

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 20 October 2020

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting - The public proceedings of the meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for playback on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Cox, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Harper (Chairman), Hinder, Lewins, Round and Webb

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

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Election of the Vice-Chairman
4. Urgent Items
5. Notification of Visiting Members
6. Disclosures by Members and Officers
7. Disclosures of Lobbying
8. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
9. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 September 2020 1 - 5
10. Presentation of Petitions
11. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public
12. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
13. Committee Work Programme 6
14. Reports of Outside Bodies

Issued on Monday 12 October 2020

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 15. Lockmeadow Management and Strategy Progress Report | 7 - 24 |
| 16. Maidstone Bus Station Project | 25 - 57 |

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this remote meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 16 October 2020). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

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

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 16 October 2020). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to comment on.

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

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: **13 October 2020**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Brindle, Cox, Mrs Gooch, Harper (Chairman), Hinder, Mortimer and Webb

Also Present: Councillor Round

136. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Blackmore, Fort and Lewins.

137. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were present:

- Councillor Brindle for Councillor Blackmore
- Councillor Mortimer for Councillor Lewins

138. **URGENT ITEMS**

Whilst not an urgent item, the Committee were informed that Item 15 – First Quarter Financial Update would be presented before Item 14 – Review of the Economic Development Strategy.

139. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Round was present as a Visiting Member for Item 15 – Review of the Economic Development Strategy.

140. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

141. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

142. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

143. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

144. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

145. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

146. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

147. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development highlighted that as further consultation needed to take place, the draft Economic Development Strategy would now be presented to the Committee in November 2020, rather than October.

The full Economic Development Strategy would then be presented to the Committee in February 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

148. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

149. FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Head of Finance introduced the report and informed the Committee that the forecast overspend had increased since publication, from just under £700k to just over £1million. This was to provide updated information, in line with the figures submitted by the Council each month to central government. The variance was greater than experienced in previous years due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The overspend was attributed in the main to Maidstone Leisure Centre, the Museum, the Hazlitt Theatre and Mote Park Café. The Museum had a projected adverse variance of £127k, the Hazlitt's adverse variance was £142k and the variance for Mote Park Café totalled £60k. A variance cost of £500k had been set aside for the Leisure Centre which was currently the subject of ongoing negotiations with Serco, as the Change of Law contract clause had been invoked which allowed the company to claim their losses from the Council.

The Head of Finance emphasised that the figures presented were based on the information available to the Council at the time and that these were still the subject of uncertainty. The Council was assessing the amount of loss that could be recovered through the government's Sales, Fees and Charges Scheme. It was noted that any residual shortfall at the end of the financial year would be met from the general fund balance.

The capital expenditure for the first quarter was minimal due to the lockdown period, however the Mote Park Dam works had begun with the proposed Visitor Centre on hold.

The Policy and Information Manager informed the Committee that four of the five targeted indicators had not achieved the quarter one target. These indicators had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown period and social distancing requirements. The number of visitors to visitmaidstone.com reflected interest in Mote and Cobtree Parks and a newly created webpage on home food deliveries in the local area. The percentage of unemployed individuals in Maidstone in receipt of out-of-work benefits had risen significantly.

In response to questions, the Head of Finance confirmed that the Adventure Zone was run by Serco and was included in the Council's negotiations. The Adventure Zone had now reopened. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development confirmed that the planning permission received for the Mote Park Café and Estate Services Building would be tendered out to the market to discover the price level contractors would likely demand.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Officers involved for their work.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted; and
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

150. **REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager introduced the report and noted that the Interim Summary Document shown in Appendix 1 to the report was a live document and subject to change whilst the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) was under review. The document was produced following a series of virtual consultation events held over the summer with Members, Officers and Businesses.

The proposed public consultation process would be advertised through the Council's social media, be made available on the Council's website and circulated via the Economic Development Local Business Database. The Communications Team would be involved in contacting Parish Councils for their responses as part of the public consultation process.

Ms Lucie Bailey, the Economics Director of Lichfields Planning and Development Consultancy, provided Members with a presentation on the Interim Summary Document. Ms Bailey confirmed that the document was based on the initial findings of various consultations and was presented to the Committee to encourage discussion and feedback before a full draft EDS would be created. The development of the enabling actions that would later be presented to the Committee would focus on the first five-year period of the strategy.

Ms Bailey referenced the many growth opportunities within the strategic context, and the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT Analysis) which were both shown within Appendix 1 to the report. The existing EDS was adopted by the Council in 2014, with the revised EDS scheduled to have an end-year of 2037 to coincide with the new Local Plan period and encourage consistency across corporate priorities.

Specific attention was drawn to the overarching proposition, five principles and the enabling factors for each principle that had been drafted. It was noted that further one-to-one consultations were ongoing with stakeholders and that a draft EDS would be presented to the Committee in November 2020.

During the debate there was particular support for the first priority – 'Open for Business'. In discussing the priorities, the importance of the low carbon economy and where it would fit into the strategy were questioned, alongside the importance of maintaining and encouraging skilled labour within the local economy. The link between employment and health and wellbeing and the importance of physical and technological infrastructure were highlighted.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager invited the Committee to submit further comments on the Interim Summary Document over the next two weeks, after which the one-to-one consultations would begin.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Interim Summary Documents, shown in Appendix 2 to the report, and Strategy's Programme moving forward, be noted;
2. The proposed public consultation programme for the revision of the Economic Development Strategy, be approved; and

Note: Councillor Harper exited the meeting at 7.45 p.m. during consideration of this item at which time Councillor Mrs Gooch was duly elected as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

151. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. – 8.03 p.m.

2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2025/26	ERL	17-Nov-20	Governance	Yes	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q2 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2020/21	ERL	17-Nov-20	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Draft Economic Development Strategy	ERL	17-Nov-20	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	John Foster
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2021/22	ERL	19-Jan-21	Governance	Yes	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2020/21	ERL	16-Feb-21	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Economic Development Strategy	ERL	16-Feb-21	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	John Foster
Making Maidstone More Active - Update	ERL	TBC	Officer Update	?	John Foster	Mike Evans
Tour of the Business Terrace	ERL	TBC	Briefing		John Foster	John Foster
Town Centre Opportunity Sites Delivery Strategies	ERL	TBC	Officer Update	Yes	William Cornall	John Foster

Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee

20 October 2020

Lockmeadow Management and Strategy Progress Report

Final Decision-Maker	Policy and Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	Georgia Hawkes, Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Alexa Kersting-Woods, Leisure Property Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the progress of the Lockmeadow complex since the council acquired the site in November 2019 and sets out the Council's future plans.

Purpose of the report

This report is for information only.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the Committee endorse feasibility work on the Food Hall concept and on improving links with the Town Centre.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	20 October 2020

Lockmeadow Management and Strategy Progress Report

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The acquisition of Lockmeadow and proactive management of the site will materially improve the Council's ability to make Maidstone a Thriving Place.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Financial	The management activity described in this report is covered by existing budgets.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Staffing	We deliver the activities set out in the report with our current staffing.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Legal	There are no legal implications arising from this report as it is for noting only.	Principal Solicitor - Commercial
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address.	Principal Solicitor - Commercial
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	The use of local supply chains for the Market and potentially a Food Hall will bring added social value and reduce the impact on the environment also providing higher quality food. However it is still important to consider the food provision within the development and how the offering will provide healthier	Senior Public Health Officer

	choices for children and families to have a healthy balanced diet, therefore not contributing to rising childhood obesity levels within the Borough.	
Crime and Disorder	N/A	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Procurement	N/A	Director of Finance and Business Improvement

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Lockmeadow comprises:

- leisure centre with an Odeon multiplex cinema, 18-lane bowling alley, a trampoline park, five restaurants and a two-level David Lloyd swimming pool and gym complex
- car parks
- a market hall operated by the Council.

2.2 In November 2019, the Council purchased the long leasehold interest (105 years unexpired). The rationale for the purchase was twofold. Firstly, taking control of a centrally located site, which plays a key role in Maidstone's leisure offer, would help the Council realise its priority of making the borough a Thriving Place. Secondly, the acquisition would generate a financial return, in line with the Council's commercial investment strategy.

2.3 Fidum (a facility management company) were appointed to oversee the day to day management. In March 2020 we appointed a Leisure Property Manager to oversee both the Lockmeadow Complex and Maidstone Market. The post holder sits within the Corporate Property Team.

3. INITIAL ACTIVITY

3.1 Our overriding objective has been to make Lockmeadow a top leisure destination for local residents and for visitors. This means an all-round offer, including not only leisure facilities and dining, but also events and activities which make better use of the riverside, and specifically activities which will attract families.

3.2 In the past the Lockmeadow complex was a very popular place to go for leisure activity in the town with high footfall and good levels of public awareness. Over the years its popularity has been in decline, so improving the site's marketing was a priority for the Council. A tender process was held to find a marketing consultant. The successful bid was a partnership

between Floresco Communications and the council's own communication team.

- 3.3 A marketing strategy was drawn up and included targets of increasing social media following, increasing public awareness of the different tenants and increasing footfall.
- 3.4 Our tenants reported a very promising start to 2020 with Hollywood Bowl and Gravity both healthily exceeding income targets in February.
- 3.5 The previous landlord had commissioned some improvement works in 2016, mainly interior design and a new front entrance. These improvements dated the rest of the building so funding was agreed by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 29th April 2020 to improve the look of the building and the site in general. The plans were approved by Planning Committee on the 23rd July and work commenced 10th August . Work includes modernisation of the external facia, removal or replacement of railings and a new, more welcoming entrance to the car park. In addition, the cattle shed type structure at the rear of the car park is also being removed to open the site to its attractive riverside location. Work is due to be completed in November 2020.

4. THE IMPACT OF COVID 19

- 4.1 When lockdown was implemented all tenants in the centre had to close and a decision was made to close the Market as initial government guidance was quite sparse and it was not clear how or if we could safely operate. The Market Hall became the base for the Council's community hub distributing food and other items to vulnerable groups.
- 4.2 All bookings for the Market Hall were cancelled, these included dog and cat shows, and autojumbles, and we either had to refund deposits or move bookings to next year.
- 4.3 Tenants in the centre were facing financial difficulties. However, only one tenant has so far faced a material change in their circumstances. The Restaurant Group, owner of Frankie and Benny's, entered a Creditors Voluntary Arrangement in July. The company closed many of their sites, but the Lockmeadow branch of Frankie and Benny's remained open and is now paying the Council a rent based on turnover rather than the previous fixed rent.
- 4.4 Odeon were due to start refurbishment work in March and this was delayed until July 2020.
- 4.5 All tenants apart from GBK and Odeon have now reopened and are operating in compliance with government guidance. Odeon expect their refurbishment to be completed mid-October 2020 and will reopen shortly afterwards. We are optimistic that GBK will open around the same time.
- 4.6 One of the positives to come out of the pandemic was the 'shop local' change to consumer behaviour. Once we had a date to reopen the Market,

we launched the LOVE YOUR LOCAL MARKET campaign. The campaign included an offer of 8 free stalls to anyone who produced or made items locally and were new to market trading. This resulted in around 50 enquiries and over 20 new traders, several whom have continued with the Market after their initial rent-free period.

5. MARKETING OF VOIDS

- 5.1 For approximately 4 years there have been 2 vacant units located on the ground floor of the centre. Although there have been a few enquiries no businesses have progressed beyond an initial viewing.
- 5.2 Traditionally sites like Lockmeadow tend to attract chain restaurants and these businesses were already struggling financially pre Covid 19 and even more so now.
- 5.3 A new approach is needed to attract tenants and one option we believe worth investigating further is the concept of a food hall. This is a growing trend which has evolved from the old-style food court, the difference being that these are aimed at attracting independent businesses. They also provide the customer with a fast-casual food option but with wider choice and higher quality than traditional fast food.
- 5.4 The food hall model offers distinct advantages for both landlord and tenant. For the landlord, having several tenants in a space spreads the risk of long-term voids and loss of income when a sole tenant moves out. Lower rent and lower risk for the potential tenant is attractive particularly if they are new to the restaurant business. Tenants will not have to fund significant start-up costs to refurbish a building as in most of the models for food halls the landlord provides the operating space in return for a percentage of the profits or other similar arrangements. The tenant then just needs to transform the space to reflect their brand.
- 5.5 Further work is ongoing developing the food hall concept, with initial work funded from the Council's corporate budget for feasibility studies.

6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 6.1 The Odeon Luxe is due to open at the end of October 2020. The Luxe model includes reclining seating, a high-quality sound and visual experience and a cocktail bar.
- 6.2 The work we have commissioned to improve the building and the site's appearance is due to be completed mid-November 2020. Subject to approval we would like to continue to invest in the site and provisional plans include a new rear entrance to the complex with extended outside dining areas. We would like to maximise the river frontage with a river view café and children's play area.

- 6.3 Longer term plans could include a review of the Market Hall to consider different options for the building / site that fit with the aim of Lockmeadow becoming a thriving leisure destination and supporting economic growth.
- 6.4 Parking Services are reviewing the car parking provision on site and looking at improved technology that will allow us to offer parking discounts for customers visiting the Lockmeadow complex. This will support a Love Lockmeadow loyalty scheme we are developing with the aim of encouraging an increase in dwell time and return visitors.
- 6.5 As part of the site improvement works, we are improving the appearance of the Town Square which is in the centre of the Lockmeadow car park. Also, the management of the amphitheatre has moved to the Leisure Property Manager. This area has been very underutilised in the past, so the intention is to look at a programme of riverside events bringing both sides of the river together. The events will need to be co-ordinated with other events in the district to avoid clashes.
- 6.6 Consideration is being given to how we can better link Lockmeadow and the town centre. This includes looking at increasing signage and improvements for the pedestrian journey. Initial discussions are taking place with MBC planners and with KCC, with the next step being the preparation of plans for an integrated set of improvements.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Lockmeadow Food Market

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None







Contents.

1.0	Introduction.
1.1	Architectural Design Approach
2.0	Brief.
2.1	Introduction.
3.0	Existing Plan.
4.0	Proposed Plan.
5.0	Proposed Massing

Client	Maidstone Borough Council
Project Contact	Jones Hargreaves Sam Gulliver MRICS Senior Associate Partner 21 Woodstock Street, Mayfair, London, W1C 2AP. T +44(0)20 7493 5503 E london@joneshargreaves.co.uk
Status	Preliminary
Date	09.10.2020
Revision	*



Arnison Centre, Durham



Riverside Centre, Hemel Hempstead

1.0 Introduction.

1.1 Architectural Design Approach.

We bring together our client's personal vision, the immediate and wider context, and our skill, imagination and experience to create individual buildings of beauty, quality and effortless function.

Getting the most from buildings is in the DNA of the company. From the outset we have aimed to creatively resolve issues where occupiers, developers, investors and statutory regulator's respective views meet.

We believe that good design is fundamental to each project, and that it is not just in the architecture of the building and the selection and detailing the materials, but is in the efficiency of the space, the ease of construction and in the added value that it can bring.

