



Harlow Council

2014 BUDGET CONSULTATION SUMMARY RESULTS

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Harlow
Council
Working together for Harlow

Final - September 2014

Foreword

1,029 respondents took part in Harlow Council's budget consultation. There were two parts to the consultation – 489 surveys from randomly selected homes were completed which gives a statistically reliable sample of households in Harlow. A further 540 surveys were completed online and on paper by other residents or groups who wanted to have a say.

All of these responses will help the Council to determine the areas in which it should prioritise funding for and where it should focus its attention on helping to save over £5.3 million during the next four years. The Council will take all findings into consideration when it comes to agree its budget for 2015/16 in January 2015 and in subsequent years.

Summary of findings:

A: Discretionary services:

Discretionary services are the things the Council is not legally obliged to provide. The discretionary services which received the highest scores were:

- i. Parks, playgrounds and green spaces
- ii. Regeneration of the town
- iii. (Reducing) anti-social behaviour

The discretionary services which scored the lowest (in order of lowest score first) were:

- i. Harlow Youth Council
- ii. Sports and Leisure
- iii. The Playhouse
- iv. Paddling Pools
- v. (Grants to the) voluntary and charity sector

B: Statutory services:

Statutory services are the things the Council has to provide by law. However, the Council is able to provide these to differing levels providing it meets its legal duties. The statutory services which received the highest scores were:

- i. Road and pavement repairs
- ii. Street cleaning
- iii. Housing need

The statutory services which scored the lowest (in order of lowest score first) were:

- i. Local Council Tax Support
- ii. Planning
- iii. Licensing
- iv. Revenues & Benefits Administration

C: Additional Services / Comments:

Respondents were asked to comment on whether there was currently anything the Council does not provide but they think they should. A total of 397 comments (including multiple

comments from individual respondents) were received. The top suggestions / comments coming back from respondents (jointly for both parts of the consultation) were:

| | Theme | Number | % responses |
|----|---|--------|-------------|
| 1. | Street lights (revert part night lighting) | 36 | 9.2% |
| 2. | Free garden waste collection | 29 | 7.4% |
| 3. | Youth services (provision of) | 25 | 6.4% |
| 4. | Travellers (regulation of unauthorised traveller encampments) | 13 | 3.3% |
| 5. | Repair roads | 12 | 3.1% |

D: Council Tax:

When asked if Council Tax should increase, stay the same or reduce:

- 50% of household respondents feel that Council Tax levels should stay the same, 16% would agree to an increase but 34% would favour a decrease.
- 39% of the open survey respondents feel that Council tax levels should stay the same, 39% would agree to an increase but 22% would favour a decrease.

E: Areas for improvement:

For both the household survey and open survey the top areas which were cited as the most in need of improvement are:

% of cases – most important / in need of improving:

| | % of cases (Household Survey) | | % of cases (Open Survey) | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | Most Important | Needs Improving | Most Important | Needs Improving |
| I. Road and pavement repairs | 28% | 54% | 28% | 56% |
| II. Traffic congestion | 16% | 39% | 22% | 43% |
| III. Affordable decent housing | 33% | 33% | 35% | 36% |

F: Satisfaction with the Council / Value for Money:

- 46 per cent of household respondents were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Harlow Council.
- 33 per cent of household respondents stated that they either tend to agree or strongly agreed that Harlow Council provides value for money.
- 41 per cent of the open survey respondents stated they were very or fairly satisfied with Harlow Council.
- 34 per cent of the open survey respondents stated that they either tend to agree or strongly agreed that Harlow Council provides value for money.

1.0 QUESTION: The Council provides a number of discretionary services. Please state which services you believe should cease being provided, be reduced, stay the same, or increase in terms of the things they provide.

The below tables provide a ranked order for the overall preference of services amongst (Strand A) household survey, and (Strand B) open self-selecting survey.

