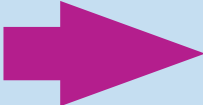




The research-based case as to why your council should champion neighbourhood services



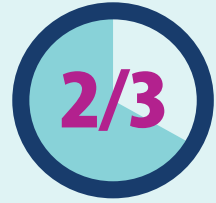
Why neighbourhoods matter

When a resident steps outside their own front door what do they see? Pavements? Local roads? A local park? A recycling bin? A street light?

Too often these local neighbourhood services are 'hidden in plain sight'. Many residents may not even realise that these local services are anything to do with their local council but as soon as these services start to fail they become all too visible.

Austerity has hollowed out services

During the last decade of austerity local councils have cut neighbourhood services by around £6 billion as services such as social care have, by necessity, been prioritised. This means that services like local parks, investment in streetscene services and neighbourhood level services have suffered a greater proportion of cuts. But it would be a mistake to think that these services do not matter to the public. They do! The public care deeply about neighbourhood services.



worth of cuts in neighbourhood services during the last decade

APSE with leading poll company Survation carried out a public opinion survey asking some key questions about what the public really think and really want from their neighbourhoods services. The results should inform both local and national politicians about what the public want to see as their priorities.

More money to local councils

We asked 'Should the government keep more money to spend at a National Level or should they give more money to local councils?'

Over 80% of the public want to see more money spent in their local area by their local council.

This shows the value that the public place on the services that councils provide.

People want more of their taxes spent in their area

When it comes to spending the taxes the public think that more of the tax-take should be spent in local areas. Just 13% think there is too much spent in local areas. This suggests that the public like to see what their taxes are spent on - spending on local neighbourhood services is a very visible connection between taxes and local public services. Theresa May pledged an end to austerity in 2018. Spending on neighbourhood services would be a very visible sign at a community level of meeting that pledge.

The public values neighbourhoods just as much as social care

Whilst all neighbourhood services appear to be popular with the public we asked about neighbourhood services and included social care. Not unsurprisingly the public rate social services highly as a local public service where they would like to see extra funds spent. However road maintenance (repairing pot holes) is ranked even higher and social care was only marginally above affordable housing and waste and recycling services. So the public are clear. They value a whole range of services delivered at a neighbourhood level.

This campaign is not about a competition between neighbourhood services and social care but more a recognition that good quality neighbourhood services help to support our communities; helping in the prevention agenda by ensuring neighbourhoods services are able to meet the needs of everyone in our communities.

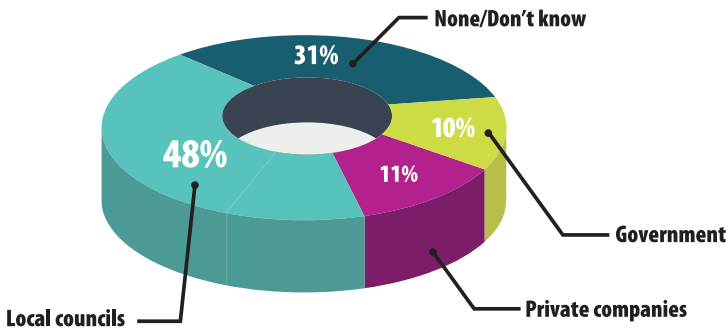
Trust in local councils to deliver services



Almost five times as many people trust local councils over central government to deliver services in their area.

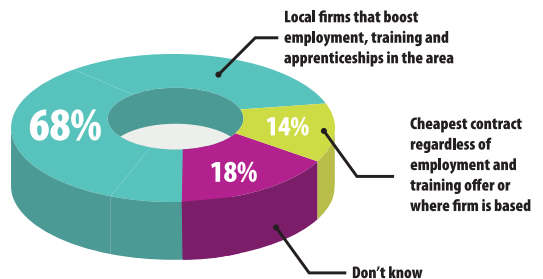
The public can see and value neighbourhood level services and they trust local councils to get on with delivering them. Not only do the public want more of the tax-take spent in local areas they trust local councils to deliver local public services like housing, street cleaning, bin collections and recycling. There is strong support for council neighbourhood level public services.

Almost five times as many people trust local councils over private companies to deliver public services.



Buy better buy local

A huge 68% of the public would prefer to see public service contracts going to local firms that bring something back to the local area. There is widespread public support for prioritising local employment over and above a 'cheapest first' approach. In light of the collapse of Carillion and other warnings over the security of public sector contractors the public want and expect a more ethical approach to how councils do business.



Less than 1 in 5 voters support a 'cheapest first' approach but by contrast two thirds of voters want to see councils buying better and being ethical in their buying decisions.



4 things your council can do

The public value neighbourhood services. It would be unwise for any council to disregard the views of their local electorate. APSE is calling on local councillors and councils to adopt a strategy in support of neighbourhood level services.

1

Adopt a neighbourhood services champion within your political group to act as a voice in support of neighbourhood services

2

Adopt the model resolution to Full Council to raise awareness of the positive impact of neighbourhood services on local communities and the consequences of these services being lost or cut through pressure on local council finances

3

Raise awareness amongst the local community and local businesses about the neighbourhood services you provide and how you are working to preserve them for future generations

4

Fight for Funding! There is no point in having extra funding for core statutory services like social care if the fabric of our communities is lost at a neighbourhood level. The Fair funding review for local government needs to take into account the funding pressures on neighbourhood services. They are vital to healthy, sustainable communities.



For more information visit:

<http://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/research/good-neighbourhoods/>

You can also join the conversation using #apseneighbourhoods on Twitter and LinkedIn