

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 9 January 2018
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Cox (Vice-Chairman), English, Munford, Prendergast, Springett, de Wiggondene-Sheppard, Wilby and Willis

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Issued on 21 December 2017

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PART II

To move that the public be excluded for the items set out in Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

	Head of Schedule 12 A and Brief Description	
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PUBLIC SPEAKING

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, please contact 01622 602272 or by email on committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting. If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk or 01622 602272. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the Policy and Resources Committee, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by three Councillors, to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 29 December 2017

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor D Burton (Chairman) and Councillors Cox, English, Munford, Prendergast, Springett, de Wiggondene-Sheppard and Willis

94. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillor Wilby.

It was noted that apologies for lateness were received from Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard.

95. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

96. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

97. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

98. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

99. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that Councillor English had been lobbied on Agenda Item 13 – Review of Air Quality Management Area and Low Emissions Strategy and Agenda Item 14 – Air Quality Development Plan Document (Local Plan) – Scoping.

100. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

101. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER ADJOURNED TO 13
NOVEMBER

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November adjourned to 13 November be approved as a correct record and signed.

102. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

103. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mrs Maureen Cleator asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee:

With over 500 units being built on Springfield site and the Royal Engineers Road, what plans have been put in place to ensure that we don't end up with the traffic situation such as on the Hermitage Lane, which is basically chaos?

The Chairman of the Committee replied that:

The response I have for you is drawn largely from the detail in our Local Plan.

Included within Policy H1 (11), which is the Springfield allocation, there are criteria which address highways and transport matters. Access to the site will be taken from the A229 Springfield and A229 Royal Engineers roundabouts only. Improvements to and provision of pedestrian and cycle links is required to facilitate connections with the town centre. Finally, improvements are required to the eastern bank of the river towpath for pedestrian and cycle use. As part of the planning process, a transport assessment will be required to explain how impacts of the development will be mitigated. This will be assessed by Maidstone Borough Council as the local planning authority and Kent County Council as the highways authority.

Mrs Cleator then asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Committee:

From the answer you have given me, are there no further improvements to the roundabout at the Barracks, because it is actually very chaotic now, never mind when 500 extra houses are built there?

The Chairman of the Committee replied that:

Any further improvements will be drawn out of the transport assessment. There is a package of highways improvements across the Borough and further improvements may feature through that as well.

Mrs Jane Darling asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee:

I noted on the local plan it states that on this development the target rates for affordable housing provision within the Maidstone area will be

30%, with the exception of policy H1(11) Springfield, Royal Engineers Road which is set at 20%; where there will only be a provision for 20% affordable housing, what is the reason for this?

The Chairman of the Committee replied that:

When the Local Plan was submitted it was supported by a viability study (DEL 002 Revised Plan and CIL Viability Study) which determined that 30% affordable housing at H1 (11) Springfield is not feasible due to site constraints. As a result, a 30% affordable housing requirement would have resulted in limited capacity to provide for necessary supporting infrastructure. The lower requirement of 20% would allow for an appropriate balance of affordable housing with the need to provide infrastructure.

Mrs Darling then asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Committee:

I have actually read what you have just read to me and I simply don't understand what it means. What does the viable bit mean? Why is it that 20% affordable housing is more manageable? What are the site constraints?

The Chairman of the Committee replied that:

In simple terms, the viability study looks at: the cost of the site, the cost of construction, the cost of providing affordable housing and the other associated infrastructure. It then comes to a conclusion of whether it is commercially viable to deliver the site or not. If there wasn't enough margin in the project then the site would lay dormant and no developer would bring it forwards. I think that that is a major issue across the whole of the country as developers are sitting on sites and not developing and we did not wish that to be the case for this site based upon a very thin viability assessment.

104. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2017/18.

It was noted that the Committee were content that the report setting out the new Key Performance Indicators need not be presented to them in February.

It was noted that Kent County Council were consulting on bus services and that an item be added to the work programme to enable the Committee to submit a formal response.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

105. OUTSIDE BODIES - VERBAL UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

There were no verbal updates from Members.

106. REVIEW OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA AND LOW EMISSIONS STRATEGY

The Mid-Kent Environmental Protection Team Leader presented the review of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and the Low Emissions Strategy to the Committee.

It was noted that:

- The Low Emissions Strategy demonstrated that Maidstone Borough Council was committed to improving air quality with the Borough.
- The changes to the AQMA would enable the Council to focus resources on the areas with genuinely poor air quality.
- There were 32 individual actions in the Action Plan that accompanied the Low Emissions Strategy and were categorised into the following themes: transport, planning, procurement, property and carbon management, and public health. The actions were numbered under each theme according to the greatest potential impact on air quality, with the first number having the greatest impact.
- The proposed Low Emissions Strategy, its associated Action Plan and the revision of the AQMA were all subject to specific consultation. The public consultation ran for 8 weeks and included direct contact with Councillors and Parish Councillors, as well as with statutory consultees and special interest groups.
- Progress on the Action Plan would be reviewed and reported to the Committee annually.

In response to questions from the Committee the Mid-Kent Environmental Protection Team Leader replied that:

- The Council could only impose conditions on taxi licenses that were registered in the Borough. However, Officers could look into the introduction of a low emission zone or a clean air zone in the town centre. The Committee then suggested that One Maidstone could be approached to explore opportunities such as their Business Improvement District bid to promote clean air in the Borough and to investigate possible funding for the aforementioned zones.
- The NOx tubes were reviewed regularly and an annual screening report had been sent to DEFRA which complimented the Council on the movement of the tubes.
- Officers would add an action into the Action Plan to inform parents not to leave their cars idle outside schools through the use of a banner campaign.

The Strategic Planning Manager informed the Committee that he did not anticipate the action in the 'Planning 1' theme taking 3-5 years, but instead two years.

The Committee discussed the continuous monitoring station which used to be located on the gyratory system. It was noted that there had been difficulty in finding a suitable location for the continuous monitoring station since the gyratory system had been improved. Therefore, the Committee requested that a report be brought back at the earliest opportunity to set out an appropriate alternative to monitor air quality in the Borough.

It was noted that Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard arrived at 6.53 p.m. during consideration of this item.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Low Emissions Strategy be adopted.
2. That the associated Action Plan be adopted, subject to the following amendments being made:
 - a. An addition of an action to inform parents not to leave their cars idle outside schools using a banner campaign;
 - b. To cooperate with One Maidstone to explore opportunities such as their Business Improvement District bid to promote clean air in the Borough; and
 - c. An amendment to the timescale of the 'Planning 1' theme to 2 years (found on page 50 of the agenda).
3. That the revised Air Quality Management Area included at Appendix 2 be approved.

Voting: Unanimous

Note: Councillor English left the meeting at 7.25 p.m. before the voting on this item, but returned before consideration of the next item. Therefore, Councillor English did not vote on this item.

107. AIR QUALITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (LOCAL PLAN) - SCOPING

The Principal Planning Officer (Strategic Planning) presented this item and highlighted to the Committee that:

- The second recommendation on the papers should refer to paragraphs 1.7 to 1.12 instead of paragraphs 1.6 to 1.11.
- The Planning Department could play a significant role in the objectives of the Low Emissions Strategy in securing mitigation measures in conjunction with development. This included

encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes, as well as the adoption of new technologies such as electric vehicle charging points which had the potential to reduce emissions.

- The Local Plan Inspector considered air quality in depth during the Local Plan process. The Inspector considered that there was a need for more robust mitigation measures centred on modal shift for purposes of both the transport strategy and for improving air quality.
- Policy DM6 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan set out a sequential approach for assessing and addressing the air quality impacts of new development and that Policy DM6 would continue to have full weight whilst the new Local Plan was being prepared.
- The Inspector had signalled that there was a changing local and national context and that more urgent work needed to be done to improve air quality. This was the reason why the Council could not wait until the Local Plan was reviewed to carry out this work.

The Committee requested that the following items be included in the scoping of the Air Quality Development Plan Document:

- Agricultural and horticultural practices, as these can have large impacts on air quality;
- The use of emerging technologies in mitigating the effects of poor air quality;
- The consideration of renewable energy; and
- The accessibility of electric vehicle charging infrastructure for all residents.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Head of Planning & Development be instructed to prepare the Air Quality Local Plan.
2. That the scope of the Air Quality Development Plan Document, described in paragraphs 1.7 to 1.12, be agreed as the basis for progressing the preparation of the plan, but that it also include: consideration of agricultural and horticultural practices, emerging technologies and renewable energy options, with the further addition of accessibility to charging infrastructure.

Voting: Unanimous

108. FEES & CHARGES 2018/19

The Head of Finance presented a report which set out the proposed fees and charges for services within this Committee's remit for 2018/19.

It was highlighted to the Committee that:

- Charges which were determined centrally had been included in Appendix 1 for information.
- The fees for Local Land Charges would increase to align across the shared service, which would result in more efficient administration. If agreed, the new fees would be effective from 6 December 2017.
- No changes were proposed to parking charges for 2018/19.

It was noted that Members requested future budget monitoring reports be presented to this Committee in a different format, displaying the different services in separate tables. This would enable the Committee to monitor each service individually.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed discretionary fees and charges set out in Appendix 1 to this report be agreed.
2. That the centrally determined fees and charges set out in Appendix 1 to this report be noted.
3. That the introduction of increases to Local Land Charges be effective from 6 December 2017.

Voting: Unanimous

109. GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN

The Planning Projects and Delivery Manager presented the Green and Blue Infrastructure Action Plan to the Committee.

It was highlighted to the Committee that the Action Plan could only be delivered in partnership, as the planning, design and management of the Green and Blue Infrastructure resource was the responsibility of many different organisations. The stakeholders had agreed the Draft Action Plan in 2015 following a series of themed workshops.

It was noted that the Committee were encouraged by the progress that had been made on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and thanked all Officers and Members that had been involved.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Head of Planning and Development agreed that information on how the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy could be used during the planning process would be incorporated into the planning training syllabus for Members.

RESOLVED:

That the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy action plan be adopted.

Voting: Unanimous

110. AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

The Planning Officer (Strategic Planning) presented the Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17 to the Committee.

It was noted that:

- This year's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) had been structured differently to the previous year to reflect the monitoring indicators recommended in the Sustainability Appraisal 2017 and the indicators within the Local Plan 2017.
- The Local Plan Planning Inspector had revised the 2016/17 indicators and increased the number from 12 to 50. These indicators would be monitored from 2017/18 onwards.
- The AMR 2016/17 showed that good progress was being made towards the targets of the Local Plan 2017.

RESOLVED:

That the Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17 attached at Appendix 1 be noted.

Voting: Unanimous

111. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

2017/18 WORK PROGRAMME

Report Title	Work Stream	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Tri-Study and Park and Ride Recommendations	Changes to Services & Commissioning	SPS&T	22/01/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Georgia Hawkes
Review of Air Quality Monitoring in Maidstone	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Tracey Beattie	Stuart Maxwell
Planning Service Improvement Plan	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	SPS&T	06/02/2018	William Cornall	
Draft London Plan Consultation Response	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
Neighbourhood Planning Protocol	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Sue Whiteside
Innovation in MBC Car Parks	Changes to Services & Commissioning	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Georgia Hawkes	Jeff Kitson
Q3 Performance Report 2017/18	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Third Quarter Budget Monitoring Report	Corporate Finance and Budgets	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Statement of Community Involvement Draft for Consultation	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Sue Whiteside
Local Development Scheme	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Anna Houghton
Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	Sue Whiteside/Mark Egerton
PDR Greensand Ridge	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
CIL Admin and Governance Arrangements Update	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
20mph Speed Limits / Zones	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
Infrastructure Delivery Update	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
Self Build and Custom Build Register - Issues and Implications	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	Stuart Watson
Local Plan Lessons Learnt	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Local Plan Delivery	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Enforcement Protocol	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	James Bailey
Affordable Housing Delivery	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
Local Plan Review Evidence Base	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Gypsy and Traveller: Need and Supply	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Local Plan Review and Meeting Housing Need	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee / Mark Egerton
Maidstone Integrated Transport Package	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	SPS&T	TBC	John Foster/Rob Jarman	Abi Lewis/Mark Egerton
Duty to Cooperate / Other LPA Key Issues	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
Statement of Community Involvement Adoption	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sue Whiteside
Employment Need and Delivery	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
Member Engagement in Pre-Application Discussions	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	
Planning Performance Agreements Review	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC

Agenda Item 13

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

9 JANUARY 2018

REFERENCE FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-20, 2018-19 REFRESH

At its meeting on 13 December 2017 the Policy and Resources Committee considered the Report of the Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh.

During the debate, the Committee discussed the wording under the priority area of 'Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough'. The Committee highlighted that it was difficult to get around the Borough by any mode of transport in peak hours, not just by car. However as this priority area was owned by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee it was appropriate to ask this Committee to consider changing the wording for this priority area.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee considers removing reference to 'by car' in the phrase 'We do however recognise that travelling in and around the Borough by car during peak periods can be difficult'.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING,
SUSTAINABILITY AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

9 JANUARY 2018

Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Chief Executive
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the Strategic Plan would be refreshed for 2018-19. The draft refreshed plan is attached at Appendix A. The Committee is asked to consider those sections that have been refreshed for the priorities relevant to its terms of reference, prior to approval by Policy and Resources for submission to full council.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the refreshed Strategic Plan attached at Appendix A.
2. To recommend amendments to the Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh to Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	13 December 2017
Strategic Planning and Sustainable Transportation Committee	9 January 2018
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	16 January 2018
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	30 January 2018
Policy and Resources Committee	14 February 2018
Council	28 February 2018

Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Maidstone Council's Strategic Plan 2015-20 sets out the Council's priorities and the actions that we need to take to achieve these. Last municipal year the Service Committees had extensive input into the wording of all the action areas within the Strategic Plan. Policy and Resources Committee subsequently agreed at its meeting on 25 July 2017 that the current plan be refreshed to ensure contextual information is up to date and areas of focus in relation to the action areas for 2018-19 are agreed. At their meeting on 13 December it was agreed that the three priorities for 2017-18 remain priority action areas for 2018-19. The plan attached at Appendix A includes updated statistics (where available) and changes to the "we will commit to" sections. The foreword will be updated prior to Policy and Resources Approval in February as will the artwork and strategies and plans sections of the plan at Appendix A.
- 1.2 A Resident Survey was conducted over the summer which included postal and online submissions as well as a roadshow in various locations. A summary report of those areas relevant to the strategic plan is provided at Appendix B.
-

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Appendix A shows the refreshed Plan with tracked changes as agreed by Policy and Resources Committee. The refresh includes updated statistics in the contextual information and updates to the: we will commit to sections of each action area.
- 2.2 Every two years the Council conducts a Resident Survey. The survey carried out over the summer included consultation on our budget and corporate priorities. When asked to prioritise the three priority action areas by importance, the majority of respondents said that priority 2, 'A clean and safe environment' was the one most important to them. One in four respondents said that 'A home for everyone' was most important and less than one in ten said that 'Regenerating the town centre' was most important to them. With regard to spending on the priorities just over half of all respondents said that funding for the priority 'A home for everyone' should be maintained and almost one in three said spending should be increased. Over half of all respondents said that funding for 'A clean and safe environment' should be increased and 1.5% said funding should be reduced. Overall, 46.1% of respondents said that funding on 'Regenerating the town centre' should be maintained and 26.8% said that it should be reduced.
- 2.3 Political groups have been offered briefing sessions on the results of the Resident survey. The results have been given to service managers to inform decision making in their service areas. The Policy and Information Team will meet with managers in December and January to collate the actions that have been taken as a result of the survey. This will be fed

back to a member workshop in February and used to inform the Communication and Engagement Strategy refresh in March.

2.4 Policy and Resources have agreed that the top three priority areas for 2017-18 will be maintained for 2018-19:

- A Home for Everyone
- Providing a Clean and Safe Environment
- Regenerating the Town Centre

2.5 The Committee is asked to consider the 'we will commit to' sections for the priority areas that map to its terms of reference. The action areas to be considered are:

- Respecting the Character and Heritage of our Borough
- Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough
- A Home for Everyone

2.6 Policy and Resources Committee requested that the Committee gives consideration to the wording of the context under the Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough in relation to moving around the Borough by car.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider whether any further amendments are need to the refreshed Strategic Plan at Appendix A. Any recommendations will be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee prior to submission to Council.

