

**Stroud District Council
Budget Consultation 2008**

Report of Research

November 2008

Report prepared for:

**Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 4UB**



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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Again this year, Stroud District Council invited The Research Box to undertake research relating to the Council's budget preparations, following the research studies undertaken in 2004-2007. The aim was to provide an understanding of the community's view of the issues associated with the development of the Council's Budget for 2009/10 and to help the Authority decide on the level of Council Tax increase for the forthcoming year.

This report contains the principal findings arising from this consultation. The consultation was undertaken with a representative random selection of residents of the District by means of 309 telephone interviews and two discussion workshops.

1.2 Summary of Key Findings

This year, support for Stroud District Council and the services that it delivers is still quite positive, but there are signs of a slight decrease in positive attitudes since 2007. This year, 62% of residents said that they were happy with the way the Council runs things (down from 69%), and 54% believed the Council to be businesslike and efficient (down from 60% last year). Less than half (43%) agreed that services had improved over the past few years (down from 51% in 2007). Over a quarter (27%) disagreed that they get good value for money from SDC.

For almost all the Council's services, the balance of residents' opinions continues to rate services as being good or very good. As was the case last year, refuse-collection, and waste & recycling remain the Council's star services, but there are signs of a small year-on-year downturn in positive attitudes here. This year, 68% gave recycling and composting a good/very good score; the score for refuse collection was 80%. It is also interesting to note that concessionary fares saw an increase in perceived performance this year, with half of all respondents agreeing that this service was good or very good.

There has been a downturn in positive satisfaction for almost all Council services, with the exception of concessionary fares, energy advice and grants to voluntary groups – these saw increases in satisfaction. All other areas remained the same or had lower levels of satisfaction than last year. The poorest-performing services are the same as they were last year: public conveniences, town-centre improvements, neighbourhood wardens and car parks. Public conveniences showed a slight worsening in satisfaction levels, but car parks showed an improvement on last year.

This year, residents wanted to see more money spent to improve services in three areas (crime prevention, public conveniences and town centre improvements). On most other aspects, the majority of opinion continues to be in favour of keeping spending constant. Respondents would like to see less spent in four areas – parking enforcement, food and health & safety, licensing, and planning & building control.



Of the three Council Tax increase options that were examined in the research (a 0%, 3% or 5% increase in the District's part), the middle option was favoured by the largest group (47%, similar to last year when it was 48%) – and the number of people preferring a 5% increase in order to get service improvements remained fairly consistent as well (23% in 2007 and 21% in 2008). The average preferred increase, calculated from these figures, works out at 2.6% this year (again similar to last year – when it was 2.5%).

The research examined the Council's five Corporate Delivery Plan priority areas. The areas given highest priority in the survey were 'sending a little waste to landfill as possible' (85% a high or very high priority) and 'helping local people to find local solutions to long terms problems' (78%). The area that had the lowest level of priority was 'creating public spaces and buildings which perceived to be cared for, clean, green and safe' (58%).

The survey looked at a number of indicators of well being. On the subject of the area as a place to live, there were very high levels of satisfaction (90% said they were fairly or very satisfied), slightly down from 2007 (93%). Nearly two-thirds (61%) said that they were satisfied that the District Council was working to make the area as a better place to live, again this was down slightly on 2007 figures (65%).

On average, just over half of residents (53%) said that they are happy with the various opportunities for them to participate in local decision-making, this was also down slightly from 2007 (56%).

Once again this year, the survey examined the question of election cycles for the District and revealed that opinion is broadly balanced, but has swung in favour of the current electoral system – 50% preferred the current system, with 44% preferring 'whole Council' elections every four years.

A new question this year looked at preferred ways of electing a Leader or Mayor. The majority of respondents (60%) preferred a mayor directly elected by the members of the public rather than having a leader elected by the council (34%).

The telephone survey initially revealed a balance of opinion against the proposed revised recycling arrangements (59% thought it a bad or very bad idea) but opposition is down slightly from last year. However, once the implications for higher Council Tax were explained to them, opinions amongst the largest group of residents (57%) swung in favour of the revised collection arrangements.



2. Introduction

2.1 Background

In October 2008, Stroud District Council commissioned The Research Box to undertake public consultation that would provide an understanding of the community's view of the issues associated with the development of the Council's Budget for 2009/10 and which would help the Authority decide on the level of Council Tax increase for the forthcoming year.

The survey was designed to be representative of the District's population.

This is the fifth year this survey has been conducted and so comparisons are possible with the last four surveys, which are shown throughout this report.

2.2 Method

The consultation was held with residents in the District by means of a telephone survey, supported by two qualitative discussion workshops.

Resident Telephone Survey

The views of residents were obtained by randomly calling households in the District and asking to speak to the person there who was responsible (solely or jointly) for the payment of their Council Tax. The households contacted in this way were spread throughout the localities of the District in line with the actual density of population in those localities.

A total of 309 residents responded to the survey. With this level of response, we can be 95% confident that the telephone survey results are accurate to within the following limits:

| observed result | accuracy |
|-----------------|----------|
| 10% | +/- 3.3% |
| 20% | +/- 4.4% |
| 30% | +/- 5.1% |
| 40% | +/- 5.4% |
| 50% | +/- 5.6% |
| 60% | +/- 5.4% |
| 70% | +/- 5.1% |
| 80% | +/- 4.4% |
| 90% | +/- 3.3% |

Survey fieldwork took place between 28th October and 8th November 2008. The interview took, on average, just over 17 minutes to conduct, a little longer than in 2007.



The questionnaire had the following structure:

- perceived performance of the District Council on service delivery
- budget priorities (where do people believe there should be more or less spending?)
- Council Tax options & corporate priorities
- attitudes towards the local area
- attitudes to political representation and engagement
- attitudes towards recycling and potential changes to waste collections
- profile questions (for example, age, gender and household circumstances).

A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix B to this report.

Qualitative Discussion Workshops

Two focus group workshops were conducted, one in Stroud and one in Wotton-under-Edge. Each workshop contained ten people and there was a mixture of ages, with equal numbers of men and women. There was a spread of socio-economic backgrounds, including retired people, a primary school teacher, a consultant, a shop assistant, a shopkeeper, a stay-at-home mum, a painter, and a decorator.

A sample of two discussion workshops is too small to be considered statistically representative in the same way that the survey is. However, the groups add understanding and context to the main survey and explain some of the responses therein.

The workshops are a qualitative research method and, during the discussions, respondents were shown various pieces of information and asked to comment. They were also asked, in small groups of 2-3 people, to construct their ideal budget that involved prioritising a list of all SDC services.

Both workshops covered a similar list of topics. A copy of the topic guide is included as Appendix C to this report.

2.3 Structure of the Report

This report summarises the key findings arising from the consultation and shows how attitudes have changed in the last year. It has four further chapters:

- Chapter Three examines some background attitudes, looking at residents' views towards the Stroud District, in general, and the District Council, in particular
- Chapter Four contains the findings pertaining to Council Tax increases and the views that were expressed concerning priorities for budget spending
- Chapter Five summarises the findings relating to the Council's policy priorities
- the final Chapter Six looks at the other findings from the research.

More detail from the telephone survey may be found in the full tabulations of the survey results, issued as an annex to this report.



3. Background Attitudes

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background information about the attitudes of residents to the area in which they live and the services provided by Stroud District Council.

3.2 Telephone Survey

As was the case in the previous four years, the telephone survey questionnaire included several questions that examined residents' views of the District Council and its services, even though this was not the main purpose of the survey.

Towards the end of the interview, respondents were asked to examine five statements and say whether they agreed or disagreed with them. The statements were:

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

The responses to the statements were generally positive, although lower than that seen in the 2007 survey.

When asked if they were satisfied that the Council is working to improve the environment, three quarters agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.

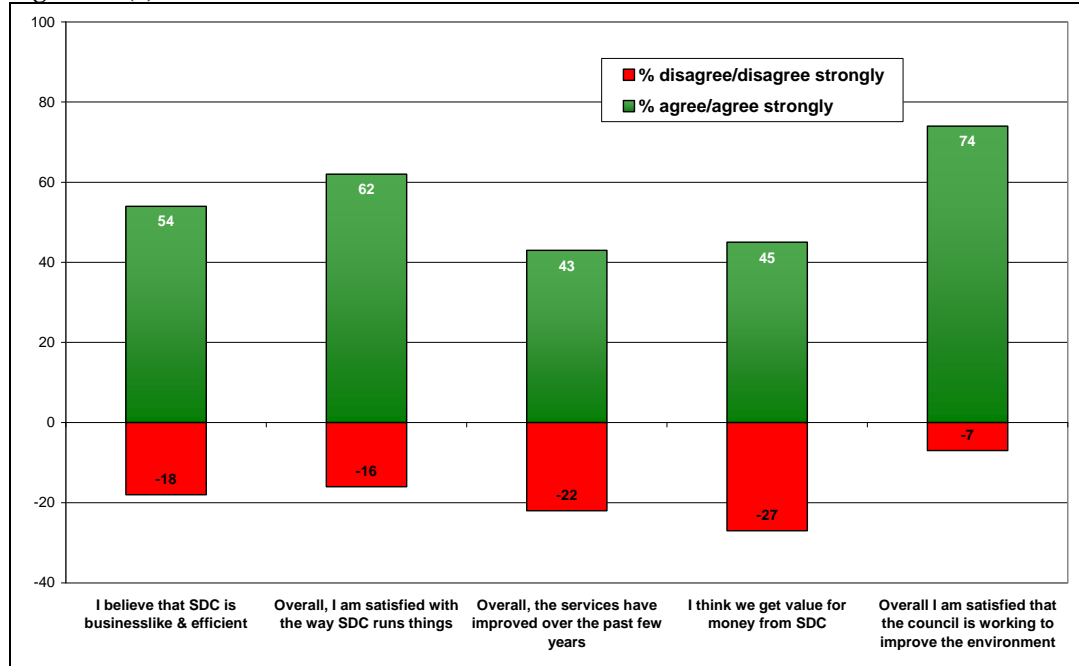
Just over 60% of residents were satisfied with the way that the Council runs things, and 54% agreed or agreed strongly that the DC is businesslike and efficient.

However, less than half (43%) agreed or agreed strongly that services have improved or that they get value for money from SDC (45%). The weakest area was whether the Council delivers 'value for money' – here, there was the highest number (over a quarter) of people who disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement.

The two figures overleaf show the results for this year, and for the five years that these questions have been asked.



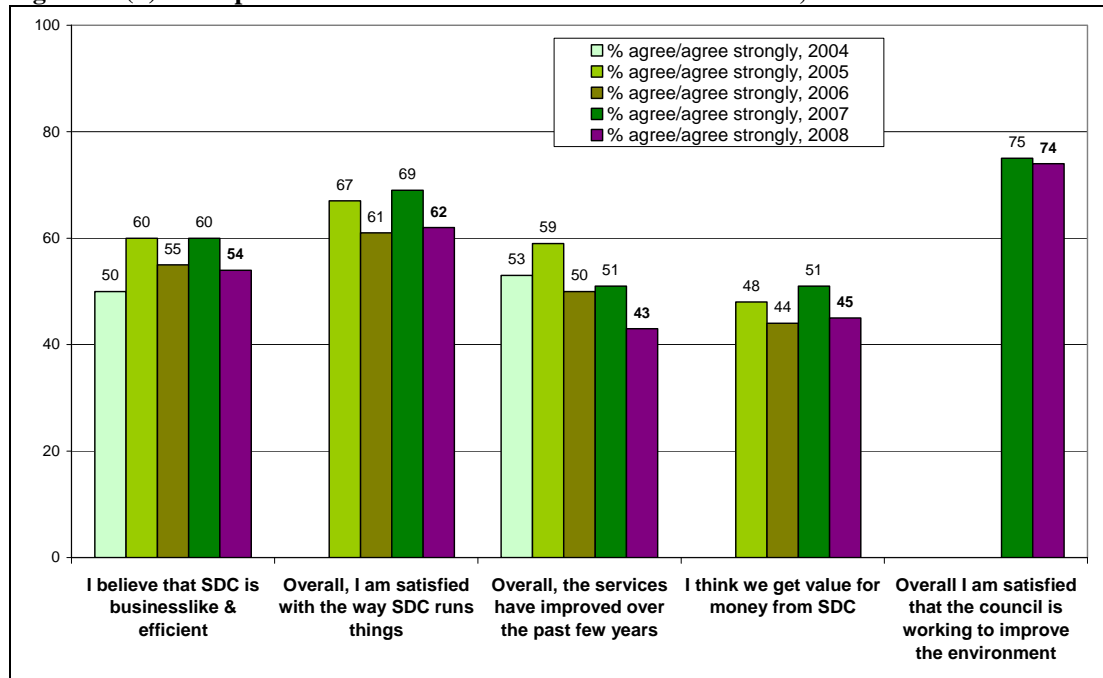
Figure 3.1(a): Attitudes Towards the District Council 2008



Note: excludes, for the sake of clarity, those saying ‘neither’ or ‘don’t know’

Comparison with the previous years’ results suggests that there has been a slight decline in positive attitudes since last year on all aspects measured. The aspect that has seen the largest decline over the years has been the ‘overall service improvement’ question.