Exceeding expectations and ensuring client satisfaction is fundamental to our approach – we view each project from our client's perspective not just our own. What's important to you is important to us. That's why our design creativity is supported by hands-on project management, tight budget control, and constant dialogue with clients and excellent communication with contractors, from first brief to final fit.

Close attention to detail and an awareness for market conditions all contribute to the successful delivery of these schemes. Jones Hargreaves have experience of working hand in glove with clients to deliver commercially led schemes which maximise capital returns on investment. We pride ourselves on taking a commercial approach to all instructions and seek to design and manage projects where the client brief and onward investment value are paramount.

2.0 Brief.

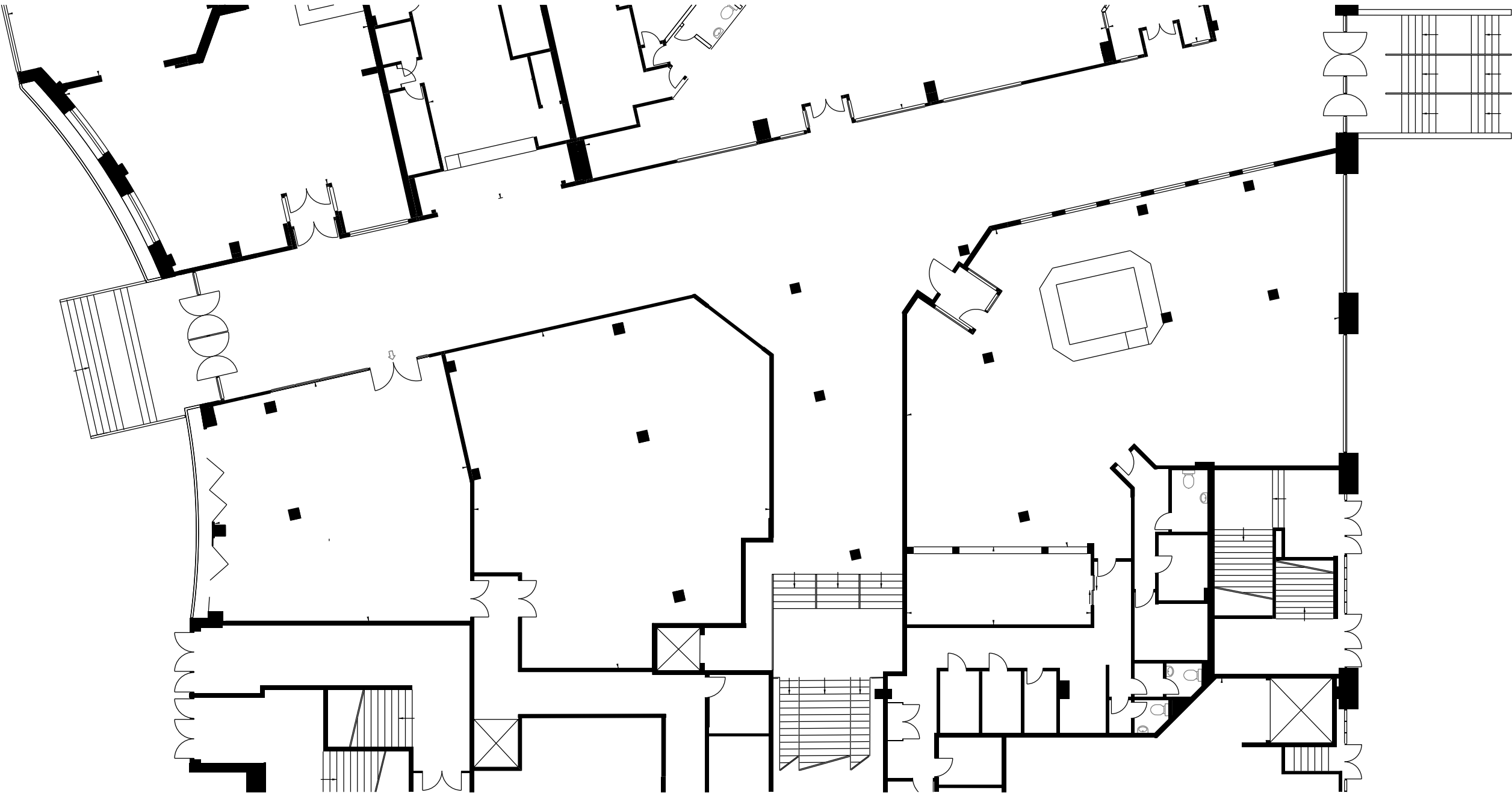
2.1 Introduction.

Jones Hargreaves have been appointed by Maidstone Borough Council to review a design option for an indicative layout and visual illustrating the creation of a possible food court with 4 kiosks and small kitchen/serving area created through the amalgamation of Unit 9a and 9b at Lockmeadow leisure complex.



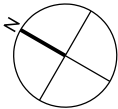
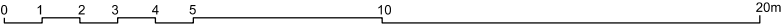
Site aerial viewed from the South

3.0 Existing Plan.



Existing Ground Floor Plan

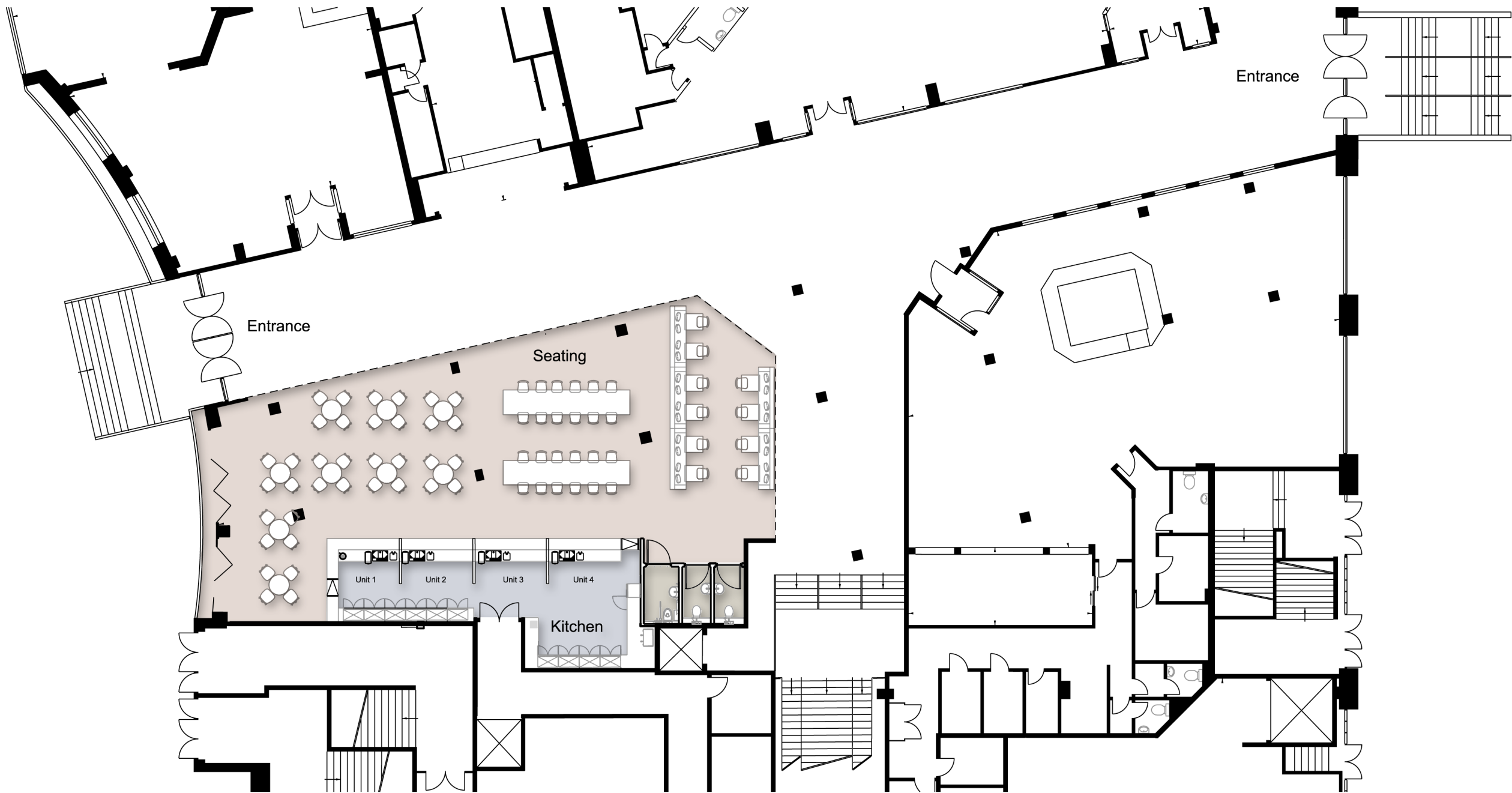
1:200@A3



01

4.0 Proposed Plan.

19

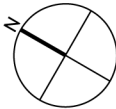


01

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Food Market

1:200@A3

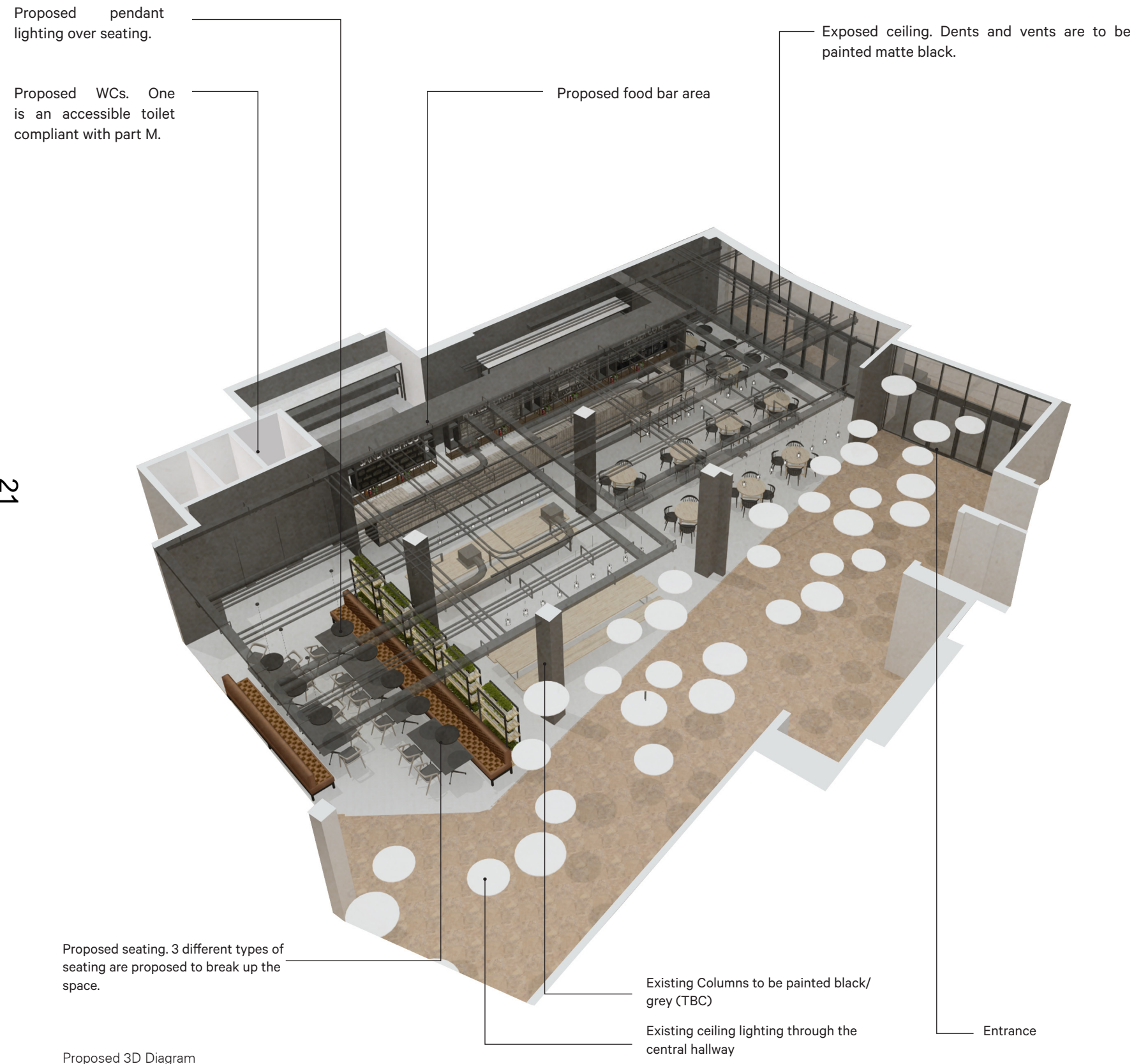
0 1 2 3 4 5 10 20m



5.0 Proposed Massing.



Proposed 3D visual of space



5.0 Proposed Massing

We are proposing a food pop up market in the space next to the entrance of the building. We are proposing to demolish the existing walls and create plenty of seating for visitors. The food bar allows for 4 different food units.

