



CITIZENS' PANEL RESULTS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

Budget Consultation

Introduction

The Council has a Citizens' Panel, which contains a representative sample of people living in the District of Stratford-on-Avon. By surveying this Panel, it is possible to obtain views and opinions broadly representative of local residents. The following results are from the January/February 2015 Panel survey.

Methodology

522 questionnaires were returned (144 via email and 378 by post) from a mailing to 1228 residents in January 2015 with a deadline of 4th February 2015. 17 questionnaires were returned not completed for a variety of reasons, i.e. moved away. This represents a response rate of 43.1%.

Results of the Budget Consultation

Usage of SDC services

Respondents were given a list of services with descriptions. 83% of respondents have used SDC car parks in the last twelve months. Seven in ten residents use the parks, playing fields & open spaces. The largest increase on 2013 was for Parks, playing fields and open spaces services up from 67% to 72%.

Table 1:

	2011	2013	2014	2015
Car Parks	86	86	86	83
Parks, Playing Fields & Open Spaces	70	69	67	72
Public Conveniences	61	63	54	51
Community Leisure/Leisure Centres/Sports Facilities	40	37	34	36
Development Control & Planning	17	22	22	21
Environmental Health	10	10	8	12
Council Tax Enquiries	11	10	8	11
Housing	5	5	6	5
Benefits Enquiries	6	6	3	4
BASE:	(493)	(524)	(416)	(507)

Level of agreement with statements about Council Tax

Residents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "It is important for the District Council to improve current levels of priority services, even if this means removal of some other services". 41% were in agreement with the statement as opposed to 29% who disagreed, a decrease of 10 percentage points on last year. The agreement figure is the lowest compared with the previous three surveys,

Table 2: "It is important for the District Council to improve current levels of priority services, even if this means removal of some other services"

	2011	2013	2014	2015
Strongly Agree / Agree	48	46	51	41
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24	27	30	30
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	28	27	19	29
BASE	(480)	(527)	(396)	(489)

The statement question "it is important for the District Council not to increase council tax by more than inflation, even if this means a reduction in the levels of some lower priority services" has been asked since 2003. Interestingly, the agreement figure to this statement has fallen for the first time in four surveys down from 78% to 69%. The disagreement level is at 21%, the highest since 2009.

Table 3: "It is important for the District Council not to increase council tax by more than inflation, even if this means a reduction in the levels of some lower priority services"

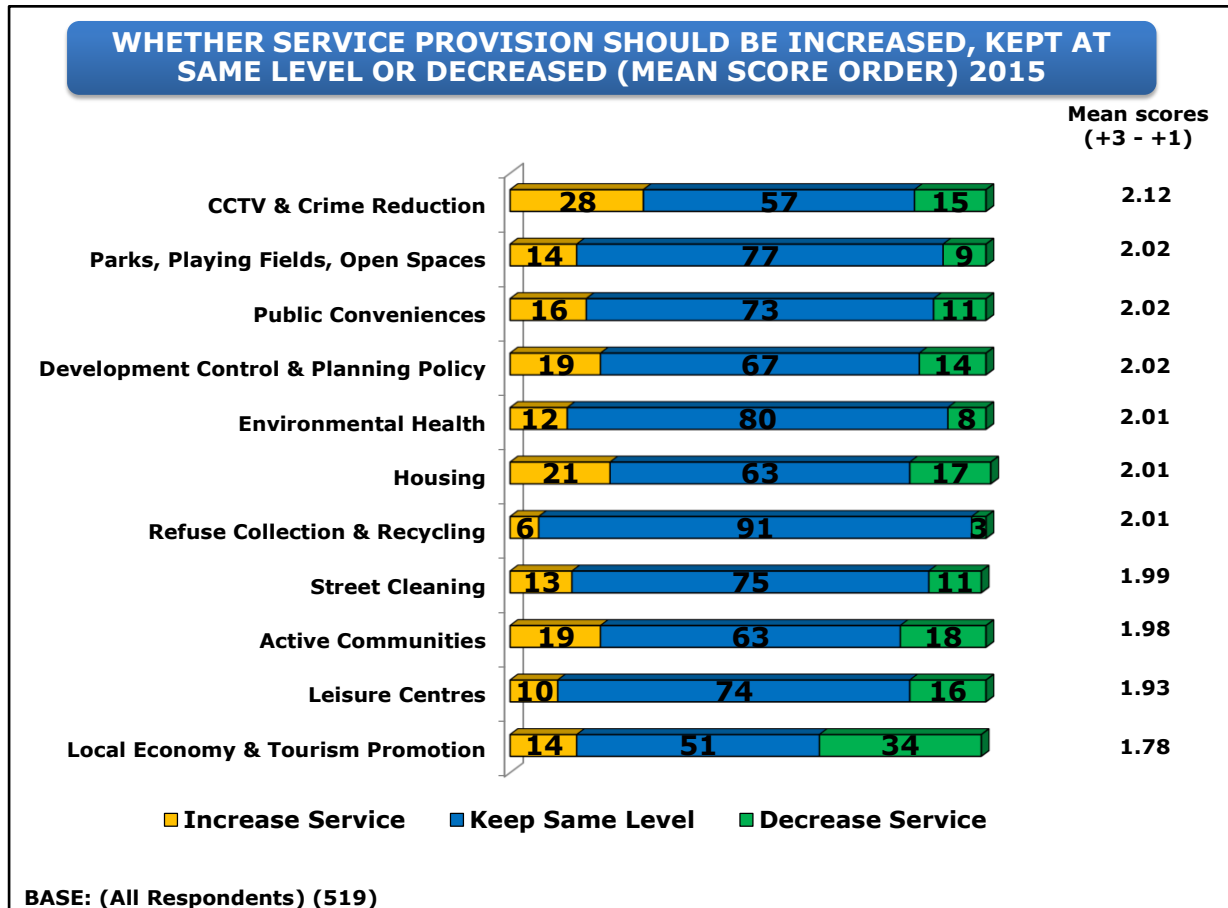
	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014	2015
Strongly Agree / Agree	56	61	77	77	78	69
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15	13	10	10	9	10
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	29	25	13	13	14	21
BASE	(322)	(474)	(498)	(537)	(399)	(508)

Spending on Services

Residents were given a description of the service alongside the cost as a share of the Band D council tax rate. They were given the current figure alongside that of 2013 and 2012 to show how it has increased or decreased in that period. They were asked if the provision of that service should be increased, kept at the same level, or decreased.

The CCTV and Crime Reduction service had the largest difference between those wanting an increase over a decrease (+13%), with Local Economy & Tourism Promotion having the largest difference between decrease and increase (-20%).

Chart 1:



CCTV and Crime Reduction rose the highest from 2.09 to 2.12, with a similar increase for Environmental Health & Licensing which had a rise in people wanting an increase in the service (albeit small) from a mean score of 1.99 to 2.01. Compared with 2014, the mean score for Development Control & Planning has decreased slightly. See table 4.

Table 4: Whether service provision should be increased, kept the same or decreased

	Mean Scores Over Time					
	2015	2014	2013	2011	2009	2007
CCTV & Crime Reduction - This relates to the provision of CCTV in the towns & larger villages within the District. Also working with partners to reduce crime & anti-social behaviour within the District. 2012-£3.14, 2013-£3.68, 2014-£3.02	2.12	2.09	2.03	2.10	1.88	1.91
Parks, Playing Fields & Open Spaces - This involves the management of parks, playing fields, & open spaces owned by the District Council, verge trimming & tree surgery. 2012-£5.36, 2013-£4.83, 2014-£4.74	2.02	2.07	2.04	1.97	1.99	1.93
Public Conveniences - This service concerns the provision of public conveniences throughout the District. 2012-£2.14, 2013-£1.51, 2014-£3.09	2.02	2.09	2.07	2.15	2.18	2.12
Development Control & Planning Policy - This service is responsible for the development of planning strategies & determining planning applications. It is also responsible for planning enforcement, conservation, & policy implementation. 2012-£25.13, 2013-£17.88, 2014-£17.85	2.02	2.11	1.97	1.93	1.87	1.78
Environmental Health & Licensing - Statutory function with responsibilities for the enforcement of a range of provisions concerned with the protection of public health & well-being, including food safety, pest control, licensing & health and safety. 2012-£7.16, 2013-£8.70, 2014-£8.13	2.01	1.99	2.03	1.98	2.01	2.02
Housing - This service fulfils the Council's strategic housing responsibility by working with housing associations to enable affordable accommodation within the District. This service also deals with the homelessness function. 2012-£12.31, 2013-£13.38, 2014-£12.52	2.01	2.06	2.04	2.22	2.09	2.02
Street Cleaning - This service relates to the cleaning of the streets throughout the whole of the District Area. 2012-£10.79, 2013-£11.99, 2014-£12.19	1.99	2.02	2.03	2.07	2.12	2.12
Refuse Collection and Recycling - This service involves the weekly collection of food waste & fortnightly collection of recycling & domestic waste. 2012-£25.94, 2013-£25.44, 2014-£25.07	2.01	2.05	2.02	2.04	2.07	2.17
Active Communities - Play schemes, school sports tournaments, physical activity opportunities for older people. 2012-£1.71, 2013-£1.31, 2014-£1.27	1.98	1.99	1.96	2.04	-	-
Leisure Centres - The provision & running of four Council leisure centres across the District, play areas & the Skate Park. 2012-£6.16, 2013-£9.21, 2014-£9.62	1.93	1.92	1.93	1.95	2.03	1.86
Local Economy & Tourism Promotion - This service relates to supporting business & the promotion of tourism throughout Stratford District. 2012-£1.39, 2013-£1.61, 2014-£2.02	1.78	1.83	1.87	2.04	1.85	1.73
Base	519	416	561	506	500	329

