

**BODY:** SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 10 December 2012

**SUBJECT:** Corporate Plan - 2013/14 Refresh – Public Consultation and Timetable

**REPORT OF:** Peter Finnis – Head of Corporate Development

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**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose:** To present the findings of the public consultation exercise and set out the timetable for producing the 2013/14 version of the Corporate Plan.

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**Recommendations:** 1. That the committee note the findings of the public consultation exercise and the proposed timetable for the 2013/14 and make any specific comments or recommendations to the Cabinet.

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## **1.0 Background/Introduction**

- 1.1 In keeping with the practice first established in 2010, a specific public consultation exercise in respect of testing the current and future corporate plan priorities has been undertaken.
- 1.2 For the last two years, consultation has taken place primarily face-to-face with specifically targeted and open invitation groups. This has resulted in some high quality feedback but with relatively low numbers participating. Therefore, the primary objective this year has been to undertake a light-touch consultation but to increase the number of feedback responses and potentially reach new and different audiences.

## **2.0 The Public Consultation Exercise**

- 2.1 The consultation exercise, undertaken this year was primarily online via a questionnaire using the survey tool "survey monkey". The link to this survey was sent out to a wide variety of individual email contacts and databases held by the Council including community and business contacts with requests for the survey link to be forwarded to their contacts. However, in recognition that there are still significant numbers of the population who are not able to use or

access online tools, the survey questionnaire was also made available in hard copy at the two main customer service points at 1 Grove Road and the Town Hall. The presence of the consultation was advertised in the local media and on the Council's social media pages and ran for 12 weeks from early August.

- 2.2 In addition to the survey questionnaire, we staffed a consultation display at a youth fair event on 29 October at the Winter Gardens where young people were shown a display of current priority projects and activities and were invited to consider them and rate the top 3 in order of importance from their perspective. In addition, they had a free-form opportunity to suggest new ideas for the Council to consider.
- 2.3 As in previous years, the consultation focused on priority objectives and projects in the three outward delivery corporate priority themes of prosperous economy, quality environment and thriving communities. A total of 254 people completed the survey questionnaire and a further 17 hard copy questionnaires were received. In addition, a total of 41 young people primarily in the 10-18 years age range made contributions at the youth fair. This means a total of 312 people participated in this year's consultation. This compares to overall totals of 142 people in 2011 and 157 people in 2010.
- 2.4 It is interesting to note that, from an age perspective, there has been a demonstrable shift in the profile of respondents this year. In the last two years we did not record this but as the consultations were primarily face-to-face, it was apparent that the vast majority of participants were in the over 50 age range. This year, we collated age range data and, as can be seen in the appendix, there has been a significant shift to a younger age range among this year's respondents.

This shift may be a factor as to the variations between current and previous years in top priority selections but, equally, it is important to note that there are still considerable similarities in top-line results with previous years despite the change in audience.

### **3.0 Objectives and Outcomes**

- 3.1 It is important that we maintain annual 'health check' consultation in respect of the corporate plan in order to be able to demonstrate that priority activity has been set with the knowledge of up to date community evidence.
- 3.2 Full details of the responses to the survey and from the youth fair event are set out in the appendix with headline results summarised in paragraph 4 below. Although, this year's consultation exercise is not directly comparable with 2010 and 2011, it is useful to show the variation in top 3 priorities that have emerged in those past years compared with the current results.

3.3 Although it is acknowledged that this has been a relatively light-touch form of consultation, it does, for the third year running, give as many people as possible the opportunity to comment and contribute to the Council's priority setting agenda. It also maintains the important annual testing of our priority actions, and it has been achieved at negligible cost, a factor which is important in the current economic climate.

#### 4.0 Headlines and Comparisons

4.1 Within the prosperous economy theme, the top three prioritised issues among respondents to the survey and their comparisons with 2010 and 2011 were:

	2012	2011	2010
1.	Creation of jobs	Town centre re-development	Town centre re-development
2.	Youth employment	Development of events programme	Creation of jobs, eg: Science Park
3.	Improved public transport links	Youth employment, eg: Activating Eastbourne	Development of events programme

4.2 Within the quality environment theme, the top three prioritised issues among respondents to the survey and their comparisons with 2010 and 2011 were:

	2012	2011	2010
1.	Street and public area cleaning	Street and public area cleaning	Waste management
2.	Parks enhancement and preservation	Waste management	Green Transport – Park and Ride and Cycling Strategy
3.	Tackling derelict sites	Parks enhancement and preservation	Tackling derelict sites

4.3 Within the thriving communities theme, the top three prioritised issues among respondents to the survey and their comparisons with 2010 and 2011 were:

	2012	2011	2010
1.	Reducing crime levels	Youth facilities provision	Youth facilities provision
2.	Youth facilities provision	Cultural provision	Provision of decent and affordable homes
3.	Decent and affordable homes	Housing – decent homes, solar panels, Extra Care Scheme	Continue benefits service improvements

4.4 In consideration of the current priority projects across all the

corporate themes, the top three prioritised issues among respondents to the survey and their comparisons with 2010 and 2011 were:

	2012	2011	2010
1.	Town centre re-development	Town centre re-development	Town centre re-development
2.	Transport – public transport and cycling provision	Youth provision	Youth provision
3.	Street and public area cleaning	Waste management, Street and public area cleaning, and Parks enhancement and preservation	Waste management

