

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL RESIDENT SATISFACTION REPORT

Prepared by Lake Market Research for the Maidstone Borough Council

Date: 24th February 2012

This report complies with ISO:20252 standards and other relevant forms of conduct



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1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to providing value for money services which residents are satisfied with. Due to the value of information and insight generated from the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, Maidstone Borough Council commissioned Lake Market Research to conduct a similar survey towards the end of last year. We recognise the importance of resident consultation in shaping local public services and the pressures on local government to deliver more to its residents than ever before and with reduced budgets. The continuation of this type of research study allows Maidstone Borough Council to robustly monitor resident opinion and utilise it to prioritise resources and shape future initiatives.

As such, we set the following research objectives in line with the general themes covered in this research:

- Explore general perceptions of the local area, such as satisfaction with it as a place to live, whether people feel they belong to it;
- Provide a public assessment of satisfaction with how Maidstone Borough Council runs its services and how well informed residents consider themselves;
- Provide a public assessment on five of the key council services provided by the council (doorstep recycling, refuse collection, Maidstone Leisure Centre, parks and open spaces, street cleanliness);
- Explore residents perceptions in line with the core values and strategic priorities set by Maidstone Borough Council and what areas residents perceive should be tackled.

1.2 METHODOLOGY & WEIGHTING

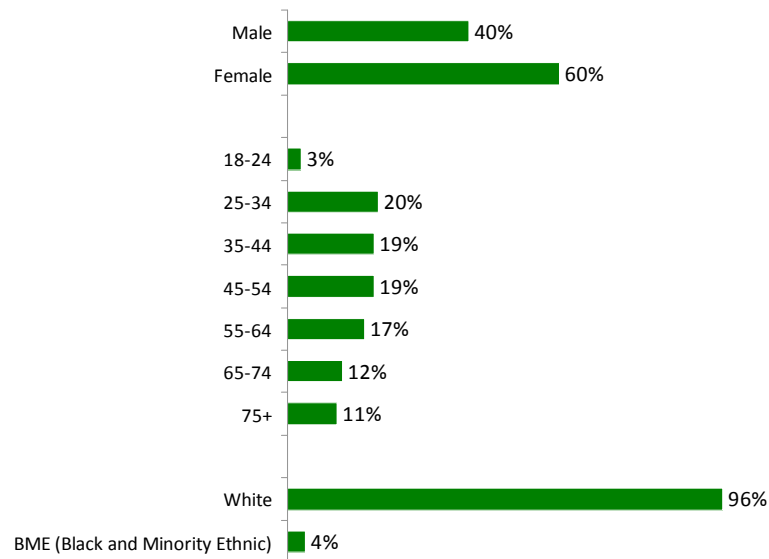
The survey was conducted by Lake Market Research via a postal survey distributed to Maidstone residents. In line with the Place Survey conditions outlined for the 2008/2009 Place Survey in Maidstone, a sample of 1,700 completed questionnaires were required for this year's research. Maidstone Borough Council used random sampling to select potential residents with each of the residents having an equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being selected to receive a questionnaire. This sample list was then sent to Lake Market Research to use to distribute questionnaire packs. A sample of 4,600 were sent in the initial mailout and residents were given 3 weeks in which to complete and return the survey to Lake Market Research. Responses were tracked and a sample of those that did not respond were sent a reminder letter with 4 weeks in which to complete and return the survey (which encompassed the Christmas period, where delivery of post is different to all other times of the year). Another invitation to complete the survey was then sent to a random sample of 1,600 residents from specific wards supplied by Maidstone Borough Council. The covering letter enabled respondents to also complete the survey online if they wished, this resulted in 81 residents completing their survey online as opposed to returning it by post, thus a total of 1,623 completed surveys were returned – a 26% response rate.

In addition to the survey being sent by post, the survey was also distributed to the Lake Market Research Local Opinion panel of Maidstone residents which resulted in a further 93 questionnaires being completed online.

1.3 RESIDENT PROFILE

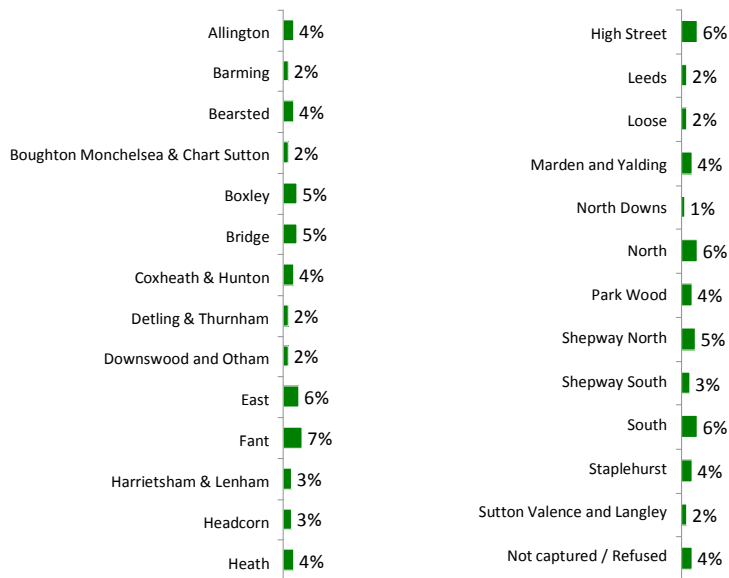
A summary of the profile of residents who completed the survey are as follows:

Gender, Age & Ethnicity



Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1709)

Ward profile



Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

1.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETING THE DATA

It should be noted that a sample of residents participated in the survey rather than all residents of Maidstone. Therefore, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Crudely speaking, overall results are accurate to +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, but this assumes a perfect random sample has been achieved (in practice, margins of error may be slightly larger).

As is often observed with a postal survey design, weights were applied to the final data collected to rebase the underrepresented proportion of 18-34 year olds that completed the survey. The following table shows the unweighted and weighted base sizes for gender, age and ward:

AGE	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1709	1709
18 - 24	19	43
	1%	3%
25 - 34	152	347
	9%	20%
35 - 44	236	326
	14%	19%
45 - 54	281	317
	16%	19%
55 - 64	375	290
	22%	17%
65 - 74	344	205
	20%	12%
75+	302	181
	18%	11%
Net - 18 - 34	171	390
	10%	23%
Net - 35 - 54	517	643
	30%	38%
Net - 55 +	1021	676
	60%	40%

GENDER	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1637	1655
Male	739	669
	45%	40%
Female	898	986
	55%	60%

WARD NAME	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1716	1709
Allington	81	70
	5%	4%
Barming	32	32
	2%	2%
Bearsted	91	76
	5%	4%
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	33	28
	2%	2%
Boxley	88	90
	5%	5%
Bridge	73	80
	4%	5%
Coxheath and Hunton	77	74
	4%	4%
Detling and Thurnham	34	33
	2%	2%
Downswood and Otham	27	30
	2%	2%
East	98	98
	6%	6%
Fant	104	118
	6%	7%
Harrietsham and Lenham	63	58
	4%	3%
Headcorn	56	49
	3%	3%
Heath	56	63
	3%	4%
High Street	84	97
	5%	6%
Leeds	31	29
	2%	2%
Loose	32	28
	2%	2%
Marden and Yalding	81	74
	5%	4%
North Downs	28	22
	2%	1%
North	89	100
	5%	6%
Park Wood	61	72
	4%	4%
Shepway North	85	82
	5%	5%
Shepway South	61	58
	4%	3%
South	93	95
	5%	6%

Staplehurst	67	61
	4%	4%
Sutton Valence and Langley	34	29
	2%	2%
N/A / Refused	57	62
	3%	4%
Net - Urban	885	935
	52%	55%
Net - Rural	774	712
	45%	42%

Where possible, this report makes comparisons to the results of the 2008 / 2009 Place Survey conducted amongst Maidstone residents. For consistency with how the 2008 / 2009 Place Survey results were presented, residents who indicated 'Don't know' have been removed from the results presented in this report.

