

Final Report

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Report on
Stirling Quality of Life Survey

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Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

Stirling Council, on behalf of Stirling Alliance, issued a survey to its Citizens' Panel members to establish a baseline on quality of life issues in the Stirling area. The main aim of the survey was to investigate local people's perceptions, level of satisfaction with different aspects of their lives and priorities for the future.

Method

The survey covered a number of different aspects of quality of life, which were identified through focus groups with local people. Stirling Council administered the issue and return of questionnaires in February 2002. A reminder was issued around a fortnight after the initial tranche of questionnaires were issued, to increase the response rate. A total of 858 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 67%. FMR Research Ltd conducted the data-processing, analysis and reporting elements of the project and this report details the findings of the survey. A presentation of top line findings was made to Stirling Alliance on March 26th 2002.

Key Findings

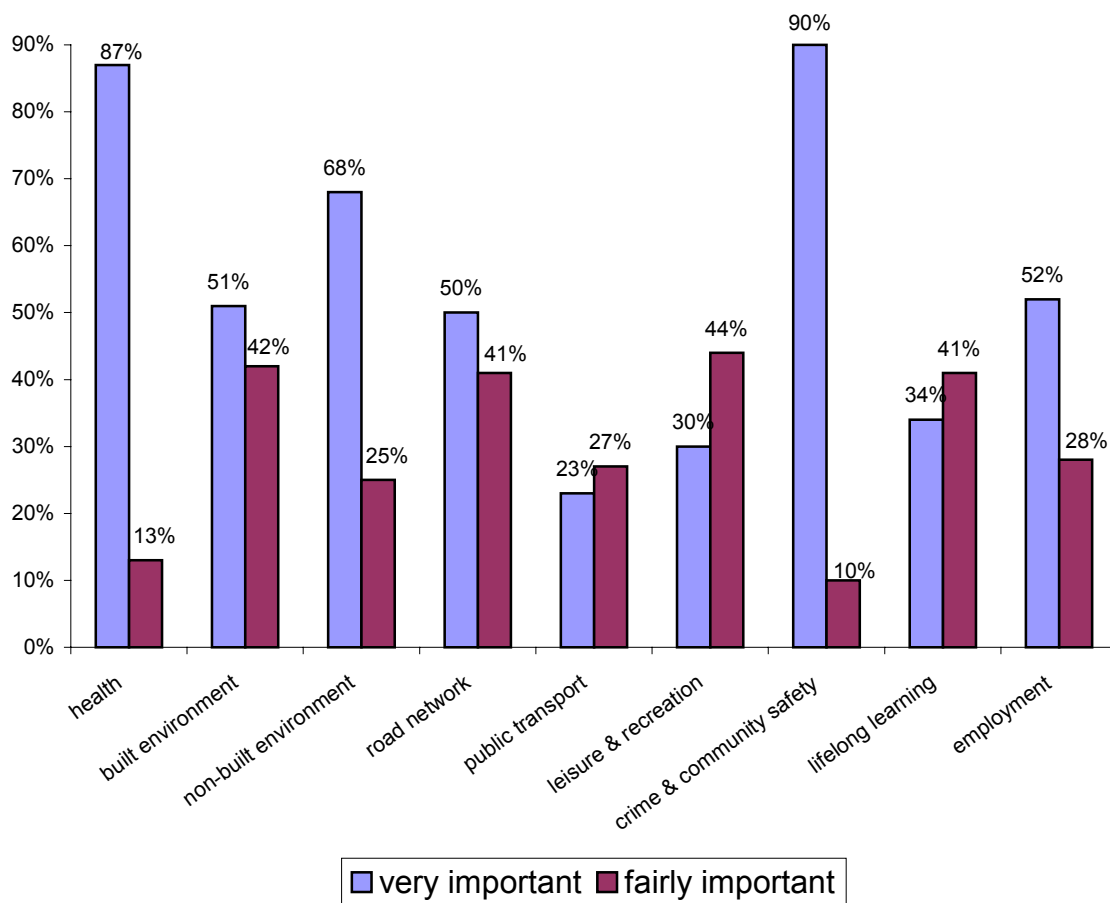
This section follows the flow of the questionnaire. The questionnaire commenced with a general section on quality of life in the local area, prior to moving onto more specific aspects of quality of life. The specific sections (health, built environment, non-built environment, roads & transport, leisure & recreation, lifelong learning and employment) asked respondents for ratings for both the importance of and satisfaction with each aspect. These are illustrated in charts and associated comments are then listed in bullet point form. The survey closed with further general quality of life questions.

Quality of life in your area

- Panel members rated the Stirling Council area highly as a place to live (42% very good; 50% fairly good). Throughout the survey, older respondents were generally more positive than younger ones.
- The rating of their local neighbourhood was similarly positive, with 49% (415 respondents) rating it as very good and 39% (335 respondents) as fairly good.
- Just over half of respondents (52%, 448 respondents) considered there to have been no change in their neighbourhood in the past couple of years. Ten percent (85 respondents) felt it had changed for the better, whilst one-third of respondents (283 respondents) considered it to have deteriorated.
- The main reasons given for an improvement in the area were improved amenities (31%, 22 respondents) and improved housing (23%, 16 respondents). The key reasons given for a perceived deterioration were increased traffic problems/volume and parking (18%, 49 respondents), more litter and/or broken glass (18%, 47 respondents) and roads/footpaths being in disrepair (17%, 45 respondents).
- The neighbourhood was rated well in terms of friendliness (84% very or fairly good, 719 respondents) but less positively regarding community spirit (57% very or fairly good, 492 respondents). However, the proportion of Panel members rating either as poor were still low.
- Just over a quarter of respondents (28%, 235 respondents) spend time as a volunteer or unpaid organiser for charities, clubs or other official organisations within the Stirling area, and 18% (149 respondents) do so for local community groups such as Parent Teacher Associations, Tenants Associations or Community Councils.

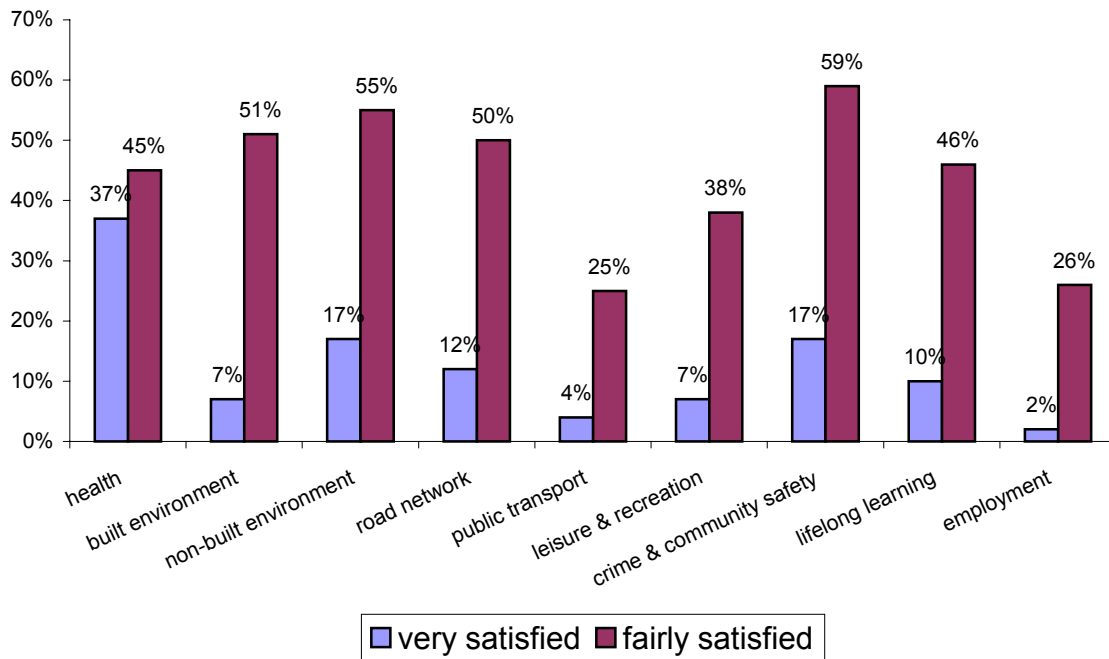
Importance Ratings

The perceived importance of the different aspects of quality of life were as follows:



Satisfaction Ratings

As can be seen from the chart below, the satisfaction levels with each issue varied widely.



It should be noted that the rating of satisfaction with health in the chart on the previous page relates to the respondent's perception of their own health in the previous twelve months, not satisfaction with related services/facilities.

Health

- Access to all health services tested was generally perceived to be good, although there were a high proportion of 'don't know' responses to community health workers.
- The principal ideas for improving quality of life via health services was to reduce waiting times for both GPs and specialists/consultants and to improve access to services, particularly for those without cars.

Built Environment

- 88% of respondents (761 respondents) were satisfied with the home in which they lived.
- Dissatisfaction highlighted the need for a better quality home (30 respondents), primarily by Council tenants, and a larger home (24 respondents), primarily by owner-occupiers.
- The main perceived problems in meeting future housing needs in the area was a lack of affordable housing for sale (43%, 364 respondents) or rent (28%, 241 respondents). However, 35% (297 respondents) foresaw no future housing problems.
- The top three issues which Panel members felt they required more of were facilities for young people (80%, 624 respondents); leisure and sports facilities (65%, 508 respondents); and play areas for children (46%, 360 respondents). The buildings which people would like to see less of were houses (20%, 156 respondents) and land/premises for business and industry (16%, 118 respondents).
- Suggested improvements to the built environment included improving road/path maintenance (56 respondents); improving traffic management/control and speeding (37 respondents); things for young people to do (24 respondents); better maintenance (24 respondents); and improved leisure facilities (24 respondents).

Environmental Issues

- Access to the countryside (85% very or fairly good, 722 respondents) and access to public parks (68% very or fairly good, 577 respondents) were rated most positively, whilst

around one in three respondents rated cleanliness of streets, availability of recycling facilities and maintenance of common areas as poor.

- When asked to indicate whether issues were a major problem, minor problem or not a problem at all, 28% of respondents (236 respondents) considered illegal dumping of waste to be a major problem, as was the loss of woodlands and open space (23%, 200 respondents). Between 27% and 37% considered each issue tested to be a minor problem.
- Suggested improvements to quality of life under this heading included clearing up litter/fly tipping (61 respondents); improving paths/walkways (32 respondents); improving recycling (24 respondents); and preserving the green belt (23 respondents).

Roads and Transport

- The majority of respondents use a car as their main form of transport (70%, 598 respondents).
- The two areas of least satisfaction, and greatest dissatisfaction, were the condition of roads (62%, 532 respondents, dissatisfied) and the condition of pavements (49%, 412 respondents, dissatisfied). This theme emerged throughout the survey.
- Quality of life would improve if roads were better maintained (118 respondents), public transport was improved (95 respondents) and traffic was managed more effectively (76 respondents).

Leisure and Recreation

- Greatest satisfaction was noted with the quality of parks and open spaces (58%, 499 respondents, very or fairly good) and shopping facilities (60%, 517 respondents, very or fairly good).
- Access to sports and leisure facilities (31%, 270 respondents, very or fairly poor) and access to arts and cultural activities (31%, 268 respondents, very or fairly poor) were seen to be areas for improvement.
- Further suggestions on how leisure and recreation could improve the quality of life of local people included improving/maintaining parks and play areas (36 respondents); a new or improved swimming pool (26 respondents); and improving access to/more local facilities (23 respondents).

Crime and Community Safety

- Generally, respondents feel safe when out during the day, either alone or with friends, and in the evening with friends. The greatest concern for safety was when people are out during the evening alone, when 20% (175 respondents) reported feeling unsafe to one degree or another, particularly amongst Council tenants, 16 – 24 year olds and those living in urban areas.
- Panel members were asked to rate a number of crime and community safety issues as major problems, minor problems or not a problem at all. The top three major problems were perceived to be speeding and other driving offences (35%, 297 respondents), illegal drug activity (19%, 166 respondents) and graffiti/vandalism (19%, 162 respondents).
- One in eight respondents (12%, 99 respondents) stated that they had been a victim of crime, either to themselves or their property, in the previous twelve months, whilst twice this number (25%, 207 respondents) had experienced crime indirectly in that period, e.g. as a witness of being aware of crimes committed against friends or family.
- There is a fair degree of concern about both violent crimes against people (43%, 363 respondents, very or fairly concerned) and crime against property (61%, 515 respondents, very or fairly concerned).
- The two key ways to improve community safety were seen to be providing more places for young people to go (63%, 541 respondents) and an improved level of policing (60%, 508 respondents).
- The key suggested improvements in the open-ended responses were increasing police presence (61 respondents) and addressing problems of young people hanging about/drinking (26 respondents), reiterating earlier points made.

Lifelong Learning

- Satisfaction with lifelong learning for children and young people was high where people had an opinion, but between one third and one half of respondents did not feel they could comment on such things as out of school care, provision of nurseries and other facilities for the under fives and the standard of schooling.
- Similarly, when asked to rate different aspects of lifelong learning targeted at adults, around one third of respondents could not comment. Satisfaction was generally lower than with services aimed at children and young people, however.

-
- The suggested improvements for lifelong learning and how this could impact on quality of life were primarily one-off statements given the wide range of issues under this heading.

Employment

- The top three barriers to getting a job cited were a lack of job opportunities (47%, 164 respondents), wages are too low (43%, 150 respondents) and travel costs (30%, 105 respondents).
- The three skills or qualifications which were perceived to be key to finding a job were computer/IT skills (73%, 222 respondents), formal qualifications such as Highers/HND/degree (50%, 153 respondents) and management qualifications/skills (32%, 99 respondents).
- Suggested improvements to quality of life via employment prospects were attracting businesses to the area/rural area (18 respondents), providing further education/training opportunities (11 respondents) and improving information and awareness of job opportunities (9 respondents).

General Quality of Life

- Stirling compared favourably to neighbouring areas such as Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Perth & Kinross in perceived quality of life. 14% (119 respondents) considered it to be much better and 28% (241 respondents) considered it to be slightly better. Only 5% rated it as worse than neighbouring areas. However, it should be noted that 30% did not venture an opinion.
- When asked what made Stirling a good place to live, many responses were given. The top four were good community/friendly neighbours (37%), access to countryside/open spaces (29%), good, attractive, pleasant environment (25%) and good transport links/easy commuting (24%).
- When asked what changes they would like to make to improve their quality of life, the top four responses were improving roads/pavement maintenance (31%), improving traffic control (21%), providing more facilities for young people and children (20%) and more leisure/sports facilities (19%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The topics within the survey are confirmed as being important to local people's quality of life, as all, except public transport, were seen as being important by the majority of respondents. Safety and health were seen to be particularly important, but few additional issues were raised.

Overall, residents of Stirling are generally satisfied with their quality of life and feel it compares well to other areas. Some residents (older people, home-owners and those living in rural areas) are generally more satisfied than others (younger people, Council tenants and those living in urban areas), but this assists Stirling Alliance in addressing the issues raised in a more targeted way.

Thirteen key areas for improvement were identified via the survey. None of these are straightforward to address as they often require the co-operation of different sectors and members of the public themselves, plus reallocation of or additional resources. They require to be addressed nonetheless and this gives Stirling Alliance additional focus in its activities.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Stirling Council, with its community planning partners, appointed FMR Research Ltd in January 2002 to undertake the data-processing, analysis and reporting elements of their Quality of Life Survey. This report presents the findings from that survey.

The survey was conducted with Stirling Sounding Board, the Council's Citizens' Panel, and was the fifth survey to be undertaken with the Panel. The survey was designed by partners as a baseline for quality of life and they will develop quality of life indicators to track quality of life in Stirling over time, based on the survey. The questionnaire built on different surveys which had already been conducted at both national and local level to allow comparability of results, but also asked additional questions which were developed following two focus groups with members of the Panel on quality of life issues. A number of different aspects of quality of life were explored, under the following headings:

- quality of life in the area;
- health;
- the built environment;
- environmental issues;
- roads & transport;
- leisure & recreation;
- crime & community safety;
- lifelong learning;
- employment; and
- general quality of life comments.

1.2 Objectives

The main aim of the survey was to investigate local people's perceptions, level of satisfaction with different aspects of their lives and priorities for the future.

Specific tasks asked of FMR were as follows:

- data-processing of the returned questionnaires;
- listing and coding of open-ended responses;
- production of data tables, with analysis by specific demographic characteristics and cross-tabulations (gender, urban/rural, age, employment status, tenure and car ownership);
- data on disk/emailed, in SPSS format;
- a full report with associated commentary and interpretation of the results (commenting on differences by demographic profiles where appropriate), along with an executive summary; and
- a presentation of the preliminary results to Stirling Alliance (Stirling's strategic community planning partnership group).

2 Method

2.1 Approach

Stirling Council and its partners spent some time designing a questionnaire to seek views from local people on quality of life issues, with a view to developing quality of life indicators and tracking change over time. A couple of focus groups were convened to assist in identifying the key issues to be included. A total of 56 questions were asked and the questionnaire is appended for information.

In February 2002 the survey was issued to all members of the Panel, approximately 1,275 local people, by Stirling Council. A reminder was sent a couple of weeks after the first tranche had been issued and the final deadline for responses was set as March 18th 2002. All questionnaires were returned to Stirling Council via their reply-paid response service, logged onto the Panel's Access database as having been received and then sent to FMR for data-processing.

Once all questionnaires had been received and logged onto the database, Stirling Council sent the details of those who had responded to FMR to allow demographic details to be imported into the SPSS file and analysis undertaken on this basis. This assisted in telling us what kinds of people said what.

A total of 858 responses were received, which represents a response rate of 67%.

Upon receipt of the questionnaires, FMR input the data to SPSS, the industry standard data-processing package. Literal responses were entered as free text to allow consideration to be given to the very specific issues raised by respondents, in addition to being coded as far as possible into emerging themes to gain some insight into what is important to local people.

A presentation of the top-line findings was made to Stirling Alliance on March 26th and this report details the findings of the survey more fully. A separate appendix of the cross-tabulated data is also provided.

2.2 Profile of respondents

Slightly more women than men returned the survey.

Table 1: Gender

	No.	%
Female	507	59%
Male	351	41%
Total	858	100%

Responses were received from across the different age groups.

Table 2: Age

	No.	%
16-24	73	9%
25-34	131	15%
35-44	162	19%
45-54	144	17%
55-64	157	18%
65-74	153	18%
75+	38	4%
Total	858	100%

A mix of working status was also achieved.

Table 3: Working status

	No.	%
Full time employed	329	38%
Part time employed	103	12%
Self employed	43	5%
Student/training	42	5%
Looking after home/family	82	10%
Retired	204	24%
Long term illness	32	4%
Unemployed	23	3%
Total	858	100%

Almost three-quarters of respondents were owner-occupiers. One in five were Council tenants.

Table 4: Tenure

	No.	%
Privately owned	625	73%
Rented from Council	175	20%
Rented from HA	13	2%
Private landlord	32	4%
Residential care	1	0%
Tied accom.	12	1%
Total	858	100%

Four out of five respondents had access to a car.

Table 5: Access to car

	No.	%
Yes	692	81%
No	120	14%
N/R	46	5%
Total	858	100%

One third of respondents lived in rural areas, whilst the remaining two-third lived in urban areas.

Table 6: Urban/rural

	No.	%
Rural	279	33%
Urban	579	67%
Total	858	100%

3 Key Findings

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the key findings from the quality of life survey 2002. It broadly follows the flow of the questionnaire, which is appended for information.

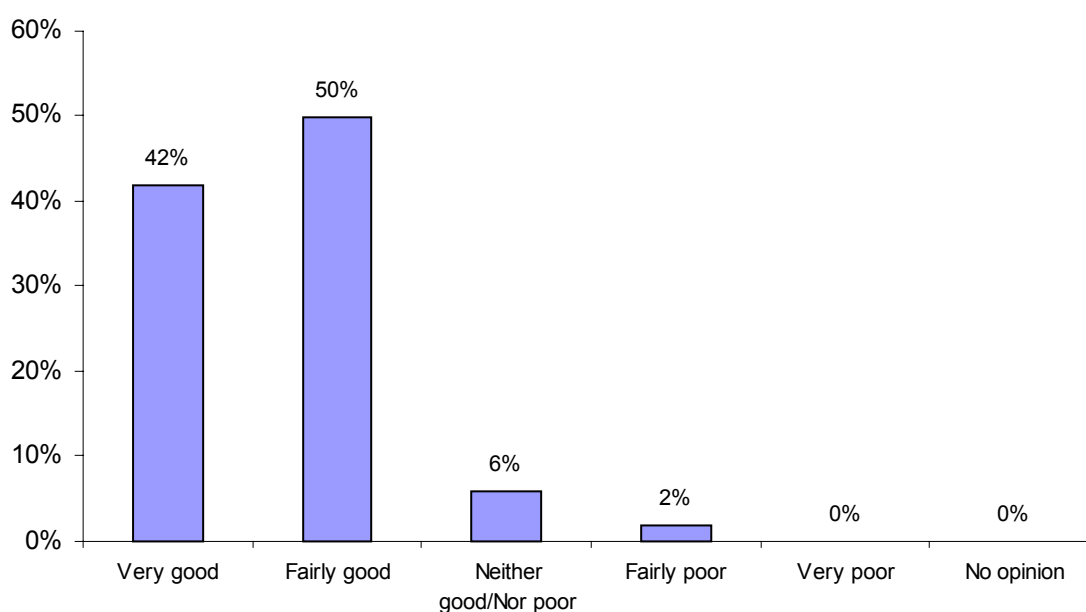
As the questionnaire was a self-completion one, not everyone answered each question fully. The 'missing' responses have been suppressed so as not to dilute the data. This is why the base varies slightly for each question. Where more than a handful of respondents did not complete the question, this is noted in the commentary.

3.2 Your Area

3.2.1 Rating of Stirling Council as a place to live

Panel members rated the Stirling Council area highly as a place to live. Forty-two percent rated it as a very good place to live, whilst a further 50% rated it as fairly good. Older people were more likely than younger respondents to rate the area as very good (53%, 100 respondents aged 65+), rather than fairly good (42%, 79 respondents aged 65+) whilst only 19% of 16 – 24 year olds rated the area as very good.

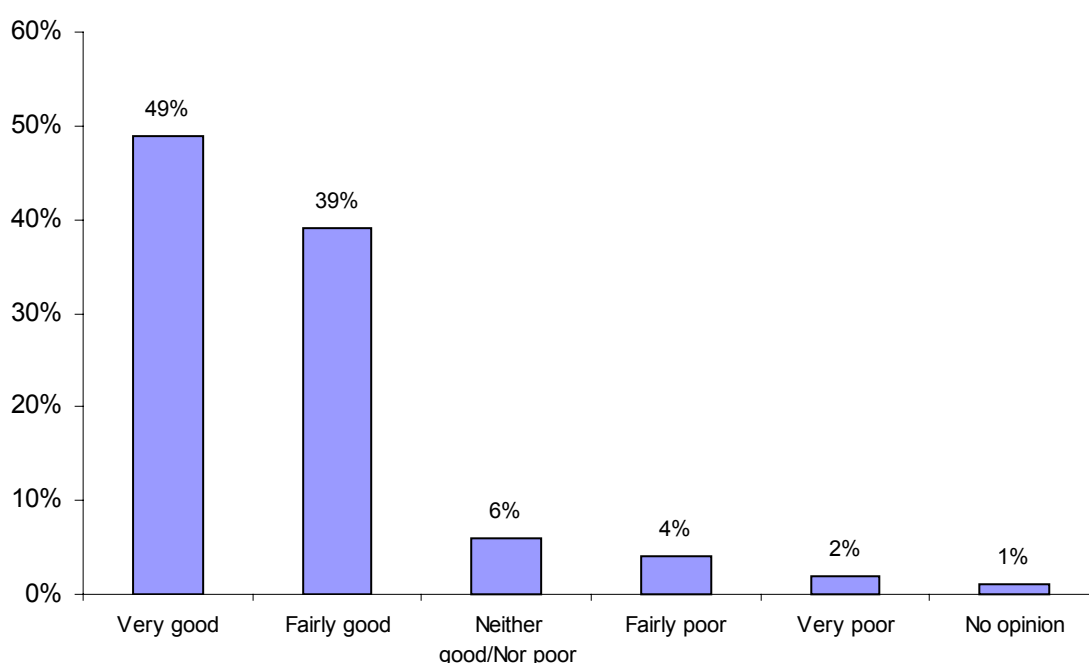
Figure 1: How do you rate the Stirling Council area as a place to live?



3.2.2 Rating of local neighbourhood as a place to live

Respondents were then asked to rate their local neighbourhood as a place to live. Responses were similarly positive, with 49% of respondents (415 respondents) rating it as very good and 39% (335 respondents) as fairly good. As with the previous question, older respondents were more likely to state very good (59%, 110 respondents) than fairly good (37%, 69 respondents) in contrast to those aged 16 – 24 (33%, 24 respondents, stated very good and 42%, 31 respondents, fairly good).

Figure 2: How do you rate your local neighbourhood as a place to live?



3.2.3 Change in the neighbourhood

Just over half of respondents (52%, 448 respondents) felt that there had been no change in their neighbourhood in the past two to three years. However, whilst 10% (85 respondents) felt that their neighbourhood had changed for the better, one-third of respondents (283 respondents) considered it to have deteriorated.

Table 7: Do you think your neighbourhood has changed over the past 2-3 years?

	No.	%
Yes - has got better	85	10%
Yes - has got worse	283	33%
No change	448	52%
No opinion	39	5%
Total	855	100%

Those who were more likely than the norm to cite an improvement in their neighbourhood were men (12%, 43 respondents); those aged 25 – 44 (12%, 36 respondents) or 65+ (13%, 24 respondents); Council tenants (12%, 21 respondents); and rural residents (13%, 36 respondents). Conversely, Council tenants were also more likely than the norm to state that their neighbourhood had got worse in the past two to three years (45%, 78 respondents) as they were less likely to state that there had been no change (38%, 67 respondents). Those who lived in urban areas (36%, 208 respondents); women (36%, 182 respondents); and those aged 16 – 24 (37%, 27 respondents) or 45 – 64 (39%, 116 respondents) were more likely to cite deterioration in their neighbourhood.

The main reasons given for an improvement in the area were improved amenities (31%, 22 respondents) and improved housing (23%, 16 respondents). The reasons for an improved rating were as follows:

Table 8: If yes, in what ways do you think it has changed (for the better)?

	No.	%
Improved amenities (incl leisure, sport, for kids, etc)	22	31%
Improved housing	16	23%
Improved roads, lighting and traffic management	13	18%
Better school and associated facilities	12	17%
Better community spirit	11	15%
New/young people moved into area	9	13%
Better shopping/eating out facilities	9	13%
Improvements to built environment	6	8%
Crime and assoc. causes decreased	5	7%
Improvements to non-built environment	5	7%
Other	9	13%
Total	71	100%

The main reasons for a perceived deterioration were given as increased traffic problems, volume and parking (18%, 49 respondents), more litter and/or broken glass (18%, 47 respondents) and roads/footpaths being in disrepair (17%, 45 respondents).

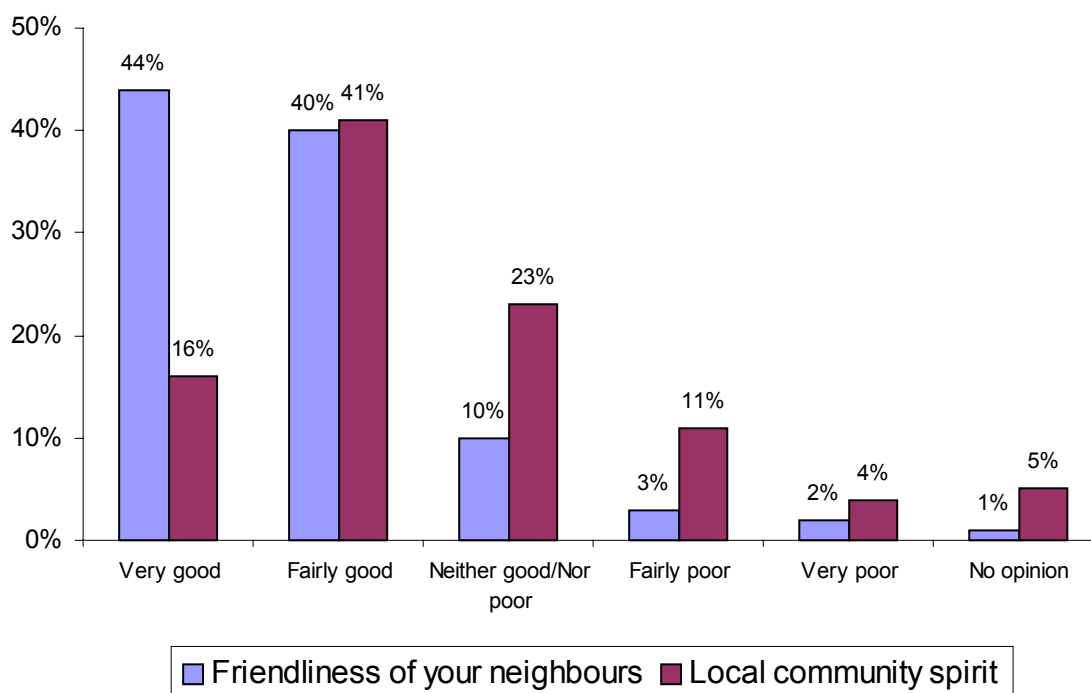
Table 9: If yes, in what ways do you think it has changed (for the worse)?

