Basildon Town Centre Regeneration

Early engagement results

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1. Survey context

The consultation took place between 9 June and 7 July 2021. A total of 2948 people participated in the survey. The survey took on average 21 mins to complete.

This sample size provides a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of + or - 1.79.

1.1 Age representation

Respondents aged 16 to 24 present the highest under-representation gap; the most over-represented group was aged 60 to 64.

The age bands were grouped into further categories for this analysis, based on life stages:

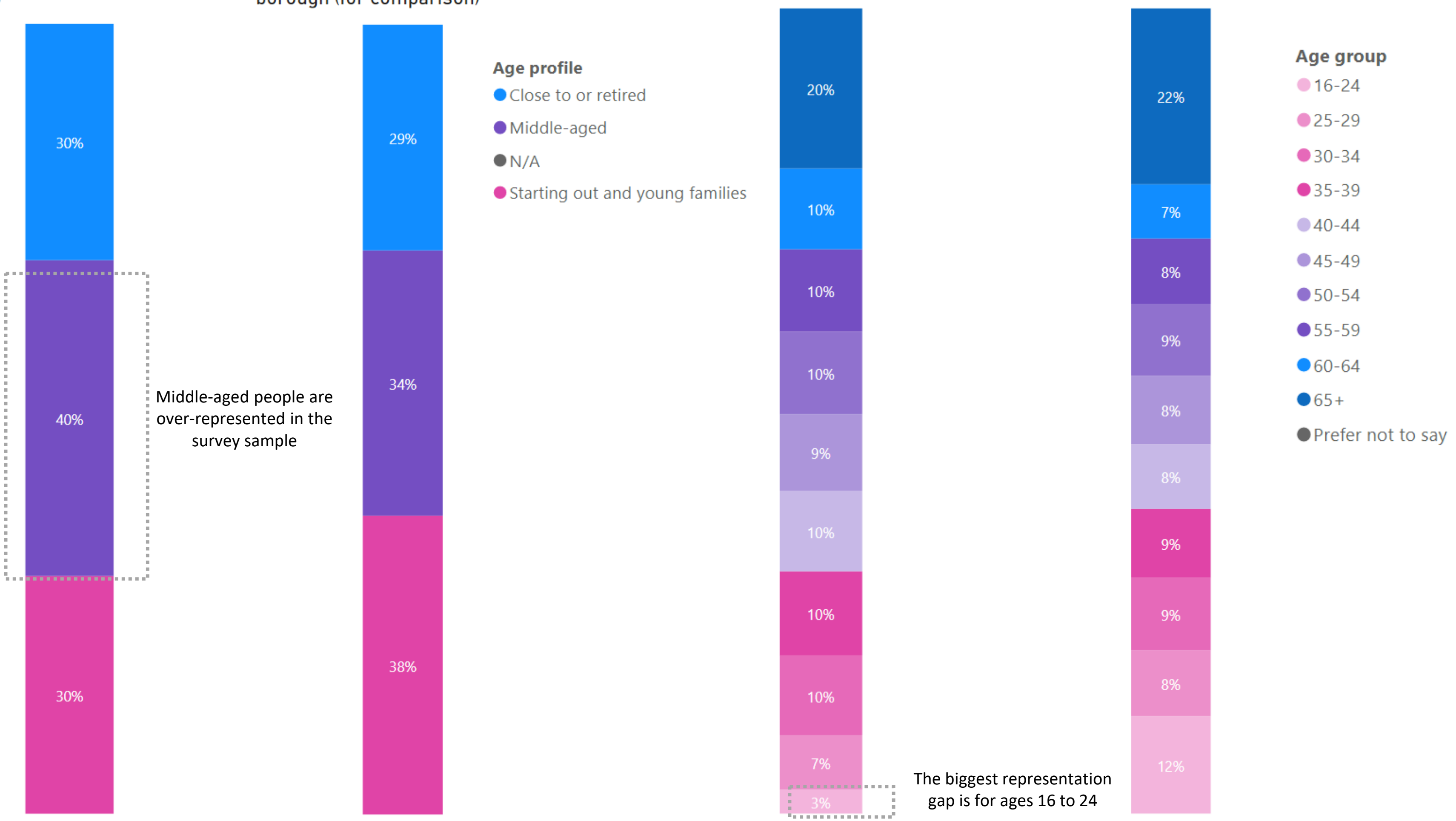
- Starting out and young families – ages 16 to 39 (representing 30% of the sample)
- Middle-aged – ages 40 to 59 (40% of respondents)
- Close to or retired – people aged over 60 (30% of respondents)

