**Citizens’ Panel Annual Performance and Attitudes Survey 2017**

**Extract and commentary on results of interest to the Redesign Board**

**Introduction**

Feedback from the Citizens’ Panel on redesign topics will help the Board understand public mood, especially given the statistical validity of the survey responses. This will inform the Board’s communications plan and identify where most effort and new action on engagement with the public is required.

The annual survey of Council performance and public attitudes was carried out early this summer. Results are analysed by the UHI. Feedback on the survey overall was reported to the Council meeting in October. In the survey this year we included some new questions on redesign issues and responses can be analysed along with the responses to some other long standing questions we ask.

**Survey responses**

The responses to questions of interest to redesign are attached at Appendix 1. These cover:

* The most important qualities for the Council to display – views on the top 5 qualities
* The extent to which people agree or disagree if the Council shows these qualities
* The extent to which the Council meets expectations
* Overall satisfaction with services
* Involving communities:
  + How people define their community
  + Involvement in community activities
  + How much influence people feel they have over decision-making in their communities
  + If they feel they have little influence, why that is
  + The extent to which they would like to be involved in decision-making in their area
  + Views on community involvement
  + Awareness of the Council offering participatory budgeting (PB)
  + Willingness to be involved in PB
  + Interest in taking part in community discussions about how local services are provided and making choices about these within our budget limits
  + Views on community involvement
  + Contact with Community Councils

**Commentary**

The responses to the questions asked can be grouped into the following work streams:

1. Engaging with the public on the Council’s budget position and on funding choices
2. Public expectations of the Council
3. Helping people help each other and supporting community run-services
4. Local democracy and community councils
5. Implementing our redesign values of: challenging, open to ideas, participating and empowering

A commentary on the responses for each work stream is offered below.

1. **Engaging with the public on the Council’s budget position and on funding choices**

Slightly more people disagree than agree that we are open and honest about funding choices (by 1%). Results are fairly evenly spread with 33% agreeing we do this, 33% neither agreeing or disagreeing and 34% disagreeing. 28% placed being open and honest about funding choices in the top 5 qualities for the Council to demonstrate. This is given a mid-ranking place and is seen as more important than being approachable, helpful, asking for ideas, representing views, inviting challenge and helping people to help each other. It is given the same importance as involving people in how it spends money and caring for the environment.

***So we need to be far more proactive in being open and honest about funding choices. There does appear to be a public appetite for that and people expect us to do more about it.***

A majority of people (68%) are either very or fairly interested in taking part in community discussions about how local services are provided and making choices about these within our budget limits.

***So there is clear interest in being involved in discussions around redesign and affordability at a local level.***

Far more people disagree than agree that we involve people in how we spend Council money. 42% disagree we show this quality while 25% agree. This is the same score as in 2015 but much improved from last year when 28% more disagreed than agreed. As noted above this quality has an equal placing in terms of importance with being open and honest about funding and caring for the environment and ranked roughly middle in the 15 qualities listed.

***Similarly we need to enable more involvement of the public in how we spend Council money and there appears to be public interest in it.***

Just over a third of respondents were aware of the Council’s approach in the last year on its approach to participatory budgeting. Interest in being involved in this is very high: 62% would be willing to put forward ideas for new projects and 82% would be willing to choose the project they like most.

***So we have very positive interest in people being involved in participatory budgeting.***

1. **Public expectations of the Council**

The majority of respondents (56%) feel that we meet their expectations, although this has declined from 67% in 2013. 8% feel we exceed their expectations and this is similar to previous years. However 36% feel we fall short of their expectations and this has increased from 26% in 2013.

***Overall the trend shows a decline in the Council being seen to meet public expectations and this raises questions about how to re-set expectations of the Council given the ongoing budget challenges.***

73% are satisfied with Council services and at the same level as last year. This is very positive, although it has dropped from a high of 88% satisfaction in 2013. ***With ongoing budget reductions expected, it will be very difficult to achieve such high satisfaction ratings unless we can redesign services effectively and affordably.***

Year on year the public tell us that the most important quality of the Council is to maintain good quality local services. 75% place this in their top 5 most important qualities. Providing value for money, listening to local people and being efficient have consistently featured in the top 5 too, usually in 2nd, 3rd and 4th place respectively.

