

Assessing Wyre Forest's performance

Results of the Place Survey 2008/09 for Wyre Forest District Council and partners

01 June 2009



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Summary of key findings

Summary of key findings

This report presents the findings from the 2008 Place Survey conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Wyre Forest District Council.

The survey was conducted via a postal self-completion approach, as prescribed by the Audit Commission and the Department of Communities and Local Government. Fieldwork was carried out from 29th September to 19th December 2008. A total of 1,702 responses were achieved and data has been weighted to ensure results are reflective of the wider population in the district, and to account for non-response bias.

The results of Wyre Forest's Place Survey 2008 are fairly mixed, showing progress in some areas and regression in others. Satisfaction with the area has risen since 2006/2007, and there have also been improvements in key aspects of community safety: for example, a range of forms of anti-social behaviour are felt to be less of a problem than they were two years ago.

However, there are areas in which clear focus is now needed. Overall satisfaction with the Council has fallen (possibly related to a perceived decline in value for money) and Wyre Forest compares unfavourably with other districts on a number of measures, particularly the extent to which residents feel they can have an influence of local decision making. This last finding, combined with the fact that civic participation in the district is fairly low, suggests there may be scope to improve community levels of engagement in the district.

Perceptions of the Local Area

Satisfaction with local area is high, with approaching eight out of ten Wyre Forest residents saying they are satisfied with their area as a place to live (79%) – a rise of six percentage points since 2006/2007 – while just 9% are dissatisfied. Moreover, Wyre Forest's results are on a par with the Worcestershire consortium (84%) and district averages (81%).

The vast majority of residents are satisfied with their home as a place to live (88%). The results for this measure are again in line with that for other districts (90%).

As in 2003/2004 and 2006/2007, crime levels are seen as the most important factor in making somewhere a good place to live. They also place a similar amount of priority on crime as being in need of improvement. Residents still place the most emphasis for

priority on road and pavement repairs, level of traffic congestion and activities for teenagers.

Road and pavement repairs have been identified as needing greater priority than they did two years ago. However, the number of people thinking that health services need improvement has dropped since 2006/07.

Community safety

As noted in the previous section, community safety is a falling concern, but nevertheless remains central to residents' assessment of quality of life in their local area. Half of Wyre Forest residents say they feel *safe* in their local area at night. Encouragingly, this is greater than the third (32%) who express feeling unsafe.

The biggest problem is perceived to be teenagers hanging around on the streets – 44% consider this to be a problem – which lends further credence to the finding that activities for teenagers is one of Wyre Forest residents' uppermost priorities. Rubbish/litter and vandalism/graffiti are the next most cited forms of anti-social behaviour perceived to be a problem locally (38% and 32% respectively).

Around a fifth (21%) of residents agree that anti-social behaviour issues are being dealt with successfully in Wyre Forest but more residents actually disagree that they are (30%). A majority of residents are ambivalent about this (49%).

This poor rating may be due, at least in part, to the need for more effective communication and consultation. Only 23% of residents agree that the police and other local public services seek people's views about anti-social behaviour and crime. However, over two fifths disagree (41%).

Community cohesion

The proportion of residents who think that Wyre Forest is a place where people from different backgrounds get on has improved since the last BVPI survey. About seven in ten Wyre Forest residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (72%). However, this is slightly lower than the district and consortium averages.

Three in five residents (61%) say they feel they belong to their immediate neighbourhood either *very* or *fairly strongly*. This is right in line with the consortium average and the overall average for Ipsos MORI.

Respect and consideration is an area in which Wyre Forest has improved over the last two years. Around a third (34%) think that a lack of respect and consideration is still a problem locally; a substantial fall since 2006/07 when 55% of residents took this view. Wyre Forest's results are now significantly more positive than the National average of 50%.

Considerably more Wyre Forest residents *disagree* than agree that parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children in their local area. Nearly a quarter (23%) agree, at least to some extent, while almost three in five (56%) disagree that local parents do this. Wyre Forest residents are less likely to agree (and more likely to disagree) that parents are taking sufficient responsibility than across the consortium overall and compared to other districts.

Helping out and getting involved

Compared to other districts, civic participation levels are relatively low in Wyre Forest; just over one in eight (12%) have taken part in any civic participation activities in the last 12 months.

Volunteering levels in Wyre Forest are consistent with other districts and across the consortium.

Local decision making

Only a quarter of residents agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (25%). A slight downward trend on this measure is evident across most districts for whom Ipsos MORI has conducted the Place Survey, but Wyre Forest's score on this measure places it below both the consortium average (27%) and district average (29%).

Nine in ten would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area in some capacity – just under three in ten would like to be more involved in any decisions (27%), while the majority (63%) say it depends on the issue. Just ten percent would not like to be involved. This suggests that there is considerable scope to increase engagement within the local population, particularly if residents are allowed to identify their own priority issues.

Information provision

About a third of Wyre Forest residents say that they feel informed about local public services (34%), which is lower than the averages both across the consortium and for other districts for which Ipsos MORI has worked.

More positively, Wyre Forest has made some progress in informing residents about how their council tax is spent, as the proportion feeling informed about this has risen from 57% in 2006/07 to 65% this year. However, there has been a sharp fall in the proportion of residents who feel informed about how they can get involved in local decision-making – another key influencer of satisfaction – with a decline from 42% two years ago to 28% in the current survey.

One in five residents feel informed about what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency (20%), compared with 65% who do not feel well informed, although this result is in line with the consortium average, it is actually very slightly higher than the average across districts for whom Ipsos MORI have worked (17%).

Health

Over three quarters of Wyre Forest residents consider their health to be very good or good (77%). A further 19% say their health is fair, while five percent describe it as bad or very bad. Wyre Forest's health and well-being score is very much in line with the comparative data for other districts and across the consortium.

Local Public Services

Views about local public services vary. Residents are most positive about how local public services treat all types of people fairly (71% think this is happening at least to some extent), are working to make the area cleaner and greener (65%), and how they are working to make the area safer (61%). However, the majority are critical about the extent to which local public services act on the concerns of local residents and the extent to which they promote the interests of local residents (57% and 59% respectively say this applies not very much or not at all).

Seven out of ten residents (71%) say that local services have usually or always treated them with respect and consideration over the last year, just seven percent say they have rarely or never received respect in that time. This is slightly lower than the consortium and district averages (both 74%).

When asked about their perception of a range of public services, Wyre Forest residents are most satisfied with their GP (86%), and least satisfied with the local police (43%), although it is worth noting that residents are significantly more likely to have used their local GP service and hence are less likely to give a neutral or 'don't know' answer.

Council Services

Thinking generally, over two fifths of residents are satisfied with Wyre Forest District Council (42%). A further third are ambivalent (35%), while nearly a quarter are dissatisfied (23%). Satisfaction with the Council has fallen from 50% in 2006/07 to 42% this year. However, it is important to stress that, based on the results of local authorities that Ipsos MORI has worked with, overall satisfaction ratings of Councils have fallen quite markedly in the majority of cases, so Wyre Forest is by no means unique in this regard.

The survey findings suggest that one of the biggest influences on satisfaction with the Council is whether it is perceived to provide good value for money. Residents are evenly split on this – about a third (31%) disagree, compared with 31% who agree. Feelings tend to run stronger among those who disagree with 9% saying they *strongly* disagree, compared to just two percent who *strongly* agree.

Regarding support for the elderly, about three in ten residents think that older people are getting the support and services they need to continue living at home as long as they would like (29%). This result is on a par with the other districts (32%) and across the consortium (29%).

Turning finally to Council services, satisfaction with local transport services has remained fairly stable since 2006/07, but there is a more negative picture in relation to cultural and recreational services – satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities, with libraries and parks and open spaces has fallen, while satisfaction with museums and galleries and theatres and concert halls has remained at a similar level.

With regards to environmental services, Wyre Forest residents are most satisfied with local tips/ household waste recycling centres (77%) and are least satisfied with keeping land clear of refuse and litter (53%).

Overview

Introduction

This report sets out findings from the 2008/09 Place Survey conducted for Wyre Forest District Council and its partners by the independent research agency Ipsos MORI.

The Place Survey is the new biennial statutory survey which all lower and upper tier local authorities in England are required to carry out. Together with the tenant satisfaction (STATUS) survey, it replaces the suite of Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) user satisfaction surveys, which have been carried out since 2000¹.

The findings from the Place Survey are important because they help the Council and its local partners on the local strategic partnership (LSP)² (including the police, fire and health services, and the voluntary and community sector) understand how they are performing in relation to each of the new citizen perspective indicators³ prioritised by the government, and how residents' views have changed over time in relation to key local public service and quality of life issues.

This report sets out a summary of the key findings from the Place Survey, along with more detailed analysis which looks at how satisfaction and perceptions with quality of life in the local area have changed over time, and how they differ between different demographic groups in the district. It also draws on comparator data, where available, to understand how well the Borough is performing relative to other local areas.

In addition, the report provides technical details relating to the conduct of the survey, a consideration of response rates and the respondent (sample) profile.

Topline findings as a 'marked up questionnaire' setting out the overall findings against each survey question and full data tables are provided under separate cover. These tables provide a detailed analysis of the findings by a range of socio-demographic, and other relevant variables.

¹ The BVPI surveys were carried out in 2000/01, 2003/04 and 2006/07.

² The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a statutory partnership body that brings together organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sector within a local authority area, with the objective of improving people's quality of life.

³ The Place Survey collects 18 of the 198 national indicators prioritised by government. These indicators are common to all areas. Government requires local authorities and their partners to monitor all indicators in order to measure progress made in meeting key quality of life priorities.

Background and context

Since the publication of the 2006 Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*⁴, there has been a new focus in the way local public sector agencies work and report performance. Improving outcomes for local people and places is now at the heart of local service provision, with a move away from the previous emphasis on processes, institutions and inputs.

The Place Survey plays an important role in trying to measure these improved outcomes. It replaces the BVPI surveys⁵, which focused much more on Council-specific issues and services. The Place Survey captures local people's views, experiences and perceptions, about the local area, rather than the Council specifically, so solutions for the district can reflect local opinions and preferences. It is also vital to track people's changing perceptions over time (by comparing results to previous waves of the BVPI General User Satisfaction Survey, which asked a number of the same questions), as a way of determining whether interventions made in an area result in the right outcomes for local people, for example, whether people feel happier and safer.

Importantly, results from the Place Survey will be used to measure 18 of the 'citizen perspective' indicators, which the government has charged local government and its partners to monitor and deliver on. These indicators are drawn from the government's new National Indicator Set⁶, which will measure how well the government's priorities, as set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, are being delivered at the local level over the next three years. They form an important part of the new, streamlined local performance framework (the Comprehensive Area Assessment) which will come into effect in April 2009. It is intended that the survey will be carried out every two years.

Importantly, the Place Survey was carried out using a prescribed postal self-completion methodology – as were the BVPI surveys - to allow for robust comparison of data between local areas in England, and against previous BVPI survey data where relevant. Details of the approach are summarised in the next chapter, and detailed in Appendix 1.

⁴ Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper, October 2006, CLG

⁵ The Place Survey and tenant satisfaction 'STATUS' survey were conducted in 2008/09 and replace the suite of BVPI surveys undertaken in previous years.

⁶ Further information about the 198 indicators which form the National Indicator Set can be found at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/543055.pdf>. Details of the 18 citizen perspective indicators collected via the Place Survey can be found in the 2008/ 09 Communities and Local Government (CLG) Manual

Interpreting the data

It should be remembered that a sample of residents, and not all residents living in Wyre Forest District Council area participated in the survey. 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 to 4 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). Further information on this, and a full guide to statistical reliability, is provided in Appendix 2.

In accordance with the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Place Survey guidance, the base for each question is “valid responses” or all those providing an answer. Those stating “don’t know” or who do not complete the question are excluded from some – but not all – of the calculations. The base size does, therefore, vary from question to question, depending on the extent of non response, and whether there was a requirement to remove don’t know responses. Where don’t knows *are* included in the base size this is illustrated on the charts.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the report, an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half a per cent, but greater than zero.

Reference is also made to socio-economic groups of residents. There are four groupings - AB, C1, C2 and DE - and the definition for each group is detailed in Appendix 3.

Throughout the questionnaire, local residents were asked to think about their local area when responding to questions. The local area is defined as the area within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from the respondents’ home.

In order for Wyre Forest District Council and partners to understand how levels of satisfaction and perceptions about quality of life have changed in the district over time, data from the previous two waves of the BVPI General Survey have been included for comparative purposes (only where it is valid to compare). A similar methodology was

followed for the Place Survey as for the BVPI General User Satisfaction Survey, making comparisons between them relatively robust⁷.

The latest available national benchmarking data⁸ have also been included in this report to help to set the findings in context and – in the absence of a national dataset for all the Place Surveys conducted in 2008/09 - support the local authority and its partners in judging how well it compares to other areas/ nationally. Such comparative data is for illustrative purposes only, and must be treated with caution due to the different data collection methodologies used (all used a face-to-face methodology rather than postal self-completion approach), and the different question wording in some instances (where this is the case it is explicitly stated in the main body of the report).

Where appropriate, an Ipsos MORI Place Survey average has been included for comparative purposes. This is effectively an average score for all those areas where Ipsos MORI conducted a Place Survey. Ipsos MORI surveyed 124 areas, which included a broad mix of district, unitary and metropolitan boroughs, so the IM average should provide a reasonably reflective picture of what is happening nationally. However, it is important to note that it does not represent the 'official' national average.

Because Ipsos MORI carried out the Place Survey across all the district authorities in Worcestershire, a County or consortium average figure has been provided in the charts. This allows Wyre Forest District Council to see how well it is performing against its neighbours. An overall district average is also provided, which gives an average score for all the 49 districts surveyed by Ipsos MORI.

⁷ A small cautionary note should be added when comparing data - due to the possible impact on people's responses to questions because of the change in questionnaire design and question ordering for the 2008/09 Place Survey, and the timing of fieldwork.

⁸ National benchmarking data has been drawn from latest available figures from the following surveys:

- Survey of English Housing 2006/07. 17,506 face-to-face interviews with representative cross section of adult English population in the year to March 2007.
- Citizenship Survey 2007/08. Face-to-face survey of 8,804 adults in England, April 07 – March 08.
- British Crime Survey 2007/08. A continuous survey of adults in England and Wales. Findings based on 46,983 face-to-face interviews conducted between April 2007 and March 2008.
- Health Survey for England 2006. 14,157 face-to-face interviews in England conducted throughout the calendar year January to December 2006.

Where net figures are discussed this is expressed in plus (+) or minus (-) and this either refers to the difference between opinions in the 2008 Place Survey and previous BVPI surveys, or the two most favourable ratings minus the two least favourable ratings.

Acknowledgements

Ipsos MORI would like to thank the 1,702 residents in Wyre Forest District Council who took part in the survey. We would also like to thank Alison Braithwaite from Wyre Forest District Council for her help in getting the questionnaire into field and her input throughout the survey process.

Publication of data

As Wyre Forest District Council has engaged Ipsos MORI to undertake an objective programme of research, it is important to protect the organisation's interests by ensuring that it is accurately reflected in any press release or publication of the findings. As part of our standard terms and conditions, the publication of the findings of this report is therefore subject to the advance approval of Ipsos MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

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May 2009*

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Approved:*

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Methodology for data collection

The methodology for the Place Survey was prescribed by CLG. In summary, the methodology was as follows:

- A postal self-completion methodology.
- The sampling frame used was the small-user Postcode Address File (PAF).
- Ipsos MORI selected a random sample of 4,000 addresses from the PAF file supplied by the Audit Commission in order to meet the 1,100 responses required.
- A prescribed questionnaire was used, comprising of a mix of questions previously asked on the BVPI General User Survey (to allow for performance tracking against previous waves of the BVPI surveys), new questions (to enable measurement of the 18 citizen perspective National indicators), plus a series of demographic questions.
- All questionnaires were distributed – and returned - through the UK Royal Mail postal system.
- Fieldwork for the survey took place between 24 September and 19 December 2008.

In order to promote a good response rate, a number of steps were taken:

- The questionnaire was branded with the logos of Wyre Forest District Council, Worcestershire County Council and Ipsos MORI, and contained a covering letter from Walter Delin, Chief Executive and Trish Haines, Chief Executive of Worcestershire County Council.
- Details of an Ipsos MORI helpdesk were provided.
- Participants were able to request a translated version of the questionnaire in an alternative language, or were given the opportunity to undertake the survey over the telephone with an Ipsos MORI translator.
- In line with the guidance, two reminder mailings of the questionnaire were sent out to those residents who had yet to respond to the survey.

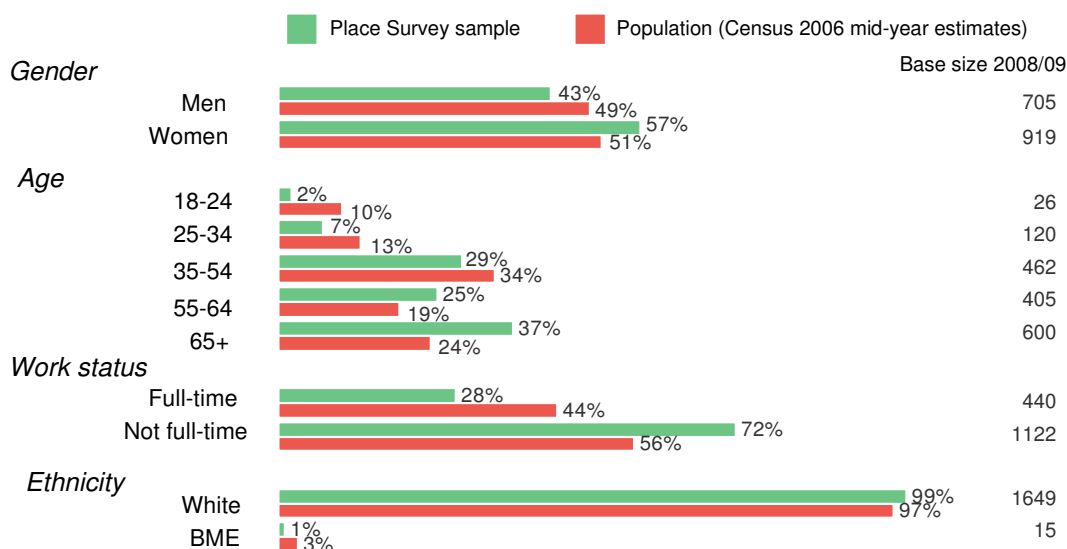
Comparing results of the Place Survey sample (unweighted) to updated Census estimates indicates that women, those aged 65 and over, those not in full-time work and White residents are more likely to respond to the survey, as the following chart illustrates⁹. The use of the Audit Commission Place Survey weighting procedure has adjusted for this non-response bias, so the overall sample profile is representative of the population of the local area.

As you can see from the following chart, there are only 15 BME respondents in the sample. Due to this small number, there are few, if any, significant differences to report on. Please see the data tables for more details but be aware that results are indicative only, because of the very small number responses from this group.

⁹ Gender and age figures based on ONS 2006 Mid-Year Population Projections. More precisely, they are obtained by interpolating mid-way between the mid-2008 and mid-2009 Projections in order to derive estimates for the end of 2008. Ethnicity based on ONS 2006 Mid-Year Population Projections.

Methodology: Sample Profile

Sample Profile for Wyre Forest: Key demographics



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses. Source: Age, gender and ethnicity from 2006 Mid Year estimates. Work status from 2001 Census.



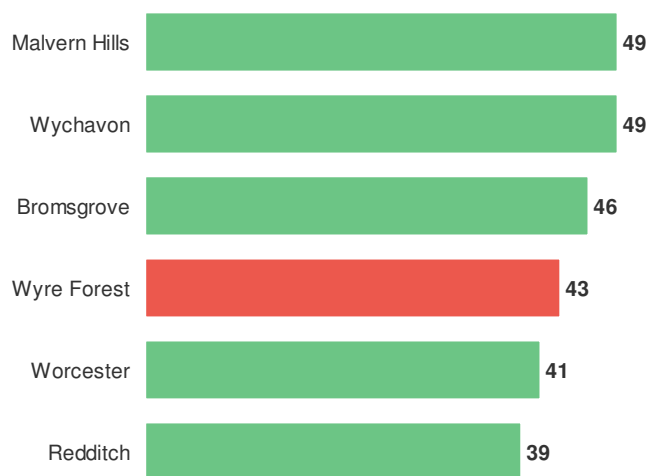
A maximum +/- 3 percentage points at the 95 per cent confidence level is required to calculate the national indicators collected in the Place Survey. With this in mind, CLG and the Audit Commission required each local area to achieve a minimum sample size of 1,100 completed Place Survey questionnaires.

The total number of returns collected for the survey was 1,702. This achieved sample size is based on the total number of respondents to the survey as a whole, and not the number of respondents to individual questions. This represents an adjusted response rate of 43%

A full detailed approach to the methodology is attached in Appendix 1. Further guidance on statistical reliability is provided in Appendix 2.

Methodology: Response Rate

Response Rate across Worcestershire County Council (%)



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Key trends

Progress against national indicators

Despite this being the first year of the Place Survey, a number of trends can be identified over time because a number of questions from the old BVPI surveys were incorporated into the Place Survey questionnaire. The following table identifies progress made against six of the new national indicators collected through the Place Survey 2008/09 – drawing on comparator data from (up to) two previous waves of the BVPI General User Satisfaction Survey.

Please note that this comparator data should be treated with a small degree of caution, as set out in the introductory chapter, because of the possible impact the change in question ordering and structure of the Place Survey questionnaire had on people's responses.

As we can see, satisfaction with the local area has increased since 2006/07 (up six percentage points to 79%). Perceptions of various forms of anti-social behaviour as a problem in the local area are also continuing to fall and are now substantially lower than 2003/04 and 2006/07, although perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem had already fallen a great deal by 2006/07. The proportion of residents who believe their area is socially cohesive has also moved in a positive direction in the last two years (by eight percentage points to 72%).

National indicator	Definition	BVPI 2003/04 (%)	BVPI 2006/07 (%)	Place 2008/09 (%)
NI1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	n/a	64	72
NI4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	n/a	30	25
NI5	Overall/ general satisfaction with the local area	n/a	73	79
NI23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration	n/a	55	34
NI41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem	57	32	30
NI42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem	68	47	32
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>				

Non national indicator trends

For many local authorities, the Place Survey remains an important tool through which to collect perceptions data and monitor performance around some of its key universal services, such as waste collection and recycling. The new place based approach to local area working means that the government no longer requires local authorities to formally measure or report its performance in these areas, but the collection of this data at the local level still remains a priority for many.

The following table illustrates local authority performance over time in some of these key service areas – and against the old BVPIs that local government was monitored against under the previous performance assessment framework.

As we can see, overall satisfaction with the council has declined by 11 percentage points since 2003/04. It is a mixed picture however for the specific cultural, recreational and environmental facilities provided by the council. The most notable decline is with waste collection, where satisfaction has fallen by 17 percentage points since 2003/04). Satisfaction with sports facilities is also somewhat lower than in 2003/04 (48% versus 52%).

BVPI	Definition	BVPI 2003/04 (%)	BVPI 2006/07 (%)	Place 2008/09 (%)
BV3	Overall satisfaction with council	53	50	42
BV89	Satisfaction with cleanliness	56	62	53
BV90A	Waste collection	79	66	62
BV119A	Sports/leisure facilities	52	65	49
BV119C	Museums/galleries	42	42	43
BV119D	Theatres/concert halls	39	32	33
BV119E	Parks and open spaces	71	75	70
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>				

Please note: some of the question wording differs between the Place Survey 2008/09 and previous waves of the BVPI survey/ BVPI definitions. This is commented upon further in the main body of the report.

Comparing Wyre Forest District Council to other Consortium members

The following chart provides an overview of Wyre Forest District Council's performance against the 18 citizen perspective indicators, compared to Worcestershire overall. The NI score for the authority is listed in the orange circles down the middle. The deviation from the Worcestershire mean is displayed as a + or – figure.

For example we can see that for NI 1 (people from different backgrounds getting on well together), Wyre Forest District Council's score is 72.4%, which is 4.6 percentage points below the county average. It is below the average and so to the left of the chart. It is not desirable to be below average on this measure and so the figure is presented in red.

Conversely for NI 17 (perceptions of anti-social behaviour), Wyre Forest District Council's score is 19.1%, which is 4.7 percentage points above the county average (and so also on the right of the chart). However, it is not desirable to be above the average on this measure and so the figure is still presented in red.

Non-statistically significant differences are presented in grey.

NIs: comparator scores

1

		NI Score		
NI1	% people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in local area	-4.6	72.4	
NI2	% of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood	-0.8	61.0	
NI3	Civic participation in local area	-2.0	12.3	
NI4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in locality	-2.3	25.1	
NI5	Overall/ general satisfaction with local area	-4.5	79.0	
NI6	Participation in regular volunteering	-2.0	23.5	
NI17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour		19.1	+4.7
NI21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour/crime issues by local council/police	-4.8	21.4	
NI22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for behaviour of their children in area	-9.9	22.5	
NI23	Perceptions that people in area do not treat one another with respect/ consideration		33.9	+7.2
NI27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour/crime issues by local council/police	-2.0	23.1	
NI37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in local area		20.1	+1.3
NI41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as problem		30.2	+6.7
NI42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as problem		31.5	+7.9
NI119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health/ wellbeing	-0.6	76.3	
NI138	Satisfaction with people over 65 with both home/ neighbourhood	0.0	85.7	
NI139	Extent to which older people receive support needed to live independently	-0.4	29.0	
NI140	Fair treatment by local services	-3.0	70.7	

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The NI score for the authority is listed in the orange circles. The deviation from the consortium mean is displayed as a + or - figure. I.e. if you have -2.5 score in the left hand bar, this means your score is 2.5 percentage points below the consortium average.



1. About the local area

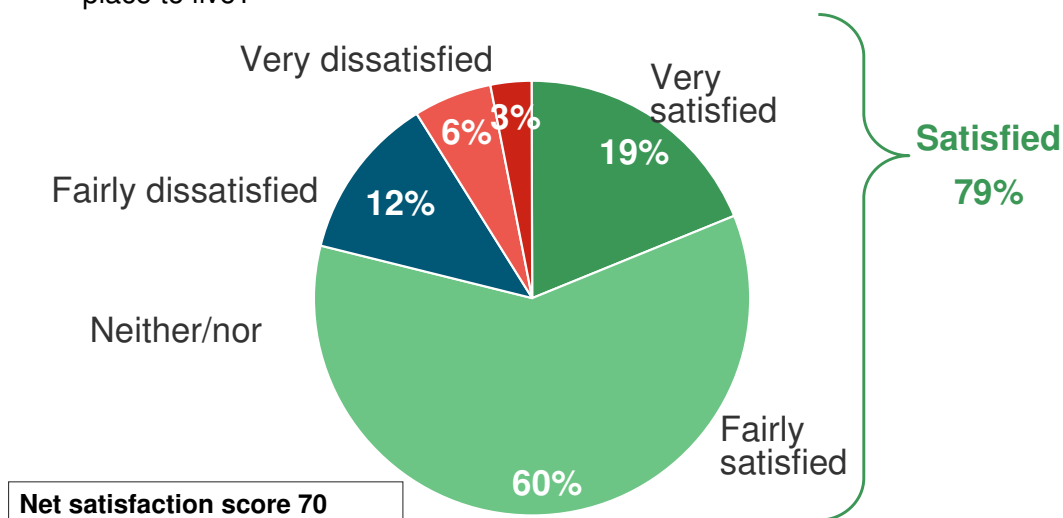
General satisfaction with local area

With the new 'place based' focus on public service delivery, resident satisfaction with the local area is one of the key national indicators the government is seeking to measure (NI 5). Residents were asked about their satisfaction with the local area – i.e. the area within a 15 to 20 minutes walk from their home.

