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RESIDENTS UNCONVINCED OVER SUCCESS OF MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE PLANS

Nearly 60% of Maidstone residents are unaware of plans to develop the town, according to a survey run by independent market research agency Local Opinion.

And, of those who have heard of the proposals, a third are not convinced the Town Centre Management Plan will achieve its objectives.

There was general approval of 10 sites earmarked for high quality development, particularly Maidstone East station and Sessions House Square (84%), Gala Bingo (83%) and Granada House (77%). However the online survey of 293 Maidstone residents revealed that only 8% were optimistic that the management plan would achieve its aims to link public spaces, maximise pedestrianism, enhance the riverside, promote music, and improve safety, congestion and the fabric of the town.

Local Opinion research executive and Maidstone resident Sharon Greenslade said: "Our results show that there is an appetite for change in Maidstone but respondents told us they had been disappointed by development proposals in the past that had failed to deliver promised improvements. The majority welcome the broad proposals outlined in the five-year plan but, unfortunately as far as local residents are concerned, the opinion is: they'll believe it when they see it."

Local Opinion research covers current and topical issues relevant to local residents such as local problems, shopping, eating out, local services, government, transport, parking,

education, current affairs, arts and culture . Those taking part are invited to suggest their own questions for inclusion in future surveys.

Surveys run every two to three months and can be completed online, by phone or by post and the results will appear on the Local Opinion website.

A total of 632 adults took part in the Kent survey, with 293 interviews conducted in Maidstone.

To register:

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ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Local Opinion complies with the highest market research standards
- Reportage of these results must include the sample size
- Respondents are free to withdraw from Local Opinion's survey pool at anytime

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