1.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at Maidstone Borough Council for all their help and advice in developing the project. We would also like to thank all 1716 Maidstone residents who agreed to take part and whose views made this research possible.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VIEWS ON THE LOCAL AREA

The vast majority are positive about their experiences of living in Maidstone, with over eight in ten claiming they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Satisfaction with the local area is broadly consistent to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009. Broadly consistent proportions also agree that they feel they belong to their local area.

Just over three quarters of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together and just under a quarter disagree. A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009.

Proportions are markedly different when looking at resident perceptions of influencing local decisions with just over a third of residents believing they can influence these decisions. Perceptions have significantly improved, however, compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents agreeing that they can influence these decisions. Three in ten residents indicated that they would like to become involved and 56% indicated that it would depend on the issue. The proportion wanting to become more involved has increased (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009).

SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL

The majority of residents speak favourably of Maidstone Borough Council, with just under two thirds indicating they are satisfied with how it runs its services. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with how the Council runs its services. Perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services. It should be noted when interpreting this improvement, however, that the question wording has altered for this year's survey in that the Place Survey referred to a more generic reference of 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things'.

Views on perceptions of value for money vary with 46% of residents agreeing that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money and 34% of residents disagreeing.

The majority of residents believe they are kept informed about the services and benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides, with just under two thirds indicating they are kept very or fairly well informed. In contrast, just under four in ten consider themselves not very well informed in that they are given only a limited amount of information or they believe Maidstone Borough Council doesn't tell them much at all about what it does.

The majority of residents believe that Maidstone Borough Council treat all types of people fairly, with three quarters of residents indicating agreement in terms of 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'. A quarter of residents, however, indicate 'not very much' or 'not at all'.

The majority of residents speak favourably of their refuse collection services, with just over eight in ten indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. A 4% decrease in

agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009.

The majority of residents also speak favourably of their doorstep recycling, with just under eight in ten indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. Reflecting the recent work put in place by Maidstone Borough Council, perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied.

Perceptions of Maidstone's parks and open spaces are also positive, with just over three quarters indicating they are satisfied with them. Perceptions have improved (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with.

Satisfaction levels for street cleanliness are more polarising with just under six in ten residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just under three in ten are dissatisfied. A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009.

Satisfaction levels with Maidstone Leisure Centre vary with just over half of residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over a third of residents indicated that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and just over one in ten are dissatisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS VS. PRIORITIES

There is a general consensus in the two main actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to 'grow the economy'; encouraging new business and attracting investment. It should be noted, however, that whilst not in the majority a significant proportion also selected 'improve skills & knowledge' so this area should also be considered.

Response is more varied when looking at the actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve residents perceptions of 'a decent place to live'. The top three actions listed, however, are to ensure 'elderly and disabled people live in their homes for longer', 'make houses more energy efficient' and 'provide better access to affordable housing'.

When looking at the actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve 'corporate and customer excellence', there is a general consensus for the two main actions; improve communications with residents and improve consultation with residents.

3. VIEWS ON THE LOCAL AREA

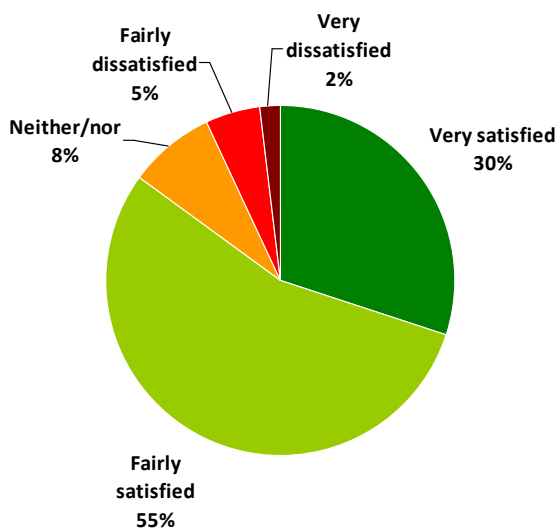
3.1 LOCAL AREA AS A PLACE TO LIVE

The vast majority are positive about their experiences of living in Maidstone, with over eight in ten (84%) claiming they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Only 7% of residents are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the local area is broadly consistent to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (84% vs. 85% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with the local area

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



% Satisfied	84%
% Dissatisfied	7%
% Satisfied change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-1%

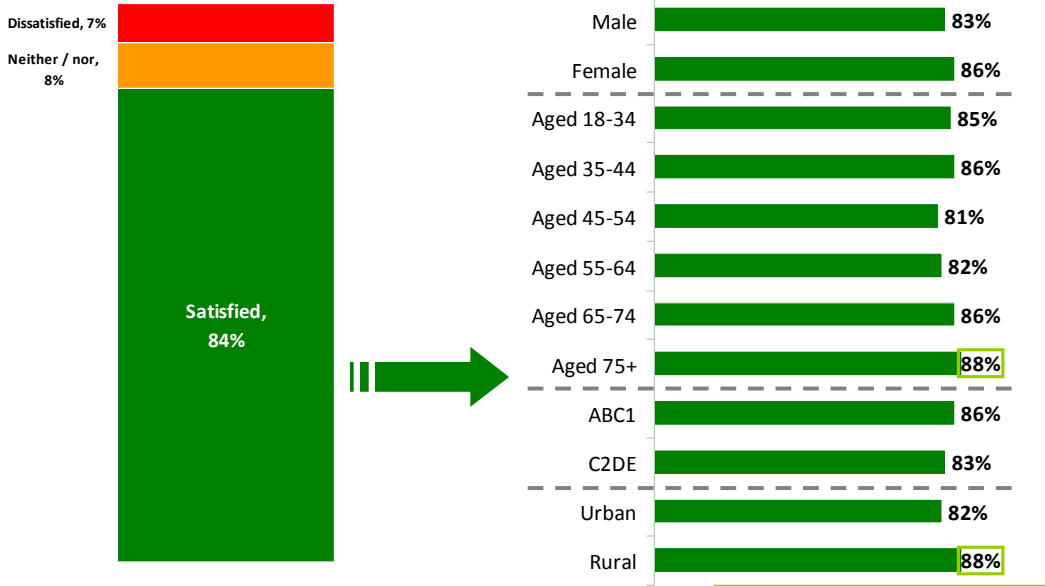
Base: Q1, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1695)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, residents aged 75+ are the most satisfied with their local area (88%) and residents aged 45-54 and 55-64 are the least satisfied (81% and 82%). These age trends are broadly consistent with those observed in the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 in Maidstone.

Perceptions also vary amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of rural residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (88% vs. 82% for urban residents).

Satisfaction with the local area by key subgroups

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



Base: Q1, Male (unweighted base size - 731), Female (888), 18-34 (168), 35-44 (235), 45-54 (280), 55-64 (370), 65-74 (339), 75+ (296), ABC1 (262), C2DE (338), Urban (871), Rural (767)

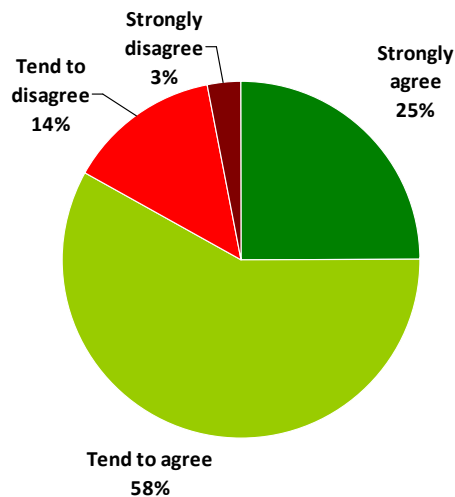
Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

3.2 BELONGING TO THE LOCAL AREA

Broadly consistent proportions also agree or tend to agree that they feel they belong to their local area, with over eight in ten (83%) residents in agreement and just under one in five (17%) in disagreement. In the 2008/2009 Place Survey, only 59% of residents were in agreement. It should be noted, however, when making comparisons that the question was phrased as belonging to ‘immediate neighbourhood’ as opposed to ‘local area’.

