

# Fire and Rescue Plan Survey 2024/28

Final Report

13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Prepared for:-

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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# Introduction and methodology

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## Introduction

The Fire and Rescue Plan sets out the priorities for fire and rescue services in Essex and a series of strong, tangible commitments to how we will help keep our communities safe. The plan brings together the Service, partners and the public to build safe and secure communities and offer efficient and effective prevention, protection and response activity.

Following the Commissioner's re-election in May 2024, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex are developing a new Fire and Rescue Plan (2024/28).

As part of the development of the new Fire and Rescue Plan (2024/28), a public survey was hosted by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex to gather thoughts and views on the priorities proposed.

This document provides analysis of the Fire and Rescue Plan Survey results and has been prepared by an Independent Research Consultant. Charts and tables are used throughout the report, along with verbatim quotations, to illustrate the findings.

## Methodology

The survey was hosted online and ran between 17<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. Links to the survey were shared with all partners listed in the survey communications plan by email and via social media channels. Partner organisations also included the survey links in internal and external channels and two media releases were distributed to local Essex news organisations which saw wide pick up in print and online media.

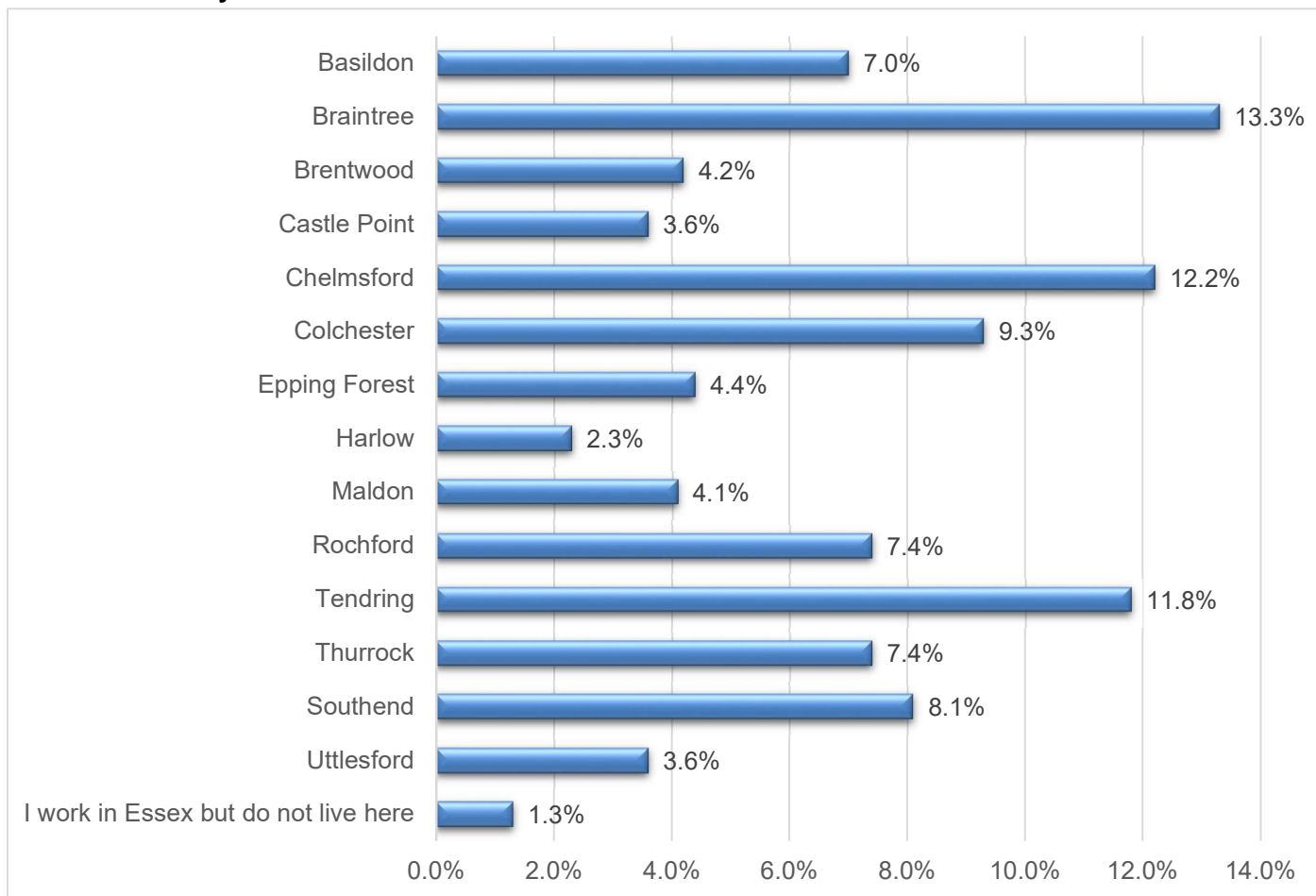
# Sample

A total of 3,051 individuals engaged with the survey. This section of the report details the profile of respondents taking part. (NB. Not all respondents completed every question and so sample bases provided throughout the report are those answering each question).

## District

As shown below, highest proportions of respondents lived in Braintree, Chelmsford and Tendring.

### Which district do you live in?



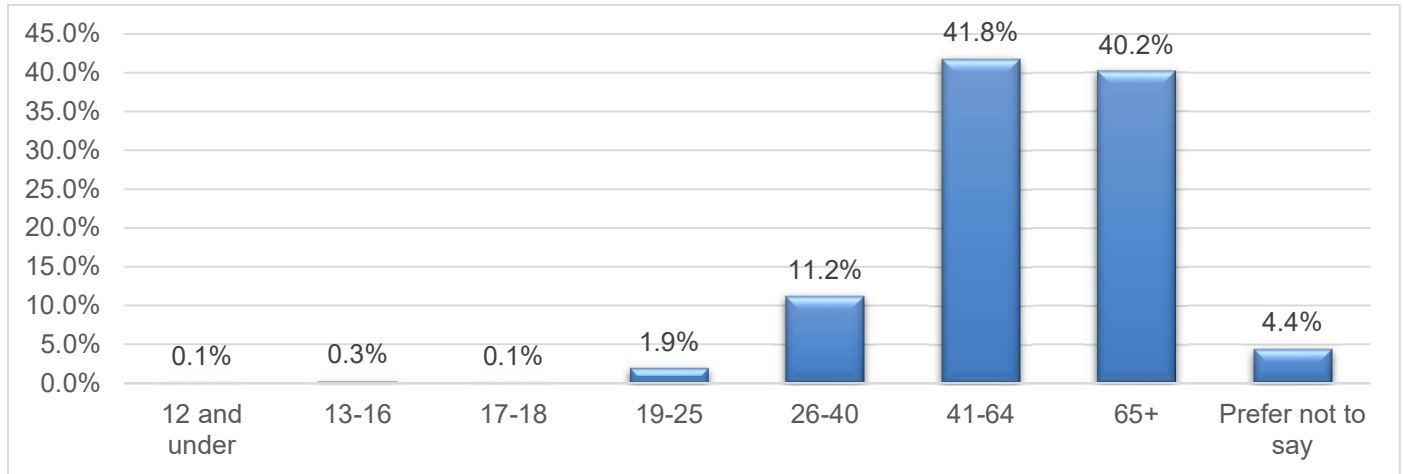
Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,931)

A small proportion of respondents (1.3%) completed the survey as they work in Essex but do not live in Essex.