Level of Support for Various New Proposals

The following proposals were presented to residents in the questionnaire. They were asked to choose up to three options to support.

<p><u>Improvements to the Lifestyles Building, Alcester</u> - The Council is negotiating the managed transfer of the Greig Centre, Alcester to the Council's ownership. The proposal post this transfer would be to improve the current leisure facilities and to ensure that the Lifestyles centre became financially self-sufficient. £250,000 one-off</p>
<p><u>Core Strategy Development</u> - This item is unavoidable, the funding would enable the Council to implement the Core Strategy which determines development in a managed way throughout the district. The funding would also provide resources to meet the cost of producing and implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and the Site Allocations Plan. £320,000 over two years</p>
<p><u>Working with Troubled Families</u> - This funding would enable the Council to work closely in partnership with other agencies to work with Troubled families on issues including financial exclusion, domestic violence, anti-social behaviour. £34,000 per annum for three years</p>
<p><u>Empty Property Grants</u> - The Council is keen to bring empty properties throughout the District back into use. The scheme would provide grant funding in order for improvements to be made to properties in order that they are returned to the housing market. £100,000 per annum</p>
<p><u>Shared Services System Harmonisation</u> - The Council is working in partnership with other local authorities in order to deliver services more efficiently. This has enabled savings of £200,000 per annum to be achieved. In order to make larger savings it is necessary to make an investment in systems across our partnership. It is expected that this will generate savings significantly higher than this investment. £85,000 per annum</p>

Shared services systems harmonisation had the strongest support for three-quarters of respondents.

Table 5: Support for Proposals

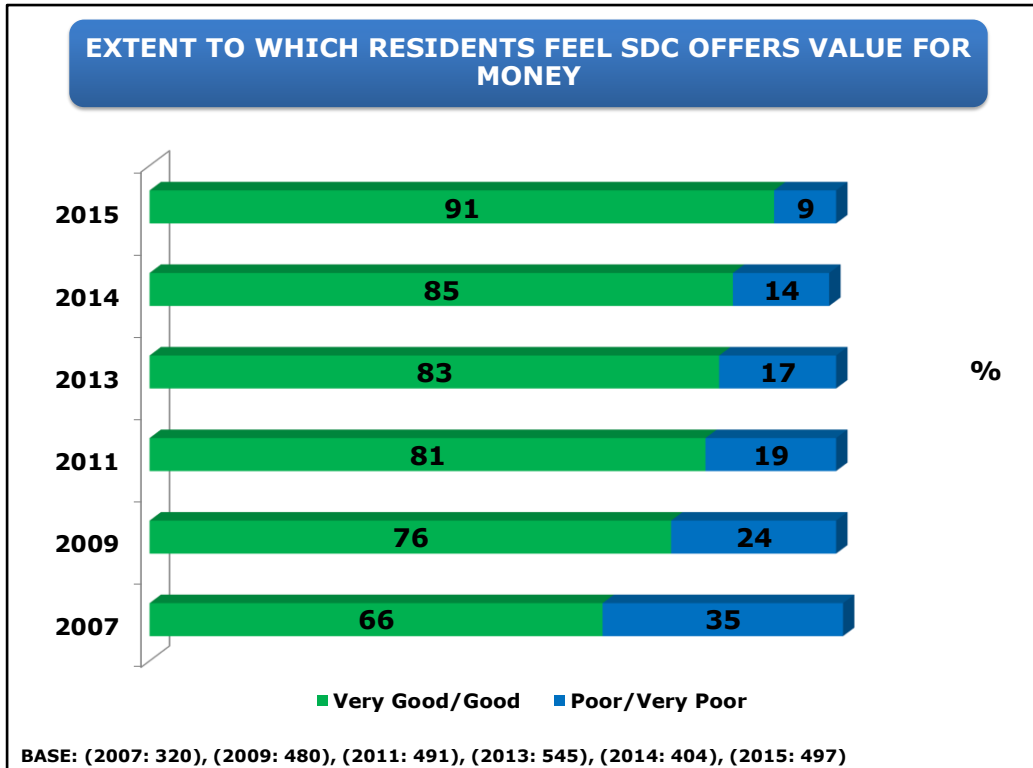
	%
Shared services system harmonisation	76
Empty property grants	68
Core Strategy development	54
Working with troubled families	49
Improvements to the Lifestyles Building, Alcester	22
Base:	(510)

Value for Money

Panel members were told that the current council tax element for a Band D property was £128.05. They were asked if this represented good value for money or not.

It is interesting to note that the value for money figure stands at the highest figure ever at 91%, a 6 percentage point increase on 2014 and 25 percentage points higher than 2007.

Chart 2:

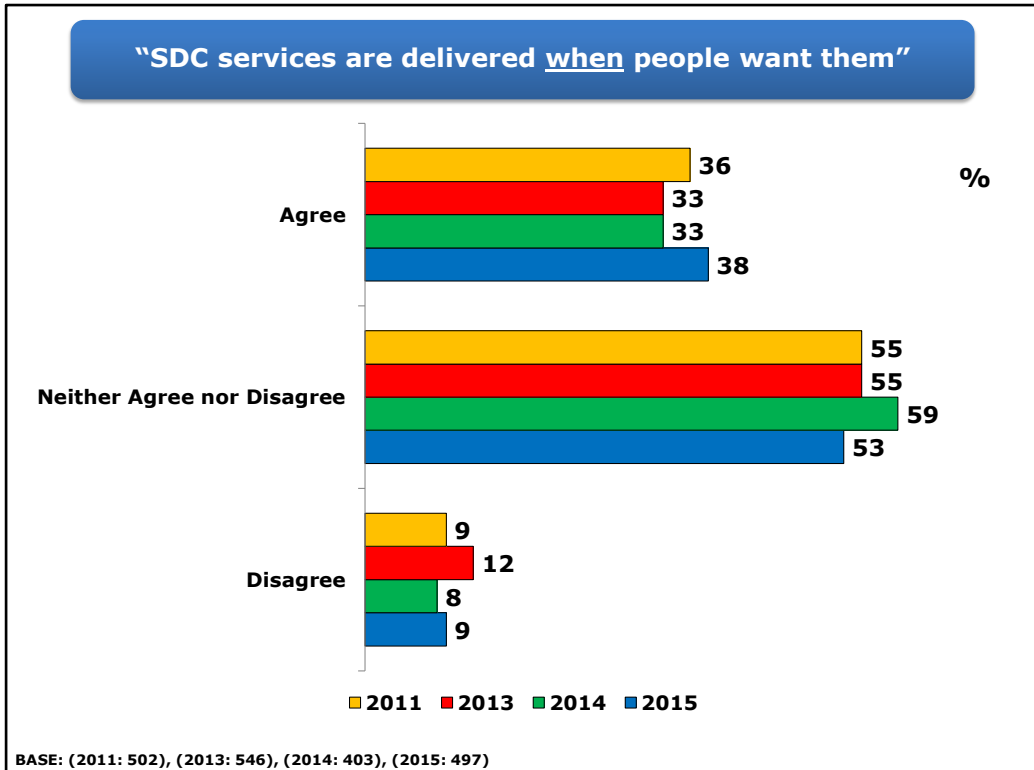


Statement questions on SDC services

SDC services are delivered when people want them

Asked whether they felt SDC services were delivered when people wanted them, 38% agreed and 9% disagreed. The agreement figure has risen by 2 percentage points from the 2011 figure.