As you can see from the chart below, nearly eight out of ten (79%) of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Of these, one in five (19%) are very satisfied. Encouragingly, this NI score (i.e. the proportion who are satisfied with their local area - 79%) has risen by six percentage points from 2006 when the score was 73%.

General satisfaction with local area (NI 5)

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

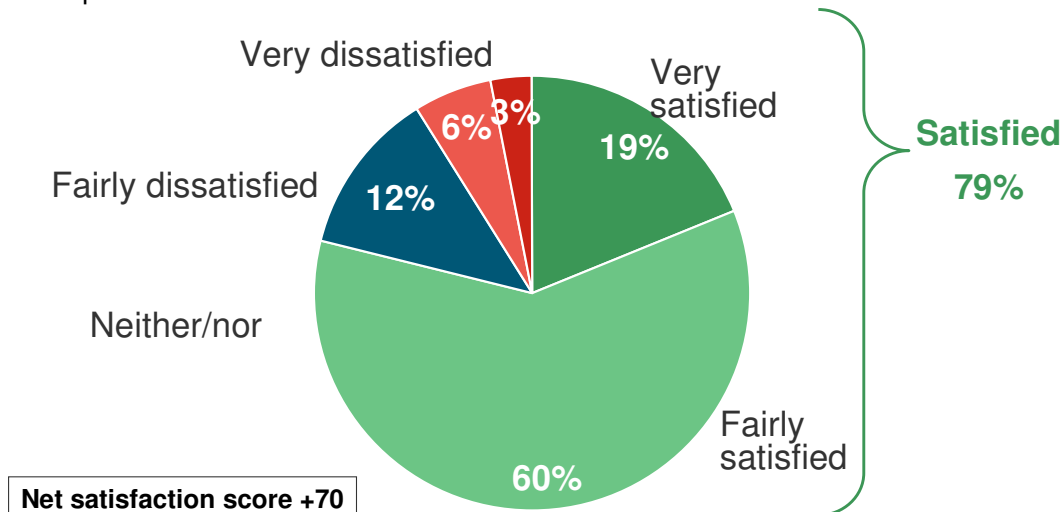


Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1651)



General satisfaction with local area (NI 5)

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



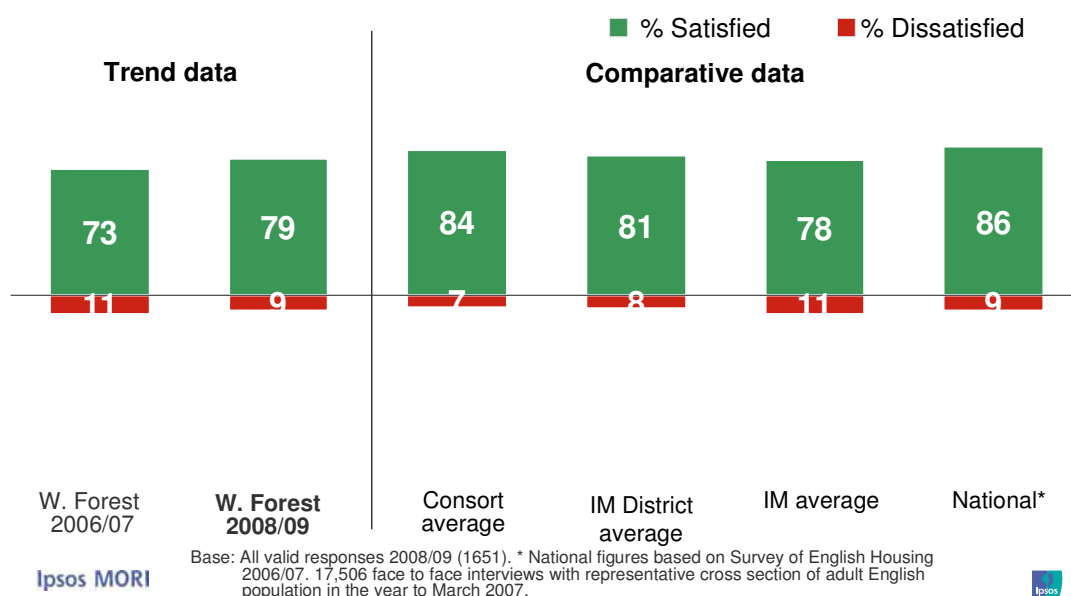
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1651)



The Wyre Forest NI score is pretty much in line with other consorts and districts. It sits slightly below the consortium average of 84% and the District average of 81%. However, it is seven percentage points below the National average (86%).

Satisfaction with local area (NI5): Contextual data

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



Nearly one in ten (9%) of residents are dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live. There is some variation in attitudes towards local area by demographic sub-group. Residents aged 55-64 (82%) and 65 and over (both 87%, compared to 77% of 25-34 year olds) and those who own their own property (82%, compared to 60% of social tenants) are more likely to be positive about their local area. Whilst social rent tenants are more likely to be dissatisfied (24%; average 9%). As previously mentioned, there is no mention of differences between ethnic groups as the number of BME respondents is too small to warrant any statistical differences.

People who feel informed (90%) are more likely to be satisfied with their local area, as well as those who are also satisfied with the Council (87%), who feel that local public services act on the concerns of residents (89%) and who feel safe outside after dark (89%).

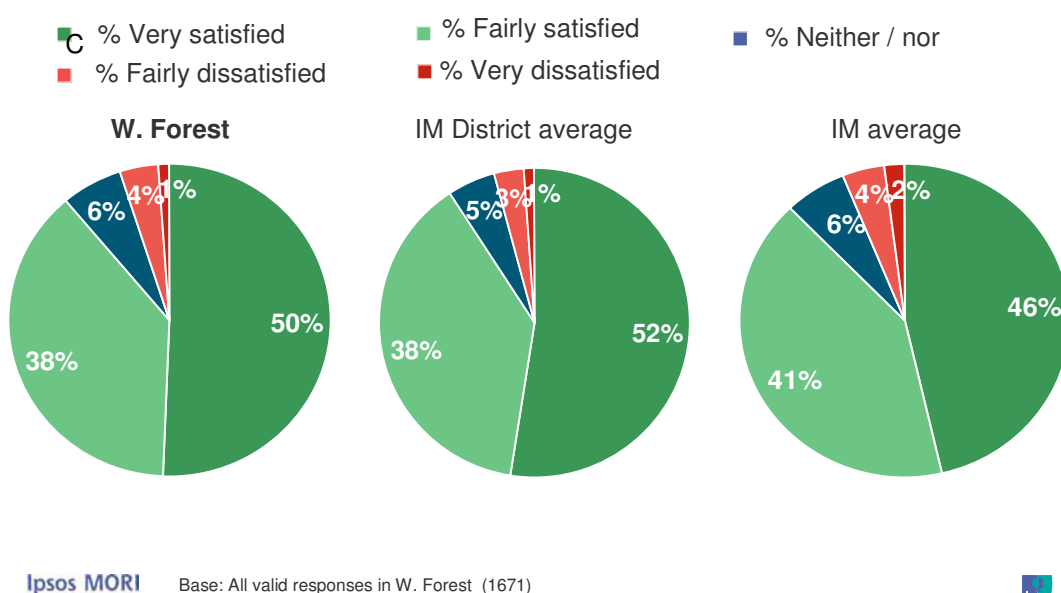
Satisfaction with home

Residents were also asked about satisfaction with their home as a place to live.

Encouragingly, nearly nine out of ten residents are satisfied with their home as a place to live (88%). On top of this, half consider themselves to be very satisfied. This is in line with the average for other districts (90%) and the overall Ipsos MORI average for all local authorities who commissioned us to conduct their place survey (87%).

Satisfaction with home as place to live

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your home as a place to live?

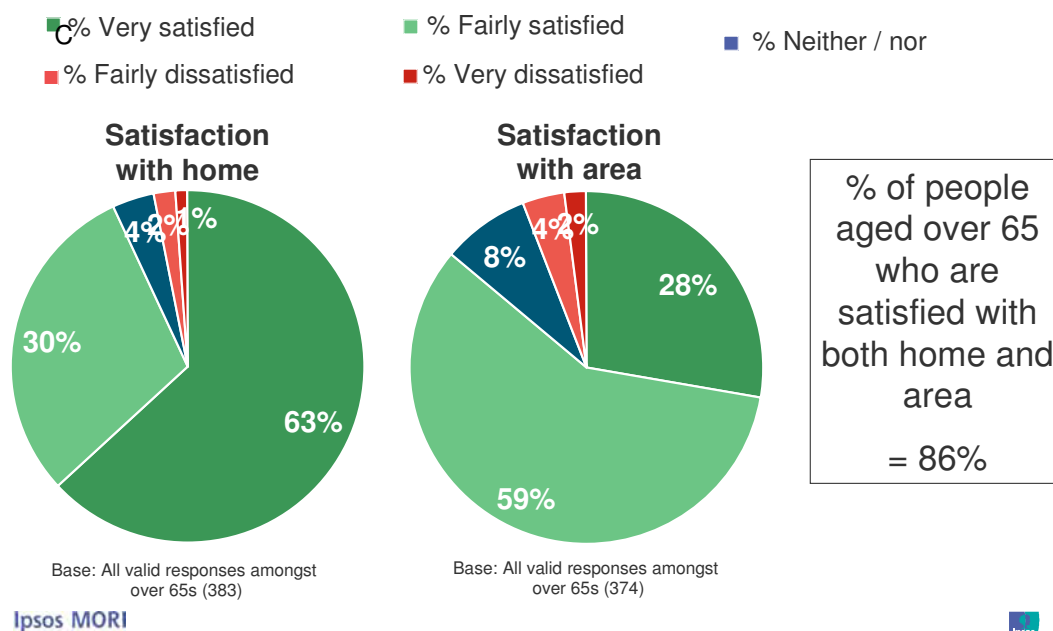


As with satisfaction with the local area, older residents (93% of over 65s) and those who own their own property (92%) are more satisfied with their home (compared to the average of 89%). This can be compared to only 80% of 18-34 year olds being satisfied. Again social tenants are more likely to be dissatisfied (26% compared to 3% of owner occupiers and 5% on average).

An important priority for government is to understand how older people (aged over 65) live, and the quality of their environment. NI 138 provides an overall assessment of this, by combining the satisfaction scores of residents aged over 65 with the local area and with their home. The following chart sets out how the over 65s in Wyre Forest District Council view these issues, and provides an overall NI score of 85.7%.

As mentioned earlier, Wyre Forest residents aged 65+ are more positive than their younger counterparts. Over nine in ten (93%) are satisfied with their home and 87% with their local area. As with residents as a whole, the proportion of who are very satisfied is particularly high for satisfaction with home; in the case of residents aged 65+, over six in ten give this top rating (63%).

Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood (NI 138)



Priorities for the local area

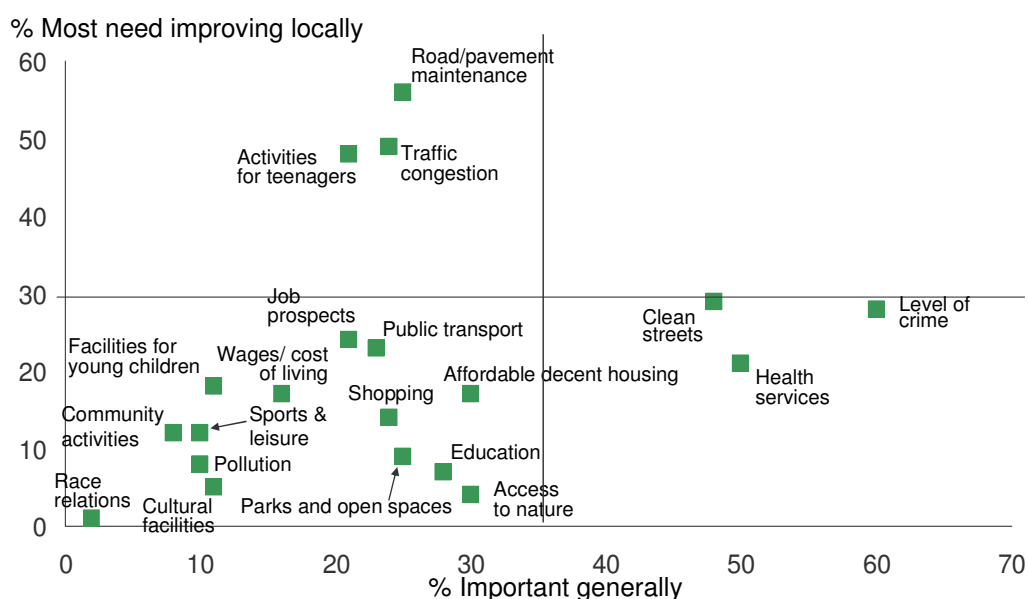
By looking at the following chart, we can compare what residents see as important to making somewhere a good place to live, and what they think needs improving most in their local area.

Factors in the top right-hand corner of the chart are those regarded by Wyre Forest residents as most important and most in need of improvement. As can be seen from this chart, the level of crime and clean streets emerge as residents top priorities in terms of both importance and scope for future improvement. This is in line with the results of the previous BVPI surveys.

Road and pavement maintenance, activities for teenagers, and traffic congestion are considered by Wyre Forest residents to be less important quality of life issues than crime and the cleanliness of streets, but are nevertheless considered by many to be in need of improvement. Again this broadly mirrors the picture in 2006/07.

Looking at results by age, older residents (aged 65+) place greater priority on public transport (26% compared to 23% overall of over 65s) and those aged 35-44 prioritise activities for teenagers (56% compared to 48% average) and education provision (14% compared to 7% overall).

Developing priorities for improving quality of life



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



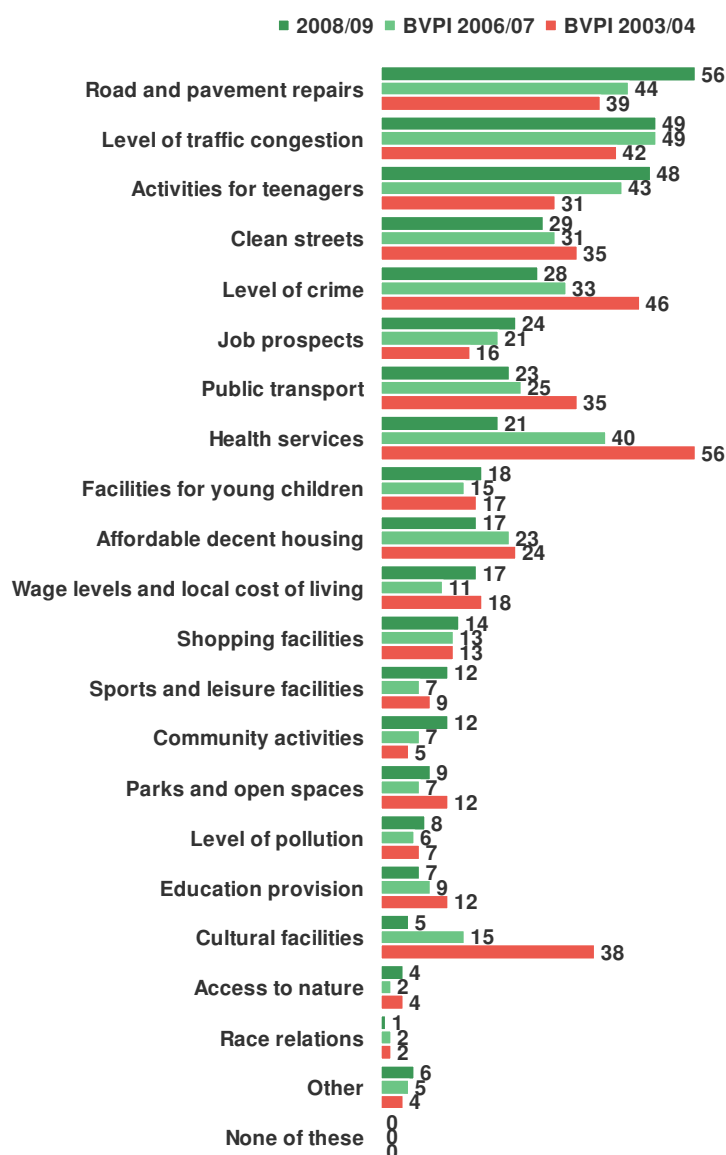
Looking at the following chart, we can see how priorities for improvement have changed since 2006/2007.

Residents see road and pavement repairs as a higher priority now than they did in 2006, with 56% now stating that these are one of the things that most need improving (compared to 44% in 2006). This suggests that there may have been a decline in the state of the road a pavements over time. Other things have remained pretty consistent. People still put the most emphasis on road and pavement repairs, level of traffic congestion and activities for teenagers.

However, less priority has been given to health services. In 2006 two in five (40%) prioritised this, compared to one in five (21%) now. Likewise, cultural facilities have declined in the number of people that describe them as something that most needs improving (15% in 2006 compared to 5% now). This could be due to the fact that these things have improved in the area or that other things have taken precedence over them.

Priorities for improvement and changes over time

Q Thinking about this local area, which of the things below, if any, do you think most need improving?



2. Community safety

The new Place Survey seeks to build on the perceptions data collected through previous BVPI surveys, and ask a range of new questions which focus on the degree to which the police and other local public services work together to seek people's views about crime and anti-social behaviour, and are successfully dealing with the issues by working together.

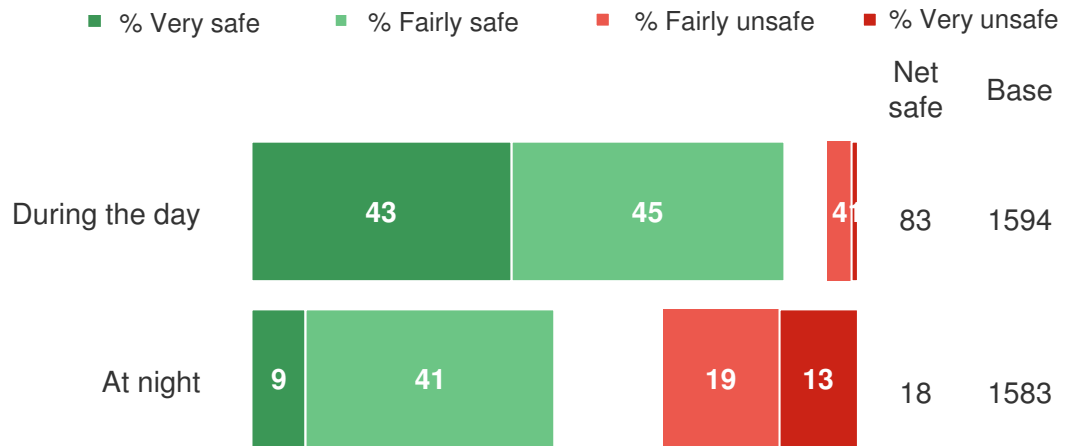
Safety in the local area

Approaching nine in ten residents (88%) feel safe when outside in their local area during the day. This is split evenly between those who feel very safe (43%) and those who feel fairly safe (45%). To be expected this figure drops when considering safety after dark. Only half of residents feel safe in their local area at night and only about one in ten (9%) feel very safe. About a third of residents express feeling unsafe after dark (32%).

As might be expected, women are more likely to feel unsafe after dark (38% compared to 27% of men), as are older residents, aged 65 and over (35%). Safety is strongly correlated with satisfaction with the area (57% of those who are satisfied feel safe after dark compared to 22% who are not satisfied). Also 65% of those who agree that local services are dealing with ASB and crime successfully feel safe compared to 35% who disagree with this.

Safety in the local area

Q How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area...

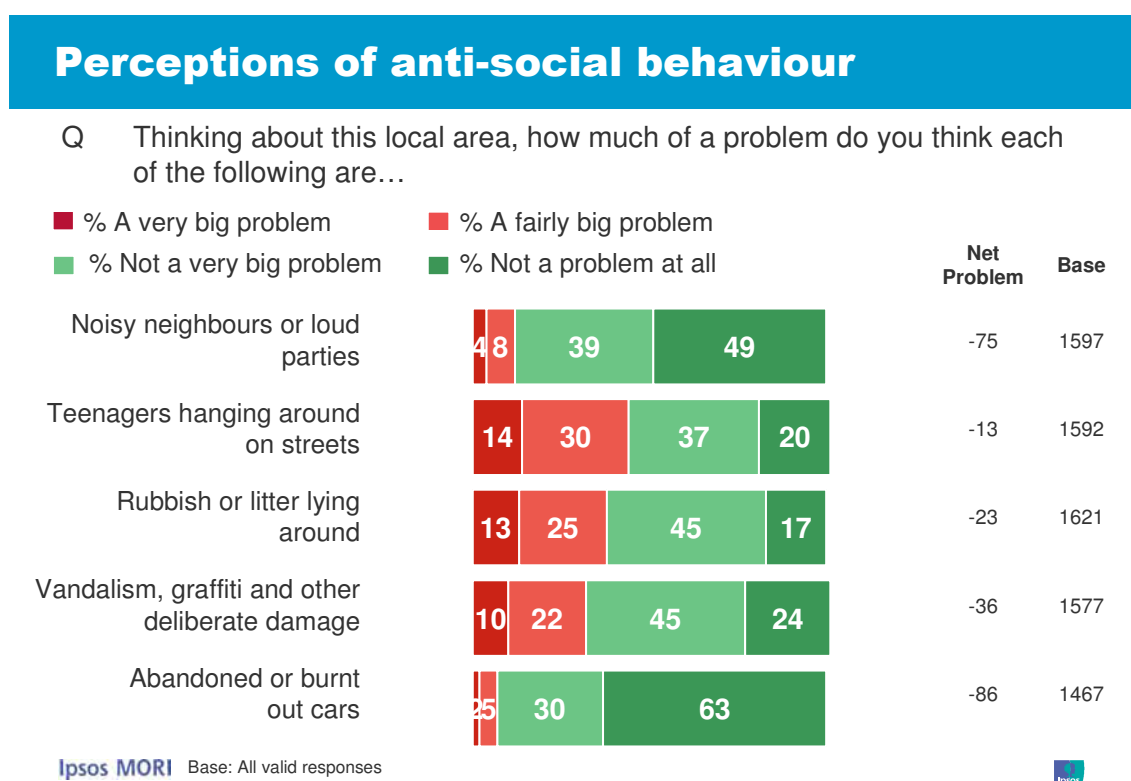


Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



Perceptions on anti-social behaviour

The next chart shows how much of a problem Wyre Forest residents think certain types of anti-social behaviour are in the area. Residents appear to place teenagers hanging around on the streets as the biggest problem (44% believe that this is a very or fairly big problem), followed by rubbish and litter lying around (38%) and vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles (32%). Noisy neighbours and abandoned and burnt out cars are given less precedence (12% and 6% respectively).



About a third (32%) of residents consider people using or dealing drugs to be a problem. Likewise, a very similar amount, (31%) think that people being drunk or rowdy in public places is.

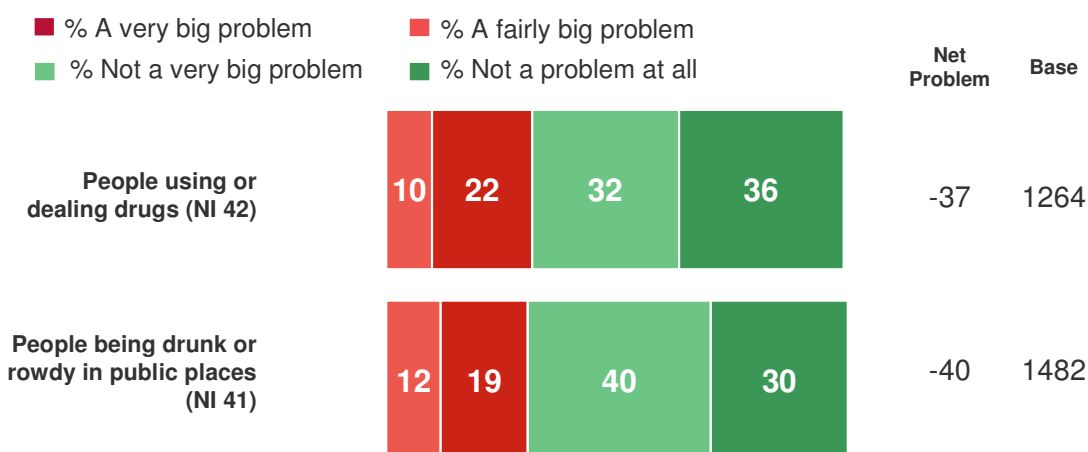
NI 17 is a combined measure of anti-social behaviour. It is calculated by allocating scores to the responses to the question about the seven anti-social behaviours, whereby: 0 = Not a problem at all, 1 = Not a very big problem, 2 = Fairly big problem, 3 = Very big problem. A total score for each respondent is calculated based on the responses to the seven questions. The maximum possible score is 21. High perception of anti-social behaviour is a score of **11 or above**. The indicator is the percentage of respondents whose score was 11 or above out of the total answering the

question. Just under one in five (19.1%) of Wyre Forest residents fall into this “high perception” category; which is higher than the consortium average of 14.4%

Further national indicators are based on the proportion of residents who think people being drunk or rowdy in public places (NI 41) or using or dealing drugs (NI 42) is a very or fairly big problem in their area. As can be seen from the next chart, fewer than half of Wyre Forest residents consider either of these issues to be a problem locally. Wyre Forest’s NI 41 and NI 42 scores reflect this at 30.2% and 31.5% respectively.

Perceptions of anti-social behaviour: NI 17, 41 and 42

Q Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are...



