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APSE Parks State of the Market Survey 2022




Post Pandemic: Green Urban Spaces
A brief guide to increasing the opportunities to green urban spaces and understand and value the benefits this will bring to communities



State of the Market Survey 2022

Local Authority Parks and Green Spaces Services





State of UK Public Parks 2021

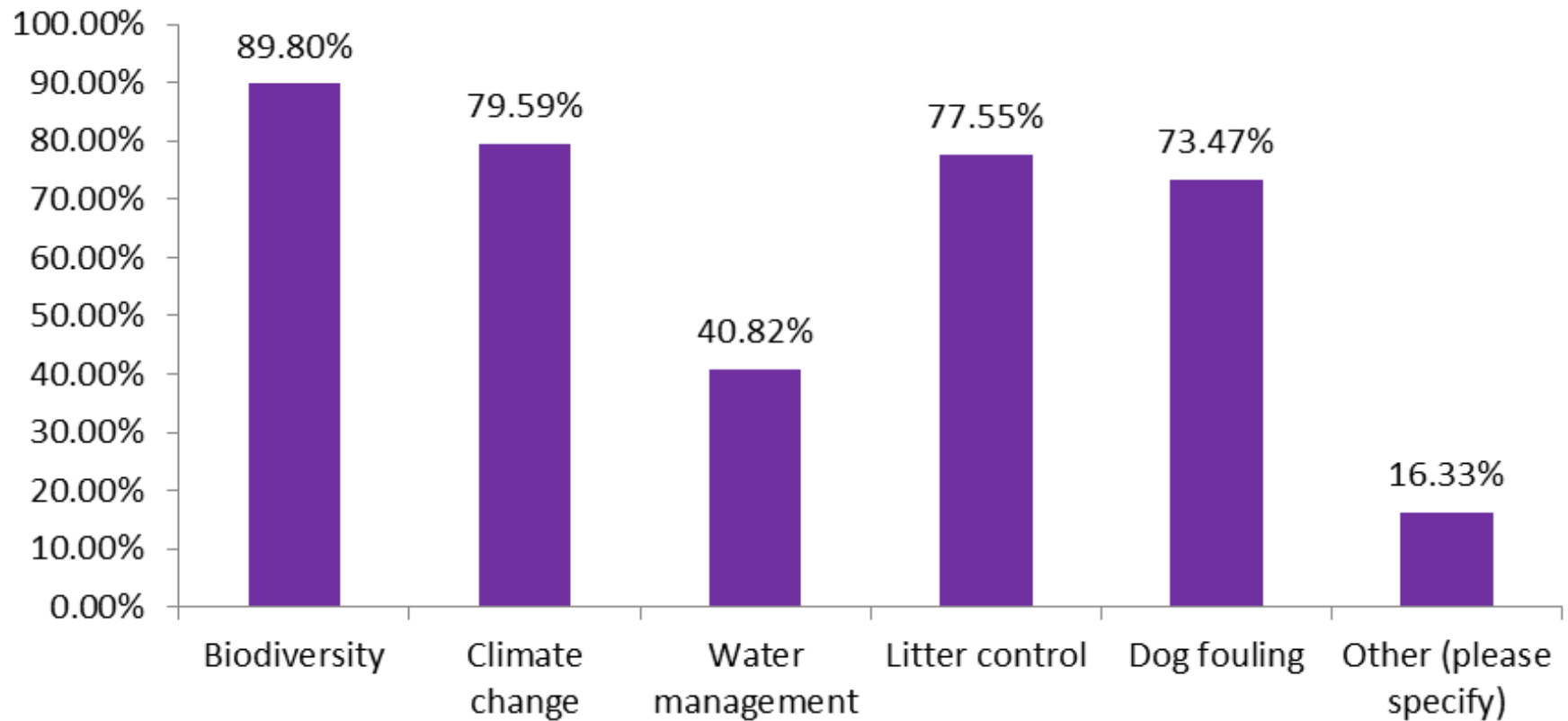


The COVID-effect!

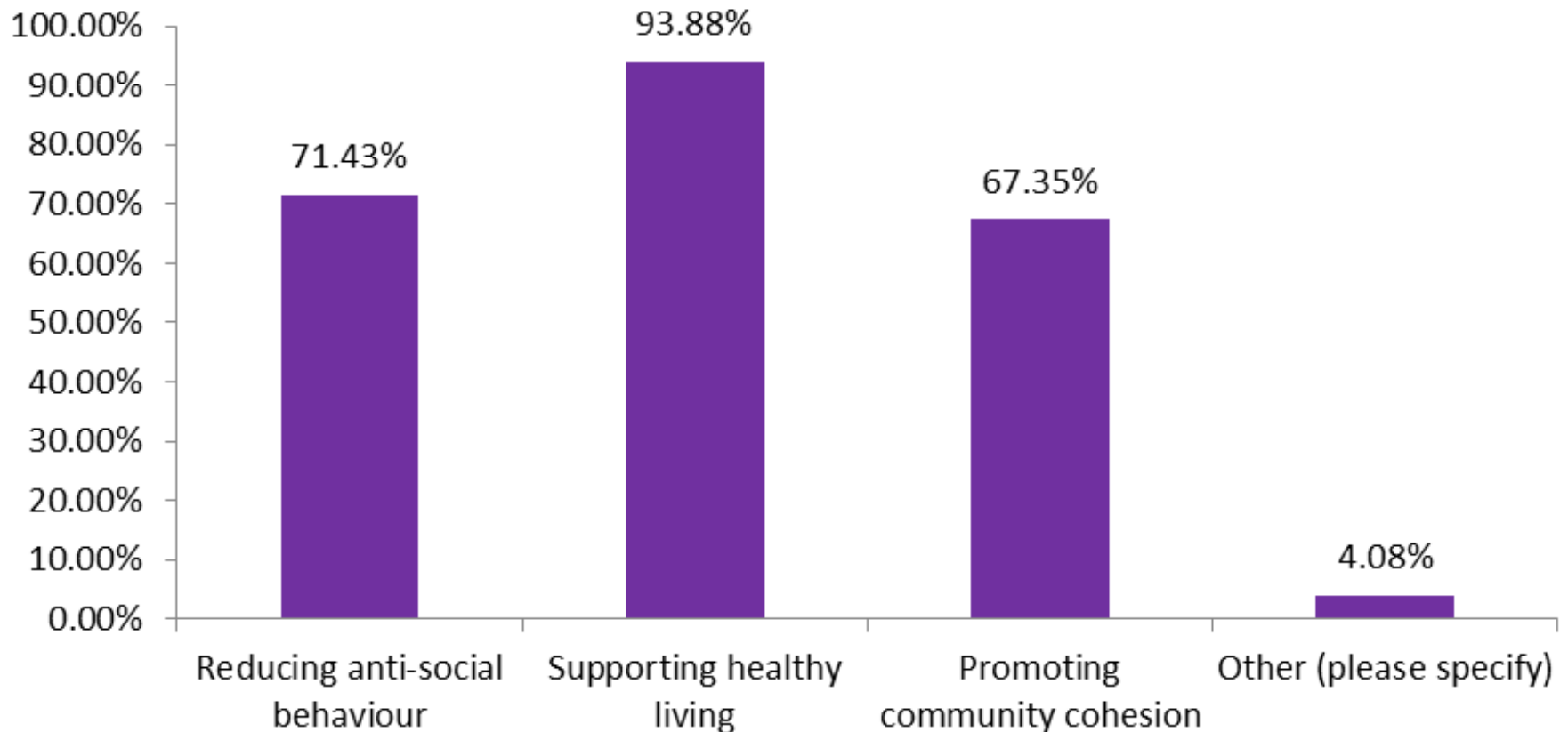
- 86% feel parks have had their budgets cut more severely than other services (68% in 2021).
- 92% said budget cuts had led to reduced levels of maintenance and increases in unmaintained land (71% in 2021).
- 100% said lack of investments in parks and green spaces will impact adversely health and social well-being (97% in 2021).
- 94% stated parks should be free to access (96% in 2021).



