

# PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Thursday 7 December 2023  
Time: 6.30 pm  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

## Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), Jones, Kimmance, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski

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

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## AGENDA

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| 1. Apologies of Absence  |           |
| 2. Notification of Substitute Members  |           |
| 3. Urgent Items  |           |
| 4. Notification of Visiting Members  |           |
| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers   |           |
| 6. Disclosures of Lobbying   |           |
| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information |           |
| 8. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 November 2023  | 1 - 4     |
| 9. Forward Plan Relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference   | 5 - 12    |
| 10. Fees and Charges 2024/25   | 13 - 108  |
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**Issued on Wednesday 29 November 2023**

**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**

- |   |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| 15. Exempt Appendix to Item 14 - Statement of Common Ground - Lower Thames Crossing | Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial and/or business affairs of an individual (including the authority holding that information) | 201 - 226 |
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### **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Tuesday 5 December 2023). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899**.

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

# Agenda Item 8

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2023

##### Attendees:

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Councillors Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Mrs Grigg, Jeffery, Kimmance, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski</b>
<b>Cabinet Members:</b>	<b>Councillor Paul Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development</b>
<b>Visiting Members:</b>	<b>Councillor English</b>

70. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jones.

71. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Jeffery was present as Substitute Member for Councillor Jones.

72. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there was an urgent update to Item 12 – Sutton Valence Conservation Area - Proposed Extension, which had been accepted to provide more information about the legal implications of the decision.

73. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor English was present as Visiting Member for Item 11 – Consideration of works to amalgamate and extend Medway Street Car Park and Item 12 – Sutton Valence Conservation Area – Proposed Extension.

74. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

75. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

76. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

77. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2023

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

78. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development advised that the report concerning the Town Centre Strategy (the Strategy) had been delayed. Further work was required on the Strategy to ensure that it achieved the outcomes desired for the Town Centre, as well as cross-party consensus, before it was presented to Members.

The Cabinet Member was unable to give a definitive date for presentation of the Strategy at this time.

**RESOLVED:** That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

79. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting adjourned between 6.35 p.m. to 6.40 p.m. due to a fire drill.

80. FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report and advised that:

- There was an overspend of £108,000 and the end of year overspend was expected to be £92,000 relating to the Committee's remit. The overspend was mainly due to less planning applications, particularly major, being submitted reducing the planning fee income generated. It was noted that this would likely change in the next municipal year should the next iteration of the Local Plan be adopted; and
- Overall, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were being met. The 'Town Centre Footfall' (TCF) KPI had achieved significantly less than targeted. The Council did not own the town centre, which contributed to the creation of the Town Centre Strategy, with the role of the area in supporting the economic growth, increasing visitor numbers and providing employment opportunities.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member advised that he was working with the Information and Analytics Manager on improving the KPIs measurement used for TCF. Further details could be provided in future reports on the processing of planning applications.

The Information and Analytics Manager stated that around half of the open enforcement cases had been opened in the last nine months, with further information available online. The link would be circulated to the Committee outside of the meeting.

During the discussion, several Committee Members expressed that there was a range of factors affecting town centre footfall, in addition to those highlighted in

the report. These included the departure of businesses that were not then replaced, resident safety and security and the difference in perception of the town centre as a place to visit between the rural and urban areas of the borough. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the points raised.

**RESOLVED:** That the following be noted

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 2 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 2 for 2023/24;
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 2 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified;
4. The Recovery & Renewal Update, attached at Appendix 3; and
5. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 4.

81. CONSIDERATION OF WORKS TO AMALGAMATE AND EXTEND MEDWAY STREET CAR PARK

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report and stated that there a high demand for parking within Medway Street car park; expanding the site through its amalgamation with an existing car park adjacent to the site would provide additional parking spaces. The site adjacent had previously been let to local businesses but was now vacant.

The proposal would include improvements to the car park and the provision of secure bicycle storage which was in high demand. Additional revenue could be generated for the Council by expanding the car park, with the proposal being funded entirely through a ring-fenced high street enforcement budget.

The Cabinet Member expressed concern that the electric car sharing scheme may not be well utilised given the close proximity of a car hire company.

In response to comments/questions, the Cabinet Member stated that:

- The existing electric car charging points within Medway Street car park would be retained. Additional charging points would not be installed as they were expensive, there was no demand for additional chargers, and the technology supporting the vehicles was developing and changing at pace. It was better to wait until demand had increased;
- There was no evidence of demand to support the viability of an electric car sharing scheme if introduced, but there was nothing preventing the scheme being implemented in the future;
- They wished to encourage visitors to the town centre through multiple transport modes, including by car, with the site being well utilised.

Addressing town centre congestion was a separate matter; and

- Providing a solar roof to the car park and enclosing the area could deter visitors from using the site due to the negative perception this could have on safety and lead to anti-social behaviour, but this could be explored if possible; and
- A separate piece of work was being conducted concerning town centre bicycle storage, which would also be presented to the Local Ward Members.

During the discussion, overall support for the proposal was expressed. Some Members suggested that consideration should also be given to the provision of parking for residents living in or near the Town Centre, and the importance of promoting other forms of transport.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:** That

1. The funding works to amalgamate and extend the car park at an estimated total budget of £177,500, be approved; and
2. An Additional £20,000 for provision of green bike store and electric car sharing scheme points (if not externally funded in whole or part), be agreed.

## 82. SUTTON VALENCE CONSERVATION AREA - PROPOSED EXTENSION

The Cabinet Member introduced the report and stated that expansion of the Conservation Area (CA) in Sutton Valence was an improvement to the existing CA, with no adverse comments received from the Local Ward Members or Parish Council. The urgent update was briefly outlined.

The Cabinet Member responded to a question arising out of the public feedback received on further extending the CA. The Cabinet Member also confirmed that a report concerning an overarching Conservation Area Management Plan would be presented at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:** That

1. The extension to the Sutton Valence Conservation Area as set out in the "Sutton Valence Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Alterations (December 2021)" document at Appendix 1 be agreed; and
2. Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to undertake the necessary statutory requirements to implement the agreed boundary changes.

## 83. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.38 p.m.

# MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

## FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 2023 TO 29 FEBRUARY 2024

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

A Key Decision is defined as one which:

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

The current Cabinet Members are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**David Burton**  
**Leader of the Council**

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Relevant Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Exempt</b>	<b>Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>	<b>Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated</b>
<p>Statement of Common Ground - Lower Thames Crossing</p> <p>To formally agree a draft Statement of Common Ground between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways regarding the Lower Thames Crossing.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 7 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Statement of Common Ground - Lower Thames Crossing	<p><b>Erik Nilsen</b></p> <p>ErikNilsen@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>
2nd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 8 Nov 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 14 Nov 2023</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee</p>	2nd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	<p><b>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</b></p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Exempt</b>	<b>Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>	<b>Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated</b>
						5 Dec 2023 Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023		
Fees and Charges 2024/25  F&Cs for the PAC that will be used to charge for services in 24/25  ∞	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	Yes	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023  Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023  Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Dec 2023  Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023	Fees and Charges 2024/25 CS PAC	<b>Adrian Lovegrove</b>  Head of Finance  adrianlovegrove@m aidstone.gov.uk

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<p>Town Centre Strategy - Update Report</p> <p>A report on the next stage of the Town Centre Strategy</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Dec 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Town Centre Strategy - Consultation Report	<p><b>Karen Britton, Alison Broom</b></p> <p>karenbritton@maidstone.gov.uk, alisonbroom@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</p> <p>Kent County Council is consulting on a county wide Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as per the DfT guidance.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Before 31 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	<p><b>Tom Gilbert</b></p> <p>tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Over-arching Conservation Management Plan</p> <p>The over-arching Conservation Area Management Plan has been drafted to address concerns that there was limited guidance on conservation areas that</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 7 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Over-arching Conservation Management Plan	<p><b>Janice Gooch</b></p> <p>JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>

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do not have either a conservation area appraisal or management plan.								
10 Marden Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 7 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Marden Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	<b>Jeremy Fazzalero</b>  Principle Conservation Officer  jeremyfazzalero@maidstone.gov.uk
Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 7 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023	Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	<b>Janice Gooch</b>  JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Exempt</b>	<b>Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>	<b>Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated</b>
Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme Report on the 1st round of CIL bidding and revised prospectus for the 2nd round of bidding with timetable/programme	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme	<b>Rob Jarman, Carole Williams</b>  Head of Development Management,  Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk, carolewilliams@maidstone.gov.uk
Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	Cabinet		7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024  Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024  Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024	Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	<b>James Wilderspin</b>  Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager  jameswilderspin@maidstone.gov.uk

<b>Details of the Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Decision to be taken by</b>	<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Expected Date of Decision</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Exempt</b>	<b>Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation</b>	<b>Documents to be considered by Decision taker</b>	<b>Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated</b>
						Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024		

**Planning, Infrastructure and  
Economic Development Policy  
Advisory Committee**

**7 December 2023**

**Fees and Charges 2024-25**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	7 December 2023
Cabinet	20 December 2023

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

**Executive Summary**

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

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2024/25 and setting next year's Council Tax. Following consideration by this Committee at its meeting on 11 September 2023 of the draft Medium Term Finance Strategy for 2024/25 – 2028/29 and savings budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee.

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

This report also includes an update on the Budget Survey. Public consultation on

the budget has been carried out. Details are set out in Appendix C and D. Members are encouraged to review the findings and assess whether the budget proposals being presented later this year are consistent with public expectations and aspirations.

**This report makes the following recommendations to the Committee:  
That**

1. The contents of the report, be noted;
2. The Fees & Charges Policy as detailed in appendix B to the report, be noted;
3. The Cabinet be recommended to approve the Fees & Charges as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

## Fees and Charges 2024-25

### 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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

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

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out in financial terms how the Council's Strategic Plan will be delivered over the next five years, given the resources available. In so doing, it establishes the framework for the annual budget setting process.

- 2.2 The MTFS and relevant savings proposals for 2024/25 were presented to CLA PAC on 5 September 2023. Across the council, these savings and fees and charges increases of 5% overall would cover the budget gap. The 5% increase can be delivered by increases to fees and charges or by increased volumes. Any reduction to savings or F&Cs would require further savings options to be considered.
- 2.3 This assumes that Council Tax is increased up to the referendum threshold and there are no significant changes to funding when government announce the funding settlement. If there are variations to our assumptions in the MTFS we will need to review the position again.

## **Fees and Charges**

- 2.4 The council is able to recover the costs of providing certain services through making a charge to service users. For some services, this is a requirement and charges are set out in statute, and in other areas the council has discretion to determine whether charging is appropriate, and the level at which charges are set.
- 2.5 In recent years, the use of charging has become an increasingly important feature of the council's medium term financial strategy, as pressures on the revenue budget limit the extent to which subsidisation of discretionary services is feasible. Recovering the costs of these services from users where possible helps to ensure sustainability of the council's offer to residents and businesses, beyond the statutory minimum.
- 2.6 A charging policy (attached at Appendix B for reference) is in place for charges which are set at the council's discretion and this seeks to ensure that:
- Fees and charges are reviewed regularly, and that this review covers existing charges as well services for which there is potential to charge in the future.
  - Budget managers are equipped with guidance on the factors which should be considered when reviewing charges.
  - Charges are fair, transparent and understandable, and a consistent and sensible approach is taken to setting the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges.
  - Decisions regarding fees and charges are based on relevant and accurate information regarding the service and the impact of any proposed changes to the charge is fully understood.
- 2.7 The policy covers fees and charges that are set at the discretion of the council and does not apply to services where the council is prohibited from charging, e.g. the collection of household waste. Charges currently determined by central government, e.g. planning application fees, are also outside the scope of the policy. However, consideration of any known changes to such fees and charges and any consequence to the medium term financial strategy are included in this report for information.

- 2.8 Managers are asked to consider the following factors when reviewing fees and charges:
- The council's strategic plan and values, and how charge supports these;
  - The use of subsidies and concessions targeted at certain user groups or to facilitate access to a service;
  - The actual or potential impact of competition in terms of price or quality;
  - Trends in user demand including an estimate of the effect of price changes on customers;
  - Customer survey results;
  - Impact on users, both directly and on delivering the council's objectives;
  - Financial constraints including inflationary pressure and service budgets;
  - The implications of developments such as investment made in a service;
  - The corporate impact on other service areas of council wide pressures to increase fees and charges;
  - Alternative charging structures that could be more effective;
  - Proposals for targeting promotions during the year and the evaluation of any that took place in previous periods.

#### **Discretionary Charges for 2024-25**

- 2.9 It is important that charges are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain appropriate and keep pace with the costs associated with service delivery as they increase over time.
- 2.10 Charges for services which fall within the remit of this committee have been reviewed by budget managers in line with the policy, as part of the development of the MTFS for 2024/25 onwards. The detailed results of the review carried out this year are set out in Appendix A and the approval of the committee is sought to the amended fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in that appendix.
- 2.11 Table 1 below summarises the 2023/24 outturn and 2024/25 estimate for income from the discretionary fees and charges which fall within the remit of this committee. Please note that the table only reflects changes relating to fees and charges and does not include other budget proposals which may impact these service areas.
- 2.12 The overall increase in income if these changes are agreed and implemented as planned is expected to be £263,527 which amounts to a 4.6% increase in the budgeted income figure for this committee for the current financial year.

## Fees and Charges

Service Area	2022-2023 Outturn	2023-2024 Budget	Proposed change in income	2024-2025 Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Parking Services	3,405,009	3,394,500	43,400	3,437,900
Sandling Road Car Park	76,966	53,470	0	53,470
Land Charges	236,012	286,900	0	286,900
Building Control	400,542	402,540	20,127	422,667
Development and Conservation Control	1,355,924	1,636,440	200,000	1,836,440
Economic Development- Jubilee Square	0	3,500	0	3,500
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,474,453</b>	<b>5,777,350</b>	<b>263,527</b>	<b>6,040,877</b>

Table 1: Discretionary Fees & Charges Summary

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

### Parking Services (including Sandling Road)

In general, parking fees are set at a level that reflects demand. There are only two car parks where usage is so high that demand exceeds the number of available spaces. In theory this would justify an increase in fee levels. However, for simplicity and for consistency across the entire estate, parking fees have been frozen. Further information about specific charges is set out below.

Resident / Business / Carer permits / Dispensations / Waivers - No change proposed as income from these activities is strictly controlled through Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

Penalty Charge Notices Low / Penalty Charge Notices High - No change - Statutory charge applied through legislation.

Season Tickets – Car Parks - No change proposed as changes in the way people work post pandemic have impacted on season ticket viability. Maintaining current charges may therefore stimulate low take up.

The off-peak season tickets were reduced by 50% in 2023/24 following member intervention and no further changes are proposed.

Electric vehicles (EVs) – No change proposed on the Fees and Charges spreadsheet.

Electric vehicle charging - Recommend continued variable charge per Kilowatt hour (kWh) in line with energy supplier rate plus additional charge of 15p to meet supply and maintenance costs (reviewed and adjusted monthly).

On-Street Pay and Display - No change proposed as income from these activities is strictly controlled through Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

Off-Street car parks - No change proposed on the Fees and Charges spreadsheet. A increase in the budget has been included to reflect the expansion of Medway Street and a small volume increase.

Overnight charge - No change proposed on the Fees and Charges spreadsheet.

Mote Park - No change proposed on the Fees and Charges spreadsheet.

Land Charges – Changes proposed on the Fees and Charges spreadsheet in line with charging policy.

Building control – Members are asked to agree an increase of 5% in line with the charging policy. Additional increases may be required pending further information from central government about building control requirements and will be subject to separate approval by members.

Development and Conservation Control – Increase in fees set nationally. New fees have already been introduced with effect from 6th December 2023. The headline increases were that planning application fees would increase by 35% for applications for major development and 25% for all other applications. The individual increases do vary from these headline figures. We have followed the fees per the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2023 which are reflected in Appendix A. The statutory fees may have increased but the increase in budget is not as high as expected due to the current lower volume of work.

Pre application fees have also been increased. These are based on benchmarks with other Kent planning authorities, which showed MBC were low cost compared. This is partly due to fees not going up in the last financial year i.e.2022/23.

Economic Development-Jubilee Square – An increase in the fees for promotional events. Budgets have not been increased as the actual level of income is below budget.

## **Budget Survey**

- 2.14 Public consultation on the budget has been carried out. Details are set out in Appendix C and D. Members are encouraged to review the findings and assess whether the budget proposals they have reviewed are consistent with public expectations and aspirations.

### *Services Spending Approaches*

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

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

2.16 The key points from the responses are (Appendix C):

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

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

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

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

#### *Investment Programme*

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

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

#### **3.1 Option 1**

The committee could recommend approval to adopt the fees and charges as proposed in Appendix A. As these proposals have been developed in line with the council's policy on fees and charges, they will create a manageable impact on service delivery whilst maximising income levels.

#### **3.2 Option 2**

The committee could recommend alternative charges to those set out within Appendix A. Any alternative increases may not be fully compliant with the

policy, would require further consideration before implementation and may not deliver the necessary levels of income to ensure a balanced budget for 2024-25. The impact on demand for a service should also be taken into account when considering increases to charges beyond the proposed level.

### 3.3 Option 3

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

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## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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## **5. RISK**

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

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

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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

6.1 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC (6 September 2023) received details of the savings proposals which will be needed to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25.

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

7.1 The timetable for developing the budget for 2024/25 is set out below.

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

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix A Fees and Charges Proposals 2024/25
  - Appendix B: Fees and Charges - Charging policy
  - Appendix C: Budget Survey 2023
  - Appendix D: Comparison of 2022 and 2023 Service Spending Approaches.
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers.

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25**  
**Fees and Charges**  
**Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC**

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory / Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Parking Services</b>										
Business Permits D043		x	5,892	12,710	100.00	100.00	0.00%		12,710	No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
Residents Permits D057		x	225,210	169,460	25.00	25.00	0.00%		169,460	
Visitors Permits D066		x			25.00	25.00	0.00%		0	
3rd Permit [resident / visitor parking]		x			50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Replacement Permits/Duplicate Permits D067	*	x			10.00	10.00	0.00%		0	
Carers Permits - Organisation D050	*	x	858	1,290	20.00	20.00	0.00%		1,290	
<b>Dispensations and Waivers D061</b>			23,790	27,560					27,560	No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
Waivers/Work permits [max 1 day]		x			12.00	12.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [max 1 week]		x			36.00	36.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [max 2 week]		x			45.00	45.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [max 1 month]		x			60.00	60.00	0.00%			
Waivers/ Work Permits [over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)]		x			50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 1 day]		x			12.00	12.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 1 week]		x			36.00	36.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 2 week]		x			45.00	45.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [max 1 month]		x			60.00	60.00	0.00%			
Dispensations [over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)]		x			50.00	50.00	0.00%			
Cones/ Suspension administration Fee		x			100.00	100.00	0.00%			
PCN Low - Statutory D042		x	856,738	864,660	50.00	50.00	0.00%		864,660	No change - Statutory charge
PCN High - Statutory		x			70.00	70.00	0.00%			
<b>Season Tickets - Car Parks D041 RC20</b>			108,301	132,730					132,730	No change proposed - changes in the way people work have impacted on season ticket viability
6 Month 5 days Mon - Fri	*	x			496.00	496.00	0.00%			
6 Month 7 days Mon - Sun	*	x			638.00	638.00	0.00%			
12 Month 5 days Mon - Fri	*	x			910.00	910.00	0.00%			
12 Month 7 days Mon - Sun	*	x			1,163.00	1,163.00	0.00%			
Evening (any CP) off-peak valid after 5pm and before 8am Mon - Sun-12 Months	*	x			180.00	180.00	0.00%			
Refund administration fee					30.00	30.00	0.00%			Reduced by 50% in 2023/24 - No change proposed
<b>Season Tickets - Car Parks (Mote Park Only) D041 RC23</b>			5,866	5,000					5,000	Maidstone residents only
One Year	*	x			40.00	40.00	0.00%			

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**Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC**

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b><u>PAY AND DISPLAY</u></b>										
<b><u>Electric Vehicles</u></b>										
Electric vehicles (EVs) – Free parking for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) through RingGo			15,692	40,000					40,000	Free parking for BEVs when customer registers transaction through the councils cashless payment provider.
Electric Vehicle Charging (per kWh)	*	x	0	0	0.00	0.00	0%	0	0	Charged per Kilowatt hour (kWh) in line with energy supplier rate (Inc VAT) plus additional charge of 15p (+VAT) to meet supply and maintenance costs (reviewed and adjusted monthly)
<b><u>On Street D060</u></b>										
<b><u>James Whatman Way</u></b>										
30 mins		x			0.70	0.70	0.00%			No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
1 hr		x			1.50	1.50	0.00%			
1.5 hr		x			2.00	2.00	0.00%			
2 hr		x			2.50	2.50	0.00%			
3 hr		x			3.50	3.50	0.00%			
4 hr		x			4.50	4.50	0.00%			
<b><u>All other on-street pay and display locations</u></b>										
30 mins		x			0.80	0.80	0.00%			No change - income controlled under section 55 Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
1 hr		x			1.50	1.50	0.00%			
1.5 hr		x			2.25	2.25	0.00%			
2 hr		x			3.00	3.00	0.00%			
<b><u>Off street</u></b>			1,741,045	1,701,750				43,400	1,745,150	Increase due to volumes (general increase and Medway Street increase in spaces).
<b><u>Short Stay</u></b>										
<b><u>Medway St</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.30	1.30	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.60	2.60	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.90	3.90	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			5.20	5.20	0.00%			

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25**  
**Fees and Charges**  
**Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC**

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b><u>Brewer Street [E]</u></b>										
30 mins	*	x			0.65	0.65	0.00%			No change proposed
1 hr	*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%			
2 hr	*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%			
<b><u>King Street</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.35	1.35	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.70	2.70	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			4.05	4.05	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			5.40	5.40	0.00%			
<b><u>Wheeler Street</u></b>										
30 mins	*	x			0.65	0.65	0.00%			No change proposed
1 hr	*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%			
2 hr	*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%			
<b><u>Palace Avenue</u></b>										
1 hr					1.30	1.30	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr					2.60	2.60	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.90	3.90	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			5.20	5.20	0.00%			
<b><u>Mote Road</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.20	4.20	0.00%			
<b><u>Mill Street</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.20	4.20	0.00%			

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25  
Fees and Charges  
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Long Stay</b>										
<b><u>Barker Road</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%			
5 hr	*				5.75	5.75	0.00%			
Over 5 hours					7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<b><u>Brooks Place</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.15	1.15	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.30	2.30	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.45	3.45	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.60	4.60	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x			5.75	5.75	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<b><u>Brunswick Street</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.20	4.20	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x			5.25	5.25	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<b><u>College Road</u></b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.20	4.20	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x			5.25	5.25	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%			

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**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25  
Fees and Charges  
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC**

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

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25  
Fees and Charges  
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory / Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Well Road</b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.05	1.05	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.10	2.10	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			3.15	3.15	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			4.20	4.20	0.00%			
5 hr	*	x			5.25	5.25	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x			7.30	7.30	0.00%			
<b>Lockmeadow</b>										
1 hr	*	x			1.00	1.00	0.00%			No change proposed
2 hr	*	x			2.00	2.00	0.00%			
3 hr	*	x			2.50	2.50	0.00%			
4 hr	*	x			3.50	3.50	0.00%			
Up to 5 hours	*	x			5.00	5.00	0.00%			
Over 5 hours	*	x			7.00	7.00	0.00%			
<b>Overnight charge all off-street car parks (6.30pm to 8am) (except Lockmeadow)</b>	*	x			2.00	2.00	0.00%	0	0	No change proposed
<b>Mote Park</b>										
Up to 6 Hours	*	x	200,176	213,000	2.00	2.00	0.00%	0	213,000	No change proposed
Over 6 Hours	*	x			12.00	12.00	0.00%			
<b>Parking Services Total</b>			<b>3,405,009</b>	<b>3,394,500</b>				<b>43,400</b>	<b>3,437,900</b>	
<b>Sandling Road Car Park</b>										
			76,966	53,470					53,470	Increased charge
1 hr	*	x			1.10	1.15	4.55%			
3 hr	*	x			2.20	2.35	6.82%			
4 hr	*	x			3.50	3.70	5.71%			
Up to 5 hours	*	x			6.00	6.25	4.17%			
Over 5 hours	*	x			6.00	6.25	4.17%			
<b>Sandling Road Car Park Total</b>			<b>76,966</b>	<b>53,470</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>53,470</b>	

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25**  
**Fees and Charges**  
**Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PAC**

Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee	Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Development Control - Land Charges</b>											
				236,012	286,900					286,900	
Search only (LLC1 only)		x				15.00	15.00	0.00%			No VAT on LLC1. No change to cost, in line with HMLR as at August 2023
LLC1 Only - Additional Parcel of Land		x				4.80	4.80	0.00%			No VAT on LLC1
CON29 (Including VAT)	*	x				164.00	172.20	5.00%			
CON29 - Additional Parcel of Land (Including VAT)	*	x				24.00	30.20	25.83%			
Standard Official Search (LLC1 and CON29) (Including VAT)	*	x				179.00	187.20	4.58%			5% VAT increase on CON element only
Standard Official Search (LLC1 and CON29) - Additional Parcel of Land (Including VAT)	*	x				28.80	35.00	21.53%			Includes 5% VAT increase on CON element only
Part II enquiry - CON 29 Optional Questions 4-21 (Including VAT)	*	x				16.20	17.00	4.94%			
Part II enquiry - CON29 Optional Question 22 (Including VAT)	*	x				30.00	31.50	5.00%			
Additional Questions (Including VAT)	*	x				22.80	24.60	7.89%			
<b>CON29 Personal Searches (EIR)</b>											
<b>Question</b>											
Personal Search		x				0.00	0.00	0.00%			Free
1.1 (a) - (l) (Planning)	*	x				8.40	8.80	4.76%			
1.1 (j,k,l) (Building Regulations)	*	x				8.40	8.80	4.76%			
2.1 (b) - (d)	*	x				4.20	4.42	5.24%			
3.1 (Land for Public Purpose)	*	x				4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.3 Drainage Matters	*	x				4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.5 (Railway Schemes)	*	x				4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.7 (Outstanding Notices)	*	x				12.00	12.60	5.00%			
3.8 (Building Regulations Contravention)	*	x				4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.9 (Enforcement)	*	x				8.40	8.80	4.76%			
3.10 CIL - currently only applicable to MBC	*	x				5.70	6.00	5.26%			
3.12 (Compulsory Purchase)						4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.13 b (Contaminated Land)	*	x				4.20	4.40	4.76%			
3.13 c (Contaminated Land)	*	x				4.20	4.40	4.76%			
<b>Land Charges Total</b>				<b>236,012</b>	<b>286,900</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>286,900</b>	

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Fees and Charges April 2024- March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee	Discretionary Fee	Actuals 2022-2023	Current Estimate 2023-24	Current Charges 2023-2024	Proposed Charges 2024-2025	Change	+ / - Income 2024-25	Estimate 2024-2025	Comments
				£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Building Control</b>											
				400,542	402,540				20,127	422,667	
Erection of a single dwelling house - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				1,134.00	1,190.70	5.00%			
Erection of 2 dwelling houses - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				1,489.00	1,563.45	5.00%			
Single storey heated annex - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				891.00	935.55	5.00%			
Single storey heated annex - Regularisation Charge		x				1,113.03	1,168.68	5.00%			
Unheated outbuilding - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				599.00	628.95	5.00%			
Unheated outbuilding - Regularisation Charge		x				748.77	786.21	5.00%			
Garages up to 60m <sup>2</sup> - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				551.00	578.55	5.00%			
Garages up to 60m <sup>2</sup> - Regularisation Charge		x				688.05	722.45	5.00%			
Garage with room over 60m <sup>2</sup> - 100m <sup>2</sup>	*	x				648.00	680.40	5.00%			
Garage with room over 60m <sup>2</sup> - 100m <sup>2</sup> - Regularisation Charge		x				809.48	849.95	5.00%			
Extension up to 40m <sup>2</sup> - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				809.00	849.45	5.00%			
Extension up to 40m <sup>2</sup> - Regularisation Charge		x				1,011.84	1,062.43	5.00%			
Extensions over 40m <sup>2</sup> and up to 100m <sup>2</sup> - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				971.00	1,019.55	5.00%			
Extensions over 40m <sup>2</sup> and up to 100m <sup>2</sup> - Regularisation Charge		x				1,214.22	1,274.93	5.00%			
Loft Conversions up to 60m <sup>2</sup> - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				842.00	884.10	5.00%			
Loft Conversions up to 60m <sup>2</sup> - Regularisation Charge		x				1,052.33	1,104.95	5.00%			
Garage or Basement Conversion under 40m <sup>2</sup> - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				551.00	578.55	5.00%			
Garage or Basement Conversion under 40m <sup>2</sup> - Regularisation Charge		x				688.05	722.45	5.00%			
Installation of up to 10 replacement windows - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				259.00	271.95	5.00%			
Installation of up to 10 replacement windows - Regularisation Charge		x				323.79	339.98	5.00%			
Part P electrical work or installation of heating appliance - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				324.00	340.20	5.00%			
Part P electrical work or installation of heating appliance - Regularisation Charge		x				404.75	424.99	5.00%			
Alterations up to the value of £4999 - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				356.00	373.80	5.00%			
Alterations up to the value of £4999 - Regularisation Charge		x				445.22	467.48	5.00%			
Alterations from £5000 to £9999 - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				518.00	543.90	5.00%			
Alterations from £5000 to £9999 - Regularisation Charge		x				647.58	679.96	5.00%			
Alterations from £10000 to £19999 - Full Plan & Building Notice Charge	*	x				648.00	680.40	5.00%			
Alterations from £10000 to £19999 - Regularisation Charge		x				809.48	849.95	5.00%			
Demolition Notice	*	x				275.50	289.28	5.00%			
<b>Building Control Total</b>				<b>400,542</b>	<b>402,540</b>				<b>20,127</b>	<b>422,667</b>	

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

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

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

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

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			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Administration fees</b>										
<b>Research of Permitted Development Rights and Planning Histories</b>										
Research on Planning Histories		x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			
Research on Permitted Development Rights		x			116.00	145.00	25.00%			
<b>All Outline Applications</b>										
£578.00 per 0.1 hectare for sites up to and including 0.5 hectares			1,102,209	1,087,910					1,087,910	New Fee introduced.
£624.00 per 0.1 hectare for sites up between 0.5 hectares and 2.5 hectares		x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
More than 2.5 hectares £15,4332 + £186 for each 0.1 in excess of 2.5 hectares to a maximum of £202,500		x			11,432.00	15,433.00	35.00%			
<b>Householder Applications</b>										
Alterations/extensions to a <b>single dwelling</b> , including works within boundary		x			206.00	258.00	25.24%			
Alterations/extensions to <b>two or more dwellings</b> , including works within boundary		x			206.00	508.00	146.60%			New Fee introduced.
<b>Full Applications (and First Submissions of Reserved Matters)</b>										
<b>Erection of new dwellings - not more than 10 dwellings houses.</b>										
Erection of new dwellings - between 10 and 50 dwellings houses.		x			407.00	578.00	42.01%			
Erection of new dwellings (for more than 50) £30860 + £186 per additional dwelling in excess of 50 up to a maximum fee of £405,000		x			22,859.00	30,860.00	35.00%			
<b>Erection of buildings (not dwellings, agricultural, glasshouses, plant or machinery)</b>										
No increase in gross floor space or no more than 40m <sup>2</sup> gross floor space to be created by the development		x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
More than 40 sqm but no more than 1,000 sq m gross floor space to be created by the development		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
More than 1,000 sqm but no more than 3,750 sqm gross floor space to be created by the development		x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
More than 3,750 sq m - £30,680 plus £186 for each 75 sqm or part thereof in excess of 3,750 sq.m to a maximum of £405,000		x			22,859.00	30,680.00	34.21%			

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

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

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			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<b>Change of Use</b> of a building to use as one or more separate dwelling houses, or other cases										
Number of dwellings not more than 10 £578 each dwelling		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
Number of dwellings more than 10 but not more than 50 £624 each dwelling		x			462.00	624.00	35.06%			
Number of dwellings More than 50		x			22,859.00	30,860.00	35.00%			
<b>Other Changes of Use</b> of a building or land		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
<b>Advertising</b>										
Relating to the business on the premises		x			132.00	165.00	25.00%			
Advance signs which are not situated on or visible from the site, directing the public to a business		x			132.00	165.00	25.00%			
Other advertisements		x			462.00	578.00	25.11%			
<b>Application for a Non-material Amendment Following a Grant of Planning Permission</b>										
Applications in respect of householder developments		x			34.00	43.00	26.47%			
Applications in respect of other developments		x			234.00	293.00	25.21%			
Permission in Principle - Site Area		x			402.00	503.00	25.12%			
<b>Development and Conservation Control Total</b>			<b>1,355,924</b>	<b>1,636,440</b>				<b>200,000</b>	<b>1,836,440</b>	
<b>Economic Development-Jubilee Square</b>										
<b>Jubilee Square (EN40 B724)</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>3,500</b>					<b>3,500</b>	
Use of premises licence		x			75.00	75.00	0.00%			
Use of electricity - 3 phase (incl Openreach call out)		x			85.00	85.00	0.00%			
Use of Electricity (Without Openreach call out)		x			25.00	25.00	0.00%			
Promotional/Commercial use inc admin fee		x			265.00	280.00	5.66%			Difficult space to get commercial interest in use
Events/Educational Promotion (min) charity / public sector admin fee		x			55.00	60.00	9.09%			
<b>Economic Development Total</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>3,500</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>3,500</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>5,474,453</b>	<b>5,777,350</b>				<b>263,527</b>	<b>6,040,877</b>	

# Maidstone Borough Council

## Charging Policy

September 2023

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# 1 Introduction and Context

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

# 2 Policy Aims and Objectives

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

## 3 Scope

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

## 4 Principles

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

## 5 Process and Frequency for Reviewing Charges

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

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

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

## 6 Guidance

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

## 7 Cost Recovery Limitation

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

## 8 Concessions & Subsidies

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

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

## 9 Introducing a new charge

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

## 10 Monitoring

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

## Appendix A - Discretionary Fees & Charges Review Checklist

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

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

## Appendix A - Discretionary Fees & Charges Review Checklist

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

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chargeable Service/Supply:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B – Example Schedule of Fees & Charges

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



# BUDGET SURVEY

September 2023

## ABSTRACT

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

[Consultation@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:Consultation@maidstone.gov.uk)

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## Findings

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

## Methodology

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

There was a total of 646 responses to the survey.

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

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

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

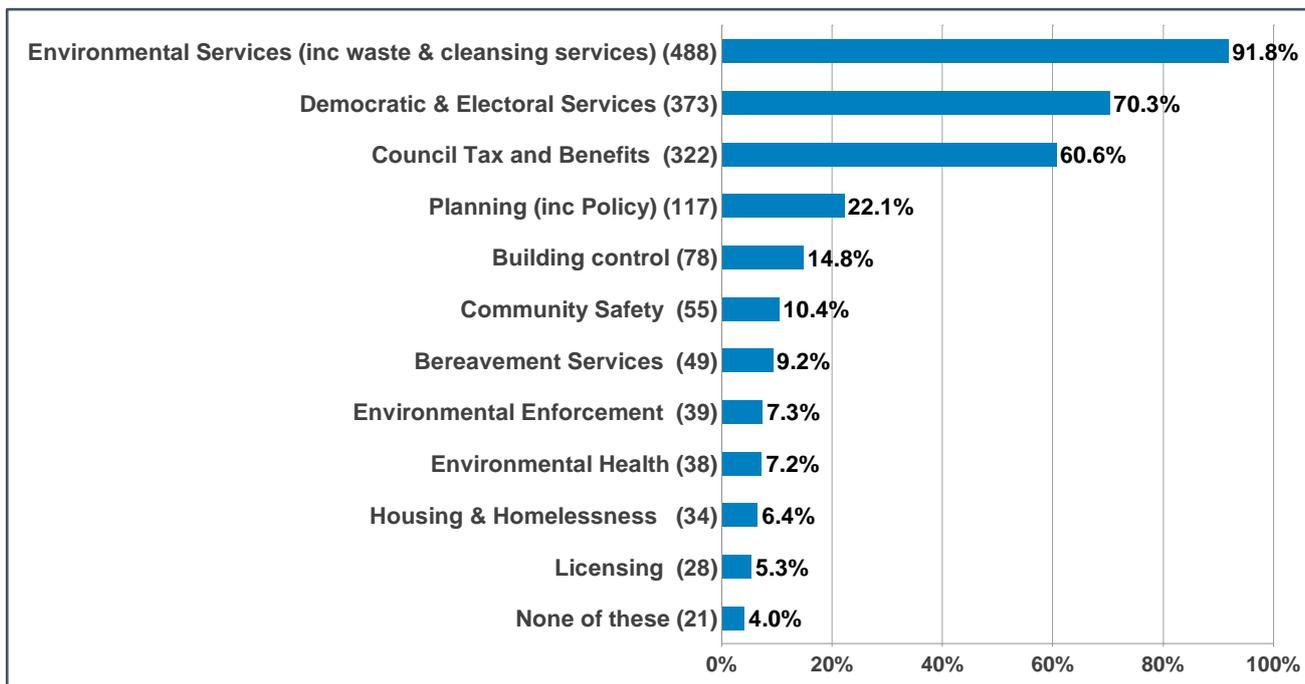
Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

# Mandatory Services

## Mandatory Services Used

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

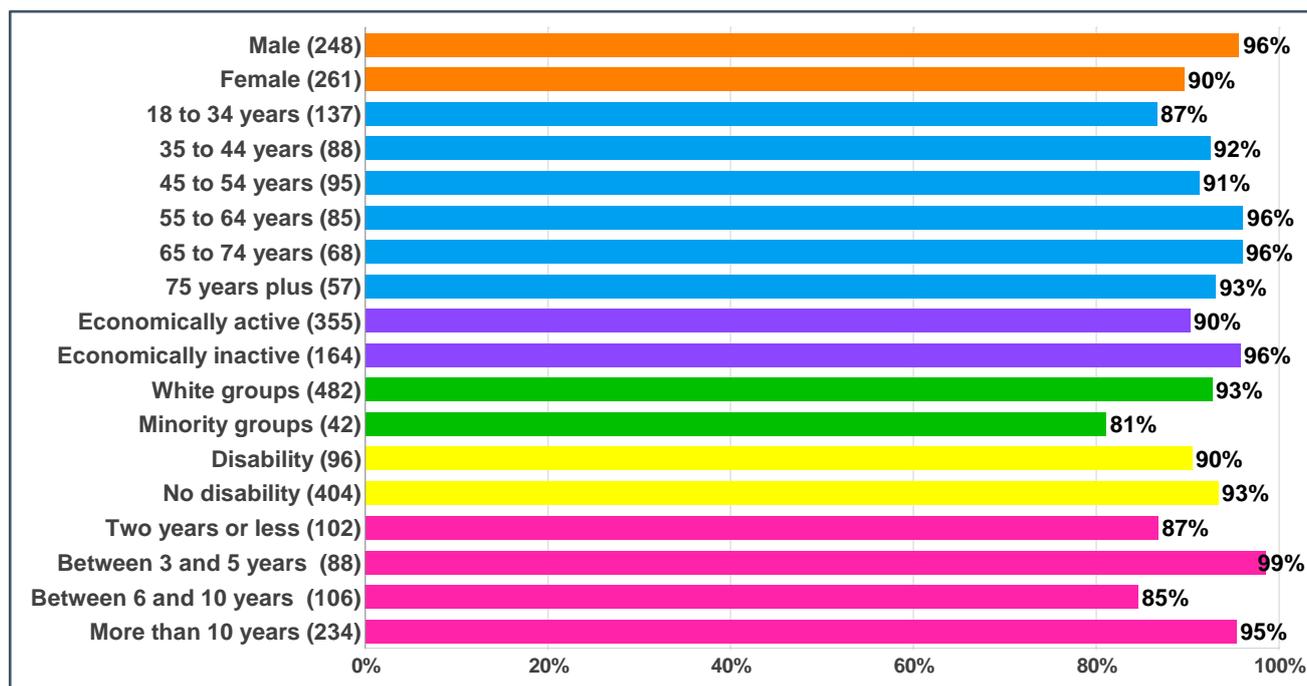
- 531 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Environmental Services, Democratic & Electoral Services and Council Tax & Benefits.
- The least used service by respondents was Licensing with 28 selecting this service.
- 21 respondents said they had not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

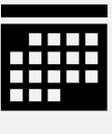


Demographic differences for the top three services are explored in more detail in the charts and tables below.