Overall percentage with high level of perceived anti-social behaviour (NI 17) = 19%

Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses

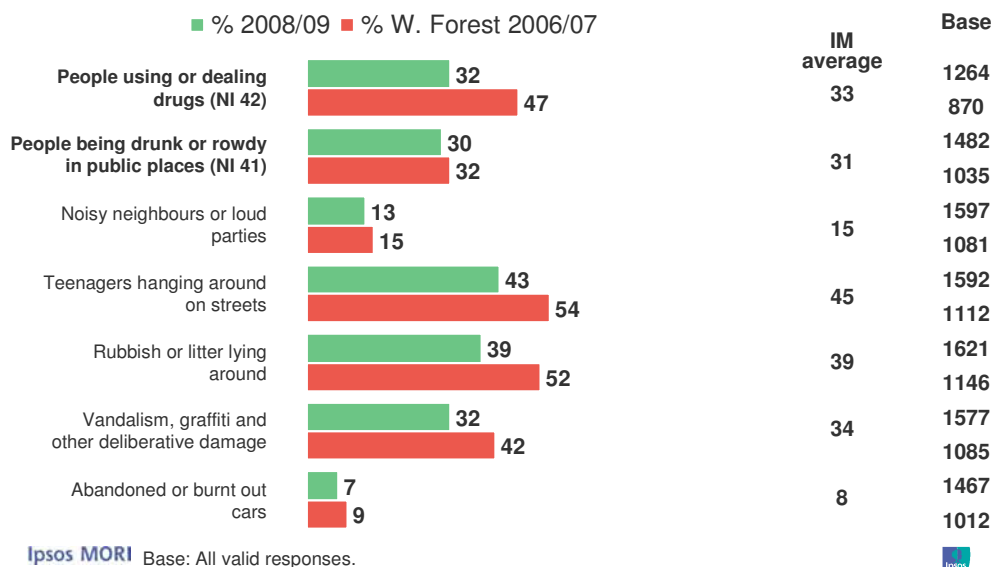


Positively, the proportion who cite all seven forms of anti-social behaviour as a problem in their area has fallen since 2006/07. For example, the number of people who think that people using or dealing drugs is a problem has fallen from 47% in 2006/07 to 32% in the present survey. It is now in line with the Ipsos MORI average of 33%. The number of people who see people being drunk or rowdy in public places has, however, stayed steady at 30% (32% in 2006; IM average 31%).

Other measures that appear to have become less problematic are teenagers hanging around the streets (43%; 54% in 2006), rubbish or litter lying around (39%; 52% in 2006) and vandalism graffiti and other deliberative damage (32%; 42% in 2006). These are now all in line with the IM average scores, whereas in 2006 they lay well above them.

Perceptions of anti-social behaviour: Comparative data

% who think the following are a very/ fairly big problem



The following two charts show how Wyre Forest residents' perceptions of drug and alcohol-related anti-social behaviour has changed over the last five years and how it compares to elsewhere in London.

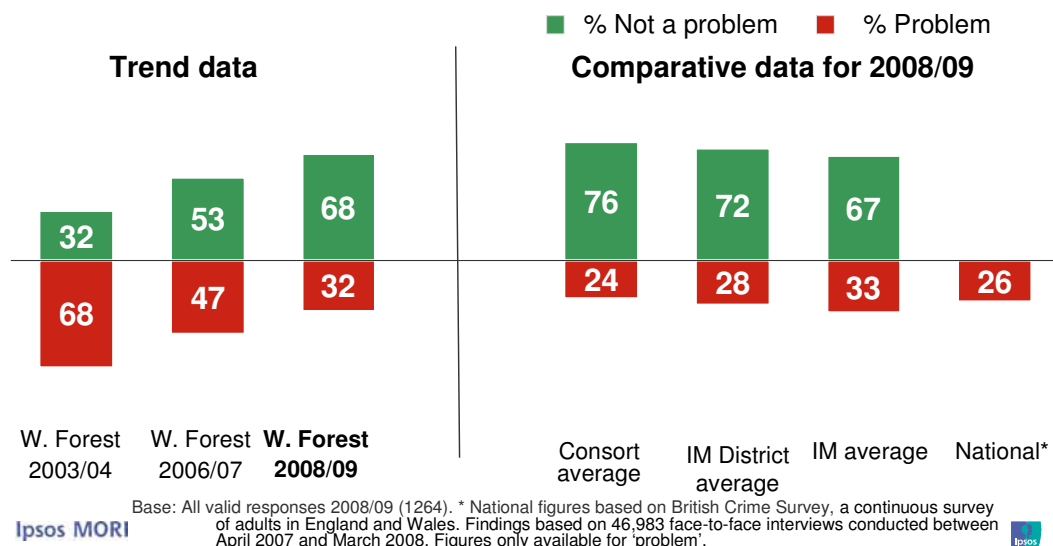
The situation on drugs and alcohol in Wyre Forest appears to have improved over time. In 2003 only a third (32%) of residents believed that people using or dealing drugs was not a problem and over two thirds (68%) thought that it was. This has steadily improved over time and now the exact opposite is apparent with 68% believing that it is not a problem and 32% feeling that it is. However, it can be seen that the proportion who do not feel drugs are a problem is still not quite in line with the consortium average of 76% or the Ipsos MORI District average of 72%. It is line with the Ipsos MORI overall average of 67%.

There is a very similar pattern involved when looking at the trend data for people being drunk or rowdy in public places. The numbers who considered this not to be a problem rose a great deal from 2003 (43%) to 2006 (68%) and now remains at the high level of 70%. This is not quite as high as the consortium average or District averages (76% and 73% respectively) but is one percentage point higher than the Ipsos MORI average of 69%.

People using or dealing drugs (NI 42): Contextual data

Q Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are...

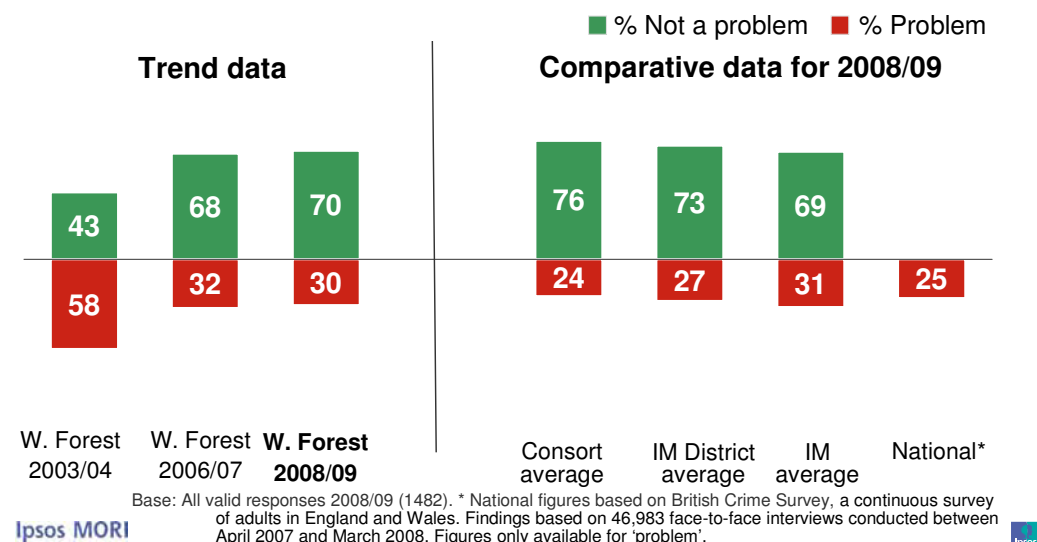
People using or dealing drugs



People being drunk or rowdy in public places (NI 41): Contextual data

Q Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are...

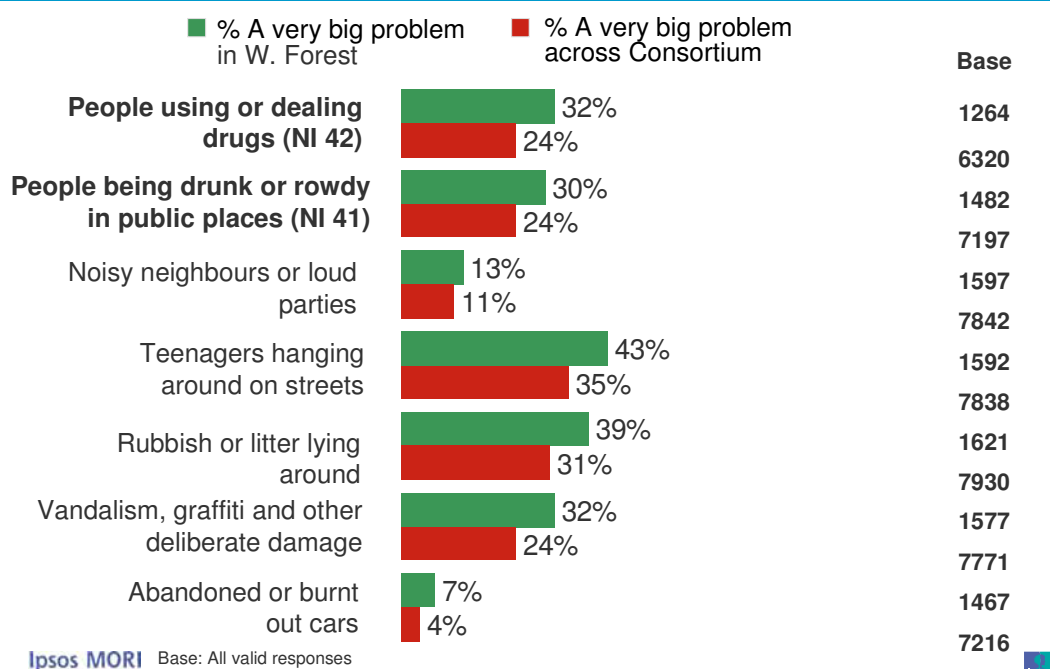
People being drunk or rowdy in public places



The number of people in Wyre Forest who consider certain aspects of community safety to be a 'very big problem' is generally a little higher than the percentage across the consortium. About a third (32%) consider people using or dealing drugs to be a very big problem, compared to a quarter (24%) across the consortium. Similarly, 43%

believe that teenagers hanging around the streets is a very big problem, compared to just under a third (35%) across the consortium.

A comparison between anti-social behaviour in Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council



Perceptions of ASB – demographic analysis

Those who live in social rented housing and those with a disability are particularly likely to identify certain types of anti-social behaviour as a problem in their local area. Particularly:

- People in social rented housing are more likely than average to consider noisy neighbours or loud parties to be a problem (24%; compared to the 13% average and 10% of owner occupiers). They also are more worried about people using or dealing drugs (46% regard this as a problem; 32% average), as well as people being drunk and rowdy in public places (48%; average 30%).
- Older residents (aged 65 and over) are more likely not to think that noisy neighbours and loud parties are not a problem (93% compared to 82% of 25-34 year olds), whereas 25-34 year olds are more likely to regards teenagers hanging around the streets as a problem (60%, compared to the average of 43%). Residents aged 45-54 are the most likely to regards people using or dealing drugs as a problem (39% compared to 28% of 35-44 year olds) as well as people being drunk or rowdy in public places (also 39%; average 30%).

Crime and the local community

In order to test how well local policing teams, and other local public sector agencies, are dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in the eyes of local people, and how well they are engaging with the public about these matters, two new questions have been included in the Place Survey to help inform two national indicators (NI21 and 27).

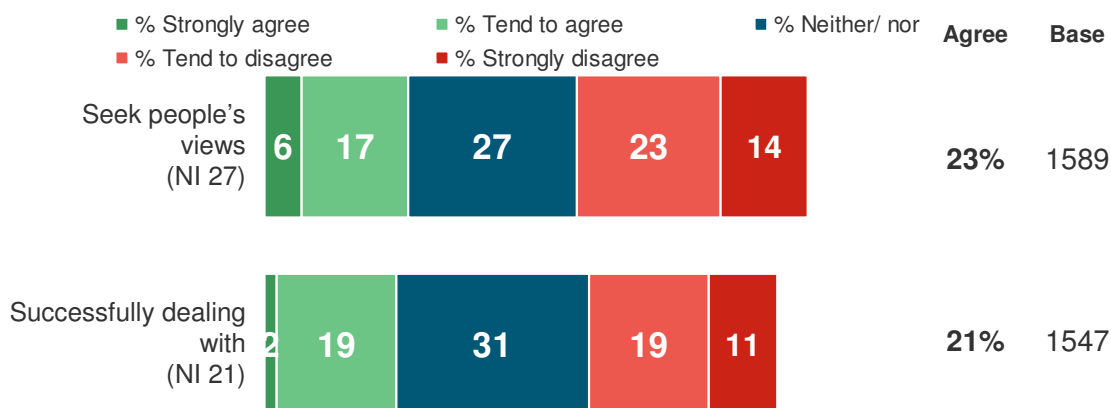
The chart overleaf summarises Wyre Forest's results for NI 27 and NI 21. In both cases, only a minority of residents are positive. Wyre Forest's NI 27 score is 23.1% - this represents the proportion of respondents who agree that the police and local public services seek people's views about the issues of anti-social behaviour and crime in the local area. Residents are more likely to disagree with this statement (37%).

Wyre Forest's NI 21 score is very marginally lower at 21.4% - this is the proportion of respondents who agree that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with these issues. Again residents are more likely to disagree with this statement (30%).

In both cases, a high proportion of respondents stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements or stated that they didn't know (a combined total of 41% for NI 27 and 49% for NI 21). This suggests that there is low awareness about what actually is being done by these agencies. Additional information about the activities of the police and other public services in addressing these issues may be needed.

Understanding and dealing with local concerns about crime and ASB (NI 27 and 21)

- Q How much would you agree or disagree that the police and other local public services seek people's views about these issues in your local area?
- Q And how much do you agree or disagree that the police and other public services are successfully dealing with these issues in your local area?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses. Note: 'don't knows' are included in the base calculations.



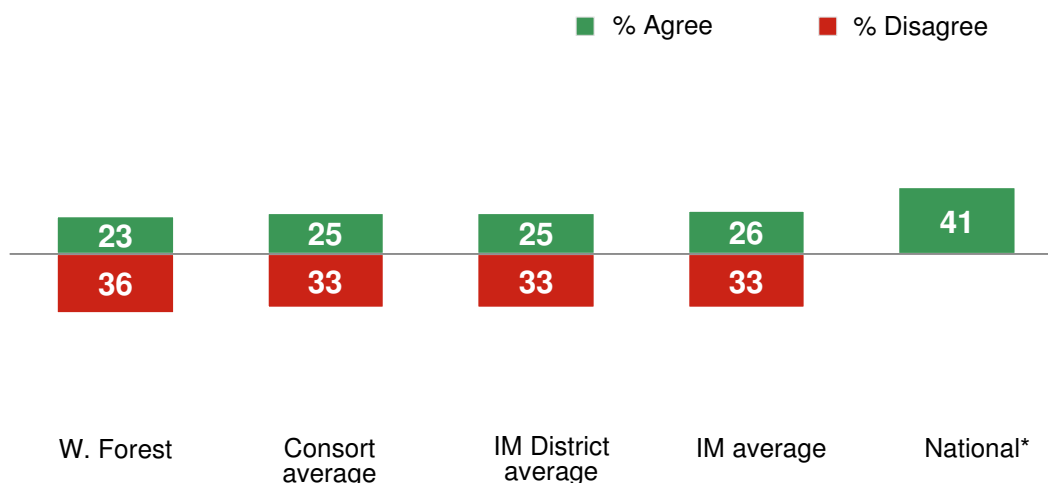
Older residents, aged 55-64 (27%) and 65 and over (26%) are more likely to agree that the police and local public services seek people's views about these issues (compared to only 14% of 25-34 year olds. Residents who are able to influence decisions which affect their local area are significantly more likely to agree with this (36%), as well as those who feel informed about local public services (35%).

Women (24%) and residents aged 65 and over (27%) are more likely than average for the sample to agree that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with these issues. As are those who feel safe outside after dark (28%) and people who think that people from different backgrounds get on well together (29%).

The chart below compares Wyre Forest's NI 27 score with the consortium and Ipsos MORI averages. As can be seen, Wyre Forest falls very slightly below these averages (23% compared to the consortium and District average of 25% and Ipsos MORI average of 26%) and it is 18 percentage points below the national average of 41%, however, differences in methodology should be noted here. The proportion of residents who disagree is also slightly higher than the averages (36% compared to 33% in all cases).

Understanding local concerns about crime and ASB (NI 27): Contextual data

Q How much would you agree or disagree that the police and other local public services seek people's views about these issues in your local area?



Ipsos MORI

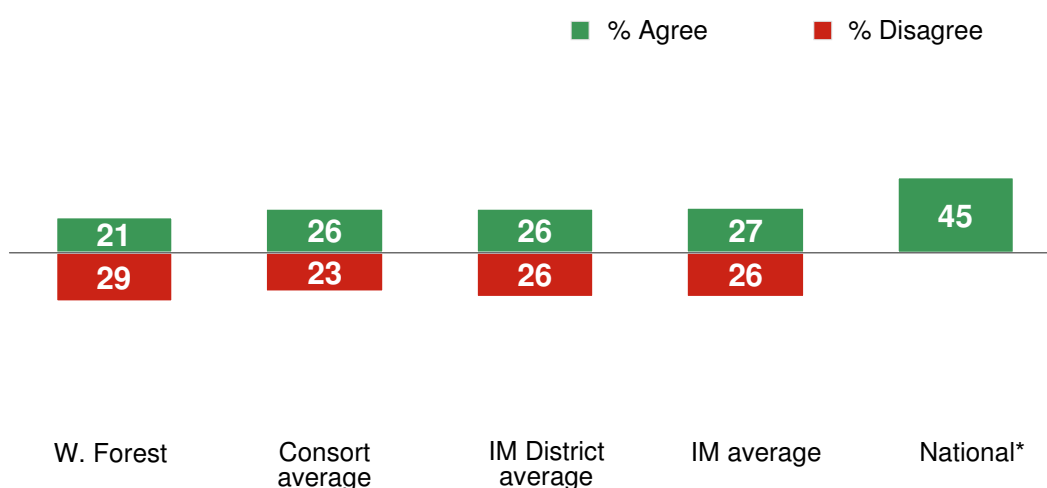
Base: All valid responses (1589). * National figures based on British Crime Survey, a continuous survey of adults in England and Wales. Findings based on 46,983 face-to-face interviews conducted between April 2007 and March 2008. Please note: this question was introduced mid-way through the 2007/08 wave.



Wyre Forest's NI 21 (agreement that police and local services have been successful in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour – 21%) is below the consortium average, District average and Ipsos MORI overall average (26%, 26% and 27% respectively) and it falls well below the national average of 45%.

Dealing with local concerns about crime and ASB (NI 21): Contextual data

Q And how much do you agree or disagree that the police and other public services are successfully dealing with these issues in your local area?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All valid responses (1547). * National figures based on British Crime Survey, a continuous survey of adults in England and Wales. Findings based on 46,983 face-to-face interviews conducted between April 2007 and March 2008. Please note: this question was introduced mid-way through the 2007/08 wave. Ipsos

3. Community cohesion

The Place Survey has been designed to include a range of questions which measure the degree of community cohesion, belonging, respect and consideration for others.

People from different backgrounds getting along

A recognised way of measuring community cohesion is by asking about the degree to which people agree that their local area is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together (NI 1).

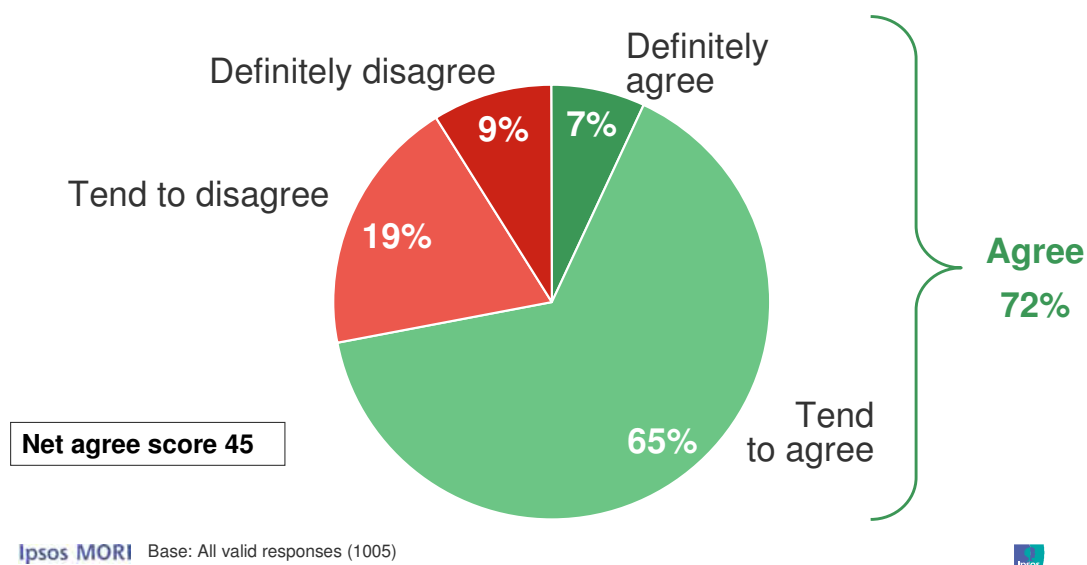
The Citizenship Survey, for one, has been tracking this issue at the national level, or some time (although this uses a face-to-face methodology) on behalf of the Home Office and CLG, and the question has also been asked on a previous wave of the BVPI survey.

Just over seven in ten (72%) of Wyre Forest residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. However, this means that nearly three in ten (28%) disagree. This gives Wyre Forest an NI 1 score of 72.4%.

Women (75%) and residents aged 65+ (85%) are more likely to agree that that Wyre Forest has a high level of community cohesion (compared to 67% of 25-34 year olds), as do owner occupiers (76%; average 72%). In addition, those who are satisfied with the Council generally (82%) and think that they are treated with respect by local services (83%) are more likely to agree, as well as those who feel safe after dark (83%) and think that local services are dealing with ASB and crime successfully (85%).

Whether people from different backgrounds get on well together (NI 1)

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

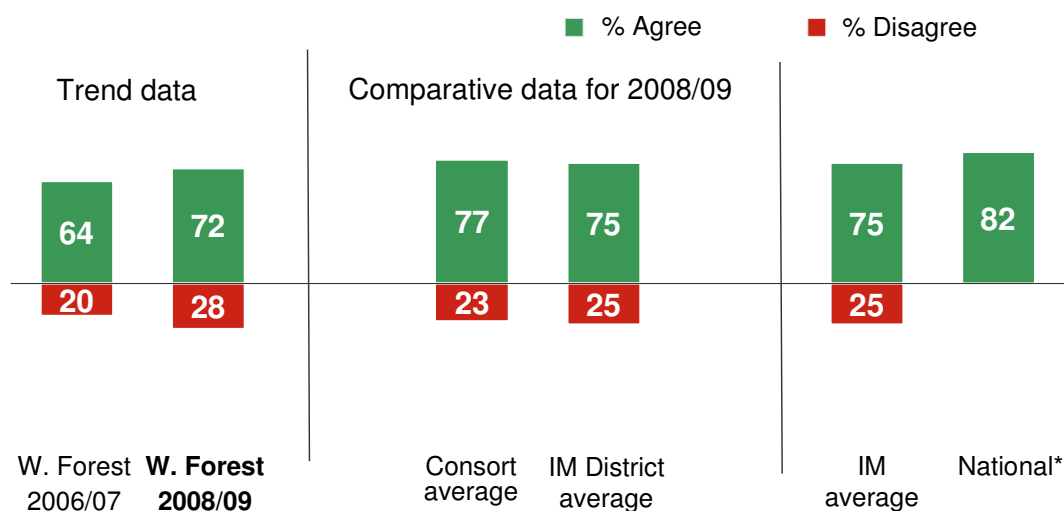


As we can see from the chart overleaf, the proportion of residents who think that Wyre Forest is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together has increased since the last BVPI survey (from 64% in 2006/07 to 72% this year). However, this still falls slightly below the Ipsos MORI District and Ipsos MORI overall averages of 75% and is five percentage points below the consortium average of 77%.

Nationally speaking, the Citizenship Survey shows that there has been a small increase in the proportion of people who perceived their community as cohesive, from 80% in 2005 to 82% in 2007/08. Wyre Forest's results mirror this increase overtime, but remain considerably below the national average.

Different backgrounds getting on well (NI 1): Comparative data

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



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1005). *National figures based on Citizenship Survey 2007/08, face to face survey of 8,804 adults in England, April 07 – March 08



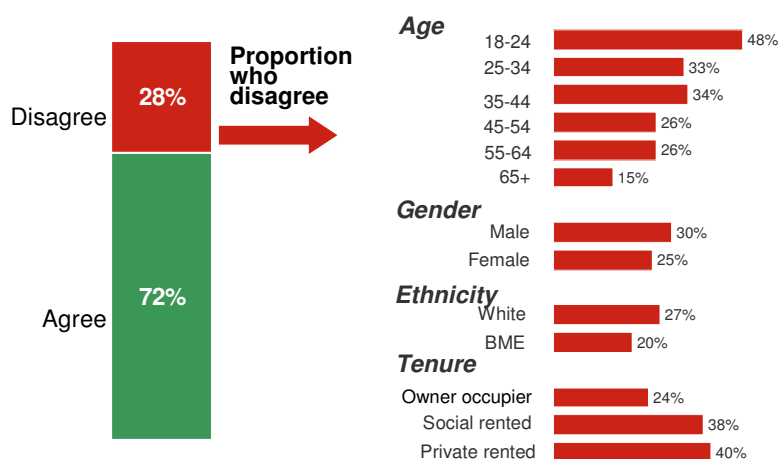
Perceptions of community cohesion – demographic analysis

The following demographic sub-groups are more likely than average to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together:

- Female residents (75% vs. 72% overall)
- Residents aged 65 and over (85%)
- Owner-occupiers (76%)

Whether people from different backgrounds get on well together (NI 1): Subgroup Analysis

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



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (237)



The latest national picture¹⁰ shows us that there was no difference between men and women in their perceptions of cohesion in 2007/08 and no change in men or women's perceptions since 2003.

But, older people are more likely than younger people to think that their local area is cohesive. Cohesion is highest among those aged 75 or over (91%) and lowest among those aged 16-24 years (76%).

Overall, people from a minority ethnic background are more likely than White people to feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (83% compared with 81%).

¹⁰ Citizenship Survey 2007/08

Belonging to neighbourhood

As a way of measuring cohesiveness in the local area (NI 2), the Place Survey also asked residents about the degree to which they feel they belong to their neighbourhood (NI2).

Three in five residents (61%) say that they feel a very or fairly strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood, while 39% disagree with this. This gives Wyre Forest an NI 2 score of 61%. This is right in line with the consortium average of 62% and Ipsos MORI average of 58%.

