

2016

Budget Consultation



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MBC

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Budget Consultation 2016

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Introduction and Methodology

Maidstone Borough Council undertook a consultation with residents and visitors on the Budget for 2017/18 between 7 October and 20 November 2016. The theme for the event was *'Your services, you decide'* with the aim of getting as many people across the borough as possible to think about what services they most value.

The objectives of the research were:

- To identify which services we deliver are a priority to our residents.
- To identify what approach to funding these services residents think we should take.

Paper copies of the survey were available at roadshows that were held around the borough and an online version survey was emailed to residents that have signed up for the Consultation Mailing List and was made available on the Council's consultation webpages. The online survey was also promoted through our social media channels.

A total of 140 surveys were completed during the roadshows and a further 786 surveys were completed online by the residents who either received notification of the survey through our mailing list or clicked on the links advertising the consultation on social media.

This provides the results with a 95% confidence level and a 3.2% error rate. This means that if we run to the survey again, 95 times out of 100 the results would be within +/-3.2% of the original survey results.

Data was weighted to counteract nonresponse bias. The weighting profile was based on 2011 census for age and ethnicity within gender in relation to borough population.

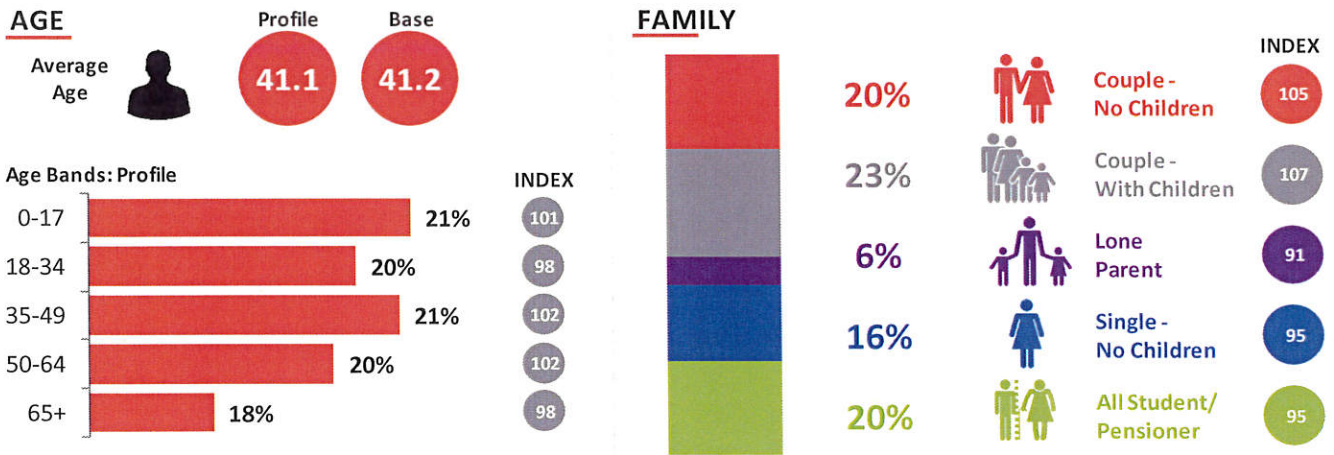
Locations of the ten Budget Roadshows

- Roseacre Junior School, Bearsted
- Vestry Hall, High Street, Marden
- Yalding Farmers' Market, High Street, Yalding
- Mid Kent Shopping Centre, Allington
- Oakwood Park Grammar School
- Longmeadow Hall, Headcorn
- The Mall, Maidstone (2 days)
- North Hall, Staplehurst
- Sutton Valence Village Hall

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Respondent Profile

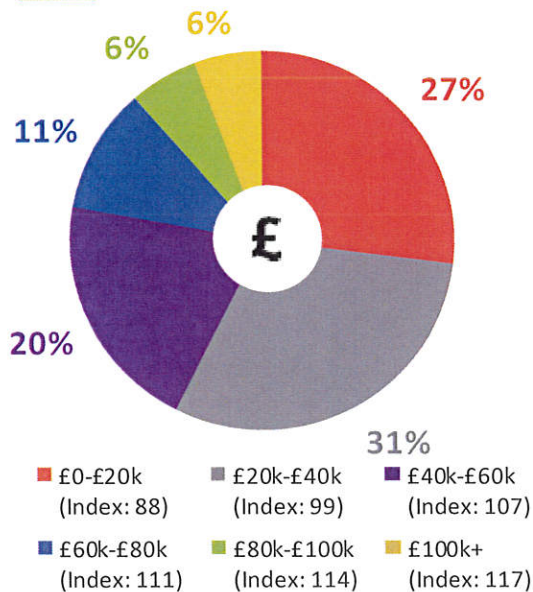
Maidstone Borough Council uses the customer classification index, Acorn. The index segments households using postcode data to gain additional insight about our residents and can help us in identifying why trends occur and how best to reach specific audiences. The following graphics show the acorn profile for the residents responding to the Budget 2016 survey. The base is all Maidstone households. An index of 100 shows that the proportion in this group is in line with the base, over 100 shows above average representation and under 100 shows under representation.



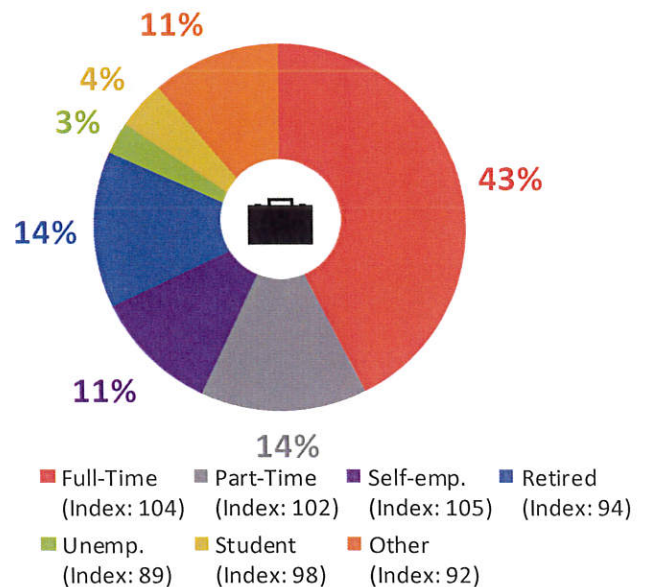
The above graphic shows that the distribution of respondents across the age bands are broadly consistent with that of Maidstone overall. However, it also shows that households containing couples are over-represented and the remaining family types are under-represented when compared to Maidstone's general population. This is also the same for housing types for this group which shows that the proportion of respondents in terraces and semi-detached properties aligns with Maidstone overall and that households in bungalows, which are generally occupied by old households are under-represented.

The graphics below show that households with higher incomes are over-represented and that the majority of households are in work. This tallies with the other information we have about the respondents benefit claimants are under-represented and this group are 6% more likely than average to have a degree or higher degree.

INCOME

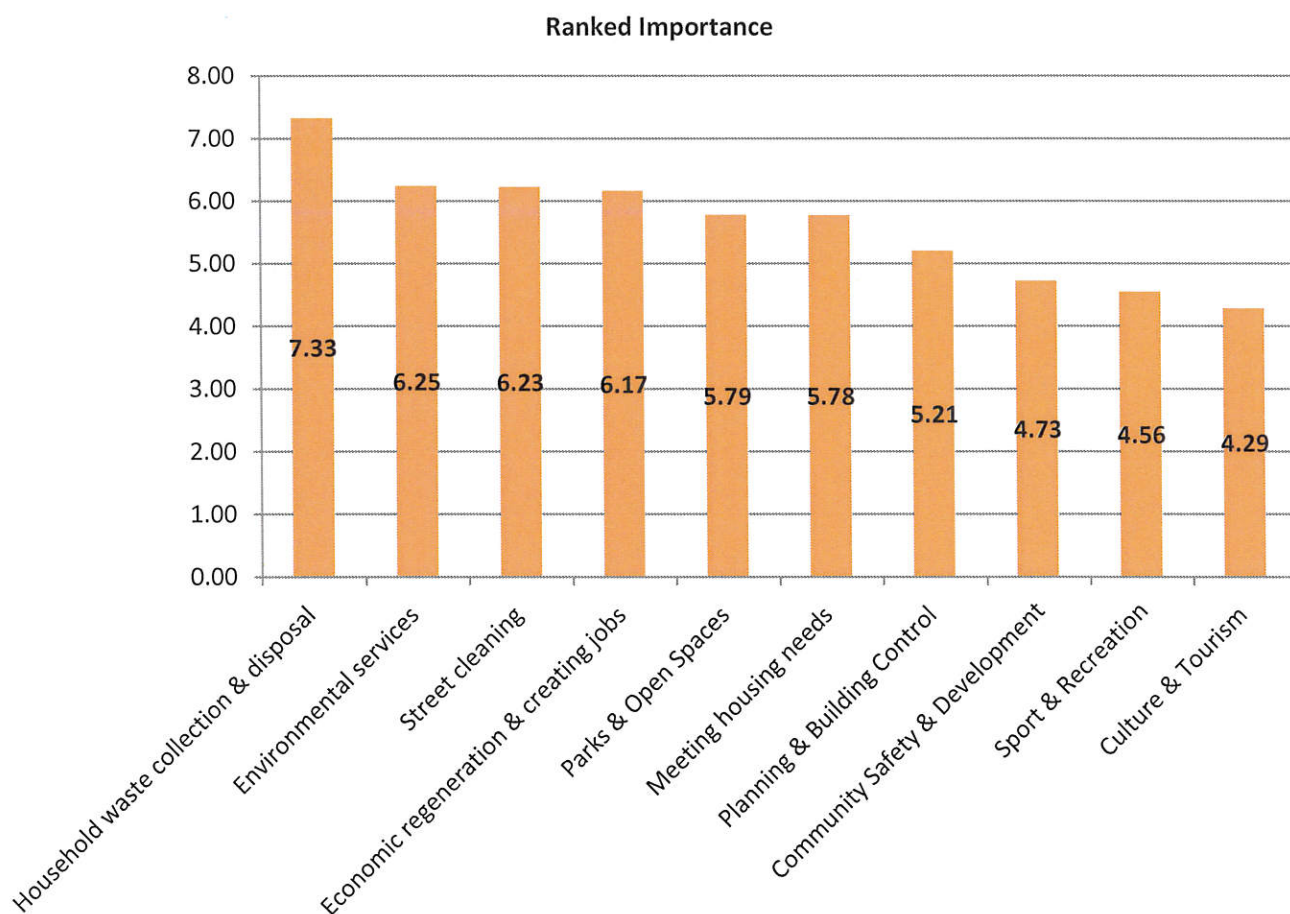


EMPLOYMENT



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Overall rating of front facing services which are important



Household waste collection and disposal received the highest rating when residents were asked to place a list of ten services in order of importance with 7.33. Culture & Tourism received the lowest rating at 4.29.

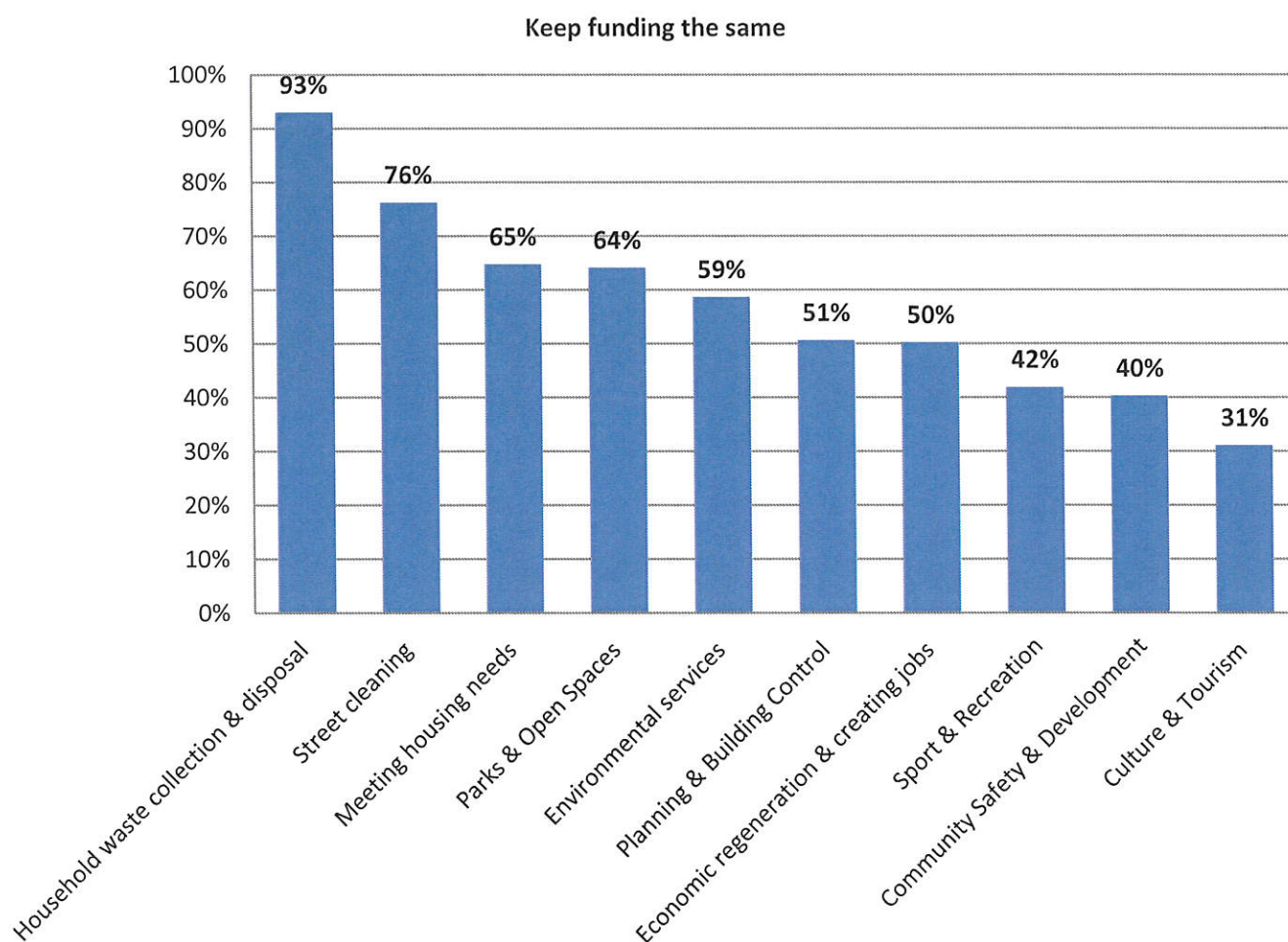
Whilst Household waste collection and disposal was clearly the top service in terms of importance there was very little difference in the ratings given to the services that were placed in second, third and fourth – Environmental Services, Street Cleaning and Economic regeneration & creating jobs.

