

**Committee:** Executive  
**Date:** Monday 4 November 2013  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

### Membership

<b>Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)</b>	<b>Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)</b>
<b>Councillor Ken Atack</b>	<b>Councillor Norman Bolster</b>
<b>Councillor John Donaldson</b>	<b>Councillor Michael Gibbard</b>
<b>Councillor Tony Ilott</b>	<b>Councillor Nigel Morris</b>
<b>Councillor D M Pickford</b>	<b>Councillor Nicholas Turner</b>

## AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

4. **Urgent Business**

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

5. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 8)

**6.35pm**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2013.

**6. Chairman's Announcements**

**6.37pm**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

**Strategy and Policy**

**7. Housing Strategy Priority Five: Homelessness Prevention Action Plan**  
(Pages 9 - 26)

**6.40pm**

Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing

**Purpose of Report**

To introduce a new Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013 - 2015

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan which has been produced as part of a review of Cherwell's overarching Housing Strategy in the context of achieving the Gold Standard set up by DCLG through the National Housing Advisory Service
- 1.2 To note continued ring-fencing of DCLG Grant for homelessness prevention and partnership working until March 2015

**Value for Money and Performance**

**8. Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2013** (Pages 27 - 74)

**6.50pm**

Report of Head of Transformation

**Purpose of Report**

To update the Executive on the results of the annual satisfaction survey and identify any areas to be reflected in future business and/or performance plans.

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the customer survey, with particular reference to improvement in areas that were identified as priorities as an outcome of the survey undertaken in 2012.
  - The way the Council deals with anti-social behaviour
  - The Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime
  - Car Parking Services
- 1.3 To agree the priorities and areas of focus for future action as set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6.

9. **Award of Liquid Fuel Contract** (Pages 75 - 78) **7.05pm**

Report of Interim Head of Finance and Procurement

**Purpose of Report**

To consider the award of contracts to supply diesel to Cherwell District Council

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the acceptance of the recommended tenders for the supply of diesel.

10. **Transformation Bid Acceptance and Accountable Body Arrangements** **7.10pm**

\*\* Please note that this report will follow as information still awaited from the Government department in relation to terms and conditions of the bid \*\*

Report of Director of Resources

**Purpose of Report**

To formally accept the offer of government funding under the Transformation Challenge Award and agree the accountable body arrangements.

**Recommendations**

To be confirmed once terms and conditions of the bid offer have been received from the Department for Communities and Local Government

**Urgent Business**

11. **Urgent Business**

Any other items which the Chairman has decided is urgent.

**(Meeting scheduled to close at 7.20pm)**

## **Information about this Agenda**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk) or 01295 221589 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012**

This agenda constitutes the 5 day notice required by Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 in terms of the intention to consider an item of business in private.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

### **Access to Meetings**

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

### **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

### **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections  
[natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk), 01295 221589

**Sue Smith**  
**Chief Executive**

Published on Friday 25 October 2013

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 7 October 2013 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council  
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management  
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy  
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures  
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning  
Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green  
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing  
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Customers and Performance

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrats  
Councillor Les Sibley

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive  
Calvin Bell, Director of Development  
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer  
Karen Curtin, Director (Bicester)  
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer  
Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement  
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy  
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

## 38 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

### **6. Local Plan Update.**

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as a tenant of Trinity College, at Drayton Lodge Farm, that has had land under discussion and also being leasee of Drayton Leisure Golf Centre that is adjacent to one of the sites in the Local Plan.

39 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman reported that there were no petitions and he had agreed a request from Councillor Les Sibley to address the Executive on agenda items 6, Local Plan Update, and 12, East West Local Rail Contribution.

40 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

41 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 **Local Plan Update**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought consideration of the draft Submission Local Plan for Cherwell.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Planning explained that the report updated Members on the preparation of the draft Submission Local Plan, reviewed the Sustainability Appraisal, Viability Assessment, the development of the evidence base, representations received, the draft Submission Local Plan itself and the next steps.

The Lead Member for Planning advised that the final iteration of the Sustainability Appraisal was nearing completion and, subject to the resolution of Executive, the final version would be presented to Full Council. The Infrastructure tables in the Local Plan would be replaced in due course by a full Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

Councillor Woodcock, Leader of Labour Group, addressed Executive and commented that he was very impressed with the comprehensive document and consultation which had provided useful feedback.

Councillor Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, addressed Executive and commended the Lead Member for Planning and officers for their hard work throughout the process. Councillor Emptage advised Executive that Kidlington Parish Council continued to have issues regarding the provision of housing in Kidlington and queried the status of the Kidlington Masterplan in relation to the Local Plan.

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy explained that the Local Plan was a snapshot in time which focussed on strategic policies and sites and it was recommended there be no revisions at this time. It was confirmed that the Kidlington Masterplan process would include an assessment of housing. A Local Neighbourhoods DPD was being developed which would look at sites with less than 400 houses.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Sibley addressed Executive and raised a number of queries in relation to Bicester and Graven Hill each of which was duly responded to.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the draft Submission Local Plan be endorsed and recommended to Full Council for approval, subject to the Final Sustainability Appraisal being presented at Full Council.
- (2) That it be noted that the Infrastructure tables in the draft Local Plan would be replaced in due course by a full Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for submission.
- (3) That it be recommended to Full Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make minor changes to the draft Submission Local Plan text to delete the references to 'draft' or 'emerging' Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) once the IDP is finalised.

### **Resolved**

The draft Submission Local Plan has now been subjected to extensive consultation. The evidence base for the Plan is nearing completion and the Plan complies with obligations flowing from the recent reforms to the Planning system. A recommendation by the Executive of the draft Submission Local Plan to the meeting of Full Council will enable the Plan to be submitted for Examination and take Cherwell one major step closer to having an up to date, 'sound' and 'adopted' Local Plan.

### **Options**

Option 1: To endorse the draft Submission Local Plan.

Option 2: To amend the draft Submission Local Plan with the effect of requiring further delay whilst the proposed changes are consulted upon and a new Sustainability Appraisal commissioned.

Option 3: To not endorse the draft Submission Local Plan

43

### **Sister City Agreement with Xishuangbanna**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which updated Members on the recent signing of a 'Letter of Intent' between Cherwell District Council and Xishuangbanna Dai Nationality Autonomous Prefecture to establish formal 'Sister City' status between the two authorities.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the signing of the Letter of Intent be noted.

- (2) That agreement be given to the establishment of a cross-party Member, Officer, Education and Business group to maximise the benefits of this link and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, for the establishment and running of the group.

### Reasons

The establishment of the sister city agreement will enable the people living and working in the Cherwell area to have closer links with a fascinating part of China. Businesses will be able to get introductions to potential partners or supply chains and schools and other groups will be able to link with similar groups in the region. Ultimately both Xishuangbanna (XSBN) and Cherwell will benefit economically from this agreement.

It is suggested that a steering committee is established to support and promote the development of the agreement between the two authorities. The group could include Members from all parties, officers, representatives from Banbury & Bicester College, MPs, town councils, Bicester Village, Chambers of Commerce and perhaps the LEPs and the UKTI. It is also worth trying to identify any businesses in the district that already have strong ties to China and inviting them to join the group. This will ensure buy in from all parts of the district and, hopefully, ensure that real benefits for both XSBN and Cherwell come out of this agreement.

### Options

Option 1: To accept the recommendations of the report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations of the report.

44

### New Homes Bonus - Year 3 Allocations 2013-14

The Director of Resources submitted a report which asked Executive to determine how they wished to allocate the New Homes Bonus received for the third year of the scheme, the award confirmed for 2013-14.

### Resolved

- (1) That the year 3 allocations of £1,340,156 be agreed as follows:
- |                                    |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Affordable Housing               | £100,240          |
| • Financial Pressure Allocation    | £619,958          |
| • Economic Development             | £450,669          |
| • Planned Growth in the District   | £169,289          |
| <b>Total year three allocation</b> | <b>£1,340,156</b> |
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources and the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management and the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy to determine the schemes on which those funds allocated for economic development purposes should be spent.



- (3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources and the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management and the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy to agree future year allocations of New Homes Bonus.

### **Reasons**

It is recommended that the allocation method set out in this report are agreed in order to be clear about how the New homes Bonus is going to be used in the third year of its receipt.

### **Options**

Option 1: Not to consider how these funds should be allocated. This is not good financial management and is therefore not advocated. It is also important to give a degree of certainty around how such funds will be allocated and used.

45

### **Budget Strategy 2014 to 2015 and Beyond**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which informed Executive of the service and financial planning process for 2014-15, sought approval of the 2014-15 budget strategy and agreement of budget guidelines for issue to service managers to enable the production of the 2014-15 budget.

The report also presented the most recent medium term financial forecasts, sought consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014-15 and agreement of the Council's approach to Business Rates pooling for 2014-15.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast for the Council's revenue budget for 2014-15 to 2018/19 be noted.
- (2) That the overall 2014-15 budget strategy and service and financial planning process be endorsed.
- (3) That the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2014-15 budget process be agreed.
- (4) That it be agreed that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) remains as it is for 2014-15.
- (5) That support in principle be shown for continuing to work on business rate pooling and agreement be given to carry out more detailed work to ascertain whether Cherwell District Council forms a pool with the County or not for 2014-15 and authority be delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management to make the final decision.

## **Reasons**

The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2014-15. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Business Plan, Service Plans and the Medium Term Financial Strategy which is currently being refreshed.

The guidelines provide a framework to identify areas of potential cost reductions across the organisation informed by our public consultation, previous investment, value for money reviews and our strategic priorities.

Council will be asked to agree the 2014-15 budget and corporate plan (and the service plans that underpin delivery) at their meeting in February 2013.

Oxfordshire authorities are not in a business rate pool for 2013-14 as the financial benefits of such an arrangement were outweighed by the risks associated with them if all authorities in Oxfordshire participated. Consideration has been given to formulating a business rates pool with just those authorities in Oxfordshire that are growing so that the amount of levy paid to the government is minimised and a greater share is kept locally than would otherwise be the case. Initial work has been carried out to estimate the financial benefit and this shows that it could be financially beneficial. However, more recent will be input into the model before a final recommendations made.

## **Options**

Option 1: To disagree with the recommendations set out above. This is rejected as it will unnecessarily delay the formulation of the detailed budget for 2014-15.

46

## **East West Local Rail Contribution**

The Director of Development submitted a report which requested Executive to recommend to Council the level of local contribution to be made towards the construction of East West Rail.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Sibley addressed Executive.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That Full Council be recommended to add the promotion and support of the construction of East/West rail to the policy framework.
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to approve a local contribution from Cherwell District Council of £4.353m towards the delivery of East West Rail.

## **Reasons**

The East West Rail project will lead to the restoration of a strategic transport corridor of national significance. With it will come significantly improved

access, which will link those centres of economic activity and remove a key barrier to realizing the ambition to secure the economic and growth potential for the Bicester area.

The Council's contribution will help to secure the £500m investment identified through the HLOS process as agreeing to pay the local contribution is a pre-condition for its release.

### **Options**

Option 1: To proceed with the Policy as recommended in this report, this is the preferred option and supported by the information in the report.

Option 2: Executive could refuse to recommend making any level of contribution towards delivering EWR. This is not recommended as this could significantly increase the risk of the whole project not progressing.

Option 3: Executive could agree to recommend a lesser amount. This is not recommended as the balance would have to be found by the other partners which could increase the risk of the project not progressing and would also damage the Councils position within the consortium.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

This page is intentionally left blank

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

4 November 2013

<p><b>Housing Strategy Priority Five: Homelessness Prevention Action Plan</b></p>
---

### Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To introduce a new Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013 - 2015

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan which has been produced as part of a review of Cherwell's overarching Housing Strategy in the context of achieving the Gold Standard set up by DCLG through the National Housing Advisory Service
- 1.2 To note continued ring-fencing of DCLG Grant for homelessness prevention and partnership working until March 2015

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy 2012 sets out 'the journey' that Cherwell District Council and partners have taken to significantly reduce homelessness and the number of people in temporary accommodation in the past five years.

Chapter Five of the Strategy acts as the Council's Homelessness Strategy, thus fulfilling the statutory requirements of the 2002 Housing Act. Since the production of the Housing Strategy in 2012 the impact of proposed welfare reform has resulted in local authorities revisiting their strategies and ensuring they are robust to deal with the potential challenges ahead.

The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan attached to this Report adds the necessary focus and detail to the Actions set out in the Housing Strategy and ensure continued performance.

## 3.0 Report Details

### 3.1 Gold Standard

The Action Plan links into the 'Gold Standard Programme'

The Gold Standard challenge for homelessness services was issued by CLG to Local Authorities in April 2013. There are 10 challenges to be met to reach Gold Standard, which is achieved through self-assessment and peer review. Cherwell is forming a partnership with the other Districts across the County to achieve this standard

### 3.2 Partnership Working

The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan outlines the Council's approach to Homelessness Prevention. It takes a strong partnership approach as it is more important than ever that we co-operate with partners to deliver our joint aims without duplication to offer best value for money from limited resources and the potential for increased homelessness as a result of welfare reform changes. The plan adopts a creative approach to offer the best value solutions at a time of austerity. Homelessness Grant from central government is no longer ring fenced and members are asked to confirm its use for homelessness prevention actions, as a spend-to-save measure.

### 3.3 Changing context for Homelessness services

The national reform agenda led by the Coalition Government requires Local Authority Homelessness Services to provide services more efficiently and to adapt services to meet the potential increase in homelessness following welfare reforms such as the introduction of Universal Credit. The requirement to do this at a time when resources are being cut brings challenges to Homelessness teams.

The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan

- lists the legislative and policy context which affects the way in which we deliver homelessness services to the local community
- describes the way in which we will provide a creative service which reacts to policy changes and reflects local conditions

Maintaining low levels of homelessness remains a priority for the district, not only because of the high cost of not doing so, but because of the devastating effect homelessness has on individuals and communities.

### 3.4 Resources for Homelessness Prevention

Funding front line services for homelessness prevention is critical to supporting the most vulnerable households, and to ensuring that the Council is not required to make investment in expensive temporary accommodation.

The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan lists the way in which we will work with partners to provide value for money, prevent duplication and bring investment to the district.

Central Government provided grant funding to local authorities to undertake homelessness prevention activities. This money is now forwarded un-ringfenced within the council overall grant from DCLG. Grant Shapps' last directive as Housing Minister was to advise Local Authorities that this money should remain dedicated to homelessness prevention at least until the end of the current Parliament.

Cherwell's DCLG Grant funding is dedicated to external partnerships that have been subject to Service Level Agreements and monitoring to ensure their contribution to our strategic homelessness prevention aims and all have played a major role in Cherwell's success in homelessness prevention. They have been essential to our success in reducing the use of temporary accommodation and will continue to be so in meeting the Gold Standard Challenge.

Chapter Five of Cherwell's Housing Strategy sets out the range of partnerships which are in place all of which have been instrumental in Cherwell's performance. On many occasions a small grant from Cherwell District Council has been a catalyst to lever in additional external investment from other public, charitable and private sector sources. As set out in the Housing Strategy, an important action within the Action Plan is to review all partnerships and ensure the investment continues to deliver the very best outcomes. This funding is crucial and the importance of its continuation cannot be overstated in terms of maintaining performance and preventing any rising costs associated with temporary accommodation.

## 4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan highlights some elements of the work being done by the Council and its partners to prevent homelessness.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is the result of a review of the actions in Chapter 5 of the Housing Strategy 2012 – 17 in the light of policy changes including Welfare Reforms and responds to local factors
- 4.3 Adopting the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is an important step in the process of meeting the Gold Standard Challenge for homelessness services, demonstrating corporate commitment to the prevention of homelessness as well as the Councils' intention to work actively in partnership

## 5.0 Consultation

Public Consultation	The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan was available through the consultation portal. No public responses were received, however, the actions had previously been consulted on through the Housing Strategy consultation
Registered Providers operating in Cherwell District Council Statutory and Voluntary agencies offering services to vulnerable people	A consultation launch event was held on 17 July, attended by many of the organisations who work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Other organisations were contacted by email, and members of the public had

	<p>the opportunity to contribute their views via the portal on the website. This was publicised in the local press and on the radio.</p> <p>As a result of consultation, the Action Plan has been changed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to broaden the partners worked with to include GPs and Health Visitors</li> <li>○ to include CAB resources</li> <li>○ to include reference to outcomes</li> <li>○ to take more account of services offered by Children and Families</li> </ul>
Cherwell District Council Equality and Access to Services Panel	The plan has been reviewed by the Equality and Access to services panel

## 6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to adopt a Homelessness Prevention Action Plan

It is a legal requirement to have a Homelessness Strategy which is reviewed annually

Option 2: Not to accept the Gold Challenge for Homelessness services

The Gold Standard is a government initiative which enables the Council to continue its high levels of homelessness prevention and offers free resources

Option 3: Not to continue partnership working

A reduction in current partnership working will place the Council at risk of a rise in homelessness and increased costs for temporary accommodation

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 The action plan sets out the areas of funding which can be drawn upon to deliver the actions as set out. The delivery of the strategy will be kept under review and annual reports will be produced with effect from April 2015 which will address future resource implications. This report assumes the current arrangements will continue using the existing level of homelessness grant until March 2015 to deliver the existing aims of the strategy. The DCLG grant is an unring-fenced grant so the council has discretion over where it can apply that funding

Comments checked by: Tim Madden; Interim Head of Finance and Procurement  
03000030106 tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk



## Legal Implications

- 7.2 The Council is required to have a Homelessness Strategy, which is regularly reviewed. This action plan is the result of such a review and updates the actions currently in the Housing Strategy in the context of Welfare Reform and the Gold Standard Challenge.

Comments checked by: Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 0030107 [kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## Risk Implications

- 7.3 The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan has been written at a time when there is a great increase in risk of homelessness, due to the effects of Welfare Reform. This contains a health and wellbeing risk for individuals at risk of homelessness; a risk of increased use of all public services (evidence shows this is the case) including health, criminal justice systems, and housing and a risk in terms of increased demand in council services. The strategic importance of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is therefore wide ranging. It addresses the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and acts in increase access to services. The actions arise from the Housing Strategy which is subject to an equality impact assessment

Comments checked by: Claire Taylor; Corporate Performance Manager; 0300 0030113; [Claire.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## 8.0 Decision Information

**Key Decision** No

**Financial Threshold Met:** no

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** no

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This decision links to the following items in the corporate plan:-  
A district of opportunity  
An accessible, value for money council  
A safe and healthy Cherwell

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Debbie Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Homelessness Prevention Action Plan
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Marianne North, Housing Needs Manager Kate Winstanley, Strategic Housing Officer
<b>Contact Information</b>	Marianne North: 01295 227946 <a href="mailto:marianne.north@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">marianne.north@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> Kate Winstanley: 01295 221648 <a href="mailto:kate.winstanley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">kate.winstanley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a>

## Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013 – 2015

### Introduction

Cherwell District Council launched its Housing Strategy 2012 -17 last year. It includes a Chapter (Chapter 5) on preventing homelessness, which forms Cherwell's homelessness strategy. [www.cherwell.gov.uk/housingstrategy](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/housingstrategy)

The strategy states:-

"It is a statutory duty for a local authority to produce a Homelessness Strategy under the 2002 Homelessness Act. Instead of producing this as a separate document, Cherwell District Council has made the decision to produce Cherwell's Homelessness Strategy as a strategic priority under the broader Housing Strategy. This is so it is read as "part of the bigger picture" within Cherwell's Housing Strategy. Homelessness cannot be seen in isolation from the range of factors which both prevent and address it." Cherwell District Council's Corporate Business plan also recognises the risk of high levels of homelessness to the Council and the importance of continuing to target resources to homelessness prevention.

This Action Plan is an extension of the approach outlined in the Housing Strategy. It identifies the actions and targets for achievements. It sets out who is responsible for carrying out the actions and how this will be monitored.

Cherwell District Council accepts the challenge of continuous improvement and wishes to achieve the Gold Standard.

The Action plan is being written at a time of great change. For this reason we have decided that, although we will include information on resources, we will review the Action Plan after 12 months of operation.

### Monitoring

A Homelessness Prevention Partnership is being established to monitor this Action Plan. Progress will be reported into the Executive on an annual basis.

#### National and Local Context

There are several known factors which could impact on levels of homelessness and demand for services in Cherwell.

Recent years have seen the needs of the most vulnerable groups become more complex. We have seen more approaches from families with complex needs, such as mental health issues and substance dependency. While the numbers remain relatively low their needs can be severe. See appendix 1 for a list of legislative and policy changes which have affected homelessness services.

#### 1. Welfare Reform

Reforms to welfare benefits may place an increased number of people at risk of homelessness through financial stress leading to rent arrears.

The **social sector size criteria** means that residents who are under-occupying their homes and who rely on benefits for their rent payments will have deductions made from their benefit of 14% for one extra room and 25% for two or more. This will reduce household income and ability to pay rent and other bills.

The **benefit cap** means that single households benefit will be limited to £300 per week and for

larger households to £500 per week. A table in the evidence base shows that this will have an effect on households with 3 or more children. The largest households in the most expensive rental area in the district stand to lose up to £245 per week. The caps do not apply to single adults who work 16 or more hours per week or couples who work 24 hours per week between them.

The introduction of Universal Credit will bring about the **end of direct payment** of rent to social landlords for all except the most vulnerable. Demonstration projects have shown that this has led to an increase in rent arrears.

**Localisation of Social fund.** Crisis Loans have been replaced by local schemes from April 2013. The focus is on benefits in kind and this combined with the length of time for approval of any cash payments makes it harder for residents to access rent in advance. This has happened at a time when social landlords are increasingly demanding rent in advance payments and private sector landlords are increasingly reluctant to accept tenants in receipt of housing benefit.

**Uprating of benefit** will be governed by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) a lower rate than the previous Retail Price Index (RPI).

**Local Housing Allowances** (housing benefit amounts) used to be based on a market led calculation, but for the next 3 years, the amount will only increase by 1%, making a larger tranche of properties unaffordable for people who are dependent on benefits.

**Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)** can be made at the Council's discretion to help with short term housing issues such as finding new accommodation. They do not represent a long term solution to housing finance difficulties. The Council has already experienced an increase in demand for DHP from its limited fund.

## 2. Localism

### **Council tax support**

Support for residents to pay their Council Tax has been localised. Councils can devise their own schemes, but there is 10% less funding and people over pensionable age must be protected. In areas like Cherwell, with a high proportion of older people, this means a reduction in benefit for other residents. For 2013/14, Cherwell has chosen to maintain the former scheme.

### **Discharge of homeless duty into private sector**

The Localism Act gives local authorities the power to discharge their homelessness duty through an offer of suitable accommodation in the private sector. Previously, although offers of private sector accommodation could be made, the homeless applicant could refuse them without risking their homeless duties.

### **Allocations scheme**

Cherwell District Council has adopted a new Allocations Scheme, which will be implemented during 2013. Following the Localism Act and new guidance from government, it makes changes which mean that only people who have a local connection and are in housing need will be able to access the housing register. The aim of this is to be able to concentrate staff resources on those people who are most in need.

## 3. Gold Standard

Local Authorities are being encouraged by the Coalition Government to take up 10 challenges to show that their homelessness service reaches "Gold Standard". The Gold Standard challenge for homelessness services was issued to Local Authorities in April 2013. There are 10 challenges to meet to reach Gold Standard, which is based on self- assessment and peer review.

The **ten local challenges** posed to the sector are to:

1. To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
4. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
7. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
9. To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks

#### **4. No Second Night Out (NSNO)<sup>1</sup>**

NSNO began as a London based initiative, which is now being adopted by Local Authorities nationwide. There are 5 principles to NSNO

- o New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately
- o Members of the public should be able to play a referring role, and a website, phone app and hotline number (0300 500 0914) have been developed for them to do so.
- o Rough sleepers should access a place of safety and assessment
- o They should have access to emergency accommodation and other services such as healthcare
- o There should be reconnection to their local community unless there is a good reason not

Once received into a hostel through NSNO, people receive a "single service offer" which lets them know the services they can access to help with their needs.

The hostel provision in Oxfordshire is currently being re-commissioned with a new service due to start in April 2015. Cherwell has paid for emergency provision to be available in the hostels this winter ( SWEP) when the requirements are met. (For more details see the Council's webpage on rough sleepers).

During 2013/14 an outreach service has been offered across Cherwell, funded by Central Government via the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire single homelessness project (BOSH). However, due to County spending cuts the commissioning process has been halted. It is also possible that in future, Cherwell District Council will have to make its own arrangements for emergency provision as well as severe weather provision. The outreach funding will come to an end in March 2014, so alternative arrangements will need to be made through our partners for outreach for rough sleepers.

Officers will continue to be aware of developments in this area and the need to develop a suitable response locally. Officers will continue to monitor the re-commissioning intentions of Oxfordshire County Council and update the lead member for housing and the Council accordingly

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nosecondnightout.org.uk/>

## **5. Thriving Families**

The Government's Troubled Families programme is badged locally in Oxfordshire as "Thriving Families". It seeks to provide a coordinated approach to the most chaotic families which cost the state huge sums of money as well as causing personal and societal upheaval. Often insecure or unsuitable accommodation is a feature of "thriving families" lives.

By working with the Thriving Families team and the resources they bring to the county, we can provide another tool with which to prevent homelessness.

## **6. Local information**

People become homeless for a number of reasons. Over the last year (2012 – 13) in Cherwell, the most frequent reasons for homelessness were:-

- Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate
- Termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate
- Private sector rent arrears
- Violent breakdown or relationship, involving partner;

## Action Plan

The Housing Strategy Action plan is the means of taking forward our strong homelessness prevention agenda. We have gone from high levels of homelessness and out of District placements to a situation where a limited number of homeless households are accommodated mainly in affordable temporary accommodation and all within Cherwell. The evidence which relates to the current situation has been assessed and informs this action plan.

This achievement has been possible through partnership working and a major focus on homelessness prevention. The causes of homelessness can be complex and varied, and an analysis of them is beyond the scope of this document. However, the challenges to success are listed in the Housing Strategy – welfare reform, reduced public spending and securing employment.

Groups who are more likely to experience homelessness are young people, people experiencing domestic violence and vulnerable adults, including those with substance misuse issues.

We will take this agenda forward through our partnership work with statutory and voluntary agencies; including a structured review of how services can meet needs in the changing circumstances we face. We will focus on the needs of single homeless people, vulnerable adults, young people and people who have experienced domestic abuse. Our successful forums, such as the Accommodation Panel will continue and be extended to include service providers working with all of these groups. We will be alert to changing needs due to the changing environment. Copies of the Action Plan are available online and on request from the Housing Team.

The actions are divided into three strategic areas – personal responsibility, personal resilience and personal health and wellbeing.

### Personal responsibility

One of the drivers for Welfare Reform is to encourage people to take personal responsibility for their lives and lifestyle, including budgeting and realistic housing choices. At Cherwell District Council it is our strategic aim to enable people to participate in choosing their housing solutions by developing these skills.

### Personal resilience

We recognise that some residents need support to achieve their housing goals and to avoid homelessness. It is our strategic aim to assist people in achieving personal resilience through education, employment and training, including opportunities through the Council's Build! self build programme

### Personal Health and Wellbeing

Decent housing is a great contributor to personal health and wellbeing. For older people, people who have problems with their mental health or people with learning disabilities, there is now evidence that housing and housing related support services can deliver better outcomes at lower cost<sup>2</sup>. In this key strategic area we seek to prevent homelessness by enabling residents to better cope with adverse situations including the risk of homelessness.

<sup>2</sup> Frontier Economics (2010) Report on Financial Benefits of Investment in Specialist Housing for Vulnerable People. Homes and Communities Agency : London.

Key strategic area 1		Personal responsibility	
Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Resources	Gold Standard Challenge
<b>Increase access to good quality homes in all sectors</b>	<i>Investigate and enable innovative models of housing provision:-</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build to rent</li> <li>○ Rent-save- own</li> <li>○ Cherwell's own development programme</li> <li>○ RP development programmes</li> </ul>	HCA grant  Registered Provider funds  CDC recyclable grant  Existing grant agreements	1, 2, 6
	<i>Cherwell Bond Scheme</i>  Continue to work with private sector landlords to source properties for the Cherwell Bond Scheme and to develop and review the scheme	Existing resources  Existing grant agreements	1, 6
<b>Contribute to a financial inclusion strategy which focuses on what can be achieved in partnership and plans for the predicted effects of welfare reform</b>	<i>Personal Budgeting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ provide debt and money advice to housing applicants</li> <li>○ produce a pack for front line staff to use following training to offer advice and signposting for personal budgeting</li> <li>○ find resources to offer a Rent in Advance scheme</li> <li>○ Establish a Credit Union in Cherwell capable of offering "jam jar" accounts</li> <li>○ Target those most in need of Credit union services to take up accounts</li> <li>○ Review the award of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure compliance with new guidance, while targeting people at risk of homelessness</li> <li>○ Support residents to access mortgage rescue</li> </ul>	Homelessness prevention grant  Existing grant agreements  Existing resources  Voluntary sector resources	1, 2, 3,4,7
	<i>Skills and training</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build an operational working relationship with the Job Centre Plus manager</li> </ul>		1,2,3



Key Strategic Area 2		Personal resilience	
Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Resources	Gold Standard Challenge
<b>Provide support to members of vulnerable groups (including vulnerable adults, victims of domestic violence and young people); to avoid homelessness, be “housing ready” and maintain housing successfully</b>	<p><i>Contribute to the re-commissioning processes and optimise provision in Cherwell for services within the</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Young People’s pathway</li> <li>○ Domestic Abuse services</li> <li>○ Single homeless people</li> </ul>	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant arrangements County Council funding	2, 4, 5, 9
	<p><i>Review service provision for vulnerable groups in the statutory and voluntary sector,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to create better access to services across the district</li> <li>○ to optimise value from the floating support service</li> <li>○ evaluate partnership funding</li> </ul>	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant arrangements Voluntary sector resources	2,4,5
<b>Offer opportunities for individuals to participate in improving their housing options</b>	Offer an accredited pre tenancy qualification to housing applicants	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant arrangements County Council funding Voluntary sector resources	2
	Offer skills training through housing development including exploring the potential of the Build! programme to enhance residents’ employment opportunities		2,3,4,5
	Work with the Thriving Families service to offer opportunities to households to improve their housing options through addressing challenging behaviours, and issues which are affecting their ability to maintain a settled housing solution		2,3,4,5
	Work with partners to offer meaningful daytime occupation and volunteering opportunities Campaign to reduce begging		2,3,4,5

<b>Key Strategic Area 3</b>	<b>Personal Health and Wellbeing</b>
-----------------------------	--------------------------------------

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Resources	Gold Standard Challenge
<b>Improve partnership working to develop and maintain services in a time of austerity, offering opportunities to develop expertise and share best practice, improve value for money and offer a co-ordinated approach</b>	Provide forum opportunities for discussion and partnership working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ single homeless forum</li> <li>○ accommodation panel</li> <li>○ young people's accommodation panel</li> </ul>	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant County Council	2,5
	Participate in forum opportunities for discussion and partnership working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ JATAC</li> <li>○ MARAC</li> <li>○ Joint Housing Steering Group</li> <li>○ Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness Group</li> <li>○ Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>○ Brighter Futures theme groups</li> <li>○ Credit Union project group</li> <li>○ Financial inclusion partnership</li> <li>○ HSAG</li> </ul> Reviewing and forming new groups if necessary	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant	2
<b>Work towards Gold Standard for homelessness services and continue to provide a high quality housing options service, focussing on homelessness prevention</b>	Work with NHAS and the Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness group to meet the Gold Standard and use the diagnostic peer review tool to improve performance	Existing resources	all
	Implement the new Allocations Scheme ensuring those in greatest need are prioritised for housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reassess Applications to achieve appropriate banding under the new scheme</li> <li>○ Ensure applicants understand the new scheme</li> <li>○ Train partners in the new scheme</li> </ul>	Existing resources	2
	Explore the options to secure funding for a Sanctuary scheme to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes where safe and appropriate	Homelessness prevention grant funding Existing partnership funding	2
<b>Work towards Gold Standard for homelessness services and continue to provide a high quality housing options service, focussing</b>	Work with NHAS and the Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness group to meet the Gold Standard and use the diagnostic peer review tool to improve performance	Existing resources	2

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Resources	Gold Standard Challenge
on homelessness prevention			

## Appendix A

### Changing Context for Homelessness Services (extract from Gold Standard Challenge NPSS toolkit helping Local Authorities develop homelessness strategies)

The list of developments in national policy contained in the box below pick out some of the key changes that have had – and will have – a direct impact on the way in which local housing authorities deliver allocations, lettings and homelessness services to their communities.

- Emergency budget – 22 June 2010
- Comprehensive Spending Review – 20 October 2010
- Localism Bill 13 December 2010
- Affordable Homes Framework February 2011
- New Homes bonus scheme
- Welfare Reform Bill February 2011
- Budget March 2011
- No Second Night Out London April 2011
- No Second Night Out nationwide July 2011
- Localism Act 2011
- Laying the Foundations – a Housing strategy for England November 2011
- Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England Consultation
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Social Justice – transforming lives – March 2012
- Budget March 2012
- Legal Aid, sentencing and punishment of Offenders Act May 2012
- Homelessness (suitability of accommodation order) (England) Order 2012 Consultation
- Allocations Code of Guidance June 2012
- Making Every Contact count August 2012
- The Allocation of Housing (Qualification criteria for armed forces) (England) regulations 2012 August 2012
- Supplementary Guidance on the homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and on the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012
- Homelessness (Suitability of accommodation order) (England) Order November 2012
- The Housing Act 1996 (Additional preference for former Armed Forces personnel) (England) Regulations 2012 November 2012

## Appendix B

### Cherwell Housing Options and Homelessness Report 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

The Housing Options Team continues to make prevention the main focus of our work and caseloads and case work solutions have increased again this year.

A&P Cases	Number Opened	Closed successful	
2012/13	1131	328	96 still open
2011/12	1127	358	
2010/11	944	333	
2009/10	1016	238	
2008/09	1264	270	

The team have been supported by the work of the Assessment and Re-housing Officers who deal with those not believed to be in priority need, offering advice and assistance, and referrals to the Cherwell Bond Scheme, CAB, Floating Support and Housing Providers.

The case loads continue to get more complex and the solutions more limited, but none the less the team have continued to keep up the excellent performance which has meant that those formally presenting as homeless has only represented **11%** of the cases loads of the team. Only **6%** of cases open to the Options Team went on to present as homeless.

In the financial year 2012/13 Housing Options Team took **127** homeless applications.

	2011/12	2012/13
Cancelled	2	1
<b>Number of Presentations</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>127</b>
Accepted	62	59
Non Priority	10	9
Intentionally Homeless	30	24
Not Homeless	20	27
Not Eligible	2	1
Pending	0	5
198 Referrals	0	2
Duty Presentations	72	58
Casework Presentations	53	69
<b>TA Placements</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>84</b>
B&B & Musketeer	73	67
Direct to Self-contained TA	14	17

The team has worked hard to limit the use of Temporary Accommodation and to take any homeless applications for open Advice Cases in a planned way. The success of this is limited by the amount of clients who presenting in crisis without the opportunity to plan.

#### Homeless Applications Taken:

- > 58 (46%) presented to our Duty Service in 2012/13
- > (57% of cases presented to Duty Service in 2011/12)
- > Temporary Accommodation was provided to 84 cases (66%) 2012/13
- > (69% in 2011/12)
- > Full Homeless duties were accepted to 59 cases (46%) 2012/13
- > (49% in 2011/12)

Only one homeless decision was made outside the 33 day best practise guideline, this was by agreement with that individual.

The areas where applicants have presented from broadly reflects the make-up of the district, but this year has shown an increase in out of Cherwell presentations, this may be due to applicants looking in more than one area as options are limited in their area of first choice.

Post Code	2011/12	2012/13
OX16	54	45
OX25	9	9
OX26	31	32
OX5	12	15
OX15	3	6
OX Outside CDC	6	10
Other	9	11

The main reasons for homeless presentations has shown a change, with Parental Evictions rising and overtaking End of AST as the main cause of homelessness.

Reasons	2011/12		2012/13	
	Number	Accepted	Number	Accepted
End AST	38	21	30	11
Parental Eviction	19	12	33	21
Relative / Friend Eviction	15	7	9	7
Relationship Breakdown	11	6	12	4
Other Loss of private / Tied	7	5	1	0
Domestic Abuse	7	2	15	7
Hospital Discharge	5	2	4	1
Other Violence	5	2	1	0
Illegal Eviction	1	1	1	1
Mortgage Repossession	4	1	5	3
NFA	2	1	3	1
Prison	2	1	0	0
Supported Accom Eviction	2	1	1	0
Emergency	1	0	1	0
Loss of Tied accommodation	1	0	2	1
MOD Discharge	0	0	3	2
Other Reasons	1	0	1	0
Pending	0	0	0	5
RSL Eviction	3	0	5	0
S198 Referral	0	0	2	2

I believe this change represents the continuing proactive approach of the Options Team to resolve issues and look for all solutions for those in private tenancies threatened with homelessness so that duties under homelessness are not necessary. In 2012/13 **105** cases were resolved through negotiation to remain in private tenancies.

The increase in numbers of parental evictions is primarily due to the lack of other housing options now available. In 2012/13 records show we assisted **30** applicants into accommodation via our Bond Scheme, in 2011/12 the records show **44**. The decrease in landlords willing to take applicants on benefits and their lack of confidence in Welfare Reforms, has a particular impact on emerging families who make up the majority of parental eviction cases.

There has also been a rise in presentations and acceptances due to Domestic Abuse. I believe this increase has also been due to lack of other options. Previously those approaching due to DA, particularly from the Banbury Refuge, have worked with the Options Team to secure private rented accommodation. This year has shown an increase in those who have run out of time in the refuge and had to be accepted formally under homeless legislation.

The numbers in Temporary Accommodation increased, in particular at the end of the financial year. The biggest impact on these figures was the lack of move-on in the self-contained accommodation during February and March, leading to more households placed into emergency placements and for longer.

Monthly Presentations	Homeless Presentations		Bed & Breakfast Placements		Self-contained Placements	
	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13		
April	7	9	6	4	0	0
May	13	9	8	3	0	1
June	17	11	11	6	0	1
July	13	17	8	10	0	2
Aug	11	14	8	10	0	0
Sept	13	6	7	3	2	0
Oct	15	11	10	5	3	3
Nov	5	11	2	5	1	2
Dec	4	4	1	1	1	1
Jan	10	15	5	5	3	7
Feb	10	10	5	8	2	0
March	6	10	2	7	2	0
	124	127	73	67	14	17

The reason for decreased move-on from self-contained TA has been lack of properties available through Choice Based Lettings (CBL) and private landlords. A contributing factor has been the re-let times on properties advertised via CBL. Several applicants matched for move-on have been waiting significant periods before they can move to their permanent offers.

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

4 November 2013

## Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2013

### Report of Head of Transformation

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To update the Executive on the results of the annual satisfaction survey and identify any areas to be reflected in future business and/or performance plans.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the customer survey, with particular reference to improvement in areas that were identified as priorities as an outcome of the survey undertaken in 2012.
  - The way the Council deals with anti-social behaviour
  - The Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime
  - Car Parking Services
- 1.2 To agree the priorities and areas of focus for future action as set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6.

#### 2.0 Introduction

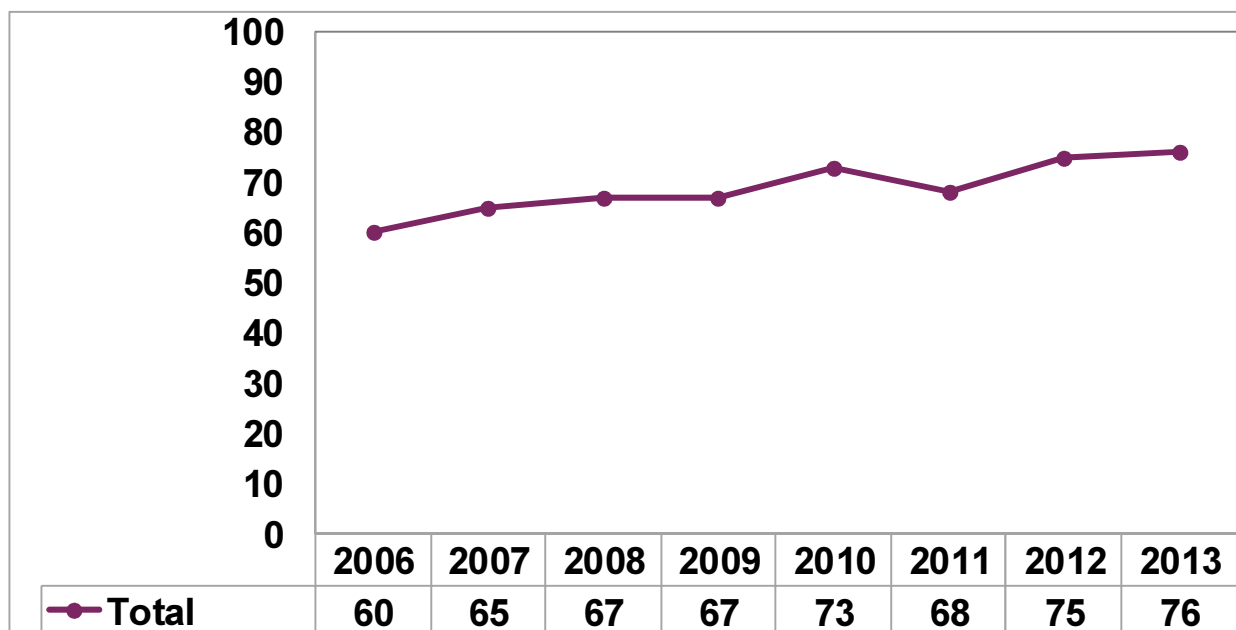
- 2.1 Cherwell District Council has a strong track record in customer and community consultation and currently uses a citizen's panel to help track customer satisfaction with council services and understand people's priorities, issues and concerns.
- 2.2 This report provides a summary of the results of the customer satisfaction survey undertaken in May/June 2013. The survey was conducted via the Council's citizen's panel and respondents were encouraged to complete the survey online. Hard copies were available for those that needed them.

- 2.3 The survey includes questions on most council services, value for money, spending priorities and quality of life issues. Specific services that the majority of the general public wouldn't have accessed during the year (e.g. Development Control or Benefits) are not included within the questionnaire, although respondents are able to make any additional comments about council services in the open questions that are included within the questionnaire.
- 2.4 The Council has been undertaking customer surveys since 2006 and the data provides a statistically valid and robust trend analysis to help inform decision making, prioritisation and customer service development.
- 2.5 A full summary of the survey results is attached as Appendix 1. The Performance and Insight Team are able to provide additional analysis if required and may be contacted by email: [consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### 3.0 Report Details

#### 3.1 Overall satisfaction with the Council

The graph below highlights the overall satisfaction rating with the Council since the inception of the survey in 2006. The trend is one of upward improvement and a significant improvement of 16% since 2006 and of 8% since the low in 2011.



In terms of what drives overall satisfaction we know that there are a number of services that impact on people's views. This 'key drivers' analysis indicates that the services listed below have the biggest impact on overall satisfaction and, as such, are important to 'get right' in terms of customer service.

- 1) The Councils approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance
- 2) Local area as a place to live
- 3) Street cleaning service



- 4) Local car parking facilities
- 5) Leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council
- 6) The way parks and play areas are looked after
- 7) Waste collection service

### 3.2 Satisfaction with Council Services

In addition to the overall satisfaction rating the survey provides more specific details about individual service areas. These results tend to be more likely to shift between years but give a good indication of where the council is getting things right and where improvement is required.

The table below summarises the satisfaction in the services areas included within the questionnaire and highlights percentage improvements since the inception of the survey. Looking at the results a general dip in satisfaction can be seen across several service areas during 2011, recovered during 2012 and consolidated but not significantly improved in 2013.

Of the Council's services recycling and waste collection consistently shows the highest levels of satisfaction.

	% change since 2006 *	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>+16%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>
Recycling centres	+14%	91	87	88	87	86	83	77	77
Household recycling collection service	+4%	83	80	82	83	78	75	76	79
Waste collection service	+15%	82	80	76	78	70	68	67	67
Food and garden waste collection	+5%	81	80	80	76	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Street cleansing service	+11%	70	69	64	72	67	66	63	59
Local car parking facilities	+5%	64	63	49	63	64	63	58	59
Local parks and open spaces	+3%	75	77	72	74	73	70	71	72
Leisure facilities	+7%	69	76	74	71	68	63	58	62
Leisure activities	+3%	59	61	56	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local area as a place to live	+2%	80	86	78	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime	+6%	48	47	42	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dealing with anti-social behaviour/nuisance	+22%	56	49	43	44	36	36	30	34

\* – Percentage improvement since 2006 or the first year the question was asked  
n/a – the question was not included within the survey in this year

### 3.3 Communication and Information Provision

In 2013 70% of respondents felt that the Council kept them 'fairly well' or 'well informed about the services and benefits it offered. This has been relatively stable

as a response since 2006 where 69% of respondents answered in the same way. 64% of respondents feel 'fairly well' or 'well informed' regarding what the Council spends its money on.

74% of respondents were happy with Cherwell link (up from 68% in 2008) and 75% were happy with the website (up from 62% in 2008)

From our detailed analysis of the results we know that access to good information about the Council and effective communication help to improve residents overall satisfaction. As such communication and information provision should remain a priority.

### 3.4 Perceptions of the Council: Value for Money and Trust

In terms of how residents view the Council as providing value for money the results are less positive. For 2013 only 45% of residents agreed with the statement 'Cherwell District Council provides value for money', with 18% actively disagreeing and 38% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

The table below tracks the results for this question since 2009 and highlights it as an area where more could be done to communicate the work that Council has done over the past several years in term of reducing its budgets, protecting frontline services and delivering value for money.

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% disagreeing with statement in 2013
38%	42%	37%	47%	45%	18%

Since 2012 the survey has also tracked a number of questions relating to budgets and trust, there is positive movement in terms of trust, respondents are clearly in favour of keeping council tax reductions to a minimum (reflecting the Council's existing policy) and increasing respondents are aware that to reduce costs services are likely to be affected.

Statement	% agreeing with statement		% disagreeing with statement in 2013
	2012	2013	
Council's don't need to cut services as enough money can be saved through efficiency savings	56%	50%	27%
I would rather pay more Council Tax to maintain services	18%	18%	62%
I trust Cherwell District Council to do what's right for residents in the current economic climate	42%	47%	26%

### 3.5 Customer Priorities

As part of the survey respondents are also asked to trade off services in terms of priority. This list gives us a ranked order of customer priority. Waste collection,

street cleansing and dealing with anti-social behaviour always tend to be reflected highly in the list and in recent years we have seen jobs and affordable housing move up the order of priority, for 2013 this pattern has not changed.

### Ranking of Customer Priorities 2013



The diagram above highlights a ‘top 6’ of key services which are perceived to be a priority by local residents in greater magnitude than other council services.

- 1) Household waste collection
- 2) Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service
- 3) Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area
- 4) Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime
- 5) Providing affordable housing
- 6) Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance

It should however, be recognised that the survey is only of local residents and that other stakeholder groups, e.g. local businesses may have slightly different priorities.

### 3.6 Suggested Areas for Future Focus

The list below highlights areas where it is recommended that continued focus is maintained. These recommendations are based on two factors, current levels of satisfaction and the extent to which the service is a high priority for local residents.

- a) Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour: whilst improvement in this area has been recorded it is still rated as one of the areas of lowest satisfaction and is an area of high priority for local residents.

- b) Dealing with Environmental Crime: littering, fly-tipping, graffiti and dealing with dog waste, all key in terms of delivering a high quality local environment and services that are valued by local residents. This is an area where the Council needs to improve (currently it has the lowest rating) and as such should remain a priority.
- c) Continuing to focus on Street Cleansing: like 'dealing with environmental crime' one of the 'top 6' priorities street cleansing is a service that is experienced by all residents and plays an important part in terms of quality of life and enjoyment living within a local area. It is a service upon which the Council is judged and valued by many residents and as such should remain an on-going area of focus.
- d) Continued focus on communication with local residents and businesses: as noted above the better the quality of communication and access to information about Council services local residents have the more likely they will be able to access services and be satisfied with the results. Whilst there are currently solid satisfaction ratings with communication it should remain an area of on-going focus.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2013 customer satisfaction survey. It highlights a general trend of improvement across council services as well as areas where continued focus is required.
- 4.2 The report also highlights customer priorities and these will be used to help inform budget setting, the development of the Council's Business Plan, Performance Pledges and 5 year Strategy.
- 4.3 As well as these high level findings the survey includes a wealth of service specific detail that will be used by service managers to help underpin service planning.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Cherwell Residents

The survey is conducted with local residents.

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To accept the recommendations as outlined in part one of this report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations and request additional work or alternative priorities arising from the survey findings.

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Tim Madden, Head of Finance and Procurement, Tel 0300 003 0106,  
[tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

### Legal Implications

7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, Tel 0300 0030107,  
[Kevin.Lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Kevin.Lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## 8.0 Decision Information

**Key Decision - No**

**Financial Threshold Met:** No

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** No

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

An Accessible, Value for Money Council.




### Lead Councillor

Councillor Nicholas Turner  
Lead member for Performance and Customers

### Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	2013 customer survey results
Background Papers	

None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager
<b>Contact Information</b>	Tel: 0300 0030113 <a href="mailto:claire.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk">claire.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk</a>





**Cherwell District Council**  
**Customer Satisfaction Survey 2013**

**OXFORD OFFICE**  
9400 Garsington Road  
Oxford Business Park North  
Oxford, OX4 2JH, United Kingdom  
T +44 (0) 1865 336 400  
F +44 (0) 1865 776 220  
E info@spafuturethinking.com  
W www.spafuturethinking.com


Prepared for: Cherwell District Council | Ref: jn4816/RM/CTW/MDT | Date: September 2013

UK | FRANCE | ITALY



 **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Research Objectives and Analysis</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Summary and conclusions</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Overall views</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Environmental services</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Leisure and recreation</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Community safety</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Car parking</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Cherwell as a place to live</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Information provision</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Contacting the Council</b>





## 1.1 Research Objectives

- As in previous years, the key research objectives were to examine:
  - Overall satisfaction with Cherwell District Council and with different Council service areas;
  - Perceptions of value for money;
  - Readership of and satisfaction with Council communications;
  - Key drivers of satisfaction.
  
- In addition to these core research considerations, a trade off exercise was introduced to achieve a budget consultation exercise. This consists of panel members identifying which services are most important to them in the current economic climate and which they would prioritise for maintaining current level of service provision.
  
- Citizen's Panel members specified at recruitment their preference for survey completion by post or online. This methodology is consistent with ad hoc customer satisfaction surveys undertaken previously:
  - A survey was sent to all panel members
  - In order to boost numbers a questionnaire was also sent to random sample of residents.
  - A self-completion questionnaire along with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and other related details, was sent.
  - Reminder questionnaires were sent to all those who had not completed and returned their questionnaire within two weeks of the initial send out.
  - An online version of the questionnaire was also available for anyone to access via the Cherwell Portal.
  - In total 745 residents completed the survey.



## 1.2 Analysis

- As certain demographic sub-groups were over-represented, the data was once again weighted, by gender, age and ethnicity to the 2007 mid-year population statistics for the Cherwell District.
  
- This document contains a summary of the key findings of the survey. A full breakdown of the results is available in the detailed computer tabulations.
  
- It should be remembered that the survey is based on a sample of residents and not the entire Cherwell District population, and the findings are subject to sampling tolerances. Significance testing has been conducted and where statistical significances are shown/ referred to, these are based on testing at the 95% confidence interval. Unless otherwise stated, significance testing is carried out against 2013 'total' data. A red box on the charts denotes a significantly lower score than the 2013 total and a green box a significantly higher score than the 2013 total. An asterisk (\*) signifies a significant difference between previous years – i.e. 2013 to 2012.
  
- Where results do not sum to 100% this may be due to multiple responses (i.e. where respondents are able to select a number of options rather than just one) or computer rounding.
  
- Two keys pieces of statistical analysis have also been conducted:
  - **Key Drivers Analysis** has been used to determine the most important drivers of overall satisfaction
  - **Conjoint Analysis** has been conducted to establish a hierarchy of importance in terms of residents' priorities







## 2. Summary and Conclusions



innovation    intelligence    inspiration


## → 2. Summary and Conclusions

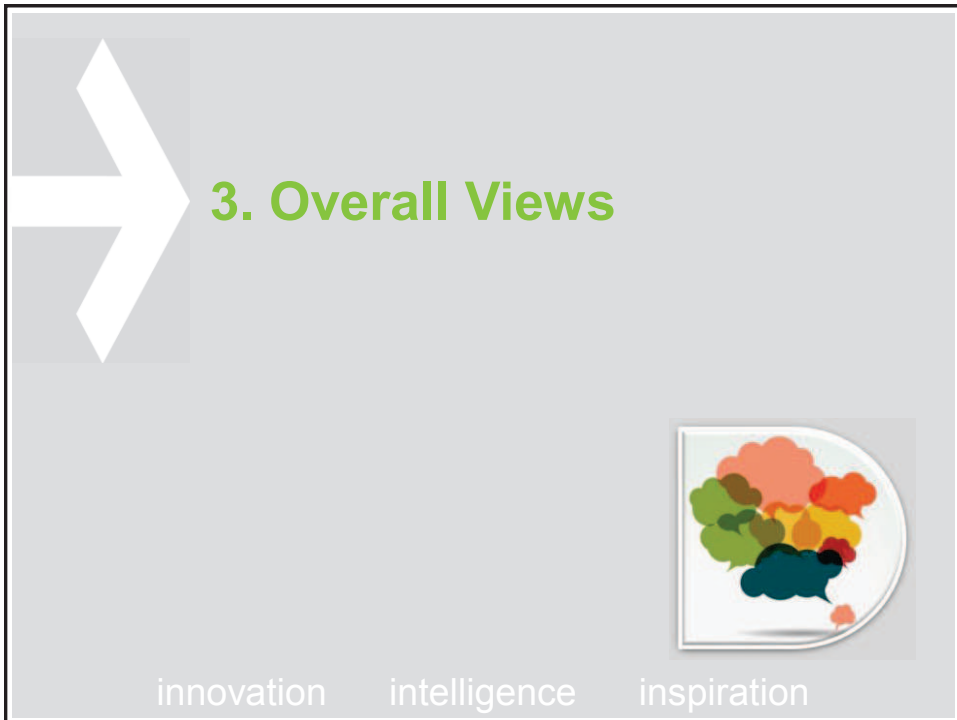
Overall the vast majority of areas examined demonstrate continued improvement with almost all ratings at the higher end of ratings they have received historically. There also some very strong long term upward trends noticeable.

It is encouraging that the Council tends to receive it's highest ratings on those factors that residents highlight as being of most importance. Whilst dealing with anti-social behaviour does receive lower actual ratings these are actually showing strong signs over improvement over time.

Whilst general economic factors are likely to still affecting ratings, it is good to see the trust in the Council to do what is best for residents to be increasing and a slight growth in outlook for the local area. There is also an increase in understanding that the economic pressures are likely to impact front line services.

Provision of leisure facilities stands out as a factor that has experienced a significant decrease in ratings this year. However, the individual ratings for this service do not highlight any specific areas of concern and the qualitative research suggests that it is the usage and awareness of events etc that is a concern more than the quality of the facilities themselves.






→ 3. Overall Views

**Satisfaction with Services**

- Recycling centres continue to be rated very strongly and have actual increased in satisfaction compared with 2012 (91% rating positively).
- The only other significant improvement compared to last year is for dealing with anti-social behaviour. There is a noticeable upward trend since 2008 on this factor (36% were satisfied in 2008 rising to 56% in 2013). Despite this improvement, over 1 in 5 remain dissatisfied with the approach to this – this is a concern as analysis shows this is a key driver of satisfaction.
- Two factors have seen significant decreases compared to last year: Local area as a place to live and Leisure facilities.
- Parking facilities tends to polarise respondents – whilst 64% rate this positively, 22% say they are dissatisfied.
- The areas where more than 1 in 10 residents were dissatisfied are:
  - Waste Collection (12%)
  - Leisure facilities (11%)
  - Councils approach to dealing with environmental crime (16%)



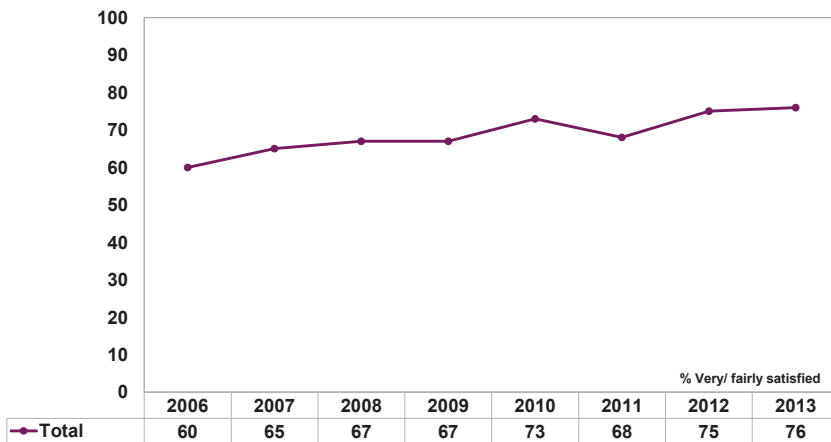
### → 3. Overall Views

#### Key Drivers of Satisfaction

- A correlation analysis was conducted to examine the key drivers of overall satisfaction with Cherwell District Council, which highlights the hygiene factors that are most important for the Council to get right and the causes of any changes in levels of satisfaction.
- The Council's approach to anti-social behaviour, the local area is like as a place to live and street cleaning services are key drivers of overall satisfaction with Cherwell District Council.
- There is a second tier of services that drive satisfactions:
  - Local car parking facilities
  - Leisure activities
  - The way parks and play areas are looked after
  - The waste collection service
- In terms of specific aspects of services examined, cleanliness of your local area is seen as a main driver, along with information about the length of stay in the car parks, speed of response to complaints concerning anti-social behaviour and the provision of services in rural areas.



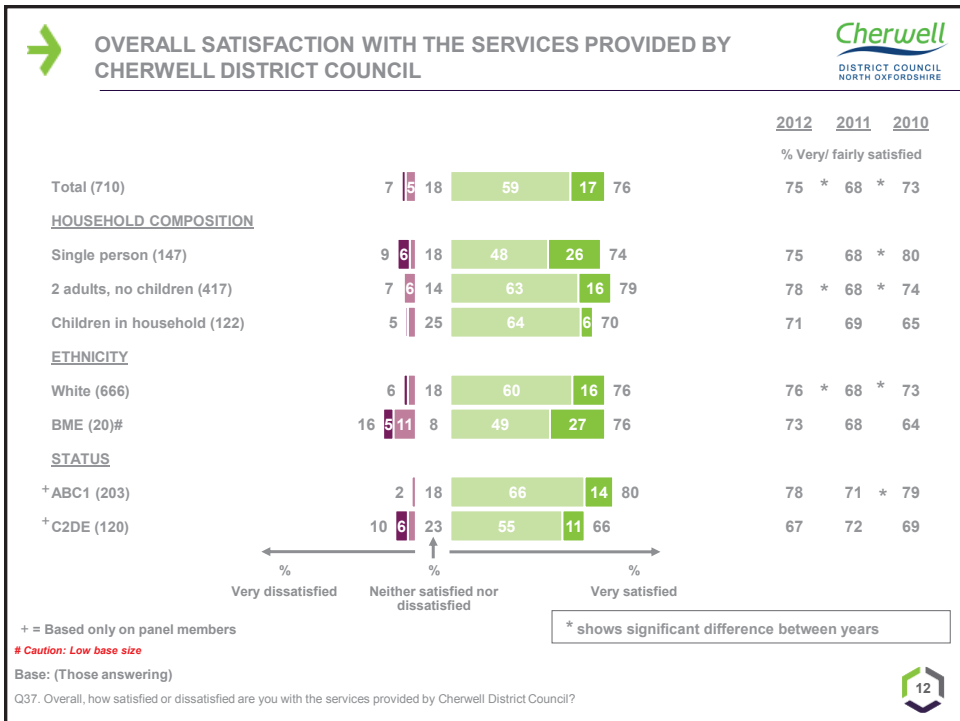
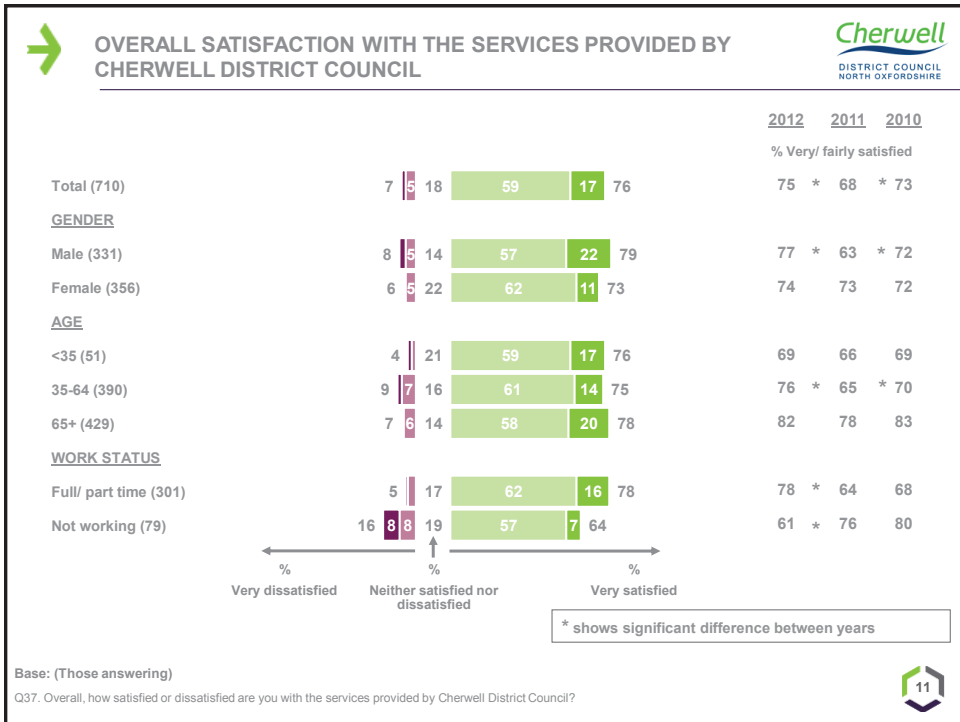
#### OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE PROVIDED BY CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

