



BUDGET SURVEY

September 2023

ABSTRACT

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

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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%).

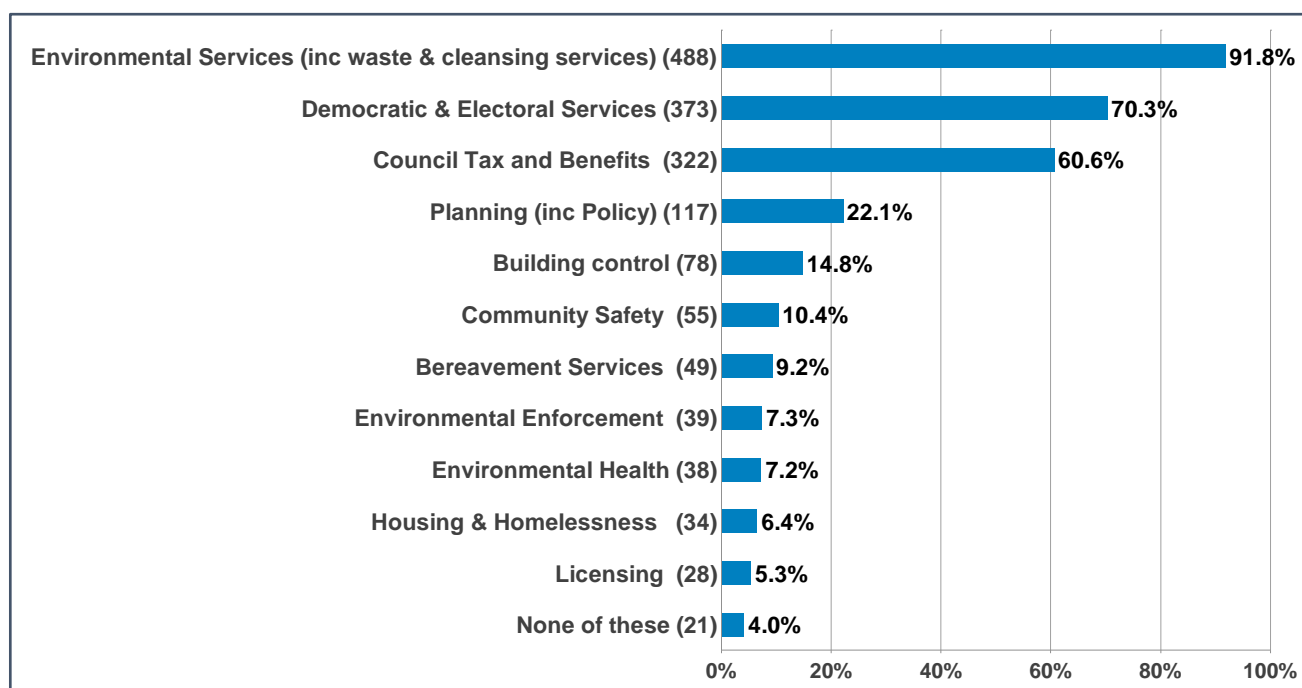
Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

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.

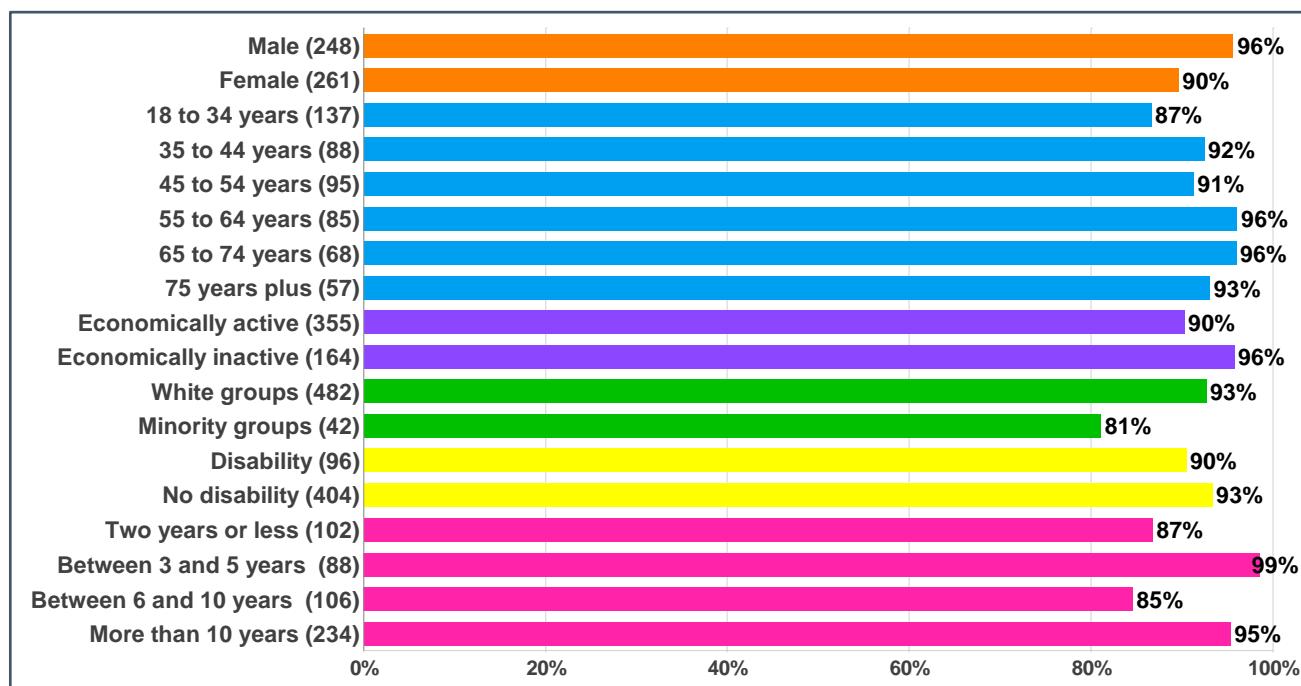
- 531 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Environmental Services, Democratic & Electoral Services and Council Tax & Benefits.
- The least used service by respondents was Licensing with 28 selecting this service.
- 21 respondents said they had not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

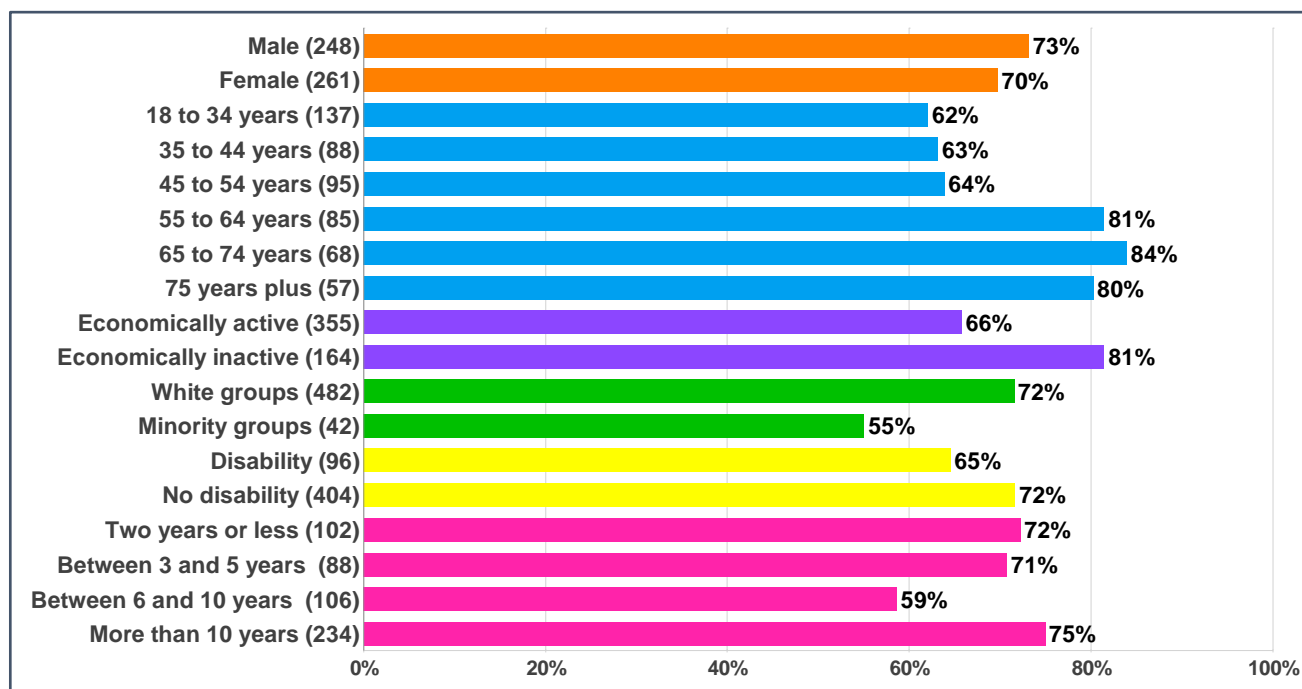
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.







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

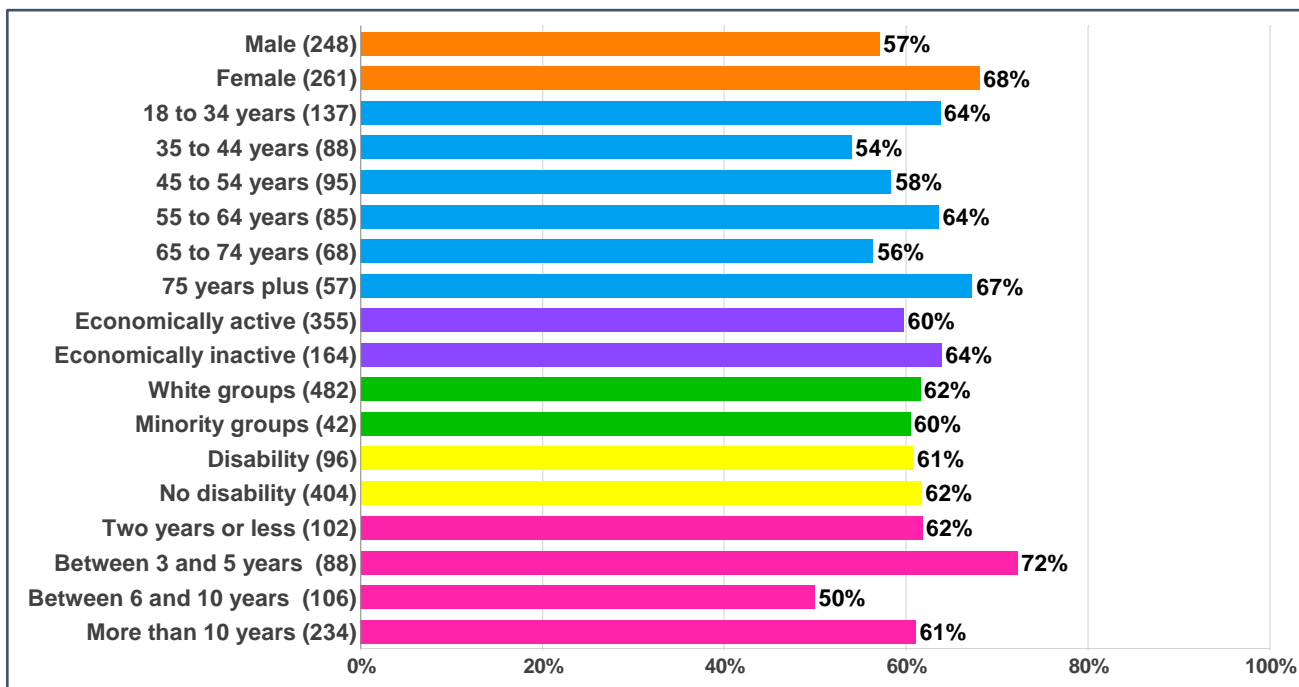
The differences in the proportions selecting Democratic & Electoral Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.





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

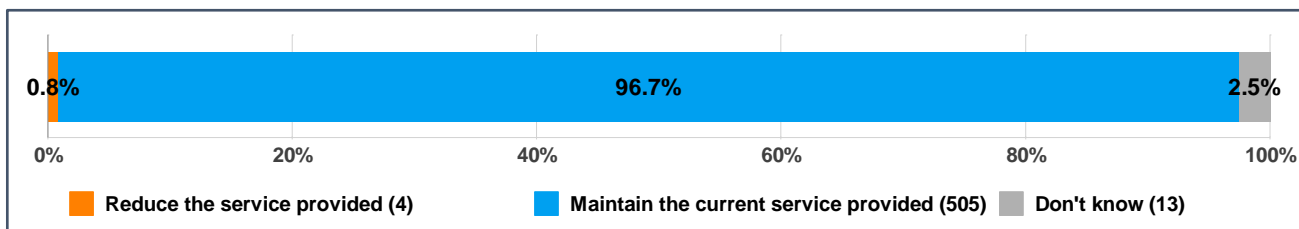
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Mandatory Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

- 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.

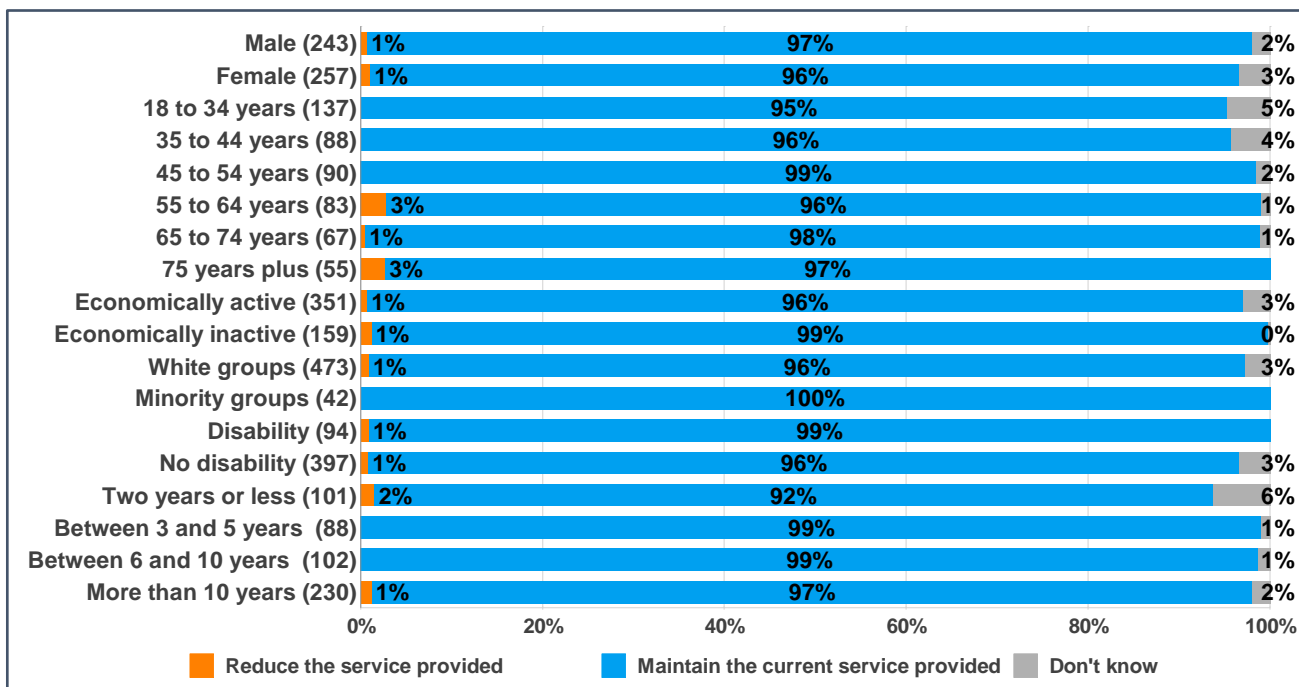
Environmental Services

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



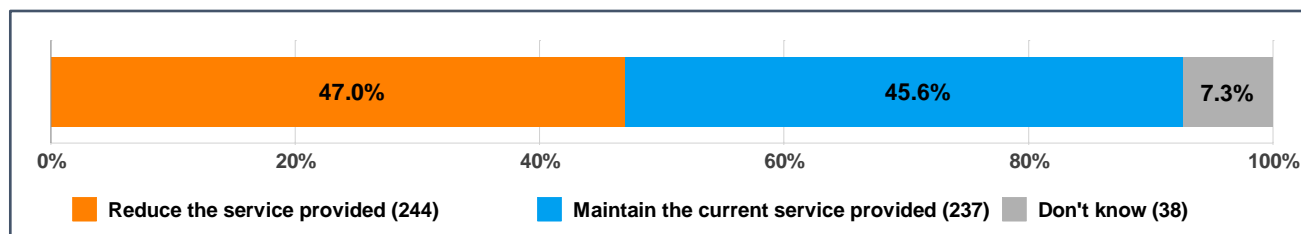
Demographic Differences

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



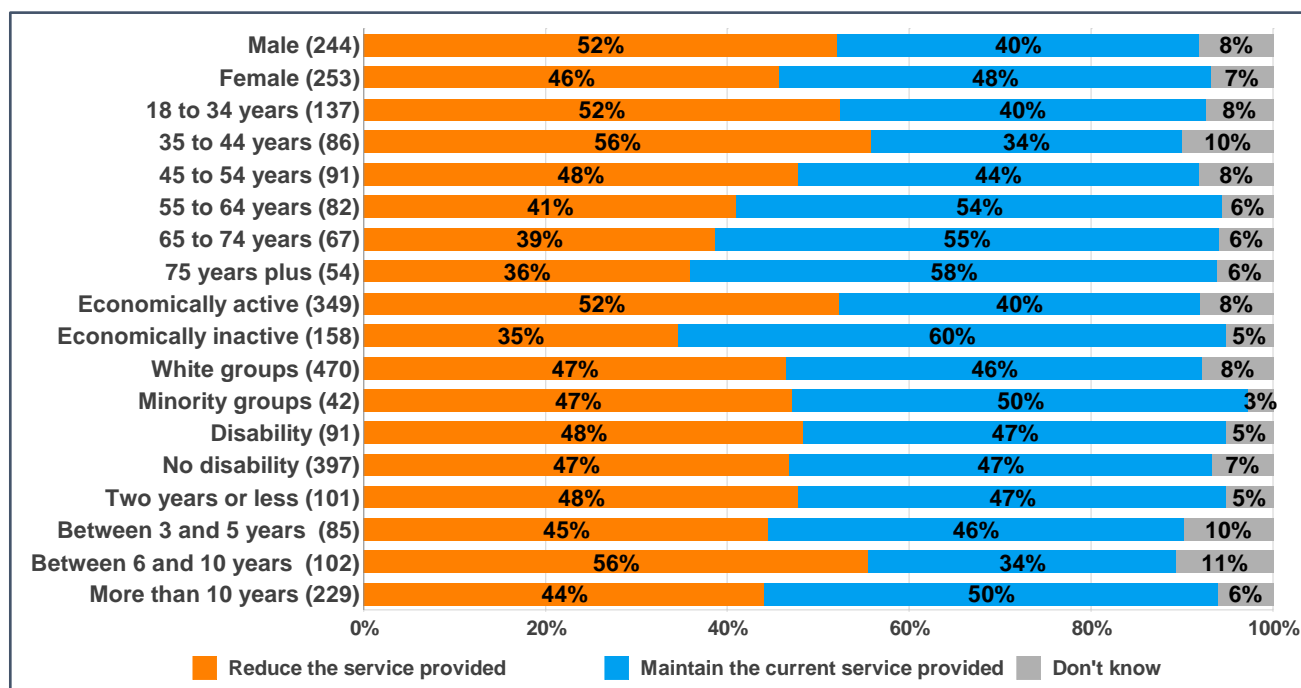
Democratic & Electoral Services

- 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.