Belonging to local area

How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?



% Agree	83%
% Disagree	17%
% Agree in 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	59%

* Please note in the 2008/2009 survey the question was phrased 'How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?' so true comparative data is not available for this question

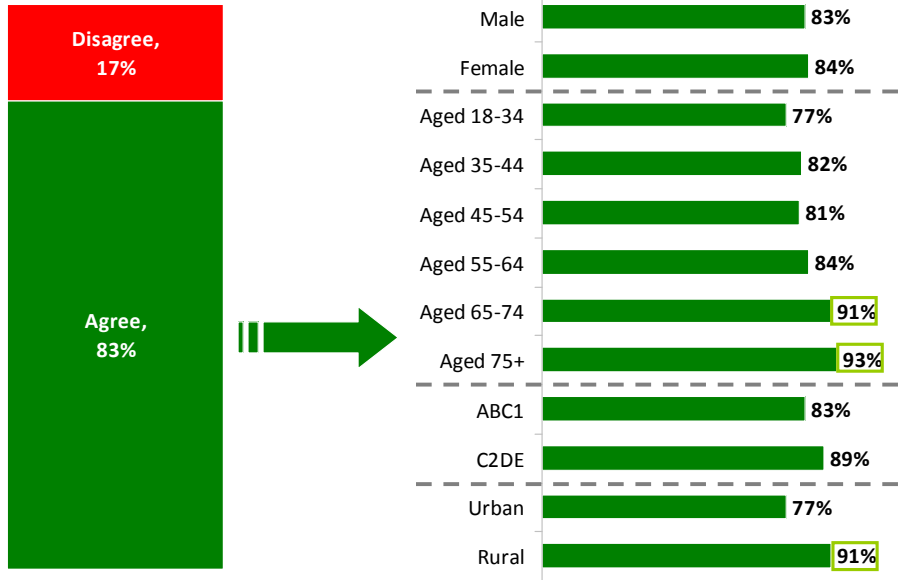
Base: Q2, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1520)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 65-74 and 75+ feel they belong to their local area (91% and 93%) and a lower proportion of residents aged 18-34 feel they belong to their local area (77%).

Perceptions also vary amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of rural residents feel they belong to their local area (91% vs. 77% for urban residents).

Belonging to local area by key subgroups

How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?



Base: Q2, Male (unweighted base size - 661), Female (791), 18-34 (139), 35-44 (206), 45-54 (246), 55-64 (347), 65-74 (318), 75+ (258), ABC1 (231), C2DE (298), Urban (771), Rural (697)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

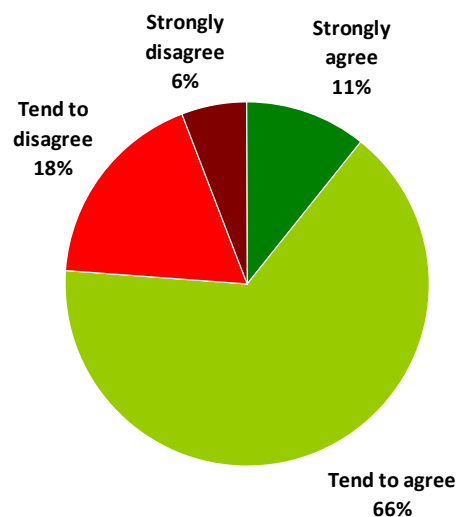
3.3 DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS GETTING ALONG

Often linked to a sense of area belonging, another important influence on attitudes to a local area is determining people's perceptions of different backgrounds getting on well with each other. Just over three quarters (77%) of Maidstone residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, but just under a quarter (23%) disagree.

A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (77% vs. 81% for 2008/2009).

Different backgrounds getting on well together

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



% Agree	77%
% Disagree	23%
% Agree change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-4%

Base: Q4, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1353)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 75+ agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (91%) and a lower proportion of residents aged 35-44 agree (69%).

In contrast to local area metrics observed so far, perceptions are broadly consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Different backgrounds getting on well together by key groups

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Base: Q4, Male (unweighted base size - 596), Female (699), 18-34 (136), 35-44 (199), 45-54 (226), 55-64 (304), 65-74 (280), 75+ (204), ABC1 (218), C2DE (280), Urban (691), Rural (614)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

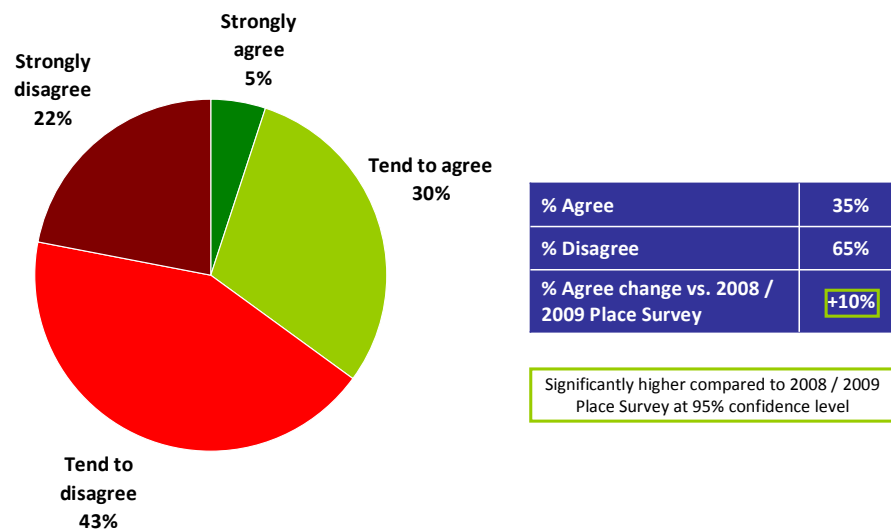
3.4 INFLUENCING LOCAL DECISIONS

Proportions are markedly different when looking at resident perceptions of influencing local decisions with just over a third (35%) of Maidstone residents believing they can influence these decisions. Only one in twenty (5%) strongly agree that they can influence these decisions whereas just under one in five (22%) strongly disagree.

Perceptions have significantly improved, however, compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents agreeing that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (35% vs. 25% for 2008/2009).

Influence over local decisions

Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?



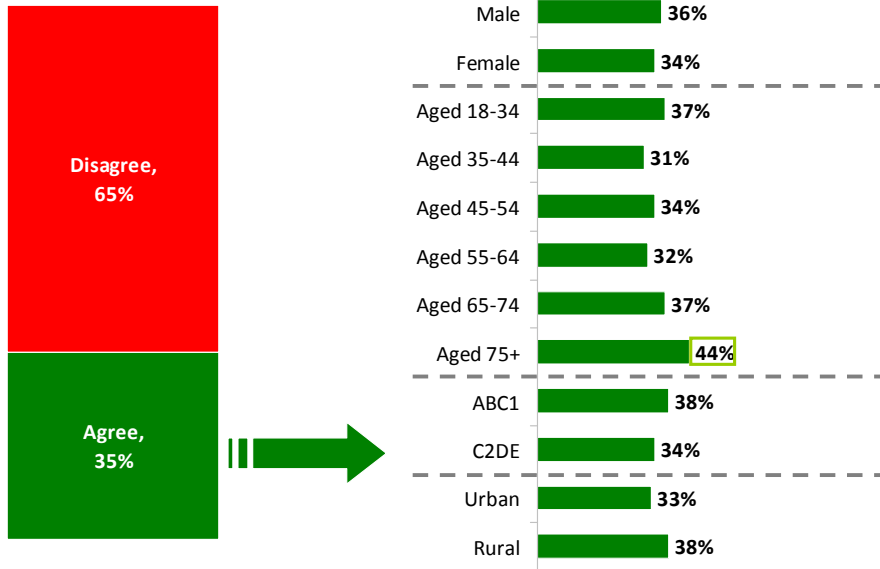
Base: Q3, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1430)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 75+ agree that they can influence local decisions affecting their local area (44%) compared to all other age groups residents aged (18-34: 37%, 35-44: 31%, 45-54: 34%, 55-64: 32%, 65-74: 37%).

