

# Best Value General User Survey 2006/7



Research Study Conducted for  
Wyre Forest District Council





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# Introduction

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## Background

This report presents the results for the BVPI General Survey conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Wyre Forest District Council.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are part of the performance management framework for local authorities, which the Government started to introduce in 1997. As part of the duty of Best Value introduced in the Local Government Act 1999, authorities are required to seek continuous improvement in their services. Best Value Performance Indicators are designed to monitor service improvement with regard to the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of service delivery.

The Government specifies that local authorities (and other best value authorities) collect and report on a number of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) that explicitly reflect users' perceptions of a range of services provided. These perception-based performance indicators are collected triennially, with 2006/7 marking the third time all local authorities have had to collect these measures of performance. This document contains the findings of a "General User Survey" carried out for Wyre Forest District Council to collect a range of BVPIs.

The Government has prescribed in detail what it believes to be the minimum requirements for the conduct of the survey. The minimum requirements are specified in the publication *Best Value Performance Indicators for 2006/7: Guidance for undertaking the Best Value Surveys*<sup>1</sup>. The minimum requirements are in place to ensure comparability of data across authorities, while allowing authorities some flexibility on the contents of the questionnaire.

## Structure of this Report

Included in the report is a set of topline findings which provides quick reference to all the headline BVPIs, together with trend data where available. Computer tables are provided under separate cover. These provide a detailed analysis of the findings by a range of socio-demographic variables.

In addition, the report provides technical details relating to the conduct of the survey, a consideration of response rates and respondent profile, plus a guide to reading tables and interpreting the data.

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<sup>1</sup> The full guidance can be downloaded from [www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk](http://www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk).

## Contextual Data

In this report, we make reference to Ipsos MORI district averages. The Ipsos MORI average figures are based on all lower tier authorities studied by the company in 2006/7 who again supplied us with weighted data. Obviously, this latter group of approximately 60 authorities does not constitute the entire 'population' of district councils. Nevertheless, we hope you find the comparisons useful.

It is also worth mentioning that the average scores generated by Ipsos MORI for the quality of life measure (satisfaction with local area) and the extent to which different forms of anti-social behaviour are seen as a problem are weighted to account for the differences in population sizes across both our consortium samples, as well as the wider Ipsos MORI family of district councils. Following the Audit Commission's approach, all other average scores for BVPIs featuring in this report do not take account of differences in population size between authorities.

## Acknowledgements

Ipsos MORI would like to thank Alison Braithwaite at Wyre Forest District Council for her help in conducting this survey, as well as the 1,264 members of the public who took part.

## Publication of the Findings

As Wyre Forest District Council has engaged Ipsos MORI to undertake an objective research project, it is important to protect the interests of both organisations by ensuring that it is accurately reflected in any press release or publication of findings. As part of our standard terms and conditions of contract, the publication of the findings of this research is therefore subject to advance approval of Ipsos MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

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Checked & Approved:

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# Technical Note

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## Methodology

A postal self-completion methodology is prescribed for 2006/07 for all the BVPI surveys, with the exception of libraries.

## Sampling

The sampling frame prescribed by the Audit Commission and Communities and Local Government (CLG) is the small-user Postcode Address File (PAF). As the Government wishes to be able to compare results across local authorities, it specified that data on all of the indicators must be collected using the principle of random selection.

A random sample of 6,000 addresses from the PAF covering the Council's area was downloaded from the Audit Commission's website [www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk](http://www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk). As Wyre Forest District Council wished to mail out to less than 6,000 addresses, 3,000 addresses were randomly selected from the PAF file, using a random start point and then a '1 in n' approach to selection.

## Booster Samples

It was decided in the case of Wyre Forest District Council that an additional booster mailout to more PAF addresses was required, in order to reach the 1,100 returned questionnaires stipulated in the guidance. An additional 670 addresses were therefore drawn from the PAF, creating an overall mailout size of 3,670.

## The Questionnaire

To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, CLG specified that a covering letter stating the purpose for which the data is being collected must be sent with each questionnaire. The front page of each questionnaire was branded with the logos of both Wyre Forest District Council and Ipsos MORI and contained a covering letter from Walter Delin, the Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council.

The questionnaire itself was designed using the General User Survey questionnaire template provided by the Audit Commission for the collection of the BVPIs. The standardised nature of the questions was maintained in line with the requirements. The wording used in the covering letter(s) was derived from CLG and Audit Commission guidance. It was not possible to personally address letters to a named resident of the household as the PAF was the sampling frame used. Letters were therefore addressed to "Dear local resident". As the target population specified is all adult local authority residents (aged 18 and over) the questionnaire asked that only someone aged 18 or over completed it.

The Audit Commission and CLG prescribed that the General Survey questionnaire template be used in full to collect the data. The questions set in the questionnaire are those which the Government requires each authority to ask in order to measure performance indicators. Altering the wording of questions or omitting questions is prohibited since it reduces the ability to make comparisons with other authorities using the same questionnaire.

Adding questions to collect more detailed information on services and issues which are relevant to the local area was permitted, but authorities were urged to do this with caution, due to the length of the questionnaire and the possible detrimental effect doing so might have on response rates. If authorities did wish to ask supplementary questions, they were asked to use the Audit Commission's bank of approved questions. Wyre Forest District Council included an additional question inviting respondents to join the Wyre Forest Citizen's Panel. Respondents were able to provide their personal contact details to enable them to be re-contacted over the next 12 months.

## Questionnaire Reminders

The guidance specifies that authorities should *"take all reasonable steps possible to maximise their response rates and should in no circumstances stop making efforts to boost them"*. For a postal survey, the guidance states that authorities should aim to maximise the response rate by sending out at least two reminder questionnaires. The covering letter had to be sent with reminders reflecting the fact that it is a reminder, while still meeting data protection requirements. All correspondence (including envelopes) had to include the authority logo.

## Fieldwork

The CLG guidance specifies that fieldwork must start between 1 September and 30 November 2006. It recommends that the schedule allows four weeks for the initial fieldwork period, with a three week fieldwork period for each of the reminder fieldwork periods. The entire fieldwork period for this project is 12 weeks: between 14 September and 8 December 2006. This breaks down into the following key stages:

- **First mailout:** questionnaires posted to all 3,000 addresses in the sample on 14 September, with an instruction asking for all questionnaires to be returned by 13 October 2006;



- **First reminder questionnaire:** posted to individuals in the sample who, at the 'cut off' point for the first mailout, had not returned the questionnaire (2,399);
- **Second reminder questionnaire:** posted to individuals in the sample who, at the 'cut off' point for the first reminder mailing had not returned the questionnaire (2,119).

The final 'cut-off' date for all data to be submitted to the Audit Commission was 15 December 2006.

## Booking In

Returned questionnaires were booked in on a daily basis. The number of valid and void returns (e.g. those not completed because they were sent to derelict, demolished or vacant addresses) were recorded in our Survey Management System. This allowed for the daily calculation and monitoring of response rates, as well as the exclusion of 'deadwood' in the (reminder) sample.

## Response Rates and Sample Profile

The **overall unadjusted response rate**<sup>2</sup> achieved from the main sample is **38%** - 1,153 returned questionnaires from an original sample of 3,000 addresses.

The **overall adjusted response rate**, removing incomplete responses and all non-effective addresses, achieved from the main sample is **39%** - 1,153 valid questionnaires from an effective sample of 2,981 addresses (19 non-effective addresses).

When taking into account the booster sample, the overall adjusted response rate is **35%** - 1,264 returned and valid questionnaires from an effective sample of 3,648 addresses (22 non-effective addresses).

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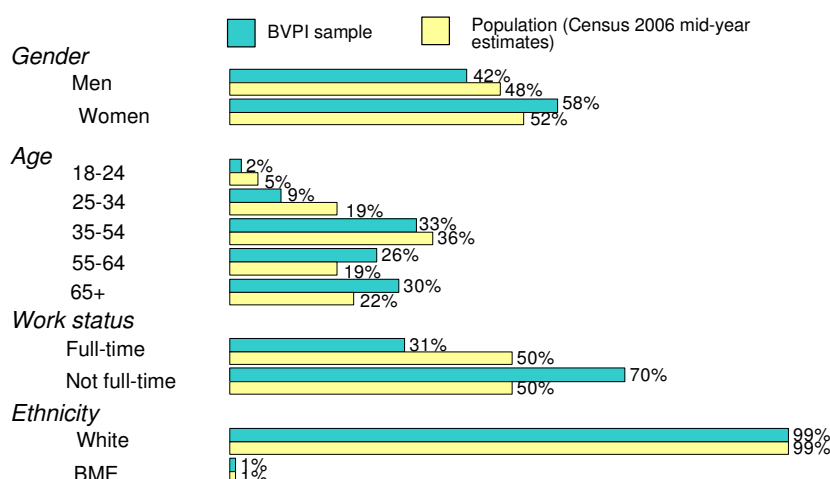
<sup>2</sup> This does not allow for invalid addresses, vacant properties etc, which will be an element of any sample drawn from the Postal Address File, as well as incomplete responses.

The following chart shows the sample profile broken down by key socio-economic variables.

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## Methodology: Sample Profile

### Sample Profile for Wyre Forest: Key demographics



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

A number of groups were over-represented in the sample of returned questionnaires from Wyre Forest residents. These groups include women (52% of residents are women, yet 58% of the sample came from this group), residents aged 55 or over (41% v 56%), and residents not working full-time (50% v 70%). As we would typically expect with a self-completion postal survey of this type, men and those working full-time were under-represented, as were the younger age-groups.

## Weighting

CLG guidance outlines weighting as a way of tackling the issue of over- and under-representation in the sample. As noted above, certain groups in the survey are under-represented, and to achieve a representative sample, weights need to be applied to the data to correct for this. The results for the sample profile discussed in this report are based on unweighted data only. However, findings from BVPI questions reported in this volume and the computer tabulations are based on weighted data, following the approach specified by CLG.

Weighting was applied by CLG's data processing supplier, Cobalt Sky, to a specification designed by The Office for National Statistics. The appropriate weight for each individual respondent contained in the dataset was applied after submission of the raw unweighted data to the Audit Commission.

The principles of the weighting scheme used are set out on the survey website ([www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk](http://www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk)). A two-stage cell weighted approach was used. In the first instance, data is weighted by sex, age and ethnicity to the

known profile of the area as recorded in the 2005 Census mid-year population estimates, and then by a further weight to adjust for household size.

## Data Processing

All questionnaires returned by respondents were booked in and scanned by Ipsos MORI. Once captured electronically, data processing was undertaken by Ipsos MORI.

## Quality Control

The quality of data is assured through checks embedded in the scanning process. The software used is set up to only accept valid responses. With all tick box information, the confidence or tolerance of the scanning software is set at a tested level and anything outside this confidence level is filtered through to a human verification process. In the verification process any questionable responses are highlighted and subsequently confirmed or corrected. All responses which contain text were also sent for verification.

## Calculating Results

In accordance with guidance, the base for questions is “valid responses” or all those providing an answer. Those stating don’t know or who do not complete the question are excluded from the calculations. The base size may, therefore, vary from question to question, and from the total sample size, depending on the extent of non response.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (\*) denotes any value of less than half a percent but greater than zero.

## Confidence Intervals

On the basis of all respondents who answer each question (as specified by CLG), and assuming that the confidence interval is unaffected by the survey response rate, the overall margin of error for this survey ranges from  $\pm 2.08\%$  to  $\pm 6.46\%$ . The specific margin of error for each BVPI is set out in the table below.

BVPI	Service	Indicator	Confidence Interval
BVPI3	Corporate Health	The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their authority.	$\pm 2.84\%$
BVPI4	Corporate Health	The percentage of those making complaints satisfied with the handling of those complaints.	$\pm 6.46\%$
BVPI89	Litter	Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards.	$\pm 2.75\%$
BVPI90	Waste	Percentage of survey respondents expressing satisfaction with: a) Household Waste Collection, and b) Recycling Facilities.	$\pm 2.62\%$ $\pm 2.48\%$
BVPI119	Culture	The percentage of residents users satisfied with : a) Sports/leisure facilities, b) Libraries, c) Museums/galleries, d) Theatres/Concert Halls, and e) Parks and open spaces.	$\pm 2.72\%$ $\pm 2.08\%$ $\pm 2.85\%$ $\pm 2.73\%$ $\pm 2.40\%$
Source: Ipsos MORI			

# Summary





# Key Findings

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## Overall Performance of Wyre Forest District Council

Of the 11 Best Value Performance Indicators measured, Wyre Forest District Council falls above the Ipsos MORI district average for four of these, in line with the Ipsos MORI district average for three, and below the Ipsos MORI district average for the remaining four.

Although some of the satisfaction measures fall below the Ipsos MORI district average, many have shown a marked improvement since 2003/4, including satisfaction with keeping residents informed, parks and open spaces, keeping the land clear of litter and refuse, doorstep recycling, local recycling facilities and sport and leisure facilities.

However, Wyre Forest has seen a drop in satisfaction with regard to the waste collection service overall and for theatres and concert halls.

## Corporate Image

Measures of Corporate Image cover overall satisfaction with the way the Council runs things (BV3) and satisfaction with complaints handling (BV4). Ipsos MORI's other work on local government indicates a large number of other factors that impact on overall satisfaction. These includes key image indicators such as value for money and efficiency, performance on information provision, visible services (such as street cleaning) and experiences of contact with staff.

Overall satisfaction with Wyre Forest District Council (BV3) has remained level since 2003/4, after a drop of 13 percentage points between 2000/1 and 2003/4. The 50% satisfied score remains lower than the Ipsos MORI district average (55%).

Two-thirds of residents consider the way the Council runs things to have stayed the same, and one in seven (15%) consider it to have got better. The proportion perceiving it to have got worse has dropped from 30% in 2003/4 to 18%.

For key image indicators the council generally scores positively, with the exception of 'providing good value for money'. However, the Council compares less favourably than others with regard to perceptions that it is efficient and well run, and that it provides good value for money.

## Communications and Contact

Although the proportion of residents who feel informed by the council is indicative of improvement since 2003/4, Wyre Forest residents generally feel less well informed about Council services and benefits than other councils. Residents feel particularly uninformed about the Council's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, and delivering on its promises and its performance.

Wyre Forest residents are most likely to find out about the Council and its activities through the local media or information provided directly from the Council. Those who feel informed are more likely to source their information directly from the Council.

One in five residents have contacted the Council to complain in the last 12 months, of which over a third (37%) are satisfied with the way in which their complaint was handled (BV4). This compares to the Ipsos MORI district average of 34%.

Of those making contact for other reasons, around three-quarters or more are satisfied with all aspects of the service they received. Satisfaction with final outcome attracts the lowest level of satisfaction - a trend common in other areas nationally.

## Living in Wyre Forest

Residents' views were collected on a range of quality of life issues covering satisfaction with the local area and priorities for improvement.

Three-quarters (73%) of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, a figure which falls somewhat below the Ipsos MORI district average (77%).

Over two-thirds perceive that Wyre Forest District Council is making the local area a better place to live and working to make the area cleaner and greener - a proportion which falls slightly below the Ipsos MORI average score.

In terms of what makes a good place to live, the level of crime, good health services and clean streets are seen as key priorities for improvement. Although considered to be less important in terms of making an area a good place to live, traffic congestion, road and pavement repairs and activities for teenagers are also seen as key areas for improvement.

The survey collected information on the social capital of communities covering aspects such as community cohesion, influence on decision making and opportunities for participation. Two-thirds of residents agree the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well, with a fifth disagreeing. Less than a third agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area, and only a quarter are satisfied with opportunities for participation in local decision-making. This reflects the high proportion that views the Council as remote and impersonal (54%). Over a quarter of



residents say they would like to be more involved in the decisions Wyre Forest makes that affect the local area.

## **Wyre Forest District Council Services**

Service provision is another important factor influencing overall satisfaction with the Council. On a range of environmental and cultural and recreational services satisfaction amongst Wyre Forest residents has improved since 2003/4. These include satisfaction with: parks and open spaces; keeping the area clear of litter and refuse; doorstep recycling services; the local recycling facility; and sport and leisure services. However, there has been a fall in satisfaction since 2003/4 with waste collection overall and theatres and concert halls.

For a number of services, Wyre Forest District Council's scores remain below the Ipsos MORI district average. These include: theatres and concert halls, waste collection services overall, and litter and refuse collection. However, Wyre Forest's scores compare favourably with the average for library services, sport and leisure facilities, and recycling.

Satisfaction with other housing and planning services is in line with the average district results.

# Context

## Trend Data for the Core BVPIs

The table shows **trend data for the core BVPI performance indicators contained in the General User Survey**. Some of this data needs to be treated with caution. The published data in 2000/2001 remained unweighted because there was no prescribed weighting scheme set by DETR (as CLG was then called) with each authority left to use different weighting schemes. Data collected in 2003/2004 was weighted centrally to achieve a representative sample in each authority, and the 2006/2007 data has been weighted in the same way. Furthermore, other methodological changes effected in 2003/2004 may have an impact on our understanding of trends, for example the requirement to use PAF rather than electoral roll means that comparison with 2000/2001 data is difficult. Some authorities also carried out their General User Surveys using a face-to-face approach in previous years.

BVPI	Title	2000/1 (%)	2003/4 (%)	2006/7 (%)
BV3	Overall satisfaction	66	53	50
BV4	Satisfaction with complaint handling	39	41	37
BV89	Satisfaction with cleanliness	52	56	62
BV90A	Waste collection	87	79	66
BV90B	Waste recycling (local facilities)	63	62	74
BV119A	Sports/leisure facilities	57	52	65
BV119B	Libraries	42		82
BV119C	Museums/galleries		42	42
BV119D	Theatres/concert halls	43	39	32
BV119E	Parks and open spaces	65	71	75
Source: Ipsos MORI				

The main points to note are as follows:

- Satisfaction with the authority as a whole has levelled out to a position marginally below satisfaction levels in 2003/4, after a significant drop in satisfaction between 2000/1 and 2003/4.
- The greatest improvements in satisfaction have been seen for cleanliness (keeping land clear of litter and refuse) - up six percentage points from 56% to 62%, waste recycling - up 12

percentage points from 62% to 74%, and sport and leisure facilities – up 13 percentage points from 52% to 65%.

- Satisfaction levels have shown the greatest decline for waste collection services overall (66% satisfied, compared with 79% in 2003/4) and theatres and concert halls (32% satisfied, compared with 39% in 2003/4).

## Comparisons with other District Authorities

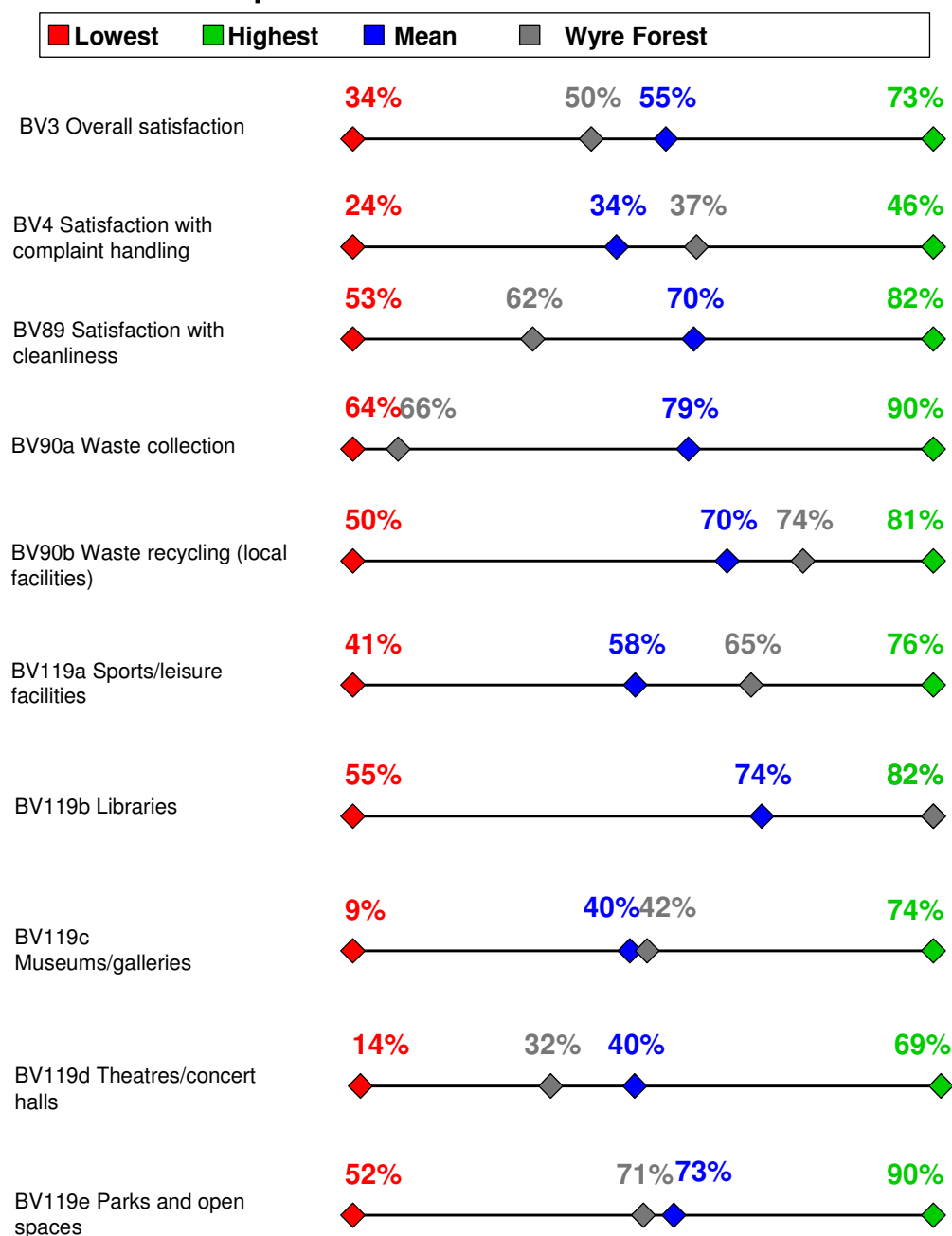
The following table shows the relative position of Wyre Forest District Council against other district councils surveyed by Ipsos MORI. For example, Wyre Forest ranks 1<sup>st</sup> for its satisfaction score for libraries, whereas it ranks less favourably for its overall satisfaction score (45<sup>th</sup>).

BVPI	Title	District Ranking 2006/7
BV3	Overall Satisfaction	45
BV4	Satisfaction with complaint handling	13
BV89	Satisfaction with cleanliness	49
BV90A	Waste collection	56
BV90B	Waste recycling (local facilities)	14
BV119A	Sports/leisure facilities	12
BV119B	Libraries	1
BV119C	Museums/galleries	22
BV119D	Theatres/concert halls	33
BV119E	Parks and open spaces	25

*Source: Ipsos MORI*

The chart below shows the extreme (highest and lowest) scores for district authorities, as well as the median score for each BVPI. Wyre Forest District Council's score is also shown in each case.

### BVPIs: A Comparison with Extreme and Mean Scores for Ipsos MORI District Authorities



Source: Ipsos MORI

## National Context

### Current Themes in Local Government

In this section, we outline some of the recent themes that Ipsos MORI has observed in its work on the BVPI surveys and for local government more generally. The 2006 BVPI General User Surveys present us with a powerful source of data on residents' views on a wide array of issues. The uniform methodology does have its critics and all the surveys suffer from the self-selection present in postal research of this kind, but now that the weighting scheme used in 2006/7 is the same as that used in 2003/4, we have for the first time an excellent opportunity to examine how perceptions of local authorities have changed across time<sup>3</sup> where comparable approaches have been used each time. The size of the dataset means that there is extensive scope to conduct comparative analysis by authority type, as well as by geography, and other area-based characteristics. Please let us know if you would like any further details on any of these themes, or would like copies of any of the reports mentioned.

### Ratings of Individual Services: A Picture of Improvement

Results we have seen so far for districts, as well as the full BVPI results for upper and single tier authorities point to advances in service satisfaction, and more rises than falls; a finding made all the more impressive because some local government services, such as libraries and refuse collection, are already among the best regarded in the country. Showing the effects of investment in the *Cleaner, Greener, Safer* agenda, there has been a noticeable improvement for cleanliness standards. Satisfaction in district authority areas studied by Ipsos MORI stands at 70%, up from an aggregate score of 63% for BV89 in 2003. This movement mirrors that which we have seen for the single and upper tier authorities, where official CLG data shows an increase of 9 percentage points. Similarly, while satisfaction with parks and open spaces has increased by 2 percentage points for single and upper tier councils across the last two rounds of the General User Survey, we see a smaller 1 percentage point rise when we examine the results for our own family of lower tier councils and the full aggregated BVPI results for district authorities for 2003. Results also show a public more confident in library, sports and leisure facilities in 2006/7, with reported satisfaction with these services up.

### Overall Reputation: taking the Plaudits?

So does higher service satisfaction filter through into an improved corporate reputation? Sadly not. But looking at the BVPI data in the aggregate, there is some good news. Between 2000 and 2003 there was a decline of 10 percentage points in the national data, from 65% to 55%. This time, however, we are seeing a dramatic slowing. A comparison between district authority data held by Ipsos MORI and the full published figures for 2003 shows a much smaller change of 1 percentage point from 56% for BV3 to 55%. Similarly, we have seen a fall for top and single tier authorities, with overall satisfaction down 2 percentage points to 51%. This decline also masks the effects of a change of methodology (and subsequently large falls) for a handful of top tier authorities who did face-to-face surveys last time, as well

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<sup>3</sup> In 2000/1 data was not weighted centrally by DCLG or its contractors, but by local authorities themselves.

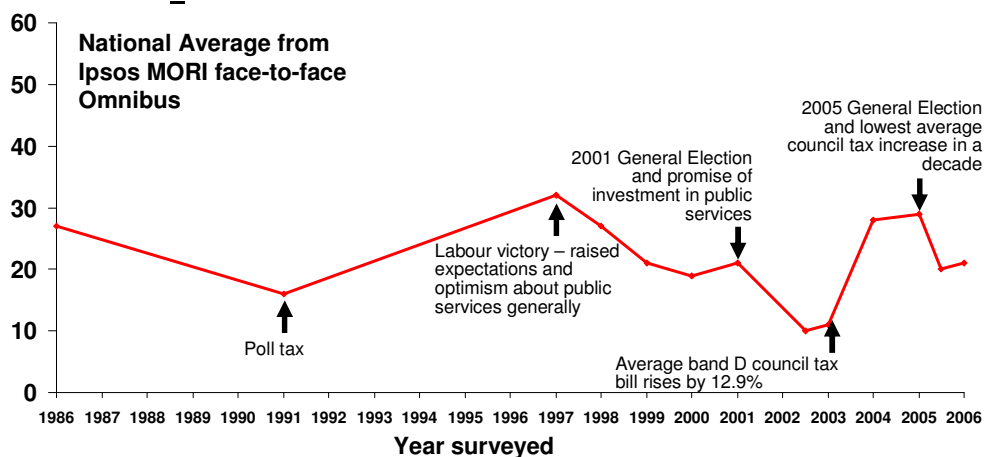
as an encouraging improvement of 2 percentage points among London Boroughs.

This trend broadly follows the pattern seen in our face-to-face Omnibus tracking research over recent years at the national level. When looking at the chart below it should be remembered that the scores shown are net satisfaction scores (derived by subtracting negative from positive opinion), and are therefore prone to larger fluctuations than we see when we just look at satisfaction (as we do with the Best Value Performance Indicators). Also, we do not ask about named authorities, but rather *'your local council'* which tends to produce less positive findings.

## Satisfaction with Local Government – Trend Data

**Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your "local council" runs things?**

Net satisfaction  $\pm\%$



N.B. Scores using c.2,000 GB Adults

Source: Ipsos MORI

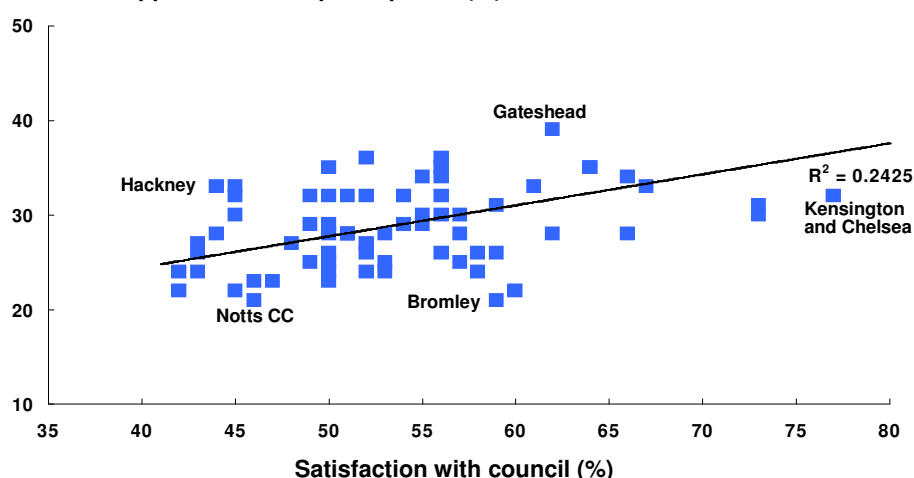
Data collected outside of the BVPI survey programme does imply a drop between 2001 and 2003, but latterly we have seen more volatility. However, despite a round of council tax rises much closer to the rate of inflation than we have seen for a number of years, our recent quarterly tracking work on the reputation of councils for the Local Government Association shows that it is extremely difficult to turn around perceptions in this area, particularly in the face of hostile media coverage, and the fact that council tax rates remain markedly higher than in the 1990s. This is reinforced through the BVPI returns we have seen so far, which show that in all but a few authorities that value for money is the image attribute on which views are most negative.

## User Engagement and Participation

Greater user engagement and participation in decision making is one of the key policy strands in the Local Government White Paper. Some local authorities are already doing great work in this direction, and one of the early messages emerging from Communities and Local Government about the single and upper tier results is that there is - potentially for the first time - a link between satisfaction with opportunities to get involved in local decisions and overall satisfaction with authorities.

### Opportunities for Participation and Satisfaction with Council

Satisfied with opportunities for participation (%)



Base: BVPI 2006 (70 District, County and Unitary Authorities)

Source: Ipsos MORI

The link is, however, weaker than that for better communications. Irrespective of the impact on the ground of participation initiatives so far, the general thrust from government is for more. Authorities need to draw on emerging best practice to understand how and when the different consultation and research tools should be applied in different contexts. Our recent report *'Ingredients for Community Engagement: The Civic Pioneer Experience'*, as well as other work on community engagement can be found at [www.ipsos-mori.com/participation](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/participation).

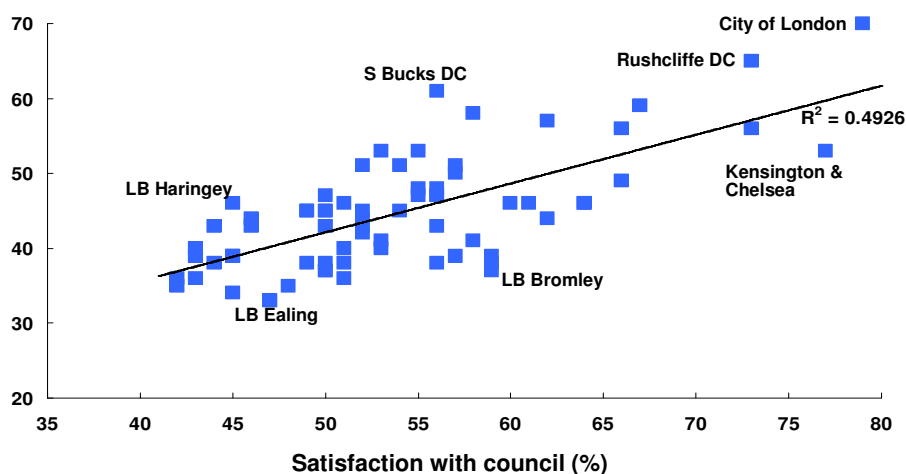
## What Value Communications?

Using the data for top tier authorities released so far, fewer consider that they are being kept well informed about the activities of local government in 2006/7. The proportion of General Survey respondents saying that they are kept informed has fallen from 51% to 42% between 2003/4 and 2006/7<sup>4</sup>. This is disappointing in some ways and may explain in part the lack of improvement in overall satisfaction. However, aggregated data for Ipsos MORI district authorities shows that 49% of residents say they feel informed. While this figure may change when the complete dataset is released by CLG, it will be interesting to see whether this gap narrows.

<sup>4</sup> Here we may also want to consider the effect of moving this question to a different position in the questionnaire in 2006/7.

## Feeling Informed and Satisfaction with Council

Feel informed by Council about services and benefits it provides (%)



Base: BVPI 2006 (70 District, County and Unitary Authorities)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Importantly though, the correlation between overall satisfaction with local government is still stronger for communications than it is for involvement. Analysis carried out so far indicates that those authorities who consistently communicate their message are better regarded by residents than those where levels of information are perceived to be lower. Given that good communications are an initial and valuable step towards securing higher levels of participation, it can be argued that authorities with good scores are well placed to motivate and engage with the public. For more information on communications and the LGA's reputation campaign, please visit [www.campaigns.lga.gov.uk/reputation/home](http://www.campaigns.lga.gov.uk/reputation/home).

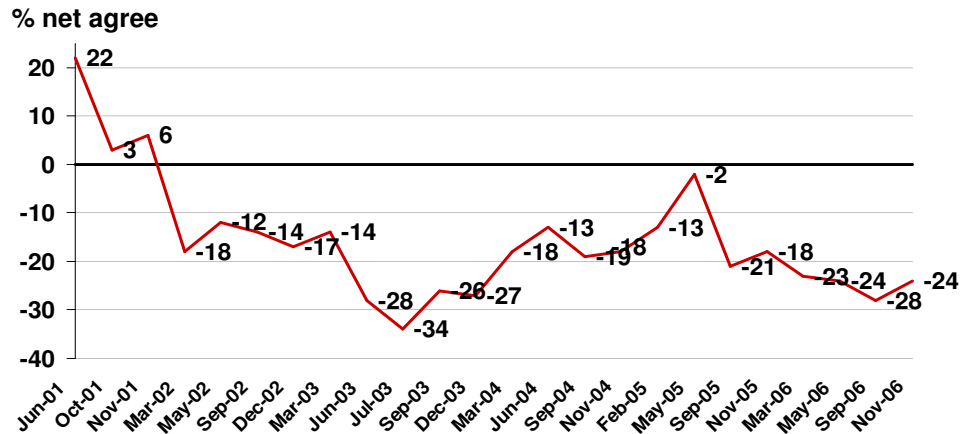
### The Impact of General Attitudes to Government and Public Services

Evidence from the Ipsos MORI Delivery Index ([www.ipsos-mori.com/polls](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls)) shows increasing pessimism about improvements in key services at the national level. Looking at public services generally, the net agree (agreement minus disagreement) figure for the statement *"In the long term, this government's policies will improve the state of Britain's public services"* stands at -24 percentage points, after a post-election high of -2 percentage points in May 2005.



## Evidence from the Ipsos MORI Delivery Index: The Public are Increasingly Sceptical about Public Services

**Q Do you agree or disagree... "In the long term, this government's policies will improve the state of Britain's Public Services"**



Base: c.1,000 British Adults

Source: Ipsos MORI

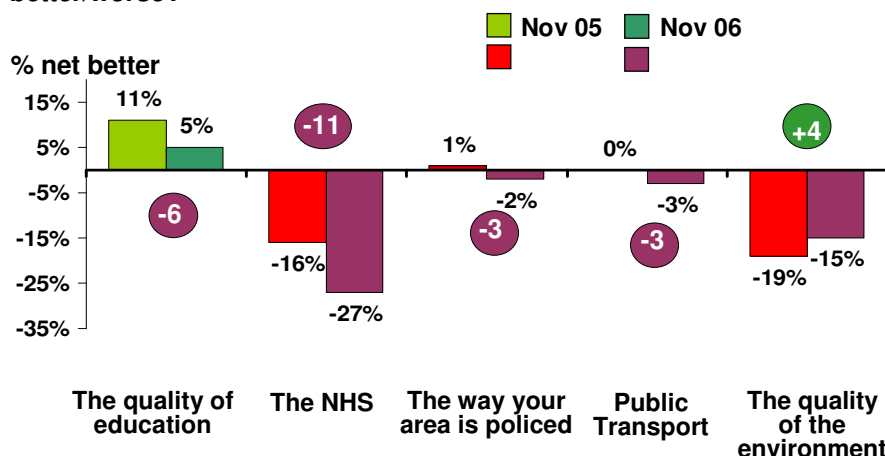
This fall can be attributed in part to rising expectations of public services generally - the proportion saying that their experience falls short of their expectations rose from 40% to 51% from 1998 to 2004<sup>5</sup> - but also to some extent by their views of the Government which have also fallen since 2003. Our broader analysis shows a faint (10%-13%), although by no means dismissible, correlation between this and the public's views of local authorities.

The public do differentiate between key service areas, however, with education generally seen as more of a success than other priority areas. But the broad trend is one of declining optimism, and the longer term trend for the quality of the environment is also in decline (despite a slight improvement in the last 12 months).

<sup>5</sup> People's Panel Research for the Cabinet Office (1998), and MORI Omnibus (2004).

## Evidence from the Ipsos MORI Delivery Index: Expectations of the Electorate over the Year

**Q Thinking about... over the next few years, do you expect it to get better/worse?**



Base: 980 British adults, 17-18 November 2006  
Source: Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute Delivery Index

Source: Ipsos MORI

We often see a huge difference between how the public view the national situation (the state of Britain's schools, changes to the NHS, and how crime, anti-social behaviour and immigration are handled), and the local situation. There is a general uplift in positive opinion as people move from a national to a more local view. The service satisfaction scores contained in these BVPI surveys raise the question as to whether the same thing is happening in local government, with better local services not leading to rising satisfaction with the councils providing the services.

### Using Data to understand Local Needs

The Local Government White Paper makes clear the urgent need for authorities to develop a stronger relationship with the communities they serve. It is therefore worth considering how councils can use their BVPI data to make a difference locally. Area-based analysis can establish whether there are any marked differences in how residents in different areas view the authority and individual services. Comparison should also be sought between residents' views of their community, in terms of priorities to improve quality of life, as well as the community cohesion and opportunities to involve.

There are some ever-presents, such as health services, which are consistently selected as one of the three most important aspects contributing to a good quality of life, irrespective of area, but other factors, such as activities for teenagers, are clearly only felt to be a quality of life priority in a smaller number of areas. Those authorities operating in more rural areas in which transport is more likely to be seen as a priority, might also wish to see the Commission for Rural Communities 'State of the Countryside 2006' report ([www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/publications](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/publications)), which looks at economic, social and environmental change.

Following on from this point, evidence in this report should be read in conjunction with other insight about the authority gathered through existing mechanisms, such as Neighbourhood Forums, as well as with other research results from qualitative projects and quantitative surveys. It does provide useful intelligence to be used in considering how service provision and decision making can be devolved to local areas most effectively. The further growth in LAAs also means that there is a greater need this time around to share data with partner agencies.

### Where now for Inspection and Strategic Regulation?

The White Paper and pronouncements by the Audit Commission about a more forward looking, risk-based Comprehensive Area Assessment signal a streamlining of strategic regulation. We will see a much reduced, but possibly tougher, national performance regime (these may be the last BVPI surveys) and a more localised and ad hoc approach to collecting data on community opinion. Generally, this is something we approve of, but we do also point to the value of an approach which permits the collection of at least some core indicators using a common methodology to support performance comparison and analysis of trends.

Local government will continually be pushed to adopt a more area- and user-focussed role, as well as a more strategic role, potentially responsible for changing resident behaviour in areas such as health, recycling, transport usage (through mechanisms such road charging schemes and parking regulations), as well as taking a stronger lead on tackling crime through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and creating more cohesive communities.

To aid a better understanding of some of the more strategic issues local public services will be addressing in the coming years, and to challenge received wisdom, Ipsos MORI has set up an horizon scanning database for the DTI. To access the hundreds of themed papers it contains, please go to [www.ipsos-mori.com/horizons/](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/horizons/). Please also visit [www.ipsos-mori.com](http://www.ipsos-mori.com), where you will soon be able to access our 'Frontiers of Transport' and 'Frontiers of ASB' reports.

### Next Steps

We hope that this report helps to provide context for your local BVPI survey.

Over the next few months, Ipsos MORI will be conducting further analysis of BVPI general survey data for all councils to highlight key trends and patterns in the data, and to help authorities' assess where they stand relative to others serving similar populations. As Comprehensive Area Assessments approach, we feel that it is essential for local authorities to be in the best position to adopt the role of place shaper, rather than be an institution which is simply shaped by place. We will therefore be producing our own comprehensive analysis of council performance and the impact of local factors in the very near future.

MORI Local Government Research Unit ([www.ipsos-mori.com/localgovt](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/localgovt)).

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# Main Findings 1: Corporate Image

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*This section looks at how residents view Wyre Forest District Council. Over the coming pages, we will look at*

- *Overall perceptions of the council;*
- *More detailed aspects of image (e.g. value for money); and*
- *Views of whether the council is doing better or worse.*

*The Best Value Performance Indicator covered in this section of the report is BV3.*



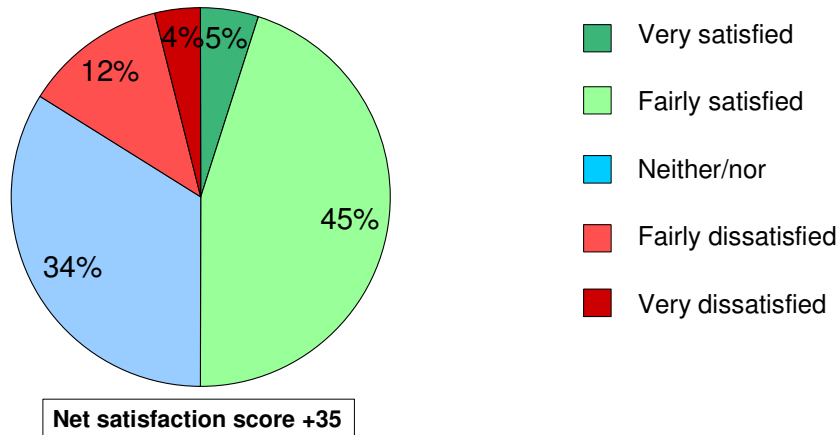
## Satisfaction with Overall Service provided by the Authority (BV3)

Half of residents (50%) are satisfied with the way the Council runs things, compared to one in seven (16%) who are dissatisfied.

3

### Satisfaction with Wyre Forest (BV3)

Q Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things?



Base: All valid responses (1189)

Source: Ipsos MORI

## Context

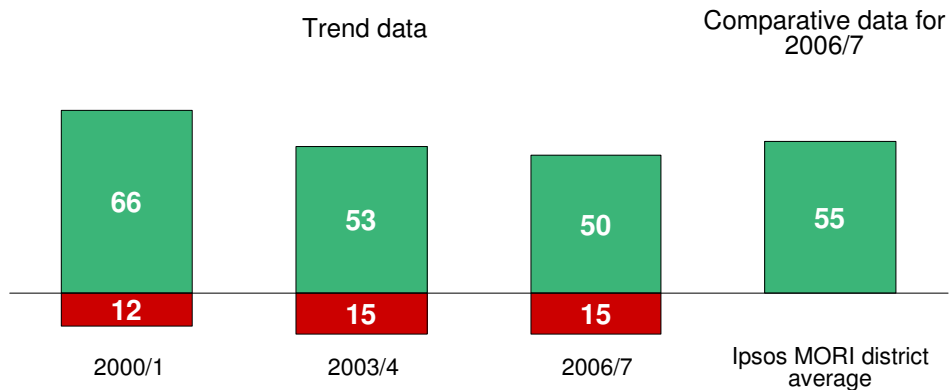
Overall satisfaction among Wyre Forest residents is five percentage points below the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

4

### Satisfaction with Council (BV3): Contextual Data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the authority runs things?

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1189)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Overall satisfaction levels dropped significantly between 2000/1 (66% satisfied) and 2003/4 (53%) but have now levelled out to a position marginally below satisfaction levels in 2003/4 (50%).

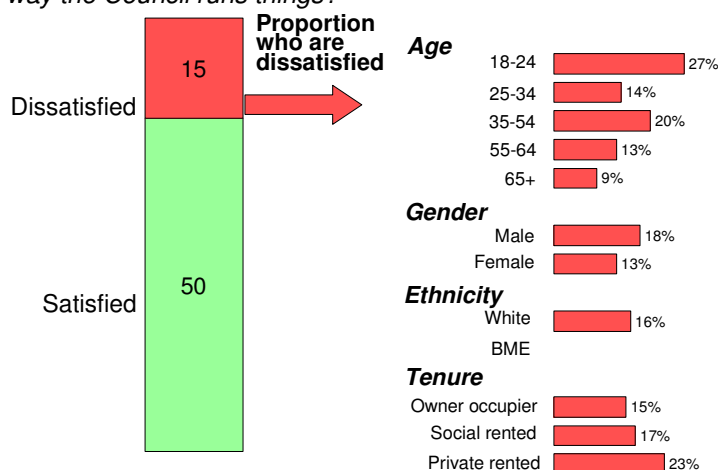
## Who is Dissatisfied?

One in seven Wyre Forest residents are dissatisfied with the way the Council runs things. Of the sub-groups identified, those aged 35-54<sup>6</sup>, and those working full-time (likely, to a large extent, to be the same people as in the 35-54 age group) are most likely to be dissatisfied, although there are no noticeable differences across other groups.

5

### Dissatisfaction with Council: Subgroup Analysis

Q Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things?



Base: All valid responses (1189)

Source: Ipsos MORI

<sup>6</sup> Although 18-24 year olds appear to be more dissatisfied than other groups, the base size for this sub-group is too low to be statistically reliable (24).



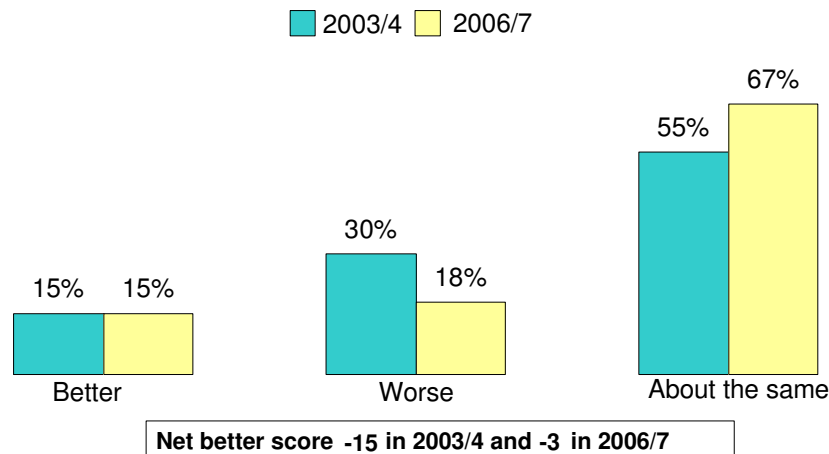
## Direction of Travel

One in seven (15%) of Wyre Forest residents consider the way the Council runs things to have got better over the last three years, compared with a slightly higher proportion (18%) who consider it to have got worse.

6

### Perceived Direction of Travel

Q Thinking about the way the Council runs things, do you think this has got better or worse over the past three years, or has it stayed the same?



Base: All valid responses (1038)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Whilst the proportion perceiving the way the authority runs things to have improved remains unchanged from 2003/4, there has been a significant drop since 2003/4 in the proportion who consider things to have got worse (from 30% to 18%).

By sub-group, women are more likely to perceive the way the Council runs things to have got better (17%, compared with 12% of men).

The following groups are noticeably more likely to perceive things to have got worse:

- Those who do not feel informed about the council (27%, compared with 7% who feel informed about the council);
- Those who disagree that people from different backgrounds get along (33%, compared with 11% who agree); and
- Those who do not believe the council provides good value for money (30%, compared with 4% who do at least to some extent).

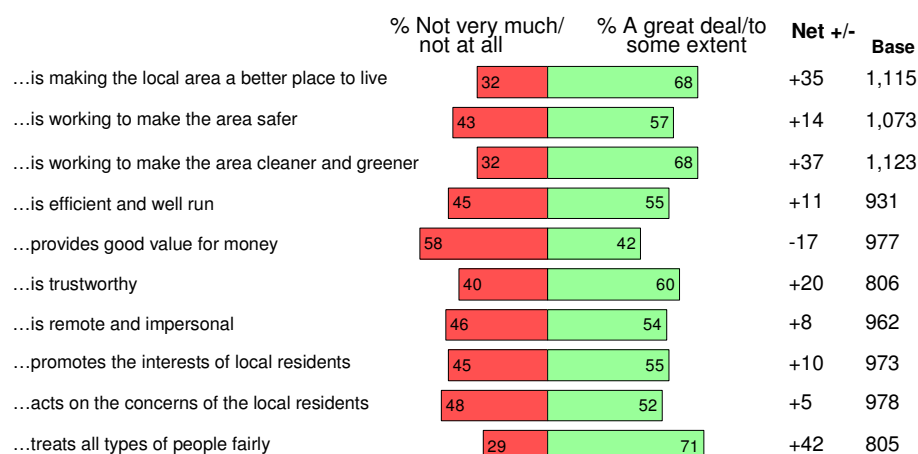
## More Detailed Aspects of Council Image

Wyre Forest residents regard the Council particularly highly in terms of treating all types of people fairly (71% say that this applies *a great deal* or *to some extent*), making the local area a better place to live (68%), and working to make the area cleaner and greener (68%) - at least twice as many agree than disagree that this is the case. However, residents are less optimistic that the council is working to make the area safer (43% say this statement applies *not very much* or *not at all*); acts on the concerns (48%) and promotes the interests of the local residents (45%); and provides good value for money (58%).

8

### More Detailed Aspects of Council Image

**Q** Here are some things that other people have said about their Council. To what extent do you think that these statements apply to Wyre Forest?



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

The council scores generally positively on all elements relating to its image, with the exception of 'providing good value for money' (with net satisfaction score of -17).

## More Detailed Aspects of Council Image: Comparative Data

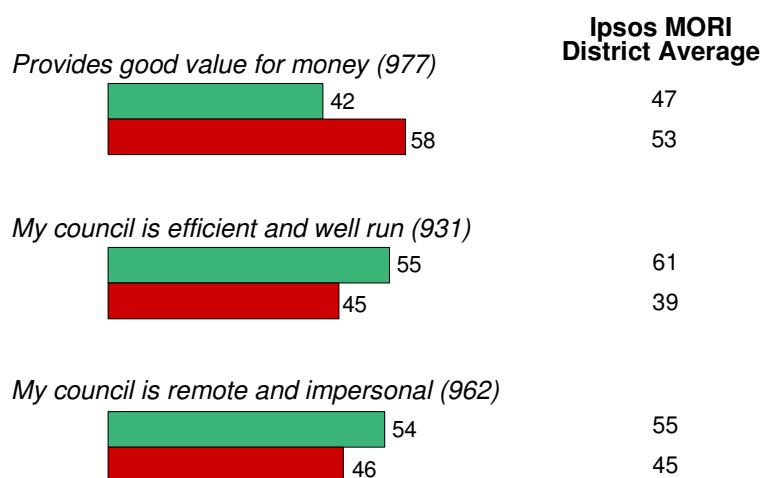
The proportion feeling that the Council is 'remote and impersonal' is in line with the Ipsos MORI district council average (just over half of residents), but scores on 'providing good value for money' and being 'efficient and well-run' do not compare favourably, falling below the Ipsos MORI district council average scores.

9

### Aspects of Council Image: Comparative Data

Q To what extent do you think that these statements apply to your local council?

■ % A great deal/some extent ■ % Not very much/not at all



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Long-term residents (who have lived in the area for 21 years or more) are more likely to have a negative image of the council in terms of:

- making the local area a better place to live (37% say the Council is doing not very much or nothing at all, compared with 22% who have lived in the area for up to five years and 25% who have lived in the area for between 6-20 years)
- making the area cleaner and greener (38% say the Council is not doing not very much or nothing at all, compared with 32% overall)
- being efficient and well-run (49% say the Council is not doing not very much or nothing at all, compared with 31% who have lived in the area for less than five years)
- promoting the interests of local residents (52% say the Council is not doing not very much or nothing at all, compared with 45% overall)
- acting on the concerns of local residents (52% say the Council is not doing not very much or nothing at all, compared with 36% who have lived in the area for up to five years)
- treating all types of people fairly (34% say the Council is not doing not very much or nothing at all, compared with 19% who have lived in the area for up to five years and 20% who have lived in the area between 6-20 years).



## Main Findings 2: Communications and Contact

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*This chapter presents residents' views on how the authority communicates and deals with contact. More specifically, we examine:*

- *Overall level of information;*
- *Level of knowledge on more detailed aspects of the authority's work);*
- *Views of whether the council is doing better or worse; and*
- *How residents feel about their experience when they contact the council (including with a complaint).*

*The Best Value Performance Indicator covered in this section of the report is BV4.*



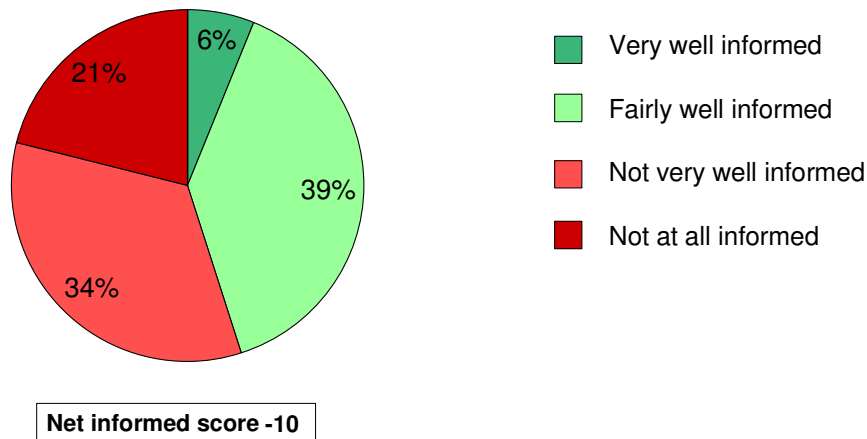
## Overall Level of Information

Views are split with regard to how well Wyre Forest District Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides. While over half (55%) do not consider the Council to keep them informed, 45% do feel very or fairly well informed.

20

### Keeping Residents Informed

Q Overall, how well informed do you think the Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?



Base: All valid responses (1139)

Source: Ipsos MORI

As is generally found to be the case in Ipsos MORI local government research, older residents are more likely to feel informed than younger residents – almost twice as many residents aged 65 or over feel informed (63%) as those aged 25-34 (33%). Those living in social rented housing are also more likely to feel informed than residents overall (69% and 45% respectively).

## Context

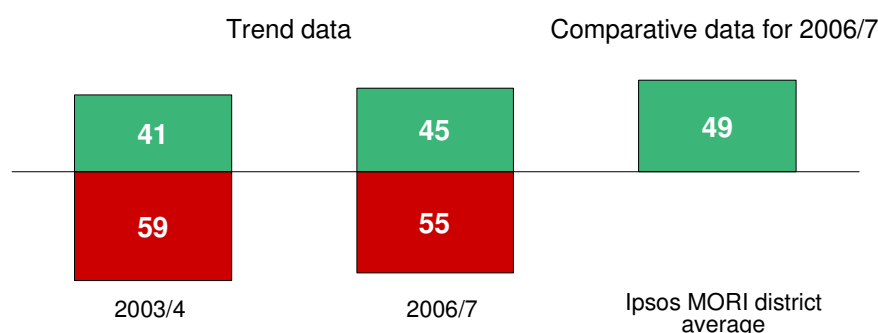
Overall, the proportion of residents that feel informed remains consistent with results in 2003/4 (41% and 45% respectively), although the results are indicative of an overall improvement, with a net score of -10 compared with -18 in 2003/4.

21

### Keeping Residents Informed: Contextual Data

Q Overall, how well informed do you think the Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

■ % Very/fairly well informed  
■ % Not very well/not at all informed



Base: All valid responses (1139)

Source: Ipsos MORI

In comparison with other district councils, Wyre Forest residents are marginally less likely to feel informed about Council services and benefits (45%, compared with the Ipsos MORI District average of 49%).



## Levels of Information about Different Aspects of the Council's Work

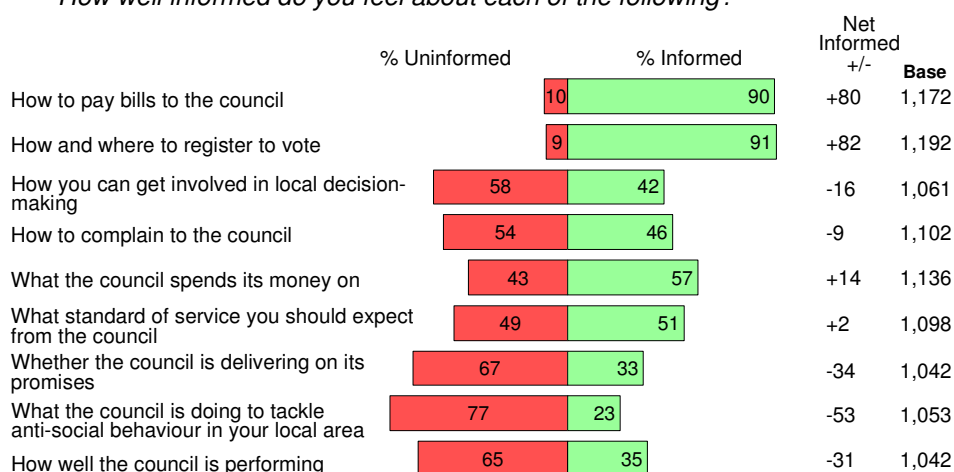
Looking more specifically at aspects of the council's work, most residents (around nine in ten) feel informed about how to pay bills and how and where to register to vote.

However, around two-thirds or more feel uninformed about whether the Council is delivering on promises (67%) and how well it is performing (65%) and substantially more than half of all residents feel uninformed about how to get involved in local decision-making (58%) and how to complain (54%). Importantly, residents are least likely to say they are informed about what the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour (77% of residents say they feel uninformed about this).

22

### Levels of Information about Different Aspects of the Council's Work

*Q How well informed do you feel about each of the following?*



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Those who are dissatisfied with the Council are more likely to say that they are not informed about all these aspects. Ipsos MORI consistently finds that feeling informed by the Council is a key driver of satisfaction both with the Council overall and with the local area. Therefore developing effective communication strategies on all aspects of the Council's work is likely to improve satisfaction among residents.

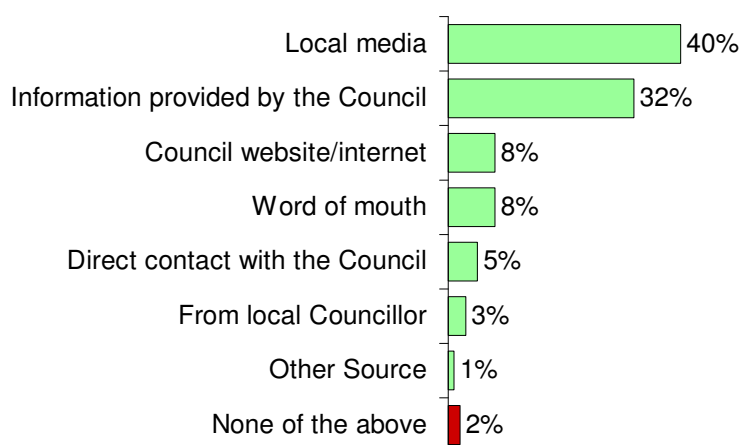
## Information Sources

Wyre Forest residents are most likely to find out about the Council's activities through the local media (40%) and directly from the Council (32%). These sources should be further utilised for distributing information about the aspects of the Council's work discussed previously.

23

### Finding out About Wyre Forest

Q How do you find out about your Council?



Base: All valid responses (1051)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Residents aged 65+ (who appear to be better informed than other residents) are more likely than others to find out about the council through information directly provided by the council (40%, compared with 32% overall). Those living in social rented accommodation, who are also more likely to be better informed than residents in general, are also particularly likely to receive information directly from the council (46%).

In contrast, those who say they do not feel informed about the council are more likely to source their information from local media (48%), and this group are more likely than others to be dissatisfied with how the council runs things.

## Contact and Complaints Handling

Within the past twelve months, 51% of residents report that they have contacted the council other than to make a complaint. The vast majority of residents contacted the council by telephone (68%), although over a quarter (27%) made contact in person.

Among those contacting the Council, around three-quarters are satisfied with all aspects of the service they received, with a slightly lower proportion (71%) satisfied with the final outcome. Lower levels of satisfaction with the final outcome despite higher satisfaction ratings for individual aspects of contact is typical of findings more generally nationwide.

24

### Contacting the Council

*Q Still thinking about your most recent contact with your Council, please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with each aspect of the service you received.*

	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied	Net satisfaction +/-	Base
How easy it was to find the right person to deal with	14	76	+62	675
The length of time it took to deal with the person you contacted	14	76	+62	669
Any information you were given	15	74	+59	660
How competent the staff were	13	78	+65	665
How helpful the staff were	13	78	+66	676
The final outcome	19	71	+52	655

Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Women are more likely to be satisfied with each aspect of the service they received than men.

The following sub-groups are more likely to report being dissatisfied with the final outcome of their contact:

- Those dissatisfied with the Council (36%, compared with 4% who are satisfied);
- Those who do not feel informed about the Council (18%, compared with 6% who do feel informed);
- Those who rate the Council's performance as worse (32%, compared with 13% overall); and
- Those who do not think the Council provides good value for money (21%, compared with 13% overall).

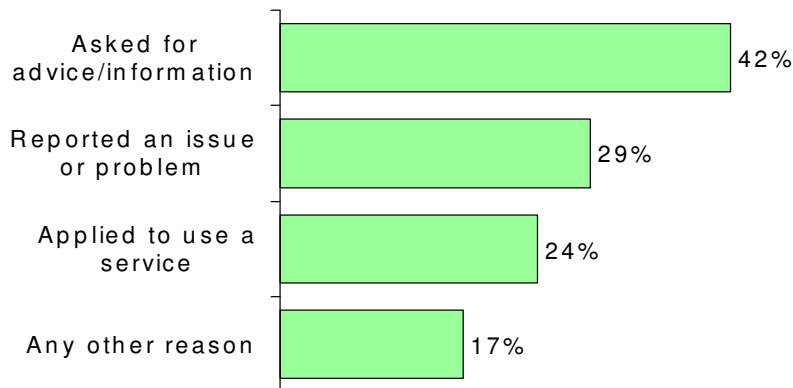
## Reasons for Getting in Touch

The top reason for contacting the Council is to ask for advice or information (42%).

25

### Reason for Most Recent Contact

Q Which of these describes the reason why you made your most recent contact with the council?



Base: All valid responses (649)

Source: Ipsos MORI

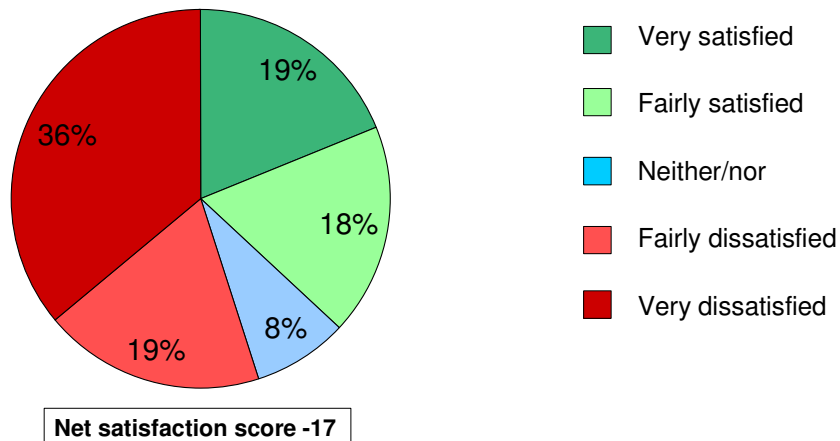
## Overall Satisfaction with Complaints Handling (BV4)

One in five (19%) residents contacted the Council in the last 12 months to make a complaint. Of those, over a third (37%) are satisfied with the way the complaint was handled, compared with just over half (55%) who are dissatisfied – a net satisfaction score of -17.

26

### Satisfaction with Complaint Handling (BV4)

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way in which your complaint was/were handled?



Base: All valid responses (218)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Dissatisfaction with the way the complaint was handled varies by gender, with men much more likely to be dissatisfied (64%, compared with 46% of women). Those who do not feel informed about the council are also more likely to be dissatisfied (64%, compared with 41% who do feel informed).

## Overall Satisfaction with Complaints Handling: Comparative Data

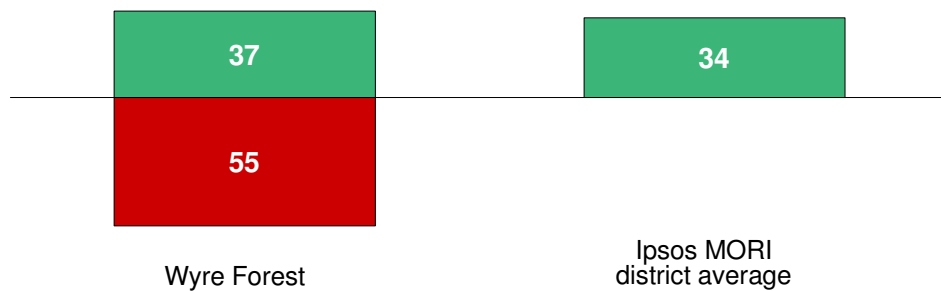
The proportion of Wyre Forest residents expressing satisfaction with complaint handling places it slightly above the Ipsos MORI District average – 37% compared to 34% respectively.

27

### Satisfaction with Complaint Handling (BV4): Comparative Data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way in which your complaint was/were handled?

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (218)

Source: Ipsos MORI

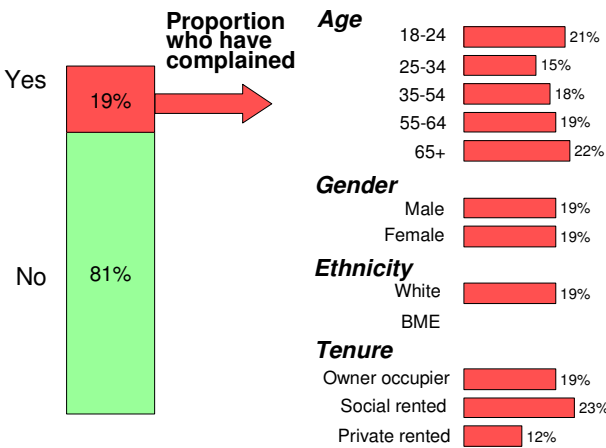
# Profile of those Complaining to the Council

The only significant sub-group variation in residents contacting the Council to complain is by disability. A quarter of those with a disability (25%) have contacted the Council in the last 12 months to complain, compared with 19% overall.

28

## Profile of Residents who have complained

Q Have you contacted the Council with a complaint in the last 12 months?



Base: All valid responses (1186)

Source: Ipsos MORI

## Main Findings 3: Life in Wyre Forest

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*This section reports on residents' views about their quality of life, focusing in particular on:*

- *Priorities for improving the local area;*
- *Anti-social behaviour; and*
- *Community cohesion.*





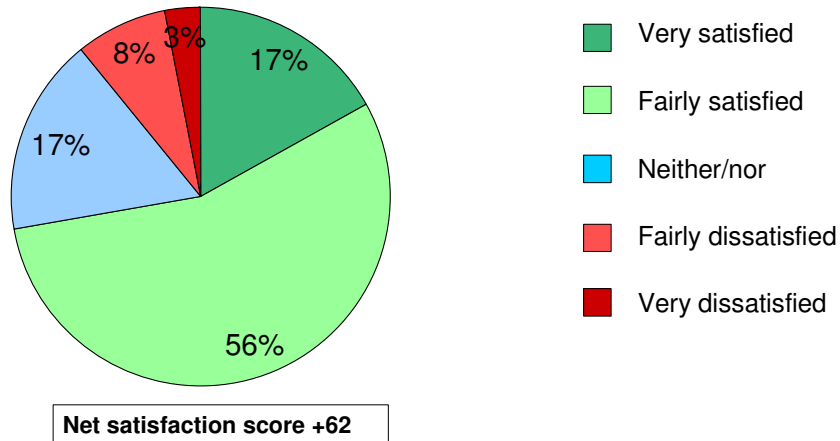
## Overall Satisfaction with Area

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Wyre Forest residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, and one in nine (11%) are dissatisfied. Overall, the net satisfaction score is +62 percentage points.

30

### Satisfaction with the Local Area

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



Base: All valid responses (1203)

Source: Ipsos MORI

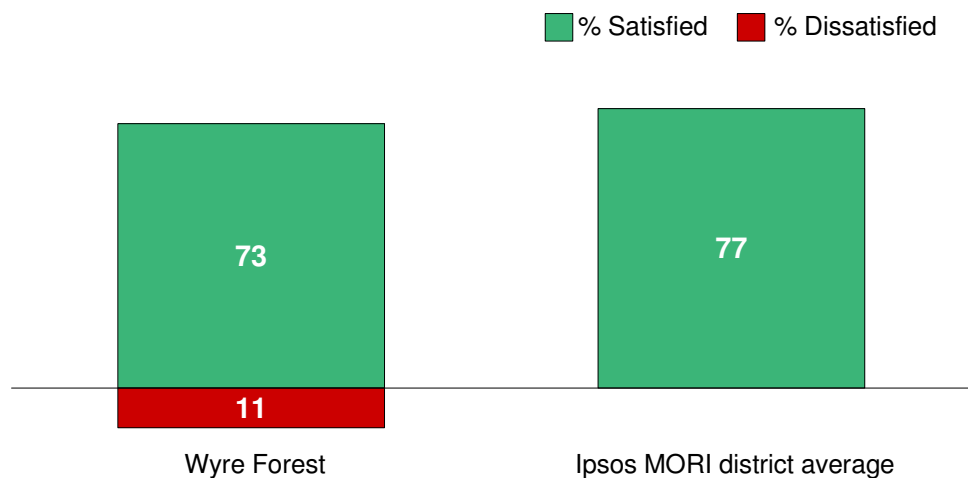
## Context

Overall satisfaction with the local area among Wyre Forest residents - at 73% - is marginally below the Ipsos MORI district average (77%).

31

### Satisfaction with Area: Contextual Data

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



Base: All valid responses (1203)

Source: Ipsos MORI

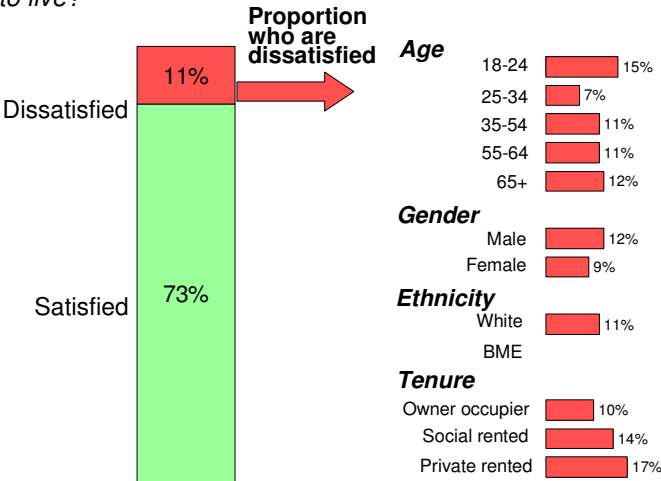
# Who is Dissatisfied?

Again, no particular socio-demographic groups stand out as being more dissatisfied than others, although women are again noticeably more likely to be satisfied than men (77% and 68% respectively), as are residents aged 65+ (80%).

32

## Dissatisfaction with Area: Subgroup Analysis

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



Base: All valid responses (1203)

Source: Ipsos MORI

## The Perceived Role of the Council

Residents provided views on how the Council has performed overall. Two-thirds agree a great deal or to some extent that the Council is making the local area a better place to live (68%), which places Wyre Forest slightly below the Ipsos MORI district average (where 71% of residents agree with this statement). The same proportion agree a great deal or to some extent that the Council is working to make the area cleaner and greener (68%), which again is slightly below the Ipsos MORI district average (74%).

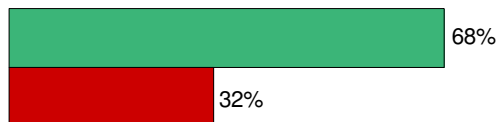
33

### Work of the Local Council: Comparative Data

Q To what extent do you think that these statements apply to your local council?

■ % A great deal/some extent ■ % Not very much/not at all

*My council is making the local area a better place to live (1,115)*

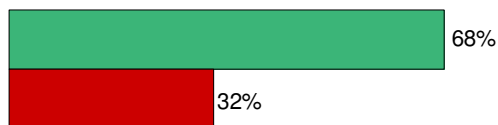


**All Ipsos MORI Districts**

71%

29%

*My council is working to make the area cleaner and greener (1,123)*



74%

26%

Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Women are more likely than men to perceive the Council to be making the local area a better place to live (72% and 63% respectively) and to be making the area cleaner and greener (73%, compared with 64% of men).

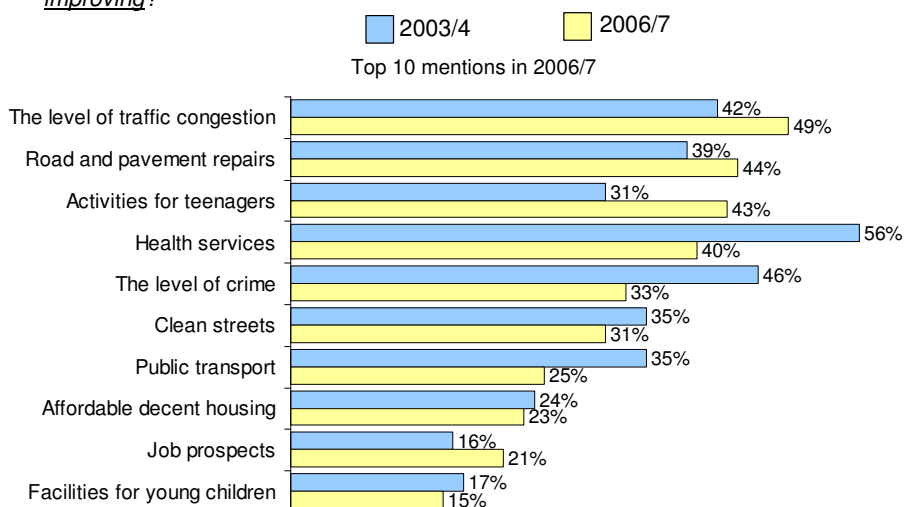
## What needs to be Improved?

Residents' top priorities for improvement are the level of traffic congestion (49%), road and pavement repairs (44%), and activities for teenagers (43%), and residents are more likely to cite these than they were in 2003/4. As Ipsos MORI commonly finds, another important aspect for improvement is health services (40%), although this is less of a priority than it was in 2003/4 (56%).

35

### Priorities for Improvement

Q Thinking about this local area, which of the things below, if any, do you think most need improving?



Base: All valid responses (940)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Other aspects that have noticeably dropped in terms of residents' priorities are: the level of crime (down 13 percentage points from 46% to 33%), public transport (down 10 percentage points from 35% to 25%), and cultural facilities (down 23 percentage points from 38% to 15%).

Women are more likely than men to say that activities for teenagers most need improving (48% and 38% respectively), as are residents aged 35-54 (51%, compared with 43% overall). This suggests that it may be parents of teenagers who particularly feel this to be important.

Those in private rented accommodation in the area are more likely than others to say that affordable decent housing needs to be improved (52%, compared with 23% overall) suggesting that a large proportion in this group are struggling to buy property in the area.

Residents aged 65+ and those with a disability are more likely to feel that clean streets are a priority for improvement (40% and 39% respectively, compared with 31% overall). Residents living in social rented housing are also more likely to see this as a priority (43%).

Improving public transport is particularly important for residents aged 65+ (32%, compared with 25% overall), which, perhaps, is a group that is more likely to rely on this.

## Developing Priorities for Quality of Life

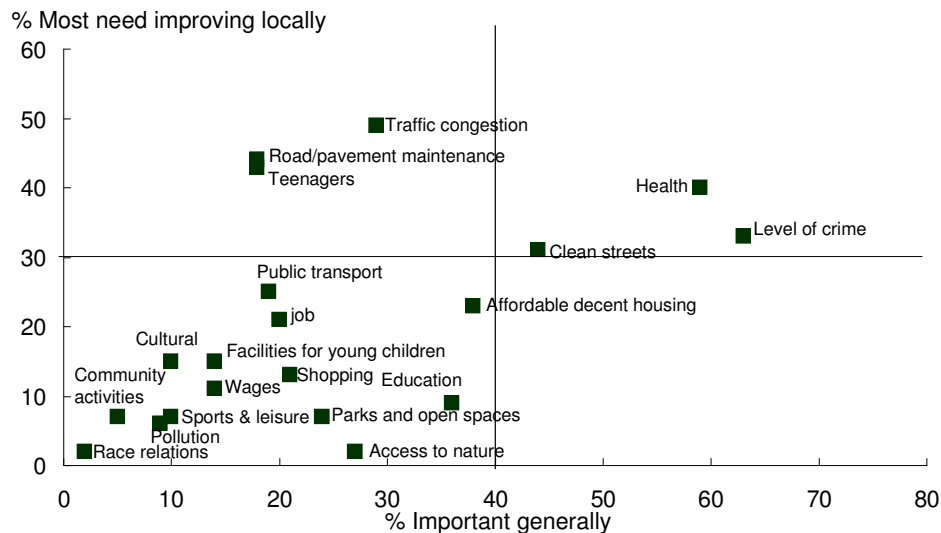
The following scatter chart looks to establish real priorities for local areas. It does so by plotting the extent to which people think aspects of life in their area need to be improved (on the vertical axis), against the extent to which they think the same things are important generally. The further to the top and right of the chart an aspect is, the more it is seen to be in need of improvement and important generally. If something is found at the top of the chart, but over to the left, then it is seen as in need of improvement locally, but not that important generally.

In the case of Wyre Forest District Council, there are clear priority areas scoring highly both in terms of importance and the need for improvement. These include:

- health;
- level of crime;
- clean streets; and
- traffic congestion

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## Developing Priorities for Quality of Life



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Affordable decent housing and education are considered important in making somewhere a good place to live but are less commonly identified as in need of improvement.

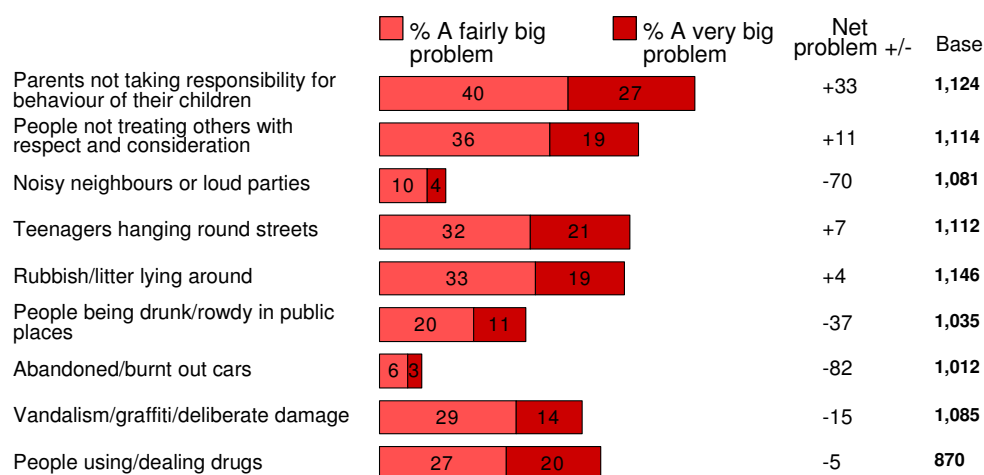
## Focus on Anti-social Behaviour

The aspects most commonly identified as a problem by Wyre Forest residents include parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (67% saying that this is a big or fairly big problem), people not treating others with respect and consideration (55%), teenagers hanging round on the streets (53%), and rubbish and litter lying around (52%).

37

### Anti-social Behaviour

Q Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think are...



Base: All valid responses

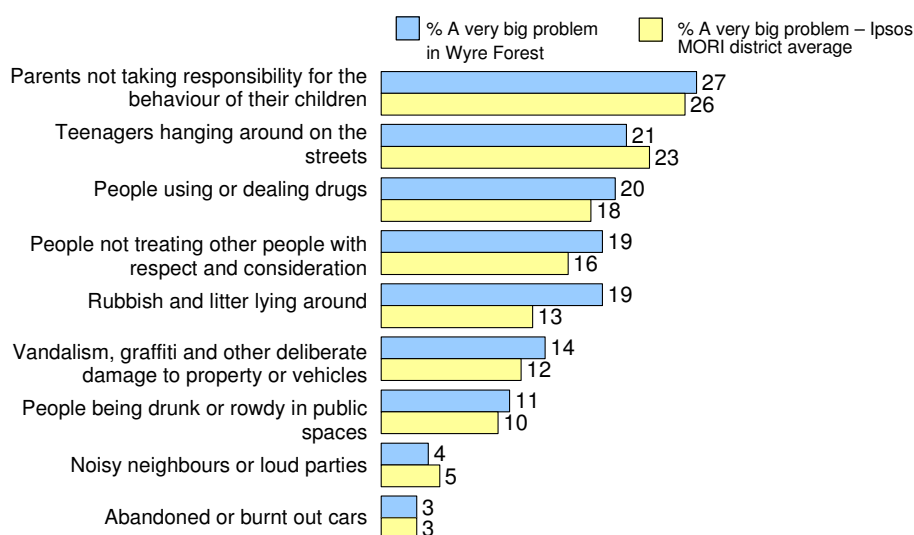
Source: Ipsos MORI

## A Comparison with other District Councils

Results for Wyre Forest residents are very much in line with results across other District council surveys, although rubbish and litter lying around is more of a problem in Wyre Forest than other areas.

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### A Comparison between Anti-social Behaviour in Wyre Forest and the Ipsos MORI district average



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

The following table shows how perceptions of anti-social behaviour have changed in the last three years. The largest positive shift has been seen for abandoned/burnt out cars and people being drunk/rowdy in public places, while there have been no negative shifts.

Anti-social behaviour	Consider a big problem in area		
	2003/4 (%)	2006/7 (%)	% point change
Parents not taking responsibility for behaviour of their children		79	-
People not treating others with respect and consideration		55	-
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	19	15	-4
Teenagers hanging round streets	63	54	-9
Rubbish/litter lying around	55	52	-3
People being drunk/rowdy in public places	57	32	-25
Abandoned/burnt out cars	43	9	-34
Vandalism/graffiti/deliberate damage	62	42	-20
People using/dealing drugs	67	47	-20

Source: Ipsos MORI

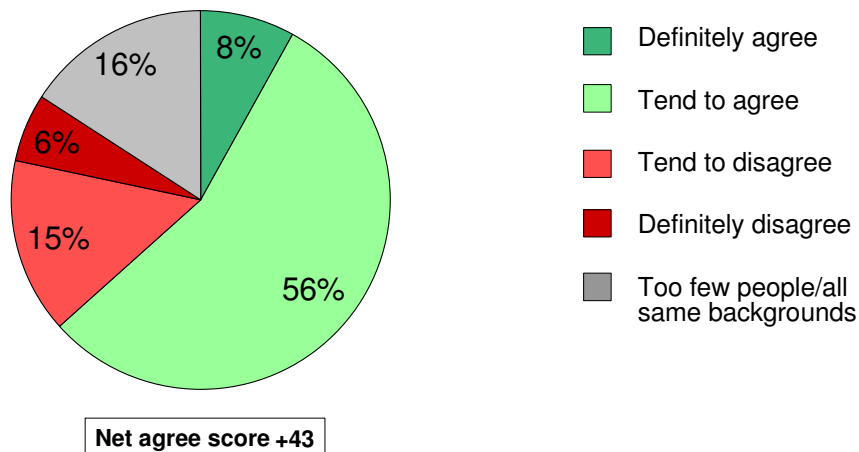
## Social Cohesion

Almost two-thirds (64%) of Wyre Forest residents agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, whereas a fifth (20%) disagree.

39

### Social Cohesion

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Base: All valid responses (920)

Source: Ipsos MORI

## Who disagrees?

No particular socio-demographic groups stand out as being more likely to disagree that the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, with the exception of those who work full-time (27%, compared with 15% who do not work full-time). However, the following groups are all more likely than their counterparts to disagree:

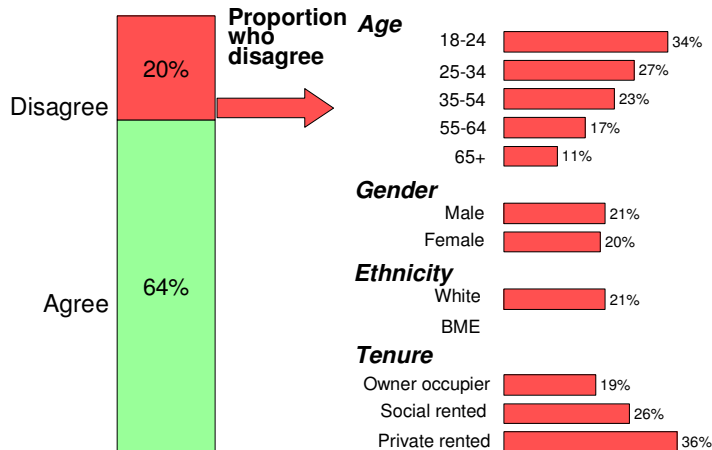
- those who are dissatisfied with the area as a place to live (51%);
- those who are dissatisfied with the council (45%);
- those who do not feel informed about the council (26%);
- those who think the way the council runs things has got worse over the last three years (42%); and
- those who do not think the council provides good value for money (27%).



40

## Social Cohesion: Subgroup Analysis

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Base: All valid responses (920)

Source: Ipsos MORI

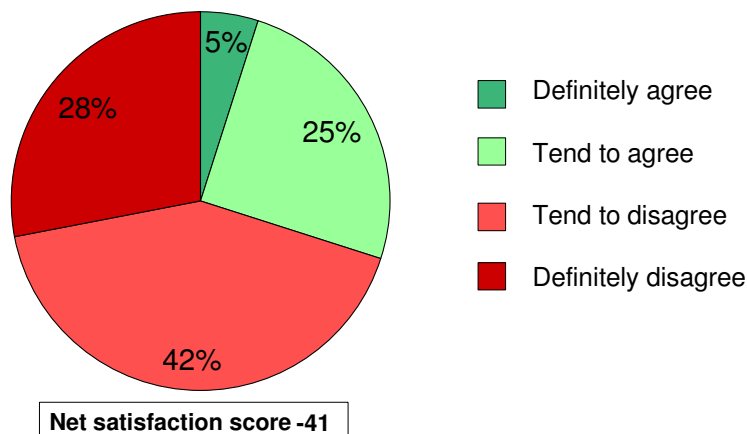
## Getting Involved

Less than a third of residents (30%) agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area, compared with seven in ten who disagree.

41

## Influencing Local Decisions

Q Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?



Base: All valid responses (987)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Results indicate that older residents (aged 65+) and those living in social rented housing are more likely to agree that they can influence decisions affecting the local area (41% and 46% respectively, compared with 30% overall). Those who have been living in the area for 21 years or more are

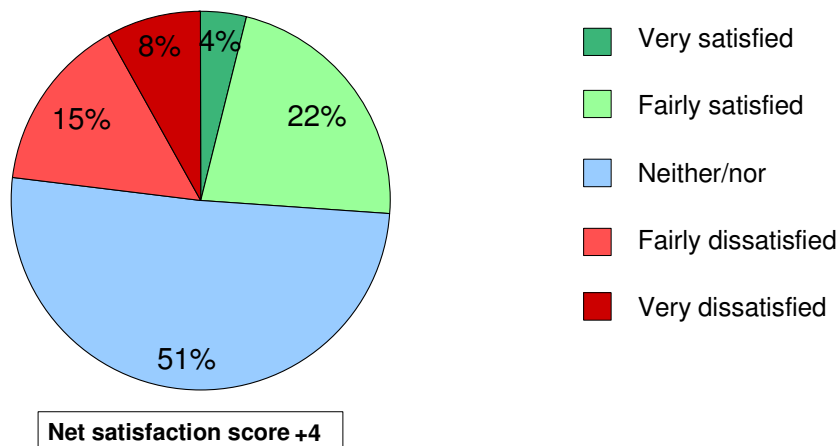
noticeably more likely to disagree that they can influence decisions affecting the local area (77%, compared with 70% overall).

A quarter of residents (26%) are satisfied with opportunities for participation in local-decision making, but half of residents (51%) are neutral on this aspect.

42

## Participation in Local Decision-making

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by your Council?



Base: All valid responses (972)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Residents working full-time are more likely to be dissatisfied with opportunities (27% compared with 18% who do not work full time).

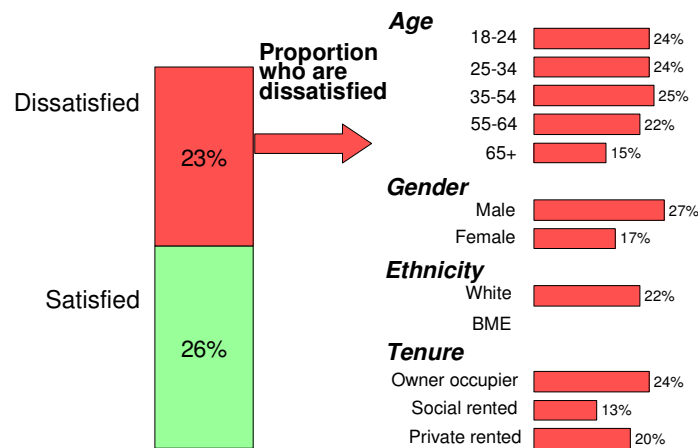
## Who is Dissatisfied?

Men are more likely than women (27% and 17% respectively) to be dissatisfied with opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by the Council, as are those who work full-time (27%, compared with 18% of those who do not) and residents in owner-occupied housing (24%, compared with 13% in social rented housing).

43

### Dissatisfaction with Opportunities for Participation: Subgroup Analysis

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by your Council?



Base: All valid responses (972)

Source: Ipsos MORI

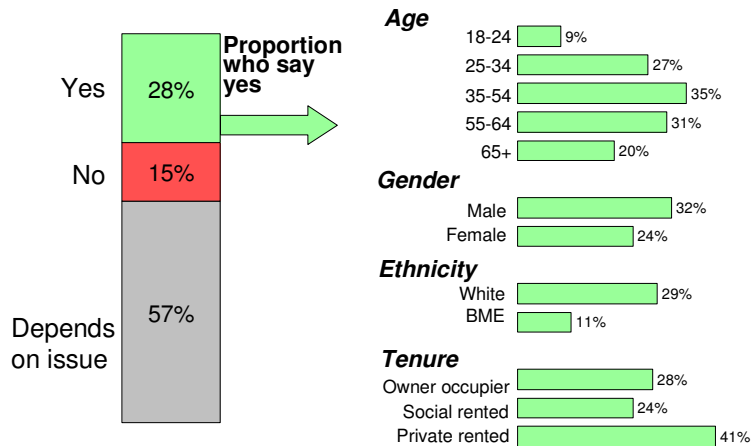
## But who really wants to be more Involved?

Reflecting the groups that are most dissatisfied in this respect, those who stand out as being particularly interested in getting involved are men (32%, compared with 24% of women), and those who work full-time (32%).

44

### Which Residents want to be Involved?

Q Generally speaking, would you like to be more involved in the decisions Wyre Forest makes that affect your local area?



Base: All valid responses (1179)

Source: Ipsos MORI

In general, those more likely to report dissatisfaction with the area, the council, council performance and value for money are also more likely to say they would like to be more involved in the decisions the Council makes that affects the local area.

## Main Findings 4: Services

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*This section looks at a range of local authority services under four headings. These are:*

- *Environmental Services;*
- *Transport;*
- *Cultural and Recreational Services; and*
- *Other Services.*

*Best Value Performance Indicators covered in this section of the report are BVs 89, 90, and 119.*



## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

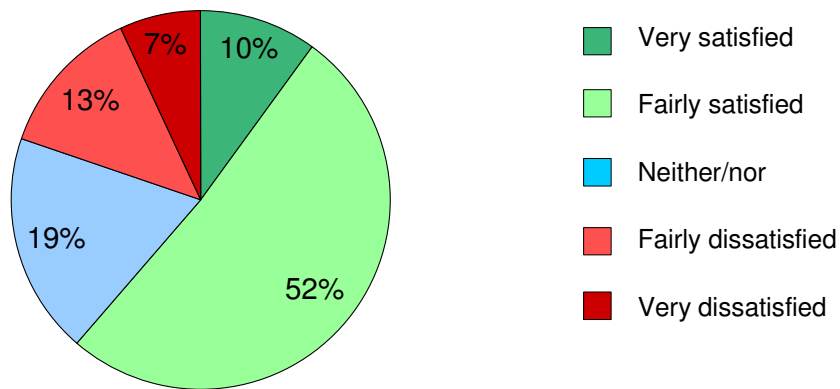
### Waste and Litter Services (BV89)

Around three in five Wyre Forest residents (62%) are satisfied that the Council has kept the land clear of litter and refuse. One in five (20%) are dissatisfied, producing a net satisfaction score of +42.

50

#### Keeping the Local Area clear of Litter and Refuse (BV89)

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Wyre Forest has kept this land clear of litter and refuse?



Net satisfaction score +42

Base: All valid responses (1207)

Source: Ipsos MORI

The majority of residents think the quality of this service has stayed the same over the last three years. Residents are more likely to say that the services have got better (21%) than that they have got worse (16%).

## Context

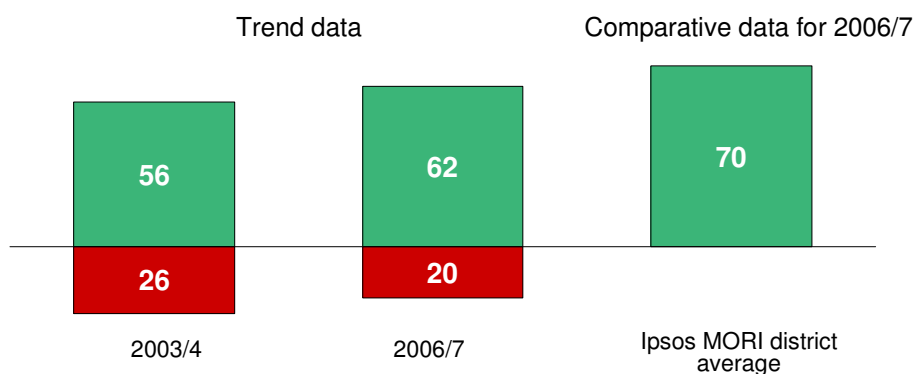
Satisfaction with this aspect of waste and litter services has improved by six percentage points since 2003/04, when 56% were satisfied. However, the Council compares less favourably with other district councils surveyed by Ipsos MORI (an average of 70% satisfied).

51

### Litter and Refuse (BV89): Contextual Data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Wyre Forest has kept this land clear of litter and refuse?

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1207)

Source: Ipsos MORI



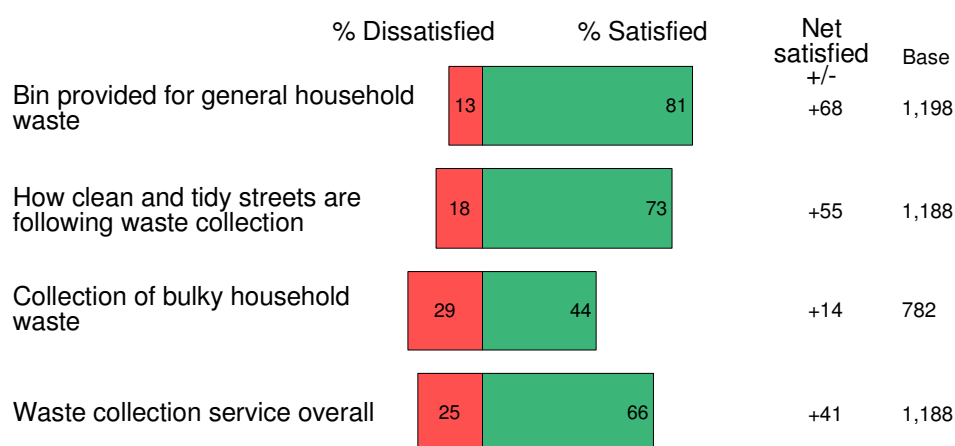
## Household Waste Collection (BV90a)

Of the different elements of waste collection services asked about, residents are most satisfied with the bin provided for general household waste (81% satisfied), and least satisfied with the collection of bulky household waste (29% dissatisfied). Two in three are satisfied with the overall waste collection service (66%) and one in four are dissatisfied (25%).

52

### Waste Collection (BV90a): Detail

Q Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide:



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Residents aged between 25 and 34 years are consistently more dissatisfied with each aspect of waste collection, while those aged 65 and over are more satisfied. Those in social rented housing are particularly dissatisfied with how clean and tidy the street is following the waste collection .

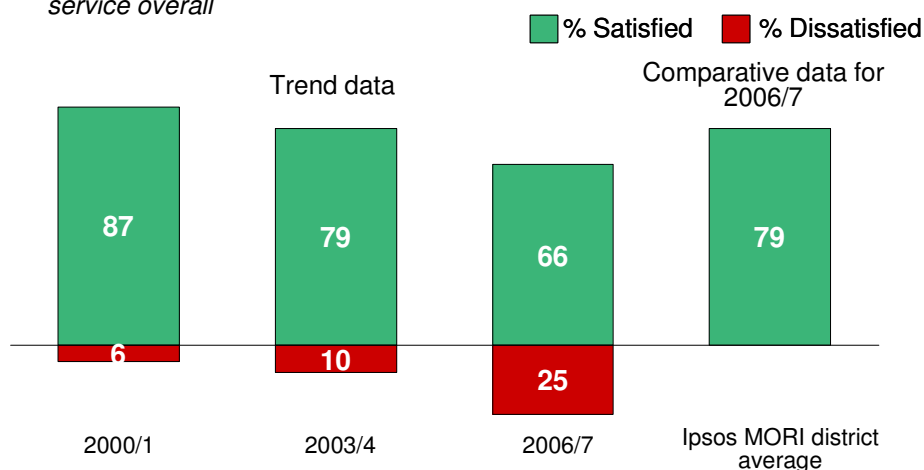
## Context

Overall satisfaction with the waste collection service has continued to decline since 2003/04, falling 13 percentage points since 2003/4. For litter and refuse services, satisfaction is lower than the Ipsos MORI average for district councils (79%).

53

### Waste Collection (BV90a): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide: Waste collection service overall



Base: All valid responses (1188)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Two in five residents (40%) think the service for collection of household waste has stayed the same over the past three years, while a third (34%) say it has got worse, and a quarter (26%) say it has improved.

## Doorstep Recycling

Of the various aspects of doorstep recycling, Wyre Forest residents are most satisfied with the container provided for items of recycling (80% satisfied) and least satisfied with how clean and tidy the street is following the recycling collection (18% dissatisfied). Overall, three in four are satisfied with the service for the collection of items for recycling, and only one in seven are dissatisfied.

54

### Doorstep Recycling

Q Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide:

	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied	Net satisfied +/-	Base
Container provided for items of recycling	12	80	+69	1,147
How clean and tidy street is following recycling collection	18	73	+55	1,188
The service for the collection of items for recycling overall	14	75	+61	1,144

Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Women tend to be more satisfied than men - with the container provided for recycling (83% satisfied, compared with 77% of men) and with recycling services overall (79%, compared with 71% of men).

Those aged between 35 and 54 years are most likely to be dissatisfied with the container provided (17% dissatisfied, compared with 12% overall) and with recycling services overall (19% dissatisfied, compared with 14% overall), while those aged between 25 and 34 years are most dissatisfied with how clean and tidy the street is following collection (31% dissatisfied, compared with 20% overall).

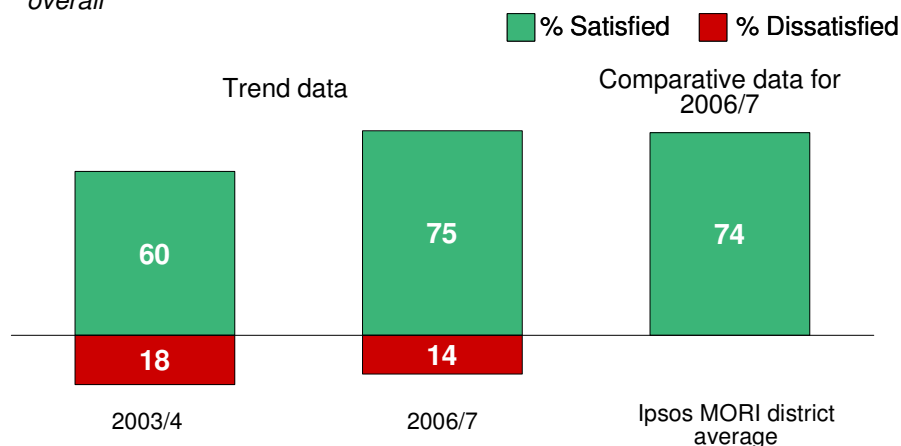
## Context

Encouragingly, levels of satisfaction with doorstep recycling have risen by fifteen percentage points since 2003/04, bringing it in line with the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

55

### Doorstep Recycling Service: Contextual Data

Q Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide: Recycling service overall



Base: All valid responses (1144)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Reflecting these improvements, approaching half (45%) say the doorstep collection of items for recycling has got better over the last three years, and a similar proportion (44%) say it has stayed the same. One in ten (11%) think these services have got worse.

## Local Recycling Facilities (BV90b)

Satisfaction with local recycling facilities is also high, with around three in four satisfied with each aspect. Three in four are satisfied with the provision of recycling facilities overall and one in eight are dissatisfied.

56

### Local Recycling Facilities (BV90b)

*Q Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide:*

	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied	Net satisfied +/-	Base
Location of recycling facilities	8	78	+69	1,110
Items you can deposit	12	76	+65	1,123
How clean and tidy site is	6	76	+70	1,092
Provision of recycling facilities overall	12	74	+62	1,137

Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Those in private rented housing are particularly dissatisfied with the items they can deposit for recycling (26%, compared with 12% overall).

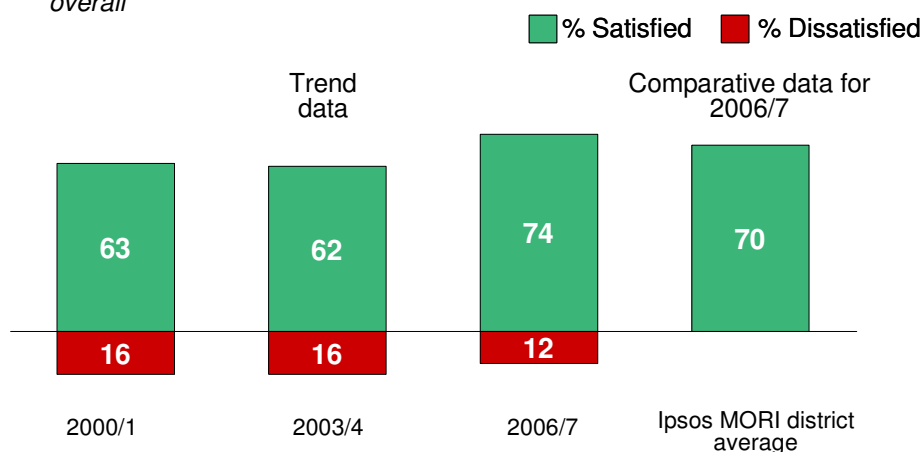
## Context

As with doorstep recycling services, satisfaction with the overall provision of recycling facilities has improved by 12 percentage points since 2003/04. The Council performs better than the average for the other district councils Ipsos MORI has surveyed.

57

### Local Recycling Facilities (BV90b): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide: Recycling service overall



Base: All valid responses (1137)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Over half of residents (52%) say the quality of local recycling facilities have stayed the same over the past three years and considerably more residents perceive facilities to have got better (42%) than worse (six per cent).

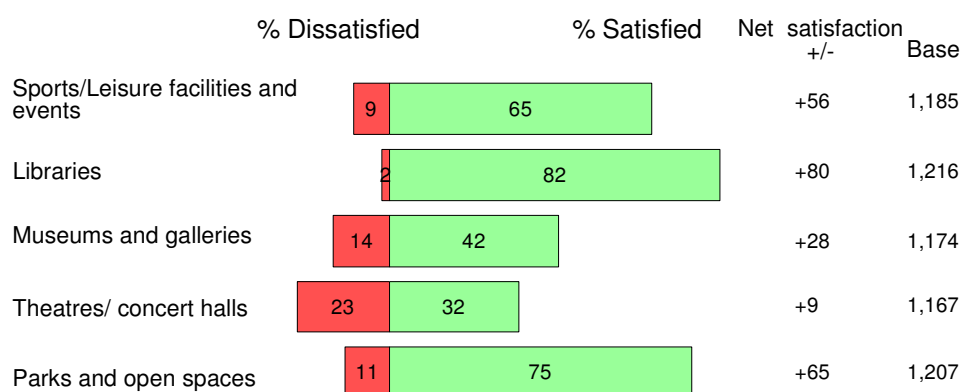
## CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Wyre Forest residents are particularly satisfied with libraries (82% satisfied) and parks and open spaces (75%). In contrast, satisfaction with museums and galleries and theatres/concert halls is lower. This is consistent with results elsewhere in the country, reflecting a significant proportion of residents who are neutral about these services.

58

### Cultural and Recreational Activities and Venues (BV119)

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest:



Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Women are more satisfied than men with both sports/leisure facilities and events (69% compared with 61%) and museums and galleries (46% compared with 38%).

Older residents aged 65 and over tend to be more satisfied with each facility, with the exception of sports/leisure facilities. Those aged between 25 and 34 years are particularly dissatisfied with parks and open spaces (20%, compared with 11% overall).

Residents with a disability are more satisfied with theatres/concert halls (38%, compared with 30% among those who do not have a disability).

## Context

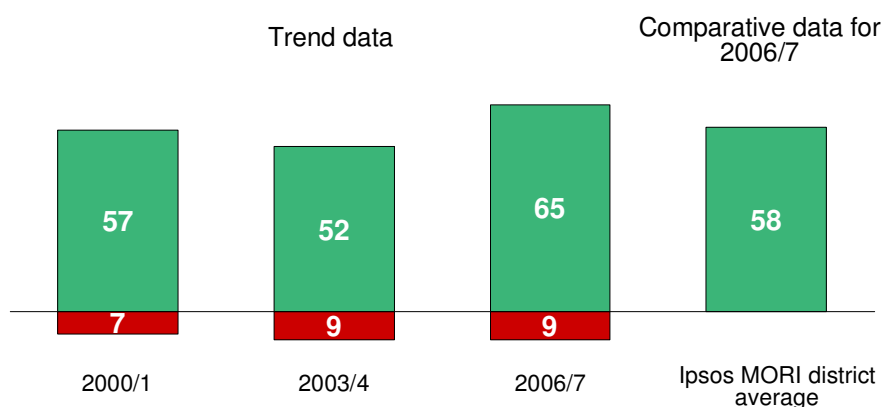
Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities has risen significantly - by 13 percentage points - since 2003/04. Wyre Forest District Council's scores compare favourably with the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

59

### Sports and Leisure Facilities (BV119a): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest: Sports/leisure facilities.

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1185)

Source: Ipsos MORI

The majority of residents think the quality of sports and leisure facilities has stayed the same over the last three years (81%). Similar proportions think they have got better and worse (12% and 8% respectively).

In terms of usage, approaching three in five residents (59%) have used sports and leisure facilities in the last 12 months, roughly in line with usage in 2003/04. Residents aged between 25 and 34 years are particularly likely to be regular users of these facilities: 36% use them at least once a week, compared with 18% overall.

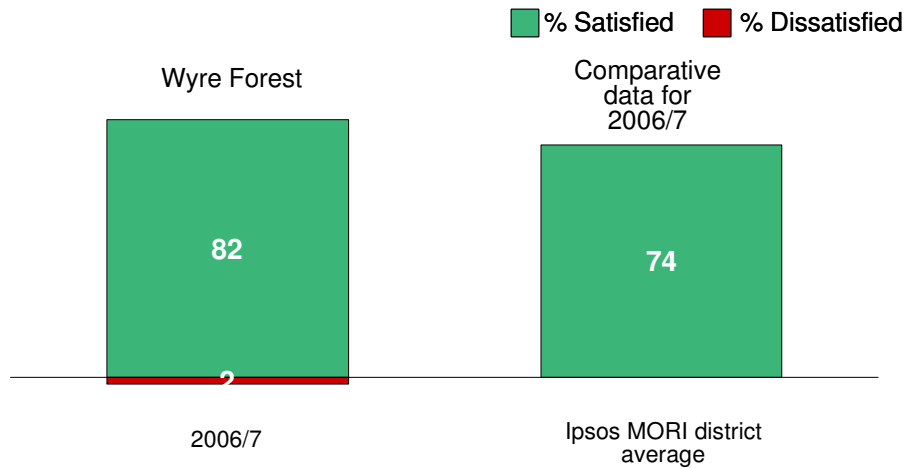


Overall satisfaction with libraries is also higher in Wyre Forest than the Ipsos MORI average for district councils. Although the majority of residents think the quality of libraries has stayed about the same, one in five (22%) think they have got better. A small minority - two per cent - say they have got worse.

60

### Libraries (BV119b): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest: Libraries.



Base: All valid responses (1216)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Approaching two in three residents (64%) have used a library in the last 12 months.

More residents than in 2003/04 are dissatisfied with museums and galleries, although there has been no change in the proportion who are satisfied. Reflecting this, most residents (86%) think the quality of museums and galleries have stayed the same over the last three years.

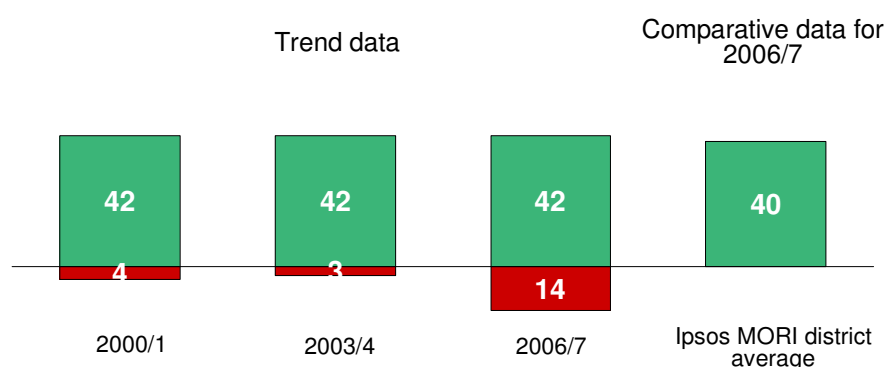
Satisfaction is in line with the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

61

## Museums and Galleries (BV119c): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest: Museums and galleries

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1174)

Source: Ipsos MORI

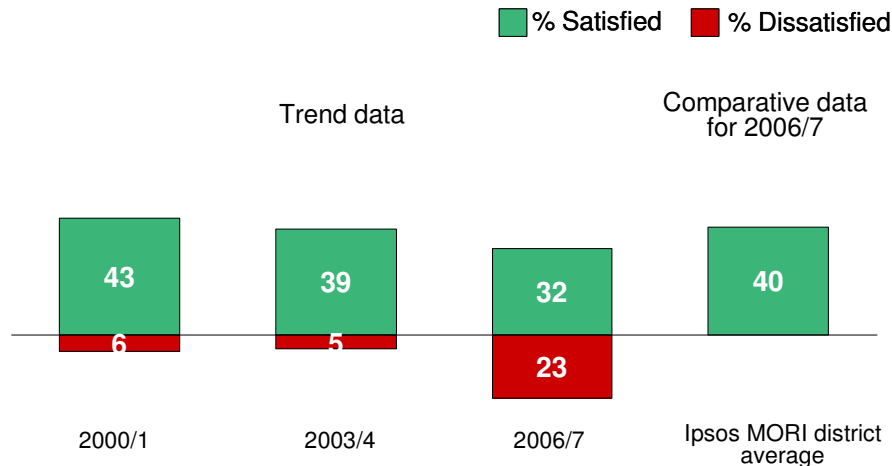
Around one in three residents (35%) have visited a museum or gallery in the past year. Visits have increased since 2003/04, when only around one in five (22%) had visited a museum or gallery in the previous year. Those aged between 55 and 64 years are most likely to have visited (45%), while those aged between 25 and 34 are least likely to have done so (24%).

Satisfaction with theatres/concert halls continues to decline - by seven percentage points since 2003/04. In Wyre Forest these facilities are less highly rated than the Ipsos MORI average for district councils. Despite this, most residents (89%) again think the quality of theatres/concert halls have stayed the same over the last three years.

62

## Theatres/Concert Halls (BV119d): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest: Theatres/concert halls.



Base: All valid responses (1167)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Around three in four residents (34%) have visited the theatre or a concert hall in the last 12 months, again showing an increase since 2003/04 of six percentage points. Those aged between 55 and 64 years are most likely to have visited one, while those aged between 25 and 34 years are least likely to have done so.

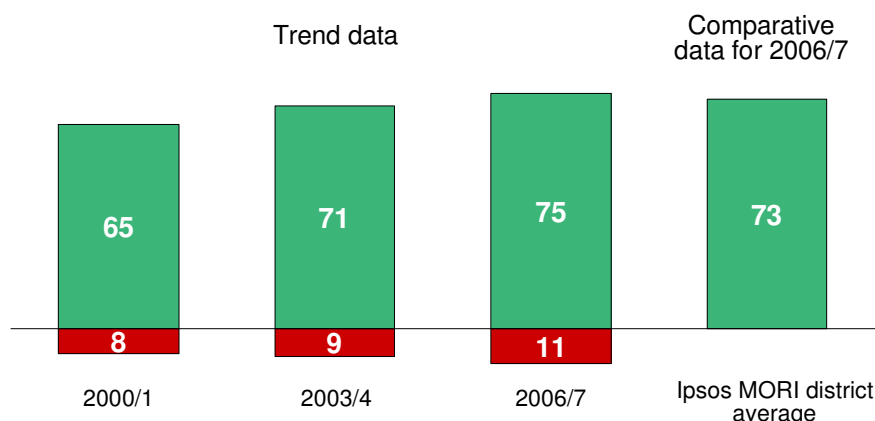
More residents are satisfied with parks and open spaces than in 2003/04 (up four percentage points). Reflecting this, one in five residents (22%) say parks and open spaces have got better over the last three years. Seven in ten (69%) think they have stayed about the same, while only one in eleven (nine per cent) saying they have got worse. Satisfaction is broadly in line with the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

63

## Parks and Open Spaces (BV119e): Contextual Data

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest: Parks and open spaces.

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1207)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Most residents (86%) have used parks and open spaces in the last year - similar levels to 2003/04. Those aged 65 and over are least likely to have used them (25% have not, compared with 14% overall), while those aged between 35 and 54 years are most likely to have done so (91% have, compared with 86% overall).

## OTHER SERVICES

The General User Survey also covers housing and planning services. The majority of residents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with them (70% and 63% respectively), reflecting a lack of use of these services. Around one in four residents are satisfied with each.

64

### Other Services

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the following services provided by Wyre Forest:

	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied	Net satisfaction +/-	Base
Housing Services	7	23	+16	1,190
Planning Services	11	26	+15	1,185

Base: All valid responses

Source: Ipsos MORI

Among users of housing services, satisfaction increases to half (50%) and dissatisfaction also increases to around one in four (23%). This produces a net satisfaction score of +27. Those in social rented housing are particularly satisfied (70%, compared with 23% overall), as are those aged 65 and over (38%).

Similarly, among users of planning services, approaching three in five (57%) are satisfied and in one in four (23%) are dissatisfied. This produces a net satisfaction score of +35. Again, those in social rented housing are particularly satisfied (43%, compared with 26% overall).

## Context

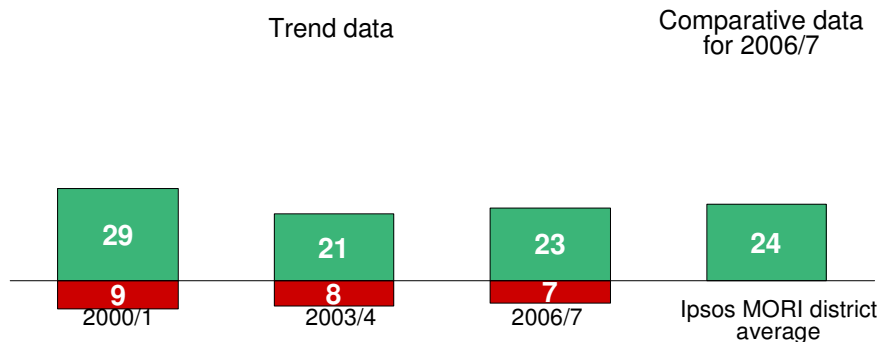
While a similar proportion of residents are satisfied with housing services as in 2003/04, more are dissatisfied. Levels of satisfaction are in line with the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

65

### Housing Services: Contextual Data

Q Please indicate *how satisfied or dissatisfied* you are overall with the following services provided by Wyre Forest: Housing services

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1190)

Source: Ipsos MORI

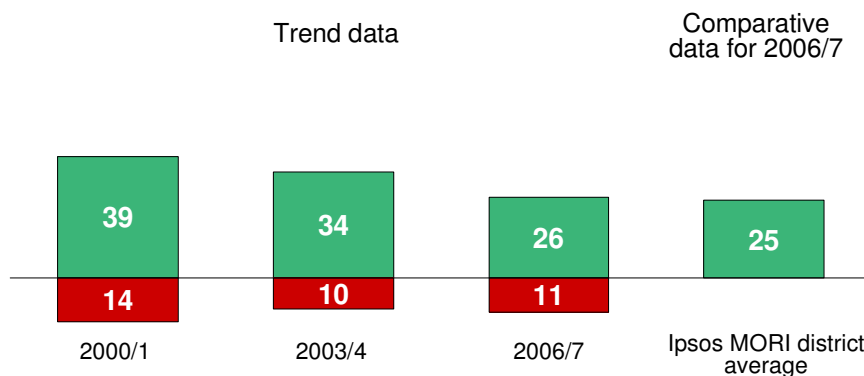
Satisfaction with planning services has fallen by eight points since 2003/04, although it remains in line with the Ipsos MORI average for district councils.

66

### Planning Services: Contextual Data

Q Please indicate *how satisfied or dissatisfied* you are overall with the following services provided by Wyre Forest: Planning services

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied



Base: All valid responses (1185)

Source: Ipsos MORI

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# Appendices

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# Statistical Reliability

The responses to the questionnaire are only samples of the total ‘population’, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if every Wyre Forest resident had been interviewed (the ‘true’ values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the ‘true’ values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% – that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the ‘true’ value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the ‘95% confidence interval’.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
500 interviews	3	4	4
700 interviews	2	3	4
1,264 interviews	2	3	3

For example, if in a sample size of 1,264, 90% say that they are satisfied with the area as a place to live, the chances are 95 in 100 that the ‘true’ value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within two percentage points of the sample result, i.e. between 88% and 92%. The likelihood is that the true result will be towards the middle of this range.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be ‘real’, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one (i.e. if it is ‘statistically significant’) we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume the ‘95% confidence interval’, the differences between the results of two separate groups must be greater than the values given in the table overleaf.



Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	<u>±</u>	<u>±</u>	<u>±</u>
100 and 100	8	13	14
100 and 200	7	11	12
200 and 200	6	9	10
500 and 1,264	3	5	5

For example, when comparing a sample of 500 with the population of 1,264 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus 5 percentage points ( $\pm 5$ ) from the sample result.

# Topline Results

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# Questionnaire

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