

Agenda

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: **Wednesday 15 January 2014**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **St Aldate's Room, Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: 01865 252191

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Membership

Chair **Councillor Val Smith**

Vice Chair

Councillor Gill Sanders

Councillor Stuart McCready

Councillor Sam Hollick

Linda Hill

Co-optee

The quorum for this Committee is 3, substitutes are permitted.

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AGENDA

Pages

1 APOLOGIES

The quorum for this Panel meeting is three and substitutes are allowed.

2 WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

1 - 2

Officer: Pat Jones Principal Scrutiny Officer will support the Panel with this debate.

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Email: phjones@oxford.gov.uk

This item presents for discussion by The Panel the forward work programme and the results of recommendations made.

In particular:

- (1) That the Temporary Accommodations Management Arrangements issue which the Panel had requested to see before its implementation, would now be considered at the March 2014 meeting of the Panel.
- (2) That the outcome of the interviews with tenants who had been through the mutual exchange process would now be considered at the February 2014 meeting of the Panel.
- (3) That the City Executive Board at its meeting on 11th December 2013, agreed with the recommendation from the Panel to ask that the new Landlord and Lettings Agencies Accreditation Scheme be publicised as widely as possible to achieve greatest impact so that the number of landlords in the Scheme be maximised, as part of the Housing Action Plan refresh.

3 RENT ARREARS ANALYSIS AND PROFILES

Officer: Helen Bishop Head of Customer Services will support the Panel with this debate.

Tel: 01865 252233

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At a previous Panel meeting, Panel members asked to see more details on Council Tenant rent arrears.

Further information was requested on the profile of the rent arrears figures. In

particular:

- The number of tenants in arrears who are affected by any of the benefit changes, or
- are in the direct payments pilot.
- Alongside this the profile of the debt by number of weeks in arrears.

THIS REPORT WAS NOT AVAILABLE WHEN THE AGENDA WAS PRINTED AND WILL BE CIRCULATED SEPERATELY PRIOR TO THE MEETING

4 NO SECOND NIGHT OUT - DETAILED PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

3 - 6

Officer: Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property
Telephone: 01865 252447
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The Panel at its meeting on 4th November 2013 discussed rough sleepers and asked for a further briefing on the numbers of people helped by the policy, a breakdown of figures showing the trends for new and entrenched rough sleepers, their profiles and the wait times for a hostel place.

5 IMPROVING QUALITY IN THE PRIVATE RENT SECTOR - A CITY COUNCIL LETTING AGENCY

7 - 10

Officer: David Edwards, Executive Director, City Regeneration
Telephone: 01865 252394
Email: dedwards@oxford.gov.uk

At the Panel meeting on 4th November 2013, the Panel while aware of the Councils focus on improving quality in the private rented sector through the extended licensing scheme, wanted to explore the possibilities of the City Council setting a letting agency. The Panel asked for further information detailing the benefits and risks of such an approach.

6 SATISFACTION WITH PARKS - DETAILS OF SURVEY RESULTS

11 - 48

Officer: Ian Brooke, Head of Leisure and Parks
Telephone: 01865 252705
Email: ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk

The Panel considers a set of performance indicators every quarter which includes LP013 regarding increasing satisfaction with parks. To further understand the downward trend of performance highlighted at its meeting on 4th November 2013, the Panel asked for further information on the survey including the methodology used, the numbers and locations of respondents,

the questions asked and reasons for any dissatisfaction.

7 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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Notes of the meeting held on 5th December 2013

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Agenda Item 2

Housing Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2013 - 2014

Dates	Agenda Items
3 rd . September 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy Action Plan. 2. Long term affordable housing for homelessness prevention. 3. Allocations review and changes to the Allocations Policy. 4. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 1. 5. Allocation Policies and how we communicate, give advice and take account of feedback. 6. Panel work programme.
3 rd . October 5.00pm.	Provisional – not used.
4 th . November at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures- Qtr. 2. Item to include a report back on performance against CS002 and CS005 2. Follow up on benefits performance indicators.
5 th . December at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy refresh. 2. Estate Regeneration – Scope 3. Management arrangements – Temporary Accommodation? 4. Communications Strategy for the Allocations Scheme 5. STAR survey benchmarks and methodology. 6. Programme details producing results for PIs HC016, NI154 and NI155. 7. Current rent arrears profiles.
15 th . January 2014 at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No second night out detailed performance information. (confirmed) 2. Improving quality in the private rent sector – a City Council Letting Agency. 3. Satisfaction with Parks details of survey results.

	4. Current rent arrears profiles.
7 th . February at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 3. 2. Outcome of the interviews with tenants who had been through the mutual exchange process. 3. Possible Asset Management Strategy – Oxford Standard 4. STAR survey validated benchmark results with demographic breakdowns.
6 th . March at 5.00pm.	<p>Provisional</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Temporary Accommodation Management Arrangements – Dave Scholes
3 rd . April at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tenants and Residents Involvement Strategy – Implementation and opportunities for influence for tenants.

To: The Scrutiny Housing Panel

Date: 14th January, 2014

Report of: Head of Housing and Property

Title of Report: Rough Sleeping and No Second Night Out Statistics

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide members with additional detail on rough sleeping numbers, especially in relation to No Second Night Out

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mark Mills

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Seamons

Recommendation(s) or major points for consideration:
For information only.

Introduction

This report contains information to supplement the performance statistic relating to rough sleeping and No Second Night Out.

A breakdown of the official rough sleeping count in November

November's official street count in Oxford was 19. An actual count was carried out according to government guidelines, rather than an estimate.

The breakdown of the 19 people found, in terms of **length of time out on the streets** is as follows:-

New to rough sleeping	- 4
Second night or more rough sleeping	- 9
Entrenched rough sleepers	- 6
Total	- 19

Gender

Male – 15
Female – 4

Age

18 to 25 – 1
26 to 35 – 4
36 to 49 – 5
50 to 59 – 4
60+ - 5

Nationality

1 A8 national
1 North Africa
17 UK

Local connection status

8 had no local connection to the city or county. This remains in line with normal trends for Oxford which fluctuate around 50% with no LC. Our reconnection policy remains in line with guidelines and is strictly implemented.

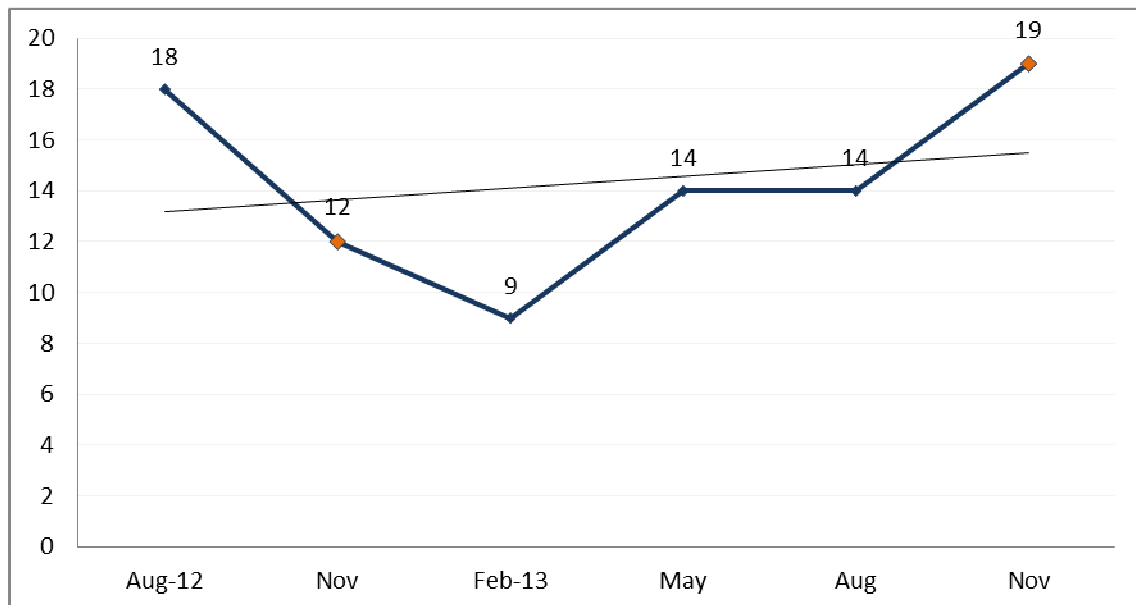
Broader Statistics for Background Information

Number of people helped by NSNO since it started

252 unique clients accessed a NSNO bed between 31st July 2012 and 30th November 2013.

Breakdown showing the trend for new rough sleepers

The first graph below shows street count trends. Rough sleeping trends have remained flat over the last year or so, however following the street count in November it has started to show a slight increase.

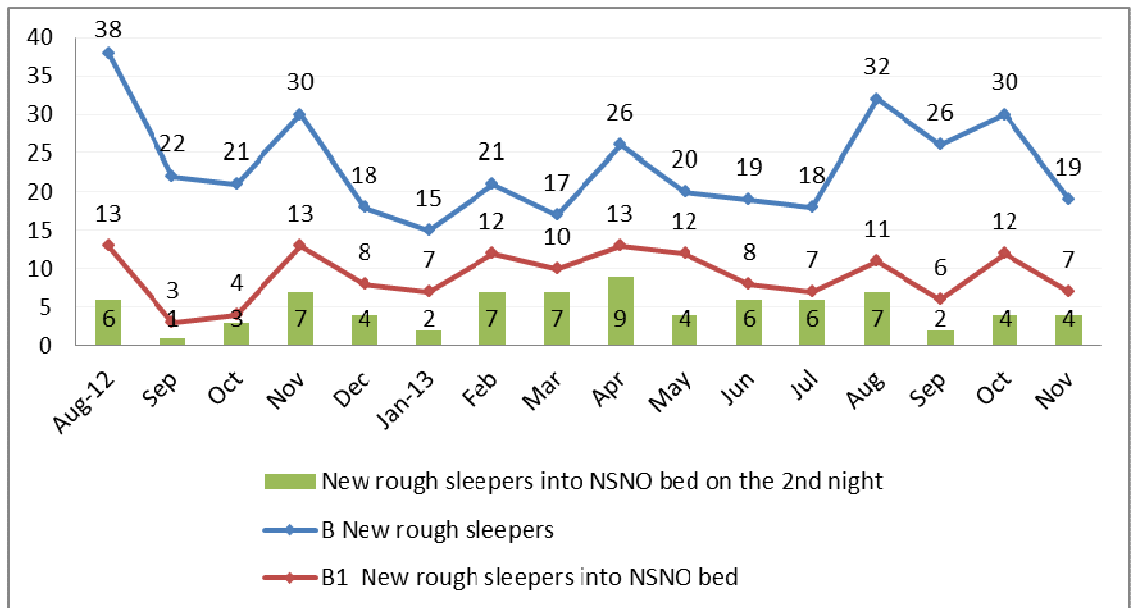


Note - Street Counts

- A street count provides a snap shot of the number of individuals who are sleeping rough on one night. The street counts are carried out quarterly in Oxford and conducted according to strict government guidelines. They are carried out by Oxford City Council, Oxford City Outreach, Thames Valley Police and volunteers from other services providers. We report the total number of rough sleepers and the number of rough sleepers identified in a street count who have been sleeping rough for a 2nd night or more. Official Street Counts are identified above in amber.

Source: Oxford City Council

The graph below shows the number of new rough sleepers coming onto the streets as well as the numbers who were accommodated in NSNO, and further the numbers accommodated in NSNO on the second night.

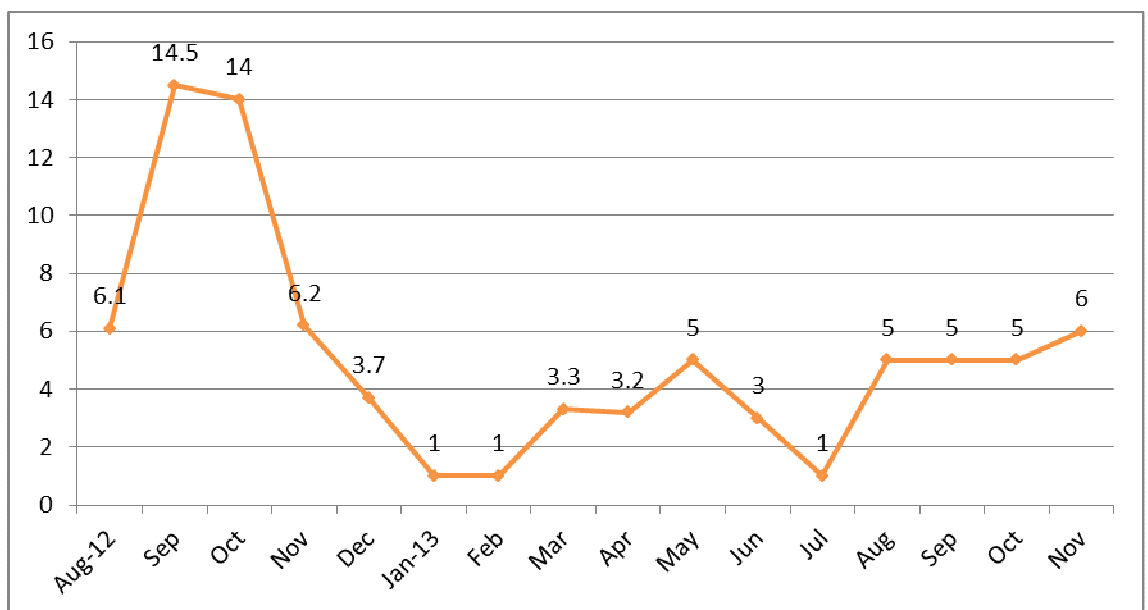


- Line B shows the number of individuals who were verified as rough sleeping for the first time in each month since the introduction of NSNO
 - Line B1 shows the number of newly verified rough sleepers (of Line B) who accessed a NSNO bed in each month
 - The columns show the number of newly verified rough sleepers (of Line B1) who accessed a NSNO bed on the 2nd night in each month
- Source: Oxford CHAIN

The current number of entrenched rough sleeping client is 39 – this is defined as having spent 6 months or more on the streets. Not all clients will be on the streets all of the time (e.g. they may be in prison or have short stays in hostels) but their profile is such that their behaviour is entrenched

Current wait times to access NSNO/hostel (for those not accessing on the 2nd night)

