Bridgend County Borough Council

Fit for the Future 2020

Consultation report

Date of issue: **6 January 2021**

Contents

1. Overview

A public consultation, Fit for the Future, was undertaken over an eight-week period from 19 September to 13 December 2020. Previous budget consultations have focused on specific service provisions, but this year, with the aim of becoming 'Fit for the Future' following the impact of Covid-19, the council wanted to engage residents on a longer-term vision for Bridgend County Borough.

The consultation received **1,831** interactions from a combination of survey completions, engagement at various meetings, social media and digital communication engagement and via the local authority's Citizens' Panel. This paper details the analysis associated with the consultation.

2. Introduction

The public survey was available to complete online through a link on the consultation page of the council's website or by visiting www.bridgend.gov.uk/future. Paper copies of the consultation were also made available which could be sent directly to residents upon request. Surveys were available in several formats, including easy-read, large print, standard and a youth version. All were available in English and Welsh. The content of the page remains available online.

In total, there were 35 questions (within all survey formats) that required a reply from respondents. Respondents could choose to answer all or some of the questions. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity. The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included with the survey in line with recommended good practice for all public-facing surveys carried out by the council.

Comments regarding the consultation were also invited via social media, letter, email and phone call.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 this year, the council were unable to carry out face-to-face engagement within the community. The council therefore relied more heavily on social media, digital communications, the website and online meetings in order to engage with residents throughout the budget consultation. This does appear to have impacted on the levels of engagement with the consultation. Details of which can be seen in section four.

3. Promotional tools and engagement methods

Details of the consultation were shared with the following stakeholders: general public/residents, Citizens' Panel members, elected members, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) employees, Bridgend businesses, town and community councils, school governors, Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum (BCCEF) members, local interest/community groups, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), Bridgend College, partners, secondary schools (including headteachers) and media outlets.

3.1 Promotional tools

This section details the methods used to raise the profile of the consultation and encourage participation.

3.1.1 Social media

In December 2017 the council committed to managing its social media accounts bilingually. In addition to introducing Welsh language corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts at that time, it started posting bilingually across the remainder of its social media channels.

Budget consultation information was posted bilingually to the council's corporate Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn channels throughout the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the proposals.

The council currently has **13,486** followers on its corporate Twitter accounts, **16,138** followers on Facebook pages, **2,713** followers on Instagram and **4,491** followers on LinkedIn. While content is most likely to be seen by these users, it is also displayed to users who are not connected to the accounts.

In addition to general social media content, four polls were created on Twitter which generated 122 votes to key questions within the budget consultation survey:

- **Supporting local businesses and the economy will be a priority for making Bridgend County Borough Fit for the Future. What do you think are the most important factors the council should focus on?**

  37 votes resulted in the following responses:

  > Financial support 45.9%
  > Promoting town centres 32.4%
  > Business start-up support 8.1%
  > Additional apprentices 13.5%

- **During the Covid-19 pandemic some of our services have been delivered remotely or online. Do you think this is an approach we should develop and adopt for the future?**

  32 votes resulted in the following responses:

  > Yes 78.1%
  > No 15.6%
  > Not sure 6.3%

- **Since closing our face to face channel for customers in Civic Offices, we have continued to provide the same service over the telephone, email and online. Have you been happy with the level of services provided?**

  22 votes resulted in the following responses:

  > Yes 36.4%
  > No 40.9%
  > Unsure 22.7%

- **More people are now accessing services online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Are you happy to continue accessing services online?**

    31 votes resulted in the following responses:

        Yes 32.3%
        No 35.5%
        Always online services 16.1%
        Unsure 16.1%

Paid Facebook and Instagram advertising was used to reach and target a wider audience within the county borough between 18 and 29 November.

The English language adverts reached **27,760 people** living in Bridgend County Borough and generated 56 comments, 41 shares, 88 reactions and 1,208 clicks through to the English budget consultation webpage.

The Welsh language adverts reached **822 Welsh-speaking people** living in Bridgend County Borough and generated 3 reactions and 37 clicks through to the Welsh language budget consultation webpage.

In addition to the explainer video, four additional videos were created to promote the consultation on social media due to the impact of the pandemic. These videos featured the Chief Executive, Leader, Deputy Leader and Youth Mayor. Overall **video views** were **5257**.

During the consultation period, the local authority posted 70 times across social media channels. This organic and paid for content **reached 512,768 people** generating **79 comments, 141 shares, 165 reactions, 122 poll votes, 5,257 video views** and **2,248 link clicks** through to the budget consultation page on the local authority website.

3.1.2 govDelivery

govDelivery is a new digital communications tool that has been implemented by the local authority in 2020 to send messages directly to residents' email inboxes in the language of their choice.

There are currently **37,360 English language subscribers and 220 Welsh language subscribers** from Bridgend County Borough to the weekly Covid-19 update emails. Fit for the Future budget consultation was included in the following bulletins:

English

Date	Total email opens	Unique link clicks	Total link clicks
15/10/2020	30,056 opens	23	29
22/10/2020	36,967 opens	233	268
29/10/2020	41,237 opens	84	99
05/11/2020	38,011 opens	51	59
12/11/2020	32,108 opens	61	68
19/11/2020	34,530 opens	37	45
25/11/2020 (Standalone bulletin)	26,492 opens	984	1,136
03/12/2020	32,900 opens	14	17

Date	Total email opens	Unique link clicks	Total link clicks
10/12/2020	33,534 opens	98	106

The Fit for the Future consultations were included in **8 weekly English language bulletins** and one standalone bulletin. This generated **1,827 link clicks** through to the English budget consultation webpage.

Welsh

Date	Total email opens	Unique link clicks	Total link clicks
15/10/2020	177 opens	0	0
22/10/2020	154 opens	0	0
29/10/2020	134 opens	0	0
05/11/2020	139 opens	0	0
12/11/2020	95 opens	0	0
19/11/2020	147 opens	0	0
25/11/2020 (Standalone bulletin)	172 opens	10	12
03/12/2020	93 opens	0	0
10/12/2020	134 opens	0	0

The Fit for the Future consultations were included in **8 weekly Welsh language bulletins** and one standalone bulletin. This generated **12 link clicks** through to the Welsh budget consultation webpage.

Overall, govDelivery generated **1,839 link clicks** through to the budget consultation webpage.

3.1.3 Media and publicity

Three main media releases were issued to coincide with the start, middle and end of the consultation in order to raise awareness and encourage participation. These were issued on 19 October, 10 November and 4 December.

Between 21 October and 11 December, the budget consultation was also incorporated into 16 news round-up media releases. These were issued at a rate of two a week.

Prior media work was carried out to encourage participation and involvement, including an interview between the Local Democracy Reporter for the area and the Leader, Cabinet, Chief Executive and senior finance officers.

The media releases were featured at the media centre of the council's website where they were hyperlinked with associated social media publicity, including the videos for the Leader and Youth Mayor.

3.1.4 Internal communications

The consultation was promoted internally with a feature at the staff intranet homepage.

It was also promoted via five Bridgenders all-staff emails. These were issued on 29 October, 5 and 26 November, and 3 and 10 December.

3.1.5 Promotional materials

An explainer video was designed to help people understand what was being asked of them, with examples of questions that were included in the consultation. The video was featured on the webpage for the consultation and also posted on the council's social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The explainer video was also separated into smaller bite sized videos for further promotion on Twitter.

The explainer video received 871 views on social media and 264 views on YouTube.

An awareness campaign was run on Bridge FM for the first two weeks of the consultation to launch the campaign and in weeks five and six of the consultation as a reminder/final push for the consultation.

Posters promoting the consultation with a QR code to take people to the landing page of the website were circulated to comprehensive schools, Town and Community Councils and Bridgend Bus Station. Posters were also displayed on local buses (by First Cymru and Easyway). The QR code generated 26 hits to the budget consultation page.

The headers for the council's social media accounts were changed to promote the Fit for the Future consultation, along with a graphic on the front page of the BCBC website linking through to the consultation landing page and a banner on the front page of the Bridgenders intranet home page also linking to the consultation landing page.

The standard email footer from the main council's email accounts Talktous was updated to include a link to promote the Fit for the Future survey. This was sent to all recipients who had contacted the council via the Talktous email address.

A standalone e-shot promoting the Fit for the Future survey was issued to 2855 businesses listed on the Bridgend business directory.

3.1.6 Other promotional activities

Targeted letters and emails were sent to school governing bodies, town and community councils, equality groups, BCBC members and Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum members.

Details of the consultation were sent to Awen and Halo and BAVO who were asked to help raise the profile through their own organisations and social media channels.

3.2 Engagement methods

This section details the mechanisms available for stakeholders to engage with the council and share their views.

3.2.1 The budget survey

The survey was made available in a variety of formats to ensure inclusion across community groups. A standard survey, easy-read, large print and youth version of the survey were all made available in Welsh and English. All were available in paper format and online. The same survey was replicated for Citizens' Panel members and sent to them in the format of their choice.

3.2.2 Youth Council

In order to gather views of young people the consultation team attended the Bridgend Youth Council meeting on 24 November 2020. The Youth Council took part in discussions around some of the key questions within the consultation and were encouraged to complete the full consultation online. 11 young people engaged in the session. Comments from attendees were noted and are themed in section 10.

3.2.3 Secondary School and Bridgend College engagement

In order to encourage participation of young people within Bridgend secondary schools and Bridgend College the consultation team wrote to all governing bodies and headteachers as well as the Principal of Bridgend College to promote the consultation amongst their learners as well as school staff and parents/carers.

3.2.4 Elected Members' online workshop

Two online workshops took place for elected members on 18 November 2020. A total of **39 members** attended across the two sessions. Members were given the opportunity to engage in and give responses to some of the questions within the consultation and were encouraged to complete the full consultation online. Comments from attendees were noted and are themed in section 9.

3.2.5 Town and Community Council meetings

All Town and Community Councils were asked if the Consultation and Engagement Team could attend their regular meeting during the live period. The purpose was to inform each TCC of the consultation and encourage their local residents to take part. The Consultation and Engagement team attended the Town and Community Council Forum and nine Town and Community Council online meetings. A total **of 136 community councillors** attended the meetings. Comments from attendees were noted and are themed in section 9.

3.2.6 Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum (BCCEF)

The quarterly meeting of BCCEF took place during the live period of the budget consultation on 10 December 2020. Members of the meeting (**12 attendees**) were given an overview of the consultation and were encouraged to complete the full consultation online. The meeting consisted of members representing community based organisations including South Wales Police, People First Bridgend, faith organisations, Victim Support Cymru and Mental Health Matters Wales. All organisations had been provided with promotional materials to promote the consultation within their individual community groups.

4. Response rate

In total, there were **1,831** interactions during the consultation. The response rate has been segregated into several areas: consultation survey responses, engagement event/meeting attendees and social media interactions.

Interactions	Number
Survey completions	1,421
Events/meetings/workshops	203
Emails	3
Letters	1
Telephone calls	2
Social media comments	79
Social media polls	122
Total interactions	1,831

1,421 survey responses were received in total (1,285 online submissions and 136 paper versions).

Survey type	Online English	Online Welsh	Paper English	Paper Welsh	Total
Standard	857	5	1	0	863
Easy read	17	0	2	0	19
Large print	3	0	0	0	3
Citizens' Panel	257	1	129	4	391
Youth	64	81	0	0	145
Total	1,198	87	132	4	1,421

There were **203** attendees at the various events and meetings.

During the consultation period, there were **201** interactions on our social media channels. This includes Twitter polls where 122 votes were received.

Comments from social media have been themed and are detailed in section 8.

Comments that were received by letter, email or telephone call have been themed and are included in section 8.

5. How effective was the consultation?

The budget consultation was conducted over an eight week period in which a range of marketing methods were used to create awareness of the consultation as well as reach and encourage stakeholders to engage with the council.

The data collection methods, which include the online survey, a paper survey, the Citizens' Panel and a youth survey (aimed at 11-24 year olds) were all developed using plain English to maximise understanding.

The four versions of the survey: standard; large print; easy read and youth were developed to maximise accessibility and to encourage participation with all members of the community.

6. Headline figures

❖ **Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic**

6.1   45% of respondents stated that customer services had performed well or very well during the pandemic;

6.2   64% of respondents stated that communications had been performed well or very well during the pandemic;

6.3   47% of respondents stated that the support for vulnerable residents had been performed well or very well during the pandemic;

6.4   39% of respondents stated that the support for businesses had been performed well or very well during the pandemic;

6.5   50% of respondents stated that support for town centres had been performed well or very well during the pandemic;

6.6   70% of respondents stated that the support for communities had been performed well or very well during the pandemic;

6.7   When asked what services they had missed during lockdown respondents stated that the services that they had missed the most were community recycling centres, followed by gyms and/or swimming pools and then parks and playing fields;

6.8   When asked which maintained services should be a priority for the future respondents stated general waste and recycling collection services followed by street lighting including responding to street lighting faults and then domestic abuse support;

6.9 58% of respondents stated that council staff working from home should be adopted as an approach for the future.

❖ **Business and the economy**

6.10 87% of respondents stated that support for local businesses was important or very important;

6.11 73% of respondents stated that promotion of town centres as places to visit was important or very important;

6.12 73% of respondents stated that supporting the visitor economy activities and services in our tourist attraction areas was important or very important;

6.13 69% of respondents stated that sustainability of culture and leisure venues was important or very important;

6.14 79% of respondents stated that labour market opportunities were important or very important;

6.15 71% of respondents stated that business start-up was important or very important;

6.16 When asked if respondents had any other ideas about how the council should support local businesses, respondents stated to reduce business rates and rents followed by the need to invest/regenerate the town centres and empty properties, encourage more shops, ensure cleanliness and reduce anti-social behaviour followed by better and free car parking.

❖ **Health and wellbeing**

6.17 When asked about which support services the council should focus on to help our most vulnerable residents as we recover from the pandemic, 92% of respondents stated that support for older people was important or very important;

6.18 81% stated that ensuring those who are homeless are kept safe as lockdown restrictions ease was important or very important;

6.19 78% of respondents stated that food poverty – (for example should BCBC support and promote food banks and provide children eligible for free school meals with food parcels during school holidays) was important or very important;

6.20 77% of respondents stated that council tax support for residents who had difficulty paying their council tax as a direct result of the pandemic was important or very important;

6.21 86% of respondents stated that during the pandemic support from community organisations was either important or very important;

6.22 68% of respondents stated that the council should protect funding for the third sector.

❖ **Customer access to Civic offices**

6.23   81% of respondents stated that they had not missed coming into Civic Offices while it has been closed;

6.24   When asked how they have accessed services while Civic Offices has been closed respondents stated the website, followed by telephone and then email;

6.25   37% of respondents stated that they had accessed customer services while the council has been closed. Respondents stated that they had most commonly done this by telephone followed by email and then social media;

6.26   The reasons most commonly stated for contacting customer services were recycling and waste, followed by council tax and then Covid-19 related advice;

6.27   41% of respondents did not think it should be a priority to reopen Civic Offices;

6.28   60% of respondents stated that when Civic Offices does reopen, the council should move to an appointment based system.

❖ **Digitalisation**

6.29   59% of respondents stated that they had accessed services online. Of these 55% accessed services themselves whereas 4% had someone to do this on their behalf;

6.30   59% of respondents stated that when Civic Offices does reopen, they will continue to access services online. A further 20% of respondents stated that they always preferred to access services online;

6.31   When asked what would help you or someone you know access services online, 44% stated that they did not need any help accessing services online. This was followed by 15% who stated that they would find printable 'how to' guides useful and 14% who would like to have videos on the Bridgend council website. 12% of respondents stated that they would like access to community learning sessions and 11% stated that they would like appointments with a member of the customer services team to show them how to access services online;

6.32   76% of respondents stated that they had not signed up to govDelivery. When asked why not, the most common responses were that they were not aware of this service, followed by not needed/required/interested and then that they can find information independently through the internet, newspapers, social media, contacting the council etc.

❖ **Council Tax levels**

6.33   When asked to select which statement best represents their views on setting the council tax for 2021-22, 37% of respondents were prepared to increase council tax slightly to help protect the most important services where possible (4.5% increase), followed by 36% of respondents who stated that they would want to keep council tax levels the same, resulting in a reduction in the level of services provided,

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followed by 19% of respondents who were prepared to increase council tax more significantly to protect more services (6% increase) and then 8% of respondents who were prepared to pay as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels (16% increase).

❖ **The future**

6.34 When asked what the council's long term priorities for the future should be respondents selected to make in-house efficiencies, followed by focussing on services that benefit everyone in the borough and then encouraging citizens to take more responsibility;

6.35 When asked which three services the council should prioritise when recovering from the pandemic, respondents most commonly chose care for older people, followed by schools and then recycling and waste;

6.36 When asked what lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic should be considered when setting medium and long term funding priorities, respondents most commonly stated that the council should have an emergency fund, not waste money and make internal savings i.e. streamline services, staff and councillors pay/expenses and review external contracts. This was followed by the need to have a caring society, support social services and vulnerable people including children, older people, disabled people, care homes, carers and homelessness and then for the council to plan and prepare for the future and be adaptable;

6.37 When asked if respondents had any further comments to make Bridgend County Borough fit for the future, respondents most commonly stated that the council should make internal saving i.e. review number of staff and councillors, pay, expenses and review funded external partners followed by evaluating spending, providing value for money and providing more clarity on where money is spent and then the council should be more prepared, improve transparency and make bold plans and decisions for the future.

7. Question and analysis - consultation survey

The consultation contained 35 questions covering the following areas:

❖ Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic;
❖ Business and the economy;
❖ Health and wellbeing;
❖ Customer access to Civic offices;
❖ Digitalisation;
❖ Council Tax levels;
❖ The future.