Of the new redesign qualities included in the 2017 survey, the quality scoring highest is being open and honest about funding choices (28% placing it in their top 5 and placing it joint 7th/15), asking people for their ideas (only 14% placed in top 5), inviting challenge from different views to make decisions and helping people to help each other both with only 8% placing them in their top5 and ranking them the lowest of all qualities in terms of importance.

***If we are to shift public expectations from the Council maintaining good quality local services to helping people to help each other we have the biggest gap to bridge. The former is seen as the most important quality and the latter is seen as the least important quality for us to demonstrate.***

1. **Helping people help each other and supporting community run-services**

More people agree than disagree (only by 4%) that we help people to help each other. This is the first time we have included this quality in the list of 15. However the majority neither agree nor disagree and only 25% agree. Only 8% place this quality in the 5 most important for the Council to demonstrate, giving it the joint lowest placing of all qualities along with inviting challenge and different views to make decisions. However a majority of respondents say they strongly agree or tend to agree that:

* I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community – 52%
* Your community could become more involved in providing services you and your community need – 61%

***Shifting expectations towards helping people to help each other will require far greater attention as while on balance we’re not seen as doing this; it is not seen as an important task for us. On the other hand these are more positive views around active citizenship so shifting expectations of the Council in this direction may be regarded more positively.***

Most people define their community as a place and a very local level, rather than identifying with a group of other people with similar characteristics or interests. Definitions around my street, neighbourhood, village, town and Highland were more popular that other definitions. ***This indicates focusing on and supporting community-action around places.***

High involvement in community activities in the last year is self-reported, with 61% volunteering informally and 43% volunteering through organised groups. Levels are higher in rural areas, among women and among those with school aged children. ***The high level of volunteering can be viewed very positively and a feature of community life in the Highlands, and it raises questions about how the Council can build capacity for people to do even more in their communities.***

1. **Local democracy and community councils**

More people agree than disagree (only by 4%) that we listen to local people. 34% agree we show this quality. In previous years responses have fluctuated. Last year more people disagreed than agreed (by 3%) but in 2015 the responses were far more positive with 12% more agreeing.

***Given that listening to local people has been consistently placed in the top 5 (usually 3rd) most important quality for us to demonstrate, on balance we’re only just viewed positively on it so more attention is needed to this quality.***

77% of respondents feel they have no or not very much influence over decision-making in their communities, compared to 22% feeling they have some influence and 1% with a good deal of influence. The reasons for feeling they have no or limited influence are because they are sceptical about public bodies and their processes or they feel their own capacity is limited. A lack of trust that public bodies listen or belief it would make a difference accounted for 54% of responses and insufficient time, skills, knowledge or feeling uncomfortable about it accounted for 63% of all responses. Currently 57% of respondents would like to be fairly or very involved in decision-making in their areas; a clear majority. 30% say they would like to be not very involved and 12% say they do not want to be involved at all.

***Enabling people to have more influence is as much about how public bodies, including us, operate and encourage it as it is about people’s individual capacity. The more we do to improve that the more we can meet the appetite and interest among the majority who seek to be fairly or very involved. Currently it seems that we and public bodies fall short.***

A majority either strongly or tend to agree with the following statements about community life:

* If a person is dissatisfied with the decisions affecting their community he/she has a duty to do something about it – 78%
* I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community – 52%
* Every citizen should get involved in community life if local democracy is to work properly – 58%
* Your community could become more involved in providing services you and your community need – 61%

***All of these responses indicate a preference for active citizenship. Redesign should mean supporting and enabling this.***

Some 22% of respondents had contact with their Community Council in the last year. Mostly this was in relation to improving local amenities, a planning issue or about a change in a local service. 44% agreed they found it easy to contact their community council and 21% disagreed.

***1 in 5 having contact with their community council is not insignificant, but the current reach needs to be extended if community councils are to be seen as vehicles of redesign in one way or another. Planning how to work with community councils differently and to reform their reach and purpose needs consideration. Early discussions with local members in workshops are scheduled between 30th October and 8th December 2017.***

1. **Implementing our redesign values of: challenging, open to ideas, participating and empowering**

In addition to some of the comments above that relate to redesign values, other findings are noted below.

More people agree than disagree (by 17%) that we ask people for ideas on how to do things better. This was the first time we included this quality in the questions and it received the 5th highest score of all 15 qualities we asked about. In total 45% agree we show this quality.