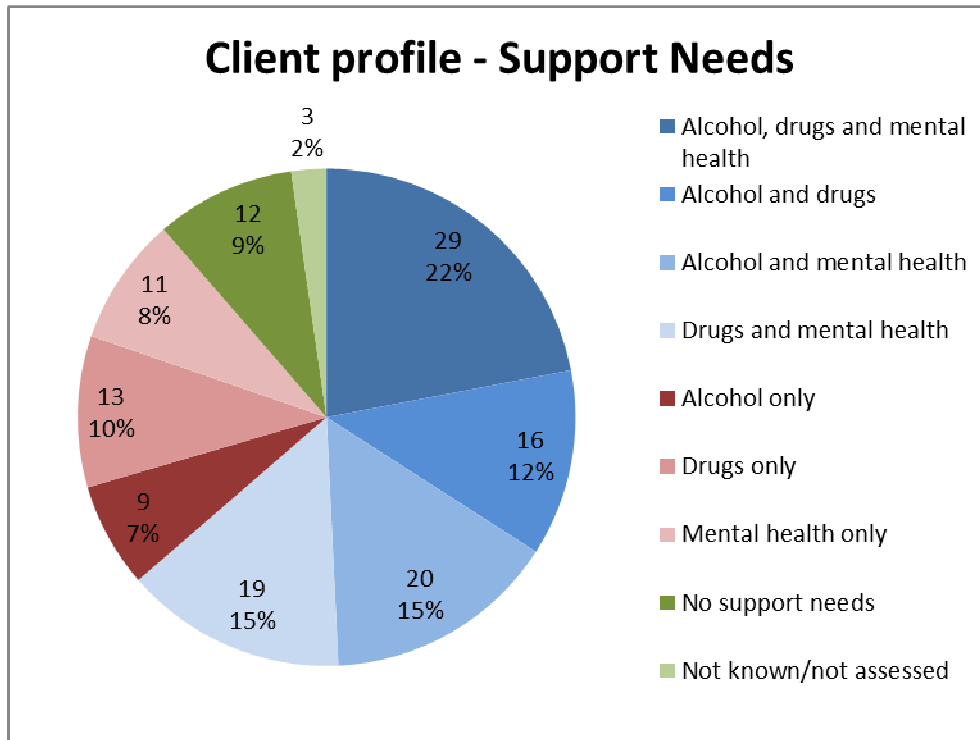
The number of nights a newly verified rough sleeper has to wait in order to access a NSNO bed has been reducing gradually over time. It remains a challenge due to the lack of movement through the pathway.



This graph shows the average number of nights between a person first being verified as a rough sleeper and being accommodated in NSNO (for those clients who did not access a NSNO bed on the 2nd night).
 Source: Oxford CHAIN

Profile of rough sleepers (support needs)

Since the introduction of No Second Night Out, we are aware that the needs of our rough sleeping population are high and complex. Nearly a quarter (22%) have three support needs in addition to their homelessness. A further 41% have two or more needs in addition to their homelessness. These support needs refer to mental health, alcohol and drugs. Other issues such as worklessness, lack of literacy and numeracy skills, debt would be in addition.



Client Profile - Support Needs

- This chart shows the support needs of verified rough sleepers where Oxford City Outreach and/or the NSNO team have gathered this information (132) in the quarter.

Source: Oxford CHAIN

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Nerys Parry
 Job title: Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager
 Service Area: Housing and Property
 Tel: 01865 252825

List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

To: Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: 15th January 2014

Report of: Head of Housing and Property

Title of Report: Improving quality in the private rent sector – A City Council Letting Agency

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide the Housing Panel with further information on the benefits and disadvantages of a City Council Lettings Agency.

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mark Mills

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Scott Seamons

Recommendation(s):

- (1) That it would not be appropriate for the Council to establish a Local Letting Agency approach with the purpose of driving up housing standards in the private rented sector in the City.
- (2) That the Council should further consider alternative approaches to this, that would seek to achieve the same policy objective through different means.

Introduction

At the Housing Panel on 4th Nov 2013, Councillor Hollick asked the Panel to explore the possibilities of the City Council setting a letting agency in an effort to improve quality in the private rented sector. The Panel was told that this had been considered by the Housing service with the intention of increasing affordable supply but had eventually been dropped because of the affordability restrictions of the Local Housing Allowance, amongst other considerations.

The Panel is aware that the Council has a focus on improving quality in the private rented sector through the extended licencing scheme but did want to explore Councillor Hollick's suggestion in outline in the first instance.

The Panel have therefore requested that officers produce a briefing paper on the pros, cons and risks of this suggestion for the Council, for their meeting on 15th January 2014.

Consideration

A number of Council's have set up a Local Letting Agent (LLA) approach in order to improve the access to the private rented sector for customers that might otherwise be made homeless.

Officers are not aware of any Council's that have developed a LLA approach in order to try to drive up standards.

A LLA is essentially the Council setting itself up a letting agent. The approach is similar to the Home Choice scheme already undertaken by Oxford City Council, although these schemes would usually take this a step further, often setting up a high street property shop, with all branding being more aligned with private letting agents than with the Council. The scheme would seek to 'trade' and attract income through charging landlords for its letting matching service, or for on-going property management (say at a 3-4% fee). Councils have to ensure that they compete fairly with lettings agents, and that public funds are not used to unfair advantage (in contravention of competition rules). Councils also need to be fully assured that there would be a local market for this service.

Oxford City Council has considered this approach in some detail. If officers felt it may be viable, the first approach would sensibly be to commission an external consultant to undertake a full market assessment, and review the current council arrangements. Although this was proposed in the Housing and Property Service Plan for 2013/14, the proposal has not been taken further. This is due to various factors, but in particular:

- The growing mis-match between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and the market rate for rental properties in Oxford, making access to, and the sustainment of tenancies, very difficult within Oxford for anyone on Housing Benefit
- The growing reluctance of landlords and agents to accept persons on low incomes/ benefits due to the buoyancy of the PRS market locally, and due to concerns over the introduction of Universal Credit and direct payments to tenants
- The high proportion of rental properties that are currently used by Home Choice from large lettings agents, with whom the Council would be in direct competition with, if it set up a LLP
- A shift in the Council's approach to securing access to properties in the PRS, in recognition of the above, by having to look beyond Oxford, and indeed Oxfordshire, to access property at LHA rates.

With regard to further driving up property standards, Oxford City Council was the first Council in the UK to adopt Additional Licensing powers for all HMOs in its area and the Environmental Development Service has received funding

to take a proactive approach to inspecting rented properties in the non-HMO sector. Environmental Development and City Development are also working together to tackle poor standards in illegal dwellings (beds and sheds) and there are plans to review further measures in 2014 that could improve regulation of the PRS.

The regulatory work being carried out in Oxford has resulted in officers and the Board Member regularly presenting to national conferences on improving standards in the PRS. In addition, recent visits by the Shadow Housing Minister, Emma Reynolds MP and a delegation from DCLG on a fact finding mission demonstrate that the Council is considered a national leader in this area.

It is not considered appropriate for officers in Environmental Development that are concerned with the regulation and enforcement of standards in the PRS, to be involved in lettings activity, as this would present a clear conflict of interest.

It is considered that there are other options that could be more usefully developed to try to drive up standards, than for the council to seek to replace lettings agents with its own approach.

We are reviewing and relauching the accreditation scheme, and that should help give information to the public about which agents we feel meet an appropriate standard also.

Conclusions

We do not believe a LLA would be viable and could undermine the availability of properties currently delivered through Home Choice. We believe that the licensing of HMO's is driving up standards in the sector and that we should consider further measures to regulate the PRS where this is appropriate.

That Oxford City Council is considered a national leader in taking steps to improve standards in the PRS.

Name and contact details of author:-

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 4

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To: Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: 15th January 2014

Report of: Head of Leisure, Parks & Communities

Title of Report: Satisfaction with Parks – Details of the survey results

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide further information on the performance of Parks Services, and performance indicator LP013.

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mark Mills

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Mark Lygo

Recommendation(s): The Panel is asked to comment on the performance information, highlighting any particular areas of concern.

Introduction

The Panel considers a set of performance indicators every quarter which includes LP013 regarding increasing satisfaction with parks. The Panel at its meeting 4th November 2013, asked for further information on the Talkback Survey (appendix A to this report) including the methodology used, the numbers and locations of respondents, the questions asked and reasons for any dissatisfaction.

In 2011 Parks had the highest level of satisfaction of Council services. Along with our drive for continued improvement, a key factor that led to this high level of satisfaction was that it was a particularly good year for the play areas modernisation programme for which we had a huge amount of positive publicity.

While we are continuing to strive to improve parks, the service plan target to retain 91% may have been overly ambitious.

81% is still very high and the second highest level for all Council services.

We have continued to improve the parks in the city. This can be seen with five Green Flags being awarded including the new award at Blackbird Leys, being shortlisted for three Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards

in 2012 (including best parks team of the year), the pavilion refurbishment programme and the Fit Trails Project.

The next satisfaction survey will take place in Spring 2014 and we are confident that this survey will continue to show very high satisfaction levels with the city's parks.

The methodology used and the numbers and locations of respondents.

The questionnaire was sent by post and email to a total of 800 talkback panel members. The survey received a response rate of 43% (344 completed questionnaires). A total of 200 face-to-face questionnaires were completed with newly joining panel members, bringing the total number of responses to 544.

	Responses (unweighted)
17-24 years	112
25-34 years	117
35-44 years	48
45-54 years	58
55-64 years	91
65+ years	106
Male	256
Female	290
Disabled	49
Not disabled	489
White	468
Non-white	69
Employed full time	174
Part time	57
Self employed	28
Student	106
Retired	126
Permanently sick/disabled	13
Looking after the home	26
Other/Unemployed and available for work	13
Own your house	267
Rent from the council / housing association	86
Rent from private landlord	148
Living rent free	8

Living in communal establishment	1
Prefer not to say/Other	17
Central	38
North	62
East	169
North East	102
South East	133
Cowley	34

What questions were asked?

- 4 Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council provide your local public services and we would like your views on some of the services they provide. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided or supported by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council? *(Please tick 1 box for each statement)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Refuse collection						
Doorstep recycling						
Local tips/Household waste recycling centres						
Local transport information						
Local bus services						
Sport/leisure facilities						
Libraries						
Museums/galleries						
Theatres/concert halls						
Parks and open spaces						

Conclusion

The next satisfaction survey will take place in Spring 2014 and we are confident that this survey will continue to show very high satisfaction levels with the city's parks.

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List of background papers: Talkback Survey Winter 2012/13

Version number: 1

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Using evidence to shape better services



Wastes & resources management



Community safety & neighbourhood policing



Sure Start & Children's Centres



Affordable housing



Healthy communities



Active citizens & customer research



Local Authority research & evaluation



Oxford City Talkback Panel

Winter 2012/13

DRAFT FINDINGS REPORT

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Summary of main findings

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Summary of main findings

This section presents key findings from the winter 2012/13 Talkback survey. The survey focuses on 'Living in Oxford'. Where possible, results to for this survey are compared to previous Talkback survey results from December 2010 and November 2011. More detailed analysis of the results is provided in the subsequent sections of this report.

Making Oxford a good place to live

As was the case in autumn 2011, the top 5 factors important in making somewhere a good place to live are 'the level of crime' (51%); 'affordable decent housing' (45%); 'clean streets' (44%); 'health services' (42%); and, 'parks and open spaces' (63%). Analysis by area shows that 'affordable decent housing' and 'the level of crime' feature as top 5 priorities in all areas of Oxford.

Neighbourhood factors seen as being most in need of improvement are 'the level of traffic congestion' (48%) and 'road and pavement repairs' (43%). But neither of these factors are seen as particularly high priorities in terms of making somewhere a good place to live. Cross-referencing the factors in most need of improvement against those regarded as being most important suggests that 'affordable decent housing', 'clean streets', and 'the level of crime' should be particular priorities for the council. The autumn 2011 survey analysis showed the same 3 factors as being most critical.

Satisfaction with the local area

Results to this survey suggest that there has been a significant decline in satisfaction with the local area as a place to live. 83% of respondents are now satisfied with their local area as a place to live compared to 90% in 2011. Satisfaction is lowest in South Eastern parts of the City and Cowley (both 74% satisfaction). Satisfaction also tends to be lower among non-working respondents, non-White respondents, disabled respondents, and those aged 35-44 or under 25.

Neighbourhood issues

Overall, the top 3 neighbourhood issues selected by panellists are 'litter levels' (69%), 'chewing gum' (31%) and 'detritus' (25%). 'Litter levels' is the top priority in all 6 areas of the city. In terms of the cleanliness of the local area, panellists are most satisfied with the cleanliness of 'formal parks' (71% satisfaction) while they are least satisfied with the cleanliness of 'green neighbourhood spaces' (64%). Panellists from Central South Eastern areas of the city tend to be least satisfied with the cleanliness of green neighbourhood spaces.

Local public service provision

Asked how satisfied they are with a range of services provided by the City and the County, overall panellists are most satisfied with the refuse collection service (82%), parks and open spaces (81%), doorstep recycling (81%), and local bus services (78%). Satisfaction is lowest for sports and leisure facilities (51%). Panellists are more likely to agree that Oxford City Council provides value for money (52%) than Oxfordshire County Council (44%).

Overall 66% of panellists feel very / fairly well informed about local public services, an increase of 5%pts compared to the same results in autumn 2011. The services that panellists feel least well informed about are 'what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency' (40% fairly / very well informed) and 'how to get involved in local decision making' (52%).

Community cohesion and respect

88% of panellists agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, a significant increase on the comparable result from 2011. Respondents from Cowley (81%) and North East Oxford (83%) are least likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together. 'Non-White' panellists (92%) are significantly more likely than White panellists (88%) to agree with the statement.

25% of respondents state that people in their local area not treating each other with respect and consideration is a problem, a significant increase compared to the results from autumn 2011. Respondents from South East Oxford (37%) and Cowley (31%) are most likely to state that this is a problem. Notably, approaching 1 in 10 respondents from Cowley (9%) think that this is a very big problem.

Overall, 85% of respondents state that in the last year they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services all or most of the time. Just 3% state that they have rarely or never been treated with respect and consideration by local public services. Disabled panellists (69%) are significantly less likely than their able-bodied counterparts (82%) to agree that they have been treated with respect and consideration.

Project details and acknowledgements

Title	Oxford City Talkback Survey Report
Client	Oxford City Council
Project number	11065 Winter 2012/13
Client contact	Sadie Paige, Hamera Plume
Author	Rob Hack
Contract Manager	Rob Hack

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1) Introduction

Background

This is the eighth Oxford City Council Talkback Survey carried out with the assistance of M·E·L Research. The survey focuses on 'Living in Oxford'. The responses will influence all of the different services provided by the Council.

Oxford City designed and provided the winter 2012/13 survey questionnaire. M·E·L Research were responsible for mailing out, receiving responses via freepost, processing completed questionnaires and data analysis. An online version of the survey was also programmed, hosted on M·E·L Research's website. Fieldwork was conducted between during March and April 2013.

A refresh of the panel, consisting of face-to-face recruitment of 200 new panel members was carried out during late March 2013. As well as completing a recruitment questionnaire, our interviewers completed the winter 2012/13 questionnaire with newly joining panel members. The responses from these face-to-face interviews have been combined with the results from the main postal survey in this report.

Response

The questionnaire was sent by post and email to a total of 800 panel members. The survey received a response rate of 43% (344 completed questionnaires). A total of 200 face-to-face questionnaires were completed with newly joining panel members, bringing the total number of responses to 544. A breakdown of the achieved sample is provided at Appendix A. In some cases the base size reported on will be smaller than the total sample. This is due to lower response rates for some questions than others.

Statistical reliability and reporting conventions

With a total number of households in Oxford of over 50,000, the top line results contained in this report are accurate to $\pm 4\%$ at the 95% confidence level¹; Results for sub-groups will be less accurate.

Where possible, results to for this survey are compared to previous Talkback survey results from December 2010 and November 2011.

¹ This means we can be 95% certain that the results are $\pm 5\%$ of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 5% above or below the figures reported i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 45% to 55%.

2) Findings

This section presents findings from the Winter 2012/13 Talkback survey.

Thinking generally, all respondents were asked to identify factors important in making somewhere a good place to live. Each respondent was asked to select up to 5 different factors. As Figure 1 overleaf illustrates, the top 5 factors overall were: 'the level of crime' (51%); 'affordable decent housing' (45%); 'clean streets' (44%); 'health services' (42%); and, 'parks and open spaces' (36%). The percentage of respondents regarding crime as important is very similar to the results from autumn 2011. However, compared to results from the 2010 survey it is notable that a significantly higher percentage of respondents now regard the level of crime as important (significant change compared to 2010). Conversely, significantly fewer respondents regard the health service (sig. cf. 2011) as important.

Figure 1.1 on page 5 presents the same results (for just the top 5 factors) cross tabulated by area. As this shows, 'affordable decent housing' features as a top 5 priority in all 6 areas, and is *the* top priority in the North of Oxford. 'The level of crime' also features as a top 5 priority across all areas, and is *the* top priority in Cowley. 'Clean streets' is *the* top priority in South East Oxford, featuring in the top 5 priorities for 4 of the 6 areas. 'Health services' is a top priority in all but 1 area (South East) and is seen as *the* top priority in North East Oxford. Other notable findings are that:

- ◆ Education provision is a top 5 priority in 3 areas, and is the top priority in Central Oxford
- ◆ 'Parks and open spaces' is a top 5 priority in 3 areas (Central, East and South East)
- ◆ 'Cultural facilities' features as a top 5 priority in North Oxford and Cowley.

Talkback panellists were then asked to select which factors, if any, need improving in their local area. Figure 2 on page 6 cross-references the factors in most need of improvement against those regarded as being most important in making somewhere a good place to live. The top right hand quadrant shows the factors which are most crucial in that they are viewed as being important and as needing improvement. The results suggest that 'affordable decent housing', in particular, followed by 'clean streets' and 'the level of crime' should be particular priorities for the council. It is notable that the autumn 2011 survey analysis showed the same 3 factors as being most crucial.

The neighbourhood factors seen as being most in need of improvement are 'the level of traffic congestion' (48%) and 'road and pavement repairs' (43%). However, neither of these factors are seen as particularly high priorities in terms of making somewhere a good place to live.

Figure 1 Ranking of factors important in making somewhere a good place to live (Q1) (%)

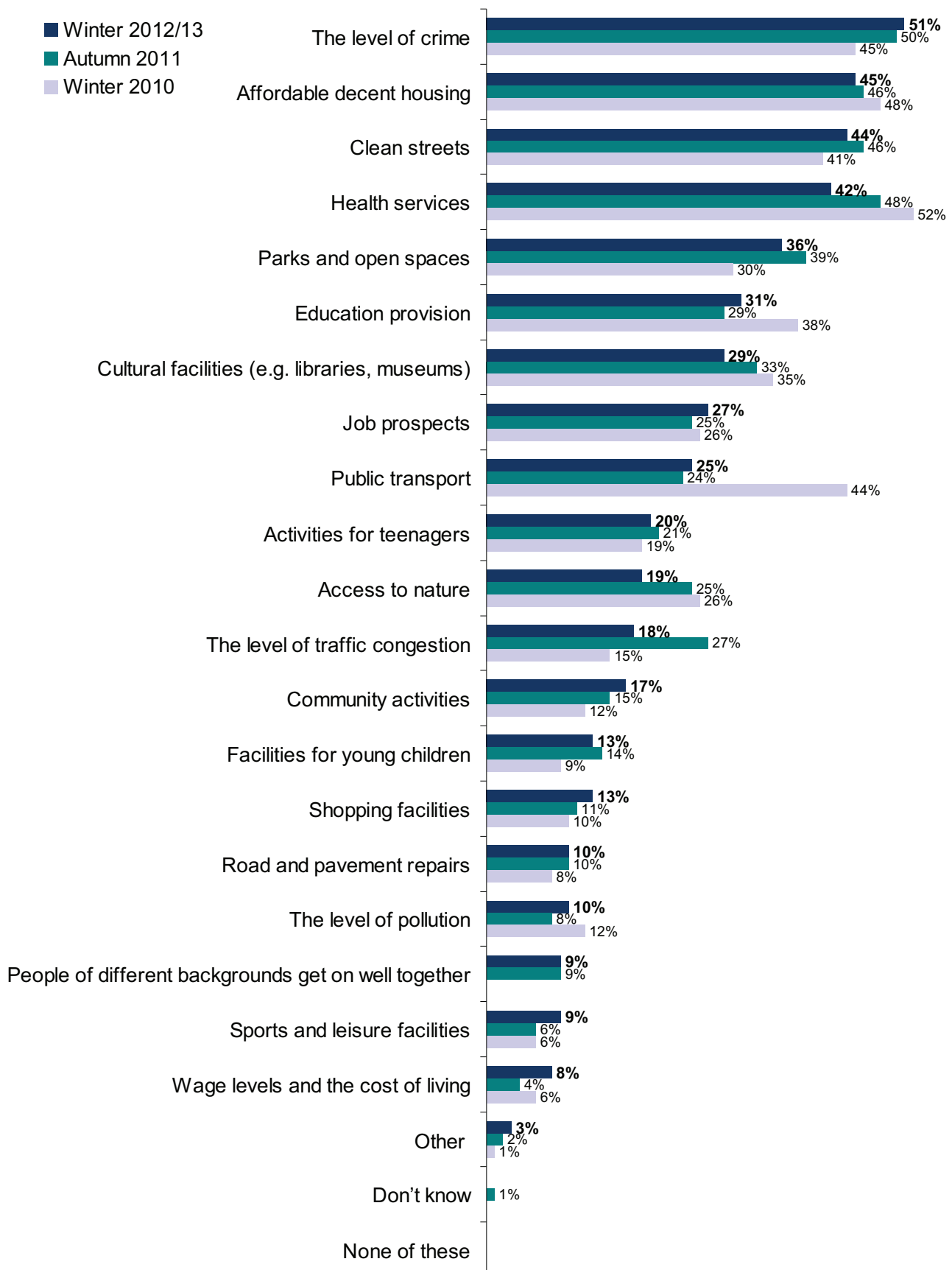


Figure 1.1 Top 5 factors important in making somewhere a good place to live / area (Q1) (%)

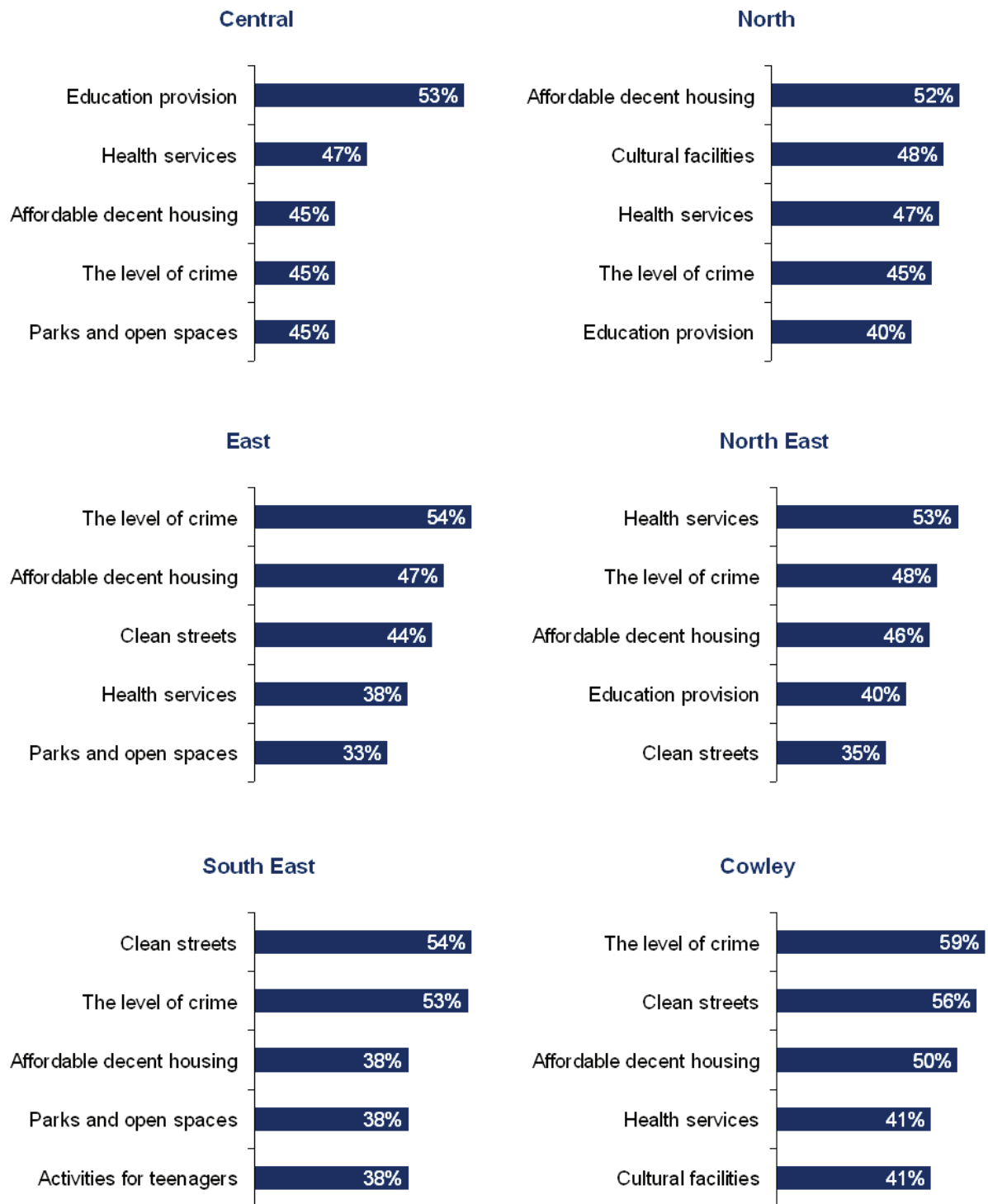


Figure 2 What makes a good place to live: importance vs. improvement (Q1&Q2) (%)

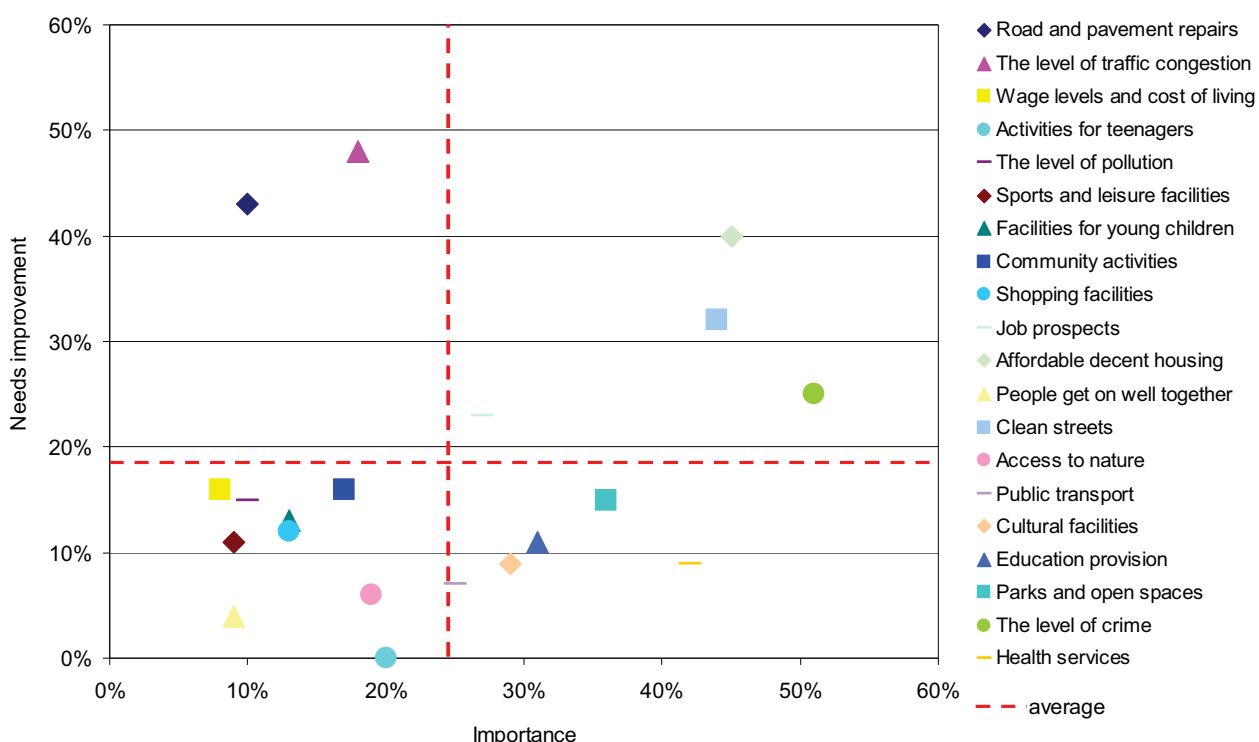
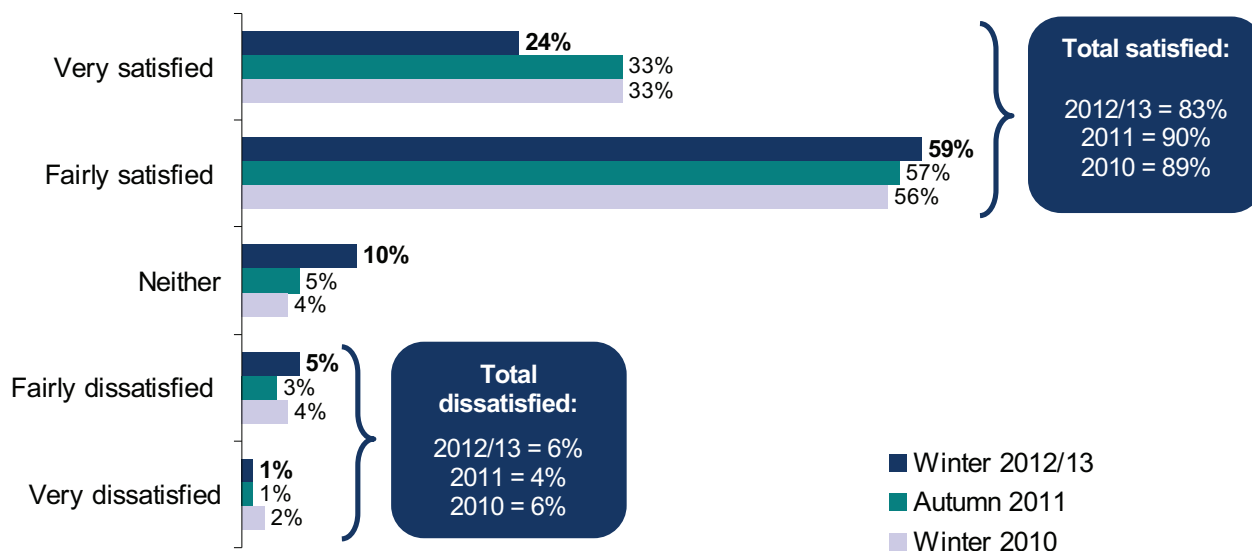


Table 2 What makes a good place to live: importance vs. improvement (Q1&Q2) (%)

	Importance %	Needs improvement %	Difference % pnts
Road and pavement repairs	10%	43%	33%
The level of traffic congestion	18%	48%	30%
Wage levels and the cost of living	8%	16%	8%
Activities for teenagers	20%	25%	5%
The level of pollution	10%	15%	5%
Sports and leisure facilities	9%	11%	2%
Facilities for young children	13%	13%	0%
Community activities	17%	16%	-1%
Shopping facilities	13%	12%	-1%
Job prospects	27%	23%	-4%
Affordable decent housing	45%	40%	-5%
People of different backgrounds get on well together	9%	4%	-5%
Clean streets	44%	32%	-12%
Access to nature	19%	6%	-13%
Public transport	25%	7%	-18%
Cultural facilities (e.g. libraries, museums)	29%	9%	-20%
Education provision	31%	11%	-20%
Parks and open spaces	36%	15%	-21%
The level of crime	51%	25%	-26%
Health services	42%	9%	-33%

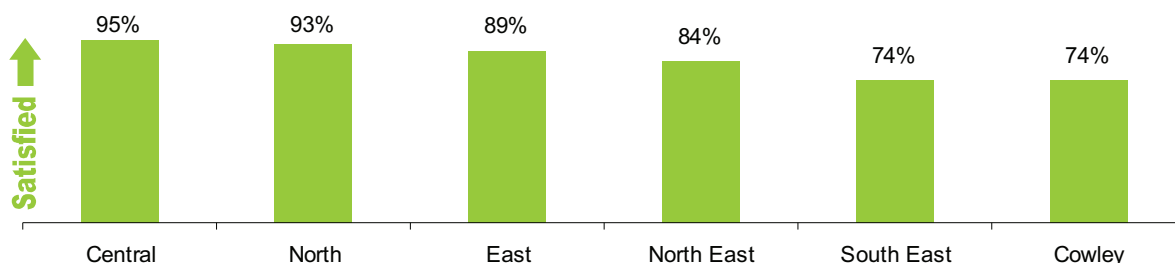
As Figure 3 below shows, a total of 83% of respondents are fairly / very satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This figure has declined significantly compared to previous years. This decline can largely be accounted for by the fact that a lower percentage state they are very satisfied (25% compared to 33% in 2011 and 2010). A higher percentage also state that they are neither satisfied nor satisfied compared to previous years.

Figure 3 Satisfaction with local area as a place to live (Q3) (%)



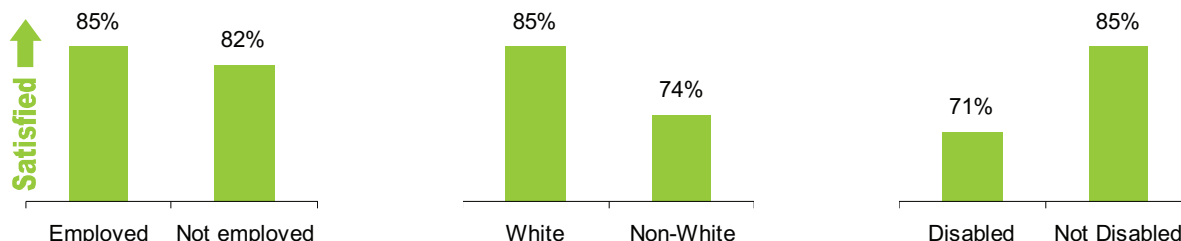
Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live is highest in Central (95%) and Northern (93%) areas of Oxford. Satisfaction is lowest in South Eastern parts of the City and Cowley (both 74% satisfaction). North Eastern and Eastern areas are closer to the average for the city.

Figure 3.3 Satisfaction with local area as a place to live / area (Q3) (% fairly / very satisfied)



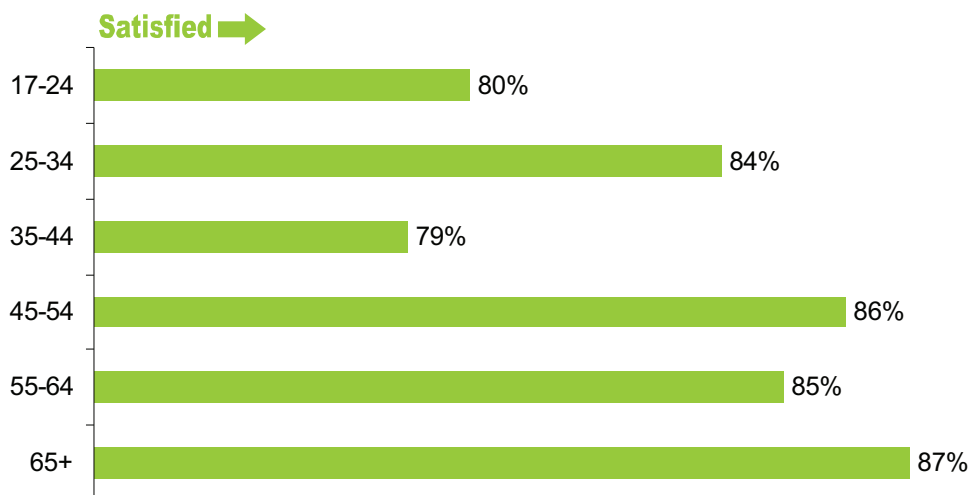
As Figure 3.4 illustrates, employed panellists (85%) are more likely to be satisfied with their area as a place to live than those who are not in work (82%). 'White' panellists (85%) are significantly more satisfied with their area as a place to live than their 'non-White' (74%) counterparts. Similarly, those with a disability (71%) are significantly less satisfied than their able-bodied counterparts (85%).

Figure 3.4 Satisfaction with local area as a place to live / work status, ethnicity & disability (Q3)
(% fairly / very satisfied)



Analysis of the same results by age-group shows that respondents aged 65+ are most likely to be satisfied (87%) while those aged 17-24 (80%) and 35-44 (79%) are least likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Figure 3.4 Satisfaction with local area as a place to live / age-group(Q3)
(% fairly / very satisfied)

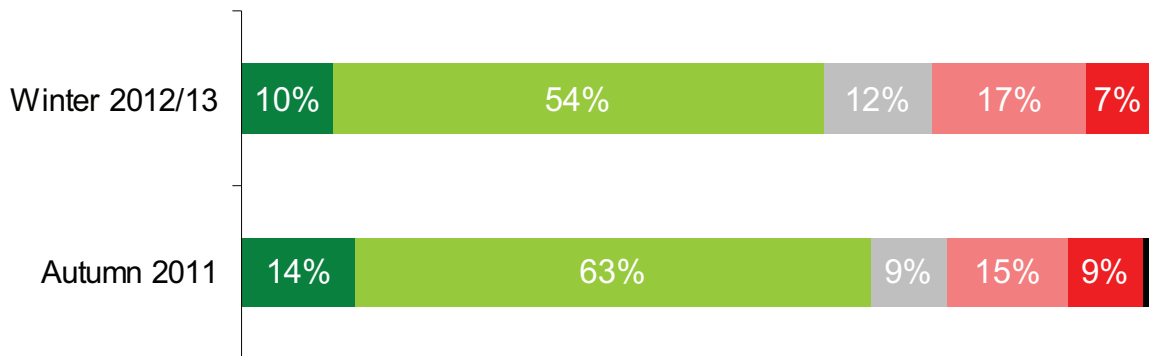


All respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the cleanliness of their local area. As Figure 4 overleaf shows, panellists are most satisfied with the cleanliness of 'formal parks' (71% satisfaction). They are least satisfied with the cleanliness of 'green neighbourhood spaces' (64%). Notably, satisfaction with 'keeping the city centre clear of litter' has increased significantly since 2011 from 56% to 68%. Conversely, satisfaction with 'keeping residential streets clear of litter' has declined significantly from 77% to 64%.

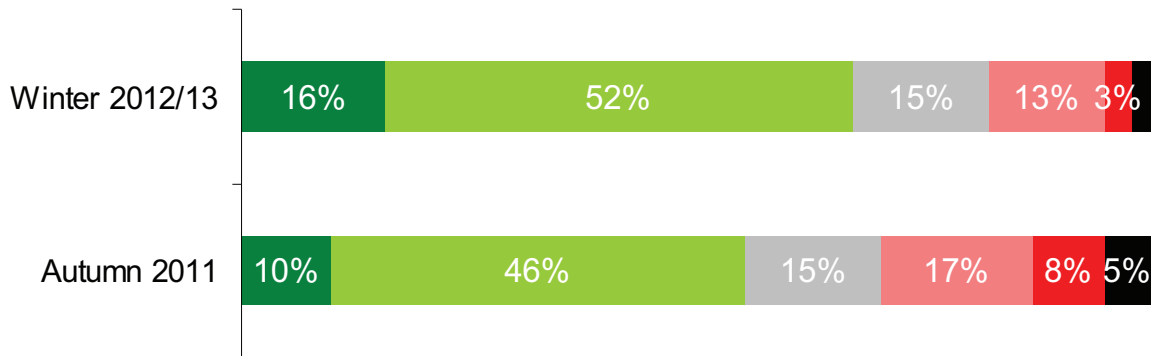
Figure 4 Satisfaction with cleanliness of local area (Q4) (%)

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Don't know

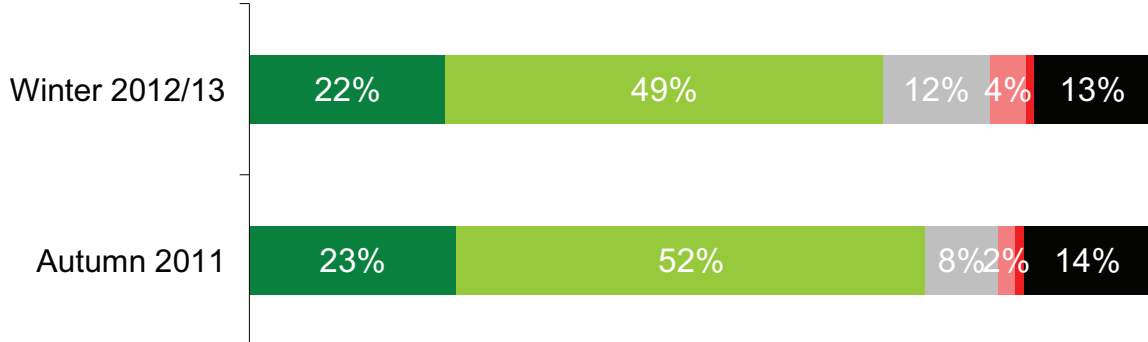
Keeping residential streets clear of litter...



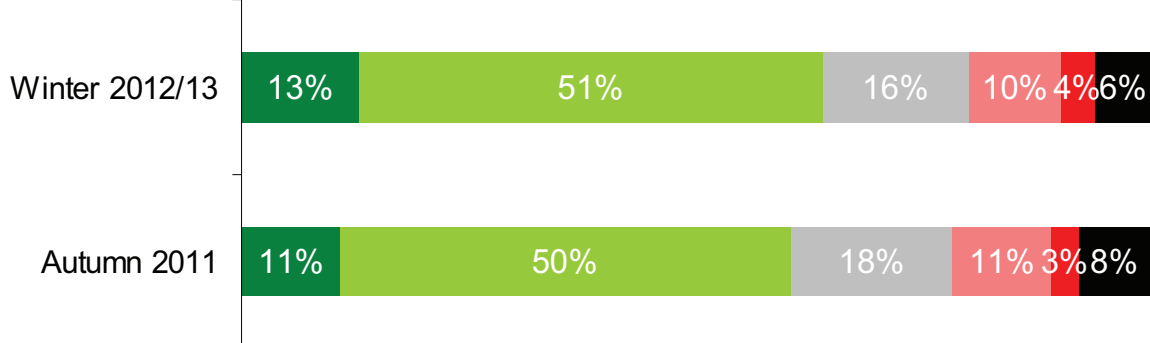
Keeping the city centre clear of litter...



Formal parks (e.g. Bury Knowles, Florence Park etc)...



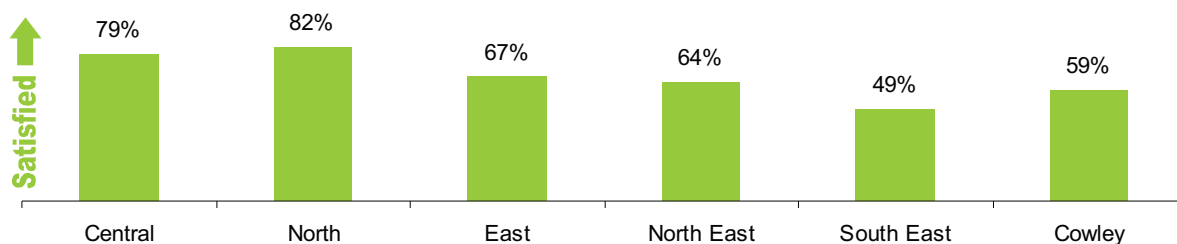
Green neighbourhood spaces...



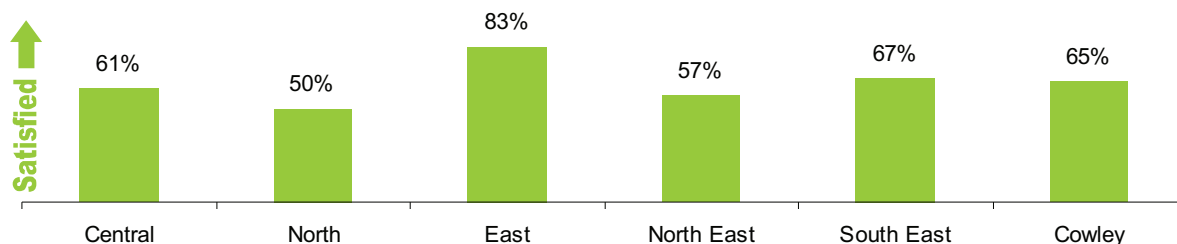
Analysis of the same results by area shows that ‘keeping residential streets clear of litter’ is a particular issue for panellists living in South Eastern areas of the city (49% satisfaction) and Cowley (59%). ‘Keeping the city centre clear of litter’ is most contentious for panellists in Northern (50% satisfaction) and Central (61%) areas of Oxford. Respondents from Central (58%) and Northern (60%) areas are least satisfied with cleanliness of formal parks. Panellists from Central (58%) and South Eastern (60%) areas of the city are least satisfied with the cleanliness of green neighbourhood spaces.

Figure 4.1 Satisfaction with cleanliness of local area / area (Q4)
 (% fairly / very satisfied)

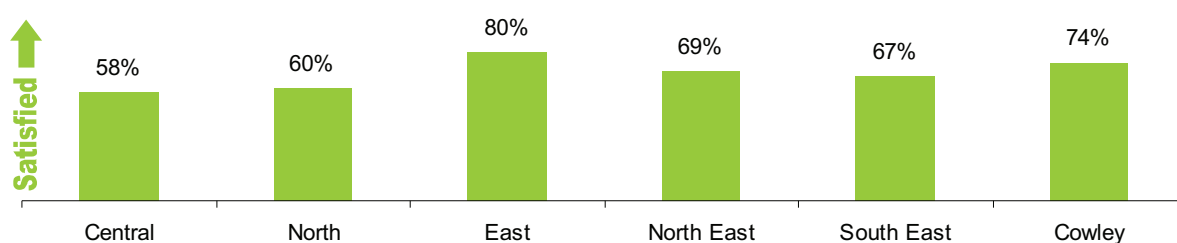
Keeping residential streets clear of litter...



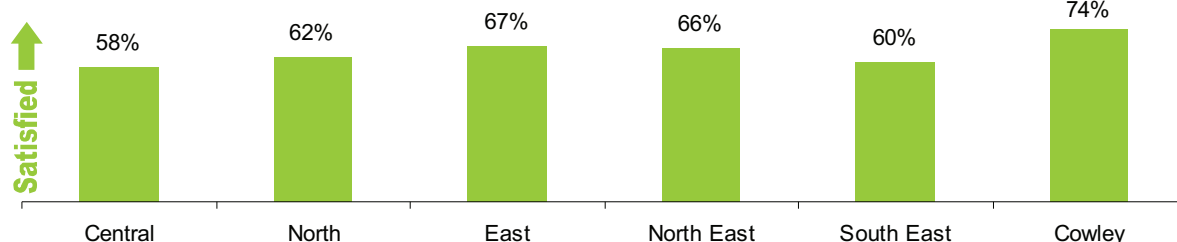
Keeping the city centre clear of litter...



Formal parks (e.g. Bury Knowles, Florence Park etc)...



Green neighbourhood spaces...



All survey respondents were asked to select, from a list of 10 options, which things were most of an issue for them in their local area. Overall, the top 3 issues selected by panellists are 'litter levels' (69%), 'chewing gum' (31%) and 'detritus' (25%). These results confirm that litter is a particular problem with panellists living in South East and Cowley; the results also suggest that fly tipping is more of a problem in these areas than other parts of the city. Figure 5.1 overleaf presents the same results (for just the top 3 factors) cross tabulated by area. As this shows, 'litter levels' is the top priority in all 6 areas.

Figure 5 Top 3 issues in local area (Q5) (%)

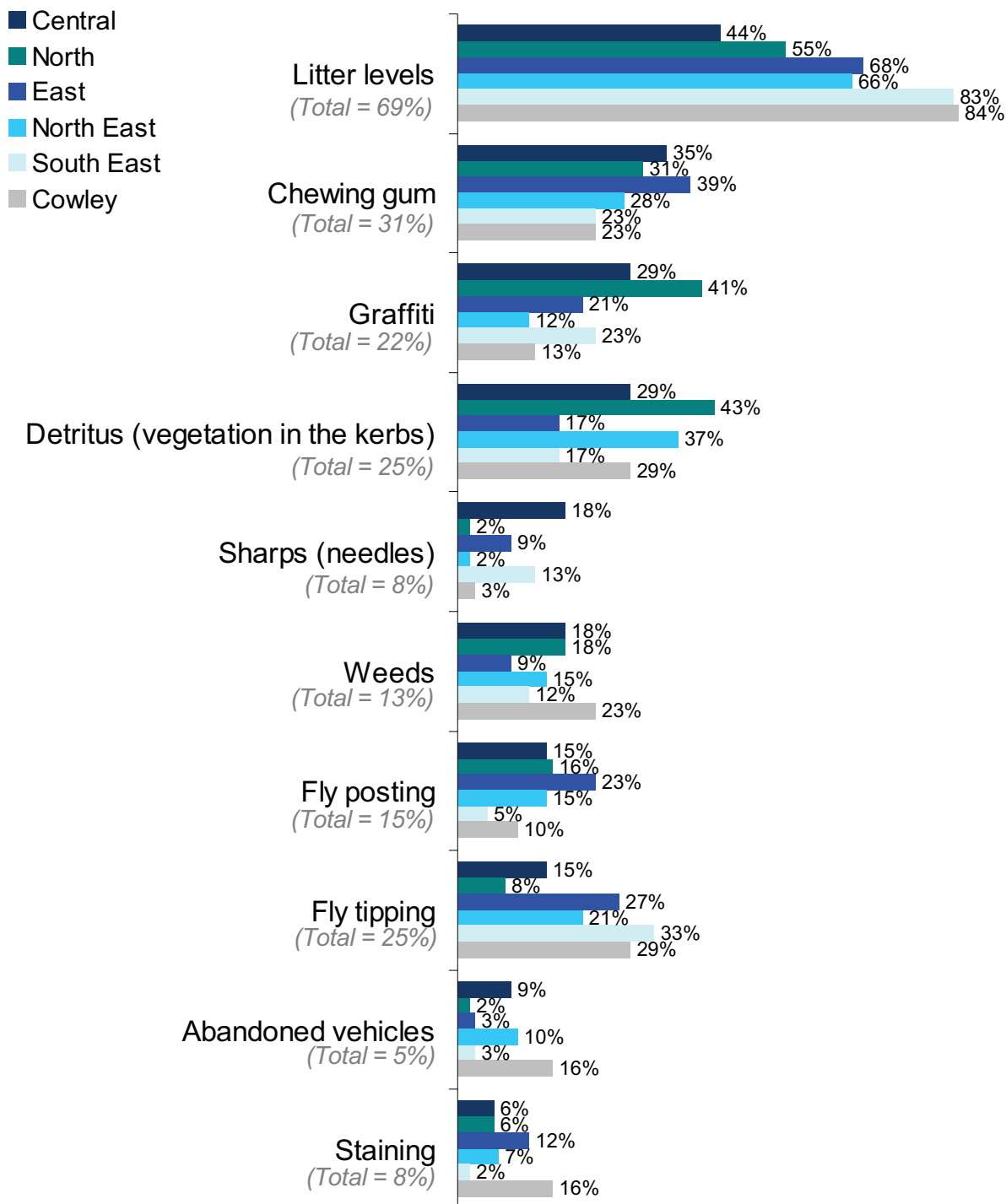
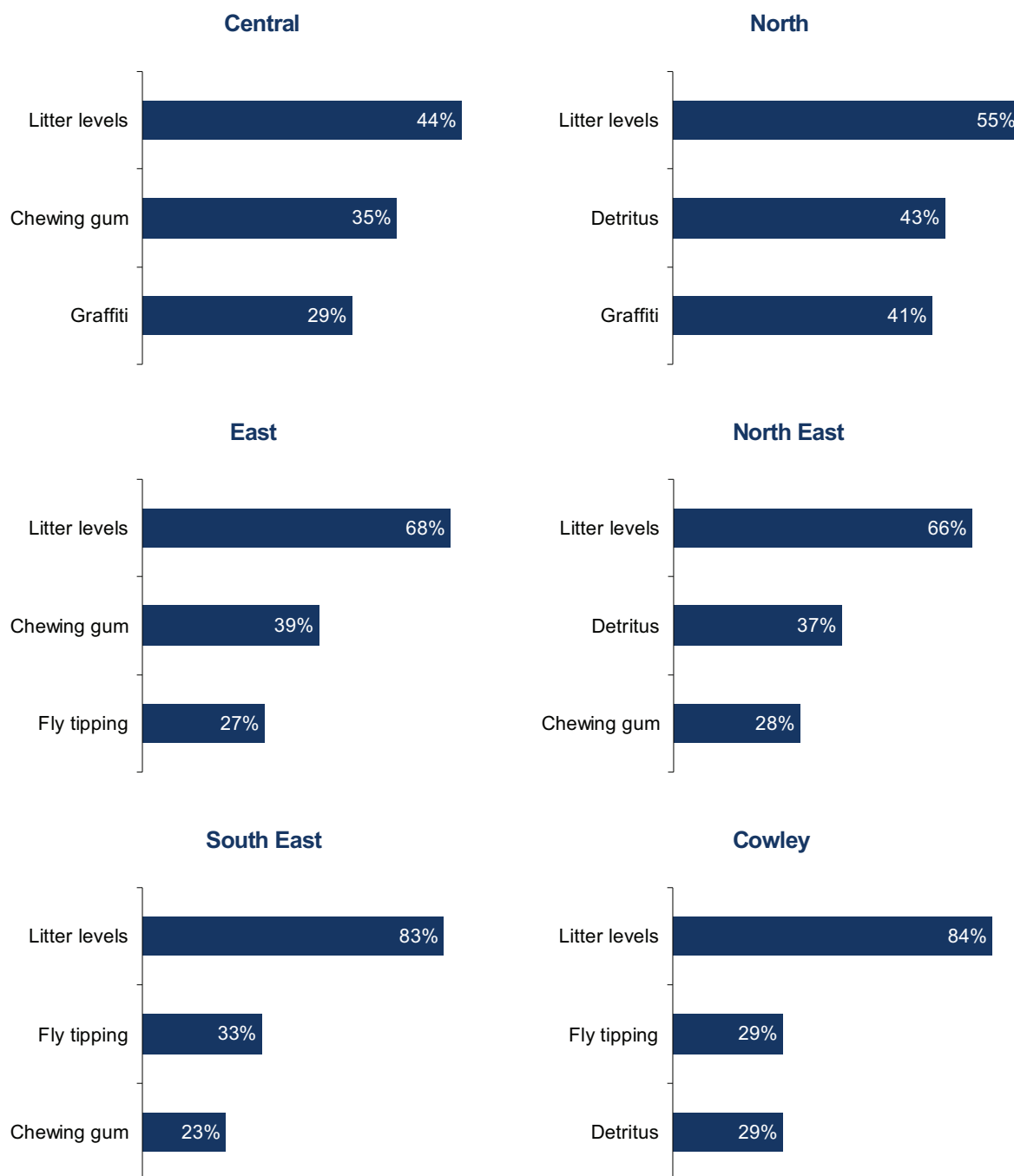
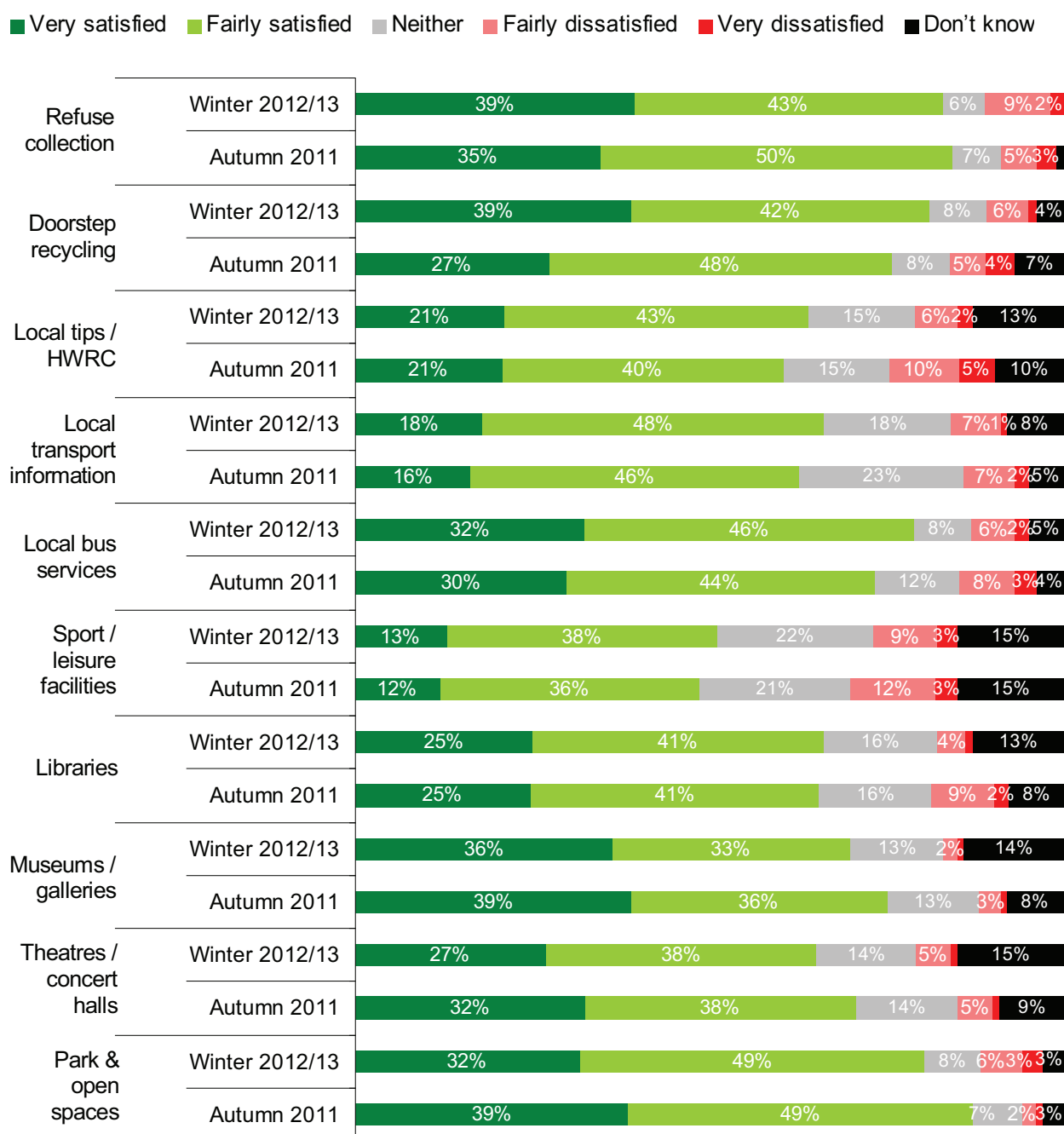


Figure 5.1 Top 3 issues in local area / area (Q5) (%)



All respondents to the Talkback panel survey were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with various services provided by Oxford City Council and Oxford County Council. Figure 6 on the following page presents the results for this question. As this shows, overall panellists are most satisfied with the refuse collection service (82% total satisfaction) although this has declined marginally since autumn 2011. Level of satisfaction are also particularly high with parks and open spaces (81%), doorstep recycling (81%), and local bus services (78%). Overall, satisfaction is lowest for sports and leisure facilities (51% satisfaction) despite the fact that this has increased marginally since 2011.

Figure 6 Satisfaction with services provided by the City / County Council (Q6) (%)



Analysis of the same results by area, work status, ethnicity and disability shows that panellists living in South East Oxford are least likely to be satisfied with parks and open spaces (66% satisfaction), theatres / concert halls (52%), museums / galleries (54%), and local bus services (69%). Residents in Central areas of the city are least likely to be satisfied with libraries (58%), local transport information (60%), and doorstep recycling (77%). Disabled respondent express low levels of satisfaction with 6 out of the 10 service areas listed, perhaps indicative of barriers faced accessing services. However, this cohort does express high levels of satisfaction with local bus services (84%). Levels of satisfaction expressed by 'non-White' respondents are generally low with the exception of satisfaction with sports / leisure facilities (59% total satisfaction compared to the city average of 51%).

Table 6 Satisfaction with services / area, work status, ethnicity & disability (Q6)
 (% fairly / very satisfied)

(Total)	% Satisfied								
	Central	North	East	North East	South East	Cowley	Not employed	Non-White	Disabled
Parks & open spaces (82%)	87%	83%	87%	82%	66%	89%	80%	66%	83%
Theatres / concert halls (81%)	65%	74%	70%	67%	52%	71%	62%	57%	48%
Museums / galleries (64%)	76%	78%	72%	75%	54%	70%	67%	60%	58%
Libraries (66%)	58%	67%	65%	67%	66%	79%	68%	71%	65%
Sport / leisure facilities (78%)	41%	50%	58%	44%	56%	36%	54%	59%	51%
Local bus services (51%)	79%	80%	83%	78%	69%	79%	81%	78%	84%
Local transport information (66%)	60%	65%	70%	63%	61%	77%	64%	72%	69%
Local tips / HWRC (69%)	71%	66%	57%	65%	66%	76%	56%	56%	53%
Doorstep recycling (65%)	77%	84%	78%	87%	79%	88%	76%	72%	72%
Refuse collection (82%)	79%	92%	72%	90%	85%	91%	79%	75%	82%

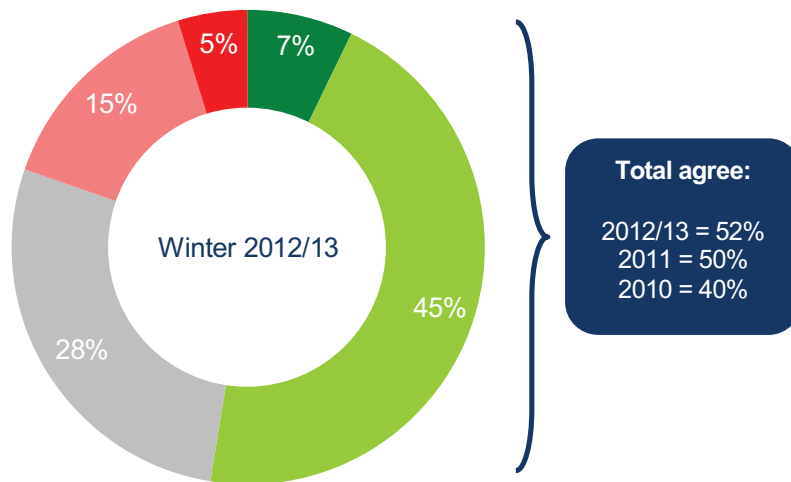
All panellists were asked the extent to which they agree that Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council provide value for money (VfM). Figure 7 on the following page shows responses to this question. As this illustrates, total agreement that Oxford City Council provides VfM (52%) is significantly higher than for Oxfordshire County Council (44%). This has increased for both the City and the County since 2011; the increase for the County is statistically significant.

Analysis of the same results by area shows that respondents live in the South East of the city are particularly likely to think that Oxford City Council (54%) and the County Council (50%) provide VfM. Respondents from the North East of the city are least likely to agree that the City Council (39%) and County Council (27%) provide VfM. Agreement levels are particularly low in Cowley and Central areas of the city.

Figure 7 Level of agreement that City / County Council provide VfM (Q7)

■ Strongly Agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Oxford City Council...



Oxford County Council...

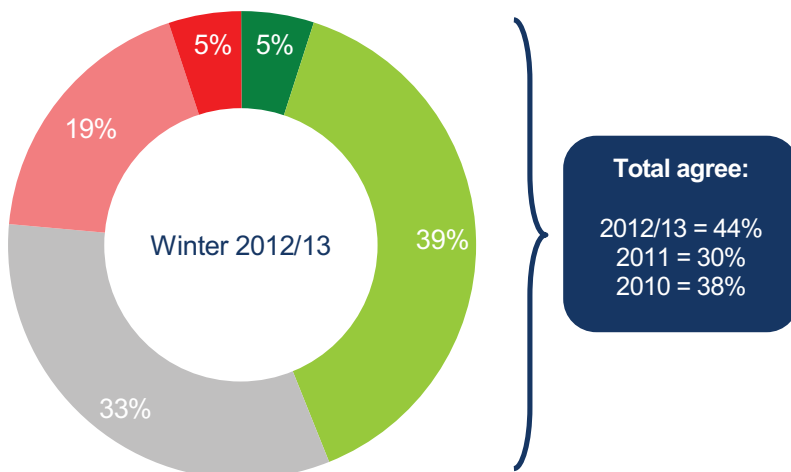
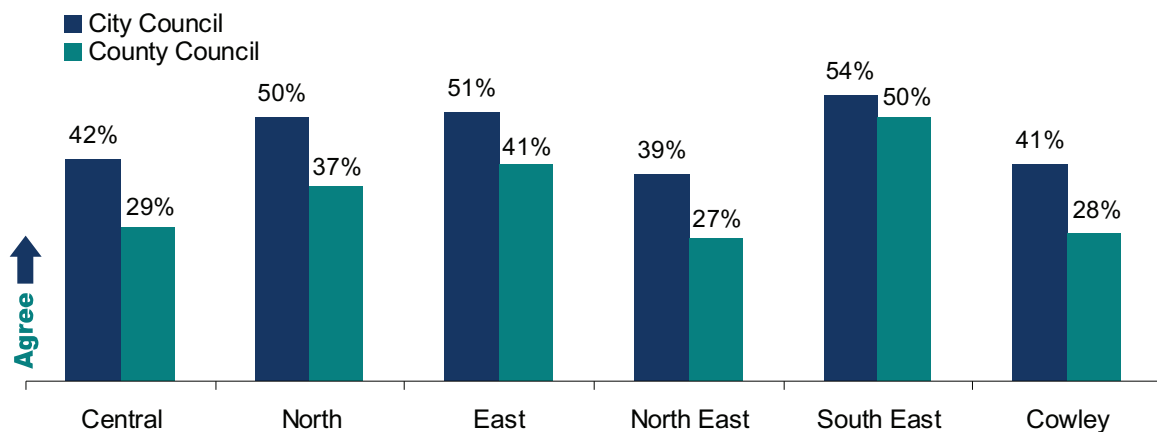


Figure 7.1 Agreement that City / County Council provide VfM / area (Q7)

(% tend to agree / strongly agree)



All respondents were asked how well informed they felt about a list of 8 public services. As Figure 8 below illustrates, overall 66% of panellists feel very / fairly well informed about local public services, an increase of 5%pnts compared to the same results in autumn 2011 (the results for this question in 2011 also represented an increase of 2%pnts compared to 2010). The services that panellists feel least well informed about are ‘what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency’ (40% fairly / very well informed) and ‘how to get involved in local decision making’ (52%).

The percentage of panellists feeling informed about ‘the standard of service they should expect’ has increased significantly from 51% to 62%. Conversely, the percentage of respondents feeling fairly / very well informed about ‘how and where to register to vote’ has decreased significantly from 97% to 87%, perhaps explainable by the fact that no local elections are taking place in Oxford in 2013 although elections are taking place in May 2013 for Oxfordshire County Council.

Figure 8 How well informed residents feel about various public services (Q8) (%)

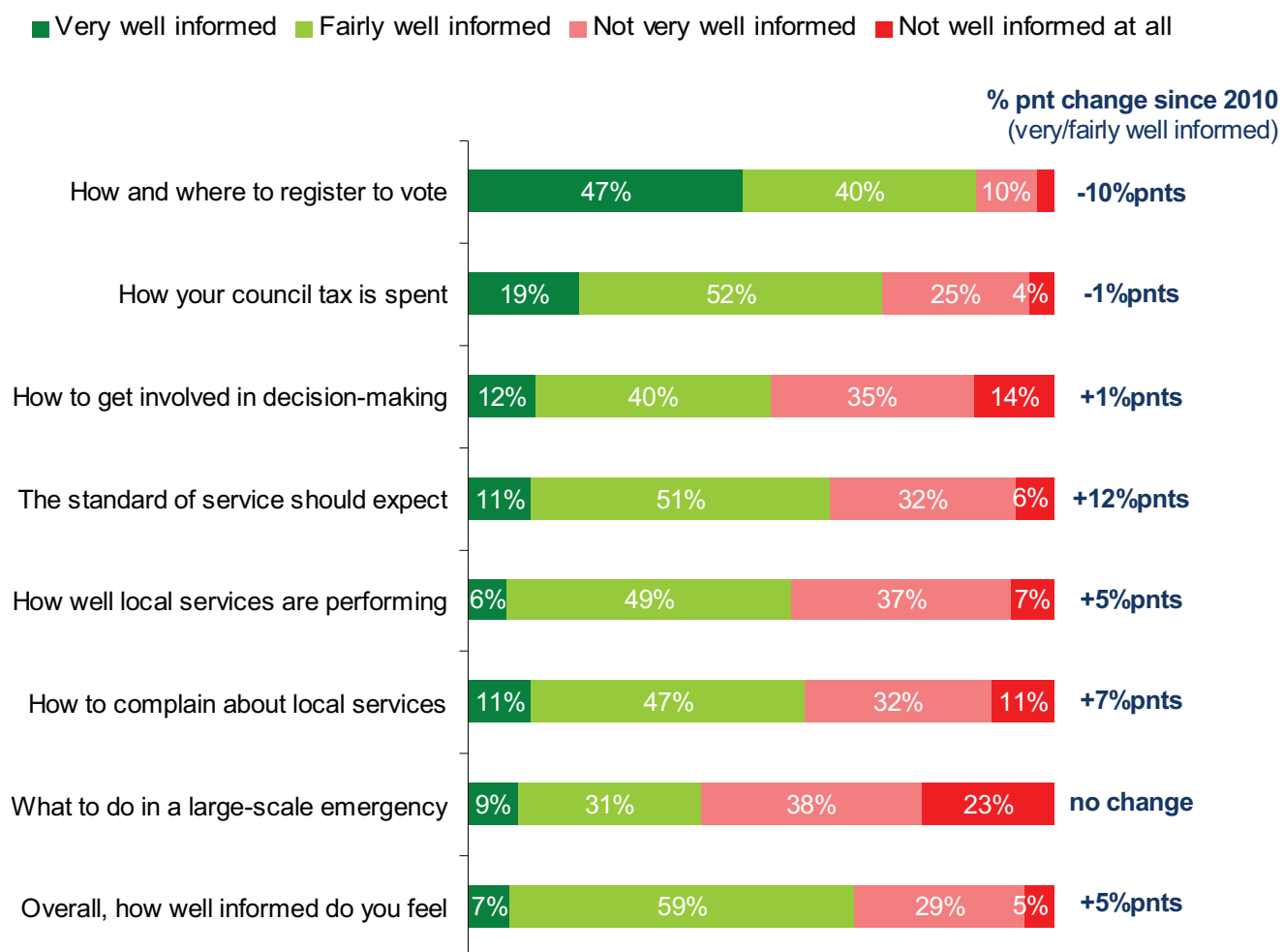


Table 8 below shows analysis of results for the same question by area, work status, ethnicity and disability. As this shows, respondents from East Oxford are least likely to feel informed about ‘where to vote’ (74%), ‘how your council tax is spent’ (46%), ‘how to get involved in local decision making (37%) and ‘how to complain about local public services (49%). Respondents from North East Oxford are least likely to feel informed about ‘the standard of service you should expect’ (47%) and ‘what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency’ (49%); they are also least likely to feel well informed about public services overall (54%).

