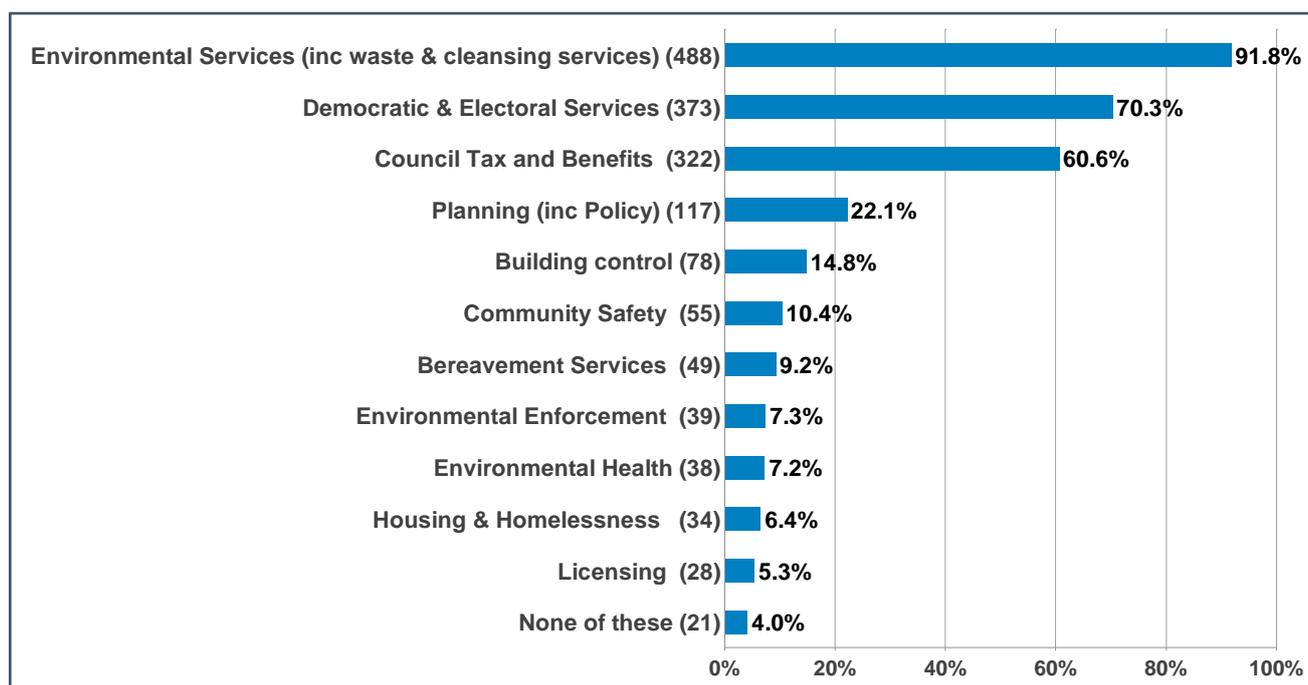
Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

Mandatory Services

Mandatory Services Used

Survey respondents were provided with a list of services Maidstone Council is required to provide and were asked to select which they had previously used. They could select as many as applied to them.

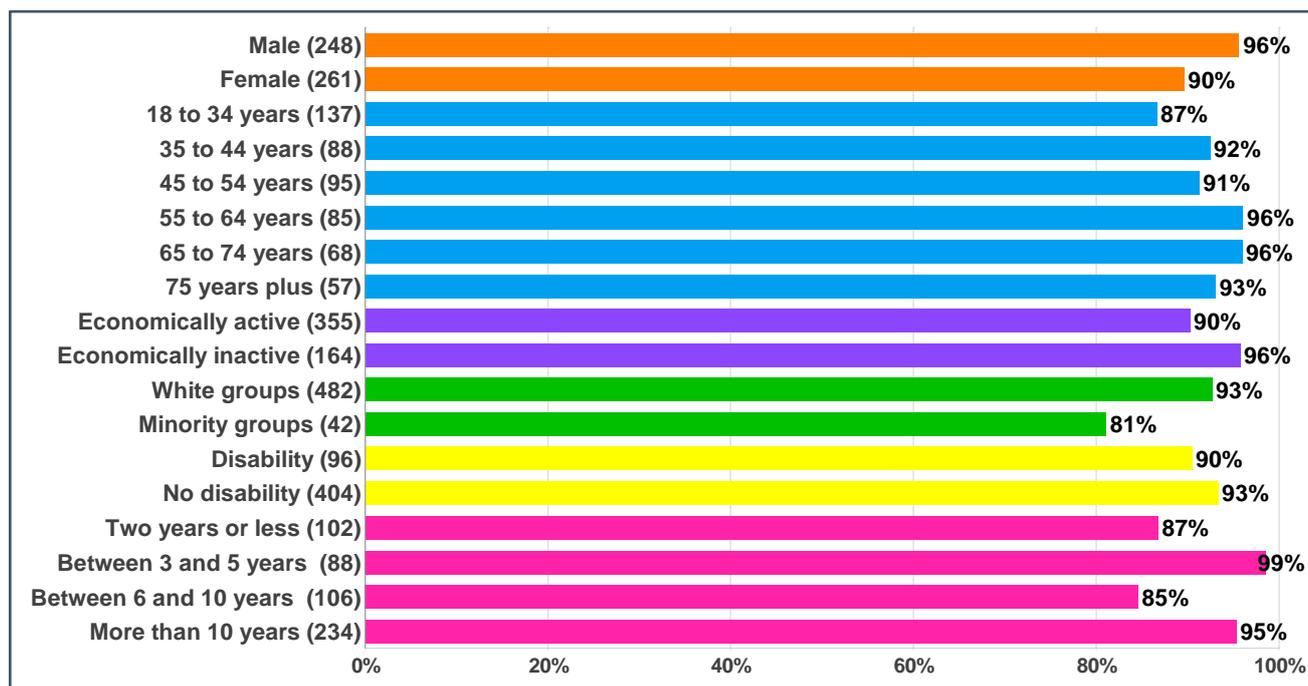
- 531 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Environmental Services, Democratic & Electoral Services and Council Tax & Benefits.
- The least used service by respondents was Licensing with 28 selecting this service.
- 21 respondents said they had not used any of the mandatory services listed.



Demographic differences for the top three services are explored in more detail in the charts and tables below.

Environmental Services

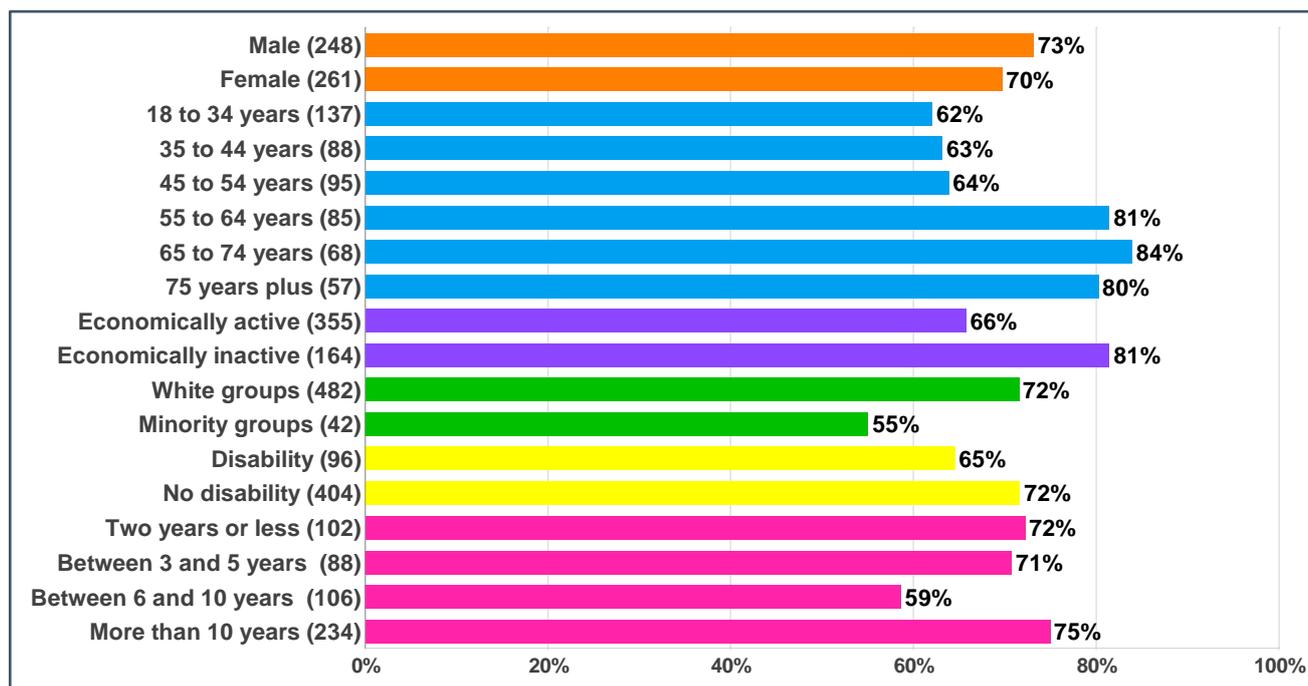
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



Mandatory Service Used – Environmental Services	
	Male respondents were significantly more likely to have used the Council’s Environmental Services with 96% selecting this as a service they had used compared to 90% of female respondents.
	87% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years had used Environmental Services compared to 96% of 55 to 64 years group.
	Economically inactive respondents were significantly more likely to have used the Council’s Environmental Services with 96% selecting this as a service they had used compared to 90% of economically active respondents.
	Minority group respondents were significantly less likely to have used Environmental Services with 81% selecting this as a service they had used compared to 93% of respondents from white groups.
	Respondents who had lived at their current address for between 6 and 10 years had the lowest proportion that said they had used Environmental services at 85%. This is significantly lower than the proportion who had lived at their current address for between 3 and 5 years where 99% have used Environmental Services provided by the Council.

Democratic & Electoral Services

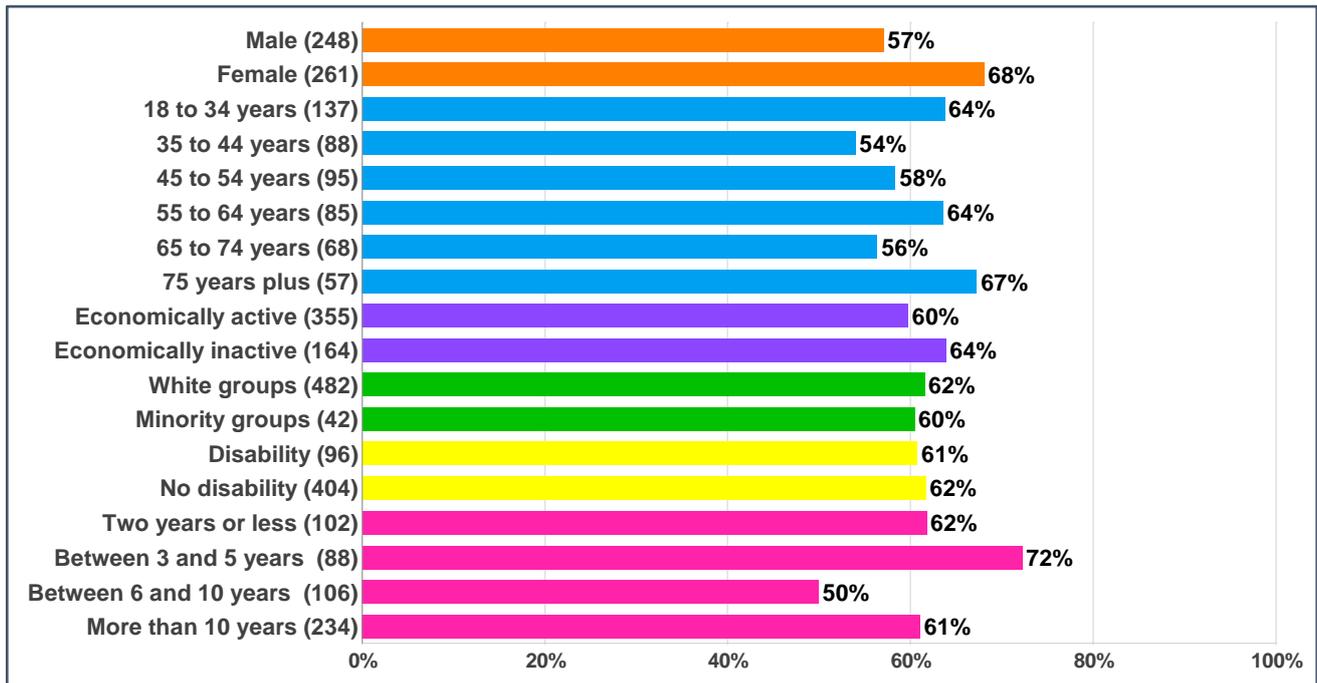
The differences in the proportions selecting Democratic & Electoral Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



Mandatory Service Used – Democratic & Electoral Services	
	Respondents aged 54 years and under had significantly lower proportions stating that they have used Democratic & Electoral services than the those aged 55 years and over.
	Economically inactive respondents were significantly more likely to have used the Council’s Democratic & Electoral Services.81% selected this as a service they had used compared to 66% of economically active respondents.
	Minority group respondents were significantly less likely to have used Democratic & Electoral Services with 55% selecting this as a service they had used compared to 72% of respondents from white groups.
	Respondents who had lived at their current address for between 6 and 10 years had the lowest proportion that said they had used Democratic & Electoral Services at 59% This was significantly lower than the proportion that responded this way for all the other length of time at address categories.

Council Tax & Benefits

The differences in the proportions selecting Council Tax & Benefits across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



Mandatory Service Used – Council Tax & Benefits	
	<p>Female respondents were significantly more likely to have used Council Tax & Benefits services with 68% selecting this as a service they have used compared to 57% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>Respondents who had lived at their current address for between 6 and 10 years had the lowest proportion that said they had used Council Tax & Benefits services at 49.9%. This is significantly lower than the proportion that responded this way for those who had lived at their current address for between 3 and 5 years where 72% said they had used Council Tax & Benefit Services.</p>

Spending Approach Mandatory Services

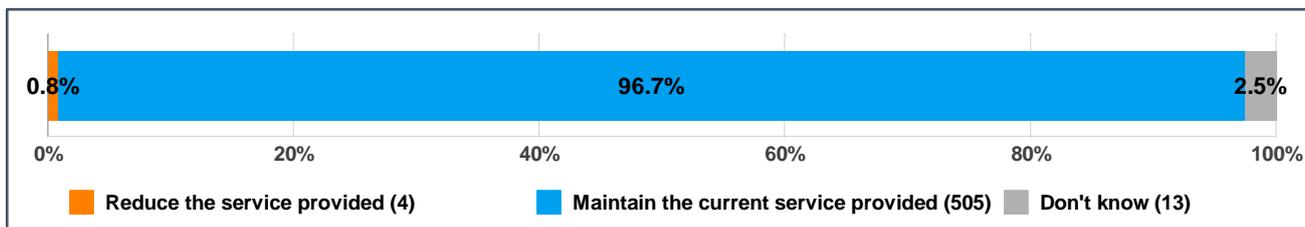
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Mandatory Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

- Reduce the service provided
- Maintain the service provided
- Don't know

To provide context the current spend on each service per Council Tax band D was shown.

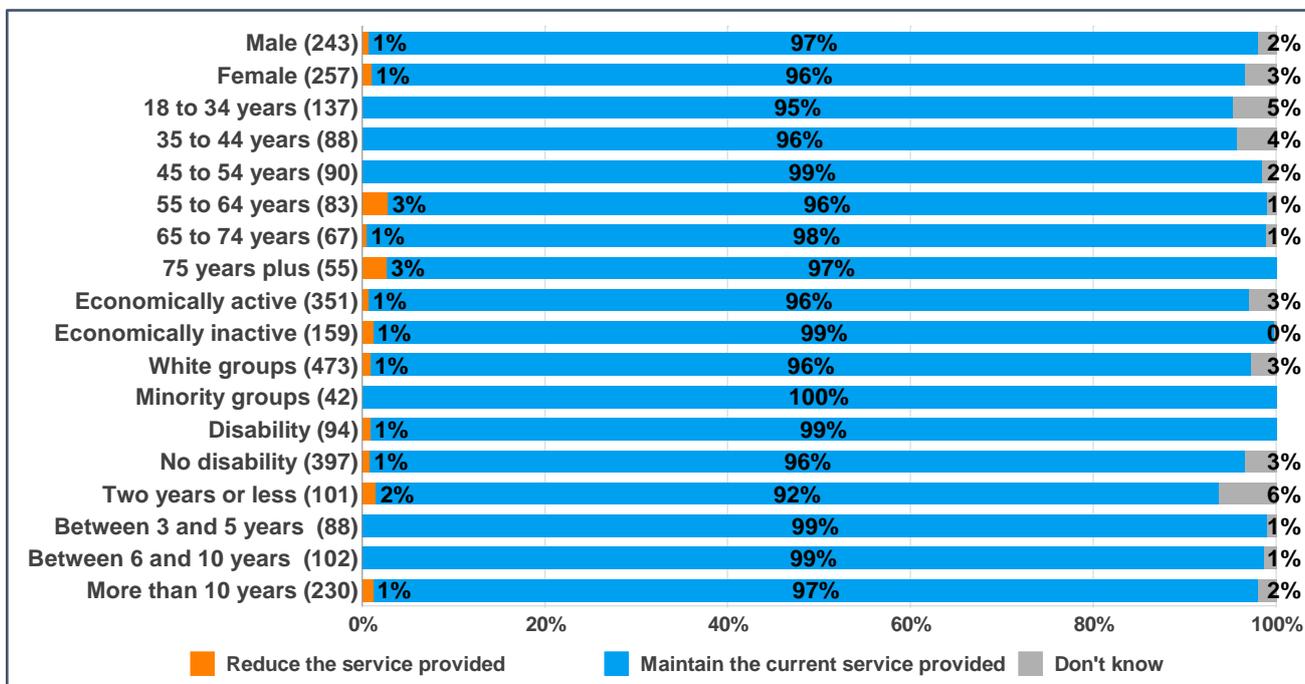
Environmental Services

- 522 responses were received.
- The most common response was 'maintain current service' with 505 (96.7%) answering this way.



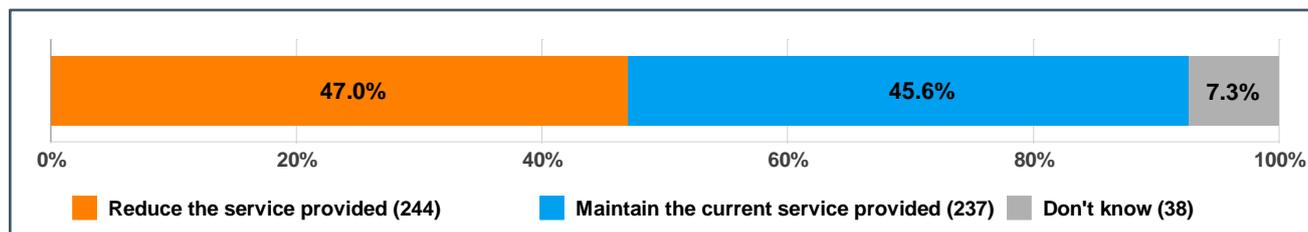
Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group. There were no significant differences in the response for the demographic groups.



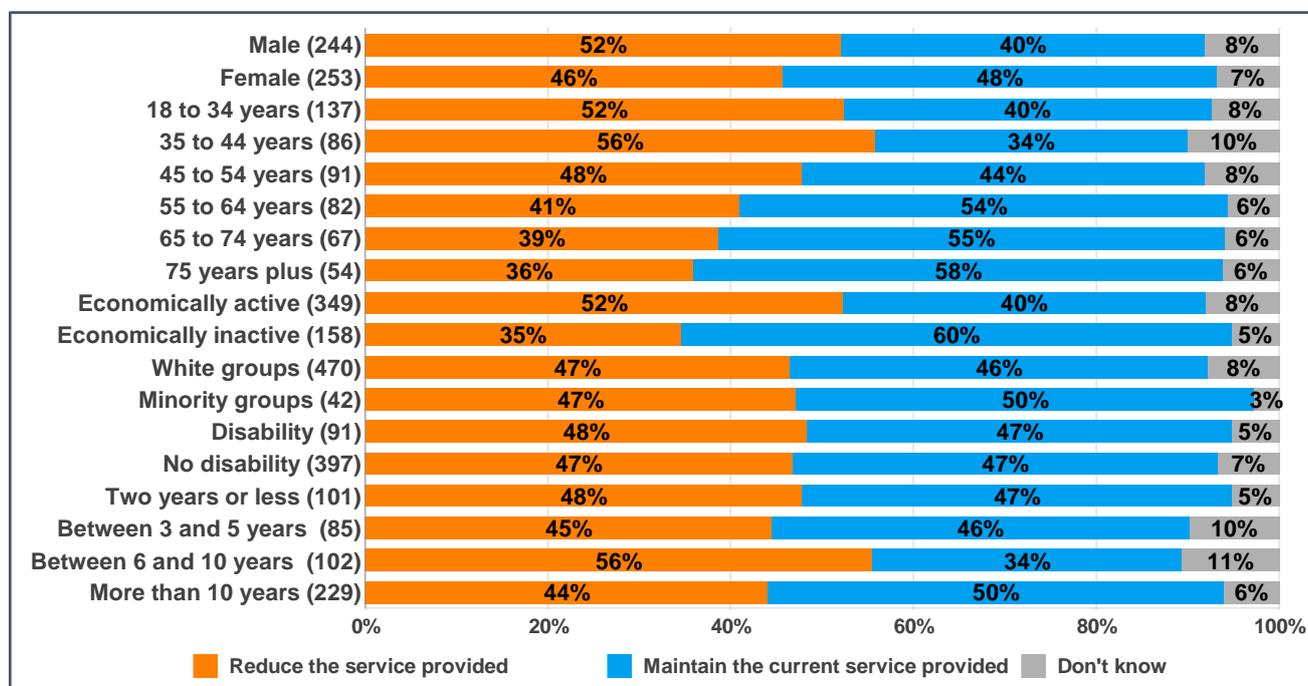
Democratic & Electoral Services

- 519 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'reduce the service provided' with 244 (47.0%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

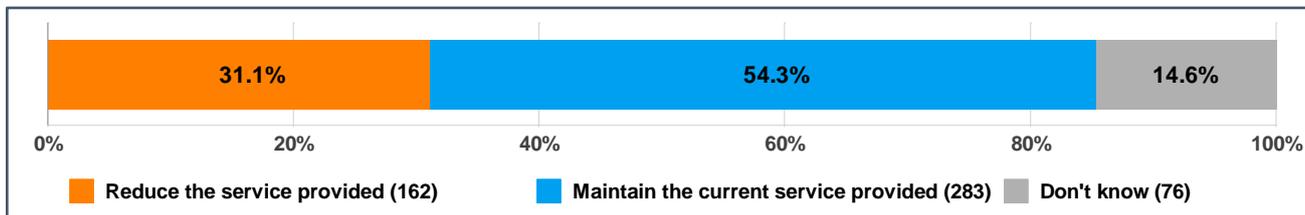


Significant Differences - Democratic & Electoral Services Approach

	<p>Respondents aged 75 years and over had the greatest proportion that felt this service should be maintained at 58%. This result is significantly greater than the proportions answering this way for the age groups 18 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years. Overall, 56% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years were in favour of reducing Democratic & Electoral Services and 52% of 18 to 34 year olds also answered this way.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents had a significantly lower proportion in favour of reducing Democratic & Electoral Services with 35% answering this way compared to 52% of economically active respondents.</p>
	<p>Respondents who had lived at their current address for between 6 and 10 years had the lowest proportion in favour of maintaining this service at 34%. This is significantly lower than those who have lived at their current address for more than 10 years where 50% said they were in favour of maintaining Democratic & Electoral Services.</p>

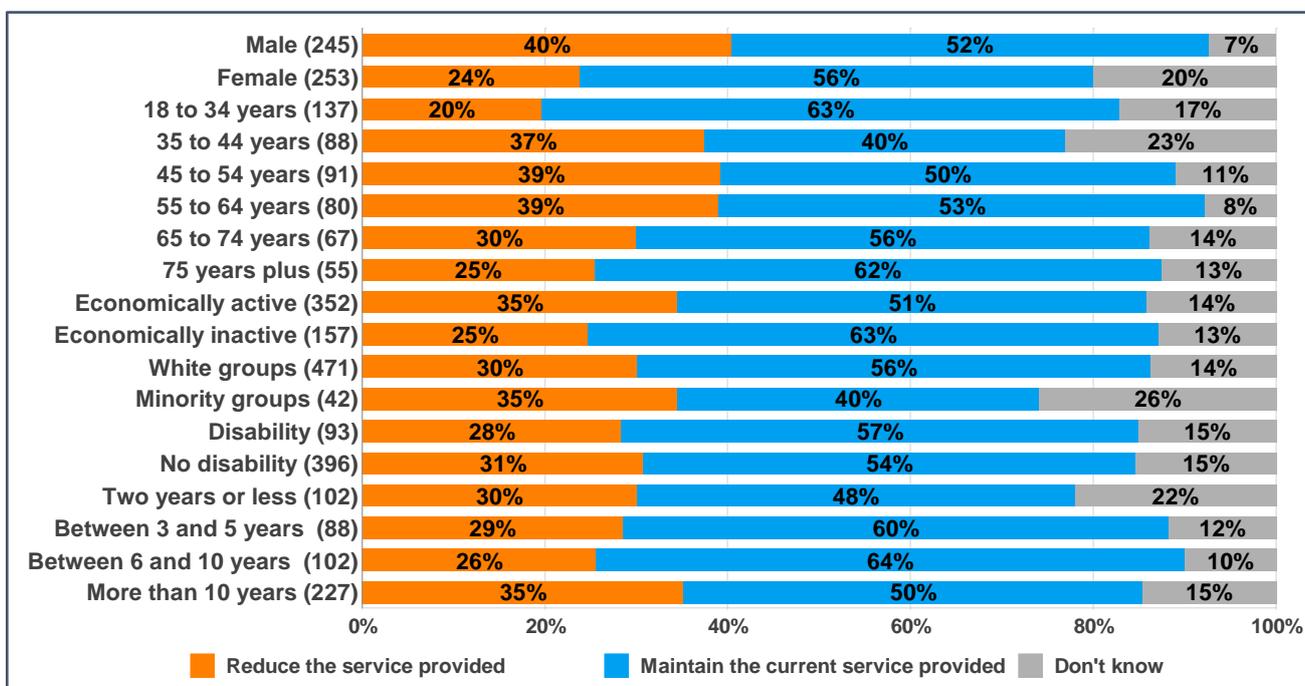
Planning (including Planning Policy)

- 520 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided with 283 (54.3%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



Significant Differences -Planning Approach

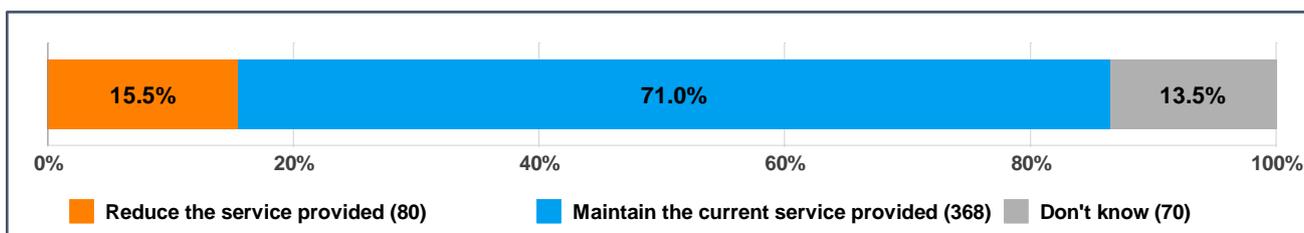
	<p>A greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Planning services with 40% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. However, more than half of each group were in favour of maintaining the current service in this area.</p>
	<p>One in five respondents aged 18 to 24 years (20%) were in favour of reducing Planning services, this was significantly lower than the proportions answering this way from the age groups covering 34 to 64 years. The 35 to 44 years group was the only one when less than half of respondents were in favour of maintaining the current service.</p>
	<p>Economically active respondents had a significantly greater proportion in favour of reducing Planning services with 35% answering this way compared to 52% of economically active respondents.</p>



Respondents who had lived at their current address for two years or less had the lowest proportion that were in favour of maintaining planning services at 48%. This was significantly lower than those who had lived at their current address for six to ten years (64%). There were no significant differences between length of time at current address and the response option 'reduce the service'.