4.5 Arising from the youth fair event, the top three prioritised issues across all the priority themes among respondents and their comparisons with 2010 and 2011 were:

	2012	2011	2010
1.	Public Transport and cycling	Town centre re-development	Youth facilities provision
2.	Youth facilities provision	Housing – decent homes, solar panels, Extra Care Scheme	Town centre re-development
3.	Waste management	Youth facilities provision Cultural provision Waste management Support for vulnerable families Support for local businesses	Waste management

4.6 In terms of overall summary headlines, it is possible to highlight the following key messages:

- Total responses to the consultation are around double the response rate of previous years
- Significant increase in responses from under 18s and the 30-50 age group
- Town centre redevelopment is still the highest priority single project by a significant margin
- Creation of jobs (both generally and for youth) show increased prioritisation –possibly reflecting current economic situation
- Reducing crime levels shows increased prioritisation – possibly reflecting recent local major incidents

- “Leisure activity” priorities such as cultural provision and sport facilities show reduced prioritisation – possibly due to being seen as non-essential in difficult economic times
- “Pleasant place” priorities such as street cleaning, decent and affordable homes, tackling derelict sites, and preserving parks and open spaces remain significant priorities for Eastbourne residents
- Across all 19 corporate priority theme subject areas, 13 polled a highest response rate of “very important” and the remaining 6 polled a highest response rate of “important”
- The highest polled scores of “very important” were 66% for improved job opportunities generally, 64% for improved youth employment opportunities and 58% for improved public transport
- Across all priority theme areas, 84% of respondents considered that the Council’s current choice and range of priorities are important or very important

## **5.0 The Corporate Plan Timetable**

5.1 The primary purpose behind the consultation was to provide evidence of priority needs to help us determine the most appropriate priority activity in the next edition of the corporate plan. The timetable for refreshing the corporate plan for 2013/14 has been agreed as part of the wider service and financial planning timetable but the key parts can be extracted as follows:

- During January - Senior Heads of Service in liaison with Cabinet portfolio holders to draft key projects for 2013/14 refreshed corporate plan theme chapters
- End of January - Leadership Team to agree draft priorities for 2013/14 corporate plan
- February to April - Finalising of refreshed Corporate Plan chapters for 2013/14
- May - Cabinet to receive and approve refreshed Corporate Plan for recommendation onto Council
- July - Council final ratification of 2013/14 refreshed Corporate Plan

NOTE: In non local election years, the final approval process for the corporate plan would be through March and April. However, consistent with previous years and in recognition of the presence of County Council elections in May 2013, final ratification of the plan is deferred to the first cycle of 2013/14.

5.2 It is important that, in determining the content of the corporate plan for 2013/14, we can be confident that the priority activity listed has taken account of:

1. Maintaining consistency towards stated long-term ambitions
2. The outcomes/progress of ongoing 2012/13 priority projects
3. Developing data from Local Futures

4. The messages arising from the public consultation exercise
5. Decisions taken as a result of service and financial planning

Senior Heads of Service and Cabinet portfolio holders will be assisted in this activity by information supplied by Strategic Development.

## **6.0 Financial and Probity Implications**

- 6.1 Other than officer time, the only financial costs relating to the public consultation exercise was in respect of survey subscriptions and printing resulting in nominal total costs of less than £300. By way of comparison, when the Council used to maintain a Citizens Panel of 1000 people with a typical response rate to a consultation being around 250 to 300, the cost of using the panel was in the region of £7,000. There are no probity implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 Equality Considerations**

- 7.1 A key driver in all our consultation has been the objective of making it as accessible to as many people as possible. Special interest groups from across the community, voluntary and business sectors were identified and provided with survey links, hard copy responses were enable for those who do not have access to online facilities and the hard to reach youth sector was specifically targeted at the youth event.

## **8.0 Consultation**

- 8.1 Public consultation outcomes are as shown in the appendix to this report and at paragraph 4 above.
- 8.2 Any specific comments or recommendations from this committee will be reported verbally to the Cabinet at its meeting on 12 December.

## **9.0 Summary**

- 9.1 The consultation exercise undertaken is a key element in further demonstrating the Council's commitment to using evidence and engagement to enhance its knowledge in setting priority activities.
- 9.2 The availability of robust and comprehensive feedback from across the community together with improvements to the use of the Local Futures data provides a solid basis for continuing our improvement journey in respect of corporate planning and strategic direction.

**Peter Finnis**  
**Head of Corporate Development**

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**Background Papers:**

- 2012/13 Corporate Plan
- Presentational material used at consultation sessions
- Individual feedback received from participants
- Comparative consultation results from 2010 and 2011

The above background papers are available for inspection from the report author whose contact details are set out at the front of this report.