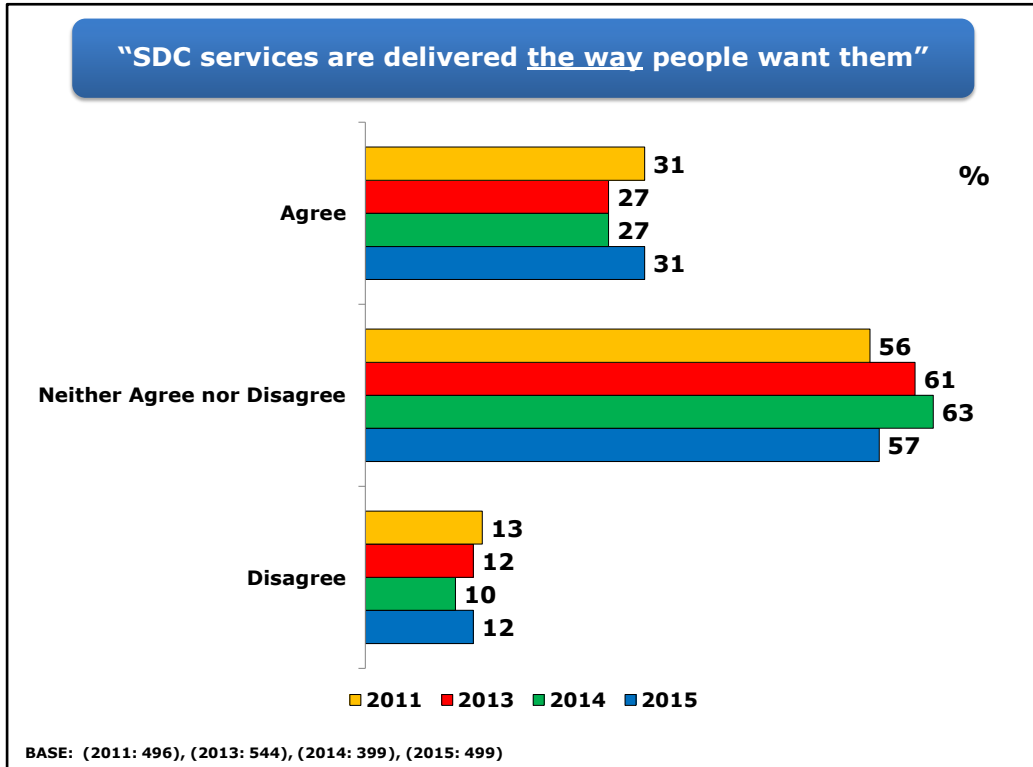
Chart 3:



SDC services are delivered the way people want them

Asked whether they felt SDC services were delivered the way people wanted them, 31% agreed and 12% disagreed. This question has a high percentage of neither agreeing nor disagreeing at 57%. The results have been fairly static over the past four surveys.

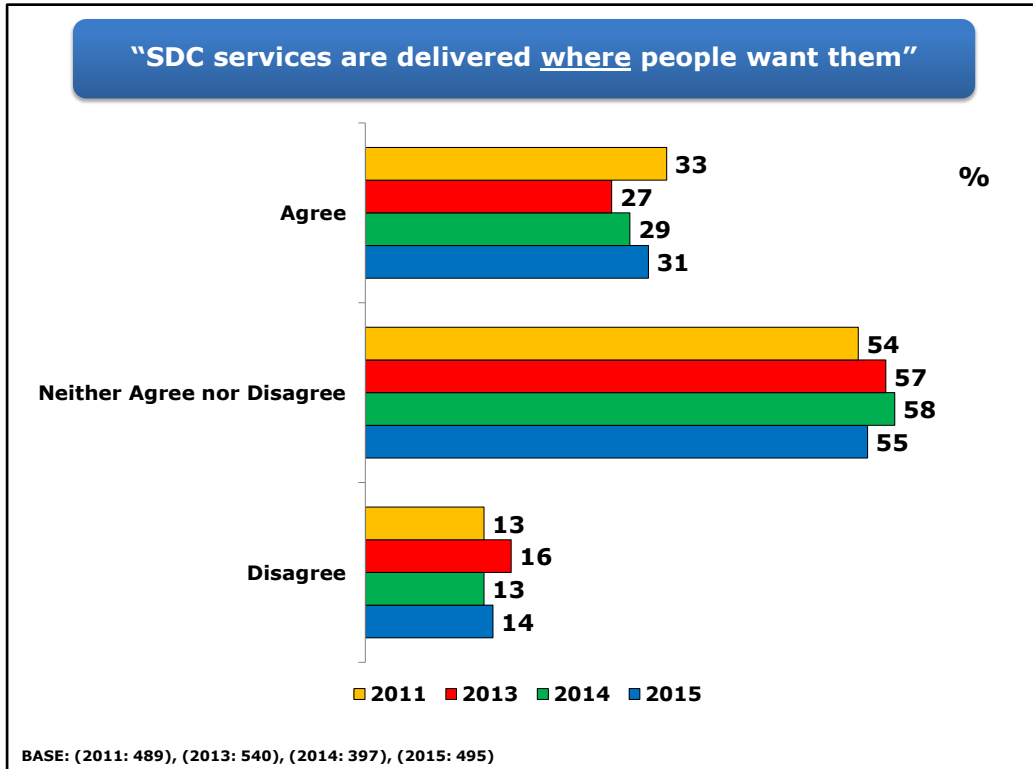
Chart 4:



SDC services are delivered where people want them

Asked whether they felt SDC services were delivered where people wanted them, 31% agreed and 14% disagreed. The agree figure has risen 2 percentage points on 2014, with the disagree figure also increasing by one point. Results have been broadly similar over the last four surveys.

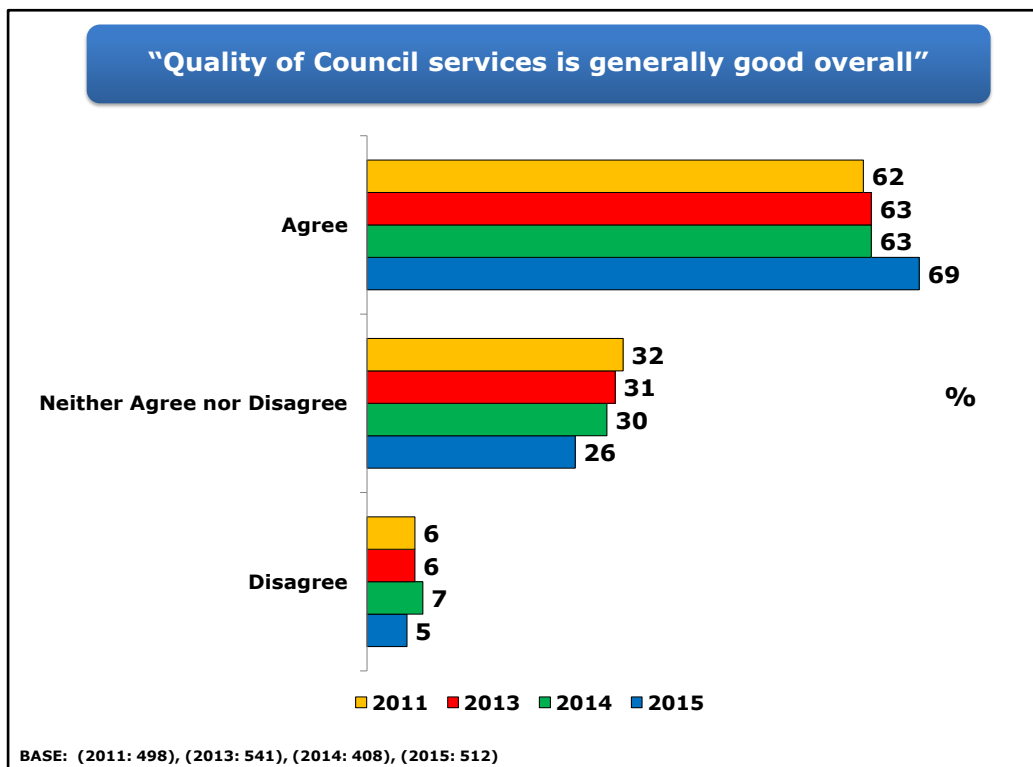
Chart 5:



Quality of council services is generally good overall

Seven out of ten respondents (69%) felt the quality of Council services was good overall. This figure has risen 6 percentage points on the previous year. Disagreement with the statement has fallen 2 points from 7% to 5%.