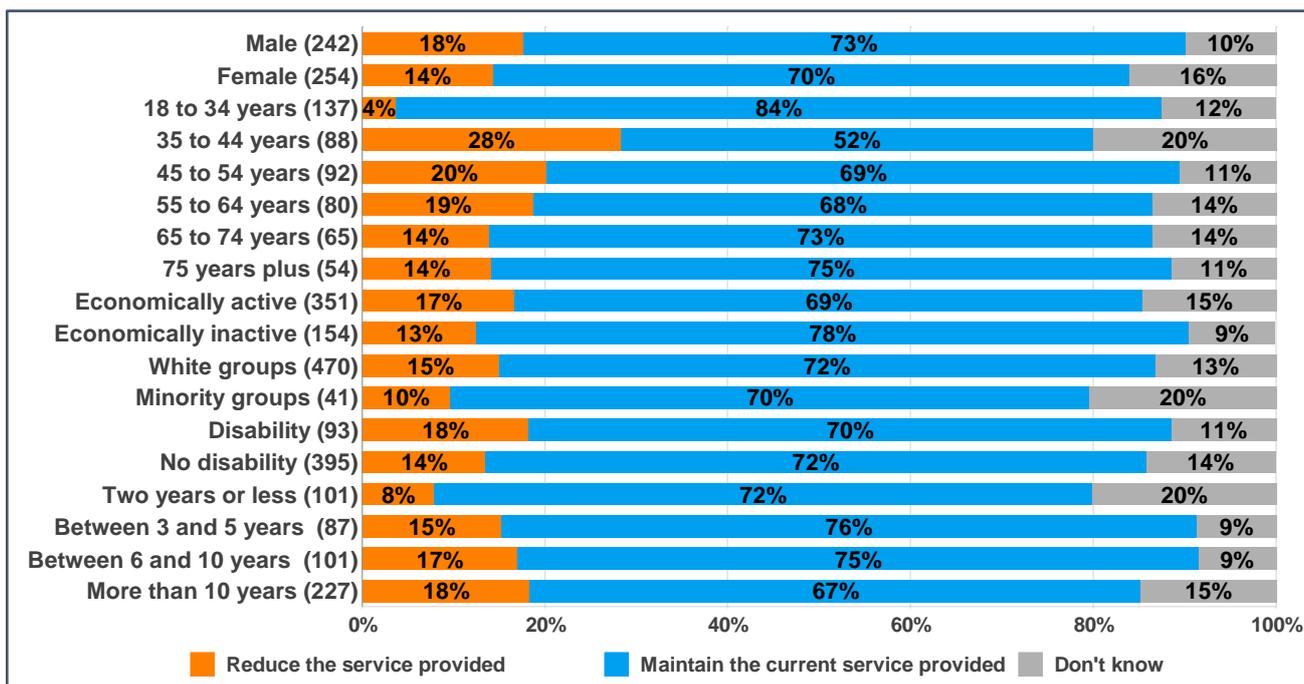
Building Control

- 518 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'maintain the service provided' with 368 (71.0%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



The 18 to 34 years group had a significantly lower proportion of respondents compared with other aged groups that said that Building Control services should be reduced with 3.7% answering this way.

The most common answer across all groups however was 'maintain the current service provided'.

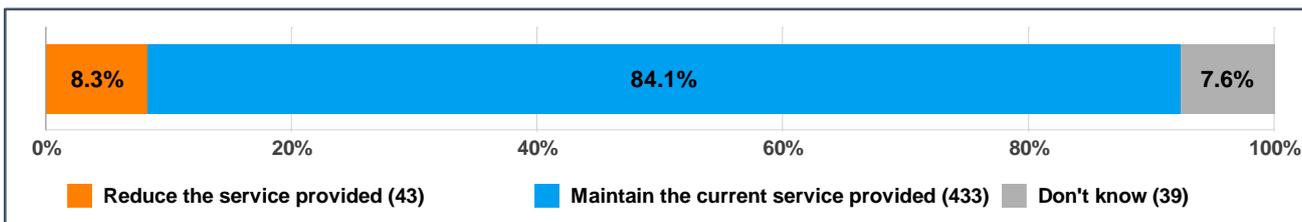


Economically active respondents had a significantly lower proportion in favour of maintaining the Building Control service with 69% answering this way compared to 78% of economically inactive respondents.

	<p>Respondents who have lived at their current address for two years or less had the greatest proportion that were uncertain about the approach that should be taken for Building Control with 20% answering this way. This was significantly greater than respondents who had lived at their current address for the categories covering three years to ten years.</p>
	<p>There were no significant differences across length of time at current address for the remaining answer options.</p>

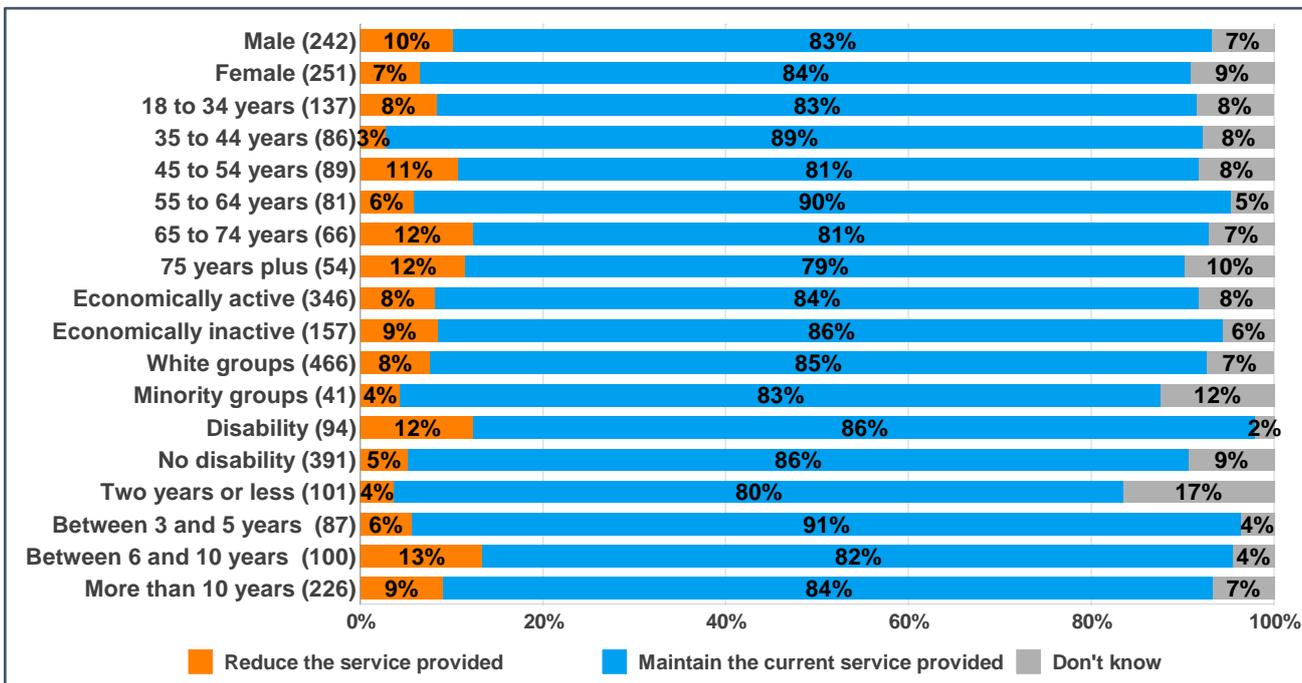
Environmental Health

- 515 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 433 (84.1%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

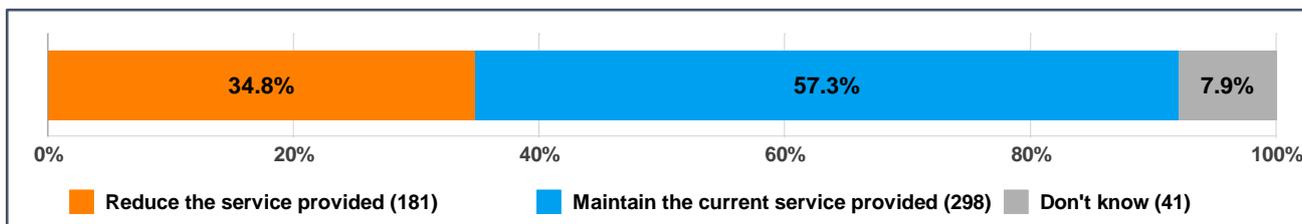


	<p>The proportion that responded ‘reduce the service provided’ from the 18 to 34 years group was significantly lower than for the 45 to 54 years, the 65 to 74 years and the 75 years and over age groups. There were no significant differences between age groups for the remaining answer options.</p>
	<p>Respondents with a disability had a significantly greater proportion that said this service should be reduced with 12.4% answering this way compared to 5.2% of respondents without a disability.</p>

	<p>Respondents who have lived at their current address for two years or less had the greatest proportion that were uncertain about the approach that should be taken for Environmental Health with 17% answering this way, significantly greater than the other groups who had been at their properties for longer (3 years +).</p>
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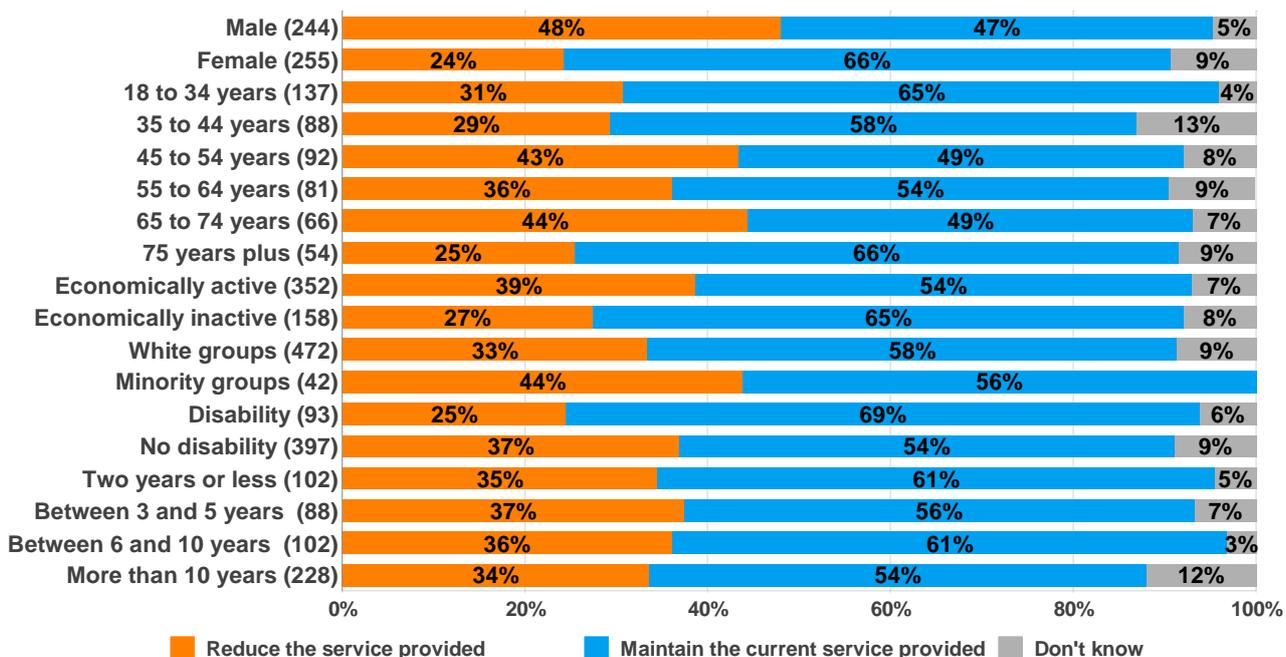
Council Tax & Benefits

- 521 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the service provided’ with 298 (57.3%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

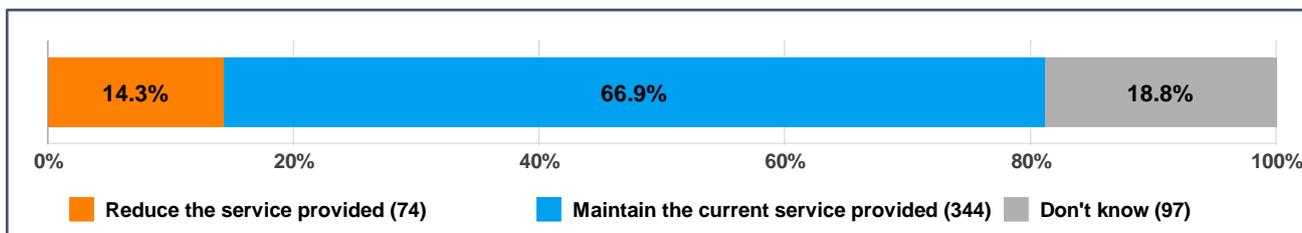


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of male respondents were in favour of reducing Council tax and Benefits with 48% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. ‘Reduce the service’ was the most common response from men and ‘maintain the current service’ was the most common response for women.</p>
	<p>The proportions answering ‘maintain the current service’ were significantly greater for the 18 to 34 years and the 75 years and over age groups at 65% and 66% respectively, when compared to the proportions answering this way for the 45 to 54 years and the 65 to 74 years age groups both at 49%.</p>
	<p>Economically active respondents had a significantly lower proportion in favour of maintaining the current council tax and benefits services with 54% answering this way compared to 65% of economically inactive respondents.</p>

	<p>Respondents with a disability had a significantly greater proportion that said that Council tax and Benefits services should be maintained with 69% answering this way compared to 54% of respondents without a disability.</p>
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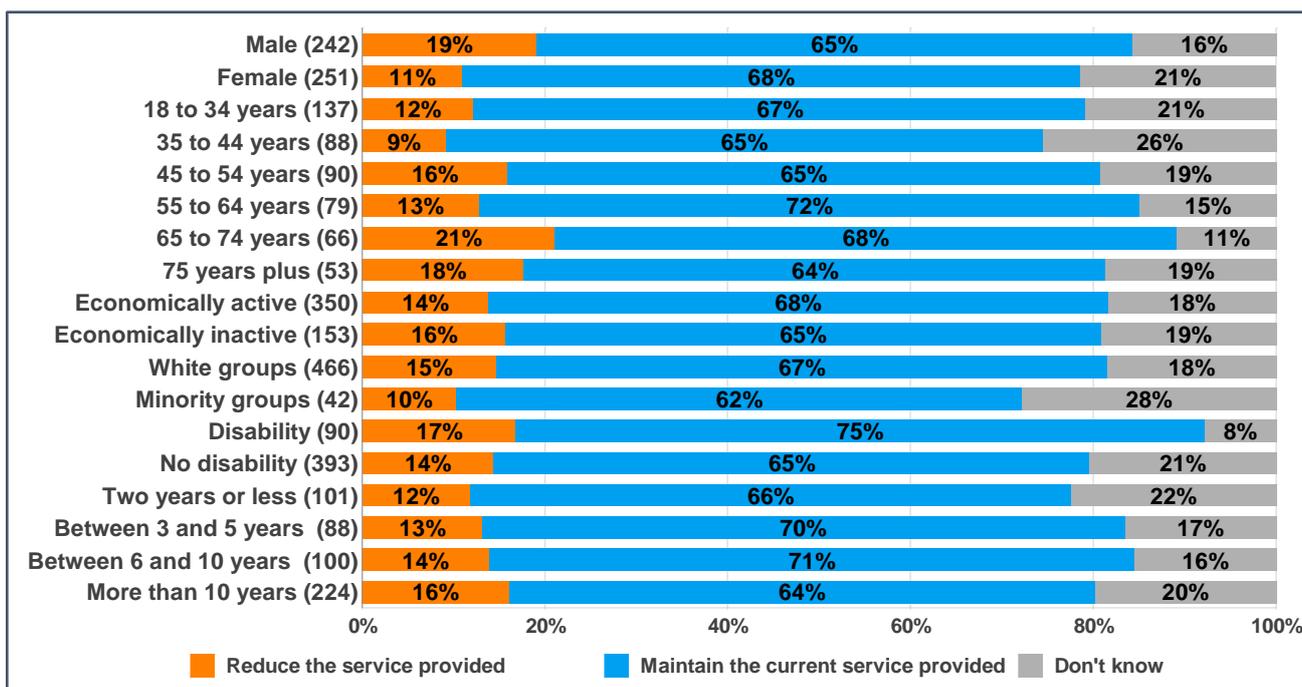
Bereavement Services

- 515 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the service provided’ with 344 (66.9%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

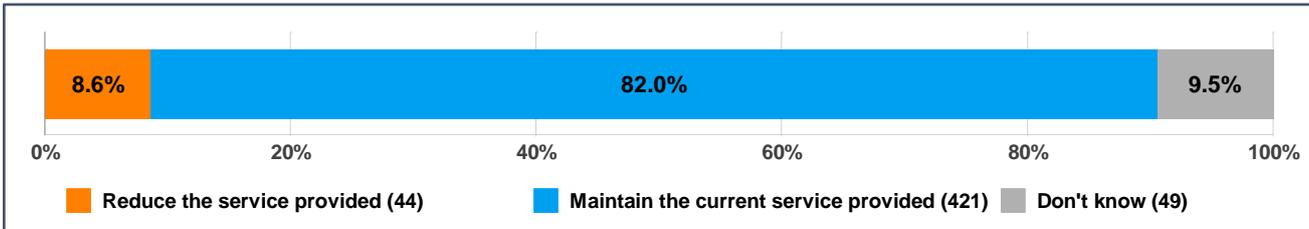


	<p>Male respondents had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of reducing Bereavement Services with 19% answering this way compared to 11% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of 65 to 74 years olds said Bereavement Services should be reduced with 21% answering this way, compared to 9% of 35 to 44 year olds</p>

	<p>Respondents without a disability had a significantly greater proportion that were uncertain about the approach that should be taken for Bereavement Services, with 21% answering this way, compare to 8% answering the same who have a disability.</p>
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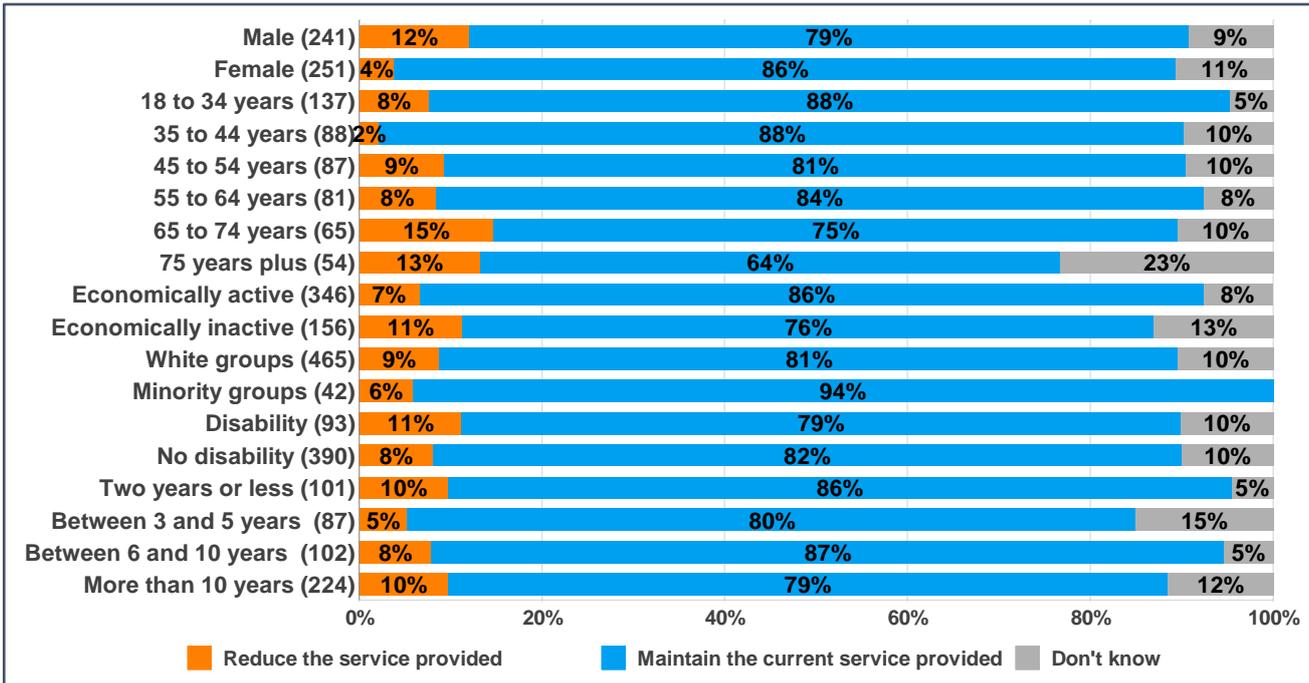
Community Safety

- 514 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 421 (82.0%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

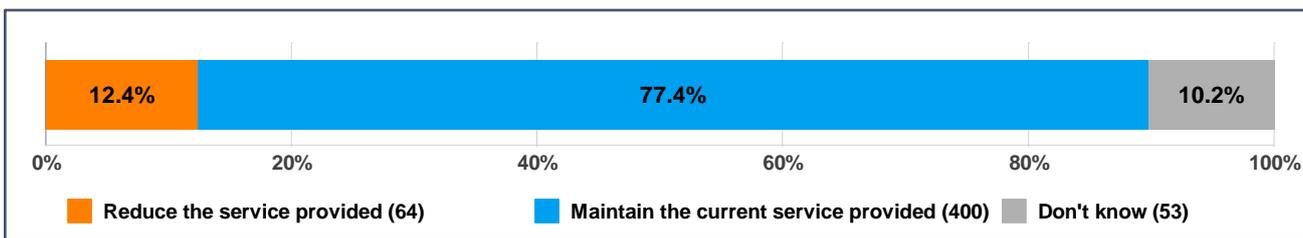


	<p>Female respondents had a significantly greater proportion that said Community Safety services should be maintained with 86% answering this way compared to 79% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded ‘Maintain the current service’ from the 75 years and over group were significantly lower than the proportions answering this way for the age groups up to 64 years. The 75 years and over group had a significantly greater proportion that answered ‘Don’t know’ compared to the other age groups.</p>

	<p>Economically active respondents had a greater proportion in favour of maintaining the current community safety services with 86% answering this way compared to 76% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>Minority group respondents had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of maintaining the current community safety services with 94% answering this way compared to 81% of respondents from white groups. There were no respondents from minority groups that answered, 'Don't know'.</p>

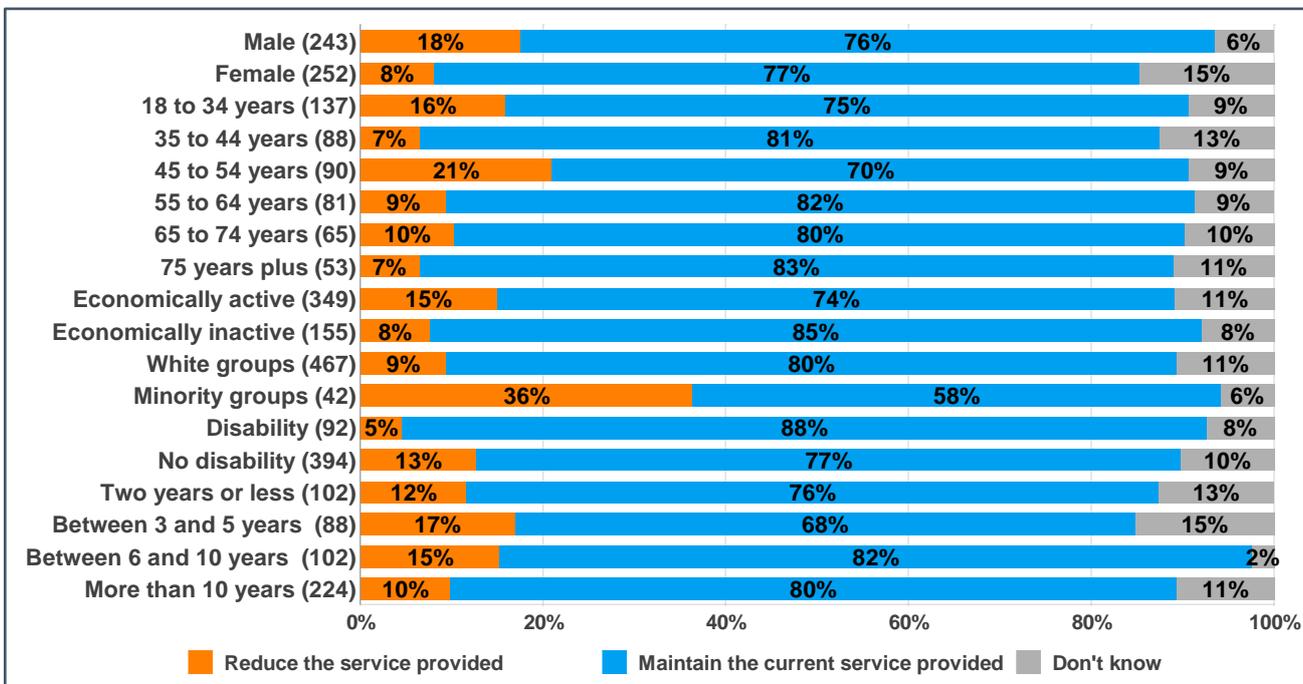
Environmental Enforcement

- A total of 517 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'Maintain the service provided' with 400(77.4%) answering this way.