2021 Survey representation by age categories

2019 Age categories across the borough (for comparison)

2021 Survey representation by age groups

2019 Age groups across the borough (for comparison)



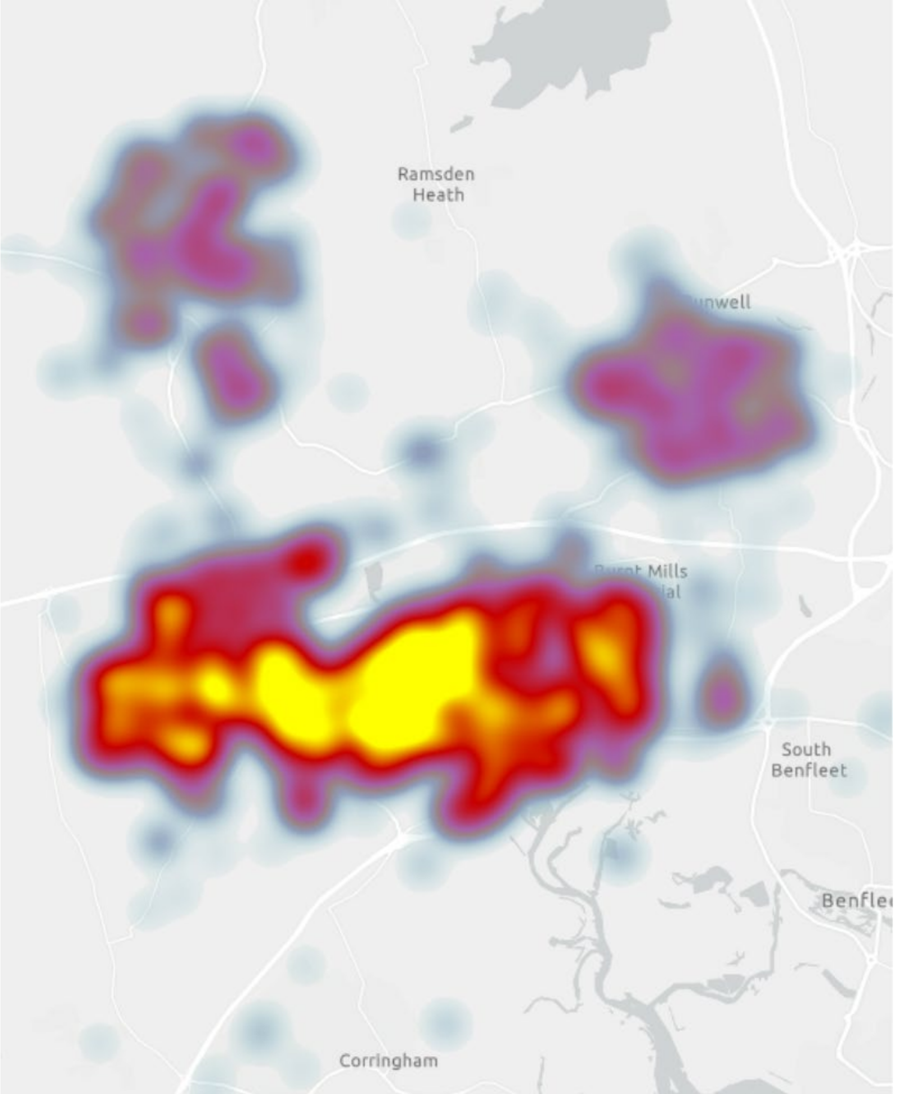
The # of respondents who have not completed their age have been removed (210 out of a total of 2 948)

1.2 Location representation

The survey responses had over-representation from the towns of Basildon and Laindon, with Billericay and Wickford being under-represented.

For 9% of respondents, the location could not be identified (either because they reside outside the borough or the postcode information was not provided accurately).

Town	# respondents	# residents aged 16+ (2019)	% respondents	% residents aged 16+ (2019)	Representation difference (ppt)
Basildon	1024	37762	35%	26%	9
N/A	258		9%		9
Laindon	697	28800	24%	20%	4
Pitsea	372	20246	13%	14%	-1
Billericay	263	28439	9%	19%	-10
Wickford	334	32408	11%	22%	-11
Total	**2948**	**147655**	**100%**	**100%**	**0**



2. General summary of findings

The survey findings indicate that 71% of respondents intend to continue to be a resident of Basildon Borough in the next 5 years.

Overall, survey respondents view the Basildon town centre primarily as a shopping destination. Findings on the need for improving the retail offer are consistent across several themes:

- potential activity offers - Q8, 85% of respondents said shopping is the top activity they would pursue if the offer was available
- new design considerations - 88% of survey respondents ranked ‘new shops’ within their top three options (Q12)
- shops have also been mentioned as the main attraction when asked about reasons for visiting other town centres (Q4, 41% of respondents) and improving the visit frequencies to Basildon town centre (Q7, 47% of respondents said ‘shops’ would make them visit more frequently).

When respondents were asked imagine they were re-designing the town centre (Q6), the top three activities listed were: creating green and open spaces (63%), increasing the retail offer (61%) and opening more businesses (65%). In a related question, shopping was named as the top activity that respondents would pursue if the offer was available (85%), followed by visiting more green and open spaces (64%) and visiting at night time for entertainment and restaurants (61%).

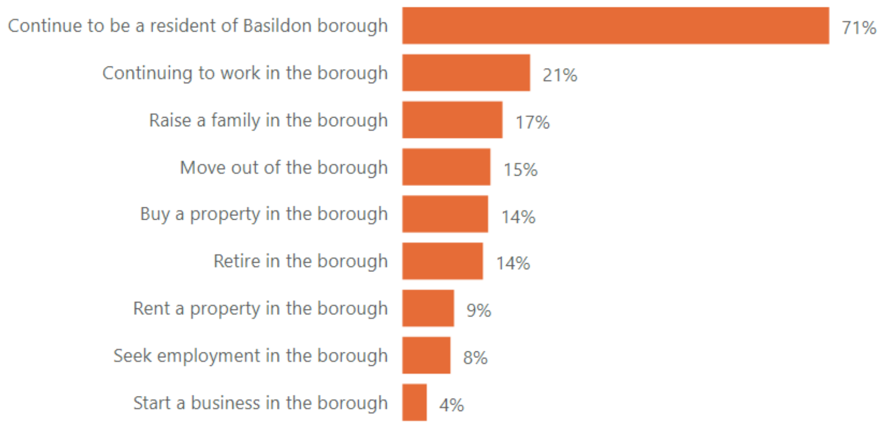
When respondents were asked to image they were designing the town centre for the future (Q12), creating a new look and style for the town centre was ranked in their top three choices by 76% of respondents; this was followed by enhancing the appearance (68% of respondents ranked this in their top three choices) and maintaining the New Town look and feel (52% of respondents ranked this in their top three choices).

For Q13, the height of buildings was amongst some of the lowest ranked, in comparison to other design choices (only 37% of respondents chose it as one of their top three priorities). However, responses from Q14, Q15 and Q17 (which focus specifically on height) indicate polarised views on the significance of heights.