## Age

Highest proportions of respondents were in the 41-64 and 65+ age categories.

### Which age group do you belong to?

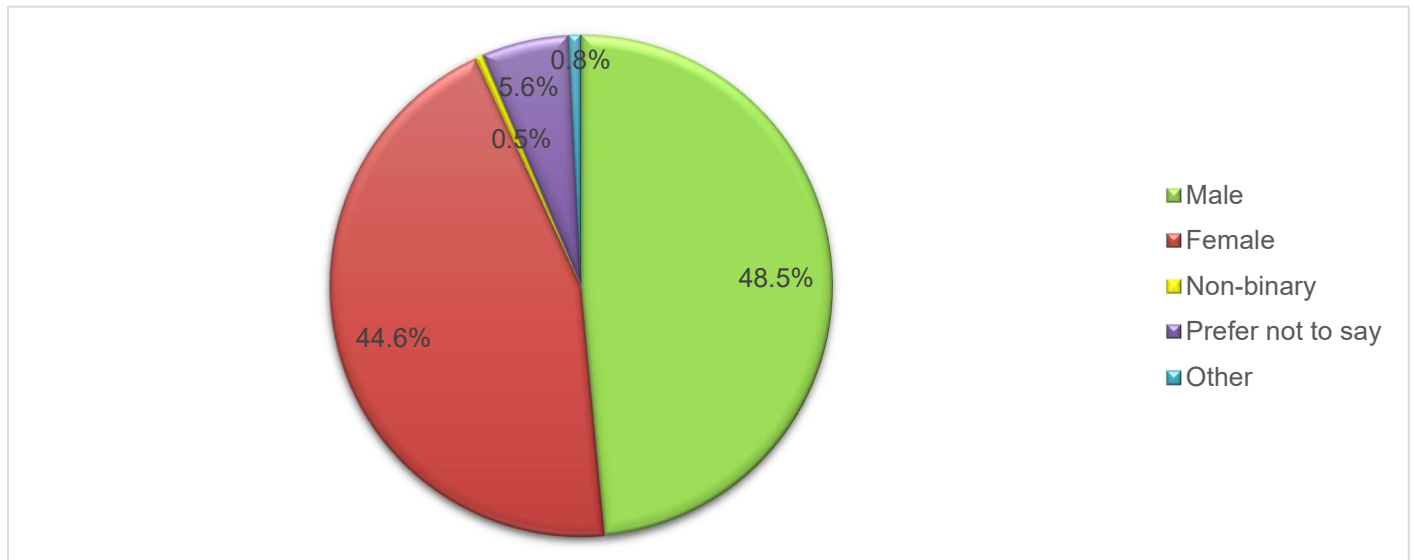


Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,870)

## Gender

Similar proportions of respondents were male and female, with 0.5% identifying as non-binary and 0.8% identifying with other gender identities.

### To which gender identity do you most identify?



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,853)

## Ethnicity

Some 87.8% of respondents were White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British.

To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
<b>White</b>		
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British	1,637	87.8%
Irish	14	0.8%
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	3	0.2%
Any other white background	44	2.4%
<b>Mixed/Multiple ethnic origins</b>		
White and Black Caribbean	6	0.3%
White and Black African	-	-
White and Asian	8	0.4%
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	15	0.8%
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>		
Indian	3	0.2%
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
Any other Asian background	7	0.4%
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British</b>		
African	1	0.1%
Caribbean	5	0.3%
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	-	-
<b>Other ethnic group</b>		
Arab	-	-
Any other ethnic group	4	0.2%
Prefer not to say	117	6.3%

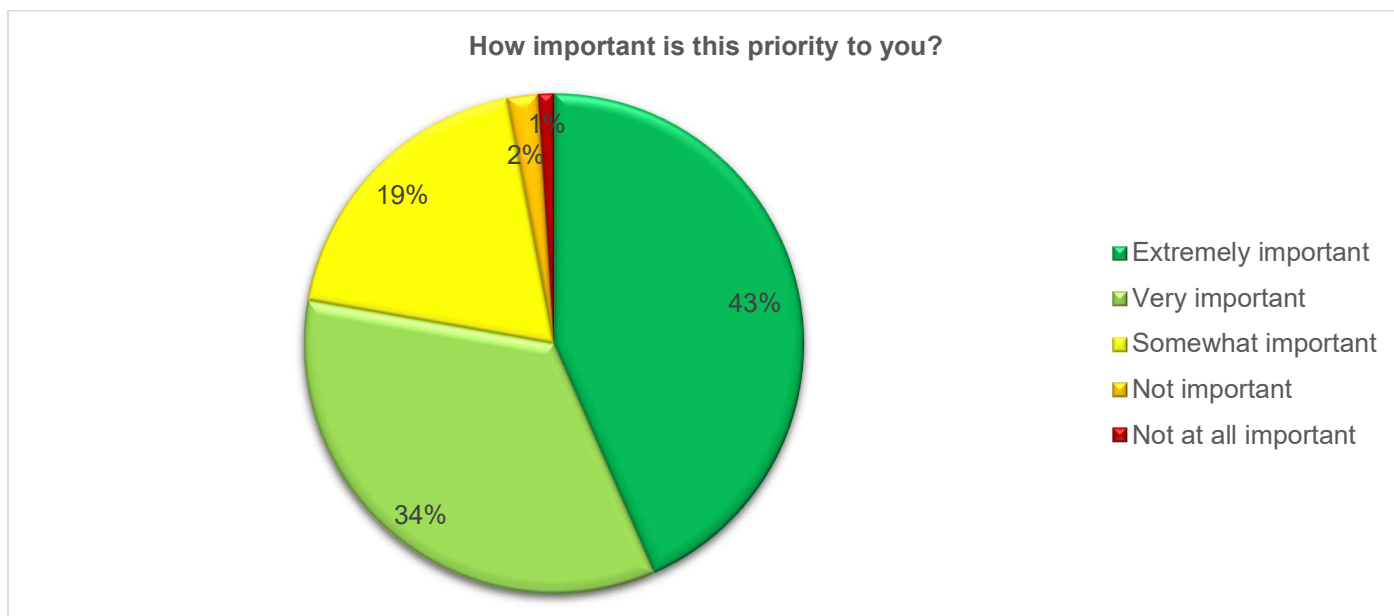
Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,864)

# Priorities

The sections below detail the six priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan. Respondents were asked how important each priority was to them and given the opportunity to provide any further comments on the priority.

