



Insight through vision



Residents Consultation 2012
Analysis Report

Prepared by CR market research

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www.crmr.co.uk

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Introduction

CR market research is delighted to present Charnwood Borough Council with the results from their recent Residents Survey. We have surveyed more than 300 residents of the borough and gathered their views on a wide range of local issues, and the key findings from our research are detailed in this report.

The on-going efforts of the team at Charnwood Borough Council contributed greatly to the success of this project. The public events held throughout the projects duration helped to ensure the highest level of involvement any such project at Charnwood has ever had.

Many of the themes covered in the survey relate to those assessed in the Place Survey and this report should provide some comparative data to help Charnwood monitor any emerging trends.

We trust that Charnwood Borough Council will find this report both interesting and informative.



Rose Collin
Sales & Marketing Director
CR market research

Key Findings

In overall terms, this survey has illustrated that Charnwood's residents are generally satisfied, informed and engaged. Satisfaction levels are often high, in particular for the services that are most important to them and residents are generally content with how their money is spent.

Some key findings include:

1. Nearly 95% of respondents regard themselves as at least 'happy' living within the borough, with more than a third (36%) stating that they are 'very happy'.
2. When asked what factors they valued most, by far the most popular response for residents was personal safety, with nearly two thirds of all respondents selecting 'Feeling safe in my home and the local area' as one of their top three priorities. The second most important factor was 'A variety of shops and markets'. A similar proportion felt that 'The cleanliness and tidiness of my local area' was important
3. Residents are broadly satisfied with service provision and factors that influence quality of life. Of the thirteen issues assessed, many score in excess of 70% satisfaction rating, with figures as high as 86% for rubbish collection and 84% for being able to visit well maintained parks and open spaces.
4. When we compare the importance of factors with satisfaction, we see that there are no significant areas of concern. We would define priorities for improvement as those factors that are above average in terms of importance but below average in terms of satisfaction; no services met that combination of criteria, implying that residents are generally satisfied with the issues that are most important to them.
5. The main concern for residents is 'local prosperity, business and jobs', with half of all respondents identifying this from the list. This is perhaps not surprising given the current economic climate.
6. In terms of the provision of services for specific age groups, the main area of concern appears to be the provision of facilities for teenagers and young people. Just 36% of respondents stated that they were satisfied with service provision for these people, with 29% saying they were dissatisfied.
7. When asked whether they felt their local area was a place where different backgrounds got on well together, more than three quarters (78%) said yes while just 8% said no and the remaining 14% were unsure.
8. More than two thirds of respondents feel it is quite easy to find out information about CBC's services, and just 13% felt it was hard to access

information. One area for development might be to try and shift views from the 'quite easy' category to the 'very easy' category, which at present accounts for just 15% of all respondents.

9. If customers have a need to contact Charnwood Borough Council, they are most likely (73%) to prefer to use the telephone. Nearly half of respondents said they would use email; this figure is actually slightly higher than in other consultations we have conducted and reflects the changing views customers have on using different communication channels.
10. When asked what communication techniques would be most effective when the council wishes to share in information on services and council tax, the most popular option was leaflet/letter with nearly six in ten (58%) respondents choosing this channel. This is presumably the current method employed for communicating information about council tax to residents
11. The majority of residents are satisfied with the way council tax is spent. However, it is worth noting the relatively large proportion (one in five) that does not know whether they are satisfied or not. Is it easy for residents to find out how their money is spent?
12. The issue that generated the strongest disagreement amongst residents is whether council tax should be reduced, or whether they would prefer to see services maintained. Views are actually very split on this issue, with an almost identical percentage of respondents wanting to reduce council tax as those wishing to maintain service provision.
13. Nearly two thirds (65%) feel it is difficult to influence decision making and a further quarter (24%) does not know. This leaves just 12% or one in eight residents that feel it is easy to influence local decision making. This presents considerable scope for improvement and might present a need to develop some responses around engagement opportunities across the borough.
14. One area of concern might be the relatively high proportion of residents that do not know how to get involved in local decision making. Three in ten residents answered this way, and this might need further examination; what opportunities are there to participate, are the opportunities consistent across the borough and are they adequately promoted?
15. In terms of getting involved and volunteering within their local community, around 11% said they already did to some degree and a further 10% would be interested in doing so.
16. Although the sample sizes make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions at the local level, it does appear that those residents living in and out of Loughborough have different perceptions on a range of themes. The three Area Forums based in Loughborough tend, on average, to perform better or preferably to the other Area Forums.

Project Background

Charnwood Borough Council commissioned CR market research to conduct a six week on-line consultation exercise with residents of the borough during November and December 2011.

The Council held 29 events across the borough to publicise the consultation and encourage people to give their views. Printed surveys were passed out to ensure that the survey process was accessible to all of the community.

The research has various aims:

- To update some of the indicators contained in the now decommissioned Place Survey.
- To provide insight for the strategic planning process.
- To provide resident satisfaction data to senior management and members to help Charnwood continue to improve service delivery.

The survey consisted of around thirty questions including monitoring details (age, ethnicity, residence, disability, gender and faith).

This survey has been conducted primarily online, providing us with limited opportunity to actively manage the respondent profile. It should be noted that although the online channel can skew the respondent profile slightly, the publicity and paper copies provided by the Council may have served to mitigate this somewhat. It is estimated that around one-third of responses were submitted in paper format. Using the aforementioned profile data we are able to develop an understanding of how representative the sample is, and you can view this data on page 7.

We have also gathered the postcode of each respondent. This has been converted to ward level data and mapped (see page 9). The sample size does not permit robust analysis at this level of detail, but results have been aggregated to Area Forum level to provide some indicative figures for different geographical areas across the borough. Where possible we have referred to Area Forum results throughout the report.

As mentioned, Charnwood Borough Council ran a series of 29 engagement events to help promote the consultation and encourage participation. For reference, we have mapped the locations of these in the map below.

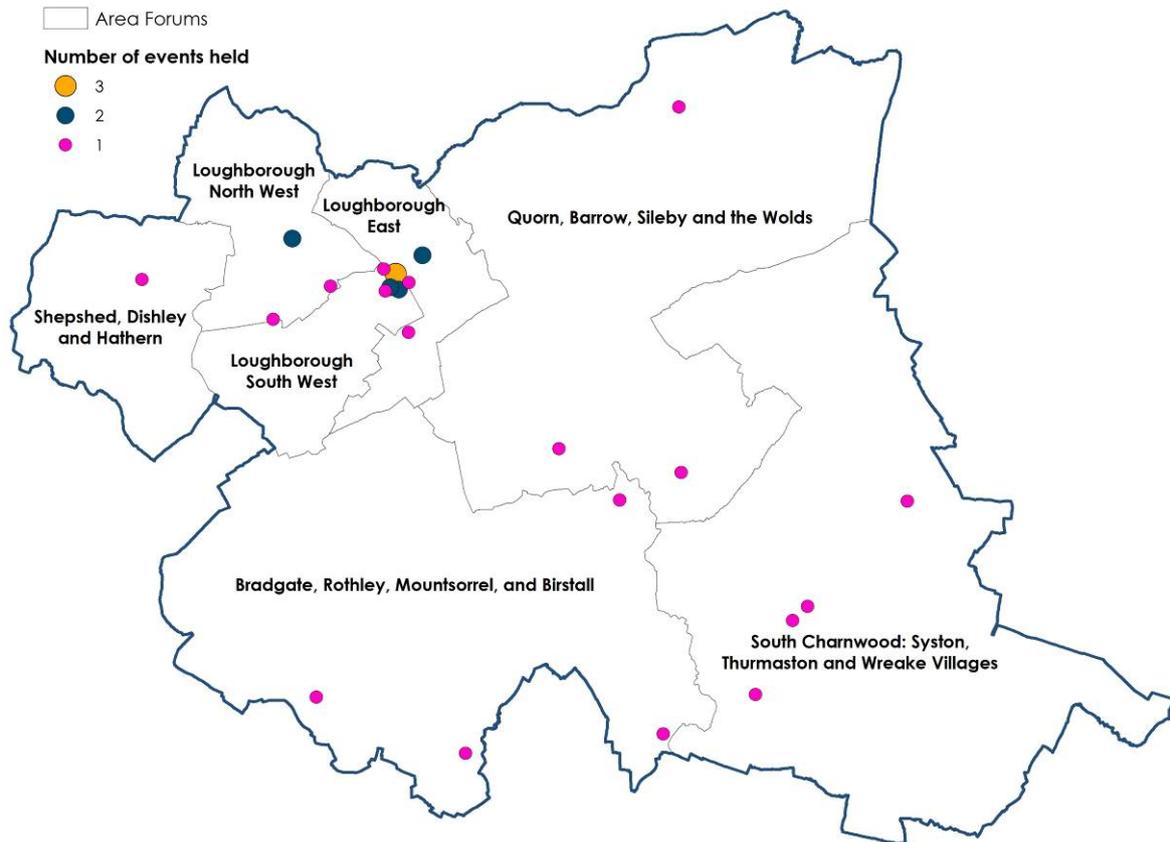


Figure A – Engagement Events

The map illustrates the diverse locations for the events, providing most parts of the borough with the opportunity to meet directly with council representatives and understand more about the purpose of the consultation project.

Respondent Profile

In order to set the following results in context, it is important to understand the make-up of the respondent sample to this survey. This first section provides an overview of the diversity of the sample obtained, across the standard equalities streams.

Age & Gender

Age	Female		Male		Prefer not to say		Total	
16-19	8	2.2%	8	2.2%	0	0.0%	16	4.5%
20-29	23	6.4%	19	5.3%	0	0.0%	42	11.7%
30-39	36	10.1%	22	6.1%	1	0.3%	59	16.5%
40-49	26	7.3%	28	7.8%	0	0.0%	54	15.1%
50-59	20	5.6%	29	8.1%	0	0.0%	49	13.7%
60-69	37	10.3%	35	9.8%	1	0.3%	73	20.4%
70-79	18	5.0%	10	2.8%	1	0.3%	29	8.1%
80+	6	1.7%	7	2.0%	1	0.3%	14	3.9%
Prefer not to say	1	0.3%	3	0.8%	18	5.0%	22	6.1%
Grand Total	175	48.9%	161	45.0%	22	6.1%	358	100.0%

Ethnicity

White British	291	81.3%
White Irish	4	1.1%
Mixed White and Black	0	0.0%
White and Asian	2	0.6%
Other European	6	1.7%
Black British	1	0.3%
Other Black background	1	0.3%
Asian Indian	17	4.7%
Asian Pakistani	0	0.0%
Asian Bangladeshi	4	1.1%
Any other Asian background	2	0.6%
Chinese	1	0.3%
Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
Other ethnic group	0	0.0%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	29	8.1%
Total	358	100.0%

First Language

English	316	88.3%
Gujarati	12	3.4%
Arabic	1	0.0%
Bengali	1	0.3%
French	1	0.0%
Latvian	1	0.0%
Portuguese	1	0.3%
Tamil	1	0.3%
Other	1	0.0%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	23	6.4%
Total	358	100.0%

Religion

Christian	179	50.0%
Hindu	16	4.5%
Jewish	0	0.0%
Muslim	7	2.0%
Sikh	0	0.0%
Other	4	1.1%
No religious belief	106	29.6%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	46	12.8%
Total	358	100.0%

Disability (respondents could tick more than one category)

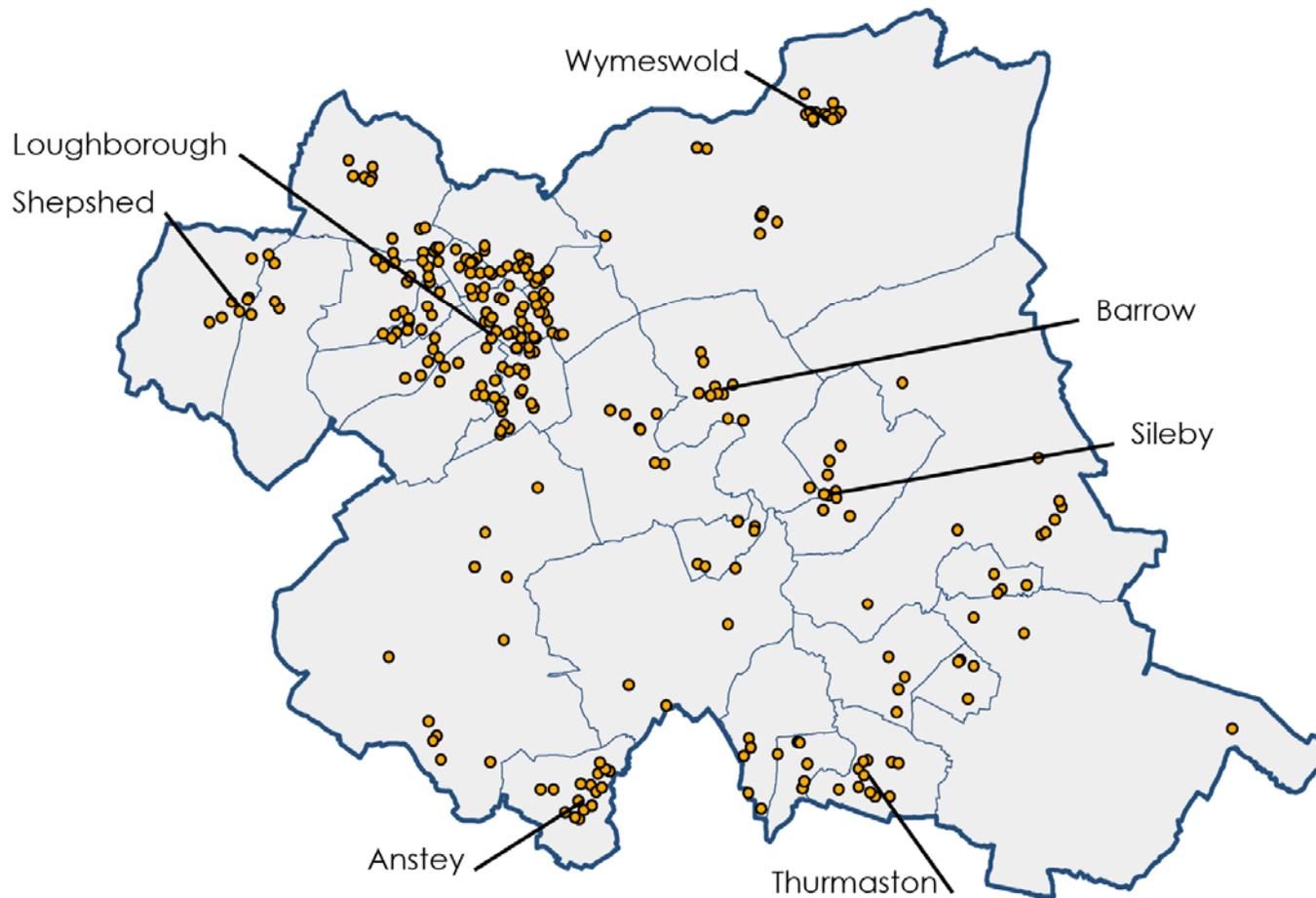
None	251	70.1%
Cognitive impairment	1	0.3%
Hearing impairment	13	3.6%
Learning difficulty	3	0.8%
Longstanding health problem	31	8.7%
Mental health problem	11	3.1%
Physical disability	20	5.6%
Visual disability	1	0.3%
Other	10	2.8%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	34	9.5%

Length of residence in UK

Born in UK	307	85.8%
Resident for over 10 years	27	7.5%
Resident for 2 to 9 years	5	1.4%
Resident for less than 2 years	1	0.3%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	18	5.0%
Total	358	100.0%

Ward

We can also note the geographical distribution of respondents. Using the postcode provided by the respondent, we have generated totals for each of the 28 wards in the borough. All have at least one respondent, although the volumes involved do not permit us to generate robust analysis at this level of detail. The table below provides Ward figures and the map illustrates the distribution of all respondents across the borough.



Ward	Count
Anstey	20
Barrow and Sileby West	13
Birstall Wanlip	6
Birstall Watermead	10
East Goscote	4
Forest Bradgate	14
Loughborough Ashby	17
Loughborough Dishley and Hathern	19
Loughborough Garendon	9
Loughborough Hastings	17
Loughborough Lemington	16
Loughborough Nanpantan	6
Loughborough Outwoods	11
Loughborough Shelthorpe	25
Loughborough Southfields	32
Loughborough Storer	15
Mountsorrel	6
Queniborough	3
Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle	8
Rothley and Thurmaston	5
Shepshed East	7
Shepshed West	8
Sileby	12
System East	4
System West	4
The Wolds	27
Thurmaston	12
Wreake Villages	13
n/a*	15

*n/a = partial or invalid postcode

Area Forums

We have aggregated the ward level data into Area Forums to allow some indicative analysis at this level. The sample sizes for each Forum are provided below, and it should be emphasised that due to the small sample sizes the results can only be considered indicative (they will have large confidence intervals attached to them). In particular, the figures for Shepshed, Dishley and Hathern, with just 15 respondents, cannot be considered robust.