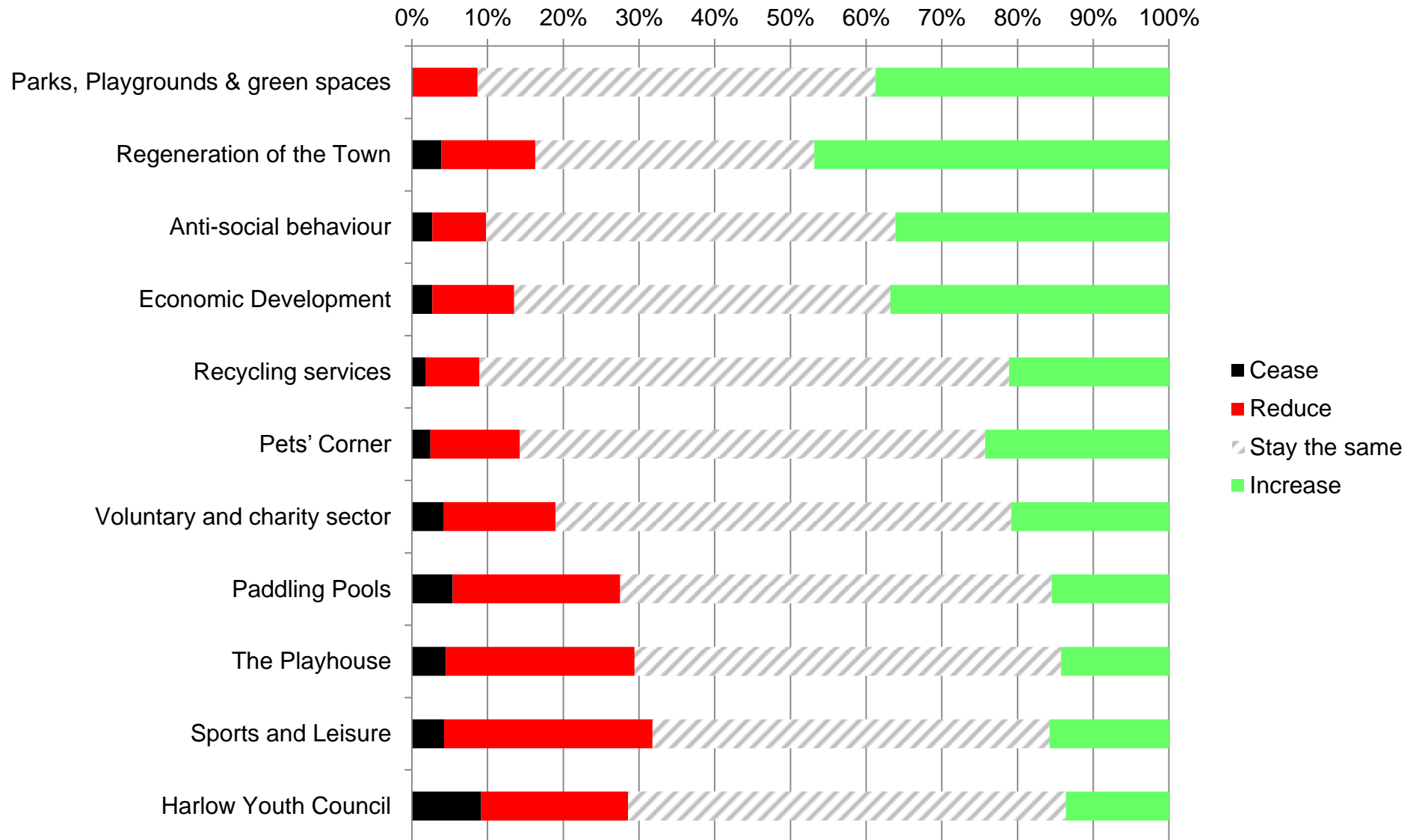
Strand A:

| | Score | Cease | Reduce | Stay the same | Increase | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 1 Parks, Playgrounds & green spaces | 139 | 1 | 39 | 243 | 179 | Positive score |
| 2 Regeneration of the Town | 122 | 18 | 57 | 169 | 214 | |
| 3 Anti-social behaviour | 107 | 12 | 32 | 245 | 164 | |
| 4 Economic Development | 94 | 12 | 49 | 227 | 168 | |
| 5 Recycling services | 48 | 8 | 33 | 321 | 97 | |
| 6 Pets' Corner | 35 | 11 | 55 | 284 | 112 | |
| 7 Voluntary and charity sector | -10 | 19 | 68 | 275 | 95 | Negative score |
| 8 Paddling Pools | -80 | 25 | 102 | 263 | 71 | |
| 9 The Playhouse | -90 | 21 | 114 | 258 | 66 | |
| 10 Sports and Leisure | -93 | 19 | 126 | 241 | 72 | |
| 11 Harlow Youth Council | -109 | 42 | 88 | 263 | 62 | |

Strand B:

| | Score | Cease | Reduce | Stay the same | Increase | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 1 Parks, Playgrounds & green spaces | 105 | 1 | 38 | 345 | 145 | Positive score |
| 2 Regeneration of the Town | 93 | 23 | 69 | 216 | 208 | |
| 3 Anti-social behaviour | 52 | 10 | 70 | 302 | 142 | |
| 4 Recycling services | -32 | 17 | 76 | 351 | 78 | Negative score |
| 5 Economic Development | -47 | 22 | 112 | 271 | 109 | |
| 6 Pets' Corner | -81 | 53 | 66 | 318 | 91 | |
| 7 Sports and Leisure | -177 | 44 | 152 | 266 | 63 | |
| 8 The Playhouse | -198 | 93 | 103 | 244 | 91 | |
| 9 Paddling Pools | -232 | 83 | 123 | 264 | 57 | |
| 10 Voluntary and charity sector | -237 | 55 | 174 | 250 | 47 | |
| 11 Harlow Youth Council | -256 | 71 | 161 | 240 | 47 | |

Overview of results for Discretionary Services – Strand A responses only:



2.0 QUESTION: Please state which services you believe should be reduced, stay the same, or increase in terms of the things they provide

The below tables provide a ranked order for the overall preference of services amongst (Strand A) household survey, and (Strand B) open self-selecting survey.