Interpretation of results. Although there are several questions which are similarly formulated, the options offered for respondents are slightly different each time. For example Q6, Q8 and Q12 ask respondents about general design, but some focus more on built environment options, others on activities, and at the same time there is overlap between these choices. It is therefore difficult to compare the results accurately, since respondents can only rank existing options on offer, rather than offer their own system of priorities.

Therefore, the survey results should only be considered as a starting point for further conversations with residents in terms of defining the programme of activities and the design for the town centre.

In the next 5 years, do you plan to do any of the following: (tick all that apply to you)



3.1 Visiting frequency

57% of the total respondents visit the town centre frequently (weekly or more). Of these, the majority are likely to reside in Basildon or Laindon and have a lower median household income than those who visit less often or not at all.

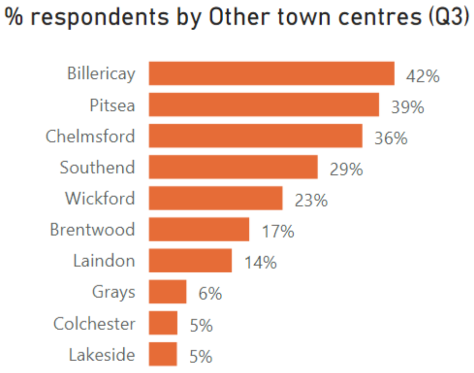
In terms of what attracts respondents to other town centres, the items with the highest percentage of respondents were: **'shops' (41%), 'parking'(10%), 'variety' (10%), 'restaurants' (8%)**. Regarding **parking preferences**, 16% of those who visit monthly, occasionally or never mentioned it, compared to only 7% of those who visit weekly or more.

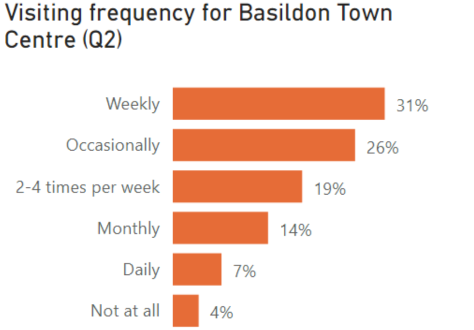
When respondents were asked directly what would attract them more to the Basildon town centre, the same top items were listed: **'shops' (47%), 'parking' (15%), 'restaurants'(13%), 'variety' (7%).**

Therefore, **the shopping offer is the biggest town centre attraction for respondents**; this is supported by parking and other activities, but to a lesser extent.

What do you like most about this town/these towns selected? (Q4)

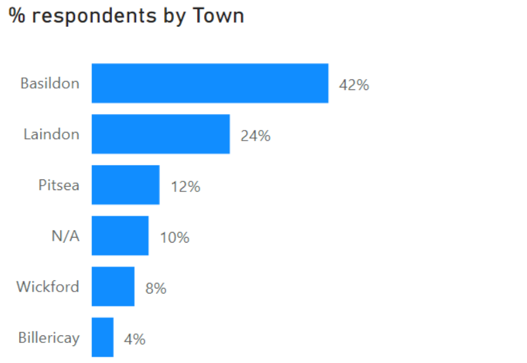
All respondents

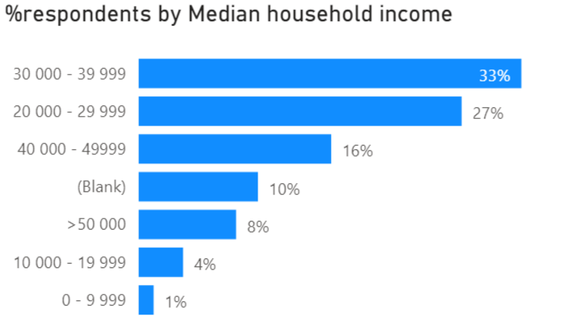


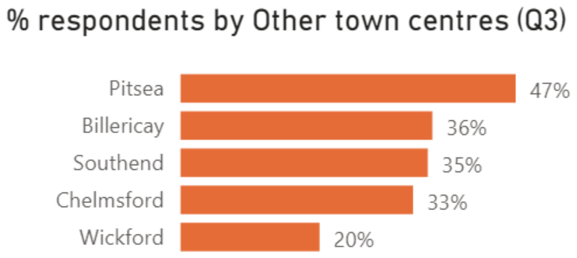


What would make you visit Basildon Town Centre more often? (Q7)

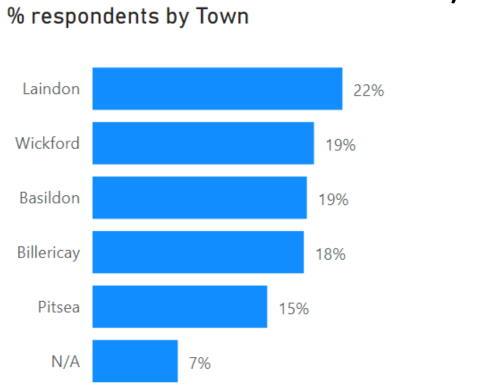
Profile – those who visit frequently (weekly or more)

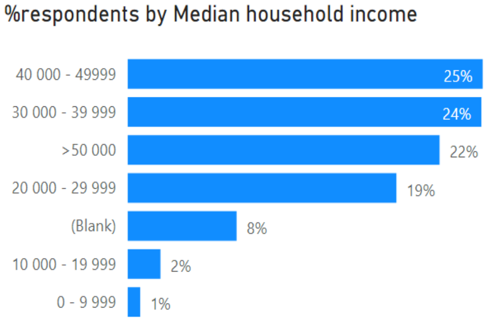


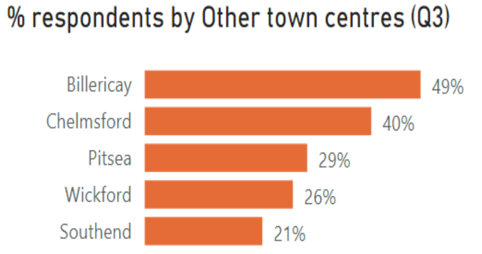




Profile – those who visit infrequently (occasionally, monthly or not at all)







