

## **Wiltshire People's Voice**

### **Results from The People's Voice, November 2009**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

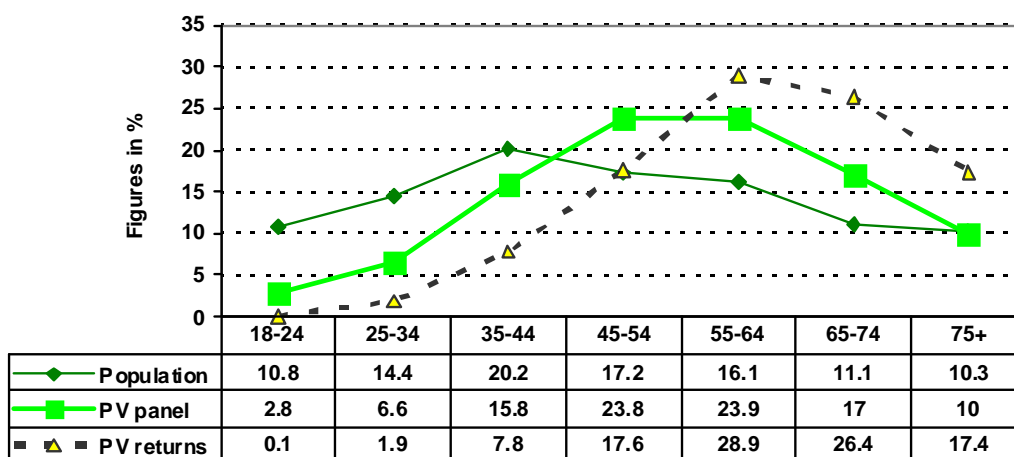
## 1.1 Background

The following report looks at the overall results across Wiltshire for the November 2009 People's Voice survey. All the figures shown in this report are shown as percentages, unless clearly stated otherwise. Analysis of the 20 community areas will be featured in a separate report.

## 1.2 Panel Make-up

As of November 2009, the People's Voice panel consists of 3,666 people from all areas of Wiltshire. The aim is to have at least 200 active panellists per community area.

Age of Panel members compared to the total population



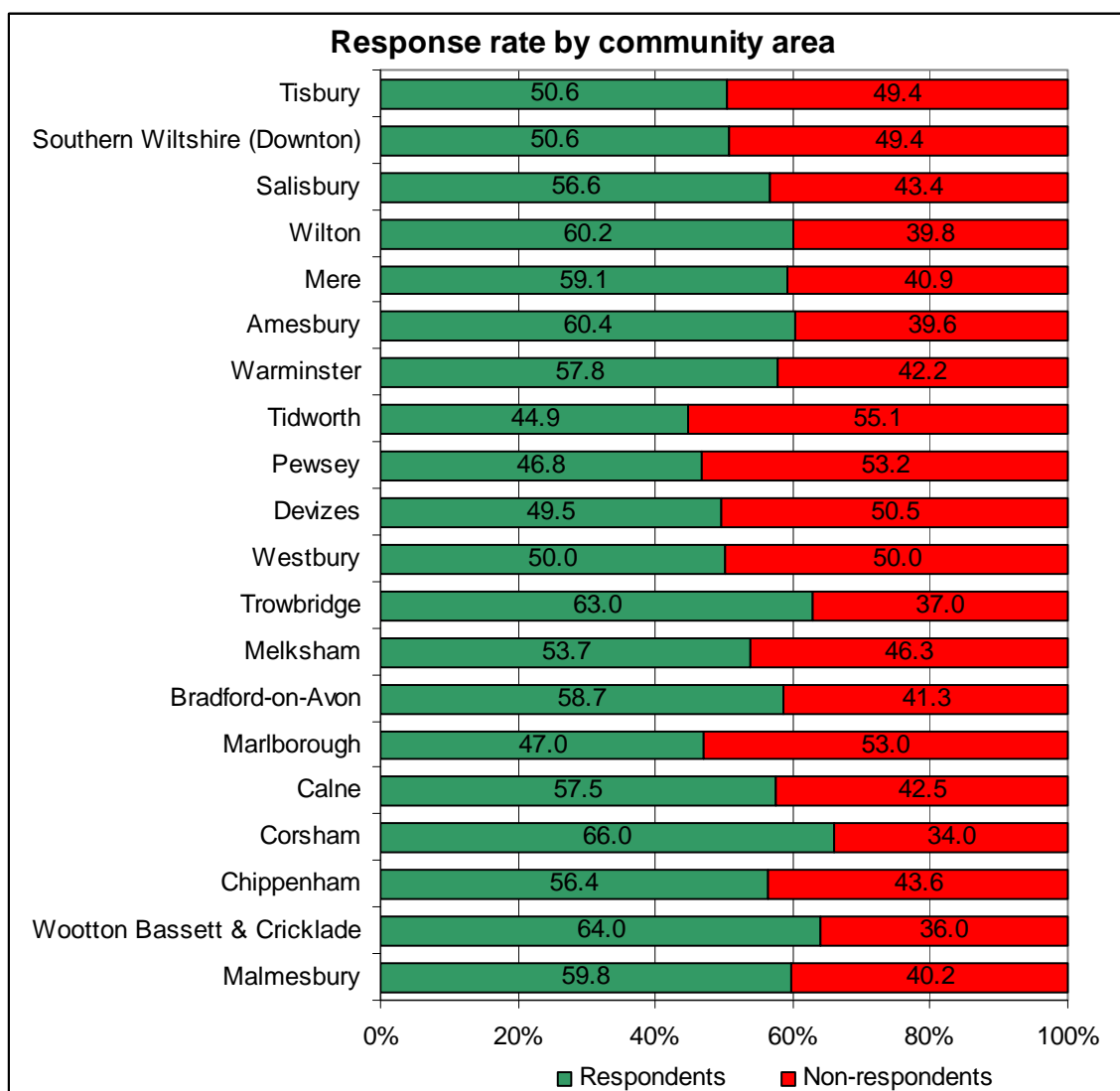
The above chart shows that the panel is under representative of the younger age groups and over representative of the older ones when compared to the overall population in Wiltshire. The results from the November '09 survey show that respondents are less likely to belong to younger age groups and more likely to belong to older ones than seen within the panel overall.

The fact that respondents tend to be older need to be taken into consideration when looking at the results within this report.

## 2 SURVEY RETURNS

### 2.1 Returns Profile

A total of 2,021 completed questionnaires were received by the closing date, representing a return rate of 55.1% a slightly lower response rate than usual in part due to an early cut off date and the survey being sent out shortly before the Christmas period. Individual returns from community areas varied between a high of 66% in Corsham to a low of 45% in Tidworth. This survey shows an unusual pattern of returns in that all the northern Wiltshire communities showed an above average response rate (including Calne which has been traditionally among the lower responders). In contrast, all the communities in eastern Wiltshire showed a below average response.



## **2.2 Survey Topics**

This questionnaire covered the following topics: satisfaction with Wiltshire Council services; Budget planning; Wiltshire Council's reputation; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service; Wiltshire Corporate Plan; Resourcing Wiltshire Police and Updating records.

## 3 WILTSHIRE COUNCIL SERVICES

### 3.1 *Satisfaction with services*

The first question of the People's Voice survey asked panellists to think about a long list of services that are provided by Wiltshire Council and to state how satisfied they are with each of them. This list was split up into the service departments which operate those services. This was to make it easier for respondents to follow and see how the council operates.

The chart below shows the different levels of satisfaction with these services:

We can see that the services receiving the highest levels of satisfaction were:

- Public libraries (83.3% saying satisfied)
- Household refuse collection (81.5% saying satisfied)
- Recycling centres and waste disposal (77.0% saying satisfied)

Those with the lowest levels of satisfaction were:

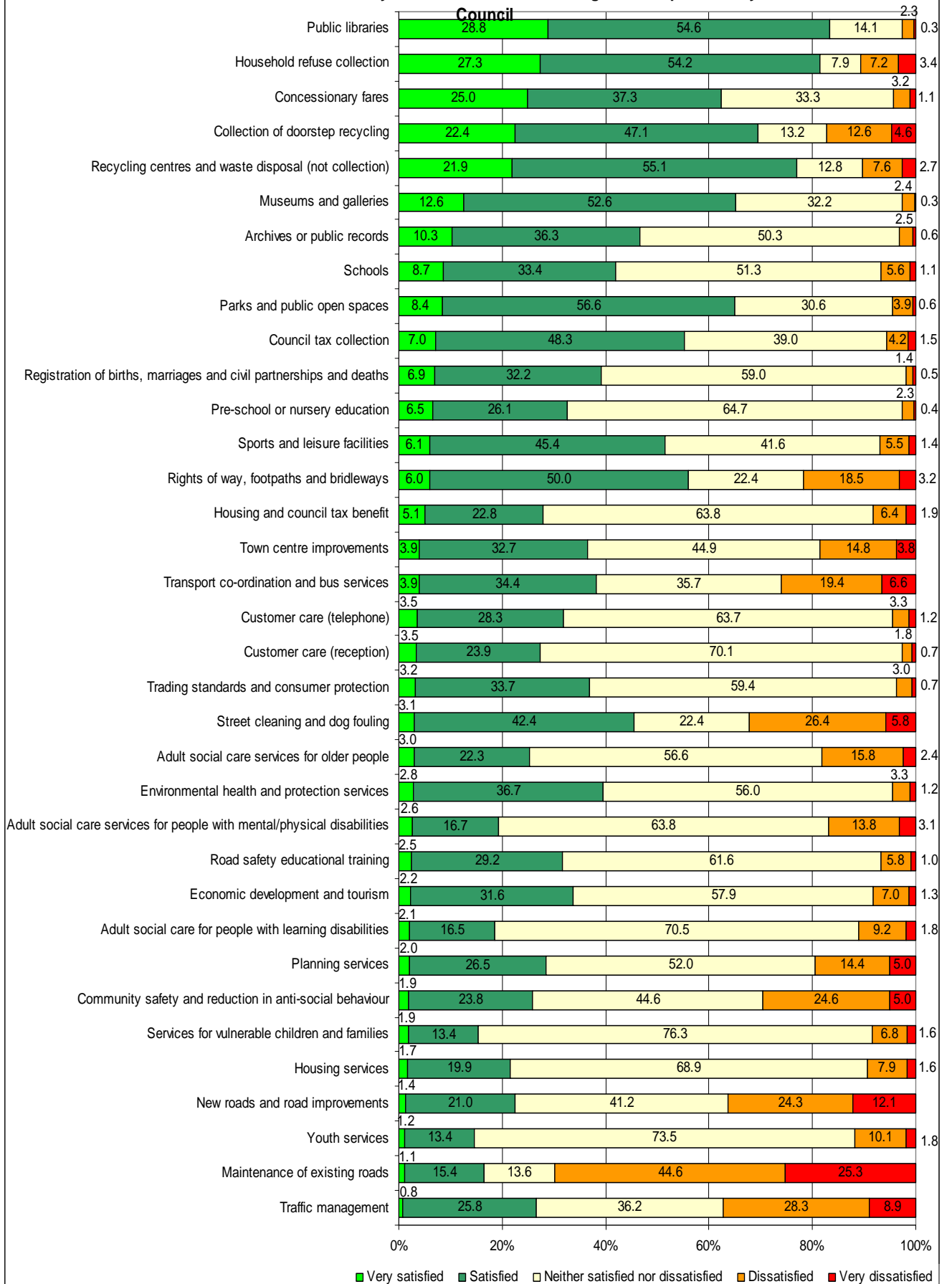
- Youth services (14.6% saying satisfied)
- Services for vulnerable children and families (15.3% saying satisfied)
- Maintenance of existing roads (16.5% saying satisfied)

Giving a low level of satisfaction with a service does not necessarily mean that residents are *dissatisfied* with it. An example of this is "Services for vulnerable children and families" – only 15% of respondents say they are satisfied with it. However, just 8.4% say they are actually dissatisfied with the service. The vast majority in this case said "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied".

The services which received the greatest levels of dissatisfaction were:

- Maintenance of existing roads (69.9% saying dissatisfied)
- Traffic management (37.2% saying dissatisfied)
- New roads and road improvements (36.4% saying dissatisfied)

**How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided by Wiltshire**





## **4 BUDGET PLANNING**

### ***4.1 Spending more, the same or less***

The second question of the survey asked panellists to think about the same list of Wiltshire Council services and asked if the council should spend more, the same or less money on each of them

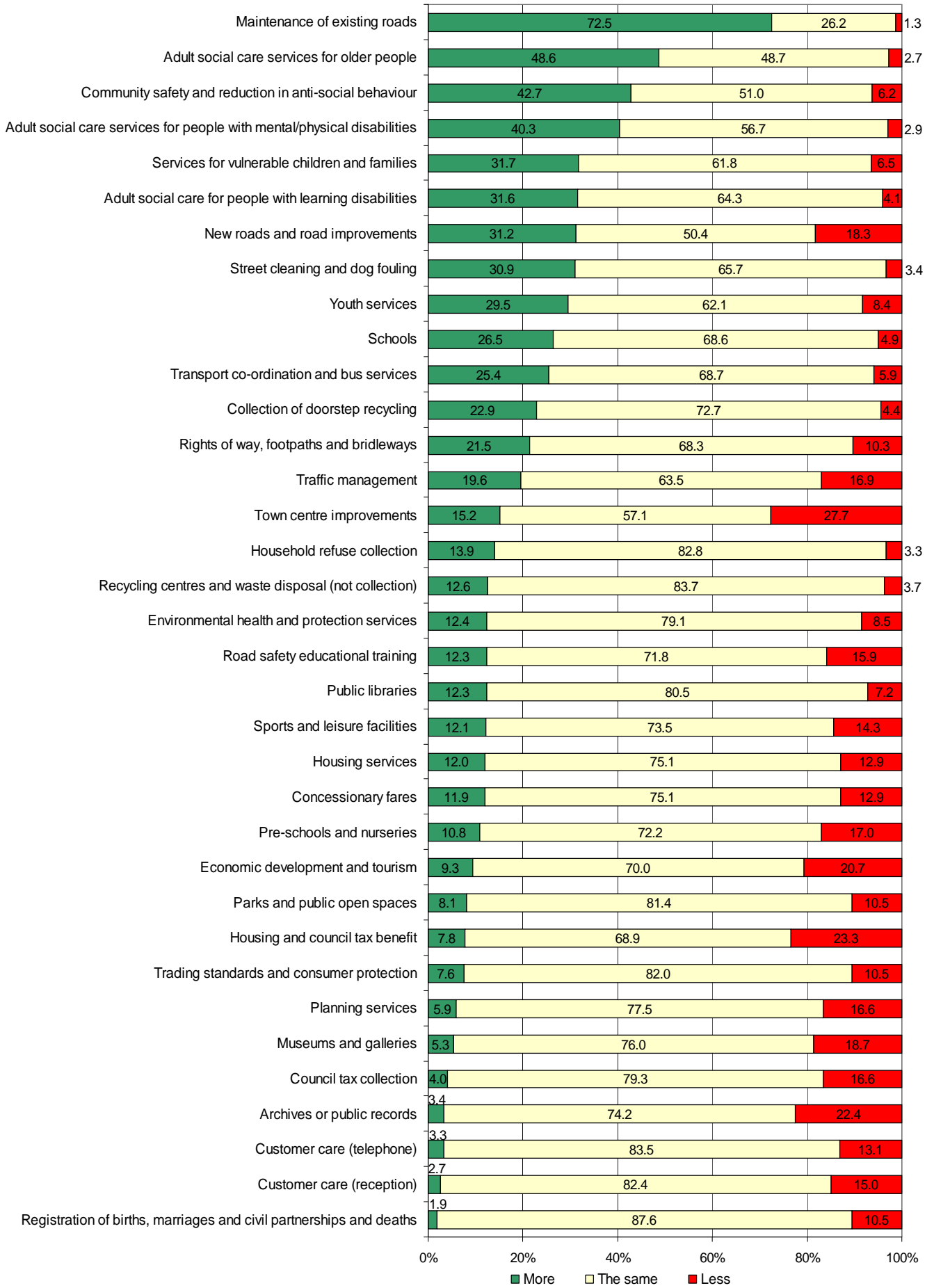
It can clearly be seen that the services which respondents most frequently say they want more money spent on are:

- Maintenance of existing roads (72.5% saying spend more)
- Adult social care services for older people (48.6% saying spend more)
- Community safety & reduction in anti-social behaviour (42.7% saying spend more)

The services that respondents most commonly say they would like less money spent on are:

- Town centre improvements (26.7% saying spend less)
- Housing and council tax benefit (22.1% saying spend less)
- Archives or public records (21.2% saying spend less)

### Spending more, the same or less on council services



This section of the report uses a scoring system to analyse the results looking at whether more, the same or less should be spent on services. Where a respondent has said “spend more” on a service, this service is given a score of +1; if they said “spend less”; it gets a score of -1. The scores from every respondent for each service are then added together and a final score for that service achieved. The service that gets the highest score is the one with the greatest number of people thinking it should have more money spent on it relative to those that think less money should be spent on it.

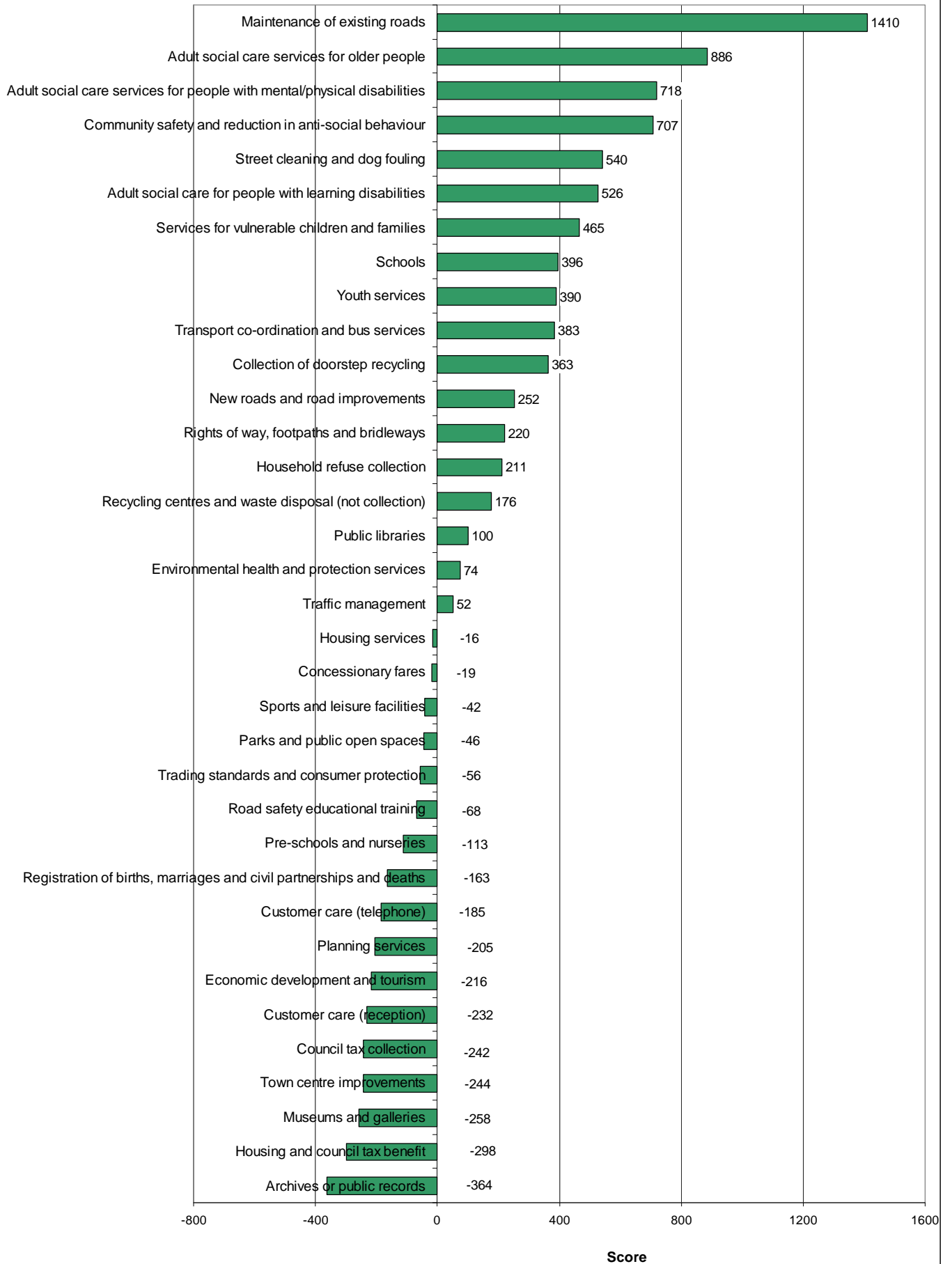
The results of this analysis back up those seen in the frequencies given above. They clearly show that more spending on maintenance of existing roads is a key priority for those that responded to the survey, with aspects of social services also scoring very highly. Community safety and anti-social behaviour reduction are also priorities.

Using this method to illustrate results of the same question shows a slight difference in priorities. Looking at the percentages above, we see that community safety receives the third greatest proportion wanting more money spent on it. Using this scoring system here, community safety drops one place to rank fourth. Also under this scoring system, Street cleaning gets promoted three places from 8<sup>th</sup> under the percentage system to 5<sup>th</sup> by using this scoring.

Archives or public records scored the least amount of points on spending with a -364 score after subtracting the *less spending* from the *more*. This is followed by housing and council tax benefits with a score of -298 and museums and galleries with -258.

We see an even greater level of change when we look at the bottom of the rankings. The service with the lowest score, Archives and public records, has dropped three places from ranking fourth lowest by percentage. The greatest change is seen for Town centre improvements. This drops 17 places from 21<sup>st</sup> lowest in the percentage table to fourth lowest in the scoring table.

### Spending more, the same or less: scoring



## 5 WILTSHIRE COUNCIL'S REPUTATION

### 5.1 Comments

Question 11 asked for open comments from panellists based on the question "looking to the future, please tell us what one thing you think Wiltshire Council could do to help improve your opinion of it?" This received over 1,360 comments, ranging from simple comments to long descriptions of improvements to services or other recommendations.

These comments covered a wide range of topics and feelings about the new council. These are summarised below:

Theme	Ideas within theme
Modernise	Be coordinated, between hubs for both work and informing staff & residents
Clean and tidy county	Dog fouling, street cleaning; prompt cleaning of graffiti
Reduce staffing	Reduce salaries; "less chiefs, more Indians"; CEO pay; value for money, honesty & integrity over pay
Refuse collection	Keep weekly collections; identical services across county
Recycling	identical services across county; more collection of plastic; 'pay as you collect'
Bus services	Better local and rural services
Making savings	Highlighting the savings made; better financial management; providing / highlighting value for money; fairer council tax (across county); avoid waste; communicate the financial position; be more efficient (in terms of staff & money)
Roads	Road improvements; fixing potholes sooner / more effectively; bypasses (for Salisbury, Devizes, Bradford on Avon)
Decision making	Boost the powers of town & parish councils; make area boards effective; allow local decision making; devolve budgets to local levels.
Parking	Consistent pricing across county; changes from free to paid parking; double yellow lines
ICT	Availability of broadband across county; access via cable
Attitude	"servant of the people, not dictatorial"; "less arrogant"
Housing	More affordable housing across county
Function	A clearer explanation of how council functions; diagrams of council structure / services; advertise; be reliable; be coherent
Planning	Use of brown field sites over green field; better quality planning officers
Sports / leisure	Better provision, especially in smaller towns / villages

Name	Shame to loose "county" from name; Wiltshire Council = "WC" is not good for reputation of council
Consultation	Respond to or act on the results of surveys; get out and meet the people (especially councillors); consult widely
Councillors	Listen; act; reply to concerns; cut expenses; show they provide value for money
Economic regeneration	Better provision of shops / supermarkets; regeneration; tourism
Environment	Be a green organisation; encourage use of / generation of renewable energy; encourage ecological solutions
Services	Provide visible services for smaller towns & villages; not just concentrate on large towns
Contact	Timely responses to 'phone calls / emails; not being passed around staff who "don't know"
Community safety	Reduce anti-social behaviour; clean up graffiti and vandalism quickly
Other comments	"to be the best council"; "allow people to fend for themselves"; "carry on as you are"

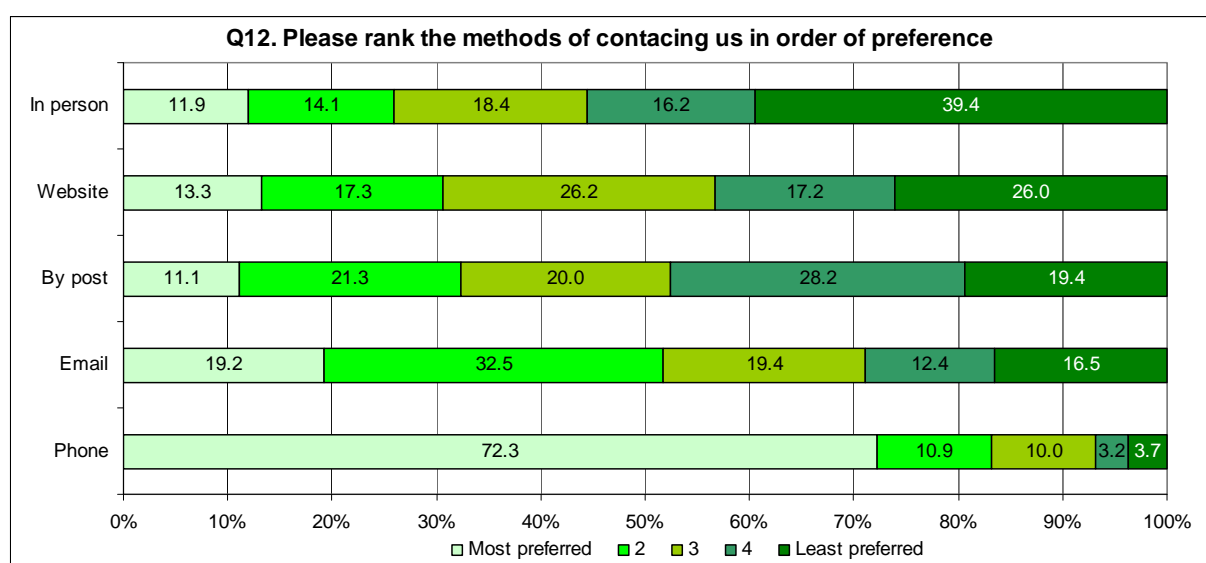
The full list of comments has been passed to Wiltshire Council's Communications team for full analysis and the in-depth understanding of the council's reputation at this stage.

## 6 WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

### 6.1 Methods of contact

This section of the survey looked at preferences for ways of contacting Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service for non-emergency enquiries. Respondents were asked to rank several different methods of contact using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is most preferred and 5 is least preferred.

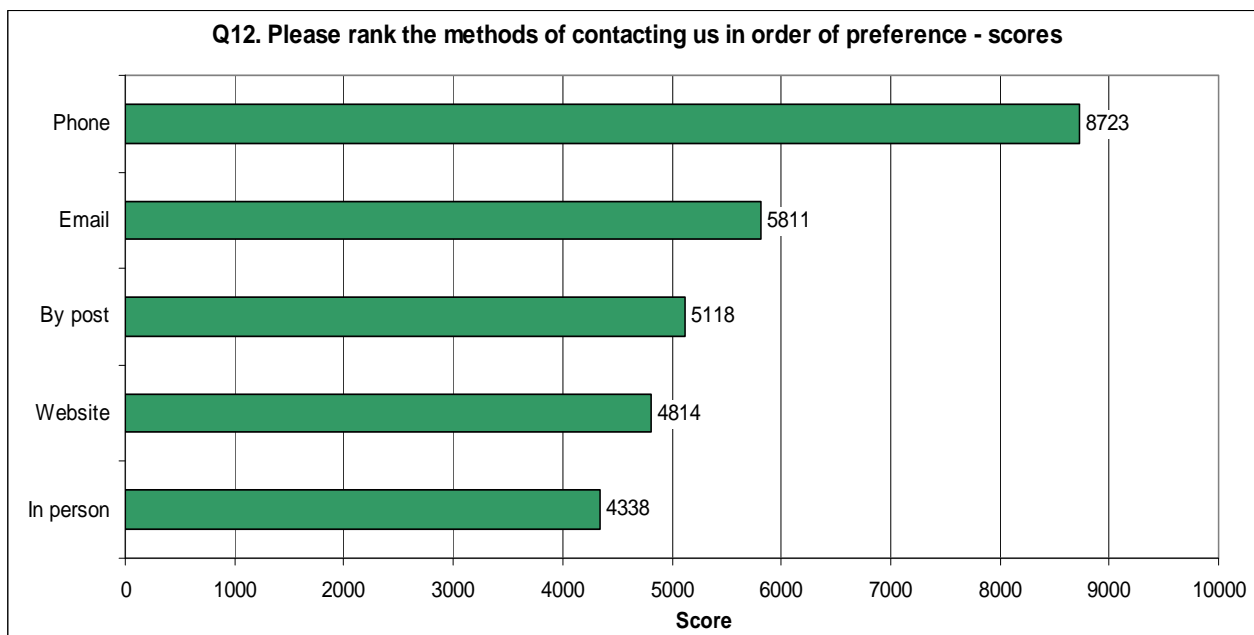
These results were looked at in two different ways. The chart below shows the proportions of respondents who chose 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 for each of the different methods of contact:



This shows that by far the most preferred option is by 'phone, with nearly three quarters (72.3%) giving this as their first priority. A further 11% gave the 'phone as their second priority. Just 3.7% said the 'phone was their least preferred method of contact.

Contact in person was the least preferred method: 39.4% ranked this fifth, saying it is their least preferred option. With just 11.9% of respondents saying it is the most preferred method, this method does not get quite the lowest proportion ranking this first but combining those giving visits in person their first and second preference, we see the other four methods all receive greater proportions.

The other method of analysing these results is to assign scores to each preference: the first preference gets a score of 5 through to the fifth preference getting a score of one. The number of people giving each preference is multiplied by each score to give an overall total for each method of contact. These totals are shown in the chart below:



This method of analysis reiterates the results of the other method. Contact by 'phone is the most popular, with a score of 8,723 and contact in person is the least preferred, scoring 4,338.

There was a large number of 'other' comments provided looking at alternative ways of contacting the fire service. These are summarised below:

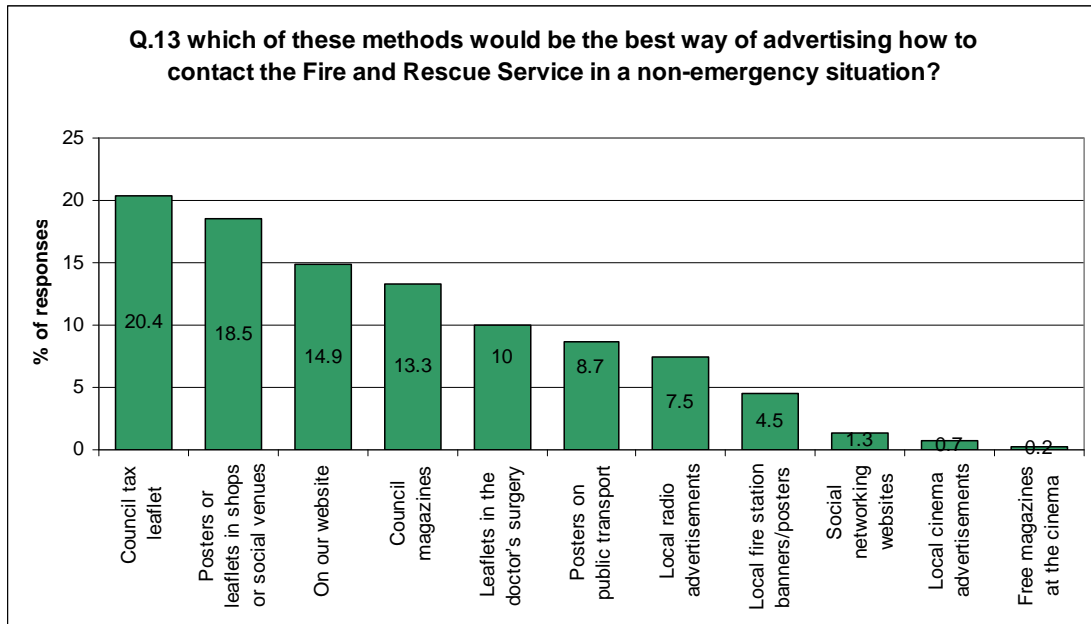
Theme	Ideas within theme
A non-emergency number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not 0845 as you can't get someone local</li> <li>• No robots – talking to a person</li> <li>• An easy to remember number e.g. 555 / 666</li> <li>• The local council offices / library</li> </ul>
A non-IT option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not everyone has a computer / access to the internet</li> <li>• The elderly may prefer a personal method of communication</li> </ul>
Face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone in the locality who's designated as the first line of enquiry</li> <li>• Local police station</li> <li>• Local surgeries</li> </ul>
Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a number for text communication</li> </ul>

## **6.2 Advertising the method of contact**

Question 13 stated that "In the People's Voice survey carried out in July 2008, 68% of you stated that you would not know how to contact us for a routine non-emergency enquiry". It then went on to ask which of the methods listed



would be best for advertising a number to be used in such a situation; up to three could be chosen.

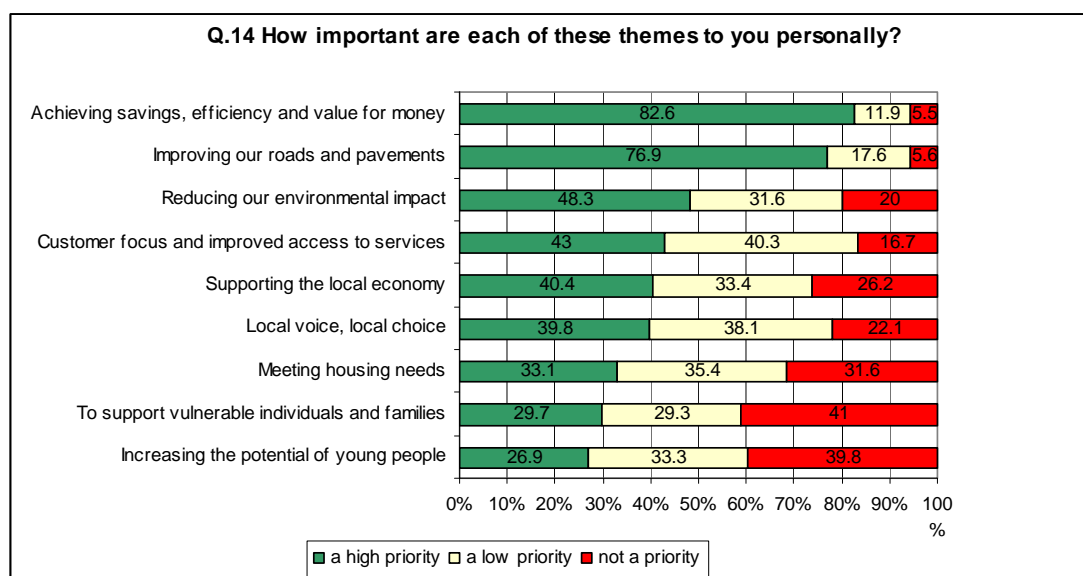


The most popular choice was advertising in council tax leaflets (20.4% responses), followed by on posters or leaflets in shops or social venues (18.5% responses) and then advertising on the Wiltshire Council website (14.9% responses). The least popular option was advertising in free magazines in cinemas (0.2% responses), followed by in local cinema adverts (0.7% responses) and then through social networking sites (1.3% responses).

## 7 WILTSHIRE CORPORATE PLAN

### 7.1 Prioritising themes

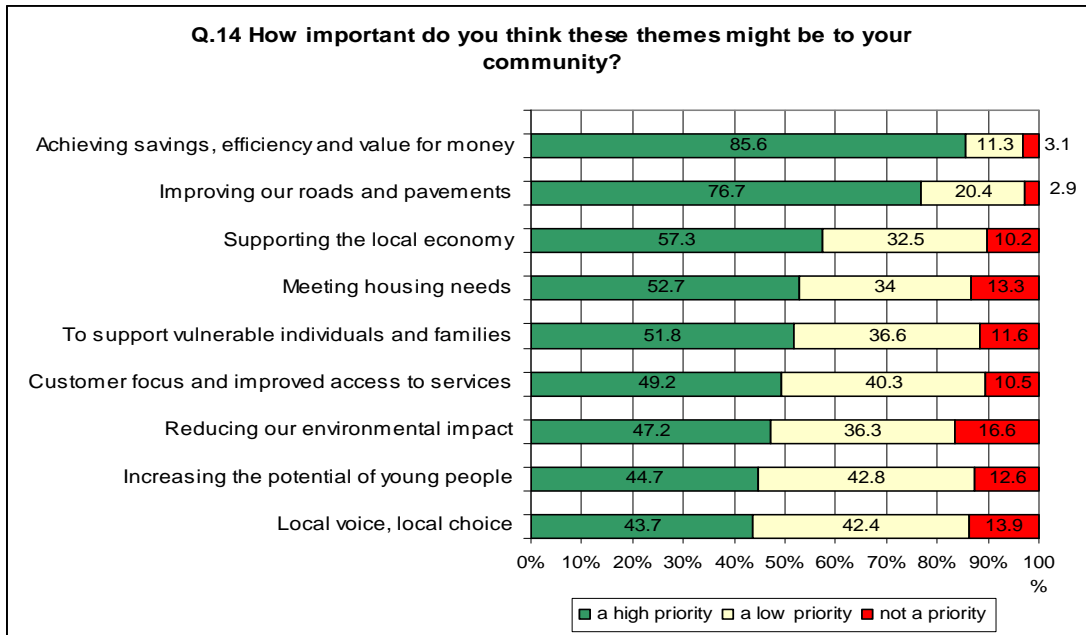
The next section focused on Wiltshire Council's corporate plan for 2010 – 2014. The Corporate Plan comprises of nine themes and respondents were asked how important each theme is to them personally and how important each theme might be to their community (defined as the area within 15-20 minutes walk of their home).



The themes which were rated as the highest priorities to the respondents personally were achieving savings, efficiency and value for money in the change to one Council (82.6% saying it is a high priority); improving roads and pavements (76.9% saying it's a high priority); and reducing our environmental impact (48.3% saying it's a high priority).

The themes which were rated as the lowest priorities, in terms of receiving the highest ratings for 'not a priority' were supporting vulnerable children and families (41% saying it's not a priority to them), increasing the potential of young people (39.8%) and meeting housing needs (31.6%). The same three received the lowest scores for being a high priority, but with the order of the first two themes reversed.

The themes which were rated as the highest priority to the respondents' communities were achieving saving, efficiency and value for money (85.6% saying it's a high priority), improving our roads and pavements (76.7% saying it's a high priority) and supporting the local economy (57.3% saying it's a high priority).

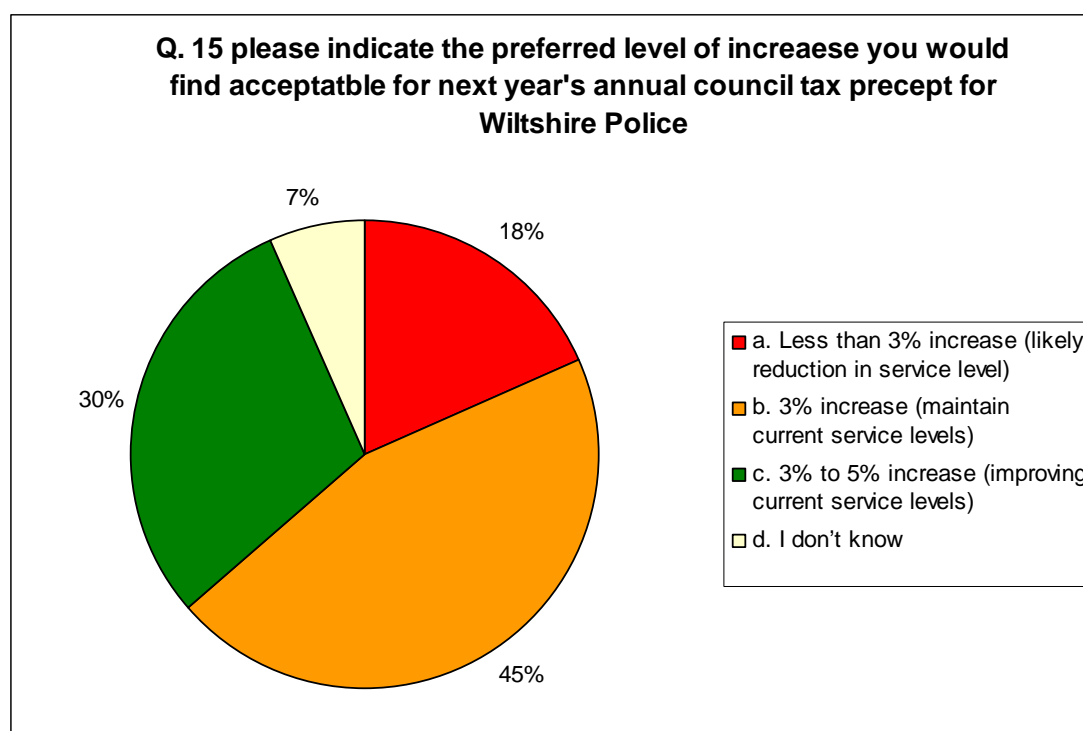


The themes which were seen as 'not a priority' by the greatest number of respondents were reducing our environmental impact (16.6% said not a priority), local voice, local choice (13.9%), and meeting housing needs (13.3%).

## 8 RESOURCING WILTSHIRE POLICE

### 8.1 Levels of increase

Question 15 asked respondents about the level of council tax rise that they would find acceptable, in order to secure certain levels of service from Wiltshire Police during the coming year.



The most popular response was to increase council tax by 3%, which is estimated to maintain current service levels; 45% respondents chose that option. The second most popular choice was to increase council tax by between 3% and 5%, which will improve current service levels, this was chosen by 30% respondents. Only 18% chose a less than 3% increase, which will reduce service levels. 7% respondents said they don't know which option was preferable.

There were also a number of 'other' comments in response to this question. These are summarised below:

Theme	Ideas within theme
Reduce council tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% reduction covered by efficiency savings</li> <li>• Less to be spent. More rigorous efforts to be made to curb spending by down grading to the number and cost of vehicles</li> <li>• Less! There is a LIMIT to growth</li> </ul>
0% increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut inefficiency</li> <li>• No increase unless police become more local</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No increase should be considered –only a freeze or reduction</li> <li>• NO INCREASE. There is no justification for ANY increase in a VERY low crime area.</li> </ul>
1% increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police are well paid for what they do</li> <li>• Less than 1 per cent with difference made up through much greater efficiency in resource deployment and reduction in overtime</li> </ul>
3% increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But only if issue of motorists using mobile phones is addressed</li> <li>• But need more police ‘on the ground’</li> <li>• Less than 3% with an efficiency target to maintain current service levels on reduced resources</li> </ul>
Other increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As I am a CCTV volunteer, any extra expenditure is OK</li> <li>• I feel the local police do not receive enough</li> </ul>
Increase efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a comprehensive review to identify duplication, inefficiency and waste</li> <li>• Any increase should be matched 2% increase in efficiency for every 15 increase in tax</li> <li>• As in the private sector, more attention should be given to economies without reducing police numbers, take a hard look at procedures and reduce clerical work accordingly, freeing P.C.'s for beat work</li> <li>• Better use of current staff and facilities</li> <li>• Better internal discipline and leadership, and a reduction in admin "bean-counters"</li> <li>• .Combine police forces, from 42 to 9 in the country, and save massive overheads</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of paperwork they have to do</li> <li>• I work with various officers in connection with my own job, most are dedicated + hard working but some seem disillusioned and therefore ineffective. Addressing this should be a priority</li> <li>• No increase - police to work to 65 and put more in their pension</li> </ul>
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fairer way to get council tax should be put in place</li> <li>• We never see any police locally</li> <li>• Cap on top council executive salaries and expenses.</li> <li>• Change the non emergency phone system present number terrible</li> <li>• I think police should visit junior schools to educate the 7-11 age groups as to the often dangerous work they do</li> </ul>

## **9 CONCLUSION**

This survey covered a wide range of subjects, some with a purely Wiltshire focus, and others with a regional and national context. Some of the results will therefore, be shared across partners with an interest in Wiltshire and in the wider picture. Further analysis may be undertaken to compare results across a range of factors, to get a more in depth understanding of people's needs and desires.

The results of this survey should be seen as a way of supporting decision makers in the context of understanding the needs, opinions and priorities of people living in Wiltshire.

Any comments on this report or help needed should be addressed to Phil Morgan, The People's Voice, Panel co-ordinator, Wiltshire County Council or e-mail [philip.morgan@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:philip.morgan@wiltshire.gov.uk)