

**Stroud District Council
Budget Consultation 2009**

Report of Research

September 2009

Report prepared for:

**Stroud District Council
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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

For the sixth year in succession, Stroud District Council commissioned The Research Box to undertake research relating to the Council's budget preparations, following the research studies undertaken in 2004-2008. 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 2010/11 and to help the Authority decide on the level of Council Tax increase for the forthcoming year.

This initial report contains the principal findings arising from this consultation. The consultation was undertaken by means of 300 telephone interviews with a representative random selection of residents of the District.

1.2 Summary of Key Findings

General Attitudes towards the Council

Residents were generally quite positive about the Council this year:

- two-thirds (66%) said they were satisfied with the way the Council runs things
- nearly three-quarters (74%) said that they were satisfied that SDC is working to improve the environment
- 70% said they've been treated with respect and consideration by Council services.

Residents are less positive about value for money and whether services have improved – both had fewer than a half of residents in agreement and, on the value for money question, a quarter disagreed.

Overall attitudes towards the Council have held firm since 2008, with some slight improvement in some areas.

Attitudes towards some of the top performing services run by the Council have seen an improvement this year. As in previous years, two services achieved extremely high ratings: 'refuse collection' and 'recycling & composting' were both positively viewed by a very large majority of residents, although 'recycling' has not seen the improvement achieved by all other top-performing services. Car parks, in particular, have seen a large improvement in perceptions.

The worst-performing services remained broadly the same as they have been in recent years – 'public conveniences' continues to be the worst.

Council Tax

There were a lot more residents this year who thought that services were already adequate with no need for improvement (44%, +10%), more residents who said savings should be the first priority (73%, up 5%), and slightly more people who thought services should be improved (46%, up 3%).



In this year's survey, residents were offered three Council Tax options for 2010:

- a 1% increase (4p per week, Band D)
 - with a reduction in services
- a 3% increase (11p per week, Band D)
 - to maintain most services
- an increase of 5% (18p per week, Band D)
 - with a slight improvement in services.

The largest group of residents (47%) chose a 3% increase to maintain most services. However, nearly one in five (18%) said that they wanted none of the three options, with most of these (11% of all residents) saying they wanted no increase in Council Tax, regardless of the impact that this choice might have on Council services.

The average preferred increase, calculated from these figures, works out at 2.5% this year (down slightly from the 2.6% in 2008).

Spending Priorities

The top three priorities for increased spending this year are public conveniences, crime prevention and town-centre improvements. The top priority for making savings is parking enforcement. For four services (parking enforcement, food and H&S, licensing and housing benefit administration), there are more residents who believe that there should be less spending than there are who believe that spending should be more.

Amongst the top priorities, the desire for more spending has lessened for public conveniences and town-centre improvements. There is a greater call amongst these top priorities for more spending in all the other areas except economic development.

Policy Priorities

Sending as little waste to landfill continues to be seen to be the highest priority overall (84% said it was high or very high priority), followed closely by helping people to find local solutions to long term local problems (72%) – however this latter priority area has dropped in importance significantly. Climate change is a much more important priority area than it was last year.

The lowest priority was for delivering the canal restoration on time and on budget – only 43% said this was a priority and 32% said it was not.

Other Issues

Over half of residents (53%) were satisfied with the opportunities that Stroud District Council provides for participating in local decision-making – this result is unchanged from 2008.

A large majority (93%) said that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (up slightly from last year).

Most people (67% this year) were satisfied that SDC is working to make the area a better place to live, a big improvement on last year.



2. Introduction

2.1 Background

In August 2009, Stroud District Council again 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 2010/11 and which would help the Authority decide on the level of Council Tax increase for the forthcoming year. The research was commissioned earlier this year than normal, in order to provide more time to feed the results into the budget process.

The initial commission was to carry out a survey of residents, designed to be representative of the District's population.

This is the sixth year this survey has been conducted and so comparisons are possible with the last five surveys, and these are shown throughout this report.

2.2 Method

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 300 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 1st and 12th September 2009. The interview took, on average, just under 19 minutes to conduct, a little longer than in previous years.



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
- profile questions (for example, age, gender and household circumstances).

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

2.3 Structure of the Report

This initial report summarises the key findings arising from the telephone survey 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 Attitudes towards the District Council

Over the past five years, the telephone survey questionnaire has included several questions that examined residents' views of the District Council and its services.

Respondents were asked to examine five initial statements and to say whether they agreed or disagreed with them. The first three of these statements have been asked for the past six years; the value for money question was asked first in 2005; the last statement was used in 2007 for the first time:

- 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.

This year, two further statements were included:

- In the last year I have been treated with respect and consideration by Council services
- I believe that the Council understands local concerns about anti-social behaviour.

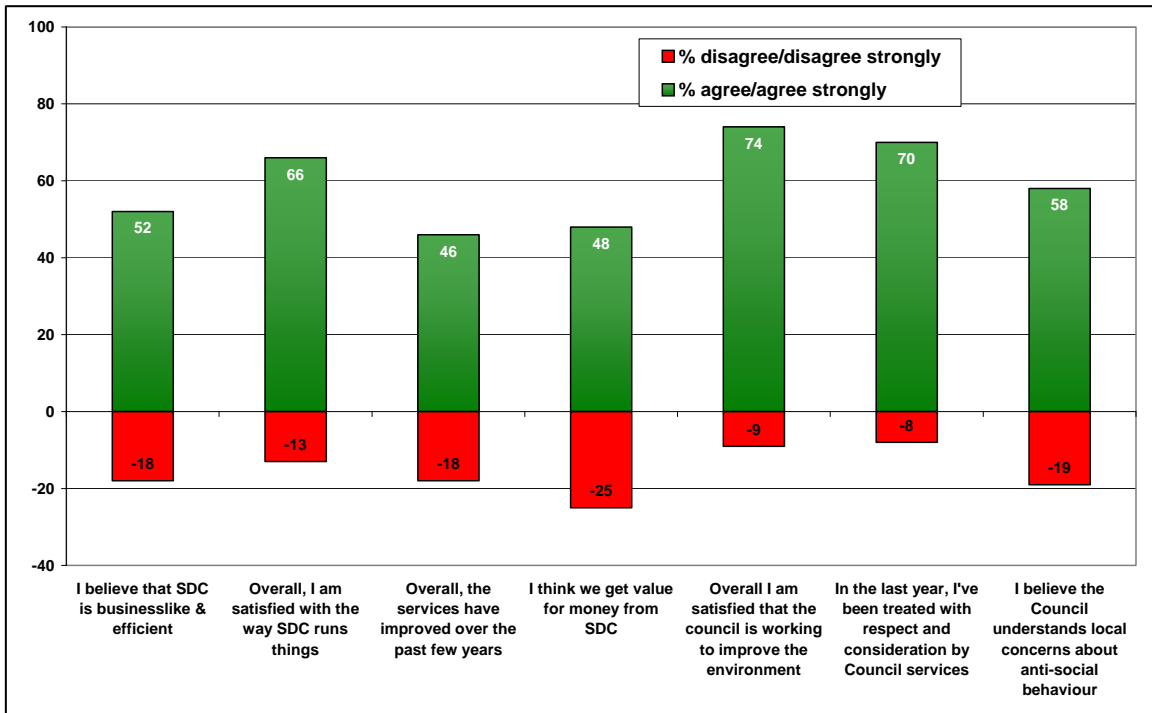
As may be seen from the figure overleaf, residents were generally quite positive about the Council, with two-thirds saying they are satisfied with the way the Council runs things and nearly three-quarters saying that they are satisfied that SDC is working to improve the environment.

The first of the two new statements (on respect and consideration) attracted quite strong positive opinions, although the 'anti-social behaviour' statement met with less agreement.

Also evident from the chart is the much weaker agreement on the 'value for money' and 'service improvement' questions.



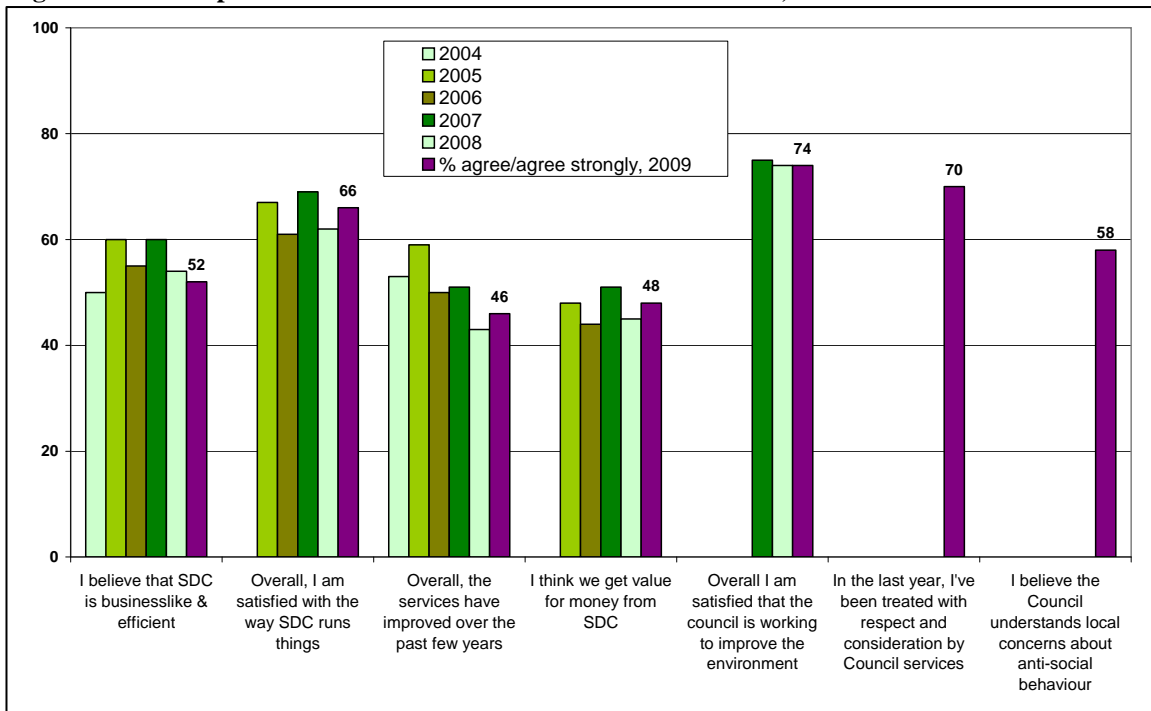
Figure 3.1a: Attitudes Towards the District Council 2009



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

Comparison with the previous years' results suggests that attitudes have held firm over the last 12 months, with a slight improvement in some areas.

Figure 3.1b: Comparison of Attitudes Towards the District Council, 2004-9



Note: The value for money question was not asked in 2004. The environment question was only asked in 2007/8. The last two questions were asked this year for the first time.

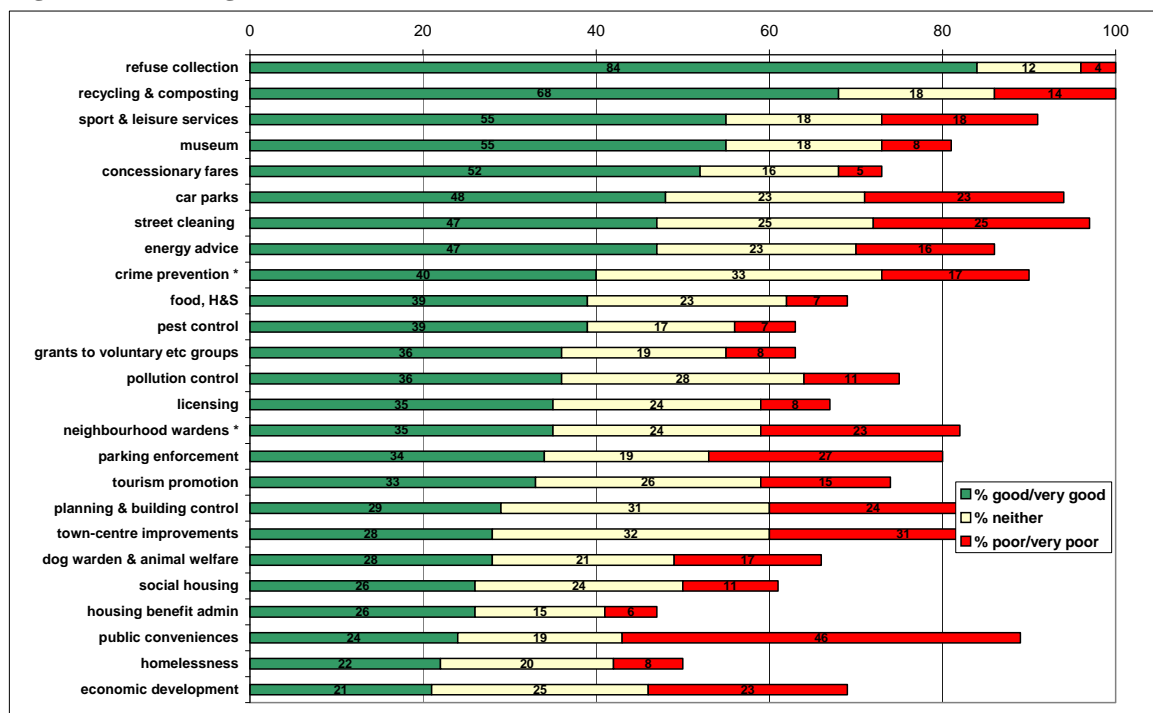


Respondents were asked to rate a series of the Council’s services, some 25 in total, whether they used these services or not. This question, that examines residents’ *perceived* performance of the Council, was rated on a five-point scale from very poor → very good.

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

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

Figure 3.2a: Ratings of Council Services 2009

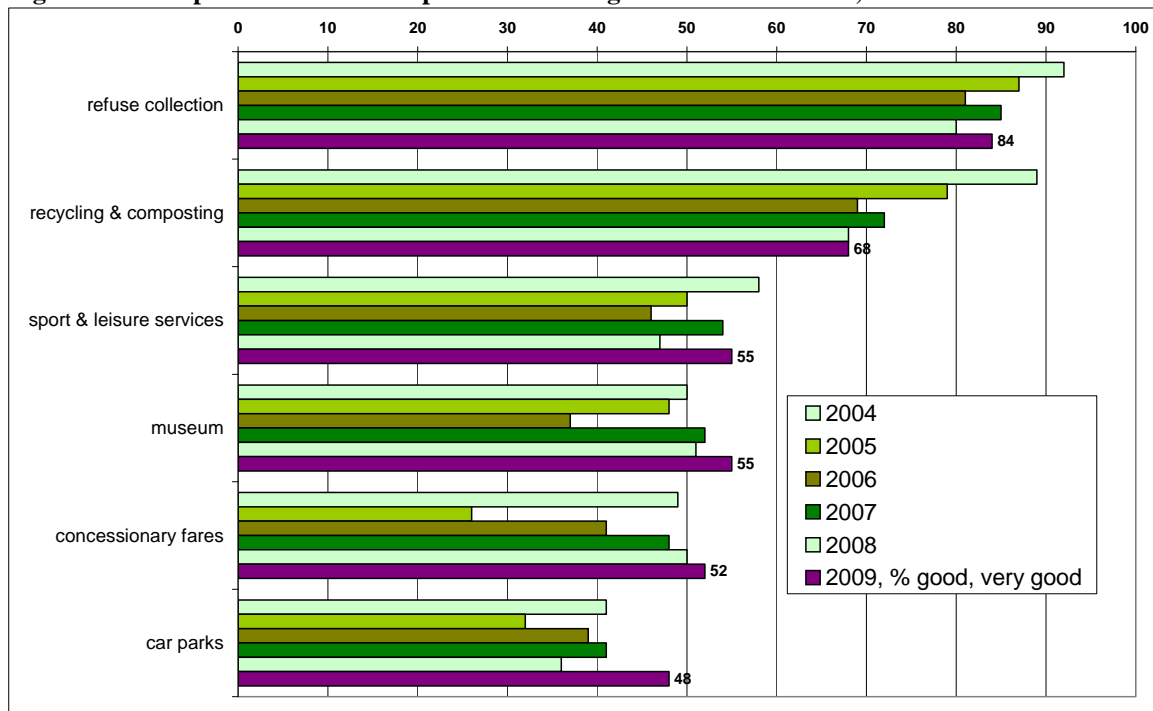


This chart excludes those residents who said ‘don’t know’, so the percentages shown do not necessarily sum to 100.

Attitudes towards some of the top performing services run by the Council have seen an improvement this year in perceptions (those rating the services as very good or good). For three of these services, the scores are higher than they have ever been. Just one amongst these top-performing services – recycling and composting – has held steady this year, after a long decline since 2004. These results are shown overleaf.



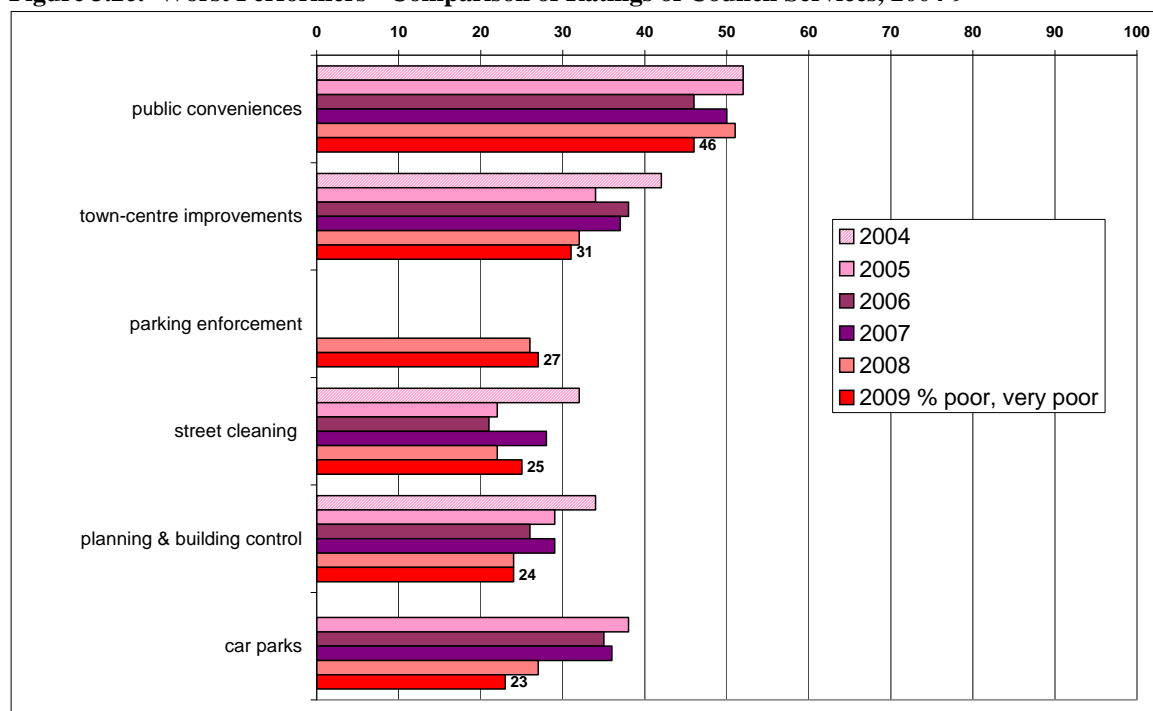
Figure 3.2b: Top Performers - Comparison of Ratings of Council Services, 2004-9



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

The worst-performing services remained broadly the same as they have been in recent years, but there are continuing small signs that fewer people are negative about some of these worse-performing services – car parks in particular.

