Moray Citizens' Panel

Customer Satisfaction Survey Report

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1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1.   The present survey asked about panel members' experience of and views on The Moray Council. This included views on the range of services that the council provides, and priorities for The Moray Council and the Community Planning Partnership.

1.2.   Analysis has also considered the extent of variation in views expressed across key groups including age, location and gender – although the scope for this more detailed analysis is limited where services are used by a minority of survey respondents. This report highlights significant variations in views across these groups, based on 95% confidence interval statistical significance tests.

Survey Response

1.3.   The survey fieldwork took place from late August to early October 2016. A total of 456 responses were received by fieldwork close: an overall response rate of 50%. This is a good level of response to a survey of this kind, and is consistent response to other panel surveys over the last year. Figure 1 provides a profile of survey respondents.

Figure 1: Profile of survey respondents

Figure 1: Profile of survey respondents

Respondent Location

- Speyside 13%
- Buckie 14%
- Elgin 14%
- Fochabers 15%
- Forres 16%
- Keith 16%
- Lossiemouth 11%
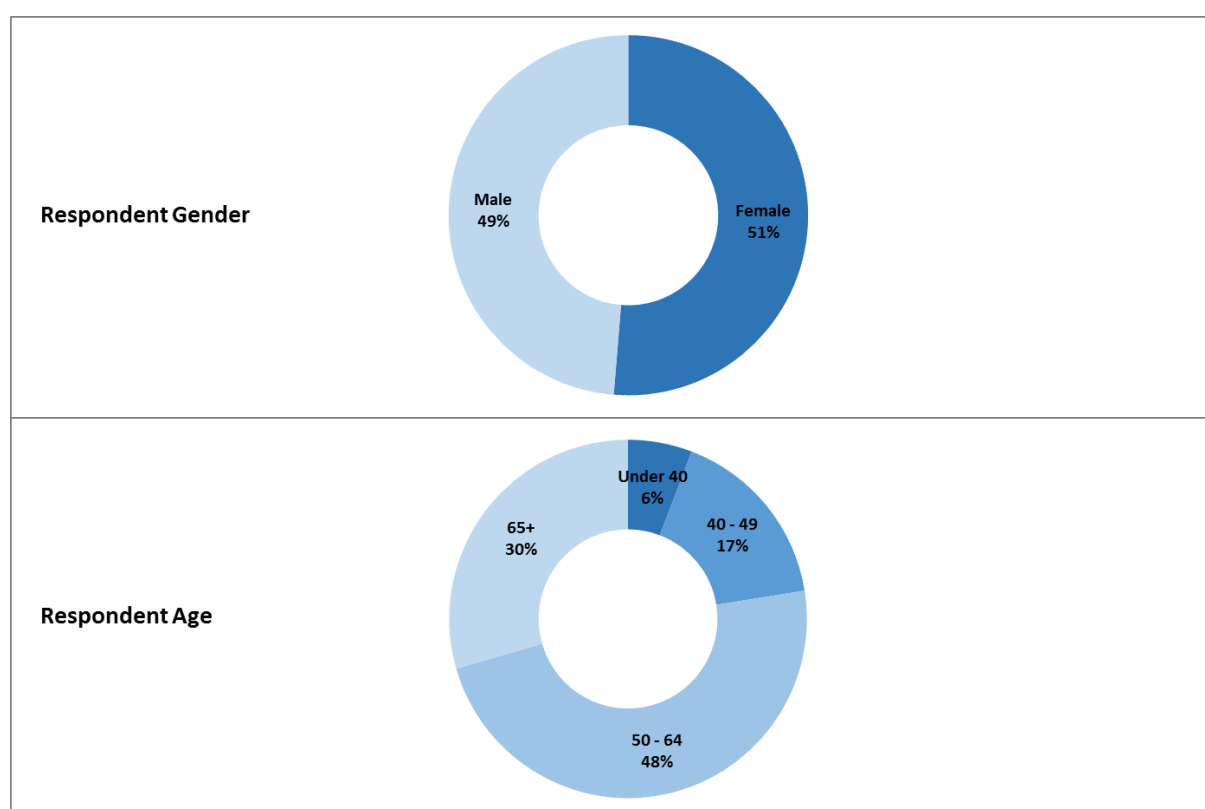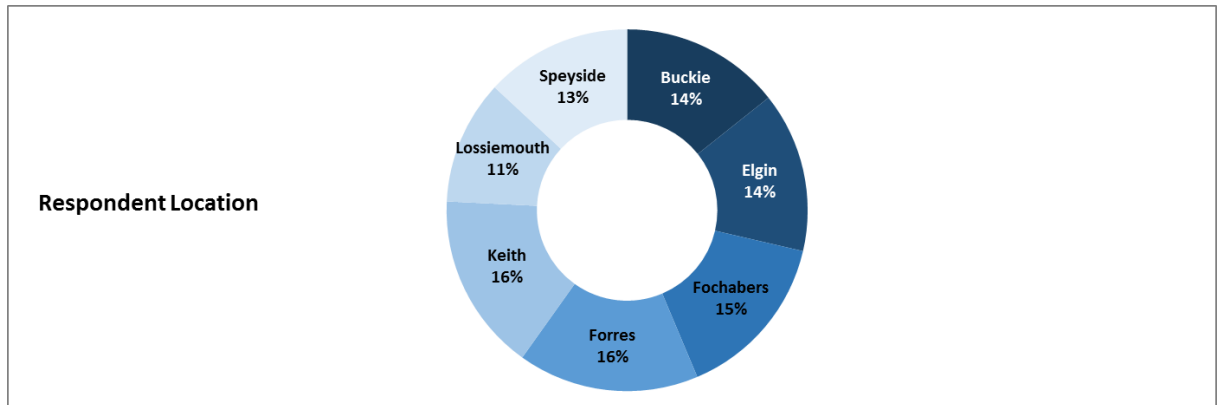
2. GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE COUNCIL

2.1. This section considers panel members' experiences and views on getting in touch with The Moray Council's services. This included a series of questions around how panel members find information on services, and on how panel members contact the council when they need to request a service.

Finding information on council services

2.2. The majority of survey respondents access information on council services via the council's website. As Figure 2 over the page indicates, around two thirds of respondents use the council's website to access information on services (66%) – by far the most commonly used option. It is also notable that the council's website is the preferred means of accessing information on services for around half of respondents (47%) – again this is a significantly more popular option than others listed at Figure 2.

2.3. Respondents also use a range of other means of accessing information on council services. These include information in local newspapers (used by 1 in 3 respondents, 33%), council mailings (used by around 1 in 5, 22%), and from family and friends (used by around 1 in 5, 19%). However, relatively few respondents indicated that these are their preferred means of accessing information on services.

2.4. The overall profile of panel members' use of communication channels is broadly similar across the main socio-demographic groups. The most significant variation is in relation to panel members' age. Those aged under 50 are significantly more likely than others to use the council's website and/or social media to access information on services – and relatively few respondents in this age group use more 'traditional' channels such as local newspapers and council mailings. In contrast, those aged 65+ are significantly more likely than others to find this information in local newspapers. Those aged 65+ are equally likely to use local newspapers and the council's website to access information on council services.

Figure 2: How usually access information on council services

How usually access information on council services

- Through the council's website — 66% / 47%
- Through council mailings — 22% / 16%
- Through leaflets/posters in council offices — 12% / 4%
- Information in the local newspaper — 33% / 14%
- Social media — 8% / 2%
- Local area forums, Community Councils, tenants' groups, etc — 6% / 2%
- From family and friends — 19% / 5%
- Through my Councillor — 7% / 1%
- Other — 12% / 10%

