

# Colchester Community Survey (Visitors and Residents)

## Report of Findings

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Prepared by:



destinationresearch  
delivering results : measuring what matters

On behalf of:



We are Colchester

## Introduction

This document presents the key findings of the Colchester community survey. The study was commissioned by Colchester Borough Council, working in Partnership with We are Colchester, a partnership between Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council and business and community organisations in the town.

The Government has identified Colchester as one of 101 towns that could receive up to £25million as part of a Town Deal. The We Are Colchester Board is looking at a range of potential projects to take forward but knowing what the local community wants and needs is vital. The Town Deal includes three thematic areas:

- How We Connect - Infrastructure, digital connectivity and sustainable travel
- How We Grow - Economic prosperity, business growth and skills
- How We Live - Place-making, built and natural environment, culture, and regeneration.

A total of 400 face-to-face interviews were completed, with a mixture of residents and visitors. Interviewers approached potential respondents on a random basis, aiming to interview every fifth person after the completion of the previous interview. Interviews excluded:

- ◉ Friends / family and people who work in Market Research
- ◉ People under the age of sixteen
- ◉ More than one person from one party.

**Statistical Reliability** - All surveys are subject to some degree of statistical error. The size of this error will vary with the sample size, population size and the degree of cross tabulations being undertaken. The margin of error reduces as the sample increases. It is generally accepted that a sample of 400 interviews offers the best balance between costs and statistical reliability. Based on the overall sample of 400 people, if the survey indicate that 80% of visitors travelled by car, we can be 95% certain that the true percentage in the population that came by car is in the range 76.1% to 83.9% (within  $\pm 3.9\%$ ).

## Introduction

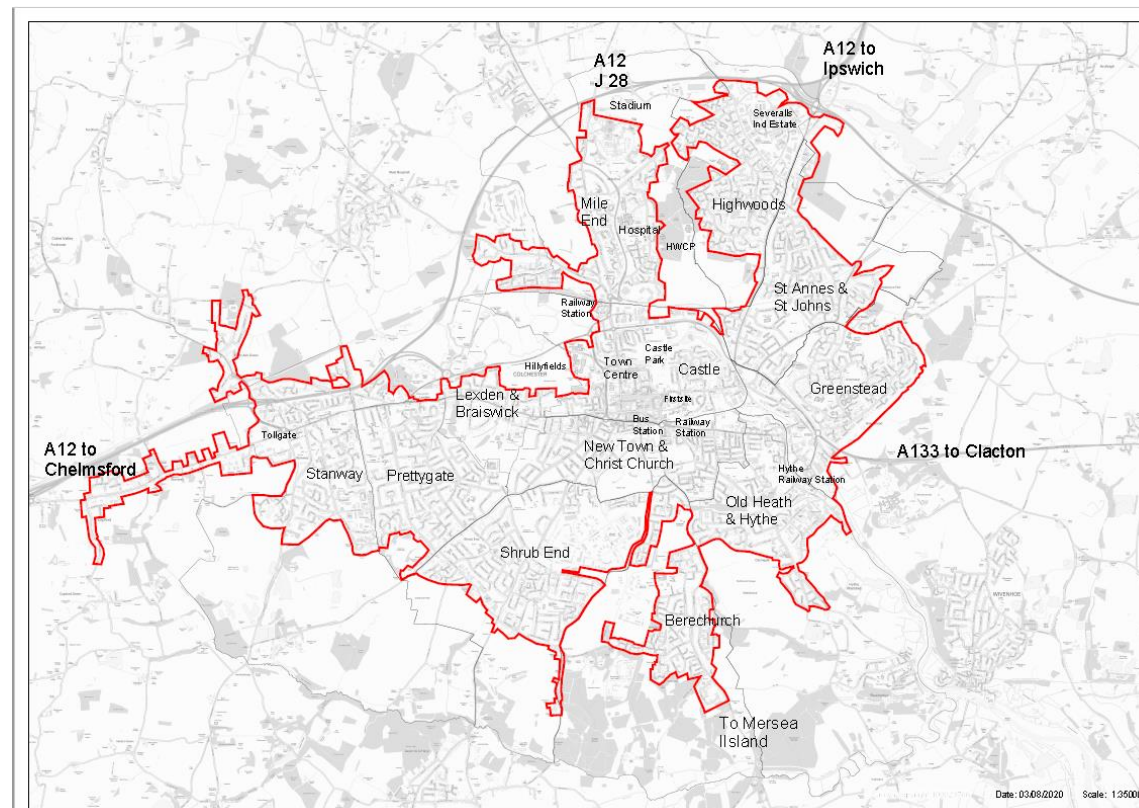
Fieldwork took place during August 2020 and interviews were conducted at a variety of locations within Colchester, with just over half of interviews (58%) completed in the town centre. Interviewers also conducted interviews at various locations within Prettygate (17%), Greenstead (12%), Old Heath (9%) and St Johns (5%). See table below for more details.

Type of respondent	Percentage interviews
Town centre: High Street, Head Street, the Castle Park. (Postcode: CO1, CO2)	58%
Prettygate: Prettygate Rd / The Common (Postcode: CO3)	17%
Greenstead: Bromley Rd / Tesco, Hawthorn Avenue (Postcode: CO4)	12%
Old Heath: Old Heath recreation ground. (Postcode: CO1)	9%
St Johns: St Christopher Road shops. (Postcode: CO4)	5%

The questionnaire included a number of profile questions to establish the respondent's gender, age group and home location.

Then, two open ended questions followed about the main reasons why they like living / working / visiting in Colchester and; What one thing could improve Colchester (thinking of today's children and future generations in Colchester)

Interviewers collected the open ended responses and developed a number of pre-coded statements which in turn have been grouped and ranked in order of importance.



## Survey Findings – Respondent Profile

## Respondent Profile

The first section of this reports describes the profile of survey respondents in terms of their gender, age groups, the location of their normal place of residence and the main reason for being in Colchester on the day of the interview.

Postcode Area	Percentage
CO1	13%
CO2	29%
CO3	15%
CO4	20%
CO5	3%
CO6	3%
CO7	5%
Other	12%

The majority of respondents live in the CO1 and CO2 areas (town centre and Old Heath). Prettygate, Greenstead and St Johns residents accounted for just over a third of respondents (35%). The rest of respondents were from other areas within the Borough or from elsewhere.

Just over half of respondents (54%) were residents and a further 28% said they live and work in Colchester. The remaining respondents were either visiting for the day (14%) or in the area for work purposes (3%).

Type of respondent	All	Greenstead	Old Heath	Prettygate	St Johns	Town centre
"Live elsewhere, visiting for the day for leisure/shopping"	14%	9%	24%	9%	10%	16%
"Live in Colchester"	54%	52%	47%	71%	50%	51%
"Live in Colchester" and "Work in Colchester"	28%	35%	24%	17%	30%	31%
"Work in Colchester"	3%	4%	6%	3%	10%	2%

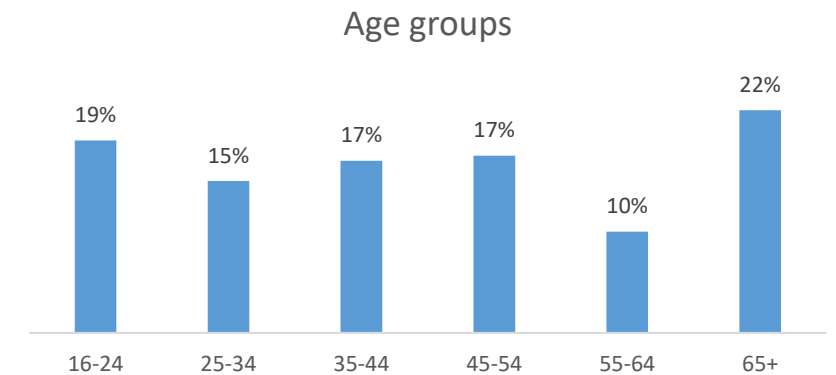
*Base: 400 – multiple choice – Do you... (Live in Colchester / Work in Colchester / Live elsewhere, visiting for the day for leisure / shopping); Base 400 – Open - Please tell us the first part of your postcode. (This is to map your location in relation to Colchester.)*

## Respondent Profile

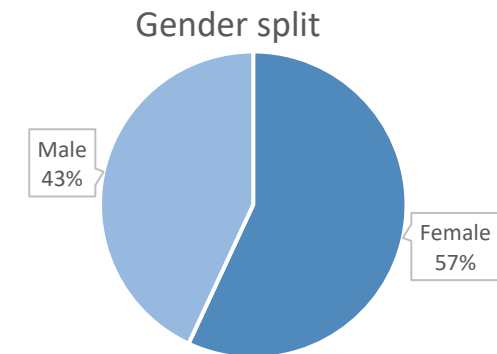
Respondents were spread across the age groups and more female respondents took part in the survey (57% of the sample).

Most respondents were aged over 65 (22%) and from the youngest age group (16-24), accounting for 19% of the sample. Age groups 35-44 and 45-54 accounted for 17% of the sample each. Finally, the 25-34 and 55-64 age group were slightly less represented at 15% and 10% respectively. Note that there were some significant differences in age groups depending on the interview locations.

Age group	All	Greenstead	Old Heath	Prettygate	St Johns	Town centre
16-24	19%	26%	18%	9%	20%	21%
25-34	15%	13%	24%	24%	10%	12%
35-44	17%	9%	18%	3%	20%	22%
45-54	17%	13%	18%	24%	10%	17%
55-64	10%	9%	18%	3%	20%	10%
65+	22%	30%	6%	38%	20%	18%



Type of respondent	All	Greenstead	Old Heath	Prettygate	St Johns	Town centre
Female	57%	57%	53%	51%	40%	61%
Male	43%	43%	47%	49%	60%	39%



Base: 400 – multiple choice – Are you female or male?; Which age group do you belong to?

## Survey Findings – About Colchester

## About Colchester

Respondents were first asked to explain the main reasons why they like living, working or visiting Colchester. We have grouped their responses into groups and ranked them in order of popularity as shown in the following table.

The following pages summarise some of the comments made within each of the top groups as identified in the table.

Main reasons for living / working / visiting	Percentage
<b>Family &amp; friends are here</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Generally good place to live / nice town</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Good links to London, coast &amp; countryside</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Lots to do, shops etc, has everything</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Born here</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Good/nice restaurants / cafes</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>History / heritage</b>	<b>5%</b>
Nice friendly people	4%
Colchester Castle Park	4%
Good range of shops	4%
Low crime, feel safe	4%
Easily accessible on foot	3%
Good atmosphere at night	2%
Good education, school, college & university	2%
Parks	2%
Cost of living is good	1%
Good public transport, park & ride	1%
Lots of activities for kids	1%
Stationed here, no choice	1%
Good Art scene	1%
Nothing	1%
Zoo	1%
Good independent / boutique shops	1%
Good job opportunities	1%

Base: 400 – open – Please tell us the main reasons why you like living / working / visiting in Colchester.



## About Colchester

Generally good place to live / nice town

Family live here, I like the town, good for shops and has everything you need

Like the town, like the coffee shops, good places to meet people especially the Red Lion Yard

It's a nice town with a lot of history

Everything, its peaceful and not as busy as London

Feels like a city but much quieter. People are friendly and polite

It's lovely and peaceful, much nicer than London and greener.

Friendly small community town. Good job opportunities

Base: 400 – open – Please tell us the main reasons why you like living / working / visiting in Colchester.

## About Colchester

### Good links to London, coast & countryside

Convenient for me. I can easily be in the centre of town one moment and then in the countryside the next.

It is nice and convenient and handy for London and the Coast

Close to countryside and coast, easy access to London and nice history

Grew up here, close to London but not too close and close to countryside and sea

### Lots to do, shops etc, has everything

Independent shops, boutique type and it has a nice vibe too.

Busy with lots to do socially such as restaurants, etc.

Good facilities like cinemas, leisure and good town centre. Friendly people and good library. Good heritage, castle is great.

Love the zoo, there is plenty for kids to do.

The amenities are all good. The pool, shops, hospital and lots of green spaces.

## About Colchester

### Good/nice restaurants / cafes

Lots of good restaurants and good night life. Town is clean and nice.

Lots of restaurants, lots of gyms, lots of facilities and lots of coffee shops.

Nice eating places and good cinemas and clothes shopping.

Nice size, lots of restaurants and bars. Good for socialising.

### History / heritage

Steeped in history. Oldest recorded town in England. I am proud to be part of it.

Castle Park is great. It is easily accessible by foot. a nice military town

I am a massive history boffin so I do love the history of the town.

## How to improve Colchester

Once respondents described the main reasons why they like living, working or visiting Colchester they were presented with the following question: *Thinking of today's children and future generations in Colchester, what one thing could improve Colchester?*

As before, we have grouped their responses into groups and ranked them in order of popularity as shown in the next table.

Overall, respondents would like more to see a wider range of facilities, amenities and attractions available for children and teenagers as well as a wider variety of parks and open spaces. In addition, respondents believe that the town would benefit from improved cleanliness and safety.

The following pages summarise some of the comments made within each of the top groups as identified in the table.

Main improvements	Percentage
More for children	17%
More for teenagers	14%
Improve parks, more parks / open spaces	7%
General clean & tidy	7%
More policing, improve safety	6%
Improve public transport & parking	5%
Recreation and attractions	4%
More leisure, sport	4%
Reduce anti-social behaviour	4%
Improve pavements and roads	3%
Improve training & job opportunities	3%
Reduce number of empty units, lower rates	3%
Reduce homelessness / drug users	3%
Improve education	3%
Improve infrastructure	2%
Reduce cars, pedestrianise	2%
Affordable housing	2%
Improve health services	2%
Make more of the arts, heritage and history	1%
Don't know	1%
Cycle lanes	1%
Promote local businesses	1%
Places to eat and drink with outdoor seating	1%

Base: 400 – open – Thinking of today's children and future generations in Colchester, what one thing could improve Colchester?

## How to improve Colchester

### More facilities and opportunities for children and teenagers

Key interventions in these areas according to respondents could be a **new youth club** as well as **new play areas for children**.

More things for kids to do, more kids clubs, youth clubs, more apprenticeships.

Sports centres, swimming pools and youth clubs at affordable price.

More for children is needed, like dancing and ballet. it has a good park here but maybe more indoor stuff.

Adventure playgrounds, sports facilities - affordable things for kids and families.

More accessible play areas, more interaction with history.

Need an amusement park or theme park to create jobs and draw people to the town

Base: 400 – open – Thinking of today's children and future generations in Colchester, what one thing could improve Colchester?

## How to improve Colchester

### Interventions to open spaces, recreation and attractions, leisure & sport facilities and selection of shops

Key interventions in these areas according to respondents could focus on community and open spaces to encourage leisure and cultural activities, eating out (whilst maintaining social distancing). Other interventions could be directed to promoting entrepreneurial spirit, small businesses and independent and boutique retailing.

A lot more things to do apart from eating and drinking. Sports centres, swimming pools and youth clubs at affordable price.

Have play areas in restaurants and more garden spaces in pubs or restaurants

Improving the parks. Adventure playgrounds, sports facilities - affordable things for kids and families.

More independent shops. Lower rents and rates.

More community spaces, a gallery where artists can display their work to sell and musicians can perform. Encourage people to the town, do something like Covent Gardens

Encourage small local businesses to thrive. Start up incentives and support cheaper rent and business rates to fill up these empty units. More entrepreneurial spirit

## How to improve Colchester

### Interventions to improve infrastructure, housing, education and health services

With Colchester growing at such fast pace, many respondents believe any investments should be targeting general health and education infrastructure as well as social housing for its knock on effects on mental health, homelessness and disabilities.

Better network infrastructure. It's the largest growing town so schools and hospitals need to grow with it.

More schools and more healthcare clinics to ease up hospitals.

Reduce over crowding in schools

Ensure they get a good education, put more money into schools and further education.

Better schools, better quality teaching, better education all round. More senior schools and sixth form colleges.

More support and help for mental health patients. Reduce homelessness. More drugs and alcohol programmes. More affordable housing.

More affordable housing. Get the homeless off the street. More rehabilitation programs for drug users and alcohol.

Help and support for people with disabilities.

## How to improve Colchester

### Interventions to improve public transport, parking, pavements and roads

Key interventions could be as specific as repairing pot holes and pavements but many see an opportunity to improve the road infrastructure in order to lower congestion and pollution levels. A lot of emphasis is placed on implementing green measures, including electric vehicles and soft mobility options. A greener transport infrastructure is significantly more important than historic demands for a new bus station (not mentioned at all in the survey).

Too much traffic and pollution. The roads need a re-think.

Better roads and pavements as lots of pot holes and pavements are dangerous.

Road infrastructure to lower congestion in the town and improve public transport

More pedestrianisation. Get traffic out of the town centre, make it cycle and pedestrian friendly.

Have more buses and trams to reduce the need for cars and make it cleaner

Reduce big buses and more mini buses.

Improve park and ride and pedestrianise the town centre

Make buses all environmentally friendly. Electric ones would be good.

More cycle paths to country parks and the town centre.



## How to improve Colchester

### Actions relating to cleanliness, policing, safety and anti-social behaviour

There are concerns that crime and anti-social behaviours have increased in recent years. Some respondents believe these issues could be solved with increased levels of policing and other safety measures such as CCTV. Homelessness and substance abuse are often linked to safety, cleanliness and anti-social behaviour. However, some of these problems may be better tackled with interventions in health and housing services, as identified on page 15. Other comments relate to improving levels of cleanliness.

Clean it up, a general revamp, more bins, more street cleaning and better toilets

Improve safety, better policing

Reduce knife crime, more policing

Get the homeless off the street.

Make it safer, CCTV. More police, reduce anti-social behaviour.

Stop the drug dealers on the street corners and drug users in public. Reduce anti-social behaviour.

Base: 400 – open – Thinking of today's children and future generations in Colchester, what one thing could improve Colchester?

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