

# Public Document Pack



**Committee:** Executive

**Date:** Monday 5 October 2015

**Time:** 6.30 pm

**Venue** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

## Membership

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)  
Councillor Ken Atack  
Councillor John Donaldson  
Councillor Tony Ilott  
Councillor D M Pickford

Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Norman Bolster  
Councillor Michael Gibbard  
Councillor Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Nicholas Turner

## 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 - 20)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2015.

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

7. **Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2015** (Pages 21 - 138) **6.35pm**

Report of Head of Transformation

**Purpose of report**

To advise the Executive of the results of the 2015 annual customer satisfaction survey which illustrate a 79% level of overall satisfaction with the Council, and 55% satisfaction in relation to how the Council represents value for money; the highest levels of satisfaction since the survey began in 2006.

The report also identifies areas to be considered for further improvement or investment within the District as part of the annual business planning and budget setting process for 2016/17.

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note that overall satisfaction with the Council and perception of how the Council represents value for money was rated at 79% and 55% respectively amongst survey respondents, both of which represent the highest levels of satisfaction since the survey began in 2006.
- 1.2 To agree to consider the areas identified as being of most importance to survey respondents, and those which may be identified for improvement or investment as part of the business planning and budget setting process for 2016/17 based on survey respondent feedback.
- 1.3 To express thanks to the survey respondents.

8. **Air Quality Management Area in Bicester** (Pages 139 - 144) **6.45pm**

Report of Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager

**Purpose of report**

To declare an Air Quality Management Area in Bicester

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To declare an Air Quality Management Area including Kings End, Queens Avenue and Field Street, Bicester.

**9. Recycling Strategy (Pages 145 - 154)**

**6.50pm**

Report of Head of Environmental Services

**Purpose of report**

To consider the future recycling strategy options which could be adopted to deal with the current environment of volatile commodity prices and potential changes to services delivered by Oxfordshire County Council.

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To support the exploration of the possibility of more local transfer stations and/or sorting facilities for future dry recycling contracts.
- 1.2 To consider the principle of a new depot in Bicester with possible local transfer facilities and/or Household Waste Recycling facilities and to request a report back on this option at an appropriate future meeting.
- 1.3 To continue a dialogue with Oxfordshire County Council regarding the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
- 1.4 To support the promotion of the current recycling scheme to bring both environmental improvements and financial benefits by increasing recycling rates towards 60%.

**10. Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy (Pages 155 - 170)**

**7.00pm**

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

**Purpose of report**

This report seeks the Executive's endorsement and support for the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy as the Council's commitment to sustainable transport in the town recognising its role in accommodating growth and integrating new and existing neighbourhoods.

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider and note the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- 1.2 To endorse the Strategy's vision and principles.

- 1.3 To support the Strategy as the basis of further work to inform Part 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan, the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan and other documents.
- 1.4 To note the next steps required to develop an action plan to deliver priorities in the short, medium and long term as schemes and funding opportunities are progressed.

**11. Adoption ('Making') of Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 171 - 216) 7.10pm**

Report of the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

**Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to seek a recommendation to Full Council to 'make', i.e. to adopt, the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan (HNNP) following the holding of a successful referendum in Hook Norton Parish on 3 September 2015. There was a majority vote in favour of adopting the neighbourhood plan so that it becomes part of the statutory development plan for Cherwell District Council under the provisions of Section 38A (4) and (6) the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

**Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the referendum result of the 3 September 2015 where 97% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan which is above the required 50%.
- 1.2 To recommend to Full Council to resolve that Cherwell District Council as local planning authority 'make' the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan (appendix 3 to this report) part of the statutory development plan for the District.
- 1.3 To recommend to Full Council to resolve to approve the issuing and publication of a decision statement, under regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, that Cherwell District Council has resolved to make the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 To recommend to Full Council to resolve to delegate to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy the correction of any spelling, grammatical or typographical errors, and the undertaking of any minor presentational improvements, prior to the Plan being adopted and published by Council.

**12. Budget Strategy 2015 to 2016 and Beyond (Pages 217 - 230) 7.15pm**

Report of Head of Finance and Procurement

**Purpose of report**

To set out the Budget Process for 2016/17, approve the 2016/17 Budget Strategy and agree the budget guidelines for issue to service managers.

To present the most recent Medium Term Revenue Plan (MTRP).

To consider the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17.

### **Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the updated MTRP for the Council's revenue budget for 2016/17 to 2020-21.
- 1.2 Endorse the overall 2016/17 budget strategy and service and financial planning process set out in the report.
- 1.3 Consider and agree the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2016/17 (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 1.4 Agree to consult on the retention of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2016/17 and delegate authority to the Director of Resources in consultation with the lead member for Financial Management to make the final decision on the scheme.

### **13. Business Rates Pooling Decisions 2016-2017 (Pages 231 - 234) 7.20pm**

Report of Director of Resources

#### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval in principle for the Council to participate in a business rates pool for 2016-2017.

#### **Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the principle to join a business rates pool for participating authorities in Oxfordshire, noting the risks and benefits outlined in the report.
- 1.2 To approve 'in principle' the Council's participation in a pool for the 2016-2017 financial year.
- 1.3 To grant delegated authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to conclude necessary due diligence and confirm the Council's final intention on whether or not to participate in a Oxfordshire business rates pool (however constituted) for 2016-2017 by 31 October 2015.

### **14. Expression of Interest for Devolution to Oxfordshire (Pages 235 - 240) 7.25pm**

Report of Chief Executive

## **Purpose of report**

To advise Members of the recent proposal which set out the areas for devolution that Oxfordshire authorities are interested in exploring further with central government.

## **Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the report.

## **15. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following report contains exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

- 1 – Information relating to any individual
- 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

Members are reminded that whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider it in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

No representations have been received from the public requesting that this item be considered in public.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

## **16. Expression of Interest for Devolution to Oxfordshire - Exempt Appendix** (Pages 241 - 266)

**7.25pm**

17. **Proposal for a Joint Transport Resource with South Northamptonshire Council** (Pages 267 - 308) **7.30pm**  
Exempt Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy
18. **Local Housing Company** (Pages 309 - 388) **7.35pm**  
Exempt Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing
19. **Build Programme - Site Negotiations and Acquisitions** **7.45pm**  
(Pages 389 - 398)  
Exempt Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing
- (Please note that the exempt appendix to this report is the same as exempt appendix 2 to exempt agenda item 18 and has therefore not been attached separately to this report)

**(Meeting scheduled to close at 7.55pm )**

## **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, 01295 221589

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

Published on Friday 25 September 2015



# Agenda Item 5

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 7 September 2015 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 Housing  
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning  
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection  
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Futures  
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present: Councillor Mark Cherry, representing the Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Change Management, Joint Working and IT  
Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources  
Karen Curtin, Commercial Director (Bicester)  
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment  
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer  
Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement  
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation, for agenda item 6  
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, for agenda item 10  
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services, for agenda items 17 and 19  
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

## 23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

25 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

26 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 **Quarter 1 2015/16 Performance Report**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which presented the Council's performance for the period 01 April – 30 June 2015 (quarter one), as measured through the performance management framework.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the following achievements be noted: Neighbourhoods blitzes; Processing of Housing Benefit (HB) Claims; Continue to support skills development; Contribute to the creation and safeguarding of jobs; Processing of planning applications; Car parking revenue; and, Council Tax / NNDR Collections.
- (2) That the following performance related matters be identified for review or consideration in future reports: Establish new management arrangements for Stratfield Break Sports Group on behalf of Kidlington Parish Council; Fly Tips Recorded; Fly Tip Enforcement Actions; ASB/Nuisance Cases responded to and resolved; Carbon management plan; and, 3-way Joint Working with SNC and SDC : Transformation.
- (3) That the lack of feedback on performance issues from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1 September 2015 provided directly to The Leader be noted.

**Reasons**

In this report we show that the Council has again commenced the new performance year well, building on the high performance of 2014/15 and continuing the positive impact upon the 4 strategic priorities for our District that we set out to achieve. There are a small number of areas which the Council needs to keep under review to ensure targets are met and actions delivered. These and the rest of the business plan will be closely monitored over the next quarter and reported through the performance management framework.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items and/or add to the work Programme for review and/or refer to Overview and Scrutiny

## 28 **Quarter 1 2015-16 - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital position as at the end of the first three months of the financial year 2015-16 and projections for the full 2015/16 period.

### **Resolved**

(1) That the projected revenue and capital position at June 2015 be noted.

### **Reasons**

In line with good practice budget monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis within the Council. The revenue and capital position is reported monthly to the Joint Management Team and formally to the Budget Planning Committee on a quarterly basis.

The revenue and capital expenditure in Q1 has been subject to a detailed review by Officers and reported monthly to management as part of the corporate dashboard.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2015-16 Financial Targets for Revenue and Capital. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

## 29 **Annual Review and Report of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme**

The Director of Community and Environment submitted a report to consider the activity and achievements of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme during 2014/15 and to consider a different approach to managing the partnership activity and its areas of focus from this year.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Banbury Futures reported that the programme had continued to meet its objectives and address the local challenges during 2014/15 and seen a greater push on engagement with the voluntary and community sector in Banbury with a range of support initiatives.

The lessons that had been learned during the past six years of the Programme could be exported to other areas in the district if there were similar issues.

The Lead Member for Banbury Futures explained that the recently obtained 2011 census information had identified changes in the make-up of the ward population which needed to be considered in the context that the whole public sector was still under fiscal pressure with on-going austerity measures and welfare reform. The meeting was advised of the change in approach to partnership activity, whereby alongside the six themes, there would be focus on specific issues and best use of existing resources made. The priorities for 2015/16 were based on partnership activity concentrating on child poverty, health inequalities, employability and supporting the most vulnerable.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme progress made in 2014/15 and the areas requiring continuous improvement be noted.
- (2) That the change in approach to partnership activity be supported.
- (3) That the new priorities from 2015/16 be supported.
- (4) That a further detailed report on the changes to the County Council's Children's Early Intervention Services to enable the Council to contribute to the formal consultation process be received.

### **Reasons**

The Brighter Futures partnership has for several years continued to work effectively in focussing the best use of resources on those most in need. The work of the six themes is proving valuable but continuous improvement remains to be achieved as there are still specific areas of concern which are well below comparative averages.

The context in which the partnership is operating is changing in relation to population, funding and organisational change. Organisational and service change in a partnership context is particularly challenging. This combined with future significant budget and service cuts means that it is even more important for the Council to lead and concentrate partnership resources to best effect.

The Programme to date has been progressed based on a number of theme lead meetings for coordination purposes and occasional wider Steering Group meetings to consider the overall Programme and its direction. This has required support from CDC to administer and is dependent on the availability of key representatives in different organisations being able to attend. This has proven to be challenging on occasions due to the additional pressures caused by regular changes in partnership organisations.

The recently obtained 2011 census information has identified changes in the make-up of the ward population in relation to a big increase in private rented households, an increase in single adults, lone parents and HMOs, increasing ethnic diversity, and specific issues such as a lack of qualifications of lone

parents. Of particular concern is the comparatively high level of child poverty in our wards.

It is important to periodically review the Programme and in light of the scale and nature of the challenges described above, now is an appropriate time. When doing so, there is a need to take account of current strengths and to consider what other partnership opportunities there are along with specific issues which are relevant to the people of the wards being supported. This is why the proposed wider partnership activity concentrating on child poverty, health inequalities, employability and supporting the most vulnerable are all inter related, relevant to the Brighter Future's Programme's objectives and capture other partnership opportunities which are in place.

### **Alternative options**

Given the very wide ranging nature of the Brighter Futures Programme, there can be many different options and permutations of key priorities, areas of focus and mechanisms to progress. Therefore, no specific alternative options are identified.

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### **Empty Homes Premium**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report to seek approval to recommend to Council that, from 1 April 2016, an Empty Homes Premium of 50% be applied for properties that have remained empty for over two years.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That Full Council be recommended to agree that an Empty Homes Premium of 50% be introduced from 1 April 2016 for properties that have been empty for over two years.

### **Reasons**

From 1 April 2013, Local Authorities have been able to charge a premium on a class of property which has been unoccupied and unfurnished for a period of two years or more. The premium can be up to 50% on the property.

The decision to make a determination is made under Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and is made at the discretion of the Council. The Government has provided guidance as to which properties should be charged the premium but ultimately, the decision is one for members to make.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: To decide not to make a recommendation to Council on introducing an Empty Homes Premium of 50%.

## **Proposal for a Joint Economic Growth Service with South Northamptonshire Council**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which presented the final business case, following consultation, for a Joint Economic Growth Service across Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Councils (SNC).

The report recommended the formation of a two way Joint Economic Growth Service and in doing so sought the Executive's agreement for the non-staffing elements of the business case. The proposal was part of the wider transformation programme across the two Councils.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the exempt final business case and the consultation responses in relation to non-staffing matters be considered and noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the exempt business case would be considered by the Joint Commissioning Committee with regard to staffing matters on 1 October 2015 and this would include consultation responses from affected staff and trade union representatives.
- (3) That the implementation of the proposed final business case to share a joint Economic Growth Service between CDC and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) be approved, subject to similar consideration and approval by SNC Cabinet and approval of the staffing implications by the Joint Commissioning Committee.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any non-significant amendment that may be required to the business case following the decision by SNC Cabinet and/or the Joint Commissioning Committee.

### **Reasons**

The business case represents a major milestone in the revised transformation programme across CDC and SNC. The proposed joint team would provide an improved and strengthened service to support economic growth in each district by existing businesses and those looking to invest by working together, sharing expertise and best practice and taking advantage of economies of scale and providing resilience.

### **Alternative options**

#### Option 1: Retain the status quo

Retaining the status quo is an option should Members wish to do so as each team has demonstrated its effectiveness in delivering economic growth and each Council has examples of best practice. However, retaining the status quo would limit the opportunities available to progress the work carried out by Deyton Bell and the recommendations from the LGA report, including

collaboration and moving towards an 'open for business' approach. The 'do-nothing' option is not recommended.

Option 2: Two-way shared service with a single Economic Growth Manager

An alternative two way shared service structure has been considered. This would see an additional post 'Economic Growth Manager' reporting directly to the Head of Service and having line management responsibility over the two team leaders.

This option has been discounted as the preferred option of two Lead Officers is an affordable model that provides geographic focus for the partners and reflects the different priorities and economies of each district. Adding an additional service manager would represent a cost increase on the proposed structure. This option could be re-visited in the future should additional partners join the structure or significant changes occur to the organisational structure of the Councils.

Option 3: Three-way collaboration and shared service with Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

A three-way collaboration with SDC is certainly a realistic option and has been given serious consideration. However, while it remains possible to progress with certain economic collaboration activities with SDC and this should be encouraged where it benefits all parties, due to the SDC Council decision in December no further formal shared service projects are being considered across the three Councils at this time.

Option 4: Three-way collaboration and shared service with other partners.

A three-way collaboration with other partners is certainly an option to consider in the future, as there are clear benefits to wider economic growth collaboration.

However, other than SDC (considered above) there are no other existing relationships at a sufficient stage to consider as part of a three-way shared service at this point. The process of developing such a relationship is likely to be lengthy and while this option should be considered again in the future, it should not be pursued at this time to the detriment of other options.

The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward. The proposal is to establish a Joint Economic Growth service between CDC and SNC and to begin a programme of collaboration and alignment including the sharing of best practice, aligning strategies and developing common projects.

**Asset Management Strategy Action Plan Update**

The Commercial Director (Bicester) and Head of Housing and Regeneration submitted a report to update the Executive on the progress of the priority actions arising from the Asset Management Strategy Review as reported in December 2014 and as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

**Resolved**

- (1) That updates on the priority actions arising from the Asset Management Plan (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.
- (2) That the allocation of up to £120k from earmarked reserves, which will allow the progression of the key activities which focus on the priority actions arising from the Asset Management Strategy Review (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That the use of £80k of the approved The Hill Youth and Community Centre capital budget to progress the Hill project to the next stage as be approved.
- (4) That it be noted that a comprehensive project plan was being monitored through the Accommodation Asset Strategy Board to ensure the vision set out in the 2014–2019 Asset Review and Strategy (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) would be delivered by 2019 and that progress against this action plan would be presented to the Executive in March 2016.

### **Reasons**

It is important that adequate resource and a number of specialist reviews are available during this financial year in order to inform the work programme, capital programme and current strategic development projects. It has been estimated that the resources required in 2015/16 can be met from windfall income or earmarked capital receipts subject to Executive approval.

### **Alternative options**

There is an option not to provide funding during 2015/16 and submit bids for the 2016/17 budget process. This is not recommended as a number of priority actions require resources now as they impact on other Council projects and priorities.

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### **Graven Hill Update**

The Director of Resources and Commercial Director (Bicester) submitted a report to update members on the work being undertaken by the Graven Hill Development Company in delivering the large scale self build project and to present the 2015/16 business plan and financial forecast as per the Council's governance and financing requirements for this investment.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the significant progress being carried out by the Graven Hill Development Company be noted.
- (2) That the 2015/16 Business Plan and objectives be approved.
- (3) That the updated Financial Forecast (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved and officers asked to reflect



the changes from the baseline model into Council financial forecasts and funding plans.

- (4) That, subject to resolution (6) below, the membership of the Partnering Board be approved as follows: 5 Elected Members - Leader of the Council, Lead Member for Financial Management, Lead Member for Housing, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy and the Leader of the Opposition group and the Council's S 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.
- (5) That it be noted that the Partnership Board has responsibility for safeguarding the Council's equity investment and lending to the Company by undertaking more detailed monitoring of the Business Plan and providing advice and recommendations to Executive.
- (6) That the addition of a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the membership of the Partnering Board be approved and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to appoint a member to the Board at its next meeting.

### **Reasons**

As at 24 August 2015 (latest Board Meeting) the work programme for Graven Hill is on track in terms of current programme, budget and risk management.

This is a significant investment for the Council and one that is innovative and delivers many positive benefits to the District. It is therefore imperative that the strong governance that has been put place continues to actively manage the work programme, budgets, risks and mitigations.

The Partnering Board has as per the governance arrangements actively managed and monitored the delivery of the initial work programme and financial appraisal of the development company. The vision document and updated financial appraisal has been reviewed in detail and is presented to the Executive for ratification.

The Executive will receive an update in Q4 on progress against the targets.

### **Alternative options**

There is an option to ask for a further review of the vision document and financial forecast.

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### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

#### **Resolved**

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the

circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

35 **Proposal for a Joint Economic Growth Service with South Northamptonshire Council - Exempt Appendix**

**Resolved**

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

36 **Asset Management Plan 2015/16 - Exempt Appendices**

**Resolved**

- (1) That the exempt appendices be noted.

37 **Graven Hill Update - Exempt Appendix 2**

**Resolved**

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

38 **Dry Recycling Contract**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report relating to the dry recycling contract.

**Resolved**

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.  
(2) As set out in the exempt minutes.

**Reasons**

As set out in the exempt minutes.

**Alternative options**

Option 1: Approve the recommendations as set out.

Option 2: Reject the recommendations and accept the proposed price reduction.

Option 3: Ask officers to develop alternative options.

39 **Revenues and Benefits Service Options**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted an exempt report relating to Revenues and Benefits Service options.

**Resolved**

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.

**Reasons**

As set out in the exempt minutes.

**Alternative options**

As set out in the exempt minutes.

40 **Highway Verge Grass Cutting**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report to consider the highway verge grass cutting difficulties in 2015 and alternative service delivery options for 2016.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the action taken to address in part the 2015 highway verge difficulties in Cherwell's three urban parishes be noted and supported.
- (2) That Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) be requested to reinstate a highway verge grass cutting agency agreement for 2016 with this Council for Bicester and Kidlington/Gosford & Water Eaton for five years.
- (3) That Cherwell District Council supports Banbury Town Council to achieve the same for Banbury.
- (4) That Cherwell District Council offers to share the additional costs net of any OCC funding on a 50:50 basis with the urban parishes to achieve a reinstatement of the 2014 highway verge grass cutting standards.
- (5) That the additional cost to Cherwell District Council of the 2015 action be included in the mid-year budget review process and the longer term proposal be considered as a growth item in the 2016/17 draft Revenue Budget process.

**Reasons**

The inadequacy of the highway verge grass cutting standards in 2015 in Cherwell's three urban parishes and the widespread adverse public response prompted the need for immediate action given OCC's stance of only

undertaking one grass cut. The town councils of Banbury and Bicester agreed a 2015 response through the use of Cherwell's landscape management contractor for additional two cuts which mitigated in part the difficulties caused.

However, there is a need to consider putting in place alternative longer term, cost efficient arrangements which avoid a repetition of the 2015 difficulties. The options considered are to repeat the approach in 2015 with supplementary grass cuts funded jointly with the urban parishes or to reinstate the OCC agency agreement in the most cost efficient and best value way.

The recommended approach for the future is to reinstate the agency agreement for grass cutting on the highway verges of the three urban areas (albeit there will be two agreements to accommodate a more cost efficient Banbury solution) and through this plus the reduced funding from OCC, to reinstate the grass cutting standard of 2014 with the additional cost shared on a 50:50 basis between this Council and the urban parishes.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: to repeat the supplementary cuts arrangement in 2015. This approach has not been well received due to the late start by OCC, the grass height between cuts and the subsequent significant arisings remaining and has been confusing for the public because of no clarity regarding about who is responsible. It also carries the risk that OCC can unilaterally change its cutting schedule with little time for this Council to respond through its own contractor.

Option 2: to do nothing and allow OCC to continue with two cuts of urban area highway verges. This will result in a repeat of the significant adverse public reaction experienced in 2015.

## **41 New Woodgreen Leisure Centre Management Contract and Facility Improvements**

The Director of Community and Environment submitted an exempt report which updated the Executive with the progress of this project, sought consideration of specific aspects to enable the project to move forward, the outcome of the tender evaluation process and to agree the shortlist for final tender submissions.

The Executive commended officers for their hard work in ensuring that the timetable for the project had been met to date.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the evaluation process outcome and conclusion be noted.
- (2) That the evaluation conclusion to invite remaining bidders to submit final tenders as indicated in the report be supported.
- (3) That the request in the final tenders in relation to the loss of whole or part of the bowls hall not be supported.

- (4) That the analysis of the financial implications arising from this report for this stage in the process be noted.
- (5) That both mandatory variants of lifecycle annual maintenance and utility tariff risk be included in the request for final tenders.
- (6) That the retained, shared and transferred risk approach be supported.
- (7) That the progress of all other aspects of the project be noted.
- (8) That the approach taken with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to the incorporation of the Woodgreen Library be supported.
- (9) That the timeline and key decision dates of the project plan be noted.
- (10) That Full Council be recommended to approve a supplementary capital estimate of up to £130,000 in order to undertake the priority building works prior to new contract commencement.

**Reasons**

As set out in the restricted minutes.

**Alternative options**

As set out in the restricted minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 2, 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

## Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2015

### Report of Head of Transformation

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To advise the Executive of the results of the 2015 annual customer satisfaction survey which illustrate a 79% level of overall satisfaction with the Council, and 55% satisfaction in relation to how the Council represents value for money; the highest levels of satisfaction since the survey began in 2006.

The report also identifies areas to be considered for further improvement or investment within the District as part of the annual business planning and budget setting process for 2016/17.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note that overall satisfaction with the Council and perception of how the Council represents value for money was rated at 79% and 55% respectively amongst survey respondents, both of which represent the highest levels of satisfaction since the survey began in 2006.
- 1.2 To agree to consider the areas identified as being of most importance to survey respondents, and those which may be identified for improvement or investment as part of the business planning and budget setting process for 2016/17 based on survey respondent feedback.
- 1.3 To express thanks to the survey respondents.

#### 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. It emphasises the importance that the Council places upon stakeholder engagement and enables us to adopt a well-informed and transparent approach to the way in

which we shape the services that we are responsible for delivering across our District.

- 2.2 This report provides a summary of the results of the customer satisfaction survey undertaken in May/June/July 2015. 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 included 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) were not included within the survey questionnaire, although respondents were able to make any additional comments about Council services in the open questions that were included.
- 2.4 The Council has been undertaking customer satisfaction surveys since 2006. The data provides a statistically valid and robust trend analysis to help inform decision making, prioritisation and customer service development as part of the annual business planning and budget setting process. This in turn enables the Council to ensure that it continues to serve the needs of the District based on what our constituents as key stakeholders, tell us.
- 2.5 A full summary of the survey results is attached as Appendix 1.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 The report details overall satisfaction with the Council and its services, the key drivers of satisfaction, how the Council is perceived to represent value for money, the areas that the survey respondents identified as being of most importance to them and the areas of least satisfaction. Each section is addressed below:

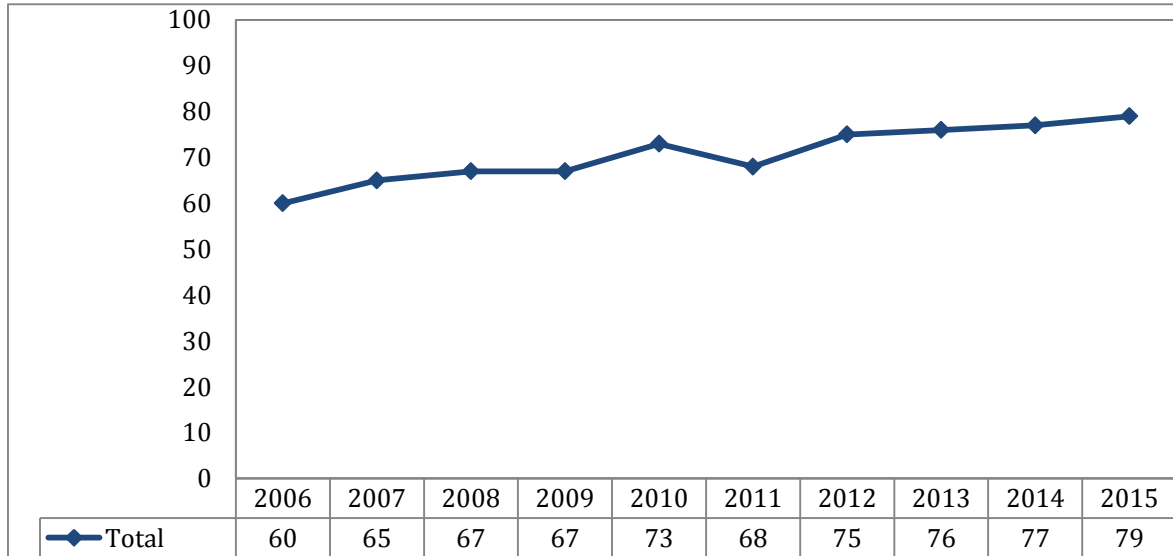
#### **Overall satisfaction with the Council**

A three-year trend of growing overall satisfaction with Cherwell District Council has continued into a fourth year as scores have reached 79% in 2015, as illustrated in chart 1 below.

The survey also confirms that the District, as a place to live, is at its highest level of satisfaction to date, rising from 81% to 88%. Trust that the Council will do what is best for residents has also increased.

This movement is a likely reflection of some all-time best satisfaction ratings for the way parks and open spaces are looked after (79%), local car parking facilities (66%) and leisure activities (64%).

Chart 1: the growing trend of overall satisfaction with Cherwell District Council



Key areas in the 2015 survey which have helped this trend are:

- Female participants are more satisfied overall than at any previous point in the survey's history at 77% each
- Rural inhabitants registered 81% overall satisfaction in 2015, an all-time survey high among this group
- Further all-time high overall satisfaction scores are recorded among residents of Kidlington (88%) and from households with 2 adults, no children (81%)

Households with children have largely consolidated an improvement on the 2014 results (rising to 78% at that time) with 77% in 2015. An improvement recorded among urban dwellers in 2014 has also largely been maintained in 2015 with 78%.

Although constituting smaller proportions of the sample overall, those not in employment and those aged 35 or under also report their highest satisfaction levels so far in the survey, awarding 78% and 83% respectively for this measure.

### Key drivers of satisfaction

Particular environmental aspects in terms of community cleanliness and upkeep, along with car parking lead the key drivers of overall satisfaction indexes in 2015.

#### Car parking

Local car parking facilities top the index for key services driving satisfaction in 2015, a difficult measure to influence quickly due to numerous constraints including land acquirement, planning implications/ consultations etc. but it is positive to see that a marginal increase in satisfaction has been recorded to 66% for this measure. It is however interesting to observe at section 3.7 that there is also a concern about paying for parking by mobile phone and the cost associated with parking.

#### Street cleaning

Street cleaning services follows closely behind parking as a driver of satisfaction so it is encouraging to see that this aspect of Council responsibility is given 69% in 2015 which represents the best score for this measure to date.

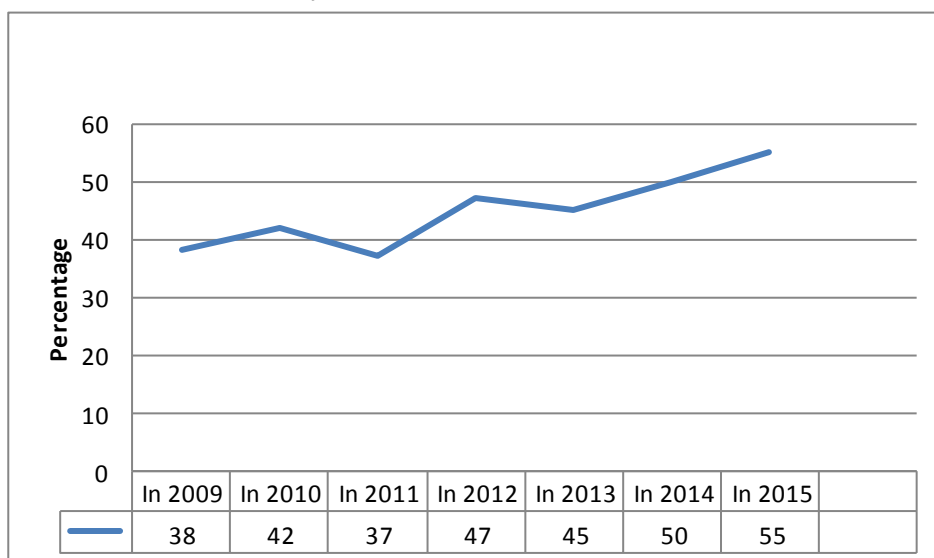
Examination of drivers according to specific aspects of services reinforces the priority currently placed upon the upkeep of environments with ‘frequency with which streets are being cleaned’ topping the index. ‘How town centres look and feel’ also enters the top three drivers.

Driver’s analysis additionally shows that positive gains could be made by enhancing/ promoting leisure facilities/ activities.

### Value for Money

Positive perceptions of the value for money offered by Cherwell District Council reach 55% in 2015, its highest to-date.

Chart 2: Value for money from 2009 - 2015



### Drivers of perception of value for money

#### Leisure activity

Access to and availability of leisure facilities/activities is seen as a visible commitment to residents beyond the Council’s other important, but perhaps more routine, services.

#### Security

A sense of safety and security when ‘walking alone’ in town centres also appears as a relatively important aspect driving perceptions of value for money. Commitments to keeping areas tidy and litter-free are likely to be feeding in here.

#### Hygiene services

Positive perceptions are driven by consistently high delivery of core hygiene duties which the Council is expected to undertake as a matter of course, such as waste collections.

### Rural services

The provision of Council services in rural areas moves into fourth place in the index. The overall satisfaction rating of 81% from those living in rural areas is evidence that Cherwell District Council activities are having a positive impact.

### Car parking facilities/pay & display

Local car parking facilities is also a factor driving perceptions of value for money.

Figure 3 illustrates out of a base of 100 the main drivers for the perceptions of value for money.

Figure 3: Key drivers of value for money perceptions



## 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 or investment is required.

Table 1 below summarises the satisfaction in the service areas included within the questionnaire and highlights percentage changes since last year.

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.

Table 1: Levels of satisfaction with specific services

	Change since 2014	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>+2%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>
Recycling centres	+2%	91	89	91	87	88	87	86	83
Household recycling collection service	-1%	87	88	83	80	82	83	78	75
Waste collection service	-2%	83	85	82	80	76	78	70	68
Food and garden waste collection	-2%	84	86	81	80	80	76	n/a	n/a
Street cleansing service	+2%	69	67	70	69	64	72	67	66
Local car parking facilities	+2%	66	64	64	63	49	63	64	63
Local parks and open spaces	+2%	79	77	75	77	72	74	73	70
Leisure facilities	-	68	68	69	76	74	71	68	63
Leisure activities	<b>+9%</b>	64	56	59	61	56	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local area as a place to live	<b>+7%</b>	88	81	80	86	78	n/a	n/a	n/a
Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime	-4%	50	54	48	47	42	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance	-1%	53	56	56	49	43	44	36	36

Recycling centres continue to represent the service that is valued most at 91%; again improving on last year's score.

It is encouraging that an increasing number of residents are noticing a wider range of leisure activities available to them, **64%** are currently satisfied with this; an increase of 9% on last year. The range of facilities available has achieved the highest score since recording began and is likely to positively impact perceptions of value for money of the District Council.

As referenced above, the increase in agreeing that Cherwell is a good place to live has risen by 7% to the highest ever (from recording since 2006) **to 88%**.

### 3.3 Communication and Information Provision

#### Official Council sources and the media

Residents obtaining most of their information about Cherwell District Council from official Council sources falls slightly since 2014. They are also now even less likely to obtain it from local media than they were in 2014.

There has been a decline in the proportions using local media and word of mouth:

- Local newspapers (0% vs 34% in 2013)
- Local radio (0% vs 13% in 2013)
- Local TV news (0% vs 11% in 2013)

#### Cherwell Link

Cherwell Link remains the most popular source of information about Cherwell District Council. About two-thirds (67%) of residents say that they obtain most of their information about Cherwell District Council using this source. This is a higher proportion than in 2009 (56%) and the second highest level recorded to-date.

#### Website

Similarly, the proportion using the Council website to obtain most of their information about the Council has fallen back to levels seen prior to a high in 2014 (25% currently vs 37% in 2014), however, it is worth noting that 54% of participants had actually used the Council website so it remains an important information source.

#### Social media

Social media is not something to be ignored, with **1 in 10** using Twitter/ Facebook to obtain most of their information about the Council.

### **3.4 Perceptions of the economy: The local economy and Council budget priorities**

In most areas, the climate surrounding national financing remains similar to that of 2014. It remains a cause of concern in the District with 80% saying they are fairly/ very concerned.

Despite these concerns, it is positive to note that 55% trust that Cherwell District Council will do what's right for residents; a significant improvement on the 42% of 2014.

### **3.5 Ranking of customer priorities 2015**

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

Whilst conjoint analysis results demonstrate the same top five key services to safeguard as in 2014, there has been some movement in the position of these five factors.

The provision of affordable housing was rated as the most important service to maintain in 2015 (having been rated 4th most important last year).

Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance drops from 3rd most important in 2014 to 5th in 2015 but there is now a clear 'gap' between this and the top four factors in terms of overall importance.

Figure 4 below highlights a 'top six' of key services which are perceived to be a priority by local residents in greater magnitude than other Council services.

- 1) Providing affordable housing (2014 4<sup>th</sup>)
- 2) Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service (2014 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- 3) Household waste collection (2014 1<sup>st</sup>)
- 4) Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime (2014 5<sup>th</sup>)
- 5) Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance (2014 3<sup>rd</sup>)
- 6) Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area (no change)

This indicates that all six priorities identified by survey respondents are reflected in the Council's four strategic priorities, key objectives and pledges for the current year. They should also be considered as part of the business planning process for the year ahead.

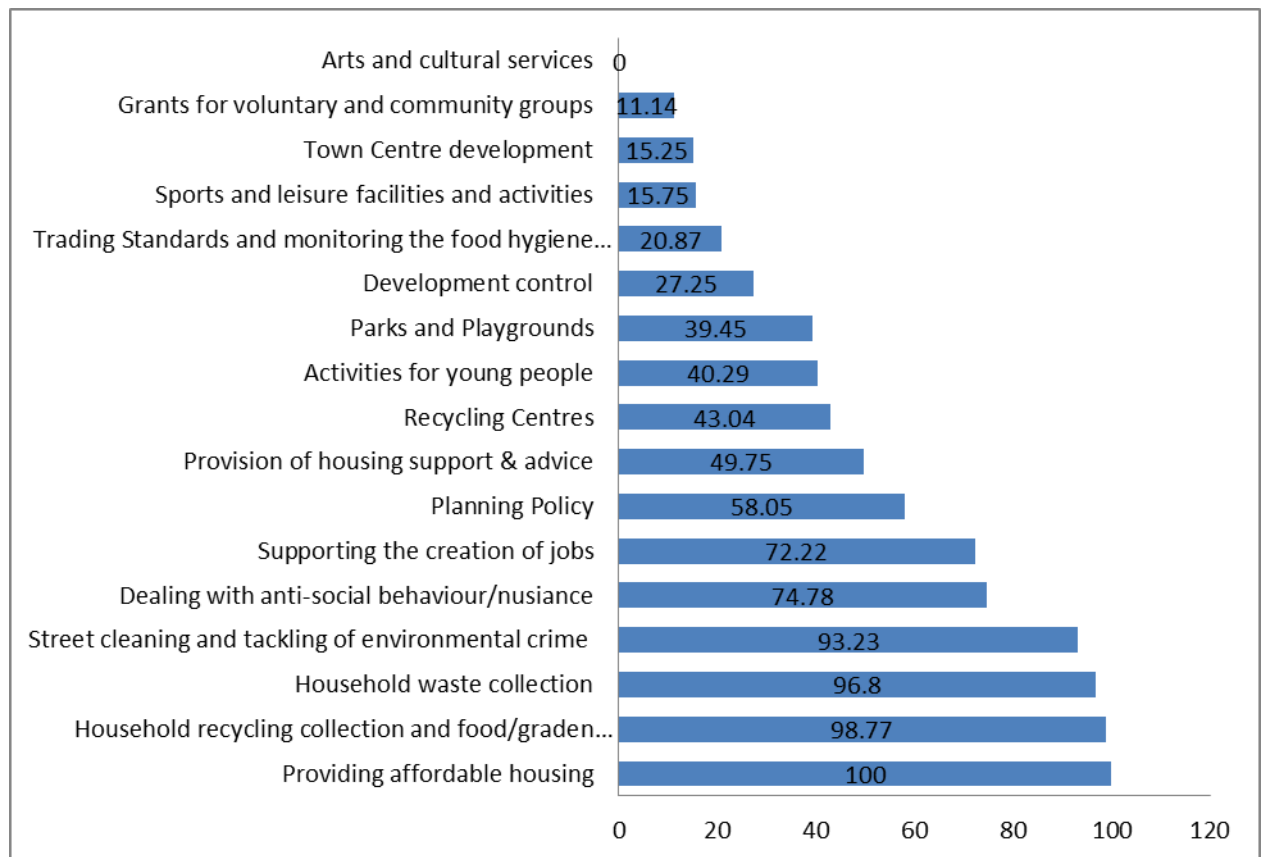
The Council's strategic priorities are:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity  
 Cherwell: Safe, Green, Clean  
 Cherwell: Thriving Communities  
 Cherwell: Sound Budgets and Customer Focused Council

Council pledges in the current year are attached as appendix 3.

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.

Figure 4: *It is important for Cherwell District Council to understand which services are most important to residents in the current economic climate. From the following pairs of Council Services, which would you prioritise for maintaining the current level of service provision?*



### 3.6 Areas of least satisfaction

Areas of least satisfaction appear to be focussed on those living in Banbury and Bicester with 74% apiece in 2015.

Although there is still room for improvement, these are factors by which residents can measure both visually and interactively a level to which the Council can be seen to be supporting the community.

Although higher proportions (around a third) answer questions surrounding the Council's approach to anti-social behaviour/ dealing with environmental crime with a neither/ nor response, positive answers over time show that perceptions can be



influenced. Although not by significant margins, these two measures see their first down-turns for a number of years.

### 3.7 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. Just 5% of respondents expressed that they are 'fairly dissatisfied' with the Council.

#### A. Affordable housing

Concerns persist about the availability of affordable housing and how a balance will be struck between rural preservation and housing development. This ranked 1<sup>st</sup> from 4<sup>th</sup> last year and highlights the concerns of residents.

The provision of 150 units of affordable homes in the District and supporting opportunities for self-build and developing self-build skills is one of the core Pledges of this Council in the current year and will help to address this priority of survey respondents.

#### B. Anti-social behaviour

The survey illustrates a small decrease in satisfaction (from 51% in 2014 to 44% in 2015) with the measures in place for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

A presence of authority, particularly at night, would help residents' feeling of security.

Working with the police and local licence holders to ensure that our town centres remain safe and vibrant is also one of the core Pledges of the Council in the current year. We will continue to work hard to address this with our partners, whilst also considering how we might continue to influence this priority going forward into 2016/17.

#### C. Car parking

There has been a decline in the numbers using car parks in Banbury & Kidlington. Bicester usage in the 2015 survey response is very similar to that recorded in 2014.

Paying by mobile phone and cost are still the main sources of dissatisfaction for car parking, with 1 in 5 respondents expressing dissatisfaction with payment via mobile devices in 2014 and this has increased to 24% in 2015.

#### D. Parks and recreational areas

The cleanliness/ upkeep of parks and recreational areas should be monitored along with the condition of some sports/ play areas to address the declines in ratings.

As one of the key deliverables associated with the strategic priority of Cherwell: Safe, Green, Clean, the Council has also pledged to improve local residents' satisfaction with street and environmental cleanliness, continuing our successful programme of neighbourhood litter blitzes in the current year.

#### E. Sports and leisure

Satisfaction overall with leisure facilities has yet to recover from the 7% decrease encountered in 2013, a rating of 69% given in 2015. Kidlington & Gosford Leisure

Centre with 67% satisfaction among those using it in 2015 remains a fairly substantial margin away from attaining the 80% + satisfaction levels regularly achieved up to 2012.

Providing high quality and accessible leisure opportunities is a key objective of the Council under the strategic priority of Cherwell: Thriving Communities, with a number of outcomes planned in the current year.

F. Street Cleaning

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.

The priority placed upon this service by survey respondents is reflected in the Council's strategic priority of Cherwell: Safe, Green, Clean and is also a specific pledge of the Council.

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

- 4.1 This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2015 customer satisfaction survey. It highlights an increasing trend of improvement across Council services, and how the Council is perceived to represent value for money as well as areas where continued focus is required.
- 4.2 The report also highlights customer priorities. These will be used to help inform budget setting, the development of the Council's Business Plan and Performance Pledges for 2016/17 and the Council's five 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**

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

Option 1: 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:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement, Tel 0300 003 0106,  
[paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:paul.sutton@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

**Financial Threshold Met: No**

**Community Impact Threshold Met: No**

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Sound Budgets and Customer Focussed Council

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood  
Leader of the Council

### Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	2015 customer survey results (summary)
2	2015 customer survey results (full)
3	2015/2016 Cherwell District Council performance pledges
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Tracie Darke: Consultation & Engagement Officer
Contact Information	Tel: 01295 221575 <a href="mailto:Tracie.Darke@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk">Tracie.Darke@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk</a>

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# Cherwell District Council

## Customer Satisfaction Survey 2015 Key Points

# Summary

**Overall satisfaction and perceptions of value for money continue to rise . Better perception of Council operatives/ initiatives attending to the local environment is helping, along with access to leisure facilities/ activities**

**The Cherwell District as a place to live is at its highest level to-date and trust that Cherwell District Council ‘will do what is best for residents’ has increased.**

**Measures for dealing with anti-social behaviour must be monitored after a small decrease in satisfaction overall**

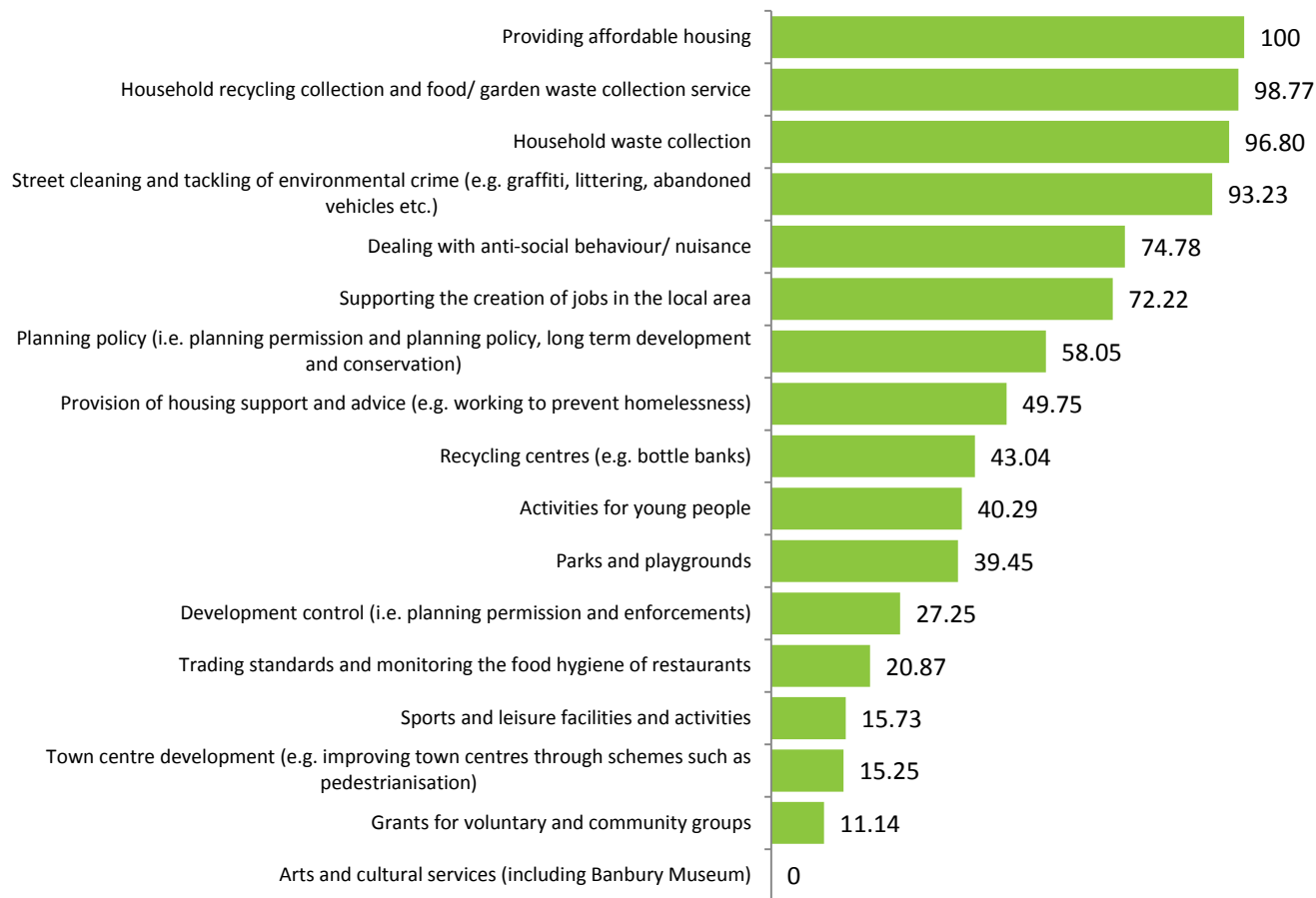
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- Residents have noticed improvements to the cleanliness of their local area (town/ parks etc.) which is helping drive positive perceptions of the Council.
  - Consistently high levels delivering the Council's core 'hygiene' services such as refuse/ recycling etc. is encouraging a level of trust among residents that they are receiving value for money.
  - The cleanliness/ upkeep of parks and recreational areas must be monitored and the condition of some sports/ play areas need to have declines in ratings addressed.

- Agreement that the police and local council were dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance had been increasing and reached 51% in 2014. However, 2015 sees this reduce to 44%. The District Council must ensure that any initiatives in place up until 2015 to tackle these issues are retained.
- A presence of authority, particularly at night, would help residents' feeling of security.
- There has been a decline in the numbers using car parks in Banbury & Kidlington.
- Paying by mobile phone and cost are still the main sources of dissatisfaction for car parking.

- Concerns persist about the availability of affordable housing and how a balance will be struck between rural preservation and housing development.
- Indicating a more buoyant economy, there is greater satisfaction with the location of jobs.
- However, despite fewer people saying they are affected by spending cuts, any sense of confidence is precarious - the economy and national budget deficit remains a cause of concern.
- It is positive that trust and transparency in the Council in this climate is recorded.

# Budget consultation - key services to be maintained

## Conjoint Analysis



Base: (Those answering: 327)

**Q43. It is important for Cherwell District Council to understand which services are most important to residents in the current economic climate. From the following pairs of Council Services, which would you prioritise for maintaining the current level of service provision?**

# Budget consultation - key services to be maintained

## Conjoint Analysis – Positioning Comparison

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	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
Providing affordable housing	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Household waste collection	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Street cleaning and tackling of environmental crime	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance	5 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area	6 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Planning policy	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
Provision of housing support and advice	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Recycling centres	9 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Activities for young people	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
Parks and playgrounds	11 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
Development control	12 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
Trading standards and monitoring the food hygiene of restaurants	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Sports and leisure facilities and activities	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
Town centre development	15 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
Grants for voluntary and community groups	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
Arts and cultural services	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
Base:	(327)	(445)	(724)	(1018)

Q43. It is important for Cherwell District Council to understand which services are most important to residents in the current economic climate. From the following pairs of Council Services, which would you prioritise for maintaining the current level of service provision?