(cabinet/corp-plan-consultation/12-12-12)

**Appendix**

## Corporate Plan 2013/14 Refresh - Consultation Responses

### Response Numbers

Online Survey via "Survey Monkey"	254
Hard Copy Survey Questionnaires from EBC Reception Points	17
Youth Fair Feedback	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312</b>

### Profile

Respondents were asked for the areas where they live so that we can see if there are any particular areas of the town where we are getting significantly more/less feedback. The results were as follows:

BN20 area	15%
BN21 area	27%
BN22 area	23%
BN23 area	16%
Other (outside town)	19%
<b>NOTE:</b> This data does not include those respondents from the youth fair	

Respondents to the survey were also asked about their relationship to the town, ie, whether they live or work in Eastbourne, or both. The results were:

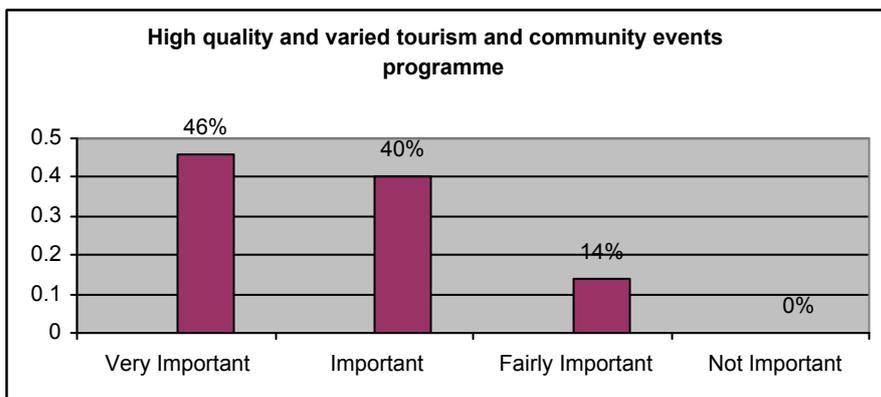
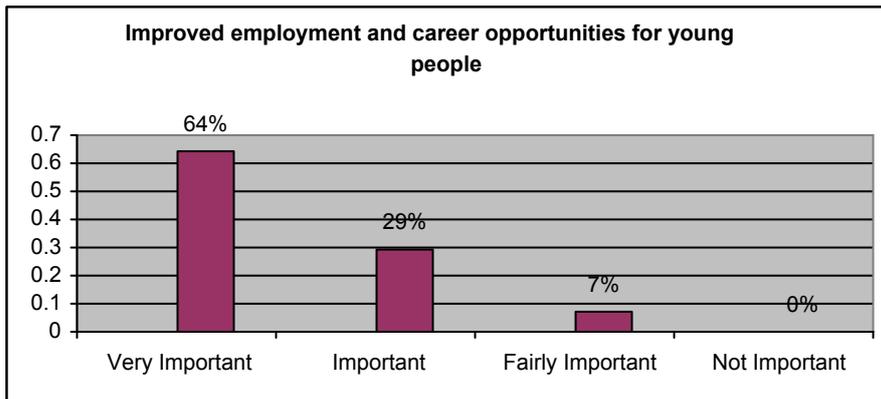
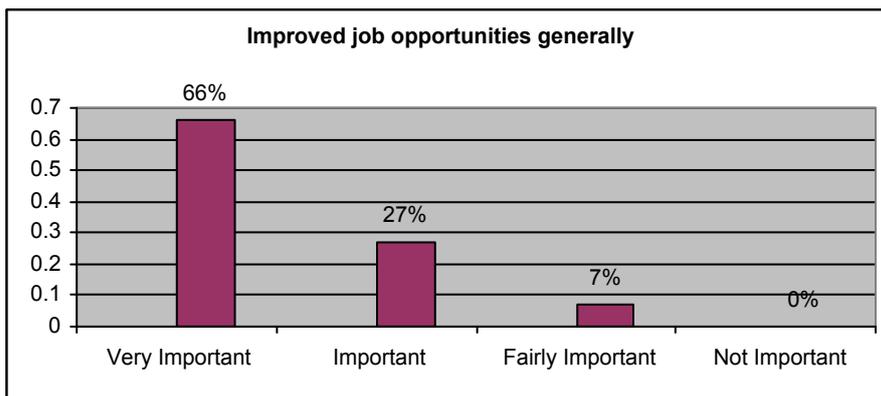
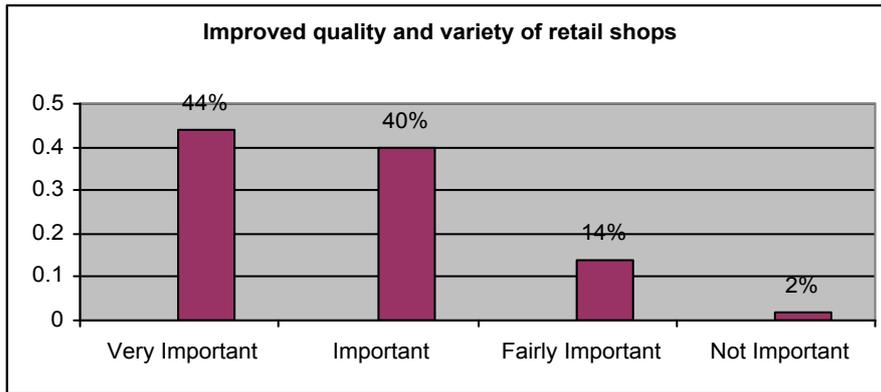
Live in Eastbourne	32%
Work in Eastbourne	17%
Both live and work in Eastbourne	51%
<b>NOTE:</b> This data does not include those respondents from the youth fair	

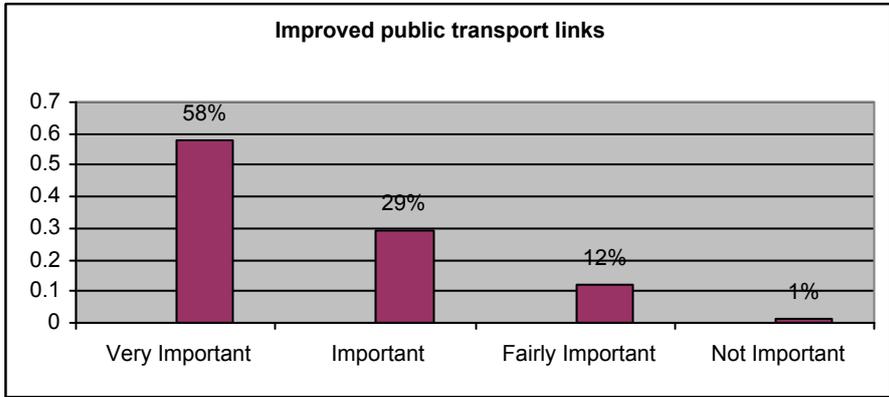
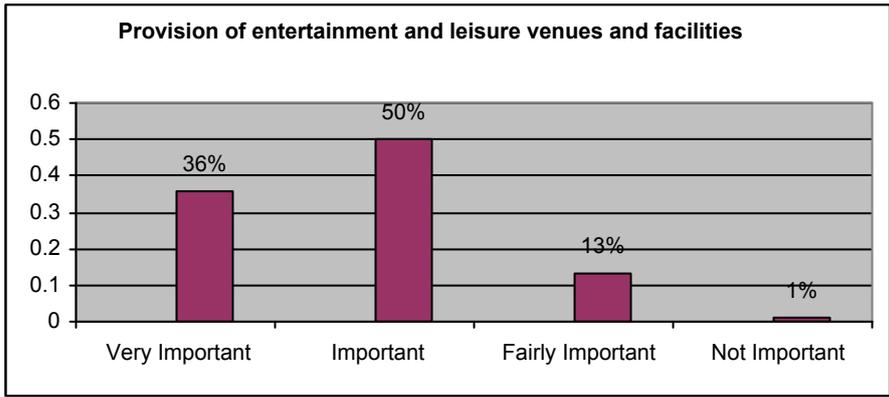
Respondents were also asked what age range they were in. The results were:

Under 18	14%
18 to 30	6%
30 to 50	42%
Over 50	37%
<b>NOTE:</b> This data includes respondents from the youth fair event	

### Corporate Priority Theme – Prosperous Economy

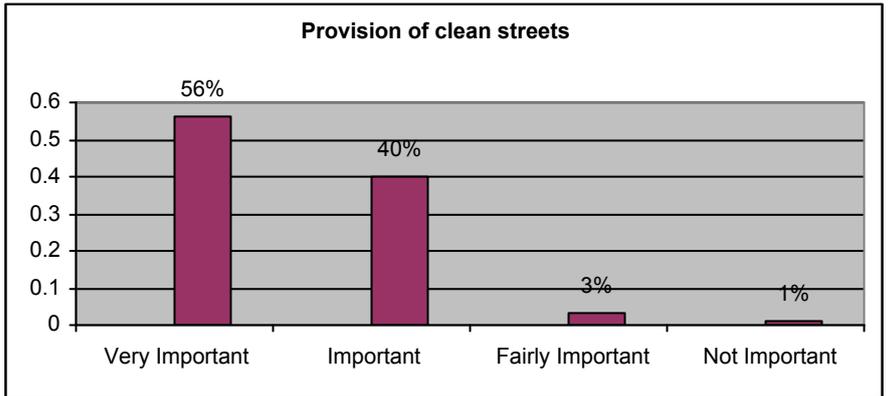
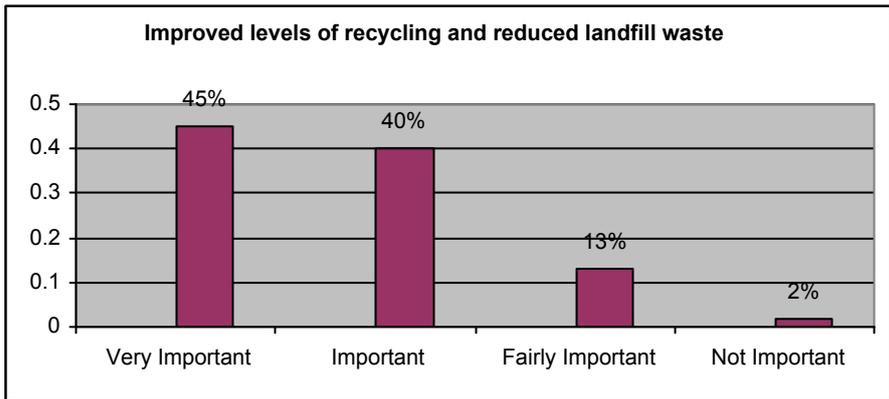
Participants were asked to rate the following economic prosperity objectives on a 4-point scale from very important to not important:

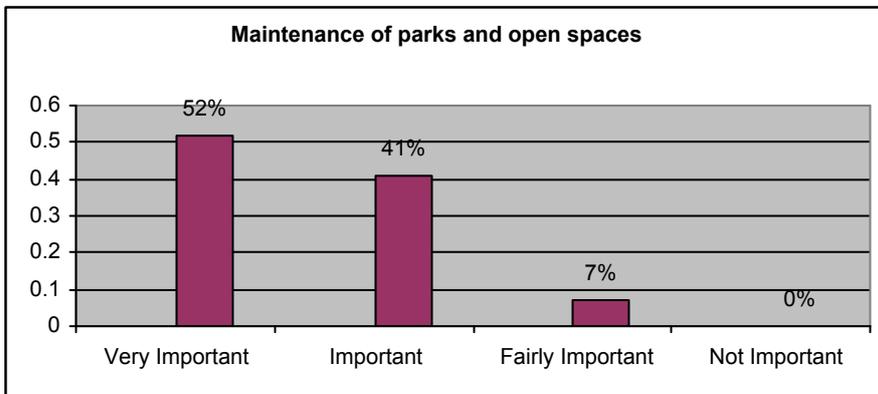
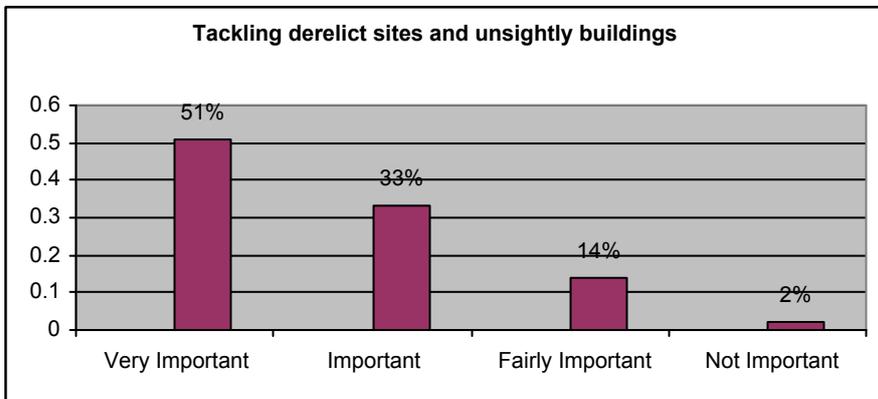
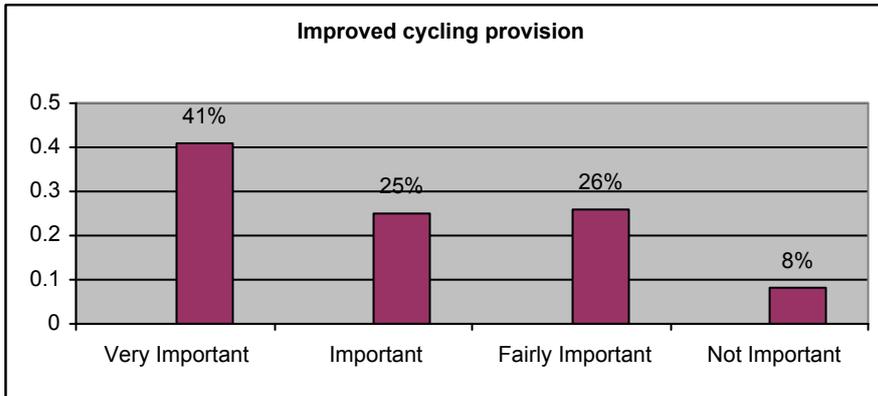
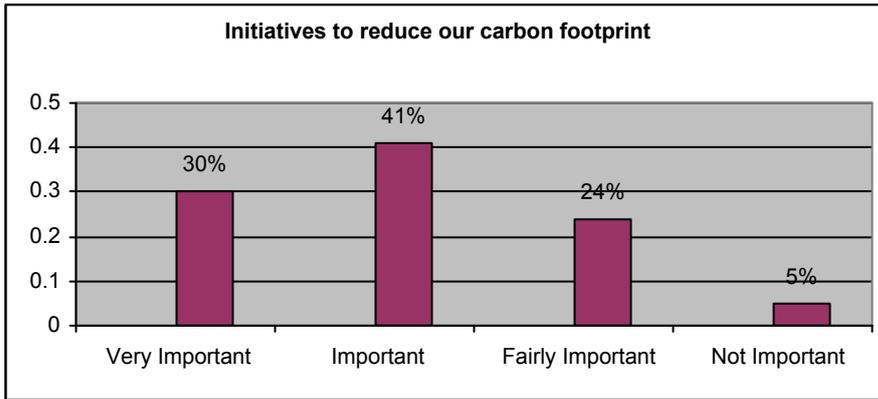




**Corporate Priority Theme – Quality Environment**

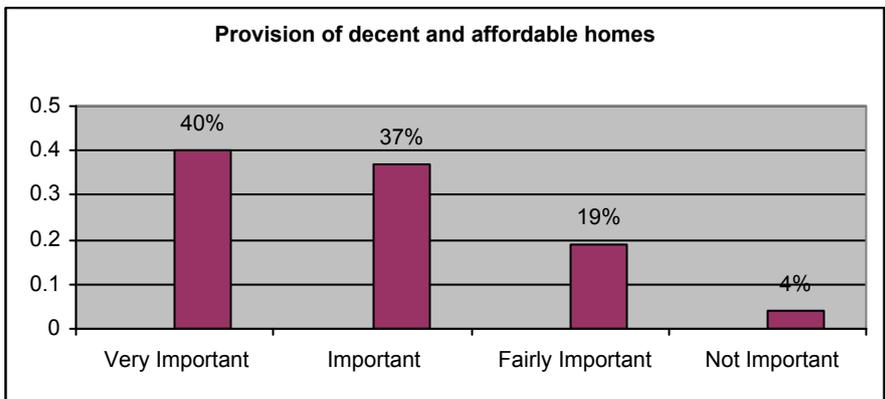
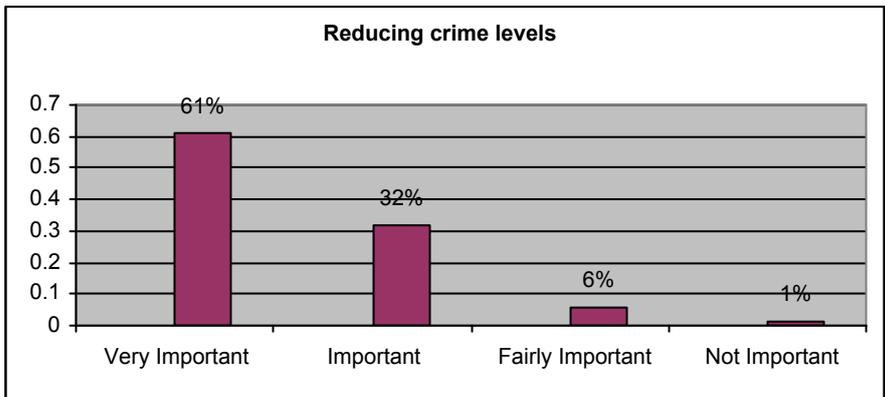
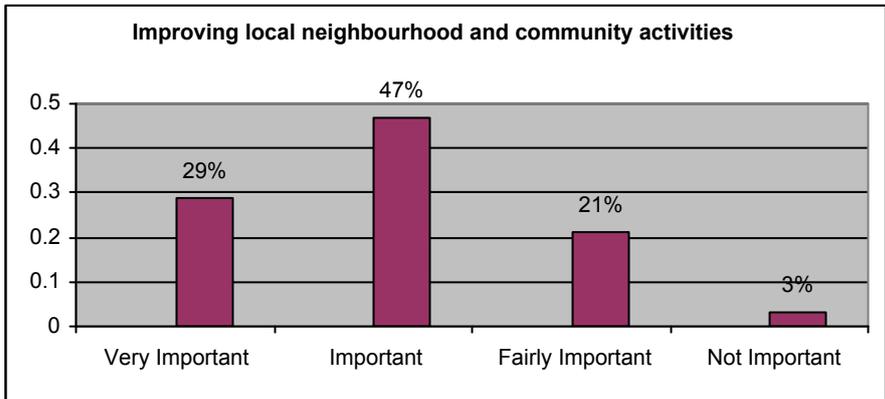
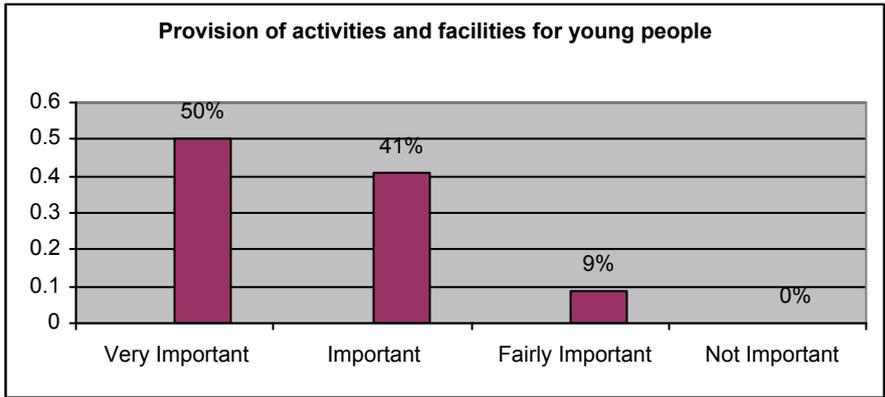
Participants were asked to rate the following environmental type objectives on a 4-point scale from very important to not important:

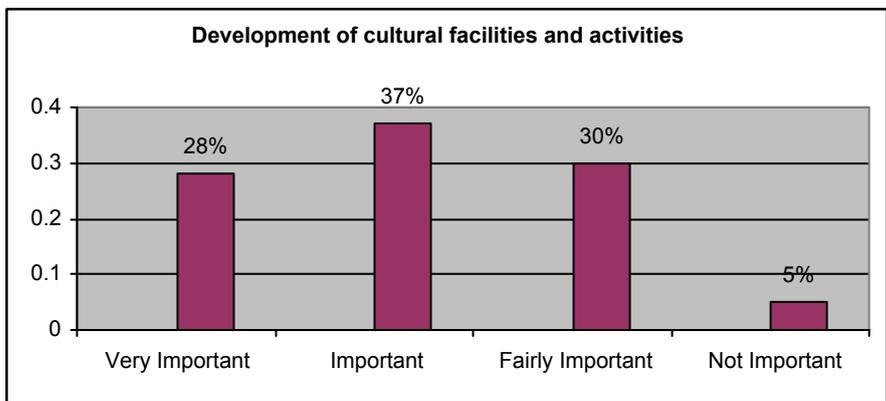
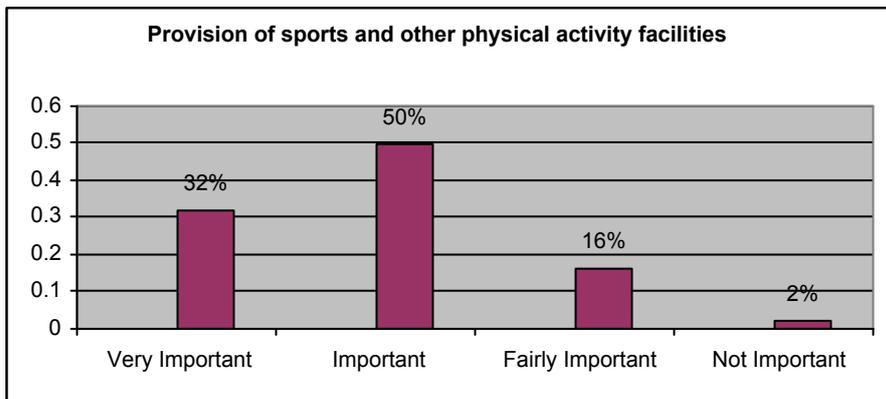
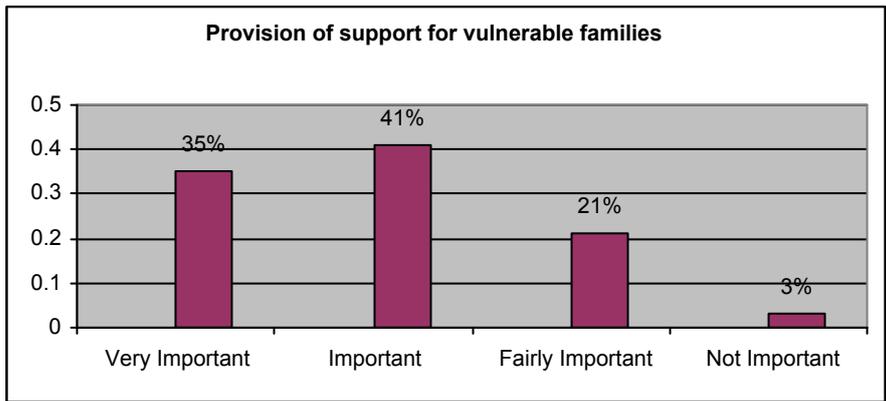




**Corporate Priority Theme – Thriving Communities**

Participants were asked to rate the following community based objectives on a 4-point scale from very important to not important:

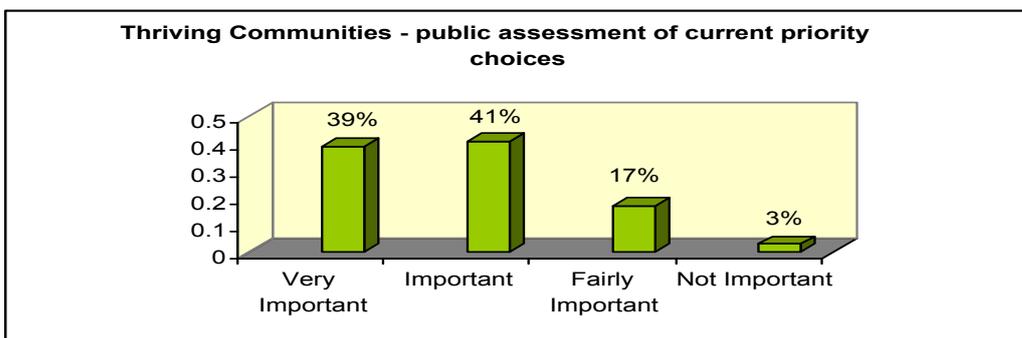
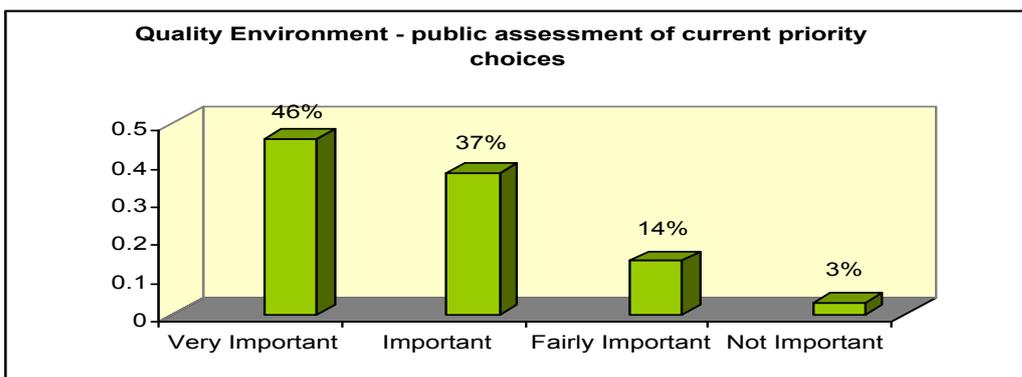
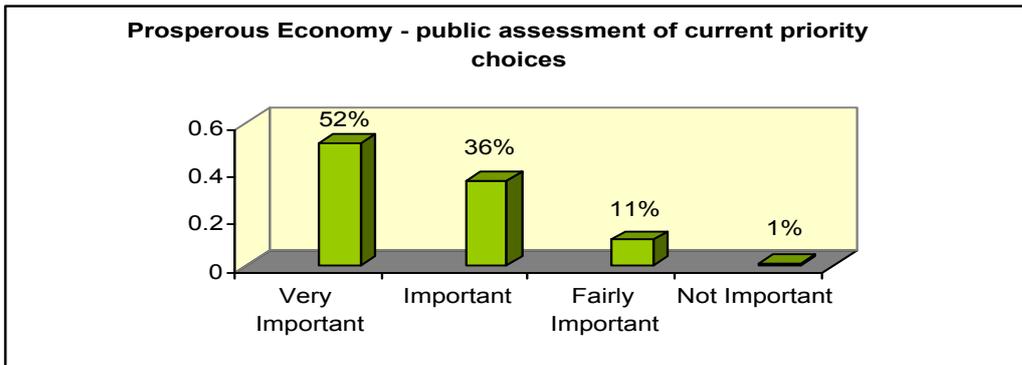




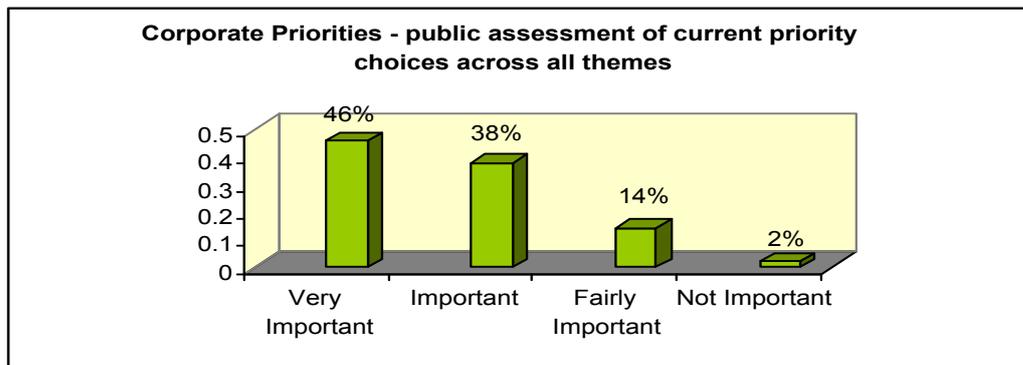
### Assessment of Our Current Priority Choices

Having regard to the feedback in the above tables, it is possible to consider how our overall current choices of priority activities are judged by the community. Set out below are tables showing, for each priority theme, the public assessment as to the overall importance of our current priority range of activity.

It can be seen that there is strong agreement among respondents that our current priority choices are appropriate, either important or very important. This is shown most strongly in our prosperous economy priority theme. Only in the thriving communities theme is the “very important” category not heading the list. However, the collective responses of “important” and “very important” are still very strong.



By pooling together the results from the 3 tables above, it is possible to show the current public perception of our priority choices across all 3 themes. These are set out in the table below and show a strong measure of agreement that our overall priority objectives are adjudged to be of real importance to the community.



### Current Priority Projects

Participants in the general survey were asked to rank in order of importance to them, 10 of our current most important outward facing specific projects, across all the corporate priority themes. All 10 projects were scored on a rating of 1 (most important) to 10 (least important). Totalling the number of top level scores given (where the project was ranked 1, 2 or 3 by the respondents) for each of the projects results in the following table in priority order:

<b>RANK AND SCORE</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>
<b>1 (164 votes)</b>	Re-development of the town centre
<b>2 (139 votes)</b>	Transport – public transport and cycling provision
<b>3 (124 votes)</b>	“Activating Eastbourne” – jobs for young people
<b>4 (118 votes)</b>	Street Cleaning – including public open spaces and derelict sites
<b>5 (110 votes)</b>	Housing strategy – affordable and decent homes
<b>6 (101 votes)</b>	Waste management including recycling and reduced landfill
<b>7 (95 votes)</b>	Sovereign Harbour Business Park – high quality job opportunities
<b>8 (94 votes)</b>	Theatre provision – audience numbers, revenue and investment
<b>9 (92 votes)</b>	Youth provision – leisure activities and facilities
<b>10 (72 votes)</b>	Neighbourhood management – creation of community led groups

## Youth Fair Feedback

We displayed a selection of 10 priority areas of activity for young people to consider and asked them to rank their top 3 in order of importance from their perspective. The resulting ranking order was as follows:

<b>RANK</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>PRIORITY 3</b>
<b>1</b>	Public transport and cycling	10	11	9
<b>2</b>	Things for young people to do	9	9	5
<b>3</b>	Waste collection and recycling	5	3	6
<b>4</b>	Jobs for young people	4	10	3
<b>5</b>	Education and career development	3	2	7
<b>6</b>	New Eastbourne Town Centre	3	0	2
<b>7</b>	Theatre events and shows	3	0	1
<b>8</b>	Keeping Eastbourne clean	2	2	3
<b>9</b>	Facilities for community groups	2	2	1
<b>10</b>	Better quality homes	0	2	3

## Other Suggestions

All respondents were invited to provide suggestions for other priority issues to address. Many of the comments and suggestions were in relation to projects already under-way. However, among other issues raised, the most frequently mentioned were:

<b>From the General Survey</b>	
1	Improved road and rail transport links into the town
2	Initiatives to reduce the number of empty town centre retail units
3	More user-friendly parking policies
<b>From the Youth Fair</b>	
1	Priority leisure facilities – climbing wall, inline skating/hockey rink, more skate parks, places for music rehearsals, more family friendly open spaces
2	Vitally important to keep the young inspired, excited and optimistic
3	Cycling – Whole seafront cycle lane, mountain biking facilities
4	More facilities and services for teenagers
5	Convert unused/vacant buildings into youth clubs