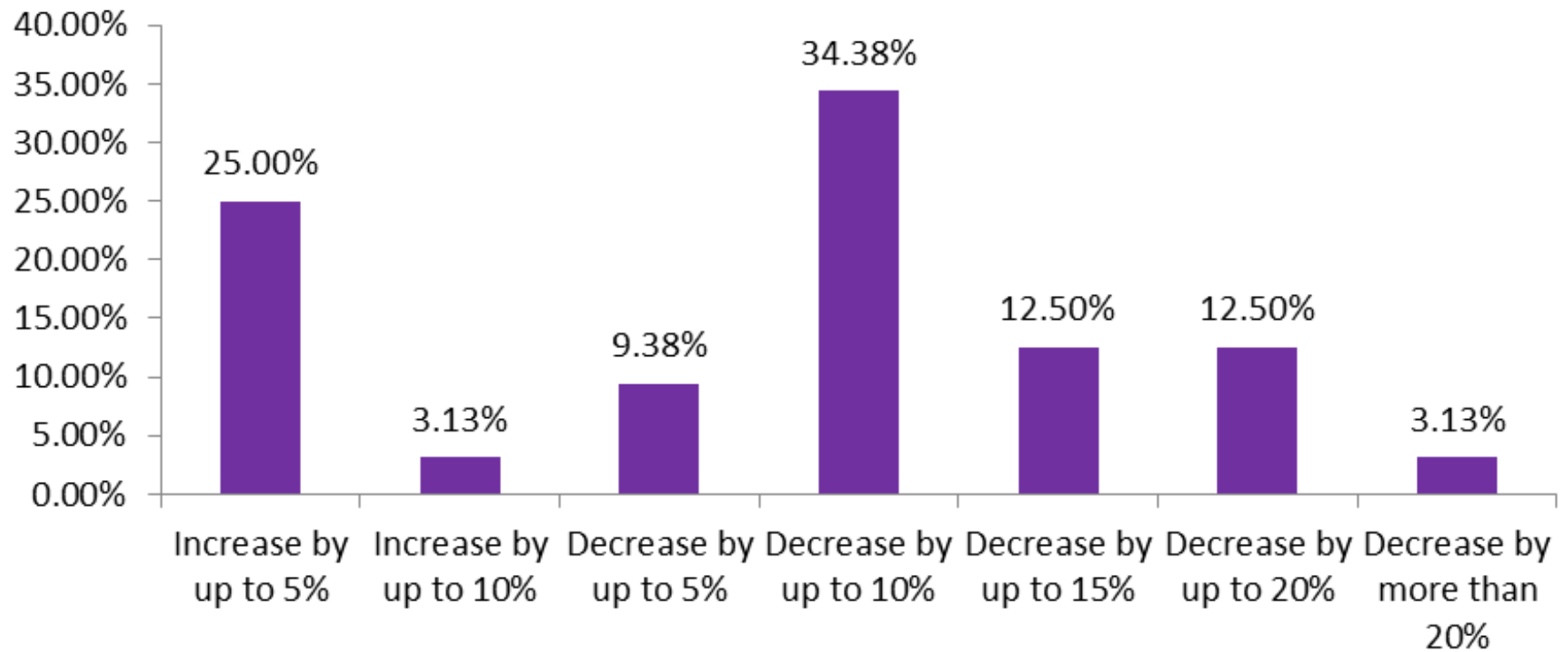
What environmental issues are a priority for your parks and green space service?



What social issues are a priority for your parks and green space service?



What is your expectation of the level of funding in your service budget in the coming five years?



Service Efficiencies

- Rethinking staffing levels/ multi-skilling
- Operational changes
- Shared procurement
- Increased commercialism
- Introducing new forms of land management
- Better location of staff to reduce travel costs
- Bringing services back in-house/greater flexibility
- Promotion of sponsorship and donation opportunities
- Asset transfer of land and buildings
- Decreasing subsidisation to services.
- Reducing service provision and standards
- Community management e.g. allotments.