***While this was rated positively, only 14% included it in their top 5 most important qualities for the Council to demonstrate. To find redesign solutions we need to do more to encourage people to see the value of them being asked for their ideas on how to do things better.***

More people disagree than agree that we invite challenge and different views to help make decisions. This was the first time we included this quality in the questions and it received the 4th lowest score of all 15 qualities we asked about. In total 25% agree we show this quality, compared to 42% disagreeing. Only 8% placed this quality in their top 5 most important for the Council to demonstrate, placing it joint lowest of all qualities along with helping people to help each other.

***We are viewed negatively on inviting challenge and different views to help make decisions and very few feel this is important; but if we get better at this we could change public opinion in how effective their contribution can be.***

**Appendix 1**

**Extract of the UHI report of the Annual Survey of Performance and Attitudes 2017**

**SECTION A: COUNCIL QUALITIES**

**Question 1: Views of The Highland Council against 15 qualities**

* 1. Respondents gave their views of the Council against a list of qualities. The difference between the percentage of those agreeing (to any extent) and those who disagree (to any extent) that the quality is shown in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1 Respondents’ views on whether The Highland Council meets stated qualities**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 you for 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 | 39 | 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** |

*N = 936-943 in 2017*

* 1. As was the case in past surveys, one of the features which catches the eye when looking at Table 1.1 above is **how few of the respondents to the survey either strongly agree or** **strongly disagree with any of the statements made.** Neither of these two options is ever selected by any more than 8% of the respondents.
  2. Notice that **compared with 2016 (of the 11 qualities** for which comparisons can be made) **the scores for 2017 have: risen in 6; stayed the same in 1,** and **fallen in 4.**
  3. There are **2 qualities where the total percentage of respondents who agree or agree strongly** with **the statement** made **exceeds 50%:**
* **“Maintains good quality local services**” (58% agree);
* **“Is approachable”** (54% agree).
  1. There are 5 qualities (also 5 in 2016; 3 in 2015) where the total percentage of people who disagree (either strongly disagree or just disagree) with the statement made exceeds the total percentage of those who agree (either strongly or just agree) with it:
* **“Is open and honest about funding choices** (-1%)
* **“Invites challenge and different views to help make decisions** (-3%)
* **“Is efficient”** (-4%);
* **“Represents your views”** (-14%);
* **“Involves people in how it spends its money”** (-17%).
  1. **“Maintains good quality local services”** is a statement regarding The Highland Council about which 58% agree (including 7% strongly so) while 17% disagree (including 2% strongly so) giving a margin of 41% between those two opinions (36% in 2016; 47% in 2015; 57% in 2014; 54% in 2013).
  2. **“Is approachable”** is a statement regarding The Highland Council about which 54% agree (including 8% strongly so) and 13% disagree (including 2% strongly so) leaving a margin of 4% between those agreeing and those disagreeing (42% in 2016; 49% in 2015; 57% in 2014; 52% in 2013).
  3. **“Is helpful”** is a statement regarding The Highland Council with which 46% agree (including 7% strongly so) while 13% disagree (including 1% strongly so) leaving a margin between these two opinions of 33% (32% in 2016; 43% in 2015; 47% in 2014; 45% in 2013).
  4. **“Is environmentally friendly**” is a statement about The Highland Council with which 45% agree (including 6% strongly so) while 20% disagree (including 4% strongly so) leaving a margin of 25% - which is notably lower than in recent years (44% in 2016 and 2015; 49% in 2014; 44% in 2013; 45% in 2012).
  5. **“Is aware of people’s needs”** is a statement with which 34% agree (including 3% strongly so) while 28% disagree (including 5% strongly so) leaving a margin in favour of the statement of 6% (8% in 2016; 11% in 2015; 15% in 2014). While respondents who do not have a disability return a 5% margin in favour of the statement, the comparable figure is 17% for people who have a disability.
  6. **“Treats all residents fairly”** is a statement with which 36% agree (including 4% strongly so) while 23% disagree (including 6% strongly so) leaving a margin of 13% between these two opinions (also 13% in 2016; 14% in 2015; 11% in 2014; 17% in 2013). Respondents who have a disability return a margin of 32% in favour of this statement compared with a margin 15% for those who do not have a disability.
  7. **“Listens to local people”** is a statement with which 34% agree (including 3% strongly so) while 30% disagree (including 6% strongly so) leaving a margin of 4% between these two opinions (-3% in 2016; 12% in 2015; 11% in 2014; 9% in 2012). This represents an increase of 7% on the -3% recorded in 2016.
  8. **“Provides value for money”** is a statement with which 33% agree (including 4% strongly so) while 28% disagree (including 5% strongly so) leaving a margin between these two opinions of 5% (-10% in 2016; 4% in 2015; 10% in 2014 and 2013).
  9. **“Is efficient”** is a statement about The Highland Council with which 28% agree (including 3% strongly so) while 32% disagree (including 6% strongly so) leaving a margin between these two opinions of -4% (-11% in 2016; -2% in 2015; 10% in 2014; 5% in 2013).
  10. **“Represents your views”** is a statement with which 21% agree (including 2% strongly so) while 35% disagree (7% strongly so) leaving a margin of -14% which is the lowest score in recent years (-13% in 2016; -5% in 2015; -1% in 2014 and 2013; -7% in 2012).
  11. **“Involves people in how it spends money”** is a statement with which 25% agree (3% strongly so) while 42% disagree (6% strongly so) leaving a margin of -17% which compares with -28% in 2016; -17% in 2015; -18% in 2014; and -11% in 2013.
  12. **“Asks you for ideas on how to do things better”** is a statement with which 45% agree (6% strongly so) while 28% disagree (5% strongly so) leaving a margin in favour of the statement of 17%. This is the first year in which this question was asked.
  13. **“Helps people to help each other”** is a statement with which 25% agree (2% strongly so) while 21% disagree (5% strongly so) leaving a margin in favour of the statement of 4%. This is the first year in which this question was asked.
  14. **“Is open and honest about funding choices”** is a statement with which 33% agree (4% strongly so) while 34% disagree (7% strongly so) leaving a margin of -1%. This is the first year in which this question was asked.
  15. **“Invites challenge and different views to help make decisions”** is a statement with which 27% agree (3% strongly so) while 30% disagree (8% strongly so) leaving a margin of -3%. This is the first year this question has been asked.

**Question 2: Qualities that are most important to respondents**

* 1. Respondents were then asked to consider the 15 qualities and choose the 5 which they thought were the ones The Highland Council should most exemplify. Table 2.1 below ranks the 13 qualities according to the percentages of respondents placing the specific qualities within their top 5 in 2017.

**Table 2.1 Respondents’ views as to the 5 most important Qualities for**

**The Highland Council to display**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 | 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*

* 1. Top of the list is that the Council **“maintains good quality local services”** – this attracts the backing of 3 in 4 respondents (also 75% in 2016; 68% in 2015; 69% in 2014; 71% in 2013). There are two other qualities which are endorsed by a majority of the sample: **“provides value for money”** (chosen by 57% in 2017; 60% in 2016; 54% in 2015; 51% in 2014; 56% in 2013);and **“listens to local people”** (selected by 54% in 2017; 61% in 2016; 62% in 2015; 58% in 2014; 59% in 2013).
  2. There are 6 options that are chosen by 24%-47% of respondents in 2017 as being in their top 5 qualities, namely: **“is efficient”** (47%); **“treats all residents fairly”** (38%); **“is aware of people’s needs”** (35%); **“involves people in how it spends its money”** (28%); and is **“open and honest about funding choices”** (28%), **“is approachable”** (24%).
  3. At the foot of the table there are 5 options which, in 2017, each gained the support of fewer than 1 in 5 respondents. These are: **“is helpful”** (17%); **“asks you for your ideas”** (14%); **“represents your views”** (13%); **“invites challenge and different views to make decisions”** (8%) and “**helps people to help each other**” (8%).

**Question 3: Expectations**

* 1. Table 3.1 below reveals respondents’ views when invited to think generally about what they expect from The Highland Council.

**Table 3.1 Expectations of The Highland Council**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expectations** | **2017**  **%** | **2016**  **%** | **2015**  **%** | **2014**  **%** | **2013**  **%** |
| Greatly exceeds your expectations | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Slightly exceeds your expectations | 7 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| Is about what you expect | 56 | 50 | 62 | 66 | 67 |
| Falls slightly short of your expectations | 26 | 32 | 27 | 17 | 20 |
| Falls a long way short of your expectations | 10 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

*N = 940 in 2017*

* 1. Table 3.9 shows that for more than **1 in 2 respondents** (**56%)** The Highland Council is **“about what [they] expect”** (50% in 2016; 62% in 2015; 66% in 2014; 67% in 2013).
  2. For **just over 1 in 4 respondents (26%)** The Highland Council **“falls slightly short of [their] expectations”** (32% in 2016; 27% in 2015; 17% in 2014; 20% in 2013).
  3. The percentage of people saying the Council **“falls a long way short of [their] expectations” is 10%** (11% in 2016; 4% in 2015; 5% in 2014; 6% in 2013; 9% in 2012).
  4. The figure for those who say their **expectations have been exceeded either slightly or greatly is 8%** (7% in 2016 and 2015; 12% in 2014; 7% in 2013).

**Question 15: Overall satisfaction with services provided by The Highland Council**

15.1 Those surveyed were then asked: **“Overall, are you satisfied with the services The Highland Council provides?”** In 2017 **some 73% answered “yes”** – the same return as in 2016(83% in 2015; 87% in 2014; 88% in 2013). There were 866 people who answered this question (91% of all respondents to the survey).

**Question 16: More or less satisfied with services**

* 1. The next question for respondents was: **“overall, are you more or less satisfied with The Highland Council’s services than you were last year?”** Table 16.1 below shows the responses to this question for the five most recent surveys.

**Table 16.1 Levels of satisfaction with services compared with previous years**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Levels of Satisfaction** | **2017**  **%** | **2016**  **%** | **2015**  **%** | **2014**  **%** | **2013**  **%** |
| More satisfied | 4.7 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 5.7 | 6.3 |
| About the same | 64.5 | 64.8 | 75.3 | 79.6 | 78.2 |
| Less satisfied | 30.8 | 31.3 | 21.0 | 14.7 | 15.5 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

*N= 923 in 2017*

* 1. Table 16.1 shows that 923 people (96.6% of the sample) answered this question in 2017. As is the case each year, most people chose **“about the same”** with the percentage doing so in 2017 **being 64.5%** - a return little different from the 64.8% recorded in 2016 (75.3% in 2015; 79.6% in 2014; 78.2% in 2013). The percentage of respondents who are **“less satisfied” is 30.8%** (31.3**%** in 2016; 21% in 2015; 14.7% in 2014; 15.5% in 2013). Some **4.7%** said they are **“more satisfied”** than they were a year ago (3.9% in 2016; 3.7% in 2015; 5.7% in 2014; 6.3% in 2013).
  2. Some 36% of respondents with school age children said they are less satisfied with services then they were last year compared with 27% of those who do not have school age children.

**SECTION F: INVOLVING COMMUNITIES**

This section, which contains 6 questions, was introduced as follows: “*The Council is committed to supporting communities to do things for themselves and let people have their say on public services. We believe everyone can have new ideas for doing things better. We want to hear them, especially when they challenge us. We believe good ideas and good results come from people coming together with diﬀerent views, and being respectful and honest about what we can do together.”*

**Question 26: Respondents’ definitions of their communities**

26.1 People were asked: **“Thinking about your community; how would you define your community?”** Those surveyed were presented with 9 options and invited to select all that applied. Respondents gave their views as per the results in table 31.1 below.

**Table 26.1 Respondents’ definitions of their communities**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Definition of Community | 2017  % | 2016  % |
| My street/ immediate neighbourhood | **43** | **42** |
| My village | **42** | **42** |
| My town | **37** | **34** |
| Highland | **36** | **39** |
| People who are from the same place | **16** | **17** |
| Age group | **13** | **13** |
| Club/organisation community | **11** | **11** |
| Faith community | **6** | **7** |
| Other | **4** | **6** |

*N= 955 in 2017*

26.2 It is immediately apparent that the results from the 2016 and 2017 Surveys are almost identical. The two leading definitions remain: **“my street/ immediate neighbourhood” (43%) and “my village” (42%).** This is closely followed in the choices made by respondents by: **“my town” (37%); and “Highland” (36%).** Somewhat further behind is **“people who are from the same place” which was chosen by 16%.** It is noticeable of these first 5 choices that they are all to do with place.

