

# **CITIZENS' PANEL RESULTS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017**

## **Budget Consultation**

**Prepared by:  
Performance, Consultation & Insight Unit  
Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
February 2017**

## 1.0 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 2017 Panel survey.

## 2.0 Methodology

490 questionnaires were returned (223 via online and 267 by post) from a mailing to 1121 residents in January 2017, with a deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> February. 12 questionnaires were returned not completed for a variety of reasons, i.e. moved away. This represents a response rate of 44.2%.

## 3.0 Results of the Budget Consultation

### Usage of SDC services

Respondents were given a list of services with descriptions. 84% of respondents have used SDC car parks in the last twelve months. Seven in ten residents use the parks, playing fields & open spaces and over half, public conveniences. There were no large increases or decreases in usage.

Table 1:

	2013 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
<b>Car Parks</b>	86	86	83	86	84
<b>Parks, Playing Fields &amp; Open Spaces</b>	69	67	72	69	69
<b>Public Conveniences</b>	63	54	51	54	52
<b>Community Leisure / Leisure Centres / Sports Facilities</b>	37	34	36	34	33
<b>Development Control &amp; Planning</b>	22	22	21	20	19
<b>Environmental Health</b>	10	8	12	10	10
<b>Council Tax Enquiries</b>	10	8	11	8	9
<b>Benefits Enquiries</b>	6	3	4	5	5
<b>Housing</b>	5	6	5	3	5
<b>BASE: (All respondents)</b>	(524)	(416)	(507)	(454)	(470)

### **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". 48% were in agreement with the statement as opposed to 22% who disagreed, an increase of 4 percentage points on last year.

*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"*

	<b>2013 %</b>	<b>2014 %</b>	<b>2015 %</b>	<b>2016 %</b>	<b>2017 %</b>
<b>Strongly Agree / Agree</b>	46	51	41	44	48
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	27	30	30	31	30
<b>Disagree / Strongly Disagree</b>	27	19	29	25	22
<b>BASE: (All respondents)</b>	(527)	(396)	(489)	(464)	(484)

The statement question "It is important for the District Council not to increase council tax by more than 2% a year, even if this means a reduction in the levels of some lower priority services" shows an agreement figure to this statement of 59% and a disagreement total of 27%. The overall agreement figure is 9 percentage points up on 2016.

*Table 3: "It is important for the District Council not to increase council tax by more than 2% a year, even if this means a reduction in the levels of some lower priority services"*

	<b>2016 %</b>	<b>2017 %</b>
<b>Strongly Agree / Agree</b>	50	59
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	14	14
<b>Disagree / Strongly Disagree</b>	36	27
<b>BASE: (All respondents)</b>	(465)	(485)

The statement question was asked "It is important for the District Council to maintain current levels of service; even if this means increasing council tax by more than 2% a year (this would require a public Referendum to agree it)". 52% agreed with the statement and 32% disagreed. The disagreement figure rose by 4 percentage points.

*Table 4: "It is important for the District Council to maintain current levels of service; even if this means increasing council tax by more than 2% a year (this would require a public Referendum to agree it)"*

	<b>2016 %</b>	<b>2017 %</b>
<b>Strongly Agree / Agree</b>	53	52
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	17	15
<b>Disagree / Strongly Disagree</b>	29	33
<b>BASE: (All respondents)</b>	(467)	(484)

The statement question "It is important for the District Council to improve current levels of service, even if this means increasing council tax by more than 2% a year (this would require a public Referendum to agree it)". 34% agreed with the statement and 44% disagreed. The disagreement level was up 6 points on the previous year.

*Table 5: "It is important for the District Council to improve current levels of service; even if this means increasing council tax by more than 2% a year (this would require a public Referendum to agree it)"*

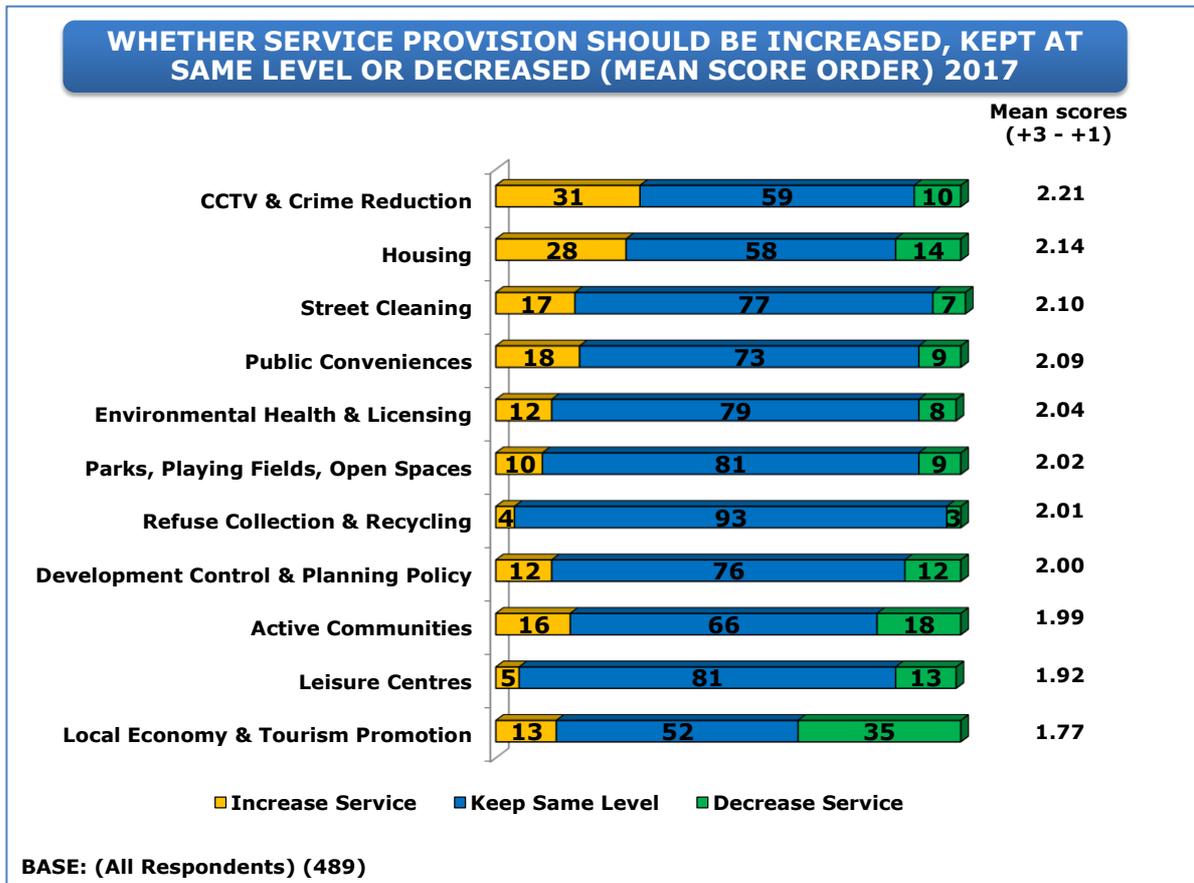
	<b>2016 %</b>	<b>2017 %</b>
<b>Strongly Agree / Agree</b>	34	34
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	27	21
<b>Disagree / Strongly Disagree</b>	38	44
<b>BASE: (All respondents)</b>	(466)	(483)

## **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 2016 and 2015 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 (+21%), with Local Economy & Tourism Promotion having the largest difference between decrease and increase (-23%).