7.1 About you

Respondents were asked how they **heard about the consultation**.

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1532 respondents provided this information.
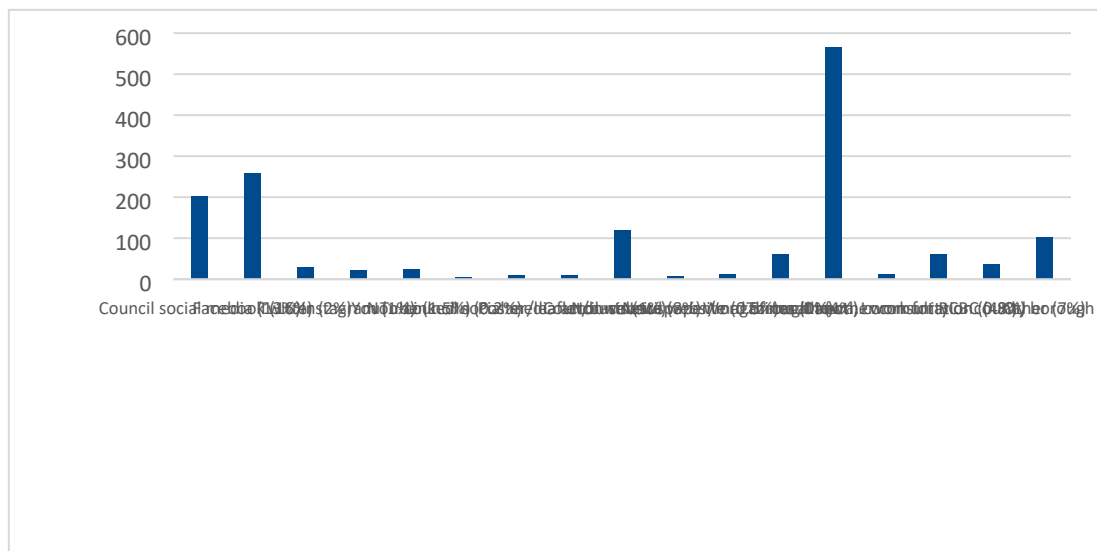
The most popular responses were:

- Direct email or letter (37%);
- Facebook (16%);
- Council social media (34%)

101 (7%) of respondents stated other when responding to this question, these are themed below:

68 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 64 comments made have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
School/teacher/school parliament/Google classroom	48
BCBC email	23
Local radio/Bridge FM	5
Oggy Bloggy Ogwr	4
Citizens' Panel	4
govDelivery/emailed newsletter	4
Word of mouth	4
BAVO	1
Bridgend business forum	1
Previously done surveys	1
Wales Online	1
I work in NHS in Bridgend	1
The gazette	1
Google news	1
Through BCCEF	1
Unsure	1

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The most common responses within 'other' were School/teacher/school parliament/Google classroom followed by BCBC email and then Bridge FM.

Respondents were then asked for their **age**.

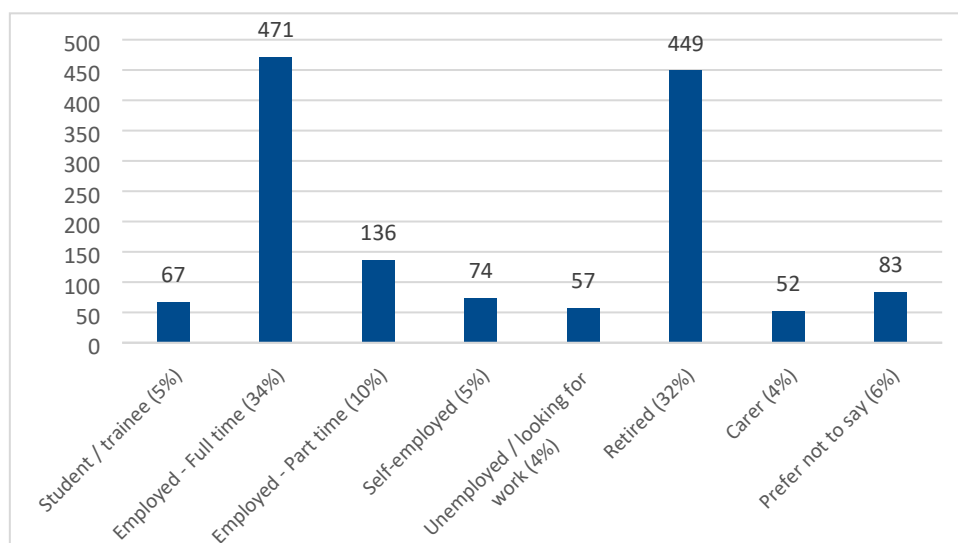**1366** respondents provided their age group:
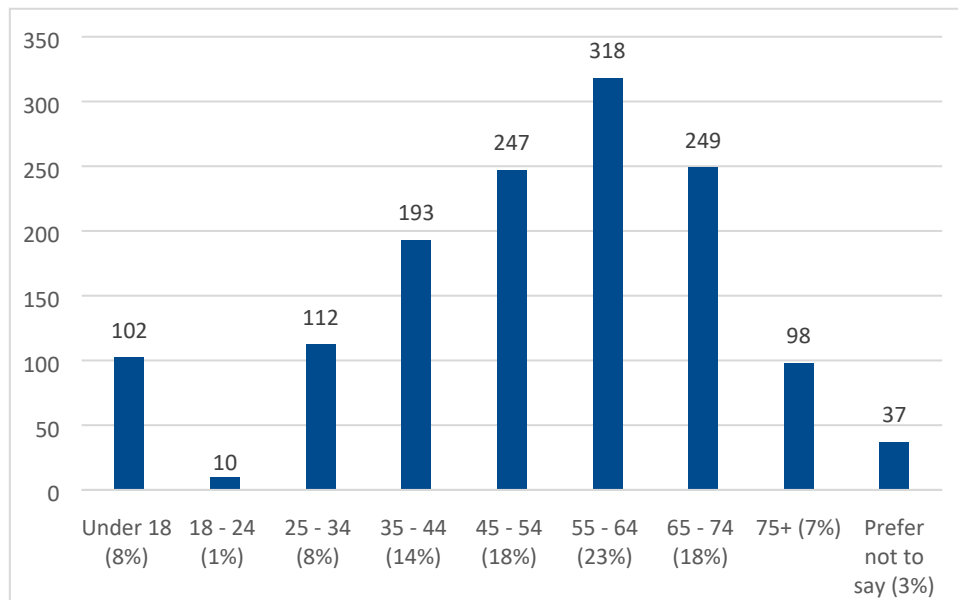
The most popular responses were:

- 23% of respondents were aged 55-64;
- 18% of respondents were aged 45-54;
- 18% of respondents were aged 65-74.

Respondents were then asked for their **employment status**.

1389 respondents provided their employment status;

The most popular responses were:

- 34% of respondents informed us that they were in full time employment;
- 32% of respondents informed us that they were retired;
- 10% of respondents informed us that they were employed part time.

7.2 Survey questions

7.2.1 Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

7.2.1.1 How do you consider Bridgend County Borough Council has performed during the Covid-19 pandemic within the following areas?

Respondents were asked to rate how well they thought the council had performed in a range of areas during the pandemic.

Customer services (maintaining the telephone service remotely for residents and providing online services such as chatbot)
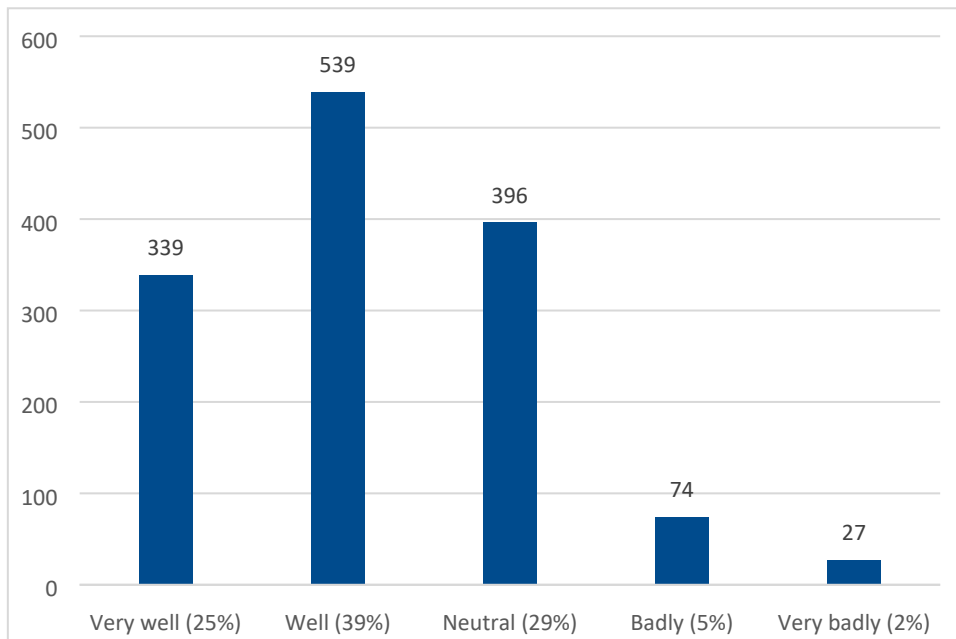
A total of 1386 people responded to this question.
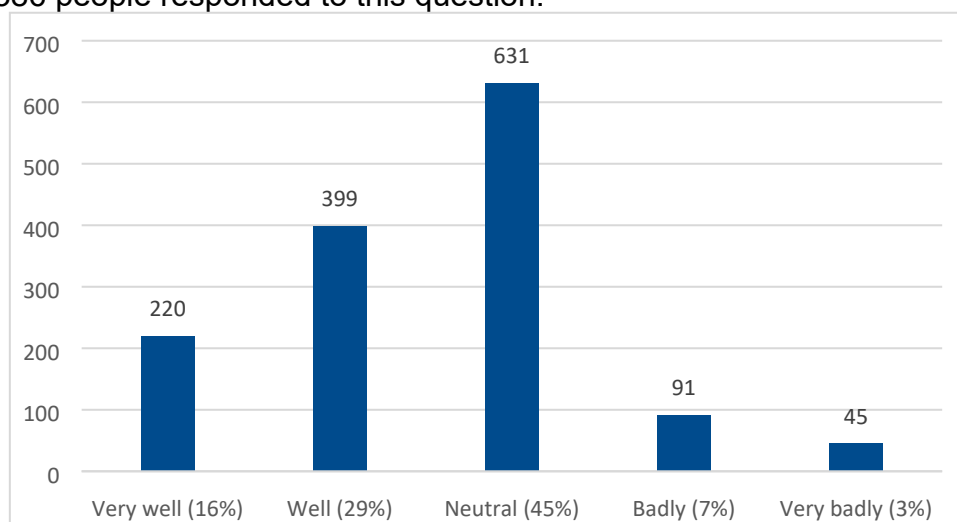
45% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 45% stated that customer services has performed very well (16%) or well (29%) during the pandemic. 10% stated that they had performed badly (7%) or very badly (3%).

Communications (for example, updating our website and social media channels)

A total of 1375 people responded to this question.

64% stated that communications had been performed very well (25%) or well (39%) during the pandemic. 29% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 7% stated that they had performed badly (5%) or very badly (2%).

Radio and car tannoy announcements

A total of 1328 people responded to this question.
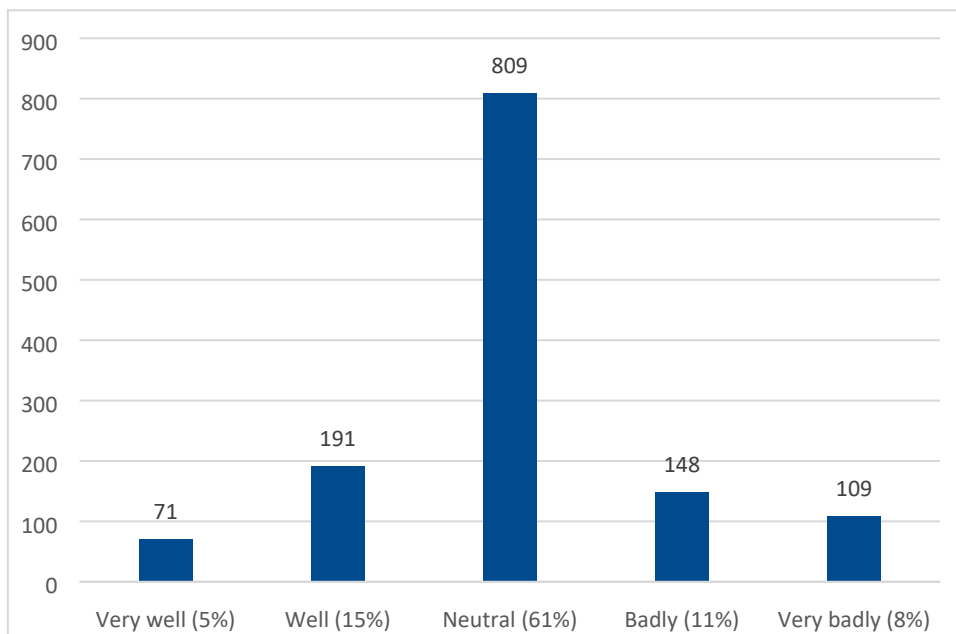
61% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 20% stated that Radio and tannoy announcements had been performed very well (5%) or well (15%) during the pandemic. 19% stated that they had been performed badly (11%) or very badly (8%).

The reassurance leaflet delivered to all homes across Bridgend County Borough along with a copy of the recycling timetable for the rest of the year
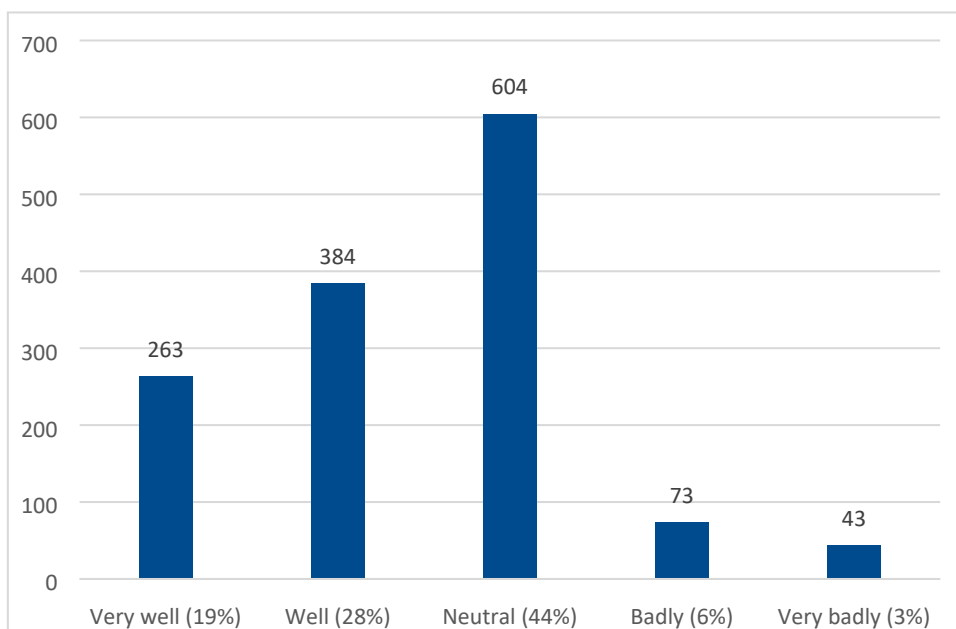
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A total of 1374 people responded to this question.
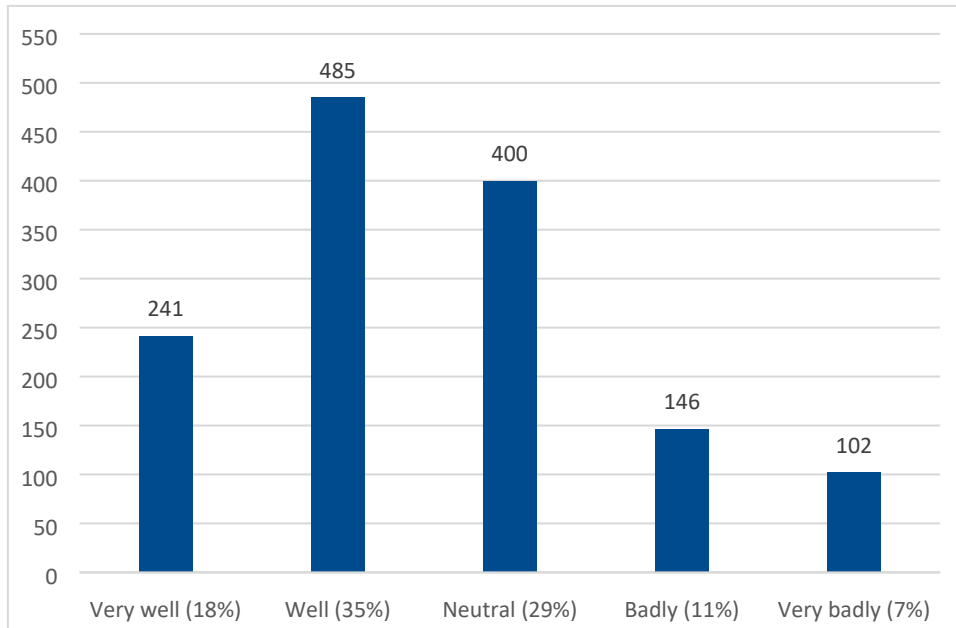
53% stated that the reassurance leaflet performed very well (18%) or well (35%) during the pandemic. 29% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 18% stated that they had performed badly (11%) or very badly (7%).

