

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 12 December 2023
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Hastie, Jeffery, Joy (Vice-Chairman), Khadka, Knatchbull
(Chairman), Mortimer, Riordan, Rose and Springett

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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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 by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Friday 8 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](#).

Issued on Monday 4 December 2023

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillor Joy (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Conyard, Forecast, Jeffery, Mortimer, Reid, Riordan, Rose and Springett
Cabinet Members:	Councillors Garten, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Councillor Parfitt-Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health
Visiting Members:	Councillor Cleator

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hastie, Khadka and Knatchbull.

78. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor Conyard for Councillor Khadka
- Councillor Forecast for Knatchbull
- Councillor Reid for Hastie

79. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

80. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Cleator was present as Visiting Member for the following Items:

- Item 10 – LGPS Pension Guarantee for Waste Contract
- Item 11 – Proposed Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and changes to the current Landlord Incentive Scheme (LIS)
- Item 12 – 2nd Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report

81. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

82. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

83. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wishes to discuss Item 13 – Exempt Appendix to Item 11 – Proposed Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and changes to the current Landlord Incentive Scheme (ISL), in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

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

86. LGPS PENSION GUARANTEE FOR WASTE CONTRACT

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services introduced the item and stated that four employees currently employed by Biffa Municipal Ltd, originally employed by the Council, would transfer to SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK in March as part of the Mid Kent waste contract change. For the four employees to retain their pension rights, SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK would need to become an Admission Body for the Local Government Pension Fund (LGPS), and Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils would need to provide a pension guarantee of £383,000 to the Kent Pension Fund to protect the employees from a shortfall.

The Committee enquired about how the pension guarantee would be monitored and the Head of Environmental Services and Waste Management stated that protections were in place in the waste contract, that SUEZ would provide data and information on its contributions to the LGPS and the same practice had been implemented with Biffa without issue.

The Committee agreed that the £383,000 was an appropriate provision to the Kent Pension Fund and recommended that it be agreed to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:

That the provision of a guarantee to the total value of £383k to the Kent Pension Fund in partnership with Ashford Borough Council be approved.

87. PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME (PSL) AND CHANGES TO THE CURRENT LANDLORD INCENTIVE SCHEME (LIS)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health introduced the report and stated that the Council was experiencing unprecedented demand for homeless services and currently had 270 households in Temporary Accommodation (TA), of which the Council owns 105 households. It was proposed to create a Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme and for the Council to own 50 households under the scheme in two years.

The Committee agreed that the PSL Scheme would be beneficial to the Council's support for vulnerable residents and increase the portfolio of Temporary Accommodation. A Member of the Committee raised a concern about whether the Council could purchase properties from landlords at the rates it anticipated considering the increased demand for rental properties.

In response to concerns, the Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the scheme would provide a guaranteed rental income, internal repairs and a management service. It was further stated that when the decision would be made another recommendation would be included to state that the final decision on leasing individual properties would be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health together with the Director of Finance & Business Improvement.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:

That is be agreed to:

1. Launch an MBC PSL scheme with an ambition to secure 50 homes within two years of launch, and;
2. Recast the capital programme to deliver the remainder of the purchased TA over 24/25, so shortening the programme from three to two years, subject to prevailing market conditions / availability of suitable stock.

88. 2ND QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health introduced the item and stated that:

- The Council was projecting a net overspend of just under £300,000 for the 2023/24 financial year.
- The finance budget for Housing, Health and Environment Services was currently £3.615m, compared to a budget of £3.434m.
- The end of year forecast for Housing, Health and Environment Services was a projected overspend of £582,000.
- The largest variance in budget was from homeless temporary accommodation.
- Four of the eight Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Housing, Health and Environment Services were achieved, with three missing targets within 10%.

The Committee considered the update and queried the £90,000 underspend in relation to Environmental Protection Section and whether the Committee could be presented with a trend metric for KPIs.

The Director of Regeneration and Place stated he would provide an answer to the Environmental Protection underspend to the Committee and the Information and Analytics Manager stated that future performance reports could include a trend graph metric.

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; and
4. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

89. EXEMPT APPENDIX TO ITEM 11 - PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME (PSL) AND CHANGES TO THE CURRENT LANDLORD INCENTIVE SCHEME (LIS)

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 11 – Proposed Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and changes to the current Landlord Incentive Scheme (LIS).

90. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 6.59 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	 Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910	 Councillor Paul Cooper Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070	 Councillor John Perry Cabinet Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741
	 Councillor Claudine Russell Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk	 Councillor Patrik Garten Cabinet Member for Environmental Services PatrikGarten@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 807907	 Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Cabinet Member for Housing and Health LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 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

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Cabinet Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Government Consultation</p> <p>The Secretary of State for the Home Department is required consult local authorities on the introduction of an annual cap on the number of entrants using safe and legal routes to enter the UK. The cap is intended to provide a considered approach to the way the UK's safe and legal routes will function in the coming years for refugees and asylum seekers entering the UK. The deadline for responses is 15th December 2023.</p>	Leader of the Council	Leader of the Council	Before 15 Dec 2023	Yes	No	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Dec 2023	Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Government Consultation	<p>John Littlemore</p> <p>Head of Housing & Regulatory Services</p> <p>johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Fees and Charges 2024/25</p> <p>F&Cs for the PAC that will be used to charge for services in 24/25</p> <p>∞</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Dec 2023	Yes	No Open	<p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Dec 2023</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 7 Dec 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Dec 2023</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2023</p>	Fees and Charges 2024/25 CS PAC	<p>Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>adrianlovegrove@m aidstone.gov.uk</p>
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and feedback	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and	<p>Hannah Gaston</p> <p>hannahgaston@mai dstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
Delivering the new strategic priorities for the Council in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping. A review of the themes and priorities for the Council.							feedback	
Provision of Wheeled Bins Summary of the policy for charging for replacement and new wheeled bins and review of recent developments to the policy.	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	Provision of Wheeled Bins	Jennifer Stevens Head of Environmental Services & Public Realm jenniferstevens@maidstone.gov.uk
Housing Revenue Account The report sets out the options for management and financial accounting of the 1,000 new affordable homes.	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	Yes	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2023	Housing Revenue Account	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Regulatory Services johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk

Agenda Item 10

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

12 DECEMBER 2023

Government Consultation on Cap for Safe and Legal Routes

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Housing, Health & Environment PAC	12 th December 2023
Leader of the Council	13 th December 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Call in has been waived to allow the consultation response to be sent by the deadline of 15th December and this has been agreed by the Mayor and the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman.
Final Decision-Maker	Leader of the Council
Lead Head of Service	Director for Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Government has asked all local authorities in England to respond to a consultation on the figure they consider to be a suitable cap on the number of refugee households that can be accommodated after 2025 in their district.

Purpose of Report

Decision

Choose from the below options:

This report makes the following recommendations to the Leader of the Council;

1. The Leader of the Council approves a zero cap response to the Government consultation for the reasons set out in the report.

Government Consultation on Cap for Safe and Legal Routes

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contained in the report. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council’s duties under the Illegal Migration Act by providing a response to the Secretary of State. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services

Information Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There could be implications and these are mitigated by the recommended zero cap. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. 	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Minister for Immigration recently wrote to all local authorities in the United Kingdom explaining that the Illegal Migration Act places a duty on the Home Secretary to set a cap on the number of entrants to the UK arriving via safe and legal routes. The Home Office launched the consultation to inform the level at which the cap on safe and legal routes is set. The consultation ends on 15th December 2023.
- 2.2 The letter acknowledges the 'considerable burden' that has been placed on local authorities resulting from the 'largest number' of persons entering the UK in its history. Workshops have been hosted by the Home Office to help inform the consultation response and the one for South East local authorities was held on 16th November 2023.
- 2.3 The Illegal Migration Act makes it an offence to attempt to enter the UK illegally and those that do so will be removed. Government has stated that the Act is intended to 'put a stop to illegal migration into the UK by removing

the incentive to make dangerous small boat crossings'. As part of its migration control the Government will introduce the concept of safe and legal routes into the UK and the Secretary of State will be required to place a cap on the number of people coming to the UK each year.

2.4 Safe and Legal Routes includes:

- UK Resettlement Scheme – those refugees entering through an UNHCR route.
- Community Sponsorship Scheme – for those being supported by family or organisations through the above UKRS.
- The Mandate resettlement scheme – similar to the above.
- Existing Afghan, Ukrainian and Hong Kong refugees schemes.

2.5 The consultation is aimed at local authorities who provide housing or support to resettled individuals in the UK. There is an expectation that local authorities will consult with a range of non-government organisations who provide support to asylum and refugee households, and that in two-tier areas the upper and lower authorities should come to an agreed figure.

2.6 In an area the size of Kent having a meaningful discussion with the relevant groups was not a realistic proposition in the timescale allowed. The number of NGO providing specialised support to relevant households in the Maidstone Borough Council is negligible. Conversations have taken place with officers from Kent County Council, which have informed this response. Kent County Council will be replying to consultation separately and are likely to reference their continued concerns relating to the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children that they are required to accommodate and support.

2.7 A resettlement tariff is proposed 'on a per capita basis to local authorities to help the families they have pledged to resettle and support into life in the UK. It is comprised of a core tariff of £20,520 per person, provided over a period of five years for UKRS arrivals and over three years for ACRS and ARAP; as well as additional tariffs in the first year of up to £4,500 per child to cover education costs, and £850 for adults requiring English language support. An additional tariff of £2,600 is made available to local health bodies to cover healthcare costs in the first year.' It is unclear whether in two-tier areas the funding will be provided in whole or part to the upper-tier or district council.

2.8 Importantly, the new cap will not be retrospective. The cap does not apply to the vast number of persons who have entered the UK and then claimed asylum and are currently accommodated in hotels and short-term accommodation across the UK. Nor does the cap impact on those persons who enter the UK through legal routes and then make a claim for asylum.

2.9 The cap has no relevance to the Asylum Dispersal Programme previously imposed by the Home Office, which set the level of asylum seekers to be accommodated in Maidstone Borough Council at 126 persons. There is tacit acceptance now at the Home Office that the 'fair distribution' figures are unlikely to be achieved in the way set out and that some districts will receive more households than their original allocation.

- 2.10 The consultation comes at a time of national crisis within the housing market, with record levels of households being accommodated in temporary accommodation and homelessness on the rise. Maidstone Borough Council is not immune from these challenging factors, and receives more applications for assistance with housing than any other district in Kent. Our current level of demand includes over 270 households in temporary accommodation, some of whom have had to be placed out of area due to the lack of suitably sized accommodation in the Maidstone area.
- 2.11 Our local housing market is impacted by other local housing authorities and agencies acquiring accommodation in our private housing sector. This exasperates an already over-heated private market that means it is almost impossible for local residents to acquire private rented accommodation at a reasonable rate.
- 2.12 Our experience is that those placed into our area by external organisations receive little or no support. Indications are that support agencies are stretched to meet existing need. The severe lack of school vacancies and General Practitioner capacity means that people coming into the area, the Town Centre in particular, are forced to travel significant distances to access the most basic of essential services.
- 2.13 Health Services in the Maidstone area are under immense pressure. According to the West Kent Health & Care Partnership's own statistics, Maidstone General Practitioner Practices have the worst GP to patient ratios in Kent. One GP Practice in the Town Centre has a ratio of one GP to 7,328 patients. Feedback from Kent Health colleagues with experience of asylum seekers elsewhere in Kent is that they often have long-term and untreated illnesses that place a significant burden on Health Services.
- 2.14 Kent County Council has confirmed the position in MBC as follows:
- Primary and Secondary schools are generally full, some primary capacity in rural areas.
 - Special Schools West Kent: All over capacity but individual needs of children would need assessment and placement as with all children moving into the area.
 - It has been helpful to have funding for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, but unhelpful that this is not consistent for asylum seekers and the non-homes for Ukraine families.
- 2.15 The draft response to the consultation is set out in Appendix A to this report.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to respond to the consultation but this is not recommended as the Council would lose the opportunity to express its concerns about the proposed initiative and a non-return might be interpreted as permitting the Government to set a cap for Maidstone.

- 3.2 The Council returns a zero cap for Maidstone Borough Council, reflecting the enormous pressures the Council faces from the housing crisis, the lack of structured support for vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees, and the ill-conceived initiatives being delivered by the Government in relation to the asylum crisis.
- 3.3 The Council could provide a figure above zero but this is not recommended as it remains unclear how this would be funded by Government and how accommodation would be secured for those households at a time when the Council is facing extreme difficulty in placing those residents it owes a housing duty.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option and reasoning are contained at Paragraph 3.2 above.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risk if the Council does not respond to the Government's consultation is that the Home Office may impose a figure on Maidstone that is wholly unsustainable. Whilst it remains within the Home Office's power to do so, by responding to the consultation it provides an opportunity to set out the reasoned arguments as to why the proposed policy is unlikely to succeed in its objectives.
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6. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Response Form – Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Consultation
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Response Form – Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Consultation

About you

Full name	John Littlemore
Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Local authority (or equivalent) represented	Maidstone Borough Council
Date	27-11-2023
Postcode	ME15 6JQ



Responses

Ahead of responding, please familiarise yourself with the consultation paper, with particular regard to the “Instructions for completing the questionnaire” section.

Question	Response
Q1: What organisations (including VCS organisations, and community sponsorship groups) in your area have you engaged with while compiling your response and have you included the responses received from these organisations in your local authority consolidated response?	Kent County Council Other Kent Local Housing Authorities YMCA Maidstone Mind Making A Difference Maidstone Salvation Army Maidstone
Q2: What is your capacity to house and support those coming through safe and legal routes under the cap in calendar year 2025?	Zero



Q3: What evidence can you provide to support this (for example, number of properties that you have available or can procure)?

Maidstone Borough Council has supported the Government in addressing this issue by providing homes through our Housing Register and under the Local Authority Housing Fund by providing new housing for 22 refugee families.

However, current pressures on the Housing Service with record numbers of households having to be placed into temporary accommodation, larger households having to be placed out of area due to a lack of suitable accommodation locally. This position is reflected across the South East and the pressures Kent is experiencing has been reported to the South East Asylum Dispersal Governance Meeting on a number of occasions.

Since April 2023 we have received over 2,000 approaches for assistance with housing resulting in over 700 homeless applications being taken. Our innovative use of data analytics to prevent homelessness places us in the top quartile nationally for preventing homelessness but we experience an increasing demand for housing at the point of applicants being homeless on the day.

Nationally, housing associations across the UK are cutting back development programmes amid a “perfect storm” of inflation, higher interest rates and the soaring cost of debt. Registered housing providers are expected to cut their build pipelines by 22% in the short to medium term.

Our ability to assist applicants into the private rented market is severely curtailed by the disparity between the local housing allowance and market rents. As a result our use of temporary accommodation has more than trebled from 80 households 4 years ago to nearly 300 at present. This is particularly manifest for larger families with over 25% of those in TA requiring four-bedroom properties or larger that do not exist in the social housing sector. This has resulted in larger households staying disproportionately longer in TA and our experience to date suggests that many of the refugee households are



	<p>extended families that are seeking to be housed as one family unit, which is unachievable.</p> <p>This situation is not assisted by the large pull on our private rented accommodation by London Housing Authorities and other neighbouring Councils. One London Borough having purchased over 160 properties in our area to place their homeless applicants.</p> <p>The Town Centre in Maidstone hosts the largest concentration of supported accommodation in West Kent. This includes the only Kent Probation Approved Premises, which serves the whole of Kent. Other Probation Trusts also utilise accommodation in our locality for CAS3 accommodation.</p> <p>No account appears to have been taken of the demands on service arising from the Asylum Dispersal Scheme or how the existing allocation for dispersal will be met and what capacity there is to support these households.</p> <p>There is no identification in the consultation document to suggest that financial assistance will be provided to local housing authorities to meet the housing needs of this cohort.</p> <p>No account has been taken of existing unmet need e.g. Maidstone has one of the highest number of Ukrainian households with over 450 families placed in the Homes for Ukraine scheme.</p> <p>There is a lack of school places and General Practitioner capacity in our locality, particularly in the Town Centre where most out of area placements are made.</p>
<p>Q4: Of the above number, in 2025, how many of the following groups do you anticipate being able to</p>	<p>a. Complex Cases: 0</p> <p>b. Single people: 0</p>



accommodate, and ensure appropriate support is in place for:	c. Large families: 0
Q5: Of the above number, how many of these do you expect to come through the community sponsorship scheme in your area?	
Q6: The Resettlement Tariff and Community Sponsorship Funding provide the local authority with access to central funding for the purpose of supporting refugee integration. What impact has this funding had on your ability to resettle refugees in your area?	Although our VCS is motivated to help, our discussions have highlighted there will be sufficient capacity within the VCS regionally to support these vulnerable persons. It is unclear where the funding will go in two tier areas and who will be responsible for commissioning which services, which makes planning extremely difficult. No separate funding has been identified for housing costs.
Q7: There is no additional funding being introduced with the cap. How could the funding instructions be changed to maximise the existing funding, enabling innovation and increased delivery of services in your area?	



Q8: What impact do you assess the local provision of public services such as education, social care (adult and children) and healthcare has on your ability to resettle refugees in your area? Why do you assess this to be the case?

Kent County Council has confirmed that there is no capacity for school places within the urban settlements.

Where there is limited capacity, this is located in rural areas, which are by their nature are isolated and not conducive to supporting persons newly entering the UK into employment and establishing other networks.

Kent County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education notes that for new school development beyond 2024 the commissioning proposals are dependent on the pace of planned housing development being realised, which is by no means certain. The Plan recognises that Maidstone will experience an increase in school age population over the lifetime of the Commissioning Plan.

Kent County Council is struggling with the number of UASC placements in our locality and has taken the decision to end early the placement of former UASC children when they reach adulthood, further placing demands on an already stretched housing service.

Health Services are overwhelmed in our area. The majority of GP practices in Maidstone have the worst patient to GP ratio of all of West Kent, with one Town Centre practice having a ratio of 7,328 patients to a GP. We are aware that funding from Government in respect of Contingency Accommodation for asylum seekers is woefully inadequate to meet their needs many of whom have longstanding untreated conditions.

As part of the Asylum Dispersal governance arrangements, we have been lobbying the Home Office for over 12 months to develop a model to assess the cumulative impact on local housing authorities to the range of pressures and placements within our areas, despite assurances this has yet to be delivered and therefore limits the objective assessment of what is a fair settlement.



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Thank you for participating in this consultation.

Please send your response by midnight on 15 December 2023 to:
capconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk

Agenda Item 11

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

12 December 2023

Fees and Charges 2024-25

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee	12 December 2023
Cabinet	20 December 2023

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

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 for 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 7 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 and the other Policy Advisory Committees.

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.

Recommendation to the Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee

1. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to comment on the content.
2. That the Committee recommend to the Cabinet to approve the Fees and Charges as detailed in Appendix A for the Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee.
3. That the Committee note the Fees and Charges Policy as detailed in appendix B.

Fees and Charges 2024-25

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	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. 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.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council’s other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	The recommendations do not have any staffing implications.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 permits best value authorities to charge for discretionary services provided the authority has the power to provide that service and the recipient agrees to take it up on those terms. The authority has a duty to ensure that taking one financial year with another, income does not exceed the costs of providing the service. 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 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>	Head of Legal
Information Governance	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
Equalities	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
Public Health	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Procurement	The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Biodiversity & Climate Change Manager

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 £76,335 which amounts to a 2.2% increase in the budgeted income figure for this committee for the current financial year.

Fees and Charges

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

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.

Parks and Open Spaces – Increases of around 9 to 12% on all pitches reflecting increased costs.

Cemetery and Crematorium – A number of changes are proposed to the charges in this area. These proposals have been made with reference to increasing supply costs and are considered to be in line with charges made by local competitors.

Environmental Health – Charges have been reviewed and increased where appropriate to offset the costs of service provision.

Waste Crime and Community Protection – Charges have been reviewed and increased for Pest Control and Community safety to offset the costs of service provision.

Recycling and Refuse Collection – Charges have been reviewed and increased where appropriate to offset the costs of service provision. There is also an increase in income included to bringing forward the implementation of the Garden Waste Charge Increase with effect from October 2023.

HMO Licensing – Increases of around 5 to 6% and a small increase in budget.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites – No increase in charges.

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.

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.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The Council's finances are subject to a high degree of risk and uncertainty. The draft MTFS includes an evaluation of the Council's financial resilience, from which it can be seen that it has adequate, but not excessive, reserves and is positioned well to manage the financial challenges that it faces.
- 5.2 In order to address risk on an ongoing basis in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each of its meetings.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (7 September 2023) received details of the savings proposals which will be needed to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

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

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

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

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

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25
Fees and Charges
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Fees and Charges April 2024 - March 2025	* Includes VAT	Statutory Fee Discretionary Fee	Actuals	Current	Current	Proposed	Change	+ / - Income	Estimate	Comments
			2022-2023	2023-24	Charges 2023-2024	Charges 2024-2025		2023-24	2024-2025	
			£	£	£	£	%	£	£	
<u>Gardens of Remembrance</u>		x								
<u>Sanctum Vault</u>		x								
5 year lease		x			1,085.00	1,085.00	0.00%			
10 year lease		x			1,640.00	1,640.00	0.00%			
20 year lease		x			2,610.00	2,610.00	0.00%			
30 year lease		x			3,310.00	3,310.00	0.00%			
<u>Family Sanctum Vault (From Jan 15)</u>		x								
5 Year lease					1,155.00	1,155.00	0.00%			
10 year lease		x			1,710.00	1,710.00	0.00%			
20 year lease		x			2,680.00	2,680.00	0.00%			
30 year lease		x			3,380.00	3,380.00	0.00%			
<u>Gardens of Remembrance</u>		x								
Bench & Plaque	*	x			285.00	285.00	0.00%			
Plot Rental - 5 years		x			375.00	375.00	0.00%			
Plot Rental - bench and SE Plaque - Annual		x			75.00	75.00	0.00%			
Added inscription	*	x			72.00	72.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 5 years					885.00	885.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 10 years		x			1,280.00	1,280.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 20 years		x			1,970.00	1,970.00	0.00%			
Sanctum Panorama Vault 30 years					2,470.00	2,470.00	0.00%			
Barbican		x			214.00	214.00	0.00%			
Barbican - annual renewal		x			26.00	26.00	0.00%			
Woodside Goundial		x			214.00	214.00	0.00%			
Woodside Goundial annual renewal		x			26.00	26.00	0.00%			
Granite bench x 2 plaques		x			160.00	160.00	0.00%			
Granite bench		x			20.00	20.00	0.00%			
Illustration, photo plaques etc.		x			P.O.A.	P.O.A.				
Chapel Lawn Planter		x								
Plaque with inscription	*	x			123.00	123.00	0.00%			
Plus 10 year dedication		x			220.00	220.00	0.00%			
Birdbath Memorial	*	x								
6" x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			123.00	123.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			19.00	19.00	0.00%			
7 1/4" x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			133.00	133.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			20.00	20.00	0.00%			
8 1/2 " x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			143.00	143.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			21.00	21.00	0.00%			
9 3/4 " x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			153.00	153.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			22.00	22.00	0.00%			
11 " x 3" plaque with inscription	*	x			163.00	163.00	0.00%			
Annual dedication		x			23.00	23.00	0.00%			
<u>Woodside Walk Book</u>		x								
Plaque with inscription	*	x			69.00	69.00	0.00%			
Plus 10 year dedication		x			160.00	160.00	0.00%			

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maidstone Borough Council

Charging Policy

September 2023

1 Introduction and Context

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

2 Policy Aims and Objectives

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

3 Scope

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

4 Principles

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

5 Process and Frequency for Reviewing Charges

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

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

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

6 Guidance

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

7 Cost Recovery Limitation

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

8 Concessions & Subsidies

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

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

9 Introducing a new charge

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

10 Monitoring

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

Appendix A - Discretionary Fees & Charges Review Checklist

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

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

Appendix A - Discretionary Fees & Charges Review Checklist

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Chargeable Service/Supply: _____

Job Title: _____

Department: _____

Appendix B – Example Schedule of Fees & Charges

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



BUDGET SURVEY

September 2023

ABSTRACT

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

Consultation@maidstone.gov.uk

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Findings

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

Methodology

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

There was a total of 646 responses to the survey.