ALL used — Preferred option
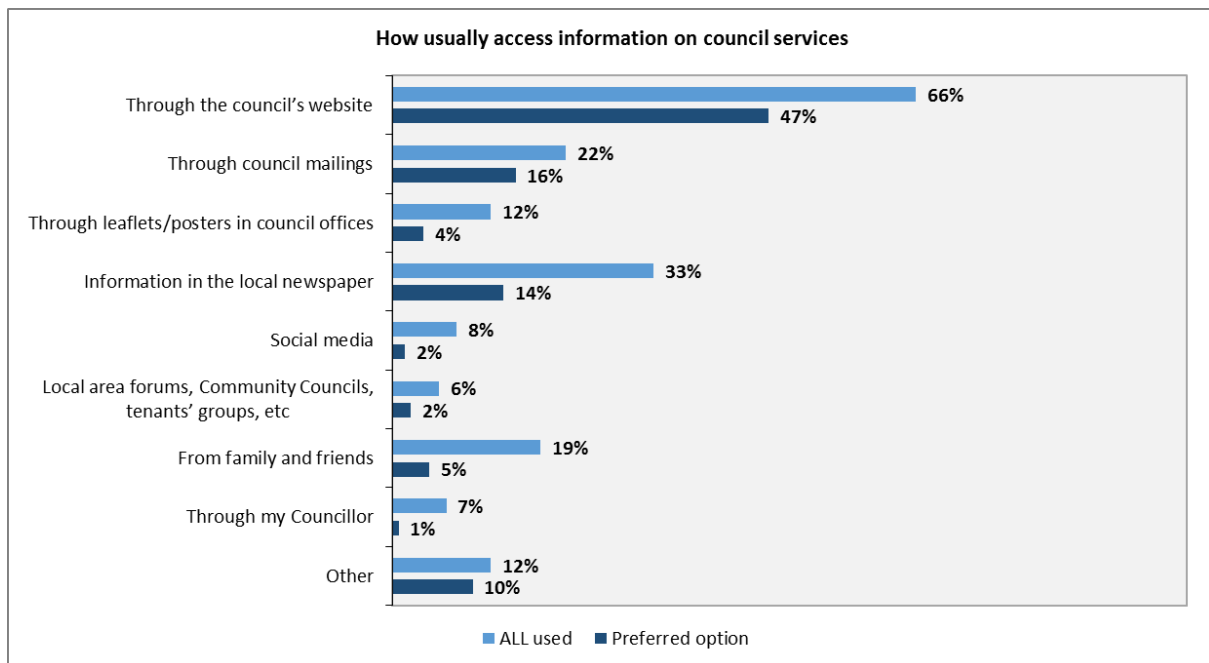
2.5.   Panel members are generally positive on the ease with which they can find information on council services (see Figure 3 over the page). Around 4 in 5 respondents indicated that they generally find it easy to access information on council services (81%), although there remained around 1 in 7 who experienced difficulty here (14%).

2.6.   This balance of views was consistent across socio-demographic groups, but there was some variation in views dependent on the communication channels used by panel members. In particular, those who access service information via the council's website were somewhat more positive on their experience than those who access information via local newspapers or leaflets/posters.

2.7.   The survey also asked panel members whether they could access information on council services in the format that they need such as printed/web-based, large print, braille, audio, alternative languages etc. Again, the response here was generally positive with around three quarters indicating that they are usually able to do this (73%), and only 7% indicating that they are not usually able to do this (see Figure 3).

2.8.   A small number of respondents who had experienced difficulties accessing information in the format(s) that they require provided further detail on their experience:

➢ Using the telephone to find information and/or access services was the most common issue raised by these respondents. Specific issues raised by respondents included difficulties finding a direct number for the service required, problems navigating switchboards to find the

right person to speak to, and difficulties for those with hearing impairment. It was suggested that those with hearing impairment have particular problems with mobile phones and switchboards (the latter linked to a lack of direct lines to services).

➢ Panel members with hearing impairment also referred to information on council services not being offered in audio format.

➢ A small number of respondents referred to a lack of information in hard copy format, including some who struggled to find the required information via the council's website. It was also suggested that the print size used by local newspapers and council mailings can be too small for those with poor eyesight.

➢ Several respondents referred to difficulties finding required information via the council website, including suggestions that site navigation and the search facility could be improved – *"every page just takes you to another page!"*

Figure 3: Views on ease of finding information on council services

Ease of finding information on council services

| 20% | 61% | 12% | 2% |

■ Very easy   ■ Fairly easy   ■ Quite difficult   ■ Very difficult   ▨ Don't know

Whether can usually get information on council services in the format required

| 33% | 40% | 4% | 3% |

■ Yes, always   ■ Yes, usually   ■ Not often   ■ Never   ▨ Don't know
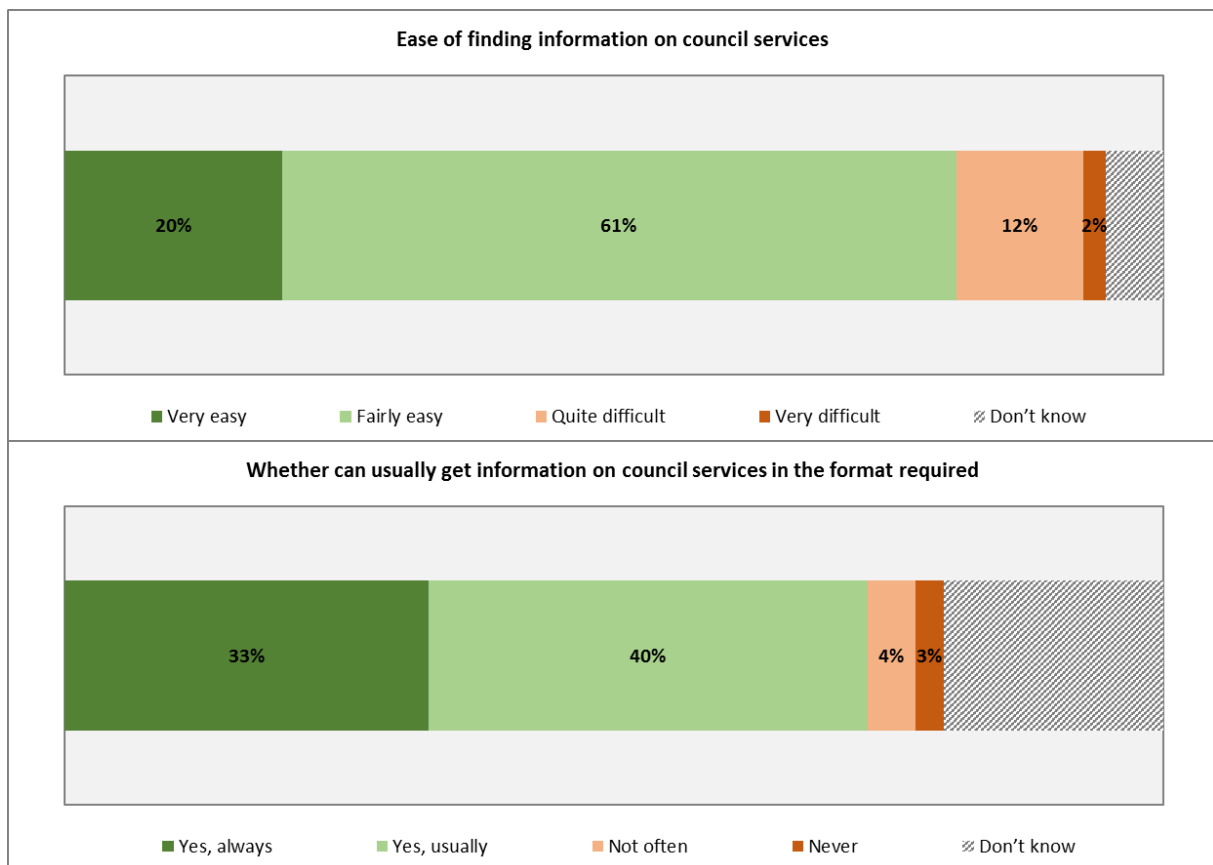
Getting in touch with council services

2.9. Figure 4 below summarises panel members' use of communication channels to get in touch with Moray Council services – for example to request a service or ask a question.

2.10. As this shows, telephone is by some margin the most common option for contacting council services (used by more than two thirds, 68%). This is also the preferred option for a little less than half of respondents (46%). Panel members did mention using a range of other communication channels, although these are not as commonly used as telephone contact. For example, around 3 in 10 make contact in person (30% at the council's headquarters or elsewhere), around 3 in 10 use email contact (29%), and around a quarter use the council's website (26%).

2.11. The ways in which panel members contact council services is broadly similar across the main socio-demographic groups. The only significant variation is across age groups, with those aged under 50 more likely than others to contact services via the council's website and/or email.