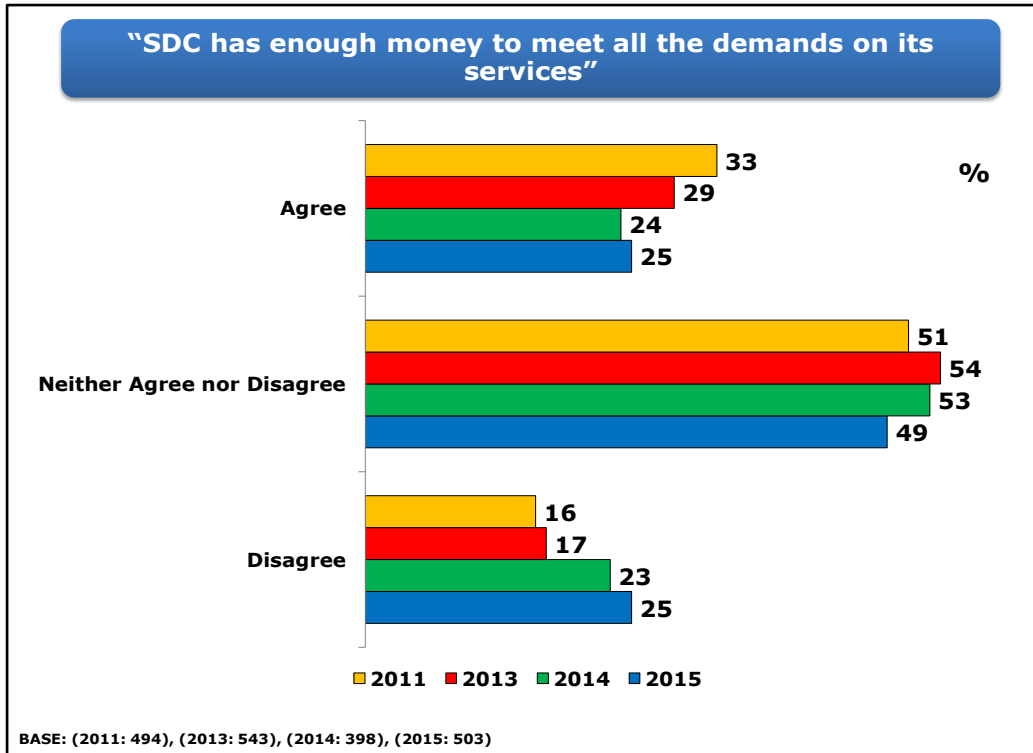
Chart 6:



SDC has enough money to meet all the demands on its services

Since 2011 residents are less likely to agree that SDC has enough money to meet all the demands on its services. This shows the awareness they have about the cuts in public services. 25% of those surveyed agreed with the statement, representing a fall of 8 percentage points from the level in 2011. The disagreement level has risen to 25% in 2015 from 16% in 2011.

Chart 7:



Residents were asked to comment on the way they answered the series of statement questions and these are included in the Appendix. There were 214 responses.

Respondents' Profile

Table 6: Gender

	%
Male	54
Female	46
BASE:	(518)

Table 7: Age

	%
Up to 29	1
30-39	8
40-49	13
50-59	14
60-69	36
70-79	20
80 & over	8
BASE:	(451)

Table 8: Number of adults aged 18 or over in household

	%
One	33
Two	58
Three	8
Four	1
BASE:	(349)

Table 9: Number of children aged 17 or under in household

	%
None	84
One	6
Two	8
Three	1
Four	1
BASE:	(360)

Table 10: Accommodation Type

	%
Owned outright	62
Buying on mortgage	24
Rent from Housing Assoc./Trust	6
Rent from a private landlord	5
Other	2
BASE:	(372)

Table 11: Whether respondents have any long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity

	%
Yes	22
No	78
BASE:	(512)

Table 12: Whether this illness or disability limits respondents' activities in any way

	%
Yes	91
No	9
BASE: (Those with disability)	(87)

Table 13: Activity which best describes what respondent is doing at present

	%
Employee in full-time job	20
Employee in part-time job	10
Self-employed, full or part-time	11
Full-time education at school, college or university	0
Unemployed and available for work	1
Permanently sick or disabled	2
Wholly retired from work	49
Looking after the home	3
Doing something else	4
BASE:	(370)

Table 14: Origin

	%
White - British	96
White - Irish, White - Other Background, Non White	3
BASE:	(514)

APPENDIX

Please make any comments that relate to how you have answered the statement questions previously.

- Town looks tatty beyond tourist areas. No civic pride encouraged. Too much emphasis on strategy and not on doing what's the point of having meeting about having meetings not bureaucracy
- I have answered as honestly as I can with the limited knowledge I have of certain areas. Re Q4-6 I ticked this because it states "this item is *****" This being the case one wonders why it was included as an option
- Strategy has been a joke - huge cost & delay could have been avoided if politician bit the bullet * made tough decisions like the council have
- I live in Bidford on Avon but travel to work in Stratford. It costs me £500 pa to park in town for work and I feel that the council should offer a reduction in one car parking charges for workers. I also feel that an awful lot of money is spent in town for tourists but there is not much funding for projects outside of Stratford. Why do we keep building on fields when there are so many derelict homes and buildings within Stratford town centre which could be restored and brought back into existence? it seems a shame that so much money is pumped into the riverside area of town but there is an eyesore of derelict buildings in the Birmingham Road
- Certain services need to be more readily available outside office hours and responded to quicker e.g. noise/nuisance issues
- The production of the core District Plan has taken too long. This 'quality' answer is ***. This inefficiency is costing us dear as developers exploit!
- The standard of the Planning Dept. and the committee is appallingly bad. The town is being ruined by a total failure over many years to plan ahead instead of reacting to events and the results of previous decisions. Piecemeal housing development & appalling traffic problems.
- None
- Generally, my impression is that the first three would be improved with a larger budget *** results in indifferent & ** distribution of attention
- It is difficult to judge on 'when' and 'the way' if you have not used SDC services (other than waste collection). In general, SDC's other services are not general to improving life in small villages so we just get on with our own voluntary initiatives
- Q5. Not all tax payers have the same access as people in Stratford. Q6b Depends on individual
- I ask Elizabeth House reception to countersign my two Netherlands pensions to certify that I am still alive. This each 1st week of the year. January 2015 I reported a fly tipped 3 piece suite in the car park by the footpath between Hodgson Road & Clapton Road (near Tesco's). It was cleaned up a few days later. I noticed over Christmas/New Year 2014/15 a few street lights were "on" all night. I would like this to be so at all times
- With regard to Q2 I believe that people accept that it is probably impossible to improve current levels of priority services
- I don't think that SDC delivers services in the way that people want them or where. The prime examples of this is PLANNING. People in the district don't want all this development and house building which SDC keep insisting on giving planning approval for. A prime example is the Lighthorne Heath/Chesterton/Gaydon fiasco - it is totally unsuitable for that area. Also the Wellesbourne Airfield proposal. We don't want to live in a mini Birmingham - our infrastructure cannot cope. Don't spoil this area, we need our open spaces - not houses, houses, houses, everywhere
- I believe in village local refuse collection could be reduced e.g. garden collect reduce in winter
- The new reality is that we have less money and we have to come to terms with that. Rather than pour everything back until all services fail - it is essential to decide what to do and what not to do. Business sponsorship and the voluntary sector must be *** as *** allies. What about asking retired residents (such as myself) to work voluntary one day a week - I would be happy to do so if I thought the results were worthwhile

