

Neighbourhood Services Poll

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**Survation on behalf of the
Association for Public Service
Excellence**

Introduction & Background

Survation were commissioned by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) to provide a public opinion survey of attitudes to local neighbourhood services in 2016, covering the range of council services that would appear in their local area.

- Respondents were asked to consider their 'local area' meaning and area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from their home.
- Polling was conducted via online panel between 19th - 28th November 2016.
- Data were weighted by age, sex, region, household income, education, 2015 GE vote and 2016 EU Referendum vote to be representative of all UK adults aged 18+.
- The overall sample size was 1,539, including booster samples in Northern Ireland & Wales to ensure sub-samples of at least 100 persons in those regions.

Key Findings

Trust in councils and councillors high versus government ministers and private companies

- Five times as many trust their local council (54%) over the government (11%) to make decisions about how services are delivered provided in their local area.
- Eight times as many trust local councillors (57%) over government ministers (7%) to make decision about their local area.
- Six times as many trusted their local council (60%) to provide services in their local area over a private company (10%). Trust in their local council was also eight times more than trust in the government (7%).

Strong desire for more government money for local councils

- More than three-quarters of people (77%) would like the government to give more money to local councils to spend at the local level.
- Around 11% thought that spending should remain the same with only 5% wanting less money to be spent at a local level.

Large variance in satisfaction rating by service area – high for waste & recycling, lower for road maintenance

- Respondents selected gave each local council service a score on a scale of 0-10 (where 0 = very dissatisfied and 10 = very satisfied). The 'Satisfaction Rating' is the average of the weighted results.
- Waste & Recycling Collection services is the area that the public gave the highest satisfaction rating score (7.2) with the road maintenance rated the lowest (5.2).

Public rate road maintenance the highest priority for new government spending

- Asked to allocate a notional budget increase across 9 services, the public allocated 18% to road maintenance, more than double any other service area.

Public see decline in local services in recent years

- A significant proportion of the public (42%) perceive a decline in local services in their local area.
- Those that saw a decline were most likely to see this decline as the fault of both the government and local Councils combined (41%) whilst only a quarter (27%) see this as being caused by government cuts alone.

How the public see local services

- The term respondents felt best described the services in their local area was “Neighbourhood services” (37%) compared to “Environment services” (30%), “Frontline services” (18%) and “Liveability services” (11%).

Commenting on the findings, Suration’s Director of Government and Public Services, Paul Smith, said:

“What stands out from this survey is the strong desire the public have to see to their taxes spent on services in their local area and that they overwhelmingly trust local Councillors and Councils to deliver those services.”

“The survey highlights that the public will back calls for more government money to be spent on what people see as Neighbourhood Services, especially road maintenance.”

“The survey will also allow councils to benchmark their own services against nationally weighted samples of public satisfaction.”

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said:

“Whilst the extra infrastructure spending promised by the Chancellor is welcome in areas like housing and roads, it is clear that the public want to see more money going to local areas.

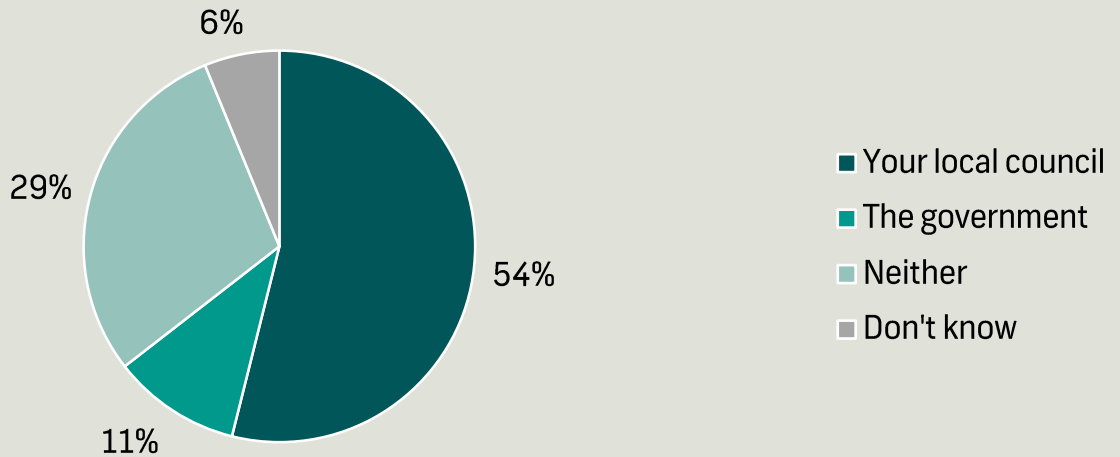
“Local spending is proven to be a great way to bolster economic activity in local areas, so clearly there is an awful lot of good to come from leveraging more local investment through trusted council neighbourhood services.”