## Environmental Services

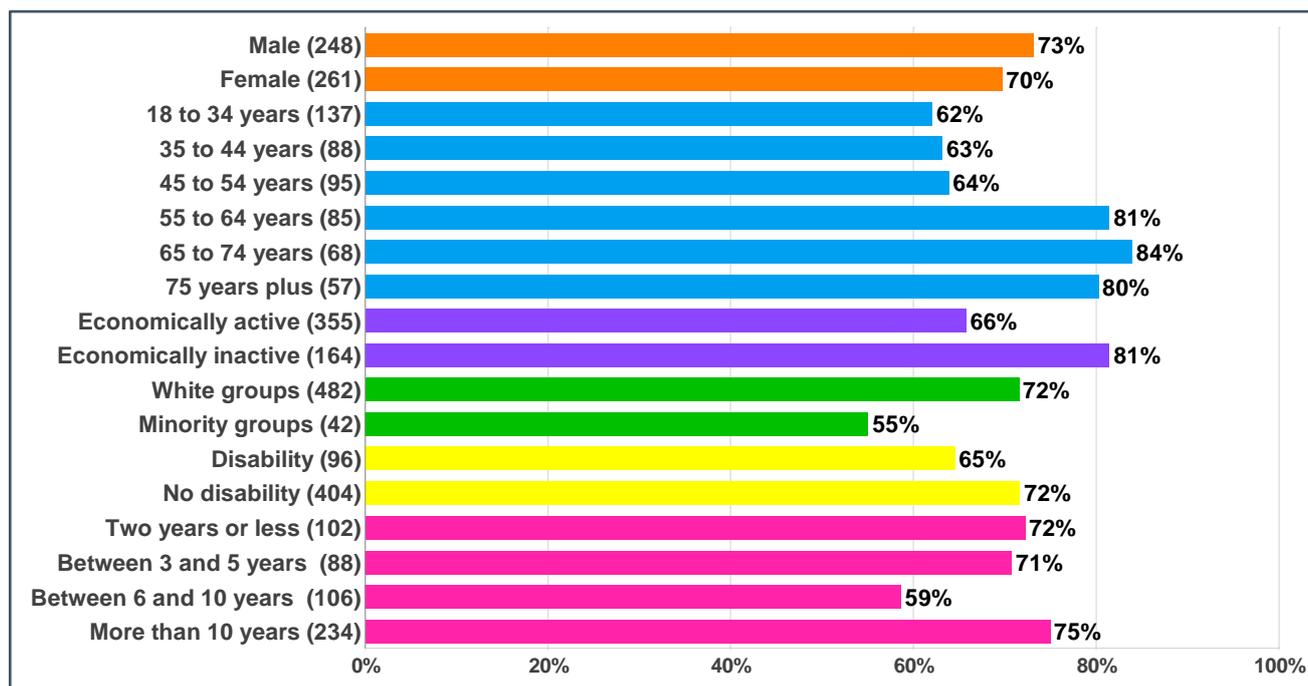
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

### Democratic & Electoral Services

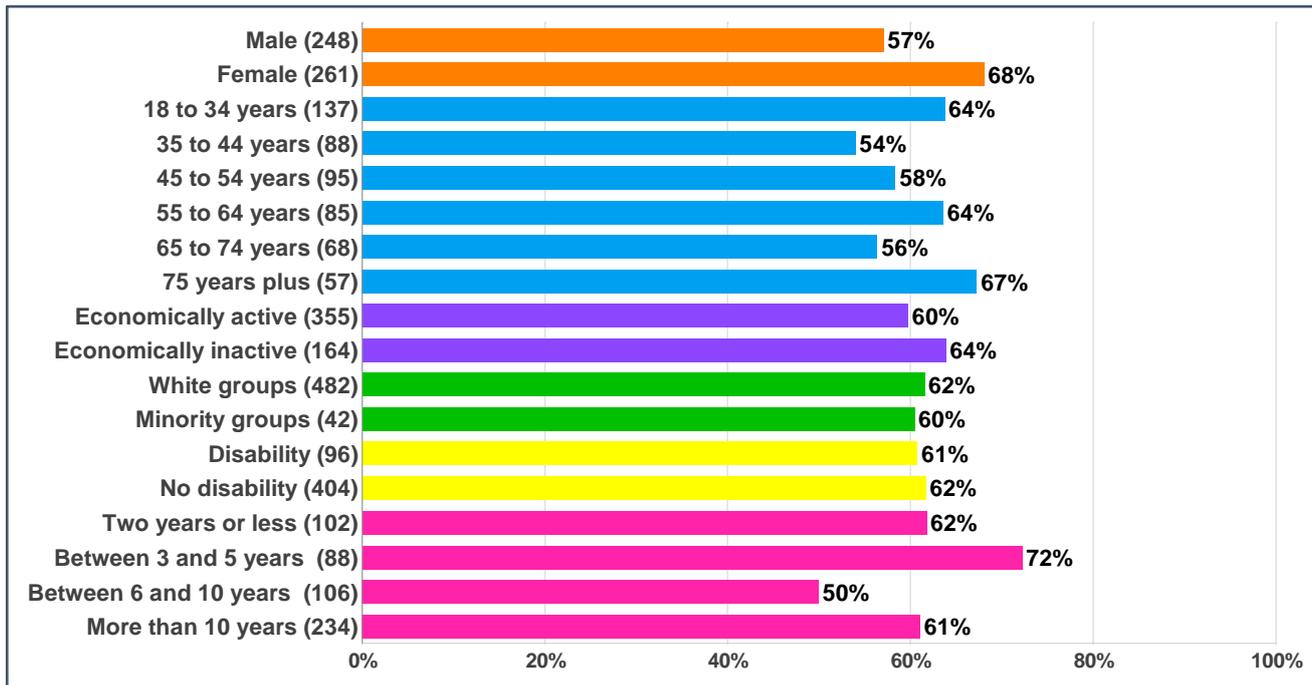
The differences in the proportions selecting Democratic & Electoral Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Council Tax & Benefits

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



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

## Spending Approach Mandatory Services

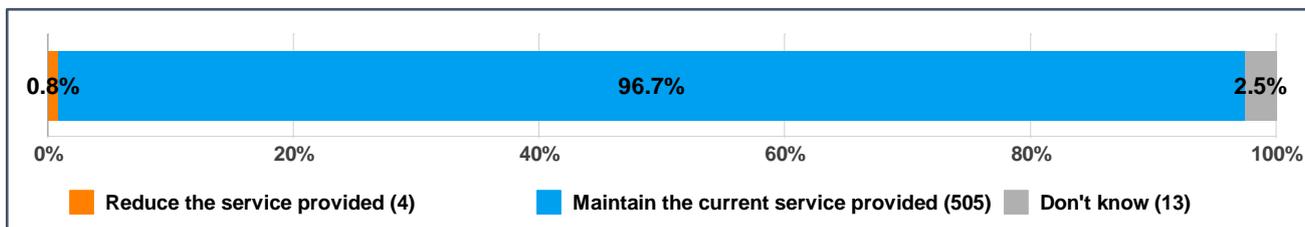
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Mandatory Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

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

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

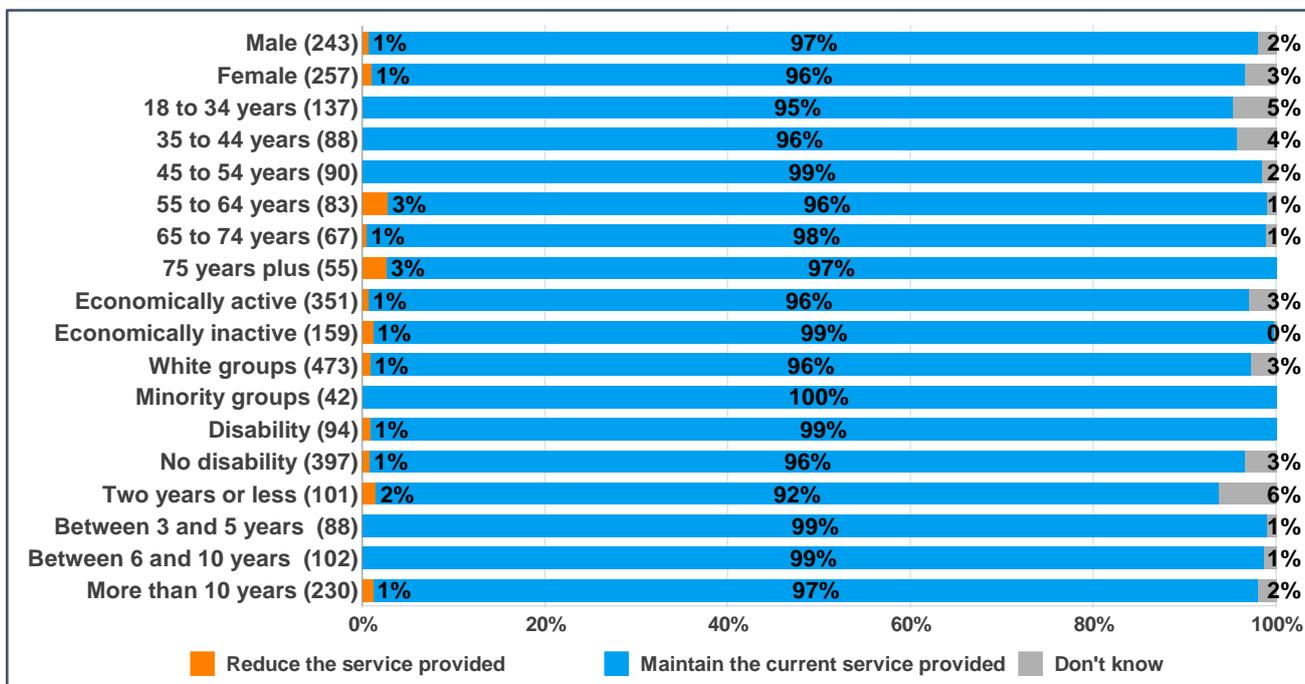
### Environmental Services

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



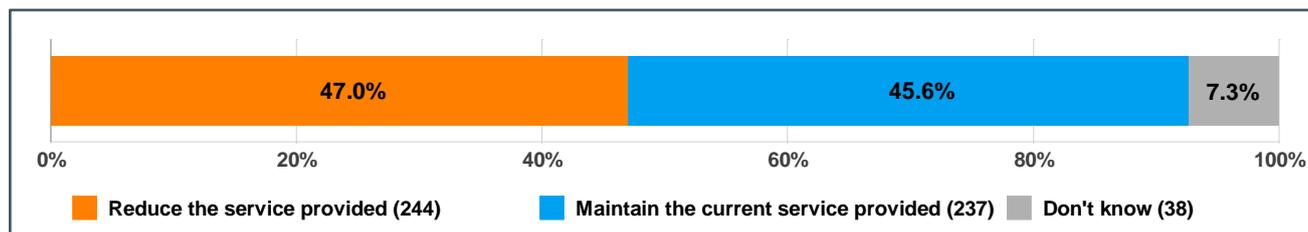
### Demographic Differences

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



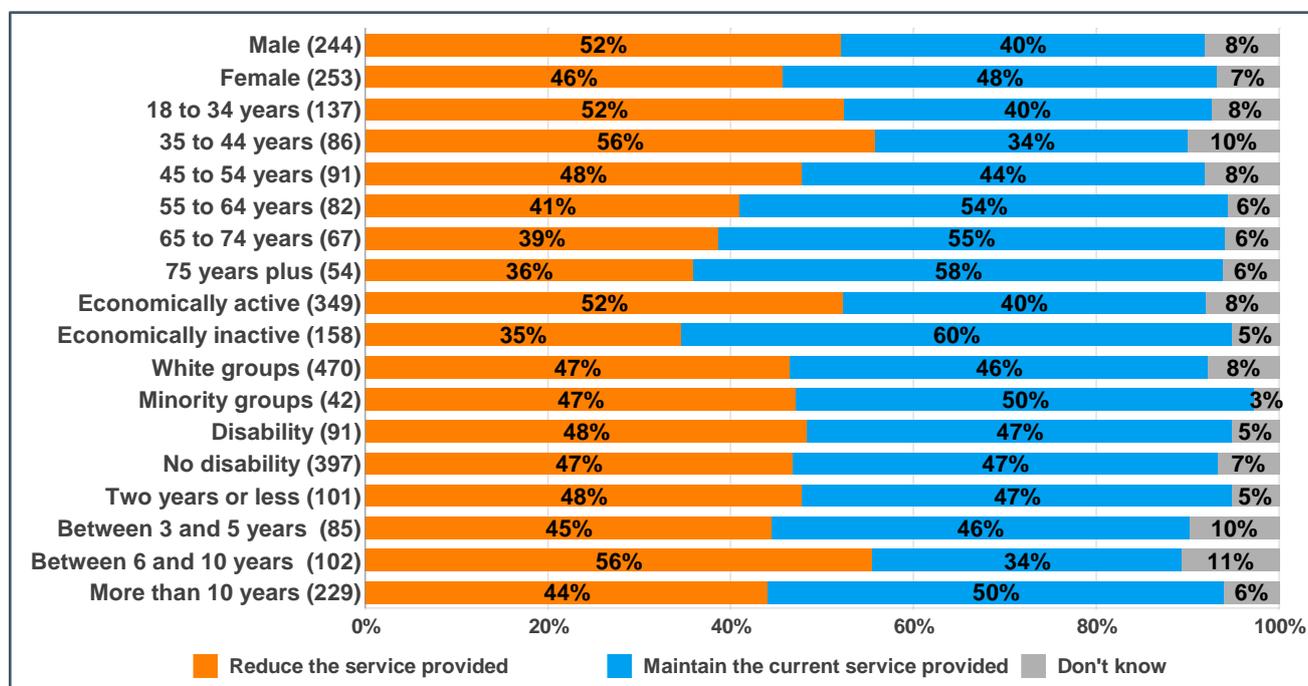
## Democratic & Electoral Services

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



## Demographic Differences

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

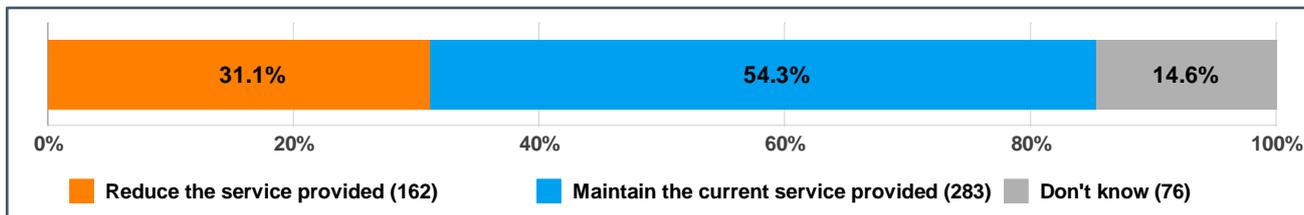


### Significant Differences - Democratic & Electoral Services Approach

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

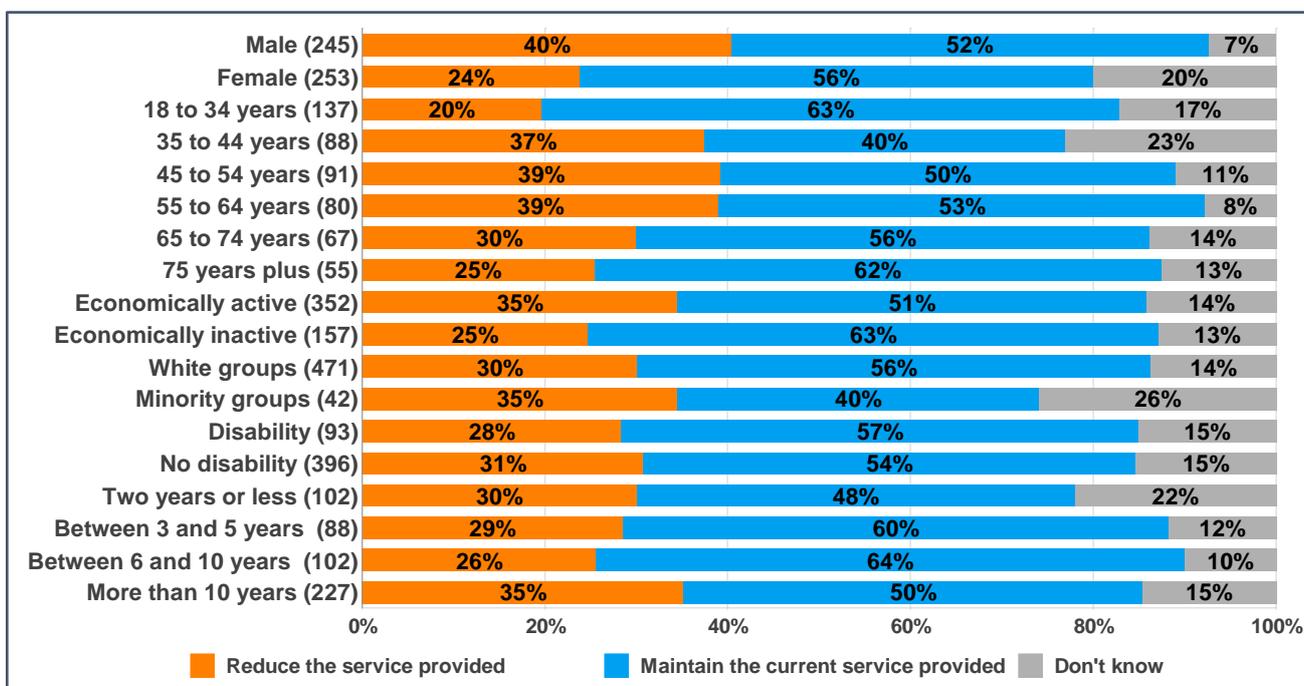
### Planning (including Planning Policy)

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



### Demographic Differences

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



#### Significant Differences -Planning Approach

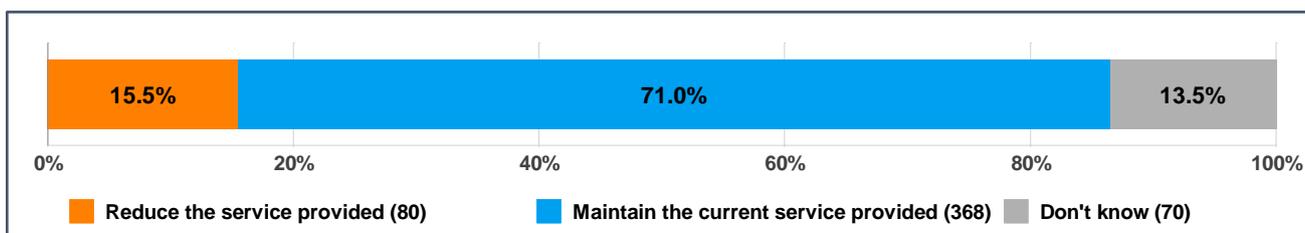
	<p>A greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Planning services with 40% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. However, more than half of each group were in favour of maintaining the current service in this area.</p>
	<p>One in five respondents aged 18 to 24 years (20%)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



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

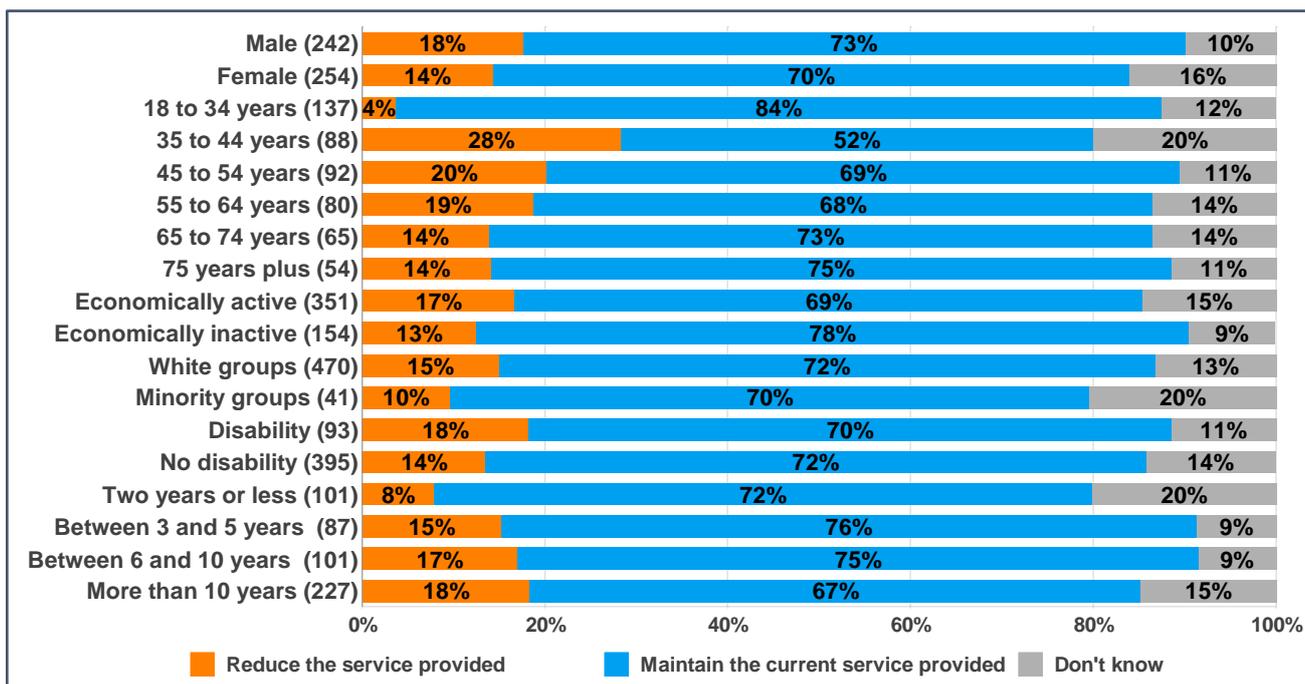
### Building Control

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



### Demographic Differences

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



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

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

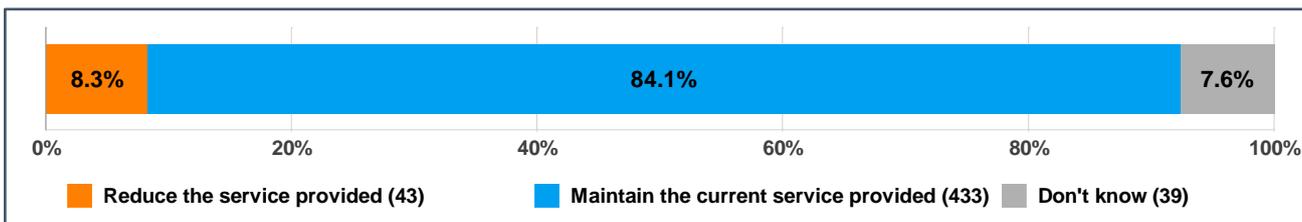


Economically active respondents had a significantly lower proportion in favour of maintaining the Building Control service with 69% answering this way compared to 78% of economically inactive respondents.

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

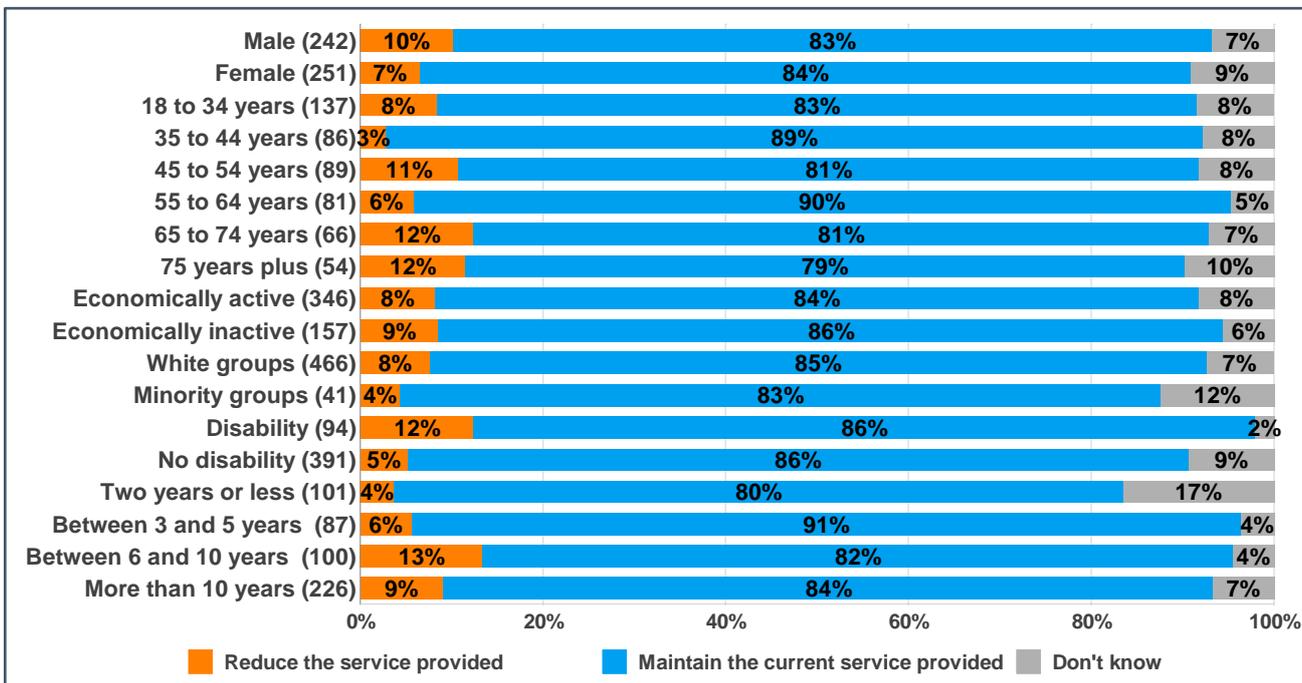
### Environmental Health

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



### Demographic Differences

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

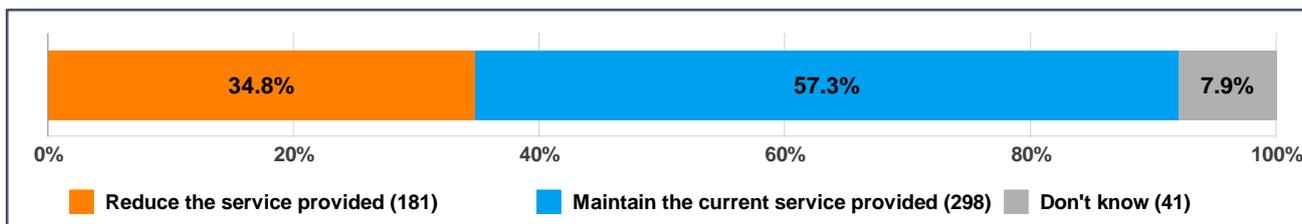


	<p>The proportion that responded ‘reduce the service provided’ from the 18 to 34 years group was significantly lower than for the 45 to 54 years, the 65 to 74 years and the 75 years and over age groups. There were no significant differences between age groups for the remaining answer options.</p>
	<p>Respondents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

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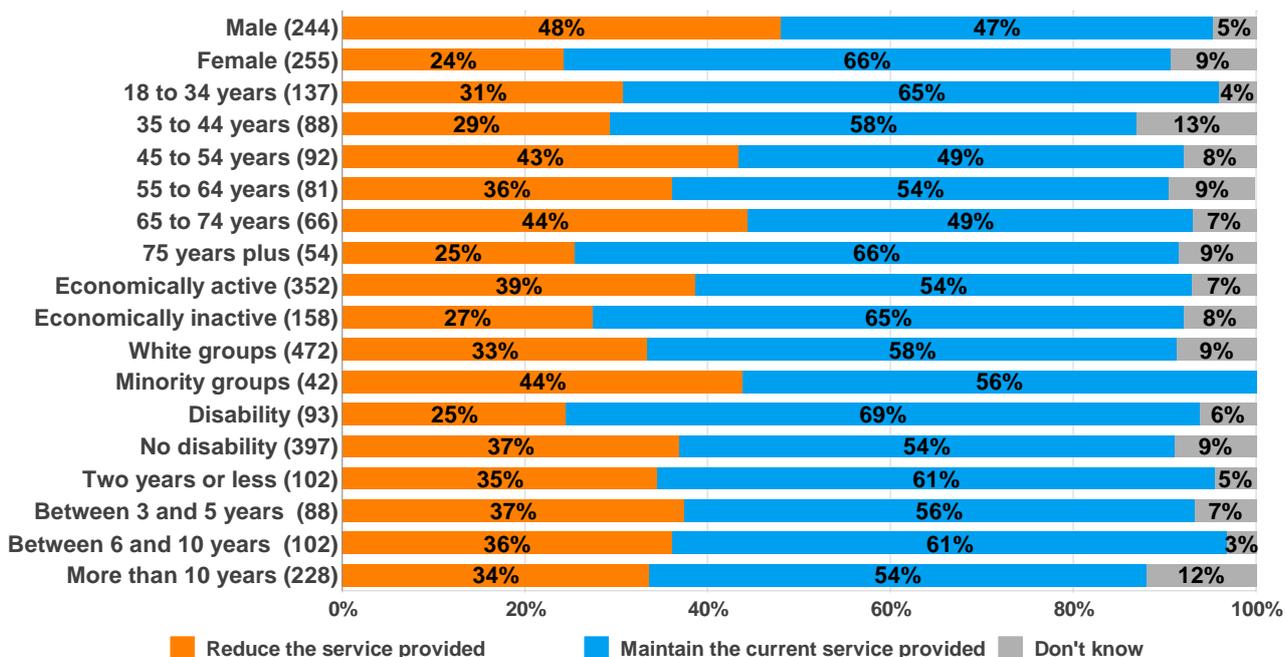
### Council Tax & Benefits

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



### Demographic Differences

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

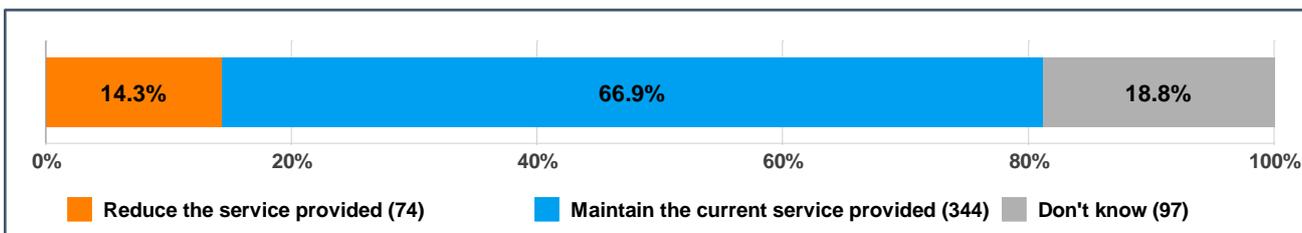


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of male respondents were in favour of reducing Council tax and Benefits with 48% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. ‘Reduce the service’ was the most common response from men and ‘maintain the current service’ was the most common response for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

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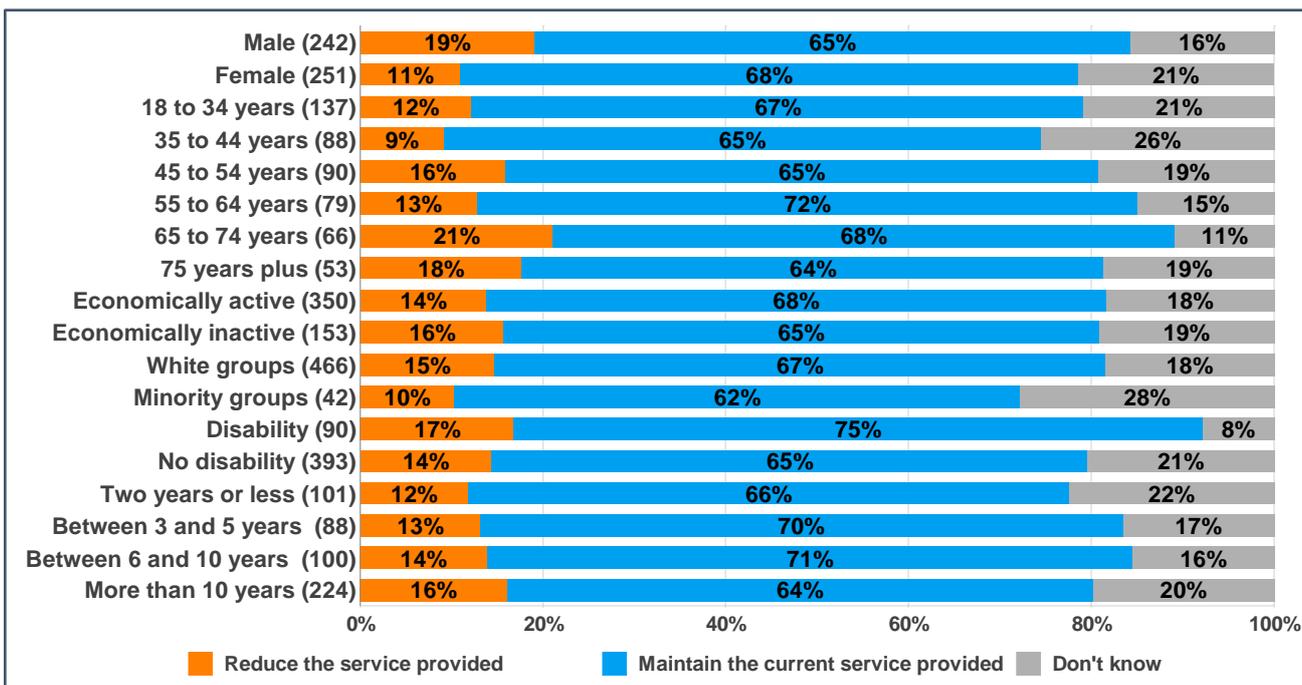
### Bereavement Services

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



### Demographic Differences

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

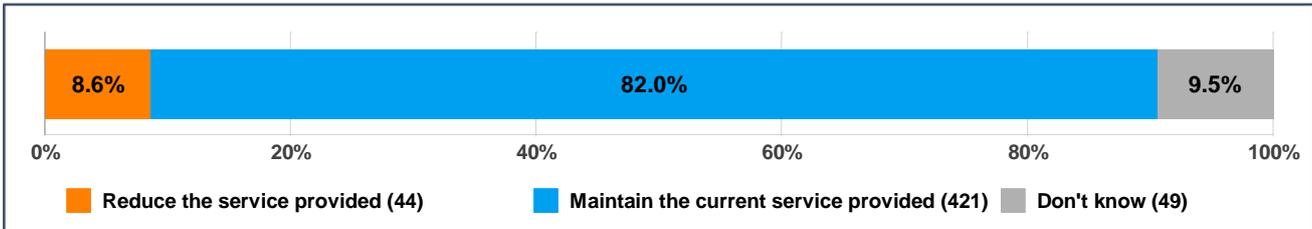


	<p>Male respondents had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of reducing Bereavement Services with 19% answering this way compared to 11% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of 65 to 74 years olds said Bereavement Services should be reduced with 21% answering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