Area Forum	Respondents
Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel, and Birstall	61
Loughborough East	58
Loughborough North West	60
Loughborough South West	49
Quorn, Barrow, Sileby and the Wolds	60
Shepshed, Dishley and Hathern	15
South Charnwood: Syston, Thurmaston & Wreake Villages	40
n/a (incomplete/invalid postcode)	15
Total	358



**note: Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle ward is split between Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel, and Birstall Forum and Quorn, Barrow, Sileby and the Wolds Forum. These eight respondents have all been included in the Quorn, Barrow, Sileby and the Wolds Forum for the purposes of this analysis.*

Analysis

This main section of the report provides an overview of the survey results and identifies some key messages for Charnwood Borough Council to consider.

Are Charnwood residents happy?

Respondents were asked how happy they were living in their local area. Figure 1 presents overall happiness figures for the borough as a whole.

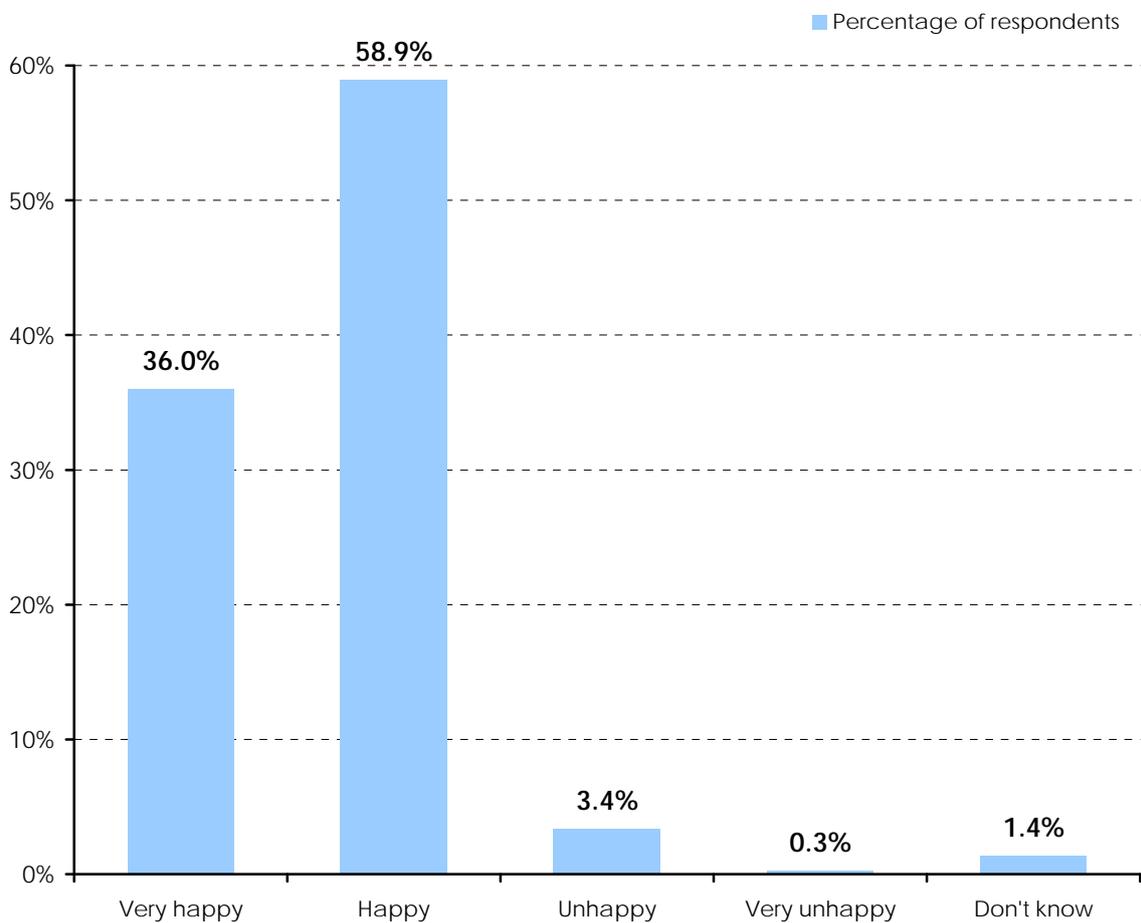


Figure 1

Nearly 95% of respondents regard themselves as at least 'happy' living within the borough, with more than a third (36%) stating that they are 'very happy'. Less than four per cent of respondents are unhappy, and at Area Forum level all areas scored at least 90% on this measure.

What is important to Charnwood residents?

Respondents were asked to identify which factors were most important in making somewhere a good place to live, and were asked to choose three from a list of thirteen different themes. Figure 2 presents the proportion of residents that selected each issue. Figures do not sum to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one option.

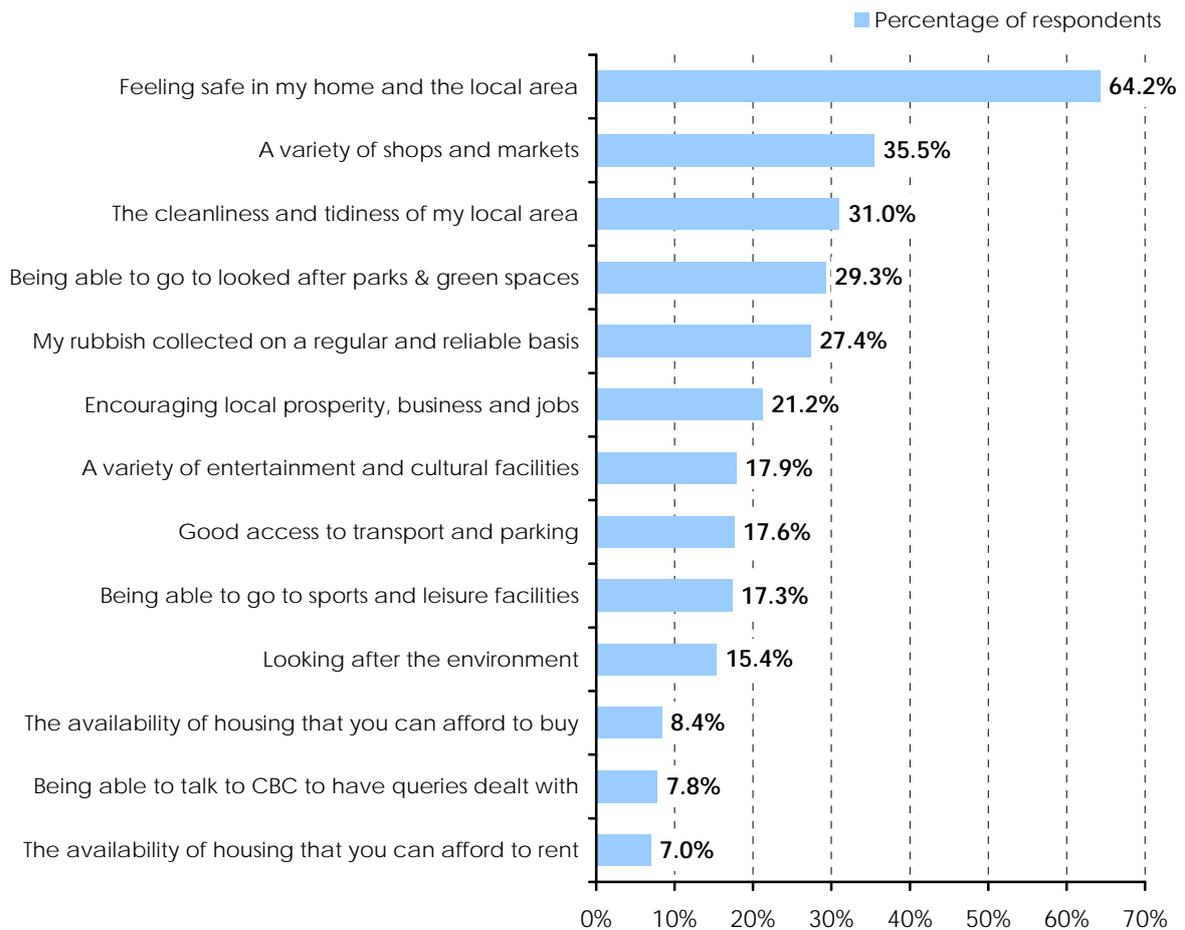


Figure 2

By far the most valued factor is personal safety, with nearly two thirds of all respondents selecting 'Feeling safe in my home and the local area' as one of their three priorities.

The second most important factor was 'A variety of shops and markets', with one in three respondents choosing this as one of their priorities. A similar proportion felt that 'The cleanliness and tidiness of my local area' was important.

Following these three priority areas, there was a cluster of issues selected by between 20% and 30% of respondents, including parks and green spaces, rubbish collection and local prosperity and jobs.

The themes considered least important, within the available list, were the availability of rented housing (which presumably is only of interest to a relatively small proportion of the population anyway) and being able to talk to the council with regard to queries, and the availability of housing to buy.

The map below focuses on the safety theme and presents the percentage of respondents in each Area Forum that identified 'feeling safe in my home and the local area' as one of their three top priorities.

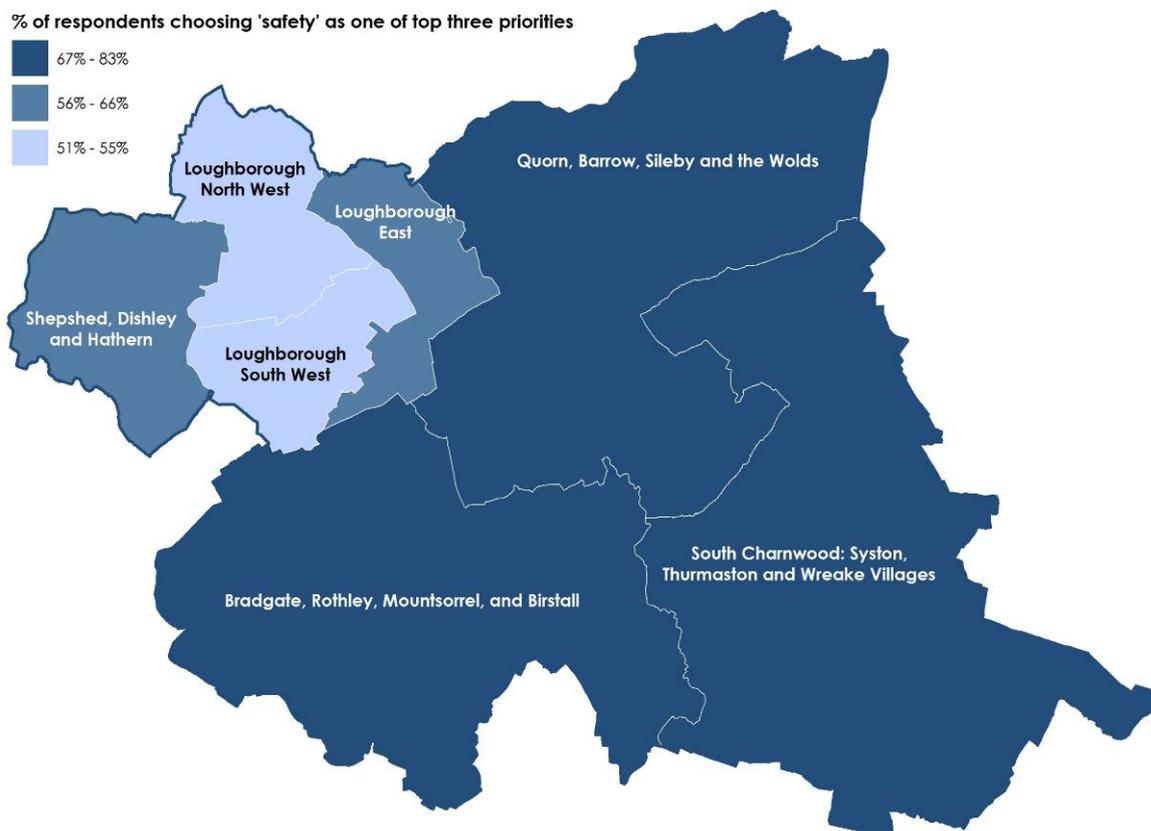


Figure 3

The map suggests that the issue of personal safety may be a greater concern in the larger, more rural Area Forums. The highest figure, 83%, is attached to the Quorn, Barrow, Sileby & the Wolds Forum. Forums in Loughborough were less likely to select this factor; all three Forums scored less than 60%.

How satisfied are Charnwood residents?

Using the same list of thirteen issues, respondents were then asked to state how satisfied they were with each. Figure 4 presents these results, with issues sorted by the proportion of residents that are at least 'satisfied' with the issue.

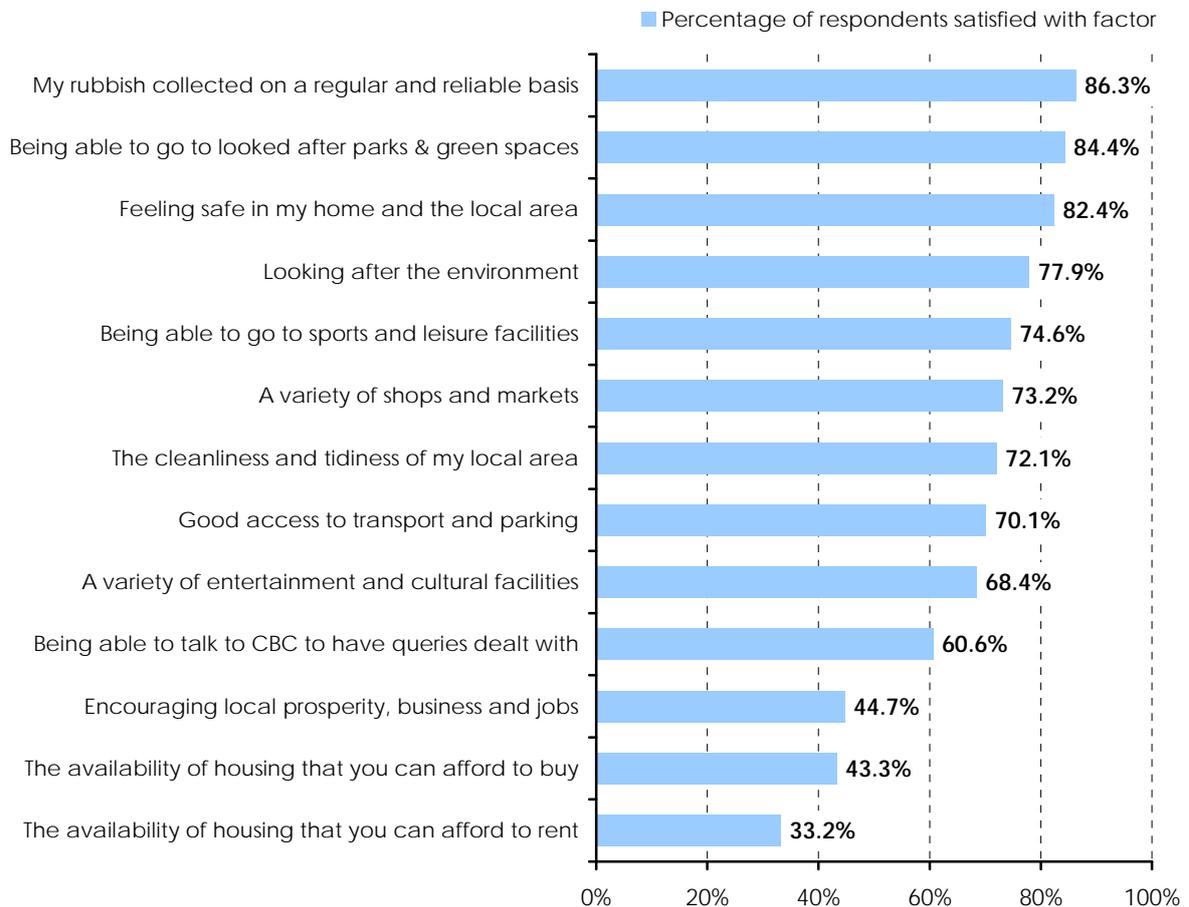


Figure 4

The majority of residents are satisfied with ten of the thirteen themes. The lowest figure, relating to the availability of rental accommodation, is skewed by the relatively large proportion of respondents that stated they did not have a view on this specific issue.

It is encouraging to see that many of the issues score in excess of 70% satisfaction rating, with figures as high as 86% for rubbish collection and 84% for being able to visit well maintained parks and open spaces.

Figure 5 presents satisfaction scores at Area Forum level.

	Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel & Birstall	Loughborough East	Loughborough Northwest	Loughborough Southwest	Quorn, Barrow, Sileby & the Wolds	Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern	South Charnwood
A variety of entertainment and cultural facilities	66%	76%	62%	71%	72%	47%	73%
A variety of shops and markets	79%	76%	68%	80%	72%	47%	70%
Being able to go to sports and leisure facilities	62%	84%	78%	90%	68%	40%	78%
Being able to go to well maintained parks & green spaces	82%	86%	77%	88%	82%	93%	93%
Being able to talk to CBC to have my queries dealt with	51%	60%	57%	69%	62%	67%	70%
Encouraging local prosperity, business and jobs	44%	45%	52%	43%	35%	53%	45%
Feeling safe in my home and the local area	90%	79%	80%	82%	83%	67%	85%
Good access to transport and parking	69%	66%	73%	69%	68%	80%	75%
Looking after the environment	77%	78%	73%	82%	73%	87%	85%
My rubbish collected on a regular and reliable basis	90%	83%	82%	88%	87%	100%	90%
The availability of housing that you can afford to buy	41%	48%	45%	45%	40%	40%	45%
The availability of housing that you can afford to rent	33%	36%	38%	41%	22%	33%	33%
The cleanliness and tidiness of my local area	62%	71%	72%	80%	72%	87%	78%

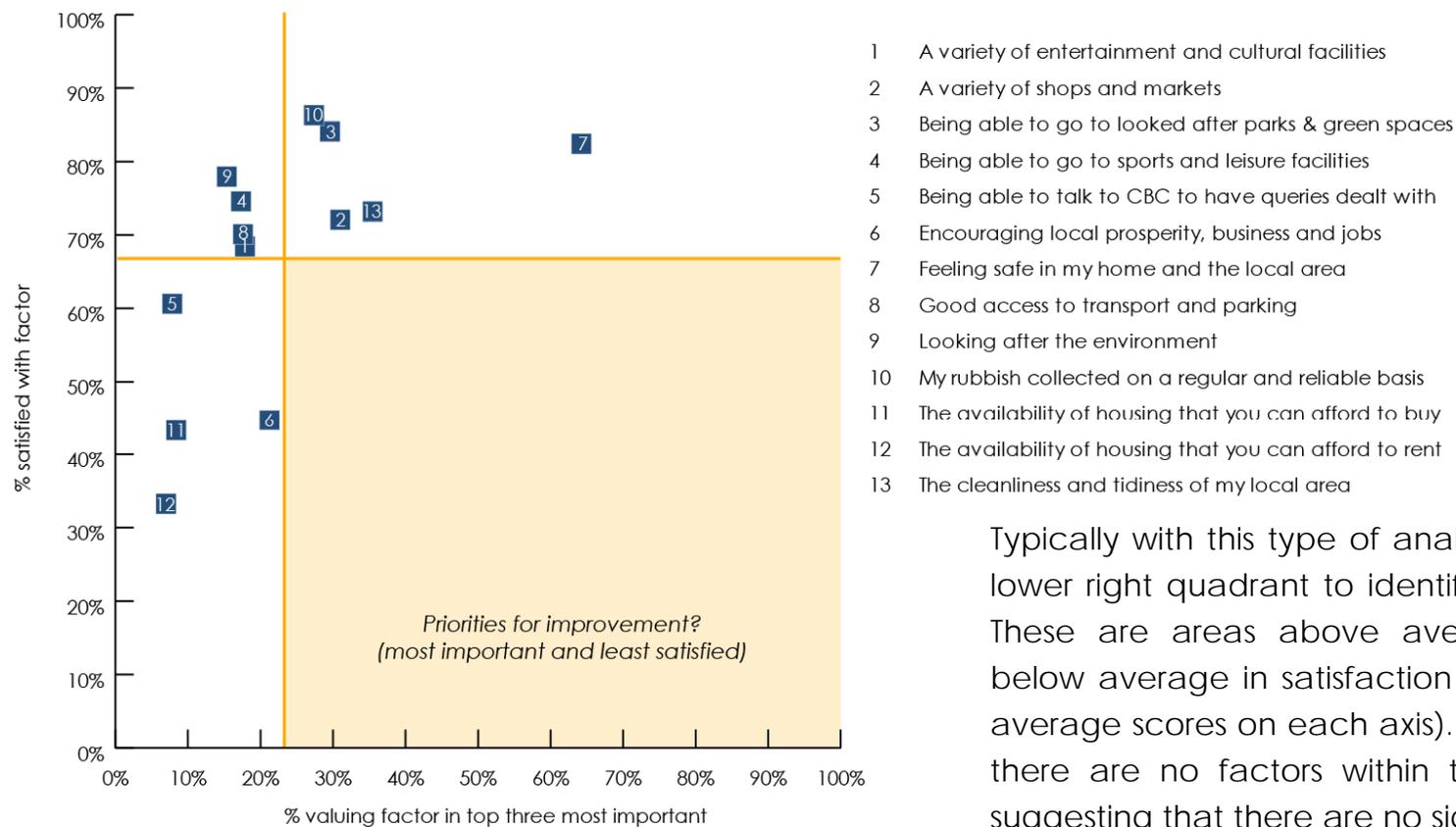
Figure 5

Figures highlighted in red are all at least five percentage points lower than the other Area Forums on that particular measure. We can see that the Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern area features on repeated occasions, although readers are reminded that this is based on just 15 respondents.

Other notable figures include 22% satisfaction for the availability of rented housing in the Quorn et al Area Forum and 35% satisfaction with encouraging local prosperity, also in the Quorn Area Forum.

Priorities versus Satisfaction

It is interesting to compare the relationship between these two sets of figures. In other words, are the factors that are considered to be important in making somewhere a good place to live also scoring well in terms of satisfaction? If not, the results may help identify some priorities for improvement. Figure 6 presents this comparison, with satisfaction scores along one axis and importance along the other.



- 1 A variety of entertainment and cultural facilities
- 2 A variety of shops and markets
- 3 Being able to go to looked after parks & green spaces
- 4 Being able to go to sports and leisure facilities
- 5 Being able to talk to CBC to have queries dealt with
- 6 Encouraging local prosperity, business and jobs
- 7 Feeling safe in my home and the local area
- 8 Good access to transport and parking
- 9 Looking after the environment
- 10 My rubbish collected on a regular and reliable basis
- 11 The availability of housing that you can afford to buy
- 12 The availability of housing that you can afford to rent
- 13 The cleanliness and tidiness of my local area

Typically with this type of analysis we would look to the lower right quadrant to identify areas for improvement. These are areas above average in importance but below average in satisfaction (the orange lines denote average scores on each axis). As Figure 4 demonstrates, there are no factors within this part of the diagram, suggesting that there are no significant areas of concern for Charnwood to address.

Figure 6

Following these questions, respondents were also provided with the opportunity to add comments and explain their thinking behind the answers they've offered. A few examples are listed below to provide a feel for the type of issue that causes concern for Charnwood residents. More detail is available in the raw dataset.

"We value the work of the local street cleaner who does an excellent job. Our concern is with rubbish in people's front gardens and the rubbish blatantly dropped in the Wanlip Lane area by pupils at the senior schools." (Birstall Watermead)

"A Council that listens to the people and a clear and coherent strategy for the good of the area. Too often there seem to be knee jerk reactions rather than planned action." (The Wolds)

"Action should be taken to stop the excessive noise from the Airfield"
(The Wolds)

"Although I hear about robberies etc, I haven't experience anything and feel it is a good area to live in." (Loughborough Lemyngton)

"Hard to find a deposit for a house to buy, and also the limited properties to rent at affordable prices." (Loughborough Dishley and Hathern)

"I feel that more accommodation could be built/be made available to more professional, working people, instead of students having all of the priority." (Loughborough Garendon)

"More direct transport connections to the Train Station from outer areas (e.g. Haddon Way area) of Loughborough rather than just from the centre." (Loughborough Shelthorpe)

"Please bring back a bus to Loughborough!" (Forest Bradgate)

"The Jubilee Park play equipment is in need of maintenance - things that were broken have simply been taken away and not replaced."
(Loughborough Garendon)

"The lights going off at Quorn in the evening is a real danger and need to stay on." (Quorn & Montserrel Castle)

What are residents concerned about?

The next section of the questionnaire asked residents to identify things that caused them concern within their local area. Respondents again had a choice of thirteen themes, based on the list used in the previous questions, and were asked to select up to three issues.

Figure 7 illustrates the proportion of residents that were concerned about each issue, presented in descending order of concern.

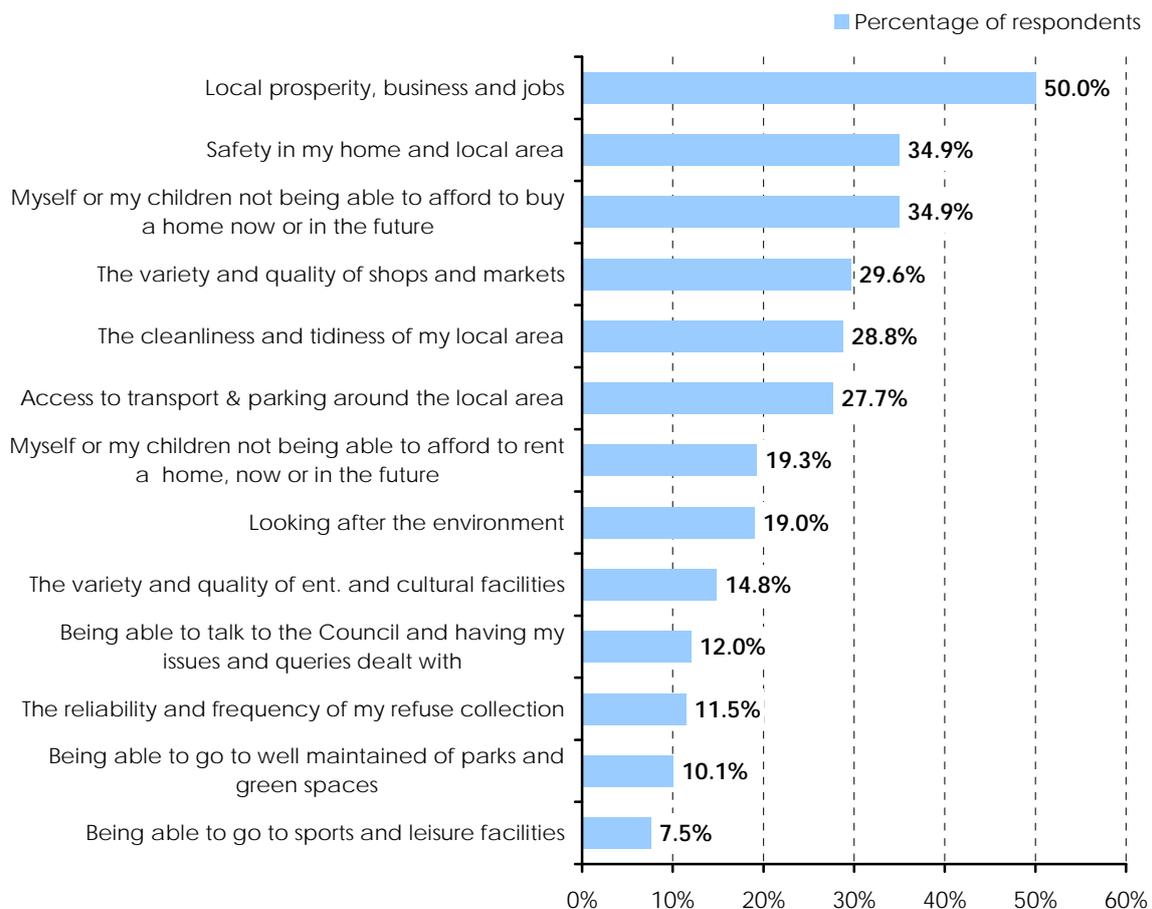


Figure 7

The main concern for residents is 'local prosperity, business and jobs', with half of all respondents identifying this from the list. This is perhaps not surprising given the current economic climate. All Area Forums had figures in excess of 45% on this measure, and it was the priority in all seven areas.

None of the other themes were selected by more than 35% of respondents, with safety and the housing market emerging as the next key issues.

Issues that were not a concern for the vast majority of residents include access to sports and leisure facilities and being able to go to well maintained parks and green spaces.

Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to add further comments on this question. A selection is provided below.

"All of these things hinge on wider National and Global outcomes, however I feel as a Borough, Charnwood represents its constituents to the best of its abilities." (Loughborough Hastings)

"Car park charges are too expensive." (Loughborough Dishley & Hathern)

"I am obviously easily satisfied as I struggled to find 3 things in the above list about which to express concern!" (Anstey)

"I believe Loughborough needs to do all it can to encourage new shops and businesses in town to a) give a better feel in Town and also to encourage growth and jobs for people living here." (Loughborough Lemyngton)

"Hard to find a deposit for a house to buy, and also the limited properties to rent at affordable prices." (Loughborough Dishley and Hathern)

"My children are grown up and settled but I really feel for those trying to get on the property ladder, rents in Loughborough are also very expensive, friends of mine hoping to settle in Loughborough on returning from abroad have had to go further afield." (Loughborough Garendon)

"Our grandchildren and other young children (couples) being able to afford to live and/or work in their own village." (Sileby)

"The entertainment and cultural facilities seem limited to the Town Hall which is prohibitively expensive for family shows." (Loughborough Garendon)

Priorities versus Concerns

In the same way that we have compared Priorities and Satisfaction levels in Figure 6, it is also useful to compare the relationship between the Priorities identified by respondents and the issues they are Concerned about.

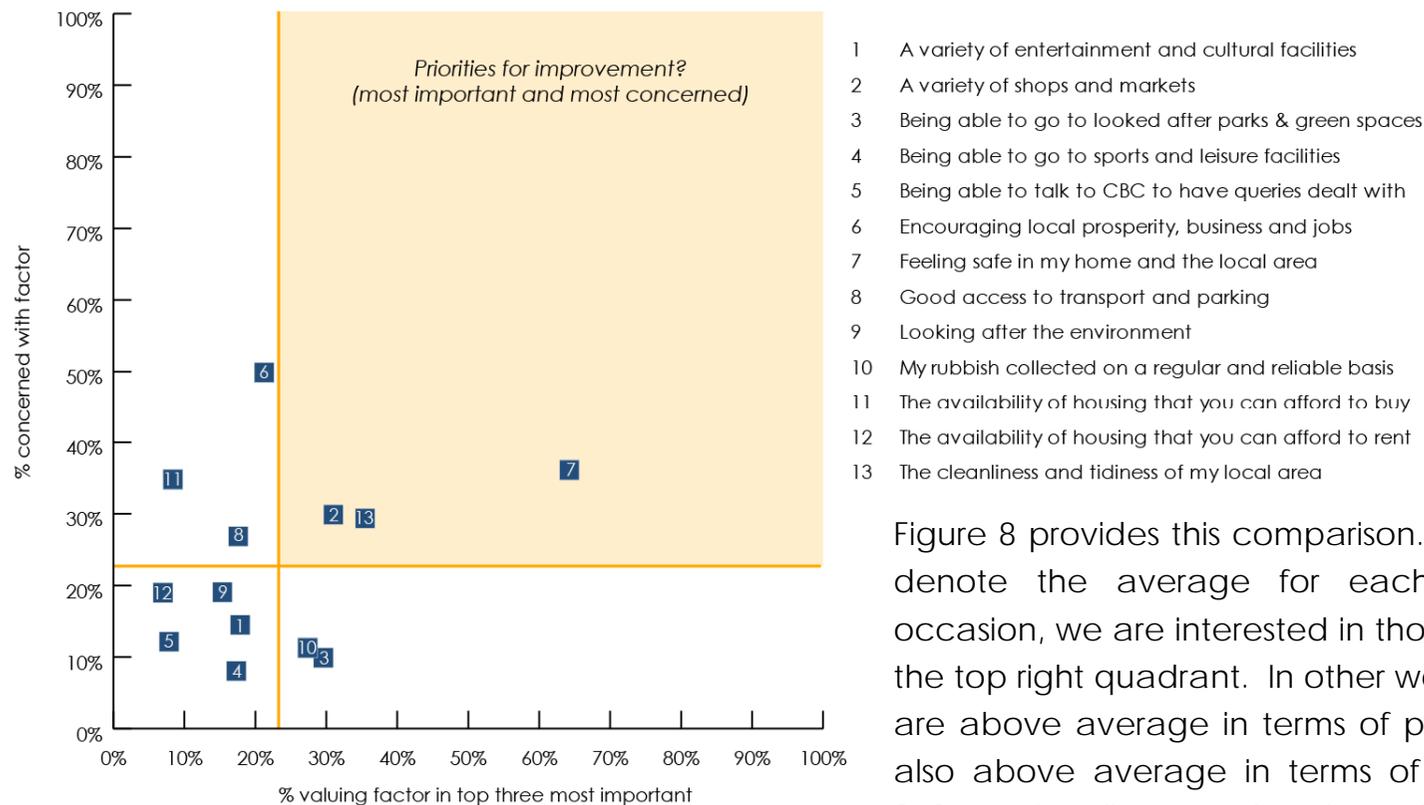


Figure 8

Figure 8 provides this comparison. Again, the orange lines denote the average for each aspect, and on this occasion, we are interested in those themes that feature in the top right quadrant. In other words, these are issues that are above average in terms of priorities for residents, and also above average in terms of causing them concern. Safety, cleanliness and variety of shops and markets are the three themes that feature in this comparison.

