

# TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL RESIDENTS SURVEY REPORT

Prepared by Lake Market Research for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

This report complies with ISO: 20252 standards and other relevant forms of conduct



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# 1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council commissioned Lake Market Research to monitor resident opinion in relation to their local area and service provision.

Understanding resident opinion is a key component of assessing the effectiveness of a local authority, alongside costs and performance information. Furthermore, understanding resident satisfaction and being able to make informed comparisons can strengthen local accountability and be a key to managing a council's own performance.

The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Residents' Survey research objectives were to:

- Undertake a residential survey to obtain a robust sample that is representative of the Tunbridge Wells borough population;
- Allow the council to better understand the community and their perceptions of local priorities and satisfaction with service levels at the council;
- Understand methods of and satisfaction with making contact with the Council, and also the proportion of residents going through the complaints process and determining their service satisfaction;
- Assess support for town centre developments in terms of pedestrianisation, car parks, off street parking and proposed changes to Sunday trading hours;
- Assess the importance of Council priorities and future work programmes;
- Assess support for a Council Tax increase of £5 across the year;
- Determine the most important factors in delivering Council savings.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY AND RESIDENT PROFILE

Residents completed the survey in a face to face interview at home between Wednesday 9th September and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Only one person per household was interviewed and informed consent (via a signed letter of authority) was obtained before interviewing.

1,052 residents were interviewed in total. A sample specification was set up in line with the demographic targets for interview in terms of gender, age and economic status based on known populations. This ensured the overall sample interviewed is representative of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council residents aged 16 and over.

An overview of the resident profile interviewed can be found below:

GENDER	
Male	49%
Female	51%
AGE	
16 - 34	25%
35 - 54	39%
55+	36%
WORKING STATUS	
Working	51%
Retired	25%
Unemployed and available for work	5%
Permanently sick/disabled	4%
Looking after the home	10%
ETHNICITY	
White	94%
BME	6%

### 1.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETING THE DATA

It should be noted that a sample of residents participated in the survey rather than all residents of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council area; and the results are therefore subject to sampling error, which means that not all differences are statistically significant.

Overall results are accurate to a confidence interval (also called margin of error) of +/- 3% at the 95% confidence level. There are three factors that determine the size of the confidence interval for a given confidence level: sample size; percentage; and population size. In calculating the general level of accuracy for reporting purposes we have used:

- The effective sample size of 1,052 achieved
- The worst case percentage (50% - when responses are for example 51% and 49% the chances of sampling error are greater than at 99% or 1%. To determine a general level of accuracy for a sample interviewed you should use the worst case percentage (50%) to calculate it.);
- 2011 Census data estimate of 86,800 residents across all wards of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council area aged 16+.

Confidence interval calculations assume you have a genuine random sample of the relevant population (in practice, margins of error may be slightly higher).

For the purposes of reporting a true reflection of residents' views, all elements of the question scales have been included in our reporting, including any 'don't know' or 'not applicable' references. In addition, questions have been reporting in the order in which they were asked of residents.

A number of subgroups have been explored to identify significant differences in response. For each question, this report identifies where significant differences occur across the following:

- Gender
- Age
- Working status
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Having contact with the Council in the last 12 months

#### **1.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for all their help and advice in developing the project. We would also like to thank all 1,052 Tunbridge Wells residents who agreed to take part and whose views made this research possible.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 2.1 THE LOCAL AREA AND COUNCIL SATISFACTION

Consistent with the overall score recorded in 2012, satisfaction with the local area is high at 92% satisfied (55% very satisfied and 37% fairly satisfied).

Just over two thirds of residents (67%) agree that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council provides value for money (17% 'strongly agree' and 50% 'tend to agree'), whilst just under two in ten (18%) disagree (5% 'strongly disagree' and 13% 'tend to disagree'). Overall agreement levels have improved from the score recorded in 2012 by +8 percentage points (from 59% to 67%).

The majority of residents speak favourably of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, with seven in ten (70%) indicating they are satisfied with how it runs things (18% 'very satisfied' and 52% 'fairly satisfied'), whilst just over one in six residents (16%) are dissatisfied with how the council runs things (4% 'very dissatisfied' and 12% 'fairly dissatisfied'). Overall satisfaction levels have improved from the score recorded in 2012 by +7 percentage points (from 63% to 70%).

Just under a third of residents (29%) agreed that they can influence any decisions affecting their local area, and just under six in ten (58%) disagreed. Overall agreement levels have decreased from the score recorded in 2012 by +9 percentage points (from 38% to 29%).

Just under a quarter of residents (24%) indicated they would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area and four in ten (40%) indicated they would not like to be more involved. Just over a third were undecided (34%) and indicated it depends on the issue involved. The proportion indicating they would like to be more involved has decreased from the score recorded in 2012 by +10 percentage points (from 34% to 24%). However, at an overall level (i.e. when combining the proportions indicating 'yes' or 'depends on the issue'), proportions are broadly consistent at 56% interest this year and 51% interest in 2012.

### 2.2 VISITING TOWN AND VILLAGE CENTRES IN THE BOROUGH

Usage of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre is high with just under two thirds of residents (63%) claiming they visit Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre either every day or at least once a week (+5% percentage points higher than the score recorded in 2012 - 58%). A further 20% claim they visit at least once a month.

As perhaps expected, primary motivations for visiting Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre are for shopping purposes, either in the form of individual shops (86%), department stores (71%) or supermarkets (63%). Just under six in ten visit the town centre for business purposes, e.g. for banks, estate agents (59%) and for pubs and restaurants (58%). Just under half use car park facilities (47%) when they visit. Overall satisfaction with the current range of services and amenities in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre is high at 86% (32% very satisfied and

54% fairly satisfied). Overall satisfaction is marginally higher than the score of 83% recorded in 2012.

In principle, residents were then asked if they would support four town centre proposals, simply answering yes, no or don't know. Just over three quarters (76%) of residents indicated they would support the continued pedestrianisation of Tunbridge Wells town Centre and six in ten (60%) indicated they would support the re-routing of buses to ensure the pedestrianised areas of the Town Centre are strictly for pedestrians.

Views are more polarising concerning a variation of Sunday trading hours, with 52% indicating they would support the government's proposal, i.e. opening earlier and later, and 40% indicating they would not support it.

Just over half (55%) indicated they would support more decisions on business rates being made locally, such as a scale of charges by size. There is however considerable uncertainty with regard to this topic with 30% of residents answering don't know to this proposal.

Residents were asked to consider the amount of car parking available in Tunbridge Wells town centre from the perspective of off-street car parking and on street car parking spaces. Just under half of residents (48%) indicated they would support the provision of more off-street car parks in Tunbridge Wells town centre and a third (33%) indicated they believed there are already enough car parks. 19% indicated they were not sure.

Views are split in terms of on street car parking with four in ten indicating the Council should review and provide more on street permit parking for only local residents, three in ten disagreeing and 27% indicating they were not sure.

### **2.3 SAFETY IN THE LOCAL AREA**

The vast majority of residents (98%) indicated they feel safe in the local area at an overall level as well as walking alone during the day. This proportion falls to just under three quarters (73%) indicating they feel safe walking alone after dark.

Residents were asked to describe their biggest area of concern with regards to safety in their local area in their own words. We have reviewed the open ended comments collected and have coded these into themes for the purposes of reporting the findings. Just over half of residents indicated that they did not have any concerns with regards to safety or were unsure (53%). Amongst those reporting a concern, a perceived lack of street lighting / lights going off too early, speeding, anti social behaviour, traffic / congestion and a lack of police presence were the most commonly cited.

Residents were asked to indicate how safe they feel on the roads of the Tunbridge Wells Borough from three perspectives: 1) As a driver/motorcyclist, 2) As a cyclist and 3) As a

pedestrian. For the purposes of reporting, we have removed the proportions of residents who indicated the question was not applicable in the chart below (i.e. they did not travel in this manner) – these proportions were 26% as a driver/motorcyclist, 78% as a cyclist and 2% as a pedestrian.

The vast majority of residents feel safe on the roads as a driver / motorcyclist (93%) and as a pedestrian (90%). Views vary amongst cyclists with just over half (55%) feeling safe and just over a third (36%) feeling unsafe.

Residents were informed that '20 mph restrictions are now in place in many parts of the country. Evidence suggests that reducing the speed limit makes our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists (particularly children and the elderly and improves the overall quality of the environment).' They were then asked whether they would like to see 20 mph speed restrictions introduced in the Borough in three instances: 1) Urban and village centres, 2) Residential areas and 3) Across Royal Tunbridge Wells.

There is interest in introducing 20 mph speed restrictions in urban and village centres (58% yes) and residential areas (61% yes). As perhaps expected, there is less interest in introducing 20 mph speed restrictions across Royal Tunbridge Wells (38% yes).

Of the prompted list given to residents, the most popular behaviour that residents would like the Council to tackle are street drinking (61%), charity collectors who ask for personal data (54%) and taking 'legal highs' or similar substances (53%). Begging and taking dogs off of leads at parks is also referenced by four in ten and three in ten respectively. Just over one in five indicated they would not like the Council to tackle any of the prompted behaviours.

## **2.4 CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL**

Just under a third (32%) of residents claimed they have contacted Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in the last 12 months. The most common method of last contact is by telephone at 56% of those making contact. 17% claimed they last made contact in person and 14% claimed they last made contact via the website / internet.

Residents who had made contact with the Council in the last 12 months were asked for their overall satisfaction with the service they received on the last occasion they made contact. Just over two thirds (68%) indicated they were satisfied with the service they received (49% very satisfied and 21% fairly satisfied). Just under a quarter (24%) were dissatisfied with the service they received. There were no significant differences observed by subgroup.

Residents who had made contact with the Council in the last 12 months were asked whether they had contacted the Council to make a complaint in the last 12 months. Just under three in ten (28%) of those contacting the Council had done so to make a complaint. At a total sample level (i.e. including those who have not contacted the Council in the last 12 months),



9% of the residents interviewed have contacted the Council to make a complaint in the last 12 months.

Satisfaction with the varying elements of the Council's complaints procedure vary widely. Satisfaction ratings were higher concerning the perceived ease of understanding the procedure and helpfulness of staff dealing with the complaint (57% and 50% satisfied respectively). Satisfaction was considerably lower concerning outcome of their complaint, the explanation provided concerning the outcome of the complaint and the way in which the complaint was handled overall.

## **2.5 COMMUNICATIONS**

The most common methods for currently obtaining information about Council activities and services are the Council website, the local newspaper and the Borough Council's resident magazine – LOCAL (at 37%, 25% and 18% respectively). The proportion using the Council website has increased versus the proportion recorded in 2012 by +14 percentage points (from 23% to 37%). The most common preferences for obtaining information about Council activities and services are broadly consistent with current methods. The Council website, the local newspaper and the Borough Council's resident magazine – LOCAL are the most common preferences.

Just under half of residents interviewed (46%) indicated they have seen a copy of the LOCAL magazine in the last 12 months. Whilst a claim of seeing a copy does not directly infer readership, it is likely we can assume that the majority of these residents have reviewed a magazine.

All residents who indicated they had seen a copy of the LOCAL magazine in the last 12 months were asked whether they agree with three statements about the magazine. Just under three quarters (73%) of residents agreed that the LOCAL magazine gives useful information about Council news. Just under two thirds agreed that they enjoyed reading the LOCAL magazine and look forward to receiving it (64%) and the magazine is well presented with a good balance of articles (65%).

The vast majority of residents indicated they have access to the internet at present (83%). Few residents indicated that they have had access in the past but do not have access now. 14% have never had access and do not intend to in the future.

For those who have access, the majority of residents indicated that they were either confident (57%) or expert (13%). 13% indicated they had basic digital skills and 8% indicated they are able to complete specific tasks on the Internet. The vast majority of residents indicated they considered the Internet as essential (56%) or important (33%).

Just under six in ten (57%) residents indicated they have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website at some point. 43% have not visited the website.

Residents that have not accessed the website were asked why they have not accessed the services on the website. The overwhelming reason for not using is simply due to not having a perceived need (79%). A small proportion of residents indicated that they do not use the computer / internet that often (6%), they are not sure how to access services (4%), they had not thought about it (3%) or were simply not interested (2%).

Residents who have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website were asked if they would be more likely to use the Internet to access Council services if a number of prompted instances were put in place. For at least two thirds of residents, the prompted instances would make no difference to them.

Just over one in five indicated they would be more likely to use the Internet to access Council services if the transaction was quicker to process, there were apps for easily viewing services on the go, the website was easier to navigate and they were confident that the website was secure for online payments.

## **2.6 USE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES**

Residents were shown a list of Council services and were asked to indicate whether they had used or benefited from them in the last 12 months.

Claimed usage of Council services in the last 12 months varies considerably. As perhaps expected, claimed usage of the 'universal services' of kerbside collections and recycling are highest. Just over half claim they have visited parks in the last 12 months. There are also sizeable proportions who have visited the Assembly Hall Theatre (24%).

Residents who identified they had used or benefited from a service in the last 12 months were asked for the overall satisfaction for that service. For the purposes of reporting, we have categorised the prompted services into three areas:

1. Kerbside collections / recycling
2. Community services
3. Council specialist services

### **1. Kerbside collections / recycling**

Satisfaction with the kerbside collections / recycling services is high with at least eight in ten indicating they are satisfied. Satisfaction is highest for the weekend civic amenity vehicle

waste collection service (90%), kerbside collection of paper and cardboard recycling (89%), local recycling sites (89%) and kerbside collection of plastic pots, tubs, bottle and cans (89%).

## 2. Community services

Satisfaction with the community services amongst users is very high, particularly concerning parks (95% satisfied and 66% very satisfied). Satisfaction with the Assembly Hall theatre, Tourist information and the Museum are also high (95%, 96% and 93% satisfied respectively).

Whilst overall satisfaction with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council operated public toilets is high at 86%, the proportion 'very satisfied' is comparably lower at 25%; suggesting potential improvements could be made.

## 3. Council specialist services

Satisfaction with specialist services varies considerably (as perhaps expected). Satisfaction with registering to vote, licensing of pubs and clubs, housing services, housing benefits services and Council Tax services are encouraging with 98%, 95%, 93%, 83%, 85% and 85% respectively.

Satisfaction levels with the service most likely to involve a complaint or issue receive lower satisfaction scores, i.e. reporting graffiti/abandoned vehicles/fly tipping/litter, parking ticket information and noise complaints at 73%, 69% and 59% satisfaction respectively (and low scores for very satisfied proportions).

## 2.7 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Residents were asked to rate eight specific services in terms of their importance to themselves and their families using a one to five scale of importance. Reducing crime and maintaining feelings of safety is the clear priority to residents with 89% ranking it as a 4 or 5 level of importance, and 72% ranking it as a 5 level of importance. Its position is consistent with that observed in 2012 (with a 93% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance). Protecting the environment ranks second with 85% ranking it as a 4 or 5 level of importance, and 62% ranking it as a 5 level of importance. This is also consistent with 2012 results (with a 92% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance).

A new service included in this year's survey ranked third - Planning services - ensuring new developments are appropriate. 79% ranked it as a 4 or 5 level of importance and 52% ranked it as a 5 level of importance. Those considered least important (although still obtaining a 56% and 54% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance) are providing community grants and funding the voluntary sector and events, theatres and the arts.

Response to the importance of housing services is mixed with 34% indicating they were not sure. If the 'don't know' responses were excluded in the chart below, it would achieve a 67% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance.

Residents were also asked to rank twelve work programmes in terms of their importance to themselves and their family, as either highest, medium or lowest priorities. Working with Kent County Council to improve congestion and cycle routes in the Borough is the clear priority to residents with 63% ranking it as a highest priority. In addition, few residents ranked it as a lowest priority (only 8%). This is consistent with the areas ranked highest in 2012 (although the statements have been altered slightly to prevent direct comparisons of percentages).

Exploring ways for improving and expanding sports facilities ranks second at 54% ranking it as a highest priority and having plans in place to ensure unmet housing needs in the borough are met whilst protecting the countryside and heritage of the town ranks third with 49% ranking it as a highest priority.

Of the twelve work programmes shown to residents, exploring the potential to deliver a university within or around the town and working with the Friends Group to develop a stage one Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Calverley Grounds was ranked lowest with only 23% and 19% of residents ranking them highest.

To preserve the services outlined in the question text, 53% of residents indicated that they would support a £5 increase across the year to the Council Tax they pay to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. 39% indicated they would not support it and 8% were unsure.

When residents were asked whether they would be willing to pay a more Council Tax (for example £10 across the year) if it allowed Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to deliver a significant project such as a new theatre, 32% indicated they would be willing. 55% indicated they would not be willing and 13% were unsure.

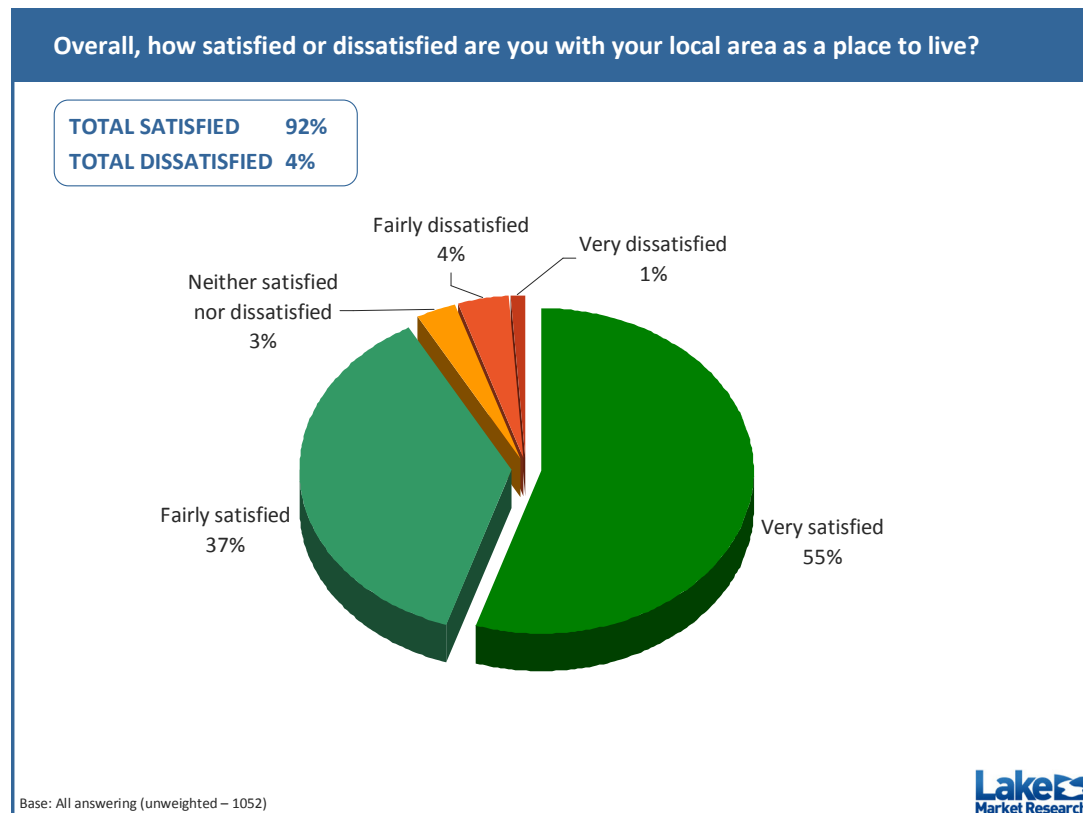
Residents were then asked to rank six options for delivering savings and increasing Council income in terms of importance. Consistent with 2012 findings, encouraging personal responsibility and making more use of buildings and money were ranked highest. 55% of residents ranked encouraging personal responsibility as a 1 or 2 level of importance and 49% of residents ranked making more use of buildings and money as a 1 or 2 level of importance.

### 3. THE LOCAL AREA AND COUNCIL SATISFACTION

#### 3.1 SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL AREA AS A PLACE TO LIVE

Before answering this question, respondents were informed that ‘some of the questions in this section are about your local area. When answering these questions, please think of your local area as within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home’.

Consistent with the overall score recorded in 2012, satisfaction with the local area is high at 92% satisfied (55% very satisfied and 37% fairly satisfied).



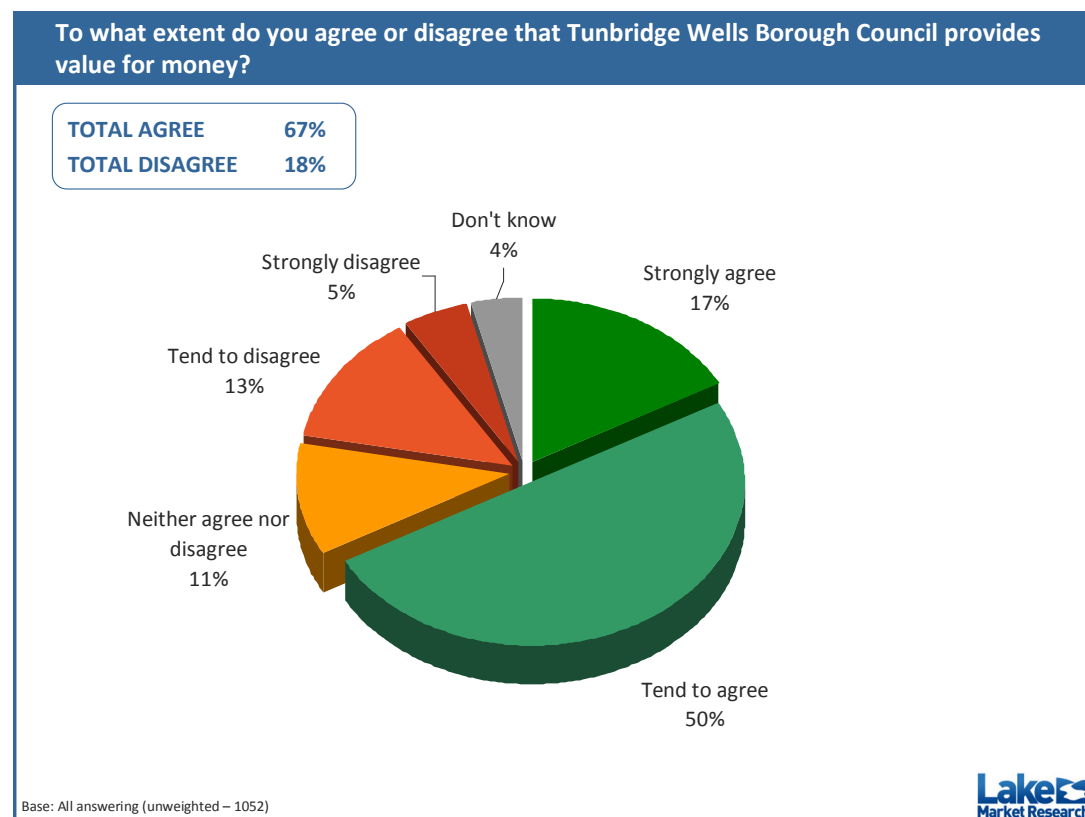
#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are no significant differences by demographic group but overall satisfaction is significantly higher amongst residents who have not contacted the Council in the past twelve months (94% compared to 88% for those who have contacted the Council).

### 3.2 VALUE FOR MONEY

Before answering this question, respondents were asked to consider 'the Borough Council receives 10% of the Council Tax residents pay, to deliver services in the area. This includes services such as bin collections, street cleaning, processing local planning applications, benefit applications, housing, leisure centres, parks, museum services and the Assembly Hall theatre'.

Just over two thirds of residents (67%) agree that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council provides value for money (17% 'strongly agree' and 50% 'tend to agree'), whilst just under two in ten (18%) disagree (5% 'strongly disagree' and 13% 'tend to disagree'). Overall agreement levels have improved from the score recorded in 2012 by +8 percentage points (from 59% to 67%).



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

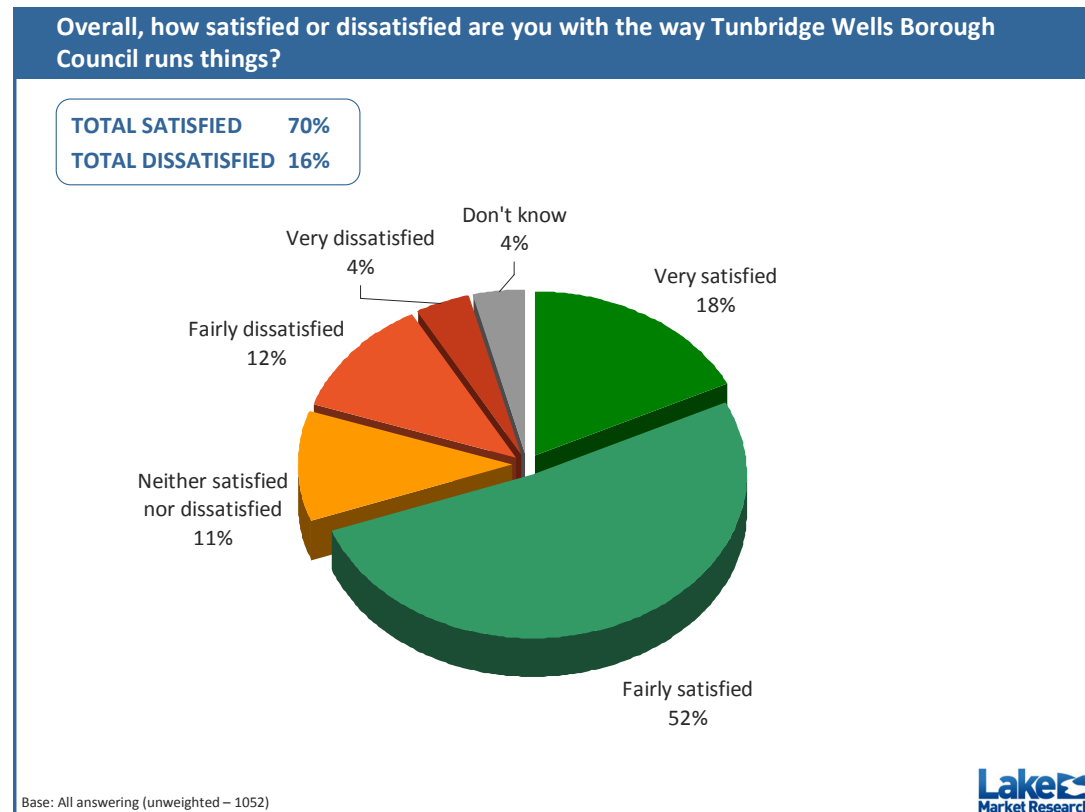
There are only a few significant differences by subgroup:

- Overall agreement is significantly higher amongst residents who have **not contacted** the Council in the past twelve months (71% compared to 61% for those who have contacted the Council).
- The proportion strongly agreeing is significantly higher amongst residents **of BME origin** compared to residents of White origin (37% compared to 16%).

### 3.4 SATISFACTION WITH HOW THE COUNCIL RUNS THINGS

The majority of residents speak favourably of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, with seven in ten (70%) indicating they are satisfied with how it runs things (18% 'very satisfied' and 52% 'fairly satisfied'), whilst just over one in six residents (16%) are dissatisfied with how the council runs things (4% 'very dissatisfied' and 12% 'fairly dissatisfied').

Overall satisfaction levels have improved from the score recorded in 2012 by +7 percentage points (from 63% to 70%).



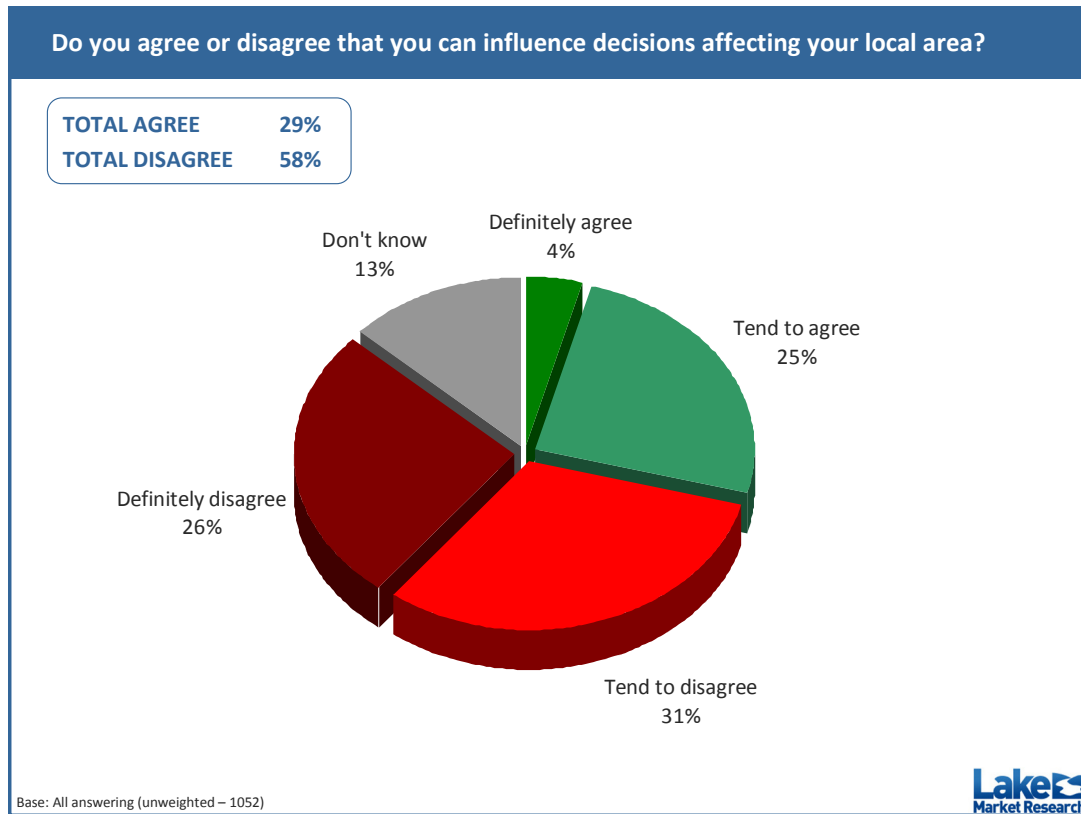
#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are few significant differences by subgroup:

- Overall satisfaction is significantly higher amongst residents who have **not contacted the Council** in the past twelve months (73% compared to 63% for those who have contacted the Council).
- The proportion strongly agreeing is significantly higher amongst **residents of BME origin** compared to White British (41% compared to 16%).

### 3.5 INFLUENCING DECISIONS

Just under a third of residents (29%) agreed that they can influence any decisions affecting their local area, and just under six in ten (58%) disagreed. Overall agreement levels have decreased from the score recorded in 2012 by +9 percentage points (from 38% to 29%).



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

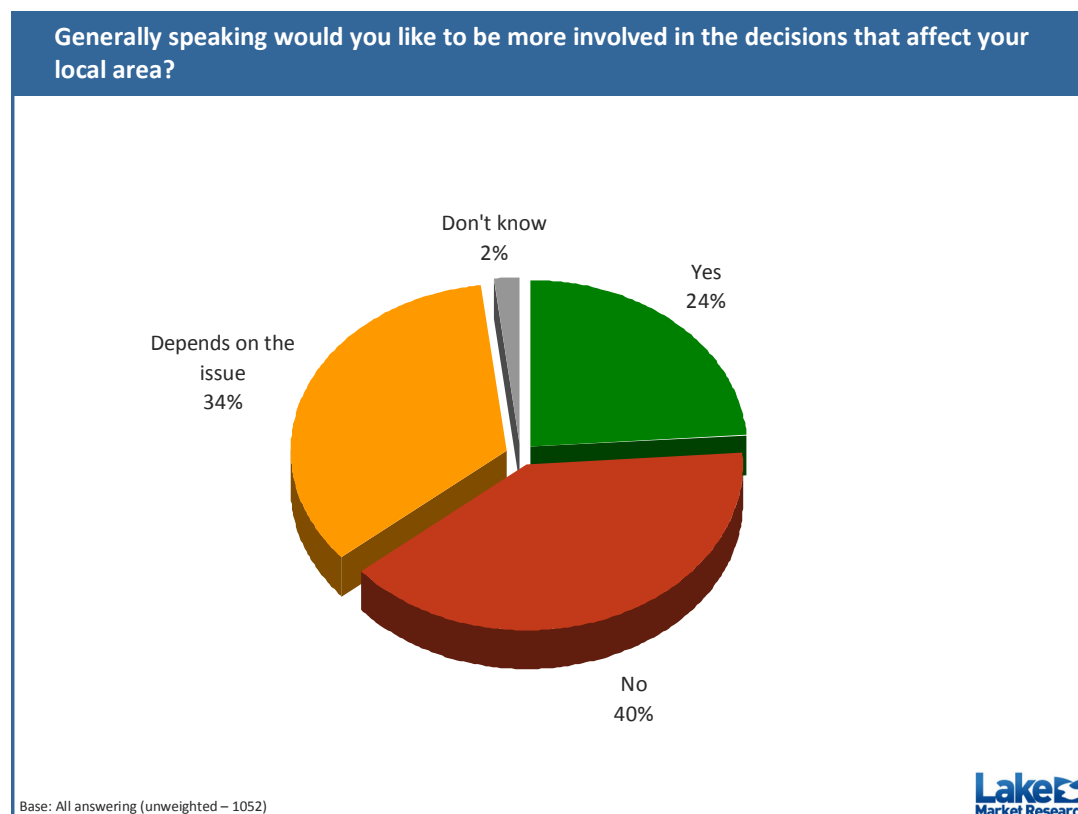
There are significant differences by age with disagreement significantly higher amongst **residents aged 35-54 years old** compared to residents aged 16-34 years old:

- 51% for residents aged 16-34 years old
- 60% for residents aged 35-54 years old
- 59% for residents aged 55 and over.



### 3.6 INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONS

Just under a quarter of residents (24%) indicated they would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area and four in ten (40%) indicated they would not like to be more involved. Just over a third were undecided (34%) and indicated it depends on the issue involved. The proportion indicating they would like to be more involved has decreased from the score recorded in 2012 by +10 percentage points (from 34% to 24%). However, at an overall level (i.e. when combining the proportions indicating 'yes' or 'depends on the issue'), proportions are broadly consistent at 56% interest this year and 51% interest in 2012.



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by age with interest in involvement significantly higher amongst **residents aged 35-54 years old** compared to other age groups; consistent with the pattern observed in terms of perceived current involvement:

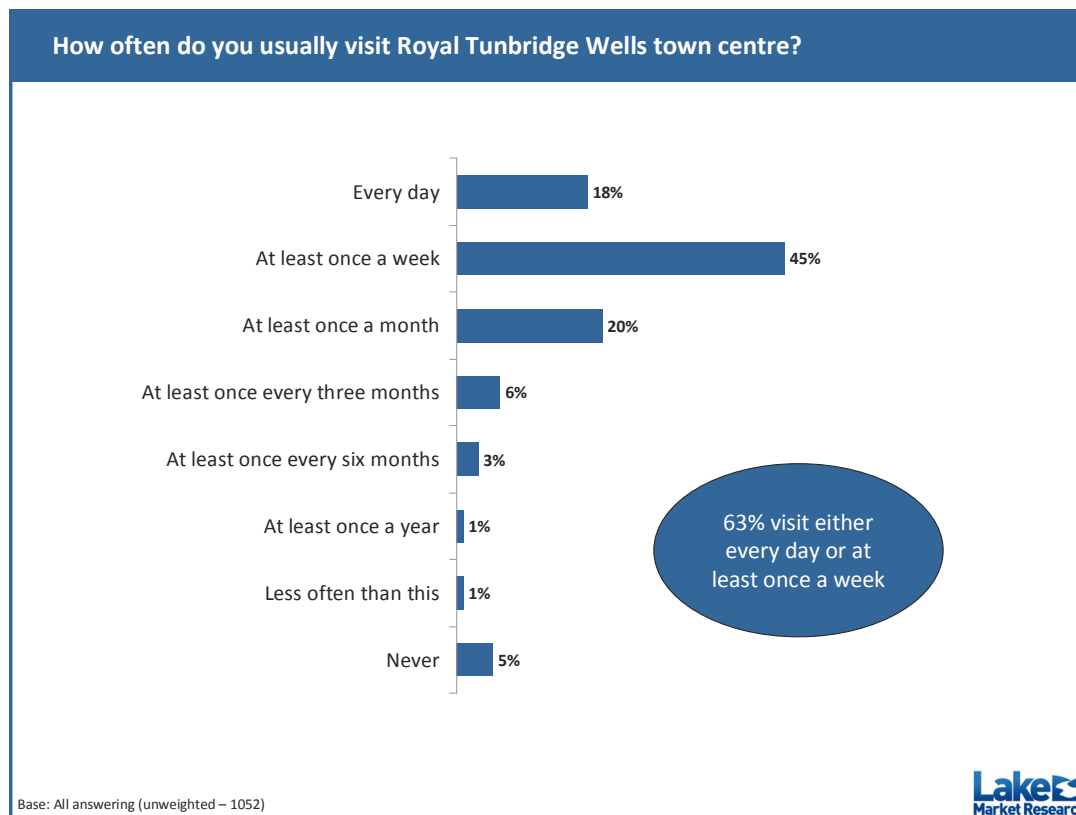
- Residents aged 16-34 - 56% interested overall (23% yes, 33% depends on the issue)
- Residents aged 35-54 - 69% interested overall (30% yes, 39% depends on the issue)
- Residents aged 55 and over - 47% interested overall (18% yes, 29% depends on the issue).

Overall interest is also significantly higher amongst residents who have not contacted the Council in the past twelve months (66% compared to 53% for those who have contacted the Council).

## 4. VISITING TOWN AND VILLAGE CENTRES IN THE BOROUGH

### 4.1 FREQUENCY OF VISITING THE TOWN CENTRE

Usage of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre is high with just under two thirds of residents (63%) claiming they visit Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre either every day or at least once a week (+5% percentage points higher than the score recorded in 2012 - 58%). A further 20% claim they visit at least once a month.



### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

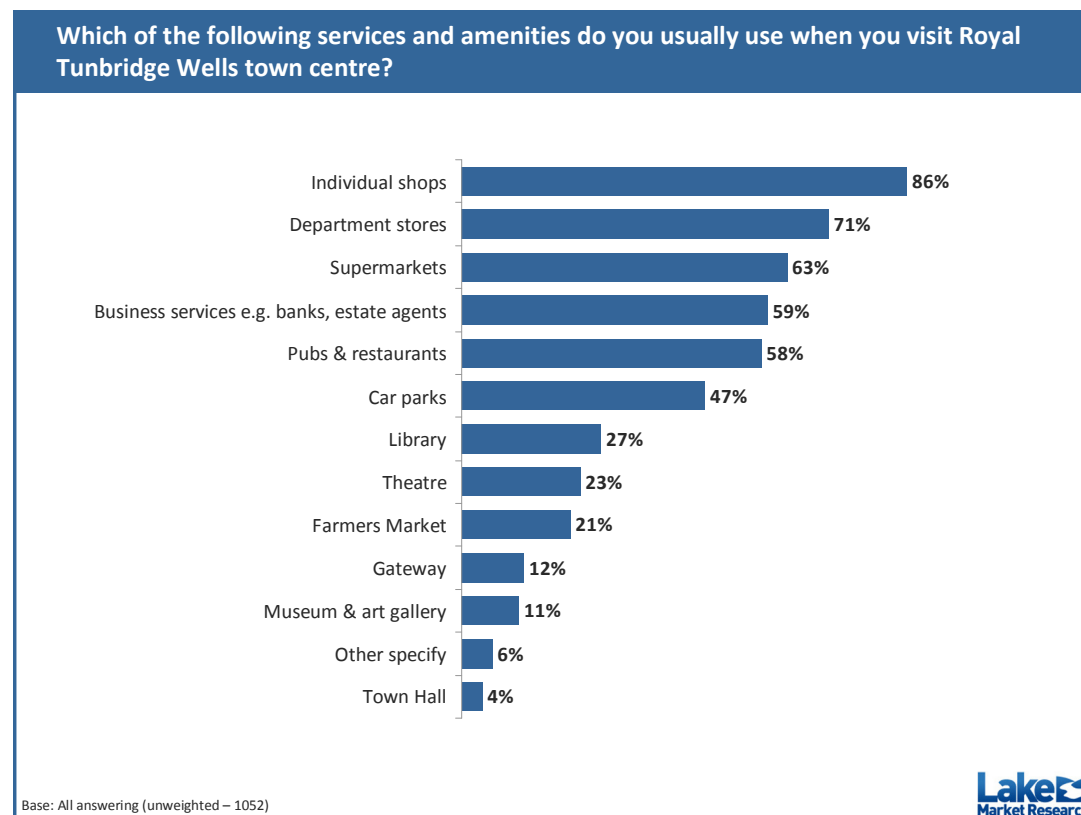
There are significant differences by age with visit frequency significantly higher amongst **residents aged 16-54 years old** compared to residents aged 55 and over:

- 72% every day / at least once a week for residents aged 16-34
- 67% every day / at least once a week for residents aged 35-54
- 53% every day / at least once a week for residents aged 55 and over.

Visit frequency is also significantly higher amongst residents who have **contacted the Council** in the past twelve months (70% every day / at least once a week compared to 60% for those who have not contacted the Council).

## 4.2 USE OF AMENITIES IN THE TOWN CENTRE

As perhaps expected, primary motivations for visiting Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre are for shopping purposes, either in the form of individual shops (86%), department stores (71%) or supermarkets (63%). Just under six in ten visit the town centre for business purposes, e.g. for banks, estate agents (59%) and for pubs and restaurants (58%). Just under half use car park facilities (47%) when they visit.

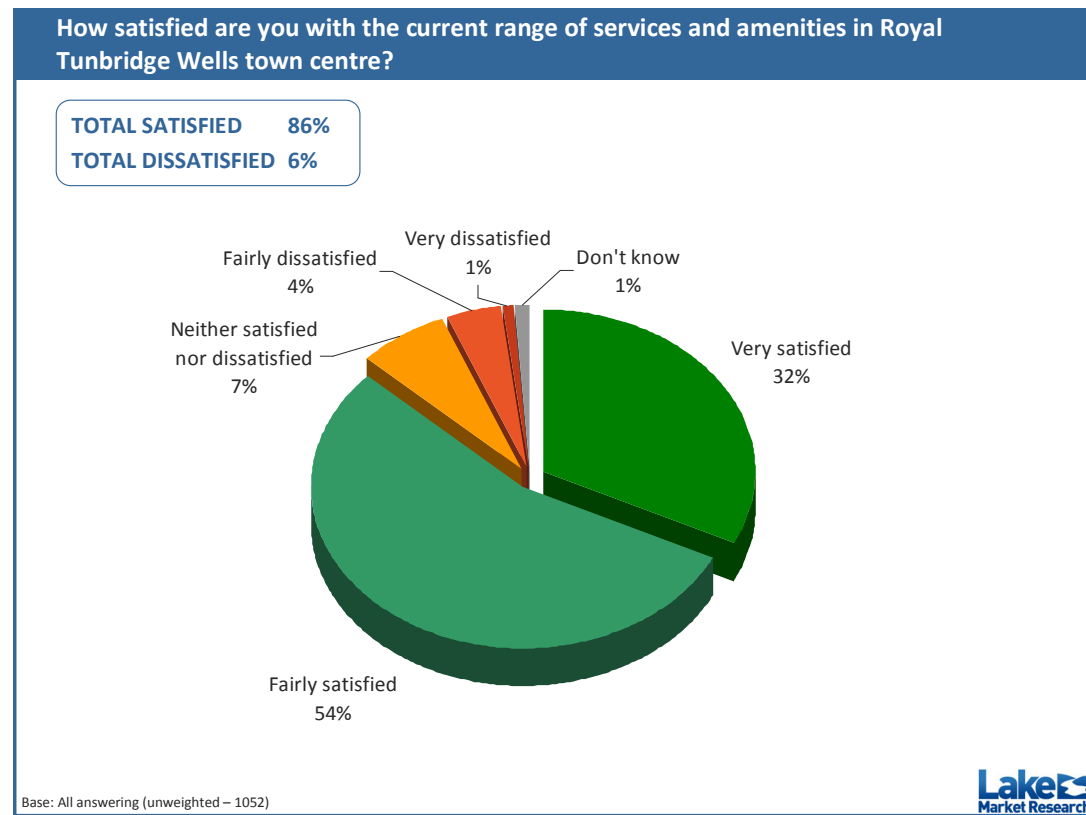


There are significant differences by gender and age groups:

- A significantly higher proportion of female residents visit individual shops (90%) and department stores (80%)
- A significantly higher proportion of male residents visit pubs and restaurants (63%)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 35-54 visit supermarkets (67%), business services (62%), pubs and restaurants (62%), car parks (55%), the library (31%), the theatre (28%) and the Farmers Market (25%).

### 4.3 SATISFACTION WITH AMENITIES IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Overall satisfaction with the current range of services and amenities in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre is high at 86% (32% very satisfied and 54% fairly satisfied). Overall satisfaction is marginally higher than the score of 83% recorded in 2012.



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by age with satisfaction significantly higher amongst **residents aged 16-34 years old** compared to residents aged 55 and over:

- 89% satisfied amongst residents aged 16-34
- 87% satisfied amongst residents aged 35-54
- 83% satisfied amongst residents aged 55 and over.

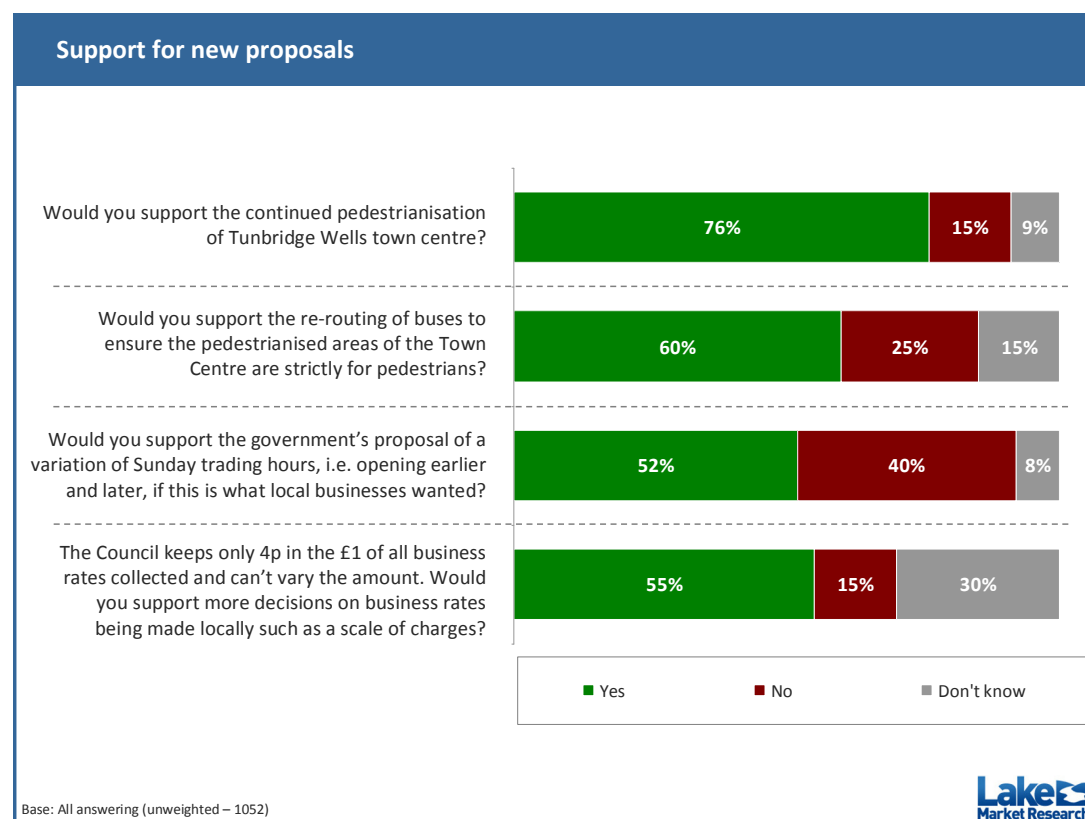
#### 4.4 SUPPORT FOR TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS

In principle, residents were then asked if they would support four town centre proposals, simply answering yes, no or don't know.

Just over three quarters (76%) of residents indicated they would support the continued pedestrianisation of Tunbridge Wells town Centre and six in ten (60%) indicated they would support the re-routing of buses to ensure the pedestrianised areas of the Town Centre are strictly for pedestrians.

Views are more polarising concerning a variation of Sunday trading hours, with 52% indicating they would support the government's proposal, i.e. opening earlier and later, and 40% indicating they would not support it.

Just over half (55%) indicated they would support more decisions on business rates being made locally, such as a scale of charges by size. There is however considerable uncertainty with regard to this topic with 30% of residents answering don't know to this proposal.



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

Support for local decisions with regards to business rates are broadly consistent across the demographic groups. There are however significant differences by age with significantly

higher support for the town centre proposals amongst **residents aged 18-54 years old** compared to residents aged 55 and over:

Continued pedestrianisation of Tunbridge Wells town centre:

- 88% yes amongst residents aged 16-34
- 77% yes amongst residents aged 35-54
- 67% yes amongst residents aged 55 and over.

Re-routing of buses to ensure pedestrianised areas are strictly for pedestrians:

- 64% yes amongst residents aged 16-34
- 64% yes amongst residents aged 35-54
- 53% yes amongst residents aged 55 and over.

Variation of Sunday trading hours:

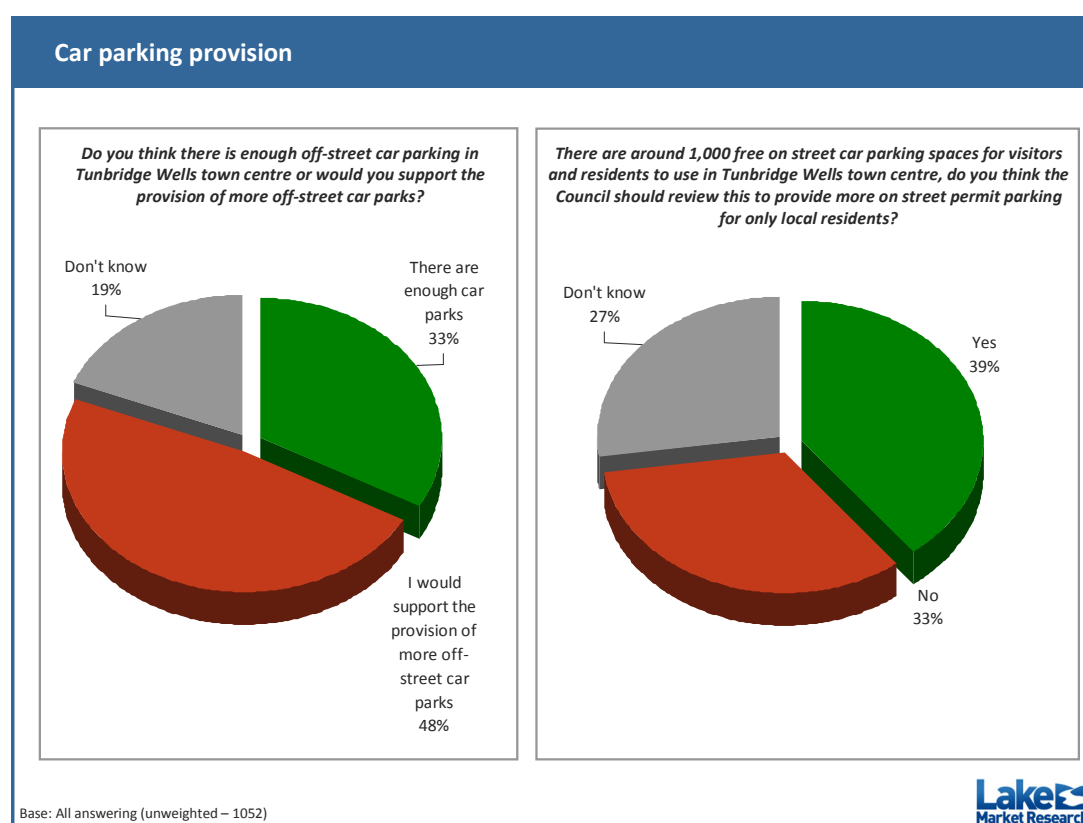
- 68% yes amongst residents aged 16-34
- 56% yes amongst residents aged 35-54
- 36% yes amongst residents aged 55 and over.

## 4.5 CAR PARKING PROVISION

Residents were asked to consider the amount of car parking available in Tunbridge Wells town centre from the perspective of off-street car parking and on street car parking spaces.

Just under half of residents (48%) indicated they would support the provision of more off-street car parks in Tunbridge Wells town centre and a third (33%) indicated they believed there are already enough car parks. 19% indicated they were not sure.

Views are split in terms of on street car parking with four in ten indicating the Council should review and provide more on street permit parking for only local residents, three in ten disagreeing and 27% indicating they were not sure.



### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

Concerning provision of more off-street car parks in Tunbridge Wells town centre, there are significant differences by age with a significantly higher proportion of **residents aged 16-54 years old** indicating there are enough car parks compared to residents aged 55 and over (it should be noted however that there is a higher proportion of residents aged 55 and over indicating they were not sure as opposed to supporting more car parks):

- 38% yes amongst residents aged 16-34
- 37% yes amongst residents aged 35-54



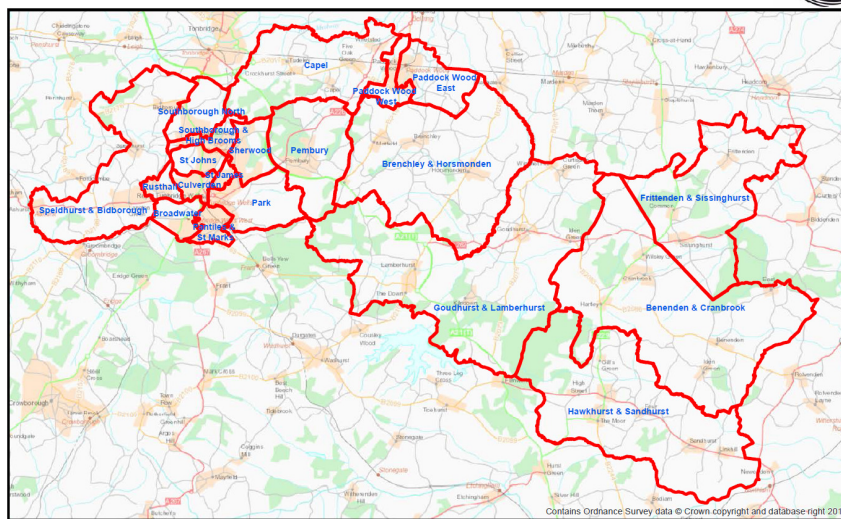
- 26% yes amongst residents aged 55 and over.

There are also differences by ward as follows:

	Base size	% I would support the provision of more off street car parks
Total	1,057	48%
Southborough North	36	74%
Broadwater	27	73%
St. John's	54	63%
Brenchley	44	60%
Park	78	59%
St. James'	76	57%
Capel	18	56%
Pembury	51	56%
Speldhurst	45	53%

Concerning provision of more on street permit parking for only local residents, the differences by ward are in line with local proximity:

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH - WARD MAP



Scale 1:140,000

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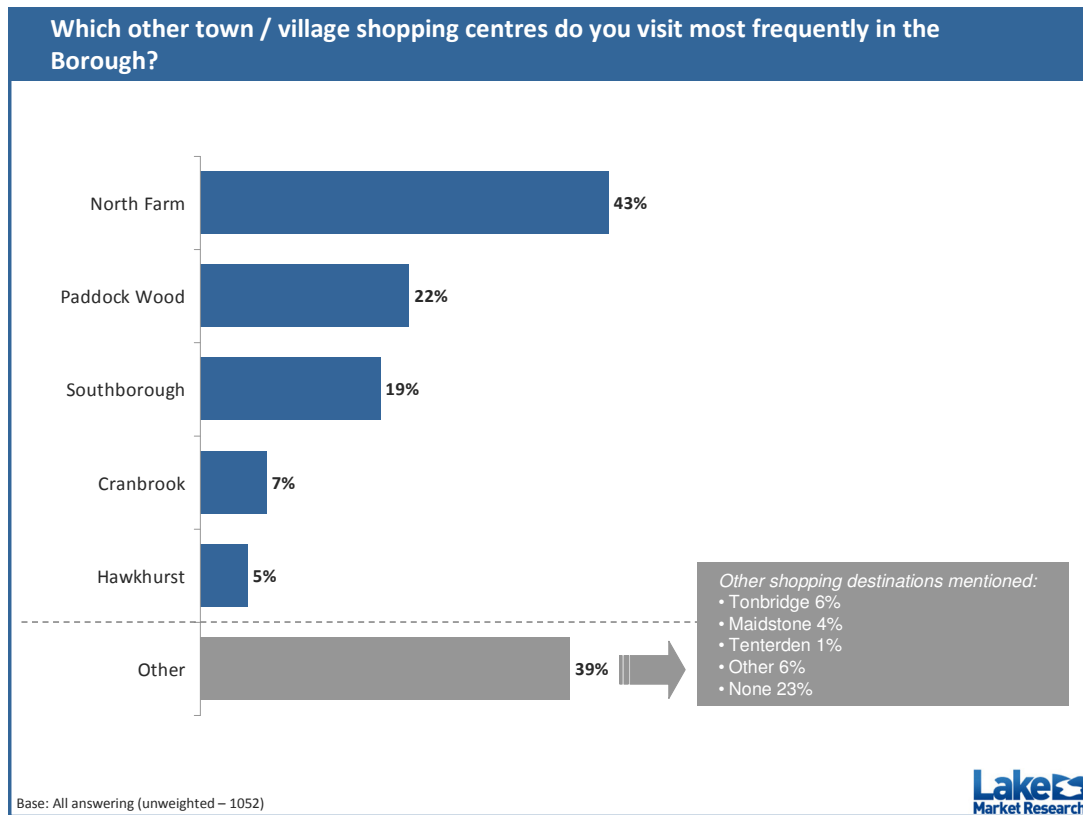
Map Dated: October 2013

	Base size	% yes
Total	1,057	39%
Brenchley	44	62%
St. James'	76	60%
Culverden	90	56%
Park	78	54%
Broadwater	27	52%
Southborough and High Brooms	81	48%
Pembury	51	44%
Frittenden	18	44%
Rusthall	70	41%
Southborough North	36	40%

#### 4.6 OTHER TOWNS / VILLAGE CENTRES VISITED

Just under a quarter (23%) indicated they do not visit any other town / village shopping centres in the Borough frequently. Amongst those who do, North Farm, Paddock Wood and Southborough are the most popular (at 43%, 22% and 19% respectively).

Other town / village centres were also mentioned (some of these were not in the Borough).

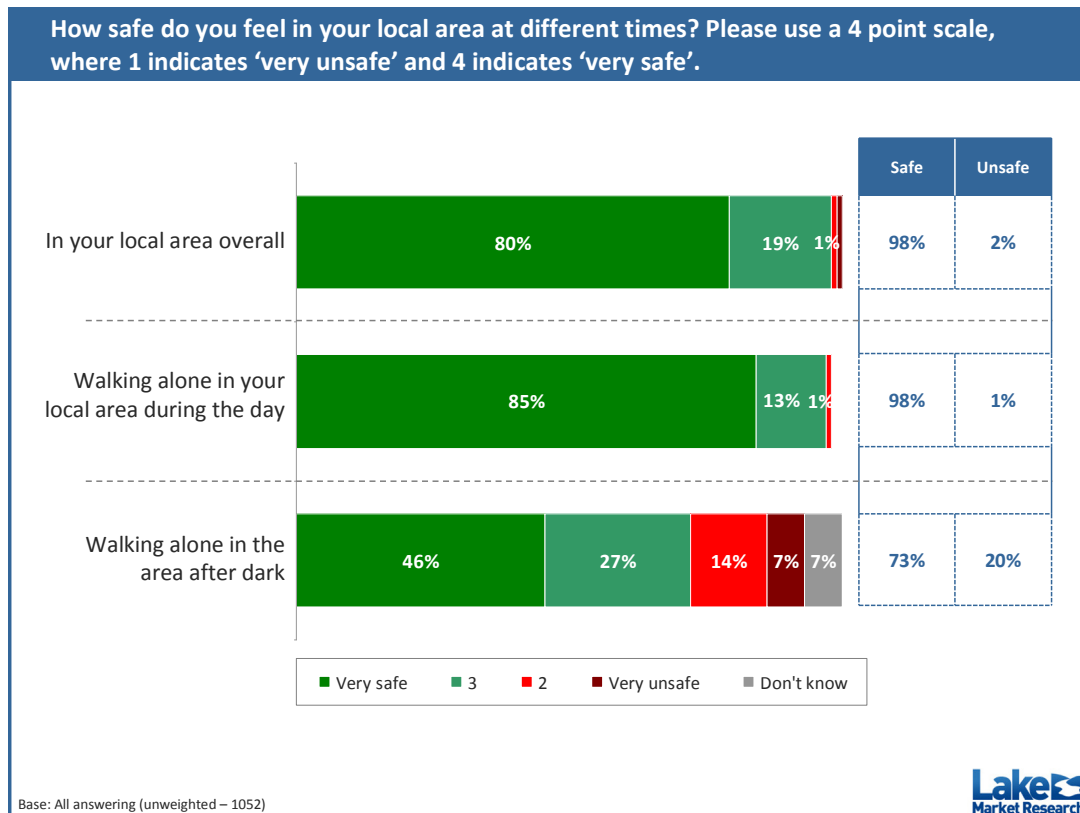


## 5. SAFETY IN THE LOCAL AREA

### 5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF DAY

Residents were asked how safe they felt in their local area at an overall level as well as when walking alone during the day and walking alone after dark.

The vast majority of residents (98%) indicated they feel safe in the local area at an overall level as well as walking alone during the day. This proportion falls to just under three quarters (73%) indicating they feel safe walking alone after dark.



### BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:

As perhaps expected, there are significant differences by gender and age with a significantly higher proportion of **male residents** and **residents aged 16-54 years old** feeling safe walking alone in their local area during the day and after dark compared to residents aged 55 and over:

- Male residents: 90% feeling very safe during the day and 61% feeling very safe after dark
- Female residents: 81% feeling very safe during the day and 32% feeling very safe after dark

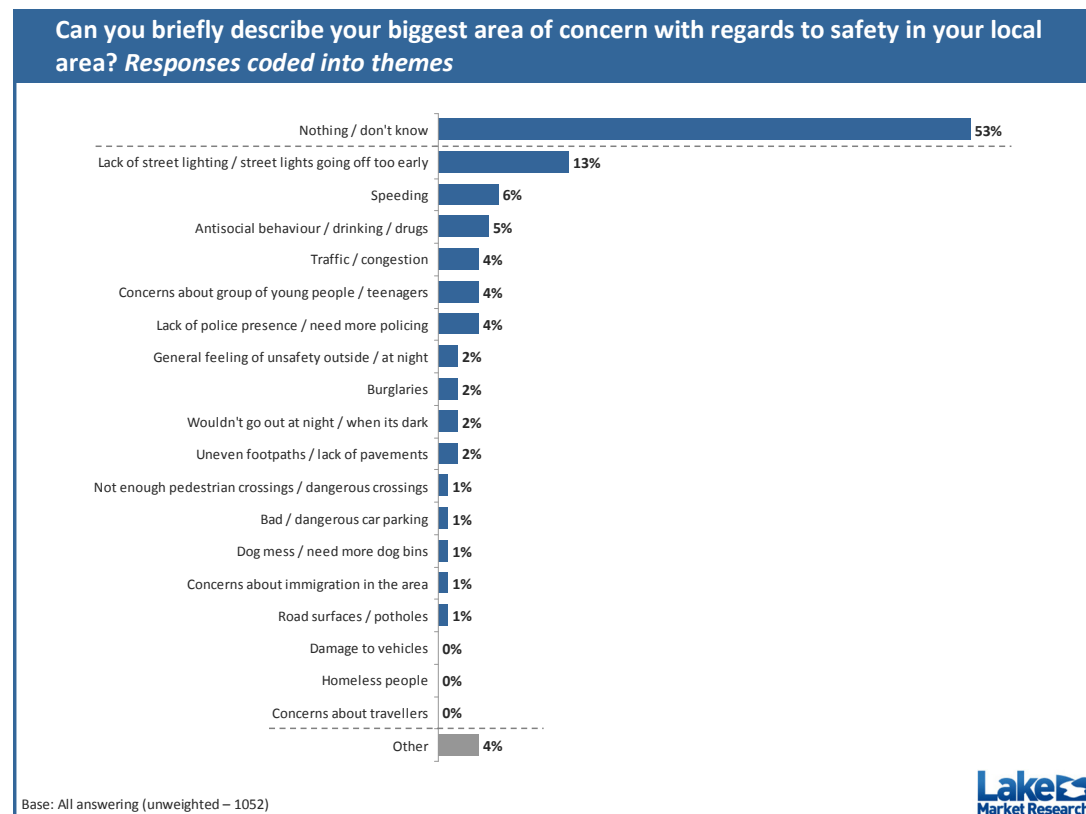
- Residents aged 16-34: 88% feeling very safe during the day and 54% feeling very safe after dark
- Residents aged 35-54: 89% feeling very safe during the day and 50% feeling very safe after dark
- Residents aged 55 and over: 79% feeling safe during the day and 36% feeling very safe after dark.

There are also differences by ward as follows:

<b>How safe do you feel in your local area at different times...? Walking alone in the area where you live after dark</b>	<b>Base size</b>	<b>Net: Unsafe</b>	<b>Net: Safe</b>
Total	1,057	20%	73%
Pembury	51	3%	97%
Benenden	71	9%	89%
Capel	18	3%	85%
St. John's	54	15%	83%
Hawkhurst	28	20%	80%
St. James'	76	17%	79%
Culverden	90	17%	77%
Speldhurst	45	21%	75%
Frittenden	18	28%	72%
Southborough and High Brooms	81	24%	71%
Pantiles	72	26%	71%
Sherwood	60	27%	70%
Goudhurst	19	33%	67%
Brenchley	44	29%	67%
Paddock Wood West	30	14%	66%
Park	78	28%	62%
Broadwater	27	21%	62%
Paddock Wood East	56	11%	61%
Rusthall	70	26%	60%
Southborough North	36	36%	59%

## 5.2 BIGGEST AREA OF CONCERN WITH REGARDS TO SAFETY

Residents were asked to describe their biggest area of concern with regards to safety in their local area in their own words. We have reviewed the open ended comments collected and have coded these into themes for the purposes of reporting the findings. Just over half of residents indicated that they did not have any concerns with regards to safety or were unsure (53%). Amongst those reporting a concern, a perceived lack of street lighting / lights going off too early, speeding, anti social behaviour, traffic / congestion and a lack of police presence were the most commonly cited.



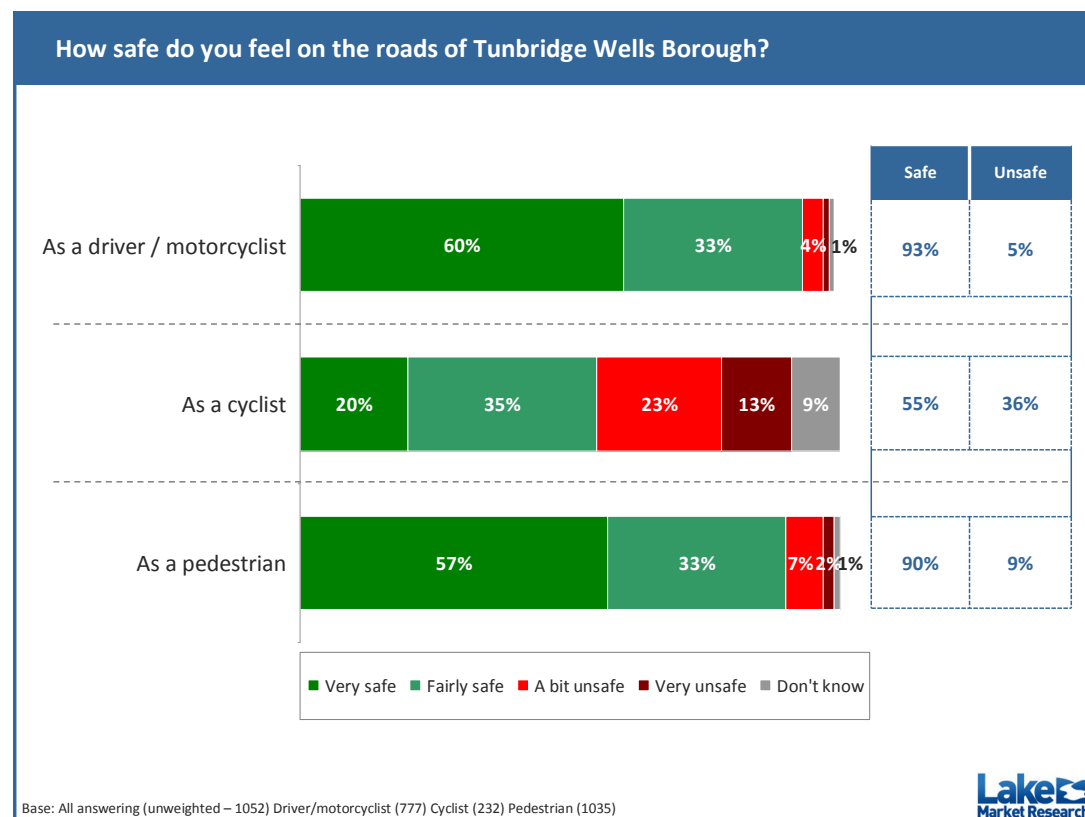
As perhaps expected, there are differences observed by ward:

	Base size	Lack of street lighting / street lights going off too early	Speeding	Antisocial behaviour / drinking / drugs	Traffic / congestion	Concerns about group of young people / teenagers	Lack of police presence / need more policing
Total	1,057	13%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Brenchley	44	29%	9%	0%	6%	2%	3%
Southborough and High Brooms	81	24%	8%	14%	8%	5%	3%
St. John's	54	21%	4%	3%	4%	0%	1%
Speldhurst	45	17%	14%	7%	12%	4%	3%
Park	78	18%	8%	8%	2%	3%	15%
Paddock W West	30	6%	7%	3%	0%	21%	3%
Pantiles	72	11%	4%	7%	0%	13%	9%

### 5.3 PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY ON THE ROADS

Residents were asked to indicate how safe they feel on the roads of the Tunbridge Wells Borough from three perspectives: 1) As a driver/motorcyclist, 2) As a cyclist and 3) As a pedestrian. For the purposes of reporting, we have removed the proportions of residents who indicated the question was not applicable in the chart below (i.e. they did not travel in this manner) – these proportions were 26% as a driver/motorcyclist, 78% as a cyclist and 2% as a pedestrian.

The vast majority of residents feel safe on the roads as a driver / motorcyclist (93%) and as a pedestrian (90%). Views vary amongst cyclists with just over half (55%) feeling safe and just over a third (36%) feeling unsafe.



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

As perhaps expected, there are significant differences by age with a significantly higher proportion of **residents aged 16-34 years old** feeling safe from all three perspectives:

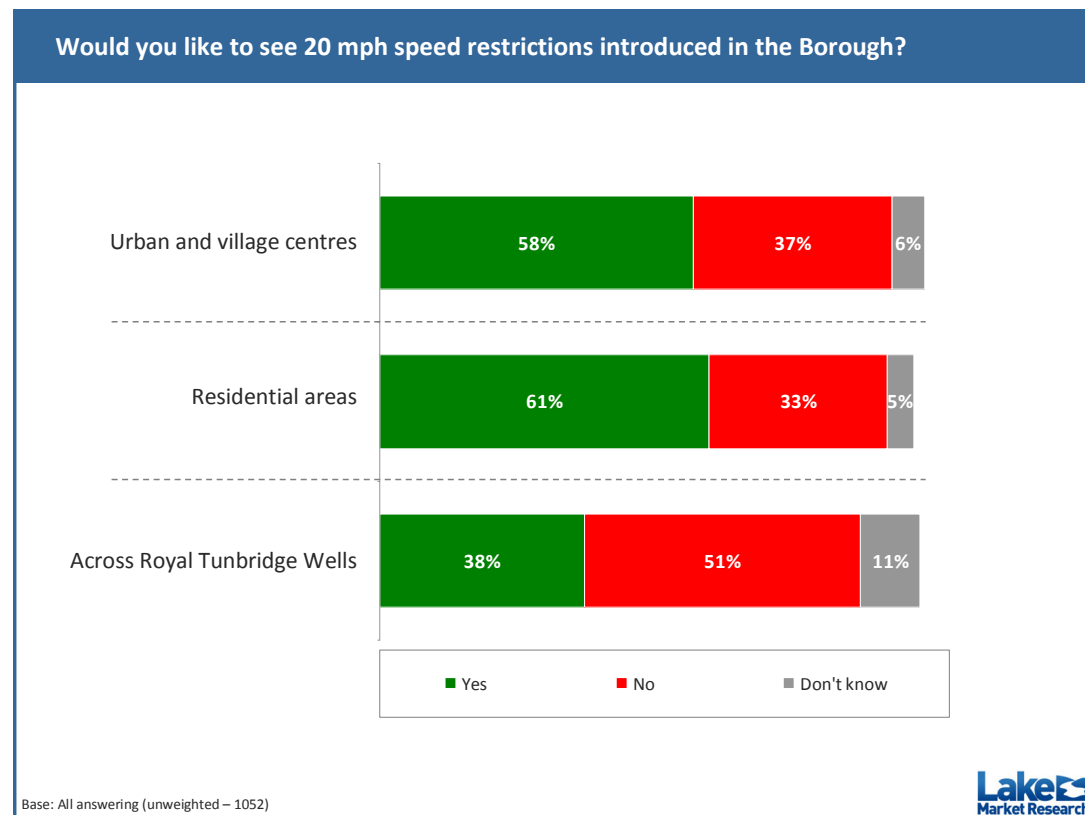
- Residents aged 16-34: 63% feeling very safe as a driver/motorcyclist, 31% feeling very safe as a cyclist and 68% feeling very safe as a pedestrian
- Residents aged 35-54: 62% feeling very safe as a driver/motorcyclist, 13% feeling very safe as a cyclist and 59% feeling very safe as a pedestrian

- Residents aged 55 and over: 55% feeling very safe as a driver/motorcyclist, 24% feeling very safe as a cyclist and 47% feeling very safe as a pedestrian.

#### 5.4 20 MPH SPEED RESTRICTIONS

Residents were informed that '20 mph restrictions are now in place in many parts of the country. Evidence suggests that reducing the speed limit makes our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists (particularly children and the elderly and improves the overall quality of the environment).' They were then asked whether they would like to see 20 mph speed restrictions introduced in the Borough in three instances: 1) Urban and village centres, 2) Residential areas and 3) Across Royal Tunbridge Wells.

There is interest in introducing 20 mph speed restrictions in urban and village centres (58% yes) and residential areas (61% yes). As perhaps expected, there is less interest in introducing 20 mph speed restrictions across Royal Tunbridge Wells (38% yes).



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

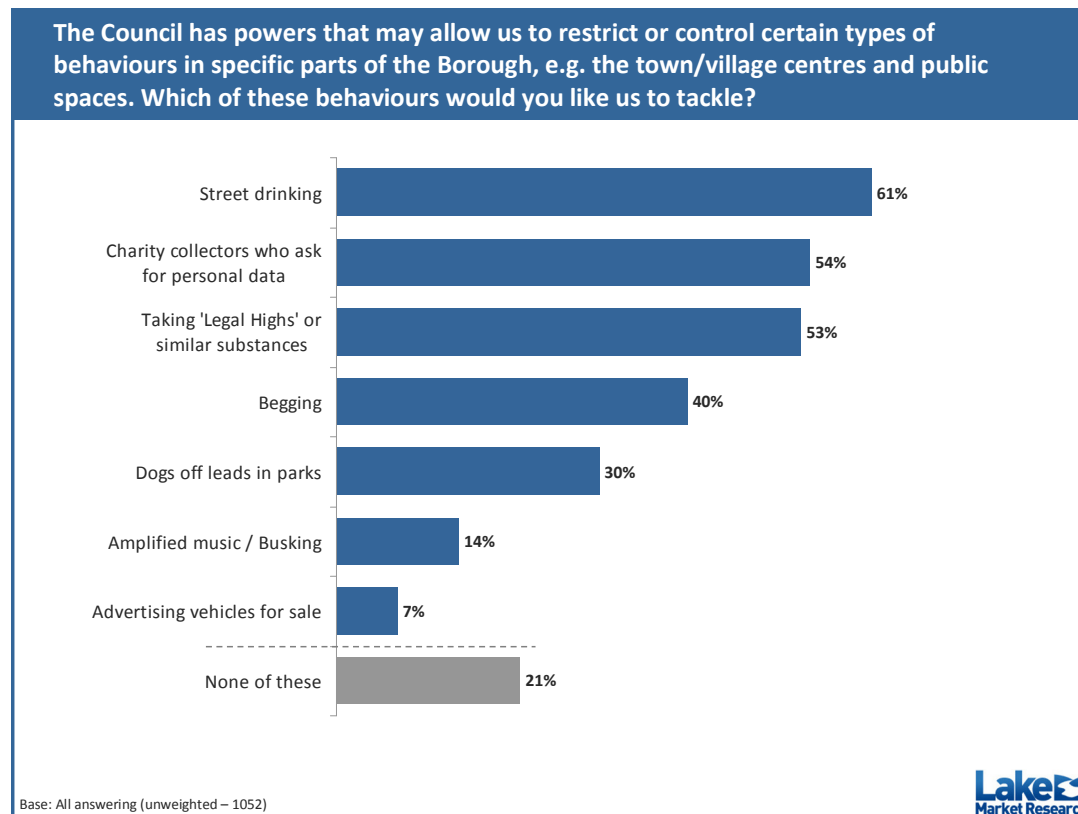
As perhaps expected, there are significant differences by age with a significantly higher proportion of **residents aged 35-54 years old** agreeing to an introduction of 20 mph speed restrictions in all three instances compared to residents aged 16-34:

- Residents aged 16-34: 49% yes in urban and village centres, 54% yes in residential areas and 29% yes across Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Residents aged 35-54: 62% yes in urban and village centres, 68% yes in residential areas and 36% yes across Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Residents aged 55 and over: 58% yes in urban and village centres, 59% yes in residential areas and 46% yes across Royal Tunbridge Wells.

## 5.5 COUNCIL INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURS IN TOWN/VILLAGE CENTRES/ PUBLIC SPACES

Of the prompted list given to residents, the most popular behaviour that residents would like the Council to tackle are street drinking (61%), charity collectors who ask for personal data (54%) and taking 'legal highs' or similar substances (53%). Begging and taking dogs off of leads at parks is also referenced by four in ten and three in ten respectively.

Just over one in five indicated they would not like the Council to tackle any of the prompted behaviours.



### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

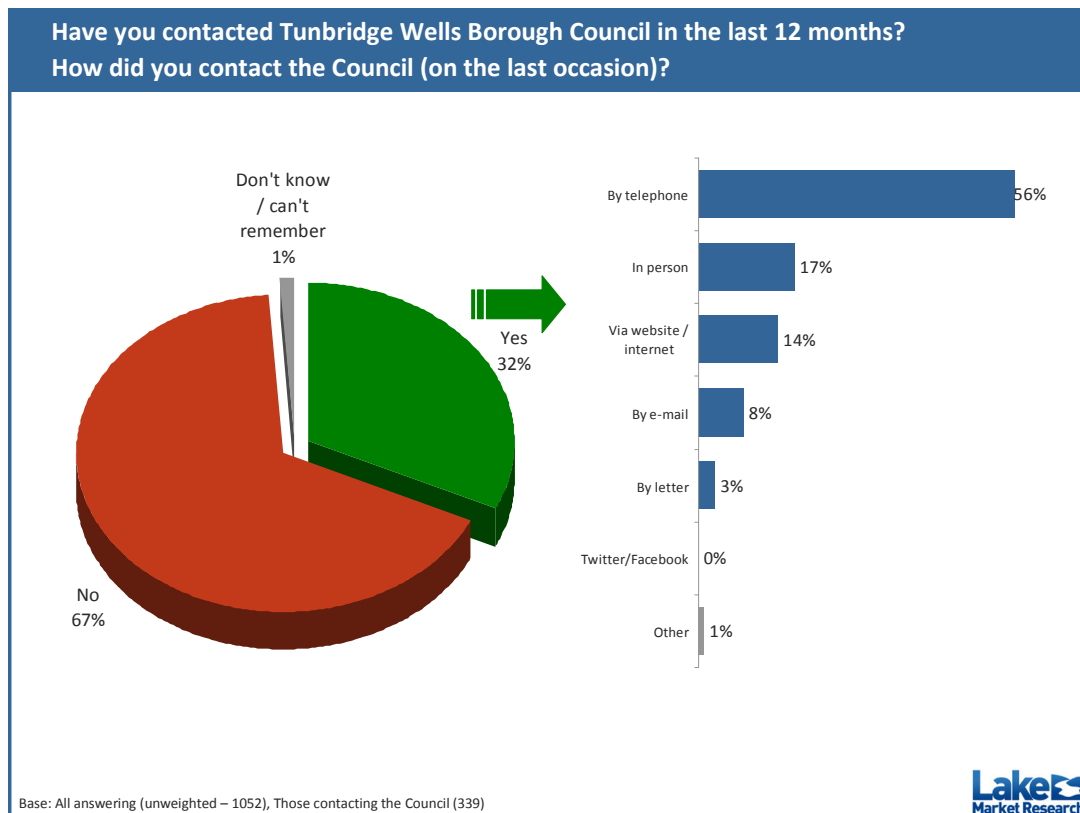
A significantly higher proportion of **residents aged 55 and over** selected all of the prompted behaviours.



## 6. CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL

### 6.1 MAKING CONTACT WITH COUNCIL AND SATISFACTION WITH CONTACT

Just under a third (32%) of residents claimed they have contacted Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in the last 12 months. The most common method of last contact is by telephone at 56% of those making contact. 17% claimed they last made contact in person and 14% claimed they last made contact via the website / internet.



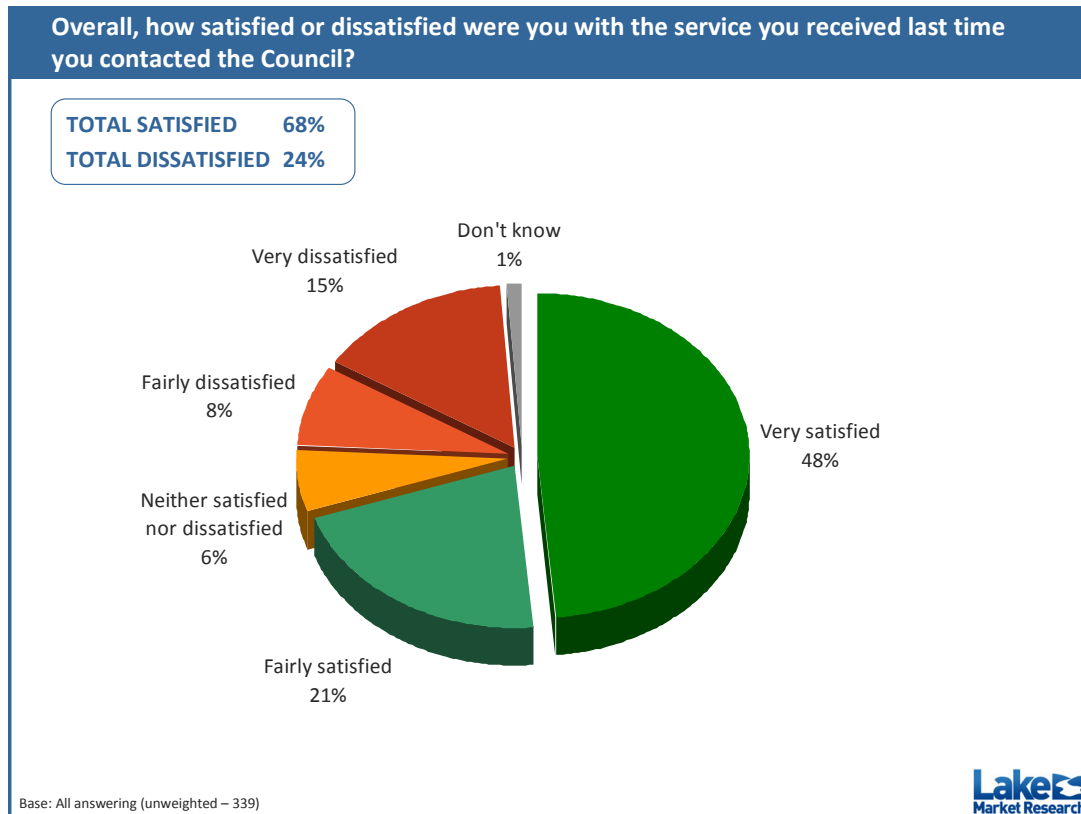
### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by **age and disability** subgroups as follows:

- Residents aged 16-34: 30% made contact in the last 12 months. Main method of contact was by telephone (52%) but a significantly higher proportion made contact via the website / internet (18%).
- Residents aged 35-54: 37% made contact in the last 12 months. Main method of contact was by telephone (50%) but a significantly higher proportion made contact via the website / internet (18%).
- Residents aged 55 and over: 29% made contact in the last 12 months. Main method of contact was by telephone (67%) and this proportion is significantly higher than the other age groups.

- Residents who are permanently sick or disabled: 59% made contact in the last 12 months. Main method of contact was by telephone (61%) and in person (28%).

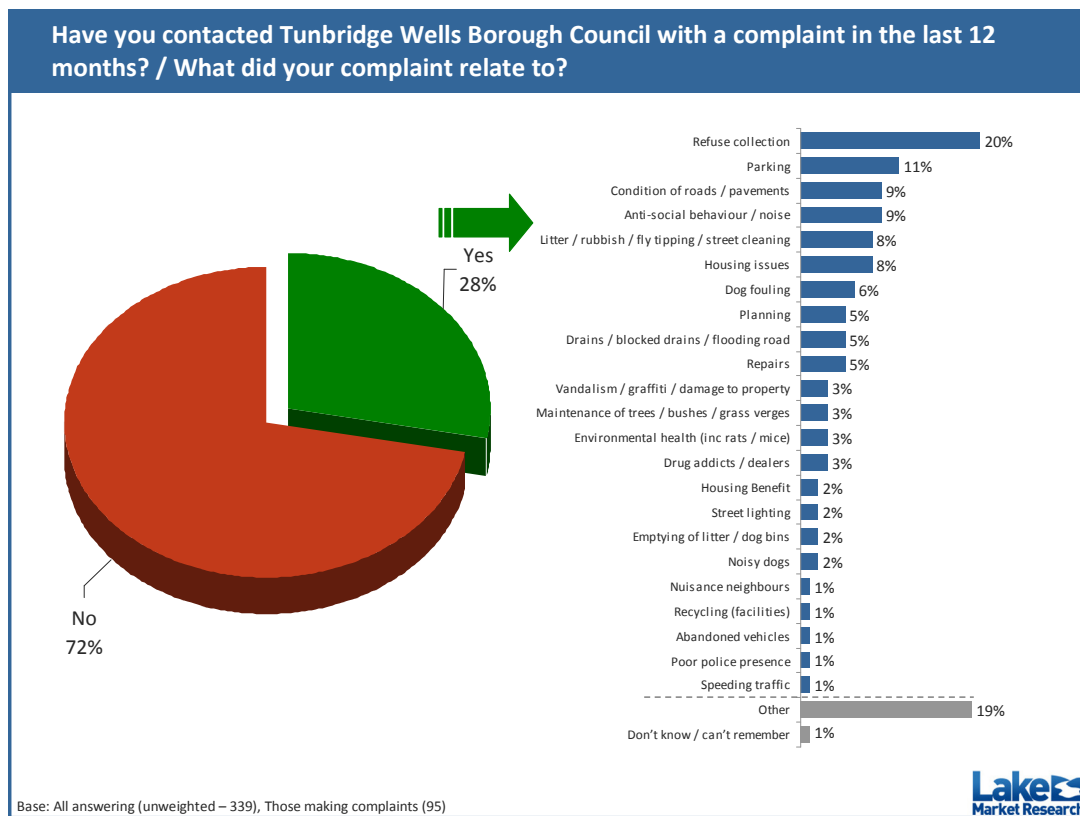
Residents who had made contact with the Council in the last 12 months were asked for their overall satisfaction with the service they received on the last occasion they made contact. Just over two thirds (68%) indicated they were satisfied with the service they received (49% very satisfied and 21% fairly satisfied). Just under a quarter (24%) were dissatisfied with the service they received. There were no significant differences observed by subgroup.



## 6.2 COMPLAINT CONTACT AND SATISFACTION

Residents who had made contact with the Council in the last 12 months were asked whether they had contacted the Council to make a complaint in the last 12 months. Just under three in ten (28%) of those contacting the Council had done so to make a complaint. At a total sample level (i.e. including those who have not contacted the Council in the last 12 months), 9% of the residents interviewed have contacted the Council to make a complaint in the last 12 months.

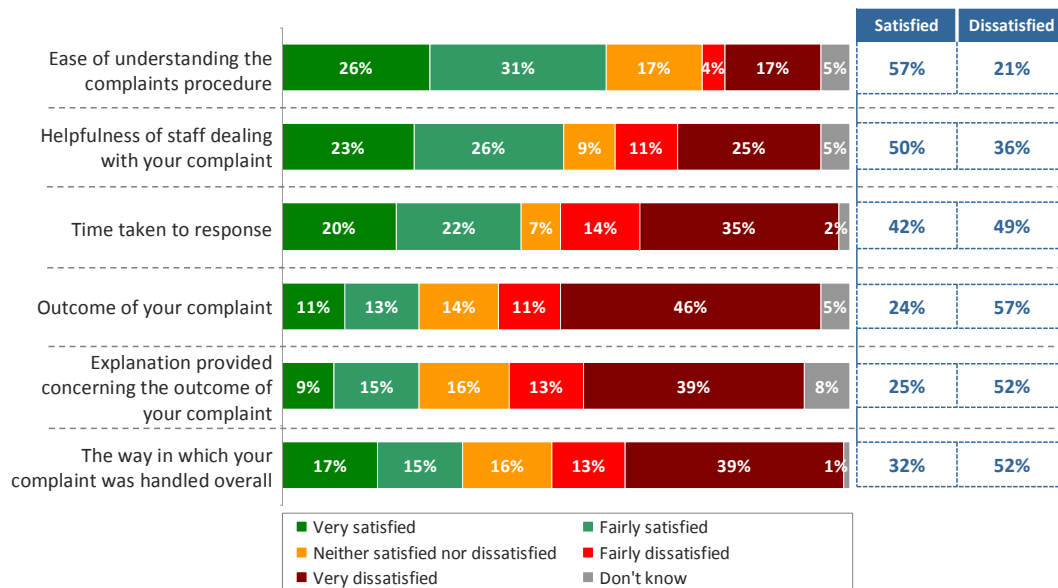
A number of reasons were identified in terms of the nature of the complaint. Refuse collection, parking, road / pavement conditions and anti-social behaviour / noise were however the most common.



Satisfaction with the varying elements of the Council's complaints procedure vary widely. Satisfaction ratings were higher concerning the perceived ease of understanding the procedure and helpfulness of staff dealing with the complaint (57% and 50% satisfied respectively).

Satisfaction was considerably lower concerning outcome of their complaint, the explanation provided concerning the outcome of the complaint and the way in which the complaint was handled overall.

## How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following elements of the Council's complaints procedure?



Base: All answering (unweighted – 95)

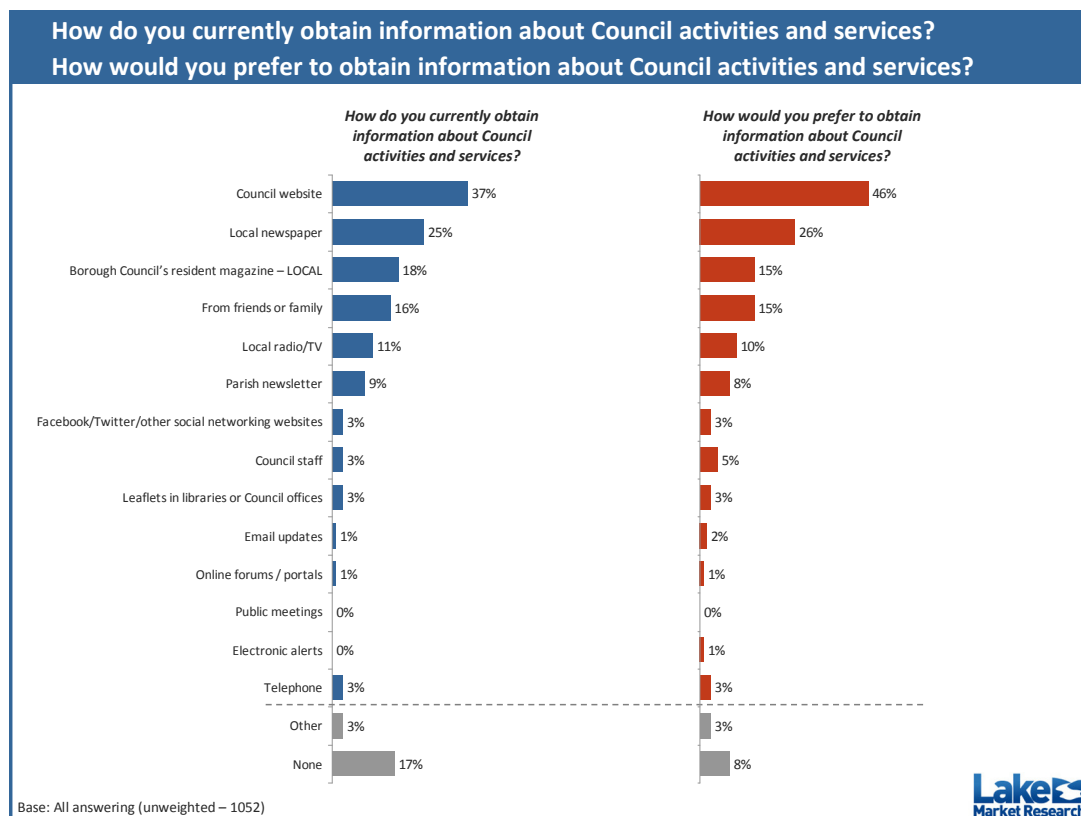
## 7. COMMUNICATIONS

### 7.1 CURRENT METHODS OF ACCESSING INFORMATION VS. PREFERRED METHODS

Residents were asked how they currently obtain information about Council activities and services followed by how they would prefer to obtain information about Council activities and services.

The most common methods for currently obtaining information about Council activities and services are the Council website, the local newspaper and the Borough Council's resident magazine – LOCAL (at 37%, 25% and 18% respectively). The proportion using the Council website has increased versus the proportion recorded in 2012 by +14 percentage points (from 23% to 37%).

The most common preferences for obtaining information about Council activities and services are broadly consistent with current methods. The Council website, the local newspaper and the Borough Council's resident magazine – LOCAL are the most common preferences.



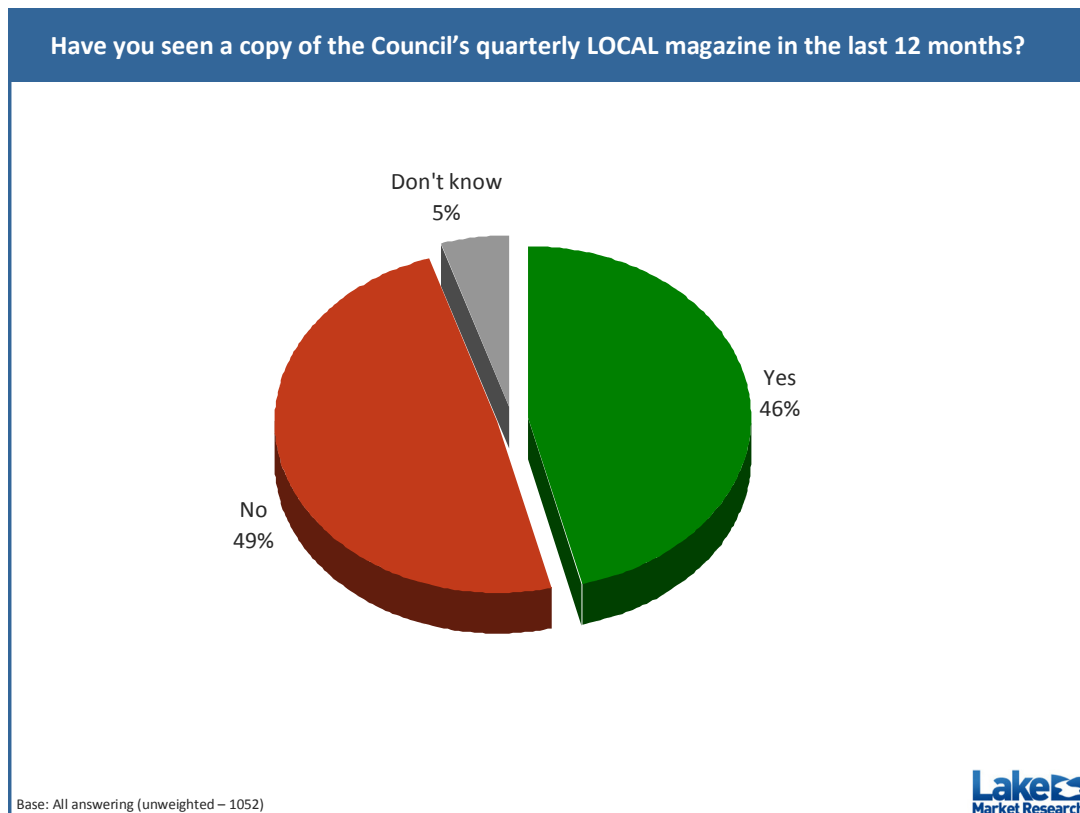
## **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

As perhaps expected, there are significant differences by **age** in terms of current methods and preferred methods. Current method differences are highlighted below (preferred methods follow a consistent pattern):

- Residents aged 16-34: The Council website is the primary means of obtaining information at 52% (all other contact methods are under 17%)
- Residents aged 35-54: The Council website is the most common means of obtaining information (47%) but the local newspaper and Borough Council's resident magazine – LOCAL are also common (24% and 19% respectively)
- Residents aged 55 and over: The local newspaper is the most common means of obtaining information (37%), and the Borough Council's resident magazine – LOCAL is also common (23%). Council website access is significantly lower at 23%.

### **7.2 BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESIDENT MAGAZINE - LOCAL**

Just under half of residents interviewed (46%) indicated they have seen a copy of the LOCAL magazine in the last 12 months. Whilst a claim of seeing a copy does not directly infer readership, it is likely we can assume that the majority of these residents have reviewed a magazine.

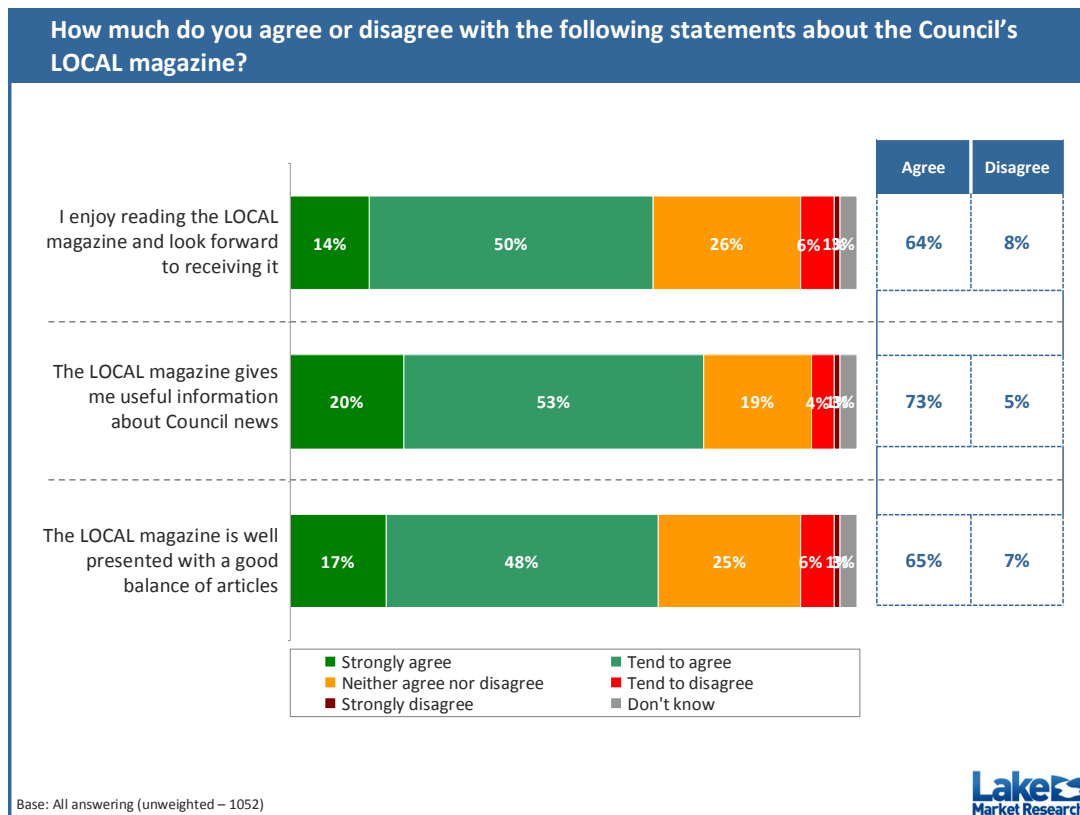


## **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

As perhaps expected, there are significant differences by gender and age with a significantly higher proportion of female residents and residents aged 35 and over indicating they have seen a copy of the LOCAL magazine:

- Male residents: 43% yes
- Female residents: 50% yes
- Residents aged 16-34: 24% yes
- Residents aged 35-54: 49% yes
- Residents aged 55 and over: 59% yes.

All residents who indicated they had seen a copy of the LOCAL magazine in the last 12 months were asked whether they agree with three statements about the magazine. Just under three quarters (73%) of residents agreed that the LOCAL magazine gives useful information about Council news. Just under two thirds agreed that they enjoyed reading the LOCAL magazine and look forward to receiving it (64%) and the magazine is well presented with a good balance of articles (65%).



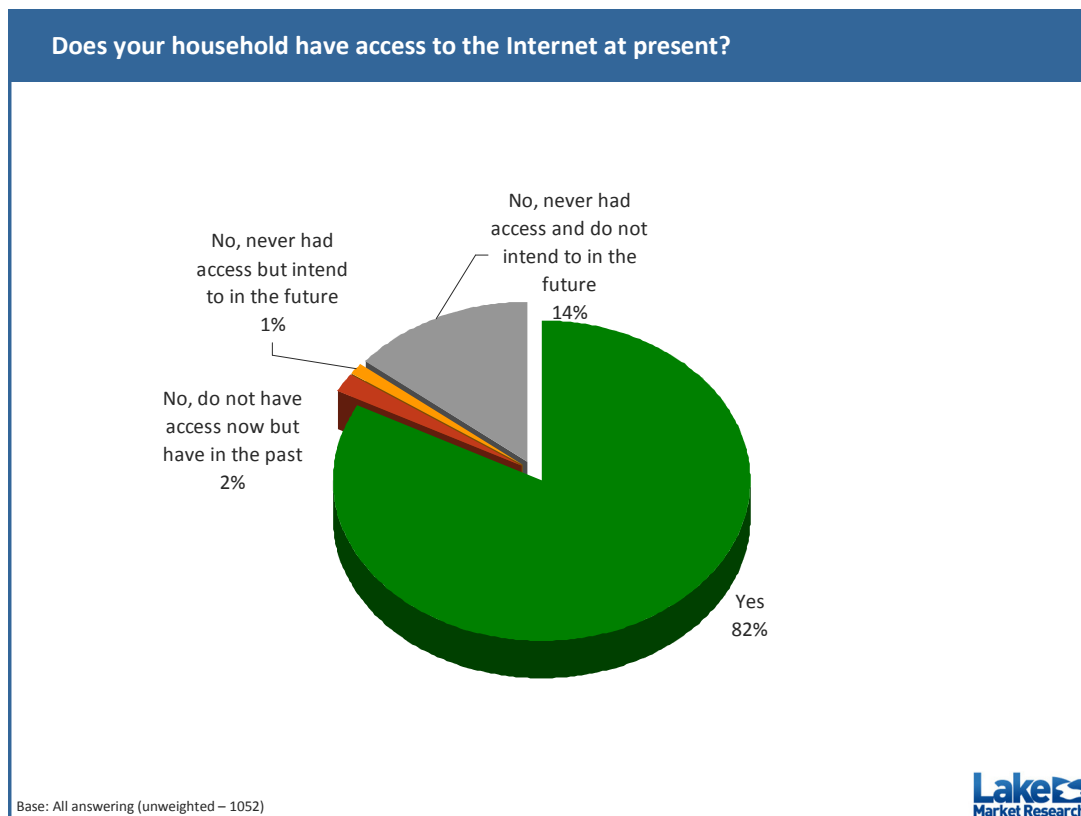
## **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

Consistent with claimed methods of obtaining information, there are significant differences by age with a significantly higher proportion of **residents aged 35 and over** indicating agreement with the statements:

- Residents aged 16-34: 66% agree they enjoy reading the LOCAL magazine, 70% agree the LOCAL magazine gives me useful information, 70% agree the LOCAL magazine is well presented with a good balance of articles.
- Residents aged 35-54: 57% agree they enjoy reading the LOCAL magazine, 67% agree the LOCAL magazine gives me useful information, 56% agree the LOCAL magazine is well presented with a good balance of articles.
- Residents aged 55 and over: 69% agree they enjoy reading the LOCAL magazine, 78% agree the LOCAL magazine gives me useful information, 72% agree the LOCAL magazine is well presented with a good balance of articles.

### **7.3 USE OF THE INTERNET**

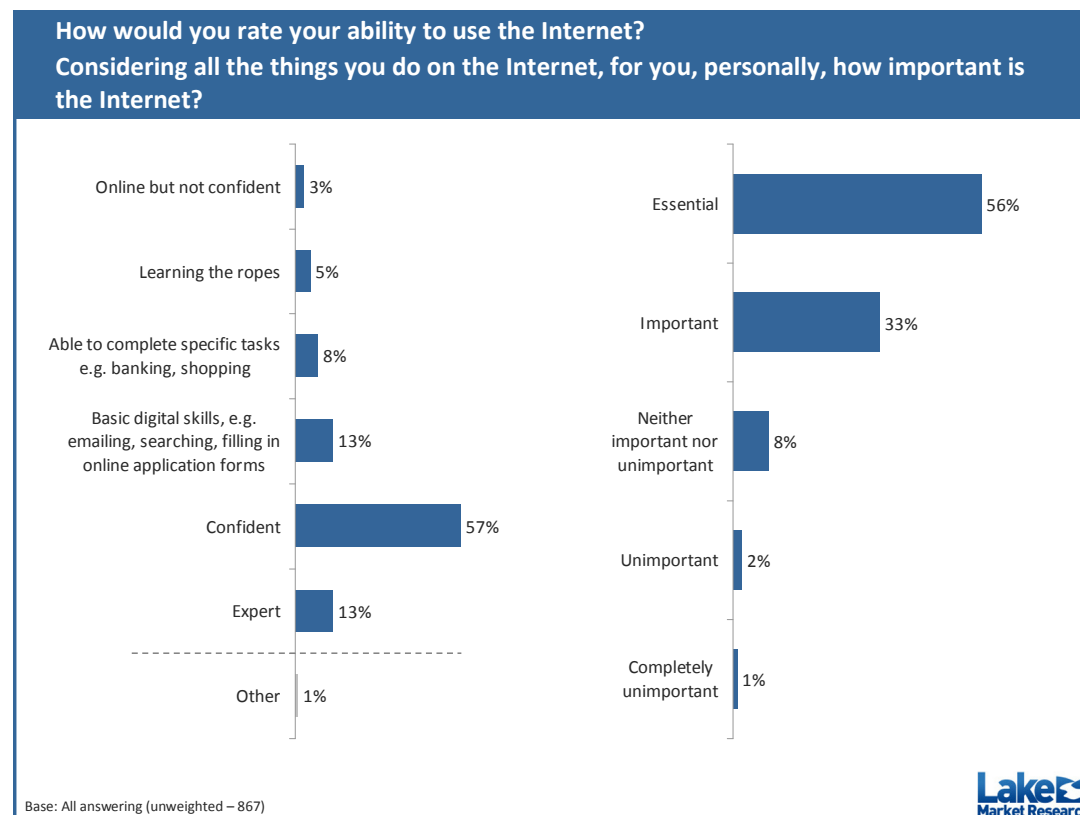
The vast majority of residents indicated they have access to the internet at present (83%). Few residents indicated that they have had access in the past but do not have access now. 14% have never had access and do not intend to in the future.





All residents who currently have internet access were asked to rate their overall ability to use the internet and how important the Internet is to them personally.

The majority of residents indicated that they were either confident (57%) or expert (13%). 13% indicated they had basic digital skills and 8% indicated they are able to complete specific tasks on the Internet. The vast majority of residents indicated they considered the Internet as essential (56%) or important (33%).



### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

As expected, proportions are significantly different by age with a significantly higher proportion of **residents aged 16-54 years old** having access, considering themselves confident / expert and consider the Internet to be essential:

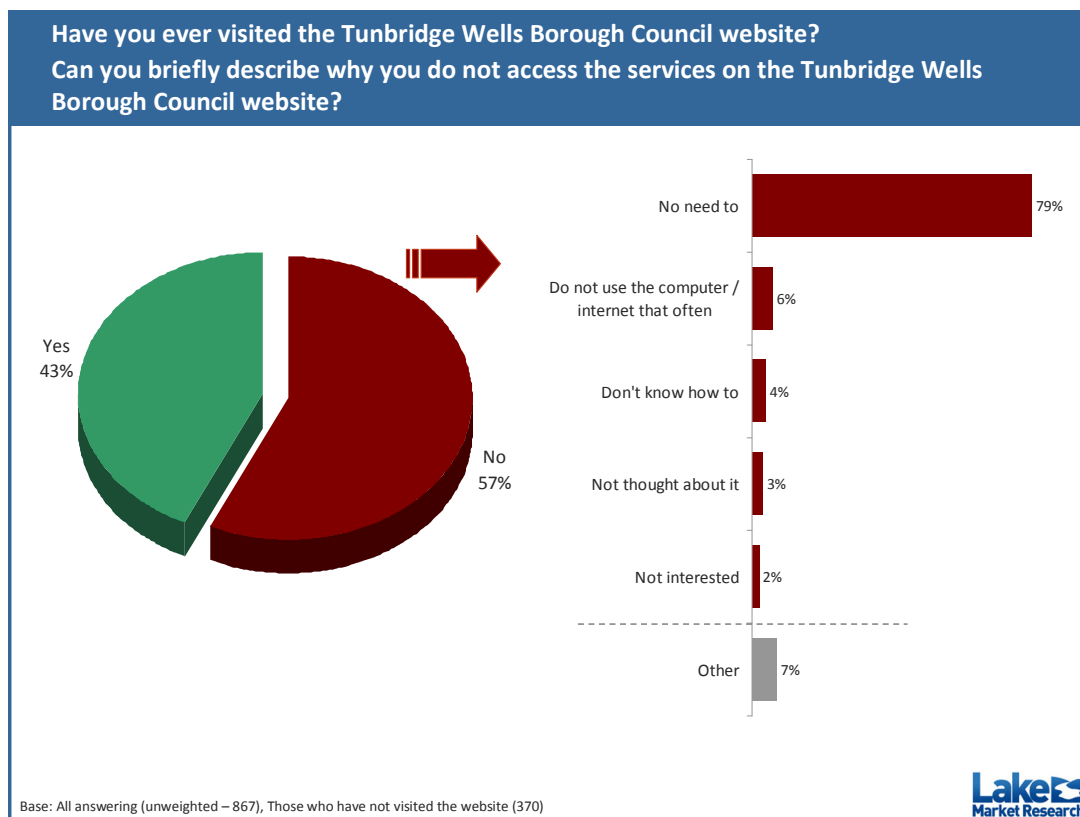
- Residents aged 16-34: 94% have access, 85% of those with access consider themselves confident / expert and 73% of those with access consider the Internet essential.
- Residents aged 35-54: 94% have access, 75% of those with access consider themselves confident / expert and 59% of those with access consider the Internet essential.

- Residents aged 55 and over: 62% have access, 49% of those with access consider themselves confident / expert and 33% of those with access consider the Internet essential.

#### 7.4 USE OF THE INTERNET FOR TUNBRIDGE WELLS SERVICES

Just under six in ten (57%) residents indicated they have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website at some point. 43% have not visited the website.

Residents that have not accessed the website were asked why they have not accessed the services on the website. The overwhelming reason for not using is simply due to not having a perceived need (79%). A small proportion of residents indicated that they do not use the computer / internet that often (6%), they are not sure how to access services (4%), they had not thought about it (3%) or were simply not interested (2%).



#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by **age, ethnicity and those who have / have not made contact with the Council in the last 12 months** as follows:

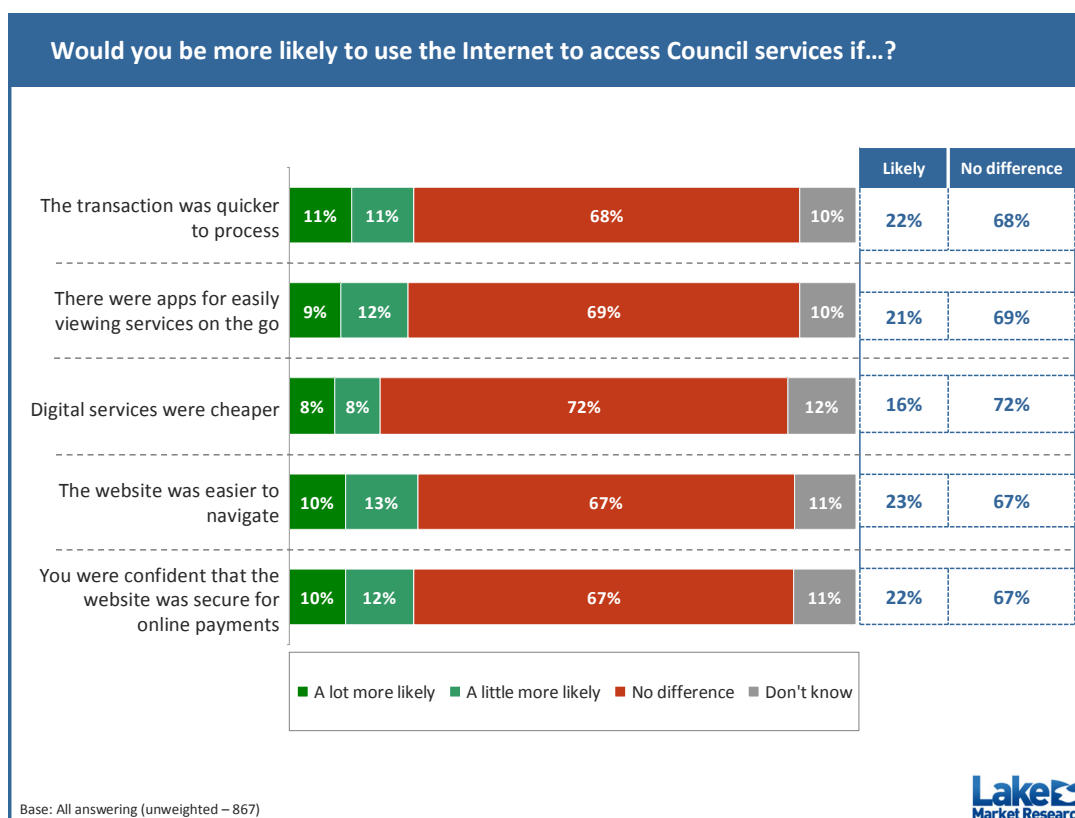
- Residents aged 16-34: 55% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website; Residents aged 35-54: 61% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough

Council website; Residents aged 55 and over: 52% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.

- Residents of White origin: 58% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website; Residents of BME origin: 40% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.
- Residents who have contacted the Council in the last 12 months: 76% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website; Residents who have not contacted the Council in the last 12 months: 47% have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.

Residents who have visited the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website were asked if they would be more likely to use the Internet to access Council services if a number of prompted instances were put in place. For at least two thirds of residents, the prompted instances would make no difference to them.

Just over one in five indicated they would be more likely to use the Internet to access Council services if the transaction was quicker to process, there were apps for easily viewing services on the go, the website was easier to navigate and they were confident that the website was secure for online payments.



## 8. USE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES

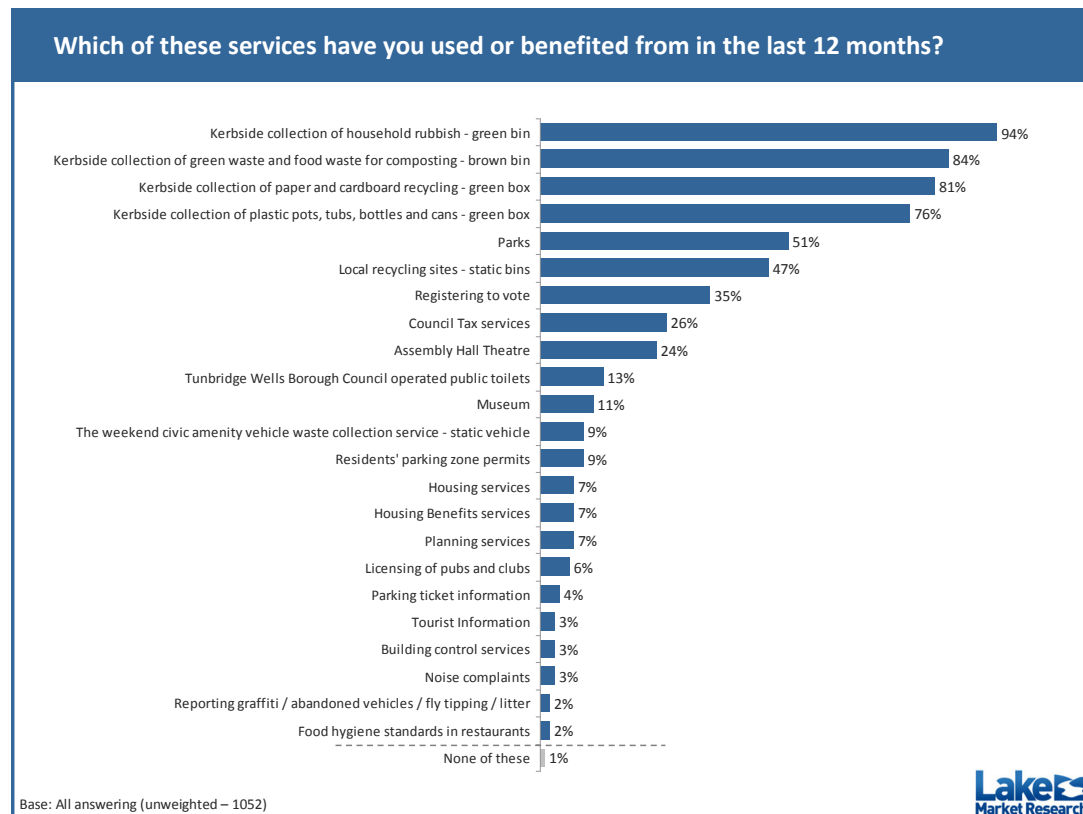
### 8.1 USE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Residents were shown a list of Council services and were asked to indicate whether they had used or benefited from them in the last 12 months.

Claimed usage of Council services in the last 12 months varies considerably. As perhaps expected, claimed usage of the 'universal services' of kerbside collections and recycling are highest:

- 94% use kerbside collection of household rubbish – green bin
- 84% use kerbside collection of green waste & food waste for composting – brown bin
- 81% use kerbside collection of paper & cardboard recycling – green box
- 76% use kerbside collection of plastic pots, tubs, bottle and cans – green box
- However, only 47% use local recycling sites – static bins

Just over half claim they have visited parks in the last 12 months. There are also sizeable proportions who have visited the Assembly Hall Theatre (24%).



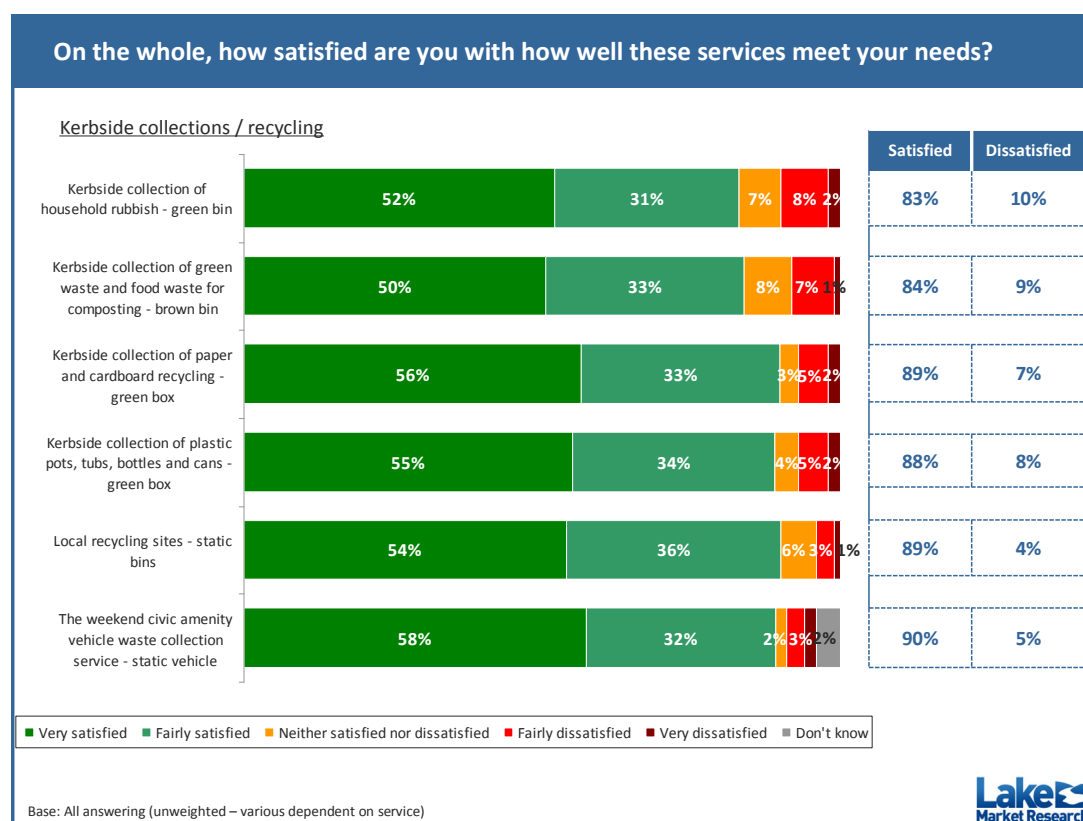
## 8.2 SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES

Residents who identified they had used or benefited from a service in the last 12 months were asked for the overall satisfaction for that service. For the purposes of reporting, we have categorised the prompted services into three areas:

4. Kerbside collections / recycling
5. Community services
6. Council specialist services

### 1. Kerbside collections / recycling

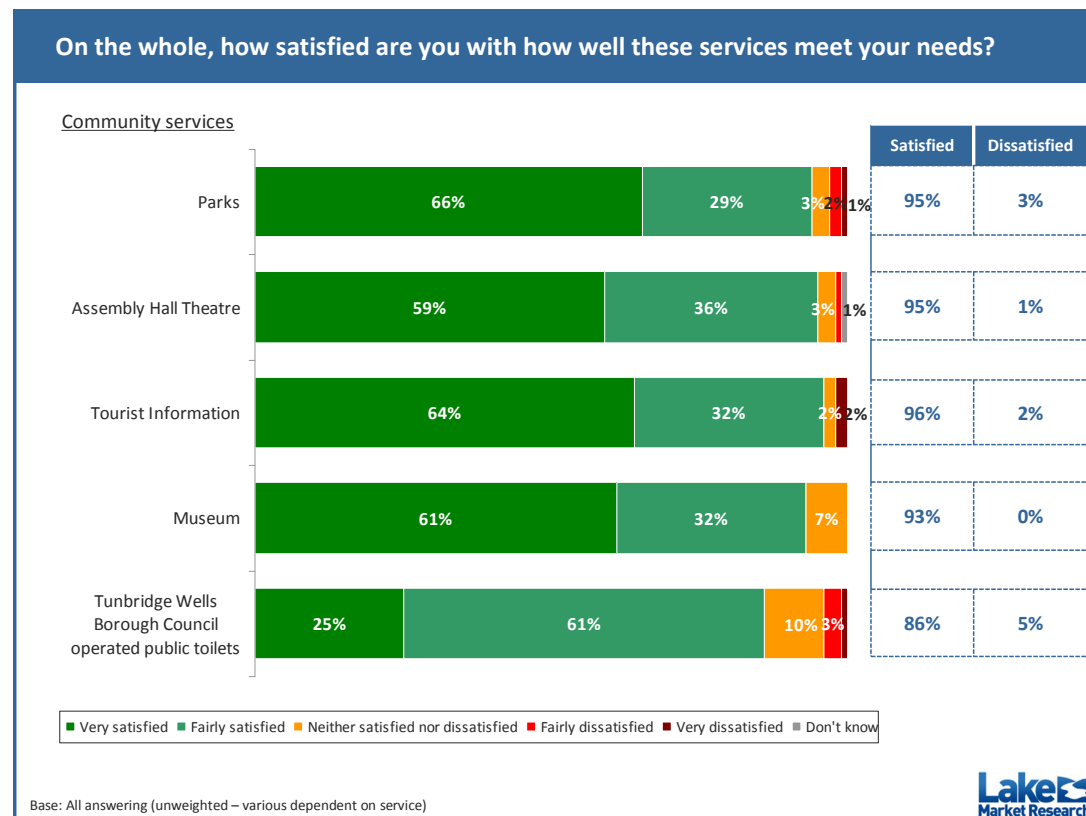
Satisfaction with the kerbside collections / recycling services is high with at least eight in ten indicating they are satisfied. Satisfaction is highest for the weekend civic amenity vehicle waste collection service (90%), kerbside collection of paper and cardboard recycling (89%), local recycling sites (89%) and kerbside collection of plastic pots, tubs, bottle and cans (89%).



## 2. Community services

Satisfaction with the community services amongst users is very high, particularly concerning parks (95% satisfied and 66% very satisfied). Satisfaction with the Assembly Hall theatre, Tourist information and the Museum are also high (95%, 96% and 93% satisfied respectively).

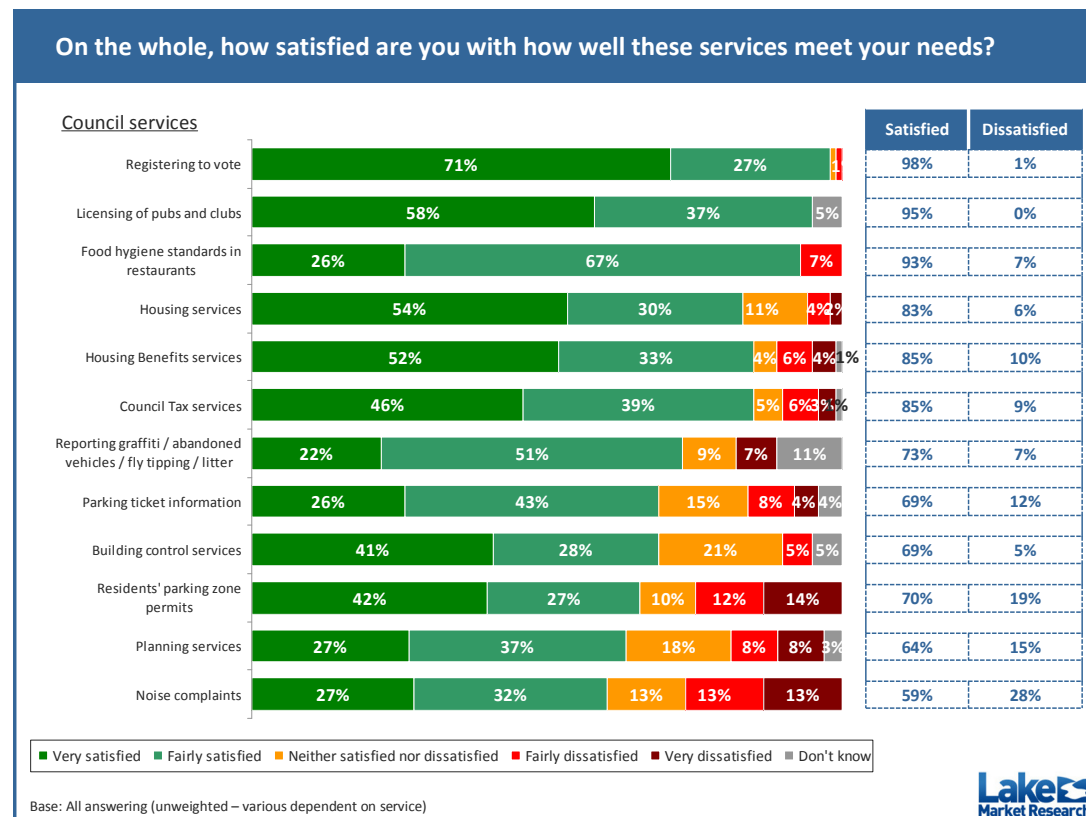
Whilst overall satisfaction with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council operated public toilets is high at 86%, the proportion 'very satisfied' is comparably lower at 25%; suggesting potential improvements could be made.



### 3. Council specialist services

Satisfaction with specialist services varies considerably (as perhaps expected). Satisfaction with registering to vote, licensing of pubs and clubs, housing services, housing benefits services and Council Tax services are encouraging with 98%, 95%, 93%, 83%, 85% and 85% respectively.

Satisfaction levels with the service most likely to involve a complaint or issue receive lower satisfaction scores, i.e. reporting graffiti/abandoned vehicles/fly tipping/litter, parking ticket information and noise complaints at 73%, 69% and 59% satisfaction respectively (and low scores for very satisfied proportions).



## 9. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

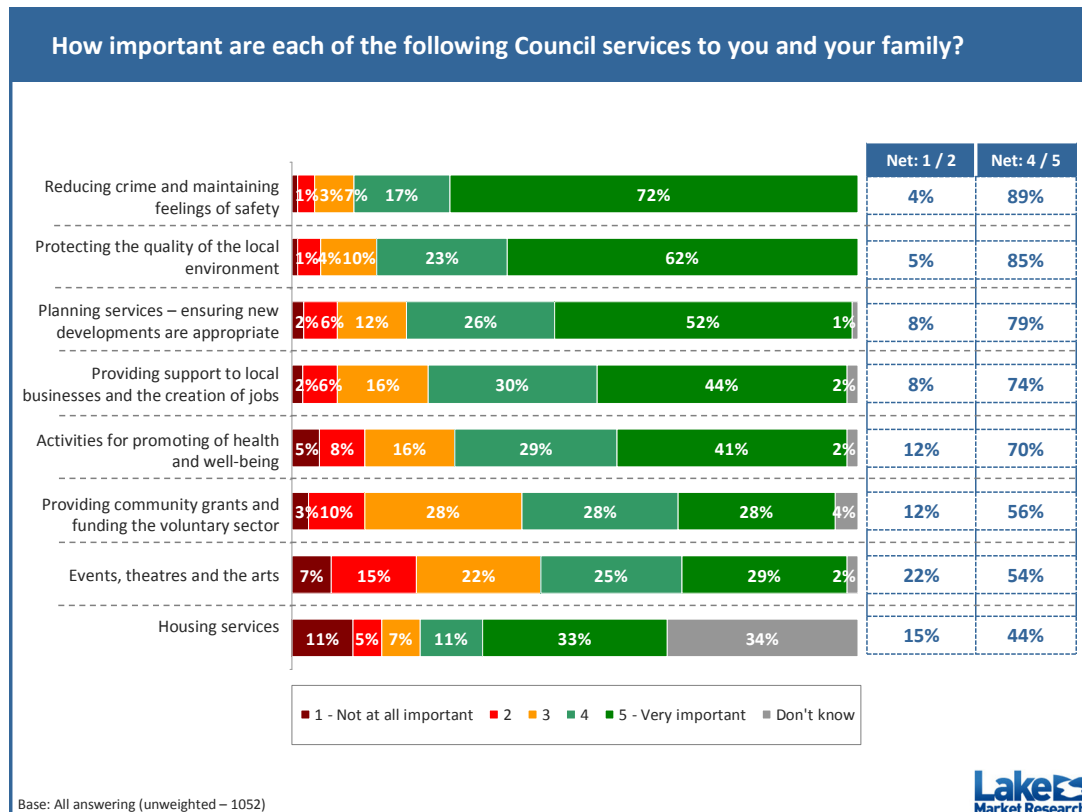
### 9.1 IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES

Residents were asked to rate eight specific services in terms of their importance to themselves and their families using a one to five scale of importance.

Reducing crime and maintaining feelings of safety is the clear priority to residents with 89% ranking it as a 4 or 5 level of importance, and 72% ranking it as a 5 level of importance. Its position is consistent with that observed in 2012 (with a 93% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance). Protecting the environment ranks second with 85% ranking it as a 4 or 5 level of importance, and 62% ranking it as a 5 level of importance. This is also consistent with 2012 results (with a 92% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance).

A new service included in this year's survey ranked third - Planning services - ensuring new developments are appropriate. 79% ranked it as a 4 or 5 level of importance and 52% ranked it as a 5 level of importance. Those considered least important (although still obtaining a 56% and 54% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance) are providing community grants and funding the voluntary sector and events, theatres and the arts.

Response to the importance of housing services is mixed with 34% indicating they were not sure. If the 'don't know' responses were excluded in the chart below, it would achieve a 67% ranking of 4 or 5 level of importance.





### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by **age** as follows:

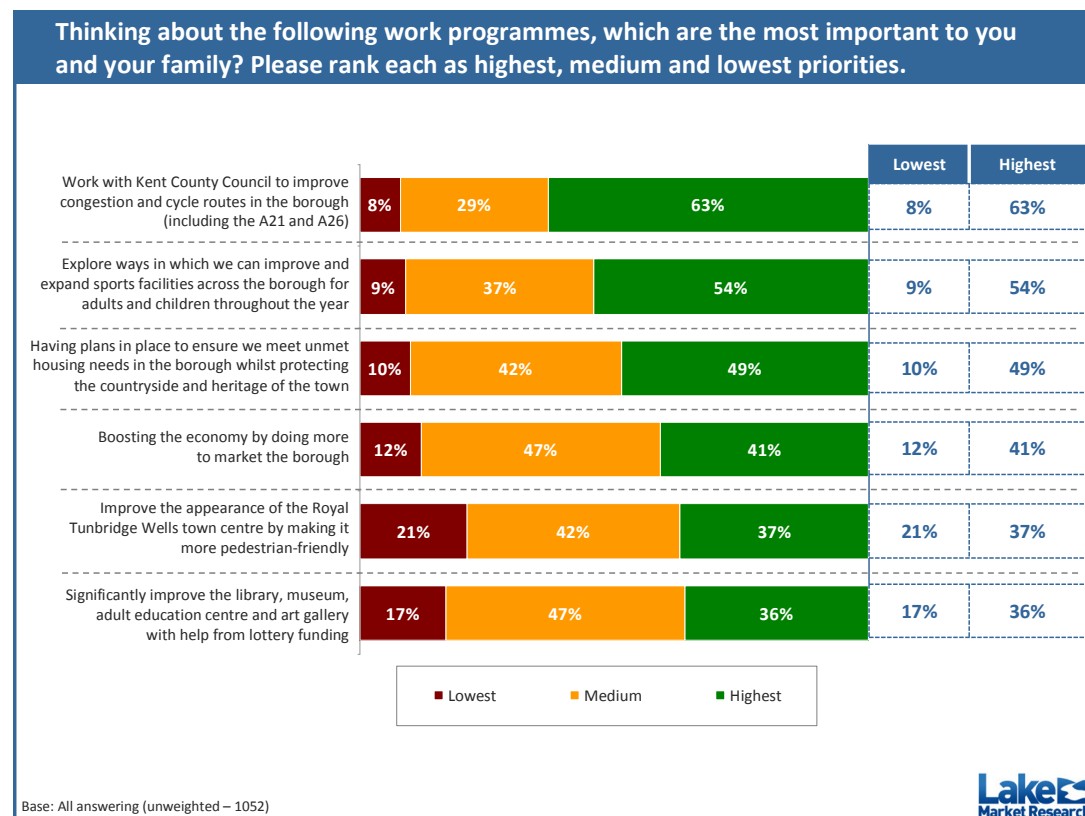
- Residents aged 16-34: A significantly higher proportion rank the following services as 4 or 5: providing support to local businesses and the creation of jobs (81%), activities for promoting health and well-being (73%), housing services (50%),
- Residents aged 35-54: A significantly higher proportion rank the following services as 4 or 5: protecting the quality of the local environment (88%), providing support to local businesses and the creation of jobs (76%), activities for promoting health and well-being (73%).
- Residents aged 55 and over: A significantly higher proportion rank the following services as a 5: Events, theatres and arts (32%)

## 9.2 IMPORTANCE OF WORK PROGRAMMES

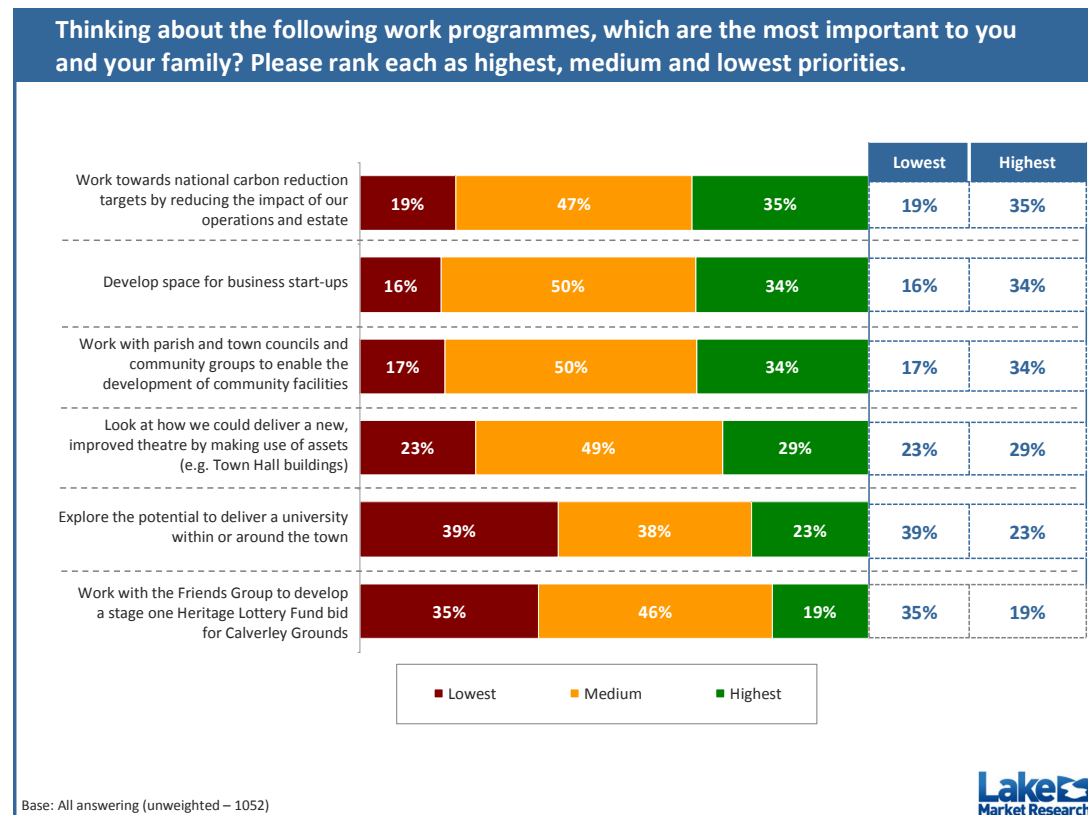
Residents were asked to rank twelve work programmes in terms of their importance to themselves and their family, as either highest, medium or lowest priorities.

Working with Kent County Council to improve congestion and cycle routes in the Borough is the clear priority to residents with 63% ranking it as a highest priority. In addition, few residents ranked it as a lowest priority (only 8%). This is consistent with the areas ranked highest in 2012 (although the statements have been altered slightly to prevent direct comparisons of percentages).

Exploring ways for improving and expanding sports facilities ranks second at 54% ranking it as a highest priority and having plans in place to ensure unmet housing needs in the borough are met whilst protecting the countryside and heritage of the town ranks third with 49% ranking it as a highest priority.



Of the twelve work programmes shown to residents, exploring the potential to deliver a university within or around the town and working with the Friends Group to develop a stage one Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Calverley Grounds was ranked lowest with only 23% and 19% of residents ranking them highest.



### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

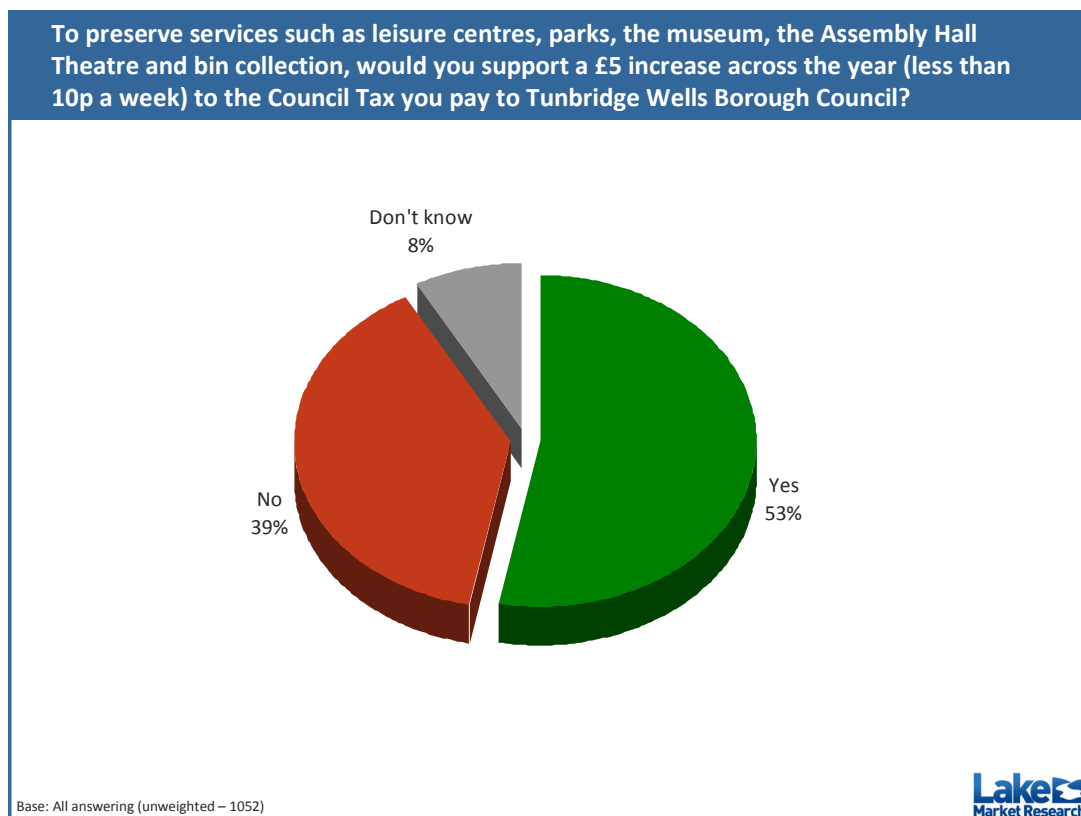
There are significant differences by **age** as follows (particularly concerning the services who ranked towards the middle at an overall level):

- Residents aged 16-34: A significantly higher proportion rank the following services as highest: improve the appearance of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre (45%), explore the potential to deliver a university within or around the town (35%), explore ways in which we can improve and expand sports facilities across the borough for adults and children (60%).
- Residents aged 35-54: A significantly higher proportion rank the following services as highest: work with Kent County Council to improve congestion and cycle routes in the Borough (72%), explore ways in which we can improve and expand sports facilities across the borough for adults and children (56%).
- Residents aged 55 and over: A significantly higher proportion rank the following services as highest: Having plans in place to ensure unmet housing needs are met in

the Borough whilst protecting the countryside and heritage of the town (53%), Significantly improve the library, museum, adult education centre and art gallery with help from lottery funding (40%), look at how a new improved theatre could be delivered (35%), works with Friends Group to develop a stage one Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Calverley Grounds (24%).

### 9.3 SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX INCREASE

To preserve the services outlined in the question text, 53% of residents indicated that they would support a £5 increase across the year to the Council Tax they pay to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. 39% indicated they would not support it and 8% were unsure.



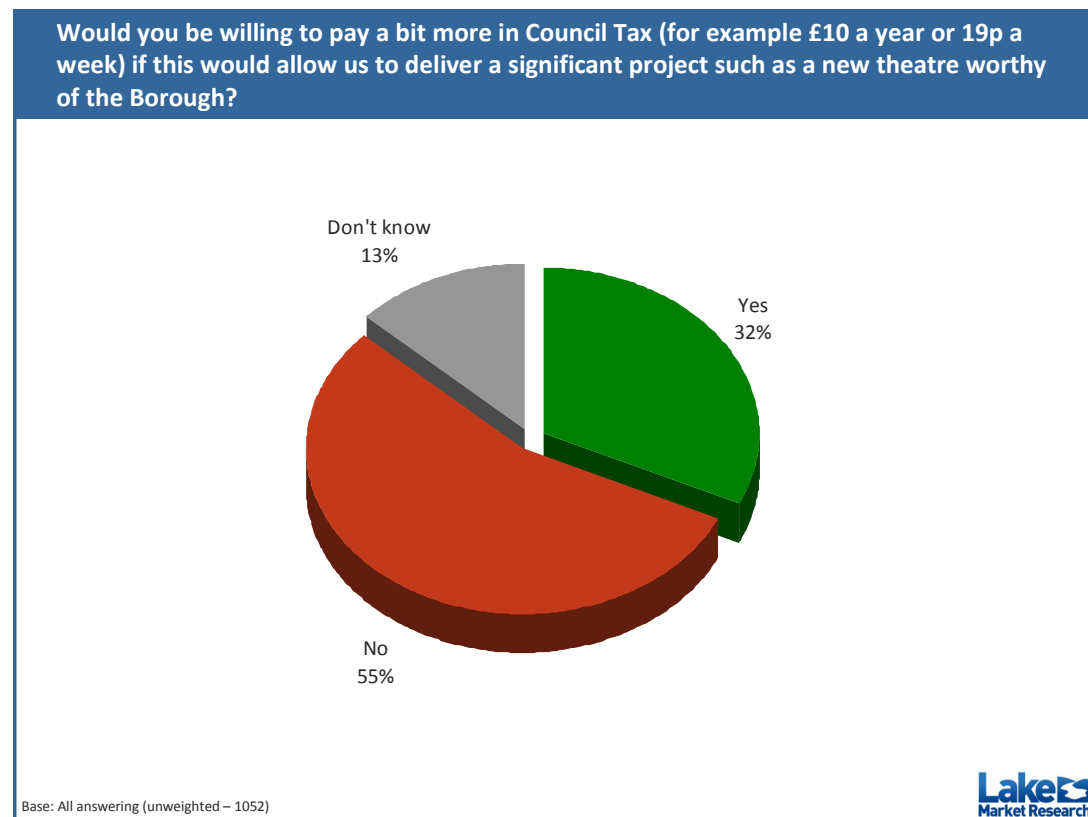
#### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by **working status** as follows:

- Working residents: 56% would support it
- Retired residents: 54% would support it
- Residents looking after the home: 57% would support it
- Unemployed residents: 36% would support it

- Residents who are permanently sick / disabled: 35% would support it

When residents were asked whether they would be willing to pay a more Council Tax (for example £10 across the year) if it allowed Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to deliver a significant project such as a new theatre, 32% indicated they would be willing. 55% indicated they would not be willing and 13% were unsure.

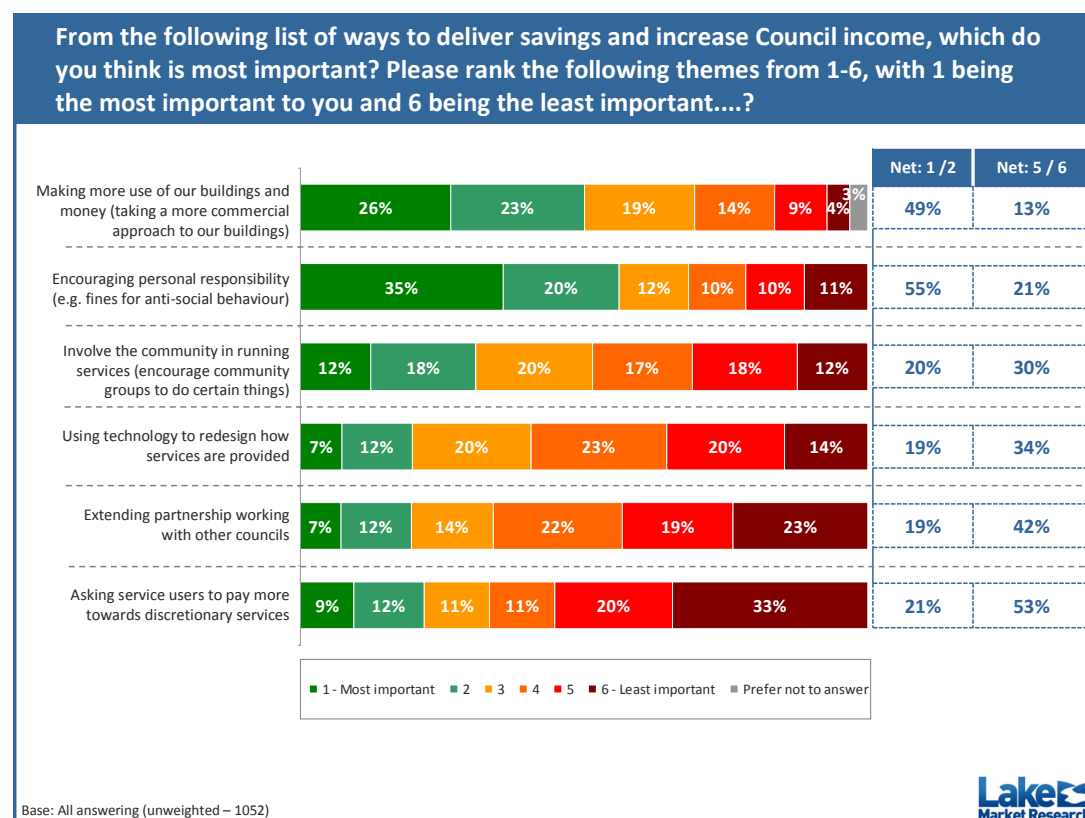


## 9.4 DELIVERING SAVINGS

Residents were informed that 'over the past five years, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's government grant has been reduced by more than half. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council does everything possible to protect services, but we expect further cuts in our grant funding. The Council is trying to limit the impact of cuts by asking residents to pay for some services.'

Residents were then asked to rank six options for delivering savings and increasing Council income in terms of importance.

Consistent with 2012 findings, encouraging personal responsibility and making more use of buildings and money were ranked highest. 55% of residents ranked encouraging personal responsibility as a 1 or 2 level of importance and 49% of residents ranked making more use of buildings and money as a 1 or 2 level of importance.



### **BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS BY SUBGROUPS:**

There are significant differences by **age** as follows:

- Residents aged 16-34: A significantly higher proportion ranked the following as a 1 or 2: using technology to redesign how services are provided (51%)
- Residents aged 35-54: A significantly higher proportion ranked the following as a 1 or 2: using technology to redesign how services are provided (39%)

- Residents aged 55 and over: A significantly higher proportion ranked the following as a 1 or 2: asking service users to pay more towards the cost of discretionary services (35%)