Figure 3.1(b): Comparison of Attitudes Towards the District Council, 2004-8



Note: The value for money question was not asked in 2004. The environment question was only asked in 2007/8

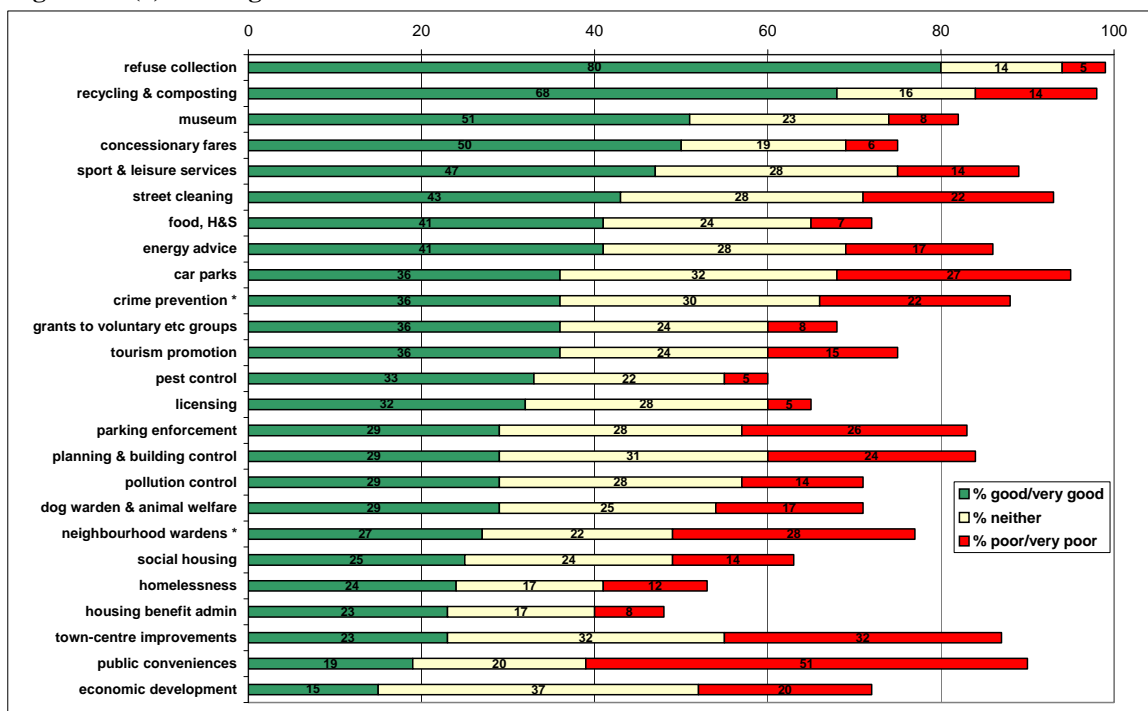


Respondents were asked to rate a series of the Council’s services, some 25 in total, whether they used these services or not. This question, that examines residents’ *perceived* performance of the Council, was rated on a five-point scale from very poor → very good.

Two services achieved extremely high ratings: refuse collection and recycling & composting were both viewed positively by a very large majority of residents. Two other services scored well, achieving positive ratings from around half or more of the sample; these were ‘concessionary fares’ and ‘the museum’.

The worst performing services were ‘public conveniences’ – where more than a half of residents gave the Council a poor or very poor score – and ‘town centre improvements’ – where the poor score was about a third.

Figure 3.2 (a): Ratings of Council Services 2008

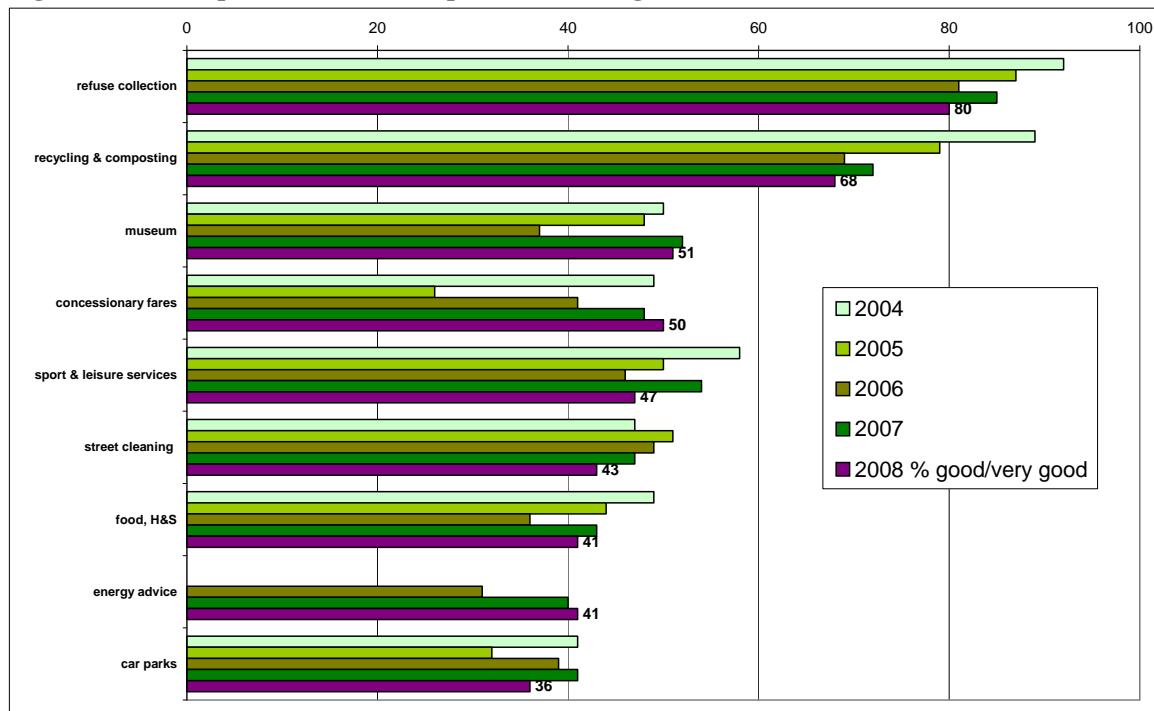


This chart excludes those residents who said ‘don’t know’, so the percentages shown do not necessarily sum to 100.

Attitudes towards some of the top performing services run by the Council have seen a slight decrease this year in positive perceptions (those rating the services as very good or good). The only area, amongst these top-performing services, where there has been an increase this year (compared with 2007) was for concessionary fares. These results are shown overleaf.



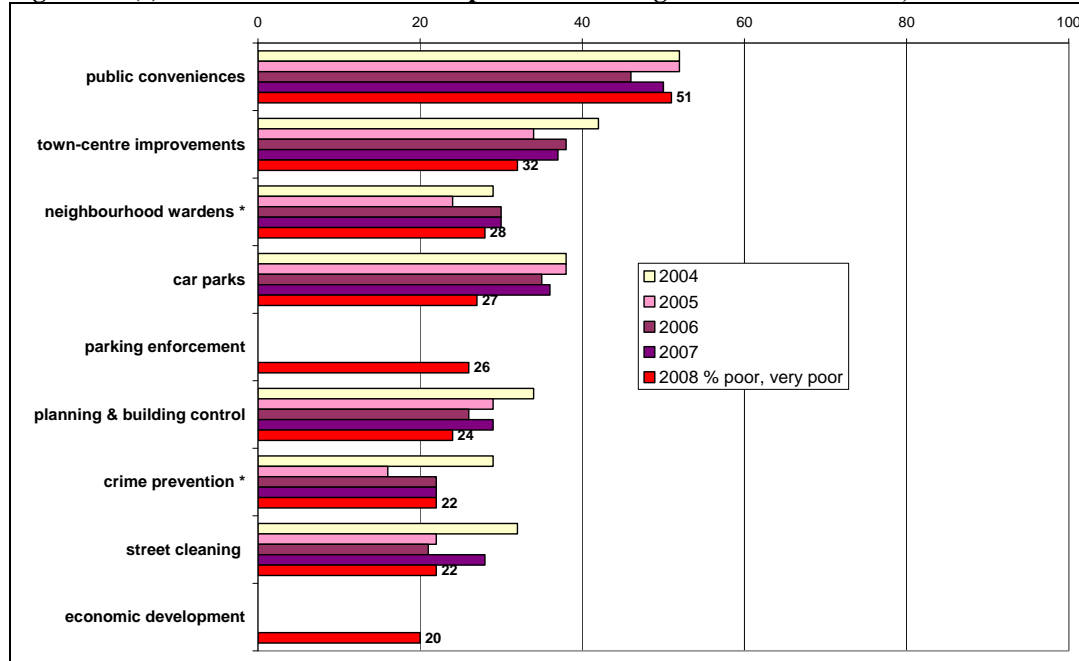
Figure 3.2 (b): Top Performers - Comparison of Ratings of Council Services, 2004-8



Note: % saying 'good' or 'very good'

The worst-performing services remain as they have been in previous years: public conveniences, town-centre improvements, car parks and neighbourhood wardens. Perceptions on public conveniences worsened slightly again this year, but all other of the aspects below improved slightly, especially car parks.

Figure 3.2 (c): Worst Performers - Comparison of Ratings of Council Services, 2004-8



Note: % saying 'poor' or 'very poor'



3.3 Insights from the Qualitative Research

Overall Mood

Many respondents were in a ‘tough-talking’ mood, which affected their willingness to participate in some of the workshop exercises. The Wotton-under-Edge group in particular felt isolated and ignored, thinking that funding was never directed their way.

“What’s the point? They are going to do what they want anyway?”

There were feelings of frustration being expressed with the way taxpayers’ money was being spent generally and so they worried, if they voted for a particular service area to have priority, that the money wouldn’t always be spent wisely. There was a view that they could not influence the ‘value for money’ side of things. Sometimes talking in radical terms, residents thought that Stroud District Council could think differently this year.

In an interesting turnaround, a few respondents wanted some sort of ‘reward’ from their Council for good behaviour, in areas such as recycling OR having a ‘pay as you go’ scheme for their tax.

“I’ve saved YOU money by recycling more, so give ME something back!”

This comment was made in reference to the reduction in landfill tax that respondents imagined Councils were getting as a result of their good behaviour, although they did not actually know how long the Council had been charged for this, nor how much had been saved. The other sentiment behind this was that if a person reduced their rubbish so much that they did not have to put bins out, they should not be charged for refuse collection in their general Council Tax bill, but should pay a charge for each time they did want a sack collected (ie, pay as you go). This type of system gave respondents more of a sense of fairness. They also unrealistically imagined that most of the council tax goes on rubbish collection, so they think they would get a big saving by not paying for rubbish collection in their general bill.