In the resident survey 2015 Street cleaning is the third most important aspect (out of 20 categories) in making somewhere a good place to live (top if we only consider services delivered by MBC), considering there was no comparable aspect that covered waste and environmental services in the resident survey this shows some consistency between how important residents feel street cleaning is.

Sport and recreation is 9th in the budget survey for importance and in the resident survey it was 19th (note: there was no comparable aspect for culture and tourism and that the aspect that was last in the resident survey, race relations, is not specifically a service) showing consistency between these two surveys.

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Sustain, Reduce or Cut?



The graph above shows the proportion of respondents that wanted to retain existing funding ('Funding kept the same') for the ten services. Household waste collection and disposal was the service which had the greatest support at 93%. Culture and tourism had the lowest proportion that said funding should be kept the same at 31% this aligns with the importance ratings.

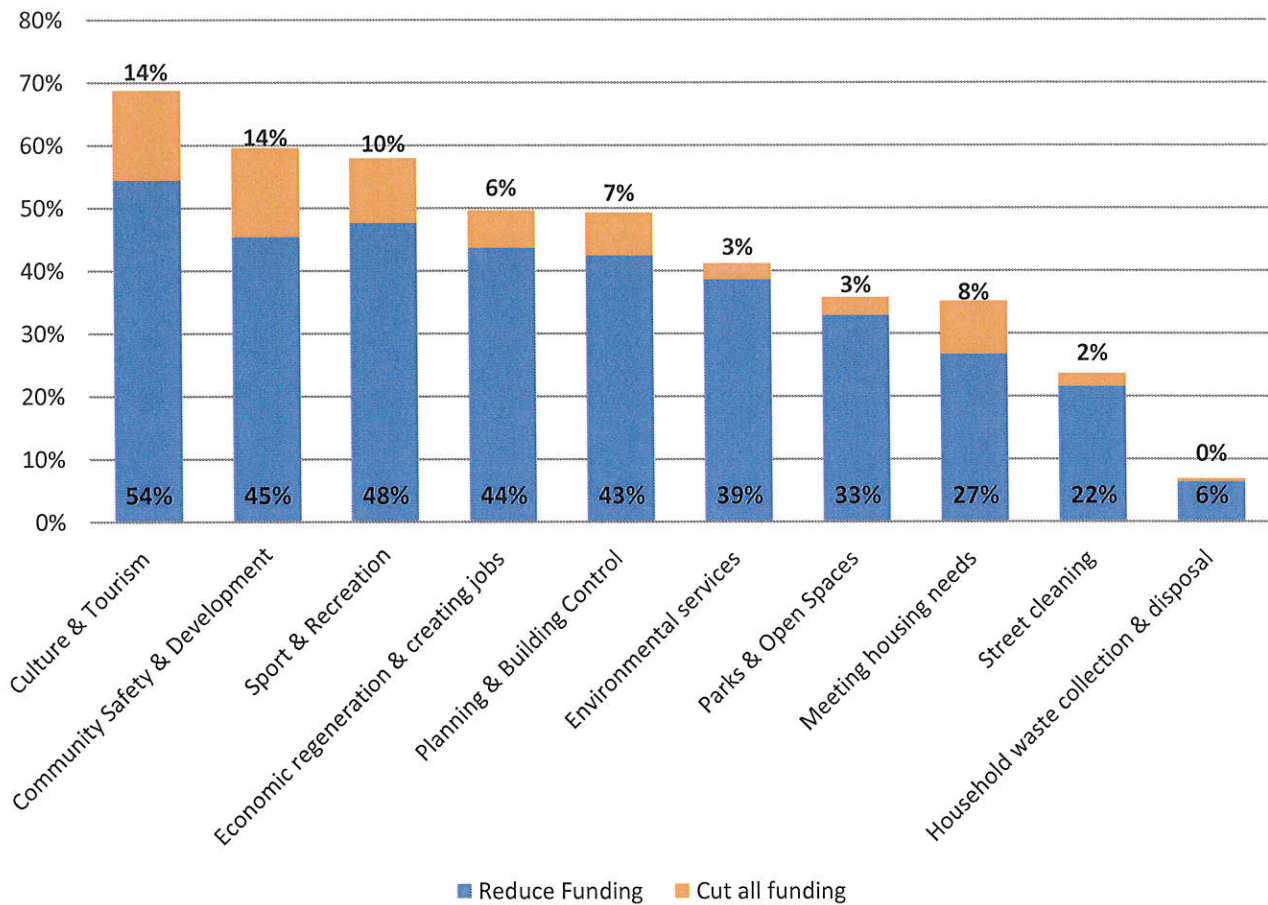
Generally we would expect the results of this question to follow the same or a closely aligned trajectory as the overall ranking and while this is true for the polar ends of the data range, there are some anomalies.

A greater proportion of respondents said that they wanted to keep the same level of funding for street cleaning (which is 3rd in importance) than did for Environmental Services (which is 2nd most important).

In addition a greater proportion of respondents said that they wanted to keep the same level of funding for Parks and Open Spaces and Housing Needs than did for Economic regeneration & creating jobs (which is 4th most important).

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Reduce or Cut Funding?



Culture and Tourism have the greatest proportion of respondents overall that said Funding should be reduced or Cut altogether at 68%. This is made up of 14% that said Cut all funding and 54% that it should be reduced. With this service area being ranked lowest in importance this result is not surprising. In addition as Household Waste Collection and Disposal was rated as the most important service it is as expected, with minimal support for reducing or cutting funding for this service.

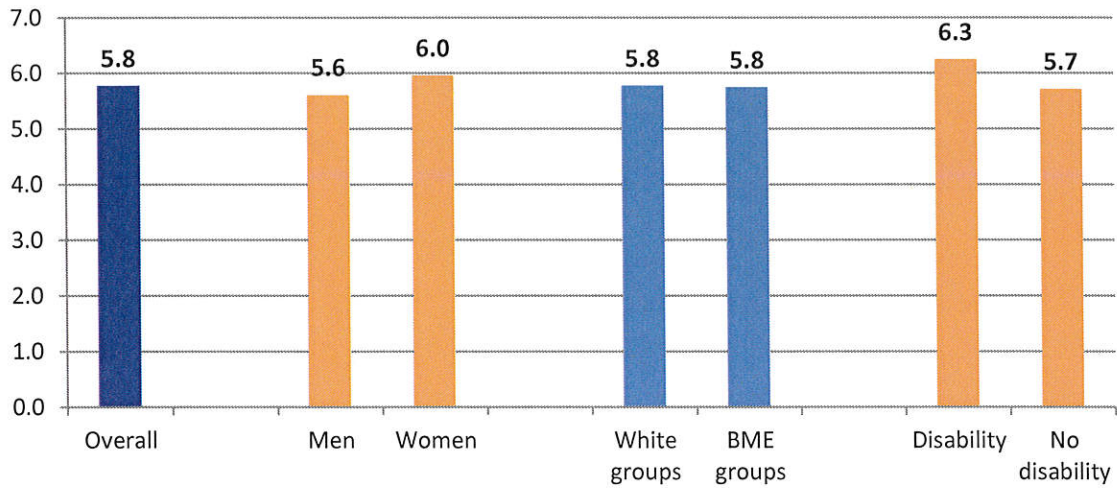
Overall, 59% of respondents said that funding should be reduced or cut for Community Safety and Development and 58% said the same Sports and Recreation. This is interesting as Sports and Recreation had a lower priority ranking than Community Safety and Development and there is a greater proportion saying to cut all funding for Community Safety and Development than for Sport and Recreation.

Environmental Services was second and Street Cleaning was third in terms of importance however these two have moved places when looking at the reduce and cut funding approaches, with Street Cleaning having the second lowest overall proportion saying reduce or cut funding and Meeting Housing Needs the third lowest.

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Meeting housing needs (including providing affordable homes and helping homeless people)

Q1 Importance - key groups

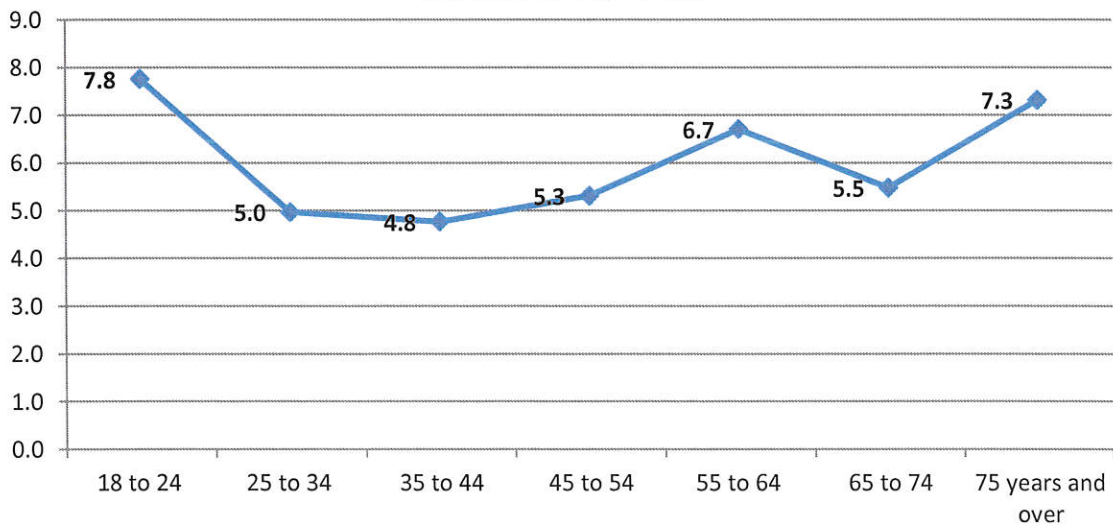


Overall, meeting housing needs (including providing affordable homes and helping homeless people) achieved a ranking of 5.8 which was the sixth most important service when assessed against the other services that were part of the consultation.

Whilst there is only a minor difference in relation to ethnicity these are consistent with the overall ranking. The graph above shows that women and those with a disability were more likely than averages to rank this service higher.

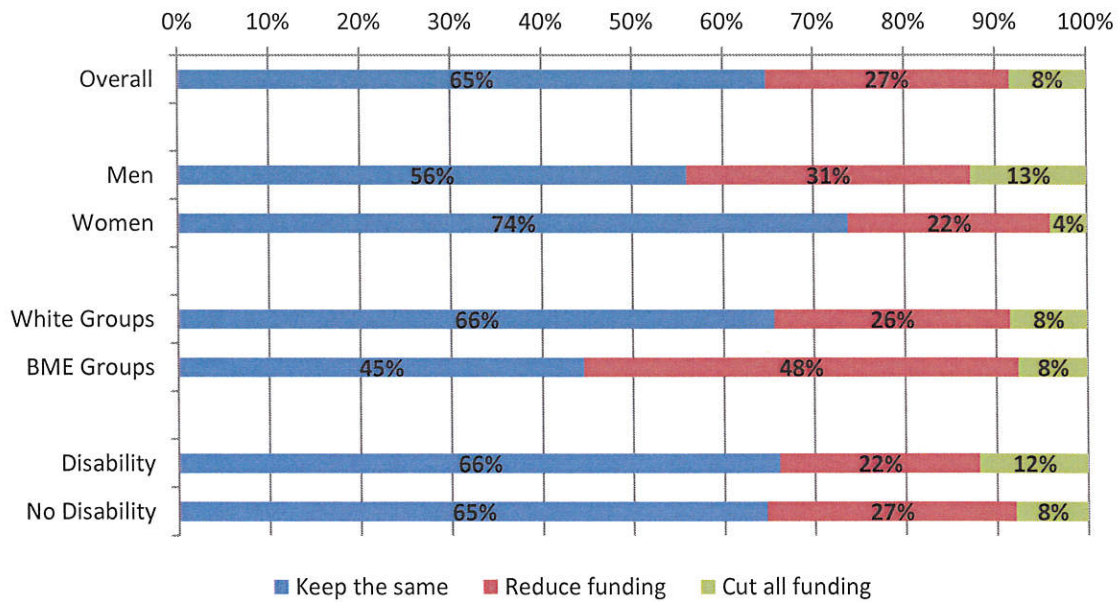
The age trend graph below shows that Housing needs is more important to respondents in the youngest and the oldest age groupings. This aligns with the funding approach on the following page which shows these two age groups have the greatest proportion of respondent that said the funding for Housing needs should remain the same.

Importance - Age Trends



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Funding Approach - Key Groups

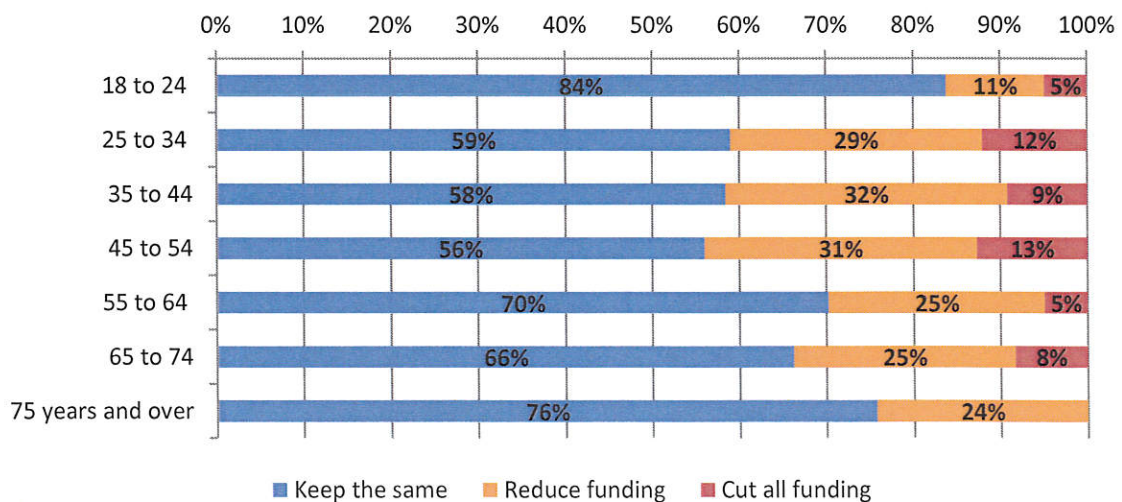


The majority of respondents (65%) were in favour of keeping the current funding levels the same for Housing Needs. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services Housing needs has the third greatest proportion.