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

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

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

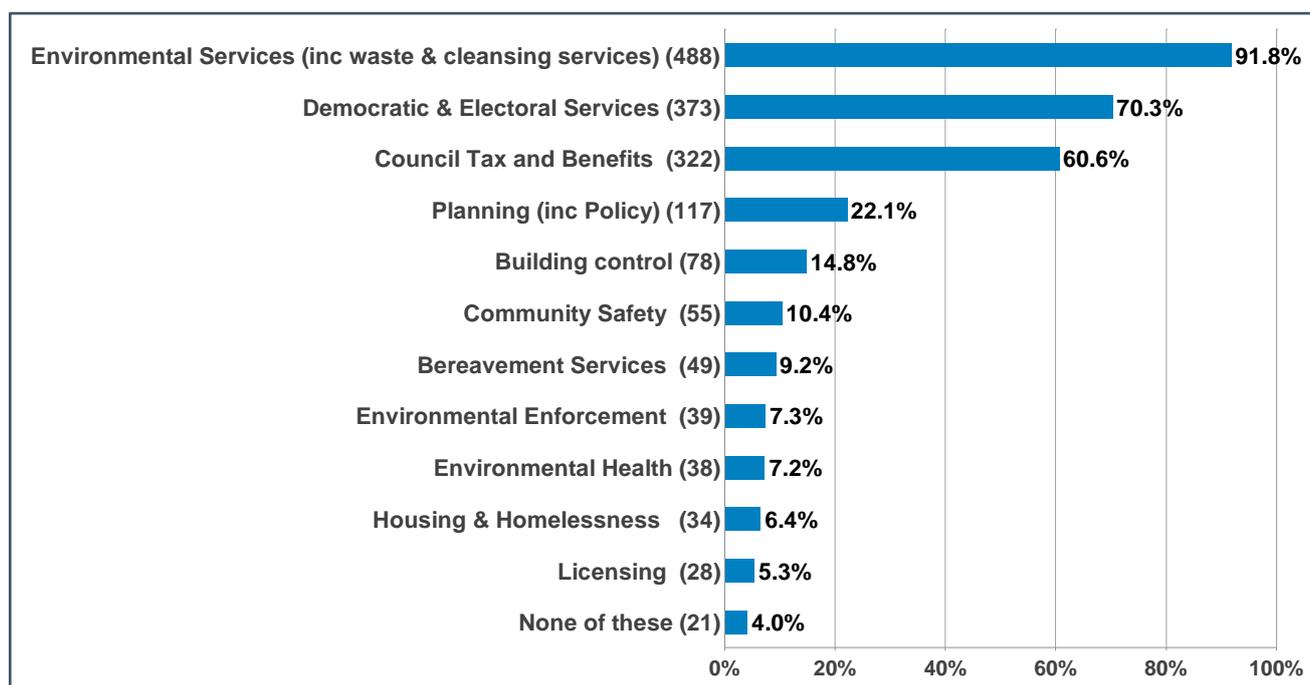
Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

Mandatory Services

Mandatory Services Used

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

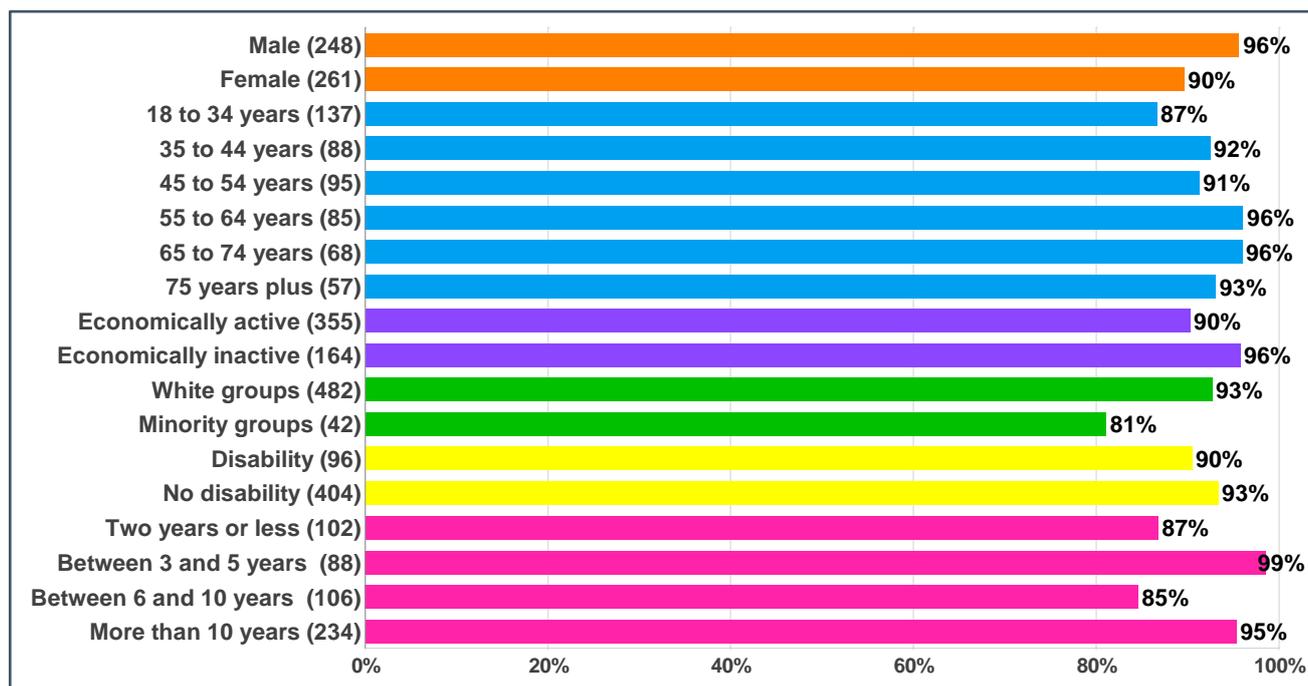
- 531 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Environmental Services, Democratic & Electoral Services and Council Tax & Benefits.
- The least used service by respondents was Licensing with 28 selecting this service.
- 21 respondents said they had not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



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

Environmental Services

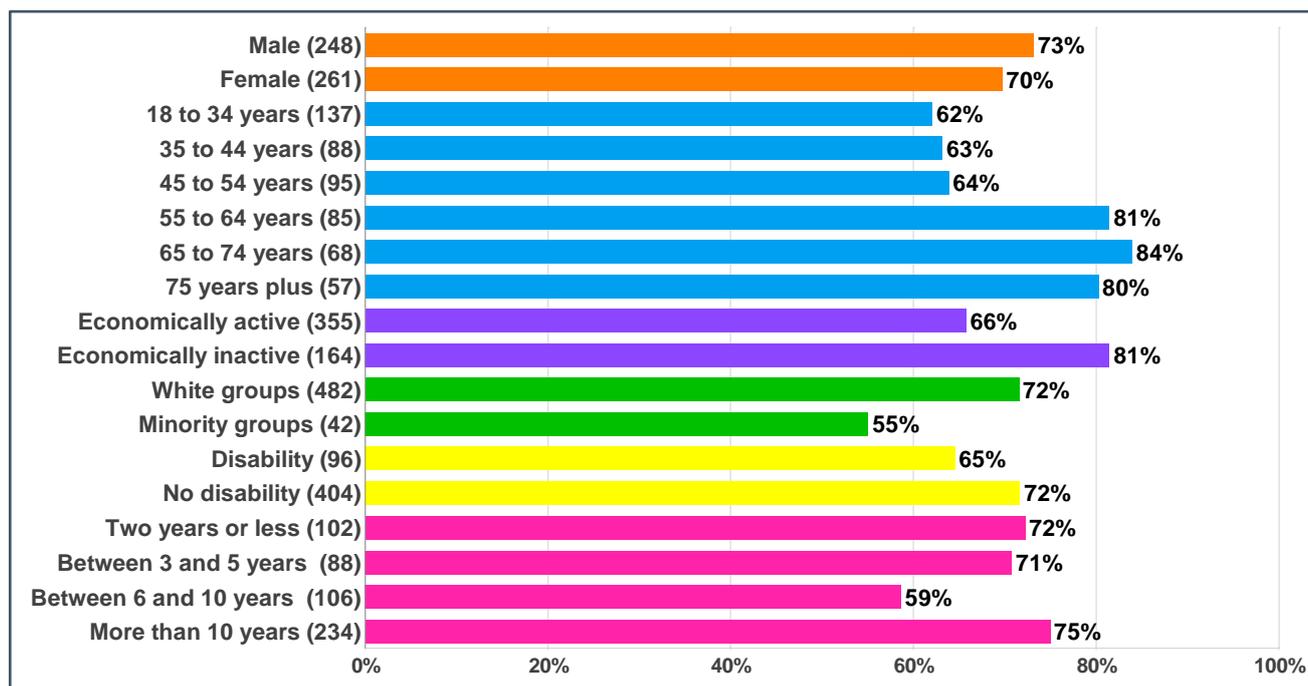
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Democratic & Electoral Services

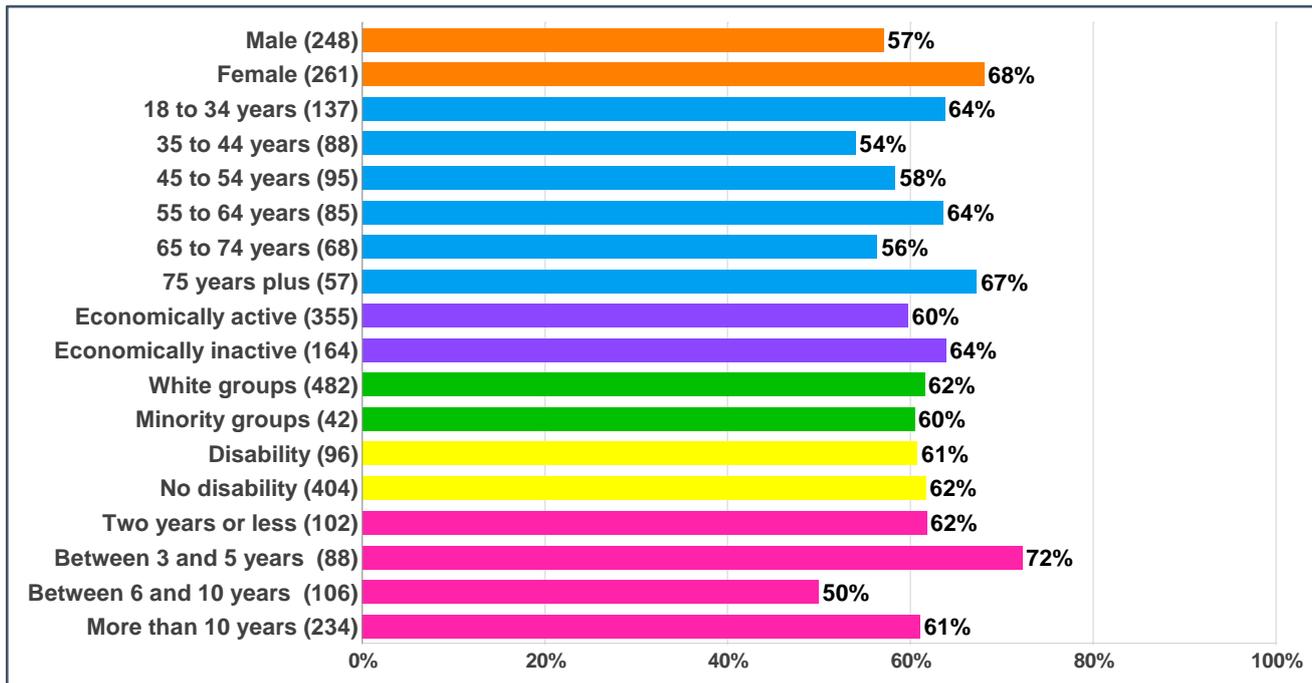
The differences in the proportions selecting Democratic & Electoral Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Council Tax & Benefits

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



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

Spending Approach Mandatory Services

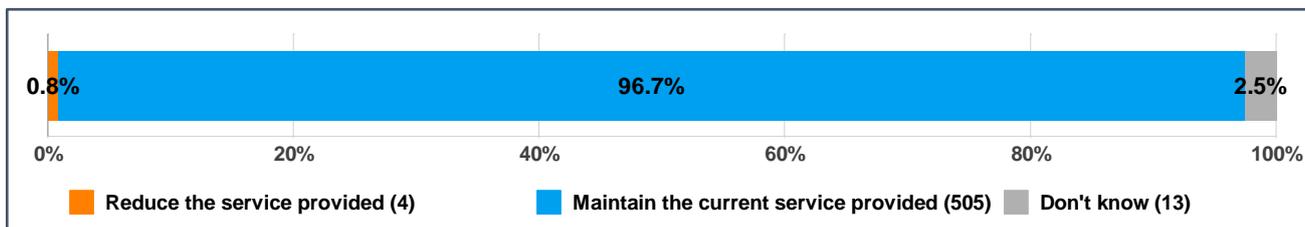
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Mandatory Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

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

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

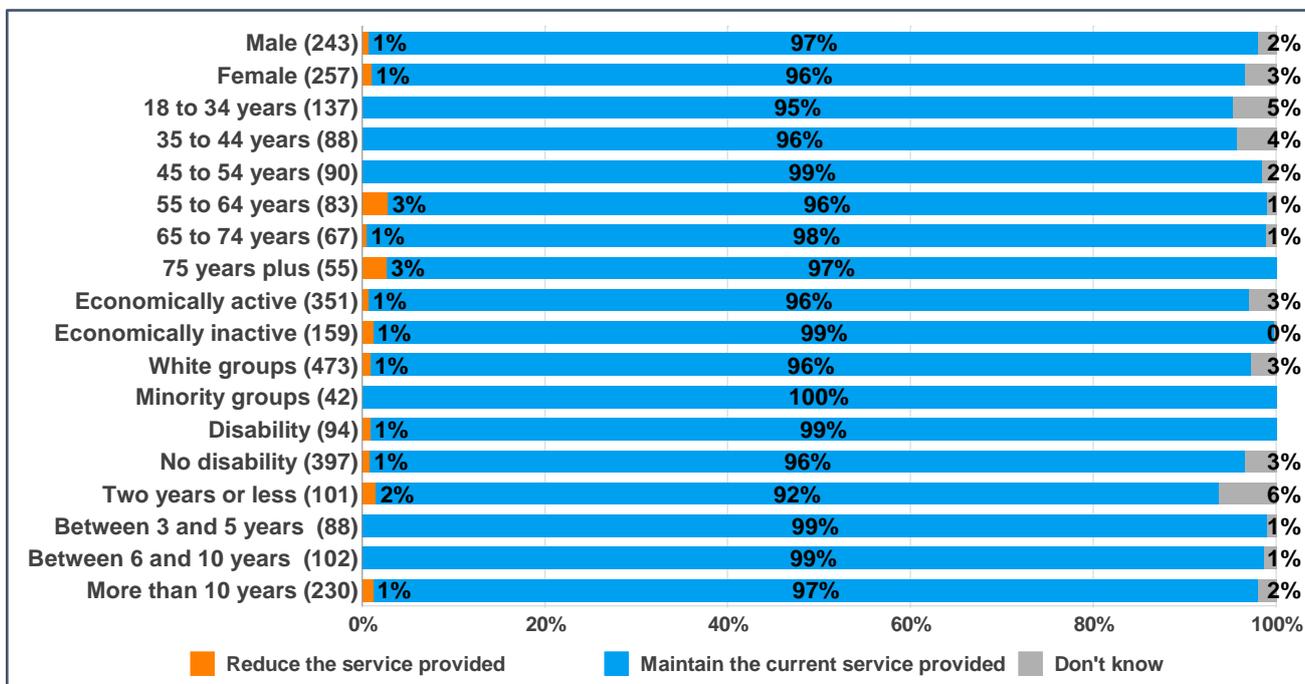
Environmental Services

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



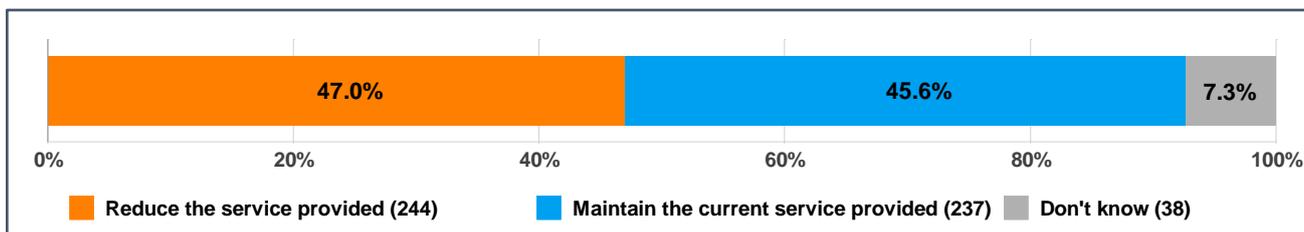
Demographic Differences

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



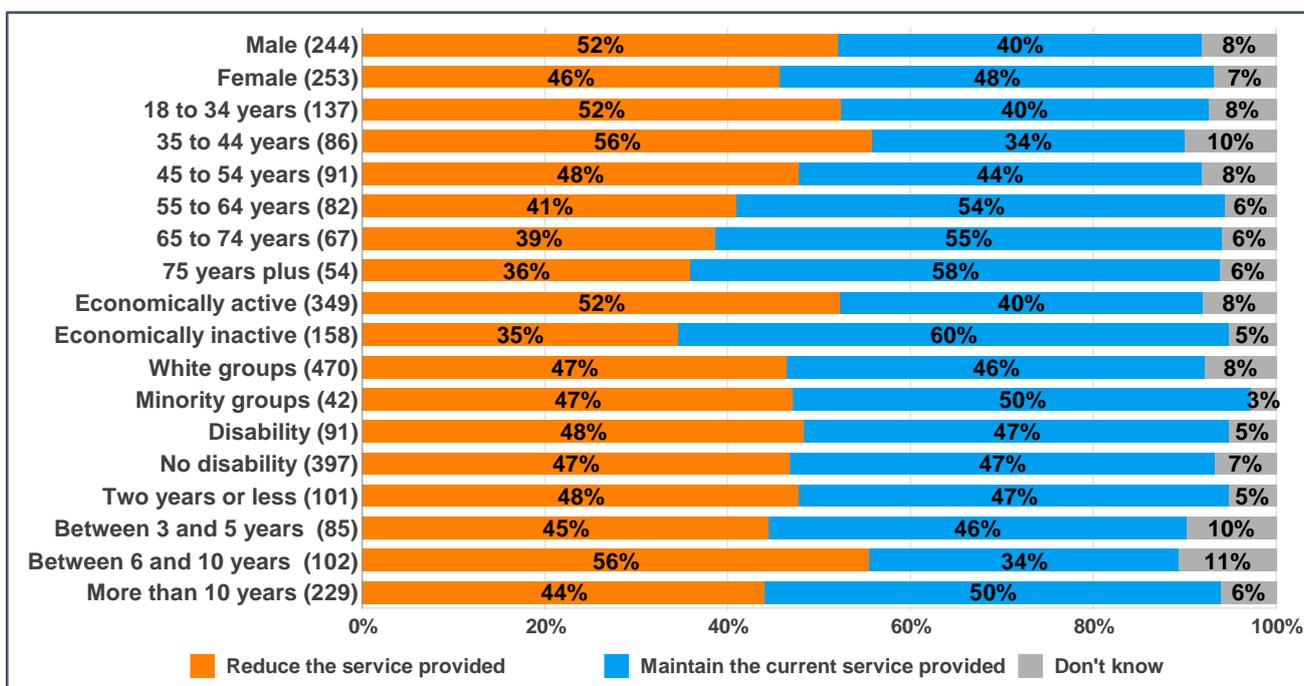
Democratic & Electoral Services

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



Demographic Differences

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

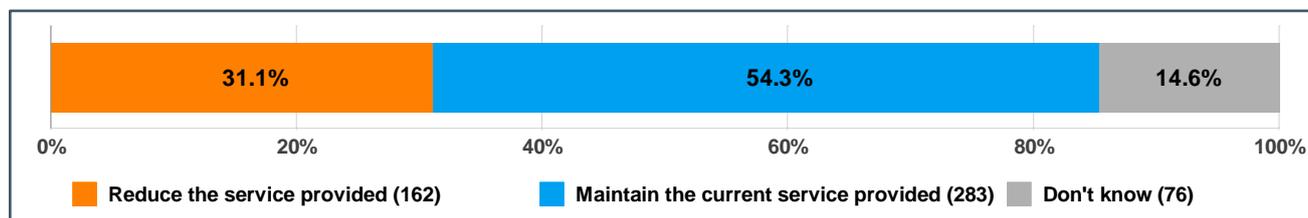


Significant Differences - Democratic & Electoral Services Approach

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

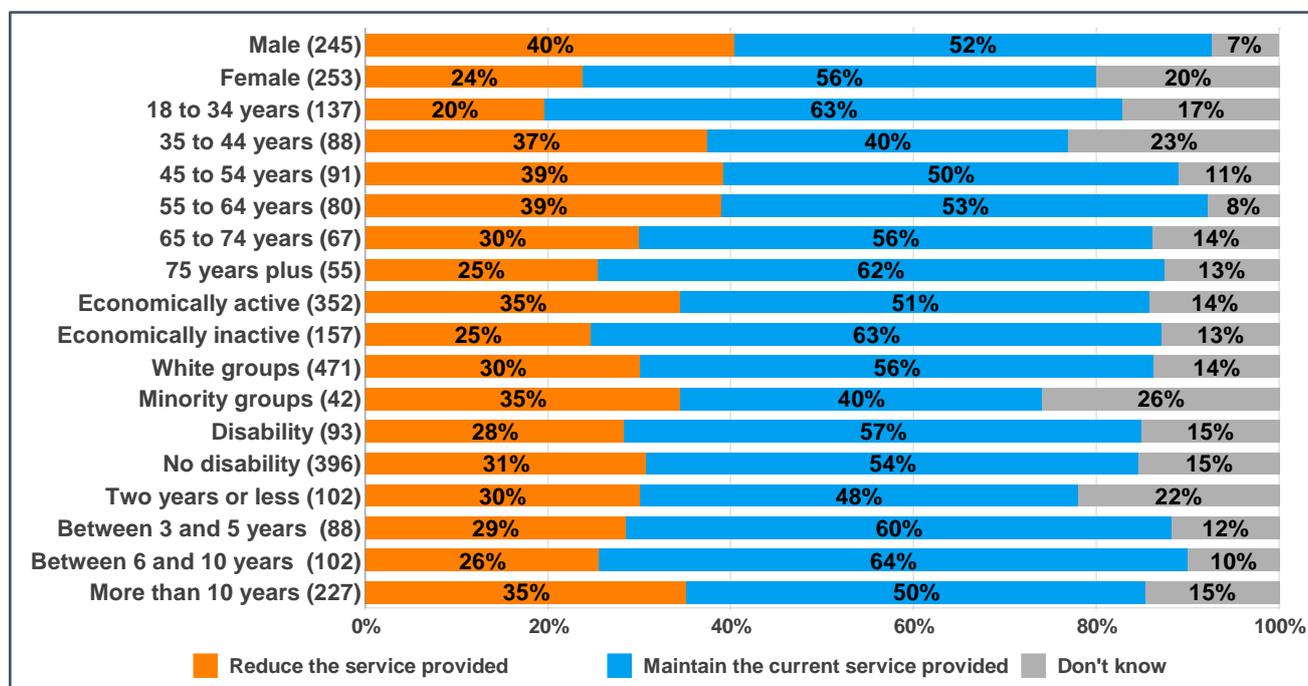
Planning (including Planning Policy)

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



Demographic Differences

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



Significant Differences -Planning Approach

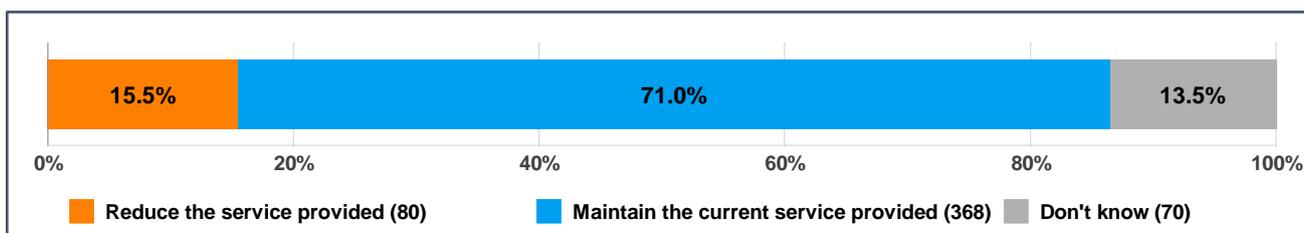
	<p>A greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Planning services with 40% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. However, more than half of each group were in favour of maintaining the current service in this area.</p>
	<p>One in five respondents aged 18 to 24 years (20%)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



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

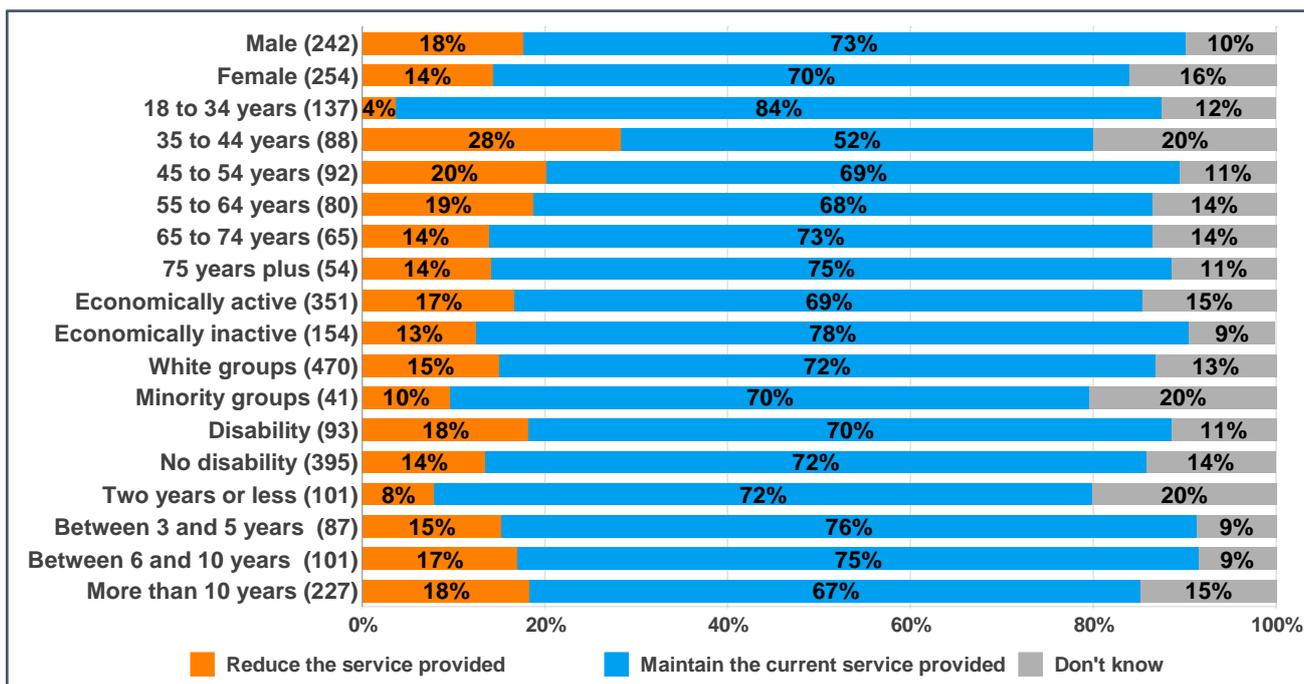
Building Control

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



Demographic Differences

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



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

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

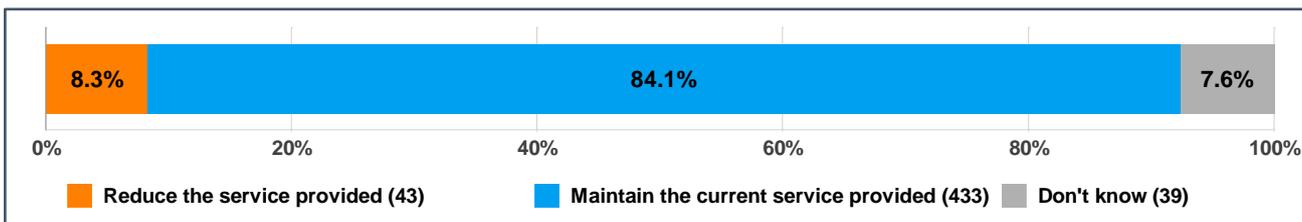


Economically active respondents had a significantly lower proportion in favour of maintaining the Building Control service with 69% answering this way compared to 78% of economically inactive respondents.

