

**Budget Consultation 2007**

**Report of Research**

**November 2007**

**Report prepared for:**

**Stroud District Council  
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Appendix A: Copy of the Telephone Survey Questionnaire

Appendix B: Copy of the Discussion Workshop Topic Guide



# 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 2004-2006. 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 2008/9 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 random selection of residents of the District by means of 300 telephone interviews and two discussion workshops.

## 1.2 Summary of Key Findings

There continues to be broad positive support for Stroud District Council and the services that it delivers, with signs of an increase in positive attitudes towards the Authority. This year, 69% said they were happy with the way the Council runs things (up from 61%), and 60% believe that the Council is businesslike and efficient (up from 55% last year). Also, three quarters are satisfied with the way the Council is working to improve the environment.

For almost all the Council's services, the balance of residents' opinion continues to rate services as being good or very good. Refuse-collection, and waste & recycling remain the Council's star services, with signs of a small year-on-year upturn in positive attitudes here, reversing the decline seen over the last two years. This year, 72% gave recycling and composting a good/very good score; the score for refuse collection was 85%.

There has been an upturn in positive satisfaction for almost all Council services – most notably for leisure services, the Museum and community safety. The poorest-performing services remain the same as they were last year, but there are signs of a worsening of perceptions in the case of public conveniences (half the population gave these a poor/very poor score, up from 46% last year) and street cleaning (now 28% poor or very poor, up from 21% last year).

In the workshop discussions there was more interest shown in how money was spent in the District this year, but people expressed a slight feeling of being down-trodden compared to other places in the County (eg Cotswold and Cheltenham) that got more investment and were 'better' places to live. A new finding this year was that, in the 'southern' part of the District, there was a feeling that things have improved a little in the last 2-3 years, albeit with a lot still to do.

There is considerable evidence this year that residents want to see more money spent to improve services, with just two services (car parks and licensing) where fewer people this year say they want to see more spending. Nevertheless, the majority of opinion continues to be in favour of keeping spending constant – and this is true for almost all services. The principal exceptions are public conveniences and town centre improvements, where more than half the population want spending to increase.



This desire to see more spending also came out in the Council Tax question. Of the three options for Council Tax increases that were examined in the research (a 0%, 2½% or 5% increase in the District's part), the middle option was favoured by the largest group (48%, down from 57% last year) – but there has been a doubling in the number of people preferring a 5% increase in order to get service improvements (up from 12% to 23% over the past year). The average preferred increase, calculated from these figures, works out at 2.5% this year (quite an increase on the 2.2% last year).

Once again this year, the research examined the Council's five priority areas. The three areas given highest priority in the survey were the environment (68% a high or very high priority), affordable housing (63%) and community safety (58%). In the workshops, two extra priorities were called for: something related to the way the Council works (effectiveness of representation, efficiency of systems and impartiality), and a request for a more 'visionary' priority which sets out how the Council wants the District to develop over the next few years, what type of a District it should be and how the residents should benefit.

This year, the survey looked at a number of indicators of well being, in order to provide a comparison with last year's BVPI survey. On the subject of the area as a place to live, there were very high levels of satisfaction (93% said they were fairly or very satisfied) and nearly two-thirds (65%) said that they were satisfied that the District Council is working to make the area as a better place to live.

On average, 56% said that they are happy with the various opportunities for residents to participate in local decision-making, but there are major differences between the age groups – about a third under the age of 45 are dissatisfied on this topic, reducing to 13% amongst the over 65s.

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 (49% preferring the current system, with 42% preferring 'whole Council' elections every four years).

The workshops included a brief examination of the household leaflet for the 'Stanleys' recycling project, and found that people's initial outright rejection of the concept was turned around once they had realised that food waste was to be collected every week. The telephone survey (which didn't have this opportunity for discussion) revealed a hardening of opinion against the proposed revised recycling arrangements (61% thought it was a bad or very bad idea, up from 52% in 2006). However, once the potential implications for higher Council Tax were explained to them, the largest group (45%) swung in favour of the revised collection arrangements (26% would prefer higher taxes with the current arrangements, 29% couldn't choose between the two options).

Finally, the survey briefly looked at the Council's response to last summer's floods. Just over a quarter of residents (27%) said that they had been affected by the loss of water supply and the clear majority believed that SDC did a good job (although people directly affected were more critical in their views): 76% thought the council had done well at maintaining bottled water supplies at local supermarkets, 65% well for the delivery of bottled water to vulnerable people and 63% well at keeping residents informed through web and media.



## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Background**

In October 2007, Stroud District Council commissioned The Research Box for the fourth year running 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 2008/9 and which would help the Authority decide on the level of Council Tax increase for the forthcoming year.

### **2.2 Method**

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

#### **Resident Telephone Survey**

The views of residents of the Stroud District were obtained by means of a telephone survey conducted amongst a random selection of households in the District. Respondents were people responsible (solely or jointly) for the payment of Council Tax in their household. A total of 300 residents responded to the survey. Fieldwork took place between 26<sup>th</sup> October and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

The interview took, on average, just over 16 minutes to conduct, a little shorter than in 2006. 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 the Council's response to the summer floods
- attitudes towards recycling and potential changes to waste collections
- profile questions (for example, age, sex and household circumstances).

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

#### **Qualitative Discussion Groups**

As was the case with the budget consultation study in previous years, a phase of qualitative research was included in order to provide greater depth to the understanding of residents' views. The groups provided a creative format for discussion and comprised between 8 and 10 people. This year, two workshops were held during w/c 30<sup>th</sup> October; the location and make-up of the groups is shown on the following page:



<b>Age</b>	<b>Socio-economic grouping</b>	<b>Venue</b>
18-45	C2DE	Dursley
36-75	BC1C2	Stroud

People were recruited from the entire District, including Painswick, Stroud, Leonard Stanley, Frampton Mansell, Nailsworth, Berkeley, Dursley, and Wotton.

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

### **2.3 Structure of the Report**

This report summarises the principal 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 Residents' Views**

As was the case in the previous three 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 four statements and say whether they agreed or disagreed with them. The statements were:

- I believe that Stroud District Council is businesslike and efficient
- generally, 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.

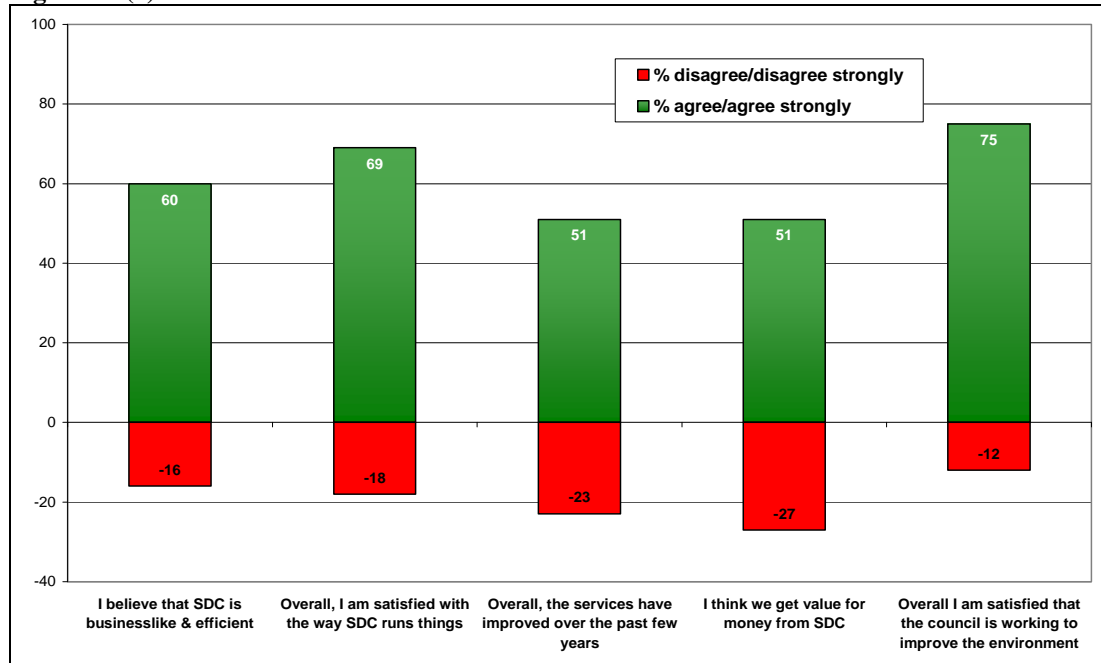
This year a new statement was added:

- overall I am satisfied that SDC is working to improve the environment.

The responses to the statements are generally positive. As can be seen overleaf, nearly 70% of residents are satisfied with the way that the Council runs things, 60% agreed or agreed strongly that the DC is businesslike and efficient, and over half agreed or agreed strongly that services have improved and that they get value for money from SDC. When asked if they were satisfied that the Council is working to improve the environment, three quarters agreed or agreed strongly with this statement. The weakest area – where there was the highest number (over a quarter) of people disagreeing or disagreeing strongly – was whether the Council delivers 'value for money'.