There was also a higher level of anxiety this year coming from respondents, with a sense of foreboding about the future. They feared that economic circumstances may potentially take a downturn and they were anticipating problems to come in 2009.

Satisfaction Levels

Furthermore, because of the global financial crisis and the Iceland investment crisis, there was a general level of dissatisfaction being expressed about the lack of ‘financial management skills’ of Councils and Government:

“You don’t know what you’re paying for”

“I find it hard to judge unless you actually know what part Stroud are actually controlling”

“There is no negotiation to be had, you know the bill is what the bill is. But I agree you pay them”

“You only notice the things there is a problem with rather than the ones that are running well. You’re only concerned with what’s not working.”



Saving v Spending

This year for the first time we showed respondents how much some specific services cost. Examples included the Museum, the cost of a leisure centre (in total and per person). This information provoked some interesting reactions and, although on the whole people didn't want money off their Council tax as a result of savings, they were tempted to introduce draconian measures to divert funding into more needy areas. Services cut in this way included (in order) dog wardens, neighbourhood wardens and the Museum. A few people did, however, want to take a cut in Council Tax for the loss of dog wardens. They did know that this was a statutory area and that the amount probably would be miniscule. They hoped that other things could be found to cut their Council Tax.

'Niceties' such as webcasting of public meetings were considered luxuries in the current economic climate and were often brought up in people's budget priorities as candidates for making savings. On the other hand, many people prioritised more social housing (the concept of social housing, because they did not want housing build in any specific areas).

Leisure centres were thought to be very important and were not chosen as an area for cuts, despite us showing the cost per head of the Dursley pool (£2 per head).

"These councils seem to think things need to make money; they don't."

It is interesting then that they cut funding for the Museum. It would seem that, in times of economic downturn, physical and sporty activities were thought to have a greater social benefit for people on low-incomes than historical culture does. Although, in the case of the Museum, it was the scale of the cost that shocked people, rather than the concept having and paying for a Museum itself.

Respondents were unhappy about the cost of the Museum because hardly any of them had visited it. Some people voted to scrap it for a reduction in council tax, but most were reluctant to do this and wanted, instead, to create more value for money. We were asked to see what their suggestions were for saving money (they were not aware about Lottery Funding or issues surrounding the entry charge) and the following arose:

- reduction in opening hours which in turn would reduce the cost of overheads
- making it free for kids but charging for adults
- holding commercial concerts there to increase people's awareness about the Museum.

Areas considered to be candidates for increased funding included regeneration, economic development, and town centre improvements. As we have found in the past, people here are talking about quite large-scale economic development and regeneration, such as is seen in Northern cities – not what may be possible with the District Council's available budget.

Budget Evaluation

This year, because of the fairly angry mood that people were in, they tended to vote for more immediate and personal improvements such as, better open spaces, regeneration (eg job creation), housing and healthy living (such as sports facilities).



4. Council Tax and Budget Priorities

4.1 Introduction

The findings relating to Council Tax and the Council's budget are contained in this chapter. It covers such questions as: how receptive are people to Council Tax rises, what level of increase do they think would be acceptable, what are the priorities for increased spending, where would people suggest that cuts are made?

4.2 Telephone Survey

Council Tax Increases

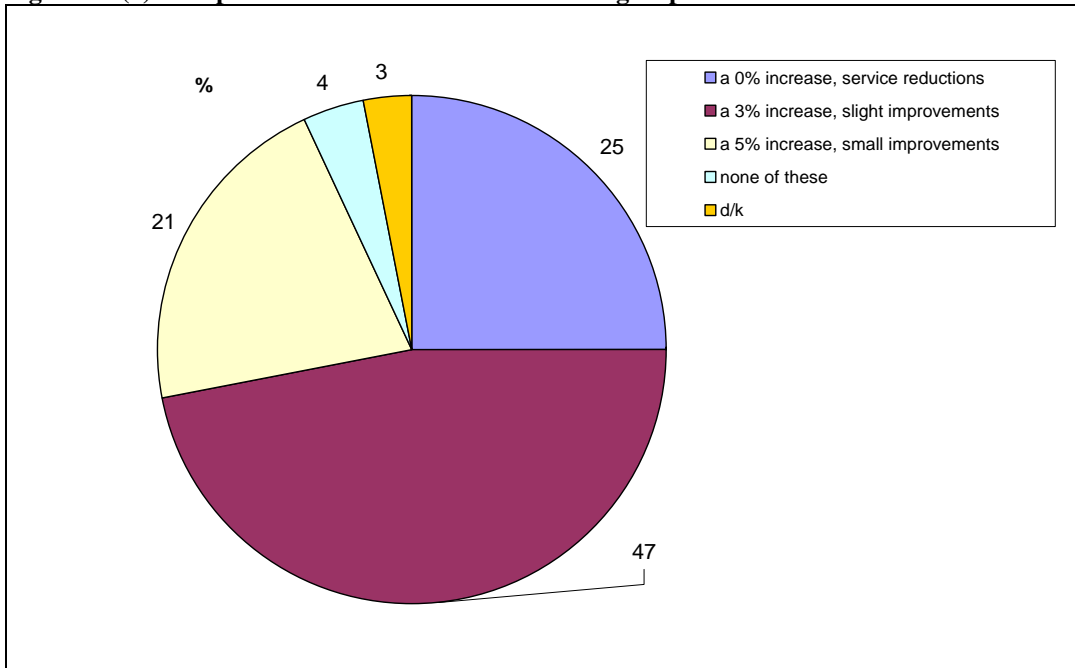
In the telephone survey, residents were asked to choose a preferred option for the District Council's Council Tax increase for next year. Beforehand, they were informed that *"the level of the Budget set by the District Council next year will only have a small impact on next year's Council Tax, because the District Council receives just 12½p in every £1, with the majority of any increase going to the County Council and the Police Authority"*. They were also advised *"a small increase may be necessary that will be broadly in line with inflation and with recent increases"*. The options offered to them combined increases in Council Tax with changes to the level of services provided by the Council, with provision made (although not offered to respondents) for them to opt out and say 'none of these options':

- a 0% increase (no change for a Band D property), but with a reduction in services
- a 3% increase (10p per week for a Band D property), with some very slight improvements in services
- a 5% increase (17p/week for a Band D property), with a small improvement in services.

As may be seen overleaf, the majority – nearly half of respondents – were in favour of a 3% increase that would allow for some very slight improvements to services.

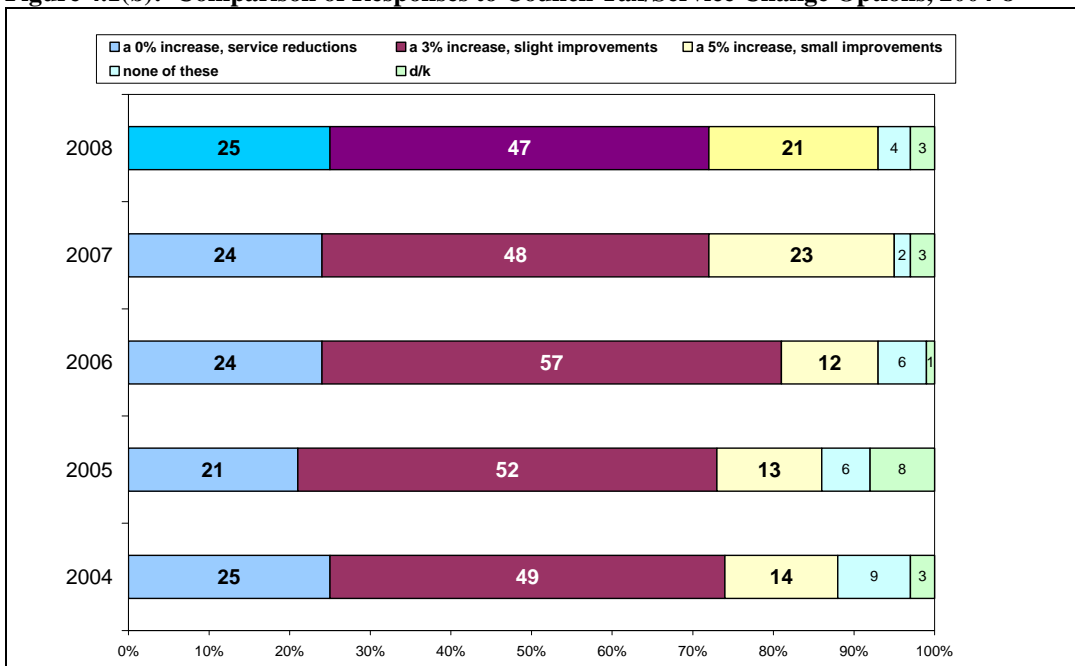


Figure 4.1(a): Response to Council Tax/Service Change Options 2008



A comparison with the results to the same question from previous years' surveys shows that the figures this year are very similar to those achieved in 2007. The average preferred increase, calculated from these figures, works out at 2.6% this year (similar to 2007 when it was 2.5%).

Figure 4.1(b): Comparison of Responses to Council Tax/Service Change Options, 2004-8

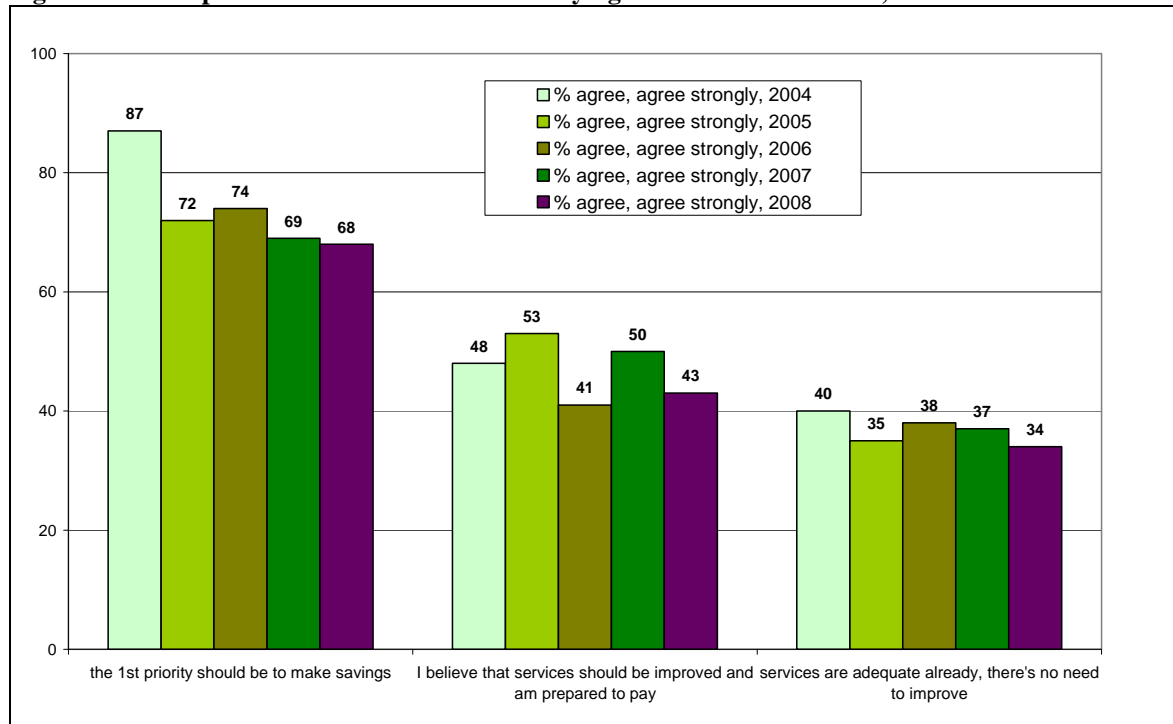


Note: before this year, the options were 0%, 2.5% and 5%



When residents were asked about their attitudes towards paying Council Tax, the results show quite stable attitudes over the past year. Nearly 70% believe the first priority should be to make savings, but fewer people this year wanted services improved and were prepared to pay for this (down from 50% to 43%).