- *The council provide good VFM. It should not be afraid to increase Council Tax. I would also support reduction in fees & payments to elected members & reduce member council meetings. Most members **** and *****
- *New Housing Strategy seems to be non-existent! Traffic, Birmingham Road & South of the river gets worse all the time. Many people no longer go into the town to shop - parking the problem*
- *I think Studley is very much underfunded and is the poor relation to Stratford. Grass verges in the summer are always very long and untidy. Not enough dog waste bins/rubbish bins (probably because they have to pay someone to empty them)*
- *It is clear that SDC has certain "stress" areas. The Corporate Plan is considerably overdue and one has to blame the administration. Planning decisions are insensitive to need. Rail services are being undermined - the link to London is poor, inadequate and does not meet the requirements of elderly and *** passengers. The traffic control services are abysmal. We need to sort out the rail/coach link. There is a need to form up to Alcester Road/Station link*
- *Grass cutting on the Conway was poor, round 3 to 4 times in one year. A joke!*
- *Keep the costs down*
- *In Q3a you state a weekly collection. This is incorrect and it is always fortnightly*
- *We need to have 2 strong councils. 1. Town. 2. County - SDC should be wound down*
- *Enough money - well, you're not going to get any more are you, so need to plan on what you have. But council needs to be there for most vulnerable and the rest of us need to pay for it.*
- *You are often not professional enough. Your telephone systems are poor. Some decisions are outlandish. Staff are polite and helpful as they can be. You take too long and allow councillors to drag their feet on decision making.*
- *Very important to provide affordable le housing using Brown Field sites in the town*
- *Q4B. Core Strategy Development. Time for the Core Strategy to be finally res****- too much money wasted with minimal progress!*
- *I really don't know what the majority of people think about when, the way or where. The last 2 questions are personal*
- *I don't sit on the wall, this means that my answer may not be based on experience myself but from here say*
- *Earlswood to *** Heath area only problem known is footpath maintenance not enough budget & present finance cut back - *** Barnard footpath officers. i.e. not road footpaths - byways & fields*
- *These are tough times. it would be great to be able to spend more money. I know this situation will be with us for some years. Explaining what is going on and why is very important. People often think more money could be saved at the top*
- *Honestly!*
- *It appears to me that the Planning Dept. (Q3B). Does a poor job e.g. very little affordable housing in new projects. As for Development Control, there does not appear to be any. The continual postponement of the Core Strategy is a disgrace. Are you listening ****?*
- *Leisure Services not where we want them i.e. Bidford has no indoor facilities by SDC - more houses, more people, more Council Tax revenue - no facilities - the refuse collection is very good*
- *Basically it is down to staff shortage. Only so much one person can do in a day, no matter how hard they work. Some areas could be dealt with by volunteer groups especially "gardening" inspecting works carried out. It is after all "our town"*
- *I would like to see 15 minute free parking near to Bridge Street. S-O-A. This would facilitate short visits for banking, cash point access and collection. More longer term parking near to the restaurants would also promote the town's nightlife*
- *I strongly favour good services at all levels. So if this means a rise in Council tax I am strongly in favour of this. After all cut backs and cut backs and cut backs will only lead to 1. Poor, substandard services. 2. Less local jobs!!!. Surely only a fool would want the two above.*
- *Ufton as a village is generally ignored by the council. When I last contacted Environmental Health, I was asked "where is Ufton?!"*
- *B. Development Control & Planning - a lot of time is spent in this area; when is the*

Core Strategy going to be completed & stop rampant over development? More time should be spent on the CORE STRATEGY - it is urgent. NO questions about infrastructure & traffic controls

- I find the services on my part is generally good*
- It's hard to answer questions with little knowledge of the overall areas. If you have specific questions for services provided who do you contact? Could a box be provided under each separate question for comments?*
- I believe some services should be run by private enterprise not District Council using our tax money to do so. Sporting activities & leisure centres need to go to private sector & vouchers used to enable people that cannot afford it some access. Toilets need to be privately run & charged for as soon as possible*
- I strongly object to Traveller/Gypsy sites being funded by the council. This should be a private enterprise if we have to have them at all. Council need to prioritise the people who live here not Travellers/Gypsies sites*
- Q3b. Planning applications do seem onerous, arbitrary & in one case subject to unilateral reversal by the "inspector". The process is not valued or credible & under minds public trust in the democratic system*
- I think the services in Stratford are very good*
- Happy with SDC services - Thank you*
- How much extra revenue could be made by opening the Church St. car park, Stratford? The one that the council employees use, why is it closed to the public? Do the council employees pay? Why should your residents pay to work in Stratford and your employees do not? This is a disgrace*
- REF Q4. No development whatsoever, housing, schools, industrial expansion, until the existing traffic & parking chaos is totally overcome. Furthermore the solution should take account of the future expansion plans for Warwickshire. VERY IMPORTANT for residents & business*
- I think it ridiculous that more is spent on toilets than crime prevention!!*
- I believe as (no don't, may do) SDC should be a outgoing & wealthy council due to the tourist interest etc! (worldwide). I believe business is lost to visitors due to e.g. parking. e.g. lack of it! With its shops, banks etc while SDC have their own parking. What's not realised is the demand for money (off road) parking!. While business rates, rents review ***. I've seen many prospect visitors pass through frustrated by lack of parking, this is your loss, the town, business & custom to e.g. theatres, shops, markets etc etc!*
- It is always hard to generalise; I do think we "trust" our council and as such, through such questionnaires & forums, we move to greater democracy and affinity, excellent community accountancy. I realise that things like "Travellers & Gypsy" local plan are "difficult" but perhaps they shouldn't even be in the equation & be edited out by policy before they even become a council/responsibility?*
- I feel we could have saved money by sorting out the Core Strategy in a much more efficient timely way. Similarly we could have saved funding sooner by sharing & harmonising partnerships with other councils. I don't feel I can comment on whether the services are what, or the way other people would **** where or when*
- My issue is fairness, I pay a considerable amount more for my Council Tax than Band A, but I receive a considerable amount fewer services. As such I feel I am supporting a considerable amount of services that I and my family don't benefit from. Is this fair???*
As for Traveller & Gypsy camps, my money should not be spent on such matters, they add nothing into the system but are benefitting from it none the less!
- While I believe the money that SDC receives is used to the best of its abilities, it appears to me that this is focussed into the tourists and visitors to Stratford, rather than its residents. Tourists are fundamentally important to our economy but it should be business and the DMO that funds this area. I would rather spend my tax money on developing our community than incessantly mowing grass for visitors*
- SDC major financial challenges and I cannot see how these will be tackled without additional income i.e. Council Tax. Perhaps future questionnaires should face this issue?*
- In regard to the planning section - for goodness sake please stop building more houses. Our town is being ruined and the estates being built look ridiculous. I do not know of*

- one person who wants or supports your building schemes. Stop building housing estates!
- Empty property grants - what would £100,000 achieve? This would surely be spread too thinly to make much of a difference to overall housing stock? - Development Control/Planning/Core Strategy needs at least the current budget if the recent shambles re Core Strategy timescales (and the impact this has already had on the District in unwelcome housing development) is not to be repeated. Refuse/recycling service is excellent
 - Removal of services to pay for priority services depends on the priority. Development Strategy is a mess but it is not a lack of money that is the problem. All areas pay in to the district budget so all areas should receive equal service, rather than concentrating on just Stratford
 - I feel we have a great town but need to attract not just tourists, we need to attract people to shop more from outlying towns to bring back small independent shops with lower rates/rent. Also make the Birmingham Road less congested and more attractive. The town could do with some of the empty shops being filled. Don't need any more charity shops
 - I would support a small increase in the Council Tax rather than a degradation in the quality of service
 - Our food waste collection is every 2 weeks. If there is not enough money to support services, then we should all pay a little more Council Tax
 - Generally satisfied with SDC services. 2. Believe the general refuse disposal/collection frequency could be decreased as recycling now covers almost all refuse. 3. Believe that better provision for cycling should be provided but that is not covered by the survey
 - I live in a small rural village and services are generally good, but it is hard to answer Q3 & Q5
 - It may be productive to hold an open forum,, whereby residents can express, discuss and analyse various issues under review
 - Q3B. There is scope for this to be better managed. Not something SDC manages well currently. More money won't fix the problem! Q3C. Why don't you leave this to the Social Housing providers? This is a waste of public funds. Q4D. Leave this to the property owners or sell the properties in their current state. Don't waste public money needlessly. Start to think like a successful commercial business, not a publicly funded money pit.
 - SDC should consider ways to increase revenue without massive Council Tax rises. Small additional payments for some services should be considered, e.g. a nominal charge for car parking at Bridgefoot which is currently free for the first hour. A charge for multiple green bins. A voluntary fee say £25, which can be collected with the Council Tax and will be ring-fenced for specific projects
 - I am very much in favour of the use of CCTV for crime prevention. Tourism is SOA's lifeblood and should be promoted. Litter and the construction eyesore around the station is a serious problem re tourism
 - At a day to day level my experience in dealing with staff and departments within SDC remains excellent, though I do detect/suspect that their ability to continue at this high level is coming under stress. We get a fortnightly green bin collection throughout the year, not sure this is necessary November - April. I believe that developing the Core Strategy has not been successful and this has had repercussions especially at the Parish level and especially with housing. I can only assume this is because a lack of resources within Planning/Core Strategy Development, I hope it's not politics
 - Your out of hours services to deal with licence law= out of hour noise and nuisance fail to deliver
 - There is always the need for Local Authorities to be more efficient and to spend public money more efficiently. The way to achieve this is not to simply cut funding. There is an increasing requirement to provide support for the ever expanding proportion of our community who, for whatever reasons are unable to cope; near the top of the list is the provision of Social Housing both in the urban but mostly in village and rural areas where currently this is clearly lacking.
 - Mostly the services are good, but living in a small village I sometimes feel I pay a high Council Tax which goes to support the residents of Stratford and the smaller villages

