



## Manor Royal Matters, AGM & Annual Review 2021 Report

10 November 2021

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Manor Royal Matters event took place on 10<sup>th</sup> November and included the Manor Royal BID AGM and Annual Review. The event took place at Crawley Town Football Club and was the first major in-person event staged by the BID since before the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The purpose of the event was to inform people of what the Manor Royal BID had delivered in the past year, how the Business District was performing now and what was planned for the future.

After introductions by the Manor Royal BID Chairman, Trevor Williams (Thales UK), the first half included the normal business of the AGM and a review of the past year in the form of a presentation of the Annual Report by Steve Sawyer (Executive Director). This was followed by a presentation by Marc Tomes (Allen Scott Landscape Architects) of the work he has been doing to create the new Manor Royal Projects Pack & Environmental Audit.

Having said farewell to retiring Vice-Chair, Keith Pordum (BonCulina), the second half involved an interactive electronic voting session by delegates that stimulated a panel debate of 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.

The panel included Dee Mathieson (Elekta), Cllr Bob Lanzer (West Sussex County Council) and Trevor Williams.

Almost 90 delegates attended the event of which 70 participated in the electronic voting session.

This report provides a commentary on the how delegates voted and will be used to inform the work of the BID.

## DEMOGRAPHIC OF DELEGATES

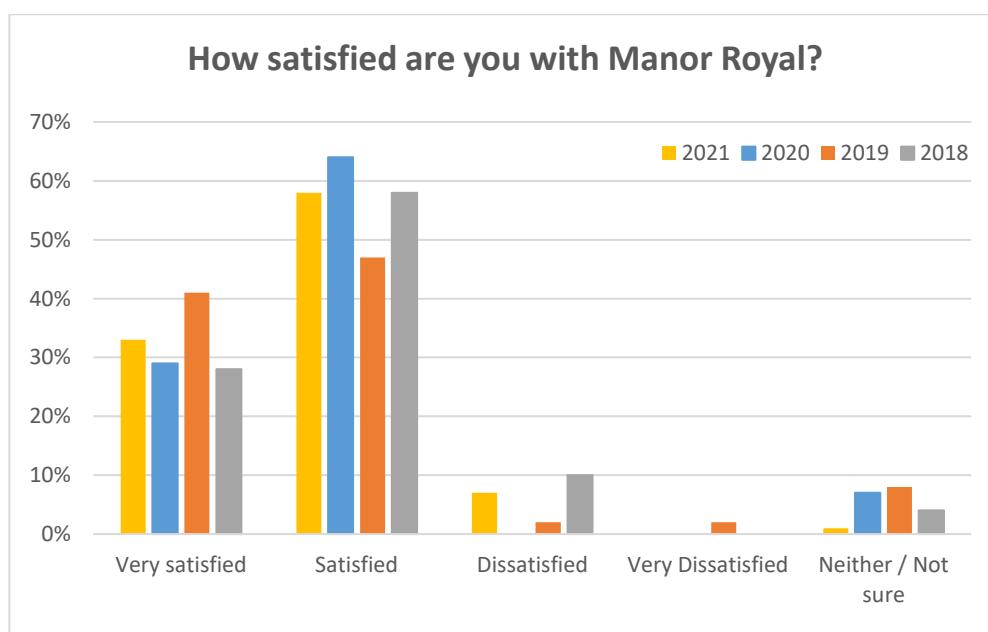
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The event was open to Manor Royal based businesses and people, plus supporting partners. 66% were people who worked or managed a business on Manor Royal. The rest of the audience (34%) was made up of partners and supporters.

## HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH MANOR ROYAL?

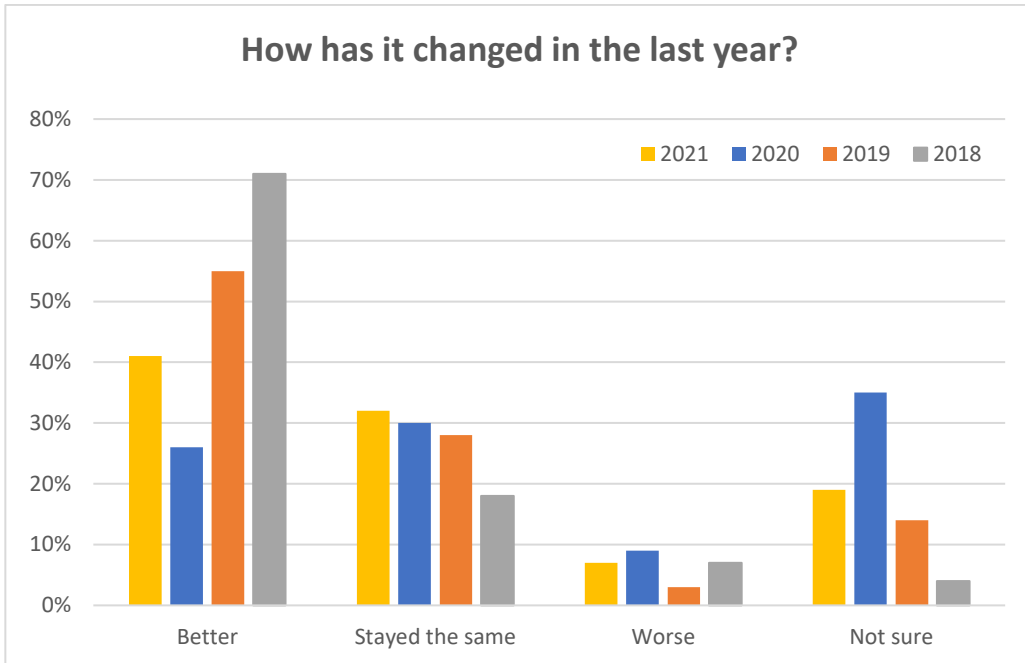
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91% said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with Manor Royal, compared to 93% who made the same claim last year. Since 2018 satisfaction levels have consistently been in the high 80s / early 90s.



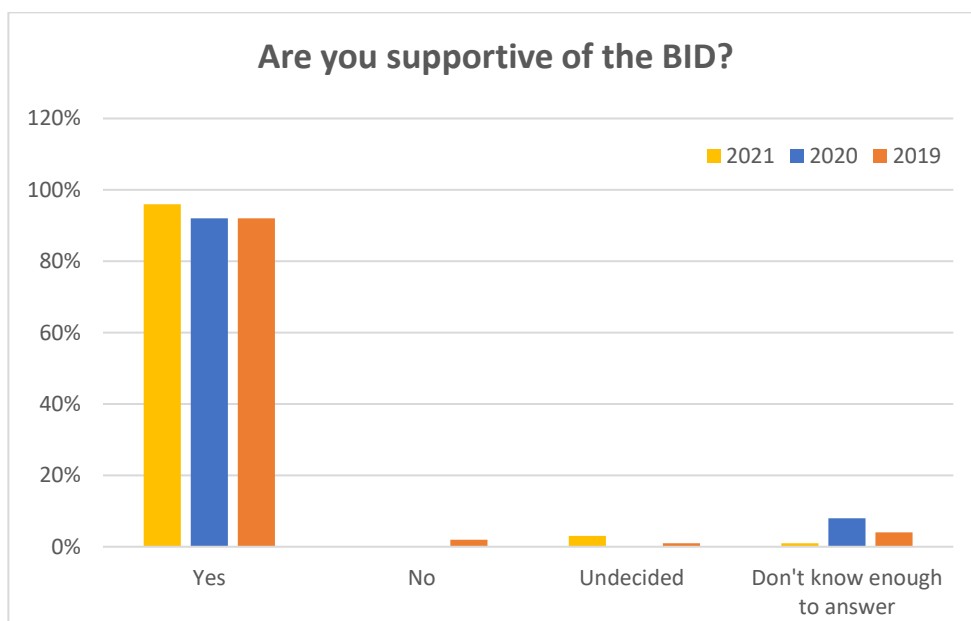
## HOW MANOR ROYAL HAS CHANGED IN THE PAST YEAR

41% felt that Manor Royal had got better in the last year, compared to 26% who felt the same way last year. 32% felt it had stayed the same. While more people reported that Manor Royal had improved, this figure is not as high as those recorded in 2019 and 2018. This could reflect the fact that no place can improve infinitely year-on-year and serves as a reminder to guard against complacency. Encouragingly, the levels of people who felt Manor Royal has got worse remains very low.



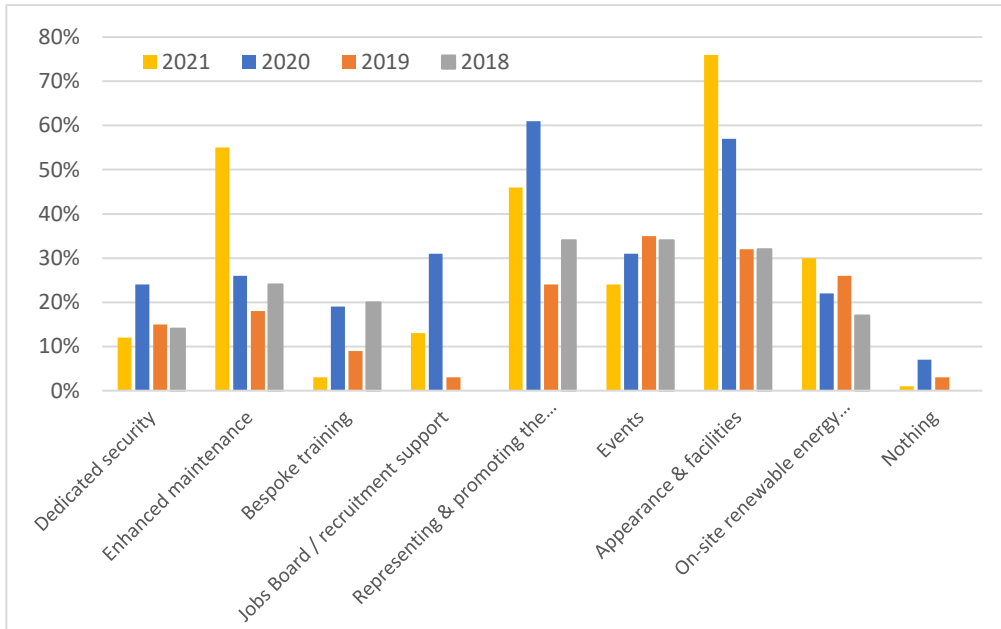
## ABOUT THE BID

Over 96% of people said they were supportive of the Manor Royal BID, which remains consistently high. The most notable change was when delegates were asked if they felt the BID was focussed on the right things. 77% responded positively, while 17% felt the BID was mostly focussed on the right things (compared to 86% and 7% respectively who voted on the same question in 2020). Only 1% felt the BID was not focussed on the right things.



## ON MANOR ROYAL BID PROJECTS

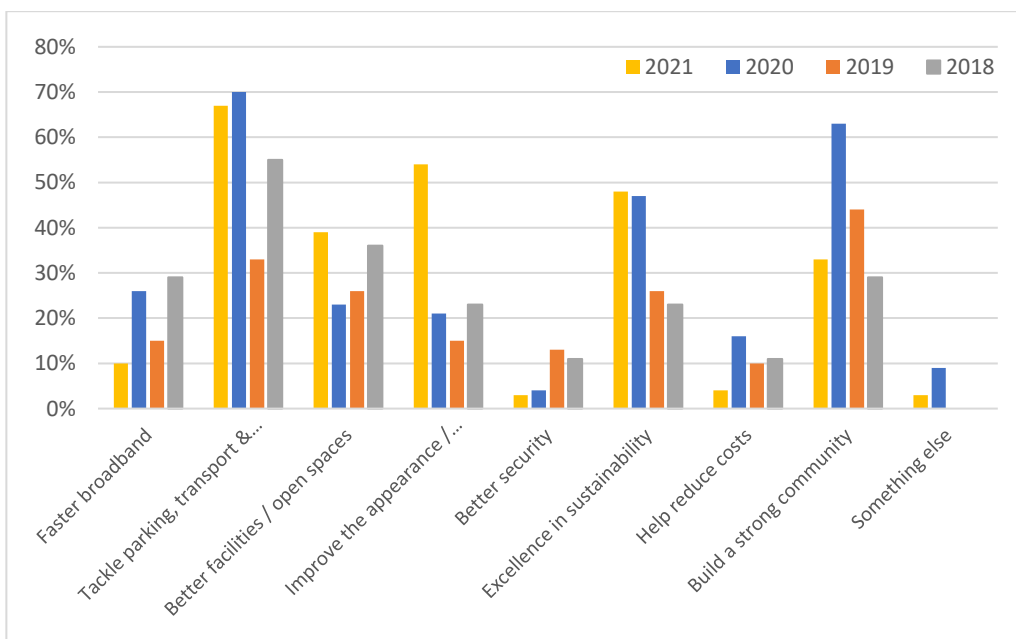
When asked which BID projects delegates most valued, last year saw a notable change compared to previous results. This trend continued in 2021. “Investment in appearance and facilities”(76%) continued to be highly valued by most, along with “Representing and promoting the area”(46%). “Enhanced maintenance”(55%) received significantly more support than the previous year (26%) with investment in “On-site renewable energy generation”(30%) jumping ahead of “Events”(24%) for the first time.



## ON WAYS TO IMPROVE MANOR ROYAL

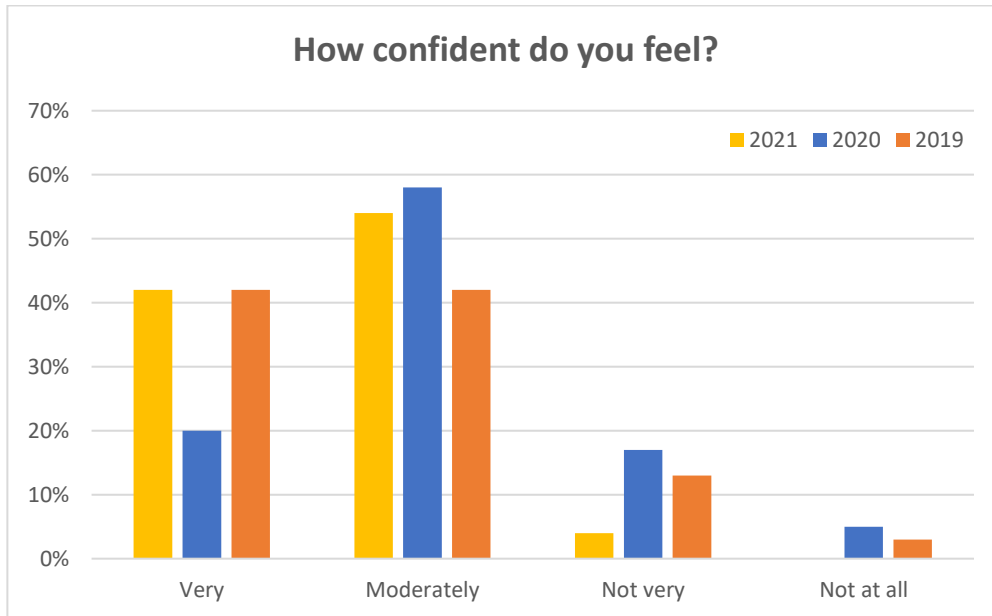
This question focussed on ways delegates would like to see Manor Royal improve. The importance attached to “Building a strong community”(33%) still ranked highly but not as high as 2020 (63%) and reversed somewhat the previous trend.

“Parking and transport issues”(67%) once again topped the list of priorities with efforts to improve the appearance of Manor Royal being reinforced as important (54%). Once again, sustainability ranked highly(48%) consistent with the previous year when it came to prominence for the first time. Creating better facilities and open space(39%) rose in importance compared to the previous year, returning it to levels first seen in 2018.

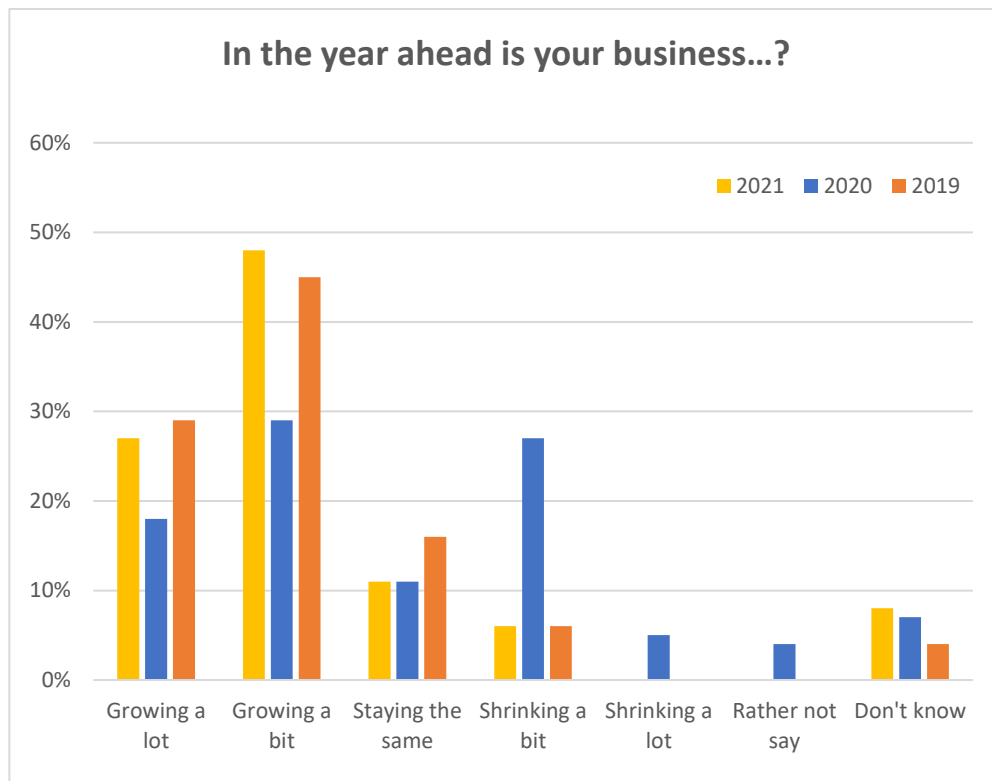


## CONFIDENCE LEVELS & PREDICTED GROWTH

Following a notable dip last year, confidence levels were up with 96% reporting feeling either “very” or “moderately” confident. Far fewer(4%) 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.



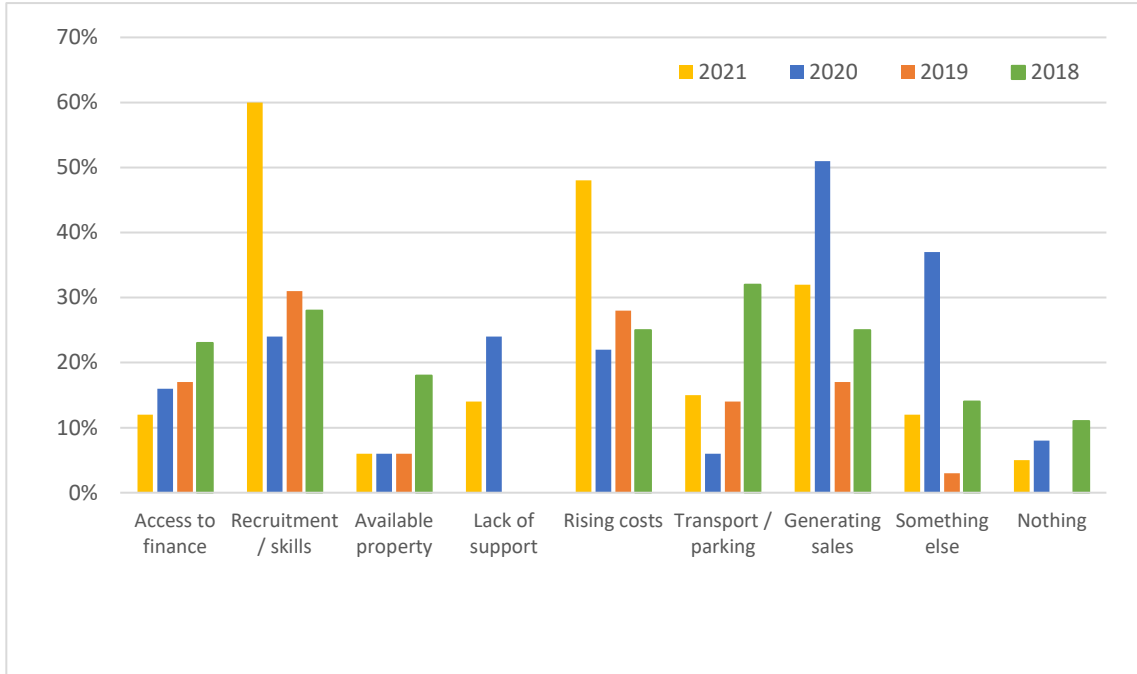
In line with higher levels of confidence, 75% were also predicting some form of growth in the next 12 months. Very similar to pre-pandemic levels. Far fewer felt they would “shrink” in the year ahead, again similar to 2019 results.



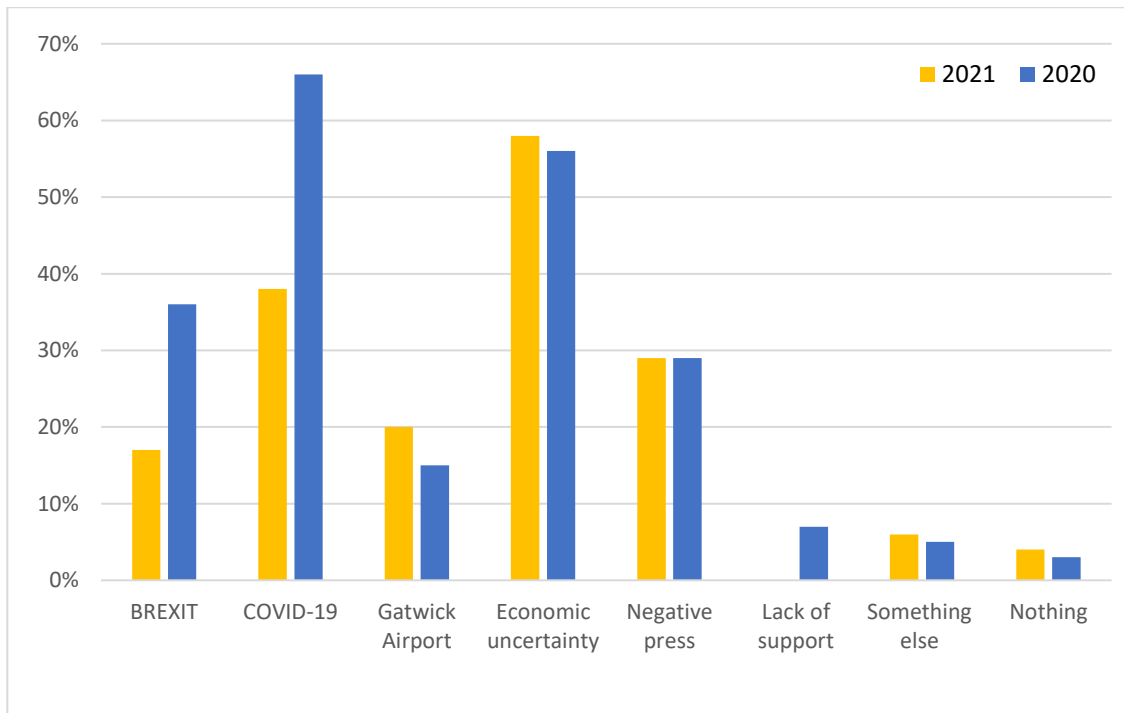
While these figures are undeniably positive, it is important to interpret them with a degree of caution. It could be the most pessimistic companies were not in attendance and previous studies suggest that companies operating in certain sectors report being more vulnerable. It is not possible from these headline results to understand how this confidence and predicted levels of growth translate across sectors and can be said to be representative of Manor Royal as a whole. Nonetheless, the headline figures are encouraging.

## WHAT'S HOLDING BACK YOUR BUSINESS?

This question was asked to gain an insight into those issues that are holding Manor Royal businesses back in some way reflecting on the day-to-day issues that might affect a business. In 2020 during the midst of the pandemic, "Generating sales" was the biggest issue for businesses. This year the striking change is the difficulty companies report with recruitment(60%) and fears of rising costs(48%). "Generating sales" still ranked highly(32%) but not as high as in 2020.



COVID-19 is less of a concern for people this year(38%) compared to last year(66%), although it is still clearly on people's minds. On-going "Economic Uncertainty"(58%), which could be a combination of factors, is troubling for many and the impact of "negative press"(29%) was again a consideration.

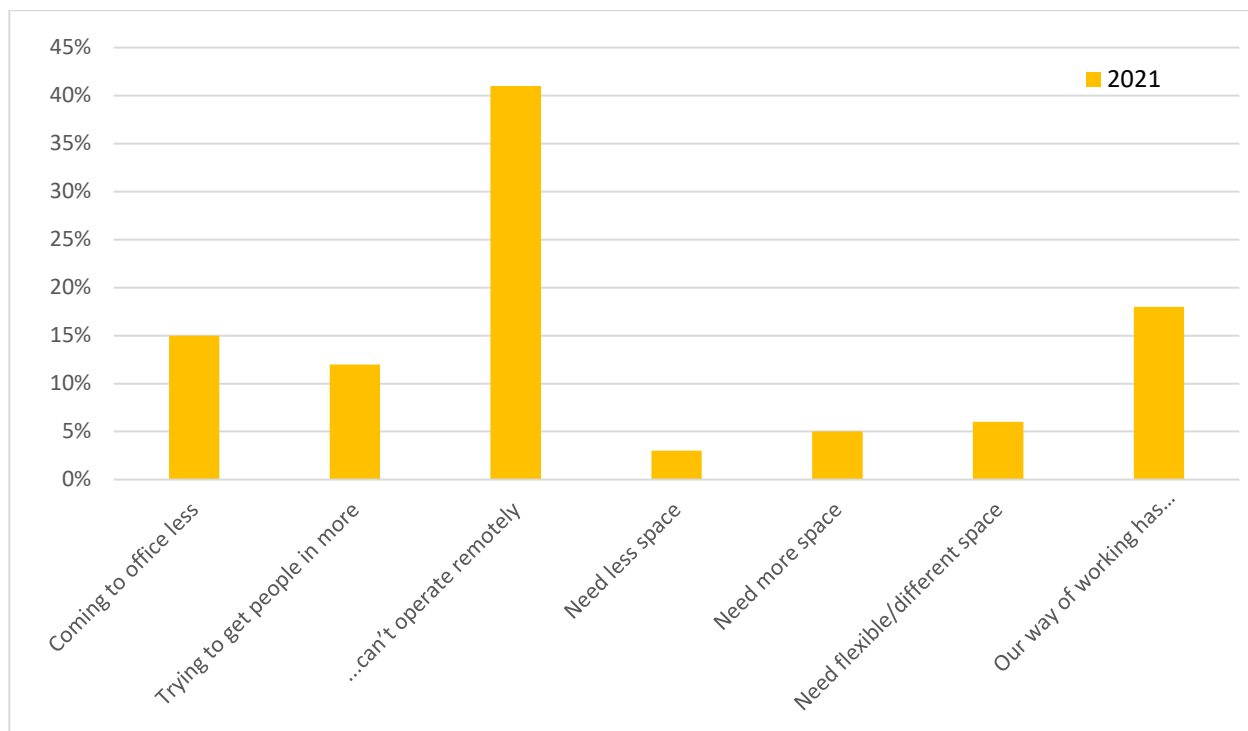


## HOW PEOPLE ARE USING MANOR ROYAL

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A new question for 2021 explored the notion of hybrid and home working practices.

41% of delegates felt that either all or part of their business could not operate remotely, which reinforces the importance of investing in the area to make it attractive, safe and accessible for those businesses operating here and their people.



However, among the workplace revolutions brought about by COVID is the appetite of employees to work from home more frequently, for those that can. This came through in the voting results. 15% reported that people were coming into the office less often with 18% accepting that the way they work has permanently changed, with a similar number (12%) making efforts to encourage people back to the workplace.

Fears that people are looking to downsize were not reflected in the results, with just 3% reporting they needed less space compared to 5% who wanted more space. Some reported wanting more flexible space(6%) but, again, only in small numbers. It might be the real longer term trends forced and accelerated by COVID have yet to fully be realised.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

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

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