Also in contrast to local area metrics observed so far, perceptions are broadly consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Influence over local decisions by key groups

Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?



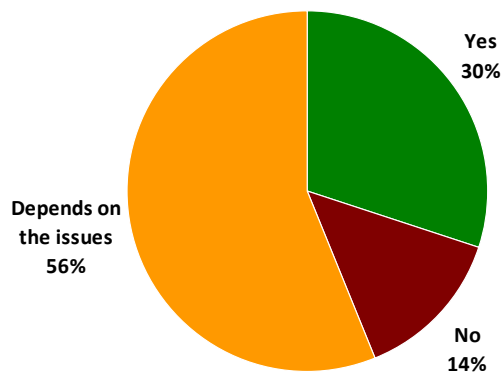
Base: Q3, Male (unweighted base size - 644), Female (720), 18-34 (139), 35-44 (193), 45-54 (243), 55-64 (326), 65-74 (302), 75+ (221), ABC1 (235), C2DE (270), Urban (722), Rural (654)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

Residents were also asked whether they would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area, generally speaking. Three in ten indicated that they would like to become involved and 56% indicated that it would depend on the issue. The proportion wanting to become more involved has increased (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (30% vs. 27% for 2008/2009).

Influence over local decisions moving forward

Generally speaking, would you like to be more involved in the decisions that affect your local area?



% Yes	30%
% No	14%
% Yes change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	+3%

Base: Q11, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1600)

The likelihood that residents would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area decreases with age, with a significantly lower proportion of residents aged 75+ indicating they wanted to become more involved compared to other age groups (11% vs. 33% for 18-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64: 33%, and 23% for 65-74). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of male residents and ABC1 residents indicated they wanted to become more involved (36% vs. 26% for female residents, and 41% vs. 28% for C2DE residents).

4. SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL

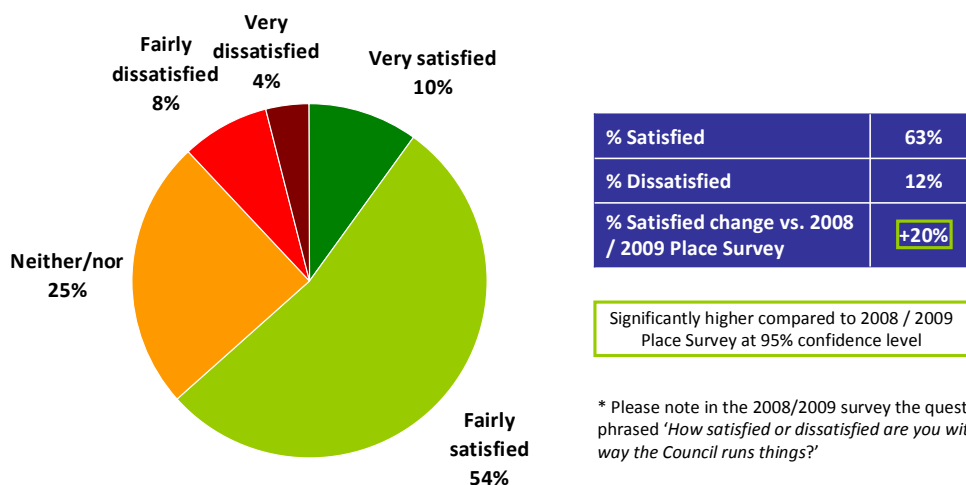
4.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY THE COUNCIL RUNS ITS SERVICES

The majority of residents speak favourably of Maidstone Borough Council, with just under two thirds (63%) indicating they are satisfied with how it runs its services. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with how the Council runs its services (12%).

Perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (63% vs. 43% for 2008/2009). It should be noted when interpreting this improvement, however, that the question wording has altered for this year's survey in that the Place Survey referred to a more generic reference of 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things'.

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs its services

All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services?



Base: Q6, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1671)

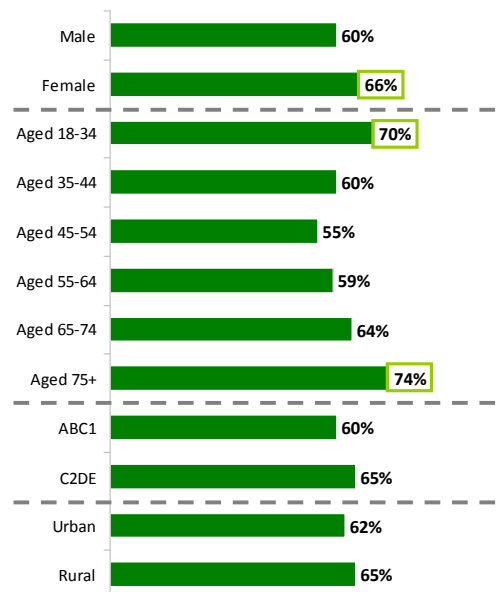
Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, residents aged 18-34 and 75+ are the most satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (70% and 74%) and residents aged 45-54 are the least satisfied (55%). These age trends are broadly consistent with those observed in the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 in Maidstone.

Perceptions also vary amongst male and female residents of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of female residents are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (66% vs. 60% for male residents). Again, these gender trends are broadly consistent with those observed in the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 in Maidstone.

Satisfaction proportions are broadly consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs its services by subgroups

All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services?



Base: Q6, Male (unweighted base size - 722), Female (872), 18-34 (165), 35-44 (229), 45-54 (275), 55-64 (369), 65-74 (338), 75+ (288), ABC1 (258), C2DE (330), Urban (866), Rural (751)

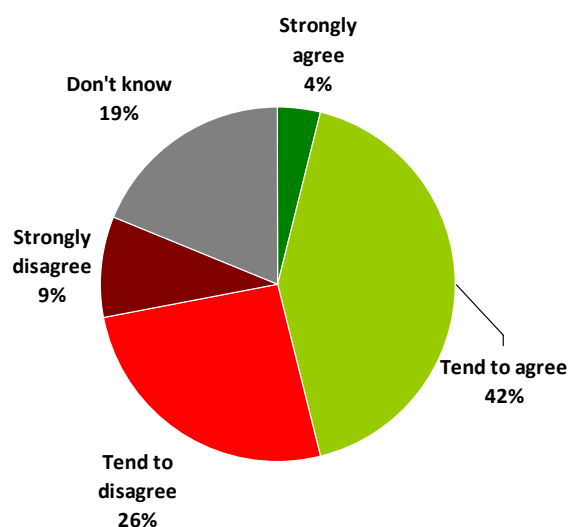
Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

4.2 PERCEIVED VALUE FOR MONEY

46% of residents agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money. In the 2008/2009 Place Survey, 32% of residents were in agreement. It should be noted, however, when making comparisons that the 2011 survey did not include a mid point ('neither agree or disagree') to keep consistency with the style of Lake's recent benchmarking data whereas the 2008/2009 Place Survey included a mid point. As a result, residents indicating 'don't know' have been presented for this question.

Providing value for money

To what extent do you agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money?



% Agree	46%
% Disagree	34%
% Agree in 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	32%

* Please note a mid point was included in the response scale ('neither agree or disagree') in the 2008/2009 Place Survey but not in the 2011 survey. As a result, 'don't know' had been included to make approximate year on year comparisons.

Base: Q8, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1701)

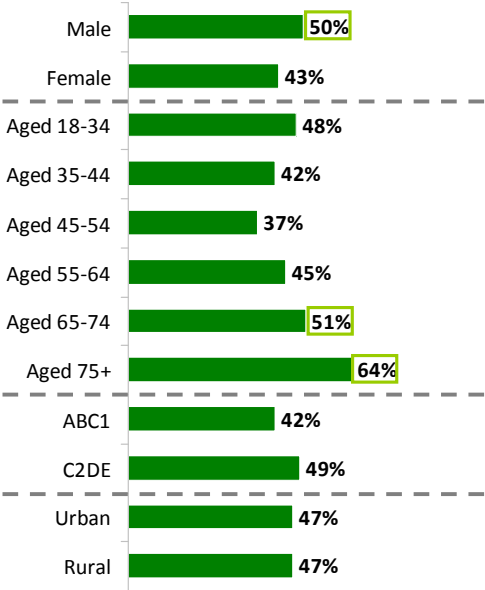
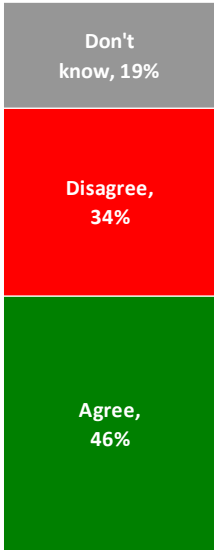
Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 65-74 and 75+ agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money (51% and 64%) and a lower proportion of residents aged 45-54 agree (37%).

Perceptions also vary amongst male and female residents of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of male residents are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (50% vs. 43% for female residents).

Value for money perceptions are consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Providing value for money by subgroups

To what extent do you agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money?



Base: Q8, Male (unweighted base size - 735), Female (888), 18-34 (170), 35-44 (233), 45-54 (278), 55-64 (374), 65-74 (340), 75+ (299), ABC1 (262), C2DE (336), Urban (881), Rural (763)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

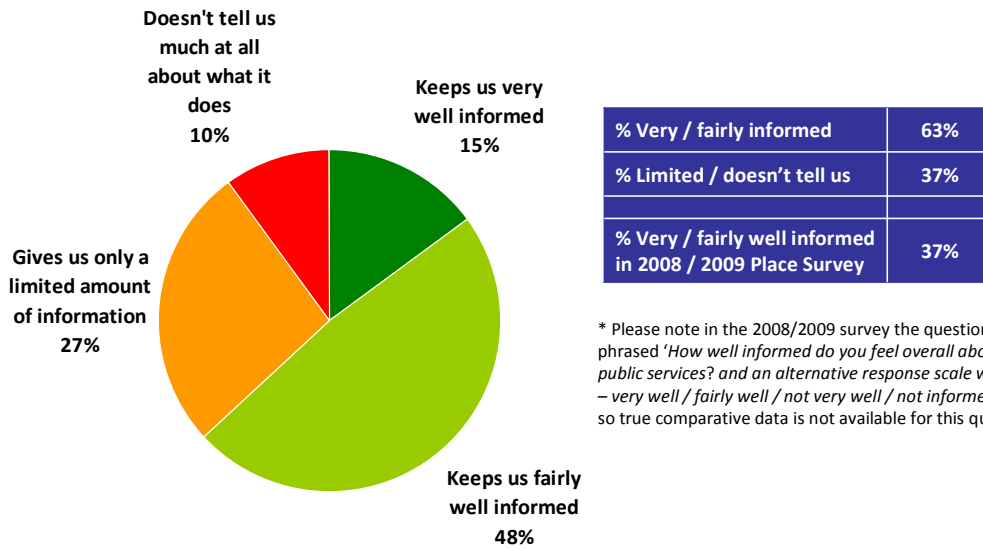
4.3 FEELING INFORMED

The majority of residents believe they are kept informed about the services and benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides, with just under two thirds (63%) indicating they are kept very or fairly well informed. In contrast, just under four in ten consider themselves not very well informed in that they are given only a limited amount of information or they believe Maidstone Borough Council doesn't tell them much at all about what it does.

In the 2008/2009 Place Survey, only 37% of residents considered themselves informed. It should be noted, however, when making comparisons that the 2008/2009 Place Survey asked for views on 'local public services' and an alternative semantic scale was used.

Keeping residents informed

How well informed do you feel Maidstone Borough Council keeps you about the services and benefits it provides?



* Please note in the 2008/2009 survey the question was phrased 'How well informed do you feel overall about local public services? and an alternative response scale was used – very well / fairly well / not very well / not informed at all' so true comparative data is not available for this question

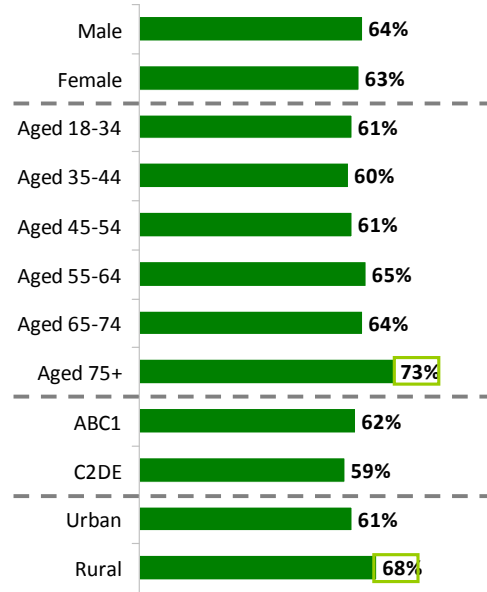
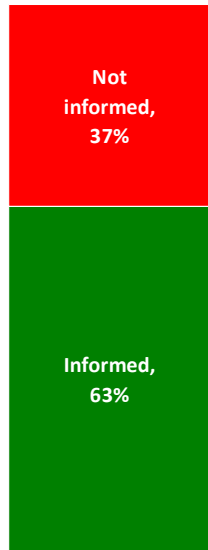
Base: Q7, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1694)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 75+ feel they are kept informed (73%) compared to all other age groups residents aged (18-34: 61%, 35-44: 60%, 45-54: 61%, 55-64: 65%, 65-74: 64%).

Perceptions also vary amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of rural residents feel they are kept informed (68% vs. 61% for urban residents).

Keeping residents informed by subgroups

How well informed do you feel Maidstone Borough Council keeps you about the services and benefits it provides?



Base: Q7, Male (unweighted base size - 728), Female (888), 18-34 (171), 35-44 (234), 45-54 (273), 55-64 (371), 65-74 (340), 75+ (298), ABC1 (257), C2DE (336), Urban (879), Rural (764)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

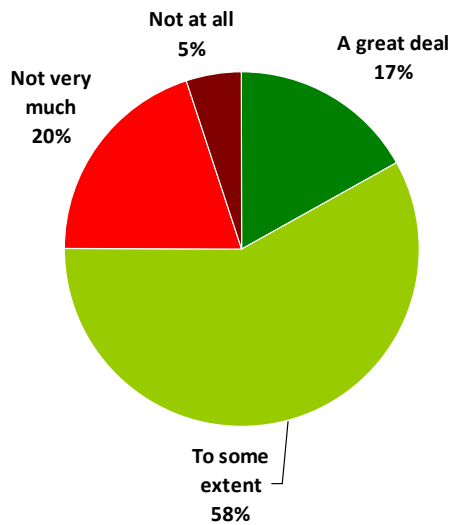
4.4 TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY

The majority of residents believe that Maidstone Borough Council treat all types of people fairly, with three quarters of residents indicating agreement in terms of 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'. A quarter of residents, however, indicate 'not very much' or 'not at all'.

Perceptions have improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they believe Maidstone Borough Council treats all types of people fairly (75% vs. 72% for 2008/2009).

Treating people fairly

To what extent do you think that Maidstone Borough Council treats all types of people fairly?



% A great deal / to some extent	75%
% Not very much / not at all	25%
% A great deal / to some extent change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	+3%

Base: Q12, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1201)

Residents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied with five key services provided or supported by Maidstone Borough Council: Refuse collection, Doorstep recycling, Parks & open spaces, Street cleanliness and Maidstone Leisure Centre.