Chart 1:



CCTV and Crime Reduction recorded the highest mean score at 2.21 and Local Economy and Tourism Promotion the lowest at 1.77.

No service rose by more than +0.03 compared with 2016. The mean score for Development Control & Planning Policy fell by a mean score of -0.09. See Table 6.

Table 6: Whether service provision should be increased, kept the same or decreased

	Mean Scores Over Time					
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2011
<b>CCTV &amp; Crime Reduction</b> - 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. <b>2014-£3.02, 2015-£2.78, 2016-£3.06</b>	2.21	2.20	2.12	2.09	2.03	2.10
<b>Housing</b> - 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. <b>2014-£12.52, 2015-£11.96, 2016-£14.74</b>	2.14	2.12	2.01	2.06	2.04	2.22
<b>Street Cleaning</b> - This service relates to the cleaning of the streets throughout the whole of the District Area. <b>2014-£12.19, 2015-£11.08, 2016-£12.22</b>	2.10	2.10	1.99	2.02	2.03	2.07
<b>Public Conveniences</b> - This service concerns the provision of public conveniences throughout the District. <b>2014-£3.09, 2015-£2.64, 2016-£2.85</b>	2.09	2.11	2.02	2.09	2.07	2.15
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licensing</b> - 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. <b>2014-£8.13, 2015-£8.09, 2016-£7.22</b>	2.04	2.05	2.01	1.99	2.03	1.98
<b>Parks, Playing Fields &amp; Open Spaces</b> - This involves the management of parks, playing fields, & open spaces owned by the District Council, verge trimming & tree surgery. <b>2014-£4.74, 2015-£8.62, 2016-£4.86</b>	2.02	1.99	2.02	2.07	2.04	1.97
<b>Refuse Collection and Recycling</b> - This service involves the fortnightly collection of recycling & domestic waste. There is a weekly collection of food waste. <b>2014-£25.07, 2015-£21.80, 2016-£24.84</b>	2.01	2.00	2.01	2.05	2.02	2.04
<b>Development Control &amp; Planning Policy</b> - This service is responsible for the development of planning strategies & determining planning applications. It is also responsible for planning enforcement, conservation, & policy implementation. <b>2014-£17.85, 2015-£17.16, 2016-£18.88</b>	2.00	2.09	2.02	2.11	1.97	1.93
<b>Active Communities</b> - Play schemes, school sports tournaments and physical activity opportunities for older people. <b>2014-£1.27 2015-£1.16, 2016-£1.22</b>	1.99	2.03	1.98	1.99	1.96	2.04
<b>Leisure Centres</b> - The provision & running of four Council leisure centres across the District, play areas & the Skate Park. <b>2014-£9.62, 2015-£12.58, 2016-£10.92</b>	1.92	1.93	1.93	1.92	1.93	1.95
<b>Local Economy &amp; Tourism Promotion</b> - This service relates to supporting business & the promotion of tourism throughout Stratford District. <b>2014-£2.02, 2015-£3.35, 2016-£2.40</b>	1.77	1.81	1.78	1.83	1.87	2.04
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>506</b>

## **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><b><u>a. Completion of Local Plan</u></b>          The Council approved the Core Strategy in July 2016; this provides the overall framework for planning decisions within the District. However, further Planning Policy documents are required to ensure sustainable development including the relation to Gypsy &amp; Traveller sites, the Canal Quarter in Stratford-upon-Avon and Site Allocations.  <b>£150,000 one off</b></p>
<p><b><u>b. Strategic Review Implementation</u></b>          The Council is undertaking a Strategic Review of all of its activities and policies. A recent questionnaire identified 22 potential priorities for the Council to consider. In order to progress the schemes which the public suggested are priorities, then additional capacity for a two year period is required.  <b>£150,000 per year for two years</b></p>
<p><b><u>c. Review of Development Control</u></b>          Stratford-on-Avon District Council has seen an unprecedented number of planning applications; it is now ranked second in the country for districts for the number submitted for consideration. In response, the Council has needed to employ several temporary planners to support the core activity. This trend has now continued for more than 3 years and it is suggested that arrangements and income levels should be changed permanently. The result of this change is estimated to generate a net reduction in cost of £89,800.  <b>£89,800 saving per year</b></p>
<p><b><u>d. Additional Housing/Homelessness Costs</u></b>          Following national reductions in welfare budgets the Council has seen an increase in the number of individuals who are presenting as homeless. In order to address these increased needs, a range of proposals are being considered to help individuals maintain tenancies and also allow for increased use of temporary accommodation.  <b>c.£160,000 per year</b></p>
<p><b><u>e. Investment in Legal Team</u></b>          The Council has an internal legal resource which helps support all of the activities of the authority. Over the last four years the Council has needed to increase its legal advice, this has required the Council to buy in additional capacity at high hourly rates. This proposal would seek to bolster the internal legal team and significantly reduce the need to incur external solicitor costs. Whilst this bid is shown as a cost of £50,000 it is expected that the savings will be significantly greater.  <b>£50,000 recurring</b></p>

The review of Development Control was by far the first choice for residents at 77% support. Least support was the implementation of the Strategic Review – 29%.

Table 7: Support for Proposals

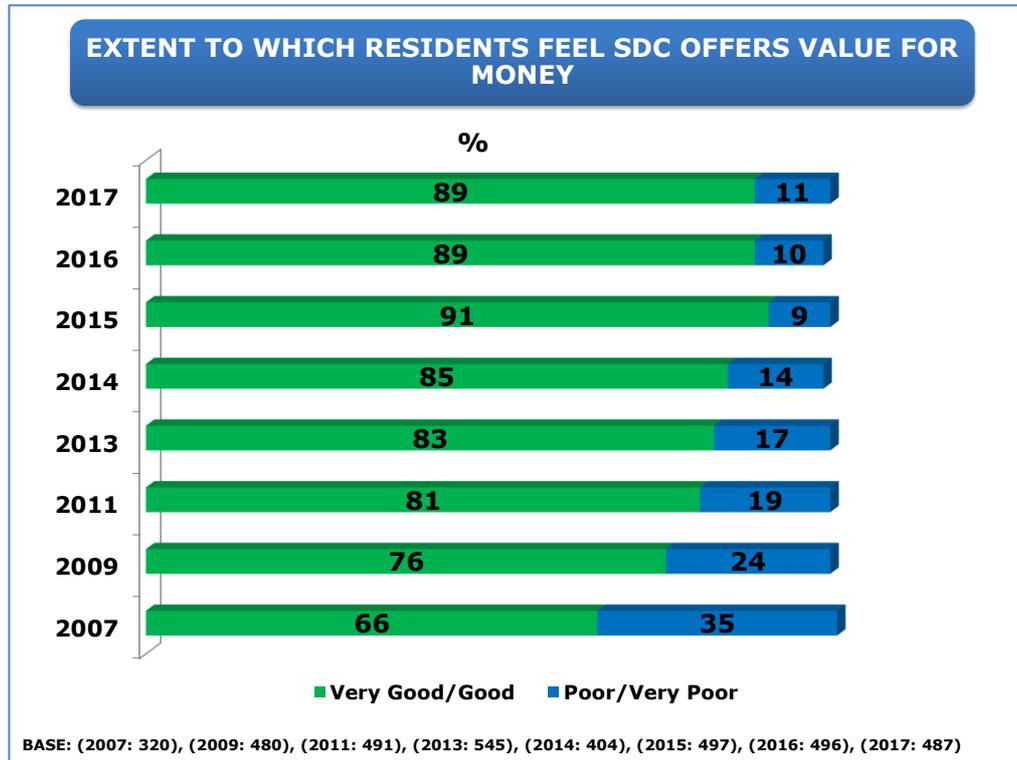
	<b>%</b>
<b>Review of Development Control</b>	77
<b>Investment in Legal Team</b>	58
<b>Additional Housing/Homelessness Costs</b>	56
<b>Completion of Local Plan</b>	49
<b>Strategic Review Implementation</b>	29
<b>Base: (All respondents)</b>	(484)

## **Value for Money**

Panel members were told that the current council tax element for a Band D property was £133.05. They were asked if this represented good value for money or not.

The value for money figure remains at a high level of 89%, the same as 2016 and the joint second highest figure recorded in the last eight surveys.

Chart 2:

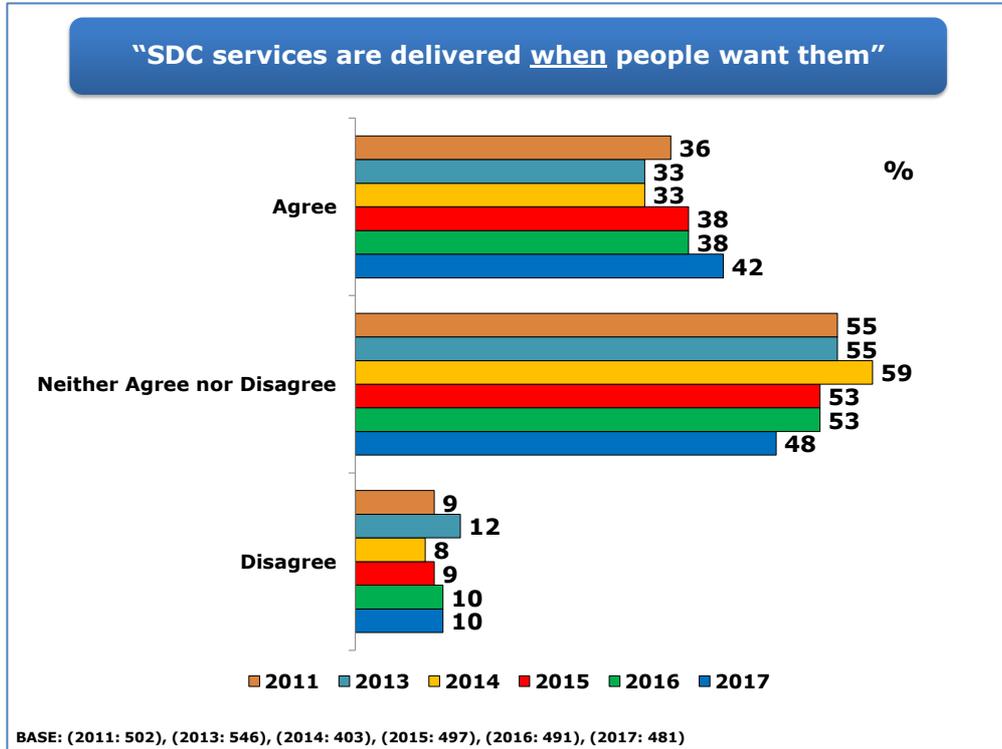


**Statement questions on SDC services**

**SDC services are delivered when people want them**

Asked whether they felt SDC services were delivered when people wanted them, 42% agreed and 10% disagreed. The agreement figure was 4 percentage points up on the previous year.

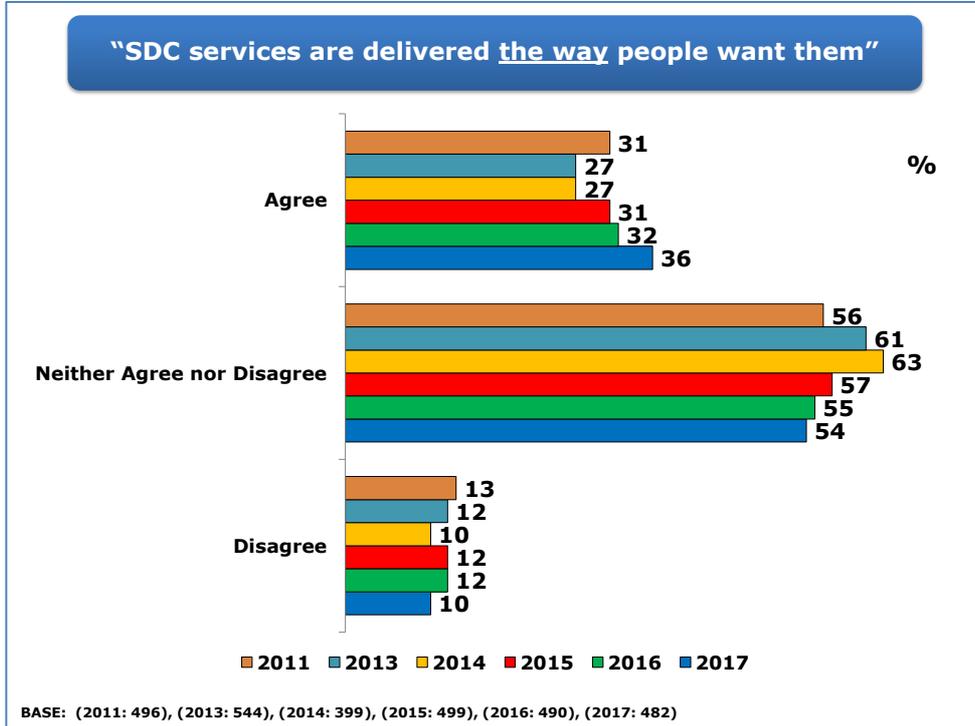
Chart 3:



### SDC services are delivered the way people want them

Asked whether they felt SDC services were delivered the way people wanted them, 36% agreed and 10% disagreed. This question has a high percentage of neither agreeing nor disagreeing at 54%. The agreement figure is up 4 points on the previous survey.

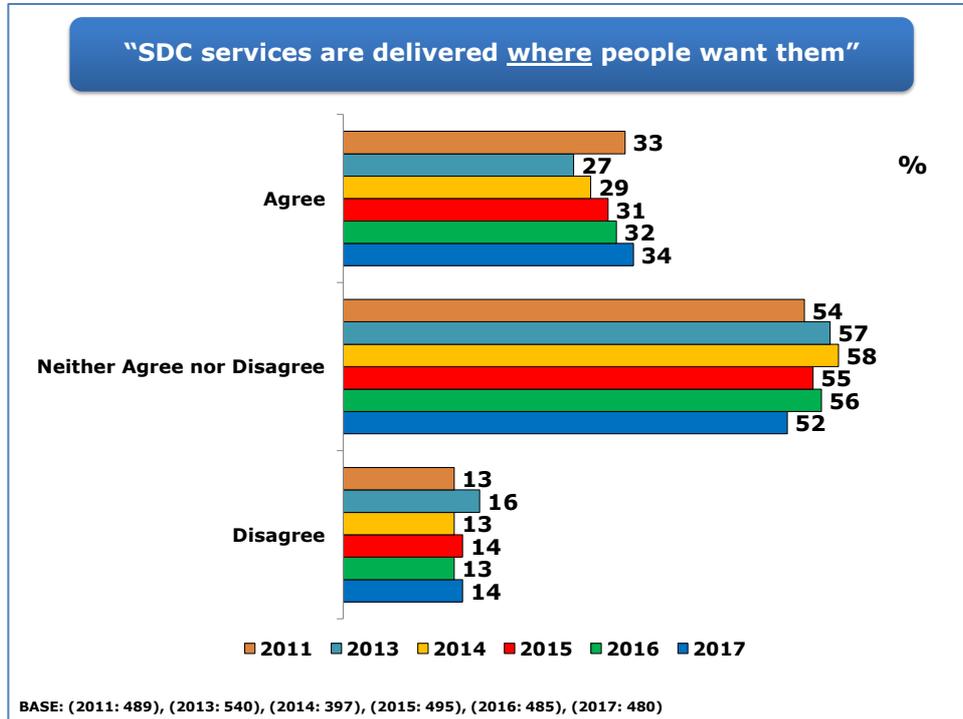
Chart 4:



## SDC services are delivered where people want them

Asked whether they felt SDC services were delivered where people wanted them, 34% agreed and 14% disagreed. The agreement figure is slightly higher than 2016 by 2 points. More than half neither agreed nor disagreed.