4. RISK

4.1 The Strategic Plan sets out our priorities and how they will be delivered, informing the Council's risk register and risk appetite. The Council has a corporate risk register which will pick up any actions from the Strategic Plan.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 Residents were asked to consider our priorities in the Resident Survey carried out in the summer - see Appendix B. Service Committees are now being asked for their feedback on the refresh.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The amendments from each Service Committee will be collated and considered by the Policy and Resources Committee prior to approving the refreshed plan for submission to Council on 28 February 2018

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Strategic Plan sets the Council's priorities	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	The Strategic Plan sets the Council's priorities. The Medium Term Financial Strategy aligns with the Strategic Plan and sets out the priorities in financial terms.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The plan informs service plans and individual appraisals	Head of Service
Legal	Each local authority has a statutory duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The Council's Strategic Plan demonstrates compliance with that duty.	Keith Trowell, Interim Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Crime and Disorder	The Strategic Plan sets out the high level priorities for Community Safety	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	No implications	Section 151 Officer

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh
 - Appendix B: Resident Survey Summary
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2020



Foreword from the Leader, Councillor Fran



Foreword to be re-written for 2018-19

I am writing this foreword as an update to our strategic plan during a period of severe financial constraints as we continue to focus on delivering a full range of services with all revenue support from central government removed. Despite this challenge the council remains ambitious for this year and has identified three areas for action:

- A home for everyone
- A clean and safe environment and;
- Regenerating the town centre

As a council our mission is to put people first. The three areas of focus will see action to ensure we have an attractive borough that respects our heritage and environment. This year we will deliver a new housing and regeneration strategy which will focus on providing much needed sustainable housing for our residents across the borough and further investment in Maidstone town centre. The importance of maintaining clarity of communication between us and all our interested parties cannot be over emphasised if we are going to achieve our priorities and ensure we are all working towards a common goal. I want our residents to be proud of where they live, our businesses to be enabled to thrive and our visitors to enjoy our offer to the extent that they would come back to Maidstone over and over

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fran Wilson".

again.

Fran Wilson

Leader of the Council



Our Mission



Our Vision

Our Vision

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.



[This will be updated with the priority areas for 2018-19](#)

Providing a Clean and Safe Environment

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to creating an attractive environment which is safe, well maintained and clean. Our borough does not experience high levels of crime and through the Community Safety Partnership, we aim to protect the most vulnerable people in our community.

Our recycling levels have reached [54.9%](#). Maidstone has areas of poor air quality due to high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide associated with road traffic and has designated the urban area of the borough as an Air Quality Management Zone.

We want:

People to feel safe in the borough and experience an attractive, clean and safe environment.

We will commit to:

- Investing to improve street infrastructure and the efficiency of cleansing services in accordance with our medium term financial strategy
- Delivering the Waste and Recycling Strategy;
- Delivering the Community Safety Plan 2018-19-17-18
- Delivering the Low Emissions Strategy
- [Adopting and Delivering an Air Quality DPD](#)

Encouraging Good Health and Wellbeing

Deprivation in the borough is lower than average, however [15.2-14.8%](#) of children (under 16 years old) in Maidstone live in poverty. There is a difference in life expectancy of men and women; women are expected to live 3 years longer than men and there is a 11 year gap between the ward with the highest life expectancy and the one with the lowest life expectancy

We want:

- To address the social determinants of health through our role in services like Housing, Environmental Health and Community Development and our provider role in terms of leisure activities
- To improve health outcomes for residents and reduce health inequality

We will commit to:

- Delivering our Housing Strategy
- Delivering our Health and Wellbeing Action Plan
- ~~Adopting and d~~Delivering our Parks and Open spaces 10 year strategic plan



Respecting the Character and Heritage of our Borough

Maidstone is a largely rural borough with high quality landscapes, countryside and urban green spaces and associated rich bio-diversity. Our borough has many attractive and protected buildings and we want these to remain in place for future generations. Our focus on economic prosperity embraces the need to protect and enhance these features so that the borough remains a great place to live, work and visit.

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We want:

- Thriving and resilient urban and rural communities
- To continue to listen to our communities
- To continue to respect our heritage and natural environment
- To continue to devolve services where we can and work with Kent County Council to do the same

We will commit to:

- Delivering the Local Plan
- Delivering the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- ~~Adopting and d~~Delivering our Parks and Open Spaces 10 year strategic plan
- Delivering and honouring our Parish Charter
- ~~Working with our Parishes and Communities on the design of their neighbourhoods~~
- Deliver the bio-diversity action plan

Ensuring there are Good Leisure and Cultural Attractions

There is always something to see or do in our borough reflecting the wide variety of venues, facilities and good quality public spaces. This not only enhances quality of life for Maidstone residents but also contributes significantly to the local economy. Our population is increasing at the highest rate in Kent. We are also growing as a destination for visitors and so our leisure and culture offer has continued importance for those living in and visiting the borough.

We want:

Maidstone to have a leisure and cultural offer which attracts visitors and meets the needs of our residents.

We will commit to:

- ~~Delivering the Commercialisation Strategy which refers to a sustainable future for our parks~~
- Delivering the Destination Management Plan
- Delivering the Festival and Events Strategy
- ~~Adopting and d~~Delivering the Museum's 20 year plan
- ~~Adopting and d~~Delivering the Parks and Open Spaces 10 year Strategic Plan



Regenerating the Town Centre

Maidstone has a thriving town centre benefiting from its role as the county town and has a diverse mix of residential, business, retail, cultural uses and public services. The changing economic environment has created challenges and the need for further investment in the town centre to meet the expectations of residents, businesses and visitors.

We want:

To ensure we have a thriving and attractive town centre that values our heritage and is fit for the future.

We will commit to:

- Delivering the Local Plan
- Delivering the Housing and Regeneration Strategy
- Delivering the Destination Management Plan
- Delivering Phase 3 of the Public Realm

Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough

Maidstone is strategically situated between London and the channel ports and is serviced by two motorway networks, the M20 and the M2, with rail connections to central London. We do however recognise that travelling in and around the borough by car during peak periods can be difficult due to congestion. The bus transport network serving Maidstone town is relatively strong whilst rural transport presents distinct challenges

We want:

A sustainable transport network that meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

We will commit to:

- Delivering the Integrated Transport Strategy
- Delivering the Walking and Cycling Strategy



A Home for Everyone

The supply of new affordable housing within the borough has been greater than in neighbouring authorities, although still less than historical levels. [439-303](#) new affordable homes were built in the borough in 20165/176.

13% of Maidstone households live in socially rented accommodation which is comparable to the rest of Kent.

We want:

To have enough homes to meet our residents' long term needs, to include homes for affordable rent and affordable home ownership. These must be economically sustainable for all our residents.

We will commit to:

- Delivering the Local Plan
- Delivering the Housing [Development](#) and Regeneration [Investment Plan Strategy](#)
- Delivering the Housing Strategy
- Delivering the Temporary Accommodation Strategy

Range of Employment Skills and Opportunities Across the Borough

There were [83,200](#)[77,500](#) people employed in the Maidstone economy in 20165/176 with a high proportion in the public sector, reflecting the town's status as Kent's County Town and administrative capital. There were [7,080](#)[7,195](#) registered businesses in Maidstone in 20176-.

We want:

To meet the skills needs of our residents and employers, supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones.

We will commit to:

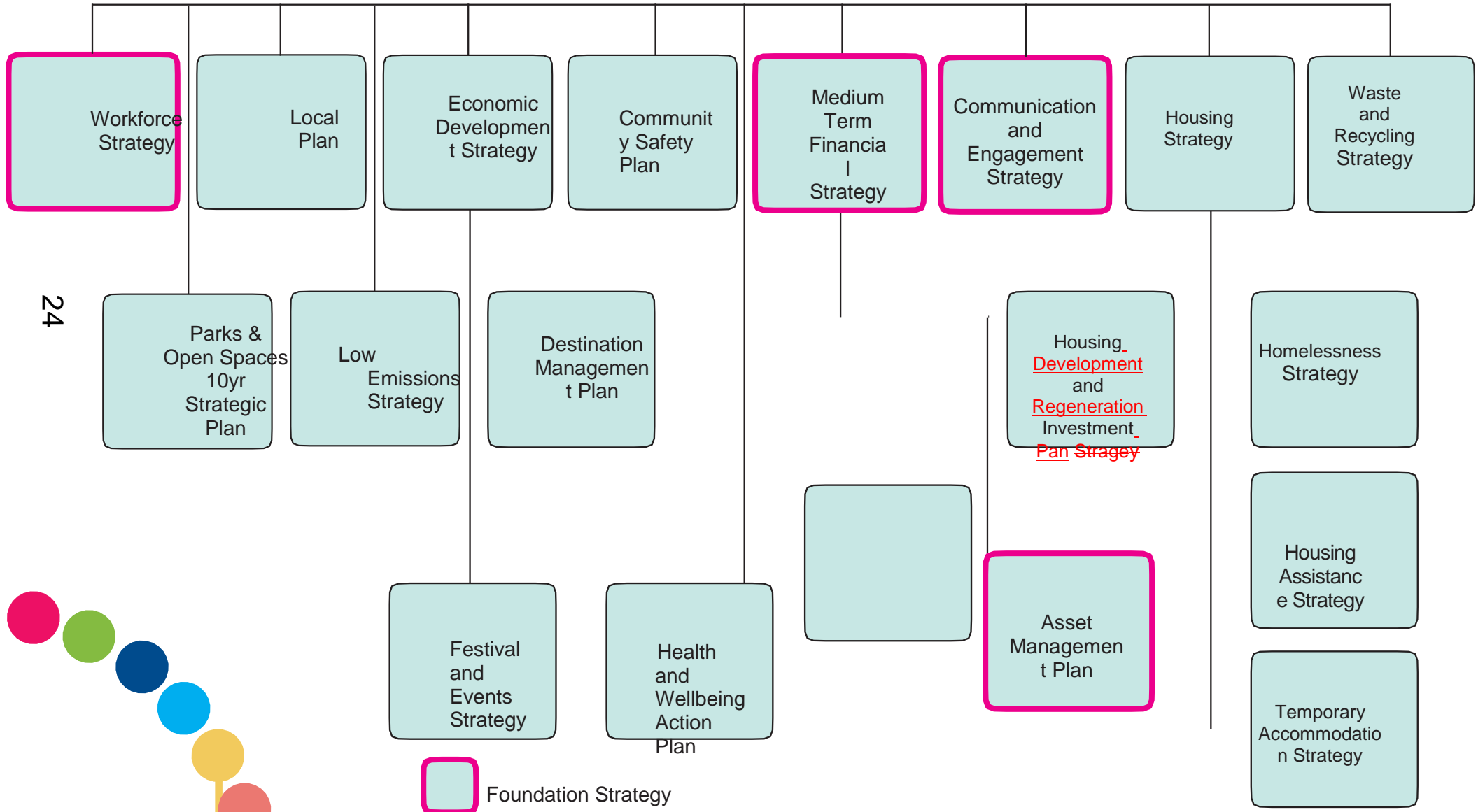
- Delivering our Economic Development Strategy
- Working with businesses to support them to grow and develop



Strategy

Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020

Plans to be updated and artwork re-done, commercialisation strategy replaced with Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan





Resident Survey

2017

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Methodology

Maidstone Borough Council undertook a consultation between 21 June and 20th August 2017.

The survey was carried out online and by post, with a direct email to approximately 9,000 customer who had consented to being contacted by email and was promoted on the Council's website, social media and in the local press and a mailed paper copy was sent to a random sample of 6,100 households on the Council Tax Register, this was a one off mailing with no reminders. In addition paper copies were also handed out at engagement days held at various locations around the borough. An incentive prize of £100 shopping vouchers was offered to boost returns.

The survey was open to all Maidstone Borough residents aged 18 years and over. Data has been weighted according to the known population profile to counteract non-response bias (weighting was applied to 2008 responses where both questions on gender and age were answered). The weighting profile is based on the 2016 mid-year ONS population estimates. However, the under-representation of 18 to 24 year olds means that high weights have been applied to responses in this group, therefore results for this group should be treated with caution. It should also be noted that respondents from BME backgrounds are slightly under-represented at 4.1% compared 5.9%¹ in the local area.

The economically active group includes respondents in employment (full, part-time or self-employed) or who are looking for work.

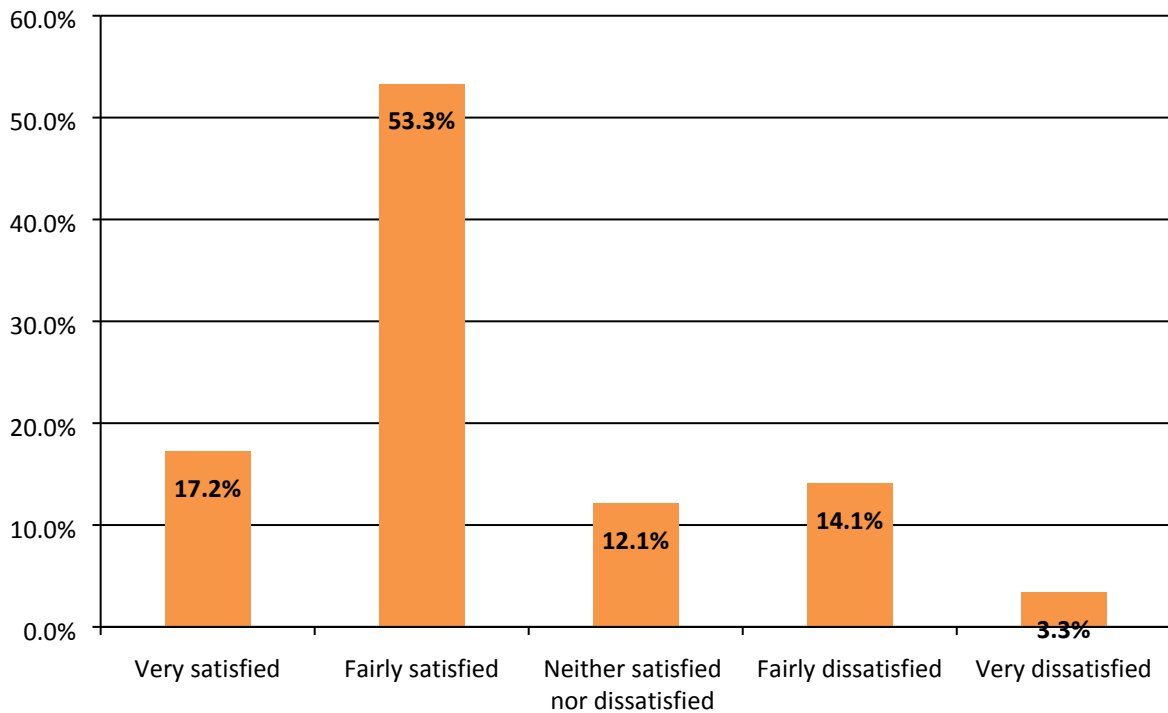
A total of 2350 people responded to the questionnaire, this report discusses the weighted results. Please note not every respondent answered every question therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

With a total of 2,350 responses to the survey, the overall results in this report are accurate to $\pm 2.0\%$ at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% certain that the results are between $\pm 2.0\%$ of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 2.0% above or below the figures reported (i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 48% to 52%).