## Priority 1 – Ensure vulnerable people are protected

*How we plan to do this: be out in our communities, engaging with the public, identifying those at risk and working with partners to keep people safe.*



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (2,004)

This priority was 'extremely important' to 43% of respondents, with a further 34% suggesting it to be 'very important'.

The 43% overall rating this priority to be 'extremely important' included 38% of male and 50% of female respondents. Respondents in the 65+ age category most frequently suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them (47%), along with those who lived in Tendring (59%), Colchester (49%) and Castle Point (47%).

### Additional comments:

Whilst some respondents agreed with this priority, others felt it was not relevant to fire fighting (1% - 12 respondents) and should be the responsibility of other agencies (1% - 20 respondents), with the fire service focusing on putting out fires (<1% - 5 respondents).

Respondents discussed community engagement being important and the need for more awareness and educating of the public, through both community organisations and schools (1% - 24 respondents).

Partnership working between the fire and rescue service and other agencies, with data sharing a key to this, was discussed to be important (1% - 21 respondents), with respondents suggesting the fire and rescue service should support other emergency services where possible (<1% - 3 respondents).

Some respondents held the view that the service lacked the personnel required to deliver this priority with the need for more frontline staff and fewer managers (1% - 11 respondents).

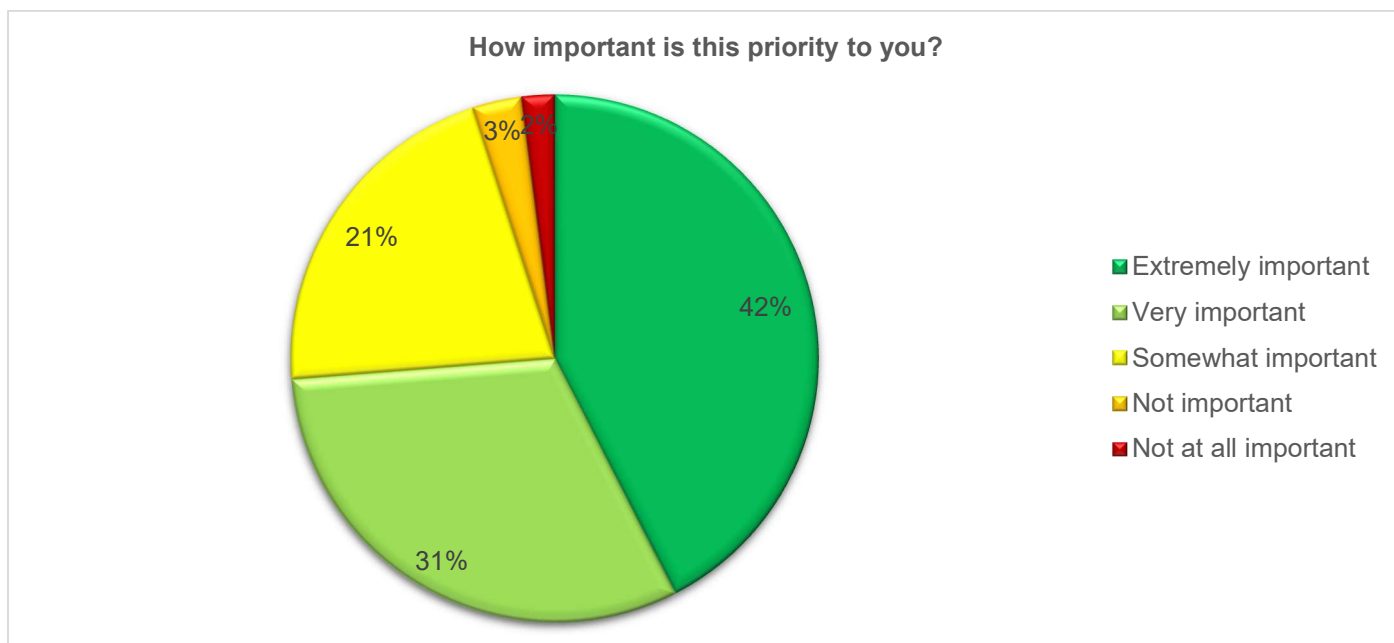
Respondents felt 'all' people needed to be protected (<1% - 8 respondents), along with vulnerable people (1% - 14 respondents), and that home fire safety visits were important and should be prioritised for those at risk (<1% - 8 respondents).

Twenty respondents (1%) questioned what classed as 'vulnerable' here, with this having an impact on how important they felt the priority would be.



## Priority 2 – Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero

*How we plan to do this: work with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to prevent harm on our roads through education and identifying and dealing with emerging risks.*



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,998)

This priority was 'extremely important' to 42% of respondents, with a further 31% suggesting it to be 'very important'.

The 42% overall rating this priority to be 'extremely important' included 38% of male and 47% of female respondents. Respondents in the 65+ age category most frequently suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them (47%), along with those who lived in Tendring (51%) and Rochford (49%).

### Additional comments:

Many respondents supported this priority but felt it was an unrealistic goal that may be difficult to attain. Respondents felt the aim should be to 'minimise' road deaths and many were not keen to see a target set that would be very difficult to achieve (2% - 28 respondents).

Some respondents discussed this not being a fire service matter/responsibility (2% - 20 respondents), whilst others agreed the fire service should be part of this (1% - 7 respondents) and felt the role of the fire service should be to support other emergency services when they can (<1% - 1 respondent).

Respondents discussed issues here including there being too much traffic/too many vehicles (1% - 7 respondents), references to motorbikes/e-bikes (1% - 8 respondents) and electric scooters (1% - 8 respondents), speeding (1% - 15 respondents) and parking (1% - 8 respondents).

Respondents also made reference to problems being down to road design, poor upkeep and the need for roads to be repaired (3% - 38 respondents).

Comments on drink driving (1% - 10 respondents) and drug driving (1% - 14 respondents) were also raised here, along with references to illegal/underage drivers and drivers without licenses (1% - 8 respondents). General references to 'dangerous' and 'poor' driving were also flagged here (2% - 22 respondents).

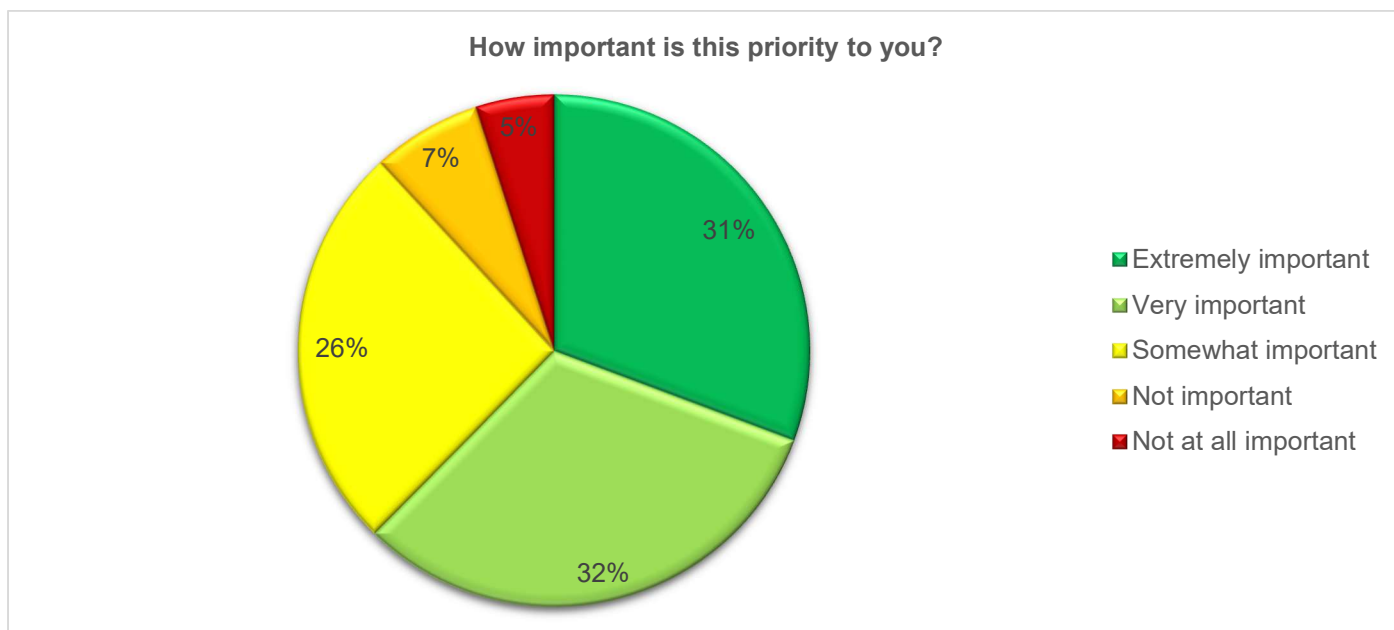
Respondents felt there was a requirement for more cameras (1% - 16 respondents), enforcement and fines (1% - 14 respondents) to tackle speeding, along with improvements to cycle paths, lanes and networks (<1% - 1 respondent).

More education on road safety and around the outcomes of serious accidents (2% - 25 respondents) was also suggested along with more thought-provoking campaigns (<1% - 4 respondents).

Multi-agency work was referred to as important here (1% - 8 respondents), with four respondents (<1%) suggesting a need for more awareness of the highway code and the need for people to be encouraged to read it.

### Priority 3 – Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce

*How we plan to do this: continue to build a positive culture within the fire and rescue service, attract talent from across our communities, and invest in our workforce through more training and development opportunities.*



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,998)

Approximately one-third of respondents suggested this priority was 'extremely important' to them, with a similar proportion suggesting it to be 'very important'.

The 31% overall rating this priority to be 'extremely important' included 29% of male and 35% of female respondents. Respondents in the 65+ age category most frequently suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them (37%), along with those who lived in Harlow (44%), Castle Point (40%) and Basildon (39%).

#### Additional comments:

A number of respondents discussed this to be an organisational/internal priority that was important/relevant for the fire and rescue service rather than the public (<1% - 8 respondents). Whilst some were unsure what 'positive culture' meant (1% - 9 respondents); others discussed a positive culture to be important for all work environments (1% - 15 respondents).

Respondents discussed issues of bullying and harassment taking place in the service (<1% - 6 respondents) with the need for racism, homophobic and misogynistic issues to be addressed (1% - 10 respondents). Two respondents (<1%) felt a thorough or independent review of the culture of the service was required.

References were made here to the need for 'less wokeness' (1% - 20 respondents) and for recruitment to be based on merit/ability and/or the best person for the job (3% - 54 respondents).

Respondents discussed the importance of all people being treated equally (<1% - 5 respondents) and the need for staff to feel safe and supported (<1% - 2 respondents), with confidential spaces available to access support (<1% - 1 respondent). The importance of valuing staff was also raised here with the view that valued and well-treated staff are key to a good service (1% - 12 respondents).

A lack of firefighters was discussed, with pay currently not reflecting the risk (<1% - 2 respondents). Respondents felt the role needed to be more attractive with a need for more wholetime firefighters (1% - 10 respondents), with others

referring to challenges in recruiting on-call firefighters (<1% - 4 respondents). Other respondents discussed there being too much reliance on on-call, with stations converted to on-call 'not working' (<1% - 2 respondents).

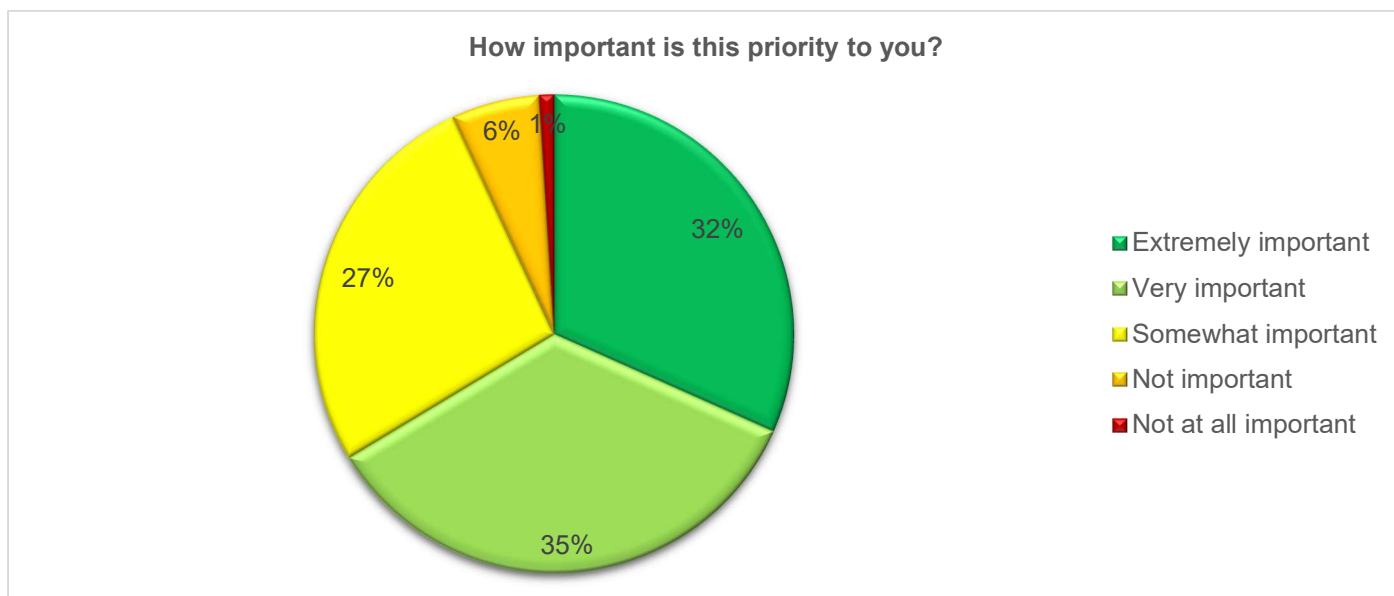
Respondents felt more community engagement was required to recruit additional firefighters (<1% - 5 respondents), with particular emphasis needed on working with schools to recruit school leavers and engage young people (1% - 21 respondents). The recruitment of leavers from armed services was also suggested here (<1% - 4 respondents).

Recent press around low morale and the reputation of the service (<1% - 7 respondents) was also referred to with the need for this to be addressed to improve the culture.

Several respondents were unsure if funding would be available to deliver this priority (<1% - 2 respondents), with four respondents (<1%) taking the opportunity here to share positive experiences of the fire service.

## Priority 4 – Make buildings across Essex safer

*How we plan to do this: extend fire protection and enforcement, improve targeted protection and help shape safer new housing and industrial developments.*



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,998)

Approximately one-third of respondents suggested this priority was 'extremely important' to them, with a similar proportion suggesting it to be 'very important'.

The 32% overall rating this priority to be 'extremely important' included 29% of male and 35% of female respondents. Respondents in the 65+ and 26 to 40 age categories most frequently suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them (35%), along with those who lived in Epping Forest (37%) and Harlow (37%).

### Additional comments:

Respondents saw prevention work to be important/paramount (1% - 9 respondents), with face-to-face advice visits being better than written advice (<1% - 3 respondents). Whilst one respondent (<1%) felt protection/prevention should be the main focus of the fire service when they are not actively dealing with incidents, others felt this priority was less important than others in the plan (<1% - 2 respondents) and felt the fire service may lack the money/resources to deliver this (<1% - 8 respondents).

Educating the public was seen as an important role for the fire and rescue service (<1% - 4 respondents) with this including references to education on the importance of smoke/CO alarms (<1% - 2 respondents), fire risks of electric scooters/bikes (<1% - 1 respondent) and education on the risks of litter/fly tipping and starting fires (<1% - 1 respondent). The fire and rescue service having a presence at larger events was also suggested by one respondent (<1%) under this priority.

Respondents shared mixed views on the fire service working with developers. Whilst some felt legislation/building regulations covered this (1% - 10 respondents) and that this was the developers and/or planners' responsibility rather than that of the fire service (1% - 20 respondents), others supported their involvement in this (1% - 15 respondents).

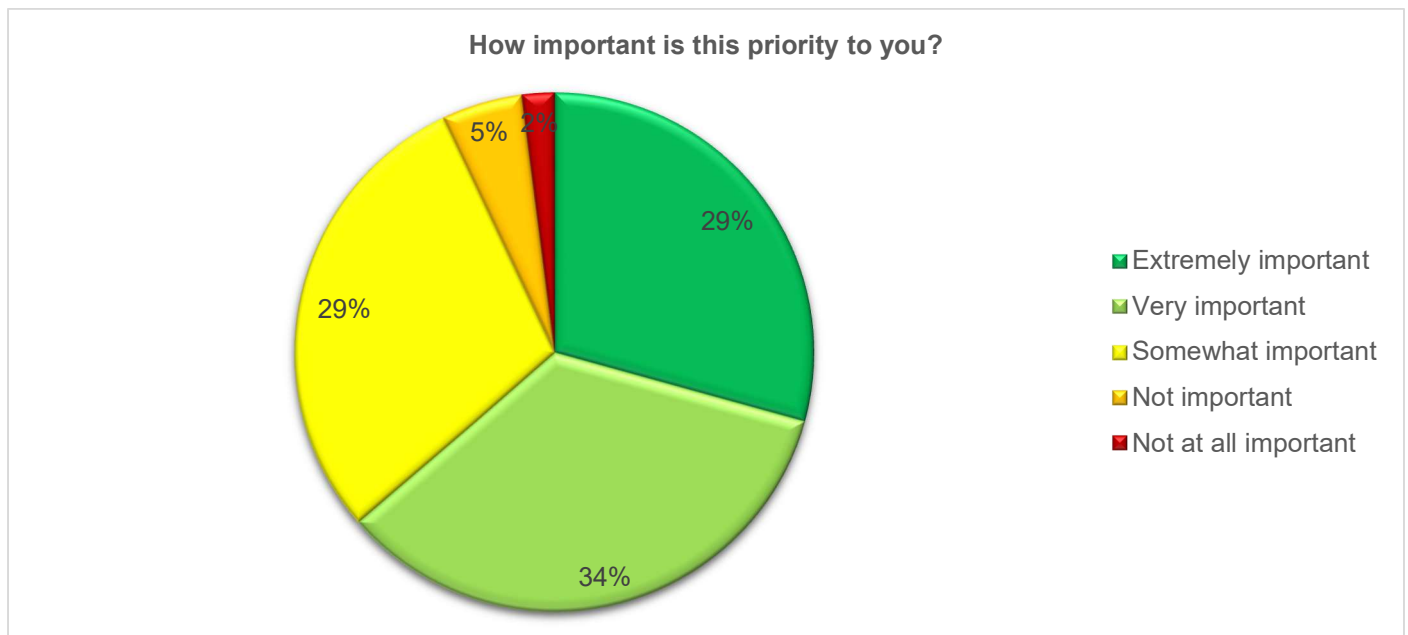
Respondents suggested new homes should have fire protection fitted (1% - 11 respondents), with others referring here to too many homes being built with buildings being too 'crammed in' and this presenting a 'dangerous fire risk' (<1% - 5 respondents). Respondents also commented here on the requirement for business and property owners/landlords to take responsibility themselves (1% - 10 respondents).

Respondents discussed the need for a focus/the fire service to target their advice on existing structures and the development of existing properties rather than new (<1% - 4 respondents), along with a need for empty buildings and properties to be dealt with (<1% - 3 respondents). Several respondents shared the view that older properties that were deemed unsafe should not be allowed onto the rental market (<1% - 2 respondents).

Nine respondents (1%) made reference here to the recent Grenfell Tower report as an example of why the fire service need to be involved, with a further six respondents (<1%) referring to cladding needing to be dealt with as a priority and others referring to the need for regular or annual inspections of businesses and/or buildings (<1% - 8 respondents).

## Priority 5 – Improve productivity and efficiency

*How we plan to do this: invest, modernise and reform the fire and rescue service, including its approach to operational resourcing, to make it more efficient, effective and fit for purpose.*



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,997)

Approximately three out of ten respondents (29%) suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them, with a further 34% suggesting it to be 'very important'.

The 29% overall rating this priority to be 'extremely important' included 30% of male and 29% of female respondents. Respondents in the under 25 age category most frequently suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them (38%), along with those who lived in Harlow (37%) and Epping Forest (36%). (NB care needs to be taken here with the small sample size of under 25).

### Additional comments:

Respondents discussed the need for the focus of the fire and rescue service to be on saving lives and protection of property (<1% - 4 respondents), with the view that productivity and efficiency should not be prioritised over public safety and keeping people safe (1% - 9 respondents).

Comments referred to the need for more operational staff (1% - 17 respondents), particularly more full-time firefighters (1% - 16 respondents), with less reliance on retained/on-call firefighters (1% - 9 respondents).

A number felt the conversion of stations to on-call had not worked (<1% - 3 respondents) and that issues of availability needed to be addressed with crews often travelling 'too far' (<1% - 6 respondents). Respondents also noted here that they would not want to see this priority result in the loss of/fewer jobs (2% - 47 respondents).

Respondents also discussed options for how the fire and rescue service could work more with other emergency services. Sharing operational control centres with the police and ambulance service was suggested (<1% - 1 respondent), along with the fire service supporting the ambulance service where possible (<1% - 5 respondents) and taking on other roles when time allows such as searching for missing people and community safety roles including providing a community presence with regards to speeding and anti-social behaviour (<1% - 7 respondents).

More investment in equipment and appliances was also referred to (1% - 9 respondents), along with the need for less management/ more frontline staff (1% - 9 respondents) and the removal of 'unnecessary bureaucracy' (<1% - 6 respondents). The need for staff to be 'listened to' (1% - 11 respondents) and 'looked after' (<1% - 6 respondents) was discussed with this seen to lead to staff retention (which was something respondents felt needed to be focussed on). Paying firefighters more and/or providing 'fair pay' was also discussed (<1% - 3 respondents) along with the need for on-call firefighters to feel more included (<1% - 1 respondent).

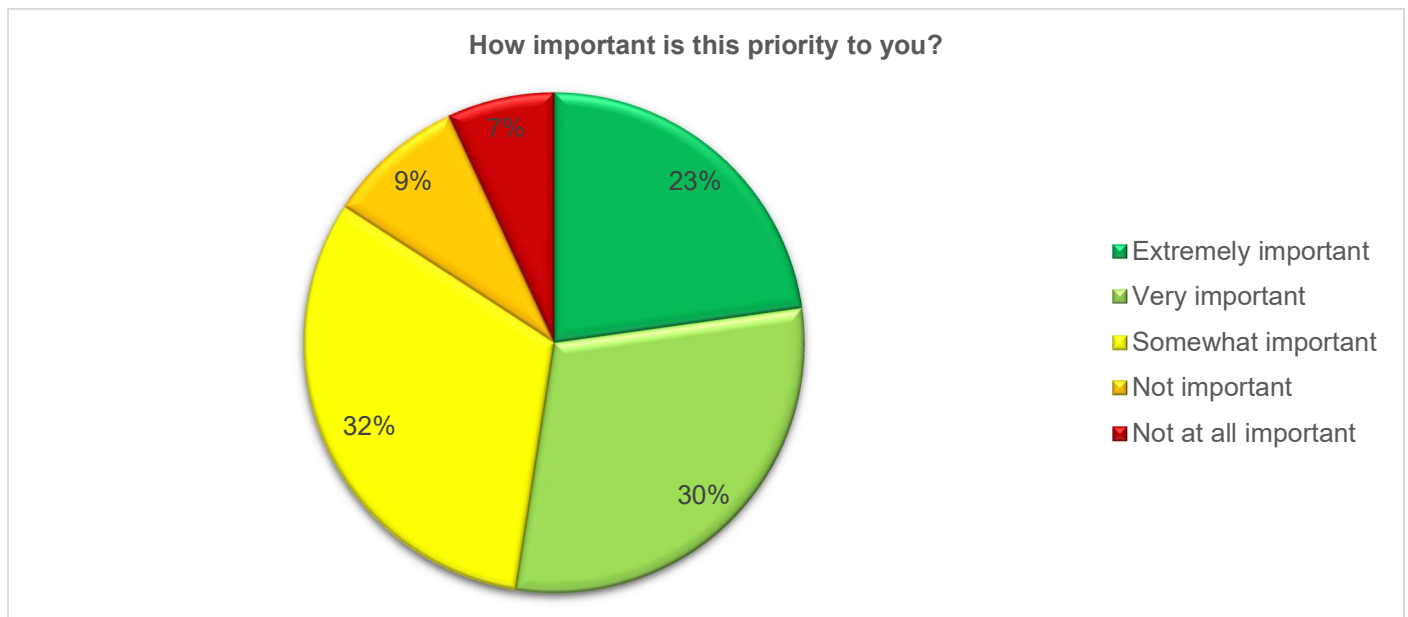
In discussing this priority, a number of respondents were unaware of 'the workings' of the fire service and so felt less able to comment, with this seen as more of an 'internal' priority (1% - 9 respondents). Others discussed not being aware or feeling the service required reform, with the current service seen to be 'fit for purpose' (1% - 17 respondents).

Financial barriers to actioning this priority were also discussed with respondents unsure the money required would be available (<1% - 8 respondents). A further six respondents (<1%) felt it would be challenging to get this priority to change past the unions (<1% - 6 respondents).



## Priority 6 – Adapt to our changing environment

**How we plan to do this: work together to reduce our environmental impact and address the consequences of extreme weather.**



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,993)

Approximately one-third of respondents suggested this priority to be 'somewhat important' to them, with just over half suggesting it to be either 'extremely important' or 'very important'.

The 23% overall rating this priority to be 'extremely important' included 20% of male and 28% of female respondents. Respondents in the under 25 age category most frequently suggested this priority to be 'extremely important' to them (29%), along with those who lived in Epping Forest (27%), Tendring (26%) and Castle Point (26%). (NB care needs to be taken here with the small sample size of under 25).

### Additional comments:

Respondents discussed this to be important but not as important as other priorities (1% - 9 respondents). Whilst the service needs to meet challenges of the changing environment, respondents did not want to see this achieved at the cost of providing public safety/keeping people safe (1% - 10 respondents).

Whilst some felt this was not a fire service matter (1% - 19 respondents), others saw this as an important issue that needed to be addressed (1% - 13 respondents). Again, some respondents questioned funding being available for this priority to be delivered (<1% - 3 respondents).

Respondents discussed the need for the fire and rescue service to engage with communities to support them to plan for emergencies (such as flooding) (<1% - 8 respondents) and to educate the public on their impact on the environment. This included references to causes of fires and flooding such as litter and glass bottles (1% - 13 respondents).

Working with other agencies to reduce hazards were also discussed here, such as maintaining open spaces and clearing gullies and drains (1% - 12 respondents), with a further 1% (10 respondents) suggesting a multi-agency approach to be needed.

Respondents felt it was important to improve forward planning and to 'be prepared' (1% - 19 respondents) as climate change and weather could not be 'controlled' (1% - 9 respondents). A focus on floods and wildfires was suggested

(<1% - 8 respondents), with others commenting that people generally 'trust' the fire service to 'adapt' and 'turn up' (<1% - 2 respondents).

Along with a need for more equipment and vehicles to deliver this priority (<1% - 3 respondents), respondents discussed other issues that needed to be addressed including building on flood plains (<1% - 6 respondents) and issues with parked vehicles blocking emergency service access to areas when required (<1% - 1 respondent).

## Additional Comments on Priorities

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments on anything else they would like to discuss regarding priorities.

Thirty respondents (1%) referred to having found it difficult to rank the priorities, with many feeling they were all important. Many of the priorities being 'linked' was also discussed (<1% - 8 respondents), with others suggesting the priorities set out to be things they would already expect the service to deliver (<1% - 3 respondents).

*"It is too simplistic to rate them in order as they are different entities and all important, ranking something as 6 really does not mean it is not important to us." (Female, 41-64, Braintree)*

*"All of the above are important - one does not work without the other." (Female, 65+, Castle Point)*

*"None of these things can improve in isolation-they all have a knock-on effect on each other." (Female, 65+, Colchester)*

*"Most of these are things which should already be being carried out. Ridiculous." (Female, 65+, Rochford)*

Eight respondents (<1%) made reference to not being sure of the role of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and questioning this in terms of value for money. Others suggested priorities to be 'empty' or political slogans (<1% - 3 respondents) along with a need for 'less words and more action' and for the service to 'get on with the job' (<1% - 9 respondents).

*"There is no substance in any of the proposals. They are the same empty slogans that you used in previous 'plans'. The role of the Commissioner should be abolished because you are a waste of taxpayers' money." (Information not provided)*

*"Time to stop talking and act now." (Male, 65+, Uttlesford)*

*"More actions, less words about it afterwards is the key." (Male, 41-64, Chelmsford)*

Respondents referred to the need for more funding in order for these priorities to be delivered (<1% - 7 respondents) with a requirement for investment in services, including increasing the pay/benefits to reflect these being dangerous occupations (<1% - 5 respondents).

*"Do not see how things can be improved without more resources." (Female, 65+, Tendring)*

*"Invest in public services, increase the pay to what's deserved, change back the pensions to reflect the dangerous job police and fire do. By doing these alone will attract more and better officers, will help retain the little experience you already have." (Maldon)*

Four respondents (<1%) discussed the need for services to employ the 'right person for the job', with others requesting less 'political correctness' and a concern that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion should not be allowed to 'get in the way of saving lives' (<1% - 9 respondents)

*"Employ people fit to do the job not because they tick a box." (26-40, Tendring)*

*"But no 'woke' or 'political correct' policies." (Male, 65+, Colchester)*

The need for more community engagement was also referred to here (<1% - 8 respondents), with communicating through schools and in education settings seen as a positive approach (<1% - 9 respondents).

*"A lot of the above comes down to more discussion groups at schools, universities, college etc. More help to be given to parents to teach how to discipline their children. To teach how to help vulnerable people. To teach how to be more tolerant and to think and help others." (Female, 65+, Tendring)*

*“Not just for children at schools, but for tax paying adults - for example attending a parish council meeting or being available for questions once in a while at a local recreation ground...in the villages, not the towns. We feel forgotten.”  
(Female, 41-64, Uttlesford)*

Twenty-six respondents (1%) made positive references to the fire service here, including comments thanking the service for the work they do.

*“I take this opportunity to thank all Fire and Rescue teams for all their hard work and commitment to keeping residents in Essex safe and safeguarded. Thank you.” (Female, 41-64, Basildon)*

*“Our ‘on call’ firemen do a wonderful job. Their number of call outs have increased considerably, and I value their willingness to drop everything to respond to a problem. Well done!” (Female, 65+, Uttlesford)*

Others discussed the priorities proposed to be ‘inward facing’ priorities rather than priorities that were community focussed (<1% - 7 respondents) with fourteen respondents (1%) keen for the fire and rescue service to focus on their core responsibilities including putting out fires and saving lives.

*“Why nothing about Fires? Why all about internal stuff... culture and environment has nothing to do with keeping me safe from Fire.” (Male, 41-64, Southend)*

*“In my view the only thing that the Fire Service should do is put out fires effectively and rapidly to save property and lives! None of the questions above are important at all!” (Male, 65+, Tendring)*

Respondents discussed the need for more wholetime firefighters, with comments focusing on the balance between wholetime and retained firefighters (<1% - 9 respondents). Improving the availability of crews was discussed (<1% - 10 respondents), along with references to not closing local stations (<1% - 3 respondents), improving equipment and appliances (<1% - 6 respondents) and having fire engines more locally so that they were not covering such large distances (<1% - 4 respondents).