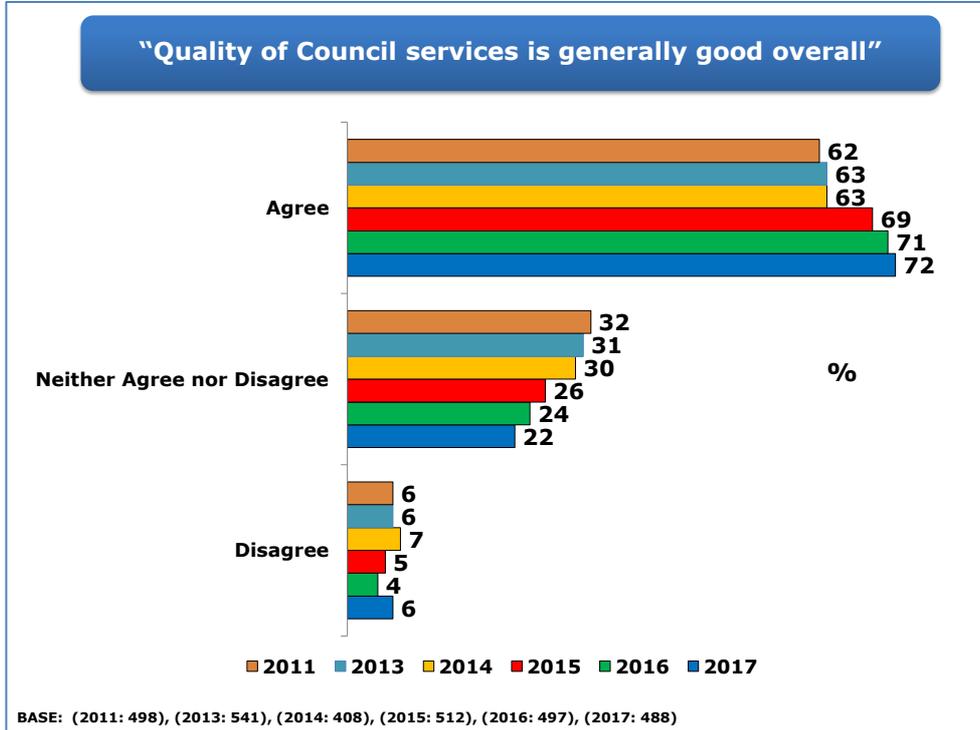
Chart 5:



## Quality of Council services is generally good overall

Seven out of ten respondents (72%) felt the quality of Council services was good overall. This figure has risen 10 percentage points on 2011. Disagreement with the statement rose 2 points from 4% in 2016 to 6% in 2017.

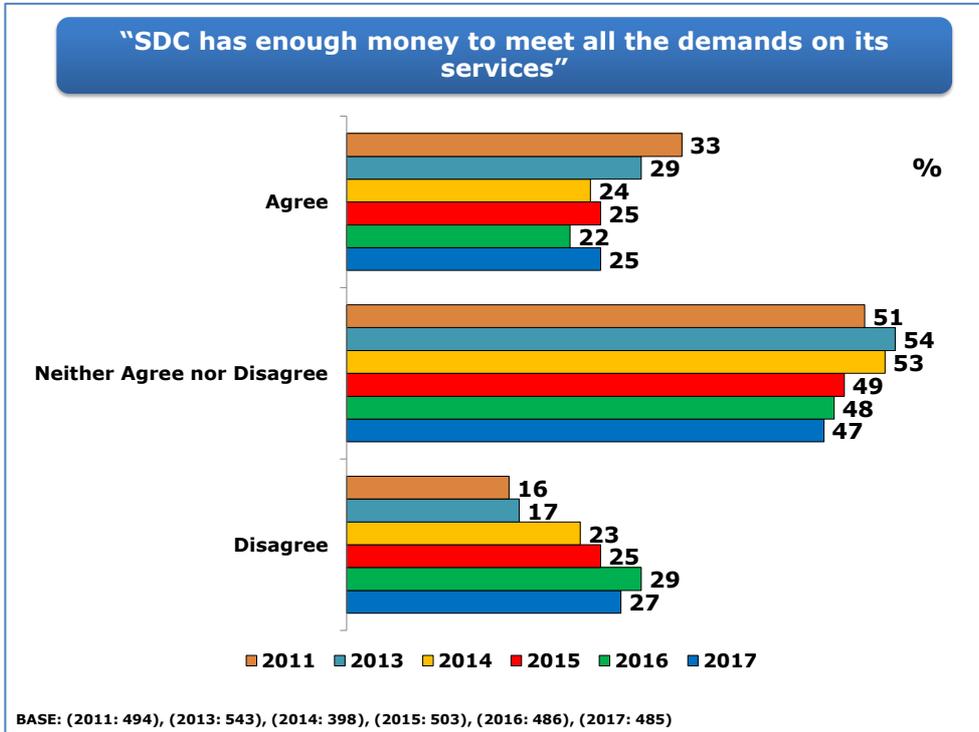
Chart 6:



### 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. Exactly a quarter 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 27% in 2017 from 16% in 2011.

Chart 7:



178 comments were made in relation to the statement questions and these are shown in the appendix.

## Respondents' Profile

Table 8: Gender

	%
Male	52
Female	48
BASE:	(487)

Table 9: Age

	%
Up to 29	<1
30-39	5
40-49	11
50-59	16
60-69	29
70-79	29
80 & over	11
BASE:	(457)

Table 10: Number of adults aged 18 or over in household

	%
One	27
Two	63
Three	7
Four	3
BASE:	(472)

Table 11: Number of children aged 17 or under in household

	%
None	85
One	7
Two	6
Three or more	1
BASE:	(472)

Table 12: Accommodation Type

	%
Owned outright	67
Buying on mortgage	20
Rent from Housing Assoc./Trust	6
Rent from a private landlord	4
Other	2
BASE:	(485)

Table 13: Whether respondents have any long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity

	%
Yes	24
No	76
BASE:	(486)

Table 14: Whether this illness or disability limits respondents' activities in any way

	%
Yes	87
No	13
BASE: (Those with disability)	(116)

Table 15: Activity which best describes what respondent is doing at present

	%
Employee in full-time job	19
Employee in part-time job	12
Self-employed, full or part-time	11
Full-time education at school, college or university	<1
Unemployed and available for work	1
Permanently sick or disabled	2
Wholly retired from work	55
Looking after the home	7
Doing something else	4
BASE:	(486)

Table 16: Origin

	%
White - British	96
White - Irish, White - Other Background, Non-White	4
BASE:	(484)

# **APPENDIX**

Additional comments made relating to the statement questions.

The council needs to be more diligent in the way it spends money internally, one suggestion would be to sell Elizabeth House, which is a prime town centre site, and move to a cheaper facility that could be leased/rented out of the town centre.
Do not think council considers local people in planning or traffic congestion caused by it at all.
Year on year I pay more and more in Council Tax and I see fewer Police patrols and no evidence of local area improvements (Lighthorne Heath). We no longer receive landscaping and any local improvements have to be carried out by local volunteers. I've never seen any council employees clearing rubbish and I rarely if ever see road sweeping done. Yet year on year I pay more in Council Tax.
The 'Disagree' answers is an attempt to highlight the lack of a strategic planning document which seems to me to have resulted in the council losing control of the planning process.
Do not know enough about it
SDC should start to remember that Studley is part of the SDC area. It is time that SDC treat Studley the same as Stratford and not just some forgotten area.
Considerable housing is being developed in the SDC area but the infrastructure is not being developed along with it. Shops are closing, roads are congested, and in surrounding districts Studley being a prime example vehicles are encouraged and allowed to park on pavements along both side and main roads restricting pedestrian access and traffic flows. Traffic pollution is killing residents.
See the previous Qu 4 - more money for leisure services
An apparent lack of willingness to do anything. verges and hedgerows are in a bad way
in relation to the above question, whilst I am generally happy with the service provided I cannot speak for others who may disagree. I would need to have information about the number of complaints raised and such like before I could give a more precise answer. I do think if you want to put up council tax, I would only be able to support it if an accurate assessment of home values and the bandings was performed. I live in the smallest house of 3 that i have owned in the last 20 years but Am in the highest band! If you want to put up costs it needs to be fairer and then I would be in agreement
The only service I use regularly is waste disposal. I do not have enough experience of others to comment
Clearly SDC does not have enough money due to trying to plug the enormous pension gap with increases cost of parking in the town and parking fines as one method and combining services with other authorities as another. It is felt that the SDC scare very much about how Stratford Town itself looks to tourists (the flowers always look lovely I have to say) but don't really care much about other places in the district; this may or may not be a fair comment but that is certainly the feeling amongst people who don't live in Stratford. And people who do live or work in town just feel that they are there to be charged vast amount of money for parking for the privilege of going to work or shop.
Don't have enough information to comment
We live in a small parish and apart from leaf clearing, lighting and general cleaning, we see very little for the money we pay, especially as we are both pensioners with no offspring.
1)THERE ARE MANY EMPTY SPACES ABOVE SHOPS AND IN THE TOWN CENTRE WHICH WOULD BE IDEAL FOR CHEAP HOUSING. 2) BUS SERVICES TO WORCESTERSHIRE ARE VERY POOR AND FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. 3) THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME "SHARP PRACTICE" WITHIN THE COUNCIL AND BETWEEN "FAVOURED" LANDLORDS REGARDING SOME PLANNING ISSUES EXPERIENCED IN STUDLEY.
Planning department in need of major investigation. Those in authority are unapproachable, unhelpful, dismissive and very defensive if any comment is made to question their decisions. Those in authority refuse to take personal responsibility when mistakes are made and choose, instead, to blame team members. This is not how a planning dept. should be run and council's refusal to accept that this dept. has problems in management is extremely worrying.
Very difficult to answer as I do not have enough information to comment with any degree of certainty
An area that I am not familiar with, as the only services I am aware of are rubbish collection, planning applications and lack of buses to outlying areas which reduces our connection to Stratford.
As a lay person it would seem all is in working order. I cannot answer the 5th question because

I am not in possession of the necessary facts.
SDC staff are always pleasant, answer queries efficiently and if they cannot answer the question will come back to you with an answer. However at times SDC do not seem to look at the whole picture in relation to long term demands
I understand that budgets are tight and frankly a small increase in Council Tax (even above the 2% limit) is acceptable at a local level.
Planning Department has a very poor reputation. Streets are not cleaned regularly Planning development control is not apparent due too many part time planning officers hence the observation above. Stratford Trust could do more with their cash but not trying to gain through development ideas. Traffic management needs urgent attention. Housing developments need to be controlled and restricted as it is becoming a pressure for the town due to council not sorting their core strategy plan sign off which was late. Stratford is changing and now over developed . Too many restaurants and coffee shops. Could add more and more but the communication with public and residents of Stratford are not consulted enough. It is about time the people have a say about the district
Demands on SDC services are infinite I imagine.
An indication of different ways services could be provided and the cost differential (across the board/ pay at point of use etc?) would be a useful tool for discussion.
I am happy with the services provided to date i would be for a small tax increase to maintain current services
I would support a proposal for an appropriate increase in council tax overall. In addition I would like to see further higher rate bands that would enable the wealthier part of the community to make an appropriate contribution.
I received excellent advice and support when I contacted the council housing dept. about a rent increase for my vulnerable adult son who is in privately rented accommodation in the town centre. Lady I spoke to was kind and thoughtful and knowledgeable
The SDC needs to raise more money to provide essential services for an expanding town and in particular more housing, roads, education and health. This can only be done by increasing domestic rates and maintaining business rates .
Services are to Stratford centred.
I believe housing is a very important issue for those who cannot afford to buy or cannot afford commercial rents, we need to do as much as possible to help those people and also to help the elderly who wish to move from oversized properties. Therefore we need additional resources to provide housing and to provide assistance to those who need help in finding homes.
We realise we live in a very peripheral village and therefore have to travel to access many services.
I receive a good service generally from SDC, thank you. I am concerned that inappropriate planning decisions have been reached in the absence of a confirmed 5 year housing supply, and this needs to be urgently and permanently resolved (should have been two years ago...) While generally well managed (thank you again) I'm sure that other core costs could be reduced to increase spend on services to our most vulnerable residents.
I don't agree that being one of the cheapest council tax areas in Warks/country is anything to boast. Let's boast that street sleepers are supported, the elderly are supported and the disadvantaged in general are helped. If the residents of Stratford can't afford to pay a bit more then who can?
Failure by Planning and Enforcement Officers to defend residents at Planning Inquiries and failure to take enforcement action against developers who consistently flout planning conditions, together with disinterested Councillors who fail to reply to emails.
I do not want to see council tax increases above 2%, especially if it is to fund projects for housing for people who choose not to work hard and get jobs nor social care for people who have chosen not to save for their old age.
Planning and legal support continue to be a weak spot which needs support.
Clearly the council is underfunded by central government zeds has competing priorities. I live in a rural area and the bus services to nearby towns have been cut drastically. This is causing me and many other non-drivers major problems as we cannot get to work, school, college, shops, amenities. It causes social isolation as well which in turn creates further problems. In my opinion far too many housing developments are going on and there is not capacity in terms