Figure 4: How usually get in touch with council services
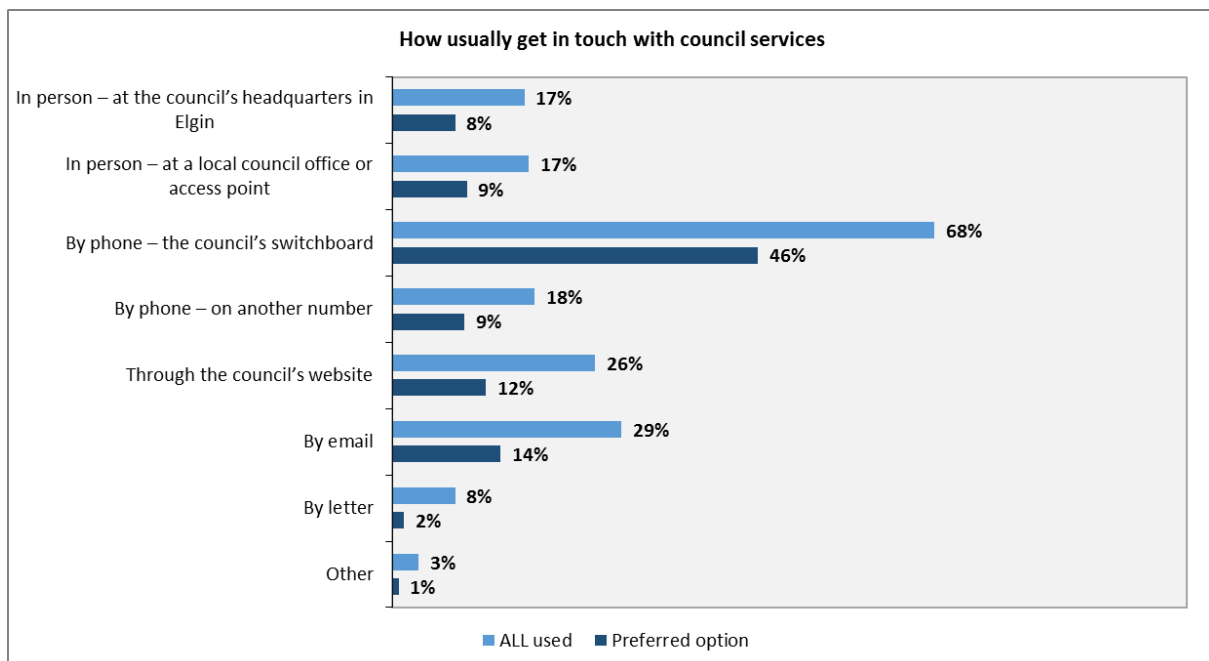
2.12. Panel members are generally positive on the ease with which they can contact council services (see Figure 5 over the page). More than three quarters of respondents indicated that they generally find it easy to get in touch with council services (77%), although there remained around 1 in 7 who found this difficult to some extent (15%). This balance of views was consistent across socio-demographic groups, although those in the Elgin and Fochabers areas were somewhat less positive than others on the ease with which they can contact council services.

Figure 5: Views on ease of getting in touch with council services
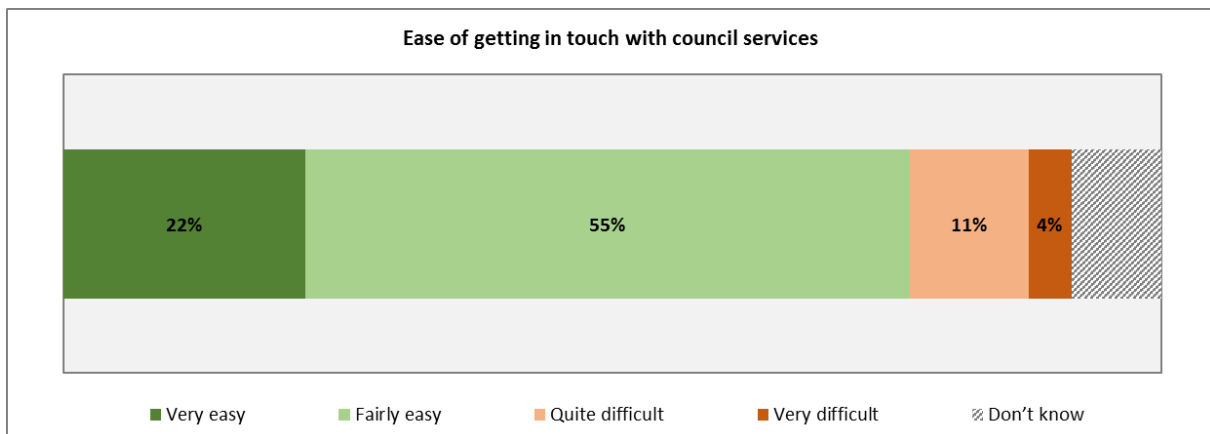
2.13.   A minority of respondents provided further comment on their experience of contacting Moray Council services (around 1 in 5 respondents). A substantial number of these respondents used the opportunity to reiterate their positive experience of getting in touch with council services – around a third of those providing comment indicated that they had never experienced difficulty in accessing services.

2.14.   For those who have experienced issues when getting in touch with council services, the main points raised were:

> ➢ Difficulties finding the right service and/or speaking to the right person was the most common issue for these respondents. This is most commonly related to frustration at the number of steps required to reach the service required – "get fed up being shunted around" – but also included some who found it difficult to identify which service they required from the council website.

> ➢ In terms of the method of contact, respondents were most likely to mention problems when trying to contact the council by phone. This was most commonly related to frustration around having to go through several stages to reach a service, and several respondents indicated a preference for a direct number to services. Respondents also referred to switchboard staff being unsure as to the service that customers require, the time that customers may be on hold, and difficulty for those with hearing impairment.

> ➢ A small number of respondents also referred to difficulties using the council website to access services. This included contact details not being provided for the service required (a lack of a direct number), difficulties navigating the website, and concerns that online service requests may not see as prompt a response.

> ➢ A small number of respondents referred to cases where they felt that they had to follow-up on an initial service request due to a lack of response – including online and telephone requests.

3.   VIEWS ON MORAY COUNCIL SERVICES

3.1.   This section considers panel members' views on Moray Council services. This included questions about panel members' experience of specific council services, and a series of questions asking individuals to reflect on their overall experience of council services.

Overall views on Moray Council services

3.2.   The survey first asked for views on the overall quality of Moray Council services (Figure 6), whether services are good value for money (Figure 7), and how the standard of service may have changed over time (Figure 9).

3.3.   A large majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they are satisfied with council services overall, although there remained nearly 1 in 5 respondents who described council services as 'poor'. This positive overall satisfaction level compares favourably with those reported across other local authority areas (comparators in the range of 60-80%).

3.4.   The overall rating of council services is also consistently high across socio-demographic groups. There was little difference in satisfaction across subgroups, the only significant variation was higher satisfaction ratings in the Lossiemouth area, and lower ratings in the Keith area.

Figure 6: Overall rating of Moray Council services
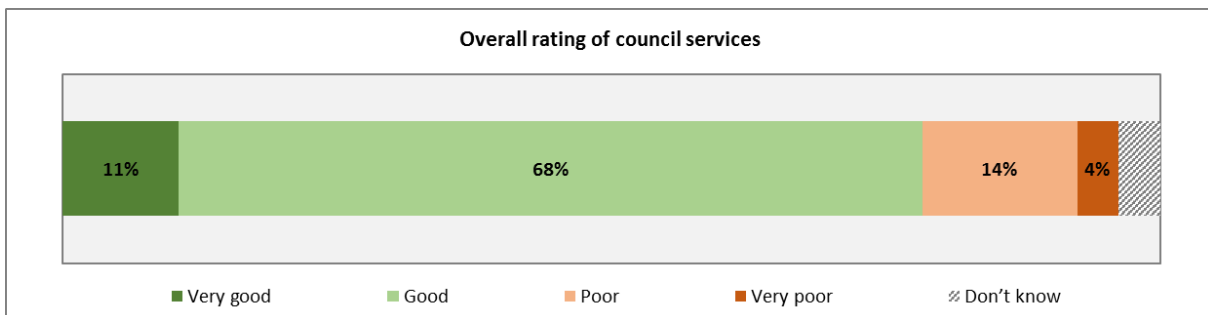
3.5.   Views on the extent to which council services represent good value for money are less positive than in relation to overall quality ratings. More than half of respondents feel that council services are good value for money; 56%, compared to 78% who feel that council services are good quality. While a number of respondents did not give a clear view on this issue (10% selected "don't know"), around a third of respondents feel that services represent poor value for money (34%).

3.6.   As was the case in relation to views on the quality of services, the extent to which council services are perceived to be good value for money is broadly similar across socio-demographic groups. The only significant variation was more positive views in the Lossiemouth area, and more negative views in the Keith area.

Figure 7: Rating of value for money of Moray Council services

Whether council services are good or poor value for money

5%	51%	28%	6%	

■ Very good value   ■ Good value   ■ Poor value   ■ Very poor value   ▨ Don't know
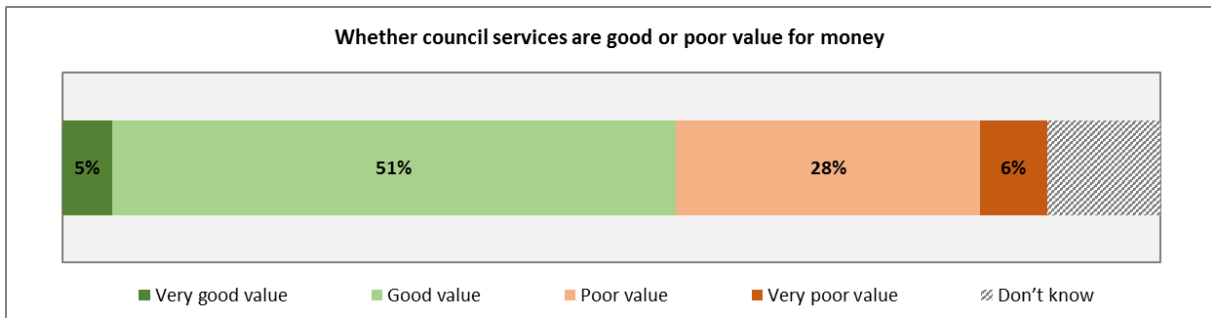
3.7. The survey also asked respondents for their views on the extent to which the standard of Moray Council services has changed over time (Figure 9 over the page).

3.8. Respondents generally feel that the standard of council services has remained unchanged or has worsened over the past 2 years; around 2 in 5 suggested that services have worsened (42%) and a similar proportion suggested that the standard has remained largely unchanged (39%). A little more than 1 in 10 respondents felt that the quality of services has improved in the last 2 years (12%). It is notable that, amongst those that have seen a change in the quality of services, respondents were more likely to suggest a decline in the quality of services.

3.9. The only significant variation in the balance of views on how service quality has changed over the last 2 years was a more negative view amongst those in the Keith area; these respondents were more likely than others to have seen a deterioration in council services.

Figure 8: Whether quality of Moray Council services has changed over past year

Whether standard of council services changes in the last 2 years

4%	8%	39%	31%	11%	

■ Much better   ■ A little better   No real change   ■ A little worse   ■ Much worse   ▨ Don't know
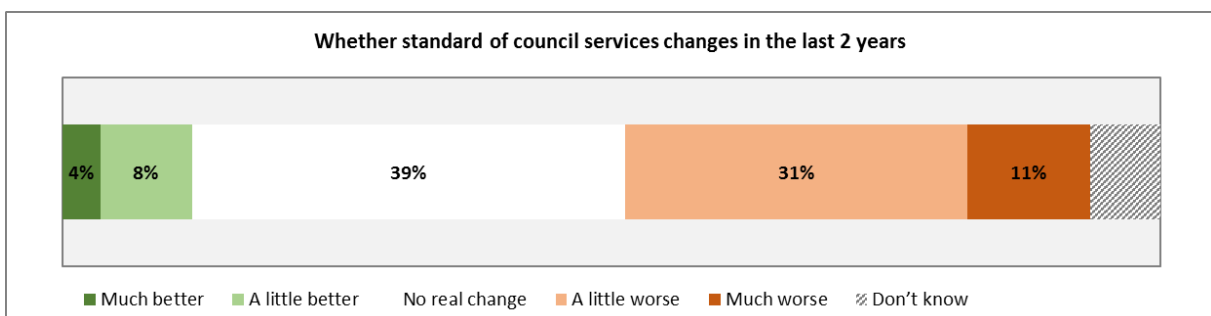
Views on specific Moray Council services

3.10. The survey also asked panel members about specific council services that they may or may not have used over the last year.

Use of services

3.11. As Figure 10 over the page indicates recycling/waste services, parking/car parks, parks & open spaces, roads and libraries are the most commonly used of services. These were the only services which more than half of respondents have used in the last year – and around 4 in 5 have used recycling/waste and parking services.

Figure 9: Use of Moray Council services

Use of Moray Council services

Service	ALL used	Used in last year
Maintenance of roads	60%	53%
Maintenance of footpaths	47%	42%
Street cleaning	45%	43%
Street lighting	53%	49%
Collection of household recycling and waste	86%	82%
Libraries	67%	53%
Sports and leisure services	40%	29%
Community centres and halls	50%	39%
Parks and open spaces	65%	62%
Parking and car parks	80%	78%
Community safety	21%	10%
Council tax collection	46%	42%
Nursery/primary/secondary schools	21%	12%
Social care – health	27%	21%
Social care – children and families	10%	4%

Rating of specific services

3.12. Figure 11 over the page summarises panel members' views on the quality of these services. These are based on the views of those who have used each service in the last year to ensure results are as representative as possible of current service performance. As such, ratings for some services are based on small numbers of responses and should be treated with caution (these are highlighted with an asterisk at Figure 11).

3.13.   Most services were rated positively by most respondents, including some services which the overwhelming majority of respondents described as "very good" or "good". Respondents were most positive about:

> Libraries (95% rating as "very good" or "good");

> Council tax collection (95%);

> Recycling and waste services (94%); and

> Street lighting (93%).

3.14.   Other services rated as "very good" or "good" by a large majority include:

> Parks and open spaces (87% rating as "very good" or "good");

> Community centres and halls (85%);

> Social care services for adults (85%);

> Parking and car parks (84%);

> Sports and leisure services (83%); and

> Education services (82%).

3.15.   Maintenance of roads and footpaths received the least positive ratings, and were the only services where fewer than half gave a positive rating (44% and 45%). Community safety services also received relatively low ratings, but these are based on a small number of responses and as such are not reliable.

Figure 10: Rating of specific Moray Council services
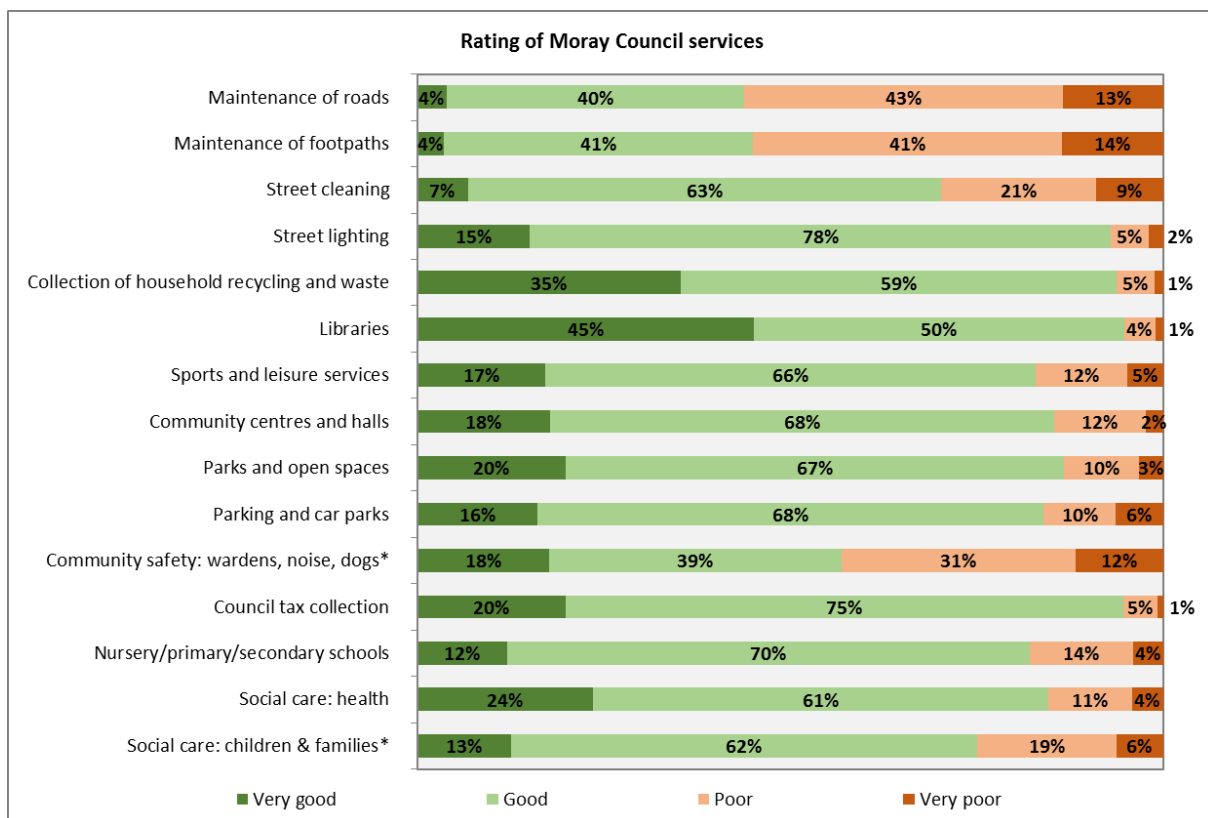
* indicates rating based on small number of responses.

3.16.   The survey also asked panel members how they feel the quality of Moray Council services compares to those provided by other public and private sector organisations. Figure 12 over the page summarises views.