# Information Provision

## Most popular source of information about Cherwell District Council

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		%					
		<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Cherwell link	67	74	65	66	57	57	56
Cherwell district council website	25	37	25	22	19	25	21
Parish news newsletter	31	30	26	25	18	25	24
Cherwell district council leaflets	26	24	24	22	23	32	32
Cherwell district council magazines	23	24	20	20	20	22	24
Friends/ family and neighbours	23	18	24	23	22	21	23
Local groups and committees	8	11	5	3	4	4	5
Contact with council staff	4	10	6	6	5	6	7
Cherwell district council posters	7	9	9	6	5	5	7
Contact with elected councillors	10	9	7	6	3	4	5
Information from other organisations	11	9	7	9	7	9	12
Twitter or Facebook	10	9	7	9	7	9	12
Public meetings	6	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local newspapers	0	6	2	3	2	2	4
Local tv news	0	2	34	31	30	32	52
Local radio	0	2	11	10	9	9	14
Other	0	1	13	11	10	13	16
None of these	1	2	1	1	1	2	2
		1	1	1	2	2	2

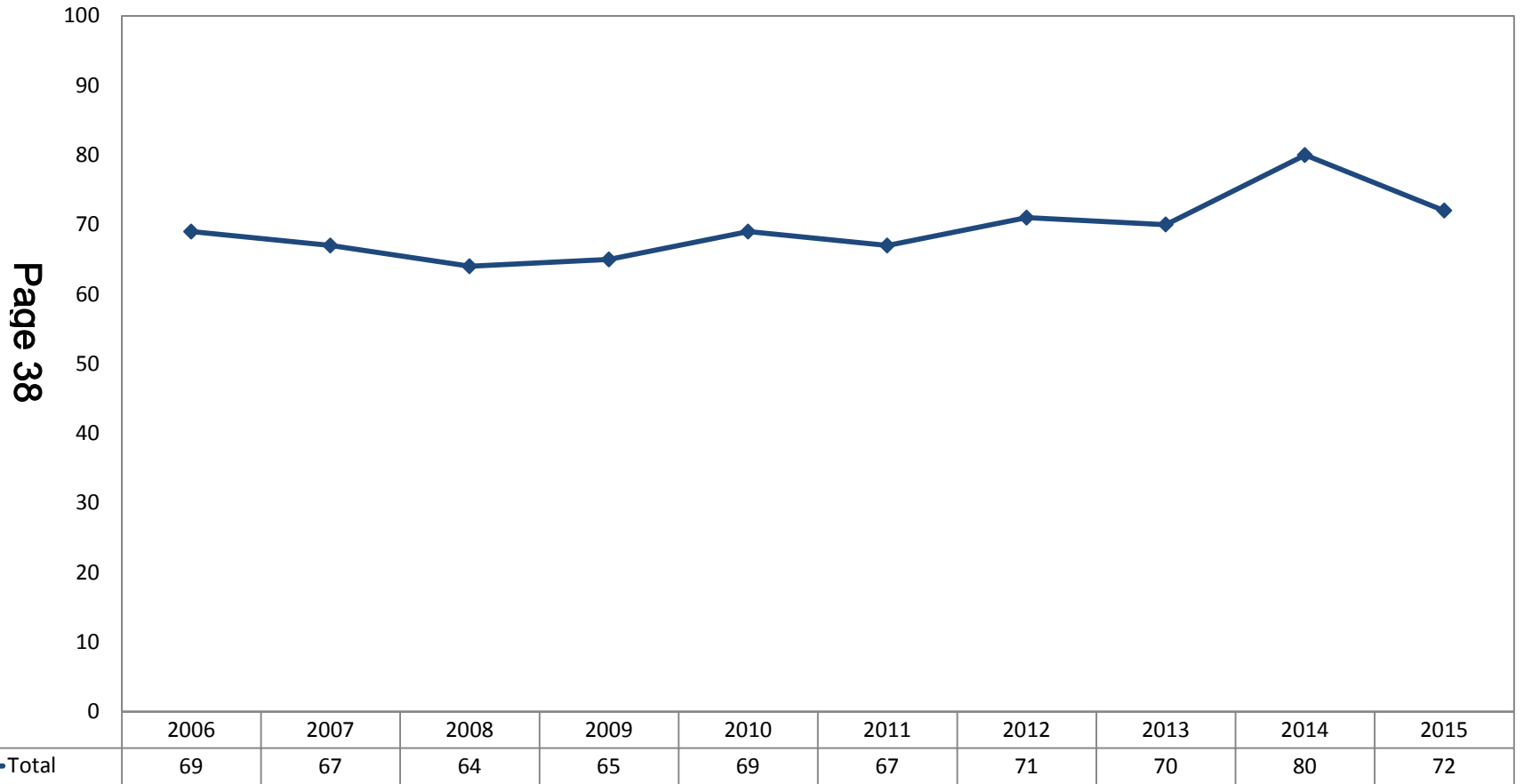
78% have actually used Cherwell Link and 54% the Council website

(443) (722) (903) (1324) (1209) (1207)

Base: (Those answering: 424)

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

# How well informed Cherwell District Council keeps residents about the benefits and services it provides



Base: (Those answering: 404)

**Q38. How well informed, if at all, does Cherwell District Council keep residents about the benefits and services it provides?**



# Cherwell District Council

## Customer Satisfaction Survey 2015

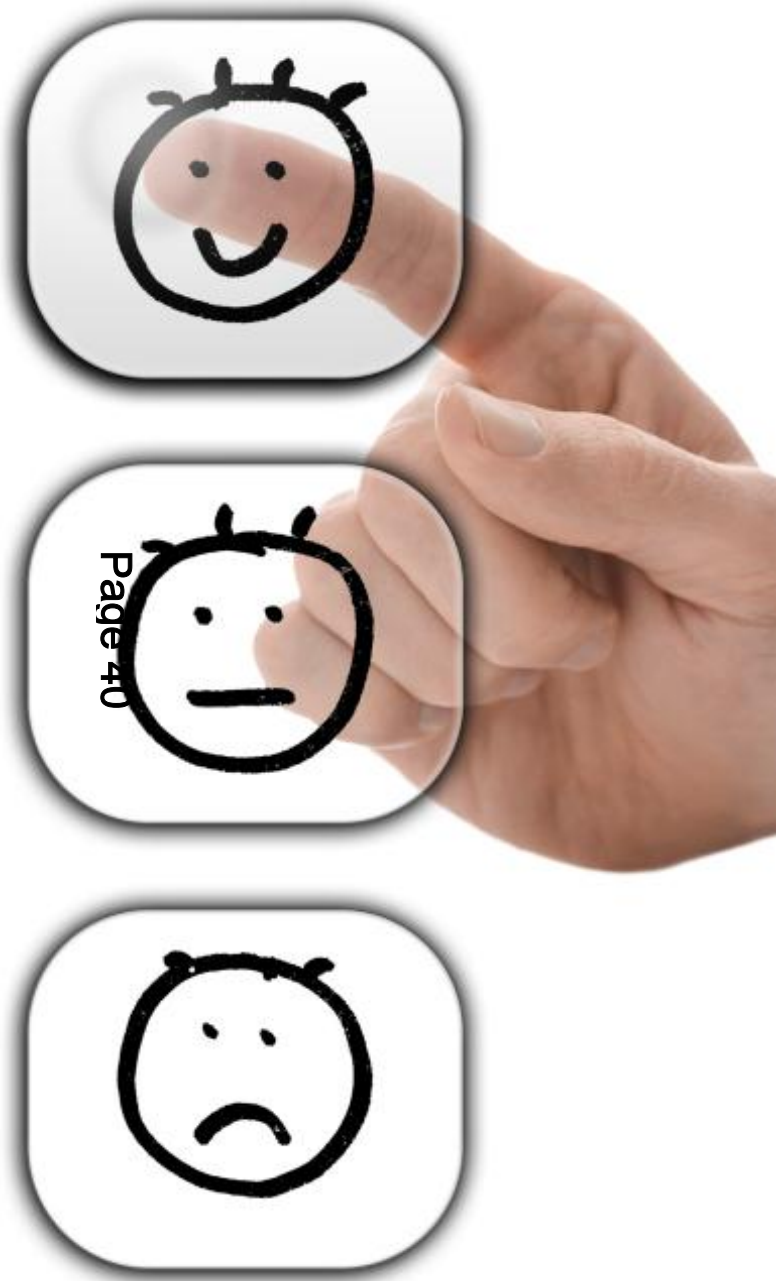
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Ref: T.Darke  
Date: August 2015



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# 1. Introduction

# 1.1 Background

- Cherwell District Council established a new Citizen's Panel in 2012 (Cherwell Views) to enable continuous consultation with residents and the extension of customer satisfaction tracking. A budget consultation has also been undertaken in previous years and in 2012, the first panel wave (focussed on customer satisfaction) incorporated a trade off exercise resulting in conjoint analysis to determine resident priorities for services.
- This report presents the findings from the 2015 wave of postal and online interviewing, comprising the customer satisfaction survey and trade off exercise.

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The first ever Customer Satisfaction Survey was set up by in 2006 with the aim of understanding how residents felt about the services they received and to use that information to improve performance. The Customer Satisfaction Survey has put in place a system of regular data collection, which provides the Council with a standard source of satisfaction data and crucial business information, which enables informed decision making with regard to service provision within the District.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

- As in previous years, the key research objectives were to examine:
  - Overall satisfaction with Cherwell District Council;
  - Overall satisfaction 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.

The fundamental objective was once again to provide robust and comparable tracking data on key performance indicators to enable the Council to measure its performance and track progress with ongoing improvements to the service it provides.

# 1.3 Methodology

## Quantitative

- 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.
  - A self-completion questionnaire, along with a newsletter giving feedback from the previous 2014 environmental survey, was sent.
  - A prize draw in the form of a local produce hamper was provided in order to boost response rates.
  - Reminder questionnaires were also sent to all those who had not completed and returned their questionnaire within three 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, 431 residents completed the survey.
- As certain demographic sub-groups were over-represented, the data was once again weighted, by gender, age and ethnicity to the 2011 mid-year population statistics for the Cherwell District.





# 1.4 Analysis

- 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 2014 'total' data. A red box on the charts denotes a significantly lower score than the 2014 total and a green box a significantly higher score than the 2014 total. An asterisk (\*) signifies a significant difference between previous years – i.e. 2014 to 2013.
- Page 45
- 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
- Please see the appendix for a more detailed description of these techniques.

## 2. Summary & Conclusions

# 2.1 Summary & Conclusions

Overall satisfaction and perceptions of value for money continue to rise . Better perception of Council operatives/ initiatives attending to the local environment is helping, along with access to leisure facilities/ activities

The Cherwell District as a place to live is at its highest level to-date and trust that Cherwell District Council ‘will do what is best for residents’ has increased.

Measures for dealing with anti-social behaviour must be monitored after a small decrease in satisfaction overall

- Residents have noticed improvements to the cleanliness of their local area (town/ parks etc.) which is helping drive positive perceptions of the Council. Consistently high levels delivering the Council’s core ‘hygiene’ services such as refuse/ recycling etc. is encouraging a level of trust among residents that they are receiving value for money.
- The cleanliness/ upkeep of parks and recreational areas must be monitored and the condition of some sports/ play areas need to have declines in ratings addressed.

- Agreement that the police and local council were dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance had been increasing and reached 51% in 2014. However, 2015 sees this reduce to 44%. The District Council must ensure that any initiatives in place up until 2015 to tackle these issues are retained.
- A presence of authority, particularly at night, would help residents’ feeling of security.
- There has been a decline in the numbers using car parks in Banbury & Kidlington.
- Paying by mobile phone and cost are still the main sources of dissatisfaction for car parking.

- Concerns persist about the availability of affordable housing and how a balance will be struck between rural preservation and housing development.
- Indicating a more buoyant economy, there is greater satisfaction with the location of jobs.
- However, despite fewer people saying they are affected by spending cuts, any sense of confidence is precarious - the economy and national budget deficit remains a cause of concern.
- It is positive that trust and transparency in the Council in this climate is recorded.

# 3. Overall Views

# 3. Overall Views

## 3.1 Overall Satisfaction (slides 15 -18)

- A three-year trend of growing satisfaction overall with Cherwell District Council continues into a fourth year as scores reach 79% in 2015, with just 5% expressing that they are 'fairly dissatisfied'
- Key areas in the 2015 survey which have helped this trend are:
  - Female participants and C2DE status respondents are more satisfied overall than at any previous point in the survey's history at 77% each. ABC1s' score of 81% also edges their highest levels of satisfaction overall to-date
  - Rural inhabitants registered 81% overall satisfaction in 2015, an all-time survey high among this group
  - Further all-time high overall satisfaction scores are recorded among residents of Kidlington (88%) and from households with 2 adults, no children (81%)

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Households with children have largely consolidated an improvement (to 78%) in 2014 with 77% in 2015. An improvement recorded among urban dwellers in 2014 has also largely been maintained in 2015 with 78%

- Although constituting smaller proportions of the sample overall, those not in employment and those aged 35 or under also report their highest satisfaction levels so far in the survey, awarding 78% and 83% respectively for this measure
- Areas of least satisfaction appear to be focussed on those living in Banbury and Bicester with 74% apiece in 2015

# 3. Overall Views

## 3.2 Satisfaction with Services (slide 19)

- Only 'local area as a place to live' scores show a statistically significant movement in 2015 from 81 to 88%
- This movement is a likely reflection of some all-time best satisfaction ratings for the way parks and open spaces are looked after (79%), local car parking facilities (66%) and leisure activities (64%)
- Although there is still room for improvement, these are factors by which residents can measure both visually and interactively a level to which the Council can be seen to be supporting the community
- Car parking is seen as a key driver of overall satisfaction so improvements here will be welcomed and there is also room to improve satisfaction levels with 'street cleaning' which has shown little movement for around four years
- Although higher proportions (around a third) answer questions surrounding the Council's approach to anti-social behaviour/ dealing with environmental crime with a neither/ nor response, positive answers over time show that perceptions can be influenced. Although not by significant margins, these two measures see their first down-turns for a number of years

# 3. Overall Views

## 3.3 Key Drivers of Satisfaction (slides 20 & 21)

- Particular environmental aspects in terms of community cleanliness and upkeep, along with car parking lead the Key Drivers of overall satisfaction indexes in 2015
- Local car parking facilities top the index for key services driving satisfaction in 2015, a difficult measure to influence quickly due to numerous constraints including land acquirement, planning implications/ consultations etc. but it is positive to see that a marginal increase in satisfaction has been recorded to 66% for this measure
- Street cleaning services follows closely behind parking as a driver of satisfaction so it is encouraging to see that this aspect of Council responsibility is given 69% in 2015 which equals the best score for this measure to date
- Examination of drivers according to specific aspects of services reinforces the priority currently placed upon the upkeep of environments with 'frequency with which streets are being cleaned' topping the index. 'How town centres look and feel' also enters the top three drivers
- The provision of council services in rural areas moves into fourth place in the index. The overall satisfaction rating of 81% from those living in rural areas is evidence that Cherwell District Council activities are having a positive impact
- Drivers analysis additionally shows that positive gains could be made by enhancing/ promoting its leisure facilities/ activities

# 3. Overall Views

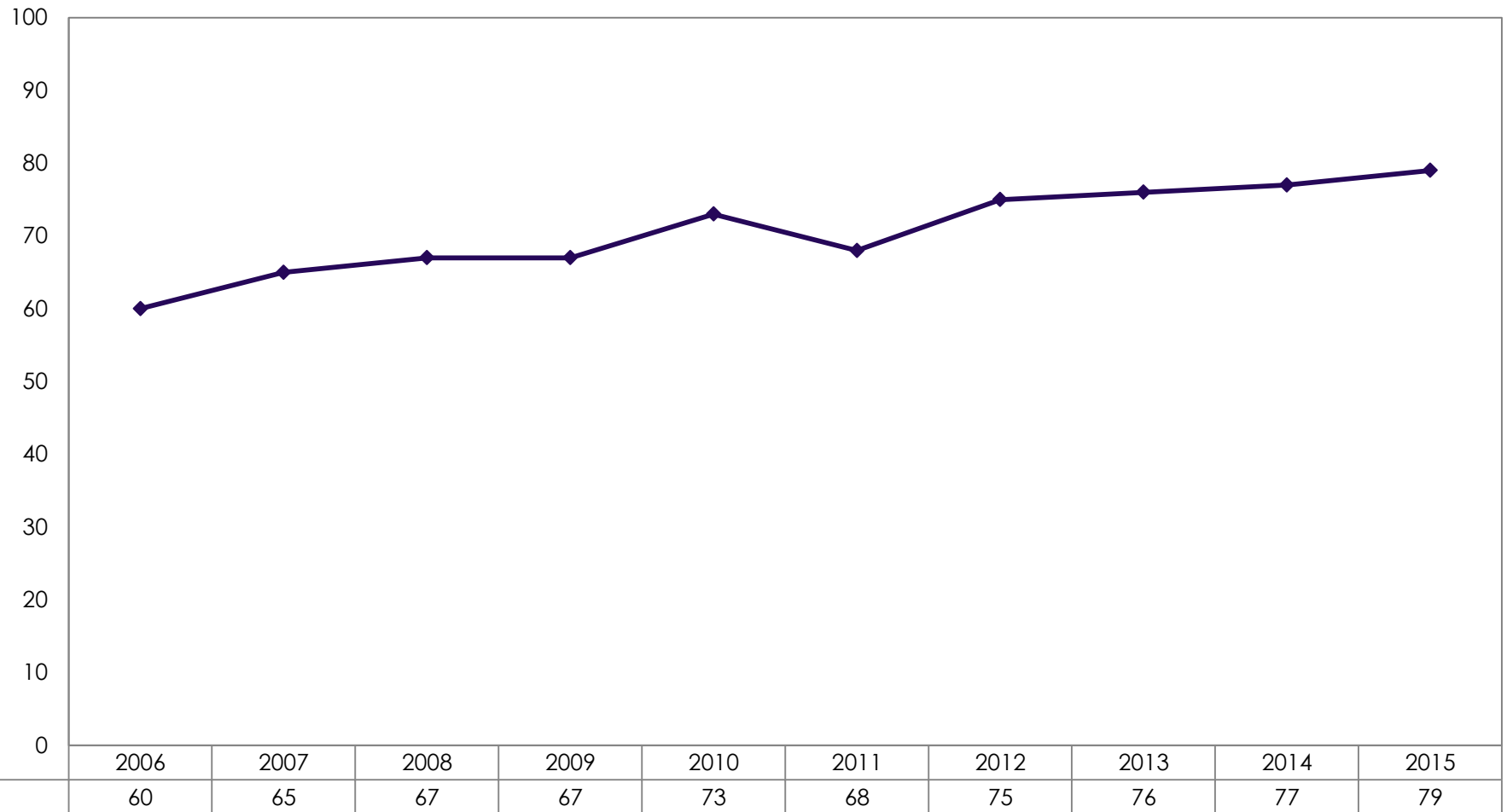
## 3.4 Value for money (slides 22 - 24)

- Positive perceptions of the value for money offered by Cherwell District Council reaches 55% in 2015, its highest to-date
- Positive perceptions are driven by consistently high delivery of core hygiene duties which the Council is expected to undertake as a matter of course (such as waste collections). Access to and availability of leisure facilities/ activities is also seen as a visible commitment to residents beyond the Councils other important but perhaps more routine services
- Aligned with these more visible and interactive initiatives, local car parking facilities is also a factor driving perceptions of value for money
- A sense of safety and security when 'walking alone' in town centres also appears as a relatively important aspect driving perceptions of value for money. Commitments to keeping areas tidy and litter-free is likely to be feeding in here



# Overall satisfaction with service provided by Cherwell District Council

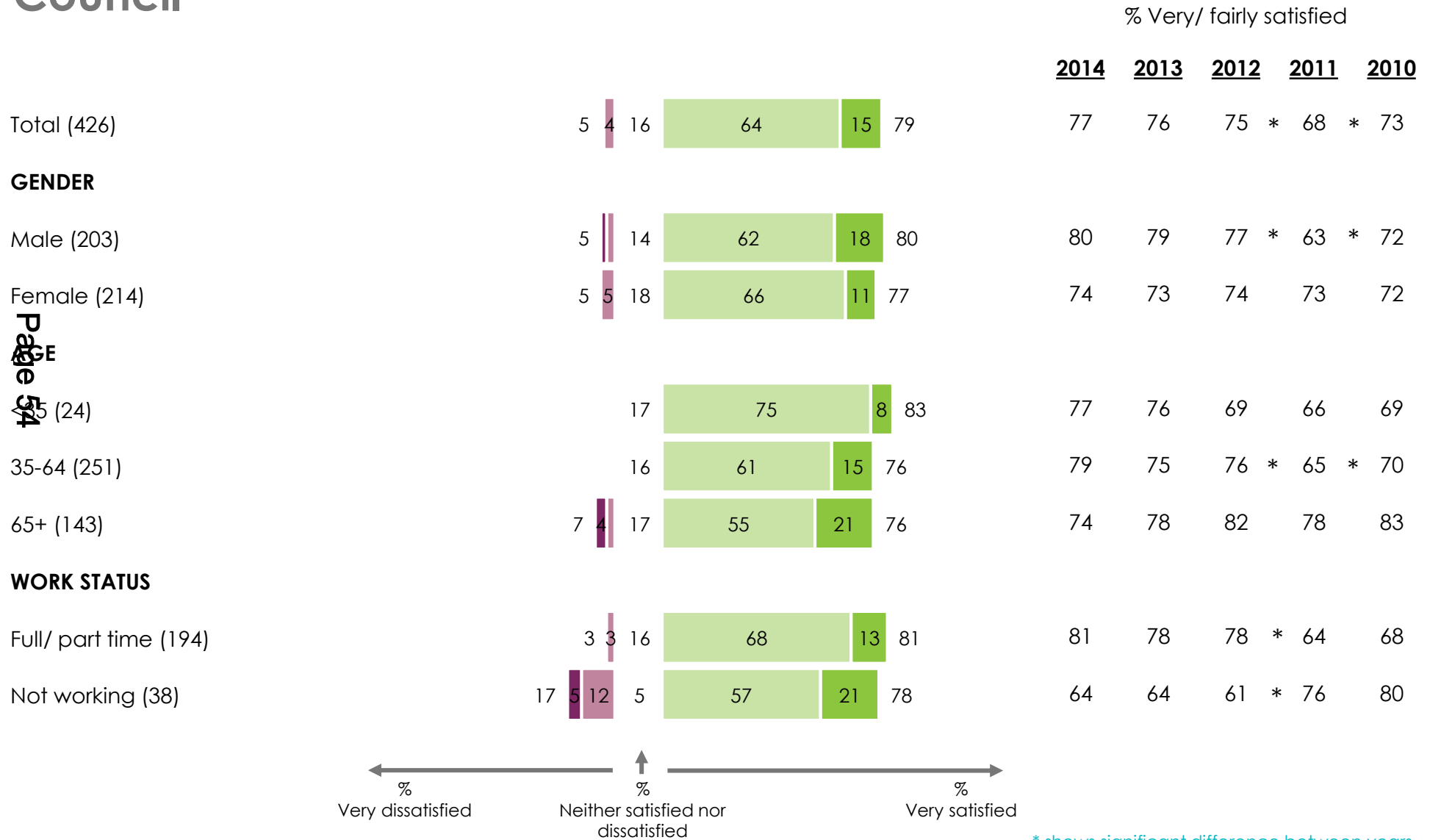
Page 53



Base: (Those answering: 426)

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

# Overall satisfaction with the services provided by Cherwell District Council



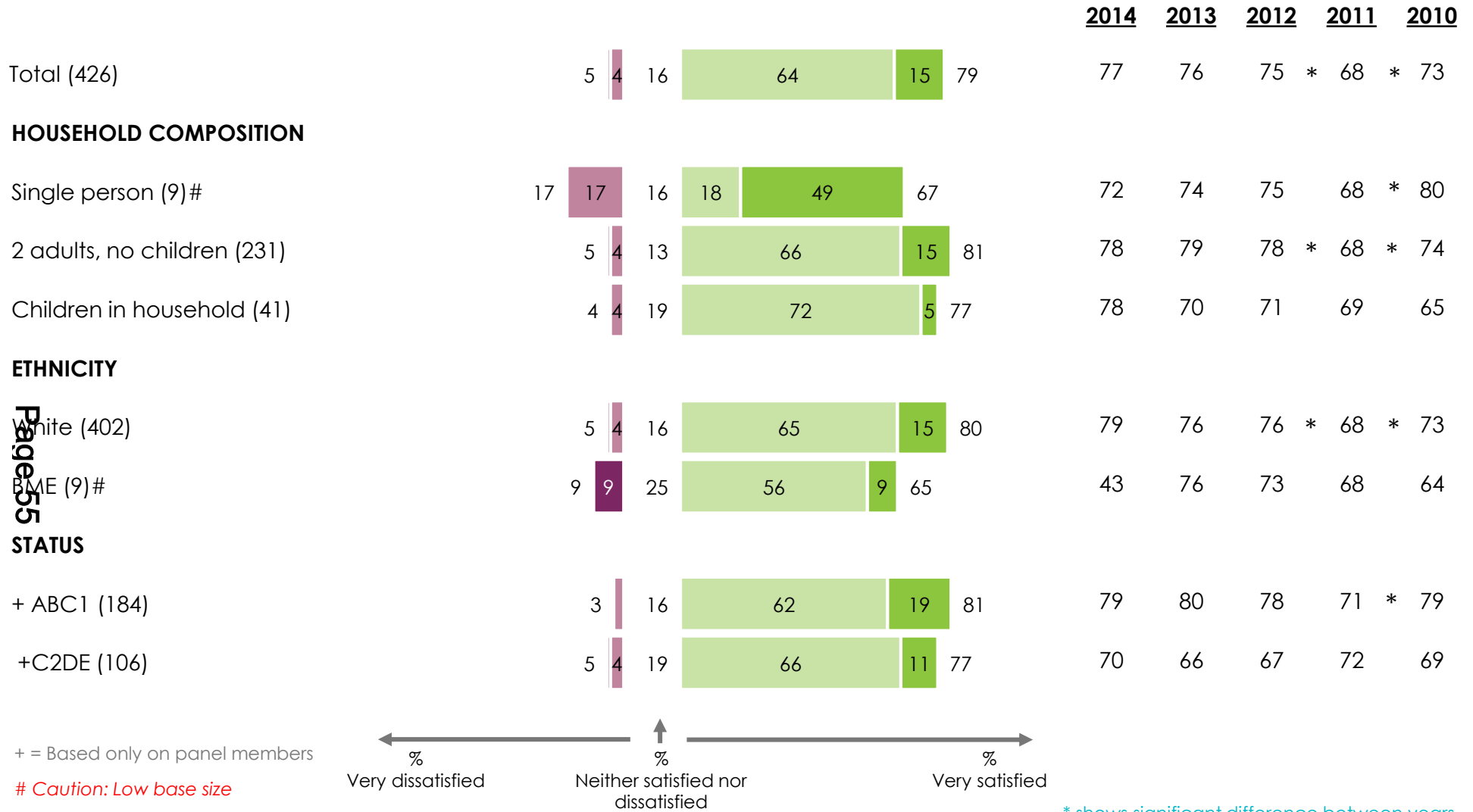
\* shows significant difference between years

Base: (Those answering)

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

# Overall satisfaction with the services provided by Cherwell District Council

% Very/ fairly satisfied



+ = Based only on panel members

# Caution: Low base size



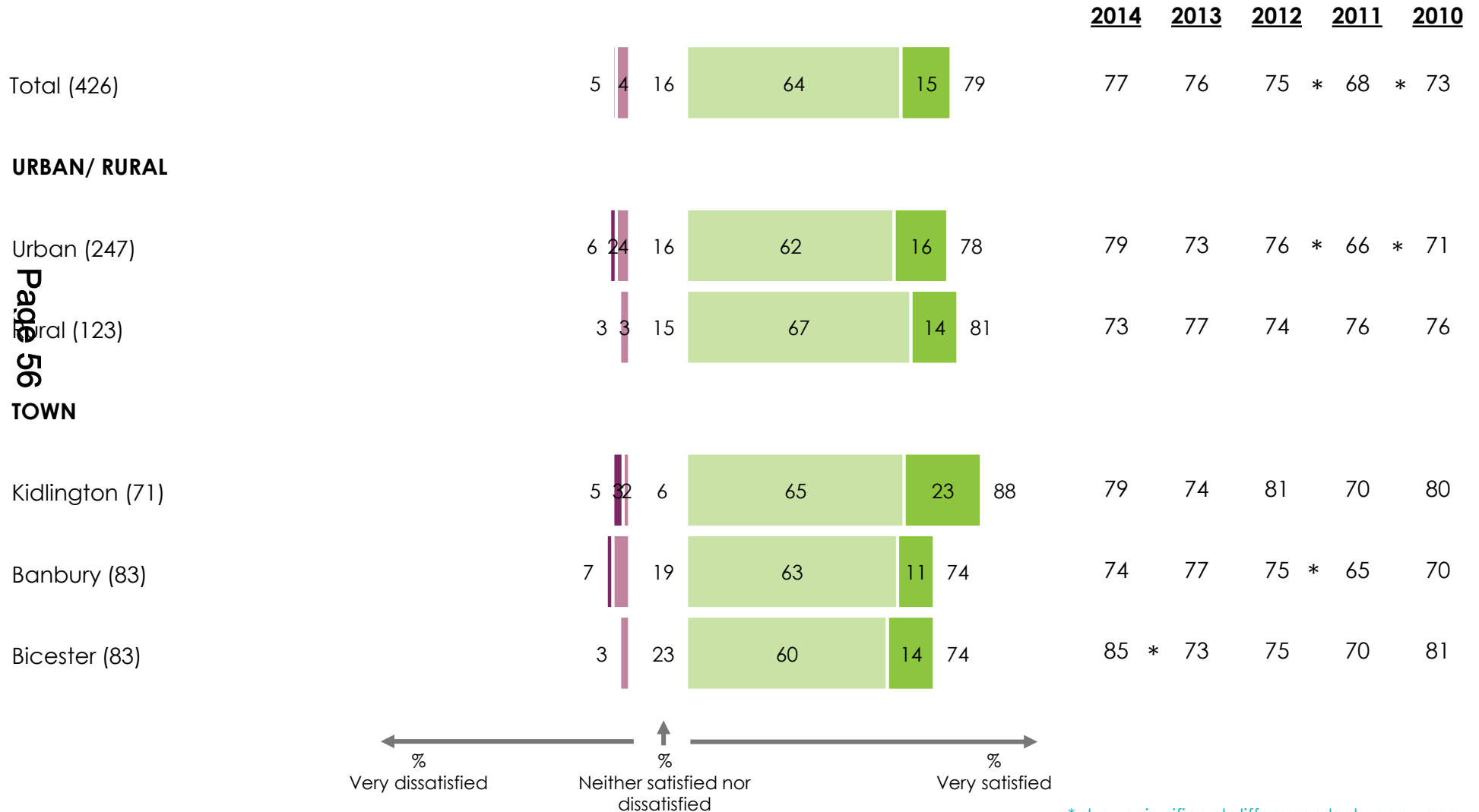
\* shows significant difference between years

Base: (Those answering)

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

# Overall satisfaction with the services provided by Cherwell District Council

% Very/ fairly satisfied

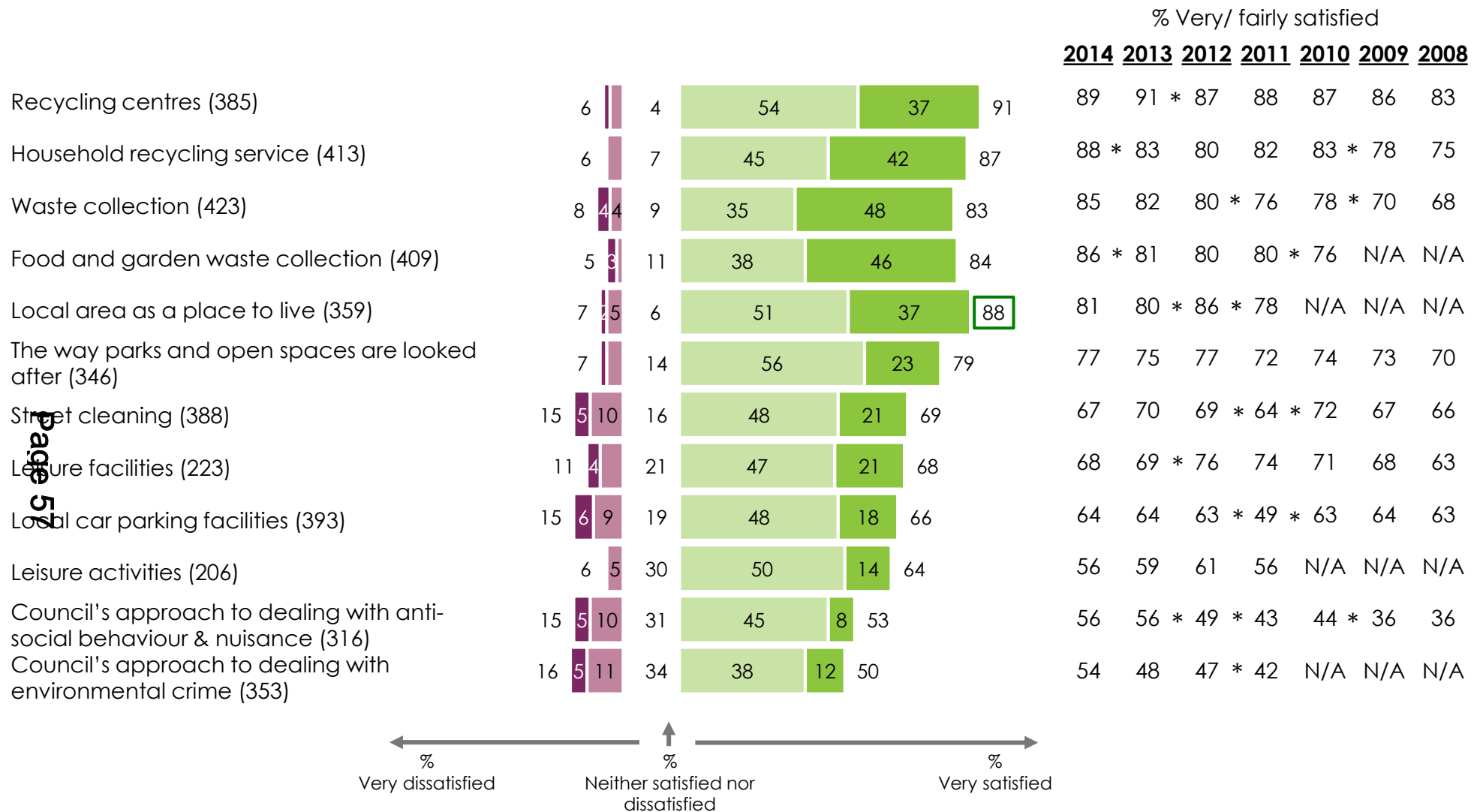


\* shows significant difference between years

Base: (Those answering)

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

# Overall satisfaction with specific services

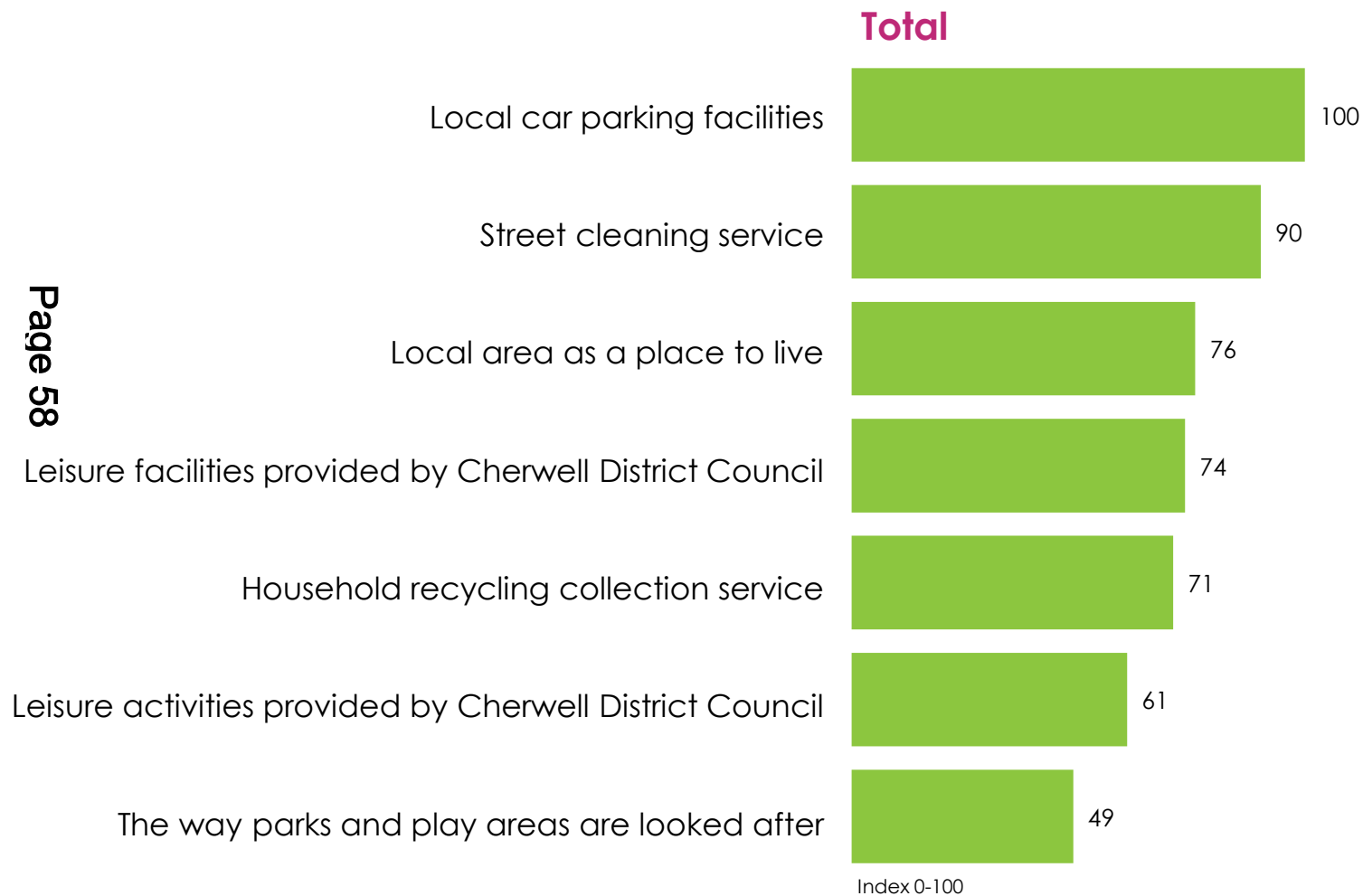


Base: (Those answering)

N.B. – Boxes show significant difference against 2012.  
\* shows significant difference between years

# Key drivers of overall satisfaction

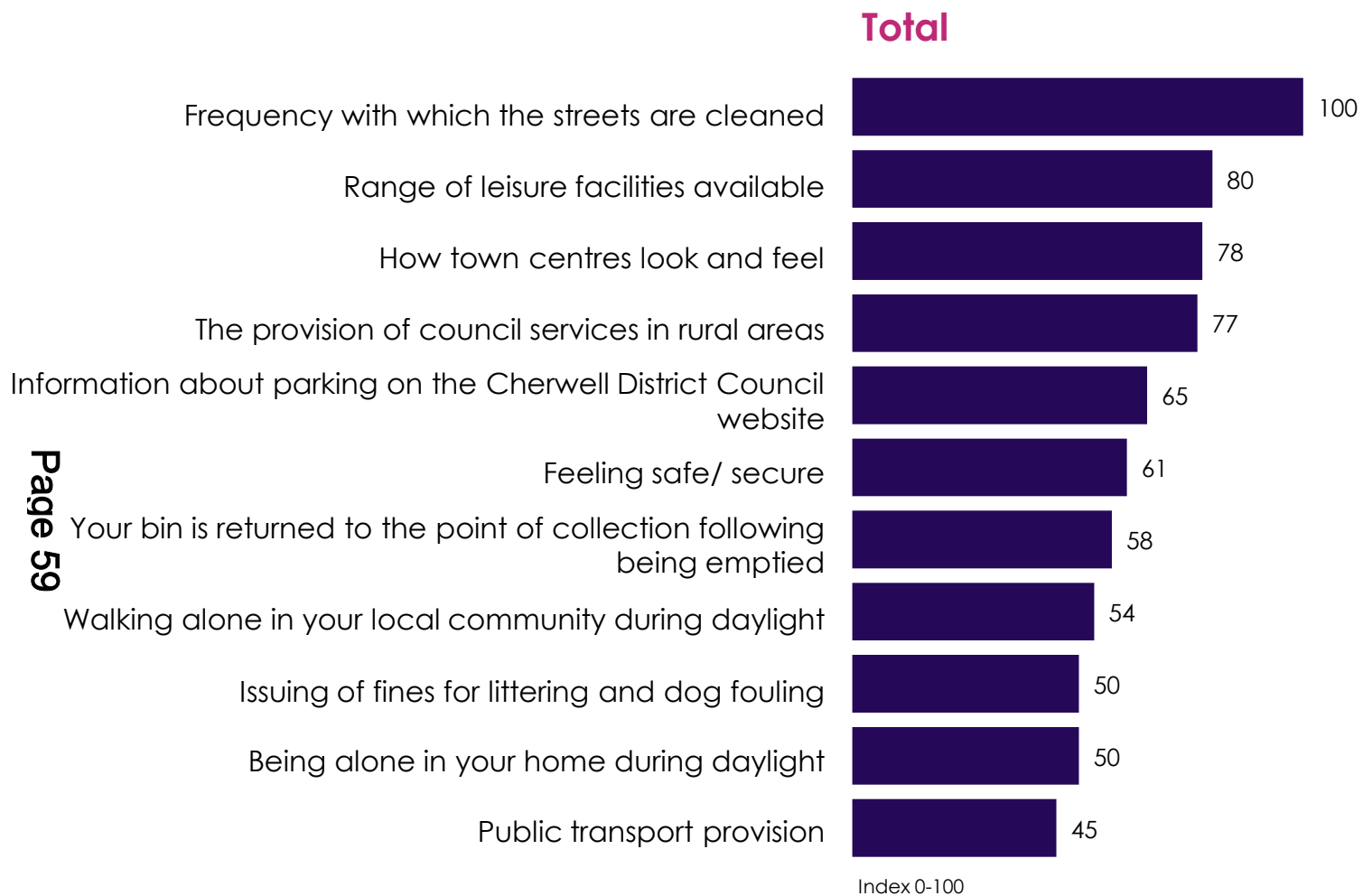
## Key services



Base: (Those answering)

# Key drivers of overall satisfaction

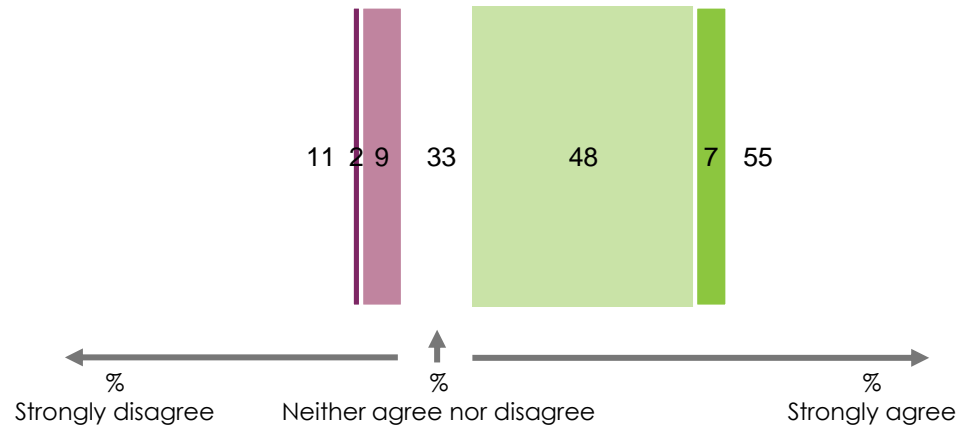
## Specific aspects of services



# Agreement that Cherwell District Council provides value for money

Page 60

Total (407)



<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
50	45	47 *	37 *	42	38

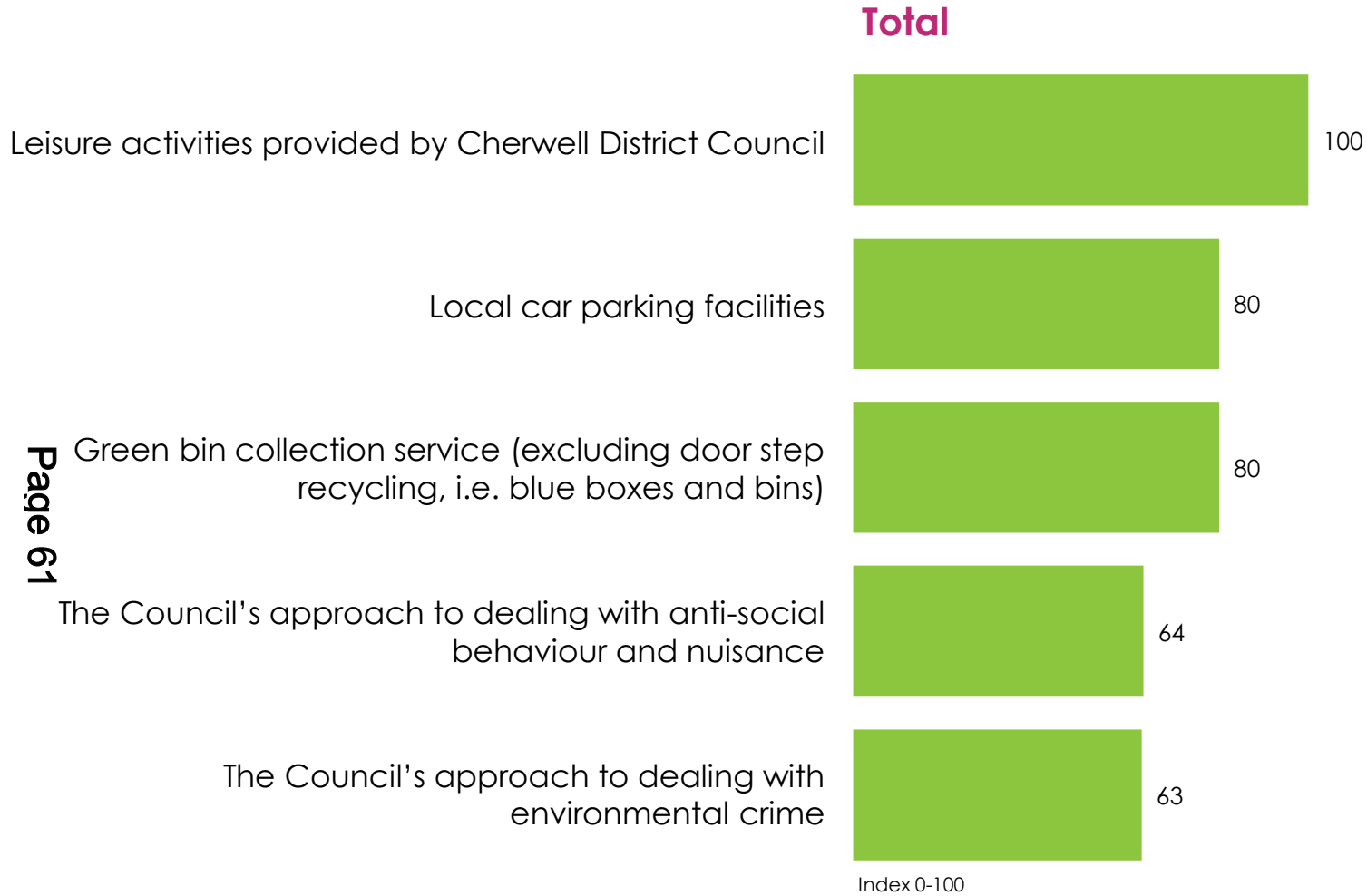
Base: (Those answering)

Q40. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Cherwell District Council provides value for money?



