

Agenda Item	
Report No	

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 26 October 2017

Report Title: **Results from the Citizens' Panel 2016-17 Performance and Attitudes Survey**

Report By: The Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The results from the Annual Performance and Attitudes survey to the Citizens' Panel provides information on satisfaction with Council services, Council qualities and perceptions of community life in the Highlands. There is high confidence that the results are representative of the Highland population and the maturity of the survey means we have information on performance trends over several years. The report also highlights an additional social media survey carried out to seek the views of those aged 16-34 years in Highland. Overall satisfaction with Council services is 73%.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- I. Consider the key findings of the feedback from the Citizens' Panel from this year's survey.
- II. Approve the follow up action to communicate the results set out in paragraph 4.1.
- III. Await further analysis and reports as outlined in paragraph 5.3 above.

2. Background

- 2.1 Each year we survey our Citizens' Panel on their views on performance and attitudes and the 2016-17 results are now provided for Members' consideration. The information will be useful in informing Council redesign and continuous improvement activity across the organisation.
- 2.2 Overall, while the survey provides a mixed picture of performance it also demonstrates that we continue to deliver quality services which are valued by the public. The impact of the current and ongoing period of financial austerity, which has seen annual reductions in the Council's revenue budget, continues to impact on public perceptions of the Council. Going forward there are further significant challenges facing the Council with continuing reductions in revenue budgets anticipated, it will therefore continue to be particularly challenging to improve or maintain positive public perceptions on the quality of our services.
- 2.3 In keeping with previous survey analysis, we have considered if there are any differences in view among different groups in our community, namely by age, gender and disability. While the citizens' panel membership is balanced, the profile of survey respondents is less so and this is reflected in more detail in paragraphs 10-18 of the full survey report with a link provided at paragraph 3.1 below. A consequence of this is that survey responses are less representative of the views of young people. To help address this a shorter survey of core questions using social media targeting 16-34 year olds was ran in parallel to the main survey. This was extremely successful has highlighted some key areas to consider further and these are reflected across this report with full detail in Appendix 2 of the survey report.
- 2.4 While we have consistent trends with a similar profile over a number of years, we will continue to look for other opportunities to understand the views of a range of user groups which this survey cannot provide including age, gender, disability, ethnicity and housing tenure. The Council has in the past ran focus groups and Services have also surveyed their service user groups achieving a more robust and relevant sample of views. Going forward all available information, supplemented by further surveys and focus groups, will be needed to inform our approaches to continuous improvement, the prevention agenda and to support the redesign of the Council.
- 2.5 This year we received 955 responses from our Citizen's Panel of just over 2,340 adults, including 491 electronically, providing a 40.8% response rate. This number of responses along with the random sampling methodology used for the panel provides good validity in the results; a 95% confidence level is achieved with a confidence interval of + or - 3.2%. In other words where this level of responses was received, we can be 95% confident that the response we would get if we surveyed all adults in Highland would be within + or - 3.2% of the results from the survey¹. In comparison the smaller survey of 16-34 year olds had 357 responses compared to 64 responses from this age group in the main survey. However the self-selecting nature of the responses via social media means while there is very useful information and insight provided the same confidence level cannot be attributed to the results.
- 2.6 The annual survey represented a set of questions the core of which had been sustained over a 10+ year period. This year we produced a shorter survey focusing on the key performance indicators we draw from the results each year. This was due to consistent trends in the responses to questions on areas such as customer contact over a number of years. We will survey in more details every three years in order to ensure past trends are being maintained.

¹ While this is a very small margin of error, not all respondents answered every question, especially when the questions were about using specific services, so results need to be treated accordingly.

3. Key findings

- 3.1 The full 2017 survey report, provided by the UHI Centre for Remote and Rural Studies, can be accessed on our the performance web pages at:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/407/how_we_are_performing-public_performance_reports

This provides further details on trends over time and graphics, including tables and pie charts. As this is a long report, running to 103 pages, a summary including highlights and areas for improvement is provided below. This year we also asked new questions on involving and developing communities and the full report also provides analysis of the short survey of those under 35 years of age using social media.