Supporting vulnerable residents (for example, delivering food parcels)

A total of 1367 people responded to this question.

44% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 47% stated that support for vulnerable residents had been performed very well (19%) or well (28%) during the pandemic. 9% stated that this support had been performed badly (6%) or very badly (3%).

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Support for businesses (for example, processing grants, free training, issuing sneeze guards)

A total of 1353 people responded to this question.
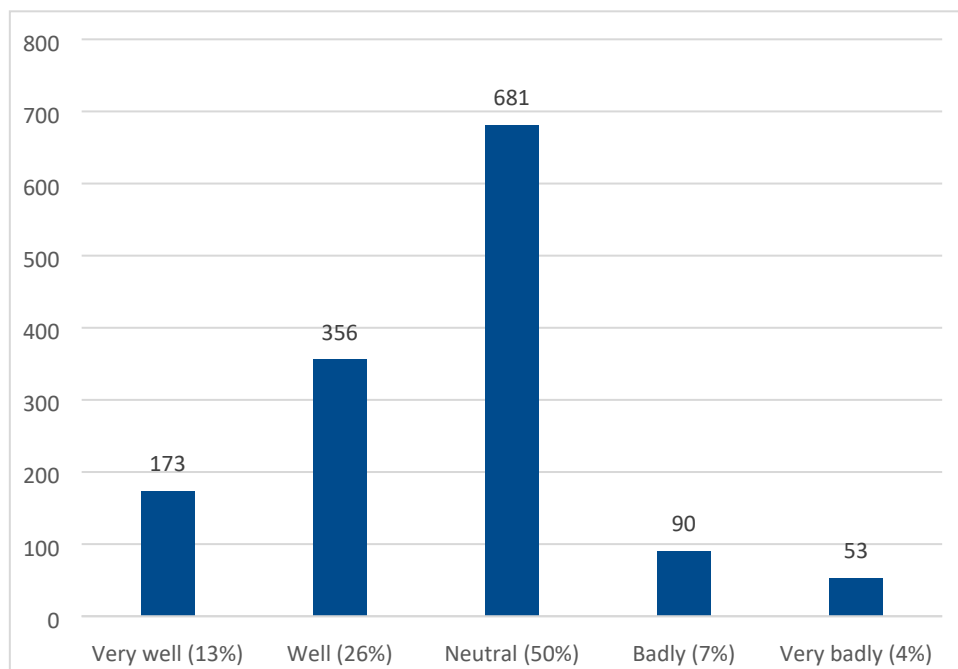
50% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 39% stated that support for businesses had been performed very well (26%) or well (13%) during the pandemic. 11% stated that this support had been performed badly (7%) or very badly (4%).

Supporting town centres (for example, introducing barriers and street markings to help ensure people can maintain social distancing)

A total of 1371 people responded to this question.
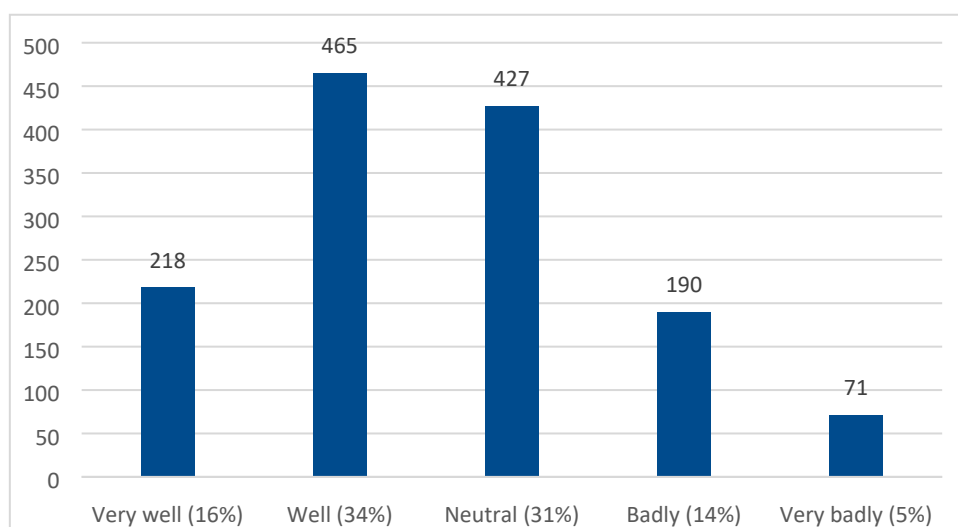
50% of respondents stated that support for town centres had been performed very well (16%) or well (34%) during the pandemic. 31% of respondents provided a neutral response

to this question. 19% stated that this support had been performed badly (14%) or very badly (5%).

Supporting communities (for example, continue to collect recycling and waste, street lighting and repairs to highways)

A total of 1388 people responded to this question.

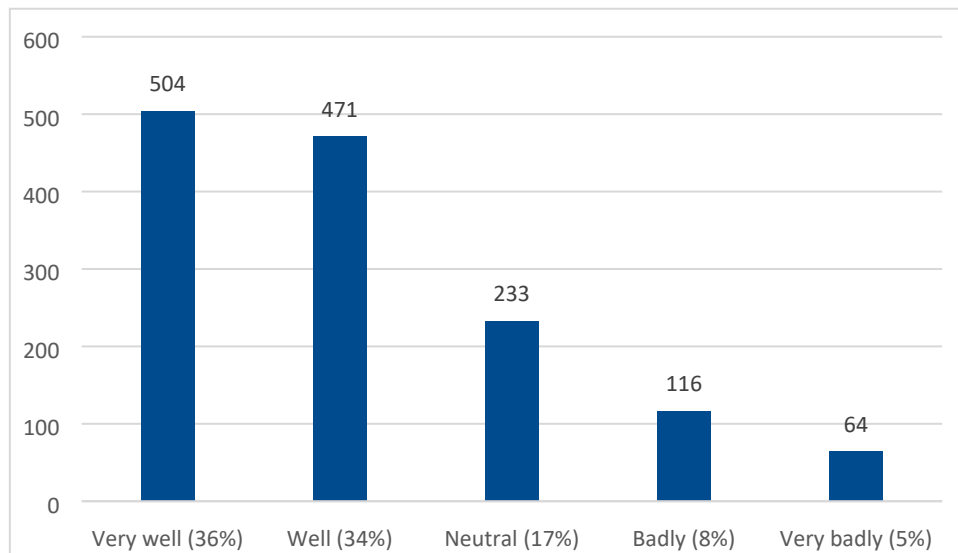70% of respondents stated that support for communities had been performed very well (36%) or well (34%) during the pandemic. 17% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question. 13% stated that this support had been performed badly (8%) or very badly (5%).

7.2.1.2 A large number of services and buildings are closed, or have limited access, because of Covid-19. What services have you missed during lockdown? Please tick all that apply.

Respondents were able to select multiple responses, a total of 5651 responses were received within this question

Chart values:
- Register office (1%): 61
- Face to face customer service at Civic offices (3%): 184
- Shopmobility (1%): 58
- Lifeguard service (2%): 105
- Garden waste service (4%): 207
- Community recycling centres (16%): 885
- Parks and playing fields (10%): 589
- Libraries (9%): 490
- Community centres (4%): 244
- Cemeteries (4%): 219
- Gyms and/or swimming pools (12%): 650
- Rights of way (3%): 142
- Schools (6%): 364
- Day services buildings (1%): 72
- Children's play areas (5%): 309
- Visiting care homes/children's homes (4%): 236
- Bridgend bus station (including the toilets) (5%): 280
- Facilities for adults with disabilities, including learning disabilities (3%): 151
- The Grand Pavilion (6%): 337
- Other (1%): 68

Respondents stated that the services that they had missed the most were community recycling centres, followed by gyms and or swimming pools and then parks and playing fields.
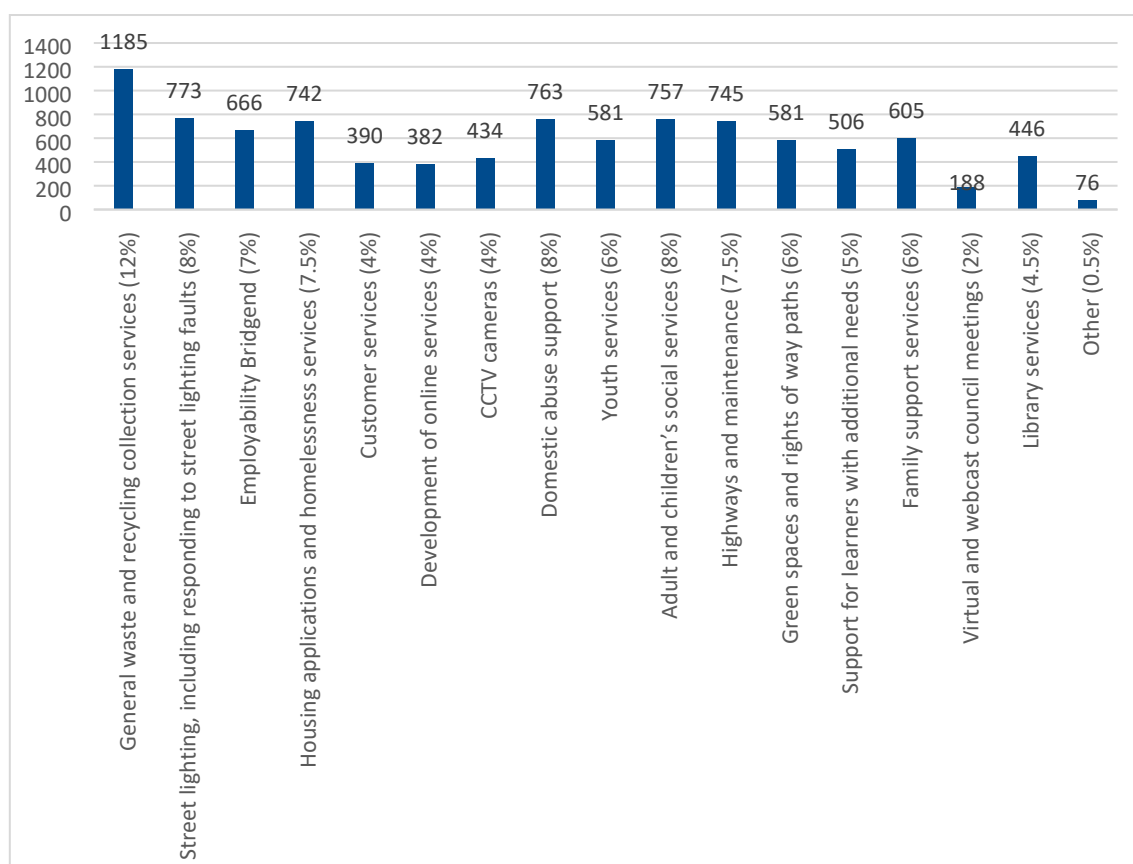
68 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 64 comments made have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Public toilets	20
Playing and attending sports, going to the gym and sports classes	9
Pubs, restaurants and coffee shops, we need to support businesses	7
Meeting friends and voluntary groups	6
Private sector places missed: garden centres, barbers and cinema	4
Travel: Car parks, community bus service, road safety training for children and being able to travel outside the borough/Wales	4
Support: from Early Help, mental health group, shielding information and seeing a doctor in the same room	4
Hedge cutting/ road repairs should have continued	2
Beaches	2
I do not use these services	2
Services should have remained/Civic should have adapted to open	2
Recycling and delivery of recycling bags	2
School and youth clubs	2
Access to church and church halls	1
Adult learning classes	1
Losing our green spaces for developments	1
Lack of police presence and traffic wardens	1
Prompt planning department and building control	1

Where 'other' was stated, the most common themes are public toilets, followed by playing and attending sports, going to gym and sports classes and then pubs, restaurants and coffee shops, we need to support businesses.

7.2.1.3 Of the following services being maintained, which services do you think should be a priority in making Bridgend County Borough Fit for the Future? Please tick all that apply.

Respondents were able to select multiple responses, a total of 9820 responses were received within this question

Of the services maintained throughout the pandemic respondents stated that the services that should be made a priority for the future are general waste and recycling collection services followed by street lighting including responding to street lighting faults and then domestic abuse support.

76 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 65 comments made have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Gyms and swimming pools, recreation and leisure facilities and sports fields	14
Public transport, cycle paths, active travel links, the bus station and road safety training	8
Community recycling centres, litter, fly tipping and road repairs	7
Support town centres/local businesses	5

Theme	No.
Public toilets	4
Face to face services/continue to provide all services	4
Maintain green spaces/stop building houses on green areas	3
Health and mental health support	3
Support for the elderly and care homes	3
Opening disabled facilities and provide information in BSL	3
Safety issues i.e. neighbourhood security, domestic abuse and homelessness	2
Schools	2
Theatres, art and culture	2
Adult learning classes	1
Be able to contact council staff directly	1
Council Tax Freeze	1
Building control	1
The use of new technologies and online training	1
Look after our old Army, Navy and Air Force better	1

Where 'other' was stated, the most common themes are gyms and swimming pools, recreation and leisure facilities and sports fields, followed by public transport, cycle paths, active travel links, the bus station and road safety training and then community recycling centres, litter, fly tipping and road repairs

7.2.1.4 Do you think council staff working from home should be developed and adopted as an approach for the future?

A total of 1402 people responded to this question.
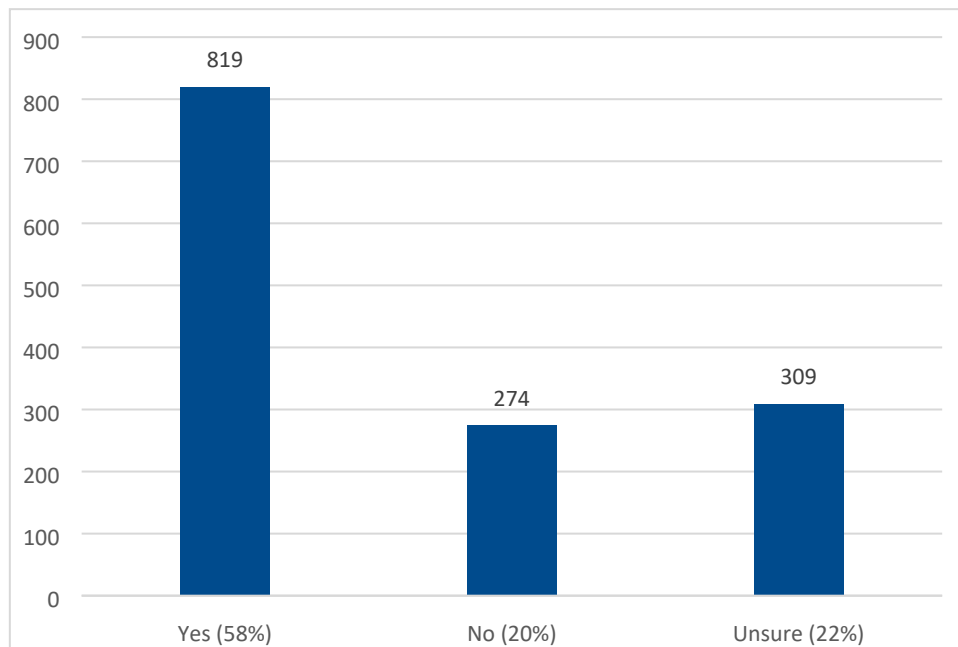
58% of respondents stated that council staff working from home should be adopted as an approach for the future. 22% were unsure and 20% did not agree with this proposal.

7.2.1.5 Please give reasons for your response, including any benefits or disadvantages.

1055 comments made have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Benefit: will save the council money i.e. less need for office space, utilities, staff expenses etc.	200
Benefit: working from home is more environmentally friendly, there is less traffic and lowers our carbon footprint	152
Benefit: provides flexibility, a better work life balance and improved staff wellbeing	120
Disadvantage: limited interaction with colleagues, staff may feel isolated and cause mental health issues	114
If staff are happy working from home and services and standards can be maintained then it should continue	76
Disadvantage: staff may be less productive through lack of motivation, IT failure or lack of office space at home, there is no accountability and difficult for managers to monitor	70
Disadvantage: some residents prefer face to face interactions or are unable to access online services	68
It depends on the role, some roles can be carried out at home and some can not	60
Service has been worse since staff have been working from home i.e. difficult to get through on the phone, no responses to emails and information between teams are disjointed	58
Benefit: staff are more productive working from home	56
Civic should be open and available to residents/need to get back to normal	56
Benefit: will keep staff safe from Covid-19 and limit the spread of infection	55
Both agile and office working should be available, this would be better for staff and residents	48
Need to ask staff for their preference, some prefer working from home and some prefer working in an office environment	40
Benefit: saves staff travel time	37
Unsure	34
Need to adapt to agile working/working from home is the future	26
Disadvantage: less footfall in town so less income for local businesses	20
Disadvantage: safeguarding concerns i.e. access to personal information and personal conversation/details available at home	7
Pay cut for all home workers	7

The most common themes are benefit: will save the council money i.e. less need for office space, utilities, staff expenses etc., followed by benefit: working from home is more environmentally friendly, there is less traffic and lowers our carbon footprint and then benefit: provides flexibility, a better work life balance and improved staff wellbeing.

7.2.1.6 Are there any other services that you think should be prioritised when decisions are being made for and in the future?

