



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL	03
WHO ARE YOUR COUNCILLORS?	04
COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	05
PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE - CLLR STEVE BUCK & CLLR LIZ ANDERSON	06
GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - CLLR JON SMITH & CLLR JOS HEADINGTON	07
BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - CLLR DANNY MATTHEWS & CLLR STEVE HAYES	08
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE - CLLR JOS HEADINGTON & CLLR NIGEL VENNEEAR	09
FINANCE REPORT - EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK	10
RESIDENTS' SURVEY	13

WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

It is with great honour that I address you as Mayor in this year's Annual Report. This report reflects not only the progress we have made over the past few years but also the strong sense of community and shared purpose that has been highlighted in the residents' survey. When I took on the responsibility of delivering the survey a few years ago, the aim was to benchmark where we were as a Council. Let's say that the feedback was constructive, and what we needed to hear to feed into our strategic plan.

Through a fantastic team effort, from our Rangers keeping our town neat and tidy, to the dedicated officers managing our buildings and cemetery, organising our programme of events, and welcoming everyone with a smile at the Greenacres Centre, we have made progress. With more to do, there is now a better understanding of what your Town Council does and how we can help.

Later this year, we will be launching our Residents' Portal, making it easier for everyone to get in touch with us, ask questions, report issues, and provide feedback. More on this soon.

Despite the ongoing challenges posed by tight budgets in local government, we remain steadfastly dedicated to delivering real value for our town. We are pushing forward with key capital projects, including the Wheeled Sports Facility and Memorial Hall improvements, which stand as a testament to our commitment to enhancing local amenities and opportunities for all residents. We are proud to have put our cemetery forward for a Green Flag award. We know how much the cemetery means to our Town. We will update everyone once we know the outcome.

We all look forward to meeting as many of our fellow residents as possible over the coming months. Please get in touch to share your views on what we're doing or to ask any questions you may have. If we don't know the answer, we will do our best to find it.

The next few pages highlight how far we have come together and reaffirm our resolve to continue working tirelessly for the benefit of our community.

Cllr Jonathan Smith
Mayor, Stotfold Town Council

Who are your councillors?



Liz Anderson



Andy Bellis



Janice Bendell



Mary Cooper



Satinderjit Dhaliwal



Steve Hayes



Jos Headington



Jane Hyde



Danny Matthews



Lisa Miller



Brian Saunders



Jonathan Smith



John Talbot



Nigel Venneear



Bryony Woods

Committee Structure & Responsibilities

FULL COUNCIL



PUBLIC REALM

FACILITIES
MANAGEMENT
(buildings, street lights)
LEISURE
MANAGEMENT
(play areas, allotments)
RECREATION
MANAGEMENT
(open spaces)
CEMETERY
HIGHWAYS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNICATIONS
AND MEDIA
YOUTH SERVICES



GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

POLICY REVIEW AND
DEVELOPMENT
FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT
RISK MANAGEMENT
HUMAN RESOURCES
STRATEGIC
MANAGEMENT
OF HEALTH
AND SAFETY



BUILDING MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT OF
ALL BUILT ASSETS
INCLUDING BUILDING
SPECIFIC HEALTH
AND SAFETY
AND COMPLIANCE
CONSIDERATIONS



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

REVIEWS COUNCIL
SERVICES AND
PERFORMANCE
TO SUPPORT
TRANSPARENT
AND EFFECTIVE
DECISION-MAKING

PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE

- Cllr Steve Buck (Chair) & Cllr Liz Anderson (Vice Chair)



It has been a busy and productive year for the Public Realm Committee. Our open spaces have been a real focus. We have continued to care for our green spaces. We submitted sites in Stotfold for designation as Local Green Spaces under the emerging Local Plan and are exploring Fields in Trust registration for added long-term protection. Two new water bottle filling stations, largely funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, are now in place at The Green and Arlesey Road.

At the cemetery, we adopted a five-year management plan and have been judged for a Green Flag Award. We were also delighted to launch the “Letters to Heaven” initiative, providing a dedicated post box for the bereaved, with seeded paper that becomes wildflowers when planted.

Elsewhere, we awarded a new three-year pitch maintenance contract supporting our PitchPower funding, purchased an additional Vehicle Activated Sign, and installed a bike repair station at the Greenacre Centre.

Looking ahead, we will investigate play area refurbishments for the Green and Riverside, progress our LED streetlighting upgrades, and roll out management plans for our other open spaces.



GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



- Cllr Jon Smith (Chair) & Cllr Jos Headington (Vice Chair)

It has been a busy and productive year for the Governance and Resources Committee, which oversees the Council's policies, finances, staffing, and strategic management of health and safety. We have focused on strengthening the foundations that allow the rest of the Council to deliver for residents and, in many cases, on quietly modernising how we work behind the scenes.

A significant piece of work this year was the appointment of Arlingclose as the Council's investment advisor, alongside a strategic review of our reserves. Our aim is to generate up to £100,000 of investment income annually, money that directly offsets pressure on the precept. We also appointed Parkinson Partnership to undertake the Council's annual partial VAT exemption calculation, an unglamorous but valuable exercise that will improve our financial efficiency for years to come. We refreshed the staffing structure and welcomed Susan Riley as Deputy Clerk. The Council adopted a Strategic Plan 2025–2030, agreed an updated suite of policies (including Customer Care, Reserves, and Stress Management), and resolved to apply for the Local Council Award Scheme, a goal we hope to achieve by the end of 2026.

The Committee also awarded over £14,000 in grants to local organisations during 2025/26, from Magpas Air Ambulance to the Stotfold Scouts and Bowls Club.

Looking ahead, we will continue to ensure the Council remains transparent, well-governed, and ready to respond to whatever the next chapter brings.

Grants awarded during 2025-26 included:

- **Royal British Legion - Poppy Appeal**
£250.00
Remembrance Sunday
- **Wanderbus**
£4,500.00
Capital donation for new bus
- **Stotfold Singers**
£430.00
Music folders
- **Magpas Air Ambulance**
£1,500.00
Air ambulance service
- **St Mary's Church**
£984.00
Redecoration costs
- **Stotfold Brownies**
£159.00
Membership fees for children in temporary accommodation
- **1st Stotfold Scouts**
£538.00
Camping Equipment
- **Shefford & Stotfold Children's Centre**
£250.00
Children's toys
- **Stotfold Twirlers**
£500.00
Additional coaching
- **Keech Hospice**
£1,000.00
Music classes
- **Stotfold Bowls Club**
£1,500.00
Solar panels
- **First Responders**
£1,500.00
Medical kit
- **Pippin Pre School**
£1,500.00
Play equipment

BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



- Cllr Danny Matthews (Chair) & Cllr Steve Hayes (Vice Chair)

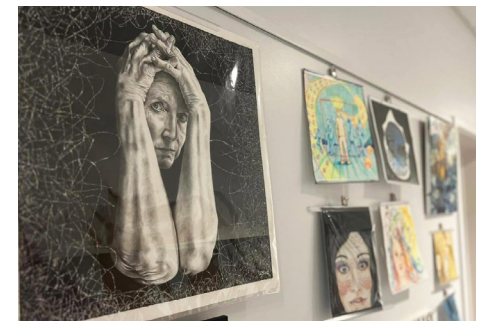
It has been a busy and rewarding first year as Chair of the Building Management Committee, supported by my Vice Chair, Cllr Steve Hayes. The Committee is responsible for keeping our buildings safe, compliant and fit for the community to enjoy and 2025-26 has been a year of real progress on all three fronts.

The headline achievement was the completion of the library relocation into the Greenacre Centre, with the new Stotfold Library opening its doors in June 2025. It was a genuinely complex project, and it is a pleasure to see it now firmly established as part of daily life at the Centre.

Elsewhere at the Greenacre Centre, the café opened in August 2025 and has quickly become a welcome addition. We installed new car park fencing, a height barrier with dedicated bays, an art gallery, accessible benches, and improved disabled access into the building.

The Memorial Hall has been a major focus. Drawing on Section 106 funding, we have invested in fire-compliant doors, a fully upgraded fire alarm system, new LED lighting, a refurbished kitchen, and Wi-Fi throughout. The non-compliant stage curtains have been removed, and refreshed hiring and storage agreements came into effect from April 2026.

Behind the scenes, we have put in place robust three-year contracts for legionella, fire safety and out-of-hours keyholding, alongside updated CCTV and legionella policies. Looking ahead, an energy audit across our estate will inform our climate action work, and the Memorial Hall refurbishment programme will continue. My thanks to fellow committee members for their dedication this year.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE



- Cllr Jos Headington (Chair) & Cllr Nigel Venneear (Vice Chair)

What a year it has been. If 2024-25 was about laying foundations, 2025-26 has been about building on them. Louder, brighter, and with rather more dinosaurs than any of us anticipated.

Our Easter dinosaur themed Augmented Reality Trail was enjoyed over 500 times, our open-air cinema brought families to The Green for Top Gun, The Lion King and The Greatest Showman, and Stotfest returned bigger than ever, boosted by our sponsors, to whom we are enormously grateful. The second year of our festive lights display lit up the town beautifully, and the Christmas Lights Switch-On welcomed a new (and slightly grumpy) guest of honour: the Grinch, who proved a firm favourite with families despite his best efforts to the contrary.



Engagement, of course, is more than events. We've supported the launch of a Stotfold Men in Sheds initiative, providing space for men to come together, share skills, and look after one another's wellbeing. We adopted a new Sponsorship and Advertising Policy to put our events on a more sustainable footing, alongside refreshed Communication, Volunteer and Safeguarding policies, and clear Terms and Conditions for traders at Council events.

Listening matters too. Our Residents' Survey continues to grow, and we have commissioned targeted youth outreach at Riverside through Amplius, addressing anti-social behaviour with early intervention rather than reaction. Working with BRCC, we are also launching IT literacy sessions to help older and less digitally confident residents stay connected.

Behind every line above is a volunteer, a partner, a colleague, or a resident who said yes. Thank you. With an even fuller events programme planned for 2026-27, the year ahead promises to be busier still and we wouldn't have it any other way. Look forward to seeing you at Greenacre Bay.



FINANCE REPORT

- Emma Payne, Town Clerk



After holding the precept steady in 2024/25, the Town Council agreed a modest increase for 2025/26. The precept rose to £951,481, up from £913,482. For a typical Band D household this means £255.64 a year, or £4.92 a week, an increase of 22p a week.

Rising costs for staff, utilities, and contracts placed pressure on the budget, and the Council chose to invest in rather than cut services. The increase allows us to maintain the parks, play areas, buildings, and cemetery that residents told us matter most, while funding the priorities set out in our Strategic Plan 2025–2030.

Spending this year reflected that choice. Investment in open spaces, play areas, and our community buildings grew, and the share of the budget spent on frontline and place-based services increased. Governance and running costs, while still the largest single area because they include staff salaries, insurance, audit, and grants, fell as a proportion of total spend.

The council continues to hold healthy reserves, the majority of which are set aside for the future maintenance of sites handed to us by developers. These reserves let us plan major works, such as play area renewals and building improvements, without placing the full cost on residents in a single year.

We remain committed to sound financial management, transparency, and value for money. Every pound is spent with the long-term interests of Stotfold in mind.

2024/25

Precept: £913,482

Band D: £244.18

£4.70 per week

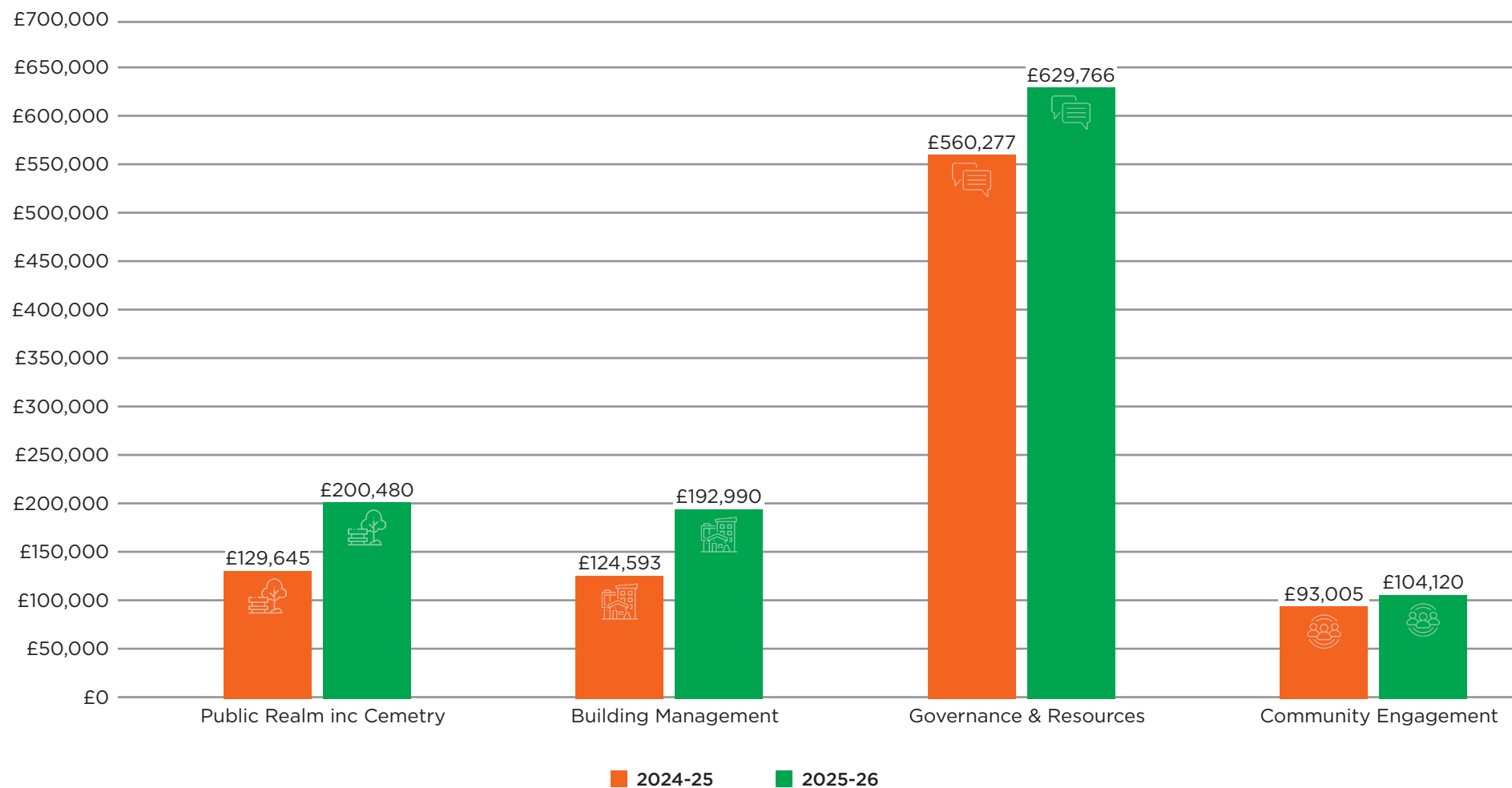
2025/26

Precept: £951,481

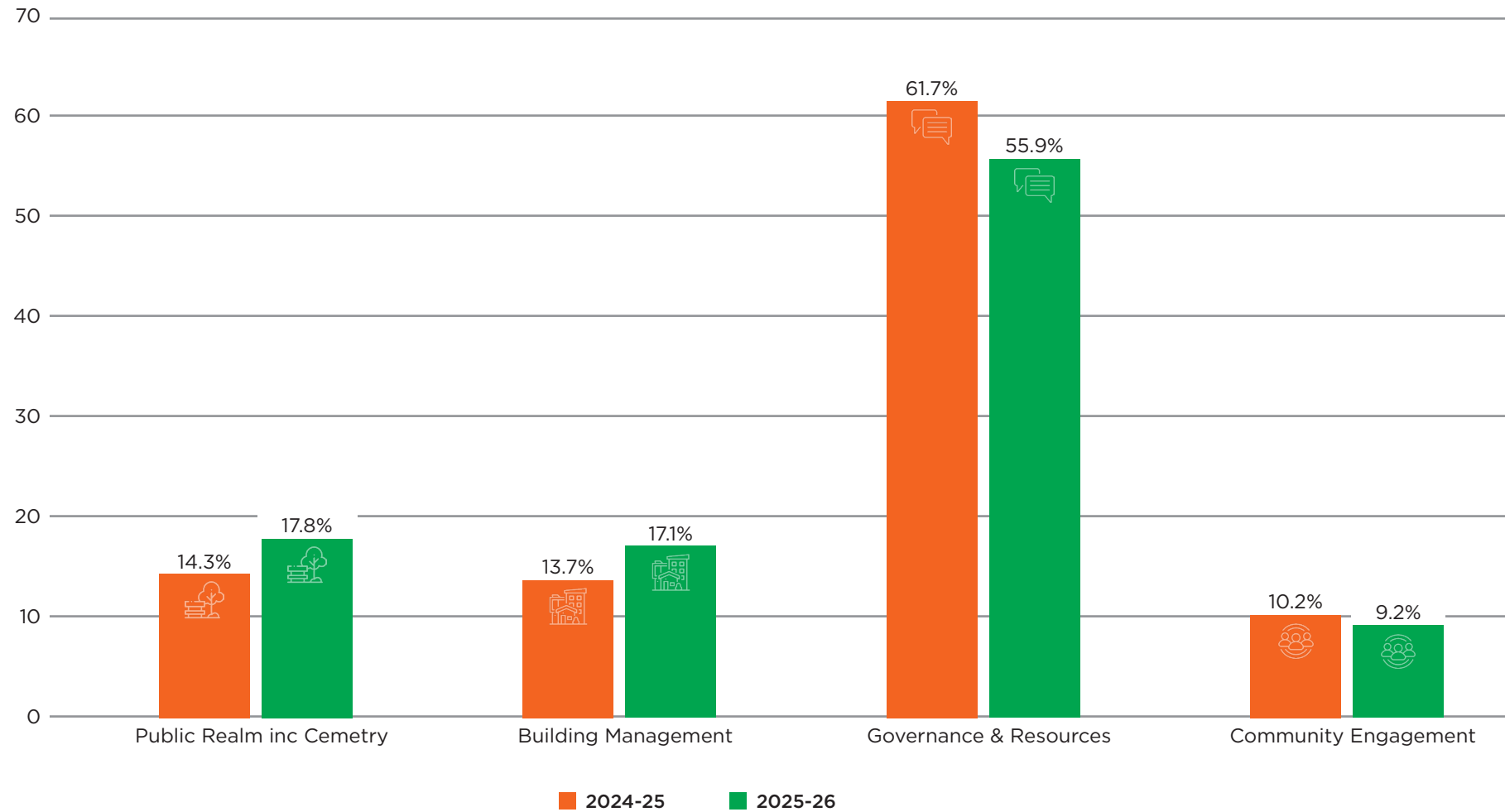
Band D: £255.64

£4.92 per week

Committee Expenditure £



Committee Expenditure %



RESIDENTS' SURVEY



- Cllr Jon Smith

Our Residents' Survey has become one of the clearest ways we hear from the people of Stotfold. This year brought 588 responses. That is down on last year's exceptional figure, when paper copies first landed on every doormat and the count passed 600, but it remains well ahead of where we started and gives us a strong, reliable base to read the trends.

That story is a positive one. Residents feel better about their Town Council than at any point since we began asking. Back in 2022, most people who responded felt negative about the Council. That balance has steadily turned, year on year, and this year more residents feel positive than ever before, while the number feeling negative has fallen to a small minority.

The same pattern runs through the questions residents care about most. More of you feel the Council acts on local concerns. More of you feel well informed about what we do and the services we provide. Most residents tell us they feel safe in Stotfold during the day, and a steady majority agree that people here pull together to improve the local area. Year after year, residents describe Stotfold as a great place to live. Those are the foundations we want to build on.

This year we asked a new question: do you know who your Town Councillors are, and how to contact them? Around half of you know both who your councillors are and how to reach them. Some know who they are but are unsure how to get in touch. And a sizeable group do not yet know who represents them. Set alongside the smaller number who find it easy to contact a councillor when they need one, this points to a clear job for the year ahead. We want every resident to know who their councillors are and to feel they can reach them.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond. Your views shape our priorities, and the progress reflects what you have told us matters.

Thinking about Stotfold, to what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements:

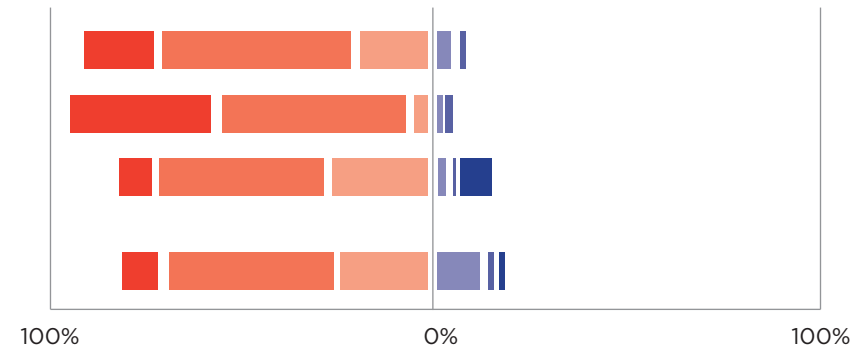
Stotfold is a great place to live

I feel safe out and about in Stotfold during the day

Stotfold is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together

People in Stotfold pull together to improve the local area

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know



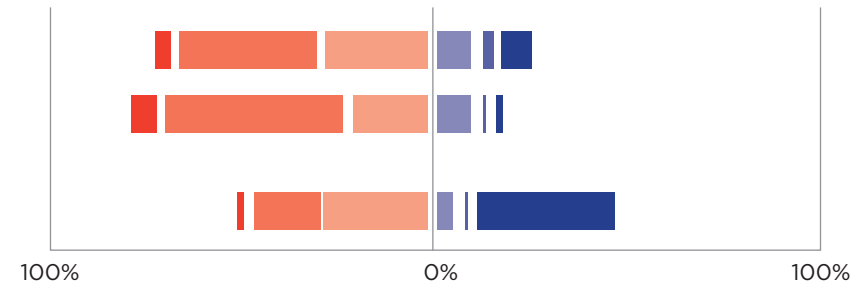
Thinking about Stotfold Town Council, to what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Stotfold Town Council acts on the concerns of its residents

Stotfold Town Council keeps its residents informed about the services and benefits it provides

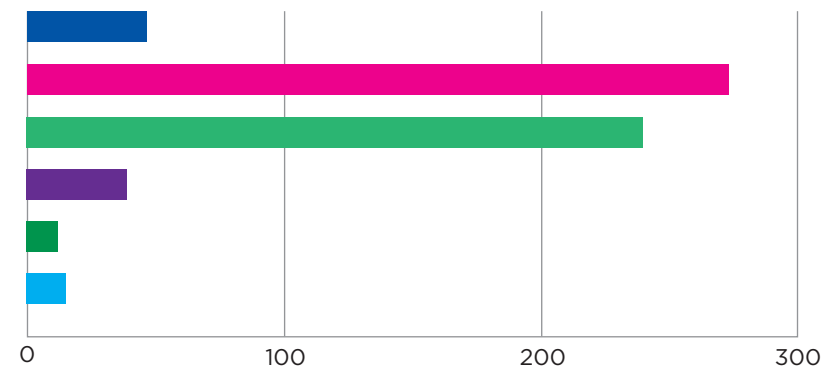
It is easy to get hold of Councillors when I need to

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know



On balance, which of the following statements is closest to how you feel about Stotfold Town Council:

Very positive	43
Positive	267
Neither positive nor negative	208
Negative	34
Very negative	16
Don't know	17



How satisfied or dissatisfied are you overall with Stotfold Town Council's...?

Play parks / green areas

Services and support for young people

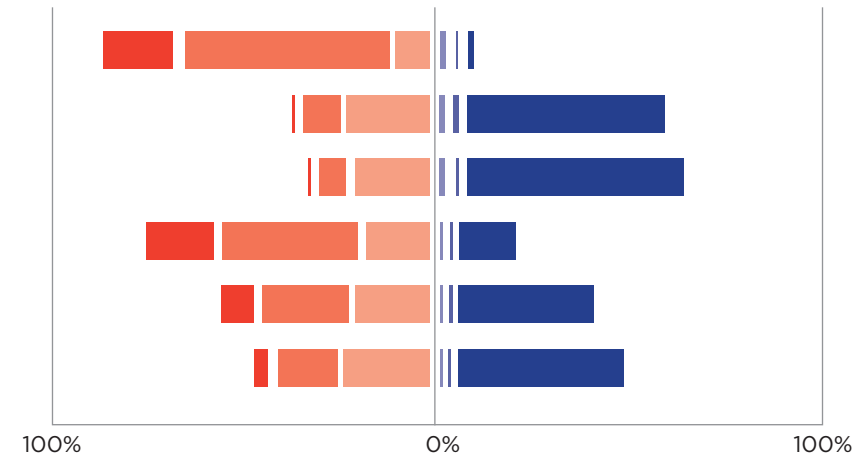
Services and support for older people

Council community events

Support for local organisations

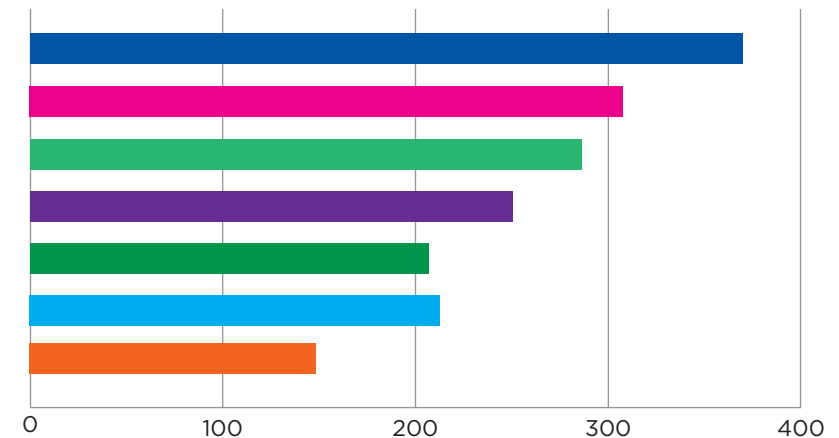
Support for local businesses

■ Very satisfied
 ■ Fairly satisfied
 ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
■ Fairly dissatisfied
 ■ Very dissatisfied
 ■ Don't know



Which areas would you like to see Stotfold Town Council prioritise?

■ Play parks and green areas	369
■ Services and support for children and younger people	309
■ Services and support for older people	270
■ Council community events	240
■ Support for local organisations	206
■ Support for local businesses	213
■ Other	148



Thinking about Stotfold, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are?

Noisy neighbours or loud parties

Rubbish or litter

Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles

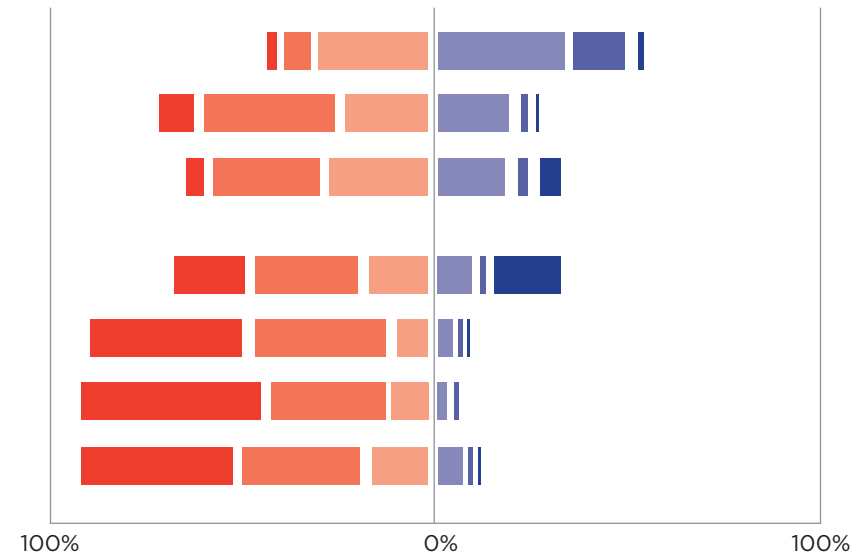
People using or dealing drugs

Speeding traffic

Poor parking

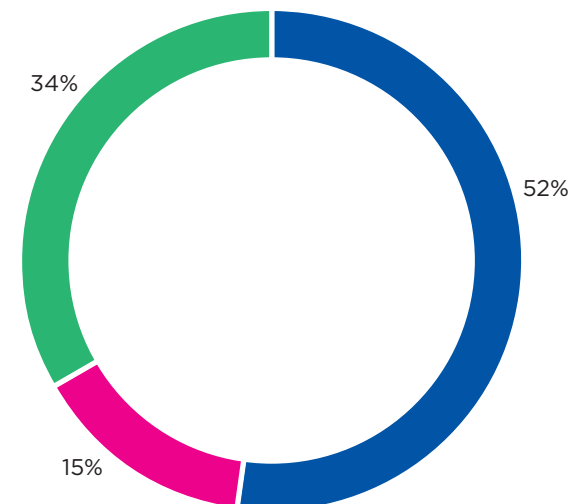
Dog fouling

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know



Do you know who your Town Councillors are and how to contact them?

Yes, I know who they are and how to contact them	303
I know who they are, but not how to contact them	85
No, I don't know who they are	197





CONTACT US:

📍 Stotfold Town Council, The Greenacre Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold, Hitchin, Herts SG5 4HG

✉ 01462 730064

📧 enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk

🌐 www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk

