

# London Borough of Merton

## Residents survey 2019

May 2019



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# 1. Introduction

This report summarises the results of the 2019 borough-wide survey of 1,000 residents aged 18+ and 271 young people aged 11-17. The survey explored resident perceptions of their local area and council services, and was delivered through a face-to-face methodology between February 4<sup>th</sup> and April 5<sup>th</sup> 2019.

## Background and objectives

Between 1999 and 2014, the London Borough of Merton (from now on called LB Merton) conducted annual surveys of residents based on the Survey of Londoners model. Following the conclusion of this survey in 2015, LB Merton commissioned a stand-alone survey of residents that took place in 2017, and DJS Research were commissioned to carry out the follow-up survey to this in 2019.

The objective was to interview a representative sample of residents aged 18 and over, as well as explore the views and behaviours of young people aged 11-17.

The core objectives amongst **adult residents aged 18+** were as follows:

- To understand residents' overall perceptions of LB Merton's performance.
- Measure the perceptions of the value for money provided by the council.
- To benchmark the perceptions of Merton residents against national data collected by the Local Government Association (LGA).
- To track the change in perceptions of Merton residents against the findings of previous resident research.
- To understand residents' levels of satisfaction with local services.
- To measure perceptions of the local safety, levels of anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion within the borough.
- To evaluate current levels of volunteering and better understand the barriers to volunteering.
- To understand how residents receive information about the area.

The objectives of the **young people survey (those aged 11-17)** were as follows:

- To measure perceptions of the council's performance and satisfaction with local services.
- To establish what the main concerns are for young people living in the borough.
- To measure young people's perceptions of whether the council delivers services that meet their needs, does the council communicate effectively, and do they take young people's views into account.
- To determine the extent to which young people are involved in their communities or are interested in doing so in the future.

# Methodology

All interviews were conducted using a face-to-face computer aided personal interviewing (CAPI) methodology. The interviews were conducted at residents' homes within randomly selected areas (or sampling points).



## Sampling & approach

To ensure a representative sample of responses, a stratified random quota sampling approach was adopted; replicating the process in 2017. We ranked the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores at Super Output Area (SOA) level from high to low within each ward and split these into quartiles. Within each quartile, we then randomly selected a number of census output areas (COAs) to form our sampling points, thus ensuring a representative geographic coverage of each ward by its relative deprivation levels.

A total of 100 COAs/sampling points were sampled, based on a target of 10 interviews to achieve in each. This resulted in between 5 and 6 sampling points identified in each of the borough's 20 wards.

Using the postcode address file (PAF), all addresses were then made available to the interviewing team within each selected COA/sampling point. The addresses were pre-loaded onto the CAPI tablets for more effective management of the interviewing team and quotas on a daily basis.

By using the 2011 Census data (or more recent ONS population estimates where available), we set quotas per ward by age, gender, ethnicity, economic activity and disability to ensure a representative sample was achieved. Quotas were managed in-field at a COA/sampling point level, meaning that only a small amount of weighting was required post-fieldwork. The data was weighted by age, gender, ethnicity, economic activity and disability within each ward.

Only residents who had lived in the borough for six-months or more were eligible to participate in the survey, and only one adult was interviewed per household.

In terms of the young person interviews, a mixed-method approach was adopted. Wherever possible, young people aged 11-17 were interviewed in the same household where an adult interview was conducted (ensuring permission was gained from a responsible adult where interviews were completed with young people aged under 16). More than one young person could be interviewed per household if they met the age criteria. A number of face-to-face in-street interviews were also conducted with young people.

## Interviews achieved & confidence

The following table presents the number of achieved interviews per ward and cluster<sup>1</sup>, and the associated sampling error (based on a statistic of 50% at the 95% confidence level).

Overall, a total of 1,000 adult responses gives a sampling error of +/-3.1%. What this means is that we can be 95% confident that if we had interviewed every resident across the borough, the responses would lie 3.1% points above or below the percentages reported. For example, if 50% of residents

<sup>1</sup> To more reliably and accurately present the data at a geographical level, the 20 wards have been merged into six 'ward clusters'. A higher sample size per cluster gives greater confidence in the results.

say that they are satisfied with the way the council runs things, we can be confident that the result would be between 46.9% and 53.1% had we interviewed all residents in the borough.

**Figure 1: Number of interviews achieved per ward and ward cluster**

	Number of interviews achieved	Sampling error (based on a 50% statistic at the 95% confidence level)
London Borough of Merton total	1,000	+/-3.1%
<b>Ward cluster</b>		
Village	191	+/-7.1%
Dundonald	149	+/-8.0%
Cannon Hill	202	+/-6.9%
Lavender Fields	150	+/-8.0%
Ravensbury	149	+/-8.0%
Colliers Wood	159	+/-7.8%
<b>Ward</b>		
Abbey	50	+/-12.8% to +/-13.9%
Cannon Hill	51	
Colliers Wood	59	
Cricket Green	49	
Dundonald	50	
Figges Marsh	50	
Graveney	50	
Hillside	50	
Lavender Fields	50	
Longthornton	50	
Lower Morden	52	
Mertons Park	50	
Pollards Hill	50	
Ravensbury	50	
Raynes Park	51	
St Helier	50	
Trinity	49	
Village	40	
West Barnes	49	
Wimbledon Park	50	

## Understanding this report

As noted above, for reporting purposes, wards have been merged together into **ward clusters**. The clusters are defined as follows:

- **Village:** Village, Hillside, Raynes Park, Wimbledon Park
- **Dundonald:** Dundonald, Trinity, Abbey
- **Cannon Hill:** Cannon Hill, Merton Park, West Barnes, Lower Morden
- **Lavender Fields:** Lavender Fields, Pollards Hill, Figge's Marsh
- **Ravensbury:** Ravensbury, St Helier, Cricket Green
- **Colliers Wood:** Colliers Wood, Graveney, Longthornton

The results are presented as whole numbers for ease of interpretation, with rounding performed at the final stage of processing for maximum accuracy. Due to rounding, there may be instances where the results do not add up to 100%. In such instances, the difference should not be more than 1% point either way – so 99% or 101%. An example is shown below:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total
Number of responses	151	166	176	96	24	613
Percentage	24.63%	27.08%	28.71%	15.66%	3.92%	<b>100%</b>
Rounded percentage	25%	27%	29%	16%	4%	<b>101%</b>

The data has been subject to statistical testing using the T-Test. Significant differences between two or more groups (e.g. ward clusters) are identified in the narrative of the report and in charts/tables using pink and blue highlighting (pink = better; blue = worse).

## 2. Key findings

It is evident that there has been a shift in opinion of the council over the past two years. While overall levels of satisfaction with the council have remained broadly stable since 2017 (70% cf. 67%), as has satisfaction with the local area (89% cf. 92%), there have been some marked reductions in positive opinion in other areas. Most notable is a 12% point decrease in residents believing the council acts on their concerns and an 11% point decrease in residents feeling informed about the services and benefits the council provides. In addition to this, there has been a 12% point drop in residents saying the council is efficient and well run and a 12% point drop in residents believing the council is doing a good job.

When we delve a little deeper into the views of specific council services, it is apparent that large reductions in positive views of various streetscene services may be playing a part in this shift. For example, the proportion of residents rating recycling services, refuse collection and street cleaning as very good/good has decreased significantly in the past two years (-22%, -21% and -9% points respectively – among service users). Likewise, less than half (47%) of residents are satisfied with how litter is dealt with, which is a 13% point decrease since 2017.

Our key driver analysis identifies street cleaning as a priority area for improvement, as this is the most closely correlated factor with overall satisfaction with the council. This further substantiates the importance of streetscene services to LB Merton residents. Added to this is the finding that 45% of residents believe the cleanliness of streets is an area that most needs improving across the borough.

Feelings of safety in local areas after dark and during the day remain relatively high; however a quarter (23%) see burglary as a problem in their area, and there has been an increase since 2017 in residents perceiving people using or dealing drugs as a problem.

On a positive note, there have been marked improvements in the views of other council services, including nursery, primary and secondary education, libraries and street lighting, and the LB Merton results consistently compare well against the LGA national polling data. Equally, a good public transport network is the aspect most valued by residents, yet only 5% feel this is an area for improvement.

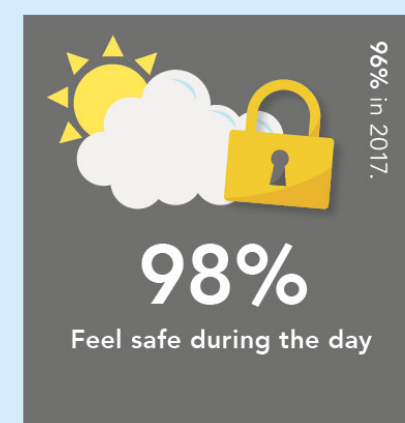
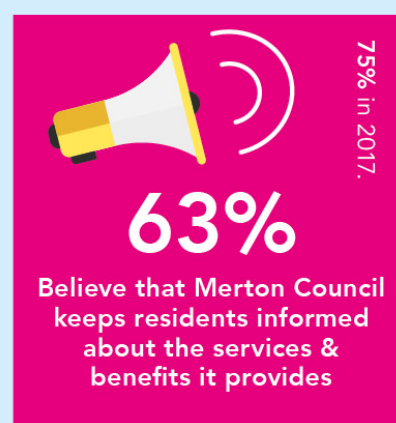
There have also been significant improvements in the wellbeing of residents, with an increase of 11% points in residents saying they are satisfied with their life nowadays and a 10% point increase in residents feeling the things they do in their life are worthwhile. Only 7% rate the air quality in the borough as very poor/poor.

Exploring where variations exist across the borough; positive opinion is consistently high in Ravensbury (where 87% say they are satisfied with the council), but levels are predominantly lowest in Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields.





## Residents Survey 2019



The Residents Survey was conducted by DJS Research ([djsresearch.co.uk](http://djsresearch.co.uk)) on behalf of the London Borough of Merton. 1,000 interviews were conducted with residents between 4th February and 15th March 2019.

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## 3. Key performance indicators

The following table presents the results of the key performance indicators. The results are compared to those achieved in 2017 and benchmarked against the most recent available Local Government Association (LGA) polling data (October 2018).

It is noticeable that although there has been a marginal (non-significant) increase in satisfaction with the way the council runs things (+3% since 2017), the majority of the indicators have seen a marked decrease in the past two years. Agreement that the council provides value for money has dropped by 9% points since 2017 and the proportion that feel the council acts on the concerns of local residents a great deal/a fair amount has decreased by 12% points.

All the metrics sit substantially higher than the LGA benchmarking. Noteworthy, agreement that the council provides value for money is 12% points higher than the national average (56% cf. 44%).

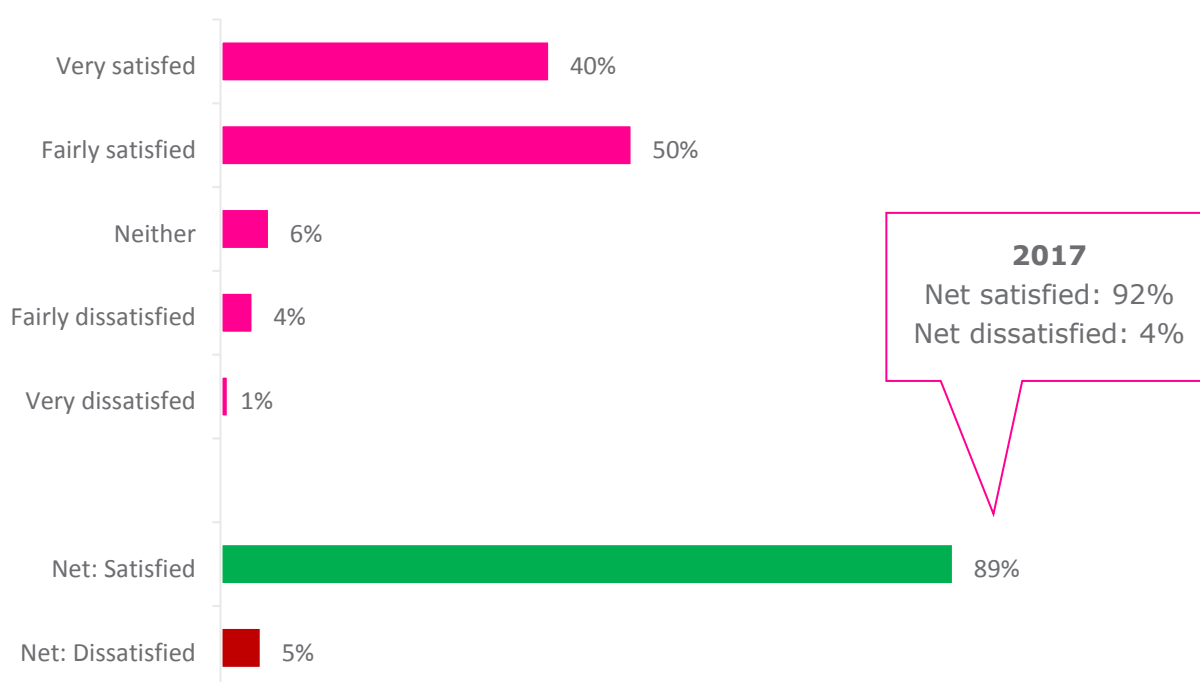
**Figure 2: Key performance indicators: compared to 2017 and LGA benchmarking**

KPI	LB Merton 2019	LB Merton 2017	LGA October 2018 national benchmark
<b>Satisfaction with the local area</b>			
Satisfied	89%	92%	78%
Dissatisfied	5%	4%	11%
<b>Satisfaction with the way the council runs things</b>			
Satisfied	70%	67%	60%
Dissatisfied	14%	14%	21%
<b>Agreement that the council provides value for money</b>			
Agree	56%	65%	44%
Disagree	19%	12%	27%
<b>Council acts on the concerns of local residents</b>			
A great deal/a fair amount	63%	75%	56%
Not very much/not at all	28%	17%	41%
<b>Feel informed about council services and benefits</b>			
Very/fairly well informed	70%	81%	58%
Not very/not at all informed	27%	18%	41%
<b>Safety after dark</b>			
Safe	84%	85%	76%
Unsafe	6%	7%	14%
<b>Safety during the day</b>			
Safe	98%	96%	93%
Unsafe	1%	1%	3%

## 4. Local area perceptions

Overall, almost nine tenths of Merton residents (89%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Whilst this is a 3% point decrease since 2017, this is not statistically significant. However, it is important to highlight that the proportion of residents who are very satisfied has increased significantly from 31% in 2017 to 40% in 2019. Levels of dissatisfaction are low at 5%.

**Figure 3: Q01. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?**  
(All responses: n=1000)



The chart overleaf presents the levels of area satisfaction by ward and ward cluster.

In terms of cluster wards, residents of Colliers Wood are the least likely to be satisfied (82%) and those from Ravensbury are the most likely (96%). Levels of satisfaction have increased by 8% points in Ravensbury since 2017, but there have been decreases of 8% points in Village and Colliers Wood since 2017.

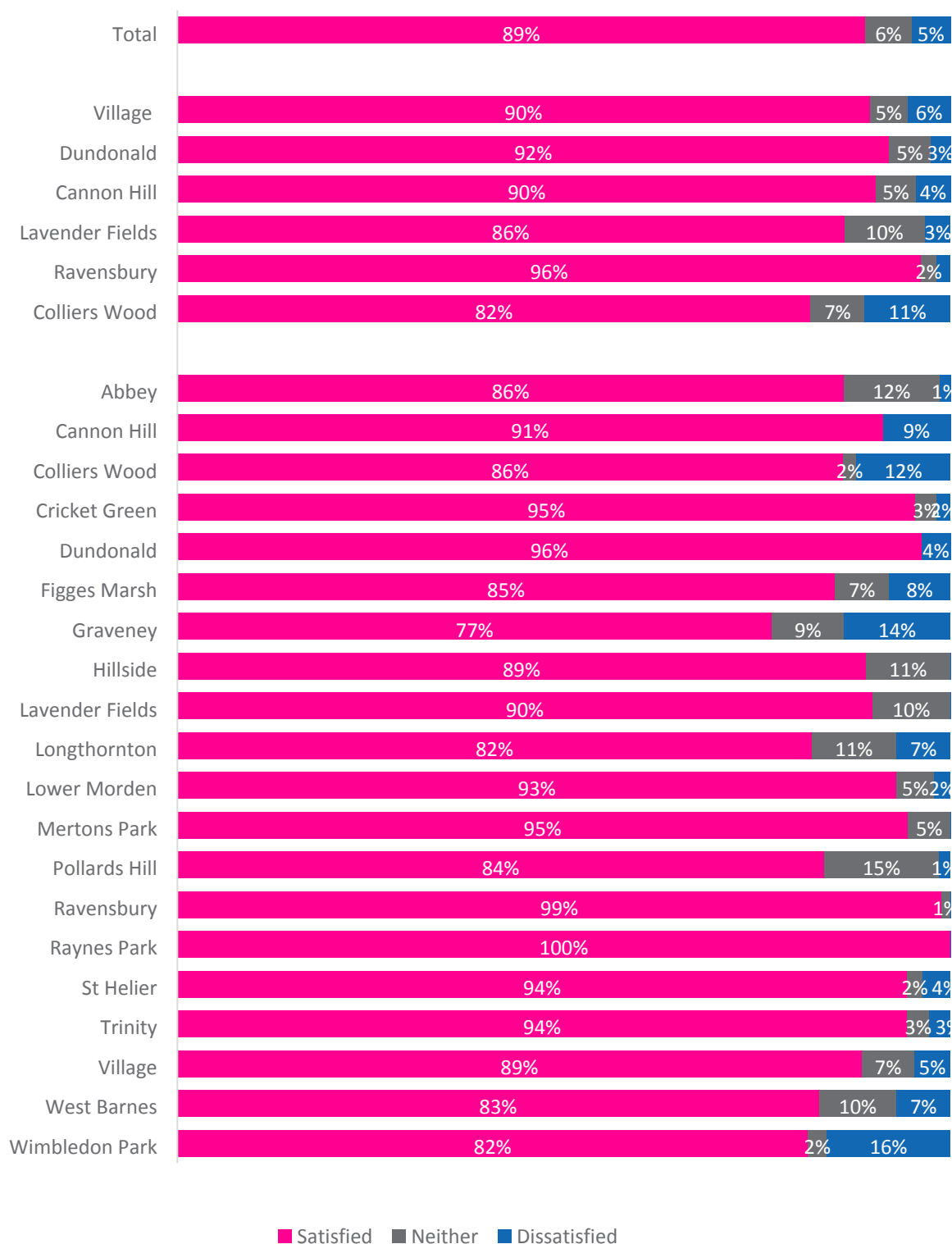
It is interesting to note that satisfaction decreases amongst residents who are new to the borough (83% cf. 91% over 5 years), and is markedly lower where residents feel refuse collection and recycling facilities are poor (82% and 76% respectively).

In addition, residents who are economically active are more likely to be satisfied than those inactive (91% cf. 85%)

There are no significant differences found between the responses provided by respondents from separate demographic groups (age, gender, ethnicity or disability).

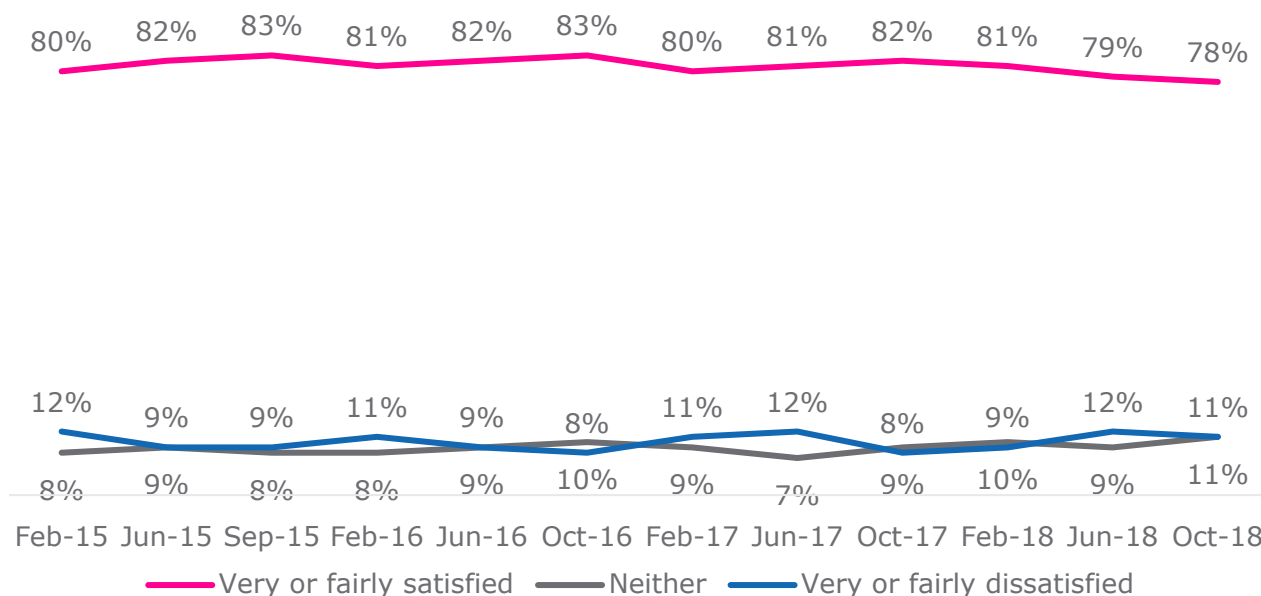


**Figure 4: Q01. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?**  
**By ward and ward cluster** (All responses: n=1000)



LB Merton compares very favourably to the LGA polling results. In October 2018, 78% of residents said they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which is 11% points below the level achieved across Merton. Levels of dissatisfaction in Merton are half that of the LGA benchmark (5% cf. 11%).