The previous page shows little to no difference in ranking of importance for this service between respondents from white groups and those from BME groups there is however significant difference in the proportion responding keep the same (21%) and reduce funding (22%).

Despite there being a 0.6 difference in the ranking for respondents with a disability and those without there is less than a 5% difference between these groups in relation to funding approach.

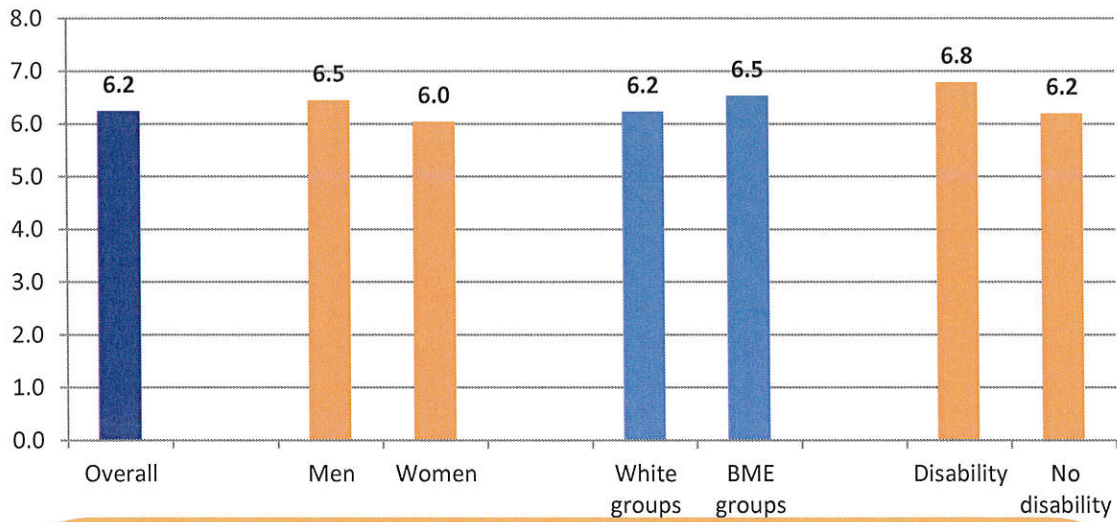
Funding Approach - Age Trends



Budget Consultation 2016

Environmental services (includes enforcement, noise and pollution control and food hygiene)

Q1 Importance

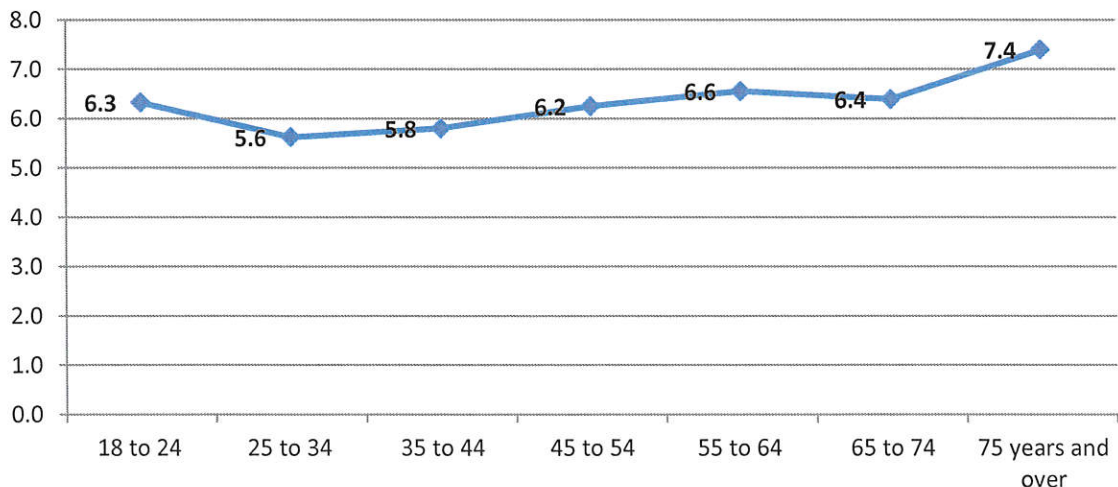


Overall, Environmental services (includes enforcement, noise and pollution control and food hygiene) achieved a ranking of 6.2 which was the second most important service when assessed against the other services that were part of the consultation.

The graph above shows that male respondents, those from BME groups and those with a disability were more likely than average than their counterparts to rank this service higher.

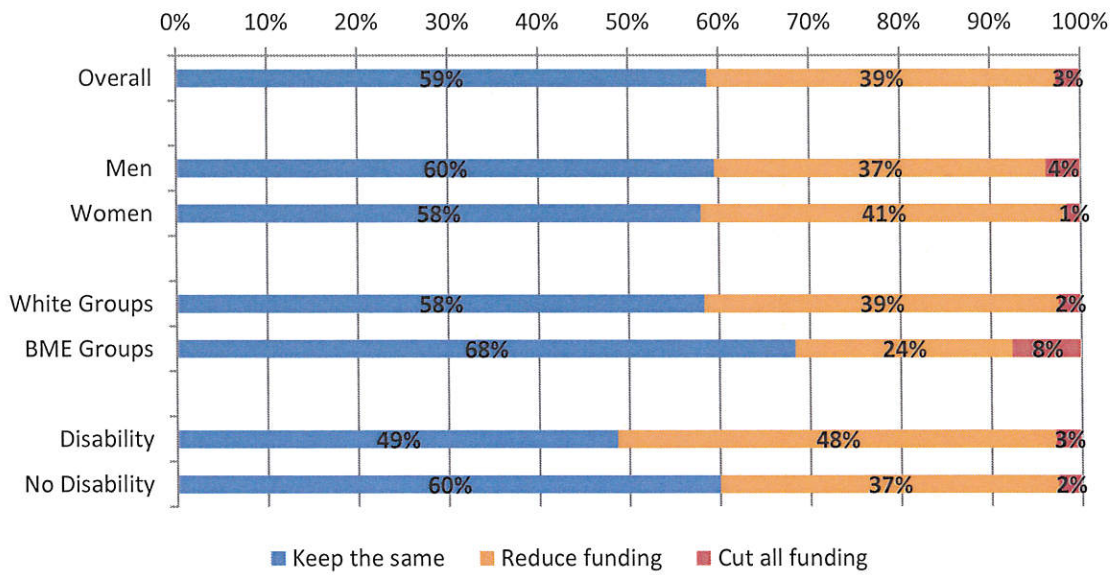
The age trend graph below shows that Environmental services are most important to respondents in the 75 years plus grouping. While funding approach on the following page which shows that the proportion of respondents in this age group that think funding should remain the same is line with the overall and that the 25 to 34 year olds, who had the lowest rating out of the age groups, has the highest proportion that think that funding for this service should remain the same.

Importance - Age Trends



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Funding Approach - Key Groups

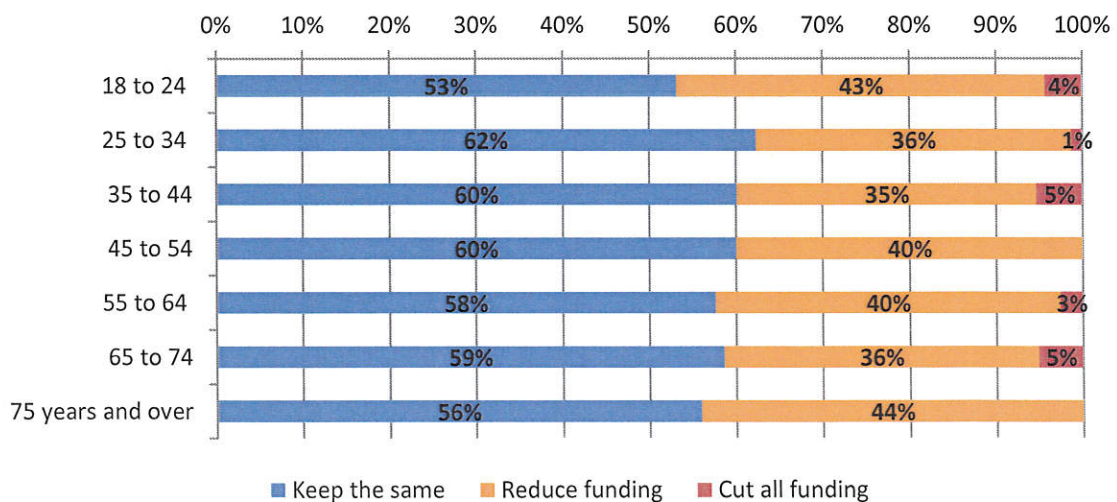


The majority of respondents (59%) were in favour of keeping the current funding levels the same for Environmental services. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services, Environmental services has the fifth greatest proportion.

The graph on the previous page shows that the greatest difference between groups is in relation to disability, where there is a 0.6 difference in importance ranking with those with a disability and those without. While the differences between these two groups funding approach are not the greatest they are significant, with a 10% difference in funding remaining the same and 15% difference in reduce funding.

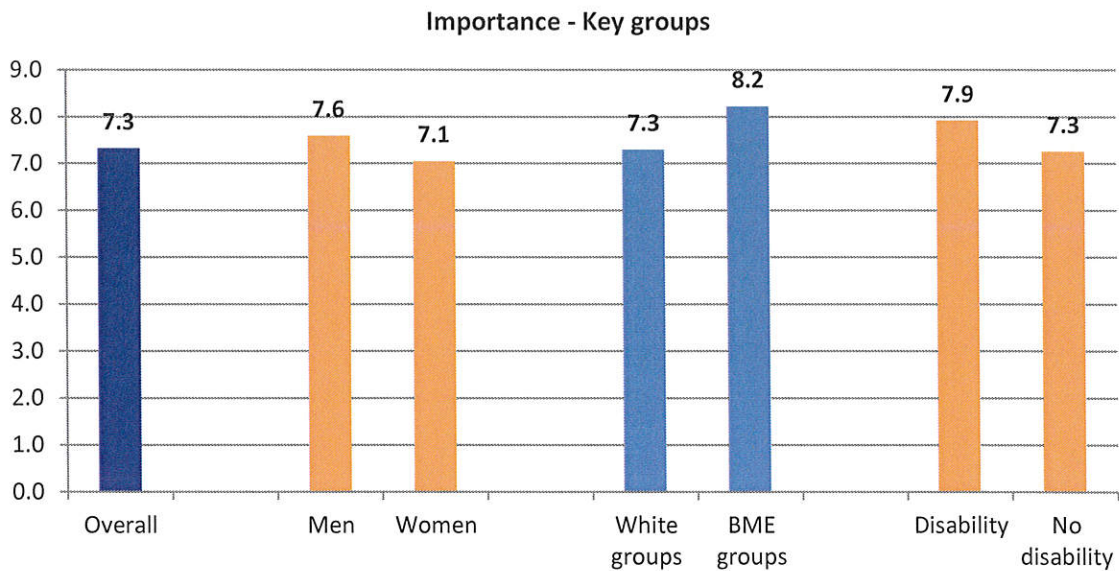
There is 0.5 rank difference between genders the approach to funding for this grouping is within 4% or less of each other and therefore not significant.

Funding Approach - Age Trends



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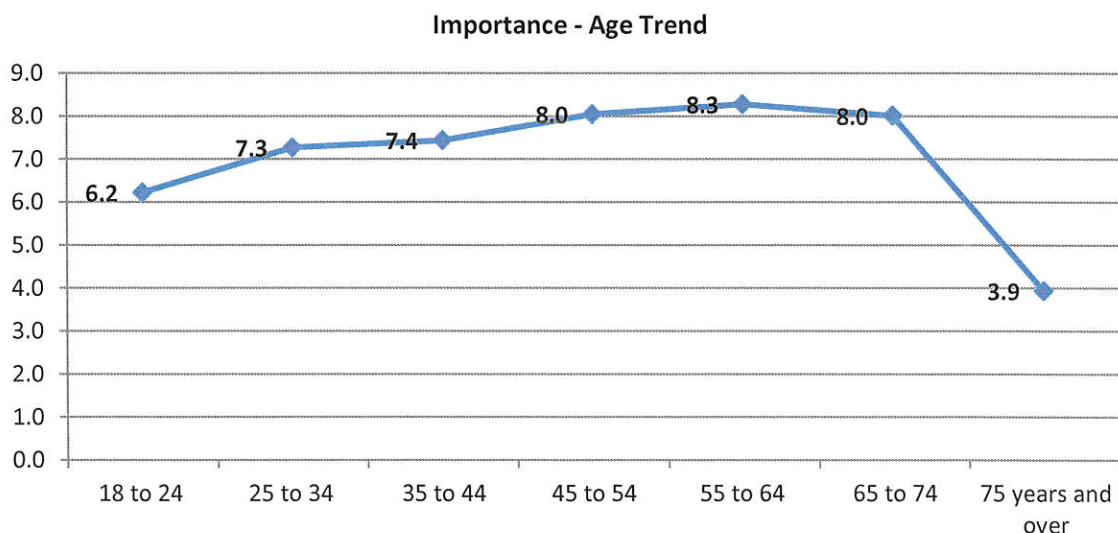
Household waste collection & disposal (includes waste & recycling services)



Overall, Household waste collection & disposal (includes waste & recycling services) achieved a ranking of 7.3 which was the most important service when assessed against the other services that were part of the consultation.

