

Budget Consultation 2011

Report

November 2011

Prepared For: Stroud District Council

Prepared By: **Future Focus Research**
130 Aztec
Aztec West
Bristol
BS32 4UB
www.futurefocusresearch.co.uk

Contents

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Approach to research | 2 |
| 1.1 Research objectives | 2 |
| 1.2 Methodology | 2 |
| 1.3 Who did we interview? | 3 |
| 2. Resident Survey | 4 |
| 2.1 Overall opinions on Stroud DC | 4 |
| 2.2 Council spending options | 5 |
| 2.3 Members and Members' expenses | 10 |
| 2.4 Council Tax options | 11 |
| 2.5 Priorities of local people | 14 |
| 2.6 Canal improvement works | 15 |
| 2.7 Use of shops/local businesses | 16 |
| 2.8 Comparisons with 2010 | 18 |
| 3. Business Survey | 22 |
| 3.1 Overall opinions on Stroud DC | 23 |
| 3.2 Council spending options | 24 |
| 3.3 Members and Members' expenses | 27 |
| 3.4 Council Tax options | 28 |
| 3.5 Priorities of local people | 29 |
| 3.6 Canal improvement works | 30 |
| 3.7 Procurement of goods and services | 32 |
| 3.8 Employment of young people | 35 |
| 3.9 Comparisons with 2010 | 37 |
| 4. Summary | 39 |
| 4.1 Resident Survey | 39 |
| 4.2 Business Survey | 40 |
| 4.3 Comparative views of residents and businesses | 41 |

1. Approach to research

1.1 Research objectives

Stroud District Council (SDC) commissioned Future Focus Research to conduct a survey of local residents and businesses as part of the budget consultation process. The survey examined their views on service priorities, SDC performance and Council Tax among other issues.

1.2 Methodology

The research consisted of 303 ten minute telephone interviews with local residents and 200 ten minute telephone interviews with local businesses. A separate questionnaire was designed for each survey, although there were many questions that were the same for both surveys.

For the resident survey, all interviews were conducted with the householder with sole or joint responsibility for payment of the Council Tax. In addition, to ensure the views were obtained from individuals from all areas of the district, we targeted a broadly equal number of interviews in each of the following local areas:

- Gloucester Border Areas
- Stroud Central
- Stroud Border Areas, including Nailsworth
- Stonehouse
- Dursley
- Wotton-under-Edge
- Berkeley

These areas are grouped based on the Royal Mail post towns – see appendix A for details of the postcodes.

For the business survey, quotas were set in terms of business size (based on number of employees) as follows:

- 140 interviews with businesses with 10 employees or less; and
- 60 interviews with businesses with more than 10 employees.

Both questionnaires were designed in conjunction with SDC to ensure the research was able to deliver the intended objectives of the research. Interviews were conducted by a team of trained interviewers.

A sample size of 303 gives a margin of error of +/-5.6% at the 95% confidence interval. Therefore, if 50% of respondents give an answer to a question, we can be sure that the true value lies somewhere between 44.4 and 55.6%.

A sample size of 200 gives a margin of error of +/-6.9% at the 95% confidence interval.

Therefore, if 50% of respondents give an answer to a question, we can be sure that the true value lies somewhere between 43.1% and 56.9%.

1.3 Who did we interview?

A total of 303 interviews were achieved with residents, distributed according to area as follows:

Table 1.1: Summary of completed interviews

| Segment | Number of interviews |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Area</i> | |
| Gloucester Border Areas | 42 |
| Stroud Central | 44 |
| Stroud Border Areas | 43 |
| Stonehouse | 43 |
| Dursley | 43 |
| Wotton-under-Edge | 45 |
| Berkeley | 43 |

For the business research the interviews, interviews were conducted with a random sample of businesses from across the district. In terms of company size, the interviews were distributed as follows:

- 143 with businesses with 10 or less employees
- 57 with businesses with over 10 employees

2. Resident Survey

This section examined the views and opinions from the resident survey conducted, covering:

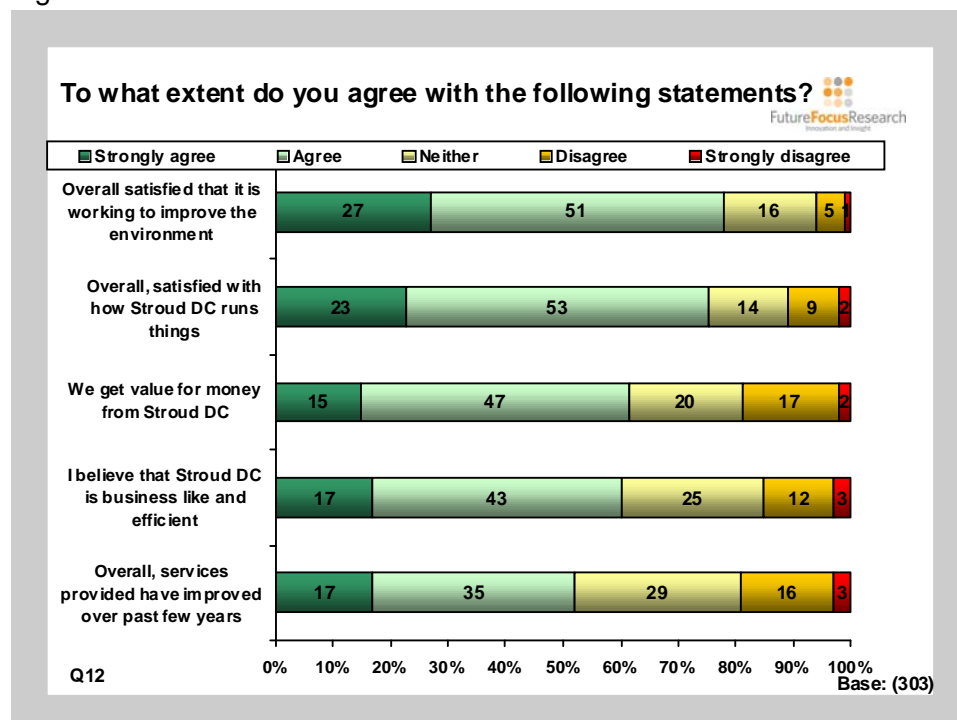
- Overall opinions on SDC
- Council spending options
- Members and Members' expenses
- Council Tax options
- Priorities of local people
- Canal improvements
- Use of local shops/businesses
- Comparisons with 2010

2.1 Overall opinions on Stroud DC

Figure 2.1 examines the extent to which respondents agree with the following 5 statements:

- I believe that Stroud District Council is business like and efficient
- Overall, I am satisfied with the way Stroud District Council runs things
- Overall, the services provided by Stroud District Council have improved over the past few years
- I think that we get value for money from Stroud District Council
- Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment

Figure 2.1



As illustrated the majority of respondents agreed that they were satisfied that SDC was working to improve the environment (78% net agreement) and that they were satisfied with the way SDC runs things (76% net agreement). The highest levels of disagreement were in terms of 'value for money' and 'services have improved over the past few years'.

The following variations were noted:

For all statements respondents in Stonehouse, were more likely to agree than all other areas;

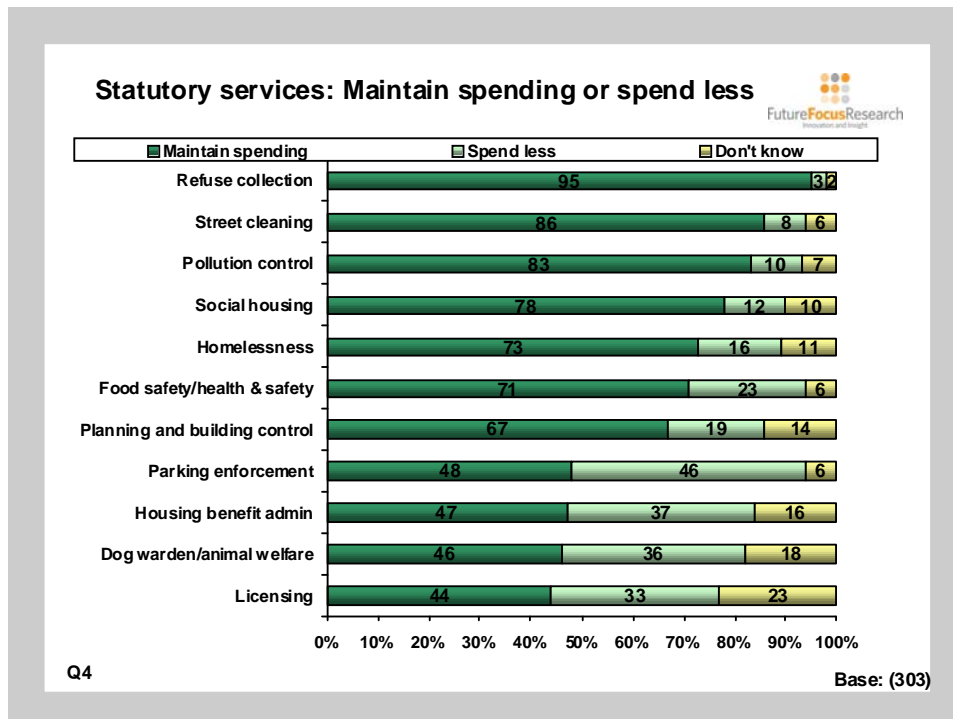
- Respondents in Stroud Central were less likely to agree that 'Stroud DC was business like and efficient' (43% compared to average of 60%), less likely to agree that they were 'satisfied overall with the way SDC runs things' (64% compared to average of 76%); and also less likely to agree that 'overall they were satisfied that SDC is working to improve the environment' (68% compared to an average of 78%); and
- Respondents in Stroud Border Areas were less likely to agree that they 'get value for money from SDC (49% compared to average of 61%).

2.2 Council spending options

Statutory services

Figure 2.2 details the views of residents on Council spending options in relation to those services that Central Government have identified as statutory services. The data has been ordered in terms of those services for which most residents felt spending should be maintained.

Figure 2.2



As illustrated for all but 4 service areas, a majority of respondents felt that spending should be maintained. The three main services that residents felt should have their spending maintained were:

- Refuse collection;
- Street cleaning; and
- Pollution control.

The following variations were noted:

Dog Warden and Animal welfare

Respondents in Stonehouse (67%) and Dursley (56%) more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to average of 46%). The comparative figure in Berkeley was 28%.

Food safety/Health and safety

Respondents in Stonehouse (88%) and Wotton-under-Edge (89%) more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 71%).

Housing benefit

Respondents in Stonehouse (61%) and Dursley (67%) more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 47%). The comparative figure in Wotton-under-Edge was 36%, where a lower proportion felt spending should be maintained.