3.17.   In relation to other public services, respondents generally feel that Moray Council services are of a similar quality; nearly two thirds indicated this (62%). Amongst those who see a difference in quality, respondents are somewhat more likely to feel that other public services are of better quality (11% feel this way, compared to 7% who feel that Moray Council services are of better quality).
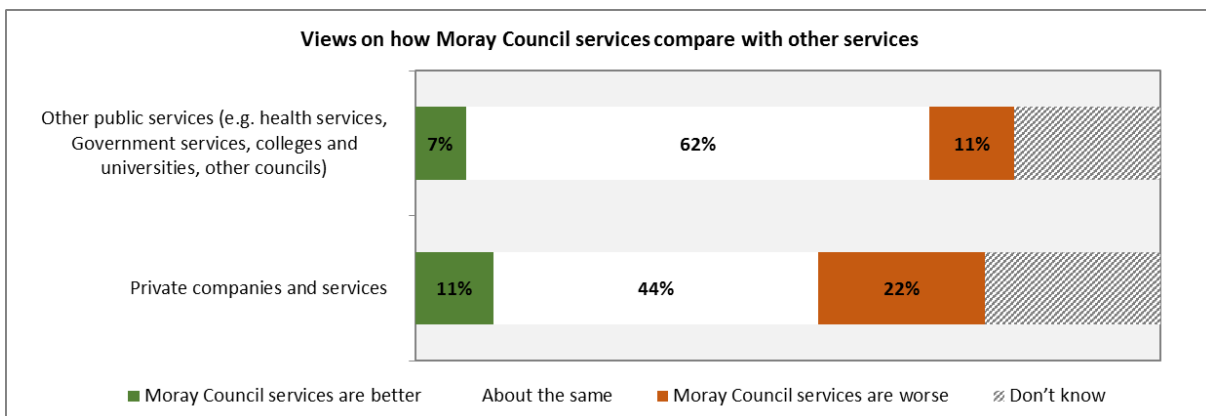
3.18.   In relation to private services, those who offered a view on how the quality of services compare were most likely to feel that Moray Council services are of a similar quality; 44% indicated this. However, amongst those who feel that there is a difference in quality, respondents were most likely to feel that private services are of better quality (22%, compared to 11% who feel that Moray Council services are of better quality). It is notable that respondents are more positive about how the quality of Moray Council services compares with other public services, than with private services.

3.19.   Comments from survey respondents identify a number of other organisations which respondents feel Moray Council services could learn. These are most commonly other public bodies – respondents made specific reference to other local authorities, NHS bodies, National Museums of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland. Respondents also referred to third sector bodies (typically Moray-based organisations), utility firms, the hospitality industry, and banks and insurance firms.

Figure 11: Views on how Moray Council services compare with other services

Views on how Moray Council services compare with other services

Other public services (e.g. health services, Government services, colleges and universities, other councils): 7% | 62% | 11%

Private companies and services: 11% | 44% | 22%

■ Moray Council services are better   About the same   ■ Moray Council services are worse   ▨ Don't know

Overall experience of Moray Council services in the last year

3.20.   The survey also asked panel members a series of questions to gather their views on various aspects of contacting council services (Figure 13), of council services dealing with enquiries and service requests (Figure 14), and of the council consulting with customers (Figure 15).

3.21.   Looking first at getting in touch with council services, respondents are generally positive in their views; the majority of respondents feel that council services usually meet each of the standards listed. Views are most positive on staff treating customers with respect and behaving professionally, and on calls/service requests being picked up quickly. A large majority of respondents feel that council services usually meet each of these standards (82%, 74% and 72% respectively).

3.22.   Views are somewhat less positive in relation to the ease with which panel members can find the person or service needed (67% can usually do this), staff understanding customers' circumstances (65%), and staff getting back to customers when they promised (64%).

3.23.   These findings are broadly similar across the main socio-demographic groups. Indeed, the only significant variation is Keith area respondents being less positive than others in relation to the ease of finding the right person or service, and on staff getting back to customers when they promised.

**Figure 12: Views on contacting council services**
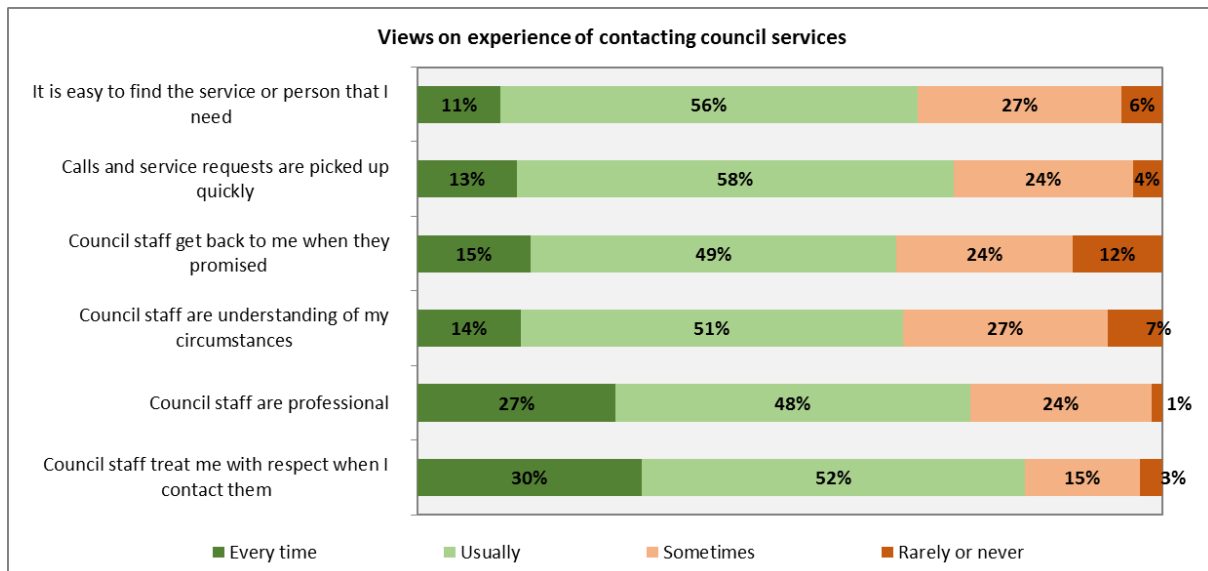
3.24.   Views are more mixed in relation to how council services deal with enquiries and service requests (Figure 14 over the page). While the majority of respondents feel that council services usually meet most of the listed standards, respondents are more likely to give a negative rating here than is the case in relation to contacting services.

3.25.   Respondents are generally positive in relation to services being clear with customers about what they will do, and when. The majority of respondents feel that council services usually do this (75% and 61% respectively). The majority of respondents also feel that council services can usually resolve their service requests (61%). However, there remained 2 in 5 respondents who feel that services only 'sometimes' manage this.

3.26.   Views are least positive in relation to services keeping customers informed about the progress of their service request (46% feel that services usually do this), services communicating with each other (50%), and services keeping to stated timescales (51%).

3.27.   As is evident in relation to views on contacting services (at Figure 13), the only significant variation in ratings of council services dealing with enquiries is Keith area respondents being more negative in their views. This is most notable in relation to services making sure that customers are clear on what they will do, keeping customers informed, dealing with requests quickly, and providing a high-quality response.

Figure 13: Views on experience of council services dealing with enquiries/requests
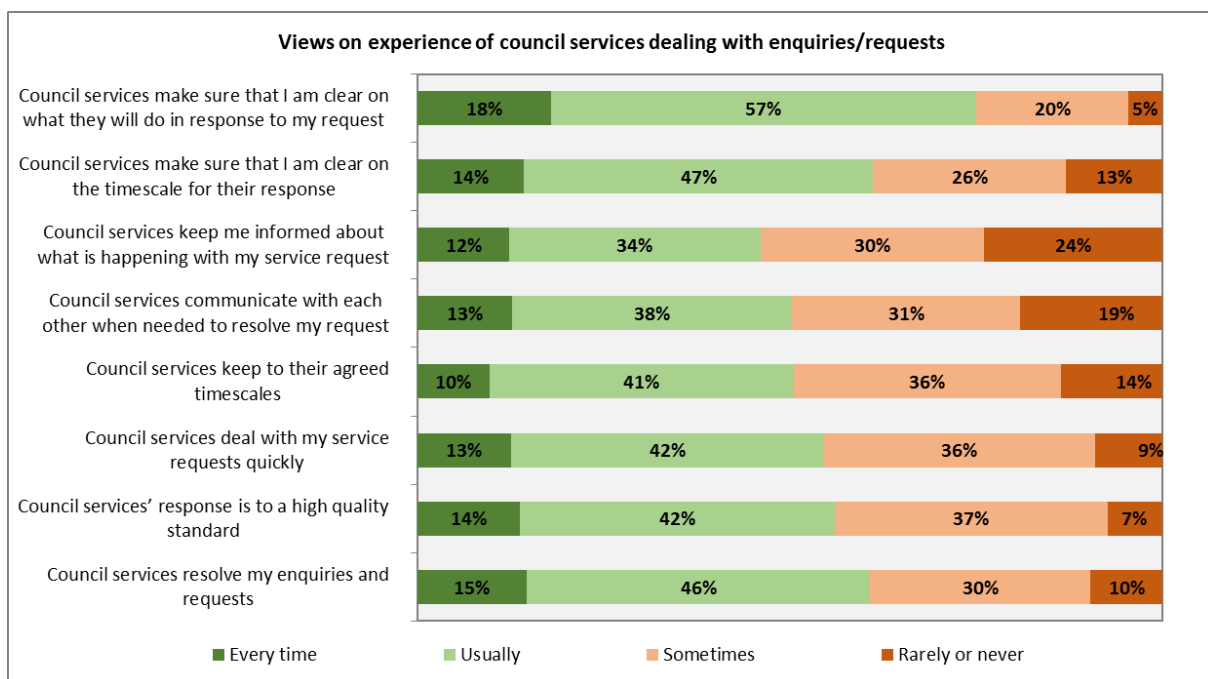
3.28.   Respondents are also somewhat mixed in their views on how council services consult with customers (see Figure 15 over the page). The majority of respondents feel able to raise problems or complaints with services; 66% usually feel able to do this. However, respondents are less positive about council services giving opportunities for customers to provide feedback, and on the council improving services for customers:

> ➢ Only 2 in 5 respondents (40%) feel that council services usually provide opportunities for feedback. More than a third of respondents feel that services 'rarely or never' provide these opportunities.