- 3.2 Key results and trends in performance and attitudes include:

Council Qualities

We ask questions on the qualities people feel are important about their Council. We have used these to help understand what matters to people about how their Council behaves as well as what it achieves. This year we added four new qualities to test the mood on the new redesign values of: challenging, open to ideas, empowering and participating. These are highlighted below. Overall results in this section include:

- a) 64% of the panel believe the Council meets or exceeds their general expectations, (57% the previous year). This compares to 26.6% of those aged 16-34 (social media responses).
- b) Ranking of qualities in order of importance is noted below. The top three are the same for the main survey and that of the younger age group. Notably only 16% of the younger age group (social media responses) thought efficiency was important compared to 47% below.

Qualities as Ranked in Order of Importance by Respondents in 2016 Survey	Respondents Mentioning Quality in Their Top 5 (2017) %	Respondents Mentioning Quality in Their Top 5 (2016) %	Respondents Mentioning Quality in Their Top 5 (2015) %
1. Maintains good quality local services	75	75	68
2. Provides value for money	57	60	54
3. Listens to local people	54	61	62
4. Is efficient	47	46	38
5. Treats all residents fairly	38	34	35
6. Is aware of people's needs	35	42	36
7. Involves people in how it spends its money	28	36	35
8. Is open and honest about funding choices	28	n/a	n/a
9. Cares for the environment	28	28	27
10. Is approachable	24	19	22
11. Is helpful	17	17	21
12. Asks you for your ideas on how to do Things better	14	n/a	n/a
13. Represents your views	13	16	19
14. Invites challenge and different views to make decisions	8	n/a	n/a
15. Helps people to help each other	8	n/a	n/a

N= 907 in 2017

- c) In the table below there are 2 qualities where over half the panel agree or strongly

agree with the statements that the Council: 'is approachable' and 'maintains good quality local services'. On balance, the Council is viewed positively in demonstrating these. However, there were 5 qualities where on balance more disagreed rather than agreed (net satisfaction score) with statements on:

- 'is open and honest about funding choices' (-1);
- 'invites challenge and different views to help make decisions' (-3);
- 'is efficient' (-4);
- 'listens to local people' (-3);
- 'represents your views' (-14) and
- 'involves people in how it spends its money' (-17).

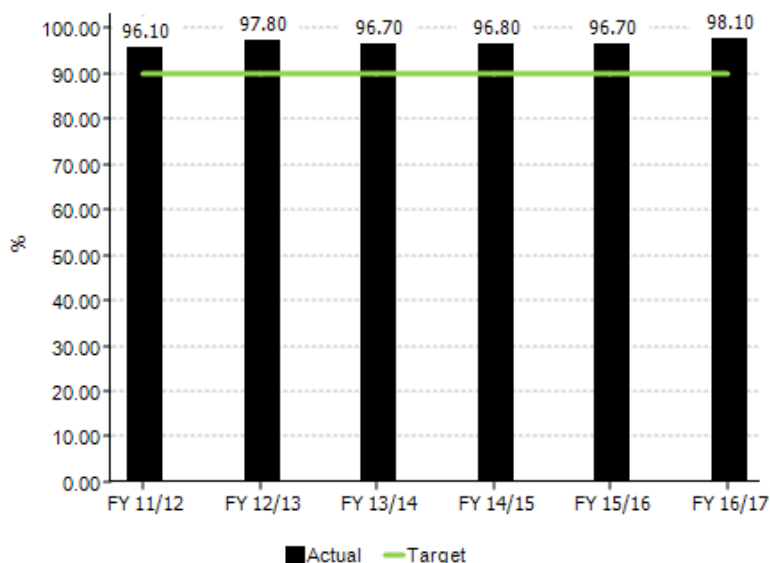
Of these only 'is efficient' features in the top 5 most important qualities as outlined in the table at (b) above. Positive improvements in previous negative net scores are seen for 'listens to local people' and 'provides values for money'. While remaining negative scores improvement is also seen in 'is efficient' and 'involves people in how it spends its money'.