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

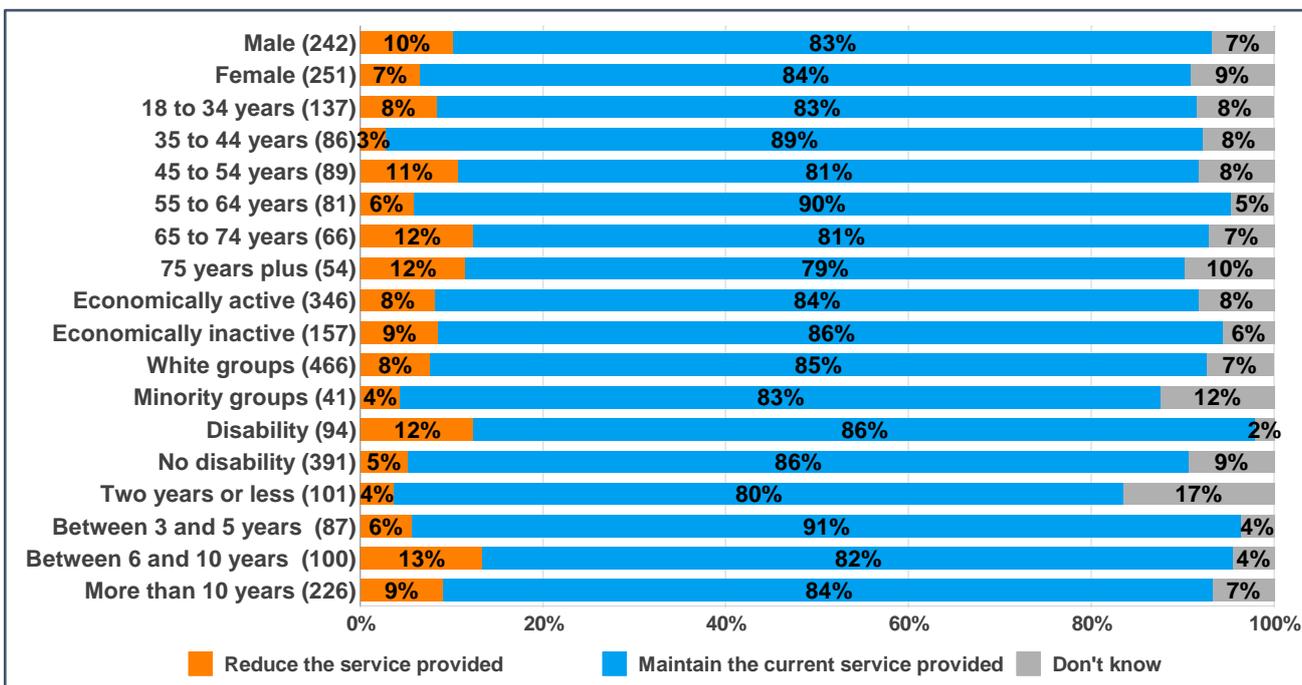
Environmental Health

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



Demographic Differences

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

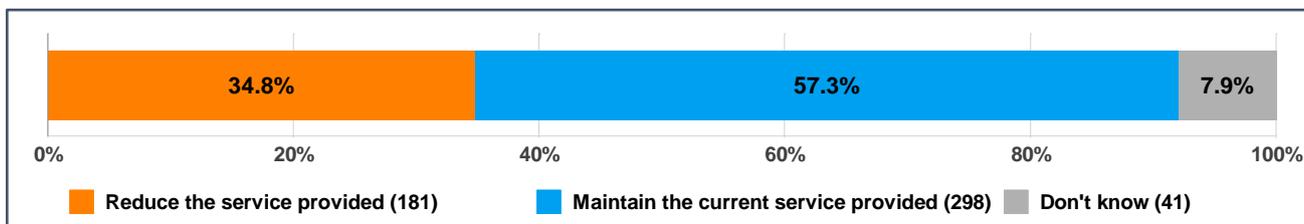


	<p>The proportion that responded ‘reduce the service provided’ from the 18 to 34 years group was significantly lower than for the 45 to 54 years, the 65 to 74 years and the 75 years and over age groups. There were no significant differences between age groups for the remaining answer options.</p>
	<p>Respondents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

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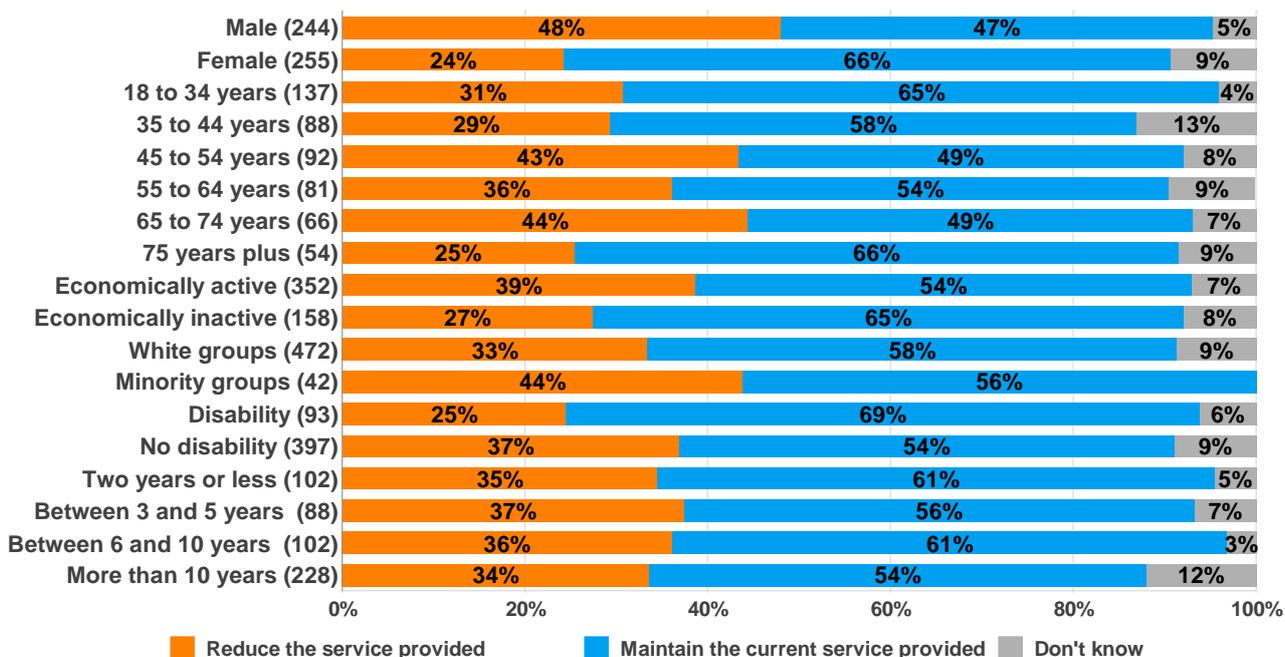
Council Tax & Benefits

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



Demographic Differences

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

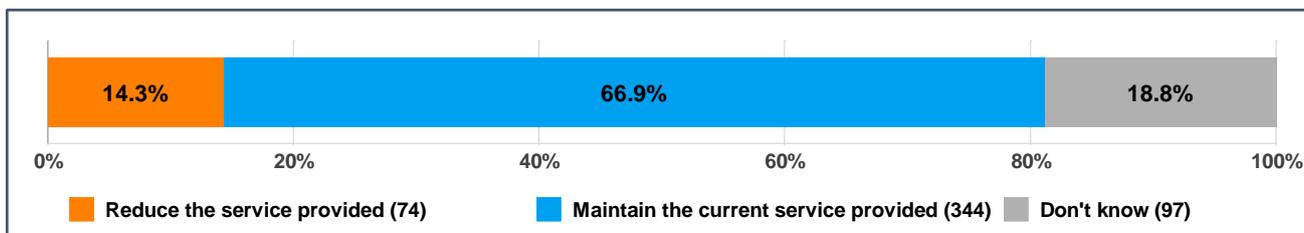


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of male respondents were in favour of reducing Council tax and Benefits with 48% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. ‘Reduce the service’ was the most common response from men and ‘maintain the current service’ was the most common response for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

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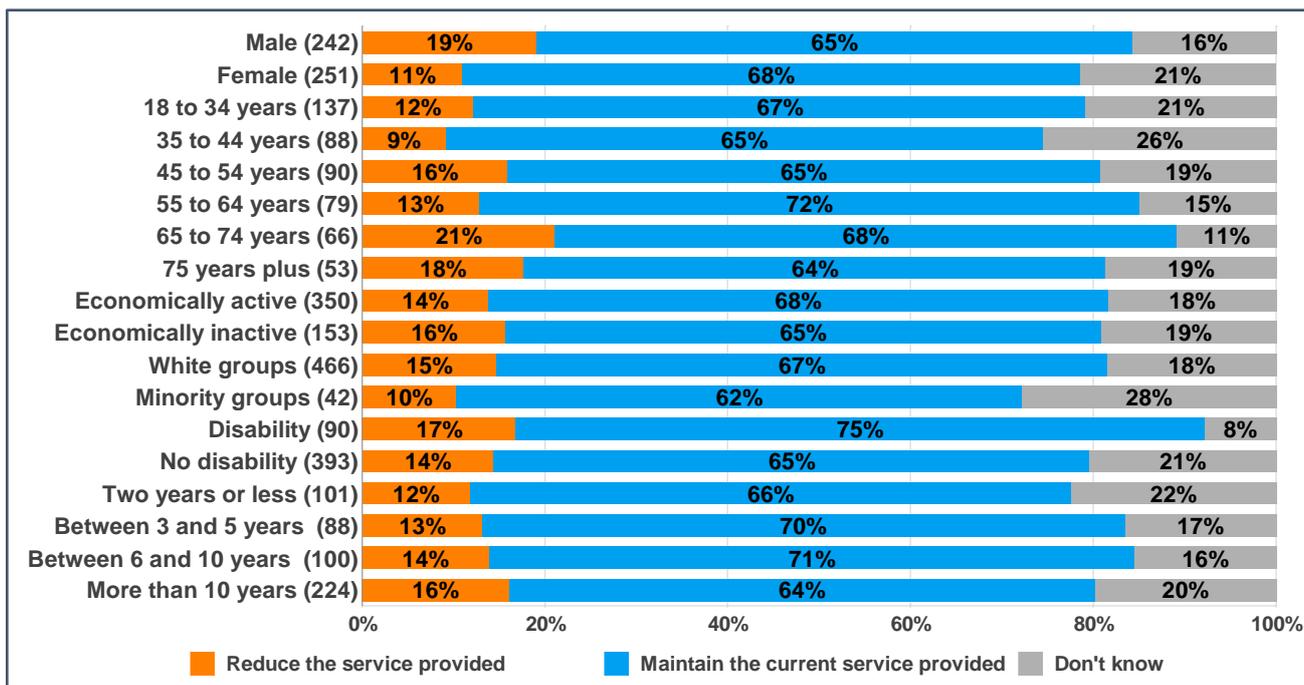
Bereavement Services

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



Demographic Differences

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

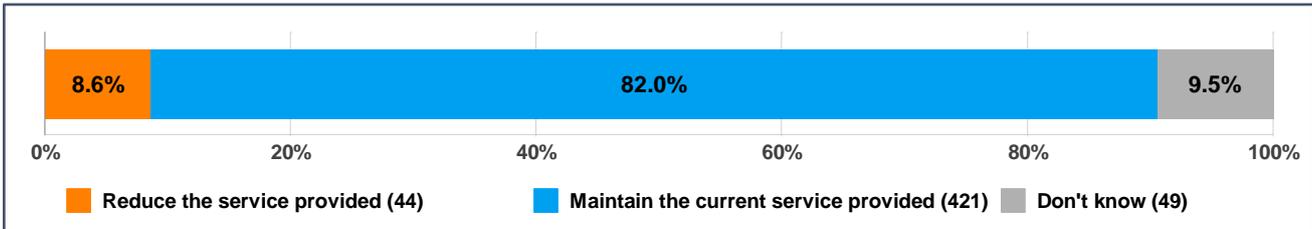


	<p>Male respondents had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of reducing Bereavement Services with 19% answering this way compared to 11% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of 65 to 74 years olds said Bereavement Services should be reduced with 21% answering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

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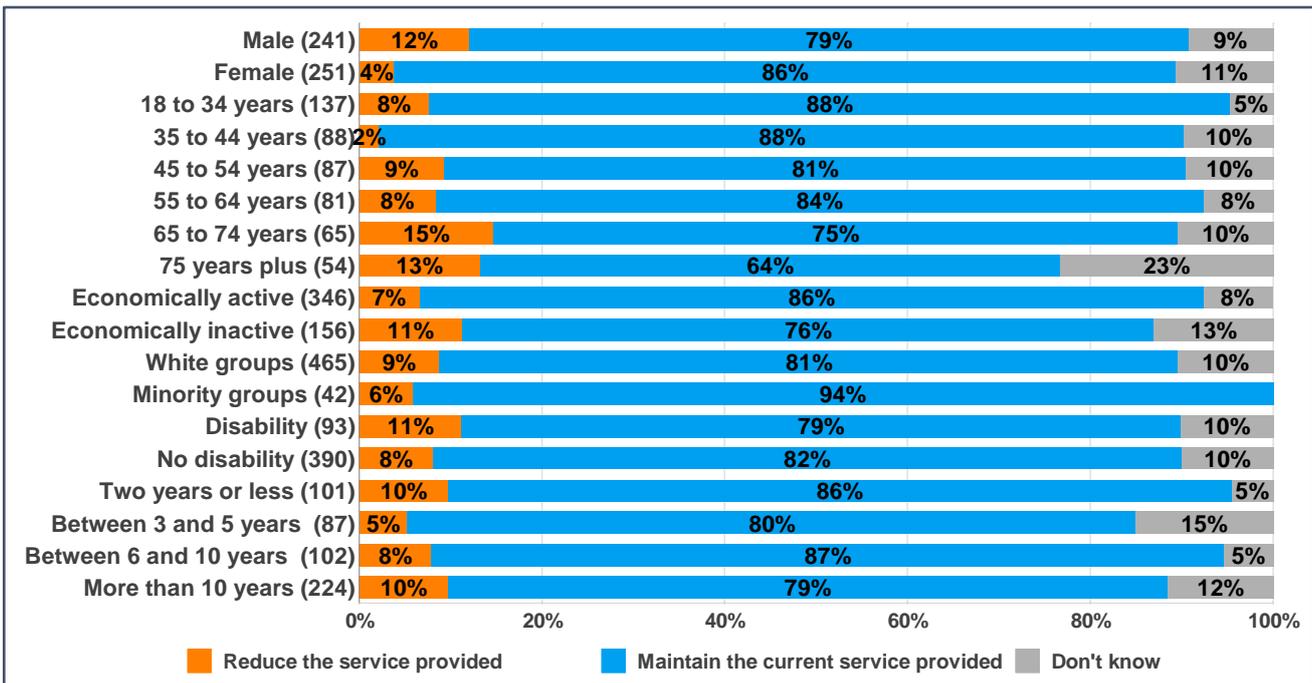
Community Safety

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



Demographic Differences

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

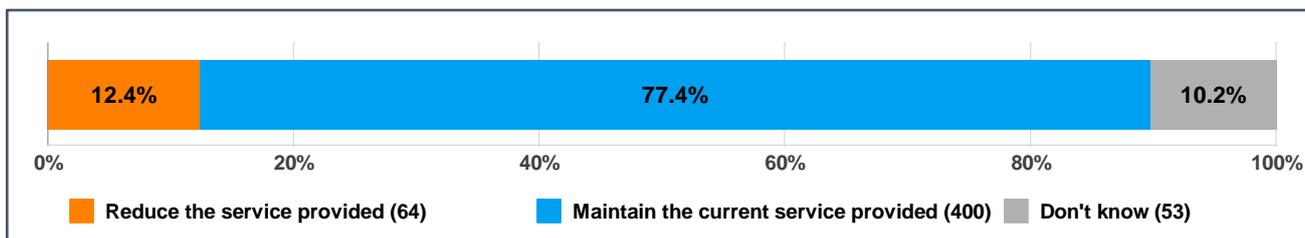


	<p>Female respondents had a significantly greater proportion that said Community Safety services should be maintained with 86% answering this way compared to 79% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded ‘Maintain the current service’ from the 75 years and over group were significantly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

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

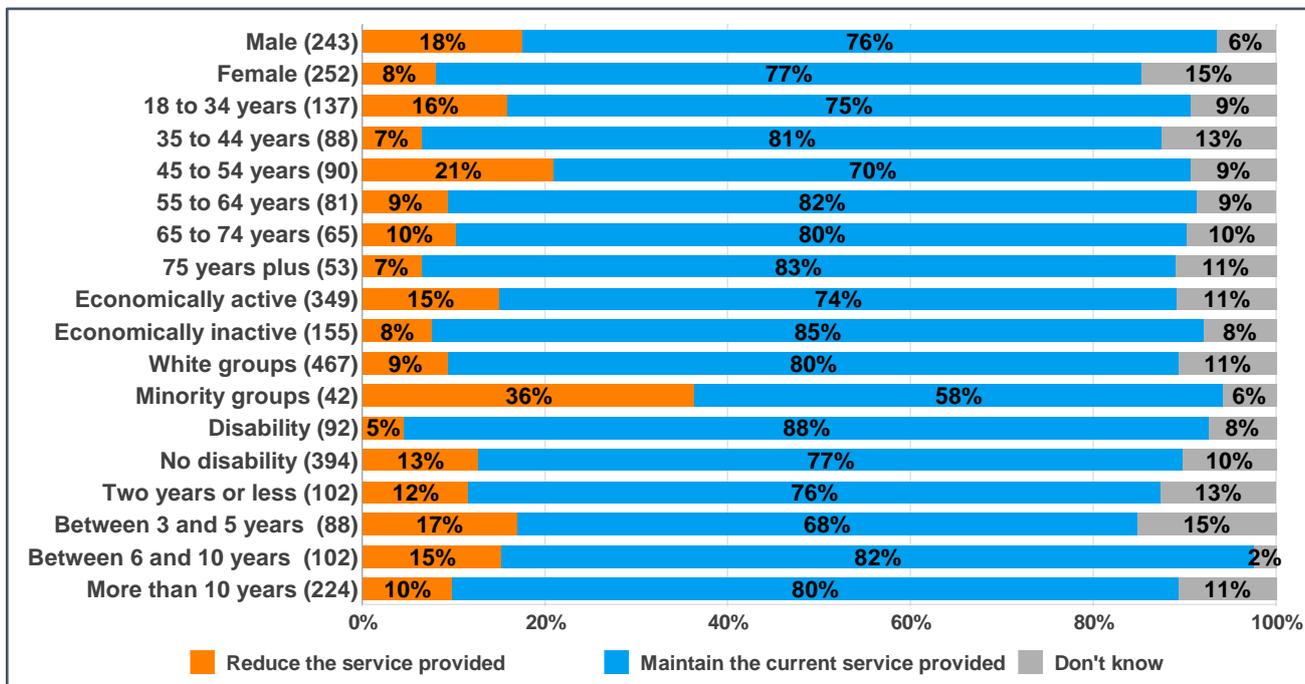
Environmental Enforcement

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

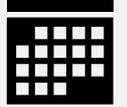


Demographic Differences

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

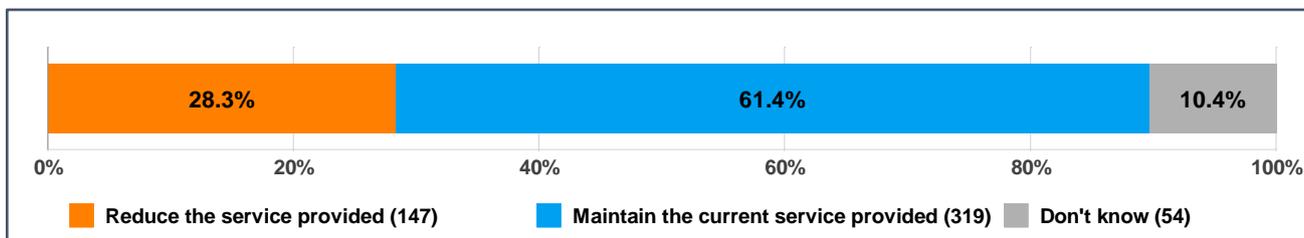


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Environmental Enforcement services with 18% answering this way compared to 8% of female respondents.</p> <p>A significantly greater proportion of female respondents were uncertain with 15% answering this way compared to 6% of male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

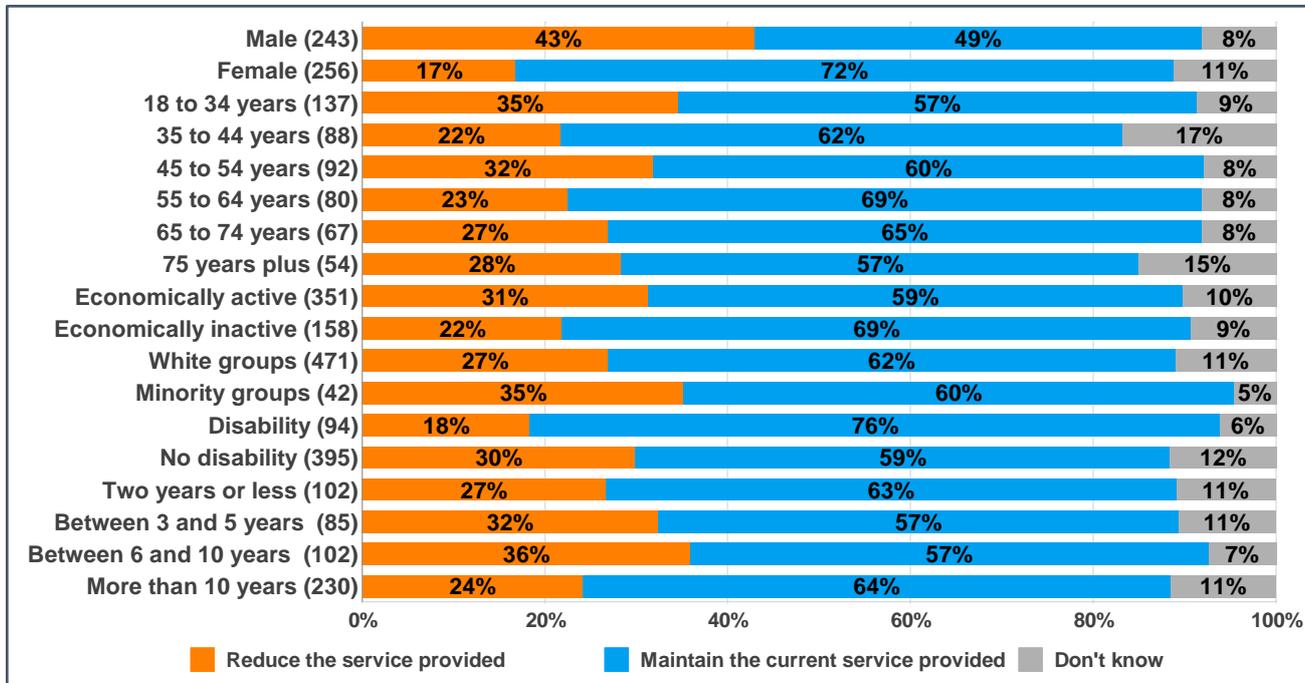
Housing & Homelessness

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



Demographic Differences

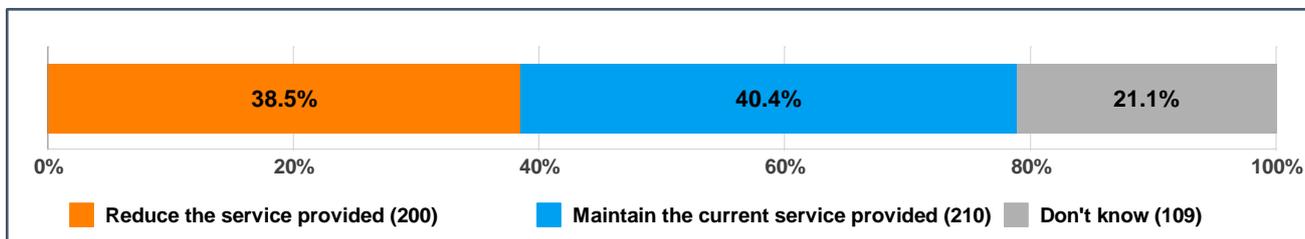
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