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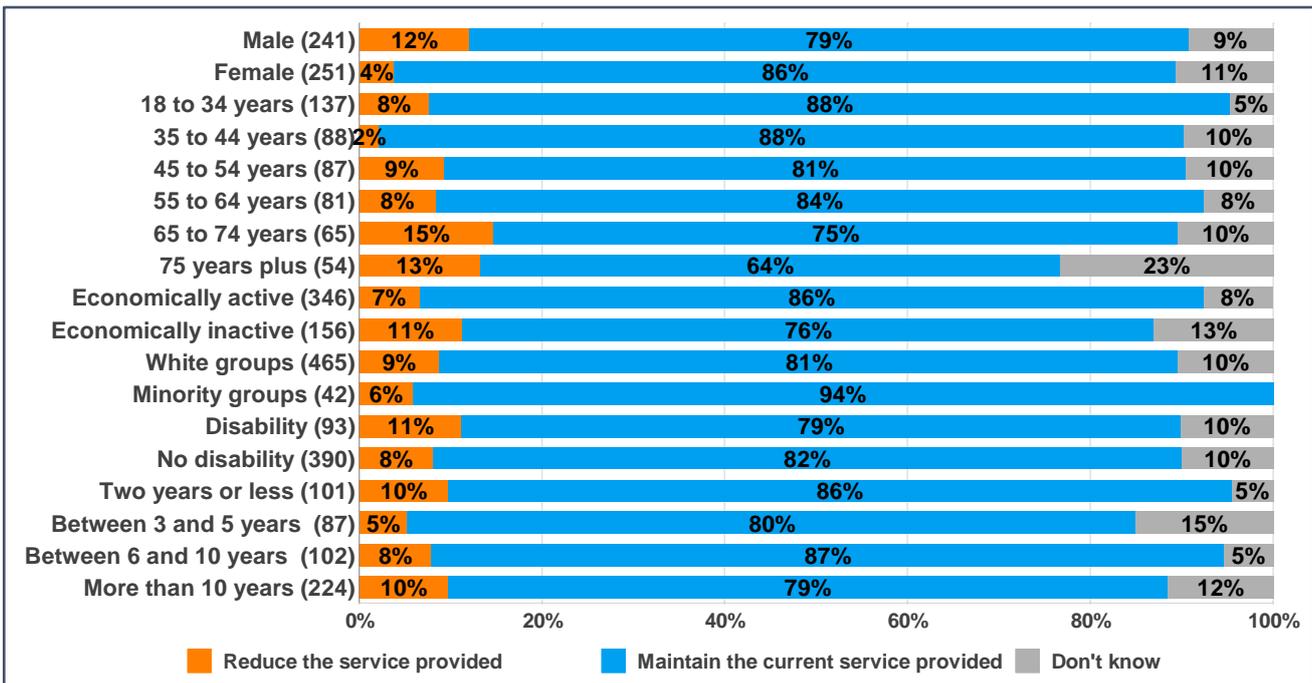
**Community Safety**

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



**Demographic Differences**

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

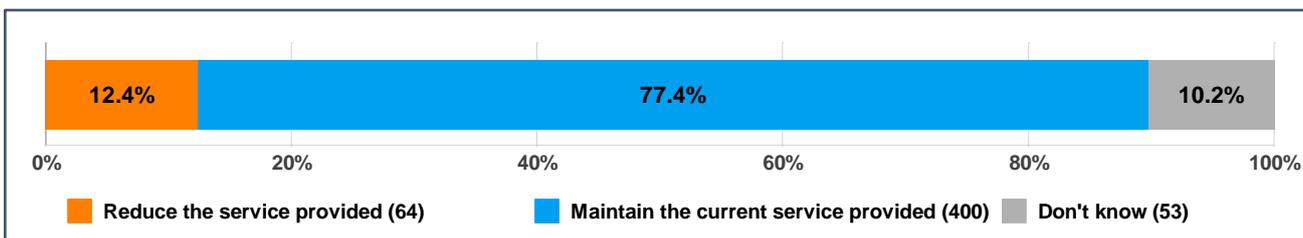


	<p>Female respondents had a significantly greater proportion that said Community Safety services should be maintained with 86% answering this way compared to 79% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded ‘Maintain the current service’ from the 75 years and over group were significantly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

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

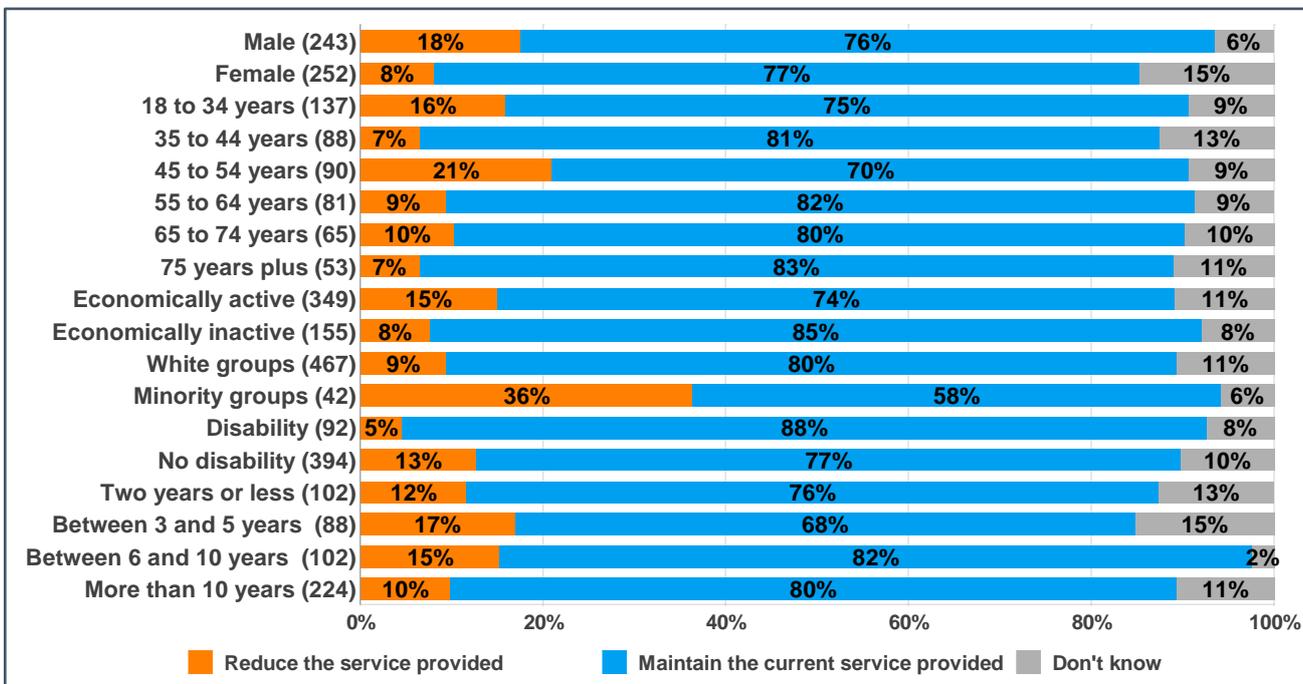
### Environmental Enforcement

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



### Demographic Differences

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

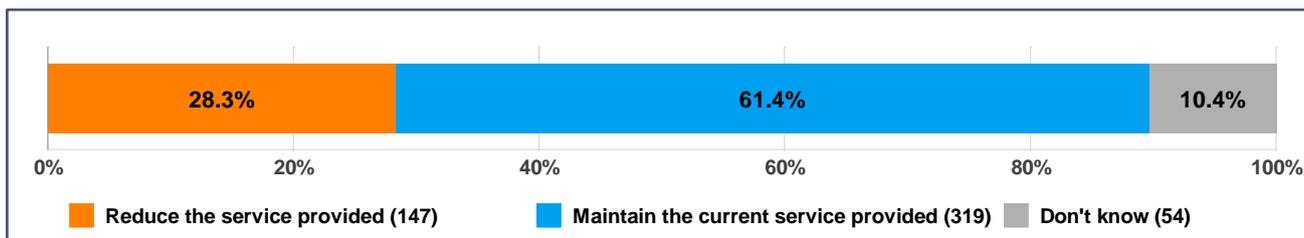


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Environmental Enforcement services with 18% answering this way compared to 8% of female respondents.</p> <p>A significantly greater proportion of female respondents were uncertain with 15% answering this way compared to 6% of male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

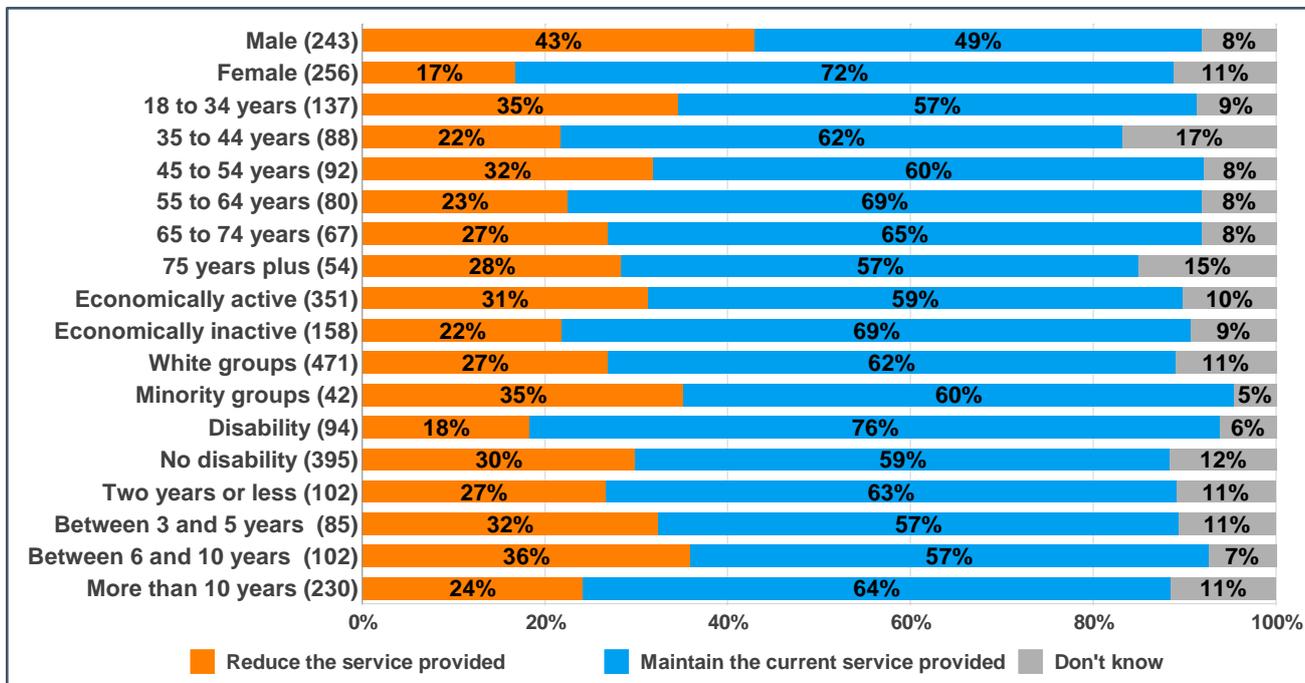
### Housing & Homelessness

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



### Demographic Differences

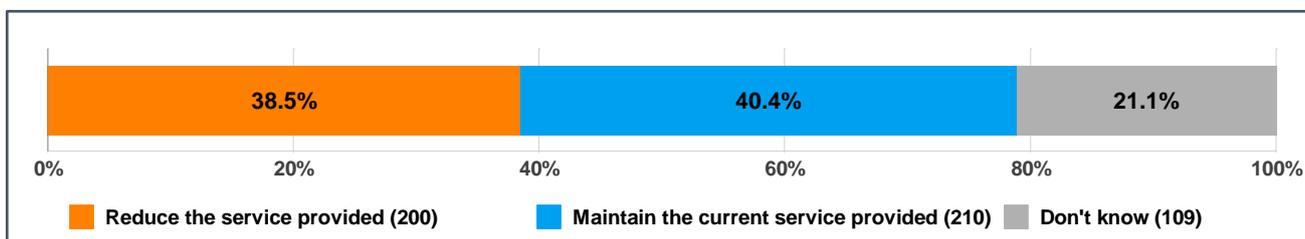
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

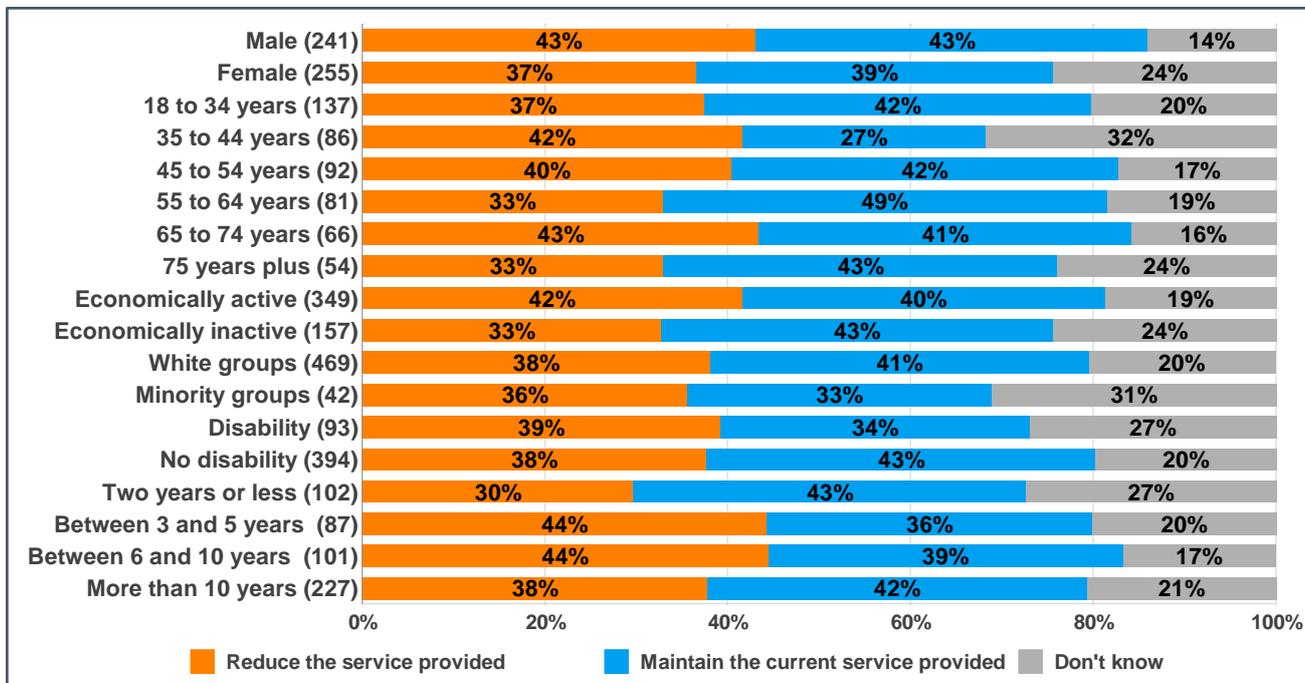
### Licensing

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



### Demographic Differences

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

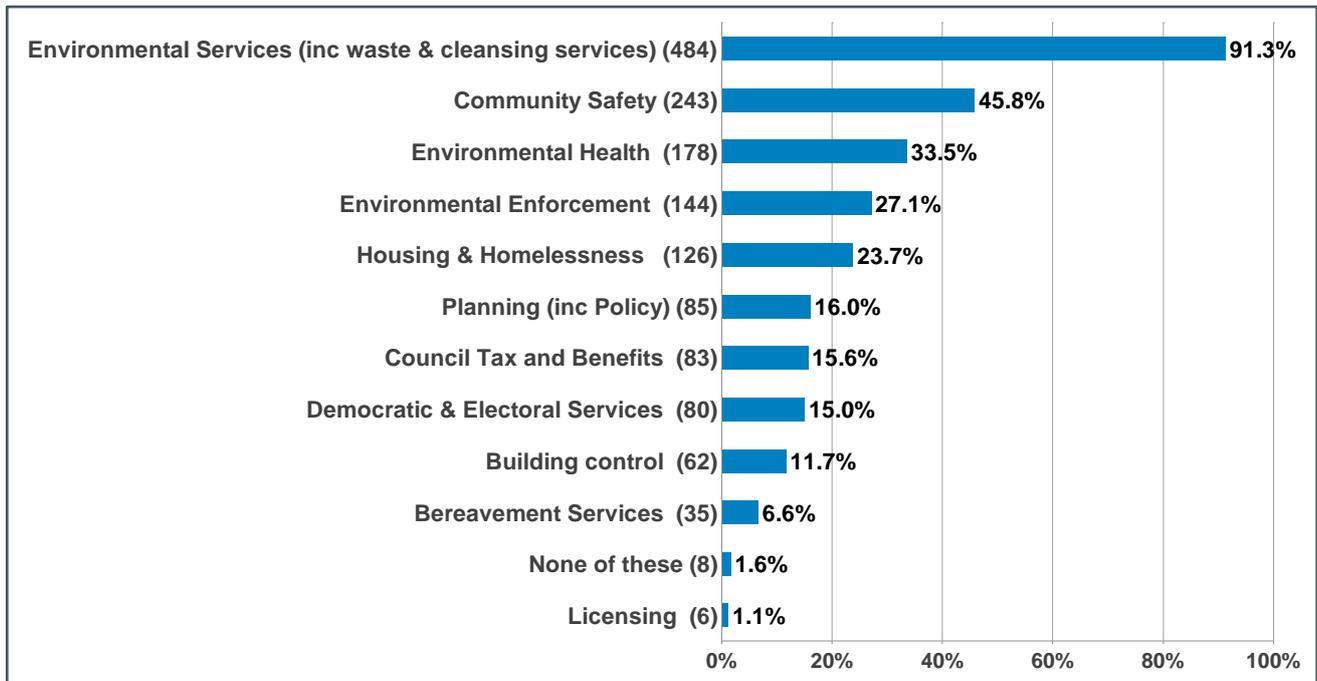


	<p>Female respondents answered 'don't know' in response to this question with 24% answering this way compared to 14% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded 'maintain the current service provided' from the 35 to 44 age group was lower than the proportions answering this way for the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

## Most important Mandatory Services

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

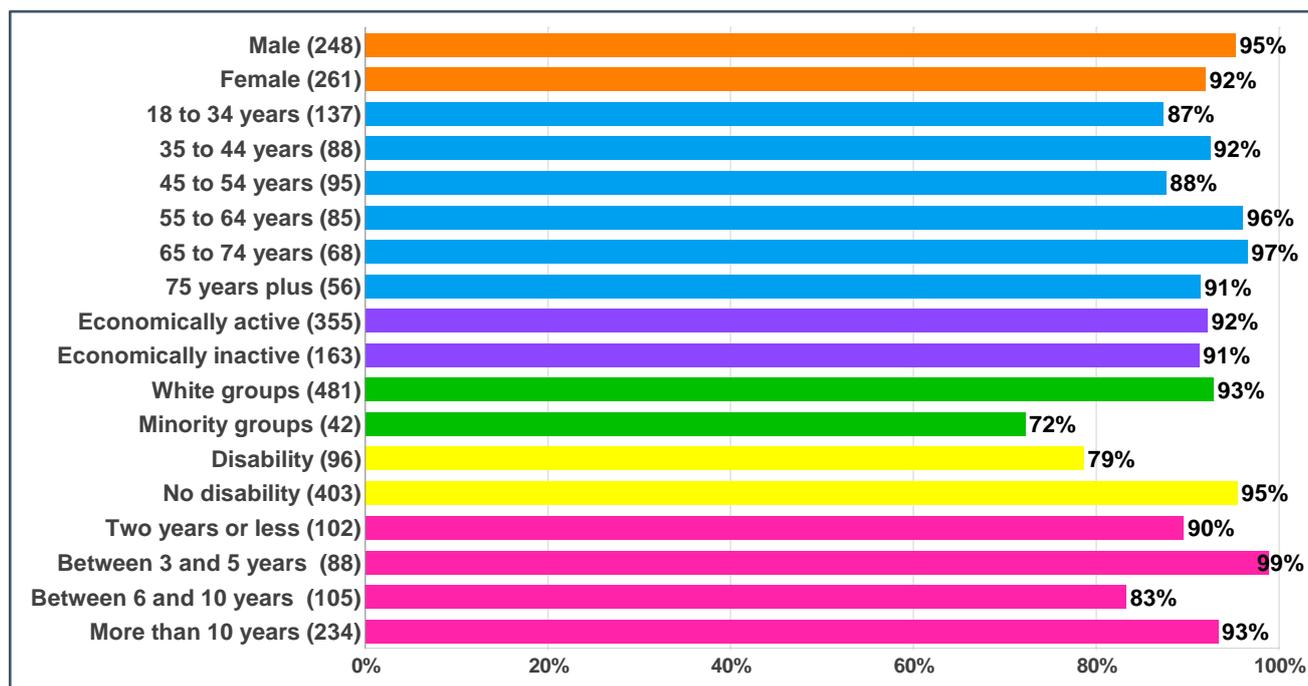
- 530 respondents answered this question.
- The top three most important services were Environmental Services, Community Safety and Environmental Health
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Licensing, Bereavement Services and Building Control.



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

## Environmental Services

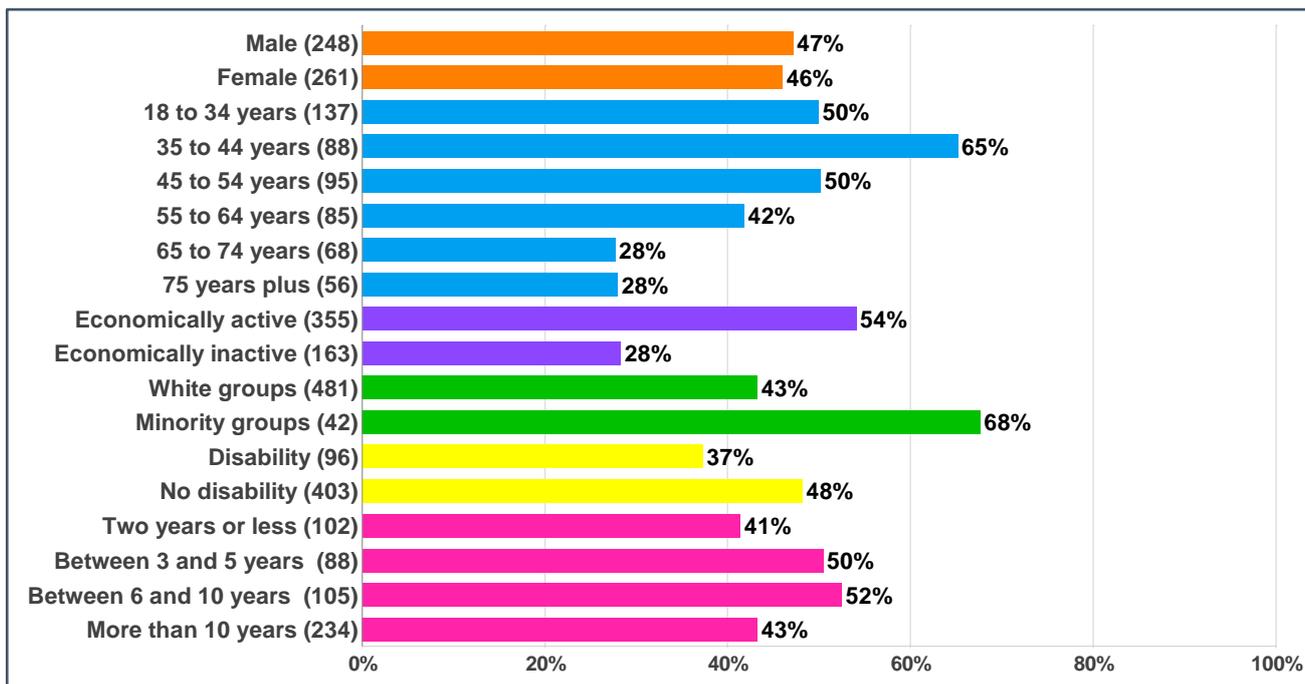
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

## Community Safety

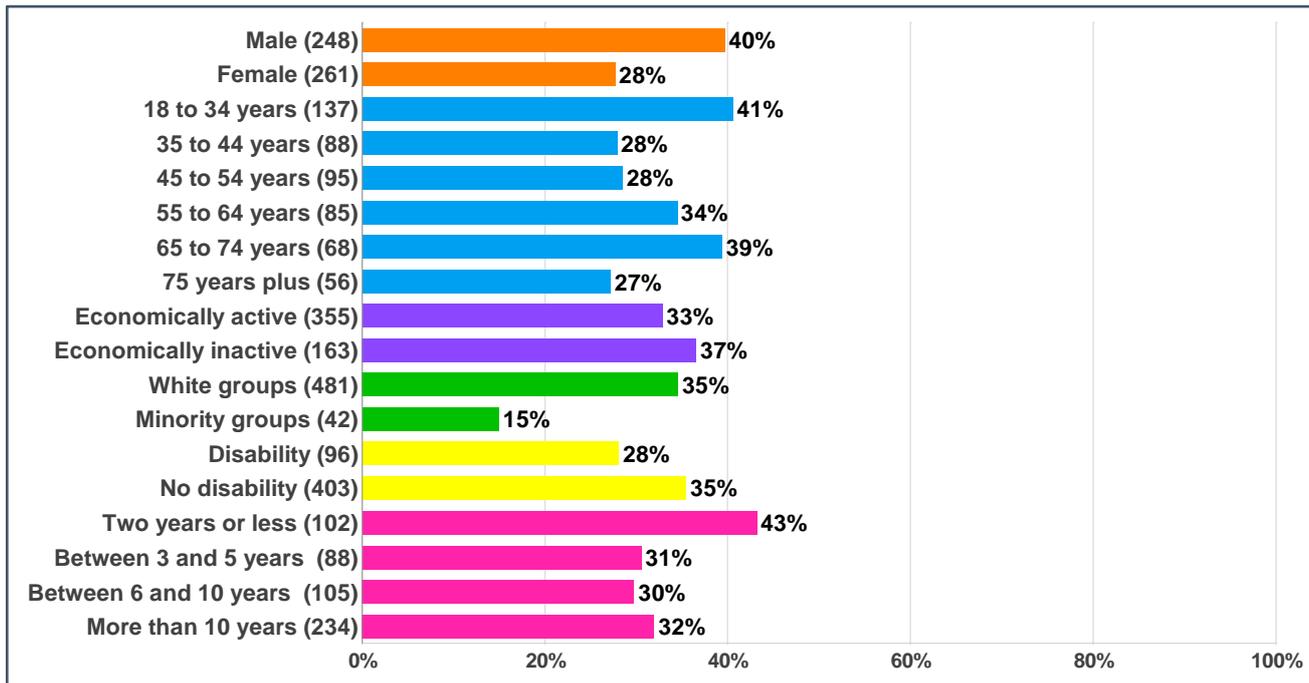
The differences in the proportions selecting Community Safety across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Environmental Health

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



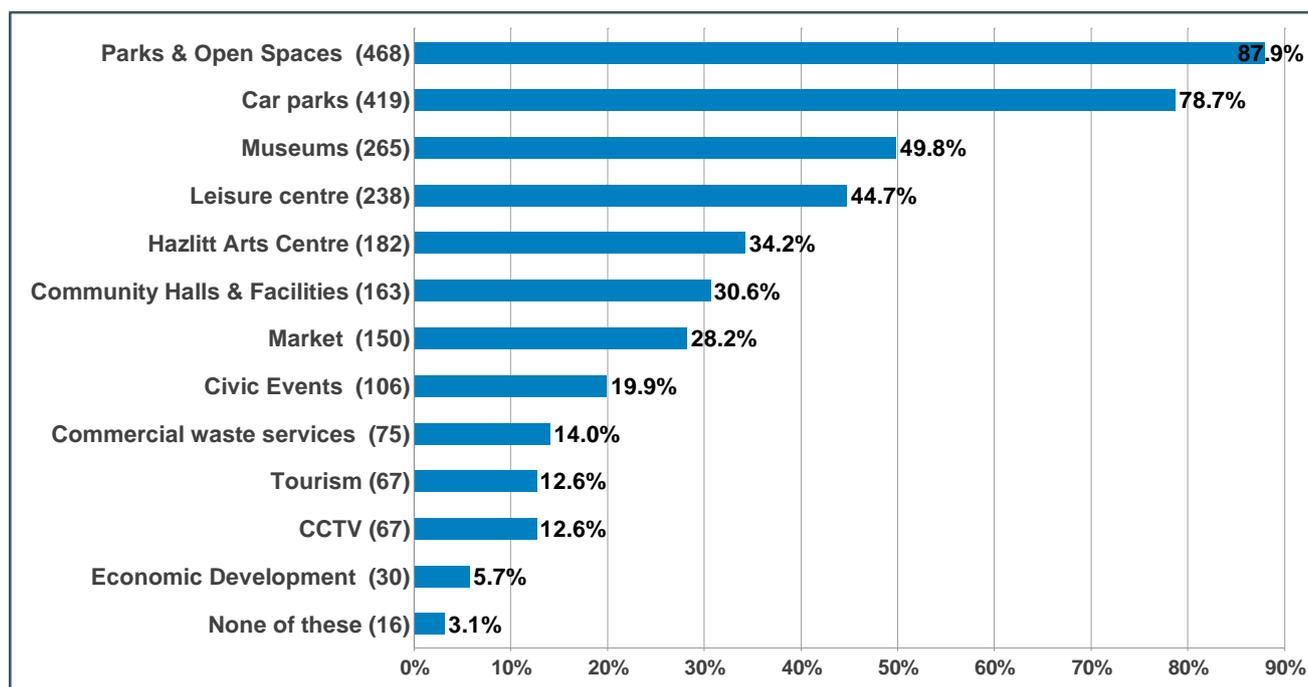
	<p>40% of male respondents selected Environmental Health as being one of their most important services compared to 28% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>35% of respondents from white groups choose Environmental Health as being one of the most important to them compared to 15% of respondents from minority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

## Discretionary Services

### Discretionary Services Used

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

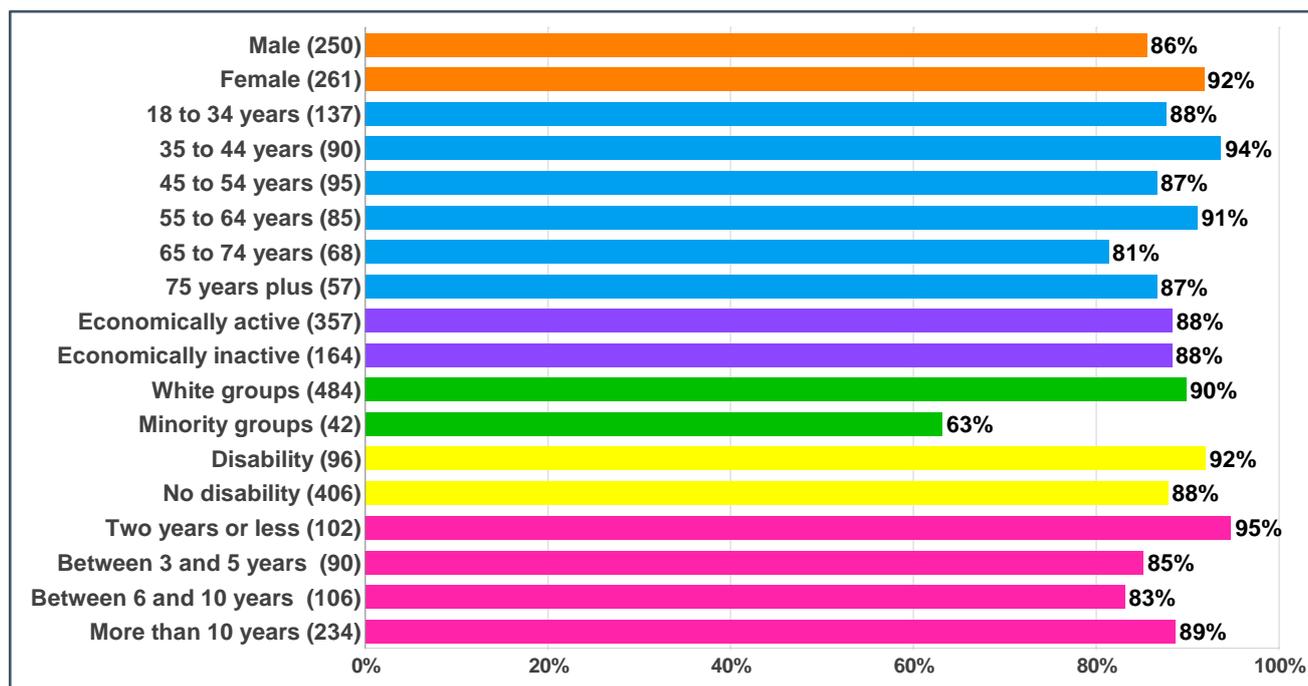
- 533 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Parks and Open Spaces, Car Parks and Museums.
- The least used service by respondents was Economic development with 30 selecting this service.
- 16 respondents said they had not used any of the services listed.



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

## Parks & Open Spaces

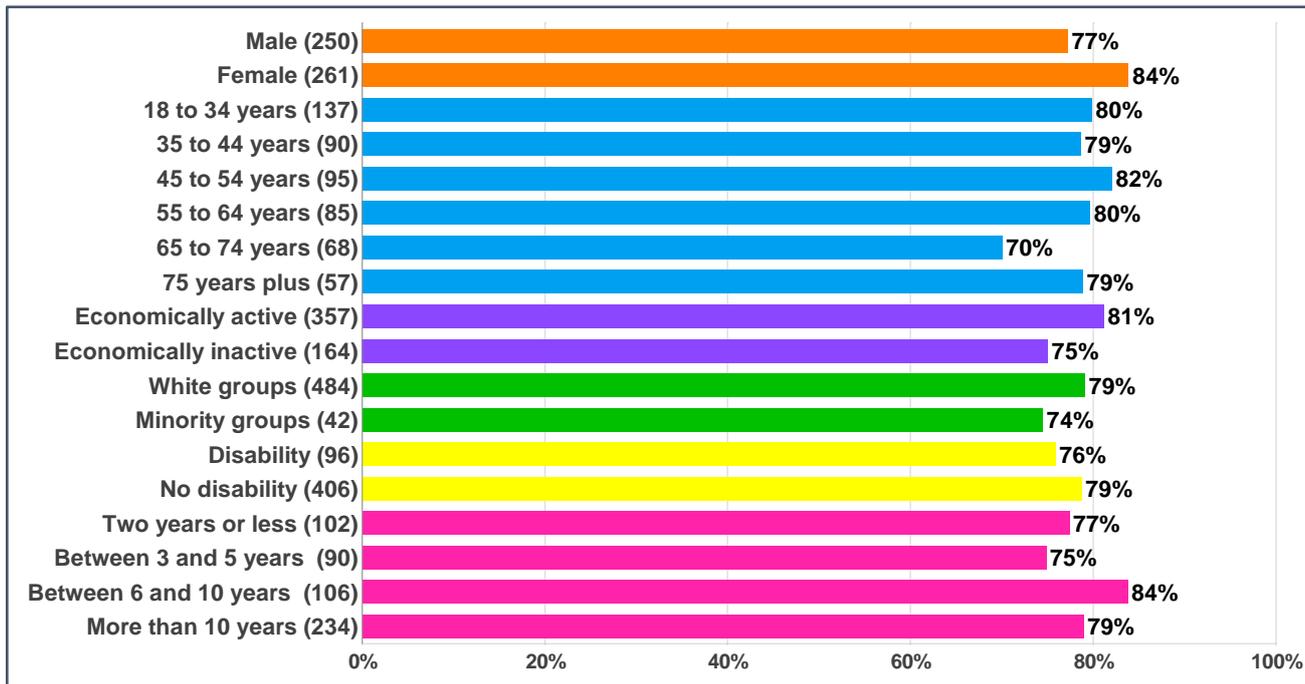
The differences in the proportions selecting parks and opens spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

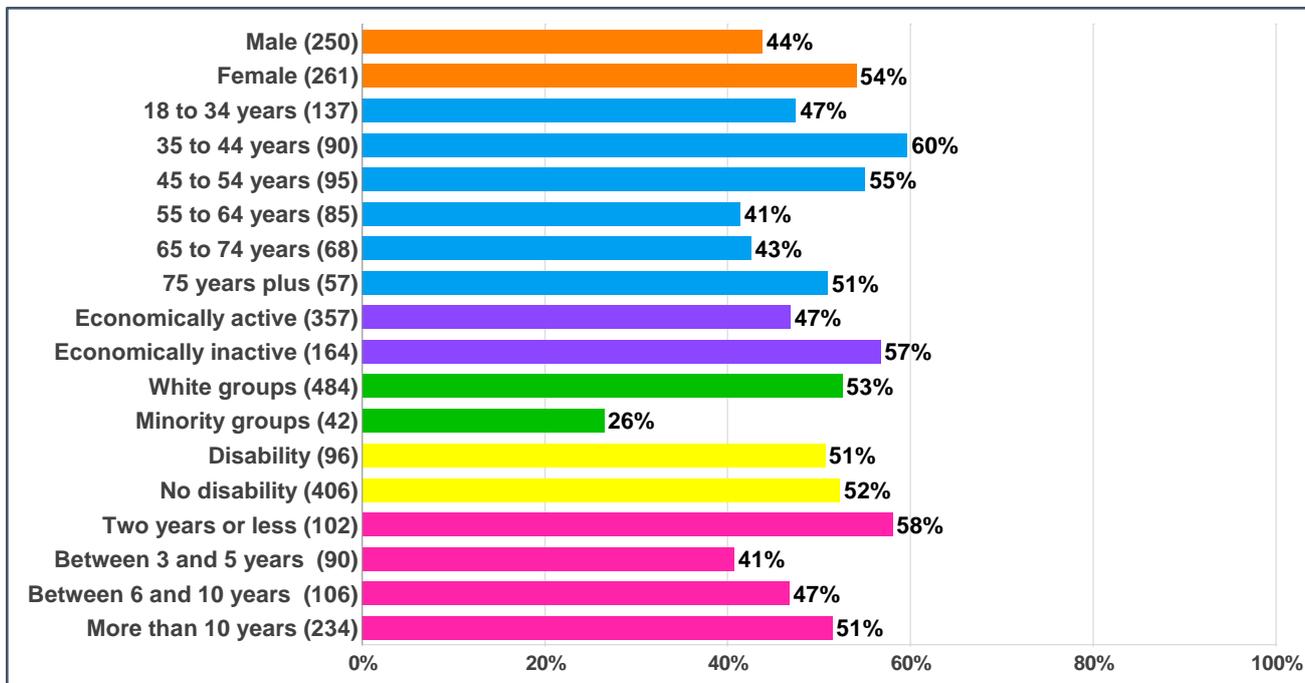
### Car Parks

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



### Museums

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



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

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

## Approach to Discretionary Services

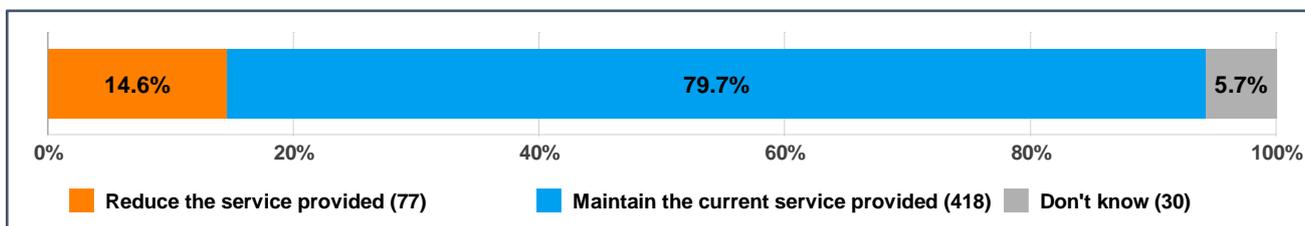
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Discretionary Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

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

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

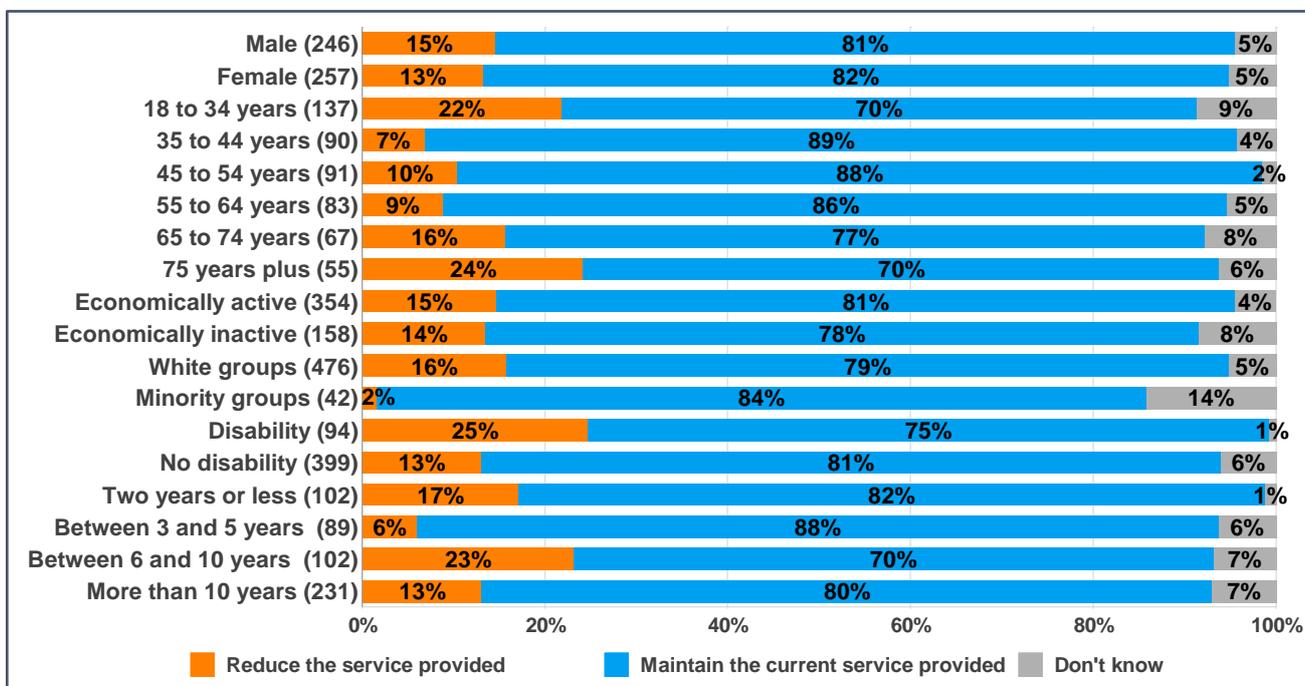
### Leisure Centre

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



### Demographic Differences

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

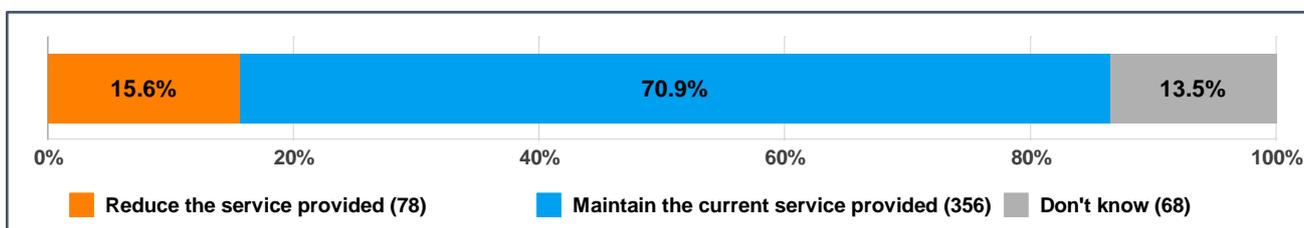


The 75 years and over and the 18 to 34 years age groups were most in favour of reducing the current service provided at 21% and 22% respectively.