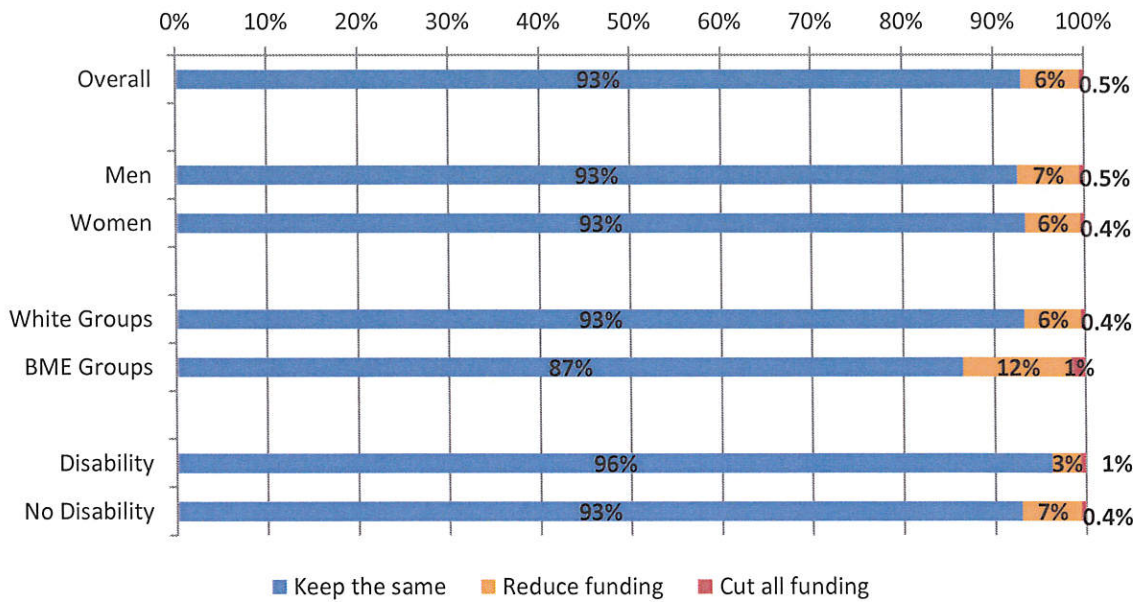
The greatest differences out of the groupings are in relation to ethnicity where there is a 0.9 difference with those from BME groups more likely to rank Household waste collection and disposal higher than those from white groups.

The age trend graph below shows that importance of waste collection and disposal increases with age until 55 to 64 years. This broadly aligns the funding approach for age groups on the following page with the 18 to 24 years groups who have the lowest rating across the age groups also have the greatest proportions of respondents that said that funding should be reduced or funding should be cut.



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Funding Approach - Key Groups

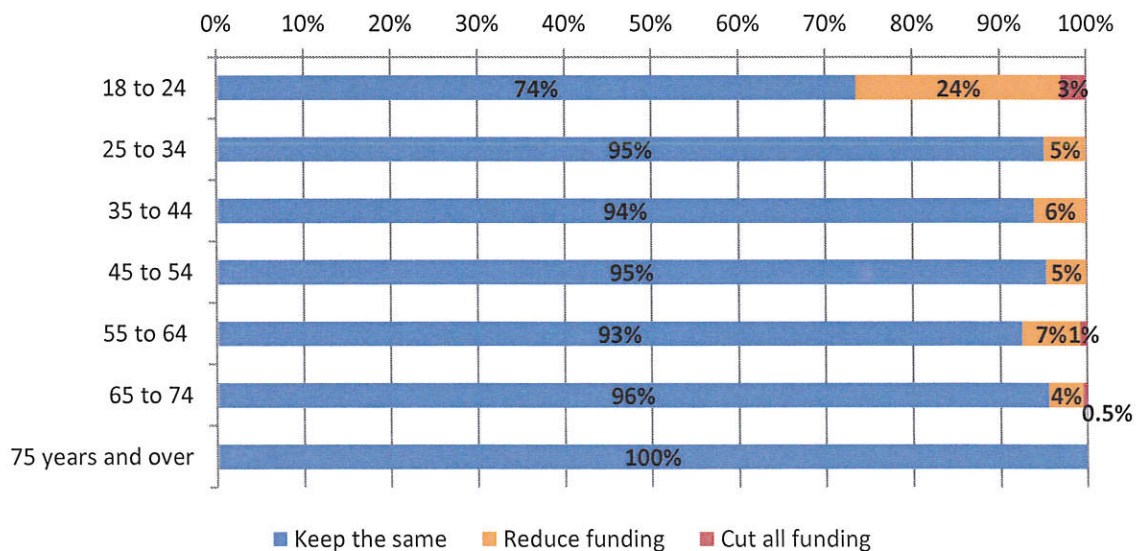


Overall, 93% of respondents said that funding for waste collection and disposal should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services this service had the greatest proportion (and the lowest proportions for reduce funding and cut all funding).

Although there is a 0.5 difference in level of importance between genders, the funding approaches for men and women are almost identical to the overall.

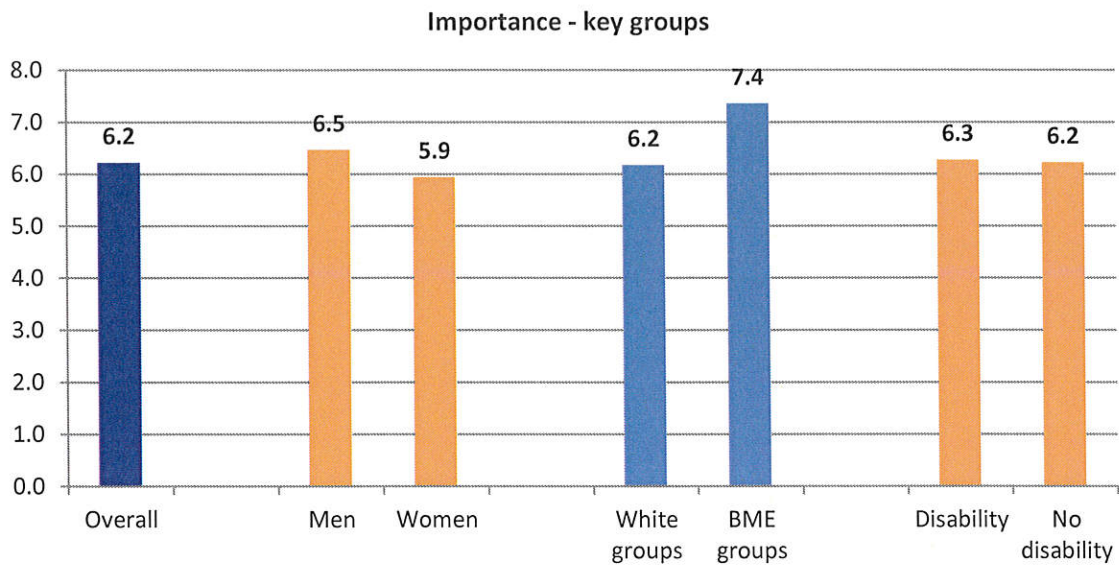
As with importance, the biggest differences in funding approach relate to ethnicity. While the response from white groups is in line with the overall levels, respondents from BME groups were twice as likely than the average to select reduce funding.

Funding Approach - Age Trends



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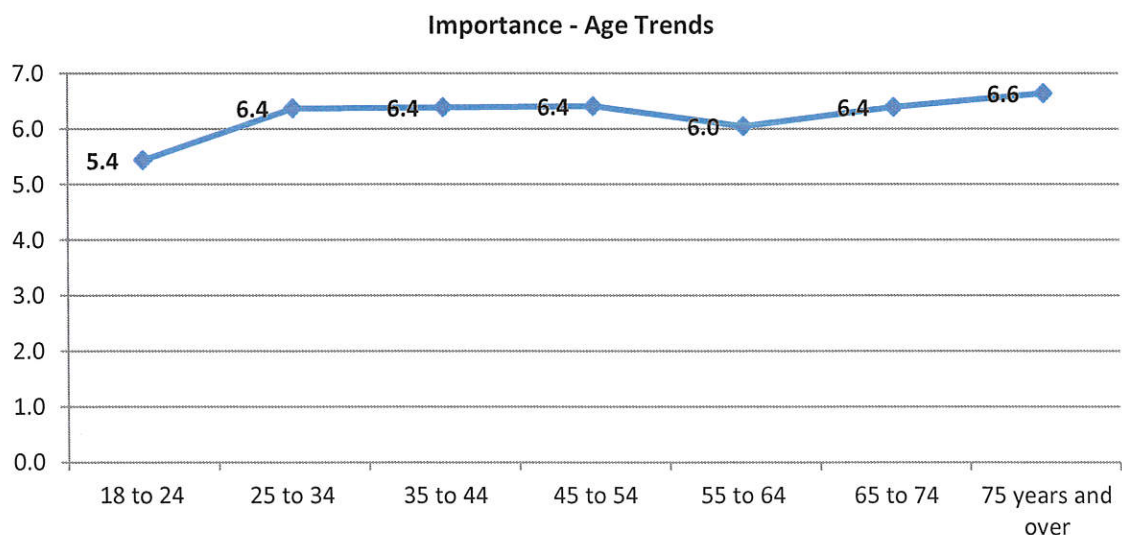
Street cleaning (providing a clean and safe environment)



Overall, Street cleaning (providing a clean and safe environment) achieved a ranking of 6.2 which was the third most important service when assessed against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

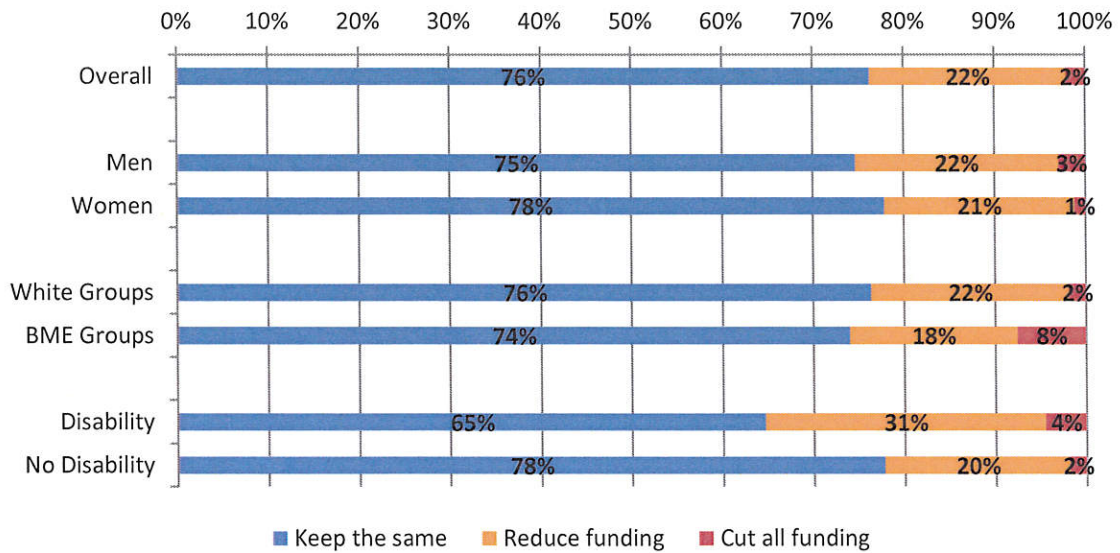
Respondents from BME groups rated this service higher than those from white groups with a 0.8 difference in rating. However, when looking at the funding approach on the following page, they are four times more likely than white groups (and the overall) to respond that all funding should be cut for this service.

In terms of age, the 18 to 24 year olds had the lowest ranking for street cleaning lowest out of all the age groupings and the 75 years and over group the highest. This aligns with the approach to funding with the 18 to 24 years having the greatest proportion of respondents that said funding should be reduced or cut all funding for this service. The 75 years and over group have the greatest proportion that said funding should remain the same.



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Funding Approach - Key Groups

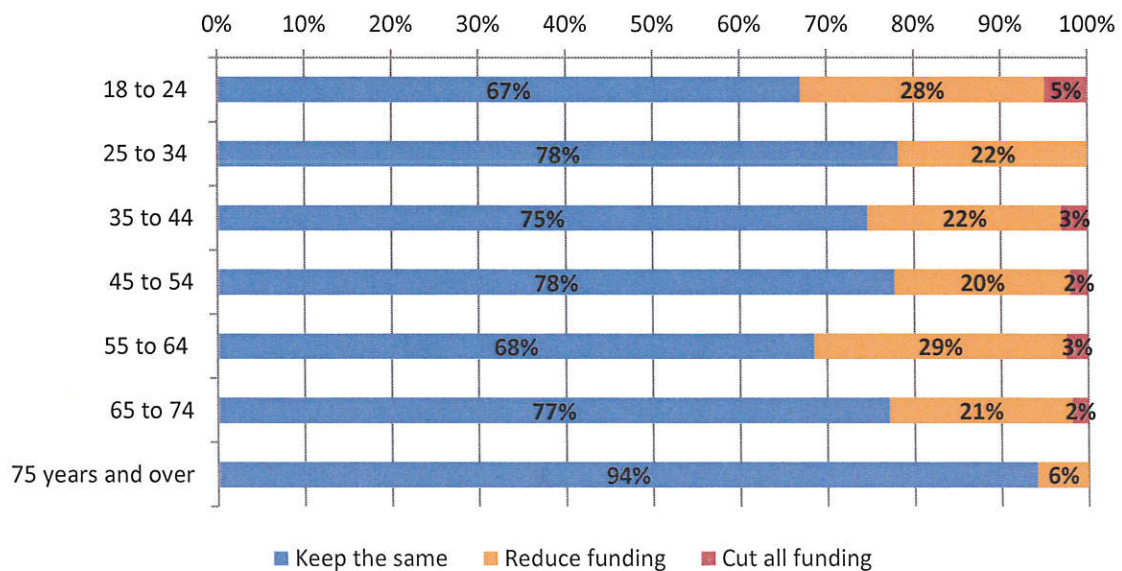


Overall, 76% of respondents said that funding for street cleaning should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services this service had the second greatest proportion (and the second lowest proportions for reduce funding and cut all funding).