# Key drivers of value for money perceptions

## Key Services



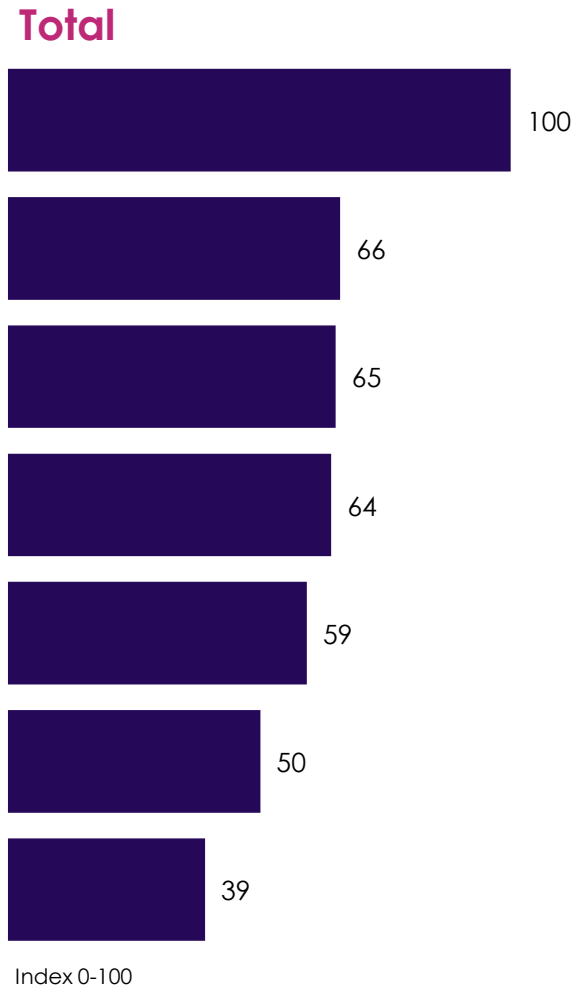
Page 61

Base: (Those answering)

# Key drivers of value for money perceptions

## Specific Aspects of Services

Page 62



Base: (Those answering)

# 4. Environmental Services

# 4. Environmental Services

## 4.1 Street Cleansing (slides 31 - 35)

- Positive scores overall for the street cleansing service operated by Cherwell District Council have shown relatively little change over recent years with only marginal positive or negative fluctuations in ratings. Currently the service overall is rated at 69%
- However, behind the overall rating the theme of local area cleanliness/ upkeep mentioned earlier in this report comes to the fore when examining results for environmental services. Satisfaction ratings for 'cleanliness of your local area' and 'cleanliness of your local town/ urban centre (Banbury, Bicester or Kidlington)' are both awarded their best ratings yet with 65% and 64% respectively
- That residents have noticed Cherwell District Council taking a more active role in keeping areas well-kept is shown with a survey-high score of 59% for 'frequency with which the streets are cleaned' and while satisfaction levels are still relatively low, it is encouraging that a significant increase to 39% satisfaction for 'issuing of fines for littering and dog fouling' has been awarded
- The only area of potential concern is that a significant decrease has occurred for 'on-street recycling bins, located in urban areas, next to litter bins' to 43%. The Council should examine these facilities to ensure that they have not deteriorated e.g. are overflowing or facilities being abused

# 4. Environmental Services

## 4.3 Household Waste Collection (slides 36 & 37)

- The noticeable upward trend of satisfaction levels overall for Cherwell District Council's waste collection service since 2012 levels-off in 2015 with a rating of 84%, one percentage point beneath 2014
- Despite overall scores plateauing in 2015 it is noteworthy that nearly half (46%) of participants awarded the 'friendliness and helpfulness of refuse collection staff' a score of 10, a score for which the personnel involved should be commended. 81% rated the same staff 8-10 in 2015

**Page 65** The attitude of public facing staff goes a long way to forging positive relationships between the public and any service provider. Although the friendliness and helpfulness of refuse collection staff is to be commended, they must be mindful that small gestures such as returning the bin to its collection point once emptied remain consistently intact

# 4. Environmental Services

## 4.4 Household Recycling Collections (slides 38 & 39)

- Although 'overall satisfaction with household recycling collection service' reduces by 2% in 2015 from the high 88% of 2014 it is positive that much of the gains made remain intact
- Examination of the individual measures relating to the recycling collection service shows that only satisfaction with the 'frequency of recycling collections' has shown any significant movement compared with 2014, negatively so to 72% in 2015 from 78%. Positive scores for this measure have a tendency to fluctuate over recent years, but it is a positive sign that a little over a third (35%) still rate their satisfaction as 10 in 2015 results
- Kerbside collection schemes become increasingly popular with battery collection and small electricals reaching 83% and 81% satisfied respectively

# 4. Environmental Services

## 4.5 Recycling Centres (slides 40 & 41)

- Recycling centres continue to be a source of particular satisfaction among residents living within the Cherwell District Council area. Satisfaction overall with these facilities edges above 90% again in 2015 with 91%
- These facilities are a further example of how accessibility and ease with which needs are accommodated help promote positive sentiment towards the council overall. Residents appreciate the range of items they are able to deposit (82% positive in 2015, 36% rating '10') and satisfaction with the location of recycling centres is showing incremental, but measurable, improvement to satisfaction scores which reach 80% in 2015

Because of their nature and purpose, perceptions of cleanliness/ tidiness of these facilities might always be difficult to improve, however, more than half (58%) rated this aspect positively in 2015 with a third (32%) inclined to remain impartial by rating 4 – 7

# 4. Environmental Services

## 4.6 Household Food and Garden Waste Collections (slides 42 - 44)

- Very little movement takes place among measures relating to household food and garden waste collections in 2015
- An overall satisfaction score of 84% remains in-line with figures achieved in 2014

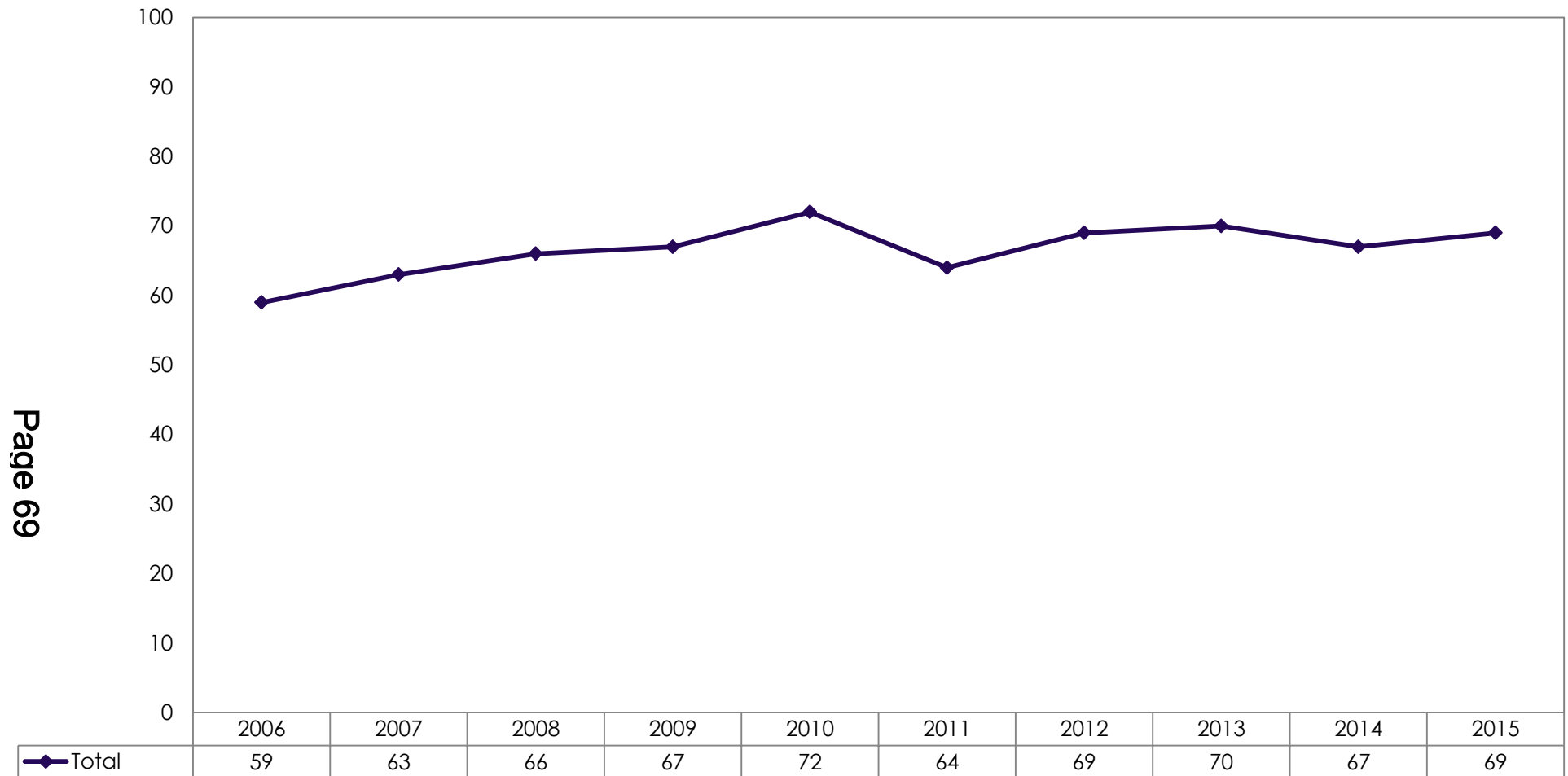
Page 68

Similarly to the recycling centre findings, survey participants particularly appreciate the range of materials taken for composting – 45% rating this aspect with a 10

- Negativity towards the 'frequency of food and garden waste collection' is fairly minimal at 11% in 2015 but a further positive note is struck with those rating collections 8 – 10 nudging over 70% for the first time with 71% (34% giving a score of 10)



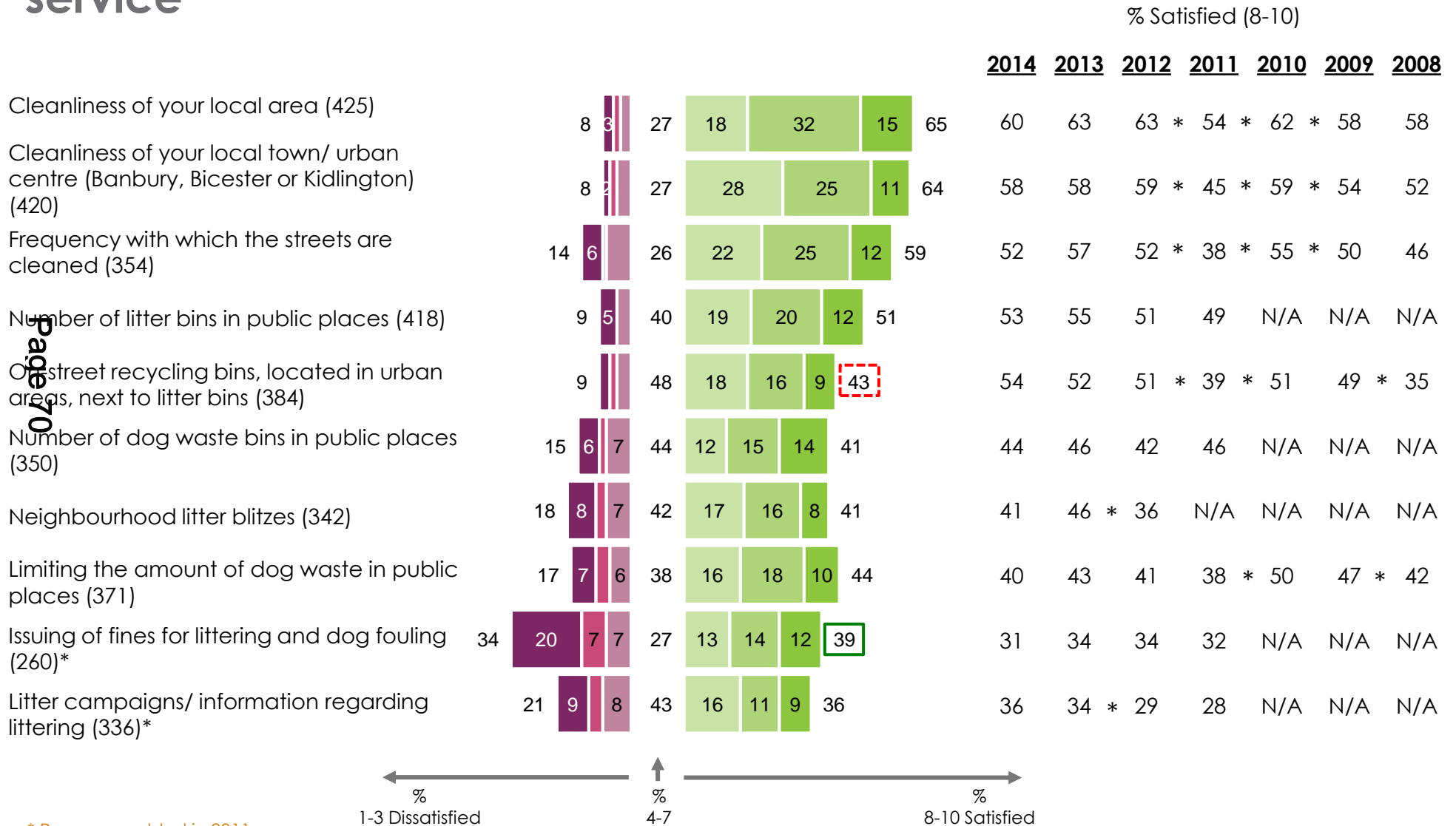
# Overall satisfaction with street cleansing service



Base: (Those answering: 388)

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

# Overall satisfaction with different aspects of the street cleansing service



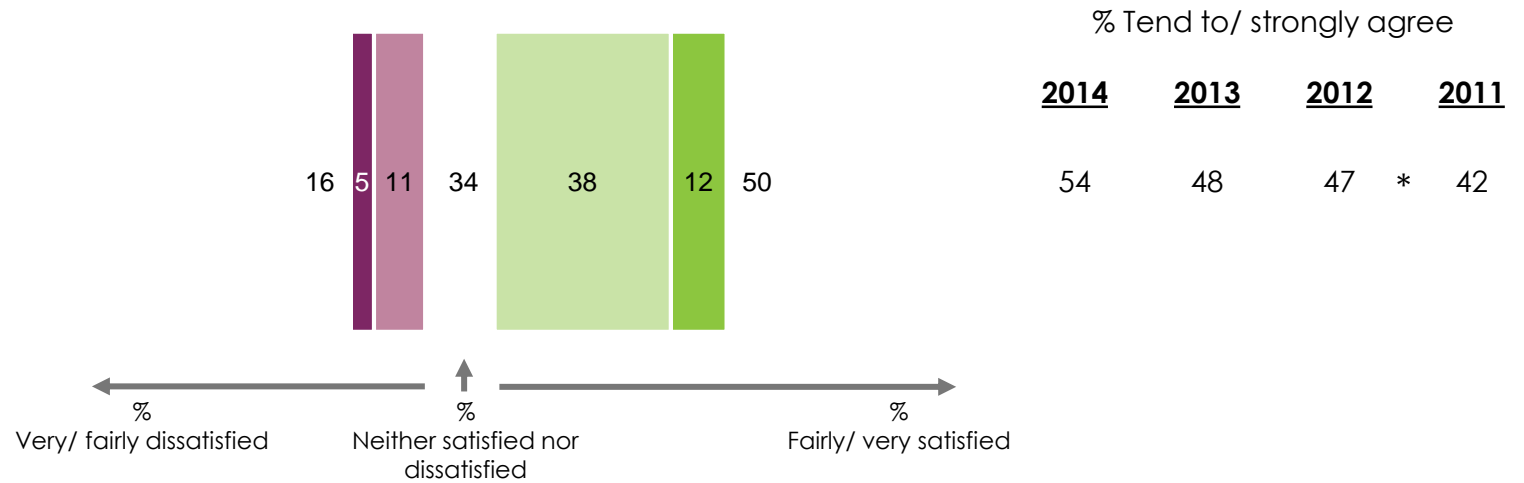
\* Response added in 2011

Base: (Those answering)

Q4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the street cleaning service?

# Satisfaction with the Council's Approach to Dealing with Environmental Crime

Total (353)



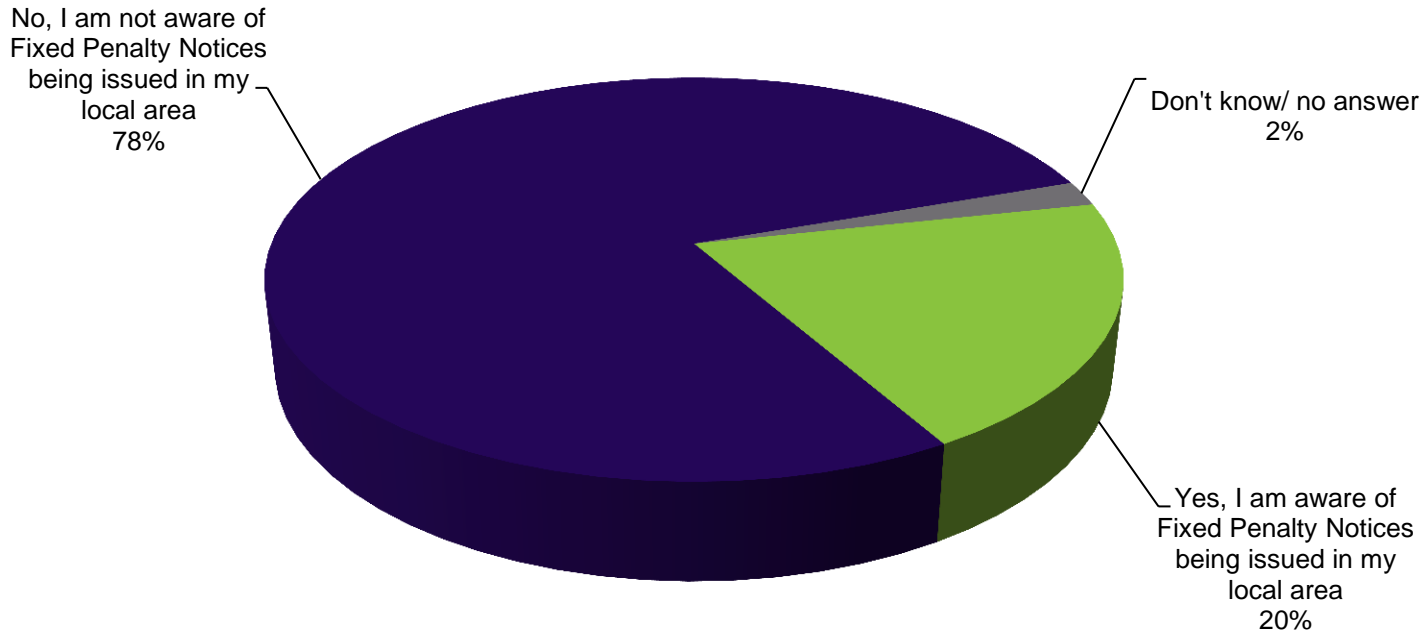
Page 71

Base: (Those answering)

Q5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Councils approach to dealing with environmental crime?

# Awareness of fixed penalty notices being issued by council's environmental enforcement officers

Total



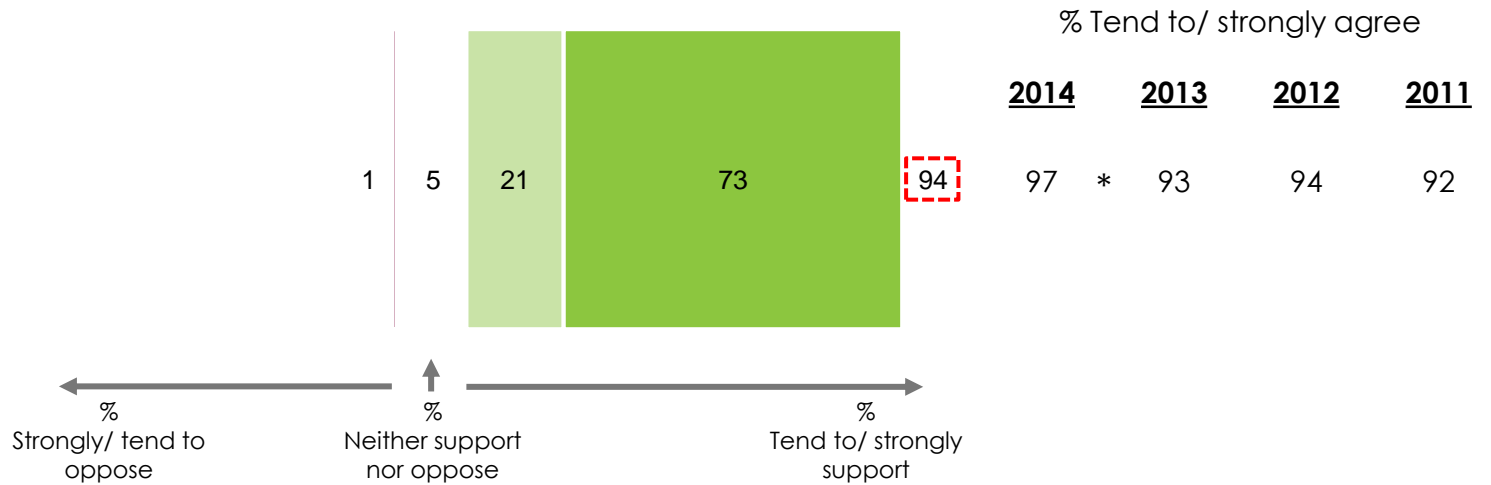
23% in 2014

Base: (All respondents: 431)

Q6. Are you aware of any Fixed Penalty Notices being issued by Cherwell District Council Environmental Enforcement Officers in your local area?

# Extent of support for Cherwell District Council's zero tolerance approach to 'on street' offences

Total (415)



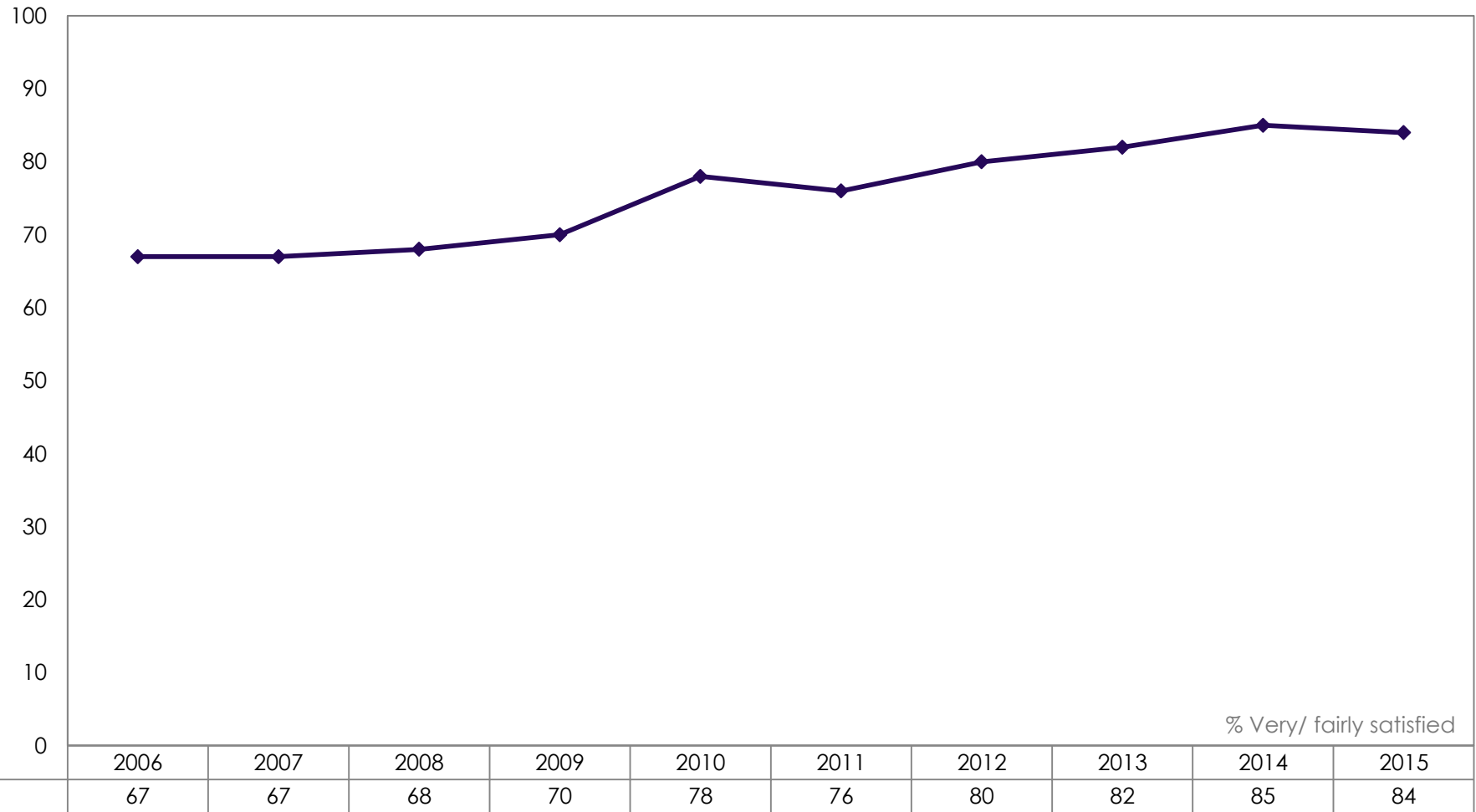
Page 73

Base: (Those answering)

Q7. To what extent do you support or oppose the Council's policy of a zero tolerance approach to 'on street' offences (i.e. giving a fine to those people issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for littering, dog fouling or abandoned vehicles)?

# Overall satisfaction with waste collection service

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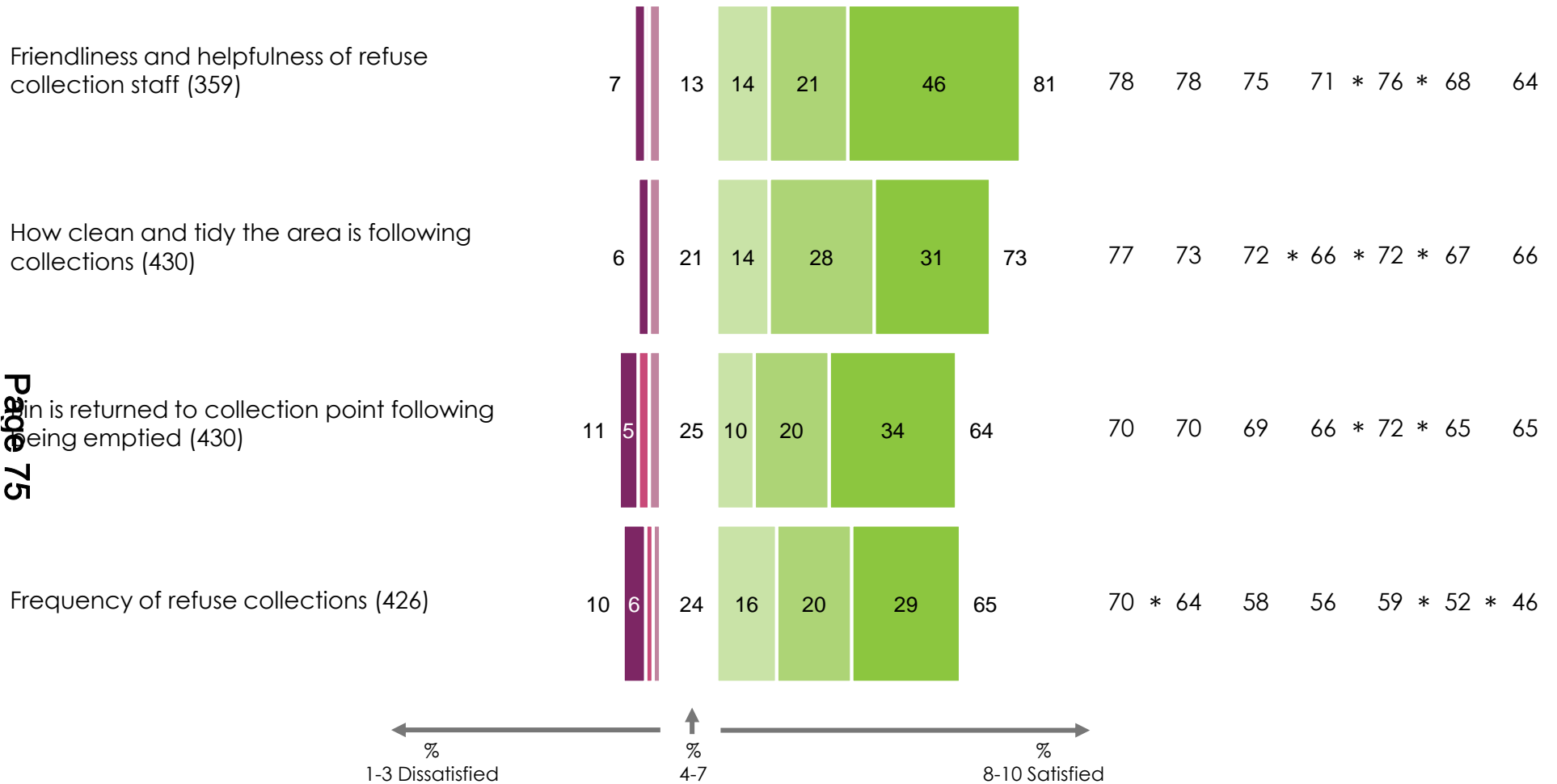
Base: (Those answering: 423)

Q8. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the waste collection service (excluding door step recycling, i.e. blue boxes and bins)?

# Overall satisfaction with different aspects of the waste collection service

% Satisfied (8-10)

**2014** **2013** **2012** **2011** **2010** **2009** **2008**

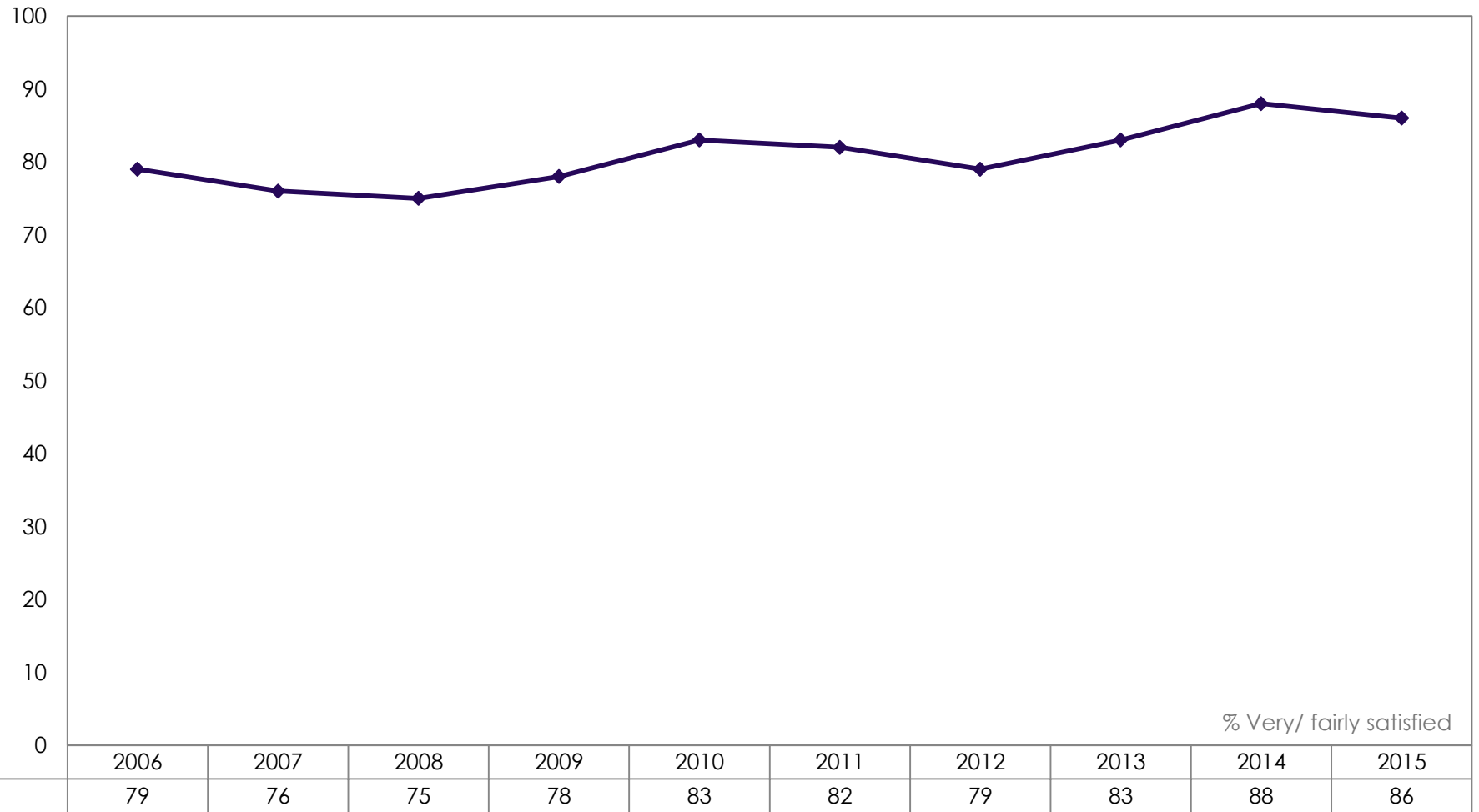


Base: (Those answering)

Q9. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the waste collection service?

# Overall satisfaction with household recycling collection service

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Base: (Those answering: 413)

Q10. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the household recycling collection service?



# Satisfaction with different aspects of the household recycling collection service

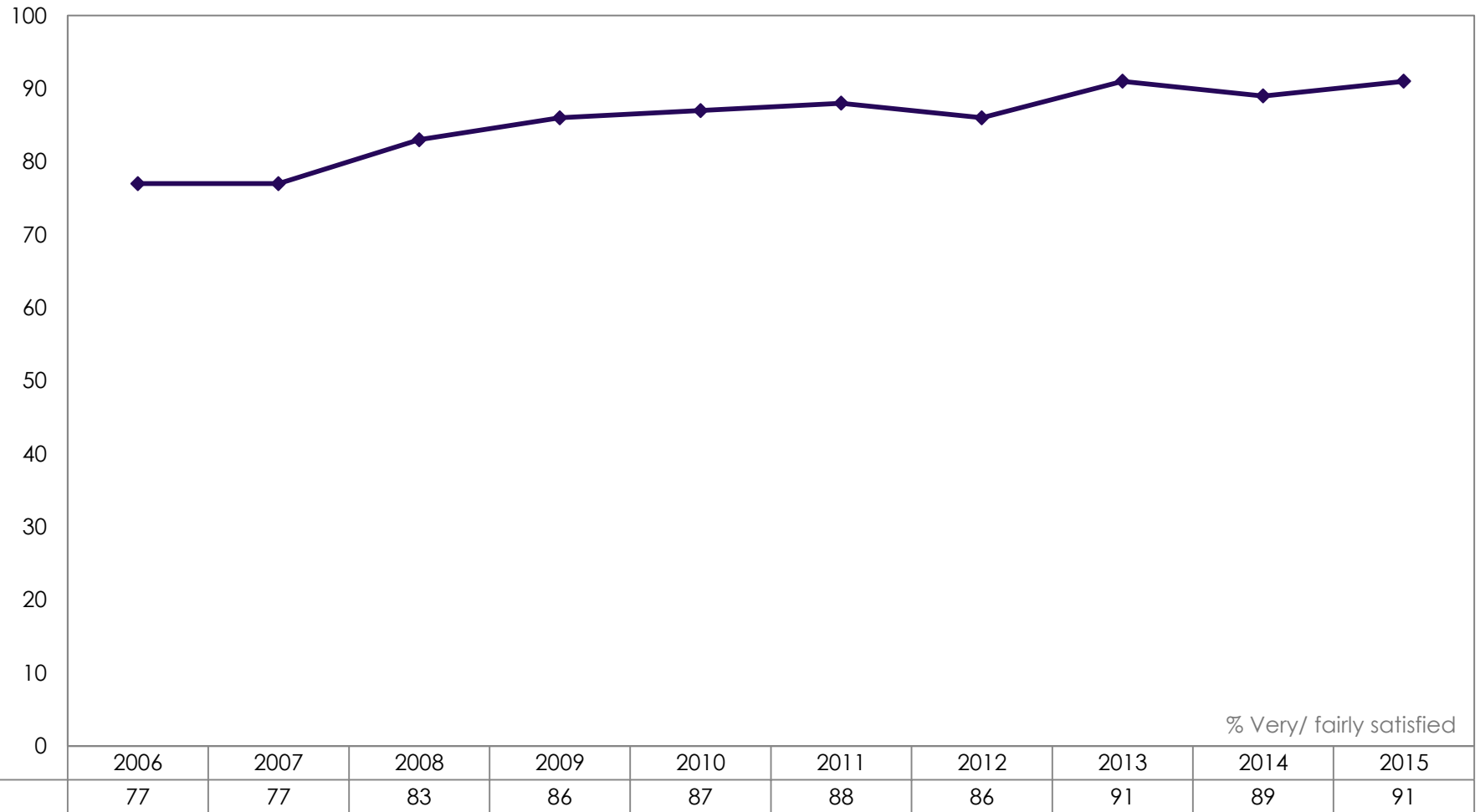


Base: (Those answering)

Q11. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the household recycling collection service?

# Overall satisfaction with recycling centres

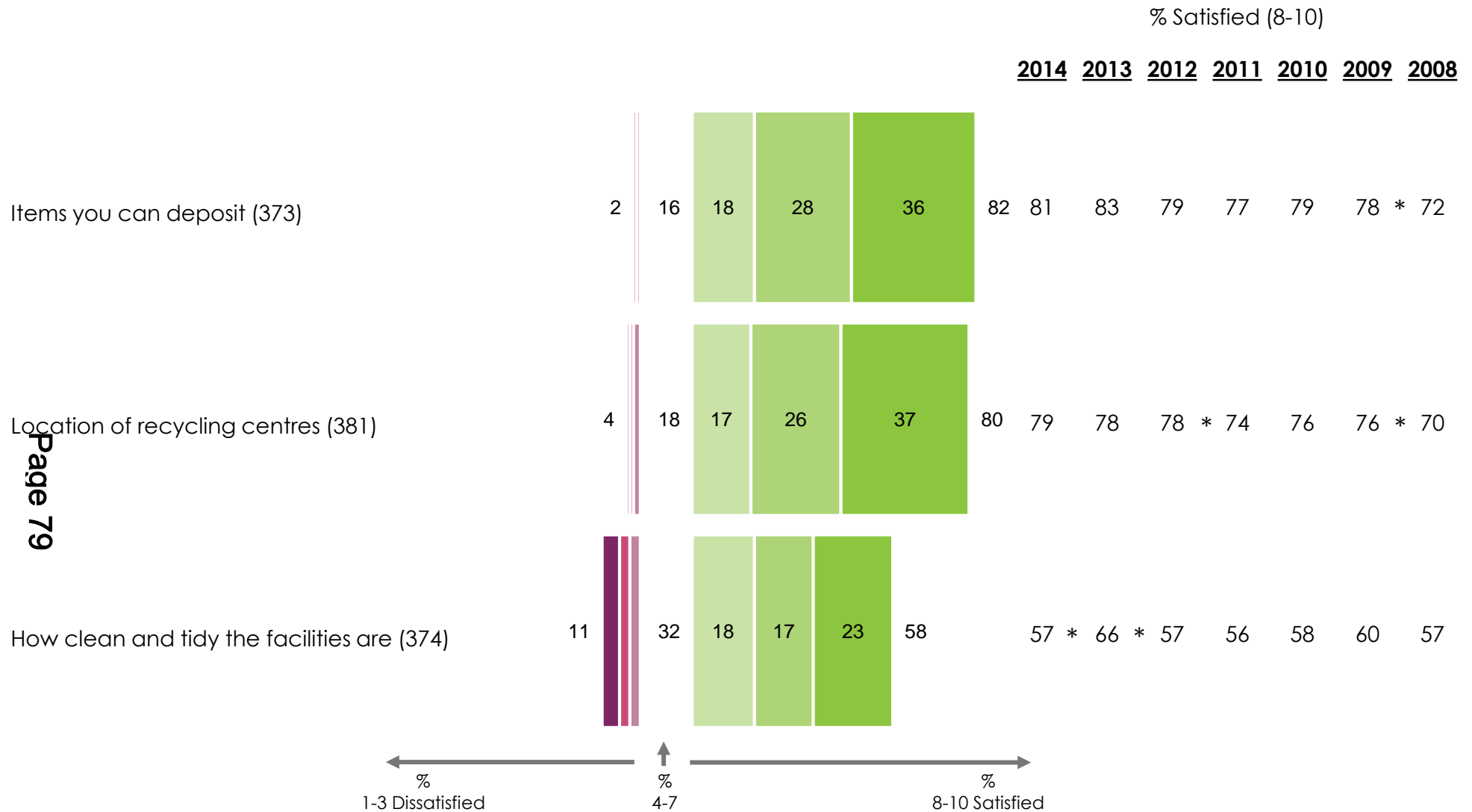
Page 78



Base: (Those answering: 385)

Q16. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the recycling centres (bottles banks etc)?

# Satisfaction with different aspects of the local recycling centres



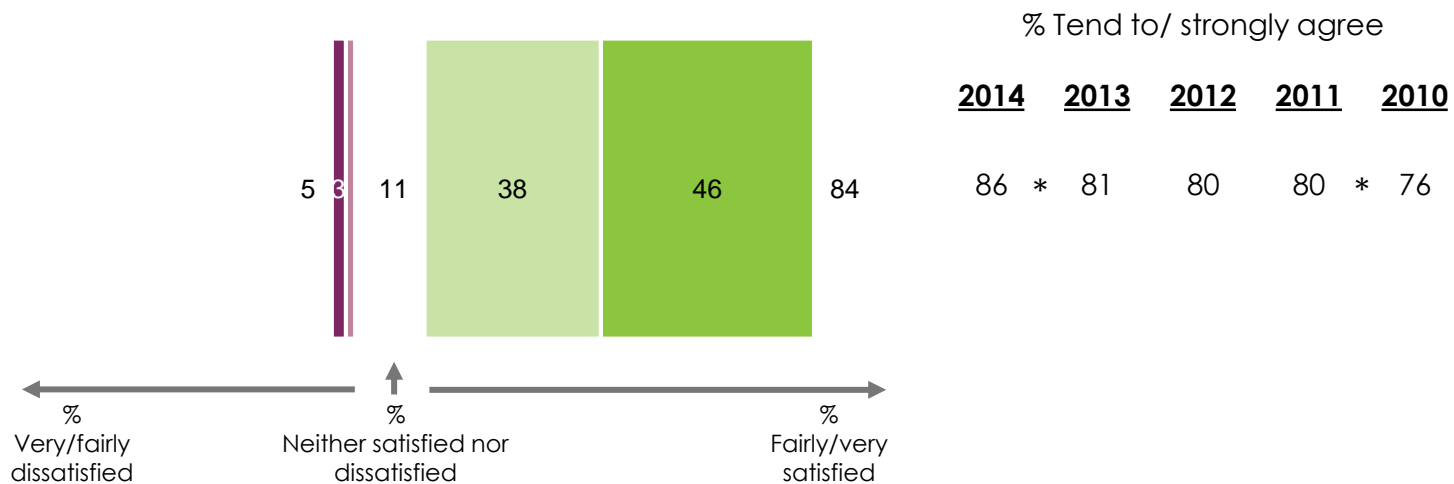
Base: (Those answering)

Q17. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the local recycling centres?

# Overall satisfaction with household food and garden waste collection service

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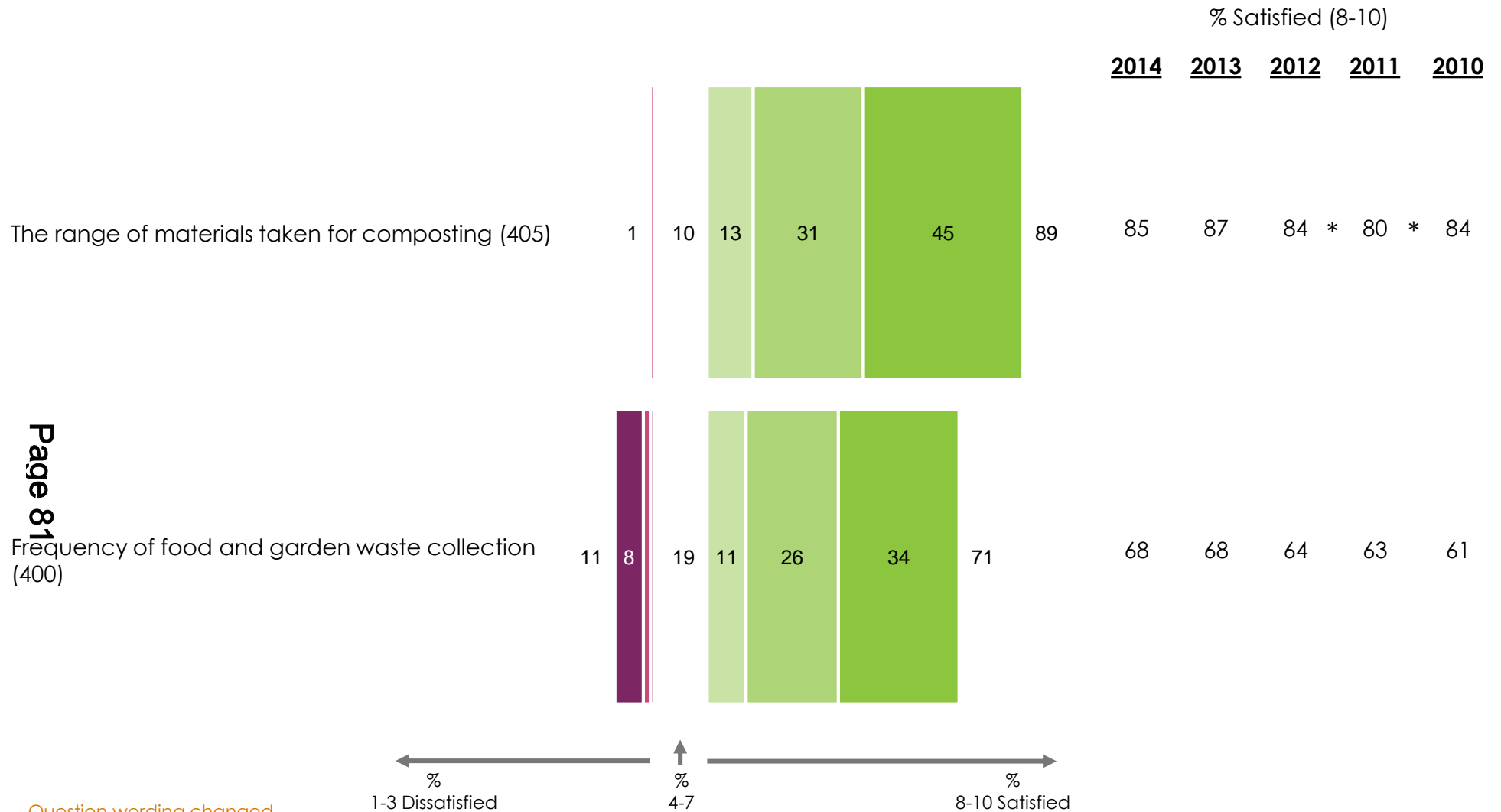
Total (409)



Base: (Those answering)

Q12. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the household food and garden waste collection service?

# Satisfaction with aspects of the food and garden waste collection



Question wording changed

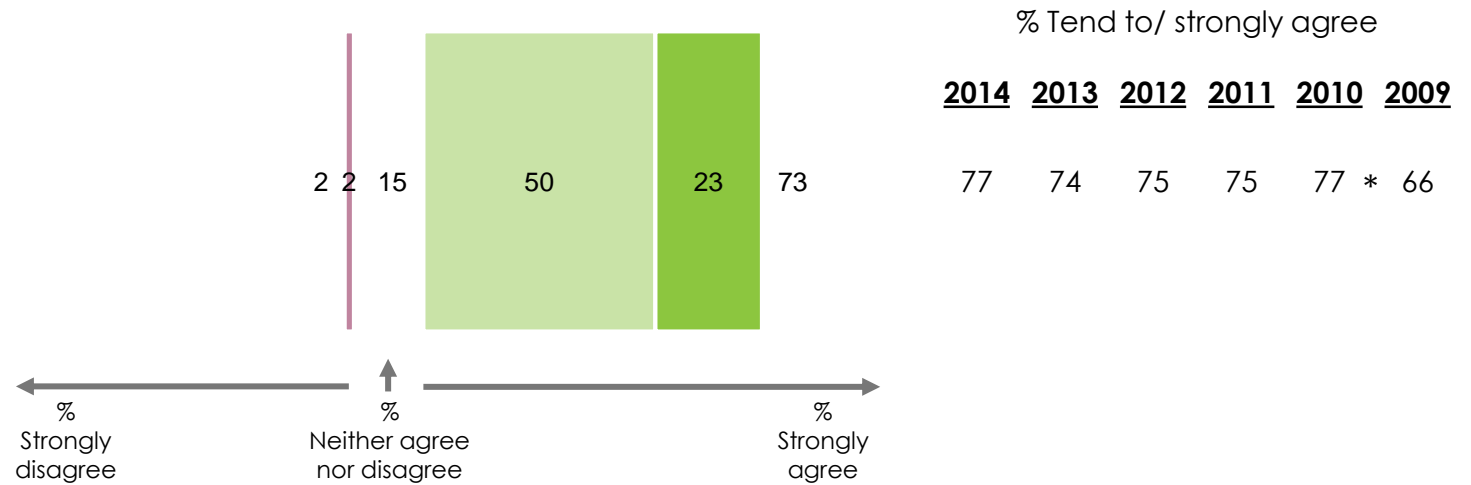
Base: (Those answering)

Q13. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the food and garden waste collection service?

# Agreement that Cherwell District Council provides enough information on the waste, recycling and food and garden waste collection service

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Total (418)



Base: (Those answering)

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Cherwell District Council provides you with enough information on the waste, recycling and food and garden waste collection service?

# 5. Leisure & Recreation

# 5. Leisure & Recreation

## 5.1 Parks and Play areas (I) (slides 49 - 52)

- Satisfaction overall with parks and play areas remains at the same level as it has since 2013; 75%
- Ratings from those who have visited park locations in Banbury, Kidlington and Bicester return to levels similar to those recorded in 2013 with 81%, 83% and 76% respectively

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Although drawn from smaller base sizes (31 people), 24% of residents visiting play areas in Kidlington during 2015 expressed dissatisfaction with their experience

- In comparison to more urban areas, the maintenance/ upkeep of certain aspects of local parks and play areas is noticed to have been lacking compared with the last three years. Satisfaction with the 'maintenance of trees, shrubs and bedding plants' has significantly reduced since 2014 to 65% and although 'cleanliness' remains at 66% satisfied, there is a directional decrease from 67% satisfied to 60% for the maintenance of play areas and equipment
- Recalling the importance of access to leisure facilities highlighted earlier by key driver analysis, the reduction to 56% satisfaction for the 'maintenance of outdoor sports pitches' is an area to prioritise. Feelings of safety while using these public spaces also decreases significantly to 65%
- Although negativity is not high for any measure, the District Council must ensure that maintenance issues are addressed before perceptions shift into negativity



# 5. Leisure & Recreation

## 5.2 Leisure Facilities I (slides 53 - 55)

- Satisfaction overall with leisure facilities has yet to recover from the 7% decrease encountered in 2013, a rating of 69% given in 2015
- Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre with 67% satisfaction among those using it in 2015 remains a fairly substantial margin away from attaining the 80% + satisfaction levels regularly achieved up to 2012
- Behind the overall satisfaction levels, perceptions of the cost of using facilities have demonstrated some gradual improvement over the last three years. 50% rate this aspect positively in 2015 and this is likely to be a key factor in encouraging people to use leisure facilities in the district. 15% dissatisfied with perceptions of cost is an improvement upon the 18% expressing dissatisfaction in 2014

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It is also encouraging that an increasing number of residents are noticing a wider range of leisure facilities available to them, 69% currently satisfied with this. The range of facilities available is the top-rated factor in this section and is likely to positively impact perceptions of value for money of the District Council

# 5. Leisure & Recreation

## 5.3 Leisure Activities (slides 56 & 57)

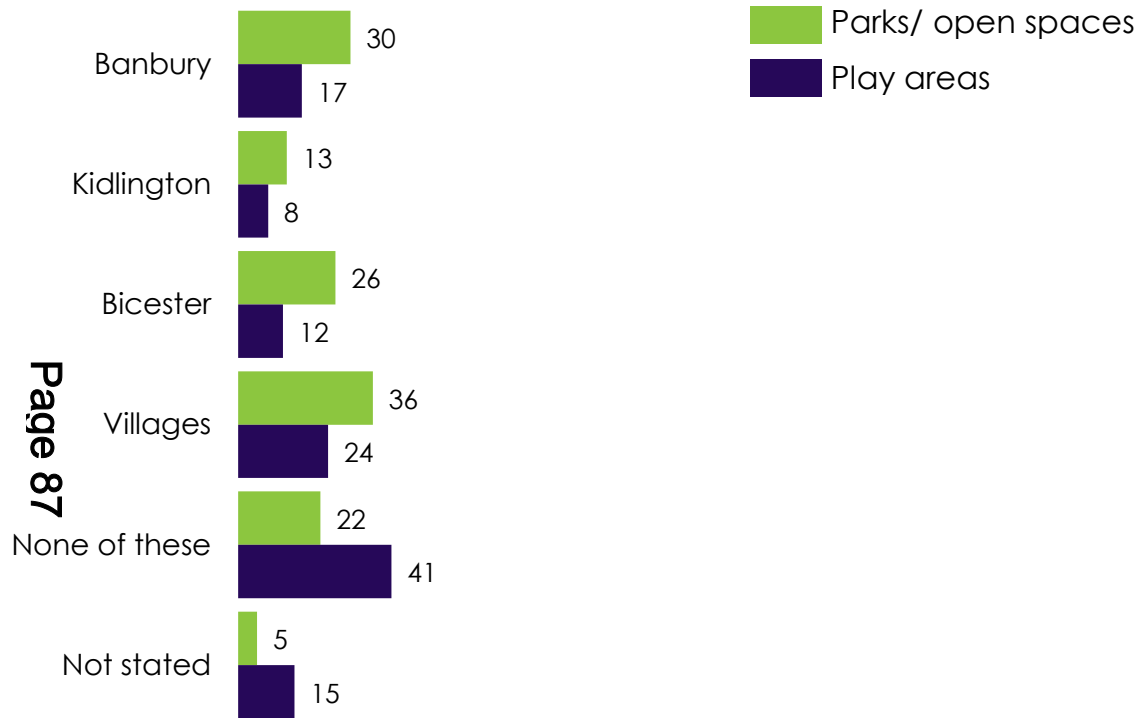
- There is no change among those who are aware of leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council, but have yet to use/ participate in any activity in 2015; still 42%
- An incrementally small but visible downward trend is emerging among those who say that they have used/ participated in leisure activities provided by the District Council in the last 12 months. From 21% in 2013, it has reduced to 19% in 2014 and currently stands at 18%

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As more people are aware of leisure facilities being available to them, and leisure facilities/ activities being a key driver of value for money, are there any initiatives that Cherwell District Council can devise to encourage more participation?