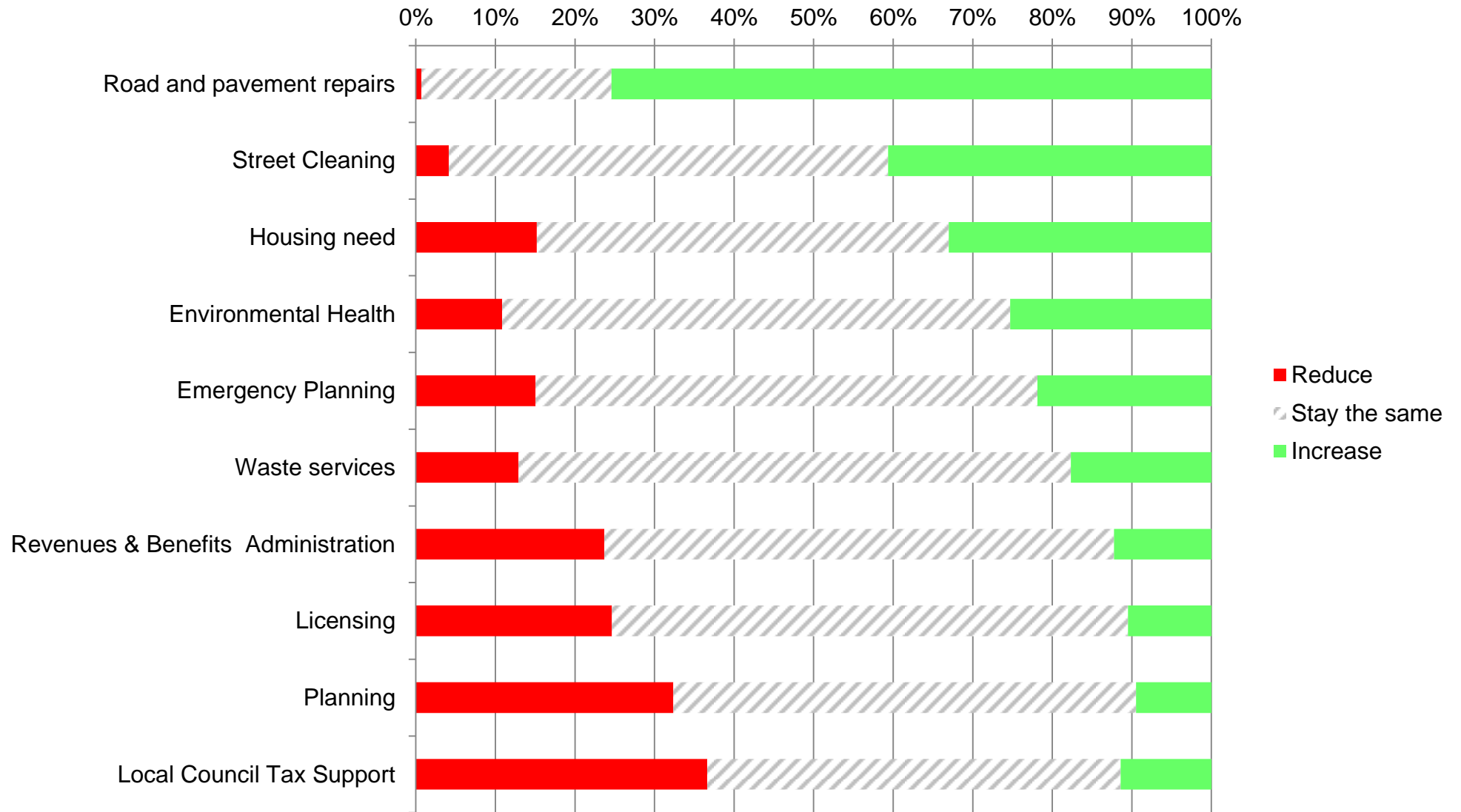
Strand A:

| | Score | Reduce | Stay the same | Increase | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 1 Road and pavement repairs | 355 | 3 | 114 | 358 | Positive score |
| 2 Street Cleaning | 174 | 20 | 263 | 194 | |
| 3 Housing need | 85 | 72 | 246 | 157 | |
| 4 Environmental Health | 69 | 52 | 304 | 121 | |
| 5 Emergency Planning | 33 | 71 | 300 | 104 | |
| 6 Waste services | 23 | 61 | 330 | 84 | |
| 7 Revenues & Benefits Administration | -53 | 110 | 297 | 57 | Negative score |
| 8 Licensing | -67 | 116 | 307 | 50 | |
| 9 Planning | -107 | 152 | 273 | 44 | |
| 10 Local Council Tax Support | -117 | 170 | 242 | 53 | |