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

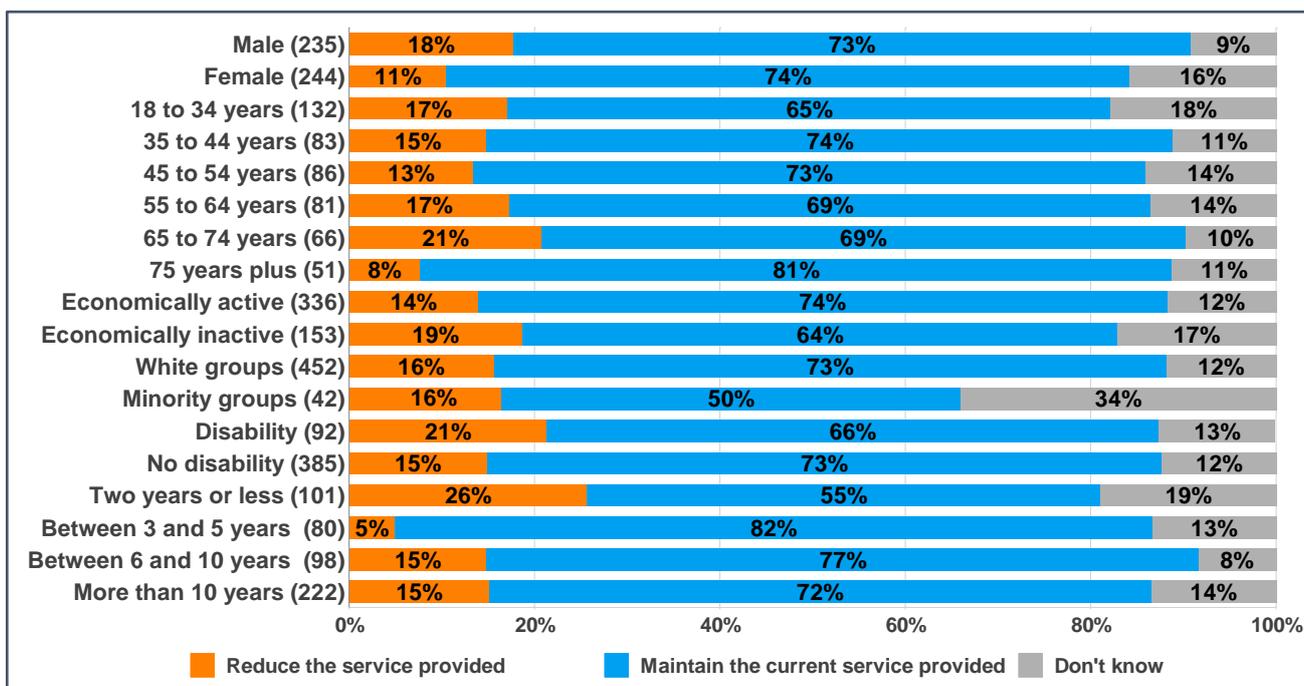
### CCTV

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



### Demographic Differences

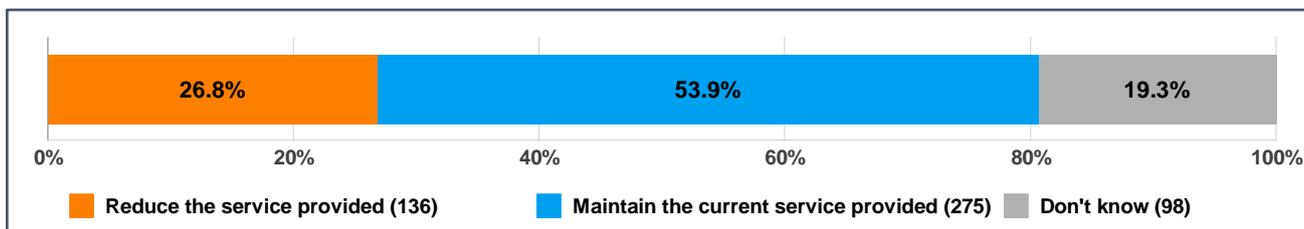
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

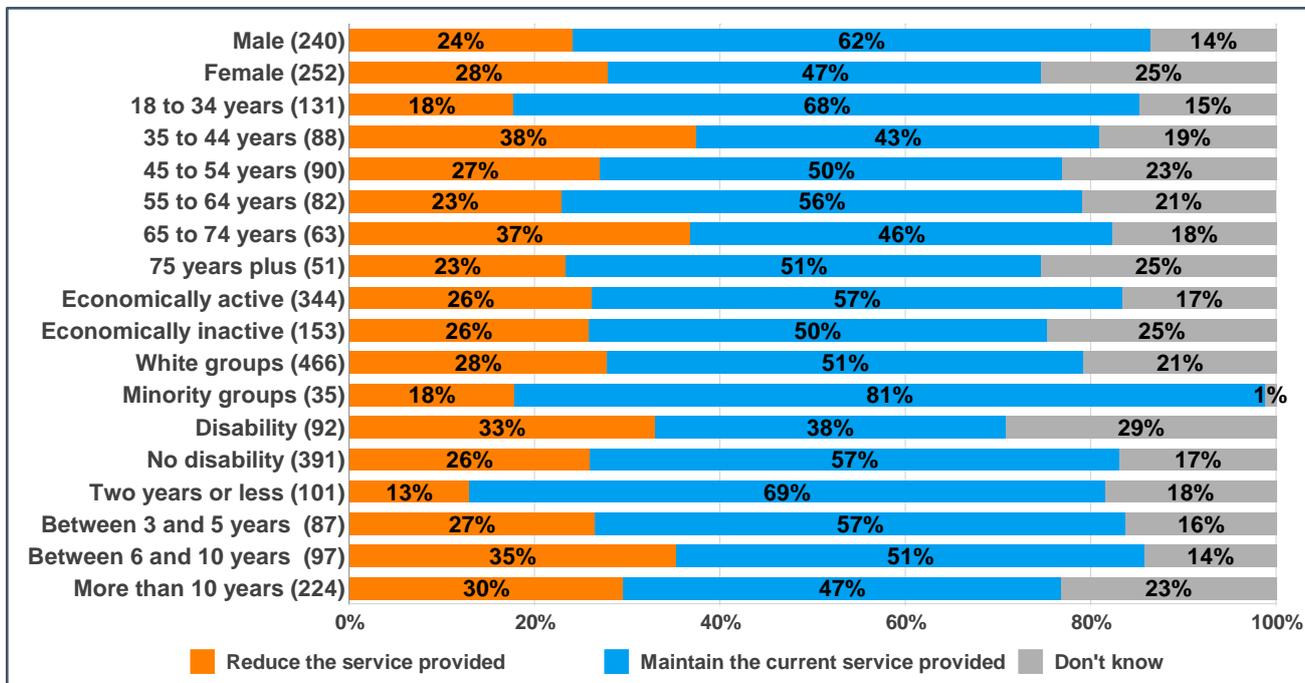
### Economic Development

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



### Demographic Differences

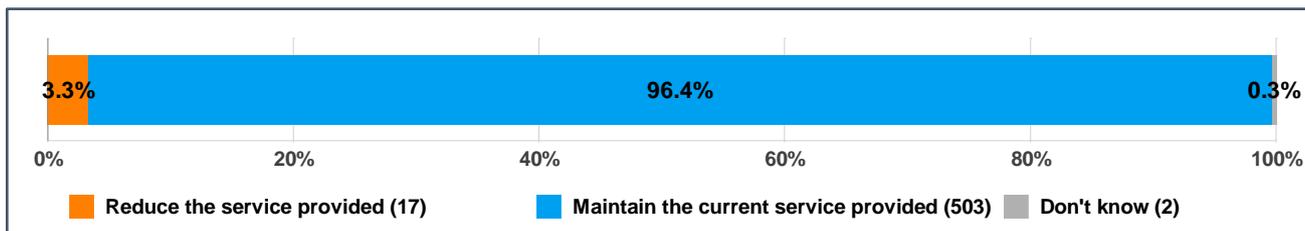
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

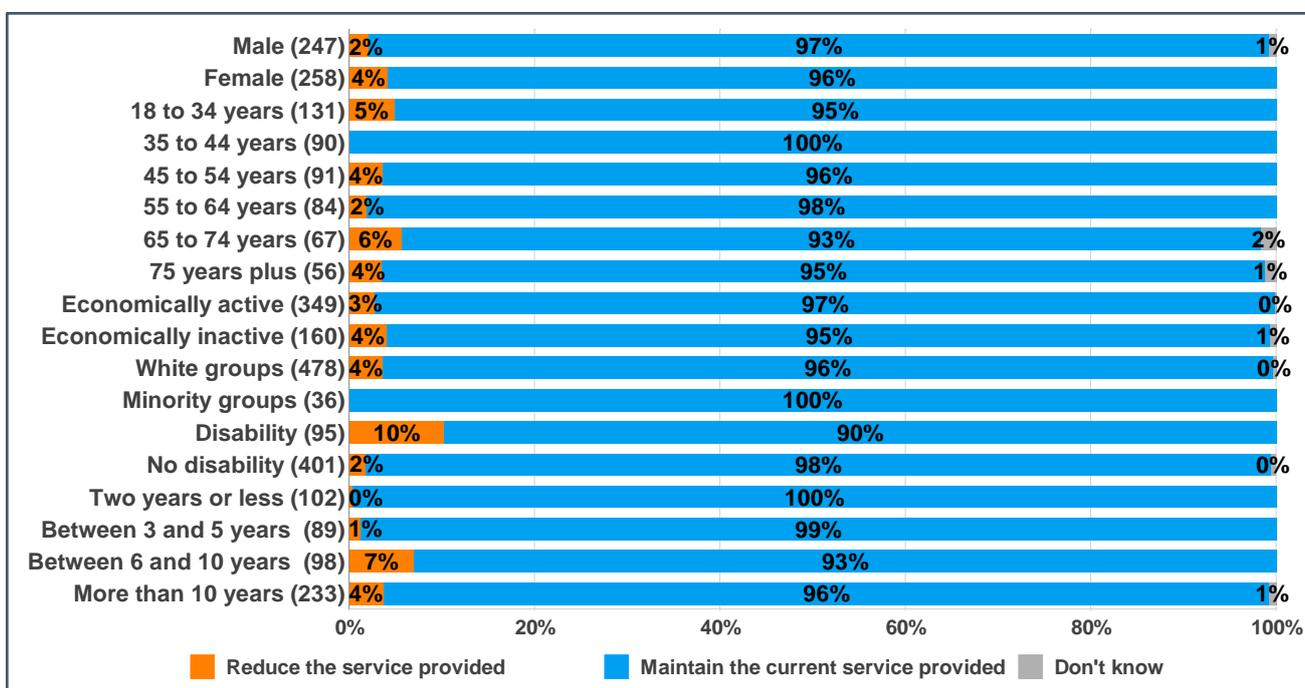
## Parks & Open Spaces

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



### Demographic Differences

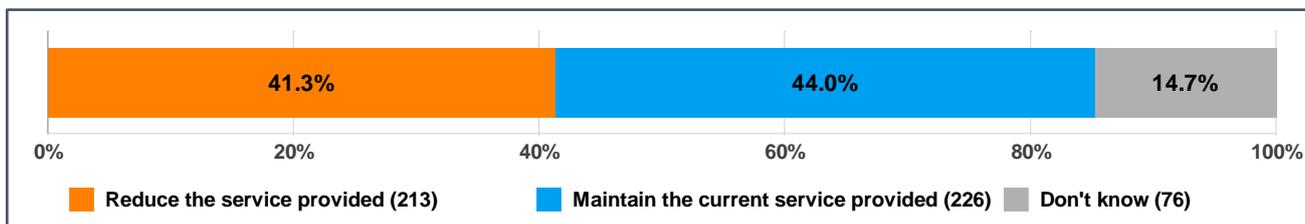
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<p>98% of respondents without a disability had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of maintaining the current Parks and Open Spaces service compared to 90% answering the same with a disability.</p>
	<p>7% of respondents who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said that the Parks and Open Spaces service should be reduced compared to 0.4% of respondents who had lived at their current address for less than two years.</p>

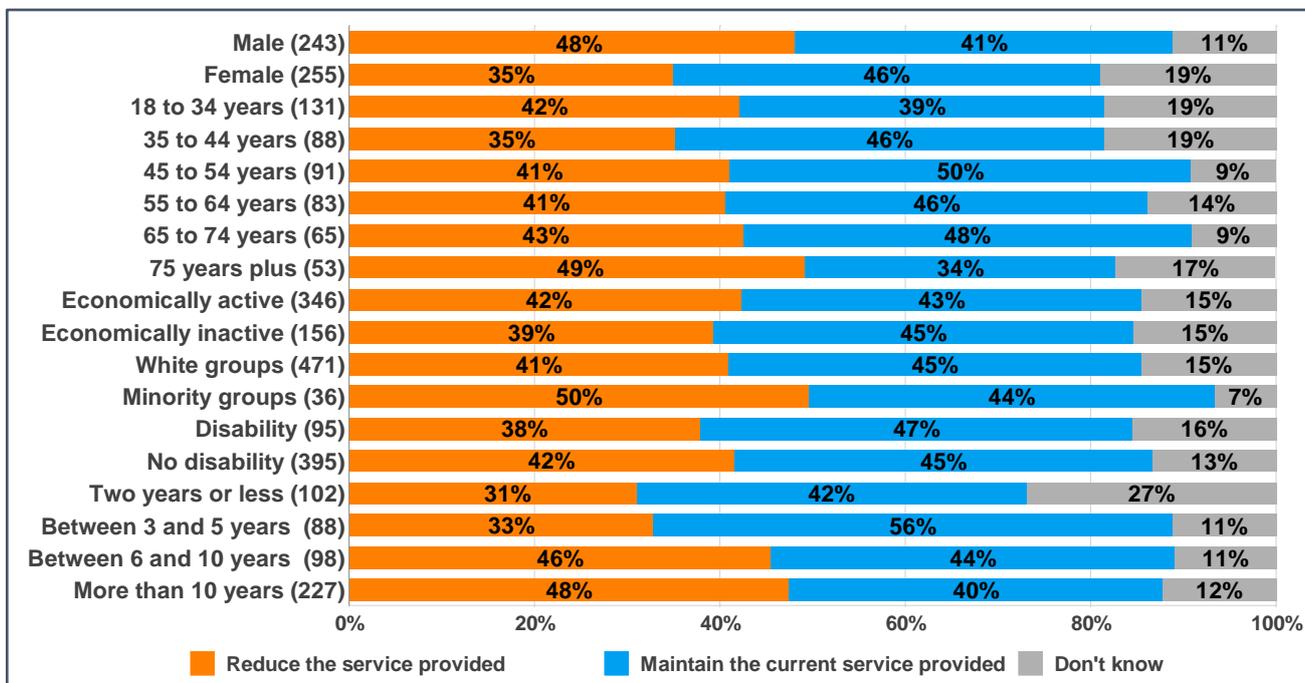
## Markets

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



## Demographic Differences

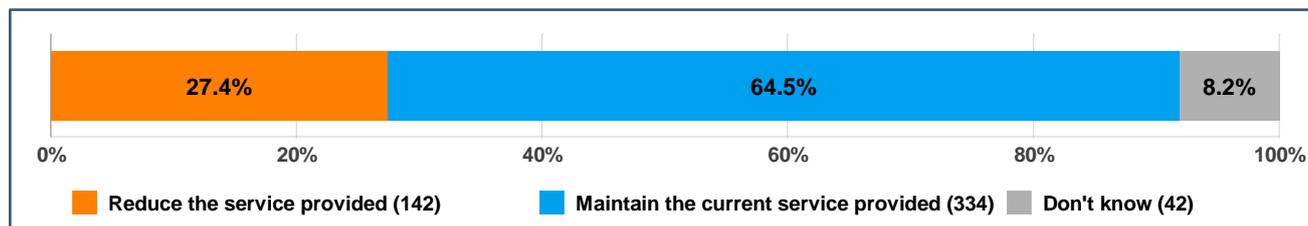
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

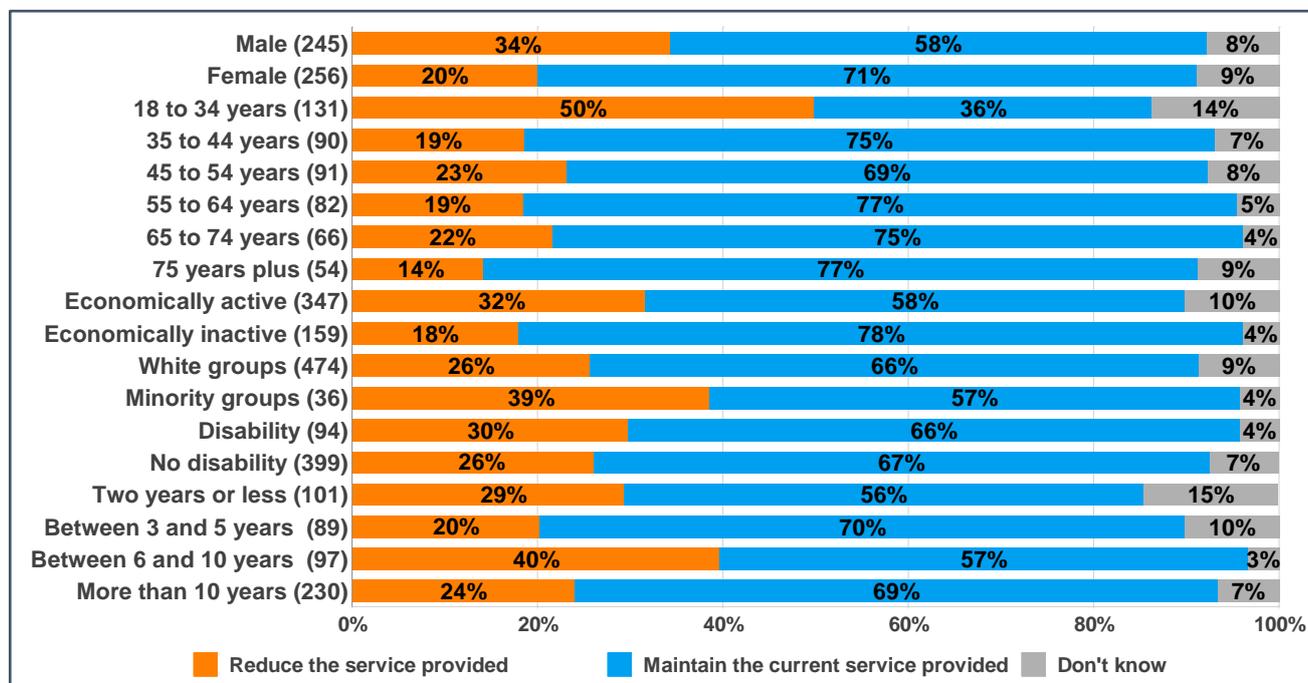
## Museums

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



### Demographic Differences

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

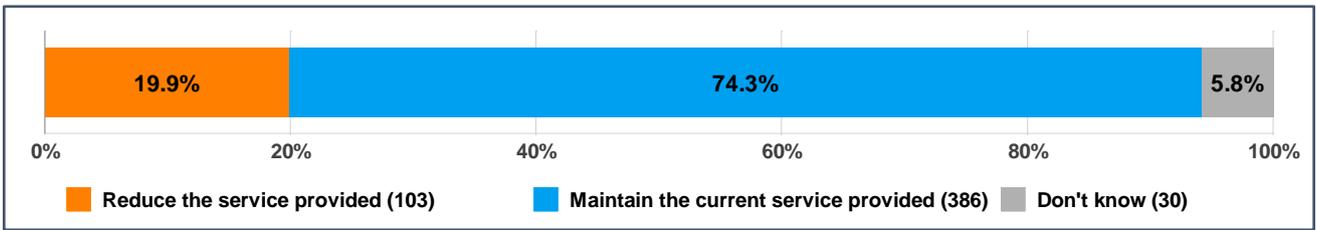


	<p>34% of male respondents were in favour of reducing Museums service compared to 20% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>50% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said that the Museums service should be reduced. This is significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>58% of economically active respondents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

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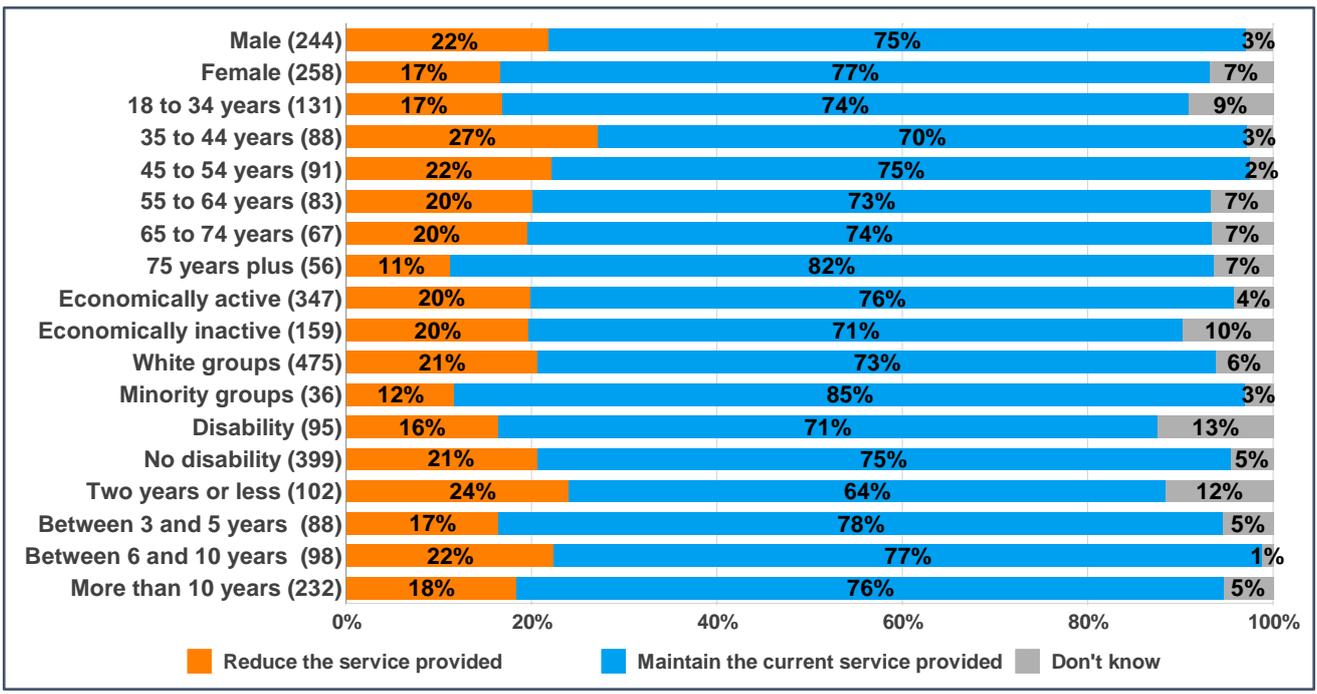
**Car parks**

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



**Demographic Differences**

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

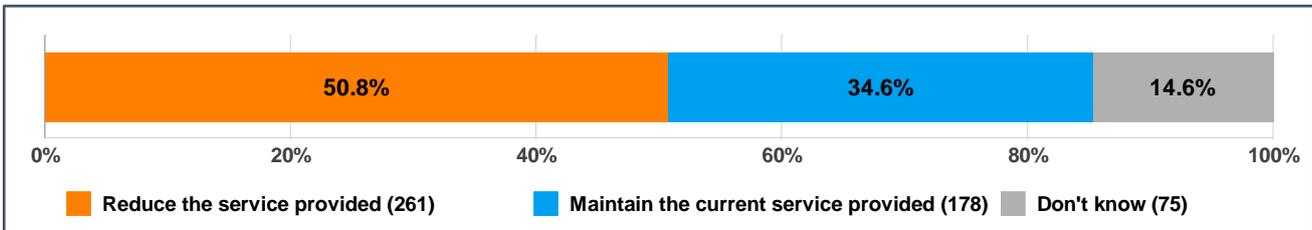


	<p>10% of economically inactive respondents answering ‘don’t know’ compared to 4% of economically active respondents answering the same suggesting a higher level of uncertainty or understanding for the economically inactive group</p>
	<p>13% of respondents with a disability answered ‘don’t know’ compared to 5% of respondents without a disability.</p>

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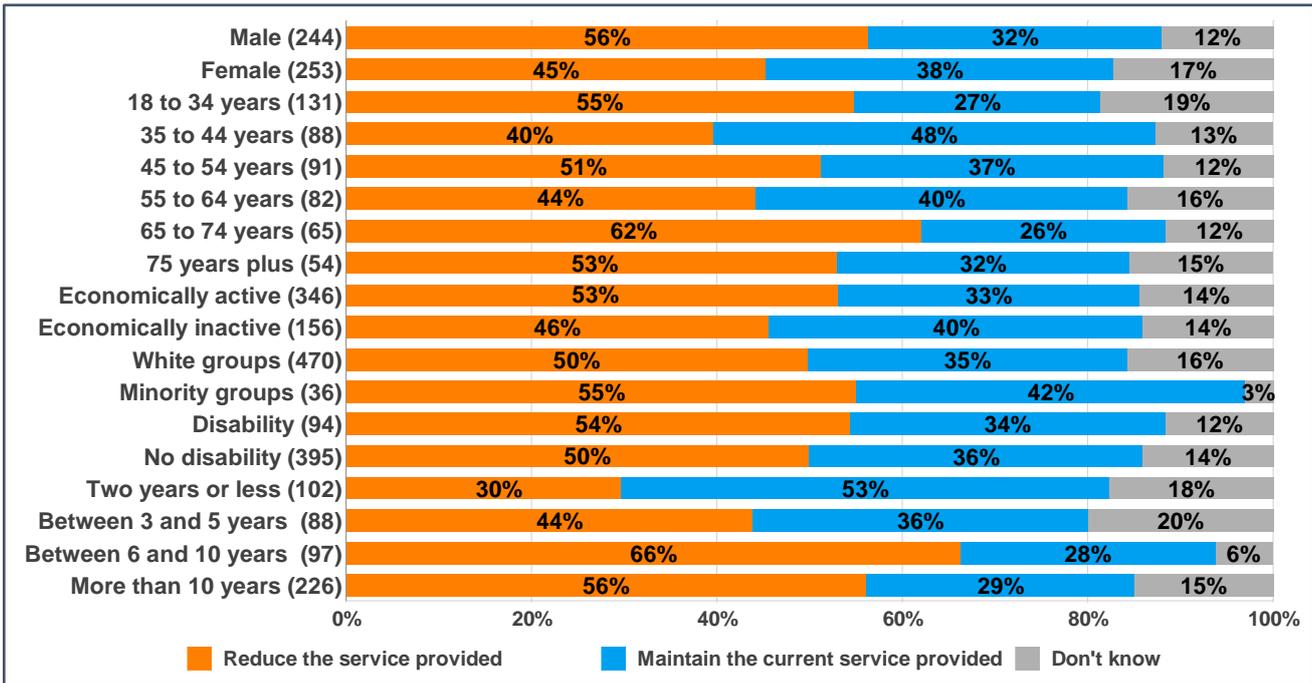
**Civic Events**

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



**Demographic Differences**

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

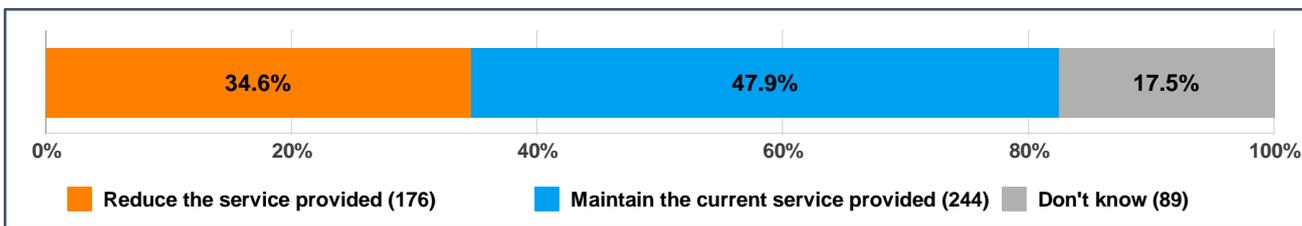


	<p>56% of male respondents were in favour of reducing civic events compared to 45% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>40% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the civic events should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the response from 18 to 34 year olds and 65 and 74 year olds age groups.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

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

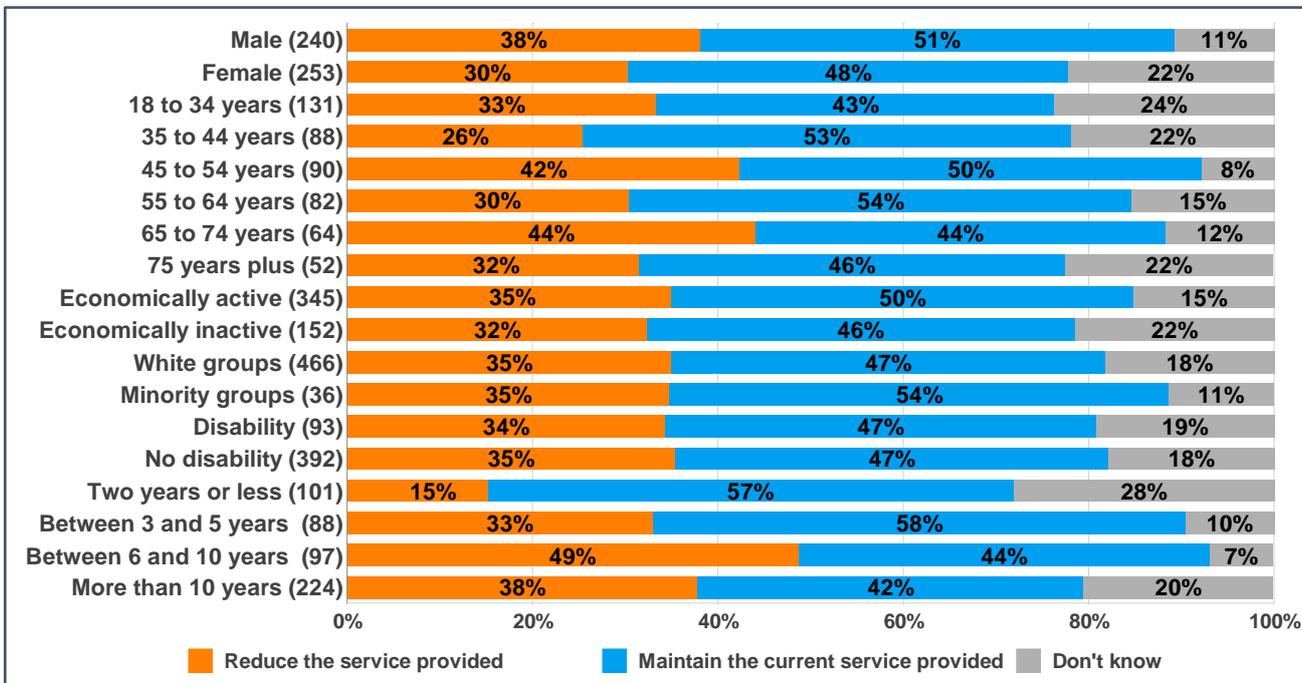
### Tourism

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



### Demographic Differences

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

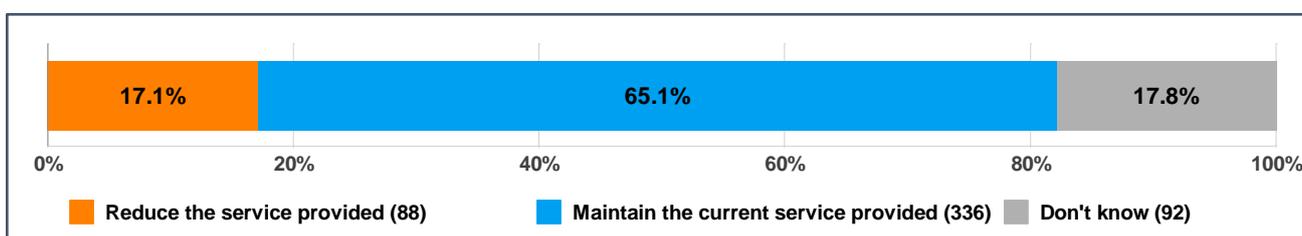


	<p>22% of females responded 'don't know' when asked about approaches for the Tourism service compared to 11% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the Tourism service should be reduced. This is significantly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

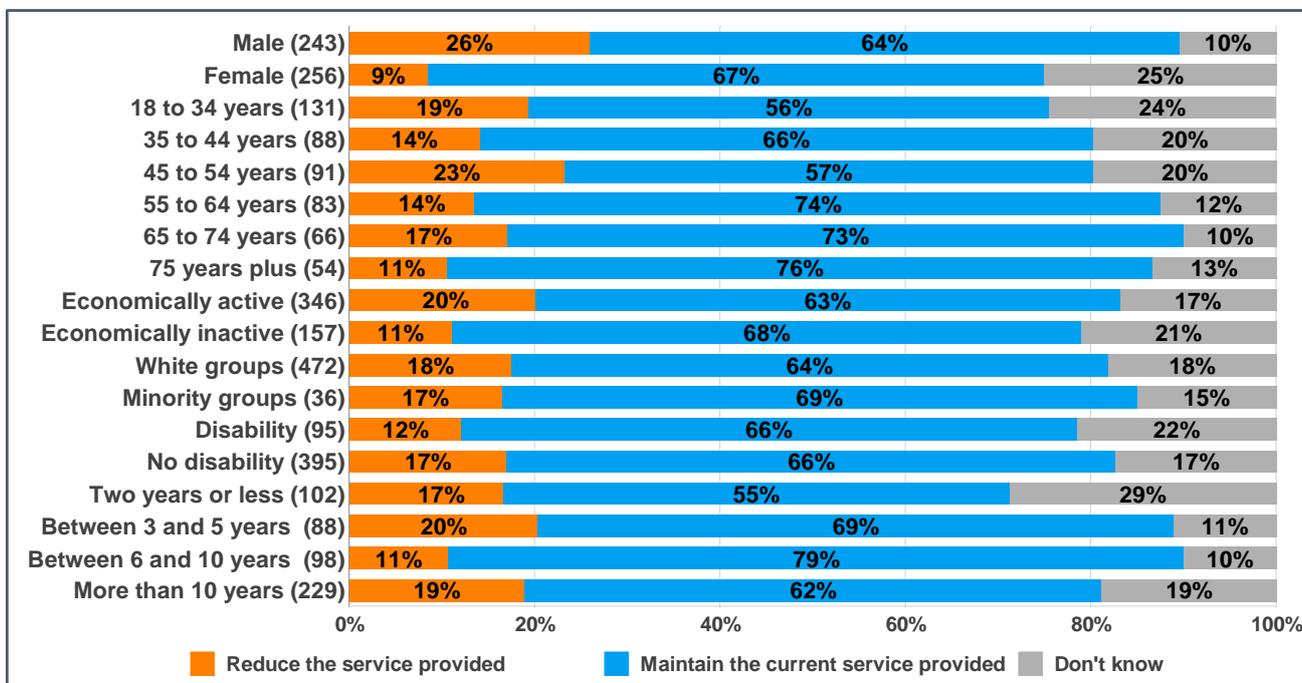
### Commercial Waste Services

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

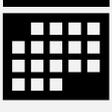


### Demographic Differences

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

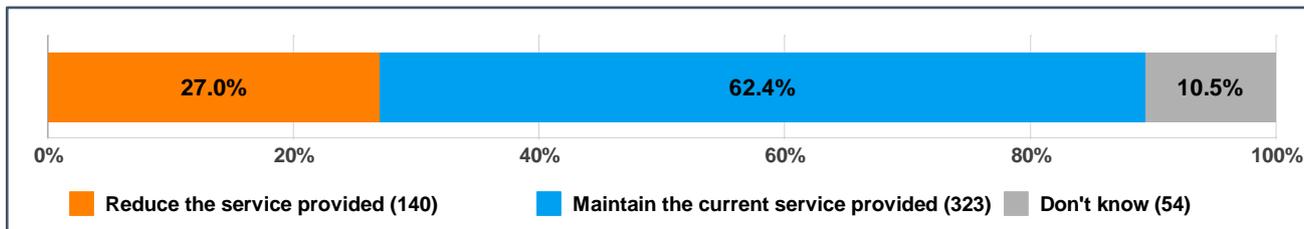


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Commercial Waste services with 26% answering this way compared to 45% of female respondents.</p> <p>22% of female respondents answered ‘don’t know’ compared to 10% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>The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

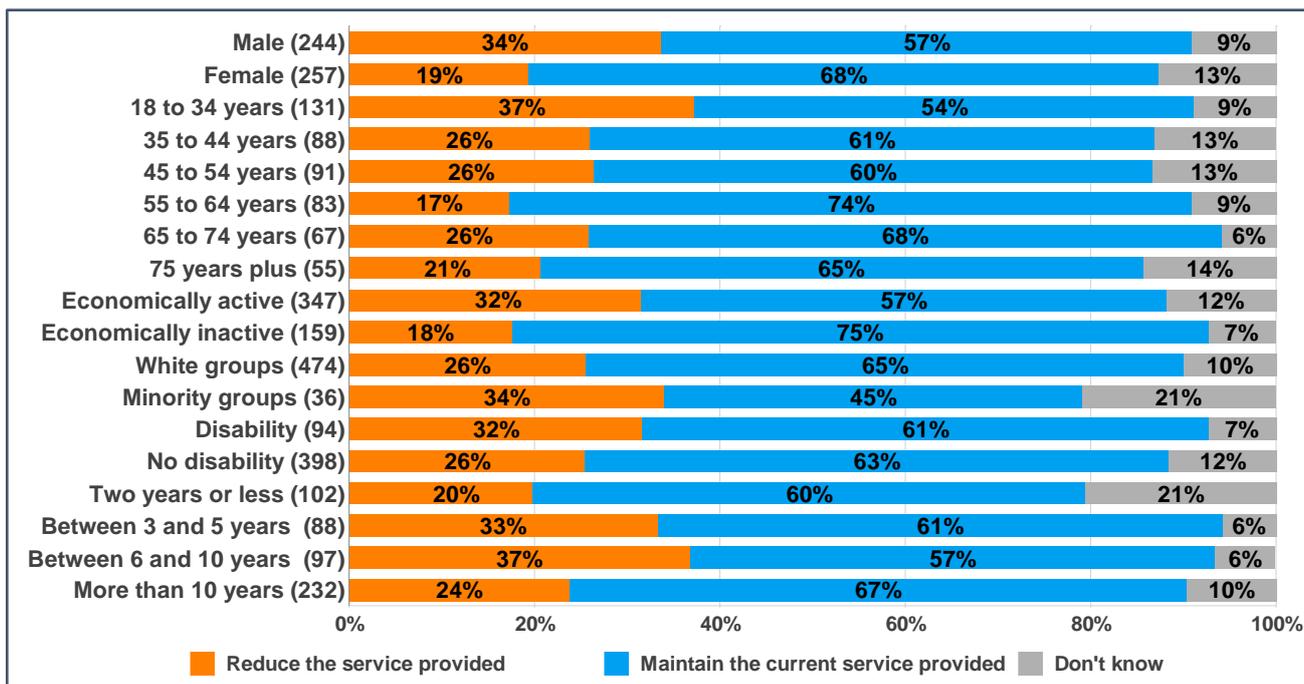
### Hazlitt Arts Centre

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



### Demographic Differences

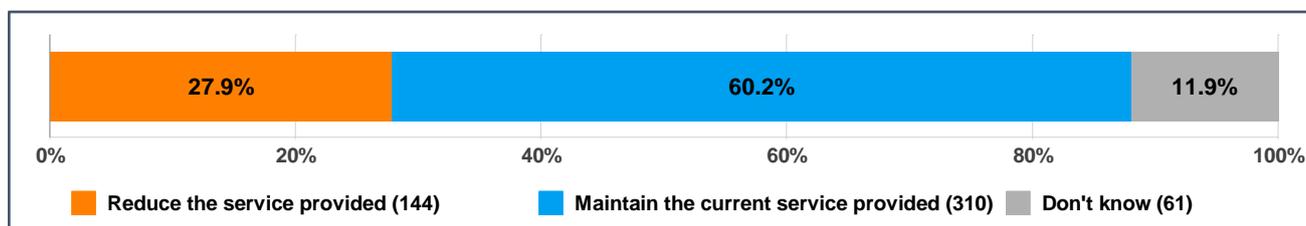
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

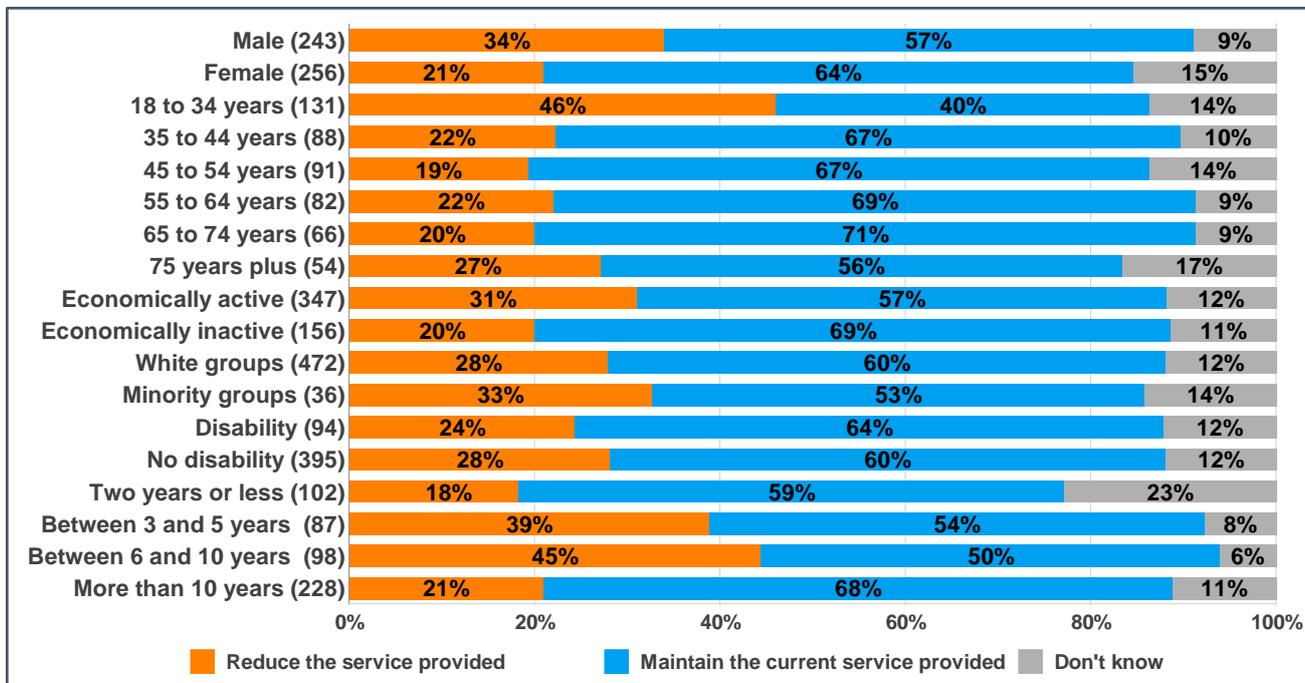
### Community Halls & Facilities

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



### Demographic Differences

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

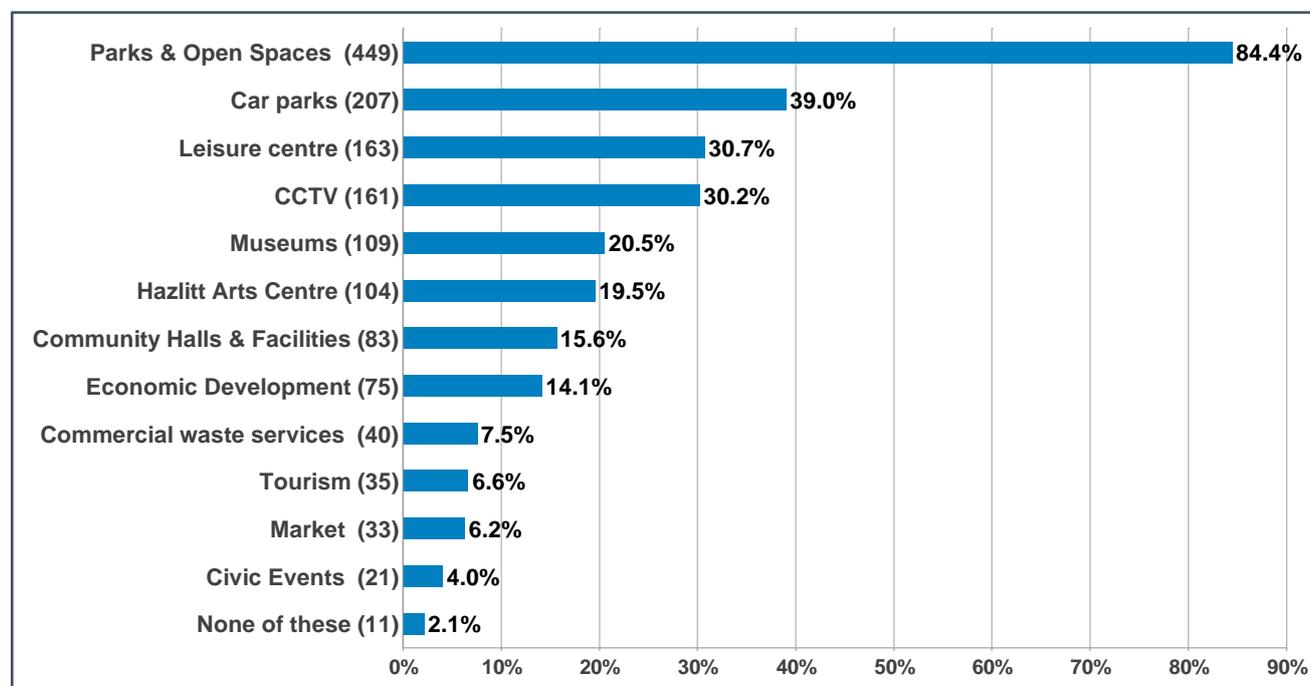


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Community Halls and Facilities with 34% answering this way compared to 21% of female respondents. Female respondents could be considered to be more uncertain of the approach to take for commercial waste with 15% answering 'don't know' compared to 9%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

## Most important Discretionary Services

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

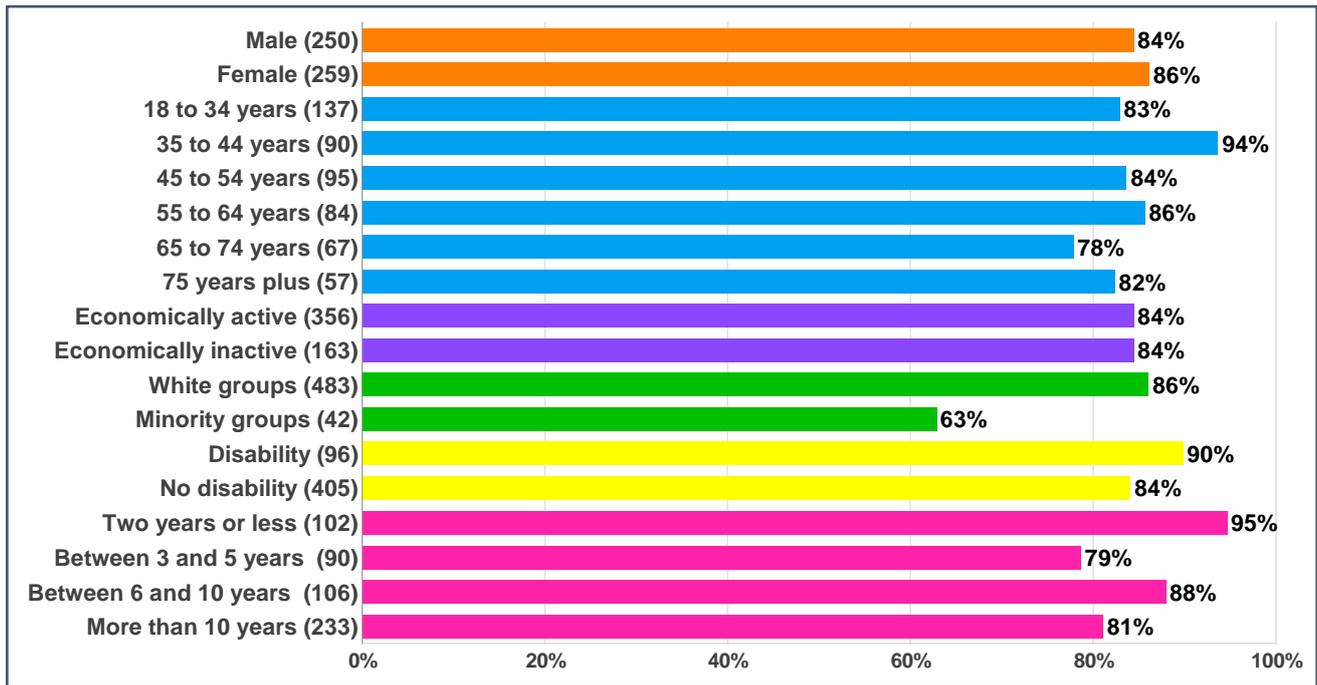
- 532 responses were received.
- The top three most important services were Parks & Open Spaces, Car Parks and the Leisure Centre.
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Civic Events, Market and Tourism.



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

Parks & Open Spaces

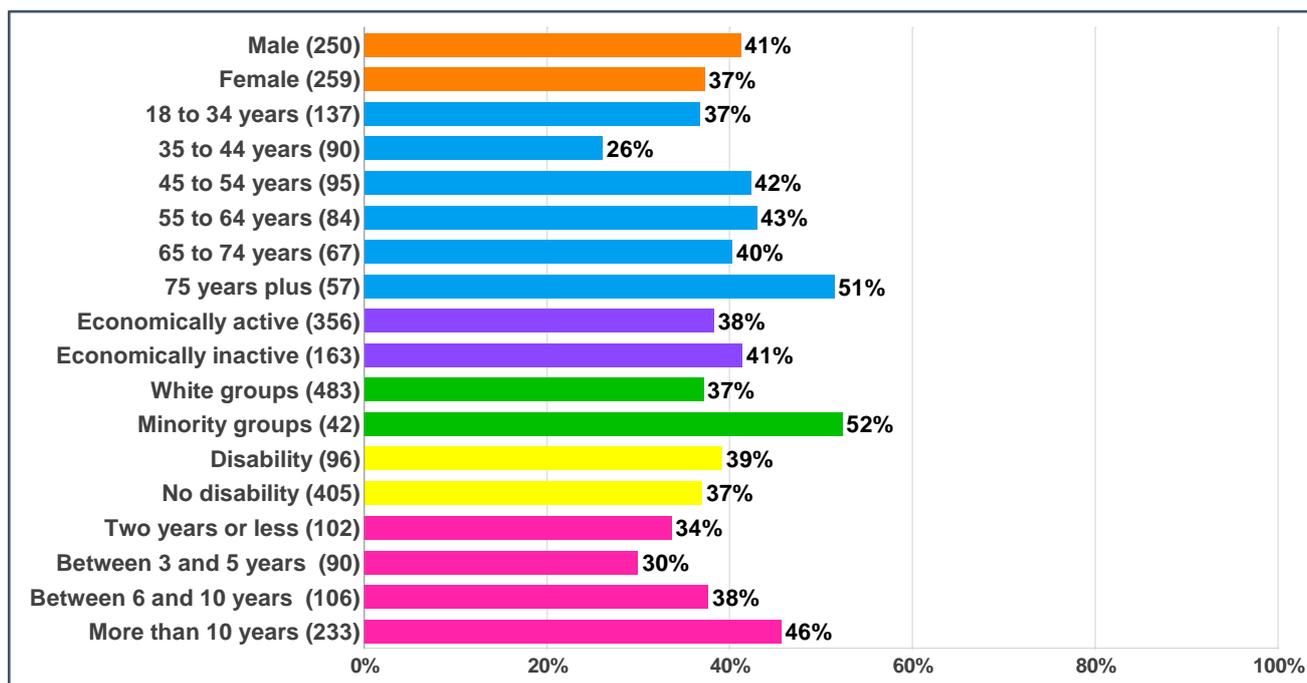
The differences in the proportions selecting Parks & Open Spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

## Car Parks

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



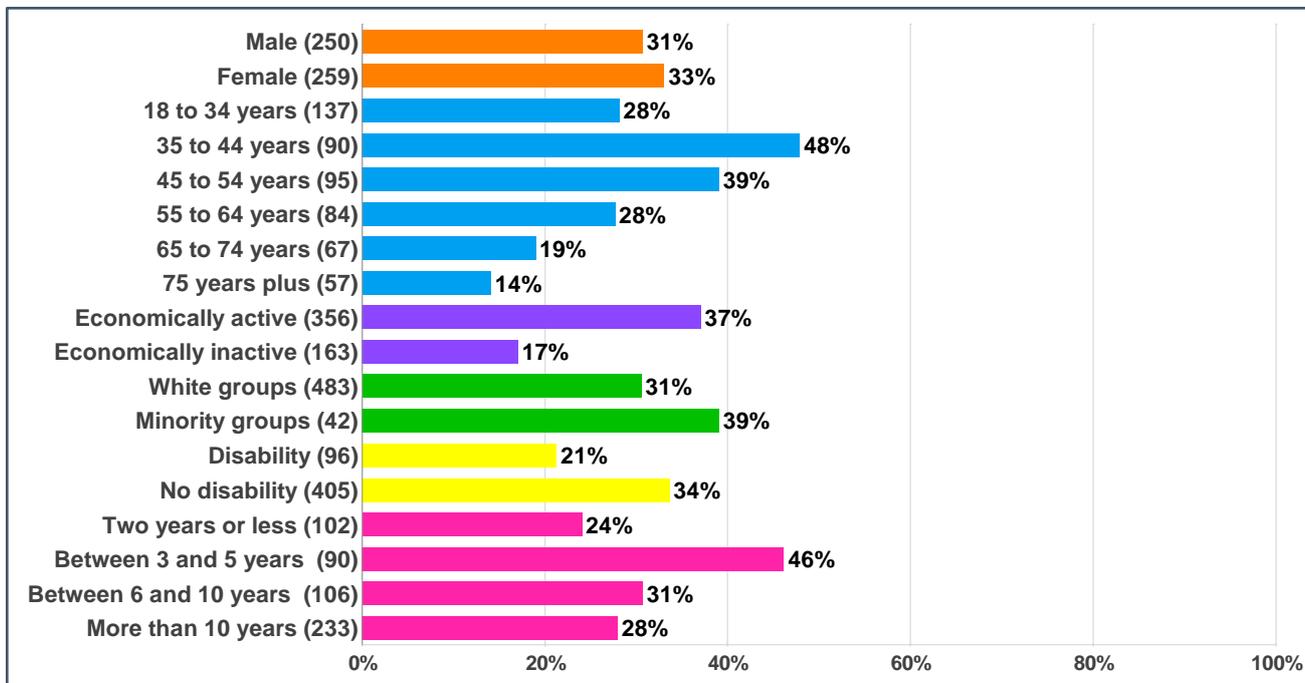
26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years selected Car Parks as being one of their most important services. This is significantly lower than for all the other age groups.



46% of respondents who have lived at their current address for more than ten years selected Car Parks as being one of the most important services to them. This is significantly greater than for those who have lived at their address less than five years.

## Leisure Centre

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



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

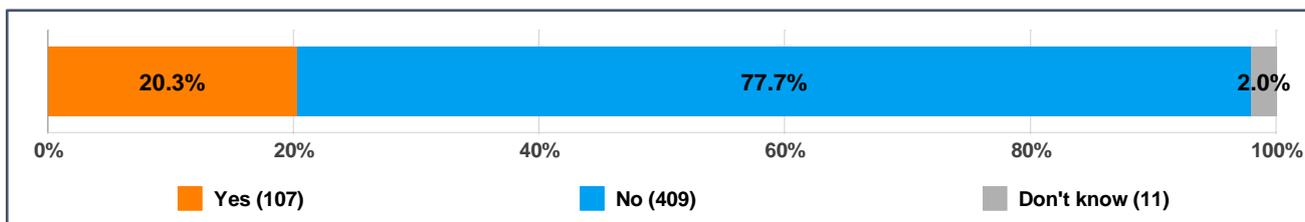
## Future fees and Spending

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

### Car Parking

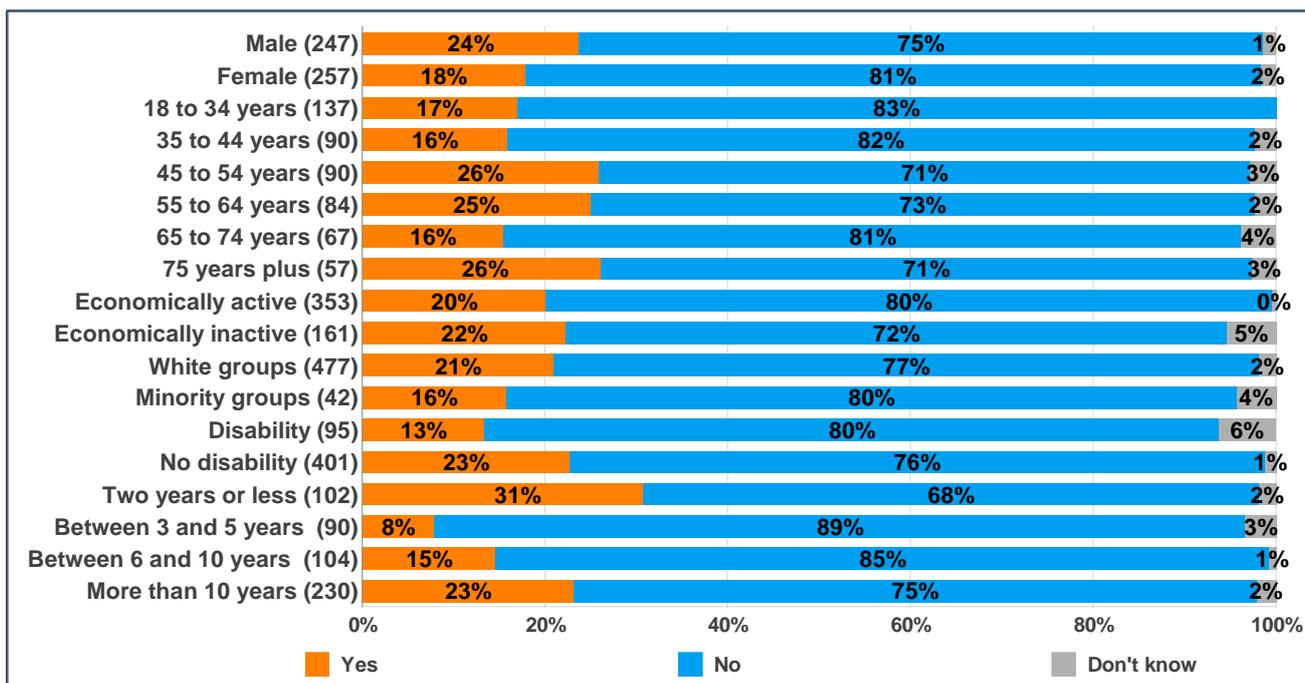
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for car parking in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of parking in the borough for context.

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



### Demographic Differences

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

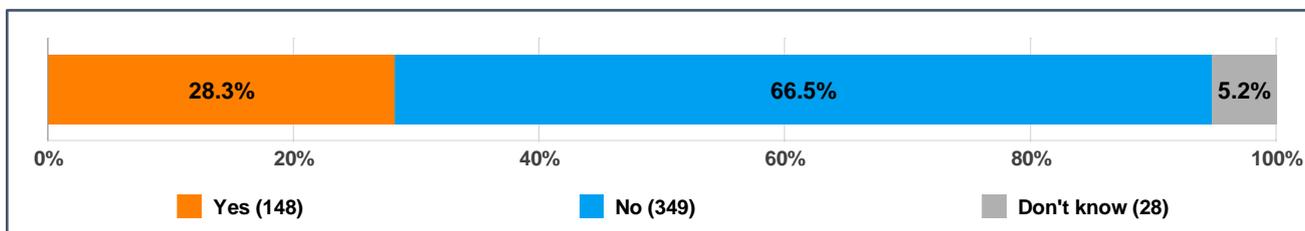


	<p>83% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said they were unwilling to pay more for car parking, significantly more than for the 45 to 54 years group where 71% were against raising charges for car parking.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about raising charges for car parking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

## Garden Waste

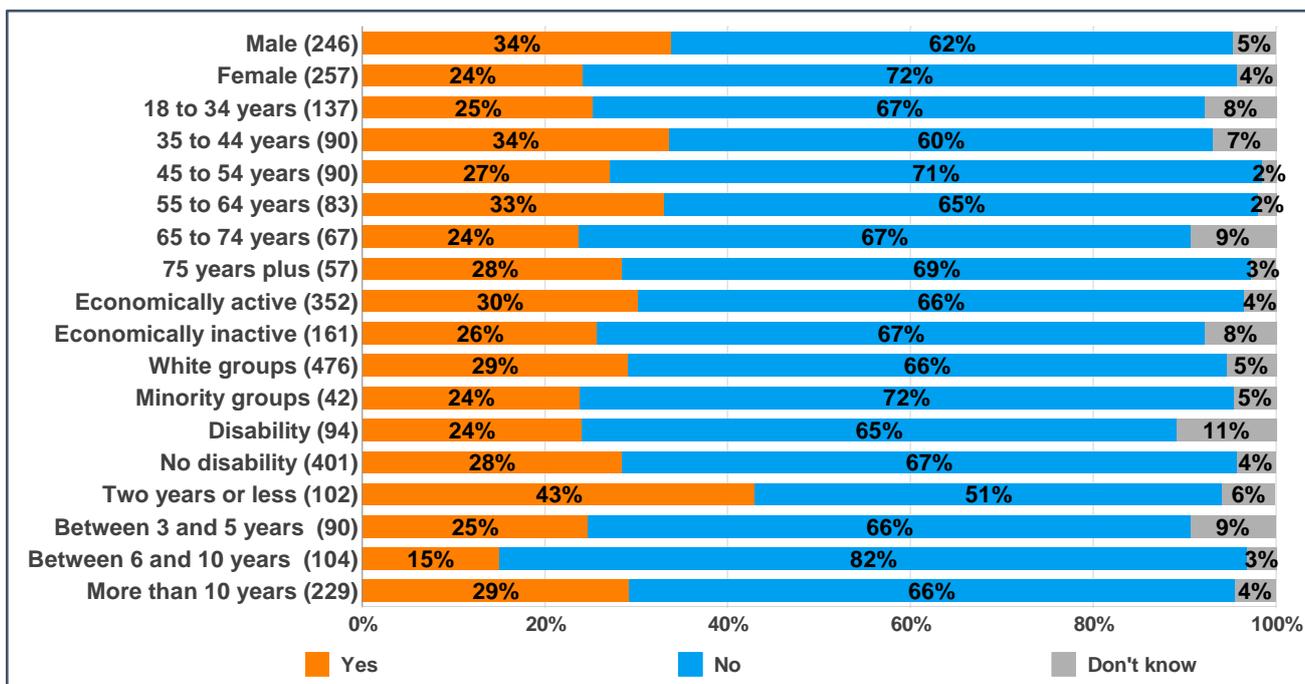
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for garden waste collections. They were provided with the current costs of garden waste collections in the borough for context.

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



### Demographic Differences

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



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

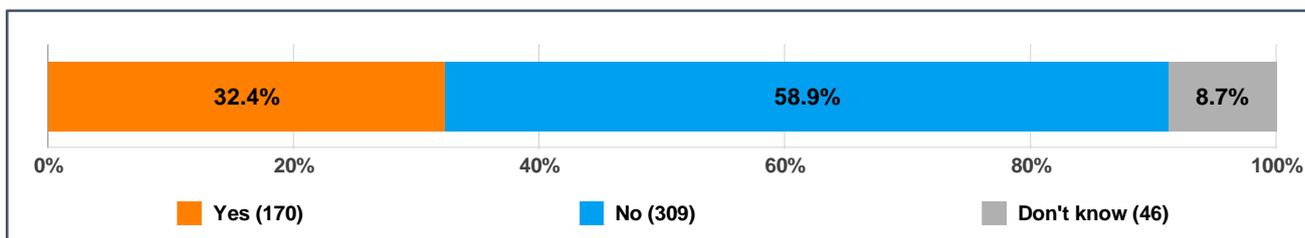


82% of respondent who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said they were not willing to pay more for garden waste services. This is significantly greater than the 'other length of time at current address' groups.

### Leisure Facilities

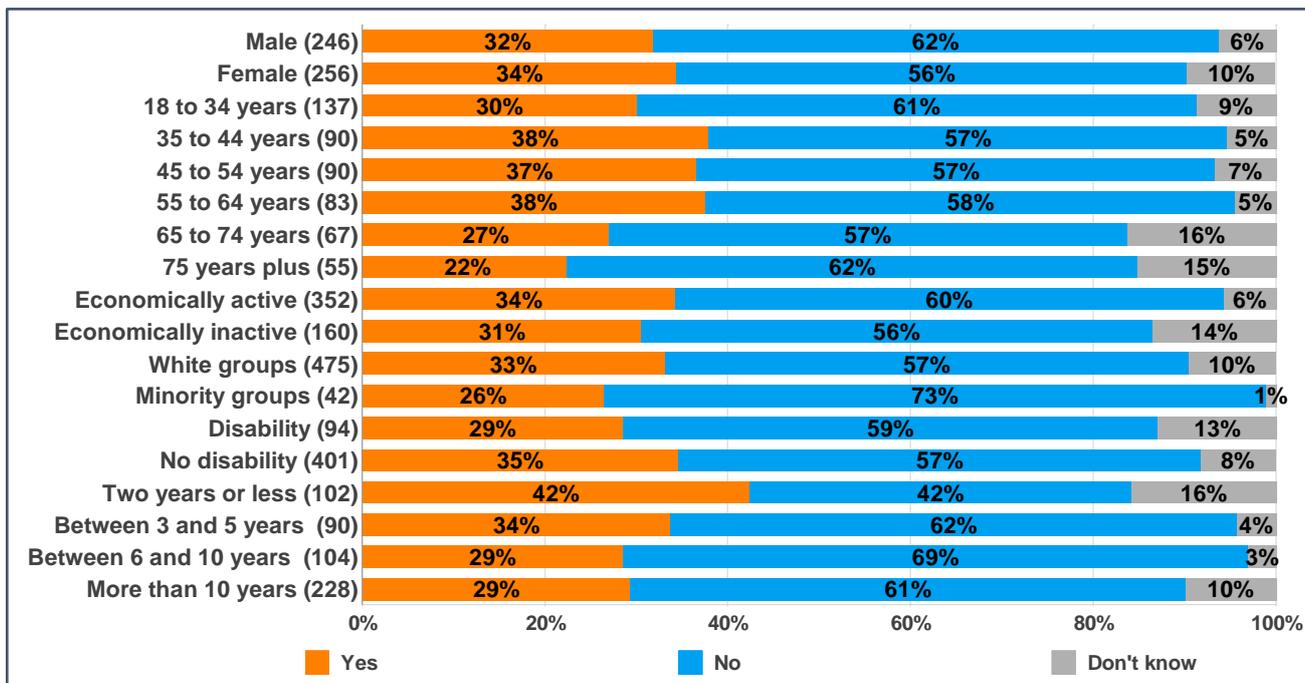
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of leisure services per council tax band D property in the borough for context.

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



### Demographic Differences

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

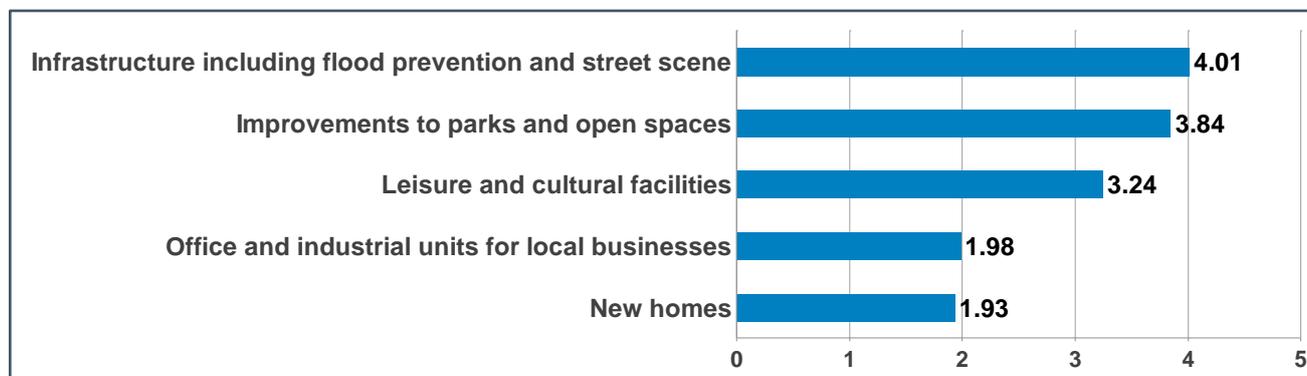


	<p>The 65 to 74 years and 75 years and over age groups had the greatest proportion of respondents that were uncertain if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities at 16% and 15% respectively. These was significantly more than the proportions of respondents that answered this way for the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

## Priorities & Investment

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

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



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

### Demographic Differences

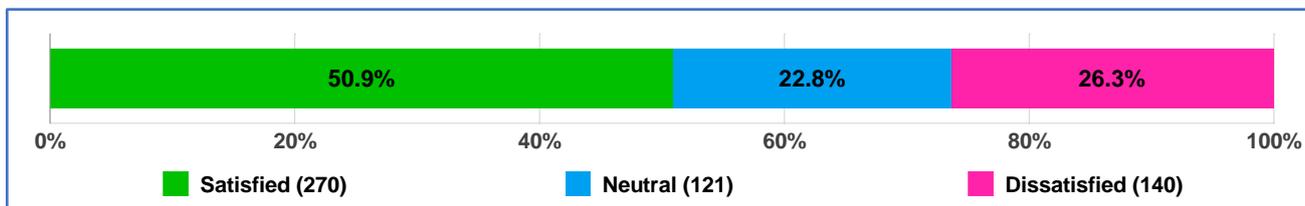
The table below outlines the differences between the ranking of the priorities across the demographic groups.

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

## Local Area Satisfaction

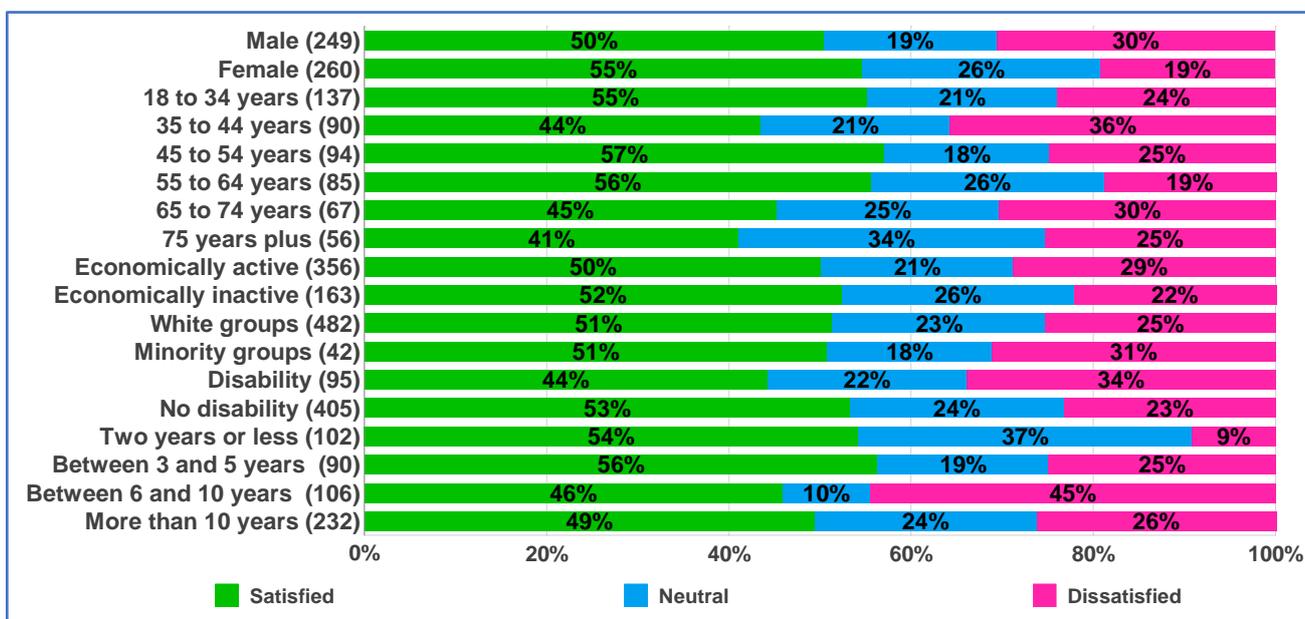
Survey respondents were asked: ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?’ and given a five-point scale from ‘very satisfied’ to ‘very dissatisfied’.

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



## Demographic Differences

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



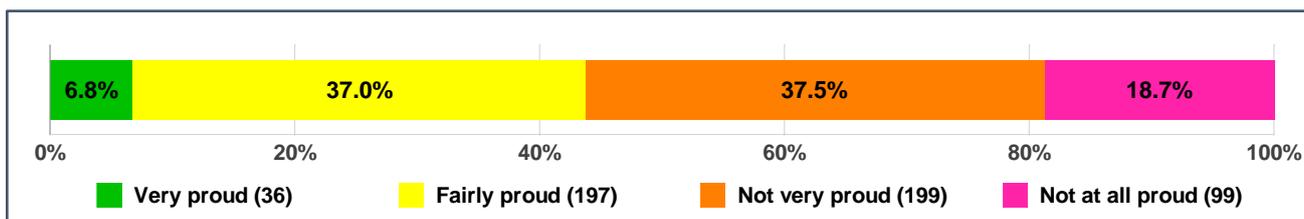
	<p>A greater proportion male respondents were dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live with 30% answering this way compared to 19% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>19% of respondents aged 55 to 64 years dissatisfied, this is significantly lower than the proportion answering the same for the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

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

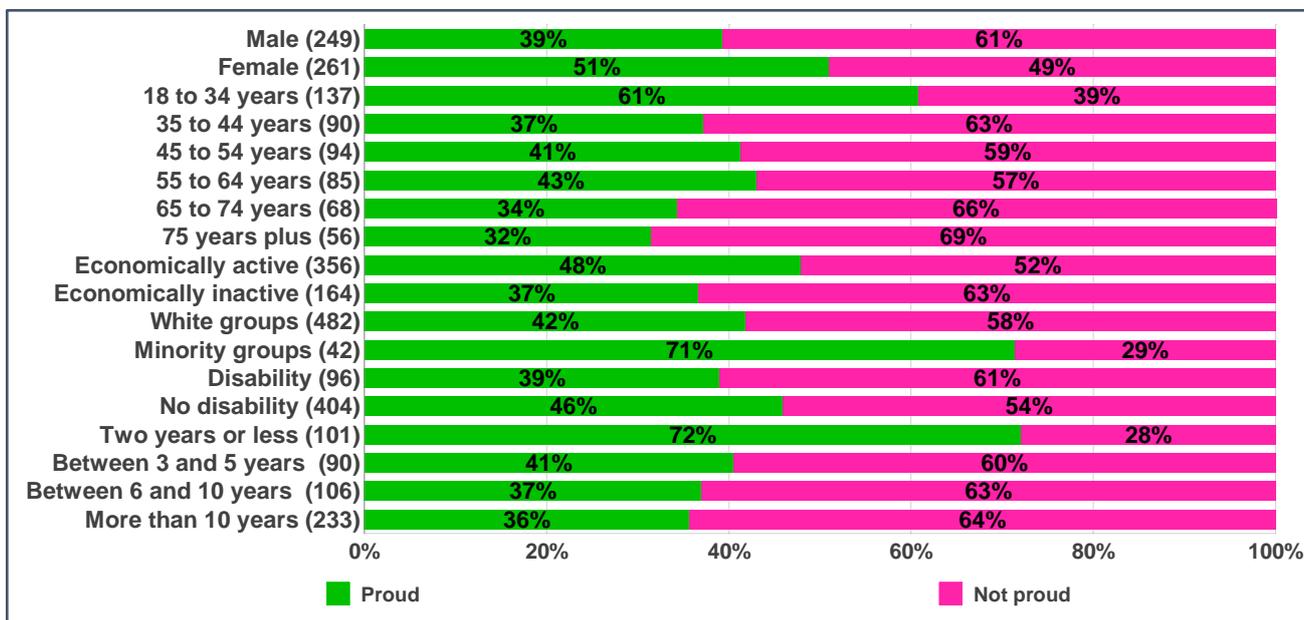
The survey asked respondents: 'How proud are you of Maidstone Borough?'

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



### Demographic Differences

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



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

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

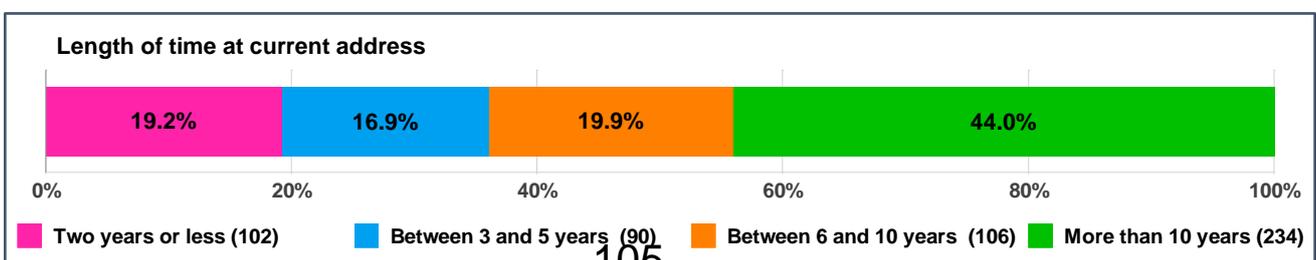
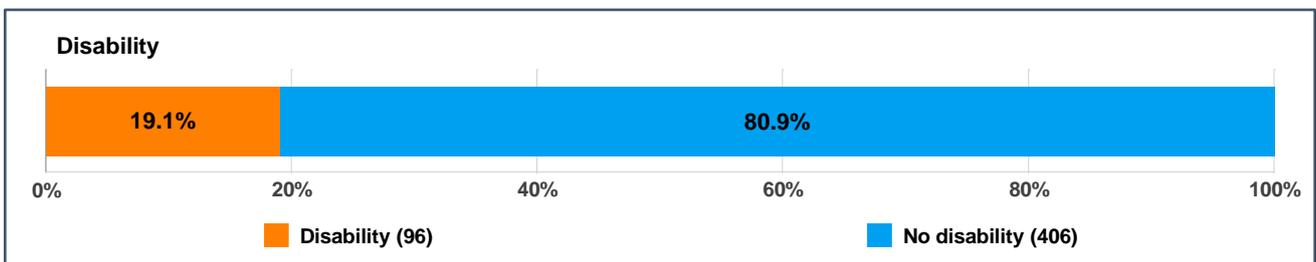
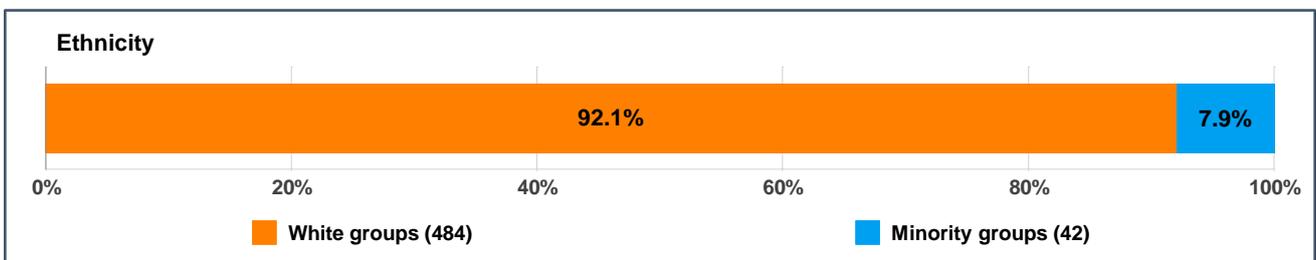
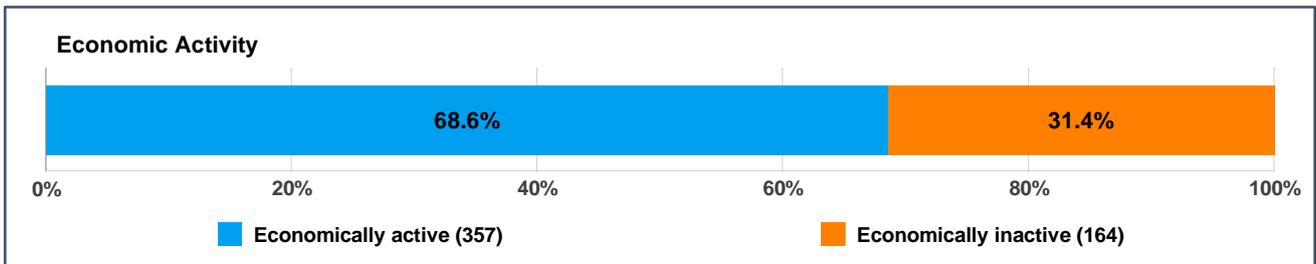
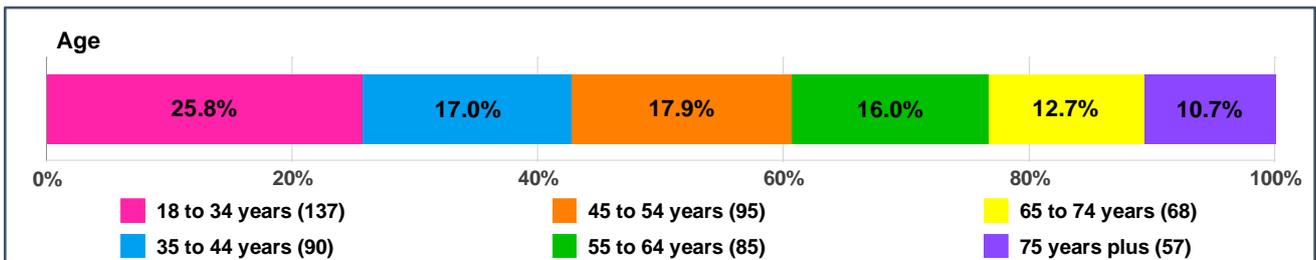
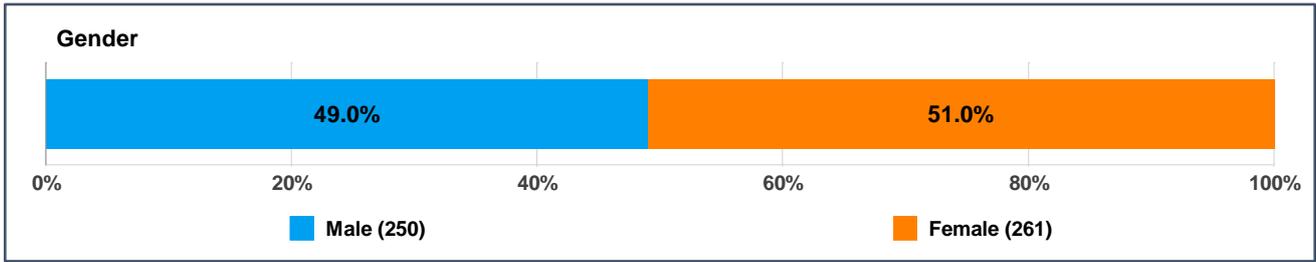
## Budget Comments

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

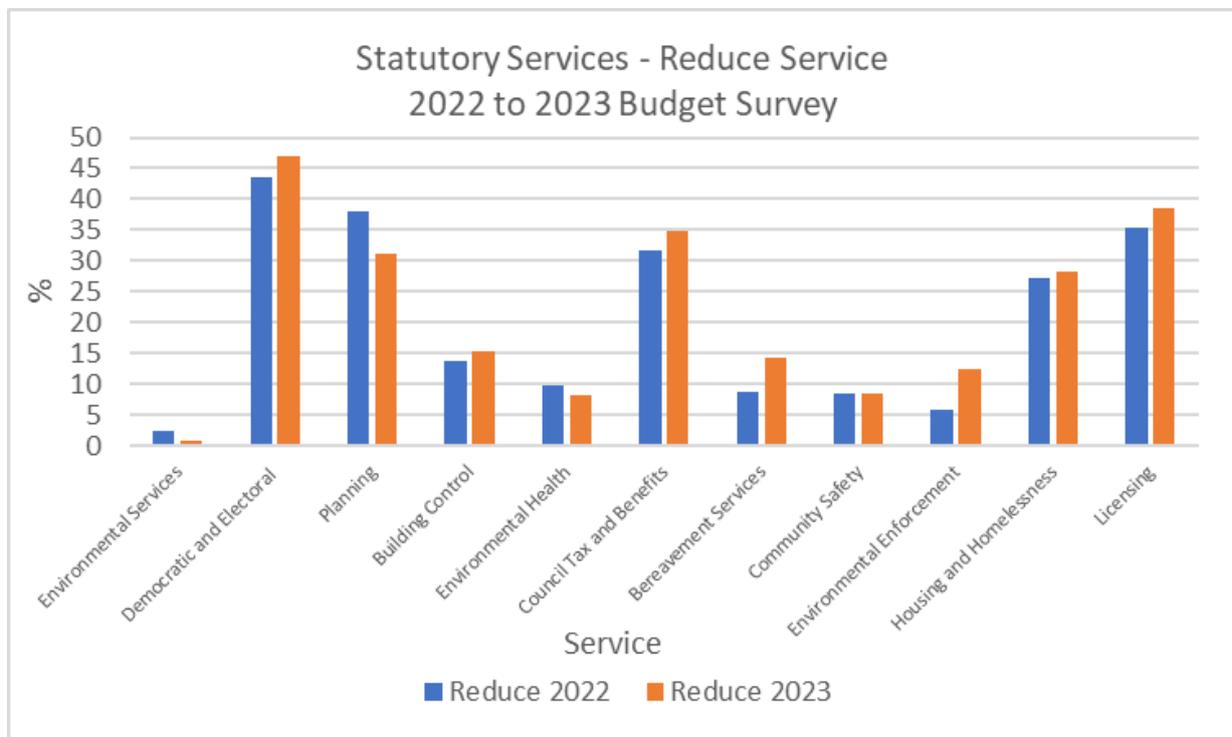
The table below provides a summary of the comments for each of the top ten themes identified.

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

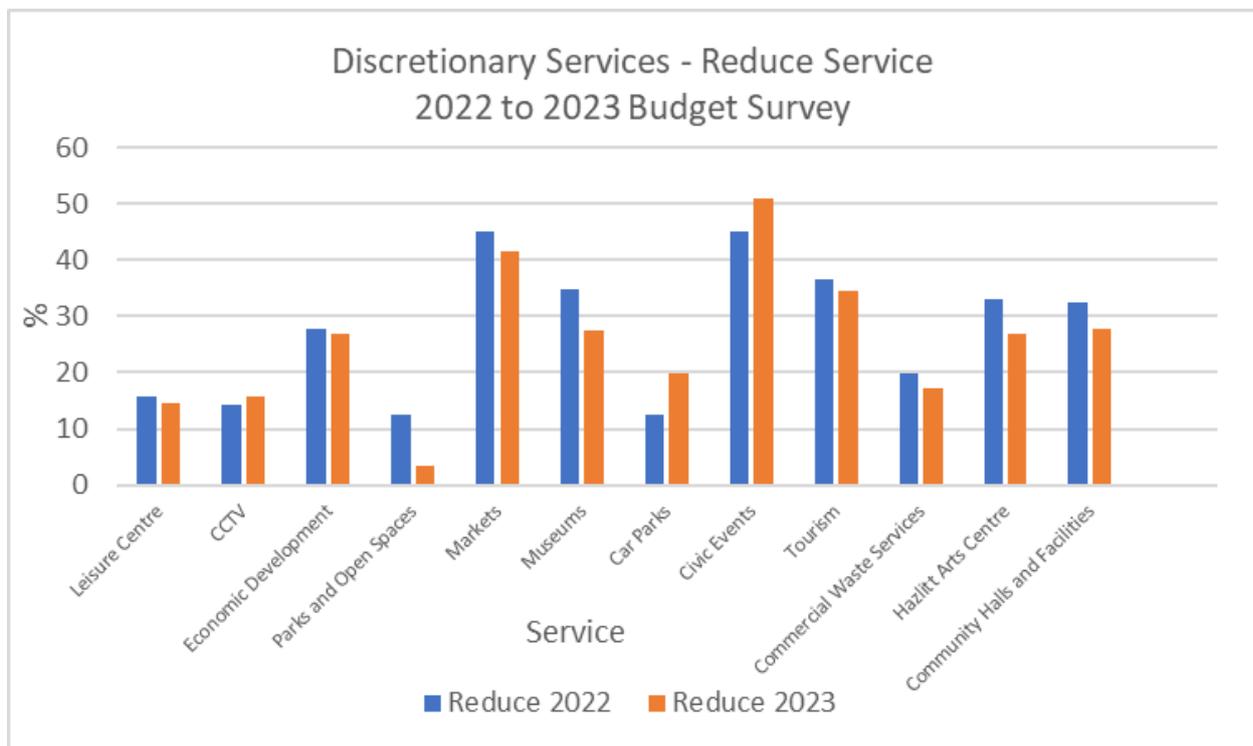
# Demographics



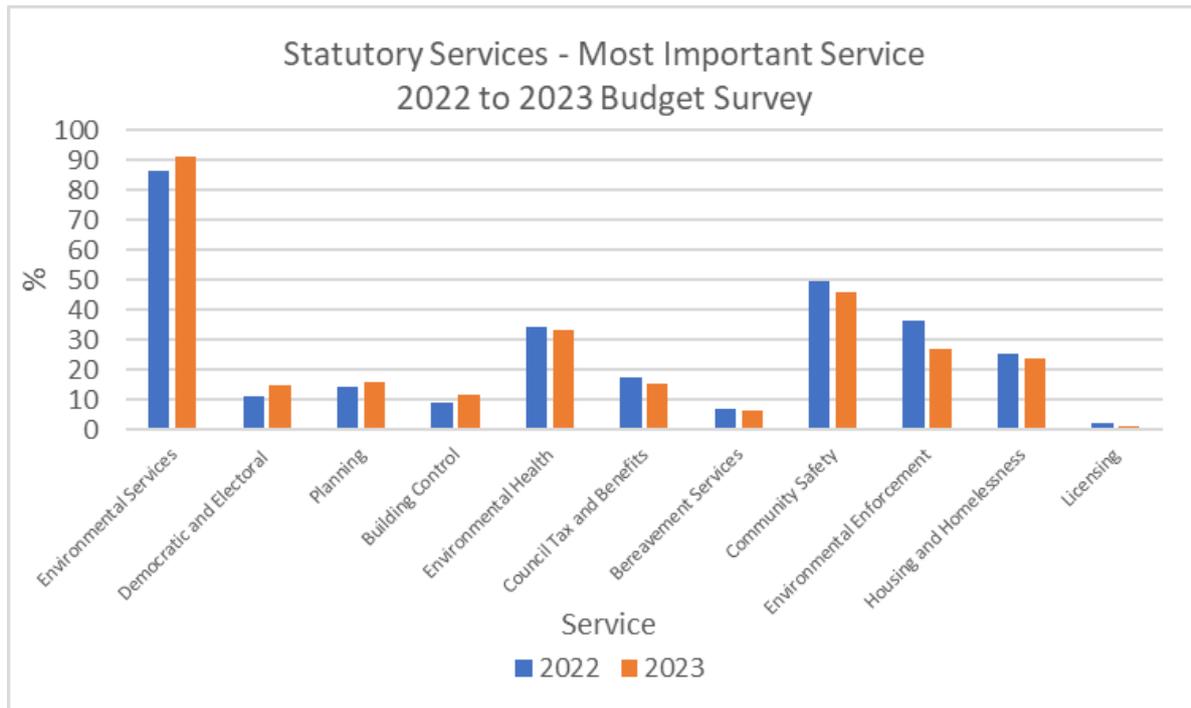
**Reduce Statutory Services.**



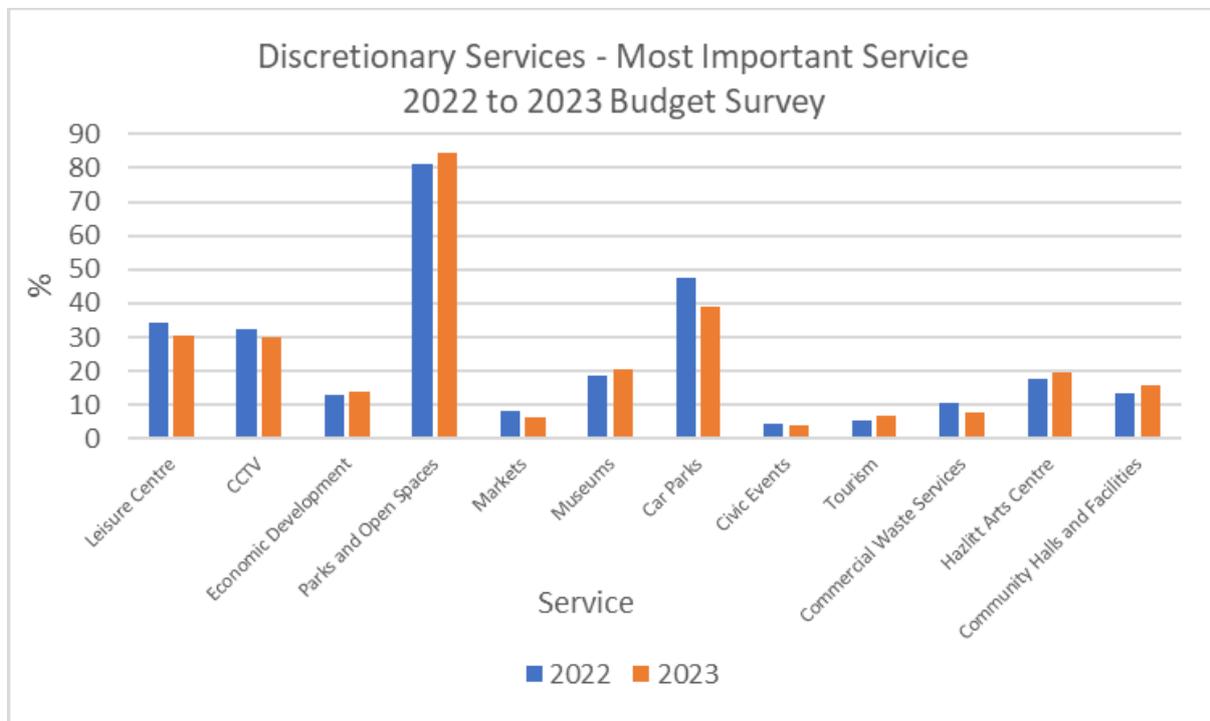
**Reduce Discretionary Services.**



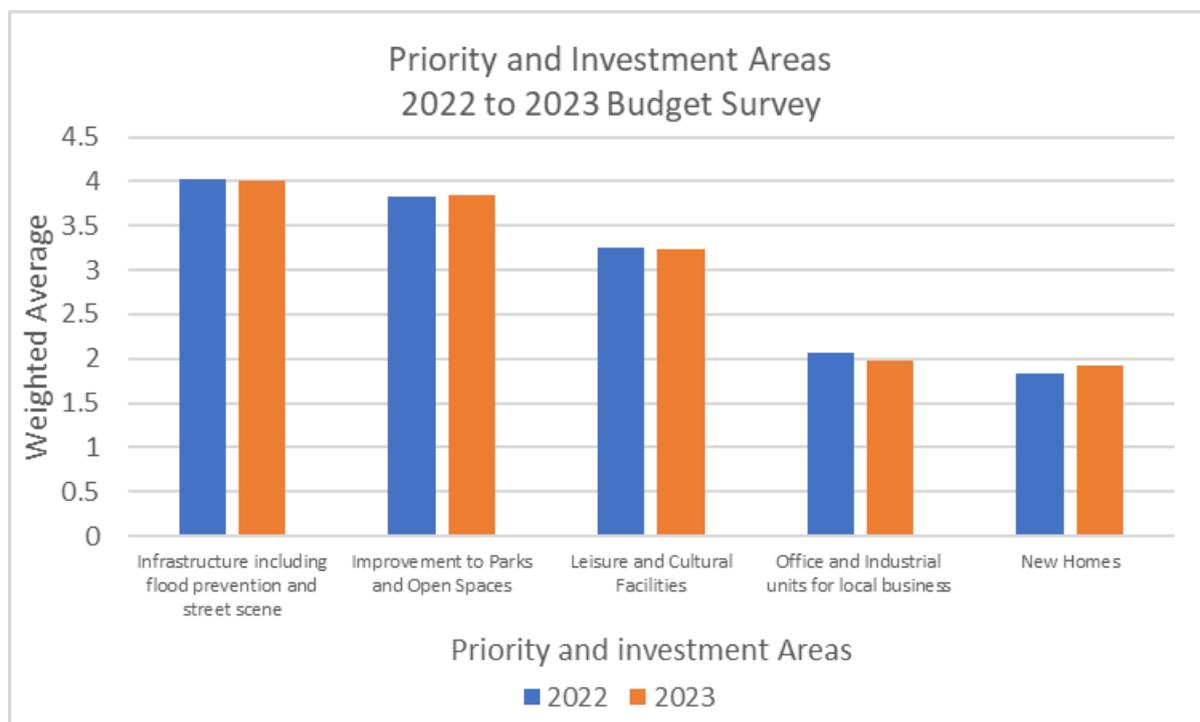
### Most Important Statutory Services.



### Most Important Discretionary Services.



## Priorities and Investment Areas



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

**PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**      **7 December 2023**

**Town Centre Strategy Update**

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

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

**Executive Summary**

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

**Purpose of Report**

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

**This report makes the following recommendations :**

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

# Town Centre Strategy Update

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

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

### **What we want the town centre strategy to achieve**

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

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

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

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

2.8 The Strategy will:

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

The Strategy will be used to:

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

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

- Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure

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

Our cross-cutting objectives are:

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

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

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

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

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

### **Missions and Objectives**

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

The Missions are:

Mission 1 – Become a county town for the future

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

Mission 3 - Guarantee well-being for all

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Link to UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

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

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

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

### **Key Workstreams to date**

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

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

## **Movement Strategy**

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

## **Community Infrastructure**

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

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

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

### **Engagement to Date**

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

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

### 3. NEXT STEPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Development of our current workstreams** this will include:

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

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

**Stakeholder and public engagement;** we will

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

**Opportunities for member participation and engagement;** these will include:

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

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

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

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

## **4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

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

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

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

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

- 4.3 **Option 3** – Do nothing

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

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## **5. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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## **6. RISK**

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

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## **7. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 7.1 Numerous committees and Executive have considered the preparation of the draft Town Centre Strategy to date. There have also been walkabouts of the town centre during the day and after dark with members; an all councillor briefing has been held and discussions with Cabinet and ward members, as highlighted in the body of this report
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## **8. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

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

None

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## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

# Agenda Item 12

## **PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**7 December 2023**

### **Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	07/12/23
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	By 31/12/23

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development)
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Tom Gilbert (Principal Planner).
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### **Executive Summary**

Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on a Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). The consultation on the KCWIP runs from 1 November 2023 to 10 January 2024.

This report summarises the KCWIP consultation (see background document 1), and it recommends that members agree a formal response to the consultation, as drafted by officers and appended to this report in Appendix 1.

#### **Purpose of Report**

Recommendation to Cabinet Member

**This report asks the Committee to consider the following recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development;**

1. That the Committee recommend that the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.

# Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3 [preferred alternative].</p>	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected.</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four cross cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from a neighbouring authority do not materially harm the council's ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section.	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
<b>Financial</b>	The cost of the consultation response is managed within current resource and budget.	Adrian Lovegrove - Head of Finance
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial

		Planning & Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS (Planning))
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Lauren McNicol - Information Governance Team
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities and Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Sarah Ward - Housing and Inclusion Team Leader
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no implications to Crime and Disorder	Karen Britton - Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
<b>Procurement</b>	The recommendation has no immediate impact on budget headings or expenditure in the current year.	Karen Britton - Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and the KCWIP consultation fully aligns with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action 1.1 Update the Integrated Transport Strategy, and work towards a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to prioritise walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicles.</li> <li>• Action 1.2 Deliver policies that enable infrastructure for: Low carbon transportation, Active travel.</li> </ul> <p>Of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.</p>	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

2.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is currently consulting on the Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). The consultation runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

2.2 The KCWIP is part of the Government's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan process. It has a 10-year timeframe but is a 'living document' in that it will be subject to regular review. This process was developed by the Department for Transport between 2016 to present. These plans are to be used as the primary strategies for walking & cycling investment decisions. They also involve the development of a local cycling and walking infrastructure plans at a district or borough level to support the work of the Local Plan. The key outputs of this process as described by the DfT are threefold:

- a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development.
- a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment
- a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

2.3 At present Maidstone Borough Council is preparing for the development of its own Local Council Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to cover the Borough. This will be complementary to the KCWIP once developed.

2.4 This consultation is the second stage of consultation, but the first public consultation on the KCWIP. The first stage was a closed stakeholder consultation to which the Council did respond in July 2023.

### **Consultation content**

2.5 The consultation document deals with two principal issues. Firstly, priority cycling routes proposed for the county, and secondly proposed walking and wheeling zones. These can be located on pages 10 to 16 of background document 1.

2.6 The priority cycling routes are those that have been identified to best support travel by that mode and will be prioritised for investment. Within Maidstone Borough KCC have identified a route between Maidstone East Railway Station and Sittingbourne Railway Station via Detling, Hartlip, Kemlsey & Sittingbourne. A detailed route map has been attached to this report in Background document 2.

2.7 The proposed walking and wheeling zones are 2km radius areas from 15 identified town centres where intervention to encourage walking and cycling are proposed. None have been identified for Maidstone Borough.

### **Maidstone Borough Council response**

2.8 The proposed full response on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council to the KCWIP consultation can be found in Appendix 1. However, set out below is a summary of that response.

2.9 In short, the proposed response makes the following points:

- Maidstone Borough Council would like to see Maidstone town centre as a walking zone in line with its adopted strategies.
- The proposed zones and routes do not appear to factor in projected growth and the Council feels that this should be the case now that the Local Plan Review is at an advanced stage.
- The proposed cycling routes need to be amended to support cycling to the rural service centres as stated in the adopted Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and Maidstone walking & Cycling Strategy.

### **What happens next?**

2.10 The KCWIP document suggests that following the consultation a consultation report will be produced and published. It is planned then intended for the document will be adopted by KCC in Spring 2024. The document will then be used to secure funding for the proposals.

---

## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1: That the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the draft response to the consultation be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline of 10 January 2024.
- 3.2 Option 2: That the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the draft response be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, subject to further comments and changes. Depending on the extent and timing of the receipt of these comments, this would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline of 10 January 2024.
- 3.3 Option 3: That the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the draft response is not approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. However, this would mean the response would not be sent and the Council's views on the KCWIP would not be provided to KCC.
- 

## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Option 1: That the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the draft response to the consultation be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.
- 

## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risk associated with the recommendation, including the risks should the Council not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk management Framework.
- 5.2 If agreement is secured, per the recommendations, then we are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

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## **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 If agreed, the response provided as Appendix 1 will be presented to the Cabinet Member and then if approved submitted to Kent County Council on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council.

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## **7. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix 1: Draft Response to Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation.

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## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Background document 1: Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: Consultation Document - [Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)
- Background document 2: Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: Cycling Route 14 Maidstone to Sittingbourne - [Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)

Active Travel Team  
Kent Highways  
County Hall  
Maidstone  
Kent ME14 1XQ

## Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House,  
King Street,  
Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ

 [maidstone.gov.uk](http://maidstone.gov.uk)  
 [maidstonebc](https://twitter.com/maidstonebc)  
 [maidstoneboroughcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/maidstoneboroughcouncil)

XXth XXXX 20XX

Dear Active Travel Team,

### **Maidstone Borough Council Response to Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan Consultation (November 2023 to January 2024)**

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) consultation. Please note that these comments should be read in conjunction with the comments submitted to the earlier stakeholder consultation in July 2023

To make a representation to the consultation the Council has reviewed the following local documents that it uses to guide walking and cycling infrastructure in the Borough:

- Maidstone Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted)
- Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 (at examination)
- Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031
- Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011-2031
- Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031 (addendum 2023)

Upon review of the above documents and the proposed KCWIP Maidstone Borough Council has the following comments to make on the proposals in KCWIP consultation.

#### Cycle Routes

The Council is happy that a route has been identified within the Borough as a priority route (Route 14 – Maidstone to Sittingbourne). However, it questions that this is the right route to be the top priority for the Borough. The Council would like to see the addition of the following priority routes:

- Maidstone town centre to the rural service centres to the south of the borough (Staplehurst & Marden)
- The River Medway towpath between Allington lock and Barming Bridge
- A route between Maidstone East and Maidstone Barracks railway stations using the footpath across the River Medway

- A route between Maidstone and Ashford along using the A20 corridor, that will then service the proposed Heathlands Garden Community.
- A cycle route on Hermitage Lane connecting housing sites together.
- A route between Maidstone town centre and the proposed Lidsing Garden community

Generally, the Council is concerned that the routes proposed do not service the planned growth within either the adopted Maidstone Local Plan 2011-2031 or the proposed Maidstone Local Plan Review, which is presently at an advanced stage of examination.

With regards to proposed route R14 Maidstone to Sittingbourne the Council does have the following detailed comments to make on the route plan:

- R14-01: The Council supports the upgrade to cycle parking at Maidstone East Railway Station
- R14-05: The Council questions the need to go via M20 junction 7 would it not be possible to go via Boxley Road and then Pilgrims Way this could potentially to a safer route and also easier to achieve.
- R14 -10: The Council believes that this is mislabelled and should refer to Cox Street rather than Broader Lane

#### Walking & Wheeling Zones

The Council is disappointed that the Staplehurst walking zone proposed in the earlier consultation did not make to through to a priority scheme and would like to see that scheme included.

As stated in our previous consultation the Council would still like Maidstone town centre to also be included as a priority walking and wheeling zone. This addition is to reflect the priority the Council has for better walking and wheeling connectivity across the River Medway and the status of the town centre as a broad location for growth in the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 and emerging Maidstone Local Plan Review.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Cooper

**Deputy Leader of Maidstone Borough Council & Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development**

**Planning, Infrastructure and  
Economic Development Policy  
Advisory Committee**

**7 December 2023**

**Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
PIED PAC	7 December 2023
Decision to be made	8 December 2023

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Jeremy Fazzalano
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Marden

**Executive Summary**

This item is to consider whether to approve the draft Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan documents for public consultation purposes. The proposed Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (known as CAAMP) recognises and summarises the significance and character of Marden, and provides a framework system to ensure that this character is protected or enhanced.

The Management Plan, if approved, would set out a framework for conserving, enhancing, and managing development in the Marden Conservation Area to ensure that it retains its special qualities as required by the Conservation Area designation under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A new Management Plan would fulfil the Council's duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Failure to approve the Management Plan would mean that this duty was not observed.

The Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would provide a stronger base for development management decisions in resisting inappropriate developments. The proposed extension to the Marden Conservation Area was considered as part of the regular review of the conservation area boundary which was undertaken with the conservation area appraisal.

Marden was first designated in September 1977 and the boundary had not been reviewed since that time. The records relating to the designation are no longer available. The Appraisal states that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained. Parish councillors have requested consideration is given to extend the boundary of the conservation area to include a group of Victorian terraces opposite Jewel Grove.