Facilities for different age groups

Residents were then asked to consider how satisfied they were with the provision of facilities for different age groups. Figure 9 presents the results at the overall borough level.

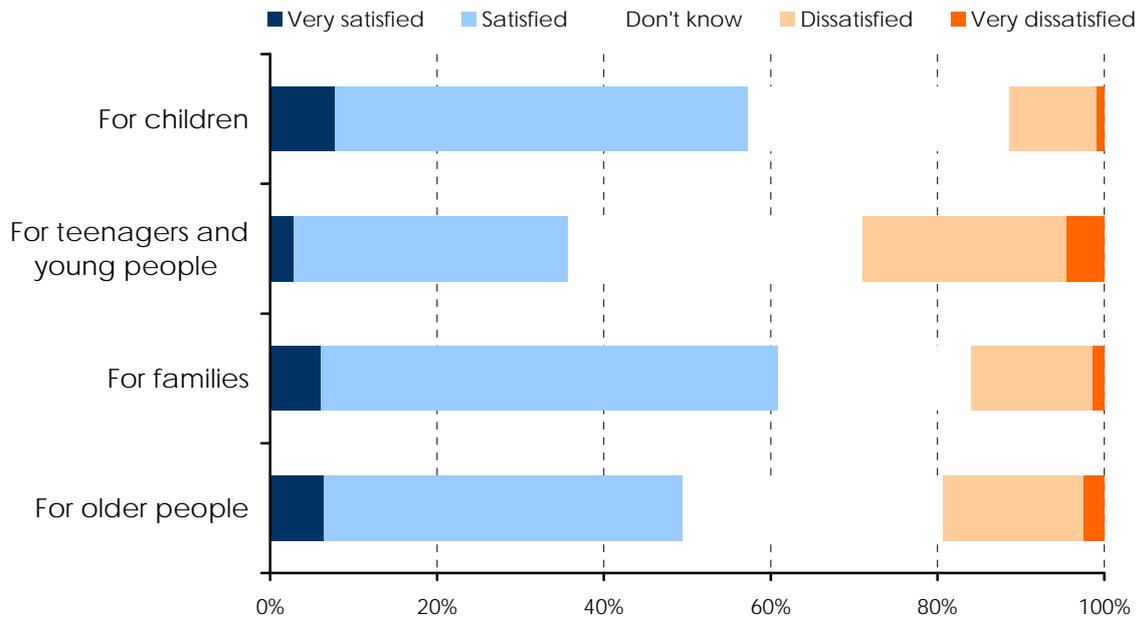


Figure 9

In overall terms, around half of respondents are satisfied with provision; the average percentage of respondents that are either very satisfied or satisfied for the four age groups is 51%. Very few respondents stated that they were very dissatisfied (between 1% and 4% for each age group)

However, this average masks variation amongst satisfaction across the four age groups. The main area of concern appears to be the provision of facilities for teenagers and young people. Just 36% of respondents stated that they were satisfied with service provision for this specific customer group, with 29% saying they were dissatisfied. This finding is consistent with many other satisfaction surveys conducted elsewhere in the country.

Satisfaction with services for the remaining age groups is higher with, for example, 61% satisfied with provision for families and 57% satisfied with provision for children.

It is also worth noting the relatively high proportion of residents that responded 'don't know' to these questions, indicating they did not have direct experience of service provision for these customer types. This was typically around 30% of all respondents for each age group.

Focusing on the main area of concern – facilities for teenagers and young people - we have also examined figures at Area Forum level. Figure 10 illustrates that the proportion of respondents that were satisfied with the provision for teenagers and young people varies considerably, between 20% in Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern Area Forum up to 48% in Loughborough East.

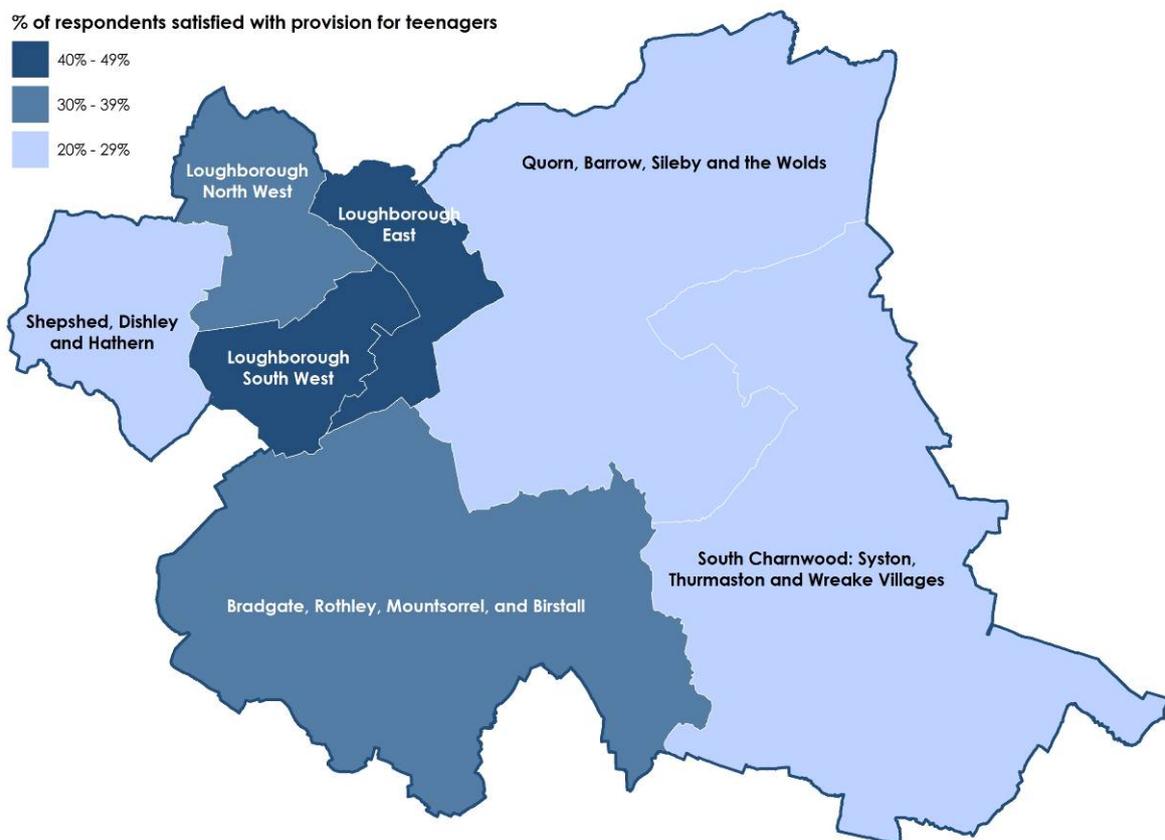


Figure 10

Again, there appears to be a broad Loughborough / rest of borough split, with the highest three figures attached to the three Loughborough-based Area Forums.

How would residents improve services for teenagers and young people?

As with the previous questions, residents were then provided with the chance to explain what they would like to see improved and, on this occasion, how they would do it. Listed below are some illustrative quotes relating to services for teenagers and young people as this was the primary area of concern. The

“Charnwood Borough Council do not provide enough funding for most groups in Shepshed. The facilities for teenagers and young people would be very poor without the input of the church and town council.” (Shepshed East)

“Give the youngsters somewhere to go in the evenings. In Newtown where I grew up there was nothing as parents are scared about letting their children out. Also in Anstey where I now live, the kids hang round the co-op with nothing to do.” (Anstey)

“Keep gangs and groups of youths from congregating in large and intimidating groups on the streets. Be proactive in policing at all times not just during targeted campaigns. Educate parents and bring in parental control orders as a first intervention with ASB cases.” (Thurmaston)

“Young people need things to do and places to do them, we need youth clubs and other facilities to allow them to be creative and channel their energy into something useful.” (Loughborough Shelthorpe)

“Create / formulate more interactions with young people - develop more after school programmes.” (Loughborough Nanpantan)

“I feel that there should be more things available for teenagers and also young people and young people with disabilities because there seems to be hardly anything available and people then complain that young people just hang around and harass others but they wouldn't do this if there was more available for them as well as for families. There are plenty of things for young children and there [sic] family but not for families with teens there needs to be more for them.” (Loughborough Ashby)

How would residents improve services for other age groups?

Examining views on the other three age groups, listed below is a sample of typical quotes. The full set of comments is available in the raw dataset.

"Doctors and Dentist surgeries would be fantastic." (Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel & Birstall)

"Apart from the expensive swimming pools what else is there for children to do? My children attended the Sileby youth club twice, because they were new to the area they felt like outcasts and no-one spoke to them so didn't go again." (Quorn, Barrow, Sileby & the Wolds)

"Bus transport to Nottingham. Bring one of the Loughborough to Nottingham routes through Wymeswold." (Quorn, Barrow, Sileby and the Wolds)

"I feel that elderly care homes need to be looked at much more closely, and that the majority of these within the borough are in a poor state and letting down our elderly, who deserve better." (Loughborough East)

"I have a 9 year old & there is nothing for him to do on my estate, & for his own safety he is not allowed off the estate." (Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern)

"I would like more businesses to be prepared to train young people. So many jobs require "experience". I would like unemployed young people to be able to use their time for something worthwhile or training." (Loughborough Southwest)

"Child facilities need attention why not build more crèches and maybe even build a large activity centre where younger kids can learn and develop through play and mums and dads can interact maybe even run some business development workshops like eBay classes and teach parents how to earn a part time income whilst the kids are having fun." (Quorn, Barrow, Sileby and the Wolds)

"In today's economic climate, I don't believe that the Council should have to provide facilities for all and sundry, e.g. facilities for teenagers and young people should be funded by their parents as should facilities for children - schooling excepted. Families can fund their own entertainment." (Quorn, Barrow, Sileby & the Wolds)

Are Charnwood's communities cohesive?

When asked whether they felt their local area was a place where different backgrounds got on well together, more than three quarters (78%) said yes while just 8% said no and the remaining 14% were unsure.

This question will be directly comparable with the results from the Place Survey and will provide some indication as to whether the situation regarding community cohesion has changed since the economic downturn placed greater pressure on many families.

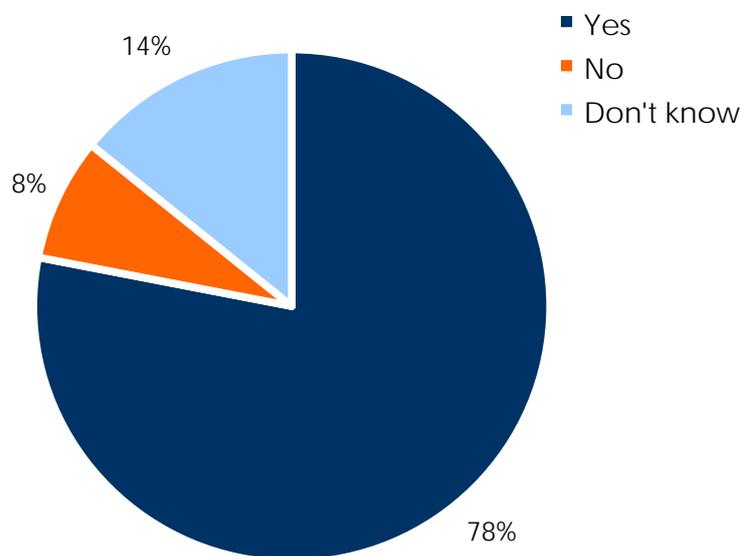


Figure 11

At an Area Forum level, figures are highest in Loughborough Southwest, at 84%, while the lowest are in Shepshed, Dishley and Hathern (67%) and South Charnwood (68%). Figure 12 presents the distribution of results on this measure across the seven Area Forums.

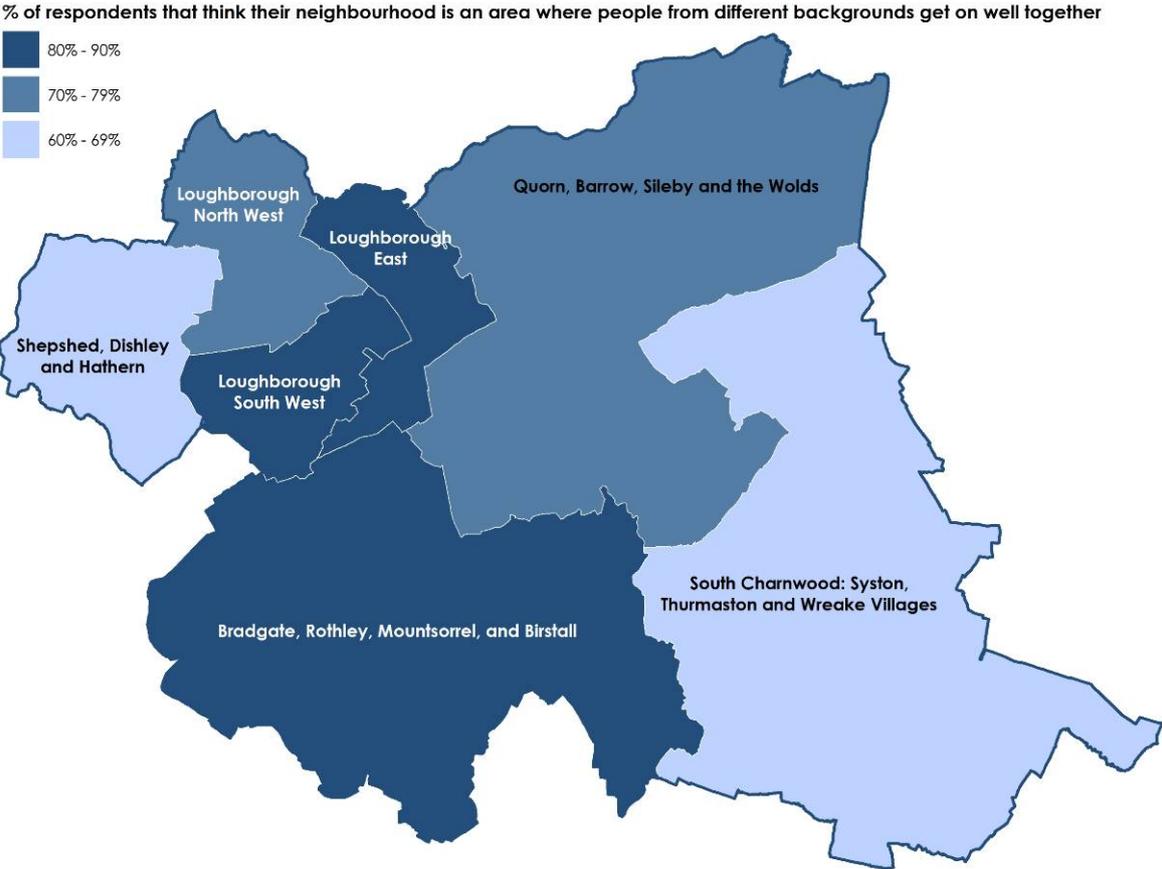


Figure 12

Finding out about and accessing council services

The next series of questions examined whether residents felt they could easily find out information about the services provided by Charnwood Borough Council and whether they could then access those services easily.

Figure 13 presents the respondents' views on how easy it is to *find out* about services provided by CBC.