5.0 Proposed Massing



Proposed 3D visual of space

5.0 Proposed Massing



Proposed 3D visual of space



joneshargreaves

Building & Project Consultants

Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Committee

20 October 2020

Maidstone Bus Station Project

Final Decision-Maker	Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	<i>John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development</i>
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Foster and Chris Inwood
Classification	Public
Wards affected	<i>High Street</i>

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with an update on the results of the recent public consultation survey on the draft designs, for the committee to approve the bus station improvement designs and to go out to tender for contractors and seeks delegated authority for the Director of Finance and Business Improvement to appoint and enter into a building contract with the winning contractor to deliver the project.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the results of the public consultation survey set out in Appendix 1
2. To approve the designs of the bus station set out in Appendix 2 and to go out to tender for contractors to carry out the works.
3. That the Director of Finance and Business Improvement is granted delegated authority to appoint and enter into a building contract with the winning contractor.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Committee	20 October 2020

Maidstone Bus Station Project

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p><i>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</i> <i>Safe, Clean and Green</i> <i>A Thriving Place</i> <i>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure; Safe, Clean and Green; and A Thriving Place.</i> 	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p><i>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Heritage is Respected</i> <i>Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</i> <i>Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</i> <i>Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</i> <p><i>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability cross cutting objective by reducing the energy used by the bus station.</i></p>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	<i>Already covered in the risk section – if your risk section is more than just a paragraph in this box then you can state 'refer to paragraph ... of the report'</i>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The project is funded in the current approved capital programme, with a budget of £1m, along with a further £90,000 in agreed external contributions from partners.</i> 	Paul Holland Senior Finance Manager
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</i> 	Head of Regeneration

		and Economic Development
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Strategic Local Plan Policy (SP23) and the Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031 (ITS) provides a framework for making decisions on transport issues around the borough, specifically addressing problems with the Council's existing transport network and it's long term development. This includes improvements to the bus station. Accepting the recommendation will assist in the delivery of the improvements anticipated by the Local Plan and the ITS. If not already done so, any necessary agreements or contracts entered into must be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and should be in a form approved by the Legal Services Manager. This is permitted pursuant to the Council's general powers under s.1 of the Localism Act 2011s and 111of the Local Government Act 1972.</i> <p><i>The Council is obliged to comply with the Contract Procedure Rules under Part 3.6 of the Constitution when tendering for and appointing the building contractor together with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.</i></p>	Patricia Narebor, Head of Legal Partnership.
Privacy and Data Protection	<i>The data held for this project is held and processed in accordance with the principles of data protection/GDPR.</i>	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment</i> 	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Improving the appeal of the bus station and therefore using buses in Maidstone is likely to encourage a reduction in car use and therefore improve air quality however this comes at the expense of removing albeit temporarily the experimental cycle lanes on King Street at a time when the public are being</i> 	Public Health Officer

	<i>encouraged to cycle and are cautious to use public transport due to COVID-19.</i>	
Crime and Disorder	<i>The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.</i>	Head of Service or Manager
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for appointing a contractor to carry out the works. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.</i> 	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

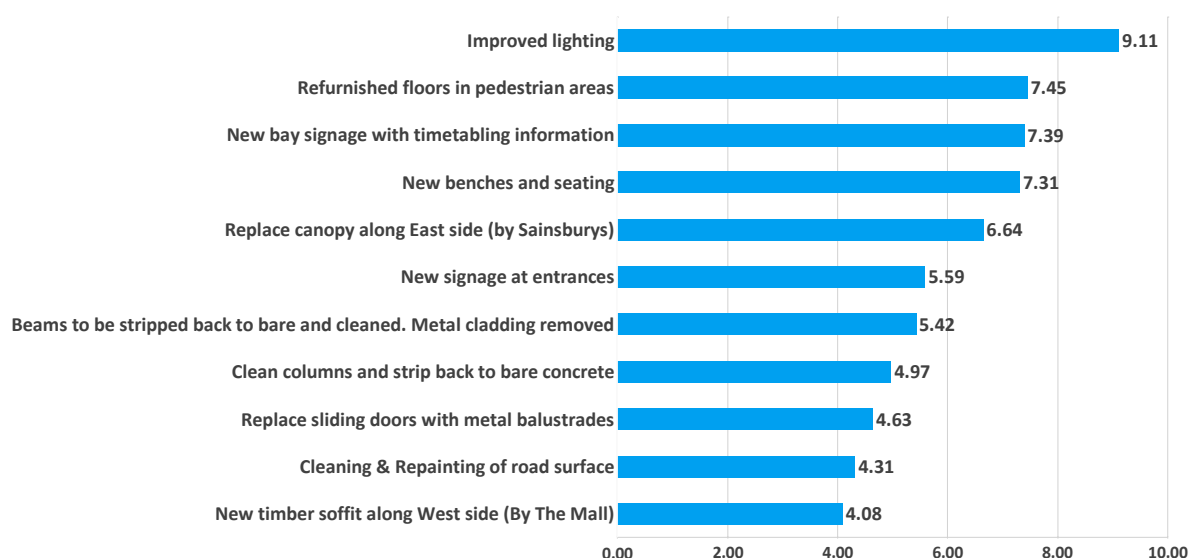
2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Public Consultation:

- 2.1 Following approval at ERL Committee on the 14th July 20 the council undertook a public consultation survey between 21st July and 17th September 2020 on the improvements proposed for Maidstone bus station improvements for The Mall Chequers Centre shopping centre bus interchange.
- 2.2 The survey was held predominately online due to COVID 19 social distancing, but members of the Economic Development Team attended a static display at The Mall between 10am and 2pm from August 10th through to August 15th.
- 2.3 As reported to ERL on the 14th July the bus station improvements include,
- Cleaning the bus stations columns and stripping them back to bare concrete,
 - Stripping beams back to bare and cleaned,
 - Removal of metal cladding,
 - Refurnishing floors in pedestrian areas,
 - Providing new benches and seating,
 - Improved lighting,
 - New signage at both entrances,
 - New bus bay signage with timetabling information,
 - Refurbishing the canopy along the Eastern side (by Sainsburys)
 - Replacing bus bay sliding doors with metal balustrades,
 - Cleaning & repainting of the road surface, and
 - Installing a new timber soffit along the Western side
- 2.4 The survey asked respondents if they disagreed or agreed with a series of statements, ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree', based on the improvements identified above. The council received 404 responses to the survey, the full survey report can be found in appendix one.

- 2.5 65.7% responded positively (Very good and Good responses combined) when asked what they thought of the overall proposals to improve Maidstone Bus Station.
- 2.6 The top priority from across all the groups surveyed was 'Improved Lighting'. In addition to 'Improved Lighting' five further improvements featured in the top three improvements across all the groups surveyed, 'Refurnishing floors in pedestrian areas', 'New bus bay signage with timetabling information', 'New benches and seating' and 'Refurbishing the canopy along the Eastern side (by Sainsburys)'

Priorities for Improvement Graph One:



- 2.7 Female respondents were more positive about the impact of the proposed improvements in that it may encourage them to use the facilities more in the future than the males surveyed.
- 2.8 The top three improvements from those that answered with a disability are improved lighting, new bay signage with timetabling information and new benches and seating
- 2.9 A breakdown of the top three priorities by age group can be found in the table below,

Table One Top Three improvements by age group:

Top Three Improvements					
	18 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating	Replace canopy along East side	New Benches and seating	New bay signage with timetabling information

3.	New benches and seating	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas
-----------	-------------------------	--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

2.10 The three top themes arising from additional comments received focussed on questioning whether the bus station is in the wrong place, air quality concerns from poor ventilation and bus fumes and a general feeling that the bus station was dirty.

Comments indicate support for public art at the bus station, depicting the local area and designed by local artists. The councils Arts and Culture Officer will use the survey's findings to support an external funding bid to contribute to the budget for this work and community engagement.

In response to the statement "I am more likely to use the bus station, in the future, if these improvements are carried out" 49% of responders agreed, 34.5% were neutral and 16.5% disagreed. Interestingly Responders aged 18 to 34 were significantly more likely be positive about their future use of the bus station following improvements than the age groups aged 45 years and over.

There were 222 comments from respondents to the question 'Are there any other improvements to the Bus Station that you would like us to consider?' There were only 31 comments classified as being generally negative, relating to comments that the proposals were not good value for money, or that they should go further as the proposals were just superficial improvements.

With almost two thirds or 65.7% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposals, there is clear overall public support for the council to deliver the improvement scheme. The survey results and feedback have not resulted in the need to amend the draft designs.

2.11 Since the architect presented the stage 3 designs to ERL Committee on the 14th July work has progressed on producing more detailed designs. The councils Employers Agent continue to refine the costs through this process to ensure the designs stay within the identified budget. See appendix Two Stage 4 Design

2.12 The council and its Employers Agent are currently putting together the tender documentation to identify a contractor to carry out the works. The following programme will be followed:

- Date of Tender Issue – 21 October 2020
- Tender Clarifications Deadline – 12 November 2020
- Client Project Team Clarification Response Deadline – 19 November 2020
- Tender Return Date – 26 November 2020 (5- week and 1 -day duration)

- Tender Evaluation Period – 26 November 2020 – 10 December 2020 (2-weeks duration)
- Internal Review and Approvals – 10 December 2020 – 17 December 2020 (1-week duration)
- Inform Tenderers of Outcome – 17 December 2020
- Contractor Appointment – 17 December 2020 – January 2021 (note 2- week Christmas shut down period)
- Contractor Mobilisation and CDP Design – January 2021 – February 2021 (note period included as part of below Contract Period)
- Contract Period – January 2021 – May 2021 (16- week duration)

2.13 There would be significant challenges for a contractor to price the works accurately and manage passengers, staff and shoppers if the bus station were to remain open during these works. The programme therefore includes a 12- week period in the new year in which the bus station will be closed and the bus stops relocated onto King Street. This will require the temporary removal of some of the experimental cycle lanes currently active on King Street.

Both KCC and Arriva have expressed their willingness to work towards relocating the bus stops temporarily to King Street. KCC have asked that MBC fund the removal and reinstatement of those elements of the temporary cycle lane needed to allow the buses to stop on King Street. Further meetings are planned to work through the details. It remains a risk however until this has all been agreed.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Options:

Do nothing

Without this investment the Bus Station will continue to deteriorate. Capital and Regional, the owners of the Mall Shopping Centre including the Station, have no incentive to invest in the Bus Station as it fails to produce a return on investment. The condition of the Bus Station will reflect badly on Maidstone Town Centre and the Council and customer use of bus services may even decline, leading to greater car use, increased congestion and poorer air quality. The public consultation survey results do not support this option.

Do minimum

Replacing the sodium lighting with LEDs lights to improve the dull and intimidating environment has been investigated as a do minimum option. This was rejected as not making a sufficient impact in terms of ambience, passenger facilities or passenger information required to trigger the desired modal shift and

encourage bus patronage. The public consultation survey results do not support this option.

Do something

Relocating the bus station to an alternative site in the Town Centre has been explored in the Tri Study in 2018 (see paragraph 6.4). The lack of available land or property in appropriate locations, together with the restrictions on access due to Maidstone's one-way system has resulted in this option being rejected.

Do optimum

The complete redevelopment of the Mall incorporating a new bus station has been explored with the owners Capital and Regional. There is a significant viability gap for this option which is no longer being considered.

Stage Four Designs

Progress and deliver the stage 4 design options as set out in the public consultation survey and Appendix two.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is the one set out in Appendix 2. All main stakeholders are in support of this approach. It offers a relatively straight forward solution to radically enhance the Bus Station environment focused on the user experience which will make it more attractive, and potentially increase bus patronage in support of the strategic priorities in the Integrated Transport Strategy. The proposed improvements have been taken to public consultation with 65.7% of respondents responding positively (Very good and Good responses combined) to the scheme.

5. RISK

A complete risk assessment has been produced for the project right through to completion in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. The main risks include.

1. The Bus station must remain operational during the works with any impact during construction on bus services being kept to an absolute minimum, and the safety of the public and construction workers must be maintained at all times.

To mitigate this risk the bus station will close for a 12- week period in the new year with the bus stops relocated onto King Street. Officers are working with Kent County Council on the temporary removal of some of the experimental cycle lanes currently active on King Street to accommodate the move. It remains a risk however until this has all been agreed.

2. Contractor cost certainty in tender responses, due to the continued operation of the bus services during the construction programme. As

above this is being mitigated by the temporary closure of the bus station for 12 weeks and relocation to King Street.

3. Risks to existing users of the Mall Shopping Centre during construction. The contractor will ensure that all relevant fire exits are retained throughout construction and that emergency pedestrian access at both bus station entrances and the Sainsbury's side are maintained.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 67.7% of those who completed the recent public consultation survey responded positively (Very good and Good responses combined) when asked what they thought of the proposals to improve Maidstone Bus Station.
- 6.2 On the 14th July 2020 ERL Committee resolved that the draft designs be approved for public consultation.
- 6.3 The 13th January 2016 version of the Integrated Transport Study (ITS) recognises the need for an improved bus station for Maidstone Town Centre.
- 6.4 On 22nd January 2018 the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation committee resolved that improvements and potential investment into Maidstone bus station be investigated. This decision was informed by a study prepared by consultants WSP entitled "Maidstone Tri-Study – Bus Interchange Study, Town Centre Parking Strategy, and Park & Ride Study" (November 2017) which considered a bus interchange study, parking strategy and a study into the current Park and Ride arrangements. The bus interchange study concluded that the bus station is in the optimum location to serve the town centre and therefore recommended improvements to the existing station.
- 6.5 On 28th March 2018 Policy and Resources Planning committee resolved that the project be funded in part from proceeds of the Business Rates Retention Pilot.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Publish the Invitation to Tender contractor documents commencing after ERL Committee approval in October.
 - 7.2 Tenders appraised and contractor selected.
 - 7.3 Work with Capital and Regional, Kent County Council and bus operators to manage the communications around the temporary closure of the bus station
 - 7.4 That the Director of Finance and Business appoints and enters into a building contract with the winning contractor.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- *Appendix 1: Bus Station Improvements Survey Report*
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None



BUS STATION IMPROVEMENTS SURVEY

September 2020

Prepared by the Policy & Information Team

Contents

Methodology & Background	2
Findings.....	3
Usage	4
Priorities for improvement	5
Difference by Usage.....	6
Demographic Differences.....	6
Comments.....	9
Public Art Comments	10
Impact of proposed changes.....	11
Use of colour & lighting will make the bus station more visually appealing	11
Better lighting will make me feel safer.....	12
New signage will make access clearer	12
New seating will make my experience more comfortable	13
I am more likely to use the bus station, in the future, if these improvements are carried out.....	14
Overall thoughts on proposals	14
Other comments	15
Survey Demographics.....	16
Acorn Analysis	18

Methodology & Background

The survey was open between 21st July and 17th September 2020. It was promoted online through the Council's website and social media channels. Residents who have signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation and during the last week of July a stand was set up in The Mall shopping centre to publicise the consultation. Additionally, paper copies of the survey were available from the stand and were provided on request to online users

There was a total of 404 responses to the survey.

As an online survey is a self-selection methodology, with people 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, as the bus station is used by people who do not live within the borough, therefore no weighting has been applied to the data.

Where reference has been made in the report to a 'significant difference' in response between different groups, the proportional data has been z-tested and means have been t-tested. These tests determines if the difference between subgroups is large enough, taking into account the population size, to be statistically significant (meaning that if we were to run the same survey 100 times, 95 times out of 100 the same result would be seen) or whether the difference is likely to have occurred by chance.

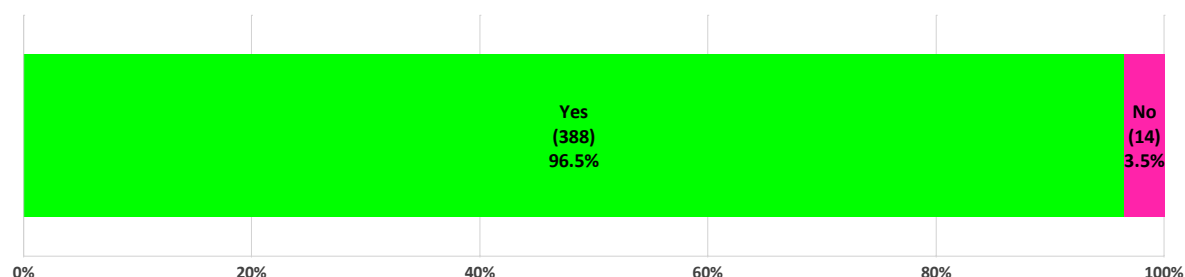
Please note that not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed, not to the survey overall.