Figure 4.2: Comparison of Attitudes Towards Paying Council Tax Increases, 2004-8



Spending Priorities

Residents were next given the list of 25 Council services and were asked to indicate whether they thought the Council should be spending more, the same, or less on each service.

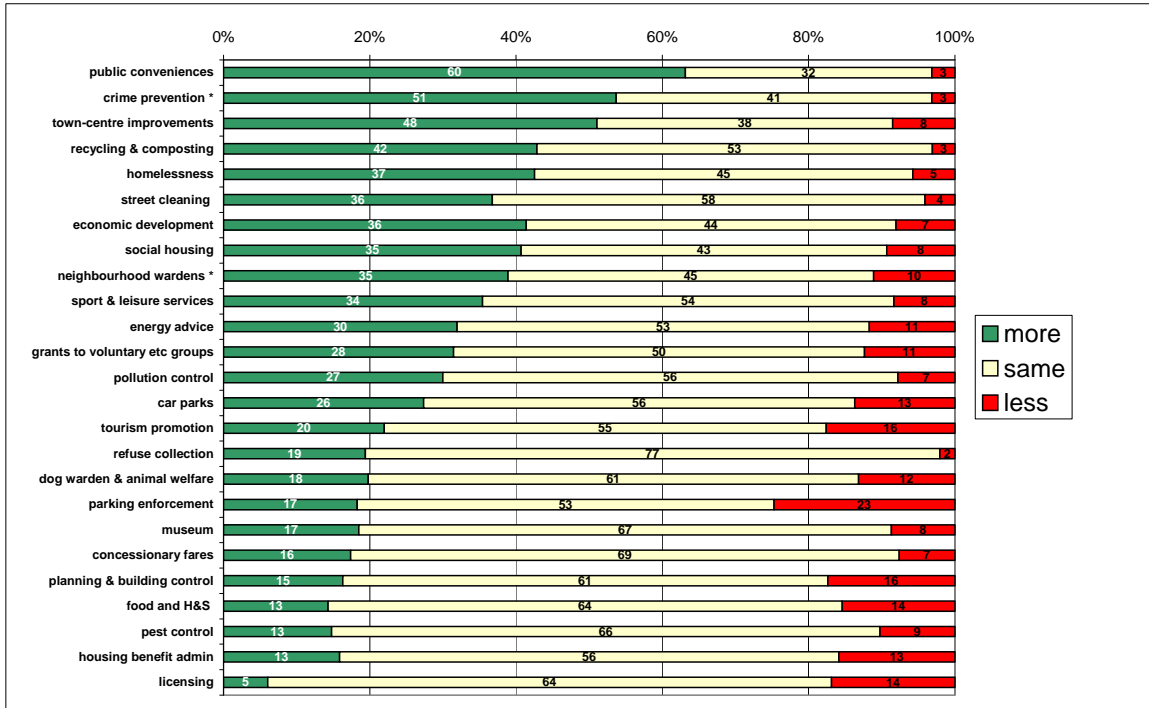
The following chart provides the full picture, with the percentage of residents saying 'spend more' shown in green, 'spend less' in red, and 'stay the same' in cream.

A number of findings arise from this:

- the top priorities for increased spending are public conveniences, crime prevention and town-centre improvements – about a half or more of residents believe that more money should be spent in these areas
- the top priority for making savings is parking enforcement – nearly a quarter of residents believe less money should be spent in this area
- for all but three services, most residents believe that spending should stay the same as it is now – these three services are: crime prevention, public conveniences and town-centre improvements where the largest group of people said 'spend more'
- for four services (parking enforcement, food and H&S, licensing and planning & building control), there are more residents who believe that there should be less spending than there are who believe that spending should be more.



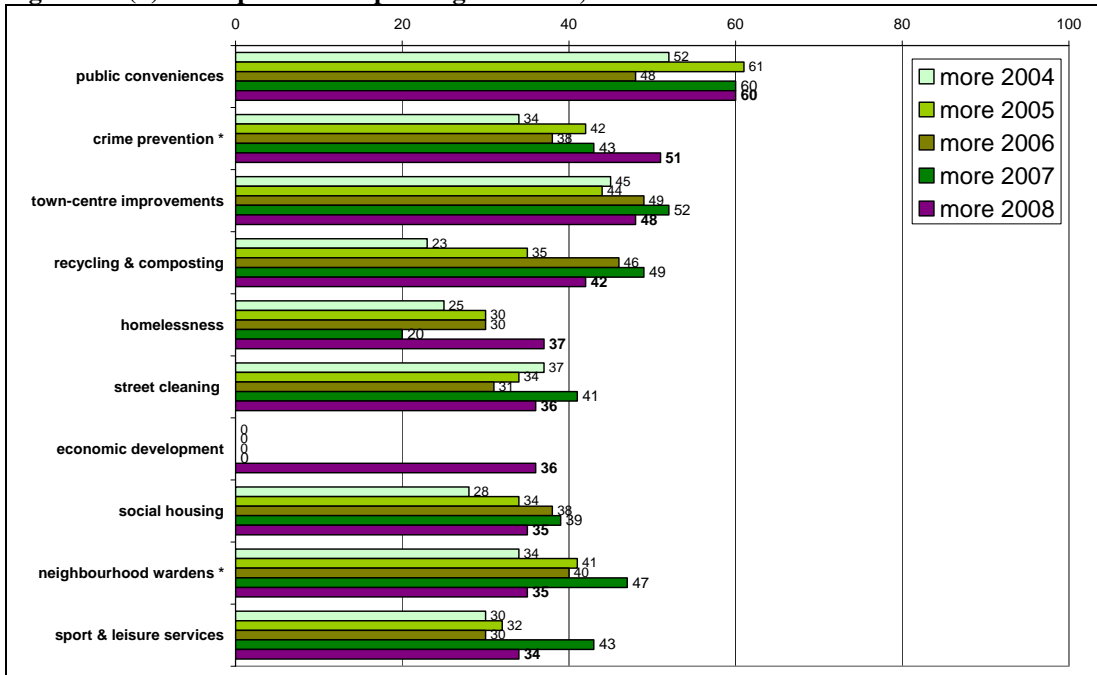
Figure 4.3 (a): Spending Priorities, Residents



Note: ignores the percentages that said ‘don’t know’

The number of people wanting more spending on crime prevention has increased a lot this year. There has also been a big increase for more spending on homelessness this year compared to 2007. Economic development was examined for the first time this year – as can be seen, it is the seventh priority for increased spending.

Figure 4.3 (b): Comparison of Spending Priorities, 2004-8



Note: this chart shows the top group of priorities only

Residents were given the opportunity in an open-ended question to say whether there were any other areas where they believed the Council should be spending more money (“in order to



achieve improvements for residents and businesses in the Stroud District”), or any areas where spending should be less. The principal candidates for increased spending, in answer to this question, were: roads & traffic, town-centre improvements and recycling. The main areas that people believed that less money should be spent were: money spent on councillors, Council administration and bureaucracy, and street lighting.

The full list of verbatim answers may be found in the Tabulations Annexe that supports this report, with example quotes including:

- **more spending**

Communal areas need more attention, i.e. cleaning and tidying, particularly the enclosed and internal areas. (Berkley)

Green bag system in the area, more social housing

There should be more bins and containers for household recycling. I also believe there should be more money available for people with special needs.

I live in Dursley and all our area have no bins, so we have to put all our rubbish on the street which attracts pests.

Looking what's available for young people

Economic development should be done in a different way. For example promoting or looking at promoting businesses so they use renewable energy and green technology. i.e. more businesses that can insulate which is done in green way.

I believe there should be more police on the beat, with a noticeable police presence.

Public Conveniences- we are never going to attract people to come here to shop and spend money if we haven't got good toilets.

Empty housing and empty places in the town centre should be dealt with, maybe they are charging too much rent for people to afford.

The Roads are terrible. Terrific potholes.

Pavements in public places, better tended.

- **less spending**

There's too much money spent on Councillors. The way to cut spending would be to reduce the number of Councillors

I just think that pensioners should pay less council tax than large families as we have a restricted income

Street lighting, on 24/7 could go off sometimes not in town centre but in estates not necessary

Bureaucracy some of the administration support and paper work

Investing too much money instead of putting it to good use, for example a festival that they cancelled which would have brought money and benefited the area

Spend the money to put up stone monuments but then never clean them or maintain them



5. Policy Priorities

5.1 Introduction

The opportunity was taken through this consultation to briefly examine the public's view on some of the Council's potential priorities for the next few years. The workshops examined different priorities to the survey; in the workshops, the priorities examined were:

- regeneration
- housing
- healthy living
- community safety
- the environment.

In the telephone survey, the priority areas were those from the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan, namely:

- sending as little **waste to landfill** as possible, including **recycling** more
- helping the community to minimise its **carbon footprint** and adapt to the consequences of climate change
- creating **public spaces and buildings**, which are perceived to be cared for, clean, green and safe
- providing more **affordable homes**
- helping local people to find **local solutions** to long-term local problems, including the safeguarding of key district health services.

This chapter presents the findings in this area.

5.2 Insights from the Workshops

Regeneration

Regeneration was seen as a top priority because it struck at the heart of current concerns and should create jobs. It was also thought to make the immediate environment more palatable, cheering you up in the gloom.

People wanted the continuation of tax relief for small business and promotion of this scheme. Indeed, any initiatives to help small businesses were considered appropriate. Some people thought that Stroud's planning policies were not conducive to businesses expanding, for example, the Wotton Auction Rooms had recently been turned down for an extension.

To residents, regeneration should not mean 'another supermarket' – some people said as this had been too influential on the character of Stroud Town. Wotton people thought that their town was not like Dursley and didn't need a new supermarket; they wanted to focus on the essential characteristics of the high street and a market town.

Wotton realised how lucky they were to have Renishaws and so thought that the Council should make sure such employers were retained and not lost, like Dyson in Malmesbury.



Residents needed convincing that the canal restoration was about regeneration. They wanted information on what jobs would be created and whether the activities there would be good for young people, eventually attracting people into the District. The implication here was that the canal restoration needs more justification and that people still need to be convinced that it creates improvements for the money spent.

“It (regeneration) has to be our number one priority. Why they are spending money on the Canal project I know but there it is. We have the great supermarkets and the fantastic new College but walk over to the town centre and that is where District pride starts and ends. You start at the bus stop across the bridge and there is litter everywhere, five takeaways and then you get to Merrywalks and it is like ghost town no music no pavement cafes and you get out of and there is the chippy. That is what Stroud is about.”

“It (canal restoration) would give the kids something to do if there was a youth club with canoeing or will there just be drunks down there?”

Housing

The issue of housing was felt to a high priority like regeneration. Both groups contained people who had been ‘homeless’ at some point in their lives and so the lack of social housing was mentioned, as was long waiting lists. High levels of concern about housing were being fuelled by concerns about future problems in the economy, such as potential redundancies and home repossessions. People thought that the homelessness might increase in the near future.

Key workers, such as teachers, wanted more help to live in the District and they thought the ‘help to buy’ schemes should be better promoted. It was felt that the inability to buy a house affects local people and traditional workers, such as farm labourers.

“My children won’t be able to live in Stroud. It is ridiculous the prices round here.”

Healthy Living

Under healthy living and well-being people liked the following:

- sport facilities
- leisure centres
- schools
- walking
- education campaign
- cultural festivals.

Such activities were considered to be giving back tangible investments from their council tax payments. They also helped to keep one occupied during an economic downturn.



Community Safety

Residents were very concerned about perceived low levels of policing and so initially prioritised crime prevention. This is what they thought was meant by Community Safety.

In addition, with their ‘socially responsible’ hats on, community safety was prioritised as a general rule – for example, at a basic level, crime is more important to address than sports facilities.

After consideration, they would sometimes demote community safety and crime prevention during the exercise when they knew that policing was dealt with as another part of council tax. Of course they would be very interested in any information on extra policing but this was not shown to them in the context of SDC budgets.