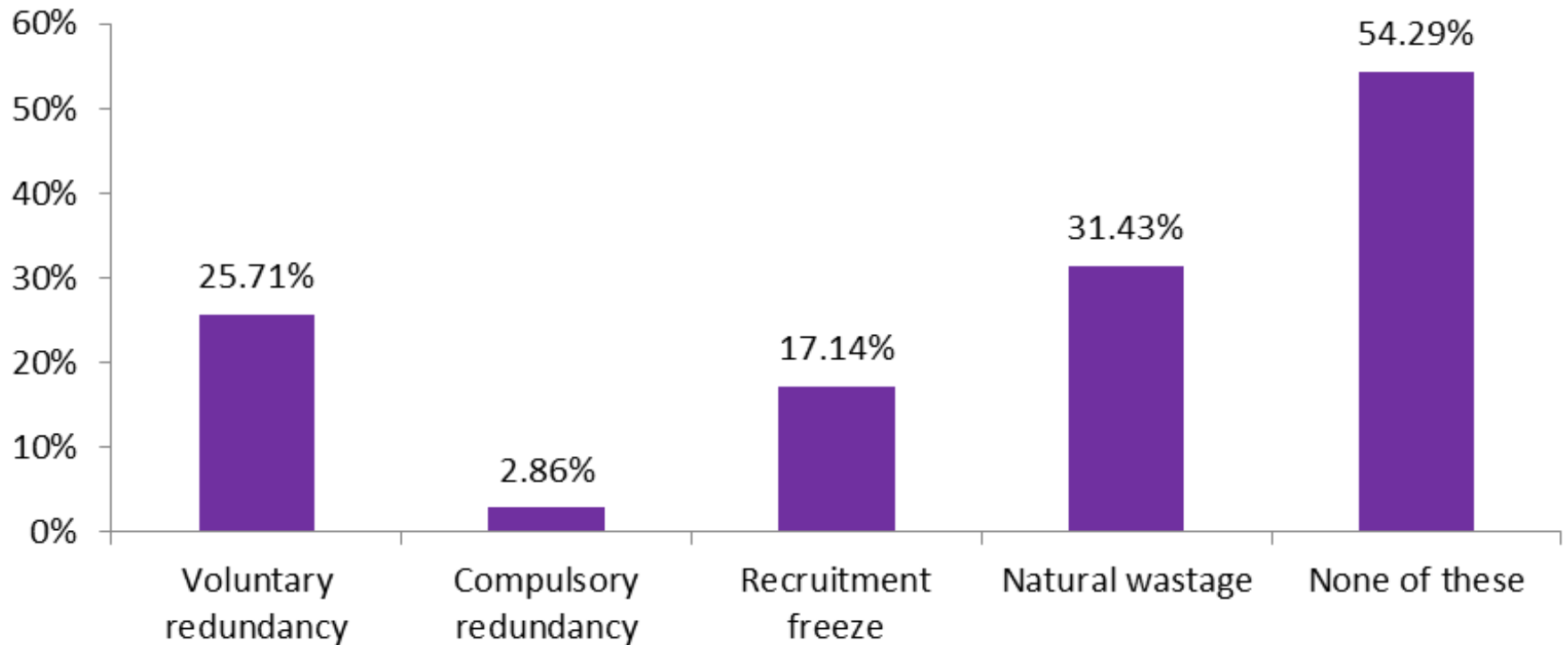


Income generation

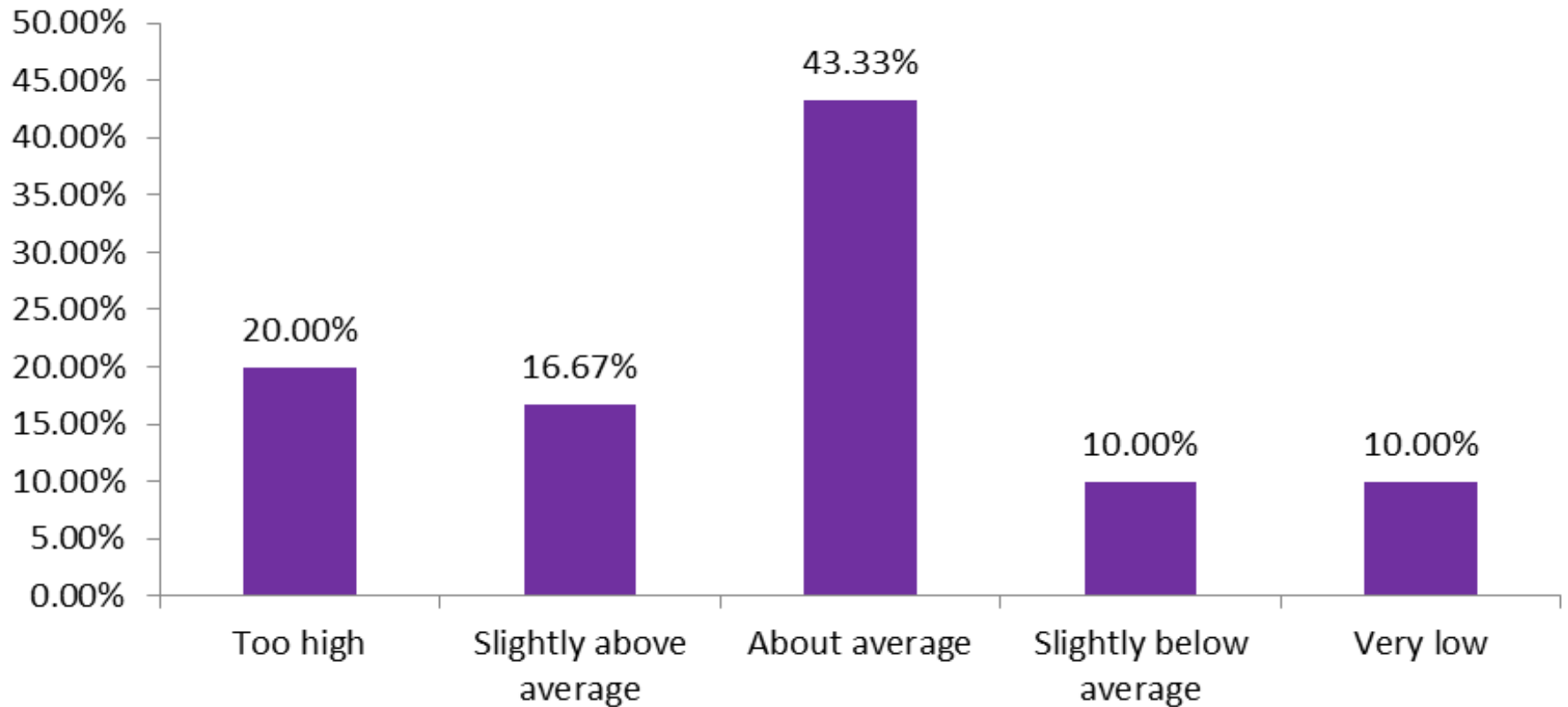
- **Main sources** of income generation are still:
 - sports pitch lettings, allotments, cafes, events and festivals, franchises and fairgrounds.
- **Other sources** of income come from bowling greens, tennis courts, car parks, boot camps and golf courses,
- **HLF Grants, S106** and monies raised by **Friends Groups** are also still an important source of additional income.
- A few respondents are also raising monies from Ecosystem services.
- Due to COVID, income was adversely affected, most areas are now beginning to recover, however, sponsorship is still slow to recover.