of amenities to support the influx of people particularly noticeable in Harbury, Bishops Itchington and Southam.
the refuse collection is poor, most people want a return to weekly collections how come that waste from black bags that are not sorted with recycling is put into the same lorry as the sorted refuse the last time i looked on government sites there is no law that says you must recycle
Within local authorities the cost of employment is too high mainly due to pensions, absenteeism etc
We appreciate the efficiency of the refuse services, and would not wish to see a diminution of this excellent facility. There is a lot of fly tipping around Sambourne, and it would be good if there were some high profile prosecutions.
Strategic Planning is poor leading to ad hoc decisions and poor quality of life
The outlying areas lack the services that the town receives.
Too much emphasis on tourists, not enough consideration for residents. ie parking, no bus terminal , and large amounts of money spent on promoting tourism.
Council tax should be increased for the upper bands to allow the Council to allocate more land for social housing, including the planning requirements of the developments.
Very satisfied & feel lucky that we live in the Stratford area.
Is another approach needed? Instead of itemising all services & then attempting to apply a cost to them all, why not start on a "hierarchy of needs" approach. Start with the No1 essential service, apply the current running cost to it, then identify the next important "need", apply current cost, etc. When you run out of money, scrap those services remaining because they are not essential needs and people can choose if they want to pay privately for them (eg leisure service)
Overall happy with the service provided. Particularly favour the one recycling bin arrangements as I feel this encourages recycling.
I do not feel that, at present, I have enough knowledge to answer most of these questions as I am a little out of touch.
I have always found my queries answered politely and where possible dealt with
Overall the level of service is very good, I feel that SDC should look how commercial companies could contribute more towards the upkeep of the town i.e. street cleansing etc.. Litter in the town and surrounding areas is becoming a bigger problem. I'm also concerned about the increasing levels of homelessness in the town.
Major savings should be made by stopping sick leave being taken automatically as additional holiday. Full time employees are far more efficient than part time and motion action needed o improve output.
Bin collection, grass verges hedge, tree pruning, pavement condition and prevention of soiling by dogs are examples of areas that are clearly inadequate
It would help if we knew 'what' services each section related to.
In my opinion, the most noticeable area where investment and improvement is needed is to bring to zero the number of homeless people in Stratford town centre. This has increased astonishingly and, apart from begging massively discouraging shoppers and tourists from coming to Stratford on repeat visits, casts a pall of shame over the town. Rightly or wrongly - what must visitors think of us?
Users of leisure facilities should pay a realistic price to be involved. Those facilities that have a substantial running cost and only used by a few should be closed
Green bin collections are a huge waste of money and results in less composting all local authorities should use less signage less visual clutter and saving money
I have no idea whether SDC has enough money to meet all the demands on its services. I think it is wrong to ask me to select three areas to support for the budget especially as not all the information is available. For example are you expecting the number of planning applications to continue at the current rate? If yes then the requirement for permanent staff is the right decision, if no then we shouldn't take staff on to end up over staffed in the future and possibly end up with a redundancy situation. For example - what activity is driving the need for additional staff in the legal team? Is it linked to the planning applications, so will these reduce over time? Is it linked to noise pollution issues or non-payment of council tax?? There may be other ways to mitigate the need to increase the team. It is misleading not to give the

whole context for the decision, my decisions if I had this additional information might be different
My personal experience with the District Council has been positive. I appreciate that cuts have to be made and this impacts upon the services the Council can provide.
If you cut too much then the poorest in society suffer the most
Any increase in overall council tax should not exceed CPI which is used by govt. to fix public sector pensions.
In regard to planning applications if you relaxed some rules in planning and change of use you could bring in more income from council tax. People just want a home and if that means changing a few rules then I think that's a good thing for the council.
Quite difficult to answer some of the questions precisely as to many of them I feel the answer should be 'It all depends'! The questions in Q6 for example are just too vague and generalised - e.g. some services may be delivered when some people want them but not others. Ditto the following two questions.
Generally I am satisfied with services provided. I think the refuse collection service is excellent and I hope there will be no attempt to reduce the number/frequency of collections.
Lack of operating efficiency across the board. Top heavy bureaucracy. Unable to address clearly defined long term problems. Poor decision making regarding spend on various projects. Business and community initiatives overly biased in favour of Shakespeare branded businesses.
No specific comments
SDC is very Stratford centric. Other towns and villages seem to be forgotten
Sometimes outlying villages are forgotten when decisions are made.
In my experience SDC appears to meet my needs, however my standard of living is more than adequate but others may not be as fortunate, as a result SDC should make every effort to eliminate homeless people/need for food banks etc. Our property is above the band D and would not object to reasonable increases in council tax but not at the expense of the less well off, or for SDC to use any additional funding for the development of tourism etc. which primarily benefits business
With a rising tide of social concerns being faced by councils everywhere, I don't feel it appropriate for financial cutbacks in key areas or indeed their support framework. I feel that time is well spent by looking at how things can be done more efficiently & effectively in all areas & I am sure the majority of council members would agree with this. Perhaps a senior members think tank could become a regular feature of council business in order that this may be achieved in the long run.
Living in Alderminster, with family ties in Whatcote, we are told that the council is for us, but we don't get any help. We need a house in Whatcote or Tysoe but are told there are no houses available, but foreign families are moving in! We feel that people from out the area get more support than us living in the area, who are paying into our community.
I think it is extremely difficult to provide the same level of service on a decreasing budget. It is almost impossible to prioritise some services over others when it is often the most vulnerable who are affected when services are cut. Are there any areas where the district council could share services (eg for legal team, planning etc) to help save costs?
It is difficult to agree totally with the last statement as I do not know if the council have enough in the pot. I do think there needs to be a curbing on new properties in the area.
If you live in Stratford then it is acceptable but for the populous who have to take a miserly hand out after all the tourists and councils have had share it is disgusting!!!!!!
Don't overspend on salaries and only retain and invest in talented people to do the necessary work
I think we are scrimping away in Stratford where we need to be investing in the future We have seen more homelessness in the town. We need to spend supporting those who have less money. Most residents can afford more. We should save money and improve operations by consolidating the three tiers of local government.
I don't have enough knowledge about the issues that are presented to the Local Authority to make a judgement on whether services are delivered when/where/the way people want.
As the council tax is increasing and presumably the increase in homes in and around Stratford has increased there should be more money available.
I feel that the Local Plan must be completed before we consider any other items.

I am generally happy the way SDC is run, but have little direct dealings with it so not well placed to comment on some of the questions
Q6 Don't really know enough about what people want or the way people want them delivered etc to be able to answer this . 4th point is a personal opinion - services good overall but when funding permits would like to see more investment in the villages eg sports facilities.
Some services have been cut back too far and require increased spending. Plus, in Q4, I would have marked item b on planning as a priority area (item c as a saving is presumably a no-brainer and should be done as a matter of common sense).
based on my own experience of SDC.
We prioritise stopping further housing development. We don't want more roads built. We prioritise maintaining countryside
More thought should be given to services in the rural areas i.e. villages not concentrate on Stratford
I think good work has been done to keep tax at a reasonable level, however to maintain improvements, I think a small increase would be acceptable
SDC has reputation for not listening to views of archial residents - far too pre occupied with satisfying tourists - tourists are visitors - residents actually live here!!
Provision of more housing is perplexing, it is essential, yet it leads to more traffic congestion
As I only live in Studley, which you probably know is on the outskirts of Stratford. I can only comment on issues in this area which are quite reasonable in comparison to when I lived in Birmingham
I would like to see a stop to the use of greenbelt land for housing and an increased protection of land that is valuable for wildlife. There is no housing shortage if unused and derelict housing was restored
As a rural dweller I am not sure I get as much for my money as town dwellers
What about the income from our parking, how much is this and how does it compare to other income? A lot of your customers are retired (like me) and on fixed incomes (like me) So any increase in fixed costs has to be met by reduced spending within your means! Pretend you are running a business
Q4 (e). No explanation has been given as to why the legal services dept. have used external expertise. If the overspend is due to Planning then there is no need to incorporate extra monies, but if by any chance it was used by any other dept. we need to know this
Although SDC do a marvellous job with the money they receive, it is always nice to have a little bit more
It appears that local government is stretched to capacity & requires a greater contribution from its rate payers
On the whole the council gives good value for money
One possible conclusion from "Brexit" is that inflation will increase. I have answered all cost related questions on the assumption that costs should increase pro rata with inflation. I recommend a reduction in local economy & tourism promotion because this is a split question (3h). I remain very supportive of assisting local business. In the case of tourism however I believe having regard to "Shakespeare" influence that this is now capable of being self-supportive. Next time this question is put forward may I suggest splitting these functions
I have major issues following an initial verbal then physical attack on my person by a person begging for money outside Boots the Chemist in Bridge Street, Stratford-on-Avon. I literally had no change when asked and said "awfully sorry I have no change" he then verbally abused me and I said you'll get nothing with that attitude and he jumped up and pushed me backwards. I suggest a ban on such people and more police "foot patrols" PLEASE
I believe there are still savings to be made and waste of money to be avoided. Until this is accomplished, increases should be avoided, in expenditure & services
More police activity on the roads & streets - Alcester enforcement of speed limits - Alcester
I think overall S.D.C council do an awful lot with the money derived from the council tax but I would like to see more facilities for the homeless
Q5. As we live in the countryside we get little return from our council tax apart from bins emptied
Q3j. Closure of public conveniences (behind Debenhams) has not had any adverse impact. Potential to save here!