miss out

- *Lack of knowledge*
- *Generally satisfied with the services I receive. I don't know if SDC has enough money to meet the current needs*
- *With an open mind*
- *Not happy with the over development of Harbury district*
- *Living in a small village on the edge of SDC I find a lot of the decisions on spending do not filter down to the village. For, example road sweeping and litter picking*
- *Q3D. Students walking to Stratford along the Alcester Road should be discouraged from leaving a trail of litter*
- *I am most grateful for this opportunity and look forward to future participation as required. I also found the consultation process most informative and sincerely with to express my gratitude. Finally if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me. XXXXX*
- *I support a £1 or £2 increase in Council Tax per year per household which would increase income for the council but not be missed by the household. It is important to be effective and efficient with people's money and not waste it on needless staff travel, meetings etc*
- *I have noticed, living in the rural community, that there has been no decline in services. In fact services have been more efficient*
- *There is still a large body of people who strongly believe that consultation with the public is for 'show'. The council has to demonstrate with actions that the people are actually listened too and suggestions - where appropriate are acted upon. The council doesn't know everything!*
- *I have no way of knowing the answer to these questions*
- *As I do not use any services except garbage removal and planning it is difficult for me to comment on the first 3 statements. The Planning department is bizarre, making decisions according to whom the applicant knows in the department, inefficient & writers of contradictory statements. I do not trust them. The main problem for the SDC lies in the cutting of government funding*
- *If our Council tax needs to go up to retain the current services which are good, then I would be in favour of this. Community Housing - affordable and local is essential to keep young people in local RURAL communities. More money needed here*
- *Q3B. Even without the extra work involved in the Core Strategy development, I feel the cuts in this budget since 2012 have already had a seriously *** effect of the council's ability to keep on top of development and to investigate breaches of planning control. The impression given is that the Council is not leading the development policy and its enforcement, but rather "*** to keep still" in the wake of ** developers. This threatens to be a disaster in the district*
- *The residents of Studley are still being completely marginalised in favour of Stratford and Alcester*
- *I believe SDC to be transparent in most of its operations and that they give good value for money. As with any service you will never please all the people all the time, but generally the service given is good. The main aim has to be to strive to give best service it can with the goal of always to improve*
- *I have been satisfied with refuse collection services provided by the council - but living in Studley I find that having to travel to Stratford to dispose of larger items time consuming, especially as Worcestershire have a disposal plant only two miles away, but we cannot use it. I am concerned about the amount of litter and dog fouling in the village and would like this to be monitored closely. I would also like to see many of the shops and vacant land (especially by the COOP) put to better use, either by changing its use or providing rate reductions to encourage occupation*
- *Why not increase the Council Tax to pay for the elderly care at home and relieve the increasing pressure on hospital beds*
- *You should implement fine for properties which are kept poorly, as in rubbish or waste is on the ground and any one can see it! Like the plot next to Magnet Trade, full with rubbish!! Some new houses have old sofa standing outside front door!*
- *I don't feel the money spent on services is fairly spread across the region*
- *Q2. I believe taxation is the fairest way to deliver services - so if Council Tax has to*

- rise to secure services (affecting the wealthiest most). so be it*
- *Planning services very important to preserve landscape, trees that give the character & take years to mature. Enforced protection very necessary. Replacement orders should be considered which are destroyed*
 - *Hard choices, but SDC should focus on essentials and not drift towards social engineering (troubled families excepted)*
 - *Every company is working to tighter budgets so it's good to see SDC prioritising*
 - *Here in Henley in Arden the only service that we actually experience on a regular basis is the collection of waste. This is a very good service. The only other service that used to be provided was the library but no longer since the County Council terminated it!!*
 - *As a newcomer to SDC I have a limited knowledge of most of the items listed. But have answered the best way I can*
 - *Encourage more people to have a compost bin. Those with a small garden can always give compost away - green bin once every 4 weeks*
 - *The questions in Q5/Q6 too general to be meaningful as the answers will differ from service to service*
 - *I do not take advantage of many services provided by SDC so I have based my answers mainly on what is good for the community. I have a particular interest in Planning and feel this is a very important issue for SDC at this particular time. Shared services seems a very sensible way of making best use of money available and worth investing in*
 - *Q2 is based on the premise that priority services cannot be maintained or improved without a tax rise or detriment to other services. Q3. Being the forgotten area of Studley many of these items are not obvious here. Volunteers do clean up and flower displays, Xmas lights are from donators, tourism is non-existent. The leisure centre has no gym equipment. Whilst refuse collections is first class, no tip facility within reach is a down side. Admin. at almost 25% seems high*
 - *Q5. The services I receive are not worth the Council Tax I pay, even though they are pretty well delivered. (I recognise that others may need the other services to a considerable extent). Q6. The services I get are well delivered - except one! The Planning debacle - the Strategy document - is disgraceful and a huge let down. The council needs to focus on their priorities and they have missed this one by miles*
 - *I don't think all areas are given the same priority. (town centre much more prevalent to outside areas like Studley) and as such not always given services as and when needed*
 - *I don't believe that Studley gets good value for money regarding the Council Tax. We don't have the hedgerows and grass verges trimmed very often and the street cleaning where I live is practically non-existent*
 - *Q6. Other than question 4 in the list, the remainder (as written) are almost unanswerable. They presuppose a deep knowledge of the council's way of working. The last question in the list is absurd as part of this questionnaire*
 - *I feel overall the council does a very difficult job quite well. The Core Development is a real concern that the character of the town might be ruined*
 - *I haven't had much contact this year with council departments. It did take several calls to get someone to cut the verges round here for which council is responsible. Very happy with collection of rubbish. Council does seem to be digging its feet on planning matters but perhaps newspaper reports are biased. (NOT impressed with way xxx replies to questions)*
 - *I can only really comment on the service we receive in this immediate area. Hence the ******
 - *Suggest fewer green bin collections in the winter. Street cleaning on Loxley Road has been necessarily frequent in 2014 possibly as a result of top dusting the road*
 - *Insufficient knowledge to agree or disagree!*
 - *I have concerns about Core Strategy Development and the great increase in the granting planning permission for new housing projects, even when Parish Councils reflect their concerns of local communities about permanent changes to villages in particular, the extra pressure put on provision & utilities, schools and medical centres is becoming a reality & will have a damaging effect on local community networks and good relationships in the future*

- *REQ1. Public conveniences are not cleaned enough and hot water/driers do not work properly, particularly where Farm Foods used to be. REF4. There are too many empty business properties in the town. Perhaps reduced business rates for say a 2 yr period might encourage business to move in to those empty premises. REQ6. I do not have sufficient knowledge to comment on whether services are delivered when/the way/where people want them. Perhaps a separate questionnaire could be provided to obtain resident's needs.*
- *Re: Q4. I don't want my money spent on any of these things. Whilst Warwickshire County Council waste public money I don't believe residents should have to pay for anything*
- *SDC's future to produce a 'Core Strategy' before its final adoption end 2015 have allowed developers to submit record numbers of planning applications against 'effectively' the weak policies of the NPPF. This is "1950's style planning" SDC should provide it's Planning Dept. with tools to combat this disastrous situation as the implications on the district and it's parishes are/have been disgraceful*
- *My home is in a village where few SDC services (e.g. leisure/wc/parks/CCTV etc) are provided. We therefore have to rely on the Parish Council to supply our needs & SDC unfortunately do not provide grant support - we feel we are therefore subsidising residents of Alcester, Stratford & Wellesbourne*
- *SDC's Planning enforcement is very poor and needs to be improved. The Core Strategy needs to be finalised and published as a matter of priority. It needs to reflect the wishes of SOA residents not those of housing developers!*
- *It took about five months and several phone calls to have several drains cleaned down the road*
- *I have not experienced any issues with any queries I have had with SDC*
- *I currently feel I am getting value for money for SDC Community Charge. Main contact with services is refuse and recycling, these are both very efficient and user friendly. Main concerns are over development of the villages and how little the SDC can do to control it? Is it too little too late?*
- *Parking charges in Stratford are too high and I think shops are suffering. I very seldom shop in Stratford purely because of the parking is too expensive*
- *Consider online surveys to save on printing & postage costs please*
- *The councils money should not be wasted on promoting tourism. The town centre cannot cope in Autumn & Winter (constant gridlock on the main thoroughfares) not mind in the summertime*
- *From experience the Planning Dept. (Planning Applications) is not fit for purpose. Letters, Emails, phone calls not answered. Lack of decision makers. Not customer friendly. 2. Just to get a waste bin fitted - 6 phone calls. 3. Villages on SDC boundary seem to get reduced service*
- *I think you could add to the housing stock, by allowing people who want it, change use from holiday lets to residential use.*
- *Q3g. In particular verges should be trimmed more often. Q6b. The Planning Department should be better staffed. It is vital that they have sufficient resources to deal with increased pressures from speculating builders, deal efficiently with applicants & enforcement procedures*
- *I think that food rubbish should be collected weekly, particularly during summer months*
- *Our food waste is collected fortnightly with our garden waste and this proves satisfactory (Q3)*
- *1st. reply, no comment*
- *I found Q3 different to answer as I would like to see more money spent on supporting an older generation & homeless & less spent on pandering those who already have homes/benefits with new housing built in our green space*
- *In general we have no opinion against the way things are run. My only comment is concerning Planning & Building. When we went through the process it took over a year almost two, which is far too slow. It was also biased on work that can or can't be done where neighbours were not stopped for doing work not applied consent for. NOT consistent basically and too slow*
- *Services delivered when: in my experience, generally yes, but some services (e.g.*

