

Polling on resident satisfaction with councils

June 2015



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To view more research from the Local Government Association Research and Information team please visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-intelligence>

Contents

Methodology.....	4
Key findings.....	6
Polling on resident satisfaction with councils.....	8
Overall satisfaction with local area	8
Overall satisfaction with local council	8
Value for money	9
Council responsiveness	9
Informed about the council.....	10
Trust.....	10
Community safety	12
Service specific satisfaction	13
Importance of services	15
The media	17
Cuts to local council services	18
Annex A: Service specific satisfaction results	20
Annex B: Views on media coverage since September 2012	24
Annex C: Polling questions	25

Introduction

This note outlines the eleventh set of results in a series of regular Local Government Association (LGA) public polls on resident satisfaction with local councils, conducted every four months.¹

With the publication of *Are You Being Served?*² – a set of resident satisfaction questions that councils can choose to use in their local surveys and benchmark themselves against other authorities – the LGA has responded to demand from the sector for more intelligence in this area.

This polling complements councils' local work with a regular look at the national picture. Tracking national changes in satisfaction with councils alongside questions on other related issues about residents' local areas can provide valuable information on what is driving resident perceptions and therefore what councils can do to serve their local communities better.

Many additional factors will influence resident views of councils at a local level, including local demographics. It is important therefore that these polling results are seen as complementary to a wider approach to understanding and responding to communities at a local level.

Comparison against national polls provides context and trends, and helps to identify possible relationships with other variables, but councils could include additional questions in their local surveys and conduct other engagement activities and analysis that might help diagnose what other factors are driving satisfaction levels locally.

Methodology

Between 5 and 7 June 2015, a representative random sample of 1,008 British adults (aged 18 or over) was polled by telephone.³

Respondents were given the following preamble at the outset:

"I would like to ask you some questions about your local council. Local councils are responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

If you live in an area with more than one council please think about the way in which they deliver services to you overall. This would include district and county councils. We are doing this to keep the survey simple as it is part of a national study."

The full interview script is included in Annex C for information. Where the questions cover the same topics as the *Are You Being Served?*² question set, the same question ordering, wording, definitions and preamble have been used to allow comparability.⁴

¹ Note that until October 2014, the polling was conducted quarterly, and this has now shifted to once every four months.

² <http://lginform.local.gov.uk/about-lg-inform/resident-satisfaction>

³ Quotas were set on age, gender and region and the data weighted to the known British profile of age, gender, region, social grade, taken a foreign holiday in the last 3 years, tenure, number of cars in the household, working status, and mobile only households. The polling was conducted by Populus Data Solutions.

Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question.

This is the eleventh round of polling in this series, and the paper examines trends since the first round in September 2012.⁵ Differences between results are only highlighted within the report where this is statistically significant.⁶

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: ‘*’ - less than 0.5 per cent; ‘0’ – no observations; ‘-’ – category not applicable/data not available.

⁴ Note though that as the mode of data collection can have a marked impact on results, these results are only truly comparable with surveys conducted via telephone.

⁵ The full papers outlining the results of previous polls can be found here:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/research-performance-and-improvement>

⁶ Statistical significance is tested at the 95% level.

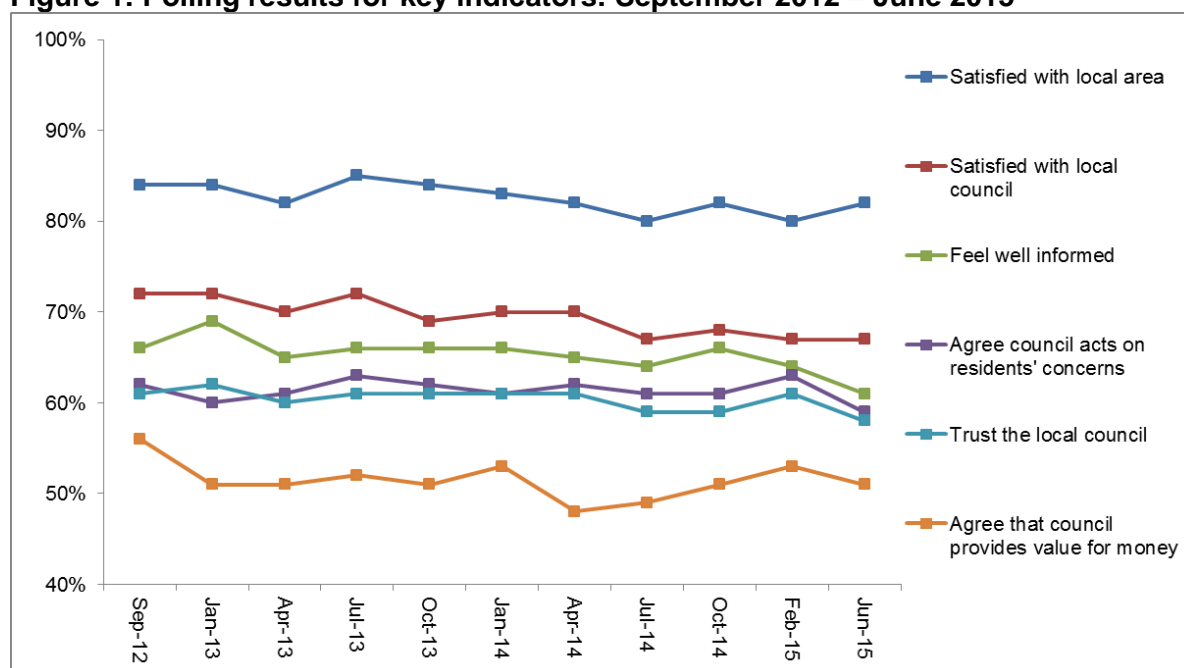
Key findings

As Figure 1 shows, for most key indicators residents' views of local councils remain broadly consistent.

Overall satisfaction amongst the public with the way their local council runs things remains positive; in this round, the proportion of people who were very or fairly satisfied was 67 per cent. This is a similar level to the preceding rounds but lower than a peak of 72 per cent observed in January and July 2013, and September 2012.

However, a small number of indicators that have changed little in previous rounds have for the first time started to see a decline (such as satisfaction with waste collection and library services, and the proportion of respondents who said that their local council keeps residents well informed). Future rounds will monitor these indicators to identify whether this is a temporary dip, or the start of a trend.

Figure 1: Polling results for key indicators: September 2012 – June 2015



Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

There have only been a small number of significant changes in the polling results since September 2012, and the notable changes in this round are highlighted below:

- Since January 2013, the proportion of respondents who tend to or strongly agree that their local council provides value for money has remained fairly stable (apart from a temporary dip to 48 per cent in April 2014), and in this round stands at 51 per cent. However, the proportion that disagreed that their council provided value for money was statistically significantly higher in this round (at 26 per cent) than several of the earlier rounds of polling. This can be partly explained by a lower proportion answering 'neither agree nor disagree' in this round.

⁷ The full sample sizes for previous rounds are as follows: 1,006 British adults in September 2012, 1,004 in January 2013, 1,036 in April 2013, 1,002 in July 2013, 1,003 in October 2013, 1,008 in January 2014, 1,005 in April 2014, 1,001 in July 2014, 1,002 in October 2014, 1,003 in February 2015

- This round of polling saw a drop in the proportion of respondents who said that their local council keeps residents very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides, to 61 per cent. Until this round, levels have remained fairly consistently between 64 and 66 per cent; therefore it will be important to monitor in future rounds whether this is a temporary dip, or the start of a trend.
- As in previous rounds, the majority of respondents said they felt safe in their local area. Eighty per cent said they felt very or fairly safe after dark; significantly higher than the 75 per cent who said this in the first round of polling in September 2012. Further, respondent feelings of safety during the day in their local area also remain very high, with 96 per cent saying that they felt very or fairly safe in this round – a similar level to previous rounds. This includes 68 per cent who said that they feel very safe – statistically significantly higher than several previous results.
- This round has seen a slight drop in satisfaction with some specific services. In most cases this is the first instance of a drop in satisfaction rather than a continuing trend, so it will be important to monitor any further changes in levels of satisfaction with these services in future rounds. The most notable changes are outlined below:
 - Although satisfaction with waste collection services remains high – in this round 77 per cent were very or fairly satisfied – this is statistically significantly lower than several previous rounds, particularly November 2013 and earlier, when satisfaction levels were generally around 83 – 84 per cent.
 - Satisfaction with road maintenance is at 39 per cent; this is in line with recent rounds, but significantly lower than September 2012 and January 2013 (both at 46 per cent) and July 2013 (45 per cent).
 - Satisfaction with library services has been relatively stable since the polling began, although with a couple of peaks - once in April 2013, the other in July 2014 – both at 71 per cent. In this round however, satisfaction has dropped to 62 per cent.

Polling on resident satisfaction with councils

This section outlines the full set of polling results.

Overall satisfaction with local area

The vast majority of respondents were positive about their local area as a place to live – with 82 per cent very or fairly satisfied in June 2015. This is a similar level to that seen in previous rounds.

	Sept 2012	Jan 2013 ⁹	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	84	84	82	85	84	83	82	80	82	80	82
Very satisfied	34	28	34	34	34	30	28	31	29	28	31
Fairly satisfied	50	57	48	51	50	53	54	50	53	52	51
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	9	9	8	9	7	10	9	8	8	9
Fairly dissatisfied	5	4	5	4	4	5	6	6	5	7	6
Very dissatisfied	2	2	3	3	3	5	2	5	4	5	3
Don't know	0	*	1	*	*	0	*	0	*	*	0

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Overall satisfaction with local council

Satisfaction amongst respondents with the way their local council runs things has remained positive. In this round, 67 per cent of respondents were very or fairly satisfied. This is a similar level to the preceding rounds but lower than a peak of 72 per cent, which was observed in three of the first rounds of polling in late 2012 and 2013 (see Table 2).

⁸ Local area was defined as “the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home”

⁹ Whilst the individual ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ answer options displayed in Table 1 for January 2013 appear to sum to 85 per cent, this is due to the fact the figures in the table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Please note that this may also occur in other parts of the report where answer categories are combined.

Table 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council(s) runs things?