Well I am an old chap, I think you try but some things don't get done. I live 26 years at xxx. When I retired there, there was trees planted round the back garden. The council I had informed them pull the other left it's got bells on???, so guess who had to cut it down, Mr ? £120 1992 my neighbour across back had row right at the side of public foot path now 55 feet high, block all the sun out of my garden, they cut 6 down 15 years, it left 55
Planning/searches for property is very slow 6 weeks wait for local searches is appalling. Standard of cleaning in town centre is dreadful and the shop frontages in many areas are not in keeping with a market town
I like the way Stratford council gets on sorting things out in a good natural way. Well done
Have not had occasion to deal directly with S.D.C. since the last survey
Based on my answers to the previous questions, I feel that SDC need to keep services at the same level. I'm sure that this will prove difficult given the fact that the government keep reducing the amount they give to councils. SDC need to look within the structure of the council to see if costs can be reduced e.g. staffing, Councillors, office expenditure etc. it cannot afford to WASTE our money anymore.
It is not how we want the services it is how the council tell us what we can have!
A lot of this does not affect me at all
I'm against further cut backs in any shape or form. The way forward should be long-term investment in the community especially at this moment in time when money is cheap to borrow. Don't wait until it becomes expensive to borrow and when inflation is high and eating away at your capital. Those who invest long term will always come out on top. Higher council tax acceptable if for future investment. xxx
There are now so many voluntary organisations that deal with many of the subjects that the council do, it would be a good idea not to duplicate these but to have a good signposting to them
I do not know what other people are satisfied with services. I live at Earlswood only one I can think of that I'm satisfied with - refuse collection. One I know of is lack of budget> Byways & footpath maintenance in poor state in Earlswood area
My preferred options generally not of my own individual concerns, those of people I see struggling and also not wholly based on my understanding and need for the schemes proposed by you to put into operation
Street cleaning not as good - more litter around parts of town and some empty premises are looking quite run down. More beggars on the streets and instances of sleeping rough and anti-social behaviour in the memorial garden in old town. Speed limit within old town and Stratford town to be introduced of 20 mph and enforced. Stop parking on pavements in old town and tourist uses on double yellow lines around Holy Trinity
I think S.D.C gives good value for money. But I wondered why Wellesbourne P. Council is allowed to get such a large grant for just one sport location using our council tax?
With prices rising, a slight increase in local rates I think can be expected as they are so important
Kitchen waste goes in my green bin and gets collected fortnightly. You say you collect weekly - when!! (Studley resident) Q3 (a)
Make developers pay more for local services i.e. increase their 5.106 contributions, ensure build wide enough & new roads, cycle lanes & car parking to reduce congestion, blocked roads dangerous for emergency services
What is an affordable home? All homes are affordable to anyone who can pay the price. Homes should be affordable to working people with modest incomes, who wish to live in the area, particularly villages in which they were brought up. Not well off incomers!
I have too little background information to make a good enough decision
By and large the SDC do a wonderful job and the questions that are asked suggests that they are mindful of what they are about and thoroughly involved in their thinking, so keep up the good work. I think we can all be proud of you all
As a council tax payer I do not want my hard earned money wasted. I.E. not spent on non-essential things e.g. It would be nice to have!!
At my age, the provision of toilet access to parks/gardens are essential together with knowledge that town planning is controlled & considered
The Council Officers do not work in the way private businesses operate. There is too much flexi

<p>working - part time and "working at home" - The Council offices should be out of town up on the park and ride area or the industrial estate. The latest traffic review is a complete joke. The town needs a new road bridge parallel to the Clopton Bridge. The traffic lights on the Birmingham Road should be removed - when they break down the traffic flows much better! I fail to understand why economies cannot be made through overall structural changes that a unitary authority would provide. Do you have any proposals around that strategy? Finally, the pension schemes holiday entitlements and benefits given to officers must be reviewed - we simply cannot afford it. Private employees do not enjoy such luxuries. I could go on!</p>
<p>Always room for improvement but fully appreciate the barriers encountered</p>
<p>Sometimes it seems S.D.C only care about issues in Stratford itself as opposed to addressing issues in outlying towns and villages Southam/Long Itchington/Ladbroke almost seem invisible by comparison</p>
<p>I would be happy to lose lots of services to ensure council tax charges do not increase further</p>
<p>If development control is increased then results must noticeable in the form of better quality housing developments, better local in new buildings and a clear commitment to stop housing developers riding roughshod over design guidelines. Why is the first house on a new development always nicely detailed but everything beyond, within cul-de-sacs etc a complete disgrace - plain brick, no detailing etc Take a look at the edge of Ilmington for example</p>
<p>I pay £1300 approx. a year for bins to be emptied (That's it) Roads are shocking. Cars parked everywhere. Police service appalling (never see in village). Drains never cleared. Road swept once a year but cannot get around due to cars parked. value for money</p>
<p>We are all suffering from cuts in income/person. The Council must do it's bit to keep costs down while providing the best service possible</p>
<p>My general feeling is that the District Council under it's current leader is poorly managed and need to be directed by a person not associated to any political party</p>
<p>SDC need to stop wasting money on stupid artwork and painting pavements. Stop the rich fat cats buying up all the smaller properties for private rental portfolios by capping the amount of properties in and around Stratford that can be used for private rental and therefore not available for young married people to buy. Stop passing in and move this back to how it used to be before the developers pack us in like sardines. Tie developers into water tight contracts on what they are going to do for Stratford people before giving them planning permission</p>
<p>Q3 (f) grass verge trimming? is this a joke, some junctions are now 'blind' owing to overgrown vegetation</p>
<p>Local towns &amp; villages should have authority to look after &amp; control their local area. There is too much SDC &amp; WCC involvement in Parish Councils</p>
<p>Q3 (f) This service could be reduced by a change of thinking over public planting/flower displays. These could be changed to wild flower/permanent shrubs planting to reduce costs and benefit the environment, reduced management of verges &amp; a proportion of recreation grounds similarly. - very successful in Birmingham</p>
<p>This council should live within its means. Staff members should be reduced at H.O. level</p>
<p>Questions appear to have a leaning towards Stratford town as opposed to the district</p>
<p>Availability of planning via telephone &amp; online planning slow. Refuse excellent when &amp; where I want it</p>
<p>With the cuts in funding from Central Government I support an increase in Council Tax to sustain and enhance the level of service. I am concerned about uncontrolled development in the district and see the local plan &amp; strategic review as important</p>
<p>I believe SDC does a good job with it's limited resources. I feel anxious about the number of houses being built and the increase in traffic etc. Also I am horrified to think that permission has been given for a big wheel to be built - more visitors, more cars, more litter, more noise - who will benefit possibly visitors but not residents</p>
<p>Stratford seems to do all right for service. But the villages don't</p>
<p>Street cleaning and law enforcement has deteriorated. Open spaces and areas for leisure have been reduced. Housing has been reduced or sold off. Public conveniences are charged for additionally where provided. Car parking is reduced and costly</p>
<p>With regards to Q4A more investigations should take place to the back ground of Gypsy and Traveller communities, they usually demonstrate that they can well afford to pay their own way, they also very often demonstrate that they do not accept or abide by our laws. With</p>