The funding approach for men and women is broadly consistent with the overall figures and while there is a 0.6 difference in the ranking between these groups both are within 0.3 of the overall figure therefore the difference not considered significant,

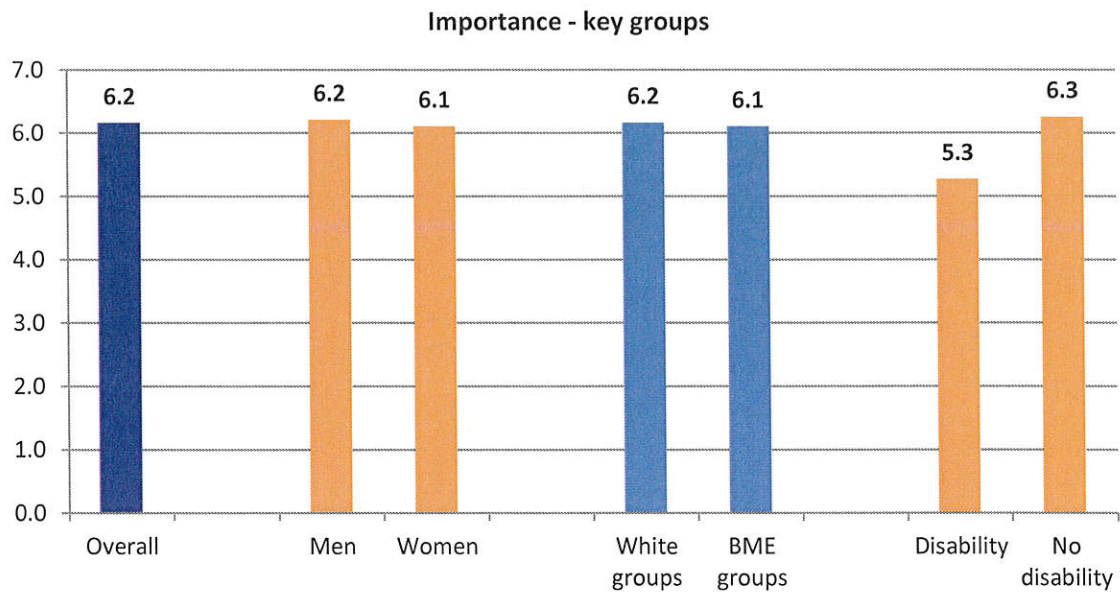
Respondents with a disability were more favourable to reducing or cutting street cleansing with 35% selecting one of these responses. However in terms of importance this grouping was consistent with the overall out-turn.

Funding Approach - Age Trends



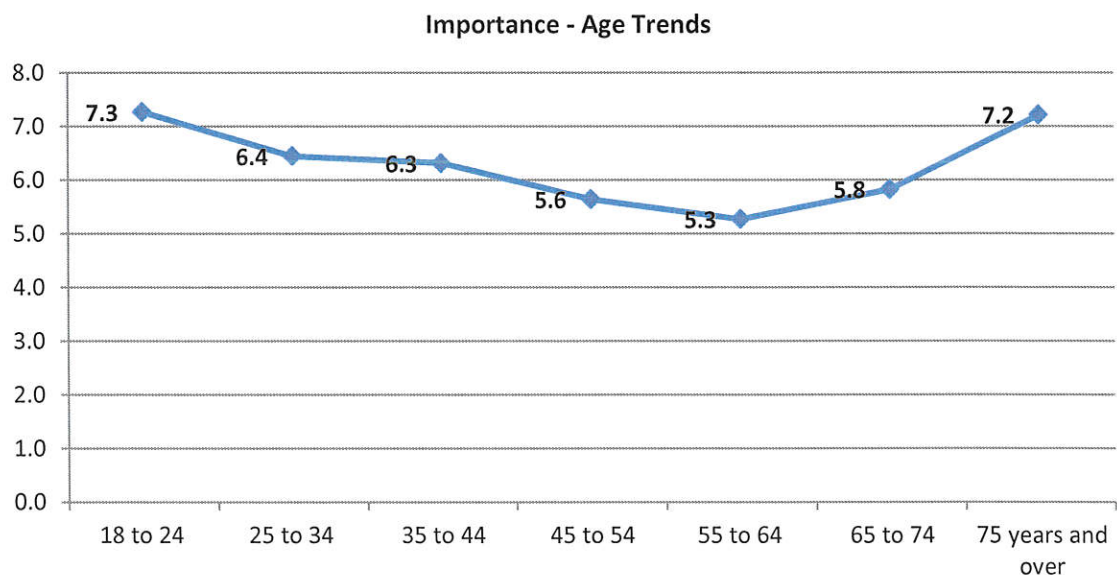
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Economic regeneration & creating jobs (including improvements to the town centre and support for businesses)



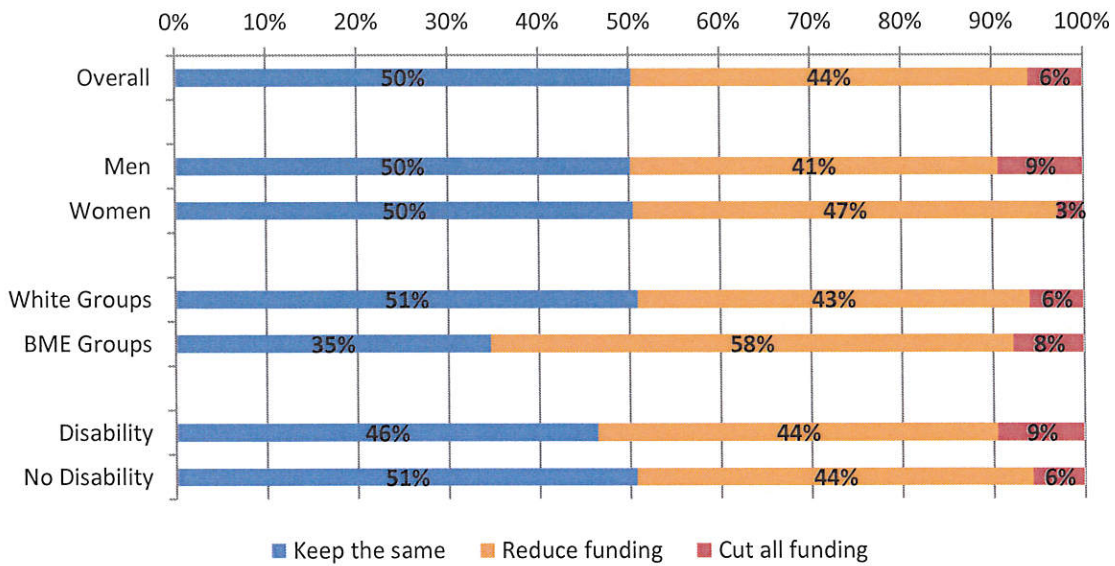
Overall, Economic regeneration & creating jobs (including improvements to the town centre and support for businesses) achieved a ranking of 6.2 and was the fourth most important service when assessed against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

The results for gender and ethnicity groupings are consistent with the overall figures. There is a 1.0 rank difference in the disability grouping with respondents with a disability placing a higher level of importance on Economic regeneration and creating jobs than those without a disability. This could be a reaction to the changes in the access to work grant and Employment and Support Allowances. This said the approach to funding for this group does not show significant differences compared to their group counterparts (those without a disability) nor the overall proportions.



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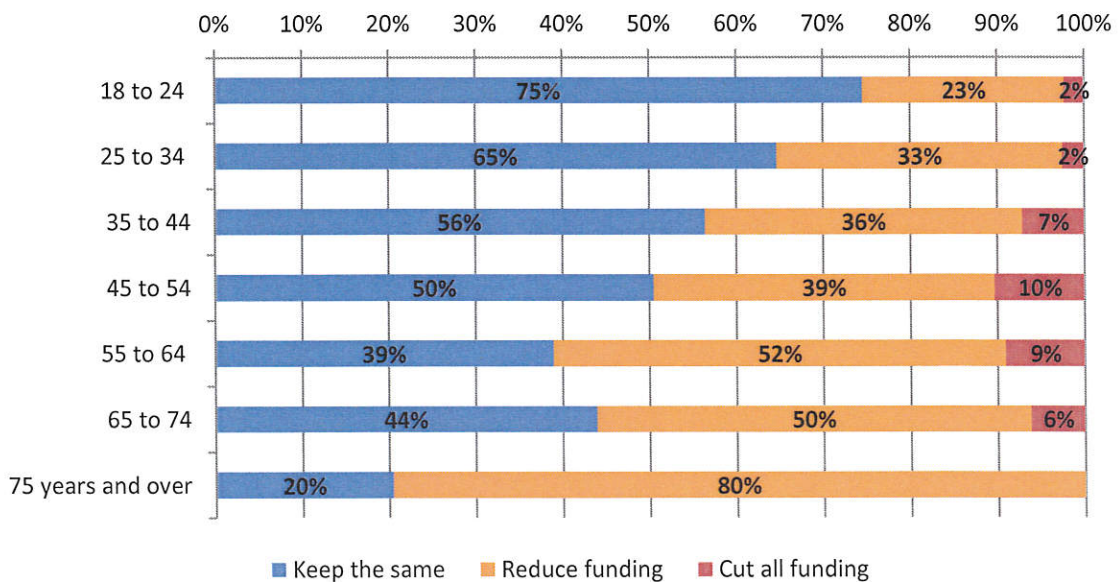
Funding Approach - Key Groups



Overall, 50% of respondents said that funding for Economic Regeneration and jobs should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services, it had the seventh greatest proportion (and the sixth greatest proportion for cut all funding).

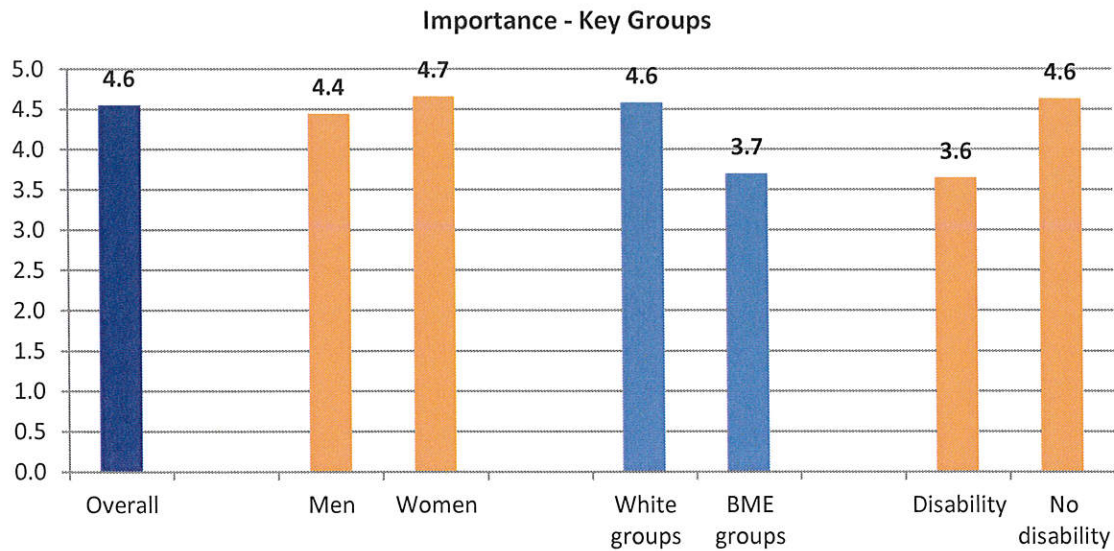
In terms of age, the 18 to 24 years group had the highest ranking for this service, followed by the 75 years and over group. For the 18 to 24 year olds this aligned with the funding approach by having the greatest proportion saying that funding should remain the same for this service at 75%. However the over 75's group, which had the second highest rank out of the age groups, has the lowest proportion saying that funding remain the same for this service at 20%.

Funding Approach - Age Trends



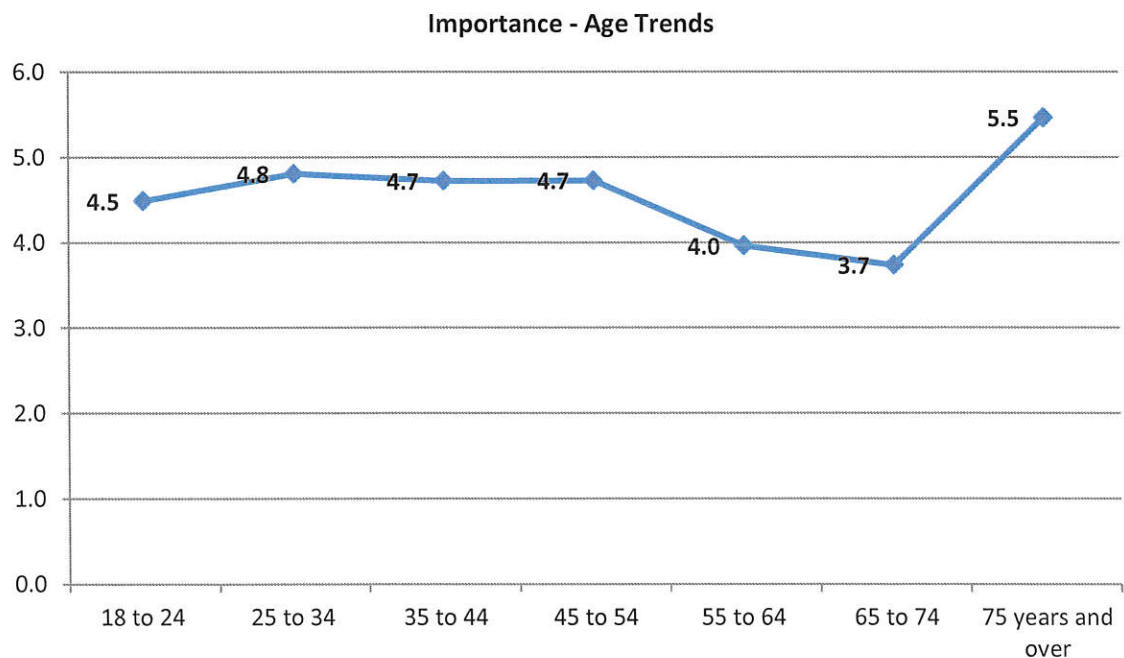
Budget Consultation 2016

Sport & Recreation (includes Maidstone leisure centre, Cobtree golf course and community halls)



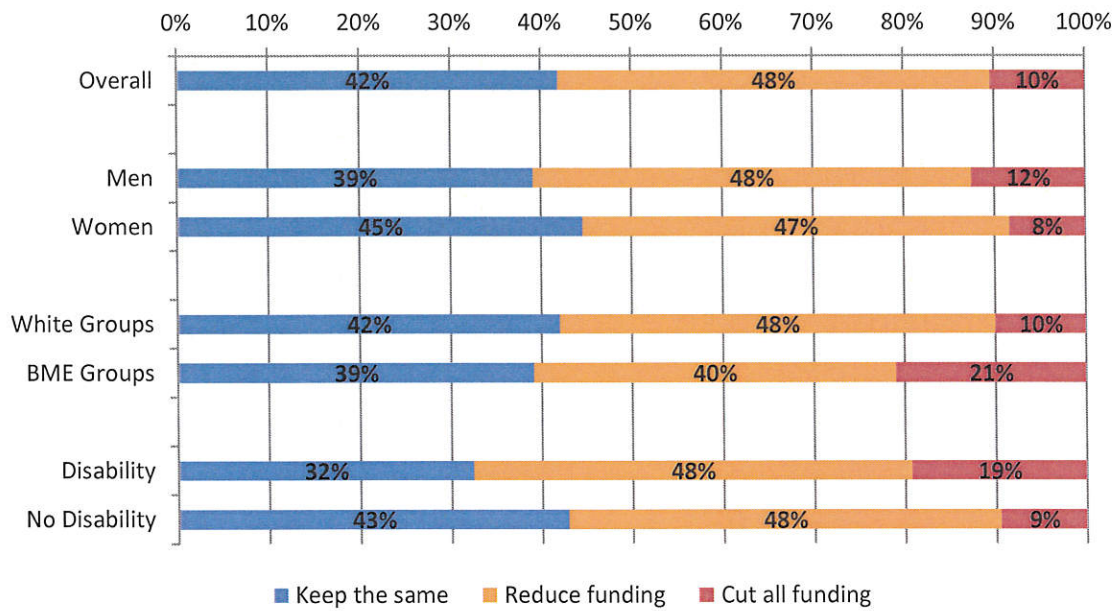
Overall, Sport & Recreation (includes Maidstone leisure centre, Cobtree golf course and community halls) achieved a ranking of 4.6 and was the ninth most important service when assessed against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

There is a slight variation between the rankings of men versus women, it is not significant. There are significant variations in the disability and ethnicity groupings with a 1.0 and 0.9 differences respectively. Both respondents from BME groups and those with a disability rated sport and recreation lower in importance. This was also reflected in the funding approach for these groups with almost double the proportion saying to cut all funding for this service.