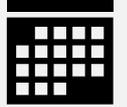


Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

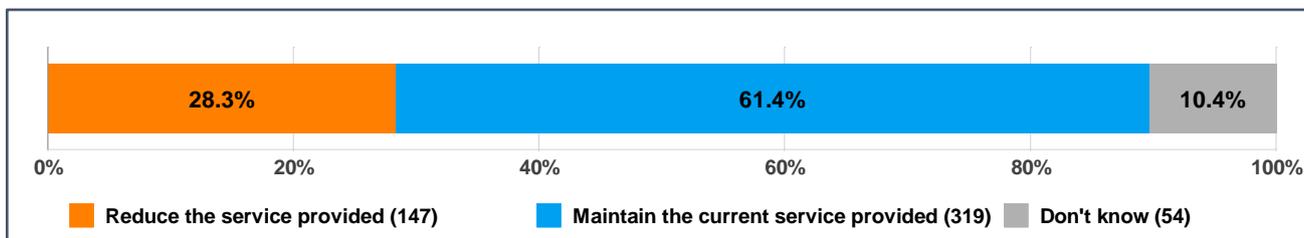


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Environmental Enforcement services with 18% answering this way compared to 8% of female respondents.</p> <p>A significantly greater proportion of female respondents were uncertain with 15% answering this way compared to 6% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>A significantly greater proportion of 45–54-year-olds that responded ‘reduce the service provided’ compared with other age groups: 35 to 44 years = 7% 55 to 64 years =9% 75 years and over =7%</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more in favour of maintaining the current environmental enforcement services with 85% answering this way compared to 74% of economically active respondents.</p>
	<p>Minority group respondents were more in favour of reducing the current service provided with 36% answering this way compared to 9% of respondents from white groups.</p>
	<p>Respondents were significantly more in favour of maintaining the current Environmental Enforcement services, with 77% answering this way, compared to 88% that answered the same who have a disability.</p>
	<p>Respondents who have lived at their current address for between two and five years had the lowest proportions responding that they were in favour of maintaining the current service provided for Environmental Enforcement with 68% answering this way. This was significantly lower than the ‘longer length of time at current address’ groups (6 years+)</p>

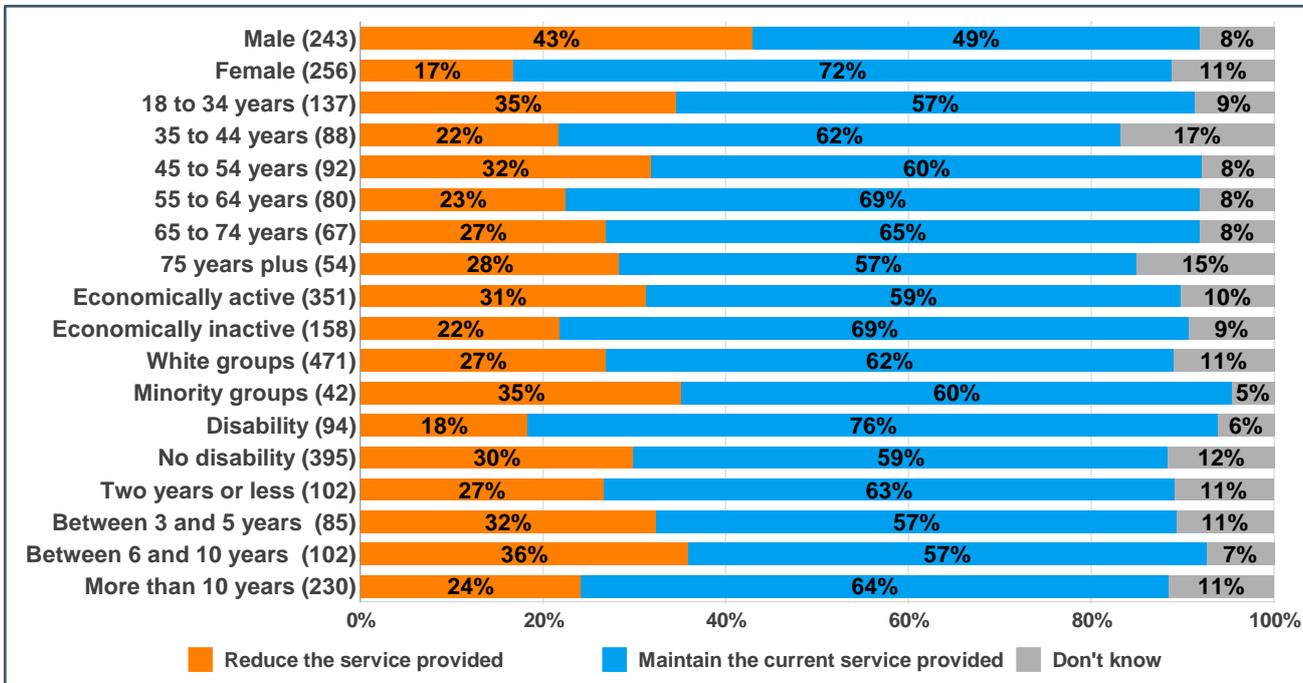
Housing & Homelessness

- 520 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 319 (61.4%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

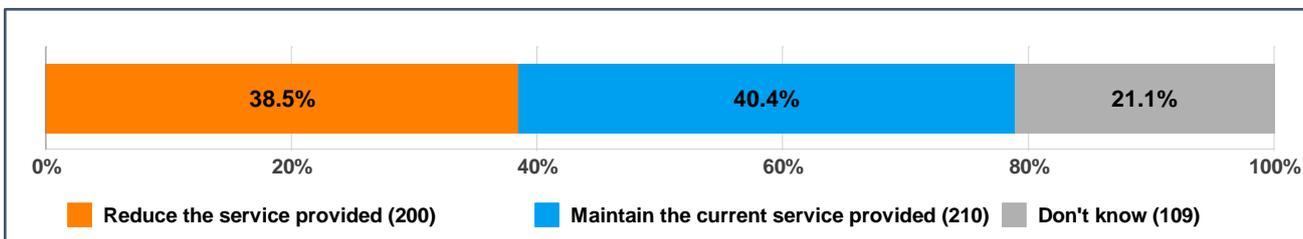
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Housing and Homelessness services with 43% answering this way compared to 17% of female respondents. 72% of female respondents said the current Housing and Homelessness service should be maintained compared to 49% of male respondents.
	69% of economically inactive respondents favoured maintaining the current Housing and Homelessness service with 69% answering this way compared to 59% of economically active respondents.
	Respondents with a disability were more in favour of maintaining the current service, with 76% answering this way, compared to 59% of respondents without a disability.

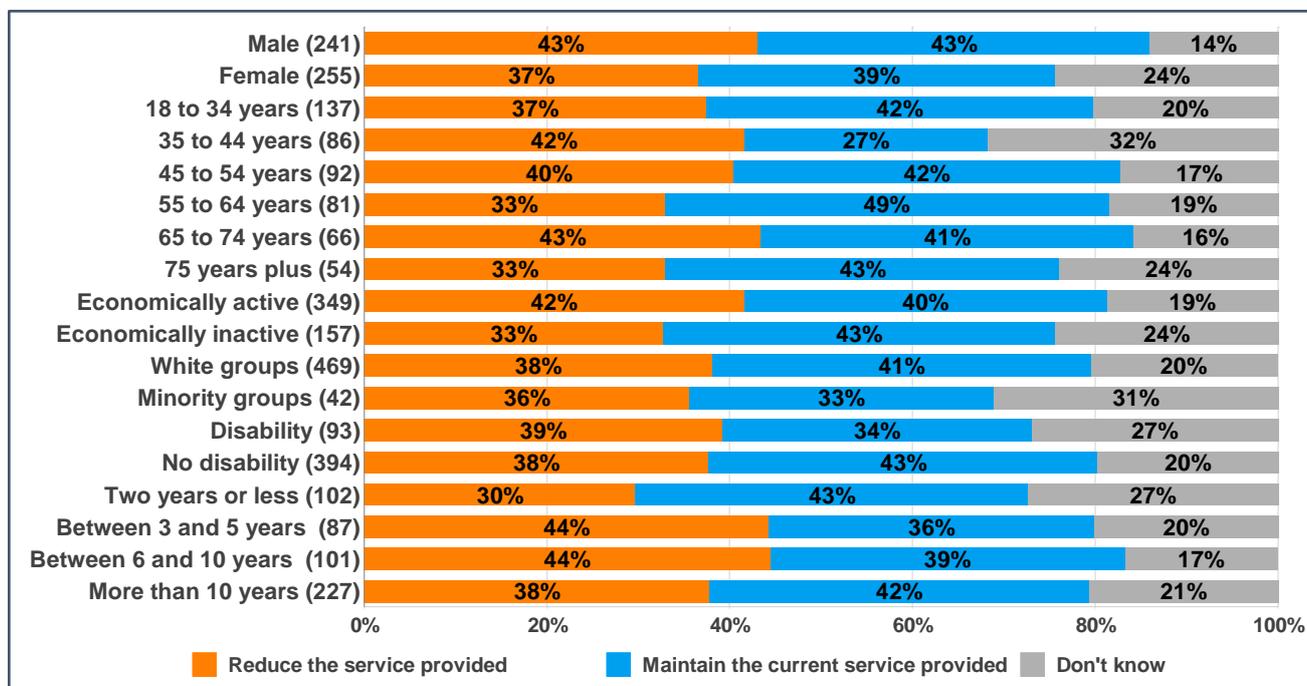
Licensing

- 518 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 210(40.4%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

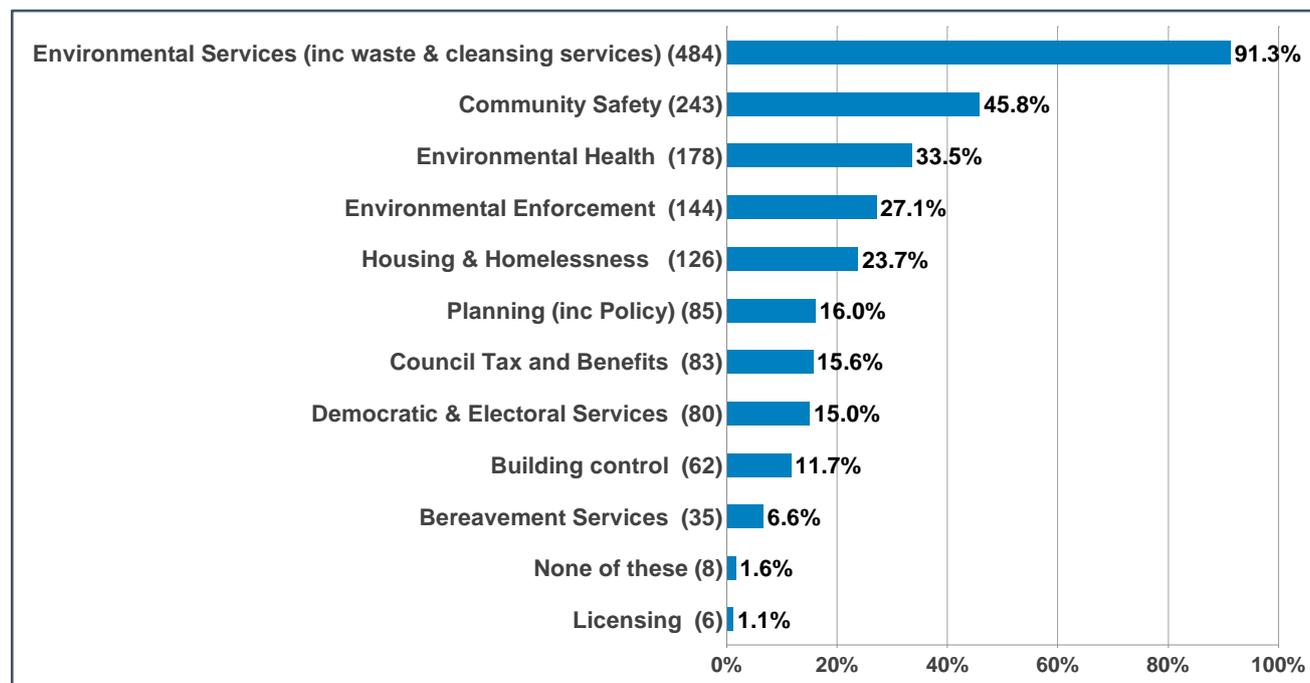


	<p>Female respondents answered 'don't know' in response to this question with 24% answering this way compared to 14% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded 'maintain the current service provided' from the 35 to 44 age group was lower than the proportions answering this way for all the other age groups.</p>
	<p>Respondents who have lived at their current address for less than 2 years had the lowest proportion of respondents in favour of reducing the current service provided for licensing with 30% answering this way, significantly lower than the 'length of time at current address' for the groups covering 3 to 10 years.</p>

Most important Mandatory Services

Survey respondents were asked to select, from the list of mandatory services, which three were most important to them.

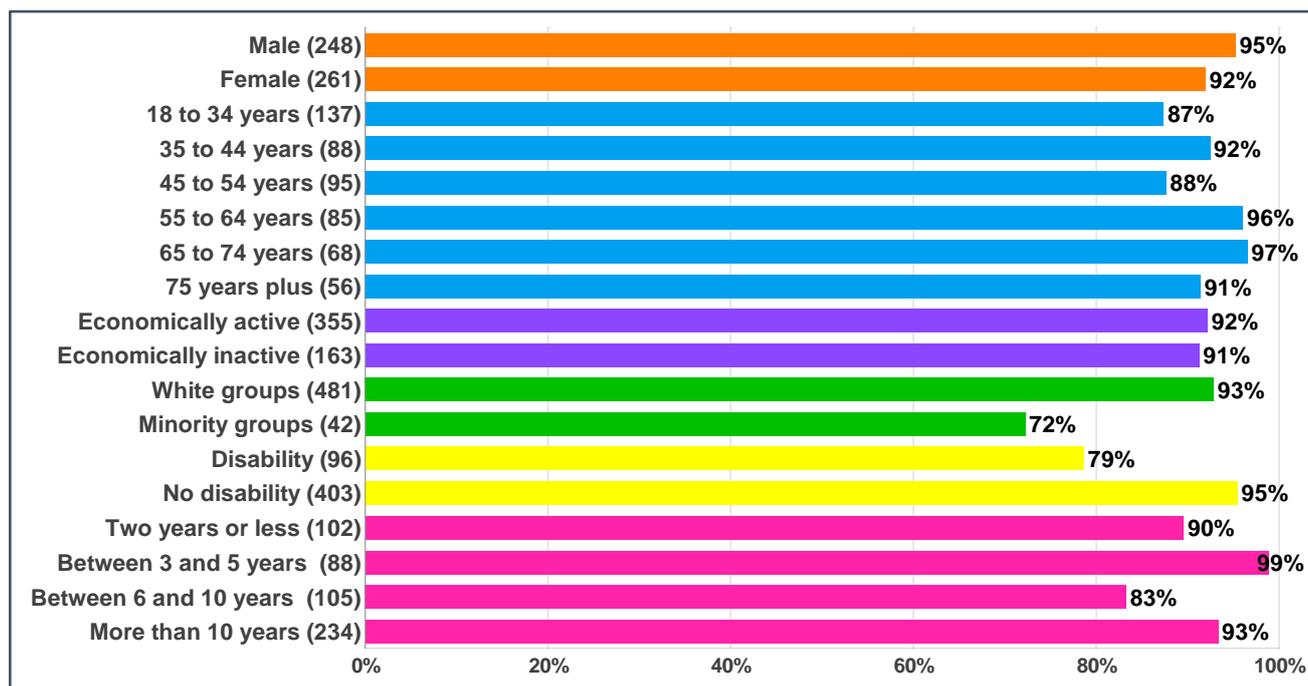
- 530 respondents answered this question.
- The top three most important services were Environmental Services, Community Safety and Environmental Health
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Licensing, Bereavement Services and Building Control.



Demographic Differences for the top three services are explored in more detail in the charts and tables below.

Environmental Services

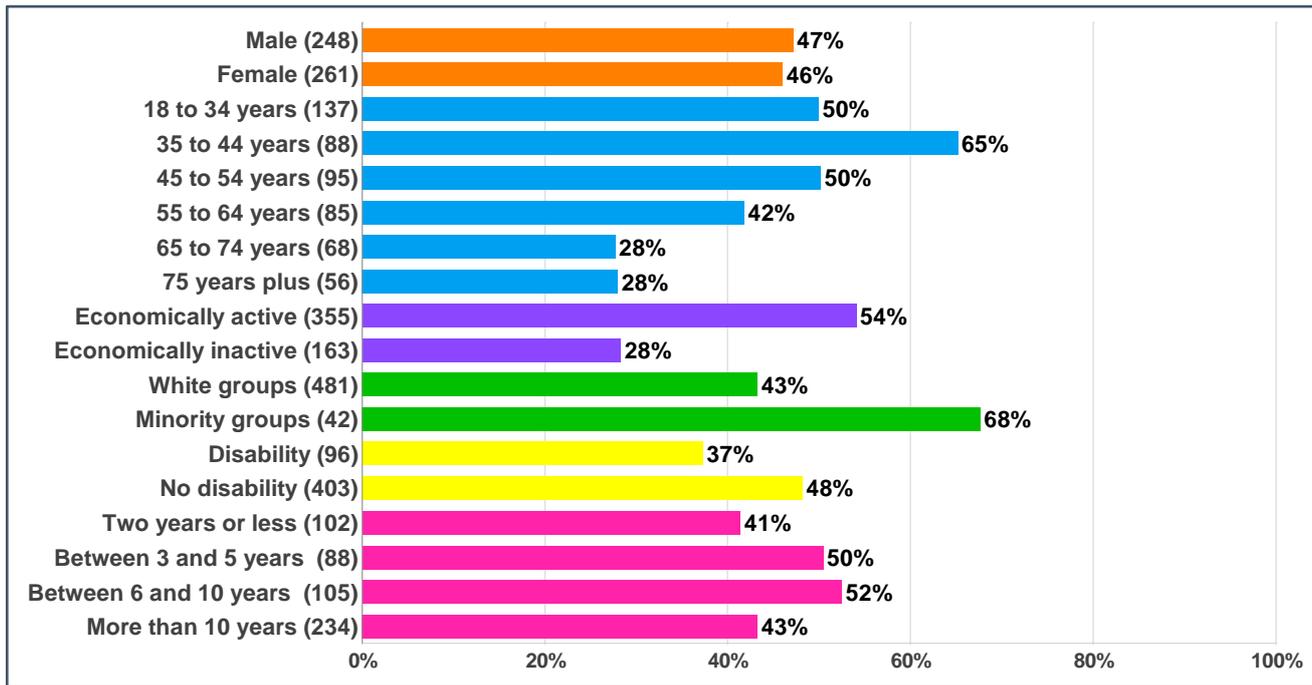
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>Respondents aged 18 to 34 years and 45 to 54 had the lowest proportions that selected Environmental Services as one of their top three ‘most important services’ at 87% and 88% respectively. This was significantly different than respondents in the 55 to 64 years and 65 to 74 years ages groups where 96% and 97%, respectively selected Environmental Services.</p>
	<p>Respondents from white groups had a significantly greater proportion that choose Environmental Services as being one of the most important services to them with 93% selecting this compared to 72% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>Respondents with a disability were more likely to selected Environmental Services as one that is most important to them with 79% making this selection compared to 95% of respondents without a disability.</p>
	<p>99% of respondents who had lived at their current address for between three and five years selected Environmental Services as being important which was significantly higher than all other time periods at address options.</p>

Community Safety

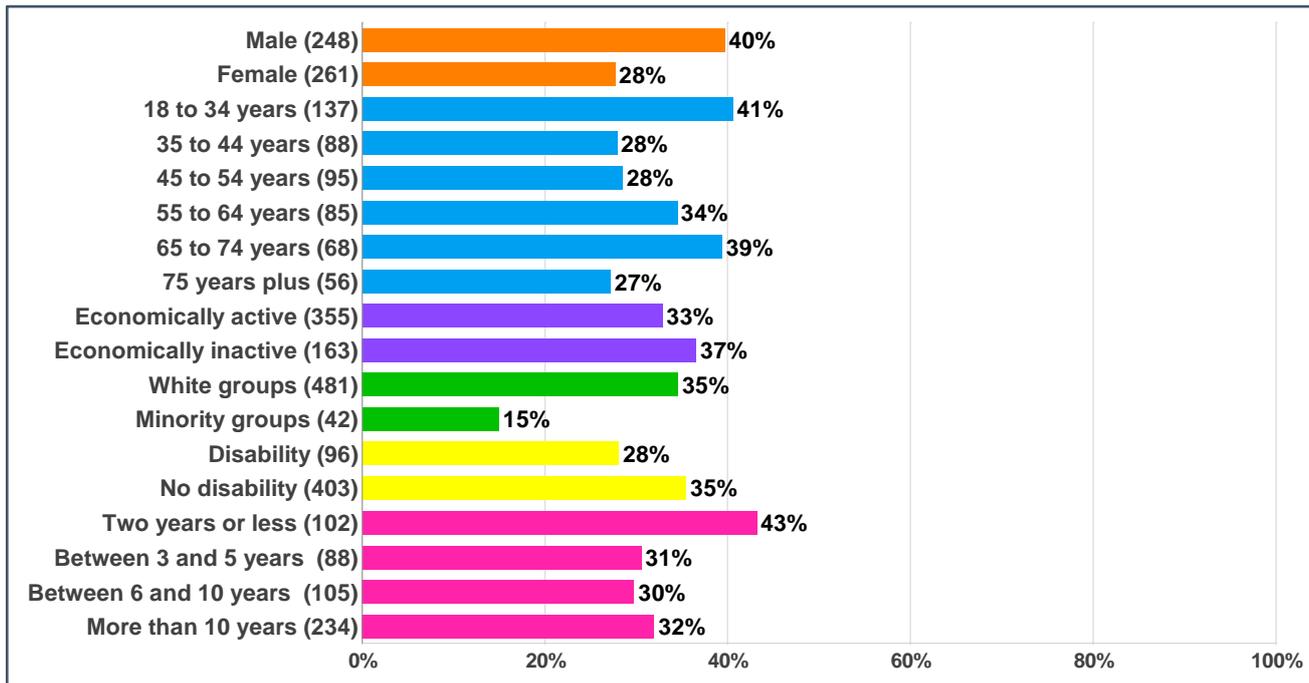
The differences in the proportions selecting Community Safety across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>65% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years selected Community Safety as one of the most important services. This was significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>54% of economically active respondents selected community safety as being one of the most important services compared to 28% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>68% of respondents from minority groups choose Community Safety as being one of the most important services to them compared to 43% of respondents from white groups.</p>

Environmental Health

The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Health across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



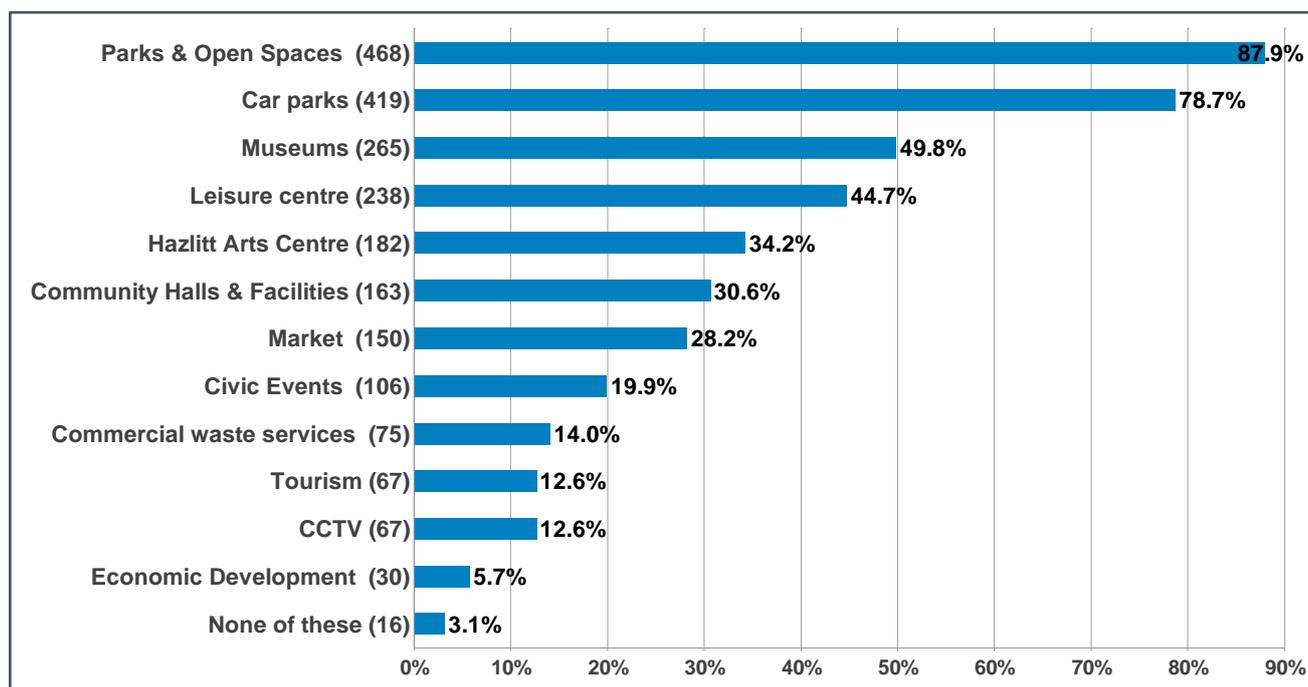
	<p>40% of male respondents selected Environmental Health as being one of their most important services compared to 28% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>35% of respondents from white groups choose Environmental Health as being one of the most important to them compared to 15% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>99% of respondents who had lived at their current address for between three and five years selected Environmental Services as being important. This was significantly greater than the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

Discretionary Services

Discretionary Services Used

Survey respondents were provided with a list of discretionary services provided by Maidstone Council and were asked to select which they had previously used. They could select as many as applied to them.