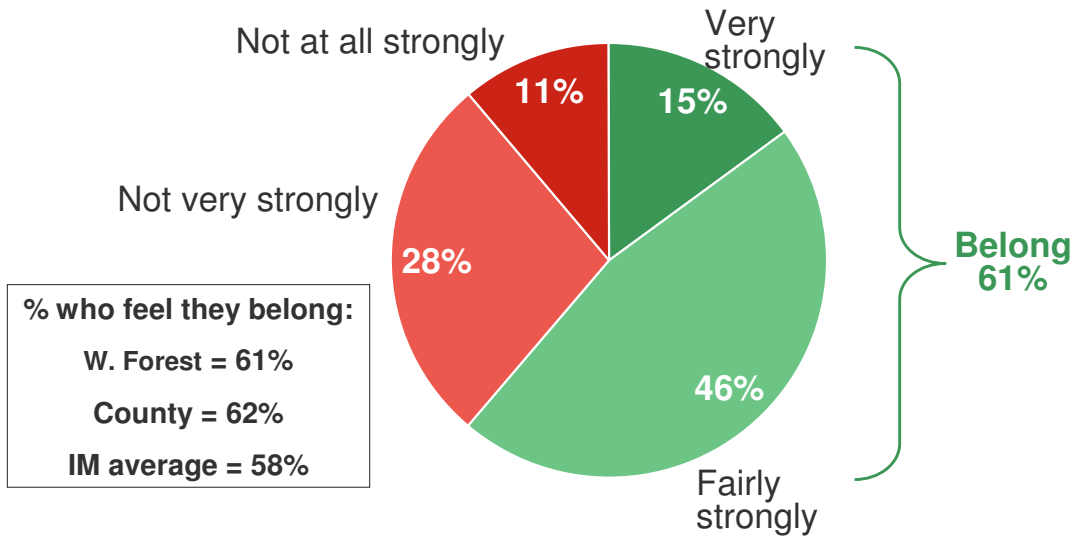
This is another question asked in the national Citizenship Survey. According to the survey's latest figures, there has been an increase nationally in the proportion of people who feel they belong to their local area, from 70% in 2003 to 75% in 2007/08. Wyre Forest falls some way behind this figure. However, as stated above this is very much in line with the consortium average of 62%.

Older residents feel a stronger sense of belonging. Nearly three quarters (74%) of over 65s feel they strongly belong to their neighbourhood, as do 66% of 55-64 year olds (compared to 50% of 35-44 year olds for example). Also, as perhaps would be expected, those who own their own property are more likely to feel this sense of belonging (62% compared to the average of 61%).

People who belong to a group making decisions about the local area are more likely than average (76% compared to 61%) to feel they belong to their immediate neighbourhood. As do those who feel informed about local public services (72%) and are able to influence decisions which affect the local area (76%).

Belonging to neighbourhood (NI 2)

Q How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1558).



Respect and consideration

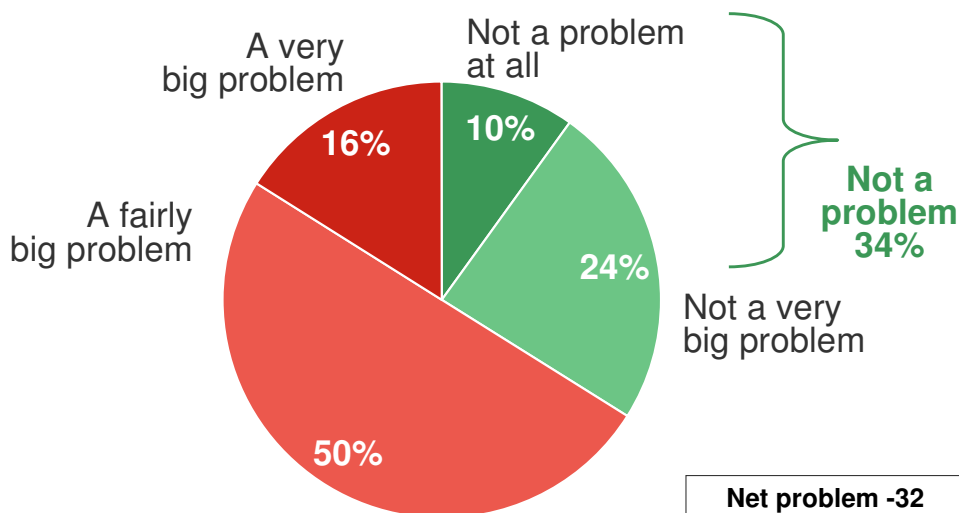
As part of the importance placed on community cohesion, local authorities and their partners are encouraged to take action to promote strong communities with shared values where local people treat one another with respect and consideration. Accordingly, residents were asked about how much of a problem they think there is with people not treating each other with respect and consideration (NI 23).

Two thirds (66%) of residents *do not think there is a problem* in their local area with people not treating each other with respect and consideration. However, about a third (34%) do view this as a problem, which translates to a NI 23 score of 33.9% for Wyre Forest.

Those who are negative about community cohesion and who feel unsafe outside after dark are more likely than average to perceive a lack of respect in their local area (72% and 75% respectively).

People being treated with respect and consideration (NI 23)

Q In your local area, how much of a problem do you think there is with people not treating each other with respect and consideration?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1517)

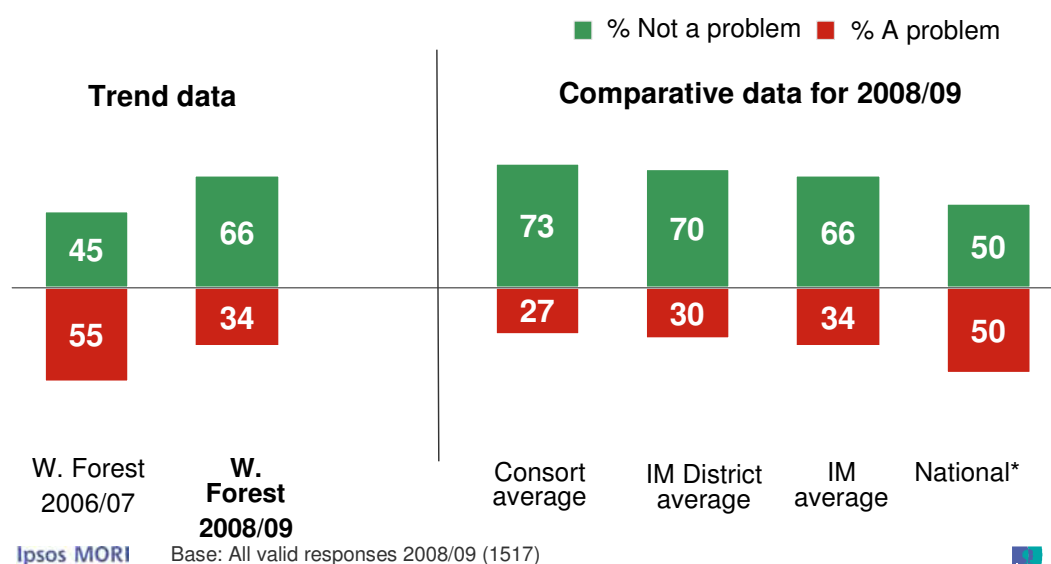


There has been significant improvement for Wyre Forest on this measure. In 2006/07 over half (55%) of residents thought that not treating each other with respect and consideration was a problem. This has changed to only a third (34%). This is a decline of twenty one percentage points which is very encouraging for Wyre Forest.

Moreover, Wyre Forest is now exactly in line with the Ipsos MORI average (66% positive and 34% negative) and significantly more positive than the National average (both positive and negative 50%). Although, it still lies slightly behind both the consortium average (73% do not think it is a problem) and the Ipsos MORI District average (70% do not think it is a problem).

People being treated with respect and consideration (NI 23): Comparative data

Q In your local area, how much of a problem do you think there is with people not treating each other with respect and consideration?



Parents taking responsibility

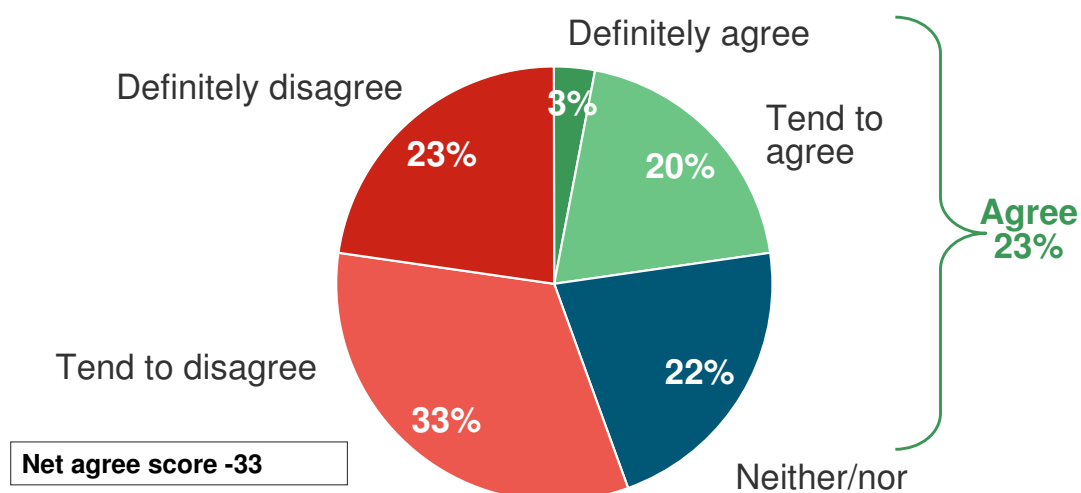
Local authorities and their partners are being encouraged to use a range of tools to encourage and support effective parenting and to take action to ensure that parents are held responsible where their children behave in an unacceptable manner (NI 22). As such, the Place Survey asked residents about the degree to which they agree or disagree that parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the local area.

Significantly more residents *disagree* than agree that parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children in their local area. Nearly a quarter (23%) agree, at least to some extent, giving Wyre Forest an NI 22 score of 22.5%, while 56% disagree that parents do this.

Men are significantly more likely than women to say that parents do not take enough responsibility (60% compared to 52% of women) and women are significantly more likely to agree that they do (26% compared to 19% of men).

Parents taking responsibility (NI 22)

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that in your local area, parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children?



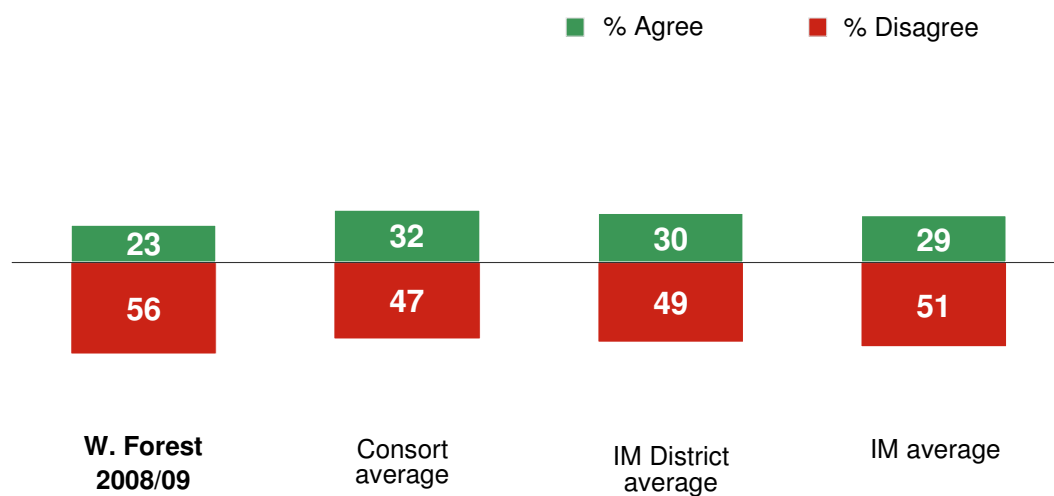
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1534)



The next chart compares Forest Wyre's performance on this indicator with Ipsos MORI comparative data. Wyre Forest residents are less likely to agree and more likely to disagree that parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children than across the consortium (32% agree and 47% disagree) and other Districts for whom Ipsos MORI have conducted surveys (30% agree and 49% disagree).

Parents taking responsibility (NI 22): Comparative data

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that in your local area, parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1534)



4. Helping out and getting involved

Helping out in the local community through activities like volunteering, is one sign of a strong, active community. As such, civic participation and participation in regular volunteering form two of the new national indicators (NI 3 and 6), and are both measured through the Place Survey.

Civic participation

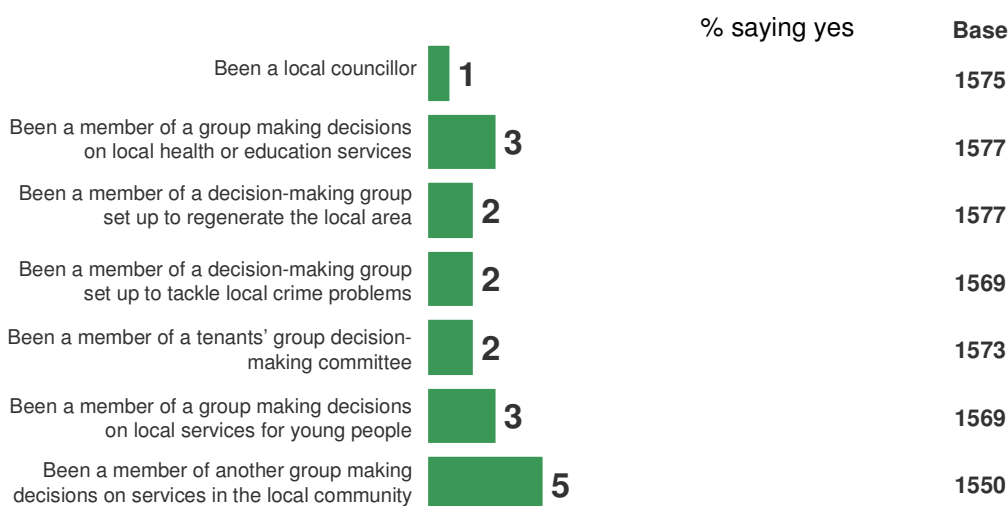
Local authorities want to better engage the more disadvantaged groups (such as women and those from ethnic or religious minority groups) in civic participation, as a means of encouraging a more empowered and inclusive society.

Civic participation levels are low in Wyre Forest. As can be seen from the chart below, less than five percent of residents have taken part in any one of the civic participation activities listed. Taken together, this gives an NI 3 score of 12.3%.

The most common form of participation is being a member of another group making decisions on services in the local community (5%) and the least is being a local councillor (just 1%).

Those who have participated in local area (NI 3)

Q In the past 12 months have you...



Overall civic participation* 12

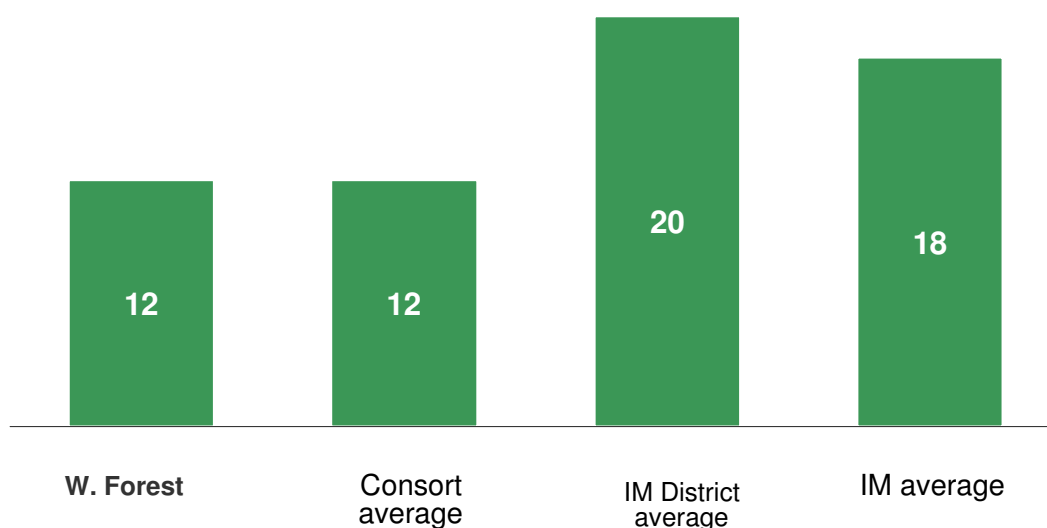
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses. *Civic participation (NI3) is % of respondents who take part in at least one of any of the activities in last 12 months



As can be see from the chart below, civic participation in Wyre Forest (12%) is lower than the Ipsos MORI district average, as well as the Ipsos MORI overall average, but it is in line with the average across the consortium (20%, 18% and 12% respectively).

Civic participation (NI 3): Comparative data

% of residents who have taken part in at least one of any of the activities that affect the local area in last 12 months



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1534).



Participation in regular volunteering

Volunteering is seen by government to have a key part to play in terms of promoting sustainable communities. There are clear links between increasing volunteering and a range of policies aimed at encouraging engagement of citizens in public services and policy, for example, as outlined in *Together We Can*¹¹.

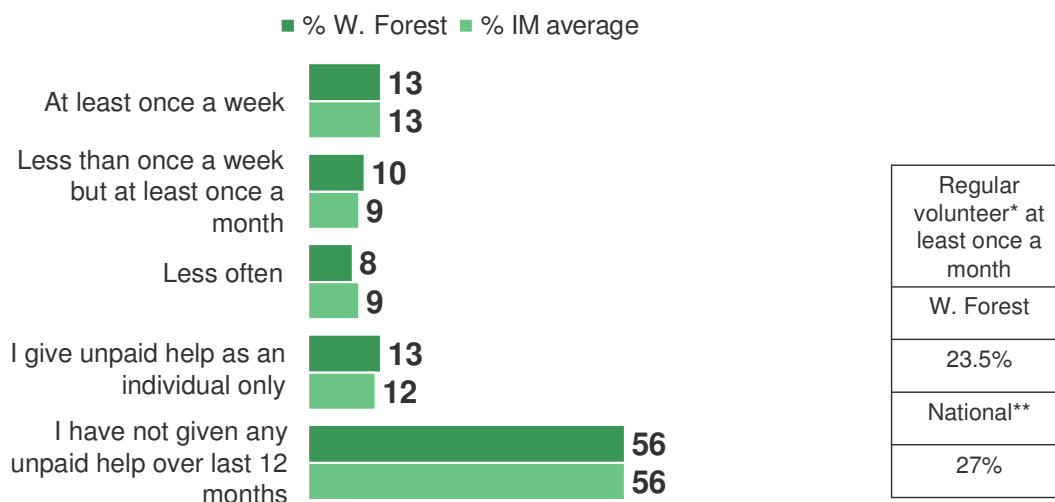
Regular volunteering is defined as taking part in formal volunteering at least once a month in the 12 months before the survey. It involves giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations which support social, environmental, cultural or sporting objectives.

¹¹ *Together We Can* is the government campaign to bring government and people closer together, encouraging public bodies to do more to enable people to influence local decisions. It is led by CLG and is closely linked to the Local Government White Paper's aim of giving local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives.

Nearly a quarter of residents say they have given unpaid help to a group, club or organisation at least once a month over the last 12 months (23%). This is slightly below the national average of 27%, taken from the Citizenship Survey and it gives Wyre forest an NI 6 score of 23.5%.

Participation in regular volunteering (NI 6)

Q Overall, about how often over the last 12 months have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All valid responses (1527). *Regular volunteering is volunteering for group, club or organisation within last month. ** National figures based on Citizenship Survey 2007/08, face to face survey of 8,804 adults in England, April 07 – March 08

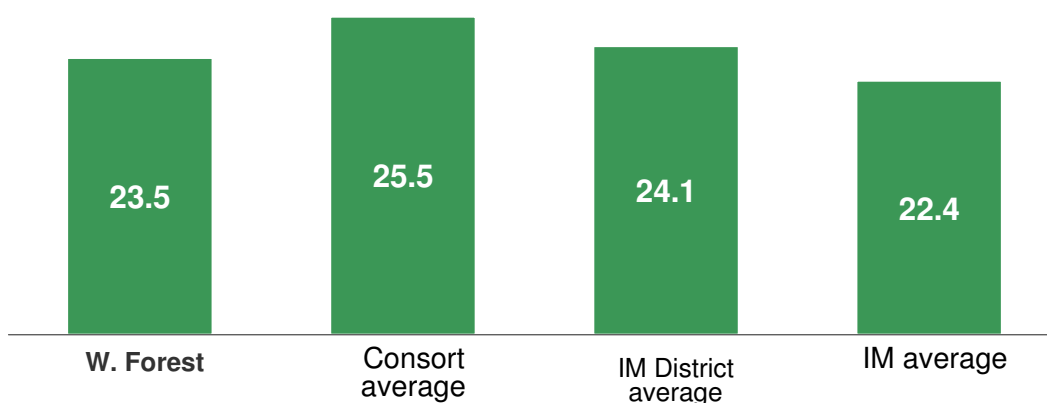


As can be seen from the following chart, the amount of volunteering in Wyre Forest is very similar across the consortium and districts (averages of 25.5% and 24.1% respectively) and is in line with the Ipsos MORI average (22.4%)

Regular volunteering: Comparative data

Q Overall, about how often over the last 12 months have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)?

% Volunteered for groups, club or organisation within last month.



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1527).

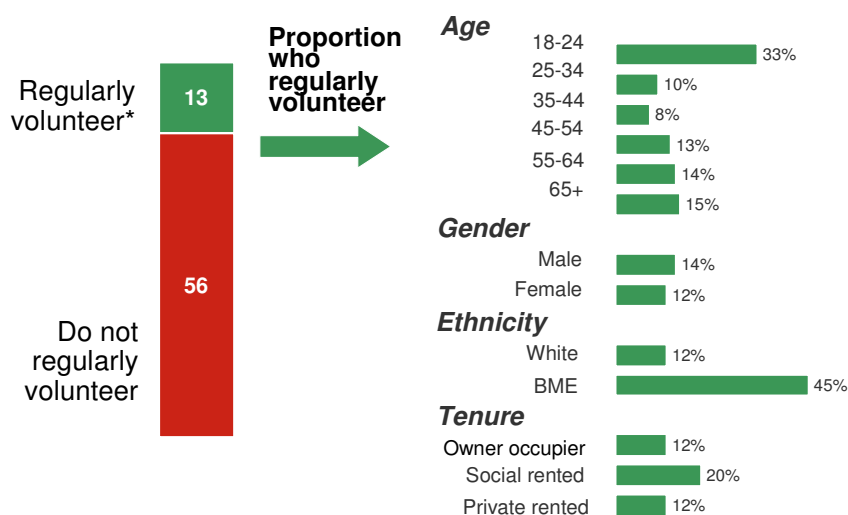


Civic participation and volunteering – demographic analysis

The level of reported volunteering is generally consistent across demographic subgroups and the low base size means that no differences across demographic subgroups are statistically significant. Those people who think that people from different backgrounds get on well together are more likely than average to volunteer once a week.

Regular volunteering: Subgroup analysis

- Q Overall, about how often over the last 12 months have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (190). *Regular volunteering is volunteering for group, club or organisation within last month



5. Local decision-making

The Place Survey measures how well local authorities and their partners engage with local residents in the community, and the degree to which local residents believe they are able to influence decisions (NI 4).

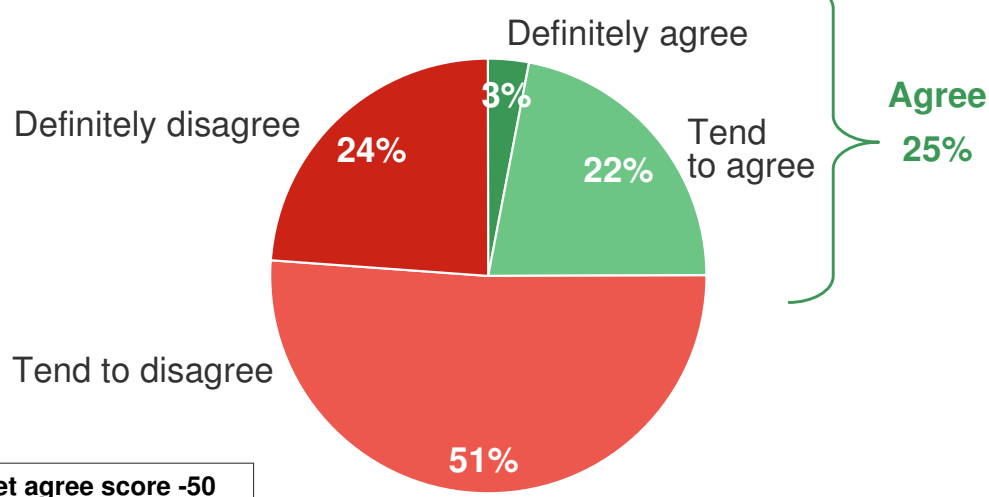
A quarter of Wyre Forest residents agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (25%). This means that three quarters disagree with this (75%) and gives Wyre Forest an NI4 score of 25.1%. Residents aged 18-34 (80%) are more likely than residents aged 65 and over (68%) to feel they have influence.

A perceived lack of influence usually corresponds with negative views of the community and of local services. The following groups of residents are among the most likely to disagree that they have influence over local decision-making:

- Residents who are dissatisfied with the Council (91% vs. 75% average); and
- Residents who are rarely or never treated with respect by local public services (90%).

Influencing decisions (NI 4)

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



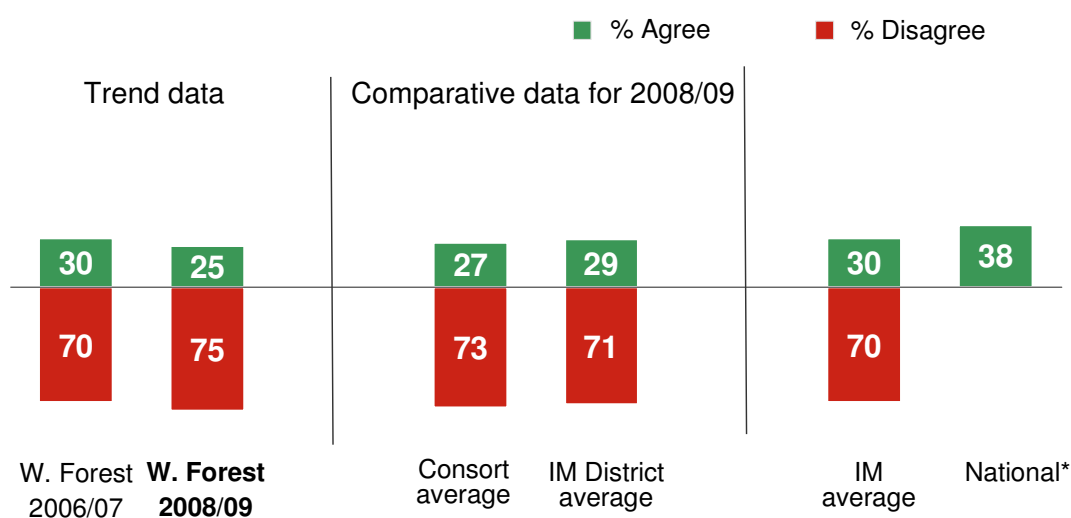
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1409)



Agreement that residents of Wyre Forest can influence decisions affecting their local area has fallen slightly since the 2006/07 survey (from 30% to 25% in this present survey). It is also now very slightly lower than the consortium average (27%), the District average (29%) and the Ipsos MORI average of 30%. Nationally speaking, Wyre Forest is thirteen percentage points below the national average (38%).