¹ 2011 Census

Council Satisfaction

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

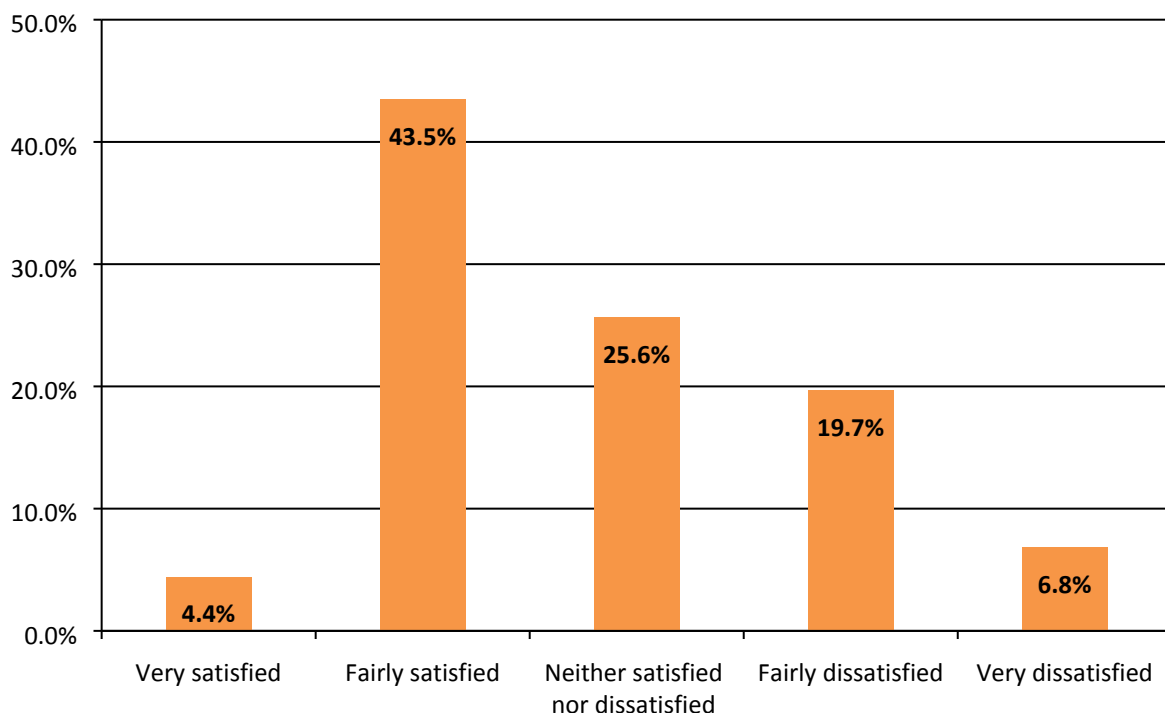


Overall, 70.5% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live. The fairly satisfied was the most common response, with the majority of responses in this answer choice.

There is a gap of 13.2% between the age group with the greatest level of satisfaction (35 to 44 year olds) and that with the lowest (18 to 24 year olds). Almost one in four respondents in the 18 to 24 years group were very or fairly dissatisfied. Respondents in the group 25 to 34 years had the greatest proportion of respondent that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied at 15.8%.

Percentage Satisfied	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	62.2
- 25 to 34 years	67.5
- 35 to 44 years	75.4
- 45 to 54 years	70.2
- 55 to 64 years	72.7
- 65 to 74 years	70.0
- 75 years and over	73.4
Gender	
- Male	68.7
- Female	72.2
Ethnicity	
- White groups	71.1
- BME groups	70.9
Disability	
- Yes	64.5
- No	72.0
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	72.1
- Economically inactive	66.2

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs things?



Overall, 47.9% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the way the Council runs things. The most common response was fairly satisfied with 43.5% of respondents selecting this answer. However, just over one in four respondents said they were very or fairly dissatisfied with the way the Council runs things.

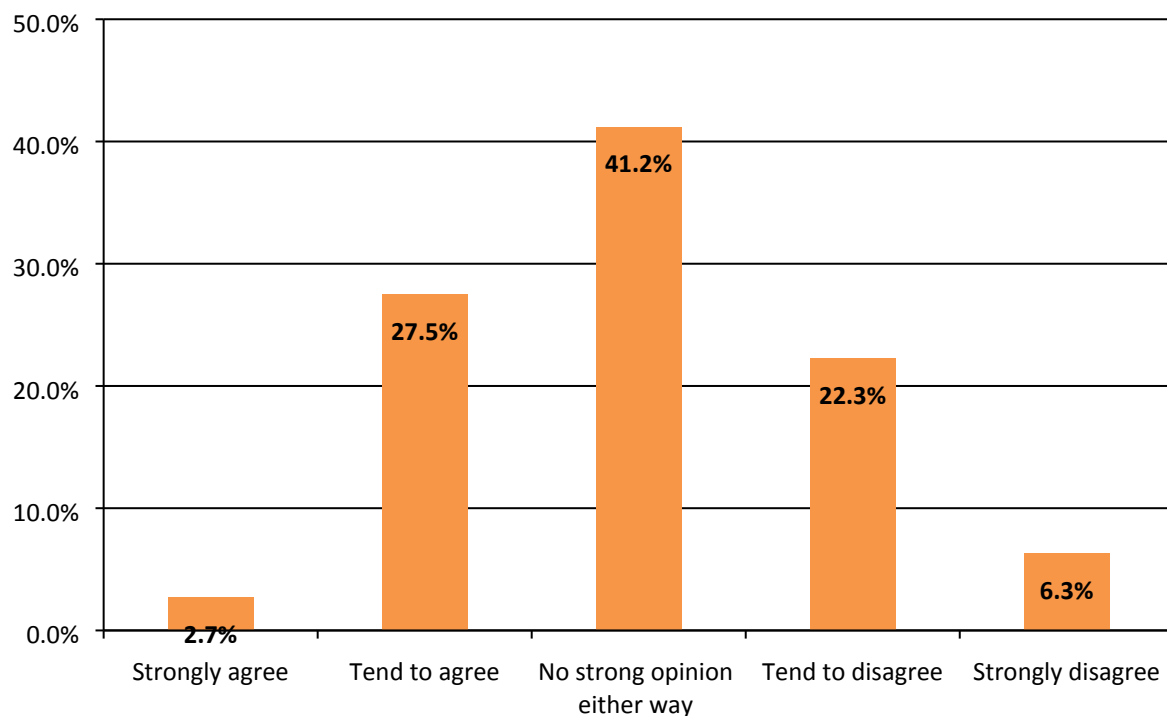
There is an 18.7% gap between the age group with the highest level of satisfaction (18 to 24 year olds) and that that with the lowest level (65 to 74 year olds).

There is an 8% difference in satisfaction between respondents that are economically active and those that are economically inactive. Inactive respondent were 5% more likely to respond that they are very or fair dissatisfied.

There is a 6.6% difference in the satisfaction levels between respondents from white groups and those from BME groups. Although both groups have a comparable proportion of people that are dissatisfied when compared to the overall result respondents from BME groups were more likely to say they have no strong opinion either way than those from white groups.

Percentage Yes	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	61.5
- 25 to 34 years	48.2
- 35 to 44 years	51.3
- 45 to 54 years	43.5
- 55 to 64 years	44.4
- 65 to 74 years	42.8
- 75 years and over	48.8
Gender	
- Male	47.3
- Female	48.4
Ethnicity	
- White groups	48.1
- BME groups	41.5
Disability	
- Yes	42.9
- No	49.2
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	49.7
- Economically inactive	41.7

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Maidstone Borough Council provides good value for money



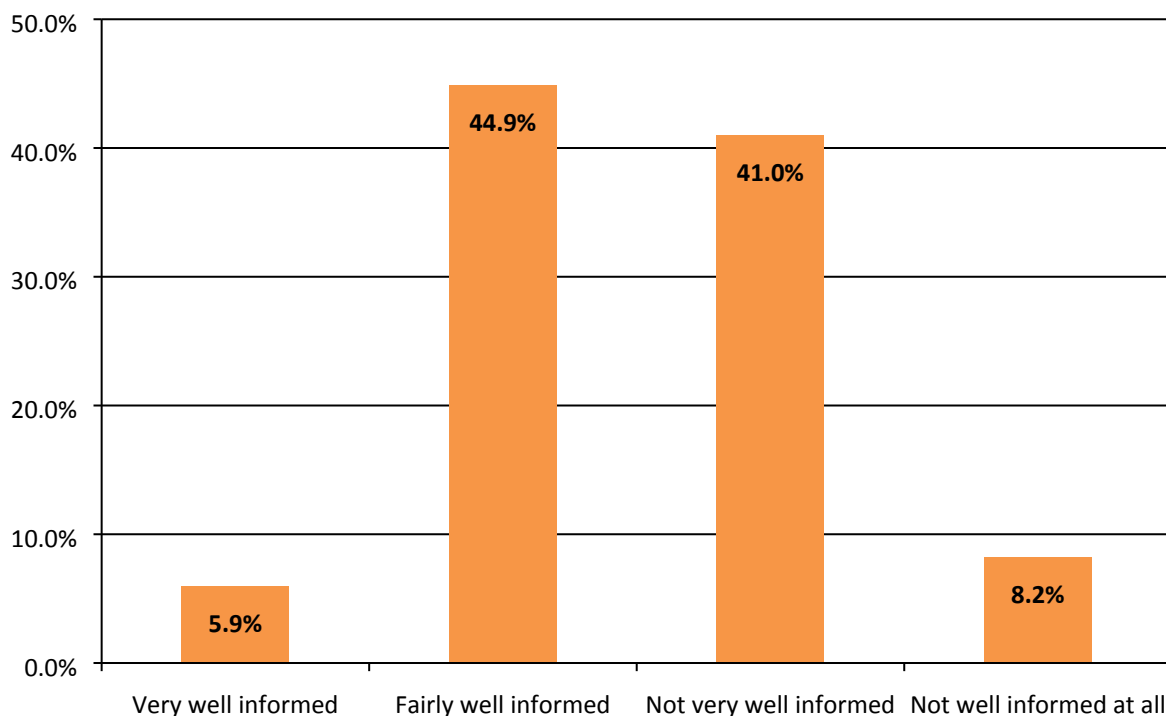
Overall, 30.2% of all respondents either strongly or tended to agree that the council provides good value for money. The most common response was no strong opinion either way with 41.2% selecting this response and more than one in four respondents said they disagreed with the statement that the Council provides good value for money.

Across the age groups, the 25 to 34 year olds have the greatest level of agreement at 35.5% and the 55 to 64 year olds have the lowest level of agreement at 25.03%. The 55 to 64 year olds have the greatest proportion of respondents that have no strong opinion either way at 47.0%, while the 18 to 24 year olds have the greatest proportion of respondents that disagree that the Council provides good value for money. Overall that is a 10.2% between the age group with the highest and that with the lowest levels of agreement.

There is a 6.2% difference in the proportion of respondents agreeing between those that are economically active and those who are not. While both have comparable proportions disagreeing at 28.4% and 28.5% respectively, there is a greater proportion of respondents in the economically inactive group that have no strong opinion either way.

Percentage Agreeing	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	31.6
- 25 to 34 years	35.5
- 35 to 44 years	30.9
- 45 to 54 years	27.6
- 55 to 64 years	25.3
- 65 to 74 years	29.8
- 75 years and over	31.7
Gender	
- Male	30.5
- Female	29.9
Ethnicity	
- White groups	30.3
- BME groups	31.3
Disability	
- Yes	28.4
- No	30.9
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	32.0
- Economically inactive	25.8

Overall, how well informed do you think Maidstone Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?



Overall, 50.8% of respondents said they thought MBC keeps its residents very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides. The most common response was fairly well informed.

The 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion of respondents that think they are very well or fairly well informed at 54.6%. Respondents from BME groups have the lowest proportion saying they are informed at 40.9%.

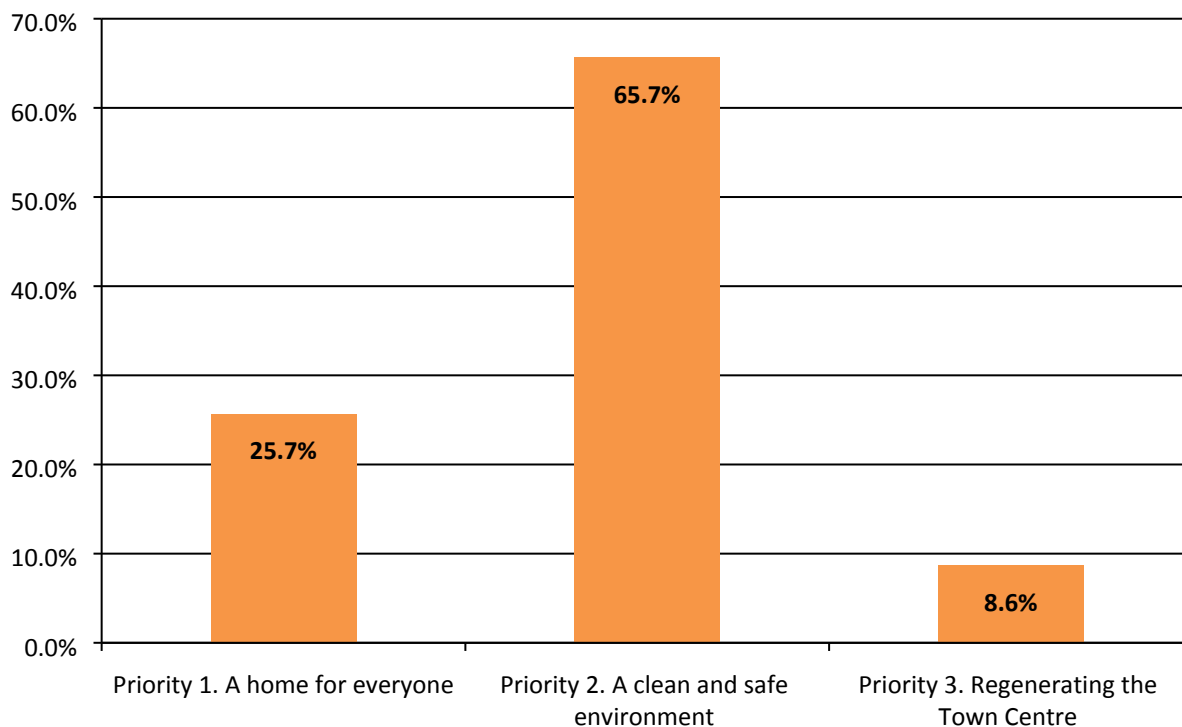
There is a 6.3% difference between the age group with the greatest level of confidence (75 years and over) and that with the lowest level (18 to 24 years). The data shows that levels of feeling informed increase with age.

The greatest variation in responses is when results from BME groups and white groups are compared. There is a 10.7% difference in the proportion that feel informed, and while there is no significant difference in the proportions responding very well informed for both groups, respondents from BME groups are more likely to not very well informed compared to white group respondents.

Percentage Very or Fairly Well Informed	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	48.3
- 25 to 34 years	49.1
- 35 to 44 years	49.6
- 45 to 54 years	51.6
- 55 to 64 years	52.2
- 65 to 74 years	50.8
- 75 years and over	54.6
Gender	
- Male	54.1
- Female	47.7
Ethnicity	
- White groups	51.6
- BME groups	40.9
Disability	
- Yes	48.4
- No	51.0
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	50.8
- Economically inactive	50.2

Corporate Priorities

Priority Importance



The majority of respondents said that priority 2. A clean and safe environment was the one most important to them. One in four respondents said that priority one was most important and less than one in ten said that regenerating the town centre was most important.

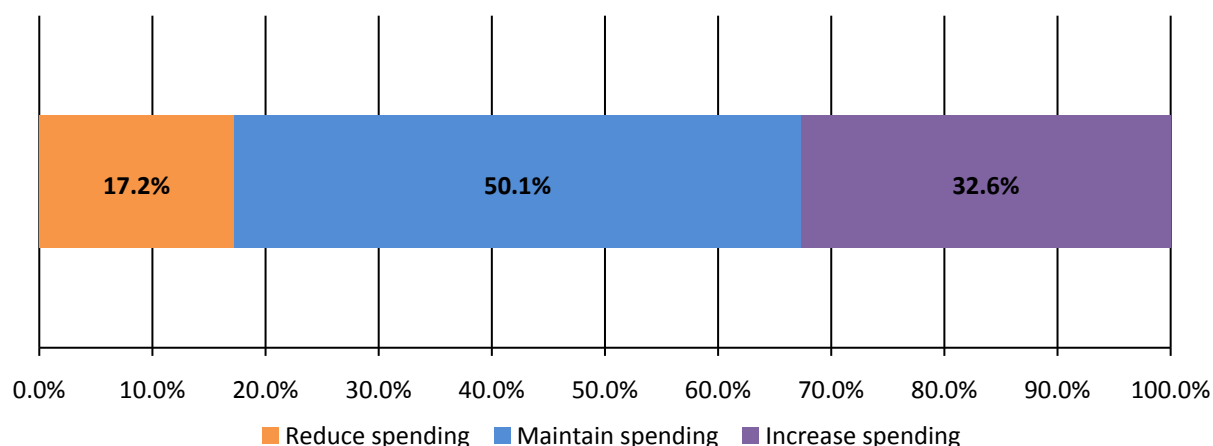
Priority two was top priority in each group; the lowest selecting this response proportion was 57.0% from the 18 to 24 years group and the highest was 72.1% from the 75 years and over group.