Strand B:

| | Score | Reduce | Stay the same | Increase | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 1 Road and pavement repairs | 335 | 9 | 162 | 344 | Positive score |
| 2 Street Cleaning | 132 | 15 | 353 | 147 | |
| 3 Housing need | 58 | 115 | 226 | 173 | |
| 4 Waste services | 32 | 32 | 420 | 64 | |
| 5 Environmental Health | -30 | 73 | 398 | 43 | Negative score |
| 6 Planning | -148 | 176 | 303 | 28 | |
| 7 Emergency Planning | -149 | 169 | 322 | 20 | |
| 8 Local Council Tax Support | -160 | 200 | 278 | 40 | |
| 9 Revenues & Benefits Administration | -186 | 209 | 283 | 23 | |
| 10 Licensing | -201 | 211 | 291 | 10 | |

Overview of results for Statutory Services – Strand A responses only:



QUESTION – Would your household be in favour of increasing Council Tax, prefer to see the cost of Council Tax stay the same, or for Council Tax to be reduced?

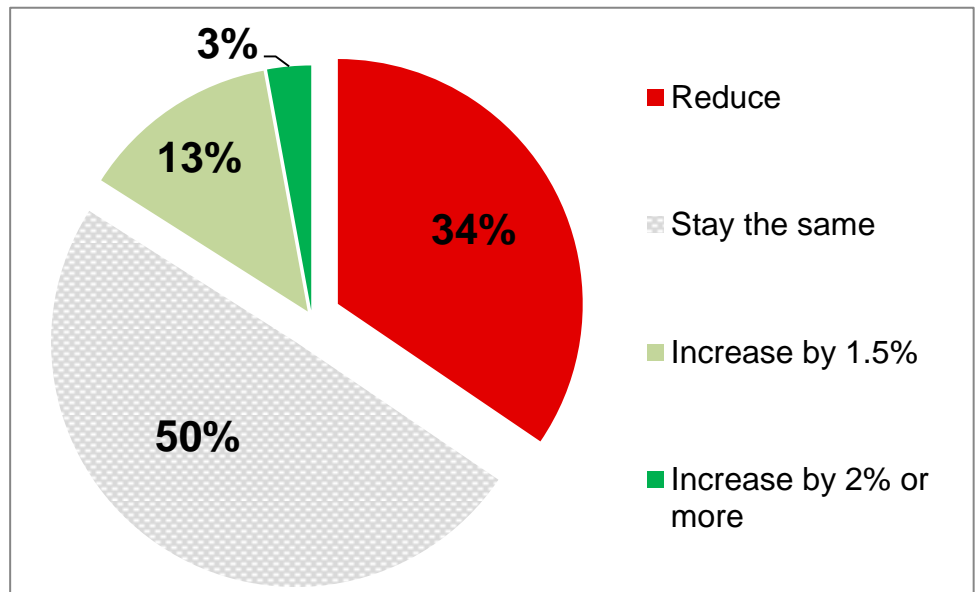
The pie charts below represent the responses of participants to the question of increasing, reducing or maintaining council tax levels from (Strand A) the household survey, and (Strand B) the open survey.

Strand A: Weighted response: 472

34% stated that they would like to see Council tax be reduced.

50% stated that they would like to see it stay the same.

16% stated that they would be willing to see Council tax increased by 1.5% or more to help fund the Council's services.