Figure 3.2c: Worst Performers - Comparison of Ratings of Council Services, 2004-9



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



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 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 13p 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 to maintain current services"*.

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 1% increase (4p per week for a Band D property), but with a reduction in services
- a 3% increase (11p per week for a Band D property), will maintain most services
- an increase of 5% (18p per week for a Band D property), with a slight improvement in services.

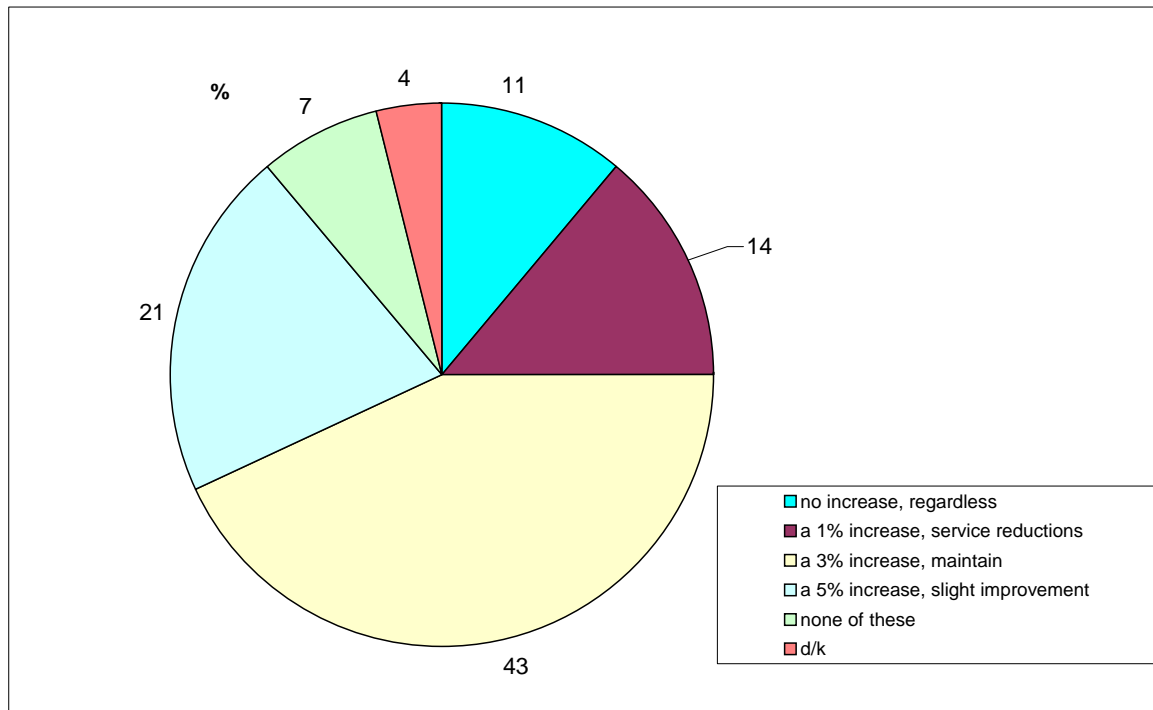
As may be seen overleaf, the largest group (47%) chose a 3% increase to maintain most services.

This year, nearly one in five (18%) said that they wanted none of the three options. Most of these (11% of the total survey sample) said they wanted no increase in Council Tax, often saying (when questioned in more detail) that this choice was regardless of the impact that it might have on Council services.

The average preferred increase, calculated from these figures, works out at 2.5% this year (down slightly from the 2.6% in 2008).

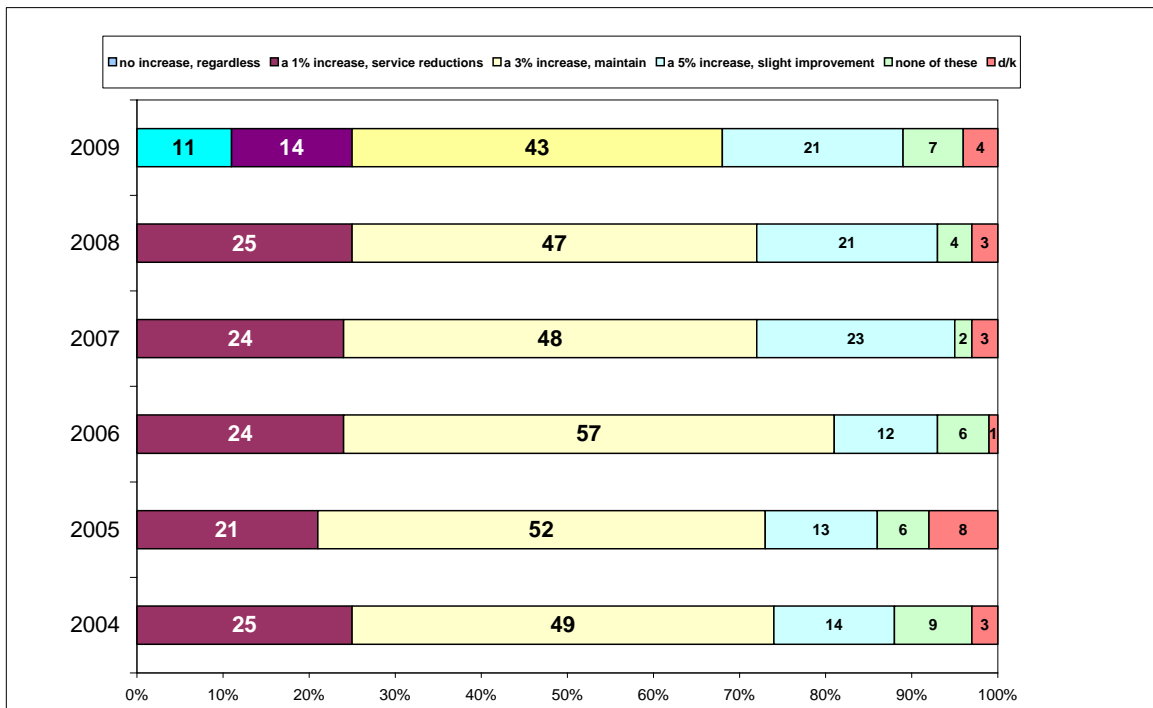


Figure 4.1a: Response to Council Tax/Service Change Options 2009



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 and 2008.