Priority one, A home for everyone had the second greatest proportion across all groups with proportions ranging from 41.3% (18 to 24 years) to 21.1% (35 to 44 years).

Priority three, Regenerating the Town Centre achieved the lowest proportion across all groupings, ranging from 1.7% (18 to 24 years) to 12.5% (35 to 34 years).

There are no significant differences between the responses given by those with and those without a disability, those from white groups and those from BME groups or between men and women.

Priority 1. A home for everyone



Just over half of all respondents said that funding for the priority, a home for everyone should be maintained and almost one in three said spending should be increased.

The 18 to 24 years group had the greatest proportion saying that funding for this priority should be increased at 47.2% and the lowest proportion saying funding should be reduced. The 35 to 44 years group have the greatest proportion responding that funding should be reduced with just over one in five people in the group selecting this answer. The 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion saying that funding should be maintained at 64.5%.

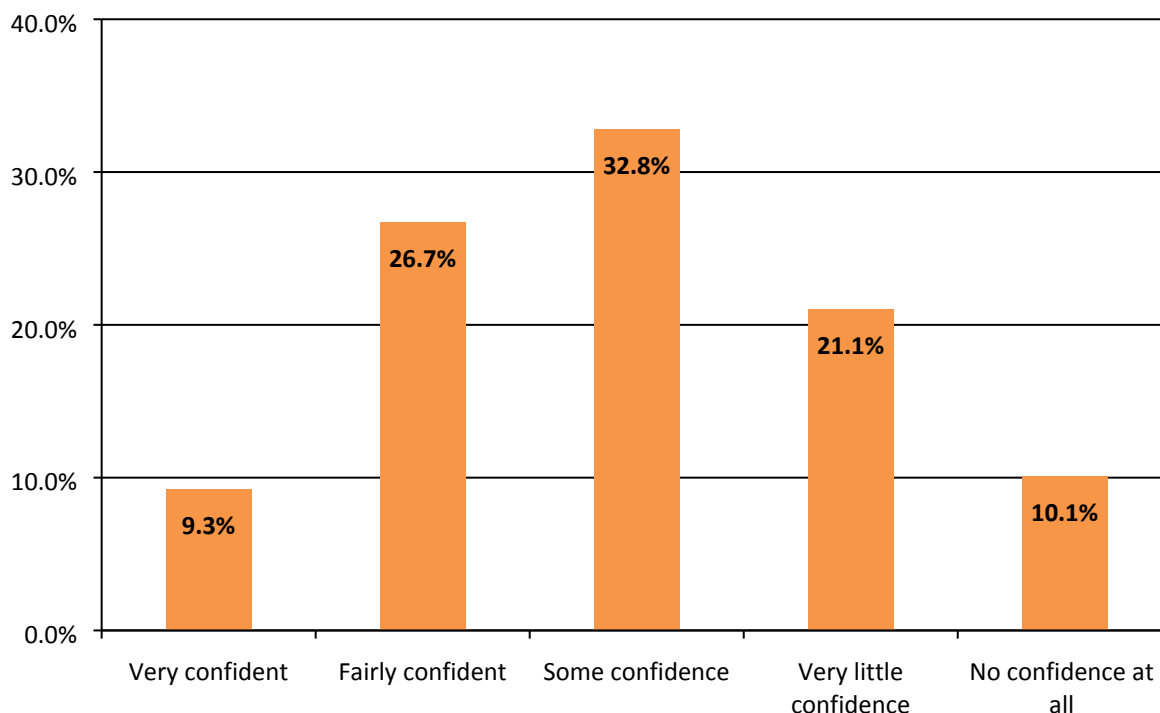
There are significant variances in responses when assessed by age with a difference of 14% between the age group with the greatest proportion saying funding should be increased and that with the lowest.

Response Levels Reduce & Increase		
Age		
	Reduce	Increase
- 18 to 24 years	7.9	47.2
- 25 to 34 years	20.8	32.3
- 35 to 44 years	21.9	29.1
- 45 to 54 years	19.6	30.0
- 55 to 64 years	15.3	36.4
- 65 to 74 years	16.5	32.0
- 75 years and over	11.4	24.0
Gender		
- Male	19.3	28.4
- Female	15.2	36.7
Ethnicity		
- White groups	17.5	32.8
- BME groups	9.4	37.4
Disability		
- Yes	17.9	34.5
- No	18.1	32.0
Economic Situation		
- Economically active	19.1	32.3
- Economically inactive	13.8	34.7

The data also shows that women are more likely than men and BME groups are more likely than white groups to say that funding for a home for everyone should be increased.

There are no significant differences in the responses from people with and without a disability.

How confident are you that you know where to get information, advice and guidance about: Housing Advice²



Overall, 36.0% of respondents said they felt very or fairly confident about where to get information and advice on housing. The most common response was some confidence with 32.8%.

The 18 to 24 years group have the greatest proportion that said they were very or fairly confident in regards to knowing how to get housing advice. However, they also have the greatest proportion who said they have very little or no confidence in relation to housing advice (and the lowest proportion that had some confidence).

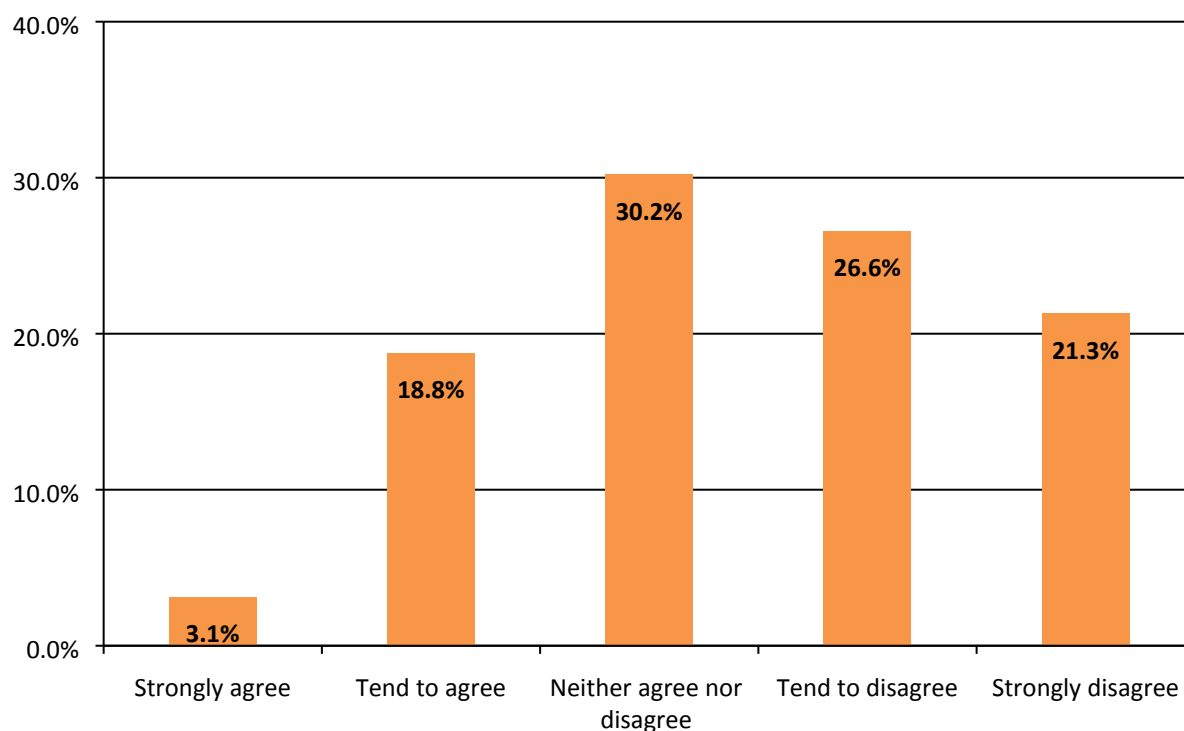
There is a gap of 12.7% between the age group with the greatest proportion saying they have confidence in this area (18 to 24 years) and that with the lowest proportion (35 to 44 years).

There are no significant variations in the responses from the economically active and the economically inactive, men and women and those with and without a disability.

Percentage Responding Very or Fairly Confident	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	44.1
- 25 to 34 years	37.4
- 35 to 44 years	31.4
- 45 to 54 years	35.4
- 55 to 64 years	39.4
- 65 to 74 years	31.9
- 75 years and over	35.0
Gender	
- Male	36.2
- Female	35.8
Ethnicity	
- White groups	36.0
- BME groups	41.1
Disability	
- Yes	37.3
- No	35.3
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	36.2
- Economically inactive	35.0

² For this question confidence refers to the proportion responding very or fair confident..

My neighbourhood is a place where....where homes are affordable³



Overall, 21.9% of respondents agree that their neighbourhood is an area where homes are affordable and 47.9% disagreed. The most common response was neither agree nor disagree with 30.2%.

The 75 years and over group has the greatest proportion in agreement at 30.9% and the 18 to 24 years group have the greatest proportion disagreeing with the statement. The data suggests that disagreement with this statement declines with age. The economically inactive group have the greatest proportion that have no strong view either way at 38.8%.

The data suggests that respondents from white groups are more likely to disagree than respondents from BME groups, that the economically active are more likely to disagree than the economically inactive and that those with would a disability are more likely to disagree than those with a disability.

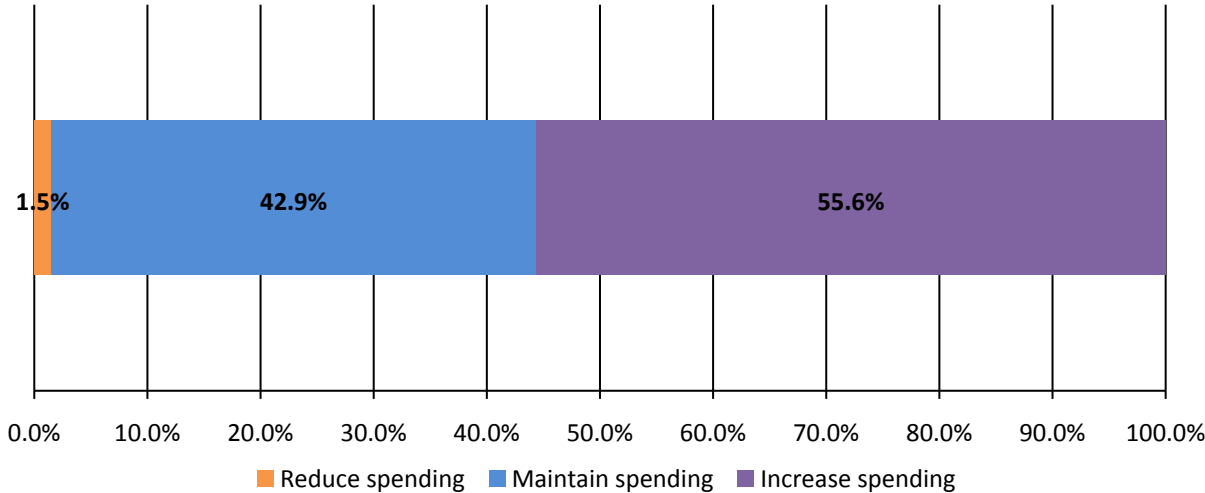
Response Levels Reduce & Increase	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	17.3
- 25 to 34 years	23.5
- 35 to 44 years	27.6
- 45 to 54 years	19.3
- 55 to 64 years	18.0
- 65 to 74 years	17.8
- 75 years and over	30.9
Gender	
- Male	21.6
- Female	22.2
Ethnicity	
- White groups	21.6
- BME groups	30.3
Disability	
- Yes	24.6
- No	20.9
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	22.5
- Economically inactive	20.0

The table to the left shows the percentage of respondents that said they had been affected by housing issues in the last 12 months.

Area	Percentage
Not being able to buy a new home or move	11.7%
Difficulties paying rent or mortgage	5.4%

³ The use of the terms agreement level or agreeing refers to the combined proportion responding strongly agree or tend to agree, disagreement level or disagreeing refers the combined proportion responding strongly disagree or tend to disagree.

Priority 2. A clean and safe environment



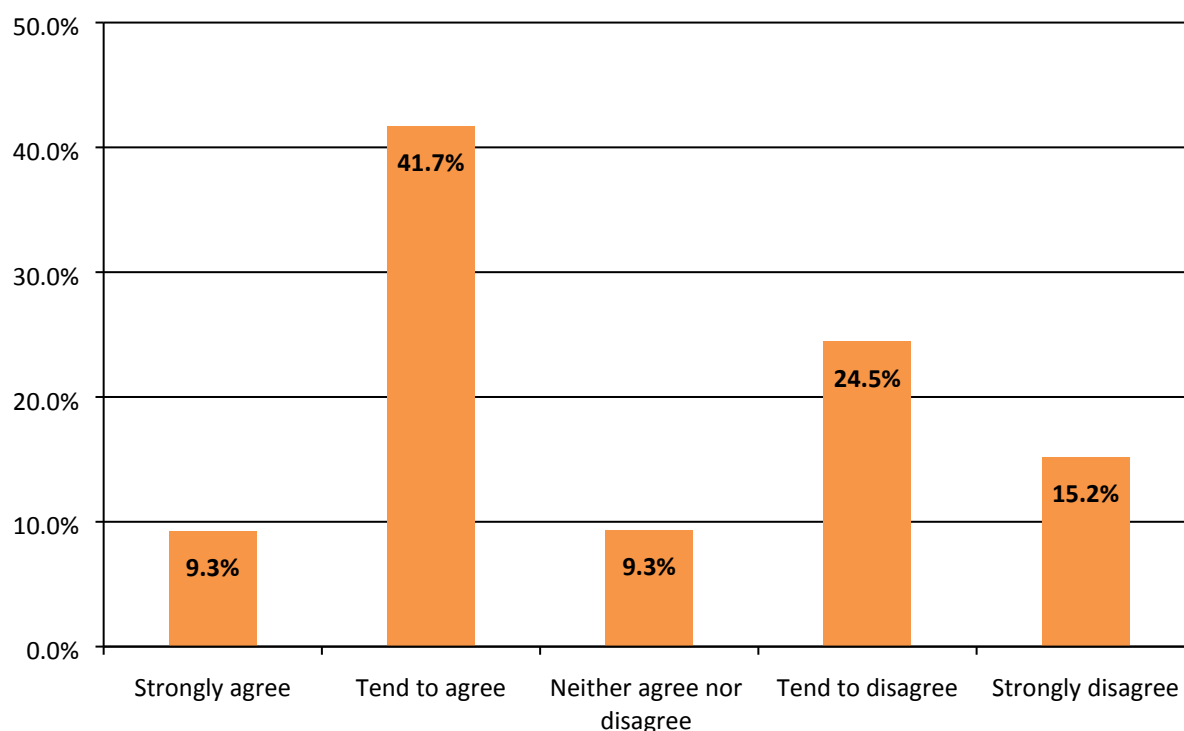
Over half of all respondents said that funding for a clean and safe environment should be increased and 1.5% said funding should be reduced.

The 35 to 44 years group have the greatest proportion of respondents that said that funding for this priority should be increased. No respondents in either the 18 to 24 years or the BME group responded that funding should be reduced. The 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion of respondents that said funding should be maintained.

While the proportion of men and women that said that funding for this priority should be reduced are in line with the overall results, the data suggests that men are slightly more in favour of increasing funding for this priority compared to women, with a 8% difference in the proportion selecting this answer. The same can be inferred for the economic activity groups with the economically active slight more in favour of increasing spending than the economically inactive.

Response Levels Reduce & Increase		
Age	Reduce	Increase
- 18 to 24 years	0.0	55.3
- 25 to 34 years	1.6	58.9
- 35 to 44 years	0.7	61.9
- 45 to 54 years	1.8	61.3
- 55 to 64 years	1.7	52.5
- 65 to 74 years	1.5	50.0
- 75 years and over	3.1	41.7
Gender		
- Male	1.5	59.7
- Female	1.5	51.7
Ethnicity		
- White groups	1.4	55.7
- BME groups	0.0	58.1
Disability		
- Yes	2.1	50.8
- No	1.4	57.2
Economic Situation		
- Economically active	1.3	58.0
- Economically inactive	1.9	50.4

My neighbourhood is a place that is ... clear of litter ⁴



Just over half (51%) of all respondents agree that their local area is a place that is clear of litter, 39.7% disagreed and less than one in ten had no strong opinion either way. Tend to agree was the most common response.