501 comments made have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Social services and support for vulnerable people i.e. the elderly, children and disabled people	94
Health and wellbeing, mental health support and support services i.e. housing and homelessness, early help, domestic abuse	68
Refuse and waste, drain clearing, street cleaning and improved recycling centres	55
Support the economy, tourism, businesses, town centres and employability	41
Environmental issues, climate change, outdoor and green spaces, rights of way and parks	39
Schools	36
Culture and sport: swimming pools, gyms, libraries and community sports	28
Better communication with residents, customer services and faster response to resident's queries	22
Make internal savings, provide value for money, work within all areas of the borough and have better scrutiny of decisions	22
Unsure	22
Police and community safety i.e. CCTV and more police and PSCOs on the streets	21
More services should available online but support given to people who can't access them	19
Services for young people	19
Highways, road and pavement repairs	15
Public transport and active travel including cycle routes	15
All services are important and we should get back to normal	10
Freeze/lower council tax	8
Early Help	7
Planning and building control	6
Welsh language services	4
Public toilets	3
Telephone service for grants, benefits and payment for pharmacies	2
Need more information in BSL	1
Work with third sector and voluntary organisations should be strengthened	1

The most common themes are social services and support for vulnerable people i.e. the elderly, children and disabled people followed by health and wellbeing, mental health support and support services i.e. housing and homelessness, early help, domestic abuse and then refuse and waste, drain clearing, street cleaning and improved recycling centres

7.2.2 Business and the economy

7.2.2.1 Supporting local businesses and the economy will be a priority for the future. What do you think are the most important factors the council should focus on?

Respondents were given information about the support that had already been provided to businesses throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a range of factors for the council to focus on when supporting businesses in the future from very important to not important at all on a five point scale.

Support for local businesses both in terms of financial support and preparation for when lockdown restrictions have been eased.
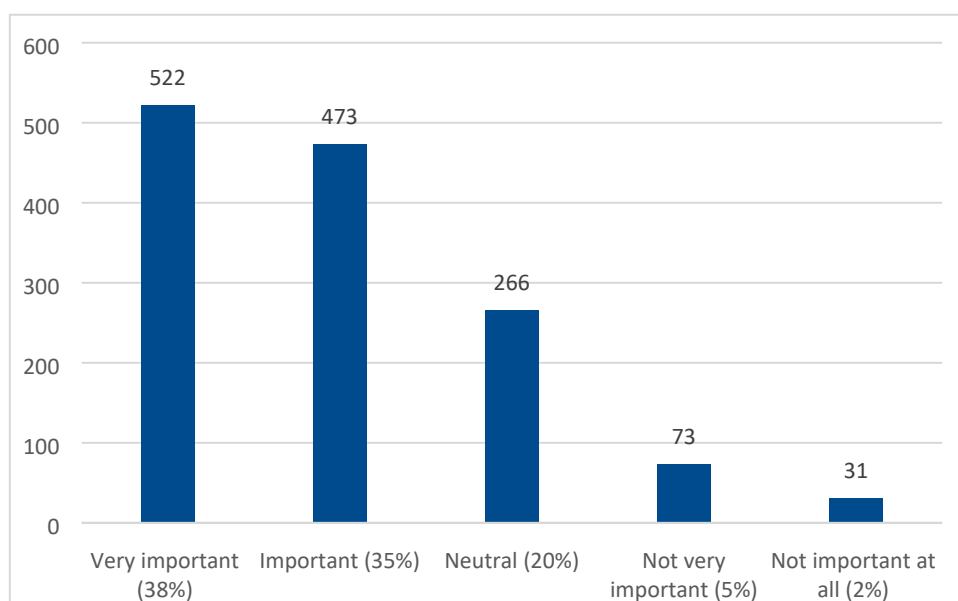
A total of 1384 people responded to this question.
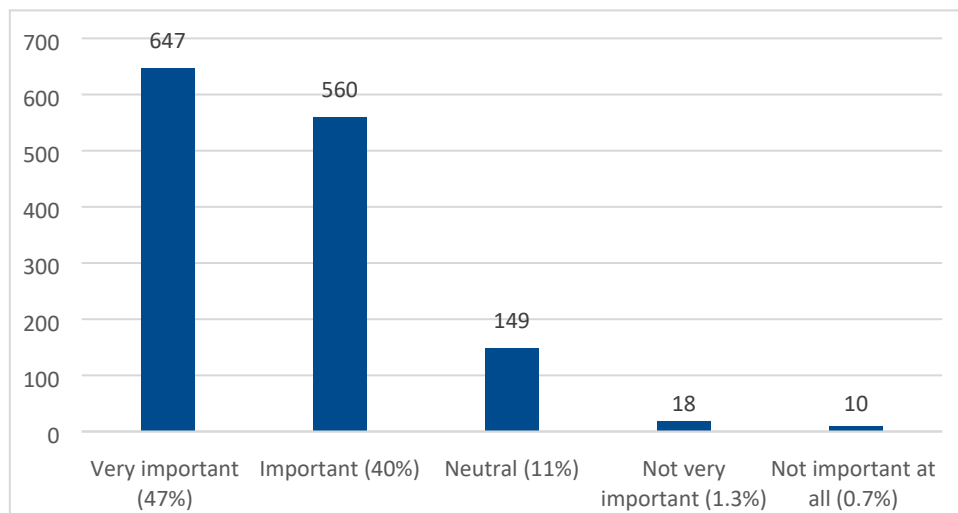
87% of respondents stated that support for local businesses was very important (47%) or important (40%). 11% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 2% felt that this was not very important (1.3%) or not important at all (0.7%)

Promote town centres as a place to visit
A total of 1365 people responded to this question.

73% of respondents stated that promotion of town centres as a place to visit was very important (38%) or important (35%). 20% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 7% felt that this was not very important (5%) or not important at all (2%).

Support the visitor economy activities and services in our tourist attraction areas, for example Porthcawl

A total of 1367 people responded to this question.
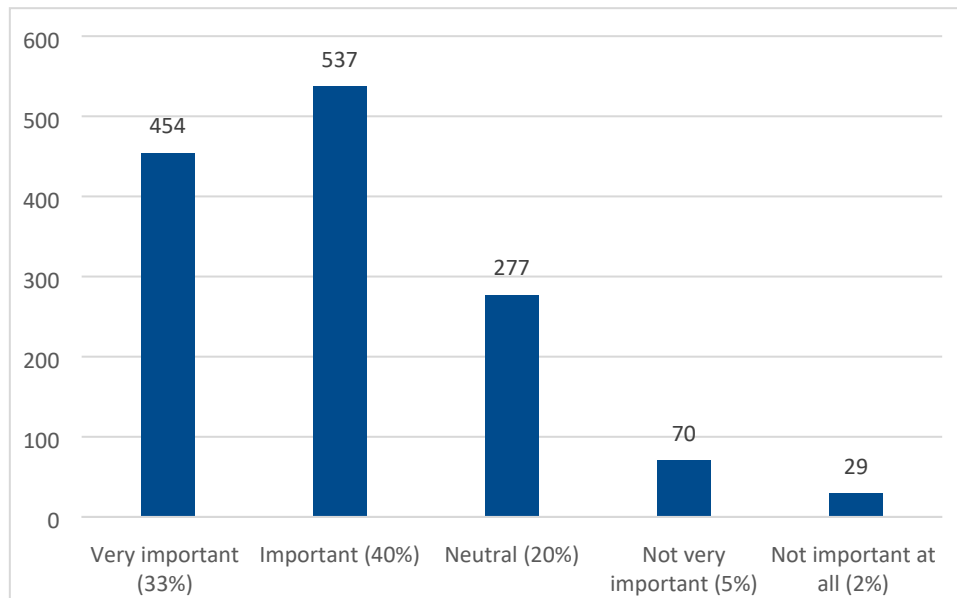
73% of respondents stated that supporting the visitor economy activities and services in our tourist attraction areas was very important (33%) or important (40). 20% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 7% felt that this was not very important (5%) or not important at all (2%).

Sustainability of culture and leisure venues – pubs and clubs and restaurants

A total of 1371 people responded to this question.
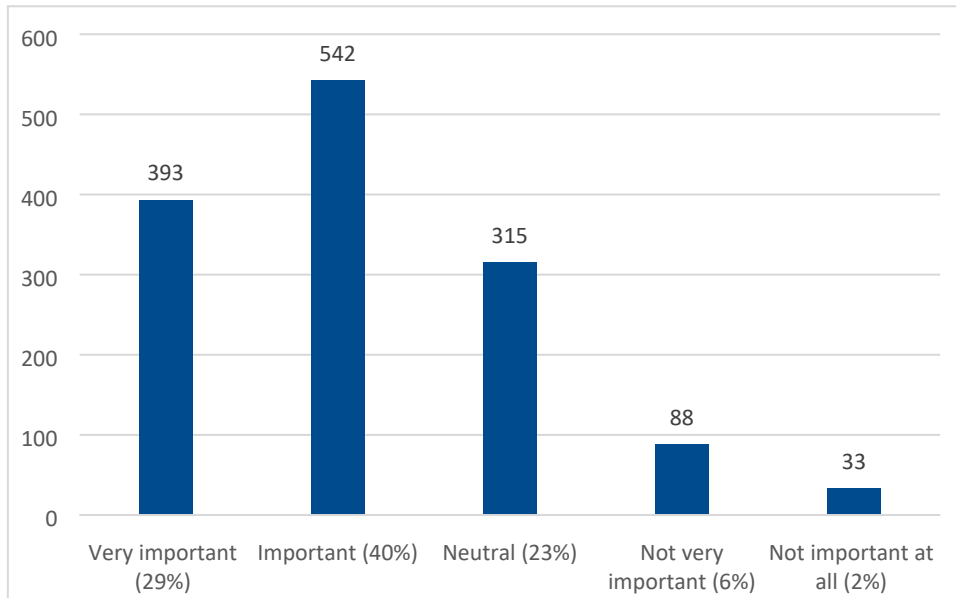
69% of respondents stated that sustainability of culture and leisure venues was very important (29%) or important (40%). 23% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 8% felt that this was not very important (6%) or not important at all (2%).

Labour market opportunities (and our role in stimulus) e.g. additional apprentices.
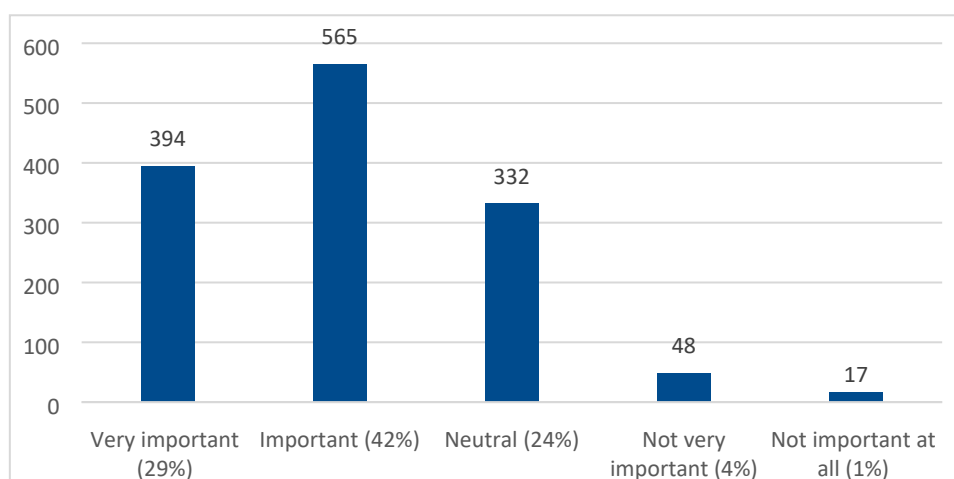
A total of 1362 people responded to this question.
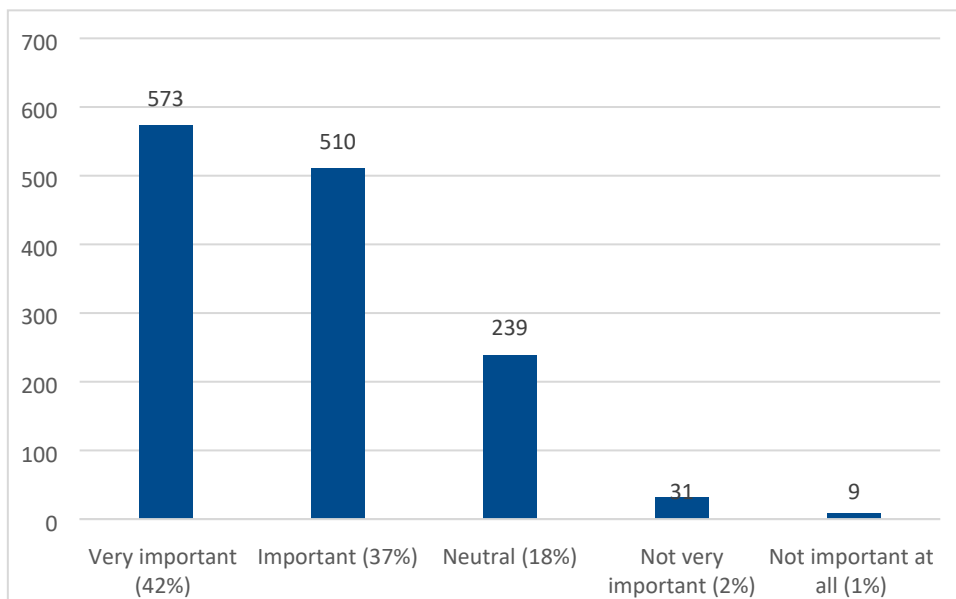
79% of respondents stated that labour market opportunities were very important (42%) or important (37%). 18% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 3% felt that this was not very important (2%) or not important at all (1%).
Business start-up support

A total of 1356 people responded to this question.

71% of respondents stated that business start-up was very important (29%) or important (42%). 24% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 5% felt that this was not very important (4%) or not important at all (1%).

7.2.2.2 Do you have any other ideas on how the council could support local businesses and the economy?

406 comments made have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Reduce business rates and rents	79
Need to invest/regenerate the town centres and empty properties, encourage more shops, ensure cleanliness and reduce anti-social behaviour	64
Better and free car parking	58
Support businesses financially, inform them of Covid-19 restrictions and ensure grants are paid out quickly	42
Advertise businesses, promote tourism and have more events, pop up shops and outdoor markets	36
Support businesses through training (such as trading online) and create a forum to offer mutual support and share best practice	35
Not sure this is a priority at the moment/just focus on current and essential businesses	21
Make internal savings i.e. reduce staff and number of councillors and wasting money	16
Support all business and not just a few i.e. start-ups, taxi services, market traders, social enterprise and producers that do not have premises	16
Listen to business owners needs	13
Use local/ British businesses	11
Work with schools and colleges to improve skills, create jobs and offer apprenticeships	10
Support businesses to invest in green technology	9
Invest in all areas in the borough	9
Improve public transport	8
De-pedestrianise the town centre	7

Theme	No.
Reduce red tape/restrictions from council planning and allow residential living above shops	6
Pedestrianise the town centre	4
Need public toilets	2
Longer term planning and funding for the future	2
Support local volunteers to support work such as litter picking, delivering leaflets and social media	1
Not that I can think of, you have done a good job	1
Open the main offices to increase footfall in Bridgend and support local businesses	1

The most common themes were reduce business rates and rents followed by need to invest/regenerate the town centres and empty properties, encourage more shops, ensure cleanliness and reduce anti-social behaviour and then better and free car parking.

7.2.3 Health and wellbeing

7.2.3.1 Which services, if any, do you think are most important for us to focus on as we recover from the pandemic?

Respondents were asked which services to help support our most vulnerable residents they thought were important for the council to focus on as we recover from the pandemic. Respondents were asked to rank services from very important to not important at all on a five point scale.

Support for older people (continue contact with the most vulnerable in our communities to ensure their needs are met)
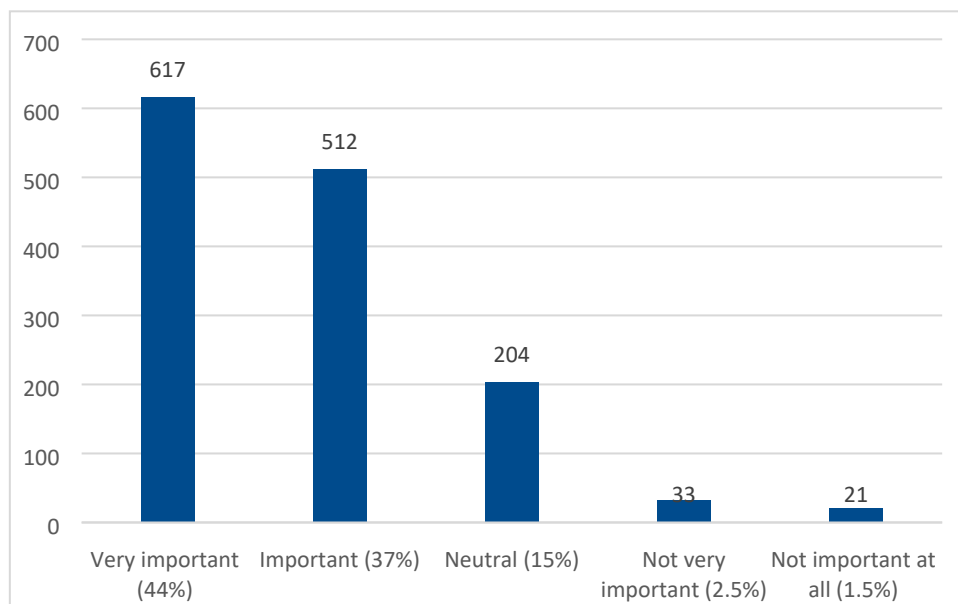
A total of 1396 people responded to this question.
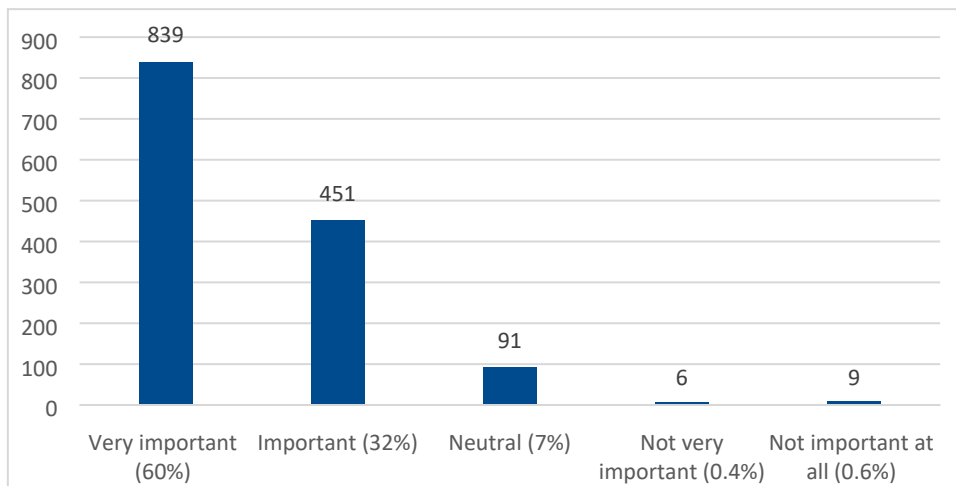
92% of respondents stated that support for older people was very important (60%) or important (32%). 7% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 1% felt that this was not very important (0.4%) or not important at all (0.6%).

Homelessness (ensuring those who are homeless are kept safe as lockdown restrictions ease)

A total of 1387 people responded to this question

81% of respondents stated that ensuring those who are homeless are kept safe as lockdown restrictions ease was very important (44%) or important (37%). 15% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 4% felt that this was not very important (2.5%) or not important at all (1.5%).

Food poverty – (for example should BCBC support and promote food banks and provide children eligible for free school meals with food parcels during school holidays)

A total of 1394 people responded to this question
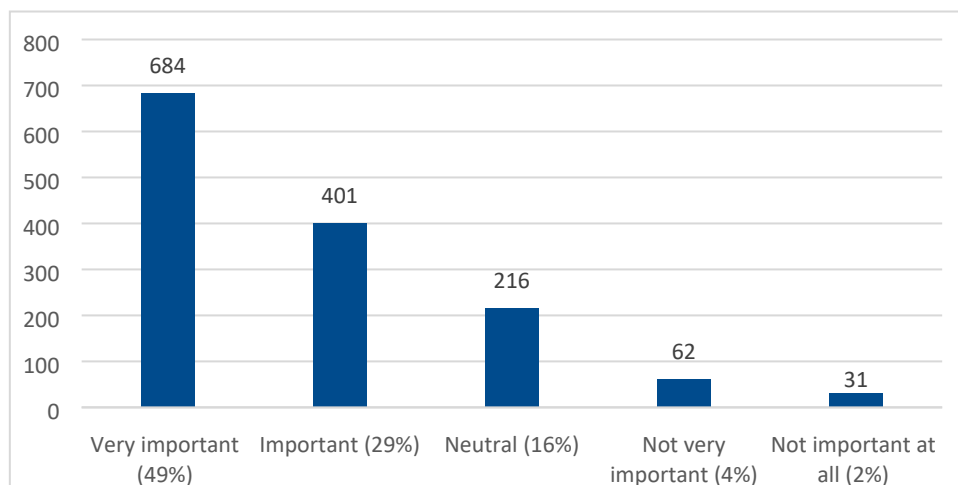
78% of respondents stated that food poverty – (for example should BCBC support and promote food banks and provide children eligible for free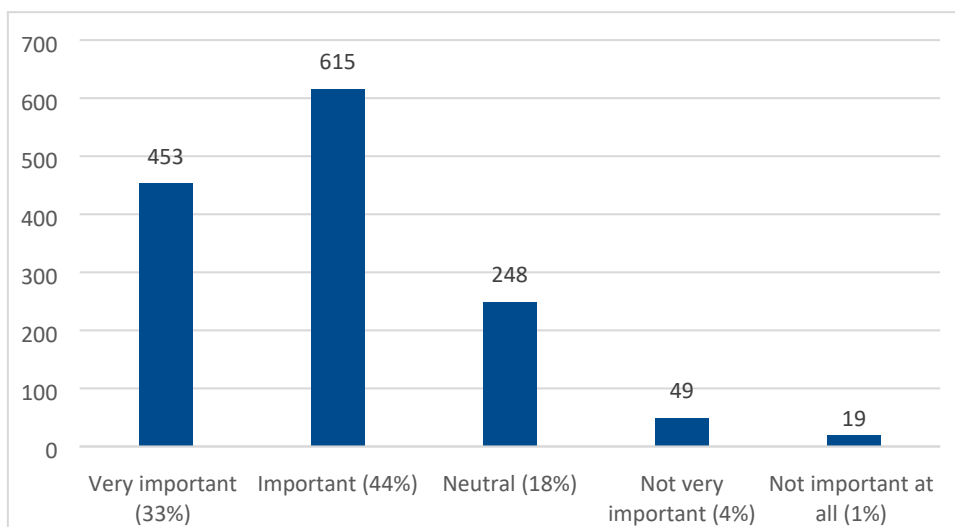 school meals with food parcels during school holidays) was very important (49%) or important (29%). 16% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 6% felt that this was not very important (4%) or not important at all (2%).

31

Council tax support for residents who had difficulty paying their council tax as a direct result of the pandemic i.e. council tax deferment or reduction scheme.

A total of 1384 people responded to this question

77% of respondents stated that council tax support for residents who had difficulty paying their council tax as a direct result of the pandemic was very important (33%) or important (44%). 18% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 5% felt that this was not very important (4%) or not important at all (1%).

Online and blended learning by schools

A total of 1373 people responded to this question
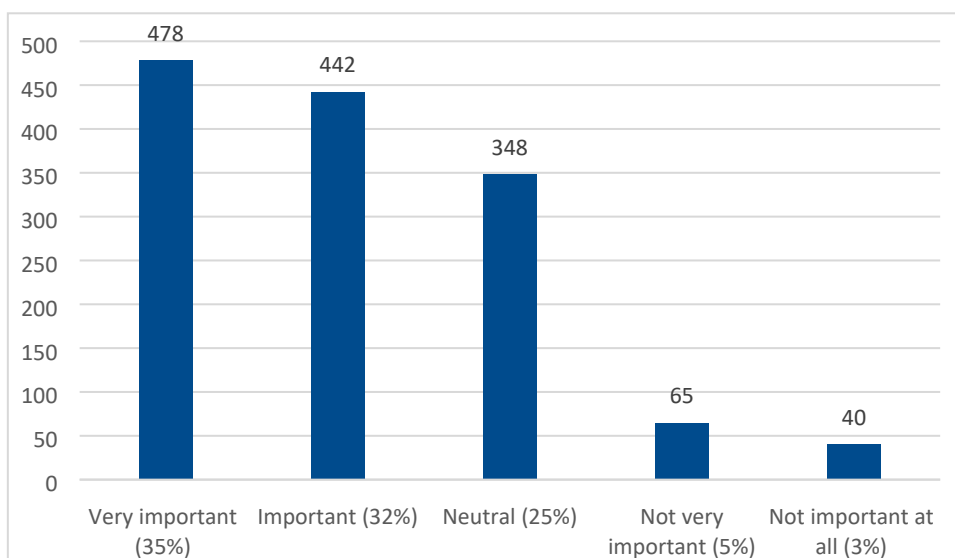
67% of respondents stated that online and blended learning by schools was very important (35%) or important (32%). 25% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 8% felt that this was not very important (5%) or not important at all (3%).

7.2.3.2 More services have been delivered remotely or online (for example services such as period dignity, domestic abuse support, flying start, youth justice and youth services were adapted to online or remote delivery).

Do you think this is an approach we should develop and adopt for the future?
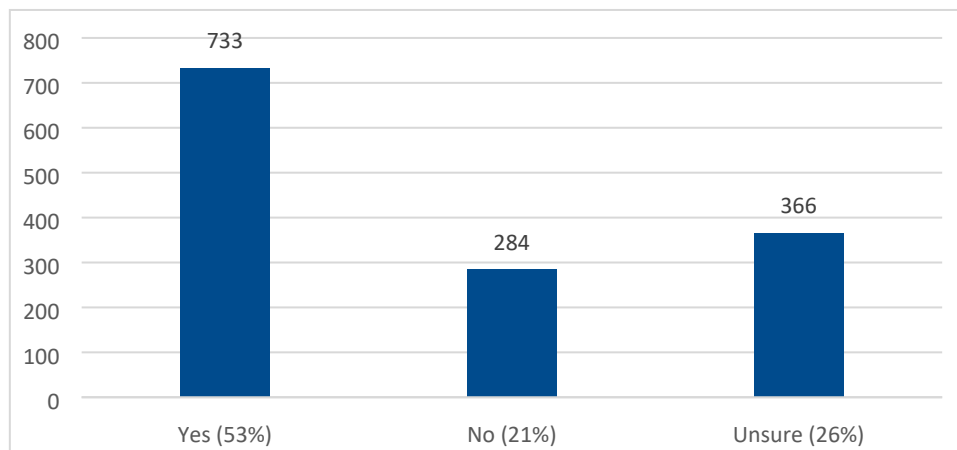
53% of respondents stated that the council should adopt more services being delivered remotely or online as an approach for the future. 26% of respondents were unsure and 21% did not support this proposal.

7.2.3.3 Do you have any other examples of services you think could be delivered remotely?

285 comments made in response to this question have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Face to face meetings are preferred/better for some people so both online and face to face services should be available	66
Some people are not able to access services online and some services would not work online e.g. domestic abuse services, social services and care and vulnerable should be supported face to face	51
All or as many services as possible, face to face contact could be delivered via webcam and zoom	43
Library services, online learning courses and online school services (although these need to be improved)	26
Unsure	15
Need to ensure online services are being delivered to a good standard	14
Customer services, admin, finance, Citizens Advice, legal advice and consumer rights	13
Online counselling and mental health support	10
Business support, employability and job centre	9
Other services: registrar, food parcel contacts, consultation surveys, shopmobility, probation, rights of way and street light faults	9
Health, online gym classes and GP services	8
Youth support services	7

|	
Planning applications and building regulations	7
None	6
Social services, family support, early help and parenting groups	6
Council meetings	5
Housing and homelessness	5
Council tax bills and support and financial help	5
Recycling and waste i.e. book an appointment at the recycling centre, order recycling bags, donate clothes	4
Work with third sector to provide services	3
Blue badge applications and car park seasons online	3
Covid-19 rules and whistleblowing facility for non-compliance	3
Why not all councils in Wales use one call/online centre for all remote services	1
What about Welsh language services	1
More green initiatives e.g. installing solar panels on every home	1

The most common themes were face to face meetings are preferred/better for some people so both online and face to face services should be available followed by some people are not able to access services online and some services would not work online e.g. domestic abuse services, social services and care and vulnerable should be supported face to face and then all or as many services as possible, face to face contact could be delivered via webcam and zoom.

7.2.3.4 During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, how important do you think it was to have support from community organisations in Bridgend County Borough?

A total of 1401 people responded to this question
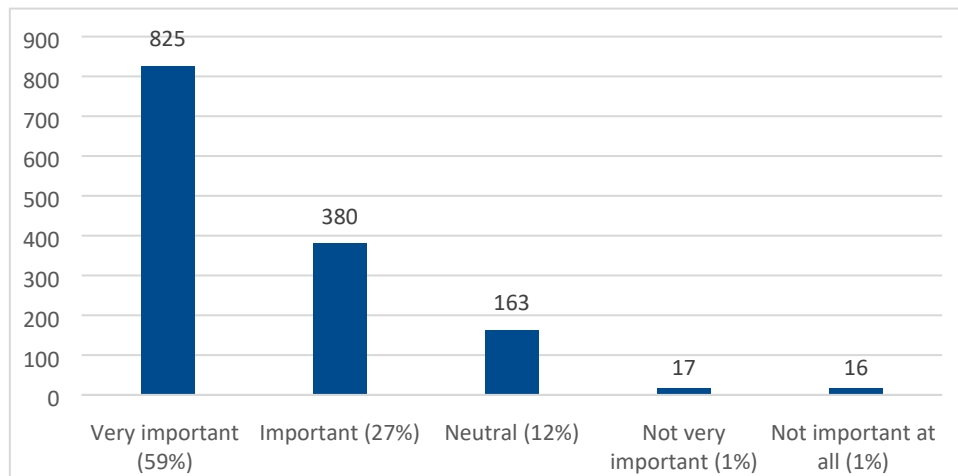
86% of respondents stated that support from community organisations was very important (59%) or important (27%). 12% of respondents provided a neutral response to this question and 2% felt that this was not very important (1%) or not important at all (1%).

7.2.3.5 In setting priorities for the future, do you think the council should protect funding for third sector organisations?

A total of 1393 people responded to this question
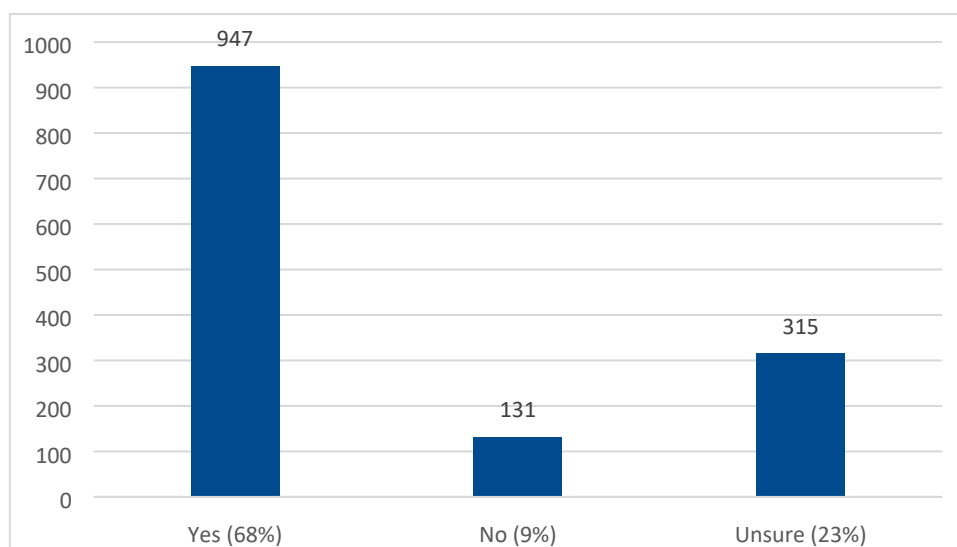
68% of respondents stated that the council should protect funding for the third sector. 23% of respondents were unsure and 9% did not agree with this proposal.

7.2.3.6 Do you have any other comments on how Bridgend County Borough Council should work with third sector organisations in the future?

255 comments made in response to this question have been themed in the table below:

| Theme	No.
Third sector organisations have done a good job during the pandemic and should be supported	42
Organisations that receive funding should be accountable and should be monitored on a regular basis	38
Improve partnership working with BCBC and between third sector organisations to ensure no duplication of work and all vulnerable people are supported	28
These should not be funded by the local authority	24
Provide extra funding to support third sector organisations	22
Need better communication to residents on what services are available from third sector organisations	17
Fund a wider variety and more local third sector organisations	17
Areas to support: older people, learning disabilities, food poverty, sports clubs, homelessness, young people, home repairs for council tenants and drug and alcohol services	15
Support the third sector through training, rate and rent relief and sharing premises	13
Unsure what value the third sector brings/do not know about the third sector/have never received these services	13
Promote volunteering and support volunteers	10
Counselling services and mental health	7
All community organisations must be free from political ideology	2
Do not panic people about Covid-19	2

35

Theme	No.
The question is all well and good if BCBC were actually working during this Covid-19 crisis	1
Access for BSL?	1
Give town and community councils the status they deserve and pass down more responsibilities to them	1
Need information on how vulnerable family members in different counties can be interacted with during local lockdown	1
Where will the funding come from?	1

The most common themes are third sector organisations have done a good job during the pandemic and should be supported followed by organisations that receive funding should be accountable and should be monitored on a regular basis and then improve partnership working with BCBC and between third sector organisations to ensure no duplication of work and all vulnerable people are supported.

7.2.4 Customer access to Civic Offices

7.2.4.1 Have you missed being able to come in to Civic Offices?

1387 people responded to this question.
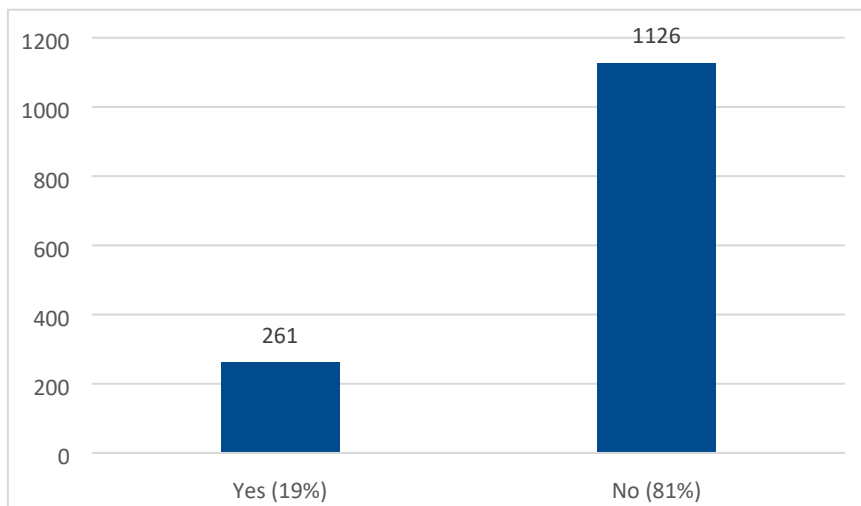
81% of respondents stated that they had not missed coming into Civic Offices. 19% stated that they had missed coming into Civic Offices.

7.2.4.2 How have you accessed services while Civic Offices were closed? Please select all that apply.

Respondents were able to select multiple responses, a total of 2068 responses were received within this question
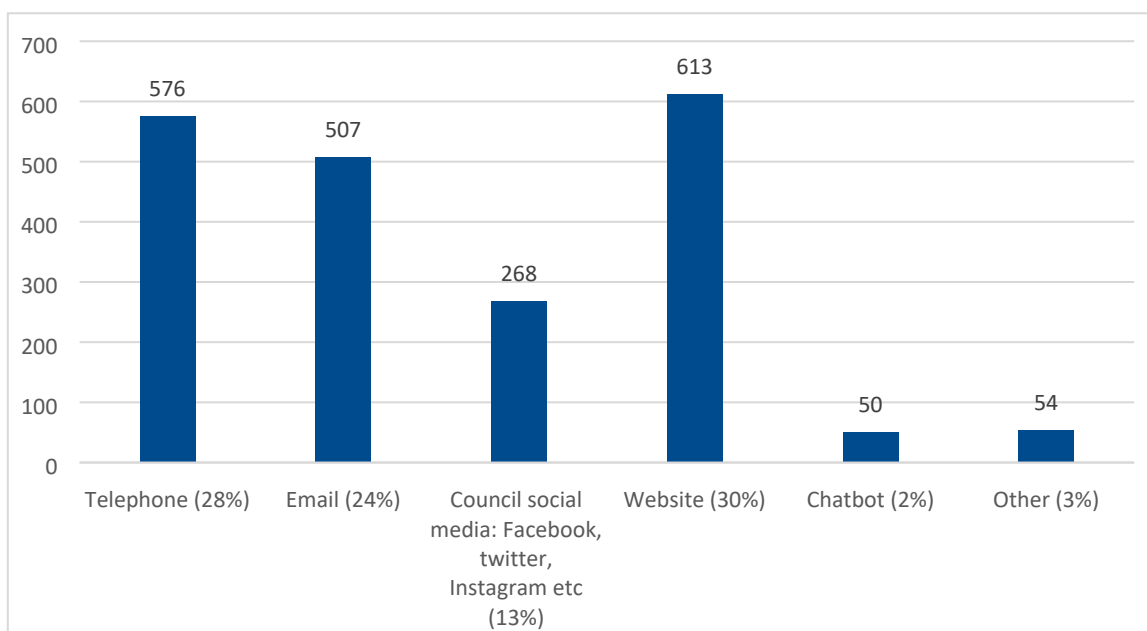
While unable to access Civic Offices the means most commonly used to access services has been the website, followed by telephone and then email.

54 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 47 comments made have been themed in the table below:

Theme	No.
None/ I haven't	20
I did not bother trying to access services/ was unable to access services as unable to get through	7
Letter/post	3
Through work/I am employed by BCBC	3
Contacting MP/AM, Local Councillor	2
Government website	1
Fix My Street	1
Council website	1
Had no idea it was closed	1
My account	1
Newsletter	1
Not everyone wants to use social media	1
Talk to us	1
Refuse collections and refuse bag delivery dates.	1
Text	1
Television	1
You should not mistake a lack of visits to Civic Offices as indication of the lack of need for people to be able to visit Civic Offices.	1

The most common themes are none/I haven't, followed by I did not bother trying to access services/was unable to access services as unable to get through and then letter/post and through work/I am employed by BCBC.

7.2.4.3 Have you contacted customer services since the council offices closed?

1373 people responded to this question.
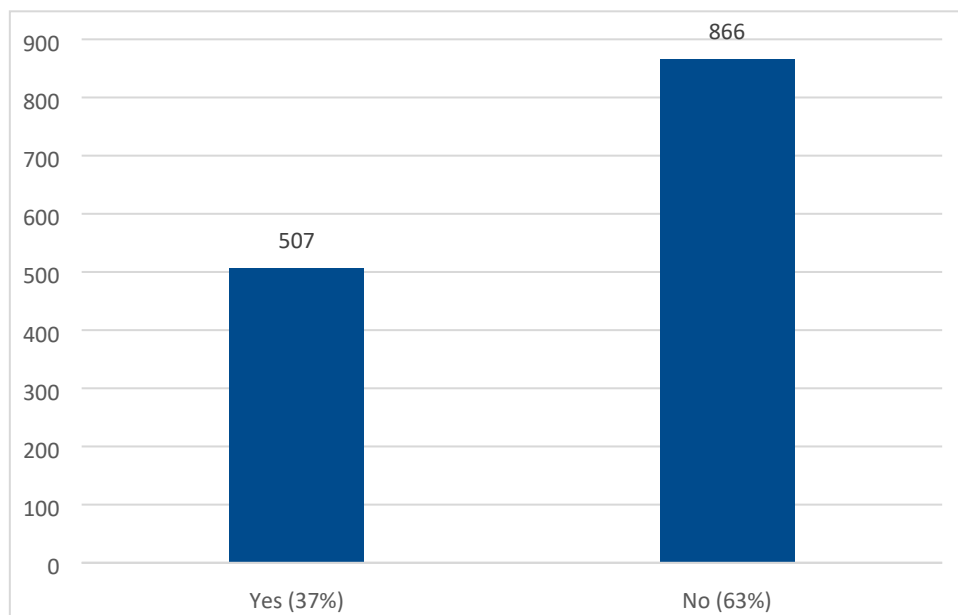
63% of respondents stated that they have not accessed customer services since the council offices closed. 37% stated that they had.

7.2.4.4 If 'yes', how did you contact customer services? Please select all that apply.

661 people responded to this question.
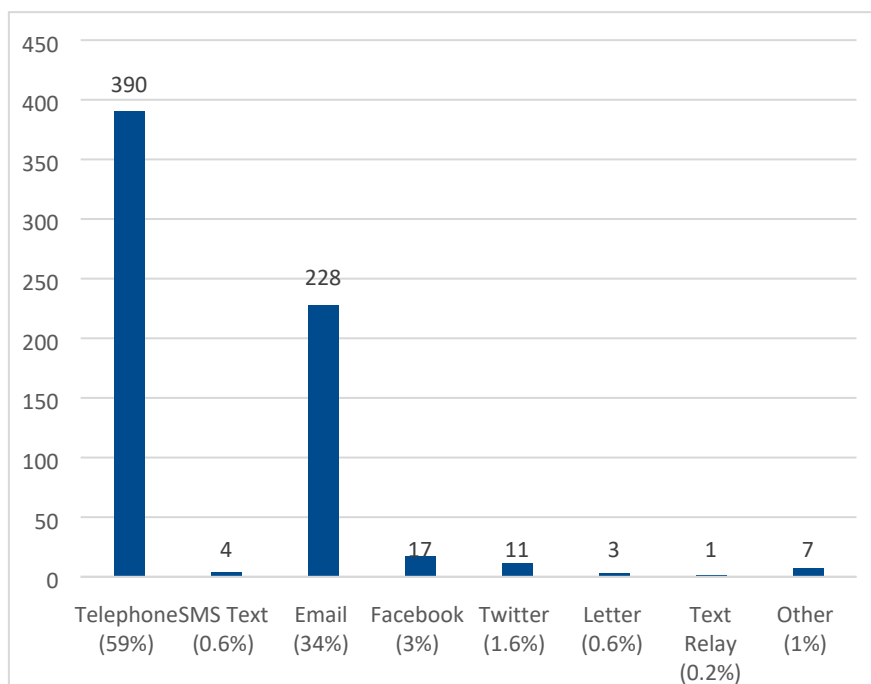
Respondents who had accessed customer services had done this by telephone (59%) followed by email (34%) and then social media (4.6%).

7 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 5 comments made have been themed in the table below:

Theme	No.
Internet/website	2
Blue badge renewal	1
Regarding refuse collection and new food bags	1
Fix my street	1

7.2.4.5 Have you, or someone you know, accessed any of the following services during the pandemic? Please select all that apply.

Respondents were able to select multiple responses, a total of 2068 responses were received within this question
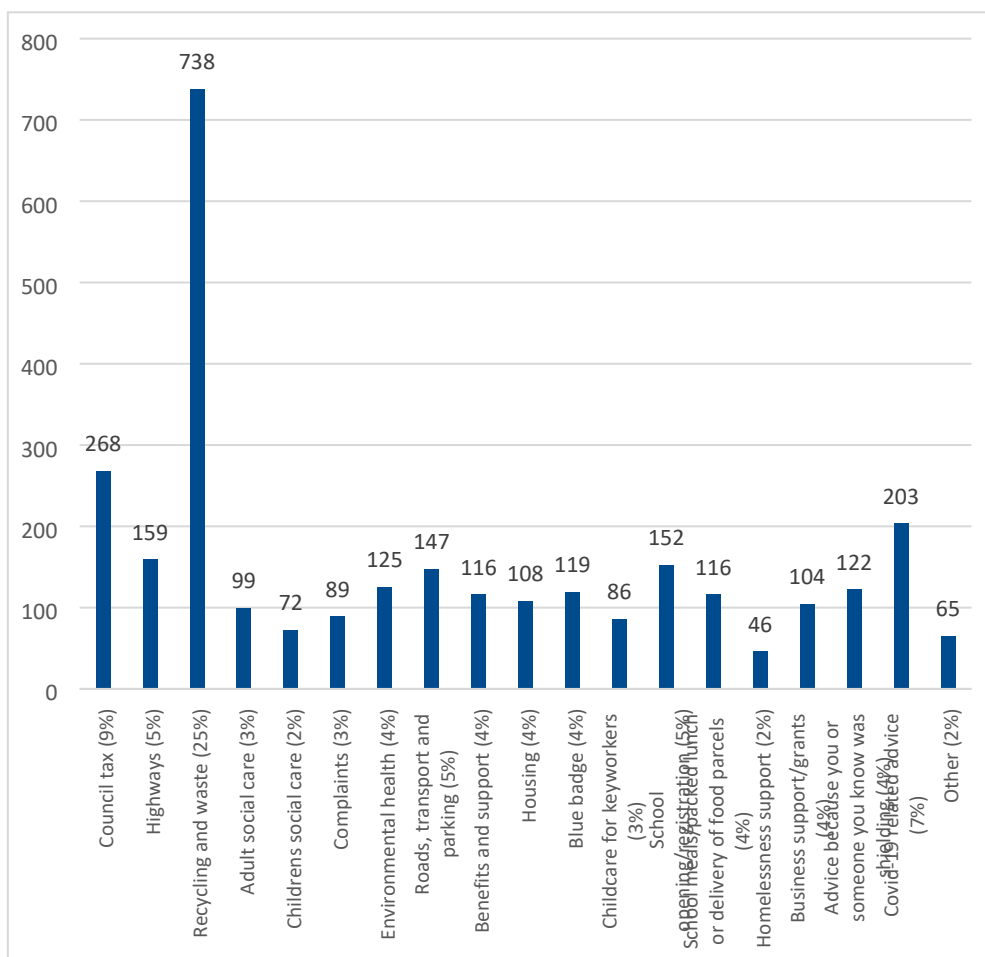
The services most commonly accessed by respondents were recycling as waste, followed by council tax and then Covid-19 related advice.

65 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 55 comments made have been themed in the table below:

Theme	No.

Theme	No.
Planning and building control	11
Register birth/death	5
I have not accessed these services	4
Healthcare/Covid-19 information	3
Library services	3
Schools information/ Supply Teacher registration	3
Protected trees department/Conservation team	3
Information about cemeteries	2
As a Councillor I access many of these/have regular contact	2
Electoral services	2
Freedom of information	2
Street lighting, fly tipping, request new food bin	4
Animal licenses/RSPCA	2
Community asset transfer/Parks and leisure	2
Care homes	1
Domestic abuse	1
Shared services for advice with online purchases	1
I have given up on BCBC services	1
Phoned to speak to someone customer service	1
Operations Officer	1
Rights of way	1

The most common themes within 'other' were planning and building control followed by register birth/death and then I have not accessed these services.

7.2.4.6 Since closing our face-to-face channel for customers in Civic Offices, we have continued to provide services over the telephone, email and online. Do you think it is a priority for the council to reopen Civic Offices to the public?

1373 people responded to this question.

40
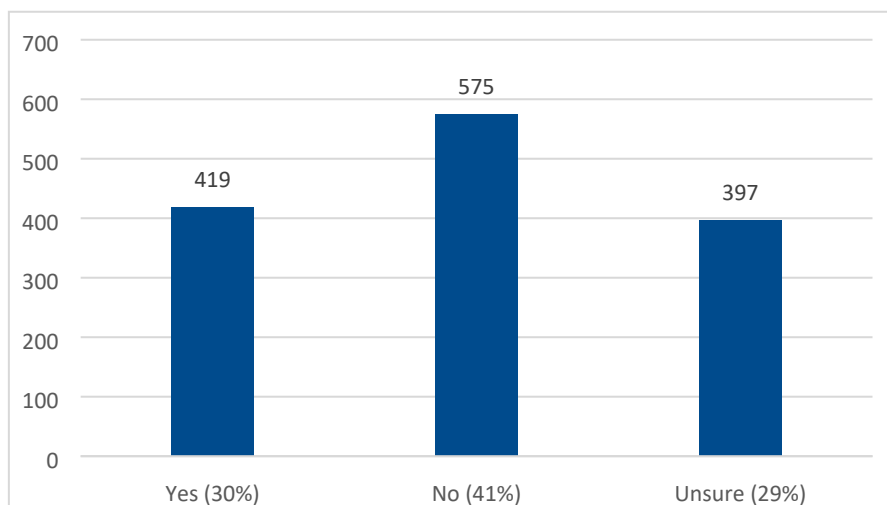
41% of respondents stated that they did not think it was a priority to reopen Civic Offices to the public. 29% were unsure and 30% stated that it should be a propriety to reopen Civic Offices.

7.2.4.7 If yes, which services do you feel you need to be able to access face to face?

274 comments made in response to this question have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
All/most services	99
Not everyone is able to access services online, some people prefer face to face contact and it is a better service face to face	78
Housing and homelessness	31
Council tax and benefits support	23
Child and adult social services	13
Civic offices should be open for the public, we need to get back to normal	13
Customer services/reception	12
Personal or sensitive issues and services for vulnerable people i.e. elderly people and disabled people	11
Street cleaning and lighting, drain cleaning, refuse and recycling	6
Blue badge application	4
Planning	4
Domestic abuse	3
Highways and road repairs	3
External services: Calan DVS, Citizens Advice and the job centre	3
Covid related problems and advice	2
BSL	1
Complaints	1
Just Ask drop in service for young people	1
Library	1
Shopmobility	1
Would save money on office space	1

The most common themes within 'other' were planning and building control followed by register birth/death and then I have not accessed these services.

7.2.4.8 Given the progress made in digitalising customer services, do you think the council should switch to an appointment based system when Civic Offices reopen?

1373 people responded to this question.
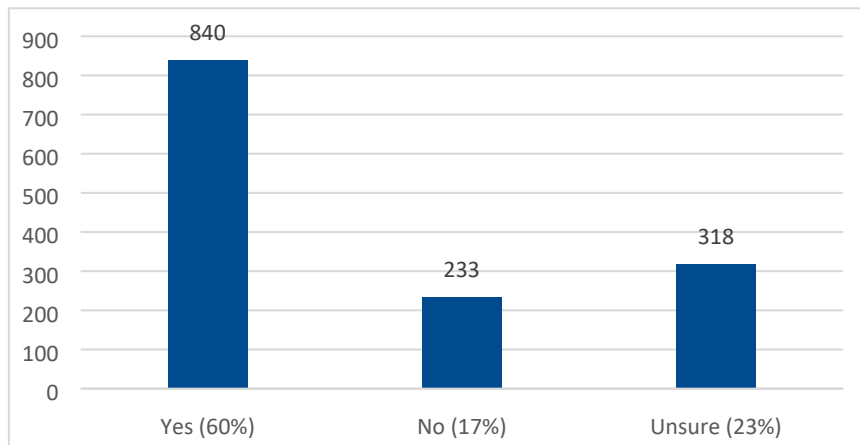
60% of respondents stated that when Civic Offices does reopen the council should move to an appointment based system. 23% were unsure and 17% did not agree with this proposal.

7.2.5 Digitalisation

7.2.5.1 More people are now accessing services online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Have you, or has someone on your behalf, accessed council services online?

1380 people responded to this question.
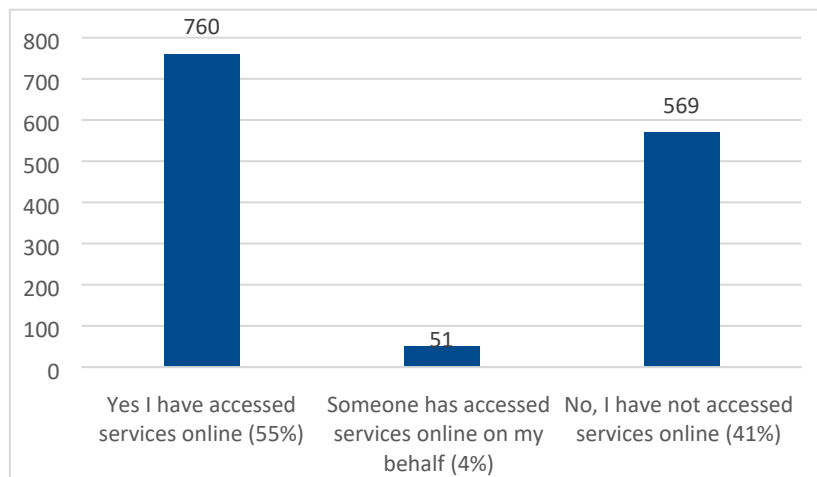
55% of respondents stated that they had accessed services online and a further 4% stated that someone had accessed services online on their behalf. 41% stated that they had not accessed services online.

7.2.5.2 When Civic Offices reopen will you continue to access services online?

1309 people responded to this question.
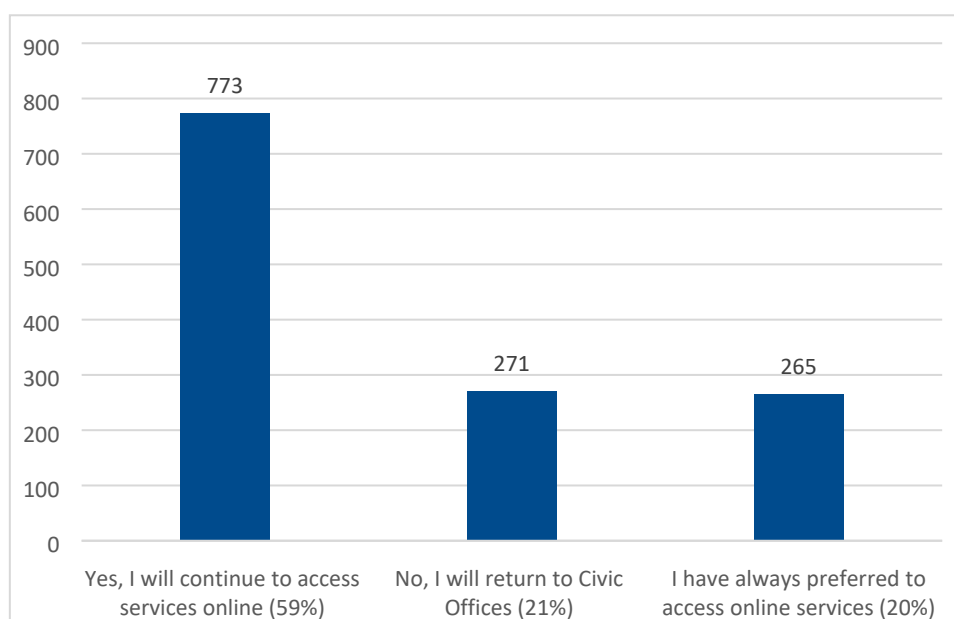
42

59% of respondents stated that when Civic Offices reopen they will continue to access services online. 20% stated that they had always preferred to access services online. 21% of respondents stated that they would return to accessing services in Civic Offices when it reopens.

Respondents who stated 'no I will return to Civic Office' to this question were asked why?

185 responses were received. The responses are themed in the table below:

| Theme	No.
Prefer to speak to someone face to face/rather human contact	91
Face to face provides a better service i.e. not waiting on the phone and issues are dealt with quicker	39
I am not online/ do not have a computer and/or internet	37
Both should be available i.e. online and face to face/some services would be better deliver face to face	6
BCBC website is difficult to use	5
As a County Councillor most of my contacts are through the referral system	1
I can't think of reason for making contact.	1
Our council staff and councillors must be available and accountable to local people in their community	1
BSL? Nothing online	1
Unsure if you could complete a bus pass application online	1
Was unable to complete a blue badge application online	1
It's easier	1

The most common themes for those that said that they would not continue to access services online with Civic Offices reopen were prefer to speak to someone face to face/rather human contact followed by face to face provides a better service i.e. not waiting on the phone and issues are dealt with quicker and then I am not online/ do not have a computer and/or internet.

7.2.5.3 What support would help you, or someone you know, to access more services online? Please select all that apply.

Respondents were able to select multiple responses, a total of 1786 responses were received within this question
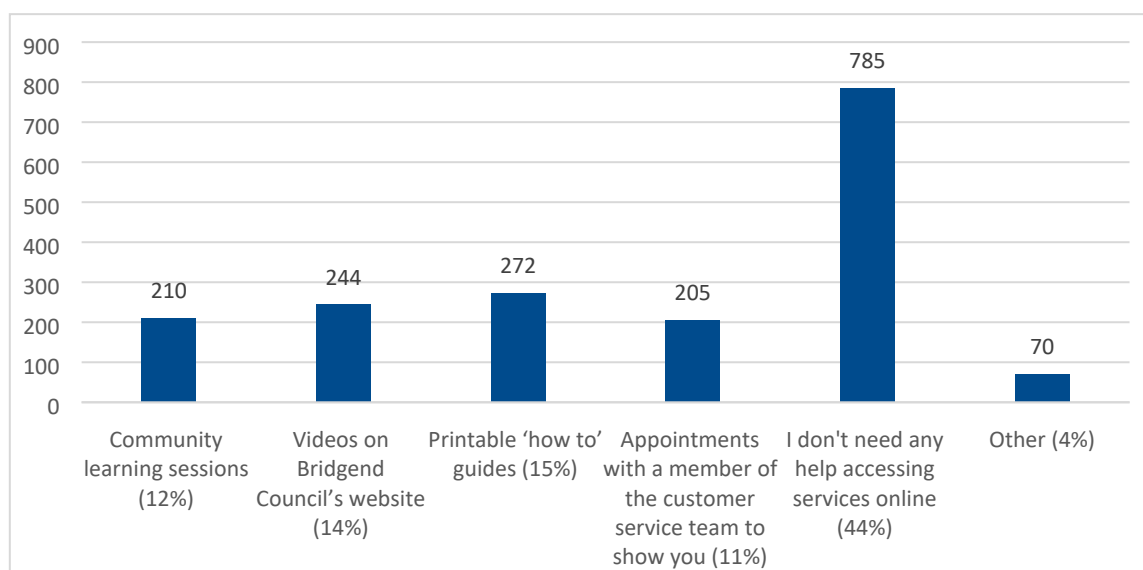
44% of respondents stated that they did not need any help to access services online. 15% stated that they would find printable 'how to' guides useful and 14% stated that they would like to have videos on the Bridgend council website. 12% of respondents stated that they would like access to community learning sessions and 11% stated that they would like appointments with a member of the customer services team to show them how to access services online.

70 respondents stated 'other' to this question. 61 comments made have been themed in the table below:

Theme	No.
Some people are not able to access the internet or struggle to access online services	20
Better website, search engine and user friendly interface	13
I want less online/prefer face to face contact	8
BSL: you need to say BSL interpreter available if needed/subtitles on help videos/ SMS support for the deaf	3
It would help if emails were responded to	3
Promote what services are available online	3
Provide a helpline	2
Produce 'how to' guides to be distributed with other items such as waste collection calendars/Mailshot leaflet with 'how to' details	2
Brochure listing services and telephone numbers	1
Courses such as learn direct	1
Council tax freeze	1
Jobs	1

|	
Show them when they drop in	1
Wales needs to come in line with the rest of the UK.	1
Safe spaces to access services online, i.e. library/internet cafe	1

The most common themes were some people are not able to access the internet or struggle to access online services followed by better website, search engine and user friendly interface and then want less online/prefer face to face contact.

7.2.5.4 Have you signed up to govDelivery service: a free online service that enables residents to receive tailored council news and information and select updates on the subjects and news which interest you most?

1262 people responded to this question.
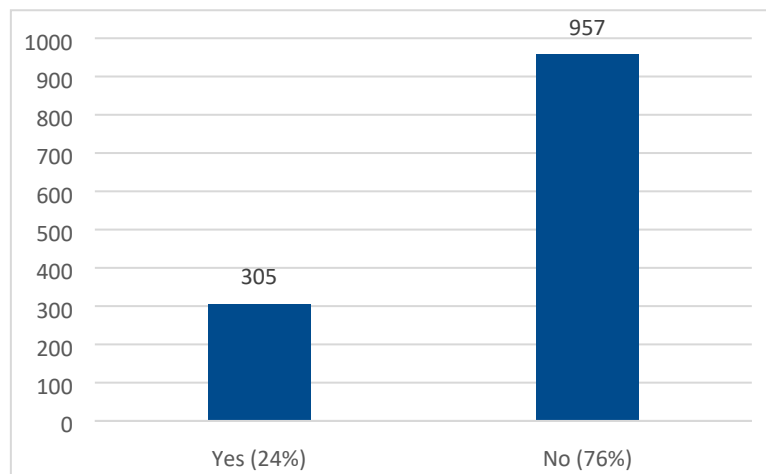
76% of respondents stated that they had not signed up to govDelivery. 24% of respondents stated that they had.

Respondents who stated 'no' to this question were asked why not?

619 responses were received. The responses are themed in the table below:

Theme	No.
Was not aware of this service	436
Not needed/required/interested	49
Can find information independently through the internet, newspapers, social media, contacting the council etc…	34
Do not own a computer, access to the internet and do not feel confident online/prefer to speak to someone	34
I think I have signed up/I intend to sign up	26
Already receive too much information	13
Not interested in BCBC news, waste of time and money	14
Don't know	5
Not sure about the service/Unsure I would use it or it would benefit my family	4
I receive all information via emails in work	2

Theme	No.
Because of the councils attack on our green spaces I don't want anything from the council	1
No information in BSL	1

The most common themes were was not aware of this service, followed by not needed/required/interested and then can find information independently through the internet, newspapers, social media, contacting the council etc.

Respondents who stated 'yes' to this question were asked what other information they thought could be included?

86 comments made in response to this question have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

| Theme	No.
There is enough information and I am satisfied with the amount of information included	20
Current issues (including Covid-19 figures and restrictions) , budget reviews, updates on council projects and future plans	16
Road works and planning applications	10
Unsure	10
Recycling and waste i.e. how to report litter and dog fouling, information on community recycling centres and pollution 'hot spots'	6
Local community and county borough council meetings and minutes, including who votes for what	5
Staff contact information	4
Library and sport centre timetable and information on the privatisation of sports clubs	4
Local business news	3
What's on and events	3
Public transport information and cycle paths	3
School building programme, schools terms dates and times	3
Health and well-being support groups, carers support and help numbers	3
Good new stories	2
Jobs/one email to click to job page	2
More news from across the borough, not just Bridgend	2
Help to claim benefits	1
More community based online consultations (like this)	1
Updates on crime figures	1
Opening times	1

The most common themes were that there is enough information and I am satisfied with the amount of information included followed by current issues (including Covid-19 figures and restrictions) , budget reviews, updates on council projects and future plans and then road works and planning applications.

7.2.6 Council tax levels

7.2.6.1 Which of the statements below best represents your views on setting the council tax for 2021-22?

1262 people responded to this question.
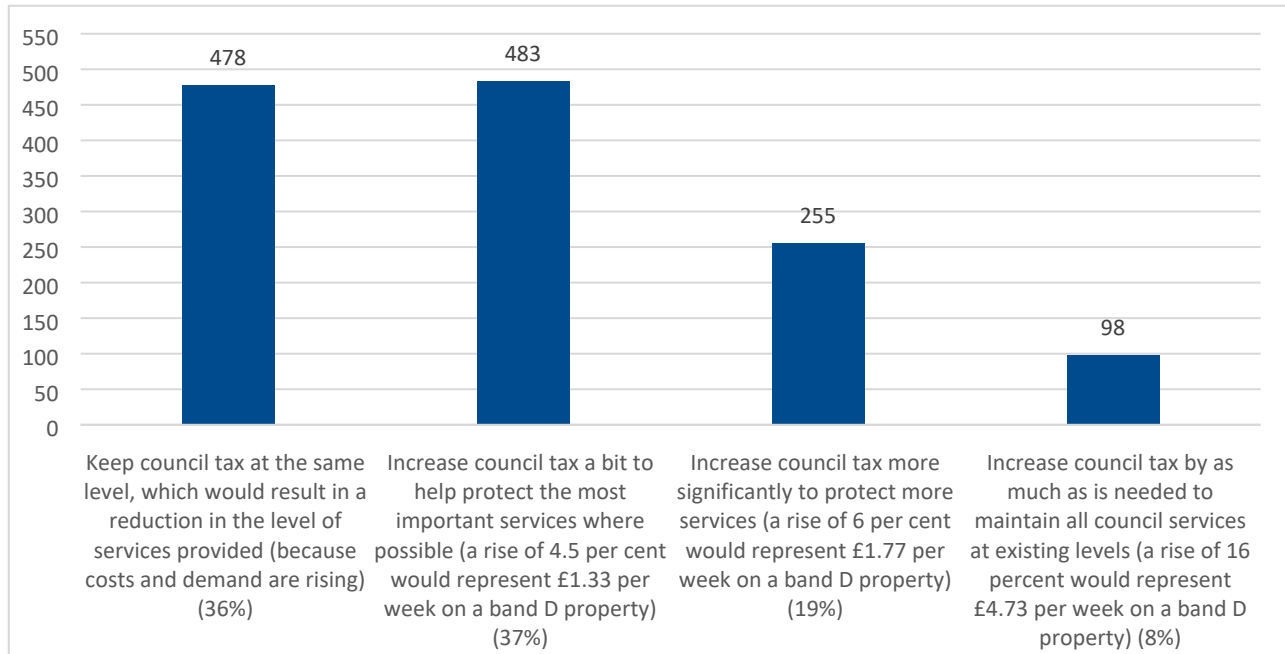
- 37% of respondents were prepared to increase council tax a bit to help protect the most important services where possible (4.5% increase);
- 36% of respondents stated to keep council tax levels the same level, which would result in a reduction in the level of services provided;
- 19% of respondents were prepared to increase council tax more significantly to protect more services (6% increase);
- 8% of respondents were prepared to pay as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels (16% increase);

The responses to the question about council tax increases also have been analysed by demographic information (age and employment status).

Council tax and age

When comparing age with response to the amount of council tax a respondent was prepared to pay we found:

- Those aged under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-46 and 55-64 chose 'keep council tax levels the same', followed by 'would increase council tax a bit to help protect the most important services' (4.5%), followed by 'increase council tax more significantly to protect more services' (6%) and then 'increase council tax as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels' (16%).
- Those aged 45-54 and 65-74 chose 'increase council tax a bit to help protect the most important services' (4.5%), followed by 'keep council tax levels the same',

followed by 'increase council tax more significantly to protect more services' (6%) and then 'increase council tax as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels' (16%).

- Those aged 75+ chose 'increase council tax a bit to help protect the most important services' (4.5%), followed by 'increase council tax more significantly to protect more services' (6%), followed by 'keep council tax levels the same' and then 'increase council tax as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels' (16%).
- Other than for those aged 75+ there was not a significant difference in the responses to this question by age

Council tax and employment status

When comparing employment status with response to the amount of council tax a respondent was prepared to pay we found:

- All respondents with the exception of those who identified themselves as retired or as carers chose 'keep council tax levels the same' as their most popular response;
- Respondents who identified themselves as retired or as a carer chose 'increase council tax a bit to help protect the most important services where possible' (4.5%) as their most popular response.
- Respondents who identified themselves as a student, full time employed, part time employed or unemployed chose 'keep levels the same' followed by increase by 4.5%, then increase by 6% and then increase by 16%
- Respondents who identified themselves as retired or as a carer chose increase by 4.5% followed by 'keep levels the same', then increase by 6% and then increase by 16%.
- There was not a significant difference in the responses to this question by employment status.

7.2.7 The future

7.2.7.1 Given the changing nature of how services are delivered, what do you think our long term priorities should be for the future? Please choose up to three services.

Respondents were able to select multiple responses, a total of 3736 responses were received within this question
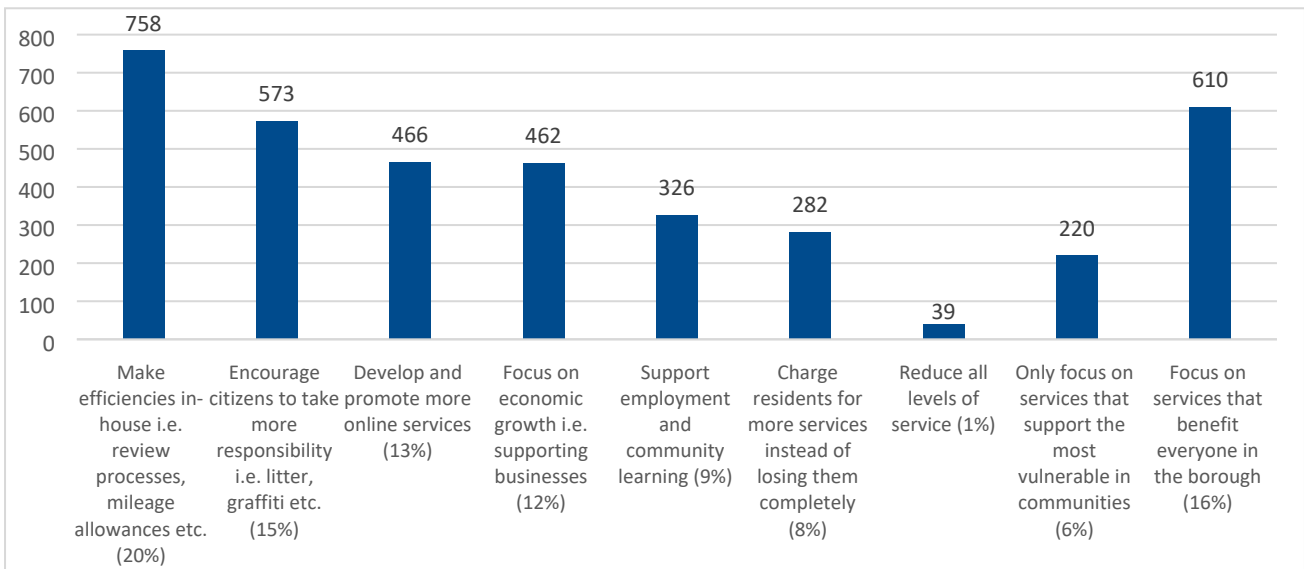
The most popular long term priorities were make efficiencies in-house, followed by focus on services that benefit everyone in the borough and then encourage citizens to take more responsibility.

7.2.7.2 What service areas should the council prioritise while recovering from the pandemic? Please choose up to three services.
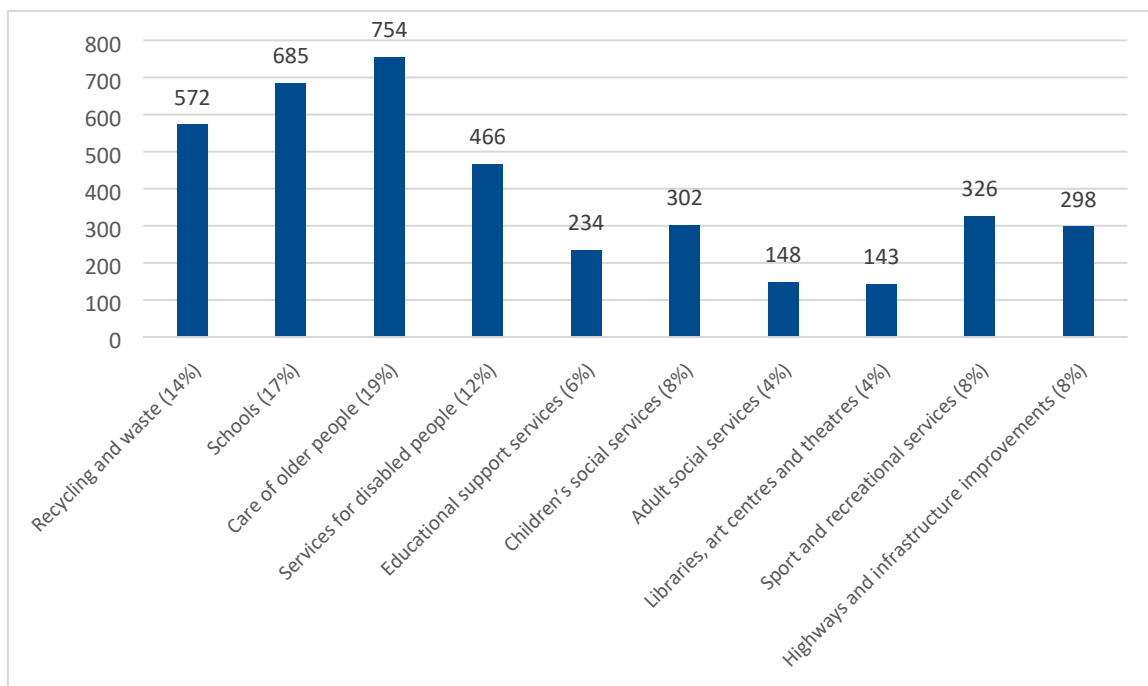
The most popular services to prioritise were care for older people, followed by schools and then recycling and waste.

7.2.7.3 Are there any other services you think the council should prioritise for the future?

410 comments made in response to this question have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Services that support vulnerable people including older people, disabled people, carers, care homes, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol services and homelessness	57
Climate change, green and outdoor spaces	46
Mental health, wellbeing, early help and children and adults social care	43
Support the economy i.e. employability, tourism, businesses and town centres	41
Recycling, waste and street cleaning	36
Education, schools, children and youth services	36
Make internal savings/ensure value for money on services and have strong decision making	23
Listen and work more with residents and communities i.e. with TCCs, community groups, churches, community learning and support community centres	23
Highways/road repairs/street lighting/drainage	19
All services are important/no more cuts	17
Sports, gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools	15
Regenerate the area, reuse/develop empty properties and make people feel safe i.e. increase CCTV, policing and reduce anti-social behaviour	15
Have better/free car parking and improve transport: reinstate bus services, cycle and active travel links	14
Develop online services but support those who are unable to access them	11
Better infrastructure, planning of developments and stop overdevelopment	10
Libraries, arts and culture i.e. music in education, cinemas, the Grand Pavilion and Maesteg Town Hall	10
Reduce/maintain/get rid of council tax and offer more reductions for those who need it	9
Public toilets	5
It is a difficult job to prioritise service services/services are not run properly now	4
Only deliver statutory services and those which focus on all not the few	4
Managing difficult tenants and enforcing Covid-19 restrictions	3
Need more information in BSL and support for non-native English/Welsh speakers such as having access to standard documents	3
Promote the public to take responsibility for their actions	2
Better pest control service	1
Get council tax from Trecco Bay	1
Stop paying police and c rime commissioner	1
Replace purple recycling bags to improve people's dignity	1
Future generations act compliance	1

The most common themes were services that support vulnerable people including older people, disabled people, carers, care homes, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol services and homelessness followed by climate change, green and outdoor spaces and then mental health, wellbeing, early help and children and adults social care.

7.2.7.4 What lessons from the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic do you think we should consider when setting our medium and long term funding priorities?

517 comments made in response to this question have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Have an emergency fund, not waste money and make internal savings i.e. streamline services, staff and councillors pay/expenses and review external contracts	89
Need a caring society, support social services and vulnerable people including children, older people, disabled people, care homes, carers and homelessness	65
BCBC need to plan and prepare for the future and be adaptable	63
There should be more online services and support people to access them	58
Staff working from home should continue, be promoted to businesses and savings made from unused council offices	47
Protect people from Covid-19, promote public health and provide mental health support	37
The importance of communities and third sector, need to work closer and support communities	37
Support businesses, town centres and employability	35
BCBC need to listen to residents and communities and ensure good communication	25
Green spaces are important and need more focus on climate change	25
Transport: ensure the bus station is open, more public transport, free car parking and more active travel links i.e. cycle lanes and walking routes	18
Enforcement of rules, including Covid restrictions, littering, dog fouling and fly tipping	15
Preventing/removing lockdowns, reopening Civic and getting back to normal, don't rely on Central Government for directions as to what you can and cannot do	12
Recycling and recycling centres need to be improved	11
Council tax should stay the same/be lowered and people struggling to pay should be supported	10
Schools and education	10
Protect and maintain essential services	9
Support the NHS/Covid specific hospitals	9
Have learned nothing additional/ we are still learning	6
Better programmes of redevelopment (including Salt Lake) and stop building more houses on green spaces	4
Provide services for everyone and not the few	4
Gyms and sport activities	3
Pay less benefits to people who abuse the system and people who always want financial support should give their time to the community by way of repayment	3
Maintain public toilets	2

51

Theme	No.
Why am I paying for a crime commissioner that does nothing	1
You are doing a good job	1

The most common themes were have an emergency fund, not waste money and make internal savings i.e. streamline services, staff and councillors pay/expenses and review external contracts followed by need a caring society, support social services and vulnerable people including children, older people, disabled people, care homes, carers and homelessness and then BCBC need to plan and prepare for the future and be adaptable.

7.2.8 Any other comments

7.2.8.1 Do you have any other comments to ensure Bridgend County Borough becomes Fit for the Future?

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any further comments that they would like to make. 407 comments were made in response to this question and have been themed in the table below. Some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
Make internal saving i.e. number of staff and councillors, pay, expenses and review funded external partners	54
Evaluate spending, provide value for money and provide more clarity on where money is spent	49
Need to be more prepared, improve transparency and make bold plans and decisions for the future	44
Need to listen to residents and improve communications and correspondence	37
Support the economy, businesses and invest in town centres including more seating areas and toilets	34
Keep the county clean and tidy, focus on recycling and improve community recycling centres	32
Need to address climate change, environmental issues and protect our outdoor and green spaces	32
You are doing a good job, staff and services have been delivered in a difficult time, keep trying	26
Try and care for people, bring communities together and support vulnerable people	26
Do not raise council tax/council tax should be levied based on services accessed	19
Support gyms, leisure centres and promote health, wellbeing and mental health	18
Encourage residents to take responsibility, work more closely with communities and with churches, TCCs and the third sector	16
Better planning of developments and improve car parking	14
Invest in digitalisation e.g. better website, remote working and remote delivery	11
Invest in children and schools	10

Theme	No.
Support all areas in the county borough	9
Improve transport, keep the bus station open, cycle lanes and taxi service	8
Limit the impact of Covid-19, communicate and enforce restrictions	8
Remember to support residents who are unable to access online services	5
Merge/work with neighbouring councils	2
Need to improve communication in BSL	2
Other services to keep open: libraries, cemeteries	2
Object to paying money to the Police and Crime Commissioner	2
Stop bilingual communication and save money	2

The most common themes were make internal saving i.e. number of staff and councillors, pay, expenses and review funded external partners followed by evaluate spending, provide value for money and provide more clarity on where money is spent and then need to be more prepared, improve transparency and make bold plans and decisions for the future.

8. Social media, email letter and telephone responses

During the consultation period there were 201 interactions on our social media channels, 122 of which were in response to the social media polls.

79 social media comments, three emails, one letter and two telephone calls have been themed and are detailed in the table below, some comments contained multiple themes:

Theme	No.
BCBC need to manage spending, stop funding Cardiff City Deal, be more transparent, make decisions and make internal savings	21
BCBC don't listen to residents/will do what they want	7
Stop building on green spaces (including Brackla fields)/ protect green spaces	6
Better planning, improve roads, pavements and the toilets at the bus station	5
Don't blame Covid-19 for cuts to services and increasing council tax	5
It will take more than a survey/survey should be more accessible	5
Not convinced Bridgend is fit for the future	5
Request for paper copies of the survey	5
Support businesses i.e. cut business rates and pay grants faster	4
Consultation query/share	4
Support vulnerable people i.e., the young, old, those in poverty and suffering mental health issues	4
More town centre support/development	3
The survey is an opportunity to have your say	3
Return the school bus service	2
Council is only interested in raising council tax	1
Help young people to get jobs from school/college	1
Use social media more to gain views	1
Pay cut for public sector workers	1

Theme	No.
Some council services are excellent	1
Some services do not respond when you contact them	1
Lack of public services - toilets	1
Request to be removed from Citizens' Panel	1
Get rid of the labour controlled council in Bridgend	1
Ruination of the regeneration of Porthcawl	1
Thank you for this significant initiative	1

The most common themes were BCBC need to manage spending, stop funding Cardiff City Deal, be more transparent, make decisions and make internal savings followed by BCBC don't listen to residents/will do what they want and then stop building on green spaces (including Brackla fields)/ protect green spaces.

9. Town and Community Council meetings and Elected Member's online workshops

The Consultation and Engagement Team attended nine Town and Community Council online meetings and engaged 39 BCBC members during two online workshops. Comments that were made during the meetings/workshops were noted and are detailed in the table below:

Theme	No.
BCBC have maintained services well during the pandemic	14
Questions around the consultation process and timeline	10
Have to remember those who are unable to access services online	8
Need to support businesses and town centres	8
Third Sector have done a good job during the pandemic and should be supported	8
Difficult to engage residents in the current climate, we will promote the consultation	7
Questions around Welsh Government funding and financial losses during the pandemic	7
Need to improve response times when someone contacts the council	6
Need to enforcement Covid-19 restrictions	4
Need to open civic for residents and support footfall in the town centre	4
Develop closer working with TCCs	3
A council tax increase would be difficult	2
Everything will be different going forward, we need to learn from our mistakes	2
Questions regarding council tax	2
A lot of residents have got concerns for Keir services	1
Access to the public toilets	1
Need to ring fence funding for education	1

The most common themes were BCBC have maintained services well during the pandemic followed by questions around the consultation process and timeline and then have to remember those who are unable to access services online, need to support businesses and

town centres and third Sector have done a good job during the pandemic and should be supported.

10. Youth Council meeting

The Consultation and Engagement Team attended the Youth Council online meeting. Comments that were made during the meeting were noted and are detailed in the table below:

Theme	No.
BCBC information is not always relevant to me, needs to be aimed more at young people in smaller chunks or videos and use social media platforms	15
Need to promote town centre/businesses/more shops but most people are shopping online now	14
Older people and digital poverty may mean people are not able to access services online, they need support to access these services and some prefer face to face interaction	12
Need to ensure vulnerable people are supported and can access services and ensure support continues after the pandemic	8
Need to support environmental projects such as renewable energy, eco infrastructure and electric car charging points	5
Commit to invest in our communities	1
Mental health support	1
Money spent on track and trace could be better spent on other things.	1

The most common themes were BCBC information is not always relevant to me, needs to be aimed more at young people in smaller chunks or videos and use social media platforms, followed by need to promote town centre/businesses/more shops but most people are shopping online now and then older people and digital poverty may mean people are not able to access services online, they need support to access these services and some prefer face to face interaction.

11. Conclusion

11.1   Responding to the pandemic

- Overall respondents stated that the council had performed well during the Covid-19 pandemic;

- When asked what services they had missed during lockdown respondents stated that the services that they had missed the most were community recycling centres, followed by gyms and or swimming pools and then parks and playing fields;

- When asked which maintained services should be a priority for the future respondents stated general waste and recycling collection services followed by street lighting including responding to street lighting faults and then domestic abuse support

- The majority of respondents stated that council staff working from home should be adopted as an approach for the future;

11.2 Business and the economy

- Overall respondents stated that support for local businesses, the promotion of the town centres and supporting the visitor economy and the sustainability of culture and leisure venues was important or very important;

- Respondents also stated that labour market opportunities and business start-up opportunities were important or very important;

- When asked if respondents had any other ideas about how the council should support local businesses respondents stated reduce business rates and rents followed by need to invest/regenerate the town centres and empty properties, encourage more shops, ensure cleanliness and reduce anti-social behaviour and then better and free car parking.

11.3 Health and wellbeing

- When asked which support services to help our most vulnerable residents the council should focus on as we recover from the pandemic overall respondents stated that support for older people, ensuring those who are homeless are kept safe as lockdown restrictions ease, food poverty, council tax support for residents who had difficulty paying their council tax as a direct result of the pandemic and support from community organisations were important or very important;

- The majority of respondents stated that the council should protect funding for the third sector.

11.4 Customer access to Civic Offices

- The majority of respondents stated that they had not missed coming into Civic Offices while it has been closed and when asked how they have accessed services while Civic Offices has been closed respondents stated the website, followed by telephone and then email;

- The majority of respondents did not think it should be a priority to reopen Civic Offices however they went on to say that when Civic Offices do reopen the council should move to an appointment based system.

11.5 Digitalisation

- The majority of respondents stated that when Civic Offices reopen they will continue to access services online, a further 20% of respondents stated that they always preferred to access services online;

- When asked what would help you or someone you know access services online the majority stated that they did not need any help accessing services online, this was followed by they would find printable 'how to' guides useful and then they would like to have videos on the Bridgend council website;

- The majority of respondents stated that they had not signed up to govDelivery, when asked why not the most common responses were was not aware of this service, followed by not needed/required/interested and then can find information independently through the internet, newspapers, social media, contacting the council etc.

11.6   Council tax levels

- When asked to select which statement best represents your views on setting the council tax for 2021-22 37% of respondents were prepared to increase council tax a bit to help protect the most important services where possible (4.5% increase), followed by 36% of respondents who stated to keep council tax levels the same level, which would result in a reduction in the level of services provided, followed by 19% of respondents who were prepared to increase council tax more significantly to protect more services (6% increase) and then 8% of respondents who were prepared to pay as much as is needed to maintain all council services at existing levels (16% increase).

11.7   The future

- When asked what do you think our long term priorities for the future should be respondents selected making in house efficiencies, followed by focussing on services that benefit everyone in the borough and then encouraging citizens to take more responsibility;

- When asked which three services the council should prioritise when recovering from the pandemic respondents most commonly chose care for older people, followed by schools and then recycling and waste;

- When asked what lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic should be considered when setting medium and long term funding priorities, respondents most commonly stated that the council should have an emergency fund, not waste money and make internal savings i.e. streamline services, review staff and councillors pay/expenses and review external contracts. This was followed by the need to have a caring society, support social services and vulnerable people including children, older people, disabled people, care homes, carers and homelessness and then for the council to plan and prepare for the future and be adaptable;

- When asked if respondents had any further comments to make Bridgend County Borough fit for the future respondents most commonly stated that the council should make internal savings i.e. review number of staff and councillors, pay, expenses and review funded external partners followed by evaluate spending, provide value for money and provide more clarity on where money is spent and then need to be more prepared, improve transparency and make bold plans and decisions for the future.

11.8   Summary

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic the response to the consultation demonstrated a significant decrease on previous years, with engagement being focussed online rather than face to face interactions and events within the community.

A total of 1421 survey responses were received, this demonstrates a decrease of 58% on last year's survey completions.

The consultation received a total of 1,831 interactions from a combination of survey completions, engagement at various meetings, social media engagement and via the authority's Citizens' Panel. This represents a decrease of 75% on last year's overall interactions.

Using statistical analysis, based on a confidence level of 95% a sample of 1,421 survey completions is considered to be robust to a maximum standard error of +2.59%. Therefore, we can be 95% confident that the responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, to within ±2.59% of the percentages reported.

This means that if the total adult population of Bridgend had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50% was observed, we can be 95% confident that the actual figure lies between 47.41% and 52.59%.

The consultation document was available in a variety of formats: standard; easy-read; large print and youth in Welsh and English. Respondents were able to select online or paper surveys in all formats.

The consultation and engagement team attended 15 online meetings during the live period resulting in 203 face to face interactions with people in online events.

This year respondents were taken to the govDelivery landing page on the BCBC website after completion of the survey. During the live period 216 people signed up to receive govDelivery notifications.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out in order to assess the impact of these proposals.

This report is to be shared with Cabinet in order to inform the MTFS for 2021-22 onwards.