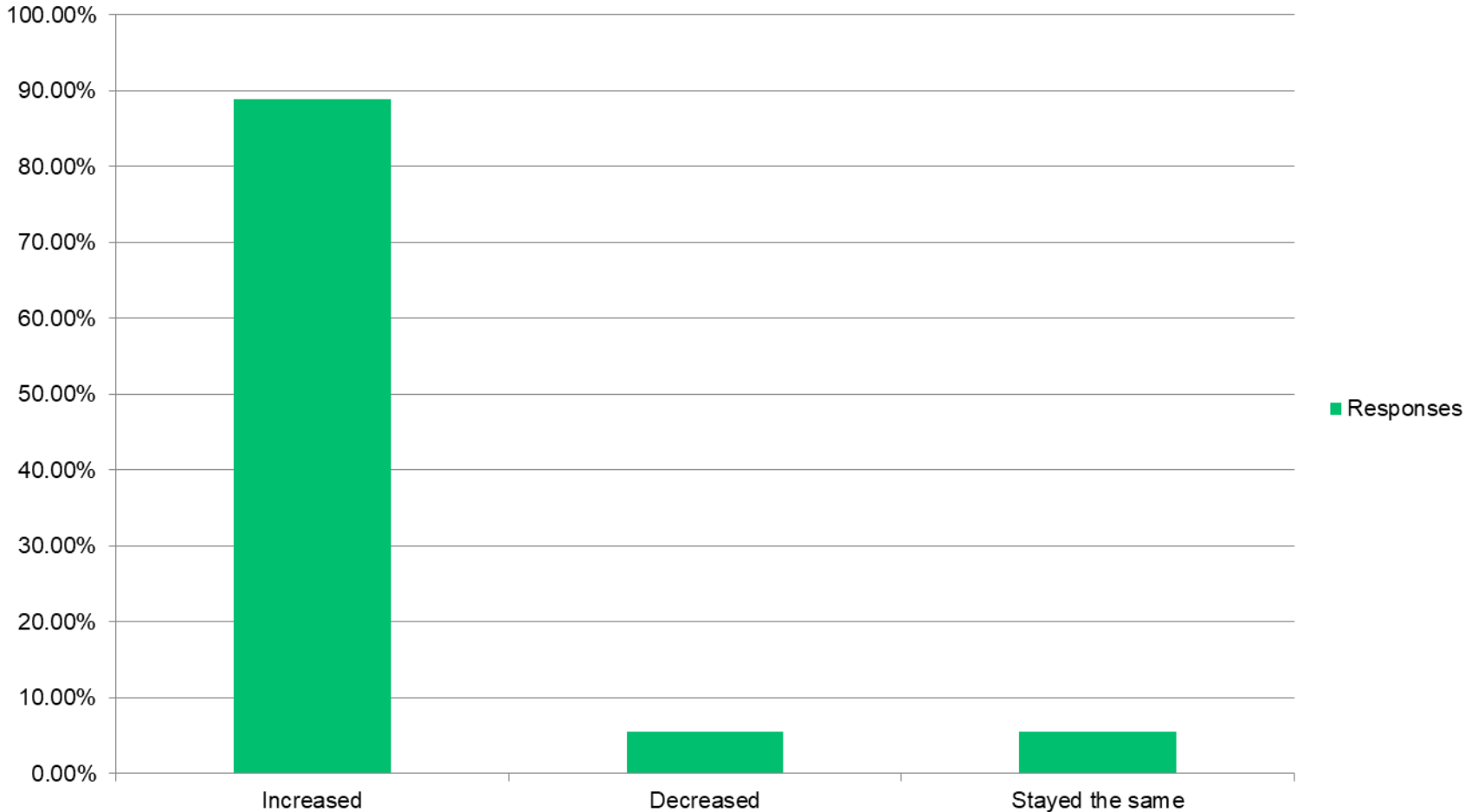
Has or does your service intend to implement any of the following within the next 12 months:



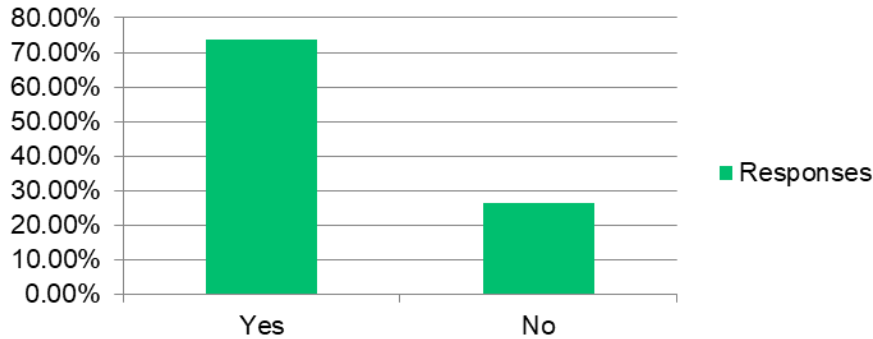
Are staff absence levels at an acceptable level?



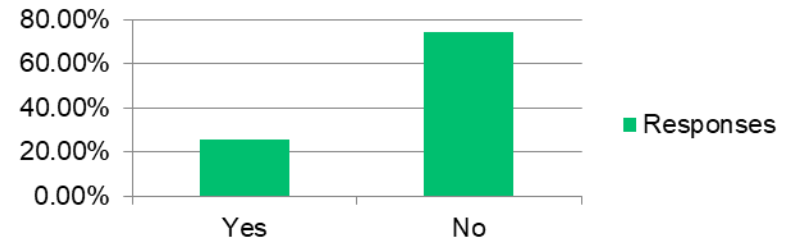
Do you think the number of visitors to your formal parks during the past year has:



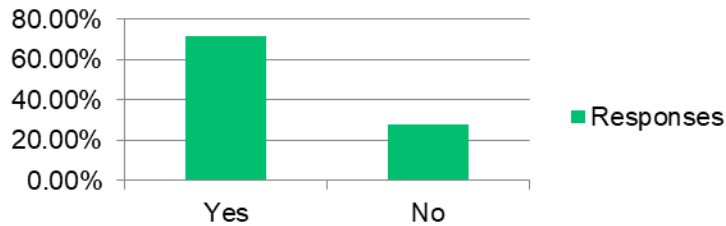
Are you considering 'Rewilding' any of your parks or greenspaces?



Are you considering protecting any of your parks and greenspaces in perpetuity?

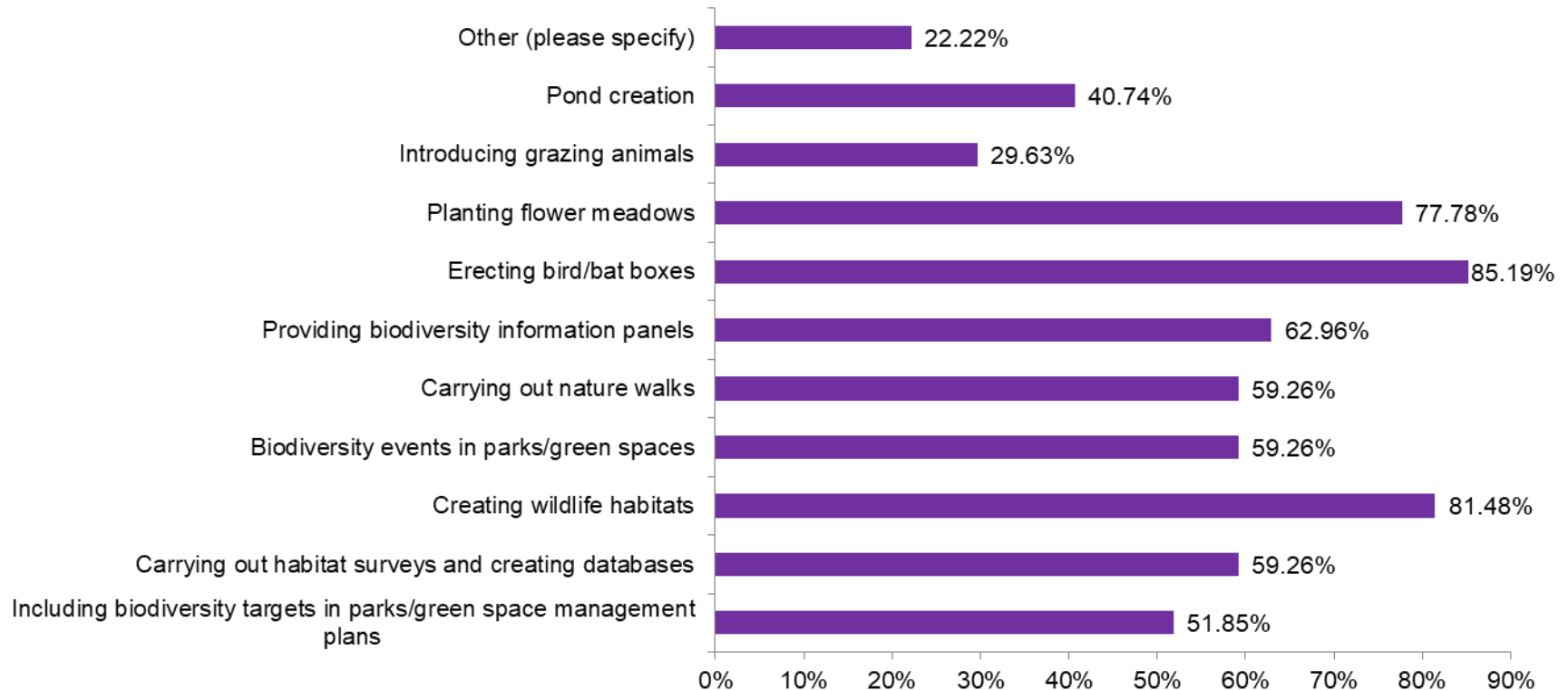


Are you considering reducing the amount of chemical treatment you use to eradicate weeds?



Biodiversity Provision

If you make a biodiversity provision, which of the following have you carried out:



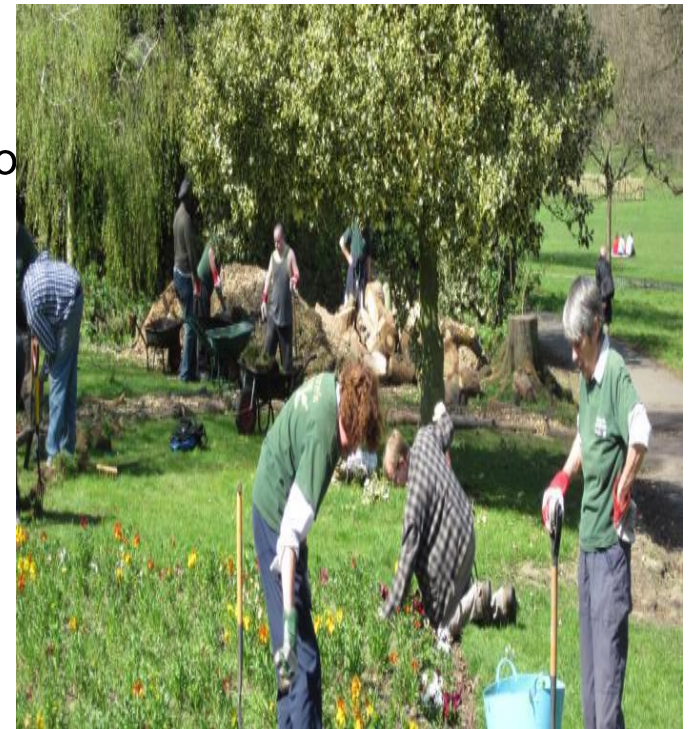
Areas of service growth and reduction

Service growth

- Capital projects (e.g. S106)
- Conservation management and climate change projects
- Community involvement and engagement
- Partnership working with other public bodies