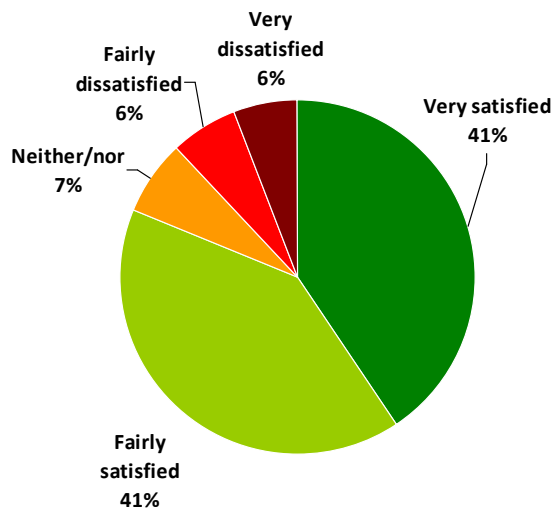
4.4 SATISFACTION WITH REFUSE COLLECTION

The majority of residents speak favourably of their refuse collection services, with just over eight in ten (82%) indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with their refuse collection (11%).

A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (82% vs. 86% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with Refuse Collection

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Refuse Collection?



% Satisfied	82%
% Dissatisfied	11%
% Satisfied change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-4%

Base: Q5b, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1691)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 65-74 and 75+ are satisfied with their refuse collection (91% and 95%) compared to other age groups residents aged (18-34: 78%, 35-44: 72%, 45-54: 81%, 55-64: 85%). Satisfaction levels are broadly consistent by gender, social class and residents living in the rural and urban areas of Maidstone.

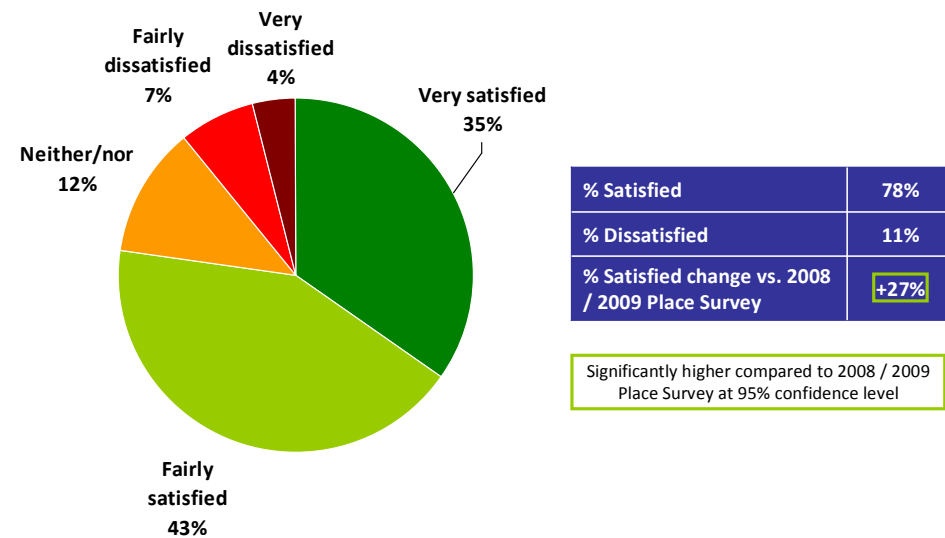
4.5 SATISFACTION WITH DOORSTEP RECYCLING

The majority of residents speak favourably of their doorstep recycling, with just under eight in ten (78%) indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with their doorstep recycling (11%).

Reflecting the recent work put in place by Maidstone Borough Council, perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with them (78% vs. 51% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with Doorstep Recycling

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Doorstep Recycling?



Base: Q5a, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1618)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ are satisfied with their doorstep recycling (80%, 86% and 92%) compared to other age groups residents aged (18-34: 75%, 35-44: 70%, 45-54: 73%, 55-64: 80%). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of residents living in the rural areas of Maidstone are satisfied with their doorstep recycling (81% vs. 76% for rural areas).

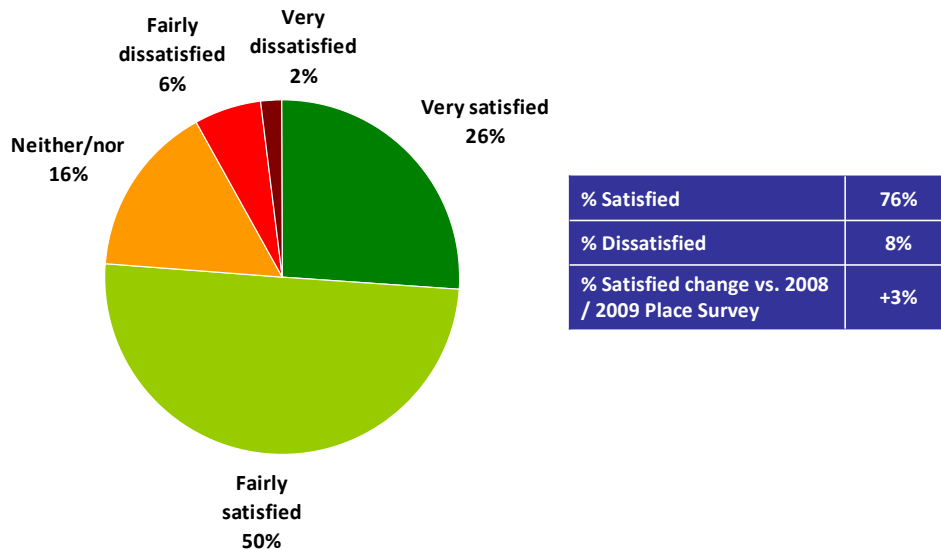
4.6 SATISFACTION WITH PARKS & OPEN SPACES

The majority of residents also speak favourably of the parks and open spaces in Maidstone, with just over three quarters (76%) indicating they are satisfied with them. In contrast, just under one in ten are dissatisfied with the parks and open spaces in Maidstone (8%).

Perceptions have improved (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with them (79% vs. 76% for 2008/2009). Satisfaction levels are broadly consistent by gender, age, social class and residents living in the rural and urban areas of Maidstone.

Satisfaction with Parks & Open Spaces

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Parks & open spaces?



Base: Q5d, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1476)

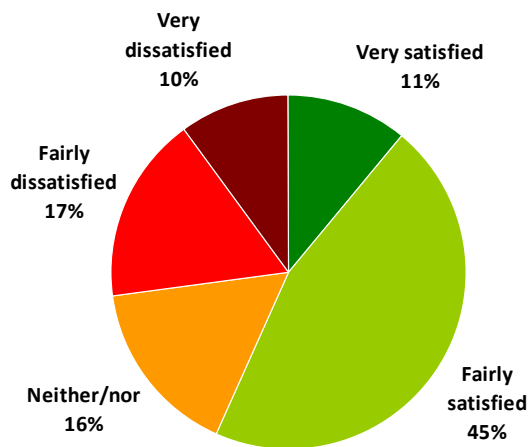
4.7 SATISFACTION WITH STREET CLEANLINESS

Satisfaction levels for street cleanliness are more polarising with just under six in ten (56%) residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just under three in ten (27%) are dissatisfied.

A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (56% vs. 60% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with Street Cleanliness

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Street Cleanliness?



% Satisfied	56%
% Dissatisfied	27%
% Satisfied change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-4%

* Please note that satisfaction with 'street cleanliness' was not tested in the 2008/2009 survey so comparisons have been made versus satisfaction with 'keeping public land clear of litter and refuse'

Base: Q5e, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1653)

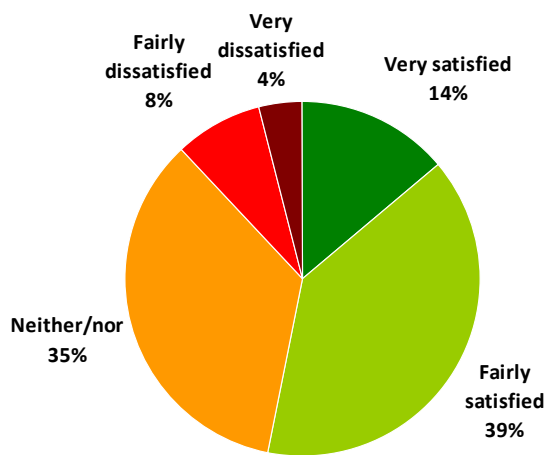
Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 and 75+ are satisfied with street cleanliness (62% for both age groups) compared to other age groups residents aged (35-44: 54%, 45-54: 52%, 55-64: 54%. 65-74: 55%). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of residents living in urban areas of Maidstone are dissatisfied with street cleanliness (30% vs. 25% for rural areas).