Planning/Housing) have been under a lot of pressure in recent years and so responses have been delayed. Services delivered the way: again in my experience, yes, I think it's good that there are different means of delivery & contact with the council because different groups of people have different needs/preferred methods. Services delivered where: My experience (in Stratford town) is good - obviously living in smaller villages would give a different view. (But people who choose to live in these places will need to take that into account)

- *Still too much focus on the immediate Stratford area. Funds need to be shared more equally*
- *A small increase in Council Tax would be ok to make sure public services were sufficient to serve the needs of residents*
- *It's the County Council that makes up the bulk of Council Tax. Generally districts are pretty well run in my experience. The survey doesn't say how much Council tax is offset by charging for services so it is difficult to make a judgement about value*
- *Services are rarely delivered on a WANT basis - more on a NEED basis. People often don't know how services are delivered but more importantly that they are delivered. In my experience SDC listen, try to compromise and usually act and I feel that this is the most we can expect of local council. In this affluent area I do not believe many demands are made on SDC services that fall outside its budget*
- *Large size of wheelie bins (including 2 green) means they could be emptied monthly. 2. Getting CORE STRAT. Approved & fully implemented should help tackle the regular & inappropriate planning applications we are facing. 3. From personal point of view we are happy with service provision provided by SDC*
- *Delay in implementation of Core Strategy; dissatisfaction with endless planning approval with little regard to local opinion or views; lack of confidence and dissatisfaction with comments of Highways Authority (WCC) in relation to planning applications.*
- *I think there's a lot of heavy demands on SDC which seems quite unfair. SDC do the best that they can and deserve more support.*
- *Provision of basic service; waste, regulatory leisure etc should be the priority over targeted intervention, for which grant funding and working with charitable sector should be explored. Planning has been a fiasco but it is far from clear whether that is a resource issue. Please sort out the planning issues which are a blight on the town.*
- *Generally, I think SDC does a good job. Tourism is a big asset and needs to be protected by maintaining environmental standards. I have concerns about members becoming too involved in operational details rather than concentrating on strategy. Officers are well paid and qualified and should be allowed to get on with their jobs.*
- *Services that help (provided and advice) only during office hours. Services that penalise (parking, videoing) provided 24 hours a day. Make SDC more approachable by opening at weekends and evenings.*
- *As a retired resident with family living outside the area it is difficult to assess the needs of the community as a whole, and whilst we are very comfortable and unwilling to make extra demands on council needs it perhaps means that others' needs should carry greater weight.*
- *C*
- *I am very happy with the service that I receive from the District Council & feel that they do a superb job with the resources available to them.*
- *Other than the general services delivered by SDC then we have not had the need for specific services from SDC, hence the agree/disagree boxes ticked above. Demand for services can always be improved if funding is available. The lack of a Core Strategy is resulting in developers ruining small villages in the area. It is vital to resolve this quickly even if it results in more funding*
- *Car parking is a huge issue in Stratford town centre. I feel the council have got it all wrong and car parking charges are too high in the car parks in comparison with other successful small towns which have thriving small, independent shops - something which I feel Stratford upon Avon should have.*
- *Need to allocate more of the council spending to areas out with of Stratford itself. Everything is too Stratford centred!*
- *There are always going to be difficult decisions when allocating minimal funds. I believe*

that the SDC does a very good job within these constraints. Leisure facilities are used by a small proportion of people within the district and they should be prepared to contribute more to use them. Leisure is not a right....

- *I have little experience of the delivery of SDC services so my answers are fairly arbitrary, relying on second or third-hand knowledge.*
- *Have answered neither good/bad when I had no experience. Could a system for waste collection, like in France, be introduced? They have several locations to where people bring their waste, which has been divided. This could work well for dry recycling waste. This could save on the collections costs.*
- *I have contacted SDC twice in the last few months and not had the courtesy of a reply on either occasion (once was refuse, once planning). To me this indicates that the quality of the service is poor and also that there is insufficient money to meet the demands - if there was enough money then surely the quality of service would be better?*
- *I am not really sure of all the statistics, so have sat on the fence, so to speak*
- *I was unable to offer all of the answers I wanted - e.g. Q5 is it good or bad value? How much is Solihull? I don't know without comparison. My opinion is that the council needs to protect the bin collections and planning, services people really need, at the expense of services like housing immigrants, gypsy's wanderers or unemployed or unworking - we have many more taking out than putting in. Car parking charges are onerous, CCTV is of dubious value it seems only to prosecute motorists not hoodies or vandals, speed changes etc are unpopular - let's have less spend on those areas, more on keeping roads well maintained, increasing parking availability, trains and buses, keep the parks well maintained and the same for the parks. Less on troubled families social housing or welfare please. I applaud the council initiative with this survey and the email communication - many thanks, long may it continue. Robert.*
- *The hundreds of new homes approved by the Planning officers (and rubber-stamped by Committees or on Appeal) should generate sufficient new Poll Tax revenue to enable an overall increase in spending on services.*
- *re question 6 items 1 2 3 I cannot speak for other people, generally I compare the services given to those given in other authorities and from my own observations I feel SDC are doing a reasonable job i.e. the bin collection in SDC is far better than WDC.*
- *More money needs to be allocated to the surrounding villages and not totally focused on Stratford Town.*
- *I have to disagree with above as I know several parents really stressed out about cuts to previously funded school buses. This does not affect me personally as my children are younger but I totally sympathize. School is compulsory and if a child has passed an exam for selective entry to a grammar, then they should be allowed to complete their time there under the conditions promised when they made their applications. To promise to fund this and then withdraw it in full and at short notice is dreadful. This should be a priority. Perhaps we need more consultation on what amounts to priority services.*
- *I think the refuse collection service is excellent and should be a model for other councils.*
- *One of the earlier questions referred to PRIORITY SERVICES. It depends on your definition...*
- *SDC extremely performance on all issues related to planning weighs heavily and negatively on all categories*
- *I am single and don't use half the services, I think my discount should be 50% not 25%. I get no help with my noisy neighbours though they are just renting and I own. I am sure they must be on housing benefit and Dwellings don't vet their tenants properly. We get no say on housing and Stratford is being over developed, the roads can't cope. We aren't listened to.*
- *We live in the sticks. So refuse collection is the most important thing that we receive off the council. We could do with more green bins and be collected weekly.*
- *Comprehensive feedback would radically improve the accuracy of my answers. I suspect many panel members would answer subjectively under the present conditions.*
- *I think that it is a very challenging time and SDC is struggling to adapt quickly to developments.*

