



Insight through vision



Report on the 2015 Residents Consultation

Prepared by CR Market Research

November 2015

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Introduction

This report presents an analysis of the 2015 edition of the Charnwood Borough Council Residents Survey. As in our previous exercises, in 2011 and 2013, CR Market Research is pleased to present our analysis of the information that has been gathered and hope the insight we have provided will help improve the Council's understanding of the current issues affecting residents of the borough.

Although there have been some small changes to the structure of the questionnaire on this occasion, we have provided comparisons with previous results where we can. We are delighted to present this analysis and hope that Charnwood Borough Council will find this report both interesting and informative.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Collin', is positioned above the printed name.

Rose Collin
Sales & Marketing Director
CR Market Research

Key Findings

The overriding message from many of the themes covered in this survey is that residents appear to be relatively less satisfied than they were two years ago. In some cases, the changes reported are not significant and simply reflect different sample groups; on other occasions the changes are statistically significant and will be areas the Council may want to explore in more detail.

Key findings include:

1. The percentage of residents that say they are 'very happy' living in the borough has fallen from 48% to 34%, and overall happiness levels have dropped from 94% to 87%.
2. Residents priorities are increasingly concentrating around a small number of themes, with the top three of safety, cleanliness/tidiness of the local area and rubbish collection standards all increasing as priorities since 2013. In particular, 'Cleanliness and tidiness in my local area' has increased significantly as a priority, from 30% in 2013 to 49% in 2015
3. Satisfaction with individual themes has improved for only four of the twelve factors since the last survey. There has been a significant decline in one particular area – the availability of housing that residents can afford to rent
4. Overall, 82% of residents are satisfied with the way CBC delivers its services (85% in 2013). Around one in eight residents are 'very satisfied'. Just more than 15% say they are dissatisfied, compared with 12% in the last survey.
5. There is a weaker sense of community cohesion, with 67% saying they felt their local area was a place where different backgrounds got on well together. This represents a statistically significant fall on the 78% reported in 2013.
6. In terms of channel preferences, there is a clear increase in the proportion of residents that would use the Council's website (from 22% to 37% in 2015). There has been a converse, albeit smaller, decrease in those opting for telephone as a preferred channel.
7. Similarly, there is now a much greater interest in using the website as means of receiving communication from the Council. Traditional 'hard copy' media such as magazines and posters are less popular, although leaflets remain the most preferred method.
8. Only 12% of residents feel it is easy to influence local decision making, down slightly on 2013.
9. Finally, residents were asked if they would be interested in participating in volunteering activity. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is more interest in getting involved in things like customer panels than there is in active volunteering.

Project Background

Charnwood Borough Council commissioned CR Market Research to conduct an on-line consultation exercise with residents of the borough during the period July to October 2015. This repeats similar exercises conducted in 2011 and 2013, and we have provided comparative analysis with previous surveys wherever possible.

As in previous years, the research has a number of key objectives:

- To update some of the indicators contained in the 2011 and 2013 Residents Survey.
- To provide insight for the Business 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).

A total of 1,078 residents completed the survey in 2015. This compares to 806 in 2013.

We have also gathered the postcode of each respondent. This has been converted to ward level data and mapped (see page 9). In 2013, we aggregated the ward level data to Area Forums in order to provide some geographical breakdown. We understand these Forums no longer exist and that type of analysis is no longer applicable. We have included one ward-level map, identifying priority themes for each area, but this needs to be treated with caution due to the sample sizes involved.

This year, we have also been asked to identify how many respondents participated from designated priority areas. This is detailed on page 9.

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	
15 and under	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	44	4.1%	45	4.2%
16-18	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
20-29	6	0.6%	10	0.9%	0	0.0%	16	1.5%
30-39	53	4.9%	24	2.2%	0	0.0%	77	7.1%
40-49	79	7.3%	49	4.5%	4	0.4%	132	12.2%
50-59	91	8.4%	67	6.2%	1	0.1%	159	14.7%
60-69	127	11.8%	103	9.6%	1	0.1%	231	21.4%
70-79	118	10.9%	147	13.6%	1	0.1%	266	24.7%
80+	35	3.2%	59	5.5%	1	0.1%	95	8.8%
Prefer not to say	8	0.7%	4	0.4%	44	4.1%	56	5.2%
Grand Total	518	48.1%	464	43.0%	96	8.9%	1,078	100.0%

Ethnicity

White British	889	82.5%
White Irish	10	0.9%
Other White	34	3.2%
Multiple heritage black African and White	2	0.5%
Multiple heritage Asian and White	1	0.1%
Multiple heritage black Caribbean and White	3	
Mixed Other	0	0.0%
Black British	0	0.0%
Other Black background	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British Indian	15	1.4%
Asian or Asian British other	3	0.3%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller	1	0.1%
Other ethnic group	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	120	11.1%
Total	1,078	100.0%

Religion

Christian	570	52.9%
Hindu	15	1.4%
Muslim	1	0.1%
Sikh	0	0.0%
Buddhism	6	0.6%
Other	28	2.6%
No religious belief	291	27.0%
Prefer not to say	167	15.5%
Total	1,078	100.0%

Disability (respondents could tick more than one category)

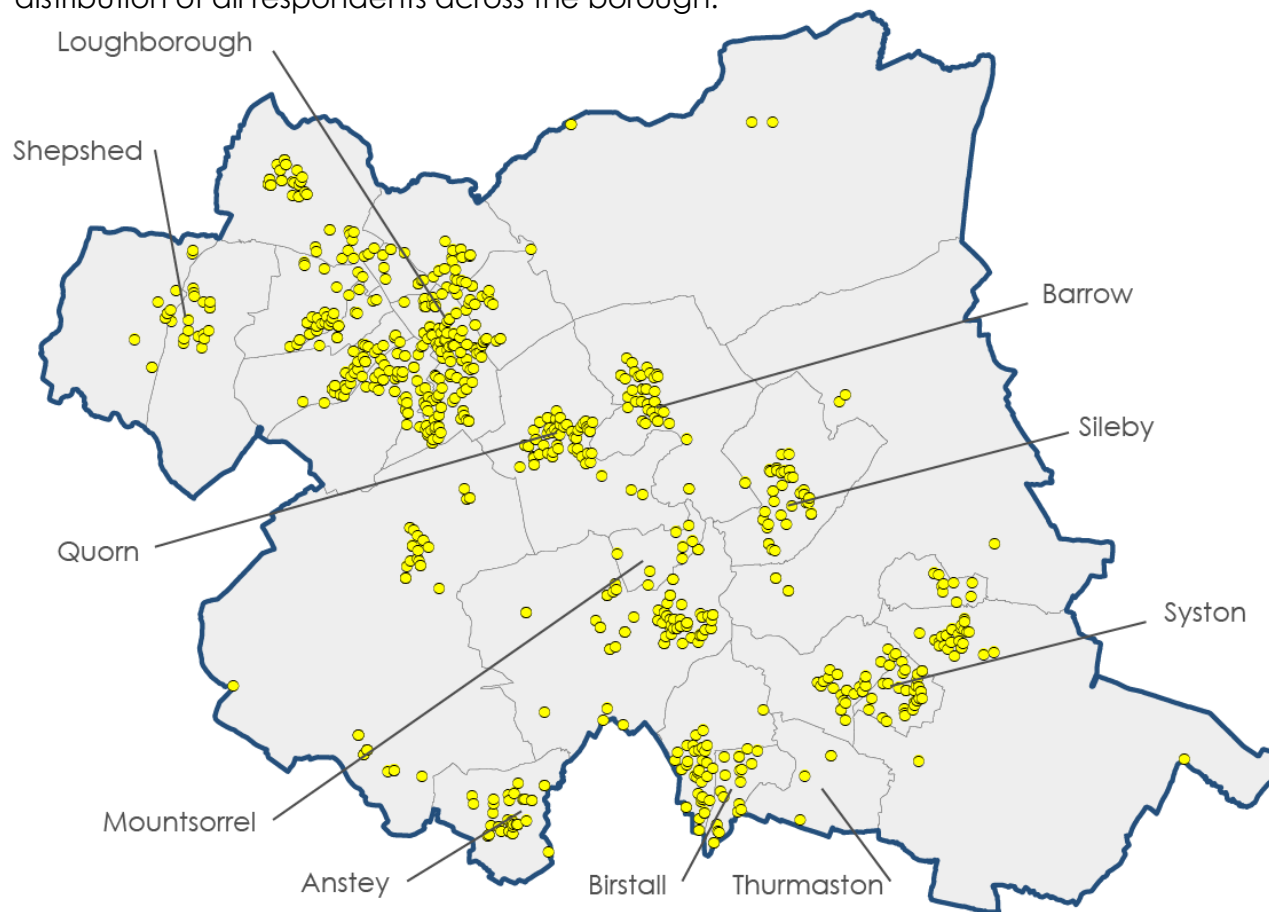
None	784	72.7%
Learning disability	2	0.2%
Sensory impairment	27	2.5%
Longstanding health problem	67	6.2%
Mental health problem	14	1.3%
Physical disability	74	6.9%
Other	20	1.9%
Prefer not to say	120	11.1%

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual/Straight	833	77.3%
Bisexual	16	1.5%
Gay	8	0.7%
Lesbian	4	0.4%
Prefer not to say	217	20.1%
Total	1,078	100.0%

Wards

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.