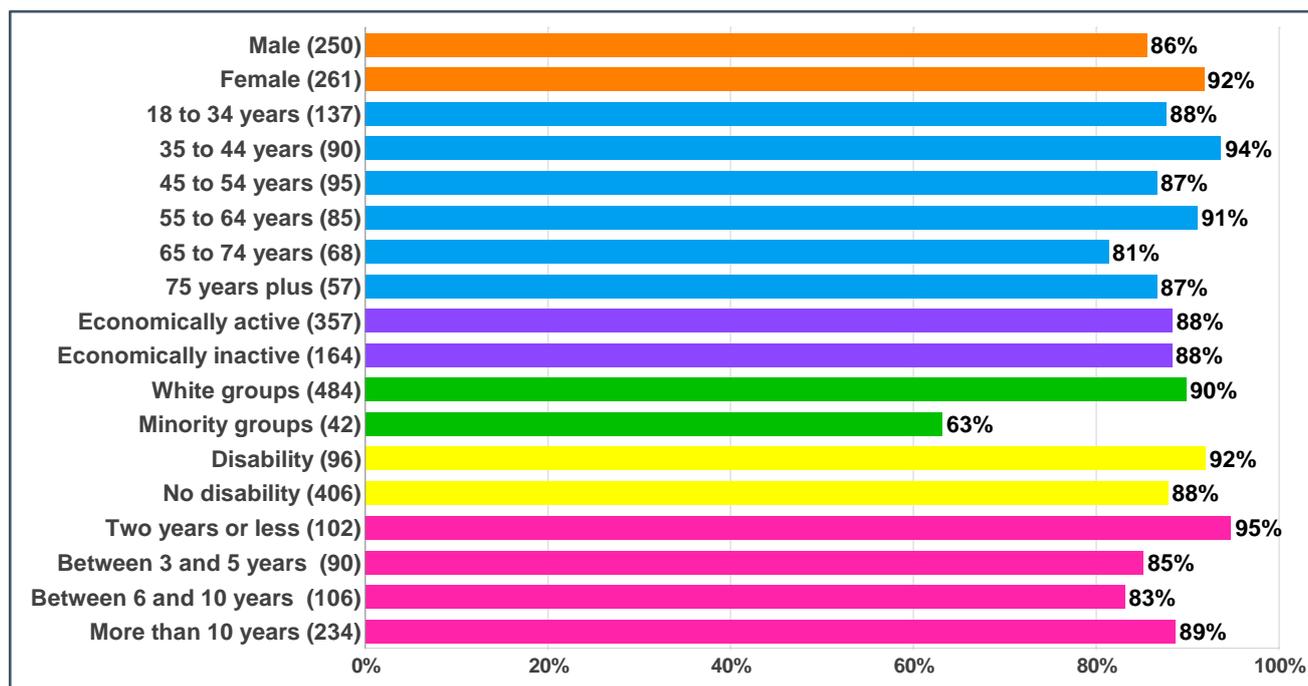
- 533 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Parks and Open Spaces, Car Parks and Museums.
- The least used service by respondents was Economic development with 30 selecting this service.
- 16 respondents said they had not used any of the services listed.



Demographic Differences for the top three services are explored in more detail in the charts and tables below.

Parks & Open Spaces

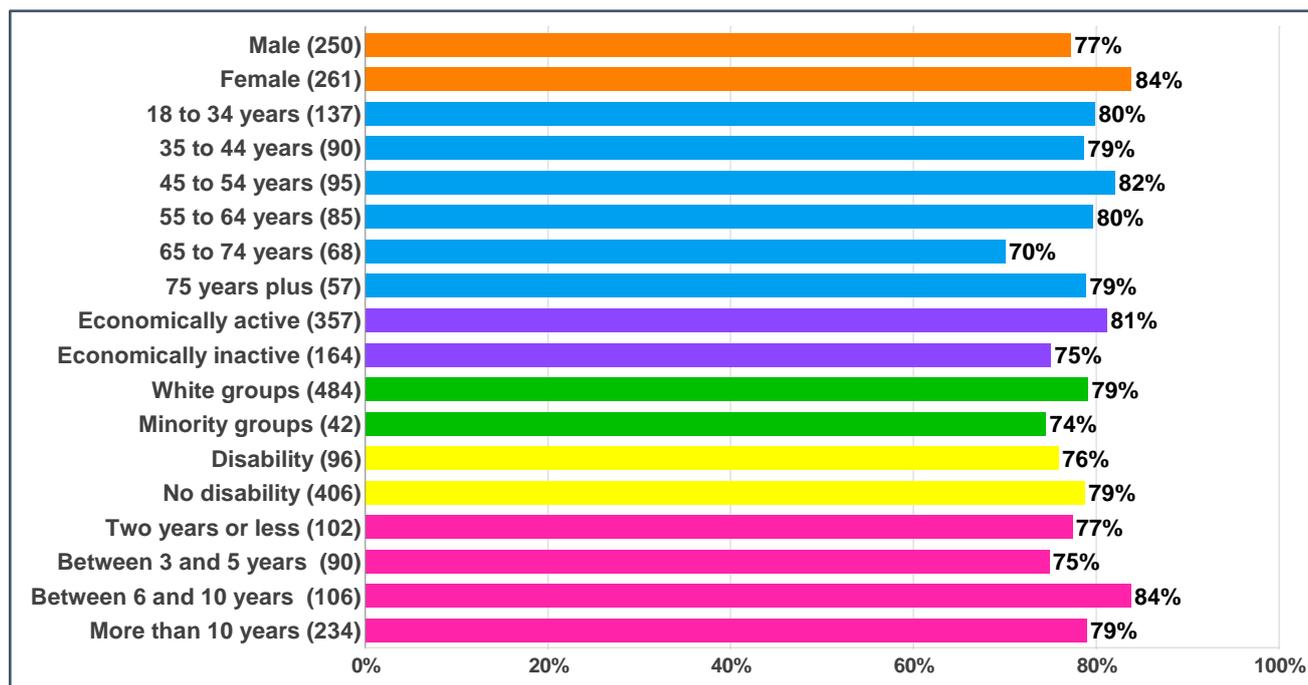
The differences in the proportions selecting parks and opens spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>92% of female respondents have used Parks & Opens Spaces in the borough compared to 86% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>65 to 74 year olds were less likely to have used Parks & Opens Spaces in the borough with 81% selecting this as a service they have used compared to 94% of 35 to 44 years olds.</p>
	<p>90 % of respondents from white groups said they have used a Maidstone park or open space compared to 63% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>95% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years have used Maidstone parks and open spaces. This is significantly greater than the other length of time at address categories.</p>

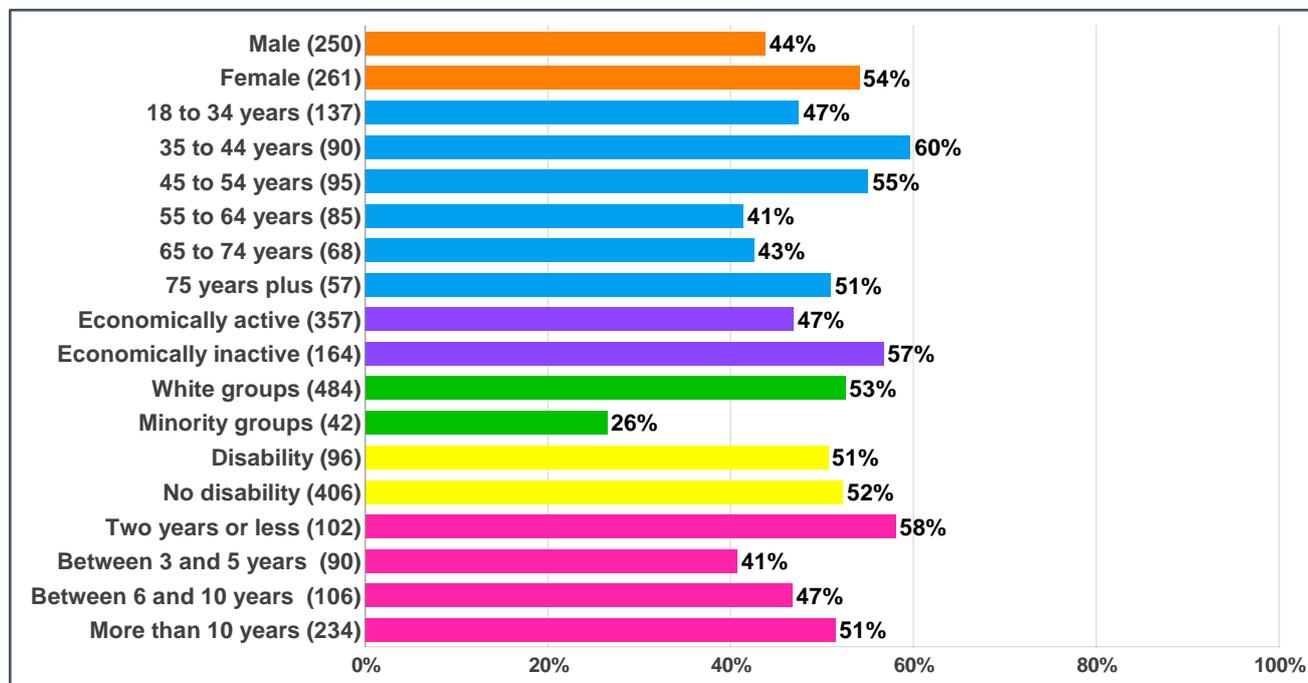
Car Parks

There were no significant differences in the proportions of each group selecting 'Car Parks' as a service they have used.



Museums

The significant differences in the proportions selecting 'Museums' across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



Female respondents were more likely to have visited Museums in the borough with 54% selecting this as a service they have used compared to 44% of male respondents.

	<p>Respondents aged 35 to 44 years were the most likely to have visited museums in the borough with 60% selecting this as a service they had used. This was significantly greater than the 55 to 64 years group at 41%.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more likely to have utilised a Maidstone Museum with 57% selecting this as a service they have used compared to 47% of economically active respondents.</p>
	<p>53% of respondents from white groups said they had visited a Maidstone Museum compared to 26% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>58% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years had visited Maidstone Museums. This is significantly more than those for the three and five years groups at 41%.</p>

Approach to Discretionary Services

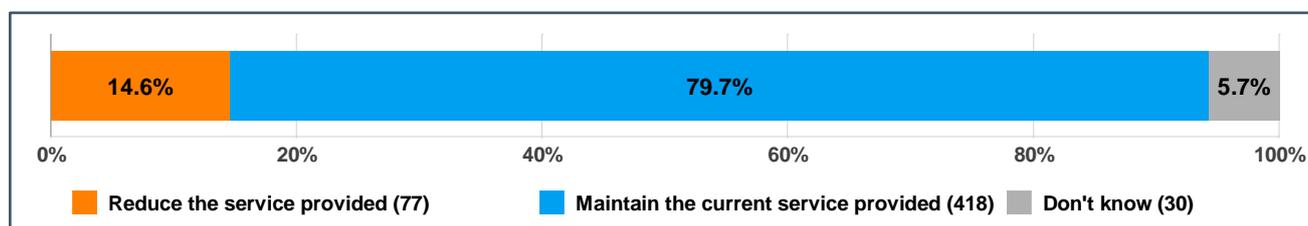
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Discretionary Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

- Reduce the service provided,
- Maintain the service provided
- Don't know.

To provide context the current spend on each service per council tax band D was shown.

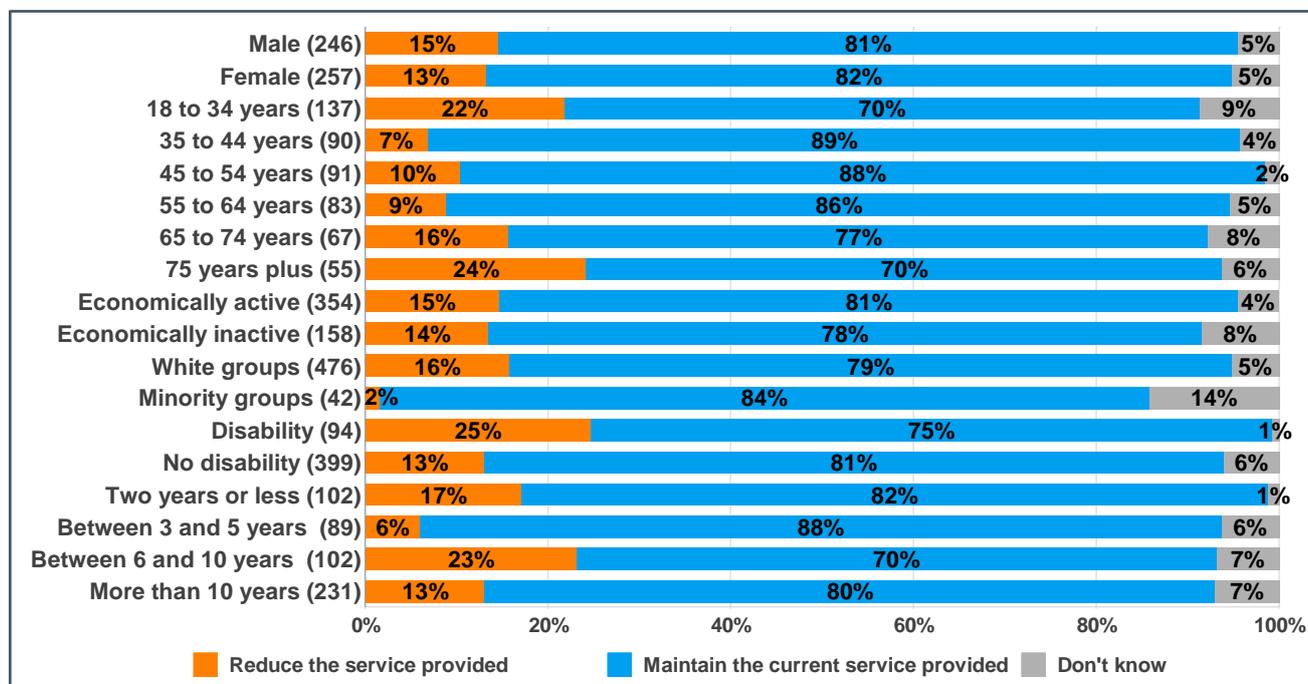
Leisure Centre

- 525 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'maintain the current service provided' with 418 (79.7%) answering this way.

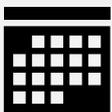


Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

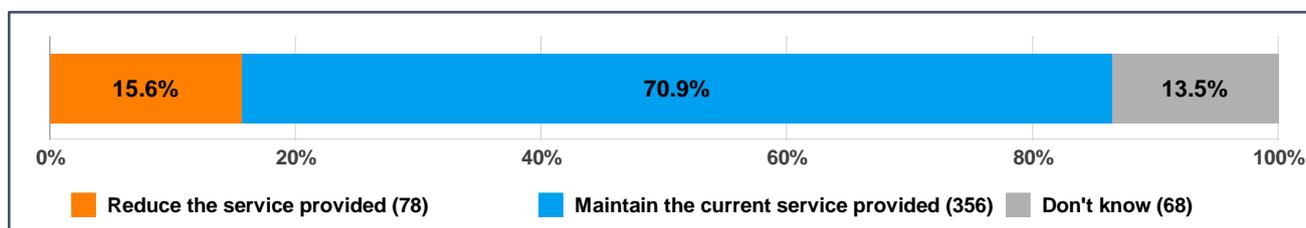


The 75 years and over and the 18 to 34 years age groups were most in favour of reducing the current service provided at 21% and 22% respectively.

	<p>16% of respondents from white groups said the Leisure Centre service should be reduced compared to 2% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>25% of respondents with a disability were in favour of reducing Leisure Centre services compared to 13% without a disability.</p>
	<p>6% of respondents who had lived at their current address for between three and five years said that the Leisure centre services should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

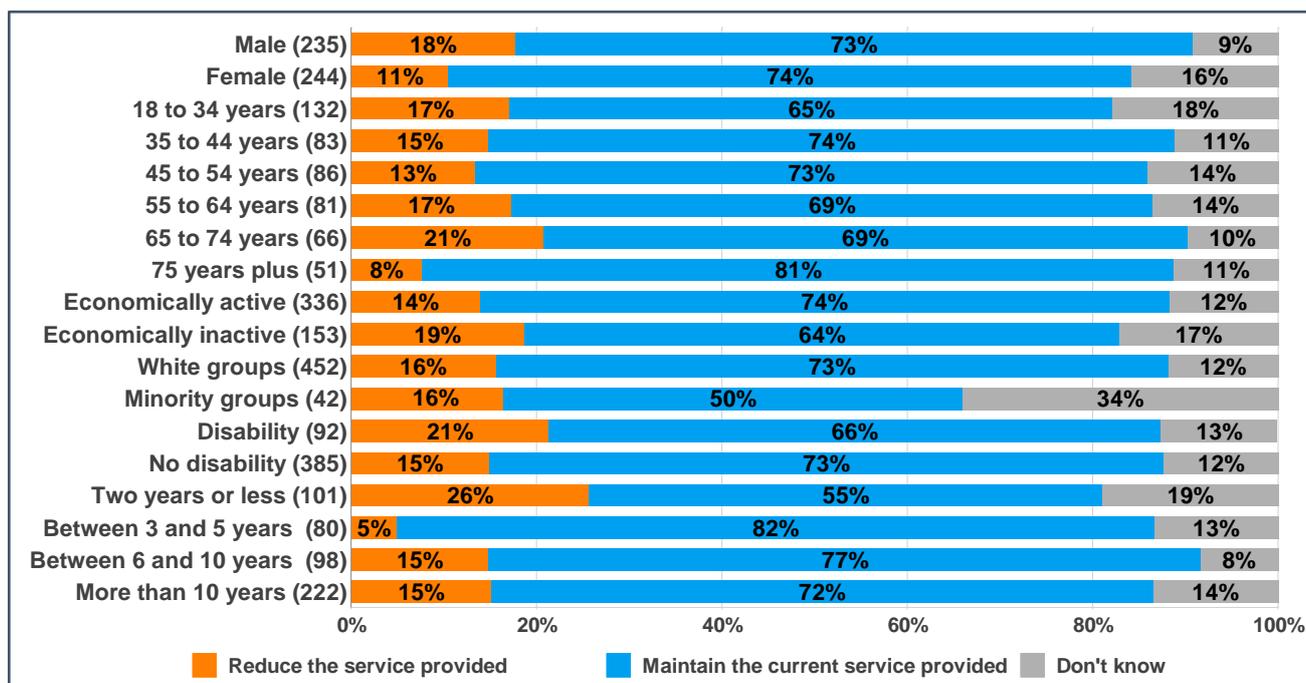
CCTV

- 502 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘Maintain the current service provided’ with 356 (70.9%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

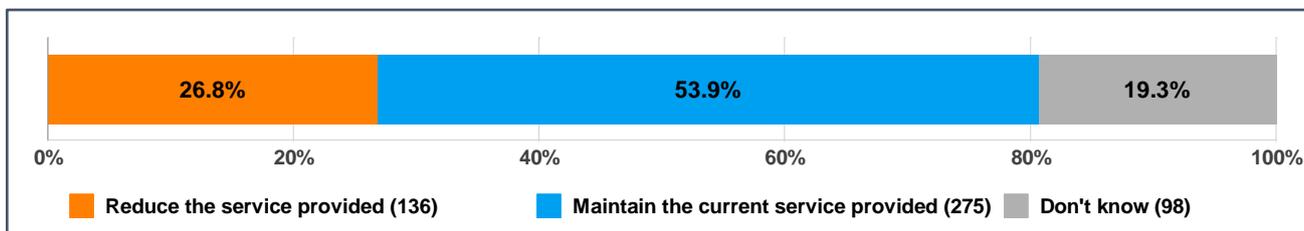
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<p>18% of male respondents were in favour of reducing CCTV services compared to 11% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>81% of respondents aged 75 years and over were in favour of CCTV services being maintained. This result is significantly greater than that for the 18 to 34 age group at 65%.</p>
	<p>74% of economically active respondents said the CCTV service should be maintained compared to 64% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>50% of respondents from minority groups were in favour of maintaining the current CCTV service to 64% of respondents from white groups. More than a third of respondents from minority groups answered 'don't know'.</p>
	<p>26% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years said that the CCTV services should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the proportion selecting this approach for the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

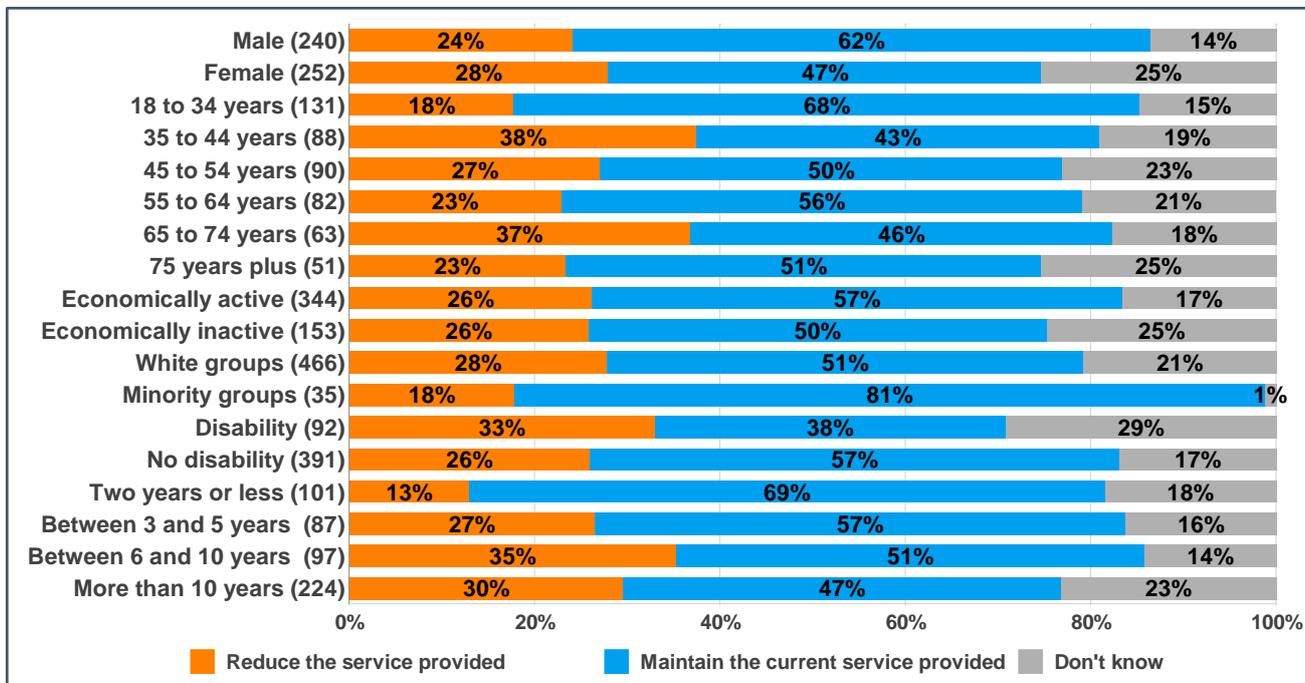
Economic Development

- 509 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'maintain the current service provided' with 275 (53.9%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

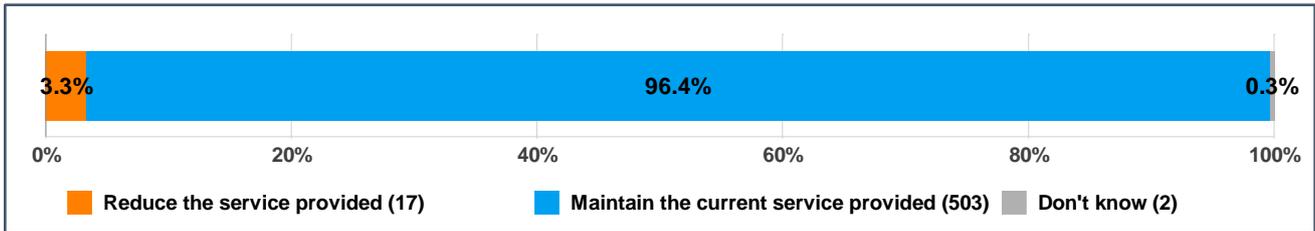
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	62% of male respondents were in favour of maintaining the current Economic Development service compared to 47% of female respondents.
	68% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said that the Economic Development service should be maintained. This is significantly greater than the other age groups.
	25% of economically inactive respondents said they didn't know what approach should be taken towards Economic Development services compared to 17% of economically active respondents.
	81% of minority group respondents were in favour of maintaining the current Economic Development service compared to 54% of respondents from white groups. More than one in five respondents from white groups answered, 'don't know'.
	57% of respondents without a disability were in favour of maintaining the current Economic Development service compared to 38% answering the same with a disability. More than a quarter of respondents with a disability answered, 'don't know'.
	13% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years said that the Economic Development service should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the other length of time at current address groups.