The greatest level of agreement was from the 18 to 24 years group at 66.5%, the 65 to 74 years group had the greatest level of disagreement at 47.0%. The 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion with no strong opinion either way at 13.6%.

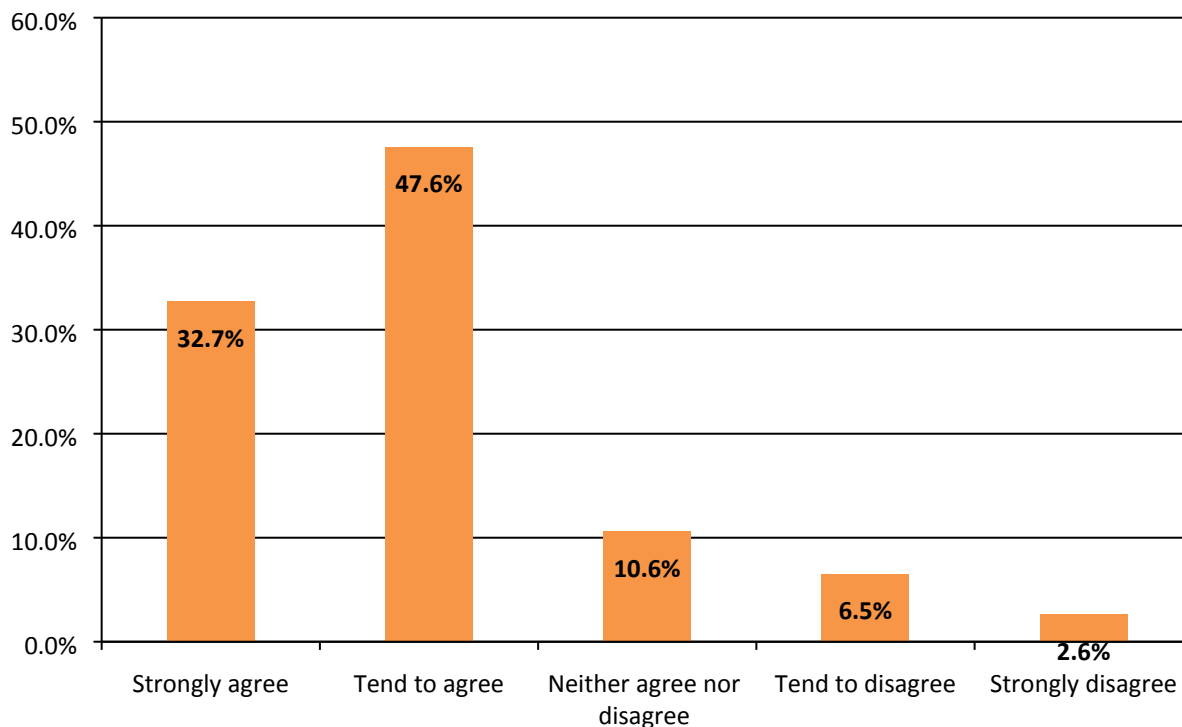
There are no significant differences between the responses of those who are economically active and those who are not, between those with and without a disability or between men and women.

Respondents from BME groups are slightly more likely to agree that their local area is free from litter compared to white groups.

Percentage agreeing	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	66.5
- 25 to 34 years	54.2
- 35 to 44 years	48.5
- 45 to 54 years	50.4
- 55 to 64 years	47.6
- 65 to 74 years	44.0
- 75 years and over	50.6
Gender	
- Male	51.9
- Female	50.1
Ethnicity	
- White groups	50.7
- BME groups	57.4
Disability	
- Yes	47.9
- No	51.5
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	53.1
- Economically inactive	46.9

⁴ The use of the terms agreement level or agreeing refers to the combined proportion responding strongly agree or tend to agree, disagreement level or disagreeing refers the combined proportion responding strongly disagree or tend to disagree.

My neighbourhood is a place that is ... clear of graffiti



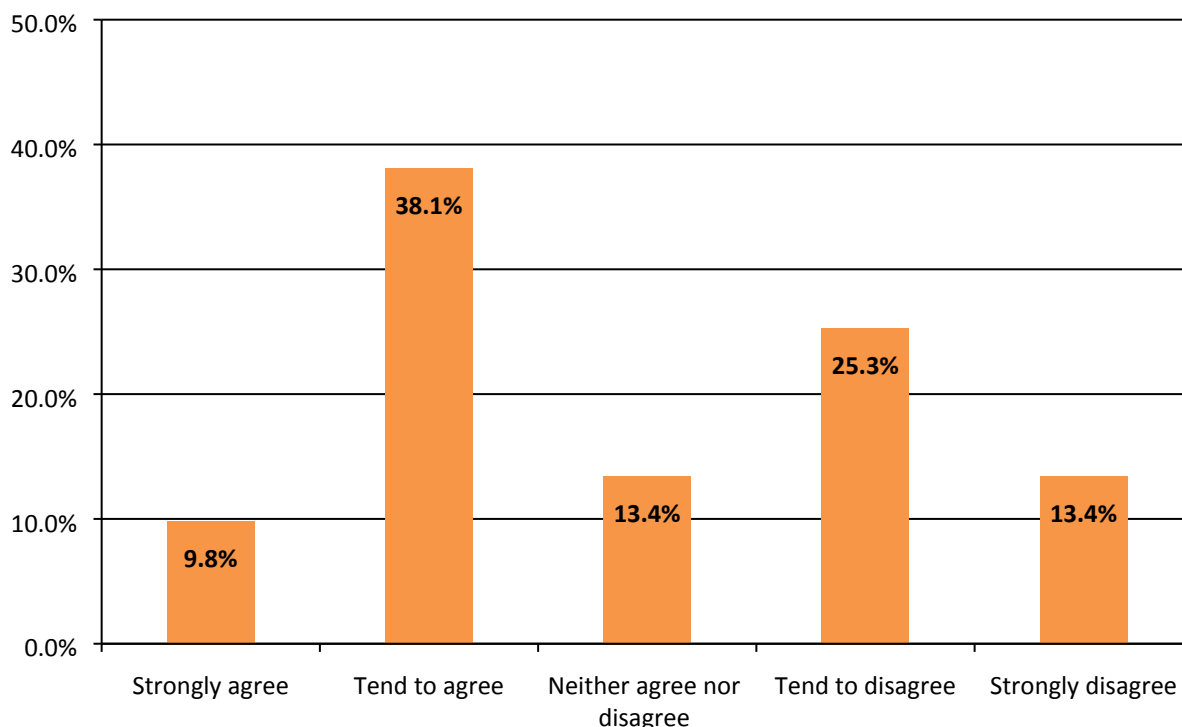
Overall, 80.3% of respondents agree that their local area is clear of graffiti and less than one in ten (9.1%) disagree. The most common response was tend to agree with 47.6%.

Respondents from BME groups had the greatest level of agreement at 86.6%, the 18 to 24 years group have the greatest levels of disagreement at 12.1% and those with a disability have the greatest proportion with no strong opinion either way at 15.4%.

There are no significant variance in the responses between those who are economically active and those who are economically inactive.

Response Levels Reduce & Increase	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	79.3
- 25 to 34 years	84.1
- 35 to 44 years	81.0
- 45 to 54 years	79.9
- 55 to 64 years	77.1
- 65 to 74 years	77.3
- 75 years and over	83.1
Gender	
- Male	79.8
- Female	80.7
Ethnicity	
- White groups	79.9
- BME groups	86.6
Disability	
- Yes	77.5
- No	80.4
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	81.4
- Economically inactive	78.1

My neighbourhood is a place that is ... clear of dog fouling



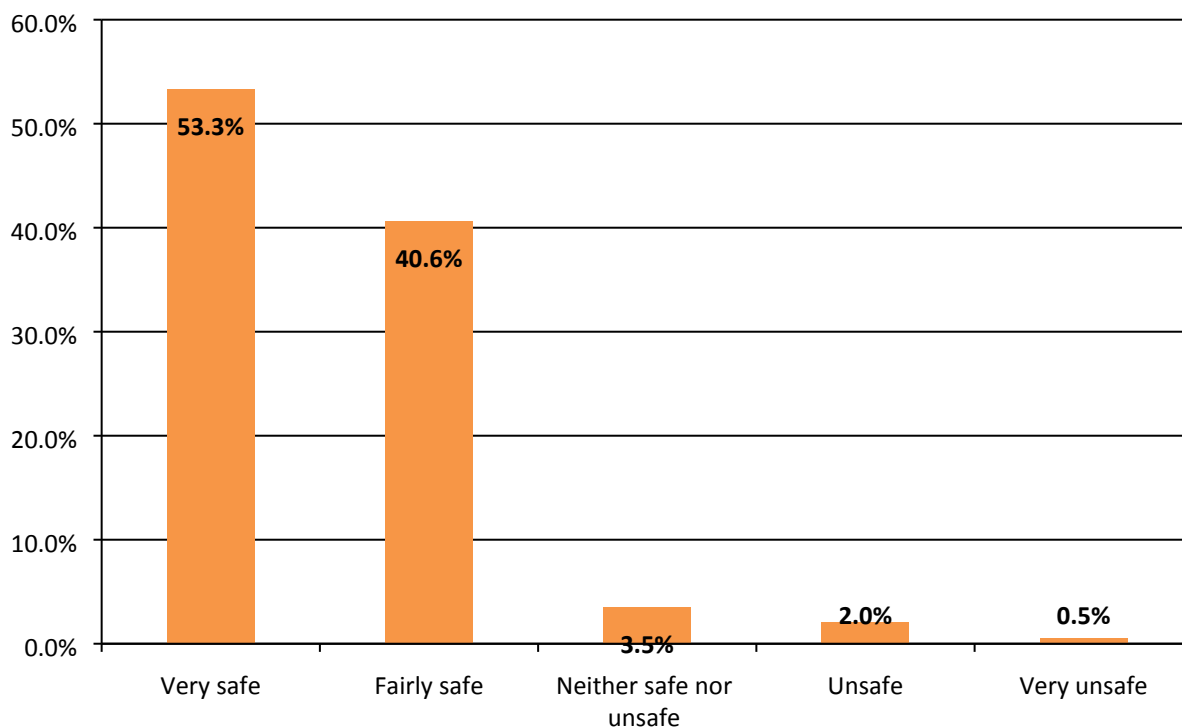
Overall, 47.9% of respondents either strongly agreed or tended to agree that their local area was clear of dog fouling and 38.7% disagreed. The most common response was tend to agree.

The 18 to 24 years had the greatest proportion that agreed at 67.4%, followed by the 75 years and over group with 58.7%. The 35 to 44 years group have the greatest proportion that disagreed at 46.2%. The 55 to 64 years groups had the greatest proportion that responded no strong opinion either way with almost one in five respondents (19.6) selecting this answer.

The data shows that men are marginally more likely to agree that their local area is clear of dog fouling when compared to women. There were no significant variations in responses between groups.

Response Levels Reduce & Increase	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	67.4
- 25 to 34 years	47.4
- 35 to 44 years	38.2
- 45 to 54 years	45.3
- 55 to 64 years	44.2
- 65 to 74 years	46.3
- 75 years and over	58.7
Gender	
- Male	40.5
- Female	45.4
Ethnicity	
- White groups	48.0
- BME groups	47.1
Disability	
- Yes	45.7
- No	48.2
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	48.9
- Economically inactive	46.5

How safe do you feel walking in your local area during daylight



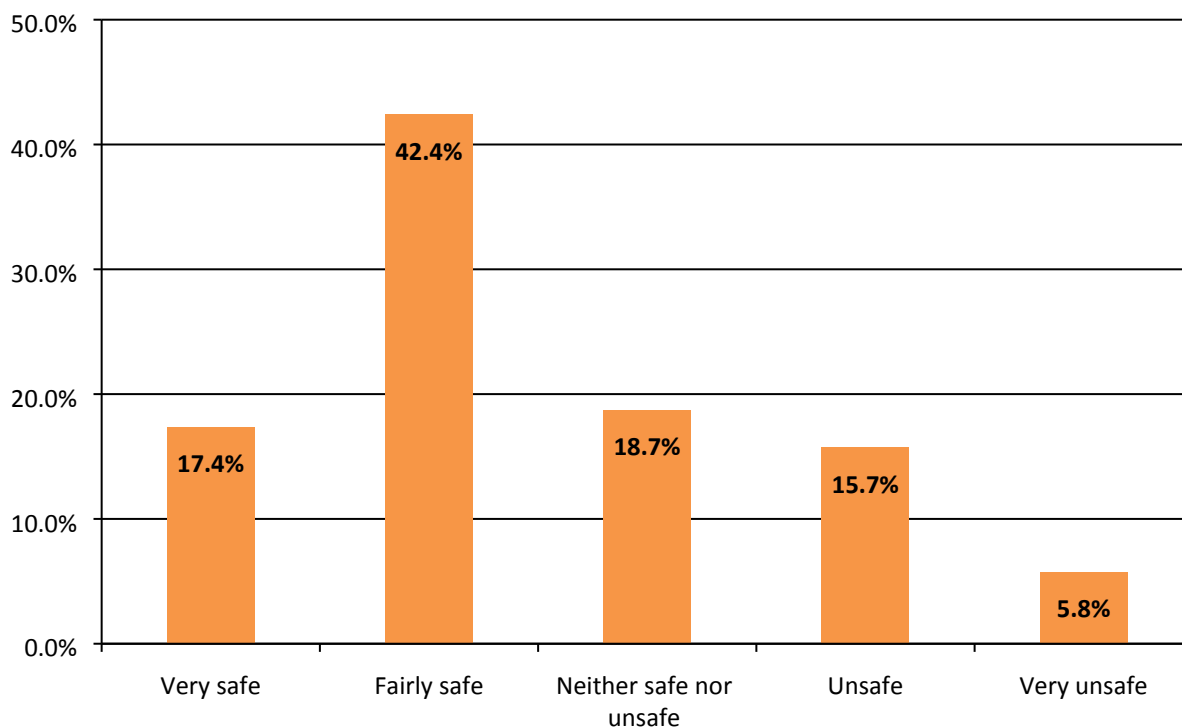
Overall, 93.9% of respondents say they feel very of fairly safe walking, in their own area during daylight and 2.5% felt unsafe or very unsafe. The most popular response was very safe with more than half (53.3%) of all respondents selecting this answer.

The 18 to 24 years group have the greatest proportion responding positively (Very safe and Safe) at 100%, the 35 to 34 years group have the greatest proportion responding negatively (Unsafe and Very unsafe) at 4.4%, interestingly this is only made up of respondents answering unsafe as there were no respondents in this group who said they were very unsafe. Respondents from BME groups have the greatest proportion with no strong feelings either way at 11.7%.

There is a 10.6% difference in the proportion of positive responses between respondents from white groups and those from BME groups. While the proportion answering negatively are not significantly different however respondents from BME groups are at least three time more likely to have no strong opinion either way.

Response Very good and Good	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	100.0
- 25 to 34 years	91.9
- 35 to 44 years	93.4
- 45 to 54 years	93.4
- 55 to 64 years	93.0
- 65 to 74 years	93.1
- 75 years and over	95.5
Gender	
- Male	95.0
- Female	92.9
Ethnicity	
- White groups	94.6
- BME groups	84.0
Disability	
- Yes	90.5
- No	94.7
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	94.1
- Economically inactive	93.2

How safe do you feel walking in your local area during night-time



Overall, 59.8% of respondents said they feel very or fairly safe walking in their local area in the night – time, just over one in five (21.5%) respondents said they feel unsafe or very unsafe. The most common response was fairly satisfied with 42.4%.