Parking enforcement

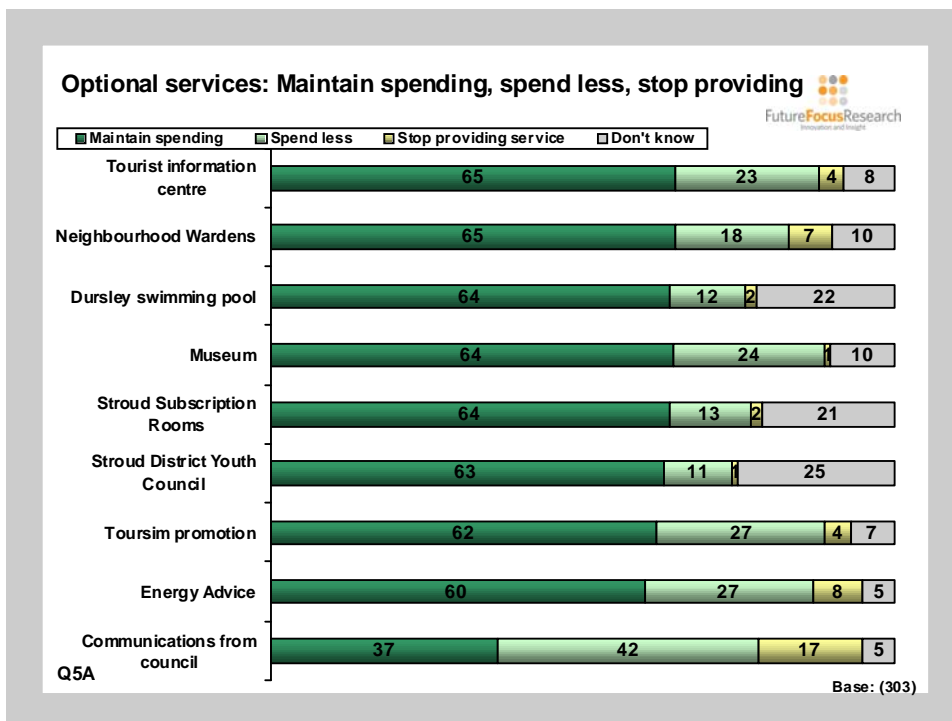
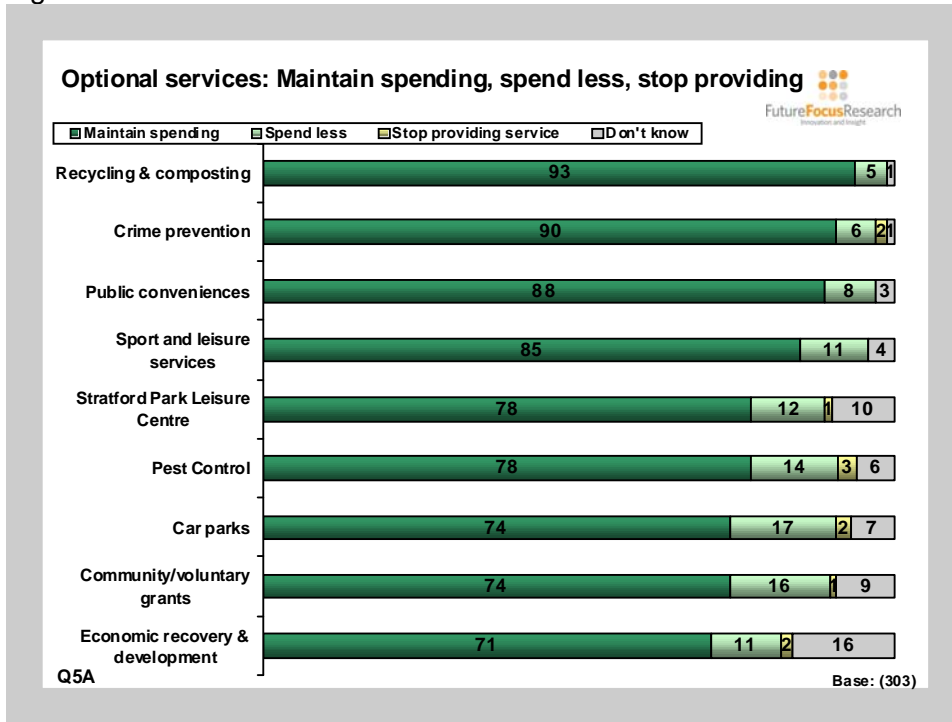
Respondents in Stonehouse (72%) and Dursley (70%) more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 48%). The comparative figures were lower in Stroud Central (30%) and Stroud Border Areas (33%).

Planning and building control

Respondents in Stonehouse (86%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 67%). The comparative figure in Stroud Border Areas was 56%.

Figure 2.3 examines the priority placed on those services whose provision by SDC is optional.

Figure 2.3



For all but one service area (communications from the Council) the majority of respondents felt that spending should be maintained.

For the following four service areas, in excess of 20% of respondents felt that there should be less spending:

- Tourism information centre (23% felt SDC should spend less);
- Tourism promotion (27%);
- Energy advice (27%); and
- Communications from council (42%).

Reasons for maintaining spending

A total of 300 respondents mentioned that spending should be maintained for at least one of the above optional services. The main general reasons given for indicating spending should be maintained are as follows:

- All council services/facilities are important: 47%
- Maintain spending as I'm happy with services provided: 14%
- Don't want to see reduction in quality: 6%
- Services are important: 6%
- Want value for money: 5%

Reasons for stopping the provision of services

A total of 82 (approximately a third of respondents) indicated that they felt the council should stop providing at least one service. The main general reasons given for feeling that services should be stopped were:

- Wasteful and unnecessary: 39%
- Could be privatised: 7%
- Service could be provided by another government organisation: 6%
- Residents could take responsibility themselves: 6%
- Don't understand what service is for: 6%
- Cuts have to be made somewhere: 5%

The following variations were noted according to the different areas:

Car Parks

Respondents in Dursley (88%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 74%). The comparative figure in Stroud Border Areas was 63%.

Communications from the Council

Respondents in Stonehouse (67%) and Dursley (56%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 37%). The comparative figures in Gloucester Border Areas and Stroud Central were 21% and 25% respectively.

Dursley Swimming Pool

Respondents in Dursley (93%) and Stonehouse (77%) were more likely to indicate spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 64%).

Economic recovery and development

Respondents in Stonehouse (91%) and Wotton-under-Edge (82%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 71%). The comparative figure in Stroud Border Areas was 58%.

Energy advice

Respondents in Stonehouse (88%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 60%). The comparative figures in Stroud Border Areas and Berkeley were 44% and 37% respectively.

Grants to voluntary and community groups

Respondents in Stonehouse (91%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 74%). The comparative figure in Stroud Border Areas was 63%.

Neighbourhood wardens

Respondents in Stonehouse (84%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 65%). The comparative figures in Gloucester Border Areas, Stroud Central and Stroud Border Areas were 50%, 52% and 51% respectively.

Stratford Park Leisure Centre

Respondents in Stonehouse (93%) and Dursley (88%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 78%).

Tourism promotion

Respondents in Stonehouse (86%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 62%). The comparative figure in Berkeley was 44%.

Tourist information centre

Respondents in Stonehouse (79%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 65%). The comparative figure in Berkeley was 47%.

Stroud District Youth Council

Respondents in Stonehouse (86%) were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained (compared to an average of 63%). The comparative figure in Berkeley was 49%.

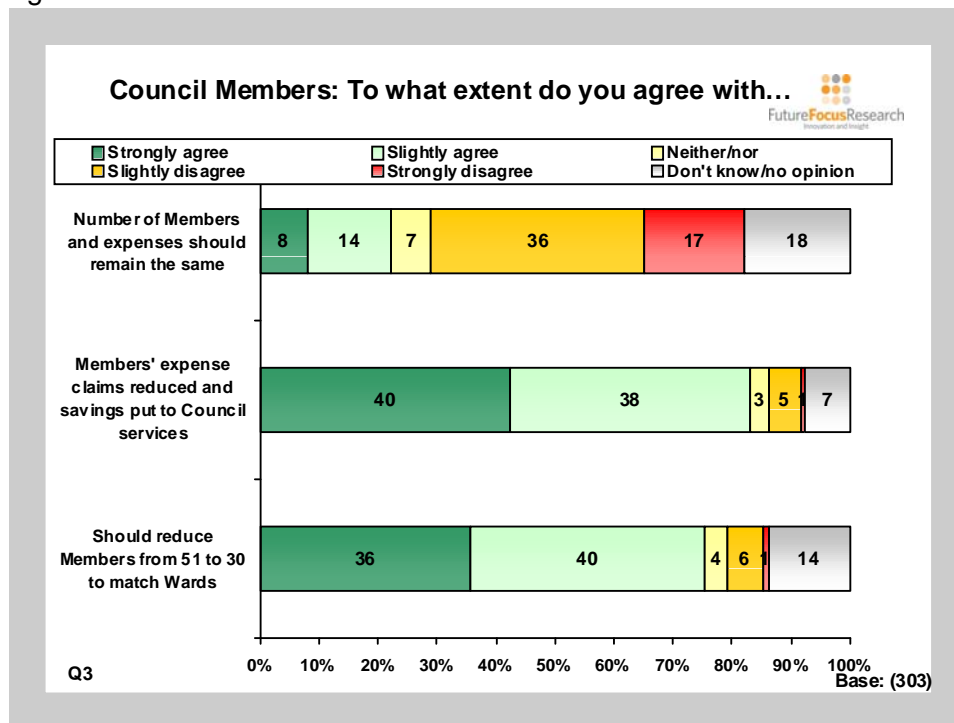
2.3 Members and Members' expenses

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

- I believe the number of Stroud District Council Members and their expenses should remain the same;
- I believe that the expenses claimed by Stroud District Council Members should be reduced and savings made used to improve/maintain other Council services; and
- I believe Stroud District Council should reduce the number of Members from 51 to 30 so it matches its number of Wards.

The findings are illustrated in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4



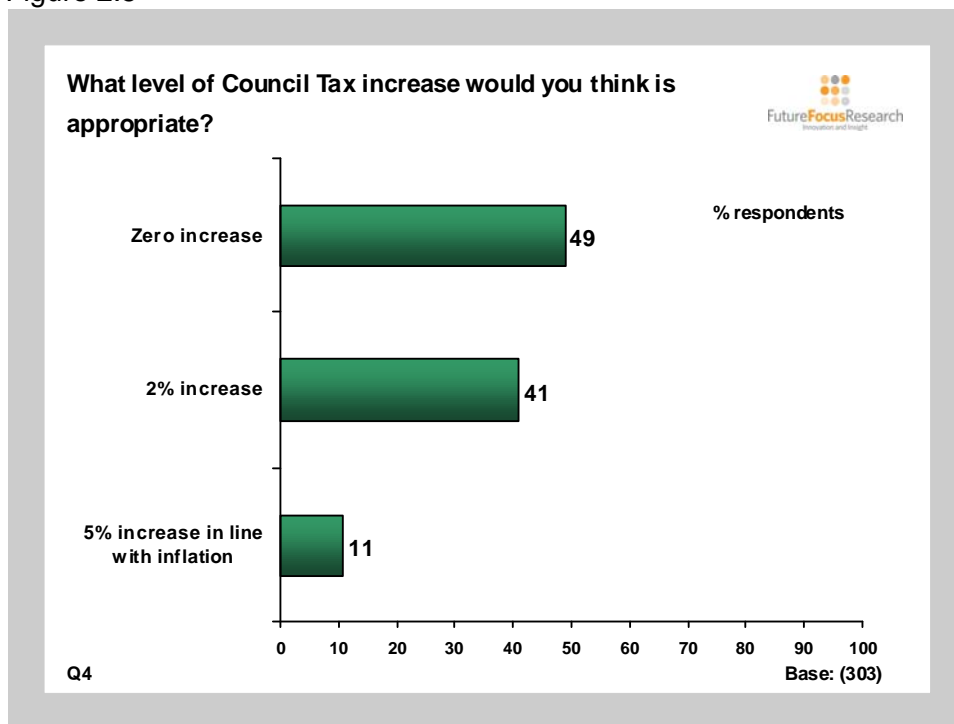
As illustrated a majority of respondents agreed that Members' expenses should be reduced with savings re-invested (78% net agreement) and that the number of Members should be reduced from 51 to 30 to reflect the number of Wards (76% net agreement). Only 22% of respondents agreed that the number of members and expenses should remain the same.

2.4 Council Tax options

Respondents were presented with the following three options for the District element of the Council Tax:

- Zero increase
- 2% increase (7p per week for a Band D property); and
- 5% increase (18p per week for a Band D property).

Figure 2.5



Just under half (49%) felt that there should be a zero increase in the District element of the Council Tax with a further 41% indicating that a 2% increase was appropriate.

The following variations were noted:

- Respondents in Stonehouse were more likely to indicate a 2% increase (61%) with 37% indicating a zero increase;
- Respondents in Wotton-under-Edge were more likely to indicate a 'zero increase' (61%) with 37% indicating a 2% increase;
- Females (54%) were more likely than males (39%) to indicate a 'zero increase'.