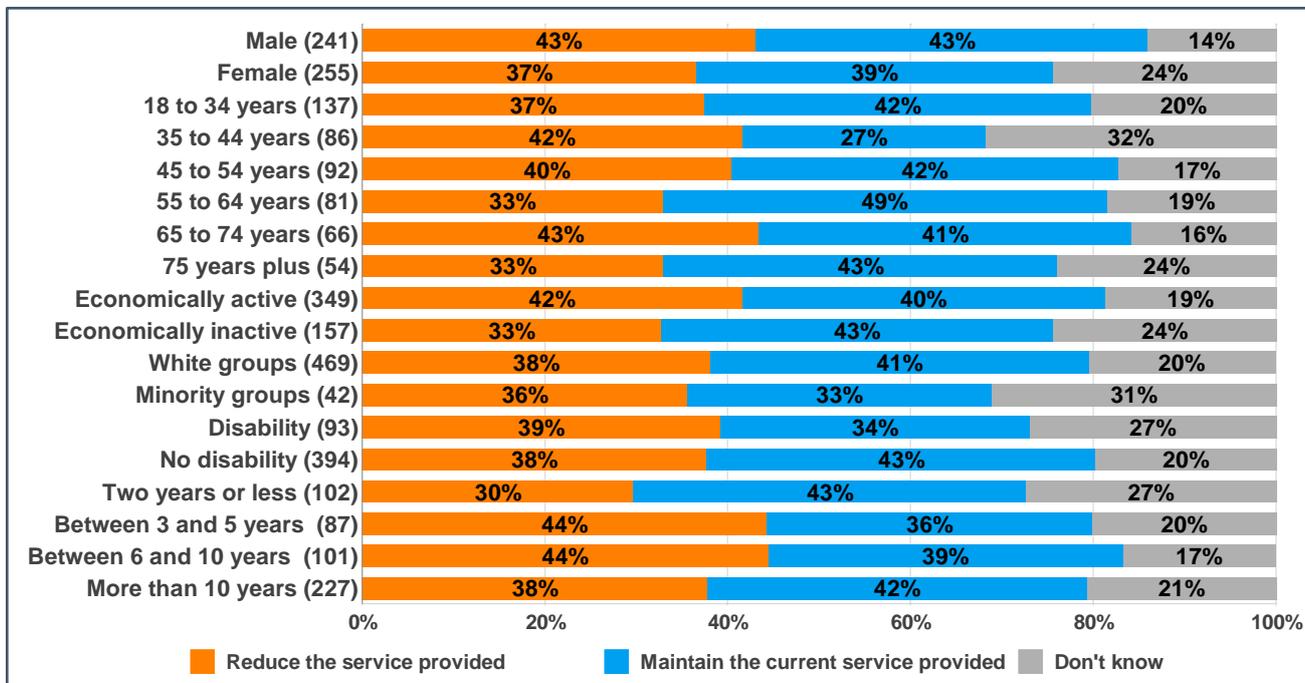
Licensing

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



Demographic Differences

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

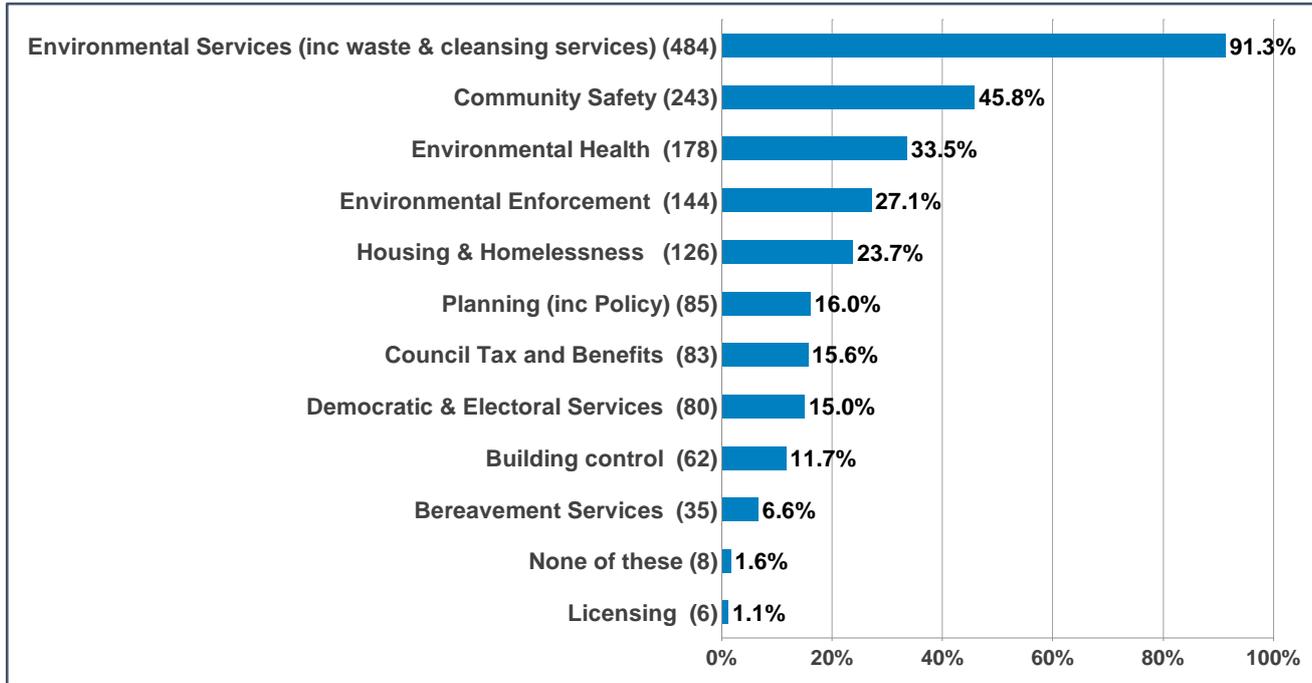


	<p>Female respondents answered 'don't know' in response to this question with 24% answering this way compared to 14% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded 'maintain the current service provided' from the 35 to 44 age group was lower than the proportions answering this way for all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

Most important Mandatory Services

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

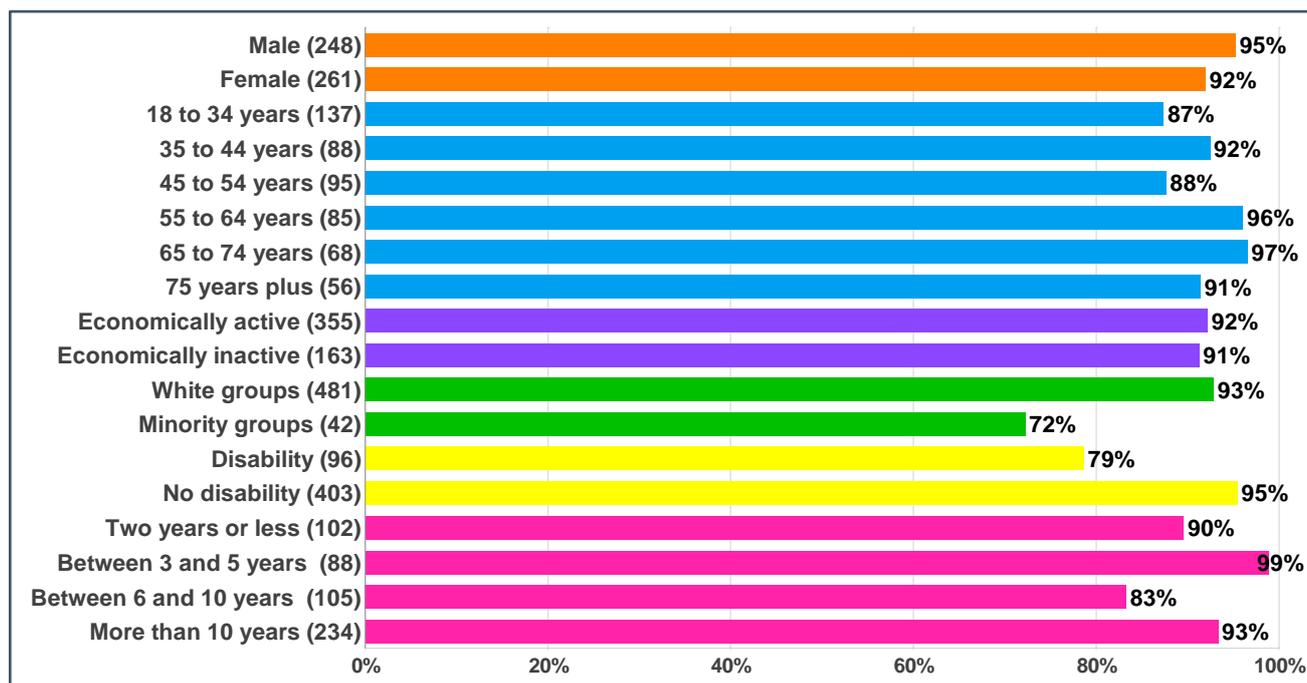
- 530 respondents answered this question.
- The top three most important services were Environmental Services, Community Safety and Environmental Health
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Licensing, Bereavement Services and Building Control.



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

Environmental Services

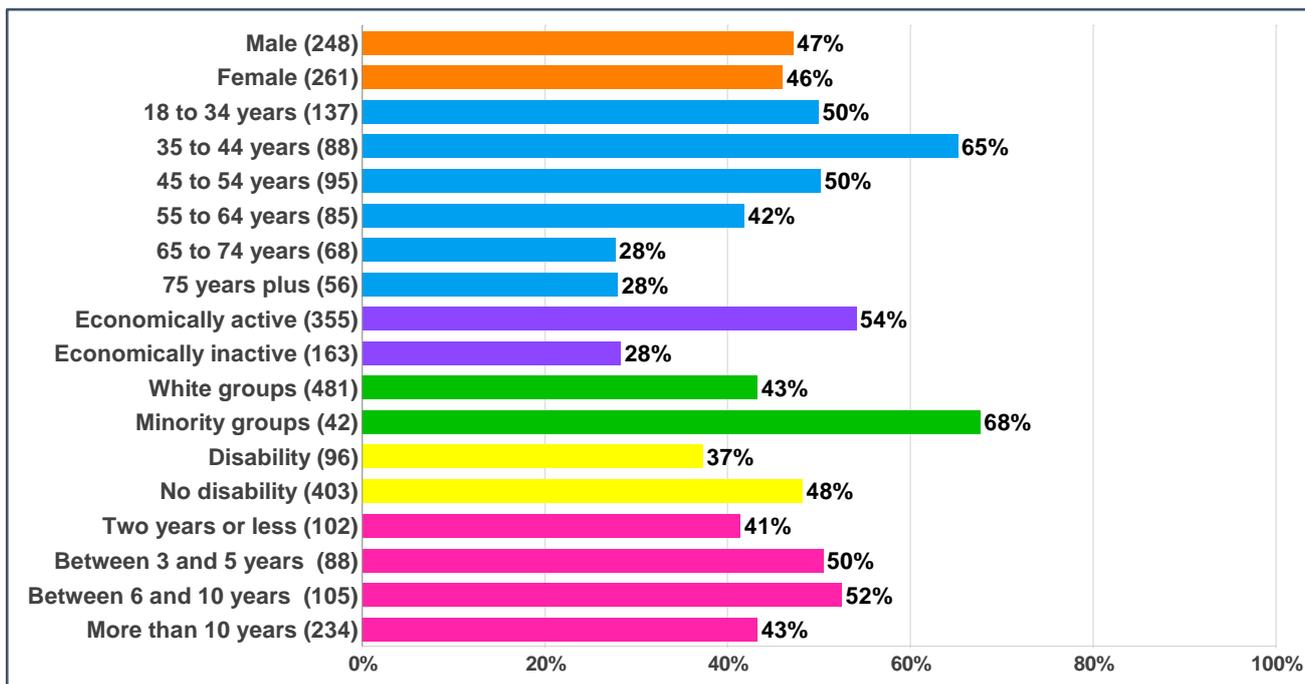
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Community Safety

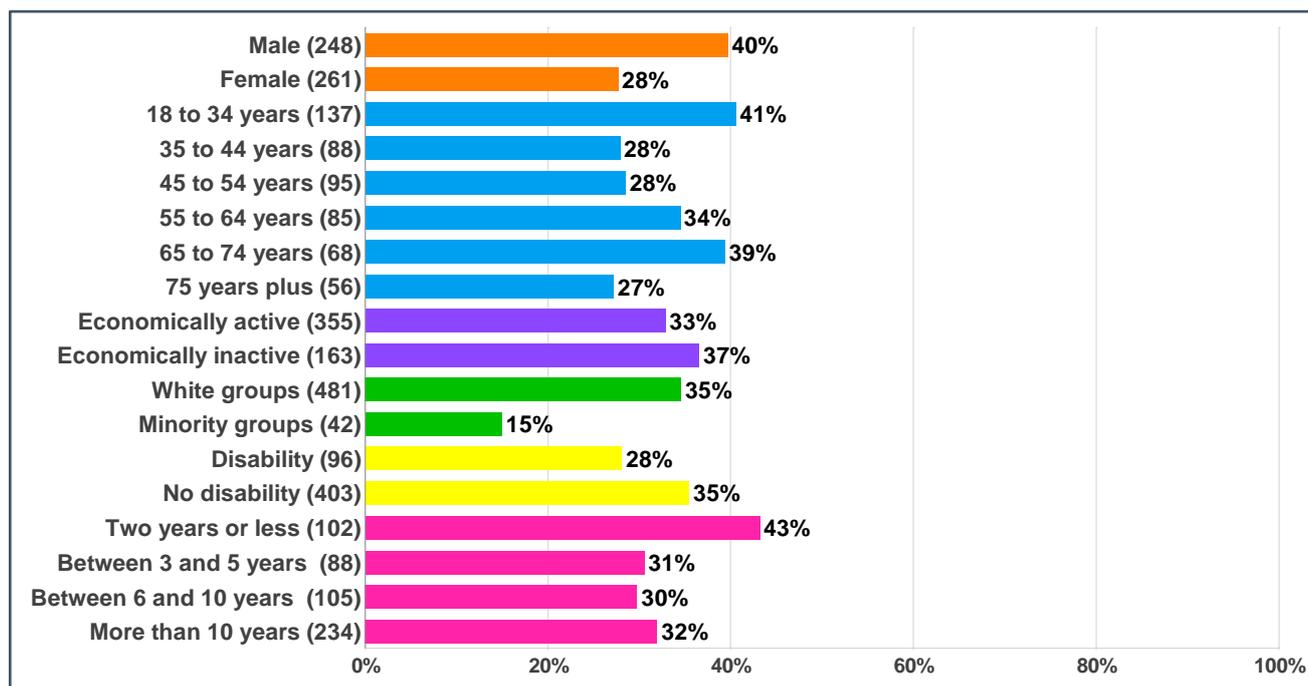
The differences in the proportions selecting Community Safety across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.

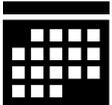


	<p>65% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years selected Community Safety as one of the most important services. This was significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>54% of economically active respondents selected community safety as being one of the most important services compared to 28% of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

Environmental Health

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



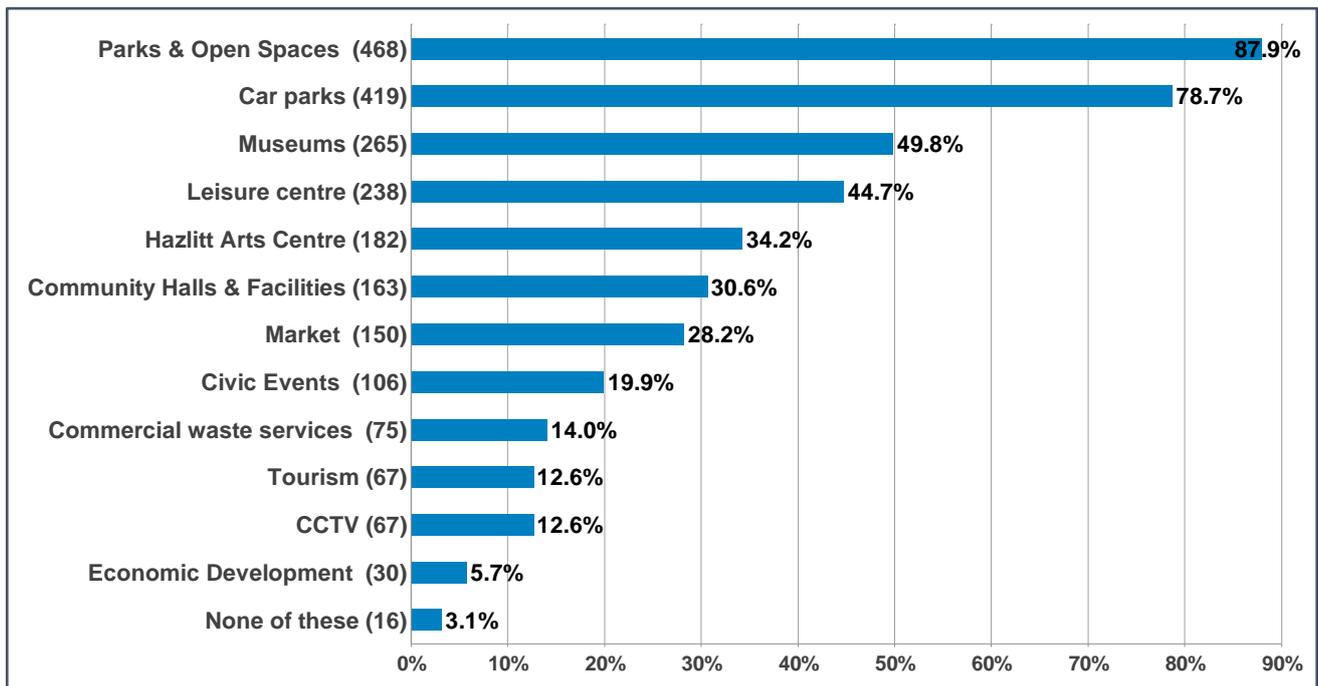
	<p>40% of male respondents selected Environmental Health as being one of their most important services compared to 28% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>35% of respondents from white groups choose Environmental Health as being one of the most important to them compared to 15% of respondents from minority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

Discretionary Services

Discretionary Services Used

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

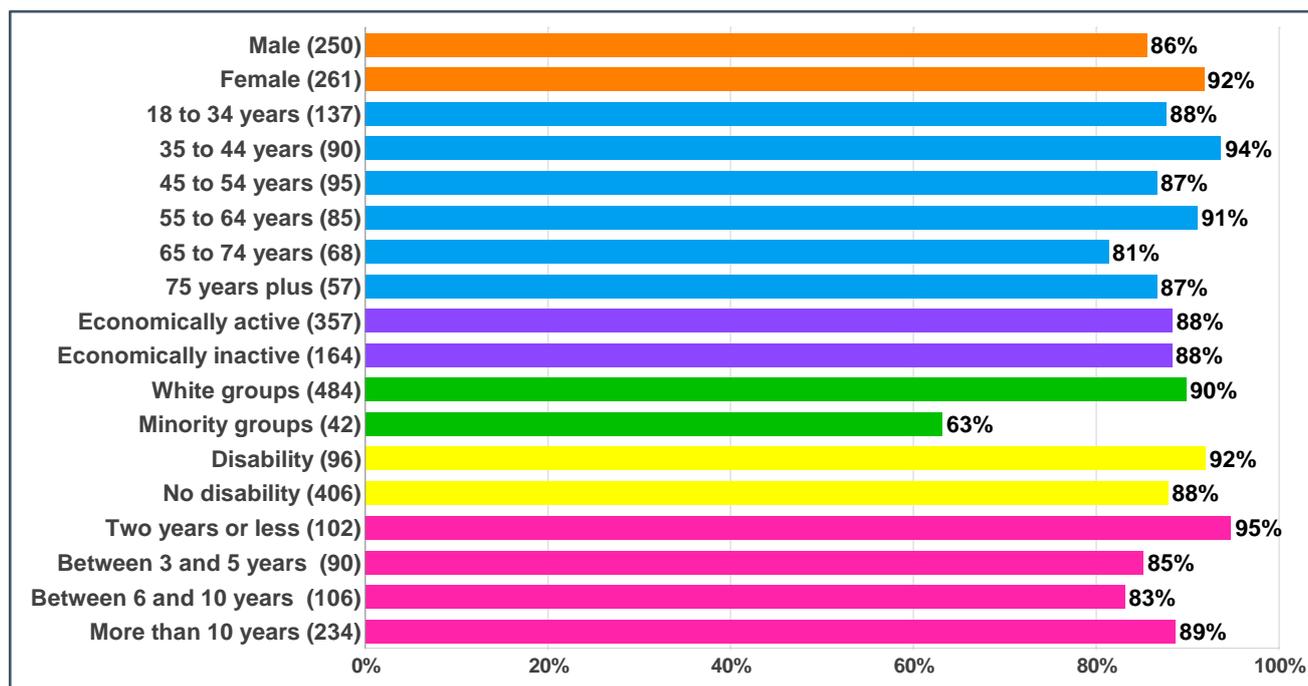
- 533 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Parks and Open Spaces, Car Parks and Museums.
- The least used service by respondents was Economic development with 30 selecting this service.
- 16 respondents said they had not used any of the services listed.



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

Parks & Open Spaces

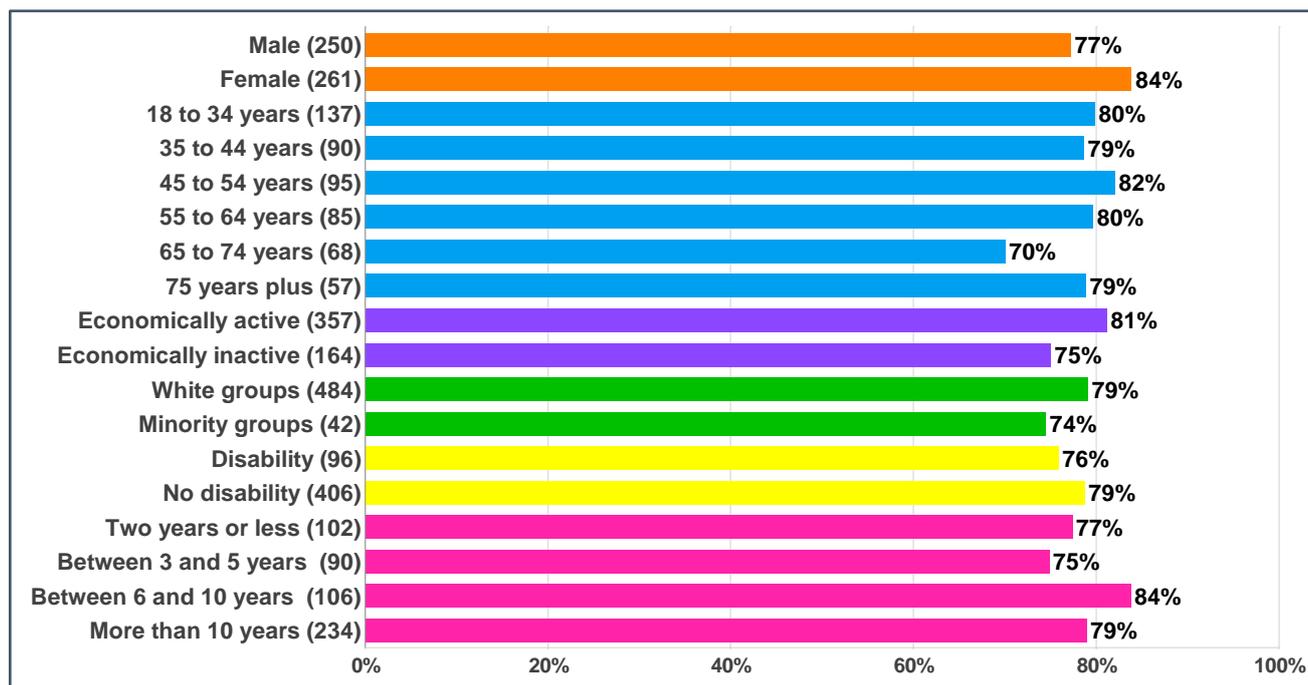
The differences in the proportions selecting parks and opens spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

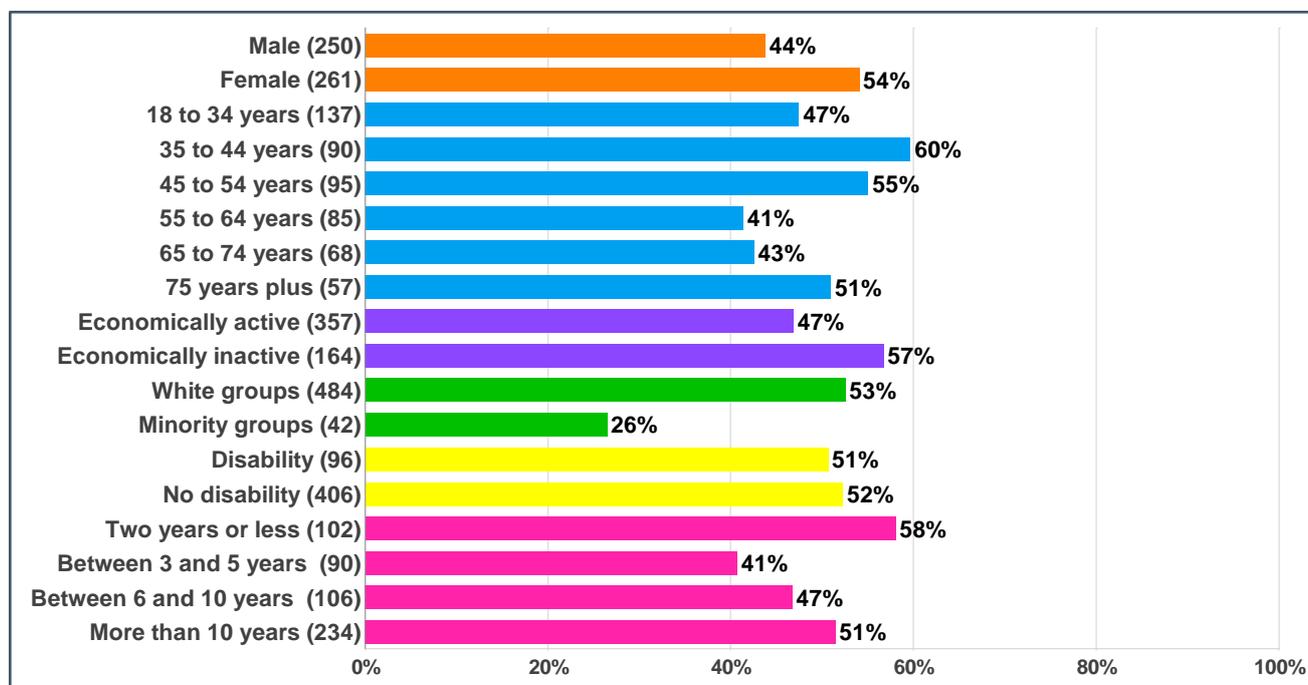
Car Parks

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



Museums

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



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

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

Approach to Discretionary Services

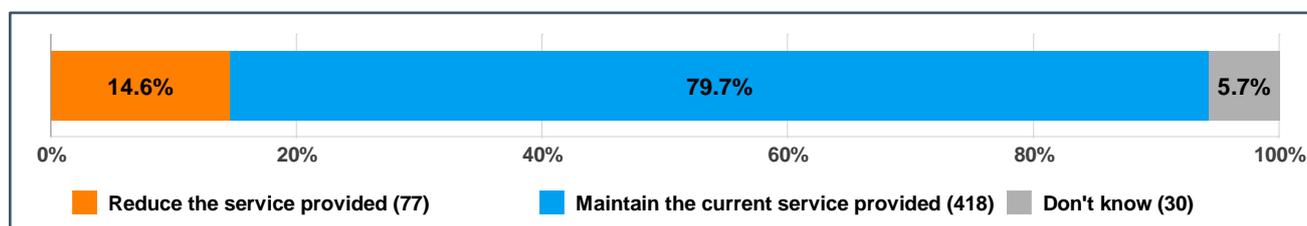
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Discretionary Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