It is notable that respondents from Central areas of the City feel best informed about ‘what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency’ by some way (71% compared to city average of 40%). It is also notable that disabled respondent feel particularly well informed about ‘the standard of service you should expect’ (71% compared to city average of 62%), perhaps due to a greater level of interaction with public services than many other residents.

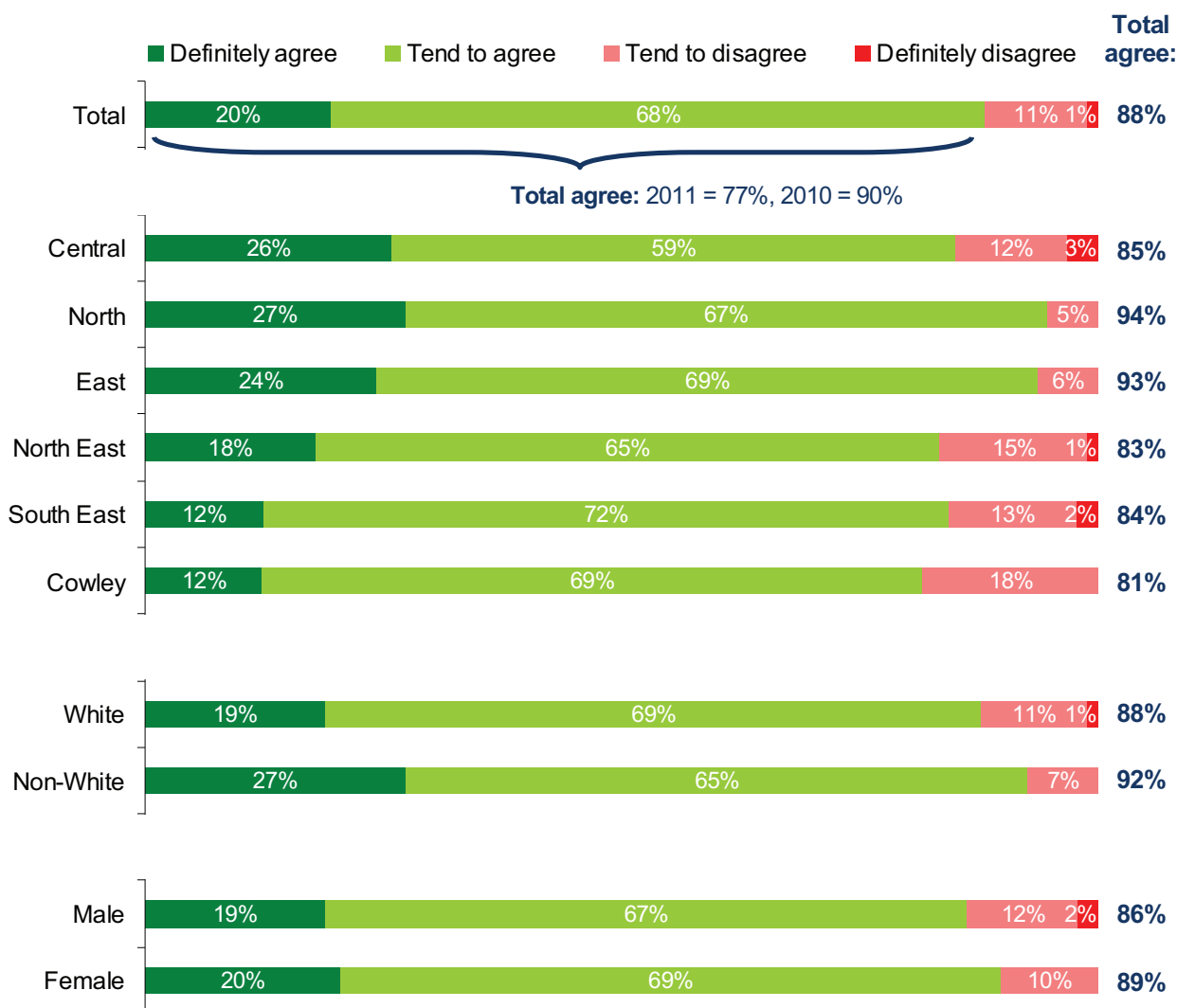
Table 8 Feel informed about various public services / area, work status, ethnicity & disability (Q8)
 (% feel fairly / very well informed)

(Total)	% Informed								
	Central	North	East	North East	South East	Cowley	Not employed	Non-White	Disabled
How and where to register to vote (87%)	94%	90%	74%	93%	84%	97%	80%	82%	90%
How your council tax is spent (71%)	82%	78%	46%	79%	74%	80%	61%	59%	76%
How to get involved in decision making (52%)	40%	63%	37%	49%	59%	57%	51%	44%	54%
The standard of service should expect (62%)	48%	62%	62%	47%	65%	53%	62%	59%	71%
How well local services are performing (55%)	42%	49%	53%	43%	63%	53%	57%	54%	63%
How to complain about local services (58%)	55%	55%	49%	50%	62%	54%	52%	60%	63%
What to do in a large-scale emergency (40%)	71%	38%	25%	23%	52%	35%	36%	44%	39%
Overall, how well informed do you feel (66%)	74%	72%	61%	54%	68%	58%	62%	65%	70%

As Figure 9 below shows, 88% of panellists agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together; this represents a significant increase on the comparable result from 2011 but is broadly in line with the result from 2010 (a marginally decrease).

Respondents from Cowley (81% agreement) and North East Oxford (83%) are least likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together. ‘Non-White’ panellists (92% agreement) are significantly more likely than White panellists (88%) to agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Women are marginally more likely than men to agree with the statement.

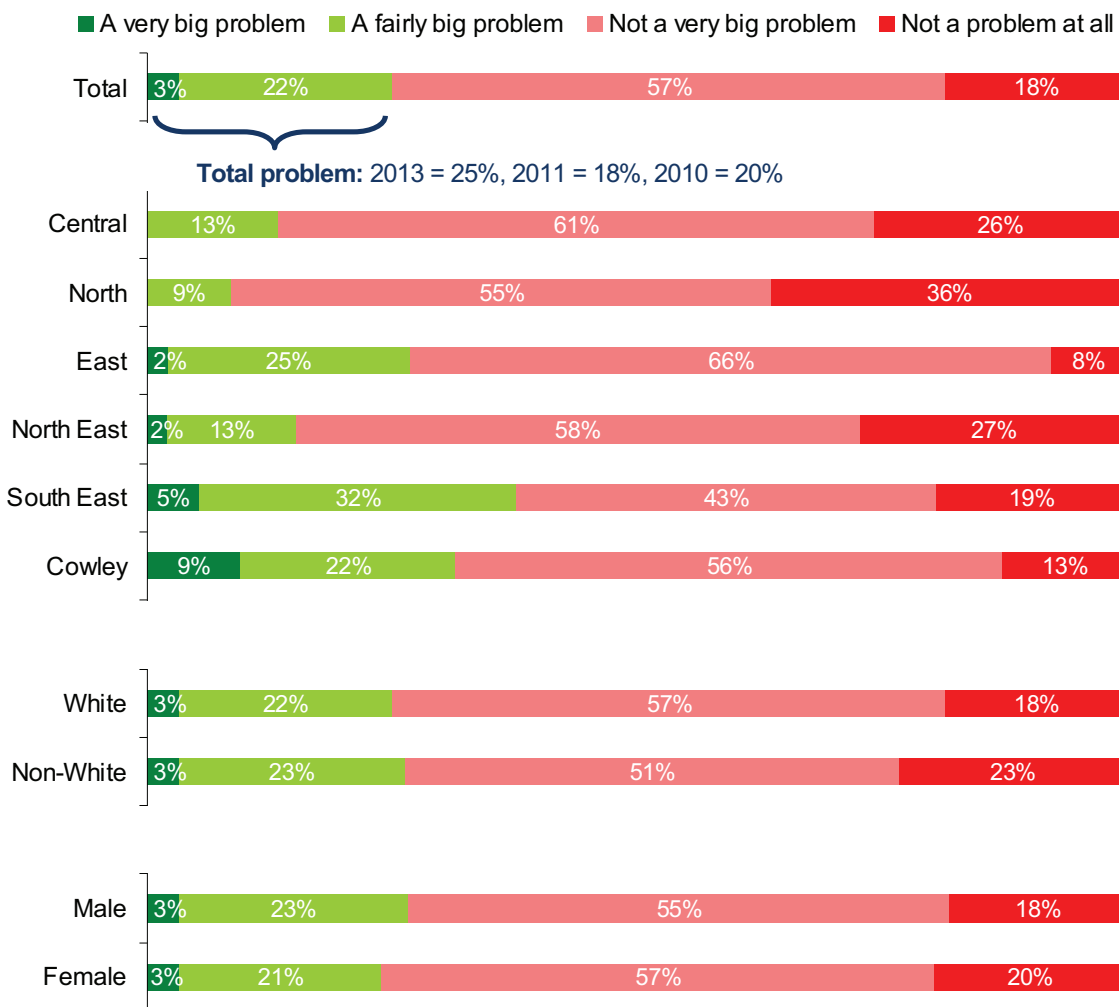
Figure 9 Level of agreement that local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (Q9) (%)



Overall, 25% of respondents state that people in their local area not treating each other with respect and consideration is a fairly / very big problem, although within this just 3% state that this is a very big problem. This result represents a significant increase compared to the results from autumn 2011 (18% fairly / very big problem).

Respondents from South East Oxford (37% agreement) and Cowley (31%) are most likely to state that people in their local area not treating each other with respect and consideration is a fairly / very big problem. Notably, approaching 1 in 10 respondents from Cowley (9%) think that this is a very big problem.

Figure 10 Extent of problem in local area of people not treating each other with respect and consideration (Q10) (%)



As Figure 11 below shows, a quarter of respondents (25%) state that in the last year they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services all of the time, a marginal decrease compared to autumn 2011. The majority - 3 out of five (60%) - state that they have been treated with respect and consideration most of the time. Overall, it can be said that 85% of respondents state that in the last year they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services all or most of the time. Just 3% state that they have rarely / never been treated with respect and consideration by local public services.

Figure 11 Frequency of being treated with respect and consideration by local public services (Q11)
(%)

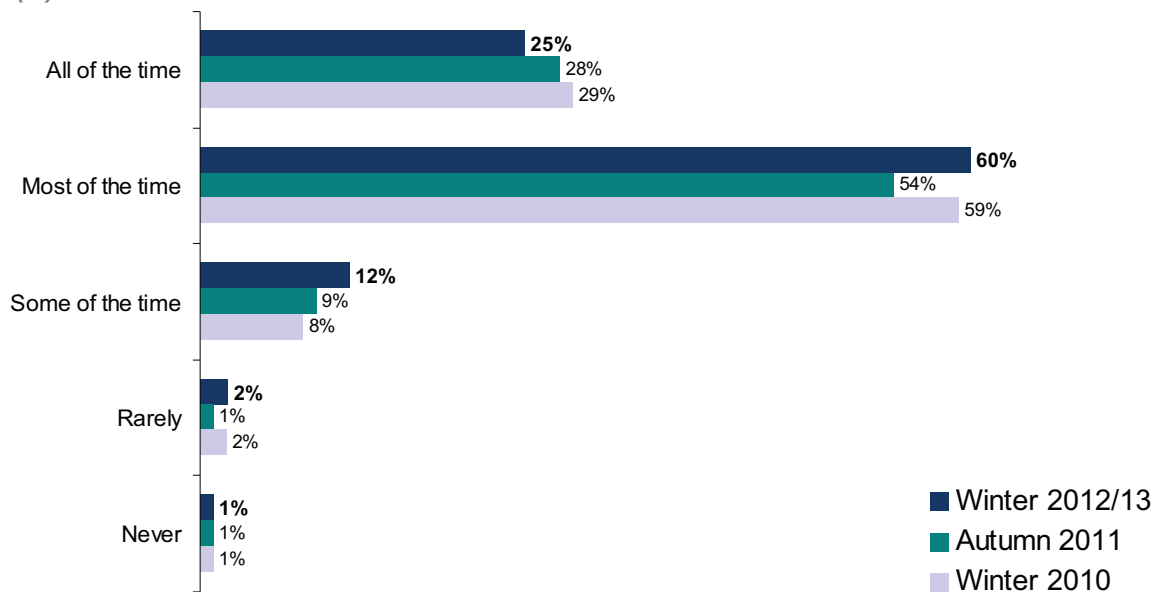


Figure 11.1 shows results for the same question cross tabulated by area, illustrating that respondents from North East and South East Oxford (both 82%) are least likely to agree that they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services all or most of the time.

Figure 11.1 Being treated with respect and consideration by services / area (Q11)
(% all / most of time)

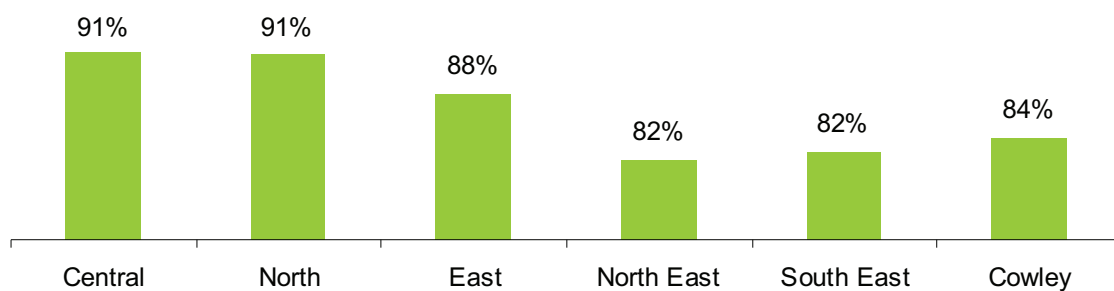
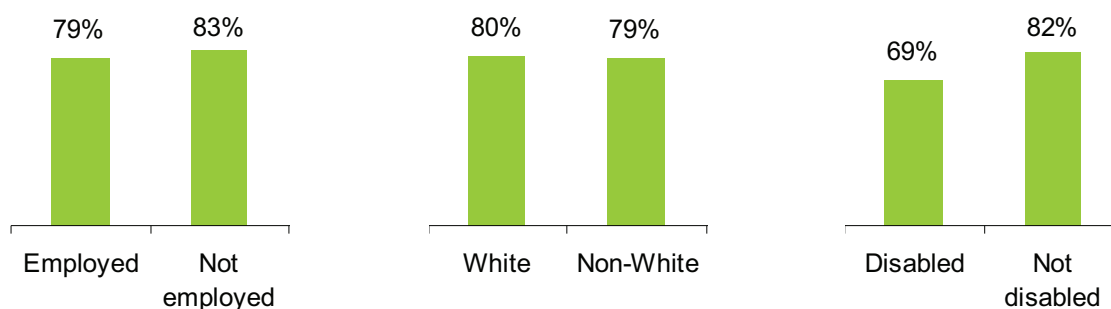


Figure 11.2 shows results for the same question cross tabulated by work status, ethnicity and disability. There is little variation by work status and ethnicity. However, disabled panellists (69%) are significantly less likely than able-bodied panellists (82%) to agree that they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services all or most of the time.

Figure 11.2 Being treated with respect and consideration / work status, ethnicity & disability (Q11)
 (% all / most of time)



Analysis of the same results by age shows that respondents in the 35-44 age-group are least likely to agree that they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services all or most of the time (74%).

Figure 11.3 Being treated with respect and consideration / age-group (Q11)
 (% all / most of time)



Appendix A: Sample composition

	Responses (unweighted)
17-24 years	112
25-34 years	117
35-44 years	48
45-54 years	58
55-64 years	91
65+ years	106
Male	256
Female	290
Disabled	49
Not disabled	489
White	468
Non-white	69
Employed full time	174
Part time	57
Self employed	28
Student	106
Retired	126
Permanently sick/disabled	13
Looking after the home	26
Other/Unemployed and available for work	13
Own your house	267
Rent from the council / housing association	86
Rent from private landlord	148
Living rent free	8
Living in communal establishment	1
Prefer not to say/Other	17
Central	38
North	62
East	169
North East	102
South East	133
Cowley	34

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Talkback Survey | Winter 2012/13

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL



www.oxford.gov.uk



Welcome to your Winter 2012/13 Talkback survey

Your views are important to us, so please take the time to complete this survey and return it to us in the freepost envelope provided.

Please can you complete and return this survey by Friday 22 March.

We're pleased to be able to offer you the chance to win £30 worth of high street vouchers.

If you would like to be entered into this prize draw then please enter your details below.

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Best wishes,
Hamer Plume,
Consultation Officer
01865 252057

If you would like to receive this survey in an alternative format such as Braille, large print, audio cassette or other languages then please let me know by calling **01865 252057**.

Is there a question/issue that you would like to see in a future Talkback survey? If so, please let me know below.

A huge thank you to everyone who responded to our last Talkback survey in Autumn.

We asked you what you thought about Community Safety and Empty Dwellings and we received over 360 responses.



The findings from the survey and our earlier Summer 2012 survey are included in our "You Said, We Did" report, which is enclosed.

Talkback Survey | Winter 2012/13 | Building a world class city for everyone. | 1

Living in Oxford

Who is asking the questions?

All our departments as the responses will influence all of the different services provided by the City Council.

What do we need to know?

Your views about living in Oxford, the quality of life you experience and your views on the services we provide.

Why are we asking you?

As residents of Oxford you are able to provide an insight into life in the city. You are also likely to have direct experience of using the services we provide.

What will happen to the results?

They will help us to make improvements to the services we provide and help us to prioritise budgets to the areas that are most important to you. We publish some of the data and key indicators in our corporate plan.



When answering the following questions please consider "your local area" to be the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home.

- Thinking generally, which of the things below would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live? (Please tick up to five boxes only in the left hand column below)
- And thinking about this local area, which of the things below, if any, do you think most need improving? (Please tick up to five boxes only in the right hand column below)

	1 Most important in making somewhere a good place to live (tick up to 5)	2 Most needs improving in this local area (tick up to 5)
Access to nature		
Activities for teenagers		
Affordable decent housing		
Clean streets		
Community activities		
Cultural facilities (e.g. libraries, museums)		
Education provision		
Facilities for young children		
Health services		
Job prospects		
The level of crime		
The level of pollution		
The level of traffic congestion		
Parks and open spaces		

Question continued from previous page...	1 Most important in making somewhere a good place to live (tick up to 5)	2 Most needs improving in this local area (tick up to 5)
Public transport		
People of different backgrounds get on well together		
Road and pavement repairs		
Shopping facilities		
Sports and leisure facilities		
Wage levels and the cost of living		
Q1 – Other (please tick box and write in below)		
Q2 – Other (please tick box and write in below)		
None of these		
Don't know		

3 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (Please tick 1 box)

Very satisfied
 Fairly satisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Fairly dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the cleanliness of your local area?
(Please tick 1 box for each statement)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Keeping residential streets clear of litter						
Keeping the city centre clear of litter						
Formal parks (e.g. Bury Knowles, Florence Park etc)						
Green neighbourhood spaces (council owned communal grass areas and shrubs and hedges)						

4 Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council provide your local public services and we would like your views on some of the services they provide. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided or supported by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council? (Please tick 1 box for each statement)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Refuse collection						
Doorstep recycling						
Local tips/Household waste recycling centres						
Local transport information						
Local bus services						
Sport/leisure facilities						
Libraries						
Museums/galleries						
Theatres/concert halls						
Parks and open spaces						

5 To what extent do you agree or disagree that Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council provide value for money? (Please tick 1 box only for each Council)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Oxford City Council						
Oxfordshire County Council						

6 How well informed do you feel about each of the following? (Please tick 1 box for each statement)

	Very well informed	Fairly well informed	Not very well informed	Not well informed at all	Don't know
How and where to register to vote					
How your council tax is spent					
How you can get involved in local decision-making					
What standard of service you should expect from local public services					
How well local public services are performing					
How to complain about local public services					
What to do in the event of a large-scale emergency e.g. flooding, flu epidemic (pandemic)					
Overall, how well informed do you feel about local public services					

We are interested to know about the unpaid help that people living in Oxford give.

Please think about any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s) that you've been involved with during the last 12 months. That's anything you've taken part in, supported, or helped in any way, either on your own or with others. For example, helping at a youth or day centre, helping to run an event, campaigning or doing administrative work. (2010 only). Please exclude giving money or anything that was a requirement of your job.

7 Overall, about how often over the last 12 months have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)?

Please only include work that is unpaid and not for your family. (Please tick 1 box)

<input type="checkbox"/> At least once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week but at least once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> Less often
<input type="checkbox"/> I give unpaid help as an individual only and not through group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> I have not given any unpaid help at all over the last 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

8 To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? (Please tick 1 box)

<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Too few people in local area	<input type="checkbox"/> All the same background
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know		

9 In your local area, how much of a problem do you think there is with people not treating each other with respect and consideration? (Please tick 1 box)

<input type="checkbox"/> A very big problem	<input type="checkbox"/> A fairly big problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Not a very big problem
<input type="checkbox"/> Not a problem at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / no opinion	

10 In the last year would you say that you have been treated with respect and consideration by your local public services? (Please tick 1 box)

<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time	<input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time	<input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time
<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/no opinion

11 Which of the following are most of an issue for you in your local area? (Please give your top 3 issues)

<input type="checkbox"/> Litter levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/> Chewing gum	<input type="checkbox"/> Staining	<input type="checkbox"/> Fly posting
<input type="checkbox"/> Fly tipping	<input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharps (needles)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeds	<input type="checkbox"/> Detritus (vegetation in the kerbs)



Talk back reports are available to download at

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Or we can send you copies on request.

Please call:

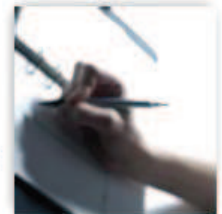
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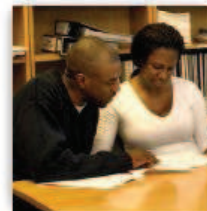
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HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

Thursday 5 December 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Smith (Chair), Sanders, McCready and Hollick.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Hill (Co-optee)

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mathew Metcalfe (Democratic and Electoral Services), Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Tom Porter (Housing and Communities) and Dave Scholes (Housing and Communities)

30. WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel received an updated forward work programme. Pat Jones took the Panel through the programme and the following items were noted to be considered at the Panels meeting in January 2014:

- Temporary accommodation management arrangements
- No second night out detailed performance information
- Improving quality in the private rented sector – A City Council Letting Agency
- Satisfaction with Parks – Details of survey results

Estate regeneration

The Panel wished to see evidence of what capacity building within the Blackbird Leys community was underway, so that when the more formal engagement begun in spring 2014, people were ready to fully participate. The Panel also wished to understand what the engagement planned for 2014, would look like and that as well as engaging with the usual groups such as the Parish Council, other established groups for example the Football Club and the Bingo Group were also approached.

Asset Management Strategy – An Oxford Standard

The Panel noted comments concerning decent homes and was informed that the results of the Stock Condition Survey which was underway was awaited and these would inform the strategy.

31. HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - REFRESH

The Panel received a report of the Head of Housing and Property which provided details of a refresh of the Action Plan for the second term of the Housing Strategy. This report was also to be considered by the City Executive Board at its meeting on 11th December 2013.

Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager, attended the meeting and introduced the report.

During the discussion the following comments/points were made:

Objective 2 – Prevent Homelessness

- How did the risk of an increase in homelessness levels due to welfare reforms etc. fit with the key action of re-modelling hostel accommodation to incorporate assessment centre, new referral and move on pathways?

Objective 3 – Addressing the housing needs of vulnerable people and communities

- The Persons Person Housing Guide was to be printed and detailed the property and the various options that were available. The Guide would be available in hard copy and on-line. A copy would also be sent to Panel Members.
- Acknowledgement of the pressures on temporary accommodation and hostel places. At the end of November 2013, there were 116 people in temporary/hotel accommodation, and that a possible 20-30 households, could become homeless in the short term. There was a large risk associated with the none-statutory homeless due to possible cuts in the County Council budgets and this was to be discussed further at the Health Improvement Board in January 2014.
- Properties in the AHP Programme will be a mixture of affordable and social rent. The split will be approximately 70% social and 30% affordable.

Objective 4 – Improve housing conditions

- It was acknowledged that solid wall properties such as those on the Donnington estate were hard to insulate and that a pilot was to be conducted on a number of properties to see the effect of the insulation and the cost per property. A budget of £250k was available for this.
- The Stock Condition Survey as part of the Asset Management Strategy would be broad and include work on specific property types, regeneration and an Oxford Standard.
- That the implementation of a new Landlord and Lettings Agencies Accreditation Scheme be publicised as widely as possible to achieve the greatest impact and that the number of Landlords in the scheme be maximised.

The Panel agreed:

- (1) To send the following recommendation to the City Executive Board:

That the implementation of a new Landlord and Lettings Agencies Accreditation Scheme be publicised as widely as possible to achieve the

greatest impact and that the number of Landlords in the scheme be maximised.

- (2) That Councillor Sam Hollick would represent the Panel at the City Executive Board meeting on 11th December 2013 and present the recommendation.

32. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATIONS

The Panel received a report from the Allocations Manager, Tom Porter, which provided a summary of the communication plan for the new Allocations Scheme.

Tom Porter attended the meeting and introduced the report.

In response to questions Tom Porter confirmed that the scheme would go live on 12th December 2013 and that letters would be sent out week commencing 9th December 2013. He added that information on the property type and size of the property would be available via the Councils website.

During the discussion it was suggested:

- Officers could give a talk about the Allocations Scheme at each of the Children's Centres.
- Members would benefit from having a better understanding of the Housing Register, possibly in the form of a Members Briefing.

Councillor Smith felt that as long as people registered themselves on the Housing Register, it provided a record of housing need, no matter how slight. In response Dave Scholes said that the Register showed more about demand than housing need.

33. STAR SURVEY BENCHMARKS AND METHODOLOGY

The Panel received a note which detailed a number of performance indicators results obtained via the STAR Survey.

Gary Parsons, Housing Strategy and Performance Manager, introduced the information. He said that the results gave a "flavour" of where the Council was currently at as the survey results for 2013 still required validating as some authorities still had to supply the data.

During the discussion the following comments/points were made:

- Satisfaction questionnaires did not necessarily give a true reflection of satisfaction. The only way to achieve an accurate view was to approach tenants' direct.
- The results could be better produced with more explanatory text and show the number of tenants in each Ward.

The Panel agreed:

- (1) To revisit the STAR Survey results at its meeting in February or March 2014 depending on when the 2013 validation is complete;
- (2) That when the validated results come back to the Panel, details of how they will be used to improve the offer etc. to tenants in Oxford is also provided;
- (3) That the Panel be supplied with a demographic breakdown of the results.

34. PROGRAMME DETAILS PRODUCING RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS HC016, NI154 AND NI155

The Panel received a note which provided information on the number of performance indicators which related to increasing housing supply. A further update to the previously circulated information on affordable housing supply and tenures and bed sizes was also circulated at the meeting.

Gary Parsons, Housing Strategy and Performance Manager introduced the item and took the Panel through the results.

During the discussion the Panel was informed that the target, which was set by the Council, was being reviewed. There was a high degree of certainty that targets for 2014/14 and 2015/16 would be met, however from 2017/18 onwards, these were indicative as the number of sites identified for housing in private ownership increased. The amount of land in Council ownership that could be developed was decreasing.

The Panel asked for a breakdown on the sites that had been identified, location, size, number of units etc.

35. CURRENT RENT ARREARS PROFILES

The Panel received a report of the Head of Customer Services, which provided an update on the performance of the Rents Team.

The Panel decided to defer consideration of the report to its January 2014 meeting as the Board Member, Councillor Susan Brown was unable to attend, and to allow Panel further time to consider the reports contents.

36. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Panel approved the note of its meeting held on 4th November 2013.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.50 pm