Actually, when being asked spontaneously about what they liked about living in the District, residents said ‘the fact that it is safe’.

The Environment

Although Stroud was considered to be an innovative Council in the field of climate change, with some impressive environmental initiatives, residents were concerned about the amounts of money being spent in the context of their council tax.

People mostly talked about extending the recycling scheme to include more types of waste, but otherwise there was less of an appetite for environment priorities than in previous years.

“I can do that myself”

“I’d rather they concentrated on ‘developing business”

So overall they felt more self-sufficient with recycling now (for example going to the tip or composting) and wanted the Council to focus on things they can’t do themselves.

The economy seemed more important to people in the current situation than any initiatives relating to climate change, but only when discussing local Council Tax. It may be also be that people think other authorities should be paying for climate change issues (central government through their income tax).

“I went to an Energy Fair last Saturday run by South Gloucestershire in Hawkesbury. I was chatting to the person there. She said if you get a wind generator you get £500 towards it and she said where do you live and I said Wotton and she said oh that’s Gloucestershire,. There you get £1,000 towards it. I never knew that.”

“We are consciously aware of recycling. We recycle and it saves the Council money because there’s less landfill but we don’t see a reduction in our council tax. There is no incentive for us. But there should be an incentive by lowering the bill.”

“£700,000 on climate change and only £200,000 on providing open spaces. I think that is the wrong way round. An energy scheme for Randwick Village Hall £35,000! Who makes these decisions. Couldn’t you build a village hall for that money?”



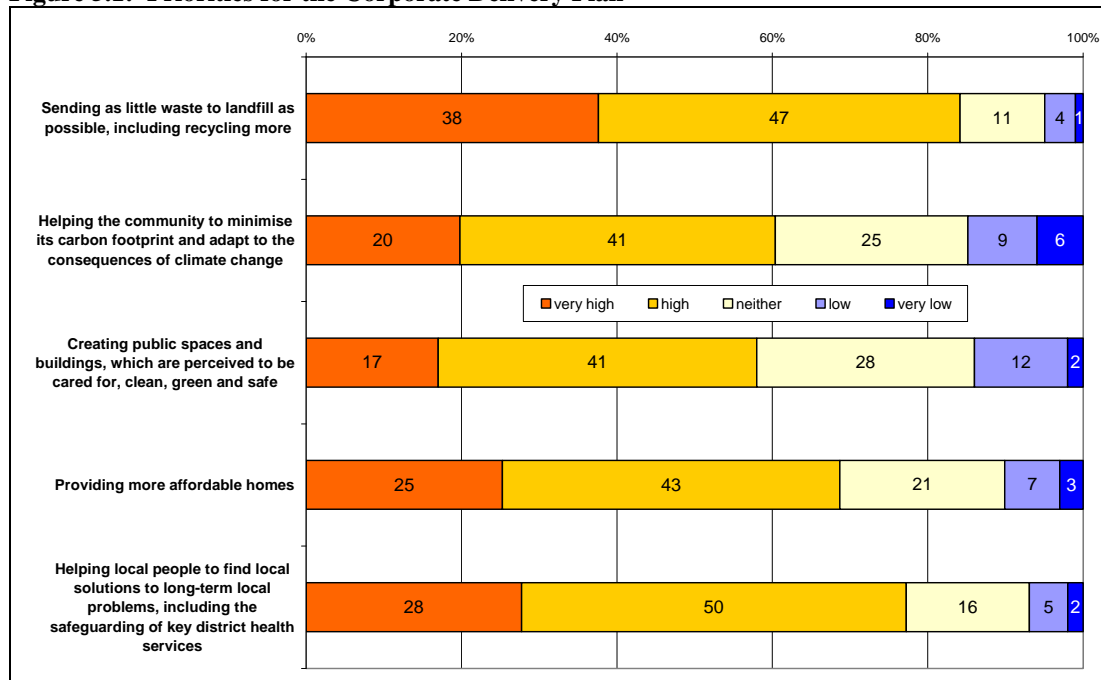
“I don’t think the Environment necessarily is more important than regeneration or healthy living because nowadays people are so environmentally aware, they have their own conscience about it. We all think of this.”

5.3 Telephone Survey Outcomes

In the telephone survey, respondents were offered the five Corporate Delivery Plan priorities and were asked to say whether they thought each should have a high, medium, or low priority (actually a five-point scale from very high → very low priority).

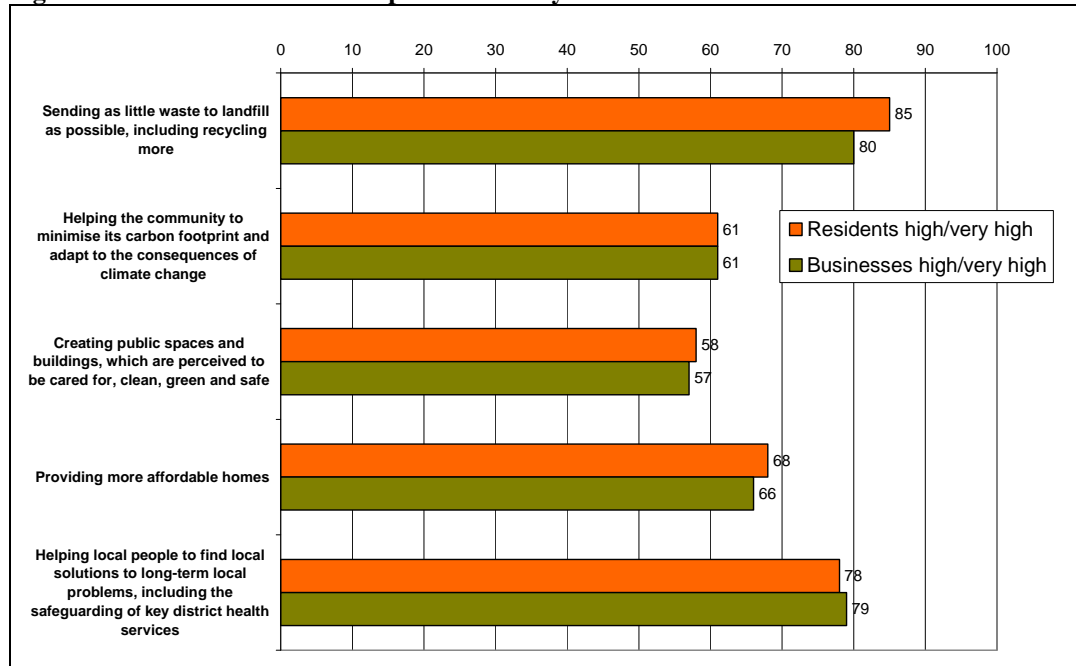
As may be seen in the next chart, sending as little waste to landfill had the highest priority level overall (85% high or very high), followed closely by helping people to find local solutions to long term local problems (78%). The lowest priority level was for creating public spaces and buildings, which are perceived to be cared for, clean, green and safe (58%).

Figure 5.1: Priorities for the Corporate Delivery Plan



This question was also asked of Stroud-district businesses in the survey carried out a little earlier in the year. As can be seen from the chart overleaf, priority levels are very similar amongst both businesses and residents in the area. Sending little waste to landfill sites had the highest priority for both groups.



Figure 5.2: Priorities for the Corporate Delivery Plan - Businesses and Residents

People were then given an open opportunity to say what areas they thought the Council should be focusing on. Many comments related to areas outside the District Council's responsibility, with the quotes below being examples of the huge range of comments made:

- *Security, in the community. Police officers on the streets. Safety on the street. Children are out on the road*
- *Let people improve their property more*
- *Roads and schools*
- *In the aftermath of the flooding last year, so watercourses and flood prevention should be a high priority*
- *Pending canal project low priority. Potential bottomless pit*
- *I believe that money should only be spent on economic development*
- *Saving money internally*
- *Policing*
- *Keeping the council tax down*
- *Just the housing issues*
- *Assisting small businesses, providing them with better facilities such as business management. As this is something the government don't do at all*
- *Anti-social behaviour, dealing with feral children and adults*
- *Trying to put more money into the local community to help them help themselves*
- *Pushing for more local policing, very much stressing the local*
- *They should stop giving all the houses to the immigrants*
- *I believe there should be a lot more recycling in Stroud as I'm concerned that excessive household waste could attract rats. Where I used to live, there were 3 different recycling boxes, all of which were collected on a weekly basis.*



6. Other Question Areas

6.1 Introduction

The consultation this year contained a series of small-scale topic areas, namely:

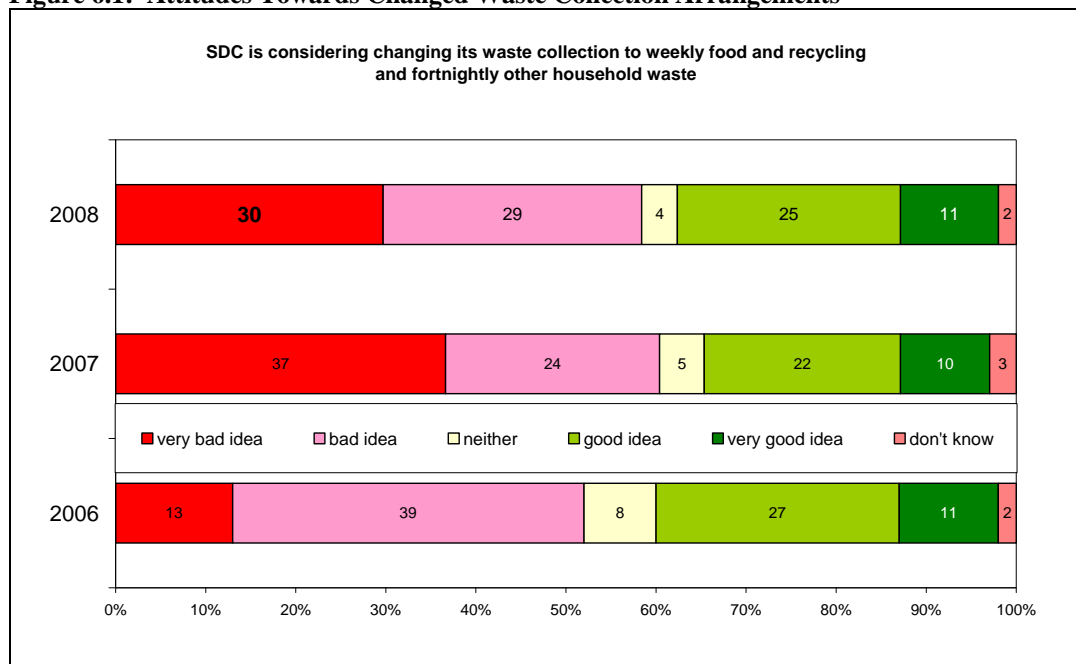
- potential new waste and recycling arrangements
- representation, and the electoral cycle
- perceptions of the area as a place to live, plus SDC's efforts to improve the area.

These topics are covered in this chapter.

6.2 Potential New Waste & Recycling Arrangements

When presented in the survey with an option to change waste collection arrangements locally, people in the telephone survey appeared to be split in their opinions. The proposal put to residents was that green-box renewables and food waste would be collected every week, with all other rubbish in bin bags collected every fortnight. As may be seen in the chart below, 36% of residents supported the proposal (up from 32% in 2007) and 59% thought that it was a bad idea, (down from 61% in 2007).

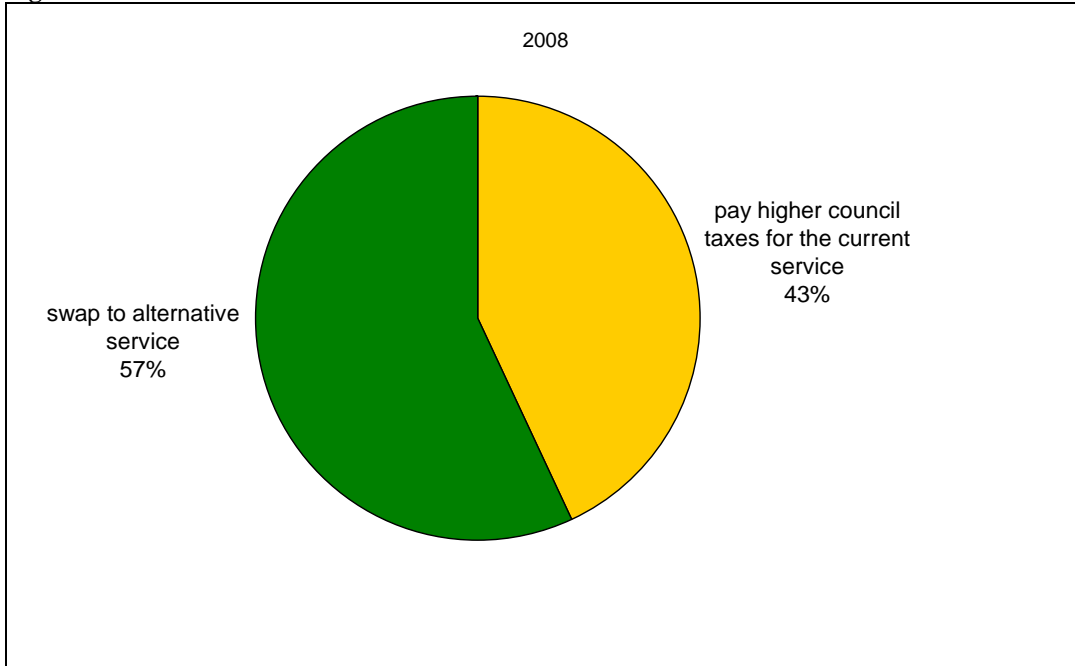
Figure 6.1: Attitudes Towards Changed Waste Collection Arrangements



However, when respondents were informed about the likely implications for their council tax bills if the Council did not reduce the amount of household waste produced locally, then most residents swung in favour of the proposed service, with over half (57%) saying they would prefer this option. This was a large increase on the 2007 figure of 45%.



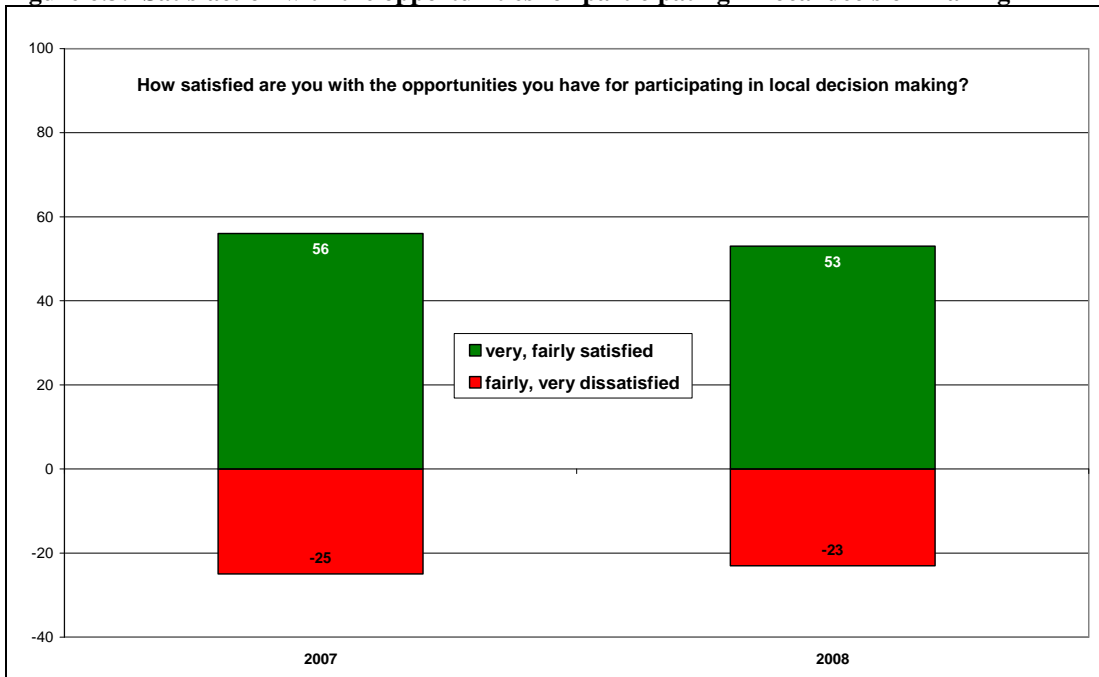
Figure 6.2: Choice if Council Tax were Increased



6.3 Representation and the Electoral Cycle

Respondents in the telephone survey were asked how satisfied they were that Stroud District Council provides various opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making in the local area. On average, over half (53%) said they were satisfied, and this did not differ much from the results to the same question asked in 2007.

Figure 6.3: Satisfaction with the opportunities for participating in local decision making

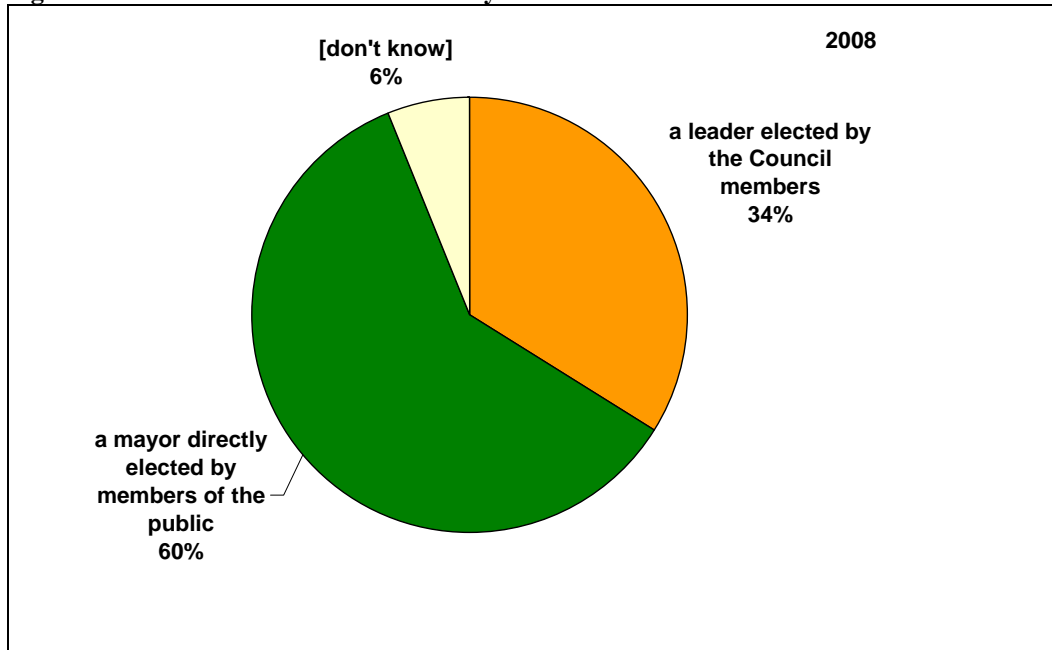


Note: excludes, for the sake of clarity, people who said 'neither' or 'don't know'



Also in the telephone survey, residents were advised that the District Council has the possible opportunity to change how the Leader of the Council is elected. It was explained that, currently, the Leader is elected annually by the Council members. The alternative would see a mayor who would be directly elected by members of the public. In both cases, the term of office would be for four years. As can be seen from the results below, the majority (60%) would prefer a mayor directly elected by members of the public.

Figure 6.4: Preferences for Leader or Mayor Election

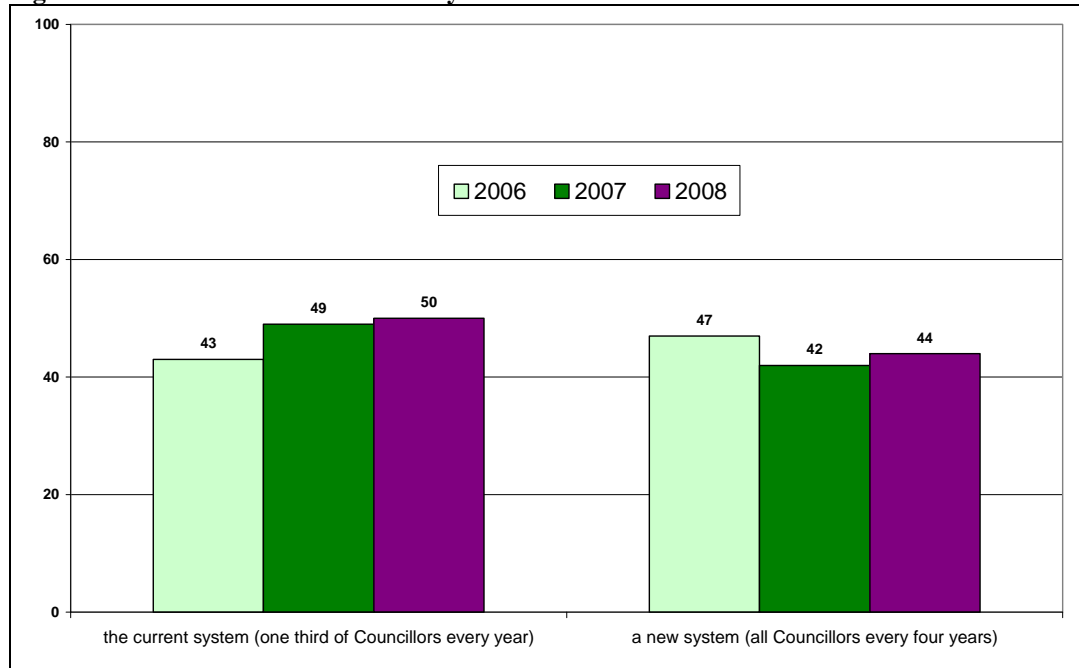


Residents were also advised that the District Council has the opportunity to change how elections for local councillors are carried out. It was explained that, currently, one third of councillors stand for re-election each year (except in the fourth year when there are no district council elections). However, the District Council could opt to move to “whole-Council” elections, which would mean that **all** councillors would be up for election at the same time, and this would happen once every four years.

Half of all respondents this year wanted to keep the current system of elections (every year). This was very slightly up on the 2007 results.



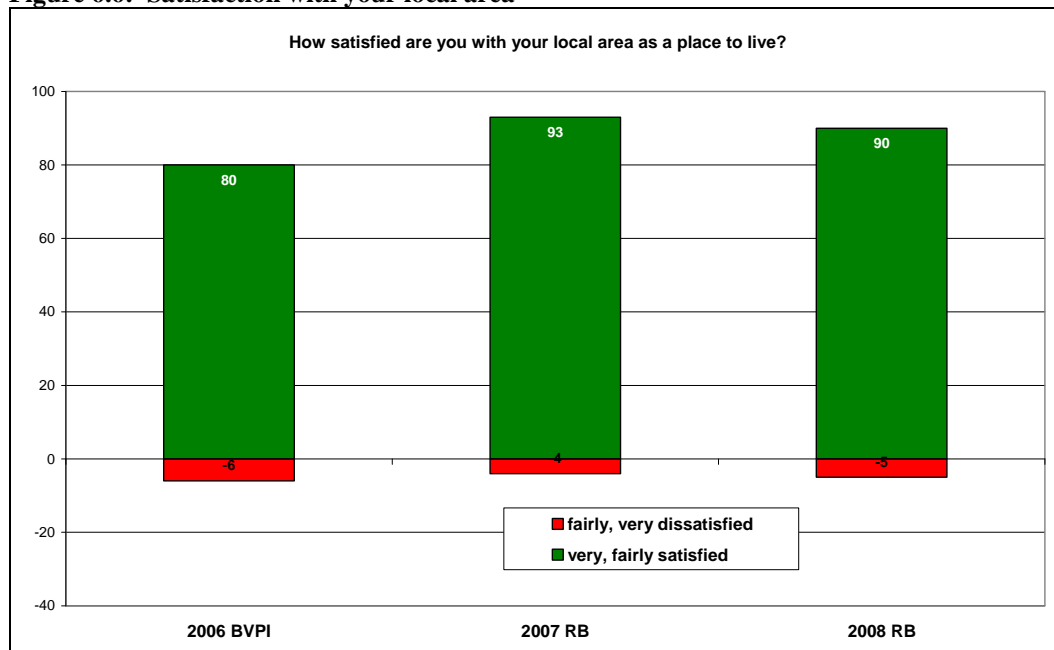
Figure 6.5: Preferences for Election Cycles



6.4 The Area as a Place to Live

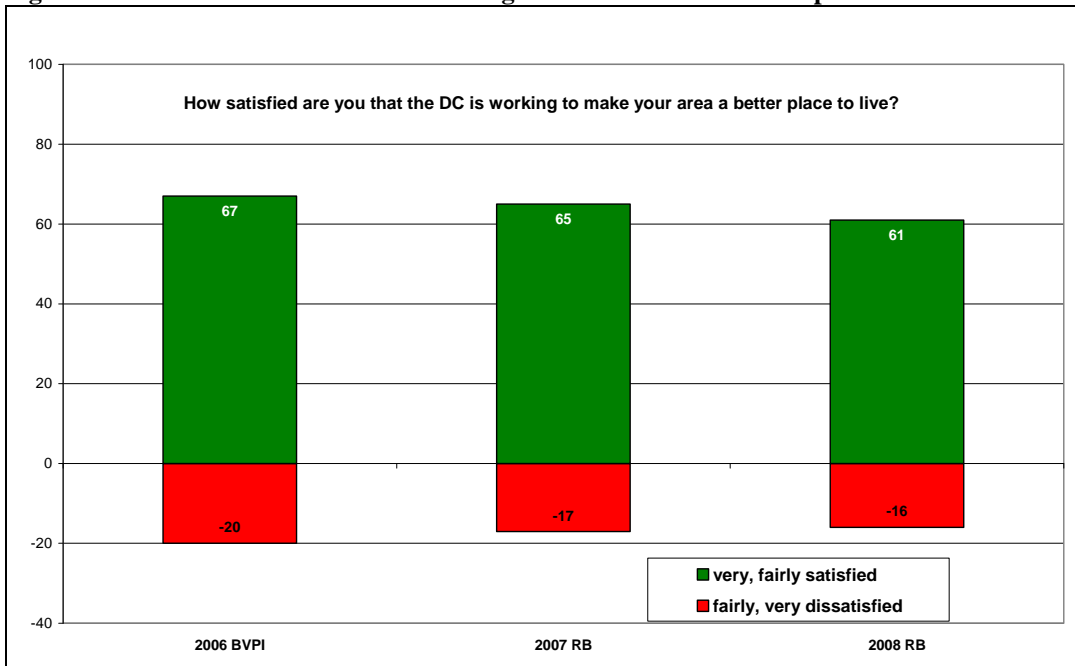
Respondents in the telephone survey were asked how satisfied they were with their local area as a place to live. This year, although the figures are down slightly compared to 2007, the survey still shows a much higher level of satisfaction (90% said they were fairly or very satisfied with the area as a place to live) than 2006’s BVPI survey.

Figure 6.6: Satisfaction with your local area



Respondents were also asked how satisfied they were that the District Council is working to make the area a better place to live. Most people (61%) were satisfied that SDC were doing this, but this was slightly lower than the figures in the 2006 BVPI survey¹ and down slightly on 2007.

Figure 6.7: Satisfaction that SDC is working to make the area a better place to live



¹ But note that the wording was slightly different in the two surveys.

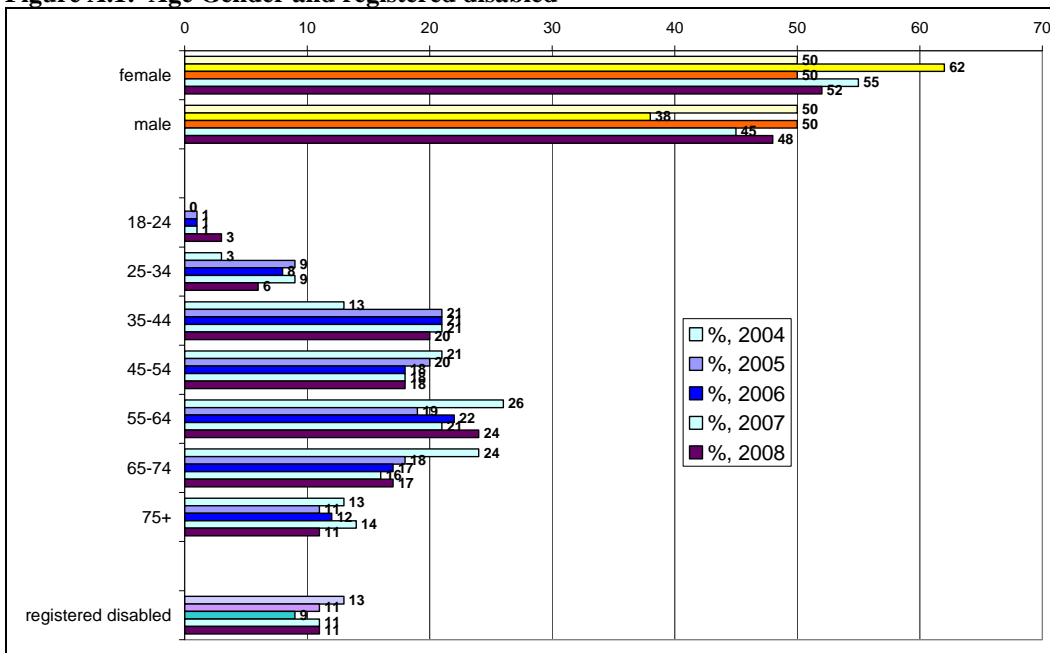


Appendix A : Telephone Survey Demographics



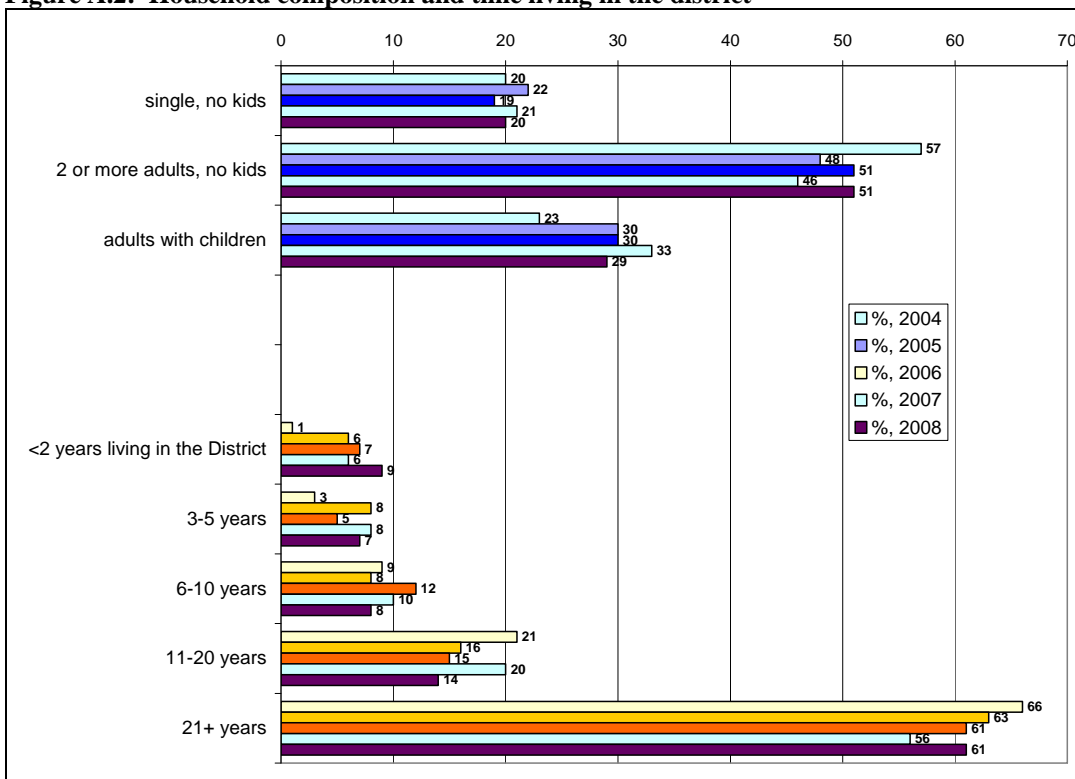
A1. Age, Gender and Registered Disabled

Figure A.1: Age Gender and registered disabled



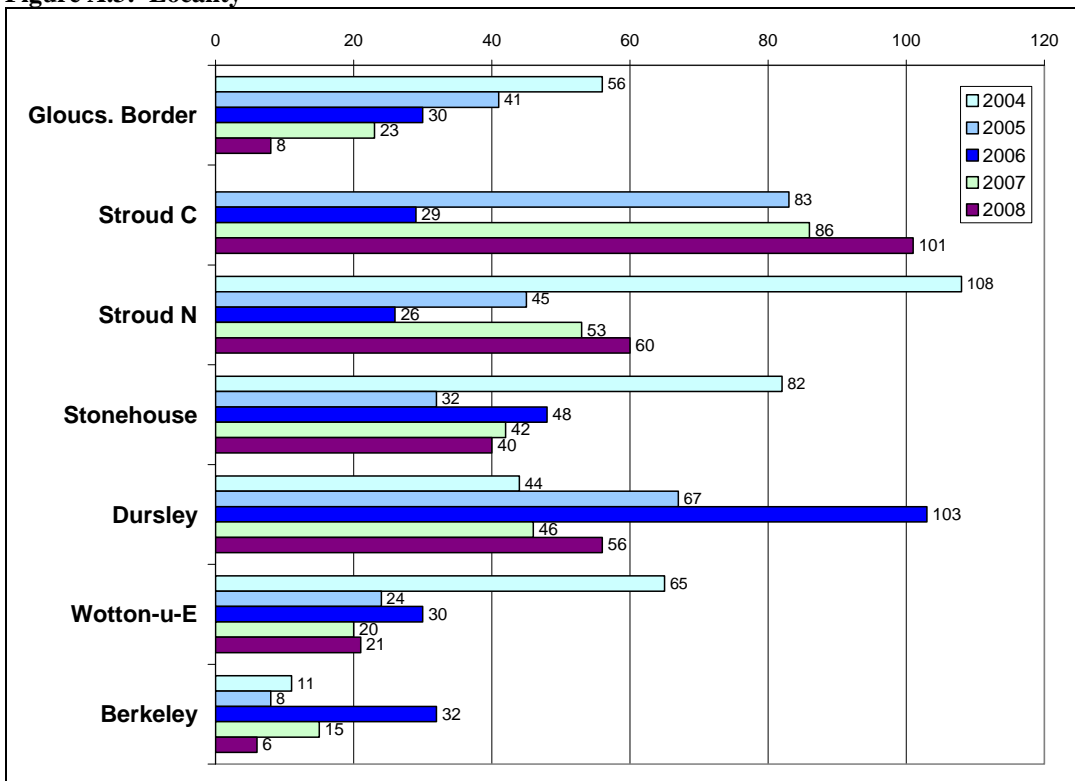
A2. Household Composition and Length of Time Living in the Area

Figure A.2: Household composition and time living in the district



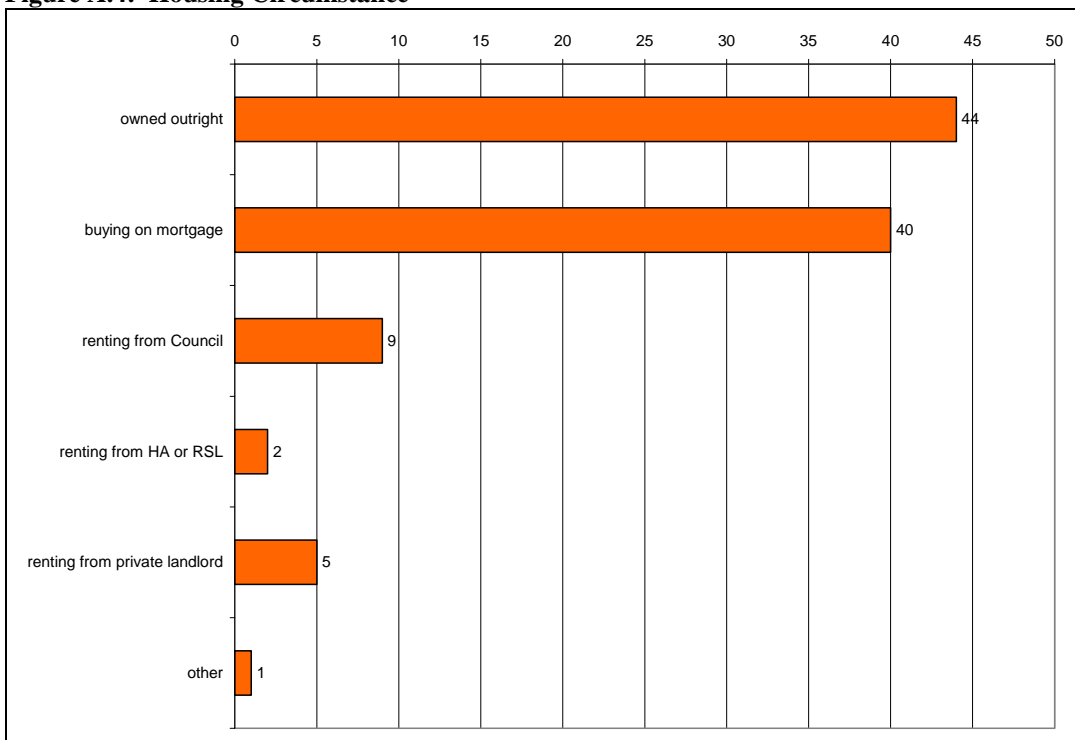
A3. Locality

Figure A.3: Locality



A4. Housing Circumstance

Figure A.4: Housing Circumstance



Appendix B
Copy of the Telephone Survey Questionnaire



Stroud District Council Resident Survey

Good afternoon/evening, my name is and I am calling on behalf of Stroud District Council. The Council is keen to obtain the views of local residents: what level of Council Tax would you feel would be acceptable next year?; which Council services should get more money?; which services should get less money? Would you mind answering some questions? The interview will take no more than ten minutes and all the answers that you give will be strictly confidential. Thank you.

- Q1.** First, can I check that you are either solely or jointly responsible for the payment of Council Tax in your household?
- yes 1 **CONTINUE**
no 2 **IDENTIFY A SUITABLE PERSON OR CLOSE**

Section One : Stroud District Council's Performance

- Q2.** We would like to know how well you think the Council performs. I will read out a list of the Council's key services. For each service, WHETHER YOU USE THE SERVICE OR NOT, please tell me whether you believe the Council's performance is good or poor. **PROBE**
- | | very good | good | neither | poor | very poor | d/k |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Car parks | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Parking enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Crime prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Concessionary fares | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Social housing | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Food safety, health & safety | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Pest control | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Grants to voluntary & community groups | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Housing benefit administration | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Sport & leisure services | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Licensing | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Neighbourhood wardens | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Planning & building control | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Public conveniences | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Recycling & composting | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Refuse collection | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Street cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Tourism promotion | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Town-centre improvements | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Pollution control | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Energy advice | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Dog warden & animal welfare | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

Section Two : Council Tax Priorities

- Q3.** Over the coming months, Stroud District Council will be deciding how much it should spend next year, and which services should have priority.

For the same list of key services, could you please indicate whether you think the Council should spend more or less next year, or whether spending should stay about the same. Remember, increased spending on some services might mean less spent on others.

- | | Spend more | Stay the same | Spend less | Don't know |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Car parks | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Parking enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |



| | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Crime prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Concessionary fares | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Social housing | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Food safety, health & safety | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Pest control | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Grants to voluntary & community groups | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Housing benefit administration | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Sport & leisure services | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Licensing | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Neighbourhood wardens | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Planning & building control | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Public conveniences | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Recycling & composting | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Refuse collection | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Street cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Tourism promotion | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Town-centre improvements | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Pollution control | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Energy advice | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Dog warden & animal welfare | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |

Q4. Are there any other areas where you believe the Council should be spending **more** money in order to achieve improvements for residents and businesses in the Stroud District?

Q5. Are there any other areas where you believe the District Council should be spending **less** money?

Section Three : Council Tax Options & Council Priorities

Q6. The level of the Budget set by the District Council next year will only have a small impact on next year's Council Tax, because the District Council receives just 12.5p in every £1, with the majority of any increase going to the County Council and the Police Authority.

The District Council will soon be considering the level of Council Tax for next year. A small increase may be necessary that will be broadly in line with inflation and with recent increases.

Which of these options would you prefer the District Council to choose? Please consider the options carefully before providing us with your response.

- a 0% increase (no change for a Band D property), but with a reduction in services..... 1
- a 3% increase (10p per week for a Band D property), with some very slight improvements in services..... 2
- an increase of 5% (17p per week for a Band D property), with a small improvement in services..... 3
- [none of these (**PROBE**)] 4
- [don't know] 5



Why do you say that? What option would you prefer?

Q7. I will now read out a short list of statements. For each, do you agree or disagree: **PROBE**

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | disagree strongly | disagree | neither | agree | agree strongly |
| I believe services should be improved and I am prepared to pay for this | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| the District's services are adequate already; there is no need to improve them | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| the District's first priority should be to make savings, before asking for more money | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

Q8. Having carefully considered the competing priorities of local people, the District Council will focus on **FIVE** broad areas in its Corporate Delivery Plan for 2008-12. Can you please indicate the level of importance, in your opinion, each area should be given? **[READ OUT]**

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | very low priority | low priority | neither | high priority | very high priority |
| Sending as little waste to landfill as possible, including recycling more | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Helping the community to minimise its carbon footprint and adapt to the consequences of climate change | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Creating public spaces and buildings , which are perceived to be cared for, clean, green and safe | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Providing more affordable homes | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Helping local people to find local solutions to long-term local problems, including the safeguarding of key district health services | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

Q9. Are there any other priorities that you think the District Council should focusing on?

Section Four : Your Local Area

Q10. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | fairly dissatisfied..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| fairly satisfied..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| neither | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

Q11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the District Council is working to make your area a better place to live?

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | fairly dissatisfied..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| fairly satisfied..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| neither | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |



Q12. Stroud District Council provides various opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making in your local area, including satisfaction surveys, tenants forums, youth councils, through your local councillor and in writing to formal committees. Overall, how satisfied are you with the opportunities you have for participating in local decision-making?

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | fairly dissatisfied..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| fairly satisfied..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| neither | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

Q13a The District Council has the opportunity to change how the Leader of the Council is elected. Currently, the Leader is elected annually by the Council members.

There are two options for the election of the Leader of the Council. In each case, the term of office would be four years. Which of these two alternatives would you choose ... **(READ OUT)**

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| a leader elected by the Council members | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| a mayor directly elected by members of the public | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| [don't know] | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |

Q13b The District Council also has the opportunity to change how elections for local Councillors are carried out. Currently, one third of councillors stand for re-election each year (except in the fourth year when there are no district council elections). The District Council could opt to move to 'whole Council' elections, which would mean that **all** councillors would be up for election at the same time, and this would happen once every four years.

Which of these two alternatives would you choose ... **(READ OUT)**

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| the current system where a third of Councillors are elected every year | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| a new system, with all councillors up for re-election once every four years..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| [don't know] | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |

Section Five : Other Questions

Q14. To encourage more recycling, the District Council is considering a change to its waste collection arrangements. Every week, it would collect all food waste and the green recycling box. All other household waste would be collected every fortnight. Do you think this is a good or bad idea? **PROBE**

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a very bad idea | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | a good idea..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| a bad idea | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | a very good idea..... | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| neither | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

Q15. The District Council could face increasing landfill taxes if it fails to reduce the amount of household waste produced locally. Would you be prepared to pay increased Council Tax to keep the current weekly waste collection service **OR** would you rather swap to the alternative service where food and recyclables are collected every week, but all other household waste is collected fortnightly?

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| pay higher Council Tax for the current service | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| swap to the alternative service | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |

Q16. Would you say that you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | disagree strongly | disagree | neither | agree | agree strongly |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| I believe that Stroud District Council is businesslike & efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the way Stroud District Council runs things | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Overall, the services provided by Stroud District Council have improved over the past few years | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |



- I think that we get value for money from Stroud District Council 1 2 3 4 5
- Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment 1 2 3 4 5

Section Six : Profile Questions

- Q17.** Finally, can I take some details about yourself? First, how old are you?
 18-24 1 55-64 5
 25-34 2 65-74 6
 35-44 3 75+ 7
 45-54 4 refused 8
- Q18.** What is your postcode? (eg GL51 9AG)
-
- Q19.** How long have you/your household been living in the Stroud District?
 under 1 year 1 11-20 years 5
 1-2 years 2 21years or more 6
 3-5 years 3 don't know / can't remember 7
 6-10 years 4
- Q20.** In total, how many adults are there in your household (including yourself)?
 one 1 three 3
 two 2 four or more 4
- Q21.** And how many children (under 18)?
 none 1 two 3
 one 2 three or more 4
- Q22.** Are you, or is any member of your immediate household, registered disabled?
 yes 1 no 2
- Q23.** Which of the following best describes your housing circumstances? **READ OUT**
 owned outright 1
 buying on a mortgage 2
 renting from the council 3
 renting from a housing association (or RSL) 4
 renting from a private landlord 5
 other 6
- Q24.** Which of the following ethnic groups do you consider you belong to?
 white, or white British 1
 Asian or Asian British 2
 black or black British 3
 Chinese, or other ethnic group 4
 mixed 5
 other (**PROBE**) 6
 [refused] 7
what other background or group? (WRITE IN)
-

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE. THEN RECORD THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

- Q25.** GENDER
 male 1 female 2



Q26. Time of Interview (24 hour clock)

Q27. Duration of Interview (minutes)

Q28. Name of interviewer



Appendix C: Copy of the Discussion Workshop Topic Guide



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION TOPIC GUIDE

Introduction

- Household Make-up, Employment status
- Length of time living in the District

General attitudes towards Stroud District

- What do they like/dislike about the District?
- How well do they think the District is run? Levels of Satisfaction
- What are their impressions of Stroud District as a council?
- Which council services perform well/badly that they know of?
- What is their impression of how well the Council manages the budget?

Corporate Priorities

- What do they think should be the Council's main priorities for this year? and the next 5 years?
- In groups, design five priorities for the Council to achieve in the District of Stroud
- Here are the actual corporate priorities, how do they compare? What do they think of the corporate priorities?
- Would they like to change anything?
- In which order of priority would they put these and why give reasons?

Budget Evaluation

- Looking at the list of services, which ones would they like to see prioritised?
- Which do they think needs less prominence?
- Looking at some specific costs, would they choose any of these as extra and pay more CT? Equally would they lose them to save council tax
 - community warden cost
 - cost of a leisure centre
 - lose weekly refuse collection go to two weekly
 - cost of flower decorations
 - cost of a dog warden
 - paying for festivals
- Looking at the items which are statutory, where would they make savings? Would they lose any of the non-statutories in order to lower their council tax?
- Put together the budget that they want to see ideally? Respondents choose from cards with all the services written on them? Stick what they want on boards as a group exercise
- Then mark which items they would take off if the Government tell them suddenly they can't have the full budget. Where do they make savings and why?