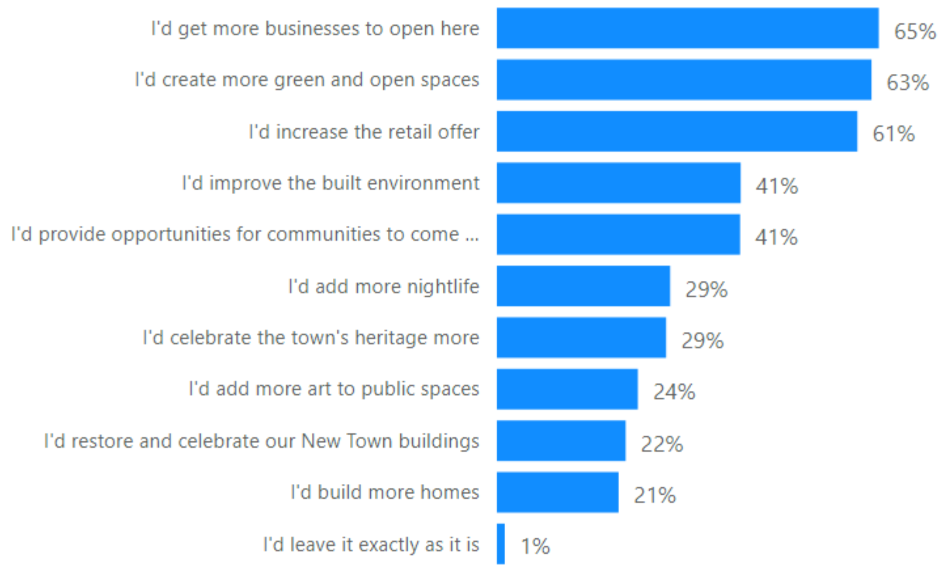
3.2 General design - activity elements

Shopping is the top activity that respondents would pursue if the offer was available (85%), followed by **visiting more green and open spaces** (64%) and **visiting at night time for entertainment and restaurants** (61%). These remain the top three choices across age profiles and location, although in different proportions (Q8).

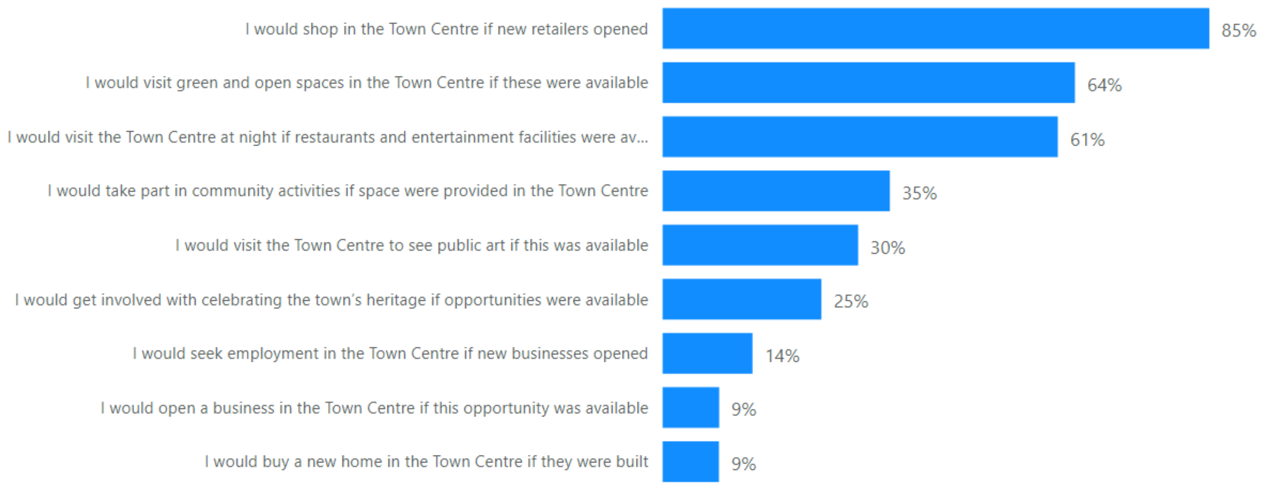
Seeking employment from new businesses (14%), opening a business (9%) or buying a new home (9%) are the least popular options (Q8). The highest interest for these aspects is within the age range of 16 – 39, where interest for seeking employment within the town centre increases to 23%, buying a home increases to 19% and opening a business to 14%.

In a related question (Q6), whereby respondents were asked imagine they were re-designing the town centre, the top three activities listed were similar - **creating green and open spaces** (63%), **increasing the retail offer** (61%) and **opening more businesses** (65%). The responses from this question suggest that residents would prefer to see a more active town centre (through the opening of more businesses, increased retail offer, improvements to the build environment and more activities for communities to come together). In contrast, adding more nightlife was chosen by only 29% of respondents and building homes was the second least popular (21%, Q6).

If you were redesigning Basildon Town Centre, what would you change or do to make it better? (Q6, select up to 5)



Do any of the below statements apply to you? (Q8, Tick all that apply)



3.2 General design - activity elements

Designing the town centre for the future

1st **- new shops -** Overall, 88% of survey respondents chose this within their top three. This ranks as the highest priority, regardless of age, median household income or location factors.