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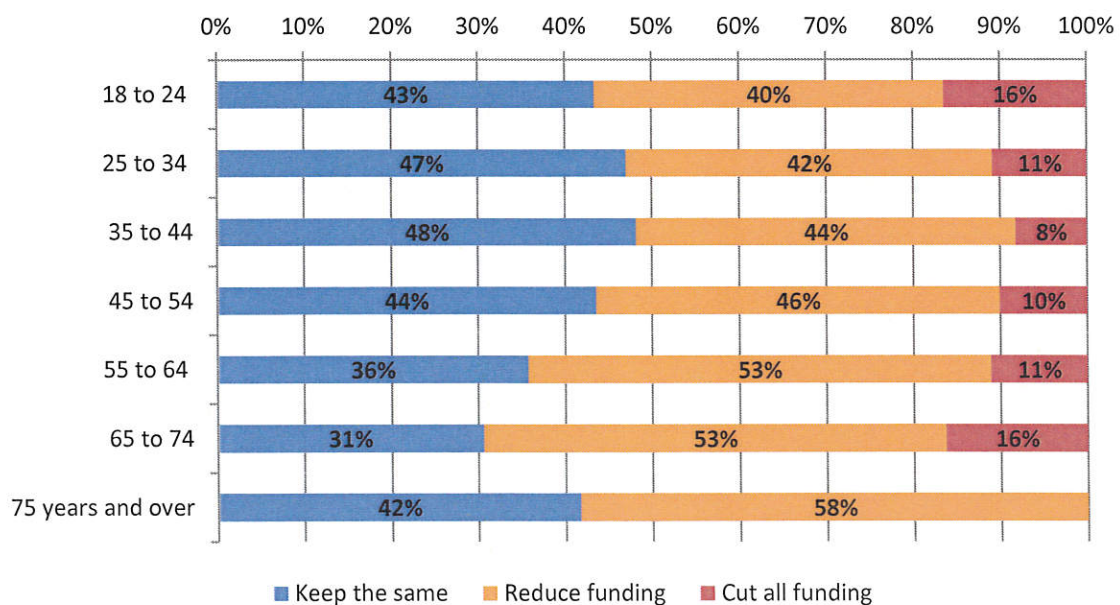
Funding Approach - Key Groups



Overall, 42% of respondents said that funding for sport and recreation should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services this service came in at eighth out of ten and had the third greatest proportion for cut all funding.

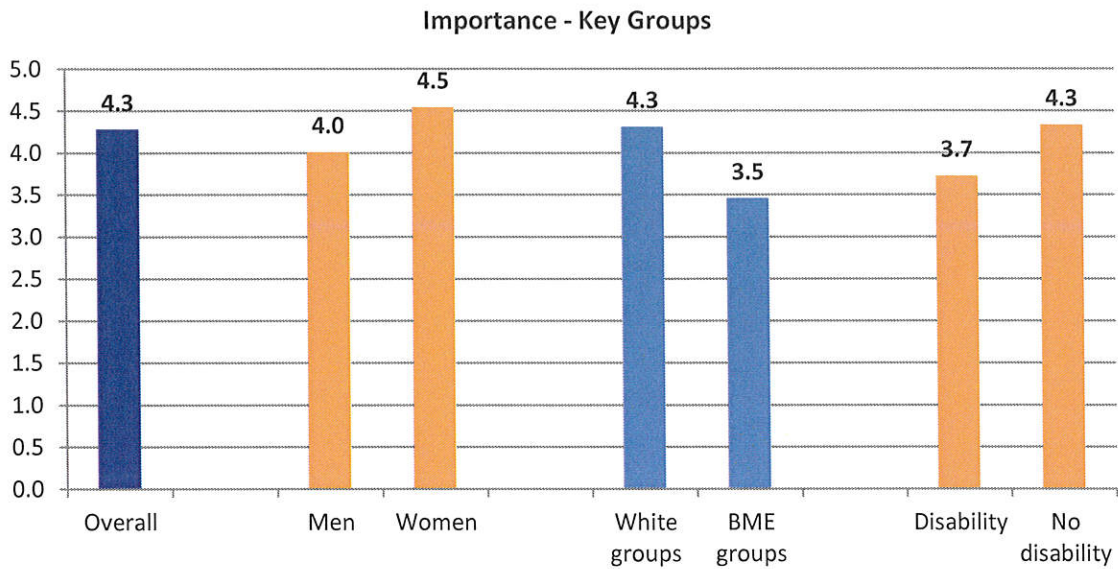
In relation to age, the 65 to 74 years age group had the lowest ranking at 3.7, this aligns with the funding approach with this group having the lowest proportion of respondents that said to keep the funding level the same.

Funding Approach - Age Trends



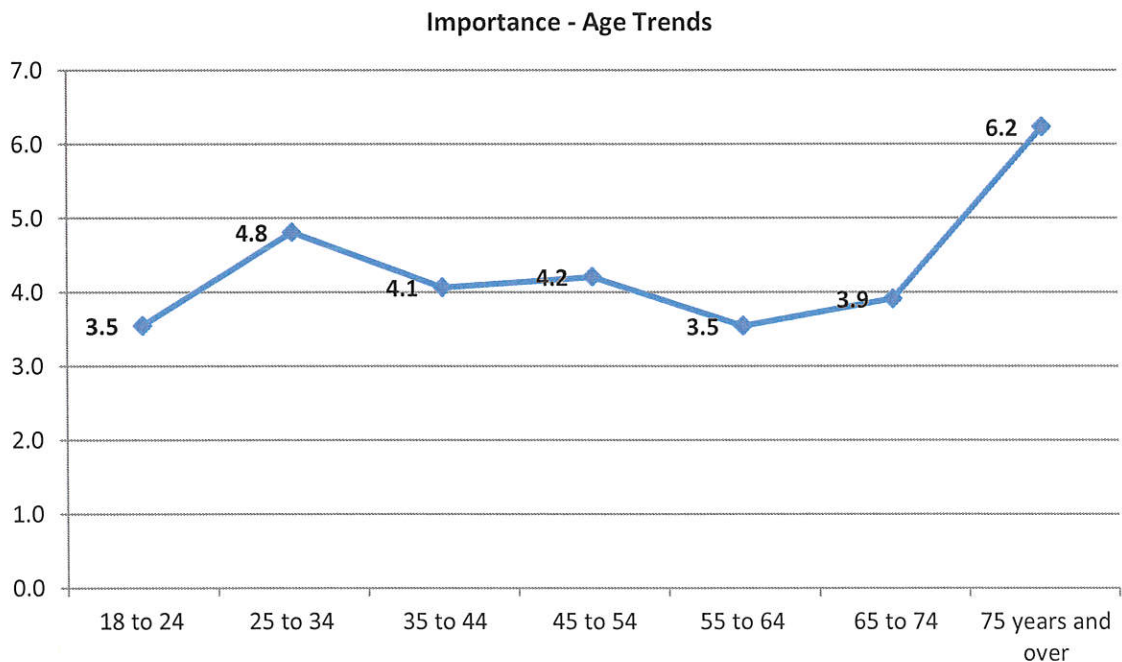
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Culture & Tourism (includes Maidstone museum, events and attractions to encourage tourism)



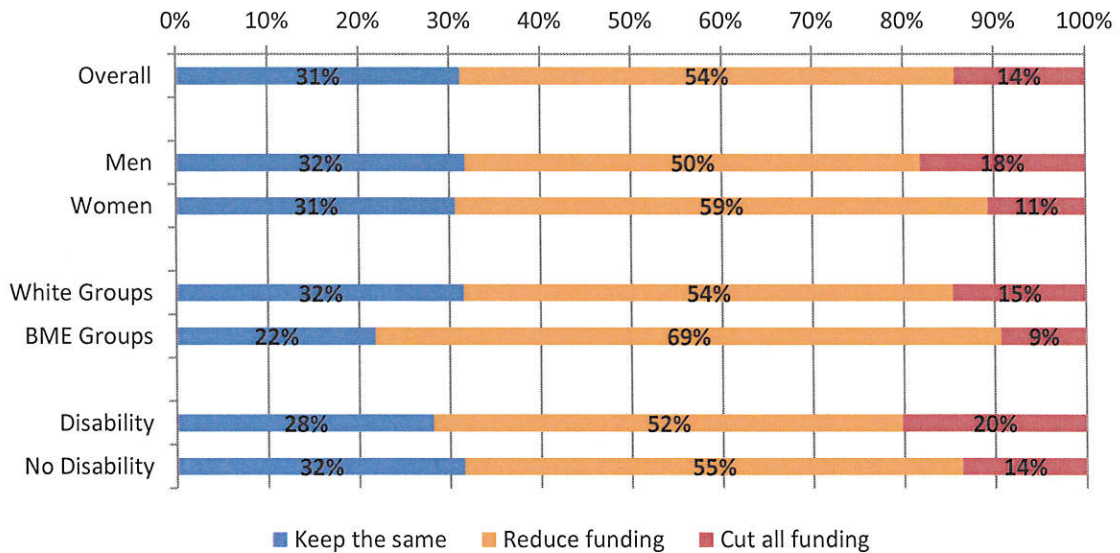
Overall, Culture & Tourism (includes Maidstone museum, events and attractions to encourage tourism) achieved a ranking of 4.3 and was the least most important service when assess against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

For this service there is a lot of variation between groups, with culture and tourism being less important to BME groups, those with a disability and men compared to their group counterparts. There is also significant variation amongst the age groups with those over 75 years placing a high level of importance on this service and the 18 to 24 years and the 55 to 64 years group more likely than average place this service at the lower end of the scale.



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Funding Approach - Key Groups

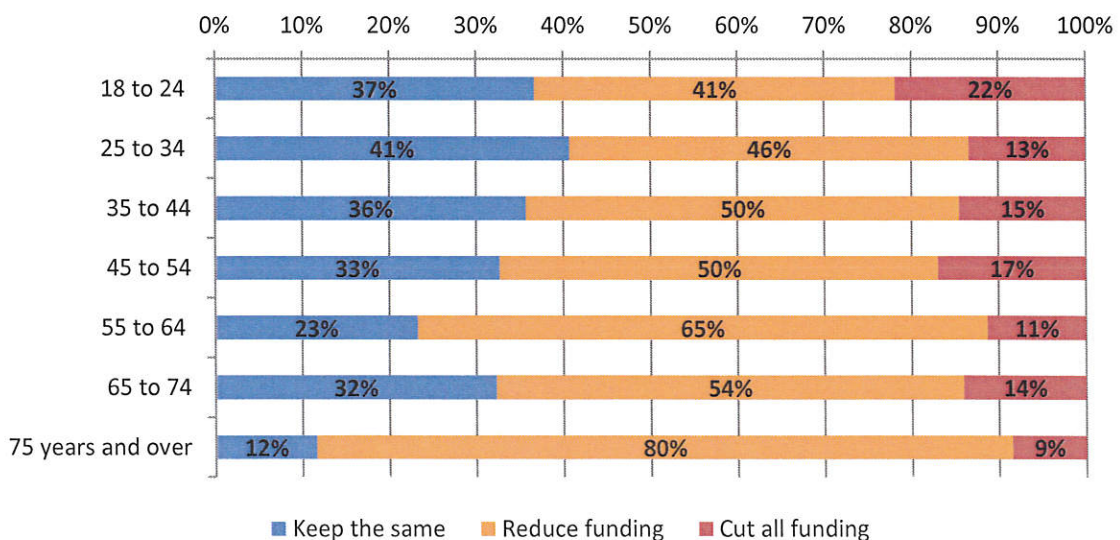


Overall, 31% of respondents said that funding for culture and tourism should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services this service had the lowest proportion in favour and had the greatest proportions for reduce and cut all funding.

Respondents from BME groups gave this service one of the lowest rating out of all the groupings. This aligns with the funding approach questions where they have the greatest proportion of respondents that said funding should be reduced and the second lowest proportion that said funding should remain the same.

The 18 to 24 years group had one of the lowest ratings for this service at 3.5, this aligns with this group having the greatest proportion of respondents that think all funding should be cut for this service.

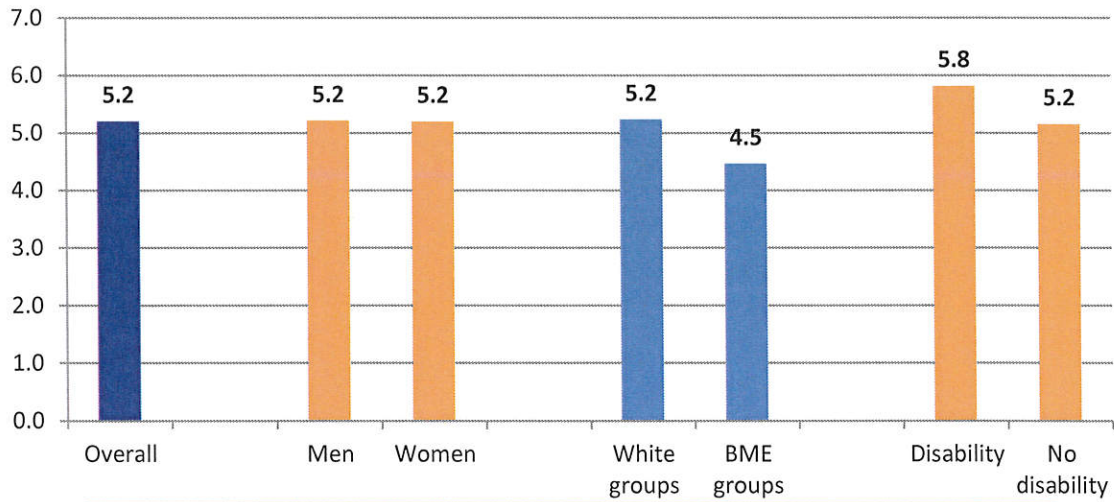
Funding Approach - Age Trends



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Planning & Building Control (includes building regulations, the Local Plan, planning applications and conservation)

Importance - Key Groups

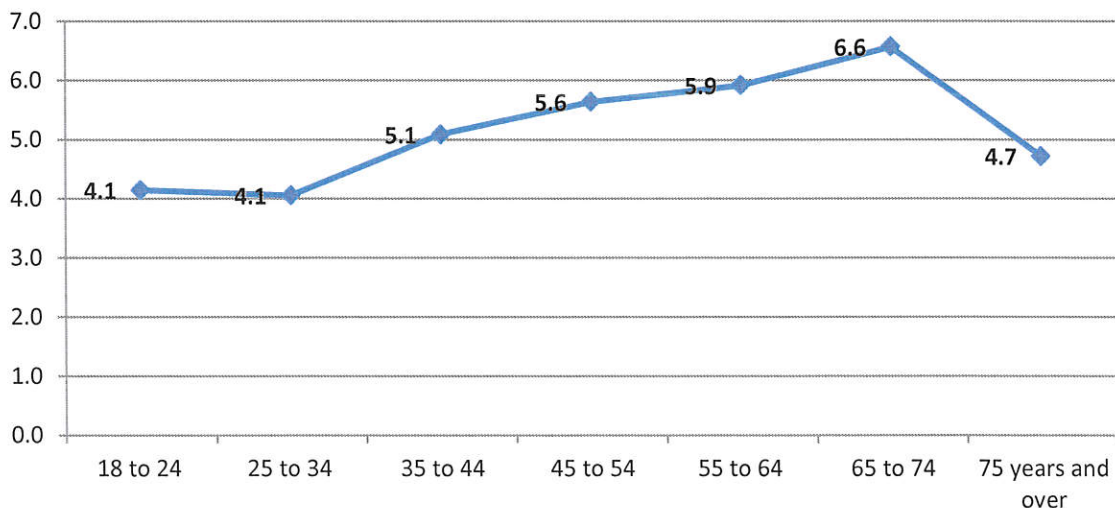


Overall, Planning & Building Control (includes building regulations, the Local Plan, planning applications and conservation) achieved a ranking of 5.2 and was the seventh most important service when assessed against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

While there were no differences in the level of responses from men and women there is a 0.7 difference between white groups and BME groups with BME groups less likely than average to rate this service highly in terms of importance. Whereas there is a 0.6 difference between the ratings from respondents with a disability and those without and those with a disability are more likely than average to rank this service higher.

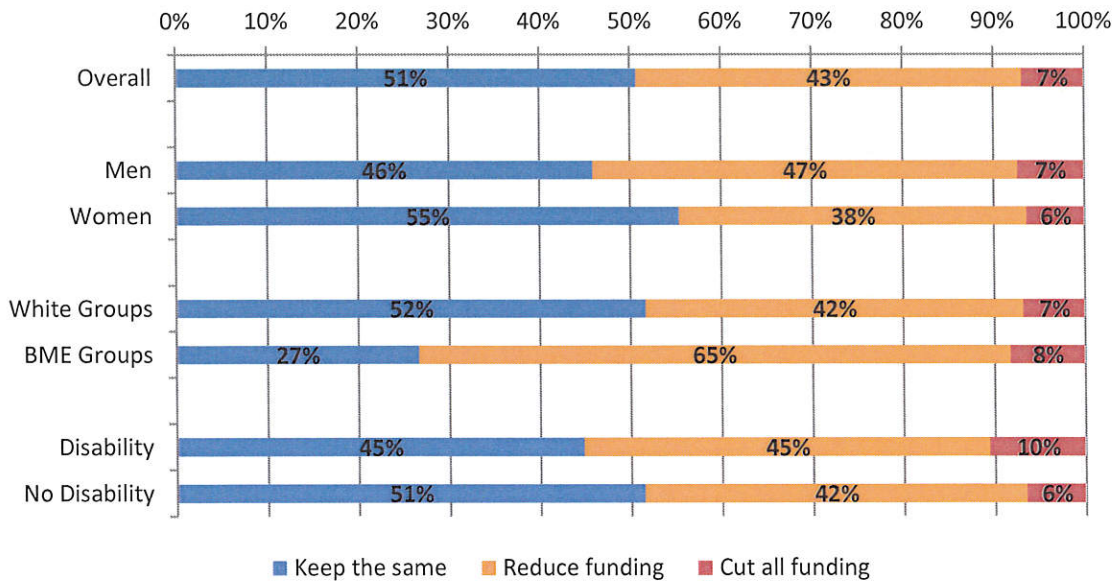
If we disregard the over 75's group on the ground of the low response rate then the graph below should show that the importance of this service to people increases as they get older.

Importance - Age Trends



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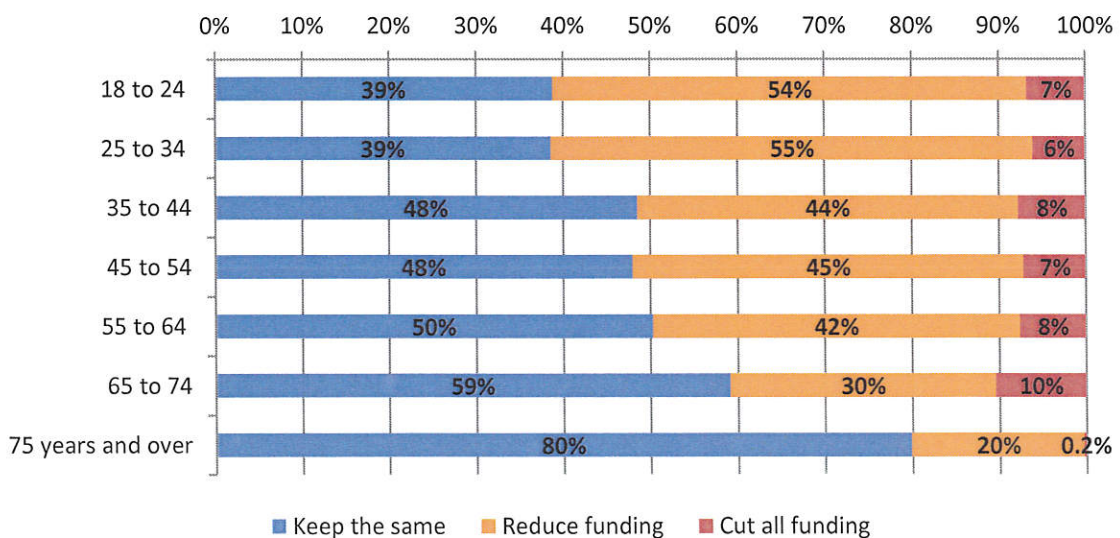
Funding Approach - Key Groups



Overall, 51% of respondents said that funding for planning and building control should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents saying keep the funding the same is assessed across all services this service sixth out of the ten services this consultation focused on and came fifth for both reduce funding and cut all funding.

Although respondents with a disability ranked this service higher than those without the funding approaches selected by these groups do not align with a greater proportion of those with a disability saying that funding should be reduced or cut then those without a disability. However the funding approach for BME groups, who placed a lower importance rating than white groups on this service, is as expected with the lowest proportion of respondents saving the funding for planning and building control should remain the same.

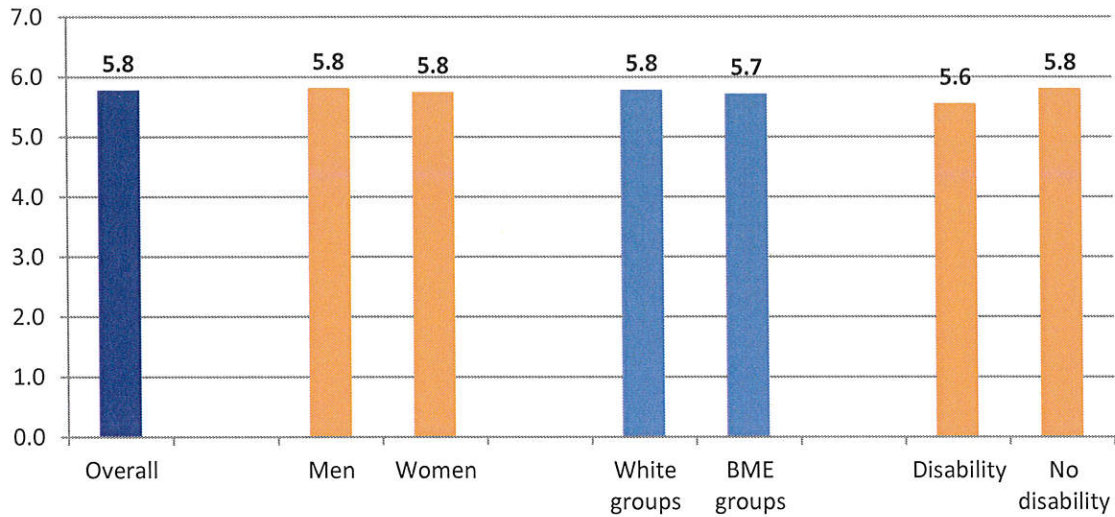
Funding Approach - Age Trends



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Parks & Open Spaces (includes all council owned parks including Mote Park, Whatman Park and Clare Park)

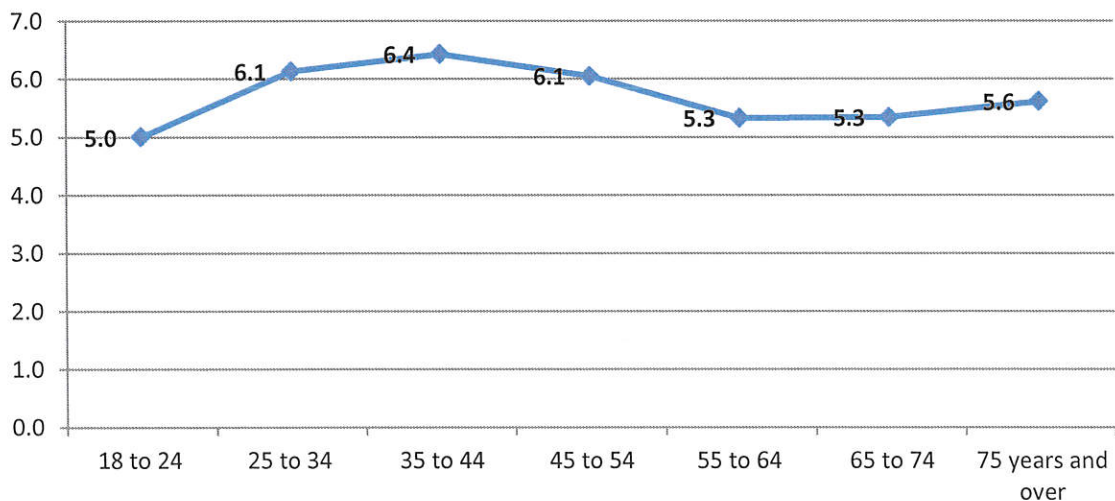
Importance - Key Groups



Overall, Parks & Open Spaces (includes all council owned parks including Mote Park, Whatman Park and Clare Park) achieved a ranking of 5.8 and was the fifth most important service when assessed against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

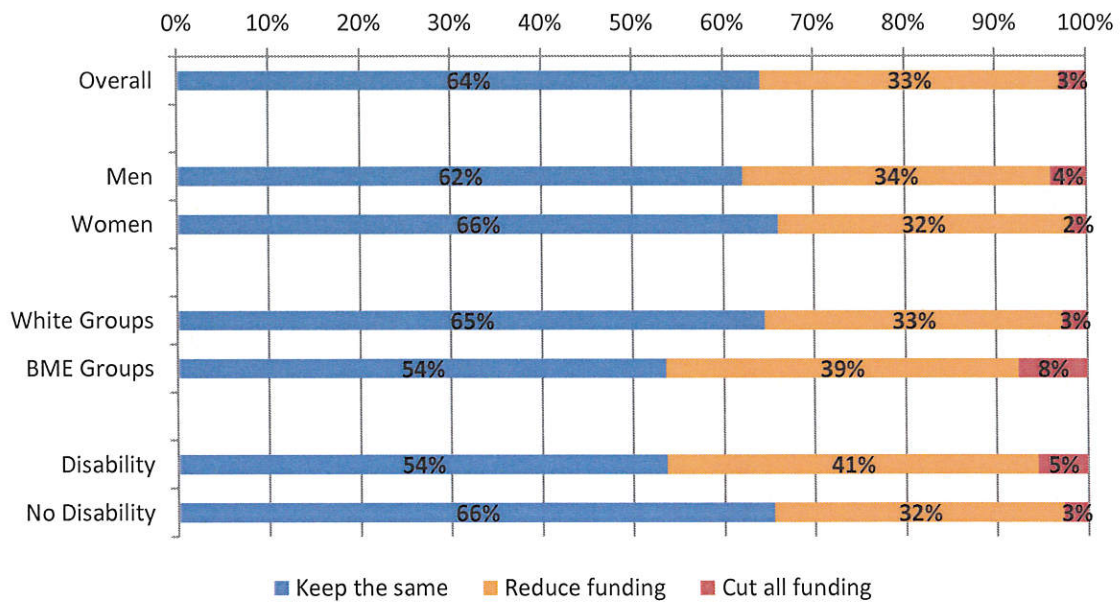
The graph above shows little to no variation between groups the graph below shows some reasonable variation in relation to the age groups. Importance of this service is highest for those aged 25 to 54 years. It is possible that this could be linked to family life, with these being the key years where children are likely to be living in the home. The funding approach analysed by age shows that the three age groups that with the highest levels of importance are also the three age groups (25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 years) where there are the greatest proportions of respondents saying keep the funding the same and had the lowest proportions that said reduce or cut all funding.

Importance - Age Trends



Budget Consultation 2016

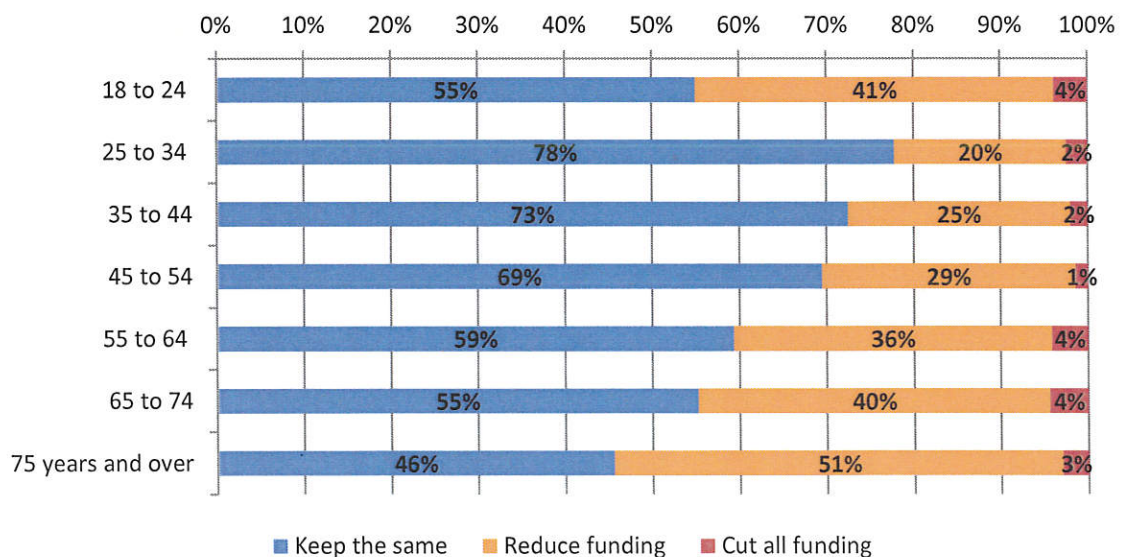
Funding Approach - Key Groups



Overall, 64% of respondents said that funding for parks and open spaces should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents is analysed across all services this service fourth out of the ten services this consultation focused on and came seventh for both reduce funding and cut all funding.

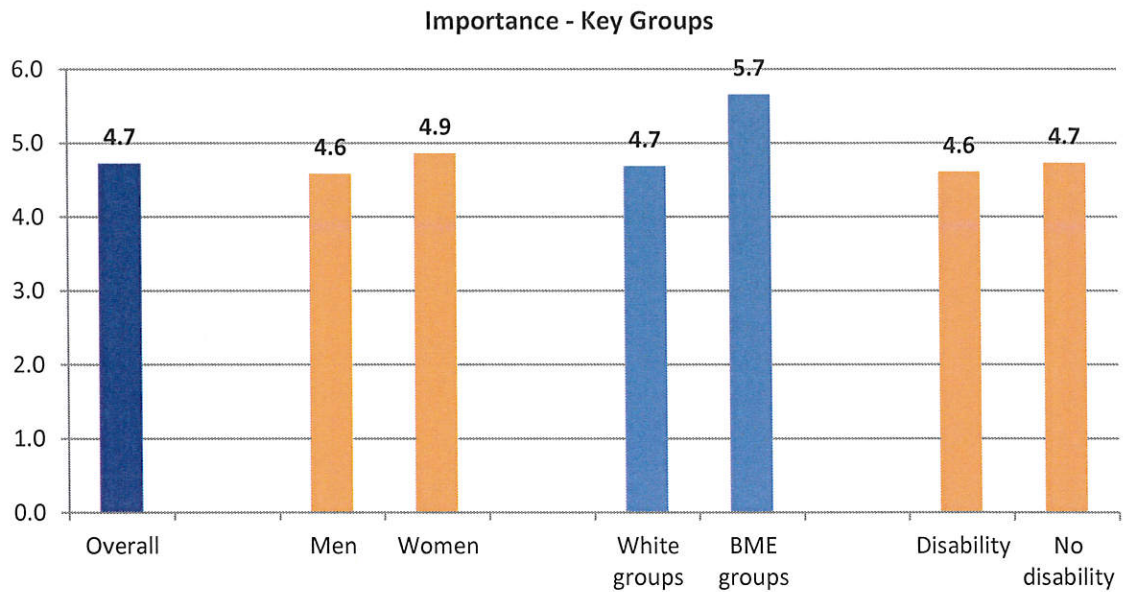
The level of importance, for the groups above, were consistent with the overall results there are some noteworthy variations in the approach to funding. A lower proportion of respondents from BME groups and those with a disability responded that the funding level for parks and open spaces should remain the same compared to white groups and the overall result. Both these groups also had a greater proportion than average that said funding should be reduced.

Funding Approach - Age Trends



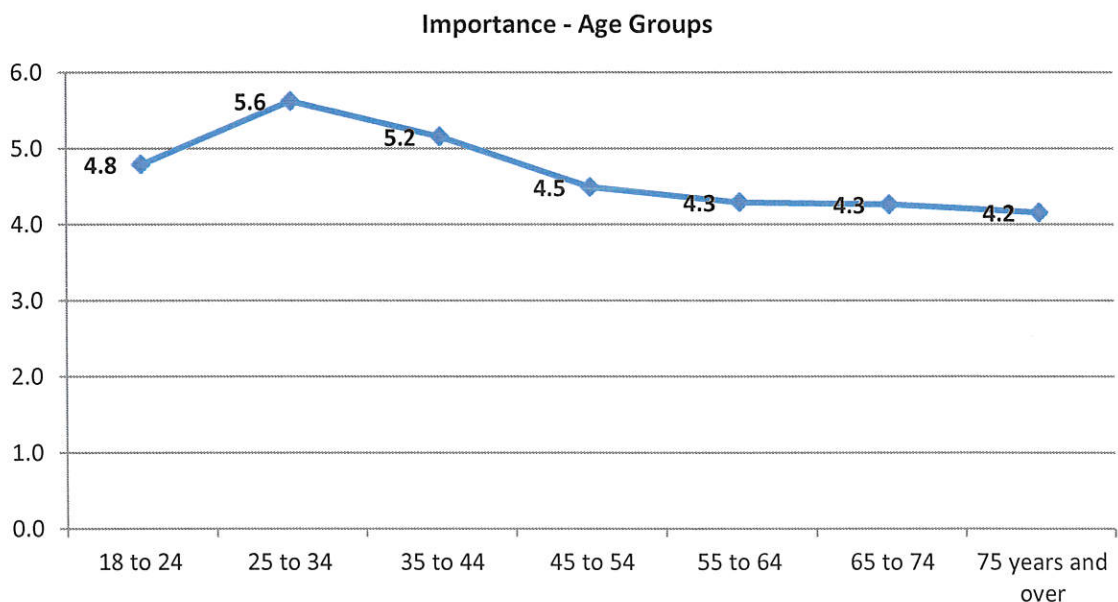
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Community Safety & Development (includes encouraging good public health and social inclusion)



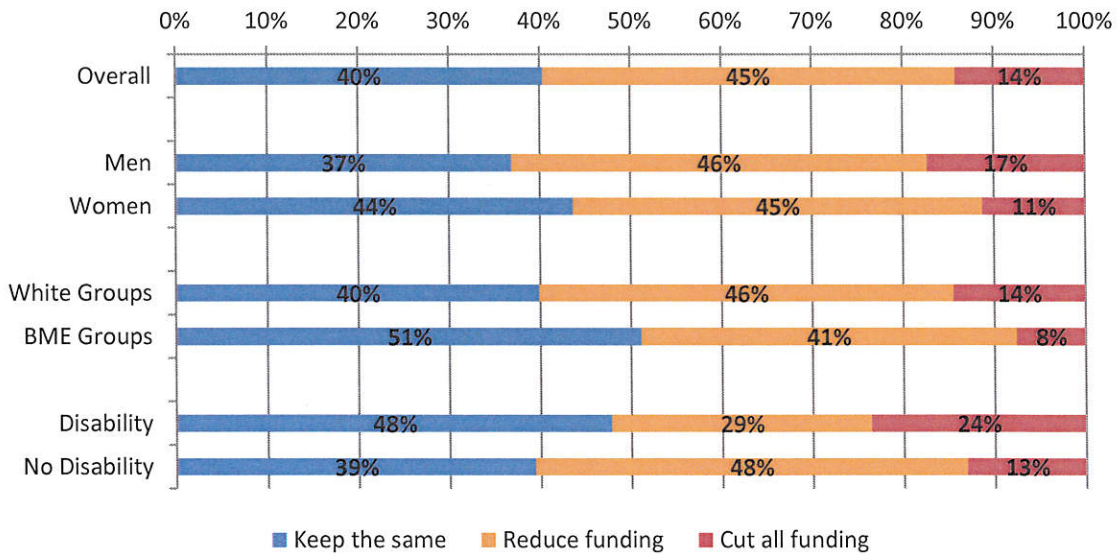
Overall, Community Safety & Development (includes encouraging good public health and social inclusion) achieved a ranking of 4.7 and was the eighth most important service when assess against the other ten services that were part of the consultation.

The results for the groups outlined above are broadly consistent with the overall result, with the exception of respondents from BME groups who placed a higher level of importance on this service than respondents from white groups. This seems to align with the funding approach response, a greater proportion of BME groups support funding remaining the same and a lower proportion say to cut all funding for community safety and development than white groups.



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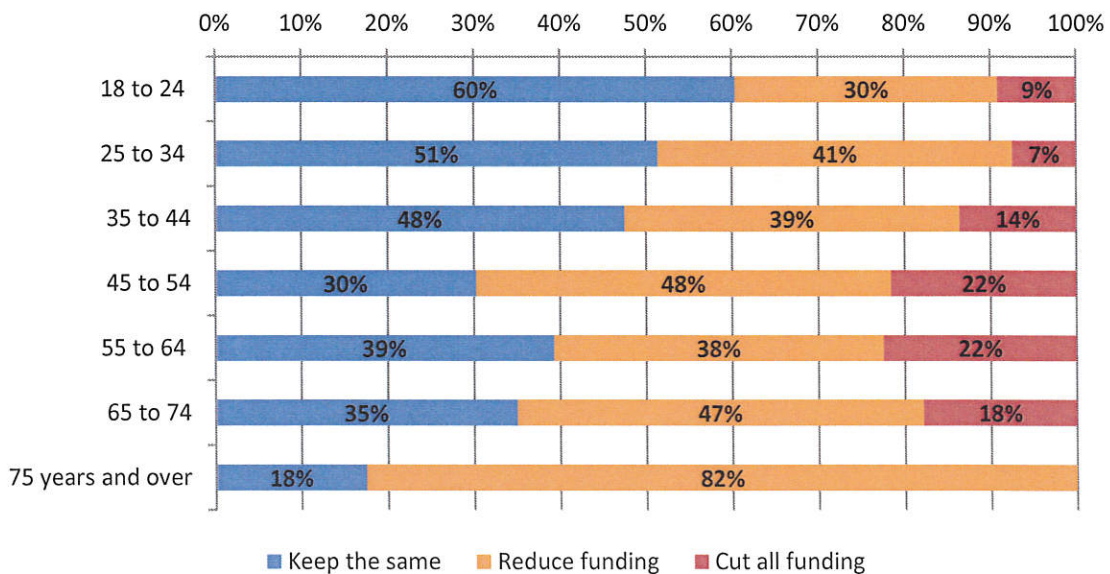
Funding Approach - Key Groups



Overall, 40% of respondents said that funding Community Safety and Development should remain the same. When the proportion of respondents is assessed across all services this service ninth out of the ten services this consultation focused on and came third for reduce funding and second for cut all funding.

In terms of age the over 75's group had the lowest rank for importance across the age ranges this is consistent with their response on the funding approach, as they have the lowest proportion of people saying that the funding level for Community Safety & Development should remain the same. While the 25 to 34 years group had the greatest level of importance they did not have the greatest proportion that said funding should remain the same. The 18 to 24 year olds had the greatest proportion that said funding should remain the same at 60%

Funding Approach - Age trends



Budget Consultation 2016

Weighting & Demographics

Age	Survey Males				Men population				BME Male Weight	White Male Weight
	White groups		BME		White groups		BME			
18 to 24	47	6.9%	7	1.0%	5,766	4.7%	534	0.4%	0.43	0.69
25 to 34	37	5.4%	2	0.3%	8,448	7.0%	871	0.7%	2.45	1.28
35 to 44	51	7.5%	3	0.4%	10,061	8.3%	818	0.7%	1.53	1.11
45 to 54	65	9.5%	1	0.1%	10,673	8.8%	490	0.4%	2.75	0.92
55 to 64	61	8.9%	0	0.0%	9,272	7.6%	262	0.2%	n/a	0.85
65 to 74	67	9.8%	1	0.1%	6,789	5.6%	166	0.1%	0.93	0.57
75 years +	14	2.1%	2	0.3%	4,843	4.0%	56	0.0%	0.16	1.94
Grand Total	342	50.1%	16	2.3%	55,852	46.0%	3,197	2.6%		
Total Males			358							

Age	Survey Women				Women Population				BME Female Weight	White Female Weight
	White groups		BME groups		White groups		BME			
18 to 24	27	4.0%	2	0.3%	5,333	4.4%	368	0.3%	1.03	1.11
25 to 34	42	6.2%	0	0.0%	9,055	7.5%	849	0.7%	n/a	1.21
35 to 44	63	9.2%	7	1.0%	10,479	8.6%	764	0.6%	0.61	0.93
45 to 54	76	11.1%	0	0.0%	10,504	8.6%	485	0.4%	n/a	0.78
55 to 64	54	7.9%	2	0.3%	9,633	7.9%	280	0.2%	0.79	1.00
65 to 74	47	6.9%	2	0.3%	7,182	5.9%	132	0.1%	0.37	0.86
75 years +	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	7,269	6.0%	77	0.1%	n/a	20.41
Grand Total	311	45.60%	13	1.9%	59,455	49.0%	2,955	2.4%		
Total Females			324							

Gender	No.	%
Male	357	53%
Female	322	47%
Grand Total	679	

Ethnicity	No.	%
White groups	650	96%
BME groups	29	4%
Grand Total	679	

Age	No.	%
18 to 24	81	12%
25 to 34	81	12%
35 to 44	124	18%
45 to 54	142	21%
55 to 64	116	17%
65 to 74	117	17%
75 years +	18	3%
Grand Total	679	

Disability	No.	%
Disability	75	11%
No Disability	598	89%
Grand Total	673	
Blank	6	