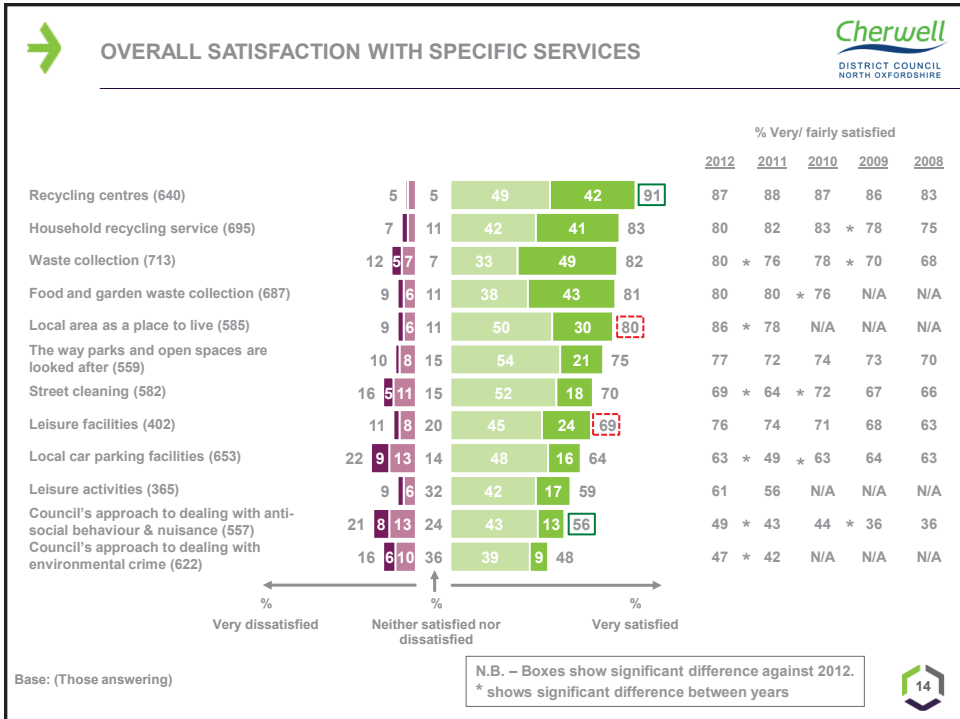
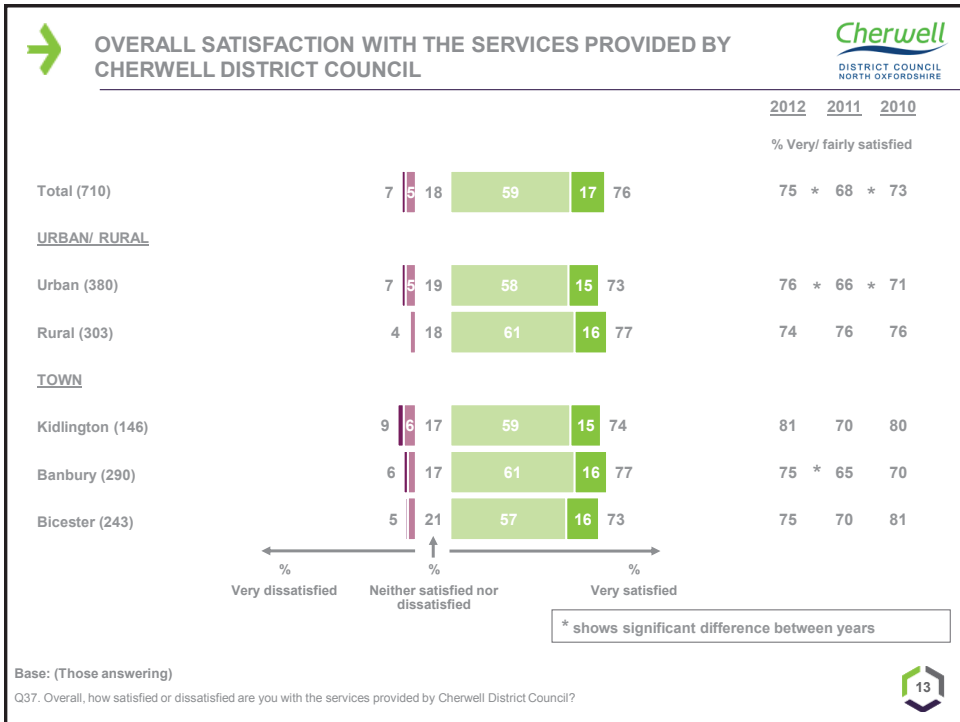


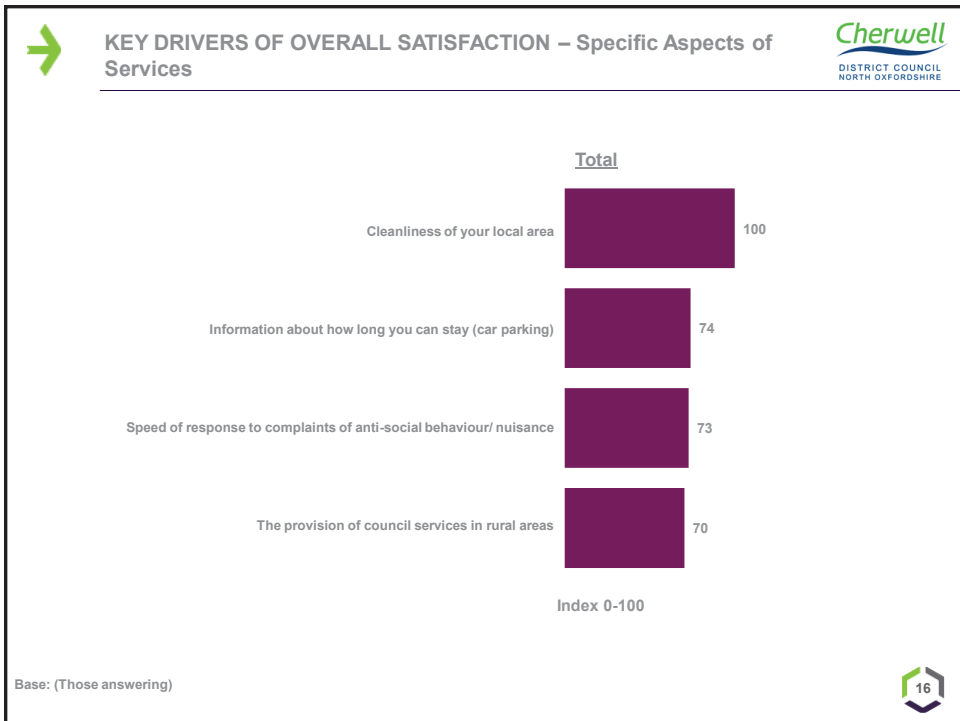
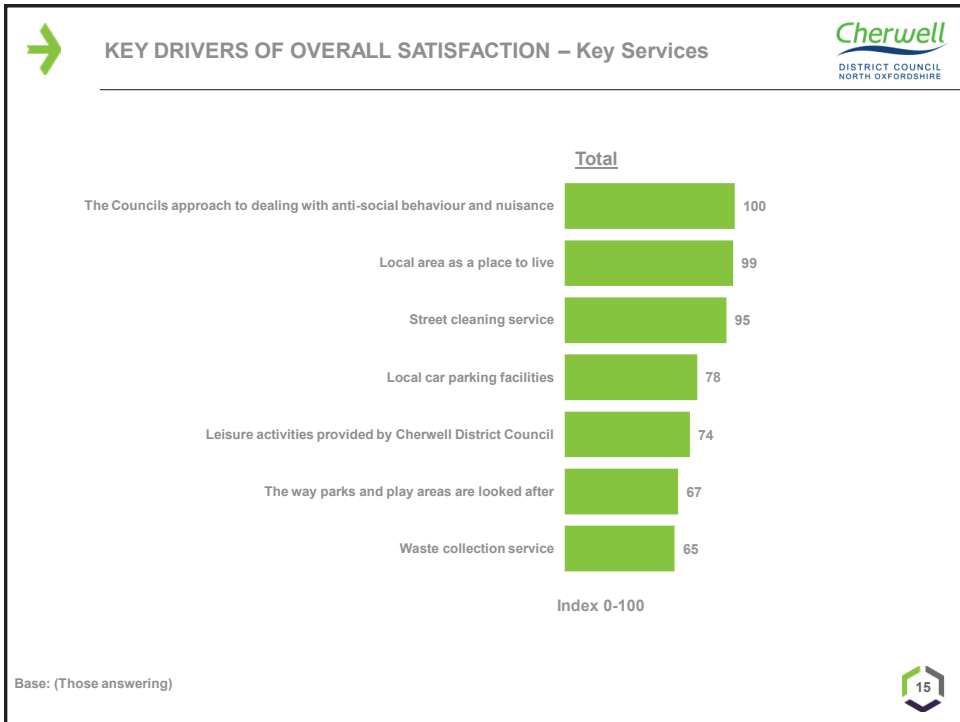
Base: (Those answering: 710)

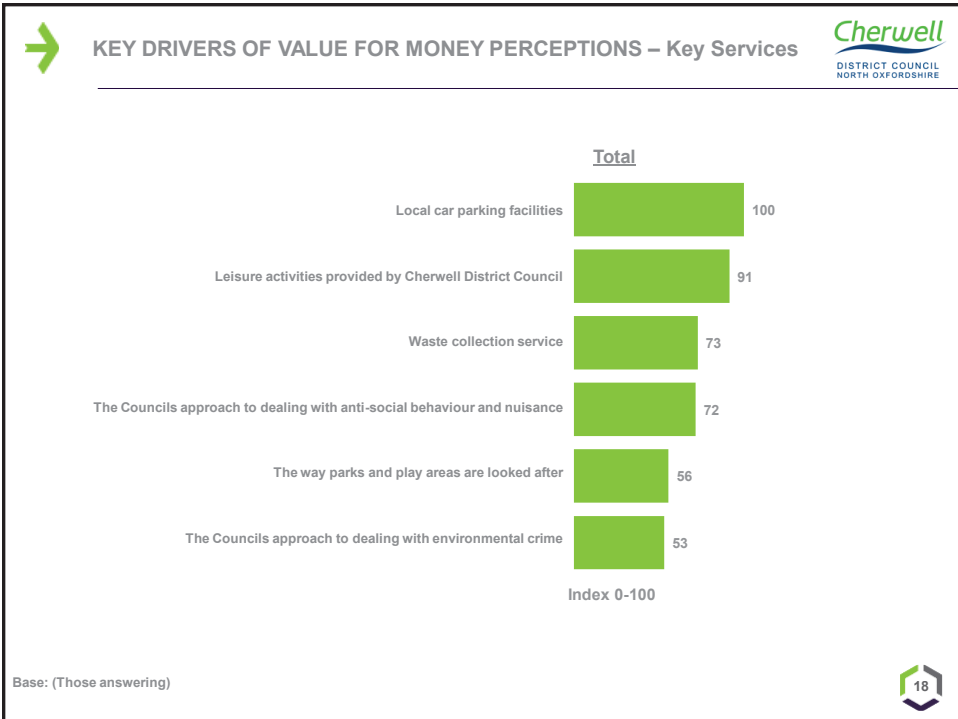
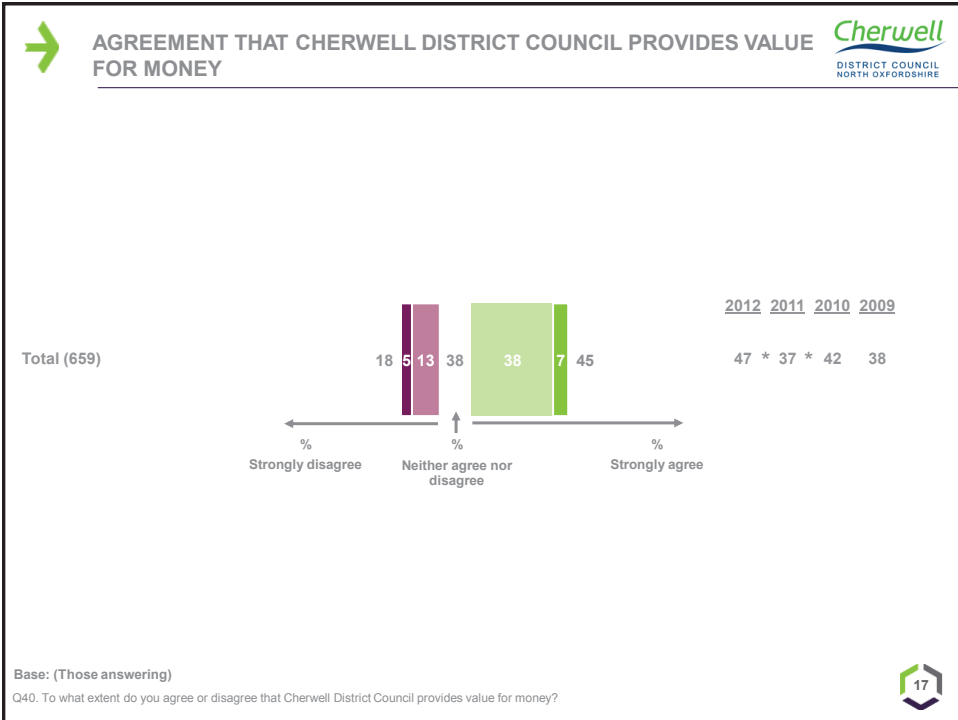
Q37. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the services provided by Cherwell District Council?

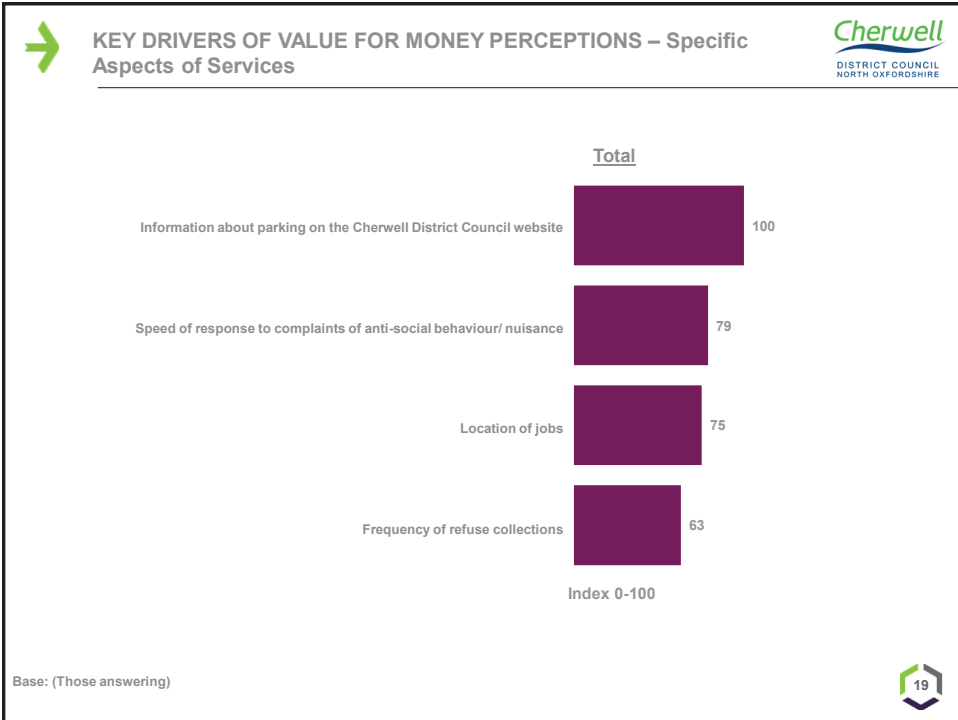












# 4. Environmental Services

innovation    intelligence    inspiration



## → 4. Environmental Services

### Street Cleansing

- Street cleansing continues to demonstrate an upward trend over time (and has almost recovered from the 8% decrease in satisfaction seen in 2011).
- In terms of the individual aspects, cleanliness of local area, cleanliness of local town/ urban centre and frequency with which streets are cleaned have the highest levels of satisfaction.
- Two areas demonstrate significant improvements compared with 2012, neighbourhood litter blitzes and litter campaigns/ information regarding littering.
- Over a quarter of people are dissatisfied with the issuing of fines for littering and dog fouling, is there potential to highlight the number of offenders who are fined each year?
- Reflecting the overall concerns over the issuing of fines, only 48% of residents were satisfied with the Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime.
- 80% are not aware of Fixed Penalty Notices being issued in their local area, whilst 93 support a zero tolerance approach to 'on-street' offences.



## → 4. Environmental Services

### Household Waste Collection

- Overall satisfaction with the waste collection service continues to demonstrate a very strong upward trend over time, 82% satisfied being the highest level yet seen for this factor (and this is 15% higher than it was in 2006).
- Whilst all of the four individual ratings are at the higher end of the scores seen over the past few years, only frequency of refuse collections (the lowest rated of the four factors) has actually increased significantly compared with 2012.
- 12% of residents remain dissatisfied with bins being returned to the collection point after being emptied.

### Household Recycling Collections

- Satisfaction with household recycling remains at a high level (matching it's best ever rating of 83% satisfied – also seen in 2010).
- Three factors demonstrate significant improvements compared with 2012:
  - The range of materials taken for recycling
  - Kerbside battery collection scheme
  - Frequency of recycling collections
- Overall dissatisfaction with recycling collections is low – fewer than 10% being dissatisfied with any of the factors examined.



## → 4. Environmental Services

### Recycling Centres

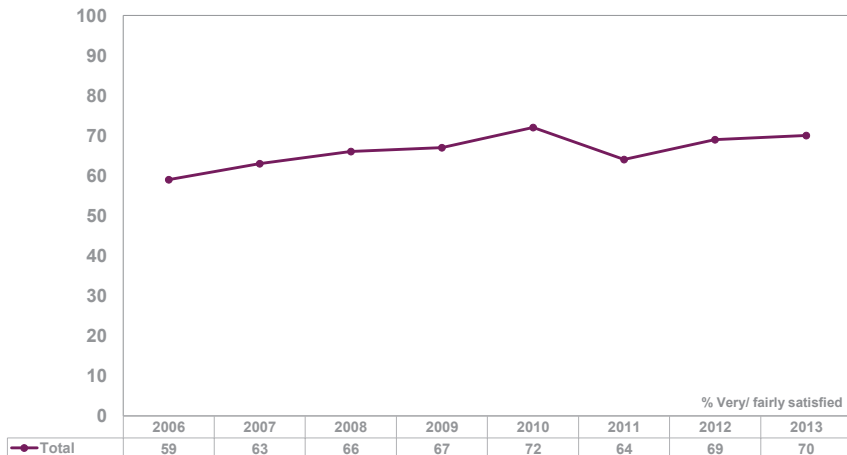
- Recycling Centres receives the highest overall ratings seen, with more than 90% satisfied for the first time.
- There is, however, some variation in terms of the ratings for individual aspects of recycling centres with 83% satisfied by the items you can deposit and only 66% satisfied with how clean and tidy the facilities are.
- Whilst being clean and tidy may receive the lowest level of satisfaction it is important to note that this seems to be acceptable with only 4% actually dissatisfied (and indeed this factor has increased in satisfaction compared to 2012).

### Household Food and Garden Waste Collections

- Household Food and Garden Waste collections are rated very similarly to previous years (81% satisfied compared with 80% in 2012 and 2011).
- Qualitative research has highlighted some concerns over the frequency of collecting food waste in the summer months (smell, flies etc.) and this is likely to be reflected with 14% saying they are dissatisfied with the frequency of food and garden waste collection.
- Almost three-quarters think the Council provides enough information on household collection services, in line with the ratings seen over the past few years.