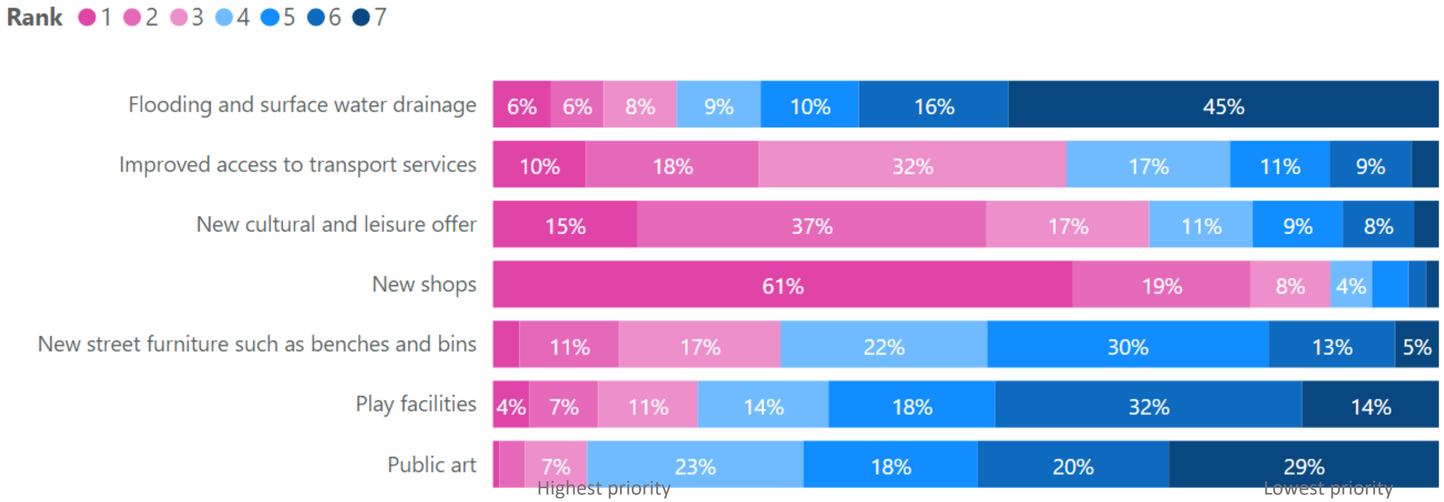
2nd **- new cultural an leisure offer** (69% of survey respondents chose this within their top three).

3rd **- improved access to transport services** (60% of survey respondents chose this within their top three).

The high ranking for new shops, alongside a new cultural and leisure offer is consistent with the activity elements considered thus far.

Although improved access to transport services also ranks highly, it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean increasing parking provision only –when asked an open question about what would improve their visit frequency (Q7), parking was only mentioned by 15% of the total respondents. Therefore, aspects such as public transport, street connectivity and active travel should be investigated further to inform development.

If you were designing Basildon Town Centre for the future, which things from the list below would you give greatest priority in your design? (Q12 ranking preferences)



3.3 General design – aesthetic principles

Within the context of design, the **highest priorities are:**

1st - **creating a new look and style** for the town centre (76% of respondents ranked this in their top three choices).

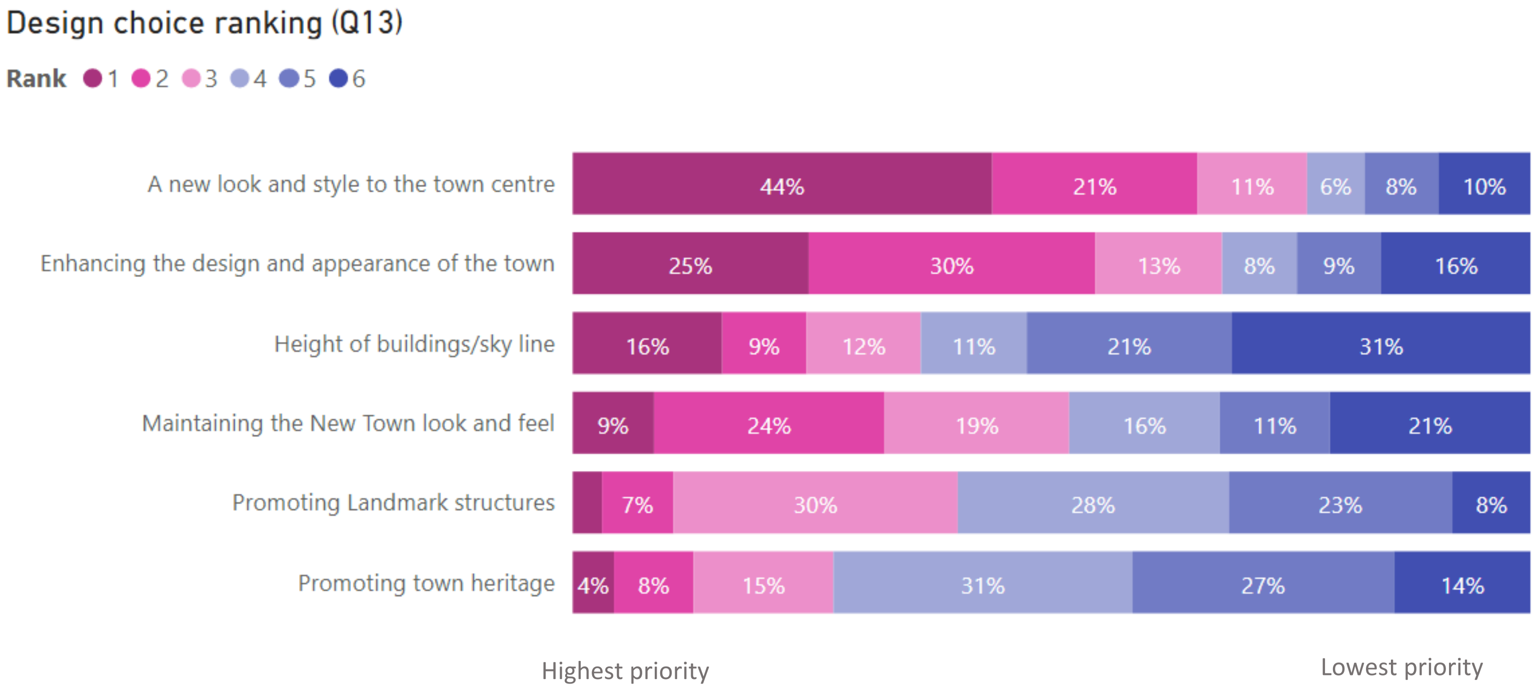
2nd - **enhancing the appearance** (68% of respondents ranked this in their top three choices).

