



Manor Royal People Conference 2024 Report

21 February 2024

Author: Steve Sawyer, Executive Director, MRBD Limited

Manor Royal Business Improvement District (BID) Company (MRBD Limited)

Unit 38 Basepoint Business Centre, Metcalf Way, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9XX

www.manorroyal.org

INTRODUCTION

The Manor Royal People Conference took place on 21 February and was hosted by Crawley College.

The purpose of the event was to bring Manor Royal business owners, managers and HR professionals together to network, share good practice and to hear presentations from keynote speakers.

The core focus of this People Conference was on workforce skills of the future, with a discussion of the key trends that will impact our people this year and beyond and the skills we need for success in business today including the investment being made by Crawley College to support the development of world class skills locally.

Anthony Fitton (Head of Consulting at Bailey & French) discussed the emerging trends impacting business and people with a focus on the importance of human-enabling technology. Dean Wynter (Deputy Principal, Crawley College) and Paul Rolfe (Associate Principal at Crawley College & Director of Sussex & Surrey Institute of Technology) discussed the innovations at the College, the use of technology to enhance and improve the learning experience and the investments planned at the College.

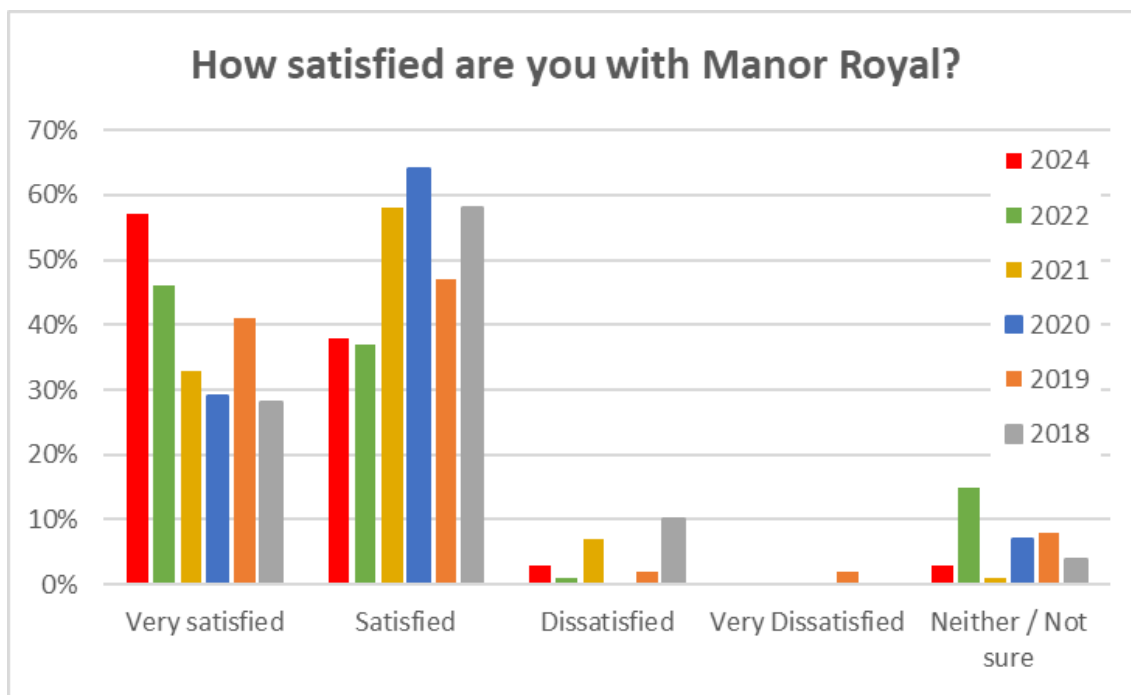
The second half of the event involved an interactive electronic voting session by delegates on the issues, challenges and opportunities businesses are facing covering people's experience of doing business on the Manor Royal Business District, their feelings about the BID and wider issues impacting on business in Manor Royal.

Almost 100 delegates attended the event of which 40 participated in the electronic voting session.

This report provides a commentary on the how delegates voted.

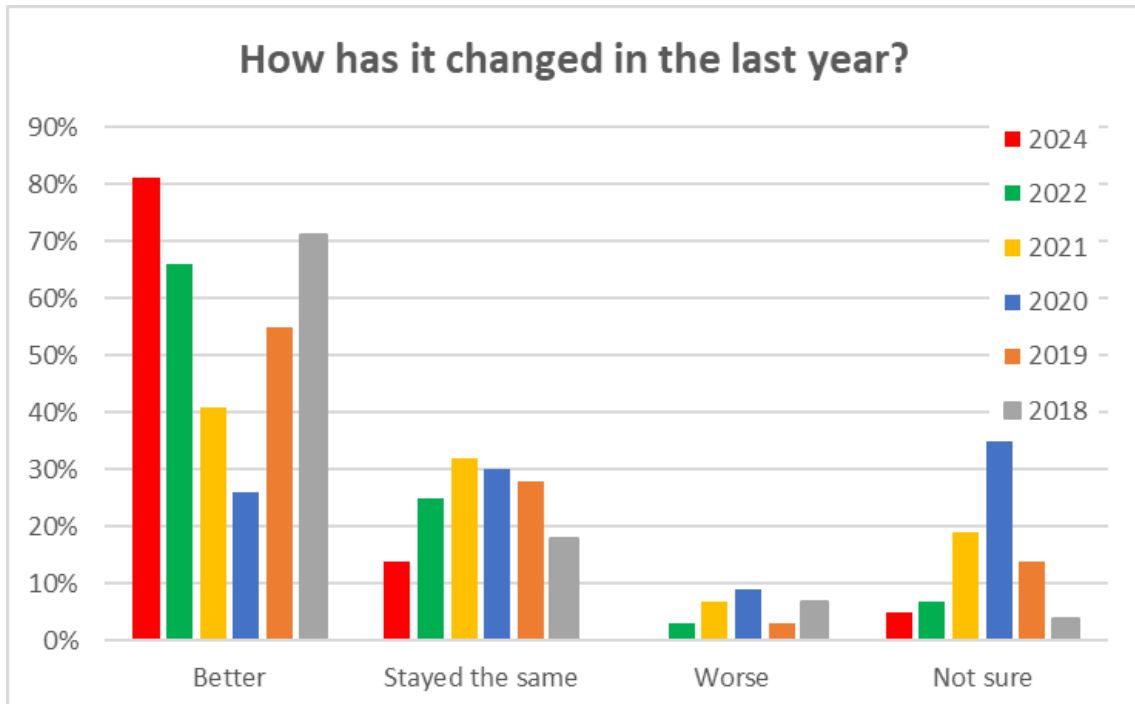
HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH MANOR ROYAL?

95% said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with Manor Royal, compared to 83% who responded to the same question as part of the BID Renewal Survey (2022). Since 2018 satisfaction levels have consistently been in the high 80% to 90% range. A huge improvement on pre-BID satisfaction levels of just 13%.



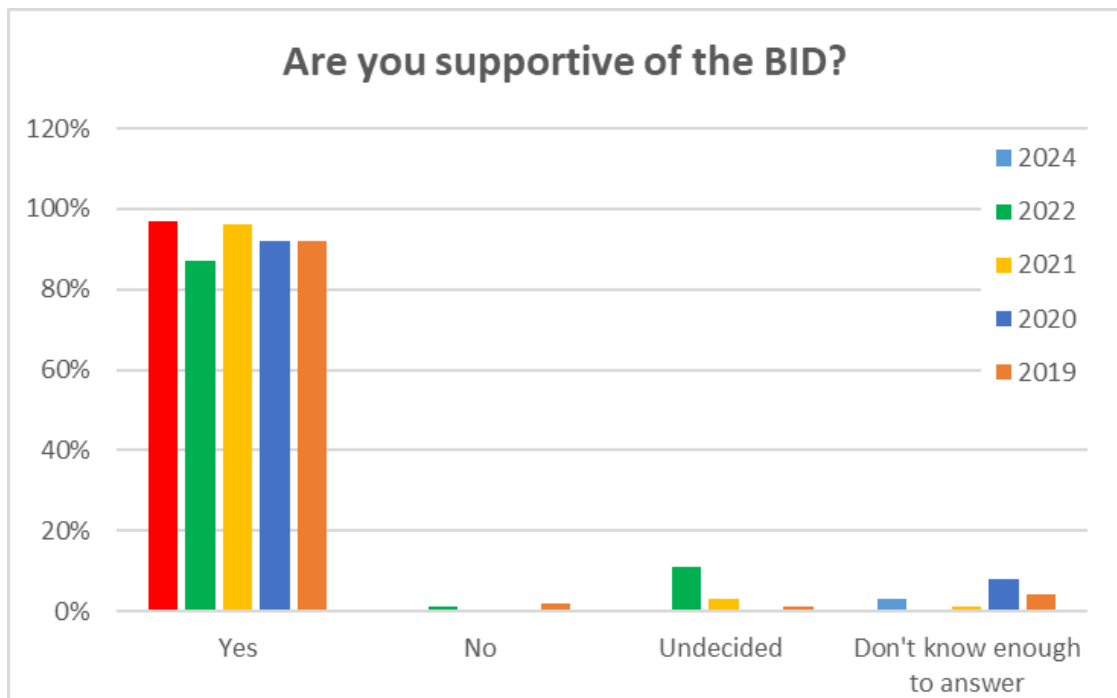
HOW MANOR ROYAL HAS CHANGED IN THE PAST YEAR

81% felt that Manor Royal had got better in the last year, compared to 66% who felt the same way in 2022. Another 14% felt it had stayed the same. No one felt Manor Royal had got worse.



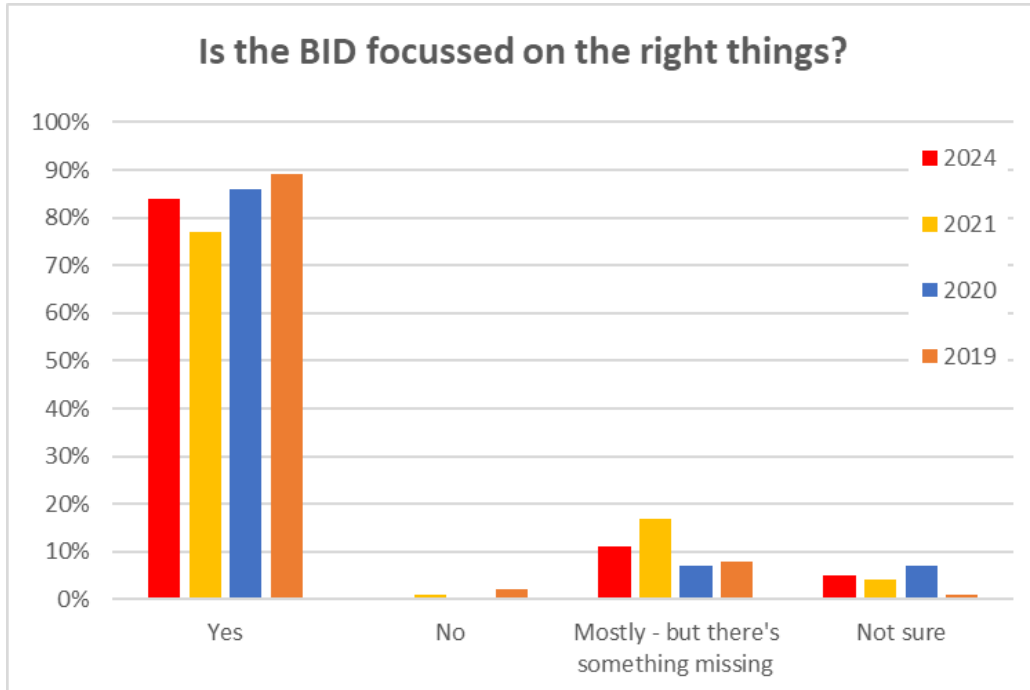
ABOUT THE BID

97% of people said they were supportive of the Manor Royal BID, which remains consistently high. This is encouraging. The challenge will be maintaining this level of support.



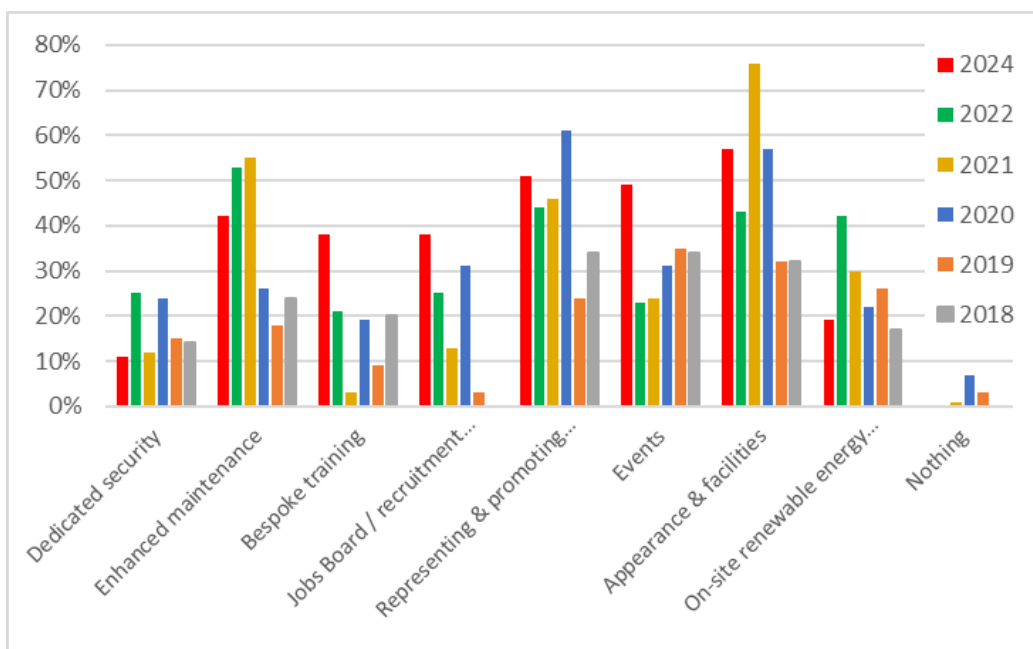
ON MANOR ROYAL BID PROJECTS

When asked if delegates felt the BID was focussed on the right things, 84% felt the BID was compared to 77% who felt the same way in 2021. No one felt the BID was focussed on the wrong things, although 11% felt there was something missing. While this is a low number the BID team is keen to understand where improvements can be made and encouraged feedback from anyone with ideas that could help to make the BID and Manor Royal better.



ON MANOR ROYAL BID PROJECTS

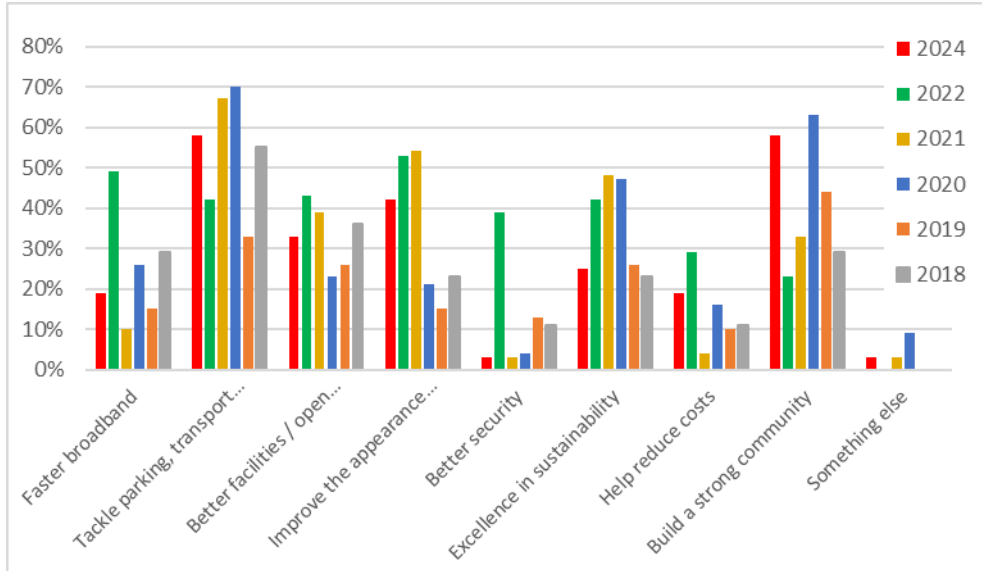
In a slight change from the BID Renewal Survey (2022), the “Appearance & Facilities” of Manor Royal was the single most highly valued BID Project (57%). 51% felt “Representing and Promoting” the area was important, which has been consistently judged as an important function of the BID for the past few years. Enhanced Maintenance (42%), Bespoke Training and the Jobs Board (38%) and Events (49%) also score highly as important services.



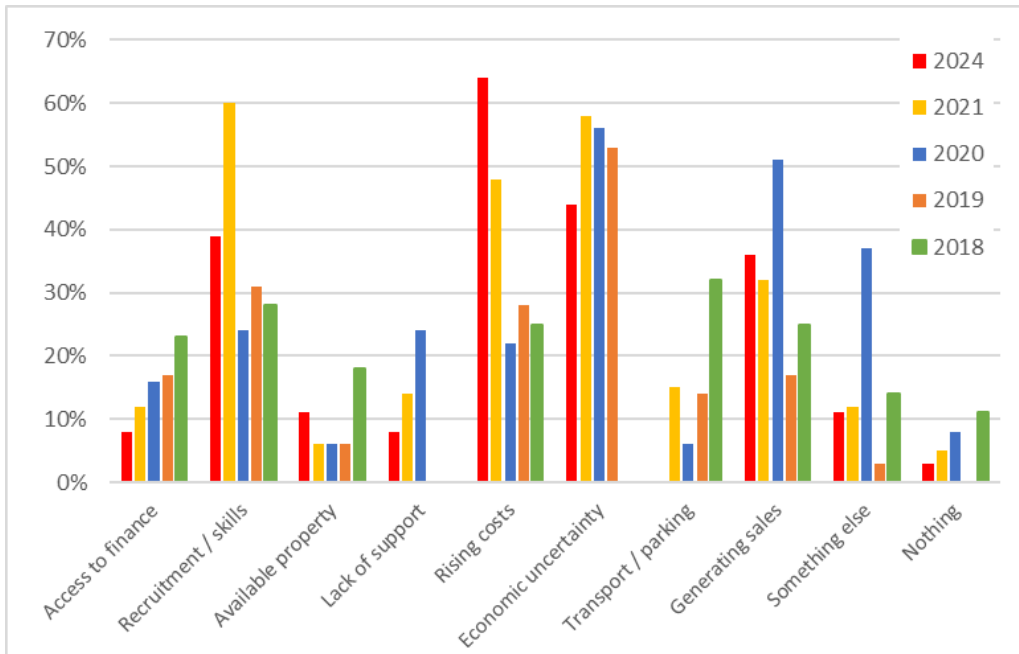
ON WAYS TO IMPROVE MANOR ROYAL

This question focussed on ways delegates would like to see Manor Royal improve. The importance attached to “Building a strong community” remains high and is perhaps judged to be more important than before (58% compared 23% in 2022). An equally strong response was generated for addressing transport issues (58%), an area businesses consistently judge to be important.

Of the other areas listed, Improving the appearance and tidiness of Manor Royal (42%) and providing better facilities (33%) scored highly.



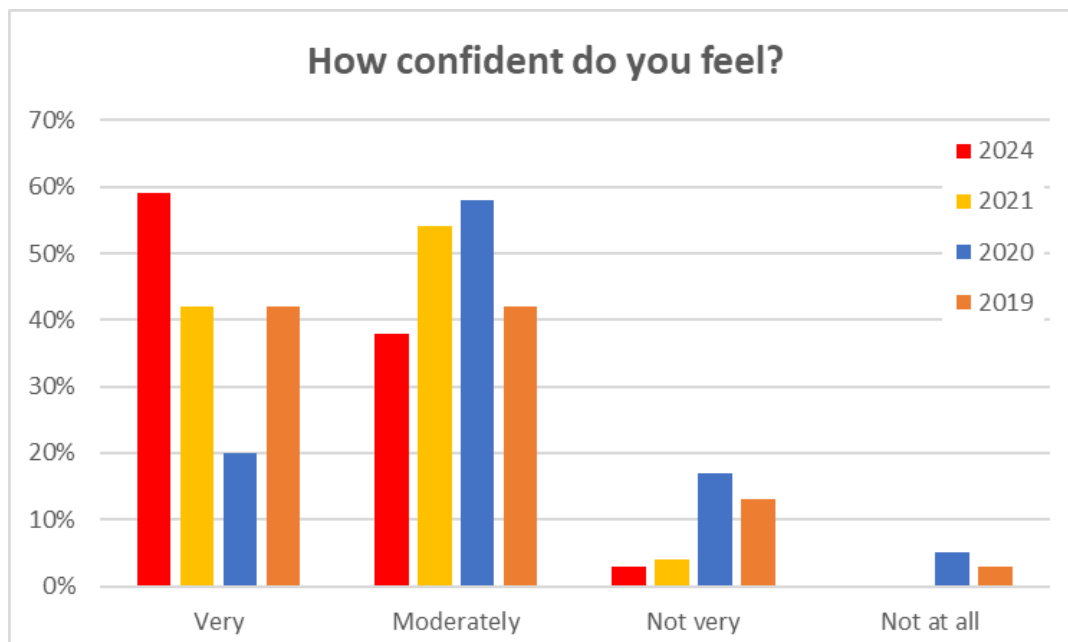
WHAT'S HOLDING YOUR BUSINESS BACK?



When it came to considering what was holding Manor Royal businesses back, “Rising Costs” topped the list, with almost two-thirds being concerned about this (64%). “Economic Uncertainty” was recognised an issue by 44% of delegates, an improvement on previous levels of concern in 2021 at 58%. The difficulty of recruitment appears to have eased somewhat but still notable (39% in 2024 v 60% in 2021) while one-third (36%) are concerned about generating sales, similar to 2021.

CONFIDENCE LEVELS

Despite the obvious challenges, particularly from rising costs, 59% of delegates reported feeling confident about the year ahead. The previous highest confidence score was 42%. Only 3% of delegates reported feeling “not very” confident and no one reported feeling “not at all” confident”. Taken at face value, confidence in Manor Royal overall has never been higher.



While these figures are positive, it is important to interpret them with a degree of caution. It could be the most pessimistic companies were not in attendance and previous studies suggest that companies operating in certain sectors report having differing levels of confidence. It is not possible from these headline results to understand how this confidence translate across sectors nor the extent to which it can be said to be representative of Manor Royal as a whole. Nonetheless, the headline figures are encouraging.

A NOTE ON THE RESULTS

The results captured from the electronic voting at the People Conference, of other Manor Royal BID events where electronic voting is used, is useful as a gauge but should be interpreted with a degree of caution given the relatively low number of respondents.

The BID Renewal (2022) and Mid-Term Surveys (2018) are based on a more extensive paper and online survey method that generates much higher response rates and is, therefore, considered more robust. It is this data that the BID Business Plans place more emphasis. Given the different methodology and slightly different questions used compared to the electronic voting method, a straight-forward like-for-like comparison is difficult so similar questions have been grouped to allow for trends to be illustrated.

KEEP IN TOUCH

For further information about this report, event or the Manor Royal BID please contact the Manor Royal BID office.

www.manorroyal.org