4.8 SATISFACTION WITH MAIDSTONE LEISURE CENTRE

Satisfaction levels with Maidstone Leisure Centre vary with just over half (53%) of residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over a third of residents indicated that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (35%) and just over one in ten (12%) are dissatisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

Satisfaction with Maidstone Leisure Centre

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Maidstone Leisure Centre?



% Satisfied	53%
% Dissatisfied	12%
% Satisfied with Sport/Leisure Facilities	43%

* Please note that satisfaction with 'Maidstone Leisure Centre' was not tested in the 2008/2009 survey so 'sport / leisure facilities' has been used as an approximate benchmark

Base: Q5c, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 893)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 25-34, 35-44 and 75+ are satisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre (59%, 55% and 62%) compared to other age groups residents aged (45-54: 45%, 55-64: 46%, 65-74: 50%). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of female residents are satisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre (56% vs. 47% for male residents).

5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS VS. PRIORITIES

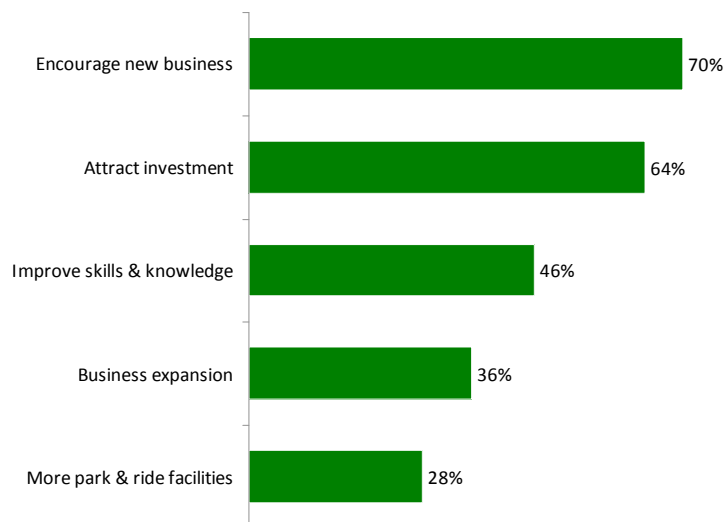
Residents were also asked to indicate their agreement with a list of actions they think Maidstone Borough Council should take in achieving the three priorities set by the Council up until 2015: 1) Growing the economy, 2) A decent place to live and 3) Corporate and customer excellence.

5.1 GROWING THE ECONOMY

There is a general consensus in the two main actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to 'grow the economy', with the majority of residents selecting encourage new business (70%) and attract investment (64%). It should be noted, however, that whilst not in the majority a significant proportion also selected 'improve skills & knowledge' so this area should also be considered.

Recommended actions for 'Growing the economy'

What actions do you think the council should be taking to achieve these priorities...
Growing the economy?



Base: Q9a, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1651)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, there are significant differences observed by gender, age and social class:

- A significantly higher proportion of male residents selected 'attract investment' (68% vs. 62% for female residents); a significantly higher proportion of female residents selected 'improve skills & knowledge' (49% vs. 44% for male residents) and 'more park & ride facilities' (30% vs. 24% for male residents)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 35-54 selected 'attract investment' (69% vs. 64% for 18-34 and 58% for 55+); a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55+ selected 'more park & ride facilities' (35% vs. 24% for 18-34 and 23% for 35-54)

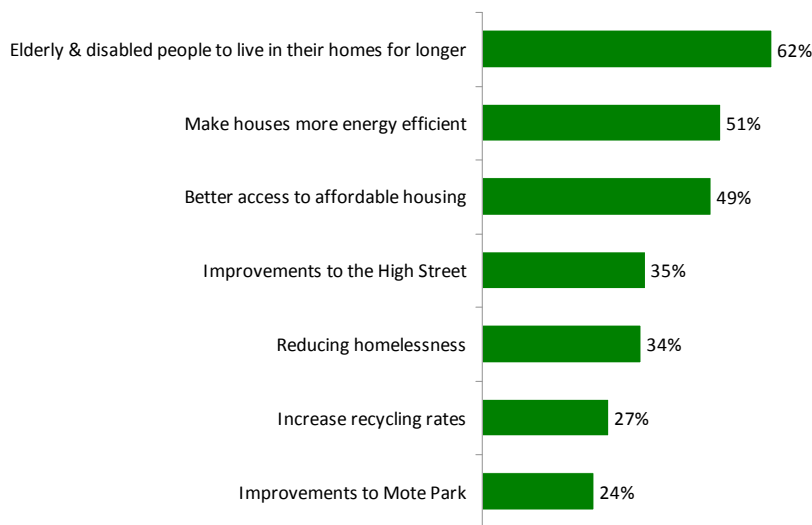
- A significantly higher proportion of ABC1 residents selected ‘attract investment’ (74% vs. 61% for C2DE residents).

5.2 A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE

Response is more varied when looking at the actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve ‘a decent place to live’. The top three actions listed, however, are to ensure ‘elderly and disabled people live in their homes for longer’ (62%), make houses more energy efficient (51%) and provide better access to affordable housing (49%).

Recommended actions for ‘A decent place to live’

What actions do you think the council should be taking to achieve these priorities...
A decent place to live?



Base: Q9b, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1674)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, there are significant differences observed by gender, age, social class and area of living:

- A significantly higher proportion of female residents selected ‘make houses more energy efficient’ (55% vs. 46% for male residents) and ‘better access to affordable housing’ (52% vs. 45% for male residents)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 selected ‘make houses more energy efficient’ (62% vs. 50% for 35-54 and 46% for 55+) and ‘improvements to the High Street’ (44% vs. 38% for 35-54 and 26% for 55+); a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55+ selected ‘elderly and disabled people helped to live in their homes for longer’ (79% vs. 43% for 18-34 and 55% for 35-54)
- A significantly higher proportion of C2DE residents selected ‘elderly and disabled people helped to live in their homes for longer’ (72% vs. 52% for ABC1 residents); a significantly higher proportion of ABC1 residents selected ‘improvements to the High

Street' (44% vs. 32% for C2DE residents) and 'increase recycling rates' (34% vs. 23% for C2DE residents)

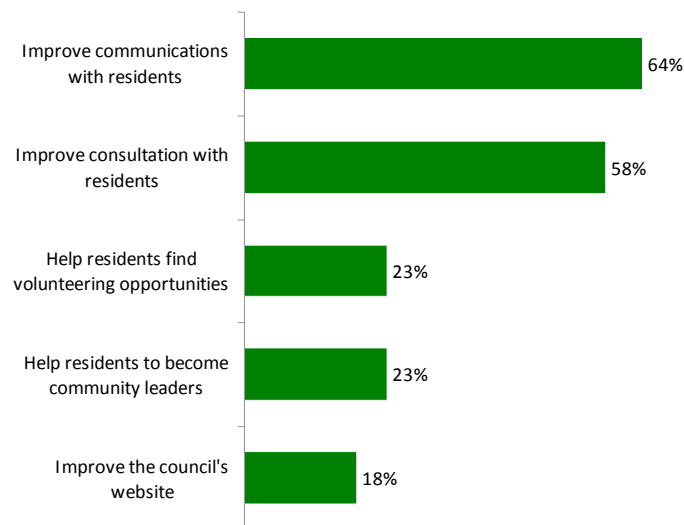
- A significantly higher proportion of residents living in rural areas selected 'elderly and disabled people helped to live in their homes for longer' (68% vs. 57% for urban residents).

5.3 CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE

There is a general consensus in the two main actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve 'corporate and customer excellence', with the majority of residents selecting improve communications with residents (64%) and improve consultation with residents (58%).

Recommended actions for 'Corporate & Customer Excellence'

What actions do you think the council should be taking to achieve these priorities...
Corporate and Customer Excellence?