For further comment from APSE please contact Mo Baines at mbaines@apse.org.uk or on 07971 843515 or Sophie Bannister at sbannister@apse.org.uk or on 07551 171682.

For further comment from Suration please contact Chris Hopkins at chris.hopkins@suration.com or on 0203 818 9661 or Paul Smith at paul.smith@suration.com on 0203 142 7640.

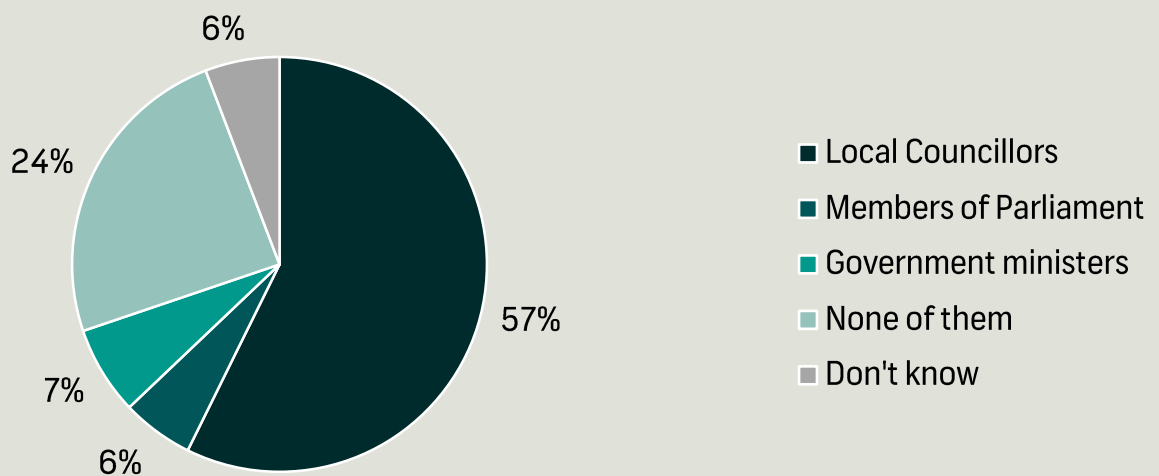
Trust in councils and councillors high versus government ministers and private companies

Who do you trust the most to make decisions about how services are delivered and about how services are provided in your local area?



- Respondents were first asked who they trusted the most to make decisions about how services are delivered and provided in their local area.
- More than half (54%) said that they trust their local council the most, compared to only one in ten (11%) who trusted the government the most.
- The remainder either said 'Neither' (29%) or 'Don't know' (6%).

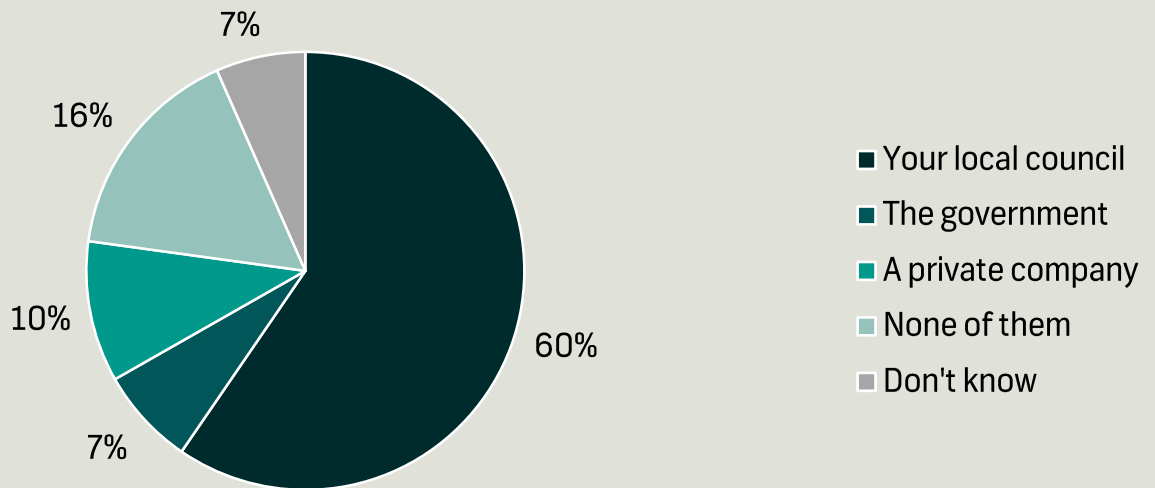
Who do you trust the most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?



- Next, respondents were asked a similar question but with different answer options relating specifically to representatives.

- Again, more than half (57%) said that they trusted their local representatives, in this case being local councillors, the most, compared to 7% who said that they trusted government ministers the most and 6% who trust MPs the most.
- The remainder either said 'None of them' (24%) or 'Don't know' (6%).

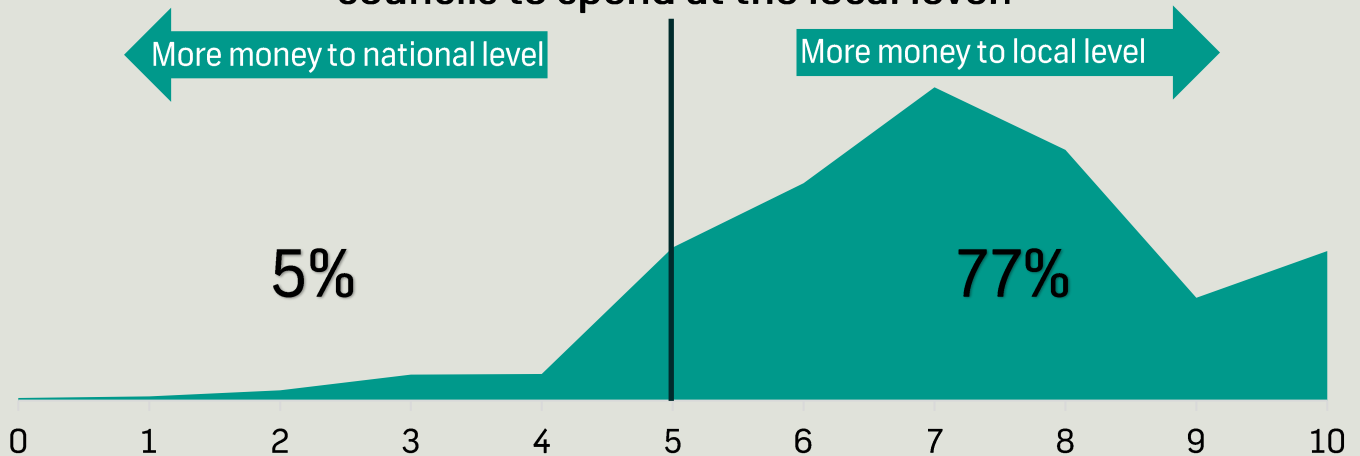
Who do you trust most to deliver services to your local area?



- Finally, respondents were asked who they trust the most to deliver services to their local area.
- Three in five people (60%) trust their local council most to deliver services to the area, compared to 11% who trust a private company the most and 7% who trust the government the most.
- The remainder either said 'Neither' (16%) or 'Don't know' (7%).

Strong desire for more government money for local councils

Would you like to see the government keep more money than it currently gives to local councils to spend at national level or should it give more money to local councils to spend at the local level?



- Respondents were asked to place themselves on a scale of 0-10 scale, where 0 meant that they would like to see the government keep more money than it currently gives to local councils in order to spend more at the national level and 10 meant that they would like to see the government give more money to local councils to spend at the local level.
- More than three-quarters of the public (77%) chose a number between 6-10 on the scale, indicating that they would like the government to give more money to local councils to spend at the local level.
- Further, more than a third (37%) chose a number between 8-10 and one in ten (11%) chose 10.
- Around 11% thought that spending should remain the same, choosing 5, while only 5% chose a number between 0-4, indicating they wanted less money to be spent at a local level.

Large variance in satisfaction rating by service area

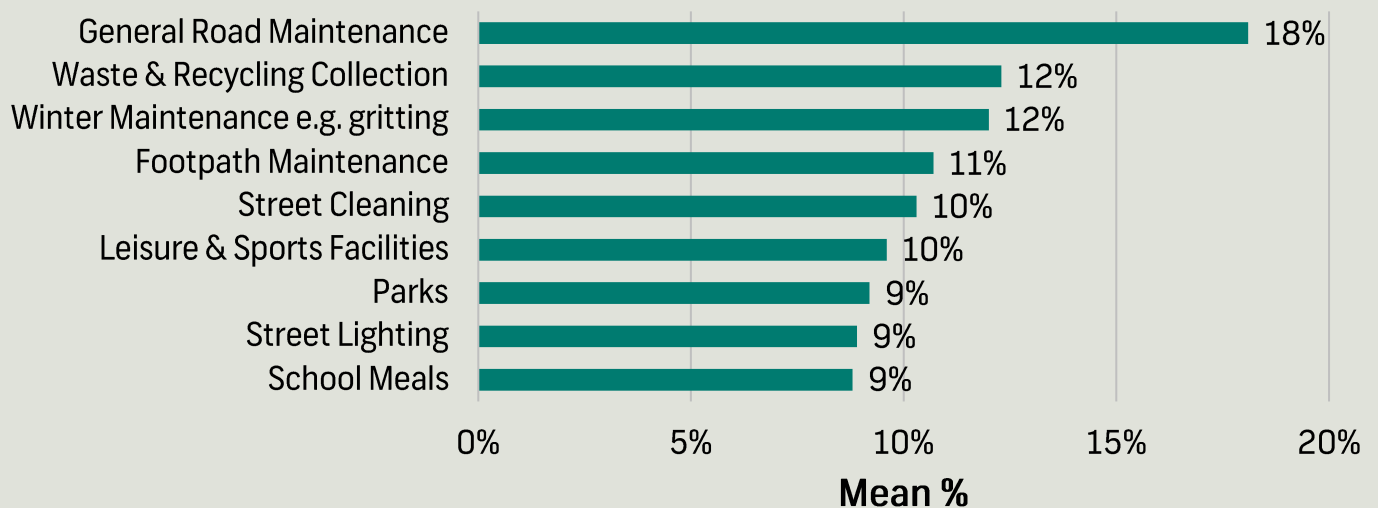
Satisfaction With Services



- Respondents were asked to give each of the nine local council services listed a score on a scale of 0-10 (where 0 = very dissatisfied and 10 = very satisfied). The 'Satisfaction Rating' is the average of the weighted results.
- Waste & Recycling Collection services is the area that the public gave the highest satisfaction rating score (7.2), just ahead of Parks (7.1) and Street Lighting (6.9).
- However, General Road Maintenance services was given the lowest satisfaction rating by the public (5.2), while Footpath Maintenance (5.9), Street Cleaning (6.1) and Winter Maintenance (6.2) also rated poorly.

Public rate road maintenance the highest priority for new government spending

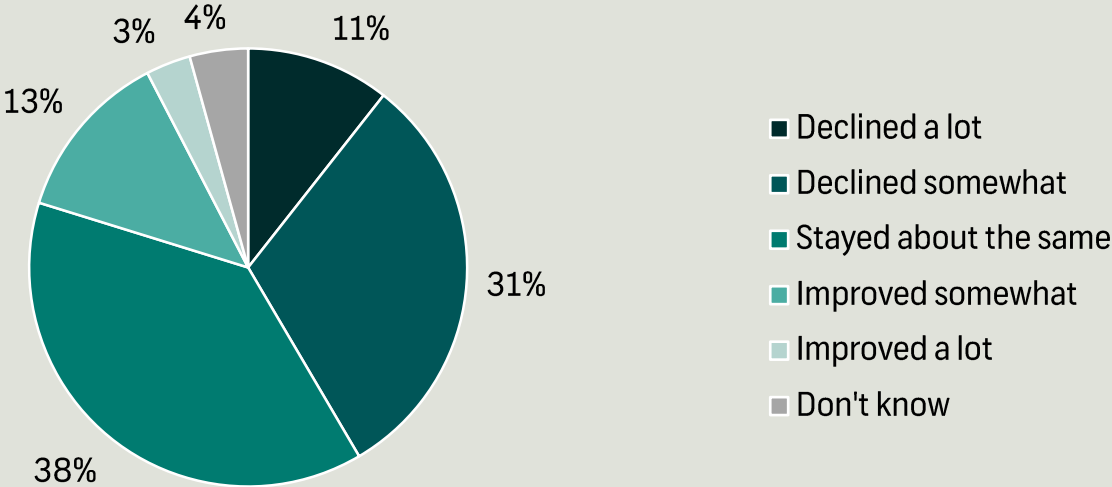
What percentage of the extra money would be spent on each of the 9 services below?



- Imagining that local councils were to receive extra funding, respondents were asked to allocate portions of a notional budget to the nine local services already discussed.
- Unsurprisingly, respondents wanted to allocate the highest mean proportion of the budget to the service they earlier rated the poorest, General Road Maintenance (18%).
- Budget allocation was fairly spread among the other services, with the public wanting to allocate an average of 12% of the budget to Waste & Recycling Collection (the next highest) and 9% to School Meals (the lowest).

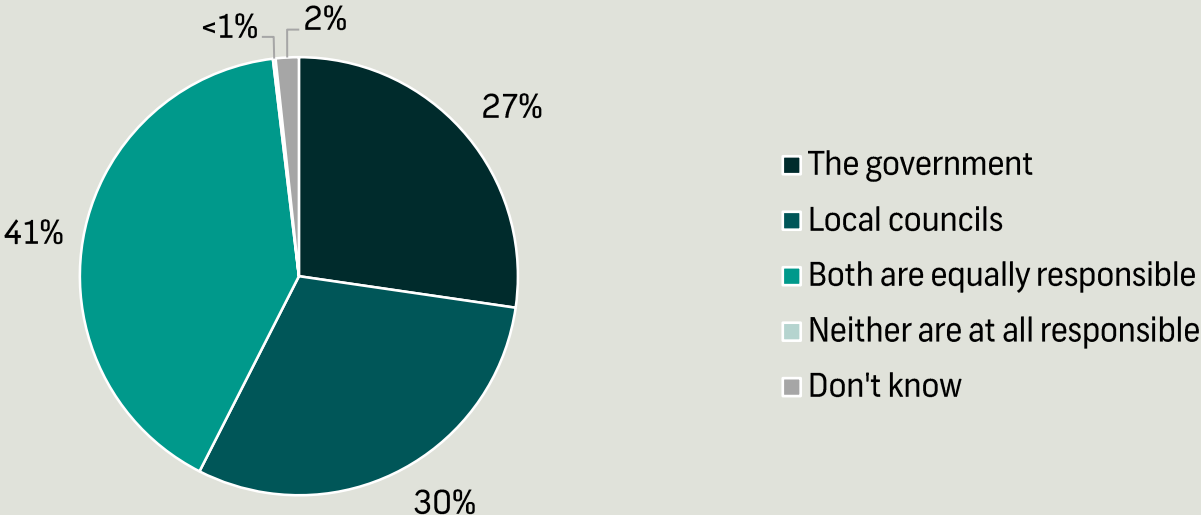
Public see decline in local services in recent years

Do you think that local services have declined or improved in your local area in recent years?



- When asked whether they thought local services have declined or improved in recent years, a significant proportion of the public (42%) perceived a decline in local services in their local area, compared to just 16% who said that services had improved.
- A further 38% of the public thought that services had stayed about the same.

Who do you think is the most responsible for the declining services in your local area?

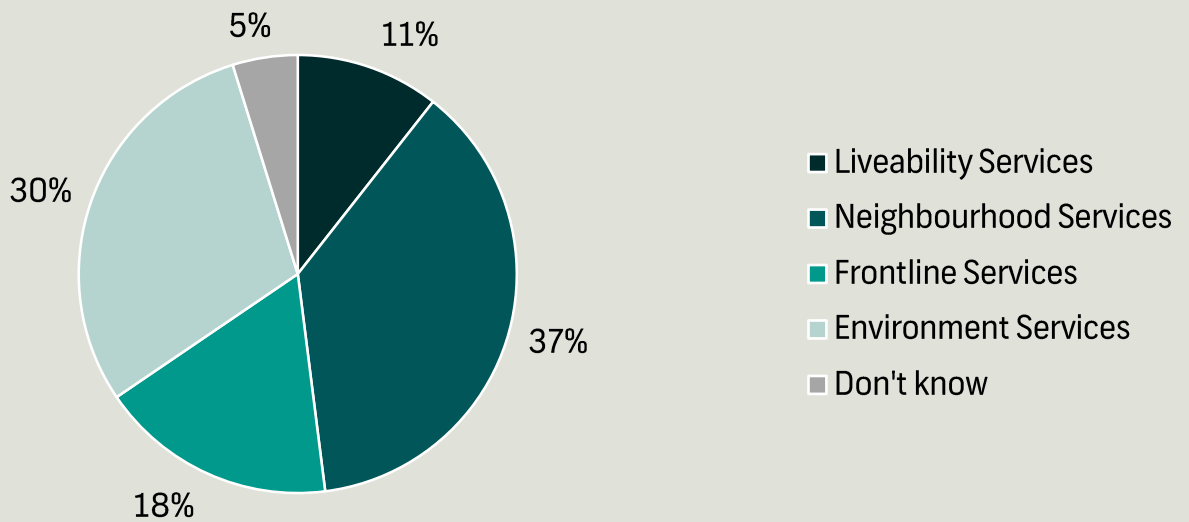


- Those that said that they had seen a decline were most likely to see this decline as the fault of both the government and local Councils combined (41%) whilst only a quarter (27%) see this as being caused by government cuts alone.

How the public see local services

- The term respondents felt best described the services in their local area was “Neighbourhood services” (37%) compared to “Environment services” (30%), “Frontline services” (18%) and “Liveability services” (11%).

What name best describes the services operated by your local council?



Appendix

Questions put in the order in which they appeared to respondents, with the corresponding question number found in data attached data tables.

Q1. Throughout this survey we will ask you to think about 'your local area'. When answering, please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home.

How many years have you continuously lived in your local area?

[0-21+ years]

Q2) Your local council is responsible for providing services to your local area. Throughout this survey we will ask you questions regarding 9 different services provided for your local area by your local council. Those 9 services are:

- Waste and recycling collection
- School meals
- Leisure and Sports facilities
- Parks
- Street cleaning
- Lighting
- Road maintenance e.g. potholes
- Footpath maintenance
- Winter maintenance e.g. gritting

If these 9 services were, as a group, to be given a collective name, which of the following terms from your point of view best describes them to you?

Liveability services
Neighbourhood services
Frontline services
Environment services
Don't know

Q3) How many children in your household attend a state-run school in your local area?

0
1
2
3
4+

[to those with at least one child in their house attending a local state school]

Q4) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the school meals provided by your local council?

[0-10 & don't know]

[to those with no children in their household attending a local state school]

Q5) You stated that no people in your household attend a state-run school. However, you may know of children who go to a state funded school.

From your knowledge, on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the school meals provided by your local council?

If you have no knowledge of the school meals provided by your local council, please select 'Don't know'.
[0-10 & don't know]

Q6) How often do you visit or use council-run leisure services and sports facilities in your local area?

Daily

A few times a week

About once a week

About once a fortnight

About once a month

A few times a year

About once a year

Hardly ever

Never

Q7) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the leisure and sports facilities provided by your local council?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q8) How often do you visit or use parks in your local area?

Daily

A few times a week

About once a week

About once a fortnight

About once a month

A few times a year

About once a year

Hardly ever

Never

Q9) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the park services in your local area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q10) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the street cleaning services in your local area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q11) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the lighting on streets in your local area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q12) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the general road maintenance carried in your area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q13) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the winter maintenance e.g gritting carried in your local area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q14) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the waste and recycling collection services provided in your local area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q15) On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the footpath maintenance provided in your local area?

[0-10 & don't know]

Q16) Do you think that local services in your local areas have declined or improved in your local area in recent years?

- Declined a lot
- Declined somewhat
- Stayed about the same
- Improved somewhat
- Improved a lot
- Don't know

[to those who said that services have declined in their local area]

Q17) You said local services have declined in your local area in recent years. Who do you think is the most responsible for this?

- The Government
- Local Councils
- Both are equally responsible
- Neither are at all responsible
- Don't know

Q18) Do you think that enough of your tax is spent on services in your local area? 0 means too much is spent in your local area, 10 means that not enough is spent in your local area and 5 means about the right amount is spent.

[0-10]

Q19) Please place yourself on the 0-10 scale below with respect to your opinion on spending in your local area.

5 means that you would like to see the level of spending remain the same, 0 means that you would like to see the government keep more money than it currently gives to local councils in order to spend more at the national level and 10 means that you would like to see the government give more money to local councils to spend at the local level.

[0-10 & don't know]

Q20-28) Imagine that local councils were to receive extra funding. If you had the choice, what percentage of the extra money would be spent on each of the 9 services below? Please allocate points to each of the items; if you would like not to allocate any of the extra money to a certain service, then enter 0. You only have 100 points in total to use.

- Waste and Recycling collection
- School meals
- Leisure and sports facilities
- Parks
- Street cleaning
- Lighting
- Road maintenance
- Footpath maintenance
- Winter maintenance

Q29) Who do trust to most to make decision about how services are delivered about how services are provided in your local area?

Your local Council
The Government
Neither
Don't Know

Q30) Who do you trust the most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?

Local Councillors
Members of Parliament
Government ministers
None of the above
Don't know

Q31) Who do trust most to deliver services to your local area?

Your local Council
The Government
A private company
None of the above
Don't know