regards to the increase in homelessness again a survey should take place to determine why, perhaps it can be reviewed
I think SDC do their very best with what they've got
Re Q2: Important to keep current services or improve them, providing increase in council tax is no more than 3.5%. Disgusted that Government no longer provides financial assistance;. Not your fault. Re Q6; As not party to decisions and feedback from residents, I am not sure if services are delivered when, they way and where residents want them. General: I think refuse collection is very good and cannot fault service provided. However apparently there are moves afoot for residents to have to??? for using Burton Farm public refuse/recycling centre. Lastly I would like to see more done to keep grass verges on roads around Stratford clean. Not your fault I know. down to laziness of public in general
SDC have a credibility problem e.g. mostly the majority of people didn't want mixed changing rooms but it was overruled (leisure centre) don't ask the questions if you don't think you'll like the answers
Q4a. Hopefully the Core Strategy (long awaited) will reduce the stampede by developers see Q4c. where's the infrastructure? Q4e. Having first hand seen the Council's legal team (Barrister) he was NO MATCH at all to the developers legal team
I think if traveller sites are provided then they too ought to be paying some sort of council tax, they use services the same as the rest of us so it is only fair they pay something towards it too
Street beggars concern me. It's so bad for their health and makes the town look unpleasant. Greenhill Street in parts looks rather unpleasant with empty shops and rubbish. My personal view of Stratford is of a lovely place to live. I am very happy with the services the council provide
Can SDC Planning Notices in local papers be in a larger print? Many people say they are very difficult to read
More needed to help young people/people generally have a housing association (orbit) flat, houses not always needed for couples without children and young people having to sleep on settees because not enough room at home. More 2/3 bedroom places - more flats not spreading into greenbelt all the time
What percentage of the current council tax goes to fund pensions? My local council member has refused to answer this. xxx of Coventry City Council estimates council tax payers will see 34p in every pound going to public sector pensions in the next five years. Do you agree? If so, tell your tax payers
Q3 & Q7 are difficult to answer without fuller appreciation of facts
I have heard that SDC wastes high amounts of money in their offices
There is not enough information to make an informed choice for Q4. For example who is employed & how much are they paid for producing the Core Strategy? It is important to have a local plan in place to decrease the work load of the Planning department & legal disputes with opportunistic developers. This could be seen as a possible saving. Conversely if you increase provision in housing will the area then be attractive to those who can't find housing elsewhere? Legal issues can vary and need different expertise. Could you recruit a broad base of retired solicitors to give free advice & then pay a specialist solicitor? have you any incentives to encourage retired professionals
If SDC had money it needed you wouldn't be talking about cutting services & raising council tax. I appreciate a small raise of 2% may be small for band D but what about A&B who may consider this larger due to smaller income/housing in the first place. Could this not be stepped for the bands E.G. 1% for A, 2% for B, 3% for C etc etc
I have tried to answer honestly, obviously my age leans to 'comfort' 7 a quiet life! which I enjoy, thanks to S.D.C
It is important that current refuse/recycling levels continue and that public toilets are maintained as currently provided, including villages & market towns. Please also remember there are settlements outside of Stratford town
With all its restraints SDC (financially) is giving an all-round good service
You are never going to be able to please everyone all the time. On the whole I think SDC do a good job under difficult circumstances
More things for teenagers to do to keep them off the streets
We don't see much evidence of SDC activities in our village other than your excellent waste

<p>collection service, and of course, planning decisions. We feel that your activities are geared to the needs of Stratford itself and then to the other market towns e.g. Southam. Basically in a small village we have to build our own local community &amp; organise appropriate local activities on a voluntary basis. For example we run our own transport services because buses were shut down years ago</p>
<p>Q2. Planning services are reduce/poorer - staff have left the department. Planning has been subcontracted to inexperienced personnel. Q3b. This service is poorer than in previous years and cannot cope with demand. Q3d. 'Affordable' should be defined by the public and not the developer. Q3i. Need to know relevant crime figures and any success of existing schemes before a proper opinion can be made. Q4c. Staff have also left employment not just numbers of applications - 'why' have they left, should be stated within C. Q6. 'Planning' is struggling and poor service' Planning' needs managing. The term 'affordable' as in affordable housing must be determined by 'buyers' and not the developers. Surveys of residents at the parish level is essential</p>
<p>I live in a band E council tax housing development in Stratford-upon-Avon. There are 44 units of accommodation all paying either band D or E and the services we receive do not reflect the cumulative money we pay</p>
<p>The hedge by Sidelands Road on the Alcester Road has needed cutting all summer and winter you cannot walk on that side many people have complained about it but nothing has been done so the Council is never there when you need it</p>
<p>1. Planning &amp; Enforcement should be higher up. 2. Environment on outlying industrial should monitor more closely</p>
<p>Q6 is, in the context of a serious attempt by SDC to assess residents views, a nonsensical question it is unanswerable</p>
<p>It would be helpful to have a concise report of any criticism received by the Council</p>
<p>Stratford tip is a long journey. Bulky waste service helpful in Studley</p>
<p>Q2 Required me to rank my views on 'priority services' on a five point scale. I could find no definition/description of 'priority services'. The tabular' landscape presentation of the November panel results was a big improvement over October. The status quo in Stratford upon Avon seems very satisfactory, except, the state of the road surfaces, congestion, especially the Birmingham Road. Poor rail links to London - crippling tourist access</p>
<p>Less money should be spent in Stratford and more in areas outside, in the district</p>
<p>More information would have been useful to make an informed decision on some of these questions</p>
<p>Definitely agree with internal payments rather than outside contractor's e.g. planning, legal team. Agree with 1st 3 Q of Q6</p>
<p>Personally I don't use a lot of the services, however, the ones that are generally available and part of the SDC Council spend I am happy with</p>
<p>As a pensioner though I believe in principle the increase in Council Tax this would be difficult under the pension I receive personally. I understand the Govt has passed responsibility to the Council within a budget. Although there is a great deal of building going on very little is affordable to low wage earners</p>
<p>I am horrified at the muddled attitude the Council has to planning and has had for years! The traffic problems appalling and show a complete lack of understanding or even intelligence from the Council which causes frustration and fury for local residents. I feel these surveys are a waste of my time as nothing ever changes. Please take me off your list</p>
<p>What are the other services that you have in mind that could be affected by improving priority services?</p>