	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	72	72	70	72	69	70	70	67	68	67	67
Very satisfied	19	16	20	18	19	15	16	14	16	16	16
Fairly satisfied	53	57	50	54	50	55	54	54	52	51	50
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	13	13	12	14	13	16	15	16	13	16
Fairly dissatisfied	10	9	9	8	10	10	8	11	9	11	10
Very dissatisfied	4	4	7	6	6	6	6	7	6	8	6
Don't know	1	2	2	1	1	*	1	*	1	*	1

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Value for money

In the first round of polling in September 2012, 56 per cent tended to or strongly agreed that their local council provided value for money. In January 2013 this fell to 51 per cent, and has remained at a similar level since (apart from a temporary dip to 48 per cent in April 2014); the proportion that tend to or strongly agree that their local council provides value for money currently also stands at 51 per cent.

Despite the stable levels of respondents agreeing that they receive value for money since January 2013, the proportion that either tended to or strongly disagreed that their council provided value for money was statistically significantly higher in this round (at 26 per cent) than several of the earlier rounds of polling. This can be partly explained by a lower proportion answering 'neither agree nor disagree' in this round.

Table 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local council(s) provides value for money?¹⁰

	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly or tend to agree	56	51	51	52	51	53	48	49	51	53	51
Strongly agree	10	9	11	11	12	9	11	12	11	11	9
Tend to agree	46	42	40	42	39	44	37	37	41	41	42
Neither agree nor disagree	21	29	25	26	25	23	31	27	25	24	22
Tend to disagree	15	11	13	13	13	14	15	13	12	14	18
Strongly disagree	6	7	7	8	8	9	7	9	10	9	8
Don't know	2	2	4	2	2	1	1	2	1	*	1

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

¹⁰ The following preamble was used: "In considering the next question, please think about the range of services your local council(s) provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services your local council(s) provides to the community. We would like your general opinion."

Council responsiveness

This is an important measure of local accountability as it looks at whether councils are perceived to be responsive to local issues and problems. In this round, 59 per cent said that their council acts on the concerns of local residents a great deal or a fair amount. Whilst this is the lowest level observed to date, it is not statistically significantly different from all previous rounds apart from February 2015, when a peak of 63 per cent was observed.¹¹

Table 4: To what extent do you think your local council(s) acts on the concerns of local residents?

	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
A great deal or fair amount	62	60	61	63	62	61	62	61	61	63	59
A great deal	8	9	10	8	10	8	9	9	9	10	8
A fair amount	54	52	51	54	52	53	53	52	52	53	51
Not very much	28	27	26	25	27	28	27	29	28	27	31
Not at all	5	6	7	7	7	7	8	9	7	7	7
Don't know	5	7	6	5	5	3	3	1	3	2	3

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Informed about the council

This round of polling saw a drop in the proportion of respondents who said that their local council keeps residents very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides, to 61 per cent. Until this round, levels have remained fairly consistent; therefore it will be important to monitor in future rounds whether this is a temporary dip, or the start of a trend.

Table 5: Overall, how well informed do you think your local council(s) keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Very or fairly well informed	66	69	65	66	66	66	65	64	66	64	61
Very well informed	17	17	17	15	17	14	14	15	15	14	12
Fairly well informed	49	52	48	51	49	51	51	49	51	49	49
Not very well informed	25	23	23	22	22	23	25	25	24	25	28
Not well informed at all	8	6	9	10	9	11	9	11	9	11	11
Don't know	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	*	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Trust

Levels of trust in councils have been stable since this polling started in September 2012. As Table 6 shows, in the most recent round, 58 per cent of respondents stated that they trust their council a great deal or a fair amount; whilst this is lower than previous rounds, the difference is not statistically significant.

¹¹ Although 63 per cent was also observed in July 2013, the difference with this round is not statistically significant – rounding masks the fact that the July figure was very slightly lower than the February 2015 result.

Table 6: How much do you trust your local council(s)?											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
A great deal or fair amount	61	62	60	61	61	61	61	59	59	61	58
A great deal	10	7	9	9	10	8	8	8	9	8	8
A fair amount	51	55	51	53	51	52	53	51	50	53	50
Not very much	26	27	28	25	26	26	28	29	29	25	28
Not at all	10	8	10	11	12	12	10	11	11	13	13
Don't know	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

A new question was introduced in the July 2013 round, looking at public trust in local councils to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area, compared to their trust in the government.

Table 7 shows that the vast majority of respondents said, of the two, they trusted their local council most to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area. With 72 per cent selecting their local council, this is a similar level to many of the previous rounds, although lower than January and July 2014 when there were highs of 77 per cent and 80 per cent respectively. The proportion that trusts the government most is much lower, at 17 per cent.

Table 7: Who do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area? ¹²								
	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Your local council(s)	70	71	77	72	80	73	75	72
The government	14	11	13	16	14	15	19	17
Neither	13	16	8	11	5	10	6	11
Don't know	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

A new question was introduced in the January 2014 round asking which individuals respondents trusted most to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area. As Table 8 shows, local councillors remain by far the most trusted group, with 70 per cent of respondents stating that that they most trusted local councillors to make these decisions. Whilst this proportion is statistically lower than peak levels of 76 per cent and 75 per cent observed in January and July 2014, it remains much higher than the next most trusted group - members of parliament, selected by 14 per cent.

¹² 'Neither' was not read out to respondents as an answer option but the interviewer could code it if it was given spontaneously.

Table 8: And which individuals do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?¹³

	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Local councillors	76	73	75	72	73	70
Members of parliament	9	9	13	11	12	14
Government ministers	6	8	7	7	10	7
None of the above	8	8	4	8	4	7
Don't know	2	2	1	2	2	2

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Community safety

Most respondents said they felt safe in their local area. Eighty per cent said they felt very or fairly safe after dark. This proportion has been gradually increasing, and is significantly higher than the 75 per cent who said this in September 2012.

Table 9: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area¹⁴ ...

	...after dark										
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly safe	75	76	78	77	78	78	79	79	79	79	80
Very safe	27	30	32	33	34	32	31	33	34	35	37
Fairly safe	48	46	46	45	45	46	47	46	46	44	43
Neither safe nor unsafe	8	9	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	9
Fairly unsafe	12	9	8	10	7	9	7	7	7	9	7
Very unsafe	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	3
Don't know	1	2	2	1	1	*	1	*	1	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

As Table 10 shows, respondent feelings of safety during the day in their local area also remains high, with 96 per cent saying that they felt very or fairly safe – a similar level to previous rounds. This includes 68 per cent who said that they feel very safe – statistically significantly higher than several previous results.

¹³ 'None of the above' was not read out to respondents as an answer option but the interviewer could code if it was given spontaneously

¹² Local area was defined as "the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home".

Table 10: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area¹⁵ ...

	...during the day										
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly safe	95	95	96	95	95	94	94	95	94	94	96
Very safe	60	62	65	66	66	62	63	62	63	65	68
Fairly safe	35	33	31	29	29	32	32	33	31	29	28
Neither safe nor unsafe	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
Fairly unsafe	2	2	1	1	*	2	2	1	2	2	2
Very unsafe	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*
Don't know	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Service specific satisfaction

Respondents were invited to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the following key services:

- waste collection
- street cleaning
- road maintenance
- pavement maintenance
- library services
- sport and leisure services
- services and support for older people
- services and support for children and young people

Respondents' views remained positive for the majority of services in this round (see

Figure 2). As in all previous rounds, levels of satisfaction with waste collection and street cleaning were higher than overall satisfaction with the council; 77 per cent were fairly or very satisfied with waste collection and 72 per cent with street cleaning, compared to 67 per cent for overall satisfaction.

As Figure 3 shows, levels of satisfaction with specific services have remained fairly stable since the polling began in September 2012, although several minor changes were observed in this round. Key findings are:

- Although satisfaction with waste collection services remains high – in this round 77 per cent were very or fairly satisfied – this is statistically significantly lower than several previous rounds, particularly November 2013 and earlier, when satisfaction levels were generally around 83 – 84 per cent.

¹⁵ Local area was defined as “the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home”.

- Satisfaction with road maintenance is at 39 per cent, in line with recent rounds, but significantly lower than September 2012 and January 2013 (both at 46 per cent) and July 2013 (45 per cent).
- The level of satisfaction with pavement maintenance has remained relatively stable over most rounds of the polling, but with a peak of 59 per cent very or fairly satisfied in July 2013 and a low of 51 per cent in January 2014. Currently, satisfaction stands at 54 per cent.
- Satisfaction with library services has been relatively stable since the polling began, although with a couple of peaks - once in April 2013, the other in July 2014 – both at 71 per cent. In this round however, satisfaction has dropped to 62 per cent. This is due to a small increase in both the proportions answering 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (19 per cent) and those who are actively dissatisfied (15 per cent). It will be important to monitor whether this is just a one off result of the beginning of a trend.
- It is also interesting to note that in recent rounds, more respondents have expressed an opinion about library services – in this round, four per cent answered 'don't know', whilst in the polling up to and including the November 2013 round, the proportion was between 10 and 12 per cent.
- Overall satisfaction with services for children and young people currently stands at 47 per cent. This is similar to recent rounds through 2014 and 2015, but lower than levels observed in some earlier rounds (for example, in three of the five polls including and prior to November 2013 satisfaction was at 53 per cent). However this is due to an increase in respondents saying they are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' rather than an increase in active dissatisfaction. It is also worth noting that many respondents will not have direct experience of this service and the proportion answering 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (26 per cent) or 'don't know' (nine per cent) reflects this.
- Views of services and support for older people have been slightly variable over the course of the polling, fluctuating from round to round. The lowest level observed to date was 44 per cent in July 2014 and the highest was 52 per cent in July 2013. This round was towards the lower end, with 45 per cent very or fairly satisfied. Similar to children's services, the proportion answering 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (28 per cent) may reflect the non-universal nature of this service.