- 1. The planning dept' seems to have a chaotic view. One moment permission is refused and then agreed on excessive development. Particularly expansion of small properties.
- 2. It is time that properties were reassessed for rates. Considering the excessive development of some properties and subsequent increase in values there should be more bands. This should increase council income and make the system more fare.
- More attention should be paid to the needs of outlying areas within SDC remit and not just Stratford
- The exploration of working with other similar authorities to share provision of services and highly paid executives must continue apace. I believe that enough money exists to fund services if the above is implemented (i.e. shared working) quickly and explored properly.
- Empty property grants should be loans if the property is sold on, developers should not profit from council grant, but should be given cash flow help until property is sold. Do not agree with provisions for gypsy and traveller provision, not until the council can get contribution from them to council finances - I do not support freeloaders or parasitic people being paid for by my council taxes. Greig Centre in Alcester, if council pays £250000 then who gets this. If the place is non-viable they should not get market rate for it
- I am not in a position to comment on SDC financial position with regard to providing the above services.
- The own big flaw is the planning department and the core strategy which seem to be in disarray. This is causing our communities long term and as yet unrecognised damage in terms of unsuitable infrastructure being allowed without regard to the environment, services or suitability for young families in rural areas. Our village is likely to become a satellite retirement community in the near future with developed greedy prices for new properties.
- I don't agree with the assumption that council tax should be kept below inflation come what may. A reasonable progressive rise should allow investment in projects and schemes that provide direct and indirect benefits to residents.
- As a pensioner I am concerned that my outgoings are reduced or at least maintained at current levels. My pension and investments are controlled by interest rates which have been minimal in recent years and thus income has not kept up with inflation.
- Generally, I get an acceptable service from SDC and its officers. More money is always useful to improve and enhance overall facilities and provisions.
- SDC continues to have a head count larger than would be required in a more efficient organisation. Many current activities could be outsourced to the private sector offering valuable savings to council tax payers. Control would not be lost as a reduced council staff would retain oversight of these activities. Working practices within council departments should be audited for efficiency by an outside agency licensed to make changes.
- I think that the Council has not taken sufficient interest in the Core Planning Strategy of local villages. These villages do not have the infrastructure to accommodate the number of houses proposed. I attended one meeting in respect of a planning application for more houses to be built in Wellesbourne and was horrified at the performance of the Planning Department of Stratford District Council as it was obvious they did not care what was happening in the villages and the statements that were submitted to the Planning Appeals Officer were incorrect. It makes the general public wonder who is being employed that they cannot simply add up figures correctly.
- I am very pleased with the level of service provided by SDC in relation to my council tax spend. It certainly looks to me as if it is being spent well and not as if more funds are needed (although I'm aware that savings do need to be made because of central government cuts).
- An increase in tax would be acceptable to retain or improve services and is understandable against the significant reduction in central funding
- I can only speak for myself and have not been a great recipient of services. Refuse collection is excellent. CCTV I feel is not cost effective but I do agree that crime prevention should be promoted.
- Although my experience of the services is narrow, when I have used a service it has been a positive experience

- *I object to the cost of politically correct services e.g. Gipsy/traveller sites and the pension costs of local authority employees. The latter is a luxury that is not available in the private sector and the former is a complete rip off of the taxpayer that cannot be justified. Other countries e.g. Eire have made travelling illegal.*
- *I am a pensioner living in Long Compton in the very South of the area so in truth apart from service such as refuse, street cleaning, planning administration etc do not have contact with SDC.*
- *It is a bit disingenuous to ask about cutting some services to fund 'priority services' when the introduction to the questionnaire states that the Council itself has opted to freeze Council Tax and even reduce it in 2012/13. I have no doubt that a realistic (with inflation) yearly increase in Council Tax would not ensure that all services could be maintained. But to some extent, the voluntary freezing and reduction in Council Tax means that some of the difficult decisions that you are currently consulting on have been brought about by your own hand. Good governance would have been to find efficiencies so that the same service could be provided, AND THEN deliver the benefits back to the public through frozen and reduced Council Tax. Instead you have frozen and reduced Council Tax, AND THEN realised that you cannot deliver the same service (despite improving efficiency) and now you are consulting with the public to find out which services they are prepared to lose as a result. Secondly, please note that in question 1, I answered that I had used: Parks, Playing Fields & Open Spaces Housing Development Control & Planning Environmental Health Services, i.e. pest control, noise Community Leisure / Leisure Centres / Sports Facilities Public Conveniences Car parks I have only directly used Public Conveniences and Car parks, but I use all of the other services indirectly. I use Environmental Health Services every time I buy takeaway food; I use the Housing service in that the streets of Stratford are not littered with homeless families. You should wake the public up to the fact that Council services need to be properly funded because they benefit the whole of society, whether they use them directly or not.*
- *Personally I am satisfied with services provided by SDC but am aware that funding will not be sufficient to continue the status quo position.*
- *I sometimes feel that satellite towns such as Alcester and Shipston do not receive the same care as Stratford itself.*
- *SDC do an amazing job at looking after the town and keeping it a beautiful place to live. There are many 'behind the scenes' roles that happen every day and really like living in Stratford. Having lived in other parts of the country, it can be seen around the town just how much SDC do! Thank you!*
- *The lack of a planning strategy has meant that wholesale development has happened rather than planned hence I disagree with the statement regarding When. It has taken SDC too long to investigate operating with other authorities.*
- *Feel marginal to main centre Stratford where some provision of services is*
- *I think that a small increase in charge is sensible and affordable by most in Stratford to keep and improve services*
- *The area where I live is overlooked at times when things are needed and a lot of money seems to be spent in Stratford upon Avon based on the assumption that because tourists visit Stratford improvements need to be made on a regular basis and a lot more happens.*
- *I think generally SDC apportions funding well, my one concern is at times it seems Stratford Centric. There are plans to improve Southam Centre, which at times is dangerous with traffic but these seem massively delayed and convoluted.*
- *Can only reply based on my own life which as far as it relates to SDC services seems to run rather smoothly! I don't currently have any complaints though I do hear them from others. I'm sure there are improvements to be made as there always are but all in all Stratford seems to be run reasonably well and provides a pleasant place to live.*
- *I have lived in a number of towns in the UK. In general SDC provides a good level of service for those that I use. I am particularly impressed with the waste and recycling service. Having worked for a time in Local Government I believe a lot more could be done (and savings made) using shared services. Personally I would not object to a small rise in Council Tax to protect essential services.*
- *I prefer not to deal in the generalisations of Q6 above. 2. How do we know whether or*

- *not SDC has enough money? 3. I prefer to have adequate services, adequately funded*
- *I believe a small increase should be made above inflation.*
- *Poor question as my response varies for each service provided. For example: the rubbish and recycling service is good but the planning services have been a complete shambles.*
- *Having lived here for sixteen years now, I have no particular idea what the SDC spend and what they spend it on and what people want other than the hectoring letters in The Herald. Refuse collection is excellent, the Bancroft Gardens are lovely, and the Town Centre is always very clean - all good jobs well done. However, the development in the area has been seemingly shambolic. I appreciate the need to provide houses but there have been no community facilities provided and in particular, no extra primary schools which I understand are at breaking point in Stratford. The provision for children generally in Stratford are awful unless they are paid for privately, which I expect some people cannot afford. The Stratford Leisure Centre is a health hazard - I stopped taking my children there as it was so awful and the water in the pool was so cold.*
- *Streets are clean but country roads are a disgrace. People just chuck things all over the verges. Clear up teams and fires. Speeds on country roads very annoying, cars go at 60mph onward from A3400 to Cherington*
- *I use a limited range of services: Public toilets, parking, library, refuse collection*
- *This council behaves very poorly. There should be a significant call and an emphasis on value. What is the CEO paid?*
- *Generally very satisfied with the level of services the Council provides. The location of the TIC is not ideal as it only serves these tourists parking at that end of town*
- *Need more support for youths and for troubled families*
- *You claim to have a weekly food waste collection? I have your instructions not to put food waste in my grey bin only my green bin which is collected fortnightly*
- *The core strategy is very late, I only ticked this item in the vain hope it will speed things up*
- *The cost of implementing the core strategy development seems to be out of all proportion to its benefits to the town. Government policy regarding the need to provide adequate housing for the population is now based on a "presumption in favour of development" so why is the Council refusing development that has been examined by its planning officers and recommended for approval the costs created by this form of action is enormous for no good reason*
- *Don't really agree with Council Shared Services - Northamptonshire is too far. Worcestershire is next to Warwickshire, have we not tried to work with Solihull, Coventry, they are on the doorstep*
- *For me, this perhaps is not an appropriate Q answers to Q7 are very subjective, and would only apply for a narrow area. As a resident in a remote village - no transport, no post office etc, and apart from bin collection and gritters there are no other Council benefits. Question would be - do I get value for the Council tax I pay?*
- *Planning*
- *RE Q6. I think the Council does a reasonable job of delivering services within the constraints imposed by the cuts in central government funding*
- *Reference Q6 - I have no idea if she has enough money or not*
- *At best I could*
- *Some areas within the district benefit from more spending on services than others*
- *The core strategy needs to be established now to prevent the present chaos regarding applications for new housing development. The priority should be to apply pressure for improved rail services and a new bridge over the river*
- *Why not utilise community groups to help in various areas i.e. gardening clubs, allotment, others etc to help with mowing and hedge trimming. They could be either temporary, part time with a small wage/one off contribution to the groups themselves. The more people are involved at grass roots level, the more they will be interested in their patch, and also spread the word. What happened to that practise of the women sweeping in front of their bit of street? Can't it make a comeback?*