	No.	%
Increased traffic problems, volume & parking	49	18%
More litter/broken glass	47	18%
Roads/footpaths in disrepair	45	17%
Poor/too much development/encroachment on green belt	34	13%
Development not backed up by infrastructure	34	13%
Increased drugs/alcohol related issues	33	12%
Young people hanging about/no amenities for yp	31	12%
More vandalism/graffiti	30	11%
Increased crime (theft, violence)	22	8%
Neighbours/Council not maintaining gardens/property	22	8%
Poor maintenance of public areas	22	8%
Increased noise	19	7%
Antisocial neighbours	13	5%
Shops closing down/deteriorating	14	5%
Problems caused by dogs	8	3%
Not enough police presence	6	2%
Other	38	14%
Total	267	100%

3.2.4 Friendliness and community spirit

The local neighbourhood was rated very highly in terms of friendliness (84% very or fairly good, 719 respondents) but less positively regarding community spirit (57% very or fairly good, 492 respondents). However, the proportion of respondents rating either quality as poor was still low, as can be seen from the following chart:

Figure 3: How do you rate your local neighbourhood in terms of the following issues?



As with previous questions, older people were much more positive in their ratings (63% and 26% rating the friendliness and community spirit as very good) than younger respondents (29% and 11% respectively).

3.2.5 Volunteering

Just over a quarter of respondents (28%, 235 respondents) stated that they spend time as a volunteer or unpaid organiser for charities, clubs or other official organisations within the Stirling area, e.g. scouts, bowling clubs, playgroups. Volunteers were more likely to be aged 45+ (31%) have access to a car (30%, 209 respondents), own their own home (31%, 190 respondents) and live in a rural area (37%, 102 respondents).

The proportion of respondents who spend time as a volunteer or unpaid organiser with any local community groups such as Parent Teacher Associations, Tenants Associations or Community Council was lower, at 18% (149 respondents). Those with the characteristics listed above were again more likely to volunteer for these activities than other members of the Panel.

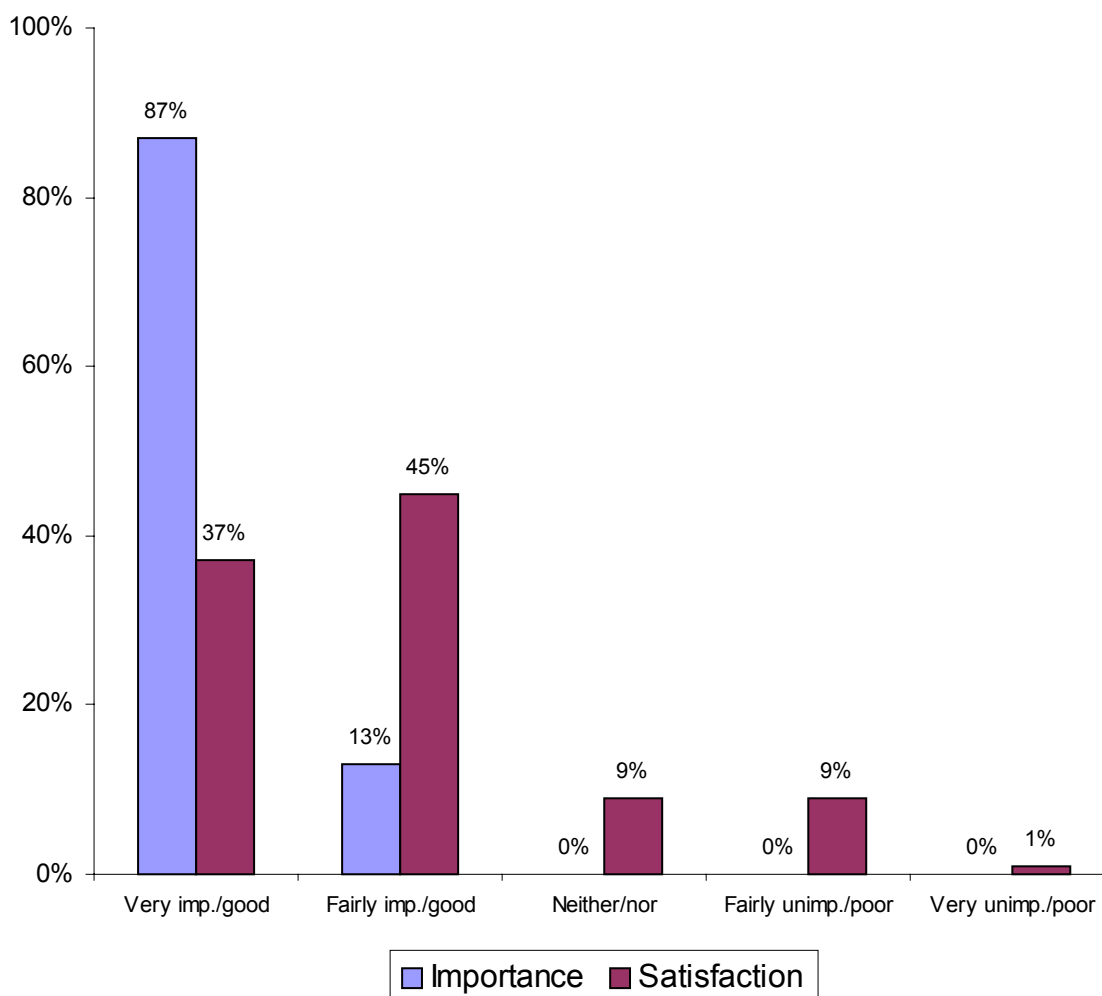
3.3 Health

3.3.1 Importance of and satisfaction with health

Health was seen to be extremely important to overall quality of life, with 87% (740 respondents) rating it as very important and 13% (107 respondents) as fairly important. Those aged 16 – 24 were less likely to rate it as very important (74%, 54 respondents), but health is generally less of an issue for this age group.

Over the past twelve months, just over a third of respondents (37%, 315 respondents) rated their own health (as distinct from health services, which were tested in the next question) as very good, and a further 45% (383 respondents) as fairly good. Older residents and Council tenants were less positive about their health.

Figure 4: How important is your health to your overall quality of life? Over the past 12 months, how would you say your health has been?



3.3.2 Rating of access to health services

Respondents were then asked to rate their local area in terms of access to a number of health services. Access to all services tested was generally perceived to be good, although there was a high proportion of 'don't know' responses to community health workers.

Table 10: How do you rate your local area in terms of the following?

	Very good		Fairly good		Neither good/Nor poor		Fairly poor		Very poor		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Access to General Practitioners (GP's)	415	48%	306	36%	69	8%	52	6%	7	1%	8	1%
Access to Hospitals	298	35%	334	39%	93	11%	60	7%	25	3%	47	5%
Access to Dentists	314	37%	303	35%	84	10%	68	8%	30	4%	58	7%
Access to Community Health Workers	220	26%	204	24%	70	8%	31	4%	9	1%	323	38%

3.3.3 Suggested improvements to quality of life via health services

Suggestions for ways in which health services could be improved to further enhance quality of life were as follows:

- reduce waiting times for GP appointments (41 respondents)
- reduce waiting times for specialist/consultant appointments (39 respondents)
- improve access to services for those without cars (28 respondents)
- improve access to dentists (17 respondents)
- need a health centre/more doctors (14 respondents)
- concern over closure of Stirling RI maternity (14 respondents)
- provide more suitable GP surgery times, e.g. outwith 9 – 5 for those who are working (13 respondents)
- embrace preventative/complementary medicine (12 respondents)

-
- other responses (101 respondents)

3.4 Built Environment

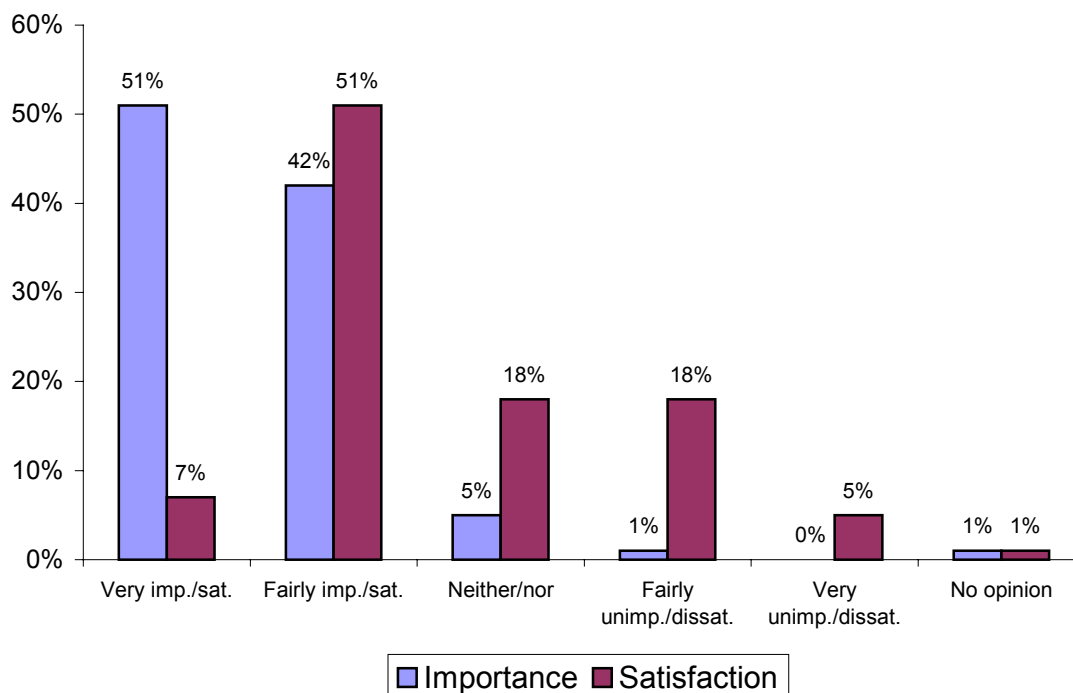
The questionnaire then moved on to test views on the built environment. This was explained to consist “of all buildings and structures, old and new. It includes houses, shops, car parks, playgrounds and the routes between them (paths, roads, railways, etc.).”

3.4.1 Importance of and satisfaction with the built environment

Half of respondents (51%, 438 respondents) considered the built environment to be very important to their quality of life, with an additional 42% (360 respondents) rating it as fairly important. Only 1% felt it to be unimportant to their quality of life. Importance of the built environment was rated slightly higher by urban dwellers (53%, 305 respondents) and older respondents (58%, 174 respondents aged 45 – 64; 55%, 105 respondents aged 65+).

However, only 7% (60 respondents) were very satisfied with the built environment in their local area and 51% (435 respondents) were fairly satisfied, with 23% (199 respondents) being dissatisfied to some degree.

Figure 5: How important is the built environment to your quality of life? How satisfied are you with the built environment in your local area?



3.4.2 Satisfaction with homes

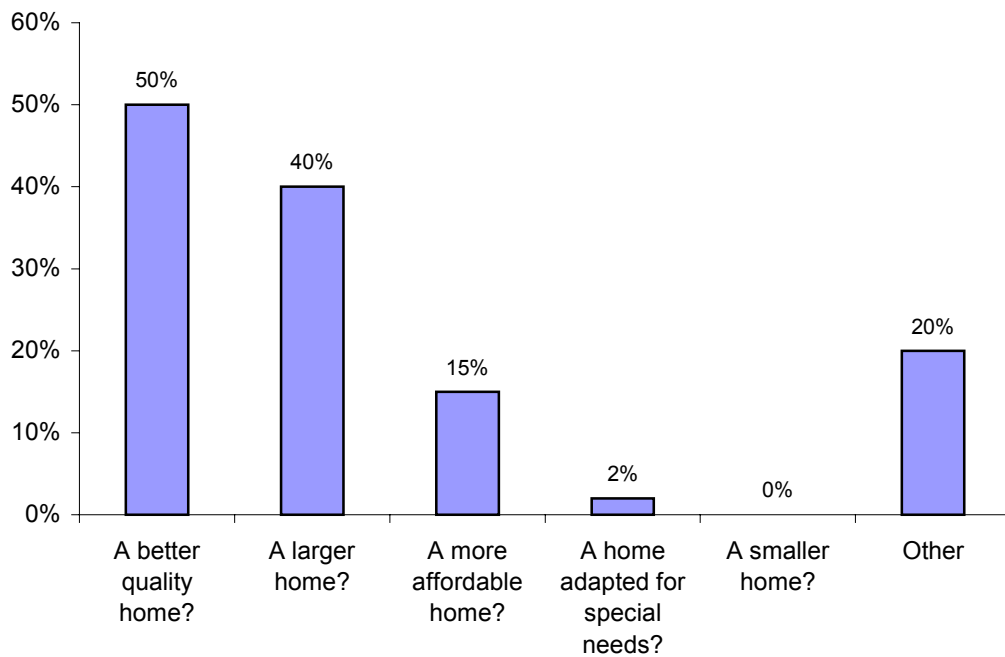
Over half of respondents (54%, 465 respondents) were very satisfied with the home they live in, whilst 34% (296 respondents) claimed to be fairly satisfied. Satisfaction was greatest with owner-occupiers (60%, 378 respondents, very satisfied) and lowest with those who rent their homes, as can be seen from the table below:

Table 11: How satisfied are you with the home you live in?

	Total		Privately owned		Rented from Council		Rented from HA		Private landlord		Residential care		Tied accom.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied	465	54%	378	60%	76	43%	3	23%	5	16%	1	100%	2	17%
Fairly satisfied	296	34%	207	33%	60	34%	6	46%	16	50%	0	0%	7	58%
Neither satisfied/Nor dissatisfied	33	4%	13	2%	11	6%	2	15%	5	16%	0	0%	2	17%
Fairly dissatisfied	47	5%	23	4%	17	10%	1	8%	5	16%	0	0%	1	8%
Very dissatisfied	14	2%	3	0%	9	5%	1	8%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
No opinion	3	0%	1	0%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	858	100%	625	100%	175	100%	13	100%	32	100%	1	100%	12	100%

Those who expressed dissatisfaction with their home put this down to a number of factors. The need for a better quality home (50%, 30 respondents) and a larger home (40%, 24 respondents) were the two main reasons cited for dissatisfaction. A better quality home was particularly an issue for Council tenants (73%, 19 respondents), whilst a larger home was more often quoted by owner-occupiers (64%, 16 respondents). Only one respondent was dissatisfied as they require their home to be adapted for special needs.