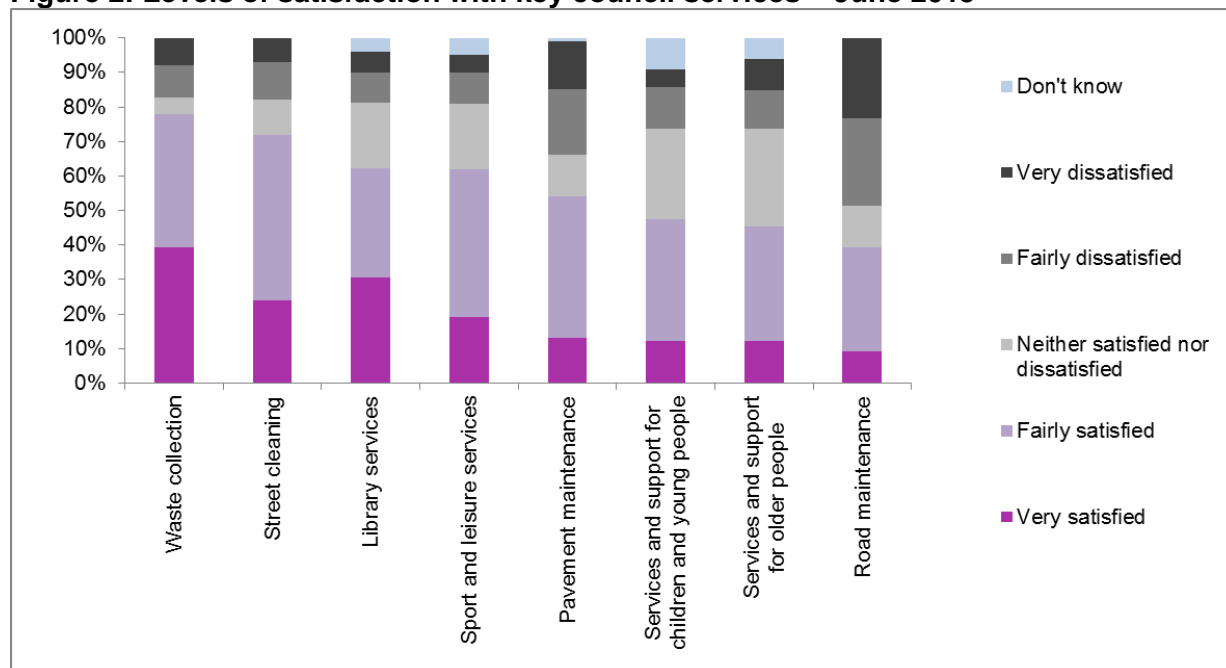
Along with pavement maintenance, road maintenance continues to have the highest levels of dissatisfaction. In this round 49 per cent were very or fairly dissatisfied with road maintenance, whilst 33 per cent were very or fairly dissatisfied with pavement maintenance.

Satisfaction with sports and leisure services remains strong amongst those with an opinion, with 62 per cent fairly or very satisfied.¹⁶ As in previous rounds, a notable proportion (19 per cent) answered 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' or 'don't know' (five per cent), which could be due to respondents not personally using the service.

Tables showing the full set of service-specific satisfaction results can be found at Annex A.

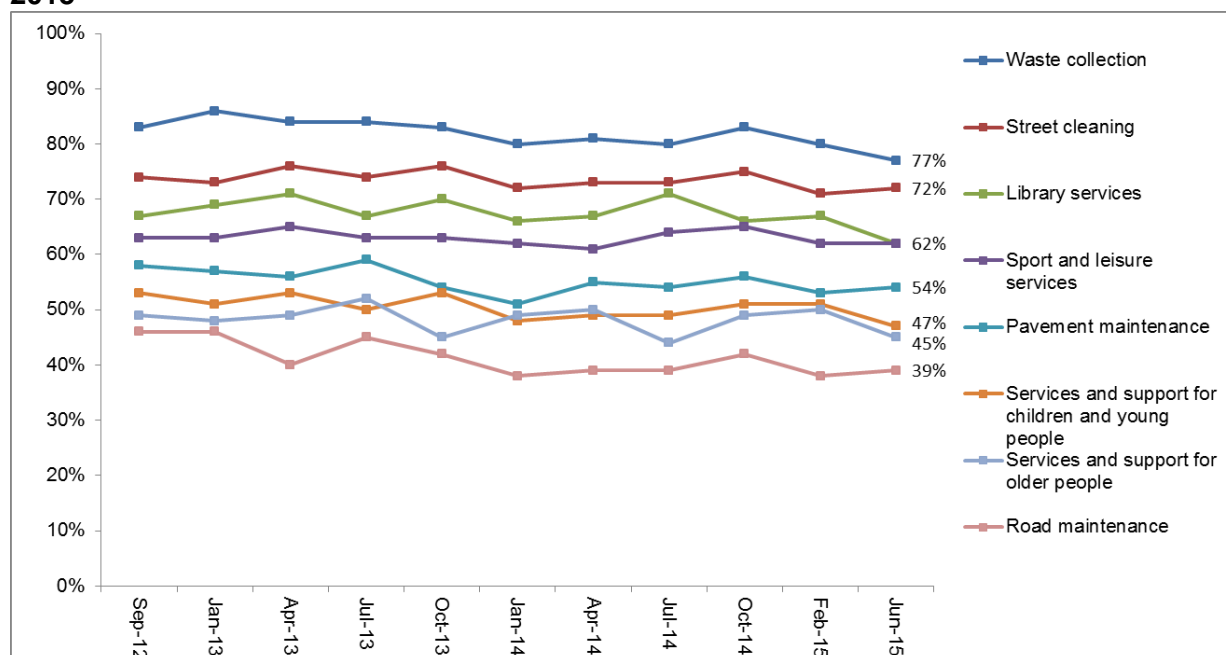
¹⁶ Note that as this question was asked of all respondents, the base includes those that may not have used particular services.

Figure 2: Levels of satisfaction with key council services – June 2015



Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults

Figure 3: Proportion very or fairly satisfied with each service: September 2012 – June 2015



Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Importance of services

Respondents were asked to pick from the following list, which three things in their local area they consider to be most important to them and their family:

- Condition of roads/pavements
- Consumer protection and environmental health (e.g. rogue traders, noise)
- Facilities/services for children and young people (not including schools)

- Housing
- Job prospects
- Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Library services
- Local high street facilities
- Public transport
- Schools
- Services and support for older people
- Sport and leisure services
- Street cleaning
- Waste collection

The level of crime and anti-social behaviour was most commonly selected among the top three most important things to respondents and their families – 38 per cent selected this option. This has consistently been the top issue selected by respondents, although it is interesting to note that the proportion of respondents selecting it in this round was statistically significantly lower than when the question was first asked in July 2014 (45 per cent).

This was followed by the conditions of roads and pavements and schools at 29 and 28 per cent respectively. Again, these issues have both consistently been in the top three most commonly selected. The least important to those surveyed in this round were library services and local high street facilities, with just ten per cent placing each of these in their top three.

Table 11: Thinking about your local area, which three things are most important to you and your family?				
	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%
Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	45	42	39	38
Condition of roads/pavements	29	31	32	29
Schools	30	29	33	28
Facilities/services for children and young people (not including schools)	25	25	27	27
Waste collection	21	22	22	24
Services and support for older people	24	22	24	21
Public transport	22	22	21	21
Job prospects	23	19	19	20
Housing	14	15	14	17
Sport and leisure services	16	17	18	16
Street cleaning	13	13	12	14
Consumer protection and environmental health	13	11	9	13
Library services	9	10	10	10
Local high street facilities	9	9	10	10
Don't know	*	1	*	1
None of the above	*	1	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Note that the figures in the table add up to more than 100% as respondents could select up to three answer options.

The media

Respondents were asked whether, overall, they thought that the media had viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months:

- the government
- local councils across the country
- their own local council

As with the previous rounds of polling, on balance respondents reported hearing positive or 'neither positive nor negative' media views, rather than negative messages about local government from the media. National government fared less well than respondents' local councils on this measure.

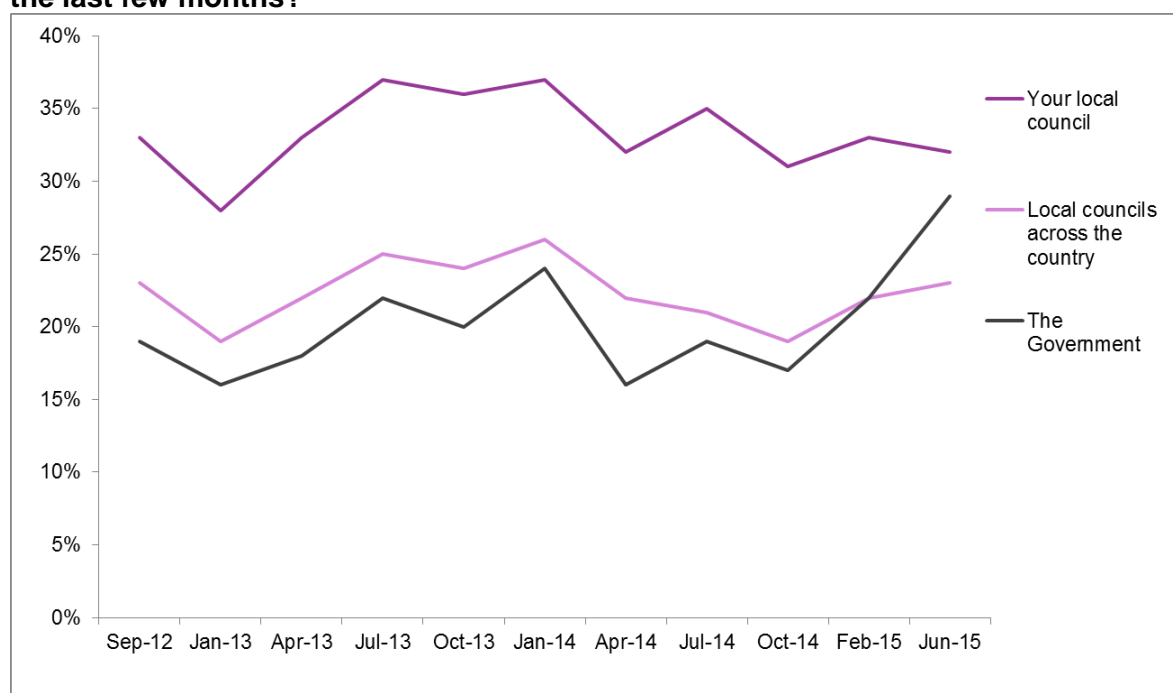
For the government the proportion of respondents observing positive coverage has significantly increased to 29 per cent. This is the highest level observed since the polling started in September 2012, with the lowest being 16 per cent (January 2013 and April 2014). This increase corresponds with a dip in observed negative coverage (currently at 40 per cent – still noticeably higher than the proportion observing positive coverage); with less change in the proportion who have observed neutral coverage (29 per cent). It is worth noting that the fieldwork for this round of polling occurred shortly after the general election, and it may be that the results reflect this.

Respondents' perceptions of coverage of their own local councils have remained fairly consistent, with the majority observing positive or neutral coverage. Currently:

- 32 per cent observed generally positive coverage of their own local council, whilst 44 per cent said that the media had viewed their own local council neither positively nor negatively
- 23 per cent observed generally positive coverage of local councils across the country, whilst 43 per cent answered 'neither positively nor negatively'.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of respondents who said that media coverage had been positive, since September 2012. Table 12 shows the results for all answer options since October 2013; the full set of figures can be found at Annex B.

Figure 4: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively in the last few months?



Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table 12: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

		Oct 2013	Jan 2014	April 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Government	Positively	20	24	16	19	17	22	29
	Neither positively nor negatively	20	23	29	26	30	29	29
	Negatively	54	49	51	54	49	47	40
	Don't know	5	4	4	2	4	2	2
Local councils across the country	Positively	24	26	22	21	19	22	23
	Neither positively nor negatively	29	28	39	36	42	34	43
	Negatively	34	37	30	36	32	40	30
	Don't know	13	9	9	7	7	5	5
Your local council	Positively	36	37	32	35	31	33	32
	Neither positively nor negatively	30	32	40	36	43	39	44
	Negatively	25	24	21	23	19	23	19
	Don't know	9	7	7	6	7	5	4

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Cuts to local council services

A new question was introduced in February 2015 asking respondents how concerned, if at all, they were about the effects of cuts to local council services on them and their family in the next 12 months. As Table 13 shows, in this round, 68 per cent were very or fairly concerned compared to 31 per cent who were not very or not at all concerned.

Table 13: How concerned, if at all, are you about the effects of cuts to local council services on you and your family in the next 12 months?

	February 2015	June 2015
	%	%
Very and fairly concerned	72	68
Very concerned	34	34
Fairly concerned	38	34
Not very concerned	18	21
Not concerned at all	10	10
Don't know	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Annex A: Service specific satisfaction results

Table A1: I am going to read out a number of different types of services that are provided by your council(s) in your area. I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with your council's...

	... waste collection ¹⁷										
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	83	86	84	84	83	80	81	80	83	80	77
Very satisfied	45	45	48	43	44	41	41	39	41	42	39
Fairly satisfied	37	41	36	41	39	39	39	41	42	38	38
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	4	4	4	4	5	6	4	4	4	5
Fairly dissatisfied	7	5	7	8	7	10	8	8	6	9	9
Very dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	7	7	7	8
Don't know	1	*	*	*	1	0	*	0	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table A1 continued...

	... street cleaning										
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	74	73	76	74	76	72	73	73	75	71	72
Very satisfied	27	26	30	27	26	24	24	25	25	27	24
Fairly satisfied	47	47	46	48	49	48	50	48	50	44	48
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	10	8	8	7	10	9	8	9	10	10
Fairly dissatisfied	12	10	9	10	10	10	11	12	9	10	11
Very dissatisfied	7	6	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	8	7
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

¹⁷ Note that in September 2012 respondents were asked about 'refuse collection'.

Table A1 continued...

... road maintenance											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	46	46	40	45	42	38	39	39	42	38	39
Very satisfied	12	11	10	10	9	9	10	8	11	8	9
Fairly satisfied	35	35	30	35	32	29	30	31	31	30	30
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	12	8	11	9	11	12	14	14	11	12
Fairly dissatisfied	24	22	22	23	26	25	22	24	24	25	25
Very dissatisfied	19	20	28	20	22	26	26	22	20	27	23
Don't know	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table A1 continued...

... pavement maintenance											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	58	57	56	59	54	51	55	54	56	53	54
Very satisfied	15	13	15	12	14	11	14	13	14	13	13
Fairly satisfied	43	44	41	47	41	39	42	41	42	41	41
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	12	11	9	11	15	14	15	12	13	12
Fairly dissatisfied	19	19	18	16	20	19	19	19	17	18	19
Very dissatisfied	13	10	15	14	14	14	11	11	14	15	14
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table A1 continued...

... library services											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	67	69	71	67	70	66	67	71	66	67	62
Very satisfied	34	29	30	32	32	30	27	30	31	30	31
Fairly satisfied	34	40	41	35	38	36	40	41	35	38	32
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	12	11	13	10	17	14	15	17	16	19
Fairly dissatisfied	7	5	6	5	6	7	7	6	5	6	9
Very dissatisfied	3	3	3	3	3	5	4	5	6	6	6
Don't know	12	11	10	11	10	5	7	3	7	5	4

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table A1 continued...