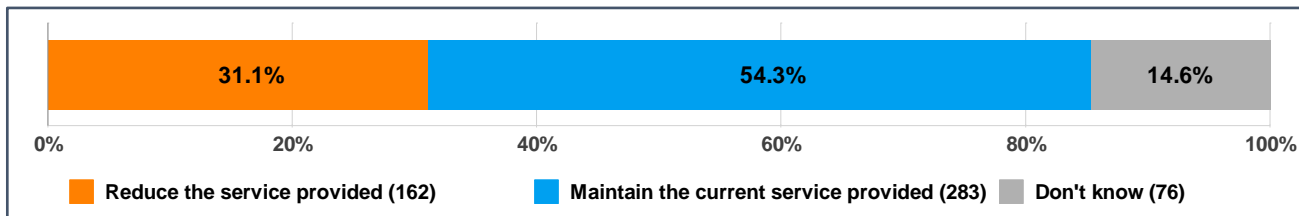


Significant Differences - Democratic & Electoral Services Approach

	<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>

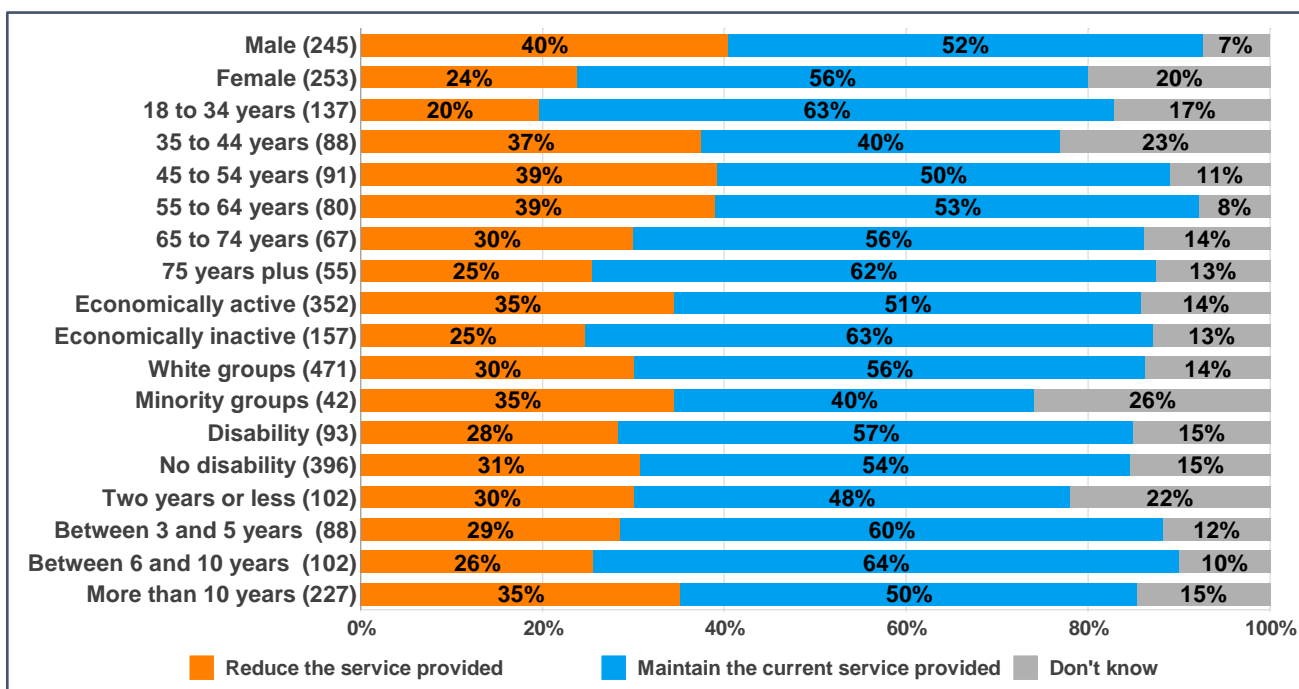
Planning (including Planning Policy)

- 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

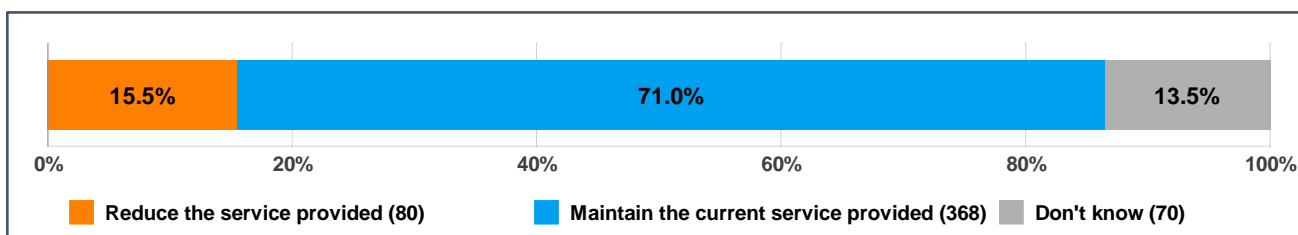
	<p>A greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Planning services with 40% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. However, more than half of each group were in favour of maintaining the current service in this area.</p>
	<p>One in five respondents aged 18 to 24 years (20%) 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'.

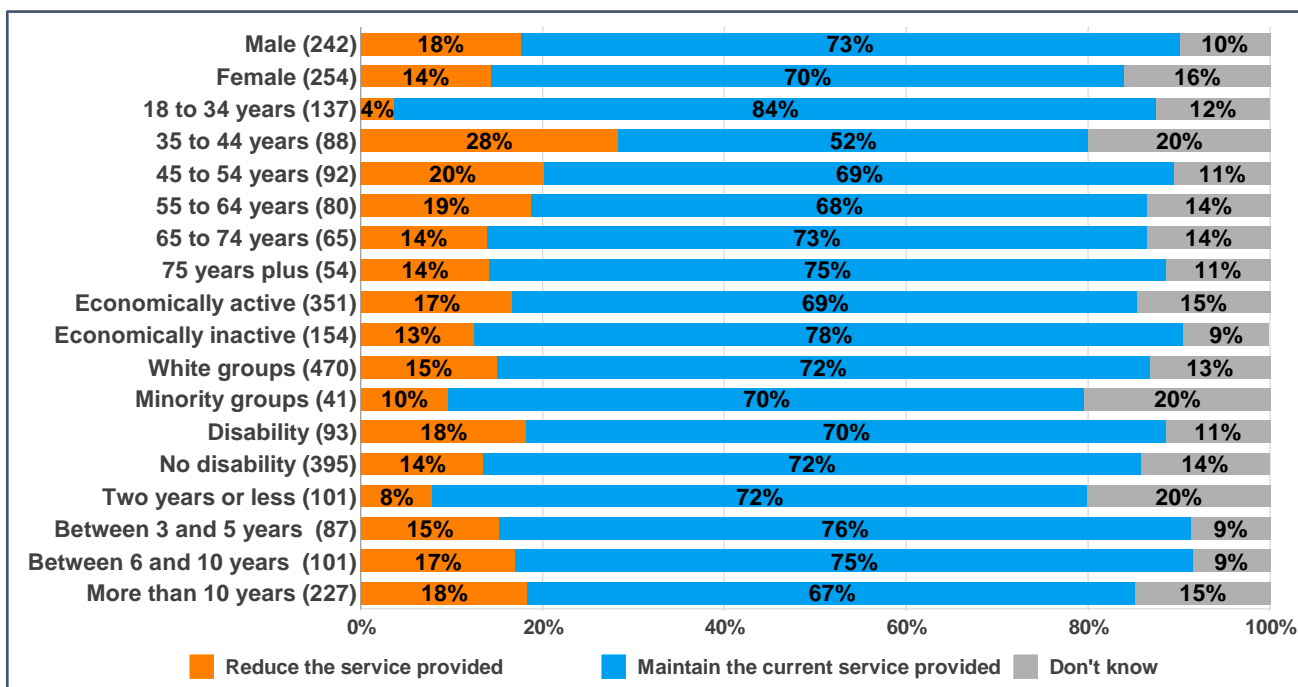
Building Control

- 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.

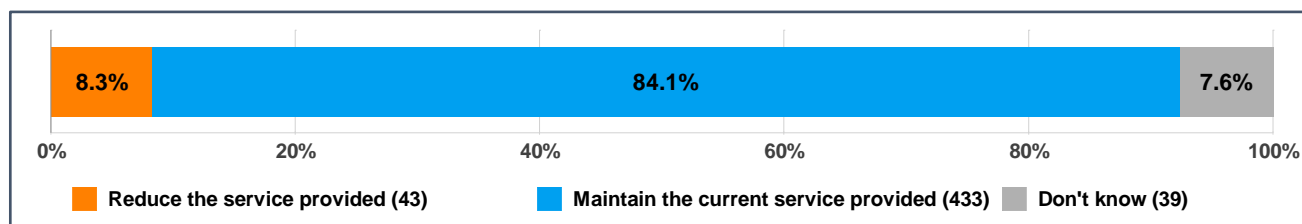


Respondents who have lived at their current address for two years or less had the greatest proportion that were uncertain about the approach that should be taken for Building Control with 20% answering this way. This was significantly greater than respondents who had lived at their current address for the categories covering three years to ten years.

There were no significant differences across length of time at current address for the remaining answer options.

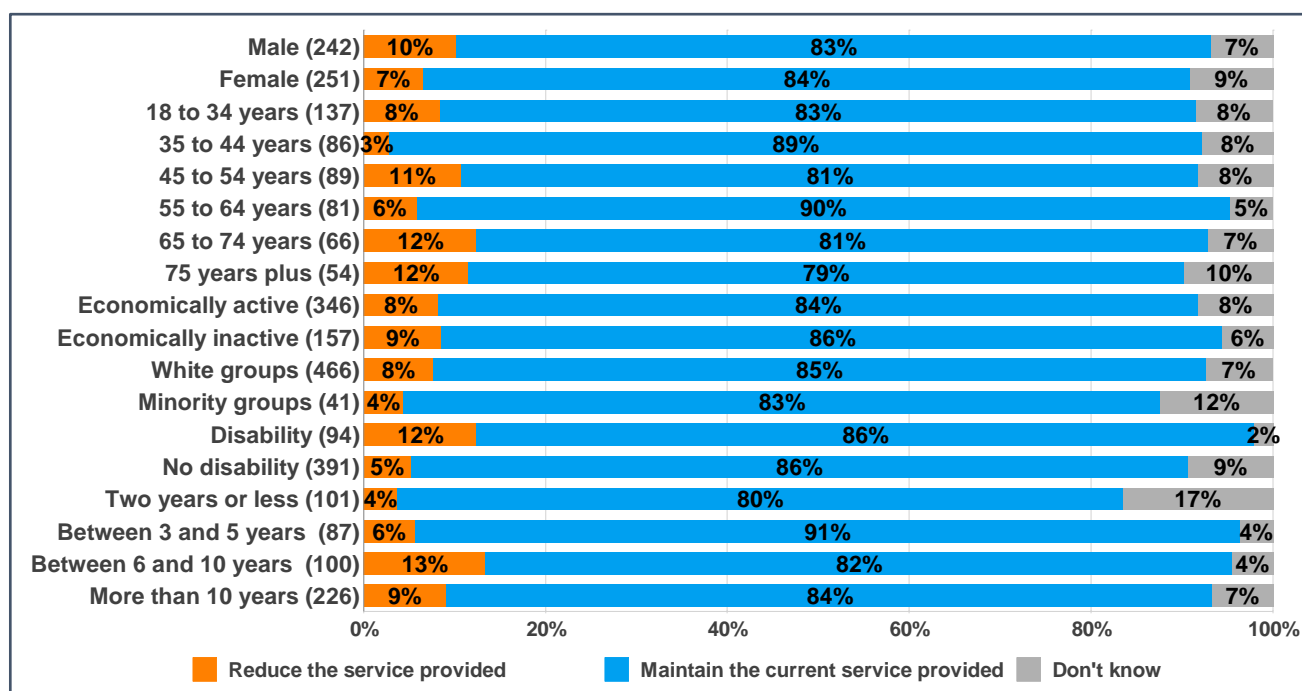
Environmental Health

- 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.



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.

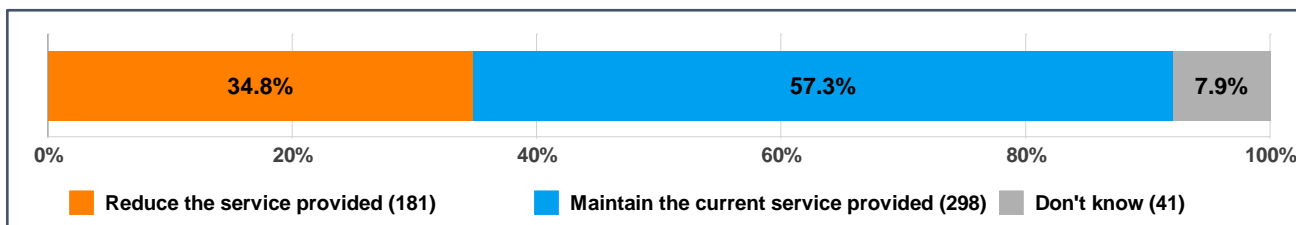


Respondents with a disability had a significantly greater proportion that said this service should be reduced with 12.4% answering this way compared to 5.2% of respondents without a disability.

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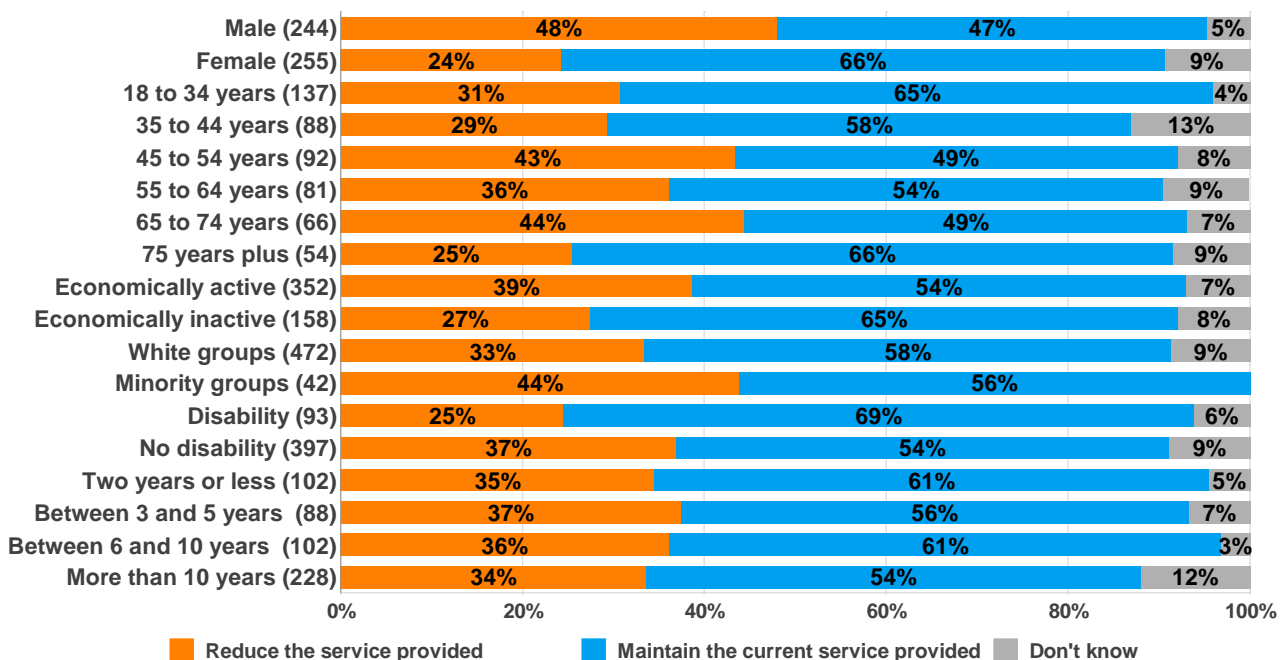
Council Tax & Benefits

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




Demographic Differences

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

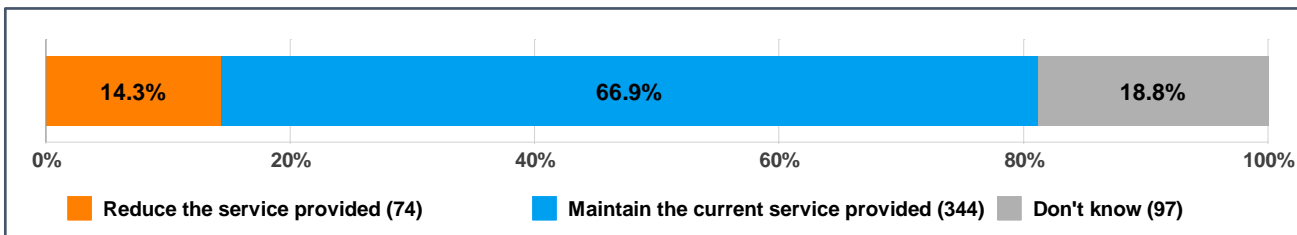


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of male respondents were in favour of reducing Council tax and Benefits with 48% answering this way compared to 24% of female respondents. ‘Reduce the service’ was the most common response from men and ‘maintain the current service’ was the most common response for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

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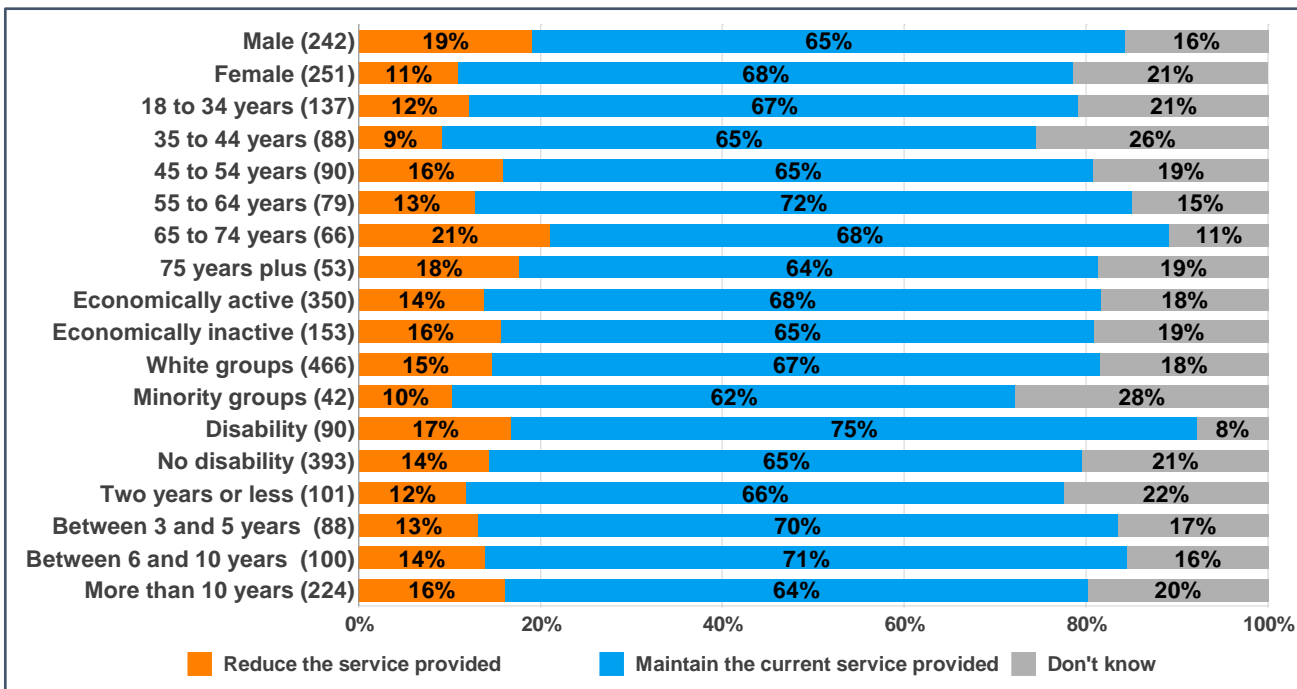
Bereavement Services



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




Demographic Differences

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

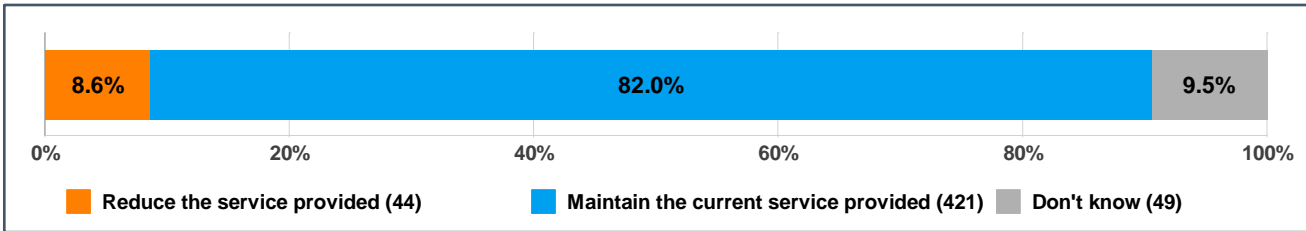


	<p>Male respondents had a significantly greater proportion that were in favour of reducing Bereavement Services with 19% answering this way compared to 11% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of 65 to 74 years olds said Bereavement Services should be reduced with 21% answering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