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

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

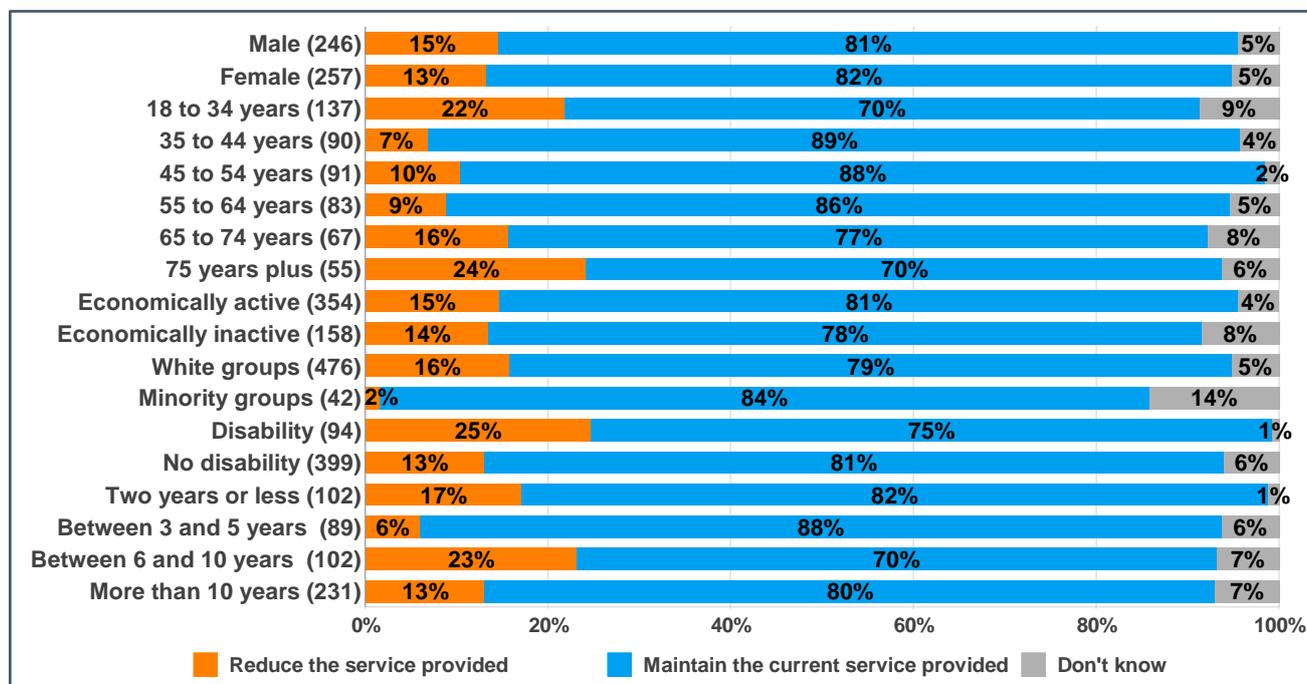
Leisure Centre

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



Demographic Differences

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

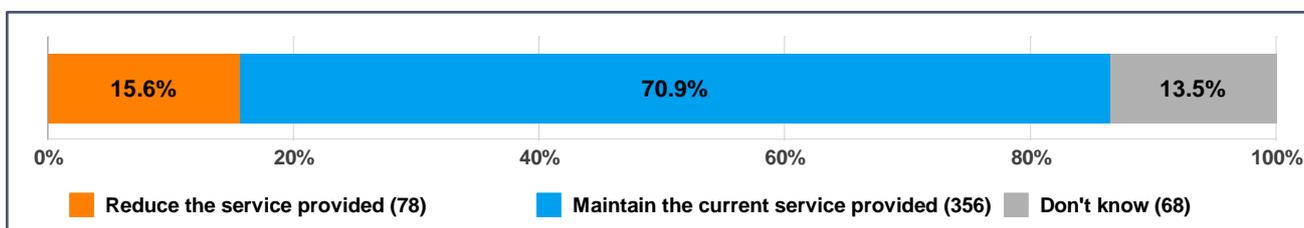


The 75 years and over and the 18 to 34 years age groups were most in favour of reducing the current service provided at 21% and 22% respectively.

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

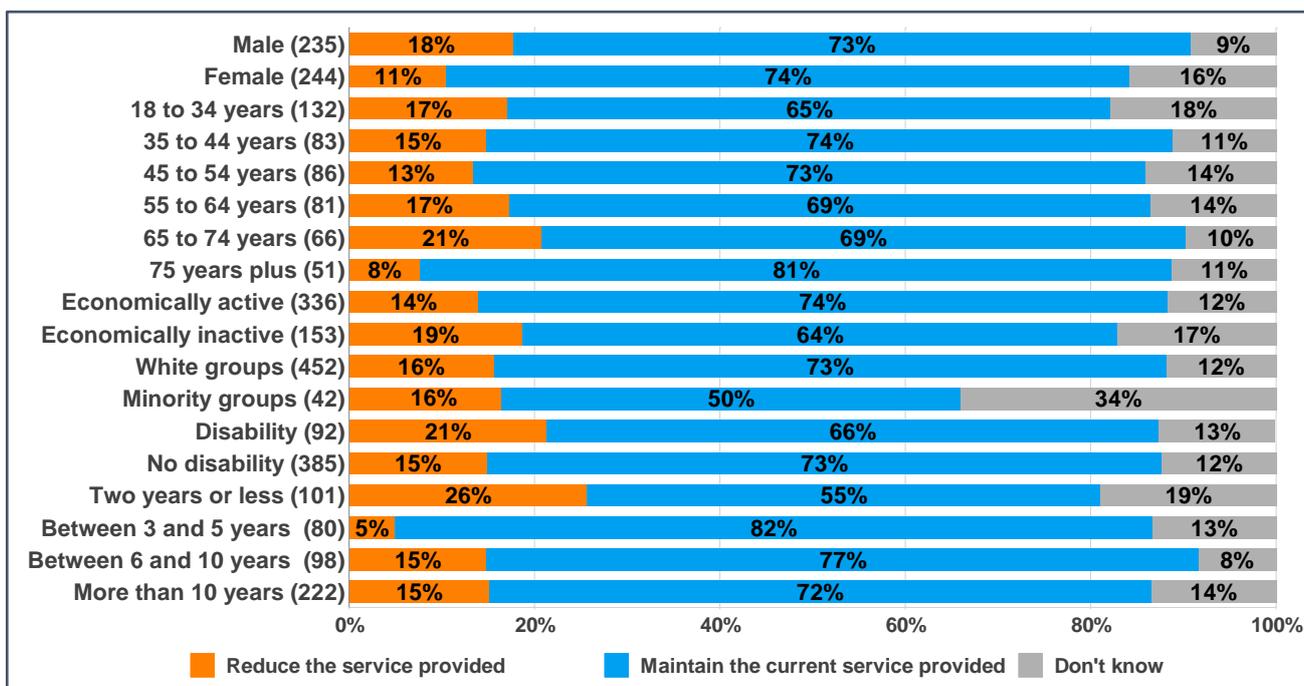
CCTV

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



Demographic Differences

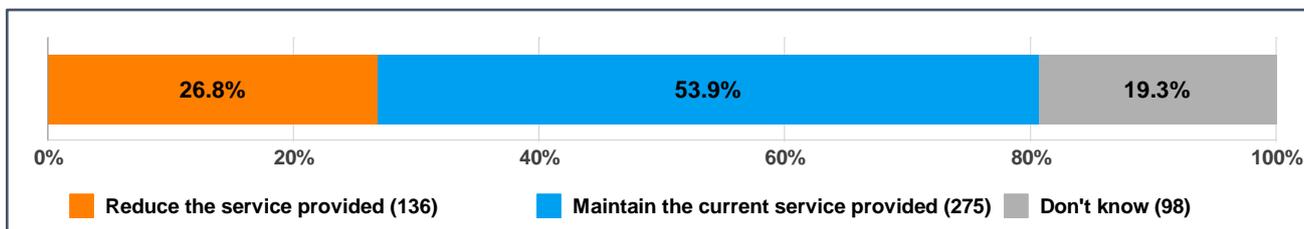
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

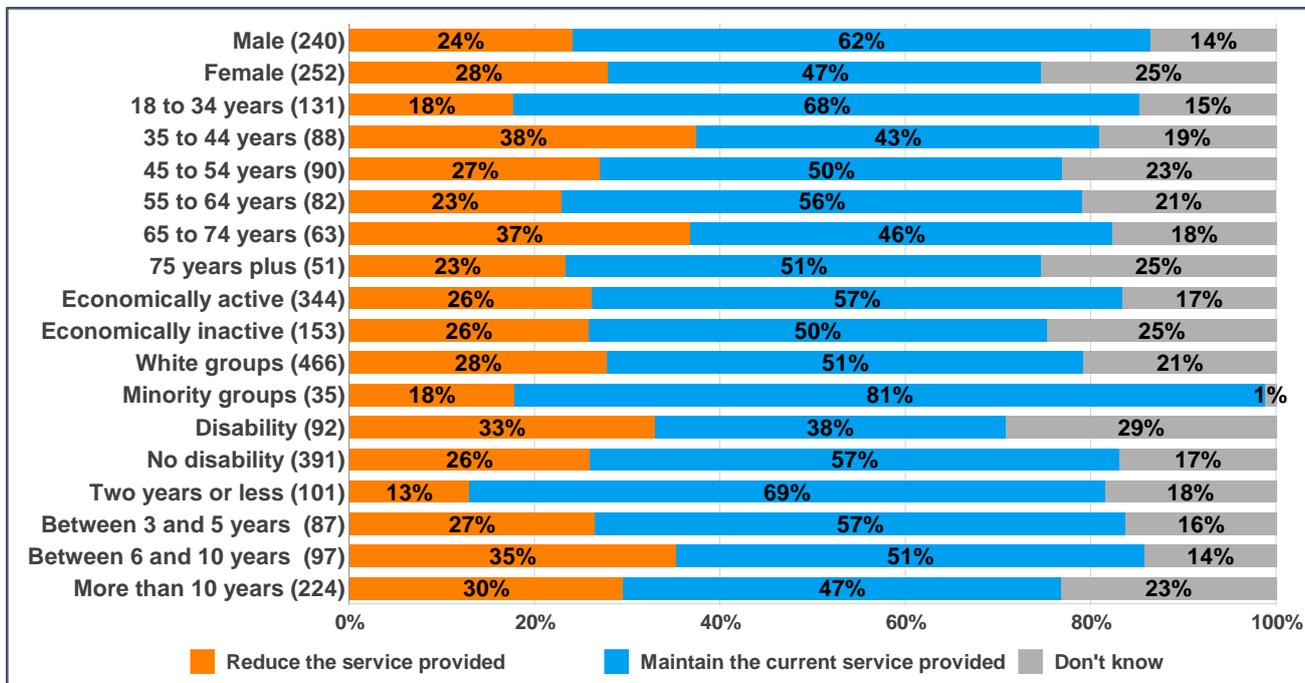
Economic Development

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



Demographic Differences

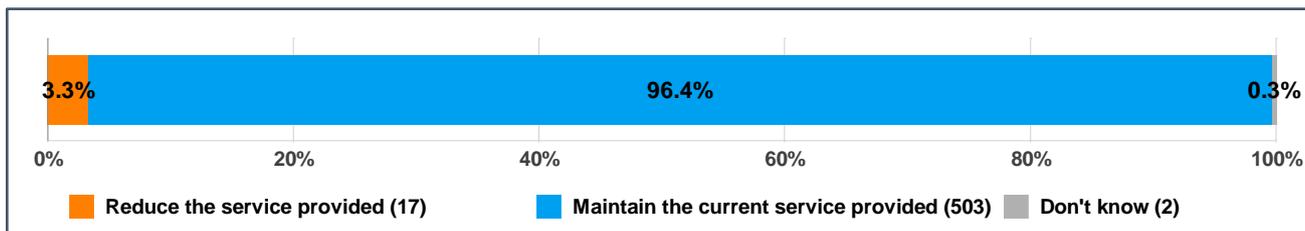
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

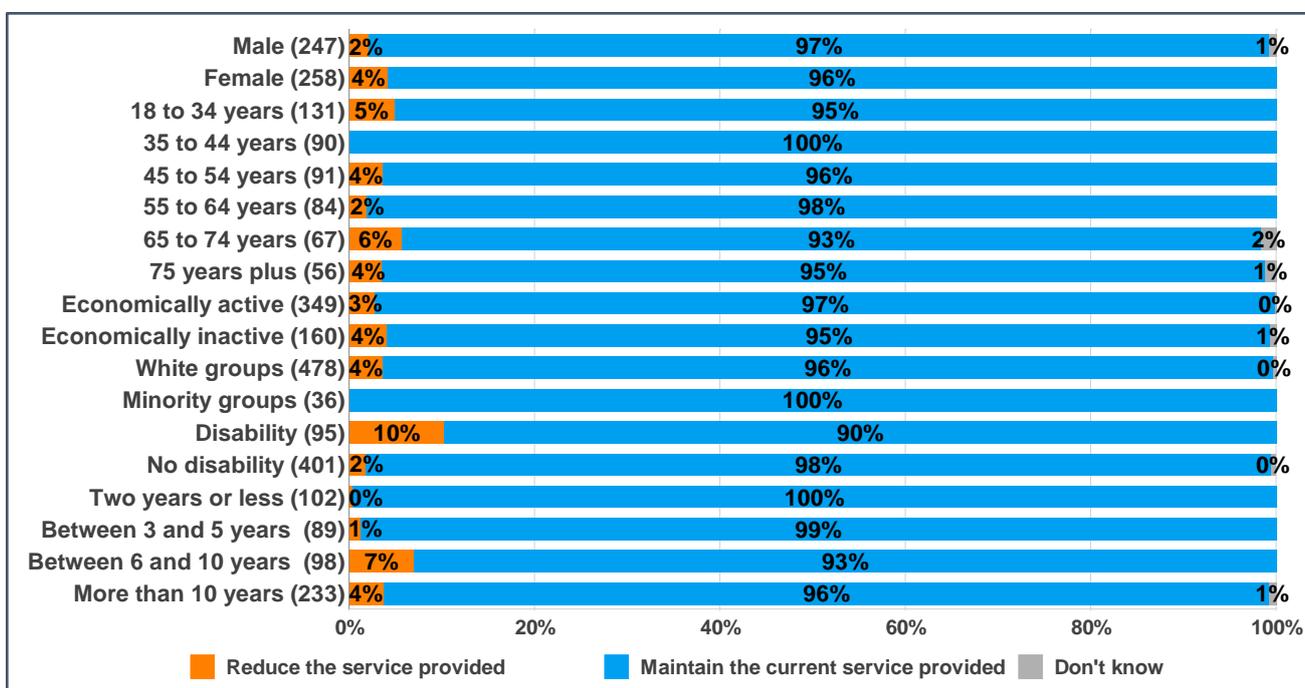
Parks & Open Spaces

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



Demographic Differences

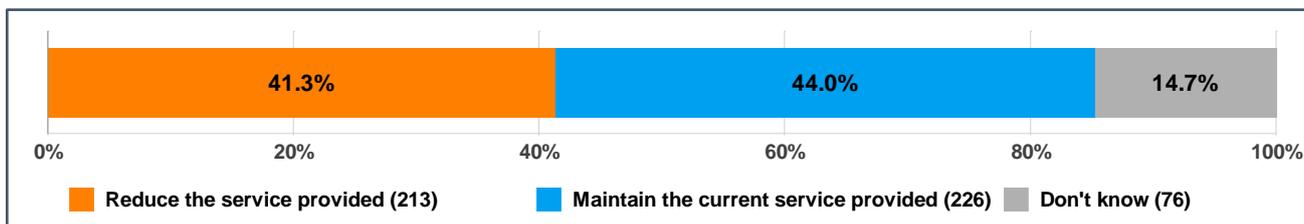
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

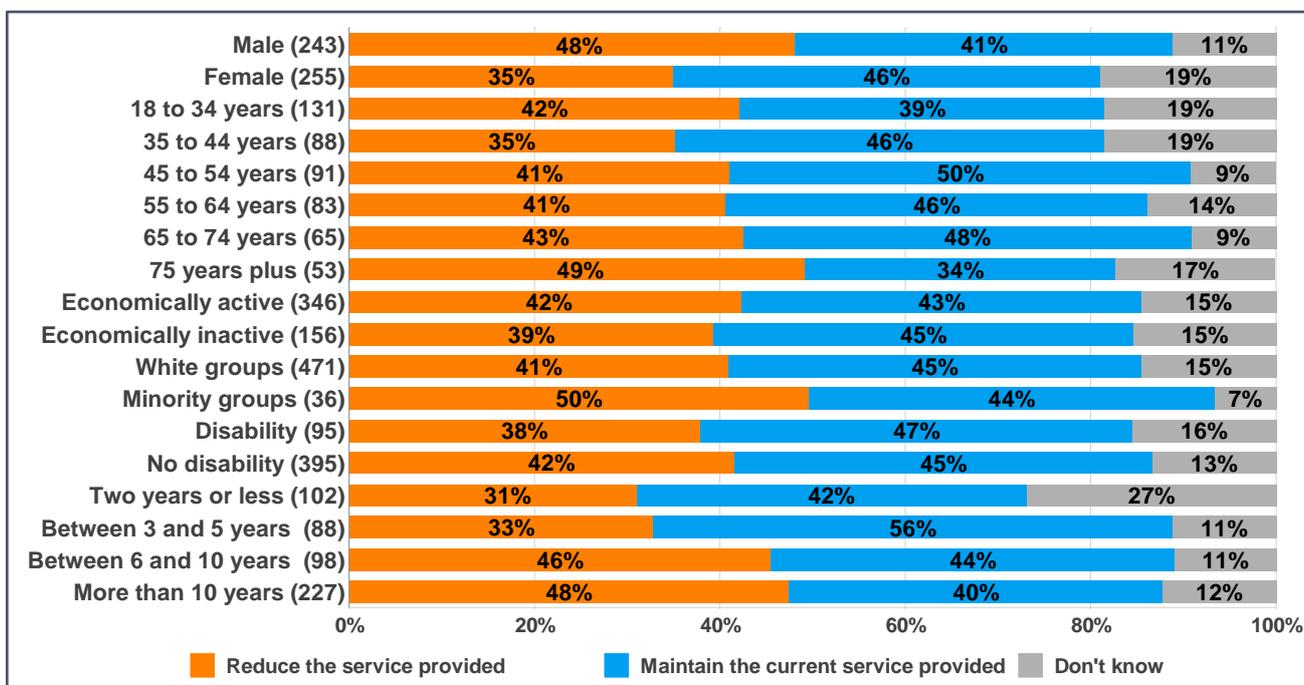
Markets

- 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

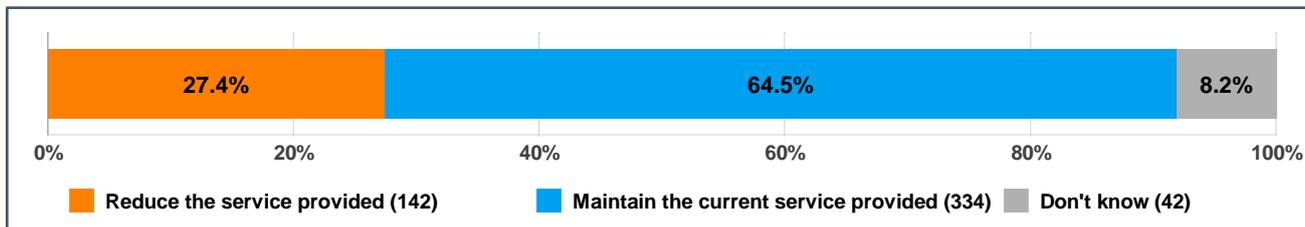
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

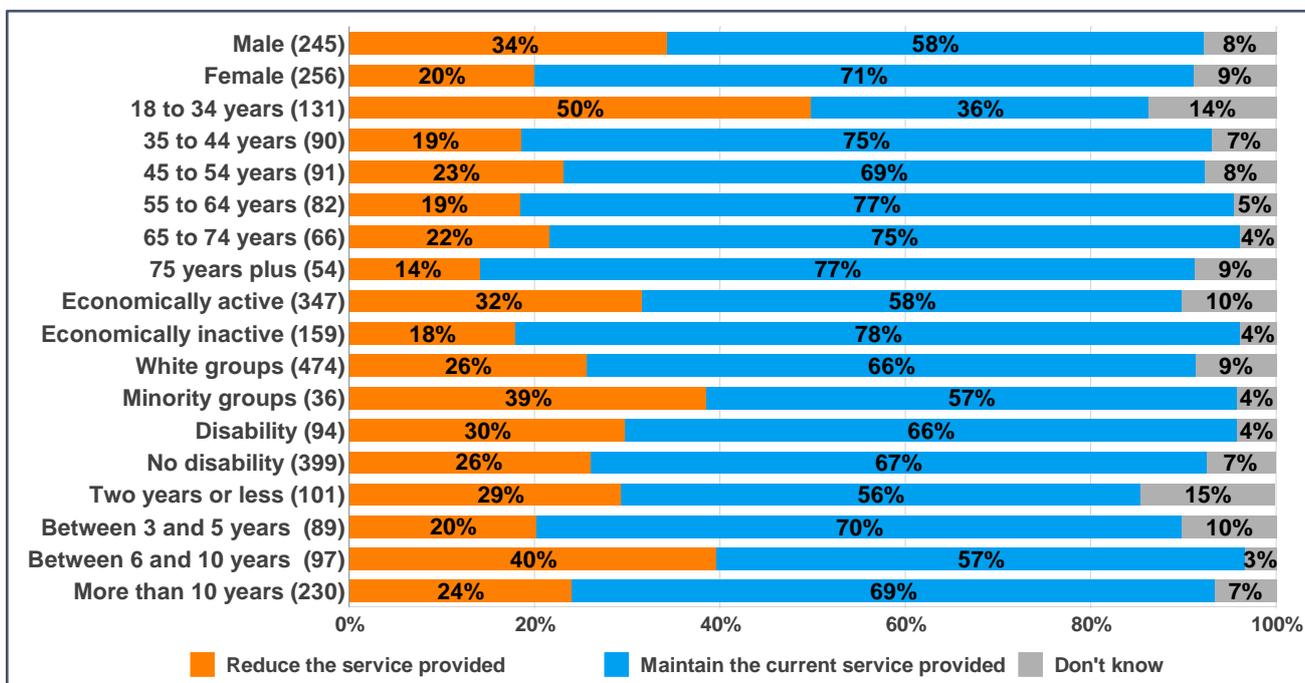
Museums

- 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.

