



## Community Consultation - 2019

### Introduction

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) carries out an annual Strategic Assessment. This makes use of a range of partnership data including police crime figures, anti-social behaviour data, demographic information, environmental services data. Based on the Strategic Assessment, a Community Safety Plan is either written or refreshed. Data from this consultation has been used in the 2019 Strategic Assessment and will be used to develop the Community Safety Plan for 2020-23.

Public consultations form an important part of the Partnerships evaluation process, gathering data around the community's perception of crime and disorder and awareness of emerging issues in both their local area and the Borough as whole.

The 2019 consultation was designed specifically to:

- Understand public perception of progress in terms of tackling crime and ASB
- Understand what contributes to making people feel safe and unsafe
- Gain an understanding of people's concerns about some of the underlying issues that impact on Crime and ASB
- Gain an understanding of people's awareness of new and emerging issues in the Borough
- Understand those issues that cause the greatest level of public concern

By collecting and using geographic, equality and diversity monitoring data, the CSP is also able to understand the opinions of different sections of the community. Face to face engagement with the public allows the CSP to gauge levels of awareness and understanding of local issues and concerns. Face to face engagement is also helpful in raising awareness of the CSP and in publicising services that are available.

It is appreciated that the data collected may have a wider use than informing the CSP's annual Strategic Assessment and is therefore shared with a number of partnerships, networks and organisations across the Borough to help set priorities, develop plans and support funding bids.

This exercise took place over the summer of 2019. Partners delivered the survey at a number of community events and online. In total 1533 respondents completed survey.

- 980 respondents recorded a post code from an urban ward
- 479 respondents recorded a post code from a rural ward.

## Geographic Distribution

Each respondent was asked to provide their postcode; this information has been used to produce the table below. It allows us to evaluate the coverage of the survey but more importantly give the opportunity to analyse the responses of individual wards or communities in more depth.

*To help us locate the area where you live, please provide your postcode*

Ward	Ward Type	Count	Ward Pop	%Ward Pop
Brickhill Ward	Urban	98	8,046	1.22%
Bromham and Biddenham Ward	Rural	57	6,552	0.87%
Castle Ward	Urban	160	8,117	1.97%
Cauldwell Ward	Urban	52	10,926	0.48%
Clapham Ward	Rural	34	4,671	0.73%
De Parys Ward	Urban	58	7,108	0.82%
Eastcotts Ward	Rural	26	4,155	0.63%
Elstow and Stewartby Ward	Rural	27	4,095	0.66%
Goldington Ward	Urban	60	9,625	0.62%
Great Barford Ward	Rural	69	8,183	0.84%
Harpur Ward	Urban	111	8,529	1.30%
Harrold Ward	Rural	36	4,135	0.87%
Kempston Central and East Ward	Urban	43	7,179	0.60%
Kempston North Ward	Urban	29	3,690	0.79%
Kempston Rural Ward	Rural	43	6,122	0.70%
Kempston South Ward	Urban	29	4,007	0.72%
Kempston West Ward	Urban	29	6,235	0.47%
Kingsbrook Ward	Urban	44	9,788	0.45%
Newnham Ward	Urban	81	7,905	1.02%
Oakley Ward	Rural	26	3,699	0.70%
Putnoe Ward	Urban	127	6,991	1.82%
Queens Park Ward	Urban	59	9,008	0.65%
Riseley Ward	Rural	19	3,407	0.56%
Sharnbrook Ward	Rural	38	3,880	0.98%
Wilshamstead Ward	Rural	29	5,014	0.58%
Wootton Ward	Rural	40	5,273	0.76%
Wyboston Ward	Rural	35	3,572	0.98%
<b>Urban Wards</b>		<b>980</b>	<b>107154</b>	0.91%
<b>Rural Wards</b>		<b>479</b>	<b>62758</b>	0.76%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1459</b>	<b>169912</b>	0.86%
Unknown Area*		74		

Ward population figure based upon ONS 2017 mid-year population estimates. Wards highlighted in purple contain LSOA's within the top 10% most deprived in England in the 2019 Index of Deprivation.

\*Responses that could not be matched to a Borough Postcode have been included in the overall figures for the consultation, but will not be counted in any local level analysis.

## **Method**

The consultation took place over the period from 5<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2019.

Whilst the co-ordination of the consultation took place within the Borough's Community Safety Team, the delivery of the survey took place over a number of partnership communication channels and events.

An online version of the survey was made available via the Borough's website and Citizen's Panel and promoted through the Borough's social media channels. Key partners provided similar opportunities, through the Neighbourhood Alert system and social media accounts. Throughout the summer the CSP worked with both statutory and voluntary organisations over a wide number of events to distribute and collect surveys. The Consultation was delivered at a number of locations and public events over the period. The times and places of these events were co-ordinated to encourage engagement with all sections of the community.

### **Equality and Diversity monitoring**

Respondents were asked to provide demographic information, which has been used to compare to the Borough's overall population. An assessment has been made using data from the 2017 ONS mid-year population estimates and 2011 Census Data. This allows an assessment of the group in terms of how representative it is and whether the levels of concern differ from one group to another. There is good national evidence that members of some protected groups, particularly in the area of physical and mental health, are likely to be more greatly affected by Crime and ASB. Full details of the equality and diversity data set is available in Appendix 1

Whilst the demographic of each individual survey type differs; the overall data set of respondents show a good representation of the Borough's Population.

Where known 50.7% of surveys were completed by women; according to 2018 ONS data 51% of the Borough's population are female.