Qualities	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	2017 Neither Agree nor Disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Difference between % who agree and % who disagree in 2017	Difference between % who agree and % who disagree in 2016	Difference between % who agree and % who disagree in 2015
Is approachable	8	46	33	11	2	41	42	49
Maintains good quality local services	7	51	25	15	2	41	36	47
Is helpful	7	39	40	12	1	33	32	43
Is environmentally friendly	6	39	35	16	4	25	44	44
Asks for your ideas on how to do things better	6	39	27	23	5	17	n/a	n/a
Treats all residents fairly	4	32	41	17	6	13	13	14
Is aware of people's needs	3	31	38	23	5	6	8	11
Listens to local people	3	31	36	24	6	4	-3	12
Helps people to help each other	2	23	54	16	5	4	n/a	n/a
Provides value for money	4	29	29	23	5	5	-10	4
Is open and honest about funding choices	4	29	33	27	7	-1	n/a	n/a
Invites challenge and different views to help make decisions	3	24	43	22	8	-3	n/a	n/a
Is efficient	3	25	40	26	6	-4	-11	-2
Represents your views	2	19	44	28	7	-14	-13	-5
Involves people in how it spends its money	3	22	33	36	6	-17	-28	-17

Community Life

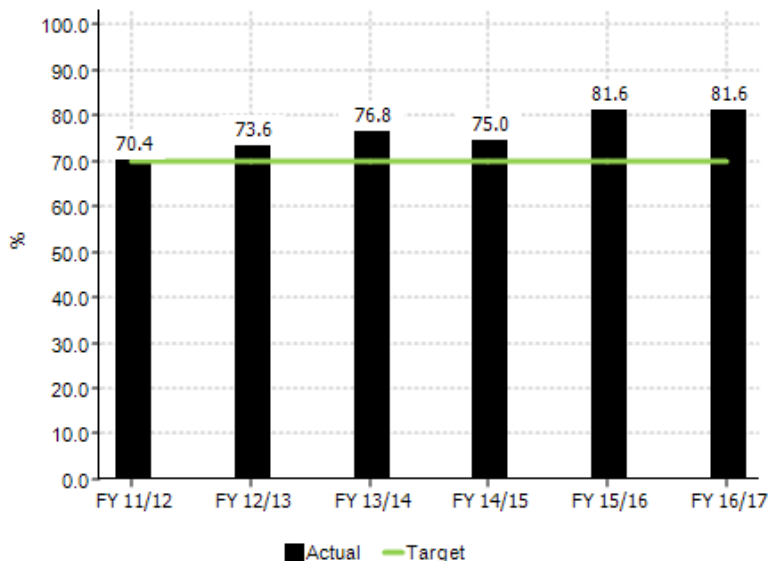
- d) 77% feel we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language to a great or some extent (76% in 2015/16).
- e) Community safety - the top 3 areas of concern remain the same and are road safety (85%), alcohol abuse (66%) and drug misuse (63%).
- f) When asked about awareness of the impact that hate incidents or crimes have on people in Highland 72.7% said they were aware (70.9% in 2015/16) with 27.3% saying they were not aware (29.1% in 2015/16).
- g) Community safety – 98.1% of respondents consider the area within 15 minutes' walk of their home to be 'very' or 'fairly' safe compared to 96.7% the previous year. This is the highest ever recorded figure. In comparison a lower number (86%) of the younger age group felt safe, while this remains a high figure 13.7% feel rather or very unsafe.

Area within 15 minutes walk of home safe - APAS



- h) Equalities – 81.6% agree that Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice the same as the previous year. An overall improving trend can be demonstrated from 66.9% agreeing when the question was first asked in 2010/11. In comparison 77.3% of the younger age group agreed.