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

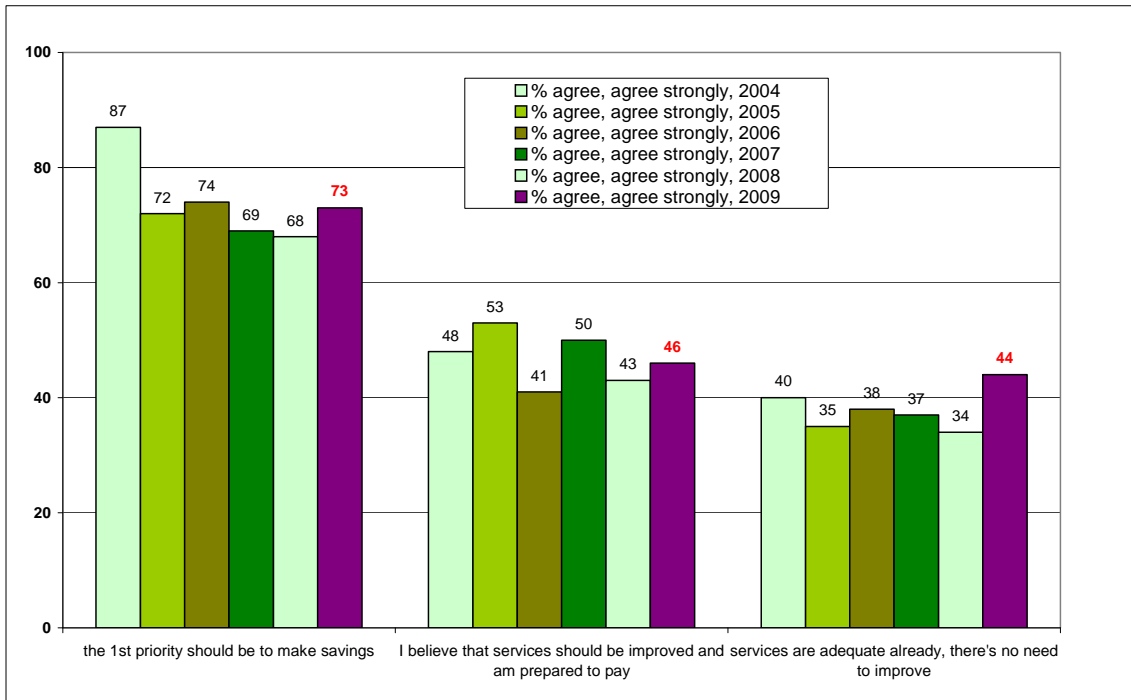


Note: last year, the options were 1%, 3% and 5%



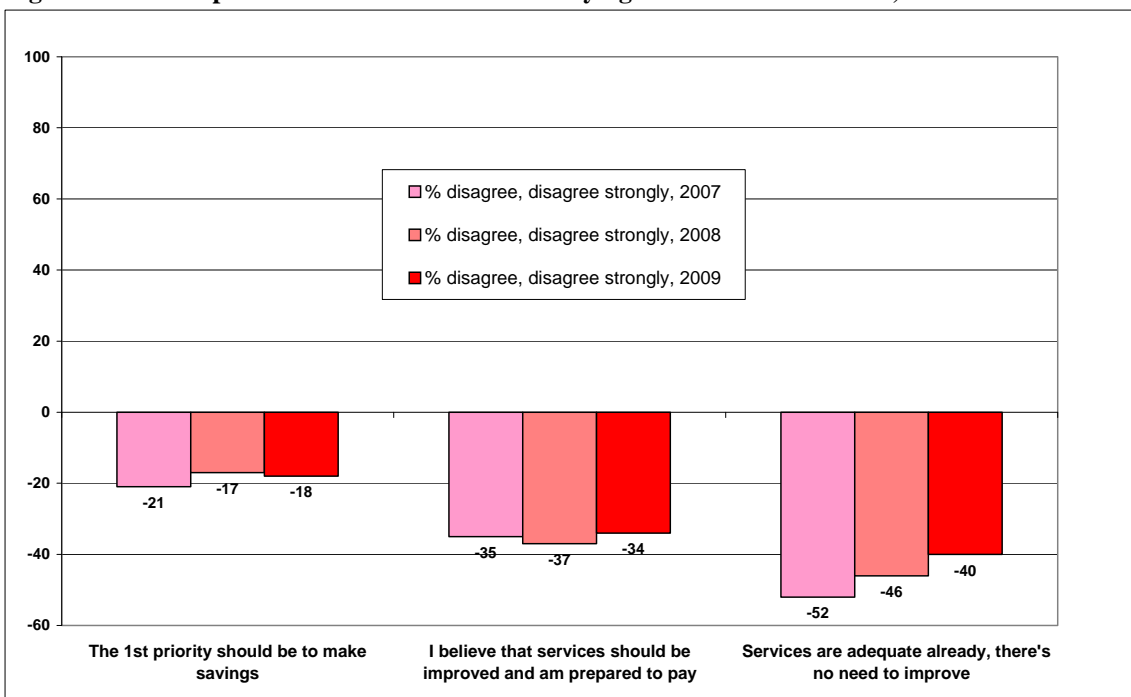
There are some conflicting results on people’s background attitudes this year. When residents were asked about their attitudes towards paying Council Tax, there were more people than last year who thought that savings should be the first priority (73%), slightly more people who thought services should be improved (46%) and a lot more who thought services were already adequate (44%).

Figure 4.2a: Comparison of Attitudes Towards Paying Council Tax Increases, 2004-9



An analysis of those who disagree with these statements shows a steady decline in the number of residents who are against service improvements – and almost no change on the other two statements.

Figure 4.2b: Comparison of Attitudes Towards Paying Council Tax Increases, 2007-9



4.3 Spending Priorities

In the interview, residents were 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 three priorities for increased spending are public conveniences, crime prevention and town-centre improvements
- the top priority for making savings is parking enforcement
- for four services (parking enforcement, food and H&S, licensing and housing benefit administration), there are more residents who believe that there should be less spending than there are who believe that spending should be more.

Figure 4.3a: Spending Priorities, Residents 2009



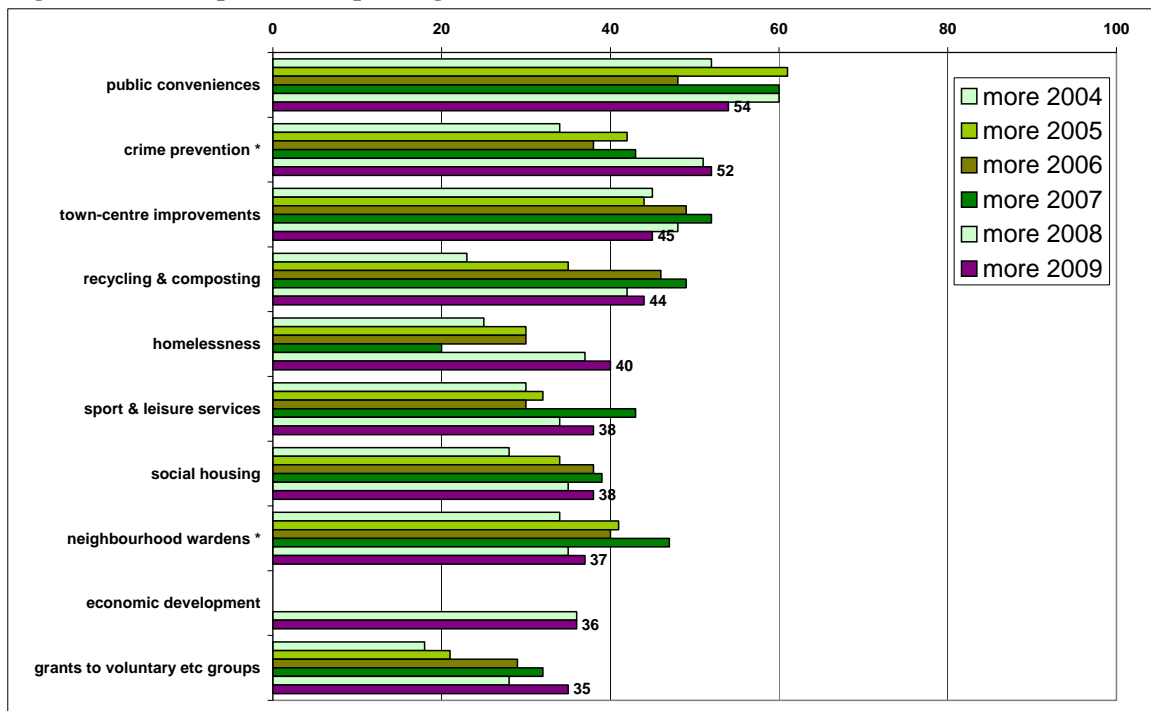
Note: ignores the percentages that said ‘don’t know’

There are a number of areas where more people want to see more spending than was the case last year. The key areas are:

- grants to voluntary etc groups (+7%)
- tourism promotion (+6%)
- dog warden & animal welfare (+5%).

Amongst the top priorities, the desire for more spending has lessened for public conveniences and town-centre improvements. There is a greater call amongst these top priorities for more spending in all the other areas except economic development.



Figure 4.3b: Comparison of Spending Priorities, 2004-9

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.

Although not a SDC responsibility, there were a lot of comments this year about the state of the roads (nearly one in five residents said that roads – mostly resurfacing or potholes – should be prioritised).

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

- **more spending**

Recycling is dealt with very badly, it's refused frequently, particularly cardboard. More than 2/3rds of what is recycled in our house is refused by the bin men

Spend more on town centre and traffic flow. Encouraging people to smarten up their shops. More of a relaxed attitude

Spread the spending geographically as the council seems to only spend in Stroud and Dursley

Street cleaning is a farce at the moment, the equipment is expensive and it achieves nothing



- **less spending**

Traffic wardens, new car parking machines that aren't necessary

Stop the newsletter telling us what you do on our behalf and instead publish bus timetables

Cutback on tidying of grass areas and hedge trimming, and council gardens could be serviced by volunteers

Less money on political correctness and more on public accountability

Town centre improvements, tourism.



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

- sending as little waste to landfill as possible, including recycling more
- reducing the impacts of climate change, investing in secure and affordable energy and building a resilient community
- 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
- delivering the canal restoration on time & on budget
- combating the effects of the economic downturn.

This chapter presents the findings in this area.