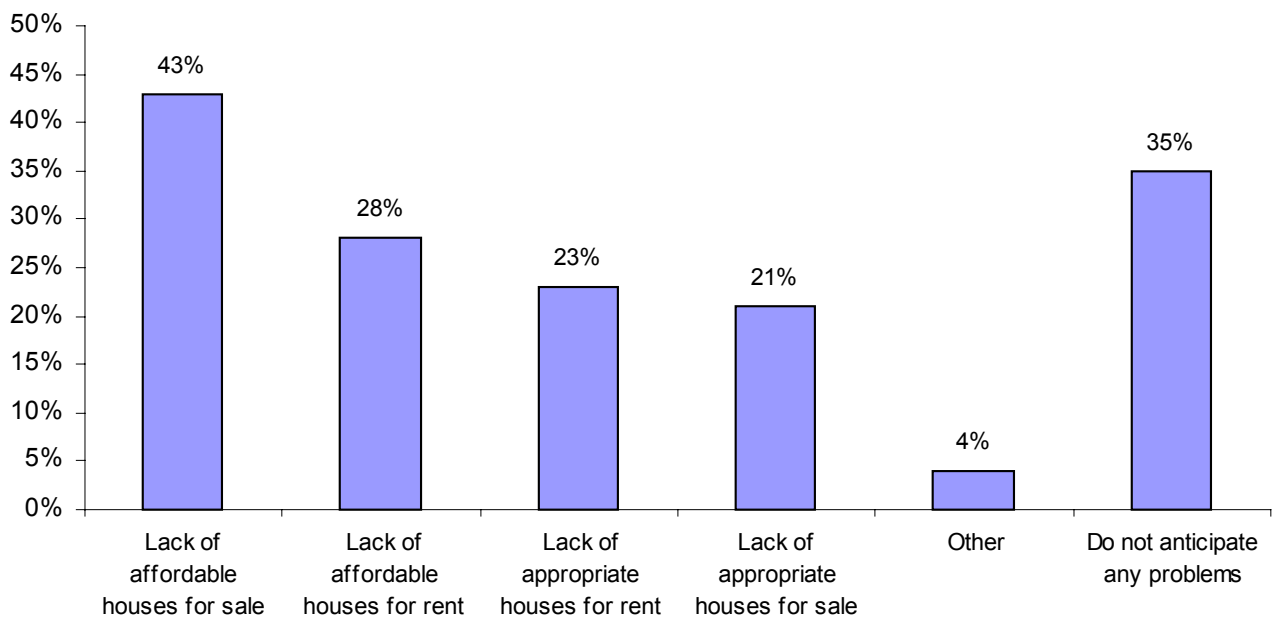
Figure 6: If dissatisfied, is this because you require....



3.4.3 Anticipated future housing problems

The main perceived problem in meeting future housing needs in the area was a lack of affordable housing for sale (43%, 364 respondents) or rent (28%, 241 respondents). Just over a third of respondents (35%, 297 respondents) do not anticipate any problems in the area meeting future housing needs. As might be predicted, given the longevity of tenure in some instances, older respondents were less likely to anticipate problems than younger ones.

Figure 7: Do you anticipate any of the following problems in meeting the future housing needs of your area?



3.4.4 Provision of various developments

Panel members were then asked whether they thought their local area needs more, less or is adequately provided with a number of different types of development. The top three issues which respondents felt they required more of were:

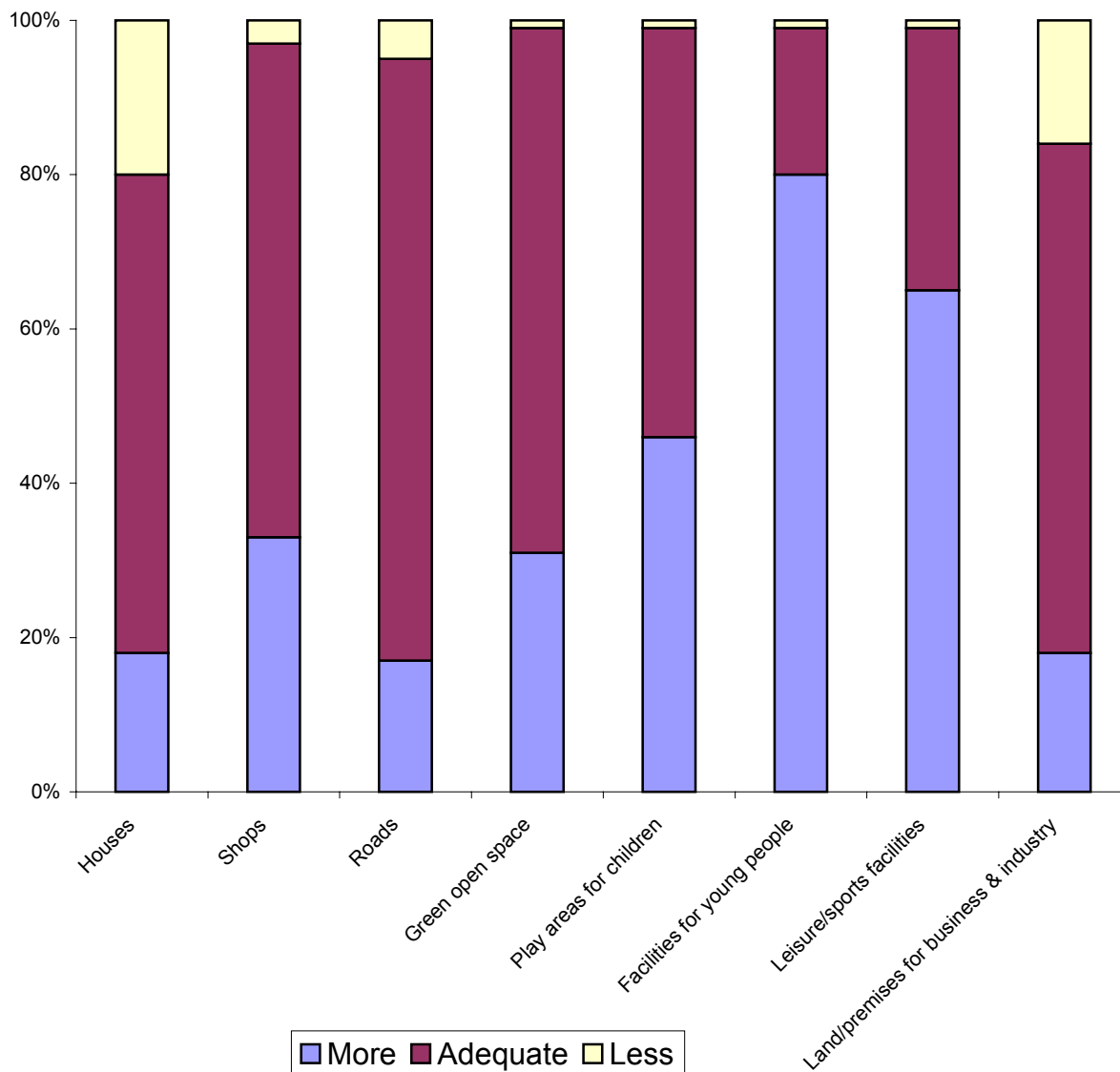
- facilities for young people (80%, 624 respondents);

-
- leisure and sports facilities (65%, 508 respondents); and
 - play areas for children (46%, 360 respondents).

These were not just cited by those respondents who would first be associated with each of the above issues, but were mentioned by a broad range of demographic groups.

Each other issue had a majority of respondents stating that there was already adequate local provision. The two issues which a reasonable proportion of respondents wished to see less of were houses (20%, 156 respondents) and land/premises for business and industry (16%, 118 respondents).

Figure 8: Do you think your local area needs more, less or is adequately provided with the following developments?



3.4.5 Suggested improvements to quality of life via the built environment

Additional comments and suggestions for ways in which the built environment could be improved to further enhance quality of life were as follows:

- improve road/path maintenance (58 respondents)
- improve traffic management/control, i.e. flow of traffic, parking and speeding (37 respondents)
- improved leisure facilities, e.g. swimming pools (25 respondents)
- better maintenance (24 respondents)

-
- things for young people to do (23 respondents)
 - improve local shopping facilities (18 respondents)
 - more play areas/spaces (17 respondents)
 - don't build on green space (17 respondents)
 - provide more affordable housing (15 respondents)
 - improve the infrastructure for growing settlements (10 respondents)
 - too many houses have been built (8 respondents)
 - improve public transport (5 respondents)
 - other responses (87 respondents)

3.5 Environmental Issues

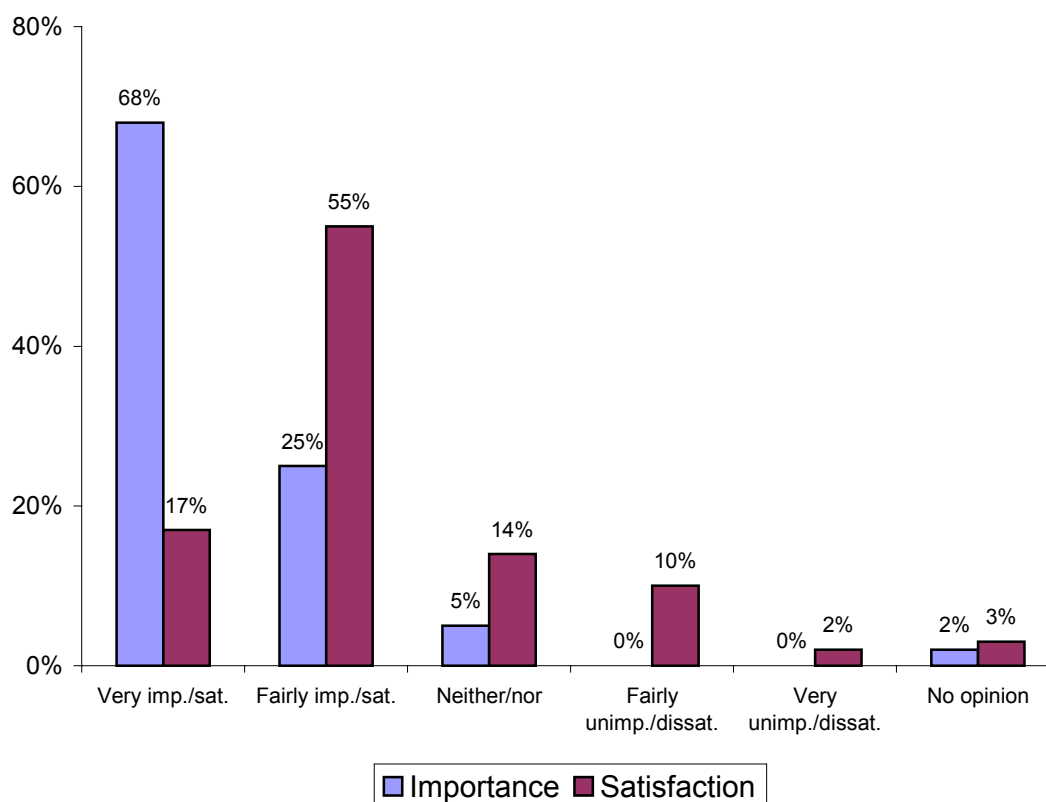
This next section of the questionnaire sought views on the non-built environment, e.g. land, vegetation, wildlife, air and water.

3.5.1 Importance of and satisfaction with the non-built environment

Around two-thirds of respondents (68%, 585 respondents) rated the non-built environment in their local area as very important to their quality of life. A quarter (25%, 211 respondents) considered it to be fairly important. The importance of the non-built environment was lower amongst Council tenants (53%, 92 respondents, very important) and those without access to a car (59%, 70 respondents) but higher amongst those living in rural areas (78%, 217 respondents).

Satisfaction levels with the non-built environment were positive but less emphatic than the importance attached to them, as 17% (142 respondents) stated that they were very satisfied and 55% (468 respondents) were fairly satisfied. Satisfaction was highest amongst those living in rural areas (30%, 84 respondents, very satisfied).

Figure 9: How important is the non-built environment in your local area to your quality of life? How satisfied are you with the non-built environment in your local area?



3.5.2 Rating of different aspects of the local environment

Panel members were then asked to rate their local area in terms of a number of different issues. Access to the countryside (85% very or fairly good, 722 respondents) and access to public parks (68% very or fairly good, 577 respondents) were rated most positively.

Cleanliness of streets, the availability of recycling facilities and the maintenance of common areas were less positively rated, with around one in three respondents rating these as very or fairly poor.

Table 12: How do you rate your local area in terms of the following issues?

	Very good		Fairly good		Neither good/Nor poor		Fairly poor		Very poor		No opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cleanliness of streets	132	15%	331	39%	123	14%	172	20%	88	10%	9	1%
The maintenance of common areas	59	7%	315	37%	181	21%	172	20%	95	11%	33	4%
The availability of recycling facilities	129	15%	298	35%	147	17%	166	19%	95	11%	20	2%
Access to public parks	194	23%	383	45%	133	16%	55	6%	29	3%	61	7%
Access to the countryside	391	46%	331	39%	72	8%	29	3%	12	1%	20	2%

Cleanliness of streets and the maintenance of common areas was rated much less positively by those living in urban areas (38% rating both as very or fairly poor) than those living in rural areas (only 14% and 16% rating them as very or fairly poor). Male respondents were slightly less positive than female respondents about these aspects of their environment, as were those aged 45 – 64.

3.5.3 Problems in the neighbourhood

A number of issues were then tested with Panel members, as they were asked to indicate if each was a major problem, minor problem or not a problem at all in their neighbourhood. Around two-fifths of respondents (42 – 43%) considered loss of woodlands and open space, air pollution and noise pollution not to be a problem at all. However, 28% of respondents

(236 respondents) considered illegal dumping of waste to be a major problem and loss of woodlands and open space was also considered to be a major problem by 23% of the Panel (200 respondents). Between 27% and 37% of respondents considered each issue to be a minor problem. It should be noted that 8 – 19% of respondents did not know if the issues were a problem or not in their local neighbourhood.

Table 13: How serious would you say the following issues are in your neighbourhood?

	Major problem		Minor problem		Not a problem		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Loss of woodlands and open space	200	23%	228	27%	359	42%	68	8%
Pollution of land and rivers	183	21%	279	33%	228	27%	165	19%
Illegal dumping of waste	236	28%	316	37%	181	21%	122	14%
Air pollution	137	16%	264	31%	365	43%	89	10%
Noise pollution	124	15%	286	33%	368	43%	77	9%

Other problems mentioned by respondents included dogs (13 responses) and traffic (12 responses), but there were several one-off comments, many of which reinforced earlier points made in the built and non-built environment.

3.5.4 Suggested improvements to quality of life via the non-built environment

A number of other comments were made regarding how quality of life could be improved by changes to the non-built environment, as follows:

- clear up litter/rubbish/fly tipping (59 respondents)
- improve paths/walkways (32 respondents)
- preserve green belt (25 respondents)
- improve recycling (24 respondents)
- address dog fouling (20 respondents)
- improve woodland/tree/plants (14 respondents)
- improve parks (11 respondents)
- reduce other pollution (9 respondents)
- reduce noise pollution (4 respondents)
- other responses (40 respondents)

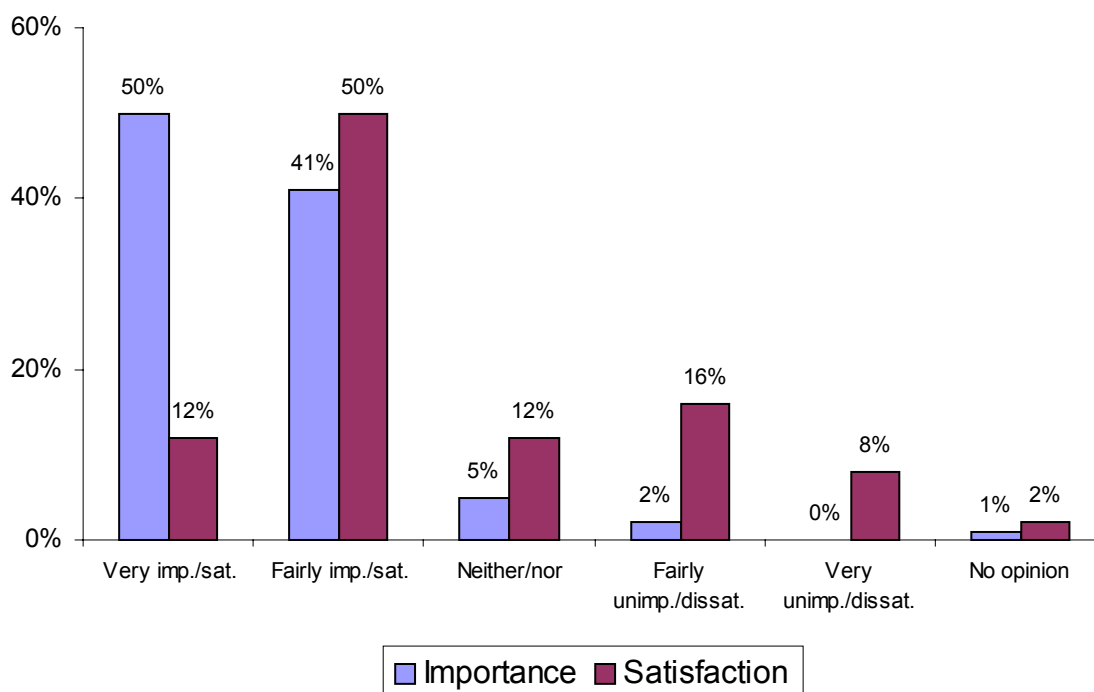
3.6 Roads and Transport

3.6.1 Importance of and satisfaction with the road network

The road network was also seen to be important to Stirling residents' quality of life. Half of respondents (50%, 432 respondents) rated this as very important and 41% (355 respondents) as fairly important. The very important rating was slightly more likely to be selected by older respondents (57%, 109 respondents, aged 65+), those with access to a car (52%, 359 respondents) and those living in rural areas (62%, 172 respondents). Only a handful of respondents considered the road network to be unimportant to their quality of life.

Again, satisfaction trailed behind the importance ratings. Whilst the majority of respondents were satisfied with the road network, fewer gave a very satisfied rating (12%, 106 respondents) and 50% (432 respondents) rated it as fairly satisfactory. However, 24% (199 respondents) were dissatisfied with the road network to some degree.

Figure 10: How important is the road network to your quality of life? How satisfied are you with the road network in your local area?



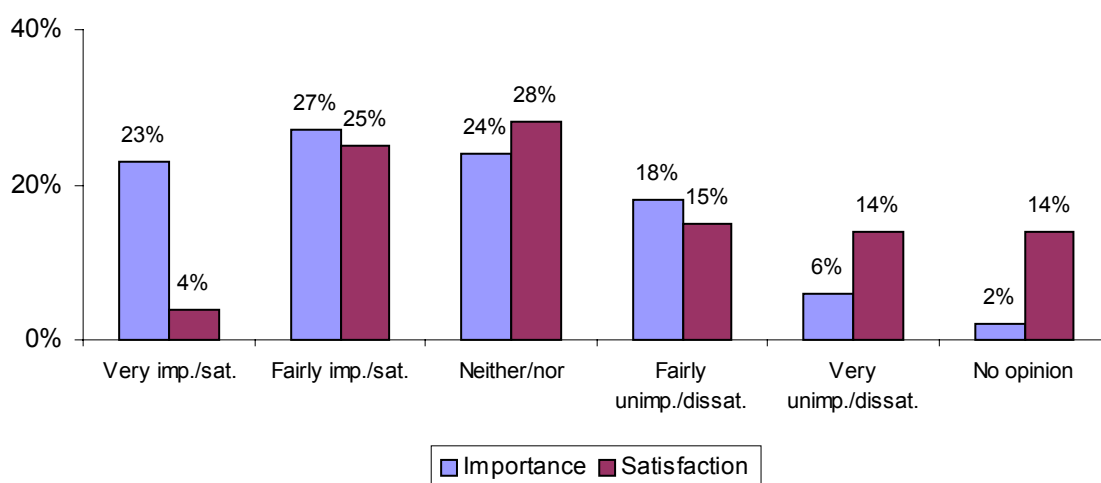
3.6.2 Importance of and satisfaction with public transport

Public transport was not seen to be quite so key to quality of life as other aspects measured in the survey. The response can be seen to divide into four approximate quarters: a quarter (23%, 196 respondents) rated it as very important; a quarter (27%, 234 respondents) as fairly important; a quarter (24%, 204 respondents) as neither important nor unimportant; and the remaining quarter (24%, 204 respondents) as fairly or very unimportant.

As would be expected, a higher proportion of those without access to a car rated this as very important to their quality of life (65%, 78 respondents). Those at either end of the age spectrum were also more likely to rate it as very important (29%, 21 respondents aged 16 – 24; 34%, 64 respondents aged 65+ compared to 17/20% of those aged 25 – 44 and 45 - 64). Those with access to a car were least likely to rate it as very important (15%, 102 respondents).

Satisfaction with public transport leaves considerable room for improvement. Whilst 14% had no opinion on this, only 4% (36 respondents) were very satisfied with public transport in their local area and 25% (218 respondents) were fairly satisfied. However, 15% (130 respondents) were fairly dissatisfied and 14% (116 respondents) were very dissatisfied. Those in rural areas were more dissatisfied (37%, 103 respondents) than urban residents (25%, 143 respondents).

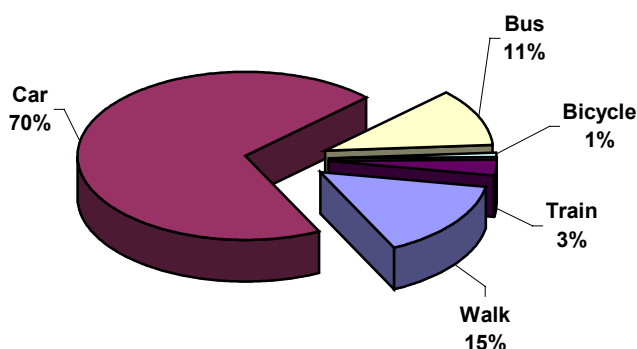
Figure 11: How important is public transport to your quality of life? How satisfied are you with public transport in your local area?



3.6.3 Principal mode of transport

The majority of respondents stated that their main mode of transport is car (70%, 598 respondents). A further 15% (124 respondents) indicated that walking was their main way of getting from a to b. Use of public transport as the primary means of transport was low, with 11% (94 respondents) travelling by bus and 3% (24 respondents) by train. Female respondents were twice as likely to walk (18%, 91 respondents) as men (9%, 33 respondents), as were those without access to a car (31%, 36 respondents). Those who were more likely than the norm to travel by car were: men (76%, 267 respondents); those aged 25 – 44 (74%, 218 respondents) or 45 – 64 (73%, 220 respondents); full-time (80%, 296 respondents) or part-time workers (74%, 76 respondents); those with access to a car (81%, 561 respondents); owner-occupiers (79%, 489 respondents); and those living in rural areas (77%, 214 respondents).

Figure 12: Which is the main method of transport you use to go about your daily business?



3.6.4 Satisfaction with different aspects of road and transport issues

Panel members were then asked to rate a number of different aspects of roads and transport issues in terms of satisfaction. The two areas of least satisfaction and greatest dissatisfaction were the condition of roads (62%, 532 respondents, dissatisfied) and the condition of pavements (49%, 412 respondents, dissatisfied). Access to parking, the availability of public transport and the availability of cycle paths/lanes were also areas of dissatisfaction for around one in three respondents. Responses did not vary much by demographic grouping.

Table 14: How would you rate your local area in terms of the following:

	Very satisfied		Fairly satisfied		Neither satisfied/Nor dissatisfied		Fairly dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The control & management of traffic	62	7%	371	43%	185	22%	127	15%	62	7%	51	6%
The condition of roads	12	1%	183	21%	116	14%	298	35%	234	27%	15	2%
The condition of pavements	20	2%	235	27%	172	20%	236	28%	176	21%	19	2%
Access to parking	55	6%	270	31%	190	22%	163	19%	120	14%	60	7%
The availability of cycle paths / lanes	33	4%	112	13%	241	28%	165	19%	132	15%	175	20%
The availability of public transport	38	4%	231	27%	230	27%	137	16%	123	14%	99	12%

3.6.5 Suggested improvements to quality of life via roads and transport

Possible improvements to roads and transport which could enhance the quality of life of local people include:

- road maintenance (120 respondents)
- public transport (96 respondents)
- traffic control/management (73 respondents)
- parking (23 respondents)
- more cycle paths/lanes (22 respondents)
- other responses (8 respondents)

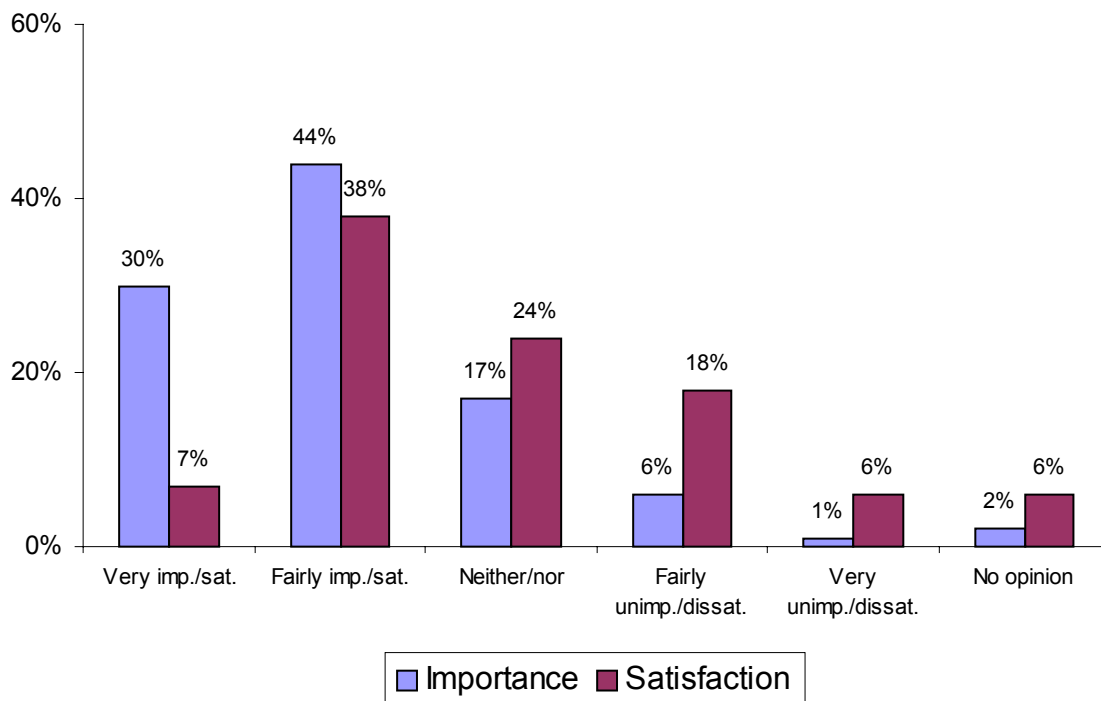
3.7 Leisure and Recreation

3.7.1 Importance of and satisfaction with leisure and recreation activities

Access to leisure and recreation activities was seen to be very or fairly important to the quality of life of three-quarters of respondents (74%, 630 respondents). It was seen to be least important by those aged 65+ (17%, 32 respondents, very or fairly unimportant).

Satisfaction again lagged slightly behind the importance ratings. Only 7% (61 respondents) of Panel members who returned the survey were very satisfied with leisure and recreation facilities in their local area and 38% (329 respondents) were fairly satisfied. However, one in four respondents (24%, 205 respondents) were dissatisfied with provision. Dissatisfaction was greatest amongst the younger age groups (39%, 29 respondents, aged 16 – 24; 34%, 98 respondents, aged 25 – 44) but varied little by other demographic groupings.

Figure 13: How important is access to leisure and recreation activities to your quality of life? How satisfied are you with leisure & recreation facilities in your local area?



3.7.2 Rating of different aspects of leisure and recreation

The ratings of access to and quality of different leisure and recreation provision varied. Greatest satisfaction was noted with the quality of parks and open spaces (58%, 499 respondents, very or fairly good) and shopping facilities (60%, 517 respondents, very or fairly good). However, access to sports and leisure facilities (31%, 270 respondents, very or fairly poor) and access to arts and cultural activities (31%, 268 respondents, very or fairly poor) were seen to be areas for improvement.

Suitable places for children to play, the quality of parks and open spaces and access to arts and cultural activities were rated least positively by 16 – 24 year olds and those who rent their home from the Council. Those living in urban areas were more positive about shopping facilities and access to arts and cultural activities, whilst rural residents were more positive about suitable places for children to play and the quality of parks and open spaces.

Table 15: How would you rate your local area in terms of the following:

	Very good		Fairly good		Neither good/Nor poor		Fairly poor		Very poor		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Suitable places for children to play	90	10%	355	41%	153	18%	134	16%	44	5%	82	10%
The quality of parks and open spaces	113	13%	386	45%	155	18%	125	15%	44	5%	35	4%
Access to sport and leisure facilities	66	8%	290	34%	175	20%	189	22%	81	9%	57	7%
Access to arts and cultural activities	41	5%	256	30%	202	24%	179	21%	89	10%	90	11%
Shopping facilities	153	18%	364	42%	158	18%	121	14%	54	6%	8	1%

A number of one-off comments were made and these are appended for information.