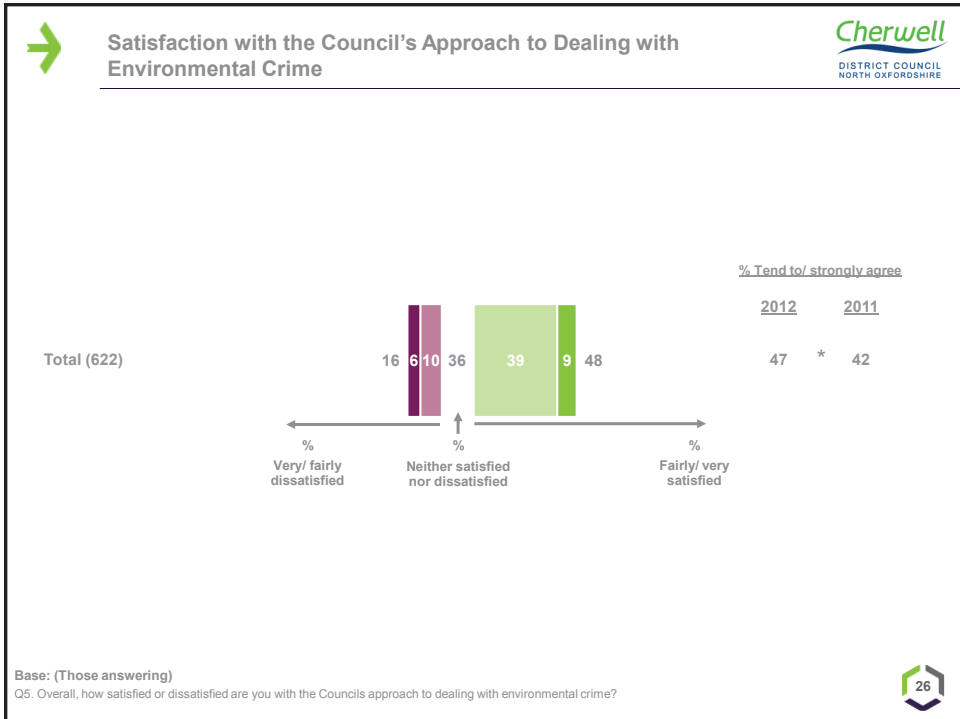
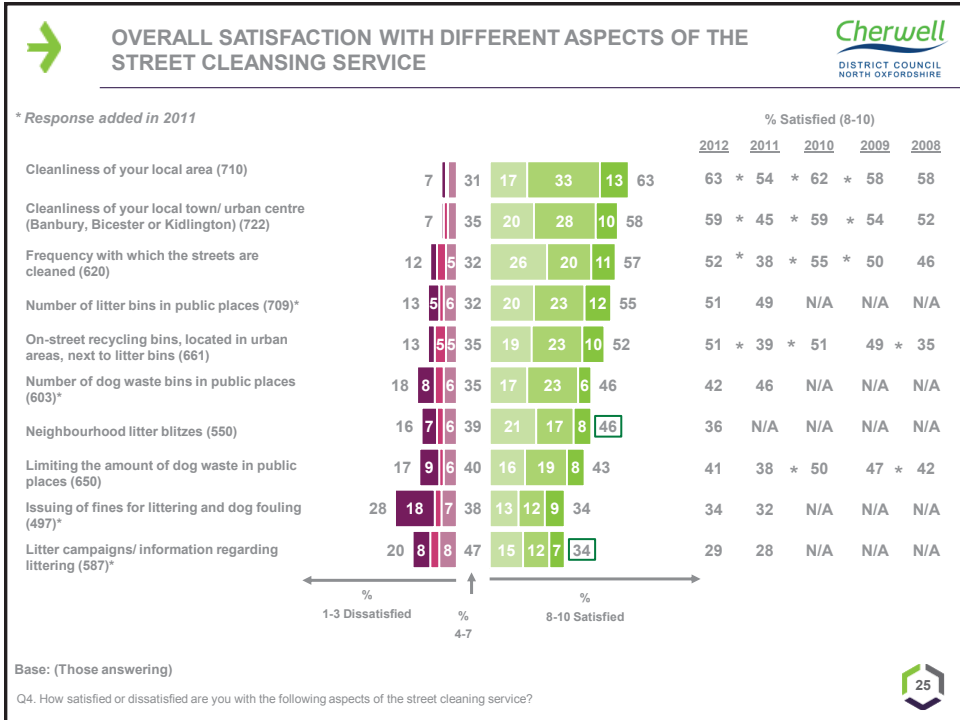
## → OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH STREET CLEANSING SERVICE

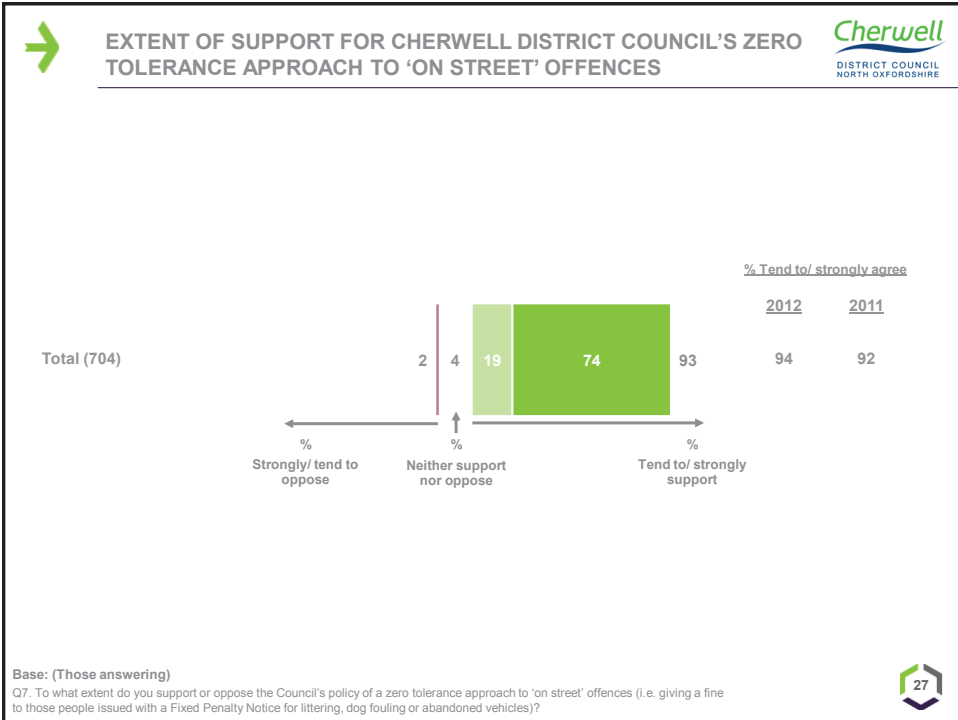


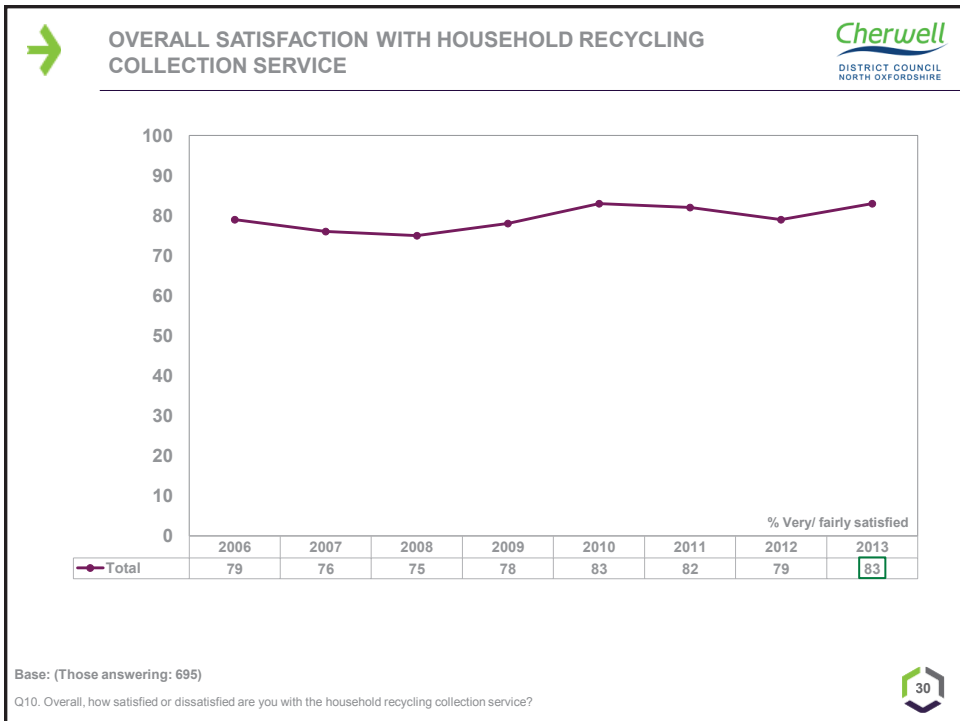
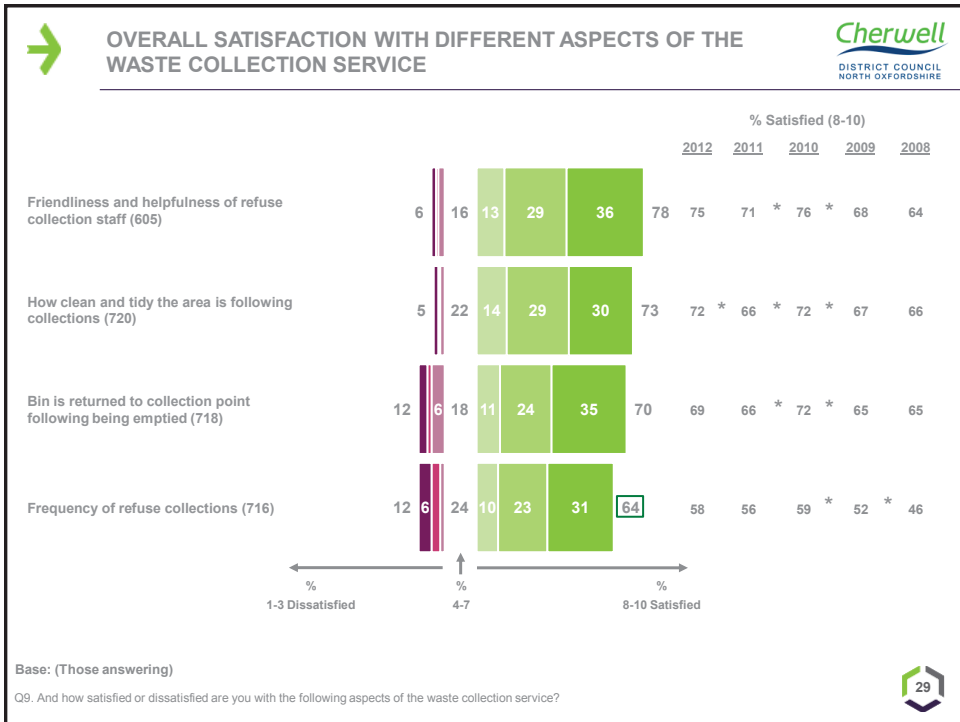
Base: (Those answering: 582)

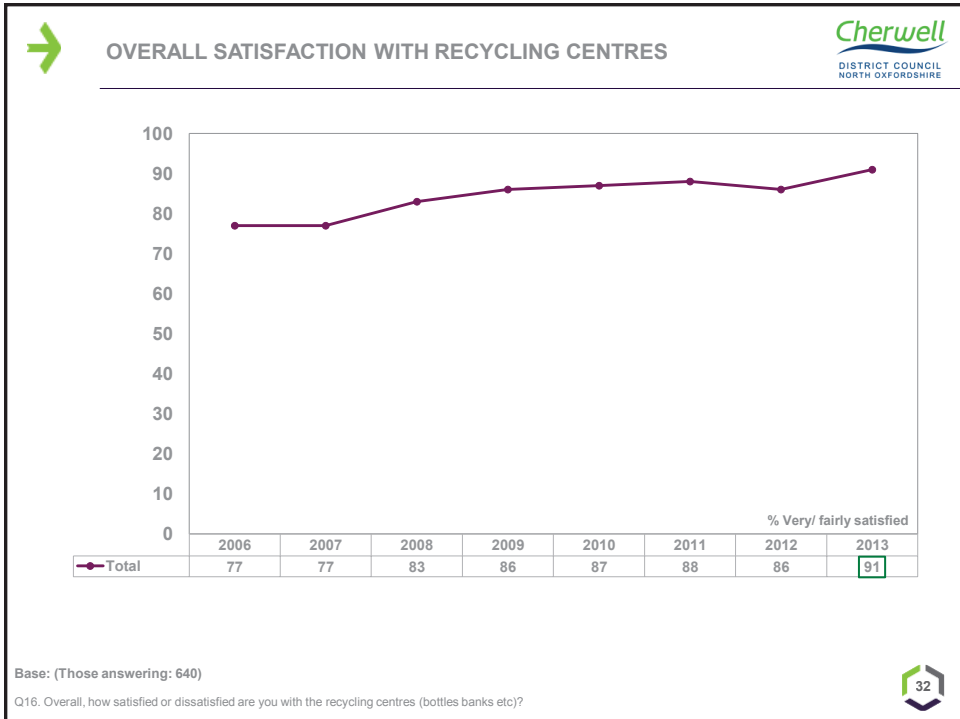
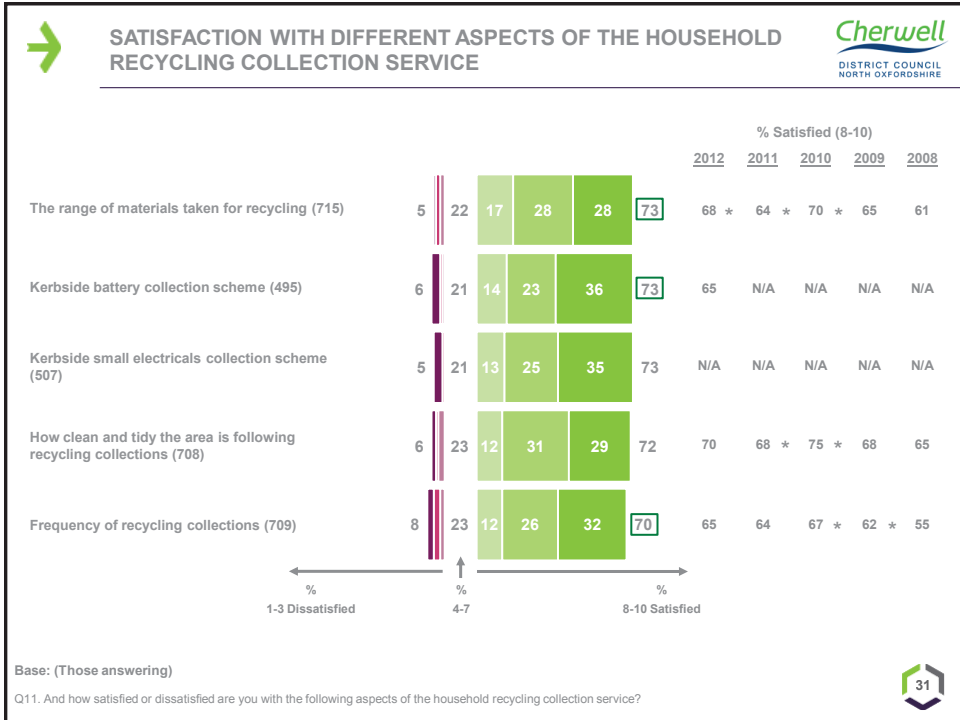
Q3. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the street cleansing service?

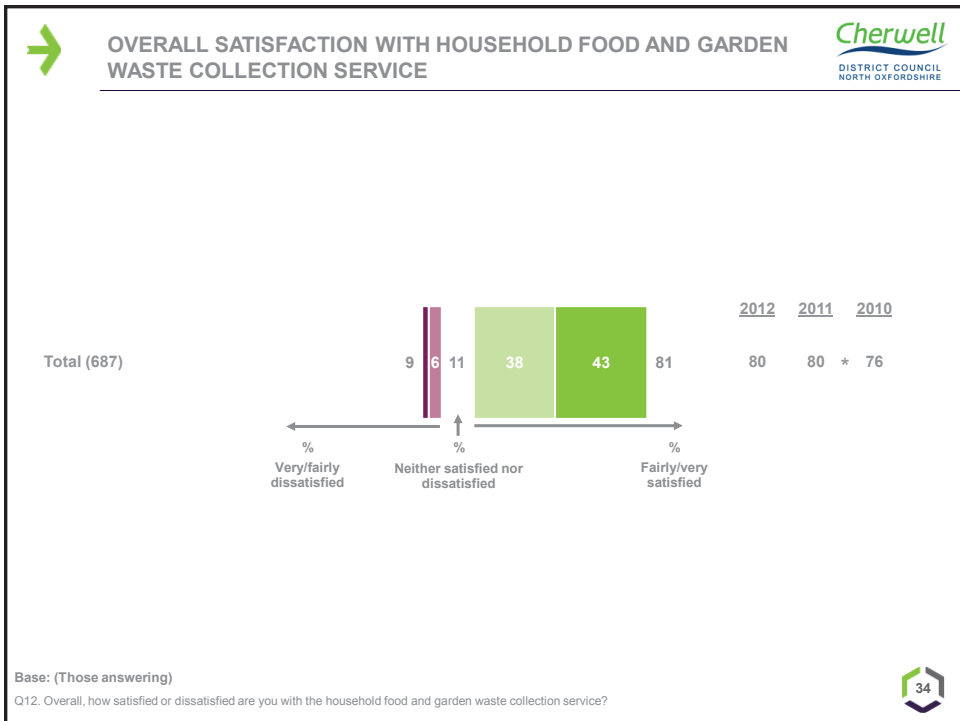
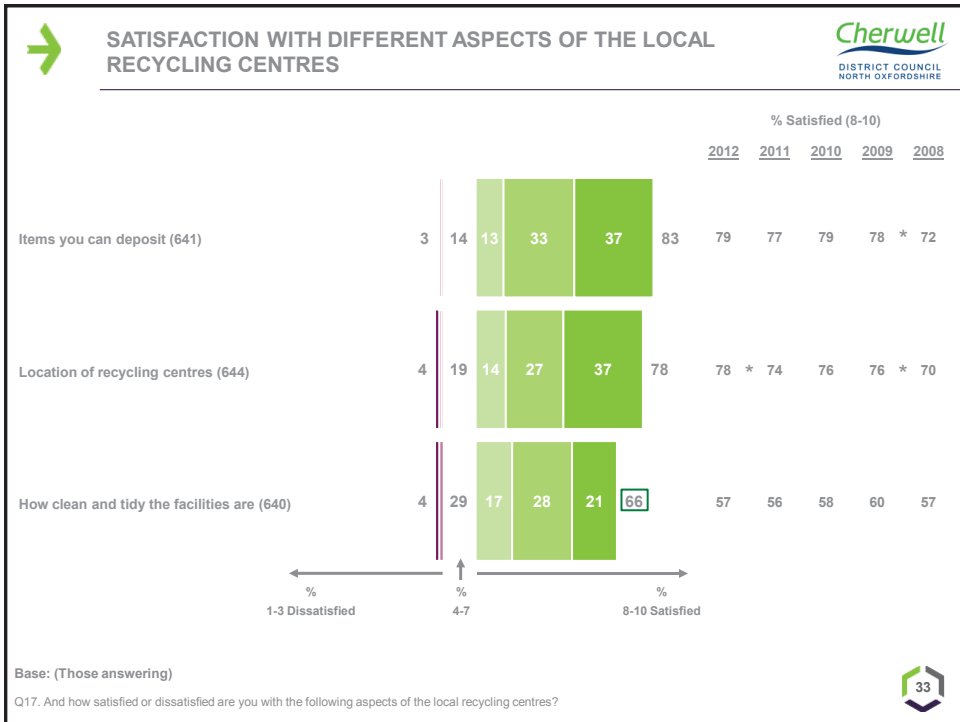


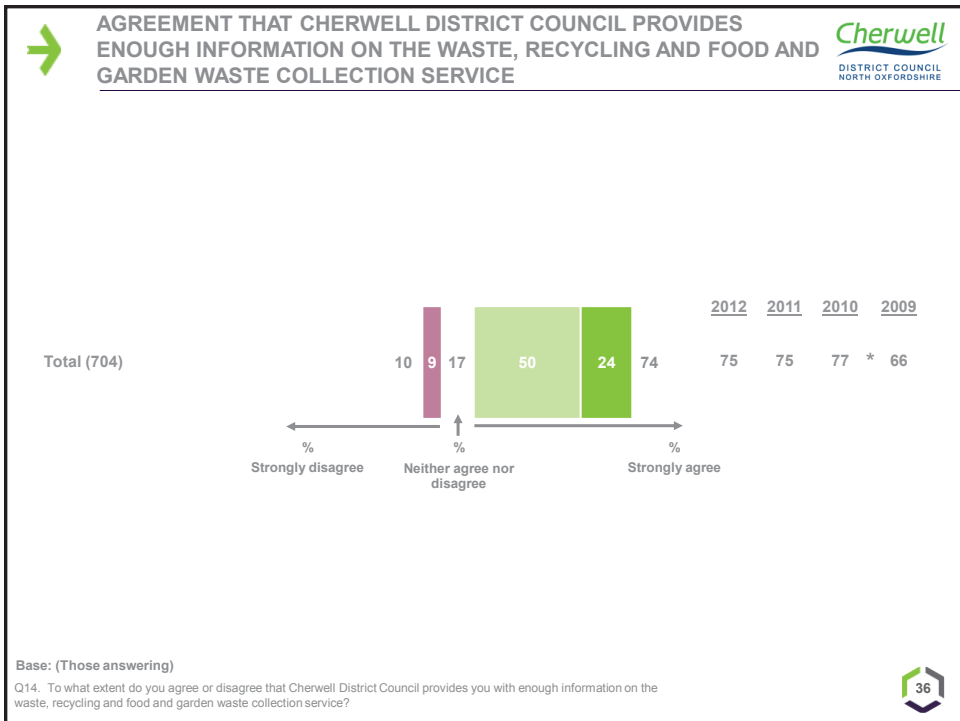
















## 5. Leisure and Recreation



innovation    intelligence    inspiration

## → 5. Leisure and Recreation

### Parks and Play areas

- As has been noted in previous years the parks/ open spaces and play areas in Kidlington are used by a smaller proportion of respondents to the survey than those located elsewhere – Banbury has the highest usage levels.
- Frequency of use amongst those visiting remains fairly high with over half of those visiting parks and open spaces at least weekly (this is around a third of all residents) and 44% of those visiting play areas doing so at least weekly (a fifth of all residents).
- Whilst usage levels of parks/ open spaces in Kidlington are lower than elsewhere, satisfaction amongst those who do use remains in-line with the other locations. There is, however, a higher level dissatisfaction with play areas amongst those using in Kidlington than Banbury or Bicester.
- All four of the maintenance aspects examined for parks/ open spaces and play areas receive the highest ratings yet seen – all of them increasing significantly since 2012.
- Whilst the number of parks and open spaces receives similar ratings to 2012 and 2011, just under a third thinking there are not enough of these, play areas is worse rated. 40% of respondents did not think there were enough play areas in 2013, compared with 34% in 2012 and 30% in 2011.

## → 5. Leisure and Recreation

### Leisure Facilities

- Whilst overall satisfaction with the leisure facilities provided by the Council had been demonstrating a strong upward trend between 2007 and 2012, there is a significant decrease in satisfaction scores this year (the score falling by 7% to 69% satisfied).
- Three of the leisure centres rated by those who have used received significantly lower ratings in 2013 than in 2012:
  - Bicester Leisure Centre (81% satisfied in 2012; 66% in 2013)
  - Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre (81% satisfied in 2012, 68% in 2013)
  - Cooper School Bicester (88% satisfied in 2012, 58% in 2013 – nb only 13 users rated this centre).
- Whilst the movement isn't significant, only 79% of those using the Spiceball Leisure Centre in Banbury were satisfied in 2013 compared with 85% in 2012. The converse is true for Woodgreen Leisure Centre where 85% are satisfied compared with 78% last year.