5.2 Policy Priorities

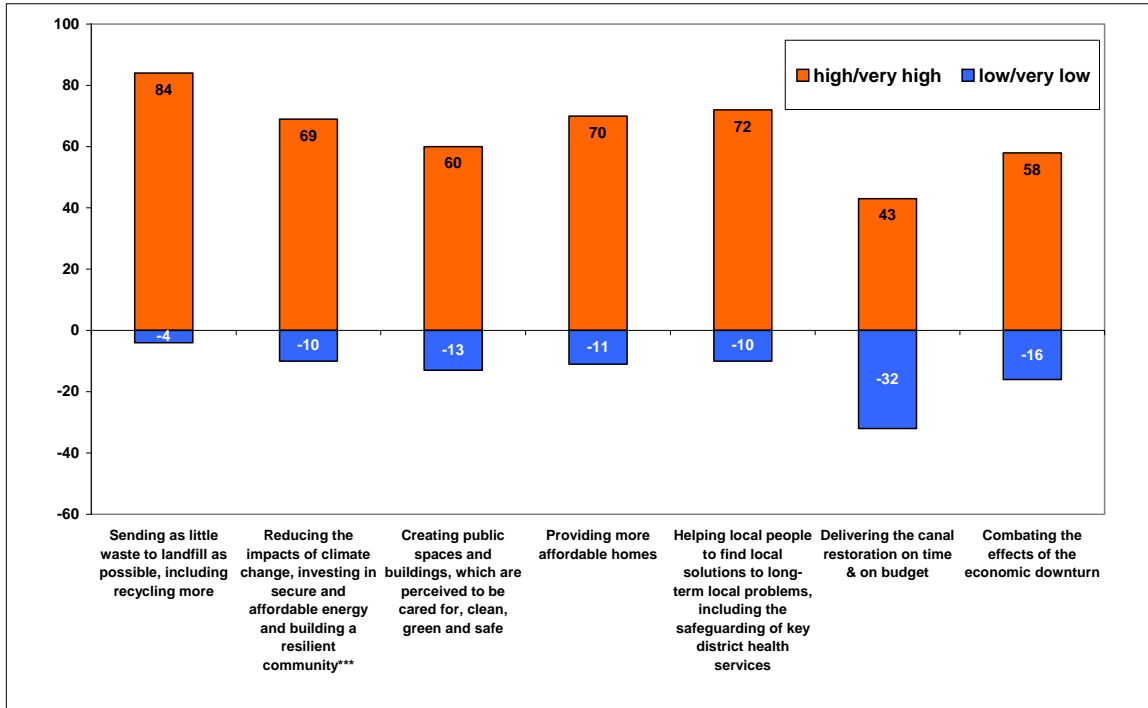
Residents were offered the seven Corporate Delivery Plan priorities and were asked to say whether they thought each should have a high, medium, or low priority (actually a five-point scale from very high → very low priority).

As may be seen in the next chart overleaf, sending as little waste to landfill was seen to be the highest priority overall (84% high or very high), followed closely by helping people to find local solutions to long term local problems (72%).

The lowest priority was for delivering the canal restoration on time and on budget – only 43% said this was a priority and 32% said it was not.



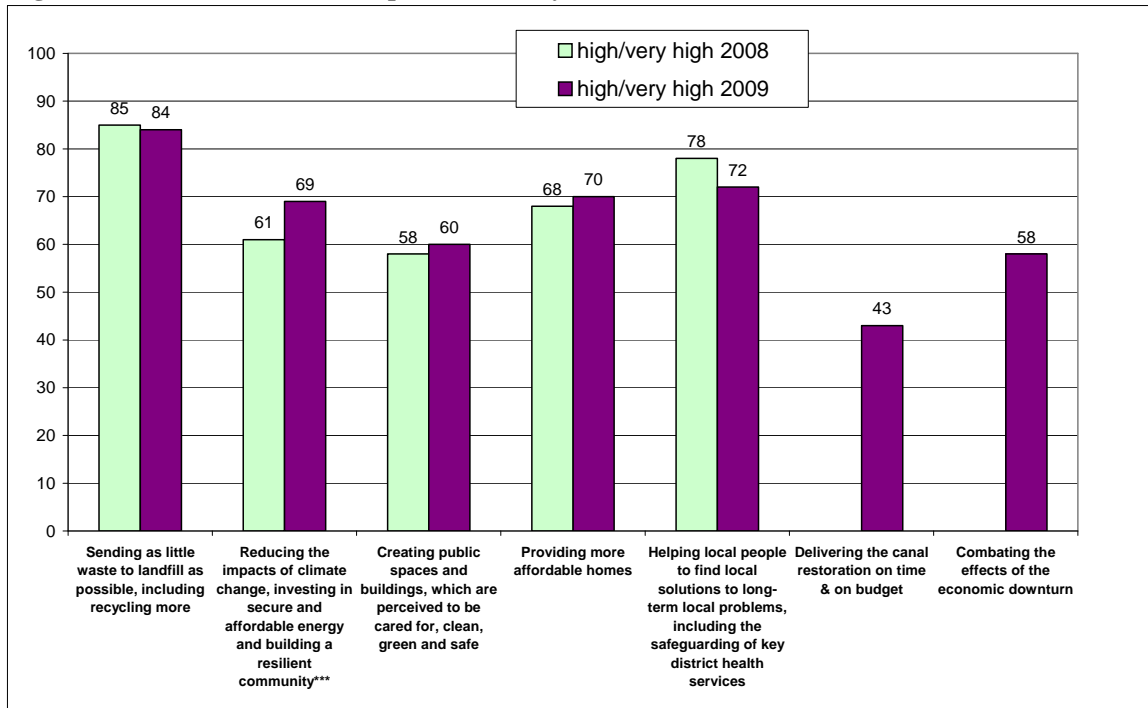
Figure 5.1: Priorities for the Corporate Delivery Plan, 2009



Some of these questions were also asked last year. As can be seen from the chart below, there have been three priorities that have increased in importance – climate change, public spaces and affordable homes – and two that are less of a priority than last year – recycling and local solutions. Only two of the priority area changes are significant though, climate change (+) and local solutions (-).

The canal restoration and economic downturn priorities were new ones this year.

Figure 5.2: Priorities for the Corporate Delivery Plan – 2008/9



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 top priorities being, in order:

- maintenance of roads and paths
- recycling
- town-centre improvements.

The quotes below are examples of the huge range of comments made:

Helping local businesses. If you don't help them the town will not improve

Big issue with car parking in Dursley, forced to park on roads

I think that they should be focusing on water power

I would like to see more on the social agenda. More sport and leisure activity for children

Facilities for the youth such as play areas and youth centres

Council should be more flexible on planning for economic development

Crime in young people. Drinking on streets, underage. Stopping that would make the area a lot better. Children from age 11 drinking on streets

Bring back food composting.



6. Other Question Areas

6.1 Introduction

The consultation this year contained a few additional small-scale topic areas, namely:

- representation
- perceptions of the area as a place to live
- satisfaction with SDC's efforts to improve the area.

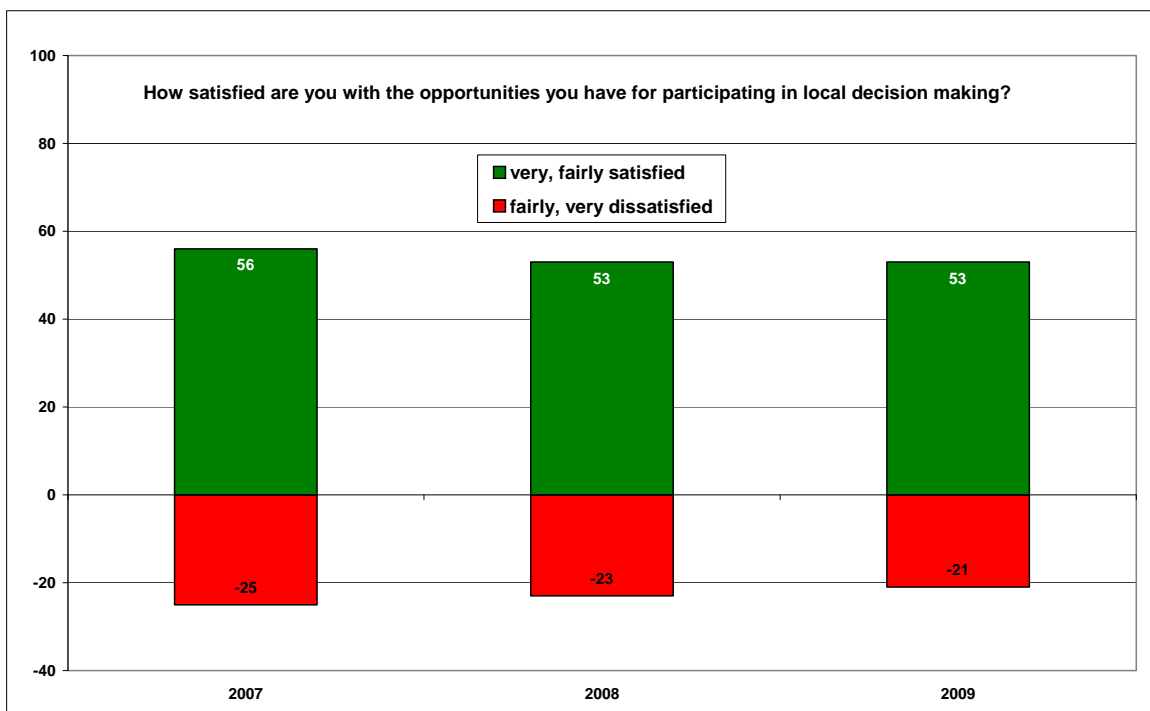
These topics are covered in this chapter.

6.2 Representation

Residents were asked in the survey how satisfied they were that Stroud District Council provides various opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making in the local area. The question has been asked for three years now.

On average, over half (53%) said they were satisfied, and this result is unchanged from last year. There is, however, some slight evidence of an improvement on this question, in that fewer people are dissatisfied now than they were two years ago.

Figure 6.1: 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'

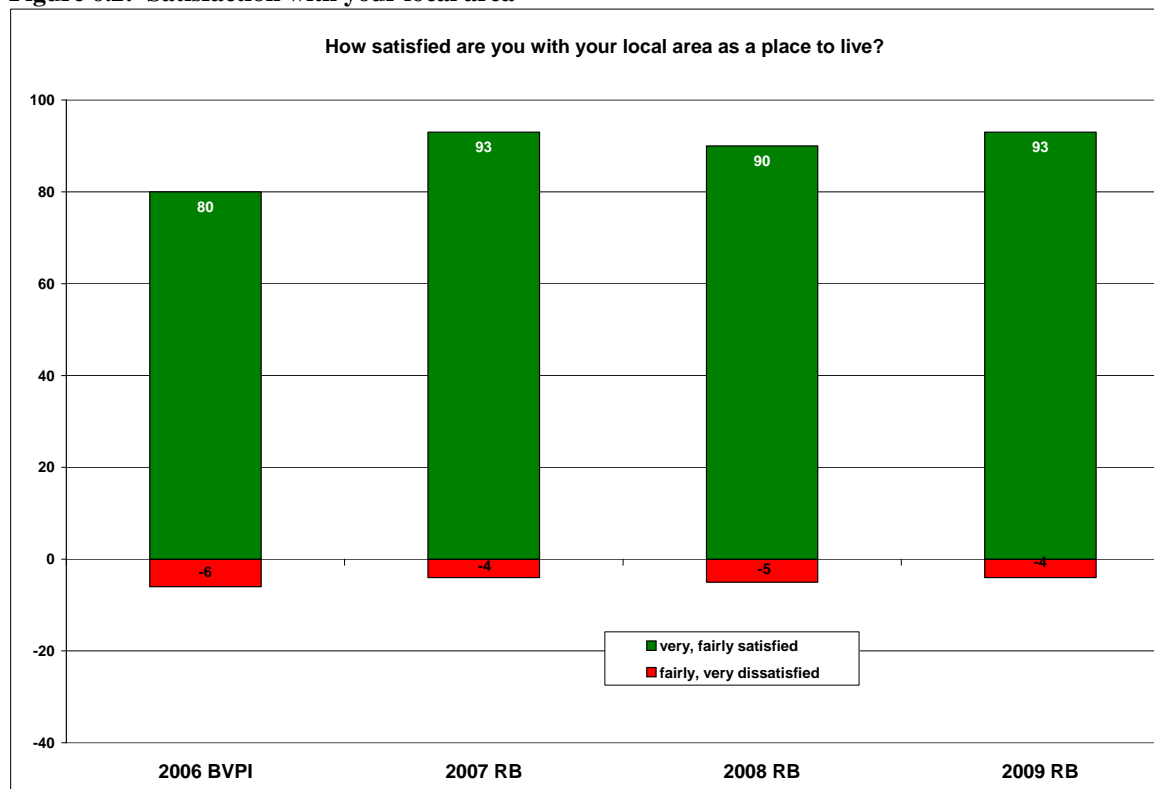


6.3 The Area as a Place to Live

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their local area as a place to live.

The results this year show a position little changed since this question was first asked in 2007, with the three years' results still showing a higher level of satisfaction than the 2006 BVPI survey.

Figure 6.2: Satisfaction with your local area



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

6.4 The Council's Work to Make the Area a Better Place to Live

Respondents were also asked how satisfied they were that the District Council is working to make the area a better place to live.

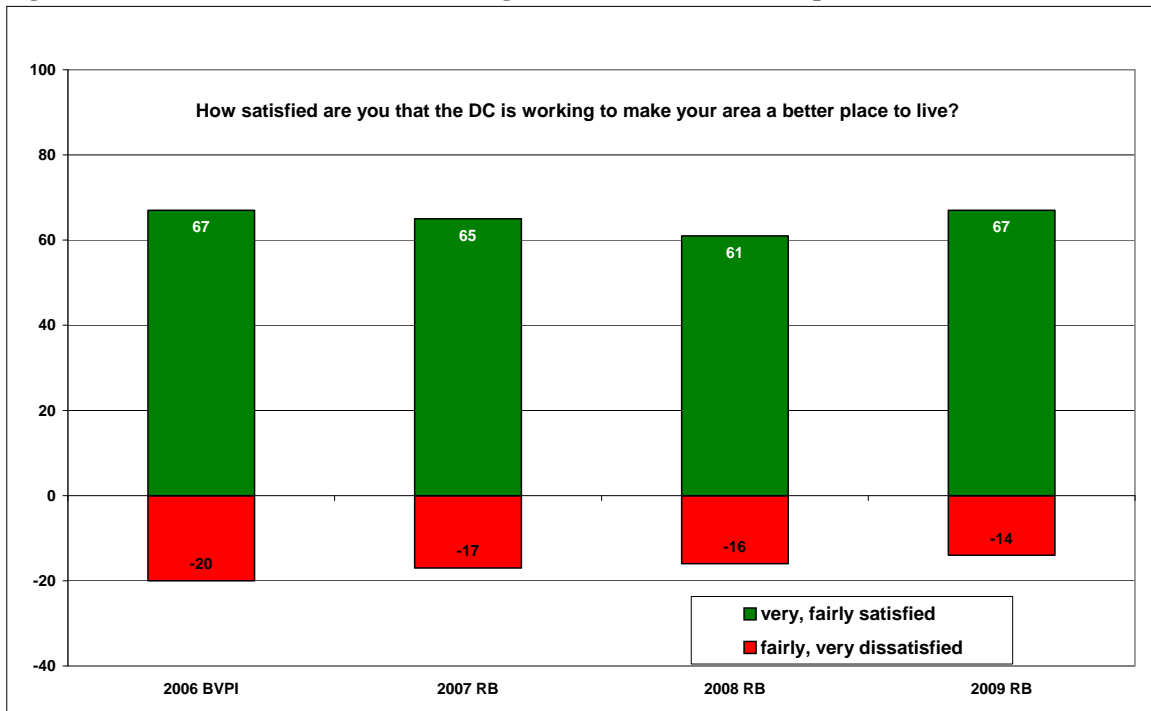
Most people (67% this year) were satisfied that SDC were doing this, a big improvement on last year and back up to the level first seen in the 2006 BVPI survey¹.

It might also be noted that there has been an ongoing decrease in the number of people who would **disagree** that the District Council is working to make the area a better place to live.

¹ But note that the wording was slightly different in the BVPI survey.



Figure 6.3: Satisfaction that SDC is working to make the area a better place to live



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

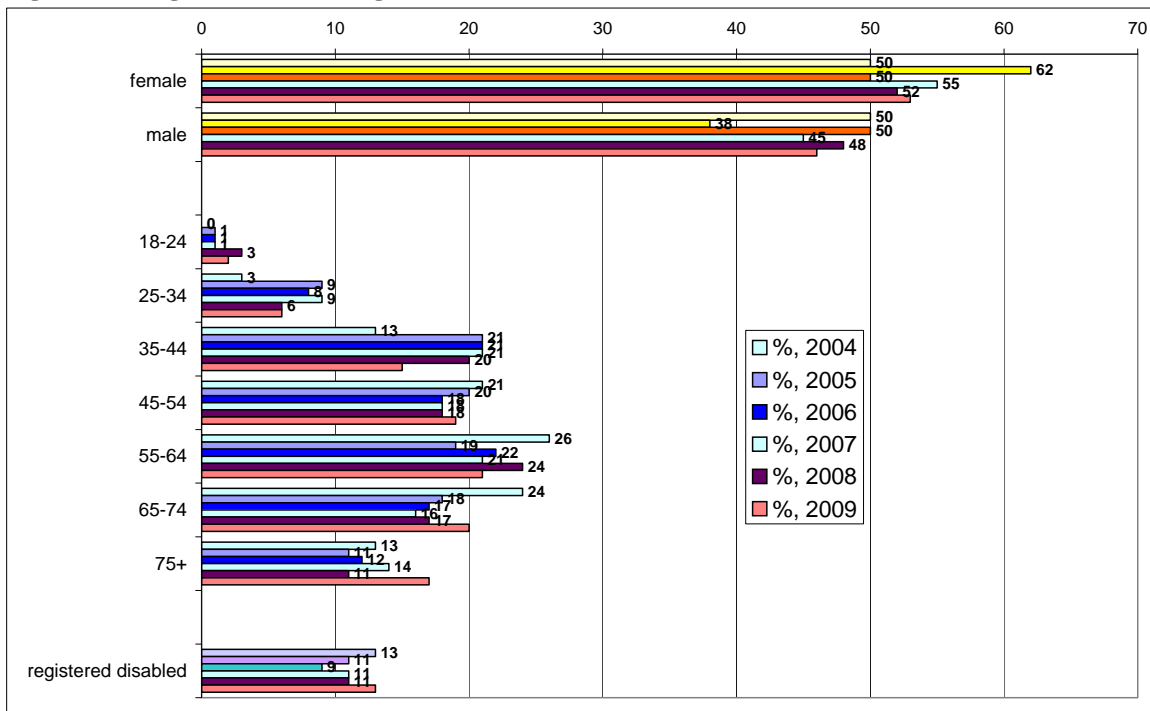


Appendix A : Telephone Survey Demographics



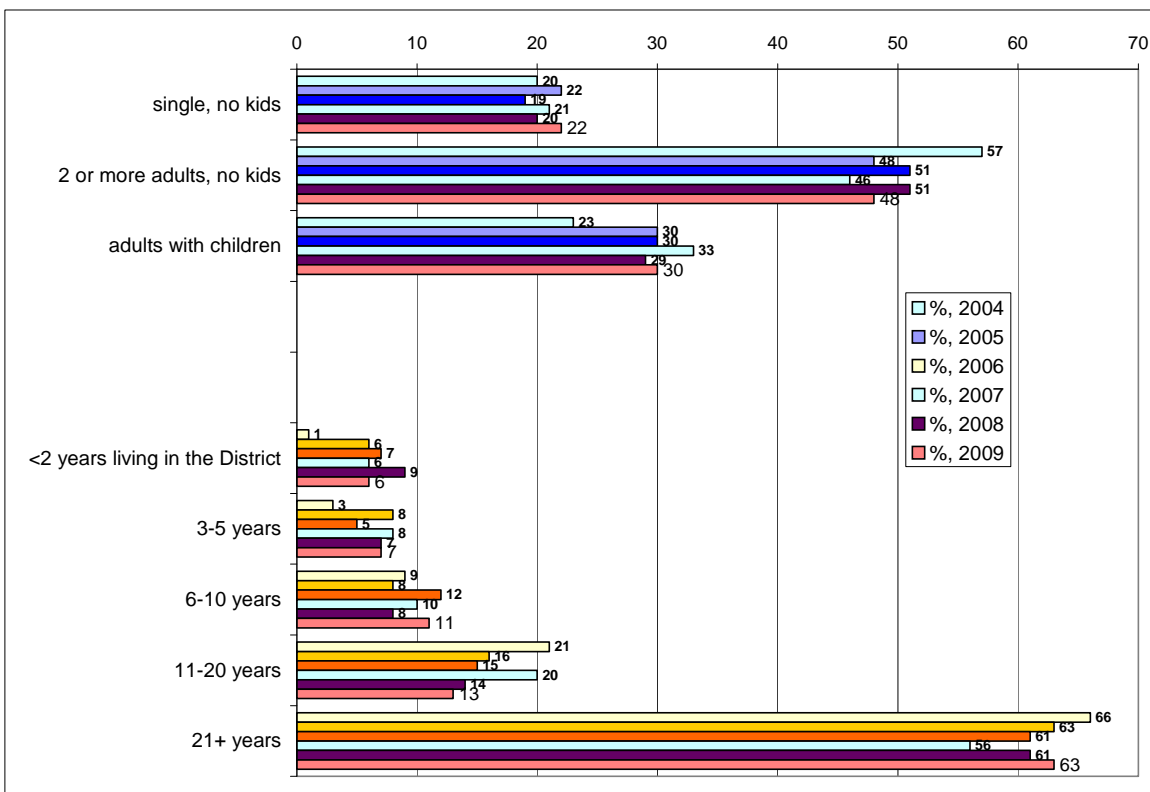
A1. Age, Gender and Registered Disabled

Figure A.1: Age, Gender and registered disabled



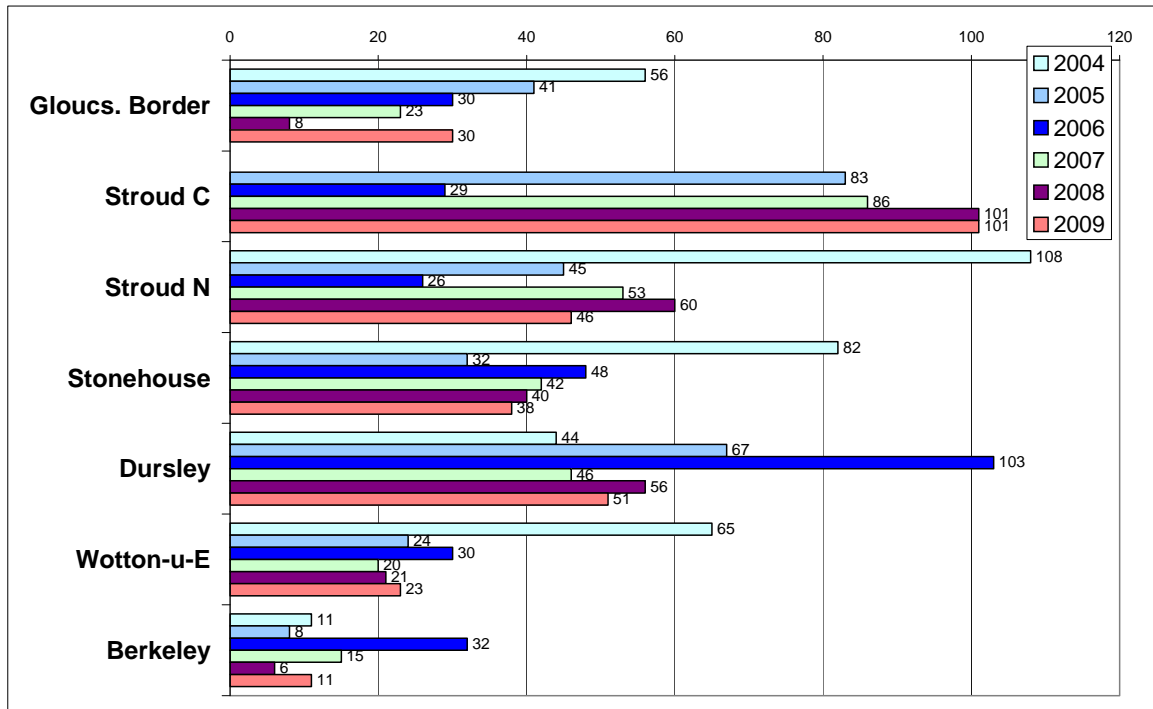
A2. Household Composition and Length of Time Living in the Area

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



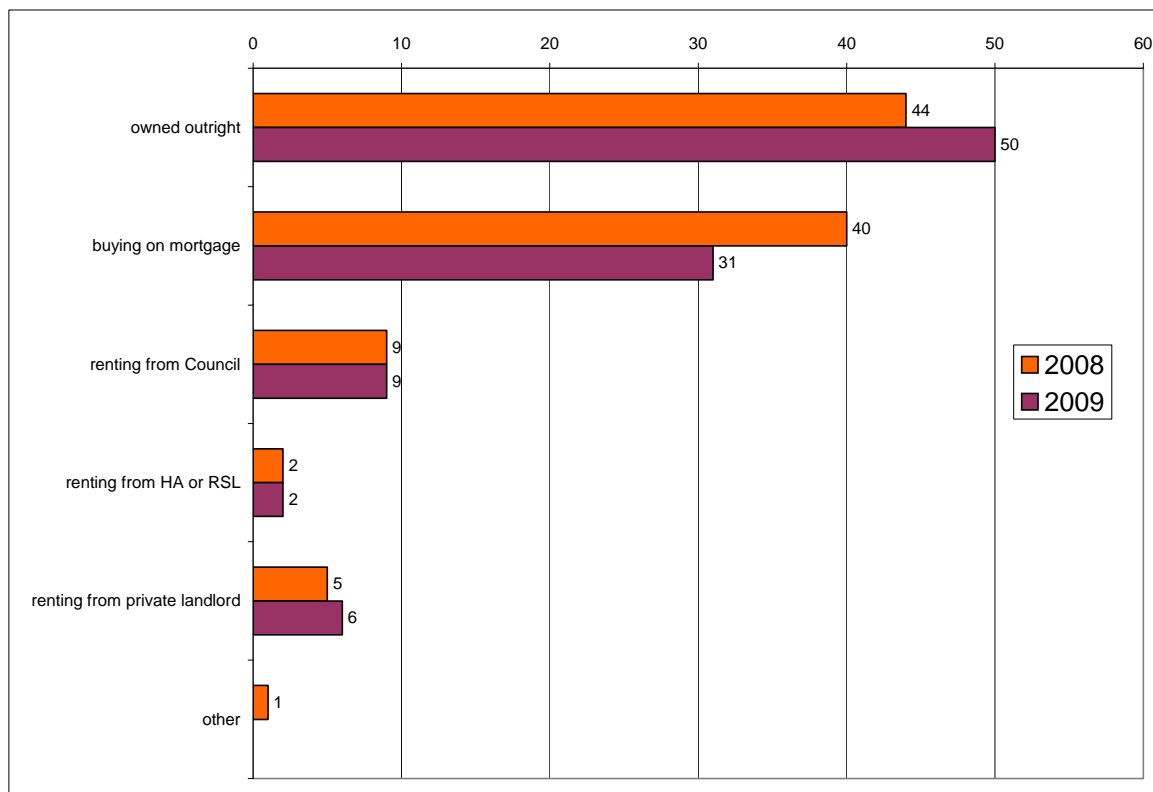
A3. Locality

Figure A.3: Locality



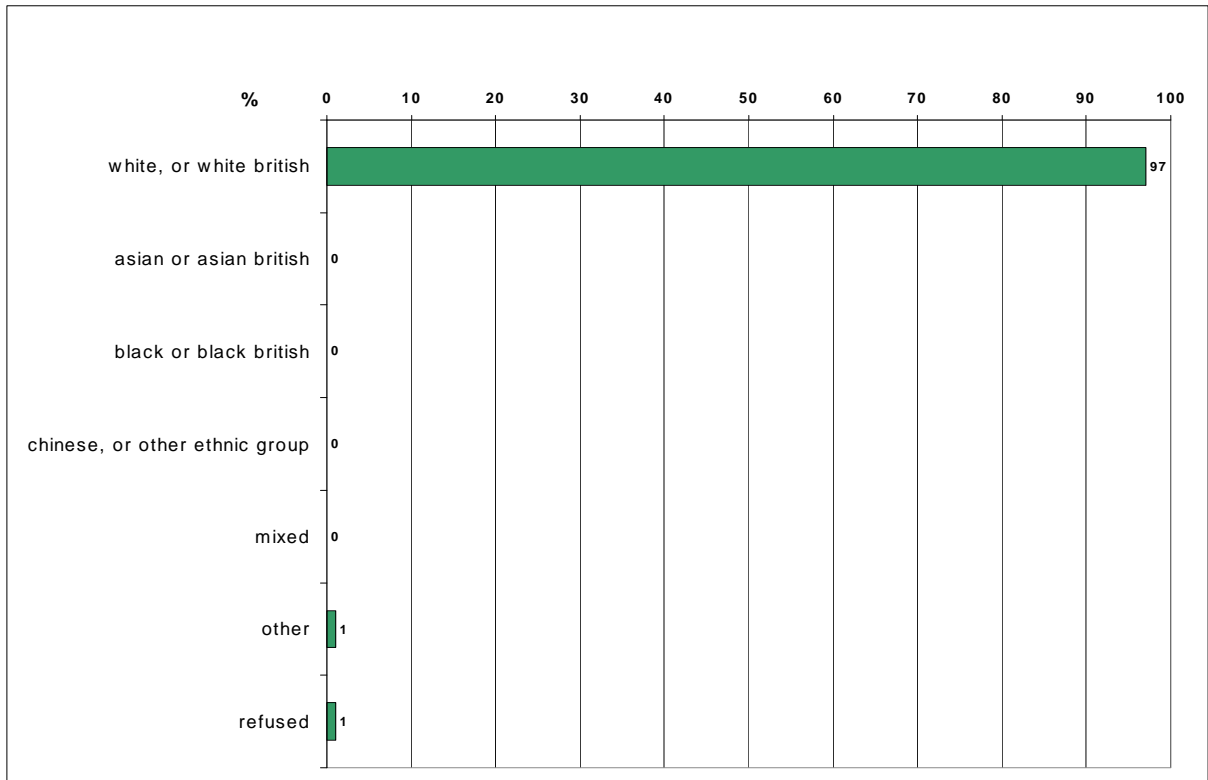
A4. Housing Circumstance

Figure A.4: Housing Circumstances



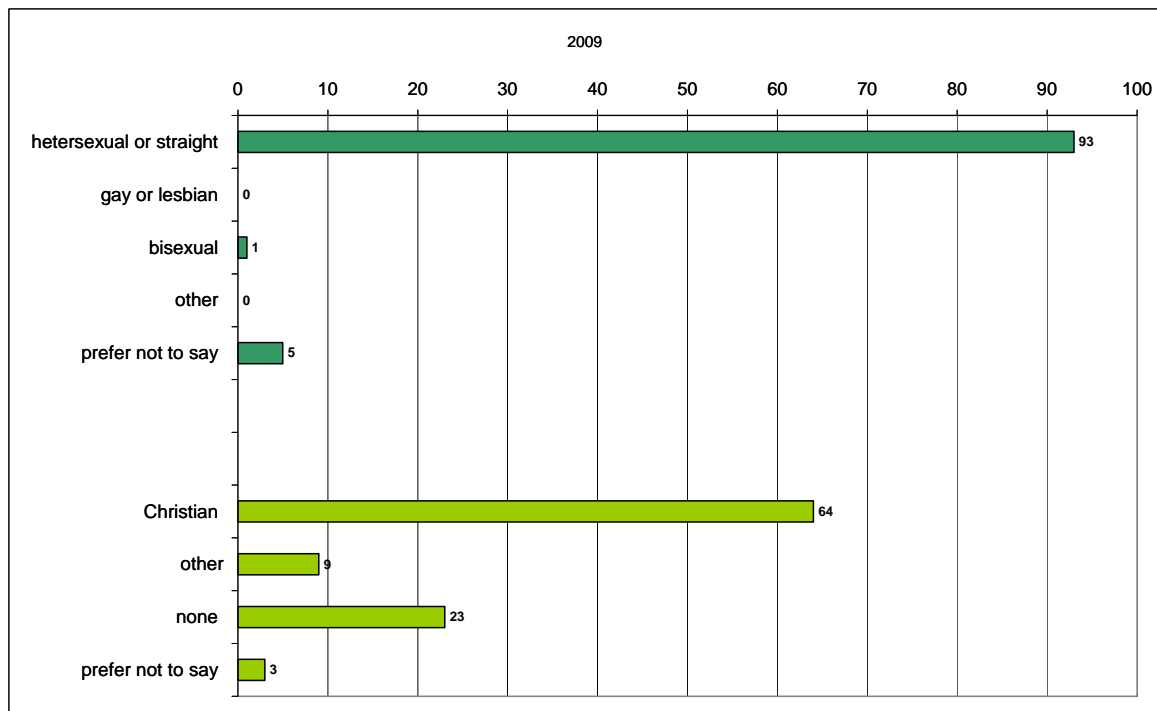
A5. Ethnicity

Figure A.5: Ethnicity



A6. Sexual Orientation and Religion

Figure A.5: Sexual Orientation and Religion



Other religions given were:

- Atheist 2
- Buddhist 1
- Church of England 16
- Islam 1
- Jedi 1
- Jehovah Witness 1
- Methodist 1
- Mormon 2
- Pagan 1
- Roman Catholic 1
- Spiritualist 1



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 District Council is committed to making efficiency savings year on year to bridge the gap between rising costs and reducing financial support from the Government. 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 13p 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 to maintain current services.

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

- a 1% increase (4p per week for a Band D property), but with a reduction in services 1
- a 3% increase (11p per week for a Band D property), will maintain most services 2
- an increase of 5% (18p per week for a Band D property), with a slight 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 2009-13. 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
Reducing the impacts of climate change , investing in secure and affordable energy and building a resilient community	<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	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Delivering the canal restoration on time & on budget	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Combating the effects of the economic downturn	<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 1
- fairly satisfied 2
- neither 3
- fairly dissatisfied 4
- very dissatisfied 5
- 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 satisfied 2
- neither 3
- fairly dissatisfied 4
- very dissatisfied 5
- don't know 6

Section Five : Other Questions

Q13. 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
In the last year I have been treated with respect and consideration by Council services	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I believe that the Council understands local concerns about anti social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Q14. The Council is inviting people to join a Citizen's Panel. This is a chance for people to have their say on a host of council services and policies. Belonging to the Panel would involve answering a survey once or twice a year, or being invited to take part in a focus group. Would you be interested in joining the Panel?

- yes 1
- no 2

Section Six : Profile Questions

Q15. Can I take some details about yourself? First, how old are you?

- 18-24 1
- 25-34 2
- 35-44 3
- 45-54 4
- 55-64 5
- 65-74 6
- 75+ 7
- refused 8

Q16. What is your postcode? (eg GL51 9AG)

Q17. How long have you/your household been living in the Stroud District?

- under 1 year 1
- 1-2 years 2
- 3-5 years 3
- 11-20 years 5
- 21 years or more 6
- don't know / can't remember 7



6-10 years 4

Q18. In total, how many adults are there in your household (including yourself)?
 one 1 three 3
 two 2 four or more 4

Q19. And how many children (under 18)?
 none 1 two 3
 one 2 three or more 4

Q20. Are you, or is any member of your immediate household, registered disabled?
 yes 1 no 2

Q21. 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

Q22. 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)

Q23. We would be most grateful if you would also answer the following monitoring questions. We are asking for this information to make sure that we are being fair in our service delivery and that the views of people from all sections of the community are represented. Any personal information provided is kept **strictly confidential** and will **not** be passed on to a third party. It is a Government requirement to ask these questions, however your response is **optional**.

Are you ... (**READ OUT**)
 male 1 transgender 3
 female 2

Q24. Do you consider yourself to be ... (**READ OUT**)
 heterosexual or straight 1 other 4
 gay or lesbian 2 prefer not to say 5
 bisexual 3

Q25. What is your religion, even if you not currently practising?
 Christian 1 none 3
 other (**PROBE**) 2 prefer not to say 4
what other religion? (WRITE IN)



Q26. You said earlier you would like to take part in the Citizens Panel. Can I take your name and contact details so the Council can contact you regarding this. They will not see the answers to this survey as all responses are confidential. **RECORD NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER / EMAIL ADDRESS BELOW**

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE. THEN RECORD THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

- Q27.** Time of Interview (24 hour clock) _____
- Q28.** Duration of Interview (minutes) _____
- Q29.** Name of interviewer _____