> ➢ Around half of respondents feel that council services try to improve the service they provide (51%).

3.29. This pattern of views is consistent across socio-demographic groups.

Figure 14: Views on council services consulting with customers
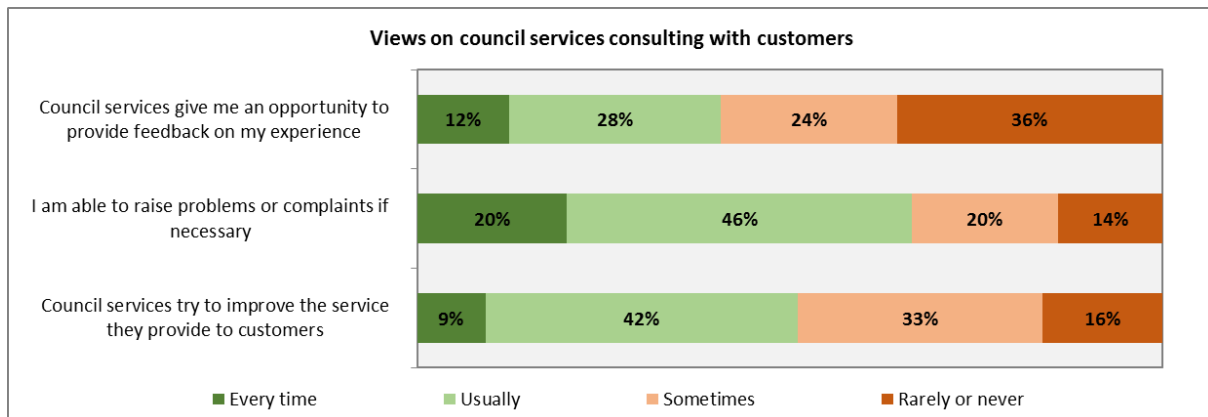
3.30. The survey gave panel members the opportunity to provide further comment on their experience of contacting council services over the last year. Around a third of respondents provided further comment here.

3.31. This included a substantial number of respondents (around a third of those making comment) who reiterated their positive experience of council services. However, most of those providing written comment referred to concerns or difficulties encountered when using council services – typically repeating issues raised earlier in the survey. The main issues were:

> ➢ The most commonly raised issue was the responsiveness of council services. Respondents provided a range of examples where they felt that there had been a lack of response from council services, where the response was slow, or where the response failed to resolve the enquiry.

> ➢ Respondents also provided examples where they felt that the standard of service received during their contact with the council had been poor. This included reference to service staff being unhelpful or not engaging with customers in a professional manner.

> ➢ A small number of respondents suggested that council services could do more to listen to and engage with customers. This included examples where services were perceived to have ignored feedback from customers, and a broader desire to see better communication from services.

➢ Some respondents also referred to a lack of communication related to tracking the progress of their enquiries. These respondents gave examples where they had been unsure of whether services had received their enquiry (for example when submitted online) and where they had difficulty getting information on the status of their enquiry.

➢ A small number of respondents described difficulties in accessing the right service or person to deal with their enquiry, including suggestions that services could do more to provide customers with a consistent dedicated contact while their enquiry is dealt with.

4. MOST RECENT EXPERIENCE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

4.1. This section considers panel members' views specifically in relation to their most recent experience of contacting council services. The survey asked a series of questions around this most recent service contact as a means of further exploring the specific experience that may influence panel members' wider views on council services.

Nature of recent contact with council services

4.2. The survey first asked panel members for brief details on their most recent experience with Moray Council services. Respondents were highly varied in terms of the nature of their most recent contact, in terms of how recently they had contacted council services, and the reason for their most recent contact:

> ➢ Most respondents had been in contact with council services fairly recently – around 3 in 5 respondents indicated that their most recent contact was within the last 6 months, including around 1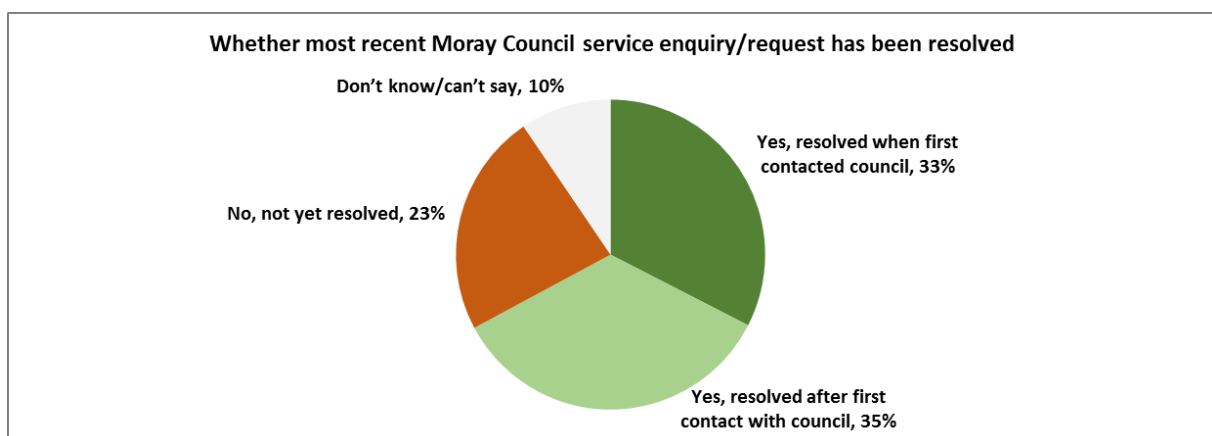 in 5 whose most recent contact was within the last 4 weeks. Around 1 in 5 indicated that their most recent contact was more than a year ago.

> ➢ Respondents mentioned a broad range of motivations for their most recent contact with council services. The most common were enquiries relating to recycling/waste services, housing and planning services, the condition of roads and footpaths, and council tax and benefits.

4.3. In terms of method of contact, respondents are most likely to have contacted the council by phone. More than half of respondents had made contact by phone (53%), including 34% who contacted the council switchboard, and 19% who used another telephone number. In terms of other contact methods, around 1 in 5 respondents had made contact via the council website or email (21%), and a similar proportion made contact in person (19%).

4.4. Survey data shows some local variation in the contact methods used by panel members. Those in the Elgin and Forres areas were more likely than others to have contacted the council in person (indeed this is the most common option for Forres respondents), while those in the Fochabers and Lossiemouth areas were significantly less likely to make contact in person (and were more likely to use the telephone).

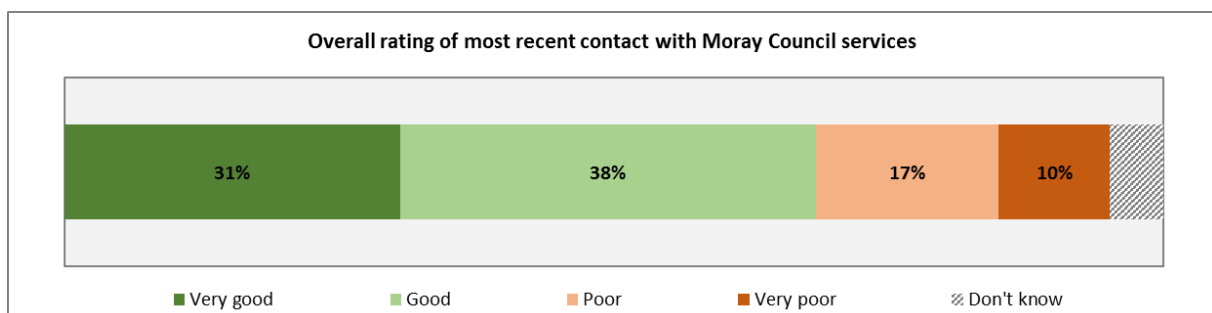**Figure 15: Most recent contact with Moray Council – method of contact**