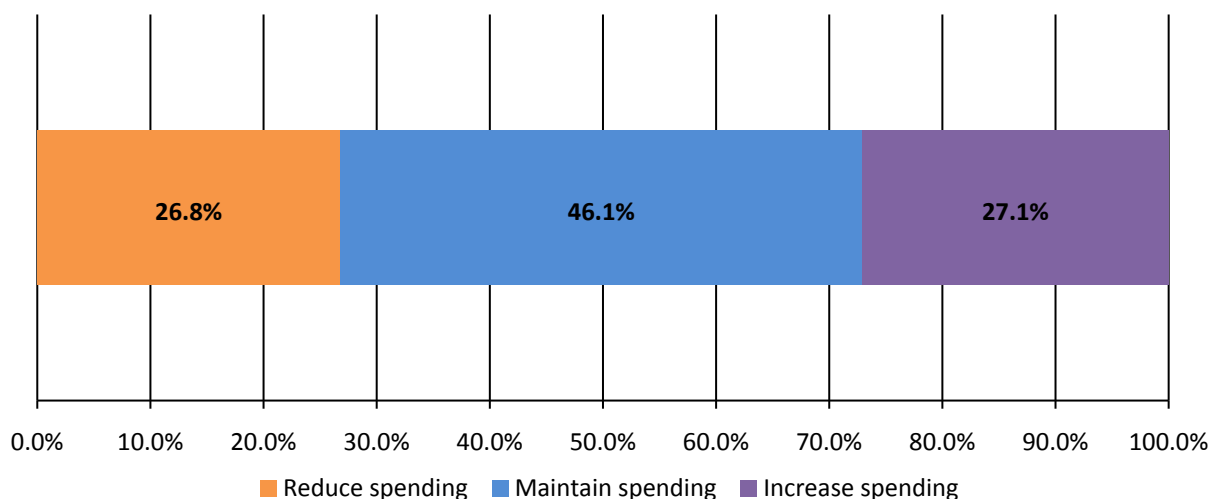
Male respondents have the greatest proportion responding that they feel very or fairly safe at 68.6%. Respondents with a disability have the greatest proportion responding unsafe and very unsafe with one in three (33.3%) in the group selecting these answers. BME respondents have the greatest proportion responding no strong feelings either way at 31.2%.

There is a 15% difference between the age group with the greatest level of respondents feeling safe (very safe and fairly safe) and that with the lowest level. For the previous two questions on feelings of safety the 18 to 24 years group had the greatest feelings of safety across all groups, it seem that these feeling of safety only apply in their own homes or during daylight hours.

There is a 17.5% difference between the feeling of safety between men and women, a 22.1% difference between respondents from BME groups when compared to respondents from white groups and a 19.1% difference between those with a disability and those without.

Response Very good and Good	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	48.4
- 25 to 34 years	62.9
- 35 to 44 years	63.4
- 45 to 54 years	63.0
- 55 to 64 years	60.3
- 65 to 74 years	56.3
- 75 years and over	56.8
Gender	
- Male	68.6
- Female	51.1
Ethnicity	
- White groups	61.4
- BME groups	39.4
Disability	
- Yes	44.8
- No	63.9
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	64.4
- Economically inactive	50.7

Priority 3. Regenerating the Town Centre



Overall, 46.1% of respondents said that funding on regenerating the town centre should be maintained and 26.8% said that it should be reduced.

The 75 years and over age group have the greatest proportion who said that funding for this priority should be reduced at 35.5% and the BME group have the greatest proportion saying that funding should be increased at 45.5%. The 18 to 24 years group have the greatest proportion saying that funding should be maintained at 59.6%.

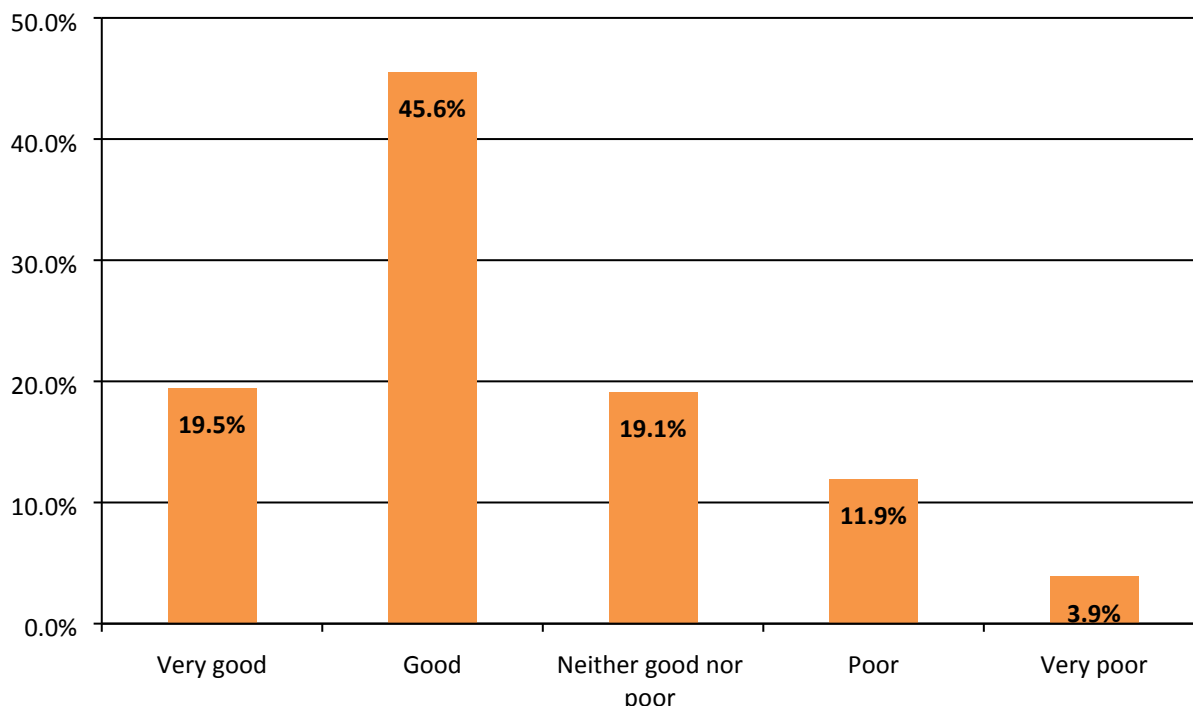
There are no significant variances in the response levels between men and women.

There are significant variances between respondents from white groups and those from BME groups, with a 19.1% difference between the proportions responding that funding should be increased.

There is a greater proportion of respondents in the disability group that said funding should be reduced for the town centre priority when compared to those without a disability, a difference of 10.9%.

Response Levels Reduce & Increase		
Age		
	Reduce	Increase
- 18 to 24 years	29.2	11.2
- 25 to 34 years	22.9	32.3
- 35 to 44 years	21.4	27.7
- 45 to 54 years	25.9	32.5
- 55 to 64 years	27.6	26.5
- 65 to 74 years	30.7	26.3
- 75 years and over	35.5	24.5
Gender		
- Male	26.2	28.9
- Female	27.4	25.3
Ethnicity		
- White groups	26.8	26.4
- BME groups	22.3	45.5
Disability		
- Yes	34.0	26.1
- No	24.9	27.2
Economic Situation		
- Economically active	24.4	28.9
- Economically inactive	31.9	23.1

How would you rate the following in Maidstone Town Centre: Range of shops



Overall, 65.0% of respondents rated the range of shops in the town centre as very good or good and 15.8% rated them as very poor or poor. The most common response was good at 45.6%.

The 18 to 24 years group have the greatest proportion that were positive about the range of shops with four out of five respondents (81.8%) in this group answering very good or good. The 65 to 74 years group have the greatest proportion responding negatively (very poor and poor) with just over one in four (25.1%) selecting these answers. The 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion that had not strong views either way at 29.5%.

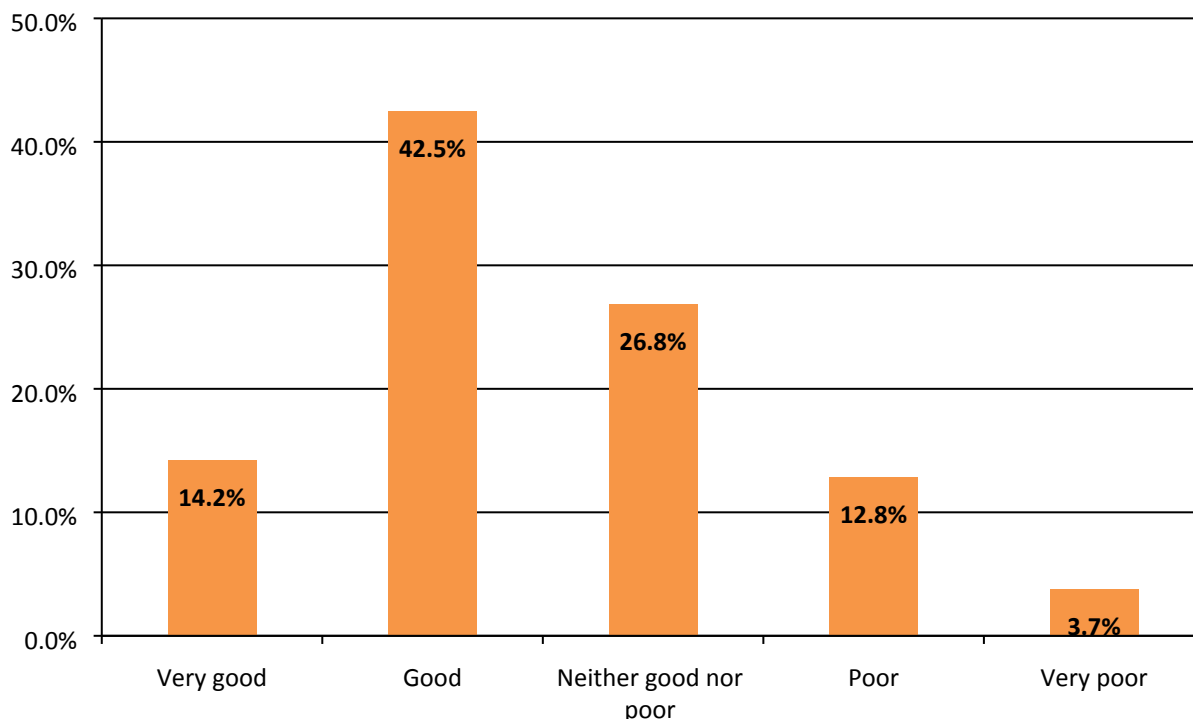
The data indicates that as people get older they are less happy with the range of shops Maidstone has to offer.

There is a 16.9% difference in the proportion of people responding positively between the economically active and the economically inactive. It should be noted that the majority of respondents aged 75 years and over said they were wholly retired from work and therefore classified as economically inactive.

NOTE: The graph and table excludes respondents who answered don't know, if these were included 1.3% of all responders selected this answer.

Response Very good & Good	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	81.8
- 25 to 34 years	79.7
- 35 to 44 years	69.2
- 45 to 54 years	66.8
- 55 to 64 years	55.5
- 65 to 74 years	48.9
- 75 years and over	49.6
Gender	
- Male	66.3
- Female	63.8
Ethnicity	
- White groups	65.0
- BME groups	72.2
Disability	
- Yes	57.2
- No	66.4
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	70.1
- Economically inactive	53.2

How would you rate the following in Maidstone Town Centre: Entertainment available



Overall, 56.7% of respondents answered positively about the entertainment available in the town centre, 16.5% were negative. The most common response was good.

The 25 to 34 years group have the greatest proportion that responded positively at 72.2% and the 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion that responded negatively at 23.5%.

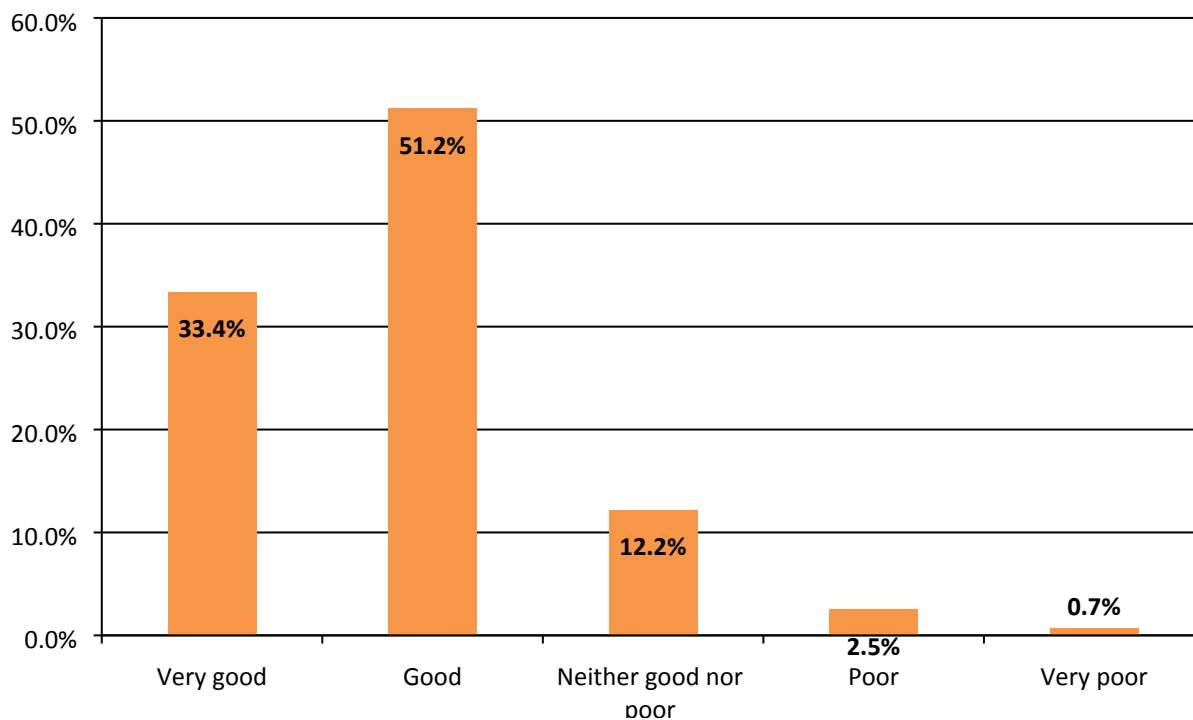
The data suggests that there may be fewer or less attractive entertainment options for this group.

There is a 15.0% difference in the proportion of people responding positively between the economically active and the economically inactive. It should be noted that the majority of respondents aged 75 years and over said they were wholly retired from work and therefore classified as economically inactive.

NOTE: The graph and table excludes respondents who answered don't know, if these were included 4.5% of all responders selected this answer.

Response Very good & Good	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	58.9
- 25 to 34 years	72.2
- 35 to 44 years	63.9
- 45 to 54 years	59.8
- 55 to 64 years	49.3
- 65 to 74 years	40.8
- 75 years and over	37.8
Gender	
- Male	59.7
- Female	53.8
Ethnicity	
- White groups	56.8
- BME groups	54.8
Disability	
- Yes	49.4
- No	59.1
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	61.1
- Economically inactive	46.1

How would you rate the following in Maidstone Town Centre: Range of eating and drinking establishments



Overall, 84.6% of respondents were positive about the range of eating and drinking establishments in the town centre, and 3.2% responded negatively. The most common response was good with more than half of all respondent selecting this answer.