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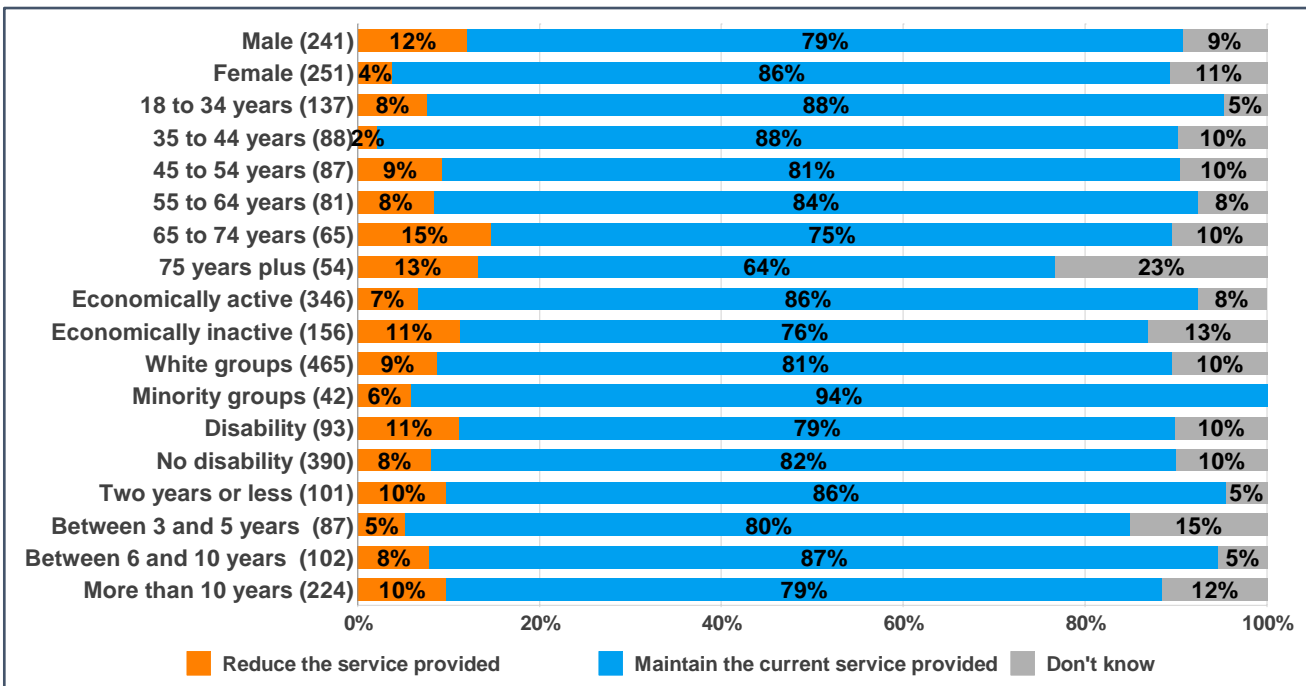
Community Safety



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





Demographic Differences

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

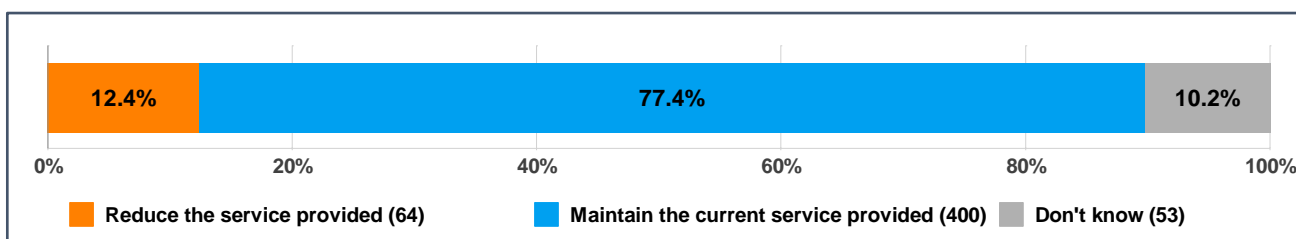


	<p>Female respondents had a significantly greater proportion that said Community Safety services should be maintained with 86% answering this way compared to 79% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded ‘Maintain the current service’ from the 75 years and over group were significantly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

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

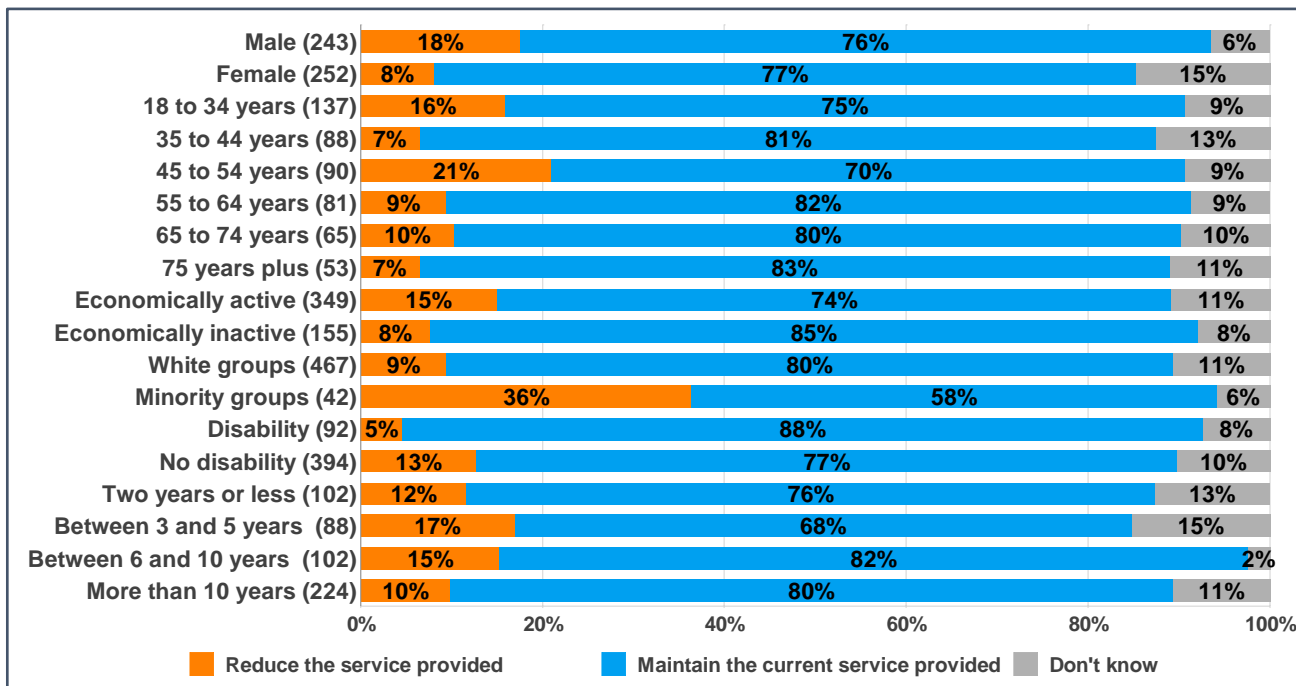
Environmental Enforcement


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








Demographic Differences

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

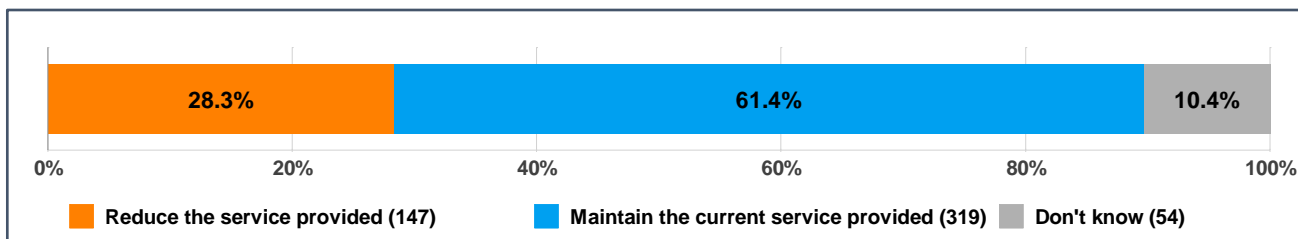


	<p>A significantly greater proportion of males were in favour of reducing Environmental Enforcement services with 18% answering this way compared to 8% of female respondents.</p> <p>A significantly greater proportion of female respondents were uncertain with 15% answering this way compared to 6% of male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

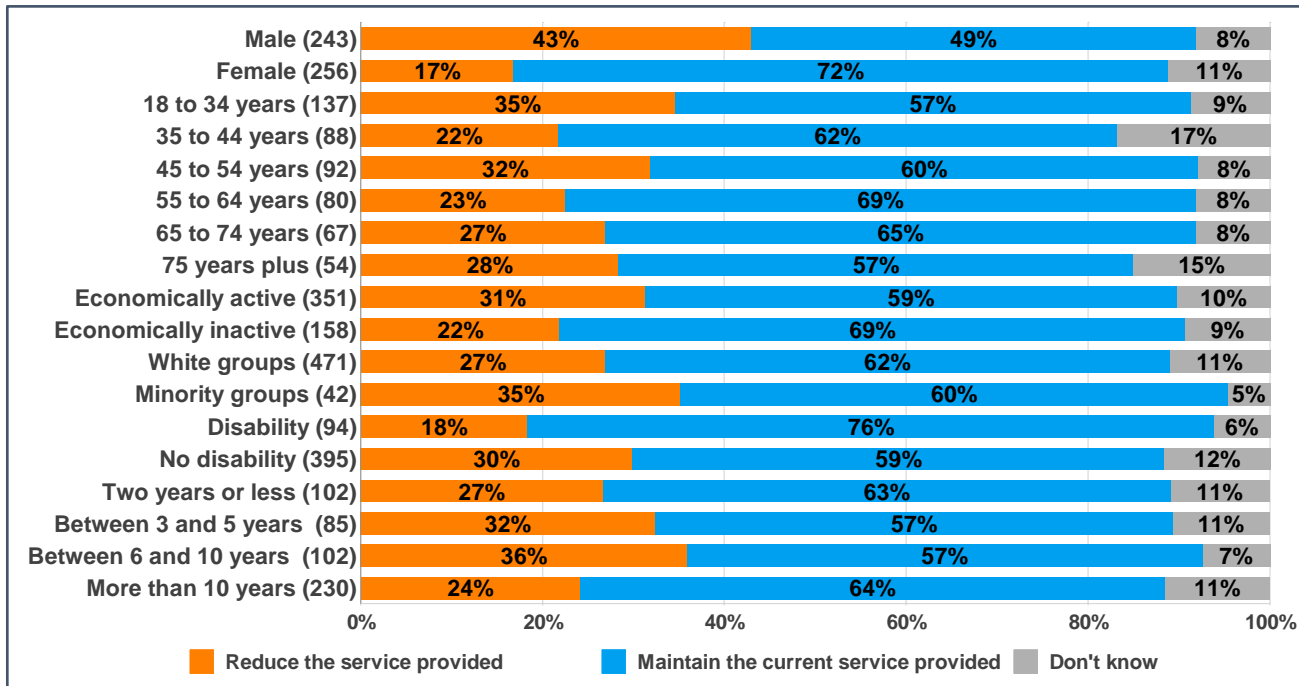
Housing & Homelessness




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



Demographic Differences

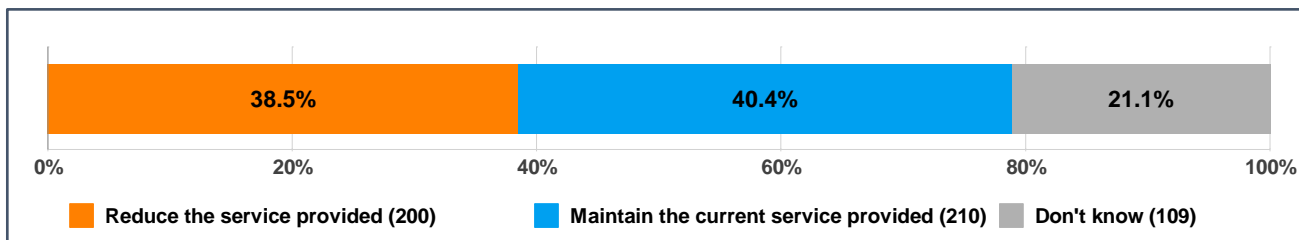
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



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

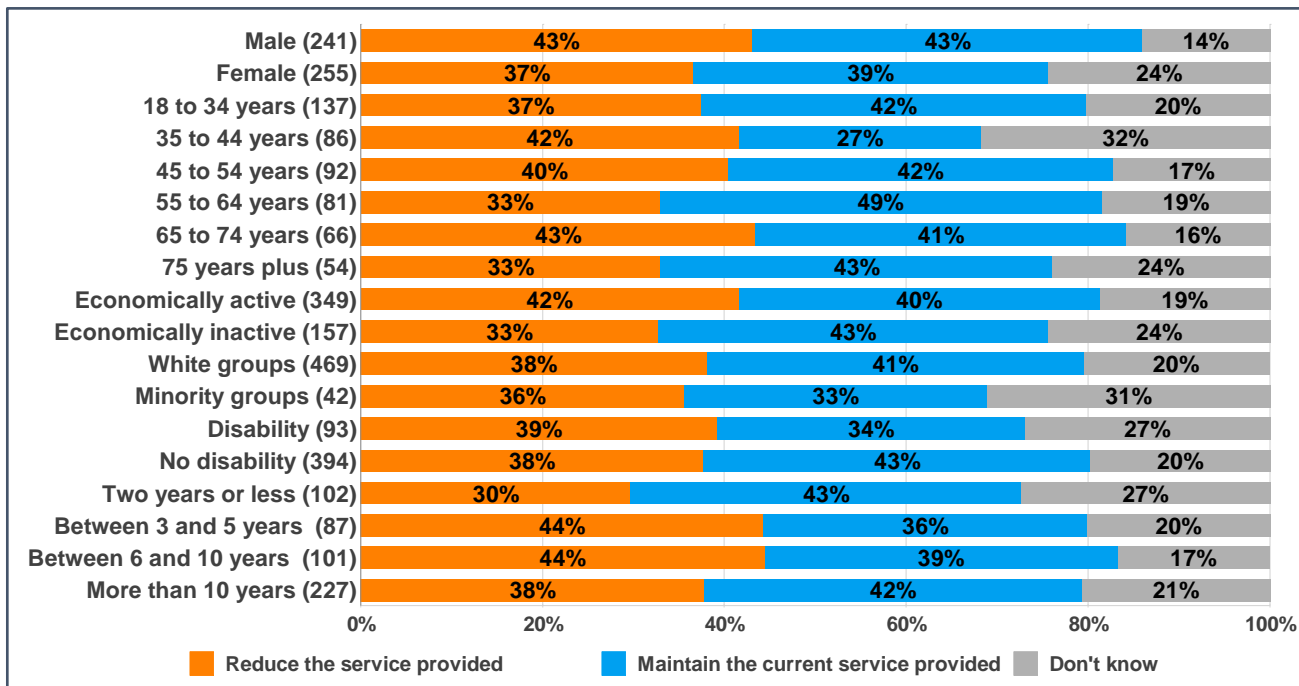
Licensing

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



Demographic Differences

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

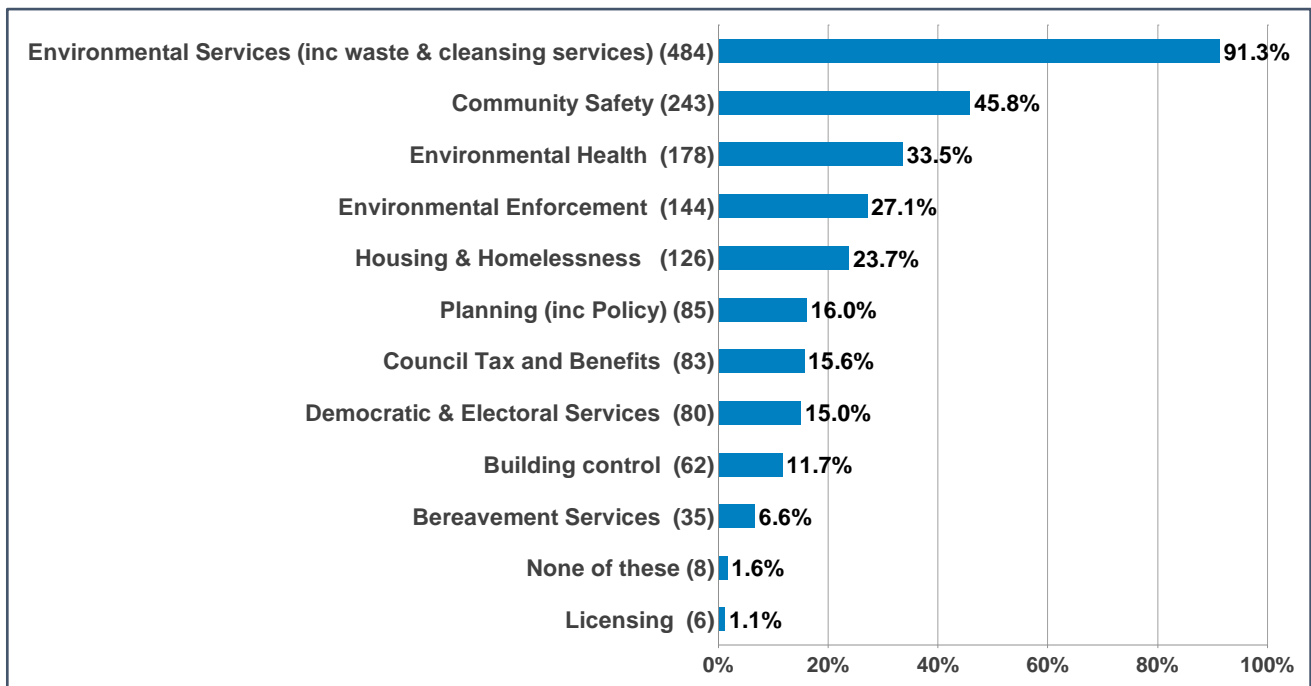


	<p>Female respondents answered 'don't know' in response to this question with 24% answering this way compared to 14% of male respondents.</p>
	<p>The proportion that responded 'maintain the current service provided' from the 35 to 44 age group was lower than the proportions answering this way for the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

Most important Mandatory Services

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

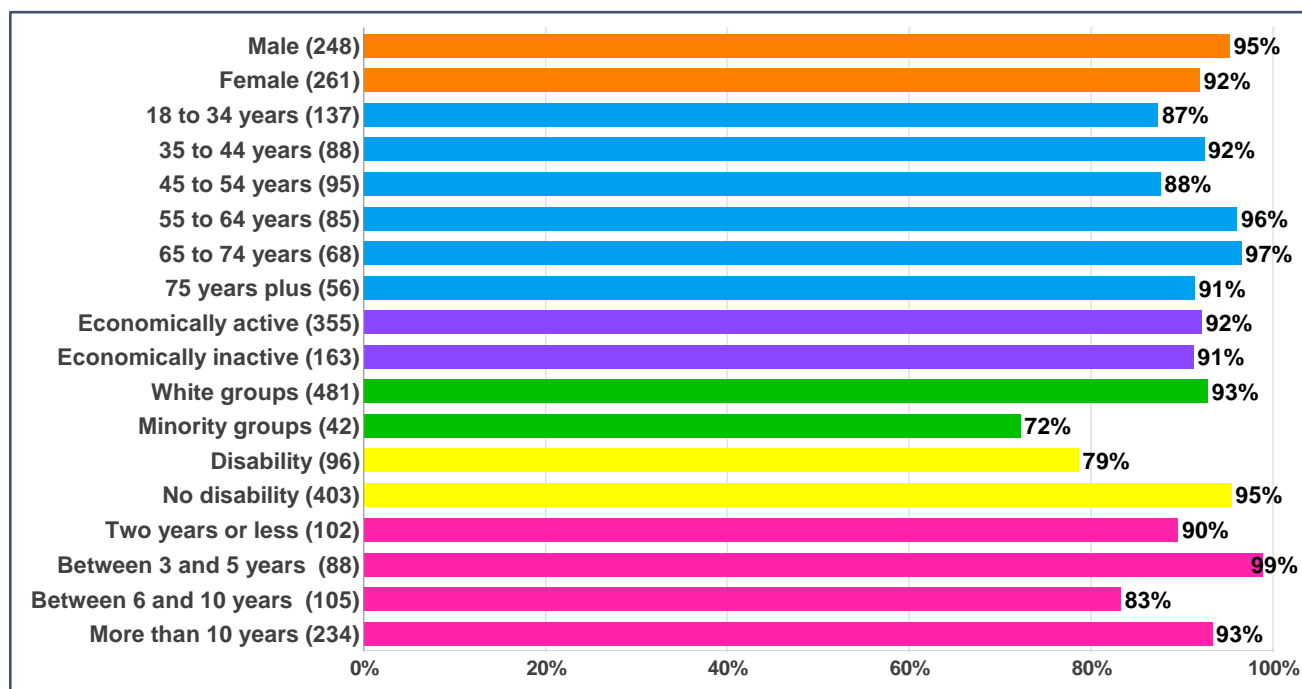
- 530 respondents answered this question.
- The top three most important services were Environmental Services, Community Safety and Environmental Health
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Licensing, Bereavement Services and Building Control.