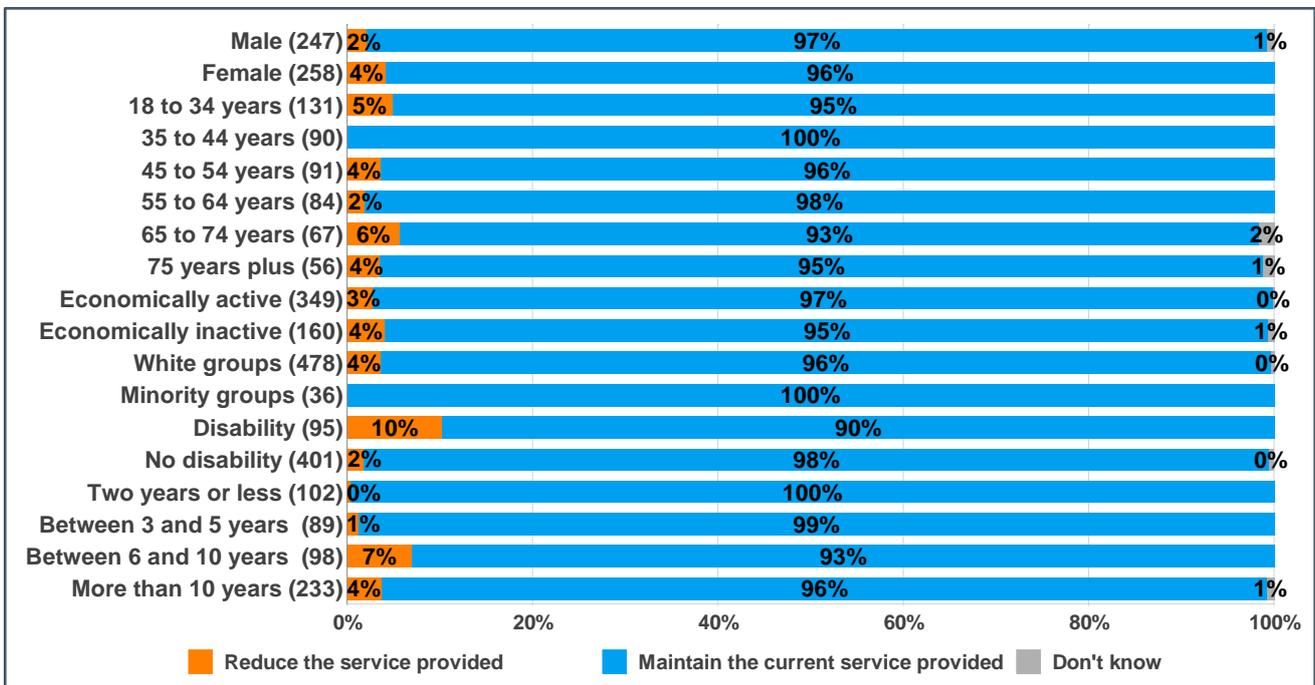
Parks & Open Spaces

- 522 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘Maintain the current service provided’ with 503 (96.4%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



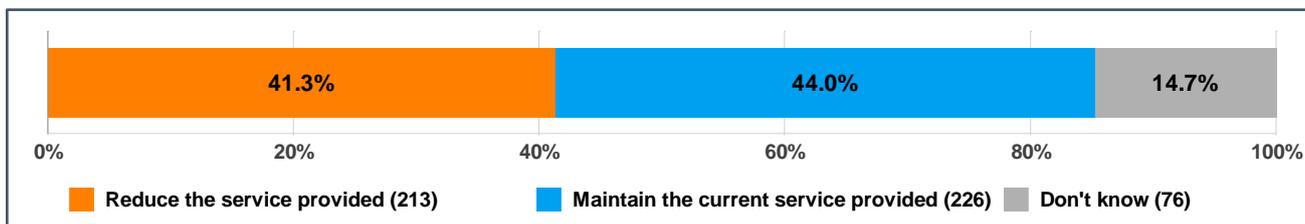
98% of respondents without a disability had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of maintaining the current Parks and Open Spaces service compared to 90% answering the same with a disability.



7% of respondents who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said that the Parks and Open Spaces service should be reduced compared to 0.4% of respondents who had lived at their current address for less than two years.

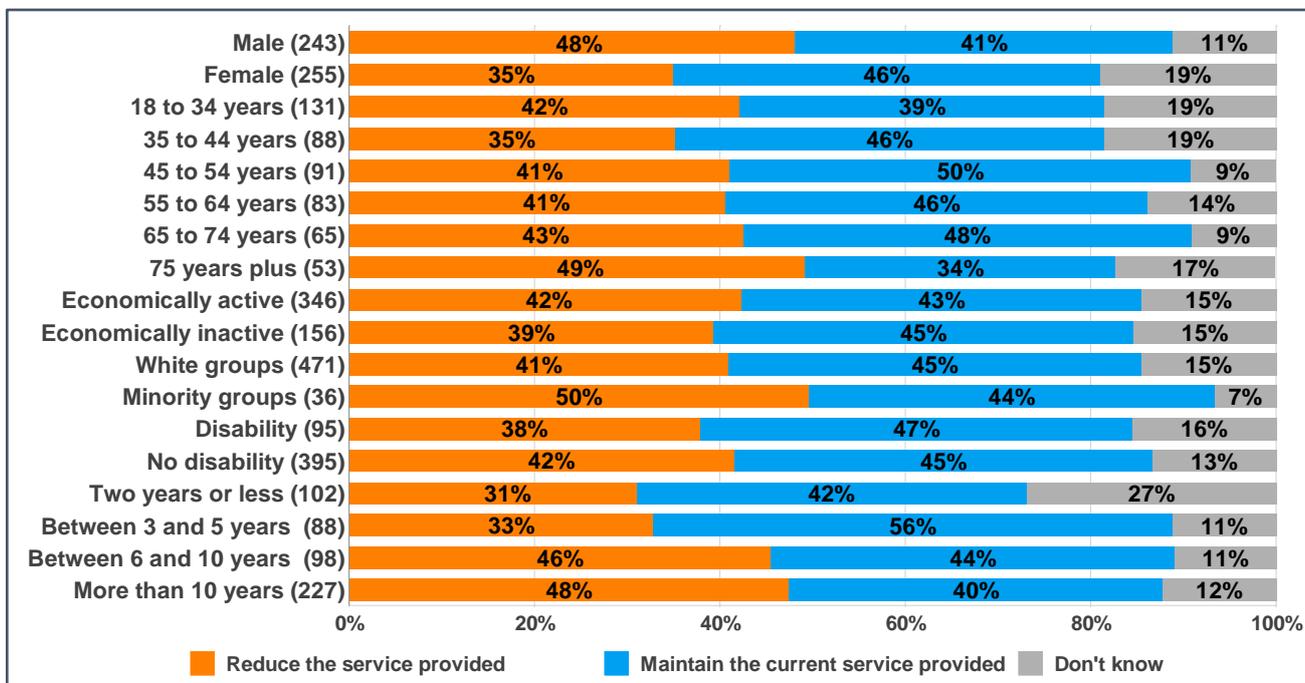
Markets

- 514 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'Maintain the current service provided' with 226 (44.0%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

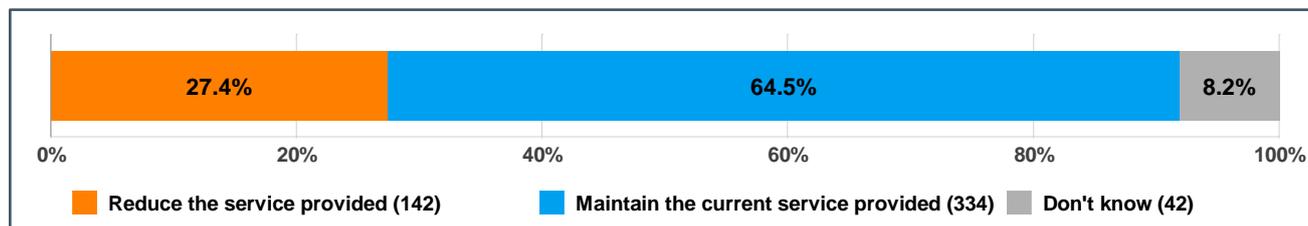
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<p>48% of male respondents were in favour of reducing market services compared to 35% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>48% of respondents who have lived at their current address for more than ten years said that market services should be reduced compared to 31% of respondents who had lived at their current address for less than two years.</p>

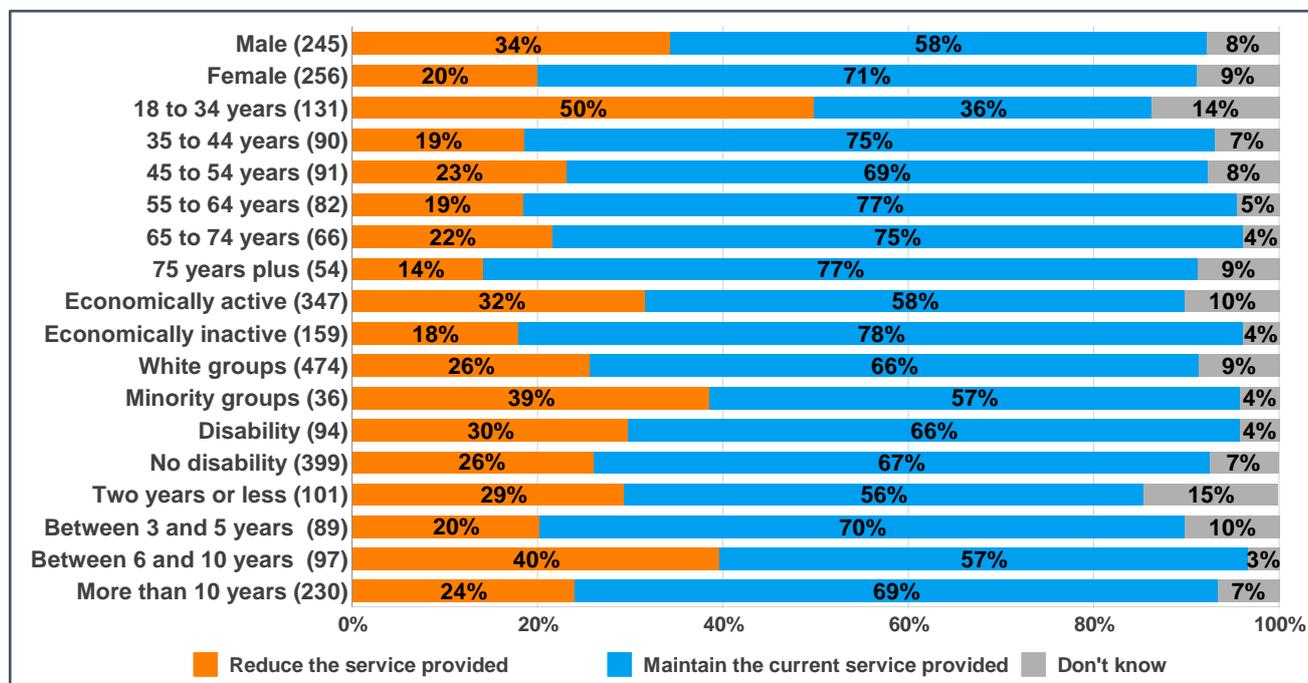
Museums

- 517 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'Maintain the current service provided' with 334 (64.5%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



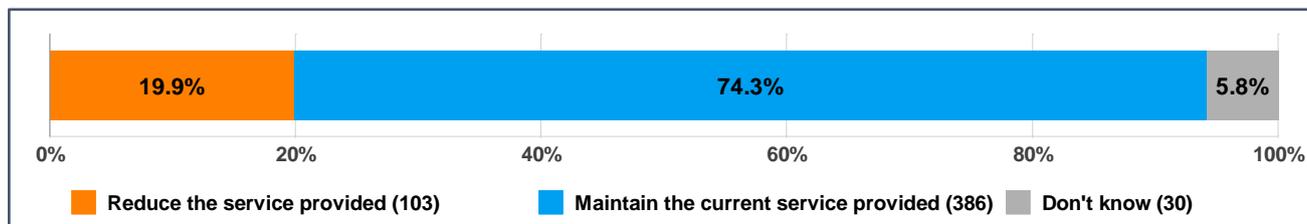
	<p>34% of male respondents were in favour of reducing Museums service compared to 20% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>50% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said that the Museums service should be reduced. This is significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>58% of economically active respondents were in favour of maintaining the Museums service compared to 78% of economically inactive respondents.</p>



40% of respondents who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said that the museums service should be reduced. This is significantly greater than the respondents who had lived at their current address for the between three and five years (20%) and more than ten years groups (24%).

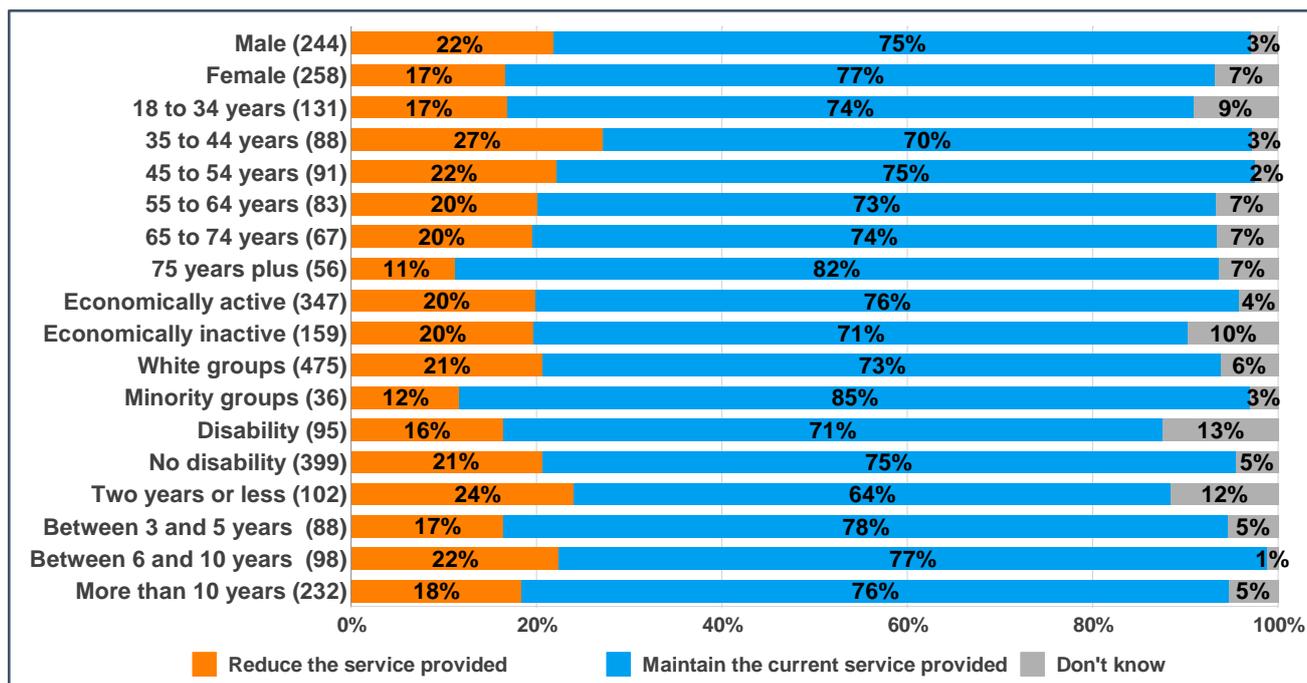
Car parks

- 519 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 386 (74.3%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



10% of economically inactive respondents answering ‘don’t know’ compared to 4% of economically active respondents answering the same suggesting a higher level of uncertainty or understanding for the economically inactive group

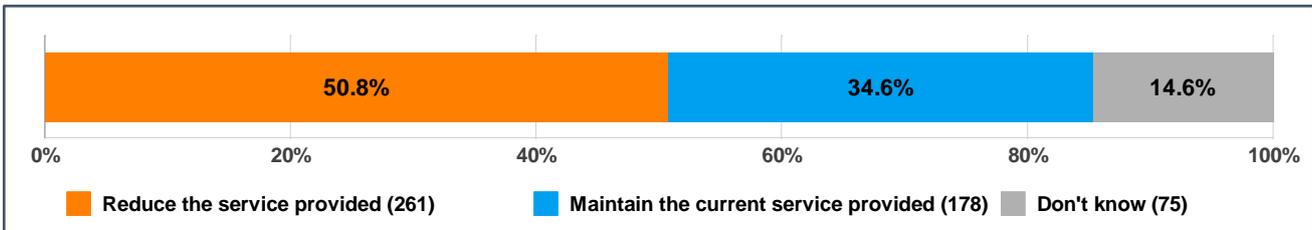


13% of respondents with a disability answered ‘don’t know’ compared to 5% of respondents without a disability.

	<p>64% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years said that Car Parks should be maintained. This is significantly lower than the proportion selecting this approach for all the other length of time at current address groups.</p>
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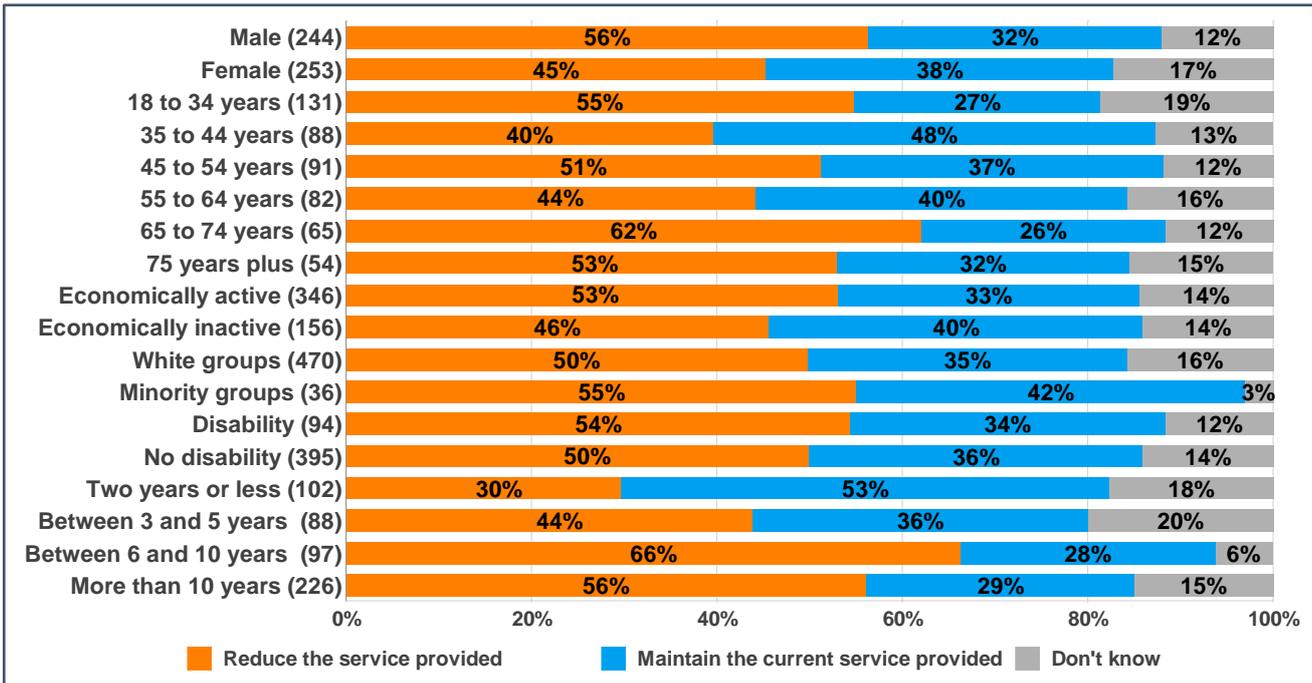
Civic Events

- 514 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘reduce the service provided’ with 261 (50.8%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

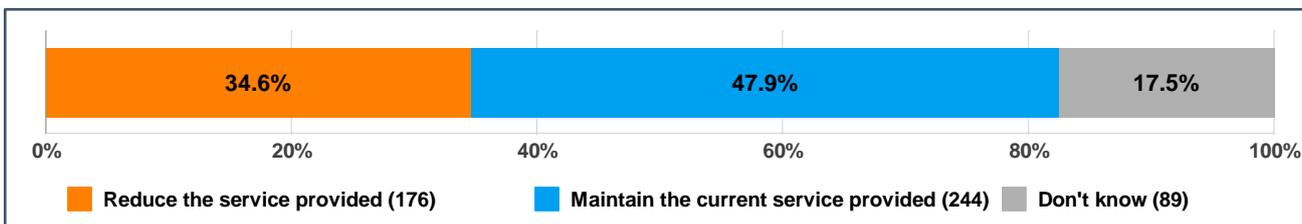


	<p>56% of male respondents were in favour of reducing civic events compared to 45% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>40% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the civic events should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the response from 18 to 34 year olds and 65 and 74 year olds age groups.</p>

	<p>16% of white group respondents responded 'don't know' when asked about approaches for civic events with 16% answering this way compared to 3% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>53% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years said that civic events should be maintained. This is significantly greater than for all the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

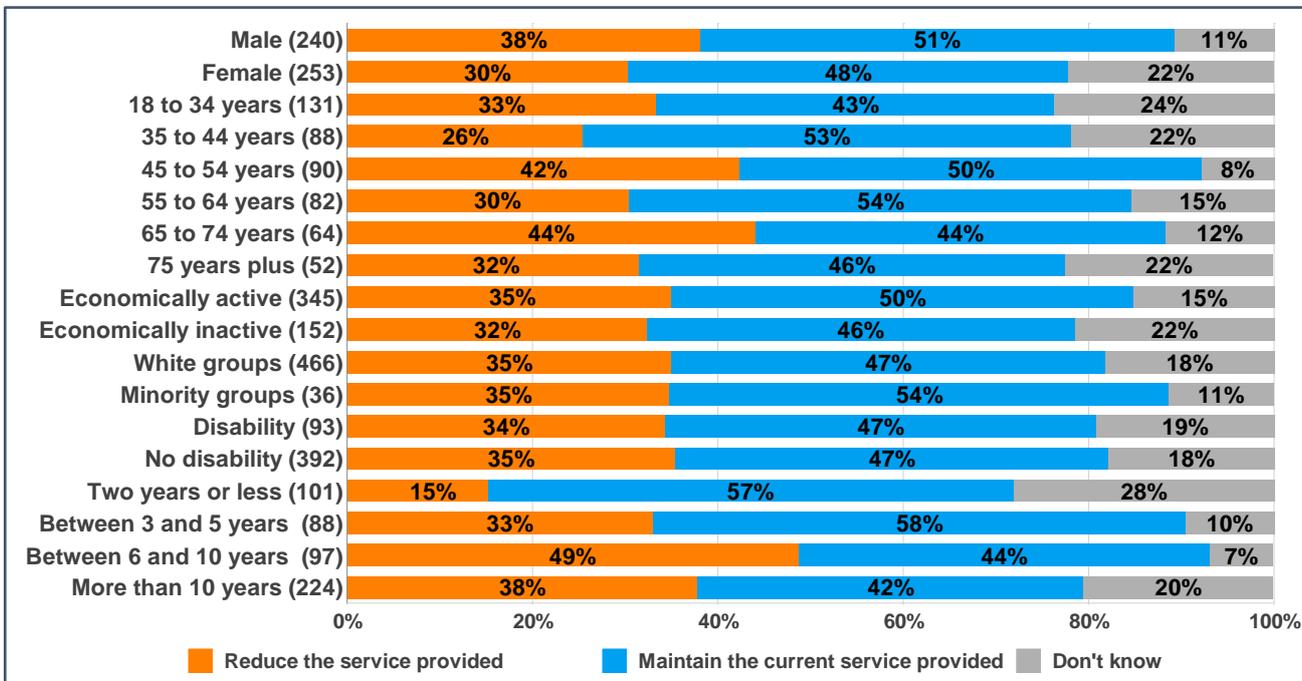
Tourism

- 510 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'maintain the current service provided' with 244 (47.9%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