How contacted Moray Council at time of most recent contact

- In person – at local office, 10%
- In person – at council headquarters, 9%
- Other, 4%
- By letter, 3%
- By email, 14%
- Council website, 8%
- By phone – another number, 19%
- By phone – council switchboard, 34%
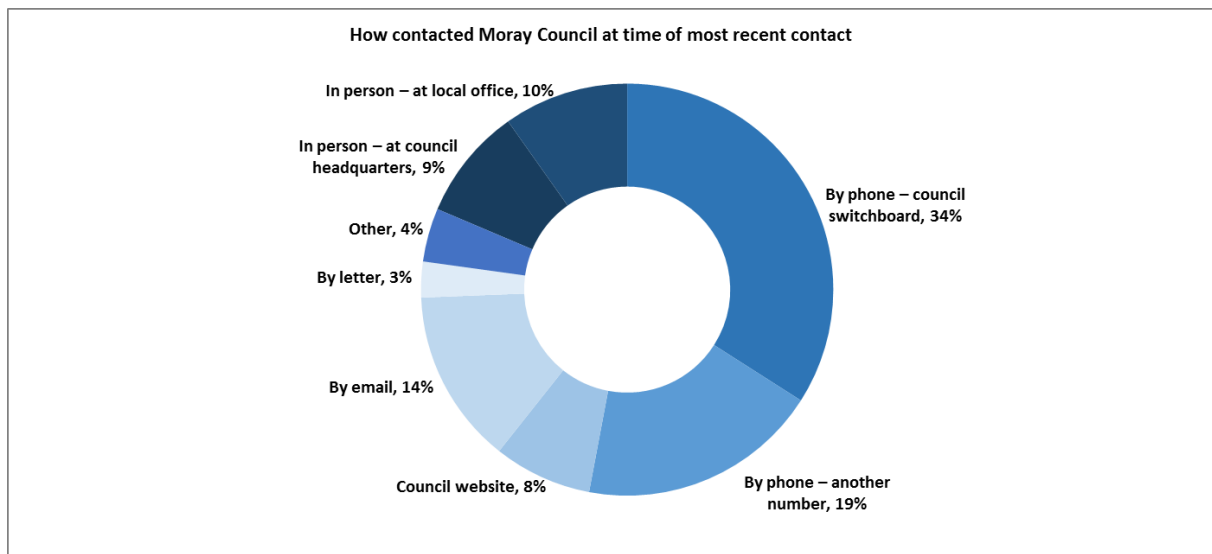
Views on most recent contact with Moray Council services

4.5. Around two thirds of respondents feel that the reason for their most recent contact with Moray Council services has been resolved (67%). This group was split between 33% who indicated that the enquiry was resolved at the point of first contact, and 35% who indicated that the enquiry was resolved after their first contact.

4.6. While this is a positive overall finding, there remains nearly a quarter of respondents who feel that the enquiry has not been resolved. Around half of these contacts had been made within the last 3 months (and around three quarters in the last 6 months) suggesting that a substantial proportion of unresolved enquiries may be ongoing. Comments from respondents who feel that their enquiry has not been suggest that these relate to a range of service areas including housing or planning, recycling and waste, roads and footpaths, and community safety including antisocial behaviour and dog wardens. Several respondents indicated that they are still awaiting a response to their enquiry. However, most indicated that they had received a response but felt that this had not fully resolved the issue.

Figure 16: Most recent contact with Moray Council – whether resolved

Whether most recent Moray Council service enquiry/request has been resolved

- Don't know/can't say, 10%
- No, not yet resolved, 23%
- Yes, resolved when first contacted council, 33%
- Yes, resolved after first contact with council, 35%

4.7.   Most respondents gave a positive overall rating of their most recent experience of contacting council services (Figure 18). More than two thirds of respondents describe their experience as 'very good' or 'good' (69%). This positive result is very similar to findings of the 2008 and 2005 surveys, and suggests continuing positive experience of council services; both the 2008 and 2005 surveys showed 72% of respondents satisfied with their most recent contact with council services.

4.8.   Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents' overall rating of their experience is dependent to a large extent on whether they feel that their enquiry has been resolved. As many as 9 in 10 of those who feel that their enquiry is resolved described the quality of service positively, compared to just 3 in 10 of those who feel that their enquiry has not been resolved.

4.9.   However, there remained more than a quarter of respondents who feel that their most recent was poor (27%). Around two thirds of these respondents indicated that their enquiry had not been resolved.

4.10.   Respondents' overall rating of their most recent experience reflect a mix of views on specific aspects of this experience, and the survey asked respondents the extent to which they were satisfied with specific aspects. Figure 19 over the page shows that:

> ➢ Satisfaction was highest in relation to service staff. A large majority of respondents described themselves as satisfied with staff friendliness (82% satisfied), knowledge (72%), and understanding of their circumstances (72%).

> ➢ Respondents were also satisfied with the ease of contacting the right person (75% satisfied).

> ➢ Satisfaction was lowest in relation to services keeping customers informed (49% satisfied), staff and services communicating with each other (55%), and services being clear on the timescale for their response (57%).

Figure 17: Most recent contact with Moray Council – overall rating

Figure 18: Most recent contact with Moray Council – rating aspects of experience

Views on experience of most recent contact with Moray Council services

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Nor	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Ease of contacting the right person	33%	42%	14%	6%	4%
Staff friendliness/treating you with respect	40%	42%	14%	2%	2%
Staff knowledge	35%	37%	18%	7%	3%
Staff understanding of my circumstances	31%	41%	17%	8%	3%
Making sure you are clear on what the service will do	30%	39%	20%	7%	3%
Making sure you are clear on the timescale for the service's response	22%	35%	26%	10%	6%
Keeping you informed of what was happening	22%	27%	26%	12%	13%
Staff/services communicating with each other to resolve your request	21%	33%	25%	12%	8%
Keeping to the agreed timescale	26%	34%	24%	8%	8%
Providing a high quality response	30%	31%	16%	13%	11%

5. PRIORITIES FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING & COUNCIL FINANCES

5.1.   The final section of the survey asked panel members about priorities for their family at present, and for views on how Community Planning Partners should work to engage communities in the planning and delivery of services, and to balance council finances.

Priorities for panel members and their families

5.2.   Looking first at the issues facing panel members and their families, the main themes emerging from written comments are summarised at Figure 19. Respondents referred to a broad range of specific issues, and it is notable that a number of these related to specific services provided by Moray Council and partners. To some extent, written comments from panel members appeared to identify the local services which are most important to their families.

5.3.   Transport emerged as by some margin the most common issue for panel members – this was mentioned by more than half of those providing written comment, and included a particular focus on the condition of roads in Moray. In terms of other issues for panel members and their families, these include health and healthcare services, the quality of waste and recycling services, education, community safety, and the quality of environment in Moray.

Figure 19: Main issues for respondents and their families at the moment[1]

Transport and roads	1st
Health and healthcare	2nd
Waste and recycling services	3rd
Education	4th
Community safety, antisocial behaviour	5th
Quality of environment	6th
Sports, leisure and libraries	7th
Care and support for older people	8th
Housing	9th
Financial issues and cost of living	10th
Employment and the economic outlook	11th

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[1] Based on free text responses, percentages based on those providing written comment.

Priorities for Community Planning Partners in Moray

5.4.   Panel members were also asked a series of questions around the issues that they felt should be a focus for Moray Council and other Community Planning Partnership (CPP) partners. The survey placed these questions in the context of two overarching themes for the Community Planning Partnership:

➢ how partners can work with communities more to plan and deliver services; and

➢ the need to balance Moray Council finances in the context of further funding reductions.

5.5.   In relation to each of these themes, panel members were asked to identify the ways in which they feel CPP *partners can do things differently*, things that *partners should stop doing*, and things that *partners should start doing*. We summarise the main issues raised by respondents over the following pages.

Doing things differently

5.6.   Looking first at views on how the council and partners should work differently, respondents raised a number of specific points in relation to the two themes of working with communities to plan and deliver services, and balancing council finances (see Figure 20 over the page). The main points for respondents in relation to *planning and delivering services with communities* were:

➢ The most common suggestion was more meaningful engagement with residents to identify needs and to shape service deliver. This included a recognition that needs vary across communities, and that residents' knowledge can be better harnessed to shape services.

➢ Better coordination and communication between service providers was also suggested as a way of ensuring a coherent approach to meeting local needs – and potentially providing an opportunity for input from communities to inform a broader range of services.

➢ Helping residents to do more and supporting local community groups were also relatively common suggestions. This included reference to ensuring access to training and adult education to develop the capacity of communities to plan and deliver services, and CPP partners providing more support to local community groups that can help to shape services.

➢ Respondents also suggested a need to raise awareness of how communities can contribute to the planning and delivery of services – both in terms of specific available opportunities, and more widely raising awareness of the importance of communities input to service planning and delivery.