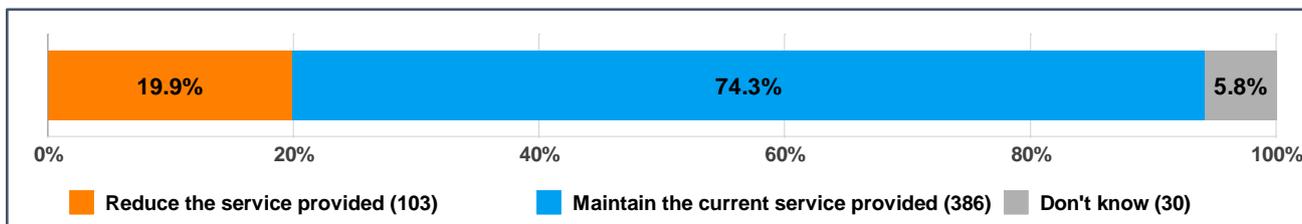


	<p>34% of male respondents were in favour of reducing Museums service compared to 20% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>50% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said that the Museums service should be reduced. This is significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>58% of economically active respondents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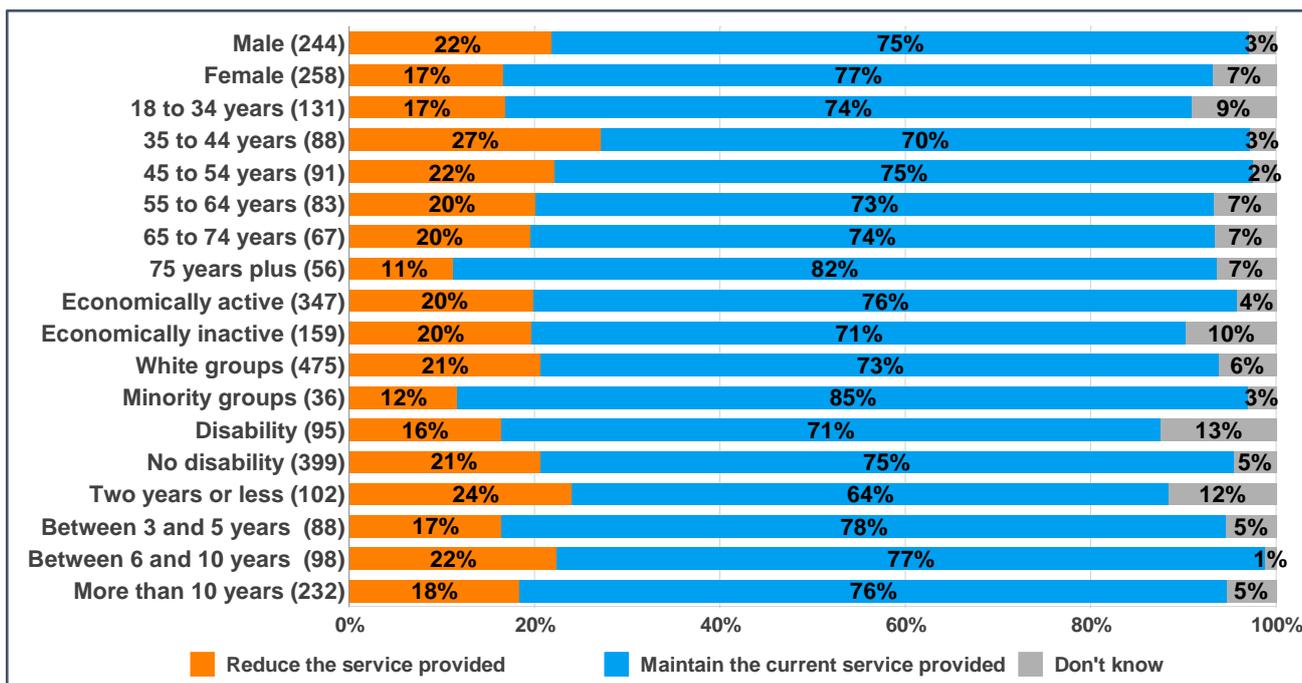
Car parks

- 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.

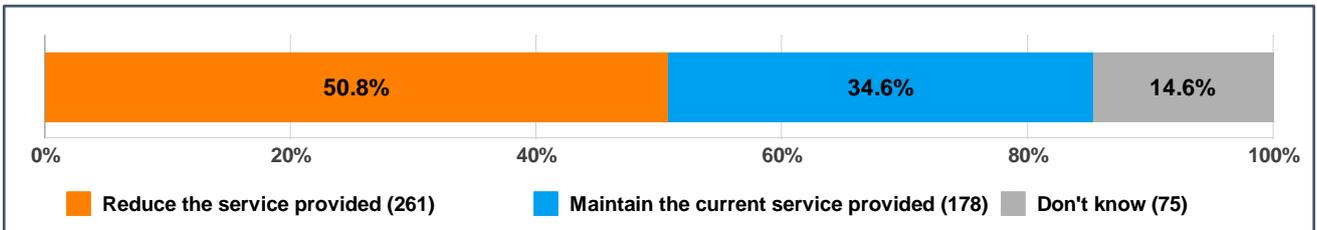


	<p>10% of economically inactive respondents answering ‘don’t know’ compared to 4% of economically active respondents answering the same suggesting a higher level of uncertainty or understanding for the economically inactive group</p>
	<p>13% of respondents with a disability answered ‘don’t know’ compared 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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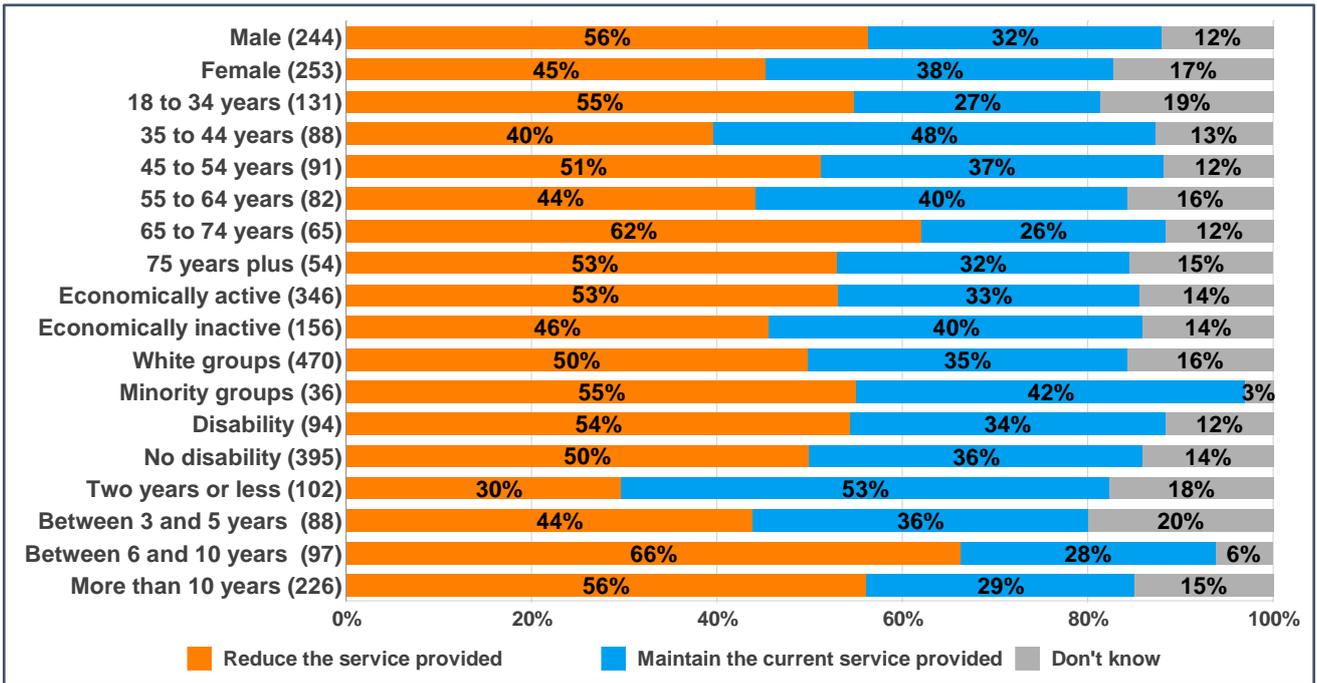
Civic Events

- 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.

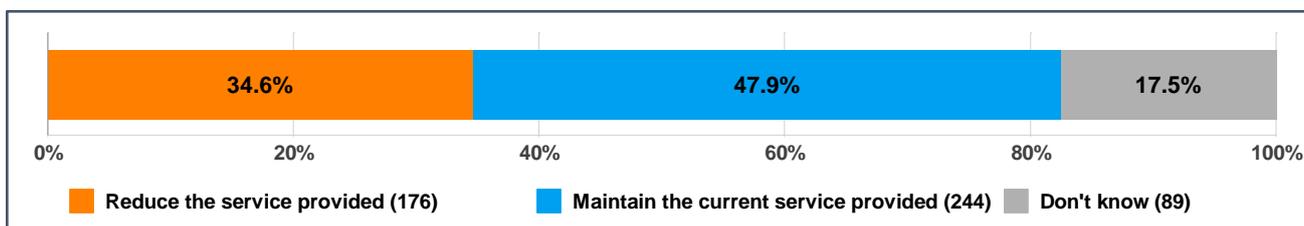


	<p>56% of male respondents were in favour of reducing civic events compared to 45% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>40% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the civic events should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the response from 18 to 34 year olds and 65 and 74 year olds age groups.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

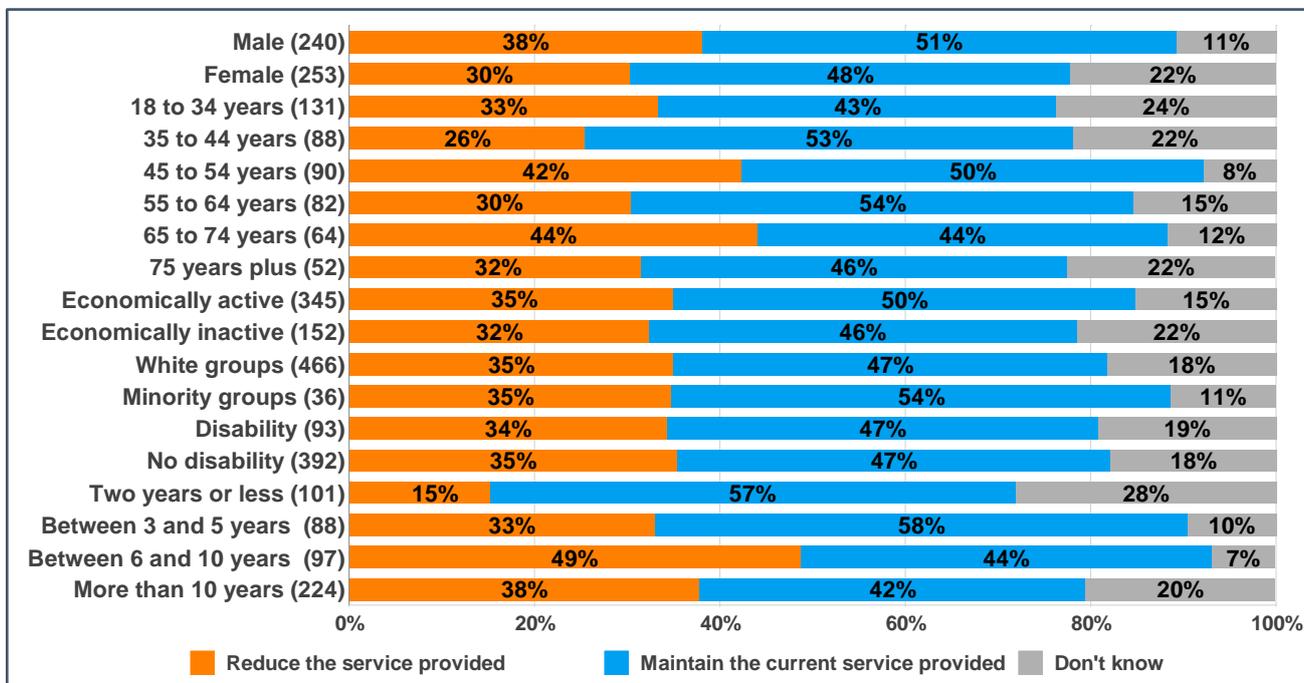
Tourism

- 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.

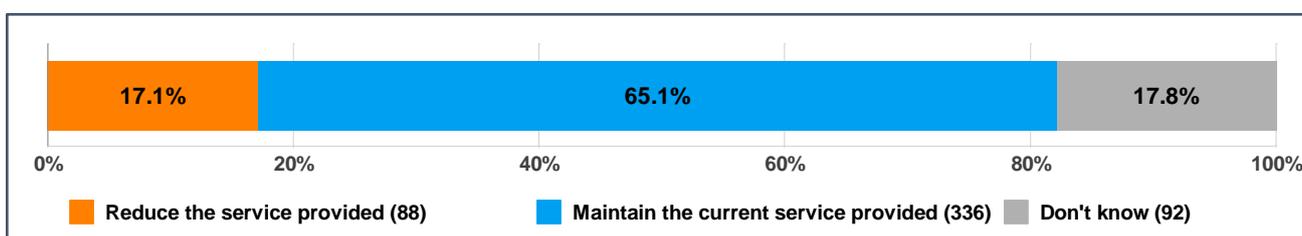


	<p>22% of females responded 'don't know' when asked about approaches for the Tourism service compared to 11% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the Tourism service should be reduced. This is significantly 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>

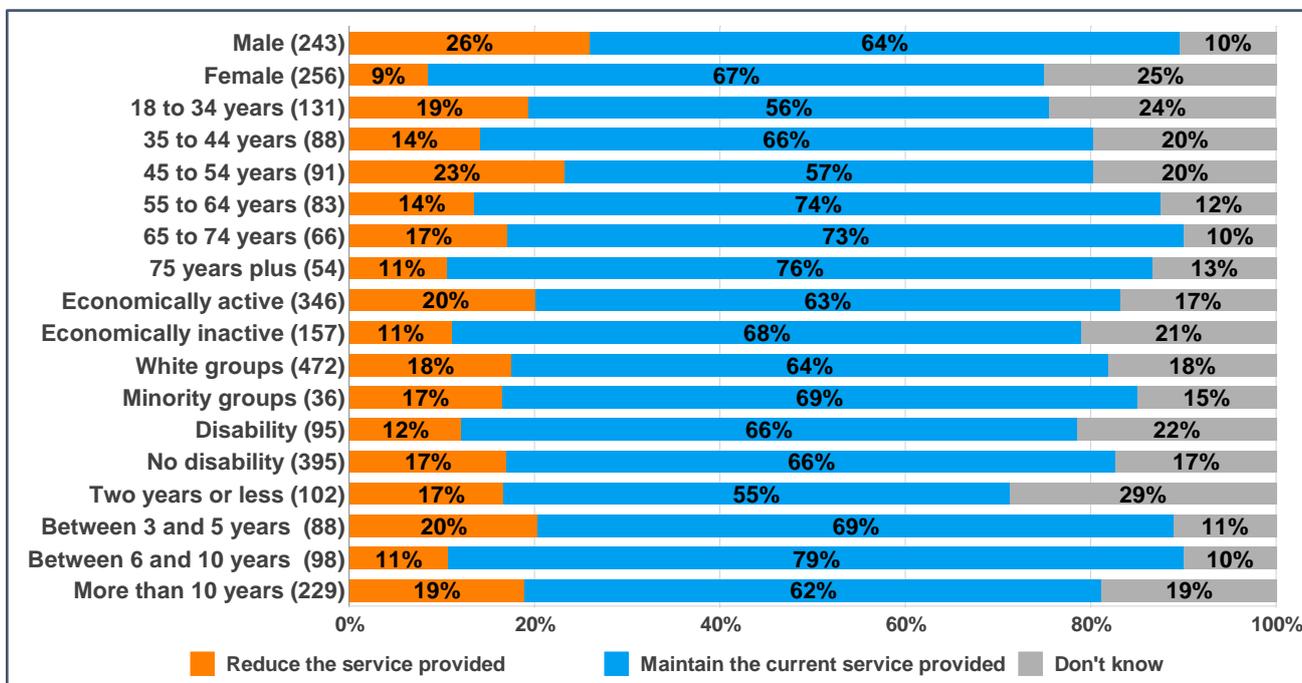
Commercial Waste Services

- 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.

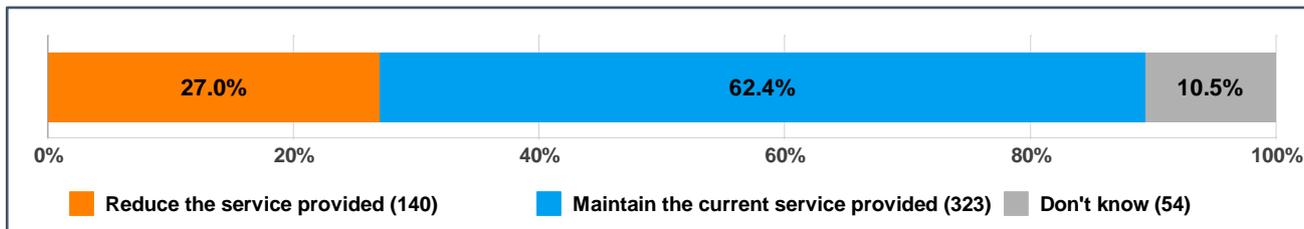


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Commercial Waste services with 26% answering this way compared to 45% of female respondents.</p> <p>22% of female respondents answered ‘don’t know’ compared to 10% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>The 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>

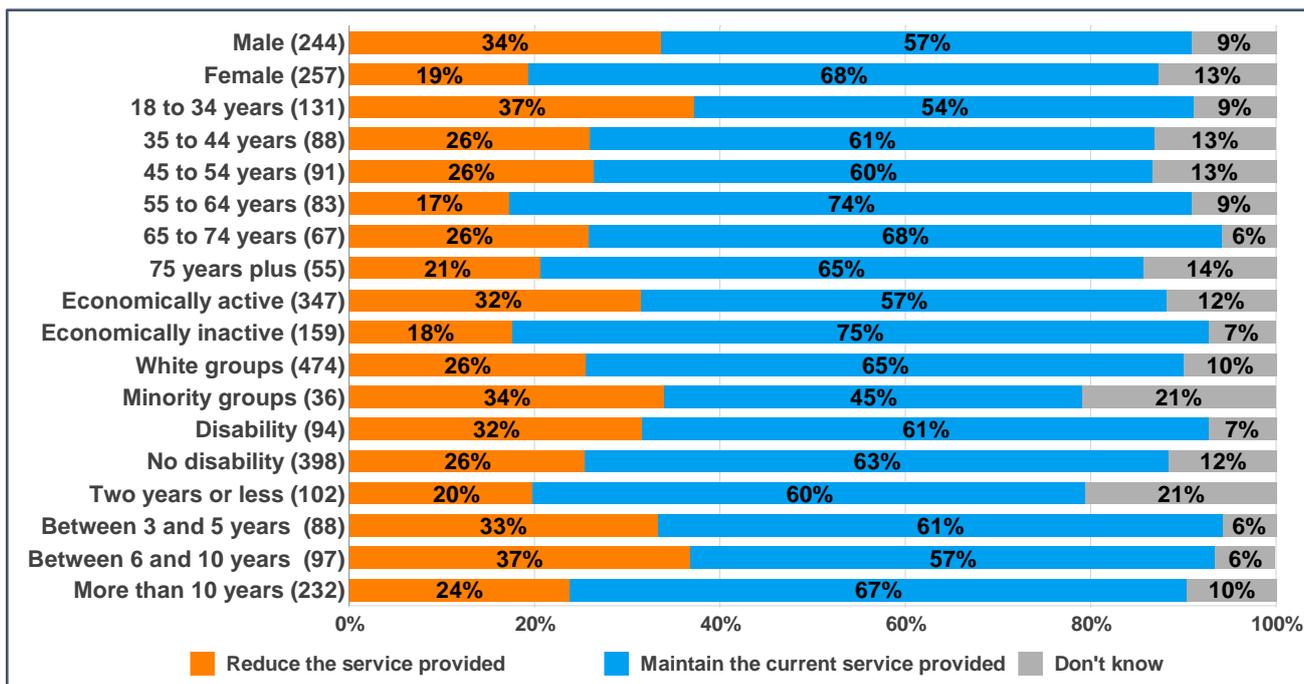
Hazlitt Arts Centre

- 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

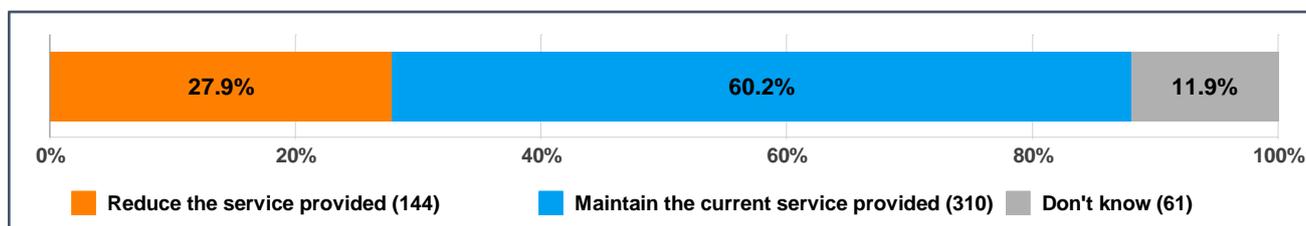
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

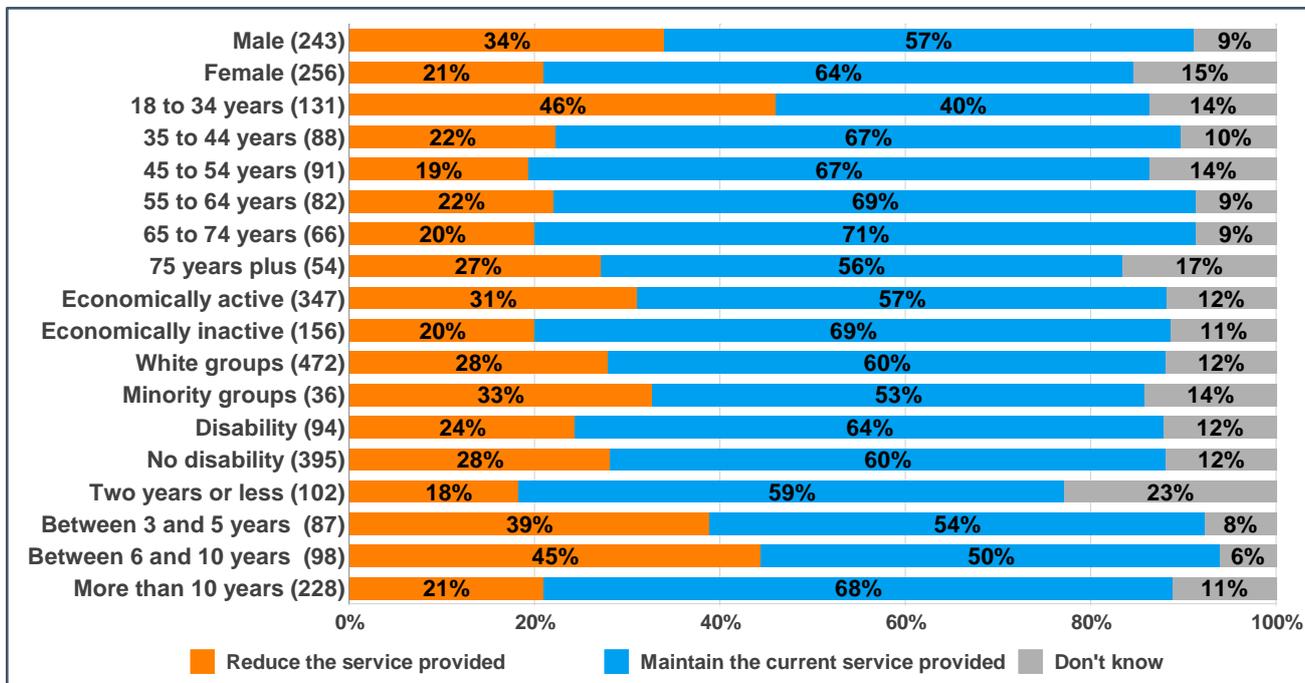
Community Halls & Facilities

- 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.

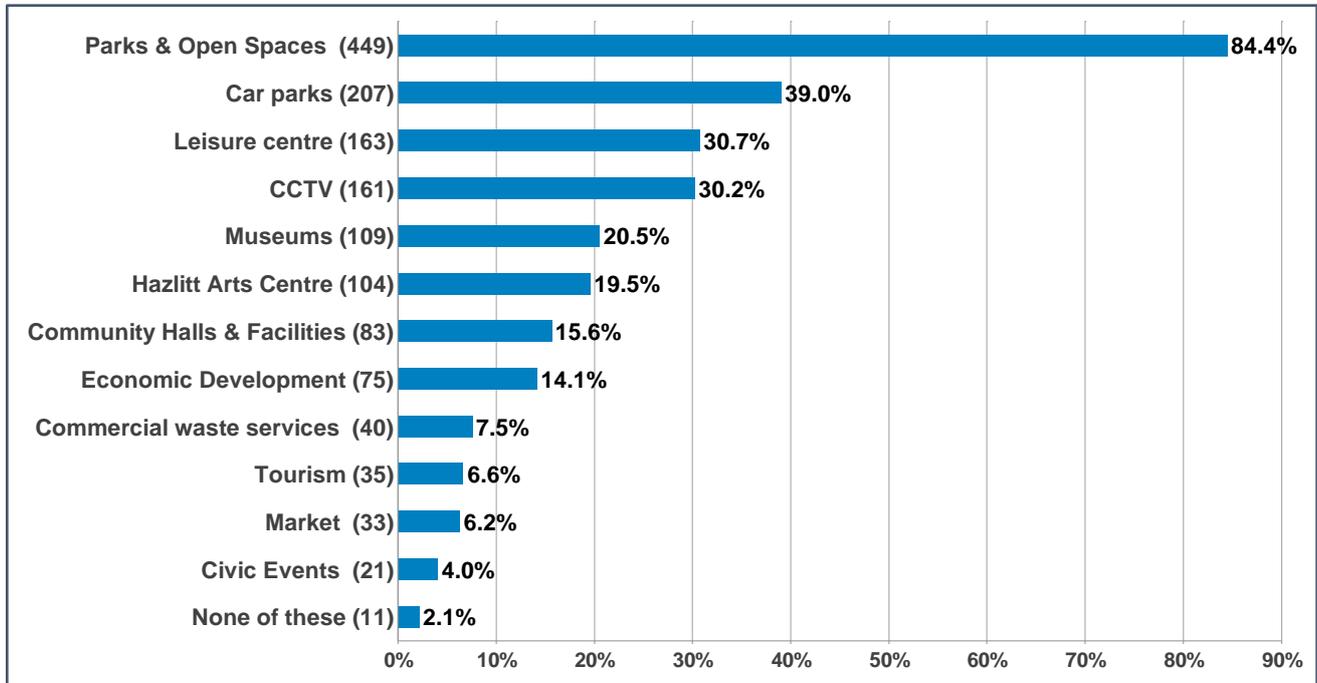


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Community Halls and Facilities with 34% answering this way compared to 21% of female respondents. Female respondents could be considered to be more uncertain of the approach to take for commercial waste with 15% answering 'don't know' compared to 9% 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.