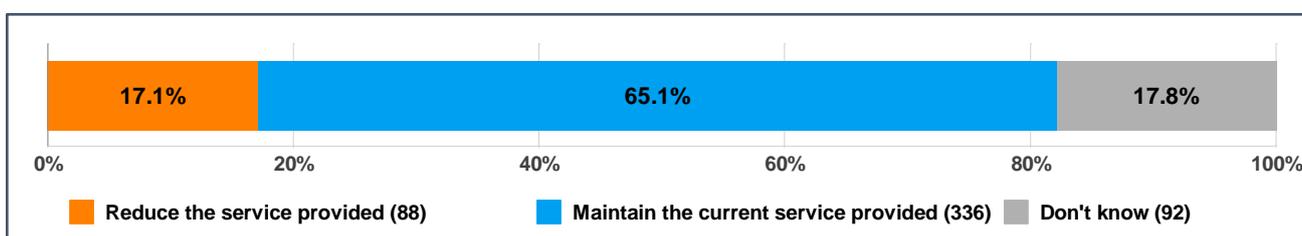


	<p>22% of females responded 'don't know' when asked about approaches for the Tourism service compared to 11% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the Tourism service should be reduced. This is significantly lower compared to the 45 to 54 years (42%) and the 65 to 74 years (44%) old age groups.</p>
	<p>49% of respondents who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said that Tourism should be reduced. This is significantly greater for all the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

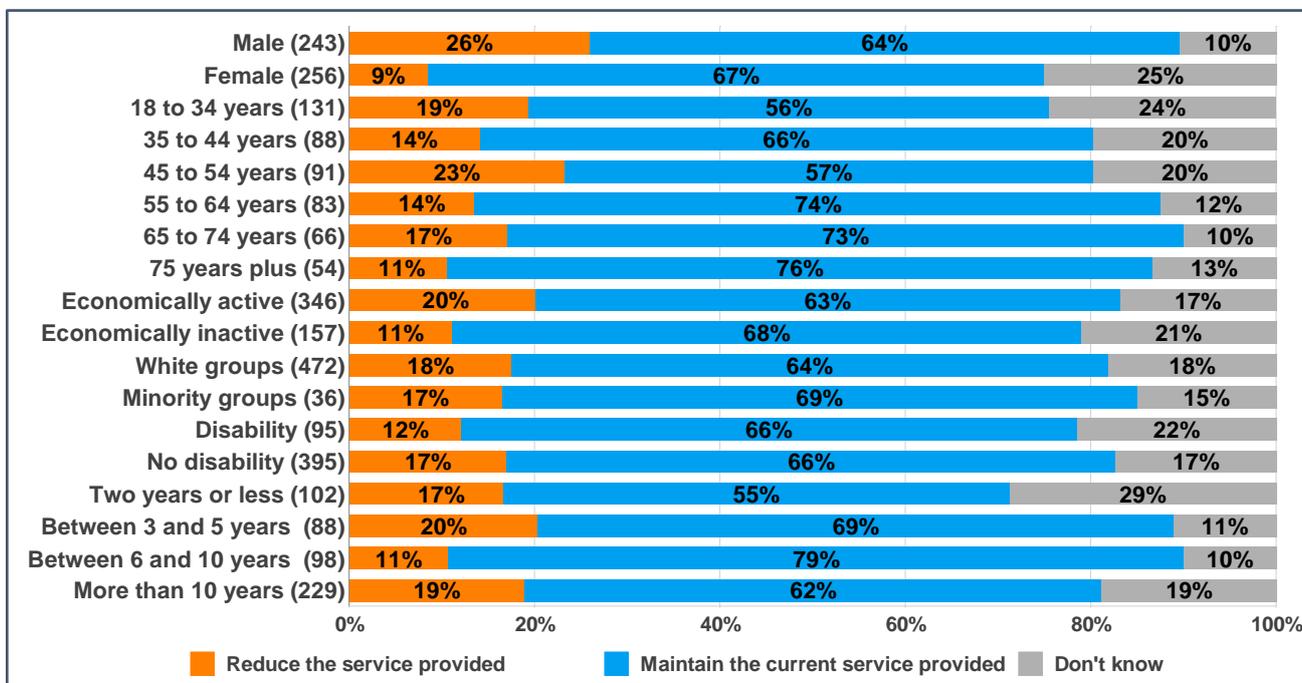
Commercial Waste Services

- 516 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 336 (65.1%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

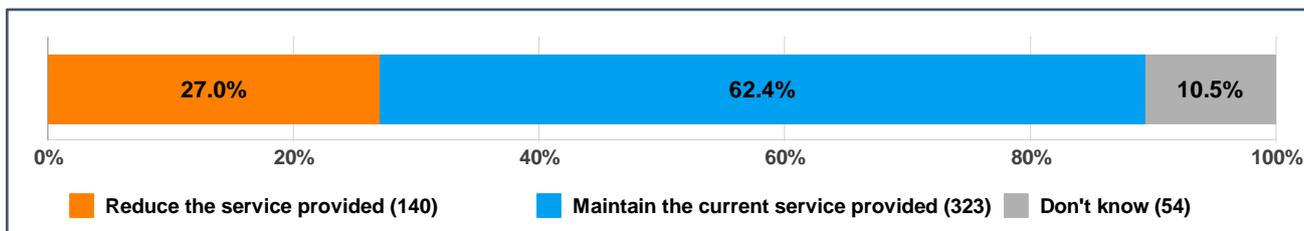


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Commercial Waste services with 26% answering this way compared to 45% of female respondents.</p> <p>22% of female respondents answered ‘don’t know’ compared to 10% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>The age groups 55 years and over were more in favour of maintaining the Commercial waste service compared to respondents aged 18 to 34 (56%) and 45 to 54 (57%).</p>
	<p>20% of economically active respondents were in favour of reducing the Commercial Waste services compared to 11% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>79% of respondents who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said that the Commercial Waste service should be maintained. This is significantly greater than for all the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

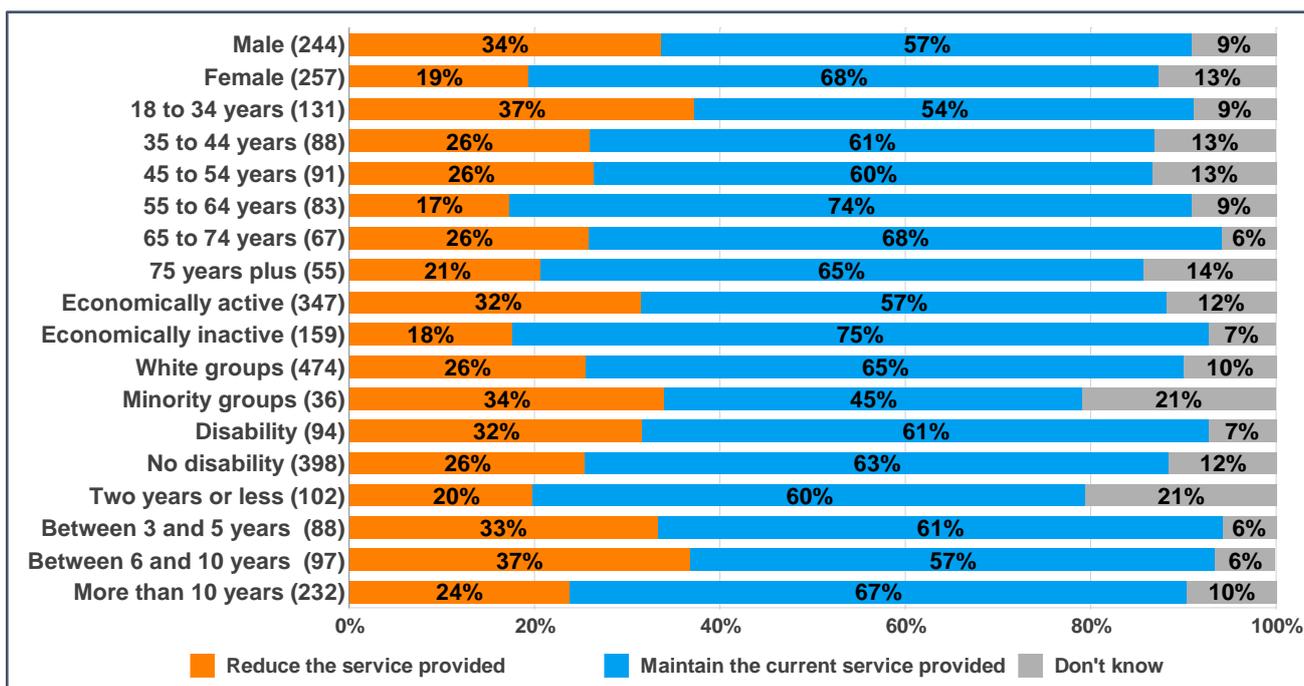
Hazlitt Arts Centre

- 518 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was ‘maintain the current service provided’ with 323 (62.4%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

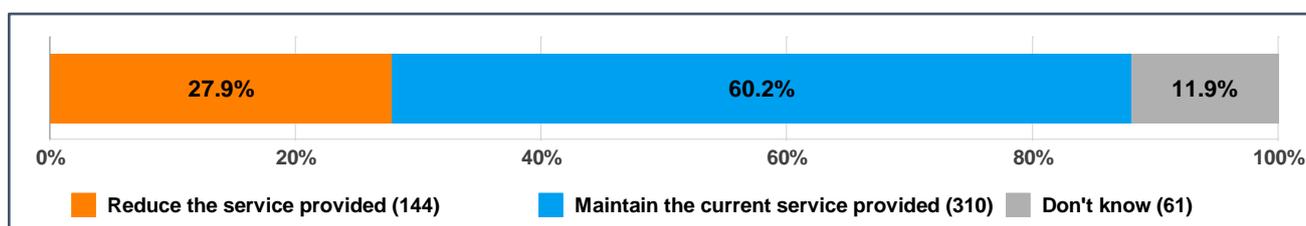
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<p>34% of male respondents were in favour of reducing the Hazlitt Arts Centres compared to 19% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>76% of respondents aged 55 to 64 years said that the Hazlitt Arts Centre should be maintained. This is significantly greater than for age groups covering 18 to 54 years.</p>
	<p>57% of economically active respondents had a significantly lower proportion in favour of maintaining the Hazlitt Arts centre compared to 75% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>65% of white groups respondents were in favour of maintaining the Hazlitt Arts centre compared to 45% of respondents from minority groups.</p> <p>More than one in five respondents from minority groups responded, 'don't know'.</p>
	<p>21% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years responded 'don't know' when asked about the approach for the Hazlitt Arts Centre. This is significantly greater than for all the other length of time at current address groups.</p>

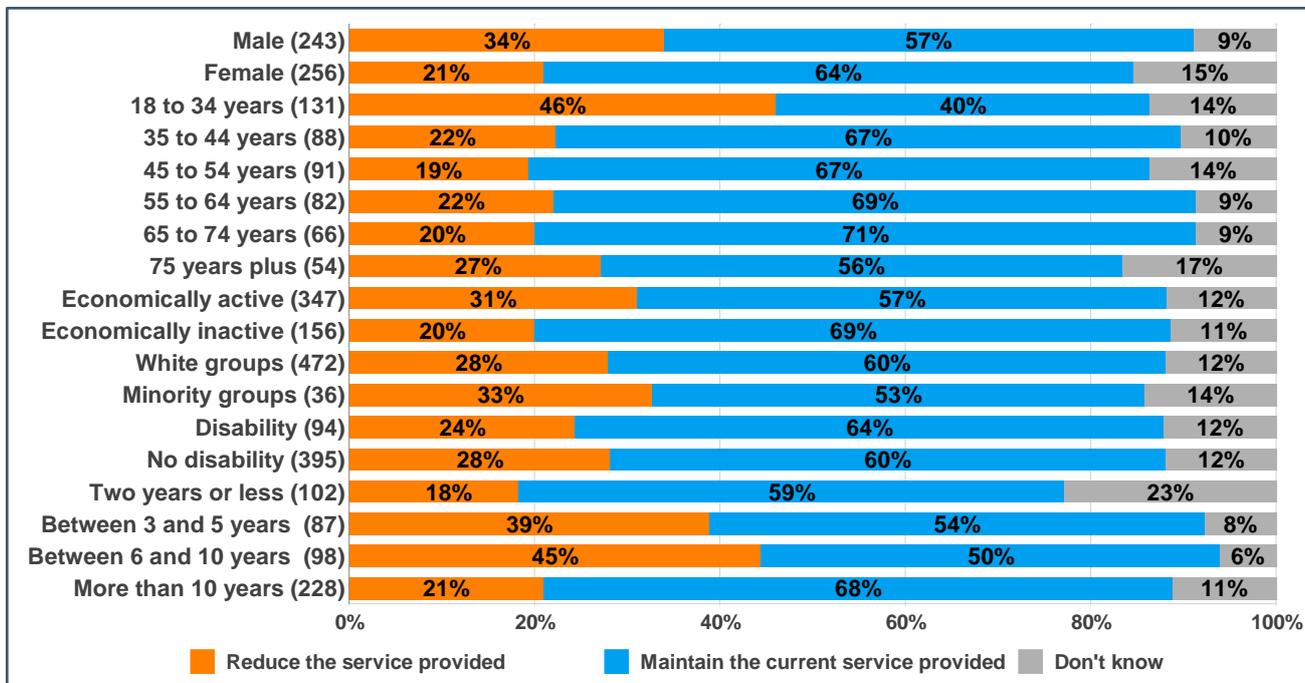
Community Halls & Facilities

- 515 responses were received to this question.
- The most common response was 'maintain the current service provided' with 310 (60.2%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

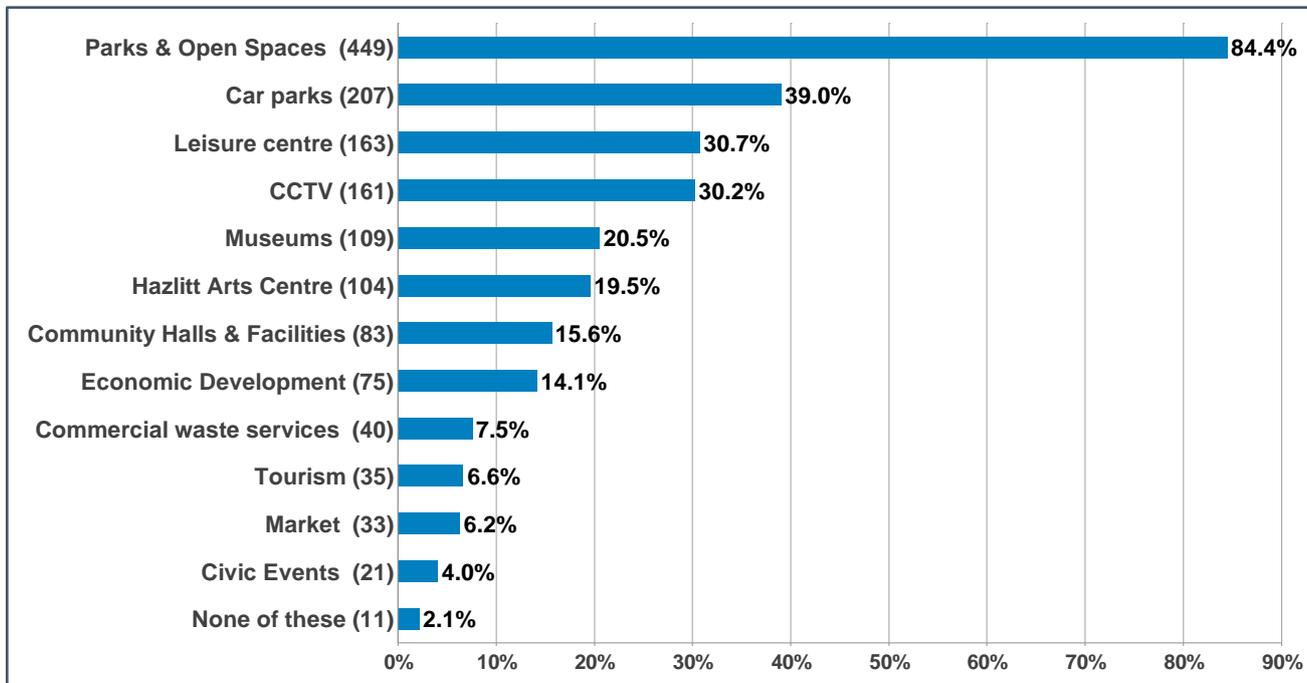


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Community Halls and Facilities with 34% answering this way compared to 21% of female respondents. Female respondents could be considered to be more uncertain of the approach to take for commercial waste with 15% answering 'don't know' compared to 9% of male respondents answering the same.</p>
	<p>46% of male respondents aged 18 to 34 years felt that Community Halls and Facilities should be reduced at 46%. This result is significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>Economically active respondents were more in favour of maintaining community halls and facilities with 57% answering this way compared to 69% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>23% of respondents who had lived at their current address for less than two years responded 'don't know' when asked about the approach for community halls and facilities. This was a significantly greater than for all the other 'length of time at current' address groups.</p>

Most important Discretionary Services

Survey respondents were provided with a list of services Maidstone Council provide and were asked to select up to three which they felt were the most important.

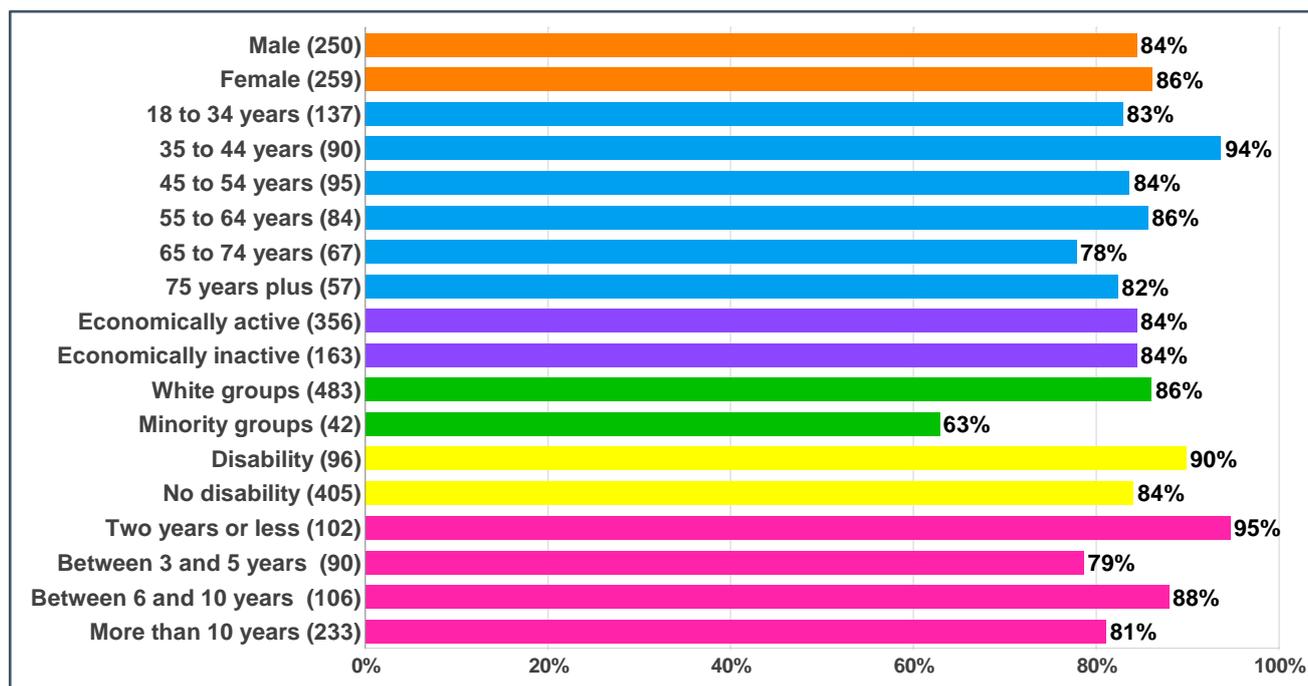
- 532 responses were received.
- The top three most important services were Parks & Open Spaces, Car Parks and the Leisure Centre.
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Civic Events, Market and Tourism.



Demographic Differences for the top three services are explored in more detail in the charts and tables below.

Parks & Open Spaces

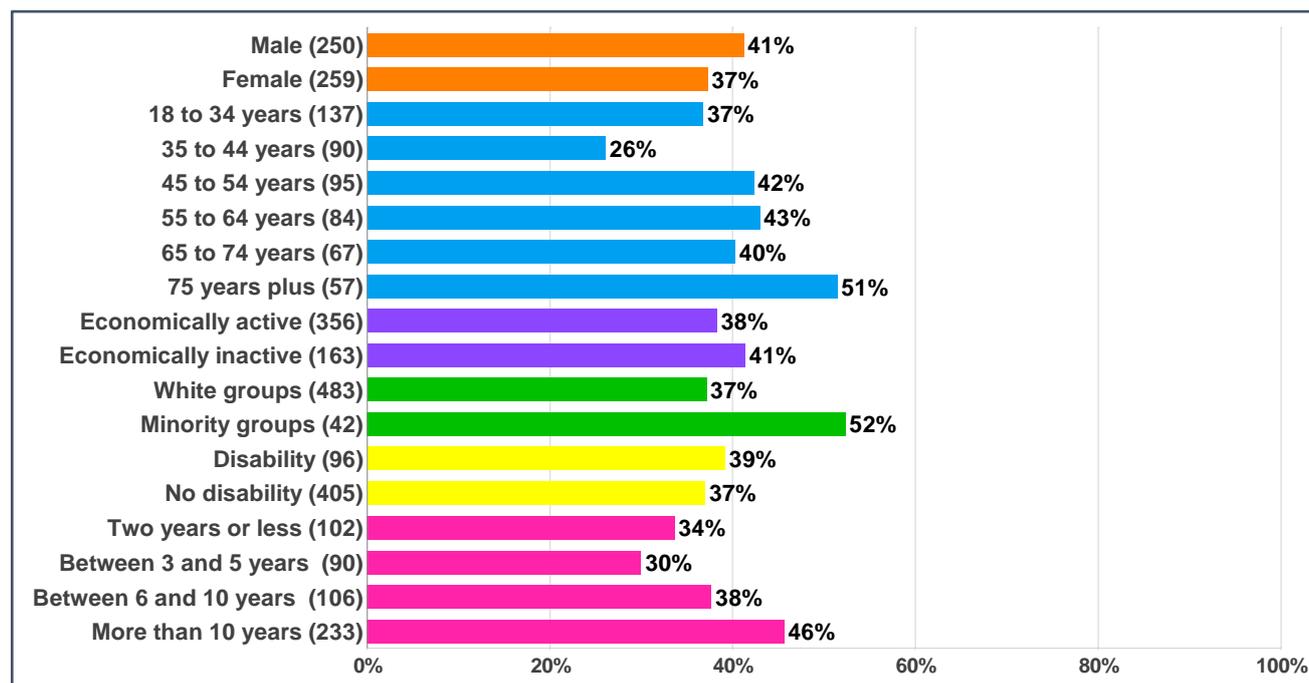
The differences in the proportions selecting Parks & Open Spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>94% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years selected Parks & Open Spaces as being one of their most important services. This is significantly greater than for all the other age groups.</p>
	<p>Respondents from white groups choose Parks & Open Spaces as being one of the most important to them with 86% selecting this service compared to 63% of respondents from minority groups.</p>
	<p>95% of respondents who had lived at their current address for less than two years selected Park & Open Spaces as being one of the most important services. This is significantly greater than the other 'length of time at current address' groups.</p>

Car Parks

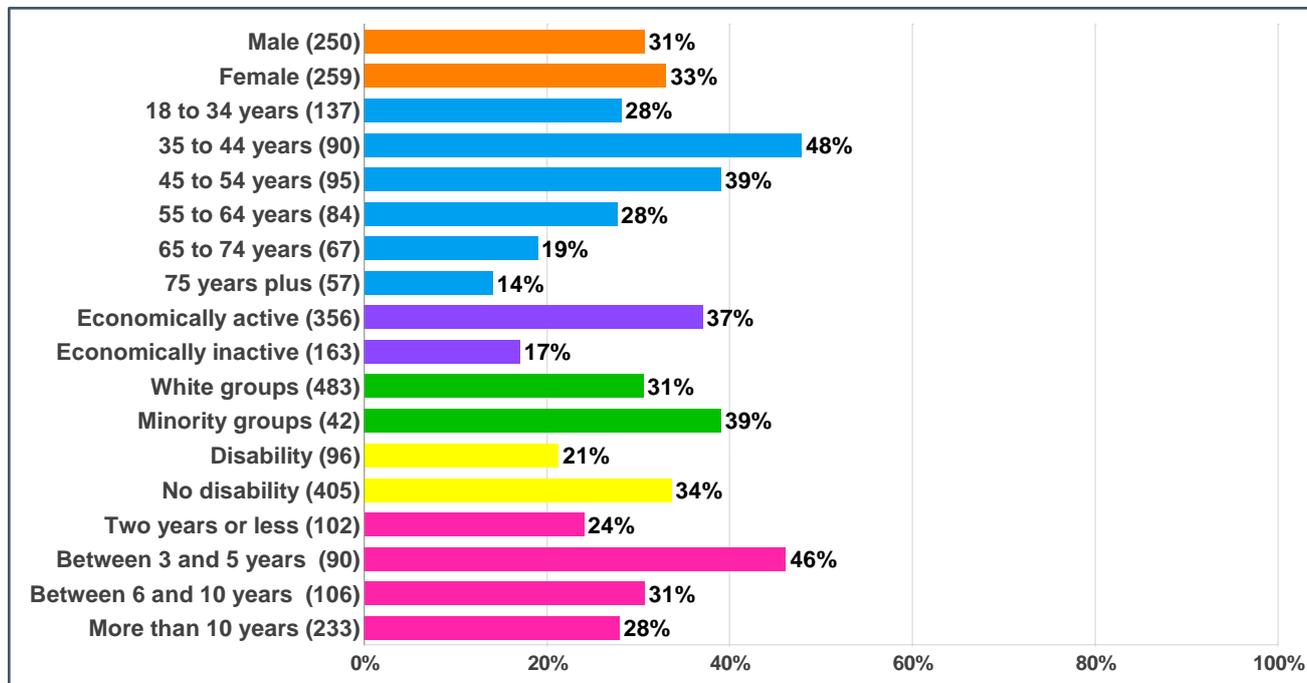
The differences in the proportions selecting Car Parks across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years selected Car Parks as being one of their most important services. This is significantly lower than for all the other age groups.</p>
	<p>46% of respondents who have lived at their current address for more than ten years selected Car Parks as being one of the most important services to them. This is significantly greater than for those who have lived at their address less than five years.</p>

Leisure Centre

The differences in the proportions selecting the Leisure Centre across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>14% of respondents aged 75 years and over selected the Leisure Centre as being one of their most important services. This is significantly lower than the proportion selecting this service for the other age groups up to 64 years.</p>
	<p>Economically active respondents were more likely to choose the Leisure Centre as more important to them with 37% selecting this service compared to 17% of economically inactive respondents.</p>
	<p>A lower proportion of respondents with a disability choose the Leisure Centre as being one of the most important to them with 21% selecting this service compared to 34% of respondents without a disability.</p>
	<p>46% of respondents who have lived at their current address for more than ten years selected the Leisure Centre as being one of the most important services. This was a significantly greater proportion than for all the other 'length of time at address' groups.</p>

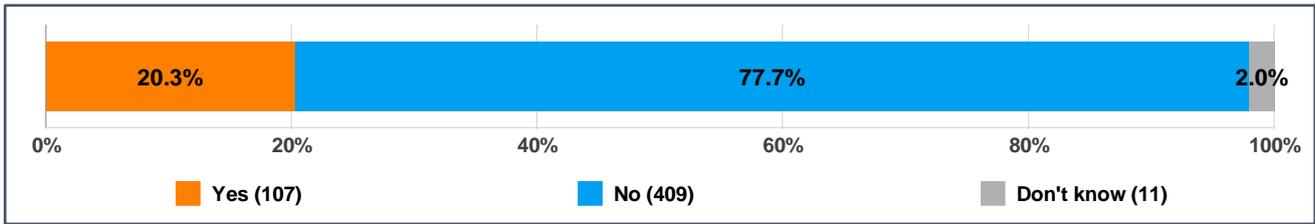
Future fees and Spending

Survey respondents were asked if they were willing to pay more for some of the discretionary services that the Council provided.

Car Parking

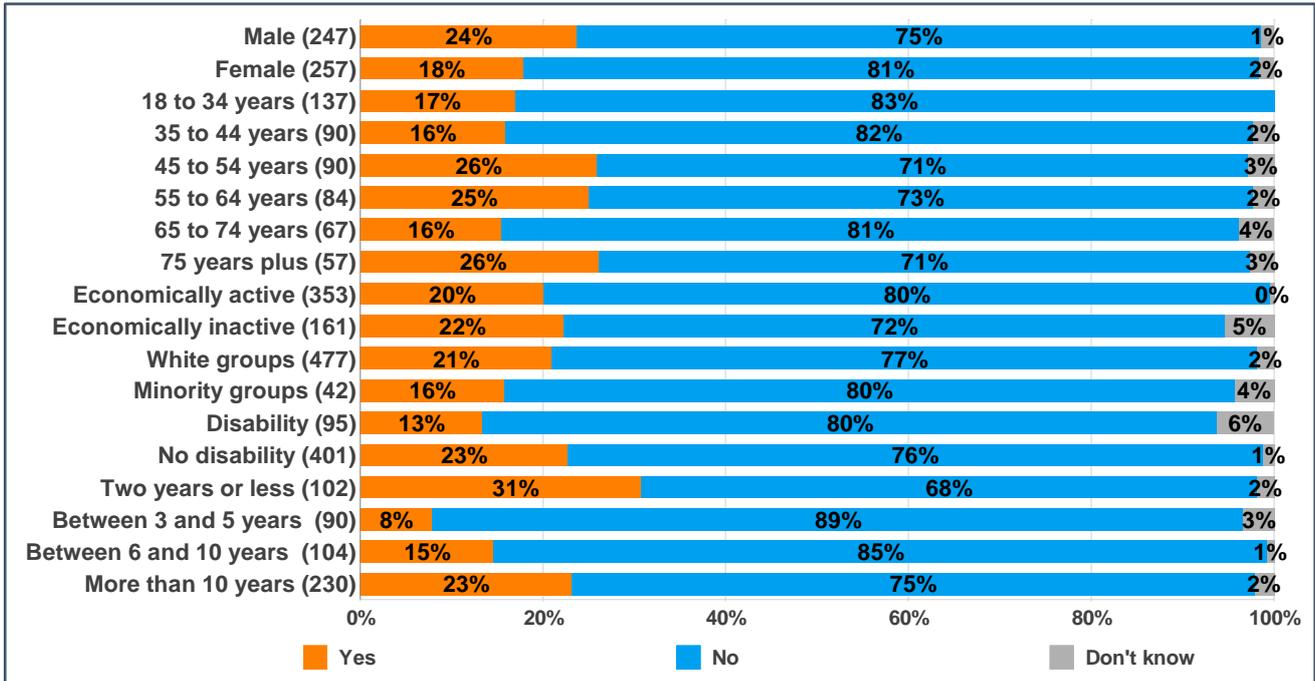
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for car parking in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of parking in the borough for context.

- 526 responses were received to this question.
- Overall, respondents were not in favour of increasing charges for car parking.
- The most common response was 'no' with 409 (77.7%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

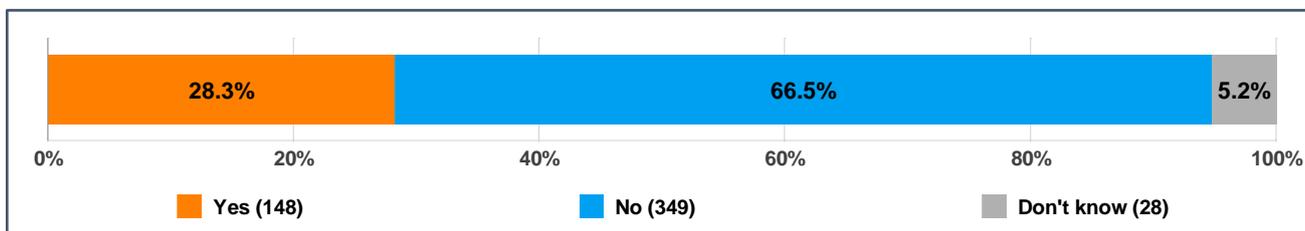


	<p>83% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said they were unwilling to pay more for car parking, significantly more than for the 45 to 54 years group where 71% were against raising charges for car parking.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about raising charges for car parking with 5% answering this way compared to 0.4% of economically active respondents answering this way.</p>
	<p>Respondents without a disability were willing to pay more for car parking with 23% selecting this service compared to 13% of respondents with a disability.</p>
	<p>31% of respondents who had lived at their current address for less than two years were willing to pay more for car parking. This is significantly greater than respondents who had lived at their current address for between three and five years and between six and ten years.</p>

Garden Waste

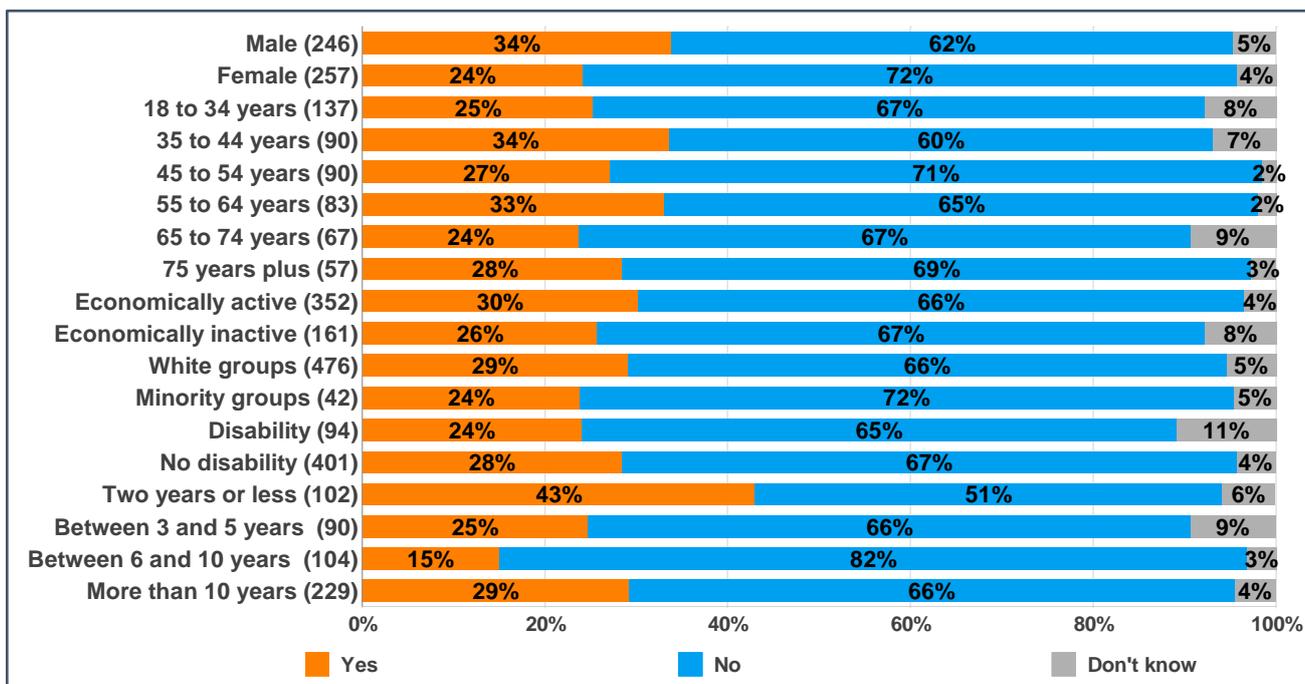
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for garden waste collections. They were provided with the current costs of garden waste collections in the borough for context.

- 525 responses were received to this question.
- Overall, respondents were not in favour of increasing charges for the garden waste service.
- The most common response was ‘no’ with 349 (66.5%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<p>Male respondents were willing to pay more for the garden waste service with 34% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about raising charges for garden waste with 8% answering this way compared to 4% of economically active respondents.</p>
	<p>Respondents with a disability were more uncertain about raising charges for garden waste with 11% answering this way compared to 4% of respondents without a disability.</p>

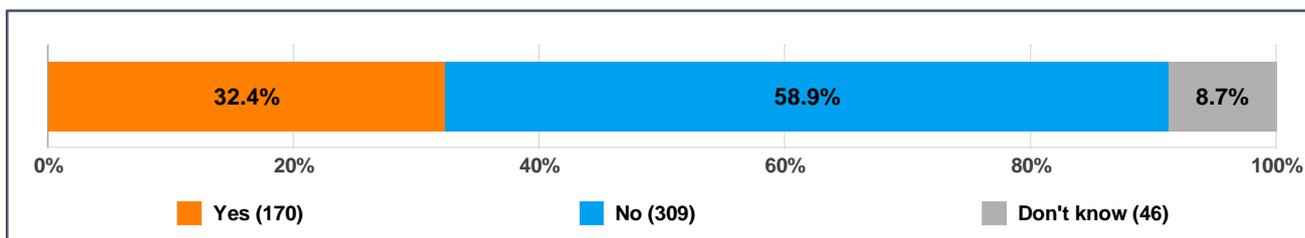


82% of respondent who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said they were not willing to pay more for garden waste services. This is significantly greater than the 'other length of time at current address' groups.

Leisure Facilities

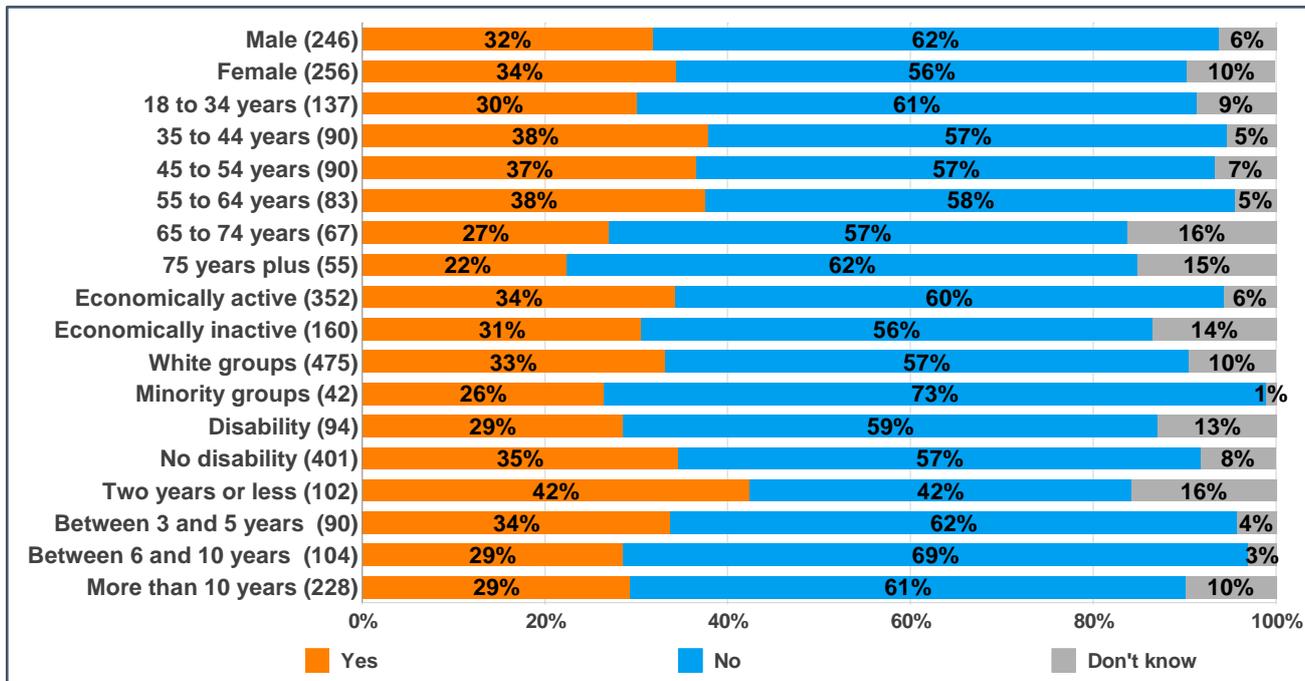
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of leisure services per council tax band D property in the borough for context.

- A total of 524 responses were received to this question.
- Overall, respondents were not in favour of increasing charges for leisure facilities.
- The most common response was 'No' with 309 (58.9%) answering this way.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.

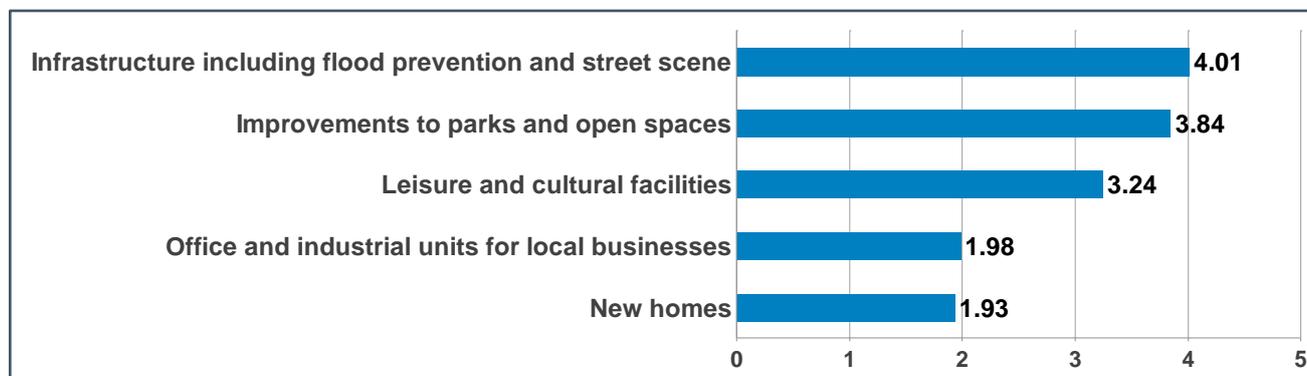


	<p>The 65 to 74 years and 75 years and over age groups had the greatest proportion of respondents that were uncertain if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities at 16% and 15% respectively. These was significantly more than the proportions of respondents that answered this way for the younger age groups.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about paying more for leisure services with 14% answering this way compared to 6% of economically active respondents.</p>
	<p>42% of respondents who have lived at their current address for less than two years said they were unwilling to pay more for leisure services. This is significantly lower than all the other 'length of time at current address' groups.</p>

Priorities & Investment

Survey respondents were asked to place a list of investment programme priorities into their preferred order of importance. A total of 518 respondents ranked the investment priorities.

To assess this data, a weighted average has been used. The programmes placed first received 5 points and the programmes ranked last were given 1 point. These were then added together and divided by the number of respondents to give a weighted average.



This question was asked in the 2022 Budget Survey. The order of priorities is unchanged.

Demographic Differences

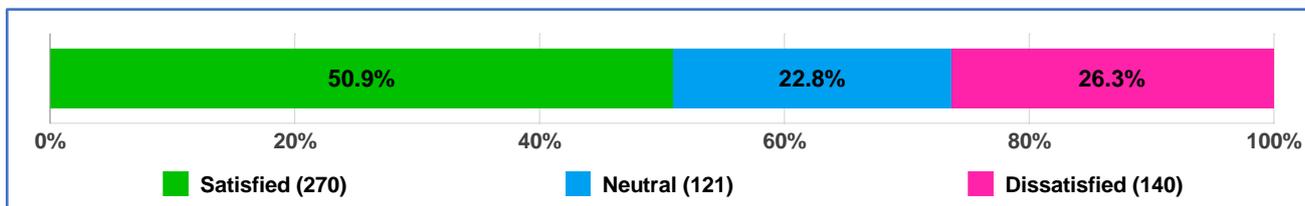
The table below outlines the differences between the ranking of the priorities across the demographic groups.

	Male respondents ranked new homes as their lowest priority while female respondents' ranked office and industrial units for local businesses was their lowest priority. The top three priorities for both groups align with the overall results.
	Respondents aged 35 to 44 years placed 'improvements to parks and open spaces' as their top priority whereas all the other age groups places this second. Both the 18 to 34 years and 55 to 64 years placed 'office and industrial units for local businesses' as their lowest, all of the other age groups places 'new homes' as their lowest priority.
	Economically active respondents ranked 'new homes' as their lowest priority, economic inactive respondents placed 'office and industrial units for local businesses' as their lowest priority.
	Respondents from minority groups placed 'improvements to parks and open spaces as their top priority and infrastructure including flood prevention and street scene' as second. The response profile for white groups matched the overall result.
	Respondents with a disability ranked industrial units for local businesses' as their lowest priority. The profile for respondents without a disability matched the overall result.
	Respondents who had lived at their current address for between 3 and 5 years placed 'improvements to parks and open spaces as their top priority and infrastructure including flood prevention and street scene' as second. Respondents who have lived at their current address for less than 2 years placed 'Office and industrial units for local businesses' as their lowest priority.

Local Area Satisfaction

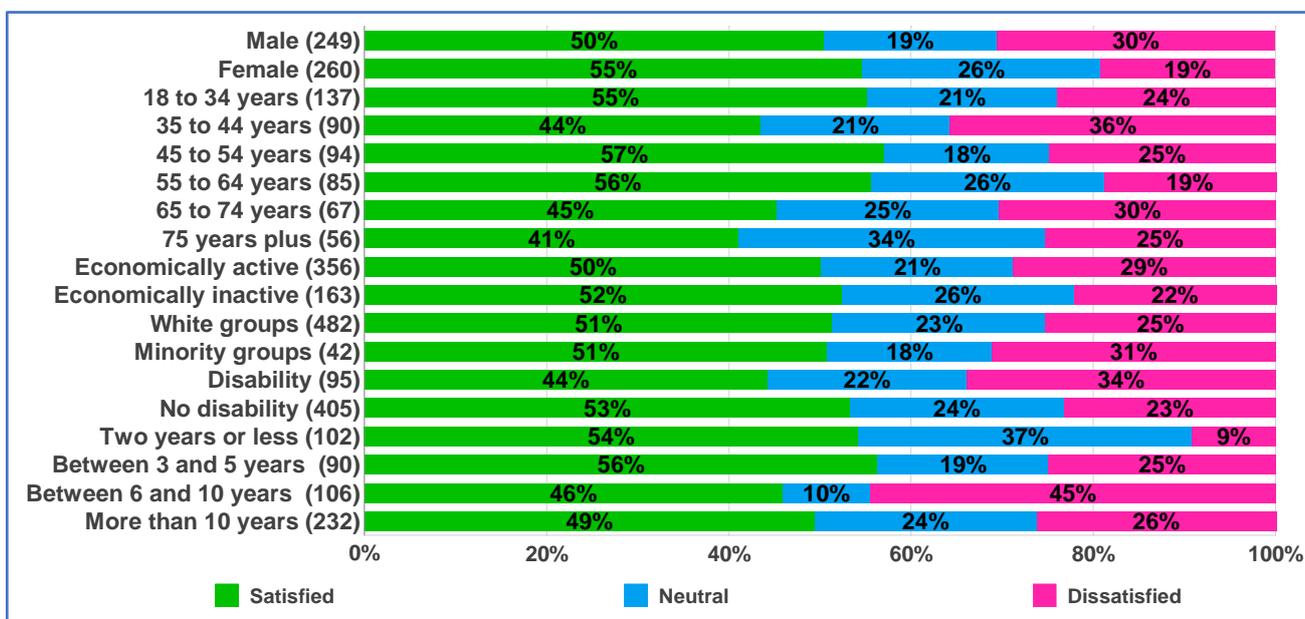
Survey respondents were asked: ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?’ and given a five-point scale from ‘very satisfied’ to ‘very dissatisfied’.

- 531 respondents to this question.
- The most common response was ‘fairly satisfied’ with 224 answering this way.
- Overall, 50.9% of respondents were positive about the local area in which they live.
- In the last Budget Survey, undertaken in Autumn 2022, 57.8% of respondents answered positively.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



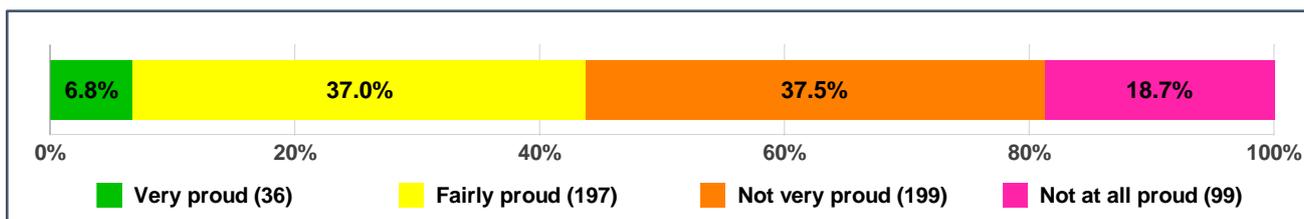
	<p>A greater proportion male respondents were dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live with 30% answering this way compared to 19% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>19% of respondents aged 55 to 64 years dissatisfied, this is significantly lower than the proportion answering the same for the 35 to 44 years group where 36% answered this way.</p>
	<p>A greater proportion of respondents with a disability were dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live with 34% answering this way compared to 23% of respondents without a disability.</p>

	<p>45% of respondents who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years were more dissatisfied than the proportions answering this way across the other length of time at current address groups.</p>
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Pride in Maidstone Borough

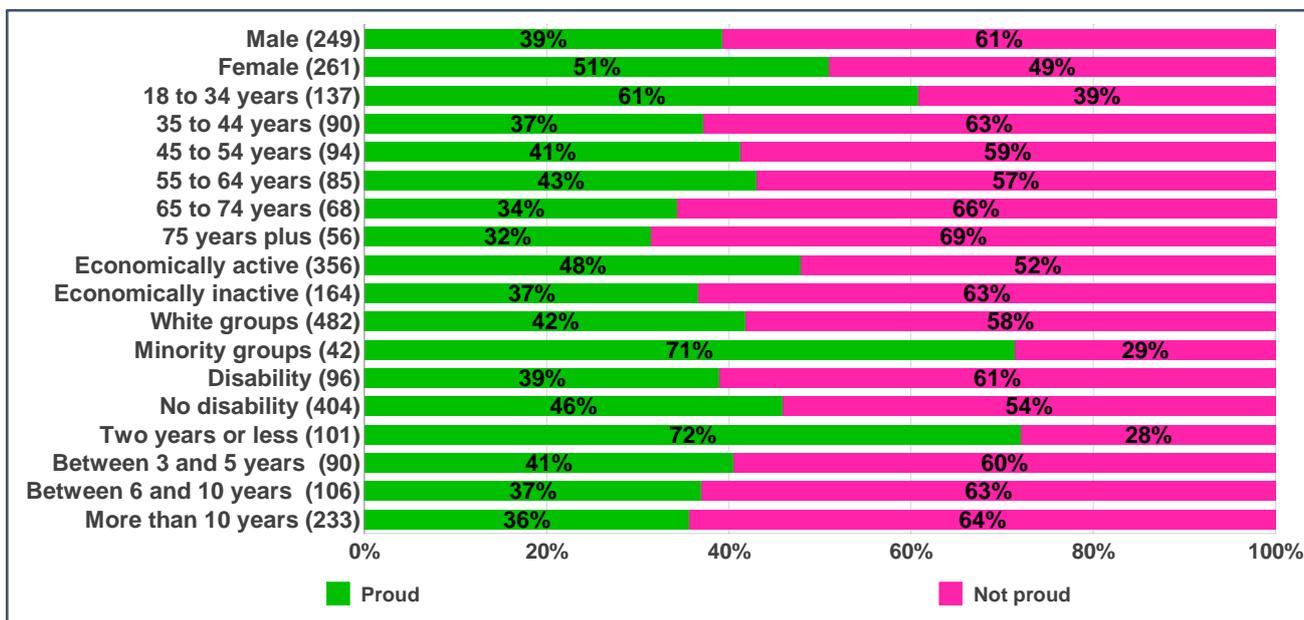
The survey asked respondents: 'How proud are you of Maidstone Borough?'

- 531 responded to this question.
- The most common response was 'not very fairly proud' with 199 answering this way.
- Overall, 43.8% said they were either 'very proud' or 'fairly proud' of Maidstone Borough.
- In the last Budget Survey, undertaken in Autumn 2022, 50.7% of respondents answered positively.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the proportions that answered positively and negatively for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<p>A greater proportion of Male respondents answered negatively when asked how proud they are of Maidstone Borough with 61% answering this way compared to 49% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>39% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years answered negatively, this result was significantly lower than the proportions answering this way across the other age groups.</p>

	<p>More economically inactive respondents answered negatively when asked how proud they are of Maidstone Borough with 63% answering this way compared to 52% of economically active respondents.</p>
	<p>A greater proportion of respondents from minority groups answered positively when asked how proud they are of Maidstone Borough with 71% answering this way compared to 42% of white group respondents.</p>
	<p>72% of respondents who have lived at their current address answered positively. This was significantly greater than the proportions answering this way across the other 'length of time' at address groups.</p>

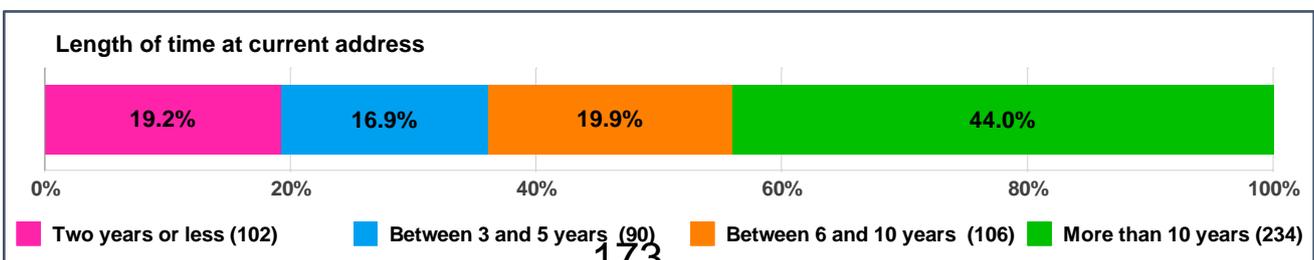
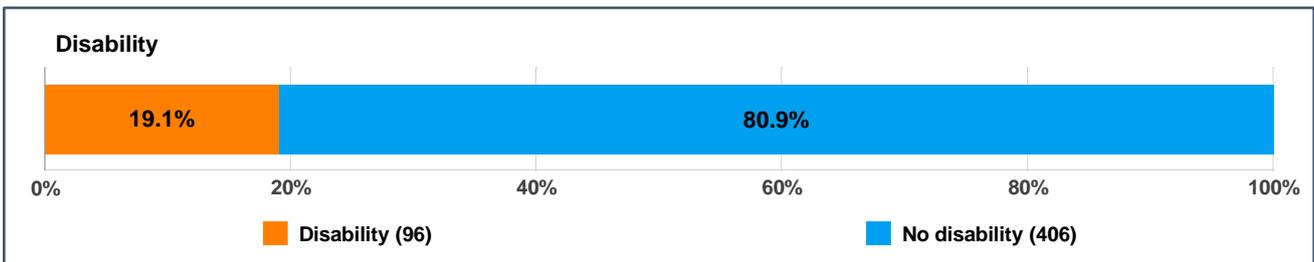
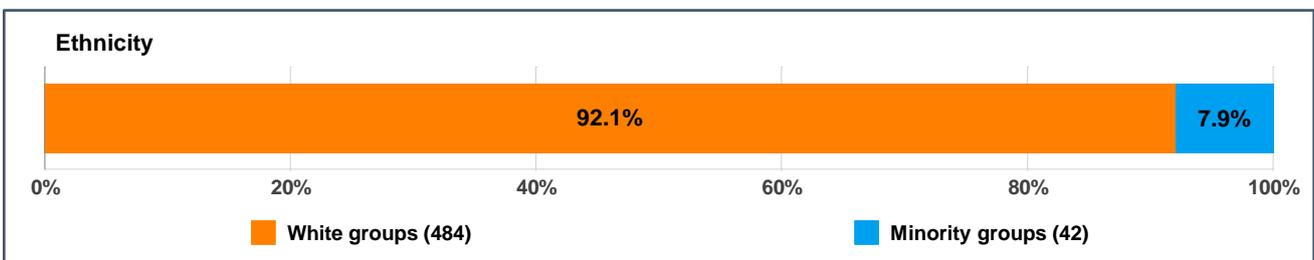
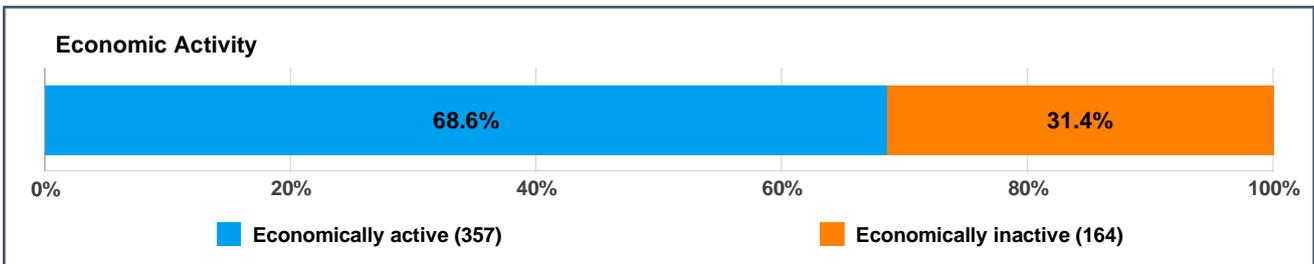
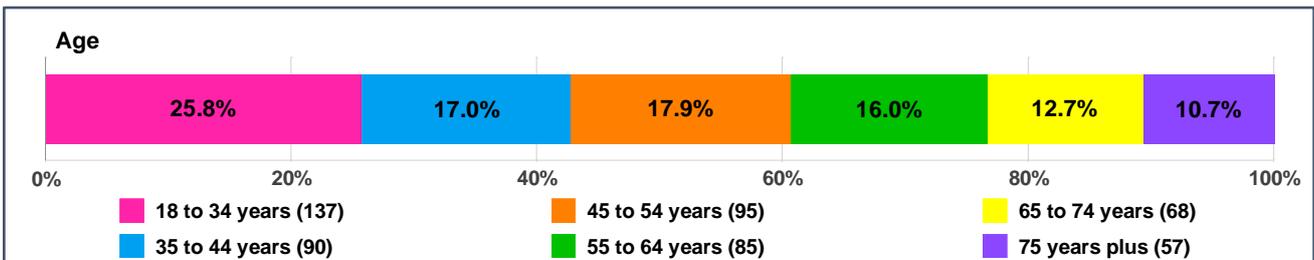
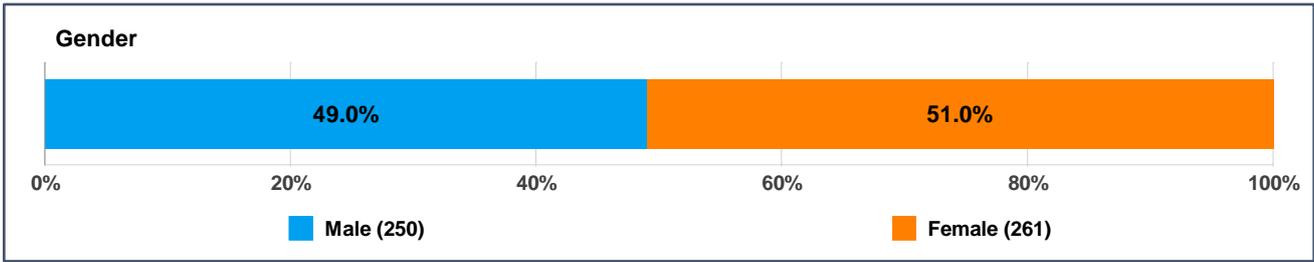
Budget Comments

Respondents to the survey were given the opportunity to make additional comments about the Council's budget and the funding of services. A total of 175 comments were received. These comments have been grouped into themes, with some comments containing multiple themes.

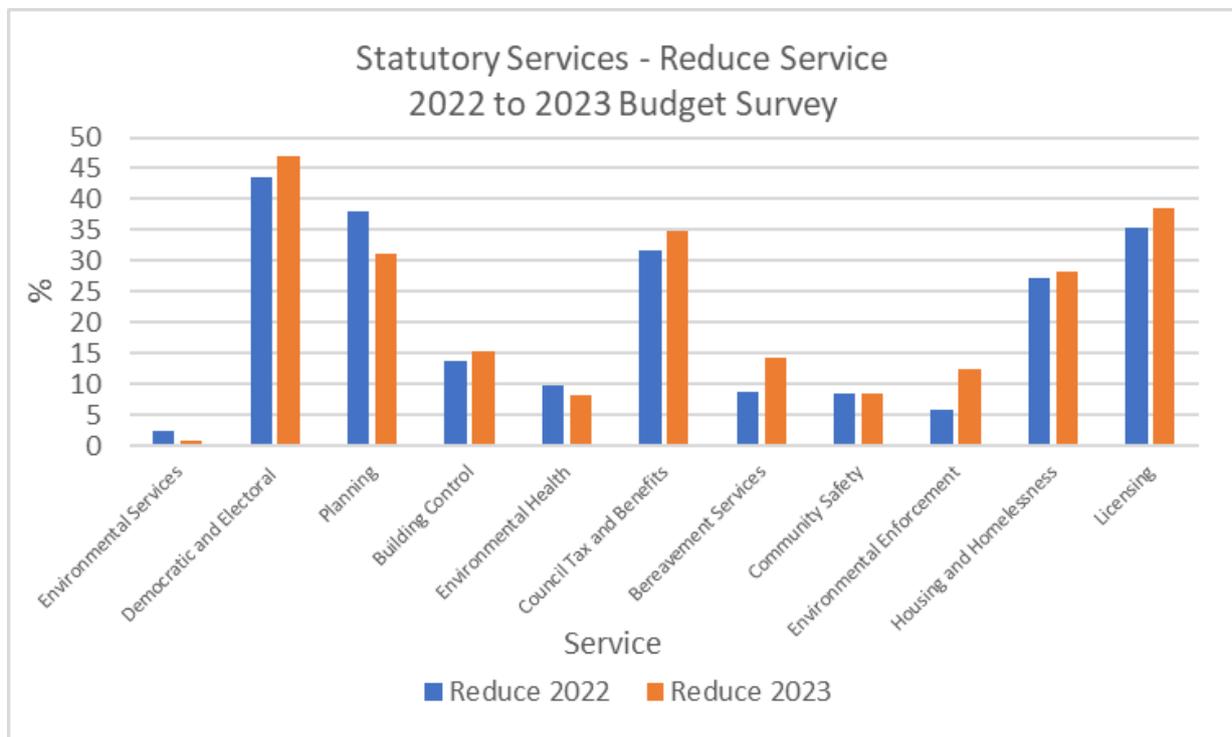
The table below provides a summary of the comments for each of the top ten themes identified.

Theme	No.	Summary
Budget	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No option to select increase services/spending. • Too much money is wasted. • Invest in income generating assets. • Get rid of Parish Councils • Get rid of Borough Councillors. • Maidstone should get a larger proportion from Council Tax.
Planning & Development	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more new homes. • Maidstone has been spoilt by over development. • Stop building until appropriate infrastructure in place.
Roads & Traffic	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a ring road. • Maidstone gridlocked. • The current road network cannot support all of the development/house building in the borough. • Too many roadworks and closures – this puts off investors and visitors.
Crime & Policing	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough visible policing. • A lot of anti-social behaviour – especially in the Town Centre. • Focus on maintaining safety.
Infrastructure	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of development without relevant infrastructure. • Stop building until infrastructure is sorted. • Current infrastructure is not being maintained or improved.
Town Centre	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Town Centre requires improvement. • Empty shops deter visitors. • The Town Centre needs to attract new businesses and investment. • Too much focus on housing in the Town Centre rather than shops.
Cleanliness	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend money on cleaning and litter picking. • The town centre is like a rubbish tip. • The Town Centre is filthy and smells bad.
KCC Function	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Tovil Waste Management Site • Unblock drains. • Fill potholes.
Parking	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstate P&R Service. • Reduce or scrap parking charges in the Town Centre. • New homes need parking facilities.
Waste	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly-tipping will increase if Tovil Top closes. • Would pay more for garden waste if the service was better. • The cost of all domestic waste disposal should be free to avoid fly tipping

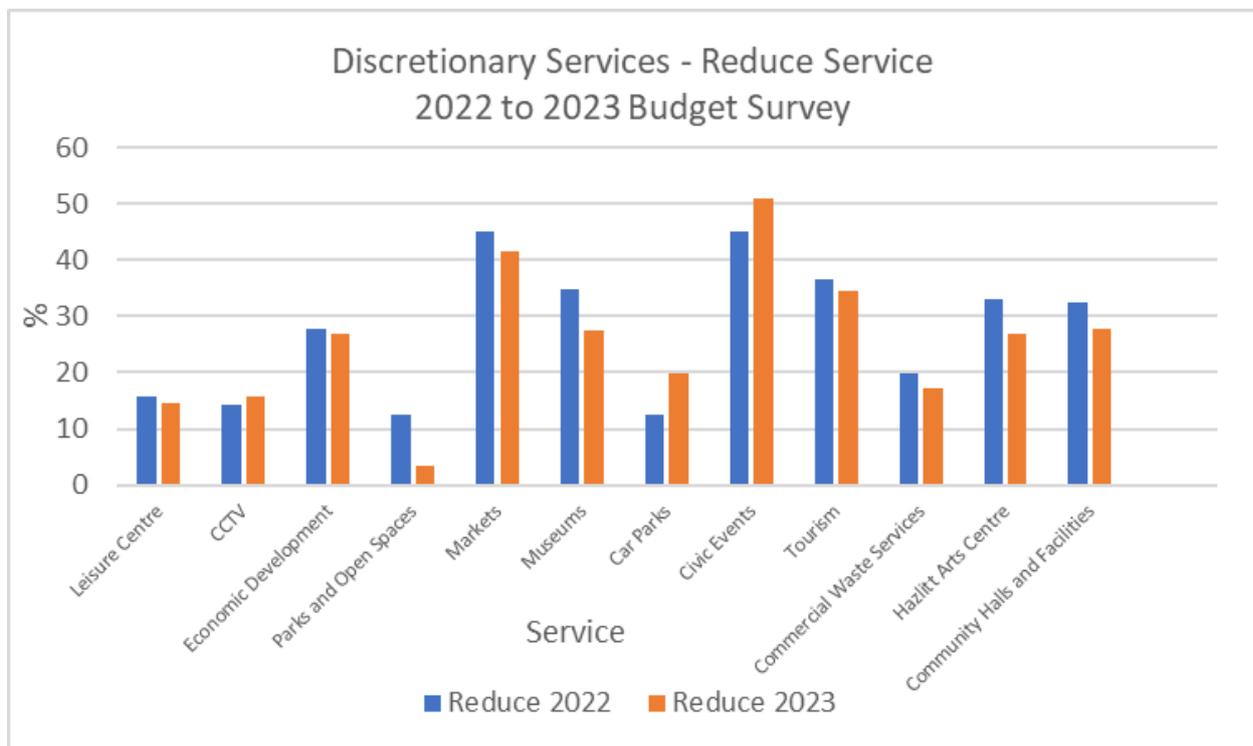
Demographics



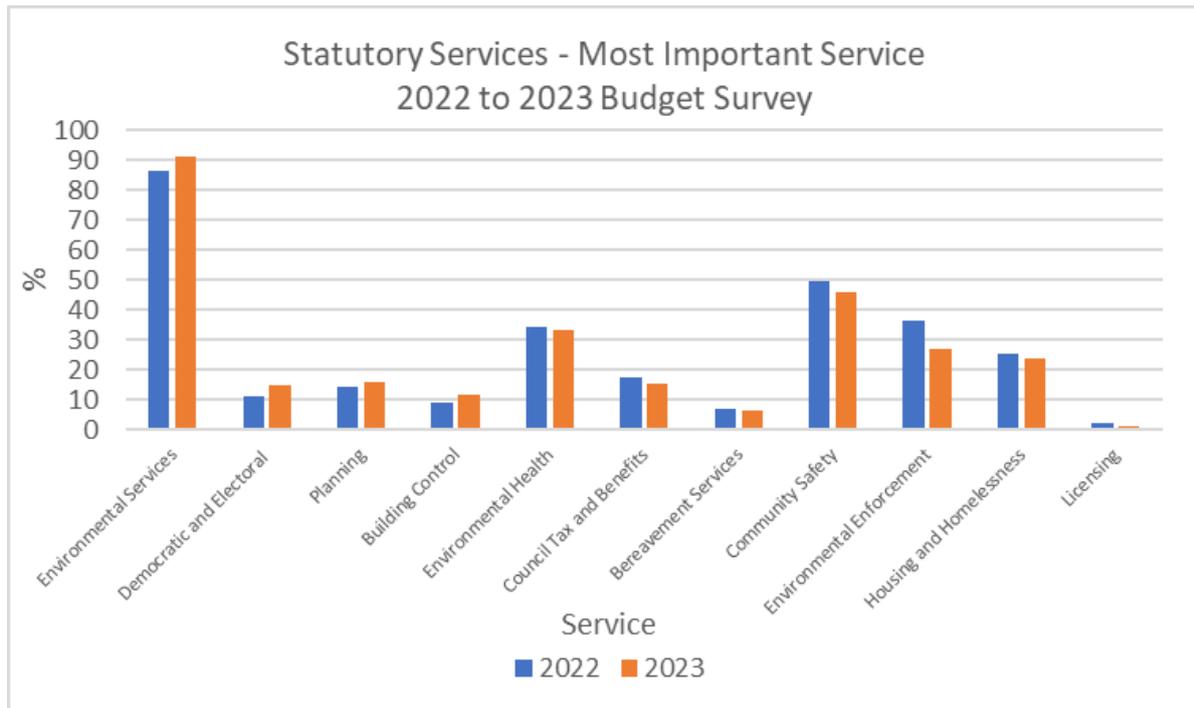
Reduce Statutory Services.



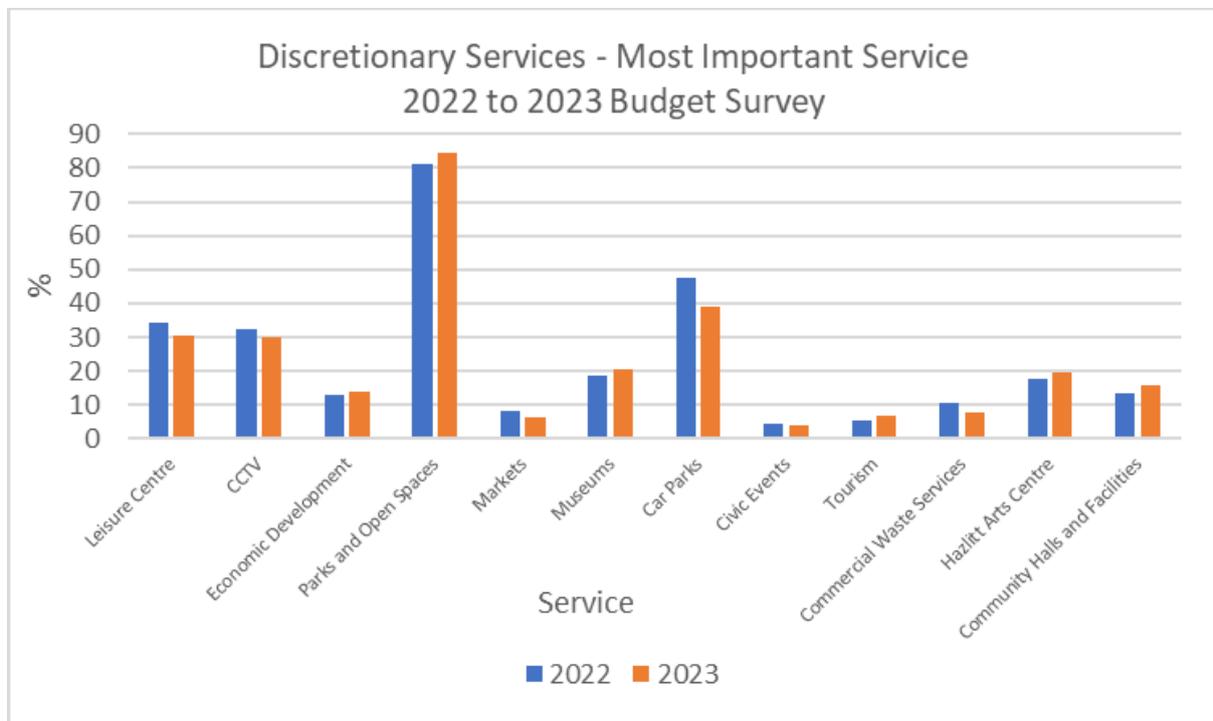
Reduce Discretionary Services.



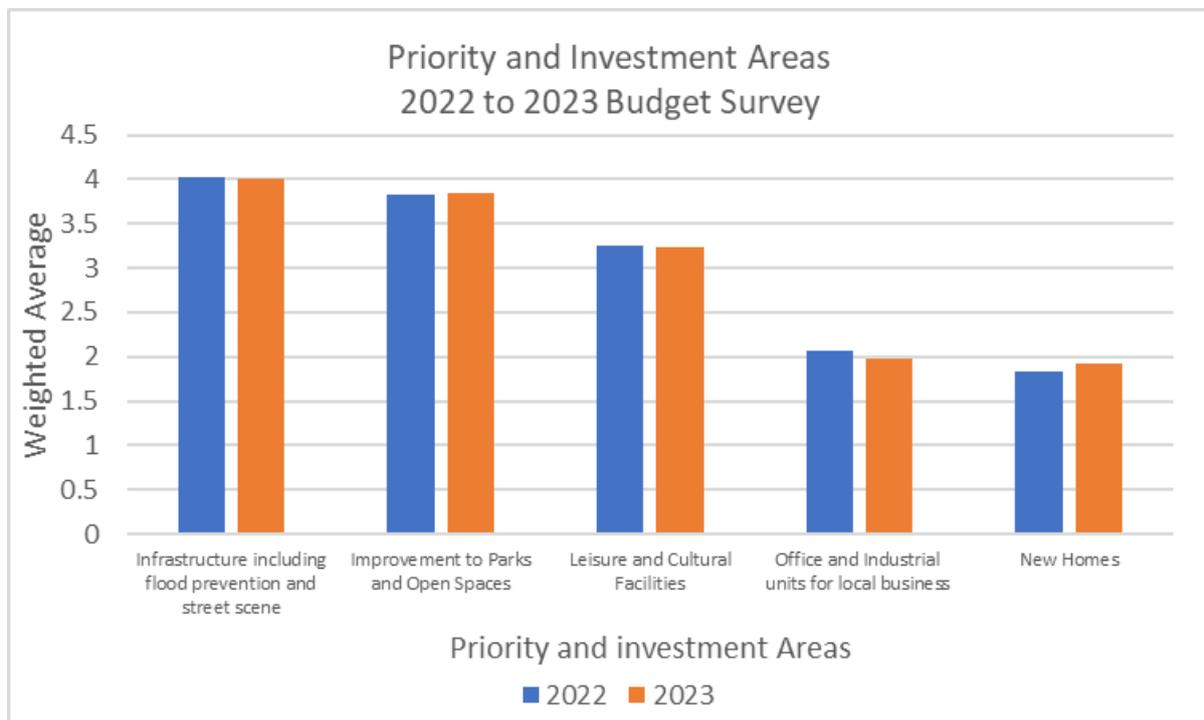
Most Important Statutory Services.



Most Important Discretionary Services.



Priorities and Investment Areas



The weighted average has been used. The programmes placed first received 5 points and the programmes ranked last were given 1 point. These were then added together and divided by the number of respondents to give a weighted average.