3rd - **maintaining the New Town look and feel** (52% of respondents ranked this in their top three choices).

The **height of buildings** was amongst some of the **lowest ranked** - ranked by 37% of respondents chose it as one of their top three priorities. The least interest was also recorded for **promoting the town's heritage.**

This suggests that respondents value a contemporary style in terms of aesthetics for the design of the built environment. The contextual approach is a close second.

Conversely, the promotion of landmark buildings and the emphasis on the height of buildings are less important within this context.



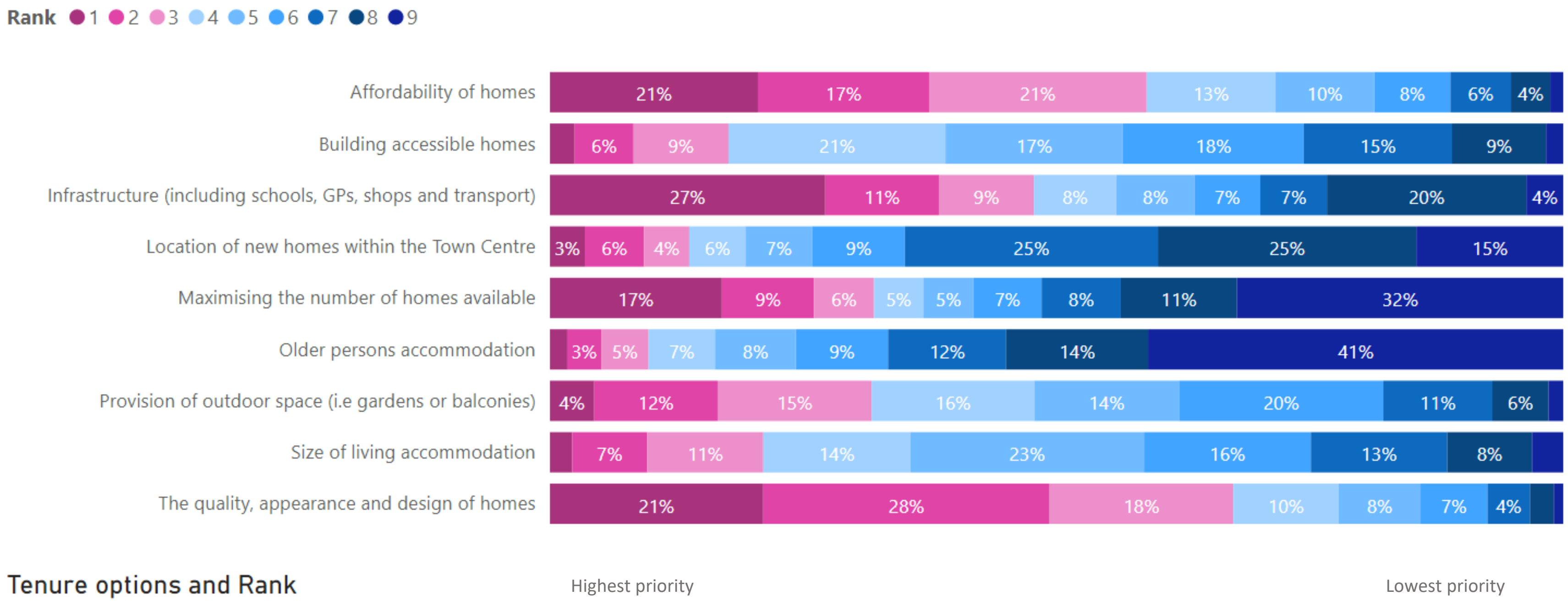
3.4 Specific design – housing

When considering priorities if new homes were built in the town centre, ‘Quality and appearance’, ‘affordability of homes’ and ‘infrastructure’ ranked highly.

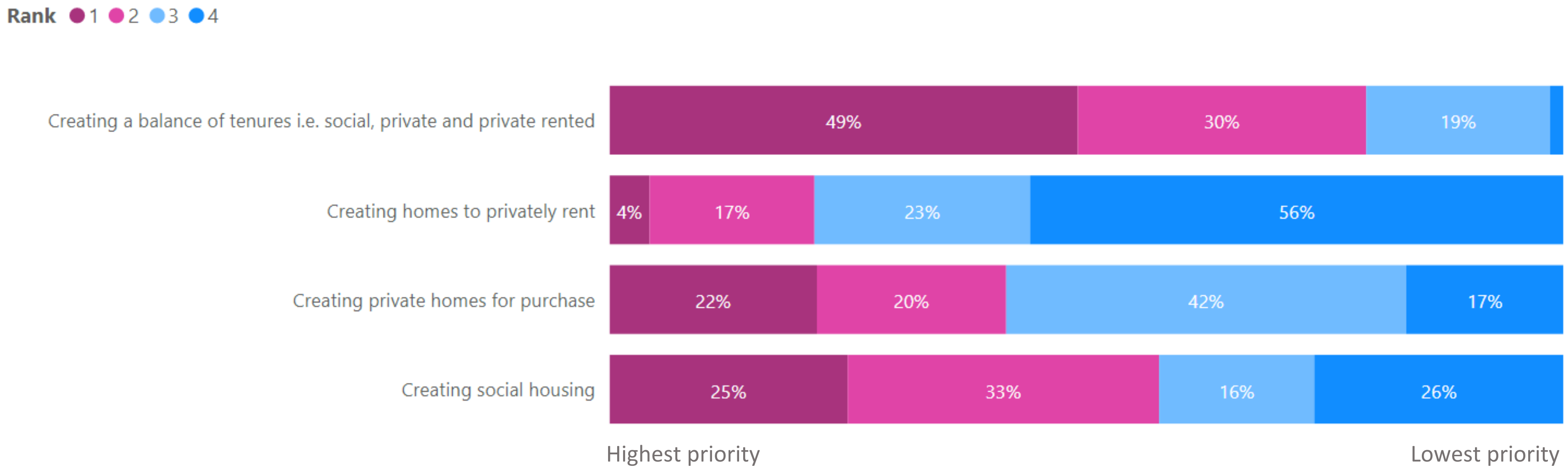
56% of participants felt new homes in the town centre should exceed the Government published Technical Housing Standards 2015.