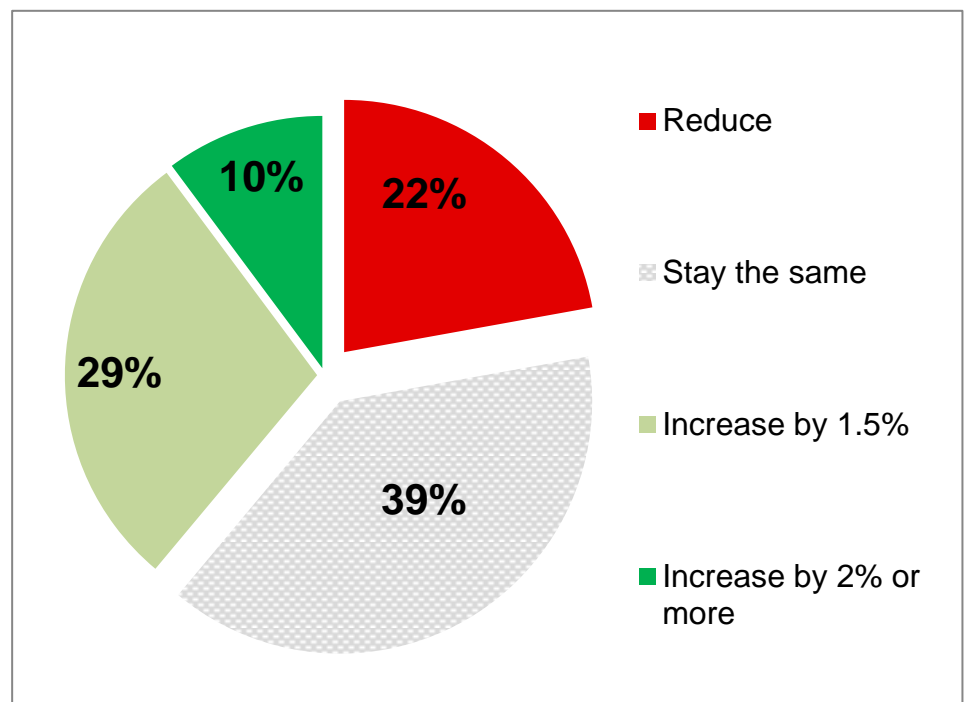


Strand B: Unweighted response: 501

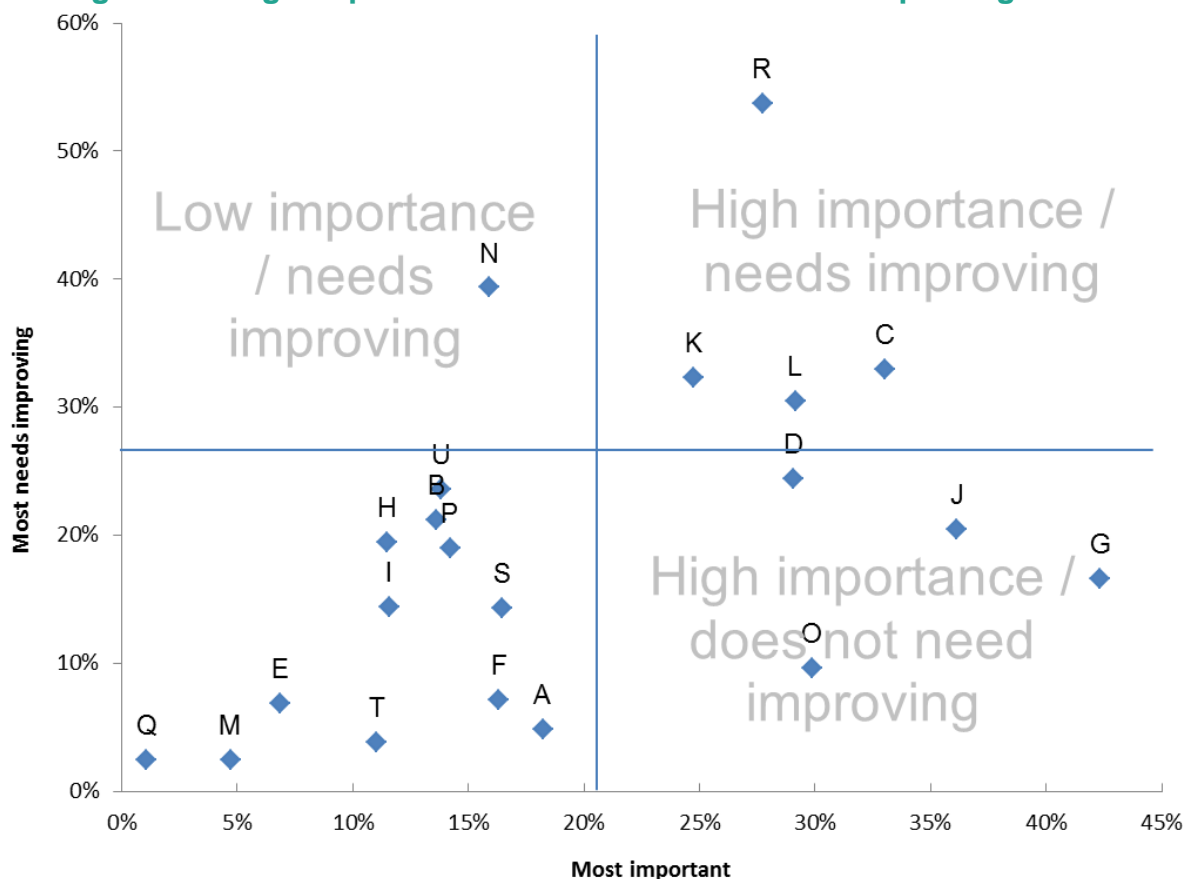
22% stated that they would like to see Council tax be reduced.

39% stated that they would like to see it stay the same.

39% stated that they would be willing to see Council tax increased by 1.5% or more to help fund the Council's services. – Over twice the rate stated by the Strand A survey.



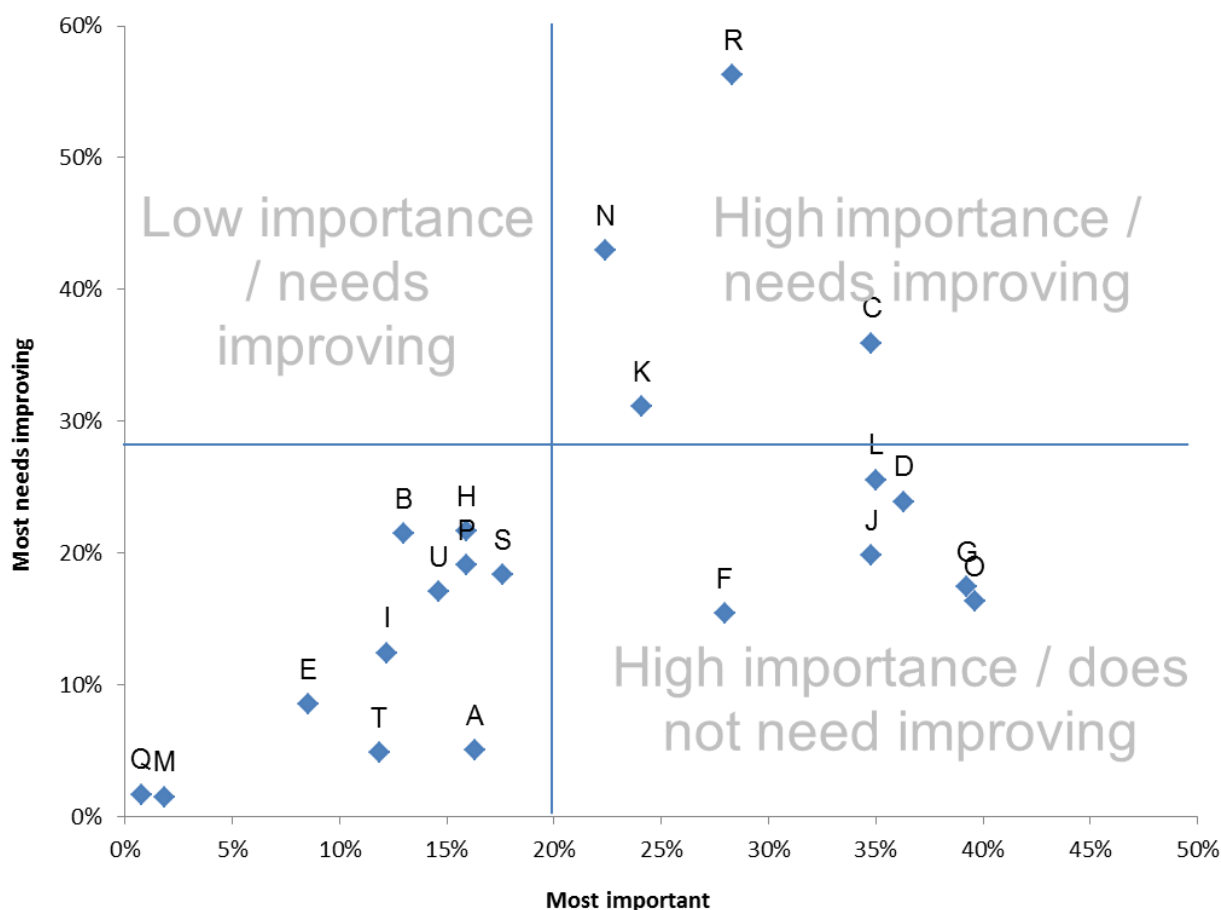
QUESTION: Thinking generally, which of the things below... are most important in making Harlow a good place to live / are most in need of improving?



Strand A

| | | Most Important | | Most needs improving | |
|---|---|----------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | | # | % Cases | # | % Cases |
| A | Access to nature | 89 | 18% | 24 | 5% |
| B | Activities for teenagers | 67 | 14% | 104 | 21% |
| C | Affordable decent housing | 162 | 33% | 161 | 33% |
| D | Clean streets | 142 | 29% | 119 | 24% |
| E | Community activities | 34 | 7% | 34 | 7% |
| F | Cultural facilities e.g. libraries, museums, theatres | 80 | 16% | 35 | 7% |
| G | Good schools | 207 | 42% | 81 | 17% |
| H | Facilities for young people | 56 | 12% | 95 | 19% |
| I | Facilities for older people | 57 | 12% | 70 | 14% |
| J | Health services | 177 | 36% | 100 | 20% |
| K | Local Job prospects | 121 | 25% | 158 | 32% |
| L | The level of crime | 143 | 29% | 149 | 30% |
| M | The level of pollution | 23 | 5% | 12 | 2% |
| N | The level of traffic congestion | 78 | 16% | 192 | 39% |
| O | Parks and open spaces | 146 | 30% | 47 | 10% |
| P | Public transport | 70 | 14% | 93 | 19% |
| Q | Race relations | 5 | 1% | 12 | 2% |
| R | Road and pavement repairs | 136 | 28% | 263 | 54% |
| S | Shopping facilities | 81 | 16% | 70 | 14% |
| T | Sports and leisure facilities | 54 | 11% | 19 | 4% |
| U | Wage levels and local cost of living | 68 | 14% | 116 | 24% |

QUESTION: Continued...