Where stated, 9.8% of respondents were aged under 35 years, 32.5% were aged 35 – 54 years, 57.6% were 55 years or older. As with previous consultations there is an over-representation of those in the 55+ category, this appears. A general observation of those that completed surveys at community events was that younger adults (often with children) were less willing to partake in the survey, which took on average 15 minutes to complete. The over-representation may also be a reflection of the demographic of the membership of the Citizens panel and neighbourhood alert system.

Where known 14.8% of respondents were BAME, whilst efforts were made to attend community event that were representative of all community groups there is still an over-representation of White British respondents to the survey.

When asked about physical and mental health, 336 respondents (21.8%) selected one or more conditions that related to themselves specifically

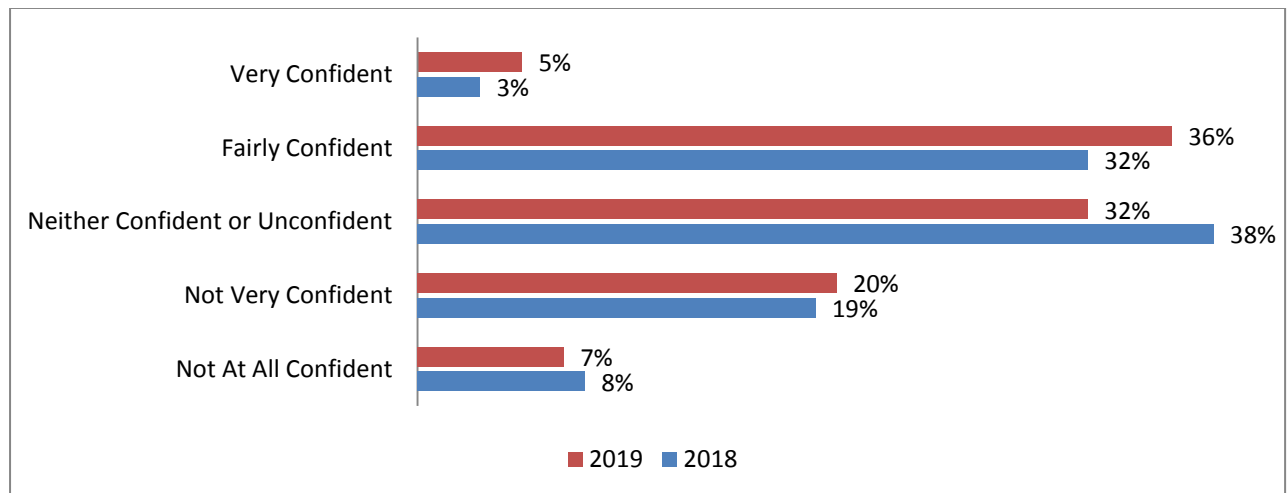
Where known 5.8% (71) respondents stated that they were from the LGBT community

## Evaluation of Questions

The answer to each question has been reviewed and are summarised below, the total number of respondents will vary for each question based upon those that chose to complete each section.

Where a percentage is given it will be based upon the total for each section.

### ***How confident are you that agencies in Bedford work together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in your local area?***



Overall the proportion of those that felt 'Very Confident' or 'Fairly Confident' increased from 35% in 2018 to 41% this year. Levels of those that felt 'Not Very Confident' or 'Not at all Confident' remained at 27%

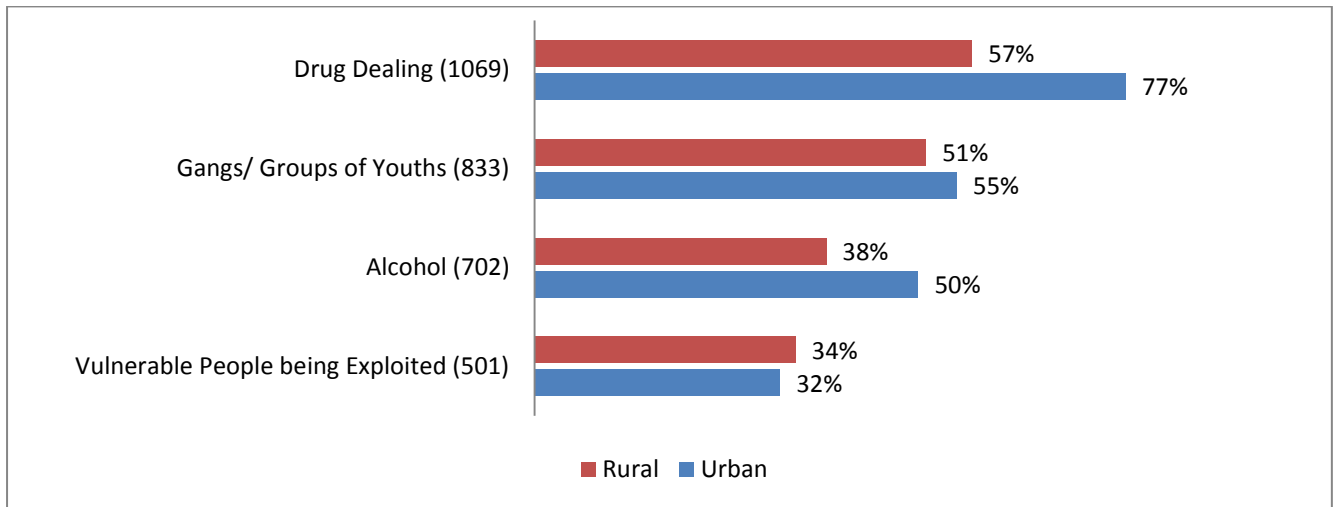
Where respondents lacked confidence they were invited to give reasons, the top five reasons listed were as follows

- Local issues or visible problems in their area had not been addressed 31.8%
- No evidence of successful partnership working in their area 20.9%
- Agencies were not visible in their local community 14.3%
- Cuts to services/lack of services in the local area 13.8%
- A perception of high levels of crime and ASB in the area 12.6%

It is clear that the public's understanding of effective partnership working is still very much influenced by what they physically see in their local area.

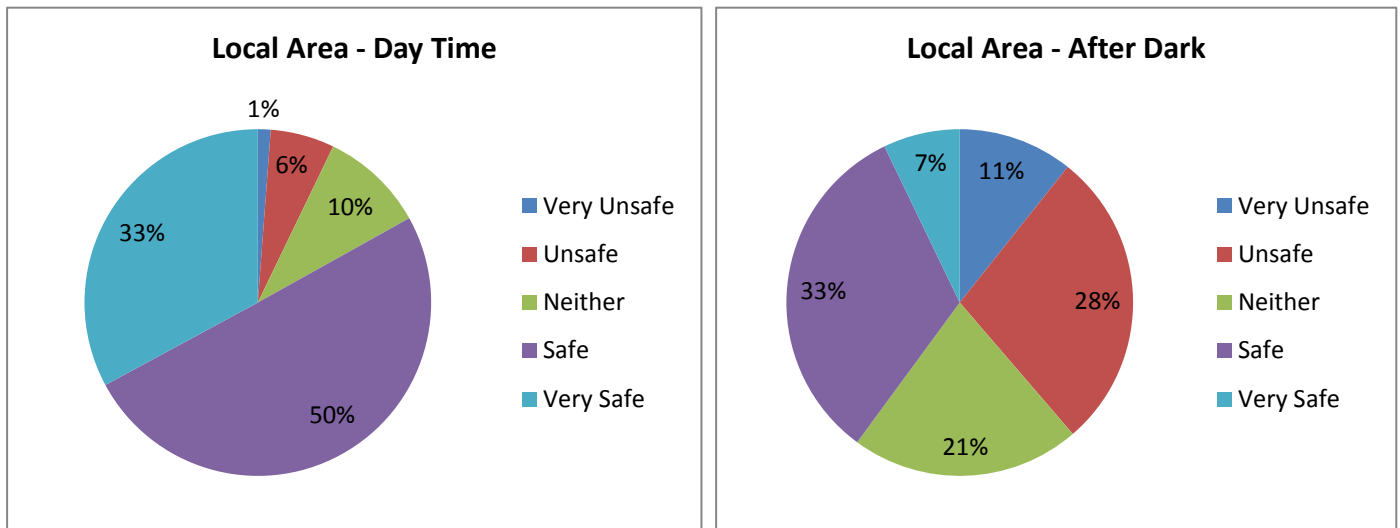
When completing the surveys at events many people commented that they had not heard of the CSP and would therefore not be aware of the way that agencies work together.

***In your local area (15-20 min walk from your home address) do you feel that levels of crime and ASB are linked to any of the following? (please tick all that apply)***



This year’s survey recorded an increase in levels of concern around Drug Dealing with 70% of respondents suggesting that it was the cause of Crime and ASB in their local area, up from 68% in 2018. Concerns around gangs and Groups of youths also increase from 52% in 2018 to 54% this year. There was a reduction in the levels of concern around Alcohol, down from 52% in 2018 to 46% this year. A new question around the exploitation of vulnerable persons was added to this year’s survey, overall 33% of respondents listed it as a concern. Overall levels of concern were slightly higher amongst those that live in urban wards, with the exception of ‘exploitation of vulnerable persons’ where a higher concern was recorded in the rural wards.

***How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area?***



Overall there has been slight in increase in those that feel ‘Safe’ and ‘Very Safe’ in the day 83% (80% in 2018).

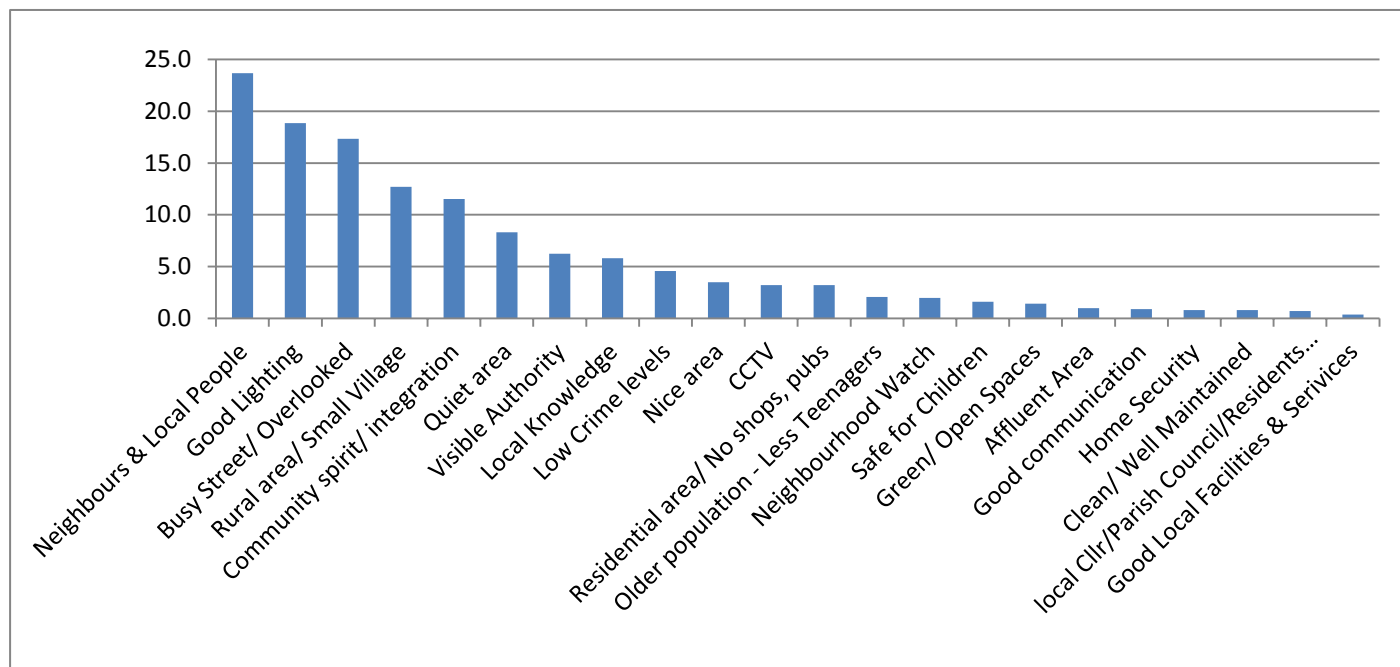
After dark data suggests that levels are consistent with the previous year, with 40% feeling ‘Safe’ or ‘Very Safe’.

### What makes your local area a safe place? (Free text questions)

1119 people gave an answer to the question; many gave more than one reason in their answer.

- 6.5% gave a negative answer to the question suggesting that their local area was not safe

Each answer has been reviewed and a list of key themes identified (22 in total), the graph below shows the percentage of respondents that mentioned each theme.



The top 10 themes area listed below, alongside those themes identified in the 2016 report.

	2016 – Top Ten		2019 - Top Ten	% Total
1	Neighbours	1	Neighbours & Local People	23.7
2	Community / Integration	2	Good Lighting	18.9
3	Good Lighting	3	Busy Street / Overlooked	17.3
4	Visible Authority	4	Rural Area / Small Village	12.7
5	Rural Area / Small Village	5	Community Spirit/ Integration	11.5
6	Quiet Area	6	Quiet Area	8.3
7	Busy Street / Overlooked	7	Visible Authority	6.3
8	Good Security	8	Local Knowledge	5.8
9	Low Crime Levels	9	Low Crime Levels	4.6
10	Affluent Area	10	Nice Area	3.5

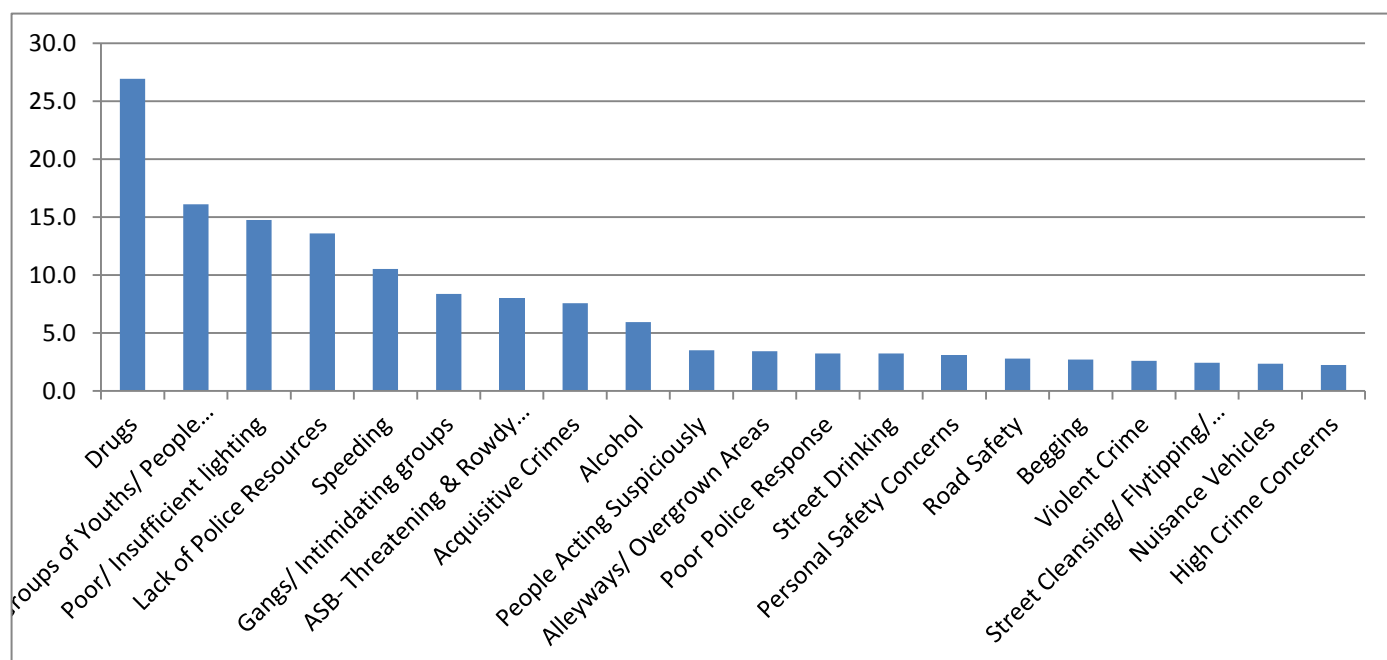
There is a consistent message within this information that indicates that the people within the local community are what make other people feel safe, their immediate neighbours, those that live in the local area and the presence of those organisations who have a role addressing community safety issues. The only physical asset that appears to increase people perception of safety is Street Lighting.

### What makes your local area an un safe place? (Free text questions)

1111 people gave an answer to the question listing one or more reasons for their answer.

- 3.1% stated that their area was safe and gave no other comments
- 4.4% referenced a specific event or place that made them feel unsafe

The remaining answers have been reviewed and a list of key themes identified (38 in total), the graph below shows the results for the top 20 theses.



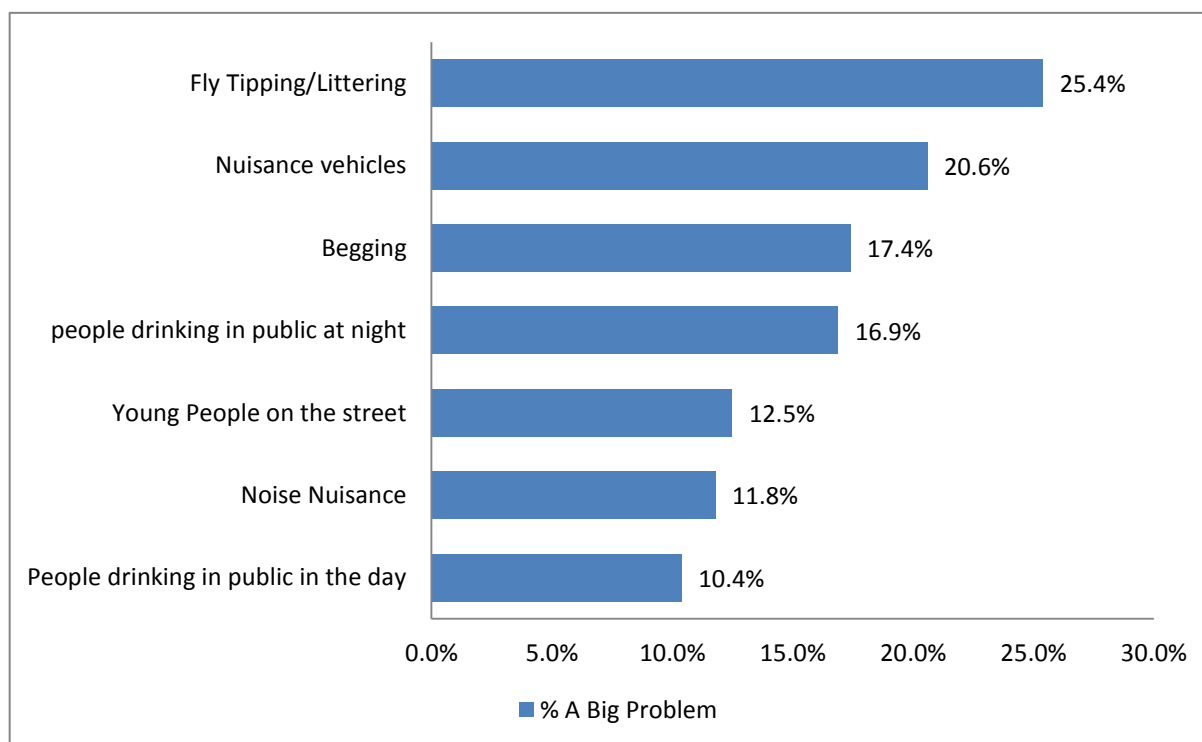
The top 10 themes are listed below, alongside those themes identified in the 2016 report.

	2016 – Top Ten		2019 – Top Ten	% Total
1	Lack of Police/Authorities	1	Drugs	26.9
2	Drug Issues	2	Groups of Youths/ People Congregating	16.1
3	Speeding	3	Poor/ Insufficient Lighting	14.8
4	Poor Lighting	4	Lack of Police Resources	13.6
5	Groups of Youths	5	Speeding	10.5
6	Street Drinking	6	Gangs/ Intimidating Groups	8.4
7	Fear of Crime/Levels of Crime	7	ASB - Threatening & Rowdy Behaviour	8
8	Road Safety	8	Acquisitive Crimes	7.6
9	Nuisance Vehicles	9	Alcohol	5.9
10	Parking Issues	10	People Acting Suspiciously	3.5

Whilst the overall list of concerns is broadly similar to that of 2016, there are increased concerns around Drugs the congregations of both youths and adults in relation to gang activity.

**How much of a problem are the following forms of ASB in your local area?**

The graph below shows the proportion of respondents that selected 'A Big Problem'



The table below shows the responses by Urban and Rural Wards

ASB Issue - A Big Problem	All Responses	Urban	Rural
People drinking in public in the day	10.4%	13.5%	4.5%
Noise Nuisance	11.8%	14.0%	8.2%
Young People on the street	12.5%	14.2%	7.8%
people drinking in public at night	16.9%	20.3%	9.9%
Begging	17.4%	22.6%	7.8%
Nuisance vehicles	20.6%	23.5%	15.0%
Fly Tipping/Littering	25.4%	25.5%	24.5%

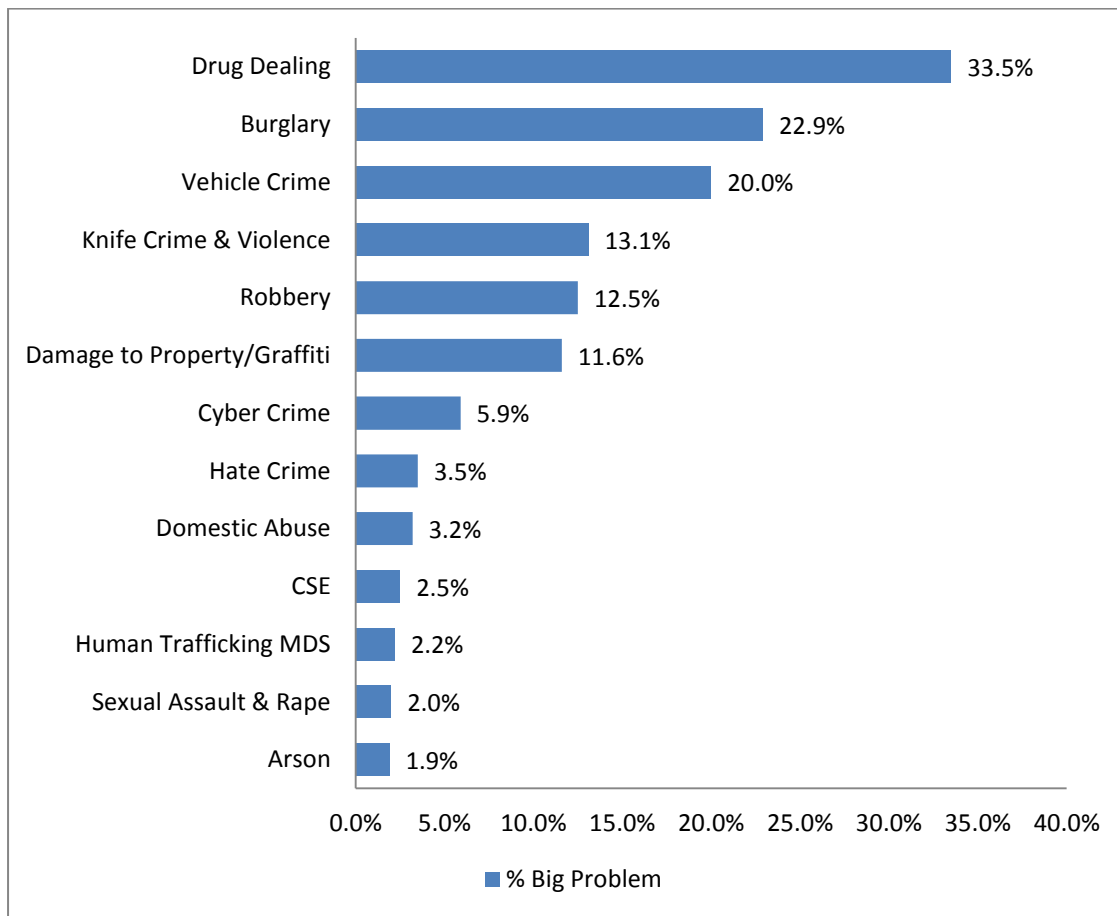
Levels of concern around the ASB issues are consistently higher in the Urban Wards of the Borough, with the exception of Fly tipping and littering where around a quarter of respondents from both Urban and Rural wards stated that it was a 'Big Problem'

**How much of a problem are the following Crimes in your local area?**

- The greatest proportions of respondents (33.5%) suggested that Drug Dealing was a 'Big Problem' in their local area. This is consistent with the previous year's report.
- There is a high level of concern around Serious Acquisitive Crime (Burglary, Vehicle Crime and Robbery)
- There are also high levels of concern around Knife Crime and Violence (13.1%)



The graph below shows the proportions of respondents that selected 'A Big Problem'



A number of crime types had significantly high responses of 'Don't Know or No Opinion', CSE (64%), MDS (61%) Domestic Abuse (59%) and Cyber Crime (59%).

All of these Crime Types are of a high concern to professionals but it is clear that levels of understanding amongst the community are still low.

### ***What could be done to make Bedford Borough a safer Place?***

1068 people gave an answer to the question listing one or more solution.

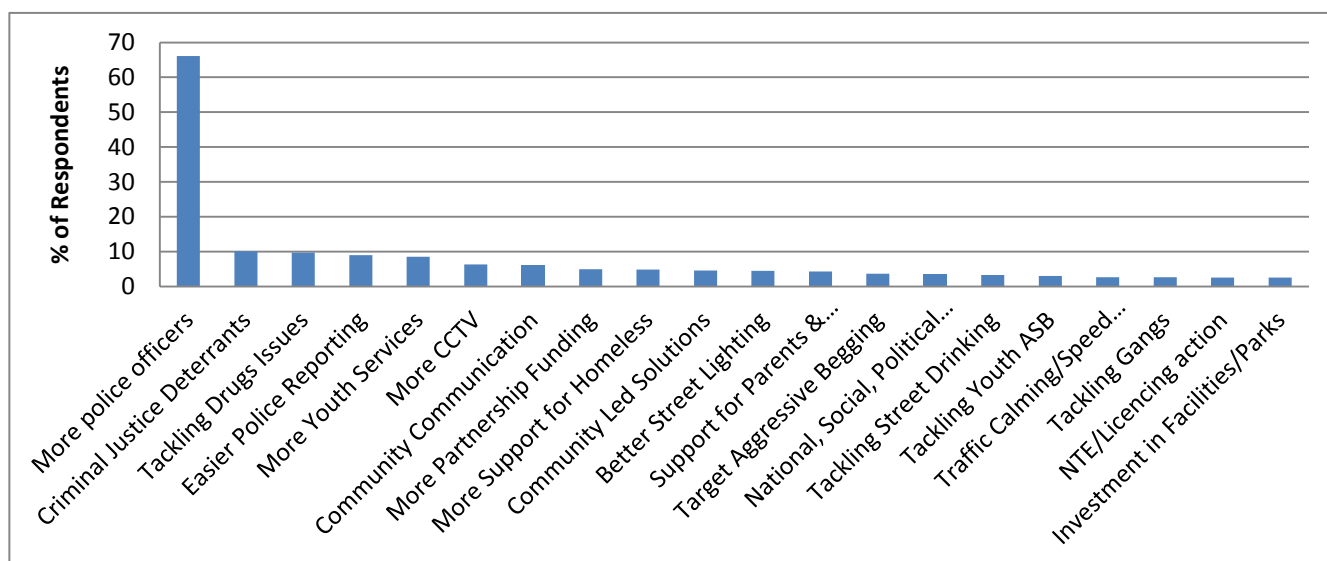
- 2 respondents gave a negative comment that did not provide an opportunity
- 10 comments could not be allocated to a theme as the content did not relate to Community Safety
- 35 comments related to a specific location of an issue

The remaining answers have been reviewed and a list of key themes identified (29 in total). These areas of work can be explored further in the design and scope of the new CSP Plan for 2020-23 and can support the development of multi-agency actions plans.

Some of the suggestions and comments raised in this question are of a level that cannot be addressed by a single CSP and relate to decisions made at a national level

- There is an overwhelming number of people (66.1%) who feel that increased resources to the police is important, this is consistent with previous consultations and comments raised at ward forums.
- 10.1% of responses call for stronger sentencing for those convicted of crimes

The graph below shows the results for those ranked in the top 20.



Areas that can be explored further within the partnership fall into four broad categories

- Work that relates to tackling a 'Local Priority'
- Opportunities that can be developed through improved 'Partnership Communications'
- Initiatives that would require 'Multi-Agency Work' to progress
- Improvements to infrastructure that would require 'Local Investment'

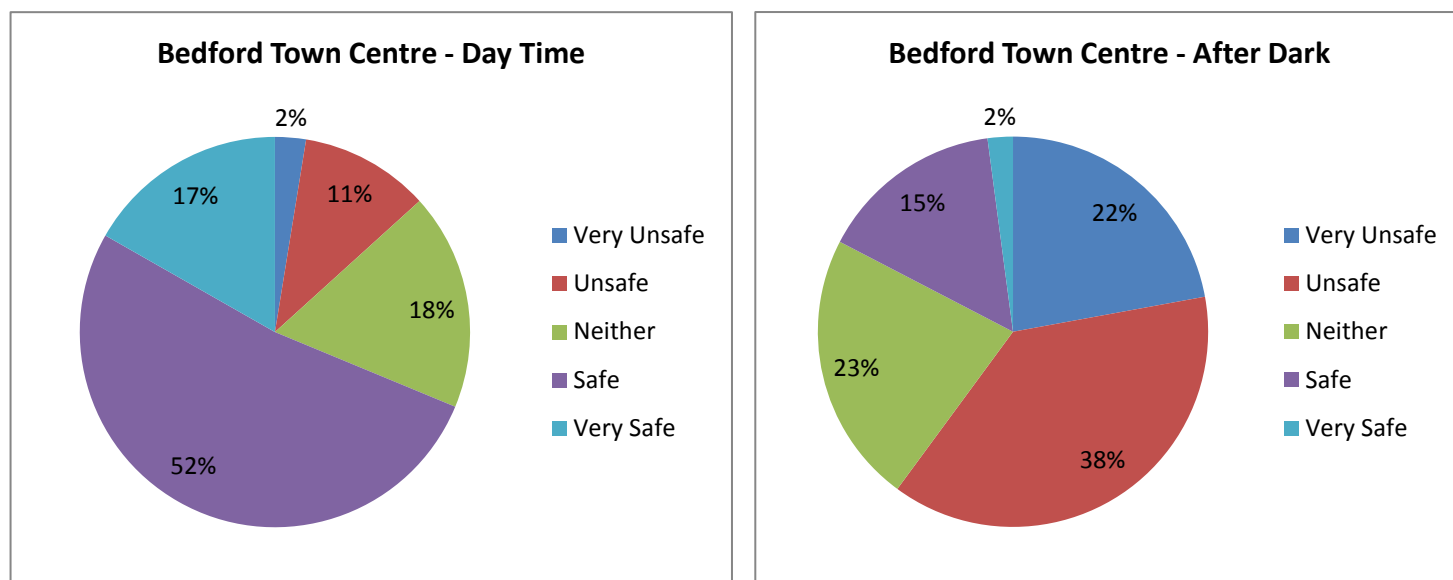
These areas of work can be developed further when developing the new 2020-23 CSP Plan and the action plans that will support the new priorities

Area of Opportunity	% Responses	Wider Themes
Tackling Drugs Issues	9.7	Local Priority
More Support for Homeless	4.9	Local Priority
Target Aggressive Begging	3.7	Local Priority
Tackling Street Drinking	3.3	Local Priority
Tackling Youth ASB	3	Local Priority
Tackling Gangs	2.7	Local Priority
Easier Police Reporting	9	Partnership Communications
Community Communication	6.1	Partnership Communications
More Youth Services	8.5	Multi-Agency Work
Community Led Solutions	4.6	Multi-Agency Work
Support for Parents & Teachers	4.3	Multi-Agency Work
NTE/Licencing action	2.6	Multi-Agency Work
More CCTV	6.4	Local Investment
Better Street Lighting	4.5	Local Investment
Traffic Calming/Speed Reduction	2.7	Local Investment
Investment in Facilities/Parks	2.6	Local Investment

## Bedford Town Centre

A number of questions in the survey related to peoples' perceptions and experiences of visiting Bedford Town Centre

### *How safe or unsafe do you feel when in Bedford Town Centre?*



Overall the results to this question are broadly comparable to those of the previous year. It is clear that visitors' perceptions of safety are greatly influenced by darkness with the majority of respondents stating that they feel 'Unsafe' or 'Very unsafe' after dark (60.1%)

- 24.8% of females stated that they feel 'Very Unsafe' in the Town Centre after dark, this compares to 18.7% for men

	Day Time 2018	Day Time 2019	After Dark 2018	After Dark 2019
<b>Very Safe</b>	17.8%	16.8%	0.8%	2.1%
<b>Safe</b>	50.3%	52.0%	14.9%	15.3%
<b>Neither</b>	21.0%	18.0%	24.5%	22.5%
<b>Unsafe</b>	9.1%	10.7%	37.5%	38.0%
<b>Very Unsafe</b>	1.8%	2.6%	22.3%	22.1%

### *What makes Bedford Town Centre a safe place? (Free text questions)*

895 people gave an answer to the question; many gave more than one reason in their answer.