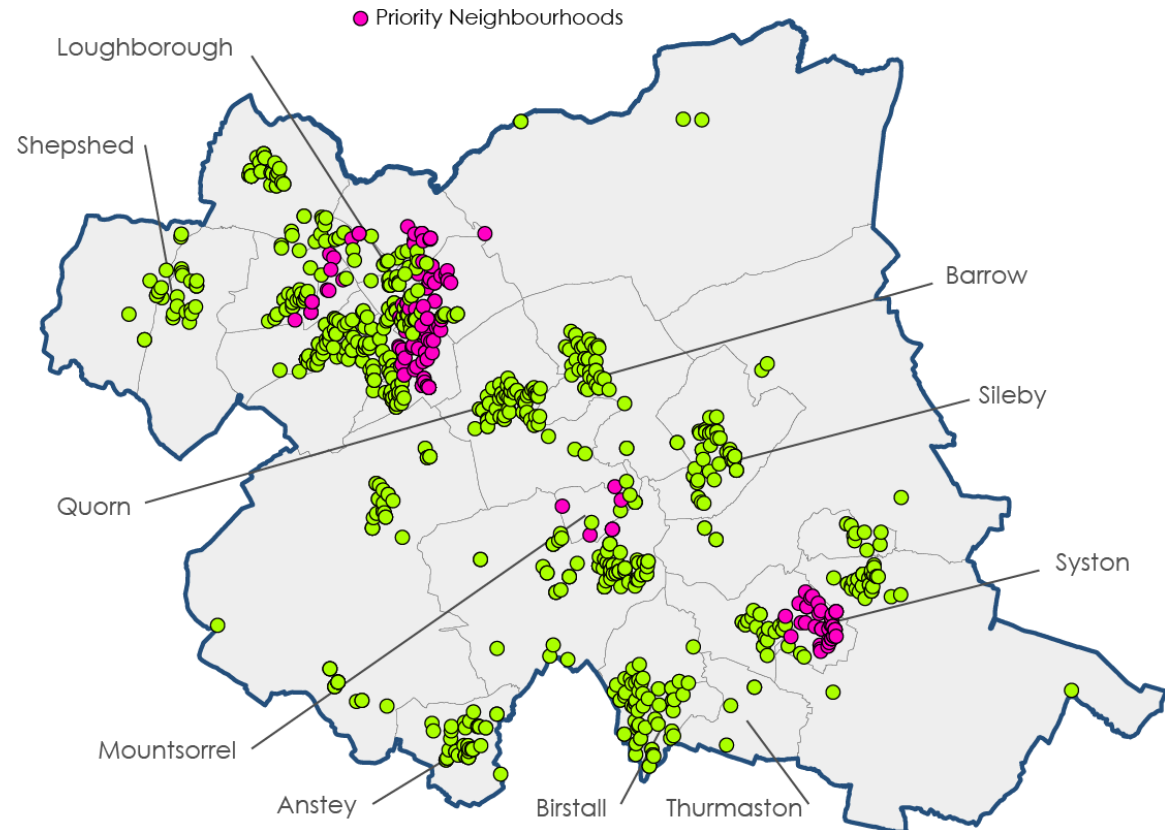


Ward	Count
Anstey	54
Barrow and Sileby West	51
Birstall Wanlip	39
Birstall Watermead	22
East Goscote	10
Forest Bradgate	41
Loughborough Ashby	14
Loughborough Dishley and Hathern	53
Loughborough Garendon	31
Loughborough Hastings	31
Loughborough Lemington	22
Loughborough Nanpantan	49
Loughborough Outwoods	50
Loughborough Shelthorpe	80
Loughborough Southfields	64
Loughborough Storer	9
Mountsorrel	8
Queniborough	34
Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle	78
Rothley and Thurcaston	91
Shepshed East	18
Shepshed West	12
Sileby	50
System East	39
System West	32
The Wolds	4
Thurmaston	4
Wreake Villages	7
Incomplete or incorrect postcode	81

Priority Areas

Following the update in 2010 of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation Charnwood's five Priority Neighbourhoods were confirmed. These Neighbourhoods are predominately in areas of social housing where income deprivation is significant and crime and ASB are often common occurrences. The residents of these areas are often disengaged from regular statutory services and are often reluctant to participate in consultations and feedback. The Council has helped to build improved community engagement and has seen an increase in contact particularly through the Community Hubs and resident groups. Officers have encouraged people to have their say and have supported the various consultations where possible.

A total of 170 respondents that reside in these Priority Neighbourhoods participated in the survey, representing 16% of all respondents.



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.

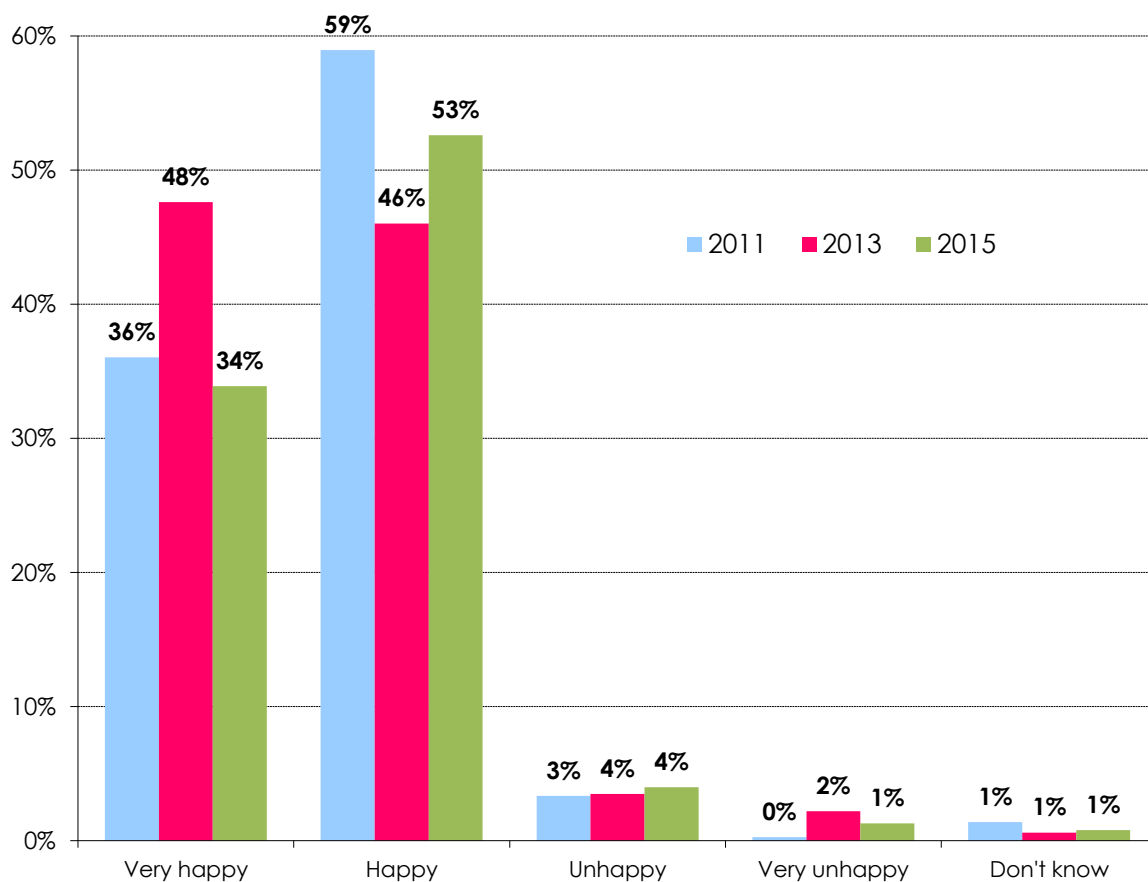


Figure 1

Nearly nine in ten respondents (87%) regard themselves as at least 'happy' living within the borough. This is down on the 2013 figure of 94% and, based on the sample sizes we used, represents a statistically significant fall. Of particular interest will be the drop in the proportion that are 'very happy', from 48% to 34%.

Around five per cent of respondents are unhappy, similar to 2013 (6%),

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 twelve 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.