**Figure 5: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (LGA benchmarking)**

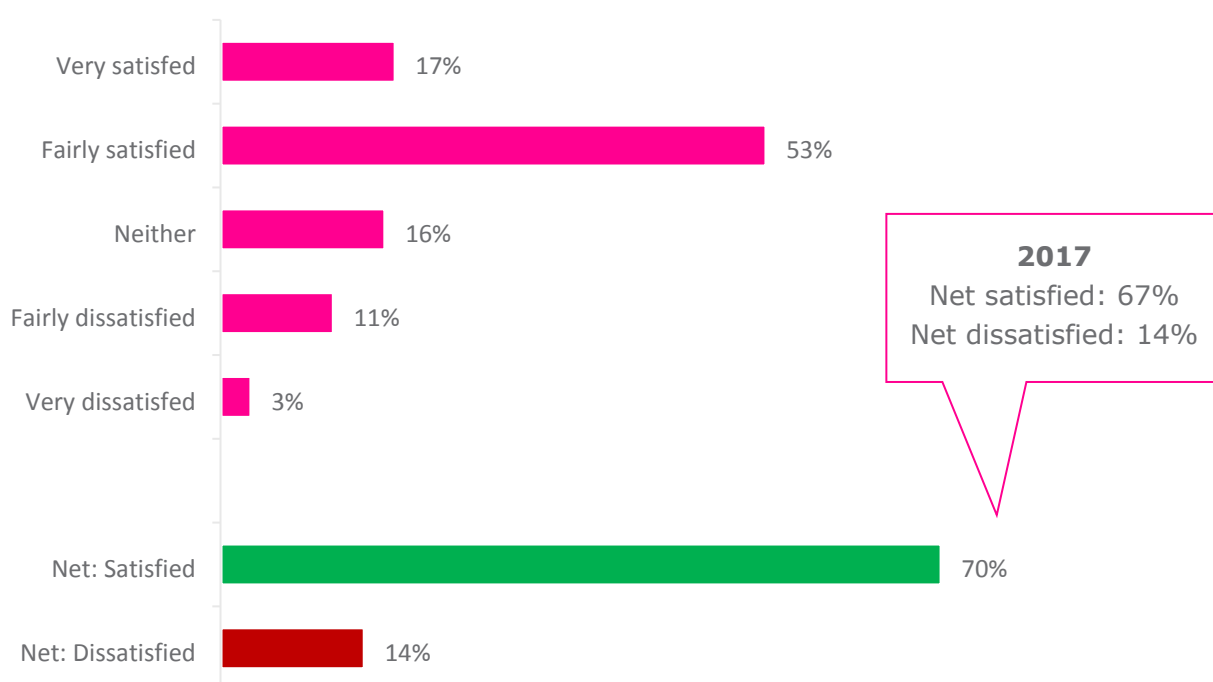


## 5. Perceptions of LB Merton

### Overall satisfaction

Overall, the majority of residents thought positively of the council, with over two thirds (70%) being satisfied with the way they run things. Whilst satisfaction has increased by 3% points since 2017, this is not statistically significant. One in seven (14%) residents are dissatisfied with the way the council runs things – a static position since 2017.

**Figure 6: Q02. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Merton Council runs things?** (All responses: n=1000)



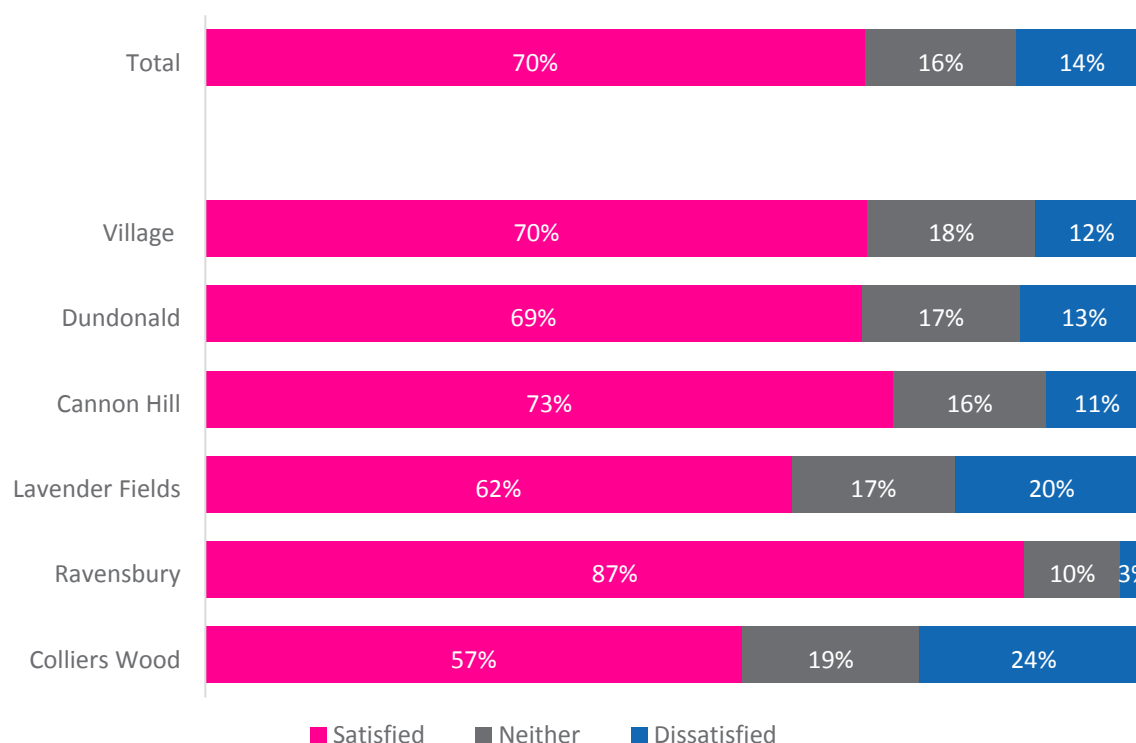
There are large variations in opinion by ward cluster. As high as 87% of residents in Ravensbury say they are satisfied with the way the council runs things (and just 3% are dissatisfied), whilst satisfaction drops to just 57% in Colliers Wood. By ward, just 48% of residents in Village are satisfied.

There is a clear inter-relationship between levels of satisfaction with the council and wider views of the local area. Where residents are satisfied with their local area, 75% are also satisfied with the way LB Merton runs things. However, where residents are dissatisfied with their local area, just 21% are satisfied with the council. Likewise, just 20% of residents who believe the council does not provide value for money are satisfied with the council.

Residents living in the most deprived areas of the borough are more likely to be satisfied (75% in quartile 1 are satisfied with the way that the Council runs things compared to 66% in quartile 4). Age also appears to affect the views that residents hold on the Council with 82% of the younger age group (18 to 24) expressing satisfaction compared to 66% of residents aged 65 or over.

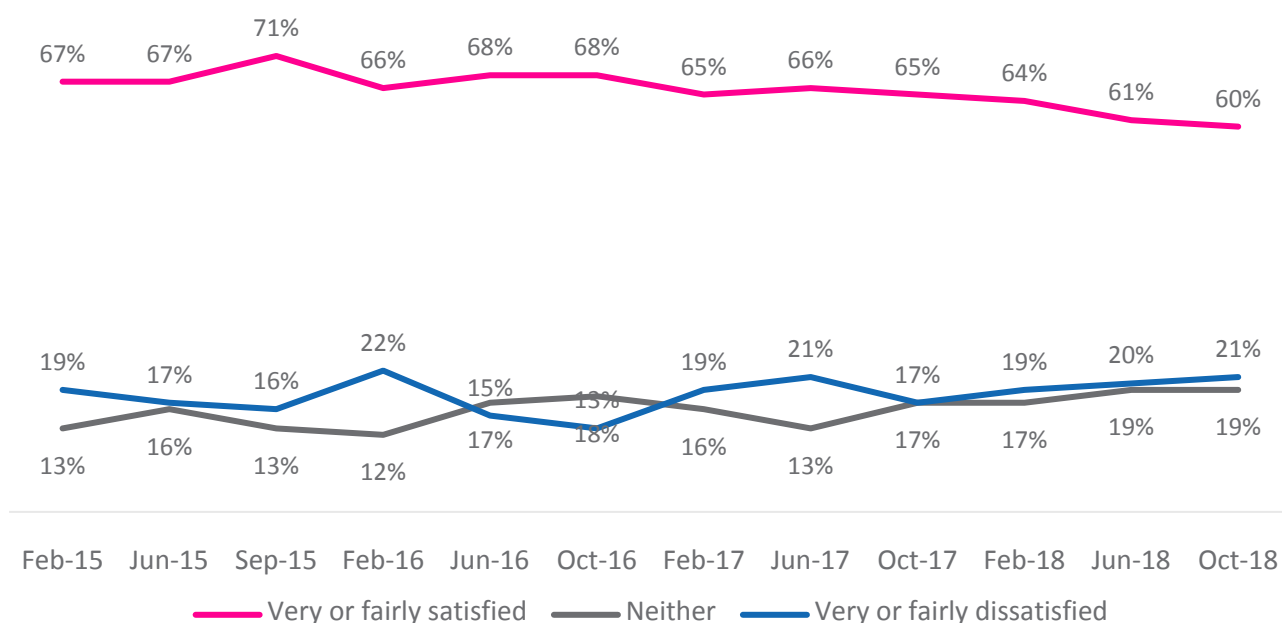
There are no significant differences found between the responses provided by respondents based on their gender, ethnicity or disability.

**Figure 7: Q02. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Merton Council runs things?** (All responses: n=1000)



LB Merton, again, compares favourably to the LGA benchmarking. In fact, satisfaction with the council is 10% points higher, whilst dissatisfaction is 7% points lower.

**Figure 8: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council runs things? (LGA benchmarking)**



## Key driver analysis

Key driver analysis (KDA) has been used to gain a better understanding of which of the residents' opinions regarding Merton Council have the greatest influence on their overall satisfaction.

The aim is to identify specific areas of the council service provision (key drivers) which have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction. The *relative importance* of each key driver is also calculated and this identifies which of the drivers are the most important and also how much more important each driver is compared to the others. Statistical models are used to identify the 'best' set of indicators (key drivers) that together influence overall satisfaction the most.

A total sample of 1,000 Merton residents were interviewed, and complex weights were applied to the data to ensure the oversample is representative of the residents of Merton in terms of area (ward), age group, gender, ethnicity, disability and work status.

The outcome variable in the KDA is 'overall satisfaction' which comes from Q2 in the survey. This is a 5-point Likert scale with all but 4 respondents giving a valid answer (n=4 gave a don't know response and are therefore excluded from further analysis). Respondents give a range of satisfaction scores across the 5 categories with 17% very satisfied and 70% being net satisfied (as explained earlier in this section).

The independent variables considered as potential drivers of overall satisfaction are the other questions included in the questionnaire including value for money (VFM), ratings of council services, what they value and what needs improving, whether they feel the council act on their concerns, how they speak about the council, how long they have lived in the area, use of the council website and the need for improvement in different aspects of council provision.



## The results

In the analysis we include just over 60 potential drivers. Analysis of the whole sample of residents (weighted to reflect the profile of Merton in terms of demographics and socio-economic factors) identifies 13 different key drivers that influence overall satisfaction shown in the table below in order of importance.

The most important driver of satisfaction is value for money followed by advocacy (those who would speak positively about the council). Specific areas of service that feature in the list of drivers are street cleaning, employment opportunities, parking services, litter and drugs.

Variables not included on the list of key drivers may still be correlated with overall satisfaction in their own right, however, they do not contribute significantly above and beyond the 13 key drivers listed.

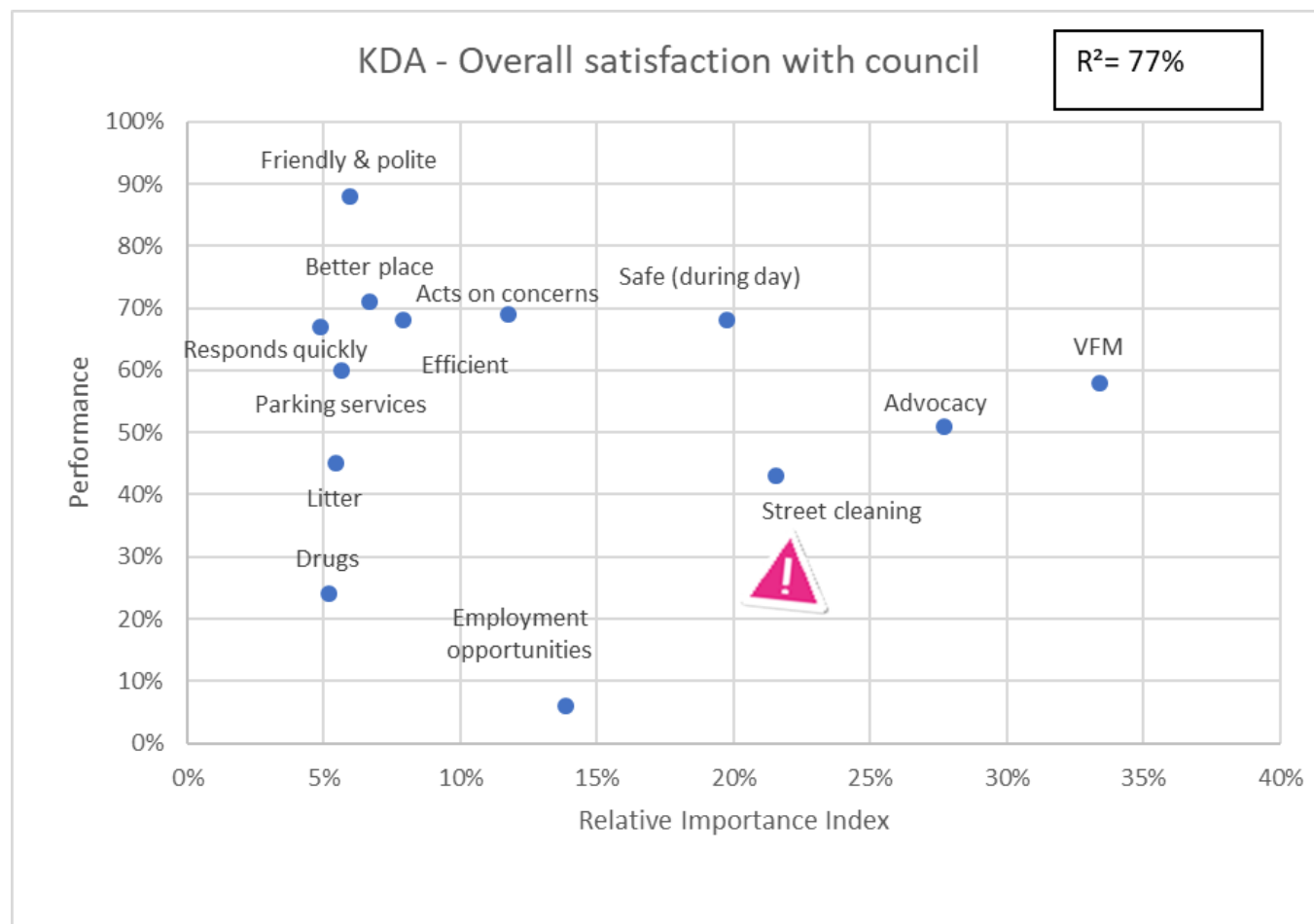
We examine the goodness of fit of this model of Q2 overall satisfaction with the council using the R-square value. In this model  $R^2 = 76.8\%$ , meaning a very good fit for this model.

**Figure 9: Key drivers of satisfaction with how the council runs things**

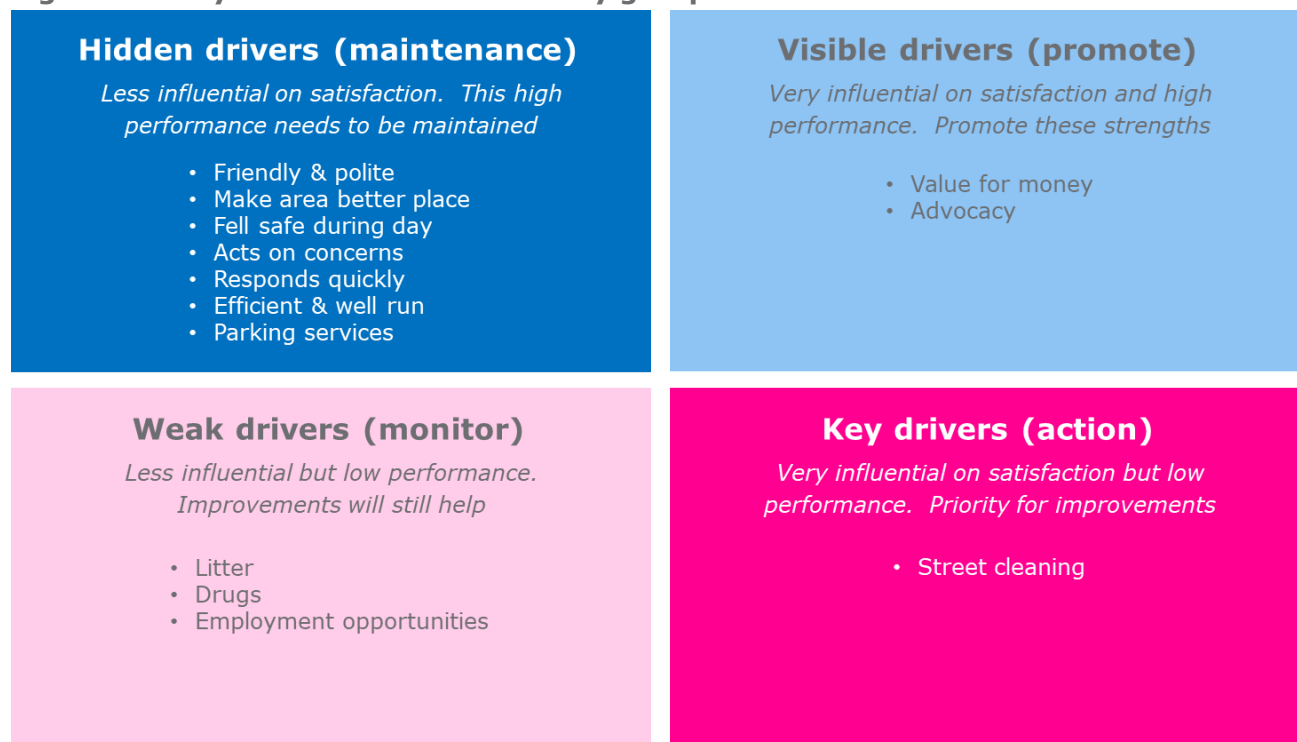
Rank	Driver	Details	Relative importance
1	Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that Merton Council provides value for money?	People who think the council is good VFM are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.33
2	Q4 On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Merton Council?	People who would speak positively about Merton Council are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.28
3	Q8 ...street cleaning (rating)	People who positively rate the street cleaning service provided by the council are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.22
4	Q12 How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area...? During the day	People who feel safe (during the day) are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.20
5	Q17 Employment opportunities (value)	People who value the employment opportunities in Merton are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.14
6	Q7 ...is efficient and well run	People who agree that the council is efficient and well run are more likely to be satisfied with the council.	0.12
7	Q5 To what extent do you think Merton Council acts on the concerns of local residents?	People who think that Merton Council acts on the concerns of local residents are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.08
8	Q7 ...is making the local area a better place for people to live	People who agree that Merton Council are making the area a better place for people to live are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.07
9	Q7 ...has staff who are friendly and polite	People who agree that Merton Council has friendly polite staff are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.06
10	Q10 Use Parking Services (residents' permits, on street parking or car parks)	People who use the Parking Service are <b>less</b> likely to be satisfied with the council	0.06
11	Q9 Litter	People who are satisfied with the way the council deals with litter are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.05
12	Q13 People using or dealing drugs	People who think drugs are a problem are <b>less</b> likely to be satisfied with the council	0.05
13	Q7 ...responds quickly when asked for help	People who agree that Merton Council responds quickly are more likely to be satisfied with the council	0.05

Once we have identified our key drivers, we can also cross reference the relative importance score (this is how much influence they have on overall satisfaction) with their performance score (the proportion of residents who express a positive opinion for that driver). The performance score comes directly from the resident's views expressed in the survey. For example, 56% of residents report that they agree that the council services are good value for money (this is a score above the 50% line), while 44% rate the street cleaning as good or very good (this is a score below the 50% line) (figure 10).

**Figure 10: Key drivers of satisfaction versus performance**



**Figure 11: Key drivers of satisfaction by group**

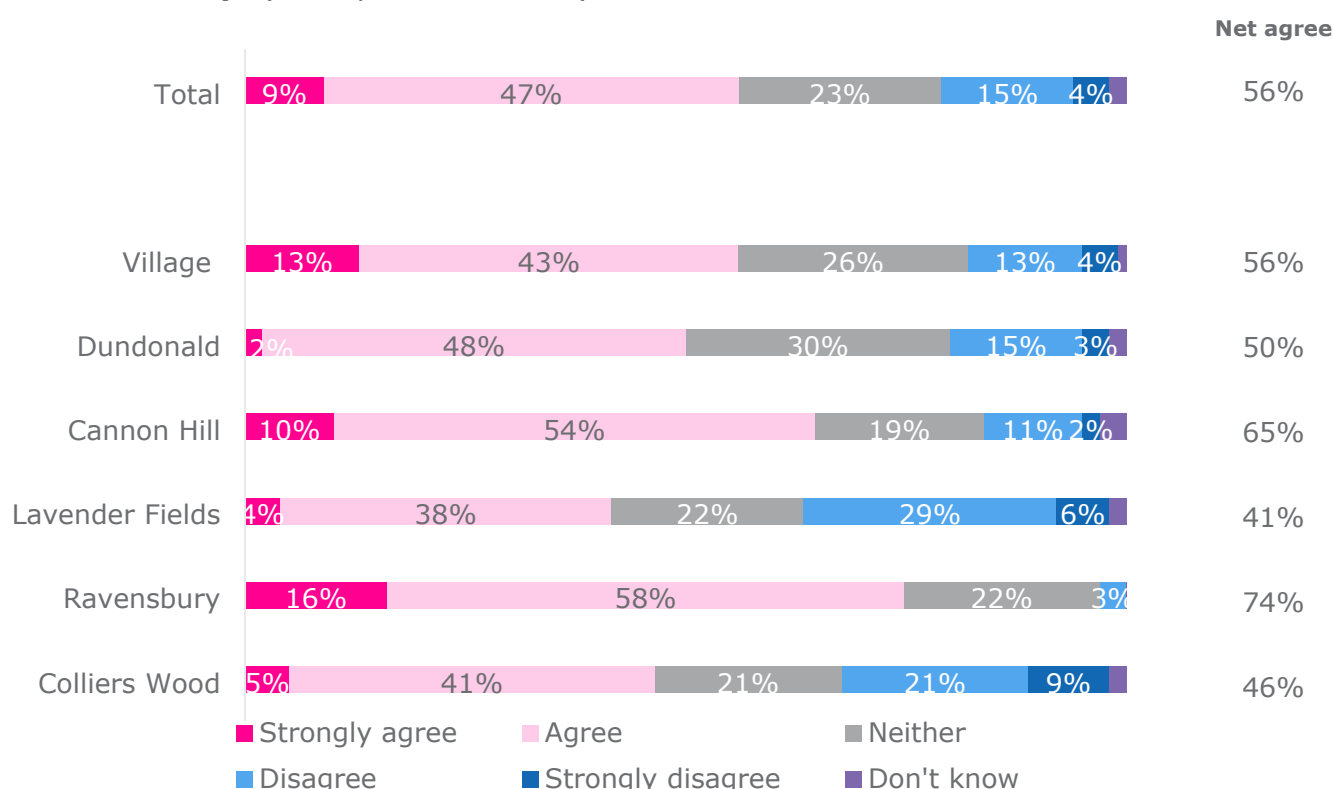


## Value for money

Following on from this, all residents were asked whether they felt the council provides value for money. More than half (56%) agree with this, whilst a further 19% disagree. Levels of agreement have seen a significant 9% point decrease since 2017 (from 65%).

Resident opinion varies considerably by ward cluster. As high as 74% of residents in Ravensbury feel the council provides value for money, but this drops to only 41% in Lavender Fields. Indeed, 35% of residents disagree in Lavender Fields. By ward, agreement that the council provides value for money ranges from 96% in Ravensbury and 85% in Lower Morden to 32% in Trinity and 37% in Pollards Hill.

**Figure 12: Q03. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Merton Council provides value for money?** (All responses: n=1000)

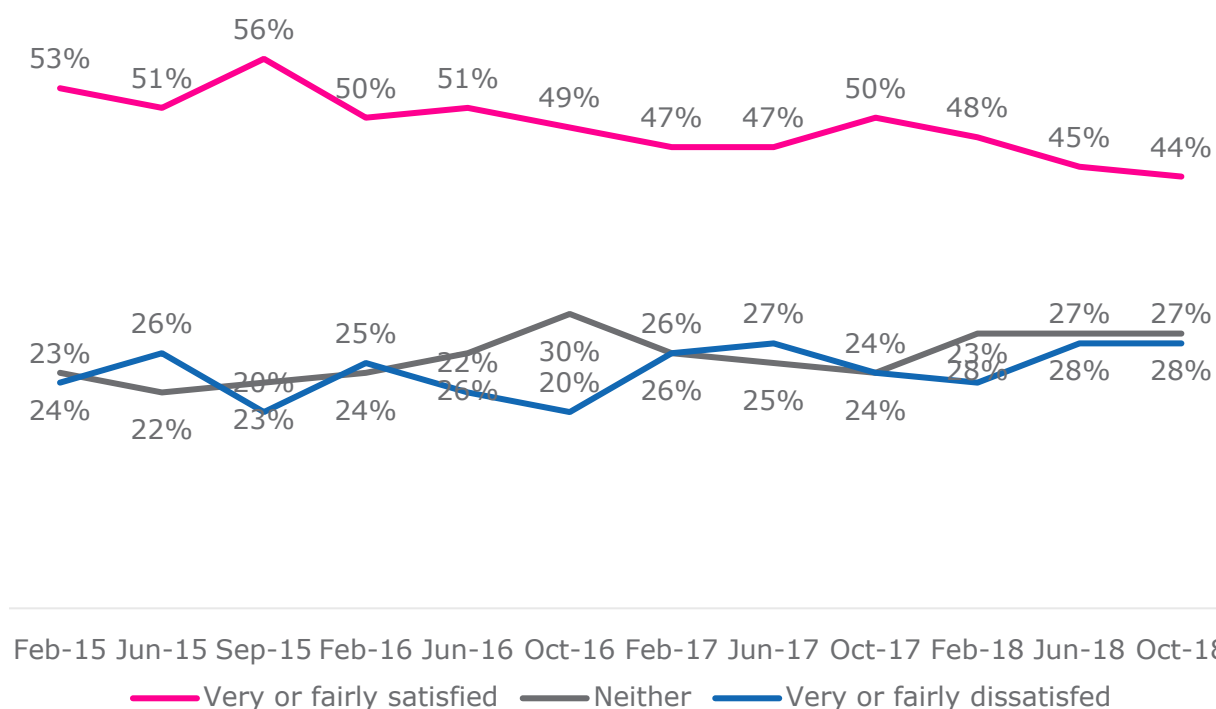


It is interesting to note that residents living in the most deprived areas of the borough are most likely to be positive (59% believe the council provides value for money in quartile 1 compared to 50% in quartile 4). It is also evident that opinions regarding value for money are strongly related to how informed residents feel the council keeps them. Where residents do not feel well informed by the council, just 33% believe the council provides value for money. Likewise, just 32% feel value for money is provided where residents feel the refuse collection service is poor.

There are no significant differences found between the responses provided by respondents from separate demographic groups (age, gender, ethnicity or disability).

Assessing the results collected as part of the LGA polling, there has been a clear downward trend in perceptions of value for money provided by local councils over the past few years. In October 2018, 44% of residents nationally believed their council provided value for money and 28% disagreed with this. It is therefore encouraging to see the LB Merton figures sitting some way better than this at 56% and 19%.

**Figure 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Merton Council provides value for money? (LGA benchmarking)**



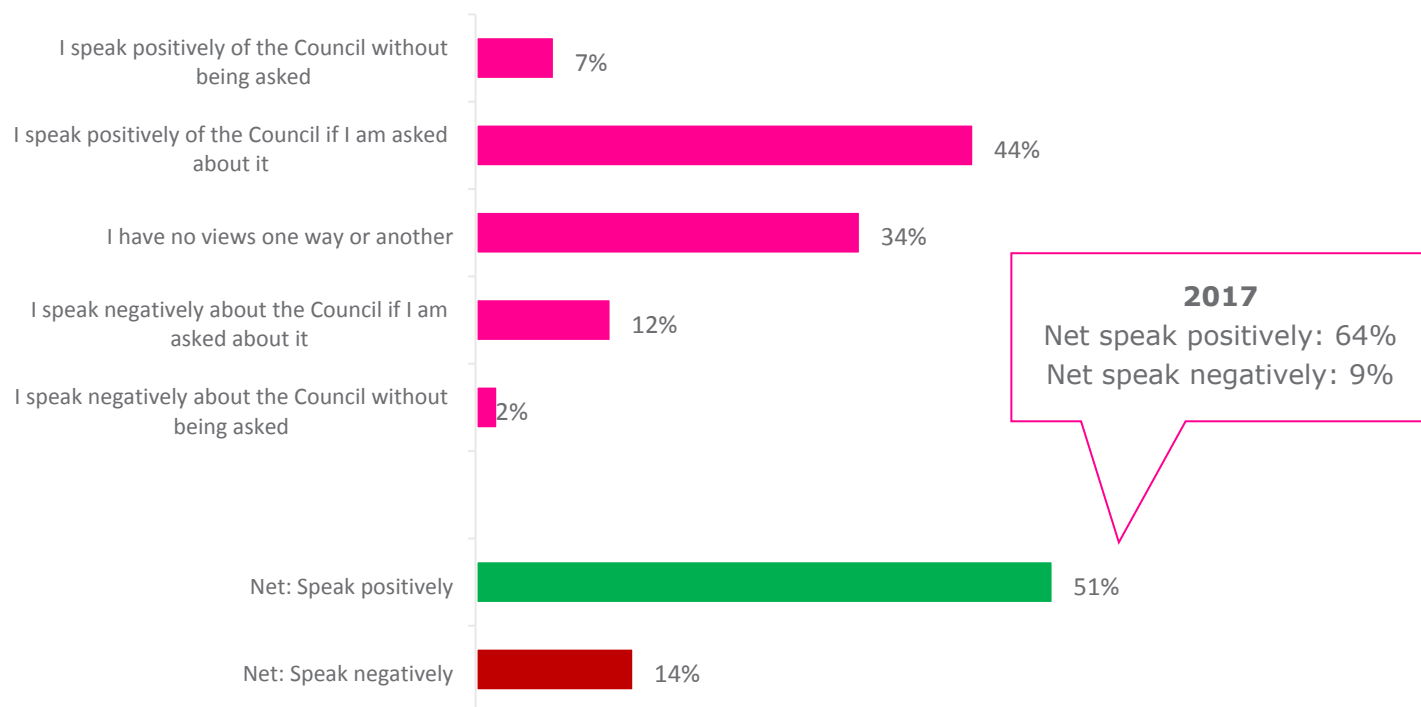
## Advocacy of the council

Just over half (51%) of residents would speak positively of the council; 7% without being asked and 44% if they were asked. This is a significant 13% point drop since 2017. However, still a small proportion of residents would speak negatively (14%), with a large number having no views one way or the other (34%).

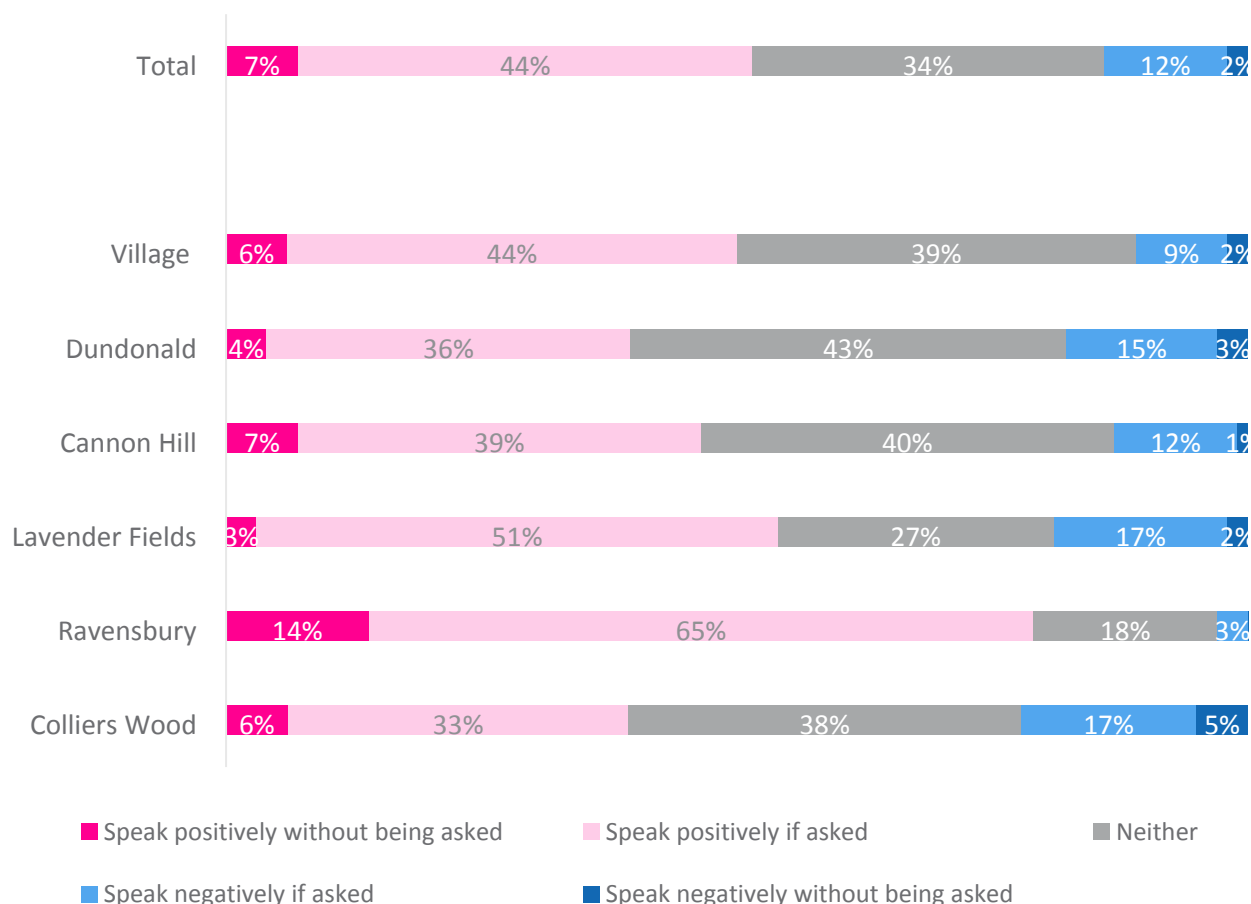
Residents of the East of the borough are far more likely than in the West to say they would speak positively of Merton Council (55% cf. 47%), and mirroring the previous findings regarding value for money, more positive views are held of residents in the most deprived areas of the borough (63% of quartile 1 would speak positively cf. 40% in quartile 4). By ward cluster, 79% of residents of Ravensbury would speak positively, yet this drops to 39% in Colliers Wood and Dundonald.

By demographic group, residents aged 65+ are more likely to speak positively of the council (55% cf. 42% aged 18-24 and 51% aged 25-64), as are BME residents (56% cf. 47% White British) and those with a disability (59% cf. 50%).

**Figure 14: Q04. Which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Merton Council?** (All responses: n=1000)



**Figure 15: Q04. Which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about Merton Council? By ward cluster** (All responses: n=1000)

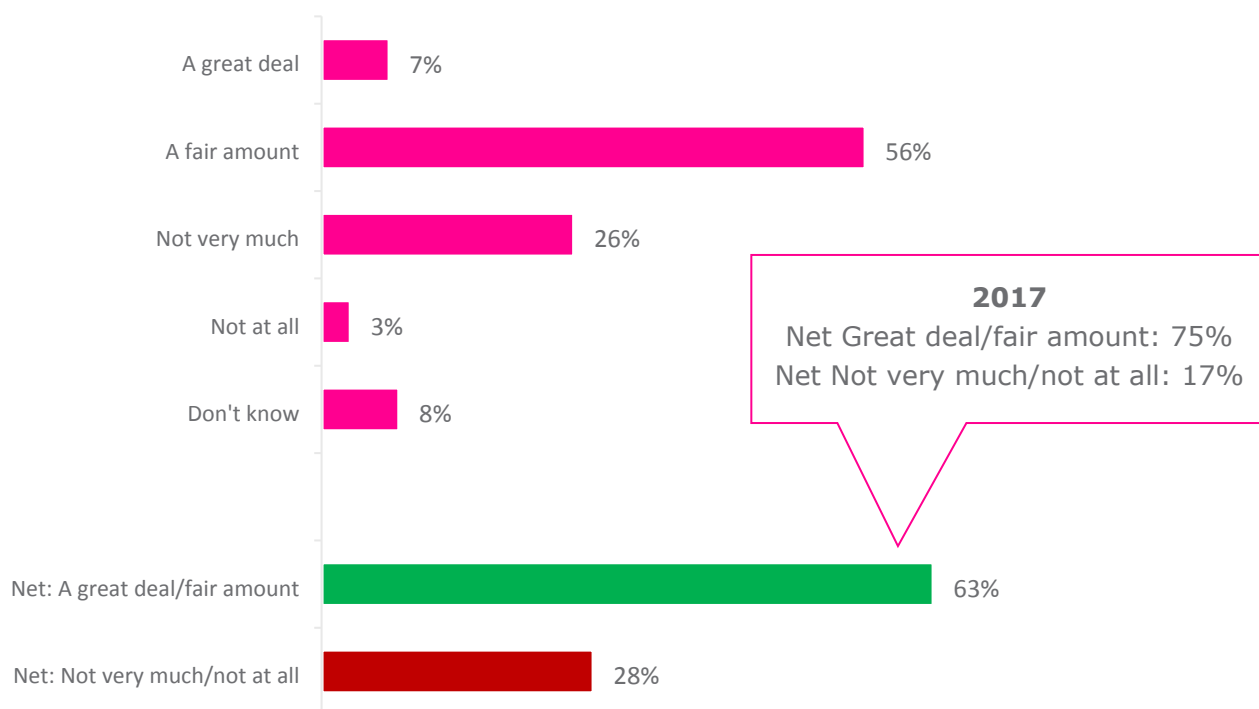


## Acting on the concerns of local residents

Close to two thirds (63%) of residents believe the council acts on their concerns. This is a significant decrease since 2017 of 12% points (from 75%). The proportion who feel the council does not act on their concerns has also increased in the last two years (by 11% points to 28%).



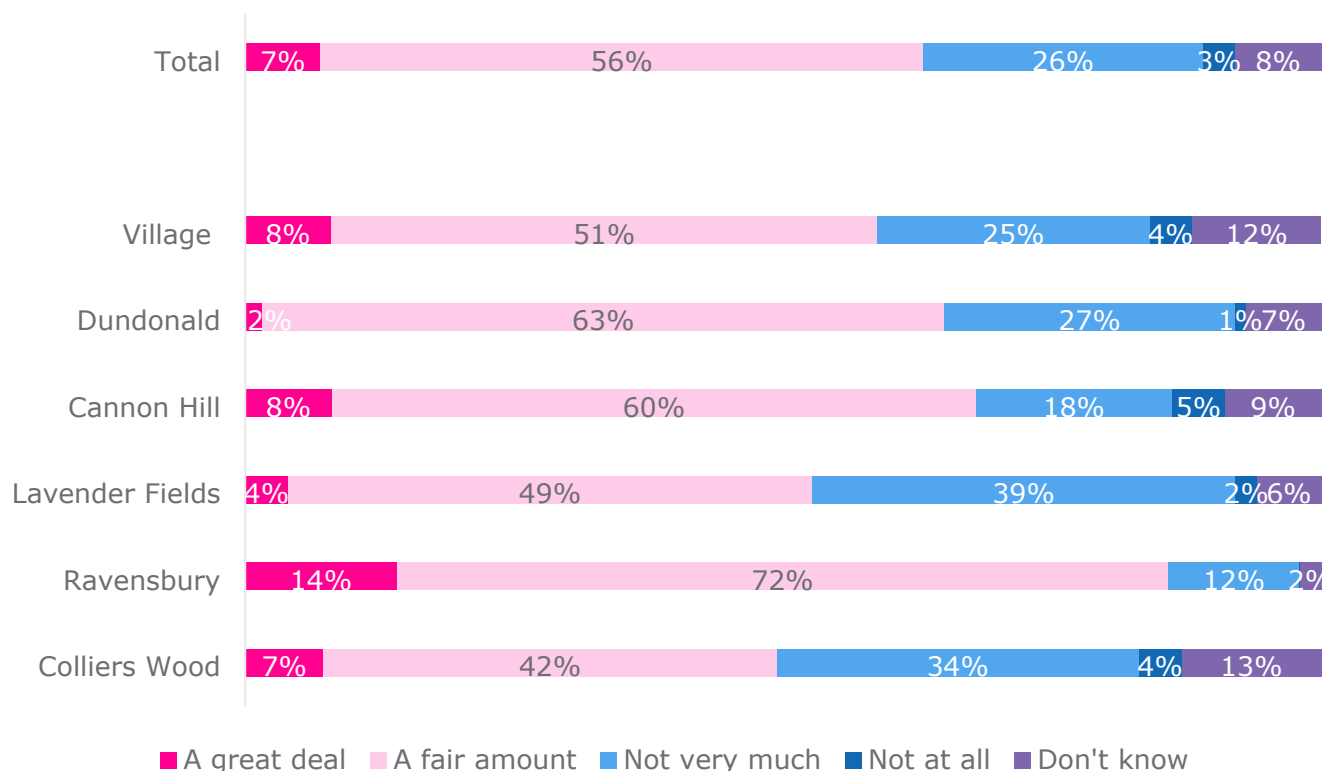
**Figure 16: Q05. To what extent do you think Merton Council acts on the concerns of local residents?** (All responses: n=1000)



As has been the pattern throughout the results so far, residents in Ravensbury are the most likely to hold positive views, with 86% believing the council acts on the concerns of local residents a great deal or to some extent. Such views are least likely to be held in Colliers Wood (50%). It is important to highlight, however, that residents in Lavender Fields are the most likely to feel their concerns are not acted upon (41%).