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

Environmental Services

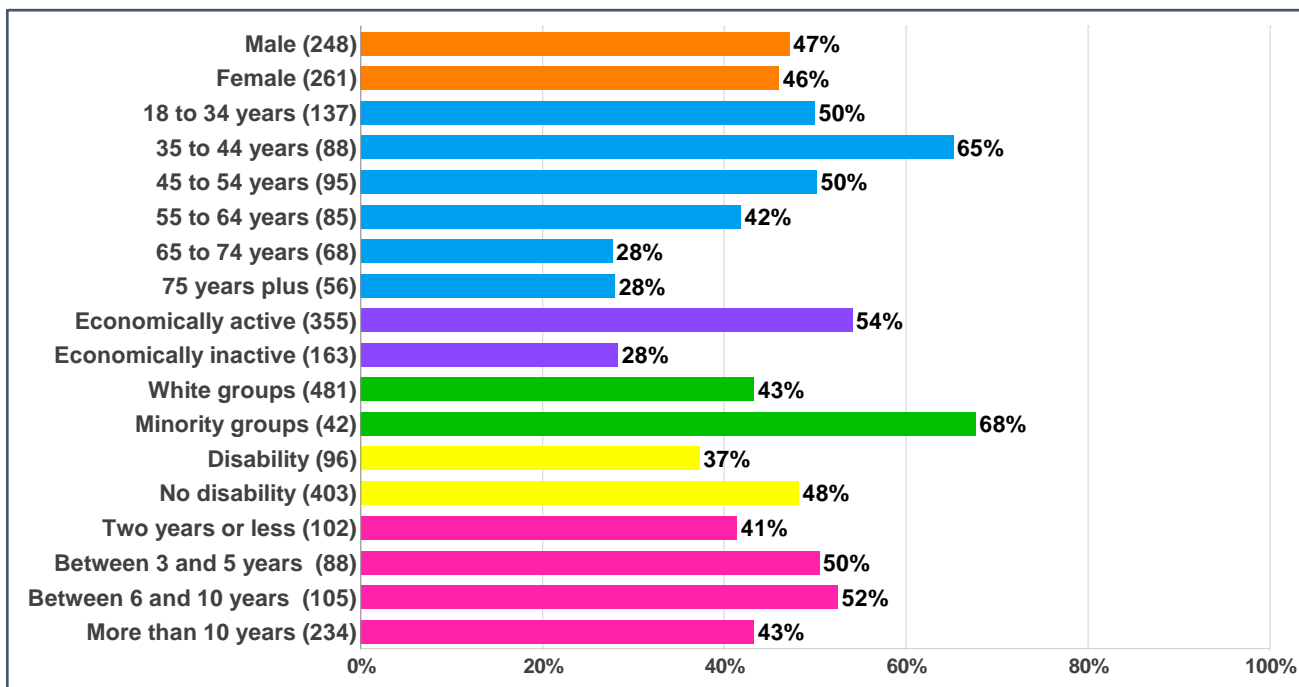
The differences in the proportions selecting Environmental Services across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



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

Community Safety

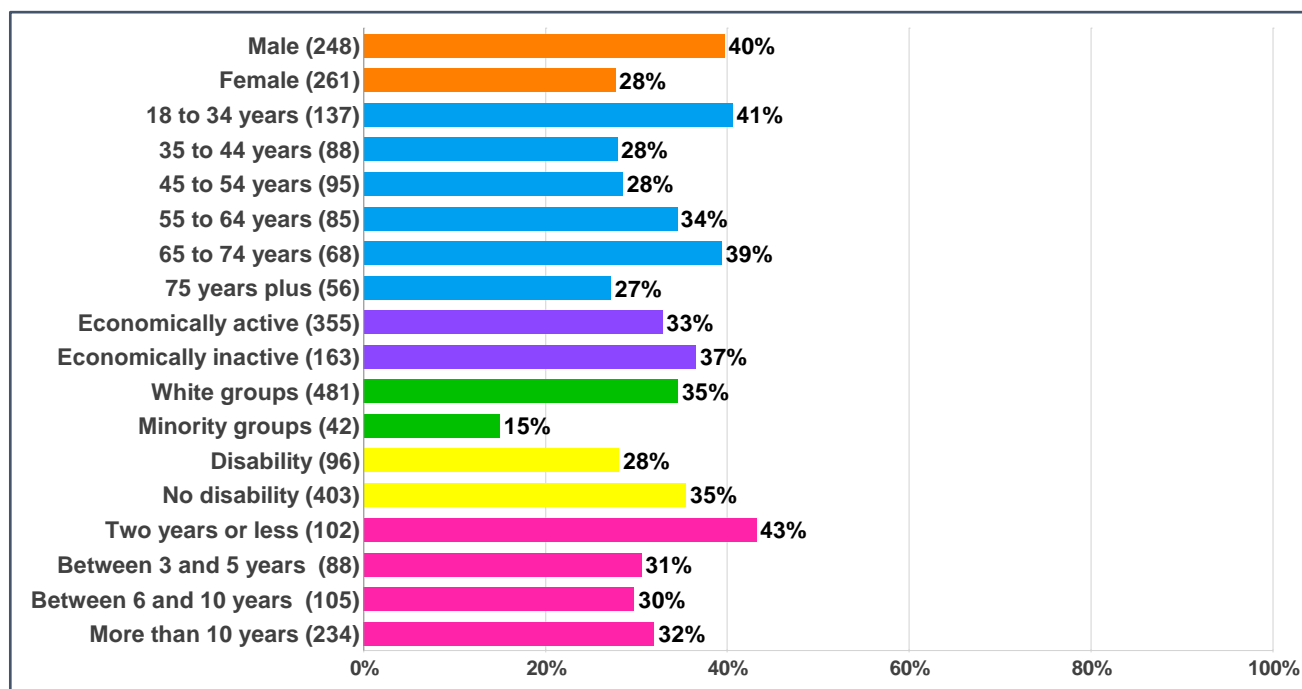
The differences in the proportions selecting Community Safety across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.






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

Environmental Health

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



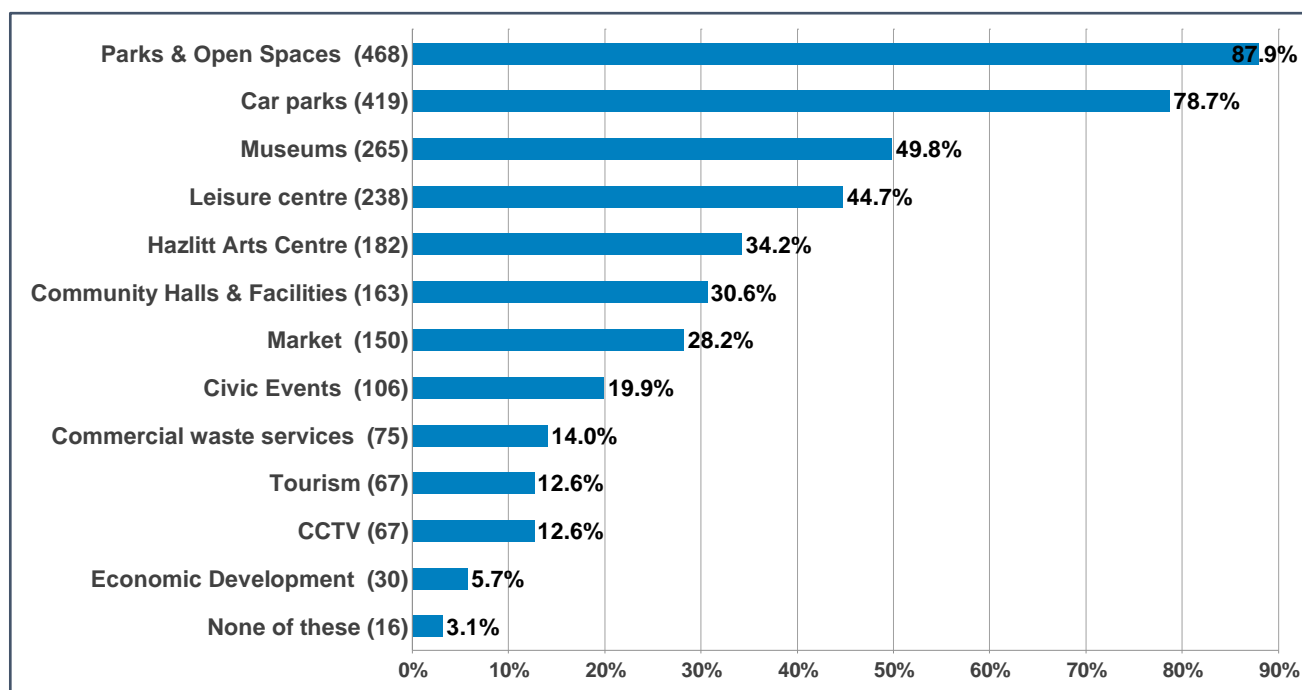
	<p>40% of male respondents selected Environmental Health as being one of their most important services compared to 28% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>35% of respondents from white groups choose Environmental Health as being one of the most important to them compared to 15% of respondents from minority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

Discretionary Services

Discretionary Services Used

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

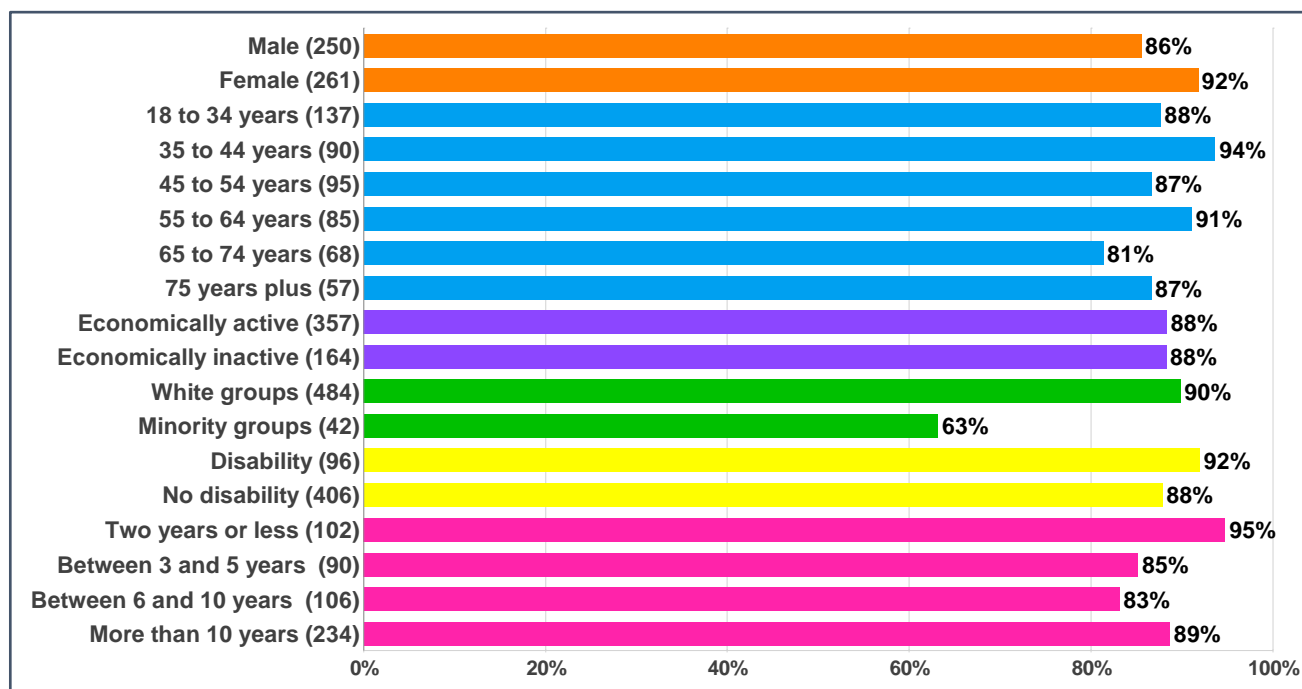
- 533 responses were received.
- Overall, the top three services that respondents had used were Parks and Open Spaces, Car Parks and Museums.
- The least used service by respondents was Economic development with 30 selecting this service.
- 16 respondents said they had not used any of the services listed.







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

Parks & Open Spaces

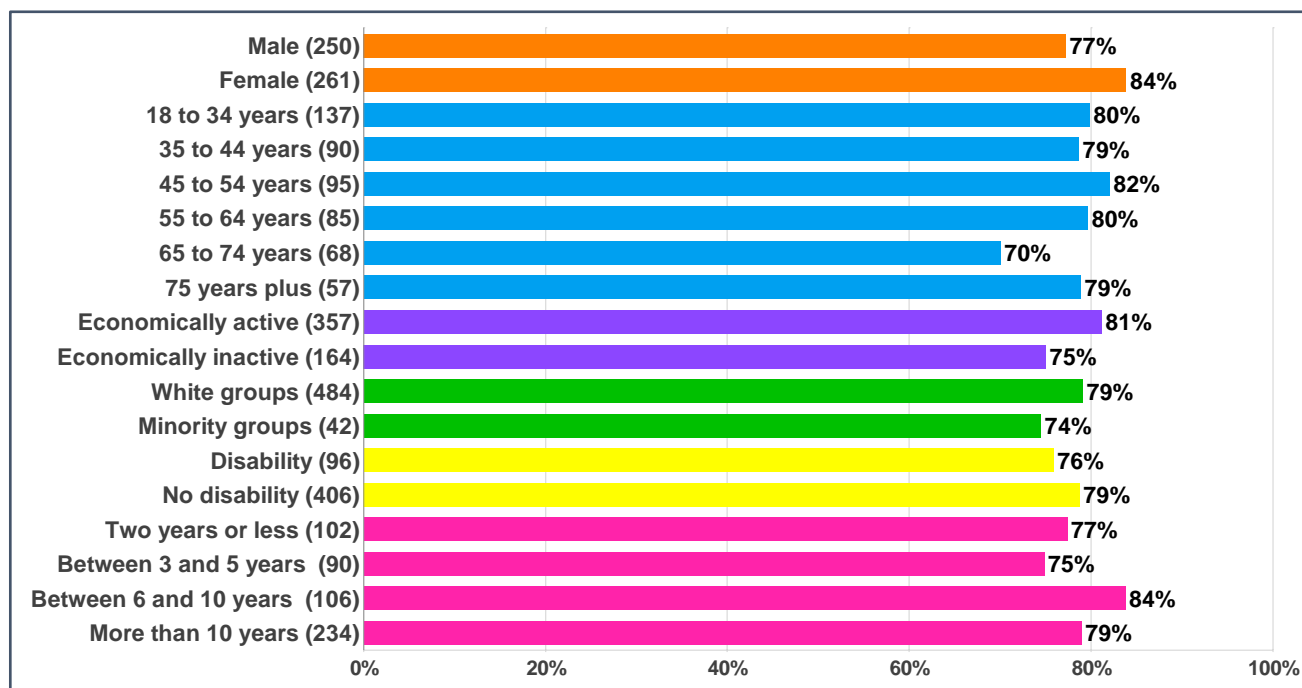
The differences in the proportions selecting parks and opens spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>92% of female respondents have used Parks & 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>

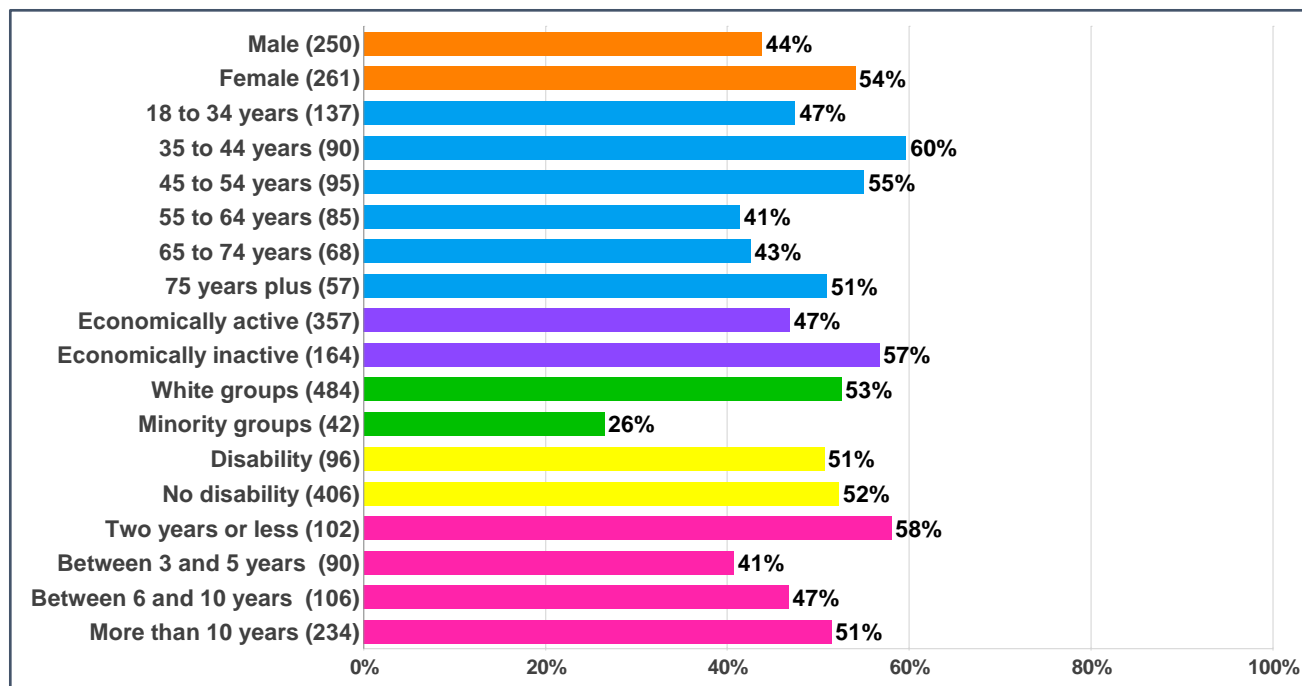
Car Parks

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

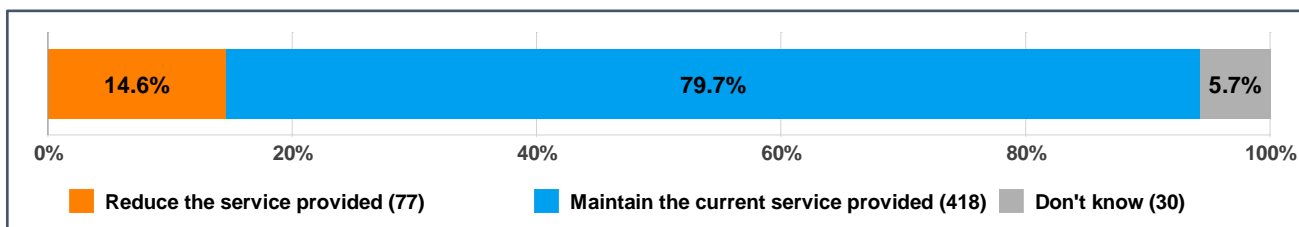
Survey respondents were asked to select what approach they felt the Council should take in delivering each of its Discretionary Services next year. They were given three options to pick from:

- 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.