Findings

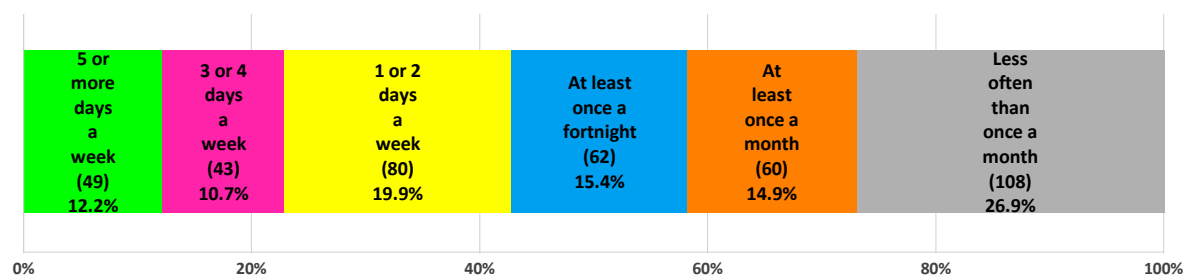
- 'Improved lighting' was the top priority overall and the top priority across all groups assessed.
- There were only five improvements featured in the top three improvements across all the groups assessed, in addition to 'Improved lighting'. These were:
 - Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas
 - New bay signage with timetabling information
 - New benches and seating
 - Replace canopy along East side
- Female responders tended to be more positive about the impact of the proposed improvements and their future usage of the bus station than male responders.
- The top themes arising out of the comments were:
 - That the bus station is in the wrong place/move the Bus Station
 - Air quality concerns – due to poor ventilation and fumes from buses
 - Cleanliness – there was a general feeling that the bus station was dirty
- Comments were made about displaying public art indicating that there is support for having art in the bus station, with people most interested in seeing art depicting the local area and art by local artists.
- Acorn analysis showed that respondents that use the bus station weekly have lower incomes and are less likely, than the average Maidstone household, to have access to a private vehicle.

Usage

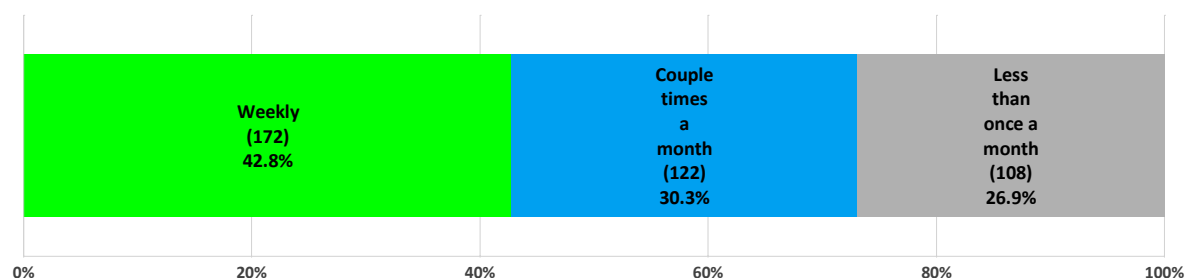
The survey asked respondents if they had used or visited (even just to walk through) Maidstone Bus Station in the last 18 months. A total of 402 responses were received to this question. The chart below shows that most survey respondents have used or visited the bus station in the last 18 months.



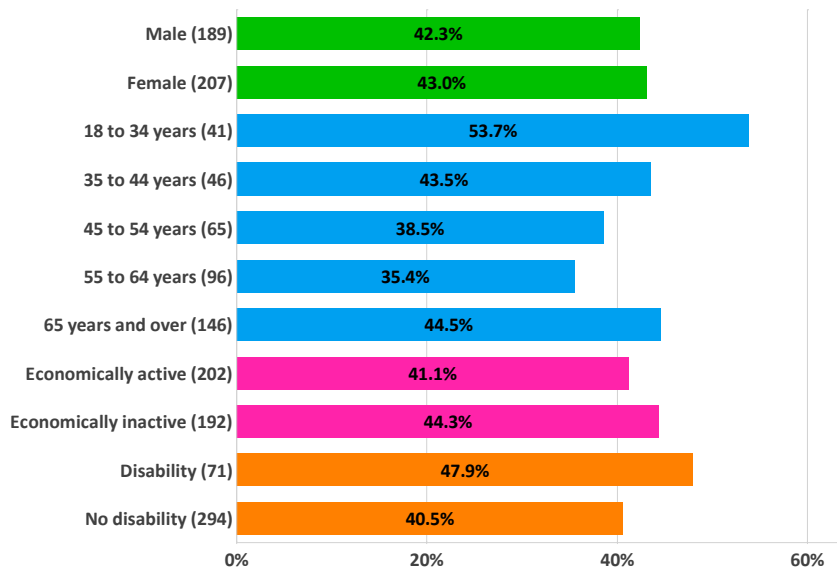
Survey respondents were also asked how often they travel via Maidstone Bus Station. A total of 402 responses were received the most common answer was 'Less often than once a month' with 108 people answering this way.



The usage frequency question was been used to create three groups – those who use/visit weekly, those that use/visit a couple of times a month and those who use/visit less than once a month. This allows us to identify if there are differences between the opinions of regular users/visitors to the bus station and less frequent users/visitors.



The chart below shows the proportions who responded 'Weekly' across the different demographic groups.



The proportion of respondents that they use or visit the bus station weekly declines as age increases (up to 65 years). This is not unexpected as those over 65 years benefit from a free bus pass.

Respondents aged 55 to 64 years had the lowest proportion stating they use the bus station weekly with 35.4% answering this way. This is significantly lower the proportion using the station weekly aged 35 to 34 years where 53.7% answered this way.

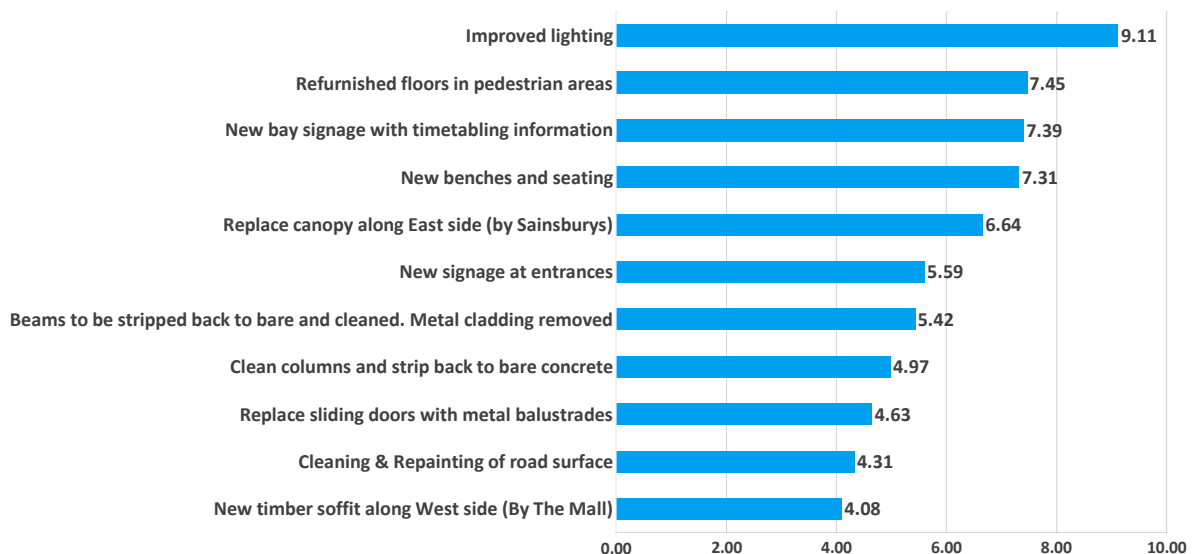
Economically active respondents were more likely to use the bus station 5 or more days a week with 15.3% selecting this response compared to 8.3% of economically inactive respondents, however, there are no significant differences between these groups when those using 'Weekly' are assessed.

Priorities for improvement

Survey respondents were shown a list of proposed improvements and were asked to place them in order of preference.

There was a total of 327 responses to this question. The highest-ranking improvement was 'Improved lighting' and the lowest ranking improvement was 'New timber soffit along West side'.

There was very little difference in score between the improvements rated second to fourth.



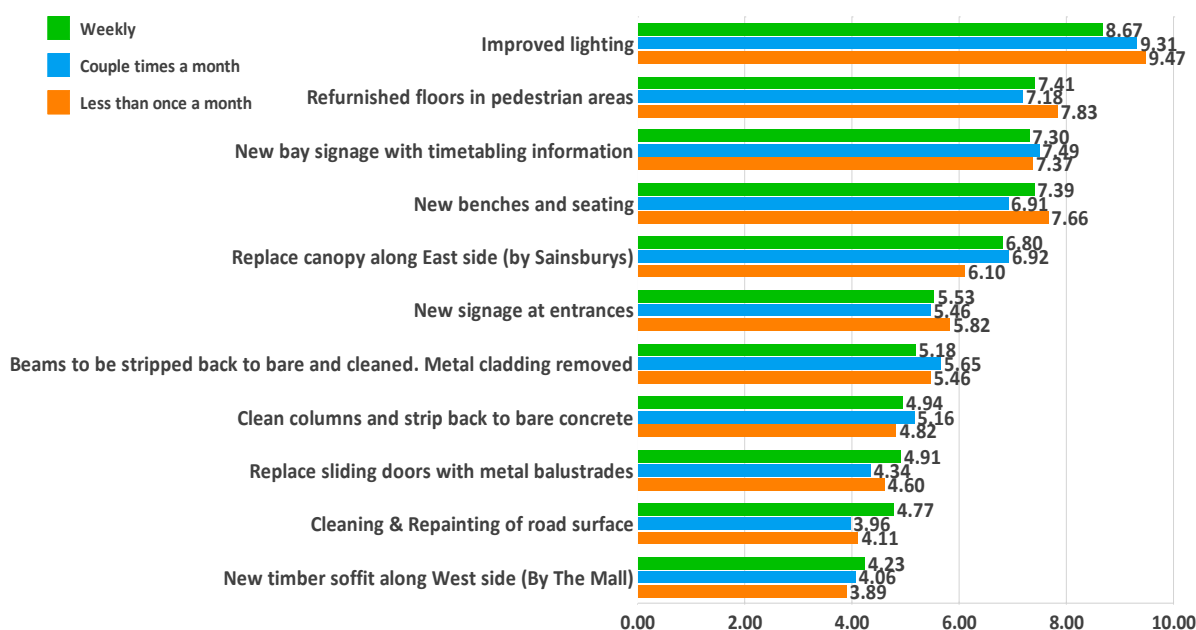
Difference by Usage

Top Three Improvements			
	Weekly	Couple times a month	Less than once a month
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas
3.	New benches and seating	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating

Those who said they use the Bus station most frequently (weekly) and those who use it less frequently (less than once a month) have the same top three priorities for improvement.

Although the top three improvements for these groups differ, there is little difference in the means scores between these groups.

The score given to 'Improved lighting' by those who use the station weekly is significantly lower than those who use the Bus Station less frequently.

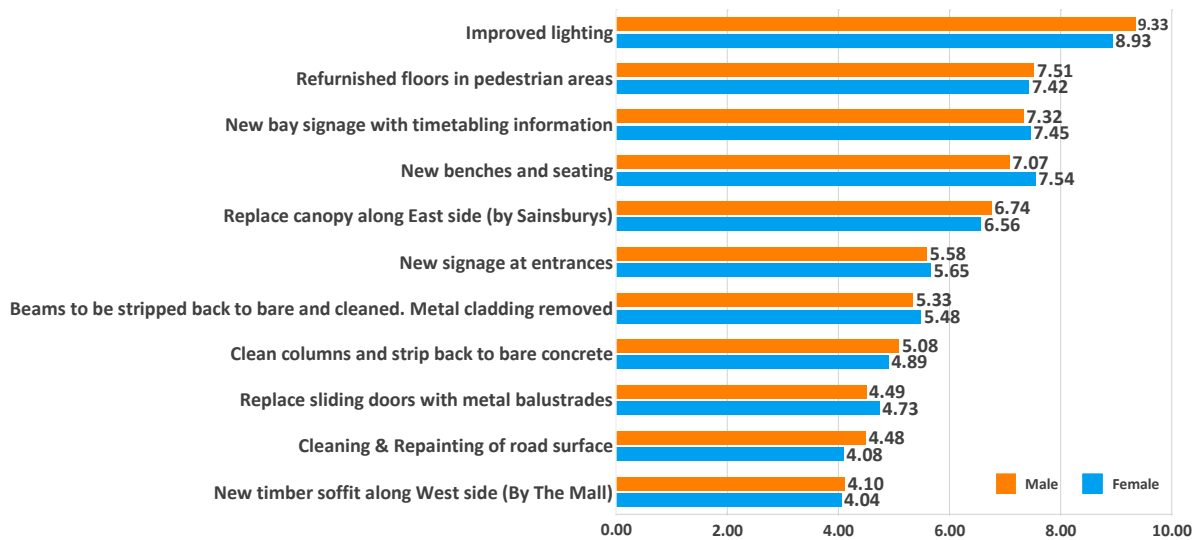


Demographic Differences

Gender

Although the top three improvements for male and female respondents differ from each other there are no significant differences in the means scores between these groups.

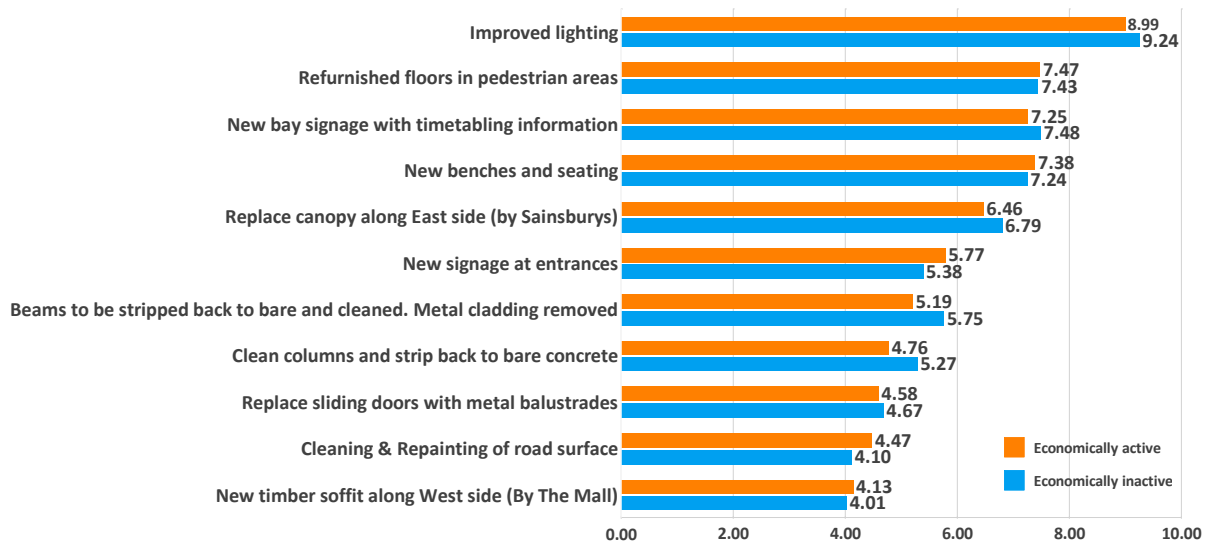
Top Three Improvements		
	Male	Females
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating
3.	New bay signage with timetabling information	New bay signage with timetabling information



Economic Activity

Although the top three improvements for economically active and economically inactive respondents differ from each other there are no significant differences in the means scores between these groups.

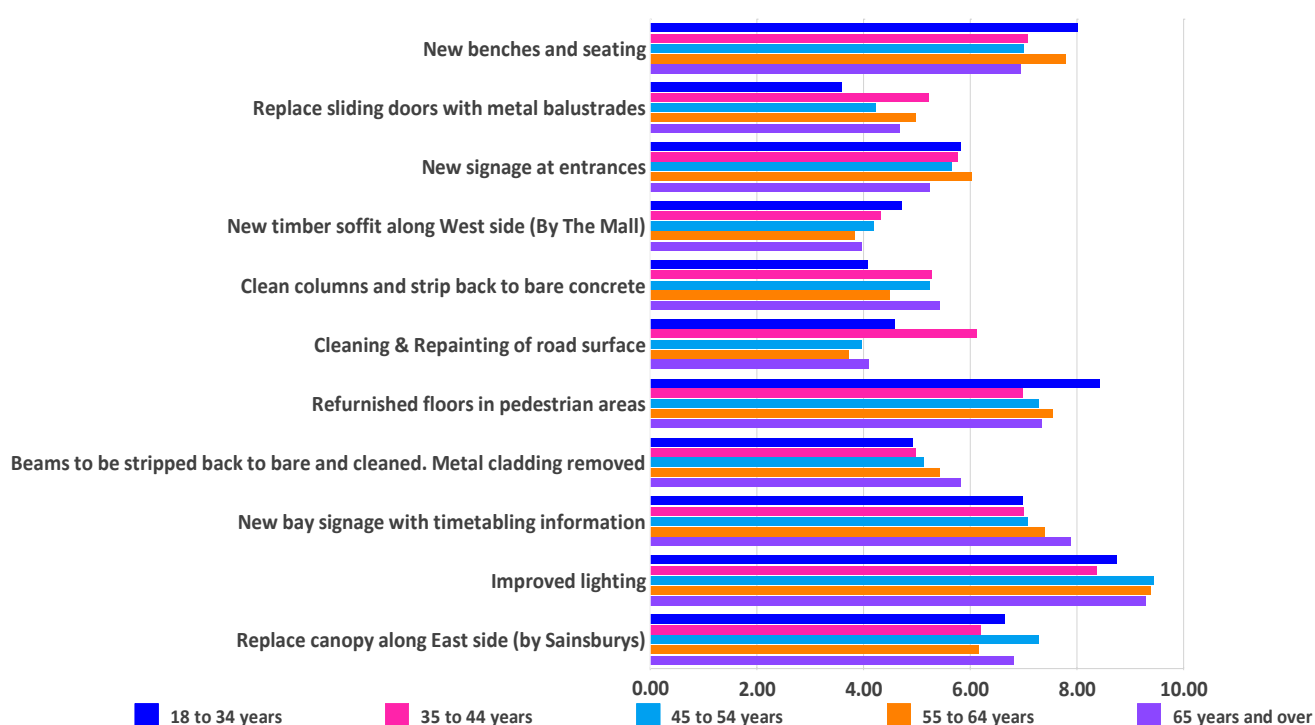
Top Three Improvements		
	Economically Active	Economically Inactive
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas	New bay signage with timetabling information
3.	New benches and seating	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas



Age

Top Three Improvements					
	18 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating	Replace canopy along East side	New Benches and seating	New bay signage with timetabling information
3.	New benches and seating	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas

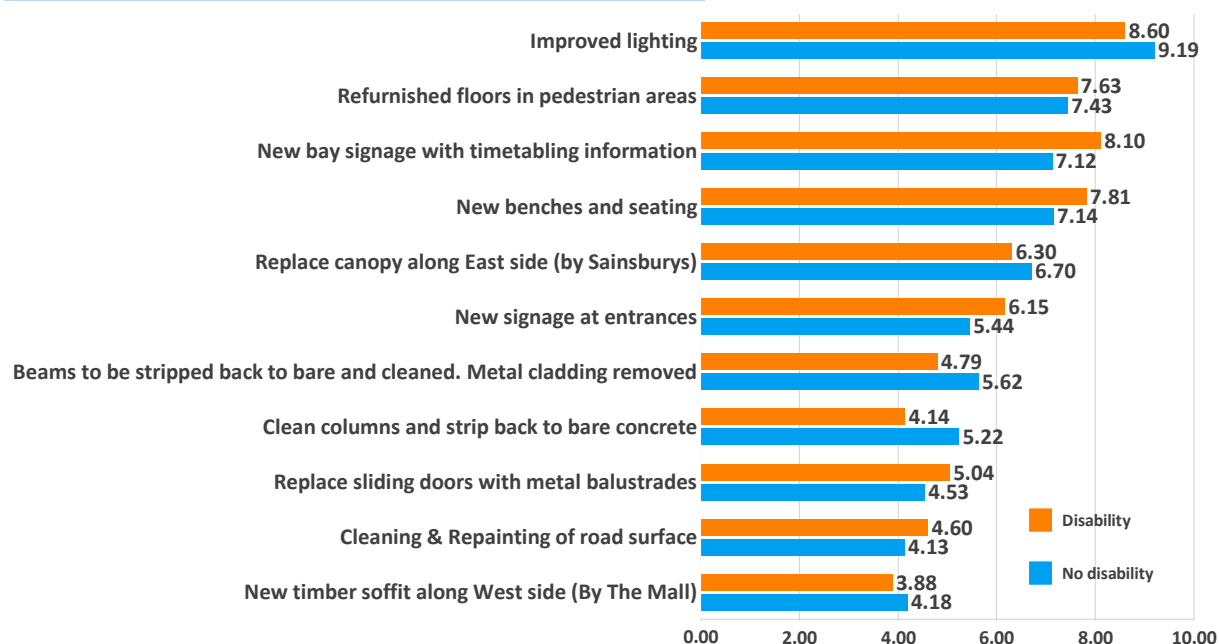
- 'Clean columns and strip back to bare concrete' was a lower priority for improvement for the 18 to 34 years age groups compared to the 65 years and over group and those aged 35 to 54 years.
- 'Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas' was a significantly greater priority for respondents aged 18 to 34 years compared to the other age groups.
- Respondents aged 65 years and over had the lowest score for 'New benches and seating', this difference is significant when compared to the results for the 18 to 34 years and 55 to 64 years age groups.
- Respondents aged 18 to 34 years had the lowest score for 'Replace sliding doors with metal balustrades', significantly lower compared to that for respondents aged 35 to 44 years and 55 years and over.



Disability

Top Three Improvements		
	Disability	No disability
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas
3.	New benches and seating	New benches and seating

Respondents with a disability rated 'New benches and seating' and 'New bay signage with timetabling information' significantly higher than respondents without a disability.



Comments

There were 222 comments from respondents to the question 'Are there any other improvements to the Bus Station that you would like us to consider?'.

There were 41 comments where respondents said that the bus station was in the wrong place. They stated that it could not be improved in its current location with some highlighting health and safety concerns, others stated that the current building was too small and not fit for purpose. There were suggestions that it should be moved to nearer the train station or be placed on the Sainsburys site.

Relocate it to near a train station!!!! Get the landowner to pay for improvements, not the tax payer!

A good quality, reliable extraction system for the fumes. The bus station is always unhealthy and stinky

There were 40 comments relating to air quality with respondents requesting better ventilation. Suggestions about how this could be achieved included enforcing no smoking and idling vehicles in the bus station, installing fans and electric buses. A couple of comments highlighted concerns about removing the sliding doors, stating that this would mean that people were more exposed to fumes from buses. Several mentioned electronic buses as having a positive impact on air quality and cleanliness. In addition, there were 7 comments mentioning smoking – all stating this should be banned in the bus station.

There were 31 comments classified as being generally negative. With comments in this theme stating that the proposals were not good value for money, that they should go further as the proposals were just superficial improvements. Others stated the money could be better spent on other improvements in the borough.

This is a waste of money and half hearted attempt at cleaning up the area.

You will see that I have prioritised anything with the word "clean" in it. It is filthy at present including the ramp up to Sainsbury - truly a disgrace. I would rather you ensured that there is revenue available to thoroughly clean the existing area every six months. If you allow the proposed area to become as dirty as the existing it won't matter what pretty colours are used!

There were 31 comments mentioning cleanliness, describing the bus station as dirty, unpleasant, and smelly. It was suggested that it should be cleaned more frequently or have a dedicated cleaning team. Specific areas that were highlighted with regard to cleanliness included the canopy running on the Sainsburys side of the station and waterway (River Len) that runs beneath the Bus Station. A lack of litter bins was also highlighted. A further 6 comments mentioned the need for the station to be 'freshened

up' or made more open and airy and 3 highlighted the mess and issues caused by pigeons roosting in the bus station.

There were 25 respondents that mentioned the need for an information point. Suggested ways to provide information about timetables and services included electric boards showing the times of the next bus and lists of departing destinations as seen at train stations. In addition, some highlighted that there is nowhere to purchase tickets in the station.

Information hub where you can find out which bus goes to each destination and it's timetable. At the moment you need to know which bus stop you need.

There were 23 comments relating to pedestrian access. Respondents requested that the staircase connecting the bus station and Sainsburys be made wider, for the lifts to be fixed / kept in order, sight lines for seeing approaching buses, crossings and improved space and access for disabled users.

Other themes that came out of the comments included 9 comments about the bus lanes with some suggesting the lanes need to be wider and others suggesting that a one system was employed. There were 9 comments about safety with 'dark corners' and CCTV and ASB mentioned. 6 comments were about facilities with requests for toilets and benches.

Public Art Comments

Survey respondents were informed that the Council was considering the use of the Bus Station to display public art and were asked what type of art they would be interested in seeing. A total of 151 people provided comments.

27 people said they would like to see images of the local area, both past and present. 23 said they would like to see art from local artists displayed and 12 said they would be interested in seeing art produced by schools and colleges. There were five comments that suggested having something relating to buses such as the history of buses in Maidstone or routes in the borough.

14 suggested modern art, 6 street art, 4 landscapes and 4 mentioned sculptures. 8 said that whatever was displayed should be bright/colourful. 3 suggested having plants in the bus station. 8 comments mentioned the need to rotate art regularly and 5 said any art would be nice.

27 people were negative about displaying art in the bus station, stated that it was a waste of money, impractical or that displaying public art was not the purpose of the bus station. In addition, there were 8 respondents that stated that they did not want to see public art displayed in the bus station.

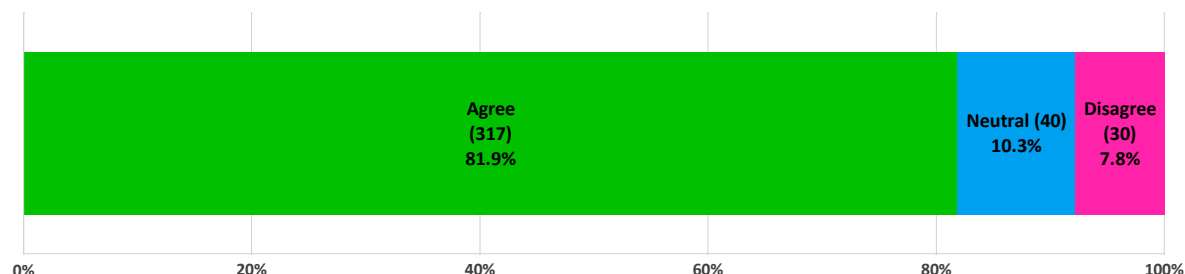
There were 10 comments classified as 'Other' that did not fit into any of the themes above. There was a request for art that 'challenged perceptions of people who use buses' and a request for art that celebrated diversity. Other comments stated the need for 'sensible pictures', 'not gory' and 'paintings' specifically.

Impact of proposed changes

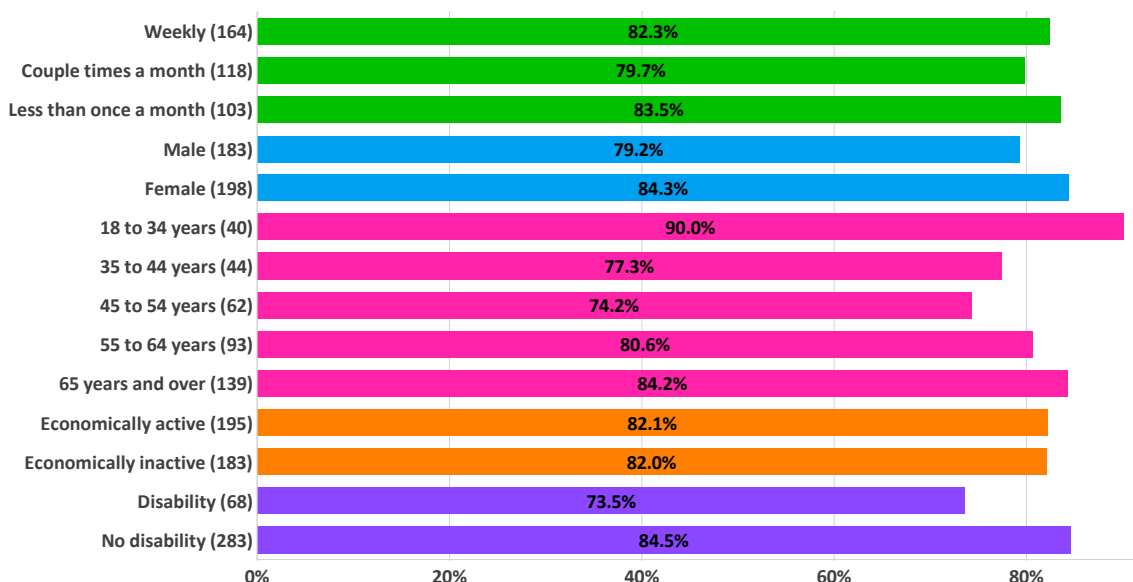
Survey respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the proposed changes. They were given five answer options ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree.

The overall result charts in this section show the answer responses with the positive responses (Strongly agree and Agree) grouped together and the negative responses (Disagree and Strongly disagree) grouped together. This is for the ease of assessing trends between positive and negative responses.