26.3 When it comes to **age group (selected by 13% of the entire sample**), there is a difference in response by age. This is the choice of 22% of those aged 16-24 and 17% of those aged 65+, but only 6% of those aged 35-44 and 7% of those aged 45-64.

26.4 Some **11% of the whole sample selected “club/organisation community”** while **6% selected “faith community”** and **4% chose “other**”.

**Question 27: Respondents’ Involvement in Various Activities in their Communities**

27.1 Respondents were then asked: *“Thinking about your community, have you been involved over the last year in any of the following?”* Four activities were presented and some 89% answered at least one part of this question and their answers are found in Table 27.1 below.

**Table 27.1** **Respondents’ Involvement in Various Activities in their Communities**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Respondents  Yes  % | Respondents  No  % |
| Volunteering by helping a neighbour, family or friend | **61.3** | **38.7** |
| Volunteering through an organised group or club | **42.8** | **57.2** |
| Taken part in a consultation – excluding the Citizens’ Panel | **27.4** | **72.6** |
| Local campaigning | **11.6** | **88.4** |

*N=847-884*

27.2 Table 27.1 shows that **more than 6 in 10 respondents (61.3%)** said they had been involved in **“volunteering by helping a neighbour, family or friend”** in the past year. Levels of involvement in this activity are higher in:

* females (68%) than males (58%);
* wards that are rural (67%) and mixed (65%) than in urban ones (51%).

27.3 Table 27.1 also shows that **more than 4 in 10 of respondents (42.8%)** said they had been involved in **“volunteering through an organised group or club”** in the past year in their communities. Levels of involvement in this activity are higher in:

* people with school-aged children (56%) than those without (41%);
* females (50%) than males (37%);
* wards that are rural (48%) and mixed (46%) than in urban ones (33%);
* people who do not have a disability (45%) than those who have a disability (32%).

27.4 Some **27.4% of respondents** said they had been involved in **“[taking] part in a consultation** – excluding the Citizens’ Panel” in their communities.

27.5 Some **11.6% of respondents** said they had been involved in **“local campaigning”** in the past year. Levels of involvement in this activity are notably higher in council wards that are classified as mixed (14%) or rural (13%) than they are in urban ones (4%).

**Question 28: Respondents’ Views on the Level of Influence they feel they have over Decision-Making in their Communities**

28.1 Those surveyed were asked: “How much influence do you feel you have over decision-making in your communities”? Some 96% of all respondents (917) answered this question and their views are to be found in table 28.1 below.

**Table 28.1 Respondents’ Views on the Levels of Influence they feel they have**

**over Decision-making in their Communities**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Views of Respondents | | | |
|  | **No Influence at all**  **%** | **Not very much influence**  **%** | **Some influence**  **%** | **A good deal of influence**  **%** | |
| Influence over decision-making in your communities | **35.1** | **42.1** | **21.8** | **1.1** | |

*N=917*

28.2 Table 28.1 shows that: **35.1%** of respondents feel they have **“no influence at all over decision-making in their communities”;** **42.1%** feel that they have **“not very much influence”;** **21.8%** feel that they have **“some influence”;** while just **1.1%** feel they have **“a good deal of influence”.**

**Question 29: Respondents’ Views as to the reasons why they do not have very much/no influence**

29.1 Those surveyed were asked: “If you feel you have not had very much/no influence over decision-making, why do you feel this is?”. Some 6 reasons were supplied and people were invited to tick all that applied. There was also space given for people who chose “other” to detail that other reason(s). Table 29.1 below shows the answers people gave.

**Table 29.1** **Respondents’ Views as to the reasons why they do not have**

**very much/no influence**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reasons for having not very much/no influence | Respondents  % |
| Not enough time | **28.5** |
| I don’t think this would make a difference | **27.6** |
| Public bodies don’t listen to community views | **26.5** |
| Don’t feel I have the skills or knowledge | **18.0** |
| I’m not comfortable in these situations | **16.0** |
| Other | **9.1** |

*Base=955*

29.2 Table 29.1 shows that **28.5%** of the entire sample gave **“not enough time”** as a reason for having not very much/no influence. This reason was selected by:

* 36% of those with school-aged children compared with 19% without;
* 33% of those in employment compared with 8% of those who are retired.