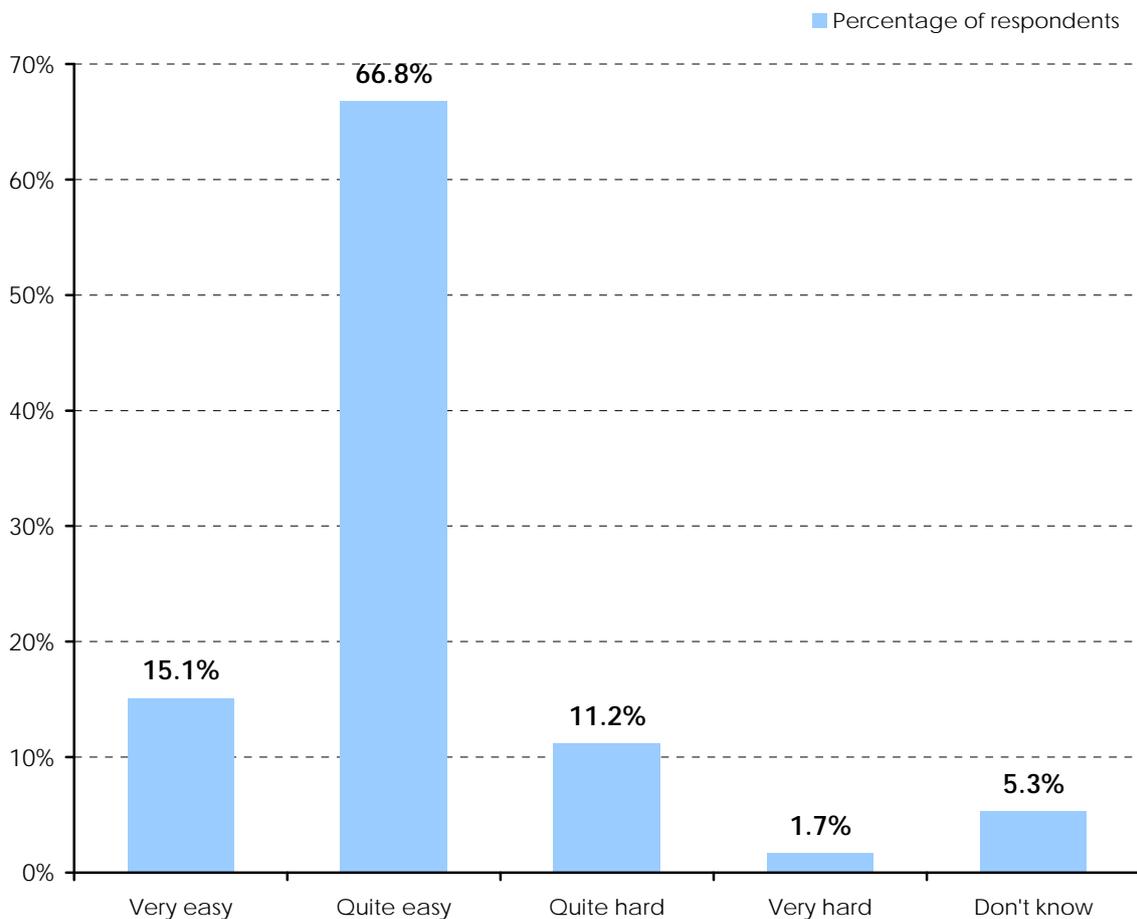


Figure 13

Charnwood will be pleased to see that such a high proportion of respondents feel it is quite easy to find out information about CBC's services. More than two thirds went for this option, and just 13% felt it was hard to access information.

The area for development might be to try and shift views from the 'quite easy' category to the 'very easy' category, which at present accounts for 15% of all respondents.

There was very little variation at Area Forum on this measure, with only two of the seven achieving less than 80%; Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel & Birstall (74%) and South Charnwood (78%).

Those respondents that felt it was hard to find out information were then asked to provide more details. Here are some of the comments made.

"I do not know how to use the internet (my son is helping me complete this questionnaire), most written information is either too long or complicated." (Thurmaston resident, aged 80+)

"There is not enough help given via telephone system, publications etc and a difficulty in contacting officers especially 'Planning'." (The Wolds resident, aged 60-69)

"I tried to arrange to pay for my council tax by direct debit by phoning the tax service. After going through all the options I was then on hold for 15 minutes before I gave up. I have decided it's less effort if I just pay each month." (Anstey resident, aged 20-29)

"Had to make multiple searches before getting to the somewhat near to what I was looking for. The website isn't that user friendly. Too much info and sitemap is not useful." (Thurmaston resident, aged 30-39)

"I live at a house where they say I cannot have a wheelie bin, except I can pay for a brown one for garden waste, other houses on the same row have all the bins. I have been on to the internet to ask these kinds of questions, but never get a response back." (Loughborough Dishley & Hathern resident, aged 30-39)

"Don't buy the local press and the website is too cluttered. Just have a simple homepage that says something like - report it, ask for it, enquire about it, pay for it and other - then have the rest of the stuff sat behind this. Can't see the wood for the trees." (Loughborough Nanpantan resident, aged 50-59)

The second aspect of this question is how easy residents find it to *access* council services. Figure 14 provides the headline results.

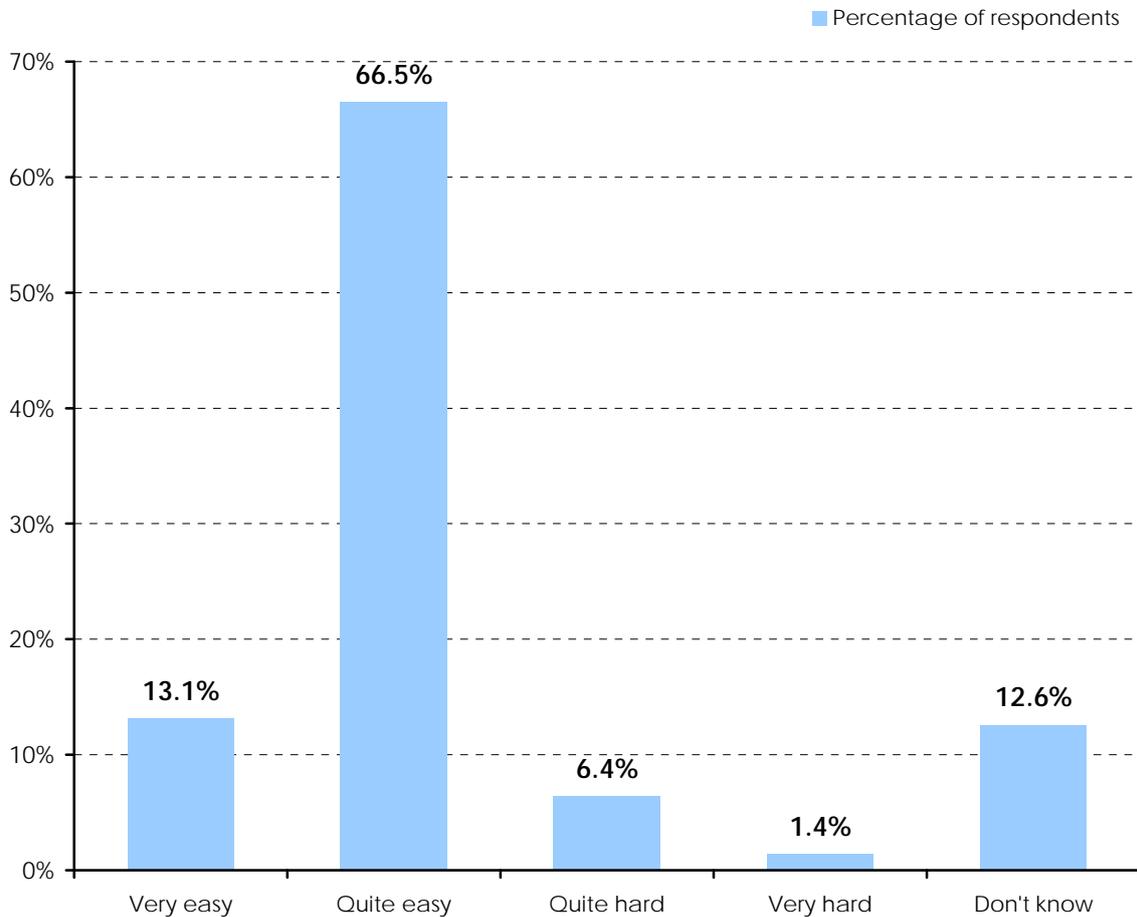


Figure 14

Results are very similar to the previous question, with two thirds of residents finding it easy to access services and a further 13% feeling it is very easy. Just 8% felt it was hard. Again, the response to these findings might be to try and move respondents' views from the 'quite easy' category to the 'very easy' category.

Again, there are no significant variations at Area Forum level on this indicator. Six of the seven areas have figures clustered between 80% and 84%. The one notable exception is South Charnwood (70%).

Again, respondents that had stated that they felt it was hard to access services were asked to provide some more detail.

"Many residents go to parish council offices not Charnwood which is a long way physically." (Ansty resident, aged 60-69)

"Once you contact the correct department/person I have found the staff very helpful. It's finding out who or which department you need to contact with a particular query." (Loughborough Dishley & Hathern resident, aged 50-59)

"I've no idea where to look, who to ask or even if there is someone I can ask." (Loughborough Shelthorpe resident, aged 30-39)

"Because you have silly rules that get in the way of common sense resolution of problems e.g. when I moved here I contacted your council tax office who refused to take information verbally." (Mountsorrel resident, aged 50-59)

"Because I have to travel into Loughborough to the council offices for most information that I require." (Shepshed West resident, aged 60-69)

"In relation to housing if your question falls outside the responses the housing staff have available to them you are ignored." (Thurmaston resident, aged 40-49)

"Website takes ages to drill down to relevant info sources then contact numbers often don't get through to correct person first time." (Thurmaston resident, aged 50-59)

What are residents' channel preferences?

Respondents were asked for their views on which forms of communication they would use to report a problem to the council. Figure 15 presents the results; figures do not add up to 100% as respondents were able to choose more than one option.

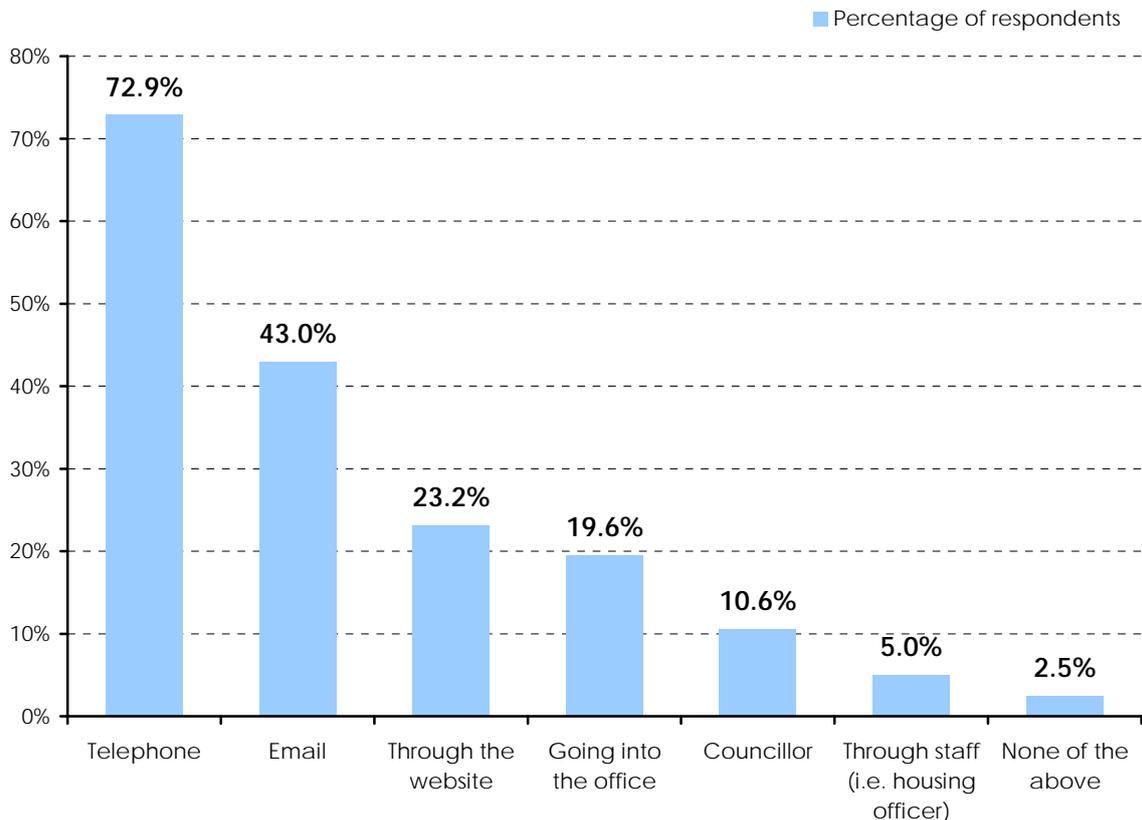


Figure 15

By far the most frequent response was telephone, with nearly three quarters stating that they would use this channel to contact the council if they had a problem.

Nearly half of respondents said they would use email; this figure is actually slightly higher than in other consultations we have conducted and reflects the changing views customers have on using different communication channels.

Around one quarter would use the website and a similar proportion would use the face-to-face channel via a council office. A small number stated that they would use other channels, including letter and Parish Councils (both less than 1%).

We have also examined this question in terms of Area Forums to see if there are any geographical variations in channel preferences. Figure 16 presents the percentage of respondents in each area that would choose to use each communication mechanism.

	Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel & Birstall	Loughborough East	Loughborough Northwest	Loughborough Southwest	Quorn, Barrow, Sibley & the Wolds	Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern	South Charnwood
Telephone	75%	72%	63%	69%	73%	80%	90%
Email	36%	60%	50%	37%	35%	47%	35%
Going into an office	8%	36%	30%	22%	7%	27%	13%
Councillor	10%	7%	8%	6%	15%	7%	23%
Through staff (i.e. housing officer)	7%	5%	5%	6%	3%	13%	3%
Through the website	13%	24%	32%	29%	27%	27%	15%
None of the above	2%	3%	2%	0%	5%	0%	0%

Figure 16

Figures highlighted in **green** are at least five percentage points above all the other Area Forums for a particular channel, while those in **red** are at least five percentage points below all the others.

Respondents in South Charnwood have perhaps the strongest inclination towards certain channels over others, with 90% saying they would use the telephone (average is 73%) and 23% saying they would use their councillor (average 11%).

Respondents in Loughborough East are much more likely to choose the email channel than most other areas.

Are residents satisfied with their experience when contacting the council?

The majority of residents (63%) are satisfied with the experience they have had when contacting Charnwood Borough Council, although only 12% said that they were 'very satisfied'.

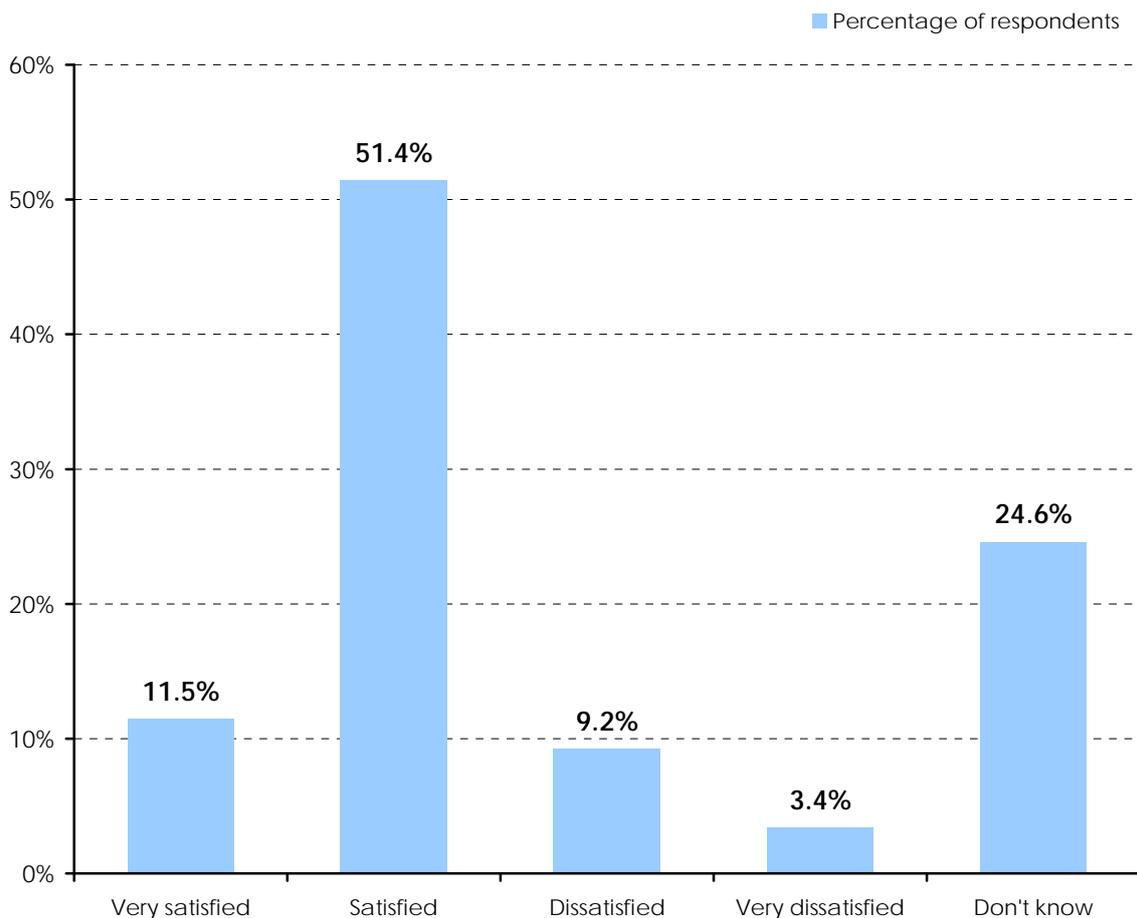


Figure 17

CBC will be encouraged to see that just 13% were dissatisfied with their experience. When we consider that in many cases residents will be making contact because they have a complaint or concern, it might be expected that a higher proportion would be dissatisfied.

When we examine the results at Area Forum level, we see that satisfaction figures range between 58% (Quorn, Barrow, Silbey & the Wolds) and 73% (South Charnwood). Figure 18 maps this measure.

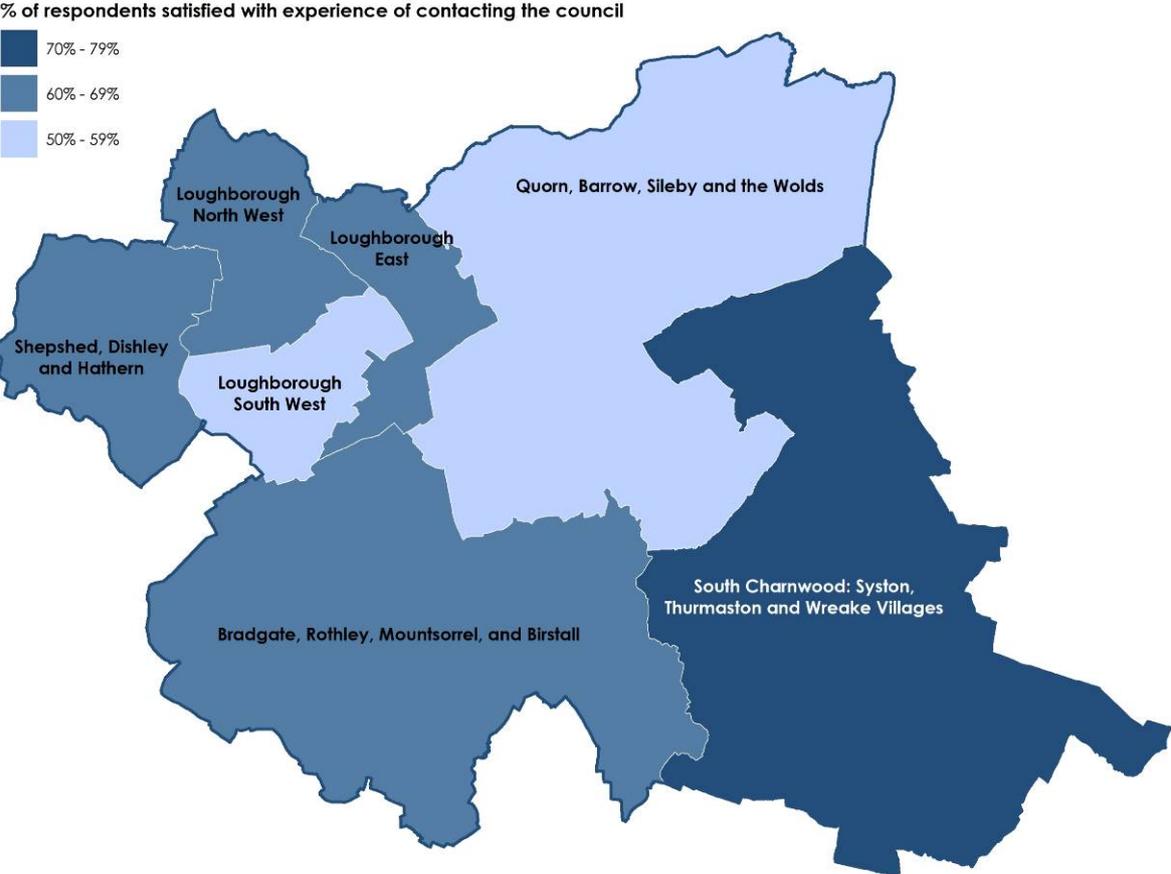


Figure 18

How would residents prefer to hear about services and council tax?

When asked what communication techniques would be most effective when the council wishes to share information on services and council tax, the most popular option was leaflet/letter with nearly six in ten (58%) respondents choosing this channel. This is presumably the current method employed for communicating information about council tax to residents.

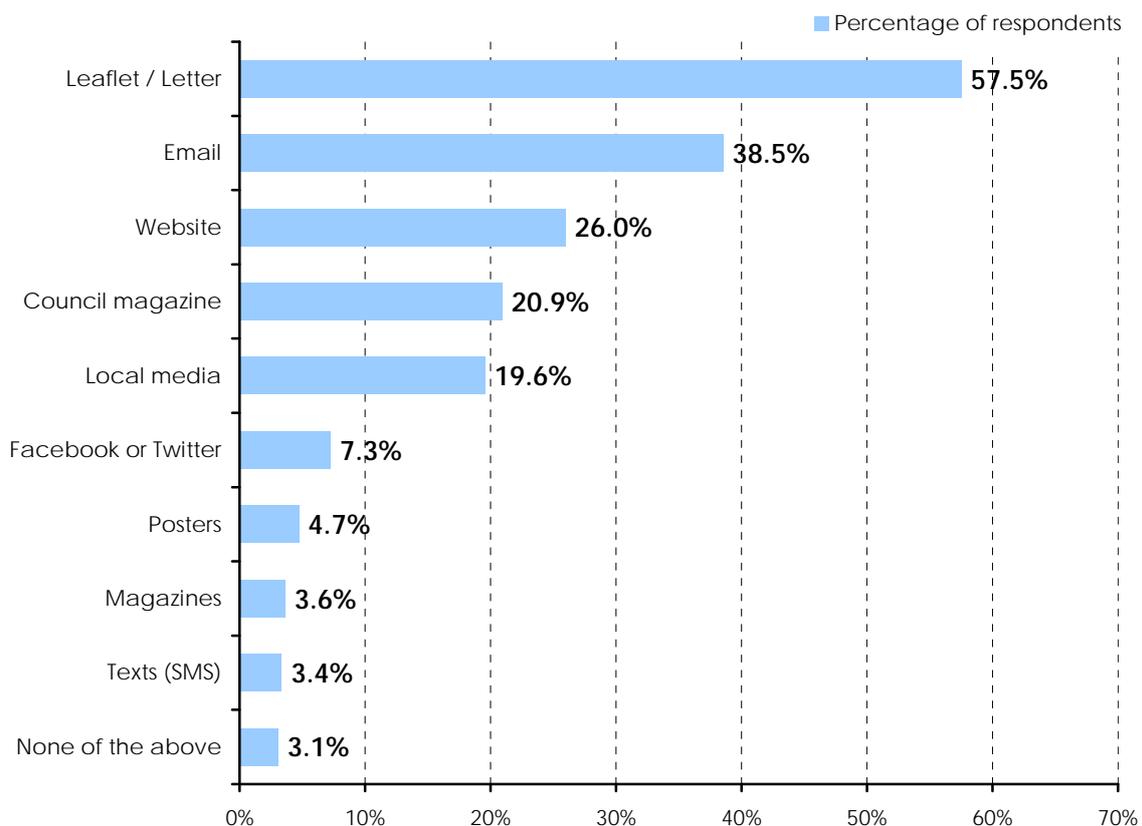


Figure 19

Other channels had mixed levels of interest. Email was popular with more than a third of residents, followed by the website for one quarter.

There is a group of channels that clearly gave relatively little support, including a mix of both traditional methods such as magazines and posters along with newer approaches like Facebook/Twitter and text/SMS.

Leaflets were the preferred option for all Area Forums, although figures did range between 48% (Loughborough Northwest) and 71% (Loughborough Southwest).

Are residents happy with how CBC keeps them informed?

Residents were asked how satisfied they were with how the council keeps them informed about their services. Figure 20 presents the headline results.

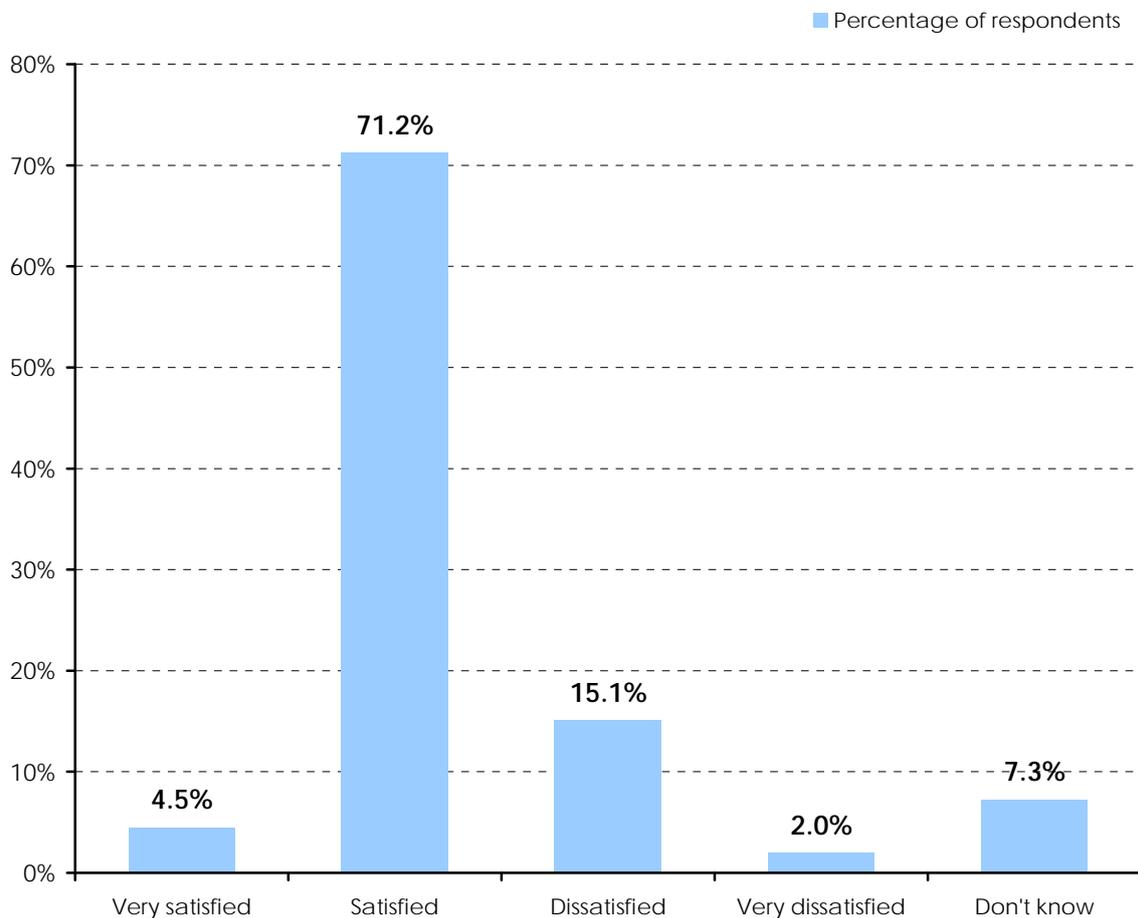


Figure 20

This distribution of responses follows the pattern observed in several of the other questions; residents are generally satisfied, although they are far more likely to be 'just' satisfied than 'very satisfied'. Few are dissatisfied; 17% on this occasion.

There are some notable variations at the more local level. The percentage of respondents that feels the council does keep them well-informed ranges from 69% in Loughborough East up to 93% in Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern. Figure 21 presents satisfaction levels in mapped form.

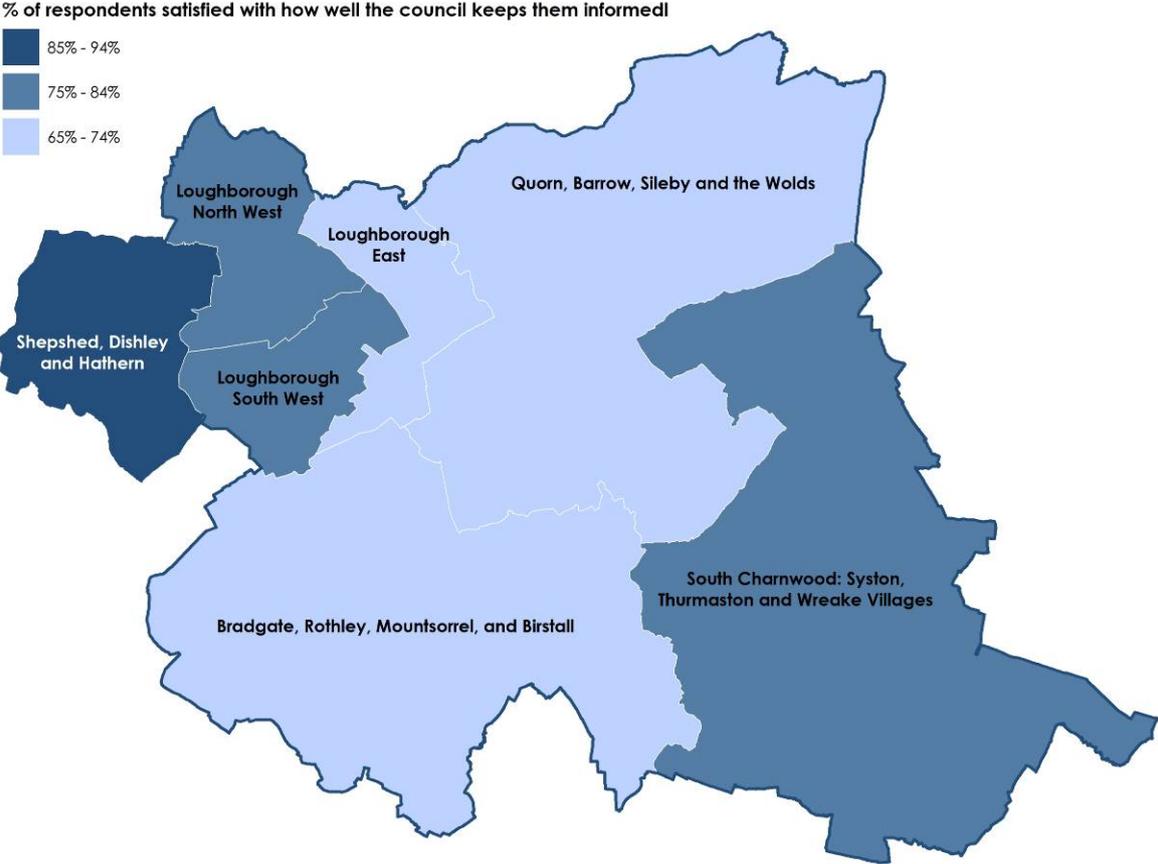


Figure 21

Are residents happy with how CBC spends council tax?

Next, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with how their council tax is spent. Figure 22 identifies that the majority (54%) are satisfied.