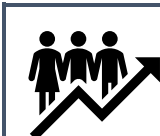
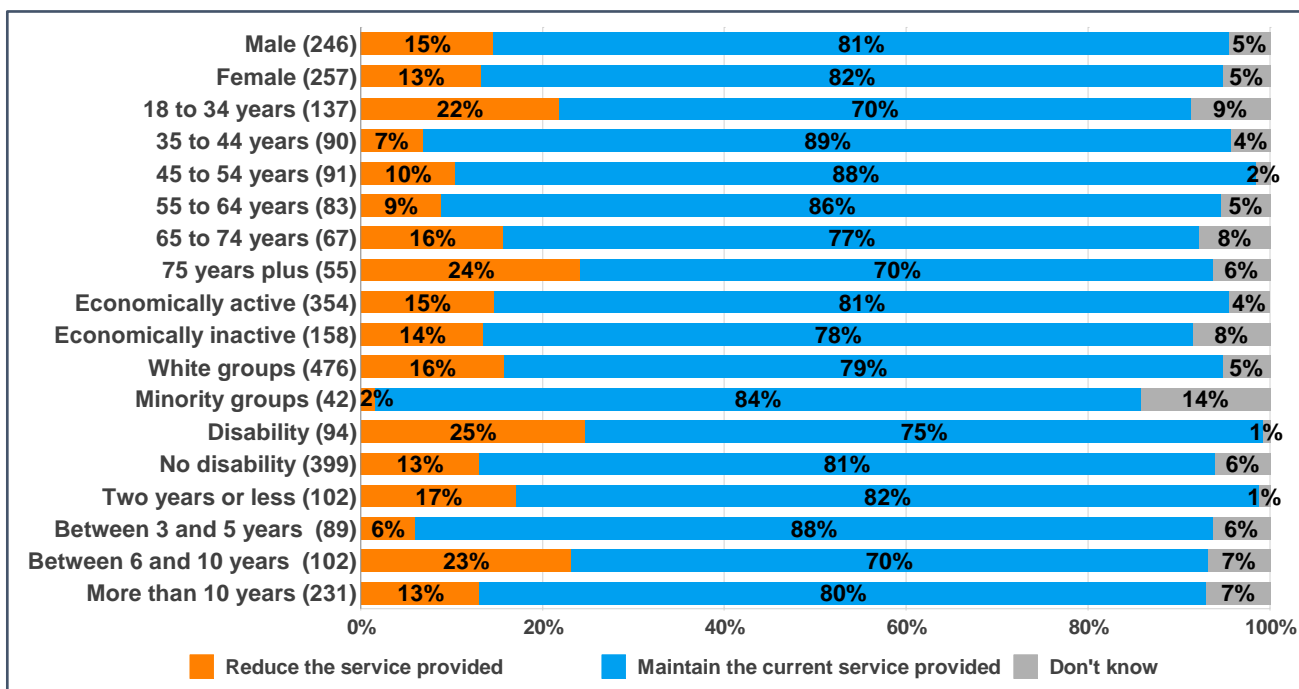
Leisure Centre

- 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.

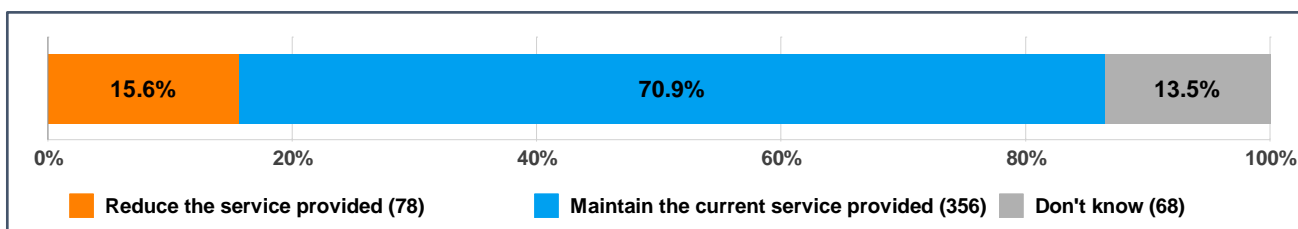


The 75 years and over and the 18 to 34 years age groups were most in favour of reducing the current service provided at 21% and 22% respectively.

	<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>

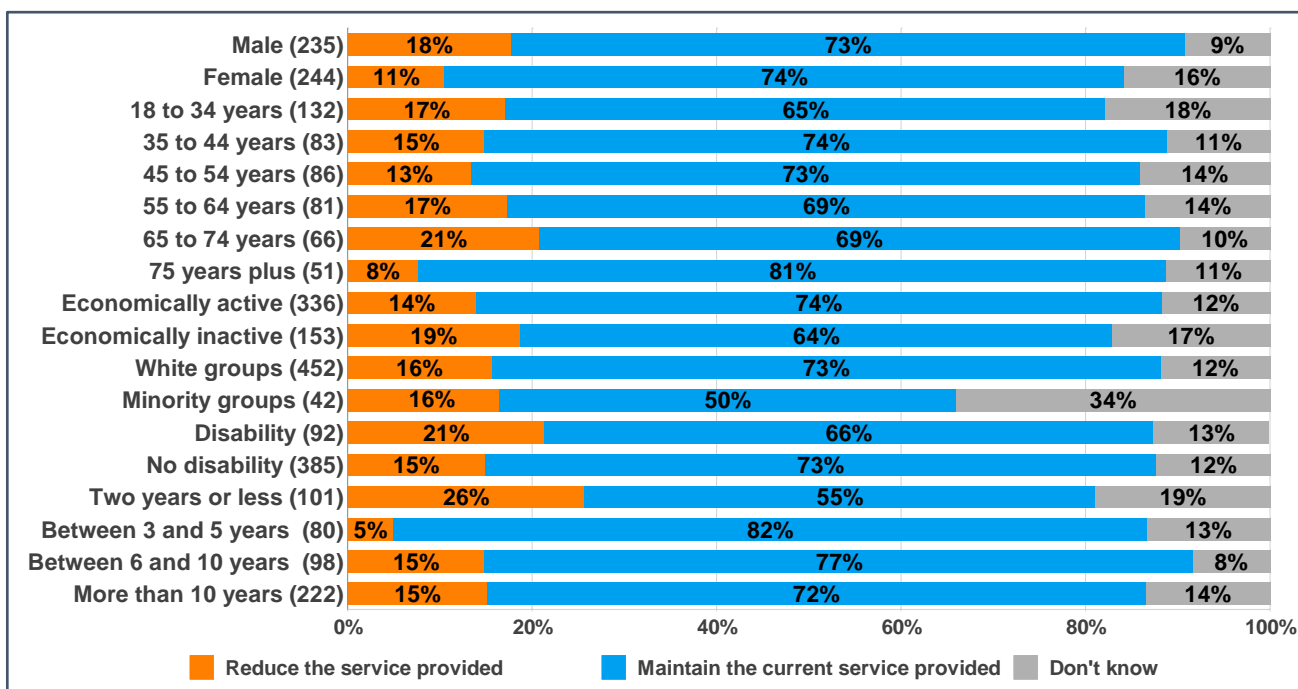
CCTV






- 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

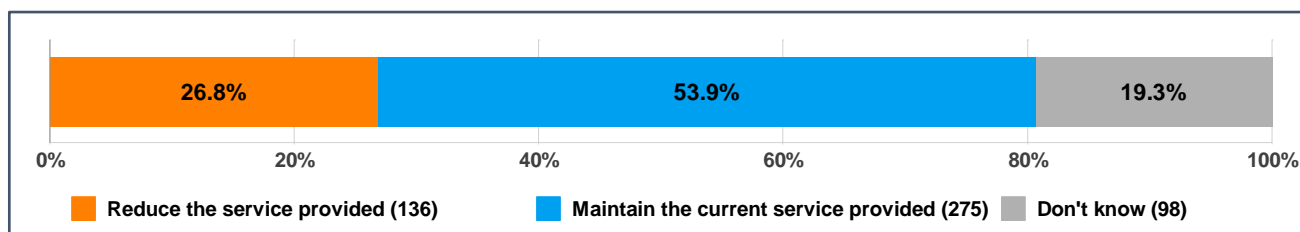
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

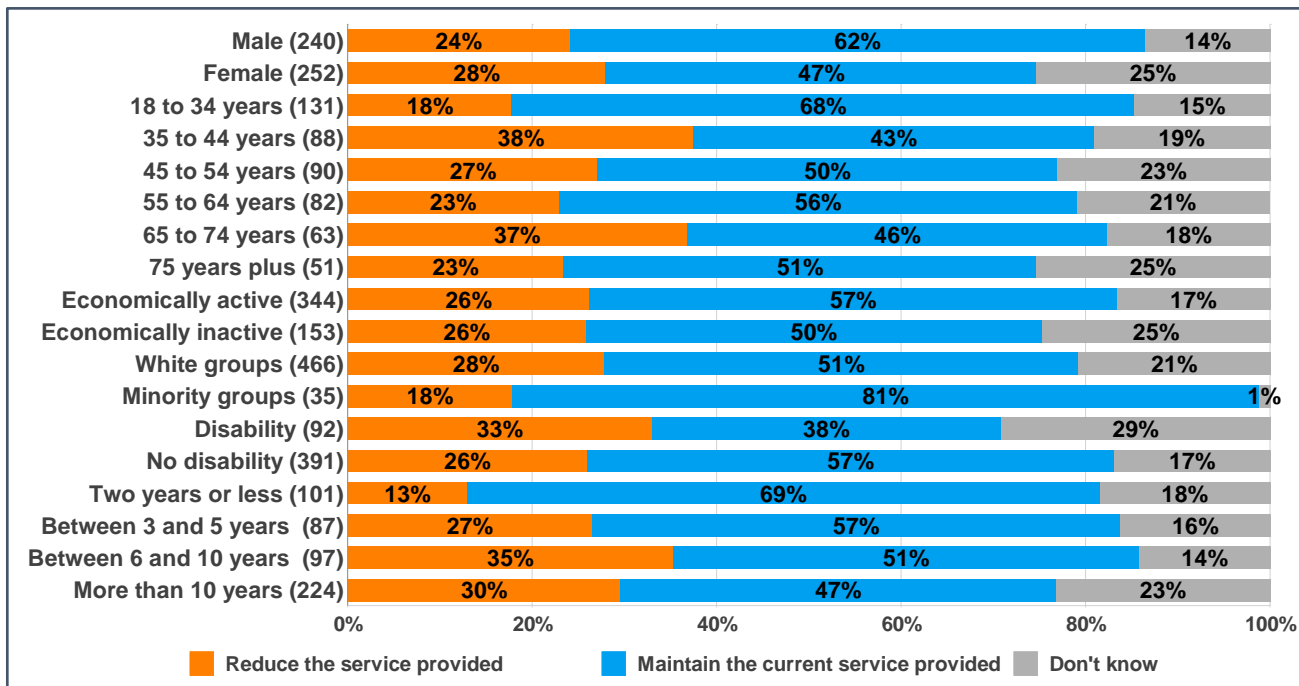
Economic Development

- 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

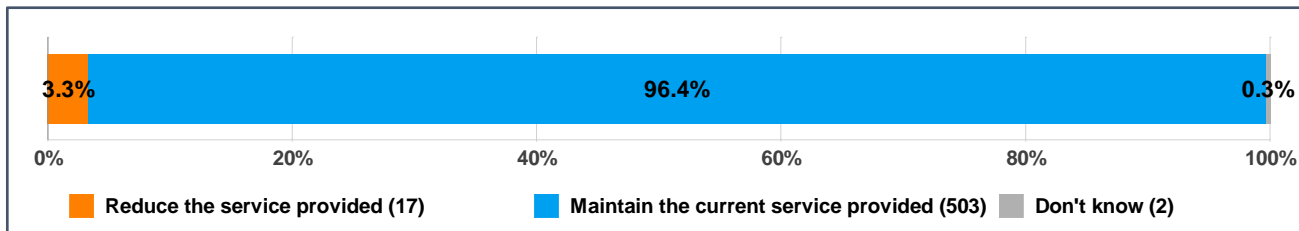
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	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.

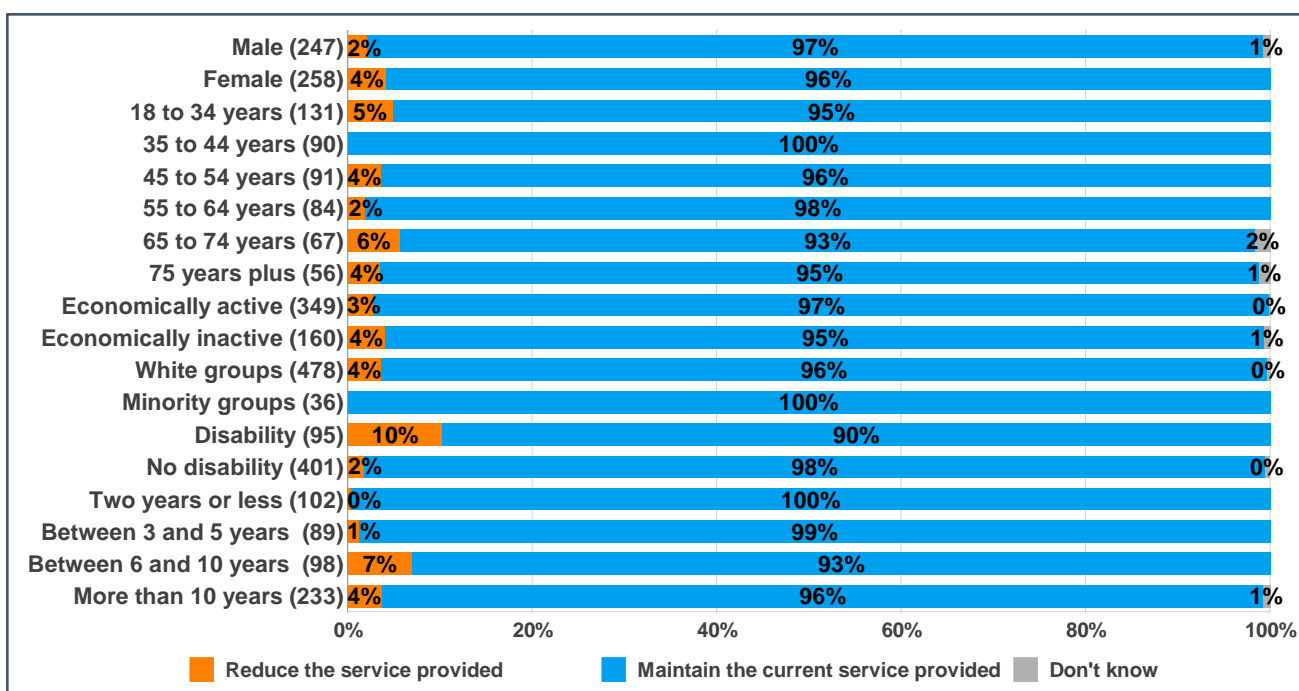
Parks & Open Spaces

- 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

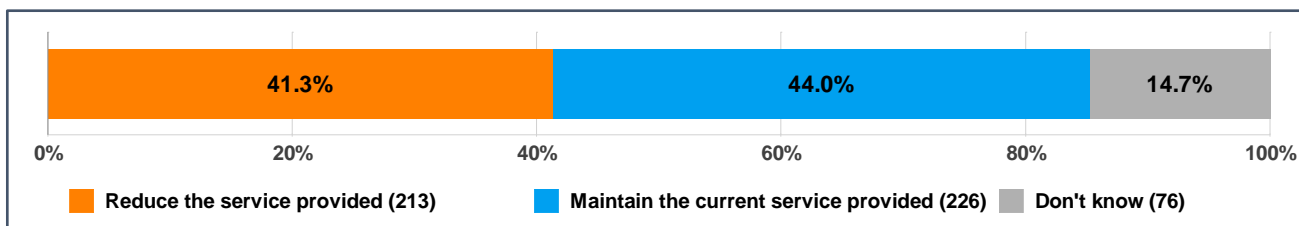
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

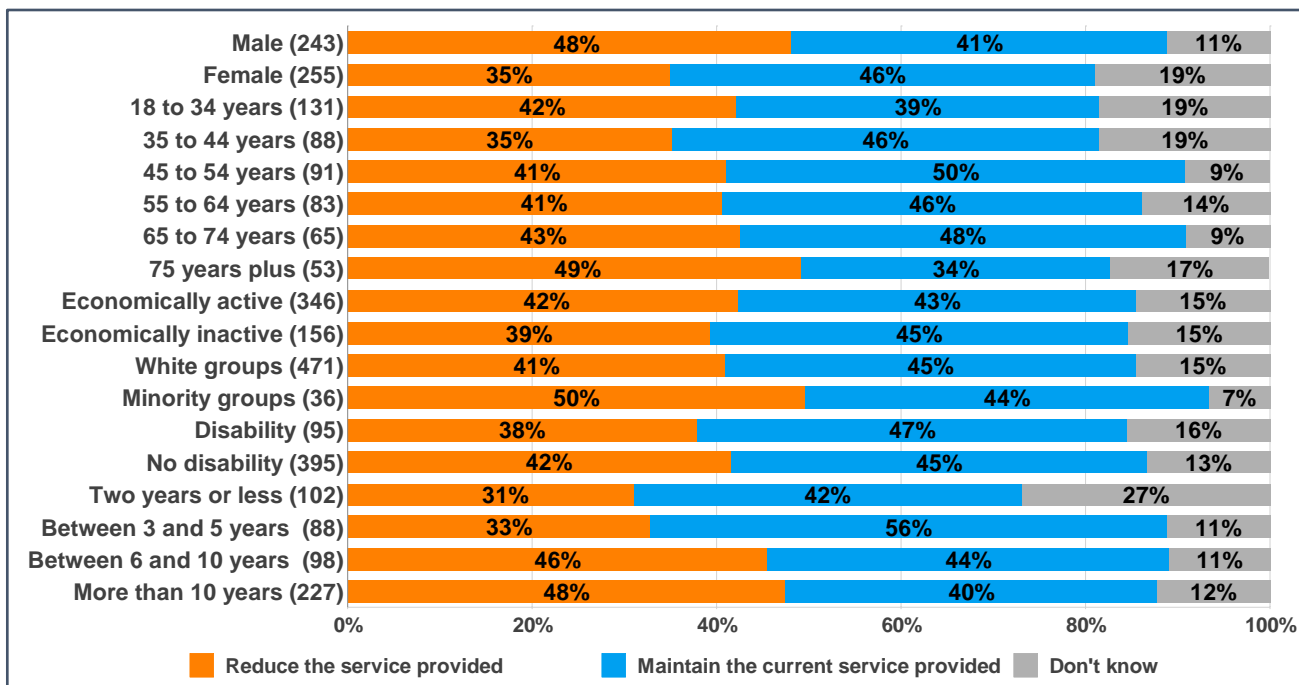
Markets

- 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

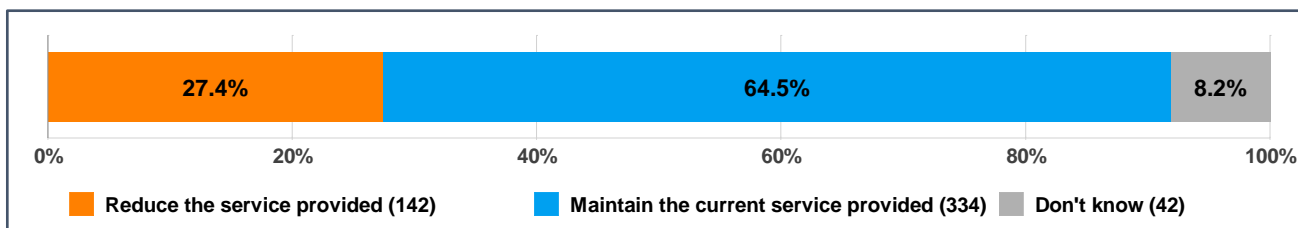
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

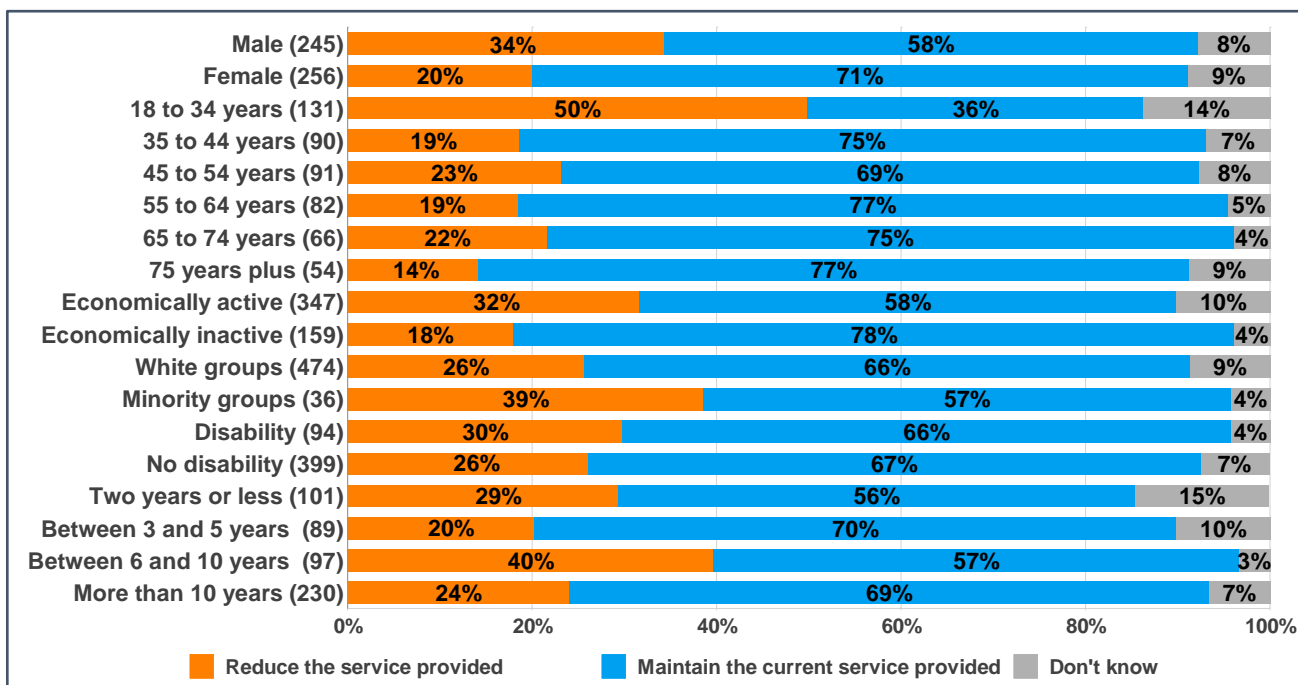
Museums

- 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.