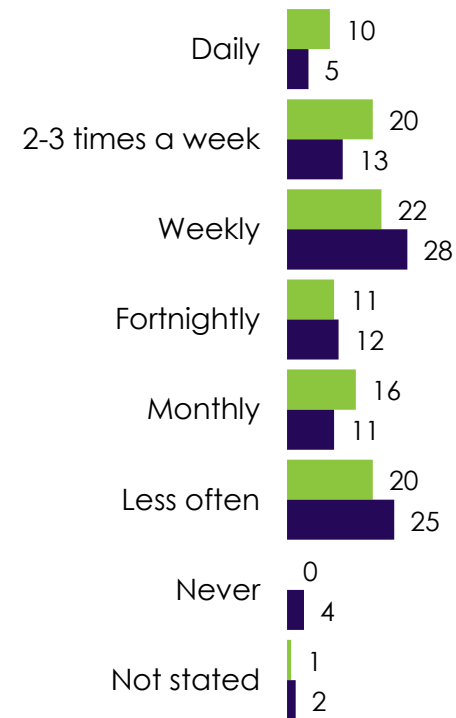
# Parks/ open spaces and play areas visited and frequency of visiting

## Areas visited (%)



Base: Those answering: Parks/ open spaces (431);  
Play areas (431)

## Frequency of visit (%)



Base: Those answering: Parks/ open spaces (297);  
Play areas (175)

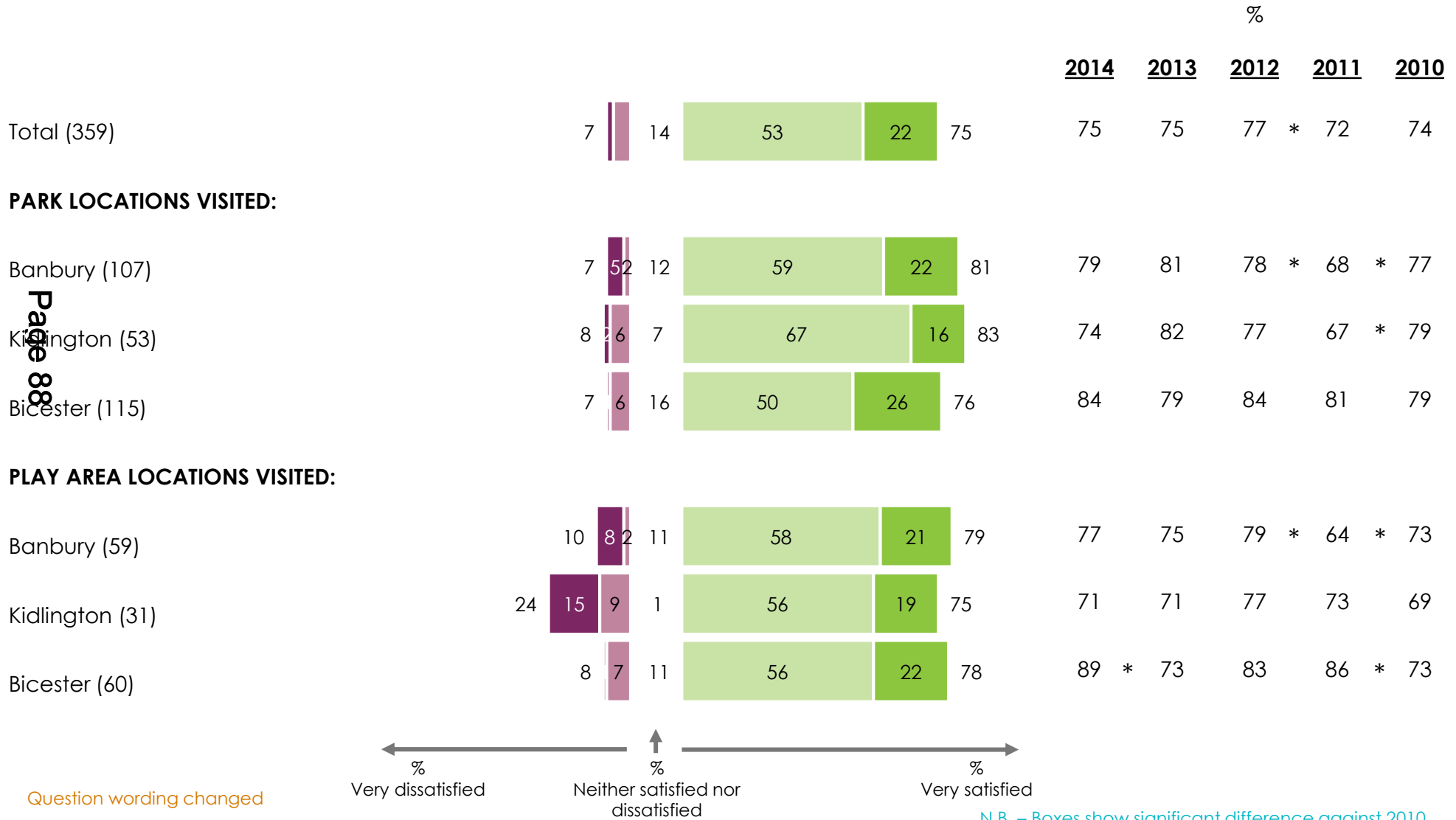
Q18a. In which, if any, of the following locations have you visited/ used the parks/ open spaces in the past 12 months?

Q18b. In which, if any, of the following locations have you visited/ used the play areas in the past 12 months?

Q19a. Roughly, how often do you visit the parks/ open spaces?

Q19b. And, roughly how often do you visit the play areas?

# Overall satisfaction with the way parks and play areas are looked after



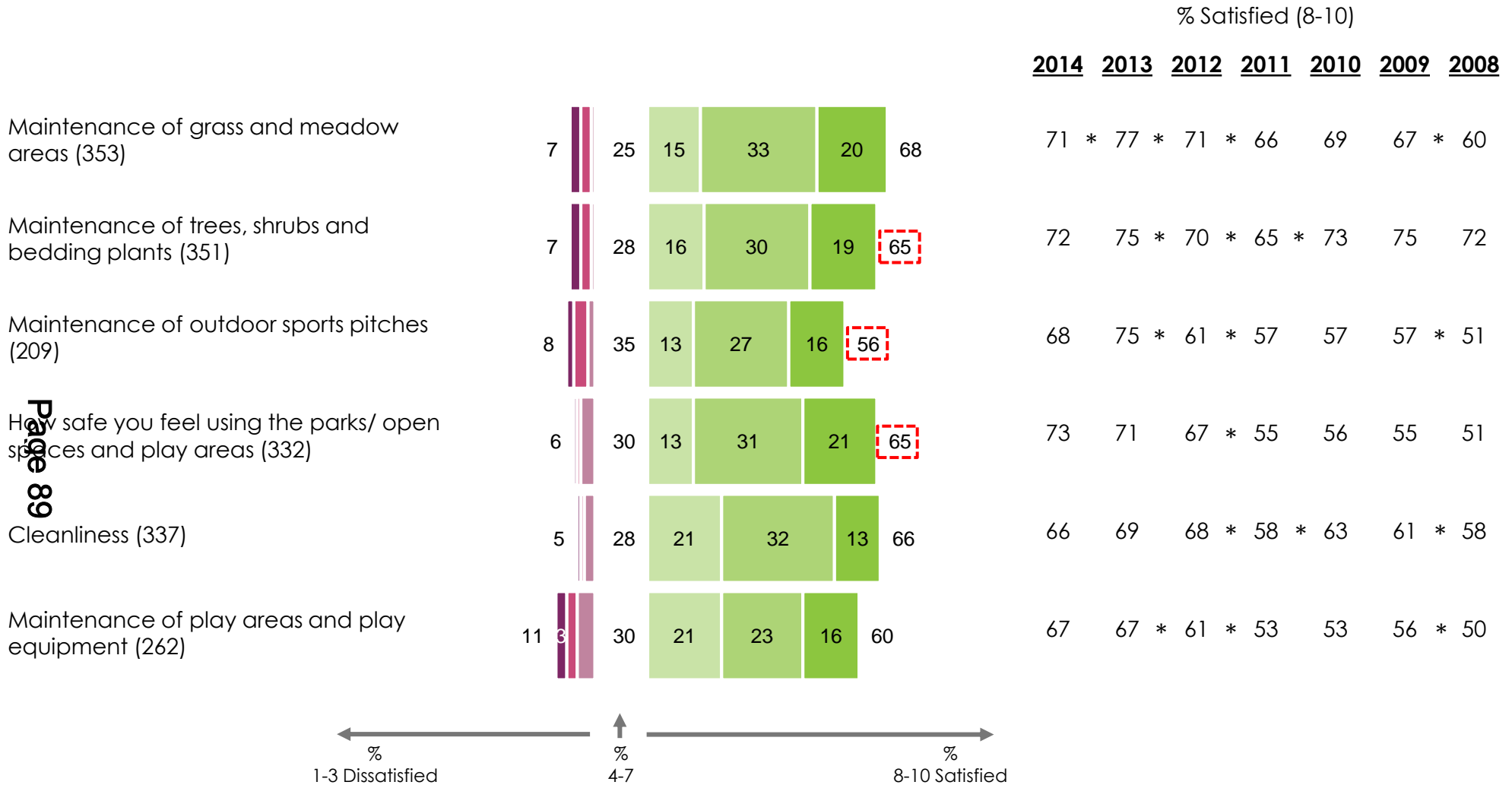
Question wording changed

Base: (Those who visited parks/play areas)

Q20. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way parks and play areas are looked after?

N.B. – Boxes show significant difference against 2010.  
\* shows significant difference against total

# Satisfaction with different aspects of the local parks and play areas



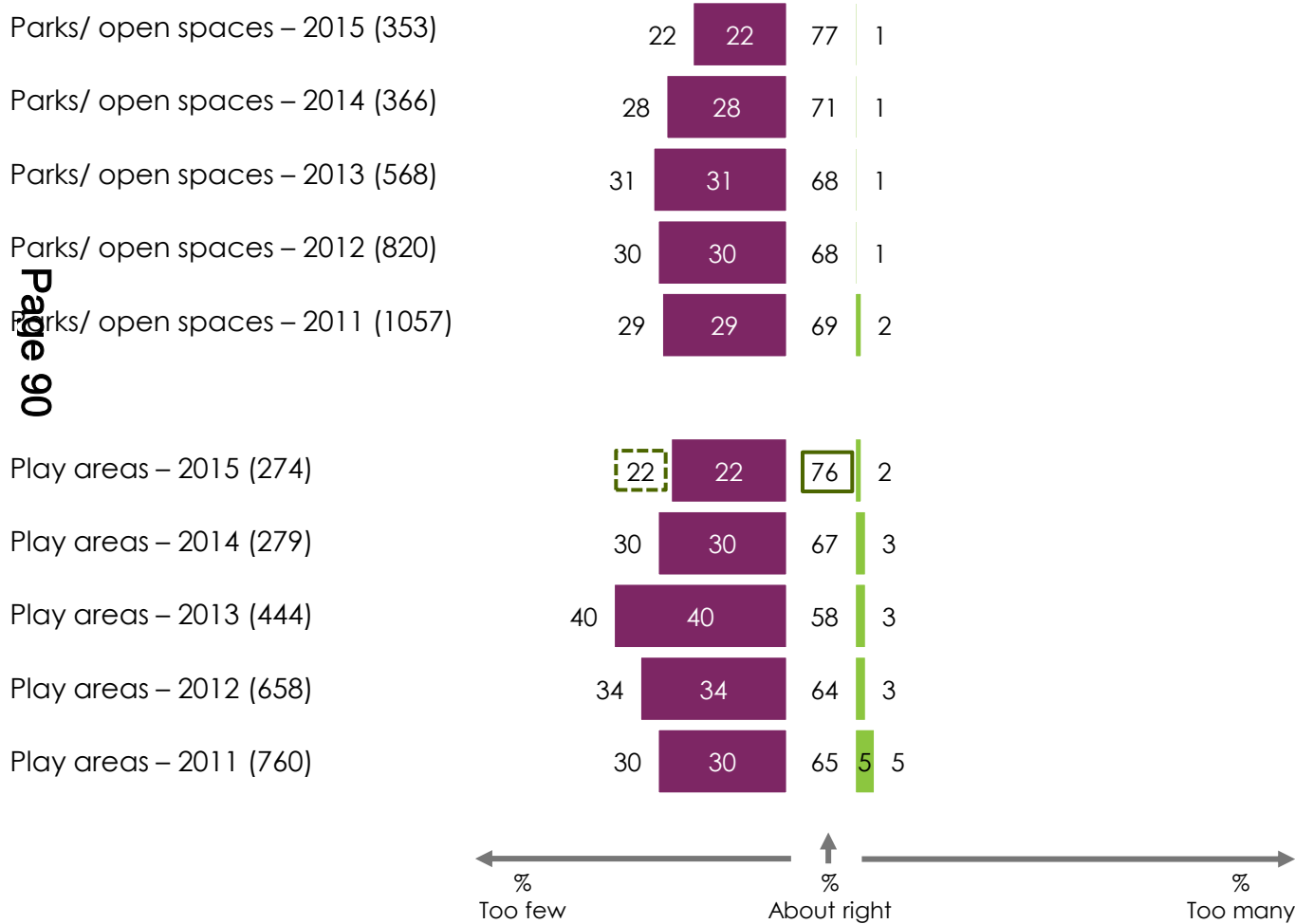
Question and response wording changed

Base: (Those answering)

Q21. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the local parks/ open spaces and play areas?

# Opinion on the number of parks/ open spaces and play areas

Page 90

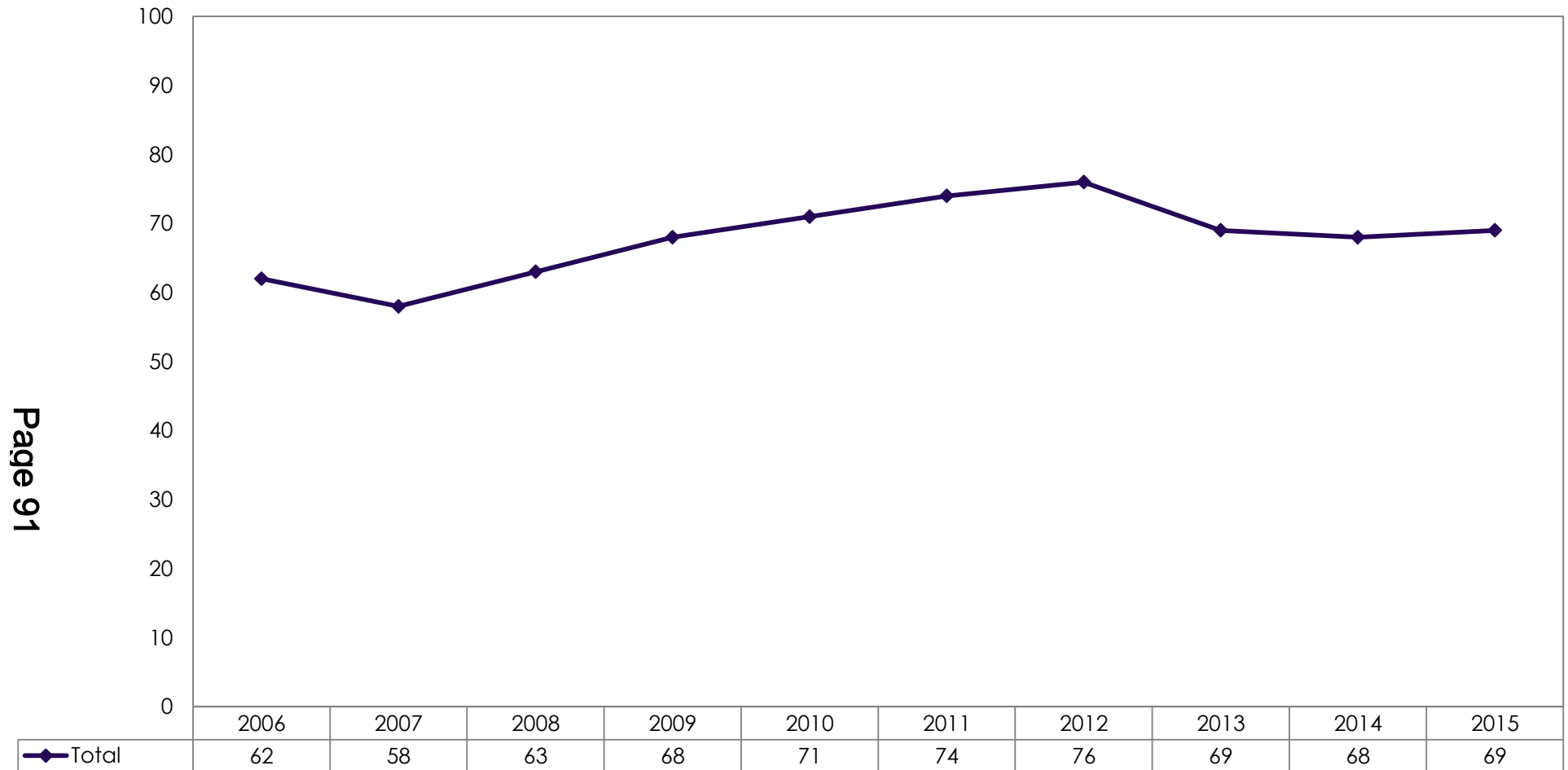


Base: (Those answering)

Q22a. Do you think that the number of parks/ open spaces available is about right, too few or too many?

Q22b. And, do you think that the number of play areas available is about right, too few or too many?

# Overall satisfaction with the leisure facilities provided by the council

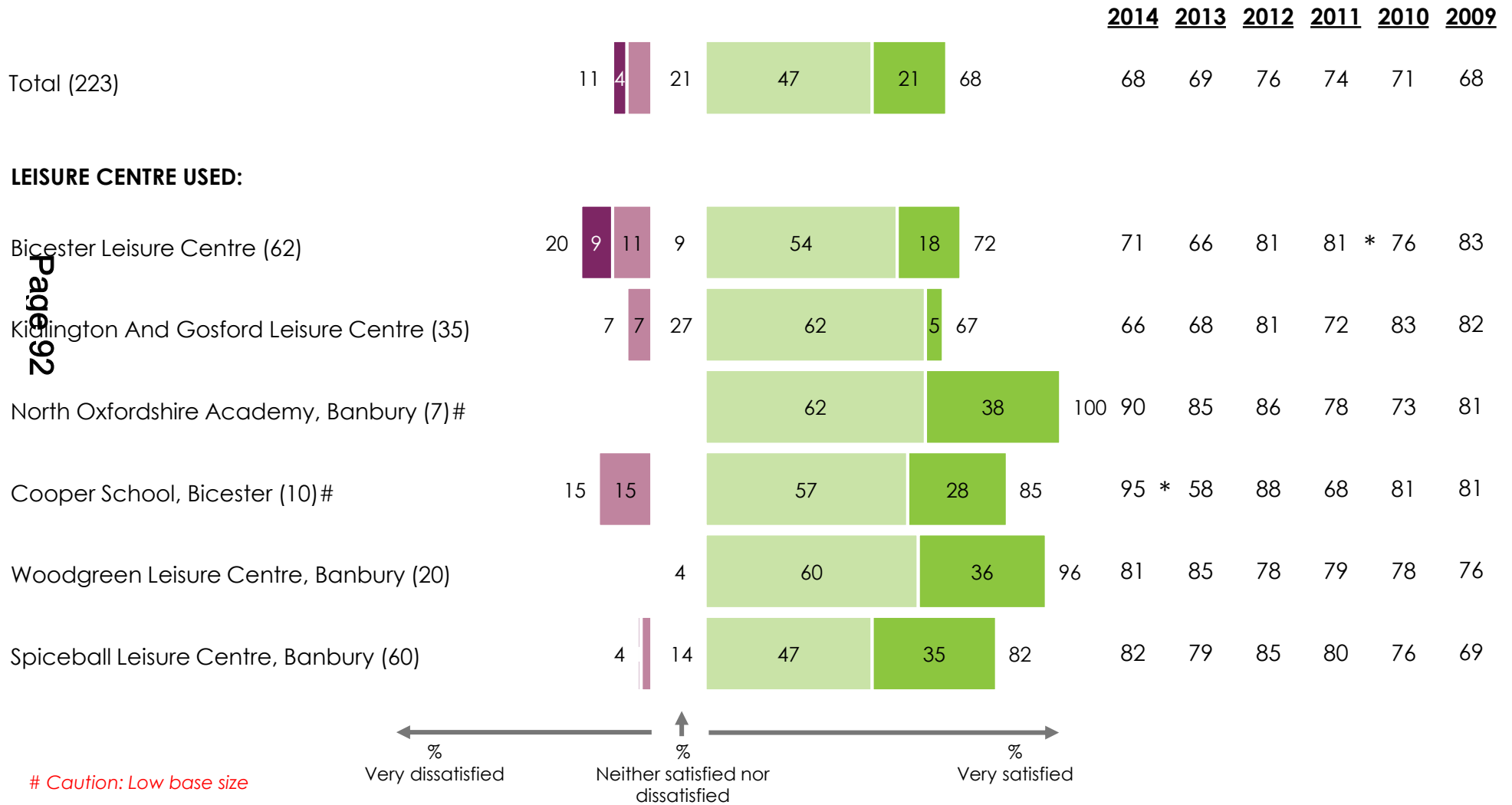


Base: (Those answering: 223)

Q24. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the leisure facilities provided by Cherwell District Council?

# Overall satisfaction with the leisure facilities provided by the council

% Very/ fairly satisfied



# Caution: Low base size

Base: (Those answering)

Q24. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the leisure facilities provided by Cherwell District Council?



# Satisfaction with different aspects of the local leisure facilities



Base: (Those answering)

Q25. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the local leisure facilities?

# Usage/ awareness of leisure activities provided by the council and interest in them

Page 94

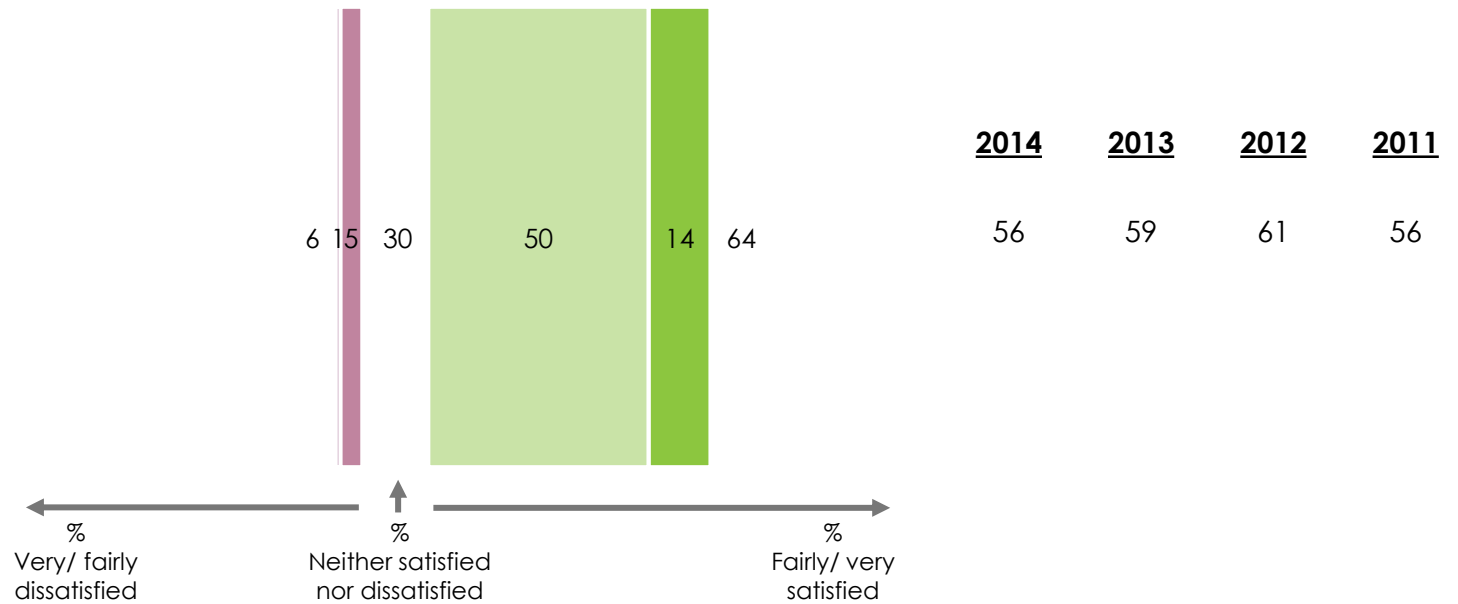
	Total	2014	2013	2012	2011
I am aware of the leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council, but have not used/ participated in any	42	42 *	34	37 *	28
I have used/ participated in leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council in the past 12 months	18	19	21	20	17
I am unaware of the leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council, but I would like to find out more	12	8 *	16 *	10 *	13
I am unaware of the leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council and I am not interested in finding out more	12	8 *	13	13	14
Don't know: 11% Not stated: 4%	%	(445)	(726)	(1018)	(1324)

Base: (All respondents: 431)

Q26. Which of the following statements best describes you?

# Overall satisfaction with the leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council

Total (206)

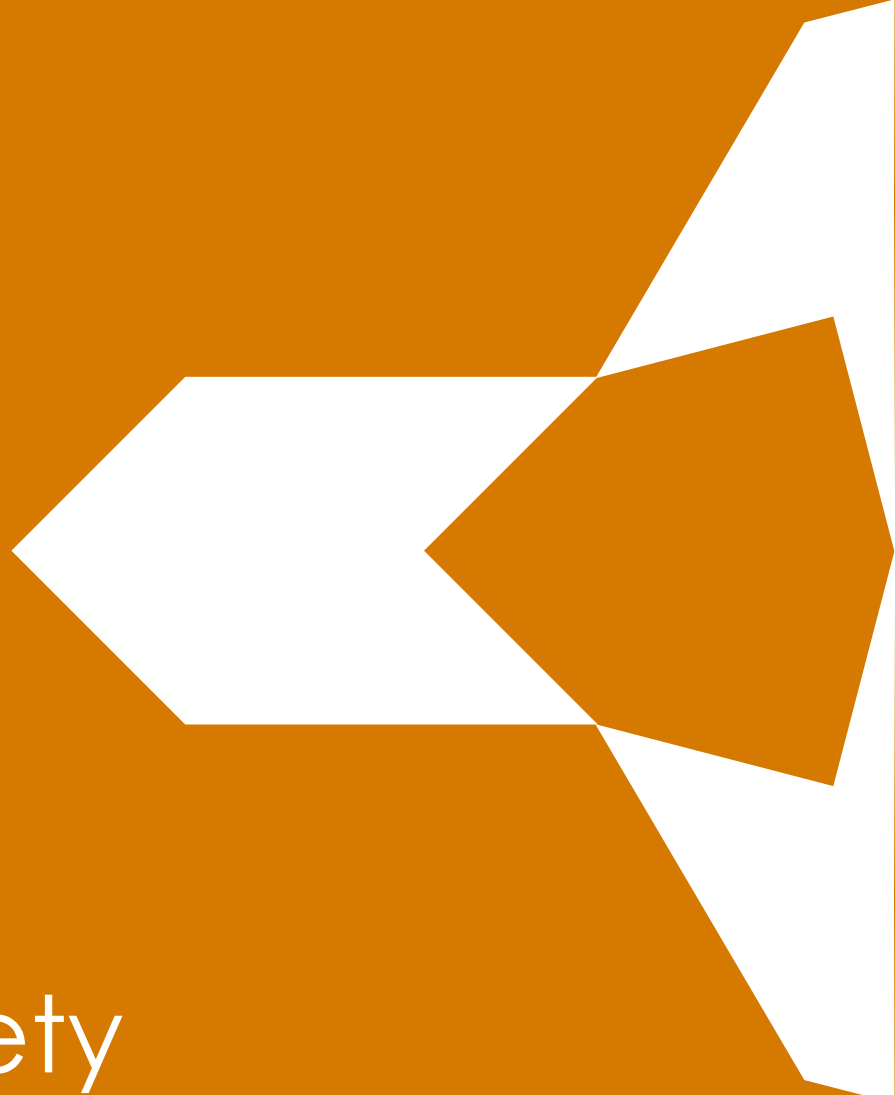


Page 95

Base: (Those answering)

Q27. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council?

# 6. Community Safety



# 6. Community Safety

## 6.1 Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance (I) (slides 61 - 64)

- Agreement that the police and local council were dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance had been increasing and reached 51% in 2014. However, 2015 sees this reduce to 44%. The District Council must ensure that any initiatives in place up until 2015 to tackle these issues are retained
- Although it is positive to note that a significantly higher proportion had not experienced any incidents of anti-social behaviour/ nuisance in 2015 (72% vs 65% 2014) and fewer reported instances of disorder to the police or Council than in 2014 in general, some concerns regarding public order remain

Page 97 Examination of the levels to which residents are satisfied with the way the council and its partners deal with anti-social behaviour and nuisance shows that dealing with vandalism and graffiti (26% dissatisfied), dealing with youths hanging around on the streets (31% dissatisfied), a visual presence of police (29% dissatisfied) and visual presence of community wardens (33% dissatisfied) would be beneficial towards reassuring residents of their safety

# 6. Community Safety

## 6.2 Fear of Crime (slide 65)

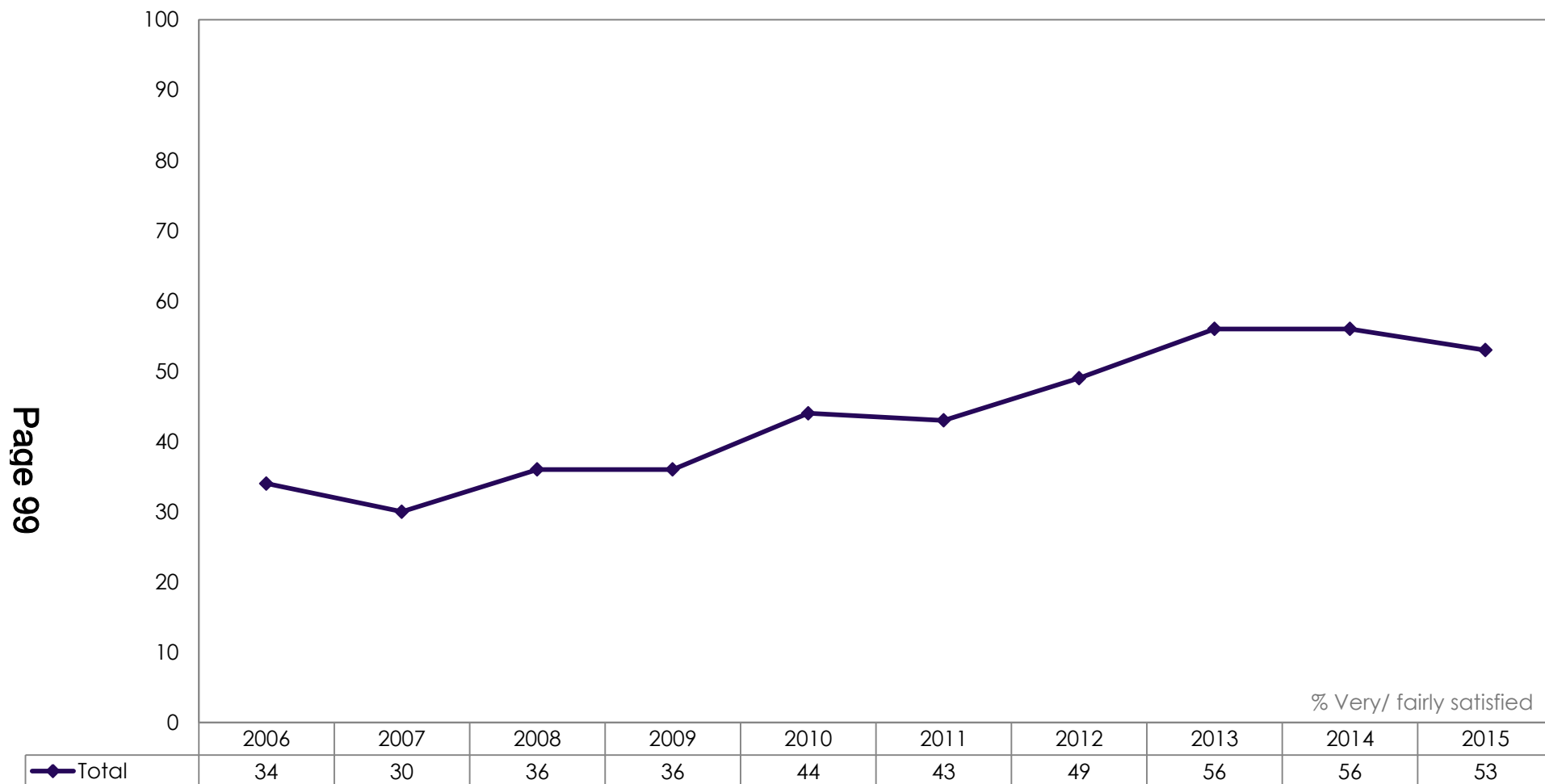
- People report high levels of personal safety while going about their business alone in the local community and in town centres during daylight hours
- Being alone at home either during daylight or after dark is also reported as causing little concern

Page 98

More concern relates to peoples' personal safety when alone outside the confines of their home after darkness falls. It is encouraging to note that the sense of personal safety when alone in the local town centre after dark improves to an all-time high 63% satisfied in 2015

- Although reporting a marginal decline since 2014 by 2% to 78% in 2015, the decrease in safety when out after dark within their 'local community' is not statistically significant

# Overall satisfaction with the council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance



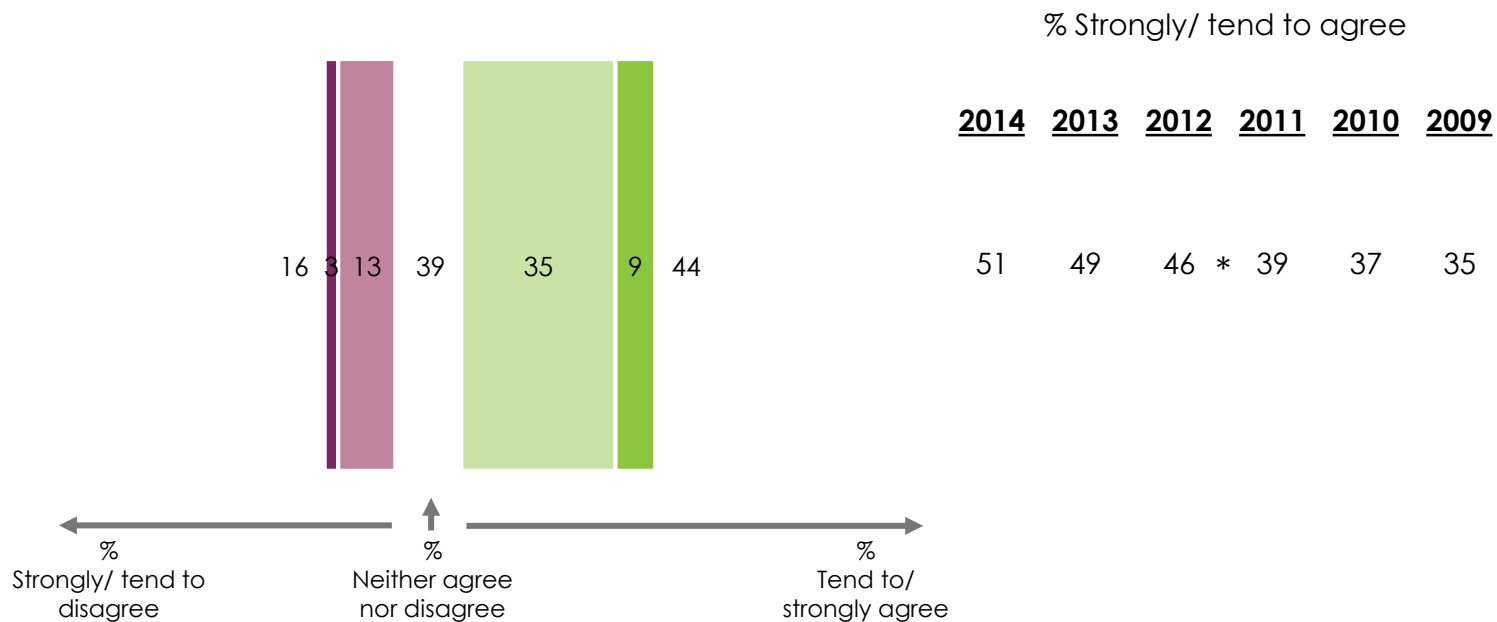
Base: (Those answering: 316)

Q28. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance?

# Agreement that the police and local council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance

Page 100

Total (286)

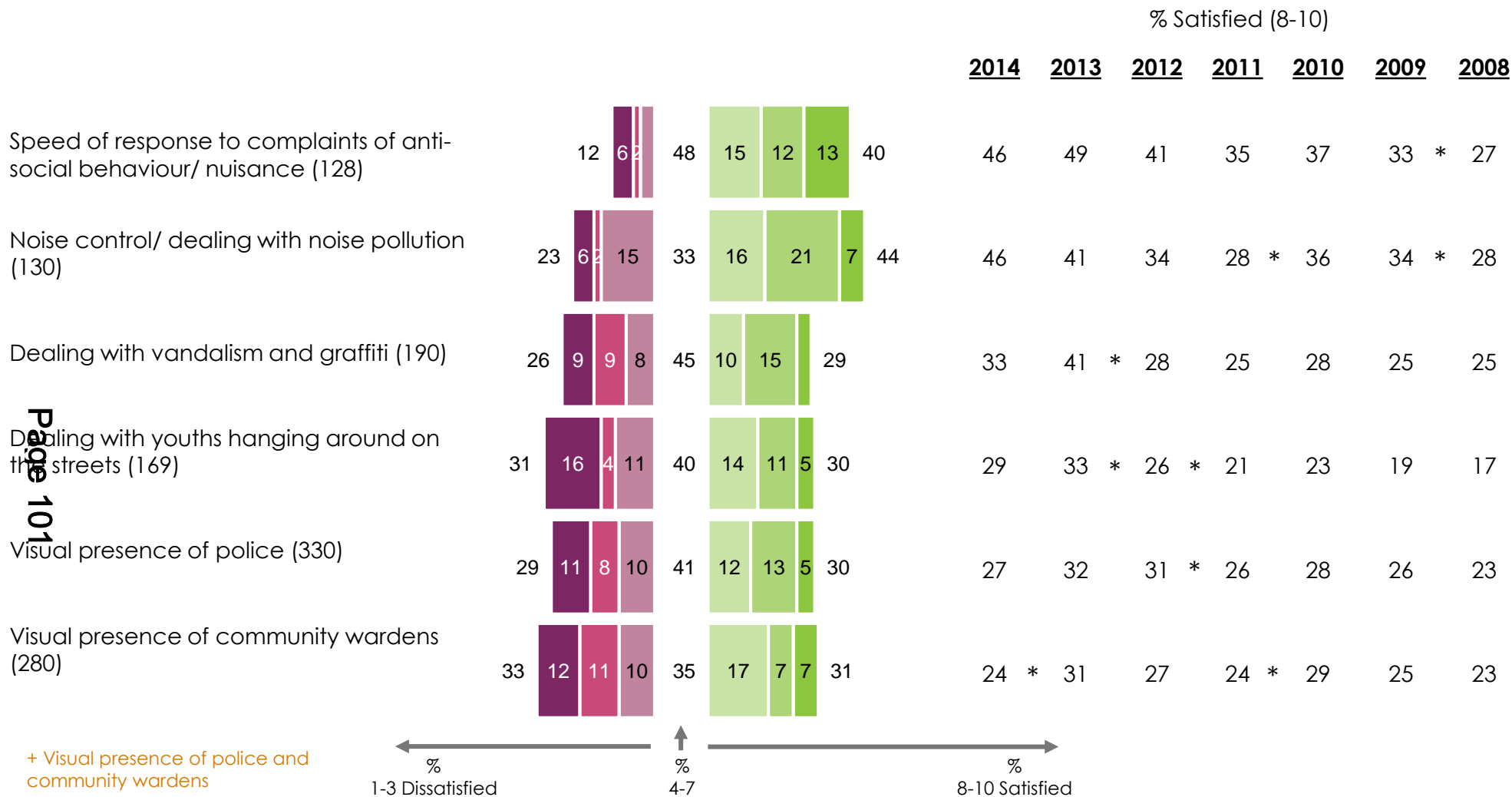


Base: (Those answering)

Q31. How much would you agree or disagree that the Police and Local Council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance in this area?



# Satisfaction with different aspects of the way the council and its partners deal with anti-social behaviour and nuisance



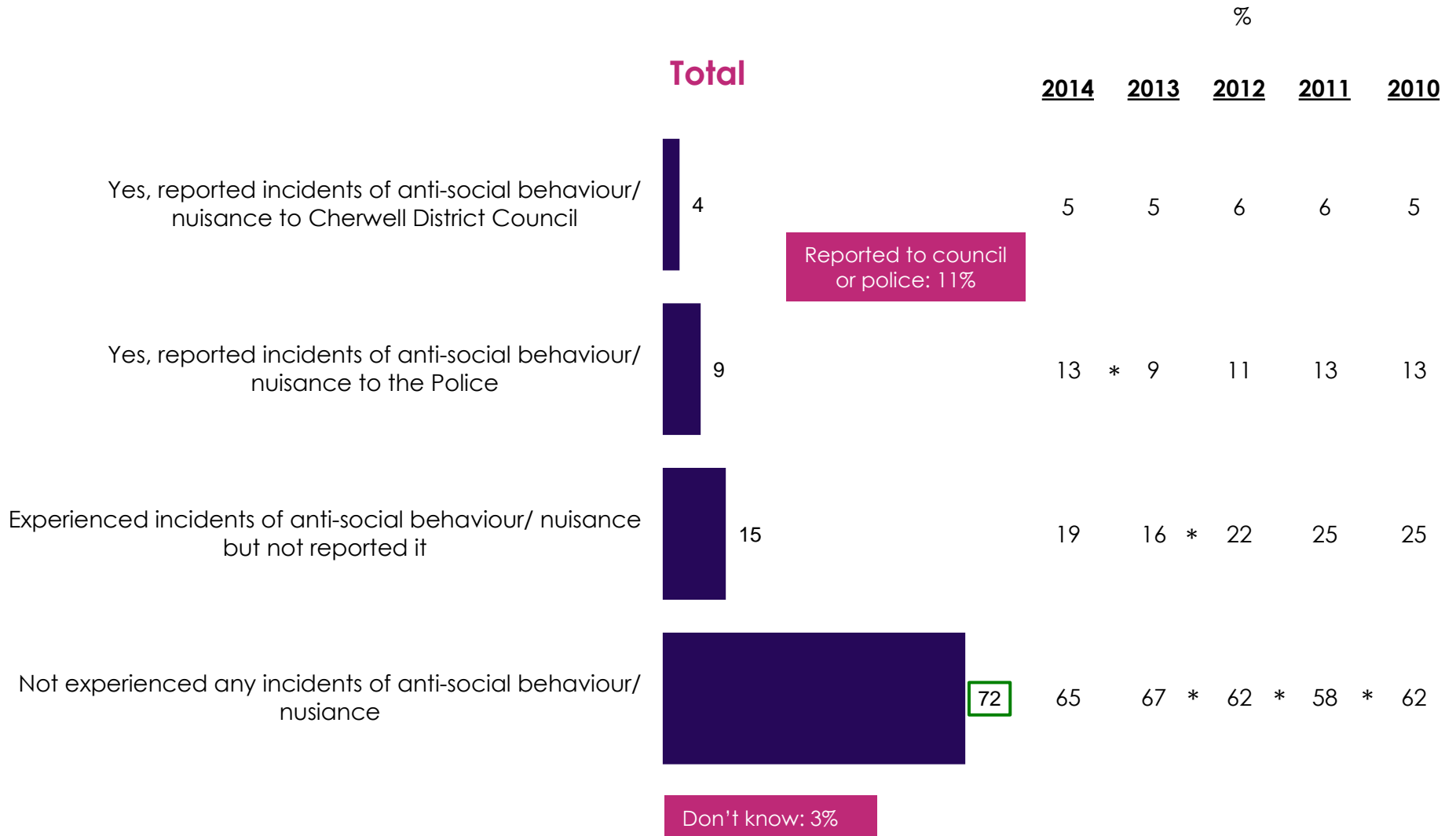
+ Visual presence of police and community wardens

Base: (Those answering)

Q30. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the way the Council and its partners deal with anti-social behaviour and nuisance?

# Whether reported any incidents of anti-social behaviour or nuisance in the past 12 months

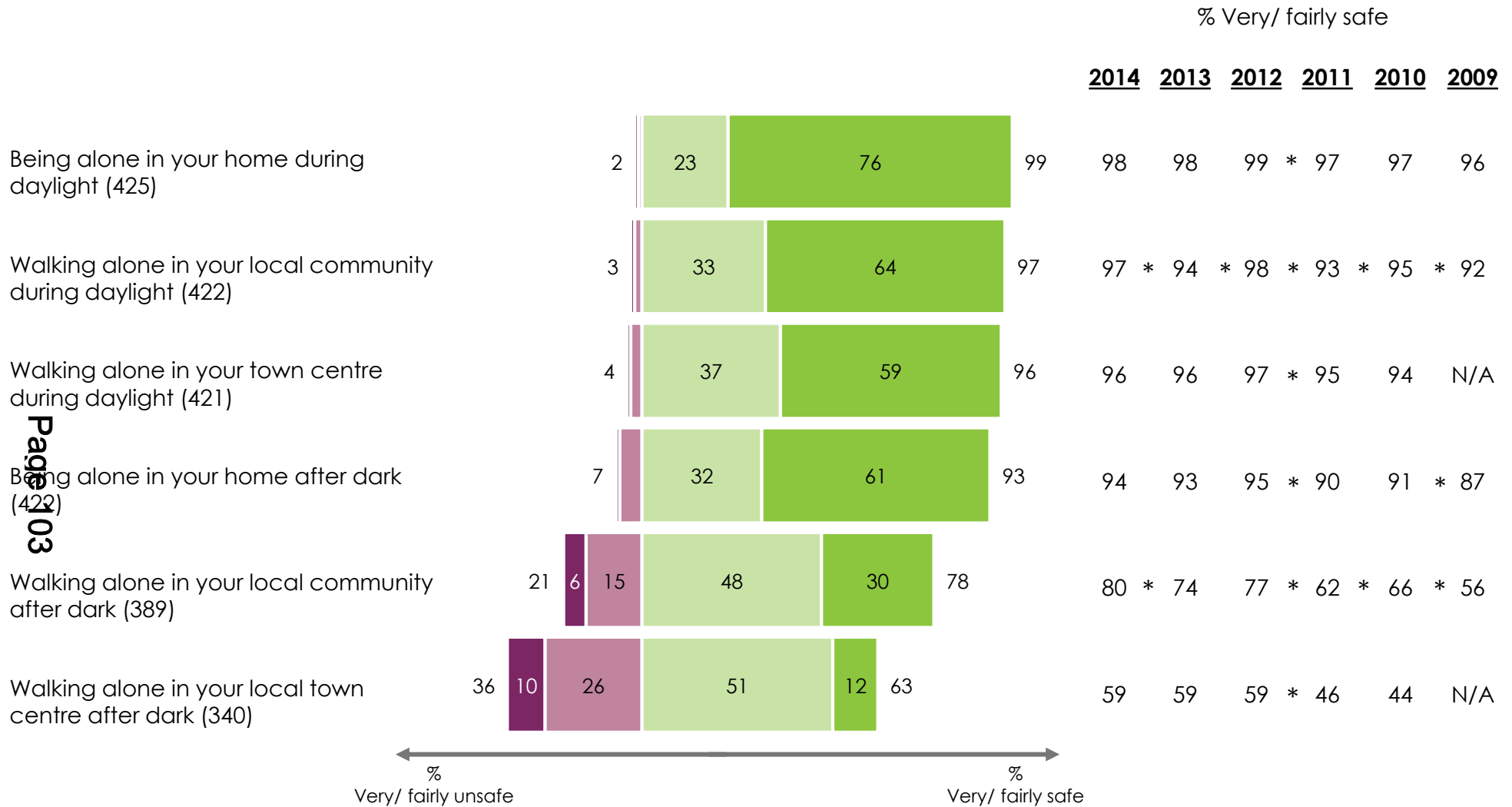
Page 102



Base: (All respondents: 431)

Q29. Have you reported any incidents of anti-social behaviour/ nuisance in your local area to either of the following in the past 12 months?

# Opinion of how safe you feel in the following situations



Base: (Those answering)

Q32. How safe or unsafe do you feel in each of the following situations?

# 7. Car Parking

# 7. Car Parking

## 7.1 Car Parking Usage (slide 68)

- Although a similar number of respondents overall (52%) said they had used Bicester car parks in 2015 compared with 2014 there are significant declines in usage for Banbury and Kidlington car parks (to 54% and 25% respectively)
- It will be interesting to monitor these locations ongoing to see if a trend emerges illustrating a change in behaviour

## 7.2 Satisfaction with Car Parking (slides 69 - 70)

Page 105 This downturn in usage might account for the slight improvement to ratings for car parking facilities overall (to 66%) through there being more space available

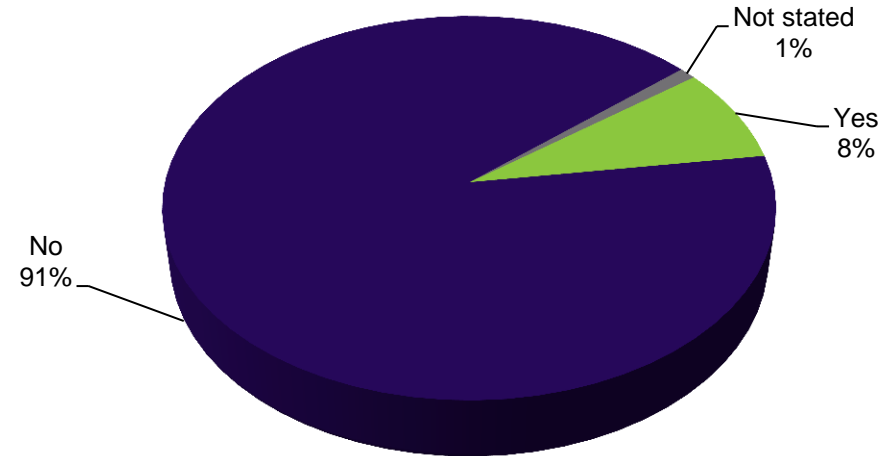
- 1 in 5 expressed dissatisfaction with payment via mobile devices in 2014 and this increases to nearly a quarter (24%) in 2015. Although the cost of parking remains the greatest cause of dissatisfaction, slightly fewer (33%) reported dissatisfaction in 2015 (compared with 36% in 2014)
- Is the cost/ method of paying affecting the decision to use the car parks in Kidlington and Banbury?

# Pay and display car parks used in the past 12 months and ownership of a season ticket or blue badge

## Car parks used

		<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Page 106	Banbury	54	62	60	62 * 67
	Bicester	52	51 *	39 *	50 * 40
	Kidlington	25	31	26	28 * 7
	None of these	12	8 *	14	13 * 18
	Not stated	0	2	1	N/A N/A
	%	(445)	(725)	(1018)	(1324)

## Own a season ticket or blue badge



	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Yes	8	8	8	8
No	89	90	92	89
Don't know	0	0	0	3
Not stated	2	2	0	0

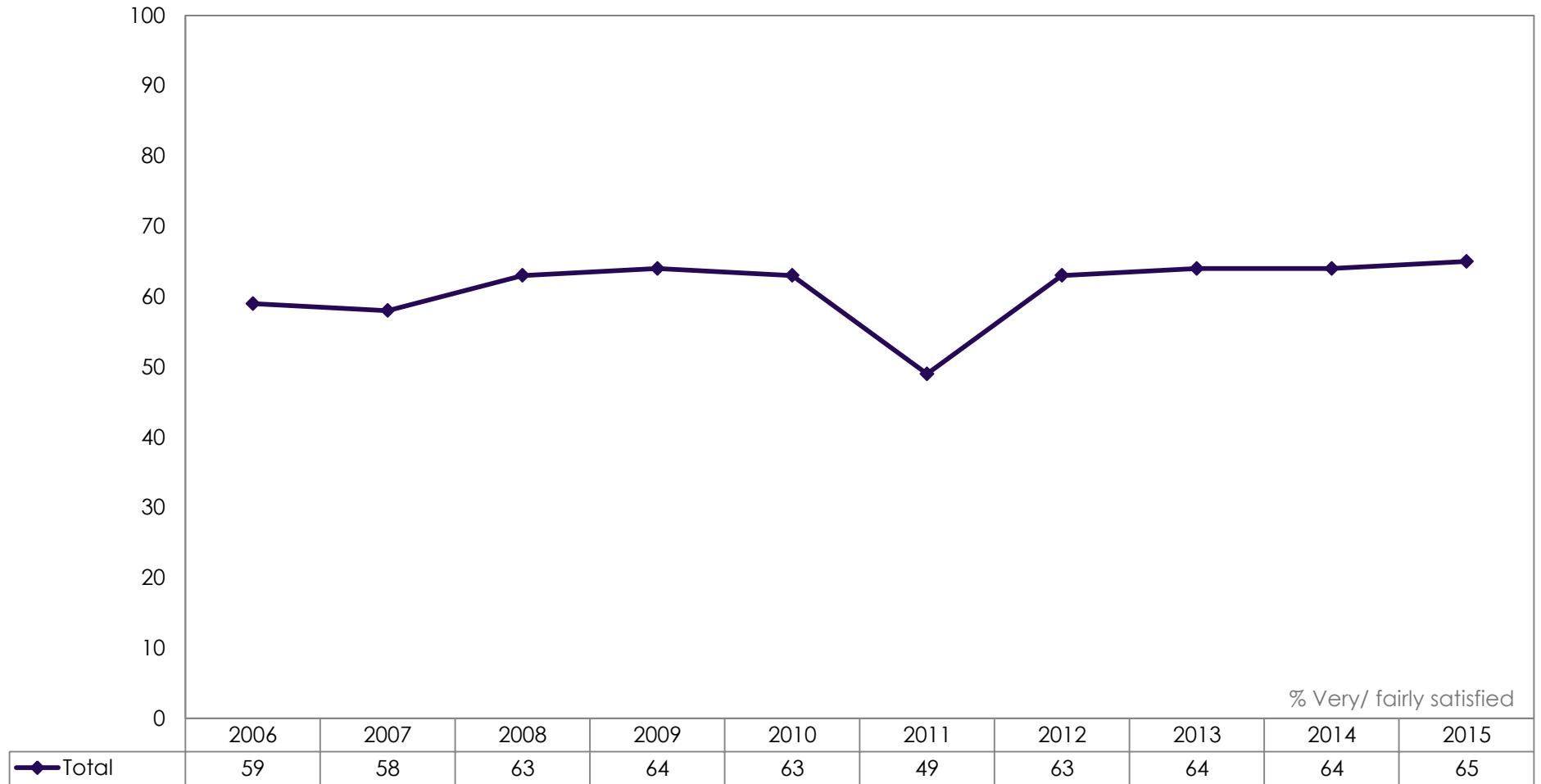
Base: (Those answering: 431)

Q33. In which, if any, of the following locations have you used the car parks operated by Cherwell District Council in the past 12 months?

Q34. Do you hold a season ticket or a blue badge for parking in Cherwell?

# Overall satisfaction with local car parking facilities

Page 107

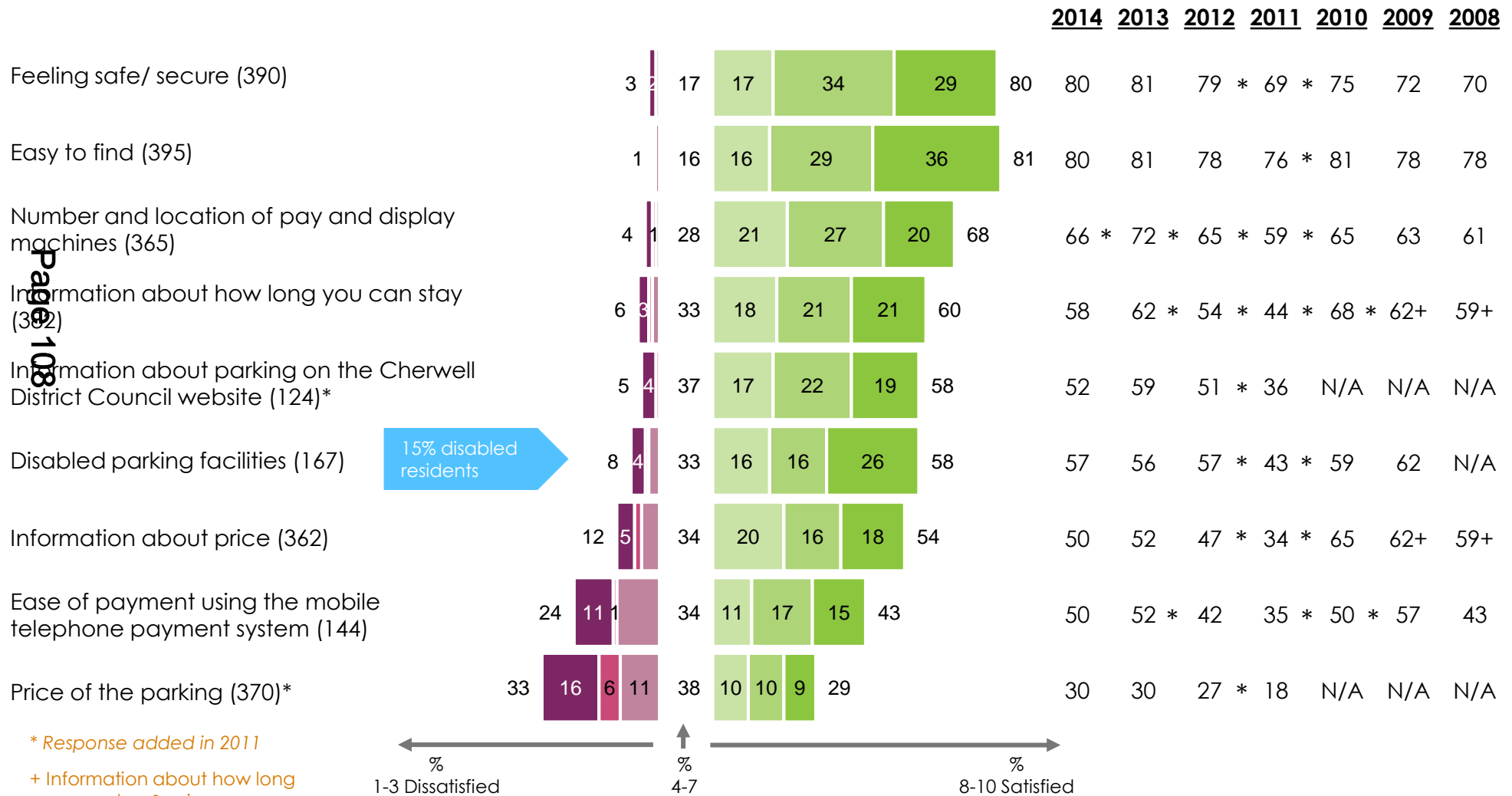


Base: (Those answering: 393)

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

# Satisfaction with different aspects of the local car parking facilities

% Satisfied (8-10)



Base: (Those answering)

Q36. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the local car parking facilities?



## 8. Cherwell as a place to live

# 8. Cherwell as a place to live

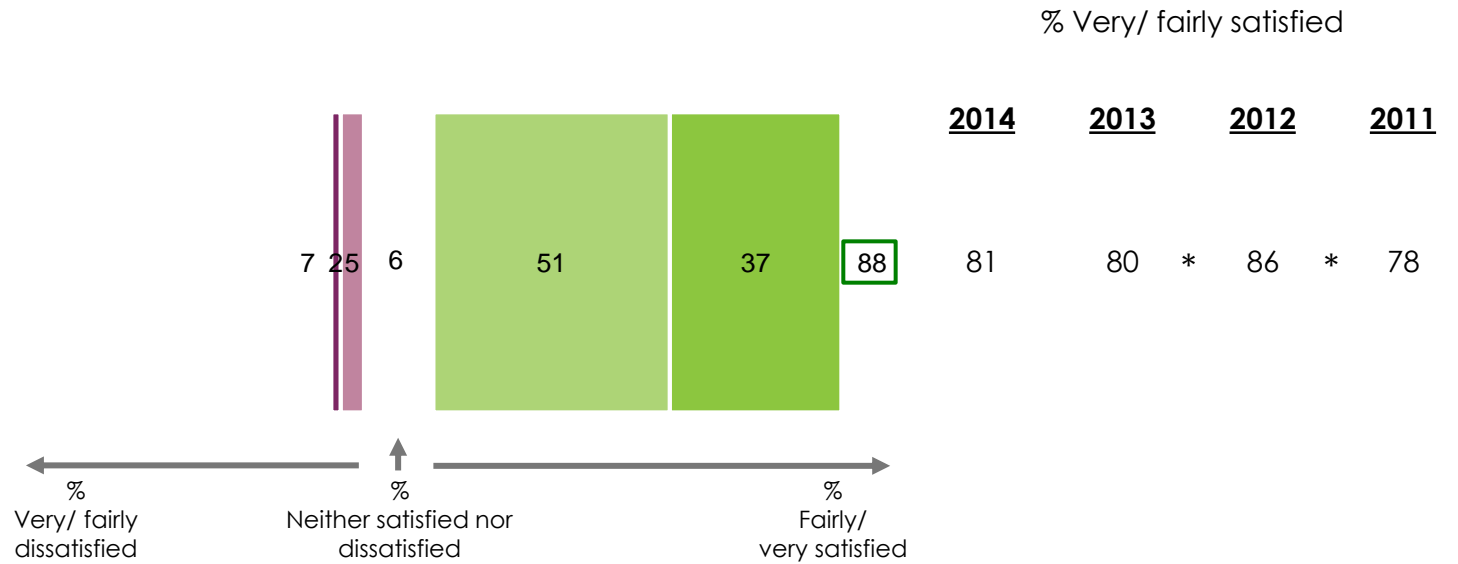
## 8.1 Cherwell as a place to live (slides 73 & 74)

- Satisfaction overall with the local area as a place to live currently stands at 88%, its highest point to-date
- Cherwell District Council has made significant gains in improving its satisfaction ratings among rural dwellers in 2015; 49% are satisfied compared with 39% in 2014
- Potentially influenced by improvements to the economy and there being more jobs available, there is also a significant movement among those rating location of jobs positively, from 28% in 2014 to 40% in 2015
- Housing remains a core concern among residents of the Cherwell district and there is some growing concern over how a balance will be struck between 'protecting rural environments and managing new development'. Satisfaction for this aspect of living in the region is just 22%, its lowest level to-date, while 24% report dissatisfaction here
- The location of housing to buy or rent at an affordable price is rated at its lowest level since 2008 (17%) in 2015, with 38% expressing concerns. The availability of homes to rent or purchase at an affordable price for most people is of concern for 37% of residents. However, it is worth noting that about half (45% and 49% respectively) of those answering these two measures chose to rate 4 – 7



# Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

Total (426)



Page 111

Base: (Those answering)

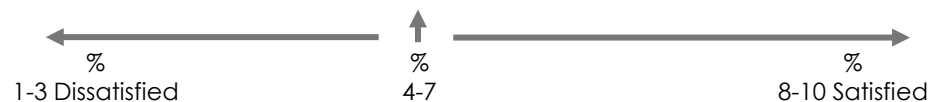
Q1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



# Satisfaction with different aspects of living in Cherwell

% Satisfied (8-10)

						<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>				
How your local neighbourhood looks and feels (426)	5	1	29	18	30	17	65	64	65	64 *	55 *	61 *	56	54		
Having the opportunity to volunteer (290)*	6	1	37	17	16	22	55	59	56 *	46	44	N/A	N/A	N/A		
How new buildings look (416)	7	1	43	24	22	5	51	46 *	55 *	46	46 *	52	49	45		
Public transport provision (393)*	14	5	3	6	40	17	17	12	46	46 *	53 *	46	44	N/A	N/A	N/A
How town centres look and feel (422)	6	2	44	24	21	5	50	50	50 *	45	42 *	53 *	48	44		
How older buildings are looked after (411)	5	1	50	21	17	4	44	46	47	45 *	37 *	46	42	40		
Being able to have your say (390)*	10	4	40	21	17	12	50	46	45 *	37	34	N/A	N/A	N/A		
The provision of Council services in rural areas (324)	14	5	3	6	47	19	12	18	49	39	40	38 *	30	35	31	N/A
How a balance is achieved between protecting rural environments whilst managing new development (370)	24	10	6	8	55	11	7	22	27 *	34	32	28	30	27	N/A	
Town centres that attract people to shop (412)	18	8	4	6	53	15	10	29	31	33 *	28	27 *	37 *	31	35	
Location of jobs (254)	15	5	4	6	45	19	13	8	40	28	27	24	20 *	24	24	25
Location of homes to rent or purchase at an affordable price for most people (292)	38	18	12	8	45	12	17	19	19	19	18 *	22 *	16	17		
Availability of homes to rent or purchase at an affordable price for most people (296)	37	19	9	9	49	6	6	13	14 *	23 *	18	17 *	21 *	16	14	
Availability of good quality jobs (249)	19	6	9	48	14	14	33	30 *	21 *	16	15 *	21	20 *	25		



\* Response added in 2011

Base: (Those answering)

Q2. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following across the District?

The page features a solid purple background. On the left side, there are three large, white, stylized arrow shapes pointing towards the right. The top arrow is partially cut off by the edge of the page. The middle arrow is the largest and most prominent, with its tip pointing towards the right. The bottom arrow is also partially cut off. The text '9. The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities' is centered on the right side of the page in a white, sans-serif font.

# 9. The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities

# 9. The Local Economy and Council Budget Priorities

## 9.1 Perceptions of economy (slides 77 & 78)

- In most areas, the post general election climate surrounding the budget deficit remains similar to that of 2014. The nation's budget deficit remains a strong cause of concern in the District with 80% saying they are fairly/ very concerned
- Despite these concerns, it is positive to note that 55% trust that Cherwell District Council will do what's right for residents in the current economic climate, a significant improvement on the 42% of 2014 and perhaps an indication of a more settled post-election confidence in the District Council

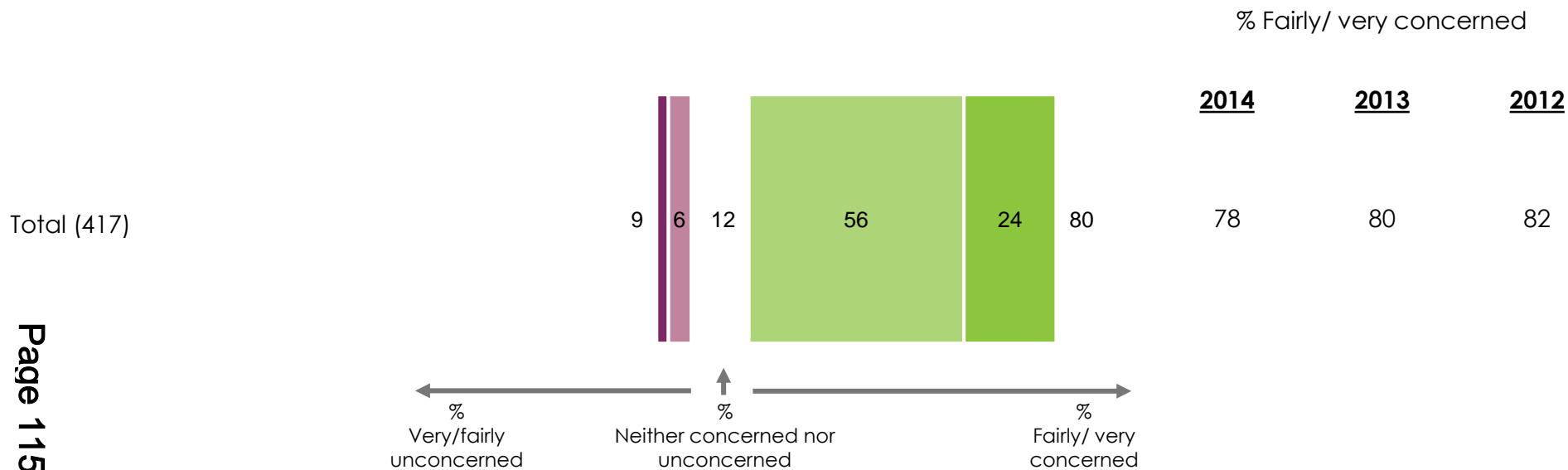
Page 114

Although agreement changes little since 2014 that the 'economic climate in Cherwell is better than it was 12 months ago' (41% agreeing in 2015 vs. 40% in 2014), results show that a significant decrease in numbers agreeing that their household has been affected by the public spending cuts has occurred, 28% agreeing in 2015 compared with 43% in 2014. However, 38% of participants continue to say that spending cuts have affected them in 2015

## 9.2 Service priorities (slides 79 & 80)

- Whilst Conjoint analysis results demonstrate the same top five key services to safeguard as in 2014; there has been some movement in the position of these five factors.
- Specifically; providing affordable housing was rated as the most important service to maintain in 2015 (having been 4<sup>th</sup> last year). Scores for the top four factors are very close (Household waste collection, Household recycling and Street Cleaning are the other three factors in the top four).
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance drops from 3<sup>rd</sup> most important in 2014 to 5<sup>th</sup> in 2015 but there is now a clear 'gap' between this and the top four factors in terms of overall importance.

# Concern regarding the nation's budget deficit



Base: (Those answering)

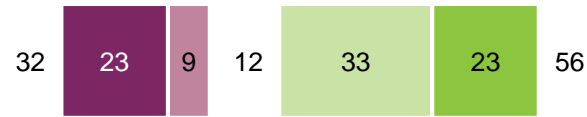
Q41. The nation's budget deficit and the need to rein in public spending are being discussed extensively. Overall, how concerned, if at all, are you about the nation's budget deficit?

# Agreement with statements regarding the nation's budget deficit

% Satisfied (8-10)

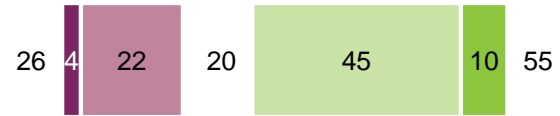
**2014**    **2013**    **2012**

The nation's budget deficit - we are all in it together (412)



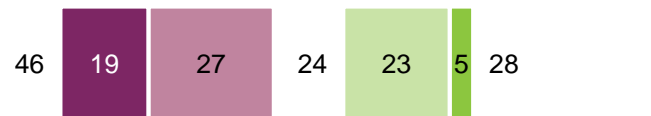
52    55 \*    61

Council's don't need to cut services as enough money can be saved through efficiency savings (394)



59 \*    50 \*    56

I would rather pay more Council Tax to maintain services (410)



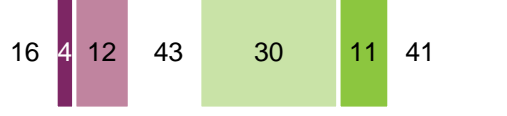
27 \*    18    18

I trust Cherwell District Council to do what's right for residents in the current economic climate (405)



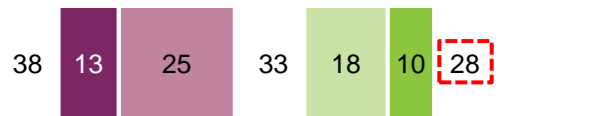
42    47 \*    42

The economic climate in Cherwell is better than it was 12 months ago (329)



40 \*    27 \*    21

My household/ I have been personally affected by the public spending cuts (395)



43 \*    37    40



Base: (Those answering)

Q42. Below is a list of statements that people have made about the nation's budget deficit. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



# Budget consultation - key services to be maintained

## Conjoint Analysis



Base: (Those answering: 327)

Q43. It is important for Cherwell District Council to understand which services are most important to residents in the current economic climate. From the following pairs of Council Services, which would you prioritise for maintaining the current level of service provision?

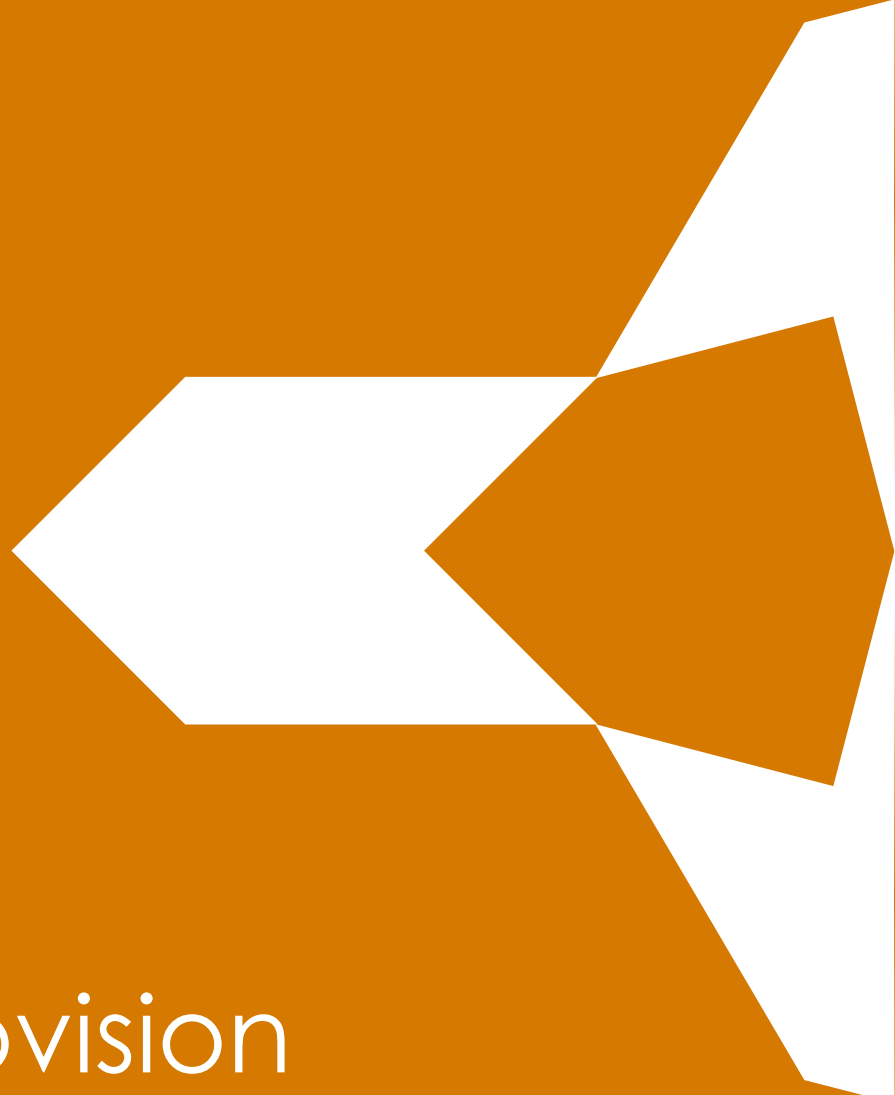
# Budget consultation - key services to be maintained

## Conjoint Analysis – Positioning Comparison

		<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
	Providing affordable housing	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
	Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Household waste collection	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
	Street cleaning and tackling of environmental crime	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Page 118	Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance	5 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
	Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area	6 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
	Planning policy	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
	Provision of housing support and advice	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
	Recycling centres	9 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
	Activities for young people	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
	Parks and playgrounds	11 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
	Development control	12 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
	Trading standards and monitoring the food hygiene of restaurants	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
	Sports and leisure facilities and activities	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
Town centre development	15 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	
Grants for voluntary and community groups	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	
Arts and cultural services	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	
	<b>Base:</b>	<b>(327)</b>	<b>(445)</b>	<b>(724)</b>	<b>(1018)</b>

Q43. It is important for Cherwell District Council to understand which services are most important to residents in the current economic climate. From the following pairs of Council Services, which would you prioritise for maintaining the current level of service provision?

# 10. Information Provision



# 10. Information Provision

## 10.1 Obtaining Information about Cherwell District Council (slide 83)

- Residents obtaining most of their information about Cherwell District Council from official Council sources falls slightly since 2014 and are even less likely to obtain it from local media than they were in 2014

**Page 120** Cherwell Link remains the most popular source of information about Cherwell District Council. About two-thirds (67%) of residents say that they obtain most of their information about Cherwell District Council using this source. This is a higher proportion than in 2009 (56%) and the second highest level recorded to-date

- Similarly, the proportion using the Council website to obtain most of their information about the Council has fallen back to levels seen prior to a high in 2014 (25% currently vs 37% in 2014), however, it is worth noting that 54% of participants had actually used the Council website so it remains an important information source
- There has been a decline in the proportions using local media and word of mouth:
  - Local newspapers (0% vs 34% in 2013)
  - Local radio (0% vs 13% in 2013)
  - Local TV news (0% vs 11% in 2013)
- Social media is not something to be ignored, with 1 in 10 using Twitter/ Facebook to obtain most of their information about the Council

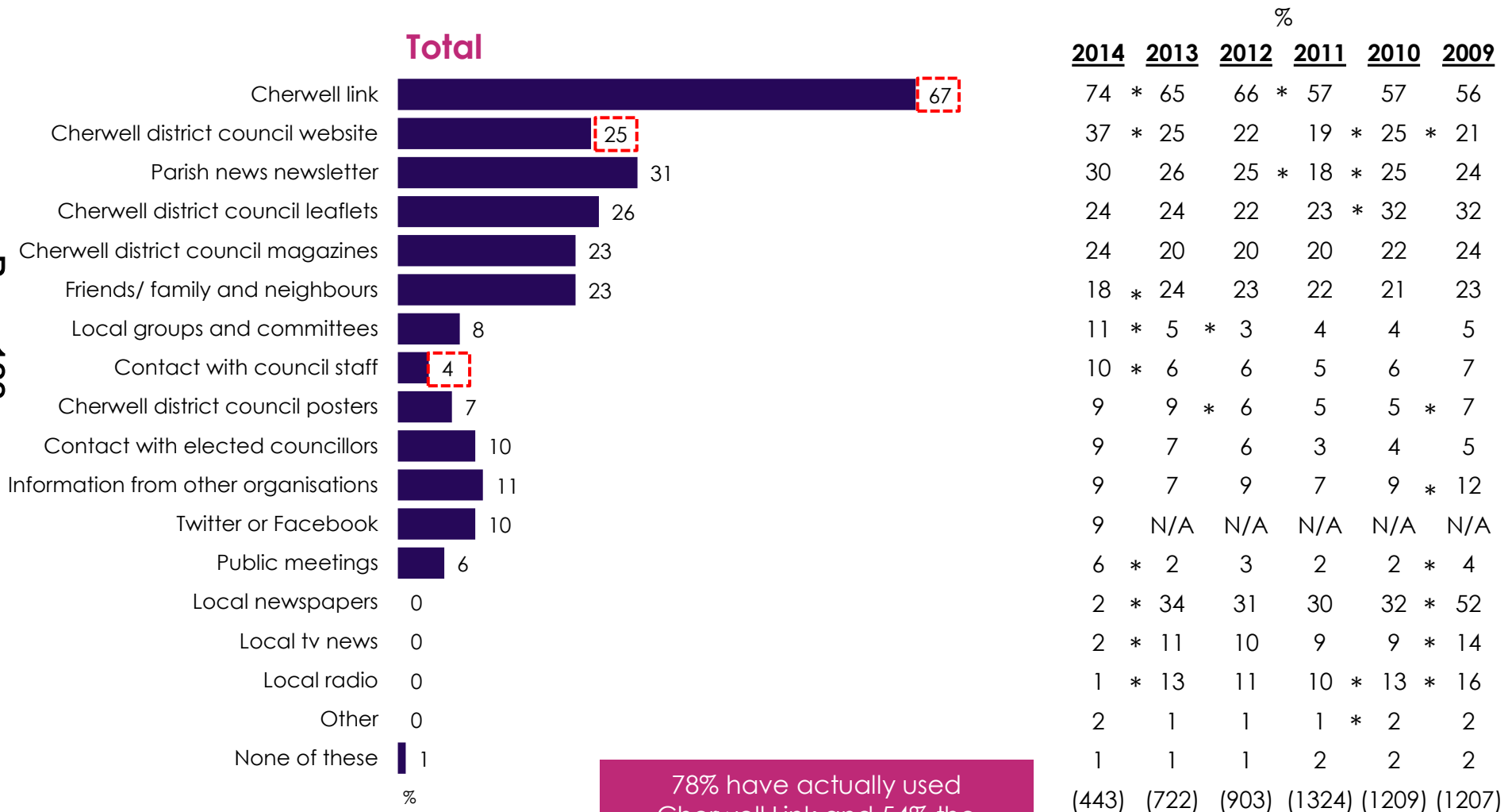
# 10. Information Provision

## 10.2 Information Provision (slides 84 - 88)

- In a climate where budgets and public spending is under heavy scrutiny it is important that information is easy to access in order to retain transparency, particularly as trust in the Council to do what's right for residents has improved in 2015. A decrease in satisfaction in how well informed Cherwell District Council keeps residents about the benefits and services it provides is noted. From a high of 80% in 2014 it reduces to 72% in 2015; still above any rating prior to 2014 but a movement to monitor so it does not become a negative trend
- Decreases in the numbers satisfied with the Cherwell Link/ District Council website appear to be a result of more residents choosing to remain impartial on these two measures
- The benefit of keeping people informed about council activities is demonstrated with 90% of those who consider themselves very/ fairly well informed saying they are satisfied with the services provided by Cherwell District Council in 2015
- Transparency and information also has considerable benefits in forming positive associations with value for money among residents. An all-time high 68% of those who feel they are 'very/ fairly well informed' agreed that Cherwell District Council offered value for money in 2015

# Most popular source of information about Cherwell District Council

Page 122



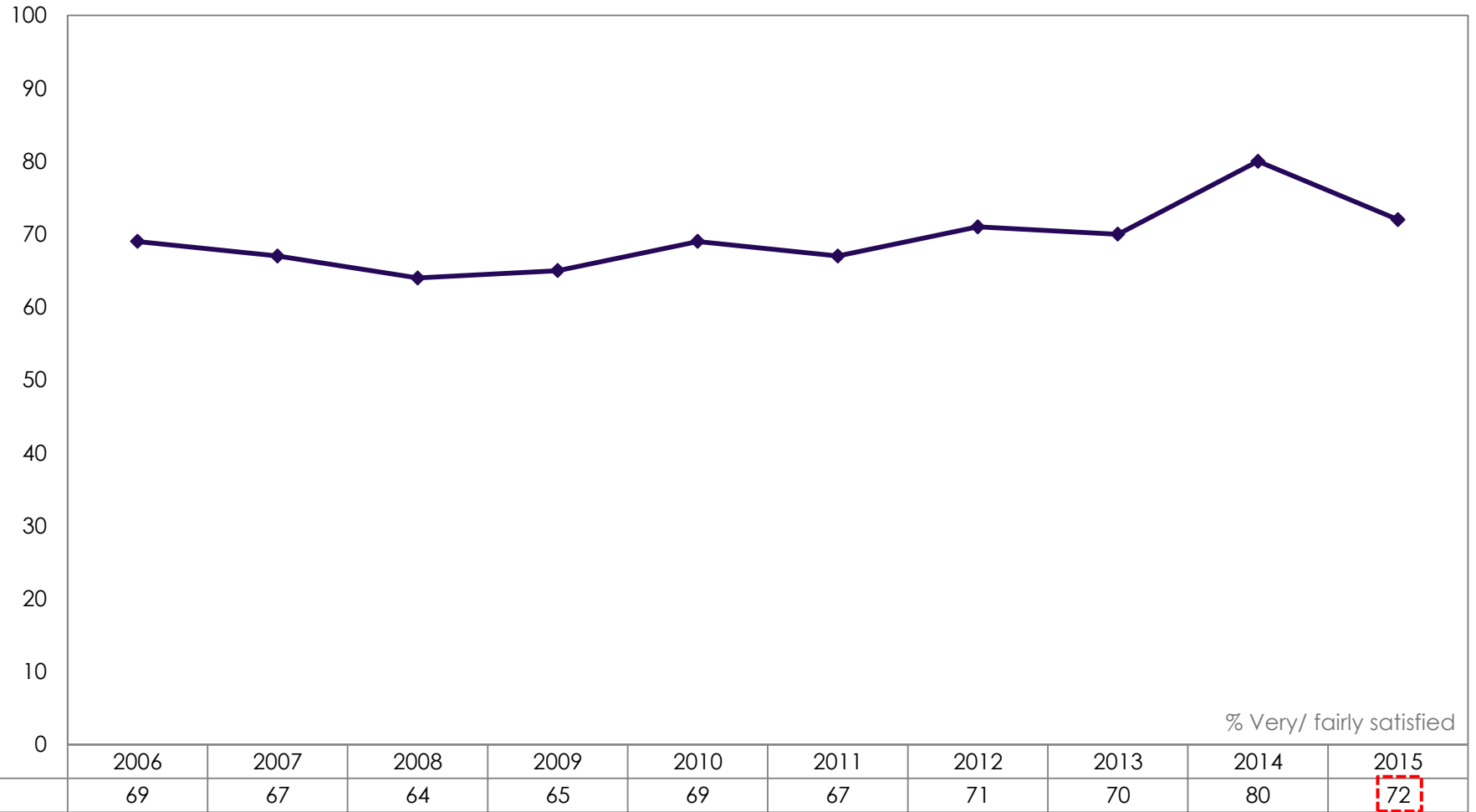
78% have actually used Cherwell Link and 54% the Council website

Base: (Those answering: 424)

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

# How well informed Cherwell District Council keeps residents about the benefits and services it provides

Page 123



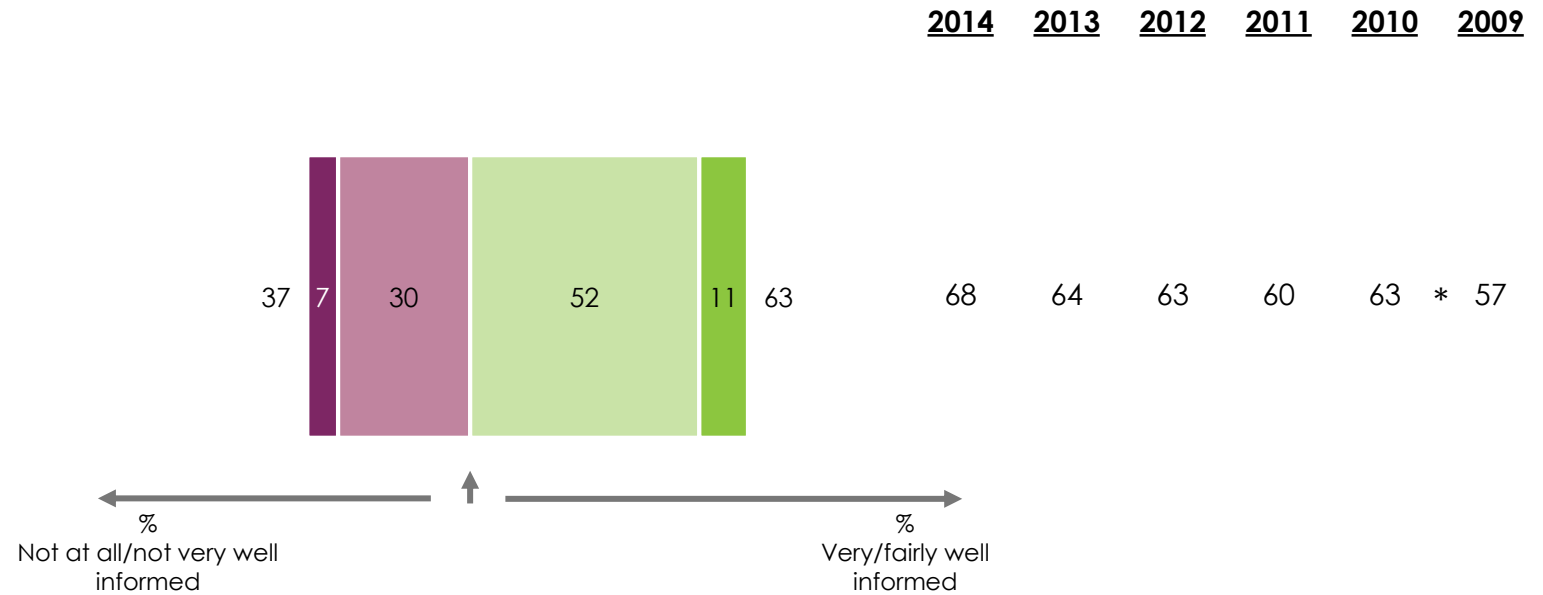
Base: (Those answering: 404)

Q38. How well informed, if at all, does Cherwell District Council keep residents about the benefits and services it provides?

# How well informed Cherwell District Council keeps residents about what the council spends money on

Page 124

Total (384)



Base: (Those answering)

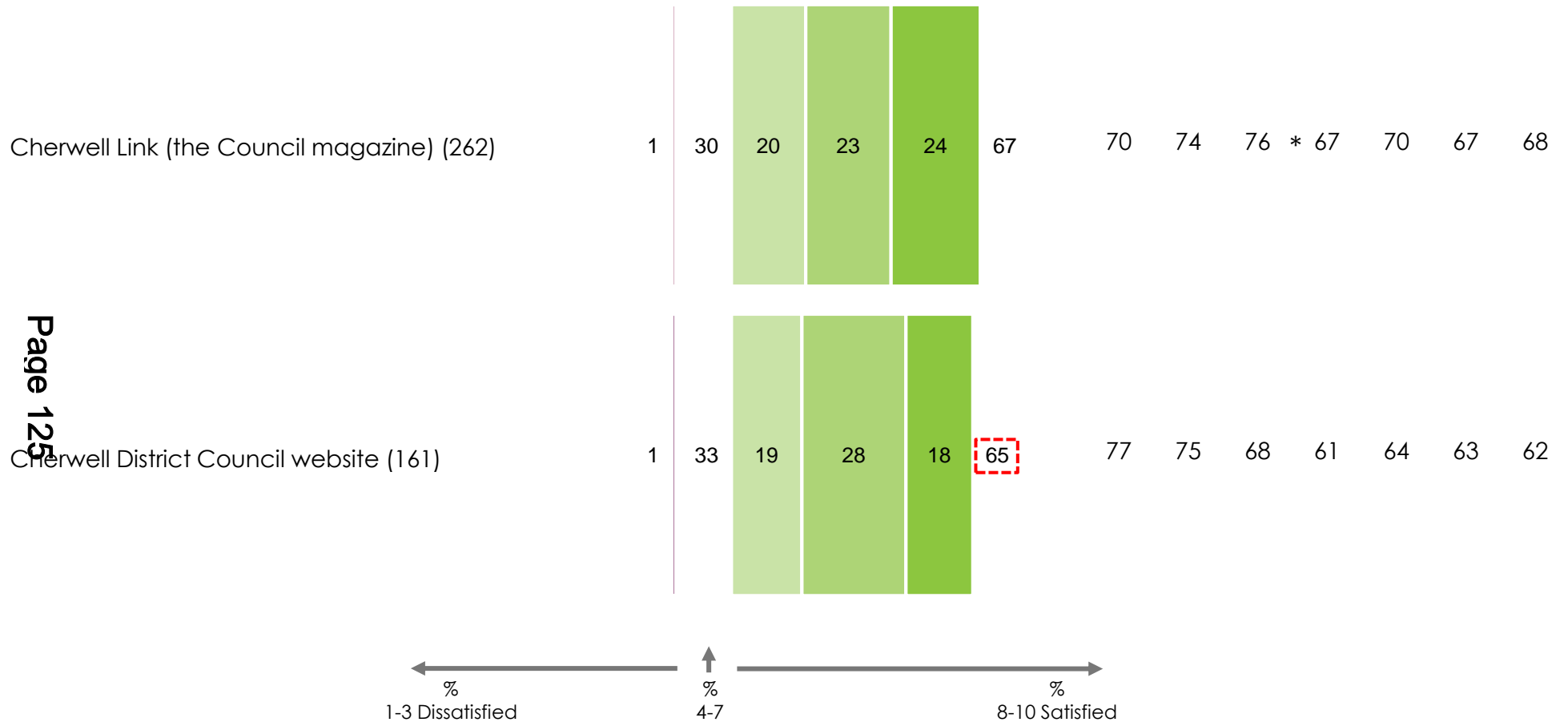
Q39. How well informed, if at all, does Cherwell District Council keep residents about what the Council spends money on?



# Satisfaction with Cherwell Link/ Cherwell District Council website

% Satisfied (8-10)

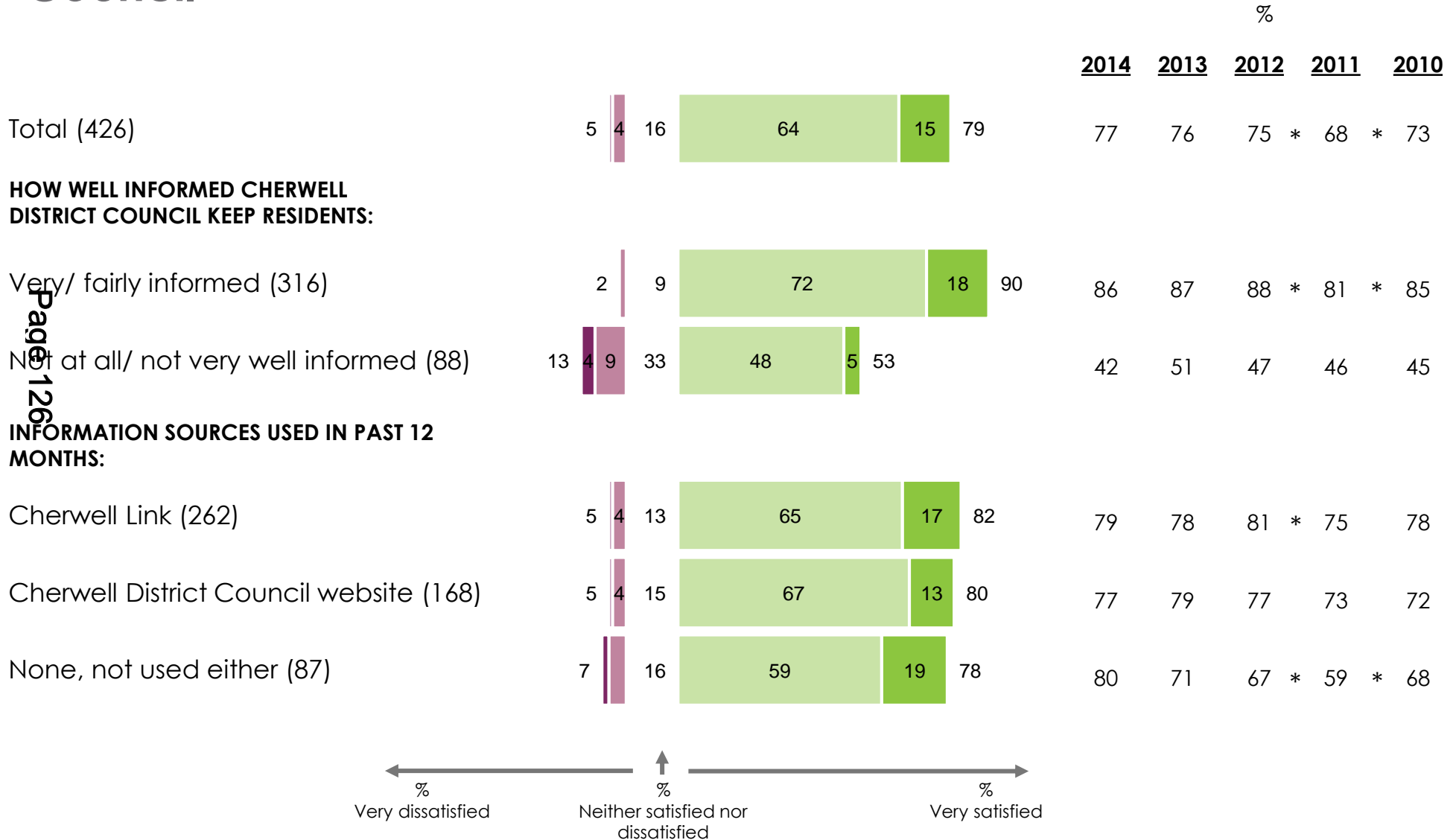
2014 2013 2012 2011 2010 2009 2008



Base: (Those answering)

Q48. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?

# Overall satisfaction with the services provided by Cherwell District Council

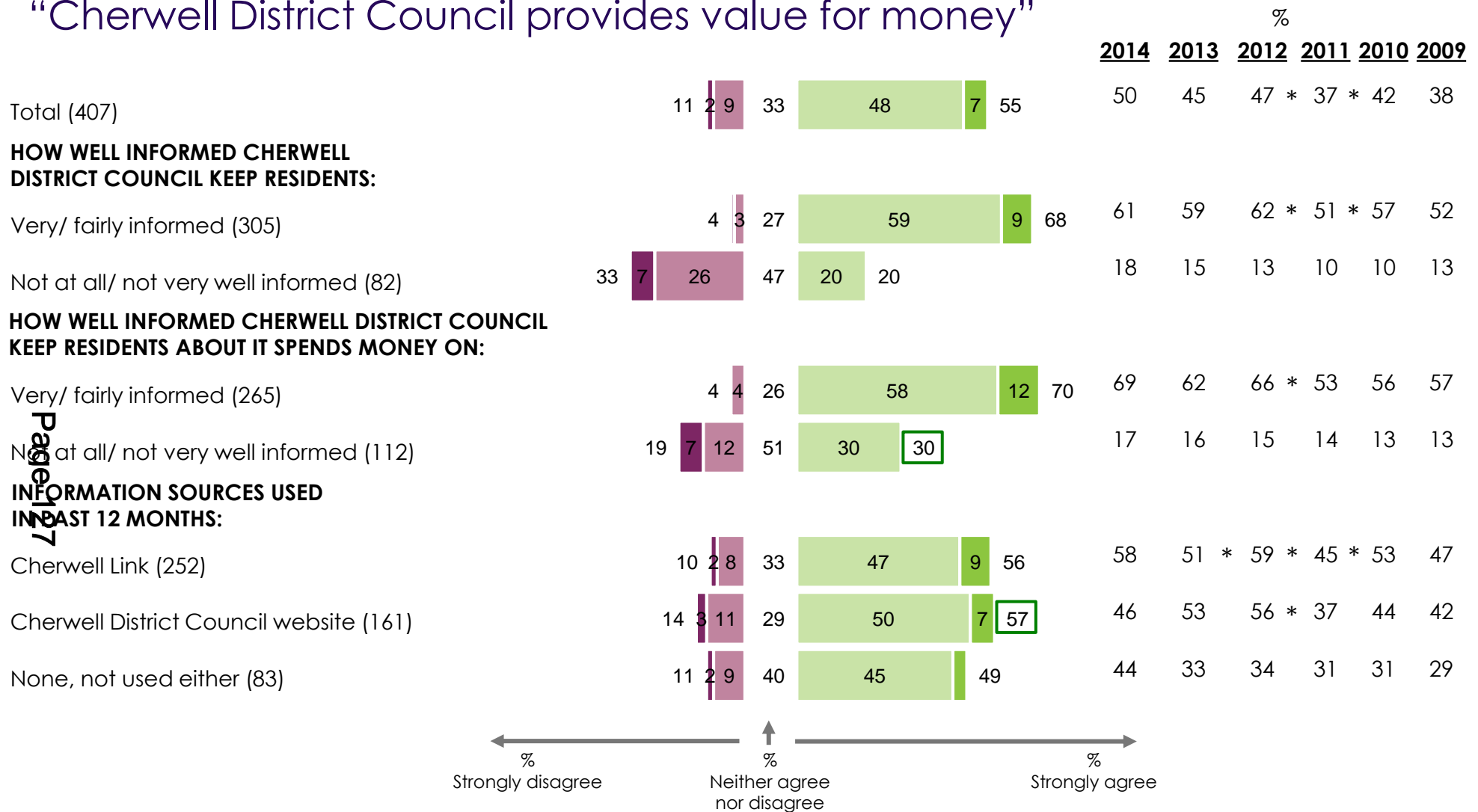


Base: (Those answering)

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

# Agreement with statement:

“Cherwell District Council provides value for money”



Base: (Those answering)

Q40. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Cherwell District Council provides value for money?

# 11. Contacting the Council

# 11. Contacting the Council

## 11.1 Satisfaction with Contact (slides 91 - 93)

- An all-time low number of residents participating in the survey had contacted the District Council in 2015 (32%). This is coupled to a fairly substantial, and statistically significant, decrease in the number contacting the Council by telephone (to 38%)
- It is positive to see that ratings for the Council 'Keeping their promises (e.g. Calling back when they said they would)' is rated at a high of 78% in 2015, a factor likely to enhance perceptions of trust and care among residents
- Key areas of service are being maintained during Council staff interactions. The only area which perhaps might need some attention is 'staff knowledge' which has yet to recover from a decrease in 2014

# Method of contacting the council

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Base: (All respondents: 431)

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

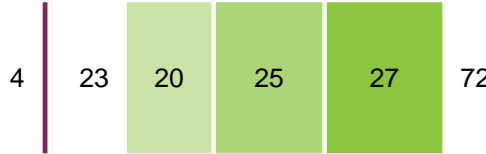
# Satisfaction with different aspects when contacting Cherwell District Council (i)

% Satisfied (8-10)

## EASE OF CONTACTING THE COUNCIL:

**2014** **2013** **2012** **2011** **2010** **2009** **2008**

Information about how to contact the Council (291)



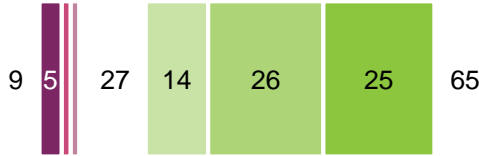
72 72 76 72 \* 66 70 71 \* 62

Being able to speak to the right person/ department (283)



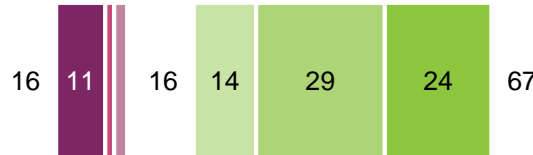
71 74 \* 65 61 65 66 \* 59

Speed of response (e.g. speed of answering the telephone/ speed of replying to emails/ letters) (287)\*



71 68 \* 62 60 60 62 \* 57

Outcome of your query/ complaint (269)



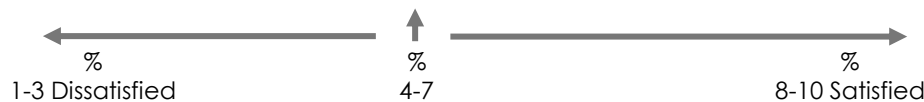
66 70 65 63 64 63 59

## FOLLOW UP:

Keeping their promises (e.g. Calling back when they said they would etc.) (211)



63 70 66 61 60 60 58



\*Response wording changed

Base: (Those answering)

Q45. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following when contacting Cherwell District Council?

# Satisfaction with different aspects when contacting Cherwell District Council (ii)

% Satisfied (8-10)

## STAFF:

**2014** **2013** **2012** **2011** **2010** **2009** **2008**

Using plain English/ not speaking in jargon (274)



78 \* 86 \* 81 77 \* 81 79 75

Being respected/ listened to by staff (271)



76 81 \* 75 73 75 74 70

Answering all of your questions/ providing enough information (280)



71 \* 78 75 \* 70 70 71 68

Explanation of process/ procedures & advice (270)

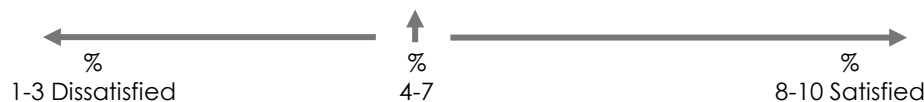


71 77 74 70 70 70 67

Staff knowledge (277)



69 \* 77 72 71 74 71 \* 66



Base: (Those answering)

Q45. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following when contacting Cherwell District Council?





# 12. Appendix

# Explanation of key drivers analysis

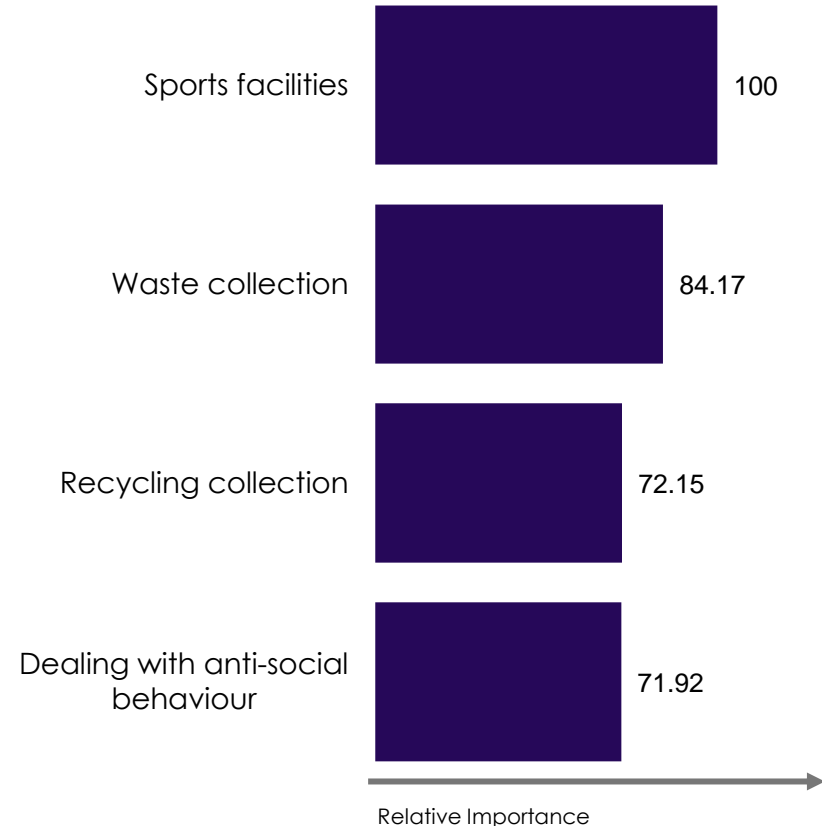
- Key Drivers Analysis is a statistical technique for examining the relative importance of factors in relation to an overall Key Performance Indicator, such as overall satisfaction with the Council, without the need for additional questions.

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This analysis is used to highlight the importance of individual services or factors in driving overall satisfaction.

- As with conjoint analysis, a relative importance hierarchy is produced, demonstrating the relative influence of factors driving overall satisfaction, which is indexed on the most important factor:

## Hierarchy of Importance



CAUTION : DUMMY DATA

# Explanation of conjoint analysis

Q43 in the questionnaire is the conjoint question. Each respondent is asked a series of questions related to Council services where they choose which, out of a pair of factors, would be most important for Cherwell District Council to maintain at its current standard e.g.:

	Much more important to maintain current level of service	Slightly more important to maintain current level of service	Equally important	Slightly more important to maintain current level of service	Much more important to maintain current level of service	Don't know	
Household recycling collection and food/garden waste collection service	1	2	3	4	5	6	Arts and cultural services (including Banbury Museum)
Providing affordable housing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Dealing with anti-social behaviour/nuisance

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Data collected from this type of question allows us to perform a complicated trade-off analysis. In its simplest terms, conjoint analysis allows you to examine the relative 'importance' a number of factors have relative to each other.

The output from conjoint analysis is a hierarchy of importance, giving a clear indication of the relative importance of individual factors to respondents.

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## Performance Pledges 2015-16

Every year from the key objectives and actions detailed across our strategic priorities several are highlighted as performance pledges. They are key activities that reflect local priorities and these pledges demonstrate our commitment to the delivery of important local services and new projects to help make Cherwell a great place to live. Our pledges are included within the council tax detail; in every quarterly review of progress undertaken by the Council's Executive and in our annual report, published at the end of each financial year. For 2015/16 our pledges are:

### Cherwell: a district of opportunity

- ➔ Make progress onsite for the initial housing development at North West Bicester.
- ➔ Progress work on North West Bicester exemplar site
- ➔ Make progress on site for the initial infrastructure at Graven Hill and promotion of the self-build plots
- ➔ Commission and complete a commercial appraisal for Banbury town centre, and subsequently bring forward appropriate redevelopment proposals for urgent consideration
- ➔ Complete and implement the Masterplan for Kidlington, helping to develop a strong village centre

### Cherwell: safe, green, clean

- ➔ Maintain the District's high recycling rate
- ➔ Improve local residents' satisfaction with street and environmental cleanliness continuing our successful programme of neighbourhood litter blitzes
- ➔ Work with the local police and licence holders to ensure our town centres remain safe and vibrant in the evenings.

### Cherwell: thriving communities

- ➔ Continue working with our partners to provide support to the most vulnerable individuals and families in the district, building on the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme.
- ➔ Deliver 150 units of affordable homes in the District and support opportunities for self-build and developing self-build skills.
- ➔ Continue to support skills development, apprenticeships and job clubs in order to help support local employment and reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

### Cherwell: sound budgets and customer focused council

- ➔ Deliver the savings target £500,000 within the agreed timescales.
- ➔ Continue to improve our website, and implement additional online services for customers
- ➔ Extend the Joint working Transformation Programme to enable the council to save money and maintain a low council tax.

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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

#### Air Quality Management Area for Bicester

### Report of Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To declare an Air Quality Management Area in Bicester

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To declare an Air Quality Management Area including Kings End, Queens Avenue and Field Street, Bicester.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 established the legislative framework for local air quality management. Under the Act the Council has a statutory duty to review and assess air quality in the district against national air quality objectives and co-ordinate actions to improve air quality where exceedances are identified.
- 2.2 DEFRA oversees the Council's role and monitors progress by requiring local authorities to undertake a review and assessment on a three year cycle. This is a two stepped approach. Step 1 requires an Updating and Screening Assessment Report (USA) to be completed in the first year. The purpose of the USA is to look at the current and likely future air quality in the district and to assess if an air quality objective is, or is likely to be exceeded. If the USA identifies a risk that an air quality objective will be exceeded the local authority is required to proceed to Step 2, a Detailed Assessment to formally identify the need to declare an air quality management area. Review and Assessment Progress Reports are completed in the interim years to ensure continuity.
- 2.3 Local authorities have a duty to declare any area where an air quality objective is unlikely to be, or is not being met as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 Previous rounds of the review and assessment process have identified nitrogen dioxide from road transport sources as the pollutant of concern in Cherwell. These review and assessment reports can be found on the local air quality management page of the Councils website; [www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/airquality](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/airquality).
- 3.2 The 2009 USA report identified that air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide may be exceeded at Hennef Way and Horsefair/North Bar in Banbury, Kings End/Queens Avenue in Bicester, and Bicester Road in Kidlington.
- 3.3 A Detailed Assessment was completed for Hennef Way, Banbury and an AQMA declared in January 2011 because the annual and hourly mean air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide were exceeded.
- 3.4 Detailed Assessments for Horsefair/North Bar in Banbury, Kings End/Queens Avenue in Bicester, and Bicester Road in Kidlington were completed in April 2013 and exceedances of the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide were confirmed for these areas.
- 3.5 The findings and conclusions of the Detailed Assessment reports have been confirmed by Defra.
- 3.6 In September 2014 AQMA's were declared for Horsefair/North Bar in Banbury, and Bicester Road in Kidlington. However, due to significant road layout changes in Bicester, it was recommended to, and accepted by, the September 2014 Executive Committee that the declaration of an AQMA in Bicester be deferred until additional monitoring and assessment had been undertaken, so the impact of the changes to the road layout on air quality could be assessed. This course of action was agreed with Defra.
- 3.6 The additional monitoring and assessment work was completed in 2015 and recommends the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area for Kings End/Queens Avenue/Field Street in Bicester, as identified in Figure 1 in Appendix 1, for the exceedance of the annual mean national air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide.

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

- 4.1 Due to exceedances of the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide it is recommended that an AQMA is declared for:
  - (i) Kings End / Queens Avenue / Field Street, Bicester as outlined in Figure 1 in Appendix 1.

### **5.0 Consultation**

Defra Defra has been consulted on the Detailed Assessment report.

### **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: An alternative option would be to not declare the area as an AQMA. However, if an air quality objective is not being met then the Council is required to declare that area as an AQMA and so for this reason this is not an alternative option.

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The continuing review and assessment of air quality will be met within existing budgets.

Comments checked by:

Denise Taylor, Corporate Accountant, 01295 221982

[denise.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:denise.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

### Legal Implications

- 7.2 There is a statutory requirement to review and assess air quality and if an air quality objective is not being met to declare an Air Quality Management Area.

Comments checked by:

Nigel Bell, Team Leader - Planning, 01295 221687, [nigel.bell@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.bell@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### Risk

- 7.3 There is an increase in risk to health to prolonged exposure to elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide.

Comments checked by:

Ros Holloway - Performance Information Officer, 01295 221578,

[ros.holloway@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:ros.holloway@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met: No**

**Community Impact Threshold Met: No**

### Wards Affected

Bicester Town

### **Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

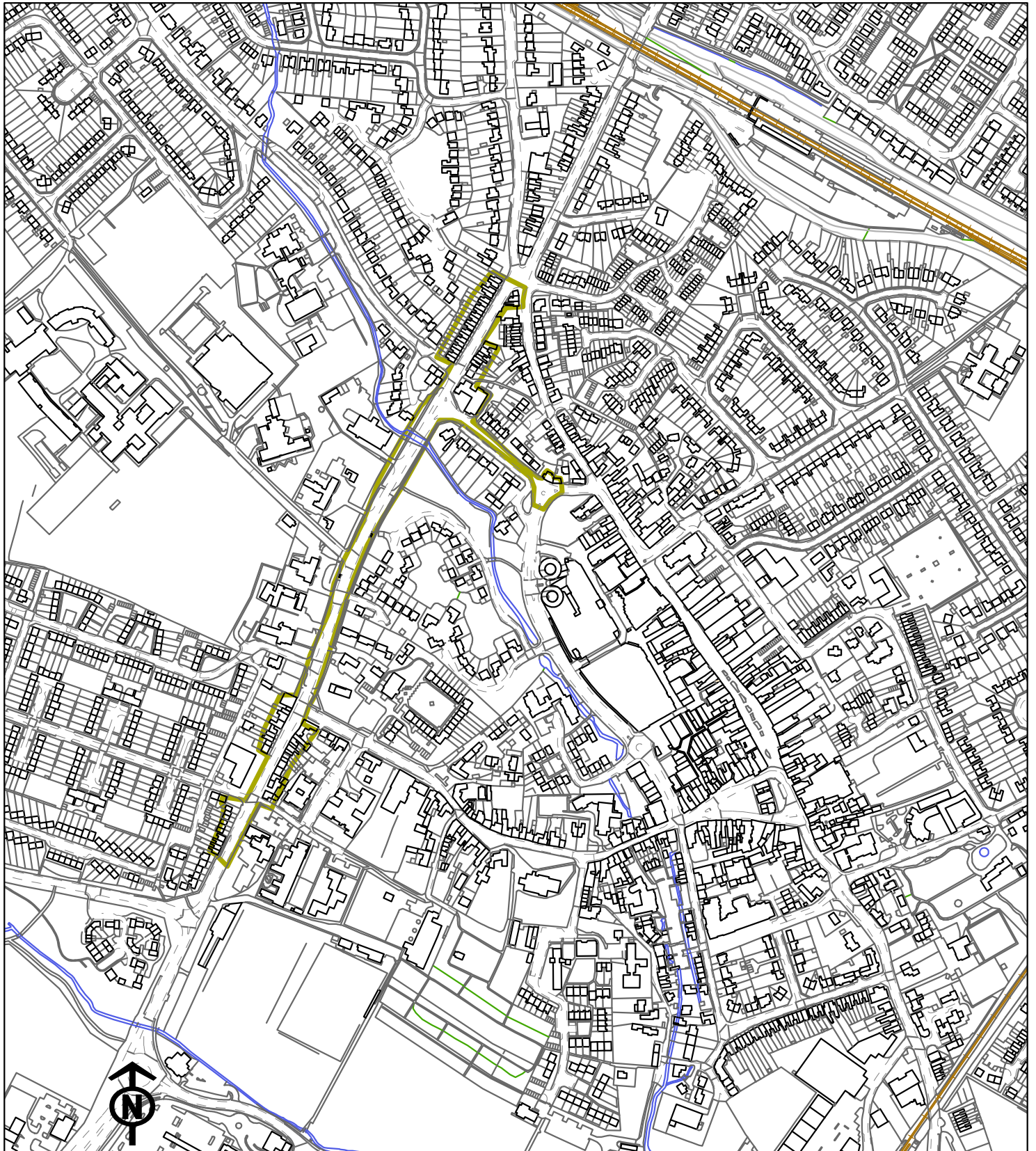
The District of Opportunity strategic priority, and the deliver high quality regulatory services that support the growth of the local economy key objective.

### **Lead Councillor**

Councillor Tony Ilott,  
Lead Member for Public Protection

### **Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	AQMA Map
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Jackie Fitzsimons - Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager
<b>Contact Information</b>	01327 322283 <a href="mailto:jackie.fitzsimons@southnorthants.gov.uk">jackie.fitzsimons@southnorthants.gov.uk</a>



Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
OX15 4AA

**Appendix 1**  
**Bicester - Air Quality Management Area**

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Ordnance Survey 100018504

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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

## Recycling Strategy

### Report of Head of Environmental Services

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To consider the future recycling strategy options which could be adopted to deal with the current environment of volatile commodity prices and potential changes to services delivered by Oxfordshire County Council.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To support the exploration of the possibility of more local transfer stations and/or sorting facilities for future dry recycling contracts.
- 1.2 To consider the principle of a new depot in Bicester with possible local transfer facilities and/or Household Waste Recycling facilities and to request a report back on this option at an appropriate future meeting.
- 1.3 To continue a dialogue with Oxfordshire County Council regarding the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
- 1.4 To support the promotion of the current recycling scheme to bring both environmental improvements and financial benefits by increasing recycling rates towards 60%.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The waste collection service was been in operation in its current format since 2009 when food waste recycling was introduced. Over the past few years the recycling rate has been in the range 54-57%.
- 2.2 Despite a number of developments such as the collection of kerbside batteries and small electrical items and a lot of promotion the recycling rate has remained fairly steady.

- 2.3 The large amount of recycling in the district has reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill. In 2002/03 54,000 tonnes went to landfill in more recent years this has reduced to around 26,000 tonnes. From 2015 this waste has gone to the Energy from Waste plant at Ardley so that the waste is converted into electricity.
- 2.4 Recycling prices in recent years have been very volatile. In 2003/04 when Cherwell District Council commenced commingled recycling collections the recycling processors were paid £30/tonne to sort the materials and the processors took the value of the individual materials. Over time this gate fee fell to low levels and from 2012 the Council started to receive significant income for the materials. Unfortunately prices have changed again and for contracts let at this time are likely to incur a significant gate fee.
- 2.5 Although the Council has a contract with UPM this expires in February 2018. Consequently, future arrangements need to be considered to ensure a contract is in place which delivers the best financial outcome after February 2018.
- 2.6 The County Council are looking to make substantial cuts to their services to meet their financial challenges. One area with a direct impact on the Council is the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres. Currently there are two, Alkerton and Ardley. However in the future the County Council is looking for one site.
- 2.7 Consideration needs to be given to make it easy for residents to dispose of waste so that other problems such as fly tipping do not increase. This may be achieved through a combination of actions including working with the County Council and the possible expansion of some kerbside services such as the bulky waste service.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 The waste collection service is a high profile service delivered to all 60,000 properties in Cherwell District Council. The services are popular with residents and show high levels of customer satisfaction.
- 3.2 Besides having high levels of satisfaction the service represents good value for money. The cost per property of the whole waste collection was below £48/property/year in 2013/14. The customer satisfaction survey results from summer 2015, again show high levels of satisfaction.
- 3.3 Despite a number of innovations to the service the recycling rates have not risen. Battery recycling, Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE), more glass banks etc have increased tonnages. However these rises have been offset by changes in legislation. For instance street sweepings were banned from composting by the Environment Agency. This reduced the Council's recycling rate by almost 2% as around 1200 tonnes of material went from being composted to going to landfill. Other examples including how rejection is calculated at the Materials Recovery Facility have meant rejection rates have risen and recycling rates have slipped back.

- 3.4 Blue bin sales have encouraged residents to recycle more. However falling newspaper sales and increasingly packaging being made more lightweight has led to increased volumes of recycling but reduced weights.
- 3.5 One of the significant waste streams in the green bins is the amount of food waste. However the way funding works between the Council and the County Council means that for each extra tonne of food recycled there is no financial benefit to the Council only a reduction in the County Council's disposal costs. Consequently any investment in promoting food waste recycling will only deliver the County Council savings. However a lost cost trial on 10,000 bins of a sticker which involved telling people to put food waste in the brown bin has been instigated and initial findings indicate there has been a small reduction in residual weights.

### **Commodity Prices**

- 3.6 In 2012, when this Council jointly with South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) and Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) entered into a dry recycling contract with UPM, material prices were high. Since then material prices have fallen, particularly during autumn 2014. Some of the falls are related to the fall in oil prices. For instance, recycled plastic prices are strongly related to oil prices which determine the price of virgin plastic products. Other price falls such as paper have been related to other factors such as falling newspaper sales and the closure of one of the three newsprint companies in the UK. The changes in individual material prices are set out in Appendix 1
- 3.7 The prices paid by MRF operators for commingled recycling have ranged from income to councils in 2012 to charging £40/tonne at current market prices. This £60/tonne change could have an impact of up to £600k/year on this Council. In addition, due to the uncertainty on commodity prices MRF operators only want to bid for relatively short term contracts (1 to 2 years) and are increasingly looking for shared risk arrangements on commodity prices.
- 3.8 Consequently, in the future the value or cost of recyclables may fluctuate wildly from contract to contract. How this is handled from a financial planning perspective needs to be considered. In addition most MRF operators have indicated that future contracts must have an element of risk sharing on commodity prices. Consequently for future contracts the level of risk the Council is comfortable with sharing will need to be considered
- 3.9 Where commodity prices will be in the next few years is difficult to predict. Reductions in newspaper sales and the lack of newsprint recycling capacity means that prices in this area may be under pressure for some time. However after paper prices fell rapidly in early 2015, in June 2015 some of the fall was suddenly recovered. Future oil prices and the associated prices for materials are also difficult to predict. However, in the long term with increasing population and economic growth the demand for resources will increase which will impact on prices in a positive manner.
- 3.10 The current contract with UPM has moved into the three year extension period from the end of February 2015. There has been some tensions regarding prices but there are on- going discussions with UPM regarding the contract.



- 3.11 In the future when a new contract is let from February 2018 commodity markets could have recovered or alternatively may be still subdued. Where the market is, will have an impact on what income the Council receives or has to pay out. It is also likely that any future contract will have some form of risk sharing on commodity prices.

### **Recycling credits**

- 3.12 Recycling credits are paid in two tier council arrangements unless an alternative agreement is reached between the disposal authority and the waste collection authorities (WCA). In Oxfordshire recycling credits of £47/tonne (calculated from historical average landfill costs – but rising by 3%/annum) are paid for dry recycling. For garden waste/food waste the County Council provide the processing contract and pay for the gate fee. Consequently there is no recycling credit payable. The downside of this arrangement is that there is no financial incentive to increase the amount of food waste captured in the garden waste/food waste mixture.
- 3.13 In total, Cherwell District Council received over £0.65 million in recycling credits in 2014/15. The Council receives recycling credits for dry recycling including glass and bring bank tonnages. The Council collects around 18000 tonnes of garden/food waste but receives no recycling credit. This is because the County Council pay the gate fee – the gate fee and the recycling credit also match.

### **Transfer Arrangements**

- 3.14 In recent years, MRFs have embraced new technology to sort commingled dry recycling. This technology is often expensive and to make MRFs financially profitable, the size of MRFs have grown, often now being capable of processing 100,000 tonnes or more of recyclables.
- 3.15 Bigger MRFs mean that the materials have to be sourced from greater distances. The MRF used by this Council is located in Shotton, which is 155 miles from Helmdon Transfer Station. There is a cost in getting the materials to Shotton and as material values have fallen, the cost of transporting materials has become more significant. In addition to transport costs are the costs of operating a transfer station. The transfer station receives loads from refuse collection vehicles and then bulks them on to larger vehicles. Fortunately, in the current contract the transport costs lie with UPM. However in future contracts with most providers, the £15-20/tonne cost of transporting materials to a MRF may lie with this Council. For this Council and for SNC this onward transfer represents £300-400k/year
- 3.16 Consequently, reducing the distance materials need to travel to be separated could produce cost savings. If more local facilities could be used then there could be opportunities for financial efficiencies. These local facilities could include exploring working with the current transfer station to see if some material sorting could take place locally. Other possibilities include a potential new replacement depot which may be built in Bicester, which could include a transfer station and/or some form of sorting facility. Such a facility will require capital investment. With the current UPM contract due to run until February 2018 there is time to explore these and other possibilities



## **Household Waste Recycling Centres**

- 3.17 The County Council operates two Household Waste Recycling Centres in Cherwell, at Alkerton near Banbury and at Ardley near Bicester. The County Council is looking to rationalise and reduce the number of sites to achieve financial savings. The County Council would like to move to a single site in Cherwell. However finding land for a new Household Waste Recycling Centre which could serve Banbury and Bicester would be a great challenge.
- 3.18 The way Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) are used has changed over the last decade. With this Council providing comprehensive kerbside services the need for residents to visit HWRC sites have diminished. With websites such as eBay and Freecycle more items can be reused rather than thrown away. Most retailers offer a take back scheme at a competitive rate for large items such as beds, furniture and large electrical items. In addition this Council offers a bulky waste collection service for large items and also a clear out service for those with a bigger project such as a garage or shed clearance.
- 3.19 The material with the greatest tonnage taken to HWRCs is garden waste even though this Council operates a free garden waste/food waste collection service.
- 3.20 Clearly it is important that residents can get rid of waste easily otherwise anti-social practices such as fly tipping can increase. Residents do have a number of options other than a trip to the tip including the use of reuse services and the Council's bulky waste service. With reduced HWRC facilities in the future it may be possible to re-design the bulky waste service so that residents' needs to visit a HWRC are minimised.
- 3.21 Meetings with the Head of Waste Management at Oxfordshire have taken place to discuss concerns regarding the closure of Ardley and to explore the possibility of operating possible joint facilities in the future. With a new expanded depot for Bicester required in the future to accommodate the increase number of collection vehicles, opportunities for recycling transfer facilities needed to be explored and now a need for HWRC facilities it may be possible to identify joint facilities

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

- 4.1 The waste hierarchy and the treatment costs for waste mean that the best financial outcome is usually achieved by reducing waste, reusing waste and recycling to very high levels.
- 4.2 Commodity prices are having an effect on recycling although for this Council the current contract insulates the Council from the full impact of commodity price falls. However, even if a gate fee were payable in the future, the best outcome for the taxpayer would still to recycle as much as possible
- 4.3 Residents having easy access to facilities to dispose of waste is important to minimise anti-social activities such as fly tipping. Currently the district is served by two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) but in the future this may be reduced.

## 5.0 Consultation

South Northamptonshire Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Oxfordshire County Council

## 6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified

Option 1 : To approve the revised recycling strategy.

Option 2: To reject the revised recycling strategy

Option 3: To ask officers to consider alternative amendments.

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement

[paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk) - 01295 221634

### Legal Implications

7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report..

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance

[kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk) – 0300 0030107

### Risk

7.3 Volatile commodity prices can impact on the sustainability of recycling. Any major changes will be recorded via the risk register.

Comments checked by:

Ros Holloway, Performance Information Officer

[Ros.holloway@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Ros.holloway@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk) 01295 221578

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met:** No

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** Yes

**Wards Affected**

All

**Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

Cherwell: Safe, Green, Clean

**Lead Councillor**

Councillor Debbie Pickford  
Lead Member for Clean & Green

**Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Material prices
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
<b>Contact Information</b>	0300 003 0105 ed.potter@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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## Appendix 1

### Commodity prices

All prices per tonne	Jul 15	Jan 15	Jan 14	Jan 13	Jan 12
News & Pams	£70	£74	£90	£86	£107
Cardboard	£74	£63	£68	£68	£85
Mixed Paper	£53	£42	£55	£53	£72
Plastics					
Natural HDPE	£395	£365	£335	£305	£340
Coloured PET	£55	£35	£40	£40	£67
Coloured HDPE mix	£155	£145	£137	£162	£200
Metals					
Steel cans	£59	£105	£142	£130	£160
Aluminium cans	£660	£765	£705	£695	£970

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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

#### **Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy**

#### **Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

This report seeks the Executive's endorsement and support for the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy as the Council's commitment to sustainable transport in the town recognising its role in accommodating growth and integrating new and existing neighbourhoods.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider and note the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- 1.2 To endorse the Strategy's vision and principles.
- 1.3 To support the Strategy as the basis of further work to inform Part 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan, the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan and other documents.
- 1.4 To note the next steps required to develop an action plan to deliver priorities in the short, medium and long term as schemes and funding opportunities are progressed.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 Bicester is located in a highly accessible and sustainable location with excellent links to the motorway network and rail connections to major city destinations. Bus routes linking Bicester to Oxford and Cambridge are good with local bus services serving the residential areas surrounding the town. It is also relatively flat making it easily accessible on foot and bicycle. Given the topography of the town there is potential to increase the number of trips made by sustainable transport through relatively small scale investment in the walking and cycling network.
- 2.2 The Infrastructure Act 2015 sets out the Government's ambitions for a new transport system. For the first time the Secretary of State for Transport will be

required by law to set out a strategy for cycling and walking infrastructure and importantly the funding provided to meet it. The Act includes a walking and cycling investment strategy to ensure active travel is considered as a priority area for investment.

- 2.3 The Government announced its response to the consultation on its Cycling Delivery Plan in March 2015, following the inclusion of cycling and walking investment plans in the Infrastructure Act. Recent statistics, based on results from the Active People Survey (APS) by Sport England, show that there have been significant increases in the number of people walking and cycling every week in many areas, with 47% of people in England walking at least 5 times a week and 3% cycling at least 5 times a week (Reference: Local Area Walking and Cycling Statistics 2013/2014, Department for Transport).
- 2.3 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015. The Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) will inform Part 2 of the Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 2.4 “*Connecting Oxfordshire*”, Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2031 (LTP4), was adopted by Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015. It provides a comprehensive policy and strategy framework to maximise the transport opportunities for Oxfordshire. It was developed in close partnership with internal and external Stakeholders, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, District Councils and Members.
- 2.5 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership’s (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) is supported by the policies and objectives of the LTP4. It includes the transport priorities within Bicester providing the “connectivity infrastructure” to tackle the challenges in the Bicester Movement Study. In terms of sustainable transport, a Walking and Cycling Connectivity Project will have a role in accommodating growth and is anticipated to create 100 construction jobs and a Gross Added Value (GVA) of £3.9 million.
- 2.5 The Eco Bicester One Shared Vision (December 2010) sets out the aims and aspirations for transport and movement within the town. It encourages walking and cycling as the first choice of travel to: improve health; reduce carbon emissions and improve the quality of the environment. The Shared Vision underpins the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan Bicester Area Strategy.
- 2.6 The transport studies for Bicester are set out below and provide baseline information for the STS:
  - i. Bicester Bus Movement Study (2009)
  - ii. Draft Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (2009)
  - iii. Baseline Travel Behaviour Survey (2010 published 2011)
  - iv. Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2012)
  - v. Bicester Movement Study (2013)
  - vi. Garden Town Transport feasibility study (summer 2015)
- 2.7 The Bicester Movement Study forms part of the Cherwell Local Plan evidence base. The Bicester Transport Model used in the Study showed that the network was generally operating well around the town. It shows a few specific and localised



areas of congestion or delay, specifically the A41 to the south east of the town and the central corridor (Kings End/Queens Avenue section to the junction of Banbury and Buckingham Road).

- 2.8 Eco-towns funding has been used to deliver sustainable transport measures in Bicester since the travel behaviour project in 2010. Some capital funding remains in the budget (approximately £500,000 – five hundred thousand pounds). Funding has also been committed to a wayfinding project. In addition, some funding for sustainable transport has been secured through the exemplar application at North West Bicester and will be sought from other developments as they come forward in and around the town.
- 2.8 More recently, funding has become available through the Oxfordshire LEP Local Growth Fund (LGF). In May 2015 a joint funding bid for a Bicester Cycling and Walking Connectivity Project was submitted by Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council seeking funding to bring forward walking and cycling improvements for key routes including Market Square, providing links between residential and employment areas and delivering the objectives of the Oxfordshire SEP. A decision on the funding is expected later this year.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council commissioned the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) in April 2014 following previous transport studies for the town to support the eco-town proposals and the Cherwell Local Plan. The Brief for the commission was to ensure exemplary and innovative approaches to sustainable transport in Bicester applying a strong vision and principles to best practice. Officers and Members have been involved in the Strategy's preparation most recently at a workshop in September 2014.
- 3.2 The main issues in this report on the Bicester Sustainable Transport Project are summarised below and described in more detail in the following section:
- i. It helps Cherwell District Council (CDC) to achieve fine grain of integration between existing and proposed new neighbourhoods through policies for walking, cycling and bus travel;
  - ii. The study provides detailed guidance for Development Management.
  - iii. The study will sit alongside and help inform the further refinement of the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) led LTP4, adding detail to the Bicester Area Strategy and informing the next wave of transport proposals on peripheral routes, which will be set by Cherwell Local Plan Part 2.
  - iv. The study will be used in informing the Local Plan part 2, especially in contributing to the definition of the new town centre boundary as the town grows, by ensuring that key transport factors are taking into account.
  - v. The STS includes a delivery plan and in terms of next steps, an action plan, broken down into short term, medium and long term steps, will need to be developed and aligned with the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

## **Integration**

- 3.3 In planning Bicester's future growth, it is recognised that transport has a significant contribution to the quality of the environment as development comes forward. The STS helps CDC to achieve high quality environments by defining the fine grain of the existing transport network and identifying opportunities for integration between existing and proposed new neighbourhoods. It does this through sustainable transport principles and policies for walking, cycling and bus travel.
- 3.4 The STS will contribute to the creation of more attractive places through improved connections for pedestrians and cyclists making Bicester a more attractive place to live, work and visit. For example, the proposals for the Market Square, Manorsfield Road and Causeway will open up the town centre making it more accessible to people and encouraging visitors to spend more time in the town, increasing footfall and spending in this location. The environment of the town will be enhanced, improving quality of life and attracting investment in the town.
- 3.5 A comprehensive network of safe and attractive footpaths and cycleways will allow the new development to integrate with the existing town. Furthermore, good links to the town's two stations will be provided to complement the investment in the rail infrastructure as part of the East-West Rail project and improvements to the rail links to major cities.

## **Development Management**

- 3.6 The sustainable transport vision for Bicester is to create a network of transport infrastructure and services that make it easy and attractive to travel by sustainable means. Seven principles (Sustainable, Resilient, Incremental, Modal Priorities, Spatial Hierarchy of Routes, High Quality and Integrated) support the vision. These principles will be applied to detailed planning proposals in the determination of planning applications through the Council's Development Management function. The study provides detailed guidance for new residential streets in housing growth areas where there is the potential to build in a high quality cycle network from the start. As such it will assist Development Management in the determination of planning proposals.
- 3.7 The principles provide a high level framework for the strategy which will be used to guide detailed planning proposals through the development management process. The strategy provides a comprehensive review of the existing network and sets out an approach to deliver improvements to the future network. It focusses work on sustainable travel and provides an assessment of the opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport.

## **Local Transport Plan 4**

- 3.8 The study sits alongside and help inform the further refinement of the OCC led LTP4, as it helps to flesh it out and inform the next wave of transport proposals on peripheral routes, which will be set by Cherwell Local Plan part 2.

## **Cherwell Local Plan Part 2**

- 3.9 The study informs Local Plan Part 2 especially in contributing to the definition of the new town centre boundary as the town grows, by ensuring that key transport factors are taken into account. The strategy sets out potential routing improvements which will feed in to the Cherwell Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It builds on the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision sustainable vision for the town as a whole. The positive policies and objectives in the Cherwell Local Plan (Policy SLE4 – Improved transport and connections) are supported by the STS.

### **Delivery Plan**

- 3.10 The Delivery Plan identifies areas to prioritise which could link with further work being carried out as part of the Garden Town feasibility studies. This work aims to identify areas, for example green space with the potential to create attractive places and integrate the proposed developments. In delivering the strategy, the priority will be to focus on the improvements to radial routes, some of which may be delivered through development, funding from the Local Enterprise Partnerships and remaining eco-town funds. For example, improvements to the Banbury Road and Middleton Stoney Road for walking and cycling are being progressed as part of the proposals for the eco-town.
- 3.11 The Delivery Plan has been prepared in consultation with officers and provides an indication of how the Strategy could be implemented. It sets out the priorities, responsibilities, delivery partners, potential funding sources including developer contributions and indicative capital costs of infrastructure improvements. The STS Delivery Plan has been progressed as far as it can by the transport consultants and officers of the Bicester Delivery Team and Oxfordshire County Council continue to work on an implementation plan based on the STS Delivery Plan and LTP4 to roll-out a programme of sustainable transport measures.
- 3.12 Further work is required to ensure consistency with the Local Transport Plan and development schemes as they come forward. However there is uncertainty about the delivery of some of the schemes due to a lack of funding opportunities. This is a particular issue for the Smarter Choices initiatives requiring a dedicated officer resource which is currently unavailable to implement this. The Delivery Plan priorities are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Sustainable Transport Strategy Delivery Plan summary and priorities

<b>Quick wins (0-2 years)</b>	<b>Short term (0-5 years)</b>	<b>Medium Term (5-10 years)</b>	<b>Long Term (10-15 years)</b>
Removing barriers along existing cycleways	North West Bicester exemplar proposals including improvements to Banbury Road	Upgrading the existing network to connect routes and integrate with new development	Multi modal transport interchanges at bus and rail stations
Increase cycling parking	Middleton Stoney Road	Walking and cycling	Walking and cycling

	walking and cycling improvements	improvements to link new developments	improvements to link new developments
Removing Traffic Regulation Order in Sheep Street and Bure Park Railway tunnel	Peripheral route improvements	Peripheral route improvements	Peripheral route improvements
Buckingham Road walking and cycling improvements	Town centre improvements	Market Square improvements	Town centre improvements

## Principles and Vision

3.13 The seven principles that underpin the Strategy are that it is:

- i. Sustainable;
- ii. Resilient;
- iii. Incremental;
- iv. Prioritises modes;
- v. Sets out a spatial route hierarchy;
- vi. High quality and
- vii. Integrated.

3.14 These principles will be critical to the successful delivery of the project. In terms of next steps, the Council will develop an action plan to deliver the Strategy over the next 20 years. The action plan will set out and break down the elements of the STS into immediate priorities followed by short term (up to five years), medium (five to 10 years) and long term (over 10 years) infrastructure project and smart travel initiatives. It will build on earlier successes and deliver town-wide transport improvements over the next 20 years, supporting Oxfordshire County Council's Bicester Area Strategy in the Local Transport Plan.

## Walking and Cycling Network

3.15 The overall approach to defining, designing and implementing the network is based on guidance in the "Handbook for Cycle Friendly Design" (April 2014) published by Sustrans. The Core Principles for the network in Bicester are as follows:

### 3.15.1 *Coherence*

Link all potential origins and destinations, with well located cycle lanes;  
 Continuous, recognisable and properly signed;  
 Offer consistent standard of protection throughout

### 3.15.2 *Directness*

Based on desire lines  
 Result in minimal detours or delays  
 Provide a positive advantage in terms of directness and priority over motor traffic

### 3.15.3 *Safety*

Safe and perceived as safe

Provide personal security

Limit conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and other vehicles

### 3.15.4 *Comfort*

Smooth, non-slip surfaces, well maintained, drained and free of debris

Sufficient width for the level of use

Enable cyclists to maintain momentum, with easy gradients

### 3.15.5 *Attractiveness*

Attractive and interesting

Integrate with and complement their surroundings

Contribute to good urban design

3.16 Improving walking and cycling infrastructure and the promotion of sustainable transport options will be critical to the success of the strategy which priorities and recommends network improvements.

3.17 Key points considered in the future movement strategy set out in the STS are as follows:

#### Walking and cycling network and core principles

3.17.1 The walking and cycling network is divided into primary and secondary routes, and is based on the core principles of **coherence, directness, safety, comfort and attractiveness**. The base network of existing facilities requires upgrading in order to fulfil these principles, set out in a comprehensive schedule of improvements. The focus for improvements will be to crossing facilities at radial distributor roads and minor residential roads.

#### Town centre improvements

3.17.2 In the town centre, the movement of through traffic needs to be addressed with the Strategy recommending restricted access and lowering traffic speeds.

Changes in the town centre would allow the retail centre of Bicester to expand, in tandem with the town's wider expansion.

#### **Market Square**

3.17.3 Market Square presents a particular opportunity. It is currently undervalued and dominated by parking and a one-way traffic gyratory. The strategy identifies the opportunities that arise from measures to pedestrianise the northern and eastern sides of the Square as well as the lower section of the Causeway.

In the longer term, the opportunity for through traffic to be restricted in Market Square is identified. If this was to be implemented only buses, taxis and cycles would be able to access Market Square between the hours of 7am and 7pm.

3.17.4 The STS suggests gradual implementation, supported by the servicing and deliveries and car parking strategy to ensure its successful operation.

## **Car parking**

- 3.17.5 Currently, Bicester town centre has approximately 35,000 sq. metres of retail floorspace. 1,160 car parking spaces are provided, or one car parking space per 30 sq. metres of retail space. The strategy looks at the potential for the retail space and parking provision to increase with the town's expansion. The STS suggests additional provision could be provided by development on the site of the Claremont car park - forming a retail anchor to the south east of Market Square, which would mirror the retail anchor of Sainsbury's/Vue to the north west. This could increase retail space in the town to approximately 45,000 sq. metres, and car parking provision to approximately 1,250 spaces.

### Electric and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles

- 3.17.6 Even with sustainable transport gains, the modal share for car driving for Bicester would still be 60%. The use of electric and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) for these trips would make these car trips more sustainable. There is currently a high level of funding available for this, and ULEV are also more pleasant and healthy in terms of air pollution and noise levels. The STS recommends strategic placement of electric charge points and an electric car club in order to reduce emissions and increase capacity on the network.

### Infrastructure improvements and behaviour change

- 3.17.7 Infrastructure improvements are critical to creating an environment where sustainable travel is the most popular choice, but this will be most effective when supported by the management and implementation of a smarter choices and active travel programme, funded and staffed appropriately. In a town the size of Bicester it is likely that no more than two full time project officers would be required to deliver a smarter choices and active travel programme at its peak with additional resource commissioned for specific schemes for example personal travel planning.
- 3.17.8 Proposed measures in the STS include travel awareness campaigns, a sustainable travel roadshow, work with rail stations, sustainable transport hubs, workplace engagement, a commuter challenge, school engagement, residential personalised travel planning and community street design.

### Modal Shift – increasing walking and cycling

- 3.17.9 The STS states: *“The first phase of the Eco development, the Exemplar, has identified a target for the reduction in journeys made by car from 69% to 50% and eventually 40%. A 19% reduction is ambitious in comparison to the 7-9% reported in the Sustainable Travel Towns. However, with high levels of investment in infrastructure together with an integrated programme of Smarter Choices, a 19% reduction is considered achievable for all new development and can be considered aspirational in terms of the whole town.”* The statement above outlines the scale of the challenge ahead in delivering the cycling and walking objectives for Bicester.

### Public transport connections and improvements

- 3.17.10 Public transport connections and improvements help maintain Bicester's role as a market town and as a service centre for the surrounding area. They support

Bicester's location at the head of the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine. The proposed growth of the town provides further opportunities for enhanced public transport infrastructure and services in the town. This is described in some detail in the sections on bus and rail in the future movement strategy.

- 3.17.11 The strategy proposes interchange hubs at the two stations, encouraging multi-modal journeys. Bus provision is made legible by separating out longer distance and town services. A local retail relay route is established along the main spine (connecting also the new Park and Ride to the south), with all other town services passing through the town centre bus station which is enhanced to form the major interchange hub. These changes would be phased and all new bus stock would be accessible, low carbon and have ITSO (smart ticket) compliant readers.

#### London Road rail crossing

- 3.17.12 The potential closure of London Road level crossing is identified in the STS as a major concern because of its impact on bus services, potentially cutting off Langford Village, Graven Hill and East Bicester from the town centre. While final decisions have not been taken, were this to occur, it would be a major constraint on the network requiring attention. OCC is looking at the feasibility of an all modes crossing of the railway at this location with a preferred scheme to be identified.

#### Central corridor – recommended improvements

- 3.17.13 Previous studies including the Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (2009) and Bicester Movement Study (2013) have recognised that there is a need to reduce through traffic in the town centre particularly along the route between the Buckingham Road (A421) and Oxford Road (A41). Town centre highway improvements in 2012 have altered some of the junctions along the central corridor route and further improvements will be considered as part of Policy BIC2 in LTP4.
- 3.17.14 As part of the STS detailed design proposals for the central corridor along the Buckingham Road and Oxford Road north-south axis have been prepared by Sustrans in consultation with officers of the OCC. This was considered to have the greatest impact on reducing through traffic along this route and providing better facilities for walking and cycling linking to the town centre.
- 3.17.15 The proposals for the central corridor in the strategy follow the general approach for walking and cycling to be segregated as far as possible along the radial distributor routes in the town. Design proposals prepared by Sustrans as a detailed scheme to promote walking and cycling are included.

#### Funding

- 3.17.16 More detail is required to turn the delivery plan into a robust framework for bringing forward schemes and prioritising improvement to implement the strategy. The immediate priorities have been identified as quick wins with a phased approach to delivery over the next 20 years as the town continues to grow and new developments are progressed. Funding will be required to secure the delivery of the STS, with the sustainable transport projects being considered as part of the Cherwell Community Infrastructure Levy and opportunities as part of a Regional

Growth Fund package. Garden Town funding streams may also provide a source of funding.

### **Additional Benefits**

- 3.18 The STS supports the objectives of reducing carbon emissions from transport, improving air quality with associated health benefits, increasing capacity on the road network and promoting sustainable lifestyles through active and healthy travel options. It supports Garden Town principles relating to integrated and accessible transport as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association in April 2014. These state that walking, cycling and public transport should be the most attractive form of transport in a Garden Town.

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

- 4.1 The Bicester STS is a key document in supporting improvements to the Bicester transport network. It reviews and summarises the policy context and best practice from the UK and Europe. The vision and principles support the shift to more sustainable travel in the future providing a framework for infrastructure improvements and behaviour change. Detailed designs have been prepared by Sustrans for the central corridor route.
- 4.2 The Strategy is necessary to ensure that the future growth of Bicester can be accommodated. Improvements and enhancements to the public transport network will ensure that opportunities for bus and train journeys are optimised. The Strategy will contribute to the creation of an attractive town by integrating new and existing neighbourhoods with easy access for pedestrians and cyclists linking to exemplary public transport facilities and services. It has an important role in integrating new development with the existing town through sustainable connections and enhancements to key routes in and around the town. By creating an attractive place to live, work and visit the STS will enhance Bicester's reputation as a place to invest and develop new neighbourhoods innovatively and sustainably. The proposed improvements to the peripheral routes form an essential part of the strategy by removing some of the vehicular through traffic from the town centre and providing the opportunity to integrate the existing and new development with sustainable transport connections.
- 4.3 The STS has informed policy documents and proposals such as the LTP4 Bicester Area Strategy and will continue to do so. By endorsing and supporting the STS it will give it weight and demonstrate the commitment of CDC to the delivery the sustainable transport ambitions for Bicester. Officers will continue to identify priorities and secure funding through developer contributions, CIL, LEP funding to deliver an action plan as a rolling programme of infrastructure improvements in Bicester.

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Draft Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy was presented to a Members workshop in September 2014. At the workshop Members considered the vision, objectives principles and delivery plan. Work has continued on the development of



the STS Delivery Plan but was delayed by officers prioritising work on the Cherwell Local Plan and LTP4. In addition, proposals for traffic restrictions on the central corridor and town centre require further consideration as they are currently aspirational and will be delivered over a period of time as opportunities arise.

- 5.2 The Eco Bicester travel demonstration project included a travel survey of over 2000 residents in 2010. It identified three key objectives which have been incorporated into the Strategy as set out below:
- i. Total trips by Bicester residents reduced
  - ii. Total distance travelled by car (as driver) by Bicester residents to all destinations reduced
  - iii. Total CO2 emissions from car travel by Bicester residents to all destinations reduced.

## **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: To adopt the STS as a Supplementary Planning Document

This option was rejected as it will lead to delay to the preparation of the document and is considered unnecessary as the STS will be used to inform CLP Part 2 and the LTP4. It would also require additional resources to complete.

Option 2: To await publication of the STS until further detail is received to complete the Delivery Plan

This option was rejected given the uncertainty of funding streams. It would lead to undue delay, resulting in some sections becoming outdated and prevent the document being used to secure funding bids. The current delivery plan relates to the strategy document and demonstrates how the strategy could be delivered. As such, it is illustrative and will be worked up in greater detail by officers with elements incorporated into the Cherwell Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from this report. The cost of the preparation of the Bicester Sustainable Transport Plan is met from existing resources.

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement, 0300 0030107  
[paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

### **Legal Implications**

7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

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

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met:** No

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** Yes

### Wards Affected

All Bicester Wards  
Ambrosden and Chesterton  
Middleton Stoney  
Caversfield  
Launton

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell District Council Business Plan strategic priorities: A District of opportunity; Safe, clean and green.  
Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 - Policy SLE4: Improved Transport and Connections

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Michael Gibbard,  
Lead Member for Planning

### Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Bicester Sustainable Strategy Extract: Executive Summary
<b>Background Papers</b>	
Bicester Sustainable Strategy	
<b>Report Author</b>	Andrew Bowe, Implementation Officer
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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy July 2015**

#### ***Executive Summary***

Bicester, a large market town in Oxfordshire with a population of 30,000 is due to undergo major expansion over the coming 20 years. Located on the train line between London and Birmingham, the town has strong relationships with Oxford and Banbury and lies within the Knowledge Spine. Development of Bicester has been relatively recent - up until 1961 the population was still only 5,500. The town is roughly circular in form with peripheral and radial roads, between which residential areas are located.

The conservation area of the town centre includes Market Square and Causeway, where St. Edburg's Church is located. Bicester's topography is relatively flat with large areas of open space including the nature reserve of Bure Park. Air quality is generally good but with some issues along the central corridor (King's End and Queen's Avenue), and there has been some flooding of the River Bure in the town centre in the past. Bicester has industrial areas, with the Bicester and Banbury College Campus well-known for its automotive focus. Retail destinations are the town centre and the internationally famous Bicester Village, to the south of the town. Local amenities - shops and schools - are located in the surrounding residential areas.

EcoBicester provides a sustainable vision for the growth of the town as a whole, while the Draft Bicester Masterplan outlines ambitions for the growth of the town including employment and housing in accordance with Local Plan requirements to 2031. A wealth of national and local policy guides this strategy, from the National Planning Policy Framework to policy covering economic development, integrated transport and physical health. This is best understood graphically – see Figure 1.1.

The strategy is also underpinned by previous transport studies of Bicester, including the Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Study, the Bicester Movement Study and the Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project, all of which aim to promote travel by sustainable means. European and UK best practice examples are used to inform this strategy.

Key messages from European towns for the successful implementation of sustainable transport include: the importance of commitment to policies favouring sustainable modes, implemented consistently over a sustained time period; the importance of investing in infrastructure; segregation of cycling; a coarse grid for motor vehicles and finer grid for cycling; the use of filtered permeability; the implementation of 20mph zones in residential areas; and integrated ticketing. Houten (the Netherlands) in particular is used as a key example. It is similar to what Bicester may become and has a similar relationship to other major places and strategic infrastructure.

While there are fewer outstanding examples within the UK, key messages from UK towns for the successful implementation of sustainable transport include: the importance of a governance structure that embeds cycling across a range of service areas for which a local authority is responsible; reducing vehicle speeds; investment in infrastructure; segregated

cycling facilities; overcoming barriers and implementing smarter choices programmes. Research on Sustainable Mobility and the Built Environment reveals a clear association between walking and cycling and the urban variables of density, land use mix, proximity and connectivity. Links between transport system characteristics and design characteristics are less clear, and evidence suggests that psychological and social factors mediate these associations. Research is now attending to models that propose that walking and cycling is dependent on demographic, psychosocial and physical environmental factors, and a multi-level approach is necessary to encourage behaviour change towards active travel.

A study of the existing movement network established existing conditions. Key findings were:

- Walking and cycling - Walking and cycling within most residential areas is relatively easy, but the main radial roads have limited or poor quality provision – with the exception of Banbury Road north of the London-Birmingham railway. While the town centre is easily accessible on foot, the pedestrianisation of Sheep Street and one-way traffic on Causeway present significant barriers to cycling through the town. Provision of cycle parking in the town centre is limited and very well-used.
- Trains - Bicester is well connected by rail with two train stations: Bicester North, which lies on the route between London Marylebone and Birmingham; and Bicester Town, which is currently undergoing redevelopment and will re-open providing service between Oxford and London Marylebone (2016), and eventually as far as Cambridge, forming part of East-West Rail.
- Buses - While there are quite a number of bus routes serving Bicester and neighbouring towns and villages, the provision is somewhat confusing with some very infrequent and others under-used. The most frequent service is the S5, which runs every 15 minutes and serves the town, Kidlington and Oxford. There is also a taxibus service from Bicester North station and shuttle bus services to Bicester Village. The bus interchange is in the town centre on Manorsfield Road by the Pioneer shopping centre – this is newly built and provides a good level of bus stand and information.
- Strategic Road Network - Bicester is well-situated in the strategic road network, located immediately east of the M40, with the A34 and A41 running south of the town. Within the town there are primary routes (peripheral route), secondary & tertiary routes (radial roads) and residential streets. Of these, the roads with the highest traffic flows are the A41 (>20,000veh/hr) and the ring road to the north and east of the town (flows between 16,000 and 19,000veh/hr). The speed limit within the town is 30mph. There is copious provision of car parking within the town centre, with car parks on average only at 50% capacity.
- Accessibility and Connectivity - In terms of neighbourhood access and connectivity, access to residential neighbourhoods is generally from the radial roads, with less connectivity between neighbourhoods due to the predominant cul-de-sac form of the road layouts. The town centre is accessible on foot within 20 minutes from most areas of town. Bicester is very accessible by bike – most parts of the town are within a 10 minute cycle of the town centre and both train stations, with all of the existing development within an easy 15 minute cycle.
- Movement - The existing movement profile for Bicester shows that residents generate a total of 86,500 trips per day, of which 56% are contained within the town. Overall, 31% of trips by residents are undertaken by sustainable modes and 69% by private motor vehicle.

The future movement profile predicts that in 2031, residents will generate a total of 132,300 trips per day, of which 59% are contained within the town. Overall, 40% of trips by residents will be undertaken by sustainable modes and 60% by private motor vehicle. A level of behaviour change is necessary to achieve the NW Bicester goal of a modal share of at least 50% for sustainable modes, and the strategy goal of 40% for the town as a whole. The complexity of how modal choices are made is considered, establishing distance as a limiting factor. Bicester's compact size gives the town a great advantage in encouraging sustainable travel particularly for the purposes of leisure, education, town centre shopping and work. Future opportunities for Bicester include place-making, particularly the historic core; innovation, and branding with EcoBicester and Bicester Village. The vision for the strategy is to create a network of transport infrastructure and services that make it easy and attractive to travel by sustainable means. The principles underpinning the strategy are that it be: Sustainable, Resilient, Incremental, Modal Priorities, a Hierarchy of Routes, High Quality and Integrated. The future movement strategy considers all modes and their integration. Key points are:

- The walking and cycling network is divided into primary and secondary routes, and is based on the core principles of coherence, directness, safety, comfort and attractiveness. The base network of existing facilities requires upgrading in order to fulfil these principles, set out in a comprehensive schedule of improvements. The focus for improvements will be to crossing facilities at radial distributor roads and minor residential roads. In the town centre, through movement of motor vehicles is to be restricted, with cycling facilitated and traffic speeds slowed to less than 20mph.
- The strategy proposes interchange hubs at the two stations, encouraging multi-modal journeys. The possible closure of London Road level crossing is of major concern, impacting bus services and cutting off Langford Village, Graven Hill and East Bicester from the town centre.
- Bus provision is made legible by separating out longer distance and town services. A local retail relay route is established along the north south corridor (connecting also the new park and ride to the south), with all other town services passing through the town centre bus station - enhanced to form the major interchange hub. These changes would be phased and all new bus stock would be accessible, low carbon and have smart ticket readers.
- Changes in the town centre would allow the retail centre of Bicester to expand, in tandem with the town's wider expansion. This is a particular opportunity for Market Square, which is currently undervalued and dominated by parking and a one-way traffic gyratory. It is proposed to pedestrianise the northern and eastern sides of the Square as well as Causeway. Through traffic would be restricted to buses, taxis and cycles between the hours of 7am and 7pm. Implementation would take place gradually, and be supported by a servicing & deliveries and car parking strategy to ensure its successful operation.
- Current retail space is approximately 35,000m<sup>2</sup> with car parking provision of 1,160 spaces, or one car parking space per 30m<sup>2</sup> of retail space. With the town's expansion, retail space and parking provision should also increase. The additional parking would be provided by development on the site of the Claremont car park - forming a retail anchor to the south east of Market Square, which would mirror the retail anchor of Sainsbury's/Vue to the north west.

This would increase retail space in the town to approximately 45,000m<sup>2</sup>, and car parking provision to approximately 1,250spaces.

- Even with sustainable transport gains, the modal share for car driving for Bicester would still be 60%. The use of electric and ULEV vehicles for these trips would make these car trips more sustainable. There is currently a high level of funding available for this, and ULEV are also more pleasant and healthy in terms of air pollution and noise levels. Recommendations include strategic placement of electric charge points and an electric car club. These improvements align with the EcoBicester vision and offer positive branding opportunities. Infrastructure improvements are critical to creating an environment where sustainable travel is the most popular choice, but this will be most effective when supported by the management and implementation of a smarter choices and active travel programme. This should be funded and staffed appropriately. Particular opportunities for Bicester with potential for change are identified, and measures proposed include travel awareness campaigns, a sustainable travel roadshow, work with rail stations, sustainable transport hubs, workplace engagement, a commuter challenge, school engagement, residential personalised travel planning and community street design.

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption ('Making') of Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan</b></p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to seek a recommendation to Full Council to 'make', i.e. to adopt, the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan (HNNP) following the holding of a successful referendum in Hook Norton Parish on 3 September 2015. There was a majority vote in favour of adopting the neighbourhood plan so that it becomes part of the statutory development plan for Cherwell District Council under the provisions of Section 38A (4) and (6) the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the referendum result of the 3 September 2015 where 97% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan which is above the required 50%.
- 1.2 To recommend to Full Council to resolve that Cherwell District Council as local planning authority 'make' the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan (appendix 3 to this report) part of the statutory development plan for the District.
- 1.3 To recommend to Full Council to resolve to approve the issuing and publication of a decision statement, under regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, that Cherwell District Council has resolved to make the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 To recommend to Full Council to resolve to delegate to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy the correction of any spelling, grammatical or typographical errors, and the undertaking of any minor presentational improvements, prior to the Plan being adopted and published by Council.

## **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Executive on 7 April 2015, following the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Examination, the Executive resolved that:
- 1) That the modifications to the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations be approved, and the issue of a decision statement to that effect be authorised.
  - 2) That all of the Examiner's recommendations and modifications to enable the Plan to proceed to a referendum be approved.
  - 3) That the area for the referendum as recommended by the examiner to be the Hook Norton parish council area (which is the approved designated neighbourhood area) and that there will be no extension to the area be approved.
- 2.2 The Plan had passed an independent examination in March 2015 and in liaison with Hook Norton Parish Council a referendum was held on 3 September 2015. There was a majority vote in favour of adopting the Plan.
- 2.3 The Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan is the first in Cherwell District to reach and pass the referendum stage.

## **3.0 Report Details**

### **Preparation of the Plan**

- 3.1 The production of the plan has involved extensive community consultation and engagement in accordance with procedures set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Advice was provided by officers from the Planning Policy and Democratic Services teams on plan preparation and on the conduct of the referendum.
- 3.2 Pre-submission consultation on a draft Plan took place for six weeks from 18 November 2013 until 6 January 2014. Following consideration of the representations received, the Plan and Sustainability Appraisal report were revised and submitted to this Council on 14 July 2014 along with the supporting documents: the Consultation Statement, and the Basic Conditions Statement. The Plan was publicized for comments for six weeks from 11 September 2014 until 23 October 2014 in accordance with the regulations.
- 3.3 Following that consultation, the plan and all supporting information and documents, including copies of representations, were sent to the independent Examiner appointed by this Council with the consent of Hook Norton Parish Council. The examination was conducted by written representations during February/March 2015. The Examiner's report was issued in March 2015 and the Examiner recommended that subject to modifications the plan proceed to referendum. The modifications were approved by the Executive on 7 April 2015 and the Plan proceeded to referendum.



## **The Referendum**

- 3.4 In liaison with the Planning Policy team and in consultation with Hook Norton Parish Council, the Council's Democratic Elections team organized a referendum to be held in accordance with the Town and Country Planning, England (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 3.5 A timetable was drawn up for the referendum and an information statement was published giving 28 days' notice. The information statement, notice of referendum and notice of poll were placed on the Council's website and displayed in Hook Norton Library.
- 3.6 The referendum regulations required that the information statement set out where the documents specified below could be inspected:
- the draft Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan;
  - the report of the independent examiner into the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - copies of the written representation submitted to the independent examiner;
  - a Decision Statement of the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction that the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions specified by statute and complies with the provision made by or under Section 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; (appendix 1)
  - a statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum;
  - a map of the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 3.7 Copies of the specified documents were published on the Council's website and placed for inspection at:
- Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA between 9:00am and 5:00pm.
  - Hook Norton Library, High Street, Hook Norton, OX15 5NH, during published opening hours.
- 3.8 A referendum version document of the Plan incorporating the Examiner's recommended modifications was also produced and placed on the Council's website to aid voters. The information statement and specified documents were available throughout the period of the referendum.
- 3.9 The question asked at the referendum was: 'Do you want Cherwell District Council to use the Neighborhood Plan for Hook Norton to help it decide planning applications in the neighborhood area?' The referendum was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015. Of those eligible to vote, 568 voted in favour of the Plan with 16 against. This represents a turnout of 34.8% of those eligible to vote in the Parish and gives a majority vote of 97.2%. The declaration of poll results is attached as appendix 2. The result of the referendum has been publicized on the Council's website.

## **Adoption Process**

- 3.10 Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires a local planning authority to which a proposal for

the making of a neighbourhood development plan has been made to 'make' the neighbourhood development plan if more than half of those voting in the applicable referendum have voted in favour of the plan. A local planning authority must also 'make' the plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held.

- 3.11 The Council is not subject to this duty if the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). There is no known breach or incompatibility.
- 3.12 In accordance with the Regulations (reg. 19) as soon as possible following the decision to make the neighbourhood plan the Council must:
- publish a decision statement that the plan has been made and the reasons. This must be published on the Council's website and in such other manner likely to bring it to the attention of people who live or carry on business in the Hook Norton Parish Council area;
  - send to the qualifying body i.e. Hook Norton Parish Council, and anyone who asked to be notified of the decision, a copy of the decision statement. The District Council must also publish where and when the Decision Statement can be inspected. A copy of the draft Decision Statement is attached at Appendix 4.
- 3.13 Regulation 20 requires that the local planning authority also publish the neighbourhood development plan on the Council's website and detail in the decision statement where and when the neighbourhood plan can be inspected. Copies of the decision statement and the final version of the Plan will also be displayed in Hook Norton library.
- 3.14 The final version of the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan incorporating the Examiner's modifications, which were accepted by the Executive at its meeting of 7 April 2015 and publicized in a decision statement, is presented at appendix 3.

### **Plan Status**

- 3.15 Under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act a neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as the adopted Local Plan once it has been agreed at a referendum and is made (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority. At this point it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.16 Where there is conflict between adopted parts of the development plan, section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the conflict must be resolved by the decision maker favouring the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan.

## **4. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 This the first neighbourhood plan in Cherwell District to reach the referendum stage and the making of the plan is the final formal stage of the process of becoming part of the statutory development plan. The preparation of the HNNP has provided a better understanding and knowledge of the process which will help in progressing future neighbourhood plans in the District. The efforts and success of Hook Norton Parish Council and the local community in progressing the Plan is acknowledged by officers.
- 4.2 Local planning authorities are required by statute to 'make' any neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum vote in favour of the plan. Of those eligible to vote, 568 voted in favour of the Plan with 16 against. This represents a turnout of 34.8% of those eligible to vote in the Parish and gives a majority vote of 97.2%.
- 4.3 The Executive are recommended to resolve that the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Development Plan be 'made' by Council and that the associated statutory and administrative steps are undertaken

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 Cllr Michael Gibbard – Leader Member for Planning

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

- 6.1 Where a referendum poll results in more than half of those eligible to vote voting in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, the local planning authority must 'make' the Plan as part of the statutory development plan. There are no alternative options available unless the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). There is no known breach or incompatibility.
- 6.2 A legal challenge can be made if a local planning authority declines to make a neighbourhood plan following a successful referendum.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 The costs of holding the referendum fell on this Council. Otherwise there are no other financial implications associated with the decision to make the plan.

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement, ext. 7936

Paul.Sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

### **Legal Implications**

7.2 The Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for Cherwell District and becomes a material consideration in the determination of relevant applications for planning permission affecting Hook Norton Parish.

Comments checked by:  
Ross Chambers (Solicitor), – Planning, ext. 1690  
ross.chambers@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

### **Risk Management**

7.3 Under Sections 38C (2) (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) anything relating to the referendum and the Council's decision to make the Plan may be legally challenged by a claim for judicial review which must be filed within 6 weeks beginning the day on which the results are published.

Comments checked by:  
Ross Chambers (Solicitor) – Planning 01295 221690  
ross.chambers@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

## **8.0 Decision Information**

**Key decision** No

**Financial Threshold Met** No

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** No

### **Wards Affected**

Hook Norton

### **Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

- Accessible, Value for Money Council
- District of Opportunity
- Safe and Healthy
- Cleaner Greener

### **Lead Councillor**

Councillor Michael Gibbard - Lead Member for Planning

## **Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Basic Conditions Decision Statement approving modifications recommended by the Examiner
Appendix 2	Declaration of results of poll
Appendix 3	Version of Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan for 'making'
Appendix 4	Draft Decision Statement for 'making' of Plan
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Shukri Masseri, Planning Officer
<b>Contact Information</b>	<a href="mailto:Shukri.Masseri@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Shukri.Masseri@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221851

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## **CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **HOOK NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINER'S REPORT**

#### **DECISION STATEMENT**

Cherwell District Council received the Independent Examiner's Report into the submitted Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan on the 12 March 2015.

Subject to modification the Examiner was satisfied that the Plan would meet the Basic Conditions as required under paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The Council at the meeting of the Executive on the 7 April 2015 resolved to accept all of the Examiner's recommendations.

The Council therefore proposes to make the recommended modifications, and to correct any typographical and other errors where necessary.

The Council's Executive also resolved that the modified Plan should proceed to a referendum as recommended by the Examiner which is likely to take place sometime in July.

The Executive also approved the referendum area as recommended by the Examiner to be the Hook Norton Parish Council area which is concurrent with the designated Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan area.

Further details of the Council's decision, the Examiner's Report and the submission documents can be viewed on the Council website.

<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning/index.cfm?articleid=10196>

<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2559&Ver=4>

Hard copies can be viewed during normal opening hours at Cherwell District Council Offices, Bodicote House, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Adrian Colwell

Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

Cherwell District Council

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# CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

## HOOK NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

### DECLARATION OF RESULT OF POLL

I, James Doble being the DEPUTY COUNTING OFFICER for Cherwell District Council at the Referendum held on the 3 September 2015 under the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that the result of votes cast is as follows:

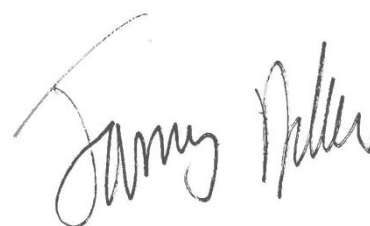
Description	Votes Recorded
Number cast in favour of a 'YES'	568
Number cast in favour of a 'NO'	16

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:-

(a) want of official mark	0
(b) voting for more than one answer	0
(c) writing or mark by which the voter or proxy could be identified	0
(d) unmarked or void for uncertainty	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>

I do hereby declare that more than half of those voting have voted **in favour** of the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan.

Turnout: 34.8%



Dated: Thursday 3 September 2015

James Doble  
Deputy Counting Officer

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**Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan  
2014 -2031  
Incorporating Examiner's Modifications**

**September 2015**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Hook Norton & background to this Plan

Hook Norton has a long history and distinctive character. A settlement known as Hocneratune dates back to at least AD 922<sup>1</sup>, and the parish now has just over 2,000 residents<sup>2</sup>. It is one of the most western parishes in the Cherwell District, and is within the Ironstone belt of North Oxfordshire. The village is set in a countryside of hills and small valleys where fields are used mainly for pasture. Many springs arise and contribute to the tributaries of both the River Stour (north of the parish) and River Swere (south of the parish).

It was once a centre of the wool industry, and has supplied iron ore from local ironstone to the Brymbo Steel Company in Wales. The industry ceased after the Second World War. Similarly, Banbury and Cheltenham railway is also now closed down but parts of the construction remain, including two viaducts. The Brewery, which dates back to 1849, continues to provide employment. However, many residents travel long distances to work.

The village has retained a range of services and Hook Norton has a vibrant community. There is a strong local feeling that house prices are high and young people with Hook Norton connections are being forced to go elsewhere. Very recent development pressure has focussed the challenges of maintaining and enhancing a sustainable community, and the quality of the natural, built and historic environment. This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to help address the challenges.

### 1.2 Who and what is this Plan for

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Hook Norton residents under the provisions of the Localism Act of 2011 to guide the future development of Hook Norton. The Plan covers the period 2014 to 2031, with a review every five years. The end date of 2031 was selected to correspond with the Cherwell District Council Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan covers Hook Norton Civil Parish area (shown on Fig 1 overleaf). A vote in favour at the referendum means that the Neighbourhood Plan will then become part of the Development Plan for the area, against which any proposals for development will be assessed. In the lead up to the referendum, decision makers are expected to consider this Neighbourhood Plan as a material consideration in any development planning decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: History of Hook Norton 912-1928, Margaret Dickens.. Pub. The Banbury Guardian 1928, reprinted Hook Norton Local History Society Group, 2009

<sup>2</sup> Source: Census 2011, Key Statistics. Population is 2,117



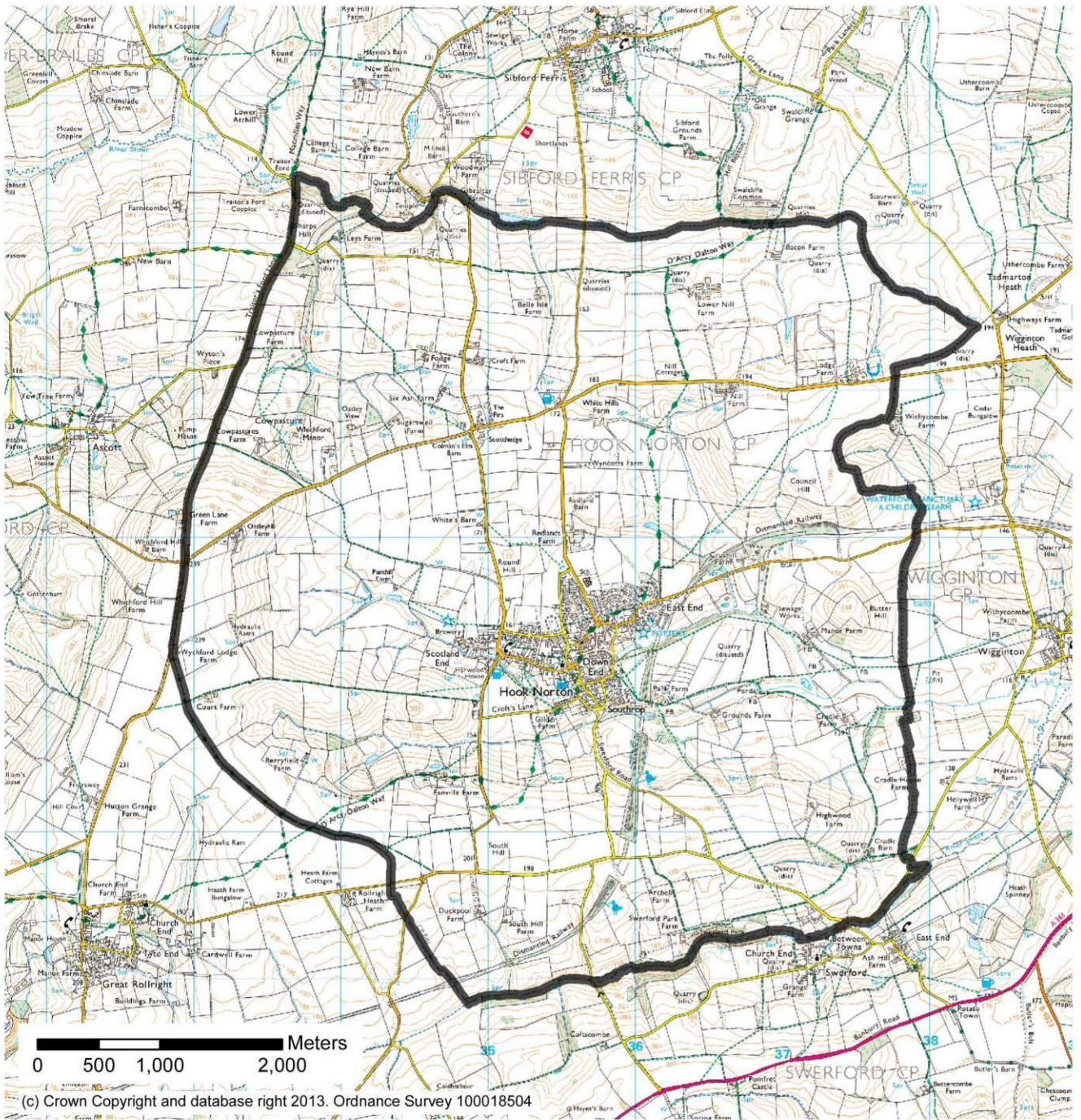


Fig 1 Civil Parish of Hook Norton

### 1.3 How does this plan fit with Cherwell District and National Plans

This Neighbourhood Plan provides locally focussed policies and actions to address matters identified as important to the local community, particularly where it is perceived that these matters are not being adequately addressed through existing planning policies.

The adopted Local Plan for the Cherwell District is the Cherwell Local Plan, 1996, from which many policies have been 'saved' for use until replaced by a new plan. Cherwell District Council has been working on a replacement for several years. There is a Non-Statutory Local Plan 2011 which was never adopted, and more recently the emerging Cherwell District policy is contained in the Cherwell Local Plan 2006-2031. This has been through public consultation and the Draft Submission Document was approved by Cherwell District Council in October 2013 for progression toward examination and adoption. Examination commenced in June 2014 and recommenced in December 2014 following modifications. The Inspector's final report was released in June 2015.

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan of 1996 and the emerging policies of the proposed replacement, the Cherwell Local Plan 2006-2031<sup>3</sup>, together with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to repeat National or Cherwell policies but, where appropriate, to add local detail to those policies. The Neighbourhood Plan makes use of evidence gathered and prepared for the emerging Local Plan. It also takes account of National planning practice guidance.

### 1.4 How the plan was prepared

Local involvement and consultation is at the heart of neighbourhood planning. The Parish Council of Hook Norton started the process with a resolution in September 2012. A public meeting was held by the Parish Council to explain the concept and invite volunteers. From this, a Steering Group was formed primarily of non-Parish Council members as the Council considered it important that the Neighbourhood Plan was not simply seen as something produced by the Parish Council but was a community effort. The Parish Council formally registered with Cherwell District Council to become a Neighbourhood Area on 26 November 2012 and this was approved by Cherwell District Council on 3 June 2013.

The Steering Group used a range of methods to inform people about the Plan and its progress including the local newsletter delivered to each household, posters placed throughout the village, a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website, emails and social media. Consultation roughly followed 5 stages and included various methods. These are summarised below:

- Identifying the issues – by questionnaire delivered through the Newsletter; two presentations and workshops advertised by posters and to which invitations were sent to representatives of local services, businesses, clubs and societies; and informal discussions such as at the Village Market
- Survey relating to key issues – commissioned from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
- Consultation on goals and objectives, and potential sites – distributed through the Newsletter, plus two 'drop-in' style presentations
- Consultation on policies – 2 workshop style presentations with questionnaires
- Consultation on Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan – in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and including consultees as advised by Cherwell District Council.

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<sup>3</sup> Cherwell Local Plan, Submission, January 2014

The Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by extensive background research to identify the social, environmental and planning context, and the main sources used are identified in the Evidence base section of this Plan (Section 7). In addition to using existing sources for initial background information, the Steering Group commissioned a survey to obtain more detail, and maintained an ongoing review of relevant material produced during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. This material included: national planning guidance; Cherwell District Council documents, planning applications and decisions; and the development of other Neighbourhood Plans. The preparation of the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan has also been informed by a process of Sustainability Appraisal.

## **1.5 Key issues, goals and objectives**

Early consultation identified the importance of the countryside, rural character and amenities to the community of Hook Norton. Concerns were raised about development, lack of affordable housing, and issues about transport. To obtain more detail about some of these, particularly housing, a survey was commissioned<sup>4</sup>.

Five main themes emerged from the consultation: housing; community and amenities; environment; employment; and transport. A series of goals were developed within these five themes, together with objectives arising from the goals, and these were endorsed by a strong majority through local consultation<sup>5</sup>. Taking into account feedback from the Sustainability Appraisal process, the goals and objectives for this plan are as follows:

### **Housing**

**Goal To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 1.1 To deliver a mix of housing that caters for the full range of housing needs in the village, as identified in the housing needs survey
- 1.2 To provide suitable accommodation for older residents and those with other particular requirements, to enable them to continue to live in the village
- 1.3 To provide suitable 'truly' affordable housing to enable young and lower income residents to remain living in the village
- 1.4 To provide a limited amount of housing with preferential access to current village residents, or those with a strong local connection
- 1.5 To ensure that new development is of high quality design, in keeping with the village and parish character and to a high level of sustainability
- 1.6 To limit the size of individual developments to ensure that growth in the parish is sustainable and does not negatively impact on the infrastructure and amenities for existing residents

### **Community and Amenities**

**Goal 1 To maintain and enhance the character, vitality and community spirit of the village**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 1.1 To retain and protect from inappropriate development the village "Crown Jewels" (for example the library, the Sun public house)
- 1.2 To maintain and enhance the existing range of amenities, services and facilities
- 1.3 To encourage the purchase of locally produced goods and services
- 1.4 To provide a safe and healthy environment for all the people of our community

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<sup>4</sup> Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Survey. Oxfordshire Rural Community Council,

<sup>5</sup> Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement refers



## **Goal 2 To maintain and develop an infrastructure to support our community activities**

### **Objectives arising:**

- 2.1 To maintain and enhance the facilities for children and young peoples' activities
- 2.2 To maintain and enhance facilities for a range of sporting and non-sporting leisure activities

## **Employment**

### **Goal To maintain and enhance employment opportunities and businesses providing sustainable services and local employment**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 1.1 To encourage and support local agriculture and businesses in suitable locations
- 1.2 To ensure that any new employment opportunities are appropriate to the surroundings and meet high standards of sustainability (in terms of location and design)
- 1.3 To encourage new business start-ups and opportunities for local people

## **Environment**

### **Goal 1 To maintain the rural character and tranquility of the parish whilst seeking opportunities for landscape, heritage, recreational and ecological gain**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 1.1 To retain and enhance the special character of the locality and distinctive local identity of the village
- 1.2 To maintain and enhance key views within and of the village and the wider District, including the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 1.3 To maintain and enhance the village's Conservation Area
- 1.4 To retain and enhance accessible open spaces within and around the village
- 1.5 To encourage sympathetic management of the countryside around the village to enhance the high quality landscape and improve local biodiversity

### **Goal 2 To minimise the environmental impact of new development, and ensure that any development is sympathetic to its setting within the village and the wider neighbourhood**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 2.1 To ensure that any development is compatible with the built and natural environment
- 2.2 To encourage development that makes use of previously developed land and buildings rather than greenfield locations

### **Goal 3 To reduce harm to the environment by aiming for a low carbon community**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 3.1 To improve the energy efficiency of the village
- 3.2 To encourage and support home working
- 3.3 To require all development to meet high standards of sustainability

## **Transport**

### **Goal Improve access within the parish, improve travel choices and reduce the need to travel**

#### **Objectives arising:**

- 1.1 To reduce traffic congestion
- 1.2 To encourage buses to serve existing and new areas, run at appropriate times and be affordable
- 1.3 To ensure there is adequate car parking available in any new development
- 1.4 To promote alternatives to minimise the use of cars e.g. car sharing
- 1.5 To protect, develop and improve the network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths in the parish to improve links within the parish and with other parishes, and enable all people to actively move around

## 1.6 Policies and actions

Feedback from the consultations, and the results of the survey, were used to develop draft policies. It was recognised that not all of the issues raised would be appropriate for Neighbourhood Plan policies. However, the plan process could suggest alternative ways in which some aspects could be taken forward and the Steering Group has therefore recommended to the Parish Council actions which could be taken to assist the community. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore refers, where relevant, to these suggestions and further detail has been provided to the Parish Council.

Policies and actions for this Plan were identified in four subject areas:

- Hook Norton character and countryside
- Community – Living and working in Hook Norton
- Transport
- Housing

Consultation took place on the draft policies and the feedback received was taken into account in this Plan.

The policies and actions in this Plan together provide for sustainable development of Hook Norton. In planning terms there are 3 dimensions of sustainable development. These are:

- Economic – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- Social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- Environmental – contributing to producing and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

This Neighbourhood Plan recognises that these 3 roles are mutually dependent, and also takes account of the particular and special qualities of Hook Norton.

The Cherwell Local Plan seeks to focus growth in the urban areas of the District. Hook Norton is a rural parish which is appreciated by residents and enjoyed by visitors. It shares with many rural areas a lack of affordable homes and a need to retain local services to enable the village to continue to thrive. The community accepts that there will be development but is very aware that development simply to meet housing numbers can erode the qualities which make a place special and valued. Approval has recently been granted for large scale housing development in Hook Norton and a further application for a large residential development has recently been made. Strong concern has been expressed that the infrastructure is unsuited for this type of growth, and that this will result in characterless estates of standardised homes more typical of suburbia than the village.

This Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to carefully manage growth, taking into account infrastructure and amenities. It is not anti-development and it does not provide for less than the amount of development described in higher level plans. This Plan seeks to meet the needs of the community in a way which retains and enhances the character of Hook Norton now and for the future.

Applicants and decision makers must read this Plan and Policies as a whole when assessing if a proposal would be acceptable.

## 2. HOOK NORTON CHARACTER AND COUNTRYSIDE

### 2.1 Policy background and reasoning

Sustainable development is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework. One of the Core Principles of the Framework recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The spatial strategy of the Cherwell Local Plan focusses development on urban areas of the District and development in the countryside is to be strictly controlled. This represents the most sustainable approach.

In relation to villages and rural areas, Cherwell wishes to protect our built and natural environments and the character and appearance of our villages and relevant policies to this effect are included in both the adopted and emerging Local Plans.

The Government places great importance on good design and recognises it is a key aspect of sustainable development. Design is fundamental to the retention of local distinctiveness, which is supported by the Framework.<sup>6</sup>

The Local Plan requires development to be of a “high standard”<sup>7</sup> and provides some elements of guidance. The emerging plan similarly requires any development in villages to be “built to exemplary design and building standards”<sup>8</sup>. Hook Norton has a rich heritage interest. It has many examples of high quality design, and expects only the best of any new development.

The Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to supplement aspects of the Local Plan with particular reference to Hook Norton, with a view to ensuring a cohesive approach to any development in the parish.

The policies reflect results of consultation which showed the high importance and value placed on Hook Norton’s character and countryside. Particular aspects which are expected to have significant weight when considering any planning application are:

- Hook Norton parish is immediately adjacent to the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Landscape in the parish has for many years been designated as an Area of High Landscape Value in recognition of its environmental quality;
- The tranquillity map referred to in the emerging Local Plan policy ESD 13 shows virtually the whole of the parish is categorised as “most tranquil” ;
- The Cherwell District Landscape Assessment which informed the Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance classifies the majority of landscape in Hook Norton as “conservation type”;
- A large part of Hook Norton village is designated as a Conservation Area (as shown on plan in Appendix A);
- Good design and positive contribution to local character is not just a matter for designated areas – it is applicable to all of Hook Norton in order to maintain the integrity of the landscape and environment as a whole;
- The landscape and character of Hook Norton attracts visitors which contribute to the local economy;
- Maintenance of unspoilt rural views is an inherent part of landscape quality, particularly from Public Rights of Way, to and from ridgelines and hillsides and other frequently used viewpoints. Views of countryside generally, and particular views to

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<sup>6</sup> Para 60

<sup>7</sup> Policy C28 of Cherwell Local Plan, November 1996

<sup>8</sup> Para C218 of Cherwell Local Plan 2006 – 2031. Submission January 2014

and from hills were identified as most important in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey. Important views also included buildings unique to Hook Norton, including the viaduct, church and brewery. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies "a series of impressive deflected views".

**Policy HN - CC 1: Protection and enhancement of local landscape and character of Hook Norton**

**Any development must be located and designed so that it is readily visually accommodated into its surroundings and setting, and provides a positive contribution to the locally distinctive character and context of Hook Norton.**

**Proposals which would introduce development to isolated sites in the open countryside which would adversely affect the tranquillity, unspoilt character and amenity value of the landscape will not be permitted.**

**Development which makes use of previously developed land and buildings will generally be preferred to greenfield locations. Residential gardens are not considered previously developed land and redevelopment of residential gardens to provide inappropriate housing is specifically not supported, where it would result in a cramped form of development or otherwise detract from the character of the village**

**Policy HN - CC 2: Design**

**Any full planning application for development must contain sufficient detail to demonstrate the proposal is of high quality design. Proposals for development within or visible from the Conservation Area must have regard to the principles set out in the Hook Norton Conservation Area Appraisal. All new development should:**

**Reflect local distinctiveness and be readily assimilated particularly in terms of: the extent and amount of development; scale; layout; open spaces; appearance; and materials**

**Respect and enhance the historic environment of the parish and its heritage and natural assets**

**Ensure that locally important views and vistas are maintained or enhanced**

**Retain and enhance open spaces, walls, hedgerows and trees which are important to the local character**

**Take account of information and design guidance included in the Cherwell Countryside Design SPD, Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, Hook Norton Conservation Area Appraisal and any specific design guidance provided by Hook Norton Parish Council**

**Incorporate features to improve environmental performance and reduce carbon emissions, unless it is demonstrated to be not practicable and viable.**

**Policy HN - CC 3: Local distinctiveness, variety, and cohesiveness**

The traditional pattern of growth which characterises Hook Norton is small scale and gradual change. This must be reflected in the extent and amount of any development in Hook Norton. Designs which could be 'anywhere place' will not be acceptable. Variety in density, layout, building orientation and sizes will be sought to reflect the local context. Building styles and materials must also respect and positively contribute to local distinctiveness. Hook Norton is one of Oxfordshire's Ironstone villages and it is therefore expected that local ironstone will continue to be the predominant building material, particularly in the conservation area. All elements of schemes must be considered to produce a cohesive and high quality design in which detailing such as car parking, boundary treatments, bin stores, meter boxes, and lighting are all provided for in a harmonious and inclusive design.

**Policy HN - CC 4: Resource efficient design**

High levels of resource efficiency will be expected and must be demonstrated in any application for development. Applicants will be expected to put forward site-specific proposals which take account of location, layout and building orientation to minimise energy consumption.

**Policy HN - CC 5: Lighting**

Any lighting proposed must be of a design which does not cause visual intrusion nor cause adverse effects due to light pollution. All lighting must meet high levels of energy efficiency.

### 3. COMMUNITY - Living and Working in Hook Norton

#### 3.1 Protection of Locally Valued Resources

##### **Policy background and reasoning**

The importance of rural services is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework as contributing to a prosperous rural economy and promoting healthy communities.

All the consultation and survey results for the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan show that the services and facilities currently available in Hook Norton are greatly valued resources. The Parish Council has identified some of these as particularly special "Crown Jewels". During the consultation for this Plan, the Crown Jewels concept was supported and extended. Consequently a list of Locally Valued Resources has been drawn up and is to be reviewed on a regular basis. The current list is shown below. This list includes The Bell Public House which, at the time of preparing this Plan, is not currently trading but has been designated as an Asset of Community Value (on 19 July 2013) and an application for conversion to residential use was refused by Cherwell District Council on 10 July 2014, with a large amount of support from the local community.

Table 1. Locally Valued Resources

Shop	Peartree Public House	School
Post Office	Sun Public House	Playgroup
Doctor (& associated dispensing)		Playground
Dentist	Memorial Hall	Playing fields
Vet	St Peters Church	Allotments
Gate Hangs High Public House	Baptist chapel & meeting room	
	Library	

##### **Policy HN - COM 1: Protection of Locally Valued Resources**

**Any proposal for a change of use which would adversely affect or result in the loss of any Locally Valued Resource as defined in Table 1 will not be permitted unless in exceptional circumstances and where it has been clearly shown as the only, or most locally acceptable option, taking into account all relevant factors including:**

- full exploration of options to secure the continuation of the facility;**
- designation as an Asset of Community Value and community purchase**
- alternative provision**

**to the extent that each factor is applicable. The list of Locally Valued Resources is shown in Table 1 and will be reviewed on an annual basis.**

#### 3.2 Communities and facilities generally

Comments made during the consultation for this Neighbourhood Plan will be collated and presented to the Parish Council to inform its considerations when various matters arise and should there be any opportunities to follow up any of the detailed suggestions and comments made.

### 3.3 Public Rights of Way

#### ***Policy background and reasoning***

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that Public Rights of Way should be protected and enhanced. The emerging Local Plan policies consider Public Rights of Way only in the context of green infrastructure for the District.

Public Rights of Way within the Parish are well used and valued both locally and more widely as a recreational resource. Individuals and groups use the paths on a regular basis, as evidenced by the Hook Norton walking group and routes arranged by Ramblers and AONB. The paths include several long-distance trails. Consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan suggested creation of circular walks to/from the village of Hook Norton, routes to avoid roads, to link Hook Norton to Chipping Norton, and several other routes and links. These are listed in Appendix B for use in implementing Policy HN – COM 2, and for both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council for use in their Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

#### **Policy HN - COM 2: Public Rights of Way**

**Existing Public Rights of Way in the parish will be protected . Where re-routing is essential to accommodate sustainable development any loss of amenity value will be minimised.**

**Opportunities will be sought to enhance the network of Public Rights of Way through the creation of new links, improved maintenance and waymarking, and making use of developer contributions, agricultural schemes and local partnership initiatives.**

### 3.4 Infrastructure and utilities

#### ***Policy background and reasoning***

Great concern was expressed in the consultation for this Neighbourhood Plan about the need to co-ordinate any development with necessary infrastructure, and to provide this in a harmonious way, with considerations of sustainability being fundamental. The extent of provision, and the ability of the infrastructure and those utilities which there are in the parish, to cope were consistent themes throughout the consultation.

In response to the pre-Submission draft of this Plan, Thames Water specifically requested that the Plan include the advice that developers should engage with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to establish:

- The demand for both water supply and sewage treatment and the necessary infrastructure, and whether these can be met, and
- Surface water drainage and flood risk requirements and whether these can be met.

In relation to flooding and water management, the Environment Agency advise that there should be no new development in Flood Zone 2 or 3, nor within 8 metres of any watercourse.

The community of Hook Norton has expressed strong feeling about the limited opportunity for local involvement in identifying where any developer contributions might be required and be most useful to the community. In particular, concerns were raised in relation to the

acceptance of a recent Section 106 contribution which appears to be sufficient only to bus primary age children elsewhere rather than enable attendance at the village school.

Community contributions may be considered in a measured way by the various relevant authorities, including Planning from Cherwell District Council, and the Highways and Education Authorities at Oxfordshire County Council, working with the Hook Norton Parish Council as the representative of the community of Hook Norton.

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications and if it wished to suggest items for inclusion in a S106 Agreement it could do so at this stage. It is important to note that Section 106 Agreements can only be sought where they are: necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Thus many items which might be considered desirable could not be included. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is intended to replace S106 agreements for many aspects of community infrastructure and the proportion of funds raised in this way is higher (25%) where a neighbourhood plan is in place than elsewhere (15%). The introduction of CIL will present an opportunity for the Parish Council to use its share of the proceeds as it chooses.

### **3.5 Facilities for young people**

The Parish Council owns a play area which was recently re-equipped to a high standard with play equipment for younger children and adjacent hard and grassed spaces for informal games. There have been some problems in the area caused by noise and antisocial behaviour. Some respondents in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations thought this may be helped by providing additional facilities, and others that it was a matter of the behaviour regardless of provision. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has recommended to the Parish Council that this be considered by a small, specific group involving the Parish Council, local young people, and the Sports & Social Club. The Sports & Social Club facilities include large areas of playing field, a Multi Use Games Area and a clubhouse, all of which are available to members.

### **3.6 Local employment**

#### ***Policy background and reasoning***

Local employment opportunities are limited and many residents travel long distances to work<sup>9</sup>. The Cherwell Local Plan 1996 proposed a site at the old Brymbo works for employment generating development. An adjacent site (to the north) was granted permission in February 2000<sup>10</sup> for fabrication and repair of agricultural, commercial and equestrian boxes etc. However, the site at Brymbo has not been developed for the industrial use envisaged. Employment land at the Stanton engineering site was granted permission for housing in 2013<sup>11</sup>.

Consultation showed support for local employment and home-working. It also noted that a recent initiative which provided small offices in Hook Norton had been unsuccessful and identified broadband provision as a critical factor to home working. Retention of existing businesses, services and facilities in Hook Norton will assist in keeping local employment.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: ORCC Community profile for Hook Norton, 2013

<sup>10</sup> Application No. 99/02275/F

<sup>11</sup> Application No. 12/00472/F



**Policy HN - COM 3 : Broadband**

It is understood that Oxfordshire County Council will be rolling out high speed broadband to Hook Norton by 2015<sup>12</sup>. In the event that this does not happen, proposals which would facilitate better quality broadband to Hook Norton will be supported provided this can be delivered in compliance with other relevant policies in this Plan, and in particular policies regarding Protection of Local Landscape and Character of Hook Norton. Any development occurring after high speed broadband infrastructure has been provided to Hook Norton will be expected to provide connectivity to that infrastructure.

**Policy HN - COM 4 : Retention of Local Employment**

Sites providing local employment within the parish should be retained for employment use except in circumstances where it is demonstrated not to be viable.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/broadband-oxfordshire>

## 4. HOUSING

### 4.1 Sustainable housing growth

#### ***Policy background and reasoning***

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that Neighbourhood Plans should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, and plan positively to support, shape and direct development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

In relation to housing growth, this Neighbourhood Plan takes a pragmatic approach which has regard to policies in both the adopted Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan, and provides positively for sustainable housing growth.

Both adopted and emerging Local Plans adopt a village categorisation approach, and both provide policies to manage unanticipated or windfall development. For Hook Norton, both Local Plans allow for infilling, minor development and conversions. In addition, the Submitted Local Plan also includes Hook Norton within an allocation of growth in the rural areas.

#### ***Type of development***

The understanding of minor development, infilling, and conversions varies between the adopted and emerging Local Plans. Both Plans refer to the scale of development which is appropriate for Hook Norton as "small" and the Submitted Local Plan identifies this as "typically but not exclusively for less than 10 dwellings."

Hook Norton is one of the villages which have recently had permissions for new housing granted under the National Planning Policy Framework provisions relating to 5 year housing land supply. The Neighbourhood Plan consultation responses made clear that the recent approvals for housing in the village are considered to represent development at an inappropriate scale for Hook Norton. One will result in a development of 37 dwellings and another of 70 dwellings. Both are due to be developed in the same time frame and the consultation responses expressed concerns about the effects and sustainability of this at parish level (Section 3.4 of this Plan refers).

This Plan therefore seeks to provide clarity about the type of development which is appropriate in Hook Norton.

#### ***Local Plan allocation and recent growth***

The adopted Local Plan does not allocate numbers but identifies Hook Norton as able to "accommodate some limited extra growth".

The Submitted Local Plan distributes growth across the rural areas by allocating new housing, on sites for 10 or more dwellings, during the plan period to groups of villages. Policy Villages 2 of the Submitted Local Plan shows Hook Norton is within a group required to deliver 252 dwellings between 6 villages in the period 2012 – 2031. The numbers take account of completions and permissions as at 31 March 2012.

As part of the evidence base for this Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant figures in the Submitted Local Plan have been updated to take into account further completions and permissions between 31 March 2012 and 30 June 2014. For the group which includes Hook Norton, all of the 6 villages have had recent approvals granted which in total will provide for 528 dwellings (as shown in Appendix C). This represents 210% of the allocation for this group of villages. It also exceeds the entire anticipated allocation for all the villages of Cherwell

during the whole Plan period. There is therefore a need for policy at parish level to take this very recent extent of growth into account.

The effect of recent approvals for Hook Norton is that 107 dwellings (42% of the total allocation to the group of 6 villages) are now due to be built on the outskirts of the village, all in the same time frame. A further application for 54 dwellings in Hook Norton has recently been made<sup>13</sup>. The emerging Local Plan seeks to avoid overdevelopment in any village<sup>14</sup>. Account has been taken of this in developing policy for this Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore does not allocate nor anticipate a need to allocate any sites for 10 or more dwellings. This accords with Cherwell District Council's aim of supporting the long term sustainability of rural areas through a measured approach to development<sup>15</sup>.

### ***Future sustainable growth***

In identifying future sustainable growth, this Plan takes account of the findings of CRAITLUS<sup>16</sup>, part of the emerging Local Plan evidence base, which gives Hook Norton a poor sustainability rating.

Large developments are not acceptable to the community. Consultation results showed 44% of respondents preferred future housing developments to be 10 -20 dwellings, and 41% preferred development to be less than 10 dwellings. Sustainable housing growth in Hook Norton therefore focuses on small scale development to provide incremental and balanced growth which respects the character of the area.

### **Policy HN - H1: Sustainable housing growth**

**Sustainable housing growth for Hook Norton in this Plan period (2014 to 2031) means conversions, infilling, and minor development. 'Conversions' means the conversion of either residential or non-residential buildings. 'Infilling' means the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage, typically but not exclusively suitable for one or two dwellings. 'Minor development' means small scale development proposals, typically but not exclusively for less than 10 dwellings. To maintain a sustainable community, proposals for up to 20 dwellings may be permitted where this does not result in more than 20 dwellings being built in any one location at any time, taking into account any extant permissions. In all cases, housing growth must comply with all relevant policies in this Plan.**

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<sup>13</sup> Application 14/00844/OUT

<sup>14</sup> Para C.235. Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031 Submission January 2014

<sup>15</sup> Para C.6a. Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031 Submission January 2014

<sup>16</sup> Cherwell Rural Area Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (CRAITLUS), August 2009

## 4.2 Location of development

### **Policy background and reasoning**

The presumption of the National Planning Policy Framework is avoidance of new isolated homes in the countryside. This was supported in consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan. Respondents were clearly not in favour of a general expansion of the village beyond existing settlement limits. In responses to the question where housing should not go, 92% identified areas outside the current village extent as areas not considered appropriate for housing.

Three locations which would extend the built up area into open countryside to the North or West of the village accounted for 45% of the total areas where respondents thought housing should not go – these were: off Bourne Lane; the “Beer Festival” fields between Clay Bank and Hayway Lane; and the field between the School and Redlands Farm.

Similarly, land between the old railway and Park Hill/Beanacre was not considered suitable, nor was development to the south of the village (off the Chipping Norton Road, Swerford Road, Burycroft Road/Crofts Lane or the fields either side of the stream).

The area between Ironstone Hollow and the old railway evoked a close split between respondents who thought it appropriate for housing and those who did not.

Locations most frequently identified as possible for future potential housing were: the “derelict” site off Rope Way; the old KMS site between Scotland End and Old School End; and land adjacent to the Doctors surgery.

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation, sites identified in the Cherwell District Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) were ranked in order of preference<sup>17</sup>. The rankings show that the top three most popular and least popular sites accord with the same general conclusions as above. Specific sites which were included in the top 3 but not mentioned above are: near the telephone exchange; and the small piece of land accessible off the Bourne and immediately to the south of the consented Bourne Lane development.<sup>18</sup>

Results of the consultation about SHLAA sites provided not just rankings but also many comments about whether all or part of a site was considered potentially suitable, and the potentially suitable areas were also indicated graphically by respondents. These comments, and the responses about preferred size of development<sup>19</sup>, make clear that a ranking for any site has also to be seen in the context that not all of that site may be considered suitable.

Sites suggested as potentially suitable in part only were: land between Ironstone Hollow and the old railway; off Bourne Lane (subsequent to the consultation, the whole site was consented), and the land near the Doctor’s surgery. In each of these cases, the smaller potentially suitable areas identified were those closest to existing housing. Also identified as potentially suitable in part were: land near the telephone exchange; and land between Old School End and Scotland End. In both these cases, it was noted that the sites are, in part, currently in alternative uses and it is anticipated these may/should continue. Furthermore these sites may be relevant to the ongoing work of the Forum addressing transportation factors including car parking.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Note that since the Station Road/Stanton site had been approved this was not included in rankings. Also, the Bourne Lane site as shown in the SHLAA was split to show the small, roughly triangular shape section in the south, & accessed off The Bourne, as a separate site. This gave a total of 11 sites.

<sup>18</sup> Application No. 11/01755/OUT

<sup>19</sup> See Section 4.1 of this Plan

<sup>20</sup> See section 5.1 of this Plan

### **Policy HN - H2: Location of housing**

**Any applications for housing development will be assessed for suitability of location using the following criteria. Suitable locations will:**

- Not be in Flood Zone 2 or 3 or within 8 metres of a watercourse**
- Comply with policies in this Neighbourhood Plan**
- Take account of existing or potential alternative site uses which shall be identified in consultation with the Parish Council.**

## **4.3 Density**

### ***Policy background and reasoning***

The adopted Local Plan provides design control to ensure that new housing is compatible with the density of existing dwellings in the vicinity. The emerging Local Plan generally seeks a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare on net developable areas but allows for lower densities where there are justifiable planning reasons.

Density is a component of local distinctiveness. Therefore, in addition to the Policies provided in the Hook Norton character and countryside section of this Neighbourhood Plan, a specific policy relating to housing density is required.

### **Policy HN - H3 : Housing density**

**For housing development within Hook Norton the maintenance of local character has a higher significance than achieving a minimum housing density figure. The appropriate density for a housing site should in every case within Hook Norton result in a development that is in character with the local surrounding area.**

## **4.4 Types of housing**

### ***Policy background and reasoning***

Hook Norton has a high proportion of larger sized homes. The 2011 Census shows 41% of homes with 4+ bedrooms in Hook Norton, whereas in the Cherwell (Non Metropolitan) District, the comparative figure is 24%<sup>21</sup> The most recent information is from the Neighbourhood Plan Survey of May 2013 which indicates 52% of homes in Hook Norton having 4 or more bedrooms.

Neighbourhood Plan consultation identified a need for a range of types of accommodation, particularly affordable and sheltered housing. This accords with the emerging Local Plan

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<sup>21</sup> Table QS411EW

which concludes<sup>22</sup> that for the foreseeable future the direction of travel should be to provide more moderately sized family homes which are affordable to those on average incomes, and more downsizing homes which will appeal to 'empty nesters.'

To balance the current mix and respond to consultation feedback, a range of housing types is therefore required. It is expected that in assessing any proposals, considerable weight will be given to the desirability of including homes meeting the Lifetime Home Standards<sup>23</sup> and homes which meet the needs of older people.

#### **Policy HN - H4: Types of housing**

**A mix of dwelling types and sizes that has regard to the needs of current and future households in Hook Norton will be sought in any development resulting in 3 or more homes. Scheme proposers are required to submit with any planning application a statement setting out how the proposed housing types, sizes and tenures comply with the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Local Housing Needs Survey.**

### **4.5 Affordable housing**

#### ***Policy background and reasoning***

Affordability of housing was strongly identified in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations as crucial to the vitality of Hook Norton. In particular, the responses identified the need for affordable housing for: young people with Hook Norton connections; for people working and providing key services locally; and to enable older people to remain in their community.

Both the adopted and emerging Local Plan consider affordable housing and allow for this to be provided in two ways:

- Through a planning obligation (Section 106 Agreement)
- Through a Rural Exception Site development.

Cherwell District Council's Allocation Scheme sets out how any such affordable housing will be allocated to those on the Council's Housing Register.

#### ***Planning obligation/Section 106 Agreement affordable housing***

Both the adopted and emerging Local Plan provide policies to include an element of affordable housing in new developments. The emerging Local Plan makes specific provision<sup>24</sup> for rural areas which requires all development of, or suitable for, 3 or more dwellings gross to provide at least 35% of new housing as affordable homes on site.

Under Cherwell District Council's Allocation Scheme, people with village connections may obtain up to 50% of all new lettings, and at least 1 in 3 of re-lettings for social housing which is not a Rural Exception Site development.

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<sup>22</sup> Para B.122. Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031. Submission January 2014

<sup>23</sup> The Lifetime Homes standard is a set of 16 criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. More information from <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/index.php>

<sup>24</sup> Policy BSC 3

### **Rural Exception Sites**

In addition to affordable housing from planning obligations, the adopted Local Plan provides for small scale low cost housing on sites within or immediately adjacent to rural settlements subject to local need and reservation for local people. There is a similar provision in the emerging Local Plan in Policy Villages 3. Policy Villages 3 permits a proportion of market housing in limited occasions in order to enable a degree of cross subsidisation, with the number of market homes not to exceed 25% and subject to robust justification.

Cherwell District Council's Allocation Scheme allows that applicants with a village connection have first priority for affordable housing built on Rural Exception Sites.

In order to meet the particular need for affordable housing for people with Hook Norton connections, and to retain affordable housing for those people, a further policy is required at parish level.

#### **Policy HN - H5: Provision and retention of affordable housing**

**Any affordable housing provided as a Rural Exception Site development in Hook Norton will be subject to a legally binding obligation to ensure that initial occupation, and any subsequent lettings or sales, is limited to people meeting Hook Norton Needs or Connections Criteria as set out in Appendix D. This obligation will have permanent effect unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer any requirement for the affordable housing.**

**Where affordable housing is provided under a Section 106 agreement or similar planning obligation Agreement as a requirement of a housing development under Local Plan policy, the maximum proportion possible of the total units provided under Cherwell District Council's Allocation Scheme shall at every opportunity be allocated to people meeting Hook Norton Needs or Connections Criteria as set out in Appendix D. This obligation will have permanent effect unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer any requirement for the affordable housing.**

## 5. TRANSPORT

### 5.1 Policy background and reasoning

Hook Norton has no rail link, the nearest station is Banbury. The old railway line has been partly developed and partly recognised as of nature conservation interest.

Road access to Banbury necessitates travel through other villages, such as Milcombe and Bloxham, or Broughton. All roads in the parish are minor and many are unsuitable for large vehicles due to gradient, width, bends or a combination of those factors. The route through Hook Norton village has several acute bends and narrow stretches, particularly at East End, Chapel Street, High Street and Scotland End which are difficult for buses and large vehicles. Access to the centre of the village requires use of at least part of this route.

A bus service connects the village to Banbury and Chipping Norton but service times do not enable people working standard hours to travel to and from Chipping Norton for work. Similarly, it is also not feasible for Hook Norton bus users who work standard hours to make use of the S3 bus connection from Chipping Norton to Oxford.

The car is the principal mode of transport.<sup>25</sup> Transportation factors make Hook Norton one of the least sustainable locations within the Cherwell District.<sup>26</sup>

Consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan showed concerns arising from the combination of limited bus services, narrow rural roads, large vehicles and on-street parking. In addition to the policies below, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recommended to the Parish Council that a Forum be set up to consider these concerns and to explore possible solutions on a Standing Working Group basis with a range of relevant Authorities, organisations and individuals. Some of the options identified for the Forum were Routing Agreements<sup>27</sup>, liaison with Satellite Navigation providers, amendments to bus timetabling, and working with landowners in relation to car parking provisions.

#### **Policy HN - T1: Access and parking**

**Any new development must provide access to the local road network which is suitable and sympathetic to the surroundings, and must provide sufficient off road parking taking account of Oxfordshire County Council's parking standards. Applicants for planning permission must clearly set out the proposed level of parking provision in relation to objectively assessed needs at the time, and show how future needs have been taken into account.**

#### **Policy HN - T2: Non-car transport**

**Opportunities will be sought to improve the local footpath/cycleway network to facilitate safe, active and energy efficient means of transport and provide enhanced linkages, including to bus stops. All development proposals must demonstrate how their proposal has taken this requirement into account. Where possible developer contributions will be sought towards the provision of an enhanced bus service for Hook Norton.**

<sup>25</sup> Census 2011, Table QS701EW

<sup>26</sup> Cherwell Rural Area Integrated Transport & Land Use Study (CRAITLUS)

<sup>27</sup> Taking into account Oxfordshire County Council's advisory lorry route map – see <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/roadsandtransport/streets/1Banburywithintet.pdf>



## 6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Following a 'yes' vote at Referendum, this Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the area.

Implementation is expected to be principally through two main organisations, Cherwell District Council and Hook Norton Parish Council, with input from other organisations. The main roles are anticipated as follows:

Implementation of Neighbourhood Plan – main roles

Cherwell District Council (CDC)	Decision-making body determining planning applications
	Monitoring the more strategic aspects of policy eg housing numbers (Annual Monitoring Report)
	Primary role of liaison & coordination with Oxfordshire County Council
	Maintain housing register
Hook Norton Parish Council (HNPC)	Lead body for maintaining the List of Locally Valued Resources (Annual Review)
	To review this Plan at 5 yearly intervals and consider any changes required
	To work with CDC and OCC in regard to local initiatives and actions
	Input toward determining planning applications
	Follow up on non-policy recommendations of this Plan eg Transport Forum, & a Group to consider facilities for young people
CDC and HNPC	To maintain positive working relationship in dealing with future planning documents relating to the Local Plan and this Plan
	To cooperate regarding developer contributions to community infrastructure
Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	Input required - particularly as Highway Authority; Education Authority & responsibilities for libraries & Public Rights of Way
	Provide high speed broadband (target by 2015)
OCC, CDC & HNPC	Co-operate regarding developer contributions to community infrastructure
	Work with others on initiatives eg Public Rights of Way

## 7. REFERENCES AND EVIDENCE BASE

Cherwell District Council ([www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)):

Annual Monitoring Report 2013 (December 2013)  
Approved Allocation Scheme (Committee approval, November 2012)  
Cherwell Local Plan. November 1996. – for list of saved policies see  
<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/3/5/pdf9113687191646230866.pdf>  
Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031 Proposed Submission. August 2012  
Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031 Proposed Submission Focussed Consultation. March, 2013  
Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031. Submission January 2014  
Cherwell Rural Area Integrated Transport & Land Use Study (CRAITLUS). August 2009  
Countryside Design Summary SPD. June 1998,  
Hook Norton Conservation Area Appraisal. May 2007  
Strategic Housing Market Assessment review and update. December 2012  
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. March 2013, revised October 2013

Cobham Resource Consultants (November 1995) Cherwell District Landscape Assessment, available via [www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)

Department for Communities & Local Government :

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)  
Planning Practice Guidance –<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

Consultation Statement. July 2014  
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. October 2013  
Neighbourhood Plan. Pre-submission version. November 2013  
Sustainability Appraisal Report. November 2013  
Sustainability Appraisal Report. Submission Version. July 2014  
via [www.hooknortonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.hooknortonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk)

Office for National Statistics. Census 2011

Oxfordshire County Council

Advisory lorry route map – via <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/lorry-routes>  
Better Broadband for Oxfordshire - via  
<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/broadband-oxfordshire>  
Rights of Way Improvement Plan – via  
<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshires-rights-way-improvement-plan>  
Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, 2004 - via  
<http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/>

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report. September 2013.  
(with ACRE and OCSI) Rural community Profile for Hook Norton. August 2013  
via [www.hooknortonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.hooknortonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk)

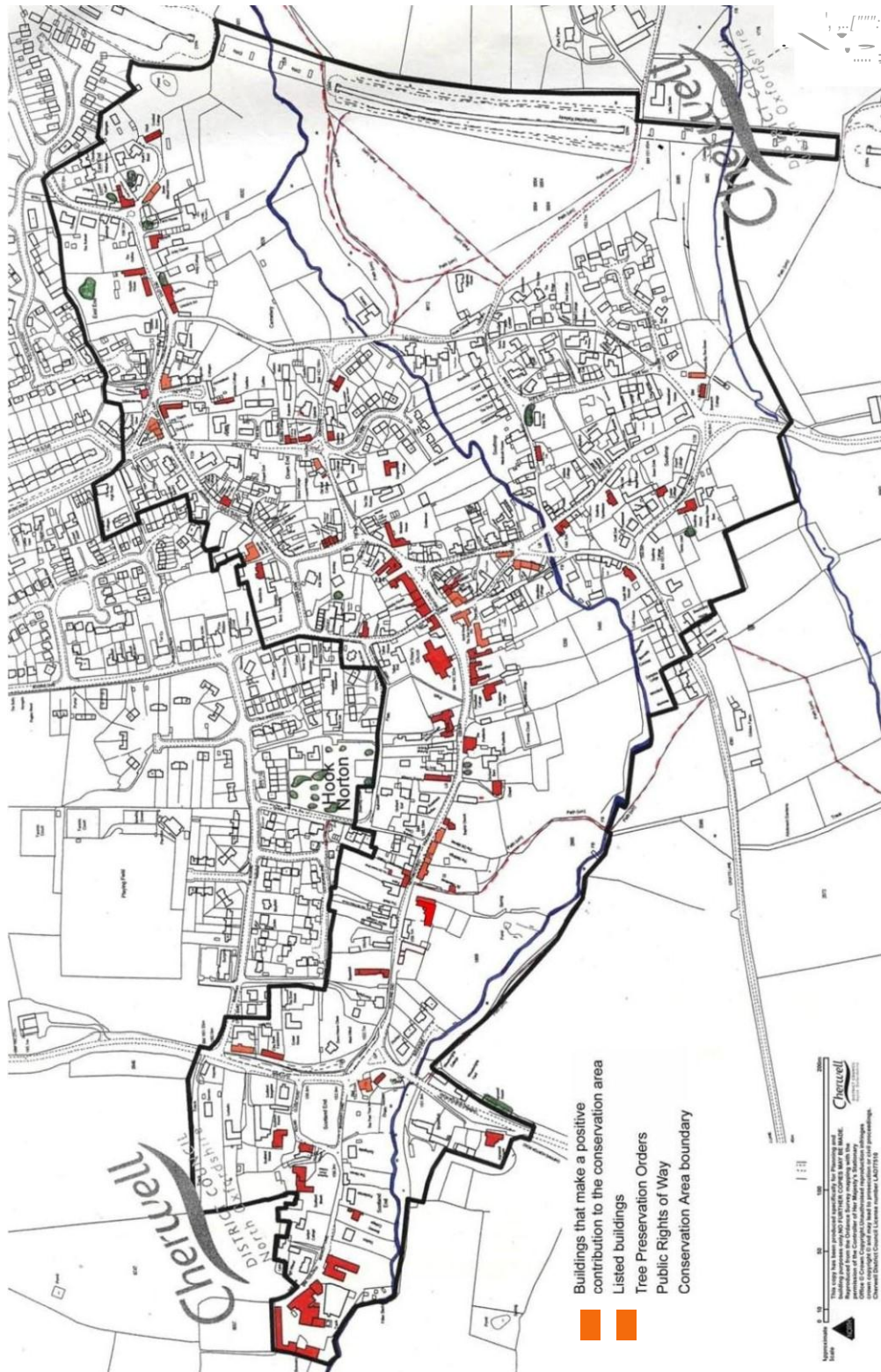
## APPENDICES

- Appendix A** Hook Norton Conservation Area
- Appendix B** Public Rights of Way – suggestions made in Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report (September 2013)
- Appendix C** Recent growth - Update to housing completions and permissions for the group of villages including Hook Norton, between 31 March 2012 and 30 June 2014
- Appendix D** Affordable housing – Hook Norton Needs and Connections Criteria
- Appendix E** List of policies

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# Appendix A Hook Norton Conservation Area

Source: CherWell District Council



## **Appendix B Public Rights of Way – suggestions made in Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report**

Circular walks from and to the village

Use old railway

Footpath on land opposite Redlands Farm towards Gate Hangs High, linking to existing footpaths

Chipping Norton, Sibfords, Whichford

Around outskirts of village & interconnect existing footpaths – so could get off road & create web surrounding village

Top of South Hill (to bypass double bend), continuing in straight line to South (ancient) connecting Stanton site

Austins Way with rights of way across to Wigginton/ Swerford.

Reinstate Wheatsheaf to Viaduct/ Swerford path

Across manor fields to link path by stream to path beside allotments

HN – Sibfords/ Whichford HN – Rollright

Station Rd – Wigginton

To join the footpath from the allotments to the Court Farm Bridleway

Ironstone Hollow/ Hollybush

Direct access to school

Footpath track to Chipping Norton

Circular walk to east of village Redlands Farm/ Old railway

Bridlepath – Gt Rollright to Ascot footpath

## Appendix C Recent growth

### Update to housing completions and permissions for the group of villages including Hook Norton, between 31 March 2012 and 30 June 2014

Requirement as per Local Plan 2006 -2031<sup>28</sup> for the group of 6 villages including Hook Norton (Adderbury; Ambrosden; Chesterton; Deddington; Hook Norton & Launton) 252

Numbers permitted (in applications for 10 or more dwellings) in those villages between 31 Mar 2012 and 30 June 2014 (as listed below) 528

Application	Number Permitted
11/01755/OUT, Hook Norton, Bourne Lane, allowed on appeal	70
12/00305/OUT, Chesterton, allowed on appeal	44
12/000472/F, Hook Norton, Station Rd.	28
13/00186/F, Launton	11
13/00301/OUT, Deddington, allowed on appeal	85
13/00344/HYBRID, Ambrosden, Springfield Fm	90
13/00456/OUT, Adderbury, Milton Rd. S., allowed on appeal	65
13/00621/OUT, Ambrosden, Ambrosden Court, allowed on appeal	45
13/01768/F, Twyford (Adderbury), E. of Deene Cl.	59
14/00250/F, Adderbury, Milton Rd. N.	<u>31</u>
	TOTAL 528

<sup>28</sup> Policy Villages 2. Cherwell Local Plan 2006 -2031. Submission January 2014

## **Appendix D Affordable housing – Hook Norton Needs and Connections Criteria**

### **Local Connection**

For the purpose of applying the policies in the Plan 'local connection' refers to people who are aged 16 years or above and who meet 2 or more of the following criteria:

- o The person was born in Hook Norton or lived in the Parish as a child up to the age of 16;
- o The person normally resides in Hook Norton and has done so for a continuous period of at least 3 years;
- o The person has immediate family who are currently resident in Hook Norton and have been so for at least 15 years;
- o Hook Norton is the person's permanent place of work.

### **Local Need**

For the purposes of applying the policies in the Plan, 'local need' means people who meet the 'local connections' criteria, who are in need of housing locally, but cannot meet those needs locally because they either cannot afford to buy a suitable home that may be currently available or cannot identify a suitable home in the parish that meets their needs to rent or buy and they fall within one of the situations listed below:

- o An existing resident or family who have lived in Hook Norton for a continuous period of at least the last three years and is seeking to establish a separate household;
- o People from outside Hook Norton who meet the criteria of having a 'local connection';
- o People who have an essential need through age or disability to live close to those who have lived in Hook Norton for at least three years;
- o People or households who have, for whatever reason, the written support of the Parish Council

### **Eligibility and Occupancy Cascade Arrangements**

For the purposes of applying the policies in the Plan and in preparing controls over future sales, lettings and occupancy arrangements for affordable housing a cascade arrangement will be set out in planning obligations associated with the grant of planning permission for new affordable housing (by new build or conversion) so that a clear hierarchy on eligibility to occupy the dwelling is made known when permission is granted.

- a) Properties will be sold or let first to people in need in Hook Norton.
- b) If, after a reasonable period (of active marketing) there are no applicants who meet the eligibility criteria, then applications will be invited from residents in the parishes adjacent to Hook Norton. If following a further reasonable period still no occupier has been found the property may be occupied on the open market.



## **Appendix E List of policies in this Plan**

### **Hook Norton character and countryside**

Policy HN - CC 1: Protection and enhancement of local landscape and character of Hook Norton

Policy HN - CC 2: Design

Policy HN - CC 3: Local distinctiveness, variety, and cohesiveness

Policy HN - CC 4: Resource efficient design

Policy HN - CC 5: Lighting

### **Community**

Policy HN - COM 1: Protection of Locally Valued Resources

Policy HN - COM 2: Public Rights of Way

Policy HN - COM 3 : Broadband

Policy HN - COM 4 : Retention of Local Employment

### **Housing**

Policy HN - H1: Sustainable housing growth

Policy HN - H2: Location of housing

Policy HN - H3 : Housing density

Policy HN - H4: Types of housing

Policy HN - H5: Provision and retention of affordable housing

### **Transport**

Policy HN - T1: Access and parking

Policy HN - T2: Non-car transport

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**CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HOOK NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**FINAL DECISION STATEMENT**

Section 38A (9) (10) of The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

Regulations 19 and 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

As the result of a favourable referendum held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, Cherwell District Council has 'made' (brought into legal force) the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Development Plan as part of the statutory development plan.

The Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan was examined by an Independent Examiner who in his report of the 12 March 2015 recommended that subject to modifications the Plan meets the required 'Basic Conditions' and should proceed to a referendum.

The referendum was held in Hook Norton Parish where more than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan being used to help decide planning applications.

The District Council considers that the Plan does not breach, nor is incompatible with, EU obligations or any of the Convention rights within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998 (Section 61E (8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 & s38A (8) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Act, as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

This decision statement confirms that on 19 October 2015 Cherwell District Council resolved that the Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan be made.

This decision statement, the Plan and details of where they can both be inspected can be viewed on the Council website:

<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning/index.cfm?articleid=10196>

Hard copies can be viewed during normal opening hours at:

- Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA between 9:00am and 5:00pm.
- Hook Norton Library, High Street, Hook Norton, OX15 5NH, during published opening hours.

Sue Smith

Chief Executive

Cherwell District Council

19 October 2015

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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

#### Budget Strategy 2015 to 2016 and Beyond

#### Report of Head of Finance and Procurement

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To set out the Budget Process for 2016/17, approve the 2016/17 Budget Strategy and agree the budget guidelines for issue to service managers.

To present the most recent Medium Term Revenue Plan (MTRP).

To consider the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the updated MTRP for the Council's revenue budget for 2016/17 to 2020-21.
- 1.2 Endorse the overall 2016/17 budget strategy and service and financial planning process set out in the report.
- 1.3 Consider and agree the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2016/17 (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 1.4 Agree to consult on the retention of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2016/17 and delegate authority to the Director of Resources in consultation with the lead member for Financial Management to make the final decision on the scheme.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The budget process is underpinned by a robust evidence base that is used to inform decision making. This evidence base includes a social and demographic profile of the district based on the 2011 Census, local ward profiles and a corporate consultation programme.

- 2.2 The consultation programme is comprised of an annual customer satisfaction survey and budget survey to understand priorities for service expenditure. The survey is statistically representative and produces robust information regarding residents' budget priorities and satisfaction with the different Council services. The information, refreshed annually, provides a sense of trend and captures new issues that need to be taken into account when service and financial planning.
- 2.3 The results of the public consultation are used to develop a prioritisation framework which, alongside the corporate strategy, medium term revenue plan and the corporate plan, provides the context for budget setting and service planning.
- 2.4 The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2016/17. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Council's Business Plan, Service Plans and enable an update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 2.5 In the context of the current challenging economic climate, the council (alongside local residents and businesses) is experiencing extreme pressure on both its expenditure and income streams. We have made a public promise to reduce expenditure by £0.5m in 2016/17 and as such it is important we continue to plan for a period of prudent budgeting.
- 2.6 The attached guidelines in Appendix 1 proposed for the coming year provide a framework to deliver a balanced budget for 2016/17. The budget timetable is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.7 The Councils Budget Planning Committee meets regularly and considers the budget in detail and will make Budget and Business Planning recommendations to the Executive in February 2016.

### **3.0 Report Details**

#### **2016/17 Budget Strategy, Budget Guidelines and Timetable**

- 3.1 The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2016/17. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Business Plan, Service Plans and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.2 The attached guidelines in Appendix 1, proposed for the coming year, provide a framework to identify areas of potential cost reductions across the organisation informed by public consultation, previous investment and strategic priorities.
- 3.3 The associated budget timetable is detailed in Appendix 2.

#### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

- 3.4 The medium term financial strategy and revenue plan are updated and presented to the Budget Planning Committee at each meeting during the budget process. The Committee considered different scenarios and test our planning process rigorously. Known cost pressures are built into the model and assumptions are made for

unknown pressures. The model results in a target for cost reduction around 18 months ahead of the savings being required.

3.5 The latest medium term revenue plan projections were reported to Budget Planning Committee on 8 September are set out below:

	2015-16 £000	2016-17 £000	2017-18 £000	2018-19 £000	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
Approved base budget	15,233	15,233	15,842	16,489	17,143	17,804
<b>Unavoidable pressures</b>						
Contract Inflation		64	66	68	70	72
Demand led increases		50	50	50	50	50
Pay inflation		245	250	255	260	265
Pay increments		175	175	175	175	175
Superannuation		69	100	100	100	100
NNDR Pressures		6	6	6	6	6
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>15,233</b>	<b>15,842</b>	<b>16,489</b>	<b>17,143</b>	<b>17,804</b>	<b>18,472</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>						
Business Rates Baseline	(3,466)	(3,587)	(3,684)	(3,783)	(3,783)	(3,886)
Revenue Support Grant	(2,629)	(986)	0	0	0	0
<b>Formula grant equivalent</b>	<b>(6,095)</b>	<b>(4,573)</b>	<b>(3,684)</b>	<b>(3,783)</b>	<b>(3,783)</b>	<b>(3,886)</b>
Transfer to Parish Councils (CTRS)	349	349	349	349	349	349
Transfer Homelessness Grant	101	101	101	101	101	101
Business Rates (Growth, Pooling & S31 )	(2,185)	(2,185)	(2,185)	(2,185)	(2,185)	(2,185)
Council Tax Compensation Grant	(63)	0	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund	(233)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
New Homes Bonus	(1,272)	(1,589)	(1,687)	(1,872)	(1,870)	(1,870)
	(9,398)	(7,997)	(7,206)	(7,490)	(7,488)	(7,591)
Council Tax income	(5,959)	(6,078)	(6,200)	(6,324)	(6,324)	(6,450)
Contribution to Reserves	124					
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>(15,233)</b>	<b>(14,075)</b>	<b>(13,406)</b>	<b>(13,814)</b>	<b>(13,812)</b>	<b>(14,041)</b>
<b>FUNDING SURPLUS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,767</b>	<b>3,083</b>	<b>3,329</b>	<b>3,991</b>	<b>4,431</b>

NB The position is cumulative and assumes no actions are taken to address each in year deficit.

3.6 The financial forecasting process is dynamic and changes on a regular basis given emerging priorities, changes in demand for services, changes in external factors and therefore these figures are subject to further change prior to finalisation of the budget for 2016/17 but give an indication of the challenges currently being faced by the Council, as outlined below:

#### Unavoidable and Demand led pressures

Pressures are identified at the start of the budget process and will be reported this Committee in October and November.

#### Budget reductions

Similar to pressures budget reductions will be identified at the start of the process and will be reported this Committee in October and November.

#### Budget strategy changes

The Executive will consider its Business Planning process at the same time as the budget. Any strategy changes will be identified at the start of the process so that they can be costed and incorporated into Budget Reductions or Pressures.

#### New Homes Bonus updates

There is still some concern as to how long the New Homes Bonus Scheme will continue. This will come into real focus if/when RSG is finally exhausted nationally; The Council continues to try and maximise its return through NHB. The business support unit is currently running a project to ensure all new and previously empty properties are in the Council Tax system so that they qualify for NHB when the CTB 1 forms are finalised in October. At this point we will know final allocations for 2016/17.

- 3.7 The key message is that future budgets will remain under significant pressure, with a growing emphasis on, collaboration, commissioning and commercialisation to deliver services more efficiently. The Council has recognised the need to think differently about how it delivers its services and has plans through the transformation workstreams to deliver these. As business cases are developed and approved they will be incorporated into the MTRP.

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

- 3.8 In 2013-14 the decision was taken across Oxfordshire to replicate the previous Council tax benefit scheme through the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).
- 3.9 For Cherwell, the impact was broadly cost neutral in 2013/14 to 2015/16 as the number of discounts offered was reduced in order to mitigate the costs of remaining with the default scheme. It was agreed that for 2016/17 the position would be reviewed and authorities would determine their approach to take in Year 3.
- 3.10 The latest estimates show that the current scheme for 2016/17 would also be cost neutral after taking account of discounts.
- 3.11 Any change to the scheme would have implementation costs and could lead to a reduction in Council Tax collection rates. It is therefore proposed to consult both customers and major preceptors on the retention of the current scheme.

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

- 4.1 The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2016/17. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Council's Business Plan, Service Plans and enable an update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 4.2 From April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced with a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Members are now required to agree, for



consultation purposes, a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2016-2017 financial year.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Cllr Ken Atack – Lead member  
for Financial Management

Cllr Atack is content with the report and  
supportive of the recommendations contained  
within it.

## **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: To disagree with the recommendations set out above. This is rejected as it will unnecessarily delay the formulation of the detailed budget for 2016/17.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 These are contained in the body of the report. There are no direct costs or other direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: George Hill, Corporate Finance Manager  
01295 221731 [george.hill@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:george.hill@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

### **Legal Implications**

7.2 A local authority must budget so as to give a reasonable degree of certainty as to the maintenance of its services. In particular, local authorities are required by section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to calculate as part of their overall budget what amounts are appropriate for contingencies and reserves. The Council must ensure sufficient flexibility to avoid going into deficit at any point during the financial year. The Chief Financial Officer is required to report on the robustness of the proposed financial reserves.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was the subject of legal advice before it was introduced for 2013-14.

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

### **Risk management**

7.3 The Council is required to set both revenue and capital budgets. Failure to adopt a budget strategy and MTFs increases the risks of the Council being unable to balance its budget, deliver service priorities and its savings targets over the medium

term. Failure to integrate the preparation of these budgets with service priorities and planning will compromise the Council's ability to deliver on its strategic objectives.

Comments checked by: Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation  
03000 030106 jo.pitman@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

### **Equality and Diversity**

- 7.4 Impact assessments will be carried out in advance of formulation of budget proposals.

Comments checked by: Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation  
03000 030106 jo.pitman@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## **8.0 Decision Information**

### **Key Decision**

**Financial Threshold Met: No**

**Community Impact Threshold Met: No**

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

All

### **Lead Councillor**

Councillor Ken Atack – Lead Member for Financial Management

### **Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Proposed Budget Guidelines 2016/17
2	Budget Timetable 2016/17
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Contact Information</b>	03000 030106 paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE 2016/17 BUDGET

### Principles

- Protect Frontline Services
- Focus attention on corporate and service priorities and improving performance
- Maximise joint working and commercialisation income
- Maximise procurement opportunities and contract negotiations

These budget guidelines have been developed within a consistent corporate framework to ensure:

- implementation of agreed savings and efficiency proposals
- resources are allocated to Council priorities
- inappropriate competition between services for resource allocations is minimised
- a transparent method for charging a fair cost between internal Council services.

The guidelines are designed to positively encourage managers and elected members to do the following:

- bring forward ideas and options to make more effective use of existing resources, clearly identifying how the ideas may develop over a 3-year period, including any requirements for pump priming money.
- link the budget setting process to Service Plans and the requirement for the identification of options, which will produce efficiency savings.
- focus attention on corporate and service priorities and improving performance.

### Budget Deliverables

1. Prepare and submit draft revenue estimates for 2016/17 and the next 4 years (5 year forecast) which fully reflect the service priority and consultation event findings and match the current duration of the MTFS.
2. Prepare and submit a draft 5 year capital programme. All schemes to carry a full project appraisal including strategic objective, priority, value for money assessment, and details of any revenue impacts. In particular the phasing of expenditure over the life of the project, so as to minimize slippage. All capital project appraisals will be validated by the Budget Planning Committee. All schemes previously approved to start in 2015/16 and onwards will be carried through for consideration.
3. The 2015/16 projected outturn at September 2015, adjusted to take account of the full year effect of savings identified in setting the 2016/17 budget, and one off items will be assumed to be the “**base budget**”.

## Budget Timetable

The revenue and capital budget is agreed by full Council before 11 March each year. The 2016/17 budget will be considered at Council in February 2016.

## Revenue Budget Guidelines

### Income

In building income budgets it is essential that a realistic assessment of income achievement is undertaken. Budget holders should use their knowledge of past trends and current market conditions in assessing income levels for the future and the scope for increases in fees and charges.

It is important to look at not only financial information but also non-financial information such as activity data on customer usage and trends to help build realistic income estimates.

Variations to the existing approved budget for income must be clearly identified and explained.

Variations in fees and charges need to be considered taking into account the Council's priorities and objective to ensure that proposals are consistent with these priorities and objectives.

### Growth

- It is the aspiration that the net impact of all growth items should be **ZERO**.
- Growth arising from changes in legislation / regulation or service planning will **ONLY** be allowed if it is fully funded by transferring resources within the same service or from within the same Directorate. Any such transfer either within the same service or the same Directorate can only come from demonstrably lower priority services. A growth proforma should be completed detailing full requirements.

**Financial assumptions** - should be used in estimating changes in expenditure and income over the medium term.

- Provide for general inflation in 2016/17 on all expenditure (excl payroll) and fees and charges as per forecasts in our MTFS model and will be used in the budget module as below:

Year	CPI %	Budget %
2016/17	1.7%	2.7%
2017/18	2.0%	2.7%
2018/19	2.1%	2.7%
2019/20	2.0%	2.7%
2020/21	2.0%	2.7%

Current CPI at September 2015 is 0%

- Payroll – payroll inflation is included at the following levels:

Year	%
2016/17	2.0%
2017/18	2.0%
2018/19	2.0%
2019/20	2.0%
2020/21	2.0%

- Council Tax should be forecasted with 0% increases and held at 2010/11 levels.

Year	%
2016/17	0%
2017/18	0%
2018/19	0%
2019/20	0%
2020/21	0%

- Interest rates should be forecasted as below:

Year	Average Interest Rate
2016/17	0.75%
2017/18	0.75%
2018/19	0.75%
2019/20	0.75%
2020/21	0.75%

***All financial indices above are subject to further review in the budget process and may be subject to change.***

### **Budget Process: Base Budget Review and Savings**

The budget for 2016/17 will be based on a slightly different methodology from previous years. Directorates will no longer be asked to take their base budget and prepare a range of savings options of up to 20%, this year the process will be based on a Base Budget Review (BBR).

The BBR will still use historical data, but will not have the presumption that the service **NEEDS** the same resources and budgets.

The following factors will be used to produce a 3-year Directorate budget:

- Trend Analysis – variance review of the last three years expenditure / income to identify any that should be captured in the budget.
- In Year Monitoring – what does the current budget monitoring identify in terms of variances that should be captured in the budget;
- Challenge – Finance staff will work with budget holders using the the above tools to provide support and challenge to ensure budgets are based upon need.

## **Savings and Additional Income from Joint Working and Commercialisation**

In the last 10 years the Council has successfully generated efficiencies savings from across the organisation to limit the impact on front line services and set a year on rear balanced budget.

RSG cuts are though expected to continue into the medium term and at a level, millions not thousands that cannot be sustained through traditional efficiency measures. The Council must adopt a more collaborative and commercial approach to its business if it is to afford to maintain its citizen first services at the level they and we have come to expect.

The Council has signed up to a Confederation Model, which gives the maximum flexibility and the best organisational structures for delivering services as a group of Councils. We can trade within rules that mean we can contract with companies without procurement costs (Teckal) and decide together which companies to put into these arrangements.

We plan to do this incrementally but we must ensure that there are sufficient solutions and savings being generated to balance the budget in the short and medium term.

The Confederation Approach will drive a more commercial approach to existing services where appropriate but there must also be a drive to new and innovative ways of achieving greater income. The Transformation Workstreams are already in place and creating the ideas. We must test these and start to deliver so that they contribute to the future financial sustainability of the Council.

### **Capital programme Guidelines**

- Capital resources are reducing over the life of the MTFS. The development of 5-year rolling capital programme and resources should be drawn up within the context of the following objectives:
  1. The generation of additional reserves and balances, with appropriate contingencies.
  2. Opportunities to invest to save.
  3. Maintaining Council assets and the Council's infrastructure to agreed standards.
- A capital project appraisal is required for each bid and this will be validated by the Budget Planning Committee who will make recommendations for schemes to be included in the 2016/17 capital programme. All schemes previously approved to start in 2016/17 and onwards will be carried through for consideration.

### **Procurement**

When setting both the 2016/17 budget and future years, regard should be given to the Corporate Procurement Strategy and the Council's Contract Procedure rules. In particular, budgets and projections should be based on Corporate and agreed framework contracts. Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Council's Procurement Team.

## **Risk**

The budget process is fundamental to the Council's financial management regime and Members need to be assured that all pertinent issues are properly considered when making key decisions on the Council's future finances.

In drawing up revenue budget proposals, risk assessments should be undertaken to test the robustness of proposals and to identify key factors which may impact on the proposals put forward. Where appropriate action plans should be put in place to manage/mitigate the risks identified – this may include a risk provision within the budget which can be calculated by your service accountant.

With a £15m Revenue Budget covering all the Council's services and activities, the potential for an issue to be missed or not considered properly will always be there. The budget process is designed to minimise this risk and throughout the process there are frequent meetings with Joint Management Team and Executive to review.

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**CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL : 2016/17 BUSINESS PLAN : TIMEFRAME**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>September 2015</b>	
02/09/15	JMT Customer Satisfaction Survey results presentation to JMT
15/09/15	Draft Customer Satisfaction Survey results to Portfolio Holder
21/09/15	Circulation of Agenda for 28/09 to JMT and Executive
22/09/15	JMT only Business Planning session focussing on finance and budget for both SNC and CDC
28/09/15	Executive/JMT Business Planning session – half day session
<b>October 2015</b>	
05/10/15	Executive - Budget Strategy and Guidelines Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey
06/10/15	Budget Planning Committee
<b>November 2015</b>	
02/11/15	Executive
03/11/15	Budget Planning Committee – Capital Report
17/11/15	Budget Planning Committee – Capital & Growth
24/11/15	Overview and Scrutiny – Business Strategy Priorities
30/11/15	Executive – Draft Business Plan
<b>December 2015</b>	
01/12/15	Online Budget Consultation goes live Budget Planning Committee – Budget and MTRP Update
<b>January 2016</b>	
04/01/16	Executive - Council Tax Base
12/01/16	Overview & Scrutiny – Draft Business Plan & Service Plan Activity
15/01/16	Online Budget Consultation Ends
19/01/16	Budget Planning Committee – Draft Budget & Review of Reserves
<b>February 2016</b>	
01/02/16	Executive - Joint report on Business Planning & Finance to Executive
01/02/16	Executive – Budget, Council Tax, Business Plan
22/02/16	Council – Final Budget, Business Plan and Council Tax

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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

#### Business Rates Pooling Decision 2016-2017

### Report of Director of Resources

This report is public.

#### Purpose of report

To seek approval in principle for the Council to participate in a business rates pool for 2016-2017

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the principle to join a business rates pool for participating authorities in Oxfordshire, noting the risks and benefits outlined in the report.
- 1.2 To approve 'in principle' the Council's participation in a pool for the 2016-2017 financial year.
- 1.3 To grant delegated authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to conclude necessary due diligence and confirm the Council's final intention on whether or not to participate in a Oxfordshire business rates pool (however constituted) for 2016-2017 by 31 October 2015.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In 2014-15 and 2015-2016 Cherwell District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council entered into the North Oxfordshire Business Rates Pool.
- 2.2 With the right members in a business rates pool the amount of levy can be minimised and a greater amount of business rate income can be kept locally. Without a pooling arrangement in place a levy of up to 50% of the total retained business rate amount can be payable to the Government. Pooling can reduce the levy payable to 0%.
- 2.3 In previous years DCLG issued a Pooling Prospectus in the preceding summer inviting applications for pooling. At this point in time no such prospectus has been

issued for 2016-17. However, we still need to take a decision on whether or not we wish to participate in a pooling arrangement for 2016-17.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 The Council has been a member of the North Oxfordshire Business Rates Pool for 2014-15 and 2015-2016 with Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. We are currently reviewing our position with regard to options for 2016-2017 and are in discussion with other authorities in Oxfordshire to determine the optimum composition of the pool.
- 3.2 Cherwell District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council are growth authorities so the amount of levy paid to the Government is minimised resulting in a greater share kept locally than would otherwise be the case.
- 3.2 We are continuing to model various combinations based on the latest figures from all Oxfordshire authorities.
- 3.5 Given the expected requirement to inform the Government by 31 October 2015 of our pooling intentions for 2016-2017 it is recommended that the decision on whether to join an Oxfordshire Pool is delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management.

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

- 4.1 For the reasons set out in section 3 above it appears likely that the Council's financial interests will best be maximised by participating in a pooling arrangement. Given the 31 October deadline for confirming the Council's position and due to the fact that we are still modelling financial scenarios and discussing matters with other local authorities across the County it is necessary and appropriate to grant delegated authority to determine this to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management.

### **5.0 Consultation**

Councillor Ken Atack – Lead Member  
for Financial Management

Councillor Atack is content  
with the report and supportive of  
the recommendations contained  
within it.

### **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: To not approve the recommendations set out above. Based on current guidance this is not an option as we need to make a decision on whether or not to pool by 31 October 2015.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 For the reasons set out in section 3 above it appears likely that the Council's financial interests will best be maximised by participating in a pooling arrangement.

Comments checked by:

Martin Henry, Director of Resources 0300 003 0102  
martin.henry@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 Any business rates pooling arrangement would be the subject of a formal legal agreement and relevant advice would be given in order to protect the Council's interests.

Comments checked by:

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

### **Risk Management**

- 7.3 Under the Business Rates Retention Scheme Central Government provides a safety net for authorities who fail to achieve their target income baseline. The Government provides recompense to authorities to bring them up to 92.5% of their target income baseline. All billing authorities are therefore exposed to a potential maximum loss of 7.5% of their baseline funding.

As part of a pool, the safety net payments are still set at 7.5%, but because of the combination of baselines of those authorities in the pool the financial losses have to be a lot greater before safety net payments are actually triggered.

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement 0300 0030106  
paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## **8.0 Decision Information**

### **Key Decision**

**Financial Threshold Met:** Yes

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** Yes

**Wards Affected**

All

**Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

All

**Lead Councillor**

Councillor Ken Atack  
Lead Member for Financial Management

**Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
None	
None	
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## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

5 October 2015

<p><b>Expression of Interest for Devolution to Oxfordshire</b></p>
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### Report of the Chief Executive

This report is public  
Appendix 1 is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972

#### Purpose of report

To advise Members of the recent proposal which set out the areas for devolution that Oxfordshire authorities are interested in exploring further with central government.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the report.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Following the 'no' vote in the September 2014 Scottish independence referendum, the Prime Minister announced that, alongside proposals for additional devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, It was also important to have wider civic engagement about how to improve governance in the United Kingdom, including how to empower the cities.
- 2.2 This followed the production of several reports during 2014 making proposals for the transfer of additional powers to local authorities, or to local areas. These built upon the 2012 report No Stone Unturned: in Pursuit of Growth ('the Heseltine report'), which recommended the merging of various funding streams to provide much greater local responsibility for economic development. Efficiency in public service provision, triggered by continuing reductions in local government funding, is also prioritised within the more recent reports.

The changes proposed include:

- Giving new powers in specific policy areas to local authorities;

- The transfer of additional budgets alongside those powers;
- Enhanced power over local taxes (council tax and business rates), additional local taxation powers, and more flexibility around borrowing and financial management;
- The creation of combined authorities and/or directly-elected mayors

2.3 Subsequently, a ‘devolution deal’ was announced by the Government and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in November 2014. Further deals followed with Sheffield (December 2014), West Yorkshire (March 2015) and Cornwall (July 2015). Additional powers for Greater Manchester were also announced in February 2015 (relating to health and social care) and in July 2015.

2.4 Following the 2015 General Election, the Chancellor, George Osborne, gave a speech on 14 May in which he said that a ‘Cities Devolution Bill’ would feature in the 2015 Queen’s Speech:  
 “A central part of our Queen’s speech will be a bill to enable a radical new model of city government”.

“Here’s the deal”:

“We will hand power from the centre to cities to give you greater control over your local transport, housing, skills and healthcare. And we’ll give the levers you need to grow your local economy and make sure local people keep the rewards”.

He went on to say however that

“It was right that people have a single point of accountability: someone they elect, who takes the decisions and carries the can.

So with these new powers for cities must come new city-wide elected mayors who will work with local councils.

I will not impose this model on anyone. But nor will I settle for less”.

2.5 The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill 2015-16 has subsequently passed through the House of Lords, and received its First Reading in the House of Commons on 21 July 2015. This will give statutory foundation to various aspects of the devolution deals, and will form a framework for further deals to be agreed with other areas.

2.6 The Government also confirmed that they were willing to receive additional proposals, but to have their proposals taken into account in the autumn 2015 Spending Review, any further proposals for devolution from local areas were required to be submitted to the Treasury by 4 September 2015.

### **3.0 Report Details**

3.1 As a result of this further call for bids, an initial expression of interest for Oxfordshire (attached as Appendix 1) has been developed by the Leaders of Oxfordshire local authorities, along with the local clinical commissioning group and other local partners. This has been submitted to the treasury, and the formal response is awaited. Should this have been received by the time of the meeting then a verbal update will be given.



- 3.2 The bid was prepared at speed in order to meet the very demanding timetable and there therefore remain a considerable number of issues in the document that require significant further discussion. There has not yet been wide consultation with councillors or the public. Any final proposals that are developed from these initial ideas will need to be the subject of full and proper consultation with Oxfordshire's residents and then be formally approved by each council.

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

- 4.1 This report is to draw Members attention to the recently submitted expression of interest in respect to a Devolution deal for Oxfordshire.

## **5.0 Consultation**

The document was signed by all of the Oxfordshire local Authority leaders, by the Chairman of OXLEP and by the Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

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

- 6.1 Not applicable. This report is for noting only.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 There are none in connection with this particular report, but should the bid progress further then there could be considerable financial implications for the Authority.

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement, 0300 003 0106

Paul.Sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 There are none in connection with this particular report, but should the bid progress, then there could be considerable legal implications, particularly in respect to any potential new governance arrangements.

Comments checked by:

Kevin lane – Head of Law and Governance, 0300 003 0107

kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met:** No

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** No

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Accessible, Value for Money Council  
District of Opportunity  
Safe and Healthy  
Cleaner Greener

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council

### Document Information

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1 EXEMPT	Delivering Growth Through Innovation - Expression of Interest for Devolution to Oxfordshire
2	Press Release
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Calvin Bell, Director of Development
<b>Contact Information</b>	0300 0030 0104 calvin.bell@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk



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## PRESS RELEASE

Friday 4 September 2015

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### Oxfordshire asks Government to consider £4bn investment deal

Public bodies in Oxfordshire have today, Friday 4 September, 2015 jointly submitted an expression of interest to Government that asks for greater local control over £4bn of funding for transport, skills training and health services.

The six Oxfordshire councils, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group jointly submitted the expression of interest, which was also endorsed by the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

It was submitted in response to a call by government for local areas to propose new ways of working that will increase economic growth and improve services for residents. In return, government is prepared to devolve power and funding to local areas as has already happened in greater Manchester.

Oxfordshire has a globally significant economy that has grown rapidly over the past few years, particularly in science and technology. But major transport bottlenecks, difficulties in recruiting skilled staff and housing affordability are major local challenges.

The initial set of ideas submitted to government set out how Oxfordshire partners will work together to address these issues in return for long-term government funding and more local powers. The four main themes of the expression of interest are:

- Delivering the infrastructure – particularly the roads network – that is required to support economic growth
- Helping people to get the necessary skills and benefit from good jobs created in hi-tech industries
- Tackling housing shortages and affordability
- Ensure health and social care services meet growing demand as the population ages and funding to public services is reduced.

These ideas build on the success of £56m City Deal and £118m Growth Deals agreed with Government last year and will strengthen the work that is already being undertaken to deliver Oxfordshire's Strategic Economic Plan.

The expression of interest also proposes to build on the effective joint working arrangements that already exist in Oxfordshire and to deliver better services for residents, including greater local control over health budgets.

The document provides a possibility for a review of the way organisations work together and take decisions. It also recognises the importance of a transparent overview of all the budgets and resources included within any future agreement.

Next steps will include further discussions between Oxfordshire partners and government departments to broker the deal. Any final deal will be subject to public consultation and compliance with the full democratic process of each council

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