29.3 Some **27.6%** of all respondents gave **“I don’t think this would make a difference”** as a reason. Amongst 16-34 year olds this reason was selected by 38%.

29.4 Some **26.5%** of all respondents selected **“public bodies don’t listen to communities”** as a reason for feeling that they had not very much/no influence.

29.5 Some **18%** selected **“don’t feel I have the skills or knowledge”** as a reason for feeling that they had not very much/no influence while **16%** chose **“not comfortable in these situations**”.

29.6 Some 9.1% selected “**other**”.

**Question 30: Respondents’ views as to the extent to which would like to be involved in decision-making in their areas**

30.1 Those surveyed were asked: “To what extent, if at all, would you like to be involved in decision-making in your area?” Some 96% of all respondents (918) selected one of the 4 options supplied. Their answers are found in Table 30.1 below.

**Table 30.1** **Respondents’ views as to the extent to which would like to be**

**involved in decision-making in their areas**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Views of Respondents | | | |
| Question | **Not at all involved**  **%** | **Not very involved**  **%** | **Fairly involved**  **%** | **Very involved**  **%** | |
| To what extent, if at all, would you like to be involved in decision-making in your area? | **12.5** | **30.2** | **47.9** | **9.4** | |

*N=918*

30.2 Table 30.2 shows that **almost 1 in 2 (47.9%)** say they want to be **“fairly involved” in decision-making in their local areas.** Almost **1 in 10** (**9.4%)** want to be **“very involved”** – with 12% of males wanting to be “very involved” compared with 5% of females. The table also shows that **3 in 10 (30.2%)** selected **“not very involved”.** In total therefore, **some 7 in 8 of the respondents** are saying that would want, at the very least, **some involvement in decision-making in their area**. Just **1 in 8 (12.5%)** chose **“not at all involved**”.

**Question 31: Respondents’ Views on Statements about Community involvement**

31.1 Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with four statements about involvement in their communities. The statements and their responses are to be found in Table 31.1 below.

**Table 31.1 Respondents’ Views on Statements about Community Involvement**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Views of Respondents | | | | |
| Statement | **Strongly agree**  **%** | **Tend to agree**  **%** | **Neither agree nor disagree**  **%** | **Tend to disagree**  **%** | **Strongly disagree**  **%** | |
| If a person is dissatisfied with the decisions affecting their community he/she has a duty to do something about it | **25** | **53** | **17** | **5** | **0.2** | |
| I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community | **11** | **41** | **40** | **7** | **1** | |
| Every citizen should get involved in community life if local democracy is to work properly | **15** | **43** | **29** | **11** | **2** | |
| Your community could become more involved in providing the services you and your community need | **14** | **47** | **31** | **7** | **1** | |

*N=882-897*

31.3 Some 94% of the sample gave their views on the statement, **“If a person is dissatisfied with the decisions affecting their community he/she has a duty to do something about it**”. Of them, **78% agreed** with the statement (including 25% who strongly agreed), **17% neither agreed nor disagreed**, while **5% disagreed** (with only one respondent strongly disagreeing).

31.4 Some 93% of the sample gave their views on the statement, **“I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community.”** Of them, **slightly more than half (52%) agreed** with the statement (including 11% strongly so), **40% neither agreed nor disagreed** and **8% disagreed** (1% strongly so). Some 57% of those living in rural wards and 50% of those living in mixed wards agreed with this statement compared with 39% of those in urban wards.

31.5 Some 93% of the sample gave their views on the statement, **“Every citizen should get involved in community life if local democracy is to work properly”.** Of them, **58% agreed** with the statement (including 15% strongly so), **29% neither agreed nor disagreed** and **13% disagreed** (including 2% strongly so). Some 62% of those in rural wards and 60% of those in mixed wards agreed with this statement compared with 40% of those living in urban wards.

31.6 Some 92% of the sample gave their views on the statement, **“Your community could become more involved in providing the services you and your community need.”** Of them, **61% agreed** with the statement (including 14% strongly so), **31% neither agreed nor disagreed**, while **8% disagreed** (including 1% strongly so). Some 66% of those in rural wards and 60% of those in mixed wards agreed with this statement compared with 49% of those in urban wards.