3.7.3 Suggested improvements to quality of life via leisure and recreation activities

Further comments on how leisure and recreation activities could improve the quality of life of local people were:

- improving/maintaining parks and play areas (36 respondents)
- new/improved swimming pool (26 respondents)
- improve access to/more local facilities (23 respondents)
- improve sports/leisure/community centres generally (22 respondents)
- provide better/more activities for children and young people (21 respondents)
- improve cinema/theatre/arts venue provision (20 respondents)
- improve the affordability of leisure facilities (18 respondents)
- improve the range and quality of shopping (13 respondents)
- better information/advertising (7 respondents)
- better access to/maintenance of cycle paths and paths (7 respondents)
- more/better publicised use of school facilities (7 respondents)
- improve the library stock/facilities (3 respondents)
- other responses (13 respondents)

3.8 Crime and Community Safety

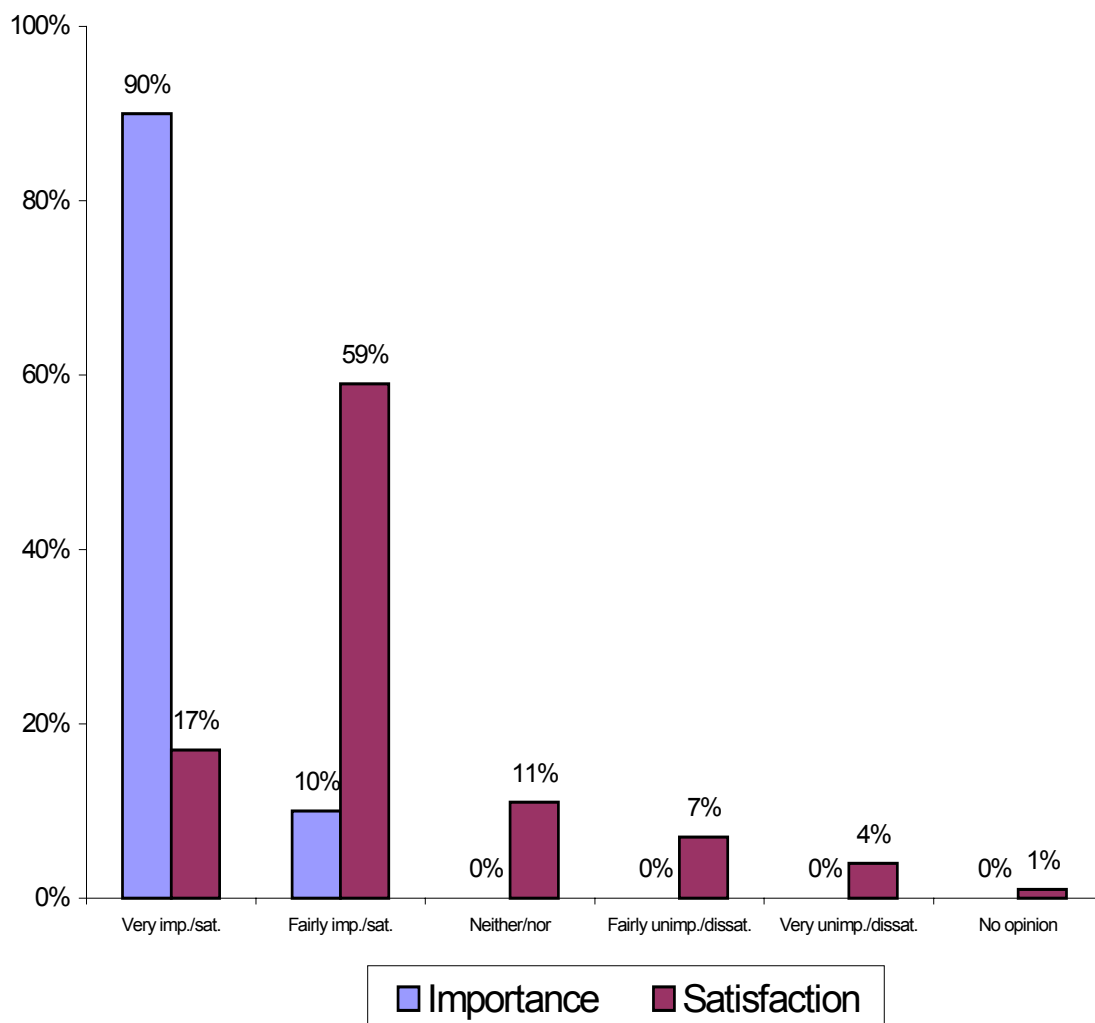
3.8.1 Importance of and satisfaction with safety

A safe neighbourhood was seen to be of critical importance to Panel members. Nine out of ten respondents (90%, 765 respondents) rated this as very important to their quality of life and a further 10% (81 respondents) as fairly important. Only three respondents stated that it was unimportant. This issue was seen as slightly less important an issue by those aged 16 – 24 (79%, 58 respondents stating very important, and 21%, 15 respondents stating fairly important). Rating did not alter much by other demographic breakdowns.

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the level of safety in their neighbourhood, with 17% (149 respondents) stating that they were very satisfied and 59% (502 respondents) that they were fairly satisfied. Respondents aged 65+ were more likely to feel safe (82%, 155 respondents, very or fairly satisfied; 7%, 12 respondents, very or fairly dissatisfied) than younger respondents, particularly those aged 16 – 24 (69%, 51 respondents, very or fairly

satisfied; 15%, 11 respondents, very or fairly dissatisfied). Satisfaction with safety was also greater in rural areas (84%, 233 respondents, very or fairly satisfied).

Figure 14: How important is a safe neighbourhood to your quality of life? How satisfied are you with the level of safety in your neighbourhood?



3.8.2 Safety in different situations

Generally, respondents feel safe when out during the day, either alone or with friends and in the evening with friends. The greatest fear for safety was when people are out during the evening alone, when 20% (175 respondents) of respondents reported feel unsafe to one degree or another. Fear of being out alone at night were greatest amongst Council tenants (38%, 64 respondents, very or fairly unsafe), 16 – 24 year olds (34%, 25 respondents, very or fairly unsafe) and those living in urban areas (26%, 151 respondents, very or fairly unsafe), suggesting territorial issues provide safety hazards in more deprived, urban areas.

A total of thirty-five respondents (4%) reported feeling unsafe in their own home. The majority of these lived in urban areas and rented their home from the Council. There was a spread across gender and age groups (although lower in the 16 – 24 age group).

Table 16: How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood when you are:

	Very safe		Fairly safe		Neither safe / Nor unsafe		Fairly unsafe		Very unsafe		No opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Out during the day with friends	525	62%	281	33%	24	3%	9	1%	4	0%	9	1%
Out during the day alone	442	52%	346	41%	33	4%	14	2%	5	1%	12	1%
Out during the evening with friends	298	35%	392	46%	87	10%	39	5%	11	1%	25	3%
Out during the evening alone	162	19%	357	42%	127	15%	123	14%	52	6%	31	4%
In your own home	428	50%	346	41%	40	5%	28	3%	7	1%	4	0%

3.8.3 Rating of safety problems in the neighbourhood

Panel members were then asked to rate a number of safety issues in their neighbourhood in terms of whether they were a major problem, a minor problem or not a problem at all. The top three major problems were speeding and other driving offences (35%, 297 respondents), illegal drug activity (19%, 166 respondents) and graffiti/vandalism (19%, 162 respondents). Fire raising and racist incidents were each seen to be not a problem by 56% of respondents.

Issues were seen to be major problems in particular by the following types of respondents:

- Graffiti and vandalism - Council tenants (40%, 68 respondents), those without access to a car (36%, 43 respondents) and those living in urban areas (25%, 142 respondents)
- Speeding - Council tenants (49%, 85 respondents) and rural residents (41%, 114 respondents)
- Theft of or from vehicles - Council tenants (20%, 34 respondents) and those without access to a car (18%, 21 respondents)
- Anti-social or disorderly behaviour – 16 – 24 year olds (27%, 20 respondents), those without access to a car (29%, 35 respondents), Council tenants (35%, 61 respondents) and urban residents (22%, 124 respondents)

- Illegal drug activity – 16 – 24 year olds (23%, 17 respondents), those without access to a car (35%, 42 respondents), Council tenants (44%, 75 respondents) and urban residents (24%, 136 respondents)
- Drinking in public – 16 – 24 year olds (23%, 17 respondents), those without access to a car (25%, 30 respondents), Council tenants (32%, 55 respondents) and urban residents (19%, 108 respondents)
- Fire raising – this didn't vary much across demographics
- Racist incidents - this didn't vary much across demographics
- House breaking – those without access to a car (22%, 26 respondents), Council tenants (22%, 38 respondents) and urban residents (15%, 89 respondents)

Table 17: How serious would you say the following issues are in your neighbourhood?

	Major problem		Minor problem		Not a problem		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Graffiti/vandalism	162	19%	496	58%	167	20%	29	3%
Speeding or other driving offences	297	35%	403	47%	99	12%	55	6%
Theft of or from vehicles	87	10%	355	42%	212	25%	200	23%
Anti-social or disorderly behaviour	149	17%	412	48%	211	25%	82	10%
Illegal drug activity	166	19%	237	28%	163	19%	288	34%
Drinking in public	129	15%	291	34%	303	35%	131	15%
Fire raising	24	3%	115	13%	476	56%	239	28%
Racist incidents	20	2%	97	11%	474	56%	263	31%
House breaking	114	13%	435	51%	142	17%	163	19%

3.8.4 Crime

Victims of crime

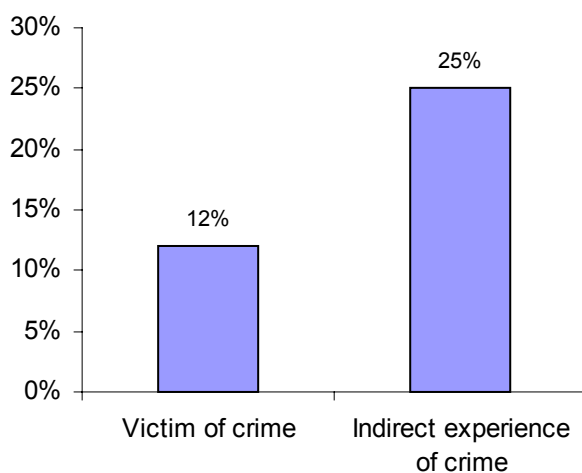
One in eight respondents (12%, 99 respondents) stated that they had been a victim of crime, either to themselves or their property, in the previous twelve months. Victims of crime were more likely to be found amongst 16 – 24 year olds (21%, 15 respondents) as this decreased with age, and urban residents (13%, 73 respondents). Those with access to a car (12%, 82 respondents) were also more likely to have been a victim of crime than those without access to a car (9%, 11 respondents). Council tenants were less likely than other tenures to have been a victim of crime (10%, 16 respondents).

Indirect experience of crime

A quarter of respondents (25%, 207 respondents) stated that they had experienced crime indirectly in the past twelve months, e.g. being witnesses of crime, being aware of crimes committed against family members or friends. This was twice the proportion who had experienced crime directly in the same period.

Those who reported a higher experience of crime were again in the younger age groups and this decreased with age (45%, 33 respondents, for 16 – 24 year olds; 10%, 19 respondents, 65+) and it was slightly higher for urban residents (27%, 152 respondents) than rural ones (20%, 55 respondents), but was reasonably consistent across other demographic groups.

Figure 15: Have you been a victim of crime, either to yourself or your property, in the last 12 months? Have you experienced crime indirectly in the last 12 months?



3.8.5 Concern regarding crime

As can be seen from the table below, there are reasonable levels of concern about both violent crime against people (43%, 363 respondents, very or fairly concerned) and crime against property (61%, 515 respondents, very or fairly concerned).

Concern about violent crime against the person was greater amongst women (47%, 239 respondents), young people (53%, 39 respondents), older people (48%, 91 respondents), those without access to a car (59%, 71 respondents), Council tenants (61%, 105 respondents) and urban residents (46%, 268 respondents).

Concern about crime against property was greater amongst Council tenants (33%, 56 respondents, very concerned; 36%, 62 respondents, fairly concerned), urban residents (22%, 128 respondents, very concerned; 41%, 239 respondents, fairly concerned) and women (21%, 108 respondents, very concerned; 42%, 212 respondents, fairly concerned).

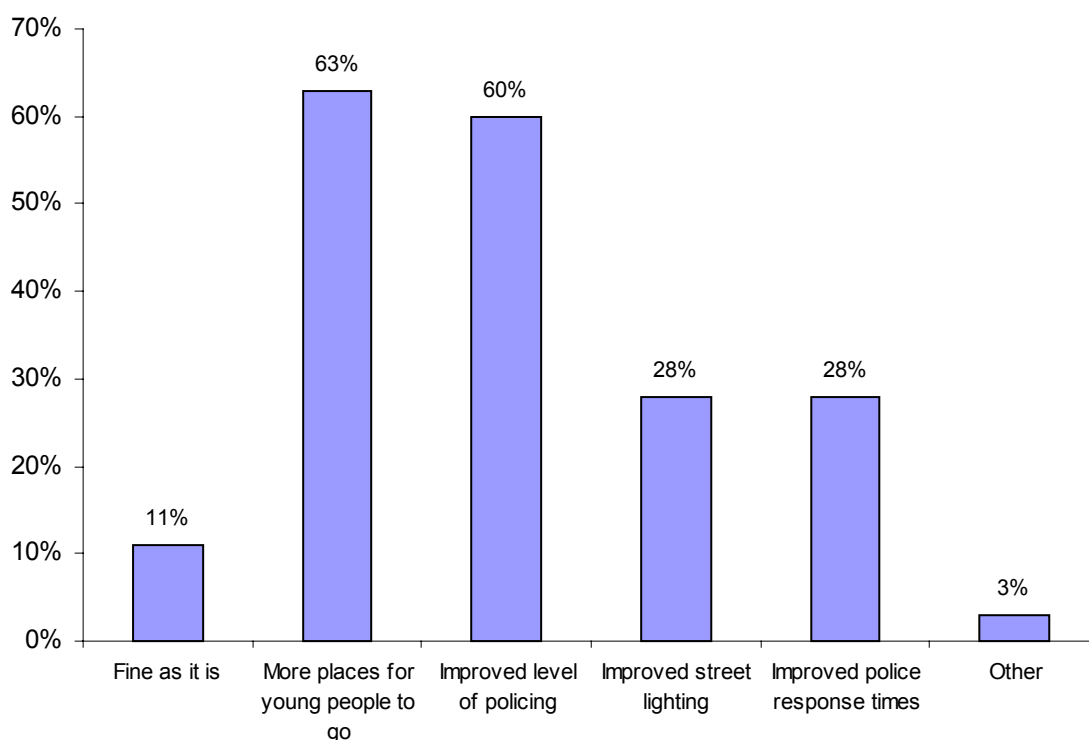
Table 18: How concerned are you about the likelihood of experiencing:

	Very concerned		Fairly concerned		Neither concerned/ Nor unconcerned		Fairly unconcerned		Very unconcerned		No opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Violent crime against you personally?	144	17%	219	26%	240	28%	183	21%	54	6%	14	2%
Crime against your property?	167	20%	348	41%	187	22%	116	14%	20	2%	16	2%

3.8.6 Key ways to improve community safety

When asked what key factors would improve community safety in their area, the two clear top responses were providing more places for young people to go (63%, 541 respondents) and an improved level of policing (60%, 508 respondents). Improvements to police response times and improved street lighting were also selected by 28% of respondents as ways in which to improve community safety. Improved street lighting was selected particularly by Council tenants (41%, 71 respondents) and urban residents (32%, 186 respondents). Only one in nine respondents (11%, 95 respondents) felt that it was “fine as it is”.

Figure 16: What key factors, if any, would improve Community Safety in your area?



Other factors which respondents felt would improve community safety in their area included:

- CCTV (11 respondents)
- controlling traffic speed (11 respondents)
- better parental control/example (7 respondents)
- neighbourhood watch (4 respondents)
- dispersal of groups of youths/curfew (4 respondents)
- plus a number of one-off comments (25 respondents)

3.8.7 Suggested improvements to quality of life via community safety

Respondents made a number of further comments on how community safety could improve their quality of life, as follows:

- policing, mainly increased police presence (60 respondents)
- address problems of young people hanging about/drinking (26 respondents)
- improve traffic management/reduce speeding (17 respondents)
- introduce preventative measures (16 respondents)

-
- CCTV (8 respondents)
 - Neighbourhood Watch (7 respondents)
 - address drugs/licensing problems (7 respondents)
 - increase sentencing/punishment (5 respondents)
 - reduce drink/drug driving (3 respondents)
 - other responses (16 respondents)

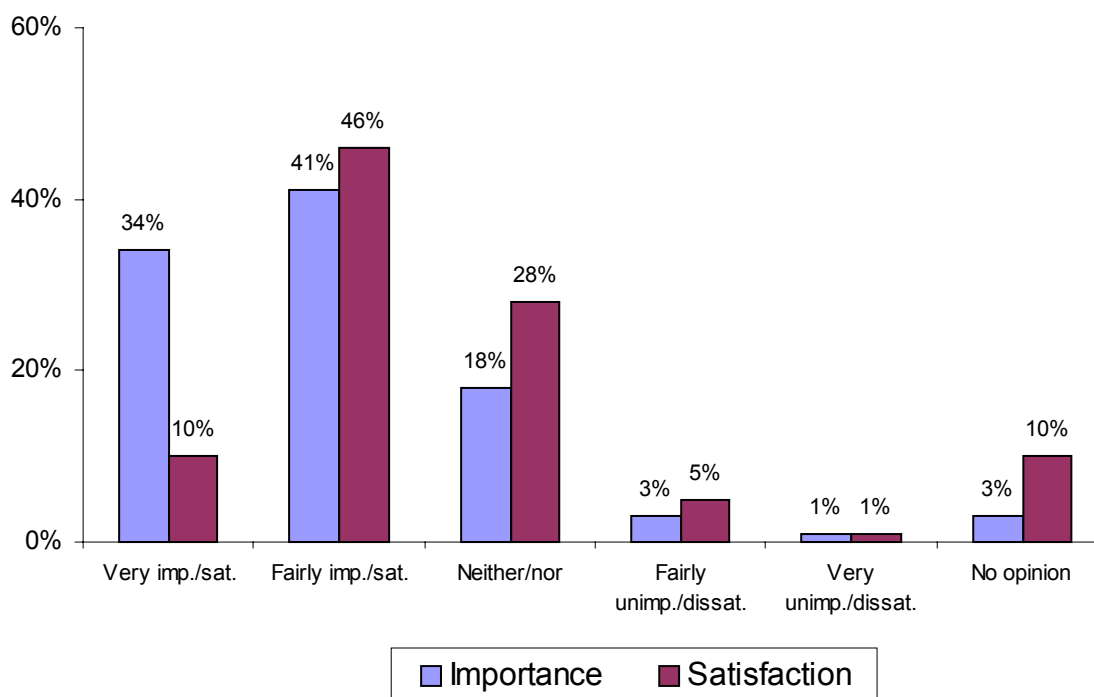
3.9 Lifelong Learning

3.9.1 Importance of and satisfaction with lifelong learning

Lifelong learning was also viewed as important to respondents and their families' quality of life. One third of respondents (34%, 289 respondents) rated lifelong learning as very important and 41% (348 respondents) as fairly important. Only 4% (34 respondents) rated it as unimportant to their quality of life. Council tenants rated it as more important than respondents of other tenures (43%, 73 respondents, very important; 37%, 63 respondents, fairly important).

Satisfaction with lifelong learning needs being met matched the importance profile better than some of the other quality of life indicators. Ten percent of respondents (89 respondents) stated that they were very satisfied with lifelong learning and 46% (389 respondents) were fairly satisfied. Only 6% (52 respondents) expressed dissatisfied.

Figure 17: How important is lifelong learning to you and your family's quality of life? How satisfied are you that you and your family's lifelong learning needs are being met?



3.9.2 Rating of lifelong learning services for children and young people

As can be seen from the table of results below, satisfaction with different aspects of lifelong learning for children and young people was high where people had an opinion, but between one third and one half of respondents did not know enough about the service to comment. Opinion varied little across demographic groupings, but those aged 25 – 44 were less likely to respond ‘don’t know’ than other age groups regarding provision of nurseries and other facilities for under fives and out of school care, as they are more likely to have children.

Table 19: How would you rate your local area in terms of the following:

	Very good		Fairly good		Neither good/Nor poor		Fairly poor		Very poor		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Provision of nurseries and other facilities for the under fives	144	17%	285	34%	51	6%	30	4%	17	2%	323	38%
Out of school care	49	6%	160	19%	80	9%	69	8%	34	4%	458	54%
The standard of primary schooling	233	27%	273	32%	43	5%	16	2%	13	2%	272	32%
The standard of secondary schooling	205	24%	254	30%	59	7%	26	3%	10	1%	296	35%

3.9.3 Rating of lifelong learning services for adults

Similarly, respondents were asked to rate a number of different aspects of lifelong learning targeted at adults. Again, around a third of respondents responded ‘don’t know’ to each question. Satisfaction was generally lower than with services aimed at children and young people, however. Further education (45%, 384 respondents, very or fairly good) and higher education (51%, 434 respondents, very or fairly good) were rated more highly than either vocational learning (30%, 259 respondents, very or fairly good) or the provision of personal development skills/opportunities (34%, 293 respondents, very or fairly good).

Rural residents were more likely to rate all aspects of adult lifelong learning as very or fairly poor than any other demographic group.

Table 20: How would you rate your local area in terms of the following:

	Very good		Fairly good		Neither good/Nor poor		Fairly poor		Very poor		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The provision of personal development skills / opportunities	52	6%	241	28%	131	15%	104	12%	40	5%	282	33%
Vocational learning	53	6%	206	24%	136	16%	88	10%	42	5%	325	38%
Further education	95	11%	289	34%	108	13%	52	6%	29	3%	277	33%
Higher Education	146	17%	288	34%	98	12%	36	4%	29	3%	253	30%

3.9.4 Suggested improvements to quality of life via lifelong learning

A total of 107 further comments on how lifelong learning could be improve to further enhance quality of life were made. These encompassed the whole range of lifelong learning issues so were primarily one-off statements. These are detailed in full in the appendix.

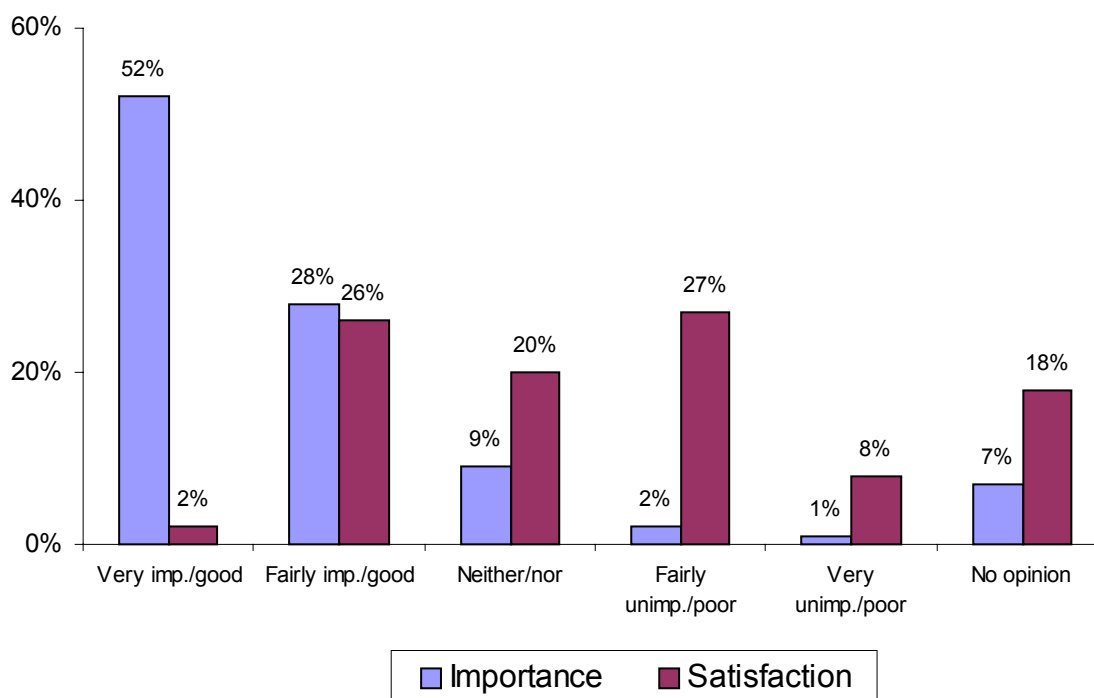
3.10 Employment

3.10.1 Importance of and satisfaction with job opportunities/employment prospects

Job opportunities were seen to be vital to respondents' quality of life. Approximately half of respondents (52%, 445 respondents) rated this as very important and 28% as fairly important. Only 3% (30 respondents) rated it as unimportant. Job opportunities were rated particularly highly by 16 – 24 year olds (68%, 50 respondents, very important).

The rating of employment prospects for local people was less positive, however. Only 2% (13 respondents) rated them as very good and 26% (219 respondents) as fairly good. Unfortunately, 27% (233 respondents) rated them as fairly poor and 8% (65 respondents) as very poor. Eighteen percent of respondents responded 'don't know' to this question, but only one third of these were aged 65+. Those who rent their home (43 – 45%) and who live in the country (48%, 132 respondents) were more likely to rate the employment prospects as fairly or very poor.

Figure 18: How important are job opportunities to the quality of life in your area? Overall, how do you rate employment prospects for local people?



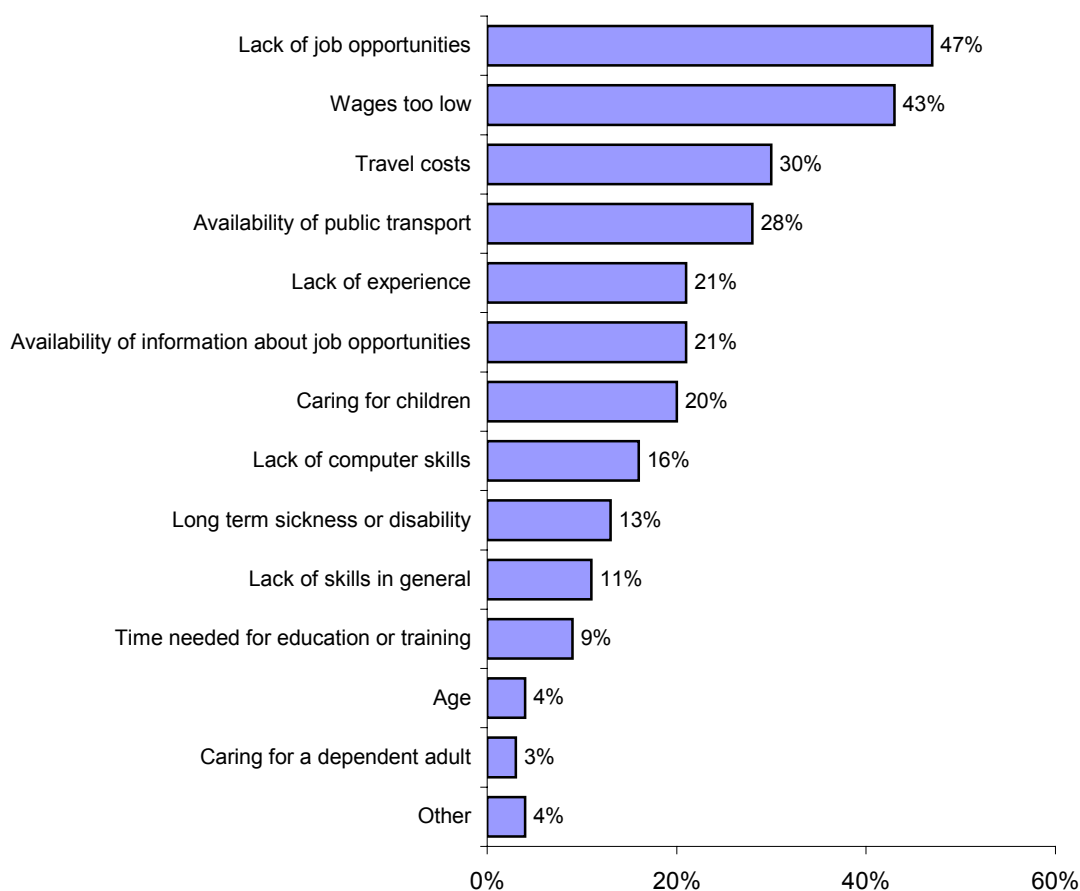
3.10.2 Experience of barriers to getting a job

Panel members were then asked if they had experienced any barriers to getting a job. A number of options were provided for respondents to select and they could tick more than one barrier. The top three barriers amongst those who felt the question was applicable to them (a base of 352 respondents) were:

- lack of job opportunities (47%, 164 respondents)
- wages too low (43%, 150 respondents)
- travel costs (30%, 105 respondents)

Caring for children was a particular barrier experienced by women (26% as opposed to 10% of men), as was the availability of public transport (33%, as opposed to 20%) as women relied upon this more heavily than men. Generally, Council tenants were more likely to cite a range of barriers than other tenures.

Figure 19: Have you experienced any of the following barriers to getting a job?



3.10.3 Perceived skills or experience to help secure desired job

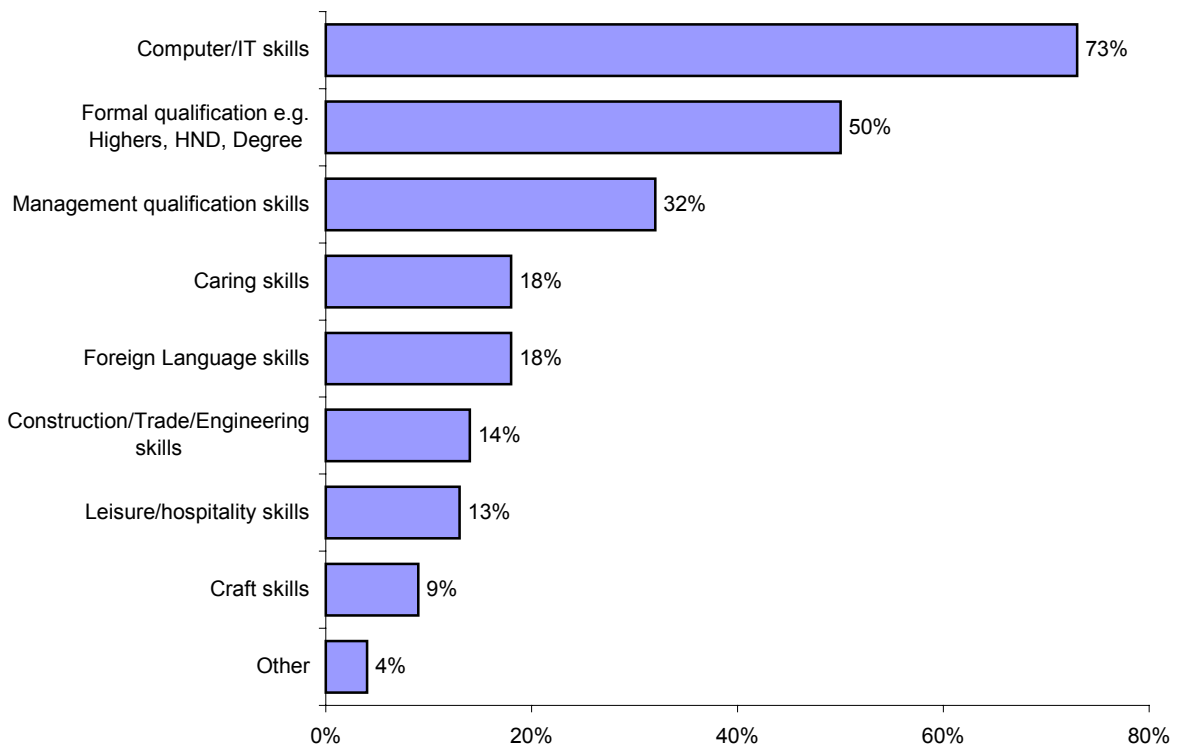
Those who were seeking employment were then asked what skills or qualifications they believed would help them to secure the type of job they desired. A total of 306 respondents answered this question, some of whom were retired (21 respondents) and some of whom were already working full-time (144 respondents) or part-time (42 respondents).

Three skills or qualifications stand out as being perceived as key to finding the job they want:

- Computer/IT skills (73%, 222 respondents);
- Formal qualifications such as Highers, HND, degree (50%, 153 respondents); and
- Management qualifications/skills (32%, 99 respondents).

Qualifications such as Highers, HND or degrees were cited particularly by 16 – 24 year olds (81%, 42 respondents) and management qualifications/skills were mentioned particularly by 25 – 44 year olds (43%, 55 respondents) and those who are employed full-time (42%, 60 respondents).

Figure 20: If you are looking for employment, what skills or qualifications do you believe will help you secure the type of job you want?



3.10.4 Suggested improvements to quality of life via employment

Further comments made by Panel members on how employment prospects could enhance their quality of life were as follows:

- attract businesses to the area/rural area (18 respondents)
- provide further education/training opportunities, particularly in the rural areas (11 respondents)
- improve information/awareness of job opportunities (8 respondents)
- encourage small businesses (7 respondents)
- improve access to childcare/support families (6 respondents)
- generate a better mix of employers/industries (4 respondents)
- improve public transport (2 respondents)
- other responses (30 respondents)

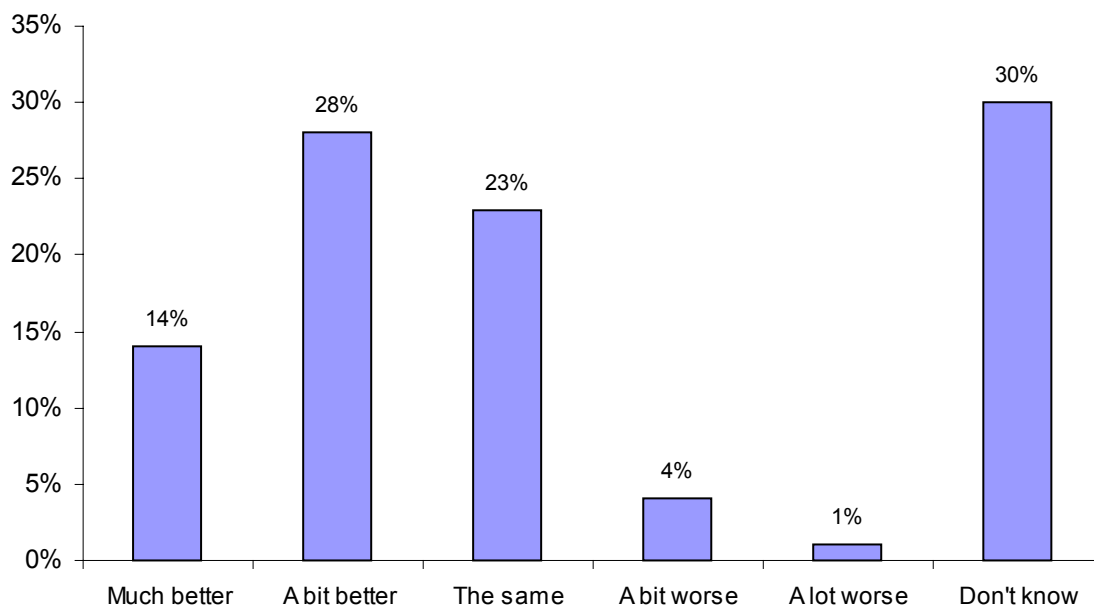
3.11 General Quality of Life

The questionnaire finished with a few questions to find out how Stirling residents compared the quality of life in their area to neighbouring areas, what they like about living in Stirling and what they would like to change.

3.11.1 Quality of life comparisons to other areas

Stirling compared favourably to neighbouring areas such as Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Perth & Kinross in terms of perceived quality of life. Fourteen percent of respondents (119 respondents) stated that Stirling is much better than neighbouring areas and a further 28% (241 respondents) that it is a bit better. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%, 194 respondents) felt that Stirling was on a par with other areas. Only 5% of respondents (47 respondents) considered Stirling to provide them with a poorer quality of life than neighbouring areas. It should be noted, however, that 30% (257 respondents) felt unable to comment on this question. The ratings varied little across different demographic groups.

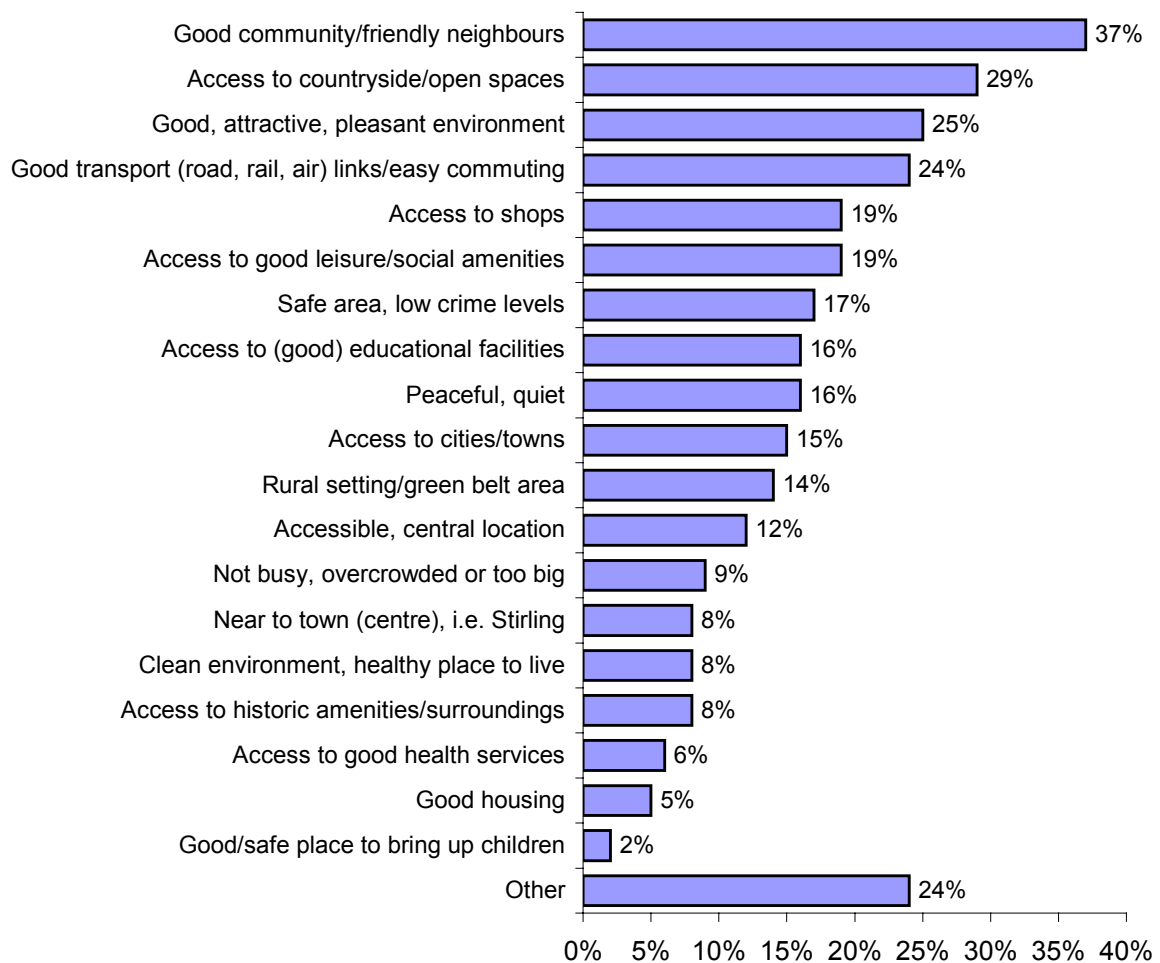
Figure 21: How would you rate the quality of life in the Stirling Council area compared to other neighbouring council areas you know of?



3.11.2 What makes Stirling a good place to live?

Respondents were given space for three comments on what makes Stirling a good place to live, however some did not list as many as three whilst others listed substantially more! A number of very specific comments were made and these can be found in the appendices. The top themes to emerge were as follows:

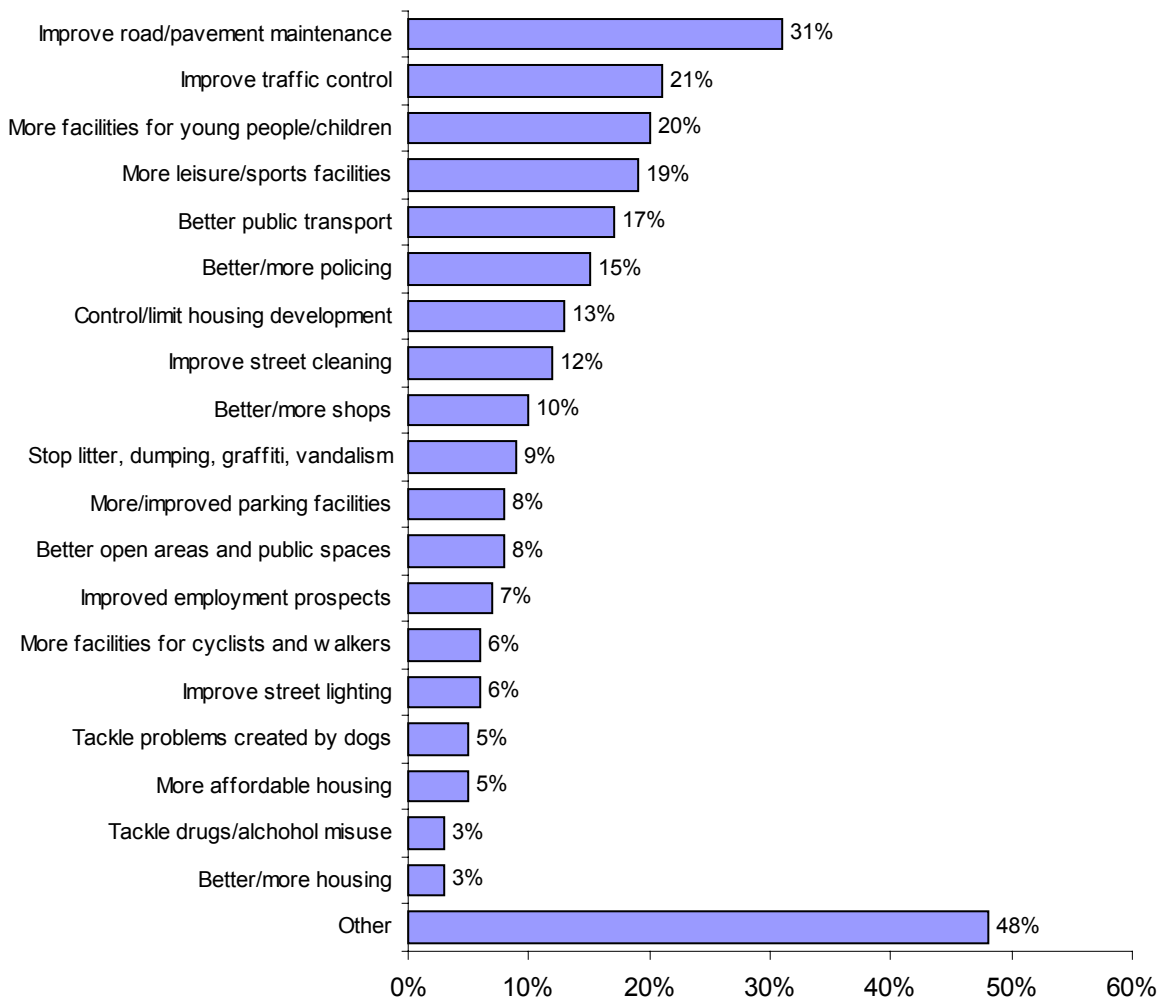
Figure 22: What three aspects of your area make it a good place to live?



3.11.3 Desired changes to improve quality of life

Again, Panel members were asked for three changes which would improve their quality of life and the level of response by individual varied dramatically. The key themes to emerge were as follows:

Figure 23: What three things do you think should change in order to improve the quality of life in your area?



4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Affirmation of quality of life issues

The topics which the survey focuses on, i.e. health, built and non-built environments, roads & transport, leisure & recreation, crime & community safety, lifelong learning and employment, are affirmed as being of importance to local people's quality of life as they all, with the exception of public transport, scored in the majority as being important. Safety and health were seen as particularly important. In addition, few additional issues were raised by respondents which had not already been addressed somewhere within the survey.

There are degrees of importance which can be tracked over time, however, as the emphasis placed on 'very' and 'fairly' important responses may change. These should therefore both be looked at, rather than just aggregated, or means calculated, when considering the results of this survey and with any future comparisons.

General satisfaction with quality of life

Overall, the survey has shown that the people who live in the Stirling area are generally satisfied with their quality of life, their neighbourhood and feel that the area compares well to neighbouring ones. Some types of people (older people, home-owners and those living in rural areas) are generally more satisfied than others (younger people, Council tenants and those living in urban areas), which assists Stirling Alliance with the targeting of actions as a result of the survey.

Satisfaction levels varied tremendously. The majority of respondents were satisfied with factors such as health, the environment (built and non-built), the road network, crime & community safety and lifelong learning. Satisfaction dipped below the half way mark for public transport, leisure & recreation and employment, however.

Areas for improvement

The areas for improvement are as follows:

- Reduce waiting times for both GPs and specialists.
- Improve access to services, particularly for those without access to cars.
- Provide more affordable housing for sale and rent.
- Provide more facilities for young people.
- Improve leisure and sports facilities, including play areas.
- Address the issues of fly tipping and litter.
- Conserve woodlands and open spaces (particularly with regard to house building).
- Improve the condition of roads and pavements.
- Stop speeding and manage traffic more effectively.
- Address safety fears, particularly for younger people in more deprived urban areas, when out alone in the evening.
- Address illegal drug activity and graffiti/vandalism, particularly by providing things for young people to do and increasing policing.
- Improve people's awareness of lifelong learning opportunities and provide local access.
- Provide more job opportunities, with decent wages, possibly by attracting different employers to the area.

None of these are easy issues to address and often involve services which cut across different public sector agencies, require considerable funding, and require the assistance of private and voluntary sectors in addition to members of the public. However, it is the role of Stirling Alliance under the banner of community planning to start to make inroads into these issues. Just because it is challenging, doesn't mean that it should not be attempted.