*“We need more fire people.” (Tendring)*

*“A real balance is required between full time and retained officers to ensure level operational response to incidents irrespective of their location.” (Male, 65+, Chelmsford)*

*“The availability has to be the number one priority. Without this you fail at every hurdle. 80% is not good that’s a fifth of machines off the run.” (Female, 41-64, Maldon)*

*“Stop closing wholetime stations.” (Male, 65+, Rochford)*

*“Better resources and equipment and appliances especially 4x4 in rural areas around harvest time.” (Male, 41-64, Chelmsford)*

*“Having local fire engines available in the locality rather than filling in gaps in the county.” (Female, 19-25, Colchester)*

# Ranking of priorities

## Importance of priorities

The chart below provides a summary of how important the priorities are to respondents to allow comparison between priorities.

### How important is this priority to you?



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,993-2,004)

As shown above, the priorities most frequently suggested to be 'extremely important' were 'ensure vulnerable people are protected' and 'improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero'.

## Ranking of priorities

Respondents were asked to rank the priorities in order of how important they were to them with 1 being most important and 6 the least important.

The chart below shows average rankings for each priority from 1 to 6, with 1 (the lower score) being the most important.



Base: all respondents excluding 'no response' (1,894-1,910)

As shown, the priority most frequently ranked as most important (lowest average score) is 'ensure vulnerable people are protected', followed by 'improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero'.

The following sections provide analysis by gender, age and district. Again, average rankings from 1 to 6 are provided (with lower scores [those closer to 1] representing the most important priority and higher scores [those closer to 6] representing the priority ranked least important). Tables are colour coded with red highlighting the priorities rated as most important and blue those rated as least important.

(NB. It should be noted that a number of respondents commented that they found ranking the priorities difficult and that those they rated lower were still important to them).

## Analysis by Gender

The figure below details average rankings for priorities broken down by gender (only categories with large enough sample sizes are included here).

### Ranking of priorities by gender (average rankings from 1 [most important] to 6 [least important])

	Total	Male	Female
Ensure vulnerable people are protected	2.2	2.4	2.1
Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero	2.6	2.7	2.6
Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce	3.7	3.8	3.6
Make buildings across Essex safer	3.3	3.3	3.3
Improve productivity and efficiency	3.9	3.7	4.2
Adapt to our changing environment	4.1	4.2	4.2
*Number of respondents	(1,894-1,910)	(848-855)	(791-798)

As shown, 'ensure vulnerable people are protected', followed by 'improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero' were those ranked most important by both male and female respondents. Whilst 'promote a positive culture and develop the workforce' was ranked slightly more important than 'improve productivity and efficiency' overall and by female respondents, male respondents ranked 'improve productivity and efficiency' slightly higher.

## Analysis by Age Category

The figure below details average rankings for priorities broken down by age category (NB care needs to be taken with the small sample size for 25 and under).

### Ranking of priorities by age category (average rankings from 1 [most important] to 6 [least important])

	Total	25 and under	26 to 40	41 to 64	65+
Ensure vulnerable people are protected	2.2	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2
Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero	2.6	3.3	3.1	2.6	2.6
Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce	3.7	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.4
Make buildings across Essex safer	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3
Improve productivity and efficiency	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.0
Adapt to our changing environment	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.0
*Number of respondents	(1,894-1,910)	(43)	(194-196)	(749-754)	(707-713)

As shown, 'ensure vulnerable people are protected' was the priority ranked as most important (lowest average score) by respondents in all age categories. This, followed by 'improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero' were the top two most important priorities overall and for those in the 26 to 40, 41 to 64 and 65+ age categories.

Whilst care needs to be taken with the small sample size in the 25 and under category (43), those aged 25 and under rated 'make buildings across Essex safer' to be a slightly higher priority than 'improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero'.



## Analysis by District

The figure below details average rankings for priorities broken down by district (NB care needs to be taken with the small sample sizes in some areas).

### Ranking of priorities by district (average rankings from 1 [most important] to 6 [least important])

	Total	Basilston	Braintree	Brentwood	Castle Point	Chelmsford	Colchester	Epping Forest	Harlow	Maldon	Rochford	Tending	Thurrock	Southend	Uttlesford	Worm in Essex
Ensure vulnerable people are protected	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.4	2.1	2.4	3.1
Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.4	3.1
Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.2	3.9	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.7
Make buildings across Essex safer	3.3	2.9	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.4	3.4
Improve productivity and efficiency	3.9	3.6	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.6	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8
Adapt to our changing environment	4.1	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.3	3.8	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.0
*Number of respondents	(1,894-1,910)	(127-129)	(248-249)	(76-77)	(67)	(225-226)	(171)	(78-80)	(41)	(73-76)	(133-134)	(212-215)	(135-138)	(142-147)	(67-68)	(24)

As shown, 'ensure vulnerable people are protected' was ranked the most important priority across all districts apart from Uttlesford, where this priority and 'improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to zero' were rated to be of equal highest importance (2.4).

# Barriers to accessing services

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Respondents were asked at the end of the survey if they had faced any barriers in accessing the services of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

Some 14% (417 respondents) had faced no barriers, with a further 1% (42 respondents) suggesting they had not had a reason/need to contact the service.

Five respondents (<1%) described positive experiences of the fire and rescue service with access having been good.

*“None, my recent dealing with firefighters have all been excellent they are the very best of people.” (Male, 65+)*

Poor availability of fire engines and crews were discussed (<1% - 4 respondents), along with references to availability issues with on-call stations (<1% - 4 respondents) and response times having increased with firefighters covering larger areas (<1% - 3 respondents).

*“Daily availability of fire engines across Essex is poor and this places more reliance on Wholetime Fire Stations to provide a service for the county of Essex.” (Male, 26-40, Rochford)*

*“Yes on call stations frequently off the run leaving excess arrival times from wholetime fire stations - papering over the cracks of this failing system.” (Male, 26-40, Harlow)*

*“Fire Service appear to be under pressure and too reliant on on-call stations which are regularly not available.” (Female, 41-64, Braintree)*

*“Fire engines are not coming from my local station??” (Non-binary, 26-40, Maldon)*

Four respondents discussed having faced difficulties when trying to access advice from the fire and rescue service (<1%), with a further two respondents (<1%) suggesting fire service recruitment to be discriminatory.

*“Yes, difficulty in contacting Fire Service for advice and information on fire safety.” (Male, 65+, Rochford)*

*“The fire safety enforcement team are particularly difficult to request, and I have been told multiple times by themselves that they are understaffed, under resourced and have too much demand.” (Male, 26-40, Work in Essex)*

*“Application for fire service is discriminatory with female and ethnic minority days only.” (Male, 26-40, Tendring)*