**Having a say on Council funding**

This three-question sub-section was introduced as follows: *“In the past year we have asked community groups to put forward ideas to their community for them to decide which projects the council should fund.”*

**Question 32: Respondents’ awareness of this approach**

32.1 Respondents were then asked: **“Were you aware the Council was developing this approach?”** Some 96% of the sample (913 people) answered the question. Of them, **37.5% said “yes”** they were aware, while **62.5% said “no”** they were not aware.

**Question 33: Respondents’ willingness to participate in this approach in their communities**

33.1 Respondents were asked: **“Would you take part if this [approach] happened in your community?”** Two statements describing possible methods of involvement were presented to those sampled and they were invited to indicate whether or not they would participate in either or both of these ways. Their answers are found in Table 33.1 below.

**Table 33.1** **Respondents’ willingness to become**

**involved in having a say on Council funding**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Approach | Respondents  Yes  % | Respondents  No  % |
| By putting forward ideas for new projects | **62.4** | **37.6** |
| By choosing the project you like most | **81.6** | **23.9** |

*N=865-893*

33.2 Some 91% of the sample gave their views on becoming involved **“by putting forward ideas for new projects”** with **62.4% saying that they would do this** and **37.6% indicating they would not do this**. Some 77% of those with school age children said they would become involved in this way compared with 57% off those who did not have school age children.

33.3 Some 94% of the sample gave their views on becoming involved **“by choosing the project you like most”** with **81.6% saying that they would do this** and **18.4% saying that they would not do this**. Some 87% of those with school age children said they would become involved in this way compared with 74% of those with no school age children.

**Question 34: Extent of Interest in Participating in Community Discussions about Provision of Local Services and Making Choices about these within Budget Limits**

34.1 Respondents were asked: **“To what extent would you be interested in taking part in community discussions about how local services are provided and making choices about these within our budget limits?”** Their answers are found in Table 34.1 below.

**Table 34.1 Extent of interest in Participating in Community Discussions about Provision of Local Services and making Choices about these within Budget Limits**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement | Very interested  % | Fairly interested  % | Not very interested  % | Not at all interested  % | Don’t know  % |
| To what extent would you be interested in taking part in community discussions about how local services are provided and making choices about these within our budget limits? | **16** | **52** | **18** | **8** | **6** |

*N=912*

34.2 Some 95% of the sample responded to this question with **16%** saying they would be **“very interested”** in being involved in this way, **52%** saying they would be **“fairly interested”**, **18%** saying they would be **“not very interested”** and **8%** saying they were **“not at all interested”.** Finally, **6%** said they **did not know** whether they would be interested or not.

**Question 35: Contact with Community Councils**

35.1 Respondents were asked: **“Have you had any contact with your community council during 2016/17?”** Some 95% of the sample (908 people) answered and of them, **22.2% said they had been in contact** and **77.8% said they had not been in contact.**

**Question 36: Reasons for Contacting Community Councils**

36.1 Of those who had made contact a question was asked as to the **reason(s) for that contact** with four options provided and respondents invited to select all that applied. The answers supplied are found in Table 36.1 below.

**Table 36.1 Reason for making contact with community council**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reason | Respondents who had contacted Community Council  % |
| Improving amenities in your area | **44** |
| A planning and development issue | **35** |
| About a change in local services | **22** |
| Other | **30** |

*N=212*

36.2 Of those who had made contact with their community council: **44%** had done so about **“improving amenities in your area”;** **35% had “a planning and development issue”** as their reason; **22% made contact “about a change in local services**”; and **29% had done so for “other**” **reasons**.

**Question 37: Respondents’ Views on the ease of making contact with their Community Council**

37.1 Respondents were asked: “To what extent do you agree that it is easy to contact your community council?” Their answers are to be found in Table 37.1 below.

**Table 37.1 Respondents’ views on ease of making contact with their community council**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strongly agree  % | Tend to agree  % | Neither agree nor disagree  % | Tend to disagree  % | Strongly disagree  % |
| To what extent do you agree that it is easy to contact your community council? | **16** | **28** | **35** | **15** | **6** |

*N=865*

37.2 Some 91% of the sample answered this question and of them: **16% “strongly agreed”; 28%** selected **“tend to agree”;** **35%** chose **“neither agree nor disagree”;** **15%** opted for **“tend to disagree”**; while **6%** selected **“strongly disagree”.**