### **Purpose of Report**

Recommendation to Cabinet Member

### **This report asks the Committee to make the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development: That**

1. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Marden Conservation Area, attached at appendix 1 to the report, be approved for public consultation; and
2. Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to undertake the necessary statutory requirements to undertake public consultation for the Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

# Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> <li>• Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to protect the historic environment.</li> </ul>	Landscape Team Leader
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of encouraging protection of the heritage at Marden and within the borough.</p>	Landscape Team Leader
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section	Landscape Team Leader
<b>Financial</b>	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Landscape Team Leader
<b>Legal</b>	Pursuant to s.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("1990 Act") the Council, as the local planning	Planning Team Leader

	<p>authority, is under a duty (from time to time) to review the conservation area.</p> <p>Pursuant to s.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council, as the local planning authority, is from time to time required:</p> <p>(1) under a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.</p> <p>(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.</p> <p>(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.</p>	
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Officer
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities and Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Housing and Inclusion Team Leader
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	No anticipated impact	Landscape Team Leader
<b>Procurement</b>	None required	Landscape Team Leader
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	Conservation Areas can be used to offer further protection, including to trees and open spaces, which ensure a wide range of benefits to local nature recovery and residents health and wellbeing. This report aligns with 'Enhancing and increasing biodiversity' actions in the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time to consider whether they should be amended, are still worthy of being designated and the possibility of revising their boundaries and to identify changes and pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation.
- 2.2 In order that informed decisions can be made on planning applications it is important to identify the special character of conservation areas which are proposed for preservation and enhancement. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan allows for an informed decision to be made by recognising the character of the Conservation Area and providing a framework of actions.
- 2.3 The first part of the document, the appraisal, identifies the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area and considers how they interact and impact upon one another and explains how the area has developed into their current form. It seeks to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the Conservation Area, and sites and features which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The clear understanding of the Area's qualities provided in the appraisal offers information to guide future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual planning proposals may be assessed. This is further elaborated upon, in the second part of the document: the management plan.
- 2.4 Marden Conservation Area consists of three different character areas, High Street, Church Green and Pattenden Lane. The High Street is the historic core of the village with a range of buildings of different building types including Wealden Hall Houses, Victorian terraces and detached buildings. The Church Green is centred around the Church of St Michael and All Angels which is an important local landmark and community facility. Pattenden Lane comprises a mix of detached and terraced properties of traditional vernacular materials including brick built and weatherboarded properties dating from the between the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century and sited on irregular plots. The variety of architectural styles, materials and built form contribute to the special character of the conservation area.
- 2.5 The Appraisal states that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained. Parish councillors have requested consideration is given to extend the boundary of the conservation area to include a group of Victorian terraces opposite Jewel Grove. Careful consideration has been given to this request, but due to the position of the Victorian buildings, the separation distance between the boundary of the conservation area and the buildings, and the modern development in-between it is considered they are not suitable for inclusion in the Conservation Area. However, they will be afforded protection on the local list. This would help ensure they are afforded protection and will ensure they are a material consideration in the planning process.

- 2.6 Resulting from the findings of the appraisal, the management plan contains proposals to preserve or enhance Marden Conservation Area. The document includes the policy background to the management plan, principles for development control, and, where appropriate, suggested boundary alterations. It also contains information on review and good practice procedures.
- 2.7 The Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) has been written in accordance with guidelines set down by Historic England and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). This has been drafted for Cabinet Member approval to enable a consultation process to be carried out in accordance with the Planning Act 1990 requirements under section 71(2). This will include the following bodies and individuals:
- a) Historic England
  - b) Kent County Council Heritage Unit
  - c) Ward Members
  - d) Marden Parish Council
  - e) Any other relevant organizations with an interest in Marden
- 2.8 In addition, copies will be placed on the Borough Council's website and in the local library. A formal notice will be published in the London Gazette and a local newspaper (KM), as per the Planning Act 1990 requirements under section 70(8) and there will also be a press release. This should ensure that the combined appraisal and management plan documents are brought to the attention of the local public.

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1 - The Committee could choose to recommend that the report recommendations be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
- 3.2 Option 2 - The Committee could choose not to recommend that the report recommendations be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. If not approved there is a risk that Maidstone Borough Council are failing to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is 3.1
- 4.2 By approving the public consultation for the Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, this provides a clear steer on enabling the council to take appropriate action and engagement to protect our heritage.
-

## **5. RISK**

5.1 There is not anticipated to be any discernible risk associated with the report and its recommendations. Any risk has been assessed with regard to the Council's risk management principles.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

6.1 The combined document will be the subject of repeat consultation in accordance with the Planning Act 1990 and Historic England Guidance. This will include the following bodies and individuals:

- Historic England
- Kent County Council Heritage Unit
- Ward Members
- Marden Parish Council

## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

7.1 The report and guidance, if approved, will be available on the MBC website. If approved by the Cabinet Member the guidance will be available to assist in the consideration of planning applications.

## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Marden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP)

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

# MARDEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL 2023

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# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Definition, Purpose and Effect of Conservation Areas

- 1.1.1. The concept of conservation areas was first brought into being by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, but the relevant legislation now is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. This act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.1.2. Designation as a conservation area makes additional controls available to the local authority. Briefly these include the control of demolition of unlisted buildings, more restricted permitted development rights for single dwelling houses and protection of trees.
- 1.1.3. In addition to these enhanced powers, the local authority is also required when dealing with applications for planning permission to have special regard to the question of whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. (Section 72.1 of the Act) There is a presumption that developments which would not preserve or enhance this special character should be refused planning permission.

### 1.2 Background to the Appraisal

- 1.2.1 Local authorities are required, by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to carry out reviews of conservation area boundaries (Section 69.2 of the Act). This is to consider whether the boundaries should be increased or decreased depending on the continued contribution that the areas within the boundary contribute to the special character of the area. It will also assist in the process of making informed decisions on planning applications where it is important to value and take into account the special character of conservation areas and to preserve or enhance them.
- 1.2.2 The clear understanding of the conservation area’s qualities which such an appraisal produces will provide suggestions for future actions and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual proposals may be assessed.

### 1.3 Scope and Nature of the Appraisal

- 1.3.1 This appraisal will set out the key historic forces which have led to the village developing to its present day form and the resulting characteristics which describe the conservation area today and which are significant in any development decisions.

## 2. DESIGNATION

### 2.1 History of Designation

Marden Conservation Area was designated by Maidstone Borough Council in 1977. Despite development encroaching on the area the conservation area boundary remains unaltered.



Fig 1: Current conservation area boundary



Fig 2: Showing the statutory listed buildings

### **3. CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

3.1.1 Marden Conservation Area consists of three different character areas, High Street, Church Green and Pattenden Lane.

#### **3.1.2 *High Street***

This part of the conservation area is the historic core of the village with a range of buildings of different building types including Wealden Hall Houses, Victorian terraces and detached buildings. The street is wide and often busy with cars parked on either side of the High Street. This part of the area has no boundary treatment and there is a lack of greenery, however, the variety of uses including post office, public house and café ensure the High Street is the busiest part of the village.

#### **3.1.3 *Church Green***

The Church Green is centred around the Church of St Michael and All Angels which is an important local landmark and community facility. Adjacent to the church is the graveyard set on a substantial plot and more reminiscent of a large park than a cemetery. The churchyard is the one of the few green spaces in the conservation and the largest. A line of mature tree lines the southern edge of the cemetery adds to the parklike character of the Church Green. The short ragstone wall bounds the southern edge of the Church Green and the sloping topography allows for important views of the church.

#### **3.1.4 *Pattenden Lane***

West End and Pattenden Lane are two distinct character areas. West End has a variety of building types include two storey detached and terraced houses of varying traditional materials including redbrick and weatherboarding. The roofscape is also varied with a mix of pitched and steeply pitched roofs including the 19<sup>th</sup> century Congregational Chapel with its classical façade. Boundary treatment is also varied and includes low picket fences, hedges and brick walls. The buildings along Pattenden lane comprise a mix of detached and terraced properties of traditional vernacular materials including brick built and weatherboarded properties dating from the between the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century and sited on irregular plots. Boundary treatment is varied but primarily consists of brick walls and picket fences. In comparison to the Church Green and High Street, the character areas built form is much more varied.

### **4. LOCATION AND SETTING**

4.1.1 Marden is a small village located approximately 8 miles south of Maidstone. It lies on the floor plain of the River Beult and is located near the topographic boundary between the Lesser Teise and River Beult catchments. The village is located on a geological area known as the Low Weald. This is characterised by clay soils which do not naturally drain well. Marden thrived with the Kentish wool trade until the late eighteenth century. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Marden had developed into an agricultural community, and was well known for the cultivation of hops and fruit.

## 5. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1.1 There are many historical references of Marden. The *Victoria County History* written in 1798 provides the following summary of Marden:

*THE PARISH OF MARDEN is about five miles long, and not more than one broad. There are about three hundred houses, and fifteen hundred inhabitants in it, the rents amounting to about 3,500l. per annum. The river Teis, being one of the principal heads of the Medway, flows along the western boundaries of it, as another head of it, which rises at Great Chart, does the northern boundary, and having passed Stylebridge, joins the former one, and then take their course together to the main river, which they join at Yalding. The turnpike road, which leads over Cocksheath to Style-bridge, separates there at the 44th mile-stone from London, the left branch passing to Cranbrook, and the right through this parish towards Goudhurst, the only parts of it which may be said to be above ground, the rest of it being so deep and miry as to be nearly impassable in wet weather. The town of Marden, as it is usually called, is situated on it, nearly in the middle of the parish. It is not paved, and consists of three streets, the houses of which are but meanly built, the church stands at the west end of the town, with the patronage opposite to it, and the vicarage on the entrance to it from Maidstone. The country here is much the same as the lower parts of the adjoining parishes of Hunton and Yalding already described in a former volume of this history. (fn. 1) Near the road from Style-bridge to Goudhurst it is very pleasant, but towards Hunton, and towards Staplehurst much the contrary, being of a very dreary and sordid aspect. It lies very low and flat, the soil in general a stiff clay, a very heavy tillage land; in winter the lands are exceeding wet, and much subject to inundations, and was it not for the manure of their native marle, and the help of chalk and lime brought from the northern hills would be still more unferstile than they were at present, notwithstanding which there are partially dispersed some very rich lands among them, and there were some years ago three hundred acres of hop-ground here, which have of late been lessened near one hundred acres. The farms are in general small, the houses of them antient well-timbered buildings, standing dispersed at wide distances, many of them on the different greens or forstals throughout the parish.*

*A fair is held here yearly on October 10, for toys and pedlary. The profits of which the portreve of the hundred of Milton receives of antient custom, which officer executed within this hundred the office of clerk of the market in all points, whilst the market was held, but it has been disused time out of mind.*

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol7/pp51-64> )

### 5.1.2 Early Development

Archaeological excavations have revealed prehistoric stone axe heads and bronze metal workings from the Bronze Age which indicates human activity on or near Marden for thousands of years. Marden grew as a settlement in the Early Medieval Period after herders brought their cattle to feed in "dens," or clearings, in the Anderida forest. It was part of the King's Manor of Milton by 1066. Over the centuries, it changed hands numerous times. Although not mentioned in the Domesday survey, in the late 11th century the settlement was known of *Maere Denn* and was part of the King's manor of Milton, in 1170 the settlement was recorded as *Maeredaen*; 1235, *Mereden*; 1283, *Merdenne*, and from the early 17th century *Marden*.

### 5.1.3 Medieval and post medieval period

The Church of St Michaels and All Angels is the oldest building in Marden and its first phase of development was between 1180 and 1200, the lower part of the tower dates from the 13th century and the north arcade of the nave is 14th century. During the 13th century King Edward I gave the village to his mother, Queen Eleanor and the village was granted the right to hold a weekly market and annual fair. The beginning of the cloth trade in Marden can be traced to 1336 and this became an important trade and source of income for the village. One of the oldest properties in the village is Turnpikes, dating from the late 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Three clothiers from the area invented a new process of dyeing in 1640, flax was also grown in the area during 17<sup>th</sup> century and there were several linen weavers in the village. There are several timber framed properties dating from this period including The Old Church Cottage and Vine House. As in most of the country, in 1666 the plague spread to the village and a pest house was used to house victims of The Great Plague.



Fig 3: The 1569 Map by Philip Symonson



Fig 4: The 1611 map by John Speed

### 5.1.4 Nineteenth century and later development

The population of Marden grew gradually in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in 1790 a workhouse was erected in the village. Farming remained the dominant industry for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until its decline at the end of the century due to cheap imports from America and a change in farming practices. By 1851 the census records some 2,292 people living in Marden. In 1842 a railway station was erected at Marden which connected the village to London, drastically reducing transportation costs and times and enabling people to travel further afield. This new mode of transportation opened up new markets for food stuffs in London and beyond, possibly influencing the increase in fruit growing at the end of the nineteenth century. Gas street-lighting was installed in 1902, to be replaced by

electricity in 1971. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century farming was still the dominant industry but in decline but by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century a new industrial estate was built to the north west of the village. Further changes occurred during the post war period when new residential development was built to the south west and south east of the village.



*Fig 5: Historic photograph of The Unicorn Inn. Date unknown but probably late C19/ early C20*



*Fig 6: Old photograph dating from the early C20 showing the former Post Office*

*A List of the Small Ownerships*  
**TOWN of MARDEX.**

	A	r	p.	A	r	p.		A	r	p.	A	r	p.
1225 Stephen Walter (Manor)				1	23								
1226 Stephen Walter Esq <sup>r</sup>				1	1								
1227 Elizabeth Paine													
1228 Stephen Walter Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1229 Ditto	1	26		1	38								
1230 William John Campion Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1231 Goolfrey West													
1232 R. Bon <sup>r</sup> Earl Cornwallis													
1233 Ditto													
1234 Ditto													
1235 Thomas Paine													
1236 Ditto	1	26		1	36								
1237 Thomas Hooker Esq <sup>r</sup>	1	10		1	37								
1238 Charles Baker													
1239 Richard Barnes													
1240 Anne Sharp													
1241 Thomas Hooker Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1242 Stephen Walter													
1243 Ditto				1	16								
1244 Richard Southon													
1245 John Walter													
1246 Overseers of Marden				1	20								
1247 Stephen Walter													
1248 Stephen Walter Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1249 Heitz of Sachville Waghorne													
1250 W. Headle and G. Bann													
1251 Ditto													
1252 Ditto													
1253 James Day													
1254 Ditto													
1255 Ditto				1	26								
1256 Thomas Hooker Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1257 William Hammond													
1258 John Charles Earl													
1259 William Cleaver													
1260 F. Austen and R. Willshire	1	32		1	22								
1261 Ditto				3	25								
1262 Ditto													
1263 Ditto													
1264 John Walter													
1265 Nathaniel Walter Jun <sup>r</sup>													
1266 Ditto													
1267 F. Austen and R. Willshire													
1268 Ditto													
1269 William John Campion Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1270 Ditto													
1271 F. Austen and R. Willshire													
Carried up	4	1	10	3	10								
1281 William John Campion Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1282 Charles Beaufoy													
1283 John Walter	1	1	20	2	1	10							
1284 Ditto													
1285 Rectorial Glebe	2			2		19							
1286 Ditto						7							
1287 Vicarial Glebe													
1288 Directors of S.E. Railway													
1289 Thomas Hooker Esq <sup>r</sup>	2	20		2	32								
1290 Benjamin Waghorne													
1291 Mary Dean													
1292 Thomas Day													
1293 Ditto	3	5		3	11								
1294 Ditto													
1295 Ditto													
1296 J. Harris and K. Austen													
1297 Ditto	2	1	20	2	1	09							
1298 Charles Beaufoy													
1299 Stephen Walter Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1300 Vicarial Glebe													
1301 Trustees of School													
1302 Directors of S.E. Railway													
1303 Mary Osborne													
1304 Ex <sup>r</sup> of Mary Veness													
1305 Stephen Walter Esq <sup>r</sup>													
1306 John Mace													
1307 Ditto	2	10		2	33								
1308 Trustees of Indep <sup>t</sup> Chapel	1	32		1	5								
1309 Ditto													
1310 Ditto													
1311 Ditto	1	3		1	12								
1312 Ditto													
1313 Ditto													
1314 Gouthe <sup>r</sup> & Marden T.E. Road													
1315 George Day													
1316 Edward Tribe													
1317 Sarah Beale													
1318 Nathaniel Walter Sen <sup>r</sup>													
1319 Ditto	1	10		1	26								
1320 Ditto													
1321 Ditto													
1322 Ditto													
1323 Ditto													
1324 Ditto													
1325 Ditto													
1326 Ditto													
1327 Ditto													
1328 Ditto													
1329 Ditto													
1330 Ditto	3	12		3	32								
1331 Ditto	2	16		2	31								
1332 Thomas Moore													
1333 Ditto													
1334 Ditto													
1335 Directors of S.E. Railway													
Carried up	4	1	10	3	10								

Fig 7: A list of small ownerships from The Survey of the Parish of Marden in the Country of Kent by John Adams of Tenterden (1817-19)

### 5.1.5 Timeline

- 1066** At the Domesday survey the Manor and Hundred of Maeredenn are part of the king's manor of Milton.
- 1170** Maerdaen is held for the Crown by Richard De Luci, Lord Chief Justice of England.
- 1235** Twenty tree trunks are cut from the woods of Henry III at Mereden and presented to the Abbot of St.Radigund at Dover for the building of a refectory.
- 1283** Edward I commands an annual market to be held in Merdenne.
- 1336** The beginning of the cloth trade.
- 1554** Fire destroys the chancel and chapel roof of St Michaels.
- 1607** James I makes Merdenne over to Sir Henry Brown.
- 1635** (approx.) Marden passes from Charles I to Sir Edward Brown and Mr Christopher Favell.
- 1640** Three clothiers from the area invent a new process of dyeing.
- 1648** The Earl of Pembroke purchases Marden.
- 1666** The Pest House is used to house victims of The Great Plague.
- 1790** A Workhouse is erected
- 1793** Money raised from the turnpike was £21 11s 3d.
- 1799** Approximately 1500 inhabitants were living in 300 houses.
- 1821** The population is now 2051 with 1100 males and 951 females living in 353 dwellings.
- 1840/41** A mammoth fossil is found in a cutting for the railway.
- 1841** The population is 2676 with 2 inns, 6 beerhouses and 7 grocers.
- 1842** The railway comes to Marden with 6 trains a day.
- 1871** The population is 2333.
- 1896/97** A new school is built to accommodate 500 children.
- 1899** The parish pump is erected by the Parish Council.
- 1902** Gas street lighting is installed.
- 1907** The Parish pump is locked up due to contamination.
- 1922** A library service opens in the Village School.
- 1928** A Hop-pickers Hospital opens.
- 1930** Marden Market closes. 1933 The first sewers are installed at Marden.
- 1940** September 5th Franz Von Werra (German Ace pilot remembered in the film "The One That Got Away") was shot down over Marden.
- 1971** Electric street lighting was installed.

*Timeline of the history of Marden*

### 5.1.6 Historic Map Regression

Map regression is the process of working backward from later maps to earlier maps of the same area to determine how a place has developed over time. The earliest map of Marden dates from 1569 and shows the wider area, including the village of Staplehurst. The early maps from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, while not overly detailed, provide a useful insight into the town's position in relation to the wider area. Later maps, including OS maps from the 19th century, offer a much more detailed view of the town



Fig 8: An early map of Marden dating from 1569



Fig 9: The 1611 map shows the location of Marden and the villages in the area.

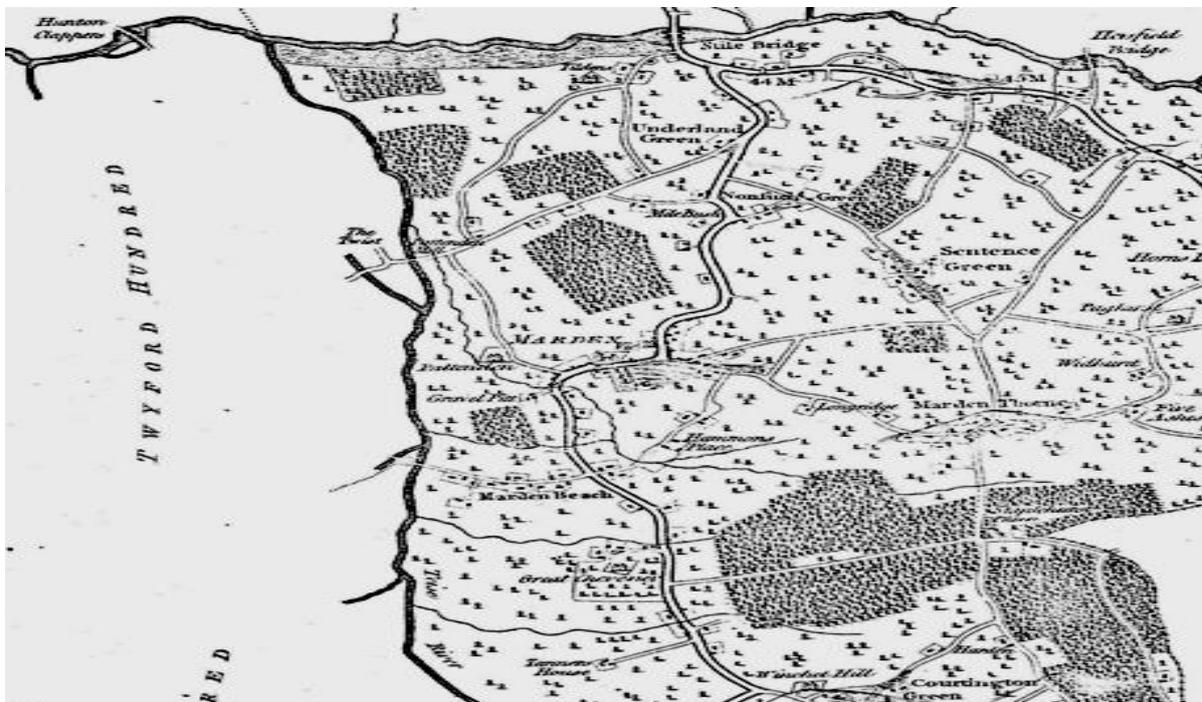


Fig 10: An 18<sup>th</sup> century map showing the woodlands, rivers and settlements in the area (Marden Society History Group).



Fig 11: The "Plan of Marden Town" by John Adams of Tenterden (1817-19)

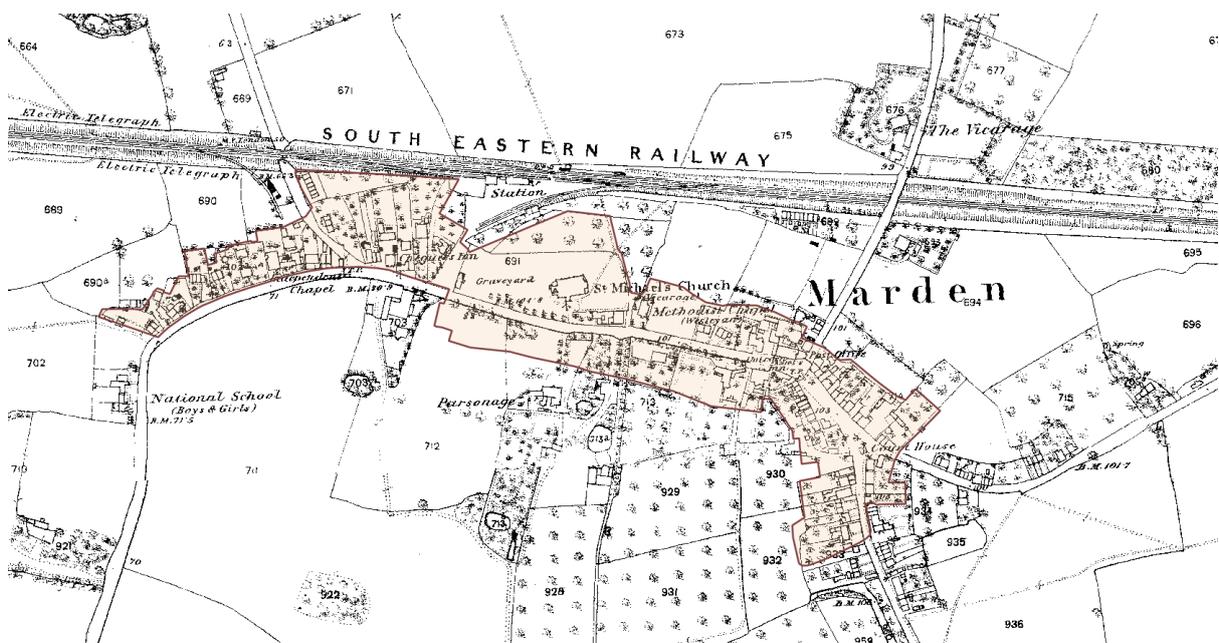


Fig 12: OS map 1876-1896

### 5.1.7 Sixteenth to nineteenth century

There are several historic maps of Marden from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first large scale map of Marden was published in 1569 by Philip Symonson and this shows The Church of St Michaels and All Angels. John Adams produced the earliest detailed plan of the village of Marden in *The Survey of the Parish of Marden in the County of Kent*, the 1817-19 map clearly shows individual buildings, plots and field boundaries. The 1876-1896 OS map shows the South Eastern railway to the north of village which was opened in 1842, The direct rail link between Marden and London's markets drastically reduced transportation costs and times. This new mode of transportation opened new markets for goods in London and beyond, possibly influencing the increase in fruit growing at the end of the nineteenth century. The area to south and southwest of the village remained undeveloped with woodland to the southeast of the village. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the South Eastern railway had improved links to the capital and farming remained the dominant industry for the village, however the village remained largely undeveloped as shown in the OS map of 1896-98.



Fig 13: OS map 1896-98

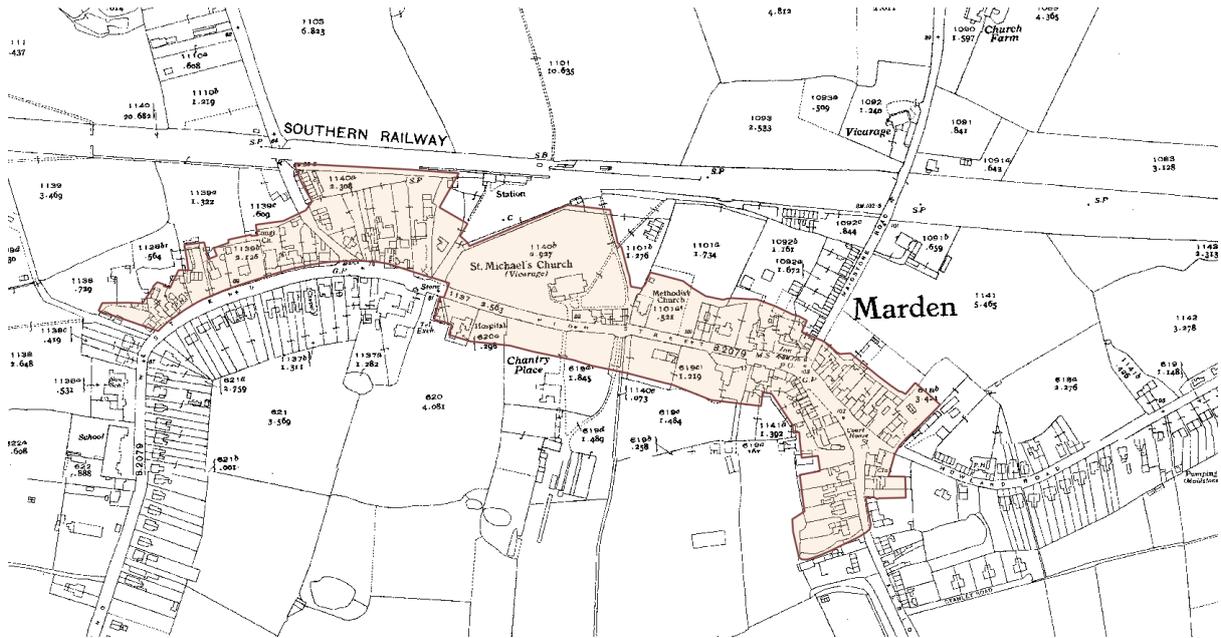


Fig 14: OS map 1936-46

### 5.1.8 Twentieth century

During the interwar period the village began to grow with major development to the east of the village along Howland Road and the southwest along West End. The map shows semi-detached properties with long narrow plots. While new development began to encroach on the village on the south and eastern areas, the village itself did not see the same level of development.



Fig 15: Aerial photograph of Marden

#### 5.1.9 Present day

The above aerial photograph shows that a substantial amount of new development occurred during the post war period with residential development on the south, south eastern, north eastern and north west of the village. To the northwest of the station is a large sprawling industrial estate.

#### 5.1.10 Summary

The historic map regression has shown how the village of Marden, once a predominantly small village with an important farming industry was transformed first by the coming of the railway and secondly by the large scale residential and later industrial development that occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **6. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

6.1.1 A detailed character assessment of the conservation area has been undertaken in order to understand the built form, materials and detailing which are prevalent in the area. Particular attention was paid to areas within the conservation area, looking to find examples of high quality and well regarded vernacular design. The architecture of the conservation area varies in date, style and material, reflecting its long history and piecemeal development over time.

#### 6.1.2 *High Street*

The High Street is the busiest area in Marden and is also the centre of the village. The character area stretches from Albion Road to Haffendon Close. The Unicorn pub, convenience store and various cafés draw locals and visitors to the area, and this creates a busy atmosphere. The road is wide enough for traffic and there is a small parking area near the Unicorn pub. There is a fascinating variety of properties of different ages and architectural styles including Wealden Hall Houses, Victorian terraces, and detached buildings, of varying dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this adds to the sense the village has developed over time and contributes to the historic character of the area. While most of the buildings are historic many have seen modern interventions including the large glazing on the café and the shopfront of the convenience store, these features are of neutral interest and do not detract from the character of the area.

6.1.3 There are several important views of the high street from the Unicorn pub looking eastwards towards the tree lined church green and to west showing the historic high street and timber framed Wealden Hall Houses. The views of the High Street is made up of an interesting variety of buildings of different architectural styles, forms and features. The existing roofscape comprises a mix of pitched and hipped roofs and the building heights which range from 2 – 3 storeys provide an interesting skyline. While the roof forms differ, the unifying feature is the universal use of clay tiles. Plot sizes vary with buildings such as Briar Cottage and Bridge Land House are sited on large irregular plots, whereas Forge Cottage has small plots. Greenhays Cottage has a long narrow plot and is typical of medieval burgage plots.

6.1.4 The typical external materials used throughout this part of the conservation area are red brick, weatherboarding cladding painted white, timber frames, and tile hung cladding. Clay tiles are the uniform material used on roofs. The variety of materials adds to the architectural interest of the area. Fenestration is generally irregular with a mix of timber casements, sashes and modern windows. The timber sashes are generally of the 8 over 8 variety. Doors are also varied with a mix of different styles. Other common architectural features in the area include dormer and bay windows.

6.1.5 The boundary treatment along Albion Road and Sutton Forge includes low brick walls and hedges which gives a sense of enclosure to the properties, this contrasts with the High Street where the buildings front the street and there are no boundary walls or fences. There are no green spaces in the character area and therefore the small planters that located near Albion Road help soften the hardstanding.



*Fig 16: The Limes, The Manse and house*



*Fig 17: Showing the variety of roof forms*

6.1.6 The Church Green character area stretches from Heffenden Close to Pattenden Lane and includes Church of St Michael and All Angels. The road gradually declines downwards, and this provides important views of the eastern area of the village. The area is characterised by the church green and the church which is the tallest building in the area.

6.1.7 The church of St Michael is of the Decorated and Perpendicular architectural styles with some portions of an earlier date. The church consists of a chancel aisles, nave and tower, the lower portion is in the Early English style. The interior is of various styles and period and numerous alterations and repairs were carried out between the 13<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> century. The chancel and chapels has impressive crown post roofs dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the sloping topography of the street, the church is visible from afar. What is distinctive about this character in comparison to others is the large green space of the church green. This is the only green space in the area and the space is used as a churchyard. The large mature trees which line add to the rural character of the area

6.1.8 The properties are a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings, predominantly dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century although there are several modern dwellings too that are of neutral interest. There are several notable listed buildings in the area including Shepherds House, a two storey dwelling with white rendered façade and a slate roof dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the older Old Church formerly a shop, now a house and dating from the late C16, with C18 and C19 additions alterations. The property is timber framed, weatherboarded with plain tiled roof. The height of buildings is generally two storeys – more consistently than in the High Street character area. The architectural styles are varied, and buildings are generally sited on large irregular plots, particularly the detached dwellings such as The Cottage and this contrasts with the High Street character area with its densely packed dwellings.



Fig 18: Grain map showing the density and form of the properties in the area

6.1.9 The typical external materials used throughout this part of the conservation area are red brick, weatherboarding cladding painted white, white render, timber frames and ragstone. In comparison to other areas, properties have either slate, clay tiled or plain tiled roofs and this variation in materials adds to the interest of the area. Fenestration is generally irregular with a mix of timber casements, sashes and modern windows. There are examples of sash windows with glazing bars missing and several unlisted buildings have UPVC windows which detracts from the special architectural interest of the area.

6.1.10 The boundary treatment is much more varied in this area and includes the long ragstone wall which forms the boundary of the church green and to the east the Grade II listed iron railings in front of Shepherds House. Many of the properties have hedges to the front of the plot and there are also examples of low picket fences.

#### 6.1.11 *West End*

The character area stretches from Pattenden Lane to West End. Pattenden Lane has a suburban feel to it due to the boundary treatment and separation distance between the various properties. The Grade II listed Nos. 1 and 2 Church Green Cottage is the oldest building dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the group of terraces located to the north of Church Green Cottage dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and although not listed, are nevertheless of historic and architectural interest. There are also several modern detached dwellings dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century located either side of Church Green Cottage. Buildings are generally of two storeys in height and situated on irregular medium sized plots. The roof scape is like other areas and consists of pitched or in the case of

Church Green Cottage, half hipped roofs. The boundary treatment is varied and includes low brick walls, mature hedges, and white picket fences, this adds to the suburban feel of Pattenden Lane. The typical external materials used throughout Pattenden Lane are red brick, weatherboarding cladding painted white and clay tiles. Fenestration is generally irregular with a mix of timber casements,

sashes and modern windows, the casement windows on the group of terraces have brick arches painted white which contributes positively to the character of the area, unfortunately several properties have UPVC windows which detract from the special architectural interest of the area.

6.1.12 West End also has a diverse range of buildings of various styles and heights. The Limes, The Manse, are an attractive row of timber framed houses with weatherboarded cladding, the façade dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the properties are possibly slightly earlier. Adjacent to the Grade II listed row of houses is the unlisted Congregational Church, a unique building in the village, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it has an impressive classical façade with pilasters, pediment, and timber sash windows. The Congregational Church makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and is a non-designated heritage asset. The West End Pub is also of local interest with its half-hipped roof, tile hung cladding and bay windows. Buildings are generally of two storeys in height and are set back from the road, the built form comprises a mix of terraced, detached, and semi-detached dwellings on long plots.

There is more of a sense of enclosure in comparison to other areas due to the boundary treatment which consists of picket fences, hedges, and low brick walls. The typical external materials used throughout this part of the conservation area are red brick, weatherboarding cladding painted white, brickwork, tile hung cladding, and a mix of clay and plain tiles. Fenestration is also varied, with timber sliding sash windows, some buildings such as the Congregational Church have sliding ashes without the glazing bar, while other modern dwellings have UPVC windows, which although suited to the modern architecture are not appropriate in a conservation area.

6.1.13 *Characteristic features of the conservation area*

<i>Boundary Treatment</i>	<i>Area</i>
Picket fences	<i>Church Green and West End</i>
Brick walls	<i>High Street and West End</i>
Ragstone walls	<i>Church Green</i>
Hedges	<i>All</i>
Iron railings	<i>Church Green</i>



Fig 19: *Showing the variety of boundary treatments in the area*

<i>Materials</i>	<i>Area</i>
Red brick	<i>All</i>
Ragstone	<i>Church Green</i>

Timber	<i>High Street and Church Green</i>
Bethersden Marble	<i>Church Green</i>
Slate tiles	<i>Church Green</i>
Clay tiles	<i>All</i>
Plain tiles	<i>Church Green and West End</i>
Weatherboarding	<i>All</i>
Tile hung cladding	<i>High Street and West End</i>



*Fig 20: Notable materials in the area include timber, weatherboard cladding, brickwork and tile hung cladding.*

<i>Architectural features</i>	<i>Area</i>
Sash windows	<i>All</i>
Casement windows	<i>All</i>
Close studding	<i>High Street</i>
Venetian windows	<i>High Street</i>
Bay windows	<i>High Street</i>
Dormer windows	<i>High Street and West End</i>
Leaded light windows	<i>High Street</i>



*Fig 21: Showing the various types of architectural details present in the area*

<i>Public Realm and Street Furniture</i>	<i>Area</i>
Asphalt	<i>All</i>
Planters	<i>High Street</i>

<i>Built Form</i>	<i>Area</i>
Detached properties	<i>All</i>
Terraced properties	<i>High Street and West End</i>
Semi-detached properties	<i>All</i>



Fig 22: Showing the variety of built form in the area including detached, semi-detached and terrace properties.

## 7. AUDIT OF ASSETS

7.1.1 A detailed description of the significant buildings and sites within the conservation area follows. These descriptions are based on examination from the street and historic map analysis. Buildings have not been examined internally or from non-public viewpoints.



Fig 23: Showing the listed buildings in the conservation area

Buildings and structures have been assessed according to their value, historically or architecturally, to the character of the conservation area. They have been graded as follows:

- Essential - buildings/sites which, because of their high architectural or historic interest or townscape function, must be retained.
- Positive - buildings/sites which contribute positively to the character and interest of the conservation area and whose retention should be encouraged wherever possible. Some buildings in this grade may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily
- Neutral – buildings/sites which do not harm the character of the area but whose retention is not necessary. Replacement developments should be designed to enhance the conservation area
- Negative - buildings/sites which harm the area’s character where re-development would be advantageous.