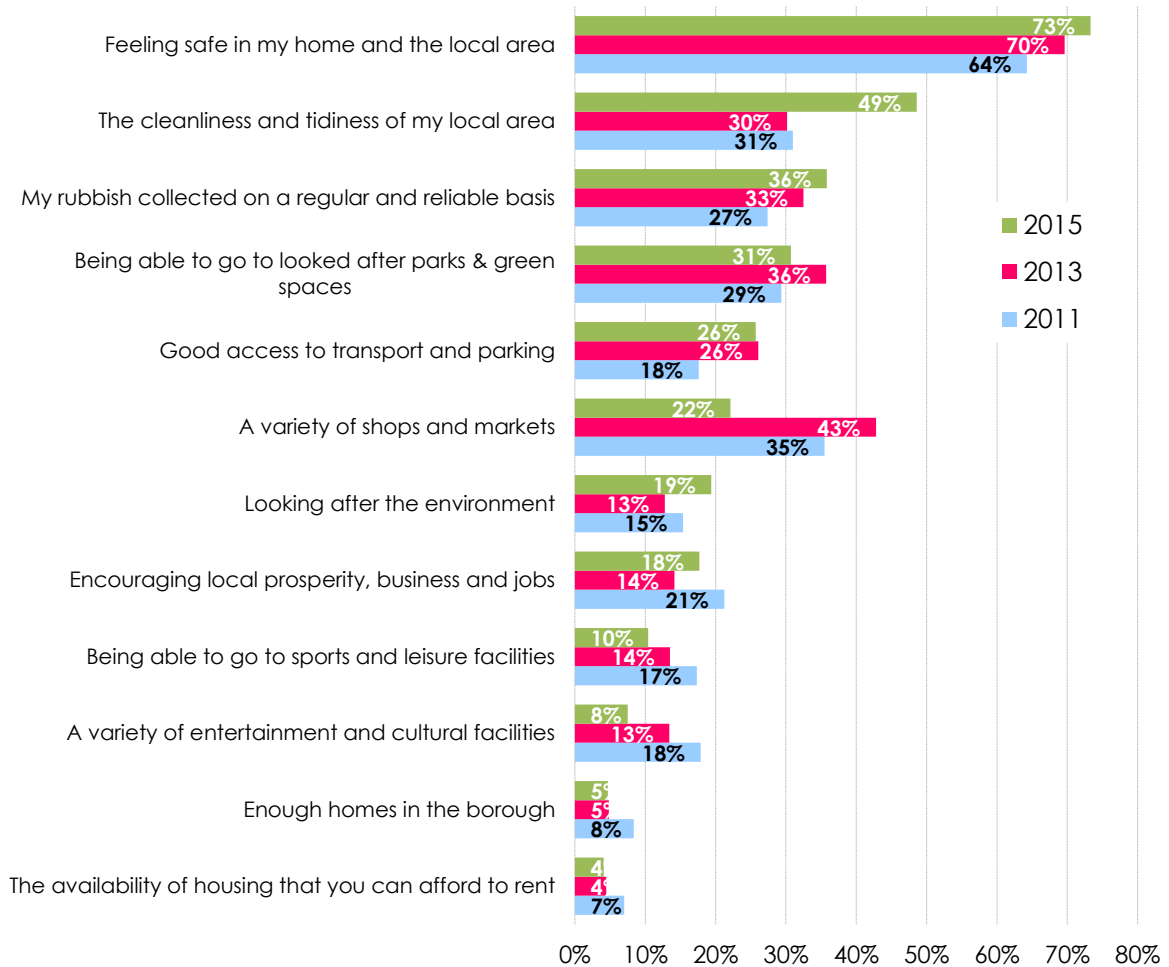
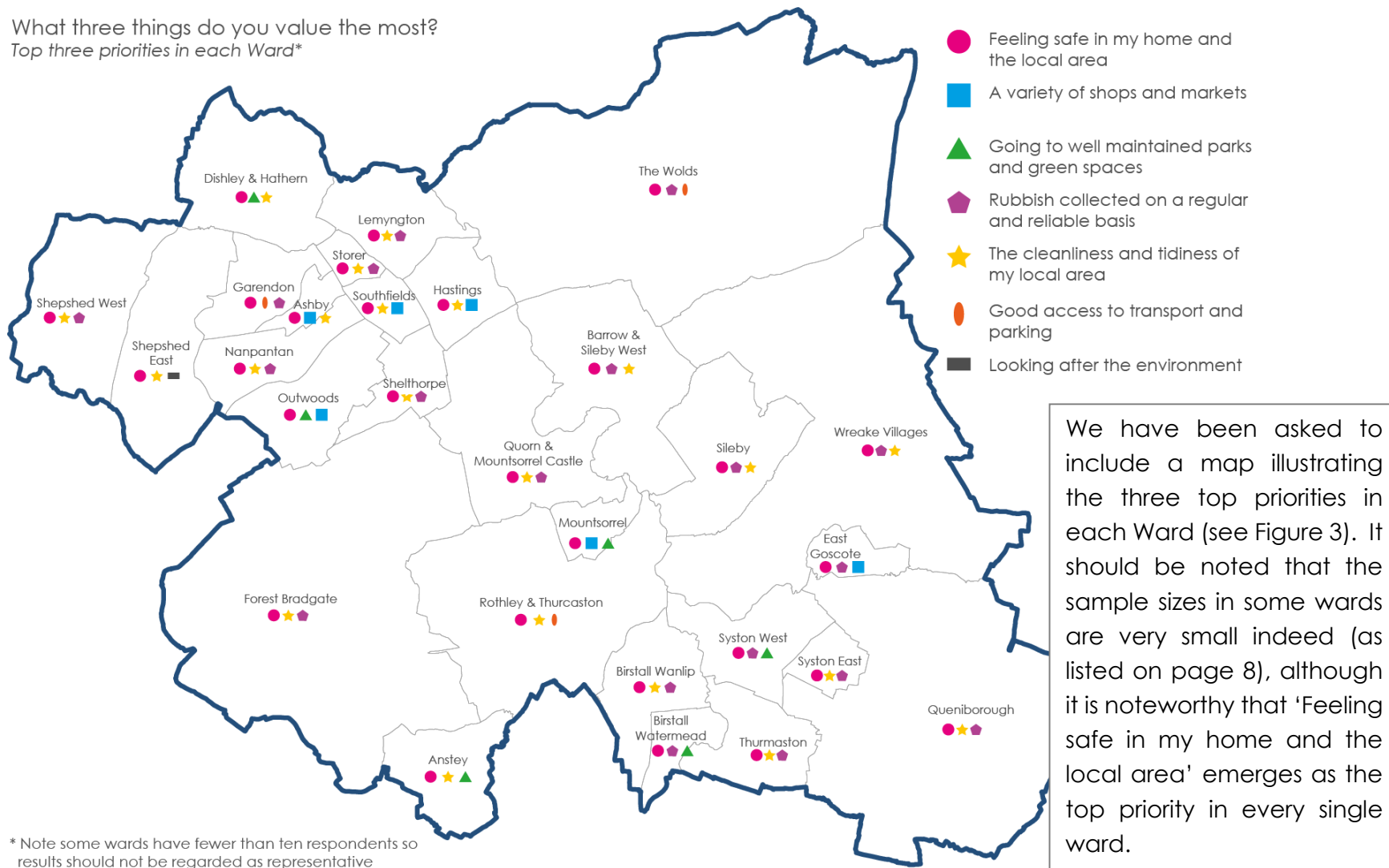


Figure 2

As in 2011 and 2013, the most valued factor is personal safety, with nearly three quarters 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 'Cleanliness and tidiness in my local area'; this has increased significantly from 30% in 2013 to 49% in 2015.

In 2015, it appears that views are stronger around a smaller number of priority themes, rather than spread across a large number. This year, the three themes with the highest percentages averaged 53% each, compared to 44% in the last survey.

What three things do you value the most?
Top three priorities in each Ward*



We have been asked to include a map illustrating the three top priorities in each Ward (see Figure 3). It should be noted that the sample sizes in some wards are very small indeed (as listed on page 8), although it is noteworthy that 'Feeling safe in my home and the local area' emerges as the top priority in every single ward.

* Note some wards have fewer than ten respondents so results should not be regarded as representative

Figure 3

How satisfied are Charnwood residents?

Using the same list of twelve 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 in 2015.

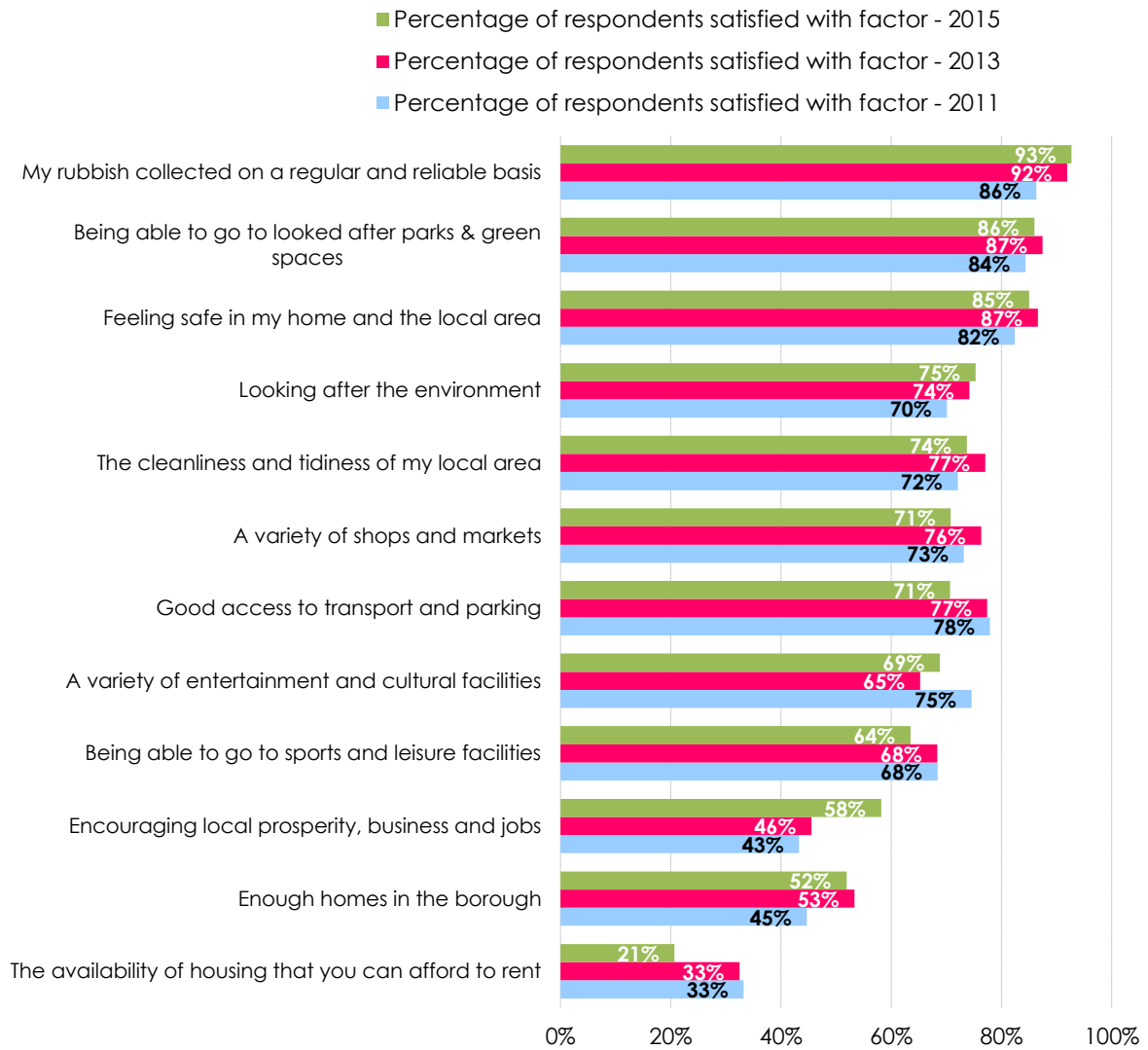


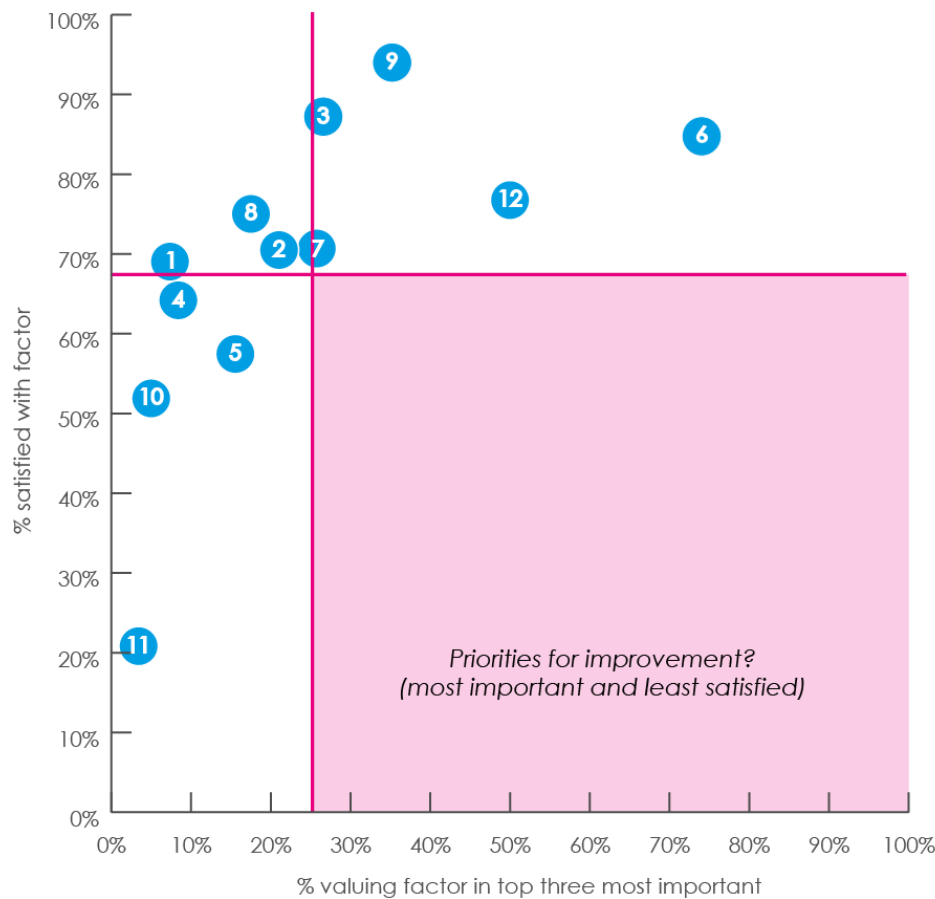
Figure 4

The broad pattern of satisfaction is similar to the one we observed in 2013. However, only four of the twelve themes have seen an improvement in satisfaction since the last survey. Satisfaction for the three key factors (safety, parks/green spaces and rubbish collections) remains high at around 90% for each.

There has been a significant decline in one particular area – the availability of housing that residents can afford to rent.

Priorities versus Satisfaction

A useful piece of analysis is review the relationship between these two sets of figures; importance and satisfaction. Specifically, we seek to identify whether factors that are considered to be important in making somewhere a good place to live also scored well in terms of satisfaction. Figure 5 presents 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 Encouraging local prosperity, business and jobs
- 6 Feeling safe in my home and the local area
- 7 Good access to transport and parking
- 8 Looking after the environment
- 9 My rubbish collected on a regular and reliable basis
- 10 The availability of housing that you can afford to buy
- 11 The availability of housing that you can afford to rent
- 12 The cleanliness and tidiness of my local area

With this type of analysis any themes in the lower right quadrant would potentially be areas for improvement. These are factors above average in importance but below average in satisfaction (the pink lines denote average scores on each axis). As Figure 5 demonstrates, there are no factors within this part of the diagram, suggesting that there are no significant areas of concern for Charnwood to address. As in 2013, the factor closest to entering this quadrant is 'good access to transport and parking'; if CBC were seeking an area to prioritise, this might be a valid option.

Figure 5

Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to add comments and provide more detail behind the answers they gave to these questions. Some examples are listed below to provide an indication of the type of issue that causes concern for Charnwood residents. More detail is available in the raw dataset.

"I am lucky enough to buy my own home, but I am aware that there are not enough council flats. And I may need to live in sheltered accommodation or a home when I am old." (Loughborough Hastings)

"Would like to see more high street/higher end shops in the area, I think we have enough takeaway, charity and "pound" style shops locally. Would like to see less empty shops." (Ward not provided)

"Town is looking tatty; lots of empty shops altogether run down." (Loughborough Lemyngton)

"A complete lack leisure facilities in Shepshed underlines a lack of care shown by the council towards Shepshed." (Shepshed West)

"The markets are fantastic and should be more of a selling point for the town." (Loughborough Lemyngton)

"Access to green spaces is rapidly being eroded by poor planning policies. Planners do not take any notice of residents; applications go on for years; the allocation of conservation status means nothing." (Ward not provided)

"Too many coffee shops / cafes etc. Not enough support for community groups. The assumption that everyone has access to a car when positioning larger shops etc." (Loughborough Hastings)

"Being senior citizens we do need to know that our wellbeing is considered when decisions are made which affect us." (Sileby)

"I am very proactive in reporting anything, bins not emptied etc, rubbish around streets, dustbins left out on pavements for days and days and I have to say everything I have every reported is dealt with very swiftly, thank you. The range of waste and recycling is brilliant as is the collection; I compare it to my daughter's in Buckinghamshire and hers is literally 'rubbish' (no pun intended!) by comparison, long may it continue." (Shepshed East)

Overall satisfaction

As in 2013, residents were asked to state how satisfied they are in overall terms with the way the Council runs things.

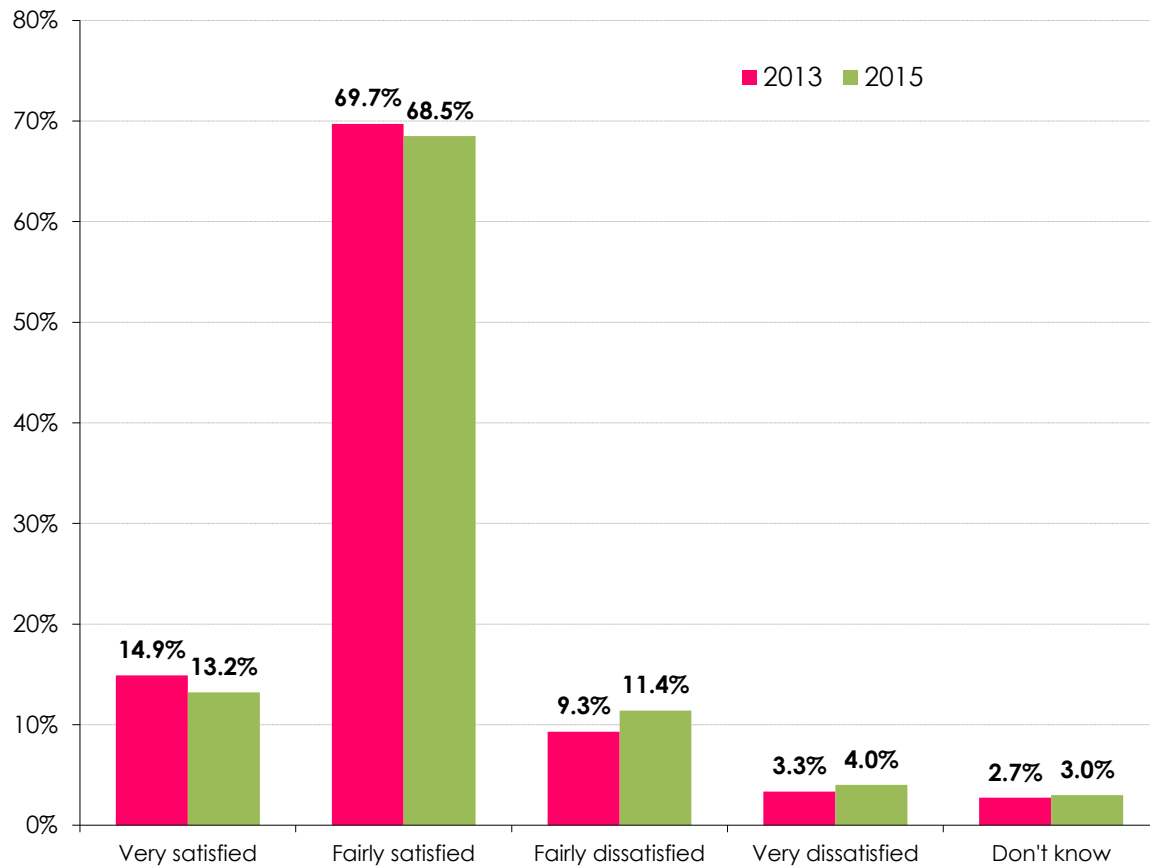


Figure 6

Figures in 2015 are almost identical to those reported in 2013. Overall, 82% of residents are satisfied with the way CBC delivers its services (85% in 2013). Around one in eight residents are 'very satisfied'. Just more than 15% say they are dissatisfied, compared with 12% in the last survey.

Are Charnwood's communities cohesive?

Residents were then asked whether they felt their local area was a place where different backgrounds got on well together. We have seen a decrease in the proportion saying 'yes' in both 2013 and 2015, falling from 78% in 2011 to 67% this year. This represents a statistically significant change, indicating we are seeing a genuine change in views on this topic and not the result of statistical artefact.

The percentage saying 'no' to this question has not changed significantly, meaning we are seeing a shift from 'yes' to 'don't know'.

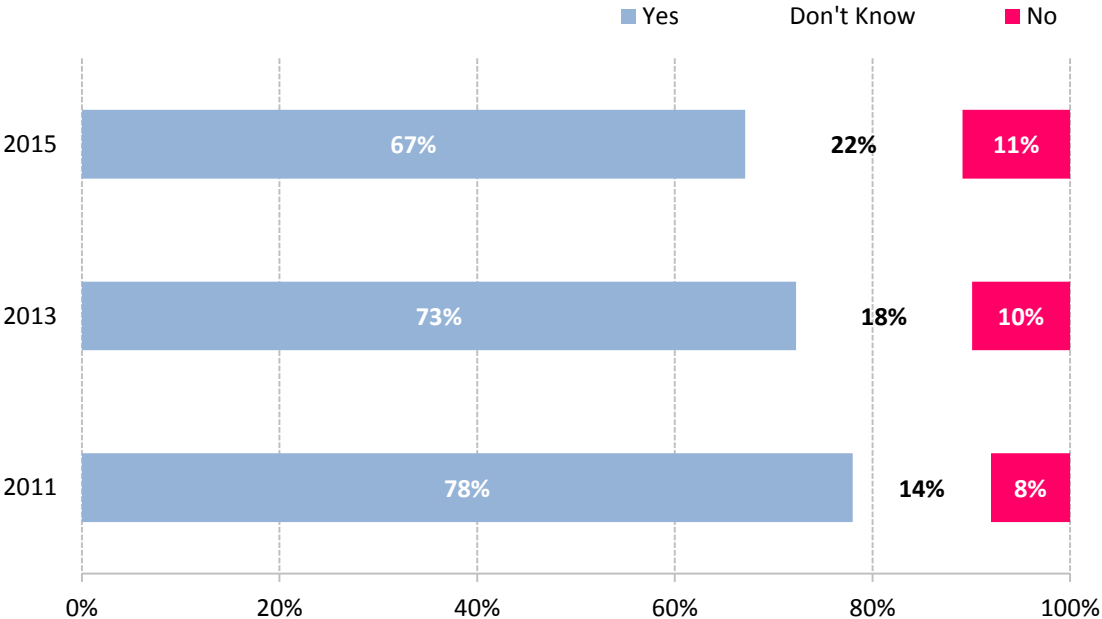


Figure 7

Finding out about and accessing council services

The next question examined whether residents felt they could easily find out about and access the services provided by Charnwood Borough Council.

Figure 8 presents the percentage of respondents that feel it is easy / not easy at the borough level.

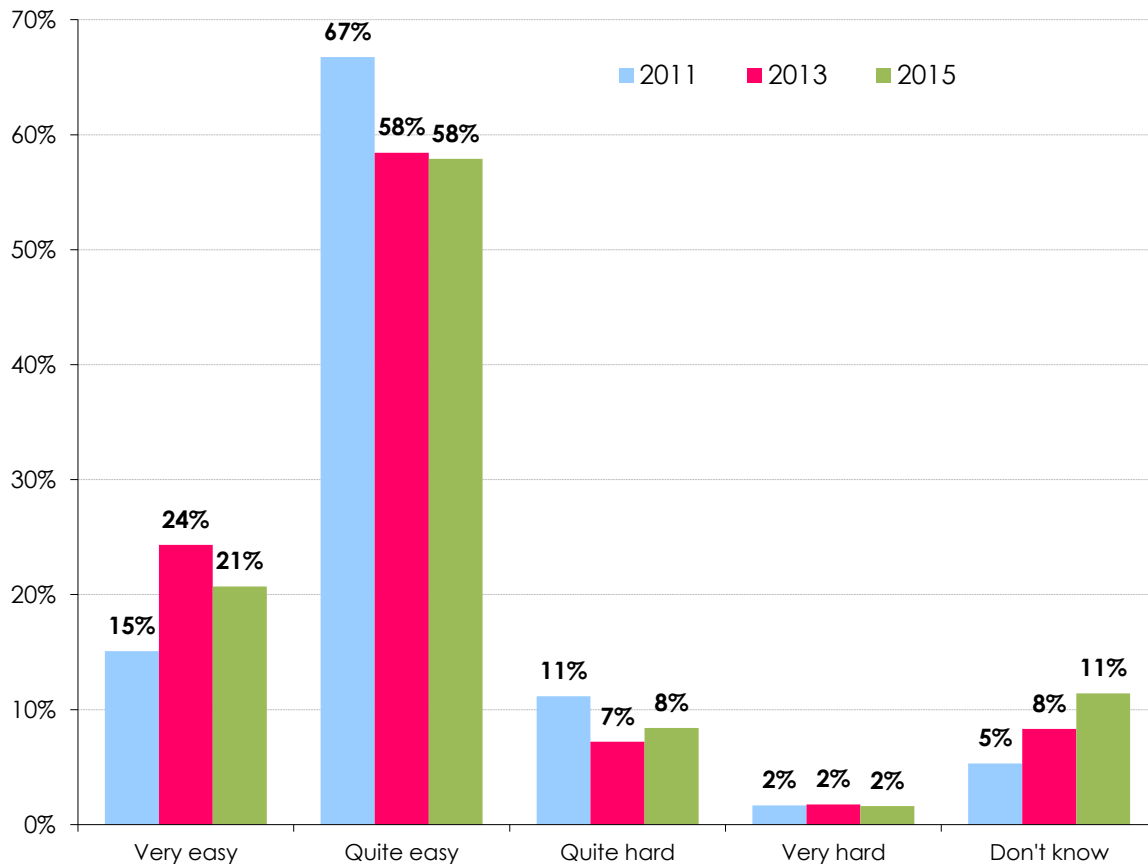


Figure 8

Overall, 79% of respondents feel it is at least 'easy' to find out about services provided by CBC. This is very similar to the comparative figure for 2013, 82%, although there has been a fall decrease in the percentage rating this as 'very easy' since 2013.

Just 10% felt it was hard to find out the information, but we have seen an increasing proportion of respondents saying they do not know, implying a falling share of residents are finding cause to try and access Council services.

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.

“Accessing the correct part of the organisation by phone is convoluted and unintuitive. Staff take a long time to respond.” (Sileby resident, aged 45-54)

“Because we have no amenities that are local for us, we have to use cars or public transport, no parking facilities if we want to shop in Shepshed unless you park at the supermarket which then makes it hard for the supermarket shoppers to shop as the car park is full. No leisure facilities for teenagers to go etc.” (Shepshed West resident, aged 45-54)

“Difficult to know what is going on without internet. Too much reliance on that and lack of face to face.” (Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle resident, aged 55-64)

“It is not very clear; you have to go through quite a few webpages to actually get to where you want to get to. Also if you want to talk specifically and have asked for this to a department through the call centre they do not put you forward, and just give you vivid answers really puts you off from contacting the council.” (Loughborough Southfields resident, aged 20-29)

“I have no idea what local facilities there are and lived here for 2 years.” (Birstall Wanlip resident, aged 25-34)

“I would have no idea where to start. What information there is tends to be centred around Loughborough. The Syston end tends to be neglected.” (Syston West resident, age not provided)

“Most services are centralised, mainly in Loughborough. Other areas of Charnwood are largely forgotten about. To catch a bus to my local leisure centre in Mountsorrel takes almost an hour. I could drive there in 10 minutes. This is because the bus routes are based on getting to and from Leicester and to and from Loughborough. Where bus services exist between neighbouring villages they only run every few hours meaning you either have to walk back, pay for a taxi, or wait hours.” (Anstey resident, aged 35-44)

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 9 presents the results; figures do not add up to 100% as respondents were able to choose more than one option. This year, for the first time, respondents were able to choose 'social media' as an option.

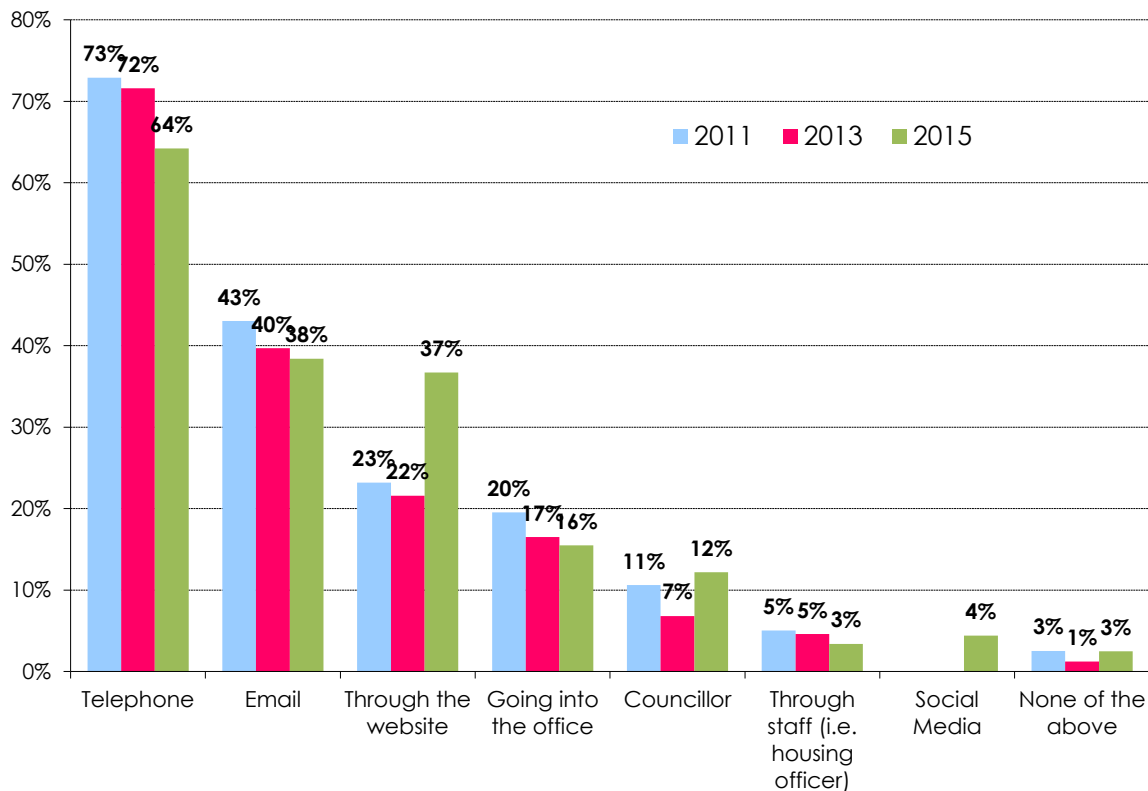


Figure 9

The same broad pattern of preferences appears, with channel types in the same ranking order as in 2013. However, there is a clear increase in the proportion of residents that would use the Council's website (from 22% to 37% in 2015). There has been a converse, albeit smaller, decrease in those opting for telephone as a preferred channel.

Four in ten respondents said they would use email; similar to 2013 but it is perhaps interesting to note there hasn't been an increase in preferences for this method over the past four years.

One in six would use the face-to-face channel via a council office.

Are residents satisfied with their experience when contacting the council?

During the past twelve months, 76% of respondents said that they had contacted the council. Of these, the notable majority of residents (77%) are satisfied with the experience they have had when contacting Charnwood Borough Council. This is similar to the figure taken from the 2011 and 2013 reports (83% and 80% respectively).

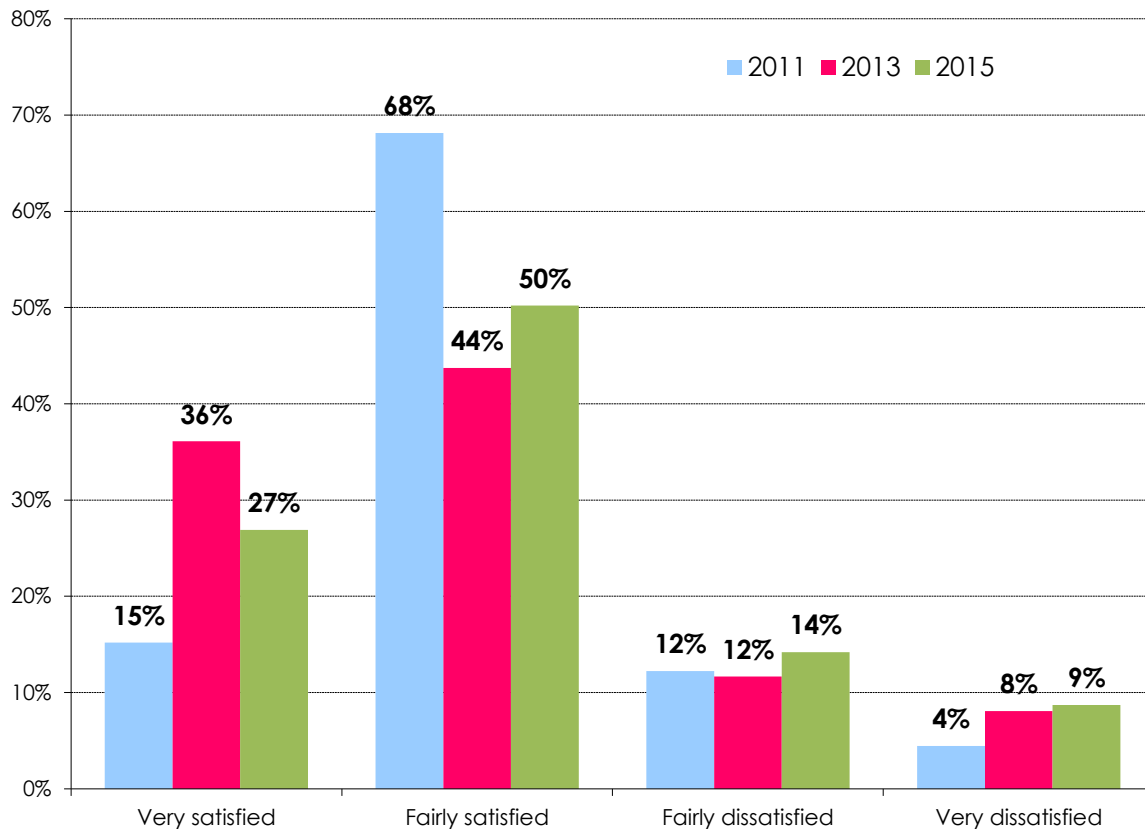


Figure 10 (n=815)

Although overall satisfaction levels are similar to 2013, there has been a shift within this away from the 'very satisfied' end of the scale towards 'fairly satisfied'.

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, we see continued change in residents' preferences. As identified in Figure 9, there is now a much greater interest in using the website as means of receiving communication, leap-frogging emails and the Council magazine in terms of rankings. Traditional 'hard copy' media such as magazines and posters are less popular, although leaflets remain the most preferred method.

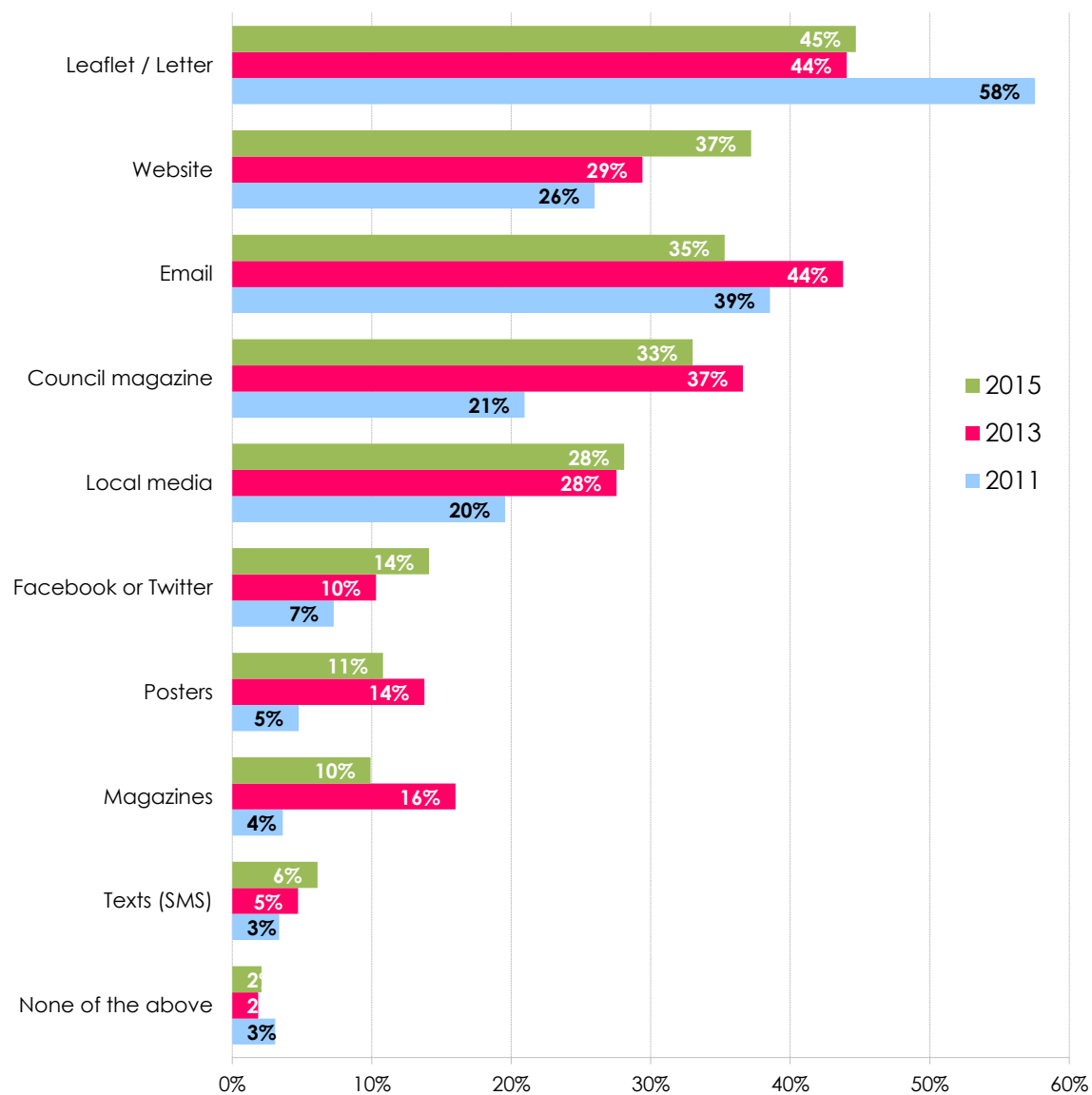


Figure 11

Social media is still relatively unpopular compared with other channels, although it continues to increase each year.

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 12 presents the headline results.

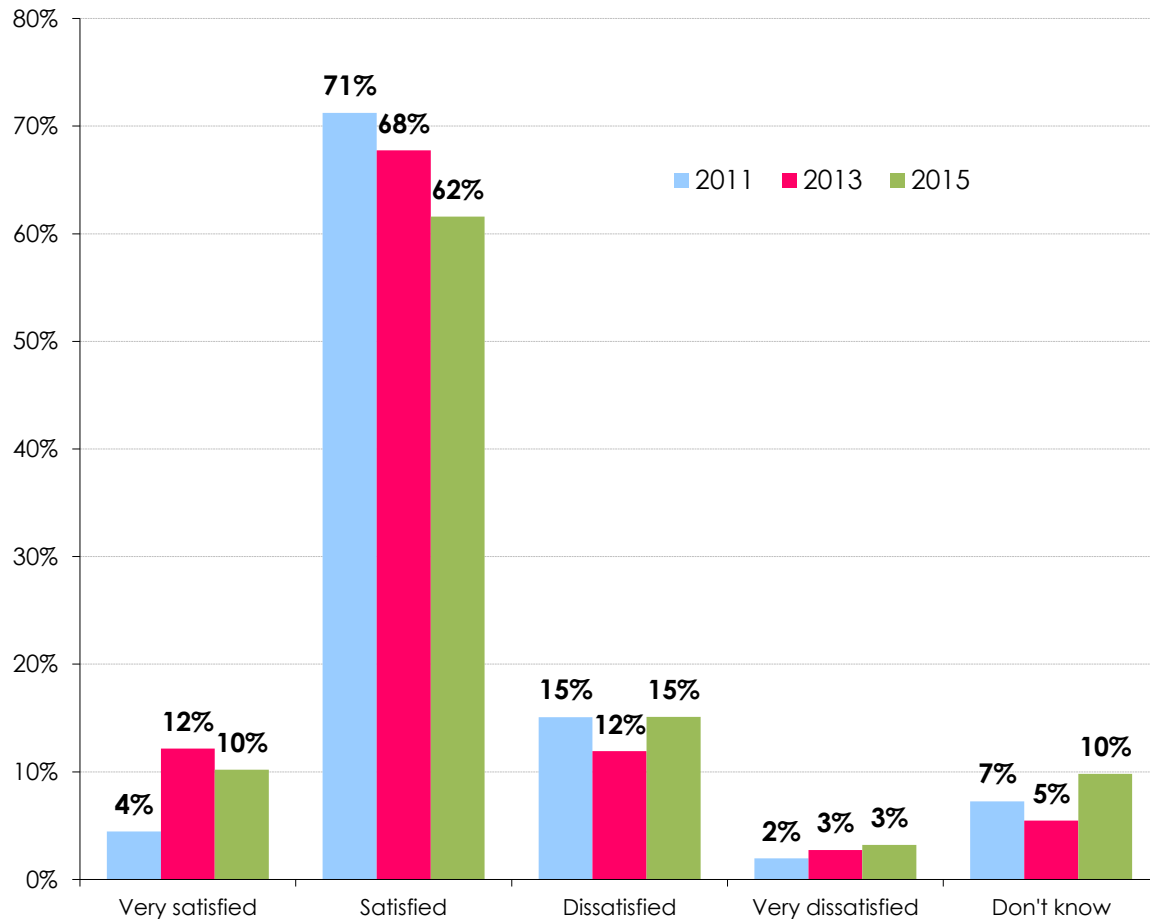


Figure 12

In 2013 we reported that 80% of respondents said they were happy with the way the Council communicated with them. This year the figure has fallen to 72%, representing a statistically significant fall in satisfaction.

The percentage that say they are dissatisfied has not increased that much, from 15% to 18%, but there has been an increase in the 'don't know' category.

Are residents happy with how CBC spends council tax?

Respondents were then asked how satisfied they were with how their council tax is spent.

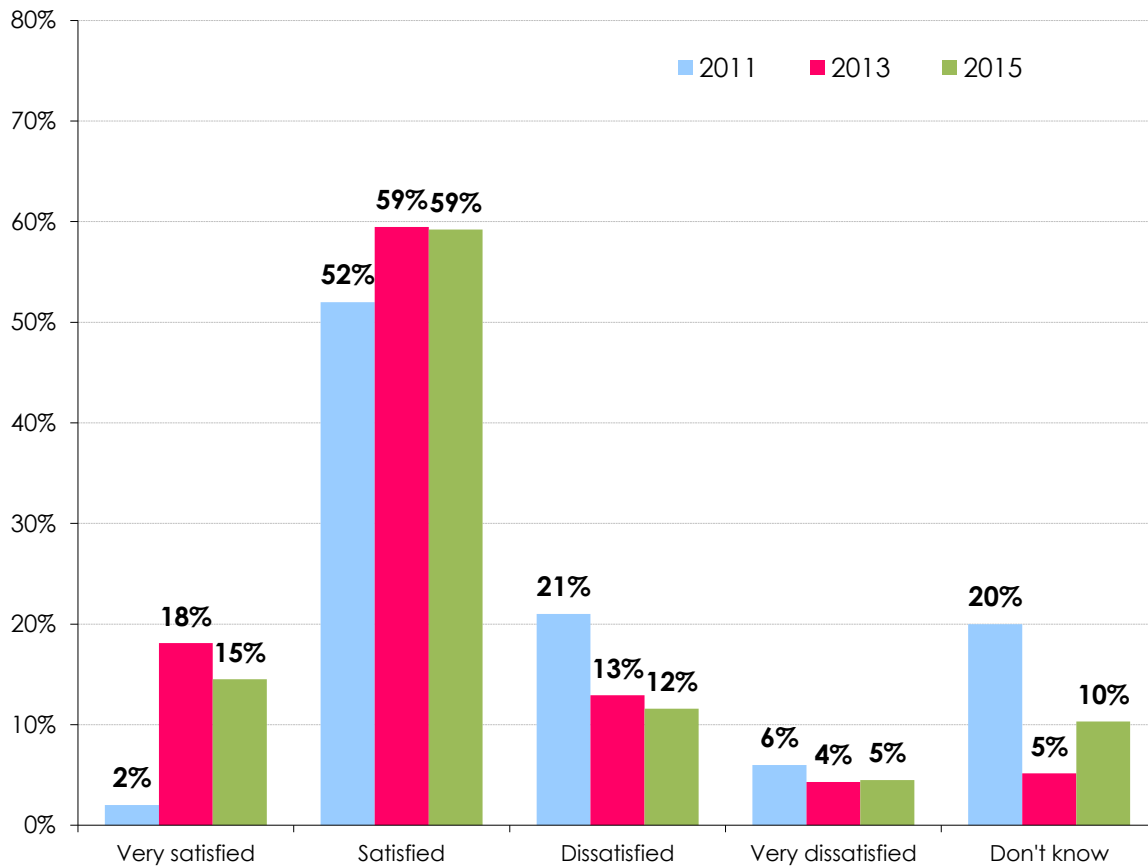


Figure 13

Again, there has been a reported decrease in the proportion of respondents that are satisfied with the way in which council tax is spent, from 77% to 74%, although on this occasion the change is not statistically significant.

There has actually also been a small decrease in the share that are dissatisfied, meaning an increase in the proportion that say they do not know.

Do residents feel they can influence decision making?

This is a theme that has been assessed for a number of years, even prior to the current version of the survey. Residents are asked whether they feel it is easy to influence decisions that might affect them.

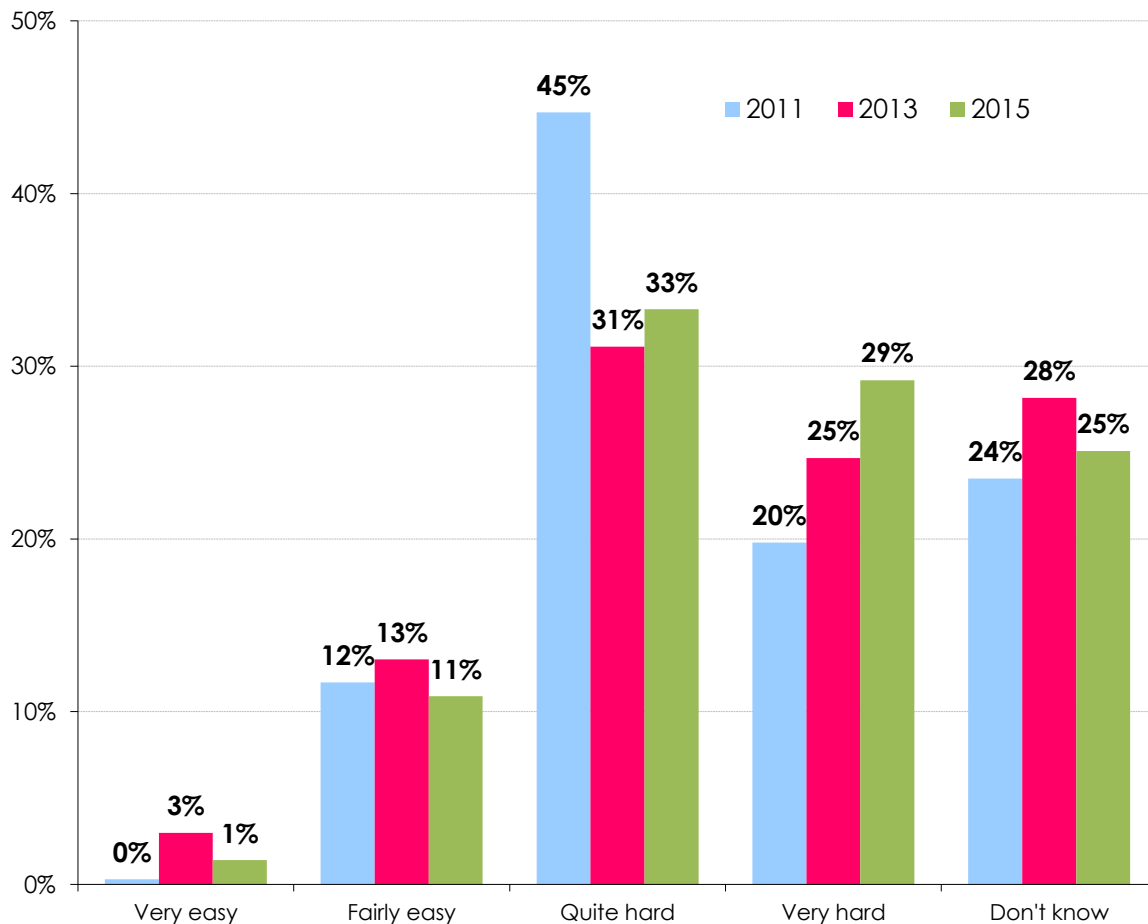


Figure 14

There has been a small decrease in the percentage of respondents that feel it is easy to influence local decision making, from 16% to 12%. As in 2013 and 2011, most residents still feel it is hard to sway these issues. Over the course of the three surveys, the percentage that feel it is very hard to influence local decision making has risen from 20% to 29%, a statistically significant increase.

Respondents were asked to provide more detail behind their answer to the previous question. Here are some of the comments made.

“Although residents have opportunities to fill in surveys, attend public meetings, have their say etc, it feels like we are not really listened to in the end, and things happen regardless.” (Loughborough Garendon resident)

“Anstey feels out of Charnwood as were quite away from Loughborough and so near to Leicester, so it feels like we are not part of the loop.” (Anstey resident)

“Decisions are taken behind closed doors that are rarely changed as a result of public opinion. Many believe, as I do that, the Council is run by a cabal that refuses to listen to arguments contrary to its own interests. Democracy - what democracy?” (Loughborough Dishley and Hathern resident)

“it seems that when people ring or call into Council Offices things still do not get done which is very frustrating indeed.” (Syston West resident)

“CBC Planning Department consistently over-rides local wishes and also the parish council. Quorn was a proper country village when we moved here in 1980. It is now an ugly, small town with an inadequate supply of local services. It is Charnwood Planning Department that is almost entirely to blame for this.” (Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle resident)

“Council do not listen to the general public! Seems they do what house builders want them to do.” (Sileby resident)

“Despite massive objections by people especially the core strategy the council went ahead, backed down, didn't support the residents and we are about to be hit with massive house building, destruction of green spaces and traffic gridlock as of result of the selfishness, decisions already made and totally apathy by this corrupt council.” (Loughborough Dishley and Hathern resident)

“I think the Council has a planned path to follow and isn't influenced much by opinions from residents.” (Loughborough Outwoods resident)

Do residents feel they can get involved in decision making?

An associated question then asks residents how satisfied they were with the opportunity to get involved in local decision making.

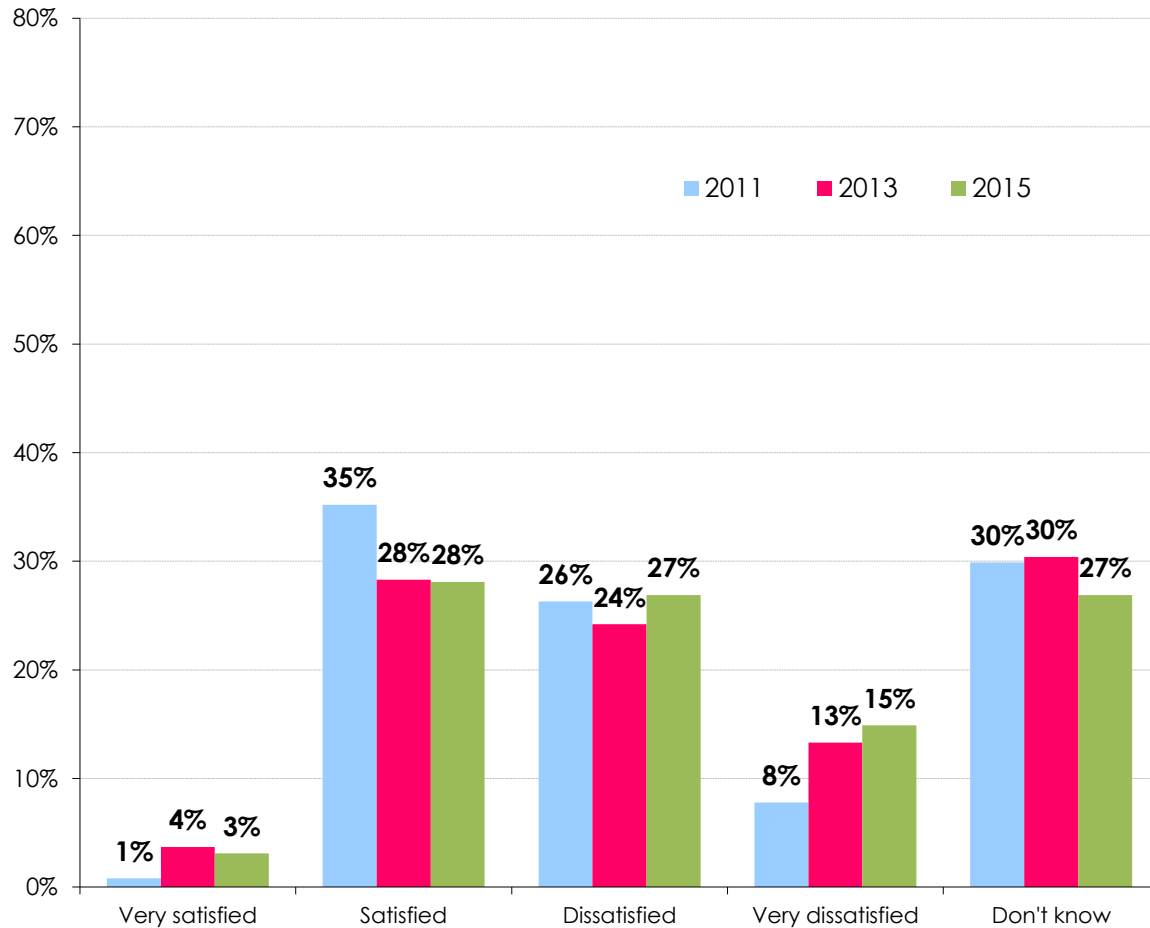


Figure 15

Responses to this question are almost identical to those reported in 2013, with 31% of stating that they are satisfied with the opportunity to get involved in local decision-making. This represents a small but insignificant decrease on the last survey (32%).

Volunteering

The final set of questions asked residents for their interest in getting involved in local decision making in a range of ways. Figure 16 presents the overall results for the borough as a whole, with a comparison with the 2011 and 2013 results. This year, the Area Forums option was replaced with “*Get more involved in local decision making e.g. through customer panels*” so there is no historical data for that specific option.

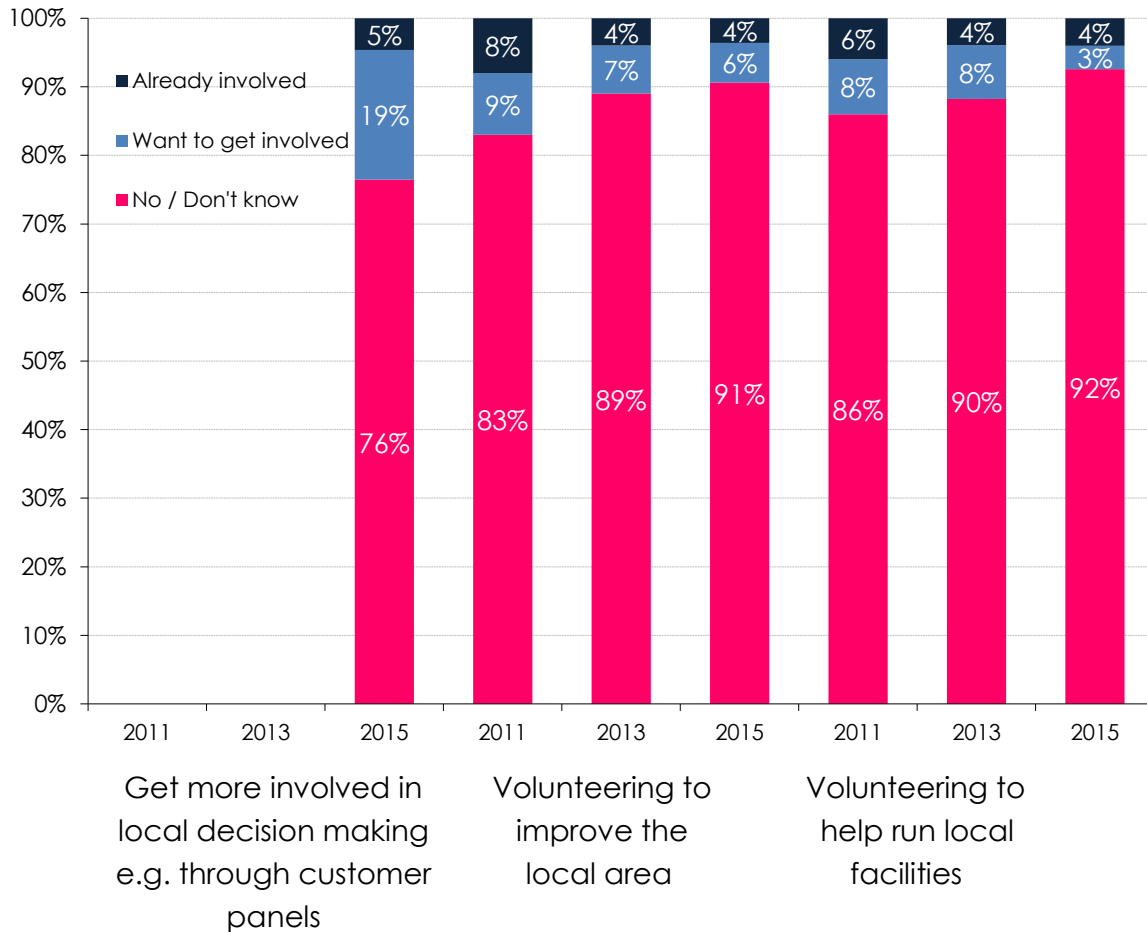


Figure 16

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is more interest in getting involved in things like customer panels than there is in active volunteering. One quarter of respondents said they are already involved this way or would be interested in doing so in the future.

Finally, we asked whether respondents would simply be willing to volunteer on a general basis. There would appear to be a pool of around 6% of residents that might be encouraged to get more involved, in addition to the 10% that say they are already involved.

Appendix – Questionnaire Completion Rates

For those respondents that commenced but not did complete the full questionnaire, Charnwood Council expressed an interest in identifying how far individual respondents were getting through the questionnaire before opting out. This might provide some insight into whether certain questions were dissuading residents from participating in the survey.

The table below details how many respondents completed each question before dropping out.

Question	Missed Question	Remaining Respondents	% of Starting Total
Started Survey	-	1,215	100.0%
Postcode (clearly incorrect/out of area)	6	1,209	99.5%
How happy are you with living in the area?	50	1,159	95.4%
What are the three most important things to you in the list below?	0	1,159	95.4%
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things?	39	1,120	92.2%
How satisfied are you with each of the following?	0	1,120	92.2%
Do you feel that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?	3	1,117	91.9%
How easy is it for you to use / access the services provided by the Council?	0	1,117	91.9%
How would you report a problem to the Council if you needed to?	5	1,112	91.5%
How would you prefer to hear about our services?	4	1,108	91.2%
How satisfied are you with how the Council keeps you informed about our services?	10	1,098	90.4%
How satisfied are you with how our portion of your council tax is spent?	0	1,098	90.4%
Do you feel it is easy to influence decisions that might affect you in Charnwood?	4	1,094	90.0%
How satisfied are you with how you can get involved in local decision making?	16	1,078	88.7%
Are you or would you like to get more involved to...	0	1,078	88.7%
Where did you find out about this survey?	0	1,078	88.7%
Final Dataset		1,078	