Influencing decisions (NI 4): Contextual data

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



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1409). *National figures based on Citizenship Survey 2007/08, face to face survey of 8,804 adults in England, April 07 – March 08

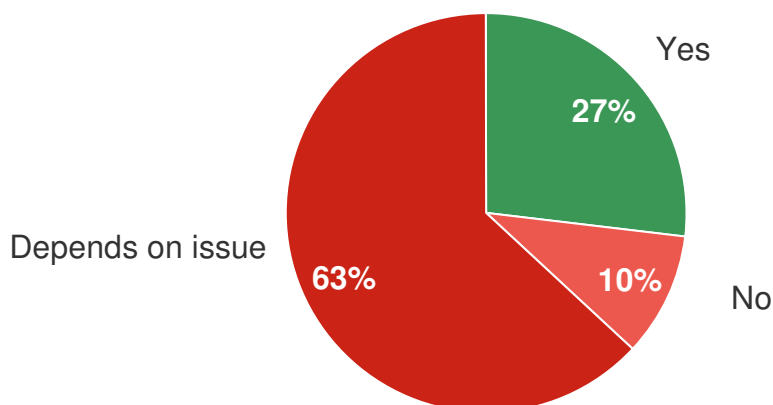


Nearly three in ten (27%) of Wyre Forest residents say that they would like to be *more* involved in decisions that affect their local area. Also over three fifths (63%) say that it would depend on the issue. Only 10% say that they would not like to be more involved. There certainly seems to be scope for the Council to engage with the public more on decision making in the area. However, as the majority say the involvement is dependent on the issue, the Council may want to establish which issues people most like to be consulted on.

Men are more likely than women to want greater involvement (35% compared 20%). Groups also more likely to want involvement are those who are dissatisfied with the area (43%; average 27%) and those who think that they are rarely or never treated with respect by local public services (52%).

Getting more involved

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



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1574)



The proportion of residents who would like to be more involved in any capacity remains very similar to what it was in 2006/07 (27% in the present survey and 28% in 2006/7). It also remains in line with average across districts (26%), the Worcestershire consortium (26%) and with Ipsos MORI overall (28%).

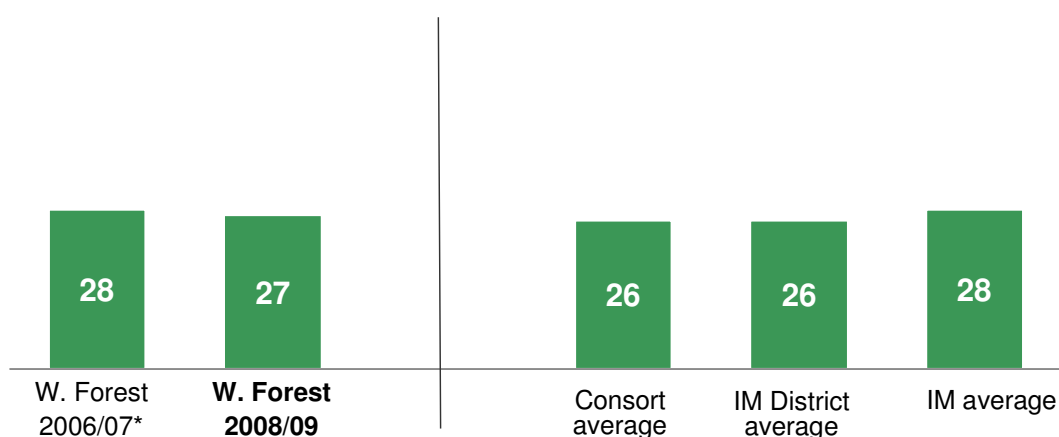
Getting more involved: Contextual data

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

% saying they want to get more involved

Trend data

Comparative data for 2008/09



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1574). *Note wording for 2006/07 BVPI question '... more involved in decisions your Council makes that affect your local area'

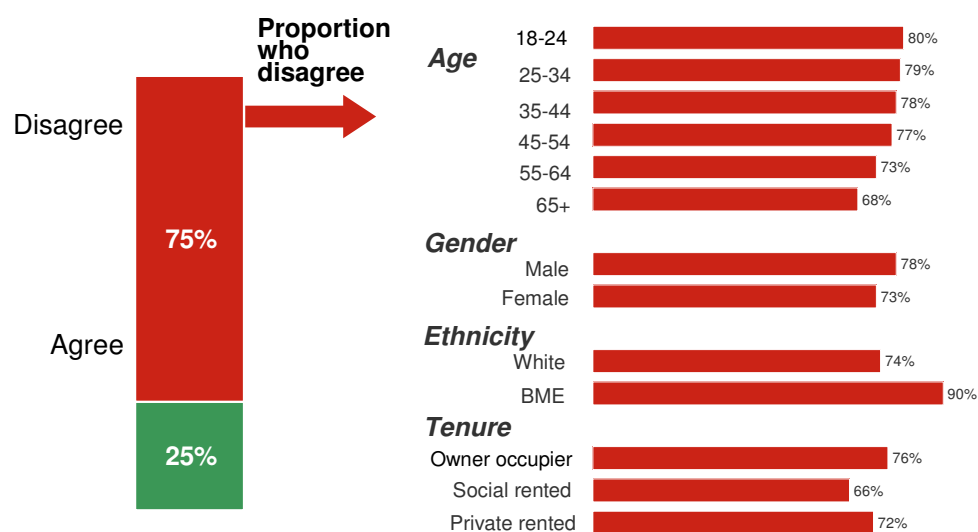


Local decision-making – demographic analysis

Three quarters of residents *disagree* that they can influence decisions affecting their local area. A higher than average proportion of these are people who own their own property (76%) and who work full-time (80%). Residents aged 18-34 (80%) are more likely to disagree that they have influence than those aged 65 and over (68%).

Unable to influence decisions: Subgroup analysis

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



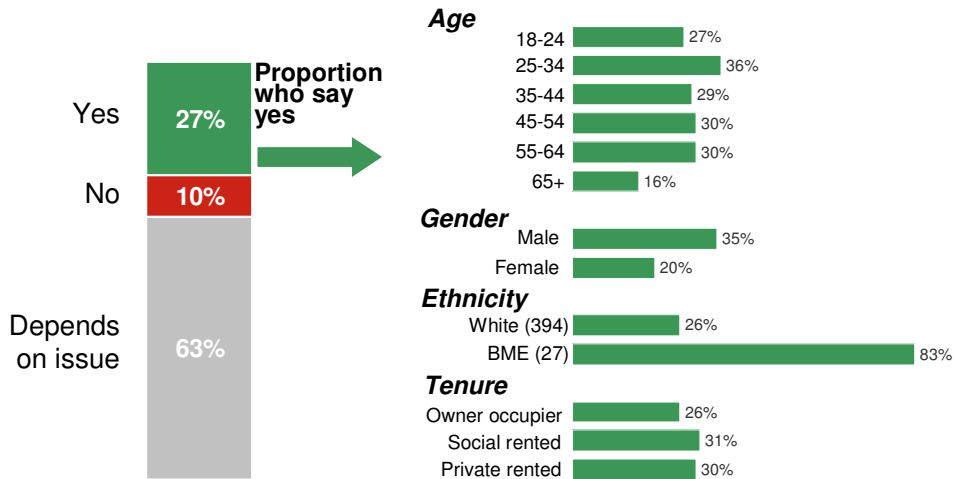
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1024)



Nearly three in ten (27%) of residents would like to be more involved regardless of the issue. This desire for involvement is greatest among men (35%), residents who work full-time (35%) and people who do not have a disability (29%).

Which residents want to be involved?

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



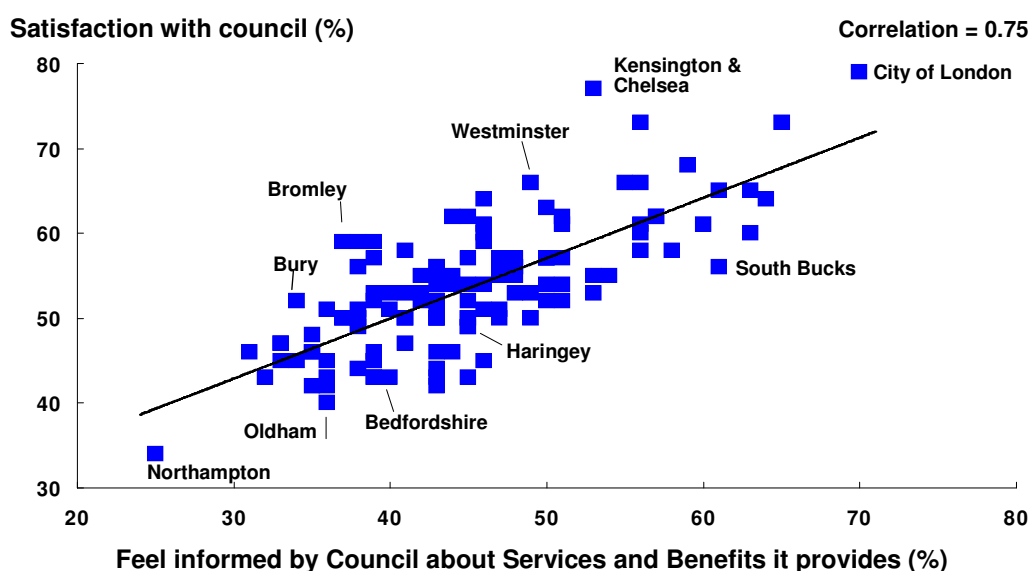
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (363)



6. Information provision

Good information and communication are important elements of service delivery. For decades, a key finding in all of Ipsos MORI's work has been that councils which do better at keeping people informed about services tend to be better regarded, as the following chart illustrates:

Satisfaction and Feeling Informed



Base: BVPI 2006 (130 Single, Upper Tier and District Ipsos MORI client authorities)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Being kept informed

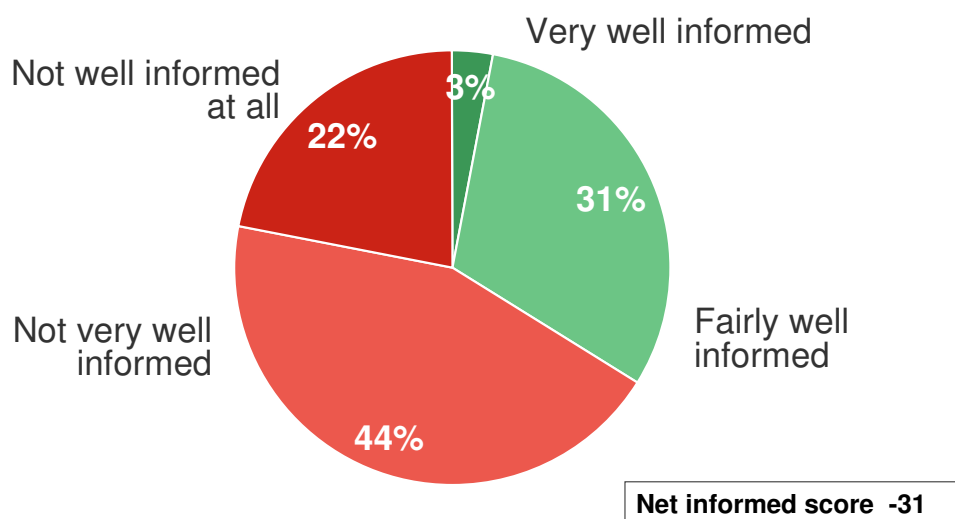
Residents were asked for their overall views about how well informed they feel about local public services overall.

About a third (34%) of residents feel *informed* about local public services, while two thirds (66%) *do not feel informed*. Only three percent say they feel *very well informed*, compared with over one in five (22%) who say they are *not well informed at all*.

Residents aged 65 and over and residents who do not work full-time are particularly likely to feel well informed (45% and 38% respectively). In contrast, residents who work full-time are more likely than average to feel that information is insufficient (71%, compared to 62% of people who do not work full time). Residents who are critical of their local area (90%) and disagree that the Council provides value for money (88%) are among those most likely to feel poorly informed.

Being kept informed

Q Overall, how well informed do you feel about local public services?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1569)



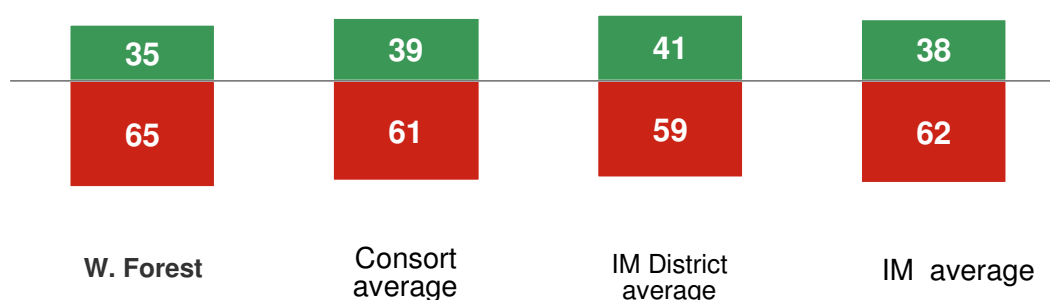
When compared to the consortium and district averages, Wyre Forest residents are slightly less well informed. As shown in the following chart, Wyre Forest is four percentage points lower than the consortium average and six percentage points lower than the Ipsos MORI district average. It also falls slightly behind the Ipsos MORI overall average of 38%.

Being kept informed: Comparative data

Q Overall, how well informed do you feel about local public services?

■ % Informed

■ % Not informed



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1569)



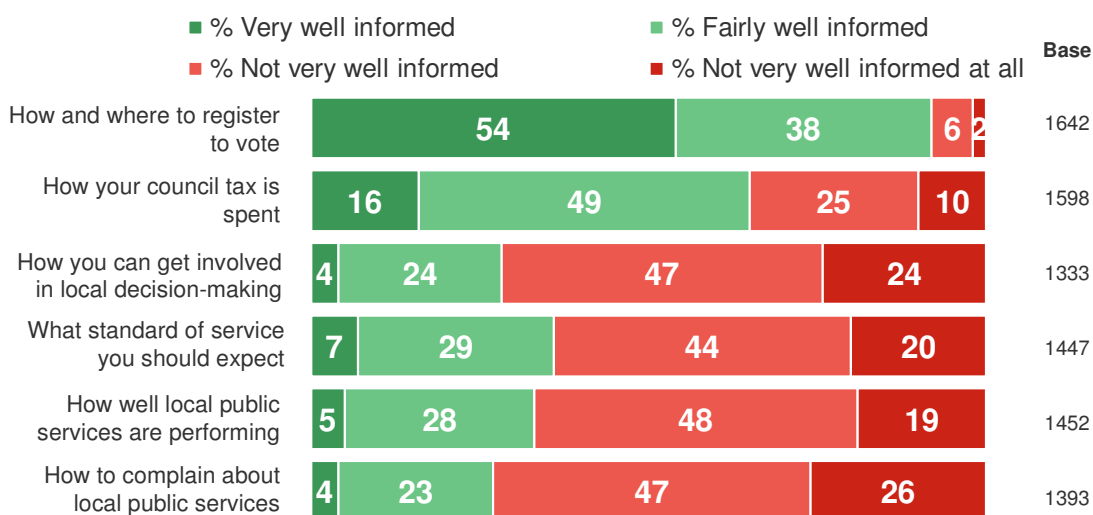
As well as being asked about how informed they feel overall, residents were asked about how well informed they feel about some other specific issues. Wyre Forest residents feel most well informed about how and where to register to vote (92% saying they are either very or fairly well informed).

Around two thirds (65%) feel informed about how their Council tax is spent. In Ipsos MORI's experience, perceived value for money is often a key influencer of satisfaction with local authorities and local services. Increased communication about this issue, therefore, could perhaps result in increased satisfaction.

For the other four measures (which are all listed in the chart overleaf), the majority of residents say they do not feel well informed. Residents are least well informed about how to complain about local public services (only 27% feel informed) and how you can get involved in local decision-making (28%). This is perhaps to be expected given the low feeling of influence over local decision-making noted earlier, and adds further support to the idea that there is scope for further public engagement in the decision-making process.

Being informed about key issues/ services

Q How well informed do you feel about each of the following?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses

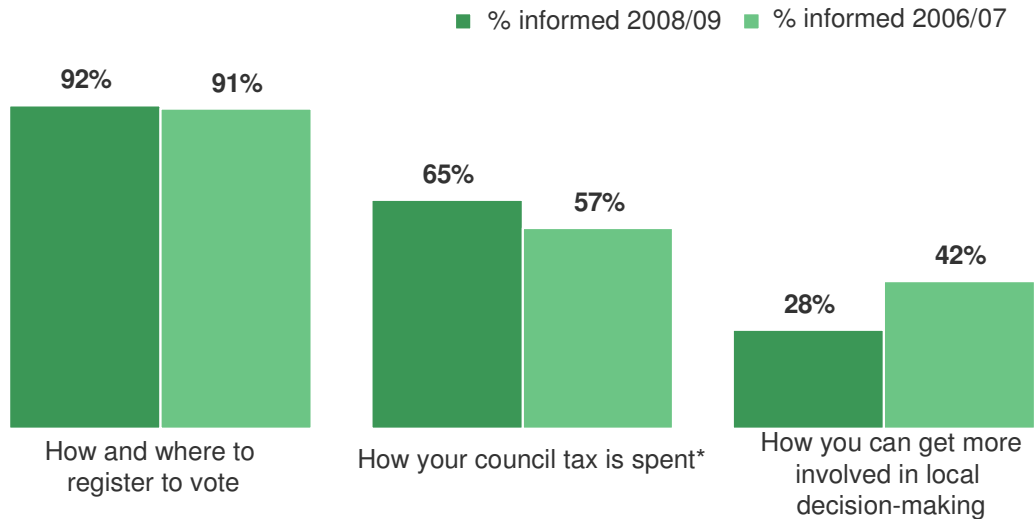


As the following chart demonstrates, Wyre Forest has made progress in informing residents about how their council tax is spent (rising from 57% in 2006/07 to 65% in 2008/9). The numbers who feel informed about how and where to register to vote remain high (91% in 2006/07 and 92% in the present survey). However, there has been

a sharp fall in the proportion of residents who feel informed about how they can get involved in local decision-making (from 42% to 28% in the last three years).

Being informed - Trend data

Q How well informed do you feel about each of the following?



*Note: 06/07 question wording was 'What the Council spends its money on'

Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09



Awareness of civil protection arrangements

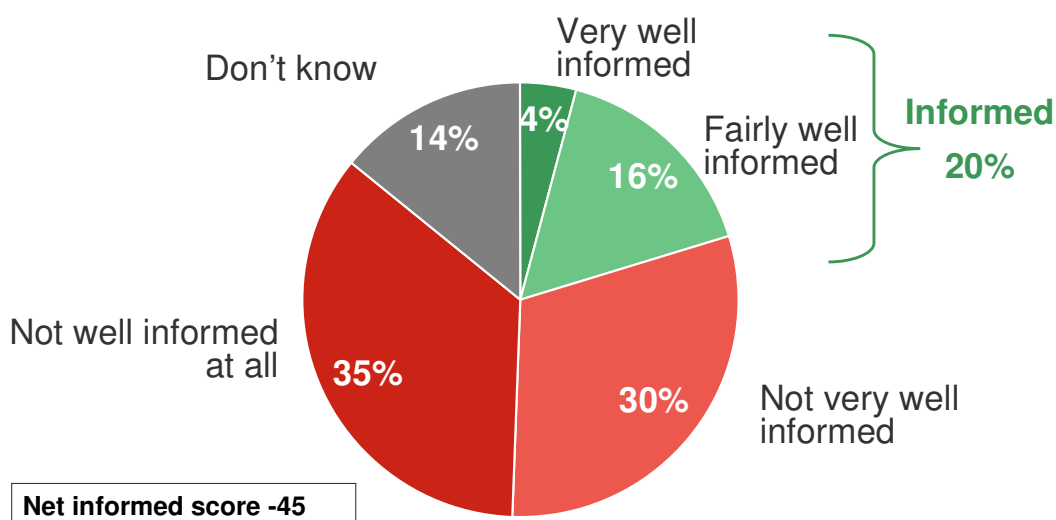
The Place Survey is responsible for providing information about how well informed residents are about civil protection arrangements and what they should do in the event of a large scale emergency in their local area (NI 37)

One in five residents feel informed about what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency (20%), compared to two thirds (65%) who do not and also 14% say they do not know. This gives Wyre Forest an NI 37 score of 20.1%.

Residents aged 65 and over feel the most well informed (24%, compared to the overall average of 20%), although this is still a minority. Those who generally feel informed about local public services are more likely than average to feel informed about civil protection arrangements (47%).

What to do in event of large-scale emergency (NI 37)

Q How well informed do you feel about... what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency?



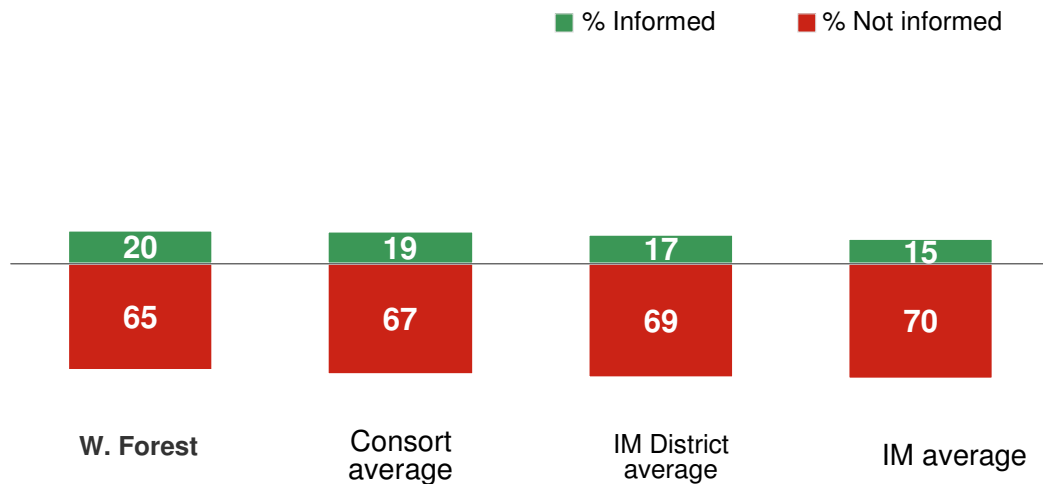
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1648). Note: 'don't knows' are **included** in the base calculations.



This low awareness is not unique to Wyre Forest, however. It actually scores very slightly above the Ipsos MORI district average of 17% and the overall Ipsos MORI average of 15% and is in line with the consortium average of 19%.

What to do in event of large-scale emergency (NI 37): Comparative data

Q How well informed do you feel about... what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1648)



7. Health

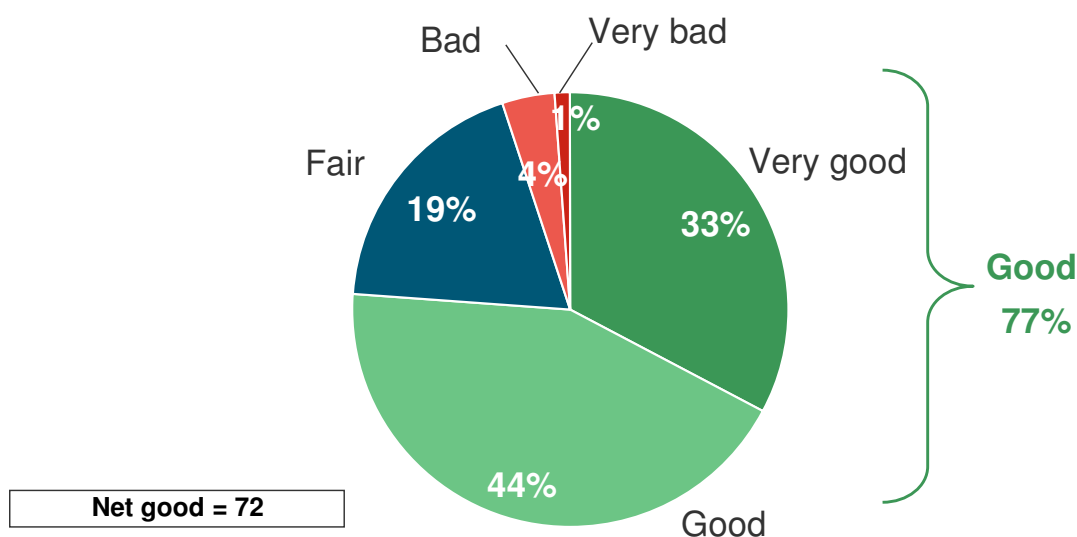
Local primary care trusts (PCTs) are jointly responsible for delivering health and well being for local communities with local councils and other agencies, through the Local Area Agreement and LSP. Subjective measures of health and well being are an important indicator of the general health of the population and are used to measure progress in improvements to general health and well-being in the local area.

Accordingly, residents were asked to provide a self-reported measure of their general health. Over three quarters of people living in Wyre Forest (76%) consider their health to be good or very good; giving Wyre Forest an NI 119 score of 76.3%. About a fifth (19%) rate their health as fair, while only five per cent describe it as bad or very bad.

Men are more positive about their health (81% compared to 73% of female residents). Also, as might be expected, younger residents describe themselves as more healthy (91% of 18-34 year olds, compared to 73% of 55-64 year olds for example). Those who report higher levels of poor health include social renters (18%, compared to the average of 5%) and disabled residents (16%).

Self reported health and well being (NI 119)

Q How is your health in general? Would you say it is...



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1640)



As can be seen from the following chart, Wyre Forest's health and well-being score is very much in line with all of the comparative data and is exactly in line with the national score (76%).

Health and well being (NI 119): Contextual data

Q How is your health in general? Would you say it is...



Ipsos MORI

Base: All valid responses (1640)

* National figures based on Health Survey for England 2006 (14,157 adults in England)



8. Local public services

Over the last five to ten years there has been a successful push towards greater partnership working, through the creation of local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and issue focused partnerships such as crime and disorder reduction partnerships and children's trusts. Local public sector agencies are now duty bound to ensure that they work together to deliver better outcomes for local people, with sustainable community strategies and Local Area Agreements at their heart.

As the Comprehensive Area Assessment comes into place in 2009, citizen perspectives about how well local public services – working together - are delivering on the ground will form an important element of how local public sector agency performance is measured.

As such, one of the key shifts seen with the new Place Survey, is the much greater focus on residents' views about local public services as a whole; in contrast to the old BVPI Surveys, which focused primarily on the function of the council.

Views about local public services

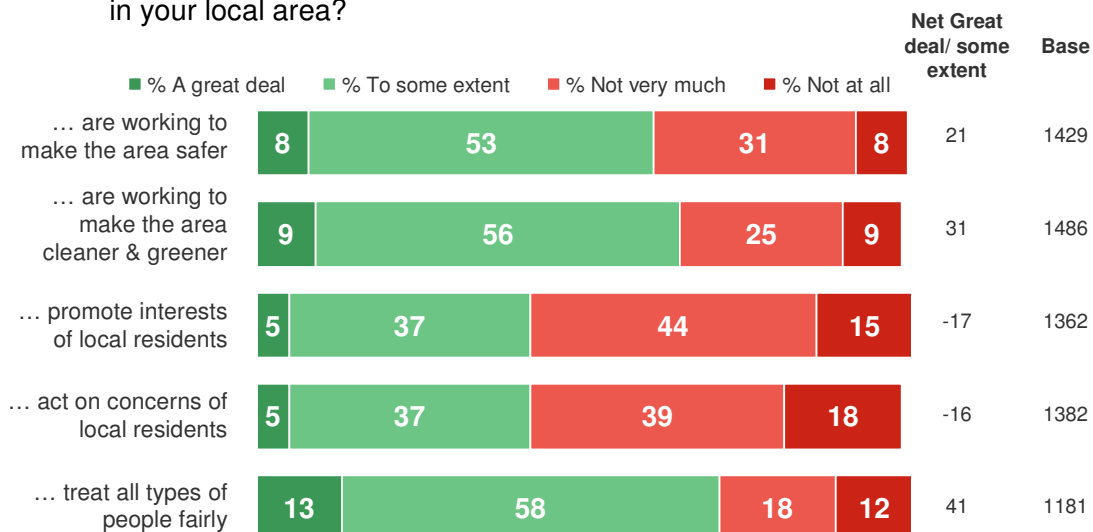
Views about local public services vary. Wyre Forest residents are most positive about how public services treat all types of people fairly (71% think this is true at least to some extent), are working to make the area cleaner and greener (65%) and how they are working to make the area safer (61%).

However, the majority are critical about the extent to which local public services promote the interests of local residents (59% do not think this applies) and act on the concerns of local residents (57%).

Women and residents aged 65 and over tend to be more positive about local public services on a whole range of measures.

Views about local public services

Q To what extent do you think that these statements apply to public services in your local area?



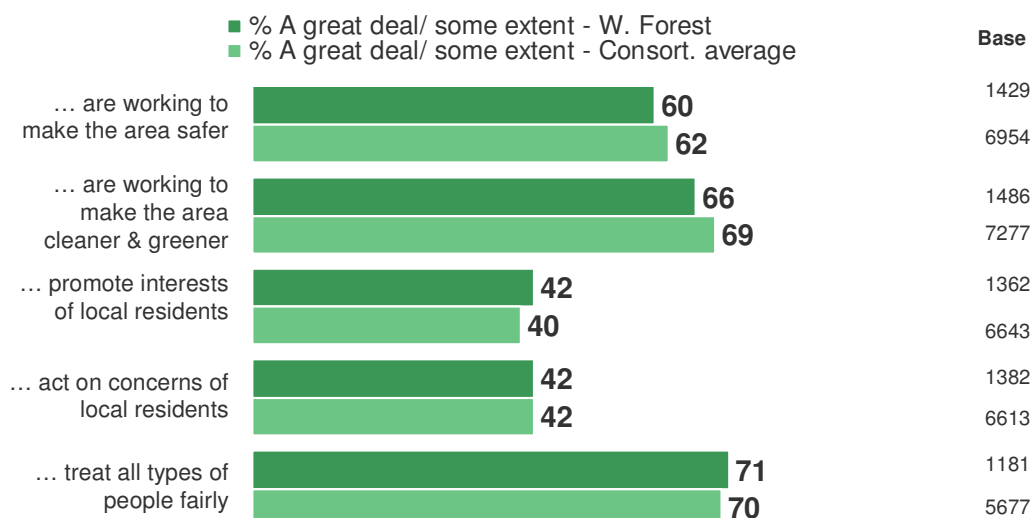
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



Wyre Forest appears to be as positive in relation to the following five measures as other Worcestershire consortium members. They are slightly less positive with regards to how local public services are working to make the area cleaner and greener (66%, compared to 69% across the consortium) and how they are working to make the area safer (62%; consortium average 60%).

Views about local public services: Comparator analysis

Q To what extent do you think that these statements apply to public services in your local area?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



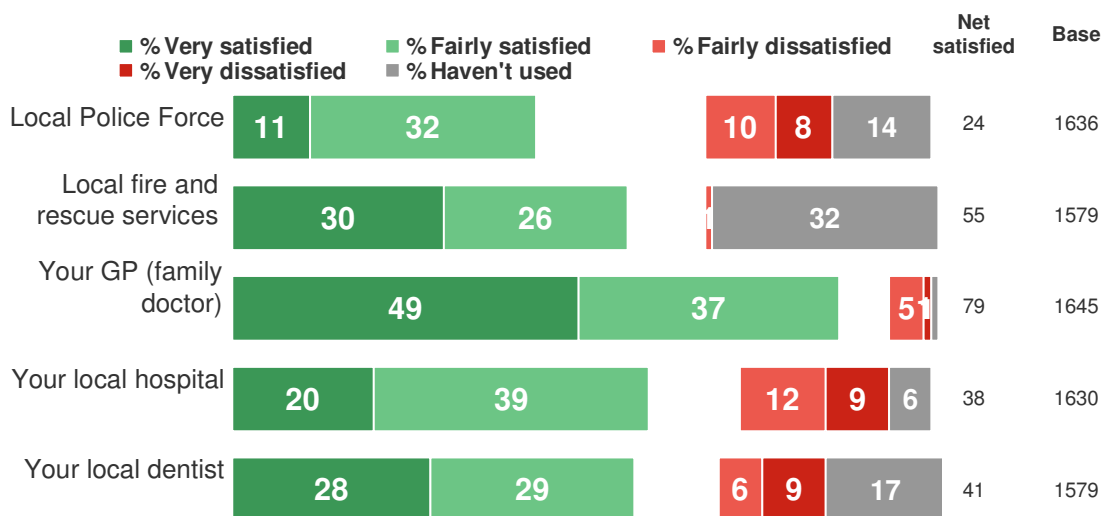
Satisfaction with local public services

Of all the local public services, Wyre Forest residents are by far most satisfied with their GP (86%). They are also relatively satisfied with local hospitals (59%), local dentists (57%) and local fire and rescue services (56%). The local police receive the lowest rating, with only 43% stating that they are satisfied with this services. Over 65s are consistently more likely than younger people to be satisfied with local services.

Satisfaction with public services appears to strongly influence satisfaction with the Council overall. Residents who are satisfied with the Council are more likely to be satisfied with all of the local public services measured than those who are dissatisfied with the Council. Similarly, feeling informed about local services correlates with a more favourable view of them, as does a perception that the Council is offering good value for money.

Satisfaction with local public services

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following public services in your local area?



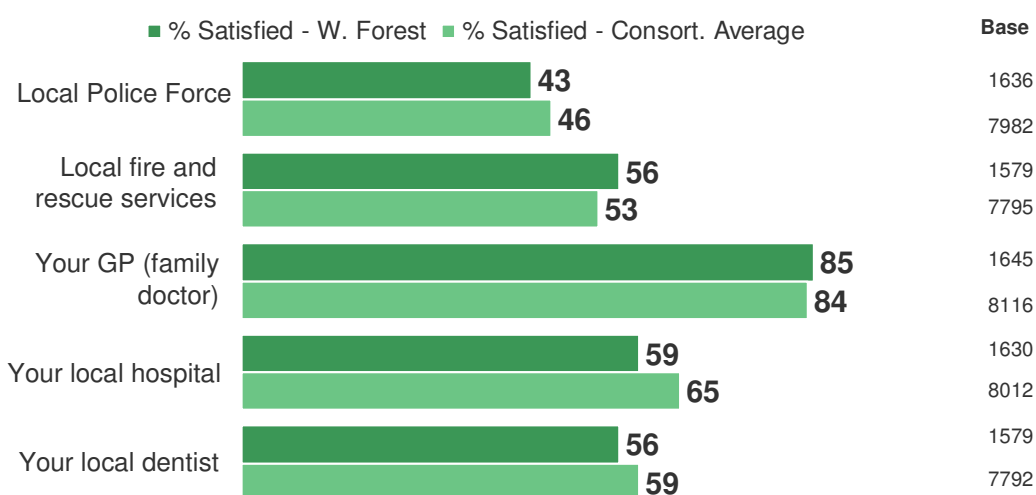
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



The chart below compares Wyre Forest residents' ratings of local services with those of other Worcestershire consortium members. Residents in Wyre Forest are more satisfied with local fire and rescue services and very slightly more satisfied with their GP than the consortium average. However, they are less satisfied with the local police force and their local dentist and they are six percentage points lower than the consortium average in satisfaction levels with regards to their local hospital.

Satisfaction with local services, including council: Comparator analysis

Q Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following public services in your local area?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



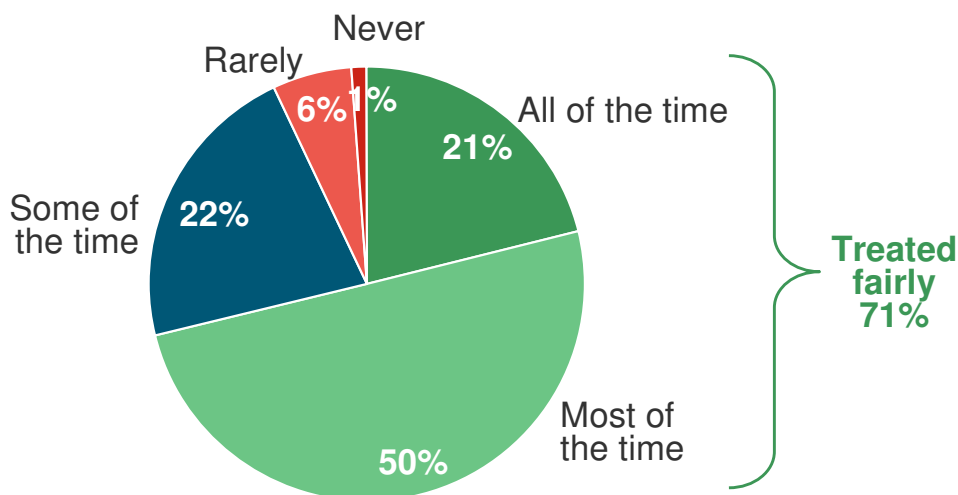
Local public services – respect and consideration

The degree to which people say they have been treated with respect and consideration by local public services forms one of the new national indicators (NI 140). Local authorities and their partners want to narrow the gap between perceptions of different groups in the community.

Seven out of ten (71%) of residents say that local public services treat them with respect and consideration all or most of the time. This gives Wyre Forest an NI 140 score of 70.7%. In contrast, just seven percent say they are rarely or never treated with respect.

Treated with respect and consideration by local public services (NI 140)

Q In the last year would you say that you have been treated with respect and consideration by your local public services?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1429)



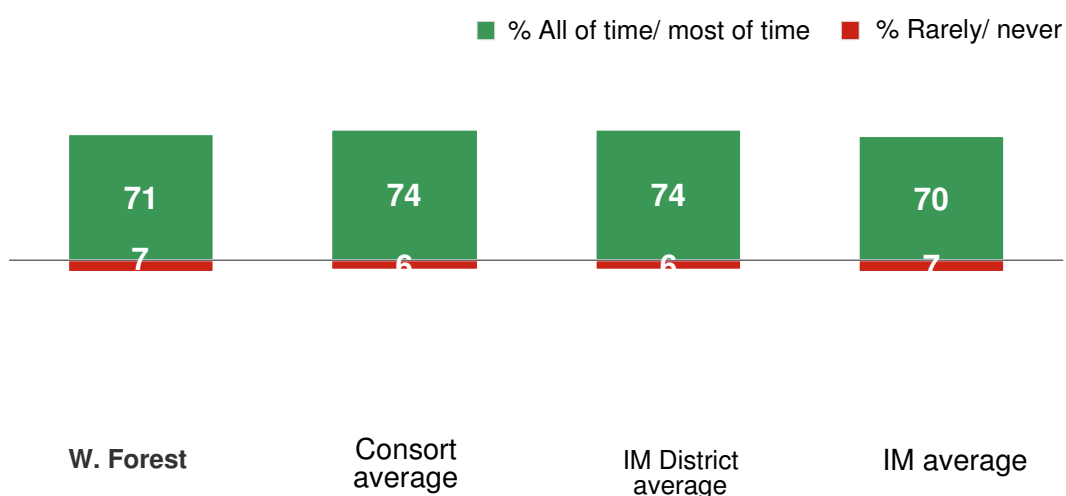
Men are more likely to say that they have *rarely* or *never* been treated with respect and consideration by public services (11%, compared to only 3% of women). Likewise, those aged 65 and over are more likely say they have been treated with respect (75% and 80% respectively, compared to the average of 71% and 62% of 18-34 year olds). Likewise, 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to believe that they are rarely or never treated with respect (13%, average 7%).

People who believe that the Council provides value for money, those who feel informed and are satisfied with the Council are more likely to feel that they are treated with respect (90%, 86% and 86% respectively).

The proportion of Wyre Forest residents who feel they have been treated with respect and consideration by their local public services is slightly lower than the consortium and Ipsos MORI district averages (both 74%) but in line with the Ipsos MORI overall average of 70%.

Treated with respect and consideration by local public services: Comparative data

Q In the last year would you say that you have been treated with respect and consideration by your local public services?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1429)



9. Council services

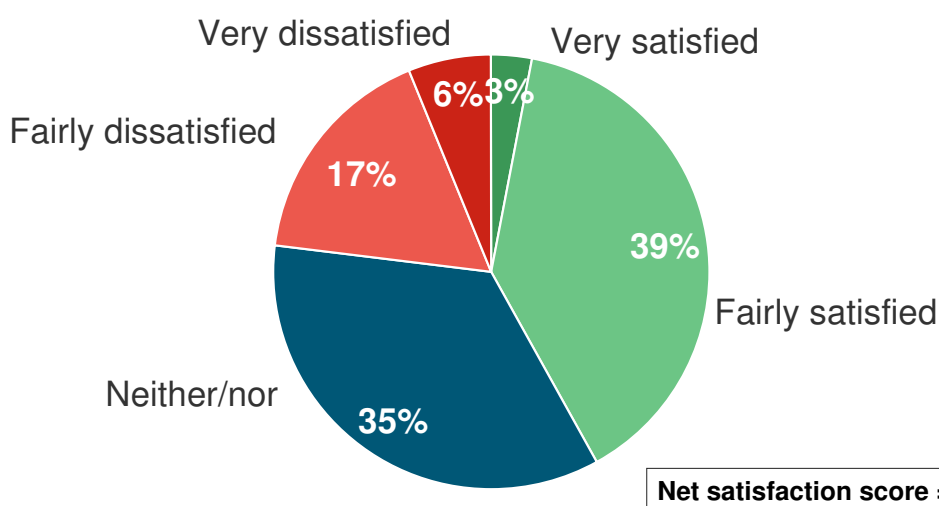
Satisfaction with council

Thinking generally, over two fifths (42%) of residents are satisfied with Wyre Forest District Council. About a third are ambivalent (35%) and nearly a quarter (23%) are *dissatisfied*.

Satisfaction with Wyre Forest District Council lags behind satisfaction with other local public services such as GPs (85%), dentists (56%), local hospitals (59%) and local fire and rescue services (56%). This is not particularly unusual and we would expect to find a similar gap across most authorities, although perhaps not to such a degree.

Satisfaction with Council

Q Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Wyre Forest District Council runs things?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1569)

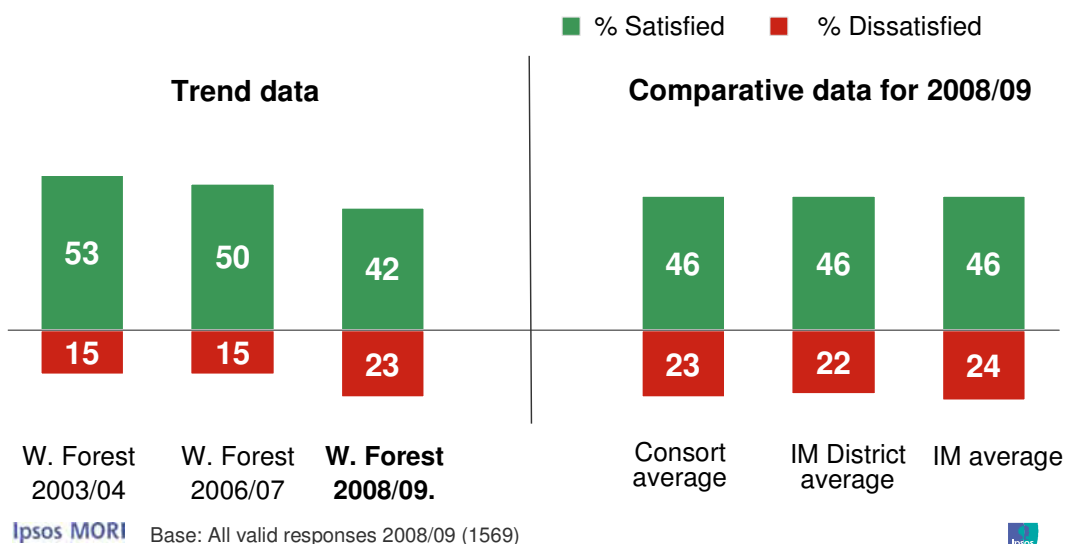


Older residents (over 65) are more likely to be satisfied with the Council (55%), along with those who live in social rented housing (57%). Also, as may be expected, people who think the Council provides value for money are more satisfied (89%), as are people who feel informed (64%) and are able to influence decisions which affect the local area (63%).

As the next chart illustrates, satisfaction with Wyre Forest District Council has fallen from 53% in 2003/04 to 42% this year. It is important to stress here that – based on the results of local authorities that Ipsos MORI has worked with – overall satisfaction ratings of Councils have fallen quite markedly in the majority of cases, so Wyre Forest is by no means unique in this regard. Nevertheless, Wyre Forest still sits four percentage points below the average across the consortium, the Ipsos MORI District average and the Ipsos MORI overall average (all 46%).

Satisfaction with council: Contextual data

Q Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Wyre Forest District Council Council runs things?



Value for money

A key driver of the reputation of all councils is whether or not residents believe they get value for money. Ipsos MORI has found that this has a much stronger relationship with overall satisfaction than actual council tax levels overall – and is based in part on how well a council demonstrates (and communicates) to the community what it provides for tax payers' money.

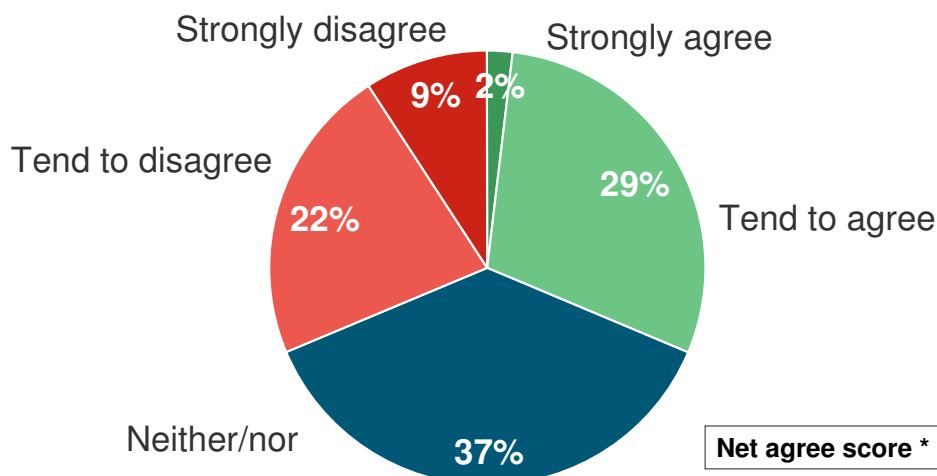
About a third *disagree* that Wyre Forest District Council provides value for money (31%) whilst the exact same proportion of residents thinks the opposite and say that they *agree* that Wyre Forest provides value for money (31%). However, it should be noted that residents are more likely to *strongly disagree* with this than *strongly agree*

(9% compared to 2%). It is also important to point out that 37% are ambivalent about this topic.

Residents aged 65 and over and people who live in social rented property are more likely than average to agree that Wyre Forest District Council provides value for money (35%, 44% and 48% respectively, compared to the average of 31%). Perceptions of value for money are also affected by information levels and the extent to which residents feel able to influence local decisions (52% of those who feel informed and 54% of those who feel able to influence decisions respectively agree that Wyre Forest Council provides value for money).

Value for money

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that Wyre Forest District Council provides value for money?



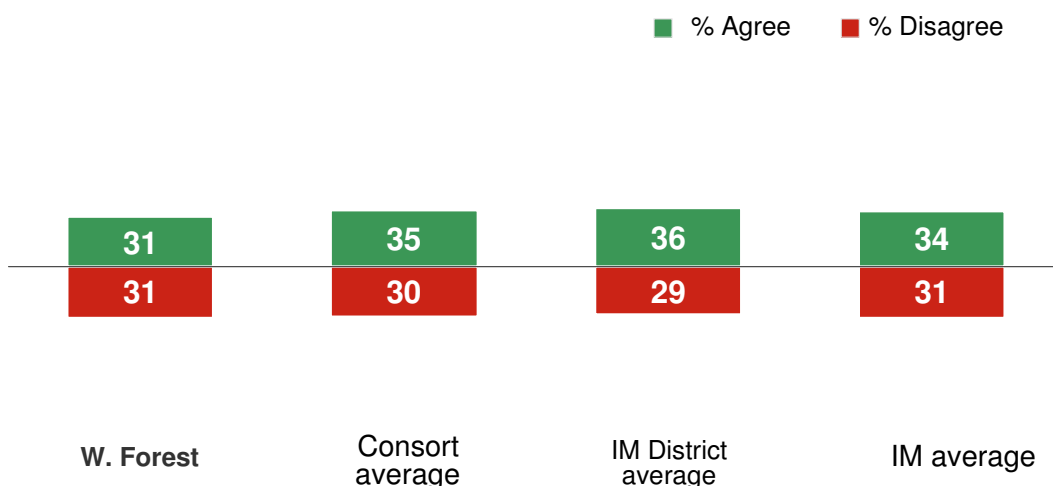
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1487)



Wyre Forest lies slightly below the consortium average, the District average and the average for Ipsos MORI overall (35%, 36% and 34% respectively).

Delivering value for money: Comparative data

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that Wyre Forest District Council provides value for money?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1487)



Support for older people

The Place Survey asked residents for their views on whether older people in the locality are getting the support and services they need to live independently, to inform a new national indicator (NI 139).

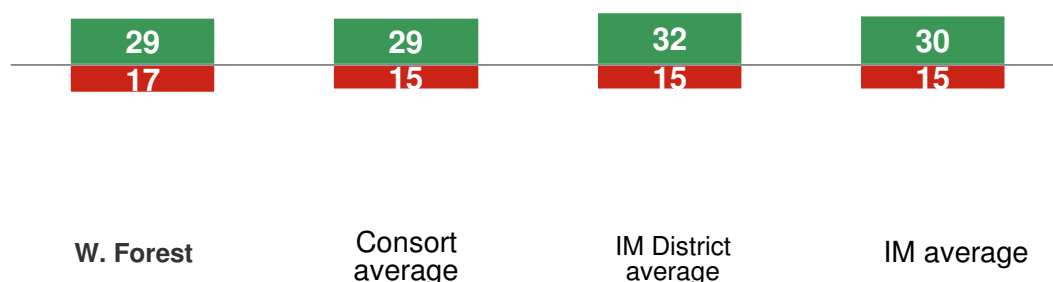
About three in ten residents (29%) think that older people are getting the support and services they need to continue living at home as long as they want to. This gives Wyre Forest an NI 139 score of 29%. Positively, this score is on a par with the average across the consortium (also 29%), the Ipsos MORI District average (32%) and the Ipsos MORI overall average of 30%.

Older residents (aged 65 and above) and those with a disability (34%) are more likely to agree that older residents can access the services and support they needs, suggesting the service users themselves may be more positive. People who live in socially rented property are also more likely to agree (43%).

Support for older people (NI 139)

Q In your opinion, are older people in your local area able to get the services and support they need to continue to live at home for as long as they want to?

■ % Yes ■ % No



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses (1638). Note: 'don't knows' are included in the base calculations



Service satisfaction

Residents were asked to rate a range of local services, specifically cultural and recreational, environmental and local transport services. Comparisons with the BVPI results enable us to track change in satisfaction with these services over time.

With regards to cultural and recreational services, there has been a general decline since 2006/07. However, satisfaction with museums and galleries and theatres and concert halls has remained the same. Satisfaction with environmental services have fallen on all measures since two years ago.

Satisfaction with culture and recreation

Of the cultural and recreational services provided by Wyre Forest, residents are most satisfied with libraries (75%) and parks and open spaces (70%) and are least satisfied with theatre and concert halls (33%).

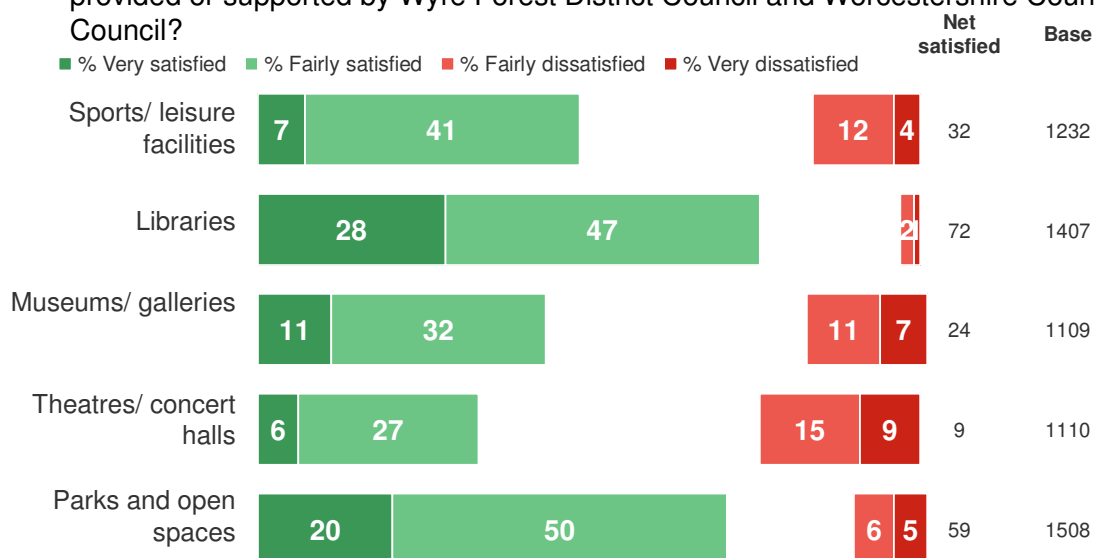
The largest decrease is with satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities (decreased by sixteen percentage points since 2006/07). Second to this libraries have declined by six percentage points and satisfaction with parks and open spaces also has fallen by six (from 76% satisfied in 2006/07 to 70% in the present study).

Theatres, concerts halls, museums and galleries appear to have remained at a similar level, though. Both theatres and concert halls and museums and galleries have risen by one percentage point since 2006/07 (32% to 33% and 42% to 43% respectively).

Please refer to Appendix 5 for charts which give a full breakdown of how satisfaction with culture and recreation services has changed over time and in relation to other authorities

Satisfaction with culture and recreation

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



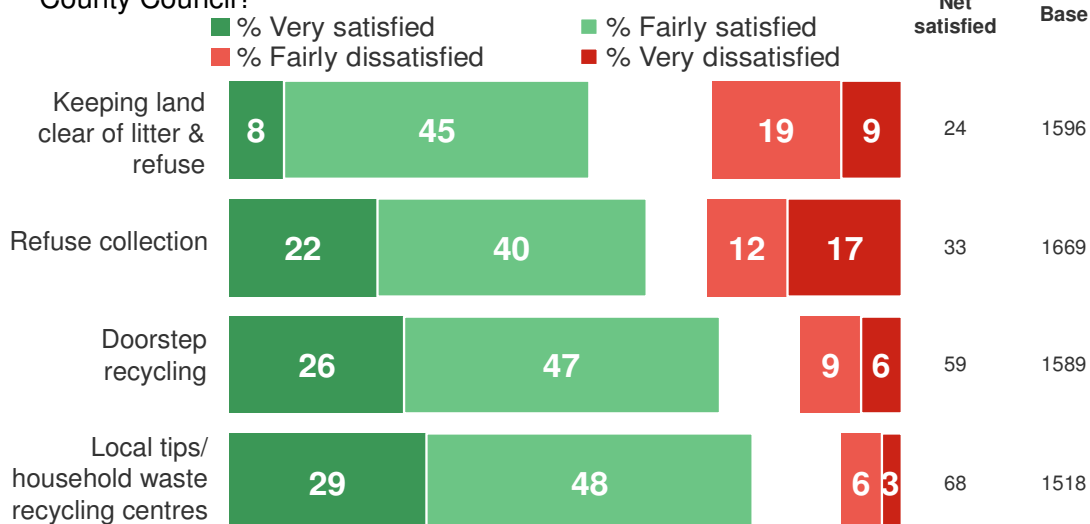
Satisfaction with environmental services

Turning now to environmental services, Wyre Forest residents are most satisfied with local tips/ household waste recycling centres (77% satisfied). Doorstep recycling is the next most highly rated (73%), while around three in five residents (62%) are satisfied with refuse collection. Residents are most critical of keeping land clear of litter and refuse (53% are satisfied with this service).

Please refer to Appendix 5 for charts which give a full breakdown of how satisfaction with environmental services has changed over time and in relation to other authorities

Satisfaction with environmental services

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council?



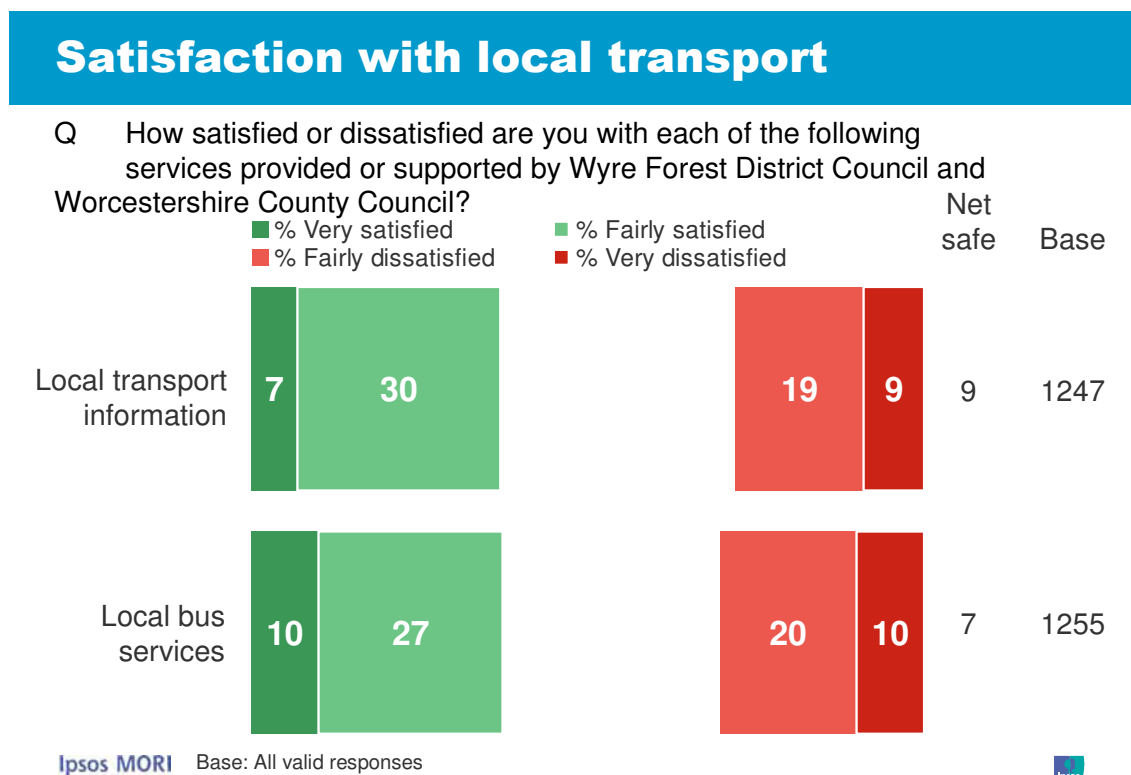
Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses



Satisfaction with local transport

Approaching two in five (37%) of residents say they are satisfied with local transport information, while 37% rate local bus services positively. This has remained fairly stable since 2006/07.

Please refer to Appendix 5 for charts which give a full breakdown of how satisfaction with local transport services has changed over time and in relation to other authorities.



Service usage

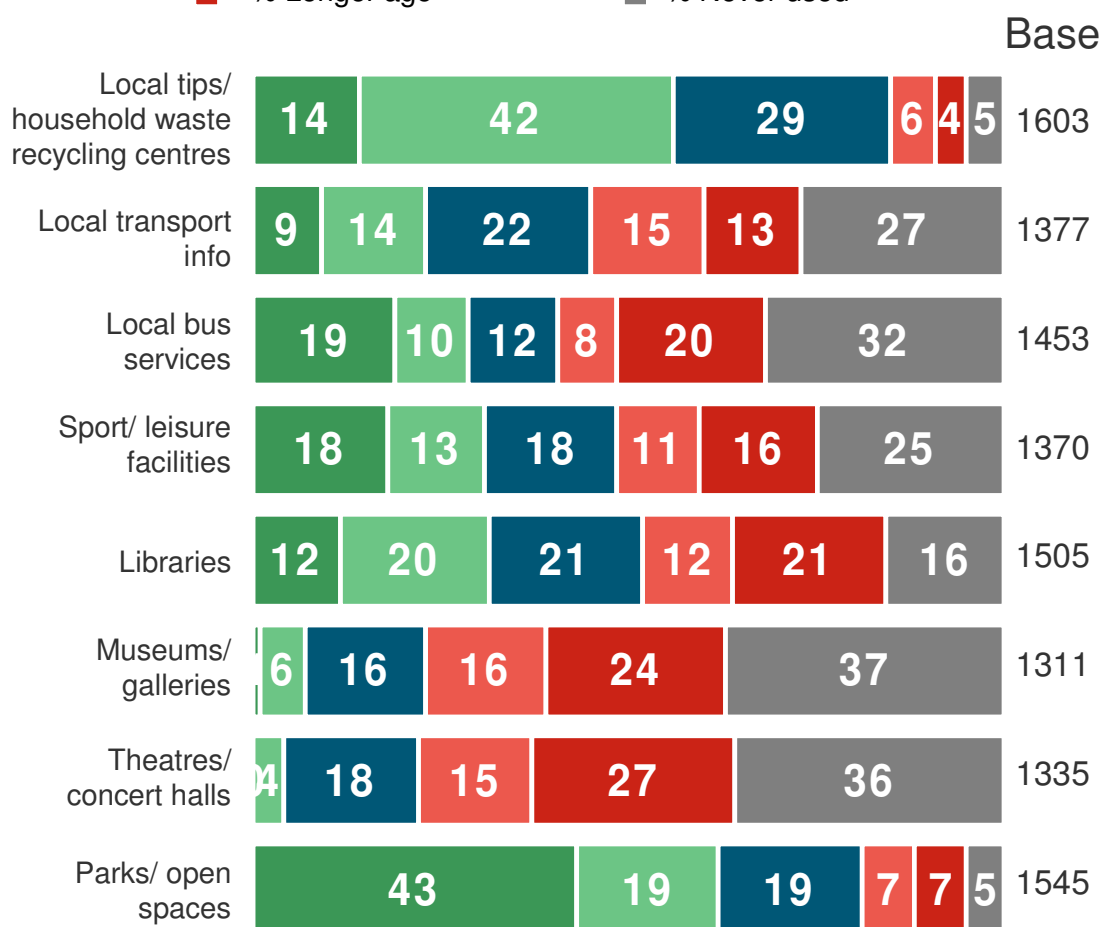
Residents were also asked about the frequency with which they use a number of council services.

The next chart shows how frequently each service is used by Wyre Forest residents. Parks and open spaces are used most frequently (43% use these at least once a week). As might be expected museums and galleries and theatres and concert halls are the least commonly used services.

Service usage

Q Please indicate how frequently you have used the following public services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council?

- % At least once a week
- % About once a month
- % Within the last 6 months
- % Within the last year
- % Longer ago
- % Never used

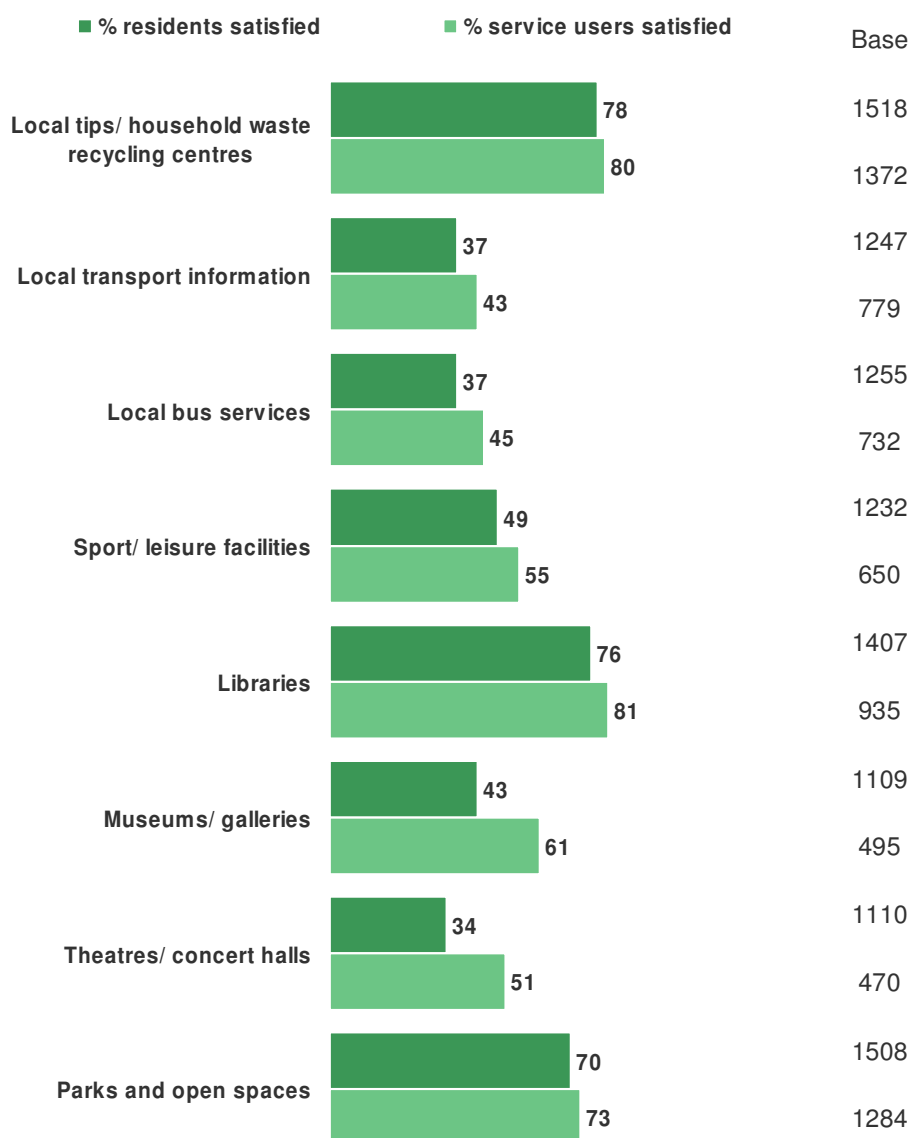


Service usage vs. satisfaction

In Ipsos MORI's experience, service users are generally more satisfied with services, and with the council itself, than non service users. As can be seen from the following chart, this gap is most evident in relation to services used by a small minority such as theatres and concert halls and museums and galleries.

Satisfaction: residents overall vs. service users

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All valid responses
Service users defined as all who have used service in past 12 months at Q9



Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

This appendix provides a detailed description of the methodology used for the Place Survey.

A postal self-completion methodology was prescribed by CLG for all 2008/09 Place Surveys.

Sampling

The sampling frame set out by the Audit Commission and Communities and Local Government (CLG) is the small-user Postcode Address File (PAF). As the government wishes to be able to compare results across local areas, it specified that data on all of the indicators must be collected using the principle of random selection. This meant that each of the residents in the sampling frame should have an equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being selected to receive a questionnaire.

CLG and the Audit Commission required a minimum of 1,100 returns to the questionnaire. Based on previous research conducted in the district (and knowledge of response rates to the BVPI surveys), Ipsos MORI selected a random sample of 4000 addresses from the PAF file supplied by the Audit Commission in order to meet the 1,100 responses required.

The questionnaire

The new Place Survey questionnaire was designed and piloted by Ipsos MORI and CLG in early 2008. The resulting questionnaire 'template' comprised of a combination of questions which: i) would allow CLG and the Audit Commission to accurately measure the 18 citizen perspective national indicators collected through the survey, and ii) would measure levels of satisfaction and perceptions about other service and quality of life matters of interest to local authorities and their partners.

As a result, the questionnaire comprised of a mix of questions previously asked on the BVPI General User Satisfaction Survey (to allow for performance tracking against previous waves of the BVPI surveys), and new questions (some of which were drawn from national surveys such as the Citizenship Survey). A series of standard 'demographic' questions was also asked to enable results to be analysed by key demographic groups (e.g. male versus female, age and ethnic group), to assess the

level of engagement with the survey from different members of the community, and to weight the data by demographic characteristics (see later section).

Altering the wording of questions or omitting questions was prohibited since it would reduce the ability to make comparisons with other local authorities using the same questionnaire.

To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, CLG and the Audit Commission specified that a covering letter stating the purpose for which the data was being collected must be sent with each questionnaire. The wording used in the covering letter was derived from CLG and Audit Commission guidance, although this was amended slightly to reflect the requirements of Wyre Forest. It was not possible to personally address letters to a named resident of the household as the PAF was the sampling frame used. Letters were therefore addressed to “Dear local resident”. As the target population specified is all adult local authority residents (aged 18 and over) the questionnaire asked that only someone aged 18 or over completed it.

A number of steps were taken in order to encourage a good response rate to the survey. The guidance stipulated that “authorities should take all reasonable steps to maximise their response rates”:

- The front page of each questionnaire was branded with the logos of Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council and Ipsos MORI, and contained a covering letter from Walter Delin, Chief Executive and Trish Haines, Chief Executive.
- Details of the dedicated Ipsos MORI Place Survey Helpdesk were provided with the covering letter. Respondents were able to ask questions and request a large print questionnaire through the telephone and e-mail Helpdesk. In some instances questionnaires were conducted over the telephone in English where respondents were unable to complete a written questionnaire (in accordance with the Place Survey guidance).

In order to encourage response from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, information was provided with the questionnaire in local community languages, which set out how residents whose first language was not English could take part in the survey. These respondents were either invited to complete a translated version of the questionnaire or – where this was not available in their particular community language – a trained Ipsos MORI

interviewer carried out the survey over the telephone in the relevant language.

- In line with the guidance, two reminder mailings of the questionnaire were also sent out to those residents who had yet to respond to the survey. The covering letter was adjusted to reflect the fact that it was a reminder, whilst still meeting data protection requirements.
- All questionnaires were distributed through the UK Royal Mail postal system. In addition, respondents were required to return their completed questionnaires using the pre-paid envelope provided with the questionnaire.

Fieldwork

The guidance required that fieldwork for the surveys take place between 29 September and 19 December 2008. Local authorities were required to commence mailing out the initial questionnaire and covering letter from the 25 September, and reminder mailings from the 15 October 2008.

For Wyre Forest, the breakdown in mailings was as follows:

- The first mailing was sent to 4000 addresses on 24th September 2008
- A second mailing was sent on the 29th October 2008.
- The third and final mailing was sent on the 20th November 2008.

Fieldwork was finally closed on the 19 December, as per the guidance.

Survey Management System (SMS)

Returned questionnaires were booked in on a daily basis. The number of valid and void returns – known as ‘deadwood’ (e.g. those not completed because they were sent to derelict, demolished, business or vacant addresses) - was recorded in the Ipsos MORI Survey Management System. This allowed for the daily calculation and monitoring of response rates, and to ensure that reminder mailings were not sent to deadwood addresses. The use of the SMS also helped to ensure that only households who had not returned a completed questionnaire would be sent a reminder.

Data processing and upload

All questionnaires returned by respondents were processed through a scanning and manual verification procedure, enabling a more reliable and faster turnaround time than manual data entry.

Unweighted data was then provided in the data and metadata templates supplied by the Audit Commission. These were submitted to the Audit Commission for weighting. Weighted data was then returned from the Audit Commission for subsequent analysis.

Response rates and sample profile

A maximum +/- 3 percentage points at the 95 per cent confidence level is required to calculate the national indicators collected in the Place Survey. With this in mind, CLG and the Audit Commission required each local area to achieve a minimum sample size of 1,100 completed Place Survey questionnaires. The achieved sample size is based on the total number of respondents to the survey as a whole, and not the number of respondents to individual questions. (The lowest number of responses to achieve this level of confidence for each question is 808.)

Further guidance on statistical reliability is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

The **overall unadjusted response rate**¹² achieved from the main sample was **42.55%** - representing 1702 returned questionnaires from an original sample of 4000 addresses.

The **overall adjusted response rate**, removing incomplete responses and all non-effective addresses, achieved from the main sample was **42.97%** - representing 3961 valid questionnaires from an effective sample of 4000 addresses (39 non-effective addresses).

The methodology summary in the main body of this report sets out how the response rate for Wyre Forest compares to other councils.

¹² The unadjusted response rate does not allow for invalid or business addresses, vacant properties, etc. which will be an element of any sample drawn from the Postal Address File, as well as incomplete responses. The adjusted response rate does take these into account however.

Weighting

As well as maximising the response rate overall it is also important, particularly when analysing survey responses, to consider how the responses received compare with the local population as a whole. As noted previously, if certain groups in the survey are under-represented, it may generate results which are not representative of the wider population.

CLG and Audit Commission guidance outlines weighting as a way of tackling the issue of over- and under-representation of certain demographic groups in the sample. Therefore, to generate results which would be more representative, data was weighted by the Audit Commission using a standard weighting scheme.

Weighting was applied by CLG's data processing supplier, Cobalt Sky. The appropriate weight for each individual respondent contained in the dataset was applied after submission of the raw unweighted data to the Audit Commission.

The principles of the weighting scheme used are available on the Place Survey website. In the first instance, data was weighted by sex, age and ethnicity to the known profile of the Borough, as recorded in the 2006 Census mid-year population estimates¹³, and then by a further weight to adjust for household size.

Ensuring quality

Ipsos MORI places great emphasis on quality assurance and associated policies, and on data protection. The quality of data is assured through checks embedded in the scanning process. The software used is set up to only accept valid responses. With all tick box information, the confidence or tolerance of the scanning software is set at a tested level and anything outside this confidence level is filtered through to a human verification process. In the verification process any questionable responses are highlighted and subsequently confirmed or corrected. All responses which contain text were also sent for verification.

In addition, all data outputs were given thorough checks by both the Ipsos MORI data analysts and research executive teams.

¹³ Gender, age and ethnicity figures based on ONS 2006 sub national population projections; the data is an interpolation between the projections for mid-2008 and mid-2009.

Confidence intervals

The base size – i.e. the number of respondents providing a valid response – was different for each question answered in the Place Survey. On the basis of all respondents who answered each question (as specified by CLG and the Audit Commission), and assuming that the confidence interval is unaffected by the survey response rate, the overall margin of error for this survey therefore ranges from $\pm 2.4\%$ to $\pm 4.1\%$. The specific margin of error for each national indicator measured through the survey is set out in the following table. Further explanation about confidence intervals is provided in Appendix 2.

National indicator	Indicator	Base size	Confidence Interval
NI1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	1,005	+/- 2.6
NI2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	1,558	+/- 2.4
NI3	Civic participation in the local area	1,493	+/- 1.7
NI4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	1,409	+/- 2.3
NI5	Overall/ general satisfaction with the local area	1,651	+/- 1.9
NI6	Participation in regular volunteering	1,527	+/- 2.1
NI17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	1,592	+/- 1.9
NI21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police	1,547	+/- 2.1
NI22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area	1,534	+/- 2.2
NI23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration	1,517	+/- 2.3
NI27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police	1,589	+/- 2.1
NI37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	1,648	+/- 2.0
NI41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem	1,482	+/- 2.3
NI42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem	1,264	+/- 2.5
NI119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing	1,640	+/- 2.2
NI138	Satisfaction with people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood	572	+/- 2.9
NI139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently	1,638	+/- 2.2
NI140	Fair treatment by local services	1,429	+/- 2.3

It is important to note that the above confidence interval calculations relate only to samples that have been selected using strict random probability sampling methods. However, in practice it is reasonable to assume that these calculations provide a good indication of the confidence intervals relating to the Place Survey and the sampling approach used.

Appendix 2: Guide to statistical reliability

The residents who took part in the Place Survey are only a sample of the total "population" of residents in the district, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those that would have been reached were everyone had responded (the "true" values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the "true" values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results to each question is based, and the number of times a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within a specified range. The following illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the "95% confidence interval":

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	\pm	\pm	\pm
100 responses	6	9	10
200 responses	4	6	7
500 responses	3	4	4
1,000 responses	2	3	3
1,702 responses	1	2	2

For example, with a sample size of 1,000 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are, 19 in 20 that the "true" value (i.e. the one which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of ± 3 percentage points from the survey result (i.e. between 27% and 33%).

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample (e.g. males versus females), different results may be obtained. The difference may be "real," or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is "statistically significant" - we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we once again assume a "95% confidence interval", the differences between the results of two separate groups must be greater than the values given in the following table:

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 vs. 100	8	13	14
200 vs. 200	6	9	10
500 vs. 500	4	6	6
500 vs. 1,000	3	5	5

It is important to note that, strictly speaking, the above confidence interval calculations relate only to samples that have been selected using strict probability sampling methods. However, in practice it is reasonable to assume that these calculations provide a good indication of the confidence intervals relating to the Place Survey and the sampling approach used.

Appendix 3: Marked up questionnaire

A marked-up questionnaire has been provided as an attached, separate document to this report.

Appendix 4: Council service satisfaction and usage – trend and comparator analysis

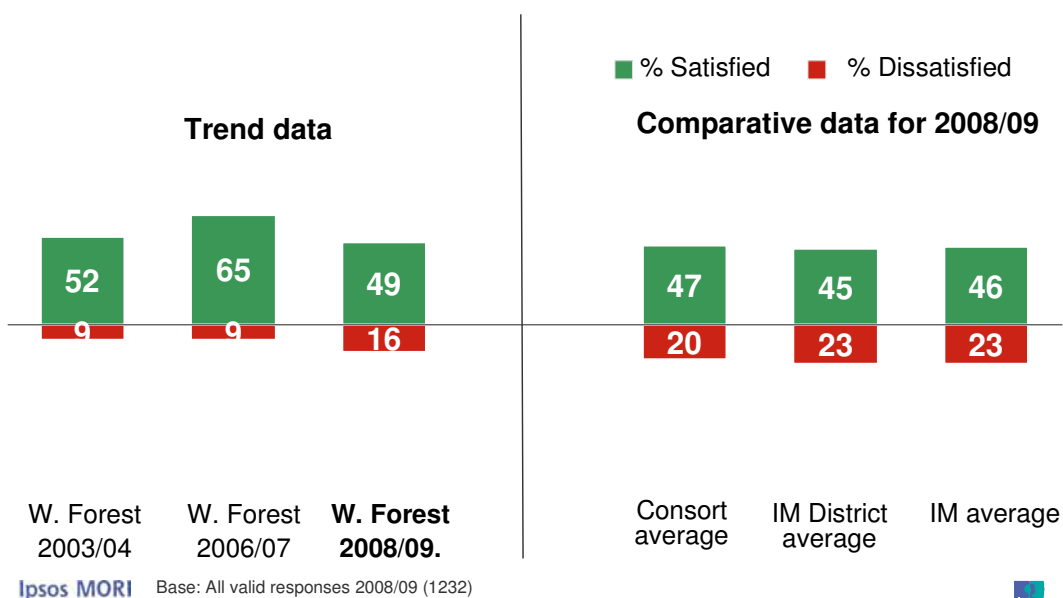
Additional charts have been produced to provide more details on service satisfaction and usage, including how the area compares to others, and how perceptions have changed over time.

Culture and recreation

Sports and leisure

Sports and leisure: Contextual data

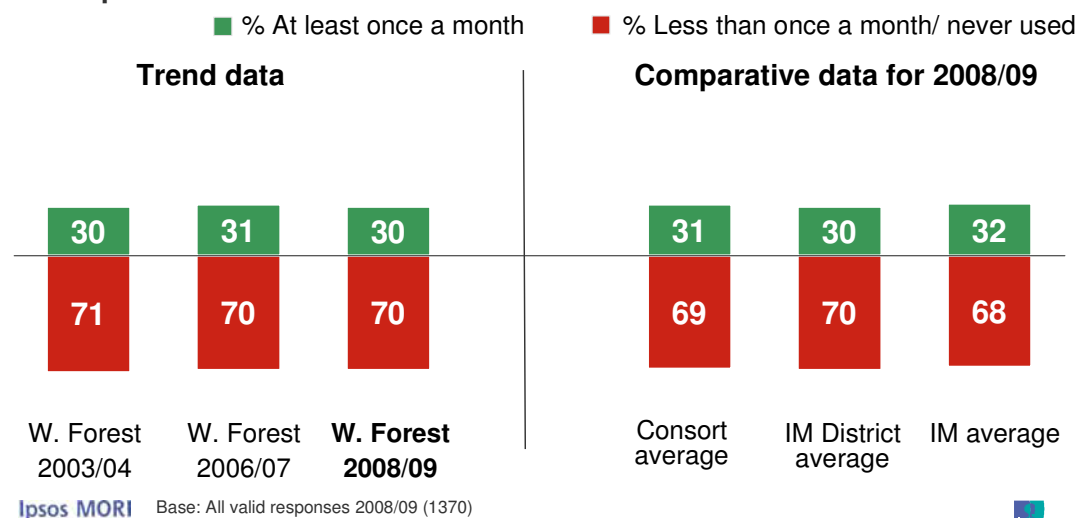
Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... sport/ leisure facilities?