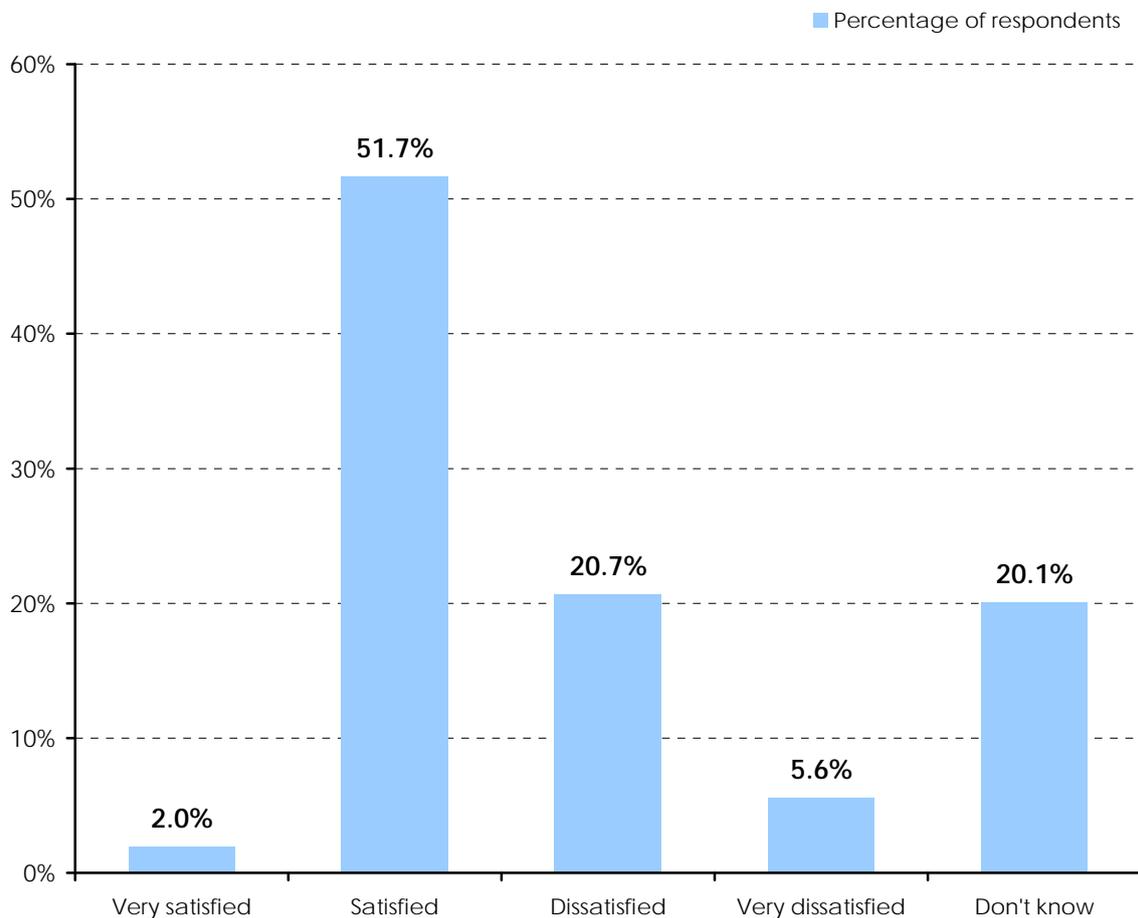


Figure 22

We see a larger proportion of dissatisfied respondents on this measure (26%), which is a typical finding when the issue of spending tax payers' money is concerned.

It is also worth noting the relatively large proportion (one in five) that does not know whether they are satisfied or not. This links back to the previous question about providing residents with information about council tax and services; is it easy for residents to find out how their money is spent?

This measure does vary notably at Area Forum level. The only figures below 50% are Loughborough Northwest and South Charnwood, both at 45%.

Lower tax or keep services?

Residents were then asked for their views on whether they would prefer to maintain the current level of service provision (by keeping council tax at current levels) or whether they would prefer to pay less council tax.

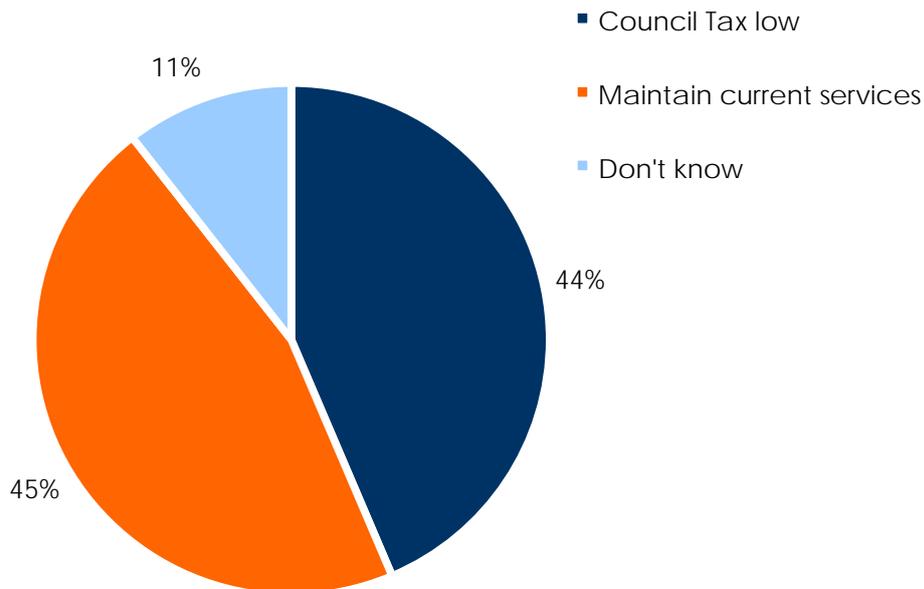


Figure 23

Views are actually very split on this issue, with an almost identical percentage of respondents wanting to reduce council tax as those wishing to maintain service provision. This is probably the area where we have seen the greatest disagreement so far and poses a difficult decision for CBC to resolve.

Figure 24 illustrates the extent to which views differ across the borough. The percentage of respondents that would prefer to reduce the level of Council Tax ranges between 36% in Loughborough East up to 52% in Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel & Birstall.

Conversely, the proportion of respondents that would rather maintain services ranged between 35% in South Charnwood up to 59% in Loughborough Southwest.

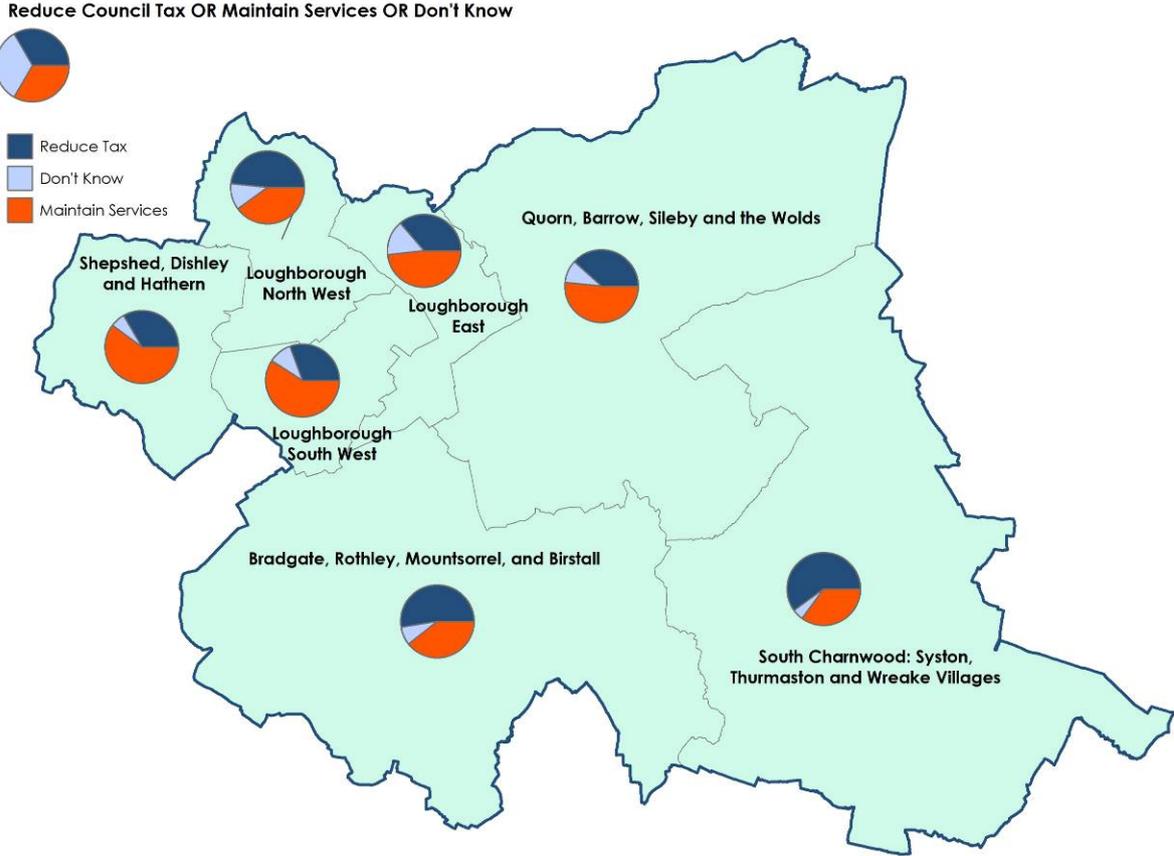


Figure 24

Do residents feel they can influence decision making?

This is another question that can be compared with previous results from the Place Survey, and asks residents whether they feel it is easy to influence decisions that might affect them. Figure 25 presents residents' views on this issue in 2011.

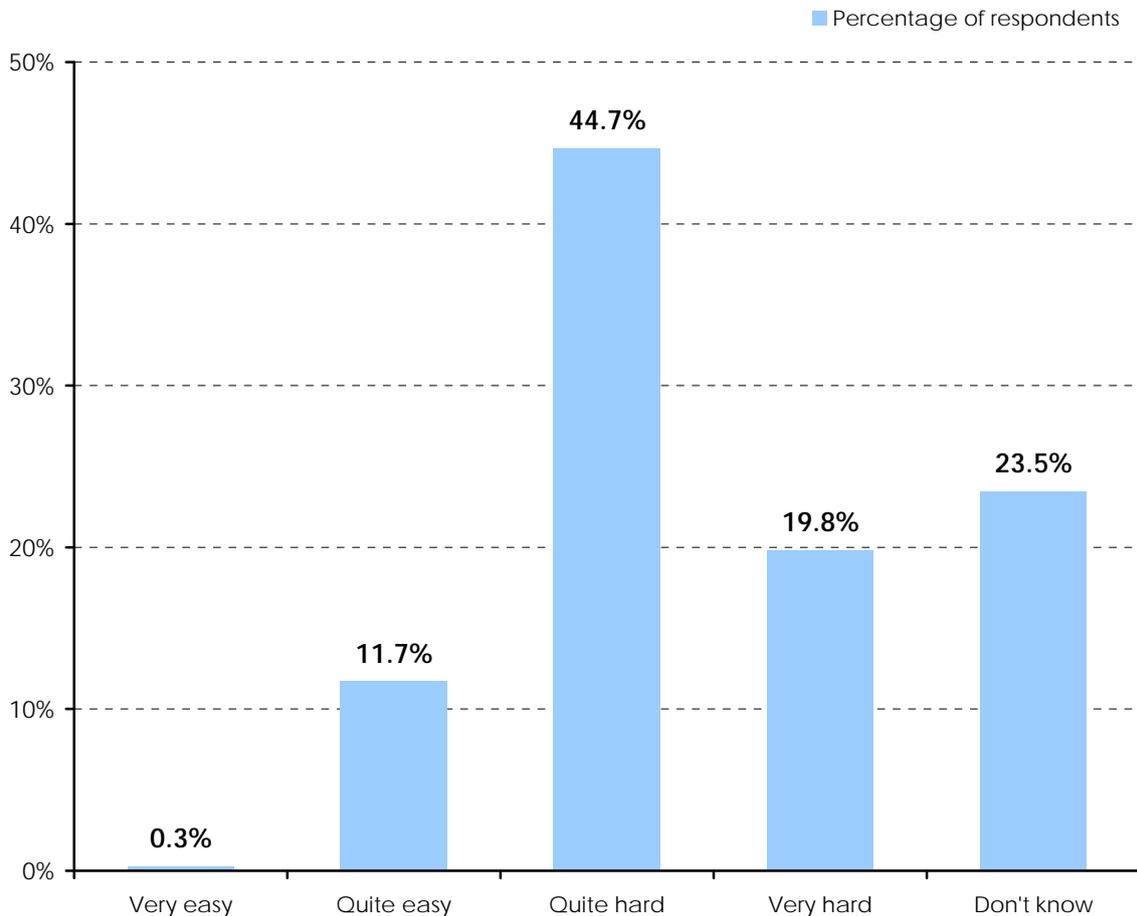


Figure 25

This is one of the few themes examined thus far that presents a less positive picture. The majority of residents, nearly two thirds (65%) feel it is difficult to influence decision making and a further quarter (24%) does not know.

This leaves just 12% or one in eight residents that feel it is easy to influence local decision making. This presents considerable scope for improvement and might present a need to develop some responses around engagement opportunities across the borough.

There is very little difference on this measure across the various Area Forums. All seven had figures of less than 17%.

Do residents feel they can get involved in decision making?

On a similar theme, residents were then asked how satisfied they were with the opportunity to get involved in local decision making. We might expect responses to this question to closely reflect the previous answers, as without the opportunity to get engaged it is unlikely that residents will feel they can influence local decisions.

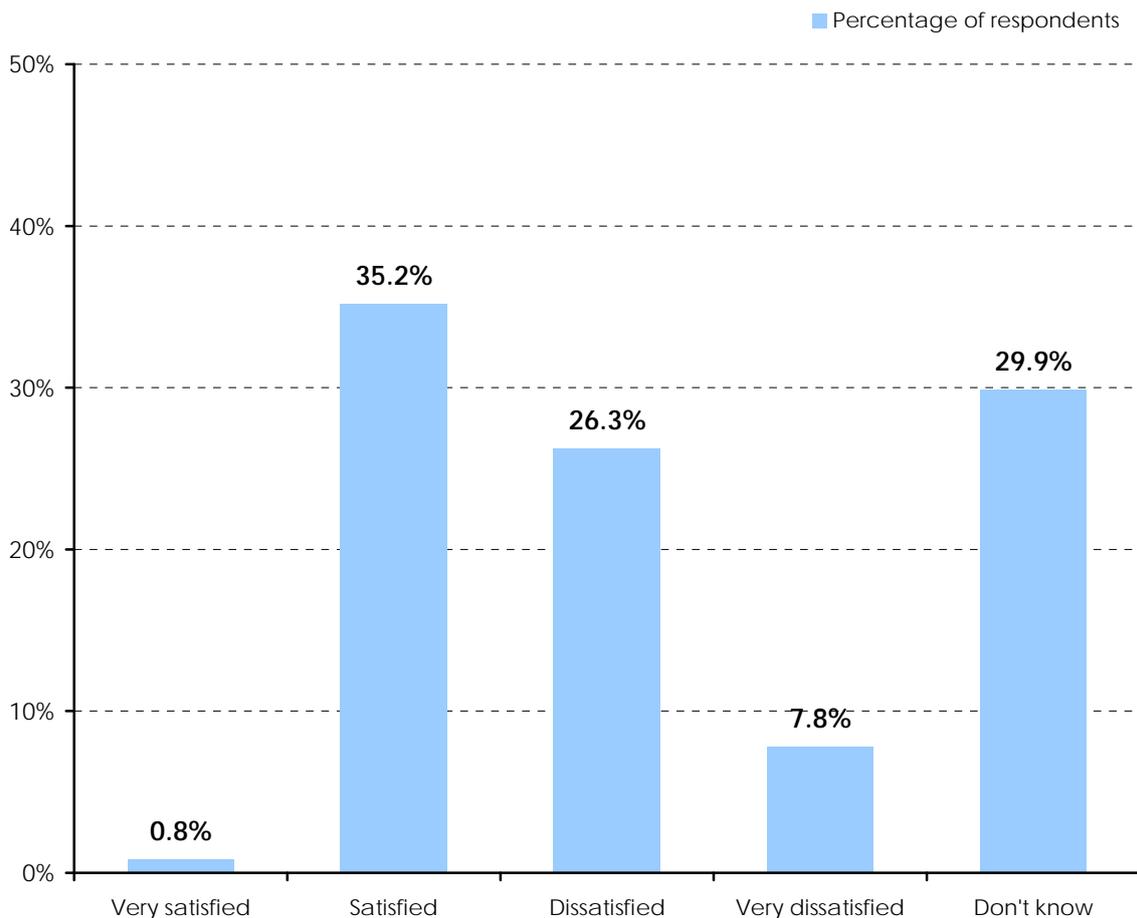


Figure 26

The picture is not quite as negative, with more than one third (36%) feeling satisfied with the opportunities available to them. The main area of concern on this question might be the relatively high proportion of residents that do not know how to get involved in local decision making. Three in ten residents answered this way, and this might be an area for further examination; what opportunities are there across the borough to participate in local decision making, are the opportunities consistent across the borough, are they genuine engagement opportunities or 'talking shops' and are they adequately promoted?

Again, this specific measure does not warrant presentation in mapped form as all seven figures are very similar. The percentage of respondents that are satisfied with the opportunities to influence decision making are clustered around 33% - 39%. The slight exception is Loughborough Northwest at 47%.

Volunteering

The final bundle of questions asked residents for their interest in getting involved in local decision making in a range of variably intensive ways.

First, we gathered views on whether residents wanted to get engaged through *area forums or customer panels*. Figure 27 presents the overall results for the borough as a whole.

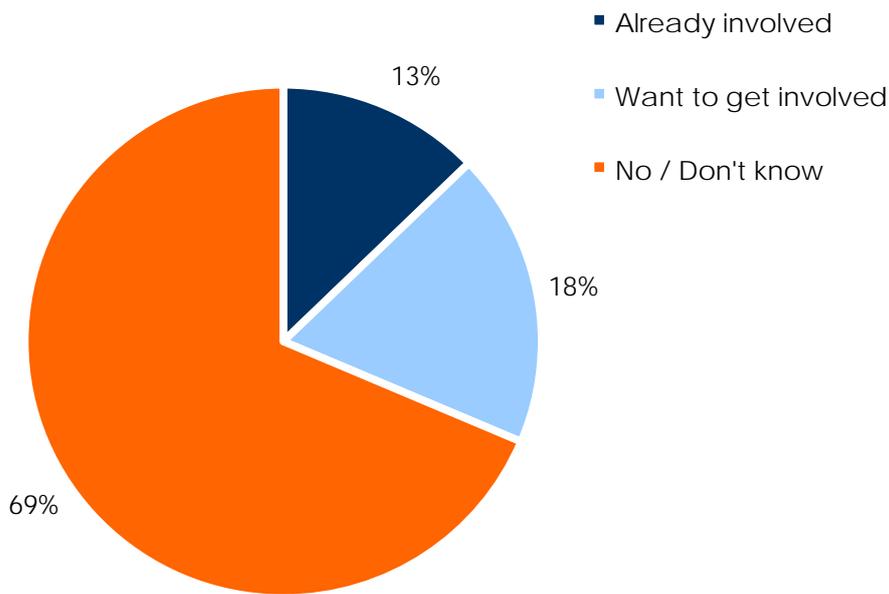


Figure 27

More than two thirds of respondents did not express an interest in this way of getting more involved. However, if the interest of the 18% of respondents who said they would want to get involved could be captured it would significantly affect figures for some of the questions asked earlier in this survey.

Figure 28 presents the same figures at Area Forum level.

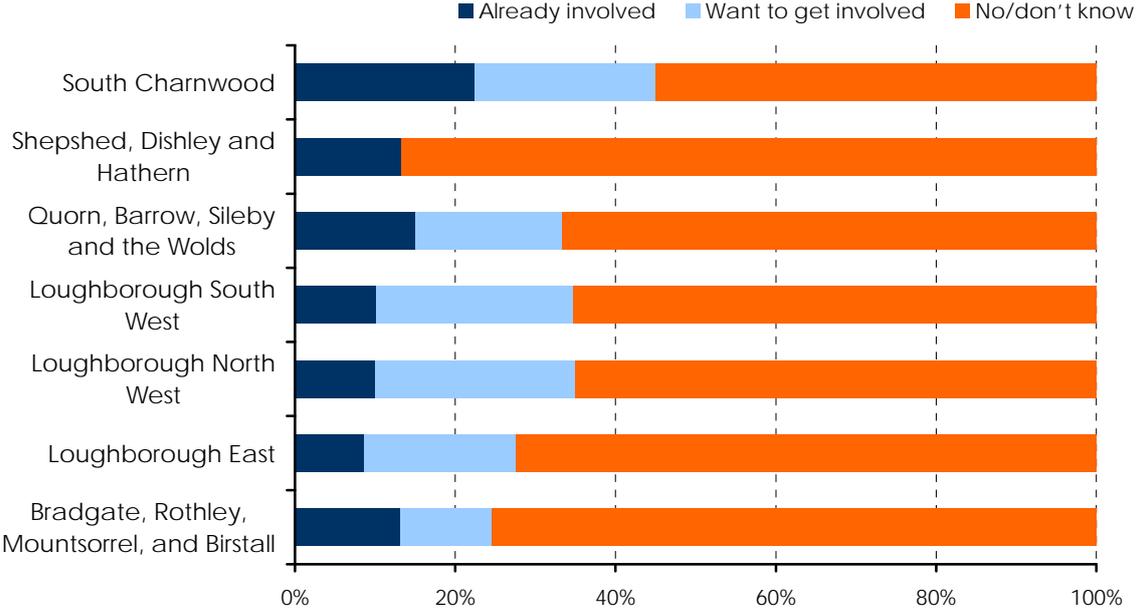


Figure 28

Existing and potential interest appears to be highest in South Charnwood Area Forum. Respondents in Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern seem least interested in getting involved (based on this small sample size).

Secondly, residents were asked whether they would be interested in going a stage further and *volunteering to improve the local area*, for example as community champions.

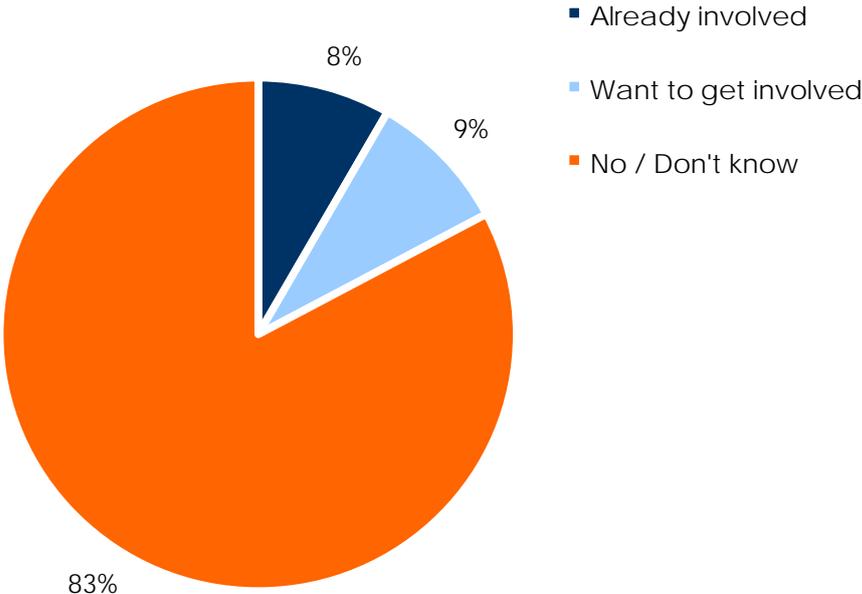


Figure 29

As might be expected, a smaller proportion are interested in this level of commitment, with around one in six saying that they are either already involved or would be interested in getting more involved. We should also assume that, due to their willingness to participate in this survey, the sample of residents we have consulted with already have a slightly greater willingness to get involved than 'typical' residents, so this figure may be a slight overestimate.

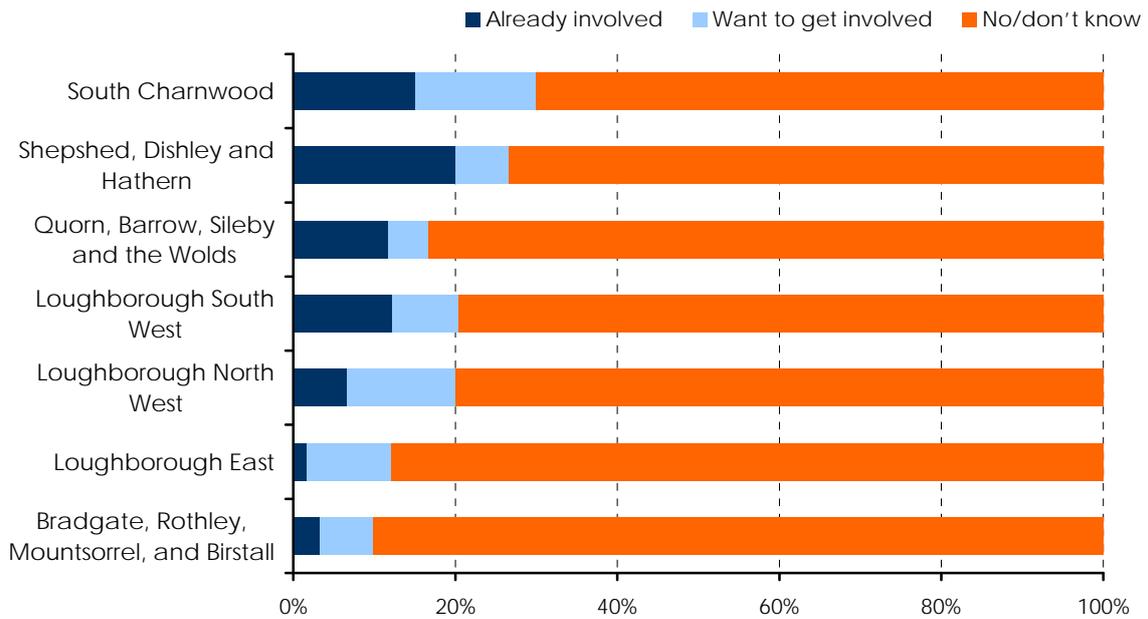


Figure 30

Again, interest seems to be greatest in South Charnwood, with 30% already involved or wanting to get involved.

Thirdly, respondents were asked if they would consider *volunteering to help run local facilities*, for example Queens Park and the museum.

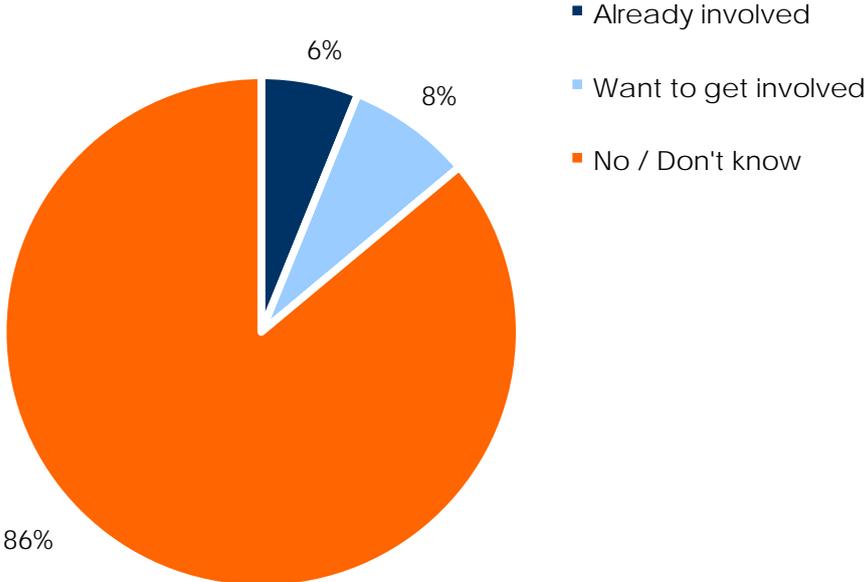


Figure 31

Again, we see a diminishing level of interest as the level of commitment increases. Around 14% said that they are either already involved or would be interested in getting involved to this extent.

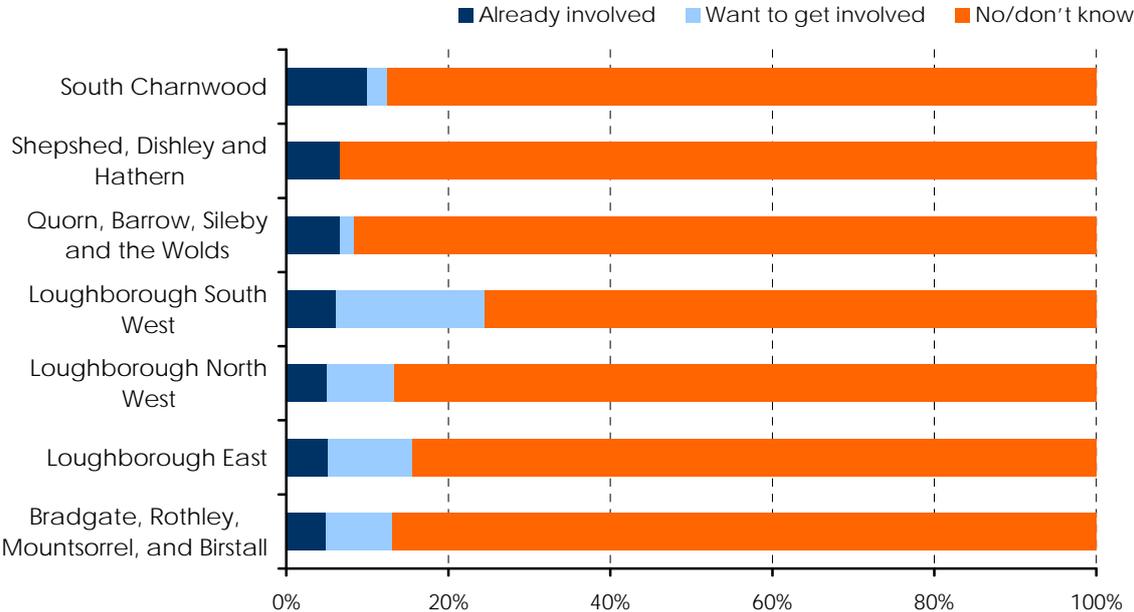


Figure 32

Respondents in Loughborough Southwest appear to show the greatest willingness to help run local facilities, with one quarter currently doing so or stating that they want to get involved.

Finally, we asked whether respondents would simply be willing to *volunteer* on a general basis. There would appear to be a pool of around 10% of residents that might be encouraged to get more involved.

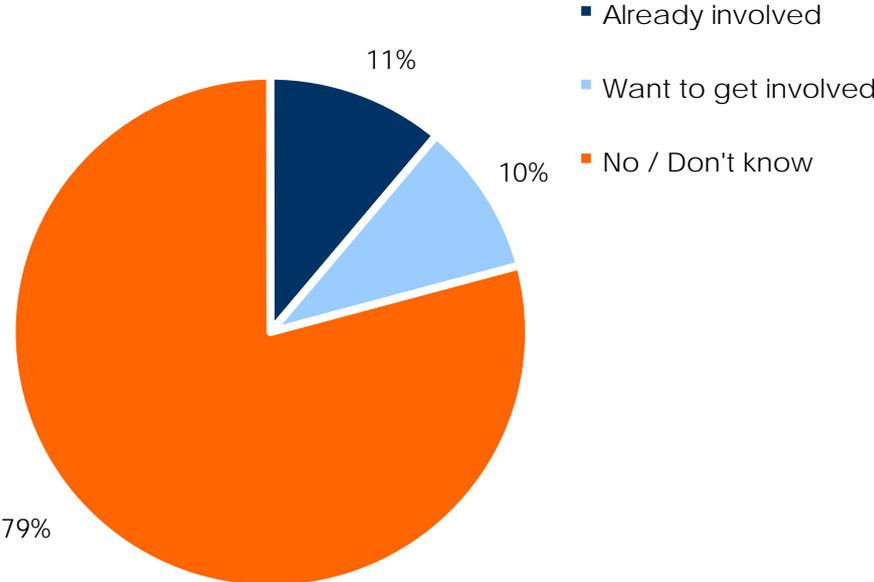


Figure 33

Figures are broadly similar at Area Forum level. All seven have between 16% and 26% current activity or interest with the exception of Shepshed, Dishley & Hathern at 13%.

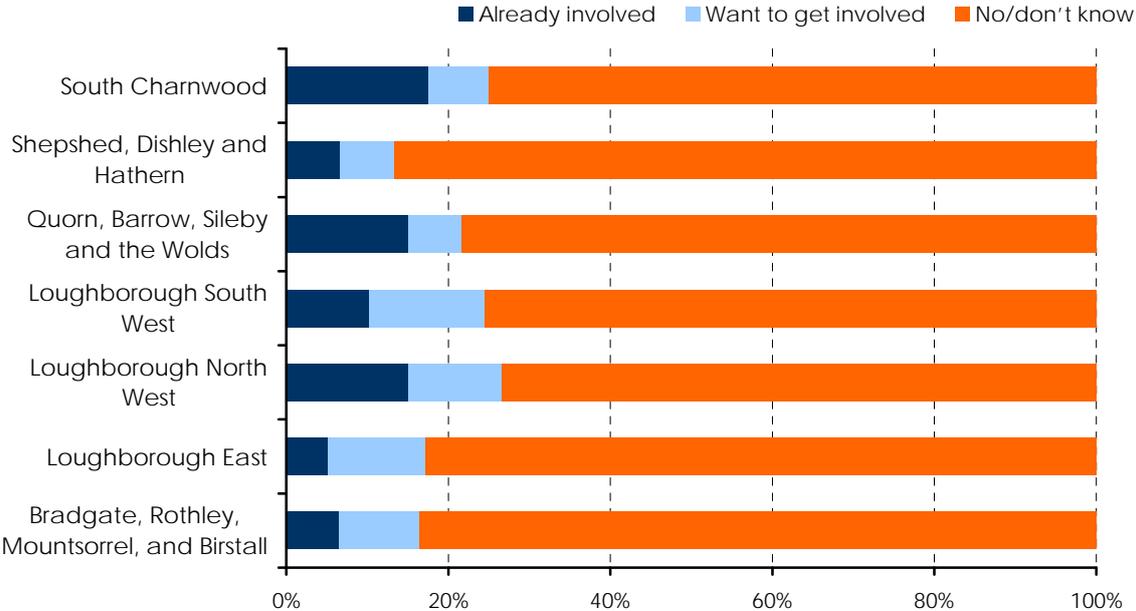


Figure 34