- 8.3% gave a negative answer to the question suggesting that the Town Centre was not safe
- 5.3% stated that they do not regularly visit Bedford Town Centre

Each answer has been reviewed and a list of key themes identified.

The top five responses are as follows;

- 42.1% (377) stated that busy streets and lots of other people make them feel safe
- 24.5% (219) felt that visible authority in the town was positive
- 11.8% (106) recognised the importance of CCTV
- 9.5% (85) listed street lighting as a factor of safety
- 6.1% (55) mentioned the good community spirit and integration in the town.

### ***What makes Bedford Town Centre an unsafe place? (Free text questions)***

997 people gave an answer to the question; many gave more than one reason in their answer. Each answer has been reviewed and a list of key themes identified.

The top ten responses are as follows;

- 27.7% (276) referenced the negative impacts of alcohol on the Town Centre
- 25.7% (256) referenced the negative impacts of drugs on the Town Centre
- 17.4% (173) suggested that a lack of police resources and funding was a factor
- 16.8% (167) mentioned the impacts of begging on their perception of safety
- 11.6% (116) specifically mentioned the towns 'Night Time Economy'
- 11.5% (115) felt that groups of youths hanging around in the town made them feel unsafe
- 10.2% (102) used the term 'Gangs' and how they are intimidating to visitors
- 8.2% (82) mentioned the impacts of homelessness on their perception of safety
- 7.4% (74) stated that rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour made them feel less safe
- 5.6% (56) suggested that poorly lit areas of the Town Centre felt unsafe

It is clear that the factors that affect levels of safety in the Town Centre are not greatly dissimilar to those recorded in the local areas of the Borough

- Feelings of safety are increased by the presence of other people, and further so by the visible presence of Authority.
- Investment in the physical infrastructure is also important in terms of good quality CCTV and lighting
- Factors that negatively impact on safety are predominantly driven by the behaviour of other people in the area; this may be in relation to their misuse of drugs or alcohol or in the way that they congregate in large numbers being rowdy or intimidating
- Concerns around the lack of police resources are consistent with other previous surveys and are reflected in both the Town Centre and local areas
- Some feelings of being 'unsafe' appear to be about the perception of an issue and are more complicated to understand; the presence of rough sleepers, or the way that groups of young people are described as 'Gangs'; these issues are more prevalent within the Town Centre data.

### **How will the Survey Data be used?**

The information gathered within the consultation will be shared with local Partners to be used to inform both strategic and local level work.

Data captured in this survey has been incorporated into the CSP Strategic assessment for 2019 and has been used to develop the new CSP plan for 2020-23

More in depth evaluation will take place to understand how people's opinions, concerns and comments change from one place to another. This will support the development of action plans within a specific place or to address specific issues.

The results of this consultation may also identify the need to go back to the community and ask more focussed questions around an issue as part of future engagement work.

## Appendix 1 – Equality and Diversity Monitoring Data

All comparison data is either from the ONS 2011 Census or ONS 2018 Mid-Year Estimate

Gender	Total	% Total	ONS 2018
Male	720	47.0	49.3%
Female	740	48.3	50.7%
Prefer Not to Say	33	2.2	
Blank	40	2.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>100</b>	

Age	Total	% Total	ONS 2018
Under 25	20	1.3	12.3%
25-34	122	8.0	15.2%
35-44	221	14.4	17.1%
45-54	249	16.2	18.1%
55-64	330	21.5	15.0%
65+	502	32.7	22.3%
Prefer Not to Say	60	3.9	
Blank	29	1.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>100</b>	

Ethnicity	Total	% Total	ONS 2011
White British	1202	78.4	71.5%
White Other	93	6.1	9.1%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	16	1.0	6.8%
Asian/Asian British	67	4.4	11.4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	24	1.6	3.9%
Other Ethnic Group	5	0.3	0.7%
Prefer not to say	92	6.0	
Blank	31	2.0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>100</b>	

Health*	Total	% Total
Physical Disability	114	7.4
Sensory Disability	32	2.1
Mental Health Condition	59	3.8
Learning Disability	20	1.3
Long Term Condition	154	10.0
None	924	60.3
Prefer Not to Say	112	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	

\*Respondents may select as many categories as applies

Religion or Belief	Total	% Total	ONS 2011
Buddhist	8	0.5	0.3%
Christian	739	48.2	59.3%
Hindu	4	0.3	1.5%
Jewish	6	0.4	0.1%
Muslim	34	2.2	5.5%
Sikh	7	0.5	2.1%
Other	36	2.3	1%
No religion	449	29.3	23.6%
Prefer not to say	134	8.7	6.6%
blank	116	7.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual Orientation	Total	% Total	ONS 2011
Bisexual	25	1.6	1.6%
Gay man	17	1.1	
Gay woman/Lesbian	18	1.2	
Heterosexual/Straight	1163	75.9	
Other	11	0.7	
Prefer not to say	181	11.8	
Blank	118	7.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>100%</b>	