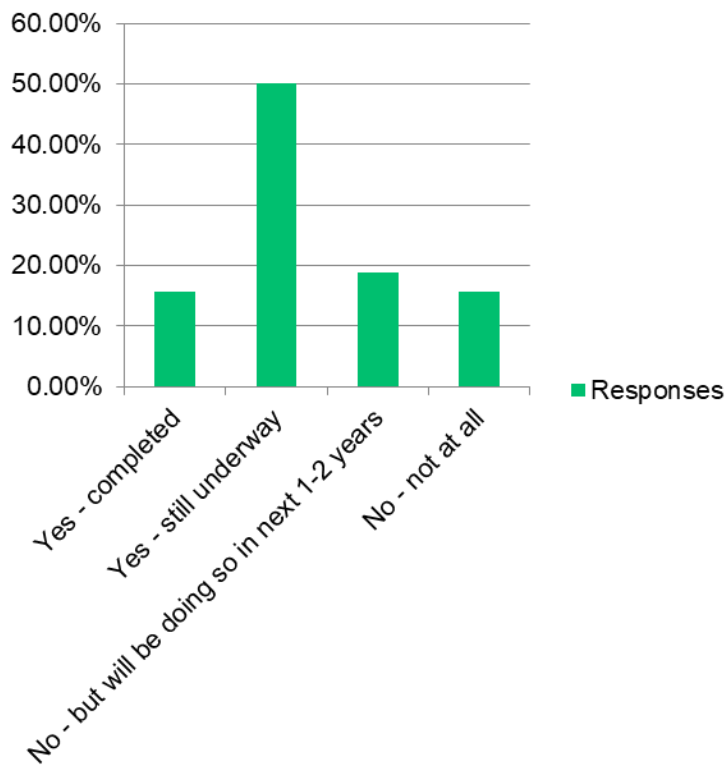
Service reductions

- Reduced frequency in grounds maintenance
- Bedding and floral displays
- Reductions in service standards

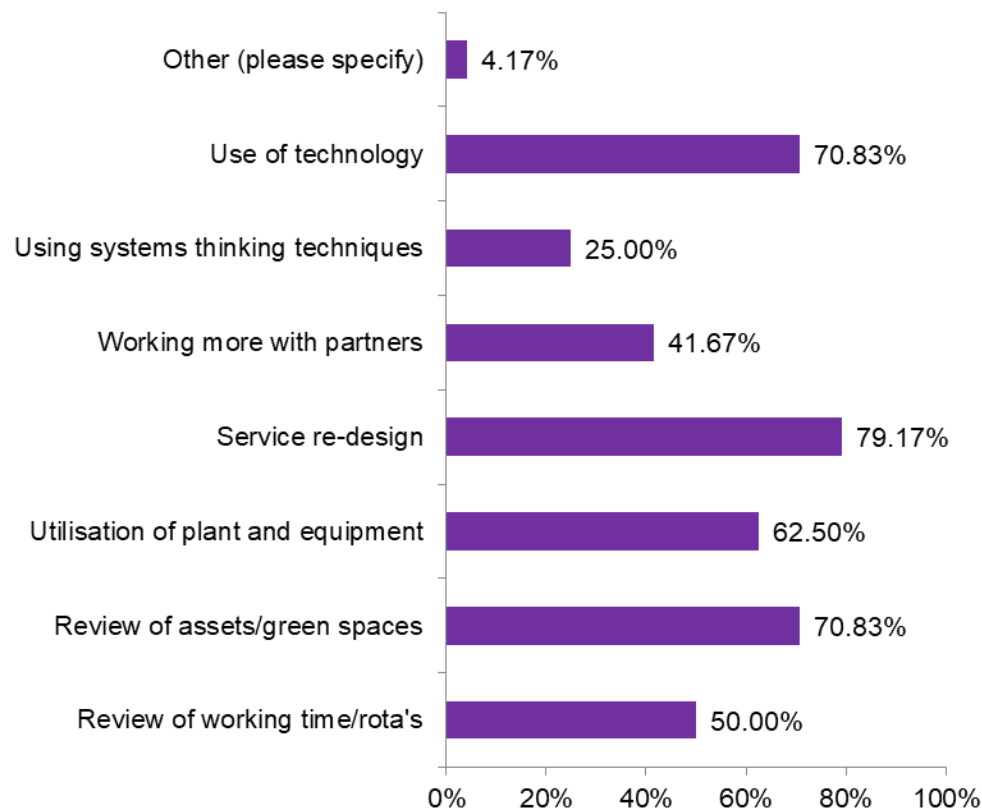




Have you undertaken a review of your service recently?



Will this review involve any of the following:



Trust and Confidence in Councils

What the public think

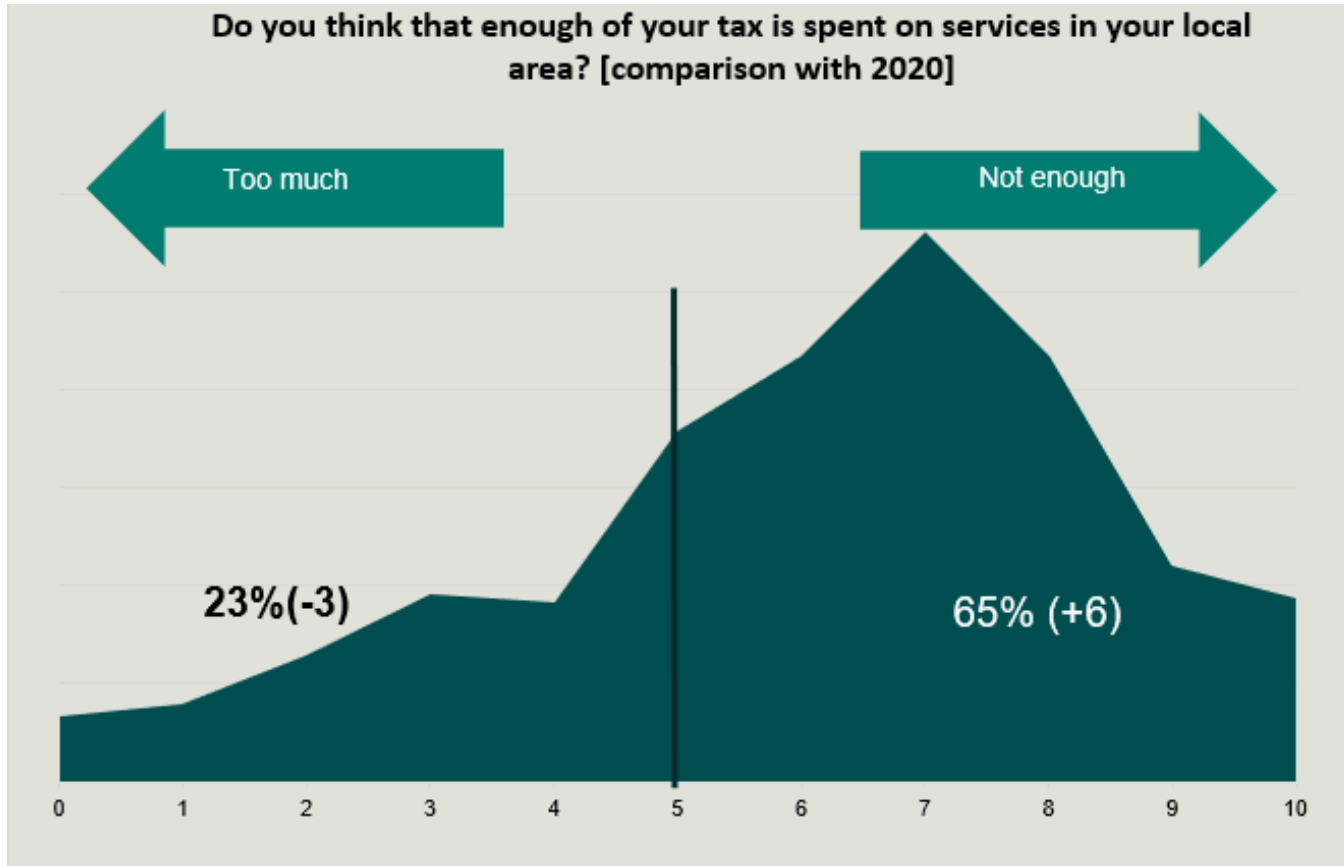
Key Points: Trust and Satisfaction

1. Public trust marginally smaller than last year but remains high vs national government.
2. They trust you much more to spend their taxes than national government.
3. Satisfaction levels with many specific services remain high, despite this year's challenges

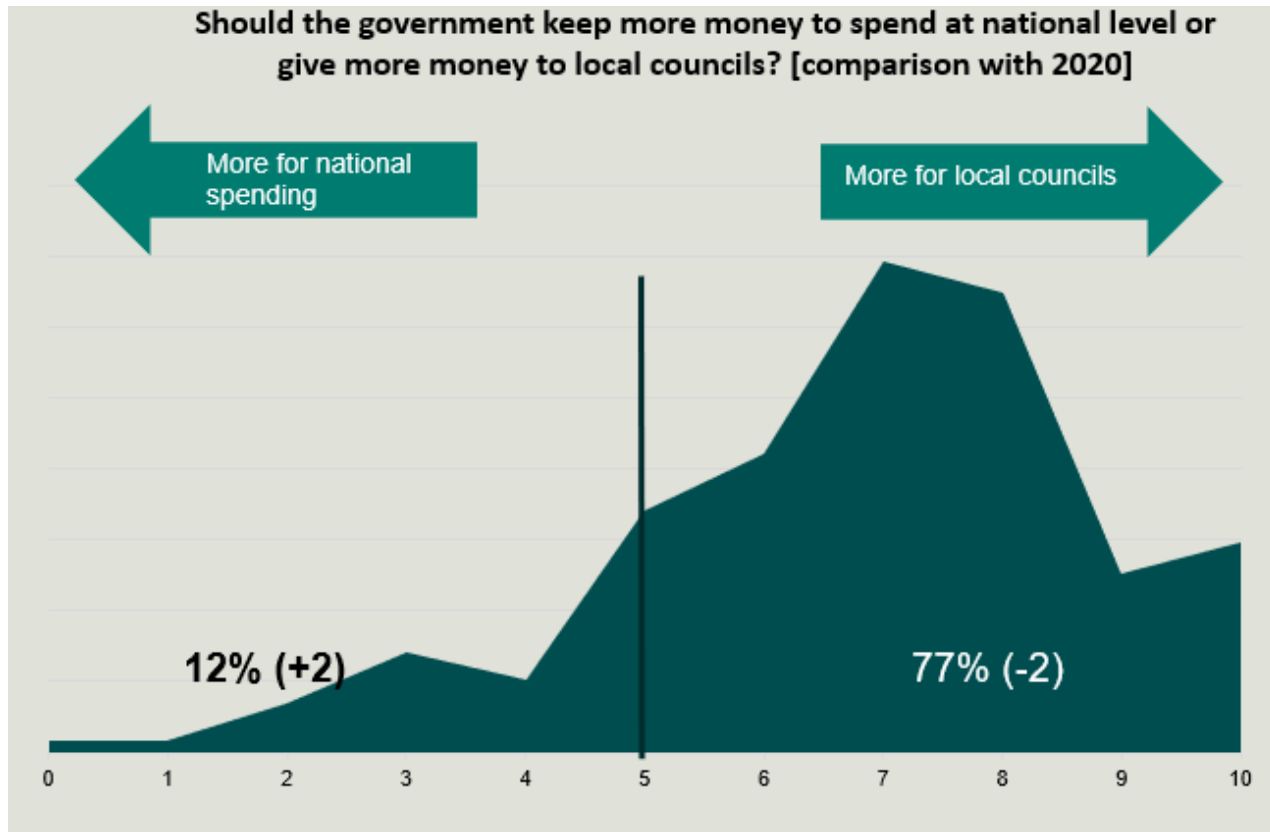
Key Points: Current and future challenges

- 1. Councils are the most trusted to provide and deliver services in people's local area.**
- 2. Councils also the most trusted to make decisions regarding local planning.**
- 3. Climate change still a high priority, closely following affordable housing, social care, and road maintenance.**