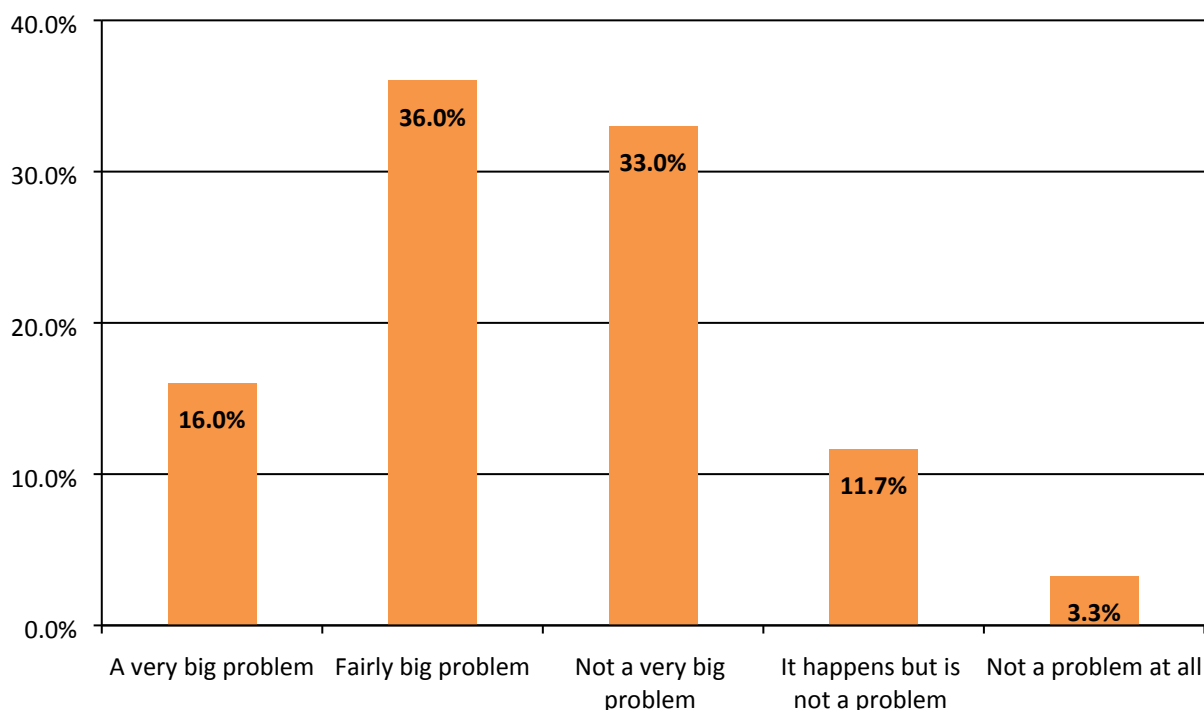
More than nine out of ten (90.5%) respondents in the 18 to 24 years group responded positively, the greatest proportion across all groups. The BME group has the greatest proportion of people who responded negatively at 10.2%, and the greatest proportion of people that have no strong opinion either way are in the 65 to 74 years group where one in five (20.5%) selected this answer.

There are no significant variances between the proportions responding positively between groupings except when it comes to age where there is a difference of 13.9% between the age group with the greatest proportion responding positively and that with the lowest proportion responding positively.

Response Very good & Good	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	90.5
- 25 to 34 years	90.2
- 35 to 44 years	86.7
- 45 to 54 years	86.0
- 55 to 64 years	78.9
- 65 to 74 years	76.6
- 75 years and over	81.8
Gender	
- Male	84.7
- Female	84.5
Ethnicity	
- White groups	85.2
- BME groups	78.2
Disability	
- Yes	83.2
- No	85.5
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	86.2
- Economically inactive	81.3

NOTE: The graph and table excludes respondents who answered don't know, if these were included 2.2% of all responders selected this answer.

Do you think any of the following issues are a problem in the Town Centre? Empty shops



Overall, just over half of all respondents (52.1%) said that empty shops in the town centre are a very big or very big problem. Fairly big problem was the most common response.

Respondents with a disability had the greatest proportion responding a very big or fairly big problem at 62.2%. The 18 to 24 years group have the greatest proportion that said it happen but is not a problem or is not a problem at all at 29.3%. Respondents from BME groups have the greatest proportion saying this is not a very big problem with over half (53.6%) of this group responding this way.

There is a 12.3% difference in the proportion responding a very big and a fairly big problem between those with a disability and those without. The data shows that those with a disability are more likely to rate empty shops as a very big problem than those without and that those without a disability are more likely to rate empty shops as not a very big problem than those with a disability.

The data suggests that empty shops are grows as a concern with age and that women are more concerned than men.

NOTE: The graph and table excludes respondents who answered don't know, if these were included 2.0% of all responders selected this answer.

Response a Very big & Fairly big problem	
Age	
- 18 to 24 years	43.9
- 25 to 34 years	43.8
- 35 to 44 years	44.1
- 45 to 54 years	55.7
- 55 to 64 years	58.7
- 65 to 74 years	60.2
- 75 years and over	59.7
Gender	
- Male	46.6
- Female	57.2
Ethnicity	
- White groups	52.7
- BME groups	35.4
Disability	
- Yes	62.2
- No	49.9
Economic Situation	
- Economically active	50.2
- Economically inactive	56.7

Demographics

Gender	%	Count
Male	48.8%	979
Female	51.2%	1029
Grand Total	100.0%	2008

Religion	%	Count
Christian	56.5%	1116
Buddhist	0.3%	6
Hindu	0.5%	9
Jewish	0.2%	3
Muslim	0.5%	10
Sikh	0.2%	4
No religion	39.8%	787
Other	1.9%	38
Grand Total	100.0%	1975
<i>No response</i>		33

Carers	%	Count
Yes, 1 to 19 hrs per week	12.1%	238
Yes, 20 to 49 hrs per week	1.7%	34
Yes, more than 50 hrs per week	2.7%	53
No	83.4%	1639
Grand Total	100.0%	1965
<i>No response</i>		43

Living Arrangements	%	Count
Owned by you or partner (with or without a mortgage)	72.9%	1447
Rented from a housing association or trust	7.5%	149
Rented from a private landlord	12.1%	239
Shared ownership	1.8%	35
Living with friends/family (no tenancy)	4.8%	96
Other	0.9%	19
Grand Total	100.0%	1985
<i>No response</i>		23

Disability	%	Count
Yes	15.9%	314
No	71.6%	1411
Prefer not to say	12.5%	247
Grand Total	100.0%	1972
<i>No response</i>		36

Age	%	Count
18 to 24 years	9.5%	191
25 to 34 years	16.3%	328
35 to 44 years	16.6%	332
45 to 54 years	18.8%	378
55 to 64 years	14.7%	296
65 to 74 years	13.3%	266
75 years and over	10.8%	216
Grand Total	100.0%	2008

Ethnicity	%	Count
White (Northern Irish, British, Gypsy or Irish Traveller)	95.2%	1865
Mixed Multiple Ethnic Group	0.9%	17
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese)	2.3%	45
Black (African, Caribbean, Black British)	0.4%	7
Other ethnic group	1.3%	25
Grand Total	100.0%	1959
<i>No response</i>		49

Household Income	%	Count
Under £9,999	7.4%	135
£10,000 to £19,999	16.1%	295
£20,000 to £29,999	16.5%	303
£30,000 to £39,000	14.1%	258
£40,000 to £49,000	12.7%	233
£50,000 to £59,000	12.1%	222
£60,000 to £79,000	9.3%	170
£80,000 to £99,999	5.9%	108
£100,000 or more	5.9%	108
Grand Total	100.00%	1832
<i>No response</i>		176

Household Make up	%	Count
Couple, with no dependent child(ren)	38.7%	771
Couple with dependent child(ren)	30.2%	601
Lone parent with dependent child(ren)	5.5%	109
Single person household	17.3%	344
Multiple person household (includes house shares and homes of multiple occupation)	3.4%	68
Other	5.0%	100
Grand Total	100.0%	1994
<i>No response</i>		14

Economic Situation	%	Count
Employed full-time (30 hrs or more a week)	48.3%	933
Employed part-time (under 30 hrs a week)	11.1%	214
Employed (no guaranteed hrs per week)	0.8%	16
Self-employed	7.4%	143
In education or training	2.1%	40
Looking for work	1.0%	19
Looking after the home	3.2%	61
Permanently sick or disabled and unable to work	2.2%	42
Volunteering	2.5%	48
Wholly retired from work	21.5%	415
Grand Total	100.0%	1932
<i>No response</i>		76

Weighting

Age	Population		Survey		Weight
	Males	%	Males	%	
18 to 24	6398	5.0%	12	0.6%	8.31
25 to 34	10406	8.1%	86	4.3%	1.89
35 to 44	10436	8.1%	111	5.5%	1.47
45 to 54	12132	9.4%	162	8.1%	1.17
55 to 64	9361	7.3%	206	10.3%	0.71
64 to 74	8341	6.5%	250	12.5%	0.52
75 years and over	5736	4.5%	122	6.1%	0.73
Male Total	62810		949		
Age	Females	%	Female	%	Weight
18 to 24 years	5864	5%	28	1.4%	3.26
25 to 34 years	10653	8%	158	7.9%	1.05
35 to 44 years	10892	8%	203	10.1%	0.84
45 to 64 years	12118	9%	208	10.4%	0.91
55 to 64 years	9617	7%	229	11.4%	0.65
65 to 74 years	8751	7%	154	7.7%	0.89
75 years and over	8118	6%	79	3.9%	1.60
Female Total	66013		1059		

Total population (18 yrs and over)	128823
Total Responses	2008

Agenda Item 15

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

9 JANUARY 2018

Planning Appeals Costs

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ellie Dunnet
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report summarises the budgeted and actual costs arising from development control appeals over the previous five years. This is an area which has been highlighted as a risk for the Council, due to the potential to incur significant financial losses. Following the second quarter budget monitoring report to this committee on 7 November, setting out the projected overspend in this area, a further report was requested, detailing further information regarding this risk.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the information regarding the financial impact of planning appeals since 2013/14 be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	9 January 2018

Planning Appeals Costs

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting in November, this committee requested a report outlining the current and projected costs arising from development control appeals, detailing historical data for the last five years, in order for the Committee to be able to fully understand underlying causes and trends.
- 1.2 This request was linked to a projected overspend on development control appeals costs reported at the end of the second quarter, and a referral from Policy and Resources Committee that both this Committee and the Planning Committee consider how they could manage these costs.
- 1.3 Table 1 below shows appellant costs incurred against the budgeted figure, year on year, from 2013/14. These figures also include costs incurred for Judicial Reviews where planning permission has been granted. The expenditure projection shown for 2017/18 is the full year forecast based on current known factors.
- 1.4 These costs include all external legal and consultancy costs incurred in investigating the appeal, as well as costs awarded against the Council. Additional miscellaneous costs for accommodation hire, photocopying etc. are also included within the totals shown above.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 (forecast)
Total Budget for Year	£19,410	£181,010	£19,410	£119,410	£119,410
Total Expenditure	£85,792	£172,461	£207,608	£233,501	£319,000
Underspend/Overspend	-£66,382	£8,549	-£173,199	-£114,091	-£199,590

Table 1: Appeal Costs vs. Budget, 2013/14 – 2017/18

- 1.5 This shows a sharp year on year increase in costs arising from appeals, and existing projections indicate that further significant increases are likely in 2018/19. During 2014/15, the budget was temporarily increased in order to fund significant appeal costs incurred during that year. In 2016/17, the budget was increased permanently by £100,000 in recognition of the fact that the previous budget of £19,410 had proved to be insufficient.
- 1.6 As detailed in a separate report on the agenda for this meeting, an additional £400,000 has been earmarked within the budget proposals for 2018/19 onwards, relating to potential future costs which the Council may incur on appeals which are currently outstanding.
- 1.7 A further factor associated with appeals but not reflected in the figures shown above is staff time. In total, it is estimated that approximately 1,600 hours of officer time have been spent investigating and preparing for appeal hearings over the past five years, which equates to an average of 7.7 days of Planning Officer time per appeal.

- 1.8 The average hourly rate for a Planning Officer is approximately £42, rising to over £200 when overheads are included. This adds significantly to the cost of the appeal to the Council, and the impact of officer time spent on planning appeals is felt elsewhere in the planning service.
- 1.9 Further information regarding appeals which have had the most significant impact on financial resources and officer time is provided in the table below for information:

Planning Application	Estimated Planning Officer Time	Costs Incurred	Comments
Baltic Wharf	130 hours	£195,422	This was an appeal against non-determination. The appeal was upheld in a Public Inquiry. External consultants were employed, and two officers were involved from Development Management and Planning Policy.
Waterside Park	100 hours	£106,819	Planning application was refused by the Planning Committee. There was a Public Inquiry, and the appeal was dismissed. Subsequent Judicial Review challenge was also dismissed. External landscape and planning consultants were employed, and a Senior Planning Officer attended the Public Inquiry.
Land East of Hermitage Lane	150 hours	£101,950	The planning application was refused by Planning Committee, resulting in a 6 day Public Inquiry and call in by the Secretary of State. Officer time spent includes a referral back to planning committee to drop one of the grounds of refusal.
Park Valley Leisure Ltd.	80 hours	£59,883	A Public Inquiry was held and costs were awarded against the Local Planning Authority due to unreasonable behaviour.
Land East of Gleamingwood Drive	100 hours	£52,001	The application was refused by Planning Committee, resulting in a Public Inquiry and incurring costs for a

Planning Application	Estimated Planning Officer Time	Costs Incurred	Comments
			Landscape Consultant and Barrister.
Boughton Lane	200 hours	Total cost tbc	This application was refused by Planning Committee against the advice of officers. The grounds of refusal were later dropped by Planning Referrals committee but the appeal and Public Inquiry still went ahead. The Inspector dismissed the appeal. This was challenged by the developer and the decision was quashed and reverted back to the Planning Inspectorate to determine. On the basis of the site being taken out of the Local Plan, the developer withdrew the appeal.
Great Pagehurst Farm	100 hours	£27,366	Members overturned a previous decision and refused planning permission. The appeal was dismissed at the hearing.
Ham Lane	120 hours	£30,259	Members overturned a previous decision and refused planning permission. A Public Inquiry was held and the appeal was upheld following changes to the application.
Current Live Cases	530 hours	£420,445	Ongoing cases
Other Minor Cases (Under £30,000)	90 hours	£308,367	

Table 2: Officer Time

1.10 The above estimates of officer time do not include time spent by the Mid Kent Legal Service. Other costs, including appellant costs have been plotted on the chart below, which indicates a continuing upward trend in this area. This presents a risk to financial stability and it is therefore important to ensure that this is managed appropriately.

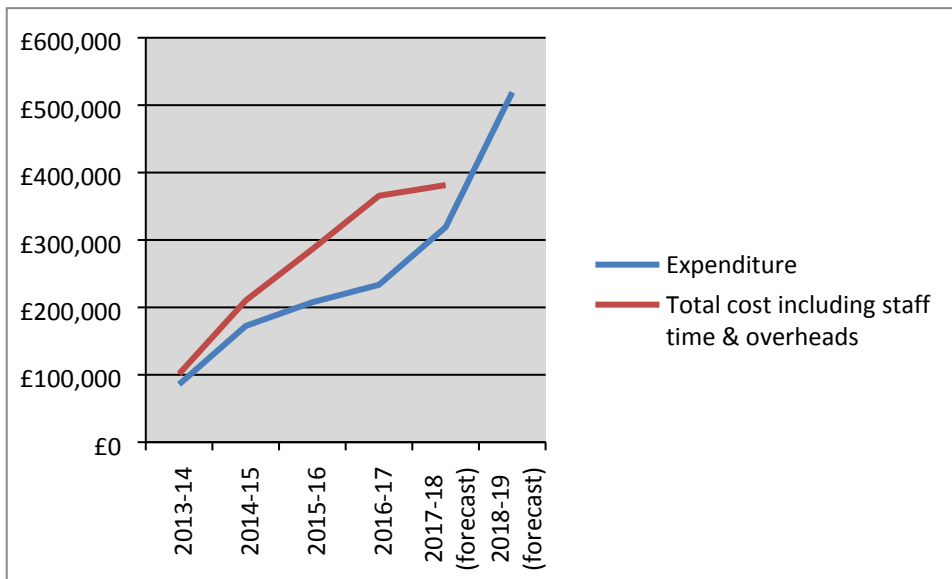


Table 3: Appeals costs including staff time

1.11 It is hoped that the adoption of the Local Plan will result in a reduction in appeals arising from planning decisions by establishing a clear framework through which planning decisions will be made. It is considered that this action will mitigate the risk of further increases in the volume of appeals and associated costs in future years.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Committee has requested this information previously and is asked to note the report. This Committee has previously accepted that it has a role in reducing the risk of appeals, by setting a coherent and robust framework for planning decisions.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee continue to monitor the situation with regard to appeals via quarterly budget monitoring reports, however, further detailed reports can be provided if required.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As noted above, the Committee is asked to note this report.

4. RISK

- 4.1 This report highlights a risk in relation to costs arising from appeals made against planning decisions. The impact of these decisions is that the Council risks incurring estimated costs of £319,000 in the current financial year and potentially in excess of £500,000 during 2018/19. Consequently this has been assessed as a 'red' risk in line with the Council's risk management framework and risk appetite. We will continue to monitor this risk closely over the coming months.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 As noted earlier in the report, this committee requested further information regarding planning appeals in response to a referral from Policy and Resources Committee at its November meeting.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 As this area has been highlighted as a 'red' risk, this will be monitored closely and any developments will be reported back to the committee via quarterly budget monitoring reports.