Creating a balance of tenures for new homes was overwhelming supported as the greatest priority.

Housing criteria and Rank



Tenure options and Rank



The Government published Technical Housing Standards in 2015 (https://bit.ly/3iqad8N). Please read these standards and tell me which statement below best represents your views? (Pick one option)	% respondents
New homes in the town centre should exceed national quality standards	56%
New homes in the town centre should meet national quality standards	36%
It would be acceptable for new homes in the town centre not need to meet national quality standards	4%
	3%

3.5 Specific design – height criteria

When asked specifically about building heights, the top 3 principles that received the most support were:

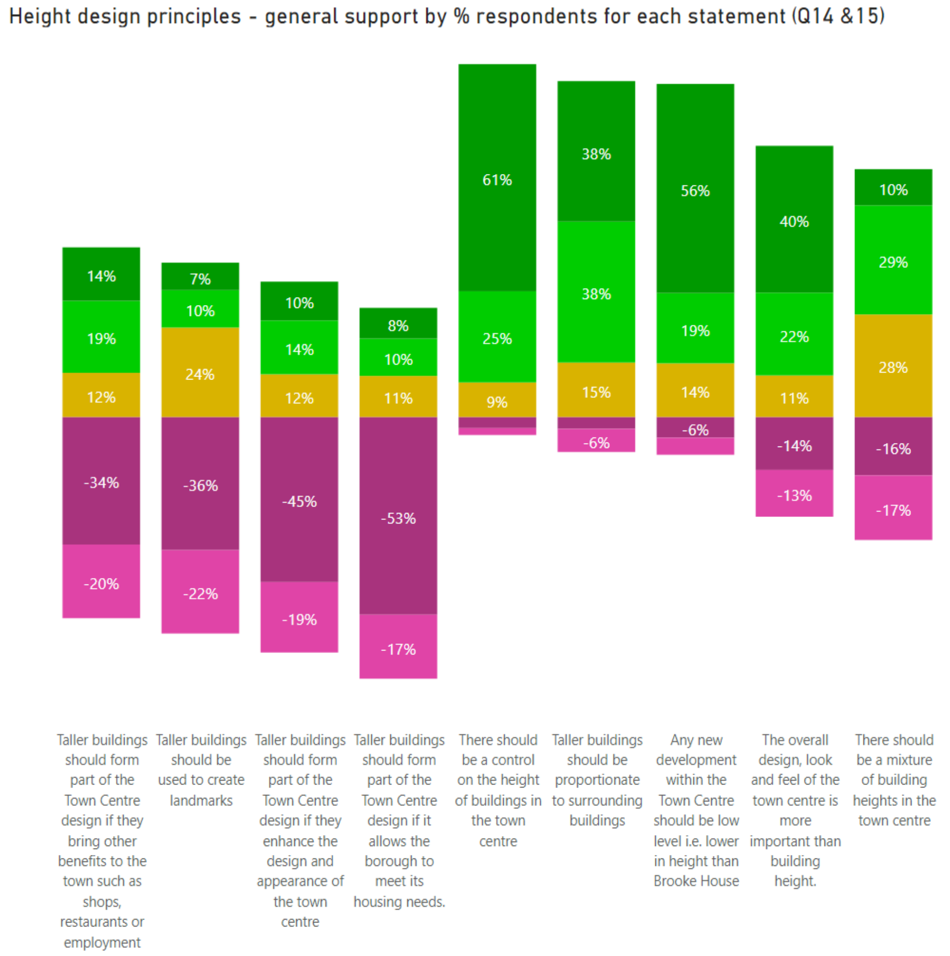
- *There should be control on the height of buildings in the town centre* (79% support or strongly support this)
- *Taller buildings should be proportionate to surrounding buildings* (74% support or strongly support this)
- *Any new development should be low level* (68% support or strongly support this)

The development of tall buildings based on borough housing needs received the least support (62% are against or strongly against).

When compared to other towns, respondents from Basildon present an increased concern around statements that favour of heights, regardless of economic or design considerations.

All respondents

Basildon only



3.5 Specific design – height criteria

In terms of age profiles, the biggest differences are noted in the ‘starting out and young families’ category (ages 16 to 39, which represent 28% of the total respondents for this question).

Support for tall buildings on design considerations (to enhance appearance or as landmarks) is less polarised.

There is also increased support for taller buildings when considering economic benefits such as shops (59% support this vs 43%) or the borough’s housing need (39% support vs 24%).

All ages

Height design principles - general support by % respondents for each statement (Q14 &15)

Starting out in life and young families (aged 16 to 39)

Height design principles - general support by % respondents for each statement (Q14 &15)

Value - general preferences
- Overall against
- Neutral
- Overall support

3.6 Specific design – height estimates

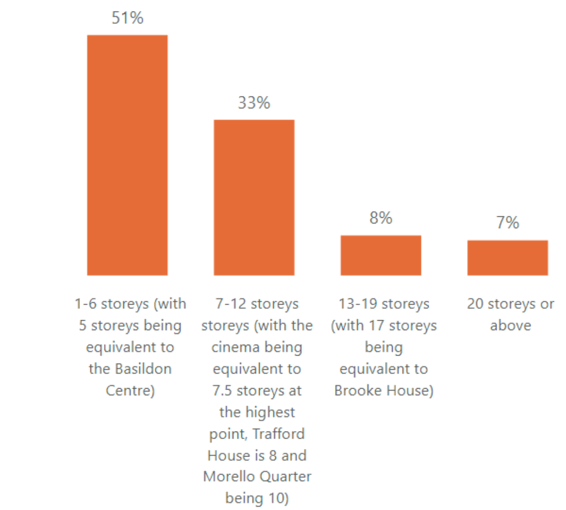
84% of the total respondents prefer developments between 1 to 12 storeys; this category includes a higher proportion of residents who are middle-aged or close to retirement.

Of the remaining 16%, the demographic is younger and property aspirations rank second or third in their plans for the next 5 years.

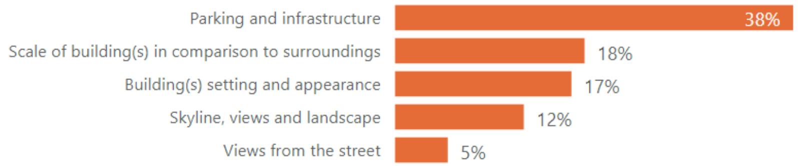
'Parking and infrastructure' was noted as the most important consideration for 38% of participants, if taller buildings were to be built in the town centre.

All respondents

Acceptable heights (% respondents, Q16)

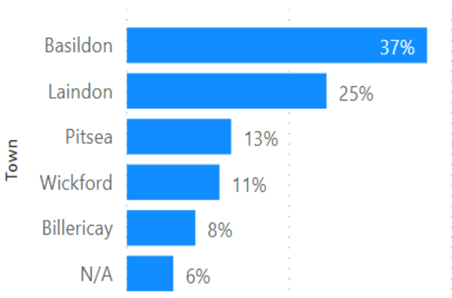


Considerations for tall buildings (top 5 choices, Q17)

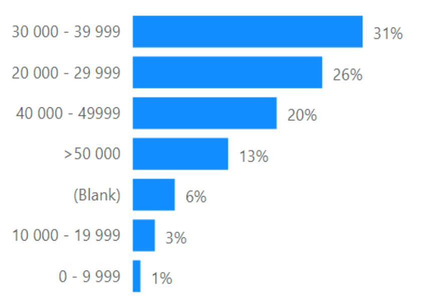


Profile – respondents who favour low heights (1 to 12 storeys)

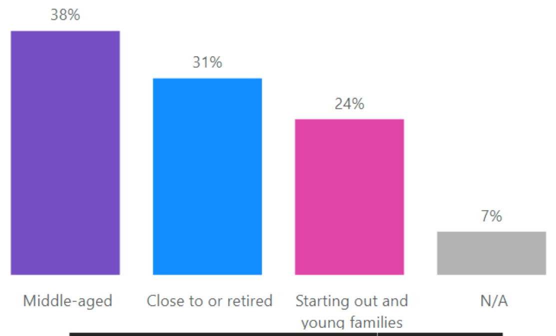
% respondents by town



Median household income (% respondents)



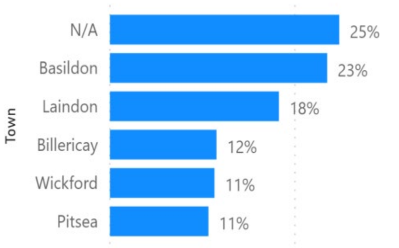
% respondents by age profile



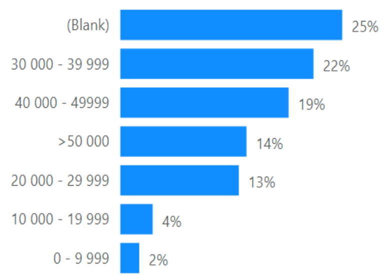
In the next 5 years, do you plan to do any of the following: (tick all that apply to you)	% respondents
Continue to be a resident of Basildon borough	75%
Continuing to work in the borough	21%
Raise a family in the borough	16%
Move out of the borough	15%
Retire in the borough	15%
Buy a property in the borough	12%
Seek employment in the borough	8%
Rent a property in the borough	5%
Start a business in the borough	4%

Profile – respondents who favour tall buildings (above 12 storeys)

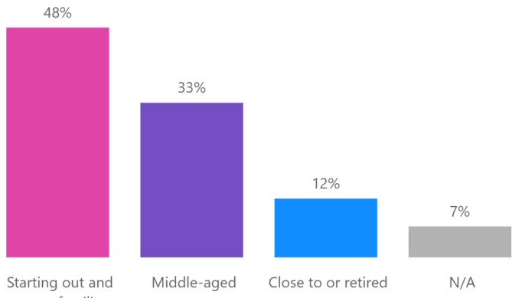
% respondents by town



Median household income (% respondents)



% respondents by age profile



In the next 5 years, do you plan to do any of the following: (tick all that apply to you)	% respondents
Continue to be a resident of Basildon borough	54%
Buy a property in the borough	29%
Rent a property in the borough	27%
Continuing to work in the borough	22%
Raise a family in the borough	21%
Move out of the borough	11%
Seek employment in the borough	10%
Retire in the borough	6%
Start a business in the borough	5%