Strand B

| | | Most Important | | Most needs improving | |
|---|---|----------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | | # | % Cases | # | % Cases |
| A | Access to nature | 88 | 16% | 27 | 5% |
| B | Activities for teenagers | 70 | 13% | 116 | 21% |
| C | Affordable decent housing | 188 | 35% | 194 | 36% |
| D | Clean streets | 196 | 36% | 129 | 24% |
| E | Community activities | 46 | 9% | 46 | 9% |
| F | Cultural facilities e.g. libraries, museums, theatres | 151 | 28% | 83 | 15% |
| G | Good schools | 212 | 39% | 94 | 17% |
| H | Facilities for young people | 86 | 16% | 117 | 22% |
| I | Facilities for older people | 66 | 12% | 67 | 12% |
| J | Health services | 188 | 35% | 107 | 20% |
| K | Local Job prospects | 130 | 24% | 168 | 31% |
| L | The level of crime | 189 | 35% | 138 | 26% |
| M | The level of pollution | 10 | 2% | 8 | 1% |
| N | The level of traffic congestion | 121 | 22% | 232 | 43% |
| O | Parks and open spaces | 214 | 40% | 88 | 16% |
| P | Public transport | 86 | 16% | 103 | 19% |
| Q | Race relations | 4 | 1% | 9 | 2% |
| R | Road and pavement repairs | 153 | 28% | 304 | 56% |
| S | Shopping facilities | 95 | 18% | 99 | 18% |
| T | Sports and leisure facilities | 64 | 12% | 26 | 5% |
| U | Wage levels and local cost of living | 79 | 15% | 92 | 17% |

QUESTION: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Harlow Council?

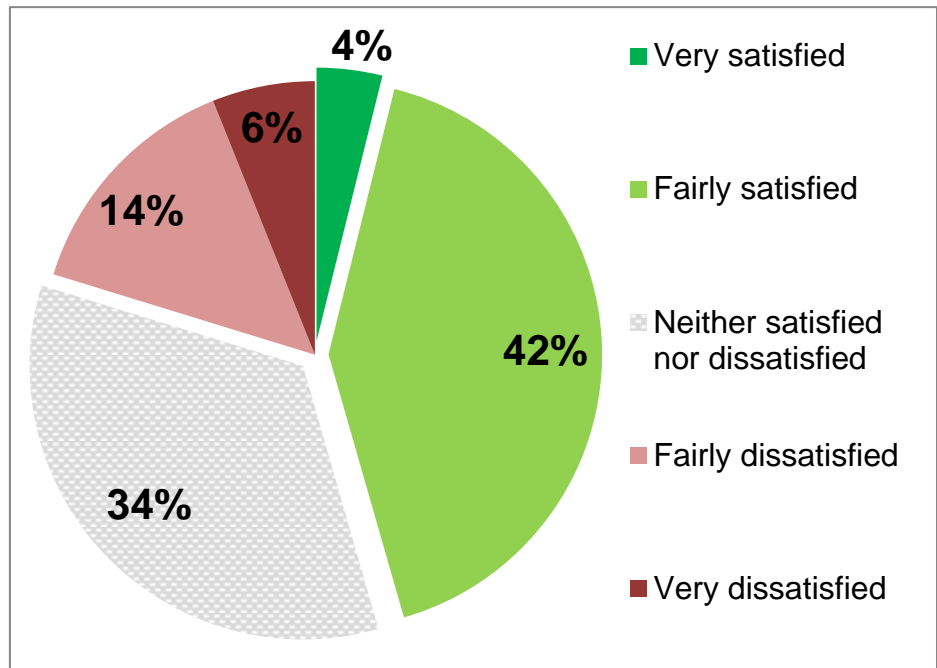
The pie charts below represent the responses of participants to the question “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Harlow Council?” amongst (Strand A) household survey, and (Strand B) open survey.

Strand A: Weighted response: 465 (excludes ‘Don’t Know’)

46% stated they were very or fairly satisfied with Harlow Council.

34% stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with Harlow Council.

20% stated they were fairly or very dissatisfied with Harlow Council.