Sports/ leisure facilities usage: Contextual data

Q Please indicate how frequently you have used the following public services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council

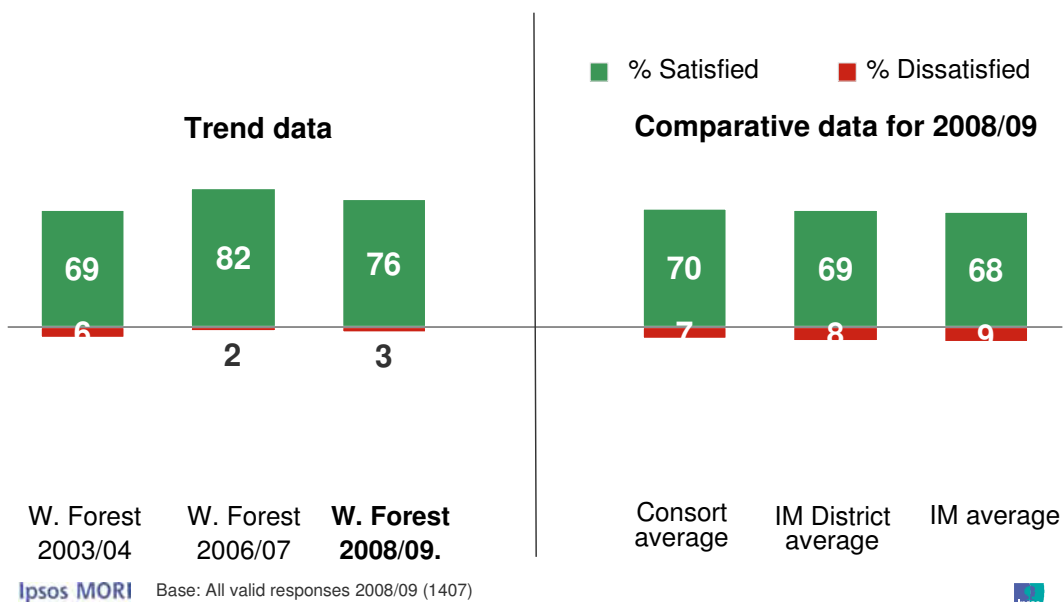
Sports/ leisure facilities



Libraries

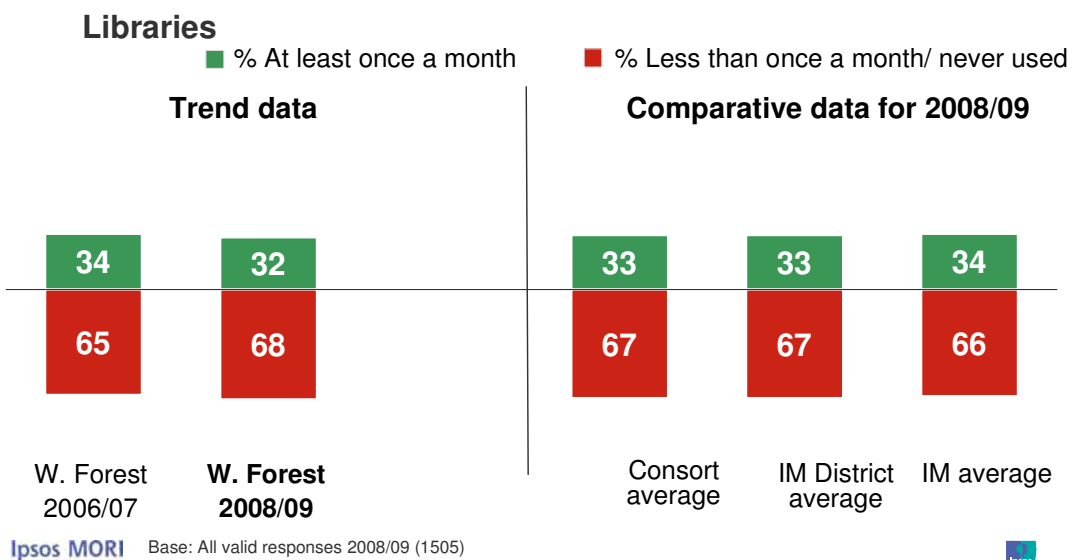
Libraries: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... libraries?



Libraries usage: Contextual data

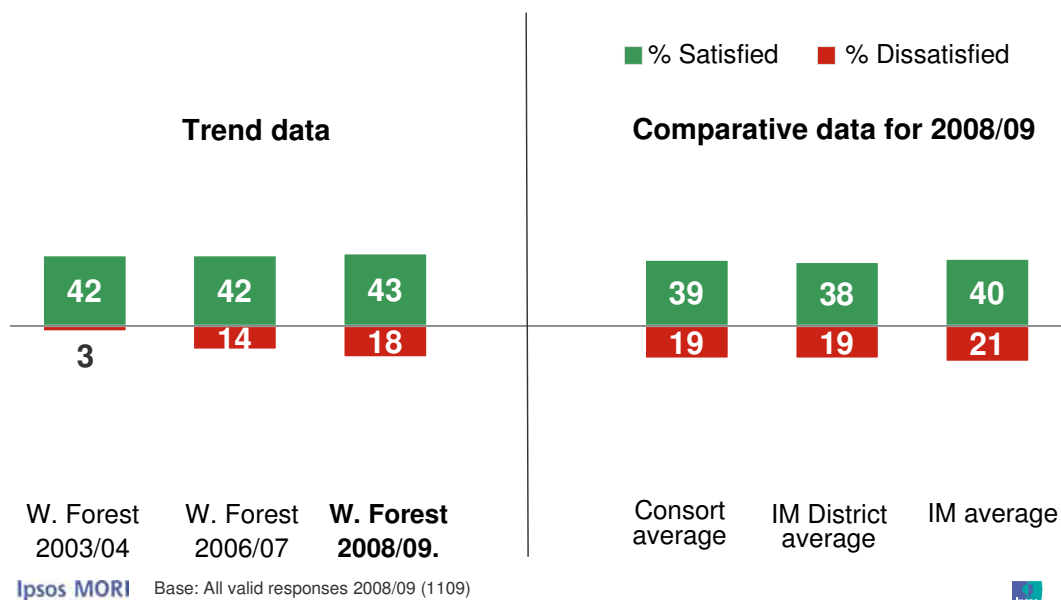
Q Please indicate how frequently you have used the following public services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council



Museums/ galleries

Museums/ galleries: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... museums/ galleries?



Museums/ galleries usage: Contextual data

Q Please indicate how frequently you have used the following public services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council

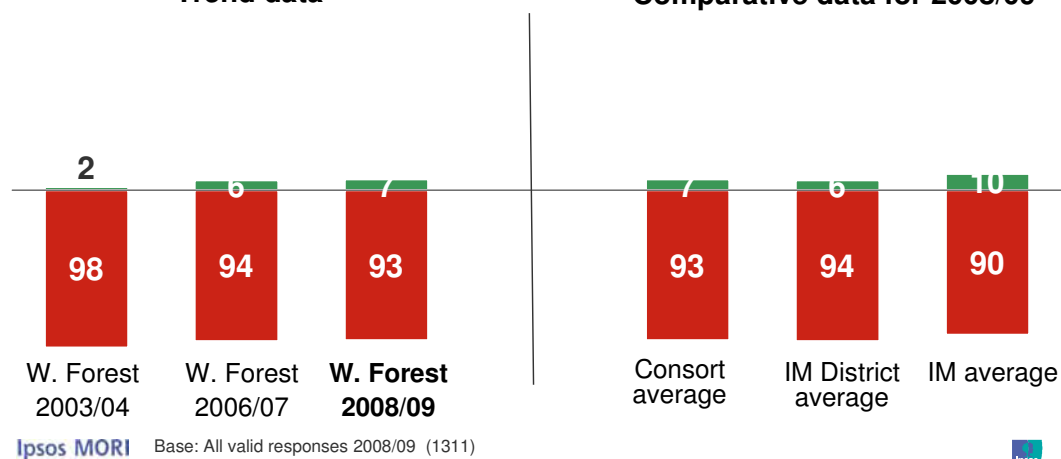
Museums/ galleries

■ % At least once a month

■ % Less than once a month/ never used

Trend data

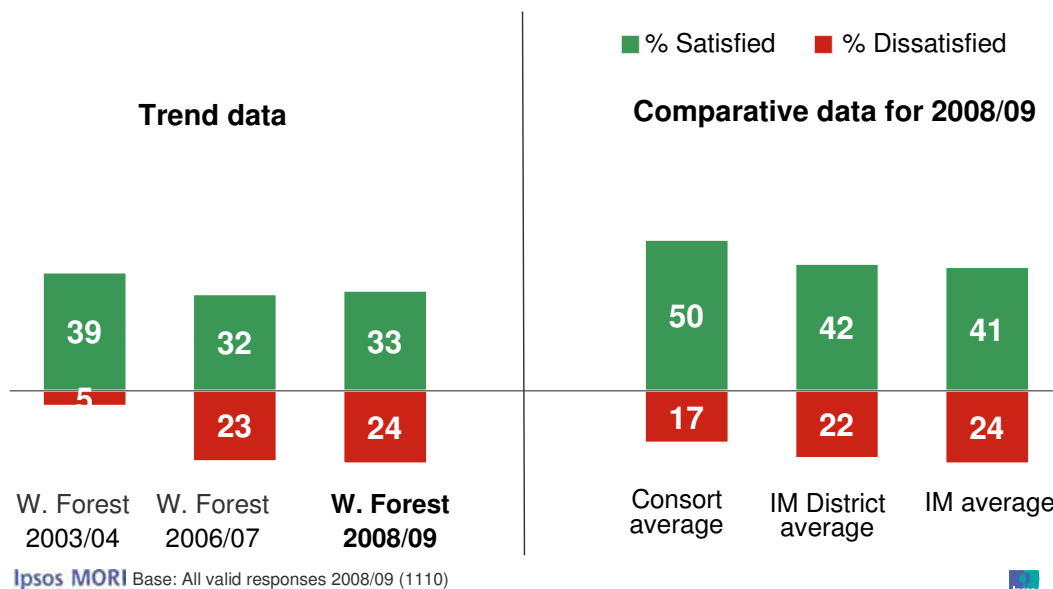
Comparative data for 2008/09



Theatres/ concert halls

Theatres/ concert halls: Contextual data

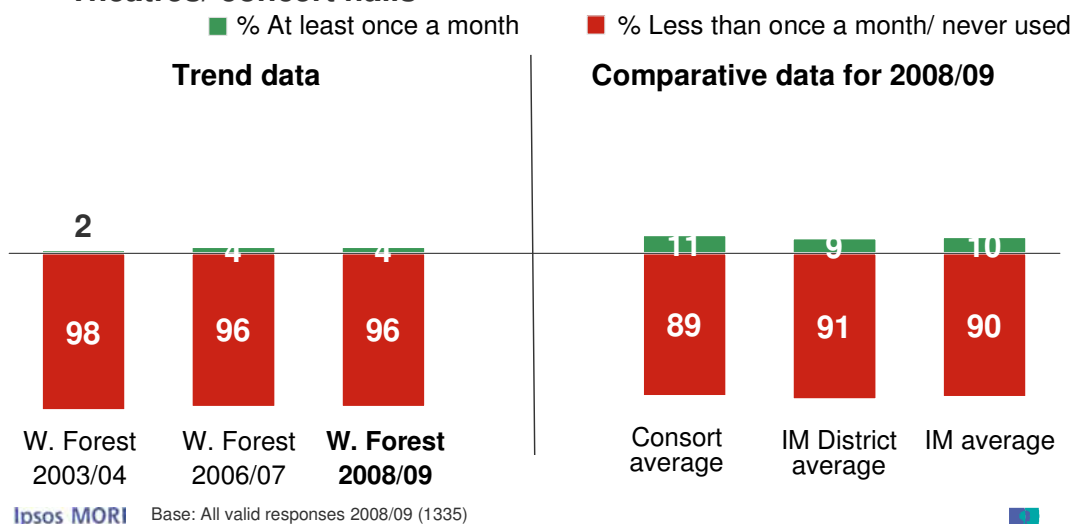
Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... theatres/ concert halls?



Theatres/ concert halls usage: Contextual data

Q Please indicate how frequently you have used the following public services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council

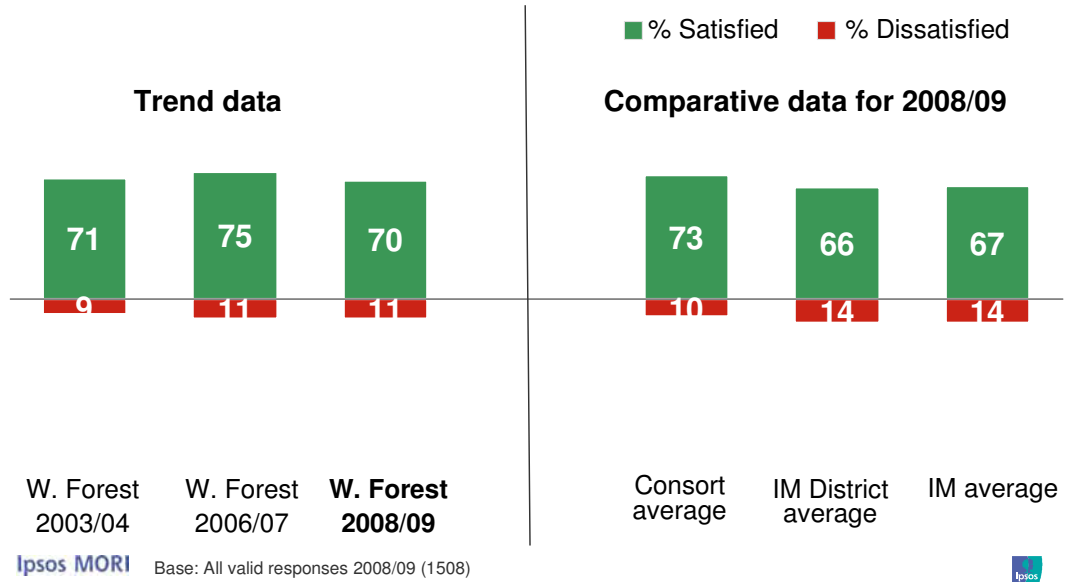
Theatres/ concert halls



Parks and open spaces

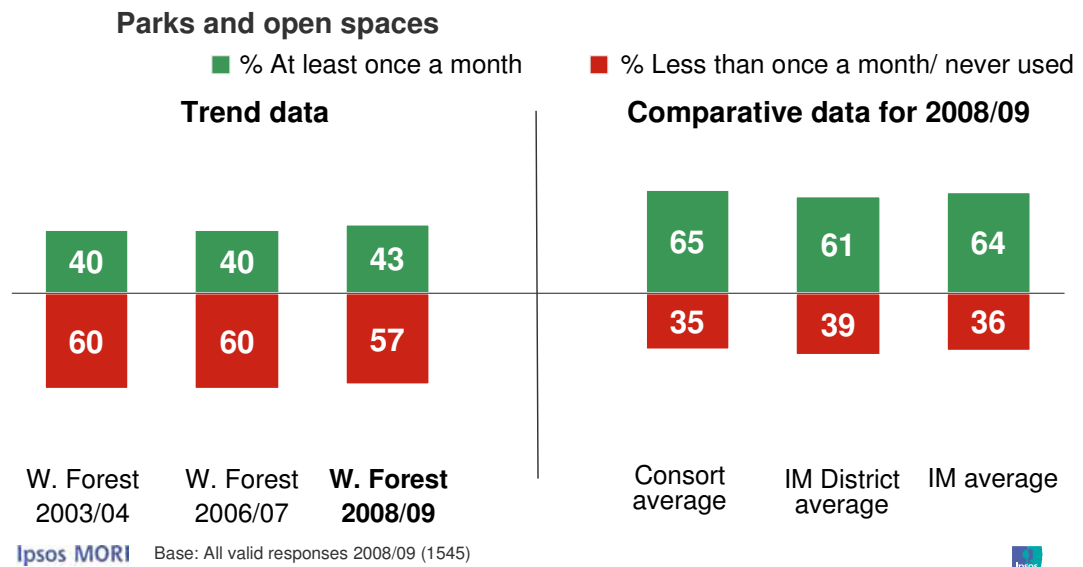
Parks and open spaces: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... parks and open spaces?



Parks and open spaces usage: Contextual data

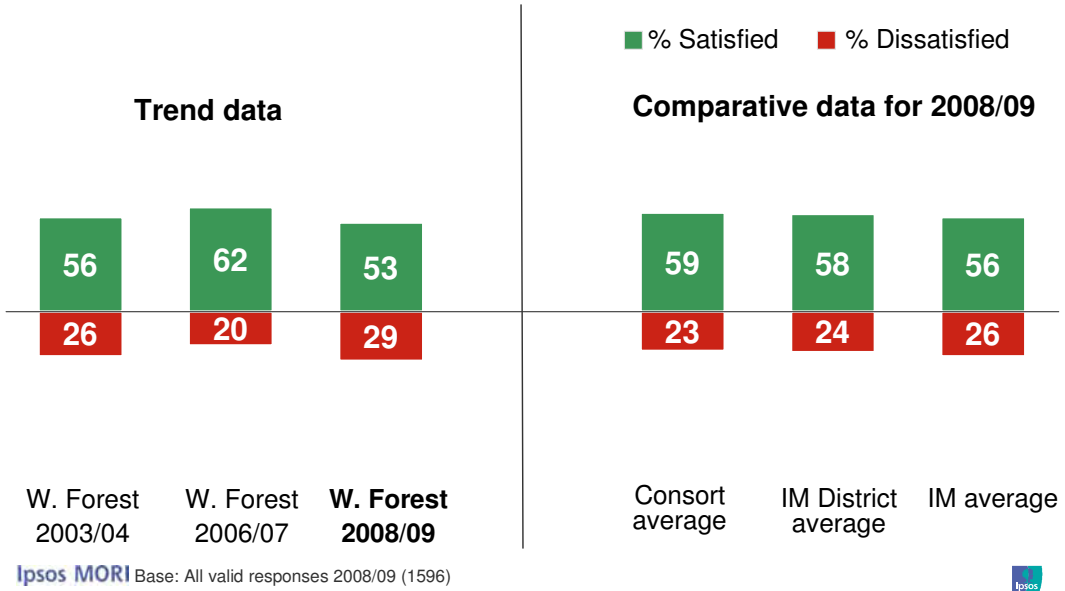
Q Please indicate how frequently you have used the following public services provided or supported by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council



Satisfaction with environmental services

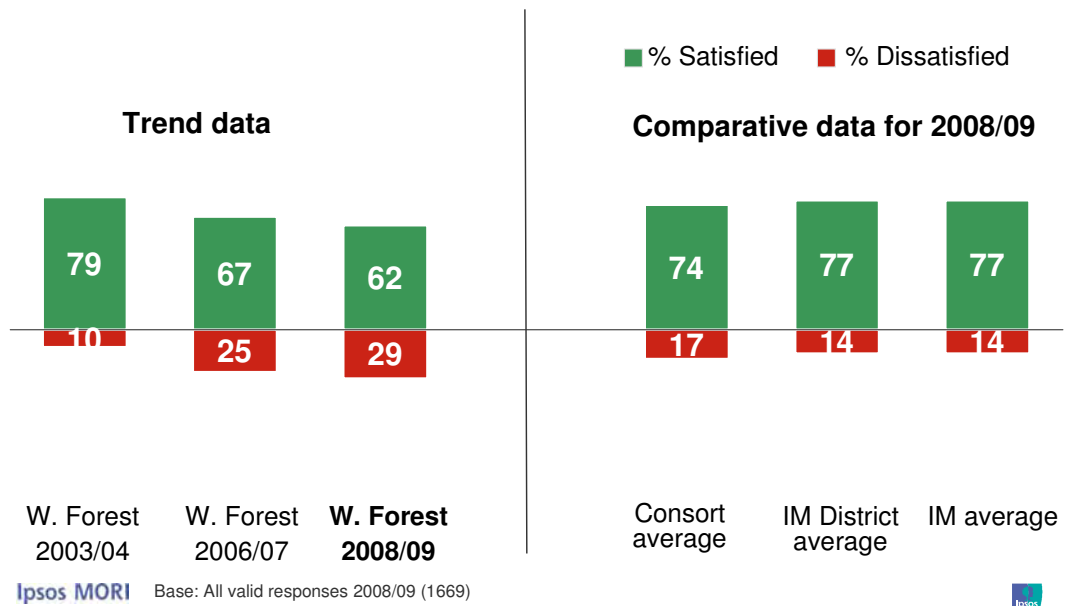
Keeping land clear: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... keeping public land clear of litter and refuse?



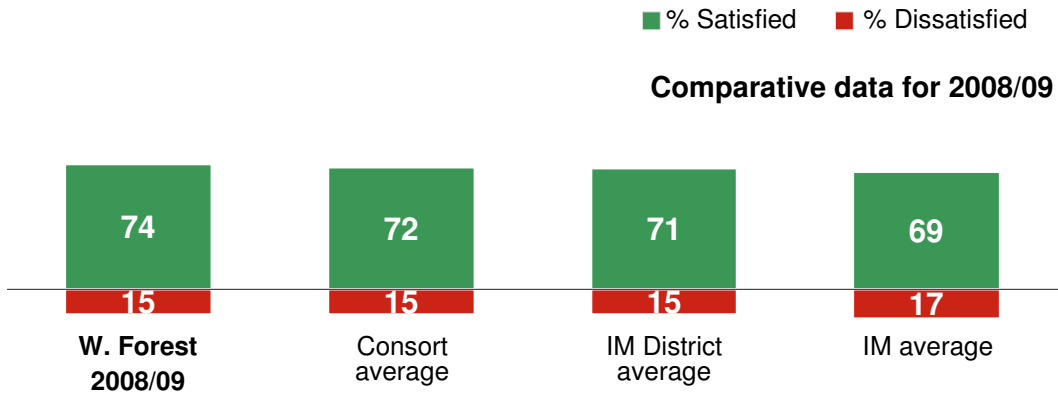
Refuse collections: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... refuse collection?



Doorstep recycling: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... doorstep recycling?

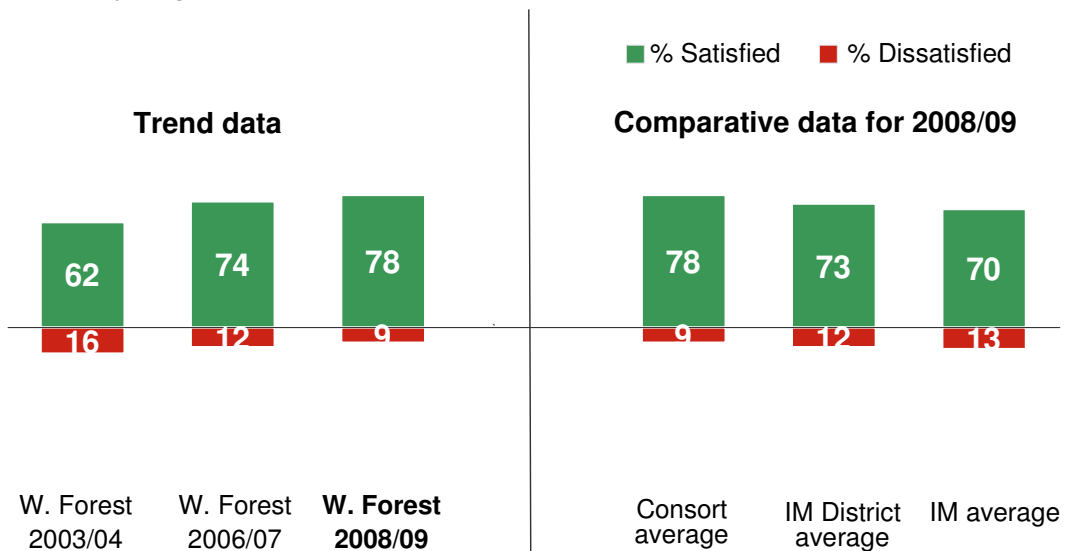


Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1589)



Local tips/ recycling centres: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... local tips/ household waste recycling centres?



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1518)



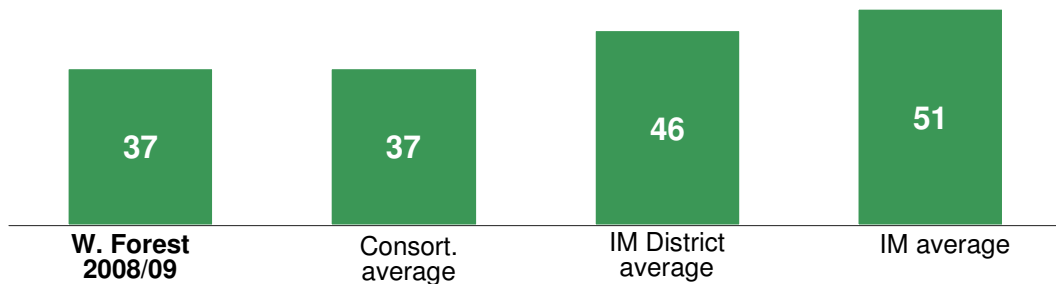
Local transport

Local transport information: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... local transport information?

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied

Comparative data for 2008/09



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1247)

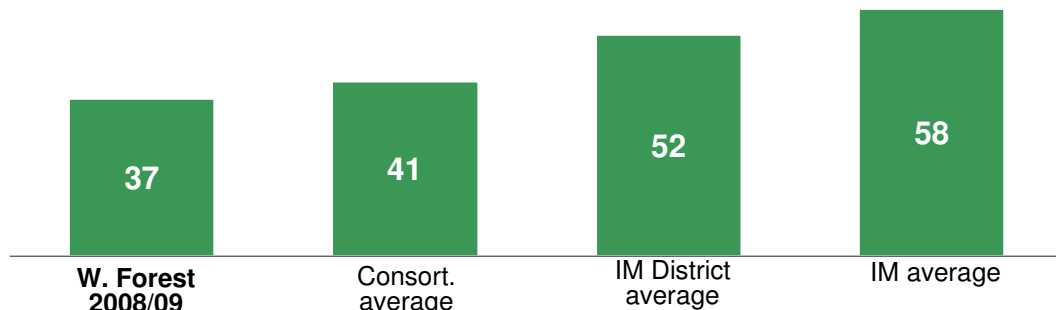


Local bus services: Contextual data

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with... local bus services?

■ % Satisfied ■ % Dissatisfied

Comparative data for 2008/09



Ipsos MORI Base: All valid responses 2008/09 (1255)