7. 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.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section – if your risk section is more than just a paragraph in this box then you can state 'refer to paragraph ... of the report'.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Financial	The potential future financial impact arising from appeals is detailed within section 1 of the report.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Staffing	No direct impact has been identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Legal	This report is for noting only and there are no direct legal implications arising from it. The impact of appeal inquiries on Mid Kent Legal Services is highlighted in the main body of the report, and constitutes a not insignificant portion of officer time.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Privacy and Data Protection	No direct impact has been identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance

Equalities	No direct impact has been identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Crime and Disorder	No direct impact has been identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Procurement	No direct impact has been identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

**STRATEGIC PLANNING,
SUSTAINABILITY &
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

9 JANUARY 2018

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2018/19 and setting next year's Council Tax. Following agreement by Council of the Medium Term Financial Strategy at its meeting on 25 October 2017, this report sets out budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Agrees the budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee as set out in Appendix C for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	9 January 2018
Policy and Resources Committee	14 February 2018
Council	28 February 2018

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 1.1 At its meeting on 25 October 2017, Council agreed a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the next five years. The starting point for the MTFS is that budget savings for 2017/18 are on track for delivery, a modest underspend is currently projected for the year as a whole, and the level of reserves is adequate, but not excessive.
- 1.2 The MTFS provides the financial underpinning for the Council's Strategic Plan, in particular the three action areas highlighted for specific focus: a clean and safe environment; regenerating the Town Centre; and a home for everyone, ie tackling homelessness and improving housing supply.
- 1.3 There is a high degree of uncertainty about the external environment. The four year financial settlement to local authorities announced in 2016 has another two years to run. This includes £1.6 million negative Revenue Support Grant payable by the Council to central government in 2019/20, but the four year settlement at least provides a measure of certainty about the Council's funding position in the short term. However, after 2020/21 it remains unclear how any new financial settlement will affect the Council. It is also unclear how the lower level of overall economic growth now projected by the Office of Budget Responsibility will impact the Council.
- 1.4 Given uncertainty about the future, various potential scenarios were modelled in the MTFS, representing (a) favourable, (b) neutral and (c) adverse sets of circumstances. All scenarios assumed that budget savings included within the existing MTFS, set out in Appendix B, can be delivered. Projections were prepared for each of the scenarios modelled and the MTFS stated that budget proposals would be sought to address all the potential scenarios.

Updates to Strategic Revenue Projections

Council Tax

- 1.5 The MTFS assumed in all scenarios that Band D Council Tax would continue to increase by £4.95 per annum, reverting to 2% in 2019/20 when this becomes a greater figure than £4.95.
- 1.6 The other key assumption regarding Council Tax is the number of new properties. The number of new properties has been increasing in recent years, from a low of 0.38% in 2014 to 1.18% in 2016. Assumptions were as follows:

Favourable – 2%
Neutral – 1.5%
Adverse – 1%

- 1.7 The Council Tax base for 2018/19 has now been calculated and is the subject of a separate report on your agenda. This shows an increase of 1.6% in new properties for the year to 20 September 2017. The SRP has been updated to reflect this and the related Council Tax base increase.

Business Rates

- 1.8 Business rates income is highly volatile, owing to the large number of assessments that are subject to appeals. However, the underlying pattern is of continuing growth in business rates income above and beyond the baseline figure assumed in the government's funding settlement. The assumption included in the MTFS of growth of 2% has therefore been retained.
- 1.9 It is likely that as part of any new funding settlement with effect from 2020/21, business rates growth will be reset to zero. In other words, councils will lose the benefit of growth accumulated since the introduction of the present system in 2014, and their share of business rates will be recalculated based on the results of the Fair Funding Review. This review is intended to reset the starting point for local authorities' funding, based on their respective needs and resources. It will have the effect of redistributing resources away from high business rates growth areas to low growth areas in the short term.
- 1.10 Some of business rates growth is currently being used to fund the Council's economic development activity. Given the volatility of business rates, this source of income is not stable and cannot be predicted with certainty for the future. Accordingly, this feeds into the corporate risk that financial restrictions limit the Council's capacity to promote the borough's future financial growth.

Fees and Charges

- 1.11 The MTFS assumes that fees and charges will increase in line with overall inflation assumptions. Any volume increase is offset by the drag on increases caused by the fact that not all fees and charges are within the Council's control, many being set by statute. This assumption continues to be applied in the updated SRP.
- 1.12 It is assumed that the Planning Fee increases announced by the government in Spring 2017, implementation of which was then delayed by the General Election, will apply for the whole of 2018/19.

Inflation

- 1.13 Inflation continues to be at a higher level than the government's 2% target. The main impact of inflation for the Council will be in its effect on payroll costs. In the Chancellor's Budget Statement on 22 November, pay increases for the public sector were left to be determined based on the recommendations of individual sector pay review bodies. Maidstone Borough Council agrees pay for its staff independently of local government collective arrangements, so is not bound by these. The updated SRP retains

the assumption of a 1% pay increase that was included within the MTFS agreed by Council in October.

Spending Pressures

1.14 Allowance is made in the SRP for known spending pressures. The main additional spending pressures now included are as follows:

Temporary Accommodation £218,000 – The existing MTFS assumed that £118,000 of the additional funding put into Temporary Accommodation in 2017/18 could be withdrawn. Continuing pressures in this area mean that this is not realistic; instead an additional £100,000 will be required, based on current projections.

Loss of interest income £120,000 – Continuing low interest receivable on cash balances means that the budget level of interest is not achievable. To date the recent increase in Bank of England base rates has not led to a corresponding increase in returns available in the market.

Planning enforcement £100,000 – There is currently a backlog of planning enforcement work, so a one-off provision has been included in the MTFS for 2018/19 to allow this to be addressed. This has been funded through a reduction of £100,000 in the provision for Planning appeal costs, which were originally estimated as £500,000 in the MTFS, based on a current assessment of the risks faced. Provision had already been made for Planning appeal costs in the existing MTFS. Whilst the provision will be charged to 2018/19, if necessary any unused provision may be carried forward to subsequent years.

Market £40,000 – The market operated by Maidstone Council at Lockmeadow has consistently under-performed on its income targets. Whilst steps are being taken to develop new income sources, it is considered that a reduction of £40,000 on an ongoing basis should be incorporated into the SRP.

Heather House £25,000 – Communities, Housing & Environment Committee has recently decided to continue operating Heather House as a community hall. Income generated from the hall is currently well below budget levels and although it is hoped that income can be built up again it is appropriate to include a provision for an ongoing shortfall of £25,000.

Chancellor's Budget Statement

1.15 The Chancellor's Budget Statement on 22 November 2018 reflected more pessimistic growth projections from the Office of Budget Responsibility. Whilst the main impact of the reduced growth was offset by projected increases in government borrowing, the implications for general economic growth and for public sector spending are unfavourable.

1.16 The statement included the following announcements relevant to local government:

Housing

- A range of measures were announced, with the intention of increasing the rate of new home construction to 300,000 per annum, including an additional £2.7 billion for the Housing Infrastructure Fund , £1 billion for a new Land Assembly Fund and £630 million for a Small Sites Fund.
- The Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap has been lifted for Councils in areas of 'high affordability pressure'. (This will not benefit non-housing stock owning Councils such as Maidstone).
- Councils may increase the Council Tax Empty Homes premium as an incentive to bring properties back into use.

Business Rates

- The annual business rates increase will now be based on the Consumer Prices Index, rather than the higher Retail Prices Index. Given that CPI is running at 3%, this will still mean a significant increase for businesses.
- The frequency of business rates revaluations will be increased to once every three years, compared with once every five years now.
- Local government will be fully compensated for the loss of income as a result of these measures.
- A 100% business rates retention pilot was announced for London, but applications for pilots from outside London, including Kent's, are still under consideration by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

1.17 There were no announcements about future local government funding, so it is not proposed to make any specific updates to the SRP arising from the budget.

Summary

1.18 The overall effect of the changes in assumptions set out above is to increase the cumulative budget gap at the end of the five year financial planning period in the neutral scenario from £3.8 million in the MTFS to £4.6 million now. Appendix A sets out the updated neutral scenario Strategic Revenue Projection.

1.19 At this stage, given that there have been no fundamental changes required to the MTFS budget assumptions, and given the certainty provided by the four year funding settlement, it is appropriate to plan for the short term on the basis of the neutral budget scenario. However, this assumption will continue to be kept under review, both when finalising the budget for 2018/19 and when updating the MTFS as part of next year's budget process.

Budget Proposals

- 1.20 Budget proposals have been developed in response to the projections set out in the MTFS. Heads of Service were asked to develop proposals both in response to the neutral scenario and to the adverse scenario. 'Neutral scenario' proposals were based on achieving further service efficiencies, increasing income, and investing to generate revenue growth. The 'neutral' budget proposals, if delivered, will ensure that the budget remit of a balanced position for 2018/19 can be secured. Details of budget proposals relating to services within the remit of this Committee are set out in Appendix C.
- 1.21 Two changes have been made to the existing budget proposals within the remit of this Committee that were agreed by Council in March 2017. The saving of £40,000 arising from the reduction in appeals following Local Plan adoption has been re-scheduled from 2018/19 to 2020/21. This is because of the backlog of appeals that relate to the period preceding adoption of the Local Plan. A saving of £50,000 from reduction in Planning Policy work arising from adoption of the Local Plan has been removed as it is not deliverable, given the requirement that has now arisen for the Local Plan to be reviewed by 2020. This saving has been substituted with a new saving proposal totalling £50,000 over the four years 2019/20 to 2022/23, for the funding of staff costs from the Community Infrastructure Levy. This saving is shown in Appendix C. The existing budget proposals, as amended, are set out in Appendix B.
- 1.22 In addition to agreeing the budget proposals set out in Appendix B, Council agreed at its meeting on 1st March 2017 to implement the 20% increase in planning fees that had recently been proposed by the government. This would be used to fund an increase in planning expenditure of £180,000 in 2017/18 and a further £70,000 in 2018/19. At the time of writing, the planning fee increase has not yet been implemented, but it is anticipated that it will be implemented in time to generate a full year's income for 2018/19 with a corresponding increase in expenditure.
- 1.23 The overall effect of the above changes for Planning Service expenditure for 2018/19 will therefore be as follows:

	£
Existing saving – as per Appendix B	-120,000
Expenditure growth – funded by Planning Fee increase	250,000
One-off investment in Enforcement (see para 1.14)	<u>100,000</u>
Net increase in expenditure	<u>230,000</u>

- 1.24 'Adverse scenario' proposals were developed for contingency planning purposes, based on a more radical approach, including service cuts. It is not proposed to explore these options further at this stage, given that the 'neutral' proposals and existing agreed savings proposals are sufficient to meet the budget remit. The 'adverse' budget proposals will be revisited and updated as necessary if it appears that the assumptions on which neutral scenario is based are no longer valid.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Agree the budget proposals relating to this Committee as set out in Appendix C for onward submission to the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - 2.2 Propose changes to the budget proposals for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - 2.3 Make no comment on the budget proposals.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee must recommend to Council at its meeting on 14 February 2018 a balanced budget and a proposed level of Council Tax for the coming year. The budget proposals included in this report will allow the Policy and Resources Committee to do this. Accordingly, the preferred option is that this Committee agrees the budget proposals at Appendix C..
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4. RISK

- 4.1 The Council's MTFS is subject to a high degree of risk and certainty. In order to address this 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.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Policy and Resources Committee received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 28 June 2017 and it agreed the approach set out in that report to development of an updated MTFS for 2018/19 - 2022/23 and a budget for 2018/19.
- 5.2 Policy and Resources Committee then considered a draft MTFS at its meeting on 25 July 2017, which was agreed for submission to Council. The MTFS included descriptions of the different scenarios facing the Council and described how budget proposals would be sought for all scenarios, so that the Council might be suitably prepared for the adverse scenario, as defined. Council agreed the MTFS at its meeting on 25 October 2017.
- 5.3 Detailed budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 13th December 2017 and it was noted that they would be considered by the relevant Service Committees, including this Committee, during January 2018. Residents' and businesses' views will also be sought.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The timetable for setting the budget for 2018/19 is set out below.

Date	Meeting	Action
13 December 2017	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree initial 18/19 budget proposals for consideration by Service Committees
January 2018	All Service Committees	Consider 18/19 budget proposals
14 February 2018	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree 18/19 budget proposals for recommendation to Council
28 February 2018	Council	Approve 18/19 budget

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	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.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	See section 4 above.	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 committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The process of developing the budget strategy will identify the	Section 151 Officer &

	level of resources available for staffing over the medium term.	Finance Team
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget and development of the MTFS and the strategic revenue projection in the ways set out in this report supports achievement of a balanced budget.	Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	Adopting a budget has no incremental impact on privacy and data protection. All budgetary data is held in line with current policies and procedures.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Equalities	Where appropriate, Equalities Impact Assessments are carried out for specific budget proposals.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Procurement	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Strategic Revenue Projection
- Appendix B: Budget Proposals in existing MTFS (updated)
- Appendix C: New Budget Proposals – Neutral Scenario

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

**REVENUE ESTIMATE 2018/19 TO 2022/23
STRATEGIC REVENUE PROJECTION (Neutral)**

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
AVAILABLE FINANCE						
14,828	COUNCIL TAX	15,265	15,803	16,357	16,924	17,505
	TARIFF / TOP-UP ADJUSTMENT		-1,589	-1,589	-2,889	-2,889
3,044	RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	3,142	3,254	3,319	3,385	3,453
1,025	BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	1,035	1,046	0	500	500
18,897	BUDGET REQUIREMENT	19,442	18,514	18,088	17,921	18,569
19,293	OTHER INCOME	19,489	19,707	19,897	20,090	20,285
38,190	TOTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE	38,931	38,221	37,985	38,011	38,854
EXPECTED SERVICE SPEND						
36,500	CURRENT SPEND	38,190	38,931	38,221	37,985	38,011
	INFLATION INCREASES					
560	PAY, NI & INFLATION INCREASES	629	640	658	677	696
	NATIONAL INITIATIVES					
25	LOSS OF ADMINISTRATION GRANT	100				
0	PENSION DEFICIT FUNDING	34	36	150	150	150
180	REINVEST PLANNING FEE INCREASES	70				
	LOCAL PRIORITIES					
94	HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION	36				
	MAIDSTONE HOUSE RENT INCREASE	40	40			
235	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	100				
200	REPLACE CONTINGENCY					
50	MUSEUM					
200	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW					
	PLANNING APPEALS	400	-400			
	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT	100	-100			
96	MOTE PARK CAFÉ - REVIEW OF OPTIONS	-56				
	LOSS OF INTEREST INCOME	120				
	MARKET - LOSS OF INCOME	40				
	HEATHER HOUSE - LOSS OF INCOME	25				
	REVENUE COSTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	261	374	547	590	433
50	GROWTH PROVISION	50	50	50	50	50
38,190	TOTAL PREDICTED REQUIREMENT	40,140	39,571	39,626	39,452	39,340
	SAVINGS REQUIRED	-1,209	-1,349	-1,641	-1,441	-486
	SAVINGS PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED	928	476	159	26	
	ADJUST AND REPROFILE EXISTING SAVINGS	-325	150	65	0	
	SUB-TOTAL - BUDGET GAP	-606	-723	-1,417	-1,415	-486
	CUMULATIVE BUDGET GAP	-606	-1,330	-2,746	-4,161	-4,647

Note: £875,000 Other Income previously netted off 'Current Spend' in 17/18 is now shown gross, ie both Other Income and Current Spend increase by £875,000.

Description	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Savings arising from Planning Review	120				120
Reduction in appeals following Local Plan adoption			40		40
5% increase in Parking income (to be agreed under fees & charges report)			100		100
Re-specify Park & Ride and deliver at reduced cost		75			75
Remove grants as part of voluntary sector grants reduction strategy	16	16	16	15	63
SPST Total	136	91	156	15	398

Description	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Increase Pay & Display income budget (Fees & Charges)	200	50	50	50	50	400
Offset staff costs with CIL		5	15	15	15	50
Increase in Local Land Charges fee income (Fees & Charges)	50					50
SPST Total	250	55	65	65	65	500

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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