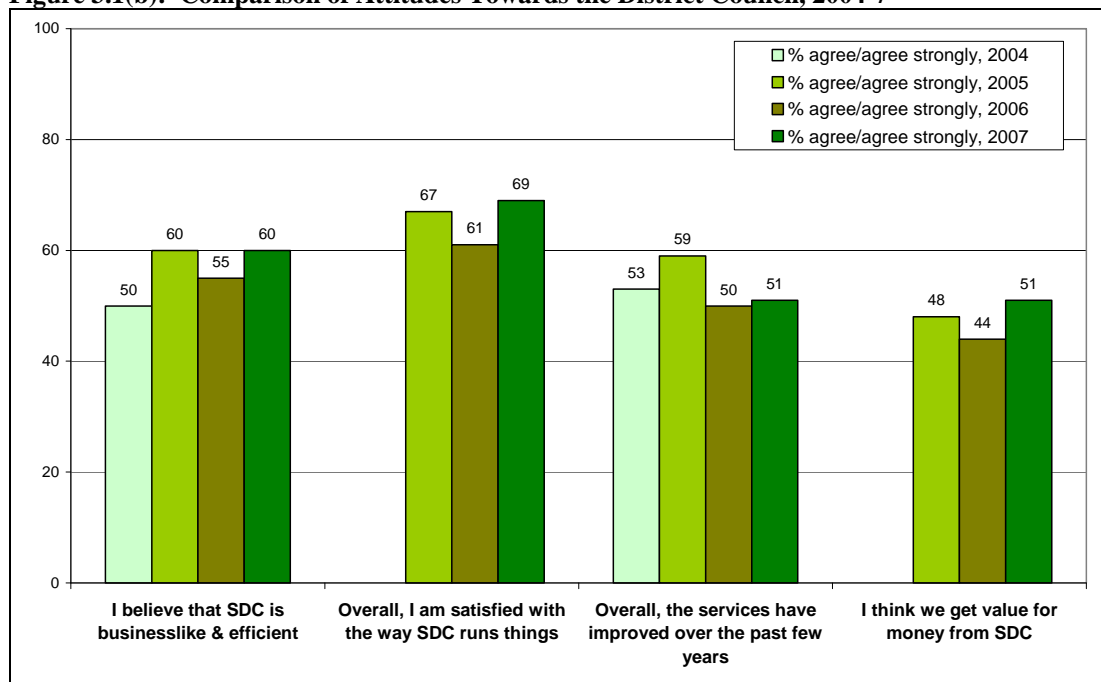
**Figure 3.1(a): Attitudes Towards the District Council 2007**



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 an improvement in positive attitudes since last year, reversing the decline observed in 2006.

**Figure 3.1(b): Comparison of Attitudes Towards the District Council, 2004-7**

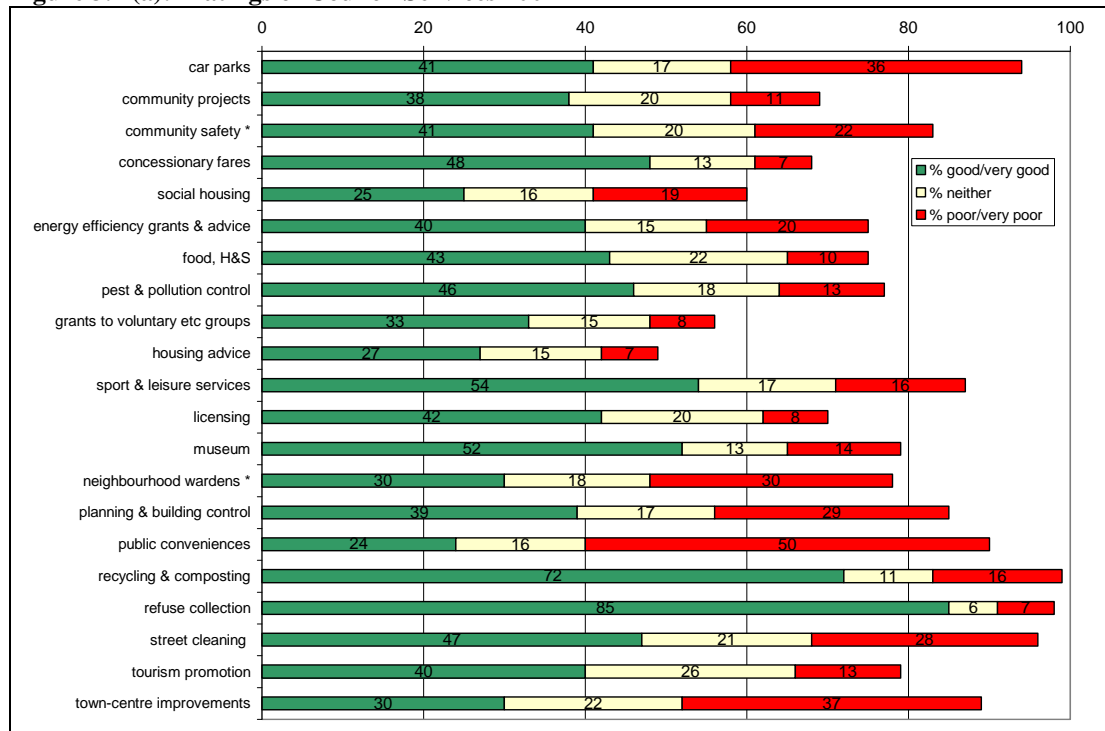


Note: in 2004 the value for money question was not asked



Respondents were asked to rate the Council’s services, whether they used them or not. Their *perceived* performance of the Council was rated on a five-point scale from very poor to very good. Two services achieve extremely high ratings: refuse collection (85%) and recycling & composting (72%) were both seen to be (very) good by most residents. Two other services scored well, achieving positive ratings from around 50% or more of the sample; these were ‘sport & leisure services’ and the museum. The worst performing services were ‘public conveniences’, ‘social housing’ and ‘housing advice’. This chart excludes those residents who said ‘don’t know’, so the percentages shown do not necessarily sum to 100.

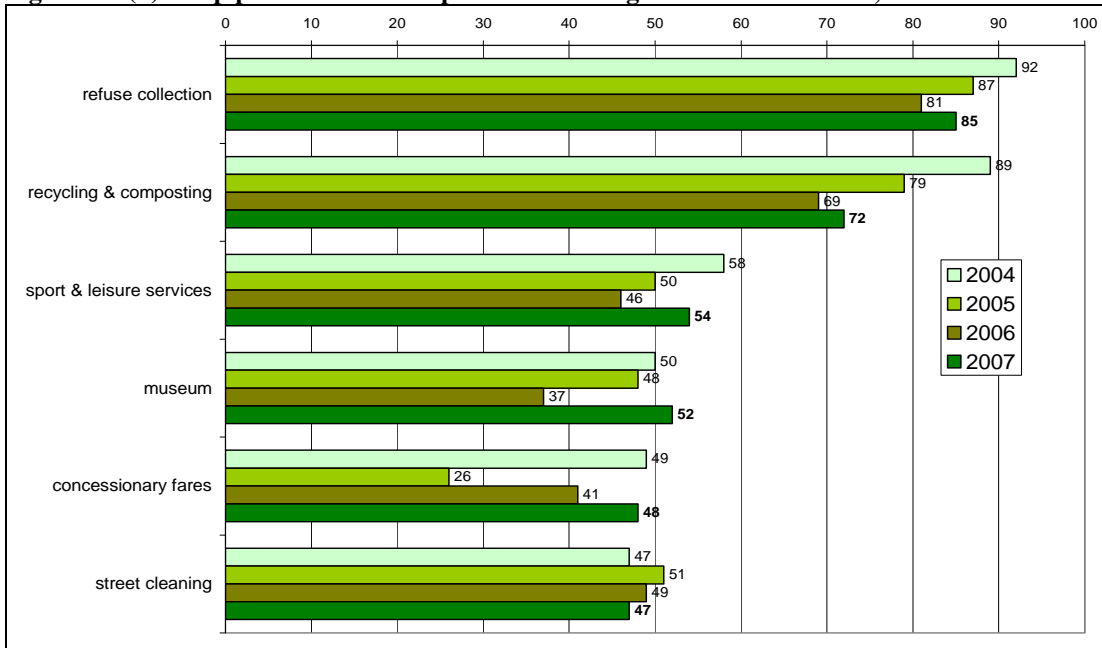
**Figure 3.2 (a): Ratings of Council Services 2007**



In line with the earlier findings that showed a general increase in positive attitudes towards the District Council, attitudes towards some of the top performing services run by the Council have also seen an increase in positive perceptions (those rating the services as very good or good). The only area, amongst these top-performing services, where there has been a decline this year (compared with 2006) was for street cleaning.



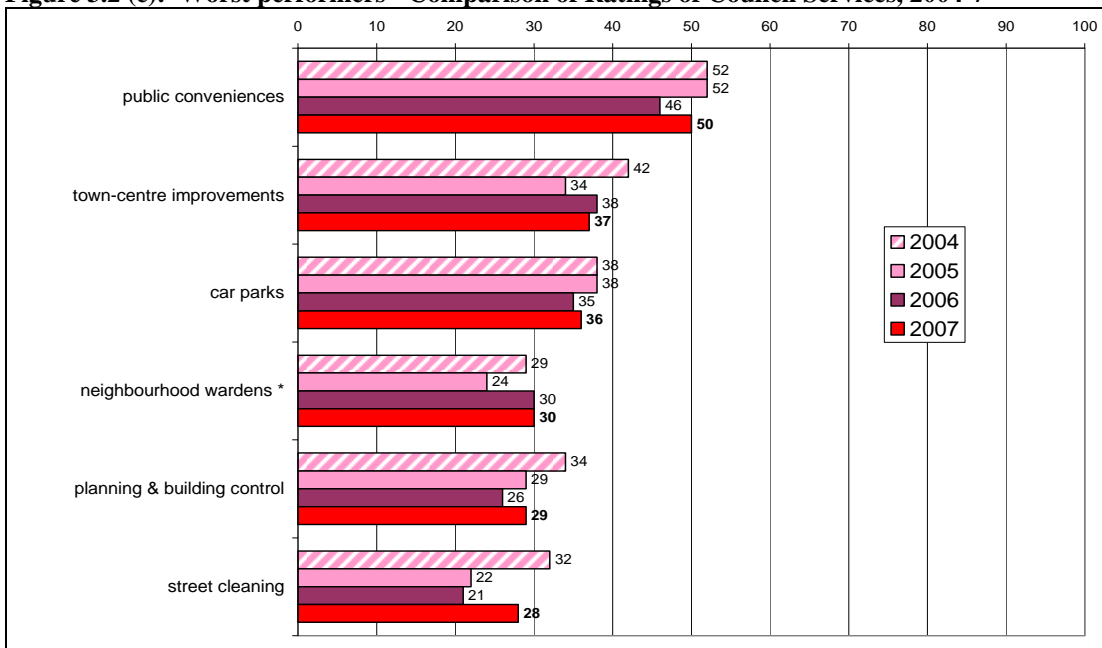
**Figure 3.2 (b): Top performers - Comparison of Ratings of Council Services, 2004-7**



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

The worst performing services remain as they have been in previous years: public conveniences, town-centre improvements and car parks, with perceptions on public conveniences worsening this year, reversing the improvement in 2006.

**Figure 3.2 (c): Worst performers - Comparison of Ratings of Council Services, 2004-7**



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



### 3.3 Insights from the Qualitative Research

#### Overall Budget Attitudes

There was more interest shown this year in how money was spent in the District, with people having higher expectations than last year. They were fascinated by the amounts spent in each service area but felt rather cynical that they personally hadn't seen a large enough improvement for their council tax increases.