Base: Q9c, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1519)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, there are significant differences observed by gender, age and area of living:

- A significantly higher proportion of female residents selected 'improve communications with residents' (69% vs. 59% for male residents); a significantly higher proportion of male residents selected 'improve consultation with residents' (62% vs. 56% for female residents)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 and 35-54 selected 'improve communications with residents' (71% and 66% vs. 59% for 55+); a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55+ selected 'improve consultation with residents' (66% vs. 61% for 35-54 and 43% for 18-34)

- A significantly higher proportion of residents living in urban areas selected ‘improve communications with residents’ (67% vs. 60% for rural residents); a significantly higher proportion of residents living in rural areas selected ‘improve consultation with residents’ (62% vs. 57% for urban residents). This is an important distinction to note when considering future improvements.

5.4 IMPORTANT ISSUES COUNCIL SHOULD BE TACKLING

Residents were also asked to describe what important issues they think Maidstone Borough Council should be tackling in their own words. For the purposes of analysis, these descriptions have been grouped into common themes as depicted in the chart below.

A variety of suggestions are given and cover all elements of the services Maidstone Borough Council provides to residents. The most common, however, are in relation to street cleaning, road maintenance, anti social behaviour and waste collections.

Important issues council should be tackling

In your opinion, are there any important issues that you think the Council should be tackling?



Base: Q10, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 919)

6. INFLUENCES ON PERCEPTIONS

In order to further understand the influences of residents' satisfaction, correlation analysis was undertaken on the measures 'satisfaction with the Maidstone as a place to live' and 'satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services' with other measures used in the survey. A correlation is an estimate of how related two variables are. The scale runs from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates a complete lack of a relationship and 1 indicates a perfect relationship between the two variables.

Attitudes towards Maidstone as a place to live are influenced by a sense of belonging to the area (0.48), different backgrounds getting on well together (0.4). Value for money is also a key consideration to residents (0.39). When looking at satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services, these metrics remain important but to less of a degree. The provision of offering value for money is essential (0.67) and perceptions of treating all types of people fairly (0.51) and the sense of feeling informed about services and benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides is also important (0.51).

Correlation analysis

Correlation between 'satisfaction with the local area as a place to live' and 'satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services'	0.43
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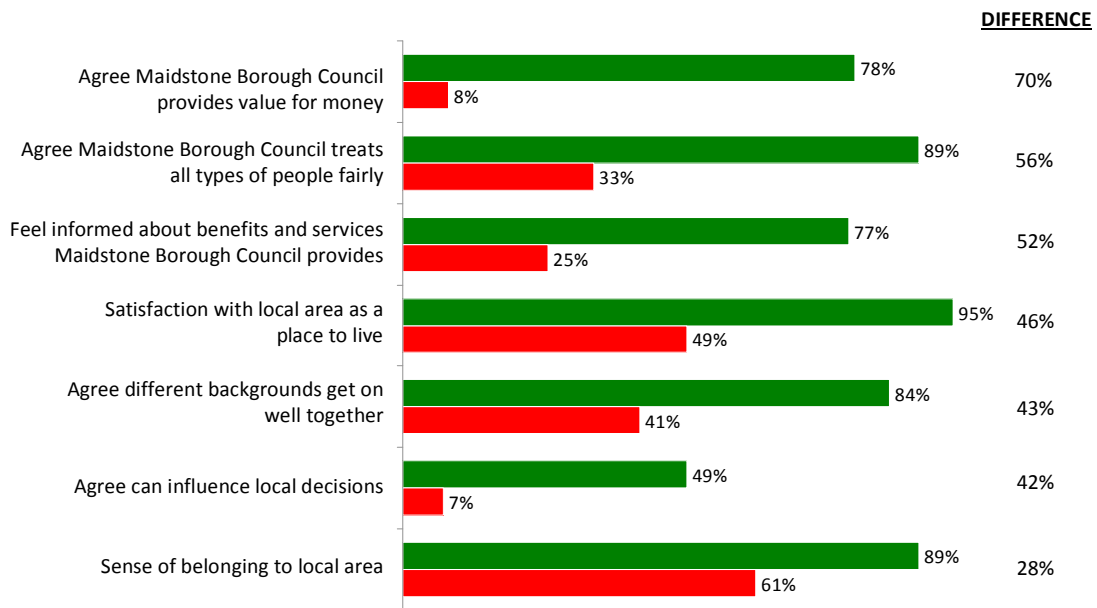
	Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	Satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services
Belonging to local area	0.48	0.31
Different backgrounds getting on well together	0.40	0.35
Influencing local decisions	0.37	0.44
Maidstone Borough Council treating all types of people fairly	0.38	0.51
Feeling informed about services & benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides	0.30	0.46
Maidstone Borough Council providing value for money	0.39	0.67

Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

Filtering metric agreement scores by those that are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services and those that are dissatisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services further emphasises these trends. The three largest distinctions between those satisfied and dissatisfied are:

- Perceptions of value for money: 78% vs. 8% for those dissatisfied
- Perceptions of treating all types of people fairly: 89% vs. 33% for those dissatisfied
- Perceptions of being kept informed: 77% vs. 25% for those dissatisfied

Metric influence on satisfaction levels



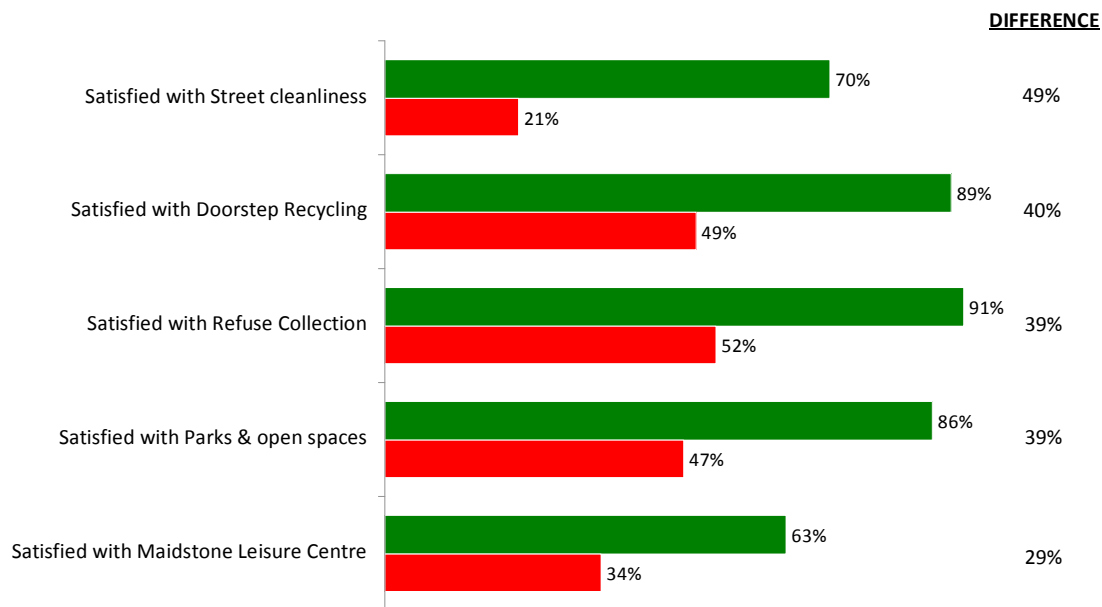
Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

We observed the following correlations when looking at analysis patterns between ‘satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services’ and the five key services in the survey (street cleanliness, doorstep recycling, refuse collection, parks & open spaces and Maidstone Leisure Centre):

- Street cleanliness (0.41)
- Doorstep recycling (0.40)
- Parks and open spaces (0.37)
- Refuse collection (0.36)
- Maidstone Leisure Centre (0.33)

Filtering metric agreement scores by those that are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services and those that are dissatisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services further emphasises the importance of street cleanliness with the largest distinctions between those satisfied and dissatisfied.

Metric influence on satisfaction levels (2)



Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)