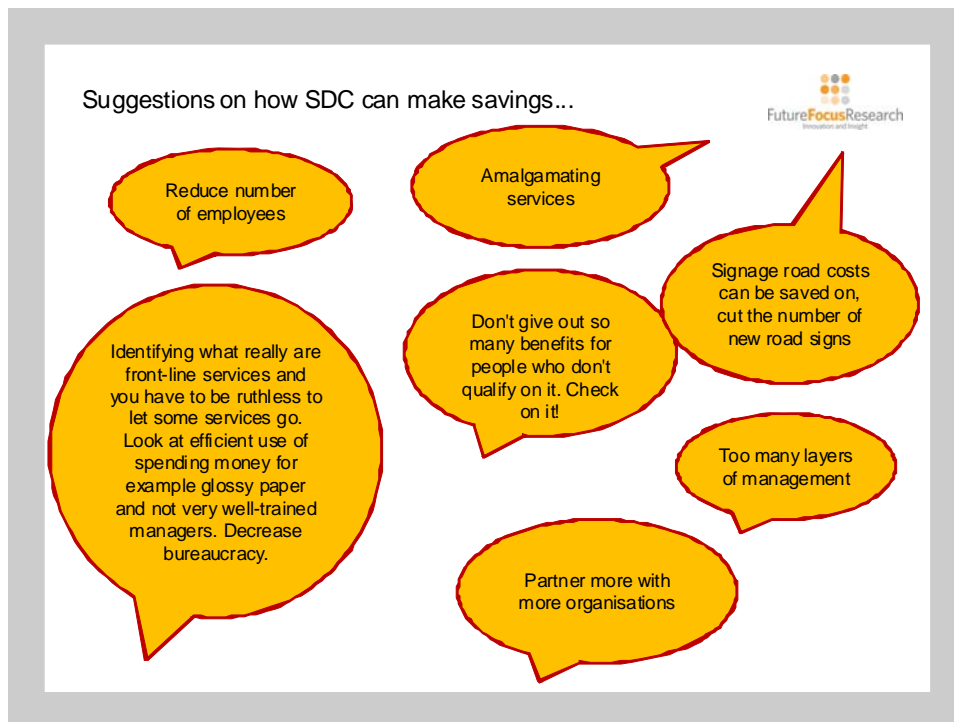
Improvements, making savings

All 303 respondents were given the opportunity to indicate how SDC could deliver improvements for residents and businesses without spending money or spending less money. Approximately two thirds responded 'don't know'. The following indicates some of the suggestions put forward:

- Staff cuts: 5%
- Focus more on key services: 5%
- Cut unnecessary services: 4%

The following provides a selection of respondents' suggestions:

Figure 2.6



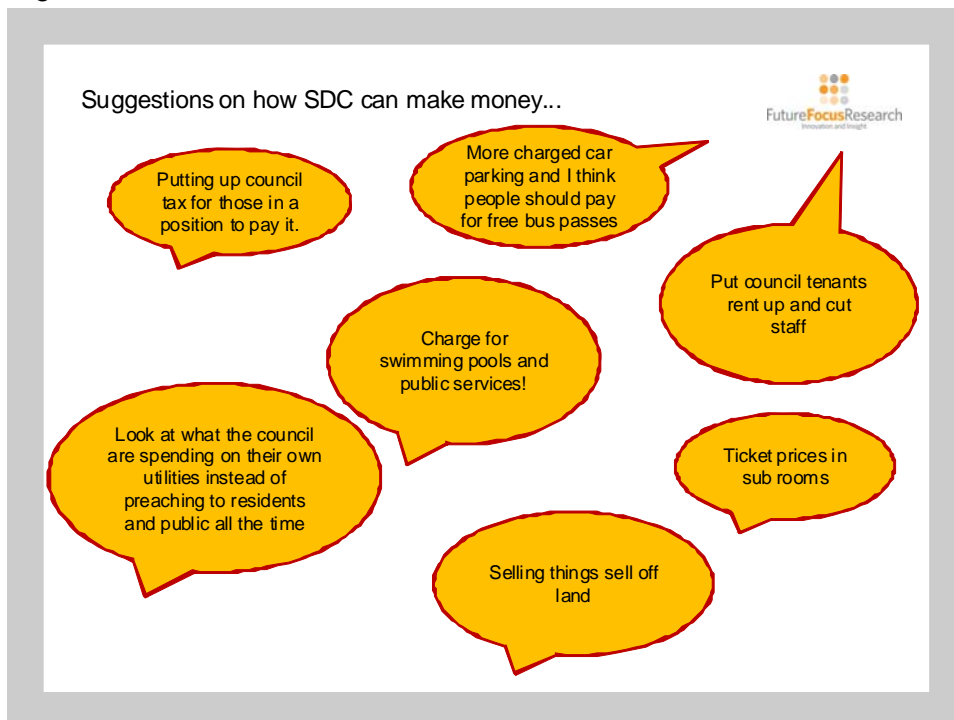
Improvements, making money

All 303 respondents were given the opportunity to indicate how SDC could generate income through delivering improved services for residents and businesses. Over three quarters (76%) did not suggest any initiatives (responding 'don't know'). The main suggestions put forward were:

- Reduce staff: 6%
- Businesses should sell assets: 3%

The following provides a selection of respondents' suggestions:

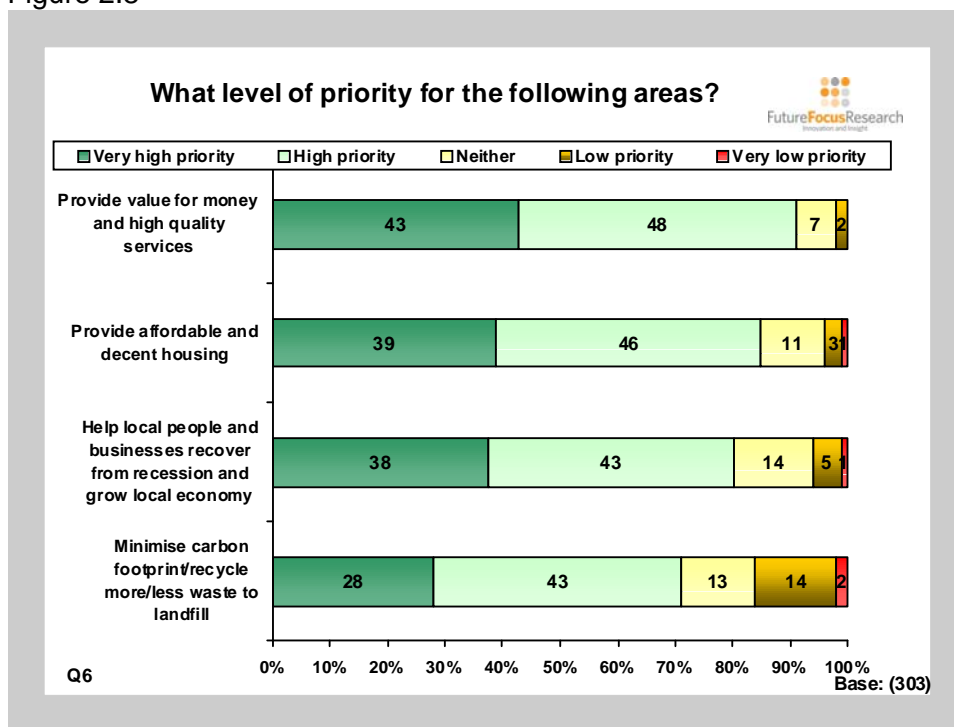
Figure 2.7



2.5 Priorities of local people

Figure 2.8 illustrates the extent to which respondents felt SDC should prioritise on certain areas.

Figure 2.8



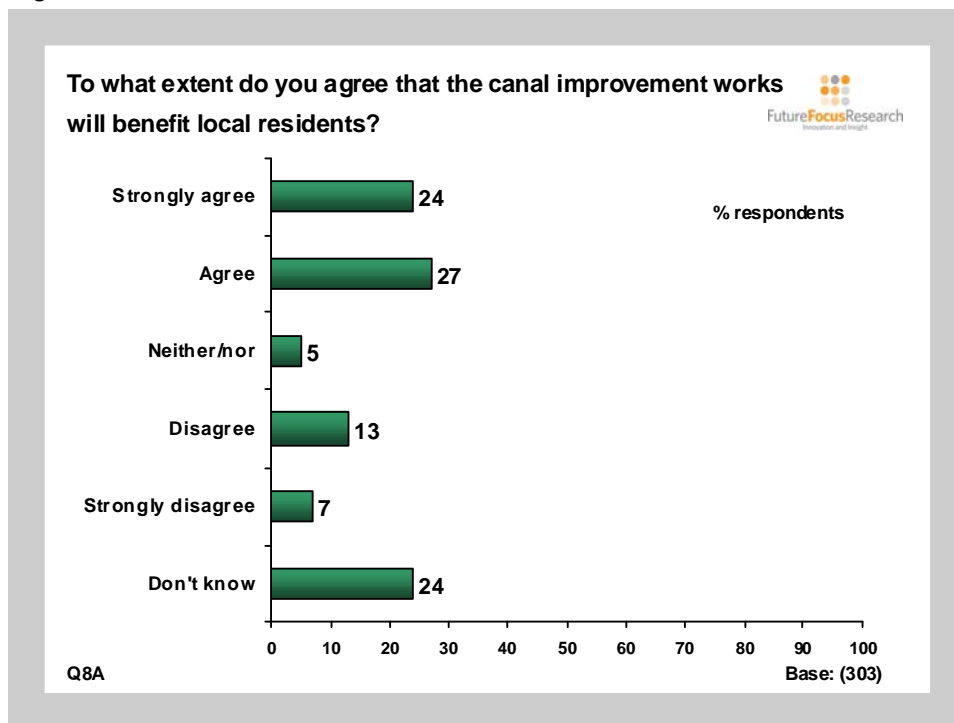
This demonstrates that the majority of respondents felt that all four areas were a priority (either very high or high). Minimising carbon footprint/recycle more/less waste to landfill was the only area assigned any noticeable degree of low priority.

2.6 Canal improvement works

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the canal improvement works would benefit local residents.

The findings are illustrated in Figure 2.9, illustrating that the majority (52%) of respondents agreed that the improvement works would benefit local residents.

Figure 2.9



The following variations were noted:

- Respondents in Stonehouse and Stroud Central were more likely to agree (77% and 68% net agreement respectively), whilst respondents in Stroud Border Areas were less likely to agree (40%);
- In Dursley, 30% of respondents disagreed compared to an average net disagreement of 20%.

Why do you agree?

A total of 157 respondents felt that the canal works would benefit local residents. These 157 respondents gave the following main reasons for their views:

- Attract tourists: 68%
- Nice place to walk: 23%

Why do you disagree?

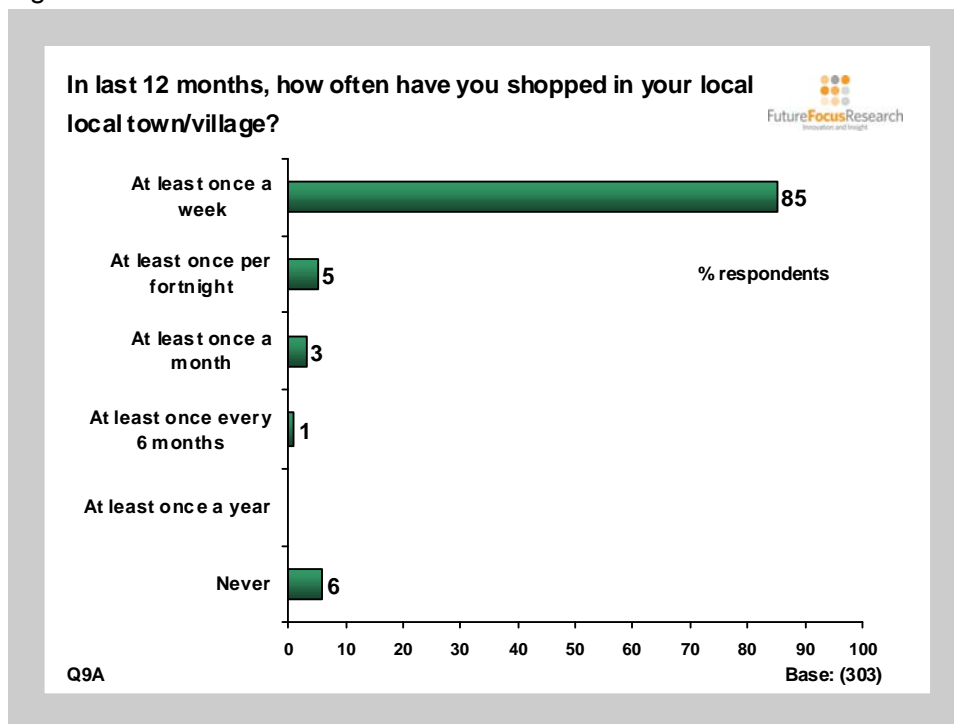
A total of 60 respondents disagreed that the canal works would benefit local residents. These 60 respondents gave the following main reasons for their views:

- Waste of money: (35%; 21 respondents)
- Can't see the benefit to locals: (13%; 8 respondents)
- Other services more important: (12%; 7 respondents)
- Won't make any difference: (7%; 4 respondents)
- Doesn't affect my area: (7%; 4 respondents)

2.7 Use of shops/local businesses

Of the 303 residents interviewed, 85% indicated that they had shopped in their local town/village at least once a week over the last 12 months. Only 6% indicated that they never shopped locally.

Figure 2.10



Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they have used local businesses (local as in District) for their goods and/or services. The following demonstrates the type of use made of local businesses over the last 12 months:

- Retail: 70%
- Restaurant/Catering/Banqueting: 58%
- Clothing: 47%
- Leisure: 42%
- Building construction/maintenance - repair/installations: 36%
- Domestic services - cleaning/ironing/gardening: 33%
- Transport: 29%
- Stationary/Office supplies: 21%
- Financial services/Insurance: 19%
- Have not used any local businesses: 15%
- IT software/hardware/IT support: 14%
- Legal services: 12%
- Telecommunications: 9%
- Printing: 6%
- Other: 3%

Energy consumption initiatives

Of the 303 residents interviewed, 75% indicated that they or their landlord had made improvements/introduced initiatives to their home to help reduce energy consumption. Of these 227 respondents, the type of improvements or initiatives introduced was as follows:

- Insulation - loft, cavity: 89%
- Double glazing: 88%
- Turning appliances off: 78%
- Energy efficient appliances: 73%
- More efficient use of existing heating/cooling/ventilation system (e.g. close windows, use heating only when necessary): 70%
- Internal or external insulation: 49%
- Solar panels: 3%

2.8 Comparisons with 2010

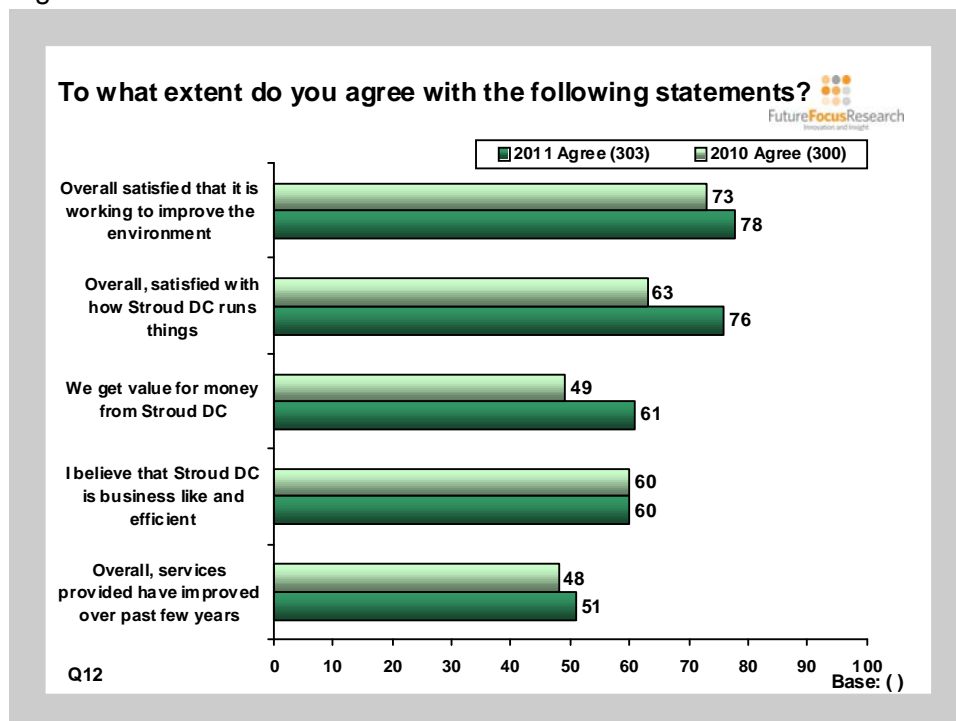
This section examines comparisons with respondent answers given in 2010. Please note there were only selected questions that were the same as in 2011 and therefore only limited comparisons can be made.

Council performance

Figure 2.11 illustrates that respondents in 2011 were more likely to agree with the statements. In particular, respondents in 2011 were more likely to agree that:

- Overall, they were satisfied with how Stroud DC runs things; and
- We get value for money from Stroud DC.

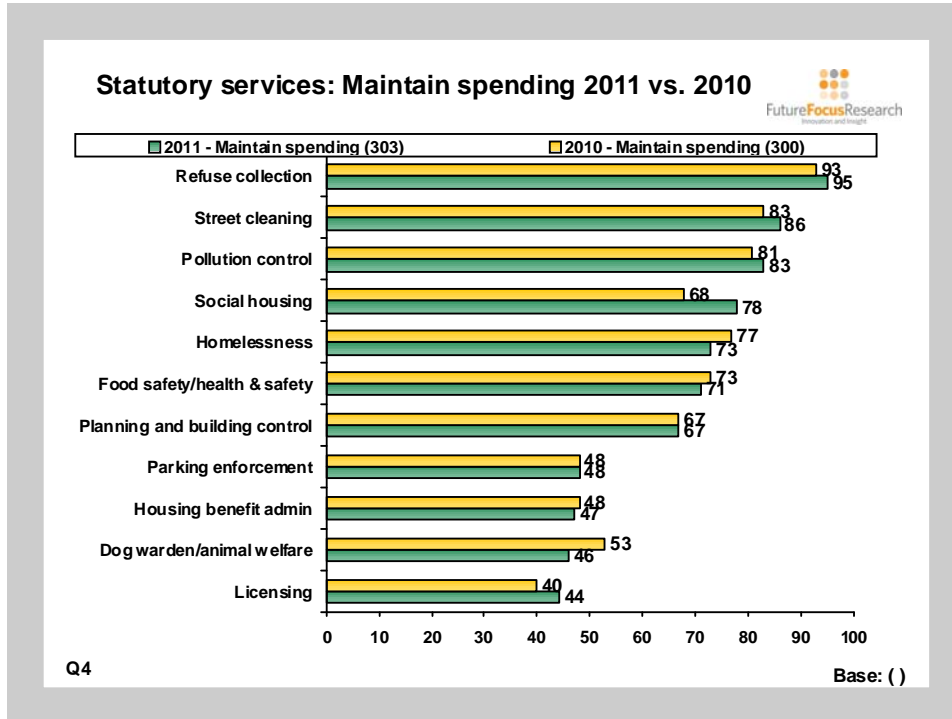
Figure 2.11



Statutory services

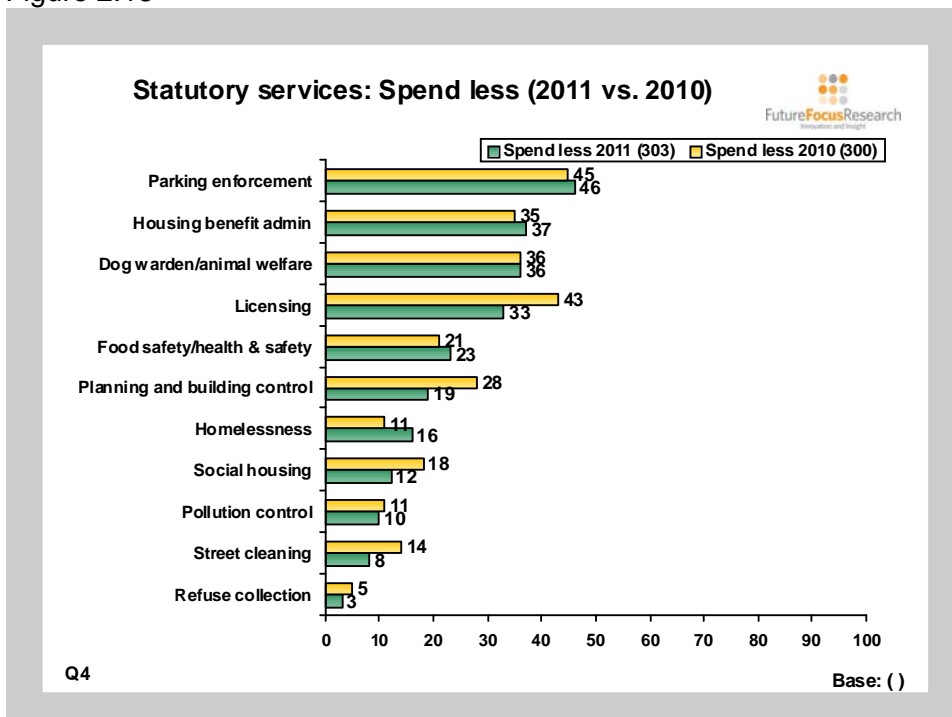
The order in which services were given priority in terms of maintaining spending was similar to 2010. In 2011, a higher proportion of respondents felt that spending should be maintained in social housing compared to 2010.

Figure 2.12



In terms of those services in which respondents felt spending should be reduced, Figure 2.13 illustrates that there were again similarities between 2010 and 2011. However, in 2010 a higher proportion of respondents felt that spending should be reduced on 'licensing' and 'planning and building control' compared to 2011.

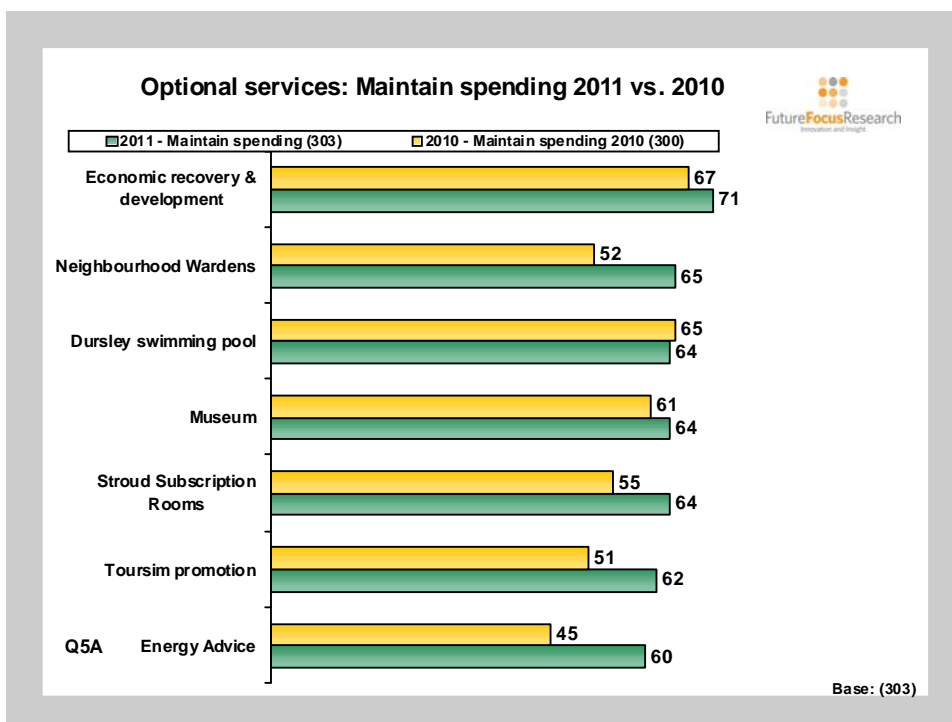
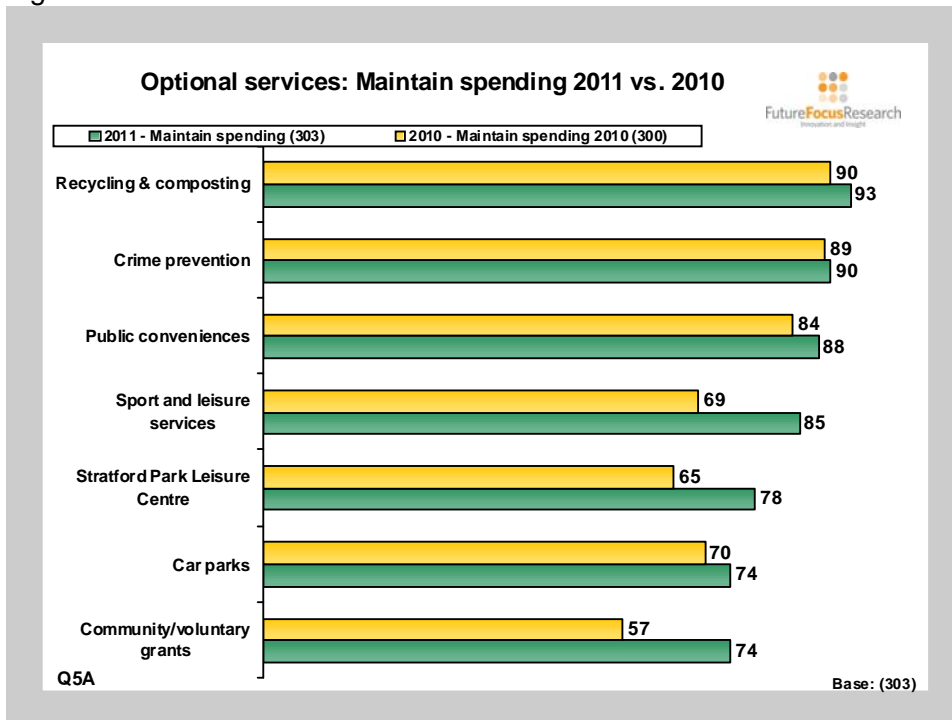
Figure 2.13



Optional services

There were again consistencies between 2010 and 2011. However, for all service areas (apart from Dursley swimming pool) a higher proportion of respondents felt spending should be maintained in 2011 compared to 2010. In particular, in 2011 a higher proportion of respondents, compared to 2010, felt spending should be maintained in 'Community voluntary grants', 'Sport and leisure services', 'Stratford Park Leisure Centre', 'Neighbourhood Wardens', 'Tourism promotion' and 'Energy Advice'.

Figure 2.14

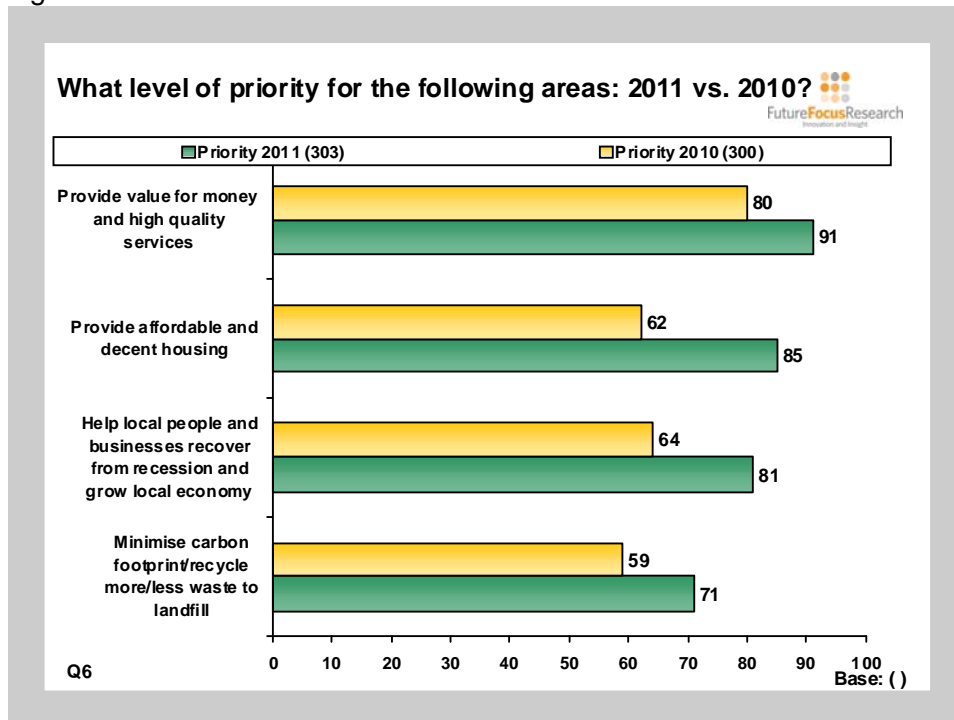


Priorities

As illustrated in Figure 2.15 respondents were more likely to identify each of the areas as priority compared to 2010. However, as can be seen there were similarities as follows:

- Providing value for money and high quality services was deemed the highest priority in both 2011 and 2010; and
- Minimising carbon footprint/recycle more/less waste to landfill was considered the lowest priority in both 2011 and 2010.

Figure 2.15



3. Business Survey

This section examines the views and opinions of the businesses surveyed, covering:

- Overall opinions of SDC
- Council spending options
- Members and Members' expenses
- Council Tax options
- Priorities of local people
- Canal improvements
- Procurement of goods and services
- Employment of young people
- Comparisons with 2010

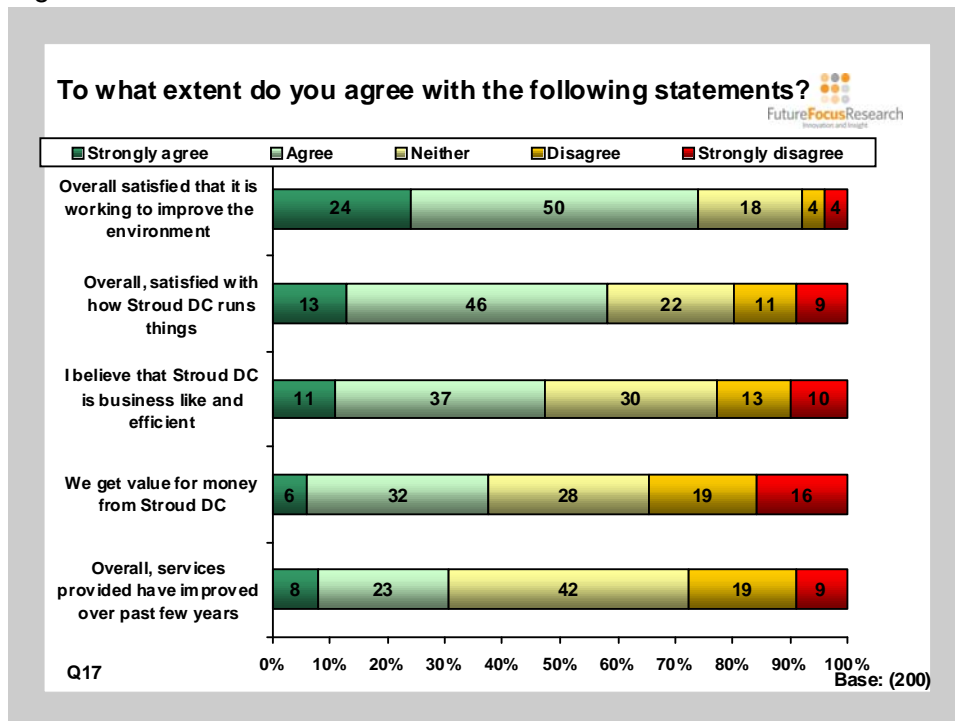
In addition to examining the results at a 'total' level, the analysis looked to establish any variations according to company size: small companies (10 employees or less) and large companies (10+ employees). Where differences were noted, these are highlighted in the report.

3.1 Overall opinions on Stroud DC

Figure 3.1 examines the extent to which respondents agree with the following five statements:

- I believe that Stroud District Council is business like and efficient
- Overall, I am satisfied with the way Stroud District Council runs things
- Overall, the services provided by Stroud District Council have improved over the past few years
- I think that we get value for money from Stroud District Council
- Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment

Figure 3.1



As illustrated the majority of respondents agreed that they were satisfied that SDC was working to improve the environment (74% net agreement) and that they were satisfied with the way SDC runs things (59% net agreement). The highest levels of disagreement were in terms of ‘value for money’ and ‘services have improved over the past few years’.

In terms of business size the following difference was noted:

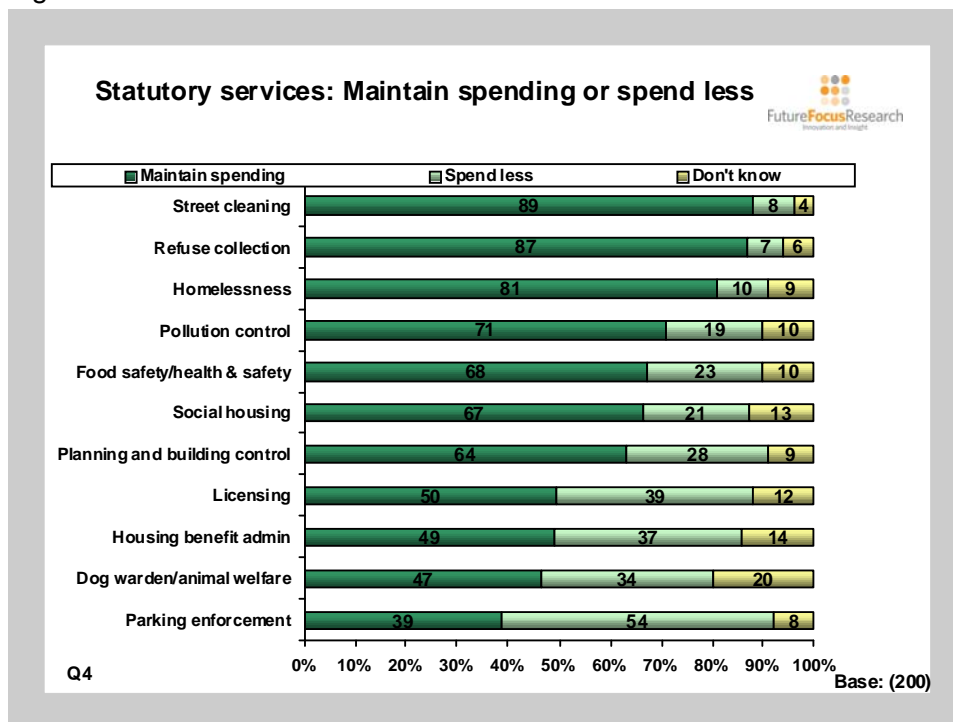
- Small companies were less likely to agree that SDC is business like and efficient (45% agreement) compared to 54% of larger companies.

3.2 Council spending options

Statutory services

Figure 3.2 details the views of businesses on SDC spending options in relation to those services that Central Government have identified as statutory services. The data has been ordered in terms of those services for which most businesses felt spending should be maintained.

Figure 3.2



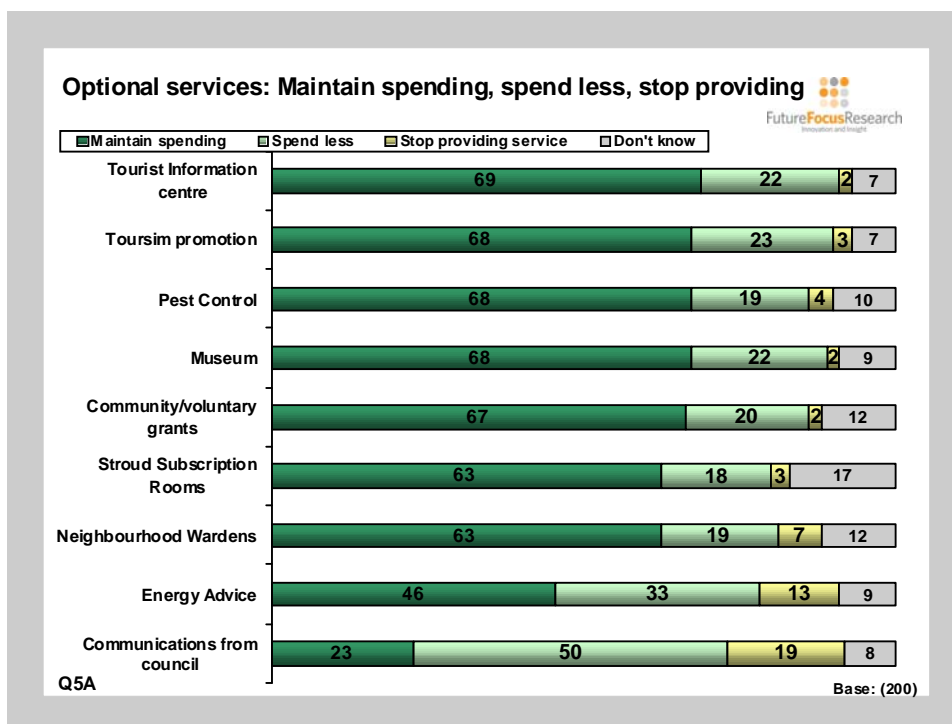
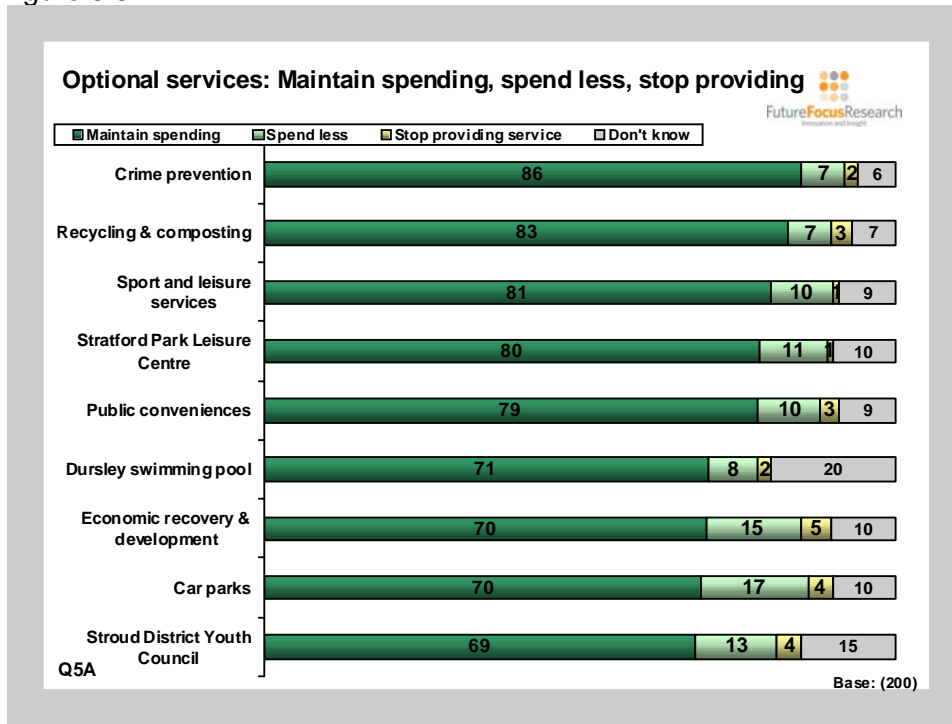
As illustrated for all but four service areas, a majority of respondents felt that spending should be maintained. The three main services that businesses felt should have their spending maintained were:

- Street cleaning;
- Refuse collection; and
- Homelessness.

Further analysis indicated that small companies were less likely to indicate that spending should be maintained on Food Safety and Health and Safety (64%) compared to 75% of larger companies.

Figure 3.3 examines the priority placed on those services whose provision by SDC is optional.

Figure 3.3



Again, for all but two service areas (Energy advice and communications from SDC) the majority of respondents felt that spending should be maintained.

In terms of Energy advice and communications from SDC, these were the only two service areas where in excess of 10% of respondents felt the council should stop providing the service (13% and 19% respectively).

The following variations were noted:

- Small companies were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained on car parks (76%) compared to 56% of larger companies.
- Small companies were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained on 'economic recovery and development (73%) compared to 63% of larger companies.
- Small companies were more likely to indicate that spending should be maintained on 'tourism promotion' (71%) and Tourist Information Centre (73%) compared to 58% and 60% respectively of larger companies.

Reasons for maintaining spending

All 200 respondents mentioned that spending should be maintained for at least one of the above optional services. The main reasons given are summarised as follows:

- Services needed - 44%
- Benefit community - 16%
- Maintain standards - 10%
- Prioritize youth and elderly - 6%
- Government investment needed to stimulate local economy - 3%
- Too many cuts made already - 3%

Reasons for stopping the provision of services

A total of 66 respondents mentioned that SDC should stop providing at least one service. The main general reasons given for stopping services are summarised as follows:

- Unnecessary services – (23%; 15 respondents)
- Cut wasteful programs – (21%; 14 respondents)
- Services redundant, can be done by residents themselves – (11%; 7 respondents)
- Should be done privately by volunteers – (8%; 5 respondents)
- No benefit to the community – (8%; 5 respondents)
- Not familiar with services – (8%; 5 respondents)
- Police can do jobs of wardens – (5%; 3 respondents)

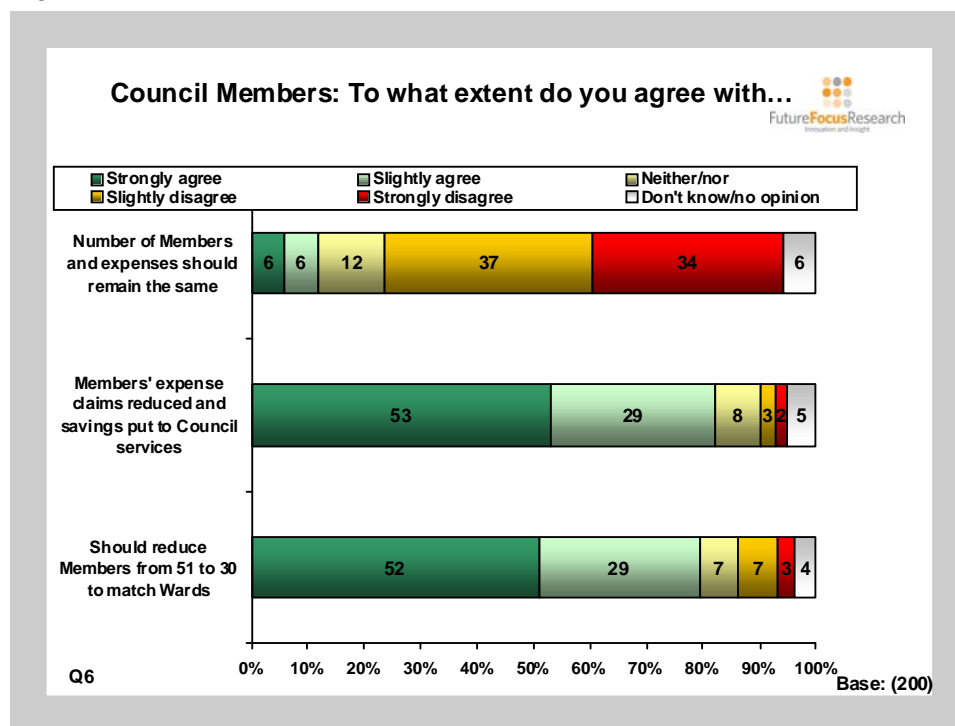
3.3 Members and Members' expenses

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to the following statements:

- I believe the number of Stroud District Council Members and their expenses should remain the same;
- I believe that the expenses claimed by Stroud District Council Members should be reduced and savings made used to improve/maintain other Council services; and
- I believe Stroud District Council should reduce the number of Members from 51 to 30 so it matches its number of Wards.

The findings are illustrated in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4



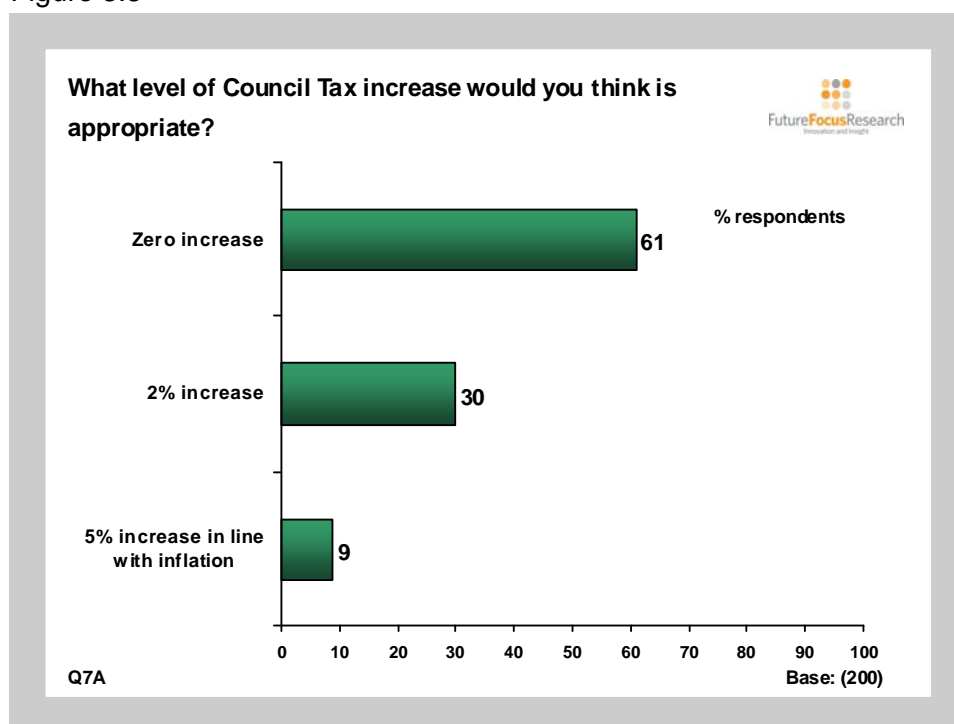
As illustrated a majority of respondents agreed that Members' expenses should be reduced with savings re-invested and that the number of Members should be reduced from 51 to 30 to reflect the number of Wards. Only 12% of respondents agreed that the number of Members and expenses should remain the same.

3.4 Council Tax options

Respondents were presented with the following three options for the District element of the Council Tax:

- Zero increase
- 2% increase (7p per week for a Band D property); and
- 5% increase (18p per week for a Band D property).

Figure 3.5



The majority of respondents (61%) felt that there should a zero increase in the District element of the Council Tax.

Improvements, making savings

All 200 respondents were given the opportunity to indicate how SDC could deliver improvements for residents and businesses without spending money or spending less money. Approximately half (49%) did not come up with a suggestion (responding 'don't know'). The following summarises the main responses:

- Savings on admin – 9%
- Think like an entrepreneur – 7%
- Save on councillors/expenses – 6%
- Improve roads – 5%

Improvements, making money

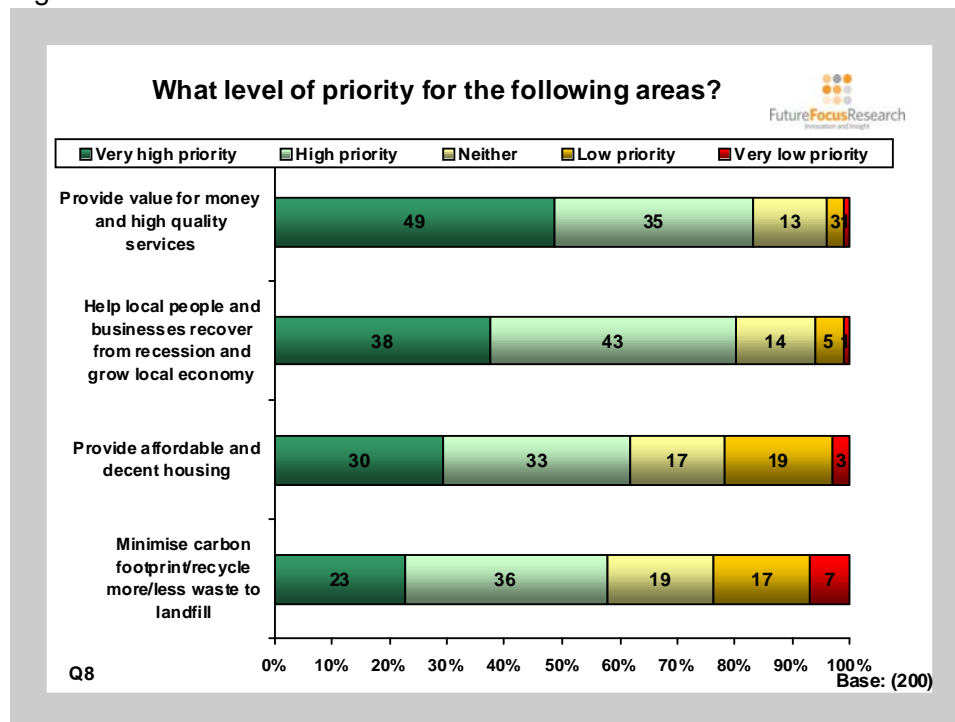
All 200 respondents were given the opportunity to indicate how SDC could generate income through delivering improved services for residents and businesses. Two thirds (66%) of respondents did not come up with a suggestion (responding 'don't know'). The following summarises the main responses:

- Don't waste money – 11%
- Fundraise – 5%
- Increase Tax – 4%

3.5 Priorities of local people

Figure 3.6 illustrates the extent to which respondents felt SDC should prioritise on certain areas.

Figure 3.6



This demonstrates that the majority of respondents felt that all four areas were a priority (either very high or high). However, it was clear that the two main priorities were perceived to be:

- Providing value for money and high quality services; and
- Helping local people and business recover from the recession and grow local economy.

The following variations were noted:

- Small companies were more likely to feel that 'providing affordable and decent housing' was a high priority (66% net high priority) compared to 51% of larger companies.

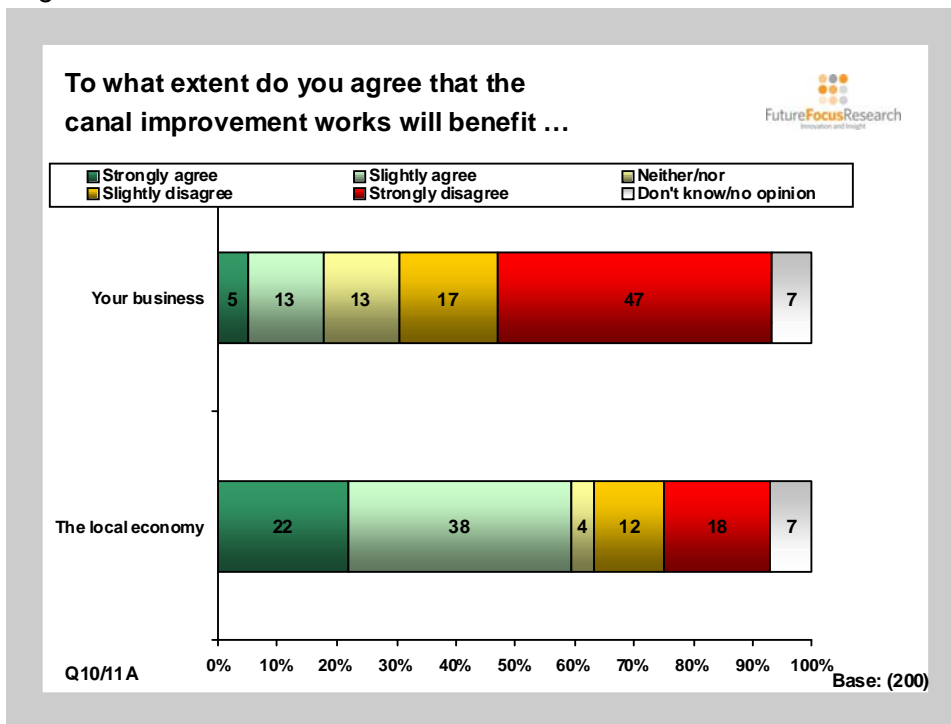
3.6 Canal improvement works

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to the following two statements:

- The improvement works will benefit the economy of Stroud District; and
- The improvement works will benefit your business.

The findings are illustrated in Figure 3.7, illustrating that the majority (60%) of respondents agreed that the improvement works would benefit the local economy, whilst only 18% felt that the works would benefit their business, largely owing to their perception that it was not relevant for their business. Smaller companies were more likely to agree that it would benefit the local economy (63%) compared to 51% of larger companies.

Figure 3.7



How will it benefit your business?

A total of 36 respondents felt that the canal works would benefit their business. The following main reasons were given:

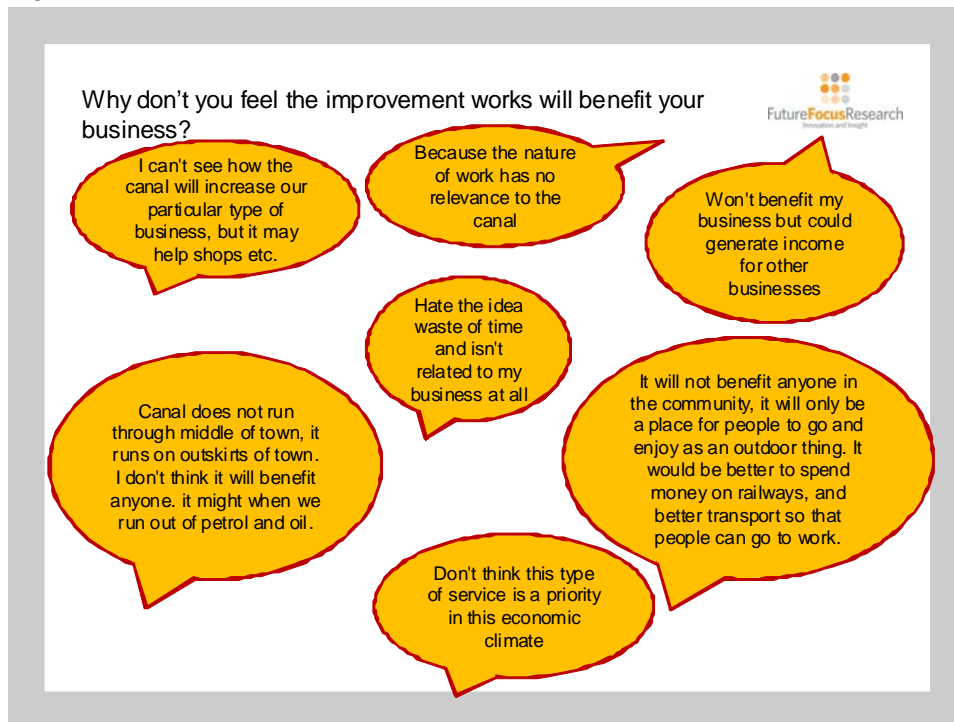
- More tourism – 14 respondents
- Creates business opportunities – 12 respondents
- May have delayed impact – 4 respondents
- Good for wildlife – 1 respondent

Why don't you feel the works will benefit your business?

A total of 127 respondents felt that the canal works would not benefit their business. The main reason given (over half of respondents) was that it was not relevant to their type of business.

Figure 3.8 gives an insight into the range of comments received.

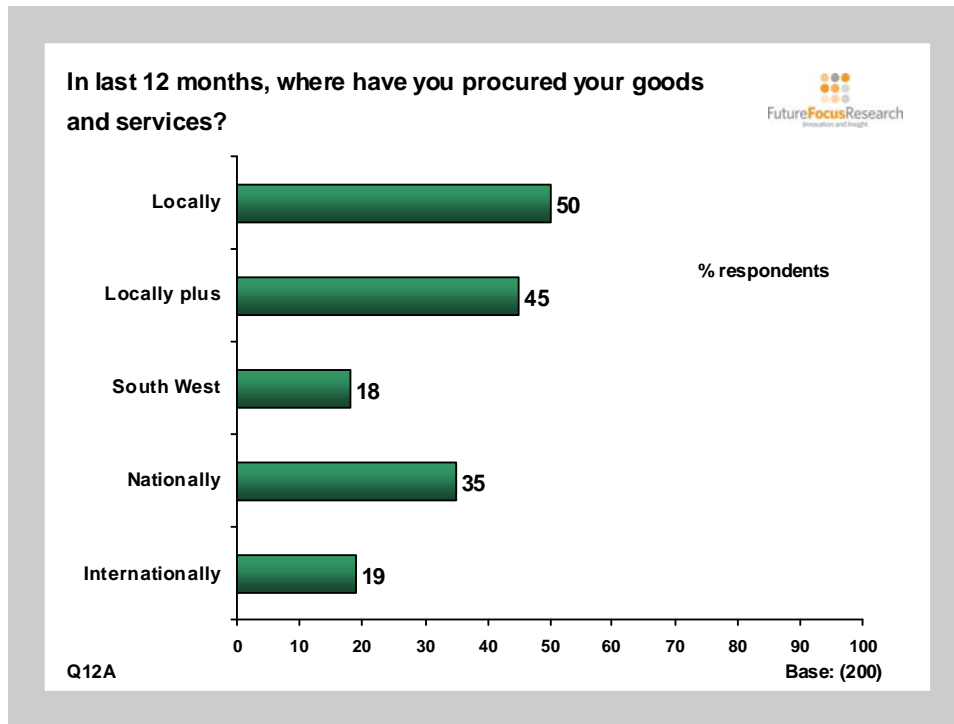
Figure 3.8



3.7 Procurement of goods and services

Of the 200 businesses interviewed, 50% (99 respondents) indicated that they procured their goods and services locally (within the Stroud district).

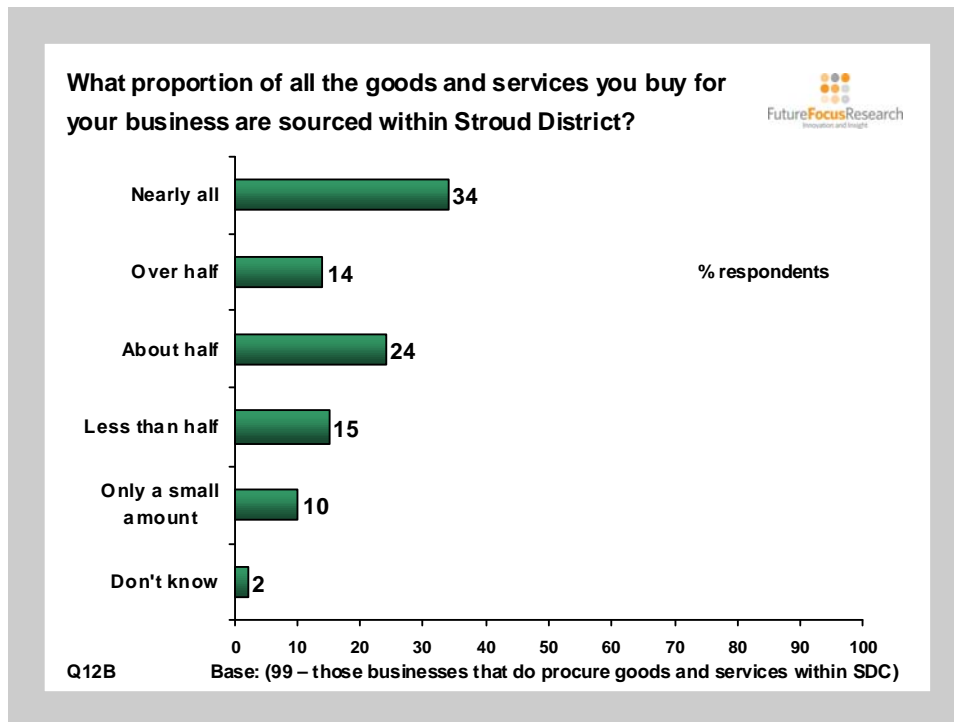
Figure 3.9



Small companies were more likely to buy their goods and services locally compared to larger companies.

As indicated, a total of 99 respondents indicated that they did use locally procured goods/services. Figure 3.10 examines the proportion, (out of all goods and services), that are procured locally.

Figure 3.10



Of those 99 businesses interviewed that did source goods/services locally, the following types were mentioned:

- Stationary/Office supplies – 28%
- Printing - 20%
- Transport – 18%
- Building construction/maintenance - repair/installations – 18%
- Financial services/Insurance – 16%
- Marketing/Advertising/Business management – 16%
- Cleaning – 16%
- Catering/banqueting/food related – 15%
- Electricity, Gas and Water Supply – 14%
- IT software/hardware/IT support – 14%
- Legal services – 10%
- Manufacturing – 10%
- Staff training/Education – 10%
- Telecommunications – 8%
- Employment Agencies – 5%
- Conference/meeting venues – 3%

Energy consumption initiatives

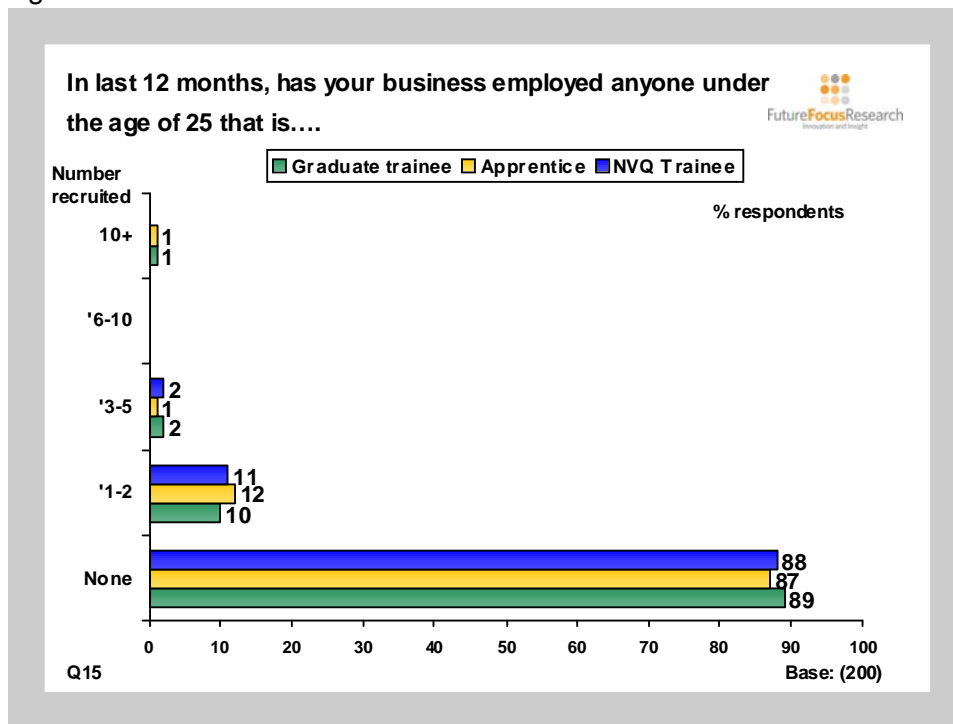
Of the 200 businesses interviewed, 52% (48% of small companies and 61% of larger companies) indicated that they or their landlord had made improvements/introduced initiatives to their business premises to help reduce energy consumption. Of these 103 respondents, the types of improvements or initiatives were as follows:

- Energy efficient appliances/equipment including IT & lighting: 39%
- Workplace initiatives (e.g. turning off PC equipment when not in use): 35%
- More efficient use of existing heating/cooling/ventilation system (e.g. close windows, use air conditioning only when necessary): 35%
- Insulation - loft, cavity: 12%
- Double glazing: 12%
- Internal or external insulation: 11%
- Promoting sustainable travel to work/meetings: 4%
- Solar panels: 3%
- Web conferencing/telephone to limit need to travel: 2%

3.8 Employment of young people

Figures 3.11 and 3.12 illustrate the recent and projected recruitment intentions of the surveyed businesses for employees under the age of 25.

Figure 3.11

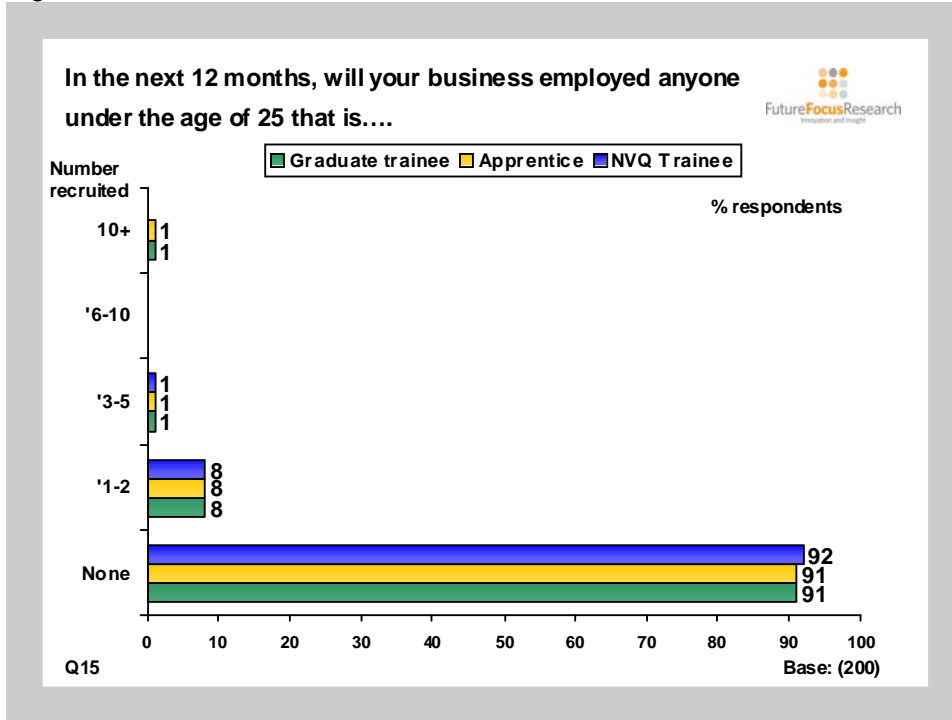


As outlined, in the last 12 months the majority of businesses have not recruited anyone under the age of 25 is a graduate trainee, apprentice or NVQ trainee. However, approximately 10% of those interviewed had employed between 1 and 2 individuals under the age of 25 in all three trainee classifications.

Small companies were less likely than larger companies to have recently employed such individuals.

Figure 3.12 illustrates the recruitment intentions for the next 12 months, demonstrating a similar pattern although a slightly higher proportion of businesses not intending to recruit individuals in the three categories identified.

Figure 3.12



Small companies were less likely than larger companies to have plans for recruitment of such young individuals over the coming 12 month period.

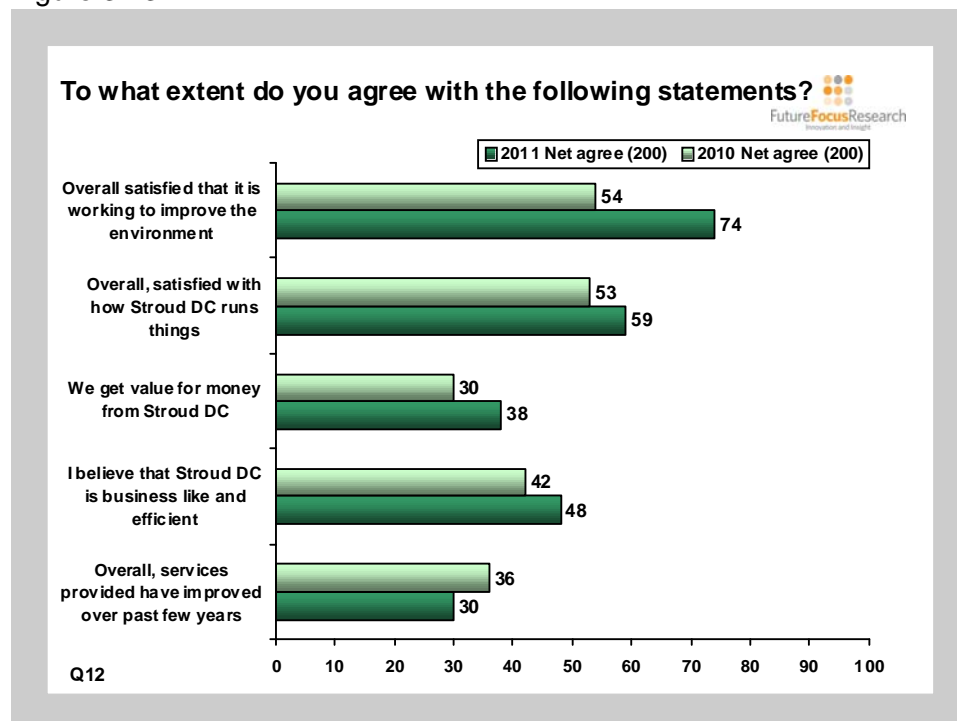
3.9 Comparisons with 2010

This section examines comparisons with answers given in 2010. Please note there were only selected questions that were the same as in 2011 and therefore only limited comparisons can be made.

Council performance

With the exception of 'services have improved over the past few years' respondents in 2011 were more likely to agree with each of the statements. In particular, respondents in 2011 were much more likely to agree that they were satisfied that SDC was working to improve the environment.

Figure 3.13



Local priorities

Figure 3.14

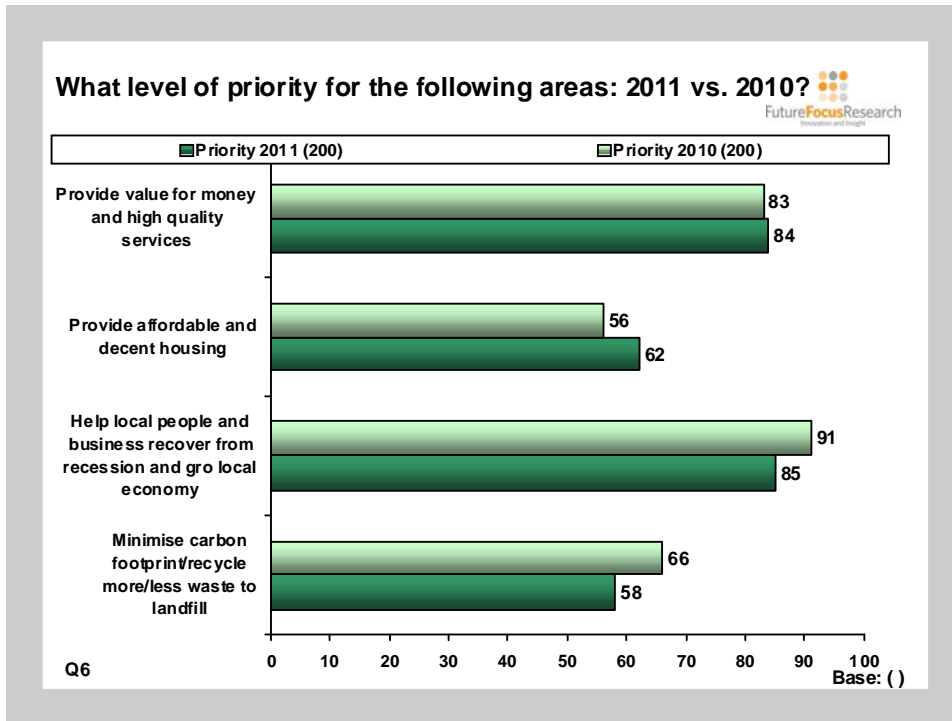


Figure 3.12 illustrates that there were similarities between the amount of priority that businesses assigned to each of the competing priorities.

4. Summary

This section provides an overview of the findings of this survey:

4.1 Resident Survey

- The three main statutory services that residents felt should have their spending maintained were: refuse collection; street cleaning and pollution control.
- For all but one 'optional' services (communications from the council) the majority of respondents felt that spending should be maintained.
- In four service areas (tourism information centre, tourism promotion, energy advice, and communications from the council) in excess of 20% of respondents felt there should be less spending.
- Majority of respondents agreed that members' expenses should be reduced (and savings re-invested) and that the number should be reduced from 51 to 30 to reflect the number of wards.
- Just under half the respondents (49%) felt there should be a zero increase in the District element of the council tax and a further 41% felt that a 2% increase was appropriate.
- All four 'priority' areas put to respondents were considered to be a priority (either very high or high). Out of the 4 areas, the issue of minimising carbon footprint/recycle more/less waste to landfill was assigned the lowest priority.
- 52% of respondents agreed that the canal improvement works would benefit local residents. The main reason given was that it would attract tourists.
- 85% of respondents had shopped at least once per week in their local town/village over the last 12 months;
- 75% of respondents indicated that they or their landlord had made improvements/introduced initiatives to their home to help reduce energy consumption.
- Although a majority of respondents agreed 5 statements regarding the performance of Stroud DC, there were some differences between the 5 statements as follows:
 - Higher proportion *agreed* that 'SDC was working to improve the environment' and 'overall way in which SDC runs things'.
 - However, the highest levels of *disagreement* were in terms of 'value for money' and 'services have improved over the past few years'.

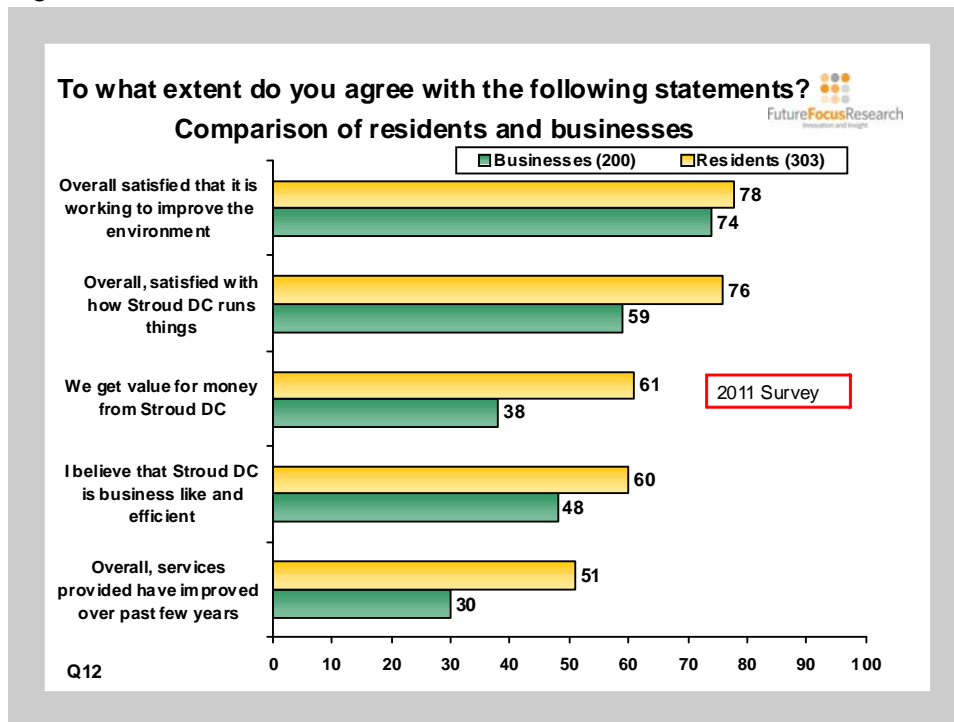
4.2 Business Survey

- The three main statutory services that businesses felt should have their spending maintained were: street cleaning; refuse collection; and homelessness.
- For all but two 'optional' services (communications from the Council and energy advice) the majority of respondents felt that spending should be maintained.
- In two service areas (communications from the Council and energy advice) in excess of 10% of respondents felt SDC should stop providing the service.
- Majority of respondents agreed that Members' expenses should be reduced (and savings re-invested) and that the number should be reduced from 51 to 30 to reflect the number of Wards.
- 61% of respondents felt there should be a zero increase in the District element of the Council Tax and a further 30% felt that a 2% increase was appropriate.
- All four 'priority' areas put to respondents were considered to be a priority (either very high or high). The main priorities were 'providing value for money and high quality services' and 'helping local people and businesses recover from the recession and grow local economy'.
- 60% of respondents agreed that the canal improvement works would benefit the local economy; whilst just 18% (reflecting nature/location of the business) felt it would benefit their business.
- 50% of respondents had procured goods/services locally (within Stroud District) in the last 12 months
- 52% of respondents indicated that they or their landlord had made improvements/introduced initiatives to their business premises to help reduce energy consumption.
- The majority of respondents had not employed anyone under the age of 25 in the last 12 months nor did they have such plans for the following 12 months
- The majority of respondents agreed that 'SDC was working to improve the environment' and 'overall way in which SDC runs things'.
- However, the highest levels of disagreement were in terms of 'value for money' and 'services have improved over the past few years'.

4.3 Comparative views of residents and businesses

The following chart provides a comparison of the extent to which residents and businesses agree with how SDC is performing (findings from the 2011 survey).

Figure 4.1



This demonstrates that residents were more likely to perceive SDC to be performing well compared to businesses. The two most notable differences were in terms of ‘value for money’ and ‘improvements over the past few years’.

Appendix A Local area postcodes

| Ref | Area Name | Postcodes |
|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Gloucester Border areas | GL2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.4, 4.0, 4.8 |
| 2. | Stroud Central | GL5.1, to GL5.5 |
| 3. | Stroud Border Areas | GL6.0 to GL6.9 GL7.6 |
| 4. | Stonehouse | GL10.2, 10.3 |
| 5. | Dursley | GL11.4 to GL11.6 |
| 6. | Wotton-Under-Edge | GL12.7, 12.8 |
| 7. | Berkeley | GL13.9 |