Satisfaction overall was better in the 'southern' part of the District than we have found in previous years. There was a feeling that things have improved a little in the last 2-3 years, but that there was still a lot to do

In the 'northern' part of the District people were, on the whole, pleased that Stroud had improved in the last 10 years but thought that the 'job needed finishing off'.

As a whole, the District was felt to suffer compared with other parts of the County (eg Cotswold and Cheltenham). It seemed to them that there was more investment in these areas and that they were 'better' places to live. Stroud District was considered to be a little down-trodden – apart from some rural villages, dubbed 'the dreamy bits'.

There was quite a lot of negativity surrounding the effectiveness of 'political representation', having their voices heard and whether there were realistic ways to effect change. This seemed to relate to their experiences of expressing views at public meetings, which did not then change councillors' minds.

#### Positive Areas of Achievement

On the whole, despite a perception of squabbling amongst councillors, people thought the Council made some good decisions and had improved some things. A number of issues were spontaneously mentioned as having improved or were given as examples of good service/ investment, such as street cleaners in the town centres. Street cleaning was considered to be less successful further afield, with some blackspots mentioned in places like Ebley and Paganhill. Respondents wanted a system to be invested in whereby such 'blackspots' (such as hang-outs, bus stops, outside pubs) were identified, with 'swat teams' dealing with the problems.

There were some very positive comments made about the Stroud Museum with an impression of interesting activities involving children etc and an events schedule. This is in contrast to previous years when there has been low awareness and few positive comments, so there seems to have been some improvement here; the museum in Wotton-under-Edge was also praised (as were events, music and arts generally).

*"The Museum in the Park is very good and it is fantastic you can have a Wedding there."*

*"The Museum is very good with the history of the cloth and walking sticks. Wide opening hours, I think that is a positive."*

Recycling schemes were felt to be good and rather better now ('they seem to be less fussy about what they take nowadays') with an impression that the system was a little more comprehensive. Respondents were happy that Stroud had not moved to two-weekly waste collection, but complained about only having one black bin bag given to them (but see later).



It was mentioned that there was money available for community groups and that they were generally quite vibrant. The policy in this area was praised, but there was concern that awareness needed raising. A particular community group, called G11, was praised in the Dursley area for helping economically less-advantaged people, including trips for young families and elderly luncheon clubs. In general, directing funding towards such groups was considered to be important.

Grants for home improvements and energy efficiency were praised. One or two respondents had experience and were very impressed by the friendly and efficient service given.

Finally, Careline was generally perceived to be a good service.

### **Less Positive Areas**

There were some areas that people were 'almost' positive about. For example, the tourist offices were praised, but not the tourism strategy. The Stroud office in particular was praised, as were the Nailsworth and Wotton offices, but the service was considered patchy in other places. The tourism potential of Dursley was felt to be considerably unrealised. Respondents felt that other districts had clearer tourism strategies (the Cotswolds and Cheltenham were cited here) but that Stroud did not.

Concessionary fares were praised too, although some people thought that concessions were given out 'willy nilly' – there was a perception by a few that too many concessionary fares were granted to groups with social problems, to the extent of making the buses 'dangerous'.

Leisure services were felt to be 'alright' with sport facilities in schools being mentioned positively (better than previous years). Generally, there were considered to be a few problems with most facilities for example:

- the cleanliness of Stroud pool changing rooms
- the size and overcrowding at Dursley pool
- problems in recreation grounds.

People didn't always know that the Stroud pool is SDC's responsibility; some people were going out of the District to access Thornbury pool, private facilities, or clubs.

### **Negative Issues**

There were some issues that, on the whole, respondents thought were not working properly, despite a few examples of good practice or evidence of change and good decision-making.

### **Regeneration**

On the whole, there was a need for regeneration of local towns and villages. If the villages were lively then the towns benefited, it was thought. People talked about some good example areas, such as:

- 'Redlers', where the site was being improved (the area around Sainsbury's roundabout)
- Ebley, where the housing along this strip seemed to look acceptable



- Oakridge, Stonehouse and Nailsworth, all mentioned as having some good places.

However, this regeneration was often put down to people and strong town councils, rather than SDC. However, there were also annoying examples that showed a lack of consistency, and examples of complete eyesores, such as ‘the knocking’ down or NOT of Tricorn house’ and the empty commercial property in Silver Street, Dursley.

*“Silver Street is terrible, run down. Businesses start and fail. It has taken 20 years to decide which supermarket. It is like the Golden Goose”*

*“The trouble is with the rates; I know several people who want to open up a restaurant in Stroud but they can’t afford it. We want local people to have restaurants not Pizza Express or Starbucks.”*

## Housing

The building of large high-density estates (in Bussage and the ‘Crest Nicholson’ estate on the edge of Dursley) was criticised because they were seen to be like ‘rabbit hutches’ with no facilities. There was a belief that affordable housing is not actually affordable:

*“In Butterow a two-bedroomed, two up, two down, mid terraced cottage no parking, no garden. It was a starter home originally and now it’s £200,000. I think that is why the Council want my father out of his council house because it is now worth £250,000”*

On the subject of social housing, whilst there was some positive views about frontline staff and the repair service, the larger decisions involving ‘middle’ management were considered to be poor, lengthy and protracted. There was an impression from long waiting lists that there was not enough social housing because the Council was selling it off, or because too many people qualified for the ‘wrong’ reasons.

*“I’m not even English and my partner’s Polish but we’ve been told we might qualify.”*

There was much discussion about residential rents being too high and landlords being too powerful. There was a call for the Council to subsidise and ‘control’ landlords. Rents of £400-500 a month were given as examples for places that were considered to be ‘no more than bedsits’.

Homelessness, whilst not considered to be a problem across the District, was mentioned as being a problem in and around the station in Stroud. This was linked to lengthy concerns about a ‘drug situation’ in the town that hindered it in terms of image, environment and feelings of safety.

*“That was my first impression of Stroud compared with Cirencester and Tetbury was I don’t like this place it is full of junkies. There are simple ways of getting around that and that is to have a halfway house where they can go. There is a lot of them living rough down the railway station”.*

Some other negative issues mentioned were around the planning department and the lack of signposting for car parks.

*“There are car parks but you just can’t find them.”*

*“Have you seen the size of the planning department, the piles of paper everywhere? Surely a bit less bureaucracy and a bit less red tape. The smaller projects they seem to clamp down on but the larger ones seem to get by without a quibble.”*



## 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 Residents' Views

#### Council Tax Increases

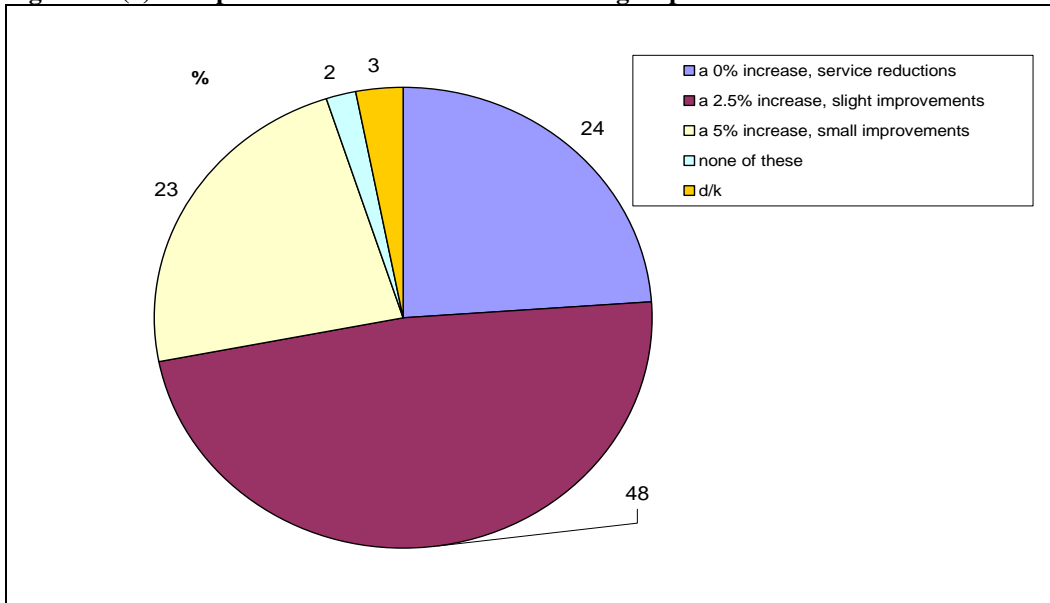
In the telephone survey, residents were asked to choose a preferred option for the District Council's Council Tax increase for next year. Beforehand, they were informed that *"the level of the Budget set by the District Council next year will only have a small impact on next year's Council Tax, because 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 2½% increase (8p per week for a Band D property), with some very slight improvements in services
- a 5% increase (16p/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 2½% increase that would allow for some very slight improvements to services.