Use of colour & lighting will make the bus station more visually appealing

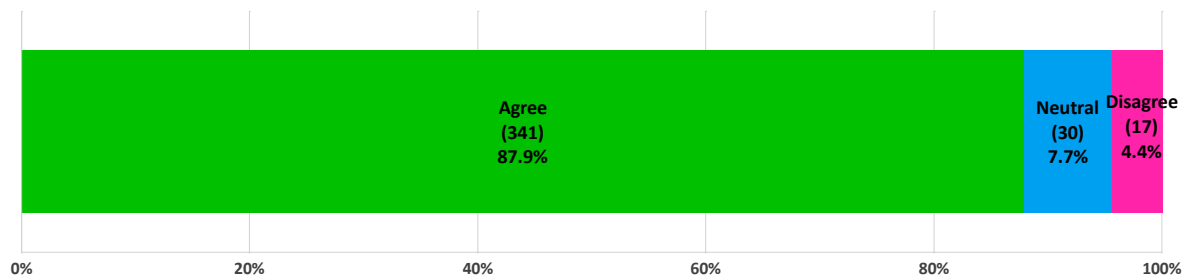


There were 387 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Strongly agree' with 166 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

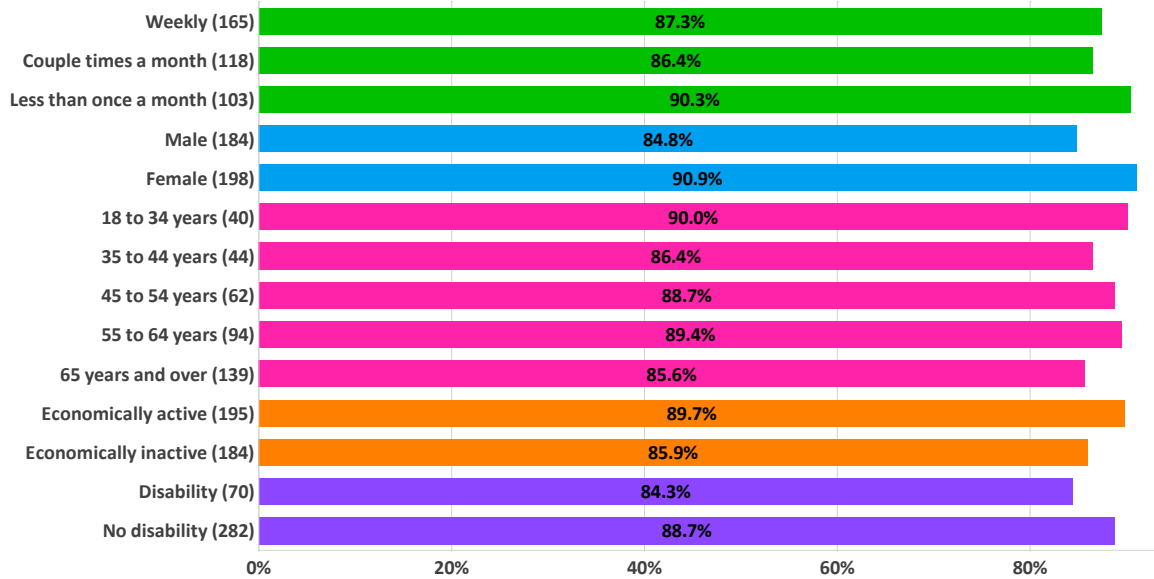


- The 45 to 54 years age group had the lowest proportion responding positively and the 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding positively. The difference between the way these two groups have responded is statistically significant.
- Respondents without a disability were more positive than respondents with a disability about the impact that colour and lighting would have on the bus station.

Better lighting will make me feel safer

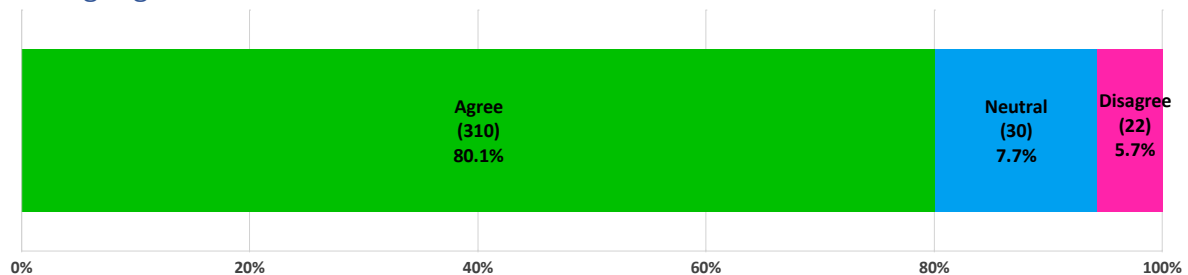


There were 388 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Strongly agree' with 205 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

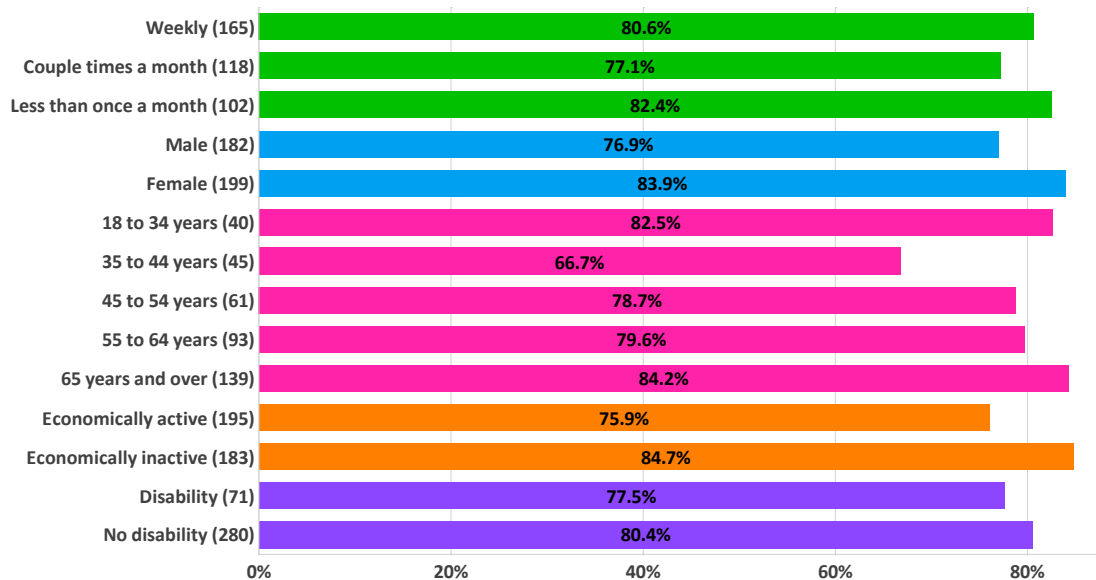


- There are no significant differences across the groups in the proportion of people responding positively.

New signage will make access clearer

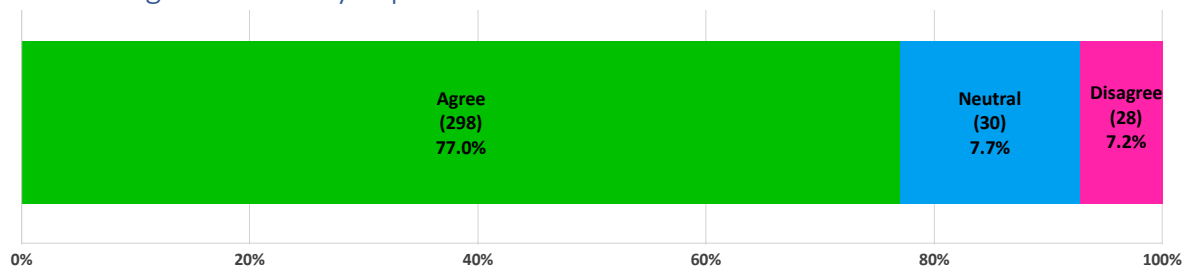


There were 387 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Agree' with 172 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

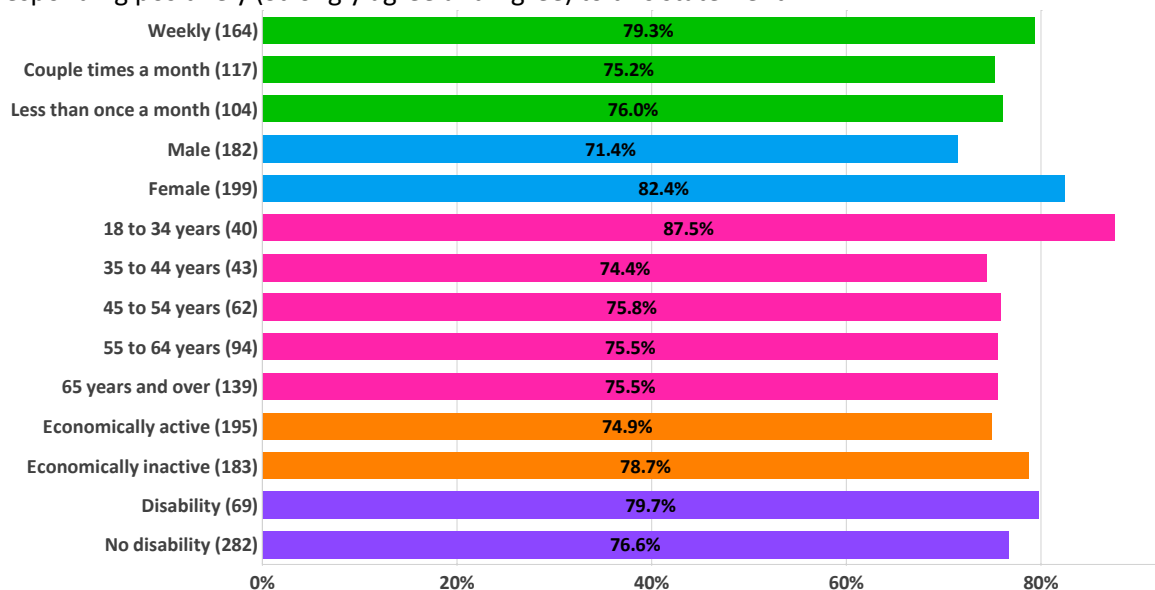


- The 18 to 34 years age group had the lowest proportion responding positively and the 65 years and over group had the greatest proportion responding positively. The difference between the way these two groups have responded is statistically significant.
- Respondents that are economically inactive were more positive than economically active regarding the impact of new signage in the bus station.

New seating will make my experience more comfortable

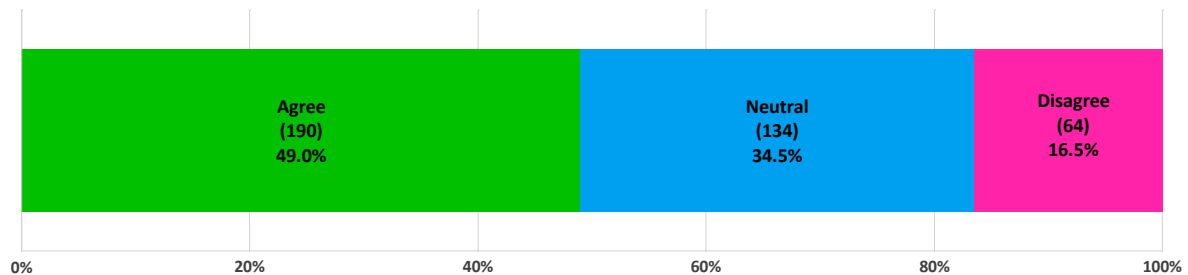


There were 387 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Agree' with 167 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

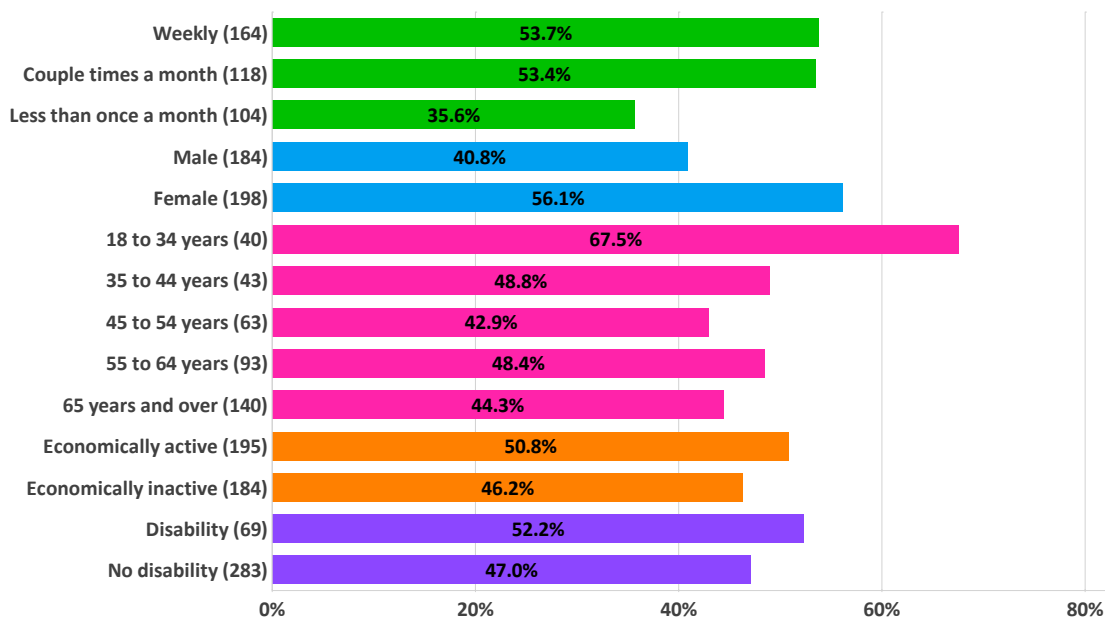


- Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondent to answer positively when asked about the impact of improved seating would have on their experience visiting Maidstone Bus Station.

I am more likely to use the bus station, in the future, if these improvements are carried out



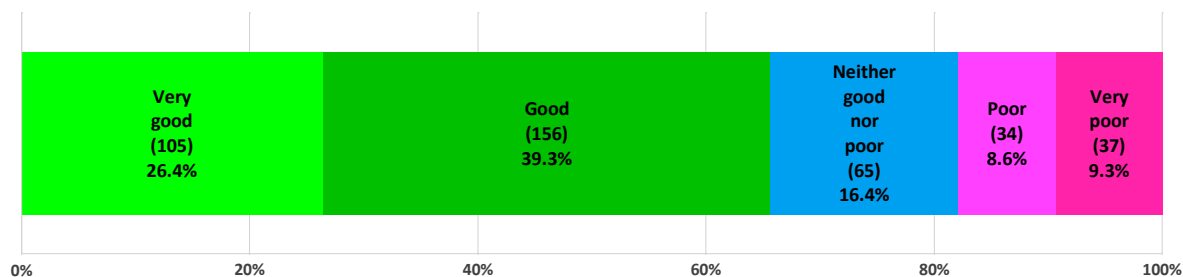
There were 388 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Neither agree nor disagree' with 134 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.



- Responders that said they use the bus station less than once a month had a significantly lower proportion responding positively to this statement compared to the other visiting frequencies.
- Female responders were significantly more positive about their future use of the bus station following improvements than male responders.
- Responders aged 18 to 34 were significantly more likely be positive about their future use of the bus station following improvements that the age groups aged 45 years and over.