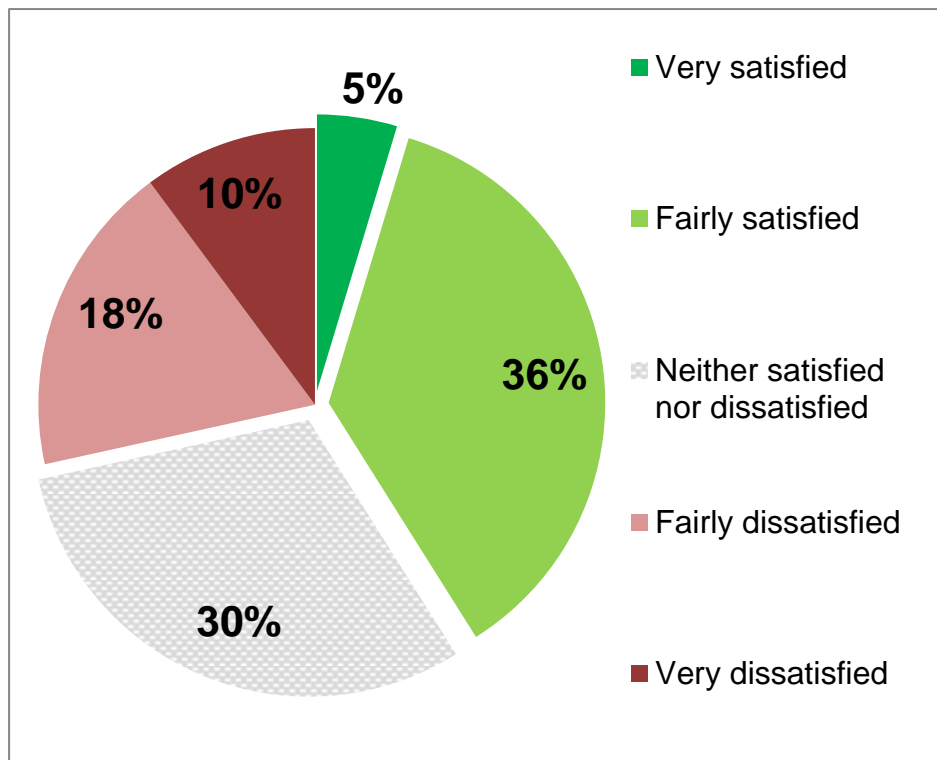


Strand B: Unweighted response: 492 (excludes Don't Know)

41% stated they were very or fairly satisfied with Harlow Council.

30% stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with Harlow Council.

28% stated they were fairly or very dissatisfied with Harlow Council.



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Harlow Council provides value for money?

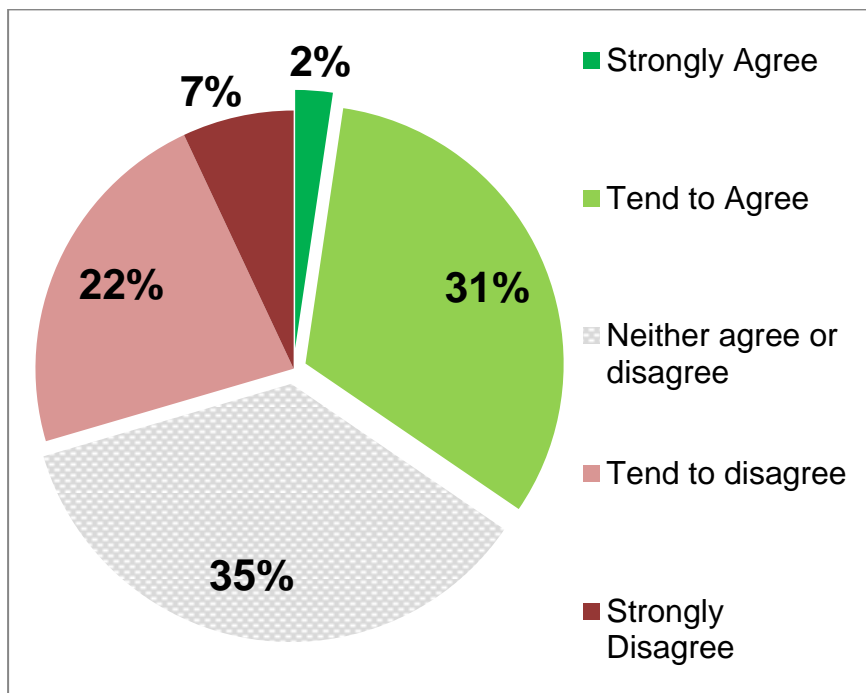
The pie charts below represent the responses of participants to the question “To what extent do you agree or disagree that Harlow Council provides value for money?” amongst (Strand A) the household survey, and (Strand B) the open survey.

Strand A: Weighted response: 448 (excludes ‘Don’t Know’)

33% agreed that Harlow Council provides value for money.

35% stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed that the Council provides value for money.

29% strongly disagreed or tended to disagree that the Council provides value for money.



Strand B: Unweighted response: 487 (excludes ‘Don’t Know’)

34% agreed that Harlow Council provides value for money.

31% stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed that the Council provides value for money.

35% strongly disagreed or tended to disagree that the Council provides value for money.