5.7. In relation to *balancing council budgets*, the main points for respondents were:

> ➢ The most common suggestions were increasing efficiency of council services, and change to council structures and staffing. Suggested efficiencies included better auditing of performance to inform budget savings, and some felt that services could learn from private sector services. Suggestions for organisational change were primarily focused on shifting the balance from management and administrative staff to more operational staff, reducing salaries for senior staff, and reducing numbers of elected members.

> ➢ Improving revenue collection was also a common suggestion. This included reference to maximising collection of existing revenues (e.g. reducing rent and Council Tax arrears), and options to increase revenue (the most common suggestion being an increase to Council Tax levels).

> ➢ A number of respondents objected to specific spending items, citing these as examples of where further savings can be achieved. The most common here were the Elgin ring road project, funding to leisure trusts, use of consultants, and expenses to staff and elected members.

Figure 20: Things that Moray Council and partners <u>should do differently</u>[2]

Planning & delivering services with communities

Asking residents views, more meaningful engagement	1st
Better coordination and communication between service providers	2nd
Helping residents to do more, skills development, training	3rd
Raising awareness of how communities can contribute	4th
Supporting local groups and events to build capacity	5th
Providing clear objectives/strategy for communities' contribution	6th
More locally based services, concerns regarding centralisation	7th

Balancing council finances

Operate more efficiently, better auditing of performance	1st
Organisational change, staffing levels, salaries	2nd
Better revenue collection, increase Council Tax	3rd
Objection to specific spending items	4th
Rationalisation of under-occupied schools	5th
Better engagement with staff/communities on where to reduce spend	6th
Focus on "core" services, support communities/agencies to provide other services	7th
Reduce social care spend	8th

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[2] Based on free text responses

Partners should stop doing…

5.8. In terms of views on what partners should stop doing, respondents again made a number of specific suggestions in relation to working with communities and balancing council finances (see Figure 21 over the page). However, it is notable that panel members gave a more limited set of suggestions for things that partners could stop doing – and that there was some overlap with points raised in relation to things that partners should do differently.

5.9. The main suggestions in relation to ***planning and delivering services with communities*** were:

   ➢ Respondents made a number of suggestions relating to specific services. This included reducing the frequency of waste collection, reducing numbers of under-occupied schools, reducing spend on social care services for those with lower needs levels, maintenance of road verges, school crossing patrols, libraries, and the Elgin ring road.

   ➢ Reducing bureaucracy was also a relatively common suggestion, and appeared to reflect concerns noted at Figure 20 above in relation to the balance between management and administrative costs, and "front-line" budgets.

   ➢ Working more collaboratively across services and partners was also suggested by several respondents, who suggested that a tendency for services to "work in silos" remains an issue.

5.10. In relation to ***balancing council budgets***, the main points for respondents were:

   ➢ The most common suggestions were for changes to specific services provided by Moray Council and partners. This included reference to reducing numbers of under-occupied schools, rationalising less used libraries, reducing halls and community centres outwith main settlements, reducing less used public transport routes, reduce funding to leisure services, reduce one-off projects (e.g. Elgin ring road), and reduce levels of street lighting.

   ➢ Reducing bureaucracy was again mentioned here, and respondents also mentioned scope to reduce inefficiencies across council services. This latter point included potential duplication of services also being delivered by other sectors.

   ➢ Several respondents suggested a need for stronger budget controls to avoid over-spending across council services.

Figure 21: Things that Moray Council and partners <u>should stop doing</u>[3]

Planning & delivering services with communities

Service-specific suggestions	1st
Reduce bureaucracy, management and admin costs	2nd
Work collaboratively across services and partners (stop working in silos)	3rd
Reduce costs associated with consultants and subcontractors	4th
Stop inefficiencies in delivery of services	5th
Stop closing services and facilities	6th

Balancing council finances

Reduce specific services	1st
Reduce bureaucracy, management and admin costs	2nd
Reduce inefficiencies	3rd
Control budgets (no more overspend)	4th
Reduce costs associated with consultants and subcontractors	5th
More services provided by 3rd sector, private sector and communities	6th

Partners should start doing…

5.11.   Respondents made a range of suggestions for what partners should start doing, both in terms of working with communities and balancing council finances (see Figure 22 over the page). A number of these suggestions reflected issues raised earlier in relation to doing things differently – indeed some respondents noted that their suggestions for working differently highlighted the things that partners should stop doing.

5.12.   The main suggestions in relation to ***planning and delivering services with communities*** were:

➢ Again, the most common suggestions related to how CPP partners deliver specific services. This included suggestions relating to recycling and waste services, health services, community safety, transport and roads, environmental services, and social housing.

➢ A number of respondents suggested better collaborative working across services and agencies. This included reference to sharing of skills and resources (including sharing systems such as procurement), and sharing of innovative and good practice.

➢ Doing more to enable communities to contribute to the planning and delivery of services was also a common theme. This included a perceived need for greater transparency and better communication with communities, and supporting local community organisations.

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[3] Based on free text responses

> ➢ More localised spending and services was also suggested by a number of respondents, including some who perceived a focus on larger towns across Moray.

5.13.   In relation to **balancing council budgets**, the main points for respondents were:

> ➢ More efficient working, including a greater focus of resources on front-line staff, was again a common suggestion in relation to balancing budgets. This included a mix of broad suggestions to reduce staffing levels, and more specific suggestions for efficiency savings.

> ➢ Increasing revenues was also a common suggestion, including a range of specific suggestions for revenue raising (the most common being an increase to council tax).

> ➢ Better engagement with communities, local community groups and other agencies was suggested specifically in relation to identifying local needs. Several respondents suggested that this is vital to ensure that resources can be focused on the most important services.

Figure 22: Things that Moray Council and partners should start doing[4]

Planning & delivering services with communities

Service-specific suggestions	1st
Better collaborative working - sharing of skills, good practice and resources across agencies	2nd
Greater transparency with communities, encouraging residents to do more, supporting local groups	3rd
More efficient working	4th
More localised spending and services	5th
Better communication/awareness raising	6th

Balancing council finances

Greater efficiencies, organisational change to make savings	1st
Better revenue collection, increase Council Tax	2nd
Engagement with communities to focus on local needs	3rd
Focus on "core" services	4th
Communities provide greater support to service delivery	5th

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[4] Based on free text responses

Residents getting involved in their local area

5.14.   The final survey questions asked panel members about getting involved in service provision in their local area. This included the extent to which panel members would feel able to do more to support service planning and delivery, and panel members' views on what could encourage more residents to get involved.

5.15.   Around a third of respondents provided further comment in relation to getting more involved in local services and organisations. More than 1 in 4 of these respondents indicated that they already contribute to local groups or organisations in some way, and felt unable to do more. This included reference to a broad range of groups including voluntary sector services, church groups, and sports and leisure groups.

5.16.   Around a third of respondents indicated that they *may be interested in getting more involved*. This included some respondents who supported the principle of residents contributing more to local services and organisations, but were unclear on what opportunities may be available in their area. However, most of those expressing an interest in getting more involved referred to specific types of services or group where they felt that they could contribute. This included reference to:

   ➢ Activities for children and families;

   ➢ Cafes;

   ➢ Community Councils and other representative bodies;

   ➢ Parks, open areas and improving the local environment;

   ➢ Home maintenance, 'odd jobs'; and

   ➢ Providing advice or support to local people.

5.17.   More than a third of those providing comment here felt unable to get involved in planning and delivery of local services. This was most commonly related to respondents' health, including some referring to their age and frailty. However, this group also included some respondents with prior experience of contributing to local organisations who suggested that this experience had left them disillusioned, and unconvinced as to the benefit of this work.

5.18.   In relation to ***changes that might encourage more residents to get involved***, it is notable that several respondents indicated that they were unsure of what could be done to improve this. To some extent, this appeared to reflect scepticism around how many residents may be willing to get more involved. Nevertheless, respondents did make a number of specific suggestions here:

> ➤ Wider promotion of available opportunities was the most common suggestion. Several respondents noted that they were unaware of available opportunities in their local area, and suggested that this may be the case for large parts of local communities. A small number of respondents also suggested that by actively soliciting input from communities, the council and others can demonstrate to residents that they value their input – and that this may encourage participation.

> ➤ Respondents also suggested doing more to support local groups and organisations, including voluntary organisations (e.g. reduced hire rates for facilities) and representative bodies. Several respondents suggested that these bodies can help to encourage and coordinate input from local residents.

> ➤ Several respondents suggested that changes could be made to local services to make it easier for residents to volunteer – such as changes to opening time to enable more working people to get involved, provision of transport to enable volunteers to get to services, and ensuring that those with disabilities or long-term conditions are supported to get involved.

> ➤ Dedicating resources to support local communities to contribute to service planning and delivery was also suggested by a number of respondents. This included suggestions that a Development Officer role and/or dedicated budget could be made available.

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