... sport and leisure services											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	63	63	65	63	63	62	61	64	65	62	62
Very satisfied	21	19	22	18	19	18	18	21	21	21	19
Fairly satisfied	42	43	43	45	44	44	43	42	44	41	43
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	16	14	13	14	17	18	17	16	17	19
Fairly dissatisfied	11	8	8	12	9	9	9	10	7	11	9
Very dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	6	5
Don't know	8	9	9	8	9	6	6	3	5	3	5

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table A1 continued...

... services and support for older people											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	49	48	49	52	45	49	50	44	49	50	45
Very satisfied	10	13	15	12	10	11	10	13	13	13	12
Fairly satisfied	39	35	34	40	35	38	39	31	36	38	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19	21	21	20	23	28	27	31	25	28	28
Fairly dissatisfied	9	8	9	8	10	9	8	11	9	9	11
Very dissatisfied	4	5	5	5	7	8	5	6	6	7	9
Don't know	18	18	17	14	15	7	9	8	11	5	6

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table A1 continued...

... services and support for children and young people											
	Sept 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	53	51	53	50	53	48	49	49	51	51	47
Very satisfied	14	14	15	15	14	14	11	16	12	13	12
Fairly satisfied	39	38	38	35	39	34	38	33	40	38	35
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15	19	16	17	18	24	23	26	21	24	26
Fairly dissatisfied	10	7	9	10	9	11	10	12	9	9	12
Very dissatisfied	6	7	6	8	5	7	6	7	8	9	5
Don't know	16	16	15	15	15	10	12	6	10	7	9

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Annex B: Views on media coverage since September 2012

Table B1: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

	The Government										
	Sep 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Positively	19	16	18	22	20	24	16	19	17	22	29
Neither positively nor negatively	23	28	29	20	20	23	29	26	30	29	29
Negatively	54	50	46	52	54	49	51	54	49	47	40
Don't know	4	6	7	6	5	4	4	2	4	2	2

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table B2: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

	Local councils across the country										
	Sep 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Positively	23	19	22	25	24	26	22	21	19	22	23
Neither positively nor negatively	30	38	39	25	29	28	39	36	42	34	43
Negatively	34	31	27	34	34	37	30	36	32	40	30
Don't know	13	12	12	16	13	9	9	7	7	5	5

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Table B3: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

	Your local council										
	Sep 2012	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	July 2013	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	July 2014	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	June 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Positively	33	28	33	37	36	37	32	35	31	33	32
Neither positively nor negatively	34	43	41	27	30	32	40	36	43	39	44
Negatively	21	18	17	24	25	24	21	23	19	23	19
Don't know	12	11	9	13	9	7	7	6	7	5	4

Base (all respondents): 1,008 British adults in June 2015⁷

Annex C: Polling questions

I would like to ask you some questions about your local council. Local councils are responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

If you live in an area with more than one council please think about the way in which they deliver services to you overall. This would include district and county councils. We are doing this to keep the survey simple as it is part of a national study.

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

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council(s) runs things?

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

3. In considering the next question, please think about the range of services your local council(s) provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services your local council(s) provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local council(s) provides value for money?

Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know

4. To what extent do you think your local council(s) acts on the concerns of local residents?

A great deal
A fair amount
Not very much
Not at all
Don't know

5. Overall, how well informed do you think your local council(s) keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

- Very well informed
- Fairly well informed
- Not very well informed
- Not well informed at all
- Don't know

6. How much do you trust your local council(s)?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all
- Don't know

7. Who do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?

(respondents to select one answer option only)

Randomise order:

- Your local council(s)
- The government
- Neither (not read out but the interviewer can code if given spontaneously)
- Don't know

8. And which individuals do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?

(respondents to select one answer option only)

Randomise order:

- Local councillors
- Members of parliament
- Government ministers
- None of the above (not read out but the interviewer can code if given spontaneously)
- Don't know

9. a) How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Fairly unsafe
- Very unsafe
- Don't know

9. b) How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

Very safe
Fairly safe
Neither safe nor unsafe
Fairly unsafe
Very unsafe
Don't know

10. I am going to read out a number of different types of services that are provided by your council(s) in your area. I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with your council's...

Randomise order:

Waste collection
Street cleaning
Road maintenance
Pavement maintenance
Library services
Sport and leisure services
Services and support for older people
Services and support for children and young people

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

11. Thinking about your local area, which **three** things are most important to you and your family?

Respondents to pick up to three answers from the following list

Randomise order

Waste collection
Street cleaning
Condition of roads/pavements
Library services
Local high street facilities
Job prospects
Public transport
Sport and leisure services
Services and support for older people
Facilities/services for children and young people (not including schools)
Housing
Schools
Consumer protection and environmental health (e.g. rogue traders, noise)
Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

None of the above (not to be read out but coded if given spontaneously and no options selected above)
Don't know

12. Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

Randomise order:

The Government
Local council(s) across the country
Your local council

Positively
Negatively
Neither positively nor negatively
Don't know

Additional question for this round:

13. How concerned, if at all, are you about the effects of cuts to local council services on you and your family in the next 12 months?

Very concerned
Fairly concerned
Not very concerned
Not concerned at all
Don't know



Local Government Association

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk
www.local.gov.uk

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For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio, please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
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