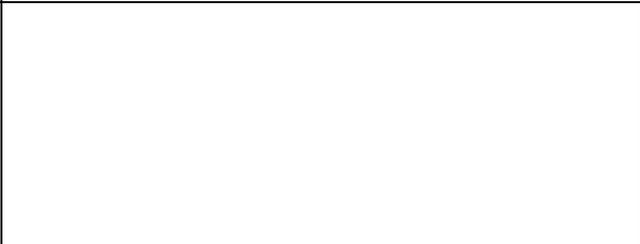
Asset	Status	Description	Value	
Albion House	Grade II	Previously cottages, now a home pair. Late C16 or early C17, with early C20 embellishments.	Essential	
Monkton House	Grade II	Late C18. Red and grey chequered brick, mainly in Flemish bond. To the right and left gables, banded plain and fishscale tiles are used. The roof is made of plain tiles. On a low brick base, there are two floors and a garret.	Essential	

<p><b>Working Mens Club</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p>Clubhouse. Late C18, with an earlier core. The ground floor is red brick in Flemish bond, while the first floor is tile-hung. Both floors of the right gable end of the front range are weatherboarded and rest on a brick plinth. The roof is made of plain tiles.</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>Marden Farm Shop</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p>Court house, probably also with market function, now shop. Probably C16, with late C17 or early C18 and C19 alterations. Timber framed, weatherboarded, with exposed corner posts.</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>Oasthouse about 180 metres south-west of E.W. Beale</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p>Oasthouse. C19. Kiln and ground floor of stowage red brick in Flemish bond, first floor of stowage weatherboarded. Plain tile roofs. Rectangular 2-bay stowage with circular kiln to right end. Stowage 2 storeys, formerly open to front on ground floor.</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	

<p><b>E.W. Beale (Chemists) Ltd, National Farmers Union Office &amp; G. Feltham, Butcher</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p><b>Shop and office row. C18 or earlier. Ground floor chequered red and grey brick to left of stack, red brick in Flemish bond under and to right of stack. First floor pebbledashed to front, brick in rat-trap bond to left gable end. Plain tile roof.</b></p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>J.H. Sutton and Son Ltd and house to right</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p><b>House and shop. C15 or early C16, with later C16 alterations and late C18 or early C19 facade. Timber framed. Ground floor chequered red and grey brick, first floor tile-hung. First floor of right gable end weatherboarded. Plain tile roof.</b></p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>John's Hairdresser, Marsida, No 3 and Vicky Clark</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p><b>House and shop row. Late C17, with late C18 or early C19 facade. Timber framed. Ground floor red brick in Flemish bond, first floor hung with banded plain and fishscale tiles.</b></p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	

<p>National Westminster Bank, Bank House, Bridgelands Cottage and Greenheys Cottage</p>	<p>Grade II</p>	<p>House, now house row and bank. C15, with later alterations and with late C18 or early C19 facade. Timber framed. Left end of ground floor red brick in Flemish bond, rest red and grey brick in Flemish bond. First floor tile-hung. Plain tile roof.</p>	<p>Essential</p>	
<p>Vine House (formerly The House attached to Suttons Agricultural Merchants</p>	<p>Grade II</p>	<p>House, formerly public house, subsequently cottages, now house. C17, possibly with earlier core. Restored 1986. Timber framed. Ground floor brown brick in Flemish bond, first floor weatherboarded. Plain tile roof.</p>	<p>Essential</p>	
<p>Ward &amp; Partners (formerly listed as JH Sutton, Agricultural Merchants)</p>	<p>Grade II</p>	<p>Shop. Late C18, with later alterations. First floor weatherboarded. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys. Modillioned wooden eaves cornice. Gabled. No visible stack.</p>	<p>Essential</p>	

<p><b>The Place (formerly listed as The House attached to Hayes Grocers &amp; Hayes Grocers)</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p><b>House pair, or house-and-shop pair, now restaurant. Left section C17, with later alterations, right section C18 or early C19. Timber framed. Ground floor clad with channelled render, first floor weatherboarded. Plain tile roof.</b></p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>Turnpike House (formerly listed as JA Castleton, Butcher with house attached)</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p><b>House, formerly shop, now house. Late C15 or early C16 with C16 and later alterations, restored in mid-to-late C20. Timber framed. Ground floor rendered, first floor with exposed framing and rendered infilling. Plain tile roof. Wealden, with two roughly equal-length hall bays and storeyed end bays.</b></p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	

<p><b>The Woodstove Trading Company, 1 Maidstone Rd, Rose's Shop &amp; No 2 High St (Smeeton)</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p>House and shop row. Early C17, with later additions and early C19 facade. Central rear wing timber framed with rendered infilling. Ground floor of front elevation red and grey brick in Flemish bond, first floor tile-hung. Plain tile roof.</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>White Lyon House (formerly listed as Worthing House and Fern House)</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II*</b></p>	<p>Formerly (and possibly originally) public house, subsequently house and shop, latterly house pair, now house. Later C15, with additions and alterations of early-to-mid C16, later C16, late C16 or early C17, and C19. Timber framed. Main range red brick in Flemish bond, with exposed framing to first floor of right gable end. Chequered red and grey brick to ground floor of front wing, and tile-hanging to first floor. Plain tile roof.</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>Former stables about 60 metres south-east of The Bridge House</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p>Stables. Late C18 or early C19. Red and grey brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roof. Built at right-angles to road. 2</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	

		storeys, with hipped roof. Projecting red and grey brick stack to rear gable end.		
<b>The Bridge House</b>	<b>Grade II</b>	<b>C17 or earlier, with C19 facade. Probably timber framed. Rendered. Rear half of right gable end tile-hung. Plain tile roof.</b>	<b>Essential</b>	
<b>The Cottage</b>	<b>Grade II</b>	<b>C19 facade to a probably C17 house. Rendered with plain tile roof. 2 storeys and garret on low rendered plinth. Half-hipped roof. Brick stack in stretcher bond set along ridge to right of centre.</b>	<b>Essential</b>	
<b>Shepherds House</b>	<b>Grade II</b>	<b>House. Late C18 or early C19. Clad with channelled render. Roof slate to front, plain tile to rear. Double depth. 2 storeys and attic. Dentilled wooden eaves cornice. Mansard roof. Brick stacks towards rear to right and left.</b>	<b>Essential</b>	

<p><b>Old Church Cottage</b></p>	<p><b>Grade II</b></p>	<p>House or special purpose building formerly shop, now house. Late C16, with C18 and C19 additions and alterations. Timber framed, weatherboarded, with plain tile roof. Two timber-framed bays, possibly a fragment of a slightly larger building. Two storeys and garret, on rendered plinth.</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	
<p><b>Church of St Michael and All Angels (formerly listed as Church of St Michael)</b></p>	<p><b>Grade I</b></p>	<p>Roughly-coursed sandstone to tower, north and south aisles and south porch. Random sandstone, ragstone and puddingstone, with ragstone gable, to south chancel chapel. Random sandstone and ragstone to chancel, and sandstone on ragstone base to north chancel chapel. Ragstone and sandstone dressings. Plain tile roofs to nave and chapels, leaded roof to north aisle. West tower, nave, south aisle extending to west face of tower, south porch with parvis</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>	

		chamber, chancel extending east of north and south chancel chapels, north aisle narrower than north chancel chapel and terminating at west end of nave.		
Nos 1 and 2 Church Green Cottage	Grade II	House, now house row. C17, with C19 facade. Timber framed. Ground floor red brick, with straight joint to right side of stack. First floor weatherboarded. Plain tile roof with diagonal bands of darker tiles.	Essential	
The Wentways	Grade II	House, Early-to-mid C19. Red brick in Flemish bond. Slate roof. 2 storeys. Gable end stacks. Regular 3-window front of two recessed 16-pane sashes and central 12-pane sash. Splayed painted voussoirs to ground and first-floor windows. Central half-glazed door with moulded architrave and flat hood. Two-storey red brick addition to right gable end, set back from front. Door formerly of six fielded panels with rectangular	Essential	

		fanlight. Included for group vale.		
<b>Fern Cottage and Amber Cottage</b>	<b>Grade II</b>	House pair. Later C18, possibly with earlier core. Timber framed, weatherboarded, with plain tile roof. 2 storeys, on rendered plinth. Hipped roof. Red brick ridge stack towards left end and slender rear stack to right. Irregular fenestration of 3 three-light casements; one to left and two to right of stack. Shallow sloping hoods to ground-floor windows. Boarded door, also with sloping hood, to left of left window. Panelled door with rectangular top light between first and second windows from right. Rear lean-to to right. Interior not inspected.	<b>Essential</b>	
<b>The Limes, The Manse and house attached to Congregational Church</b>	<b>Grade II</b>	House row. Later C18 facade to a possibly slightly earlier building. Late C18 or early C19 additions to right and left. Timber framed. Weatherboarded, with straight joint between each section. Plain tile roof to left and central	<b>Essential</b>	

		sections. Slate roof to right section.		
Westfield	Grade II	House. Early C19, with later C19 alterations. Front elevation rendered. Left gable end brick to ground floor, tile-hung above. Plain tile roof.	Essential	
Westend Cottages	Grade II	House row. Early C18, with C20 addition to left. Ground floor painted brick first floor tile-hung. Plain tile roof.	Essential	
Stocks	Grade II	Stocks about 1/2 metre south of south aisle of Church of St. Michael and All Angels Provision for 2 victims. Painted with legend: "The Old Parish Stocks. Presented by E. Hussey Esq., Lord of the Manor. 1882."	Essential	
Railings about 3 metres south and east of Shepherd's House	Grade II	Railings. C19. Painted iron. Spear-head railings with vase newels, about 1 metre high. Run across front elevation of Shepherd's House, (stopping short of left end) and return to north parallel to	Essential	

		east (right return) elevation of house.		
Railings about 3 metres east of Shepherd's House	Grade II	Railings. C19. Painted iron. Fleur-de-lys railings and newels about 1 metre high, running north from street for about 15 metres.	Essential	
Milestone	Grade II	Milestone. C19 or earlier. Stone. Rectangular, with top brought to a point. East face inscribed "Marden".	Essential	
Congregational Church	NDHA	Congregational church dating from the C19, brick with pediment in the neo-classical style.	Positive	

## 8. APPROACHES AND VIEWS



Fig 24: Map showing the important viewpoints in the conservation area

8.1.1 The view from the West End Tavern towards the north is important as there is a gentle slope that allows for views of the row of Weatherboarded terraces, classical pediment of the former Congregational church, the pitched roofscape and the hedges and trees. Due to the sloping topography, there are no glimpse of the church or High Street. The view from the corner of the Patten Lane looking westwards towards West End gives a fine view of the mix of building types in the area.



Fig 25: View of West End



Fig 26: View of West End showing the different building types

8.1.2 The view from the corner of Chantry Road looking eastwards towards the church is important, there is a gradual incline and the change in topography is noticeable. Approaching from this direction there is very little development along the road except for several dwellings on either side of the road. The long ragstone wall and is very different from other boundary treatments in the area due to the difference in materials and length of the wall. The view of the tree lined avenue contrasts with

other character areas as there is generally a lack of greenery in Marden. Situated at the top of the hill the church tower dominates the view and would have historically been the most noticeable building for miles around. From the entrance to the church the sloping terrain provides long views of the buildings to the west of the village, the approach to the church from both directions is and was always very important. The contrast with the High Street could hardly be greater due to the change in topography and low building density.



*Fig 27: View of the church and churchyard*



*Fig 28: View of the church*

8.1.3 There are two more significant views from within the conservation area. Firstly, the view from the eastern end of the High Street looking east. This view takes in major part of the commercial core of the village represented by various cafés, newsagents, shops and the Unicorn public house. The view is also important as it shows the variety of the built forms ranging from Wealden Hall houses to terraced properties, nearly all are listed. The view in the opposite direction gives a sense of the variation in roofscape with the mix of pitched and hipped roofs. The long distance view from the Unicorn looking eastwards shows the tree lined Church Green area although the church itself is not visible.

## **9. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS**

- 9.1.1 The character of conservation areas can suffer significantly from the cumulative impact of ‘minor alterations’ which can be carried out to single dwelling houses as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order without the need for planning permission. Such alterations can include replacement windows and doors and re-roofing using inappropriate non-traditional materials. The Local Authority can seek to bring such minor alterations under planning control by the use of Directions under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order.
- 9.1.2 Article 4 directions can increase the public protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. They are not necessary for works to listed buildings and scheduled monuments as listed building consent and scheduled monument consent would cover all potentially harmful works that would otherwise be permitted development under the planning regime. However, article 4 directions might assist in the protection of all other heritage assets (particularly conservation areas) and help the protection of the setting of all heritage assets, including listed buildings. There are currently no Article 4 Directions in Marden.

## **10. PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION AND GUIDANCE**

- 10.1.1 The village of Marden is a good example of a village in the Low Weald and the undulating topography, parklike churchyard and broad village street gives it a semi-rural feel. Despite modern additions, the village has retained its special historic and architectural character, and this is reflected in the high proportion of the buildings that are listed or of local interest. The variation in building materials, architectural styles and forms in each of the three character areas adds to its special interest, the Church Green with its parklike churchyard has a tranquil atmosphere, whereas the High Street and West End areas have a mix of different building types and architectural styles, the closely packed buildings along the High Street creates a more urban feel. Within the conservation area modern developments are largely of appropriate design and materials and have not resulted in any serious loss of character.
- 10.1.2 Marden has a diverse range of buildings and they are generally in good condition, there are some features such as the use of UPVC windows that detract from the character of the area, however none of the building appear to be in a dilapidated state or are in need of urgent repair.
- 10.1.3 The detailed analysis carried out in this appraisal provides a basis for considering future proposals for works and development for which the scope appears to be very limited. Those buildings or sites which are assessed as ‘essential’ or ‘positive’ will not normally be considered appropriate for demolition or redevelopment. Proposals for the redevelopment of ‘neutral’ sites will be required to match or to enhance the existing condition. No sites have been assessed as having a negative impact, so there are not many where redevelopment will be actively encouraged. There is little scope for new development on undeveloped land or as infill which would not upset the essential spatial characteristics of, and view lines across, the conservation area.

10.1.4 Future proposals for development should take into consideration the scale, materials, and design of the existing historic buildings in the area. Buildings are generally two storeys in height and developments of 2 or more storeys are likely to be considered inappropriate.

10.1.5 New development should be of high-quality design and materials, if contemporary design is considered the proposal should take inspiration from the existing buildings in the area. Also important is the presence of trees and shrubbery as this adds to the rural character of the area. New planting along the West End and High Street should be encouraged to help soften the area.

#### 10.1.6 Opportunities and Threats

This section provides a series of recommendations for future action, many of which are in control of the county council and local authority.

- Provide more public seating
- Encourage outdoor café culture opportunities particularly around the high street
- Encourage residential uses and ensure that buildings are repaired and redecorated regularly
- Reversal of inappropriate alterations to historic buildings

<b>THREATS TO BUILDINGS</b>
New development encroaching on the conservation area from the south, east, west and north.
Replacement of historic timber sash and casements with UPVC windows.
Loss of architectural features and detailing (including windows, doors, chimneys etc.)
Poor quality and/or overscaled extensions and structures
Repointing brick and flint walls with cement mortar instead of lime-based mortar
Poor-quality repairs that do not match the appearance or materials of the original

<b>THREATS TO STREET</b>
Installation of modern services and paraphernalia including satellite dishes and building services
Poor quality boundary treatment
Loss of trees and vegetation

# CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

## 11. INTRODUCTION

- 11.1.1 Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Section 69 of the 1990 Act also imposes the duty on the local authority to determine from time to time whether any further parts of the borough should be included within a conservation area.
- 11.1.2 Historic England's (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management) guidance document suggests that proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas should take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy setting objectives for addressing issues and recommendations for action arising from a previously published conservation area appraisal and identifying any further or more detailed work needed for their implementation. Such a strategy is generally given the title of a conservation area management plan.
- 11.1.3 It is important to note that a conservation area management plan cannot introduce entirely new planning objectives. Instead it will need to refer to the original legislation; to government guidance (mainly National Planning Policy Framework for heritage assets); to the adopted local plan policies; and to the emerging Local Development Framework. It can interpret established legislative provisions and planning policies and explain how they will be applied within the conservation area to ensure its preservation and/or enhancement. If any particular issues are identified which do require new policies to be drawn up, the management plan can indicate these and set a programme for their development as part of the Local Development Framework process.
- 11.1.4 This Management Plan for the Marden Conservation Area sets out the means proposed for addressing the issues identified in the above appraisal and outlines any proposals for boundary changes as also may be suggested by the appraisal.

## 12. POLICY CONTEXT

- 12.1.1 National policy and advice regarding conservation area matters is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 186 of the NPPF points out that the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings is the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas. Paragraph 185 sets out the benefits that accrue from preserving the historic environment whether it be the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental advantages, the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution or the opportunities arising from an understanding of the intrinsic character of a place.
- 12.1.2 The Historic England guidance document (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – 2016) refers to the importance of keeping the boundaries of existing conservation areas under periodic review to ascertain whether any changes are required.

The document suggests that designation of a conservation area in itself is unlikely to be effective without the formulation of specific policy guidance, and reminds local planning authorities of the duty imposed on them by Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and for these to be submitted to a 'public meeting' in the area. Paragraph 4.16 points out that such proposals cannot realistically seek to prevent all new development and should instead concentrate on the controlled and positive management of change; indeed, it is suggested that there may be instances where redevelopment will be a means of enhancing character.

12.1.3 Maidstone Borough Council published its Local Plan in 2017. Policy DM4 has an expectation that new development with the potential to affect a heritage asset should incorporate measures to conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance of the heritage asset and where appropriate, its setting. Policy SP18 of the Local Plan which amongst other things requires the sensitive design of development which impacts on heritage assets and their settings. A general Management Plan will be produced to provide general advice for development within conservation areas. While this Management Plan indicates how national and local policies will be applied in the on-going management of the conservation area, it is not in itself a planning policy document but Local Plan policy DM4 refers to conservation area appraisals and management plans as supporting documents, so they are material to planning considerations.

12.1.4 The Marden Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2020 and sets out planning policies for development and the use of land in Marden. The neighbourhood plan has weight when decisions are made on planning applications. Policy BE1 focusses on Local Character and has an expectation that any designated and non-designated heritage assets should be sympathetic to existing styles and materials and should aim to enhance the existing character of the village.

### 13. PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

13.1.1 The Appraisal above records that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained.

Consideration was given to extend the boundary to the north, however, the station and railway do not make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and there is no immediate threat of development to the north of the village.

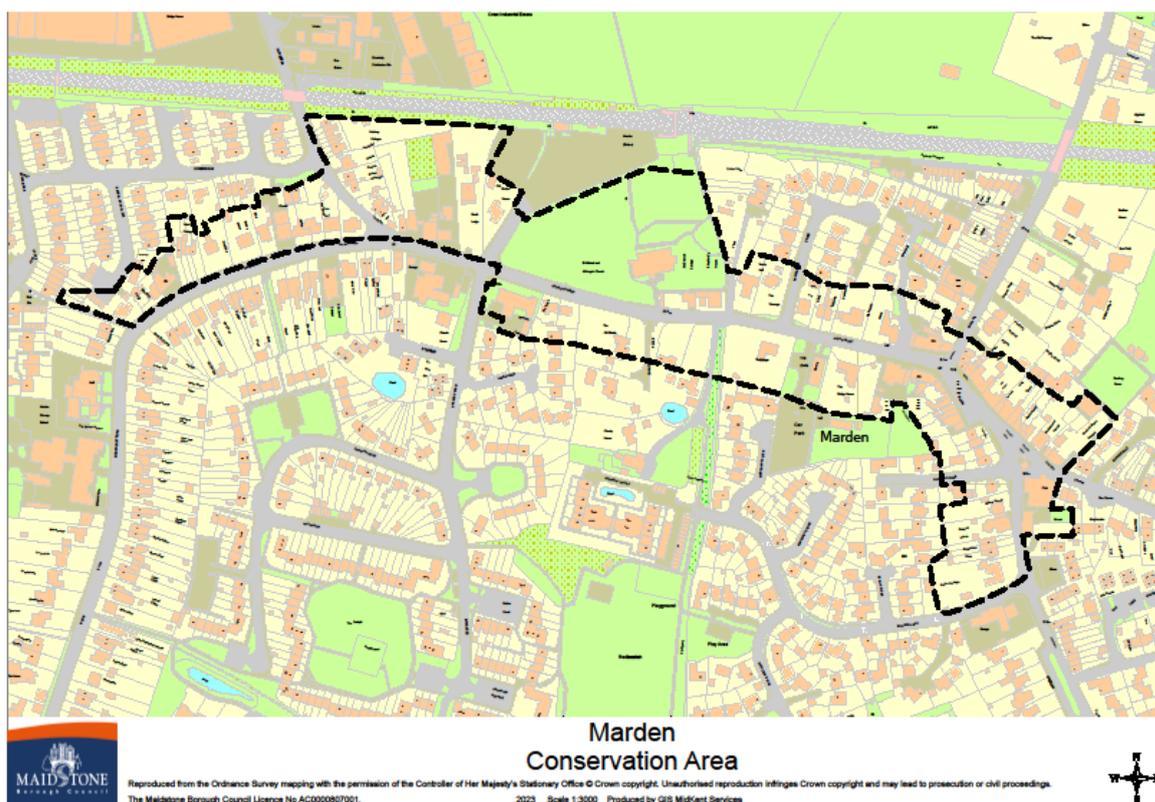


Fig 29: The present conservation area boundary

#### 14.1.1 PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

##### 14.1.2 Planning Considerations

Sensitive and responsive management of development pressure is required in order that new developments do not spoil the character and appearance of the conservation areas. To this end, the Council will adopt the following principles when dealing with planning applications within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.

14.1.3 The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations set out by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the further guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework and any subsequent revisions, additions or replacement government guidance.

The Council will apply the relevant policies from the Maidstone Local Plan 2017 until such time as these policies are replaced by a future Local Plan or by policies in the emerging Local Development Framework.

- 14.1.4 The Council will require all planning applications and applications for listed building consent to be supported by a Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement. This should set out the reasons for the development, explaining how the design has been evolved and showing how it will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area; it should also cover any access issues which exist. Historic England have published guidance on this available from the following link: (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>)
- 14.1.5 Applications must be accompanied by clear and accurate drawings showing the proposed development in detail and illustrating how it fits in to its context. Drawings should clearly indicate materials to be used in producing the external finish and architectural details of proposed buildings. Site plans should accurately depict the positions of trees on or adjacent to the site and show clearly those which will need to be removed and those which will be retained. Where trees are affected by the proposals the application should include a survey by a professional arboriculturist to comply with current British Standard BS5837, 'Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations'. It should also include details of any proposed works to, and methods for protecting, any retained tree. Photographs and other illustrative media are encouraged. Any applications which fail to provide adequate detail will not be validated.
- 14.1.6 Outline planning applications will not be accepted for proposals within the conservation area or on sites affecting its setting.
- 14.1.7 The Council will make use of technically experienced and qualified officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications within the conservation area or affecting its setting.
- 14.1.8 The overriding consideration in dealing with any proposal for development will be whether it would either preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. Any proposal which fails to do so will be refused. The Council will not insist on any particular architectural style for new building works, but the quality of the design and its execution will be paramount. The Council encourages the use of high quality contemporary design, subject to proposals being appropriate to their context in terms of scale and use of materials; however, there may be instances where a traditional approach is appropriate – in such case, designs should be high in quality and well-researched, resulting in a scheme which accurately reflects the design, scale, massing, detail and materials of local tradition. The council encourages the use of the pre-application process which ensures that planning officers are aware of a proposal at an early stage and can give advice to ensure the appropriateness and quality of any design. See pre application guidance.
- 14.1.9 In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and in this Management Plan. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, planning consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings identified as being 'essential' to the character of the conservation area, and is unlikely to be granted for those rated as 'positive'; buildings cited as 'neutral' may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an improvement over current circumstances; the redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context. Planning permission will not normally be granted to demolish buildings in the absence of an approved scheme of redevelopment.

14.1.10 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan states that the conservation area is appropriate for minor residential development as set out in Policy H27 – normally this would be restricted to proposals for one or two houses. It will be necessary for any new housing development proposals to illustrate that it is appropriate within the context of the conservation area and will not harm its special character. It is considered that the scope for new developments within the conservation area is very limited, but in dealing with any proposals the Council will have regard to the following

14.1.11 New developments should utilise building materials appropriate to the conservation area –

these include:-

- Ragstone
- Red brick
- Clay plain Kent peg tiles for roofs or tile-hanging
- Weatherboarding
- Cast iron or aluminium rainwater goods

14.1.12 In the case of red stock bricks and tiles it will be important for them to be made of Wealden clays or clays of similar geological formation. Any material selected will be required to be demonstrably used widely on nearby buildings.

14.1.13 Buildings should respect the predominant scale, which is modest. Buildings should not generally exceed 3 storeys in height.

14.1.14 Developments should preserve trees which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. All substantial trees within the conservation area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size. The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the conservation area.

14.1.15 In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:-

14.1.16 Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale. See Extensions SPD.

14.1.17 Dormer windows may be acceptable, depending on their position, number, scale and design. No more than one or two dormers per elevation will normally be considered appropriate and as a general rule a dormer should not occupy more than about one third of the overall height of the roof. Depending on circumstances, dormers should either be covered by a pitched clay tiled roof or, in the case of smaller or shallower roofs, a flat lead roof above a traditionally detailed cornice. They should not appear crowded together or be located too close to hip or gable lines. Large 'box' dormers will not be considered appropriate; neither will dormers which extend above the existing ridge height.

14.1.18 Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same provisos as dormers in relation to numbers, position and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used.

14.1.19 Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces. Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of

the conservation area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be Ragstone walls, hedging, low brick walls or metal railings. Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.

Signage whether in the public domain or as part of a commercial business frontage should respect the character of the conservation area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature

#### **14.1.20 Enforcement Strategy**

14.1.21 Unauthorised development may seriously harm the character of the Conservation Area as well as causing other problems. The Council is therefore fully committed to using its powers under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to serve enforcement notices, where expedient, to allay breaches of planning control. Section 9 of the Act sets out the relevant offences. Parallel powers to serve listed building enforcement notices regarding unauthorised works to listed buildings also exist by virtue of Section 38 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and these too will be used to their full. In suitable cases the Council may also exercise the legal provision to seek a prosecution for unauthorised works to a listed building or the unauthorised demolition of an unlisted building.

14.1.22 There are numerous powers which the Council can and will use should any building fall into a state of disrepair serious enough for it to affect the character of the Conservation Area significantly adversely or to endanger the future of a listed building.

These powers are:

**Urgent Works Notices** (Section 54 and 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Such notices can be served in respect of any vacant building or, with the prior approval of the Secretary of State, a vacant unlisted building whose preservation is considered important to the maintenance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Works specified can only be the minimum necessary to make the building wind and weathertight and are thus essentially temporary in nature. The owner must be given at least seven days' notice, after which the Council may carry out the specified works and reclaim the costs from the owner.

**Listed Building Repairs Notices** (Section 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These can only be served in respect of listed buildings. Full and permanent repairs can be specified. If an owner fails to commence work on the specified works within 2 months of the service of a Repairs Notice, the Council may start compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to the building; no other recourse is made available by the legislation.

**'Untidy Site' Notices** (Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Such a notice can be served in respect of any land (including a building) which the Council considers to adversely affect the amenity of the surroundings. The necessary steps to remedy the condition of the land and building need to be set out in the Notice and at least 28 days given for compliance. Failure to comply is deemed an offence and is punishable by a fine.

## **15. ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **15.1.1 Buildings in Disrepair**

This is currently not a significant issue in the Marden Conservation Area. However, there are numerous powers which the Council can and will use should any building fall into a state of disrepair serious enough for it to adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area or to endanger the future of a listed building. If a building falls into a serious state of disrepair the Council also has the option of adding it to the Maidstone Buildings at Risk Register. The Council will work with owners to improve the condition of any building at risk with the aim of removing them from the register.

### **15.1.2 Trees**

Trees are identified as important contributors to the character of many of Conservation Areas. All trees in a Conservation Area with a stem diameter generally above 75mm at 1.5 metres above ground level are protected under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and six weeks formal prior notice to the Council is required for any proposal to cut down or carry out other work to such trees (a Section 211 Notice). Anyone who carries out unauthorised to protected trees is likely to be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine. There may also be a duty to plant a replacement tree of appropriate size and species in the same place as soon as can reasonably be done. This duty may also apply if the tree has been removed because it was dead or dangerous.

### **15.1.3 Traffic Management**

The impact of traffic within the conservation area is a critical factor. The build-up of traffic and congestion at peak times can be significant.

### **15.1.4 Reinstatement of Original Features**

There are examples of UPVC windows on several properties in the conservation area and the Council will encourage property owners to reinstate traditional forms and materials as part of ongoing maintenance.

### **15.1.5 Public Realm Improvements**

The public realm is often managed by different organisations, including Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, and the parish council. Where practical and possible, consideration for improvements should be undertaken. These include:

- Reverse process of inappropriate modifications to buildings
- Renovate existing area of Ragstone paving and reinstate lost areas
- Ensure good quality access for pedestrians and cyclists around the village centre and into the surrounding countryside

**15.1.6 Article 4 Directions**

The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning authorities to make directions to withdraw permitted development rights. The individual permitted development rights which can be removed are limited to specific classes of development. Government guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is given in Department of the Environment Circular 9/95, which states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where firm evidence exists that damage to the character and appearance of a conservation area is likely to take place or is already taking place because of the exercise of such rights.

**16. REVIEW AND PRACTICE PROCEDURES**

16.1.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be reviewed after an appropriate period of not less than five years and any required amendments will be incorporated.

**17. ACTION PLAN SUMMARY**

ISSUE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Street Furniture	Provide more public seating.	Maidstone Borough Council
Street Furniture	Encourage outdoor café culture opportunities particularly around the high street.	Maidstone Borough Council
Maintenance	Encourage residential uses and ensure that buildings are repaired and redecorated regularly.	Maidstone Borough Council Property owners
Reversal of inappropriate alterations	Encourage owners to carry out sympathetic alterations to historic buildings to include the reversal of inappropriate additions such as UPVC window.	Maidstone Borough Council Property owners

## APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>
Newman. J	2012	<i>The Buildings of England Kent: West and the Weald</i>
Adams. J	1817-19	<i>The Survey of the Parish of Marden in the Country of Kent</i>
Bristow.W	1798	<i>The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 7</i>  <i>Available from:</i> <a href="https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol7/pp51-64">https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol7/pp51-64</a> )
Marden History Group	2023	<i>Available from:</i> <a href="http://www.mardenhistory.org.uk/home/">http://www.mardenhistory.org.uk/home/</a>
Marden Neighbourhood Plan	2017	<i>Available from:</i>  <a href="https://maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/281750/190528-Marden-Neighbourhood-Plan-with-Maps.pdf">https://maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/281750/190528-Marden-Neighbourhood-Plan-with-Maps.pdf</a>

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Historic England Cannon Bridge House 25 Dowgate Hill London EC4R 2YA  
[customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Kent County Council (Heritage Conservation Group) Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14

Email: [heritageconservation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:heritageconservation@kent.gov.uk)

Maidstone Borough Council (Heritage, Landscape & Trees), Maidstone House, King Street,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ.

Email: [PSTechnical@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:PSTechnical@maidstone.gov.uk)

### Professional Bodies

The Arboricultural Association, The Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire  
GL10 3DL T: +44(0)1242 522152 Email: [admin@trees.org.uk](mailto:admin@trees.org.uk)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Miller Building, University of Reading, Reading RG6

6AB. T: 0118 378 6446 Email: [admin@archaeologists.net](mailto:admin@archaeologists.net)

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Coventry CV4 8JE T: +44 (0)870 333 1600

Email: [mailto:contactrics@rics.org](mailto:mailto:contactrics@rics.org)

The Institution of Structural Engineers, International HQ, 47-58 Bastwick Street, London, EC1V 3PS,  
United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0)20 7235 4535

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) South East branch [SEBranch-Secretary@ihbc.org.uk](mailto:SEBranch-Secretary@ihbc.org.uk)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)

### Design and Access Statements

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101121172431/http://cabe.org.uk/>

[files/design-and-access-statements.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101121172431/http://cabe.org.uk/files/design-and-access-statements.pdf)

# Agenda Item 14

## Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee

7 December 2023

### Draft Statement of Common Ground – Lower Thames Crossing

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	7 December 2023
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	By 14 December 2023

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Call in has been waived to allow the decision to be implemented immediately and this has been agreed by the Mayor and the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Erik Nilsen (Principal Planning Officer)
<b>Classification</b>	<p>Public report with Exempt Appendix.</p> <p>Appendix 1 – Draft Statement of Common Ground between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways</p> <p>The Appendix contains exempt information as classified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in</p>

	<p>their disclosure. The Statement of Common Ground is a draft document and is currently unsigned and contains sensitive cross boundary matters. The draft document contains information affecting the business affairs of another authority. The Statement of Common Ground will be published once agreed and signed by both parties.</p>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### **Executive Summary**

The draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) appended to this report summarises the key strategic matters between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways (Exempt Appendix 1). This is specifically with respect to the Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order proposal, which is currently undergoing independent examination. The report recommends that members recommend approval of this updated Statement of Common Ground as set out in the Exempt Appendix 1.

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide background to and the current version of the Draft Statement of Common Ground between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways regarding the Lower Thames Crossing. To seek views from Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on the Draft Statement of Common Ground as appended to this report (Exempt Appendix 1) prior to a decision being sought from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.

### **The report makes the following recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.**

1. That the draft Statement of Common Ground on the Lower Thames Crossing between Maidstone Borough Council and National Highways, attached at Exempt Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

## Draft Statement of Common Ground – Lower Thames Crossing

### 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve the corporate objectives.</p>	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendation supports the various strands of the Council’s ongoing strategic planning work.</p>	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	The Statement of Common Ground and associated protocol have been produced as part of both our ongoing strategic planning work with adjacent and other authorities in relation to their planning functions, and our own current the Local Plan Review, both of which take into account the key requirements and therefore addresses associated risks.	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
<b>Financial</b>	There are no financial implications to note, any costs will be accommodated within existing budgets.	Adrian Lovegrove, Head of Finance
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial

		Planning and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	Accepting the recommendation will fulfil the Council's duties (particularly evidencing the duty to co-operate) under Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS (Planning) Team Leader
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendation does not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Senior Information Governance Officer
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Nicola Toulson, Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no implications to Crime and Disorder.	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
<b>Procurement</b>	Not applicable.	Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and wider cross-boundary matters relate to numerous actions of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan, namely cross boundary strategies related to flood elevation, biodiversity improvements, rewilding and maintaining ancient woodlands, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy generation.	James Wilderspin, Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Pursuant to s.33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) are subject to a legal duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies (as set out in regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.
- 2.2 In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires strategic policy-making authorities to prepare and maintain one or more Statements of Common Ground (SoCG).
- 2.3 SoCG are written records of the progress made by policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. They document where effective cooperation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process. They are a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries even if there are still matters to be resolved. In the case of local planning authorities, SoCG also form a key part of the evidence required to demonstrate that they have complied with the duty to cooperate.
- 2.4 A SoCG may also be used as an effective tool for demonstrating cooperation between the Local Planning Authority and those who play a part in helping deliver their Plan.
- 2.5 This report brings before the committee a SoCG that sets out the position between National Highways and Maidstone Borough Council regarding the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Development Consent Order (DCO) proposal. The application for the LTC DCO was submitted by National Highways to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2022 and was subsequently accepted for independent examination in November 2022. The examination of the LTC DCO is currently ongoing. National Highways has requested the SoCG and, subject to it being formally agreed, intends to submit the SoCG to the Examining Authority.
- 2.6 It is noted that a SoCG with National Highways on the LTC DCO proposals was previously prepared and then endorsed by the Council (via Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure) on 21 October 2022. This was countersigned by National Highways on 25 November 2022. At the request of National Highways the endorsed SoCG was retained for internal use only and therefore not submitted to the Examining Authority.
- 2.7 Subsequently, a revised SoCG was prepared during summer to autumn 2023, and this included an updated position on key issues and new evidence introduced by National Highways late in the process. Despite the draft SoCG not being endorsed by the Council, it was submitted by National Highways to the Examining Authority (at Examination Deadline 6) and has been published as part of the LTC DCO Examination Library. Maidstone

Borough Council has now written to the Examining Authority via the Planning Inspectorate to request that clarifications are provided in the public record that the draft SoCG is not endorsed by the Council. Officers have also considered the latest updates made by National Highways to the draft SoCG and suggested revised text, which is set out in Exempt Appendix 1 of this report. This text has also been sent to National Highways for their consideration. The aim for the revised SoCG to be agreed by both parties and then forwarded to the Examining Authority as a final published document.

- 2.8 This SoCG notes the position of the Council regarding various components of the LTC, including the need for the project, route alignment, traffic modelling and impacts. It reflects previous formal consultation responses made by the Council on the LTC DCO application and re-asserts its concerns with specific elements of the scheme and the latest evidence base associated with it. Previous consultation and engagement activities are also listed.
- 2.9 Members may wish to note that there is a separate SoCG between the Council and National Highways in relation to the Maidstone Local Plan Review, which was published as part of the Local Plan Review examination.
- 2.10 There is also a need for urgency for this decision (i.e., to waive call-in). The SoCG must be submitted by the deadline set by the Planning Inspectorate for the receipt of new evidence, including Statements of Common Ground, for the examination on the LTC DCO proposals. The next 'Examination Deadline' (i.e., ED9) on 15th December 2023 is the final such deadline programmed, and therefore the last opportunity for the Council to confirm its latest position on the project.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1: That the draft SoCG (Exempt Appendix 1) is approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow this document to be finalised and signed, in accordance with the agreed protocol, in order that it may be submitted by National Highways to the Examining Authority for the LTC DCO, appointed by the Secretary of State.
- 3.2 Option 2: That the draft SoCG (Exempt Appendix 1) be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, subject to further comments and changes, which would also need to be agreed by National Highways. While this would allow the SoCG to be finalised and signed, in accordance with the agreed protocol, it may cause delays in submission of the SoCG by National Highways to the Examining Authority for the LTC DCO.
- 3.3 Option 3: That the draft SOCG (Exempt Appendix 1) is not approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.

However, this would mean the document could not be finalised and signed, and thus prevent the submission of the SoCG by National Highways to the Examining Authority for the LTC DCO.

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#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Option 1. That the draft SOCG (Exempt Appendix 1) is approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow the SoCG to be finalised and signed, in accordance with the agreed protocol, in order that it may be submitted by National Highways to the Examining Authority for the LTC DCO.
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#### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risk associated with the recommendation, including the risks should the Council not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk management Framework.
- 5.2 If agreement is secured, per the recommendations, then we are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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#### **6. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Exempt Appendix 1: Draft Statement of Common Ground between Maidstone Borough Council & National Highways (regarding the Lower Thames Crossing).
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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted