Research Report

General Survey

Prepared for: Chelmsford Borough Council

bmg research

General Survey

Prepared for: Chelmsford Borough Council

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Produced by BMG Research

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Key indicators

Outlined below are the satisfaction performance indicators resulting from the 2007 interim General Survey and compared to the previous BVPI survey data undertaken in 2006, 2003 and 2000. All figures are based only on those respondents that provided a rating (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and non-respondents).

Most of the indicators have improved since 2006, albeit not statistically significantly. However, improvements have been experienced with :

- Sports and leisure facilities (experiencing a rise of 4% since 2006);
- Provision of local waster recycling facilities (3%);
- Parks and open spaces (3%);
- The council overall (2%);
- Libraries (1%);
- Theatres and concert halls (1%).

Some areas have shown a deterioration since 2006 (although, again not a significant deterioration). However, these areas may need a closer focus in 2008/9 to ensure there is no further deterioration. These are :

- Museums and galleries (experiencing a fall of 4% since 2006);
- Handling of complaints (3%);
- Waste collection (1%).

Key indicators	2007 %	2006 %	2003 %	2000 %
BV3: % satisfied with the way the Authority runs things	64	62	61	73
BV4: % satisfied with the handling of complaints	41	44	32	35
BV89: % satisfied that the Authority has kept the land clear of litter and rubbish	76	76	62	68
BV90a: % satisfied with the waste collection service overall	91	92	78	90
BV90b: % satisfied with the provision of local waste recycling facilities	80	77	75	70
BV119a: % satisfied with sports and leisure facilities and events	70	66	53	55
BV119b: % satisfied with libraries	83	82	na	na
BV119c: % satisfied with museums and galleries	48	52	42	53
BV119d: % satisfied with theatres and concert halls	57	56	54	62
BV119e: % satisfied with parks and open spaces	86	83	82	76

1.2 Other key findings

Communications

Just over one in ten respondents (13%) have contacted the council with a complaint in the last twelve months, and of these, 41% are satisfied with the way in which their complaint was handled. Other forms of contact with the council are more favourably perceived, with 73% of those who have contacted the council other than to complain being satisfied with the final outcome.

The majority of residents (54%) feel well informed about council services, leaving 46% who do not feel well informed.

Other services

Satisfaction with other services varies among users, from 66% satisfied with Chelmsford’s retail market, 56% planning services, 54% housing services and 43% public conveniences.

Quality of life

More than eight in ten residents (86%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with the same proportion (86%) feeling the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well. However, just over three in ten (37%) feel the police are doing a good job.

The key local priorities (ie factors which are both important and perceived as needing improvement) are :

- Level of crime;
- Clean streets;
- Affordable decent housing;
- Public transport.

Local democracy

Residents are generally not sure about the opportunity to participate in local decision-making (30% are satisfied, 54% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 16% dissatisfied), although almost three quarters (72%) who feel they *cannot* influence decisions about their area. One in five (21%) would like be more involved in local decision making irrespective of the issue, with six in ten (61%) wanting to be involved depending on the issue.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background and method

All local authorities were required to undertake Best Value Satisfaction Surveys on a triennial basis to inform the authority's performance indicators in 2000, 2003 and 2006. Chelmsford Borough Council, simultaneously with 4 other Councils in Essex, wished to repeat the survey in 2007.

This report summarises the results of the 2007 survey, conducted amongst 992 local residents, via a self-completion postal survey carried out between October and December 2007. It also provides comparisons with previous BVPI results.

The target population for the survey was the adult population (18+) of Chelmsford, and the sample was drawn from the Postcode Address File (PAF) sample frame. The methodology was implemented according to the previous BVPI survey guidelines and as such included two reminder mailings.

A mailing size of 2,500 questionnaires was sent to residents in Chelmsford, and following the reminder mailings, 992 completed questionnaire were returned, representing a response rate of 40%.

On an observed statistic of 50%, a sample size of 992 is subject to a maximum standard error of +/-3.11% at the 95% level of confidence.

2.2 Report content

This report contains a written summary of the findings of the survey. Indicators are calculated 'where provided a response', thus excluding respondents who 'don't know' or simply do not answer the relevant question. This reduces sample bases in most instances.

Graphs and tables are used throughout the report to assist explanation and analysis. Although occasional anomalies appear due to 'rounding' differences, these are never more than +/-1%. These occur where rating scales have been added to calculate proportions of respondents who are satisfied at all (i.e. either very or fairly satisfied).

All the data included in this report has been weighted by household size, age and gender in order to provide a sample that is representative of the area. This process is exactly the same as that used in the 2006 BVPI survey.

2.3 Data reporting

A separate data report is available, containing cross-tabulations by the following :

- Gender;
- Age;
- Length of residency in district
- Occupancy status
- Employment status;
- Disability;
- Ethnicity;
- BV3 – Overall satisfaction.

3 Corporate health

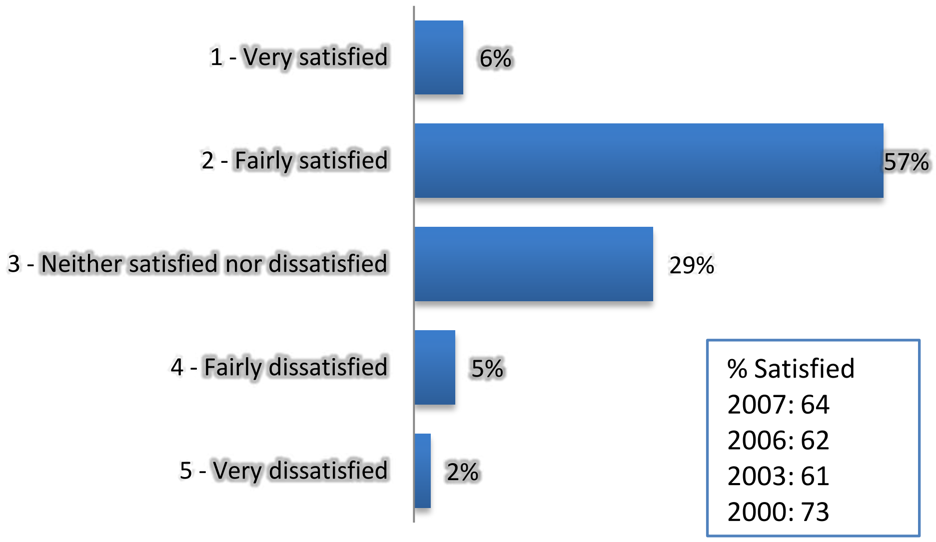
3.1 Overall satisfaction with the way the authority runs things

Respondents were asked, taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way the authority runs things.

More than three in five (64%) respondents who provided a valid response rate themselves as satisfied, which represents a small (although not statistically significant) increase since the BVPI survey in 2006.

The proportion of respondents rating themselves as dissatisfied is 7%.

Q15 : Overall satisfaction with the way the authority runs things (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 939/947

There are few significant differences across sub groups. However, men are more likely to be *dissatisfied* (9%) than women (5%).

3.2 How the way the authority runs things has changed

Respondents were also asked, thinking about the way the authority runs things, whether they think this has got better or worse over the last three years, or whether it has stayed the same.

Whilst one in five (20%) of those responding felt that things had improved over the last 3 years, only 10% felt that things have got worse over this period. The majority of respondents (69%), felt that the way things are run remained the same.

There are few differences across sub groups. However, those with a disability (15%) are more likely to feel they have got worse than those with none (9%).

4 How the council performs overall

Respondents were asked to consider a number of things other people have said about their council, and to rate the extent to which they think each one applies to their council.

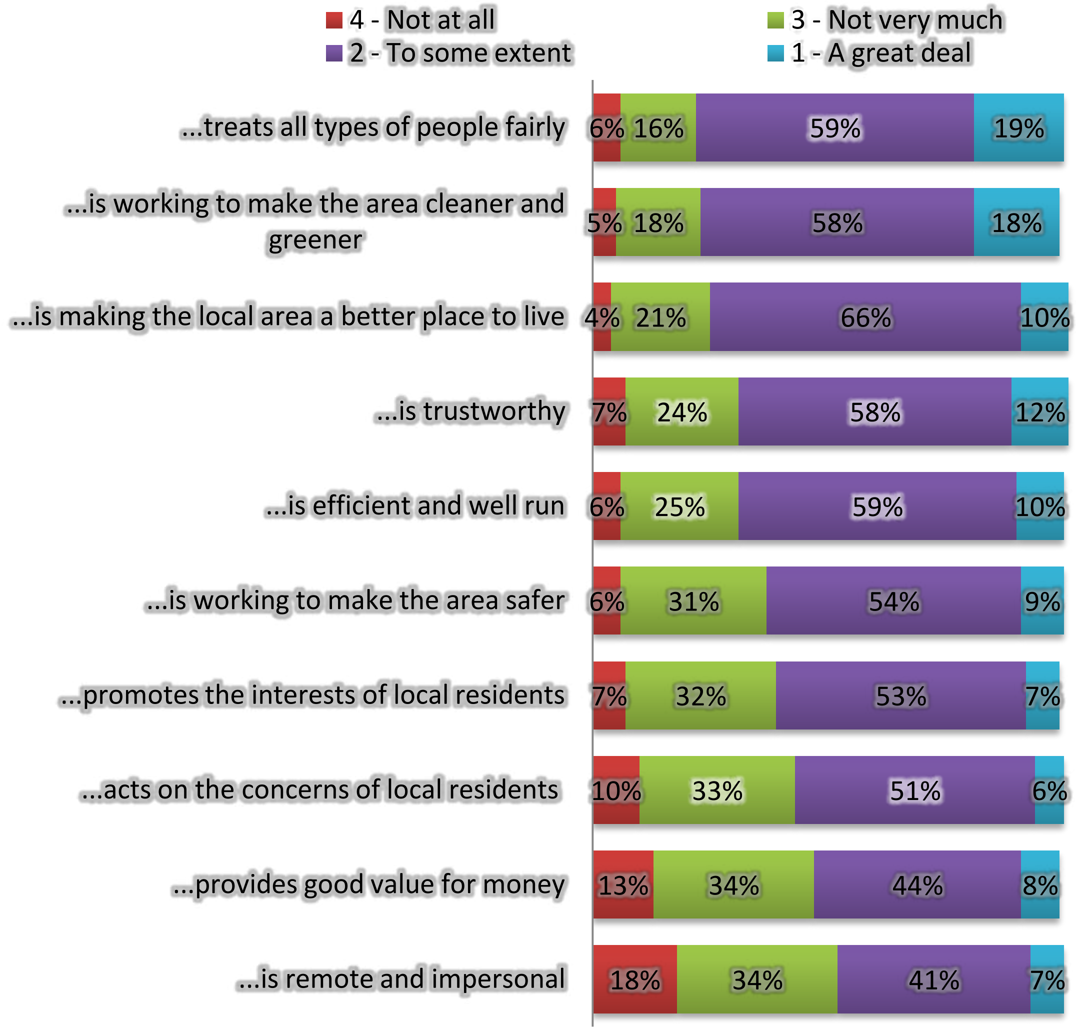
Overall, almost eight in ten of respondents express agreement that the council treats all types of people fairly (78% a great deal/to some extent), is working to make the area cleaner and greener (76%), is making the local area a better place to live (75%), is trustworthy (70%) and is efficient and well run (69%).

However, perceptions are less strong in relation to working to make the area safer (63% a great deal/to some extent compared to 37% not very much/not at all) and promoting the interests of local residents (60% compared to 40%).

Opinions are even more divided in terms of acting on the concerns of local residents (57% a great deal/to some extent compared to 43% not very much/not at all) and providing good value for money (52% compared to 48%).

On a positive note, more residents *disagree* with the negative statement that the council is remote and impersonal (48%) than agree (52%).

Q27 : How the council performs overall. The Council… (valid responses only)



Bases vary

5 Contact with the council

5.1 Satisfaction with complaints handling

Just over one in ten respondents (13%) report that they have contacted the authority with a complaint in the last twelve months.

There are no significant differences across sub groups.

The main reasons for complaining are :

- Litter/rubbish/fly tipping/street cleaning (11%);
- Recycling facilities (11%);
- Refuse collection (11%);
- Planning services (10%);
- Maintenance of trees/bushes/grass verges (9%);
- Condition of the roads/pavements (8%).

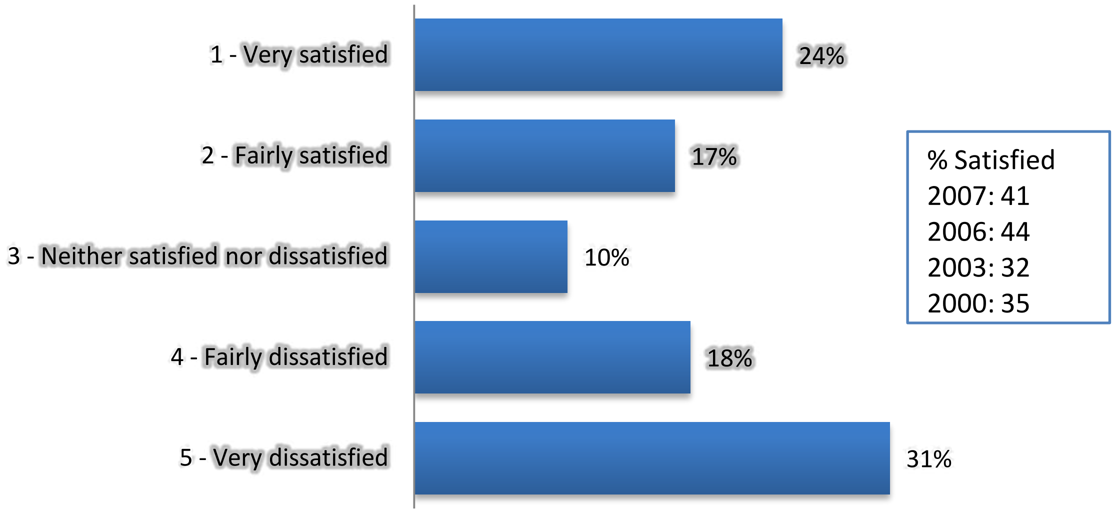
Those who have made a complaint were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way in which their complaint was handled. Responses to this question should be viewed with some caution, as experience shows us that satisfaction with the way a complaint is handled can be significantly affected by the outcome of the complaint, rather than purely how it was handled.

Amongst all complainants providing a valid response, about two in five (41%) rate themselves as satisfied with how their complaint was handled, which is not significantly different from the figure achieved in 2006.

A half (50%) however, rate themselves as dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled.

There are no significant differences across sub groups.

Q20 : Satisfaction with complaints handling (complainants valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases = 139/130

5.2 Satisfaction with other types of contact with council

About a half of respondents (49%) report that they have contacted the council other than to complain in the last twelve months. This rises to 67% among 16-24 year olds compared to 55% among 25-44 year olds, 47% among 45-64 year olds and 38% among 65+ year olds.

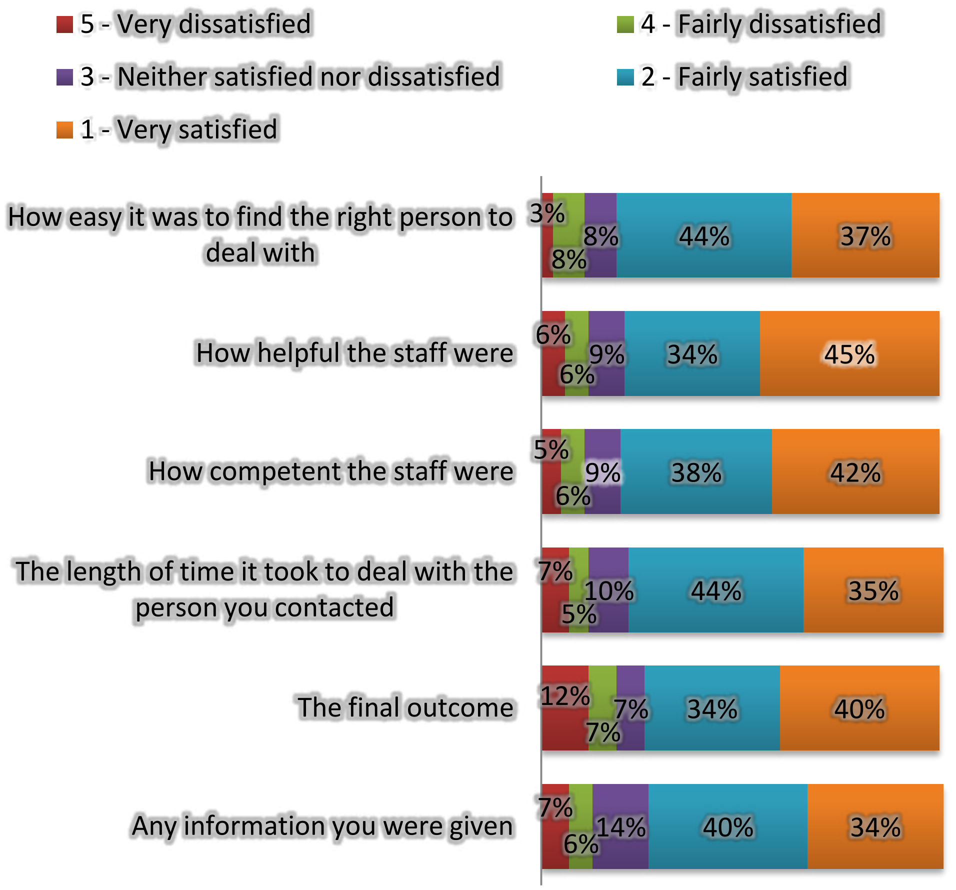
When asked the reason for their most recent contact with the council, a higher proportion said it was to ask for advice/obtain information (23% of all respondents) than said it was to apply to use a service (14%), or to report an issue or problem (13%).

When asked how they made contact with the council on their most recent contact, the highest proportion said they made contact by telephone (70% of those contacting the council other than to complain), almost a quarter (23%) in person, 11% by letter, 10% by email, and 5% via the website.

Those respondents who have contacted the council other than to complain in the last twelve months were asked to rate their satisfaction with a range of aspects of the service received.

In general, responses are positive, with a majority satisfied to some degree with each of the aspects, and less than a fifth dissatisfied, including ‘the final outcome’.

Q23 : Satisfaction with aspects of the service received (valid responses only)



Bases vary

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6 Information provision

6.1 How well informed residents feel

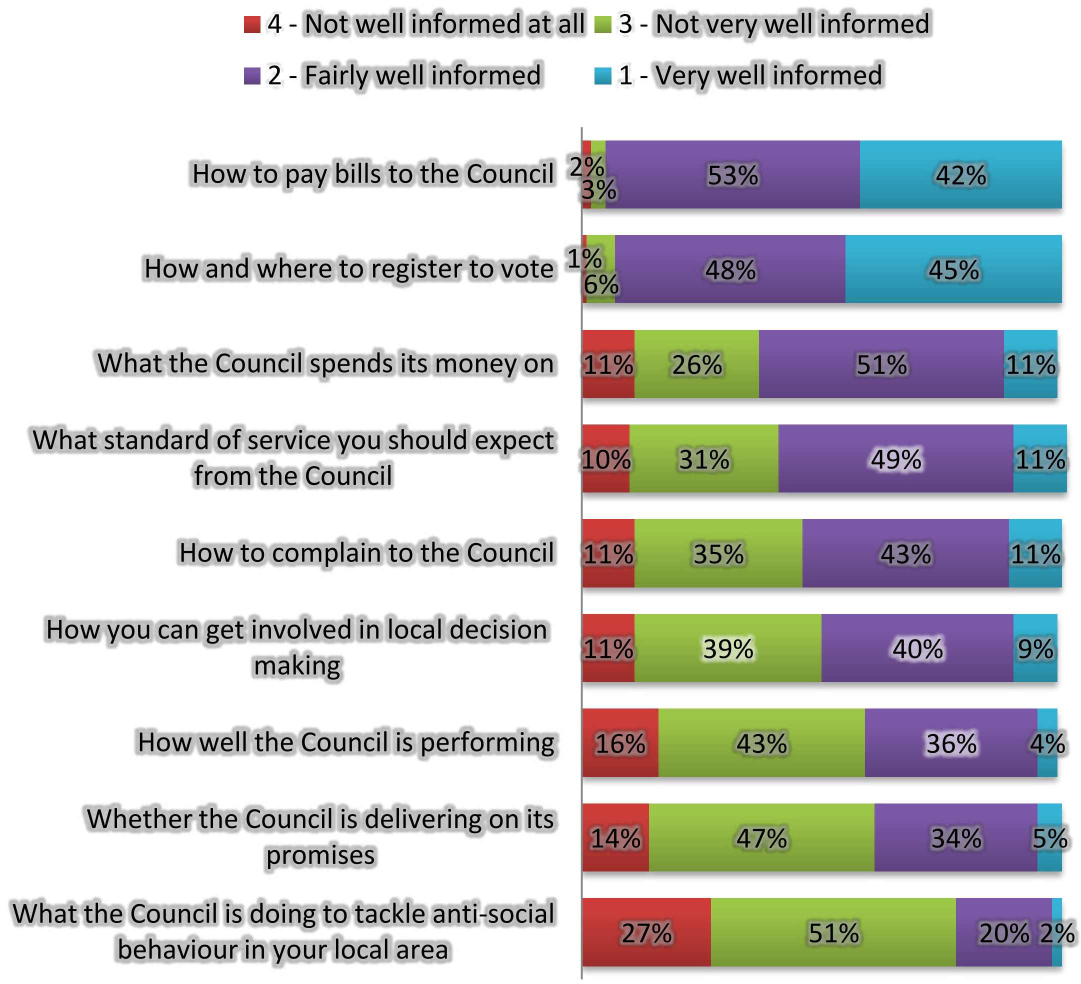
6.1.1 How well informed residents feel about specific aspects of services

All respondents were asked to rate how well informed they feel about a range of aspects of council service provision.

The aspects fall into three clear groups:

- Those where a majority of residents feel fairly or very well informed, which focus around actions required by residents: e.g. how to pay bills to the council and how and where to register to vote;
- Those where views are more balanced: e.g. what standard of service you should expect, how to complain, what the council spends its money on and how they can get involved in local decision making.
- Those where a majority do not feel well informed, which relate to more abstract aspects of council performance, and its role in tackling anti-social behaviour and whether it is delivering on its promises.

Q16 : How well informed residents feel about specific issues (valid responses only)

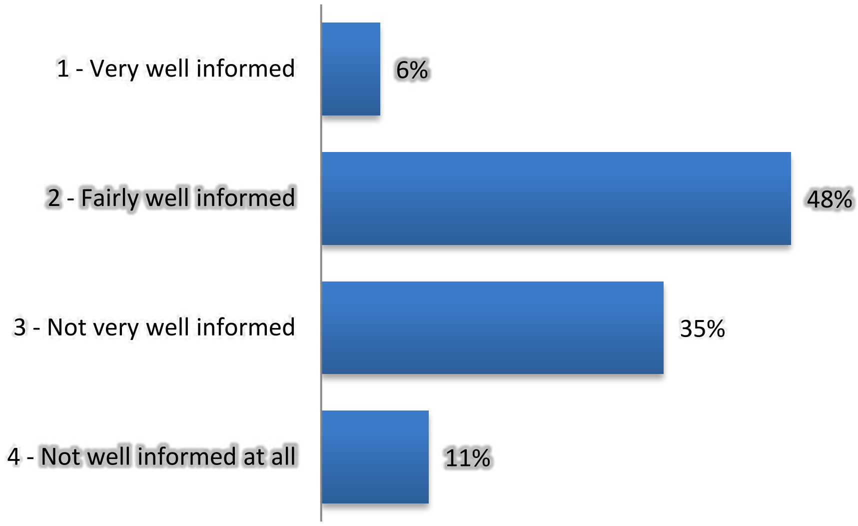


Bases vary

Within this section of the questionnaire, residents were also asked to rate overall how well informed they feel the council keeps them about the services and benefits it provides.

Reflecting how well informed they feel about the specific aspects discussed above, more than a half (54%) feel the council keeps them very or fairly well informed. The remainder, however, feel the council does not keep them well informed, including 11% who feel it does not keep them well informed at all.

Q16 : How well informed residents feel about council services and benefits overall (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 878/903

Perceptions that the council keeps them very or fairly well informed is higher than average amongst those aged 65 or more (59%), and other tenants (63%).

6.2 Sources of information about the council

Respondents were asked the main source they use for finding out about the council.

Over a third say they use information provided by the council (38%) compared to those who use the local media (26%). Relatively few respondents (14%) currently use the council website and word of mouth is used by 4%. Only 5% say they have direct contact with the council, and less than 1% consider their local Councillor to be their main source of information.

The council's website is used by a range of different age groups, including 30% of 18-24 year olds, 21% of 25-44 year olds and 11% of 45-64 year olds.

7 Refuse and recycling services

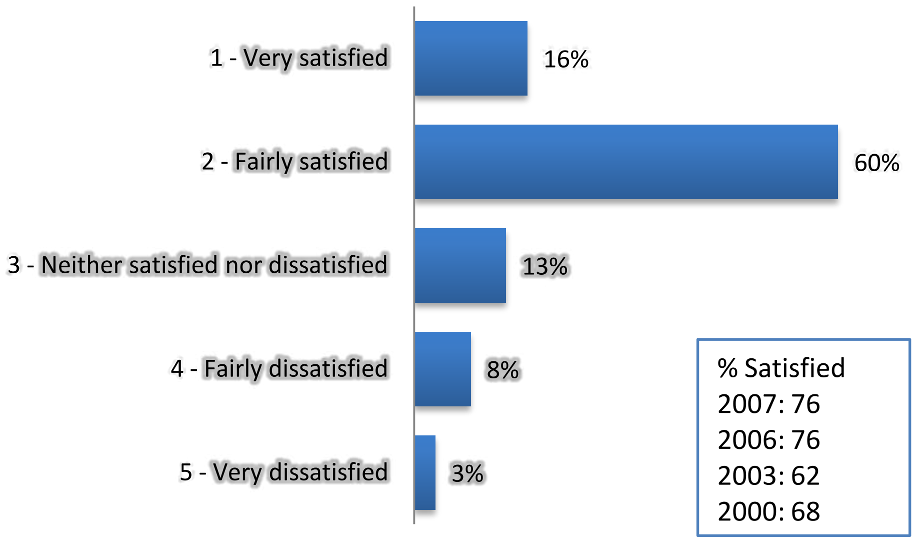
7.1 Keeping land clear of litter and refuse

7.1.1 Satisfaction with keeping land clear of litter and refuse

Respondents were reminded that the council has a duty to keep all open public land that it controls clear of litter and refuse, and asked to rate their level of satisfaction that the council has done so.

Three quarters of those providing a response (76%) express a level of satisfaction, which is the same proportion as in 2006. About one in ten are dissatisfied.

Q6 : Satisfaction with keeping this land clear of litter and refuse (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 973/980

Of those providing a response, over a fifth of respondents (22%), feel the council's keeping land clear of litter and refuse has improved over the last three years, while around one in eight (13%) feel it has got worse.

7.2 Household waste collection

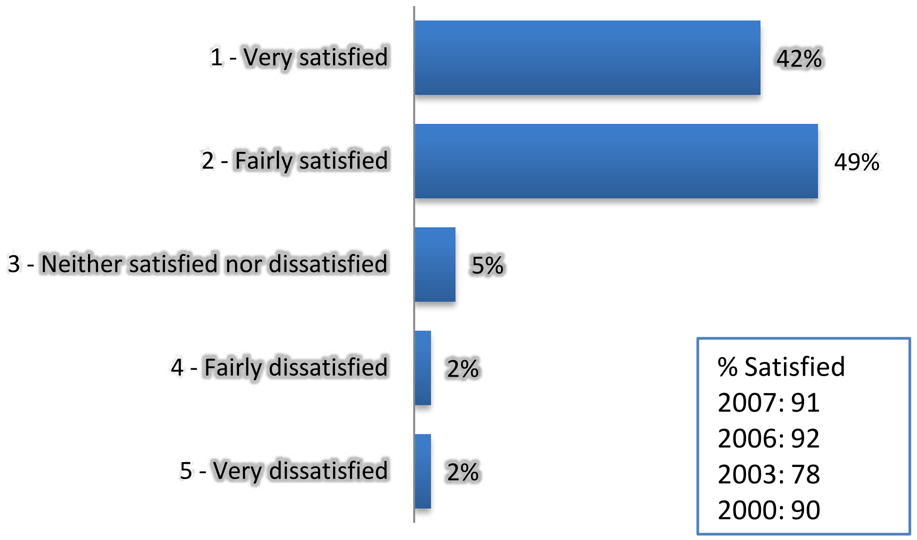
7.2.1 Satisfaction with household waste collection overall

Respondents were reminded that the council undertakes a weekly collection of general household waste, and were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of elements of the service, as well as the service overall.

In terms of overall satisfaction with the household waste collection, the vast majority (91%) of respondents who provided a response report that they are either very or fairly satisfied. This is a similar figure to the level of satisfaction achieved in the 2006 BVPI survey. Only 4% expressed a level of dissatisfaction.

This is supported by the fact that amongst respondents providing a response, a half (50%) feel the household waste collection service has stayed the same over the last three years, whilst 44% feel it has got better and 6% worse.

Q7 : Satisfaction with waste collection service overall (valid responses only)



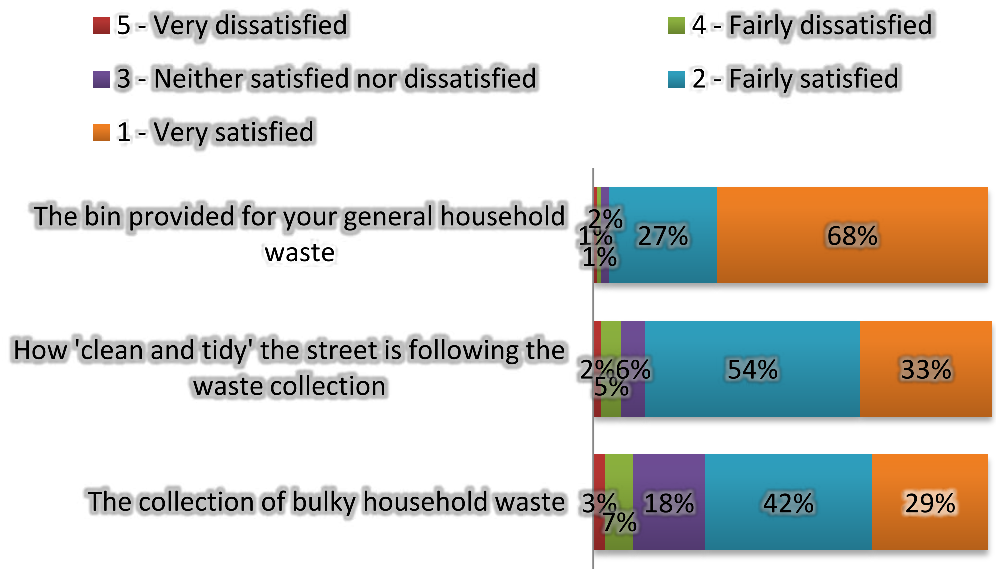
Unweighted/weighted bases : 966/974

7.2.2 Satisfaction with aspects of household waste collection

Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of the household waste collection service.

Satisfaction ratings are generally very positive. However, about one in ten (11%) respondents providing a rating express dissatisfaction with 'the collection of bulky household waste'.

Q7 : Satisfaction with aspects of household waste collection (valid responses only)



Bases vary

7.3 Provision of local waste recycling facilities

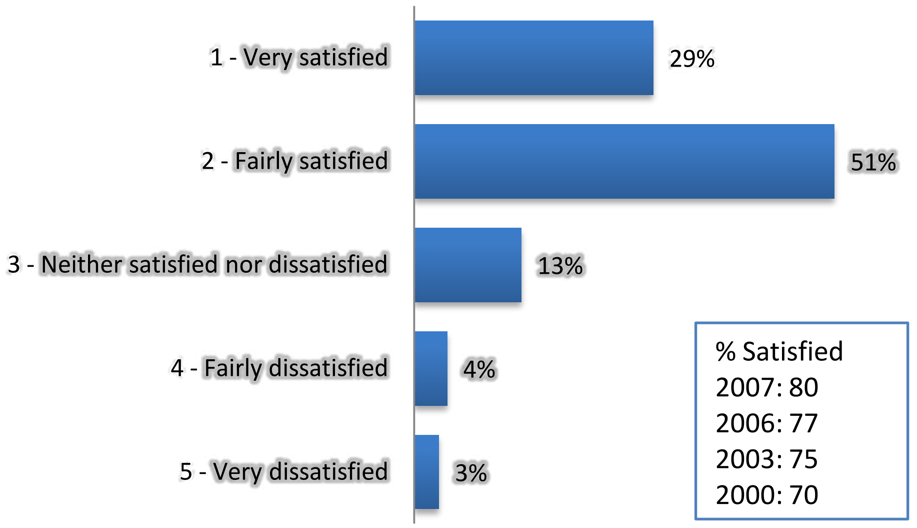
7.3.1 Satisfaction with provision of local waste recycling facilities

Respondents were reminded that the council provides a range of local recycling facilities. They were the asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of elements of the service, as well as the service overall.

In terms of overall satisfaction with the provision of local waste recycling facilities, eight in ten (80%) respondents who provide a response report that they are either very or fairly satisfied. This is a slightly higher (though not significantly higher) than in 2006. Only 7% express dissatisfaction with the service overall.

Encouraging, about half (49%) of respondents feel that the service has improved over the last three years, and only 3% are of the view that it has got worse.

Q9 : Satisfaction with the provision of local recycling facilities overall (valid responses only)

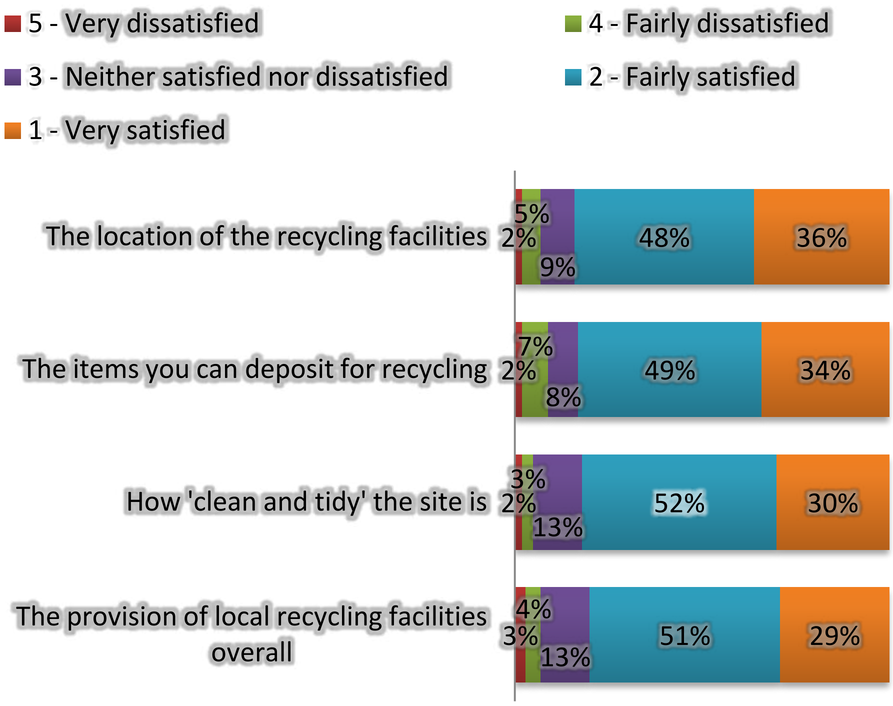


Unweighted/weighted bases : 870/886

7.3.2 Satisfaction with aspects of local recycling facilities

Levels of satisfaction with the items that can be deposited, the location of the facilities, the cleanliness and tidiness of the site and the provision of facilities overall are all relatively high, with more than eight in ten satisfied with each aspect.

Q9 : Satisfaction with aspects of local recycling facilities (valid responses only)



Bases vary

7.4 Doorstep recycling collection

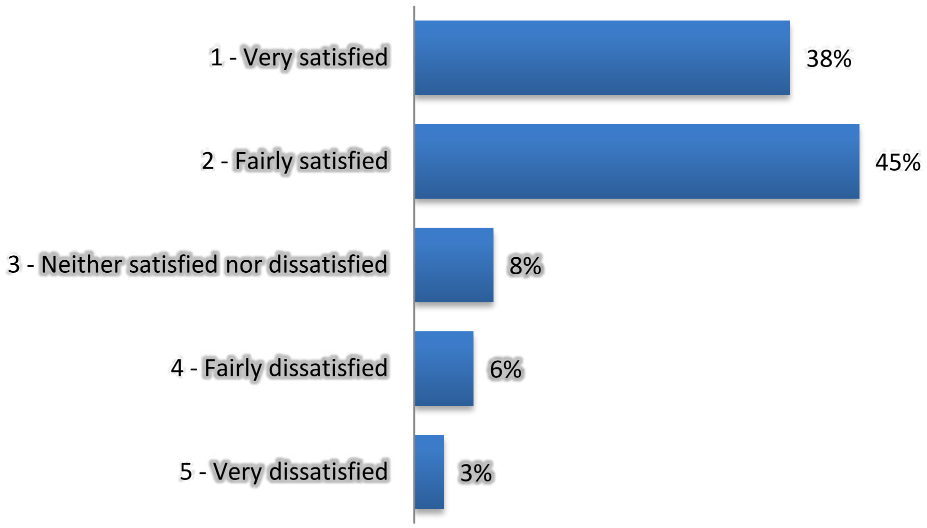
7.4.1 Satisfaction with doorstep recycling collection

Respondents were reminded that the council undertakes a regular collection of waste for recycling, and were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of elements of the service, and the service overall.

In terms of overall satisfaction with the doorstep recycling collection, over four in five respondents, (84%) who provide a response, report that they are either very or fairly satisfied.

It is very encouraging to note that about two thirds (65%) of respondents providing a response feel the service has improved over the last three years, and only 5% feel it has got worse.

Q8 : Satisfaction with the service for collection of items for recycling overall (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 951/956

7.4.2 Satisfaction with aspects of doorstep recycling collection

By considering satisfaction with specific aspects of the doorstep recycling collection demonstrates the high level of satisfaction that exists with both 'the provision of a container for items of recycling' and 'cleanliness of the street after collection'.

86% are satisfied with the latter and 7% dissatisfied, while 82% are satisfied with the container provided and only 12% dissatisfied.

Q8 : Satisfaction with aspects of doorstep recycling collection (valid responses only)

Bases vary

8 Cultural and recreational facilities

Respondents were informed that the council directly supports cultural and recreational activities and venues, and that its licensing and planning responsibilities also make a difference to the level of private and voluntary cultural provision. They were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a range of cultural and recreational activities and venues.

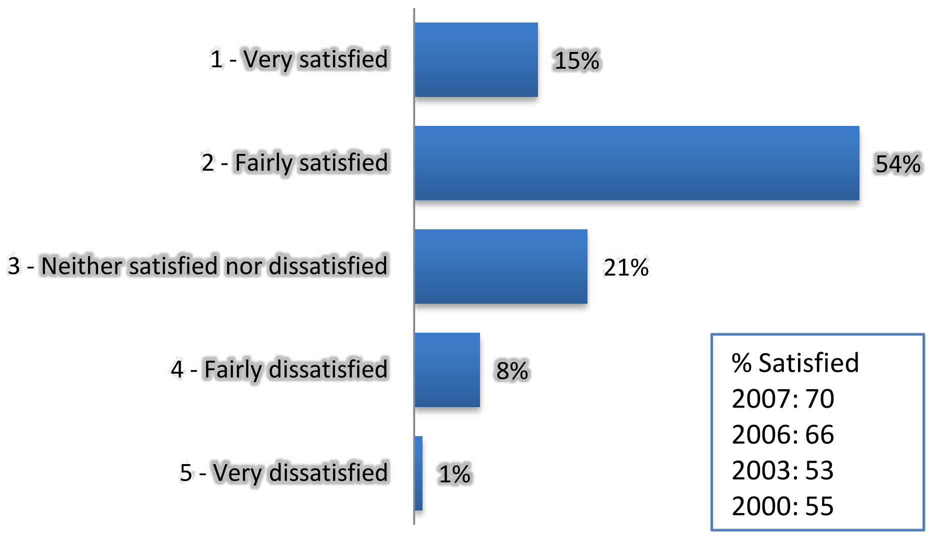
8.1 Sports and leisure facilities

8.1.1 Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities

The level of satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities at 70% is higher than that achieved in 2006, (although not significantly higher). One in ten (9%) are dissatisfied.

In line with the above finding, over two thirds (71%) of respondents providing a response feel that sports and leisure facilities have stayed the same over the last three years. However more do feel that they have improved (16%) than feel they have deteriorated (12%).

Q10 : Satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities (valid responses only)

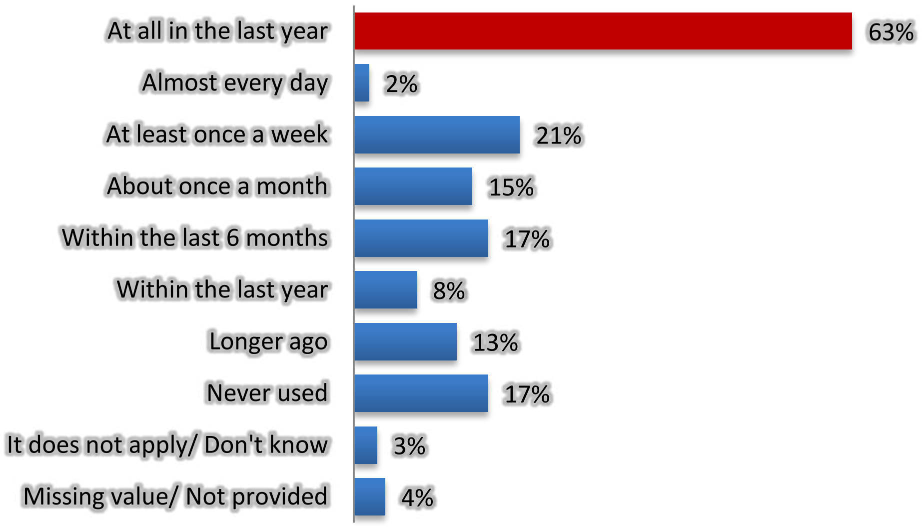


Unweighted/weighted bases : 931/947

8.1.2 Frequency of use of sports and leisure facilities

Almost two thirds (63%) of all respondents report that they have used sports and leisure facilities in the last twelve months, including almost a quarter (23%) who report using such facilities at least weekly.

Q11 : Frequency of use of sports/leisure facilities (all respondents)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 992/992

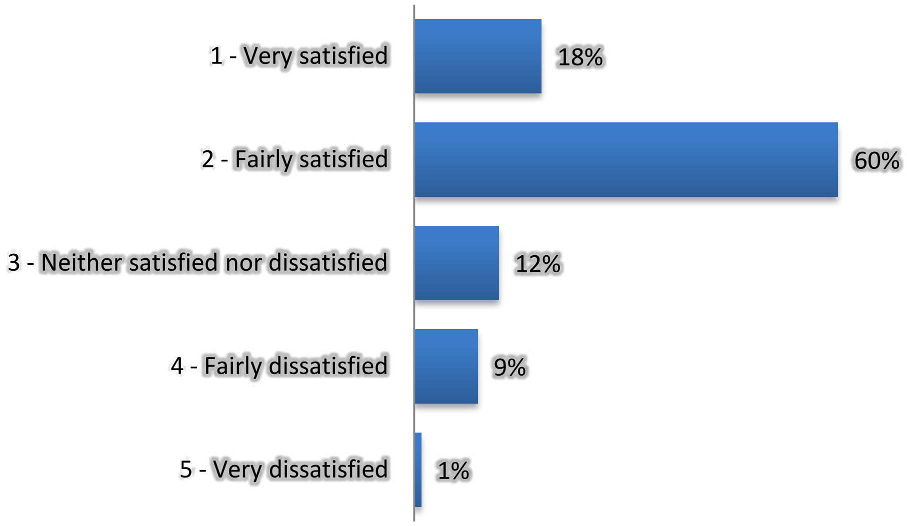
Levels of use of sports and leisure facilities are higher amongst the following respondent groups :

- Those aged 25-64 (84% of 25-44 year olds and 60% of 45-64 year olds);
- Those in work (72%);
- Those with no disability (67%)
- Owner occupiers (66%).

8.1.3 Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities – users

Amongst users providing a response, over three quarters (78%) are either very or fairly satisfied, with only one in ten (10%) expressing a level of dissatisfaction.

Q10 : Satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 535/622

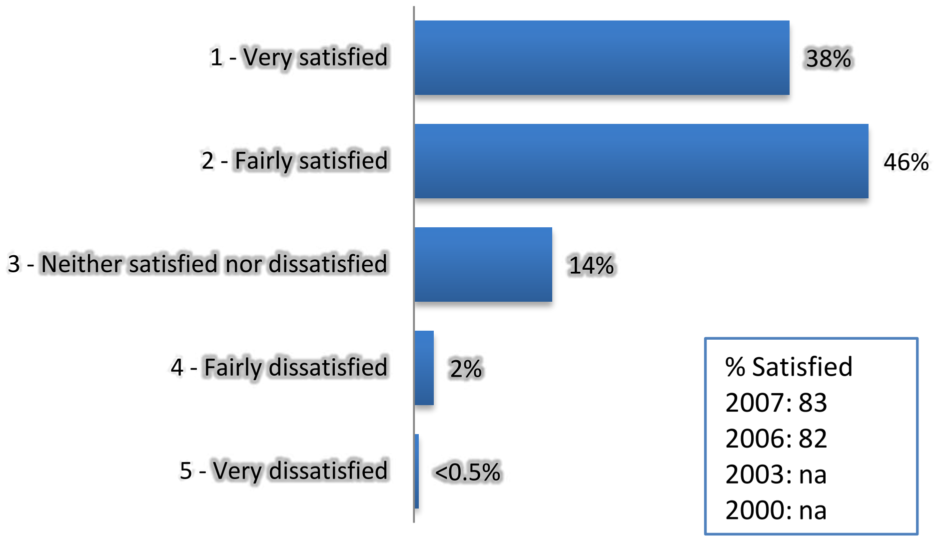
8.2 Libraries

8.2.1 Satisfaction with libraries

The level of satisfaction with libraries at 83% is high, a figure which has not changed significantly since 2006. This indicator was not collected in earlier BVPI surveys.

Certainly, more respondents providing a response feel that libraries have got better over the last three years (29%) as compared to those who believe they have got worse (4%).

Q10 : Satisfaction with libraries (valid responses only)

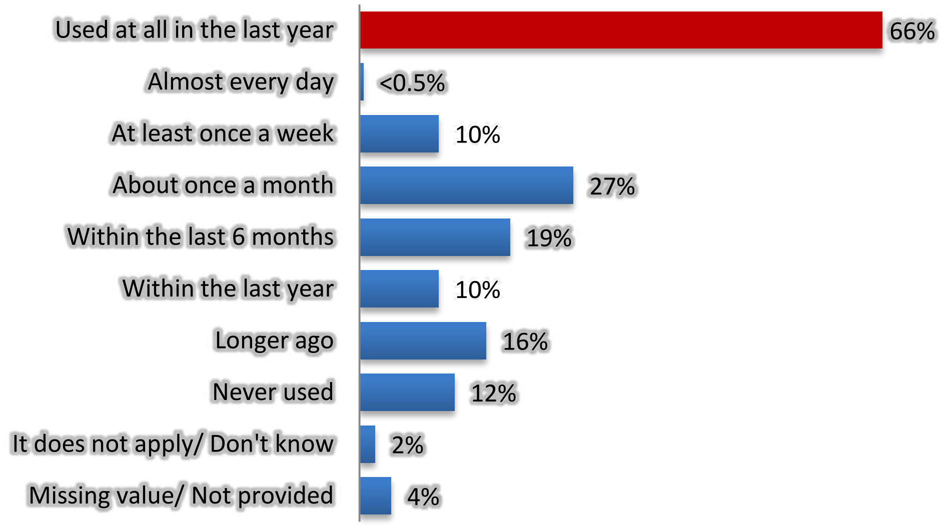


Unweighted/weighted bases : 941/954

8.2.2 Frequency of use of libraries

Two thirds (66%) of all respondents report that they have used library facilities in the last twelve months, including more than a third (37%) who report at least monthly use.

Q11 : Frequency of use of libraries (all respondents)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 992/992

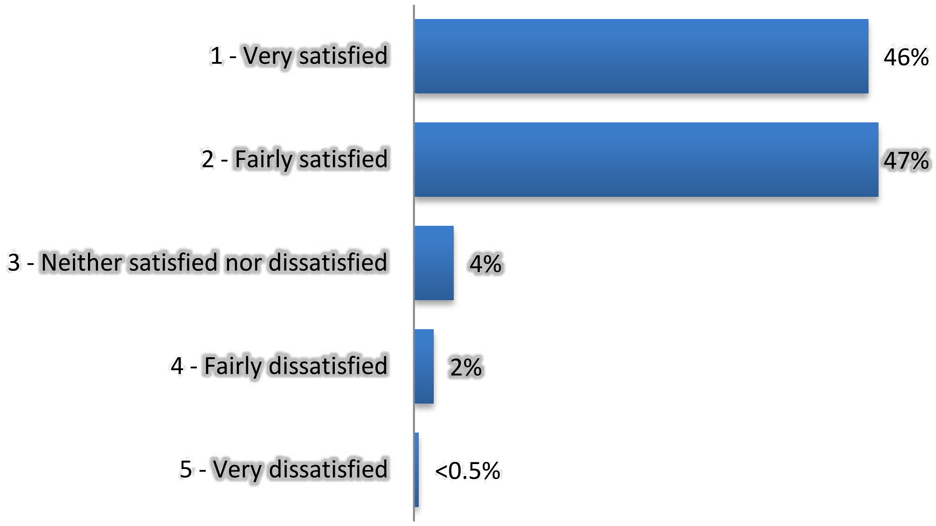
Levels of use of libraries are higher amongst the following respondent groups :

- 25-44 year olds (73%).

8.2.3 Satisfaction with libraries – users

Amongst users providing a response, the vast majority (93%) are either very or fairly satisfied, with only 3% expressing a level of dissatisfaction.

Q10 : Satisfaction with libraries (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 620/646

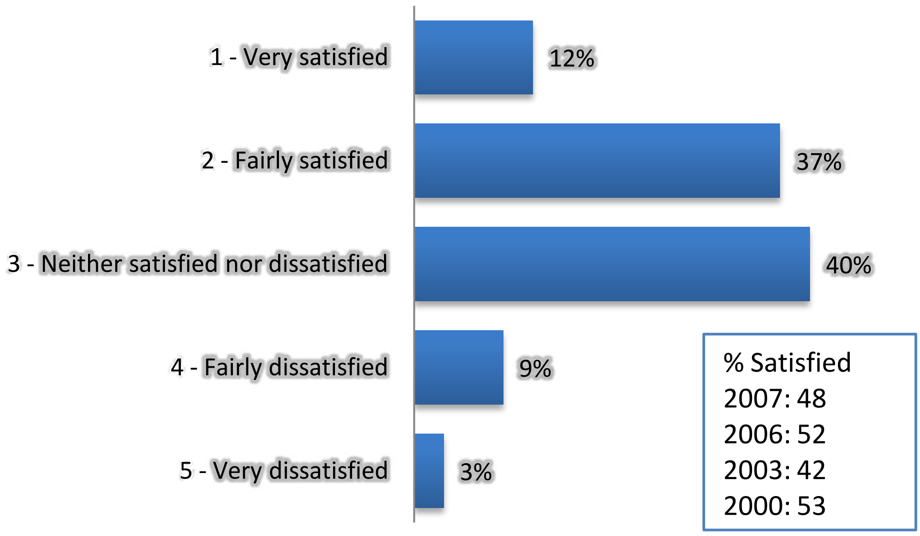
8.3 Museums and galleries

8.3.1 Satisfaction with museums and galleries

Just under a half (48%) of respondents are satisfied with museums and galleries, a figure which is slightly smaller (but not significantly so) than in 2006. Just over one in ten (12%) are dissatisfied.

While the majority (88%) of respondents providing a response feel that museums and galleries have stayed the same over the last three years, similar proportions feel that they have improved (7%) or deteriorated (5%).

Q10 : Satisfaction with museums and galleries (valid responses only)

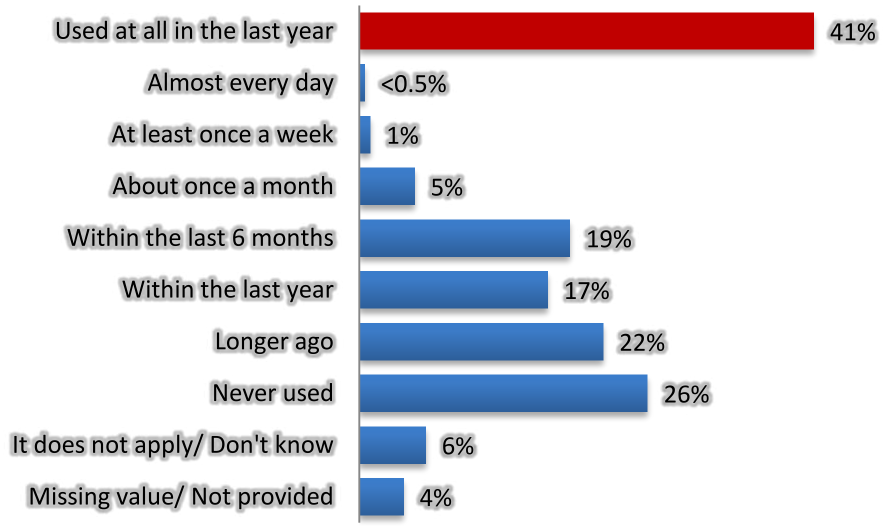


Unweighted/weighted bases : 919/937

8.3.2 Frequency of use of museums and galleries

About four in ten (41%) respondents report that they have visited a museum or gallery in the last twelve months, with over half of these having visited within the last six months (25%).

Q11 : Frequency of use of museums and galleries (all respondents)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 992/992

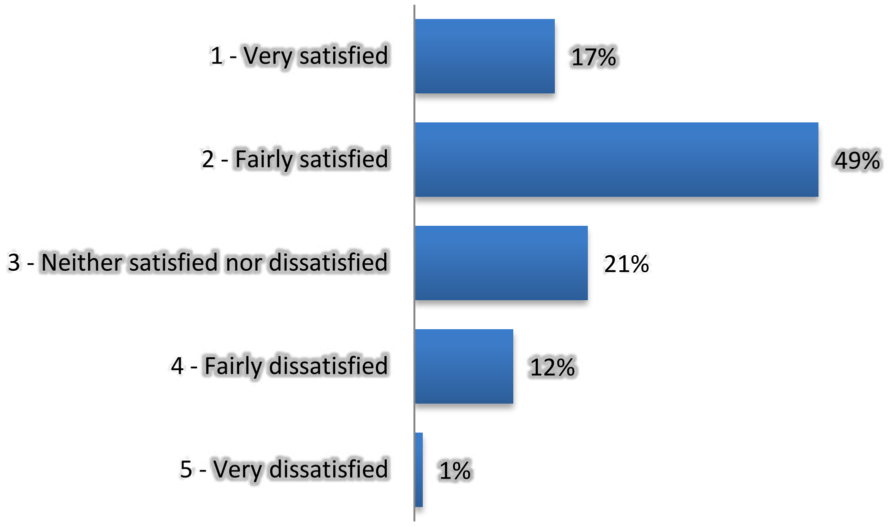
Levels of use of museums and galleries are higher amongst the following respondent groups :

- Middle age group (45% of those aged 25-44 and 41% of those aged 45-64).

8.3.3 Satisfaction with museums and galleries – users

Amongst users providing a response, two thirds of respondents (66%) are satisfied to a degree, with 13% expressing a level of dissatisfaction.

Q10 : Satisfaction with museums and galleries (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 376/399

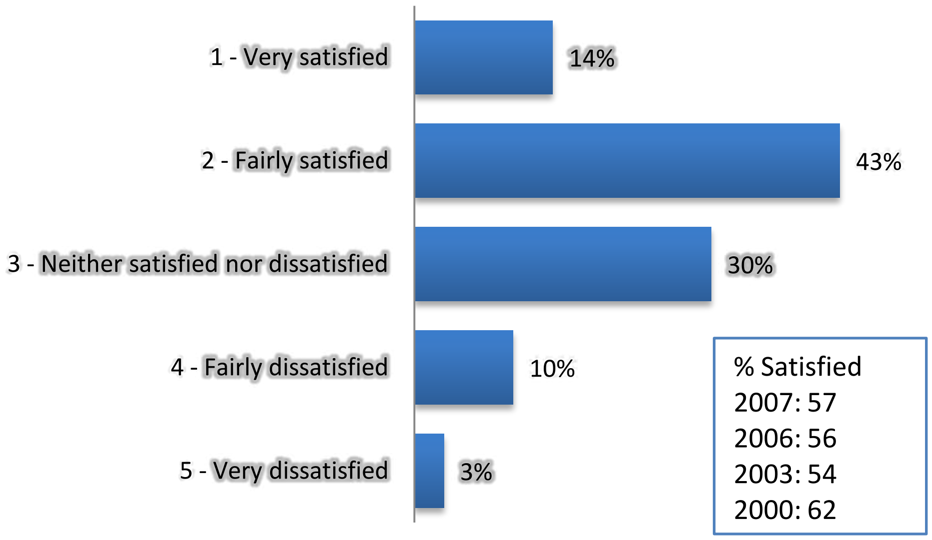
8.4 Theatres and concert halls

8.4.1 Satisfaction with theatres and concert halls

Over half of respondents (57%) are satisfied with the theatres and concert halls, which is a similar proportion to 2006 and 2003. About one in eight (13%) express dissatisfaction.

Certainly, the majority (87%) of respondents providing a response feel that theatres and concert halls have stayed the same over the last three years, with 6% stating that they have improved and 7% feeling that they have deteriorated.

Q10 : Satisfaction with theatres/concert halls (valid responses only)

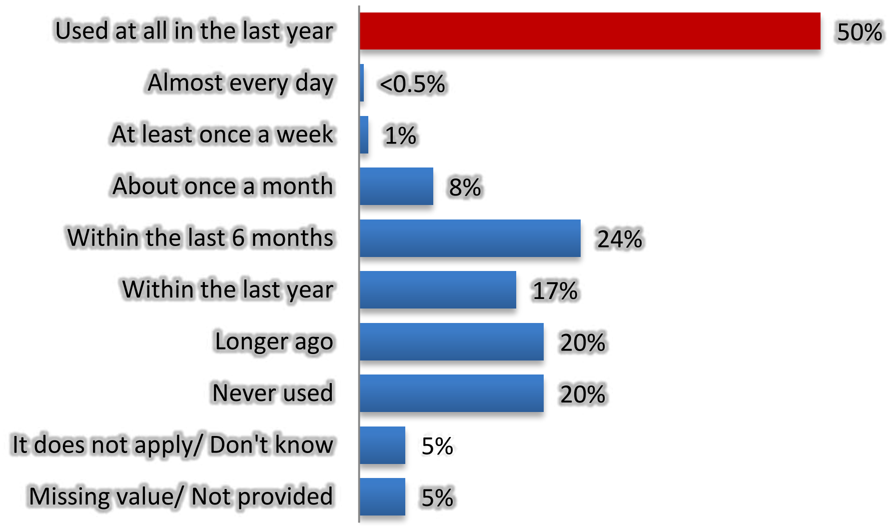


Unweighted/weighted bases : 933/945

8.4.2 Frequency of use of theatres and concert halls

A half (50%) of all respondents report that they have visited a theatre or concert hall in the last twelve months, with most of these having visited within the last six months (33%).

Q11 : Frequency of use of theatres/concert halls (all respondents)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 992/992

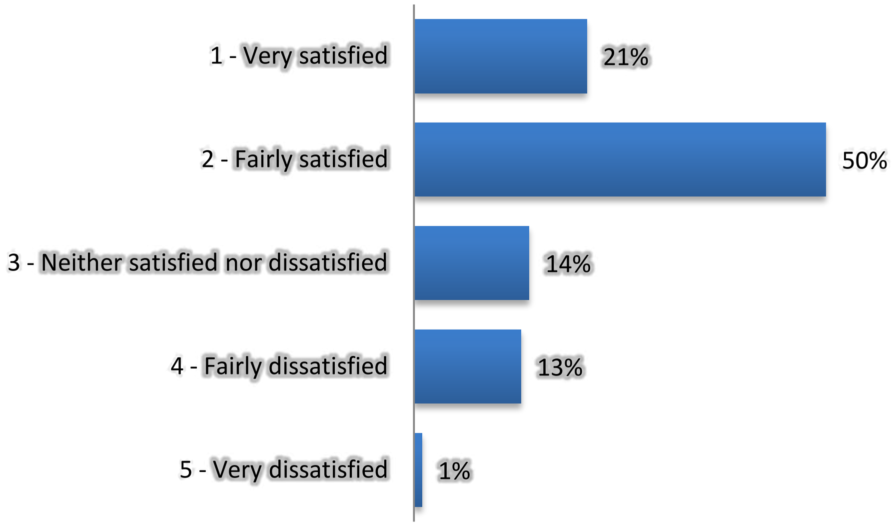
Levels of use of theatres and concert halls are higher amongst the following respondent groups:

- 45-64 year olds (55%);
- Owner occupiers (55%);
- Those with no disability (52%).

8.4.3 Satisfaction with theatres and concert halls – users

Amongst users providing a response, just under three-quarters (72%) are satisfied to a degree, including 21% who are very satisfied. About one in seven (14%) express a level of dissatisfaction.

Q10 : Satisfaction with theatres/concert halls (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 478/492

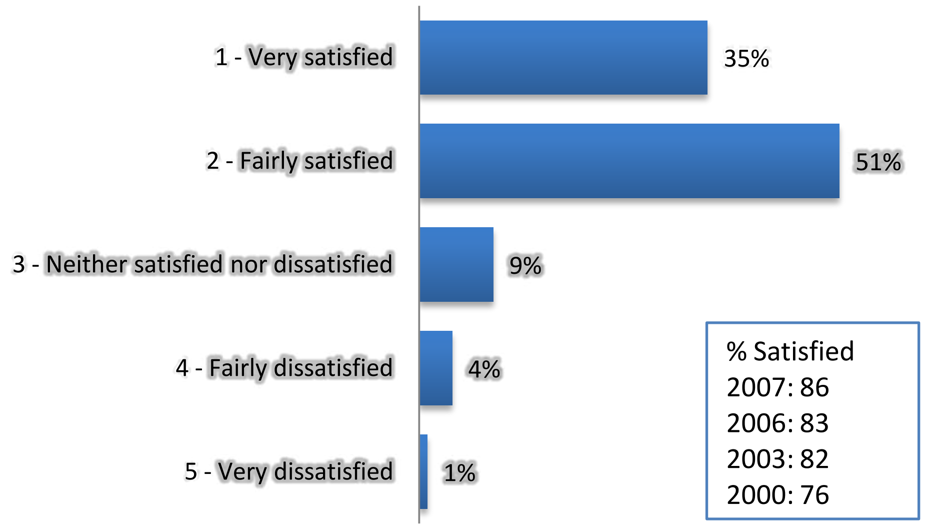
8.5 Parks and open spaces

8.5.1 Satisfaction with parks and open spaces

Satisfaction with parks and open spaces is relatively high at 86% of respondents, with only 5% dissatisfied. This is on a par with the results from 2006.

While the majority (70%) of respondents providing a response feel that parks and open spaces have stayed the same over the last three years, the proportion feeling they have improved (22%) is greater than the proportion (8%) who feel they have deteriorated.

Q10 : Satisfaction with parks and open spaces (valid responses only)

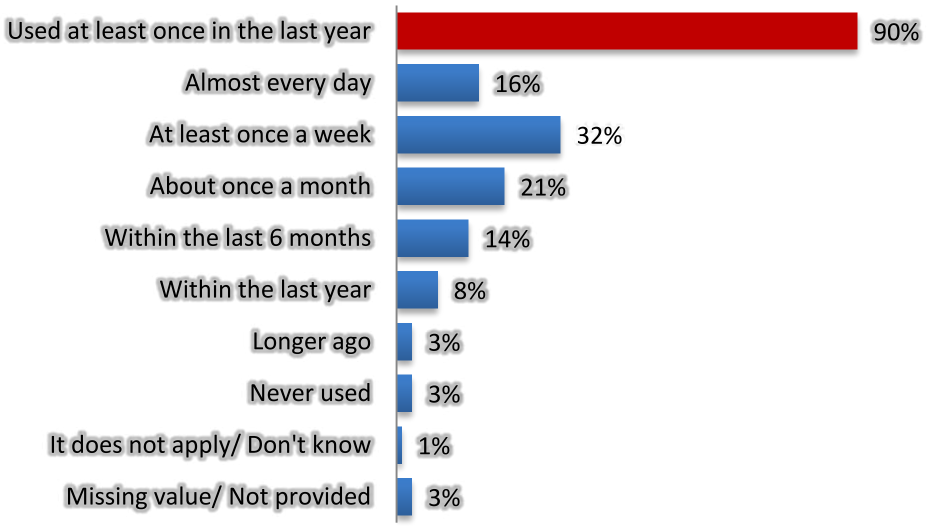


Unweighted/weighted bases : 951/964

8.5.2 Frequency of use of parks and open spaces

Nine in ten (90%) respondents report that they have visited a park or open space in the last twelve months, including more than half (48%) who report at least weekly use.

Q11 : Frequency of use of parks and open spaces (all respondents)

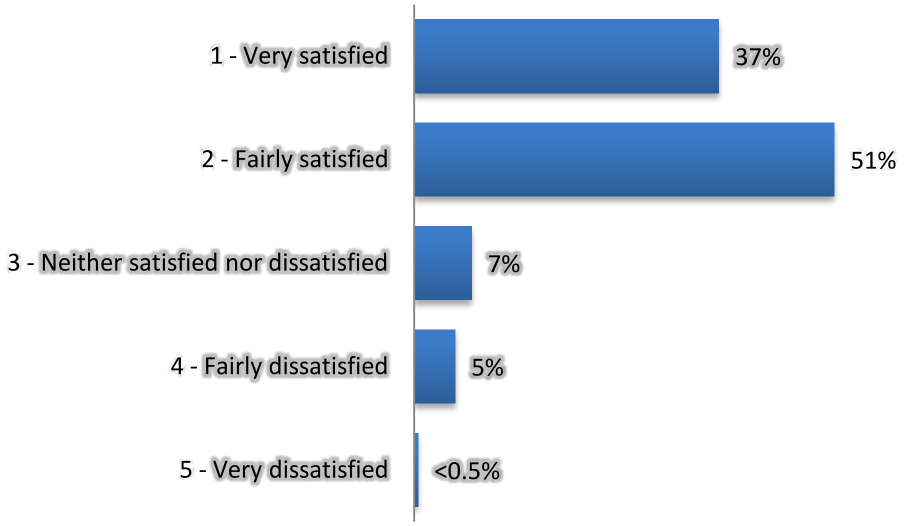


Unweighted/weighted bases : 992/992

8.5.3 Satisfaction with parks and open spaces – users

Amongst users providing a response, 89% are satisfied to a degree, including more than a third (37%) who are very satisfied. This compares with only 5% of respondents who have expressed a level of dissatisfaction.

Q10 : Satisfaction with parks and open spaces (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 839/886

9 Other council services

9.1 Housing services

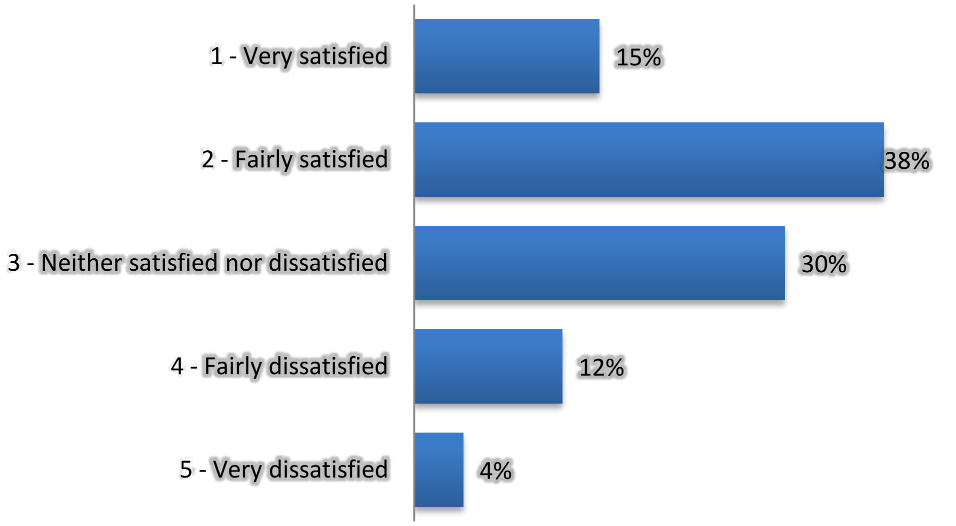
9.1.1 Use of housing services

One in ten (10%) respondents report using the housing services provided by the council in the last twelve months.

9.1.2 Satisfaction with housing services – users

Amongst users of housing services, over half (54%) of those providing a response are either very or fairly satisfied, and three in ten (30%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. However, about one in six (17%) express a level of dissatisfaction.

Q13 : Satisfaction with Housing services (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 103/97

9.2 Planning services

9.2.1 Use of planning services

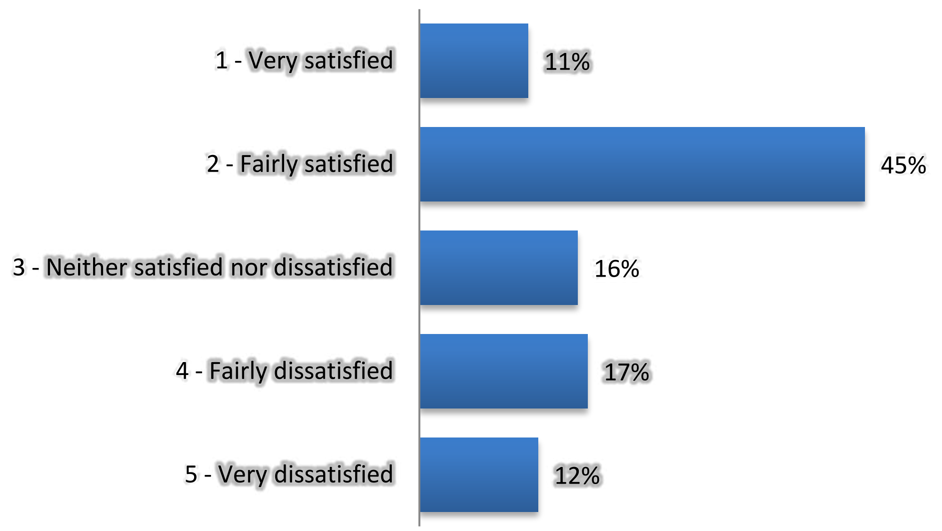
Almost one in six (17%) of all respondents report using the planning services provided by the council in the last twelve months.

9.2.2 Satisfaction with planning services – users

Amongst users of planning services, over half (56%) of those providing a response are either very or fairly satisfied, with about one in ten (11%) very satisfied. One in six (16%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

About three in ten (29%) express a level of dissatisfaction, with just over one in ten (12%) being very dissatisfied.

Q13 : Satisfaction with Planning services (users valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 161/164

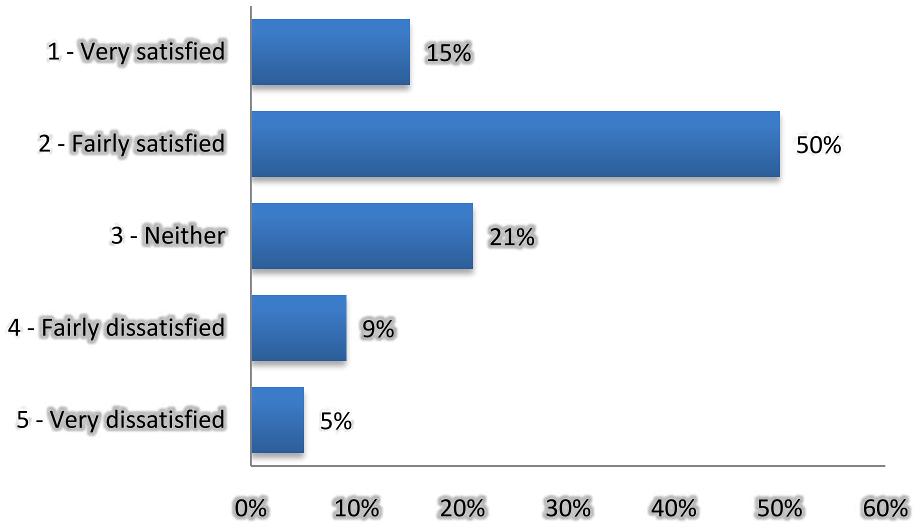
9.3 Additional services provided by Chelmsford Borough Council

9.3.1 Satisfaction with Chelmsford's retail market

More than eight in ten of all respondents (86%) have used Chelmsford's retail market.

Two thirds (66%) of those providing a response are satisfied with the market, with 14% dissatisfied. The only group significantly more likely to be satisfied than its counterparts is 65+ year olds (71%).

CHQ2a : Satisfaction with Chelmsford's retail market (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 853/855

9.3.2 Satisfaction with Chelmsford's public conveniences

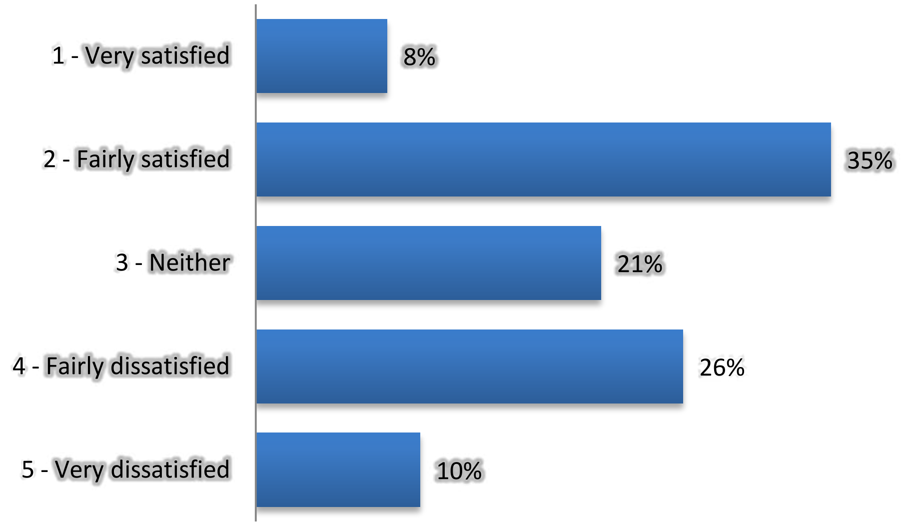
About eight in ten (81%) of all respondents have used Chelmsford's public conveniences.

Opinion is fairly divided in terms of satisfaction with the public conveniences. More than four in ten respondents (43%) providing a valid rating are satisfied, but just over a third (36%) are dissatisfied.

Dissatisfaction is particularly high for :

- 45-64 year olds (45%);
- Those who have lived in the area for 11+ years (41%).

CHQ2b : Satisfaction with public conveniences (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 795/802

10 Quality of life

10.1 The most important factors in making somewhere a good place to live

All respondents were asked to specify from a list the five aspects that are most important in making somewhere a good place to live. The table overleaf summarises the responses, and reveals that the level of crime (60%), health services (46%), clean streets (36%), education provision (36%), affordable decent housing (32%) and public transport (30%) are the issues mentioned most often.

- Crime levels are of particular concern to 25-44 year olds (68%) and owner occupiers (66%);
- Health services are of interest to retired residents (58%), 65+ year olds (55%) and those with a disability (54%);
- Clean streets, however, are more of an issue for those living in the area up to 2 years (50%);
- As to be expected, education provision is most important to those of child bearing age (49% of 25-44 year olds);
- Affordable decent housing is important to other tenants (41%) and women (39%);
- Public transport is of particular concern to 65+ year olds (40%) and those retired (37%).

Q1 : Most important factors in making somewhere a good place to live (all respondents)

	%
The level of crime	60
Health services	46
Clean streets	36
Education provision	36
Affordable decent housing	32
Public transport	30
Parks and open spaces	28
The level of traffic congestion	22
Shopping facilities	22
Activities for teenagers	21
Access to nature	18
Road and pavement repairs	15
Job prospects	13
Facilities for young children	12
Sports & leisure facilities	12
Wage levels & local cost of living	10
Cultural facilities (e.g. cinemas, museums)	9
The level of pollution	8
Community activities	7
Race relations	2
Other	1
None	<0.5
Don't know/not provided	9
Unweighted/weighted base	**992/992**

10.2 Factors that most need improving

All respondents were then asked to specify from the same list five aspects that most need improving in the local area. The table overleaf summarises the responses, and reveals that activities for teenagers (48%), level of traffic congestion (46%), road and pavement repairs (44%) and the level of crime (30%) are the factors identified as priorities for improvement.

- Activities for teenagers are particularly seen as an area for improvement among 25-44 year olds (55%) and those in work (53%);
- 45-64 year olds (52%) feel particularly strongly about improvements to the level of traffic congestion
- The wish for improvement in road and pavement repairs is found particularly among retired people (58%) and 65+ year olds (54%);
- Improvements in the level of crime are expressed equally across the board.

Q2 : Factors that most need improving (all respondents)

	%
Activities for teenagers	48
The level of traffic congestion	46
Road and pavement repairs	44
The level of crime	30
Public transport	24
Clean streets	23
Affordable decent housing	23
Health services	18
Shopping facilities	14
Community activities	13
Sports & leisure facilities	12
Facilities for young children	11
Cultural facilities (e.g. cinemas, museums)	11
Job prospects	9
Wage levels & local cost of living	9
The level of pollution	8
Education provision	6
Parks and open spaces	5
Access to nature	3
Race relations	1
Other	2
None	<0.5
Don’t know/not provided	9
Unweighted/weighted base	**992/992**

10.3 Priorities for improvement

When these two measures- aspects that are most important in making somewhere a good place to live, and aspects that most need improving – are plotted against each other it is possible to identify those areas that are perceived by respondents to be priorities for improvement, i.e. that are regarded both as important and as in need of improvement.

Factors identified as both important and in need of improvement are :-

- Level of crime;
- Clean streets.

This is followed by :-

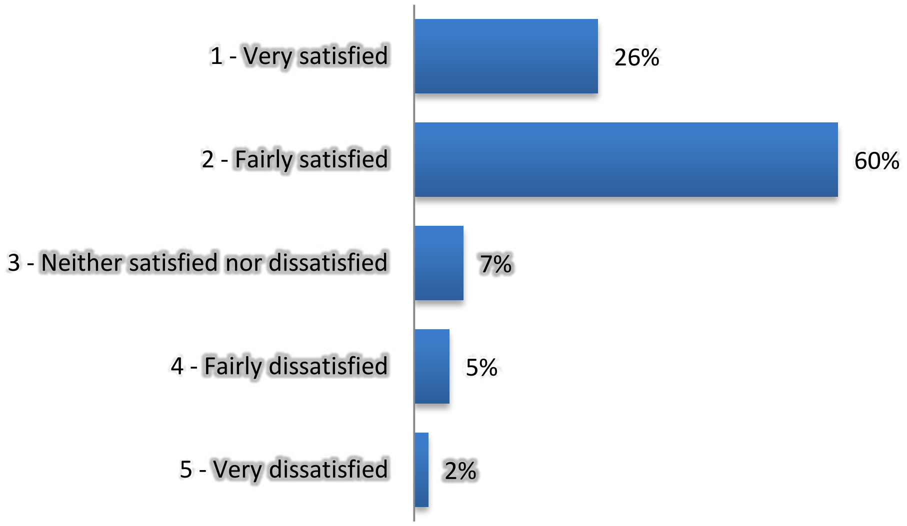
- Affordable decent housing;
- Public transport.

10.4 Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

Over four in five (86%) respondents providing a valid response rate themselves as satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with more than a quarter rating themselves as very satisfied.

Only 7% say that they are dissatisfied with the local area as a place to live.

Q3 : Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 934/950

Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live is high across the board but particularly amongst the following respondent groups :

- 25-44 year olds (90%);
- Those working (88%);
- Owner occupiers (88%).

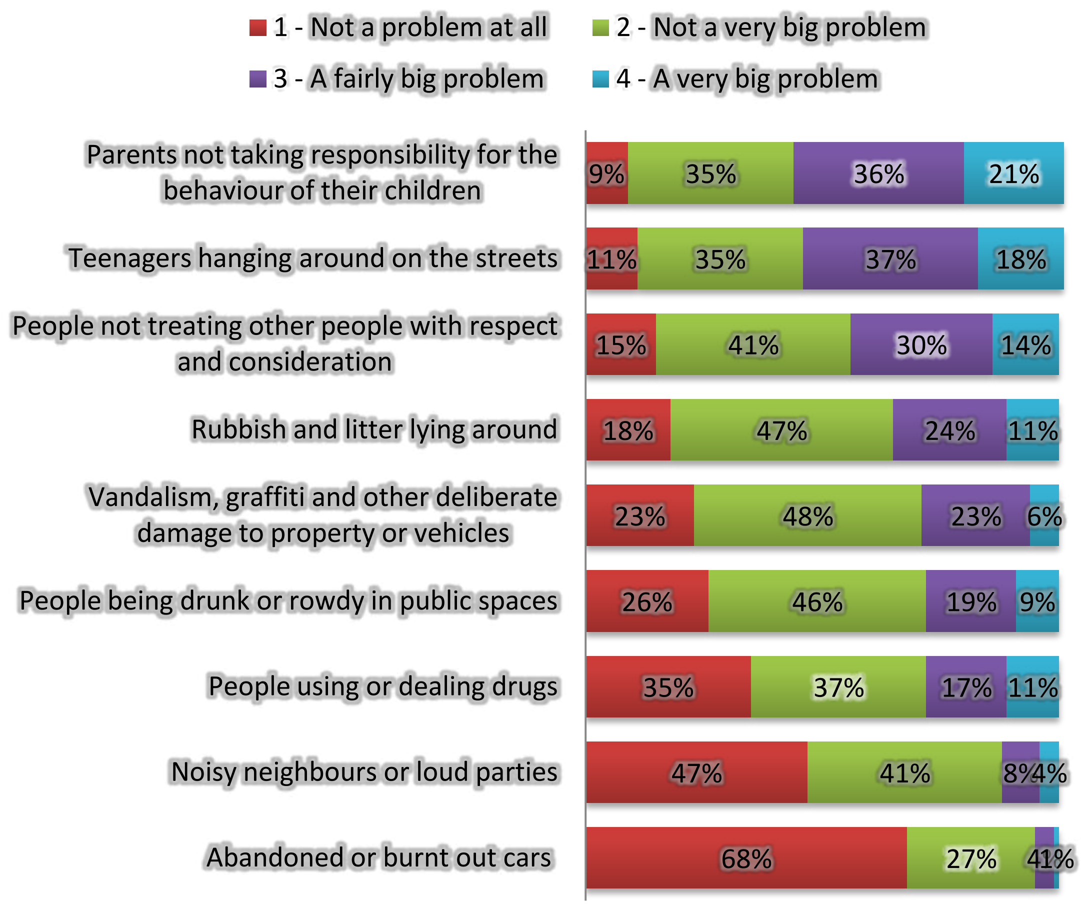
10.5 Anti-social behaviour

Respondents were asked to think about their local area and rate the extent to which they feel specific types of anti-social behaviour are a problem.

The types of behaviour fall broadly into three groups:

- Those which a majority regard as a very or fairly big problem: teenagers hanging around the streets and parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children;
- Those where views are relatively balanced: people not treating other people with consideration and respect and rubbish and litter lying around;
- Those which a majority of respondents do not regard as being a particular problem: noisy neighbours or loud parties; abandoned or burnt out cars; people being drunk or rowdy in public places; people using or dealing drugs and vandalism/graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles.

Q4 Extent to which anti-social behaviour is regarded as a problem (valid responses only)



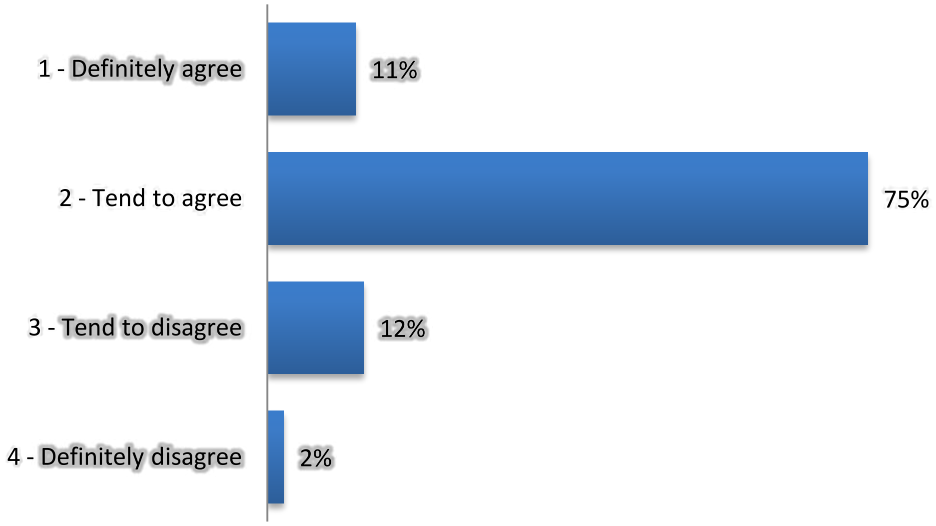
Bases vary

10.6 Extent to which people from different backgrounds get on well

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

More than eight in ten (86%) respondents providing a response agree to an extent that this is the case, while about one in seven (14%) disagree.

Q5 : Agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 633/648

Among those more likely to disagree, are :

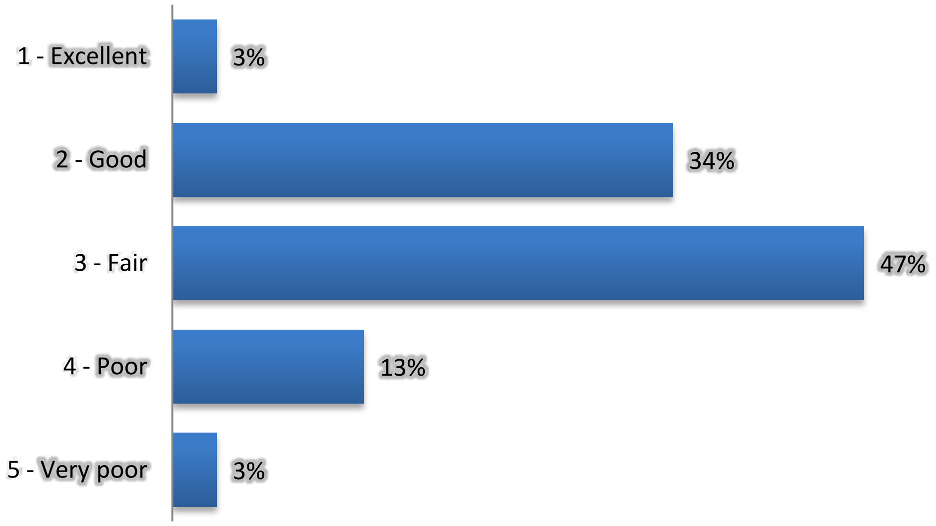
- Other tenants (28%);
- Those living in the area for up to 2 years (27%) and for 3-5 years (22%).

10.7 Confidence in the Police

An additional question was asked about neighbourhood policing measuring overall confidence in the police, with respondents being asked how good a job they think the police are doing in their local area overall.

Whilst almost a half of respondents provide a fairly ambivalent response of ‘fair’, more than a third (37%) feel the police are doing a good job and about one in six (16%) a poor job.

CHQ1 : How good a job the police are doing in the local area (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 858/858

Among those more likely to be *dissatisfied* are :

- Those with a disability (22%);
- Males (21%).

11 Local decision making

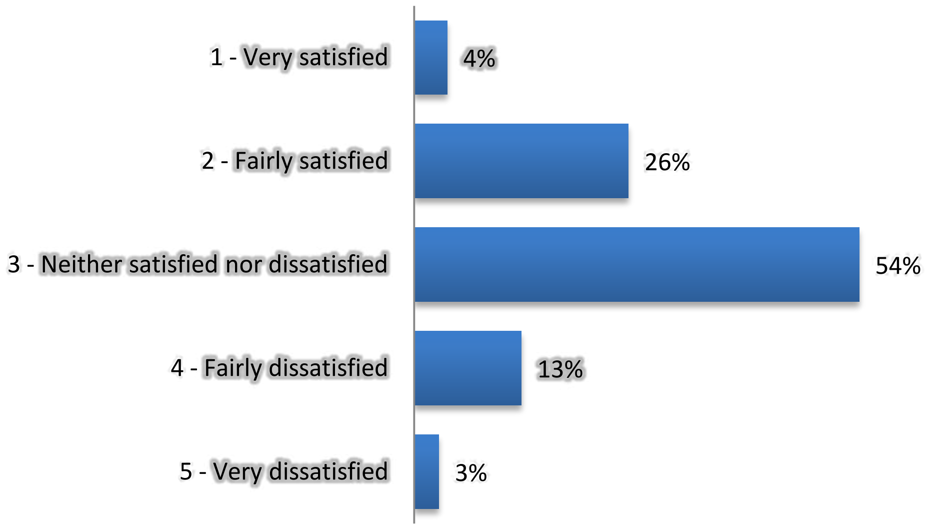
11.1 Satisfaction with opportunities for participation

Respondents were informed that the council provides opportunities to participate in decision making.

Amongst respondents providing a response, three in ten (30%) are satisfied, and only 16% dissatisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision making provided by the council.

A significant proportion, (54%) do not express a strong opinion one way or the other.

Q24 : Satisfaction with the opportunities for participation in local decision making 9valid responses only)

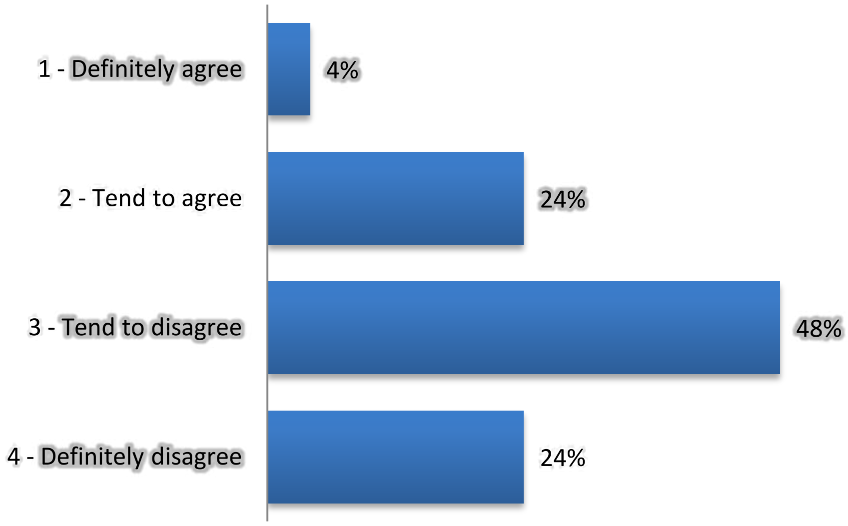


Unweighted/weighted bases : 720/745

11.2 Influence over local decisions

Of all respondents providing a response, almost three quarters (72%) believe they cannot influence decisions affecting the local area, while approaching three in ten (28%) believe they can.

Q25 : Agreement that respondent can influence decisions affecting the local area (valid responses only)



Unweighted/weighted bases : 743/756

11.3 Desired level of involvement

About one in five (21%) of all respondents report that they would like to be more involved in the decisions their council makes that affect their local area, and a further 61% say that it would depend on the issue in question. About one in eight (12%) report that they would not like to be more involved in such decisions.

The proportion of respondents who would like to be more involved (irrespective of the issue) is higher amongst the following respondent groups :

- Men (28%);
- Middle age groups (26% of 25-44 year olds and 22% of 45-64 year olds)
- Owner occupiers (23%).

Appendix I : Profile of respondents

The following tables show a breakdown of the key respondent profile details, showing both unweighted and weighted figures. The weighted figures may not add up to 992 due to rounding.

Unweighted and weighted sample profile (all respondents)

	Unweighted %	Weighted %
SEX		
Male	497	467
Female	486	513
Unspecified	9	13
AGE		
18 to 24	12	92
25 to 44	256	310
45 to 64	404	370
65+	296	191
Unspecified	24	30
TENURE		
Owner occupier	792	781
Council tenant	20	17
Other tenant	129	133
Other	11	19
Unspecified	40	43
WORKING STATUS		
Working	511	626
Not working	426	309
Unspecified	55	57

Unweighted and weighted sample profile (all respondents)

	Unweighted %	Weighted %
DISABILITY		
Yes – limiting	176	120
Yes – not limiting	52	41
No	702	768
Unspecified	62	63
ETHNICITY		
White	927	918
Mixed	7	8
Black	5	4
Asian	8	7
Other	1	2
Unspecified	44	52
NO OF ADULTS IN ACCOMMODATION		
One	237	124
Two	573	640
Three	96	143
Four	33	77
Five	3	6
Six+	1	2
Unspecified	49	0

Appendix 2 : Questionnaire

Because people matter, we listen.

With some 20 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

Our business is about understanding people; because they matter. Finding out what they really need; from the type of information they use to the type of services they require. In short, finding out about the kind of world people want to live in tomorrow.

BMG serves both the social public sector and the commercial private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of technologies such as portals and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

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