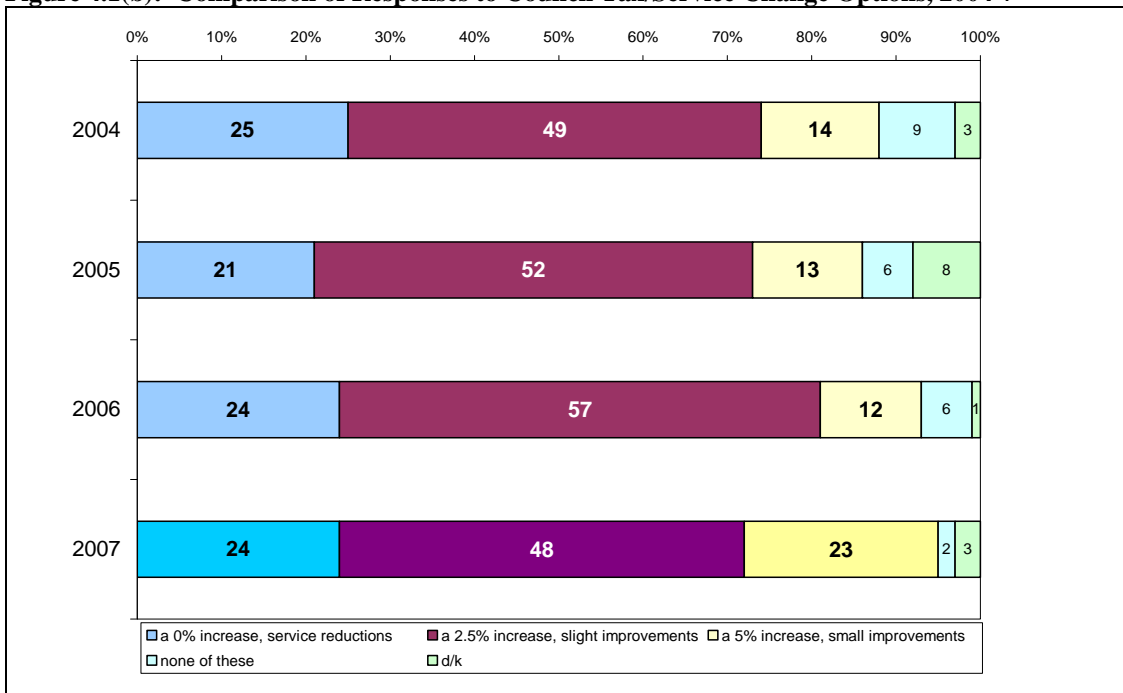


**Figure 4.1(a): Response to Council Tax/Service Change Options 2007**



A comparison with the results to the same question from previous years' surveys shows that there has been a doubling in the number of people who would prefer a 5% increase in order to achieve small service improvements since last year. The average preferred increase, calculated from these figures, works out at 2.5% this year (quite an increase on the 2.2% last year).

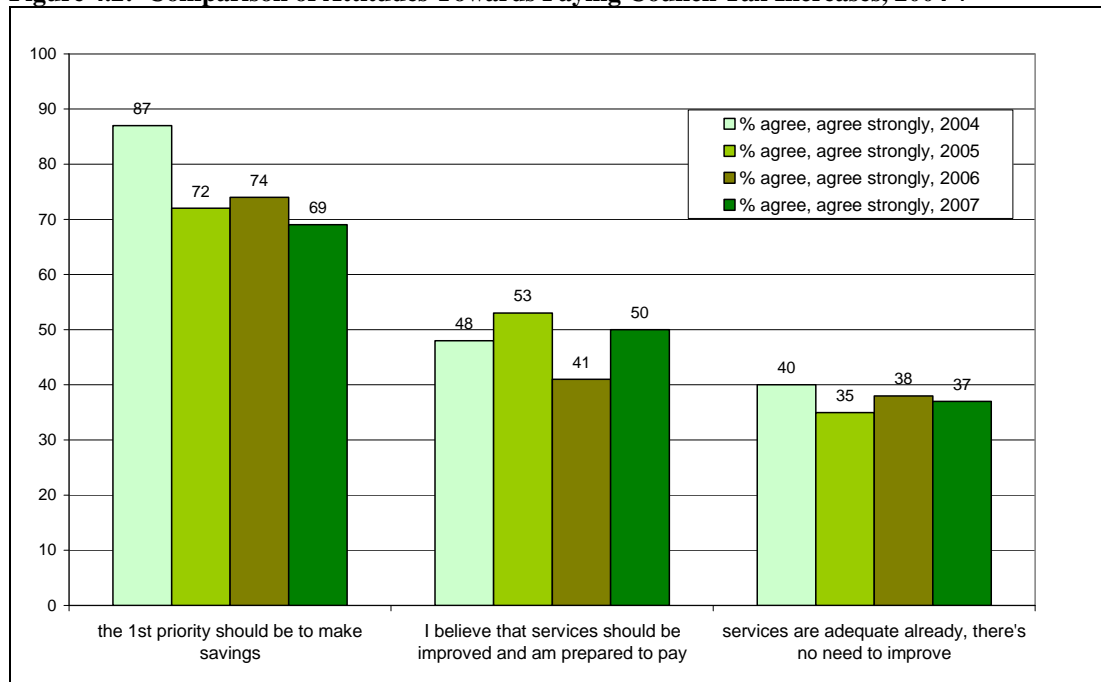
**Figure 4.1(b): Comparison of Responses to Council Tax/Service Change Options, 2004-7**



Note: in 2004, the options were 0%, 3% 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 more people this year wanted services improved and were prepared to pay for this (half of the entire sample, a significant increase from the 41% who agreed with this statement last year).



**Figure 4.2: Comparison of Attitudes Towards Paying Council Tax Increases, 2004-7**

## Spending Priorities

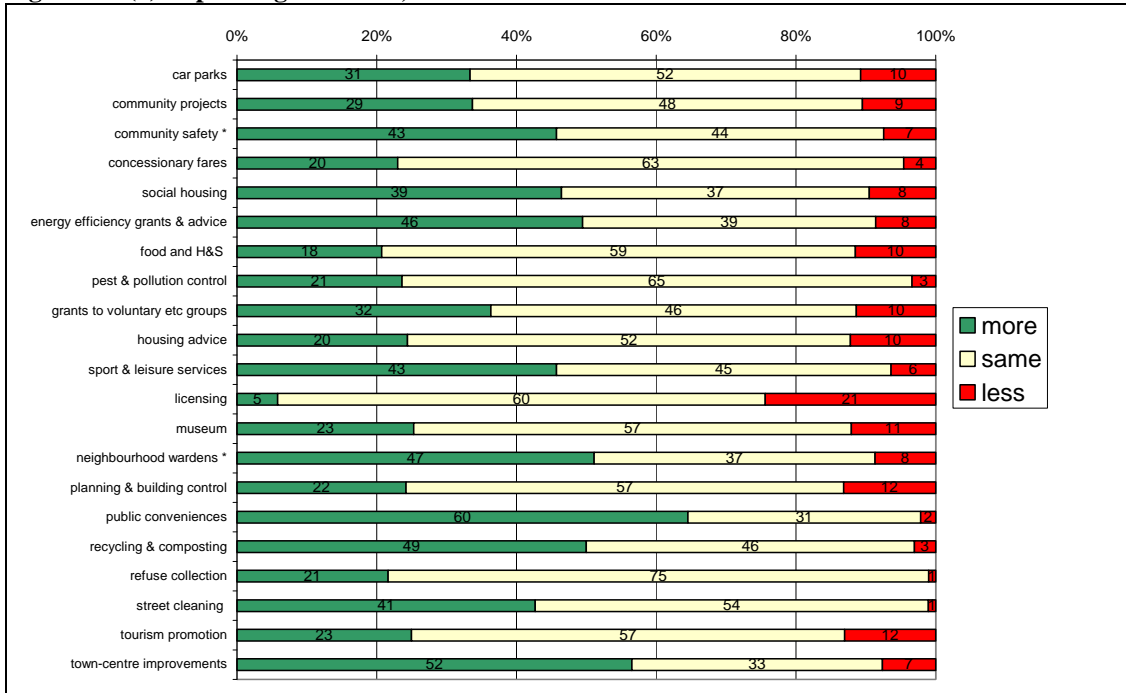
Residents were next given a list of Council services and were asked to indicate whether they thought the Council should be spending more, the same, or less on each service.

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:

- for all but a handful of services, most residents believe that spending should stay the same as it is now – these services are: social housing, energy efficiency grants & advice, neighbourhood wardens, public conveniences, recycling and composting and town-centre improvements where the largest group of people said 'spend more'
- for all but one service (licensing), there are more residents who believe that there should be more spending than there are who believe that spending should be less.



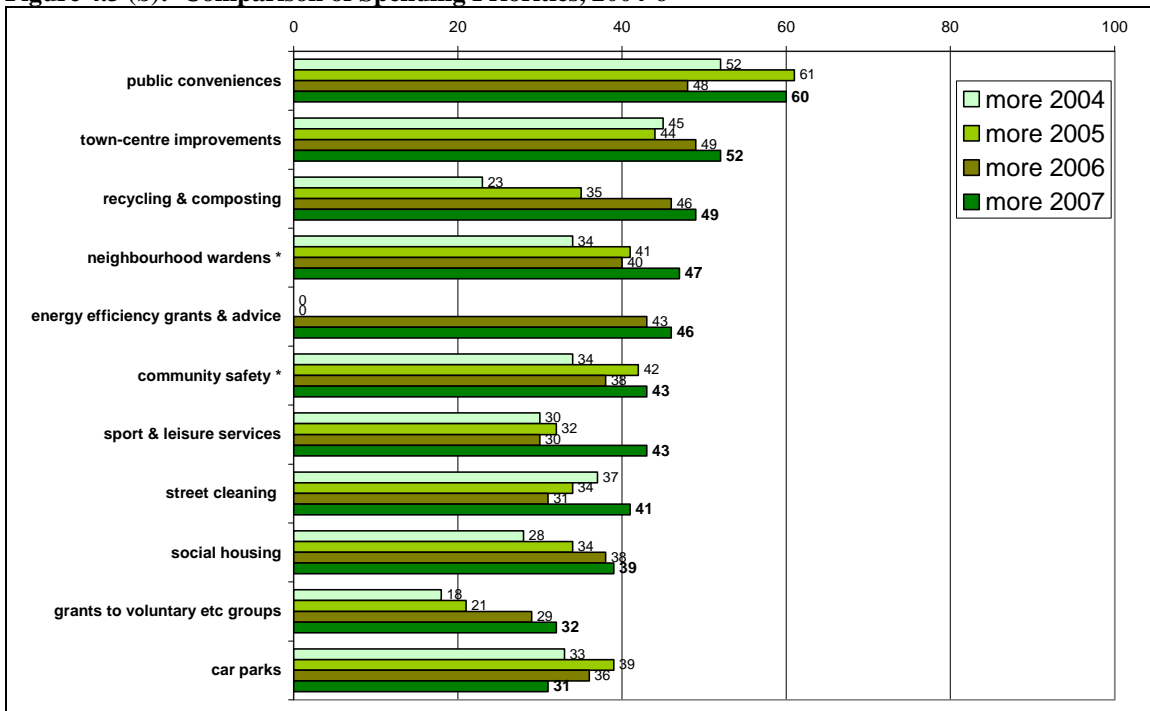
**Figure 4.3 (a): Spending Priorities, Residents**



Note: ignores the percentages that said 'don't know'

The majority of the population want to see increased spending on public conveniences and town-centre improvements; they continue to be top of the list. There has been a big leap for increased spending on neighbourhood wardens, sport and leisure and street cleaning this year compared to 2006.

**Figure 4.3 (b): Comparison of Spending Priorities, 2004-6**



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 responses are summarised in the following table.

**Table 4.1: Other Candidates for More or Less Spending**

Principal Areas for More Spending	Principal Areas for Less Spending
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roads &amp; traffic</li> <li>• car parking</li> <li>• public transport</li> <li>• police and wardens</li> <li>• recycling</li> <li>• street lighting</li> <li>• town centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Council</li> <li>• council staff, their salaries and expenses</li> <li>• lighting</li> <li>• car park machines</li> <li>• roads</li> <li>• grants</li> <li>• the canal</li> </ul>

Note: these are in order of the strength of opinion

Example quotes included:

- **more spending**

*The recycling collections don't take cardboard, so more money should be spent increasing the range of things that residents can recycle.*

*There should be more dog wardens because dog mess is a big problem in the area. Kids also tend to make a mess of the bus shelters, and I know it's a losing battle but the cleaning needs to be improved.*

*Town centre improvements are important. Dursley is looking very tatty these days. Making it more aesthetically pleasing would be good. As you enter Dursley it should look better, just to make the area look like a better place to live and work.*

*Provision of council houses, but TO LET, not to buy*

*Bus shelters should be cleaner and more sheltered. And the council should collect leaves, we have tons, blocking our drains from a tree owned by the council. If they're going to have trees by the roads, they should clean up after themselves.*

*It isn't necessarily the quantity of money, it is the way they spend it. I also can't believe how poor the recycling is at the moment, it is diabolical, we don't have enough boxes for rubbish, and we don't have wheelie bins.*

*For me, the big one is recycling, there is no way near enough, e.g batteries, plastics, cardboard*

- **less spending**

*Expenses, the counsellors get expenses and they should cut back on them.*

*The pop-up loo was a bit of a waste of money for 17 grand! Sometimes I think the council makes some questionable decisions on how it spends its money, but funding levels shouldn't be reduced on anything I can think of.*

*Well I'm not too sure how much they're spending where, I think I would opt for affordable housing, so I think instead of planning new big projects, I think they should put more money for projects for people who don't have as much money, and so young people*



*Staff, I think too much is spent on staff, too much is spent on wages, and facilities, and counsellors expenses.*

*Drug rehab groups because they don't work.*

*I don't think that it is possible to spend less on anything*

The full list of verbatim answers may be found in the Tabulations Annexe that supports this report.



## 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 priority areas were:

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

This chapter presents the findings in this area.

### 5.2 Policy Priorities

#### Insights from the Workshops

In the workshops, respondents examined and discussed the five corporate priorities. As can be seen from the general discussion about the budget, the corporate priorities (apart from healthy living) were all considered to be important but, on the whole, the language of the priorities is felt to be a bit 'government-speak' and something more direct was requested:

- **affordable housing** remains to be a huge concern for some as does the provision of social housing (see previous budget conversations)
- respondents seemed to understand **regeneration** better this year and valued the benefits it could bring in terms of the economy and a better environment
- **community safety** was quite high on the agenda, but mainly in Stroud as the rest of the District was considered quite safe. There were some positive comments about neighbourhood wardens (better than in previous years)
- **environmental issues** were mentioned spontaneously in other parts of the discussion as being important to address, however they did not this year pick up so much on it as a corporate priority. Climate change concerns people and they wanted to have clean streets, rivers and public places. Quite often people said that if you get the 'regeneration' and the 'affordable housing' side of things right a good environment will follow (eg 'a nice environment around you').
- people continue to think that **healthy living** is not a Council responsibility and that they are bombarded elsewhere with such messages. However, they do think that leisure centres and other sport facilities are important. They have noticed more promotion of exercise classes and activities, which they think is important.



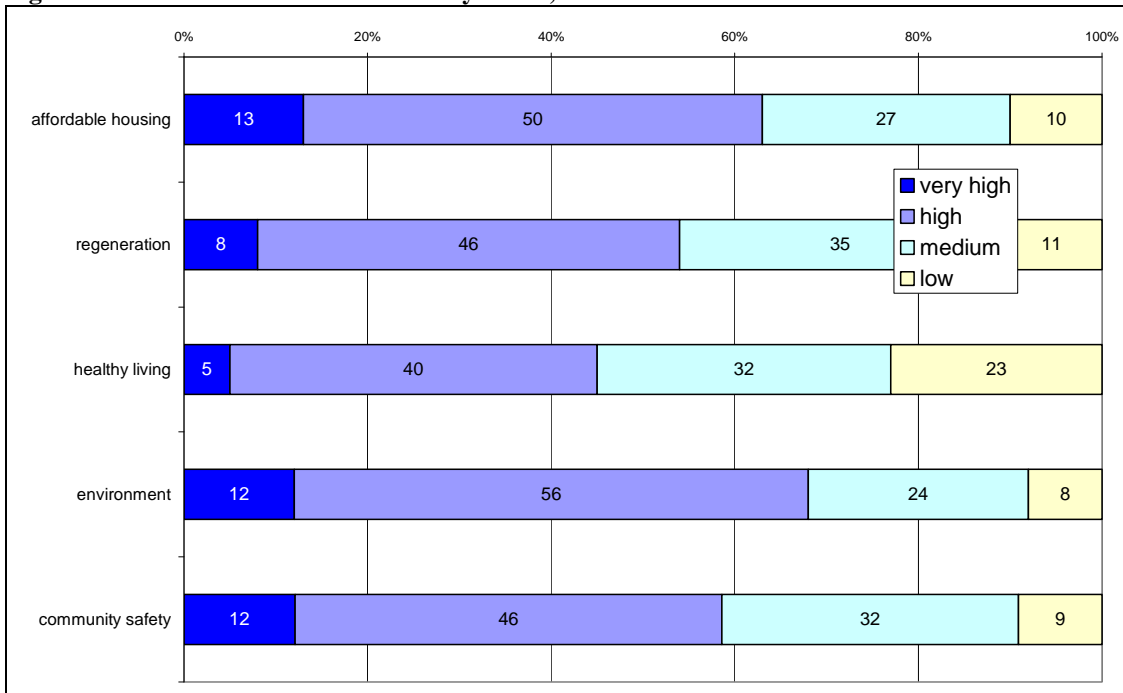
Respondents wanted two more priorities added:

- there was an interest in a ‘Local Democracy’ aspect that arose from a discussion of the budget leaflet and a suggestion was made that the corporate priorities ought to include something on ‘internal’ or ‘the way we work’ type issues, on effectiveness of representation, efficiency of systems and impartiality
- there was also a request for a more ‘visionary’ priority which sets out how the Council wants the District to develop over the next few years, what type of a District it should be and how local residents should benefit.

### Telephone Survey

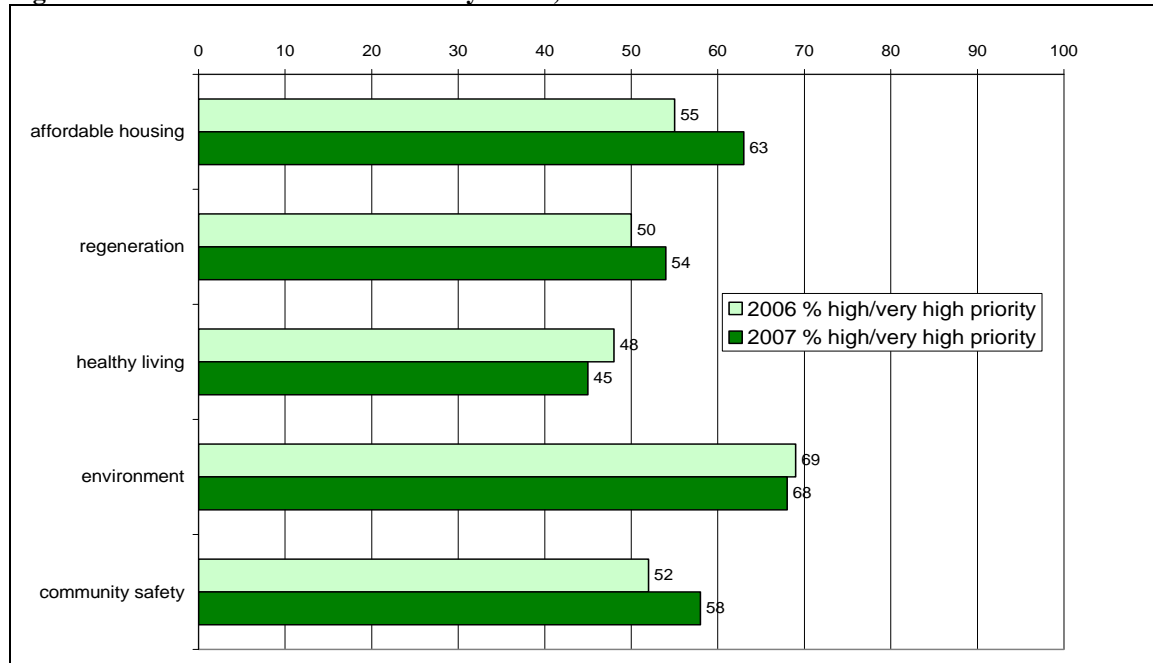
In the telephone survey, respondents were offered the five priorities and were asked to say whether they thought each should have a high, medium, or low priority. As may be seen in the next chart, all five areas were considered to be a high or very high priority by a majority of residents, with the environment having the highest priority score, which was consistent with the findings in 2006. Healthy living had the lowest priority.

**Figure 5.1: Priorities for Potential Policy Areas, Residents**



There has been quite a large increase in the priority scores for affordable housing and community safety since 2006.



**Figure 5.2: Priorities for Potential Policy Areas, Residents**

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

*YOUNG PEOPLE!!! I think they should prioritise to work together with the local young people. With promoting, a well-balanced social life, to stop vandalism and stuff, and to give them a place to go.*

*Planning applications should be followed up on; I think that there is a problem getting people to abide by planning decisions.*

*Housing for local people rather than incoming population; it's a shame that young people who were brought up here have to move away due to insufficient affordable housing*

*Healthy commerce, a thriving environment for commerce and small businesses. Our own economic stability.*

*Well, the one thing that I would like is more of a personal priority about housing. I would like to build a house on my land but the council have told me that I am not permitted*

*The environment is a top priority; we have to have a planet to live on. The kerbside recycling has been fantastic, but composting bins should be free and I think people would use them if they were delivered to their door.*

*It would be beneficial if they could providing more facilities for the youth, such as sports, leisure, and voluntary work*

*Basically, it is the problem with the roads again. They are in really bad condition, and the Council are not focusing on them. Instead they focus on road signs, which they seem to have too many of.*

*I think that council wardens could deal with youths misbehaving in car parks. I don't think it's a problem stemming from youths having nothing to do; it's a problem with drinking. Licensing definitely needs to be tightened, particularly at supermarkets*

*I think that they should certainly not build on green land.*



## 6. Other Question Areas

### 6.1 Introduction

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

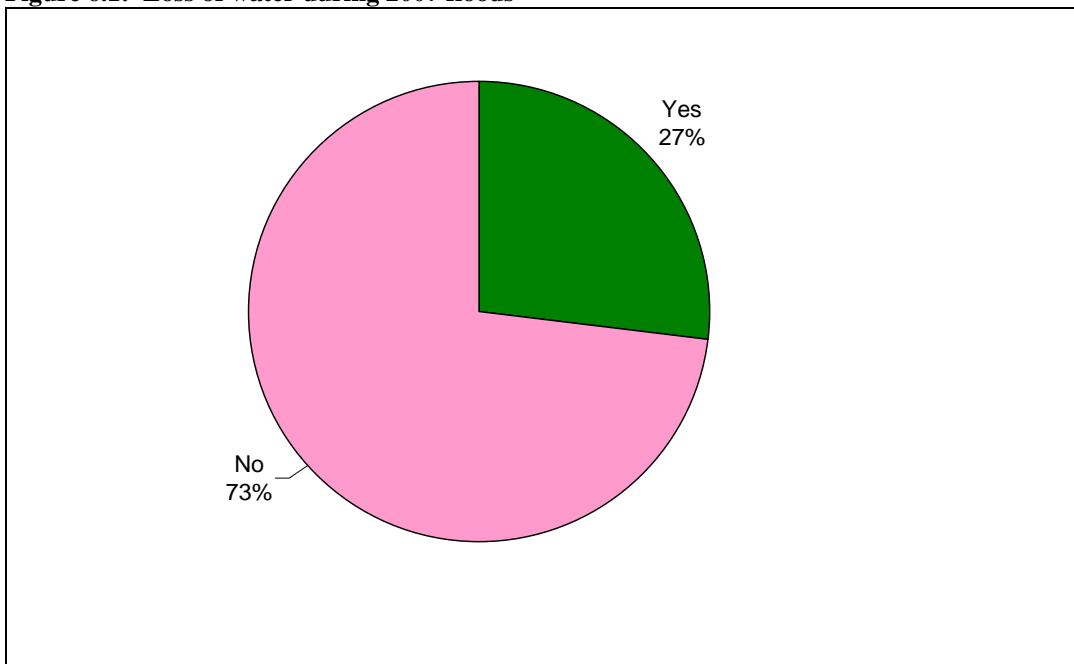
- attitudes concerning the Council's response to the loss of water supply following the summer floods
- potential new waste and recycling arrangements, including the Stanley's project
- representation and the electoral cycle
- perceptions of the area as a place to live, plus SDC's efforts to improve the area.

These topics are covered in this chapter.

### 6.2 Loss of Water Supply

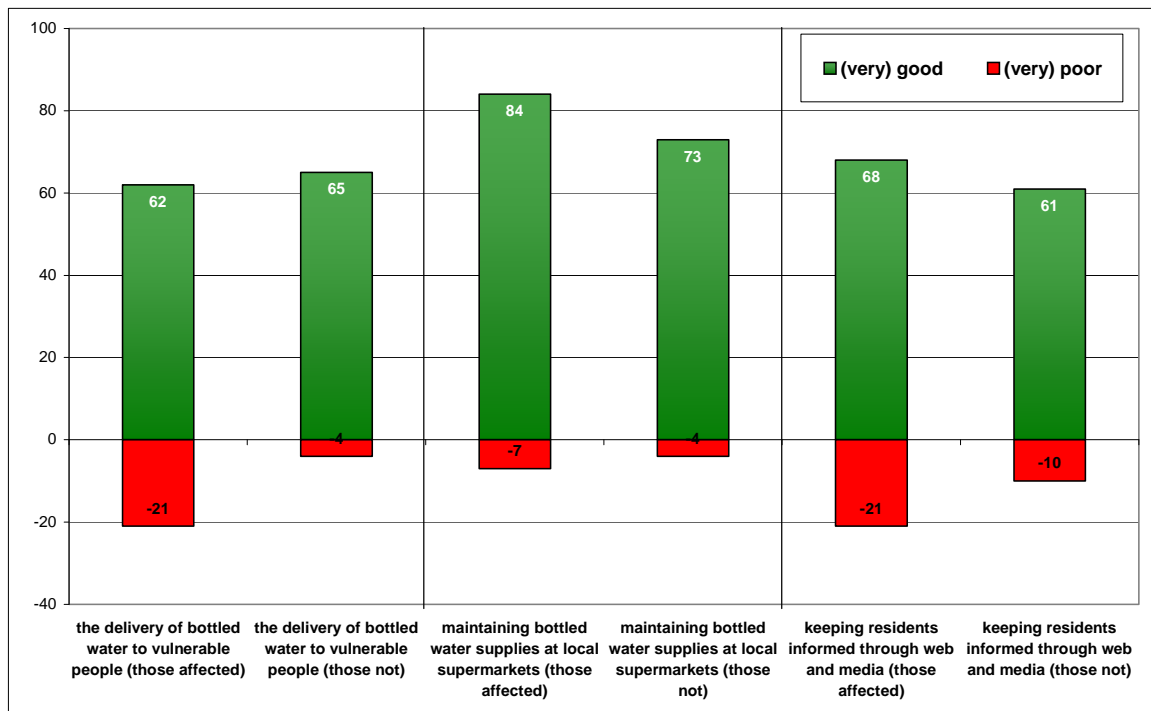
Just over a quarter of residents said they had been affected by the loss of water supply during last summer's floods.

**Figure 6.1: Loss of water during 2007 floods**



The clear majority believe that Stroud District Council did a good job in response; in particular, 76% of residents thought the Council were good/very good at maintaining bottled water supplies at local supermarkets, 65% that the Council did a good job for delivering bottled water to vulnerable people and 63% that they were kept informed through the web and media. But, as can be seen overleaf, people directly affected were more critical in their views.



**Figure 6.2: SDC response during the floods**

### 6.3 Potential New Waste & Recycling Arrangements

#### Workshop Response to the Stanley Project

Using the recycling leaflet produced for the Stanley project, the trial was explained in the workshops and comments were invited from respondents. They were immediately against the scheme but, when they realised that there would still be weekly collections of kitchen waste (which ‘attracts rats’), their attitudes changed completely. There were many horror stories told about the failing Bristol and London schemes, particularly concerning rats. The fact that Stroud has so far resisted two-weekly collections was considered to be a positive fact.

So although initially fiercely reactive against the scheme, they eventually became very positive about the new system – as long as it works and is fully supported and backed up (with no ‘half measures’). The scheme was seen to be a good way to spend council tax money and, although people realised they were resistant to change, they recognised that they needed to be ‘enabled’ or forced into change.

Remaining concerns were about the trial were:

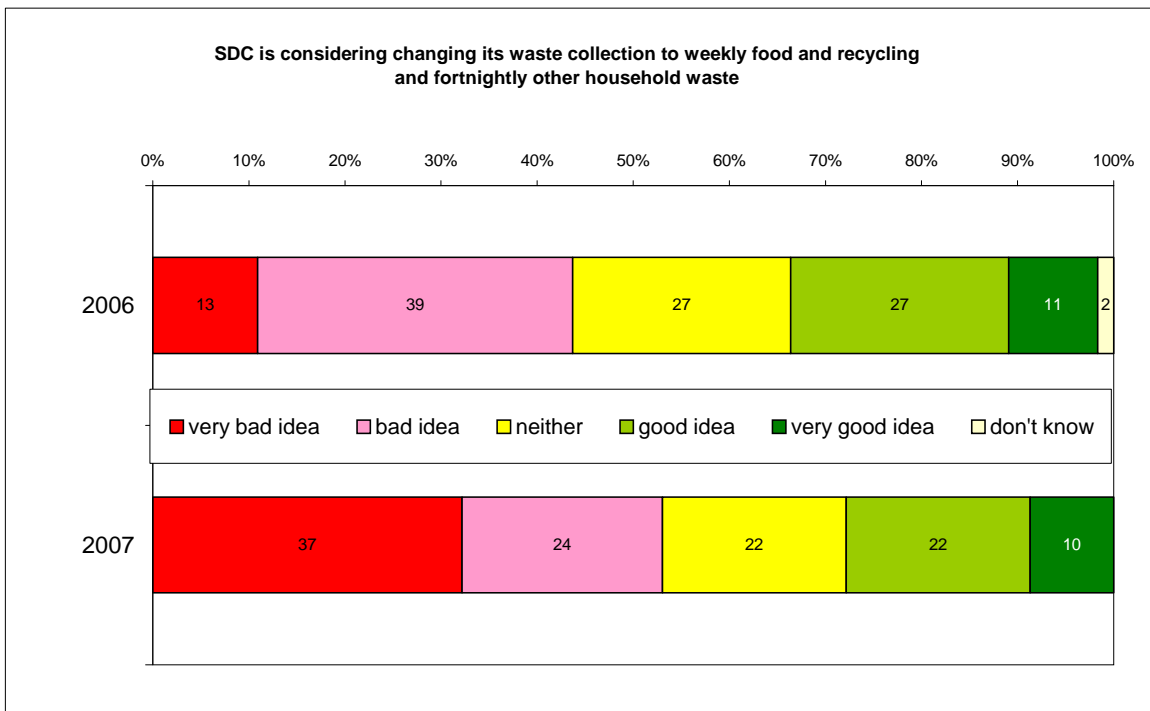
- the reliability of the liners and delivery of them (would there be enough?)
- whether the food waste really was being composted (they wanted to believe that landfill was not still being used)
- location: “they wanna try that in Chalford Hill!”
- large families, too busy to use scheme
- wheelie bins, which cause alarm for some people living on hills.



### Telephone Survey

When presented in the survey with an option to change waste collection arrangements locally, people appear 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, 32% of residents supported the proposal (down from 38% in 2006) and 61% thought that it was a bad idea, (up from 52% in 2006).

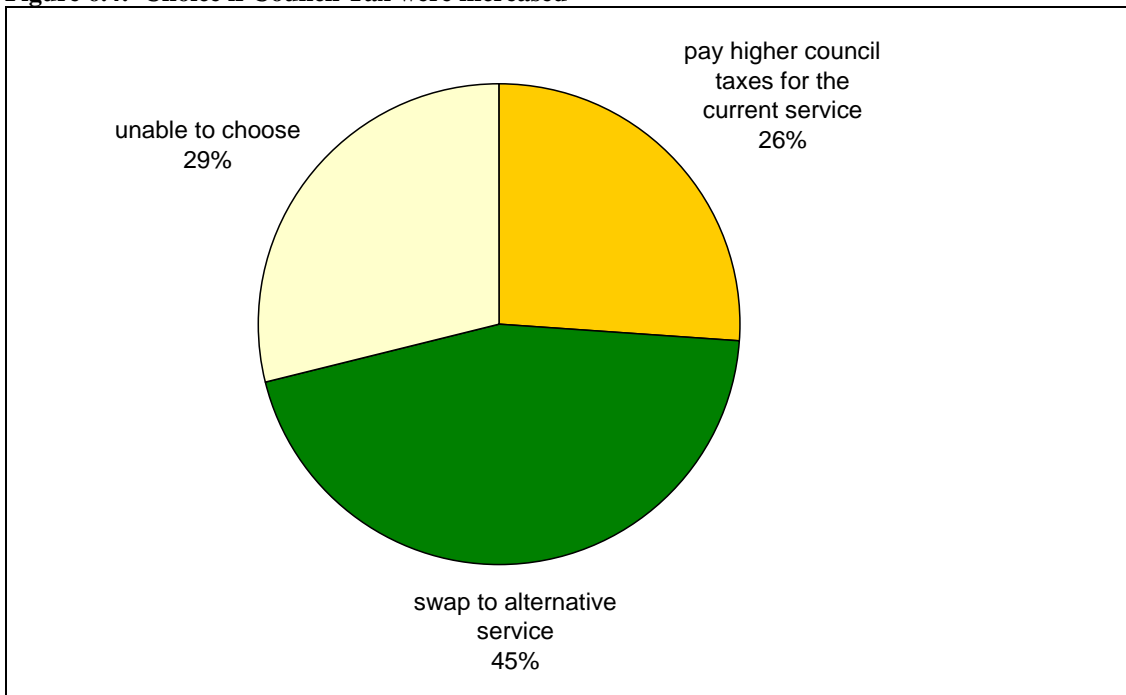
**Figure 6.3: Attitudes Towards Changed Waste Collection Arrangements**



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 alternative service, with nearly half (45%) saying they would prefer this option.



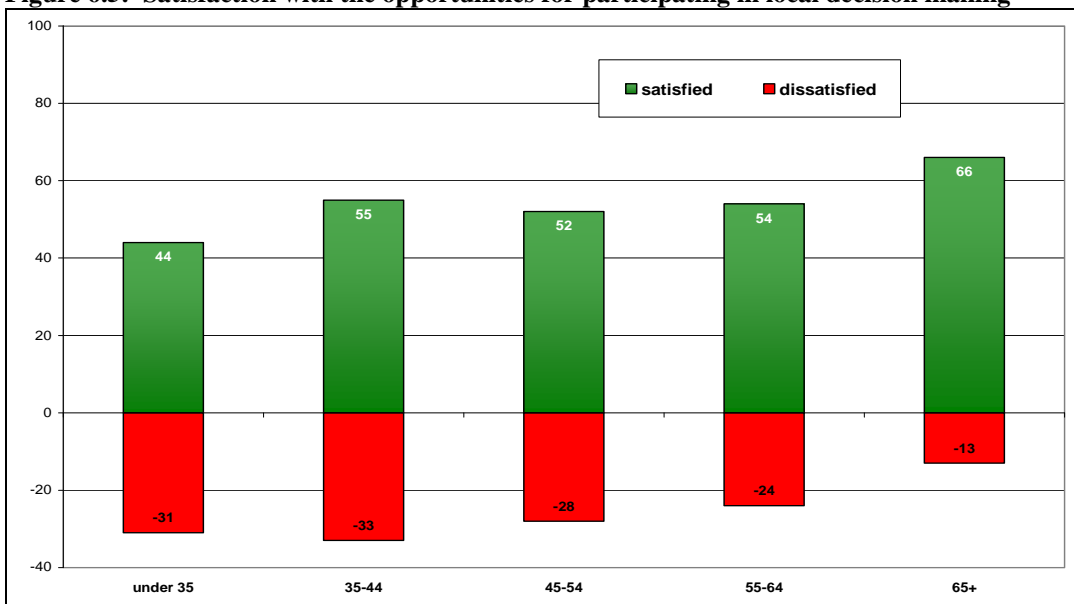
**Figure 6.4: Choice if Council Tax were increased**



### 6.4 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 (56%) said they were satisfied, but there are major differences between the age groups.

**Figure 6.5: Satisfaction with the opportunities for participating in local decision making**



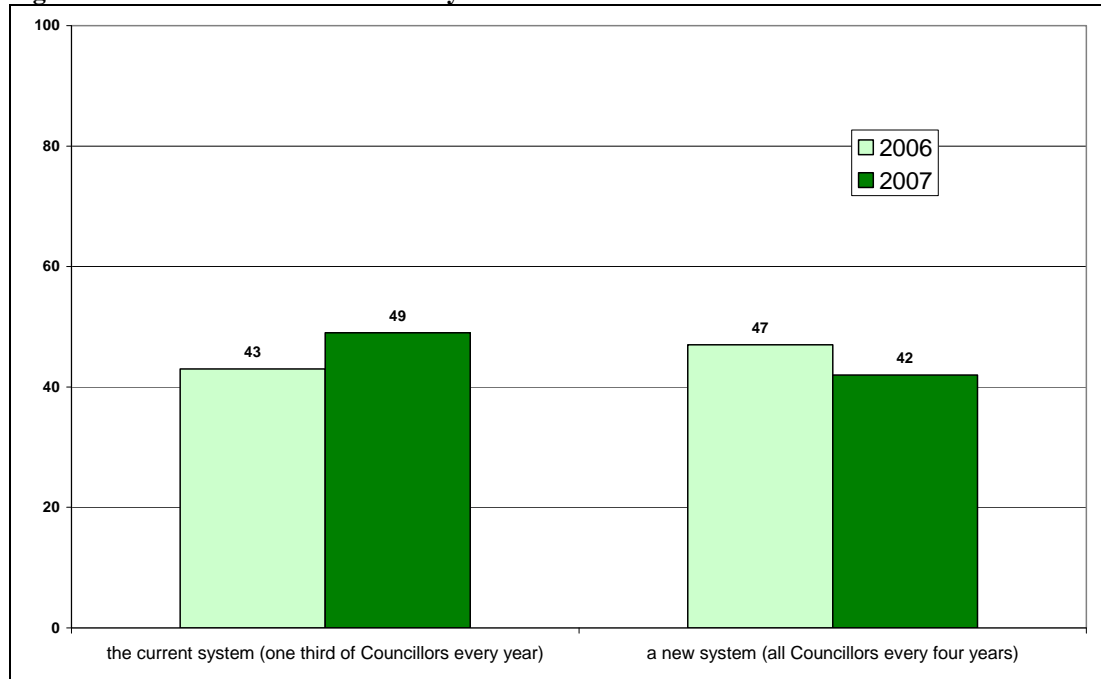
Note: excludes, for the sake of clarity, people who said 'neither' or 'don't know'



Also in the telephone survey, residents were advised that the District Council might have 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 and that the District Council could opt to move to “whole-Council” elections, which would mean that **all** councillors would be up for election, and this would happen once every four years.

Opinion has changed since 2006 on this question, with more people now wanting to keep the current system of elections (every year).

**Figure 6.6: Preferences for Election Cycles**



In the workshops, respondents agreed that it was important for Councils to have some stability so that they could make longer-term decisions. If the problem was that there were too many elections then they thought it would be better to reduce the number of them.

However, they thought that a four-year cycle was going too far and they would want to be able to ‘chuck someone out’ before that. Some compromise was requested between the current system and the proposed system.

At the same time, however, some questioned the effectiveness of representation currently, with some very long-standing councillors and the hypothesis being presented that “they pretty much know they are going to be voted back in anyway!”.

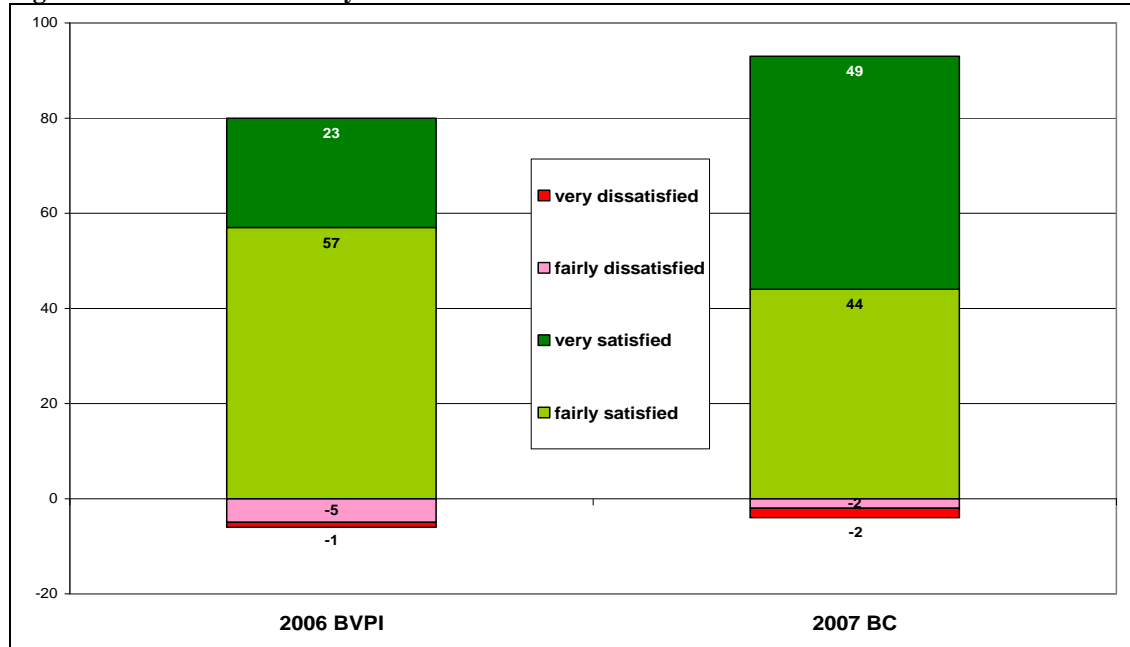
So it would seem that there was some acceptability for having fewer than yearly elections but that opinion changes if the term is too long.