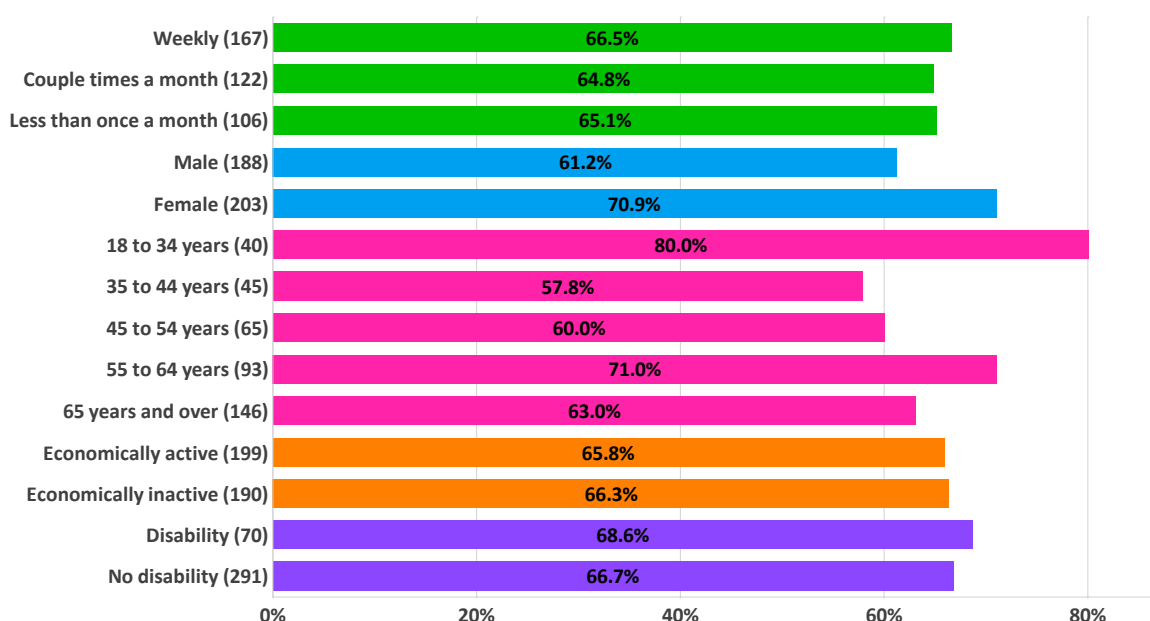
Overall thoughts on proposals

Survey respondents were asked 'Overall, what do you think of the proposals to improve Maidstone Bus station?' and were provided with five answer options ranging from 'Very good' to 'Very poor'.



There were 397 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Good' with 156 people answering this way. 65.7% responded positively (Very good and Good responses combined) when asked what they thought of the proposals to improve Maidstone Bus Station.

The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.



- Respondents that said they visit or use the bus station weekly had a significantly greater proportion responding 'Very good' compared to those who said they visit/use the bus station a couple of times a month. However, there is no significant differences between the overall proportions responding positively across the visit/usage frequencies.
- Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to be positive about the proposed improvements.
- Respondents aged 18 to 34 years had the greatest proportion responding positively to this question across the age groups. This result is significantly higher than that for respondents aged 35 to 54 years and 65 years and over.

Other comments

A total of 197 comments were received when respondents were asked if they had any further comments about the proposals to improve the bus station. No new themes were identified when these comments were cross-referenced with the response to the question about other improvements people would like to see.

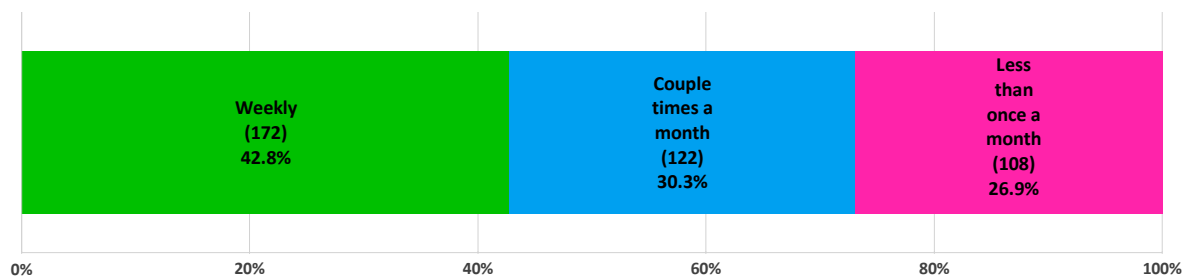
A total of 30 comments were positive about the proposed improvements and 70 were negative about the proposed improvements.

Common themes identified in the comments included:

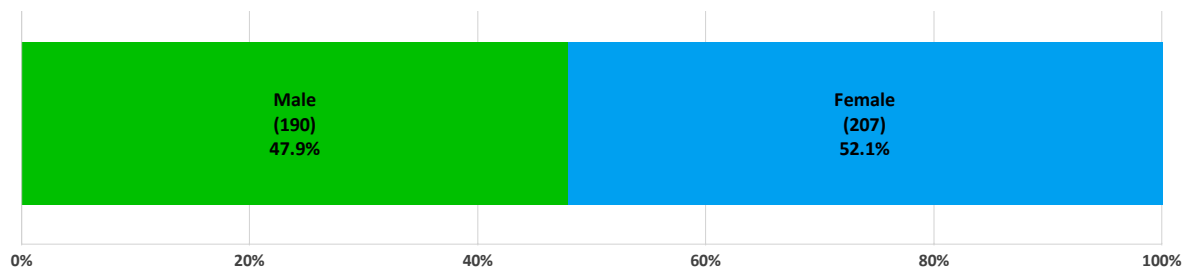
- Move it (31)
- Air quality (22)
- Cleanliness (18)
- Information boards and Bus Services (15)
- Safety issues (9)
- Lighting (6)
- Bus lanes (5)
- Pedestrian access (5)

Survey Demographics

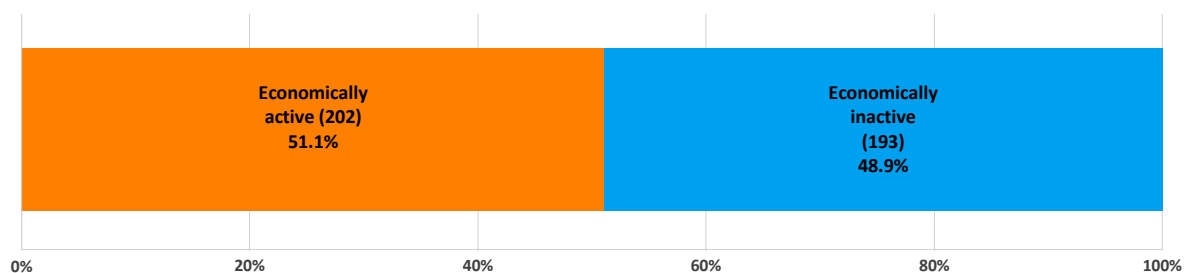
Usage frequency



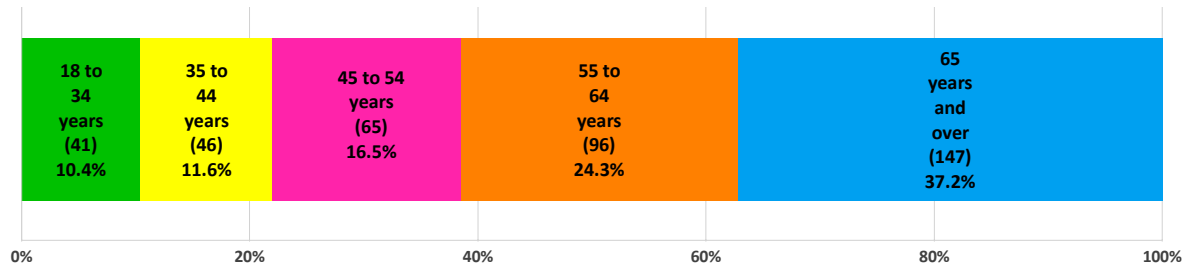
Gender



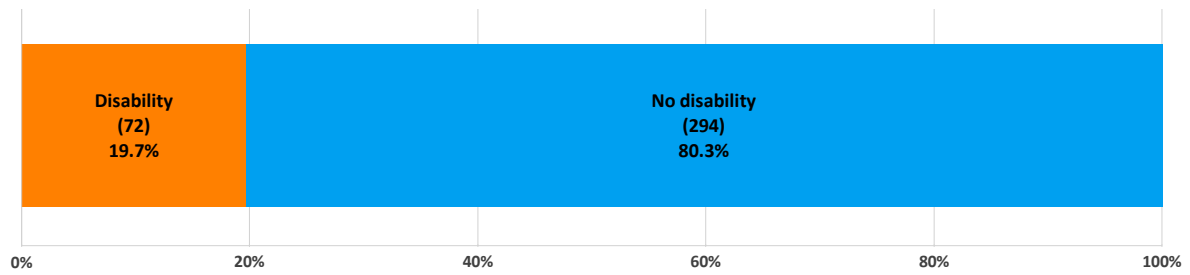
Economic Activity



Age



Disability



Acorn Analysis

The Acorn Profile provides a summary of the demographic, social and lifestyle attributes of the profile set and is derived using the recognised behaviours of Acorn Types across the whole of the UK. It is therefore an estimate of the likely characteristics that you might expect to find, based on the relative proportions of the individual Acorn Types found within the profile set.

The Acorn profile report helps you understand the underlying demographics and lifestyle attributes of your customers by comparing their Acorn profile to a base (e.g. UK population, specific area or other customer groups).

INDEX



Profiles have been run based on how frequently responders stated they travel from Maidstone Bus Station.

- The profiles show that households where someone of working age is unemployed are over-represented in 'weekly users'. Weekly users have a younger age profile than those that use the bus station less frequently. They are also less likely to have children and are more likely to be renting their accommodation from a social housing provider. Additionally, they are 18% more likely to not have access to a private vehicle. Where private vehicles are owned they tend to be smaller vehicles rather than large or luxury cars.
- 'Monthly' and 'Less than monthly' users tend to be more affluent than weekly users with higher household incomes. They tend to live in larger properties that they are owed with a mortgage or outright. Households with two or more private vehicles are over-represented in these users.

KEY FEATURES - Weekly user households compared to Maidstone households

(Based on most over-represented in the profile)



Age

25-34



Social Grade

C1



Children At Home

0



House Tenure

Social Rented



Household Income

£38k

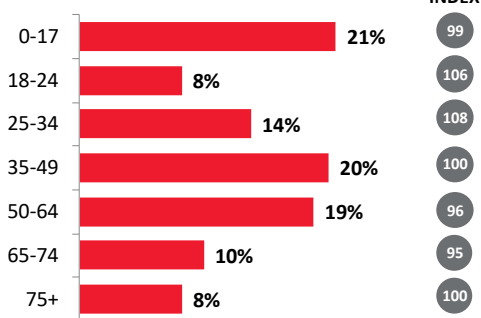


Social Media Usage

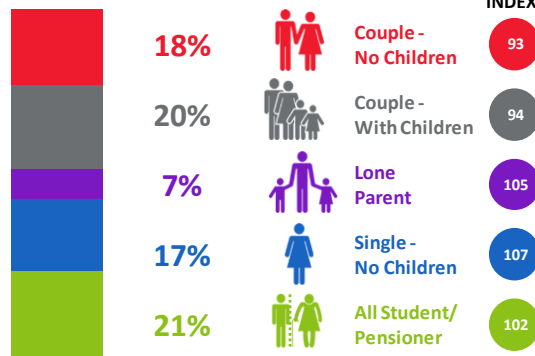
Medium

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



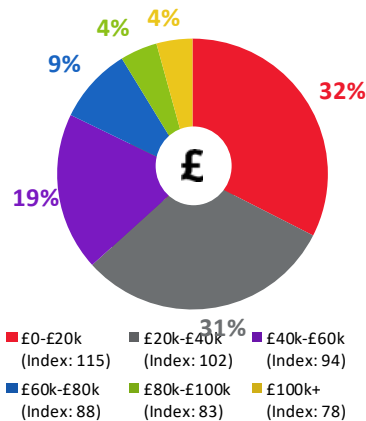
FAMILY



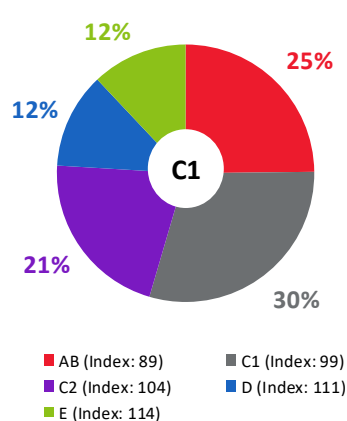
KEY INSIGHTS

- The average age of the population in the profiled households is slightly younger when compared to the base.
- Households containing singles with no children occur more in this profile than in the base.
- 32.5% of the profile live in households with an income less than £20k.
- The dominant Social Grade is C1 and the most over-represented is E.
- There is a higher proportion of people in this profile who are unemployed than in the base.

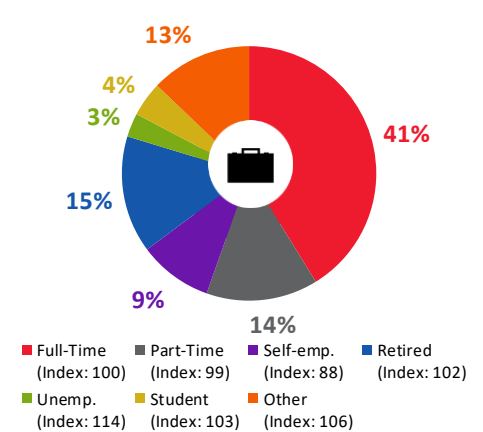
INCOME



SOCIAL GRADE

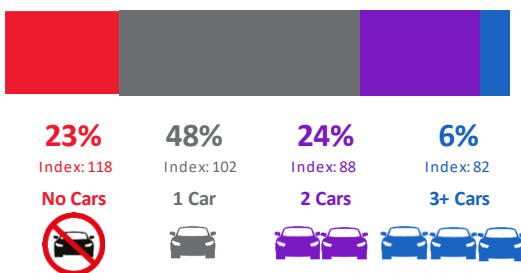


EMPLOYMENT

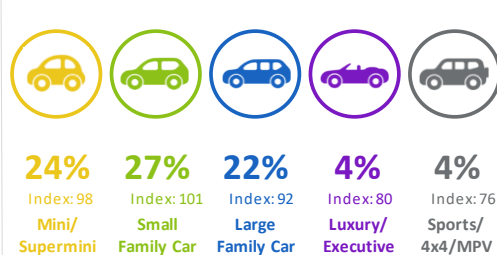


MOTOR & HOME

CARS



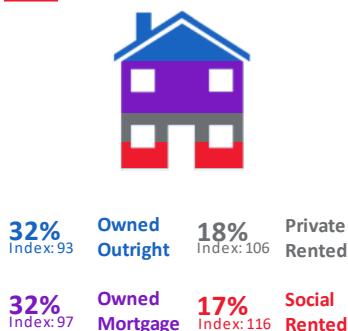
CAR TYPE



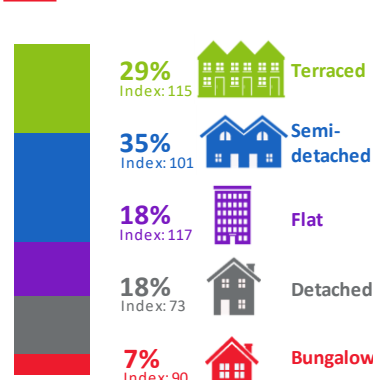
KEY INSIGHTS

- Most households will have access to a small family car.
- A higher proportion, in comparison to the base, are likely to have a small family car.
- Flats are 16.7% more likely than in the base.
- 16.8% of the households in the profile are likely to be social rented.
- About 9% of households will have 1 bedroom.
- The prevailing size is 2 people but households with 1 person appear more than in the base.

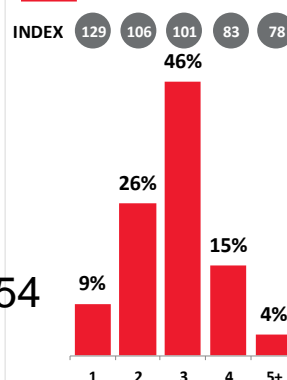
TENURE



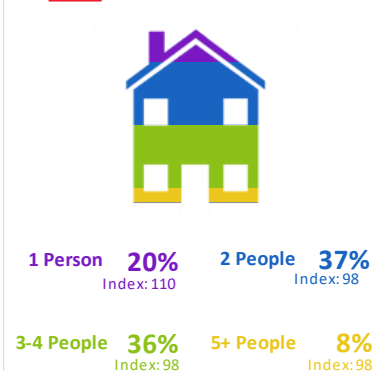
TYPE



BEDROOMS



SIZE



KEY FEATURES - Monthly user households compared to Maidstone households

(Based on most over-represented in the profile)



Age

35-49



Social Grade

C1



Children At Home

2



House Tenure

Owned Mortgage



Household Income

£44k

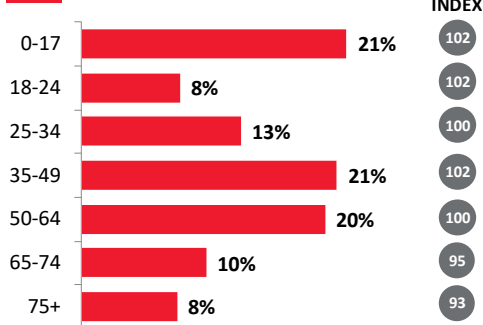


Social Media Usage

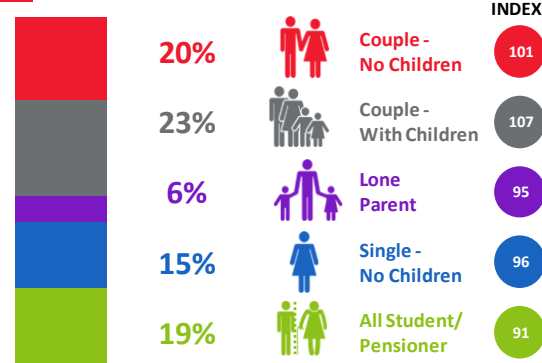
Medium

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



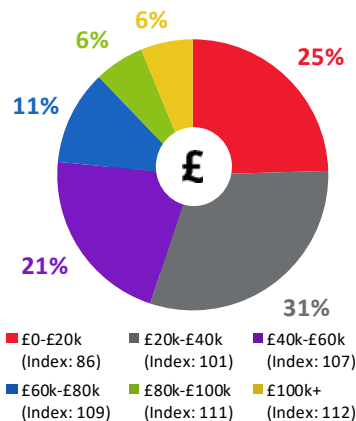
FAMILY



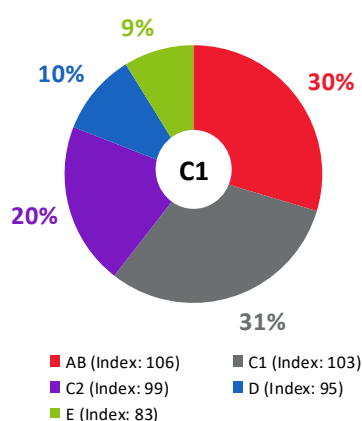
KEY INSIGHTS

- The average age of the population in the profiled households is slightly younger when compared to the base.
- Households containing couples with children occur more in this profile than in the base.
- 6.2% of the profile live in households with an income of over £100k.
- The dominant Social Grade is C1 and the most over-represented is AB.
- There is a higher proportion of people in this profile who are employed full-time than in the base.

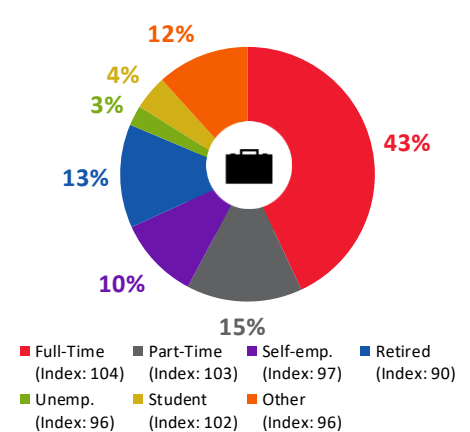
INCOME



SOCIAL GRADE

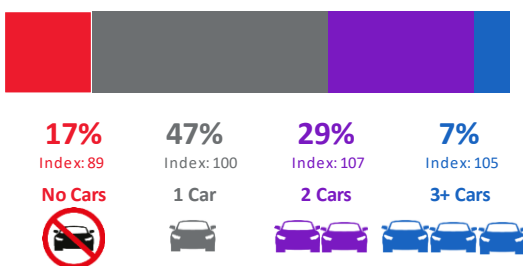


EMPLOYMENT

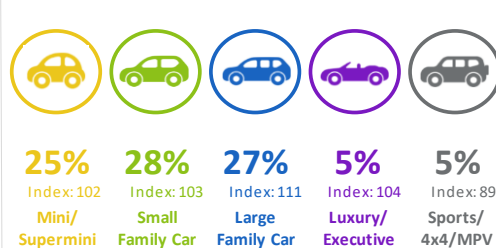


MOTOR & HOME

CARS



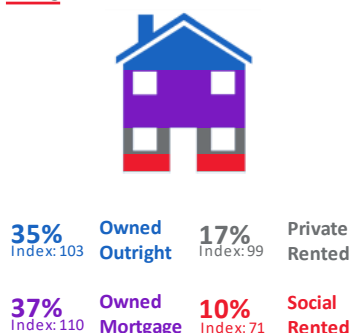
CAR TYPE



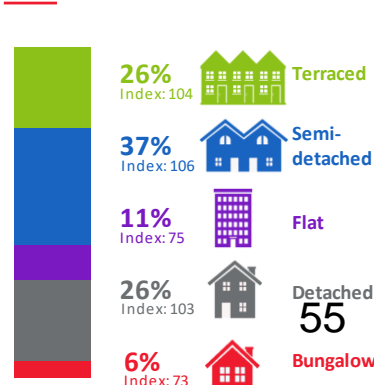
KEY INSIGHTS

- Most households will have access to a small family car.
- A higher proportion, in comparison to the base, are likely to have a large family car.
- Semi-detached houses are 6.2% more likely than in the base.
- 36.6% of the households in the profile are likely to be owned mortgage.
- About 21% of households will have 4 bedrooms.
- The prevailing size is 3-4 people but households with 5 or more people appear more than in the base.

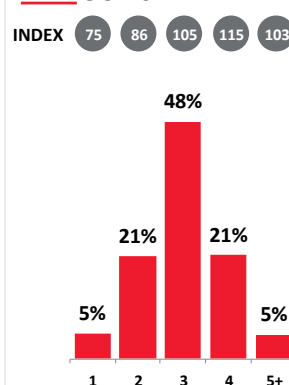
TENURE



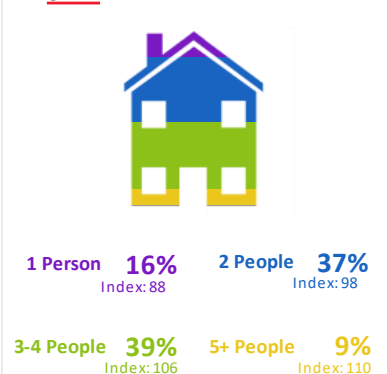
TYPE



BEDROOMS



SIZE



KEY FEATURES - Less than monthly user households compared to Maidstone households

(Based on most over-represented in the profile)



Age

35-49



Social Grade

C1



Children At Home

0



House Tenure

Owned Mortgage



Household Income

£45k

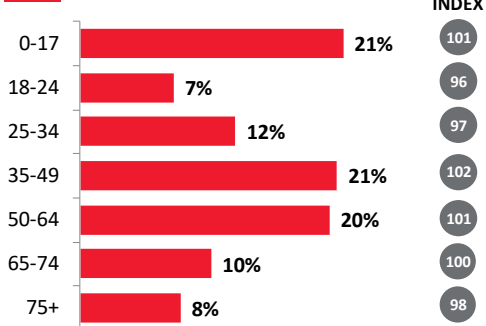


Social Media Usage

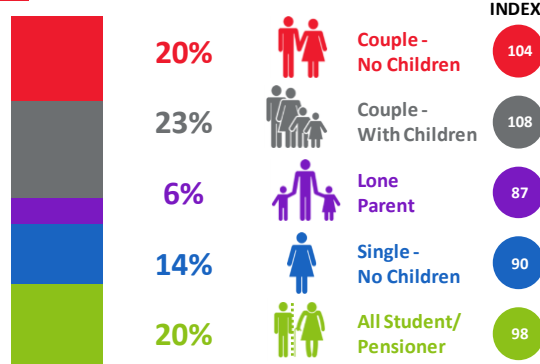
Medium

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



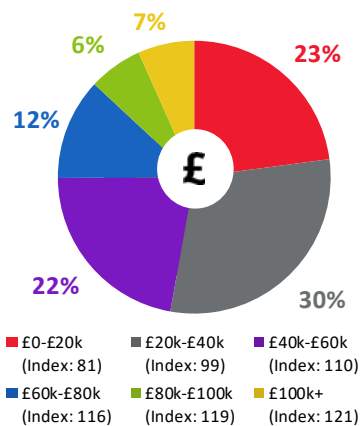
FAMILY



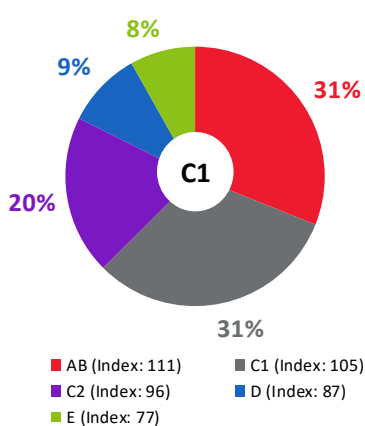
KEY INSIGHTS

- The average age of the population in the profiled households is about the same when compared to the base.
- Households containing couples with children occur more in this profile than in the base.
- 6.7% of the profile live in households with an income of over £100k.
- The dominant Social Grade is C1 and the most over-represented is AB.
- There is a higher proportion of people in this profile who are employed full-time than in the base.

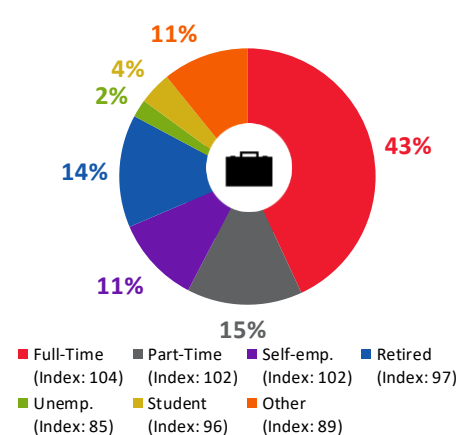
INCOME



SOCIAL GRADE

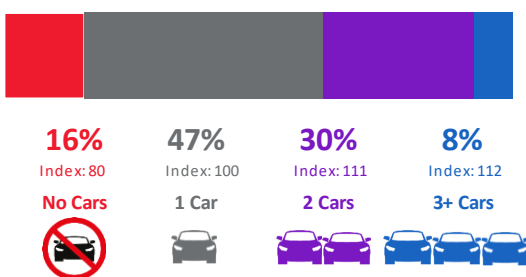


EMPLOYMENT

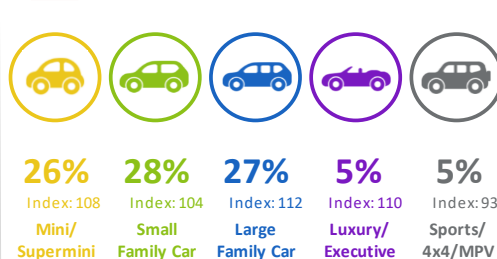


MOTOR & HOME

CARS



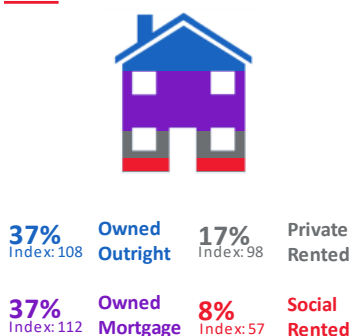
CAR TYPE



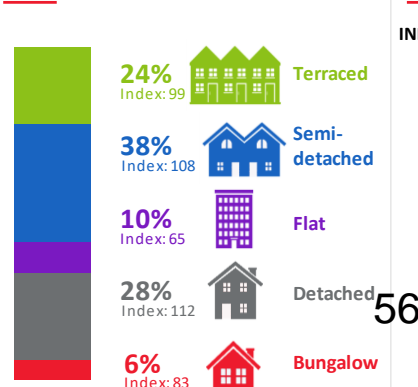
KEY INSIGHTS

- Most households will have access to a small family car.
- A higher proportion, in comparison to the base, are likely to have a large family car.
- Detached houses are 11.7% more likely than in the base.
- 37.2% of the households in the profile are likely to be owned mortgage.
- About 21% of households will have 4 bedrooms.
- The prevailing size is 3-4 people

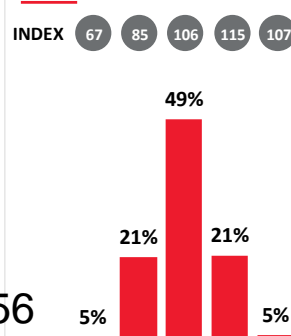
TENURE



TYPE



BEDROOMS



SIZE