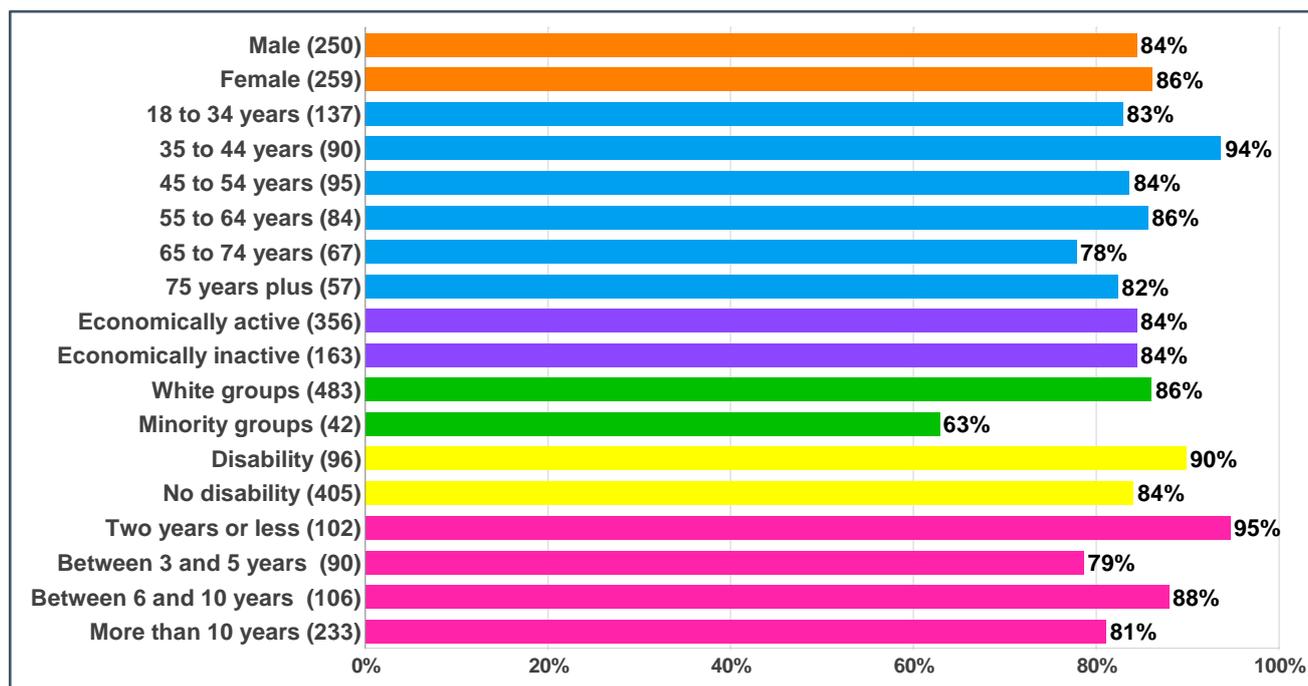
- 532 responses were received.
- The top three most important services were Parks & Open Spaces, Car Parks and the Leisure Centre.
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Civic Events, Market and Tourism.



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

Parks & Open Spaces

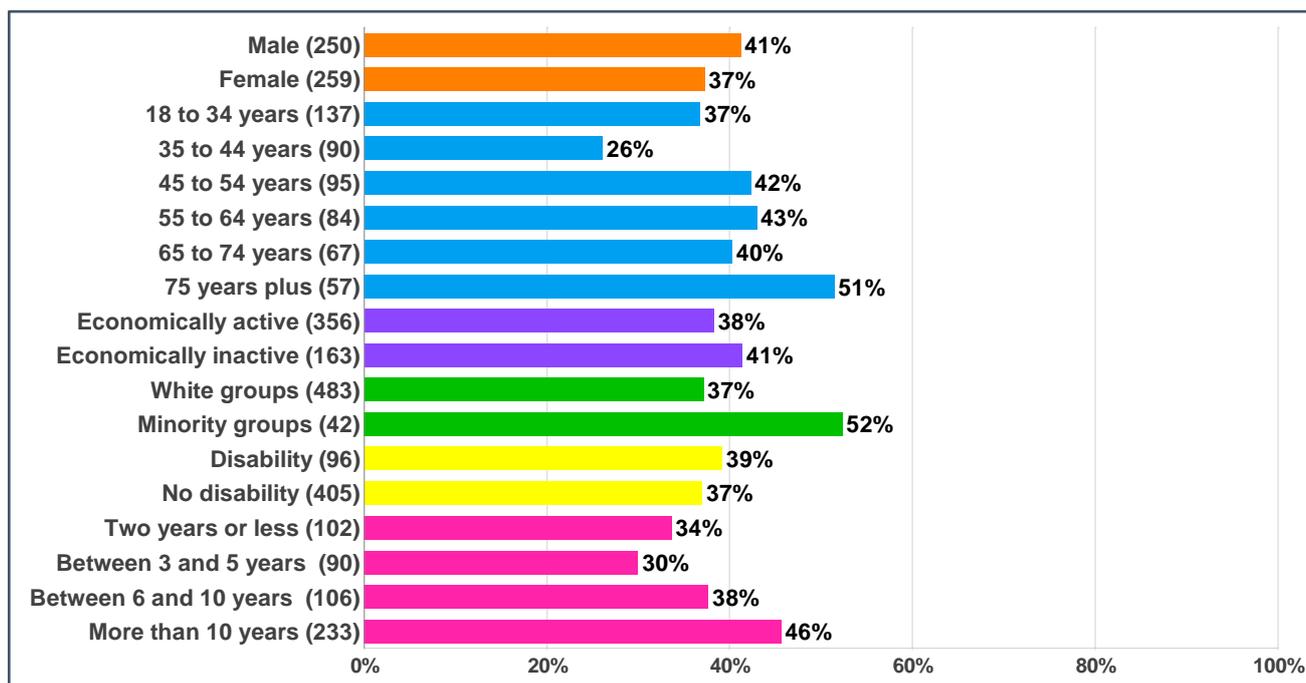
The differences in the proportions selecting Parks & Open Spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Car Parks

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



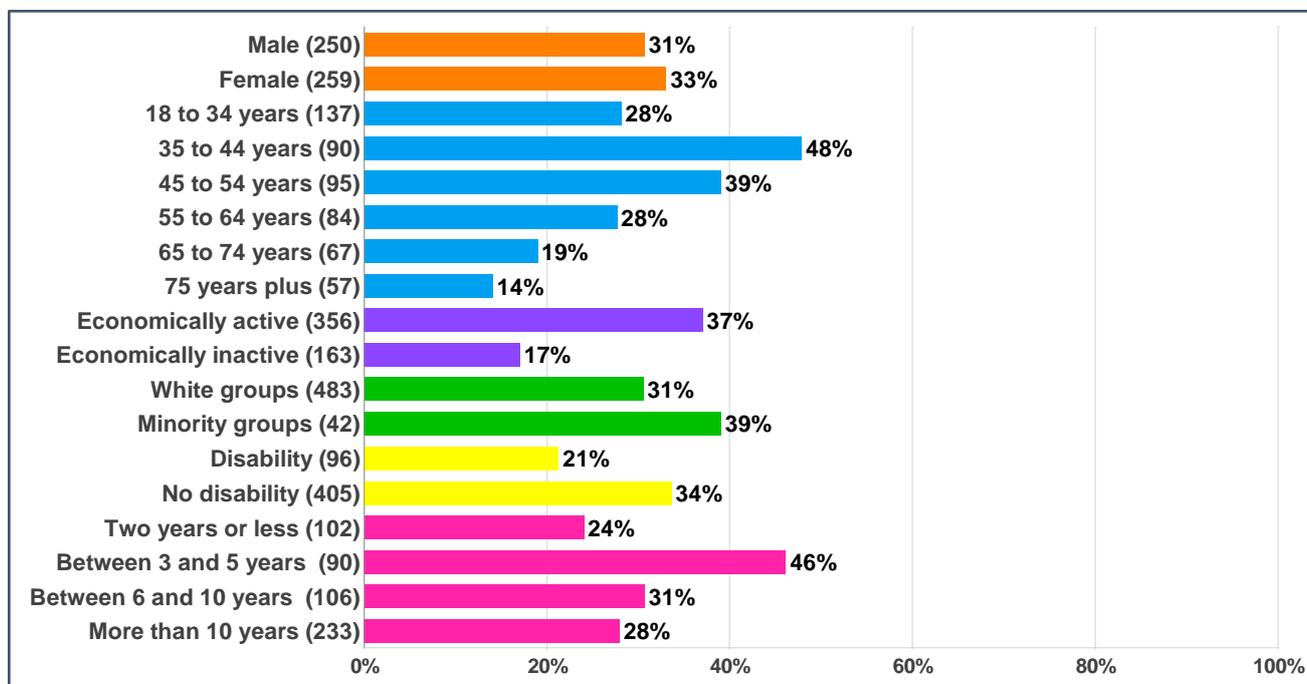
26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years selected Car Parks as being one of their most important services. This is significantly lower than for all the other age groups.



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.



	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.
	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.
	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.
	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.

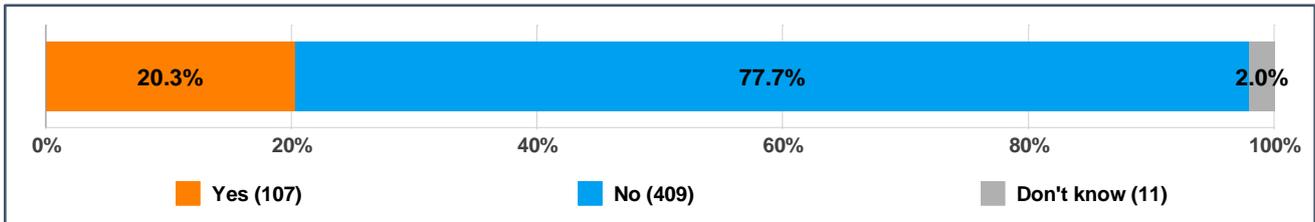
Future fees and Spending

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

Car Parking

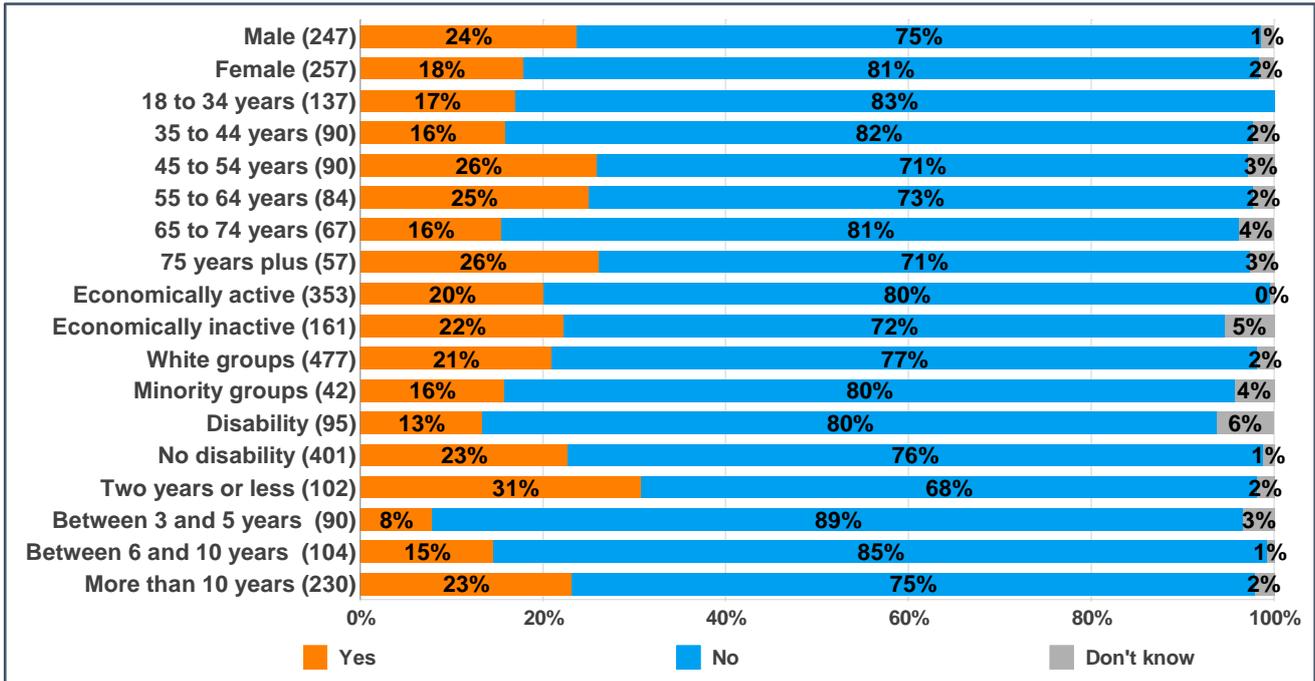
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for car parking in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of parking in the borough for context.

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



Demographic Differences

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

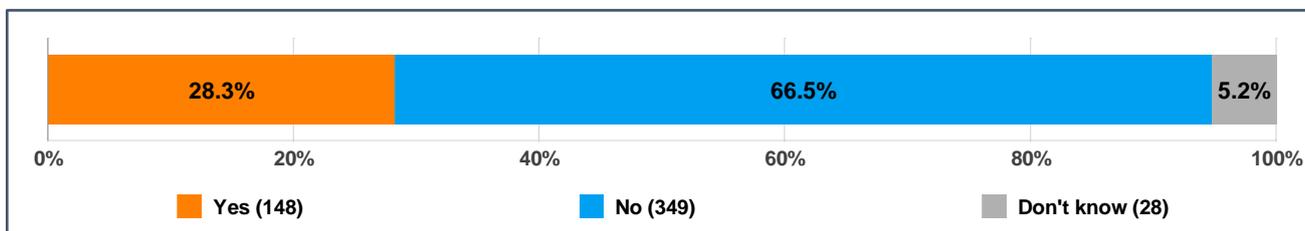


	<p>83% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said they were unwilling to pay more for car parking, significantly more than for the 45 to 54 years group where 71% were against raising charges for car parking.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about raising charges for car parking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

Garden Waste

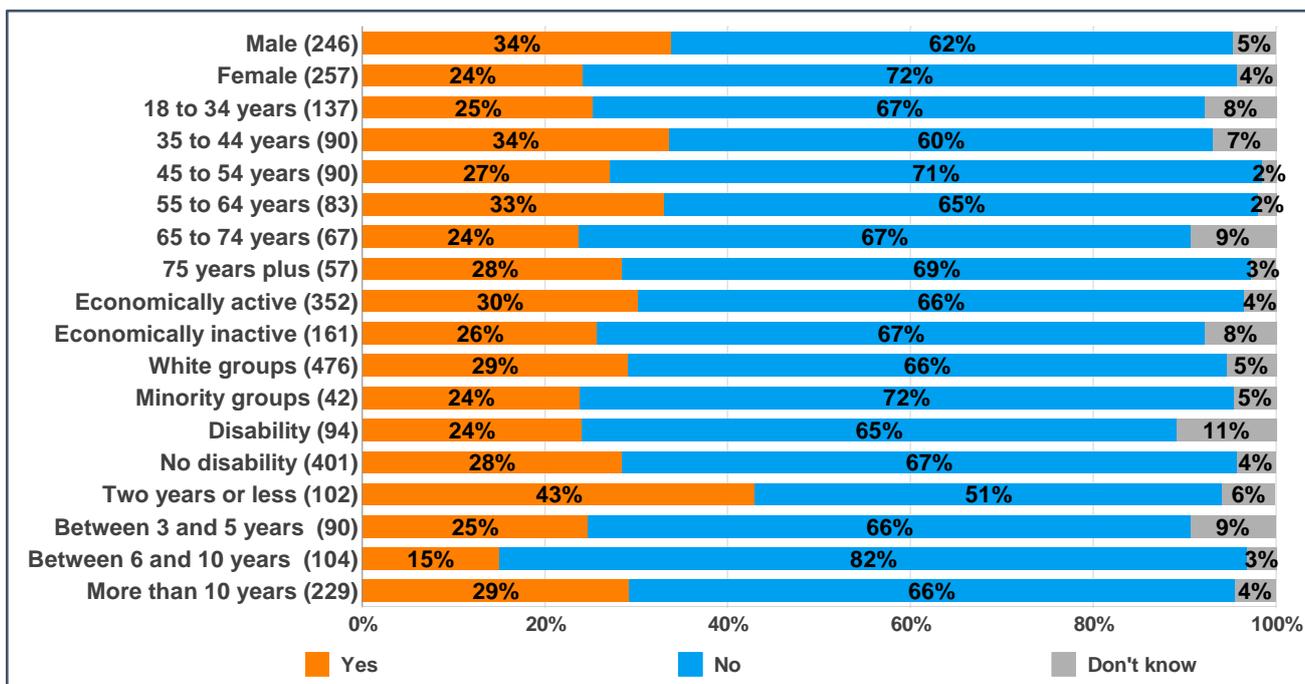
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for garden waste collections. They were provided with the current costs of garden waste collections in the borough for context.

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



Demographic Differences

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



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

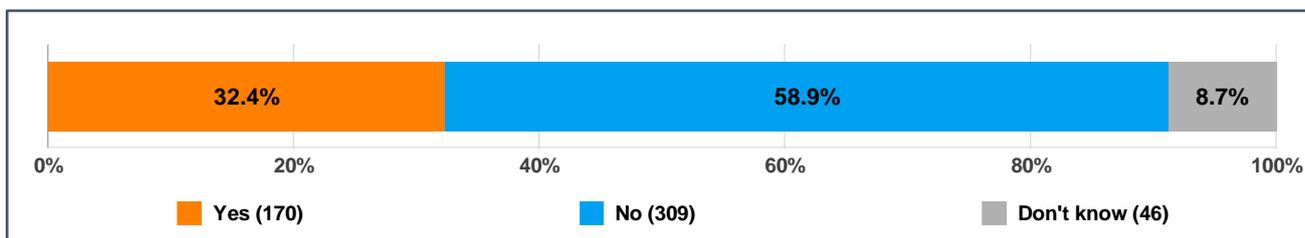


82% of respondent who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said they were not willing to pay more for garden waste services. This is significantly greater than the 'other length of time at current address' groups.

Leisure Facilities

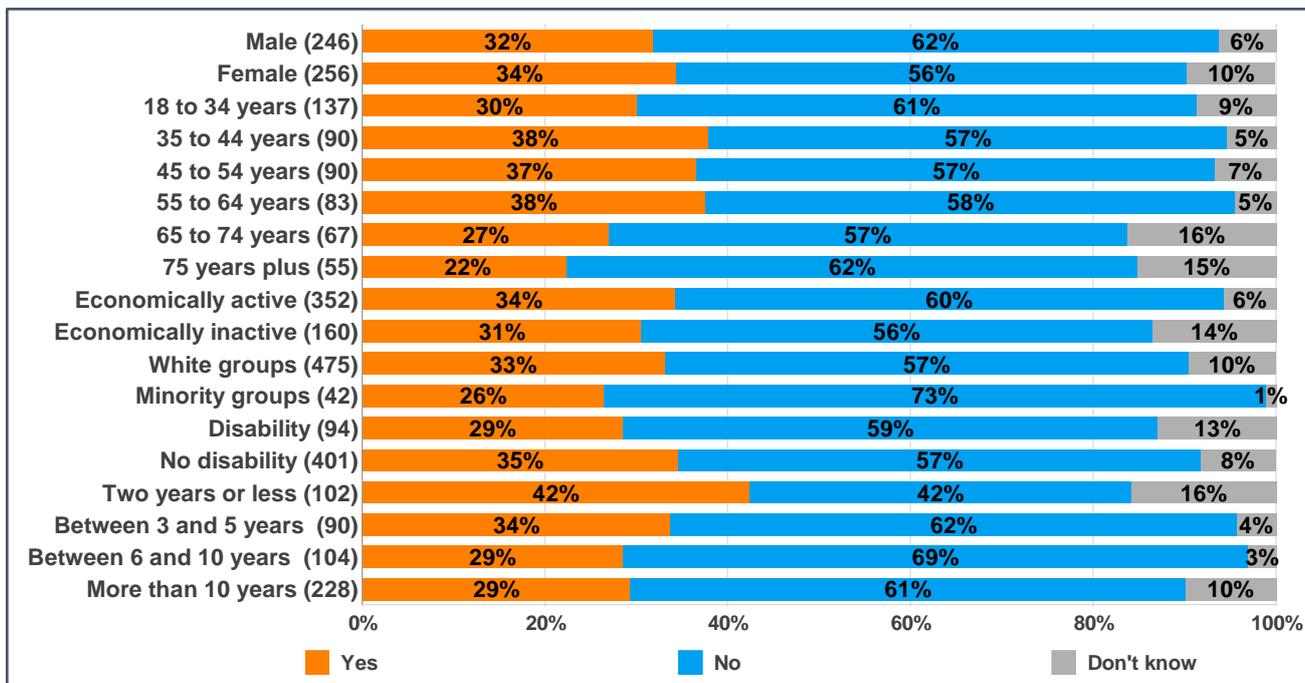
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of leisure services per council tax band D property in the borough for context.

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



Demographic Differences

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

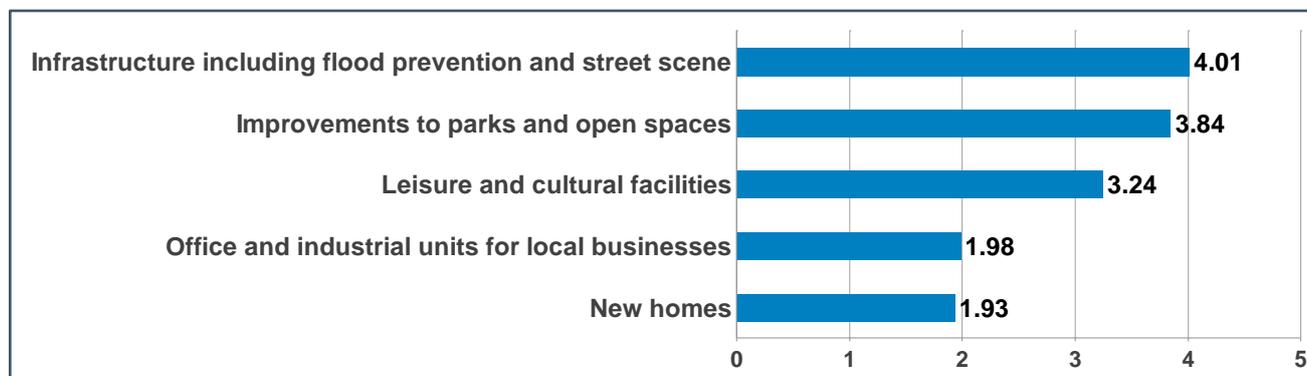


	<p>The 65 to 74 years and 75 years and over age groups had the greatest proportion of respondents that were uncertain if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities at 16% and 15% respectively. These was significantly more than the proportions of respondents that answered this way for the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

Priorities & Investment

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

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



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

Demographic Differences

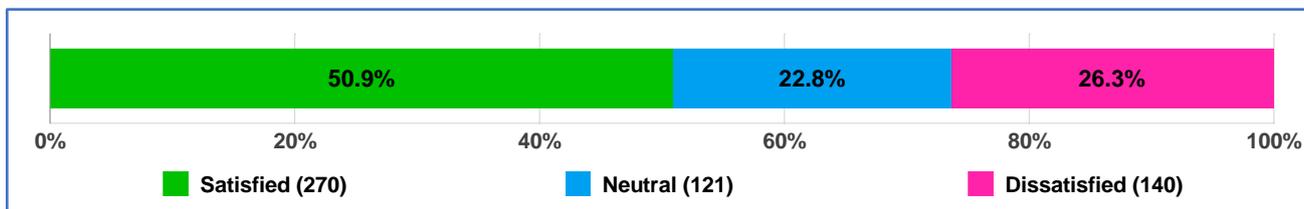
The table below outlines the differences between the ranking of the priorities across the demographic groups.

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

Local Area Satisfaction

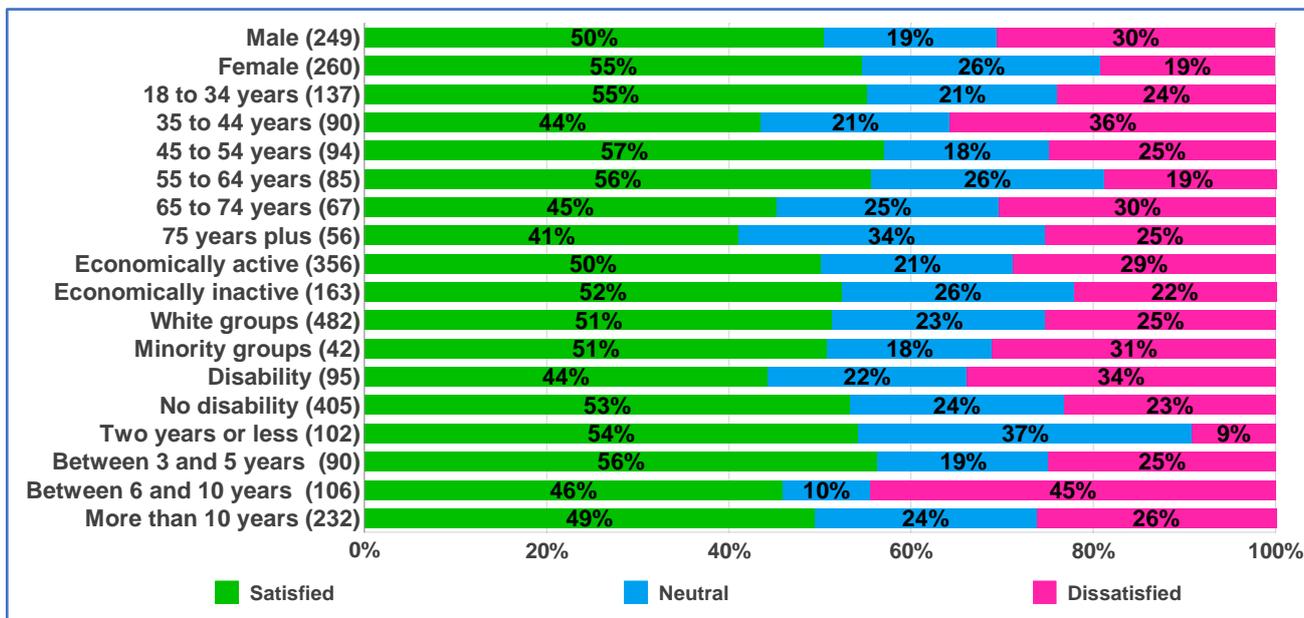
Survey respondents were asked: ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?’ and given a five-point scale from ‘very satisfied’ to ‘very dissatisfied’.