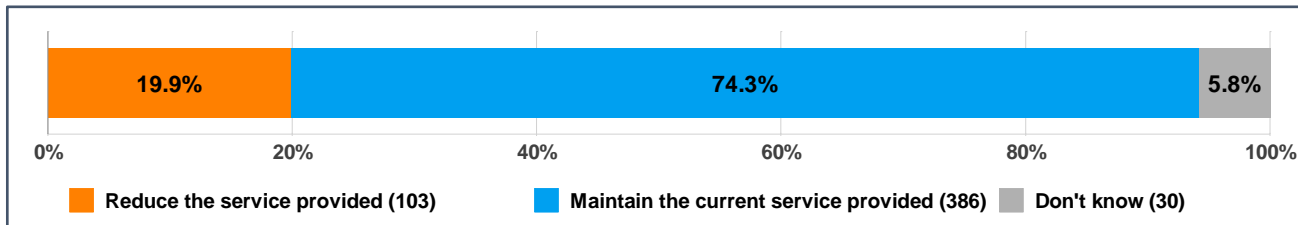


	<p>34% of male respondents were in favour of reducing Museums service compared to 20% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>50% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said that the Museums service should be reduced. This is significantly greater than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>58% of economically active respondents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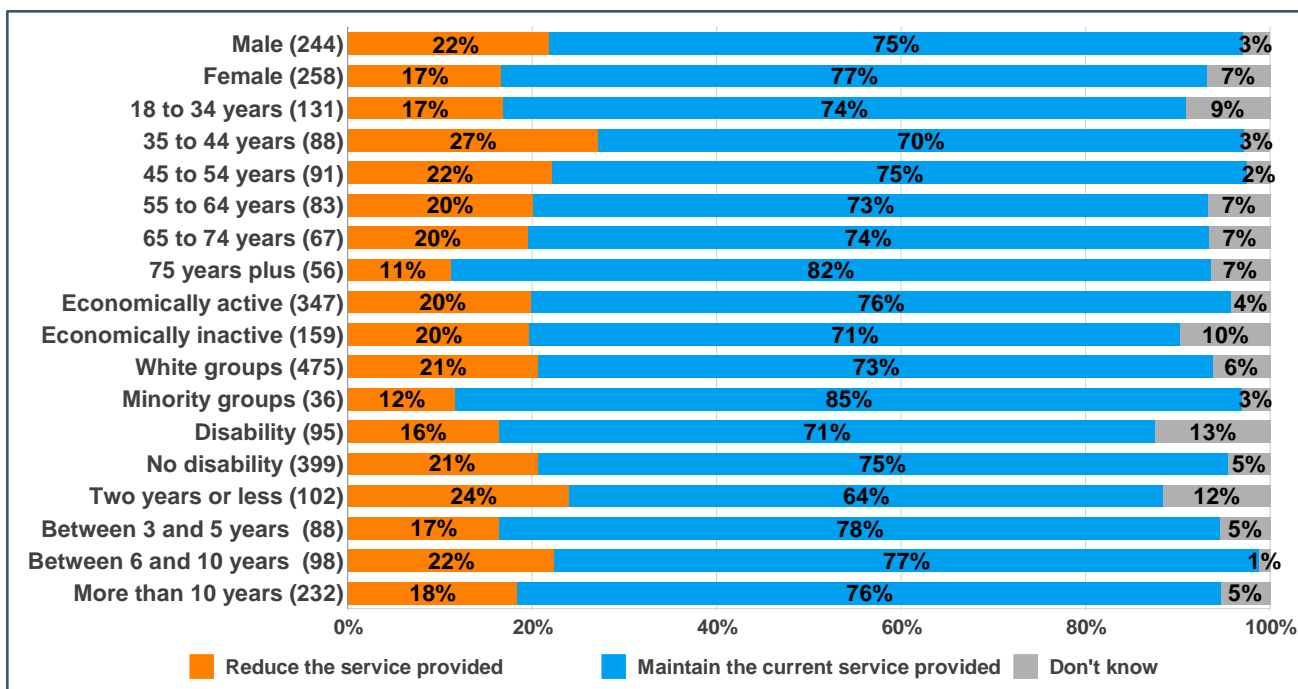
Car parks

- 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.

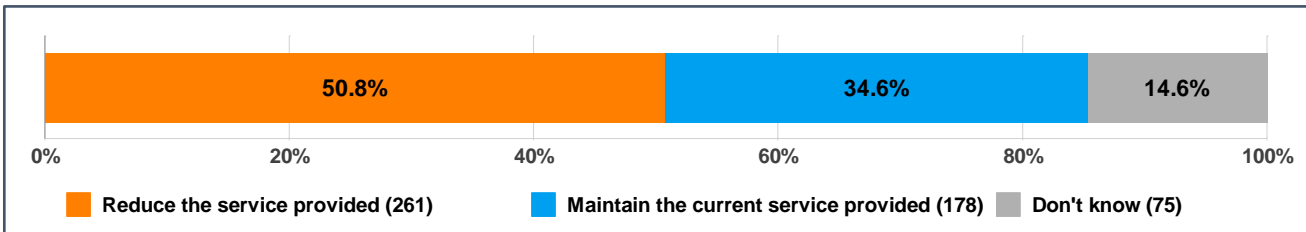


	<p>10% of economically inactive respondents answering ‘don’t know’ compared to 4% of economically active respondents answering the same suggesting a higher level of uncertainty or understanding for the economically inactive group</p>
	<p>13% of respondents with a disability answered ‘don’t know’ compared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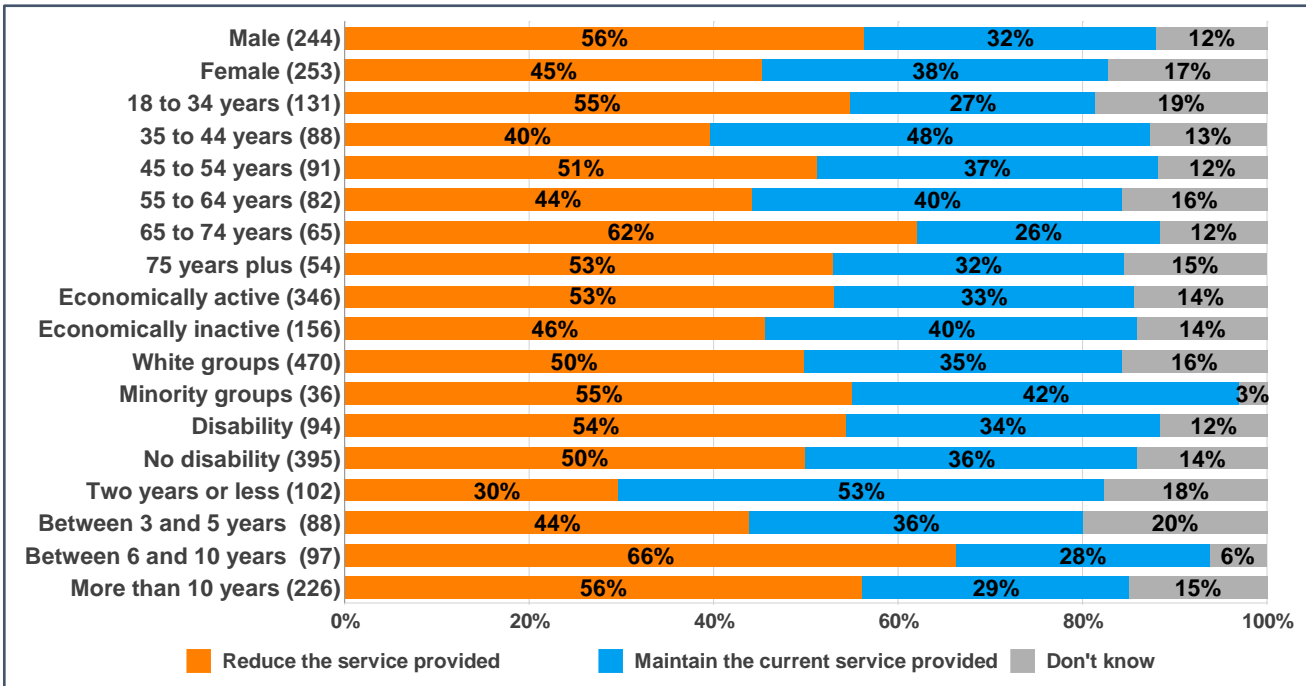
Civic Events

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


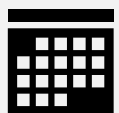


Demographic Differences

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

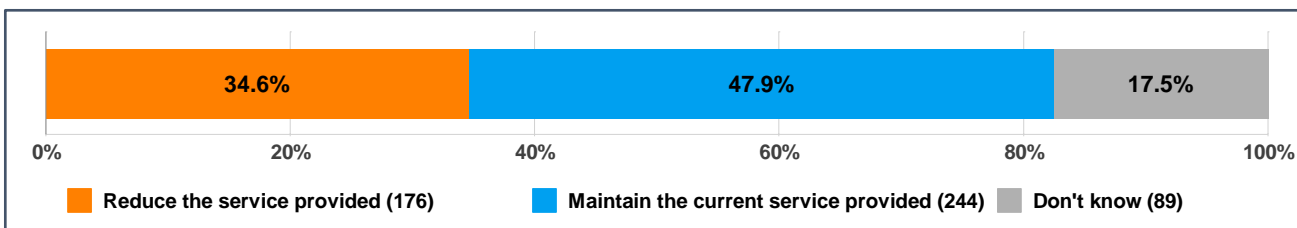


	<p>56% of male respondents were in favour of reducing civic events compared to 45% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>40% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the civic events should be reduced. This is significantly lower than the response from 18 to 34 year olds and 65 and 74 year olds age groups.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

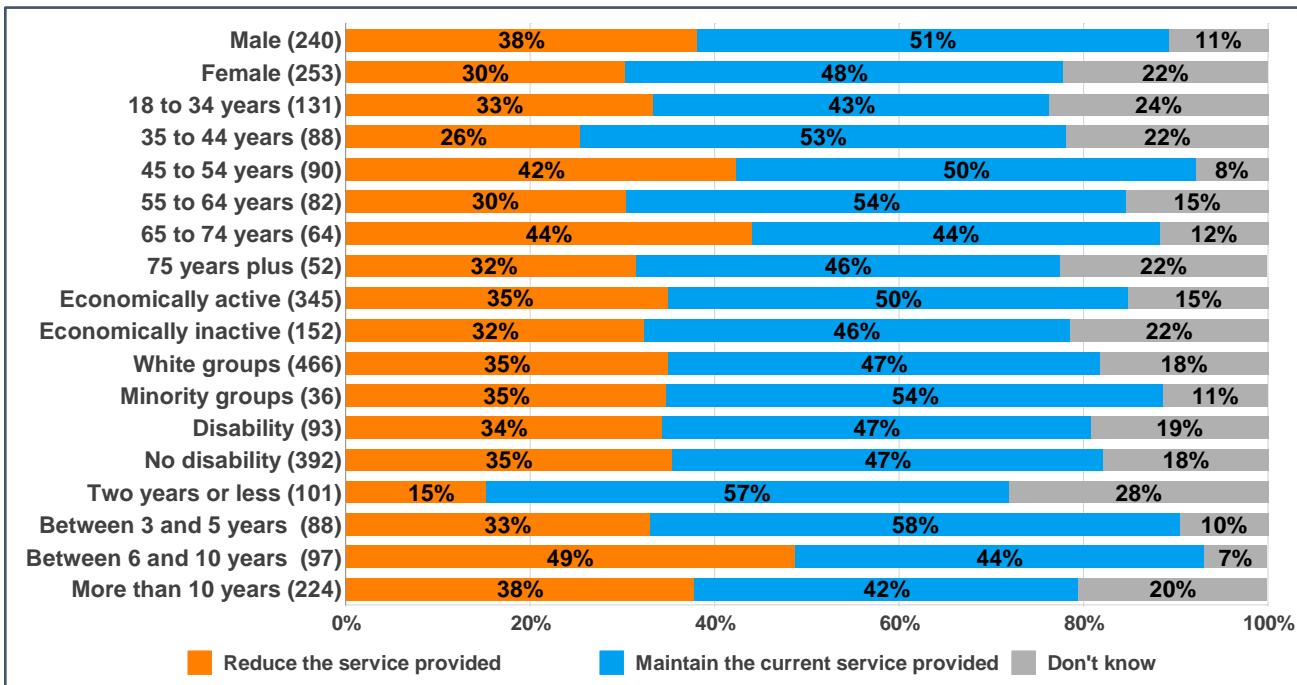
Tourism


- 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.

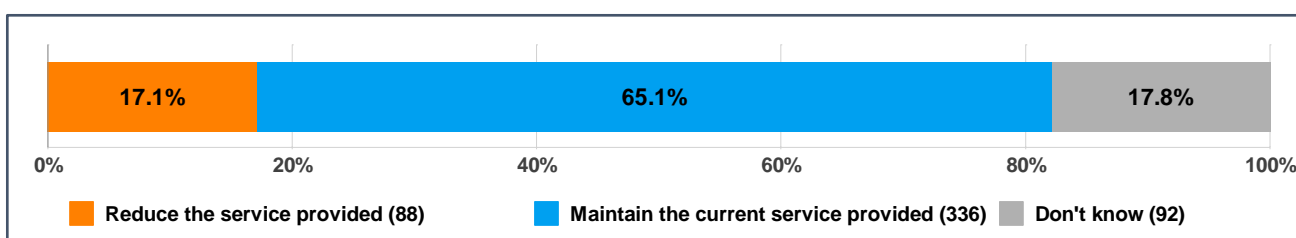


	<p>22% of females responded 'don't know' when asked about approaches for the Tourism service compared to 11% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>26% of respondents aged 35 to 44 years said that the Tourism service should be reduced. This is significantly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

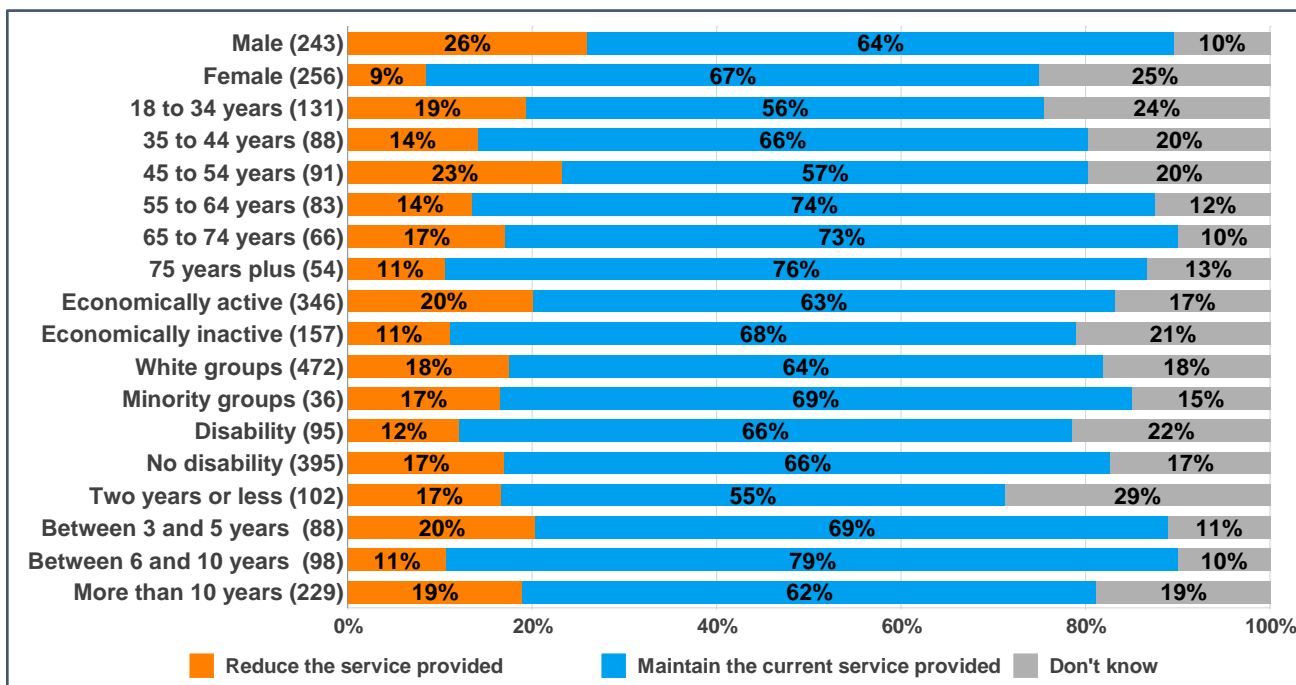
Commercial Waste Services


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



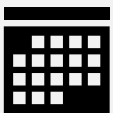


Demographic Differences

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

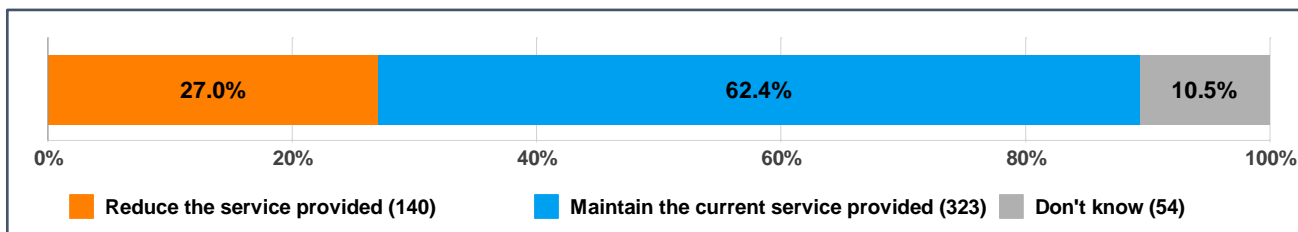


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Commercial Waste services with 26% answering this way compared to 45% of female respondents.</p> <p>22% of female respondents answered ‘don’t know’ compared to 10% of male respondents.</p>
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	<p>The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

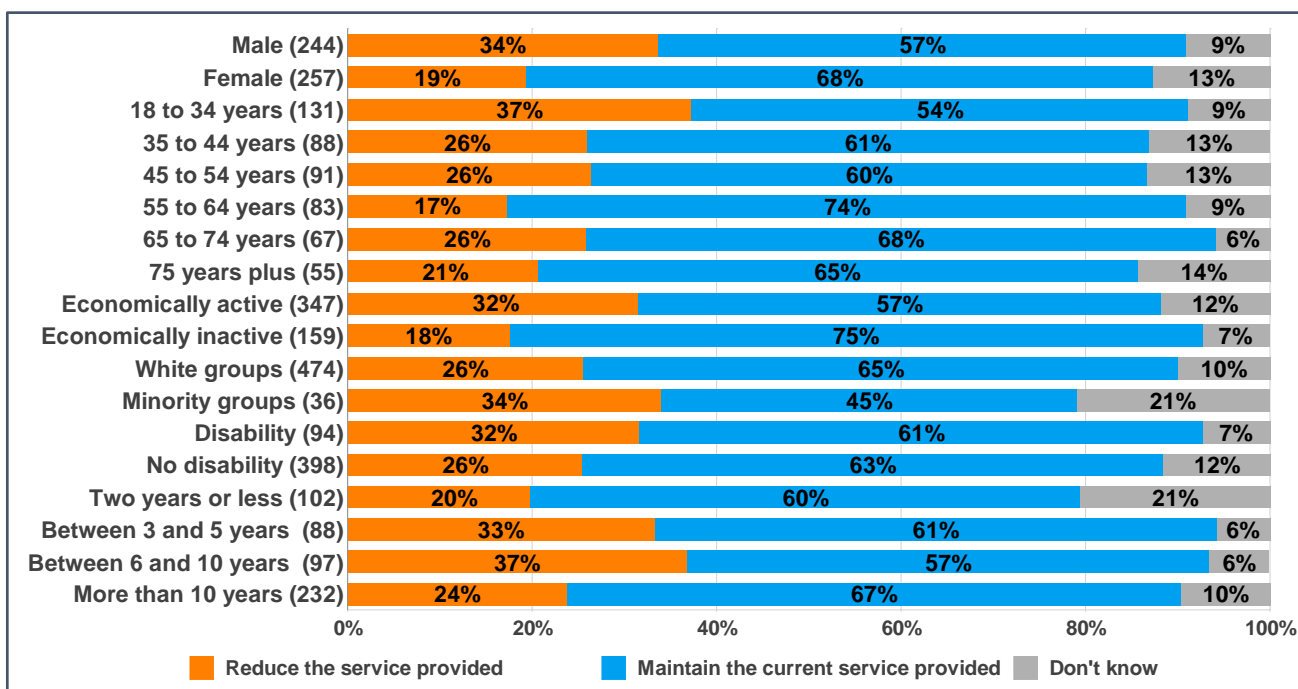
Hazlitt Arts Centre






- 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

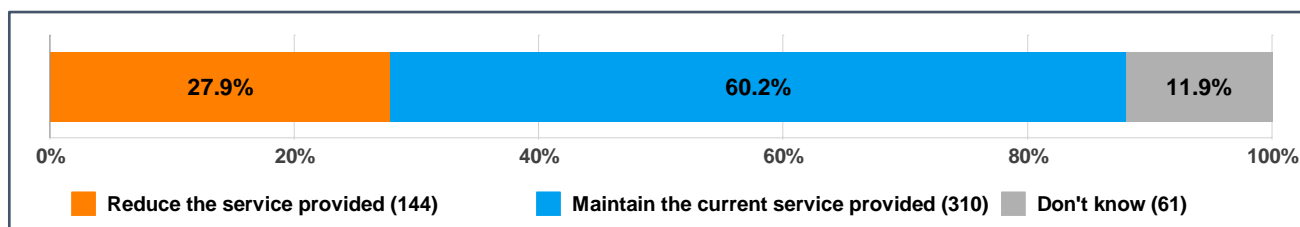
The chart below shows the response for each demographic group with significant differences outlined in the table below.



	<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>

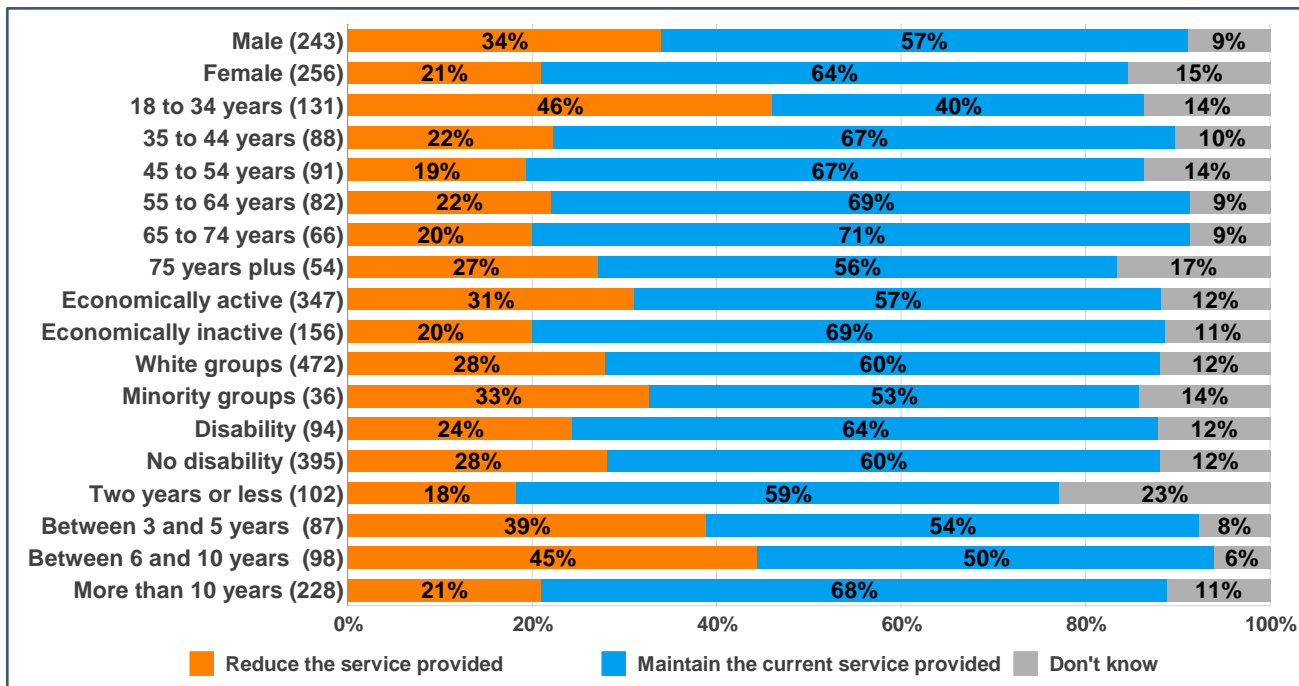
Community Halls & Facilities

- 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.

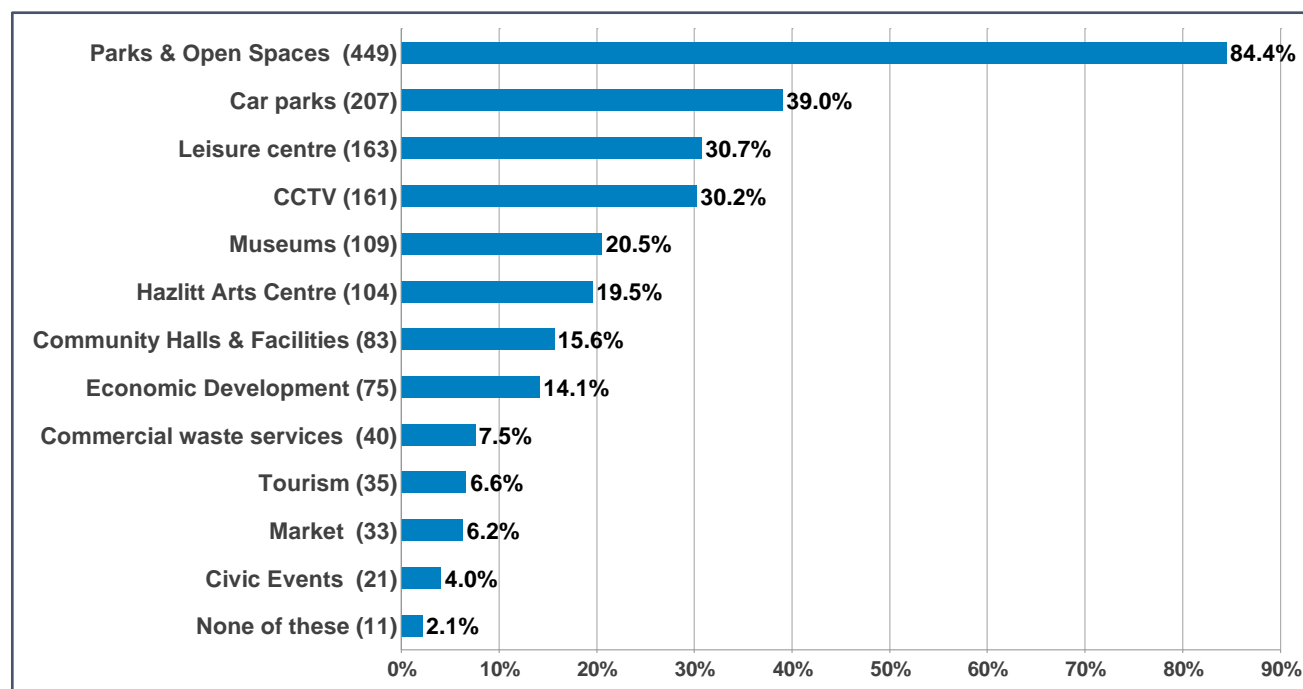


	<p>Male respondents were more in favour of reducing Community Halls and Facilities with 34% answering this way compared to 21% of female respondents. Female respondents could be considered to be more uncertain of the approach to take for commercial waste with 15% answering 'don't know' compared to 9%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

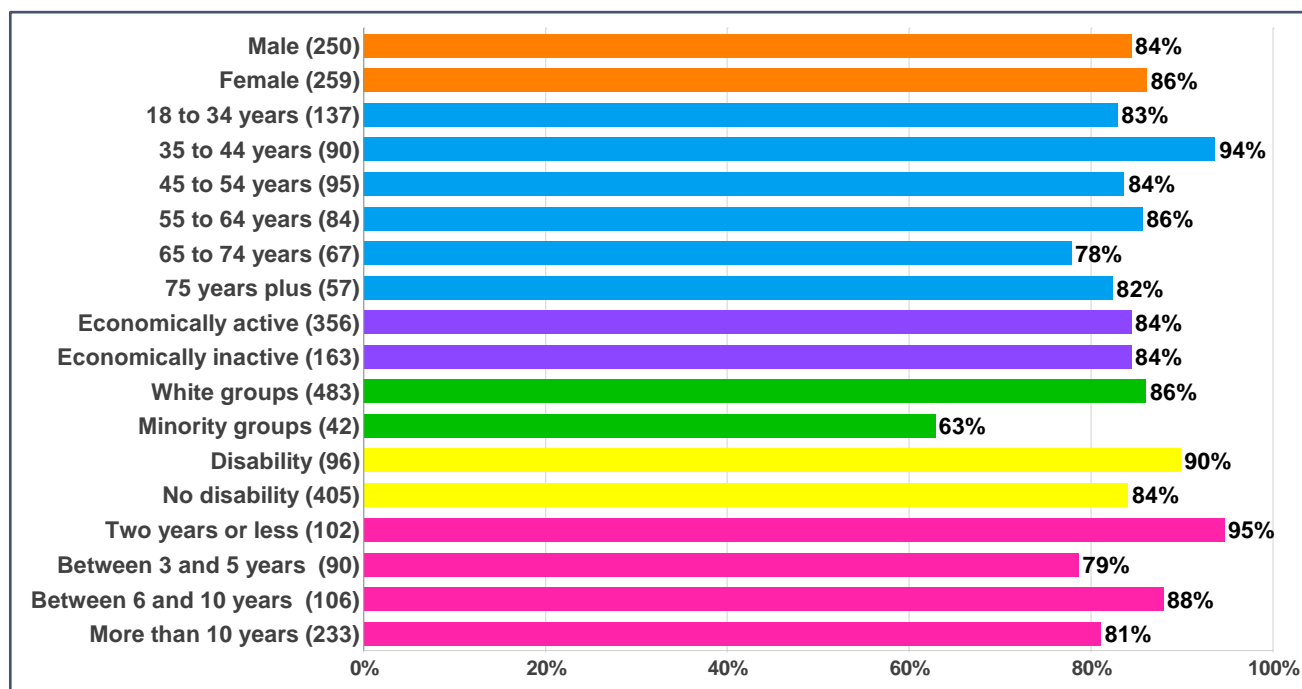
- 532 responses were received.
- The top three most important services were Parks & Open Spaces, Car Parks and the Leisure Centre.
- The three services that respondents felt were least important were Civic Events, Market and Tourism.



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

Parks & Open Spaces

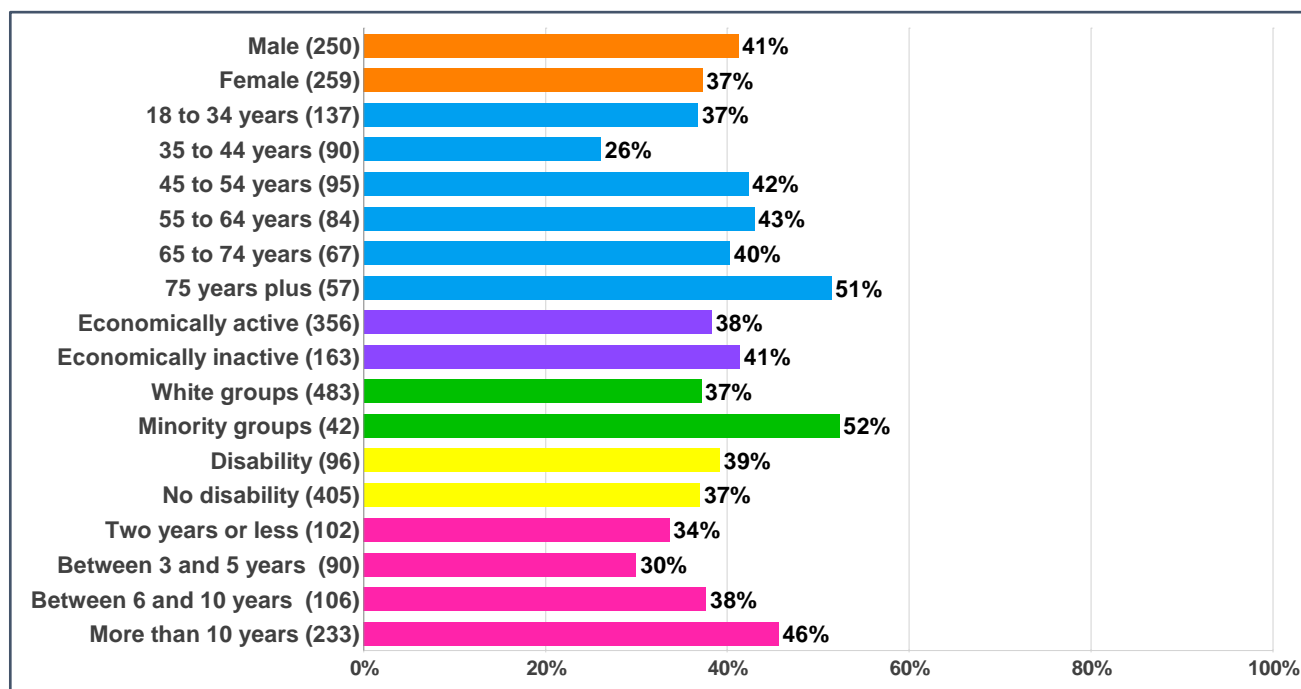
The differences in the proportions selecting Parks & Open Spaces across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<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

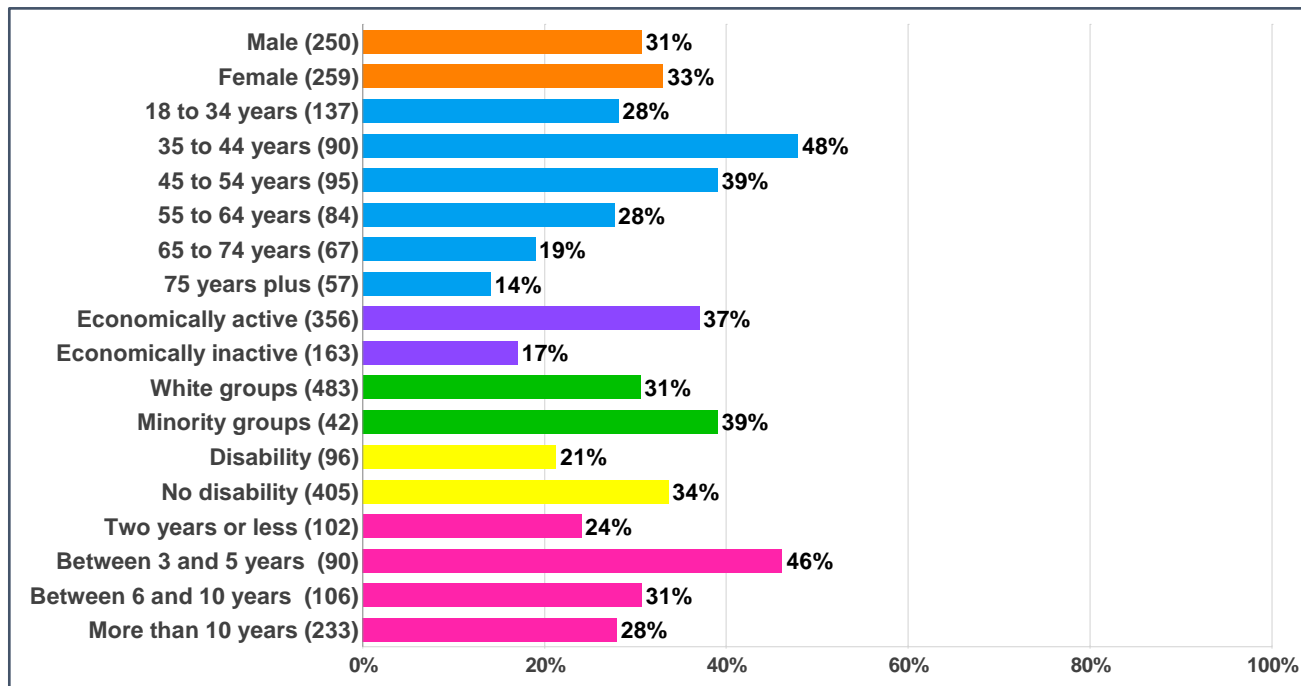
The differences in the proportions selecting Car Parks across the demographic groups are shown in the chart below with differences outlined in the following table.



	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>

Leisure Centre

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



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

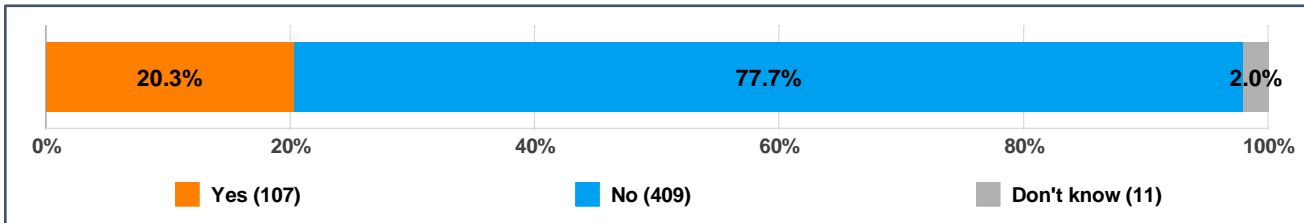
Future fees and Spending

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

Car Parking

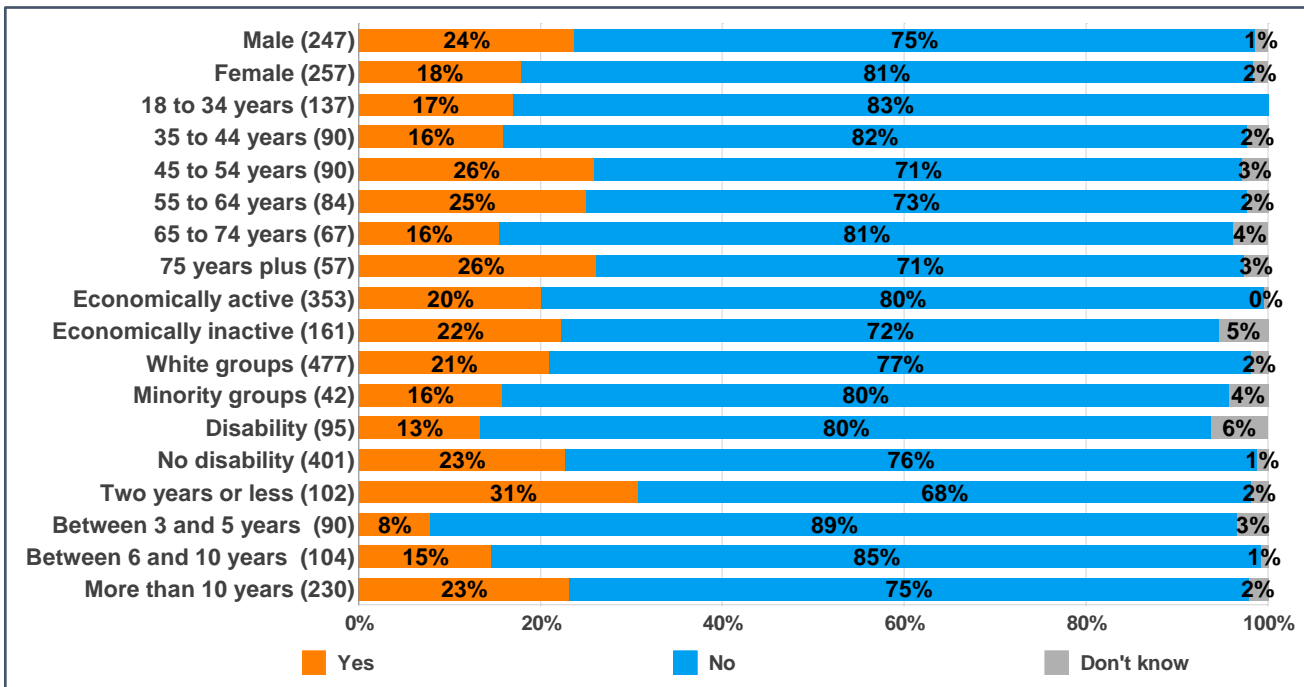
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for car parking in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of parking in the borough for context.

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



Demographic Differences

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

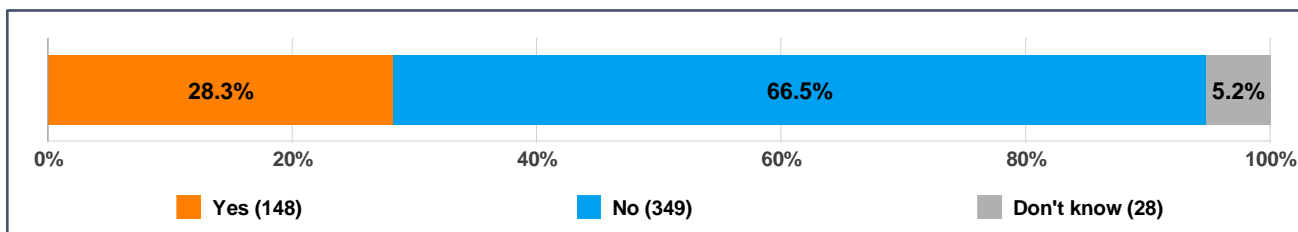


	<p>83% of respondents aged 18 to 34 years said they were unwilling to pay more for car parking, significantly more than for the 45 to 54 years group where 71% were against raising charges for car parking.</p>
	<p>Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about raising charges for car parking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

Garden Waste

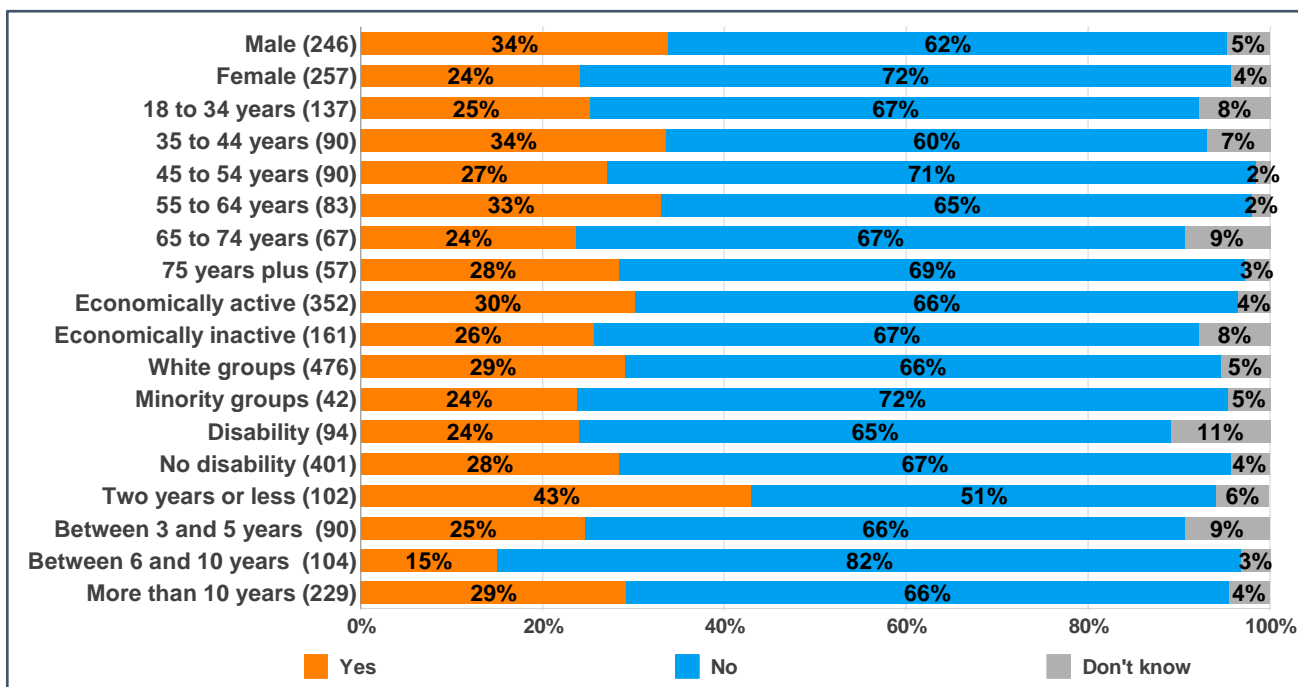
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for garden waste collections. They were provided with the current costs of garden waste collections in the borough for context.

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



Demographic Differences

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



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

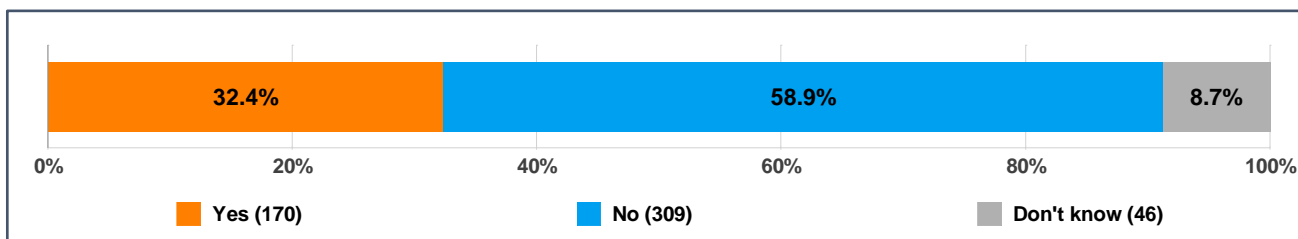


82% of respondent who have lived at their current address for between six and ten years said they were not willing to pay more for garden waste services. This is significantly greater than the 'other length of time at current address' groups.

Leisure Facilities

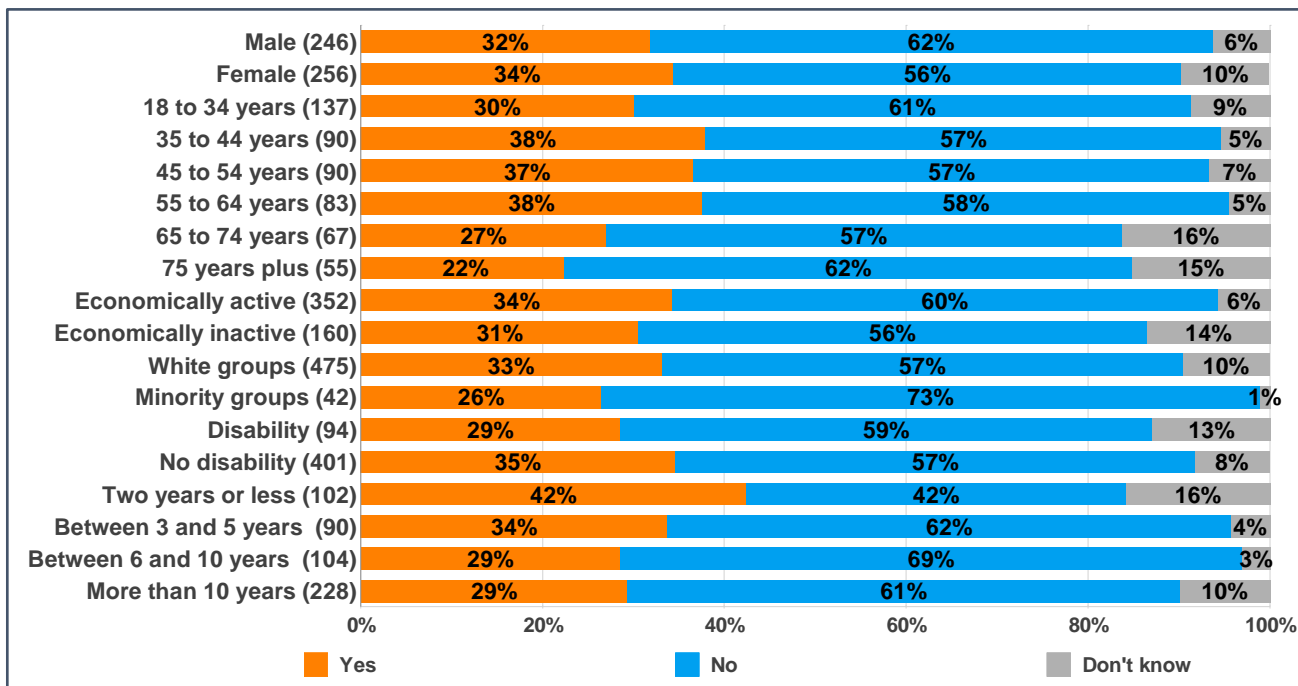
Survey respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities in the borough. They were provided with the current costs of leisure services per council tax band D property in the borough for context.




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



Demographic Differences

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

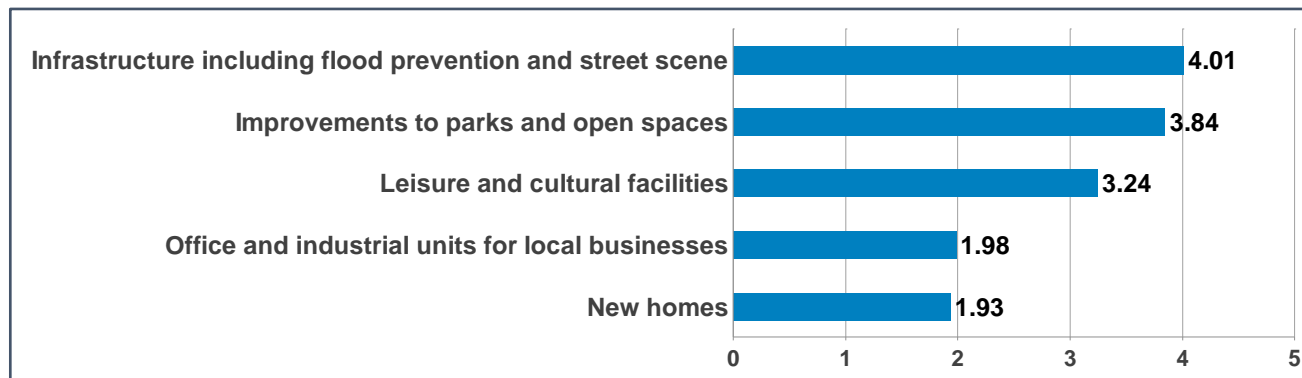


	The 65 to 74 years and 75 years and over age groups had the greatest proportion of respondents that were uncertain if they would be willing to pay more for leisure facilities at 16% and 15% respectively. These was significantly more than the proportions of respondents that answered this way for the younger age groups.
	Economically inactive respondents were more uncertain about paying more for leisure services with 14% answering this way compared to 6% of economically active respondents.
	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.

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

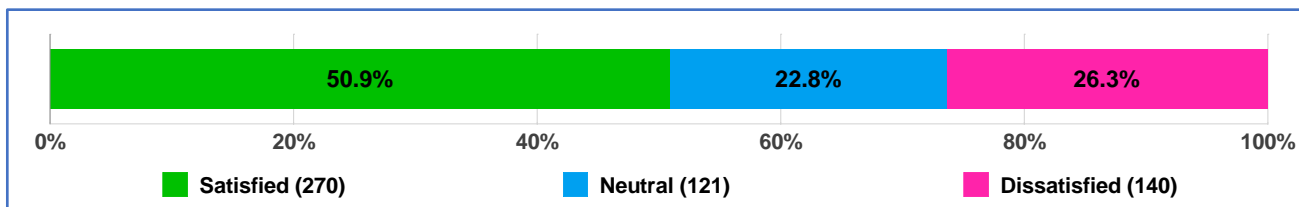
The table below outlines the differences between the ranking of the priorities across the demographic groups.

	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>

Local Area Satisfaction

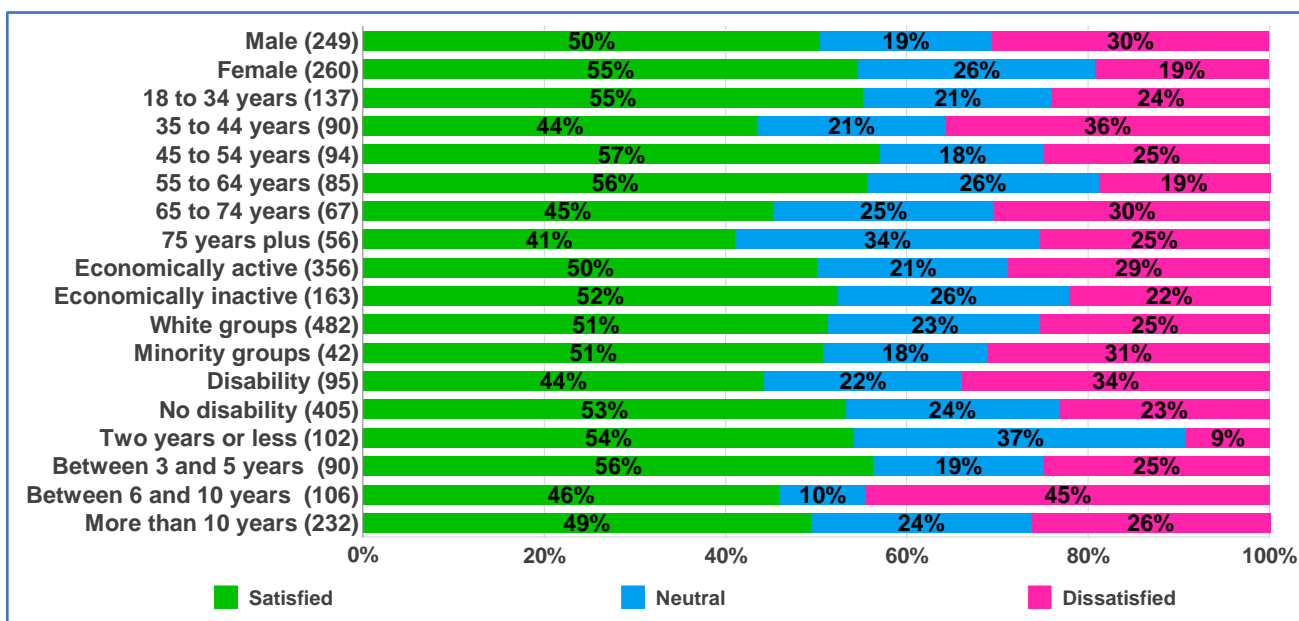
Survey respondents were asked: ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?’ and given a five-point scale from ‘very satisfied’ to ‘very dissatisfied’.

- 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.



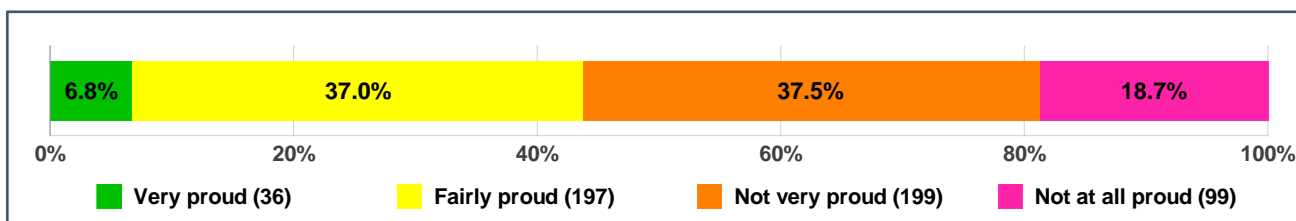
	<p>A greater proportion male respondents were dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live with 30% answering this way compared to 19% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>19% of respondents aged 55 to 64 years dissatisfied, this is significantly lower than the proportion answering the same for the 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

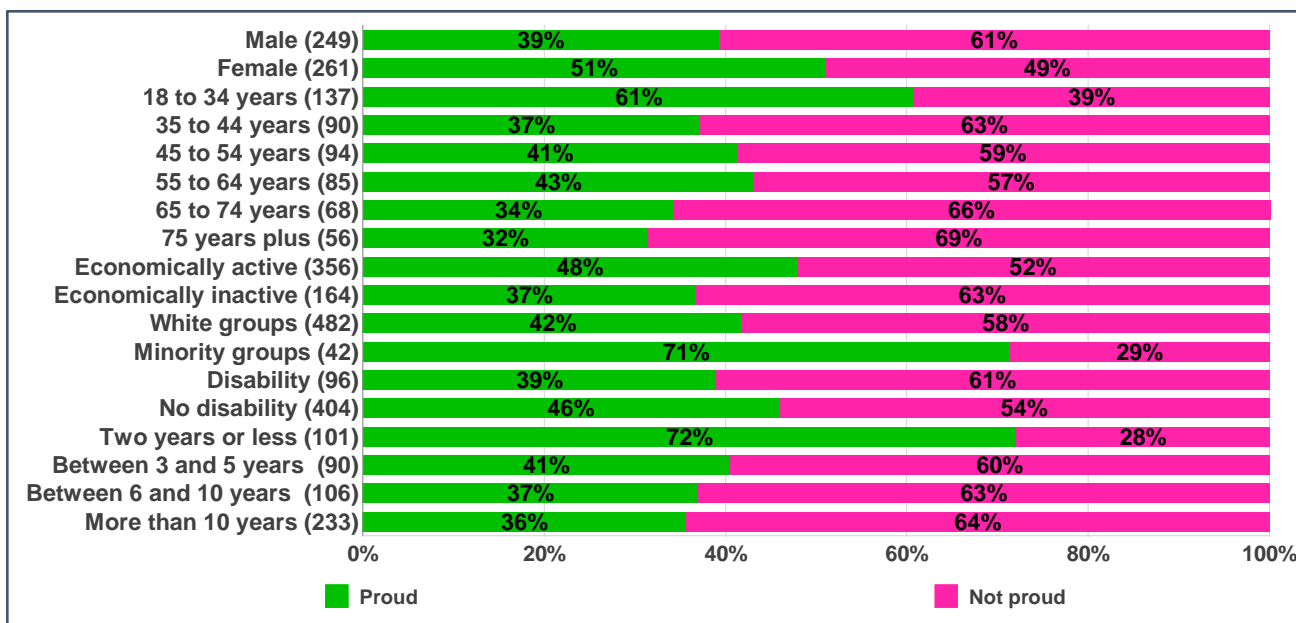
The survey asked respondents: 'How proud are you of Maidstone Borough?'

- 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