Views on prejudice- APAS



- i) When asked if people would rather live in a place with lots of different kinds of people or where most people are similar to you. 52.5% of respondents answered with lots of different people (55.7% in 2014/15). In comparison 62.8% of younger people held this view.

j) Satisfaction with Council services

As outlined at 2.4 above, more work is needed in order to understand more fully a range of user group's views in Highland. Appendix 1 of this report provides a table with more detailed information about the percentage of the panel that used key Council services and their satisfaction with them. There are a number of positive and negative movements in satisfaction but this needs balanced with how many people's views this represents. A net satisfaction score is calculated i.e. the balance of positive and negative views.

Services with net satisfaction of 70% or more Libraries (86%);

- Public Parks and other open spaces (80%)
- Walking Routes (79%)
- Swimming pools (78%)
- Primary Education (75%)
- Pre-school services (74%)
- Recycling facilities (73%)
- Payment of Council Tax (72%)
- School meals (72%)
- Other sports facilities (72%)
- Refuse/bin collections (70%)

Net Satisfaction of services used by more than 50% of respondents

- Libraries 86% (used by 55%)
- Public Parks and other open spaces 80% (used by 77%)
- Recycling facilities 73% (used by 95%)
- Payment of Council Tax 72% (used by 66%)
- Refuse/bin collection 70% (used by 97%)
- Street lighting 65% (used by 88%)
- Council website 57% (used by 60%)
- Street Cleaning 38% (used by 89%)
- Dealing with floods 37% (used by 56%)
- Pavement maintenance 18% (used by 88%)
- Winter roads maintenance 13% (used by 94%)
- Road repairs & potholes -61% (used by 95%)

k) Of the 46 service areas surveyed, there were more positive views than negative views for 45 of them (net satisfaction rate). Highest positive scores are found for libraries (86%), parks and open spaces (80%), walking routes (79%), swimming pools (78%), primary education (75%).

l) Road repairs and potholes remains a negative score at -61% an improvement from -74 with notably winter maintenance improving from moving from -5% to 13.

Number of Services in the Various Net Satisfaction Rate Bands

Net Satisfaction Rate Bands (%)	Number of Services in Each Year					
	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
75 to 100	5	8	9	6	7	3
50 to 74	19	17	12	16	12	16
25 to 49	7	11	10	12	16	11
0 to 24	14	7	12	11	9	12
Lower than 0	1	3	3	1	1	3
Total No. of services	46	46	46	46	45	45

m) The top three most important services for the public are also the top three used by most people; road repairs and potholes, winter road maintenance, refuse/bin collection. High satisfaction also continues to be found with refuse/bin collection (70%). The tables below highlight the most important services to respondents where at least 10% of the panel placed them in their top 10 most important. There are notable difference between the two surveys particularly around education and leisure.

Importance of services to respondents - appearance in respondents' top five

Services	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
	%	%	%	%	%
Road repairs and pot holes	55	66	63	57	57
Winter road maintenance	42	43	50	43	48
Refuse/bin collection	27	26	45	47	41
Primary education	24	23	21	19	19
Public Parks and other open spaces	21	24	20	21	19
Secondary education	19	21	17	18	18
Swimming pools	17	18	15	16	15
Recycling facilities	16	18	28	30	32
Care at home services	15	13	9	8	9
Libraries	14	14	17	20	19
Street cleaning	13	10	14	15	16
Residential homes for disabled/elderly people	13	11	7	6	8
Other sports facilities	13	16	15	13	13
Council Service Points	11	11	10	11	6
Pavement maintenance	10	14	15	16	12

Importance of services to respondents - appearance in respondents' top five of 16-34 year old

Services	Short Survey (Under 35s)	Main Performance Survey 2017
	%	%
Road repairs and pot holes	63	55
Primary education	50	24
Refuse/bin collection	35	27
Secondary education	33	19
Public Parks and other open spaces	33	21
Winter road maintenance	29	42
Services to protect children from harm	20	8
Pre-school services	15	6
Care at home services	15	15
Swimming pools	15	17
Other sports facilities	15	13
Recycling facilities	13	16
Street cleaning	11	13

n) There are 4 services that 90% or more of respondents (main survey) say they use:

- Refuse/bin collection (97%)
- Recycling facilities (95%)
- Road repairs/potholes (95%)
- Winter road maintenance (94%)

Using our online services

o) This is the second year asking a set of questions to gauge the panel's views on overall satisfaction with their online experience at www.highland.gov.uk . Overall 70.9% said they were very or fairly satisfied with online services compared to 75.1% the year before.

p) In relation to questions on the qualities of online services:

- 81% said they would use online services again (85% in 2016);
- 72% agreed that online services were easy to use (75% in 2016);
- 73% said they were able to find the online services they needed (71% in 2016);
- 64% agreed that online services were quick to complete (70% in 2016);
- 65% agreed that online services were easy to find (68% in 2016).

Using Advice Services

q) A one-off set of questions were asked this year to support review work on the provision of advice services. While this has given some insights into views the number of respondents to the questions is low at between 23-66 citizen panel members for each question. While no firm conclusions can be drawn from this section of the survey the responses provided were closely aligned with the emerging findings from the extensive consultation undertaken to help inform the advice review.

Involving Communities

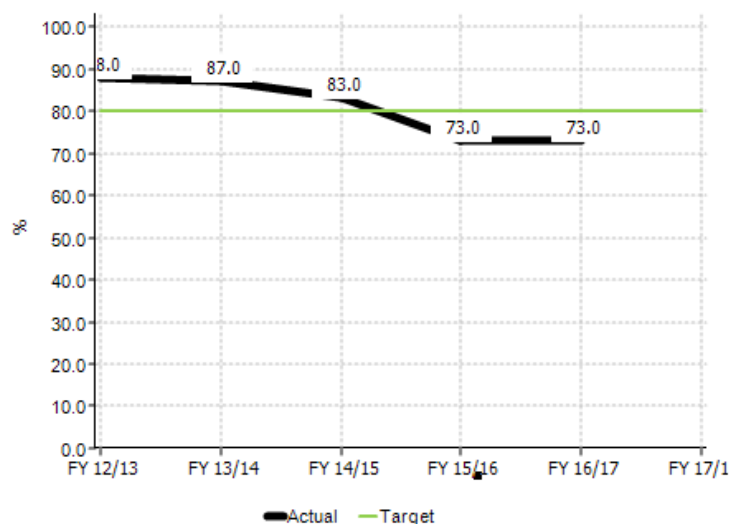
r) This is a developing set of questions around a community engagement, participation and localism. This are also aimed at supporting Council redesign work and the Redesign Board will consider the results in more detail at its workshop on 14th November 2017. Results from this section include:

- 61.3% say they volunteer in the community by helping a neighbour, family or friend with 42.8% saying they volunteer through an organised group or club;
- 77.2% feel they have no or not very much influence over decision making in their communities. This however compares to 96.9% of those in the younger age group (social media responses);
- The main reason given for not having an influence was 'not enough time' (28.5%) this compares to the younger age group where the main reason was 'public bodies don't listen to community views' (61.9%).
- 57.3% say they would like to be very or fairly involved in decision-making in their area, this compares to 84.3% of the younger age group (social media responses).

3.3 Overall satisfaction with Council services

73% of the panel say they were satisfied overall with Council services in 2016/17 compared to 73% in 2015/16. For those surveyed aged 16-34 years the satisfaction rate falls to 34.6% (social media responses) however the approach to surveying this group needs to be considered in reviewing the results.

Overall satisfaction with Council services 80% or higher - APAS



3.4 Challenges

- Maintaining good quality local services is the quality valued the most by most people. The Council's ability to sustain levels of service is severely challenged by the financial position. It seems difficult to imagine that we will be able to retain a score of 64% saying we meet or exceed their expectations or that current net satisfaction scores with Council services can be maintained.
- Using the results to understand the extent to which the relationship between the Council and its public has to change given our budget context; we need to do less and they need to do more.
- As services are redesigned, cut back or stopped we will expect communities to do more for themselves and in their communities. Our expectation and their awareness are potentially not yet aligned with only 8% placing 'helping people to help each other' within their top 5 qualities. More focus will be needed on changing public expectations of their Council. Current work streams are developing in this area around localism and community action as well as communicating the budget reality. Further questions were asked about this topic and are reported above (section r).
- Only 28% have placed being open and honest about funding choices in their top 5 qualities. This is problematic, especially if we are to communicate why maintaining good quality local services will be increasingly difficult. There is scope to shift perception here with good communications and engagement as currently 33% are ambivalent about how important this is to them.
- Also highlighted is the need to work on changing the relationship between the Council and its communities, with communities far more engaged in service design. The survey suggests that 'inviting challenge and ideas on how to do things better' are also less popular than more traditional qualities favoured of a Council, although there seems to be scope to do more to involve people in how the Council spends money as this was ranked the 7th most favoured quality but we achieved the lowest score in demonstrating it (-17%).
- On a more positive side listening to local people has remained in the top 3 qualities and this reinforces the Council's approach in its new Programme 'Local Voices, Highland Choices' and on taking forward localism.

3.5 Areas for improvement

As indicated in paragraph 2.2 the impact of financial austerity creates a challenging environment in which to drive improvement in public perception. Improvement activity needs to be focused on improved communication with the public, informing budget planning and budget decisions and driving new ways of local engagement with communities.

Actions:

- Communicate budget decisions and their impact on service delivery to the public;
- Utilise survey results to inform budget planning including prioritisation and efficiency;
- Utilise survey results to inform budget decisions;
- Utilise survey result to inform Council redesign and choices on the balance of cost and quality when determining service delivery options;
- Engage with local communities on service delivery options including community opportunities to lead on delivery;
- Service management teams will use the results to inform their ongoing improvement activity.

4. **Follow up actions**

4.1 The results will be fed back to:

- The Redesign Board to consider its key messages and work to support localism

and more community-run services

- Staff through 'In Brief', management briefings and service briefings;
- Citizens' Panel members to thank them for taking part in the survey, advising them of the key results and our follow up action;
- The general public when we feed back our performance results through our performance and press webpages.

5. Continuously improving the survey process

5.1 Each year we ask panel members how they find being a member. Feedback remains relatively consistent across the questions and this year:

- 59% said they felt their views have been listened to;
- 82% said they found it useful to be a panel member;
- 81% said they found it worthwhile;
- 23% said they found it time consuming.

5.2 We refresh a third of the Citizens' Panel membership each year and ensure the overall panel membership is representative of the adult population profile (based on 2011 Census). Panel membership stands at 2,340.

5.3 Further analysis and reporting

Services will analyse and feed back in more detail on a number of sections of the survey to strategic committees and working group meetings.

6. Implications

6.1 Resource implications

The survey costs around £15,000 in research fees, printing and postage. The recommendations for follow up actions will be contained within current budgets. The need for focus groups and further survey work identified at paragraph 2.4 will require costing and resources allocated to enable this work to be carried out with support from the Council's Policy Team. Through partnership working it may be possible to share approaches and cost. An additional £150 was spend this year on a shorter survey via social media targeted at 16-34 year olds, the engagement and number of returns secured for this investment is excellent value for money.

6.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report, but using the information for understanding how our performance is perceived and being open about that, helps us to comply with our legal duties on public performance reporting.

6.3 Community implications

The report includes questions on public attitudes to diversity and equality which generally appear to show improving tolerance and acceptance of diversity in our community since 2010/11. Additionally, the Community Life section includes questions on awareness of, and understanding of, the impact of hate incidents and crimes, i.e. those motivated by malice and ill-will towards a social group on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, race, religion or faith. The trends shown in this information are used to inform and measure a number of the Council's equality outcomes. Monitoring information on the breakdown of the panel by age, gender, disability and ethnicity is available. While, the sample size is too small to provide statistical confidence that it is representative of all views this information can, however, provide a useful indication of areas where further investigation is needed. The survey aggregates data to groupings of urban, rural and mixed Wards, but the sample sizes of returns are too small to have statistical confidence, they do provide insight into the difference between geographies in Highland. Additional work has been commissioned to analyse the results of the survey from a rural perspective and the findings will be used to inform service and policy direction.

6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications

There are no climate change/carbon clever implications. There is scope to use the survey to help us to understand how we are perceived on a range of environmental services if this is required.

6.5 Risk implications

There is a risk that our performance is judged solely on public perception. Credible performance reporting should also take into account performance information from other sources as well and ideally combining results from a range of sources. This includes our statutory and local performance indicators, describing our performance against our Programme commitments, professional opinion gathered through self-evaluation and external scrutiny bodies as well as feedback to members from constituents.

6.6 Gaelic Implications

As outlined at paragraph 2.2 (d) the survey supports the delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) and allows us to assess public opinion on the extent to which they feel we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language.

Date: 25.09.17

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Appendices

1. Views of Services – Net Satisfaction table

Views on The Highland Council's services: Net Satisfaction Rate

Service	Respondents Using Service			Year		
	2016/17 %	2017 %	2016 %	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %
Libraries	55	86	77	77	84	84
Public Parks and other open spaces	77	80	77	78	80	76
Walking routes e.g. Great Glen Way	43	79	79	83	84	84
Swimming pools	42	78	67	72	71	65
Primary education	21	75	77	75	68	59
Pre-school services	15	74	76	53	54	58
Recycling facilities	95	73	75	76	76	75
Payment of Council Tax	66	72	76	83	81	87
School meals	20	72	61	64	57	54
Other sports facilities	37	72	72	75	70	62
Refuse/bin collection	97	70	79	78	75	78
Museums	41	69	72	69	64	74
Registrars for Births, Deaths & Marriages	24	67	71	74	73	67
Street lighting	88	65	62	68	67	67
Countryside ranger service	28	61	64	72	69	69
Burials and cremations	21	61	68	66	63	61
Breakfast and after school clubs	10	58	60	23	39	40
Council website	60	57	62	n/a	n/a	n/a
Council Service Points	36	56	70	83	73	79
Services to protect children from harm	15	53	59	35	39	42
Environmental Health Service	15	53	53	50	52	54
Council Service Centre	24	50	59	53	58	n/a
Secondary education	21	50	66	64	61	60
Cycling paths	36	50	56	47	45	44
Trading Standards	14	47	48	32	38	46
School transport	15	46	69	53	54	41
Street cleaning	89	38	35	43	44	47
Community Occupational Therapy	18	38	41	23	39	32
Community learning/adult education	18	37	47	40	51	39
Dealing with flooding	56	37	33	30	34	27
Advice on Benefits	17	28	28	27	35	35
Gaelic Primary education	8	24	42	20	17	14
Housing information and advice	13	22	44	17	40	43
Gaelic Pre-school services	8	21	45	15	20	27
Planning applications & building warrants	34	20	8	21	23	19
Economic development / Business Gateway	12	20	33	29	30	31
Services to protect adults at risk from harm	11	18	12	28	36	30
Pavement maintenance	88	18	6	10	15	21
Care at home services	20	15	23	4	11	33
Services to reduce offending	9	15	-1	-7	18	7
Winter road maintenance	94	13	-5	-8	17	14
Planning for future land use (Local Plan)	33	12	6	13	8	14
Residential homes for disabled/elderly people	21	6	22	0	19	24
Gaelic Secondary education	8	5	25	5	8	7
Gaelic community learning/adult education	8	2	23	9	12	1
Road repairs and pot holes	95	-61	-74	-65	-56	-61