### 6.4 The Area as a Place to Live

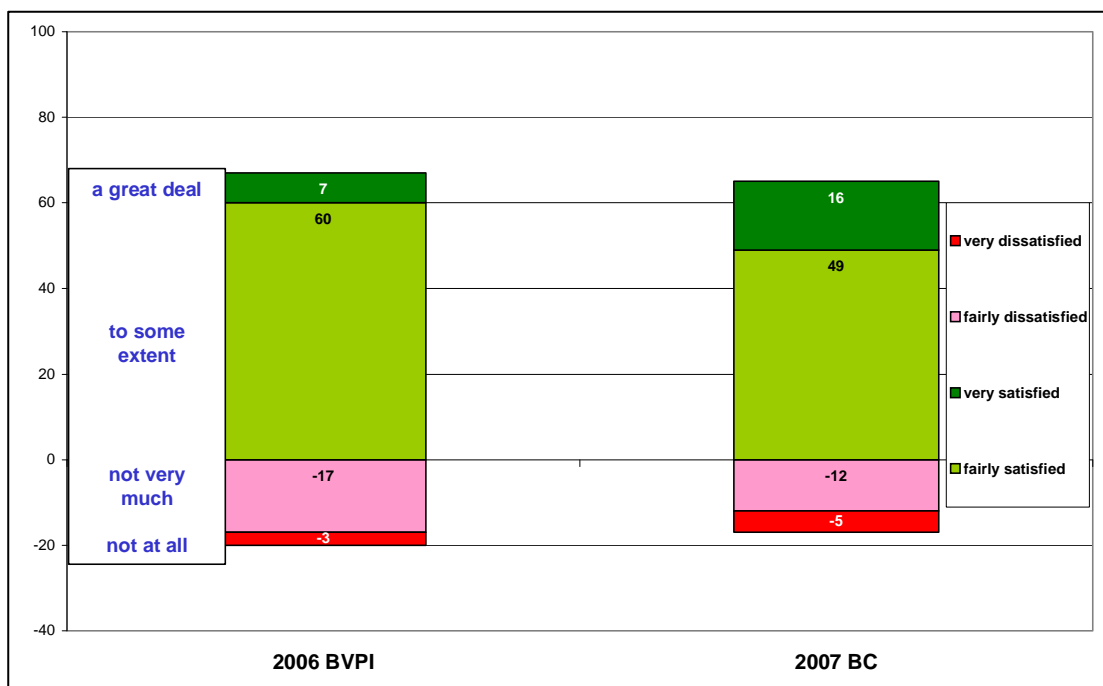
Respondents in the telephone survey were asked how satisfied they were with their local area as a place to live. This survey shows a much higher level of satisfaction (93% said they were fairly or very satisfied with the area as a place to live) than last year's BVPI survey.

**Figure 6.7: 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 (65%) were satisfied that SDC were doing this, with these results being very similar to the 2006 BVPI survey<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 6.8: Satisfaction that SDC is working to make the area a better place to live**



<sup>1</sup> But note that the wording was slightly different in the two surveys.



**Appendix A**  
**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
Community projects.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Community 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
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
Energy efficiency grants and 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
Food, 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 & 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
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
Housing 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
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

**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
Community projects.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2		<input type="checkbox"/> 3		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Community safety.....	<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
Energy efficiency grants and advice.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2		<input type="checkbox"/> 3		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Food, health & safety.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2		<input type="checkbox"/> 3		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Pest and pollution 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
Housing advice.....	<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 and 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

**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 2.5% increase (8p per week for a Band D property), with some very slight improvements in services.....  2
- an increase of 5% (16p 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.** The District Council is presently examining what policies it should be putting emphasis on over the next few years. Do you think each of the following should be given a low or high priority?

	a low priority	a medium priority	a high priority	a very high priority
<b>Affordable Housing</b> (providing affordable & decent housing) .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<b>Regeneration</b> (promoting the economic vitality of towns/villages) .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<b>Healthy Living</b> (promoting health & well-being).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<b>Environment</b> (creating a better local environment) .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<b>Community Safety</b> (creating safer & stronger communities).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**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 .....  1      fairly dissatisfied .....  4  
 fairly satisfied .....  2      very dissatisfied .....  5  
 neither .....  3      don't know .....  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 .....  1      fairly dissatisfied .....  4  
 fairly satisfied .....  2      very dissatisfied .....  5  
 neither .....  3      don't know .....  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 .....  1      fairly dissatisfied .....  4  
 fairly satisfied .....  2      very dissatisfied .....  5  
 neither .....  3      don't know .....  6

**Q13.** The District Council has the opportunity to change how elections for local Councillors are carried out. Currently, one third of councillors stand for re-election each year. The District Council could opt to move to 'whole Council' elections, which would mean that **all** councillors would be up for election, 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 .....  1  
 a new system, with all councillors up for re-election once every four years .....  2  
 [don't know] .....  3

**Section Five : Environment**

**Q14.** Was your home affected by the loss of water supply during the summer floods?  
 yes .....  1      no .....  2

**Q15.** How well do you believe Stroud District Council performed in response to the loss of water supply, specifically for:

	very good	good	neither	poor	very poor	d/k
the delivery of bottled water to vulnerable people .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
maintaining bottled water supplies at local supermarkets ....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
keeping residents informed through the website and the local media .....	<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 Six : Other Questions**

**Q16.** 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 .....  1      a good idea .....  4  
 a bad idea .....  2      a very good idea .....  5  
 neither .....  3      don't know .....  6

**Q17.** 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 .....  1

swap to the alternative service .....  2

**Q18.** 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 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Overall, I am satisfied that Stroud District Council is working to improve the environment.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**Section Seven : Profile Questions**

**Q19.** Finally, can I take some details about yourself? First, how old are you?

18-24 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	55-64 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
25-34 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	65-74 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
35-44 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	75+ .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
45-54 .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	refused .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

**Q20.** What is your postcode? (eg GL51 9AG)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Q21.** How long have you/your household been living in the Stroud District?

under 1 year .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	11-20 years .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
1-2 years .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	21years or more .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
3-5 years .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	don't know / can't remember .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
6-10 years .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4		

**Q22.** In total, how many adults are there in your household (including yourself)?

one .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	three .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
two .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	four or more .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**Q23.** And how many children (under 18)?

none .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	two .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
one .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	three or more .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**Q24.** Are you, or is any member of your immediate household, registered disabled?  
 yes .....  <sup>1</sup> no .....  <sup>2</sup>

**Q25.** Which of the following ethnic groups do you consider you belong to?  
 white, or white british .....  <sup>1</sup>  
 asian or asian british .....  <sup>2</sup>  
 black or black british .....  <sup>3</sup>  
 chinese, or other ethnic group .....  <sup>4</sup>  
 mixed .....  <sup>5</sup>  
 other (**PROBE**) .....  <sup>6</sup>  
 [refused] .....  <sup>7</sup>  
*what other background or group? (WRITE IN)*

**THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE. THEN RECORD THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:**

**Q26.** GENDER  
 male .....  <sup>1</sup> female .....  <sup>2</sup>

**Q27.** Time of Interview (24 hour clock)

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**Q28.** Duration of Interview (minutes)

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**Q29.** Name of interviewer

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**Appendix B**  
**Copy of Workshop Topic Guide**



## **TOPIC GUIDE STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION**

### **Project 4153 Resident Workshops**

#### **Introduction (5 mins)**

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

#### **General attitudes towards Stroud District (10 mins)**

- What do they like/dislike about the District?
- How well do they think the District is run?
- 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 (10 mins)**

- What do they think of the corporate priorities?
- Would they like to change anything?

#### **Satisfaction with budget spending levels (20 mins)**

- Looking at the spending levels in the list of services, are they happy at this level of spending?
- What would they want to see prioritised?
- What do they think needs less prominence?

#### **Responses to the 'Summary of Accounts' Leaflet (15 mins)**

- Looking at the 'What did we spend' and 'How did we pay sections', how would they like to see budget being used in the following year?
- Throughout the document? What are their views and comments?
- SDC is required to inform the public about the budget, do they think this is a good way of doing it?
- Do they think the leaflet provides a fair and easy to understand way of explaining the budget given that the full accounts can be accessed on request?
  - language
  - tone
  - clarity
  - image
- Some other councils produce larger booklets or an annual report given to householders as 'shareholders' etc. what do they think about these approaches?



- Would they like the council to publish annual report to every householder?
- How much budget should/should not be allocated to this activity, in their view?

### **Attitudes towards the recent flooding (10 mins)**

- How were they affected by the floods?
- How well did they think the Council responded (water distribution, manned control centre, moving bowzers, providing sand bags, visits by health officers, handing out claim forms, website etc)?
  - At the time
  - Short-term
  - Long-term
- Are they happy for emergency funds to be used as they were?

### **Elections (10 mins)**

- What would they prefer yearly or four yearly local council elections and why?
- What are the benefits and disbenefits each way?
- If it meant that the council made more long-term decisions, would they prefer 4 year elections?
- OR would they prefer to be able to change things each year if they didn't like a policy?

### **Recycling (10 mins)**

- There is a scheme in the Stanleys at the moment (see leaflet)
- What do they think about this scheme?
- It is more expensive to run, are they happy for the budget to be spent on recycling schemes, such as these?
- Or paying more landfill tax?