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



Demographic Differences

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



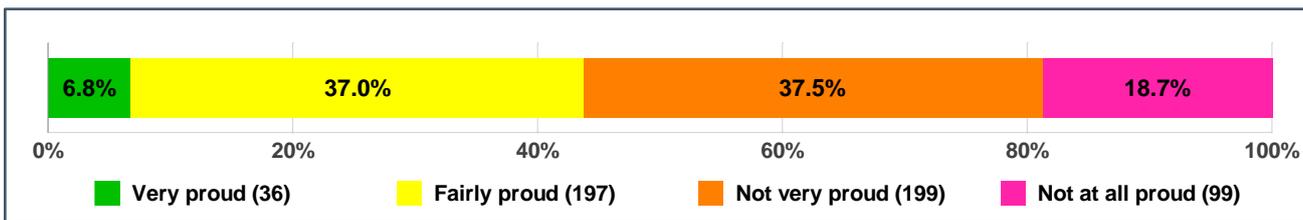
	<p>A greater proportion male respondents were dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live with 30% answering this way compared to 19% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>19% of respondents aged 55 to 64 years dissatisfied, this is significantly lower than the proportion answering the same for the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

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

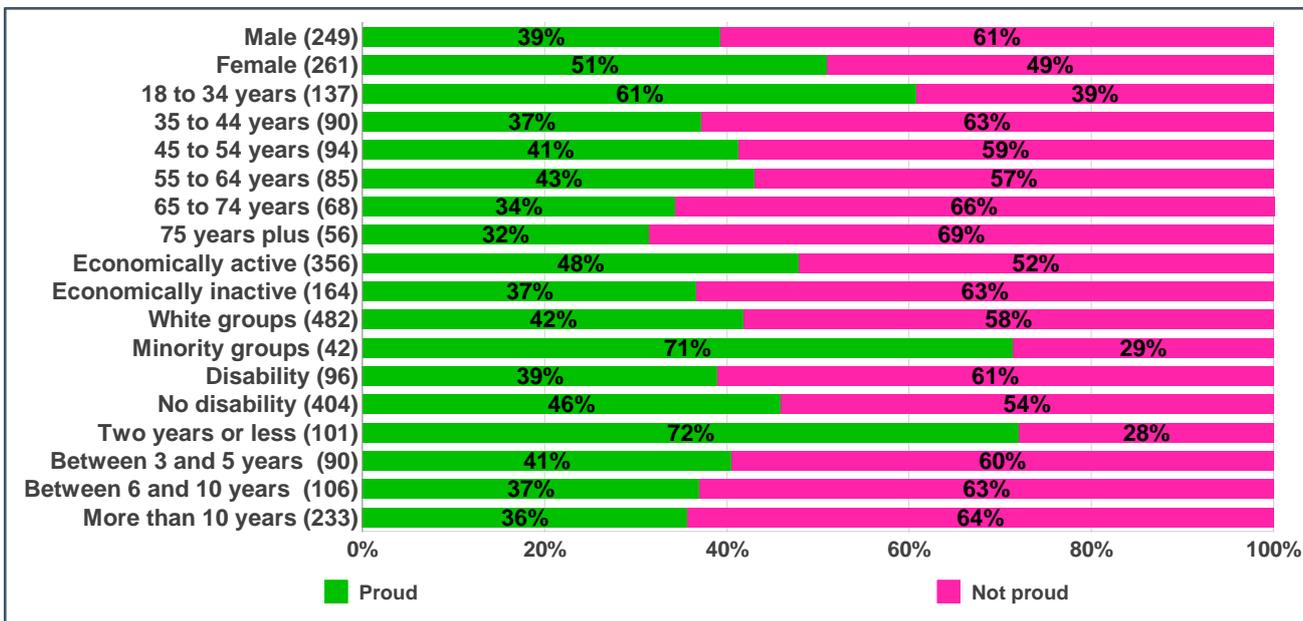
The survey asked respondents: 'How proud are you of Maidstone Borough?'

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



Demographic Differences

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



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

	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.

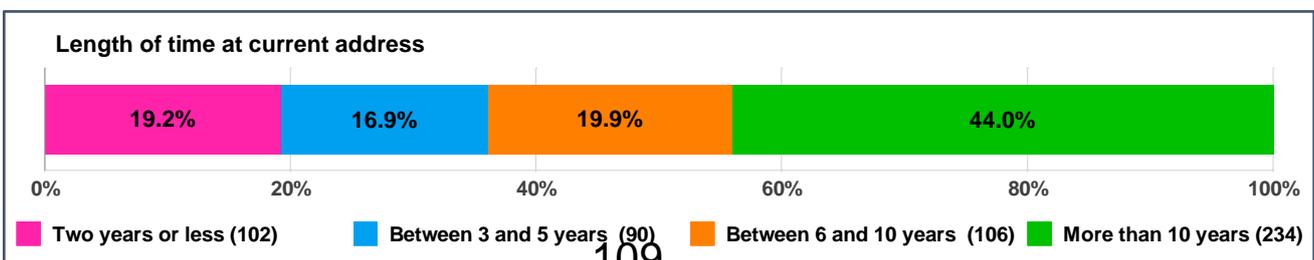
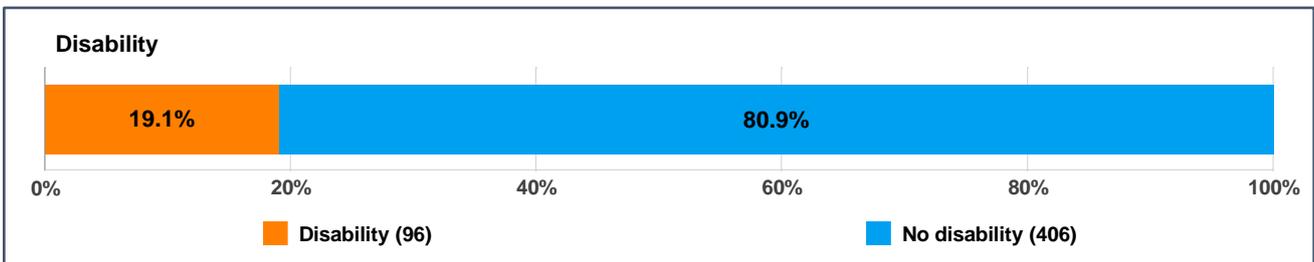
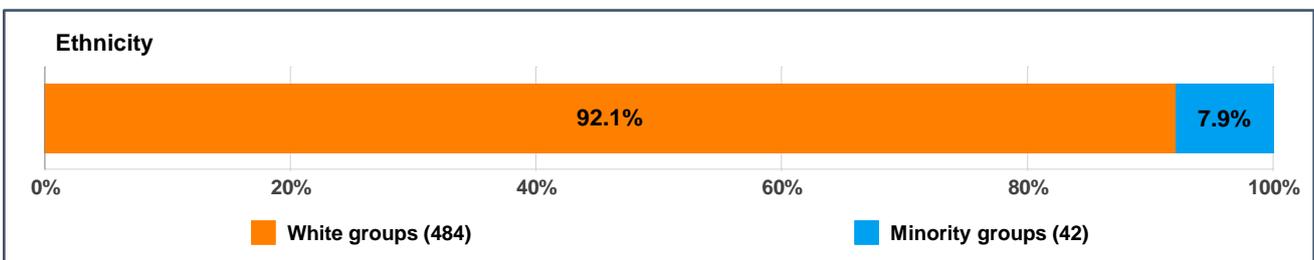
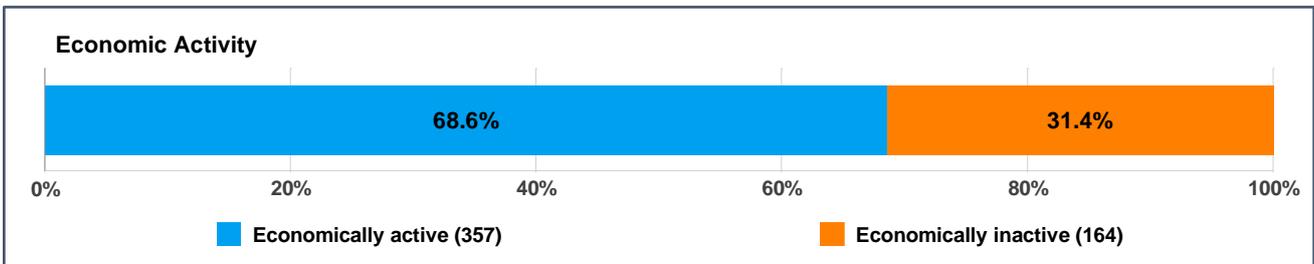
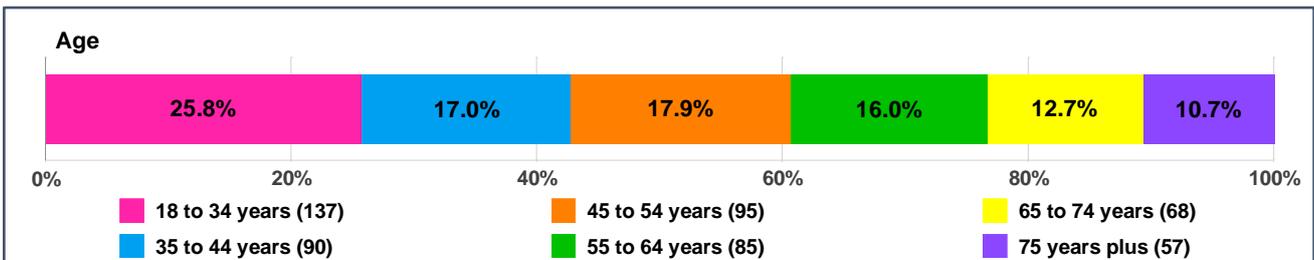
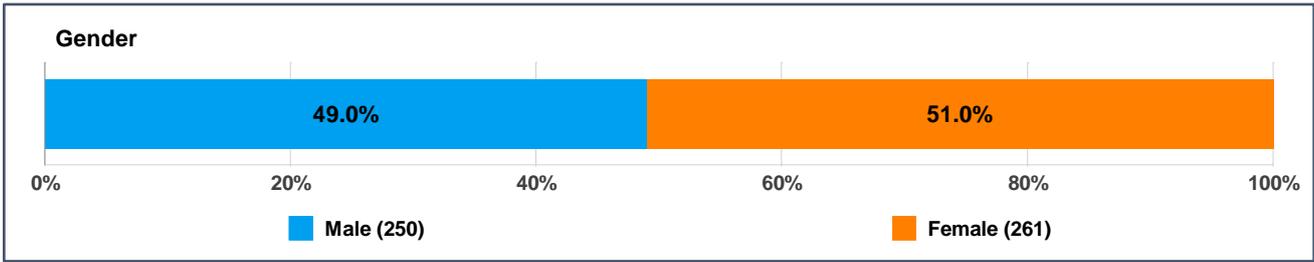
Budget Comments

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.

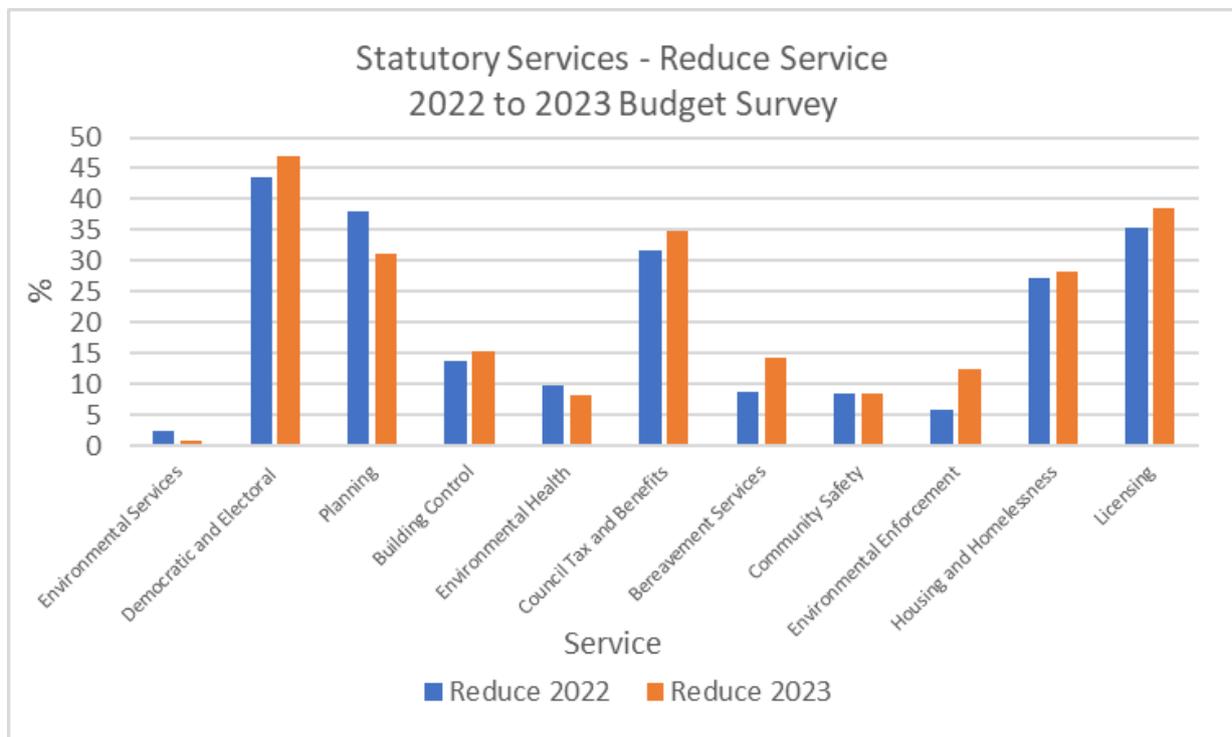
The table below provides a summary of the comments for each of the top ten themes identified.

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

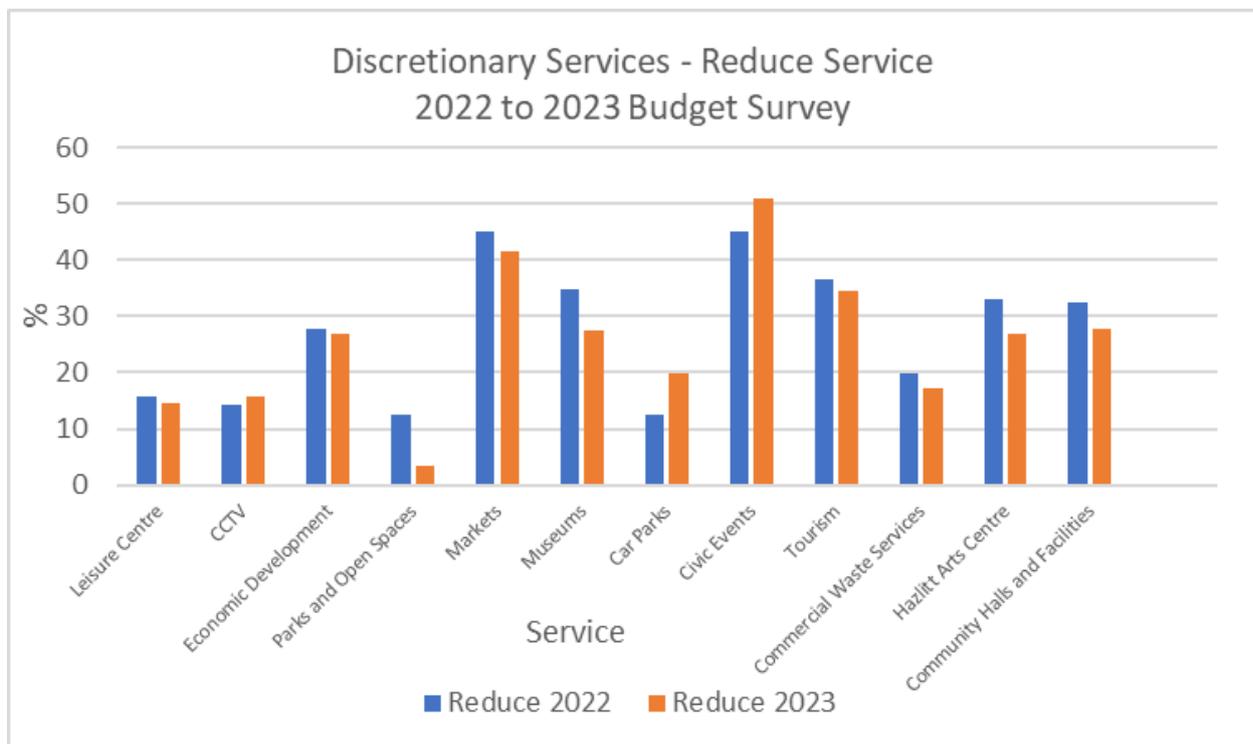
Demographics



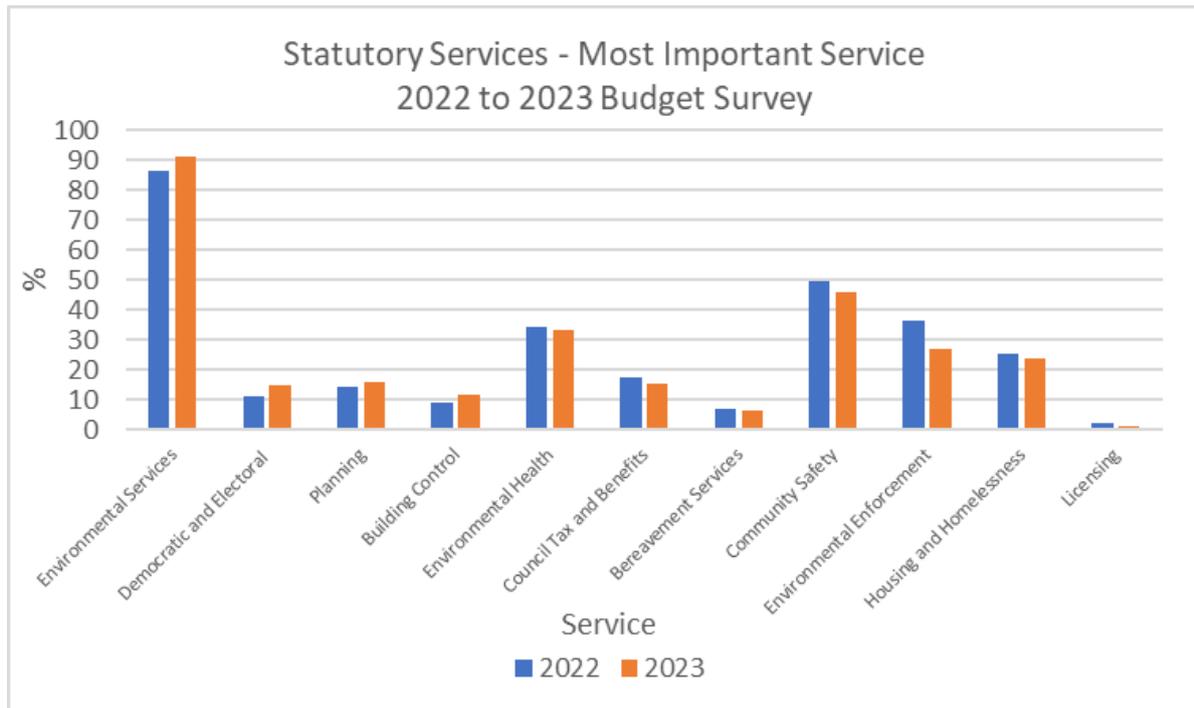
Reduce Statutory Services.



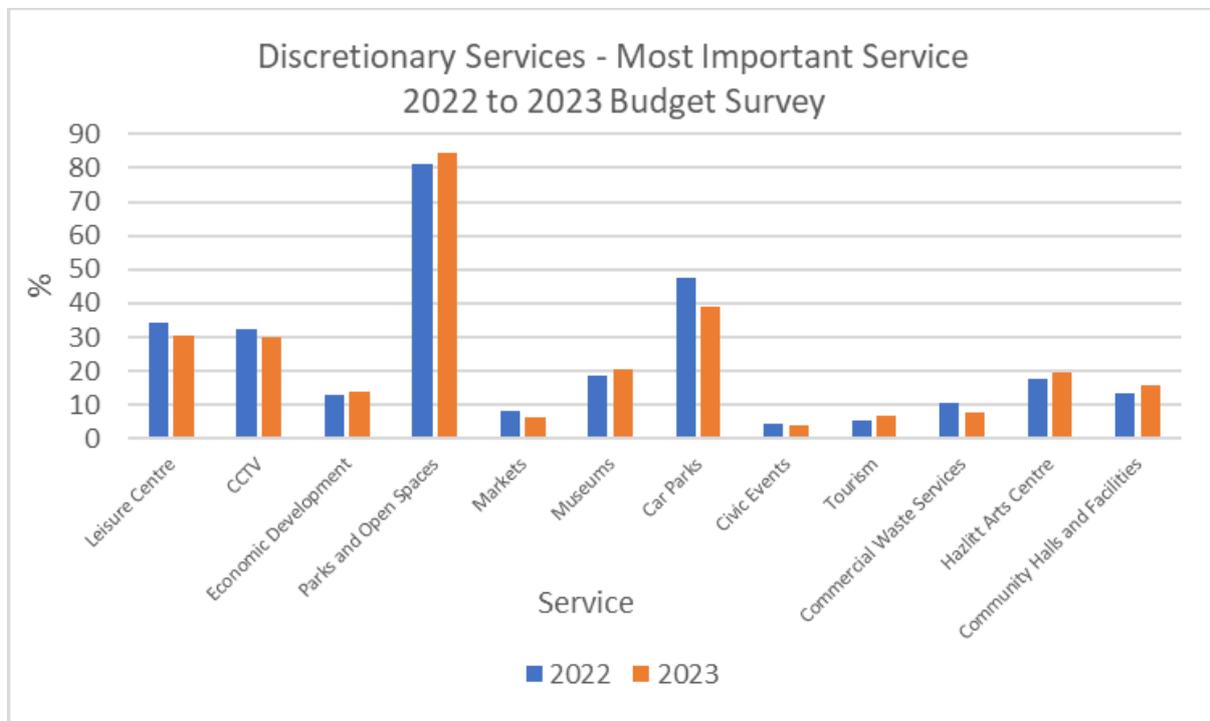
Reduce Discretionary Services.



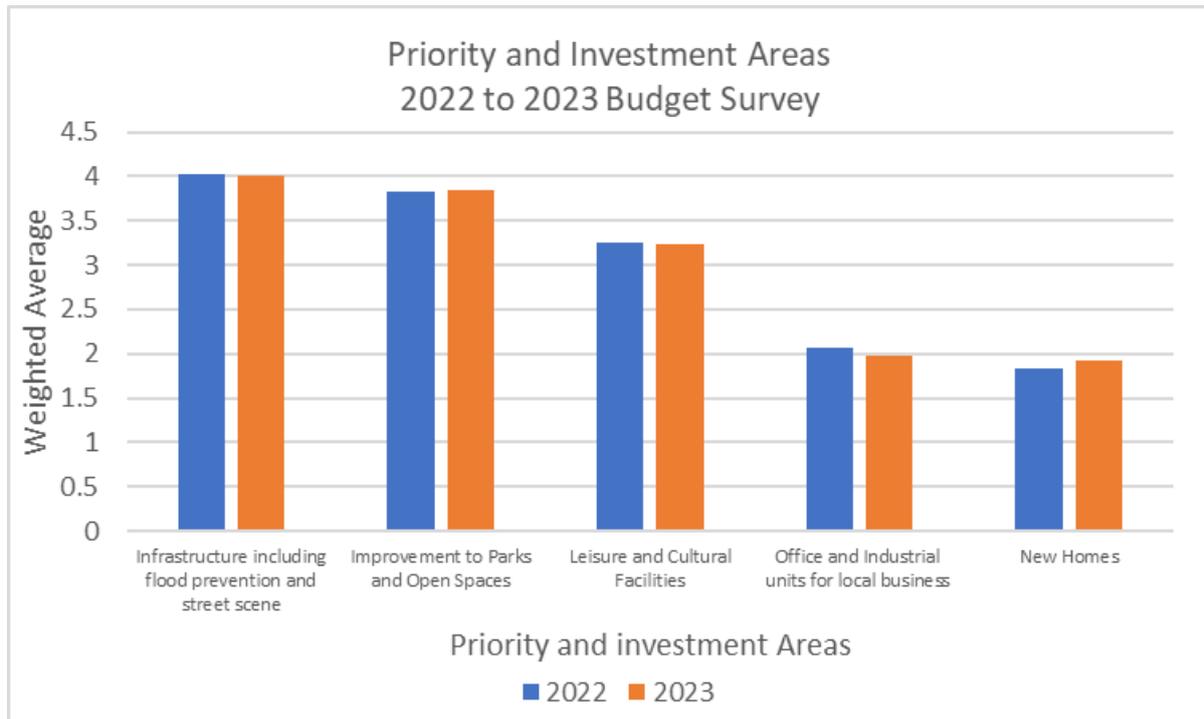
Most Important Statutory Services.



Most Important Discretionary Services.



Priorities and Investment Areas



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