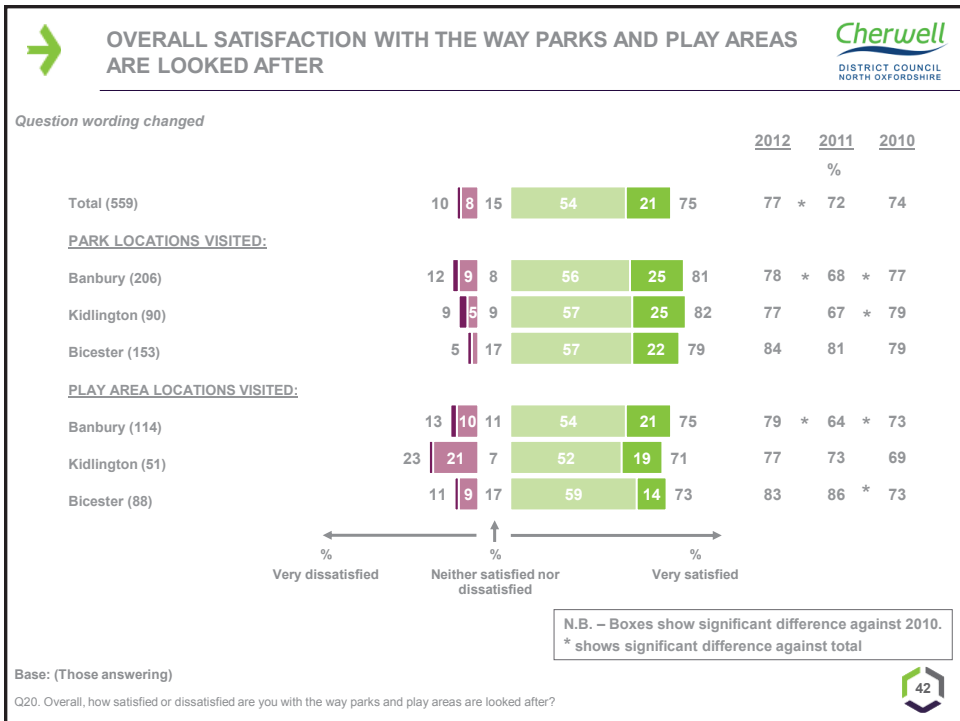
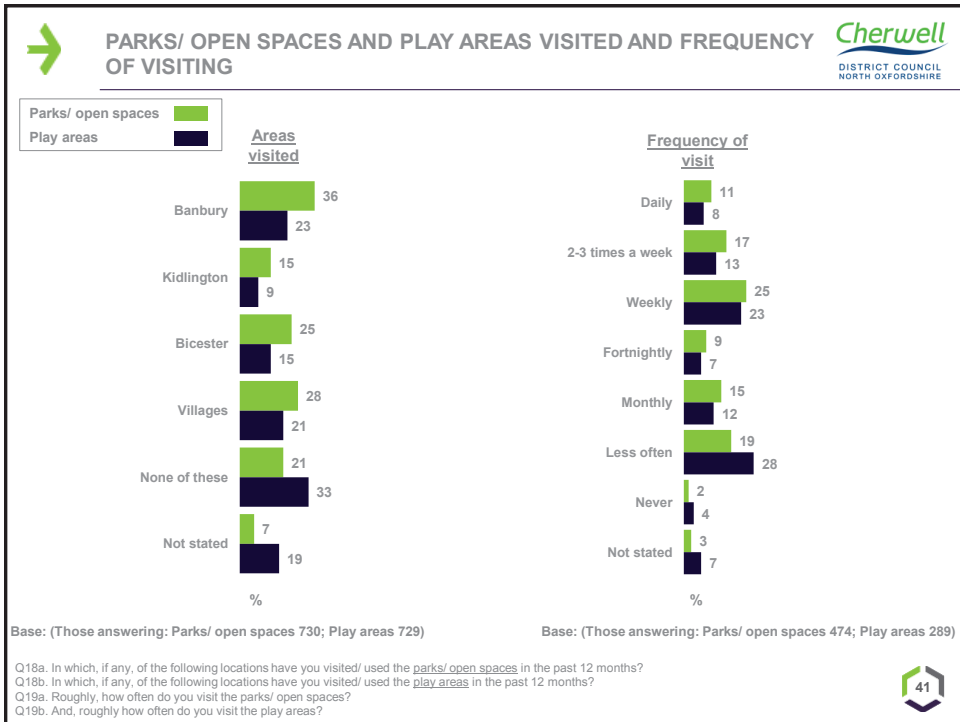
39

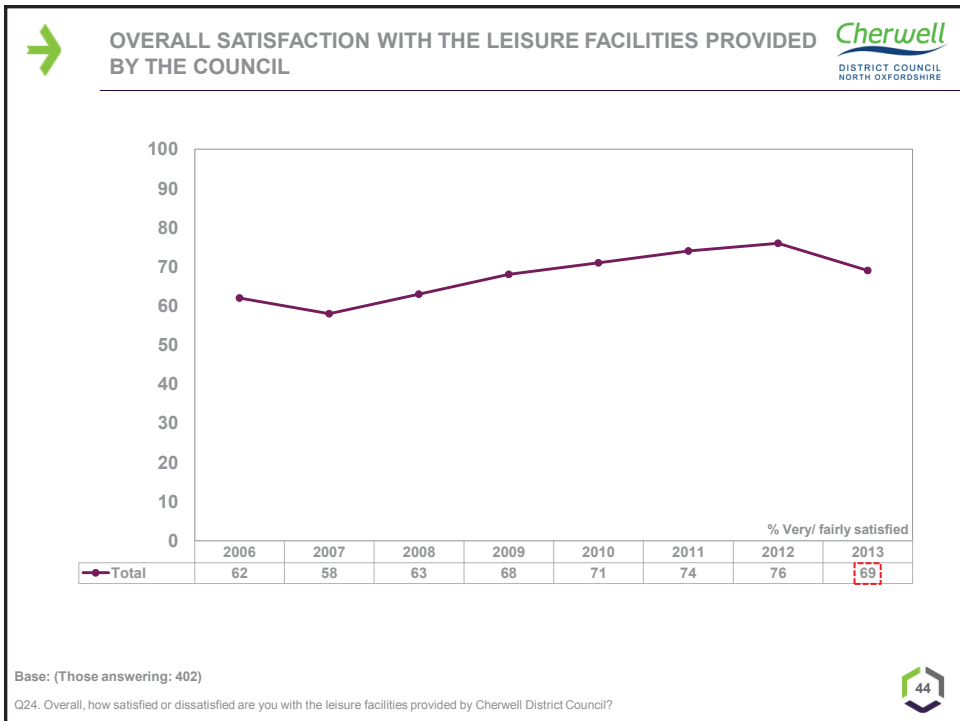
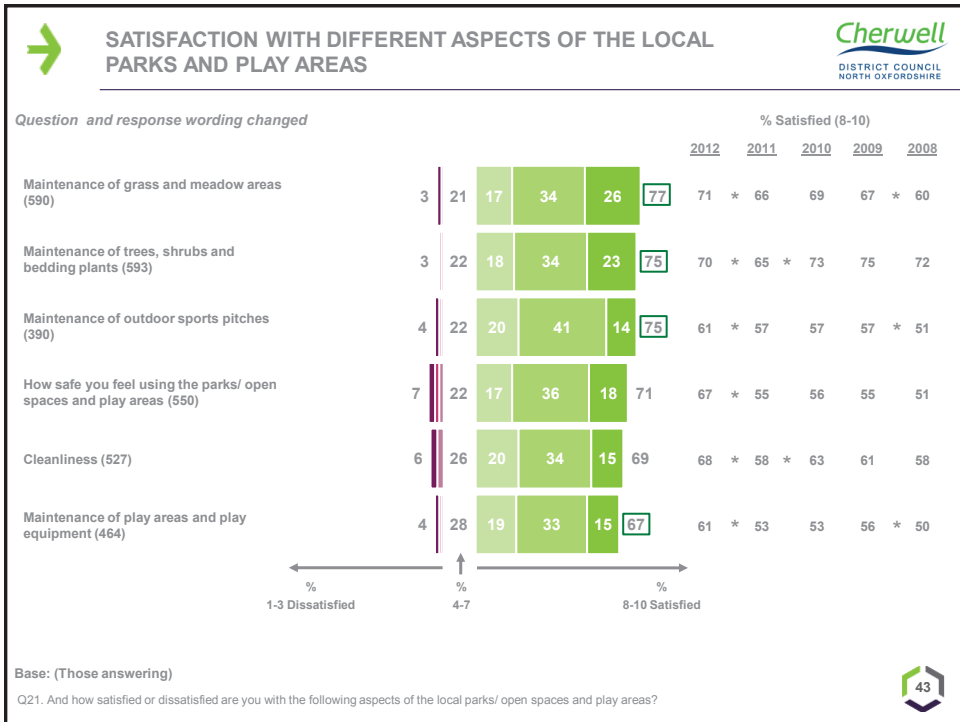
## → 5. Leisure and Recreation

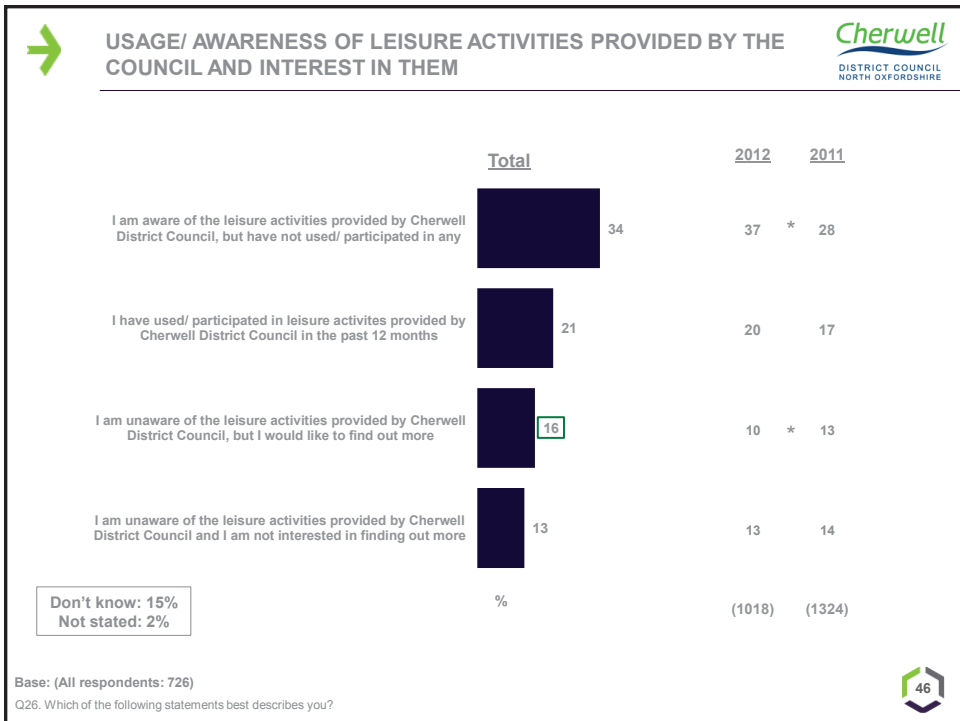
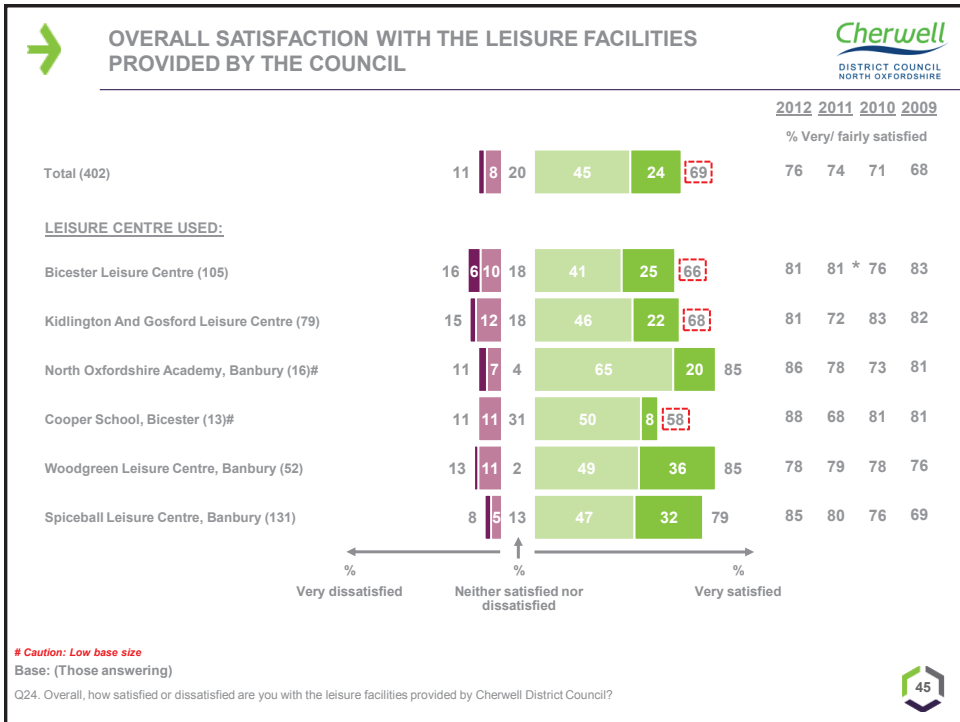
### Leisure Facilities

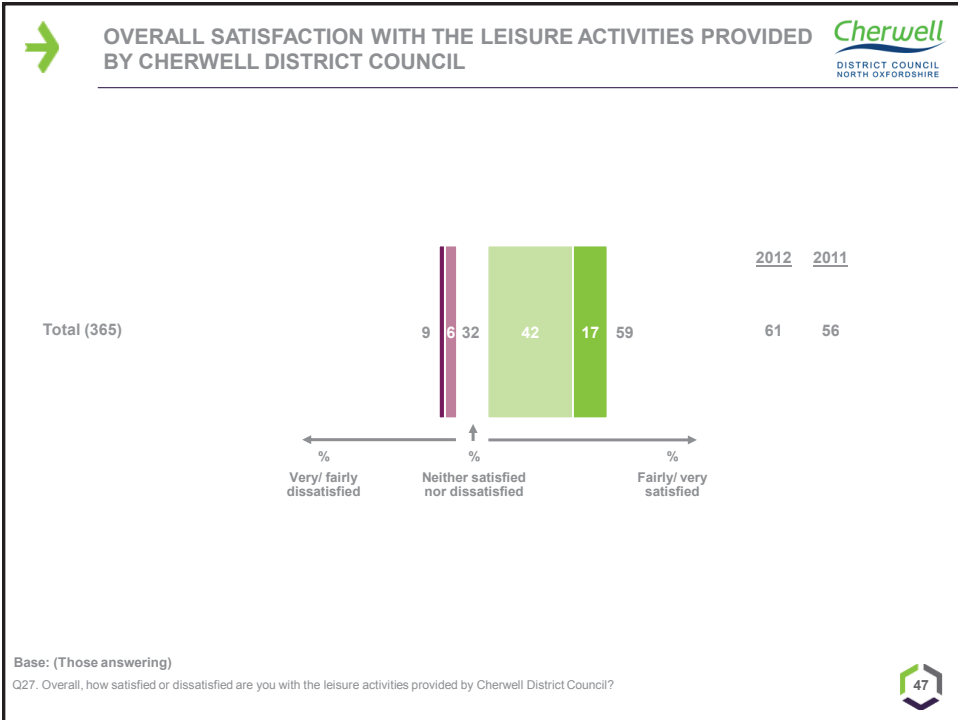
- There is some suggestion that these decreases in satisfaction could be caused by external circumstances rather than the actual performance of the leisure centres themselves as three of the five individual ratings examined have actually increased significantly since last year and are at historically high levels:
  - Staff knowledge/ professionalism (72% satisfied compared with 61% in 2012 and 55% in 2008)
  - Cleanliness and condition of venue (70% satisfied compared with 61% in 2012 and 44% in 2008)
  - Cost of using facilities (48% satisfied compared with 38% in 2012 and 30% in 2008).
- Initial reaction from the focus groups (particularly in Banbury) suggested that whilst there were excellent facilities, these facilities were under utilised and that the council could do more to encourage 'events' within them and also to better publicise what was actually going on.

40











## 6. Community Safety



innovation
intelligence
inspiration

## → 6. Community Safety

### Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance

- Dealing with Anti-Social behaviour has been identified as one of the key priorities for residents. It is very encouraging therefore to see the strong upward trend in this area continue. In 2013, 56% of residents were satisfied with the Council's approach in this area, a significant improvement on 2012 and 22% higher than the rating achieved in 2006.
- Whilst these improvements are to be applauded, almost one in five respondents continue to disagree with the statement *"the police and local council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance"*.
- Again, whilst there remains room for improvement, the satisfaction ratings for individual aspects of dealing with anti-social behaviour are at high levels compared to those seen historically. Two of the six factors show significant improvements and are at least 10% higher than seen in any previous year:
  - Dealing with vandalism and graffiti (41% satisfied in 2013, 28% in 2012)
  - Dealing with youths hanging around on the streets (33% satisfied in 2013, 26% in 2012)

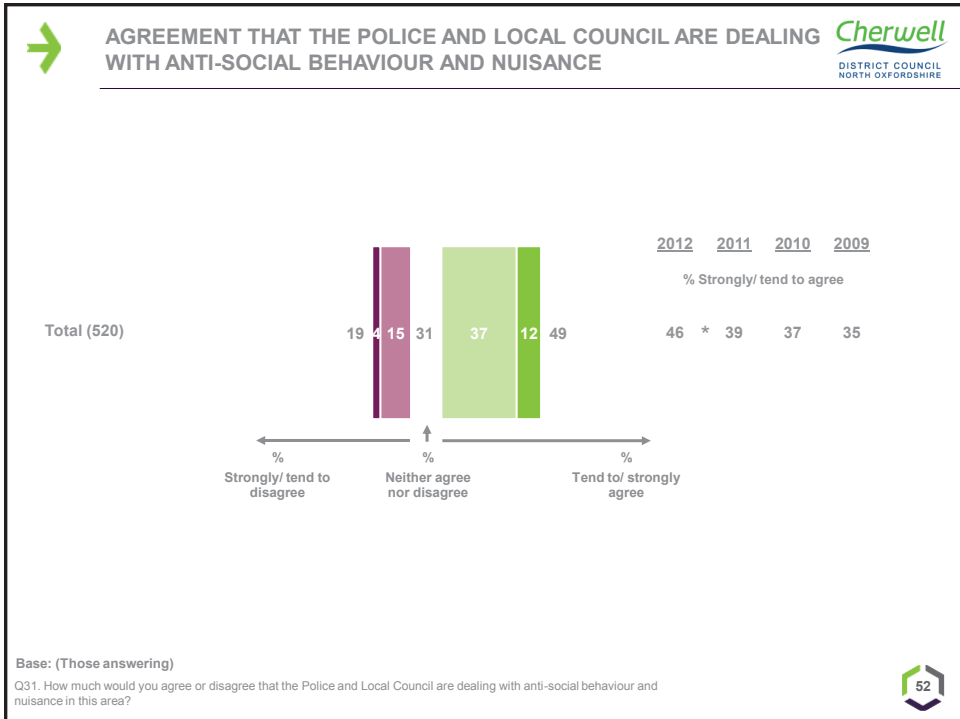
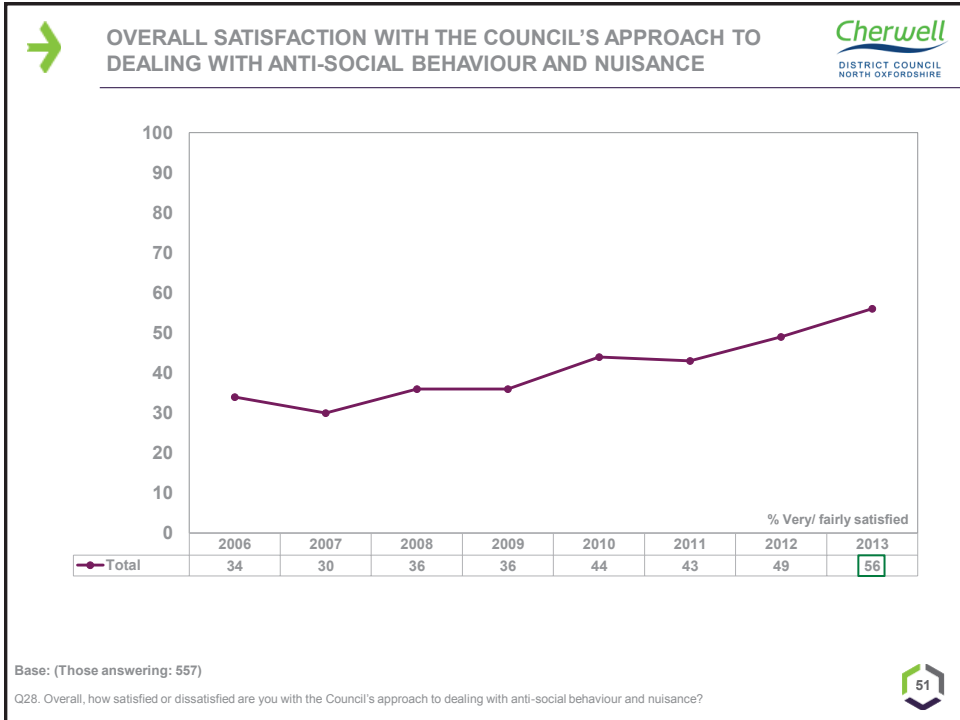


## → 6. Community Safety

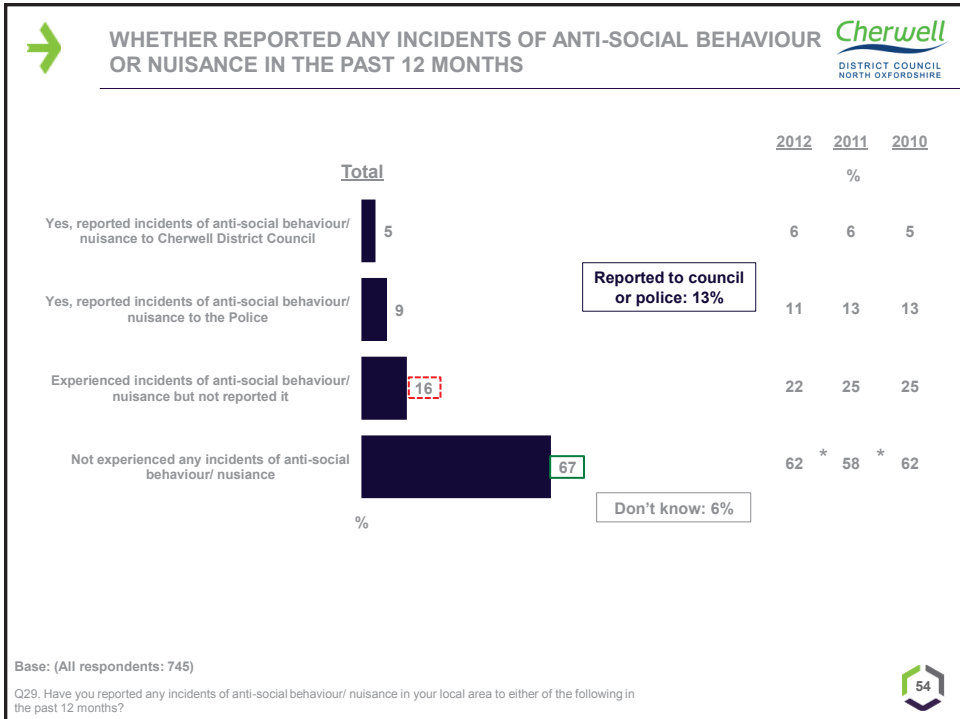
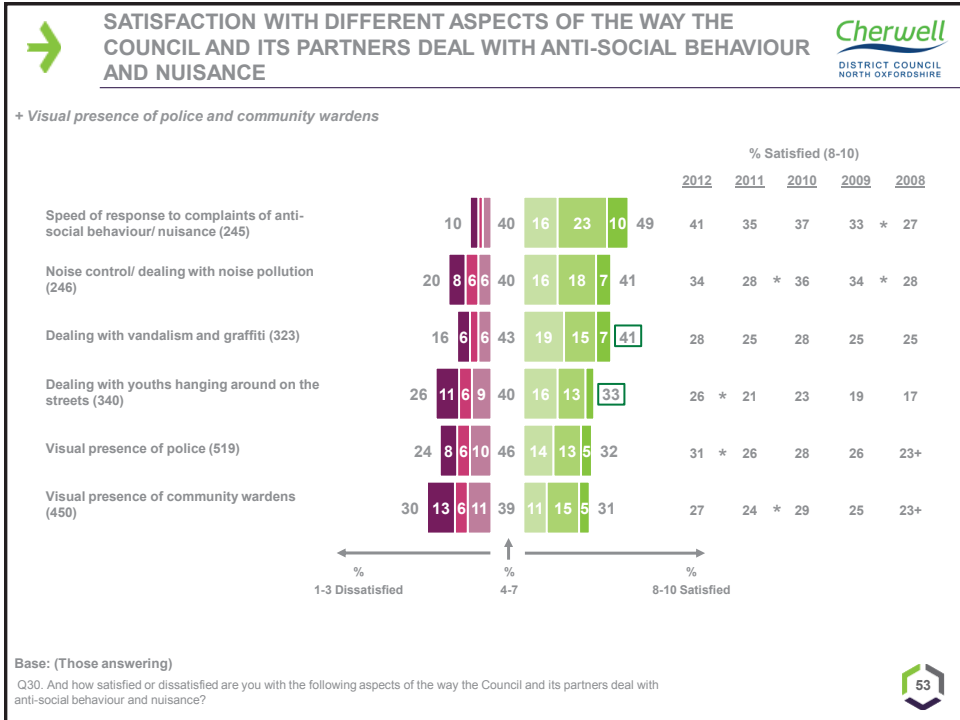
### Fear of Crime

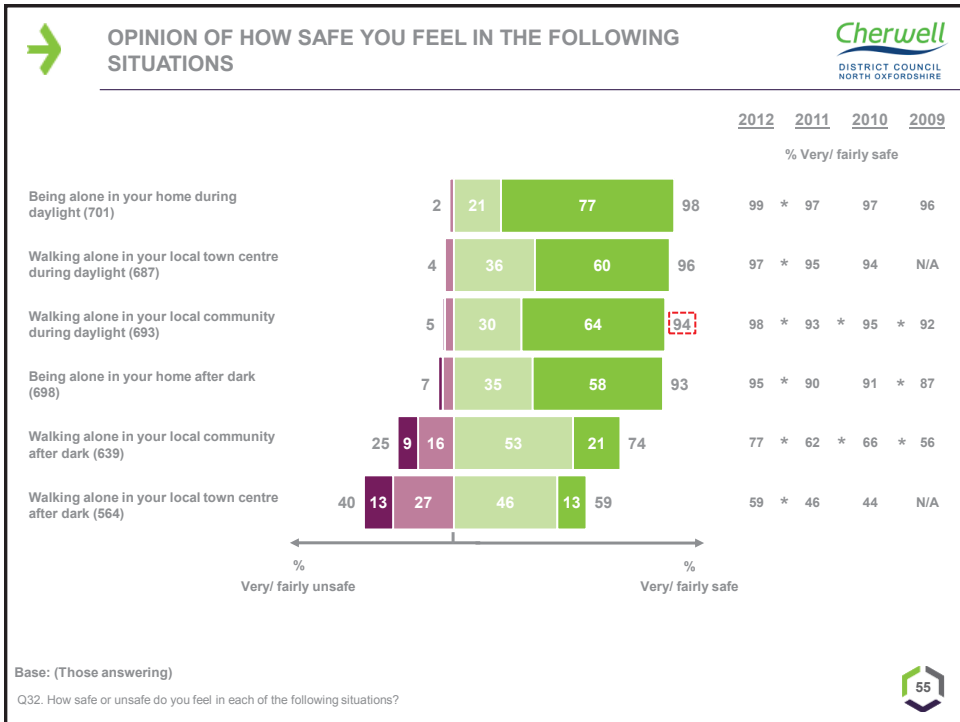
- The proportion of residents who feel safe at home or out and about in daylight remains very high (for all four of the ratings examined more than 90% feel very/ fairly safe, well over half feeling very safe).
- Despite a strong rating overall there is a significant decrease in feeling safe whilst walking alone in your local community during daylight (falling from 98% in 2012 to 94% in 2013). We would suggest that there is little other evidence to suggest there is a decreasing performance in this area and, as such, would recommend this is unlikely to be a major issue but that it should be monitored on-going to ensure that it does not become one).
- The highest levels of feeling unsafe relate to walking alone after dark. With a quarter of residents feeling unsafe when alone after dark in their local community and two-fifths in their local town centre.











# 7. Car Parking

innovation    intelligence    inspiration

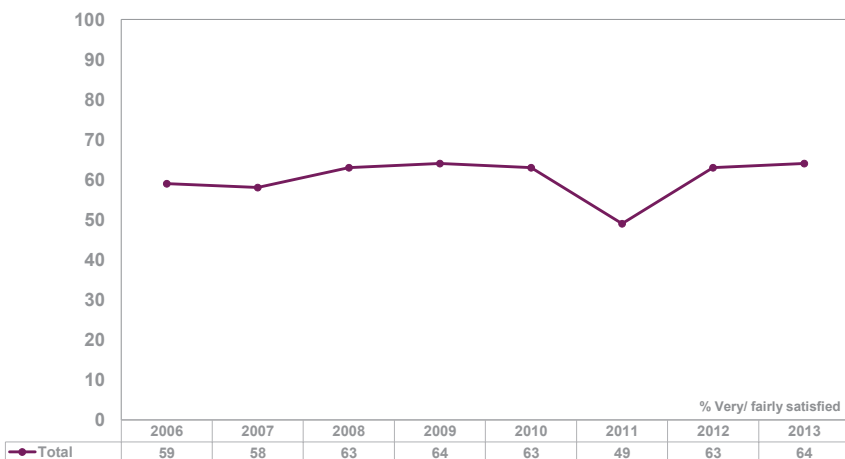
## → 7. Car Parking

### Satisfaction with Car Parking

- Satisfaction with parking has stabilised after experiencing a sharp decrease in 2011. The proportion satisfied has been at 63/64% every year since 2008 with the exception of this blip in 2011.
- Feeling safe and secure within the car parks and ease of finding them remain the two highest rated factors relating to car parking (81% satisfied with both).
- Three areas demonstrate significant improvements since last year:
  - Number and location of pay and display machines (72% satisfied in 2013, 65% in 2012)
  - Information about how long you can stay (62% satisfied in 2013, 54% in 2012)
  - Ease of payment using the mobile telephone payment system (52% satisfied in 2013, 42% in 2012)
- The qualitative research again highlighted residents dissatisfaction with having to pay to park (Witney again used as an example of a local town where parking is free and their belief that this drives footfall). This is back up by the quantitative results with 36% dissatisfied with the price of parking compared to only 30% being satisfied.



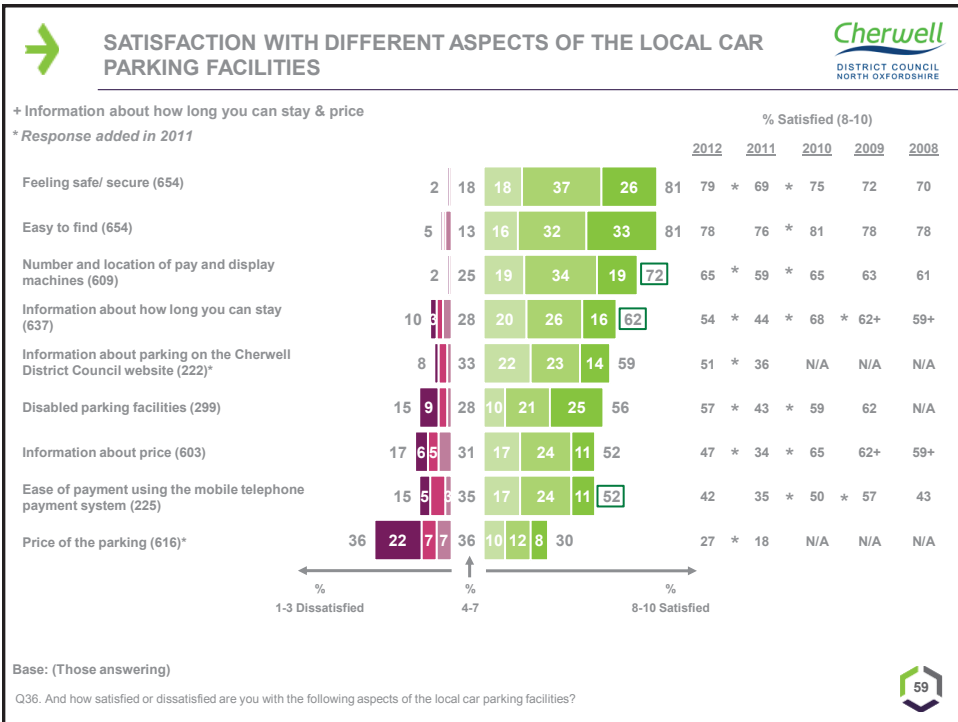
## → OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL CAR PARKING FACILITIES



Base: (Those answering: 653)

Q35. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the local car parking facilities?





## 8. Cherwell as a place to live

innovation    intelligence    inspiration

## → 8. Cherwell as a place to live

**Cherwell as a place to live**

- There has been a significant decrease in the overall satisfaction with respondents' local area as a place to live. Only 80% were satisfied compared with 86% in 2012. However, this is still slightly above the 78% satisfied in 2011.
- It is difficult to find any reasons for this decrease (either from this research or from the qualitative focus groups conducted). Indeed eight of the fourteen individual aspects of living in the area examined received significantly higher ratings than last year, none were lower than twelve months ago:
  - Having the opportunity to volunteer (56% satisfied in 2013, 46% in 2012)
  - How new buildings look (55% satisfied in 2013, 46% in 2012)
  - Public transport provision (53% satisfied in 2013, 46 in 2012)
  - How town centres look and feel (50% satisfied in 2013, 45% in 2012)
  - Being able to have your say (45% satisfied in 2013, 37% in 2012)
  - Town centres that attract people to shop (33% satisfied in 2013, 28% in 2012)
  - Availability of homes to rent or purchase at affordable prices (23% satisfied in 2013, 18% in 2012)
  - Availability of good quality jobs (21% satisfied in 2013, 16% in 2012)



→

**SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL AREA AS A PLACE TO LIVE**



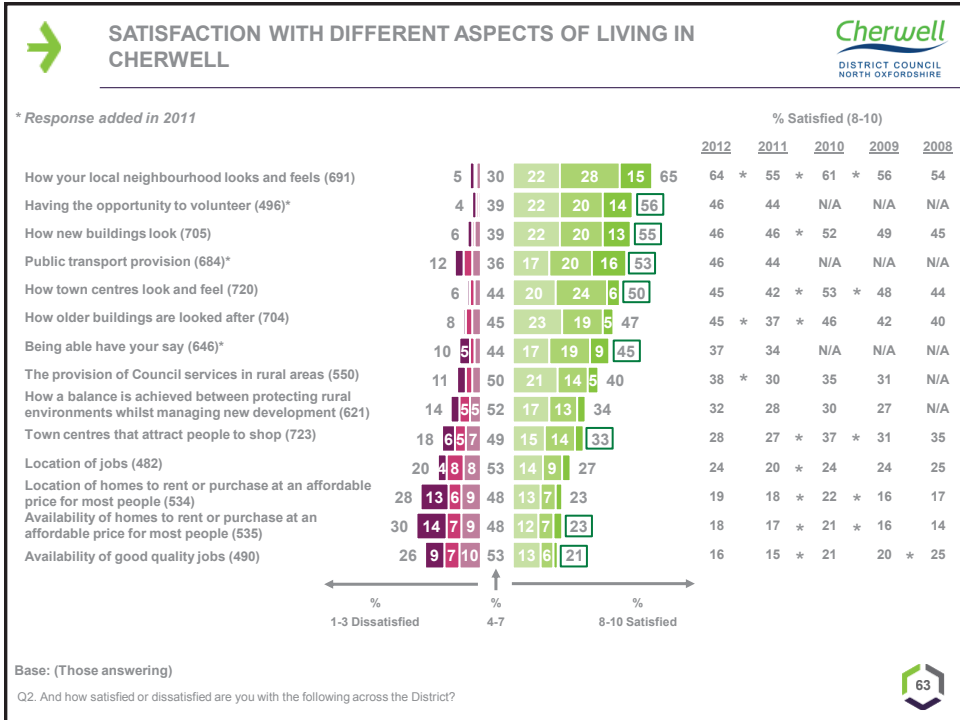
Total (585)



	2012	2011
% Very/ fairly satisfied	86	* 78

Base: (Those answering)  
 Q1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?





## 9. The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities

innovation

intelligence

inspiration



## 9. The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities

### Perceptions of economy

- Overall, 80% of respondents remain concerned over the Nations Budget deficit, this is only slightly down on the 82% concerned last year.
- However, there are some significant improvements in relation to the District Council itself:
  - 47% agree that they trust Cherwell District Council to do what's right for residents in the current economic climate (42% agreed with this in 2012)
  - 27% agree that the economic climate in Cherwell is better than it was twelve months ago (only 21% felt this in 2012). The proportion agreeing is now also slightly higher than the proportion disagreeing (27% vs 22%).
- There would also appear to be a greater sympathy towards the Council's position, significantly fewer agreed that Council's don't need to cut services as enough money can be saved through efficiency savings (50% agree with this in 2013, 56% in 2012).
- There is also a decrease in the proportion of residents who think that, in regards to the nation's budget deficit, "we are all in it together" – 61% agreed with this twelve months ago, 55% this year.

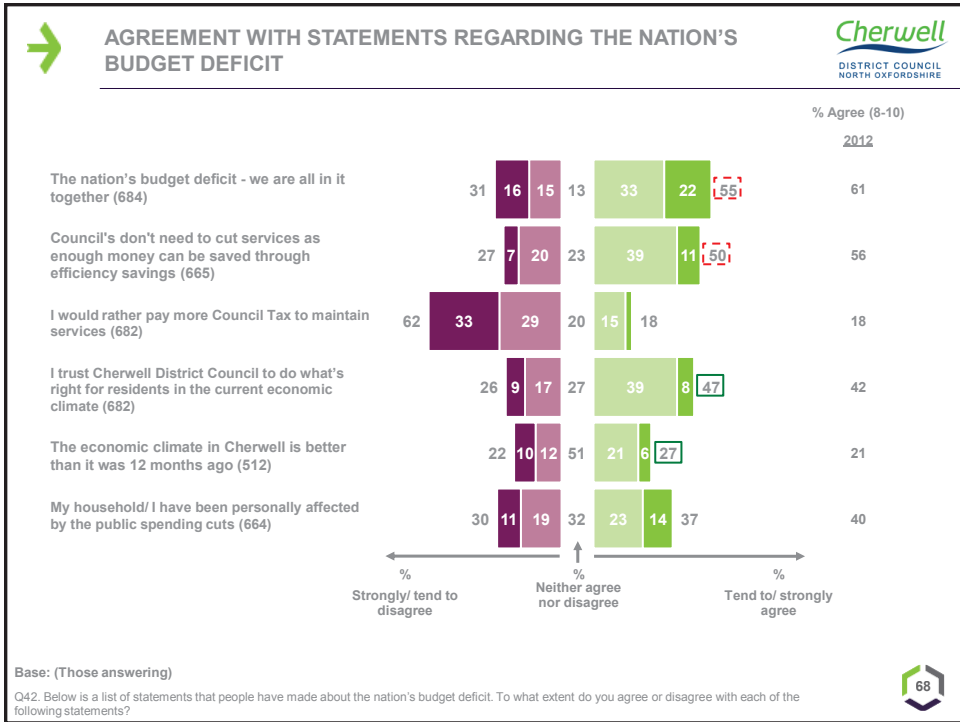
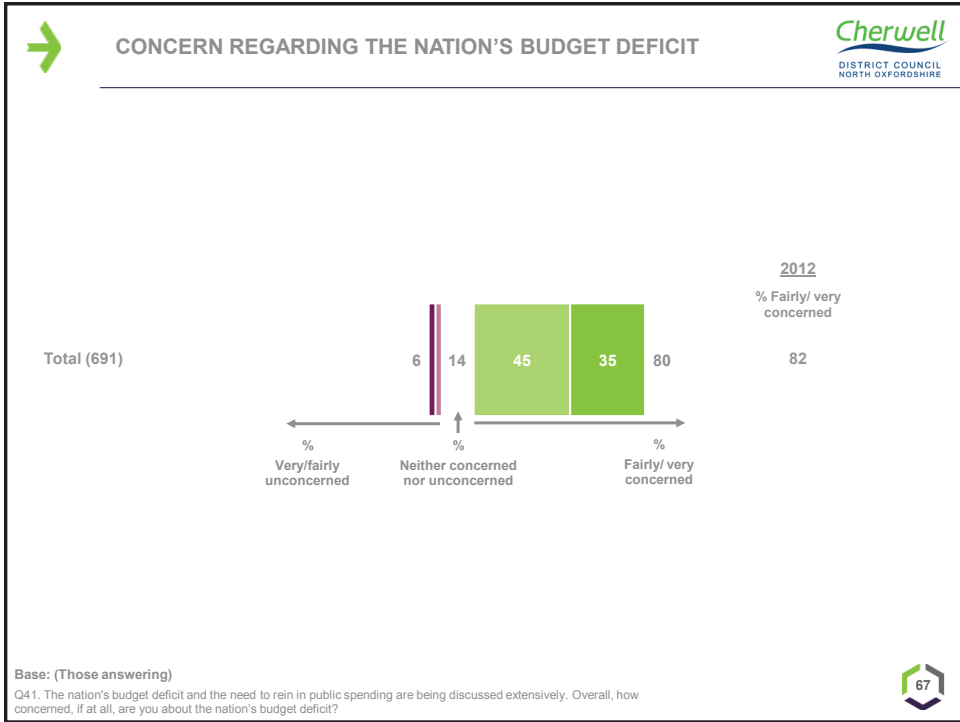


## 9. The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities

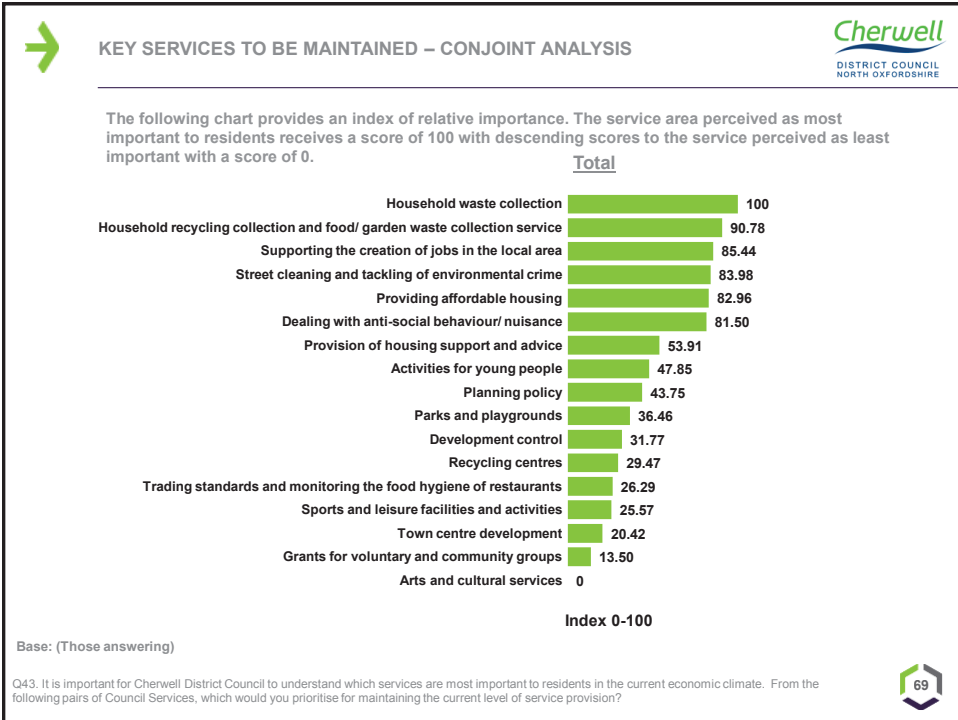

### Service priorities

- There is a very clear 'top six' group of key services that it is seen as vital for the Council to maintain:
  - Household waste collection
  - Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service
  - Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area
  - Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime
  - Providing affordable housing
  - Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance
- The qualitative research largely confirmed these as key areas and suggested that those that fell outside of this top group were nice to have (however, this did not suggest that they were unimportant or that efforts in these areas were not expected/ appreciated).








# 10. Information Provision



innovation    intelligence    inspiration

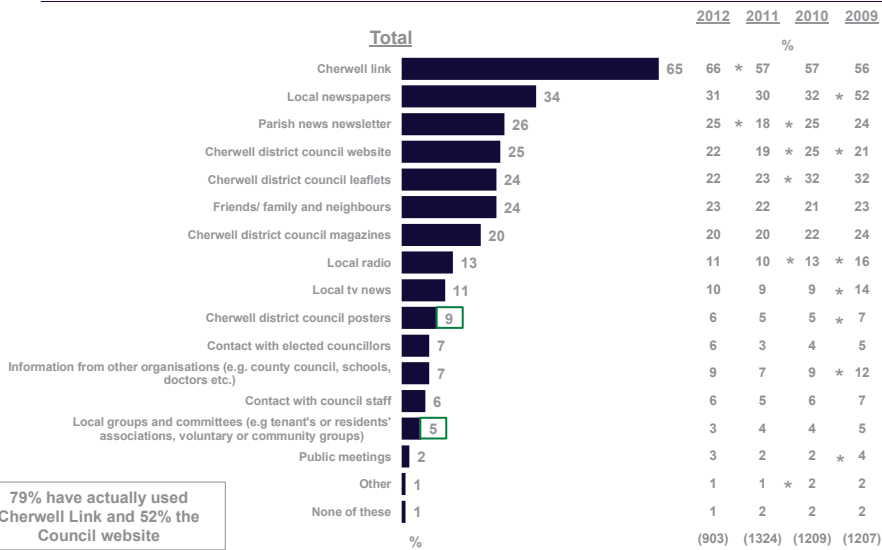
## → 10. Information Provision

### Information Provision

- The proportion of respondents who feel very/ fairly well informed about benefits and services remains fairly consistent over time – 70% saying this in 2013, 71% in 2012 and 69% in 2006.
- There is a similar consistency in ratings for being informed about what the Council spends its money on – two-thirds feels well informed, a third not well informed.
- Three-quarters tend to be satisfied with Cherwell Link and the Council's website.
- There continues to be evidence that those who feel well informed in general and those who use either Cherwell Link or the Council's website tend to be more satisfied with the Council overall and think it provides value for money.
- There was some suggestion in the qualitative research that residents would like to see more about activities provided within the area and less on the Council's internal news, e.g. appointments/ promotions etc.



## → MOST POPULAR SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

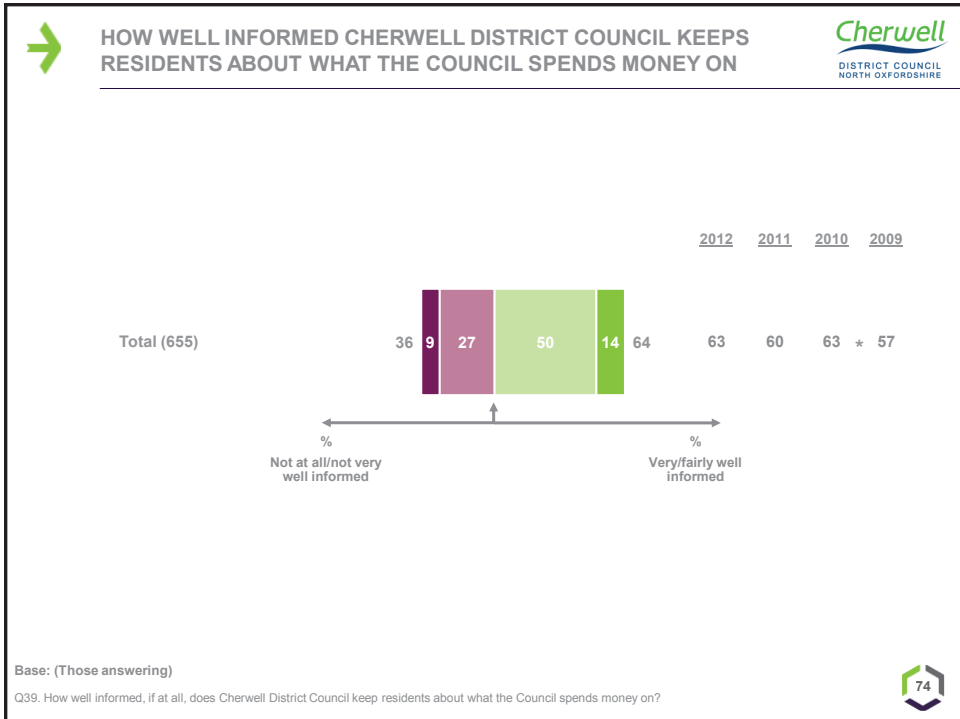
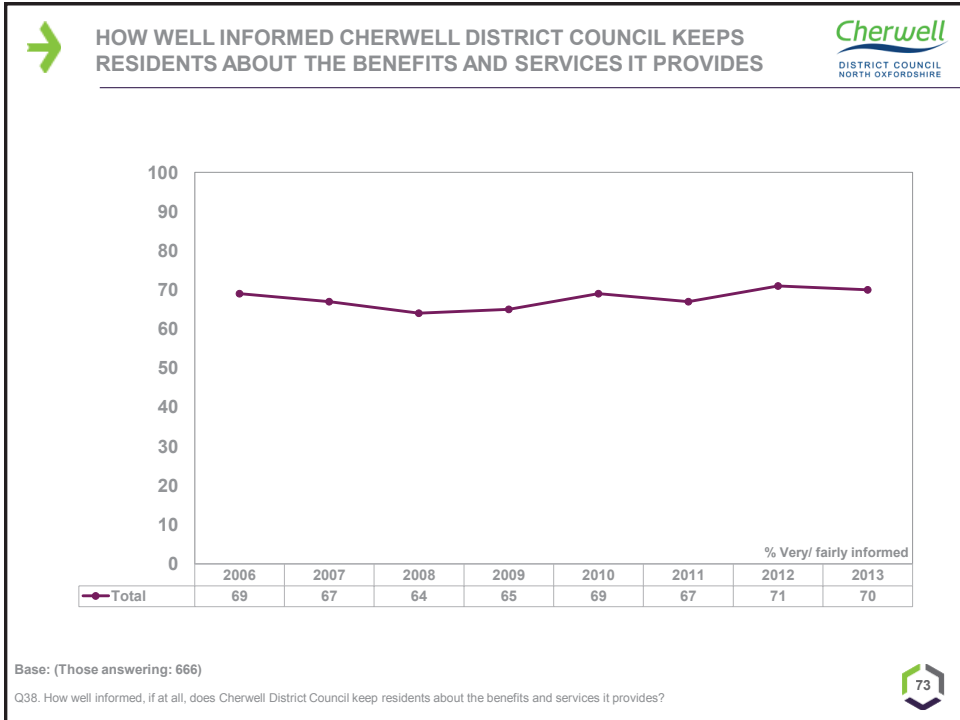


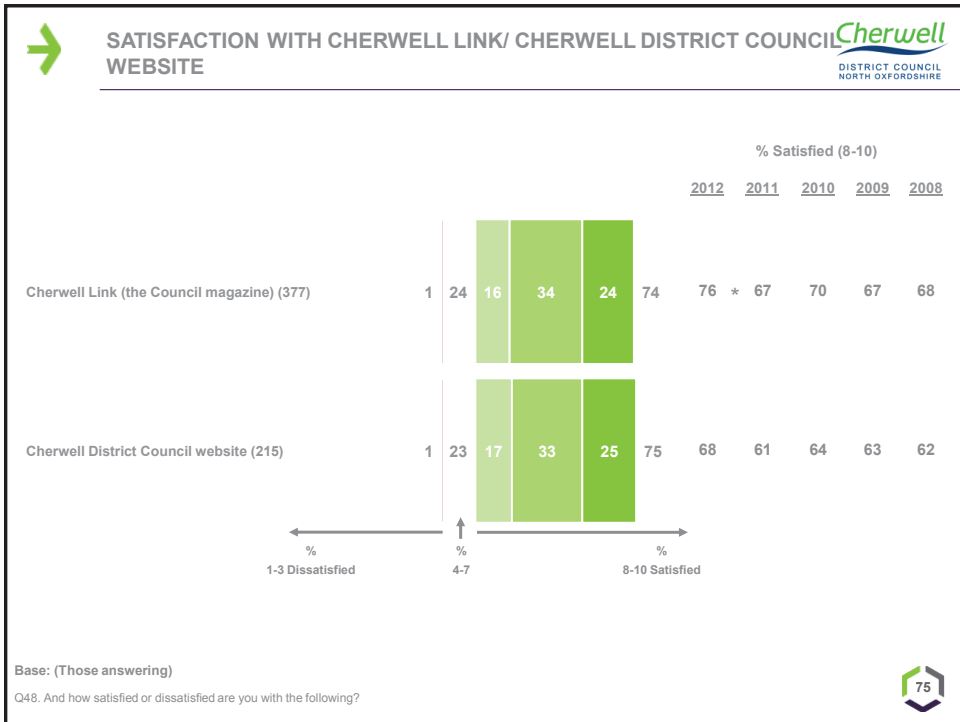
79% have actually used Cherwell Link and 52% the Council website

Base: (Those answering: 722)

Q46. From which, if any, of the following do you obtain most of your information about Cherwell District Council?








# 11. Contacting the Council



innovation    intelligence    inspiration

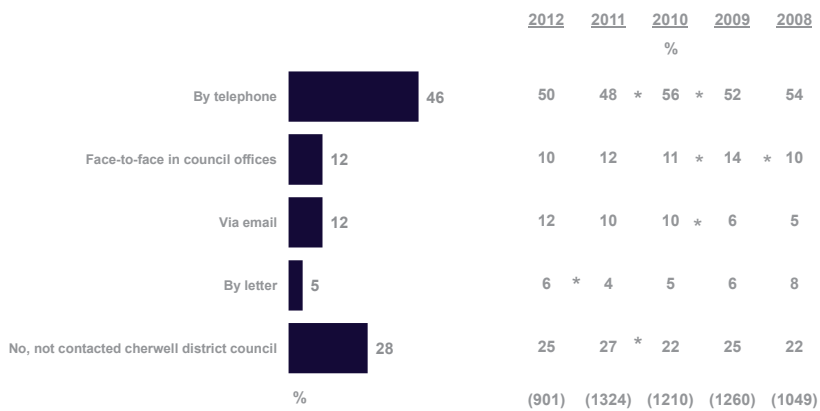
## → 11. Contacting the Council

### Satisfaction with Contact

- Around a quarter of respondents said they had not ever had any contact with the Council.
- Almost a half last contacted by phone, 12% went to the Council's offices and 12% via email. Only 5% wrote a letter.
- There is a significant increase in satisfaction with:
  - Being able to speak to the right person (74% satisfied in 2013, 65% in 2012)
  - Speed of response (68% satisfied in 2013, 62% in 2012)
- Staff also received significantly improved ratings in two areas:
  - Using plain English/ not speaking in Jargon (86% satisfied in 2013, 81% in 2012)
  - Making people feel respected/ listened to (81% satisfied in 2012, 75% in 2012)



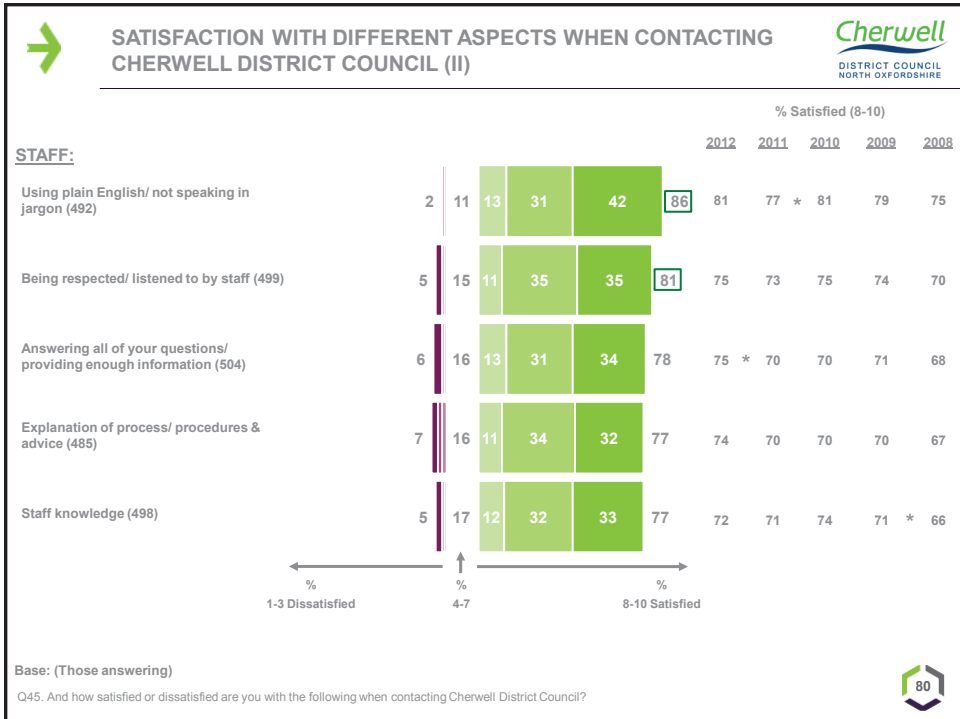
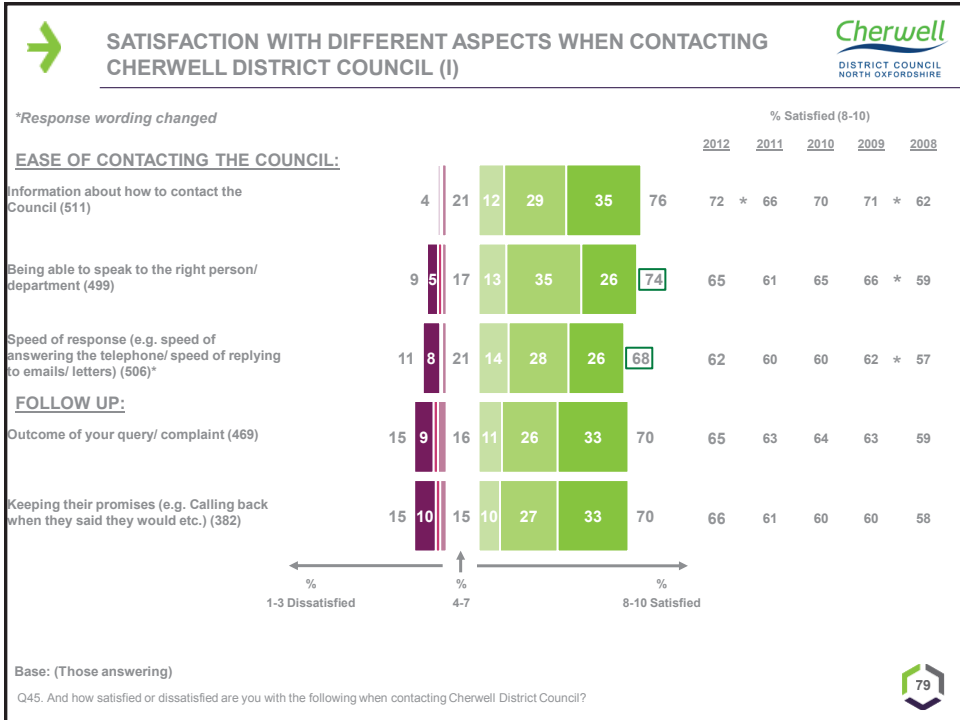
## → METHOD OF CONTACTING THE COUNCIL



Base: (All respondents: 722)

Q44. Have you ever contacted Cherwell District Council? If so, how did you last contact the Council?





## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

4 November 2013

#### Award Of Liquid Fuel Contract

### Report of Head of Finance and Procurement

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To consider the award of contracts to supply diesel to Cherwell District Council.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the acceptance of the recommended tenders for the supply of diesel.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Cherwell District Council has an annual requirement for approximately 370,000 litres of diesel that is delivered to its storage tanks at Highfield and Thorpe Lane Depots. At current market prices this requirement has a two year value in the region of £816,000. The size of the contract award exceeds delegated authority arrangements and hence requires an Executive decision.

#### 3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 To secure the lowest cost of supply Cherwell District Council purchases diesel in bulk for deliveries to its storage tanks. This results in a lower cost per unit than would be obtained from garage forecourts.
- 3.2 The cost of diesel is made up of three elements: 1. cost of the product (this is tracked by The Platts Index) Platts is a global provider of energy, petrochemicals, metals and agriculture information, and a source of benchmark price assessments for those commodity markets since 1909 2. Duty 3. Delivery and profit.
- 3.3 As the Council cannot influence either element 1 (set by international markets) or 2 (set by Central Government) tenders are evaluated on element 3.

- 3.4 To minimise the cost of running a procurement exercise and to drive down the delivery & profit element of the fuel cost Cherwell District Council cooperated with Coventry City Council to run a further competition. This used the national 'Liquid Fuel framework contract' established by the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) on behalf of the PRO5 group (a public sector buying consortium).
- 3.5 Coventry grouped requirements by County and tendered these requirements with all the eligible suppliers on the Framework. For Oxfordshire this meant that Cherwell District Council's requirement was grouped with that of Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue service, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council to give a total requirement in excess of 1.8 million litres a year.
- 3.6 Coventry's analysis of the tenders received was checked by the joint Procurement Team and GB Oils were found to have submitted the most advantageous tender for the supply of red diesel and Harvest for white diesel. Harvest is the current supplier to Cherwell District Council and they have performed well. GB Oils have been a supplier to South Northamptonshire Council for the past two years and have also performed well. The marginally better terms offered by Harvest combined with slightly less advantageous terms for red diesel should result in a saving of approximately £1,400 a year. Hence this award slightly reduces Cherwell District Council's costs.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 Following a 'best practice' procurement exercise GB Oils and Harvest have submitted the lowest cost tenders for the supply of Diesel to Cherwell District Council for the next two years and the Executive is recommended to authorise the award.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Cllr Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 6.1 No reasonable alternatives.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 These are contained in the report.

Comments checked by:

Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement, 0300 0030106  
tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk



## Legal Implications

- 7.2 The procurement has been undertaken in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 0030107,  
kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## 8.0 Decision Information

**Key Decision (Cabinet/Executive reports only) or delete if not Cabinet / Executive report**

**Financial Threshold Met: Yes**

**Community Impact Threshold Met: No**

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

An accessible, value for money Council

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead member for financial management.

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement
Contact Information	0300 0030106 tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank