Research Report

Resident Satisfaction Survey 2017

Prepared for: London Borough of Merton

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Prepared for: London Borough of Merton

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1 Background and methodology

1.1 Survey aims and objectives

This report summarises the results of a bespoke piece of research into the perceptions Merton residents hold in relation to their Council and the local area. A representative sample of 1,020 residents aged 18 and over was interviewed face to face at randomly selected sampling points between 9th February and 5th March 2017 in order to provide fresh data to inform Council decision making. All those invited to participate were asked how long they had lived in the Borough, with only those who had done so for 6 months or more being interviewed.

252 interviews were also completed with 11-17 year olds in the same households (with permission obtained from parent or guardian in the case of respondents aged under 16); the findings from this research are covered in Section 11 of this report.

The objectives of the research amongst adults aged 18+ were as follows:

- To measure overall perceptions of Merton Council's performance and the value for money it provides.
- To benchmark the perceptions of Merton residents where possible using national data collected by the Local Government Association.
- To benchmark the perceptions of Merton residents where possible against the findings of previous resident research.
- To examine public awareness in 2017 of the budget challenges the Council faces and to explore how the Council is perceived to make difficult decisions.
- To record satisfaction with local services.
- To measure perceptions of the local area in terms of neighbourhood safety, levels of anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion.
- To evaluate current levels of volunteering and quantify the barriers to volunteering.
- To understand how residents receive information about the area.

The research amongst 11-17 year olds also aimed to measure overall perceptions of the Council's performance and to record satisfaction with local services. However, this research also aimed to do the following:

- To establish what the main concerns are for young people living in the Borough.
- To measure young people's perceptions of whether the Council delivers services that meet their needs, the extent to which the Council communicates with young people, and the extent to which the Council takes their views into account.
- To measure the extent to which young people are involved in their communities or are interested in doing so in the future.
- To establish what organised activities young people participate in out of school hours, and which activities they would like to see available.

1.2 Methodology

Within the Borough, deprivation scores at Super Output Area (SOA) level were ranked from high to low. These were then segmented into quartiles within each ward to ensure that the bands reflected the relative deprivation within Merton. This provided the basis for a stratified random sampling of Census Output Areas (COAs) as sampling points, ensuring that the sampling points selected covered relatively high and relatively low levels of deprivation.

Sampling points (COAs) were selected randomly per ward and all addresses were identified from the postcode address file within each COA to form the sample. Proportional interviewing targets were set per ward, with 5-6 sampling points selected in each of the 20 wards that make up the Borough. A target of 10 interviews was set per sampling point.

Whilst the interviewers were able to approach any address within a sampling point quotas were set by age, gender and ethnicity within each ward to ensure a representative spread by demographic profile. The survey was administered on a face-to-face basis, using a tablet computer.

Post fieldwork the data was weighted by ward population, age, gender, ethnicity, and economic activity / inactivity for the resident population aged 18+. The 2011 census was used as the basis for the demographic weights to provide a sufficient level of granularity.

For the research carried out amongst 11-17 year olds, respondents were asked to give their exact age (11, 12, etc), and the data was weighted by this criteria, again to match the profile established by the 2011 census.

1.3 Questionnaire and LGA polling

Separate, bespoke questionnaires were used for the adult and young people surveys. Several questions were included to allow adult perceptions of Merton Council to be benchmarked against polling conducted nationally by the Local Government Association (LGA).

The latest LGA polling highlighted in this report was conducted at roughly the same time as fieldwork for this research (2nd - 5th February 2017). Valid comparisons can therefore be made between the findings from this research and LGA polling, both in terms of fieldwork dates and question wording. It should also be noted however that there are differences in methodology that may influence findings:

- LGA polling was carried out by telephone, compared to the face to face methodology used for this research. The impact of this on the findings, if any, cannot be quantified. Typically the largest difference in findings is produced by a self-completion methodology (e.g. postal, online) compared to an interviewer-administered survey (telephone, face to face). Self-completion surveys can produce less inhibited, more critical responses; this may be replicated to a lesser extent when respondents complete a survey by telephone (LGA) as opposed to when they speak to an interviewer face to face (Merton).
- As discussed throughout this report, the proportion giving the most positive response (e.g. strongly agree) is consistently below LGA findings, even though

the proportion giving combined positive responses (strongly agree / agree) is consistently higher. This may in part reflect the difference in methodology, with telephone interviewers reading out an answer scale that starts with the most positive response and therefore potentially biasing results towards this response. On the Merton resident survey, respondents were shown a list of possible responses for all such questions, i.e. could see all responses at once.

- Quotas and weights were set by age and gender for both surveys; however the approach for the two surveys is not identical e.g. on the Merton survey quotas and weights are set by ethnicity whereas this is not done for LGA polling. Again, the impact of such differences cannot be quantified.

1.4 Report contents

This document contains a concise summary of the key findings to emerge from this survey. It aims to highlight the positive messages in the data, plus any areas of concern that require further consideration.

The data used in this report is rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage point. It is for this reason that, on occasions, tables or charts may add up to 99% or 101%. Where tables and graphics do not match exactly to the text in the report this is due to the way in which figures are rounded up (or down) when responses are combined. Results that differ in this way should not have a variance that is any larger than 1%.

When a figure is shown in bold and underlined within a table this denotes that this figure is significantly higher compared to the total (determined by the t-test). The t-test is a statistical method used to evaluate the differences between two opposing groups. Results described as significant in this report will have been identified by this test as substantial variations in opinion.

For reasons of space, area names are sometimes abbreviated in this report as follows:

- *Village:* Village/ Hillside/ Raynes Park/ Wimbledon Park
- *Dundonald:* Dundonald / Trinity / Abbey
- *Cannon Hill:* Cannon Hill / Merton Park / West Barnes / Lower Morden
- *Lavender Fields:* Lavender Fields / Pollards Hill / Figge's Marsh
- *Ravensbury:* Ravensbury / St Helier / Cricket Green
- *Colliers Wood:* Colliers Wood / Graveney / Longthornton

2 Key findings

2.1 Local area perceptions

The vast majority of Merton residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (92%). This is a positive finding and is 12-percentage points higher than the national benchmark of 80% (LGA polling Feb 17).

Alongside this high area satisfaction, a clear majority of residents feel safe in their local area both during the day (96%) and after dark (85%). Again, this compares favourably against national benchmarking.

Almost all residents (93%) agree that their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together. This includes 38% who give the most positive response of definitely agree. Only 2% of all residents disagree that that people of different ethnic backgrounds get on well together

2.2 Perceptions of Merton Council

Two-thirds (67%) of Merton residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs things. Whilst this is only slightly more positive compared with the national figure (65%), perceptions that the Council provides value for money, acts on the concerns of local residents, and keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides, are all well ahead of national benchmarking.

Indications of the direction of travel are also positive, with significant improvements compared to previous (2014) findings in relation to the Council being efficient and well run (+4 percentage points), responding quickly when asked for help (+13 percentage points), and involving residents when making decisions (+6 percentage points). On all these measures perceptions are at their highest level to date over a period extending back to 1995/1999. Conversely, there has been a significant increase in the proportion stating that it is difficult to get through to the Council on the phone.

The main reasons given for dissatisfaction with the Council are litter / poor street cleaning (33%), and poor refuse collection / recycling service (22%). However, to contextualise this finding, only a minority of residents (37%) when asked directly about this issue suggest that rubbish and litter lying around is a fairly or very big problem in their local area.

2.3 Perceptions of local services

Of a given list of local services, service users are more likely to give a very good / good rating than poor / very poor. Responses are particularly positive in relation to primary and nursery education and parks / playgrounds / open spaces. Responses are least positive in relation to street cleaning (53% rate very good / good), parking services (50%), and road / pavement repair (48%). The relatively low ratings given to road / pavement repair and street cleaning may be a cause for concern given how many residents ‘use’ these services. As discussed above, litter / poor street cleaning is also the leading cause of dissatisfaction with the Council, suggesting that this should be an area for focus.

2.4 Budget issues

Over half of residents are aware that the Council has had to make significant savings over recent years (59%), and that they understand the scale of savings that still need to be made (53%). These levels of awareness are similar to national benchmarks compiled by BMG. However, just 8% and 6% respectively strongly agree with these statements, suggesting that awareness of the budget situation is not fully engrained despite an ongoing narrative about austerity. Half (49%) agree that they have noticed changes to some Council services - this is higher than the national average (41%), but just 5% strongly agree, indicating that most residents have yet to notice the full impact of service changes. These findings provide a reference point for future Council communications, suggesting that it cannot be assumed that the public hold an understanding of the financial imperatives behind difficult decisions.

In terms of what residents would do if a local service they cared about was at risk of being cut, roughly similar proportions agree that they would make a one-off donation or pay a new or higher charge at the point of use (38% and 35% respectively). The fact that only a minority would offer these forms of financial support for a service that they care about provides further emphasis the likely resistance to additional revenue raising strategies by the authority.

Residents are more likely to agree than disagree that they would volunteer their time in such a scenario (46% cf. 33%); however, it should be noted that just 4% strongly agree, and that this question was asked in general terms. With just 20% of Merton residents having undertaken voluntary work locally in the last 12 months, the figure of 46% would represent a major increase in such activity. These results indicate that the scope the Council has for finding models of service delivery that are uncontroversial remains limited.

2.5 Wellbeing

On measures of personal wellbeing - feeling satisfied with life, feeling that the things you do in life are worthwhile, feelings of happiness and anxiety - Merton residents give more positive responses compared to both London and UK benchmarks.

2.6 Young people

As with the findings for adults, the vast majority of young people in Merton are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (94%). Most (84%) are also satisfied with the way the Council runs things, compared to 67% of Merton adults. However, one in four (25%) believe that the Council does not keep young people at all informed about what it is doing, indicating that there may be scope for improvement in perceptions of how the Council communicates with young people.

3 Summary of key indicators

The tables below summarise perceptions of the local area and of Merton Council that can be compared to wider national benchmarks or can be tracked against data collected in Merton in 2014 when the last survey of this type was completed.

Table 1: Summary of Merton responses compared to LGA benchmarking

LGA indicator	Merton 2017 (%)	LGA Feb 17 national benchmark - (%)
Satisfaction with the local area		
Satisfied	92%	80%
Dissatisfied	4%	11%
Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things		
Satisfied	67%	65%
Dissatisfied	14%	19%
Agree the Council provides value for money		
Agree	65%	47%
Disagree	12%	26%
Council acts on the concerns of local residents		
A great deal/ a fair amount	75%	59%
Not very/much at all	17%	40%
Informed about Council services and benefits		
Very/fairly well informed	81%	60%
Not very well/not informed at all	18%	30%
Safety after dark		
Safe	85%	78%
Unsafe	7%	11%
Safety during the day		
Safe	96%	94%
Unsafe	1%	2%

Summary of key indicators

In the table below, coloured cells denote a statistically significant change.

Table 2: Council Image 2014-2017 (All responses)

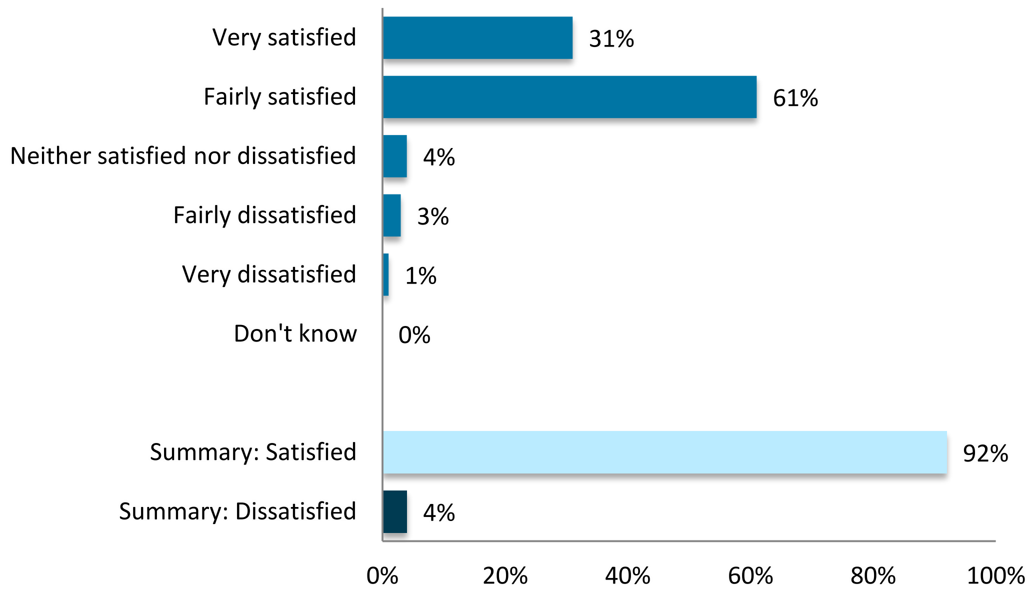
% a great deal / to some extent	2014 (%)	2017 (%)	Percentage point change
Is doing a good job	79%	82%	+3
Has staff who are friendly and polite	78%	78%	0
Is efficient and well run	72%	76%	+4
Is making the local area a better place for people to live	73%	76%	+3
Responds quickly when asked for help	52%	65%	+13
Involves residents when making decisions	56%	62%	+6
Is difficult to get through to on the phone	39%	50%	+11
Is doing a better job now than one year ago	47%	48%	+1
Sample base	**1,084**	**1,020**	

4 Perceptions of the local area

4.1 Local area as a place to live

The vast majority of Merton residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (92%). Of these, three in ten residents are very satisfied (31%). Just 4% of residents are dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live to any extent.

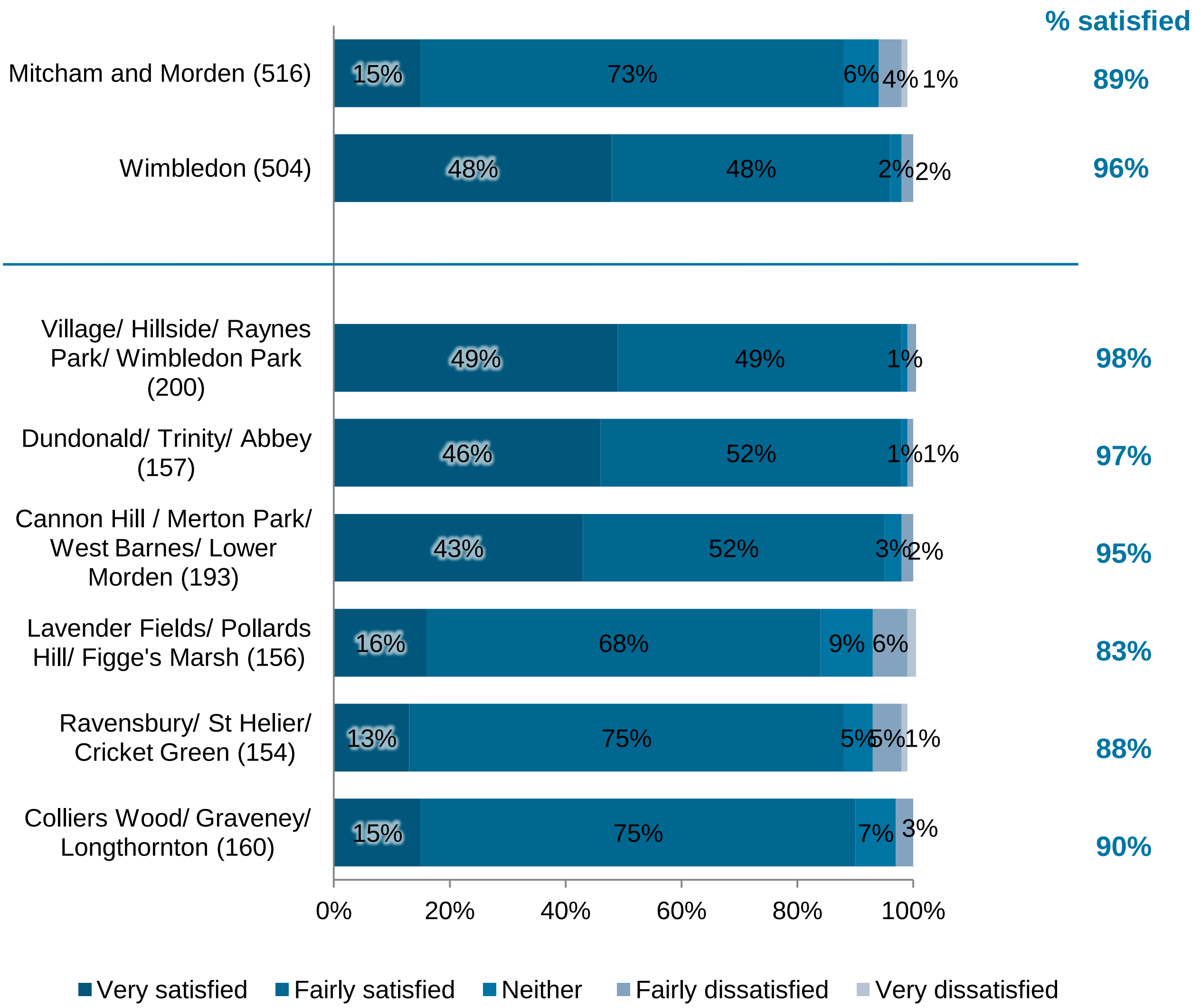
Figure 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

By constituency, whilst most Mitcham and Morden residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (89%), satisfaction levels are significantly lower compared to Wimbledon (96%). In particular, Mitcham and Morden residents are markedly less likely compared to Wimbledon to be very satisfied (15% very satisfied cf. 48%). In keeping with this, the proportion of residents in the following areas are significantly less likely to be very satisfied compared to other areas: Lavender Fields / Pollards Hill / Figge's Marsh (16% very satisfied), Ravensbury / St Helier / Cricket Green (13%), and Colliers Wood / Graveney / Longthornton (15%).

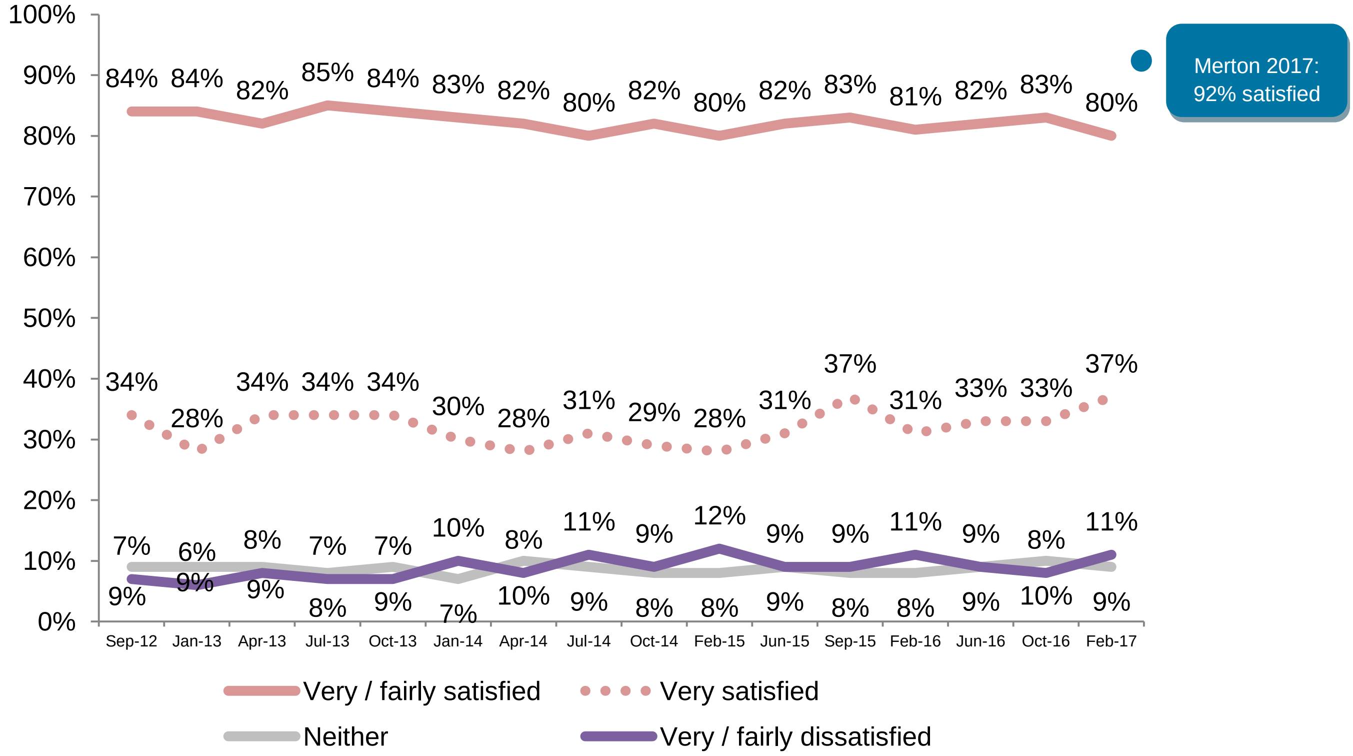
Figure 2: Satisfaction with local area as a place to live - By constituency / area (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

The satisfaction that Merton residents express with their local area is above the national benchmark for this question. In the most recent wave of national polling completed by the Local Government Association (LGA), in February 2017, 80% were satisfied on this measure and 11% dissatisfied. However, the proportion of Merton residents very satisfied with their local area - 31% - is lower than the LGA benchmark of 37%.

Figure 3: National trend in satisfaction with the local area as a place to live– LGA Polling

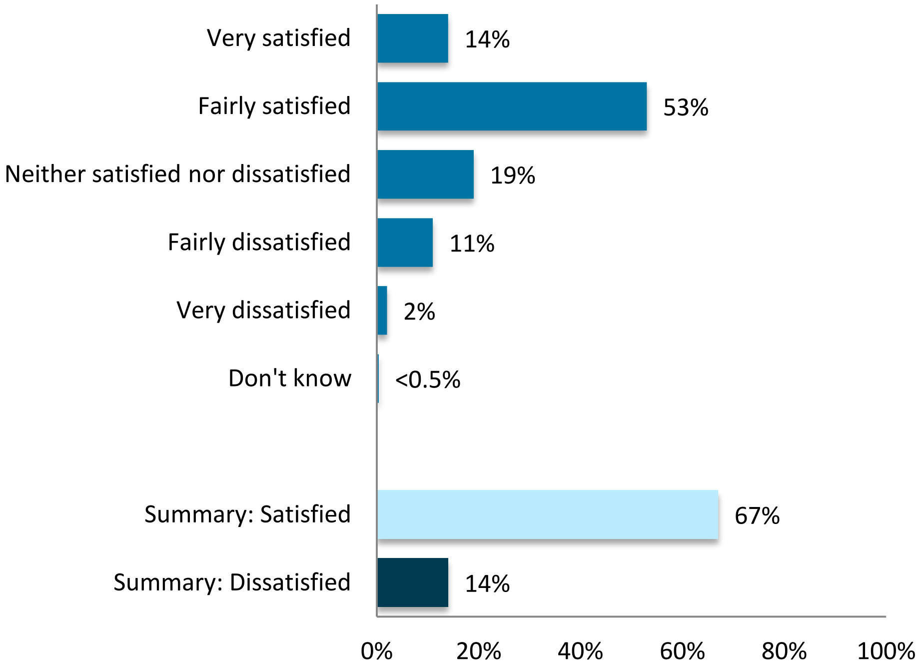


5 Perceptions of Merton Council

5.1 Overall satisfaction

All residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Merton Council on a series of measures. Before this set of questions all respondents were read a brief summary of the services Merton Council provide. In response, two-thirds (67%) of residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs things. This is comprised of 14% who are very satisfied and 53% who are fairly satisfied. Among the remainder of residents the proportion giving a neutral response (19%) is above the proportion who are dissatisfied (14%).

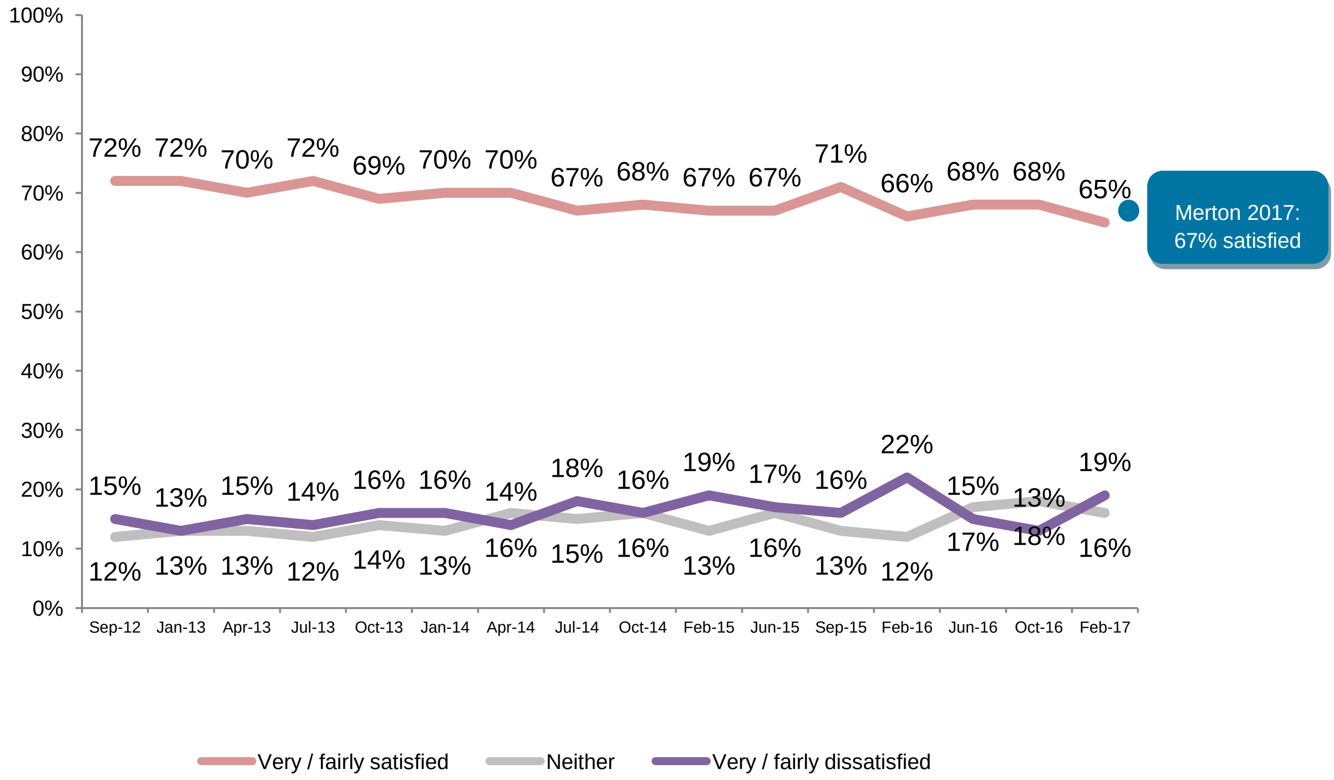
Figure 4: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Merton Council runs things? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

The wording of this question is consistent with that used in recent polling undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) into perceptions of local authorities. The proportion satisfied with the way Merton Council runs things (67%) is slightly above the national benchmark of 65%, although the proportion very satisfied is slightly below (14% cf. 17%).

Figure 5: National trend in satisfaction with the way Councils run things – LGA Polling



Looking at responses by age, satisfaction with the Council is significantly higher compared to the average among residents aged 65+, as the table below indicates. Despite the higher incidence of disability amongst this age group, residents who are disabled[1] are significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the Council compared to those who are not (28% cf. 13%). They are also significantly more likely to be very dissatisfied (10% cf. 2%).

Table 3: Satisfaction with the way Merton Council runs things - By age and disability (All responses)

	Age				Disability	
	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Yes	No
Satisfied	67%	66%	63%	**77%**	62%	68%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15%	20%	21%	12%	10%	**19%**
Dissatisfied	15%	13%	15%	11%	**28%**	13%
Don't know	**2%**	<0.5%	<0.5%	0%	0%	<0.5%
Unweighted sample base	**78**	**461**	**326**	**149**	**71**	**937**

Among those who disagree that Merton Council provides value for money only 22% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things overall, with 61% dissatisfied in this respect. Value for money perceptions will be examined in detail later in this chapter. It is also notable that those who feel that they are either very or fairly well informed about the Council's services and benefits are significantly more likely to be satisfied with the way Merton Council run things than those who do not feel well informed (72% cf. 43%).

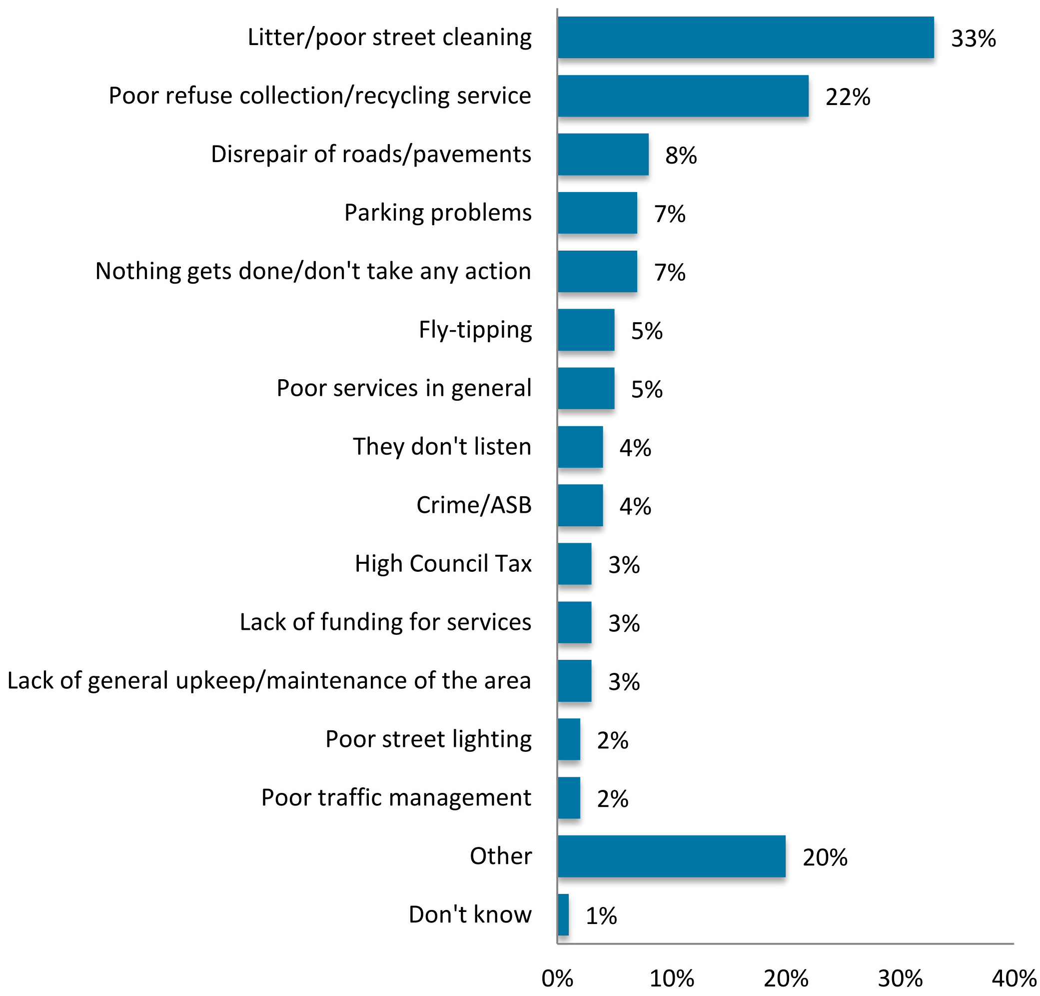
[1] 'Disabled' is defined as respondents stating that they have a long term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do.

5.1.1 Reasons for current view of Merton Council

Whilst 67% of residents are currently satisfied with the way Merton Council run things, there clearly remains scope to raise this proportion further. To understand how this might best be achieved, those expressing dissatisfaction with the Council were asked to indicate in their own words why this is. The responses given were grouped into themes after the completion of fieldwork so that responses could be quantified.

Much the most common reasons given for dissatisfaction are issues relating to litter and street cleaning (33%), and refuse collection / recycling service (22%).

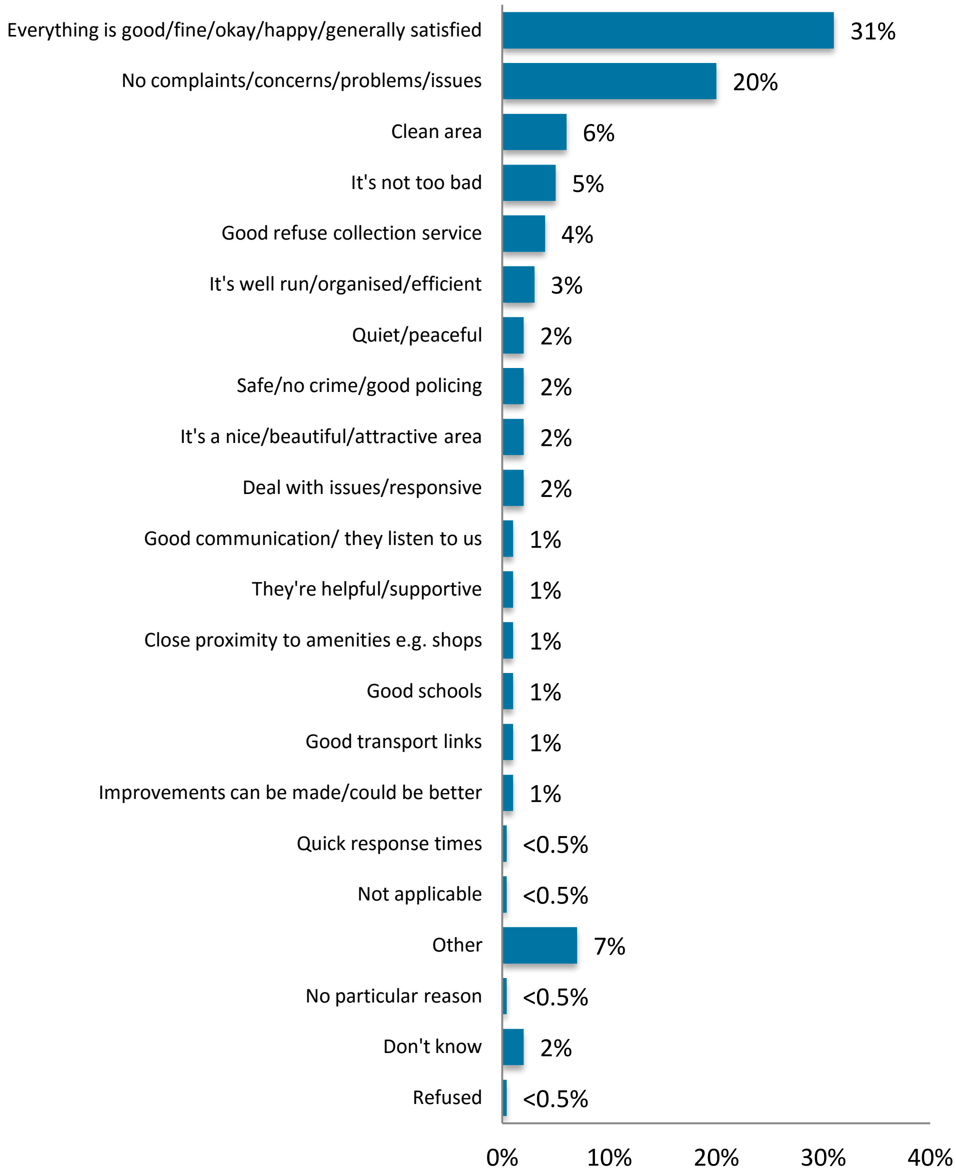
Figure 6: Reasons given for being dissatisfied with Merton Council (All those who are dissatisfied)



Unweighted sample base: 136

While identifying sources of dissatisfaction is important for Merton Council in order to shape both service delivery and public communications, it is also important to understand the perceived strengths of the authority. When satisfied residents were probed on this the most common responses were general/generic, i.e. everything is good / fine (31%) and that no problems or issues have been encountered (20%). The specific issues more commonly mentioned are the area being clean (6%) and refuse collection (4%), i.e. the issues that also most commonly provoke Council dissatisfaction.

Figure 7: Reasons given for being satisfied with Merton Council (All those who are satisfied)



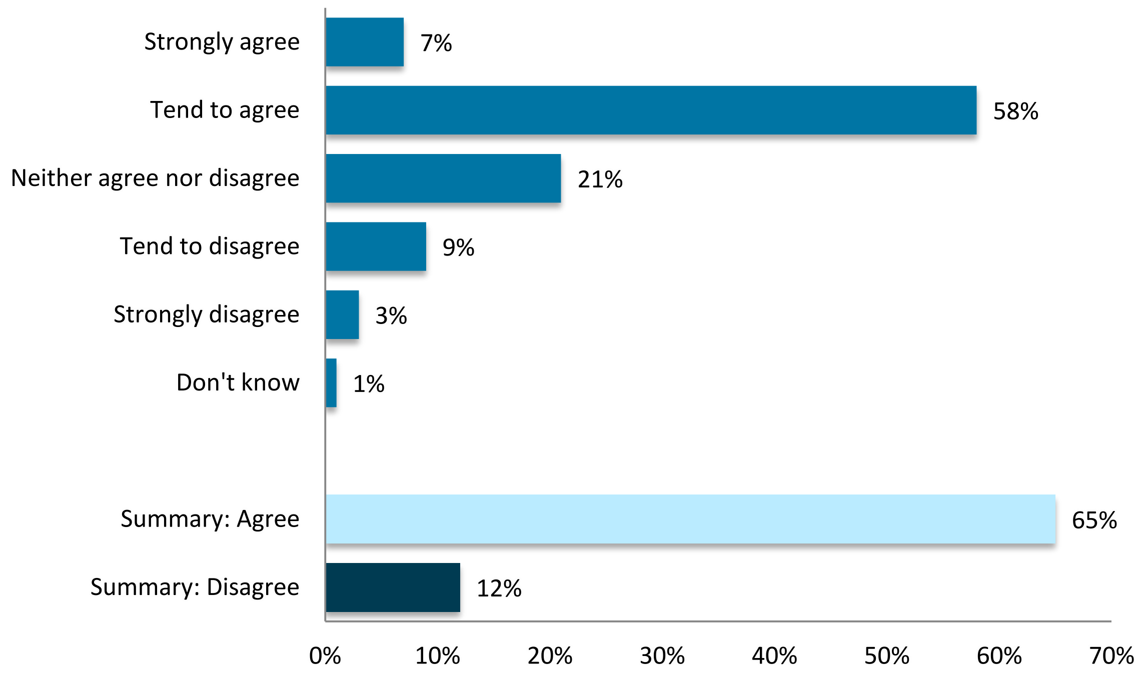
Unweighted sample base: 684

Despite being satisfied overall, at this question 17% of respondents still gave comments that were negative in tone.

5.2 Value for money

Residents were also asked to comment on the value for money Merton Council provides. In response, two-thirds (65%) of Merton residents agree that their Council provides good value for money, whilst 12% disagree. One in five residents (21%) gave a neutral response on this question suggesting that they do not feel sufficiently able to judge the value for money Merton Council provides.

Figure 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Merton Council provides good value for money? (All responses)

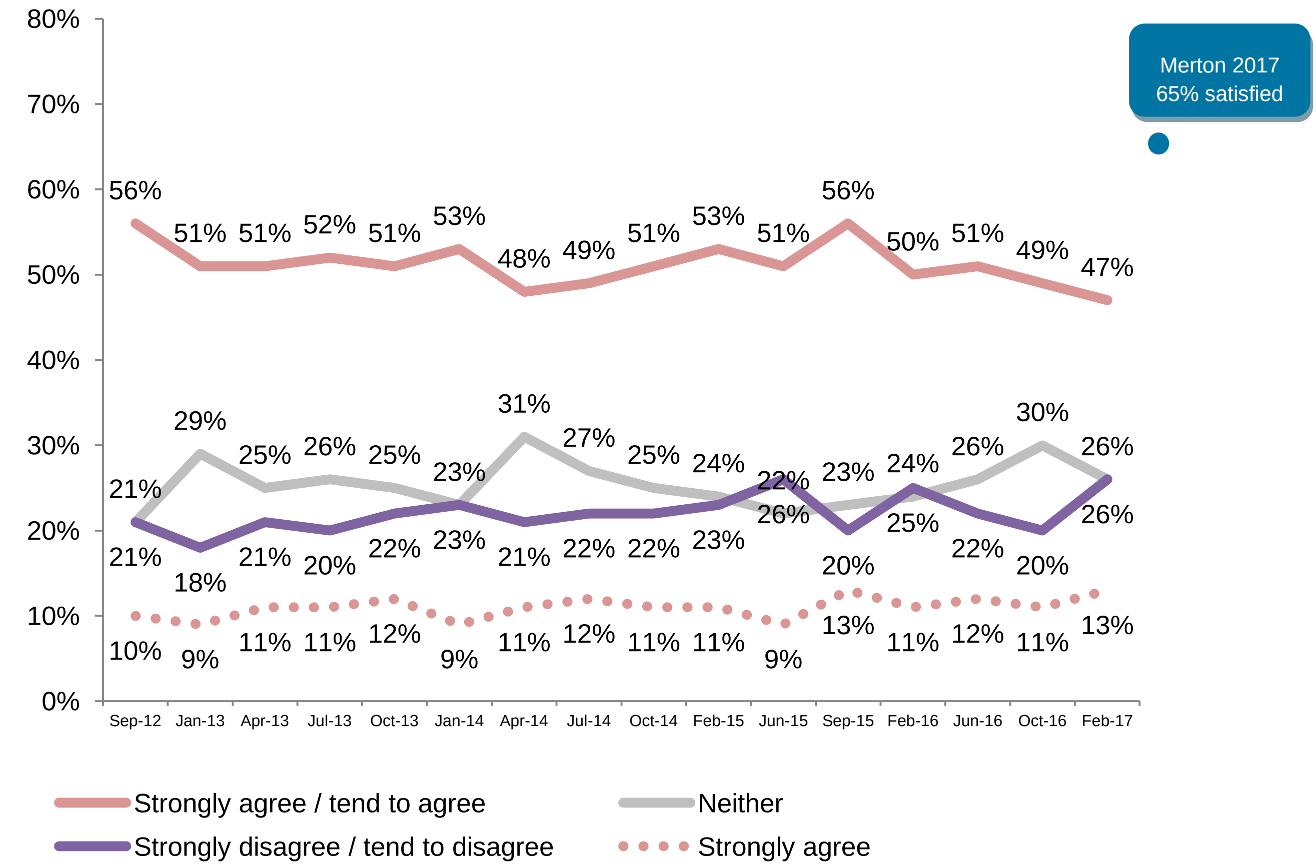


Unweighted sample base: 1,020

As might be expected, those who agree that Merton Council provides value for money are significantly more likely that those who do not to be satisfied with the way the Council runs things overall (81% cf. 22%).

Agreement that Merton Council provides value for money is substantially higher than the latest national benchmark (65% cf. 47%), despite the fact that overall Council satisfaction is in line with the benchmark. However, the proportion of Merton residents strongly agreeing that the Council provides good value for money (7%) is below the national benchmark of 13%.

Figure 9: National trends in perceptions of Councils providing value for money - LGA Polling



Analysis by age shows that residents aged 65+ are significantly more likely, compared to those aged 45-64, to agree that the Council provides good value for money, in keeping with the pattern on overall satisfaction with the Council.

18-24 year olds are also significantly more likely compared to the other age groups shown to give a response of 'don't know' (7%).

Disabled residents are significantly less likely to 'neither agree nor disagree' and significantly more likely to disagree, compared to non-disabled residents. They are also significantly more likely to strongly disagree (9% cf. 3%). Again, this mirrors the pattern of responses seen in relation to overall satisfaction with the Council.

Table 4: Agreement with whether Merton Council provides good value for money - By age and disability (All responses)

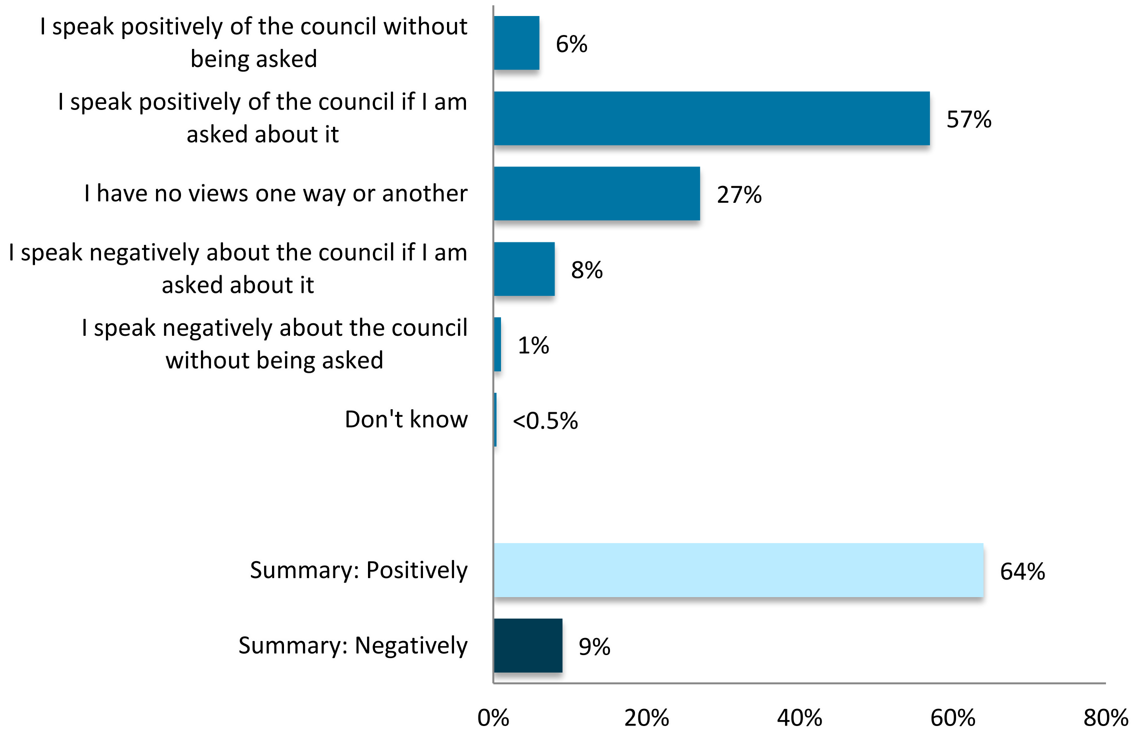
	Age				Disability	
	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+	Yes	No
Agree	63%	66%	60%	72%	64%	65%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	21%	23%	17%	13%	**22%**
Disagree	6%	12%	15%	10%	**20%**	12%
Don't know	**7%**	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Unweighted sample base	78	461	326	149	71	937

In line with the results relating to satisfaction with the way the Council runs things, informed residents have more positive views on Council value for money than the uniformed. Seven in ten (70%) of those who feel informed about the Council's services and benefits agree that the Council provides value for money, compare to 42% among those who do not feel so well informed.

5.3 Advocacy of the Council

Residents were also asked whether they would speak positively or negatively about the Council. Approaching two-thirds (64%) would speak positively whilst 9% would speak negatively. Unprompted comment about the Council is less likely; 6% state they would speak positively of the Council without being asked whilst just 1% would speak negatively without being asked. Even amongst those who are satisfied with the Council overall, just 9% would speak positively without being asked; amongst those who are dissatisfied with the Council, 7% would speak negatively without being asked. There is therefore appears to be little reputational risk to the Council currently via negative word of mouth.

Figure 10: On balance, which of these statements comes closest to how you feel about Merton Council? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

By age group, residents aged 25-44 are significantly more likely compared to those aged 45-64 to speak positively of the Council (68% cf. 58%). However, there are no significant differences by age group in terms of the proportion who would speak negatively about the Council (6%-10% depending on age group). Disabled residents are both more likely to speak positively (70%) and negatively (16%) about the Council, but there are no significant differences on this measure compared to non-disabled residents.

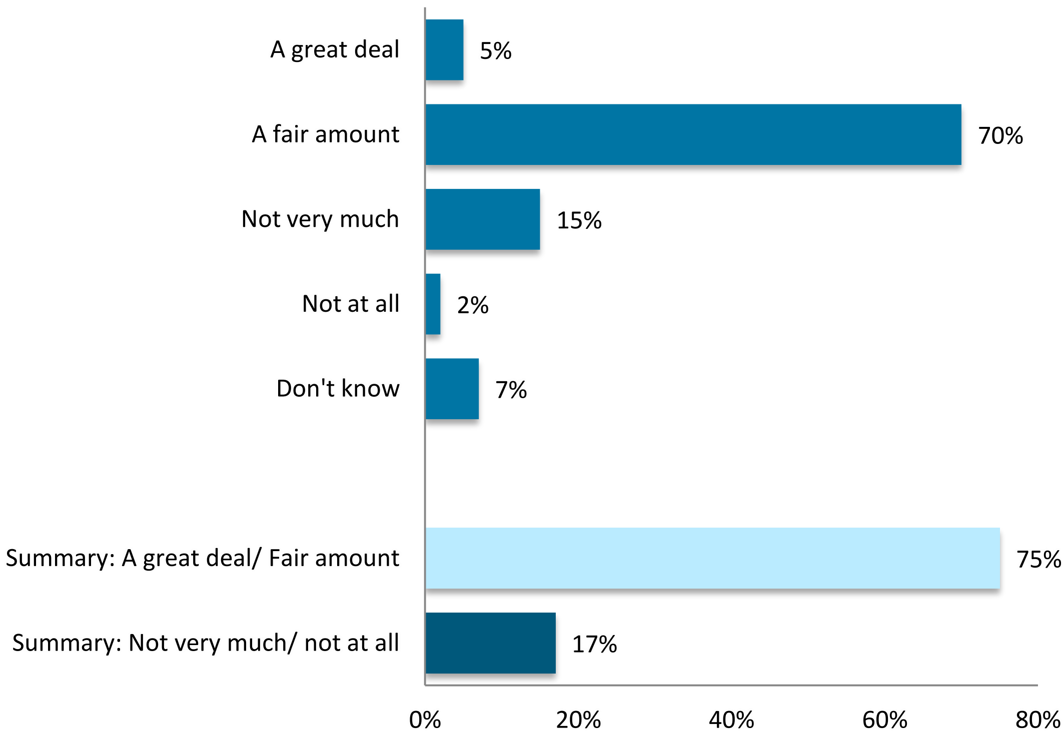
Examining the link between advocacy and satisfaction shows that among those who are satisfied with the way Merton Council runs things 78% would speak positively about the council. Although satisfaction therefore does not translate directly into advocacy, this proportion is significantly higher than the 21% of those who are dissatisfied with Merton Council overall who would speak positively about it.

5.4 Acting on the concerns of local residents

Asked whether they think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents, three quarters (75%) consider that the Council does this, a great deal or a fair amount. However, just 5% state the Council does this a great deal; correspondingly, just 2% state the Council fails to do this at all.

There are no significant differences in the summary responses by age group or disability.

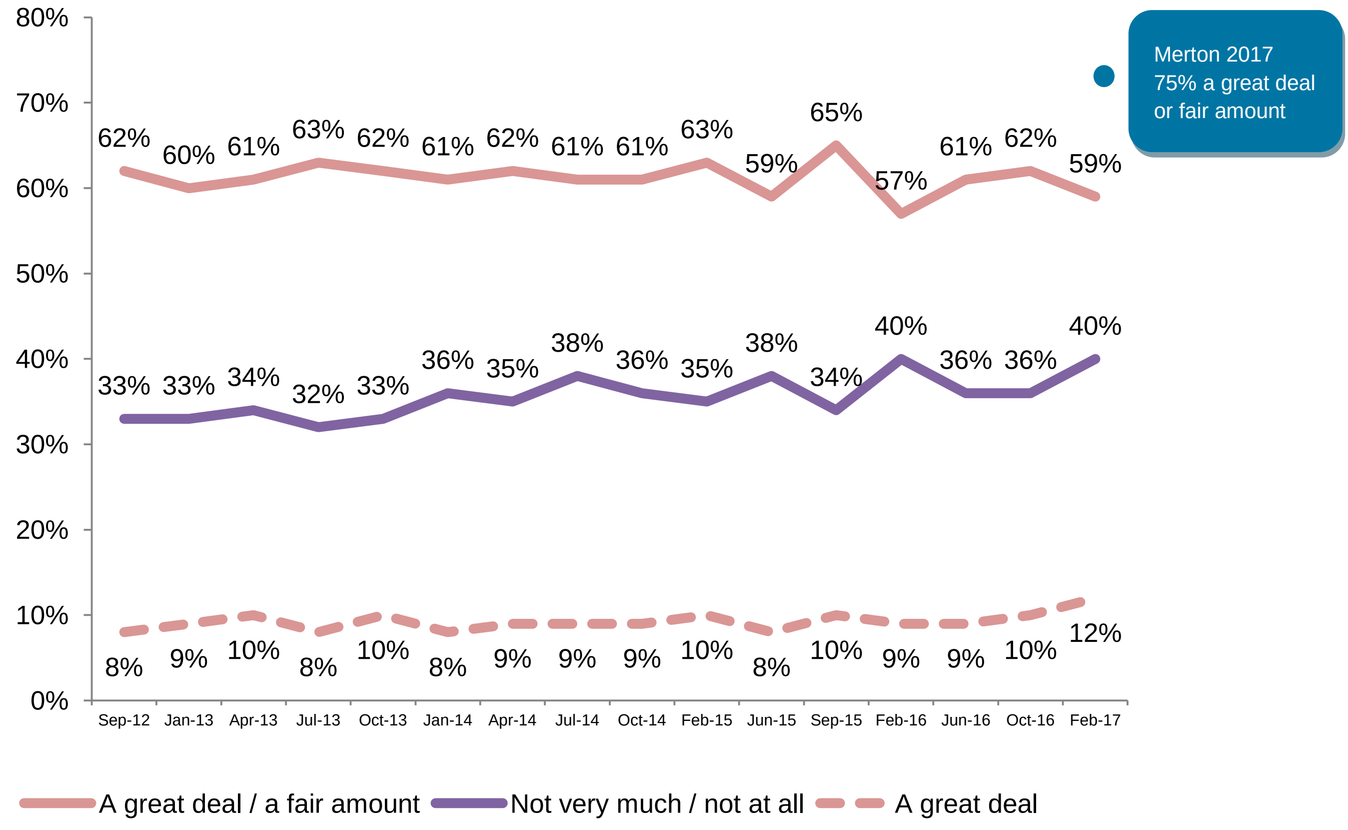
Figure 11: To what extent do you think Merton Council acts on the concerns of local residents? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

As with measures of the Council providing value for money and keeping residents informed, the proportion giving a positive response (a great deal / a fair amount) is ahead of LGA benchmarking (75% cf. 59%) while the proportion giving the most positive response is below the LGA figure (5% cf. 12%).

Figure 12: National trends in perceptions of Councils acting on the concerns of local residents - LGA Polling



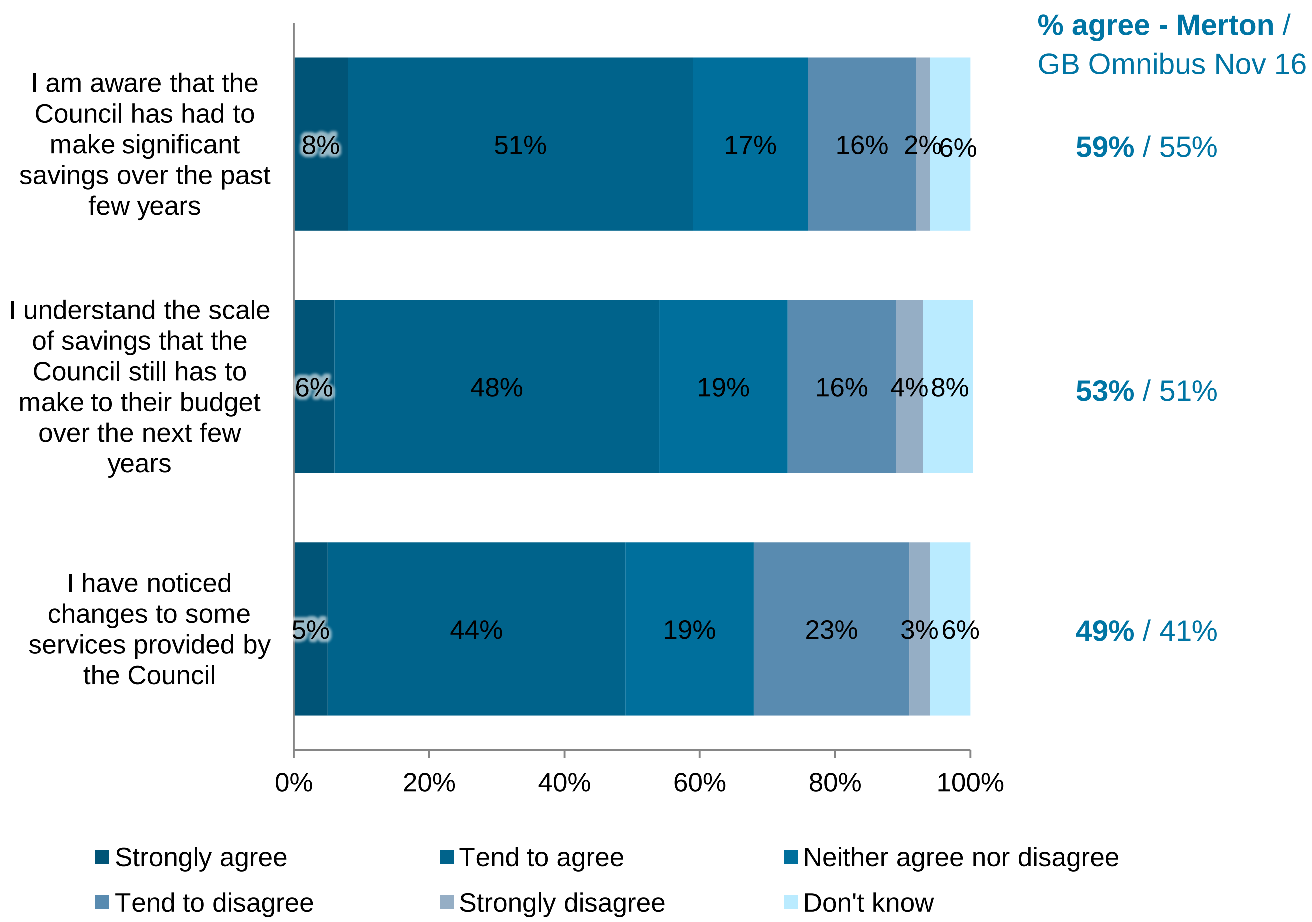
Among those who feel that Merton Council acts on their concerns a great deal or a fair amount 73% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things overall. This proportion is significantly higher than the survey average of 67%.

5.5 Budget issues

Clearly the impact of ongoing austerity is a key factor in Council decision making and service delivery choices. Although the period of local government austerity commenced in 2010 the efficiency savings that Councils were initially able to make generally meant that the impact of budget reductions were not immediately visible to the public. However, with finances in local government becoming ever more acute, a set of questions were included in this survey of Merton residents to ascertain the current levels of understanding the public have of budget pressures. This question set was used on BMG's monthly online omnibus poll of 1,500 GB residents in November 2016, allowing the views of Merton residents to be placed against those nationally (albeit recognising the different survey approaches used).

Over half are aware that the Council has had to make significant savings over recent years (59%), and that they understand the scale of savings that still need to be made (53%). These are similar to the omnibus benchmarking, as the figure below indicates. However, just 8% and 6% respectively strongly agree, suggesting that awareness of the budget situation is not fully engrained. Half (49%) agree that they have noticed changes to some Council services - this is higher than the national average (41%), but just 5% strongly agree, indicating that most residents have yet to notice the full impact of service changes.

Figure 13: Awareness around Council budget issues (All responses)



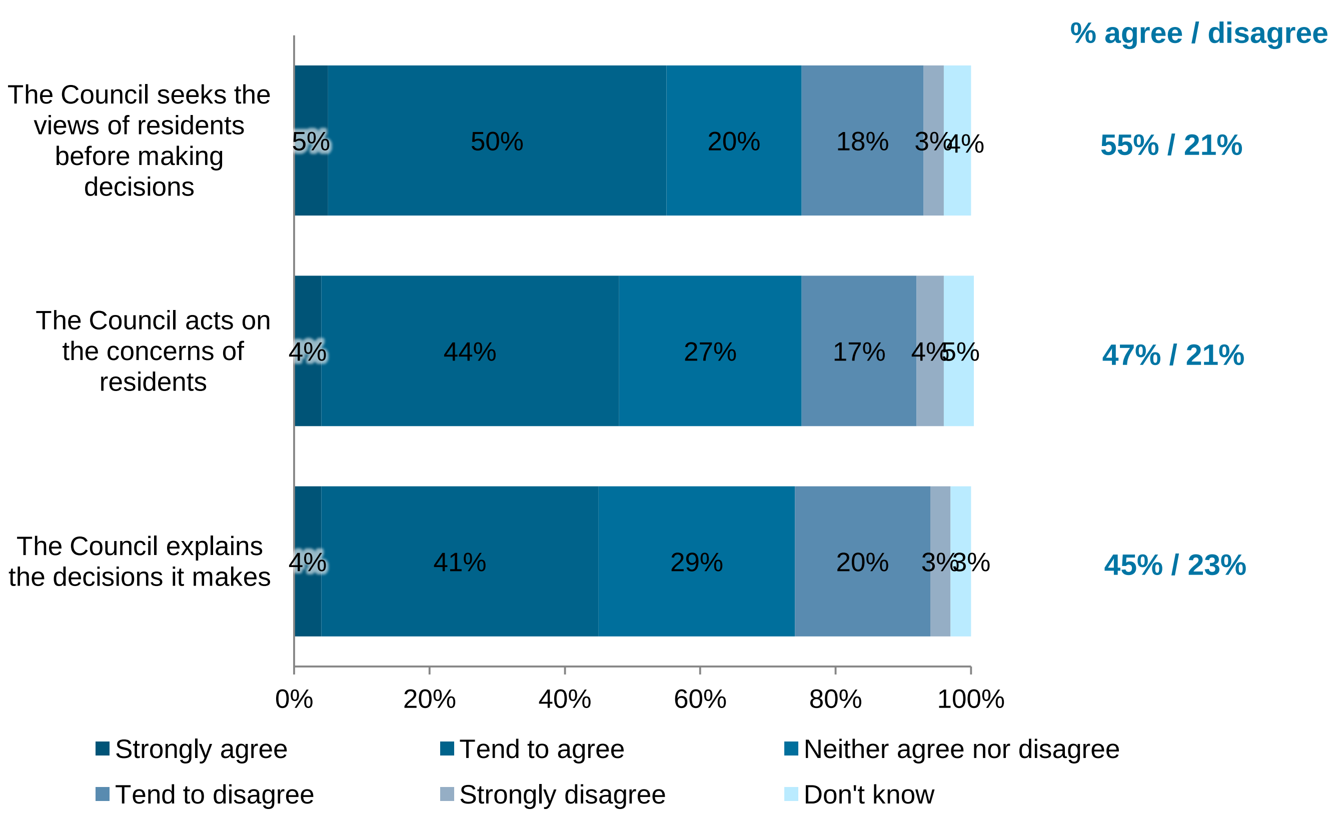
Unweighted sample base: 1,020

This insight into awareness and understanding of the Council's budget pressures can be used as a means by which to analyse more general perceptions of the Council. A fuller understanding of the budgetary situation appears to be correlated with more positive perceptions of the Council:

- Those who state that they understand the scale of the savings required over the next few years are significantly more likely to be satisfied with how the Council runs things (70%) compared to those who do not have this understanding (60%);
- 70% of those who agree that they understand the scale of required savings agree that the Council provides value for money compared to 51% of those who do not understand the scale of savings required.

Given that financial pressures necessitate difficult decisions, a bank of statements was also included in the survey to examine perceptions of how the Council navigates these decisions. Residents are more likely to agree than disagree that the Council seeks residents' views before making decisions, that it acts on residents' concerns, and that it explains decisions. However, no more than 5% strongly agree or strongly disagree with any of these propositions, again suggesting that many residents may not be fully engaged with these issues.

Figure 14: The budget savings Merton Council has had to make means that it will be faced with tough decisions in the future. In this context do you agree or disagree that...? (All responses)

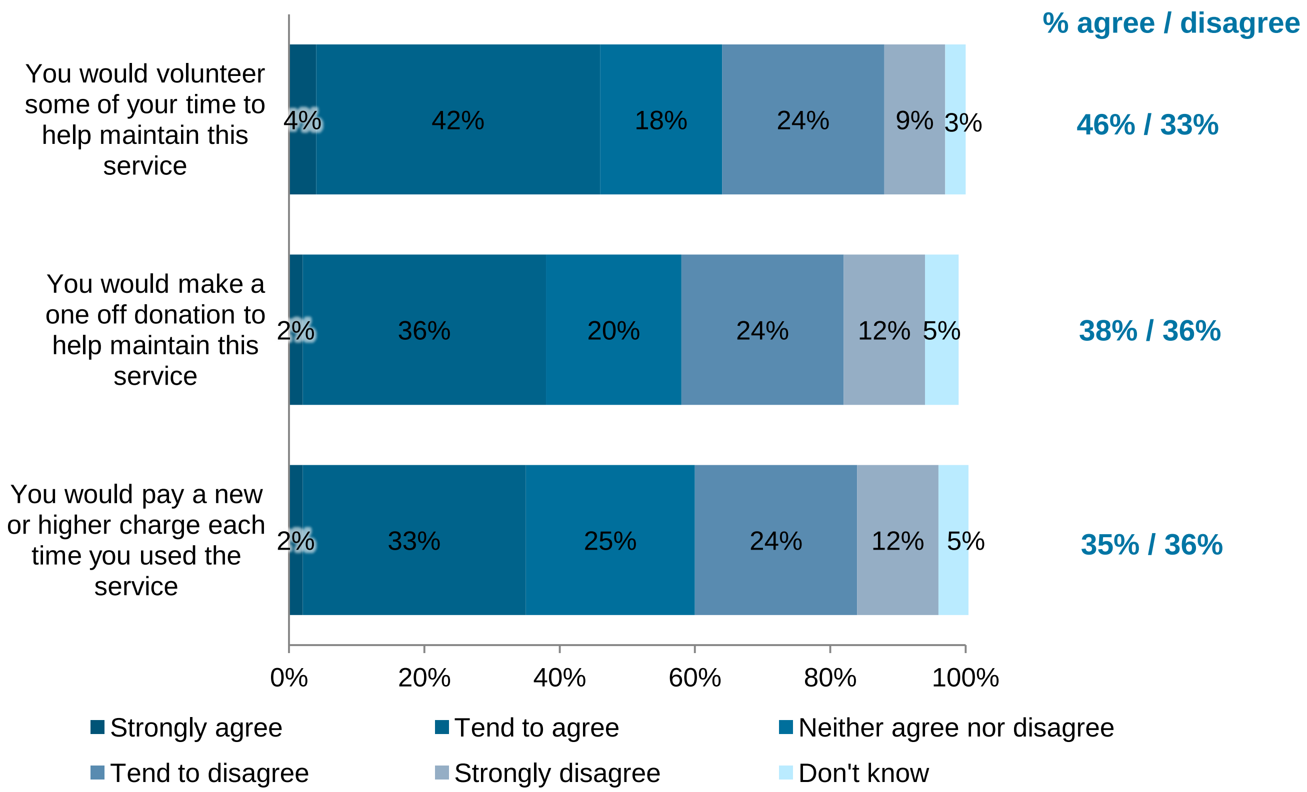


Unweighted sample base: 1,020

The design of this survey deliberately did not touch on the specifics of budget numbers, nor the services that have been affected previously or might be in the future. However, a question was asked in which residents were asked for their potential response if a service they cared about was at risk of being cut. In this scenario, residents are more likely to agree than disagree that they would volunteer some of their time to help maintain the service (46% cf. 33%). However, just 4% strongly agree, and it must also be recognised that this question was asked in the most general of terms without any reference to the practicalities of what such voluntary activity would entail. As discussed in Section 9, 20% of Merton residents have undertaken voluntary work in their local community in the last 12 months, so the figure of 46% would represent a major increase in such activity.

The options of making a one off donation, or paying a new or higher charge at the point of use, were also put to respondents. The proportion agreeing / disagreeing that they would be prepared to do this is similar, with just 2% strongly agreeing that they would be prepared to make either of these contributions. These results indicate that the scope the Council has for finding models of service delivery that are uncontroversial remains limited.

Figure 15: If a service you cared about in your local area was at risk of being cut, how strongly do you agree or disagree that...? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

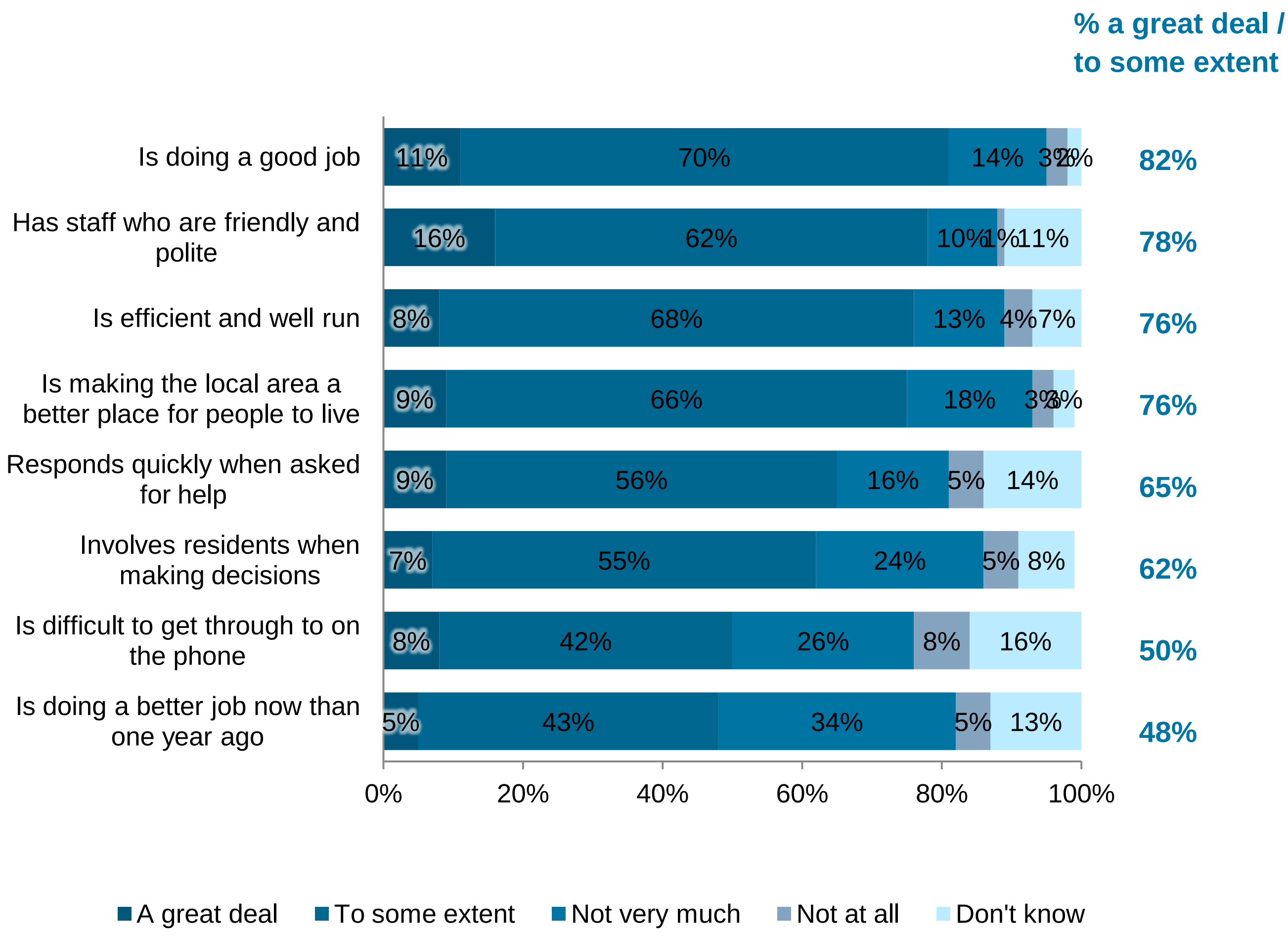
Probing these responses further shows that those who indicate that they understand the scale of the savings that the Council still has to make over the next few years are significantly more likely than those who are not to volunteer for a service they care about (55% cf. 38%); to make a one off donation (49% cf. 21%); and to pay more at the point of service use (48% cf. 18%).

6 Perception of the Council and its services

6.1 Wider perceptions of Merton Council

When presented with a list of eight statements that could be used to describe Merton Council, more residents agree than disagree that these statements are correct (a great deal / to some extent). This is positive for all statements except for Merton Council being difficult to get through to on the phone. Residents most commonly agree that Merton Council is doing a good job (82%); has staff who are friendly and polite (78%); is efficient and well run (76%); and is making the local area a better place for people to live (76%).

Figure 16: To what extent do you think these statements apply to your Borough? Merton Council...

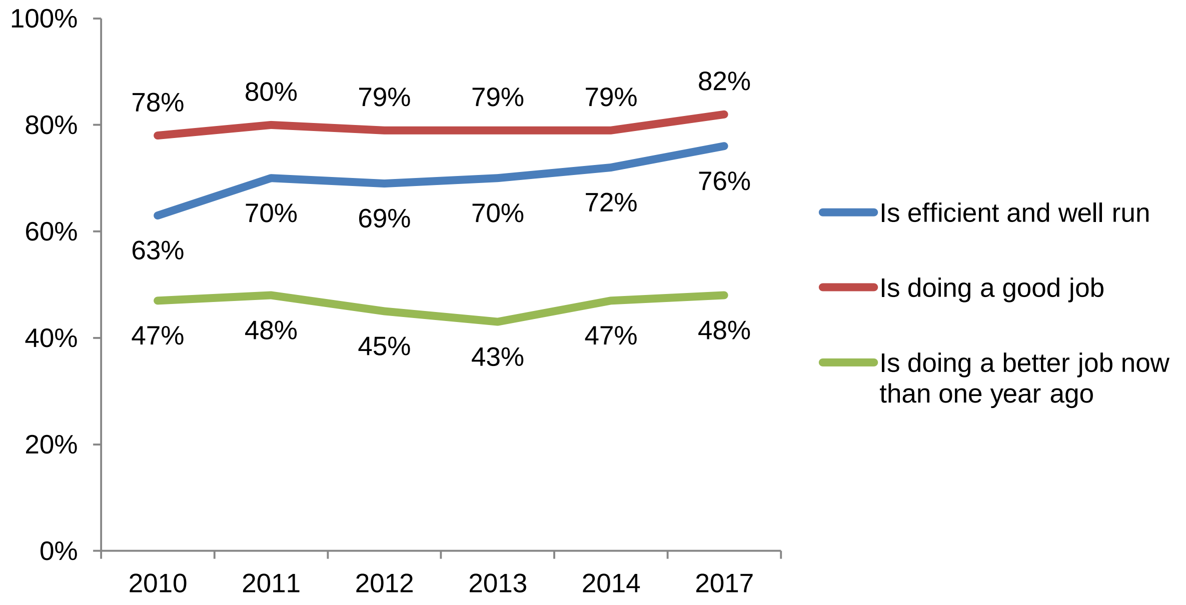


Unweighted sample base: 1,020

All these statements can be tracked over time as far back as 1995 / 1999. For brevity, the findings from 2010 onwards are shown here. The proportion stating that the Council is doing a good job is at its highest level to date (both on the period shown and over the extended time period referred to), but has not changed significantly compared to 2011 - 2014 findings. Agreement that the Council is efficient and well run is also at its highest level to date over the extended time period, and is up significantly compared to previous waves.

Perceptions that the Council is doing a better job compared to a year ago are in line with previous findings.

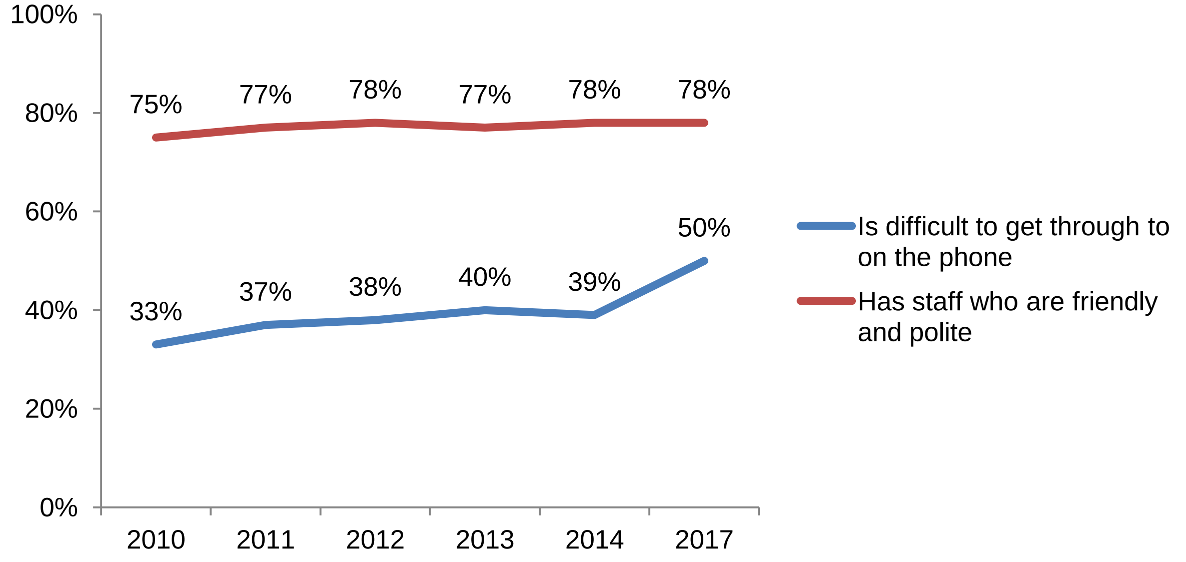
Figure 17: Overall perceptions of Merton Council - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

Perceptions of Council staff as friendly and polite have remained stable over time; however, the proportion feeling that the Council is difficult to get through to on the phone has increased significantly compared to previous findings.

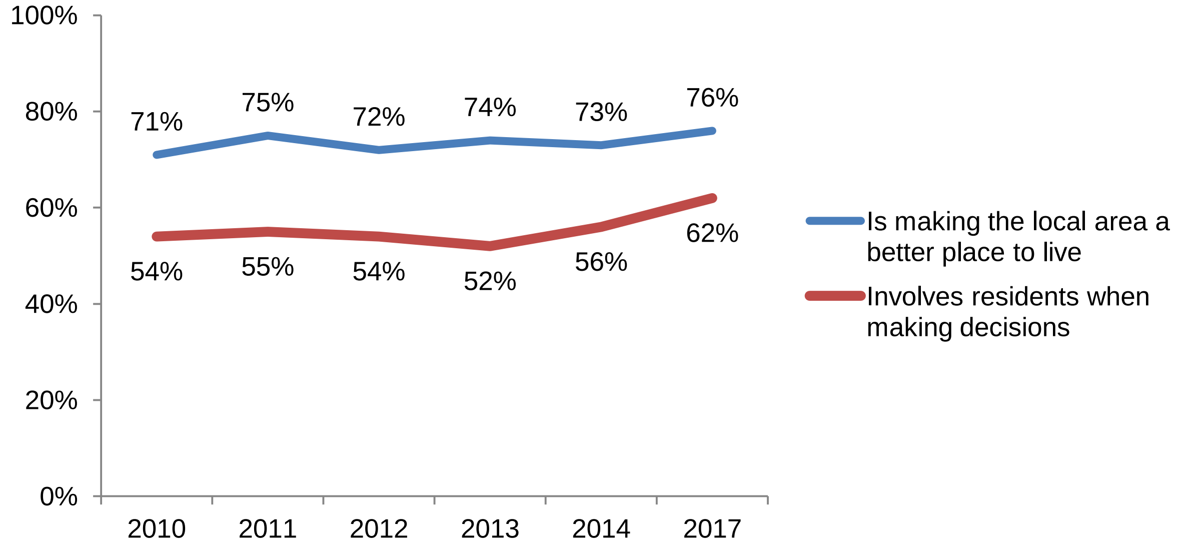
Figure 18: Customer service perceptions of Merton Council - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

The proportion stating that the Council is making the local area a better place to live has not altered significantly compared to previous findings; however, the proportion stating that the Council involves residents when making decisions is at its highest level to date (on the period shown and also extending back to 1995), with significant improvement compared to previous findings.

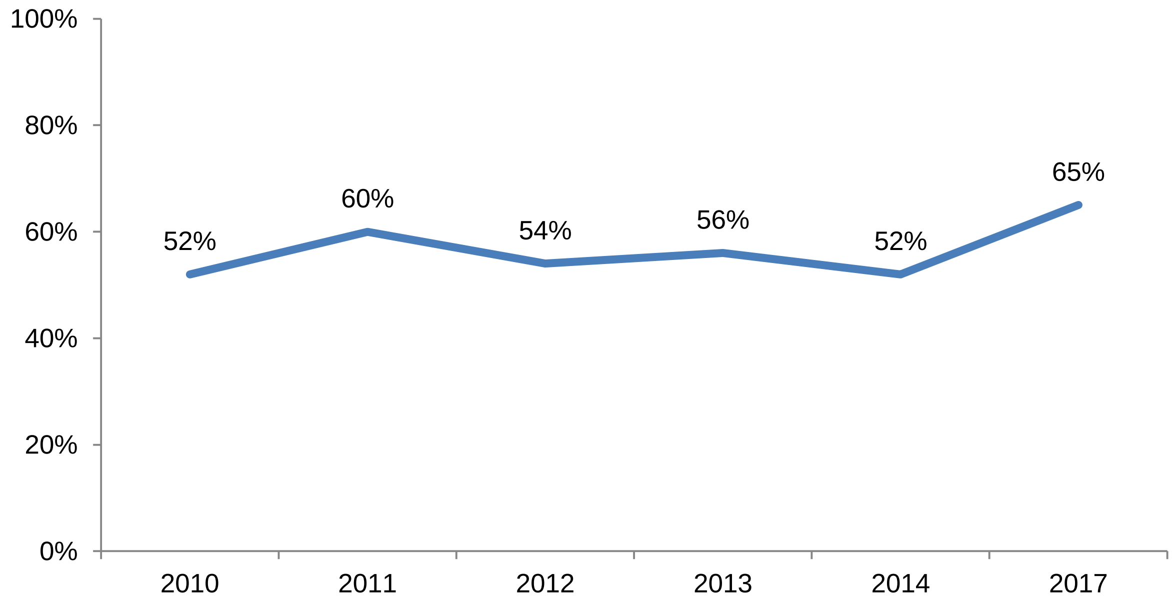
Figure 19: The Council making the local area a better place for people to live / involving residents when making decisions - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

Similarly the proportion agreeing that the Council responds quickly when asked for help is at its highest level to date (going back to 1995), and significantly higher compared to previous findings.

Figure 20: The Council responding quickly when asked for help - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases vary

6.2 Views on specific areas of Council delivery

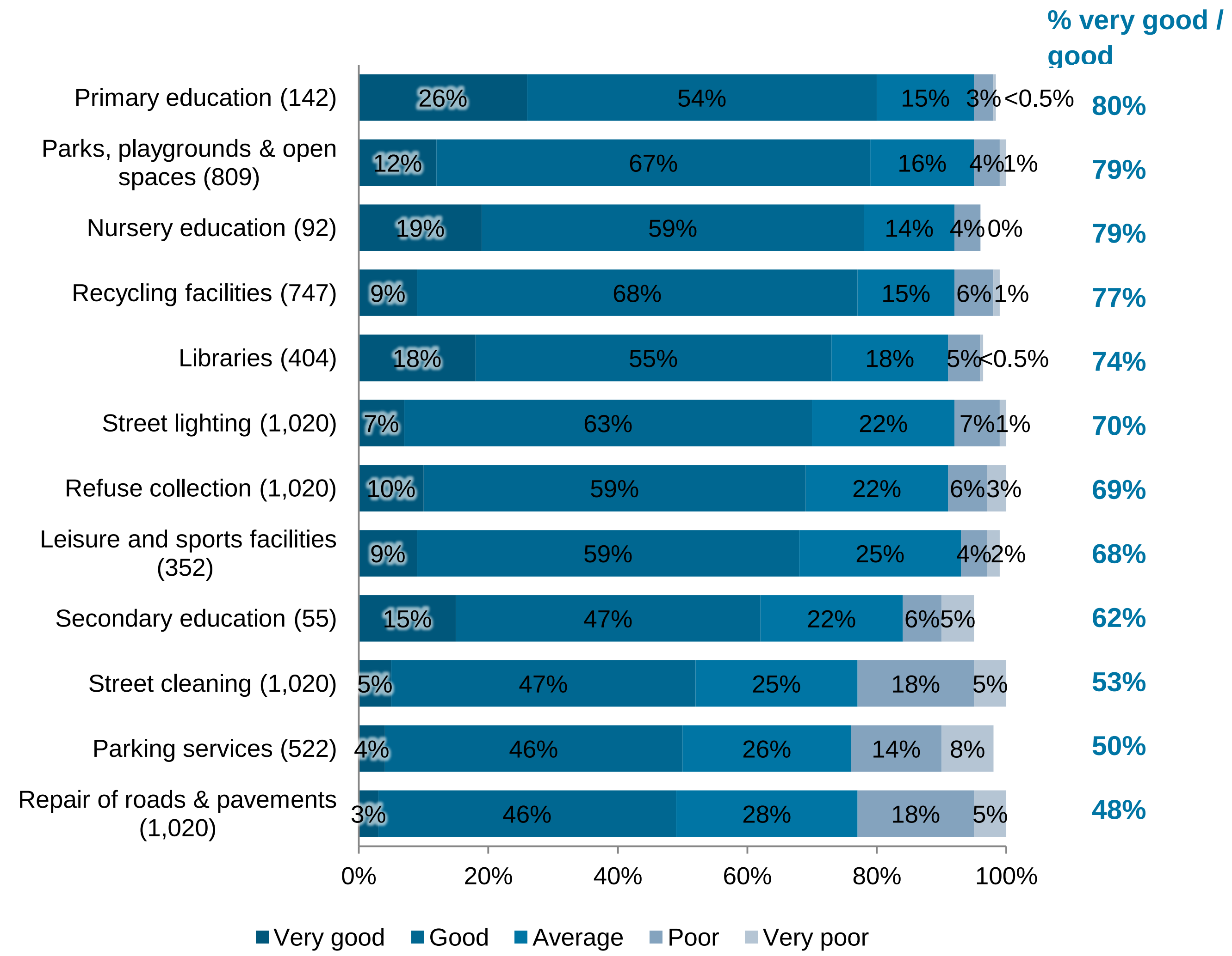
Respondents were then asked to give their views on specific local services in their area. The responses overleaf are based on all service users; in the case of street lighting, refuse collection, street cleaning, and road / pavement repair this is defined as all respondents, whilst responses for the other services shown are based just on those stating that they or other household members use the service. As a result of this, it should be noted that the base size for secondary education is relatively low (55). Responses in connection with nursery / primary / secondary education are all shown just for users of such services where they are provided by the Council (see Section 6.3).

For all these services, service users are more likely to give a very good / good rating than poor / very poor. No more than 8% give a rating of very poor for any service.

Responses are particularly positive in relation to primary and nursery education and parks / playgrounds / open spaces; and least positive in relation to street cleaning, parking services, and road / pavement repair. The relatively low ratings given to road / pavement repair and street cleaning may be a cause for concern given how many residents 'use' these services. As discussed in Section 5.1.1, litter / poor street cleaning is the leading cause of dissatisfaction with the Council, suggesting that this should be an area for focus. As discussed later in this section, the main areas of [relatively] poor perceptions in this area relate to how the Council deals with dog fouling, litter, and fly tipping, whereas perceptions of how the Council deals with graffiti are mostly positive.

A 'don't know' option was also available and coded by up to 5% of service users.

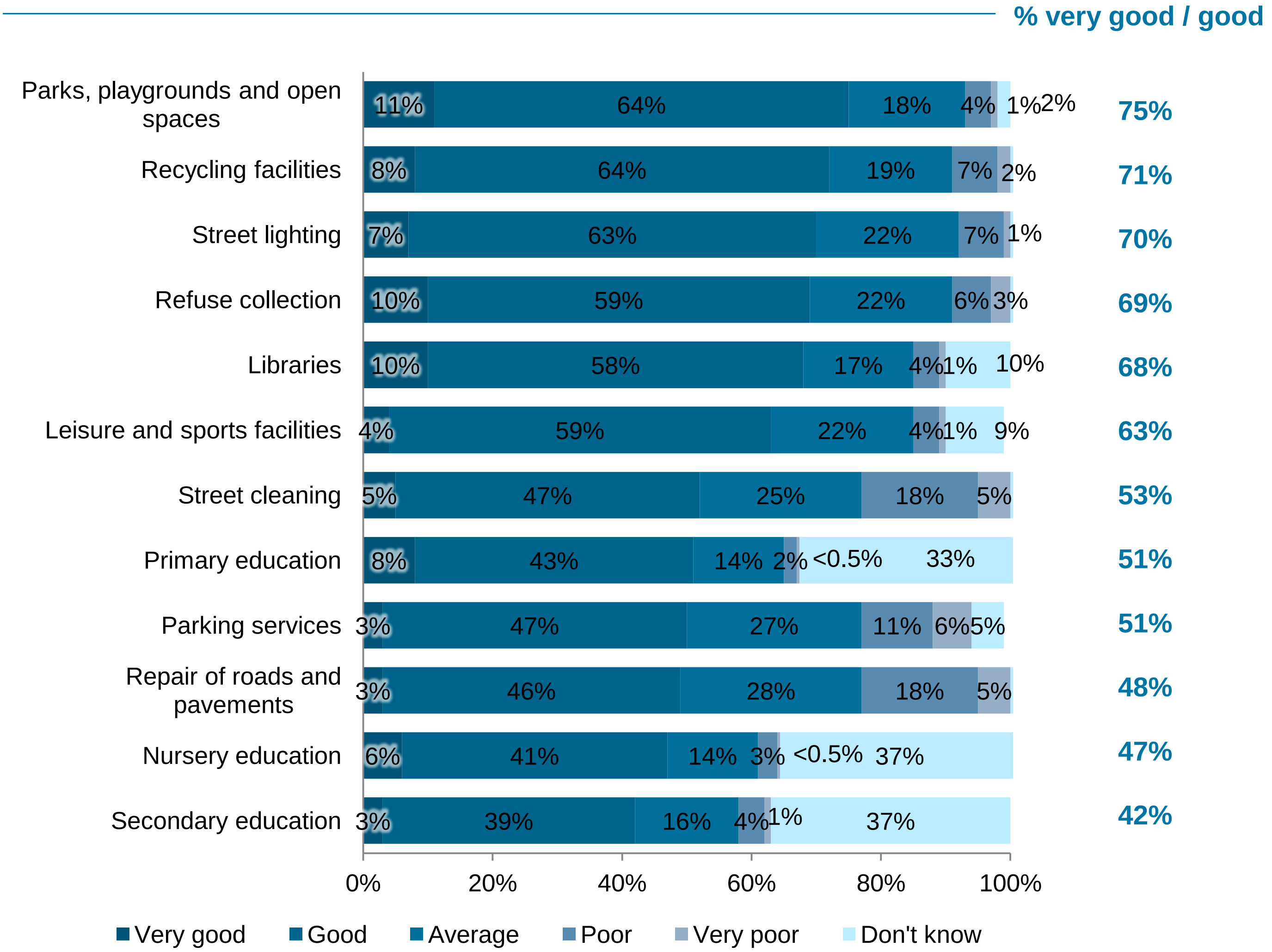
Figure 21: What is your opinion of...? (All service users)



Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

Responses are also shown below based on all respondents, including non-users. Don't know responses are shown, as a third or more of respondents gave this response in relation to nursery, primary, and secondary education. Chiefly as a result of these responses, nursery and secondary education has the lowest proportion giving a rating of very good or good. Parks, playgrounds, and open spaces, and recycling facilities, remain amongst the most-highly rated local services even when the views of non-users are included.

Figure 22: What is your opinion of...? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

The table below then compares the proportion of service users (as defined in Figure 21) giving a positive rating in the latest findings compared to 2014. It should be noted that in 2017 this equates to a rating of Very good / good whereas in 2014 the figure shown is the proportion giving a rating of Excellent / very good / good. Comparisons between the two sets of findings should therefore be treated with caution. All significant changes compared to 2014 are highlighted.

Table 5: Comparison of service satisfaction against 2014 (All service users)

	2014 (%)	2017 (%)	Percentage point change
Primary education	77%	80%	+3
Parks, playgrounds & open spaces	78%	79%	+1
Nursery education	81%	79%	-2
Recycling facilities	75%	77%	+2
Libraries	82%	74%	-8
Street lighting	71%	70%	-1
Refuse collection	70%	69%	-1
Leisure and sports facilities	63%	68%	+5
Secondary education	69%	62%	-7
Street cleaning	54%	53%	-1
Parking services	40%	50%	+10
Repair of roads & pavements	42%	48%	+6
User sample bases vary			

The table below shows the same findings based on all responses (both service users and non-users).

Table 6: Comparison of service satisfaction against 2014 (All responses)

	2014 (%)	2017 (%)	Percentage point change
Parks, playgrounds and open spaces	72%	75%	+3
Recycling facilities	72%	71%	-1
Street lighting	71%	70%	-1
Refuse collection	70%	69%	-1
Libraries	66%	68%	+2
Leisure and sports facilities	44%	63%	+19
Street cleaning	54%	53%	-1
Primary education	44%	51%	+7
Parking services	35%	51%	+16
Repair of roads and pavements	42%	48%	+6
Nursery education	33%	47%	+14
Secondary education	33%	42%	+9
Unweighted sample base	1,084	1,020	

As respondents were asked to give their responses in relation to their area, the findings for this question can also be analysed spatially to pinpoint locations where there is a perceived need for service improvement. As discussed in Section 8.2, half (49%) of Dundonald / Trinity / Abbey residents, and two-thirds (66%) of Ravensbury / St Helier / Cricket Green residents, cite rubbish or litter lying around as a problem in their local area. In keeping with this, Dundonald / Ravensbury residents are the least likely to rate street cleaning in their area as very good / good (43% cf. 46%), and are significantly more likely compared to the average to rate this service as very poor / poor (both 29%).

Other significant differences compared to the total by area, and constituency, are highlighted in the table below. Services with a small base size for one or more areas are excluded; base sizes for the figures shown below are at least 51.

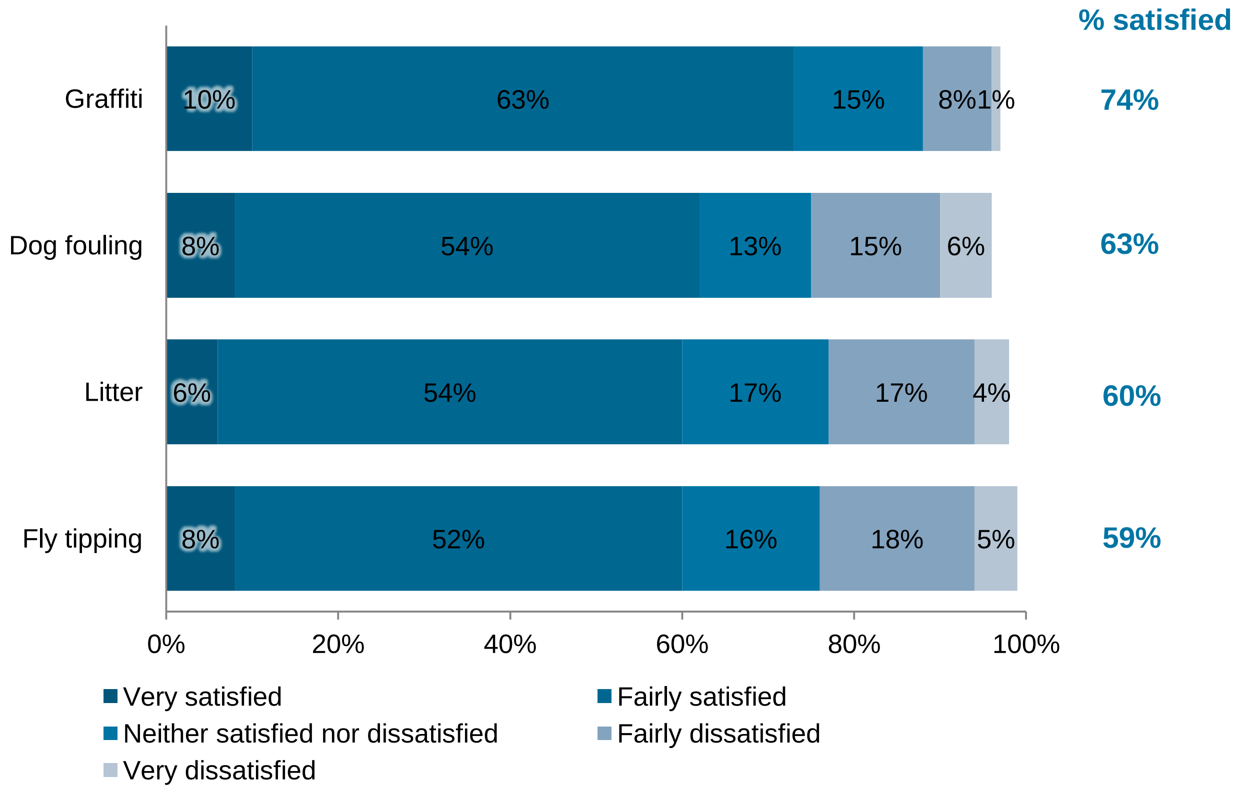
Table 7: Proportion rating local services as very good / good - By constituency and area (All service users)

		Constituency		Area					
	Total	Mitcham & Morden	Wimbledon	Village	Dundonald	Cannon Hill	Lavender Fields	Ravensbury	Colliers Wood
Refuse collection	**69%**	70%	67%	61%	69%	75%	64%	77%	68%
Street cleaning	**53%**	54%	51%	51%	43%	60%	55%	46%	60%
Street lighting	**70%**	67%	72%	70%	70%	78%	62%	63%	72%
Repair of roads and pavements	**48%**	51%	45%	43%	39%	55%	45%	49%	59%
Parks, playgrounds and open spaces	**79%**	79%	78%	77%	80%	83%	69%	89%	68%
Recycling facilities	**77%**	81%	75%	76%	79%	77%	69%	86%	75%
Parking services	**50%**	54%	47%	49%	49%	53%	34%	59%	54%

Respondents were also asked to consider how the Council deals with specific environmental issues. Three-quarters (74%) express satisfaction with how the Council deals with graffiti; around six in ten are satisfied in relation to dog fouling, litter, and fly tipping.

A 'don't know' option was also available and coded by up to 2% of respondents.

Figure 23: How satisfied are you with the way the council deals with...? (All responses)

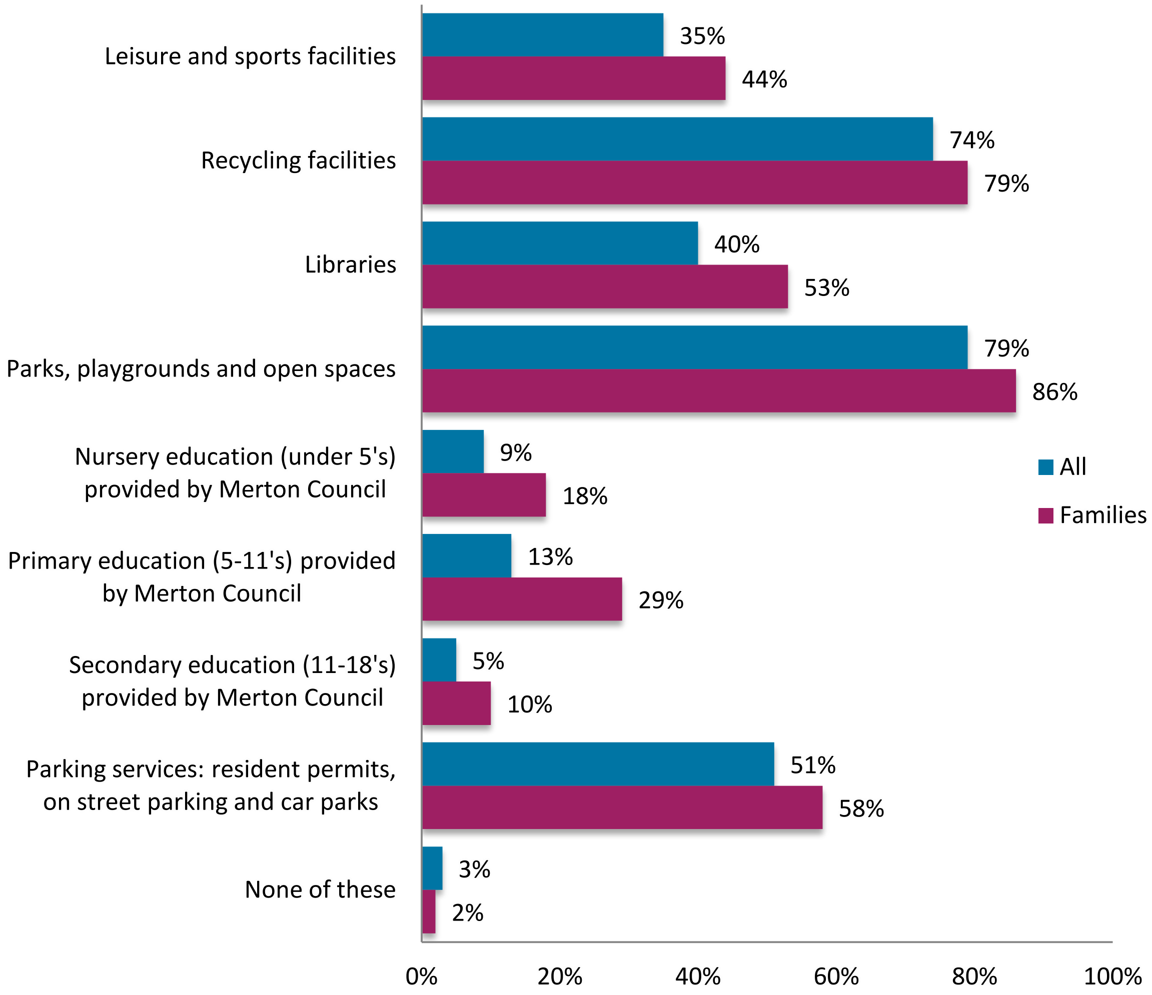


Unweighted sample base: 1,020

6.3 Use of local services

Asked which of a list of local services they (or other members of the household) use nowadays, three-quarters or more state they use parks, playgrounds, and open spaces (79%) and recycling facilities (74%). Families (i.e. residents with child[ren] aged under 16) are significantly more likely, compared to the average, to use each of the services shown.

Figure 24: Which of these services provided locally do you or members of your household use nowadays? (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases: All: 1,020, Families: 392

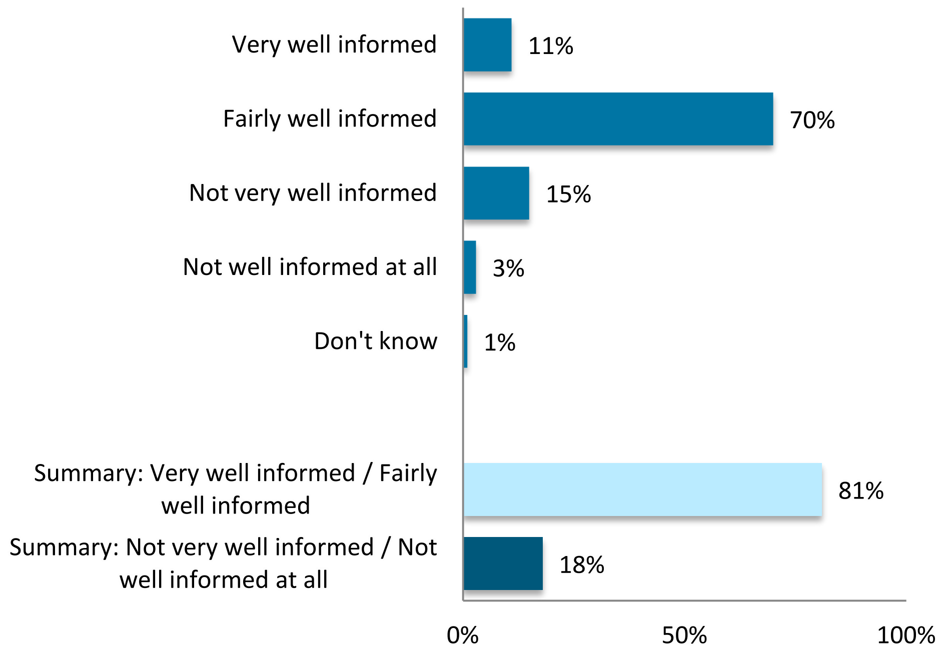
7 Communications and information

7.1 Feeling informed

The extent to which residents receive and understand the messages that Councils provide can have a key influence on how they perceive that authority. On this basis a question about how well Councils keep residents informed is included in the standard LGA question set. Eight in ten Merton residents (81%) currently feel well informed about Merton Council's services and benefits, including 11% who feel very well informed. Approaching one in five (18%) do not feel well informed, with most of these feeling not very well informed (15%).

There are no significant differences in the summary responses by age group. Disabled residents record broadly similar responses in terms of feeling very / fairly well informed (78%) and not very / not at all well informed (20%); however this group is significantly more likely compared to non-disabled residents to feel not well informed at all (7% cf. 2%).

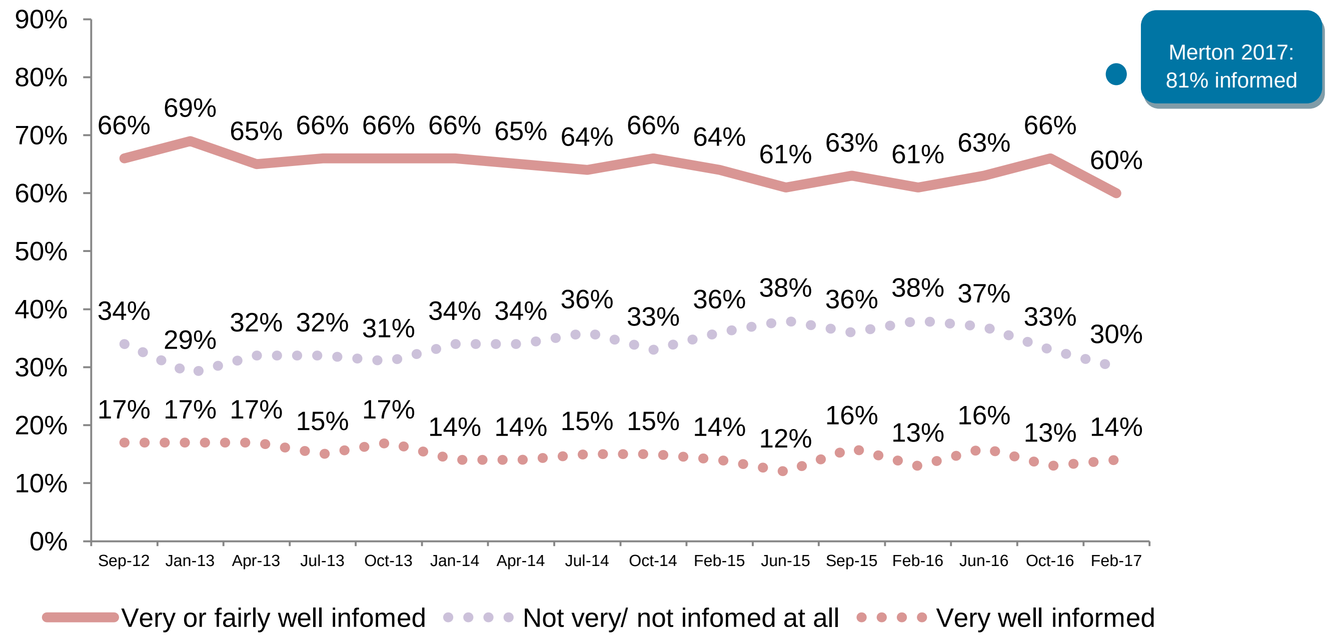
Figure 25: Overall, how well do you think Merton Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

The proportion of residents who feel informed about Merton Council's services and benefits is markedly higher compared to the latest benchmark derived from LGA polling (81% cf. 60%). As with other measures, the proportion of Merton residents giving the most positive response on this measure is however behind the benchmark (11% very well informed cf. 14%).

Figure 26: National trends in being kept informed about Council services and benefits – LGA Polling



Looking at the interaction between residents feeling informed and overall satisfaction with the Council shows a positive association. Among those who feel very or fairly well informed about Council services and benefits 72% are satisfied with the way Merton Council runs things. This is significantly higher than the 43% who are satisfied among residents who feel less well informed.

7.2 Key sources of information about Merton

Respondents were presented with a list of local information sources and were asked which they currently use to keep them informed about what's happening in Merton. As the table overleaf indicates, the most-mentioned sources are produced by the Council: *My Merton* (43%), the Council website (33%), and Council information leaflets (33%). Almost one in three also refer to the *Wimbledon Guardian* (31%). The most-used sources for each age group are shaded in the table below, with figures significantly higher than the total **highlighted**. The top two or three sources for each age group are also Council-produced, although residents aged 65+ are least likely to mention the Council website (12%) and significantly more likely compared to the average to mention Council information leaflets (40%). The *Wimbledon Guardian* is mentioned by at least three in ten of each age group apart from 18-24 year olds (16%).

Table 8: Which of the following ways do you use to keep you informed about what's happening in Merton? (All responses)

	Total	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+
Merton Council website	**39%**	39%	**46%**	39%	12%
Wimbledon Guardian weekly newspaper	**31%**	16%	30%	35%	37%
Wimbledon Guardian website	**5%**	4%	6%	5%	2%
Wimbledon SW19 online newsletter	**3%**	2%	3%	2%	3%
Time and Leisure magazine	**16%**	7%	13%	**22%**	16%
My Merton the council's quarterly publication	**43%**	22%	42%	44%	**53%**
Twitter	**3%**	6%	4%	2%	1%
Facebook	**7%**	**13%**	**10%**	4%	1%
South West Families Magazine	**2%**	1%	2%	3%	2%
Evening Standard	**9%**	6%	7%	**12%**	9%
BBC London	**10%**	13%	11%	10%	6%
Radio Jackie	**2%**	0%	2%	2%	1%
Metro	**9%**	12%	10%	9%	4%
ITV London	**4%**	**9%**	3%	3%	4%
Darling Magazine	**2%**	2%	1%	**3%**	2%
South West Londoner website16	**1%**	0%	1%	**2%**	0%
Posters and banners displayed in Merton	**16%**	18%	16%	14%	19%
Information leaflets provided by the council	**33%**	42%	30%	32%	**40%**
Other	**4%**	4%	4%	4%	5%
Unweighted sample base	**1,020**	78	461	326	149

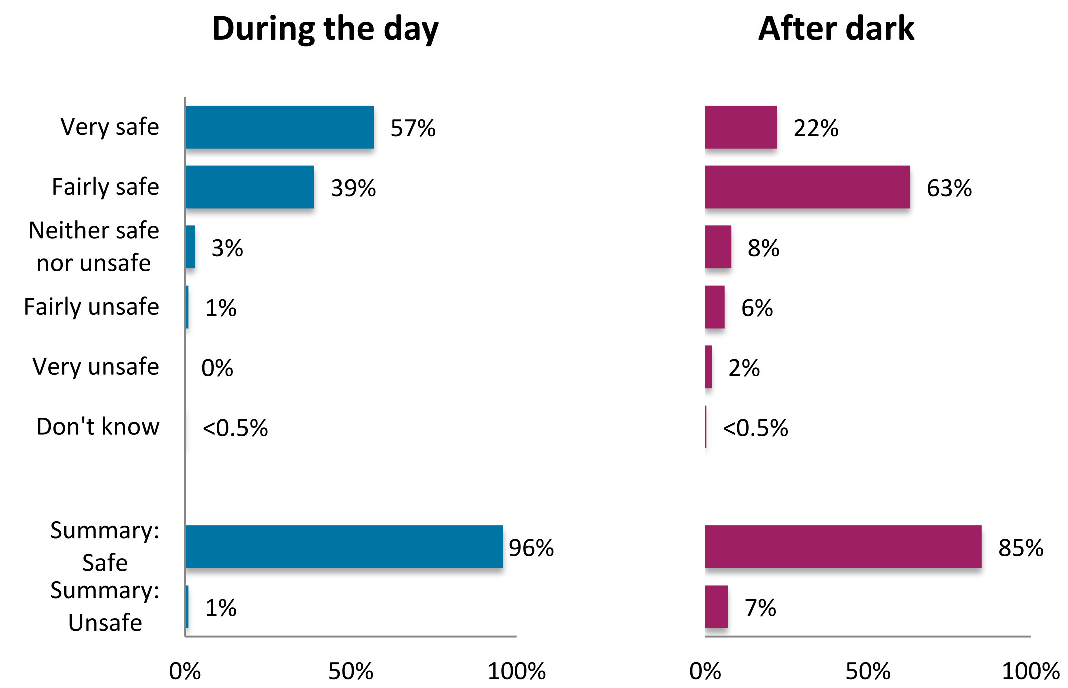
8 Safety, neighbourhood issues, and community cohesion

As discussed in Section 4.1, neighbourhood perceptions are less positive amongst residents of Mitcham and Morden. Reasons for this may include issues around safety and anti-social behaviour; these issues, and perceptions of community cohesion, are explored in this section.

8.1 Feeling safe

Asked how safe they feel when outside in their local area during the day, almost all (96%) feel safe, with no respondents stating they feel very unsafe. After dark, 85% feel safe, although most of these feel fairly safe (63%) as opposed to very safe (22%).

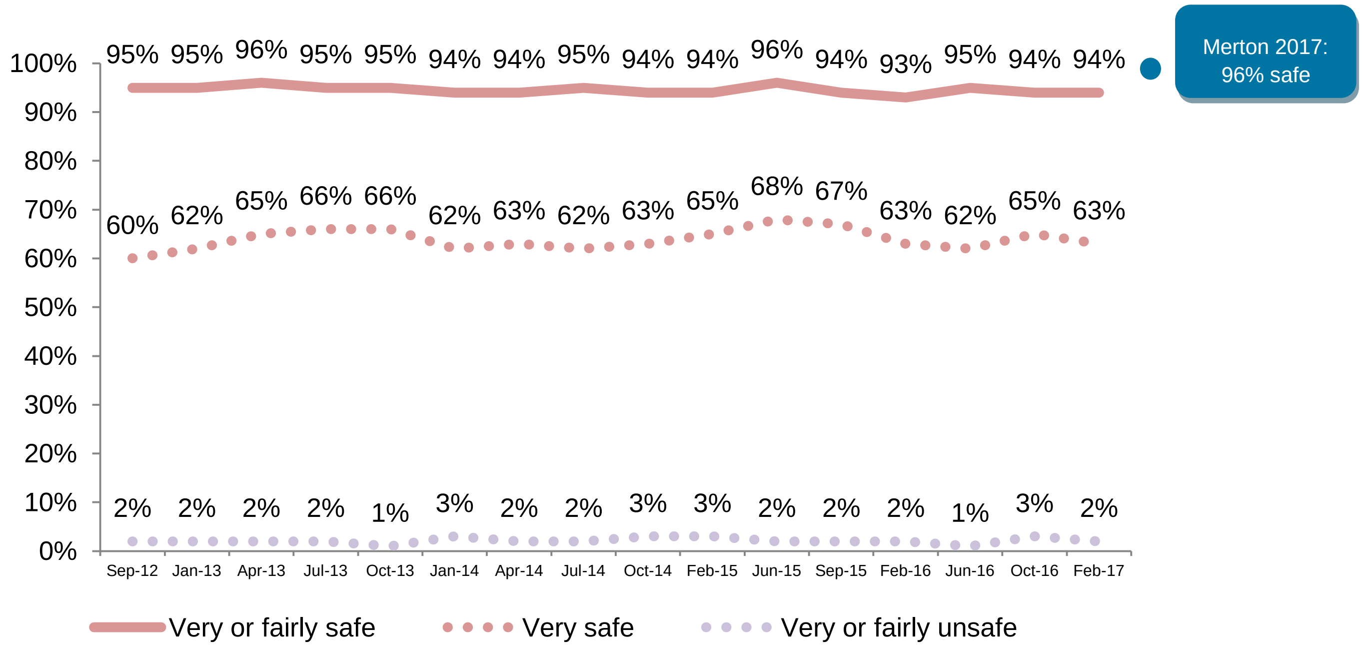
Figure 27: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area...? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 1,020

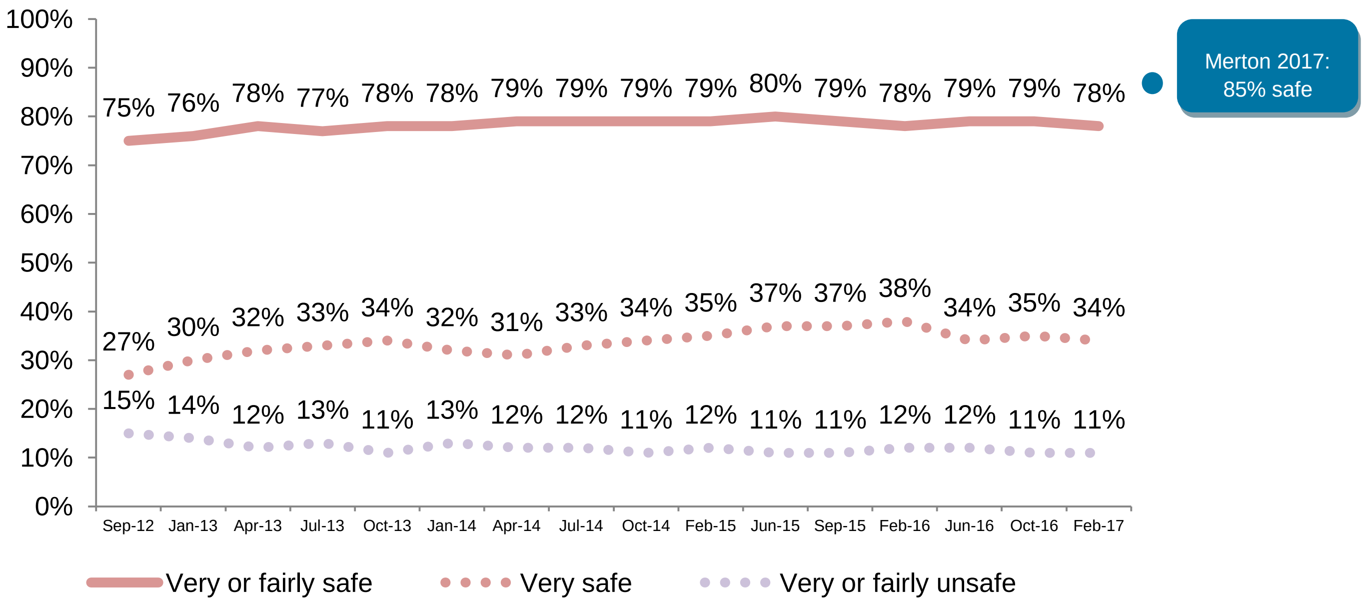
The proportion of Merton residents feeling safe during the day (96%) is in line with LGA benchmarking (94%), although the proportion of Merton residents feeling very safe is a little lower (57% cf. 63%).

Figure 28: National trends in feelings of safety DURING THE DAY - LGA Polling



The proportion of residents feeling safe after dark is ahead of LGA benchmarking (85% cf. 78%); however, the proportion feeling very safe is markedly lower (22% cf. 34%).

Figure 29: National trends in feelings of safety AFTER DARK - LGA Polling



These findings can then be broken down spatially and by gender, age group, and disability:

During the day, at least nine in ten within each of these groups feel safe, including all those interviewed in Dundonald / Trinity / Abbey and Ravensbury / St Helier / Cricket Green;

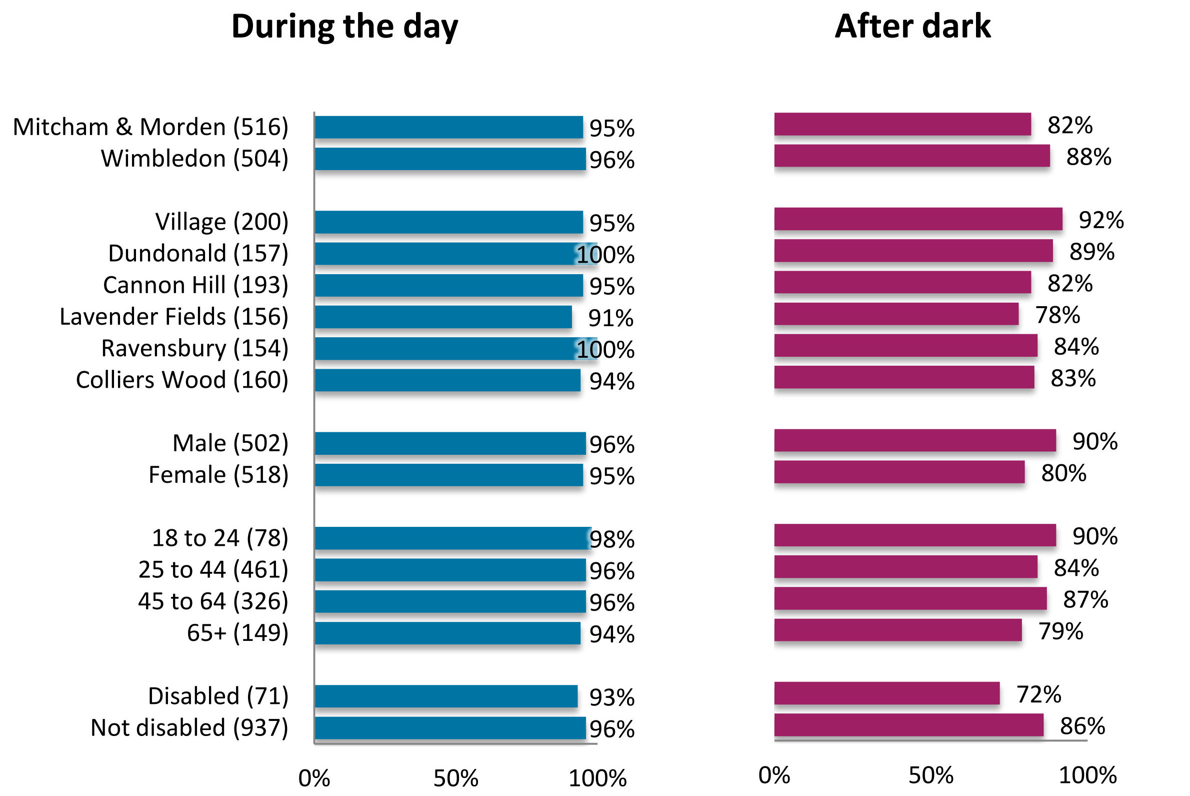
After dark, Mitcham and Morden residents are significantly less likely, compared to Wimbledon, to feel safe (82% cf. 88%). It should be noted that the proportion feeling *unsafe* is similar for both constituencies (8% cf. 7%). The lower levels of perceived safety in Mitcham and Morden are driven chiefly by responses in Lavender Fields / Pollards Hill / Figge's Marsh, where 78% feel safe and 13% unsafe.

Female residents are also significantly less likely to feel safe after dark compared to male (80% cf. 90%), with 11% of female residents feeling unsafe at this time.

By age group, residents aged 65+ are significantly less likely, compared to the average, to feel safe after dark (79%); however this is driven by a higher volume of ‘neither’ responses from this group (14%). For each age group, 7% to 8% feel unsafe after dark.

Disabled residents are significantly less likely to feel safe after dark compared to non-disabled residents (72% cf. 86%). Whilst this group is also more likely to feel unsafe (13% compared to 7% of non-disabled residents), this difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 30: Proportion feeling very / fairly safe - By key demographics (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

8.2 Neighbourhood issues

Respondents were then read a list of neighbourhood issues and asked to rate the extent to which these are problems in their local area. Of the issues listed, residents are most likely to describe rubbish or litter as a very or fairly big problem (37%), although just 7% describe this as a very big problem. Significant differences, compared to the total, are highlighted in the table below; it will be seen from this that Mitcham and Morden residents are significantly more likely to report noisy neighbours or loud parties, people using or dealing drugs, and groups hanging around the streets. Reports of the issues listed are, in general, most common amongst residents of Ravensbury / St Helier / Cricket Green.

Table 9: Proportion describing issues as a very / fairly big problem in their local area (All responses)

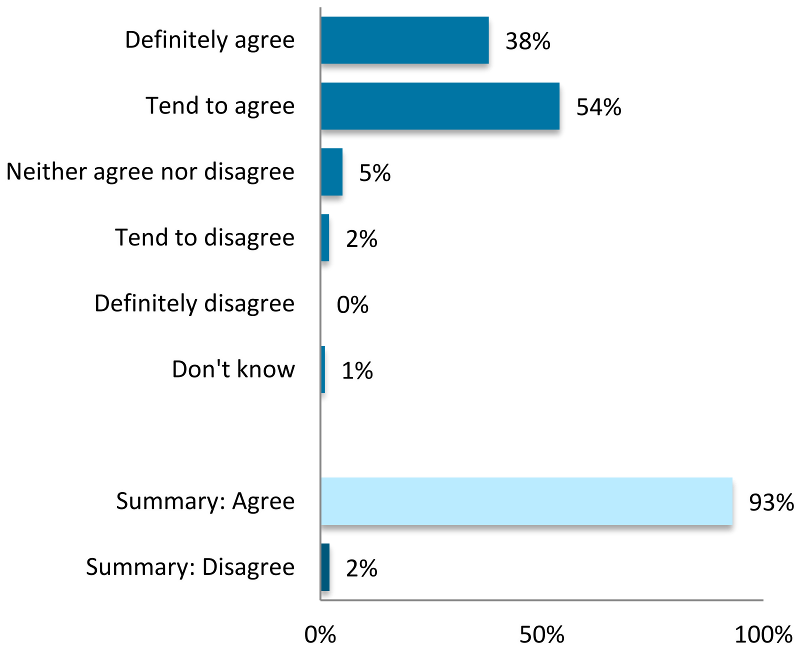
		Constituency		Area					
	Total	Mitcham & Morden	Wimbledon	Village	Dundonald	Cannon Hill	Lavender Fields	Ravensbury	Colliers Wood
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	**11%**	13%	8%	10%	4%	8%	13%	22%	7%
Rubbish or litter lying around	**37%**	39%	34%	25%	49%	35%	33%	66%	16%
Vandalism, graffiti & other deliberate damage to property / vehicles	**9%**	9%	8%	6%	6%	10%	9%	17%	5%
People using or dealing drugs	**11%**	15%	7%	4%	11%	4%	13%	18%	18%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	**17%**	17%	17%	4%	33%	14%	13%	19%	23%
Groups hanging around the streets	**19%**	23%	15%	2%	27%	20%	16%	28%	22%
Unweighted bases	**1,020**	**516**	**504**	**200**	**157**	**193**	**156**	**154**	**160**

8.3 Community cohesion

Residents were also asked whether their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together. Most (93%) agree this is the case. Just 2% disagree, with none of those interviewed stating that they 'definitely disagree'.

Perceptions on this measure have improved compared to 2014, when 89% stated that they agreed and 7% disagreed. However, it should be noted that the word 'ethnic' was added to the questionnaire on this iteration of the research, and on previous waves the 'don't know' option was extended to read 'Don't know / too few people / all same background'. Comparisons against previous findings should therefore be treated with caution.

Figure 31: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? (All responses)

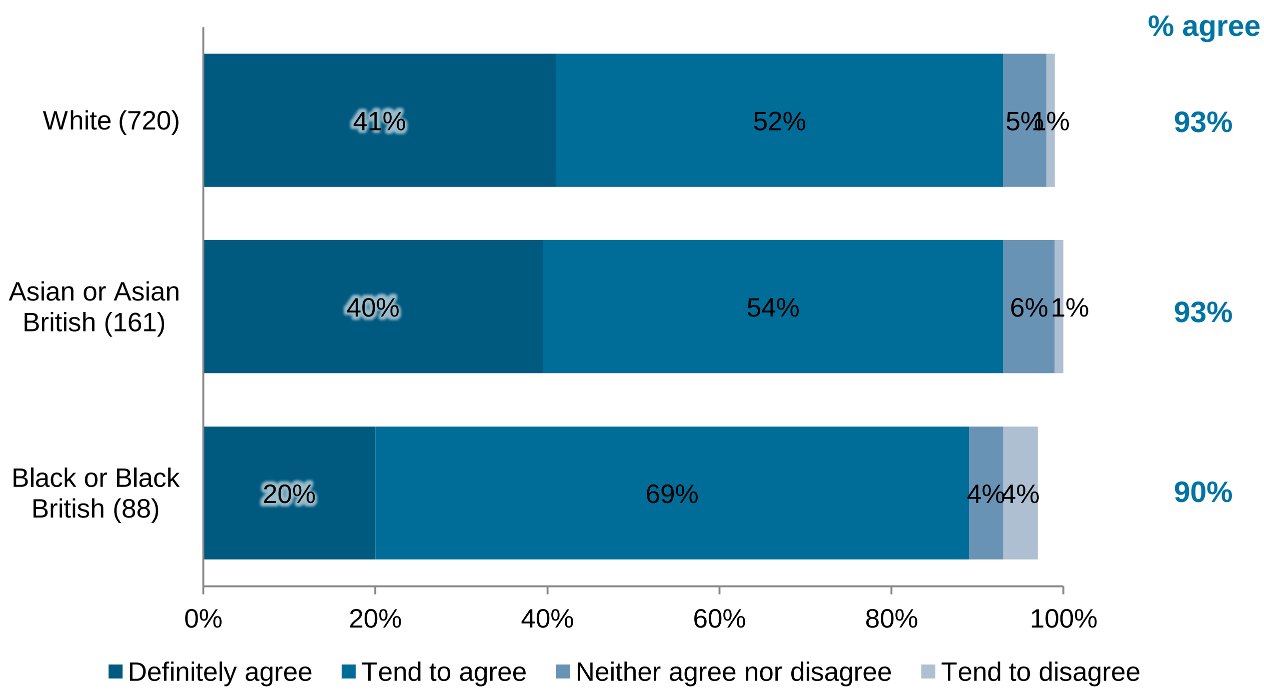


Unweighted sample base: 1,020

These findings are shown below split by broad ethnic groups for whom there is sufficient data. At least nine in ten of each of the groups shown agree that people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together in their local area. However, black / black British residents are significantly less likely compared to white or Asian / Asian British residents to agree strongly. Black or black British residents are also significantly more likely compared to white residents to disagree (4% cf. 1%), although as discussed no residents of any ethnicity strongly disagree.

The option of ‘don’t know’ was coded by no more than 2% of the groups shown.

Figure 32: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? - By ethnic group (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

9 Voluntary work

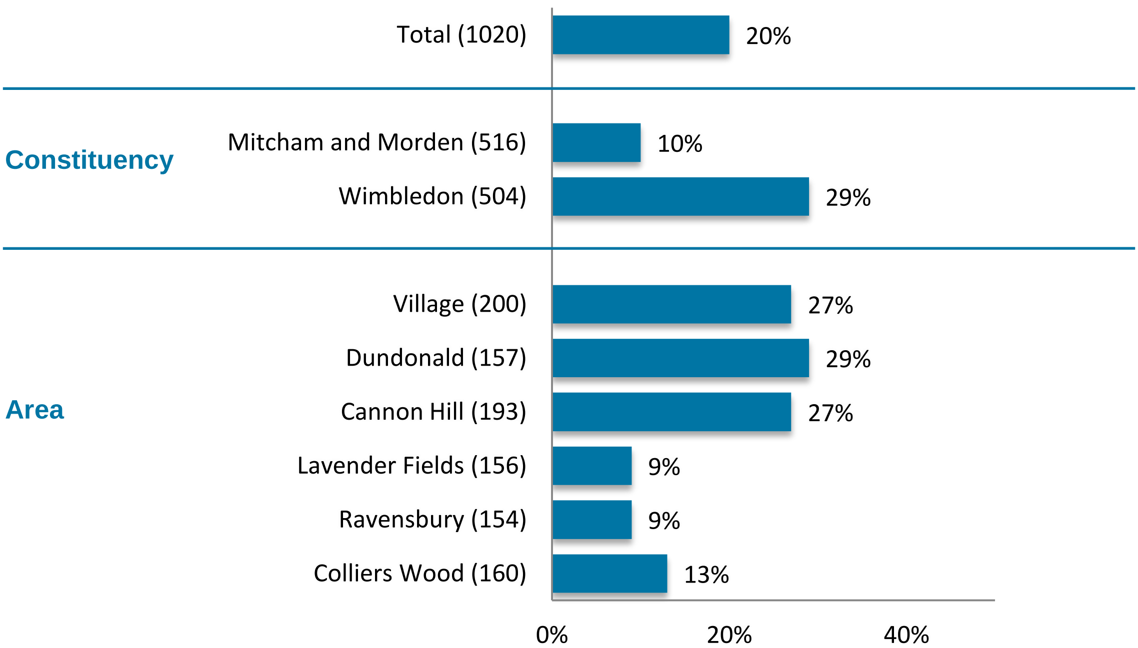
The voluntary / third sector is increasingly seen as a possible way of delivering services currently delivered by the Council that are vulnerable to budget cuts. The Council already partners with organisations such as Volunteer Centre Merton, Rethink Mental Illness, Carers Support Merton, Imagine Independence, Merton Mencap, and Merton Voluntary Service Council; as discussed in Section 5.5, up to half of Merton residents are also prepared in principle to volunteer their time to help maintain local services.

With this in mind, respondents were asked whether or not they have undertaken any unpaid activity / voluntary work in the last 12 months in their local community. One in five (20%) have done this. Levels of volunteering are higher amongst groups who are more likely to be 'settled' in their local community, for example:

- Residents who have lived in Merton for 5-10 years (21%) or 10+ years (22%);
- Residents who own their home (23%);
- Residents aged 45-64 (24%) or 65+ (21%).

Spatially, there are significant differences in levels of volunteering. Wimbledon residents are significantly more likely to have volunteered compared to Mitcham and Morden residents (29% cf. 10%). This is reflected in the levels of volunteering at a more local level, as the figure below indicates.

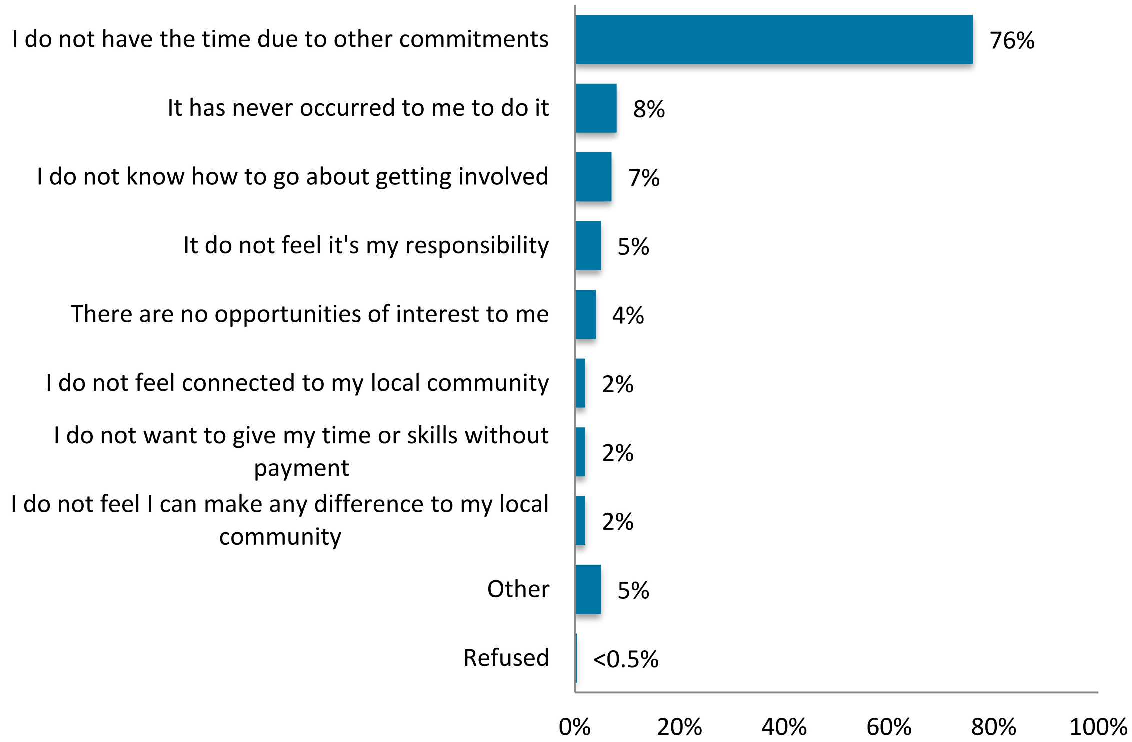
Figure 33: Proportion volunteering in the last 12 months (All responses)



Unweighted sample bases in parentheses

Residents who have not volunteered in the last 12 months were asked to state why, from a given list of reasons. Multiple responses to this question were allowed. Much the most common reason given is lack of time due to other commitments (76%). Unsurprisingly, this is particularly likely to be cited by residents who are economically active (81%) or who have children (80%); however, this reason is much the most common reason given by any of the demographic or area groupings mentioned in this report (at least 56%).

Figure 34: Why do you think you have not participated in any community activity in the last 12 months? (All responses, those not volunteering in the last 12 months)



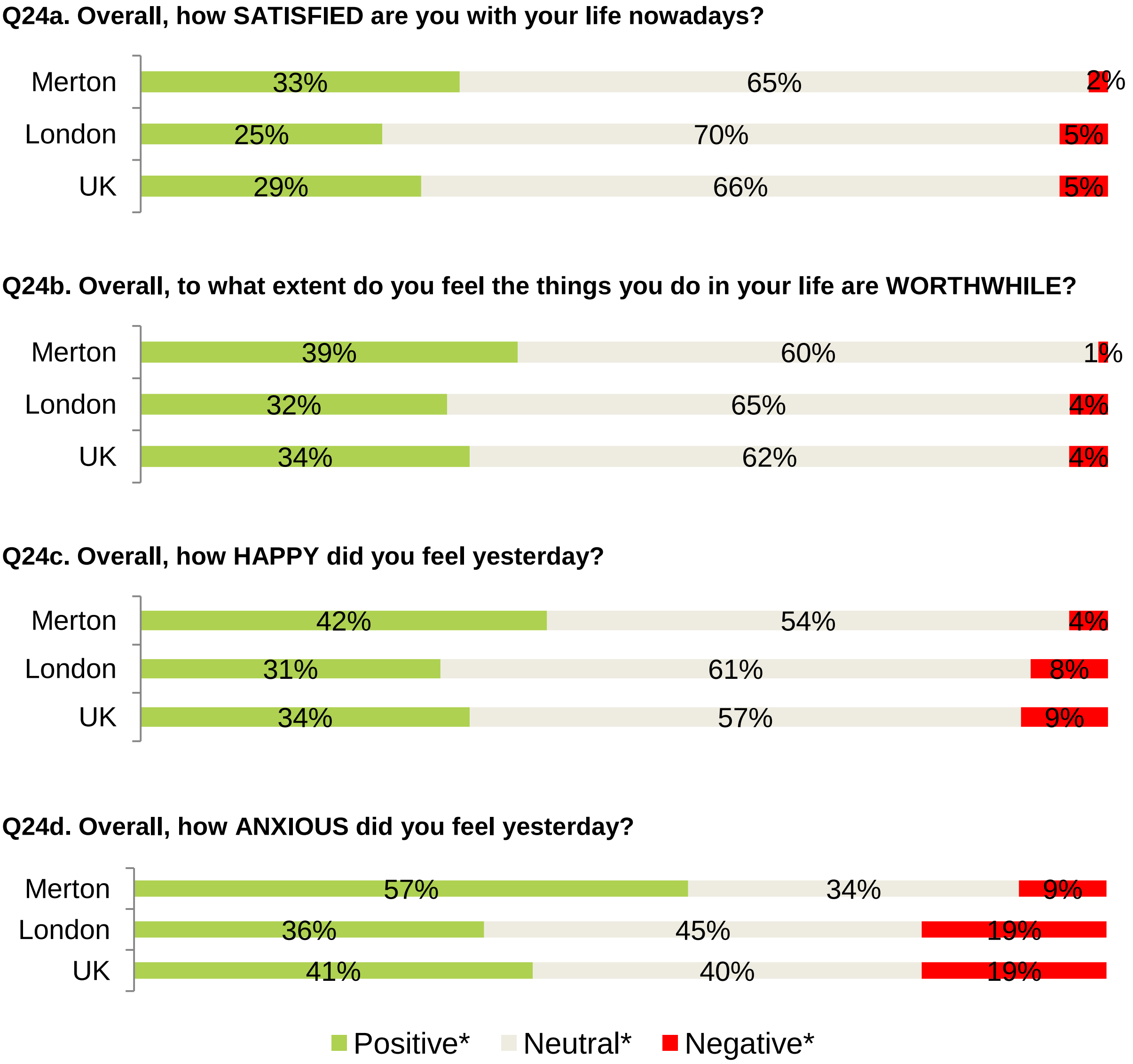
Unweighted sample base: 829

10 Health and Wellbeing

Standard questions used by the Office of National Statistics to measure wellbeing were added to the 2017 survey. These questions sought responses on a 0-10 scale on issues such as happiness and anxiety, with numeric responses grouped together to determine whether the respondent has a low, medium or high feeling of wellbeing (see note within graph overleaf for groupings).

As the figure below indicates, Merton wellbeing measures compare favourably to London and UK-wide benchmarks.

Figure 35: Wellbeing measures



** For Q24a-c, Positive = 9-10, Neutral = 5-8, Negative = 0-4*
For Q24d, Positive = 0-1, Neutral = 2-5, Negative = 6-10
Base: All respondents (1,020)
UK / London benchmarks taken from ONS 2014-15 Wellbeing dataset

When looking at these ratings split by age there are few significant differences. Residents aged 25-44 are significantly more likely compared to the average to state that they feel the things they do in their life are worthwhile (43% rating 9-10). Conversely, residents aged 18-24 and 65+ are significantly more likely than 25-44 year olds to give a low rating on this measure, although no more than 4% in each group give this set of responses. 18-24 year olds are also significantly more likely compared to the average to give a low rating in terms of life satisfaction (5% cf. 2% overall).

As the table below indicates, the responses given by disabled residents are in general less positive compared to non-disabled residents.

Table 10: Feelings of different aspects of life by age and disability

		Age				Disability	
	Total	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+	Yes	No
Satisfaction with your life nowadays?							
Summary: Low (0-4)	2%	5%	1%	2%	3%	7%	2%
Summary: Medium (5-8)	65%	71%	64%	65%	65%	65%	65%
Summary: High (9-10)	33%	24%	35%	34%	32%	28%	34%
Feel the things you do in your life are WORTHWHILE?							
Summary: Low (0-4)	1%	4%	<0.5%	1%	4%	7%	1%
Summary: Medium (5-8)	60%	62%	57%	61%	63%	62%	59%
Summary: High (9-10)	39%	33%	43%	38%	33%	31%	40%
How HAPPY did you feel yesterday?							
Summary: Low (0-4)	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	13%	3%
Summary: Medium (5-8)	54%	51%	53%	56%	56%	46%	54%
Summary: High (9-10)	42%	44%	44%	41%	39%	41%	43%
How ANXIOUS did you feel yesterday?							
Summary: Low (0-1)	9%	8%	10%	8%	8%	13%	8%
Summary: Medium (2-5)	34%	32%	34%	35%	35%	43%	33%
Summary: High (6-10)	57%	59%	56%	57%	58%	44%	58%

Colours signify difference to the total sample. Red colour is when a figure is significantly more negative, green when the figure is significantly more positive. Colour coding is not applied to the 'medium' band.

11 Young people

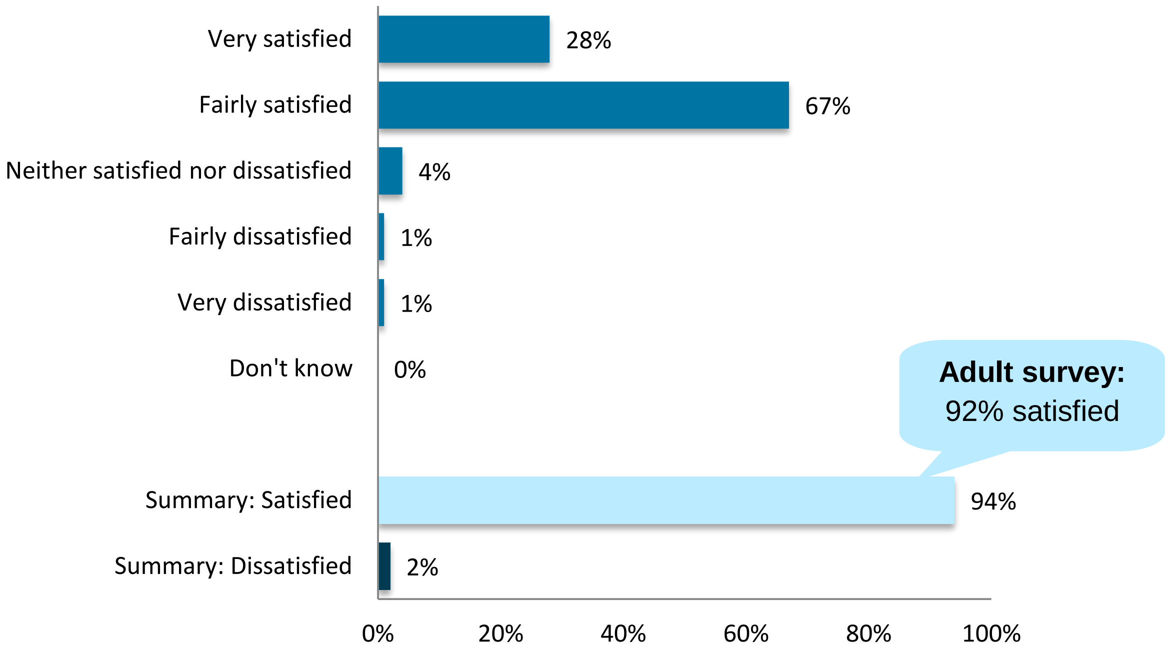
This section details findings from the research carried out amongst 11-17 year olds.

11.1 Local area as a place to live

The vast majority of young people in Merton are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (94%). Of these, approaching three in ten (28%) are very satisfied. Just 2% are dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live to any extent.

The same question was asked on the survey of adults (Section 4.1), with very similar findings (92% satisfied with local area as a place to live).

Figure 36: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 252

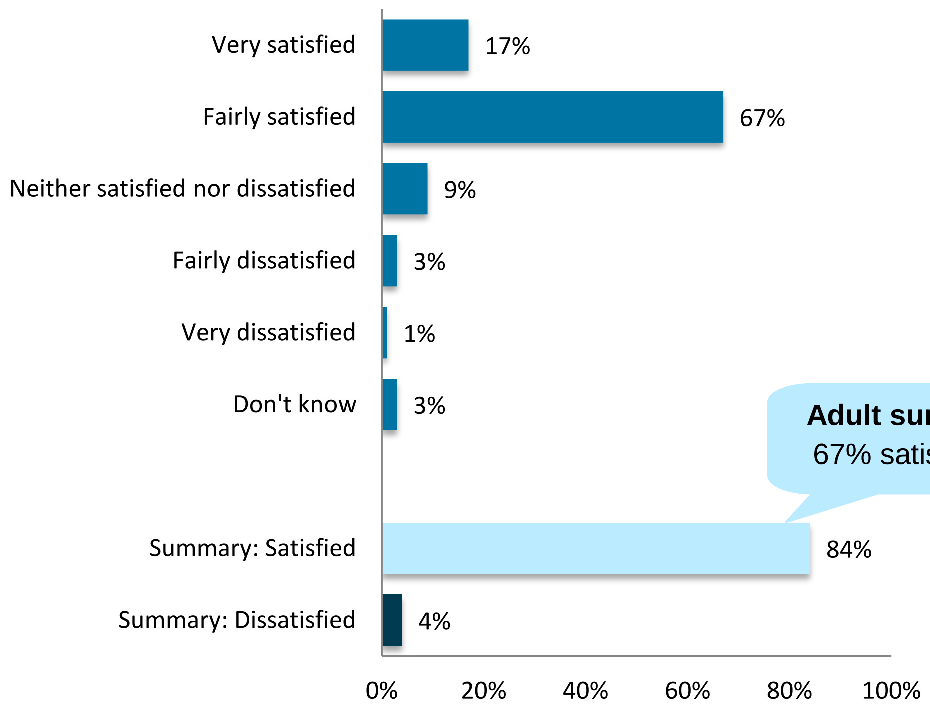
The findings can also be analysed by 11-15 year olds compared to 16-17 year olds. On this comparison, 11-15 year olds record significantly higher levels of satisfaction (96% cf. 90%) and significantly lower levels of dissatisfaction (1% cf. 5%).

11.2 Perceptions of Merton Council

Respondents were then asked to rate the way the Council runs things, having first been reminded of some of the Council's responsibilities (*Where you live Merton Council is responsible for the collection of bins, street sweeping and cleaning, schools and education, road maintenance and social care*). Most (84%) are satisfied on this measure, with just 4% dissatisfied. This compares favourably to the findings from the survey of adults, where 67% were satisfied.

There are no significant differences in perceptions when comparing 11-15 year olds and 16-17 year olds.

Figure 37: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Merton Council runs things? (All responses)



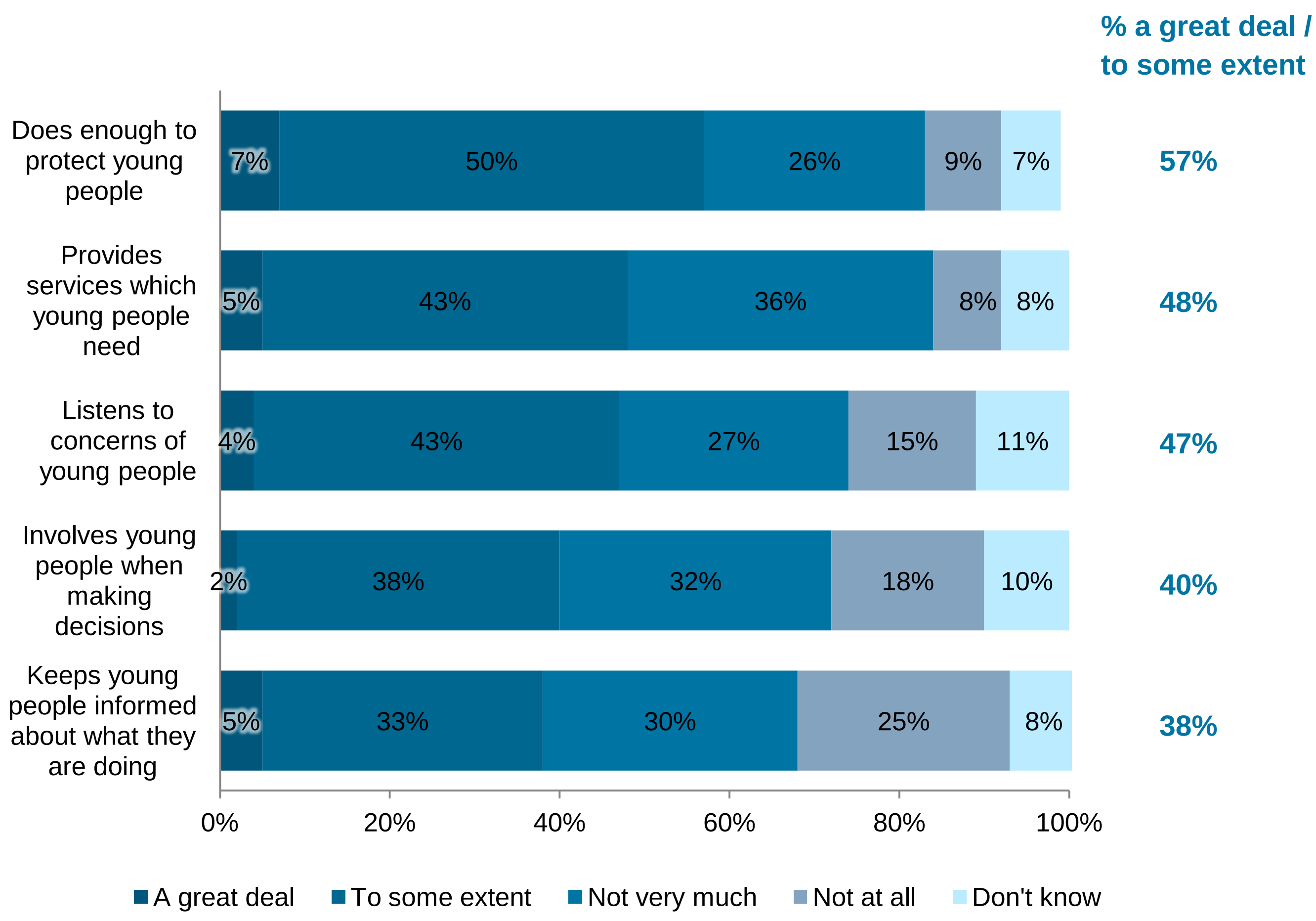
Unweighted sample base: 252

11.3 The Council and young people

Respondents were then asked to rate the Council on a series of more specific measures relating to services and communications, specifically in the context of young people. Perceptions are most positive in relation to service metrics, i.e. doing enough to protect young people and providing services which young people need. By contrast, on the engagement metrics shown - listens to concerns of young people, involves young people when making decisions, keeps young people informed about what they are doing - at least 15% state that the Council does not do this at all. Perceptions are least positive in relation to keeping young people informed about what the Council is doing, with one in four (25%) stating that the Council does not do this at all.

It should also be noted that no more than 7% state that the Council does any of these ‘a great deal’.

Figure 38: These are some things which other people have said about their council. To what extent do you think these statements apply to your Borough? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 252

Analysis by age group indicates that 11-15 year olds' perceptions of how the Council interacts with young people are more positive than 16-17 year olds; all measures where there are significant differences between the two groups are detailed below:

- Involves young people when making decisions: 11-15 year olds are significantly more likely to believe that the Council does this a great deal / to some extent (45% cf. 31% of 16-17 year olds).
- Keeps young people informed about what they are doing: 11-15 year olds are significantly more likely to believe that the Council does this a great deal / to some extent (42% cf. 28% of 16-17 year olds). 16-17 year olds are also significantly more likely to believe the Council does not do this at all (35% cf. 20%).

11.4 Concerns

From a given list, respondents were asked to select up to three issues that they are personally concerned about. An average of 2.1 issues were selected, with 13% stating that they were concerned about none of the given issues. The main issues concerning young people in Merton - approaching a quarter or more - are gangs (29%), crime (24%), and litter / dirt in the streets (23%).

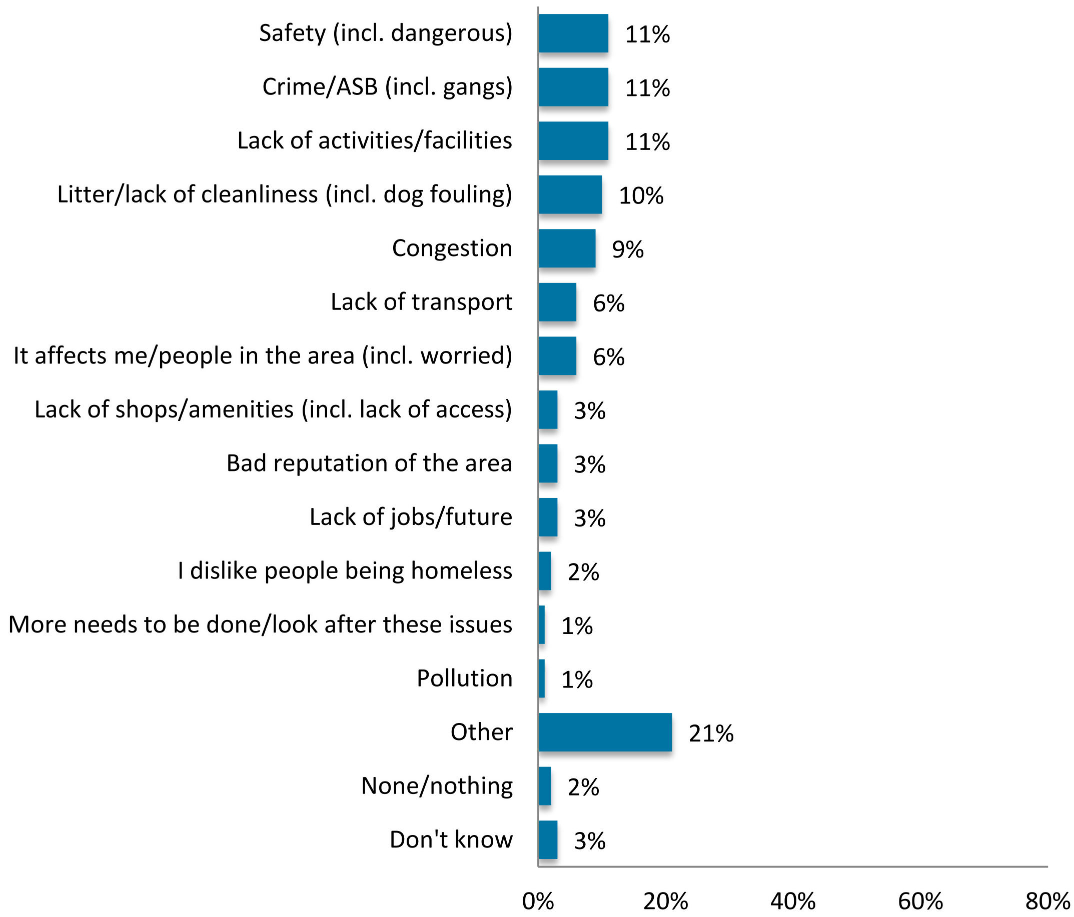
Breaking these findings down further, gangs, crime, and litter / dirt in the streets are also the leading issues of concern to 11-15 year olds. At least one in five 16-17 year olds also mention these three issues as concerns, but one in four also identify a lack of fun things to do (25%), and a lack of jobs (24%). 16-17 year olds are also significantly more likely compared to 11-15 year olds to mention standard of education and local housing as concerns, although these issues are still mentioned by a relatively low proportion of this group (10%).

Table 11: Which three of these are you personally most concerned about? (All responses)

	Total	11-15	16-17
Gangs	29%	**32%**	20%
Crime	24%	25%	22%
Litter\dirt in the streets	23%	23%	23%
Lack of fun things to do. (e.g. sports / cinema etc)	18%	15%	**25%**
Traffic congestion	16%	15%	18%
Pollution of the environment	14%	12%	17%
Bullying	12%	13%	9%
Lack of jobs	11%	6%	**24%**
Anti-social behaviour / bad behaviour in public	11%	12%	6%
Poor public transport	9%	8%	12%
Not enough being done for young people	7%	7%	9%
Drug use and pushers	7%	8%	3%
Lack of shopping facilities	7%	6%	10%
Poverty / homeless people	6%	6%	6%
Standard of education	5%	3%	**10%**
Local housing	5%	2%	**10%**
Access and/or quality of health care	2%	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	0%
None of these	13%	15%	9%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%
Unweighted sample base	**252**	**165**	**87**

As an open-ended question, respondents identifying any areas of concern were asked why they are most concerned about these issues. No consistent theme emerges from these responses, which are summarised below. Concerns about safety, crime / ASB, lack of activities / facilities, litter / lack of cleanliness, and congestion are expressed by one in ten respondents at this question, in line with the issues identified earlier in this section.

Figure 39: Can you explain why you are most concerned about these issues? (All responses, those concerned about any issue)



Unweighted sample base: 216

11.5 Health and safety

In relation to safeguarding, respondents were shown a list of possible sources of help if they were worried about their health and safety and asked to select which they might use. Multiple responses were allowed. Much the most common response is family members (92%), followed by teachers (29%), and police (24%). This pattern of responses is seen for both 11-15 year olds and 16-17 year olds, although the latter are also significantly more likely than 11-15 year olds to refer to websites (11% cf. 1% of 11-15 year olds).

Table 12: If you were worried about your health or your safety which of these sources of help do you think you might use? (All responses)

	Total	11-15	16-17
Family member	92%	93%	89%
Teacher	29%	**32%**	20%
Police or other emergency service	24%	24%	24%
NSPCC / Childline / other national helpline	8%	9%	6%
Websites	4%	1%	**11%**
Youth workers	4%	3%	4%
Community leaders, such as religious leaders	1%	<0.5%	2%
Other	4%	3%	7%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	1%
Unweighted sample base	**252**	**165**	**87**

11.6 Perceptions of local services

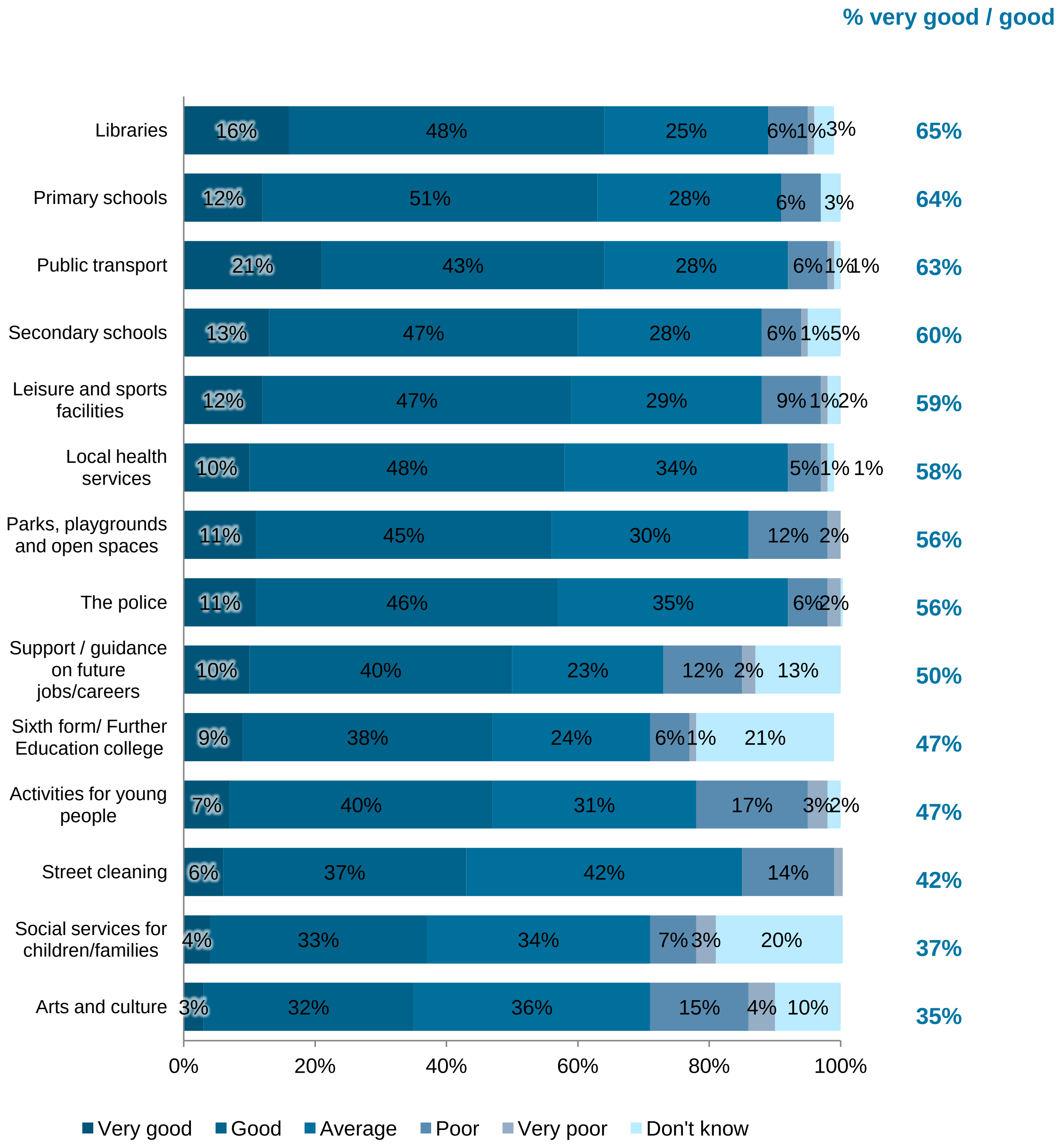
Respondents were also asked to rate a series of local services in their area. Given the greater constraints on time for the young person's survey, these findings cannot be filtered on service users; responses in connection with primary / secondary / further education, etc may not relate to Council-provided services.

Young people are more likely to consider each of the services listed as very good / good than very poor / poor. For each of the given services, no more than 4% give a rating of very poor. The relatively low proportion rating further education / social services positively is largely driven by the higher level of don't know responses for these services. Aside from these services, fewer than half rate arts and culture, street cleaning, and activities for young people positively, with 16% - 20% rating these services as very poor or poor. The relatively low ratings given to street cleaning reflect young people's concerns about litter / dirt in the streets (Section 11.4). As discussed in Section 6.2, adults' perceptions of street cleaning are also less positive compared to most other services.

There are no significant differences in perceptions of local services by age group other than for the following services:

- Sixth form / further education college: 16-17 year olds are significantly more likely to rate this service as very good (17%, cf. 6% of 11-15 year olds), although this may be driven primarily by the lower proportion of 'don't know' responses amongst 16-17 year olds (9% cf. 26%).
- Activities for young people: 11-15 year olds are significantly more likely to rate this service as very good / good (52% cf. 37%).
- Arts and culture: 11-15 year olds are significantly more likely to rate this as very good / good (39% cf. 25%).

Figure 40: What is your opinion of...? (All responses)

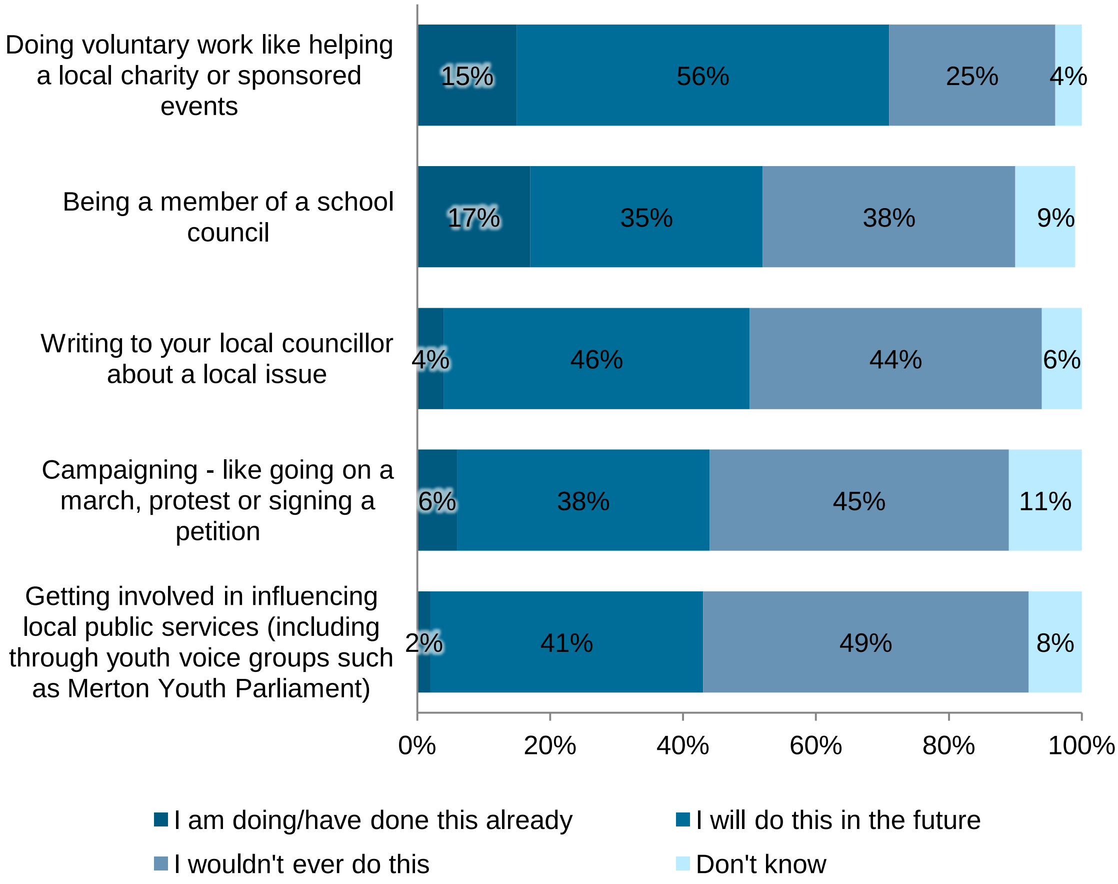


Unweighted sample base: 252

11.7 Getting involved

Of a list of possible ways to get involved in their community, current or previous engagement is highest in terms of doing voluntary work (15%) and being a member of a school council (17%). However, in addition to this, for each activity at least one in three (35%) state that they will do this in the future.

Figure 41: Which of the following activities have you ever done, would consider doing in the future or would not consider doing? (All responses)



Unweighted sample base: 252

There are no significant differences by age group, other than in relation to being a member of a school council. Unsurprisingly, 16-17 year olds are significantly less likely to state that they will do this in the future (19% cf. 42% of 11-15 year olds), whilst being slightly more likely to be doing this currently or have done this in the past (21% cf. 16% of 11-15 year olds).

11.8 Activities out of school hours

As discussed in Section 11.4, approaching one in five young people in Merton are concerned about a lack of fun things to do. On the theme of such activities for young people, respondents were asked if they attend any of a list of activities out of school hours. Those stating that they no longer attend school (10%) are excluded from all findings in this section. The most popular activities, for each age group, are sports and gym (mentioned by 45% of all respondents), libraries and parks (39%), and after school clubs (36%). As the table below indicates, 16-17 year olds are significantly less likely compared to 11-15 year olds to go to after school clubs, or drama, dance, or music.

15% do not attend any of the given activities. Of those expressing concern about a lack of fun things to do, the proportion not engaging in any of these activities is similar (18%), and this group is marginally more likely than other young people to engage in sports and gym; drama, dance, or music; and youth club. However, it should be noted that the base for this group in these findings consists of just 41 responses.

Table 13: Do you attend any of the following activities out of school hours? (All responses, those still at school)

	Total	11-15	16-17
Sports and Gym	45%	45%	44%
Libraries and Parks	39%	38%	42%
After school club	36%	**39%**	24%
Drama Dance or Music	18%	**21%**	8%
Youth Club	9%	10%	4%
Breakfast club	7%	8%	3%
Scout/adventure/Cadet groups/girl guides	7%	8%	5%
Other	3%	3%	1%
Don't attend any	15%	13%	20%
Don't know	1%	0%	**3%**
Unweighted sample base	**226**	**163**	**63**

Respondents were also shown a list of activities and facilities and asked which, if any, they would like to attend out of school hours. Up to two responses were allowed. For each age group, the most popular activities, etc are a place to meet my friends and other people (40% of all young people), and sports activities (37%). Around one in four also mention a place for play and hobbies (28%), a place for music, art, and drama (27%), and a place to do homework (25%).

A similar pattern of responses is apparent amongst those who earlier expressed concern about a lack of fun things to do.

Table 14: Which of these activities would you like to attend out of school hours? (All responses, those still at school)

	Total	11-15	16-17
A place to meet my friends and other people	40%	39%	44%
Sports Activities	37%	38%	34%
A place for play and my hobbies	28%	29%	27%
A place for Music, Art and Drama	27%	28%	23%
A place to do my homework	25%	23%	30%
Parks and playgrounds	17%	18%	13%
A place where adults will listen to my problems	4%	3%	**<u>10%</u>**
A place where adults will organise activities for me and my friends	3%	3%	4%
Other	0%	0%	0%
Would not like to attend any	1%	1%	0%
Don't know	2%	3%	0%
Unweighted sample base	**227**	**164**	**63**

12 Adult survey respondent profile

The table below shows the composition of the adult survey sample prior to the application of weights.

Demographic	Proportion (Unweighted %)	Sample base (Unweighted)
Gender		
Male	49%	502
Female	51%	518
Age		
18 – 24	8%	78
25 – 34	26%	266
35 – 44	19%	195
45 – 54	20%	203
55 – 64	12%	123
65 – 74	8%	83
75 – 84	5%	51
85 +	1%	15
Refused	1%	6
Tenure		
Owner occupier	62%	634
Rented from Housing Association	10%	97
Rent from private landlord	25%	257
Shared ownership	<0.5%	3
A residential home	<0.5%	3
Other	2%	17
Refused	1%	9
Time in borough		
6 months to 1 year	7%	67
Over 1 and up to 2 years	7%	69
Over 2 and up to 5 years	15%	152
Over 5 and up to 10 years	14%	147
More than 10 years	57%	584
Don't know	<0.5%	1
Ethnicity		
British	51%	561
Irish	1%	14
Any other white background	13%	145
White and Black Caribbean	<0.5%	1

White and Black African	1%	2
White and Asian	1%	3
Other Mixed /multiple ethnic background	3%	8
Indian	6%	52
Pakistani	4%	39
Bangladeshi	1%	11
Chinese	2%	13
Other Asian	5%	46
Caribbean	5%	45
African	5%	43
Arab	<0.5%	5
Other ethnic group	2%	26
Refused	1%	6
Consider self disabled		
Yes	7%	71
No	92%	937
Prefer not to say	1%	12
Household composition		
One adult under 60	5%	52
One adult aged 60 or over	6%	68
Two adults both under 60	15%	144
Two adults, at least one 60 or over	11%	115
Three or more adults, 16 or over	20%	200
1-parent family with child/ren at least one under 16	4%	37
2-parent family with child/ren at least one under 16	35%	355
Other	2%	27
Prefer not to say	2%	22
Occupation		
Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)	51%	470
Employee in part-time job (Under 30 hours per week)	12%	104
Self employed - full or part time	7%	67
On a government supported training programme, e.g. Modern apprentice	*%	1
Full-time education at school, college or university	2%	39
Unemployed and available for work	4%	38
Permanently sick/disabled	1%	16

Wholly retired from work	13%	160
Looking after the home	7%	104
Doing something else	1%	11
Prefer not to say	1%	10

Appendix: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2008) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management ISO 27001:2013.

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

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BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

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