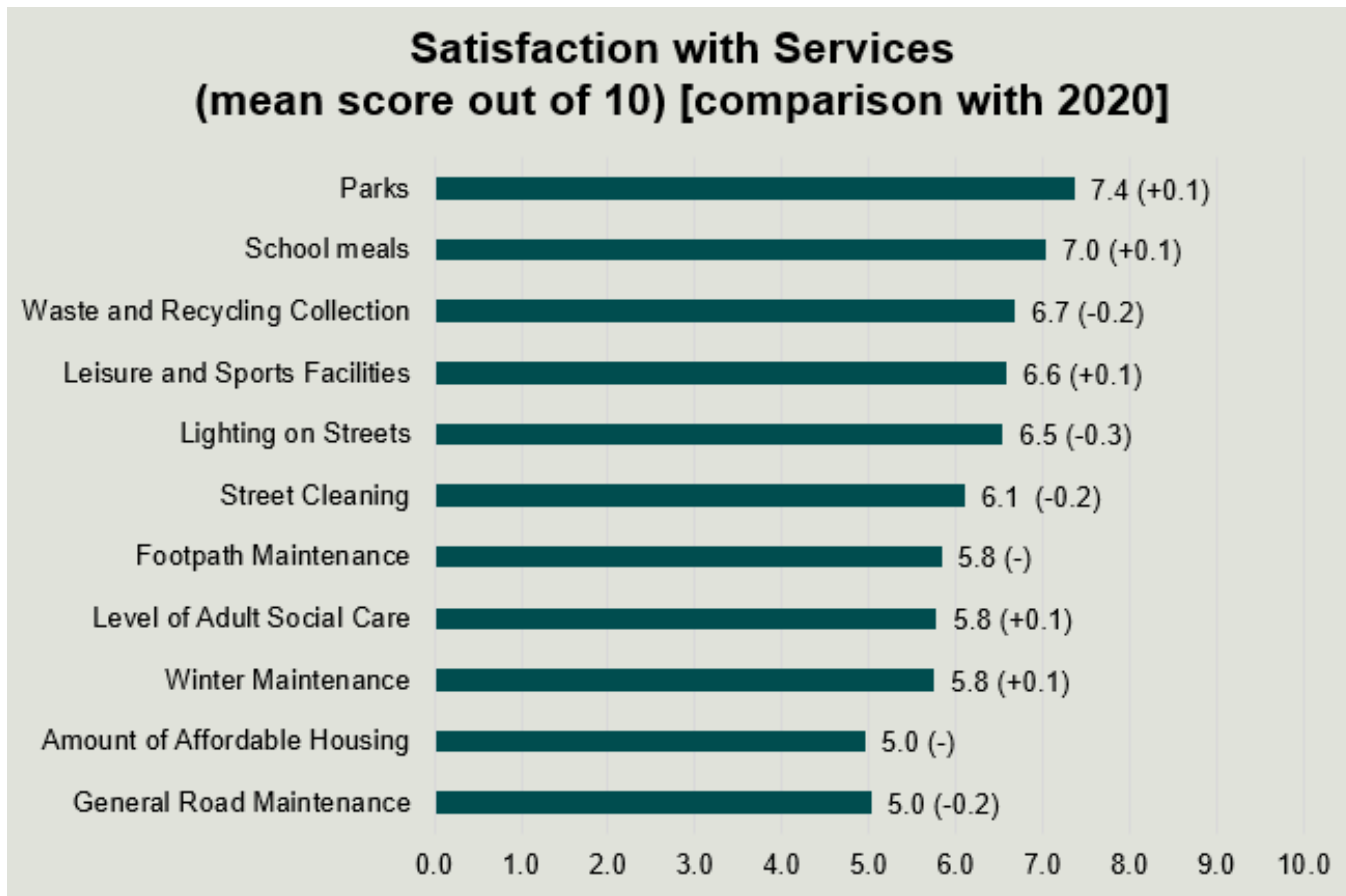
Enough of your taxes spent in your area?



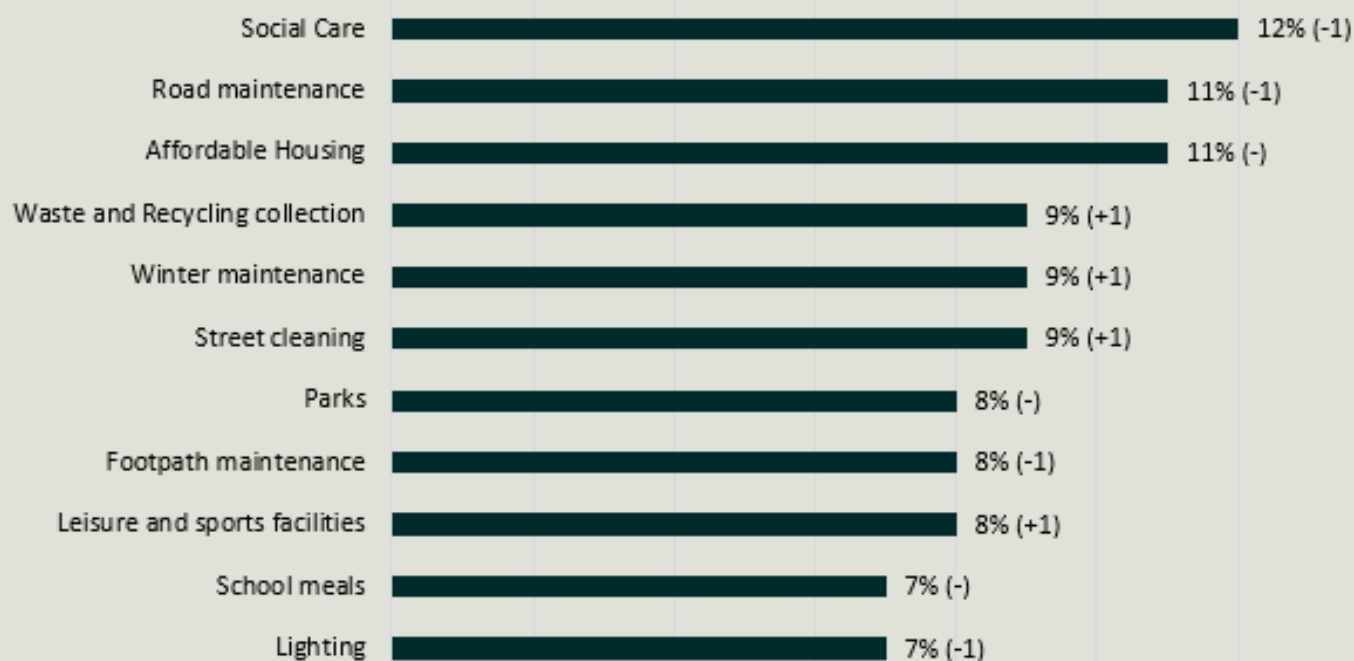
Key fact 2 : People trust Councils with their tax



Satisfaction levels vary between services



If you had the choice, what percentage of the extra money would be spent on each of the 11 services below? (mean %)
[comparison with 2020]



Conclusions

- Coronavirus has continued to be a 'game changer'
- Wider recognition of benefits parks and greenspace – still awaiting evidence of sustainable and realistic financial support.
- Huge increase in visitor numbers – increasing pressure on parks budgets when income has reduced.
- Increased connection with nature ongoing.
- Climate change and biodiversity now seen as key responsibilities for parks managers.
- Income generation will remain important
- Some signs of reduction in level of budget cuts.
- Local government finances and parks importance to local tax base
- Need to continue fight to protect parks and greenspace
- COVID recovery and opportunity for Government

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