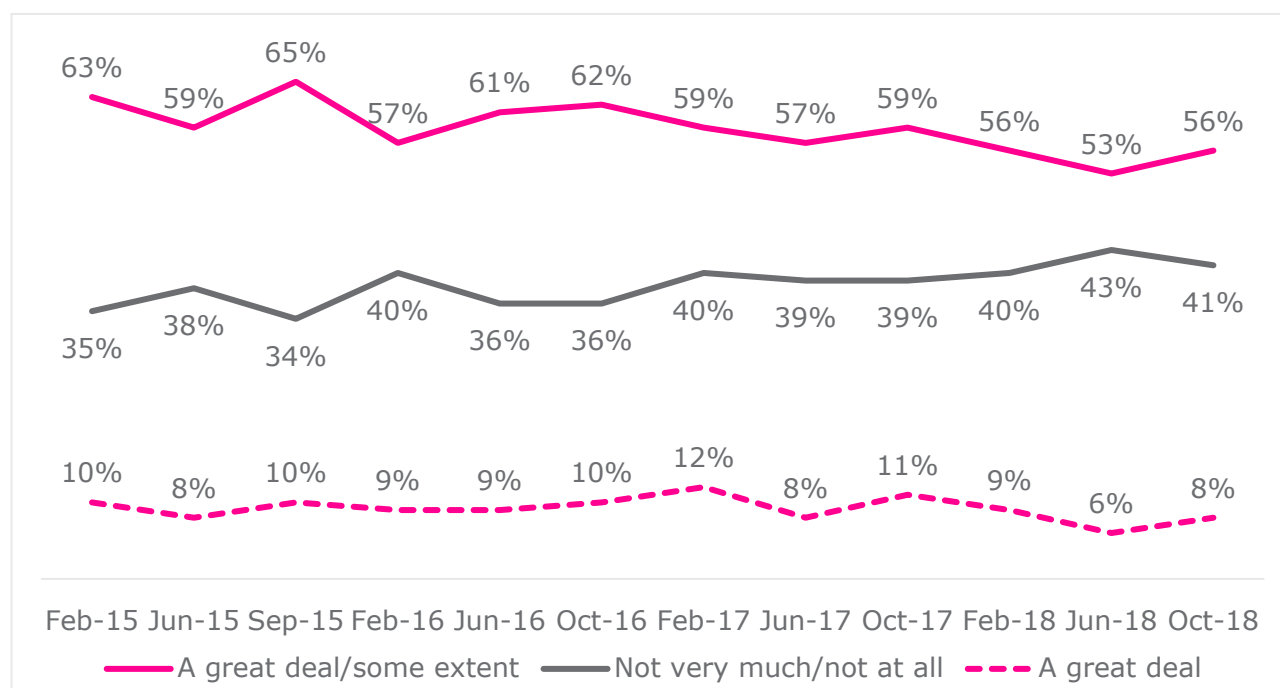
There are no notable variations by age, gender or disability, but it is apparent that BME residents are more positive than White British (68% cf. 60%) as are residents the more deprived areas of the Borough (69% of those in quartile 1 agree that the Council acts on the concerns of residents compared to 52% in quartile 4).

**Figure 17: Q05. To what extent do you think Merton Council acts on the concerns of local residents? By Ward cluster** (All responses: n=1000)



LB Merton, again, compares well against the latest LGA polling statistics from October 2018. Where 56% of residents feel their local concern acts on their concerns, this compares to 63% within Merton.

**Figure 18: To what extent do you think Merton Council acts on the concerns of local residents? (LGA benchmarking)**

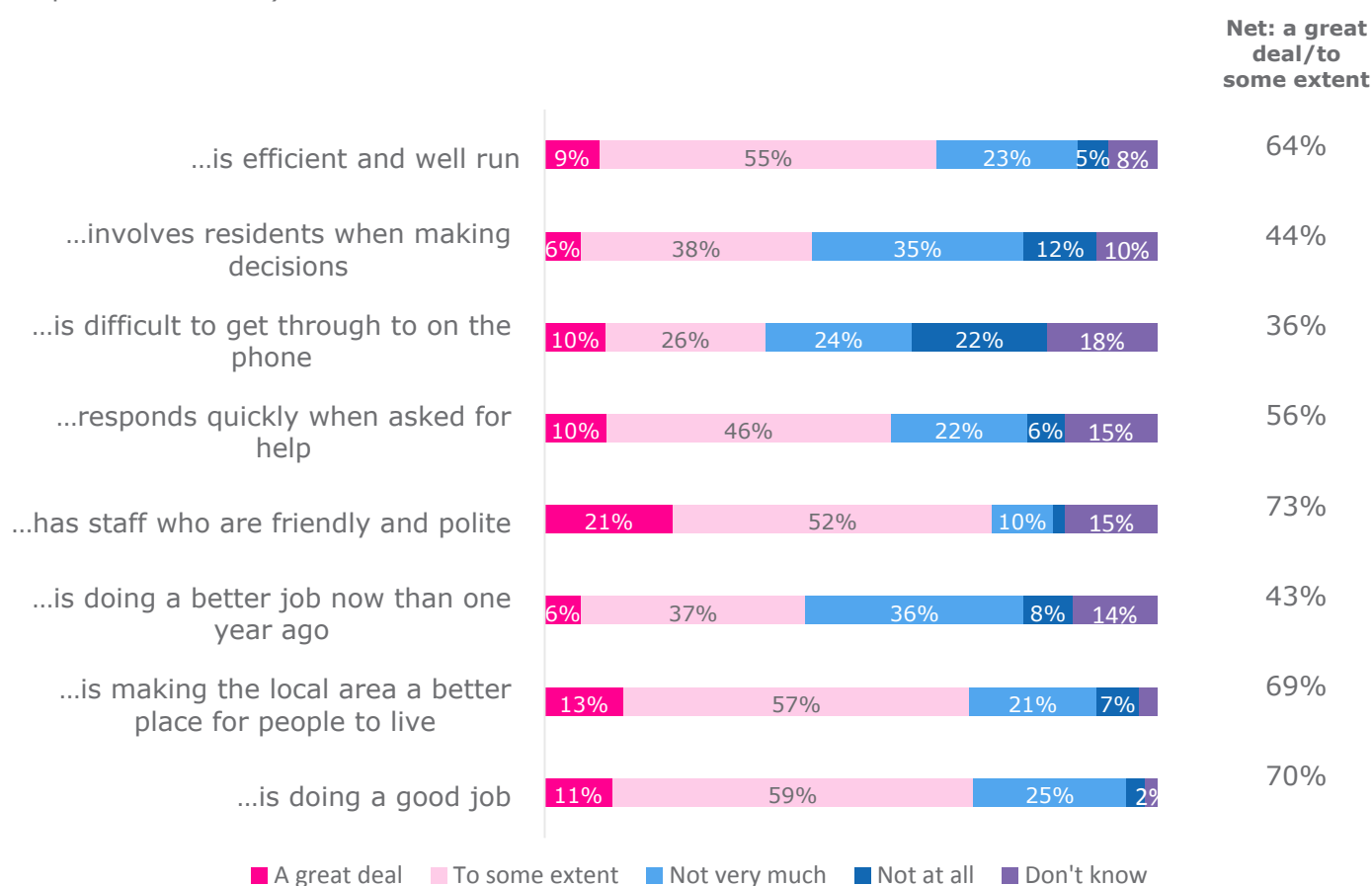


## 6. Perceptions of LB Merton services

### General views of service provision

All residents were presented with a list of eight statements that other people have said about their council, and they were asked to state whether each applied to Merton Council. It is positive to see that close to three quarters of residents (73%) believe the council has staff who are friendly and polite and 70% believe the council is doing a good job. A similar proportion also believe the council is making the area a better place for people to live (69%). On the reverse of this, however, just 43% of residents believe the council is doing a better job than one year ago, and a larger proportion (44%) do not believe this is the case. Over a third (36%) feel the council is difficult to get through to on the phone (this rises to 43% when don't know is excluded).

**Figure 19: Q07. These are some things which other people have said about their council. To what extent do you think these statements apply to your Borough? Merton Council...** (All responses: n=1000)



The table below presents the results by ward cluster. It is noticeable that residents in Ravensbury are more likely to hold positive views, particularly in terms of the council being efficient and well run and making the local area a better place to live.

**Figure 20: Q07. These are some things which other people have said about their council. To what extent do you think these statements apply to your Borough? Merton Council...** (All responses: n=1000)

	<b>Village</b> (n=191)	<b>Dundonald</b> (n=149)	<b>Cannon Hill</b> (n=202)	<b>Lavender Fields</b> (n=150)	<b>Ravensbury</b> (n=149)	<b>Colliers Wood</b> (n=159)
...is efficient and well run	70%	60%	62%	48%	84%	59%
...involves residents when making decisions	42%	37%	52%	28%	58%	43%
...is difficult to get through to on the phone	31%	23%	31%	50%	39%	41%
...responds quickly when asked for help	59%	56%	57%	42%	74%	48%
...has staff who are friendly and polite	67%	68%	77%	78%	83%	66%
...is doing a better job now than one year ago	45%	35%	44%	41%	57%	32%
...is making the local area a better place for people to live	75%	65%	73%	52%	87%	60%
...is doing a good job	71%	68%	79%	50%	85%	65%

There are also significant differences between the views of residents in the most and least deprived areas of the Borough with those in the least deprived areas (quartile 4) less likely to feel that six of the eight statements apply to Merton Council. Quartile data is displayed in figure 21.



**Figure 21: Q07. These are some things which other people have said about their council. To what extent do you think these statements apply to your Borough? Merton Council...** (All responses: n=1000)

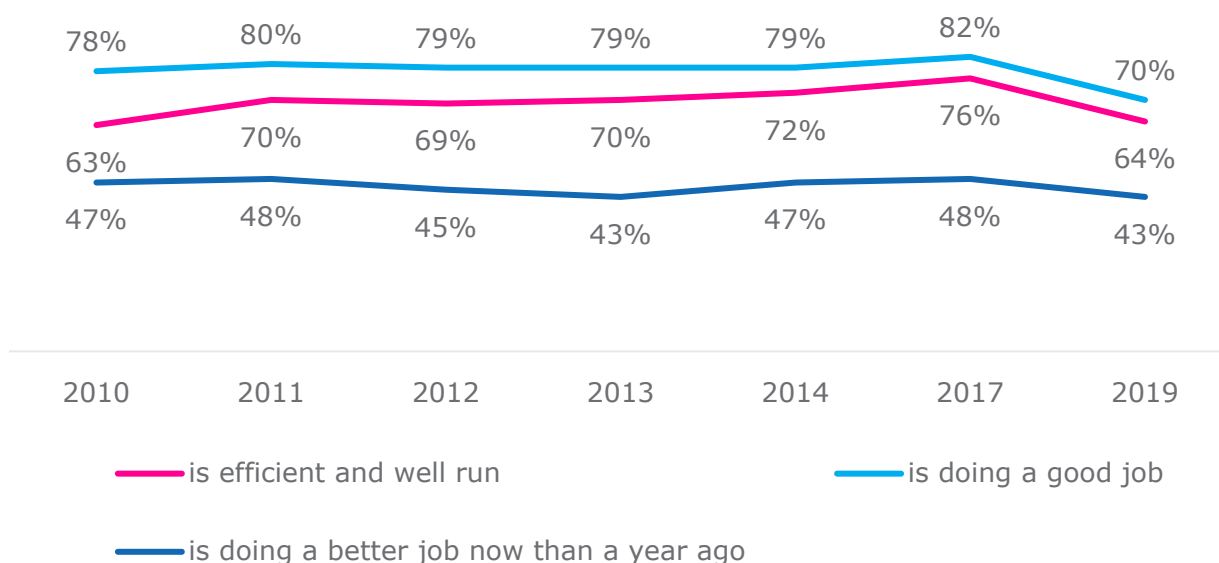
	Quartile 1 (n=248)	Quartile 2 (n=288)	Quartile 3 (n=243)	Quartile 4 (n=221)
...is efficient and well run	70%	64%	68%	52%
...involves residents when making decisions	46%	46%	45%	36%
...is difficult to get through to on the phone	50%	30%	33%	29%
...responds quickly when asked for help	61%	54%	59%	50%
...has staff who are friendly and polite	80%	73%	70%	67%
...is doing a better job now than one year ago	51%	39%	45%	35%

Agreement that the statements apply to the Council is quite consistent across the key demographics, however there are some significant differences between responses by disability, age, ethnicity and economic status:

- Residents with a disability are more likely to feel that the Council involves residents when making decisions (53% cf. 42%) and that Council staff are friendly and polite (81% cf. 72%)
- Younger residents are more likely to feel that the Council is making the local area a better place to live than older residents (80% of those aged 18 to 24 compared with 66% of those aged 45 and over)
- Residents from a BME background are also more inclined to feel that the Council is making their area a better place to live (74%) compared to white British residents (65%)
- Those economically inactive are more likely to find the Council difficult to get through to on the phone (41% cf. 33%), less likely to agree that the Council is making the local area a better place for people to live (63% cf. 72%) and also less likely to believe that the Council is doing a good job (64% cf. 72%)

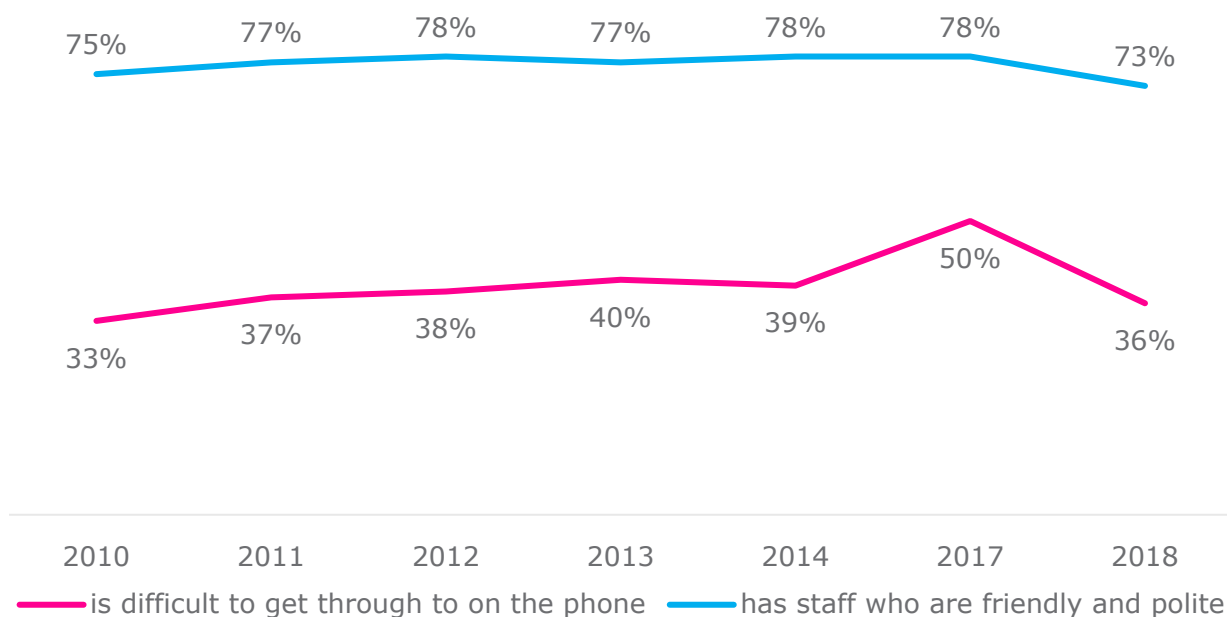
The following chart presents the proportion of residents who believe the council is efficient and well run, is doing a good job and is doing a better job than one year ago in 2019 compared to previous years. It is apparent that whilst there was an improvement in views between 2014 and 2017, there has been a marked deterioration in the past two years. There has been a 12% point decrease in the proportion of residents who feel the council is efficient and well run and the same decrease in terms of the council doing a good job.

**Figure 22: Overall perceptions of Merton Council - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)**



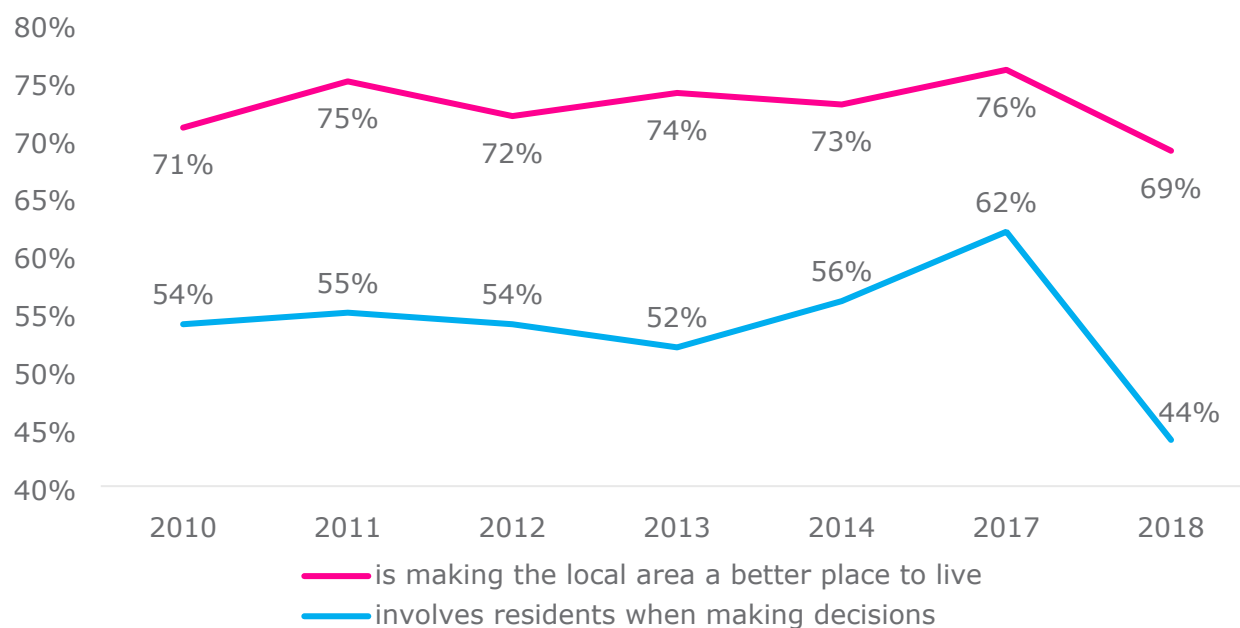
When considering views of the customer service provided by the council, there are less pronounced changes over time. However, views of staff being friendly and polite have decreased significantly for the first time since 2010 (by 5% points). It is positive to see that far fewer residents believe the council is difficult to get through to on the phone than in 2017 (-14% points), with levels returning to where they were in 2011.

**Figure 23: Customer service perceptions of Merton Council - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)**



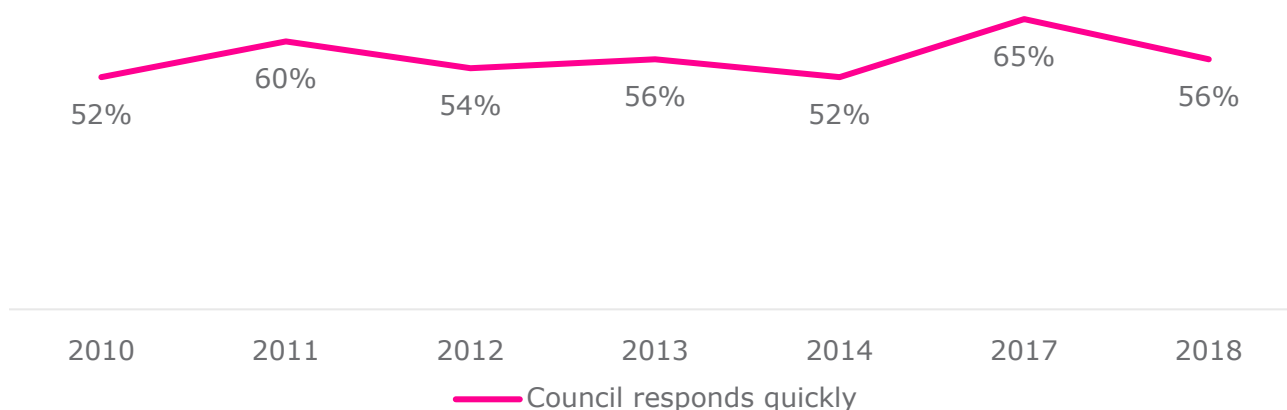
There was a steady climb in 2014 and 2017 in residents believing they are involved in council decision making; however, this has seen a marked decrease in the past two years by 18% points (from 62% to 44%).

**Figure 24: The Council making the local area a better place for people to live / involving residents when making decisions - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)**



More than half (56%) of residents believe the council responds quickly when asked for help. Whilst this is a drop since 2017 (-9% points), it remains higher than recorded in 2014.

**Figure 25: The council responding quickly when asked for help - Proportion stating a great deal / to some extent - Tracking over time (All responses)**



## Perceptions of specific council services

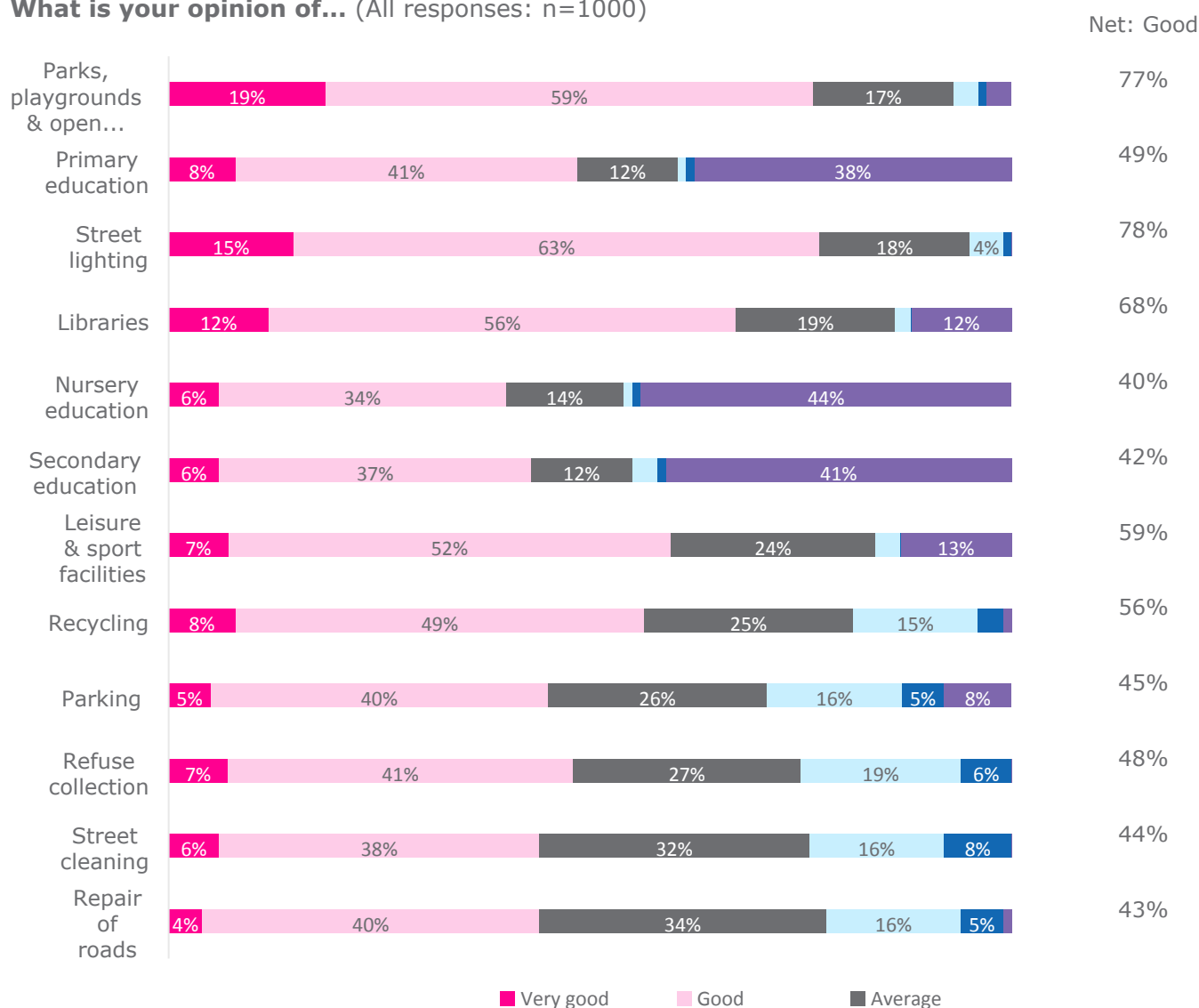
### Views of all residents on specific services

The council delivers a range of services across the borough. All residents were asked to rate each service on a scale from very good to very poor, even if they do not have direct experience of the service.

The large majority of residents believe the borough's parks, playgrounds and open spaces are good (77%). A similar proportion say the same about street lighting (78%). A number of services are perceived less positively, including the repair of roads and pavements (43% good), street cleaning (44%), parking (45%) and refuse collection (48%).

**Figure 26: Q08. I would like to ask you about local services in this area. I would like your opinion of these services even if you yourself have not had direct experience of them.**

**What is your opinion of...** (All responses: n=1000)







Looking at how the perceptions of council services among all residents have changed since 2017, it is clear from the table below that positive views of refuse collection and recycling have experienced the greatest deterioration (-21% and -15% points respectively). There has been an improvement in the perception that street lighting is good in the borough (+8% points).

**Figure 27: Q08. I would like your opinion of these services even if you yourself have not had direct experience of them. What is your opinion of...** (All responses: n=1000)

<b>% very good/good</b>	<b>LB Merton 2019</b>	<b>LB Merton 2017</b>	<b>% difference since 2017</b>
Parks, playgrounds & open spaces	77%	75%	+2%
Primary education	49%	51%	-2%
Street lighting	78%	70%	<b>+8%</b>
Libraries	68%	68%	=
Nursery education	40%	47%	<b>-7%</b>
Secondary education	42%	42%	=
Leisure & sport facilities	59%	63%	-4%
Recycling	56%	71%	<b>-15%</b>
Parking	45%	51%	<b>-6%</b>
Refuse collection	48%	69%	<b>-21%</b>
Street cleaning	44%	53%	<b>-9%</b>
Repair of roads and pavements	43%	48%	-5%

Perceptions of key council services vary markedly by ward cluster. Residents in Cannon Hill and Dundonald are predominantly the most positive, whilst this is the opposite case in Lavender Fields. Indeed, as low as 26% of residents in Lavender Fields believe the repair of roads and pavements is good.

**Figure 28: Q08. I would like your opinion of these services even if you yourself have not had direct experience of them. What is your opinion of...** (All responses: n=1000)

% very good/ good	Total	Village	Dundonald	Cannon Hill	Lavender Fields	Ravensbury	Colliers Wood
Refuse collection	48%	47%	54%	57%	39%	44%	44%
Street cleaning	44%	44%	52%	55%	25%	47%	37%
Street lighting	78%	79%	89%	80%	65%	85%	67%
Repair of roads and pavements	43%	42%	44%	60%	26%	57%	28%
Parks, playgrounds, open spaces	77%	84%	77%	83%	69%	78%	71%
Recycling facilities	56%	50%	69%	69%	47%	49%	53%
Parking services	45%	47%	55%	43%	41%	53%	31%

### Views of service users alone

It is evident that a large proportion of residents do not have direct experience of some services, particularly nursery education, primary education and secondary education. Therefore, to be able to compare each service like-for-like, the following charts present the responses of each service among only those that use that service.

The proportion rating each service as very/good is high for the majority of services, particularly primary education (86%), libraries (82%), and parks, playgrounds and open spaces (81%). However, a markedly lower proportion of residents rate street cleaning (44%), repair of roads and pavements (44%), parking (45%) and refuse collection (48%) as good.

**Figure 28: Q08. I would like to ask you about local services in this area. I would like your opinion of these services even if you yourself have not had direct experience of them. What is your opinion of...** (All service users: bases vary)

Net: Good

81%

86%

78%

82%

79%

79%

75%

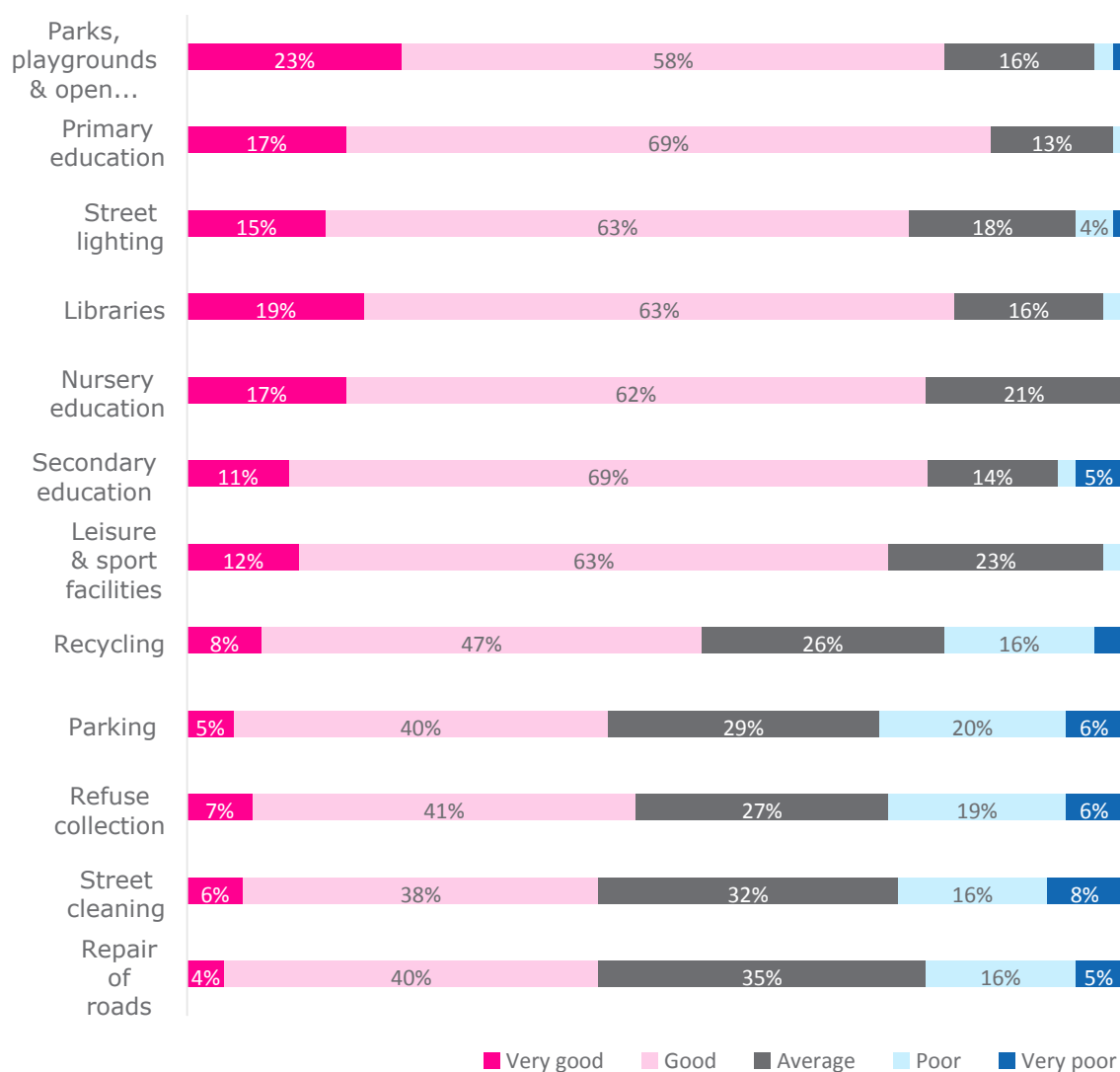
55%

45%

48%

44%

44%



There have been some notable decreases in positive opinion of services since 2017 (among service users). Just 48% of residents rate the refuse collection service as good, which has dropped by 21% points since 2017. Likewise, the proportion rating the recycling facilities as good has dropped by 22% points. There have been improvements in views of secondary education, leisure and sports facilities, street lighting and libraries.

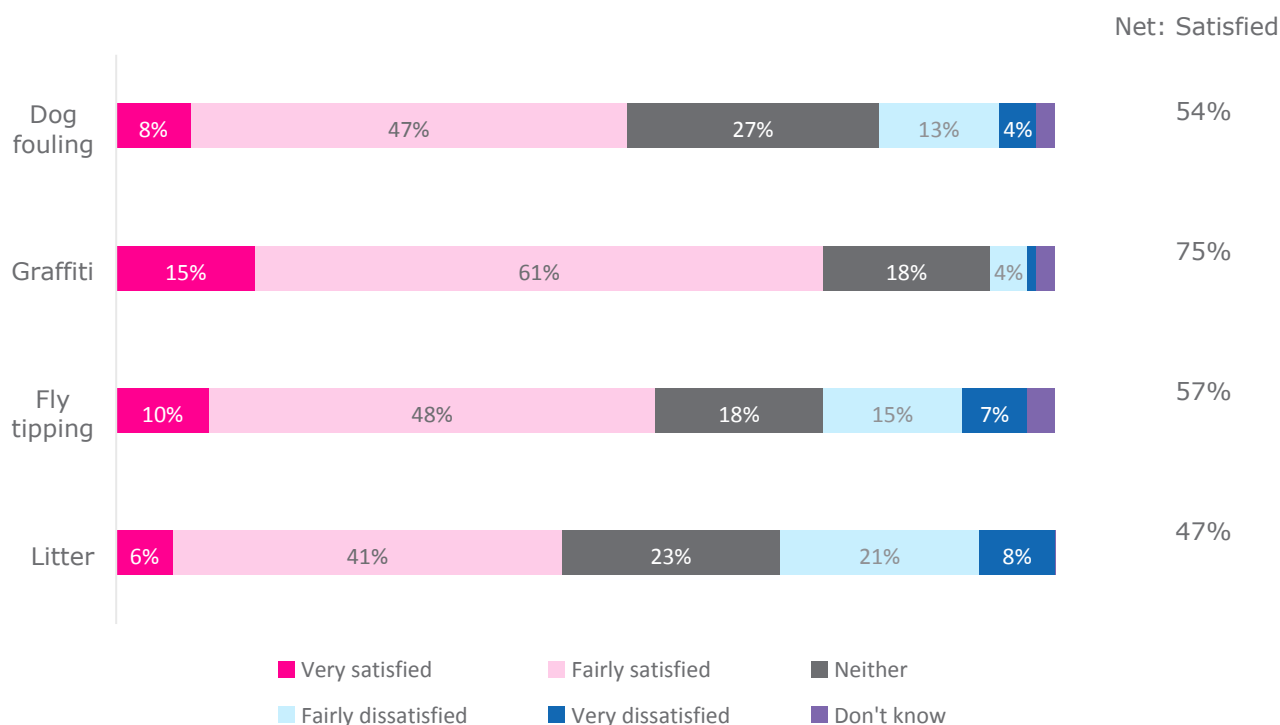
**Figure 30: Q08. I would like your opinion of these services even if you yourself have not had direct experience of them. What is your opinion of...** (All service users: bases vary)

<b>% very good/good</b>	<b>LB Merton 2019</b>	<b>LB Merton 2017</b>	<b>% difference since 2017</b>
Parks, playgrounds & open spaces	81%	79%	+2%
Primary education	86%	80%	<b>+6%</b>
Street lighting	78%	70%	<b>+8%</b>
Libraries	82%	74%	<b>+8%</b>
Nursery education	79%	79%	=
Secondary education	79%	62%	<b>+17%</b>
Leisure & sport facilities	75%	68%	<b>+7%</b>
Recycling	55%	77%	<b>-22%</b>
Parking	45%	50%	-5%
Refuse collection	48%	69%	<b>-21%</b>
Street cleaning	44%	53%	<b>-9%</b>
Repair of roads and pavements	44%	48%	-4%

## Views of environmental factors

Following on from this, all residents were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way the council deals with a range of environmental issues. Less than half (47%) are satisfied with how litter is dealt with, which is a decrease of 13% points since 2017. Just over half (54%) are satisfied with how dog fouling and fly tipping is dealt with, but both are below that recorded in 2017 (-9% and -2% points respectively). Satisfaction with how graffiti is managed is far higher, at 75%, and has remained stable since 2017 (74%).

**Figure 31: Q09. How satisfied are you with the way the council deals with...? (All responses: n=1000)**



Perceptions of environmental factors also vary by ward cluster with those living in Village having the most positive views towards all four aspects.

**Figure 32: Q09. How satisfied are you with the way the council deals with...? (All responses: n=1000)**

% very good/ Good	Total	Village	Dundonald	Cannon Hill	Lavender Fields	Ravensbury	Colliers Wood
Dog fouling	54%	71%	59%	57%	49%	35%	49%
Graffiti	75%	94%	81%	65%	73%	76%	60%
Fly tipping	57%	74%	64%	60%	32%	66%	43%
Litter	47%	60%	55%	55%	28%	43%	34%

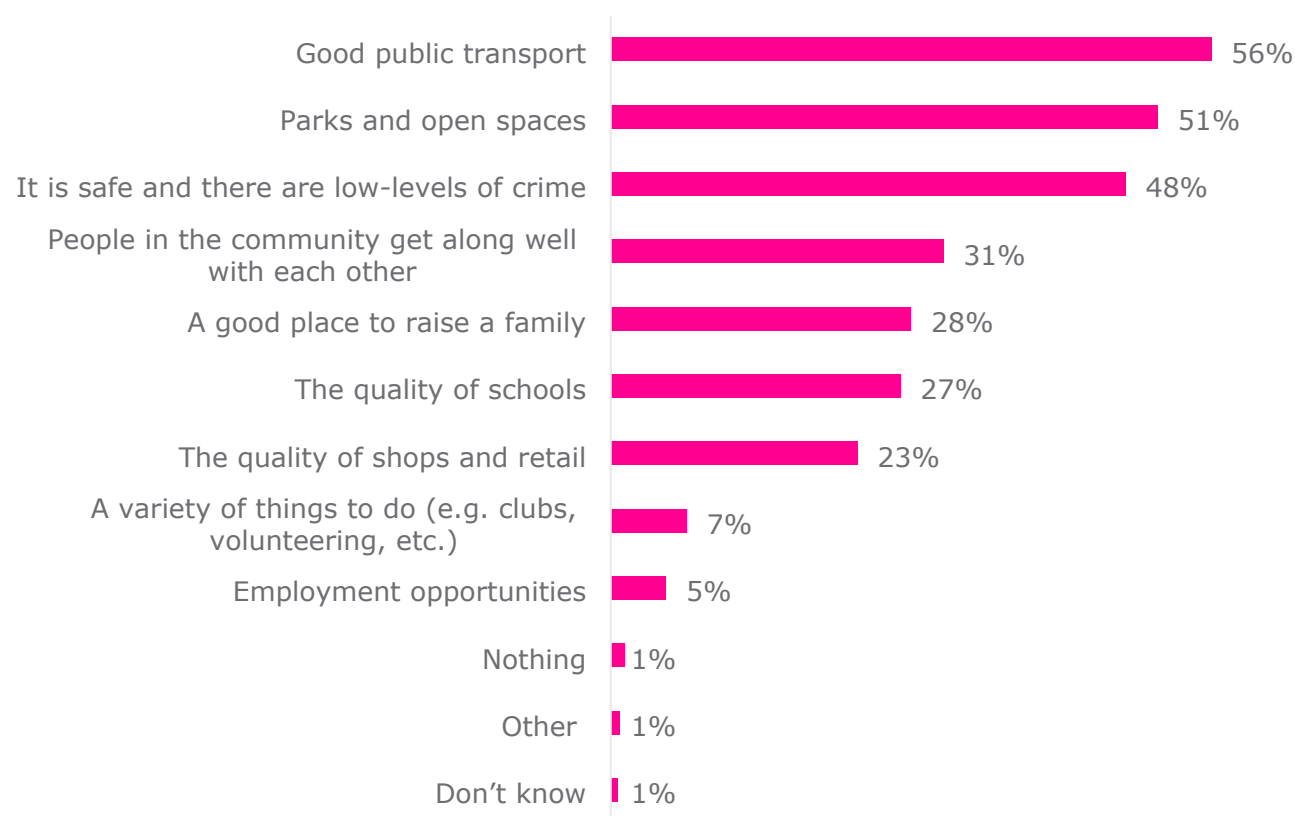
By demographic group, the only significant differences all relate to the first statement regarding dog fouling:

- Residents aged 65+ are more likely to be satisfied with the way that the Council addresses dog fouling (63% cf. 52% aged 25-44 and 53% aged 45-64), as are men (58% cf. 51% women) and those with a disability (65% cf. 53%)

## Areas most valued by residents

All residents were asked to choose up to three things from a list that they value the most in the London Borough of Merton. By far the most valued aspect of the borough is its public transport, with 56% choosing this. This is of greater importance to younger residents (61% aged 18-24 and 57% aged 25-44). Parks and open spaces are valued by around half of residents (51%) and safety/low levels of crime is valued by 48% of residents.

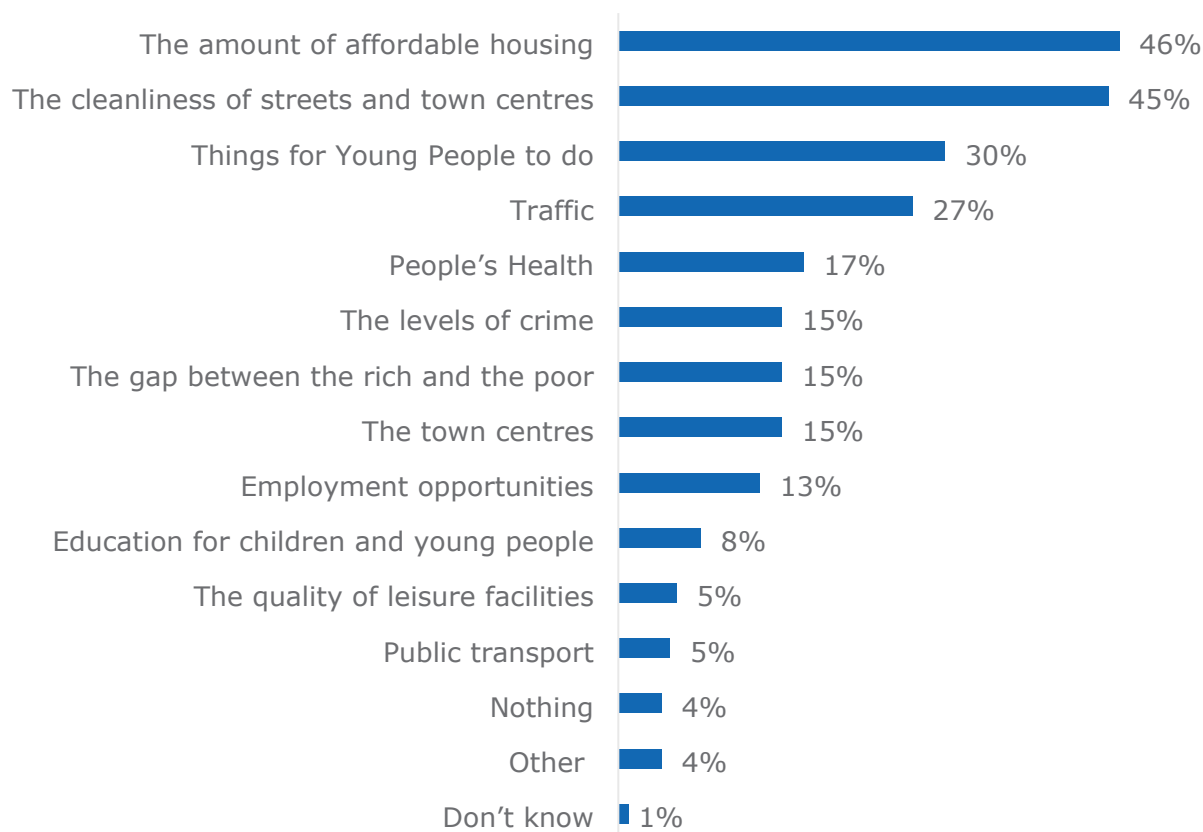
**Figure 33: Q017. From this list, please select the three things that you value the most in the London Borough of Merton.** (All responses: n=1000)



Following on from this, all residents were presented with another list and asked to specify which three they felt needed most improvement in the borough. It is encouraging to see that while public transport is the most valued aspect of the borough, only 5% of residents feel this is in need of improvement. We also found on the previous page that low levels of crime are relatively important to residents, and with 15% saying that this is an area for improvement, this is a secondary priority for the borough.

A clear priority for improvement, however, is the availability of affordable housing, which is chosen by 46% of residents. Interestingly, the cleanliness of streets is a choice of 45% of residents, mirroring what we have found as the priority in our key driver analysis.

**Figure 34: Q018. And, from this list, please select the three things that most need improving in the London Borough of Merton.** (All responses: n=1000)





# 7. Communications

## Feeling informed

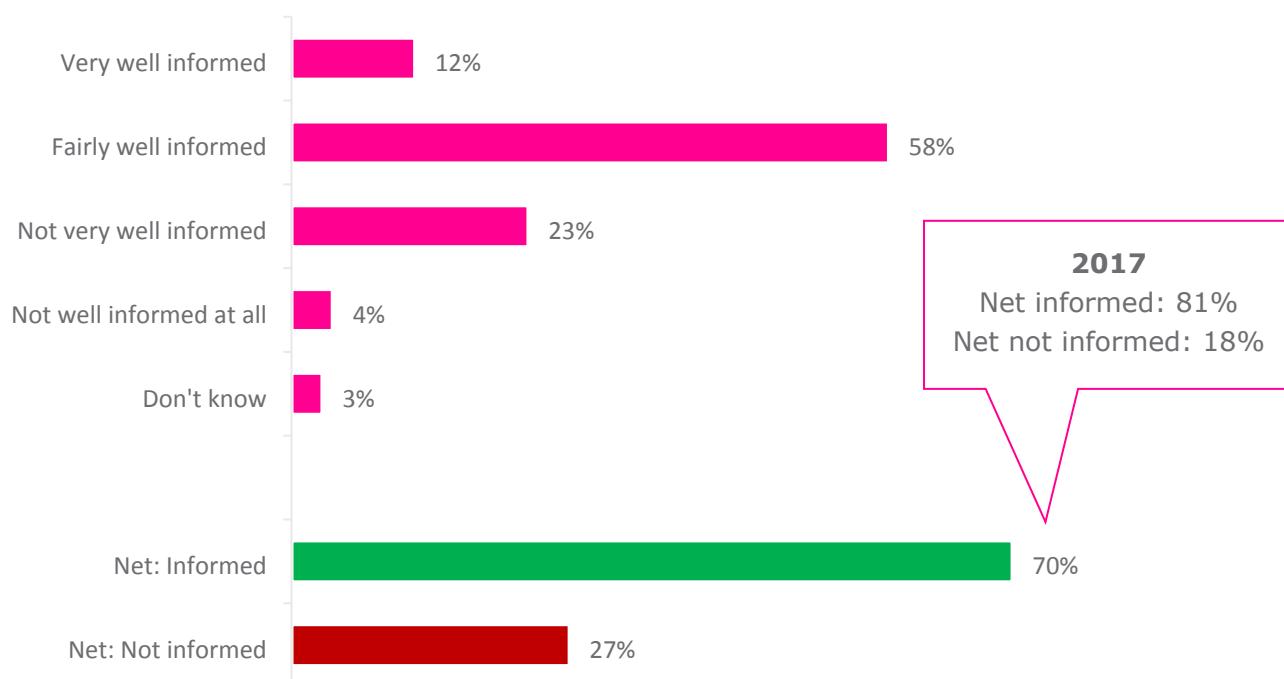
According to the LGA, the extent to which residents feel informed by their council directly affects their views of the council and the services they receive. This in turn impacts on their levels of satisfaction and a council's public reputation.

A key question in the survey asks residents how well they think the council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides.

Seventy percent feel either very well informed (12%) or fairly well informed (58%), however this figure has fallen since 2017 when eight in ten (81%) felt informed.

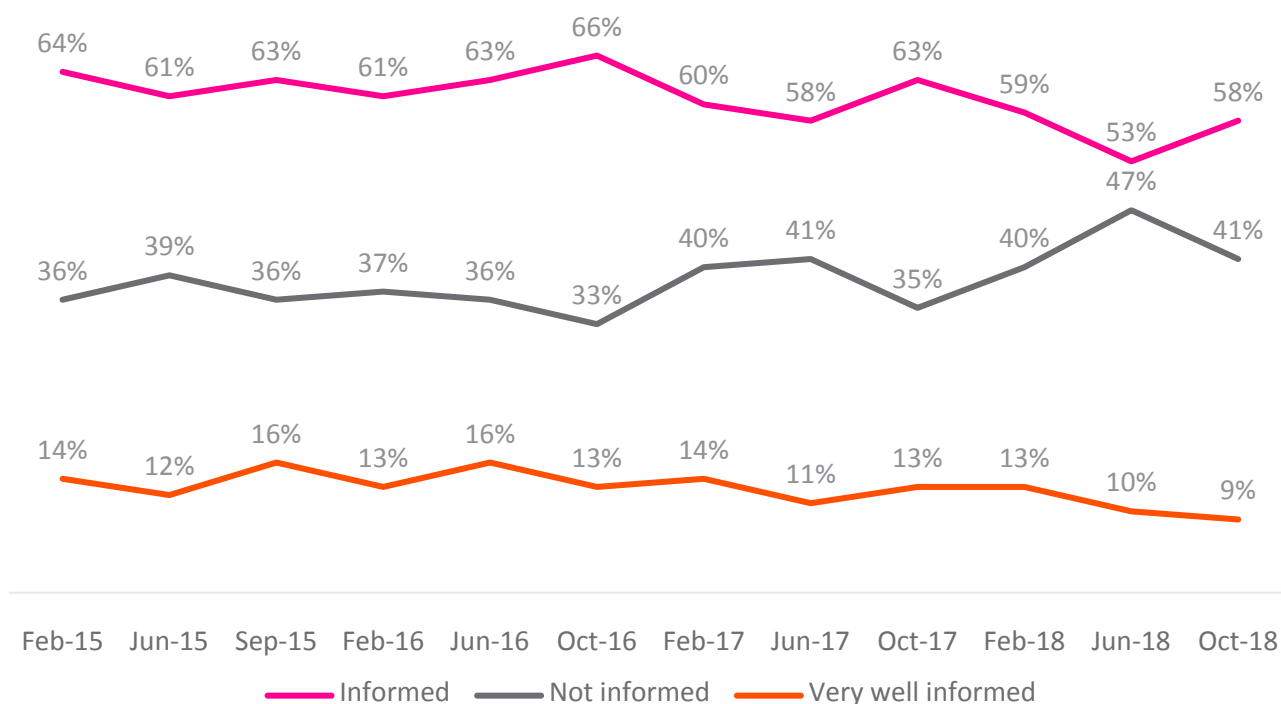
Over a quarter do not feel that they are kept informed, with the majority of these (23%) not feeling very well informed. This lack of awareness could mean that some residents are not accessing valuable services which may improve their quality of life and perceptions of the council.

**Figure 35: Q06. Overall, how well do you think Merton Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides?** (All responses: n=1000)



Whilst the number of residents feeling informed has fallen since 2017, the council still compares favourably against the LGA October 2018 benchmark data where 58% of residents felt informed (70% Merton 2019) and 41% felt that the information was lacking (27% Merton 2019).

**Figure 36: Overall, how well do you think Merton Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? (LGA benchmarking)**



There are no significant differences found in the responses provided by age, ethnicity or disability, however there are discrepancies by ward with half or more Lavender Fields (50%) and Longthornton (57%) residents feeling that they are not kept up to date by the Council.

**Figure 37: Q06. Overall, how well do you think Merton Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? By ward** (All responses: n=1000)

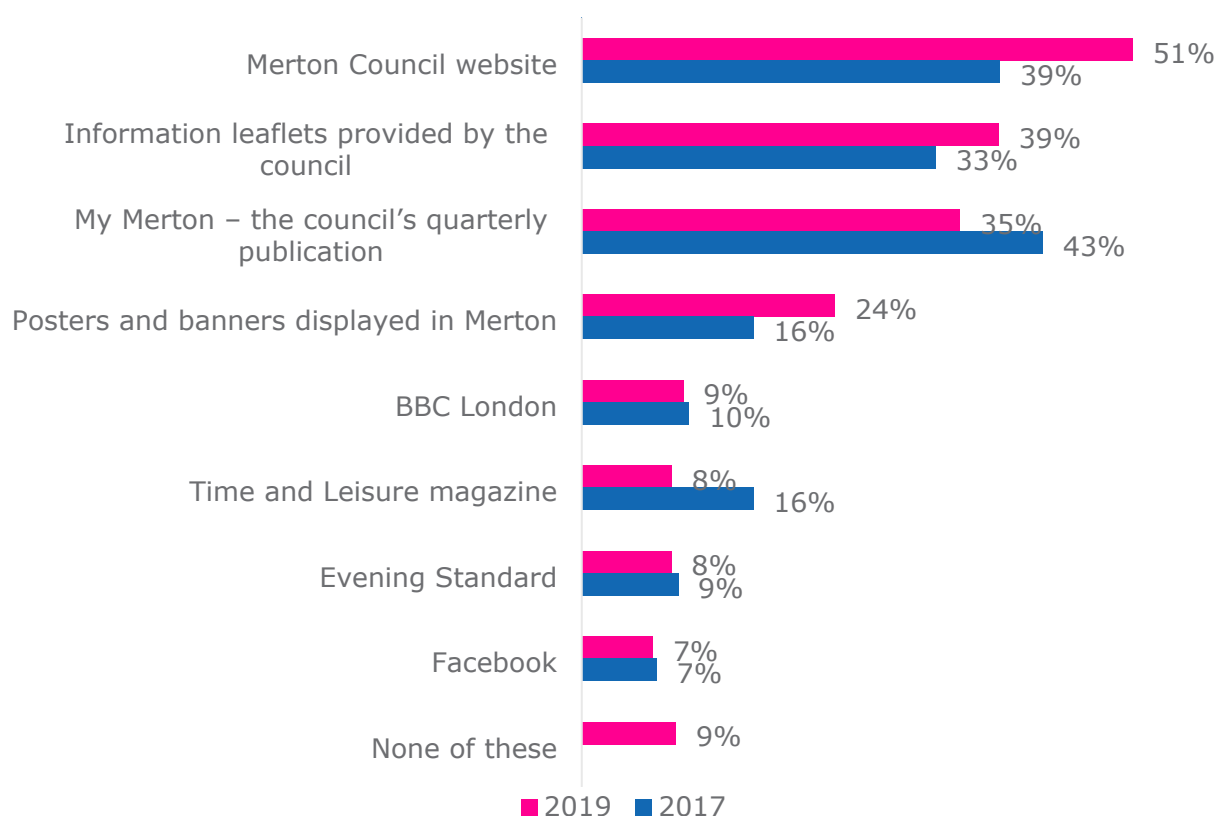
	Informed	Not well informed
Abbey	65%	30%
Cannon Hill	90%	4%
Colliers Wood	72%	23%
Cricket Green	80%	20%
Dundonald	52%	48%
Figges Marsh	55%	45%
Graveney	63%	31%
Hillside	46%	45%
Lavender Fields	47%	50%
Longthornton	41%	57%
Lower Morden	78%	22%
Mertons Park	78%	13%
Pollards Hill	84%	16%
Ravensbury	91%	8%
Raynes Park	92%	5%
St Helier	91%	9%
Trinity	81%	19%
Village	62%	38%
West Barnes	75%	21%
Wimbledon Park	65%	35%

## Communicating with residents

Understanding how residents consume information will enable the council to develop communication messages and approaches that reach and resonate with residents.

As in 2017, the three most frequently mentioned sources of information are the Merton Council website (51% in 2019, 39% in 2017), information leaflets provided by the council (39% in 2019, 33% in 2017) and the My Merton publication (35% in 2019, 43% in 2017).

**Figure 38: Q11. Which of the following ways do you use to keep informed about what's happening in Merton?** (All responses: n=1000)



\*Note that all other forms of communications are used by less than 6% of residents.

As demonstrated in the following table, information leaflets are more likely to be used by those living in the areas of Merton that face greater levels of deprivation, with 53% of residents living in the most deprived IMD quartile reading the leaflets. This also holds true for residents of a BME background, who are more likely to read the leaflets than white British residents (44% cf. 34%).

Residents from a BME background are more inclined to read the posters and banners that are displayed across the borough (29%) compared to white British residents (19%) who are more likely to access the My Merton publication (38% cf. 32%).

The older age range, 65 and over, are considerably less likely to use the Merton Council website (19%) as a way to receive Merton news. This is also true of women who are less likely to use the website than men (48% cf. 55%). The economically active are also more likely to access the website than those inactive (59% cf. 33%). Disabled residents use the website less than those who do not have a

disability to gather information (21% cf. 57%), and instead tend to use the My Merton publication (52% cf. 33%).

**Figure 39: Q11. Which of the following ways do you use to keep informed about what's happening in Merton? By IMD quartile and ethnicity.** (All responses: n=1000)

	IMD quartile				Ethnicity	
	1 – most deprived	2	3	4 - least deprived	White British	BME
Merton Council website	58%	47%	46%	54%	53%	50%
Information leaflets provided by the Council	53%	39%	27%	34%	34%	44%
My Merton	40%	34%	33%	34%	38%	32%
Posters and banners displayed in Merton	38%	25%	12%	18%	19%	29%

**Figure 40: Q11. Which of the following ways do you use to keep informed about what's happening in Merton? By age, economic activity and gender.** (All responses: n=1000)

	Age				Economic activity		Gender	
	18–24	25–44	45–64	65+	Active	Inactive	Male	Female
Merton Council website	45%	62%	50%	19%	59%	33%	55%	48%
Information leaflets provided by the Council	34%	37%	39%	46%	37%	42%	39%	39%
My Merton	13%	29%	44%	50%	30%	47%	33%	38%
Posters and banners displayed in Merton	19%	24%	25%	21%	24%	21%	25%	22%

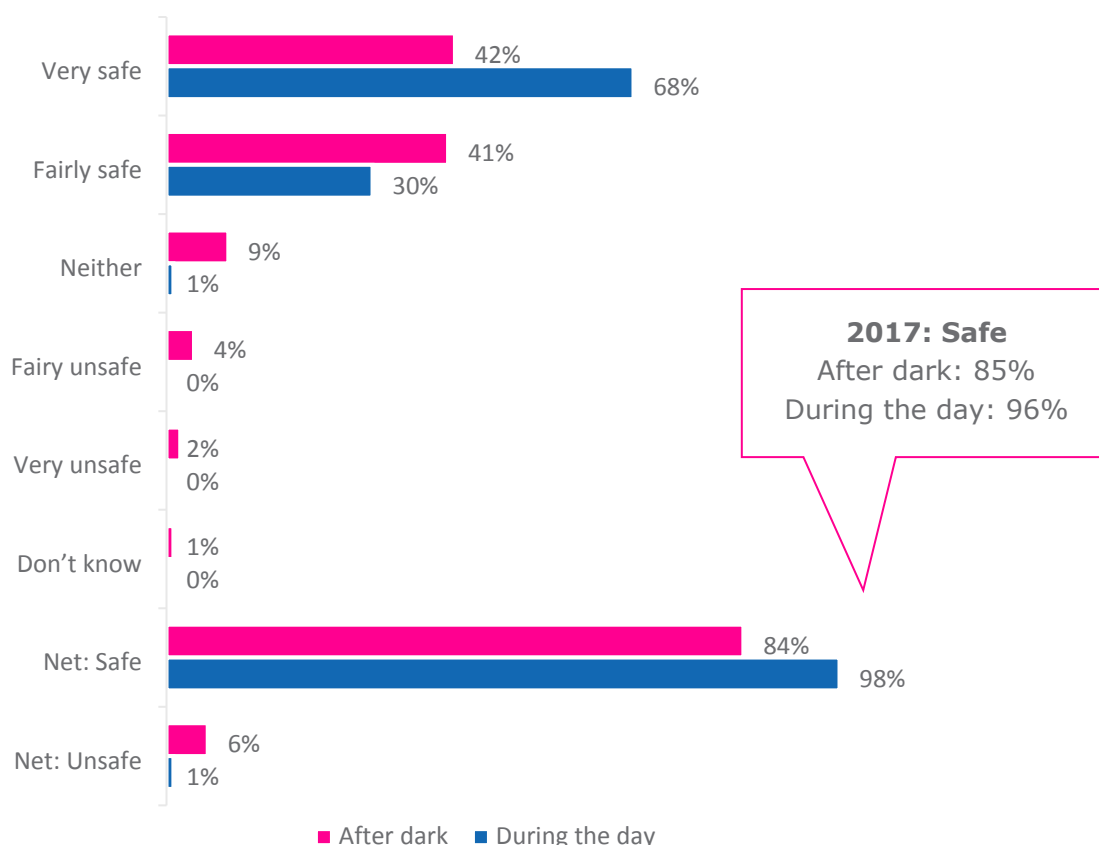
## 8. Safety, neighbourhood issues, and community cohesion

### Feelings of safety

Feelings of safety are an important factor contributing to an individual's sense of satisfaction with the local area around them. Feeling safe can also lead to a stronger sense of community and research has shown that, as a result, residents are more likely to deliver higher rates of social participation, lower rates of crime, and improved physical and mental health.

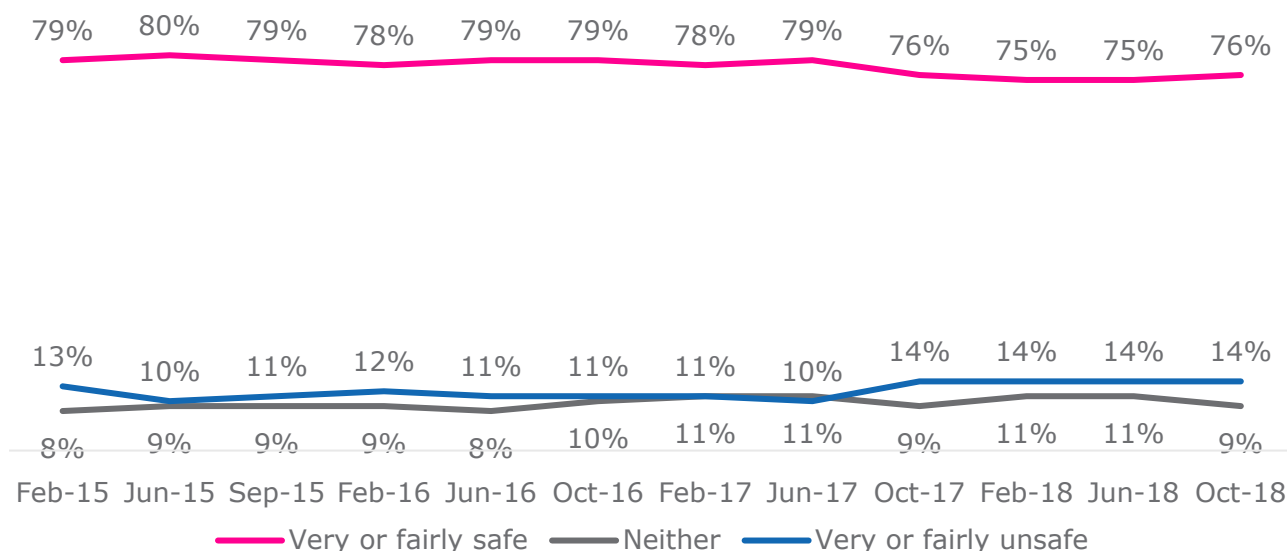
It is therefore a positive result that most residents living in the borough feel safe in their local area, both during the day (98%) and at night (84%). Feelings of insecurity do increase, however, during the darker hours.

**Figure 41: Q12. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area...?** (All responses: n=1000)

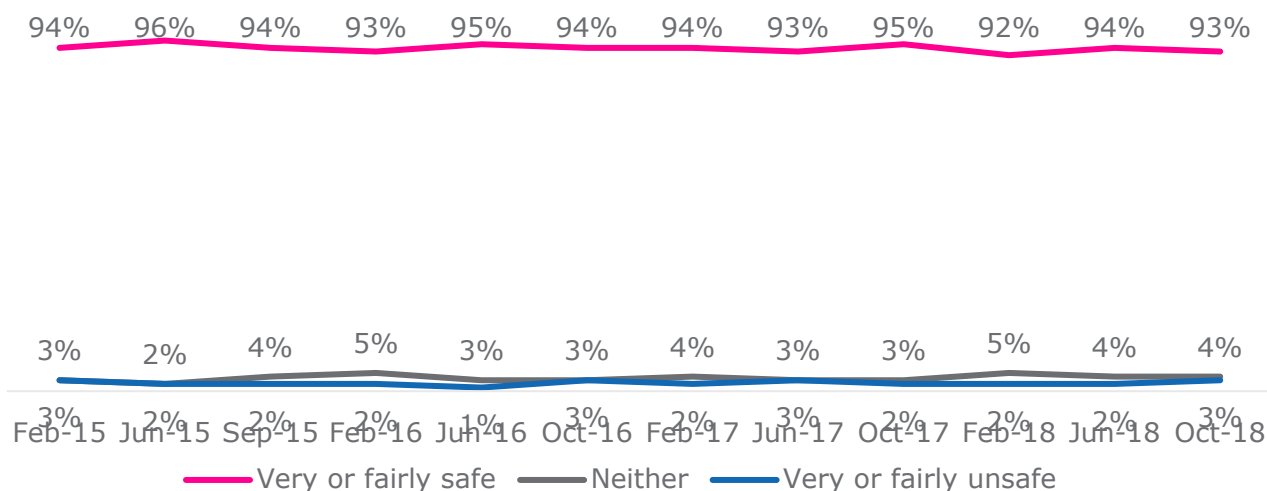


Again, Merton compares well against the national figures collected by the LGA in October 2018 when 76% of residents felt safe after dark and 93% felt secure during the day.

**Figure 42: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark (LGA benchmarking)**



**Figure 43: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day (LGA benchmarking)**





Attitudes are quite consistent across the individual wards with the exception of West Barnes, Longthornton and Graveney where residents are more likely to feel unsafe after dark.

**Figure 44: Q12. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area...? Proportion feeling unsafe by ward. (All responses: n=1000)**

	% feeling unsafe after dark	% feeling unsafe during the day
Abbey	1%	0%
Cannon Hill	0%	0%
Colliers Wood	13%	2%
Cricket Green	0%	0%
Dundonald	0%	0%
Figges Marsh	10%	4%
Graveney	17%	0%
Hillside	0%	0%
Lavender Fields	2%	0%
Longthornton	16%	0%
Lower Morden	0%	0%
Mertons Park	12%	2%
Pollards Hill	10%	2%
Ravensbury	0%	2%
Raynes Park	0%	0%
St Helier	7%	0%
Trinity	3%	0%
Village	4%	0%
West Barnes	16%	0%
Wimbledon Park	0%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>

Feelings of daytime safety are consistent across the key demographics, however as night approaches certain residents become more concerned about their safety:

- Residents of Lavender Fields, 75% feel safe after dark
- Those living in Colliers Wood, 76% feel safe after dark
- Women, 78% feel safe after dark
- Those aged 65 or over, 73% feel safe after dark



- Disabled residents, 74% feel safe after dark
- Those economically inactive, 75% feel safe after dark

**Figure 45: Q12. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area...?**  
**Proportion feeling safe by key demographics.** (All responses: n=1000)

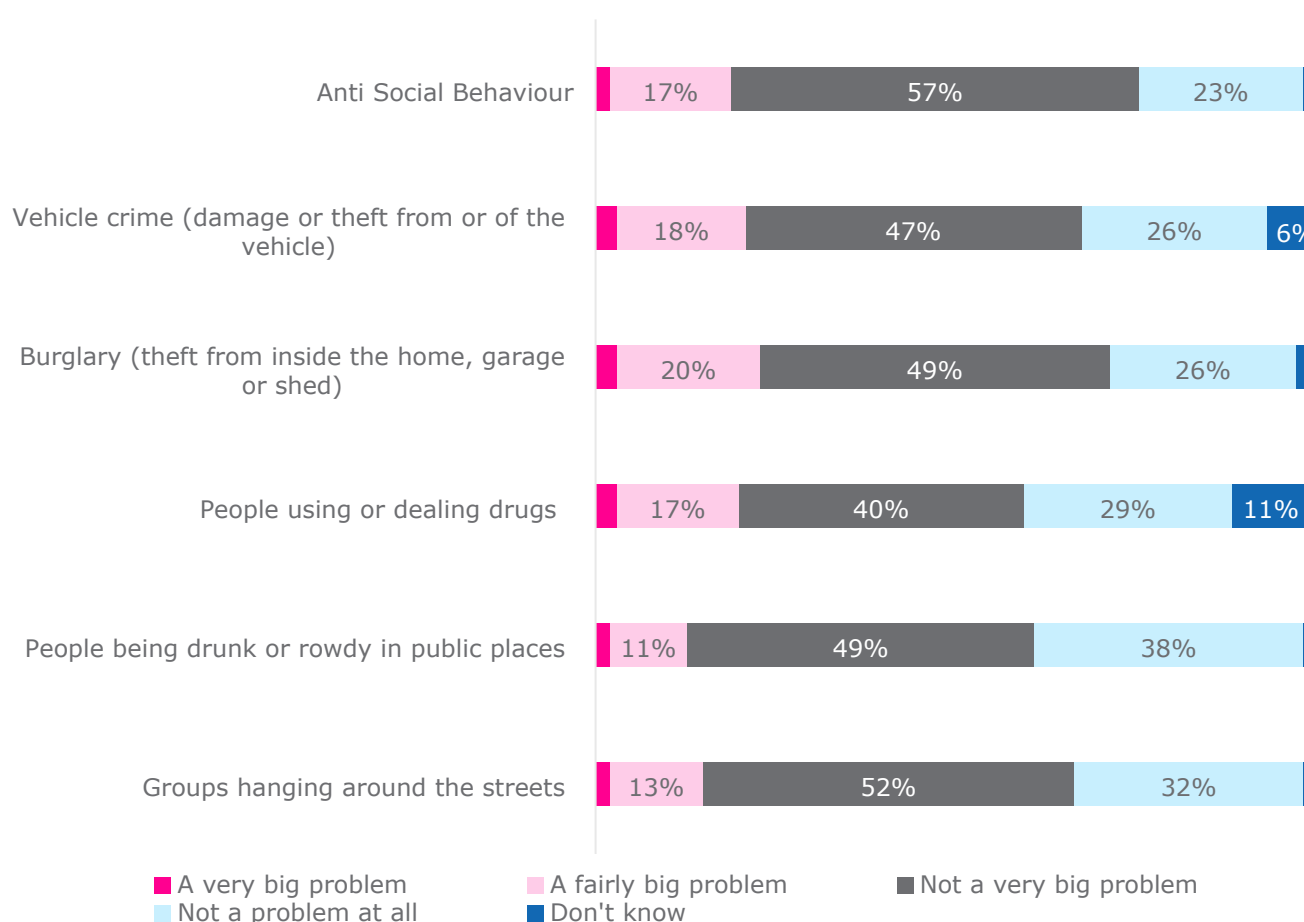
	% feeling safe after dark	% feeling safe during the day
Village	90%	100%
Dundonald	91%	100%
Cannon Hill	84%	98%
Lavender Fields	75%	97%
Ravensbury	86%	99%
Colliers Wood	76%	97%
Male	90%	99%
Female	78%	98%
18 to 24	83%	100%
25 to 44	86%	98%
45 to 64	86%	99%
65+	73%	98%
Disabled	74%	99%
No disability	86%	98%
Economically active	88%	98%
Economically inactive	75%	99%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>98%</b>

## Issues in the local area

Neighbourhoods can be ruined by the people that live in or visit the area. Respondents were asked to give their opinion on the extent of some of the issues that can be caused by either their neighbours or people who come to the area to cause problems.

Of the issues discussed, residents feel that burglary is the biggest problem with 23% citing this as a very big or fairly big problem. In comparison to 2017, there has been an increase in residents feeling that people using or dealing drugs is a problem (11% in 2017 to 20% in 2019), but a decrease in people being drunk or rowdy in public places (17% in 2017 to 13% in 2019).

**Figure 46: Q13. Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following is?** (All responses: n=1000)





Residents living in Cannon Hill, Cricket Green and Dundonald report fewer problems in their neighbourhoods than residents living elsewhere.

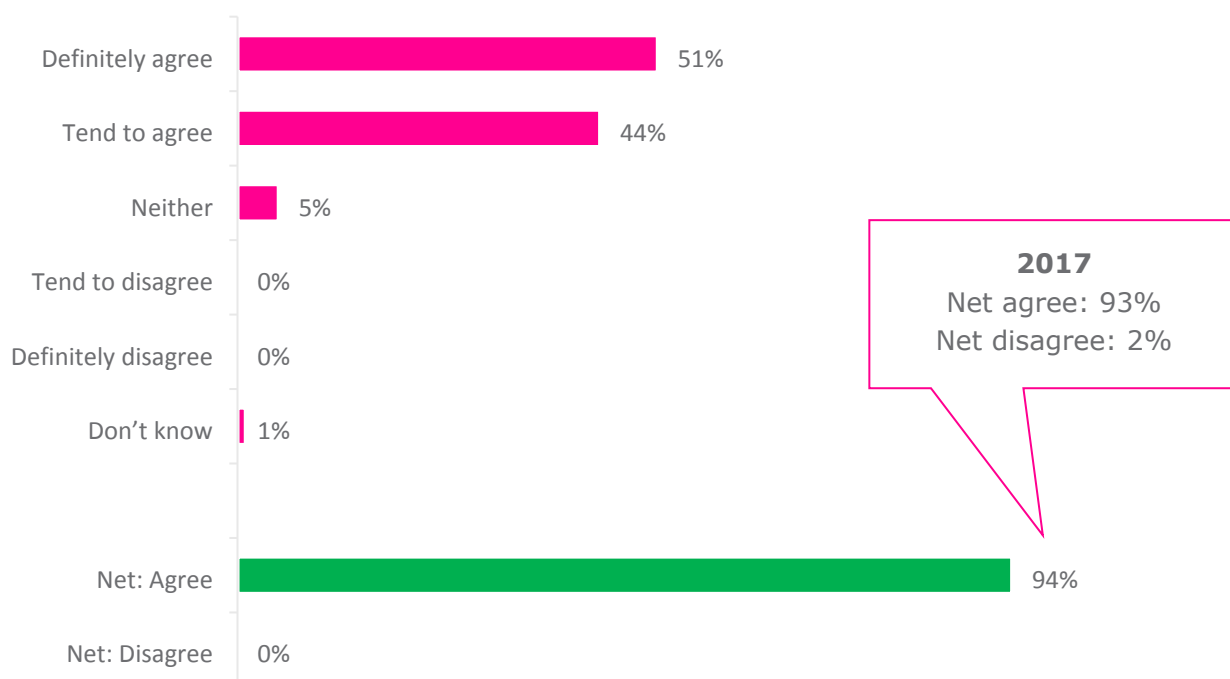
**Figure 47: Q13. Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following is?** (All responses: n=1000)

	% who see the issue as a problem in their area					
	Anti-Social behaviour	Vehicle crime	Burglary	People using or dealing drugs	People drunk or rowdy in public places	Groups hanging around the streets
Abbey	19%	15%	34%	34%	30%	19%
Cannon Hill	0%	9%	17%	0%	0%	0%
Colliers Wood	14%	25%	32%	28%	17%	19%
Cricket Green	25%	0%	0%	0%	2%	5%
Dundonald	12%	0%	2%	0%	0%	6%
Figges Marsh	21%	13%	14%	17%	27%	20%
Graveney	38%	30%	26%	25%	39%	34%
Hillside	11%	22%	11%	11%	4%	10%
Lavender Fields	41%	10%	7%	43%	13%	14%
Longthornton	26%	24%	13%	15%	13%	13%
Lower Morden	18%	20%	35%	41%	15%	9%
Mertons Park	18%	31%	45%	14%	10%	33%
Pollards Hill	11%	37%	51%	27%	4%	9%
Ravensbury	45%	39%	32%	45%	37%	35%
Raynes Park	4%	4%	7%	2%	1%	0%
St Helier	22%	21%	26%	21%	19%	25%
Trinity	11%	43%	17%	38%	15%	20%
Village	9%	43%	39%	21%	0%	14%
West Barnes	14%	29%	42%	20%	3%	10%
Wimbledon Park	20%	17%	16%	4%	1%	6%
TOTAL	19%	21%	23%	20%	13%	15%

## Community cohesion

The vast majority of Merton residents (94%) believe that their local area offers a cohesive place to live where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together. This view is largely unchanged since 2017.

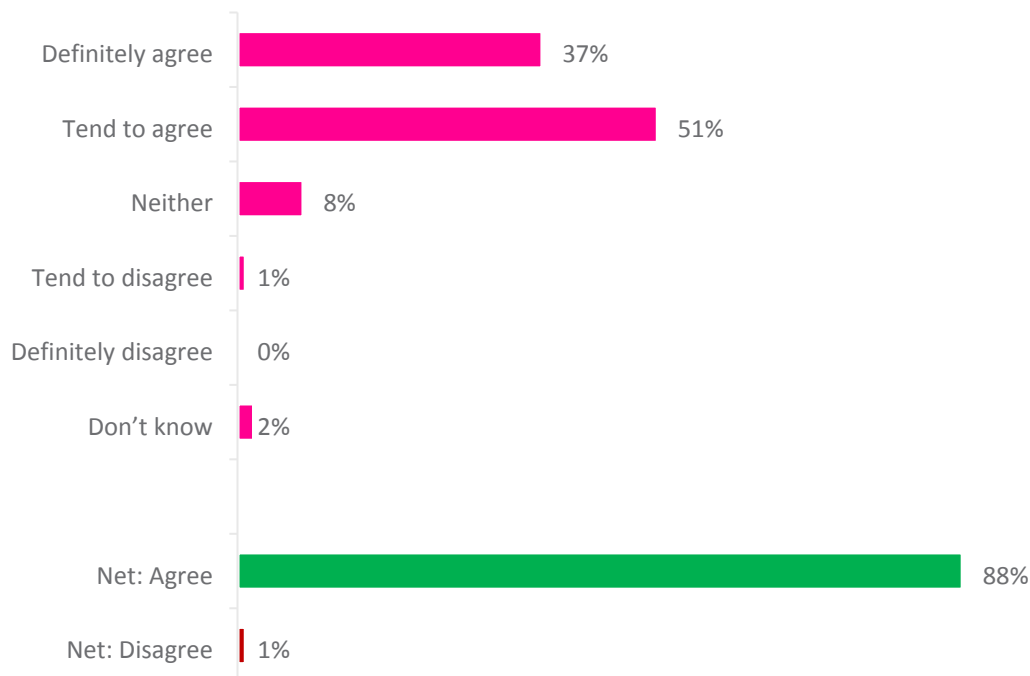
**Figure 48: Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together?** (All responses: n=1000)



Agreement that people get on well together is broadly consistent across the wards with the exception of Hillside where 81% agree with this. Views are also consistent amongst residents of different ages and ethnic backgrounds.

Almost nine in ten (88%) residents feel that there are people in their local area who they can rely on in an emergency.

**Figure 49: Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that in an emergency, there are people in your local area that you can rely on?** (All responses: n=1000)



Relationships are commonly forged based on age and the length of time that the resident has lived in the borough (which are also likely to go hand in hand):

- Younger residents (aged 18 to 24) are less likely to feel that there is someone they can call on in an emergency than those age 45 to 64 or 65 and over (79% cf. 91% and 92% respectively).
- Residents who have lived in the borough for between six months and one year are less likely to have someone to call on than those who have lived in Merton for over five years (81% cf. 92%).

Older residents probably have more people to call on in an emergency because they tend to have a wider support network, knowing more people in the local area who they can talk to than younger residents.

One quarter of residents over the age of 65 know more than ten people who they can speak to, compared with 13% of those aged 18 to 44.

**Figure 50: Q16. How many people do you know well enough to speak to in your local area?  
By age and length of time living in the borough. (All responses: n=1000)**

	<b>0</b>	<b>1 to 5</b>	<b>6 to 10</b>	<b>More than10</b>
18 to 24	0%	68%	16%	13%
25 to 44	2%	63%	23%	13%
45 to 64	0%	44%	28%	27%
65+	1%	37%	38%	25%
6 months to 1 year	3%	80%	11%	4%
Over 1 and up to 2 years	2%	83%	11%	5%
Over 2 and up to 5 years	2%	73%	16%	9%
Over 5 and up to 10 years	1%	51%	34%	13%
More than 10 years	0%	32%	35%	33%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>19%</b>

## 9. Volunteering

The changing political and demographic climate is driving local authorities to transform the way that they deliver services, with the balance shifting from delivering services to empowering communities to do things for themselves. This can be achieved, in part, by increasing the involvement of volunteers in the delivery of services. There is also strong evidence that volunteering improves the wellbeing of those who get involved.

In Merton, just over one in ten residents (12%) have offered their time to undertake unpaid or voluntary work within their local community over the last 12 months. This is a drop of 8% points since 2017 however (from 20%).

On the whole, the desire to contribute to the local community becomes stronger both with the length of time that the resident has lived in the neighbourhood and with age. However, once the resident reaches the age of 65 their likelihood to volunteer falls again.

**Figure 51: Q19. During the last 12 months, have you undertaken any unpaid activity/ voluntary work in your local community to help local groups, clubs, organisations or individuals?** (All responses: n=1000)

	Yes	No
18 to 24	10%	90%
25 to 44	11%	89%
45 to 64	18%	82%
65+	7%	93%
6 months to 1 year	8%	92%
Over 1 and up to 2 years	3%	96%
Over 2 and up to 5 years	9%	91%
Over 5 and up to 10 years	13%	87%
More than 10 years	17%	83%
TOTAL	<b>12%</b>	<b>88%</b>

Residents who do not get involved in community activities cite a lack of available time due to other commitments as the main reason for non-participation (69%). For a notable number (13%), the idea of volunteering has simply never occurred to them.

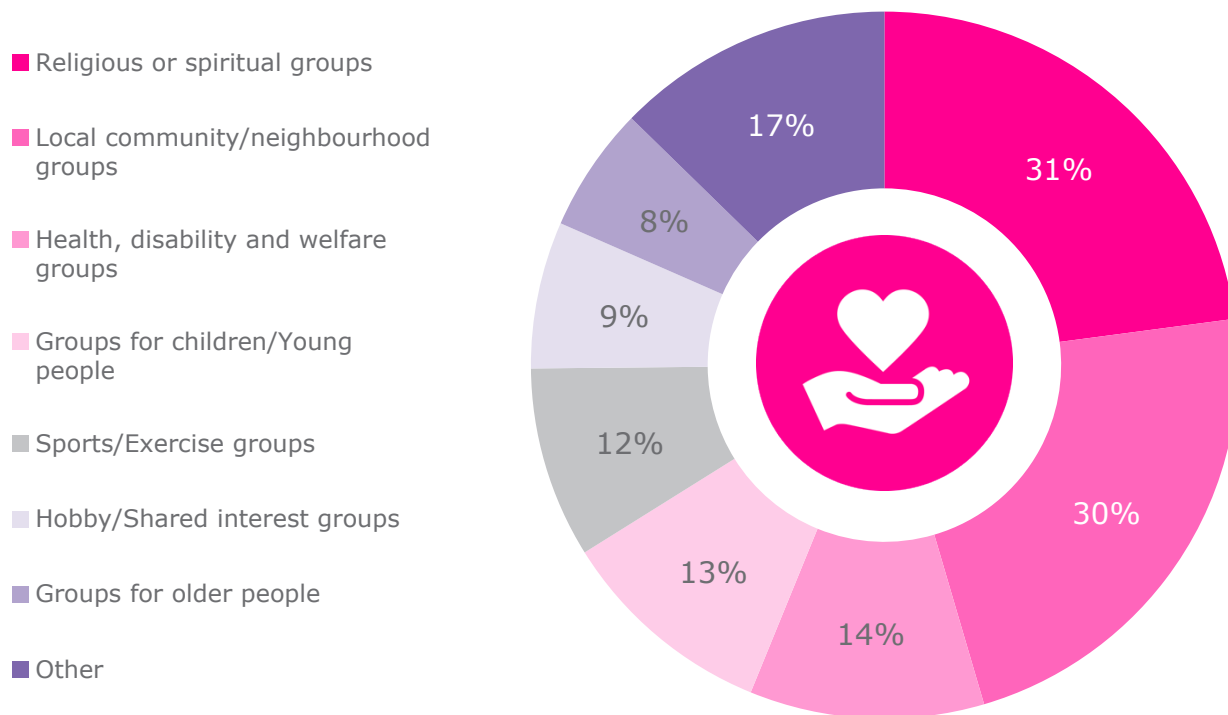
**Figure 52: Q20. Why do think you have not participated in any community activity in the last 12 months?** (All responses where do not volunteer: n=877)





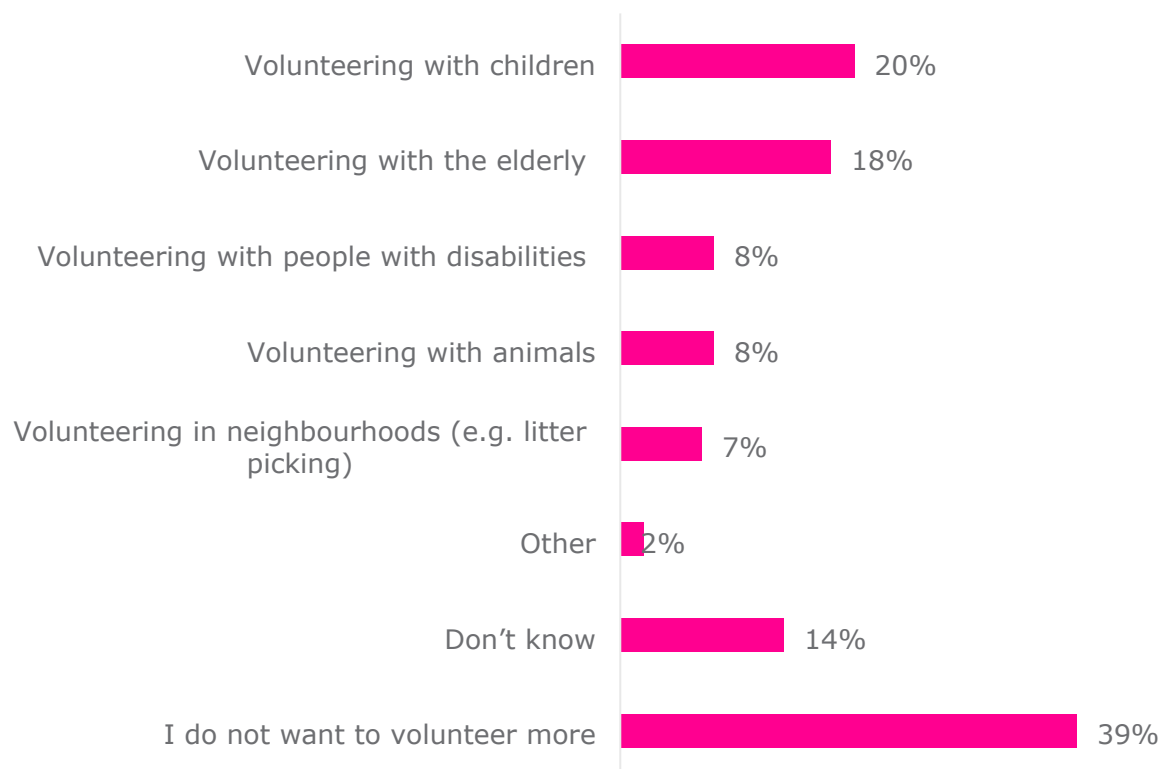
A sense of belonging plays a strong role in motivating residents to get involved, with most voluntary work taking place within either a religious or spiritual group (31%) or a local community or neighbourhood group (30%), both of which are very much community oriented.

**Figure 53: Q021. Please can you tell me who you did the unpaid / voluntary work for?** (All responses who volunteer: n=121)



Whilst 39% of residents would not like to get more involved in volunteering, popular choices amongst those who would like to focus on children (20%) and the elderly (18%). Around a quarter of residents aged 18-24 (23%) and 25-44 (26%) say they would like to volunteer with children, whilst 24% of residents aged 45-64 would like to volunteer with the elderly.

**Figure 54: Q22. If you volunteered more what would you like to do?** (All responses)

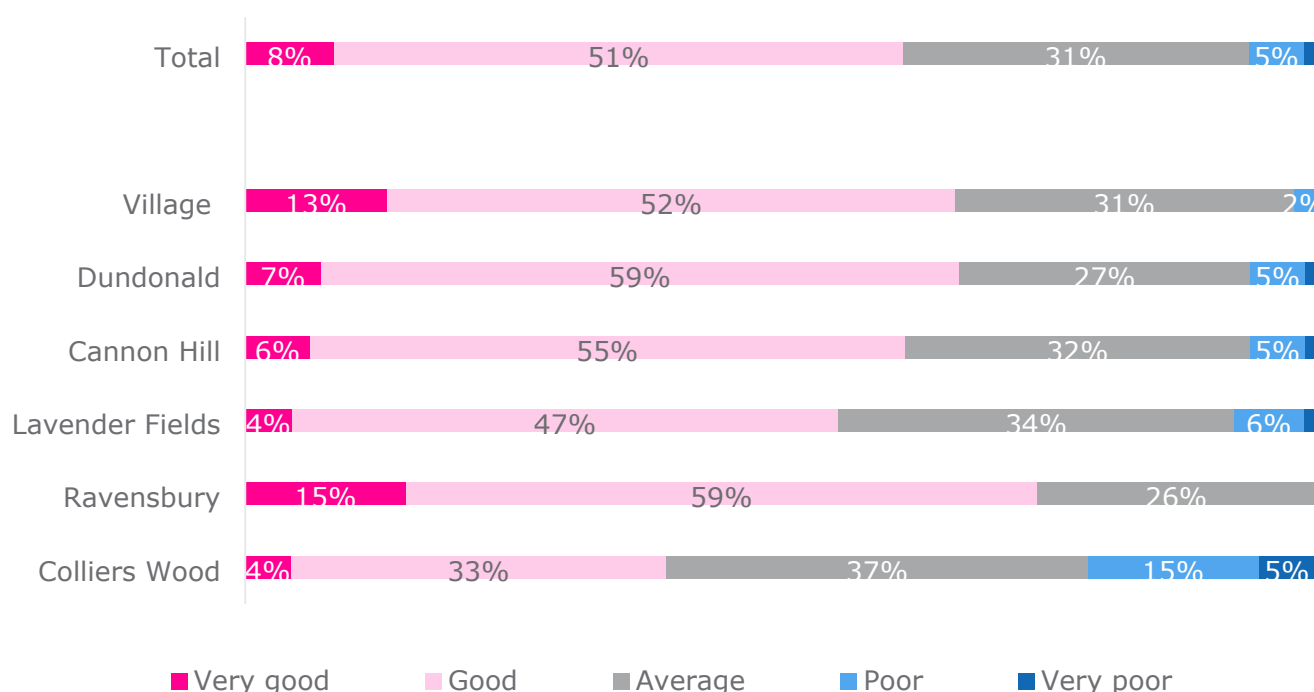


# 10. Health & Wellbeing

## Air quality

A new question added into the 2019 questionnaire explores resident perceptions of the air quality in the borough. Overall, three in five (59%) residents believe the air quality is good, with just 8% saying it is very good. Only 7% deem the air quality to be poor, although this increases to 20% in Colliers Wood. It is interesting to note a big difference in views between the East and West of the borough, with 65% in the West feeling the air quality is good compared to 54% in the East.

**Figure 55: Q024. How would you rate the overall air quality in the London Borough of Merton?** (All responses: n=1000)



## Life satisfaction and wellbeing

The World Health Organisation's definition of health underscores the importance of wellbeing: "*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*"

Many scales have been developed to assess wellbeing, including the ONS Measuring National Wellbeing (MNW) programme which aims to "develop and publish an accepted and trusted set of National Statistics which help people understand and monitor well-being".

Personal wellbeing (sometimes referred to as "subjective wellbeing") is one of many ways in which the MNW programme aims to assess the progress of the nation.

The survey uses four questions to measure personal wellbeing and respondents are asked to complete their answers using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”.

These questions were added to the 2017 survey and repeated in 2019.

The wellbeing scores for 2019 compare very favourably to 2017, particularly in terms of residents feeling like the things they do in their life are worthwhile. They also compare well to the UK and London benchmarks.

**Figure 56: Q023a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?** (All responses: n=1000)



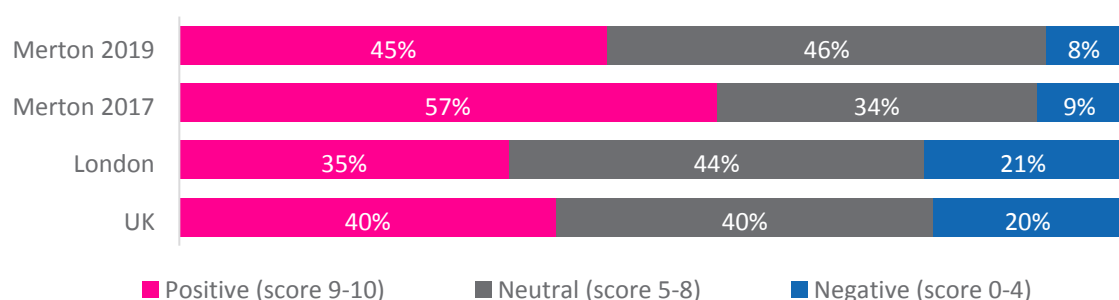
**Figure 57: Q023b. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?** (All responses: n=1000)



**Figure 58: Q023c. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?** (All responses: n=1000)



**Figure 59: Q023d. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?** (All responses: n=1000)



Note: For Q23d – positive = 0-1; neutral = 2-5; negative = 6-10



Exploring how wellbeing varies by age and disability, older residents (aged 65+) and those with a disability are significantly less happy with their life nowadays (29% and 26% score 9-10). Residents with a disability are also less likely to feel the things they do are worthwhile (34%) and less likely to feel happy (32%).

**Figure 60: Q023a-d. Wellbeing by age and disability**

	Age				Disability		
	18-24 (n=52)	25-44 (n=472)	45-64 (n=303)	65+ (n=173)	Yes (n=139)	No (n=857)	PNTS (n=4)
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?</b>							
<b>Low (0-4)</b>	5%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	n=1
<b>Medium (5-8)</b>	51%	50%	57%	70%	71%	52%	n=2
<b>High (9-10)</b>	44%	49%	42%	29%	26%	47%	n=1
<b>Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?</b>							
<b>Low (0-4)</b>	5%	0%	0%	2%	5%	0%	n=0
<b>Medium (5-8)</b>	52%	46%	50%	58%	62%	47%	n=1
<b>High (9-10)</b>	43%	53%	49%	40%	34%	52%	n=3
<b>Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?</b>							
<b>Low (0-4)</b>	2%	2%	2%	3%	5%	2%	n=1
<b>Medium (5-8)</b>	59%	55%	52%	61%	64%	54%	n=2
<b>High (9-10)</b>	40%	43%	45%	36%	32%	44%	n=2
<b>Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?</b>							
<b>Low (0-1)</b>	42%	46%	44%	45%	34%	47%	n=2
<b>Medium (2-5)</b>	51%	46%	46%	46%	51%	46%	n=1
<b>High (6-10)</b>	6%	8%	10%	9%	15%	7%	n=1

# 11. Young people

## Data in this section

The data has been subject to statistical testing using the T-Test. Significant differences between the responses provided by young residents aged 11 to 15 and those aged 16 to 17 are identified in the narrative of the report and in tables using pink and blue highlighting (pink = significantly higher; blue = significantly lower).

## Local area perceptions

Many of the decisions made within local environments are taken by adults, and young people's thoughts and feelings are often not considered, despite the fact that these choices will have a profound impact on their lives.

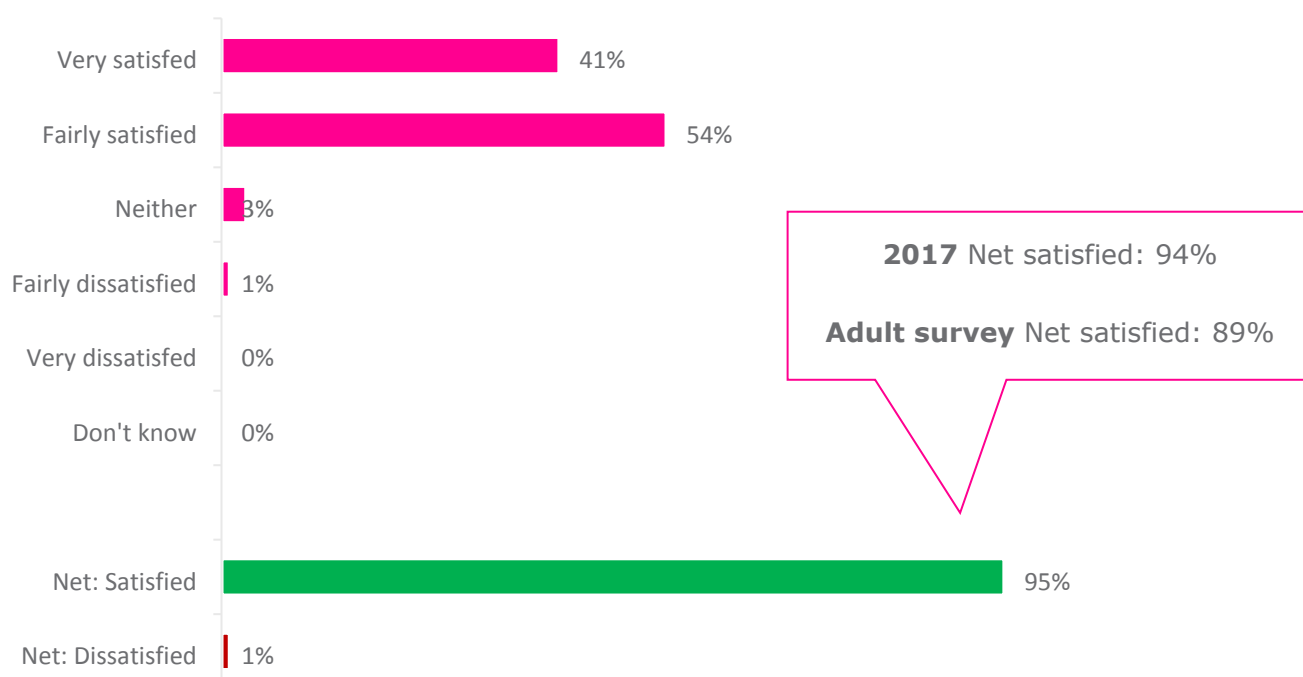
The council included young residents aged 11 to 17 in the research as it recognises that young people's participation is vital in order to improve and develop services and to be able to respond to their needs.

Young residents were firstly asked how satisfied they are living in their local area. The vast majority (95%) are satisfied with where they live and this compares favourably against the proportion of satisfied adults (89%).

Of the young people satisfied, two fifths (41%) are very satisfied which is an increase of 13% on 2017 (28%).

If we segment the data by age into two sub-groups, 11 to 15 year olds and 16 to 17 year olds, and compare the results between these groups, it becomes apparent that the younger age group is significantly more likely to be satisfied with their local area than those in the older age range (98% cf. 89%).

**Figure 61: Q01. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?** (All responses: n=271)



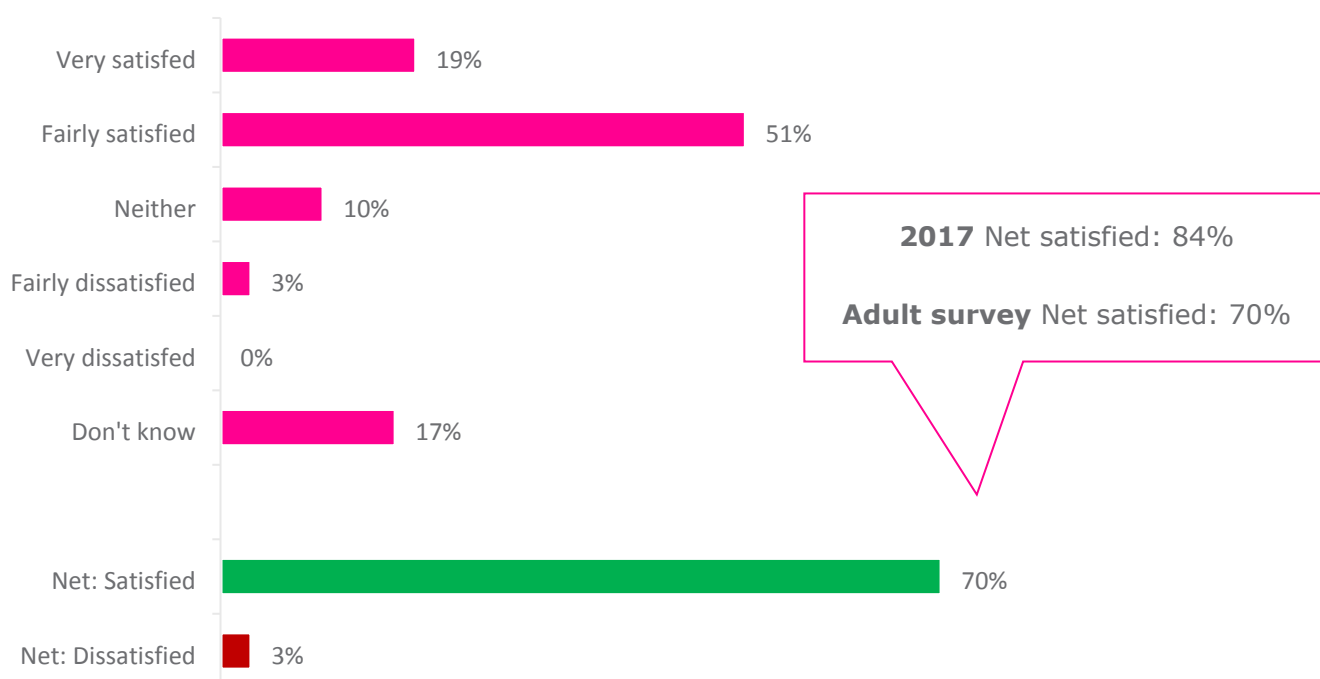
## Perceptions of LB Merton

### Overall satisfaction

Respondents aged 11 to 17 were provided with an explanation of the services provided by Merton Council and asked how satisfied they are with the way that the council runs things. The majority are satisfied with the way that the council operates (70%), which is in line with that of adult residents (also 70%), however satisfaction amongst young residents has fallen by 14% points between 2017 and 2019.

There is no significant difference in satisfaction between respondents aged 11 to 15 and those aged 16 to 17.

**Figure 62: Q02. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Merton Council runs things?** (All responses: n=271)



## Perceptions of LB Merton services

### General views of service provision

Helping young people to fulfil their potential is a key ambition of all councils, but children's services are under increasing pressure which has been caused by large funding gaps that are further compounded by increasing demand.

Councils have worked hard to protect budgets, and young residents were asked to rate the council on five aspects of the service it provides which relate to them directly.

Fewer than half are satisfied with each of the aspects noted and those relating to communication (listening to, informing and involving young people) are evaluated more harshly than those that relate to service provision.

With the exception of *...provides services which young people need*, satisfaction has fallen for each measure between 2017 and 2019, with the most notable decline for *...involved young people when making decisions* which has fallen from 40% to 23%. It is important to highlight, however, that the proportion of young people who say they 'don't know' has increased since 2017 (from 10% to 19%), which will explain some of the decline in positive views over the time.

Analysis by age group indicates that 16 to 17 year olds' perceptions of how the council interacts with young people are less positive than those of the 11 to 15 age group:

- 69% cf. 54% feel that the council does not involve young people when making decisions
- 53% cf. 33% feel that the council does not listen to the concerns of young people
- 50% cf. 33% feel that the council does not do enough to protect young people
- 50% cf. 34% feel that the council does not provide the services that young people need

This continues the trend established in 2017 when 11 to 15 year olds' views were also more positive.

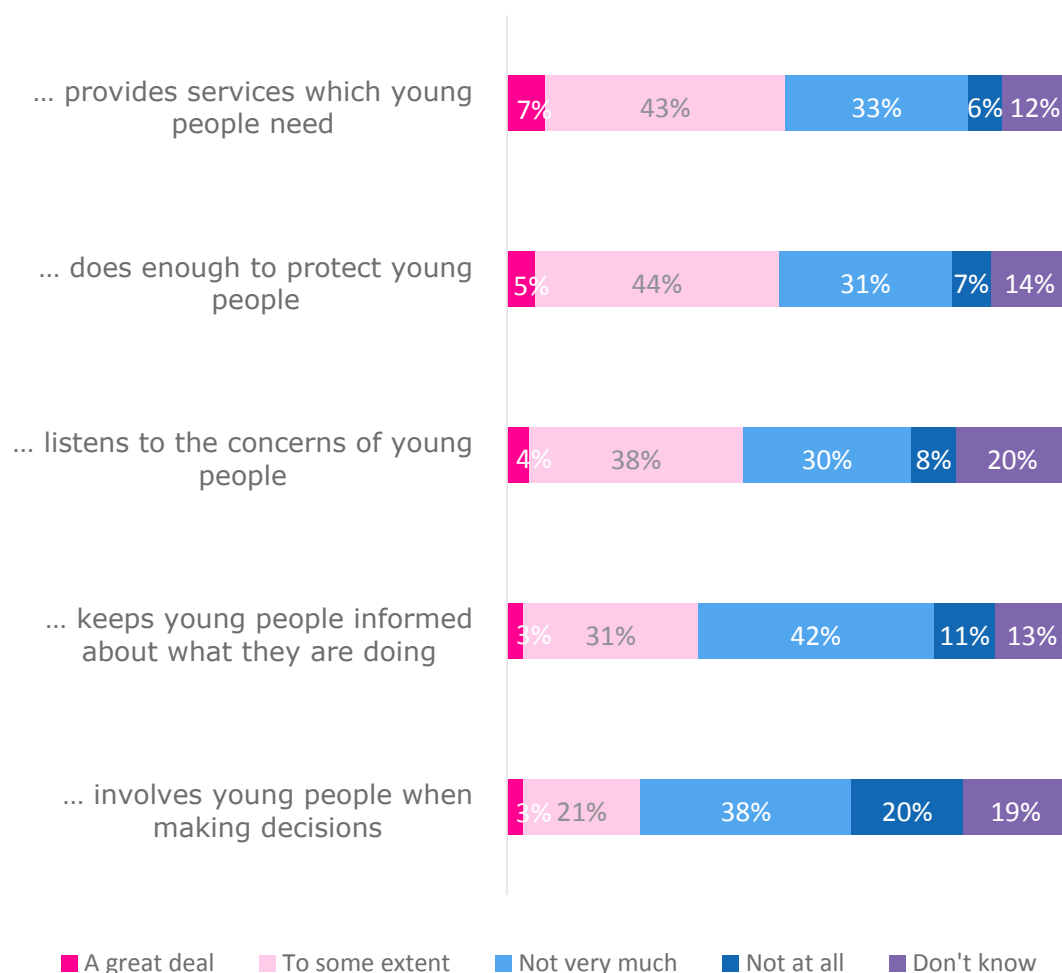


**Figure 63: Q08. These are some things which other people have said about their council. To what extent do you think these statements apply to your Borough? Merton Council...?** (All responses: n=271).

Net: a great deal/to some extent

2017 Net: a great deal/to some extent

50%	48%
49%	57%
41%	47%
34%	38%
23%	40%



## Perceptions of specific council services

Younger residents were asked to rate a range of local services and amenities on a five-point scale from very poor to very good.

They were asked for their views whether or not they had direct experience of the service or amenity and it is not surprising that a notable proportion of young residents have not been exposed to some of the services and amenities covered.

Views on parks, playgrounds and open spaces, secondary schools, public transport and primary schools are particularly positive with over eight in ten rating them as good or very good.

Figure 64 shows that there have been notable increases in the number of young residents rating some services or amenities as good between 2017 and 2019, with a focus on education provision:

- Parks, playgrounds and open spaces – increased by 30%
- Secondary schools – increased by 24%
- Sixth form/ Further Education colleges – increased by 24%
- Public transport – increased by 20%
- Primary schools – increased by 19%

It is worth noting that only 43% of the target audience feel that the activities for young people provided are good or very good.

Again, analysis by age group indicates that 11 to 15 year olds' perceptions are more positive than those of the 16 to 17 age group:

- 89% cf. 77% rate parks, playgrounds and open spaces as good or very good
- 87% cf. 72% rate primary schools as good or very good
- 49% cf. 34% rate access to arts, and culture experiences as good or very good
- 48% cf. 31% rate children's centres as good or very good
- 46% cf. 31% rate activities for children as good or very good

**Figure 64: Q09. I would like to ask you about local services in this area. What is your opinion of... ?** (All responses: n=271)

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Don't know	Net good	2017 Net good
...parks, playgrounds and open spaces	23%	63%	13%	1%	0%	0%	86%	56%
...public transport	25%	58%	13%	3%	0%	1%	83%	63%
...libraries	15%	62%	19%	2%	0%	2%	77%	65%
...leisure and sports facilities	10%	54%	25%	3%	1%	7%	64%	59%
...support / guidance on your future	8%	56%	17%	3%	1%	14%	64%	50%
...the police	5%	50%	29%	6%	3%	7%	54%	56%
...local health services	4%	50%	29%	7%	0%	10%	54%	58%
...services and support for children and young people with disabilities	7%	45%	18%	3%	0%	27%	52%	NA
...access to arts and culture experiences	6%	39%	25%	9%	1%	21%	44%	35%
...street cleaning	9%	34%	38%	17%	2%	0%	43%	42%
...activities for young people	4%	37%	32%	20%	3%	4%	43%	47%
...social care services for children and families	4%	38%	19%	4%	0%	35%	41%	37%

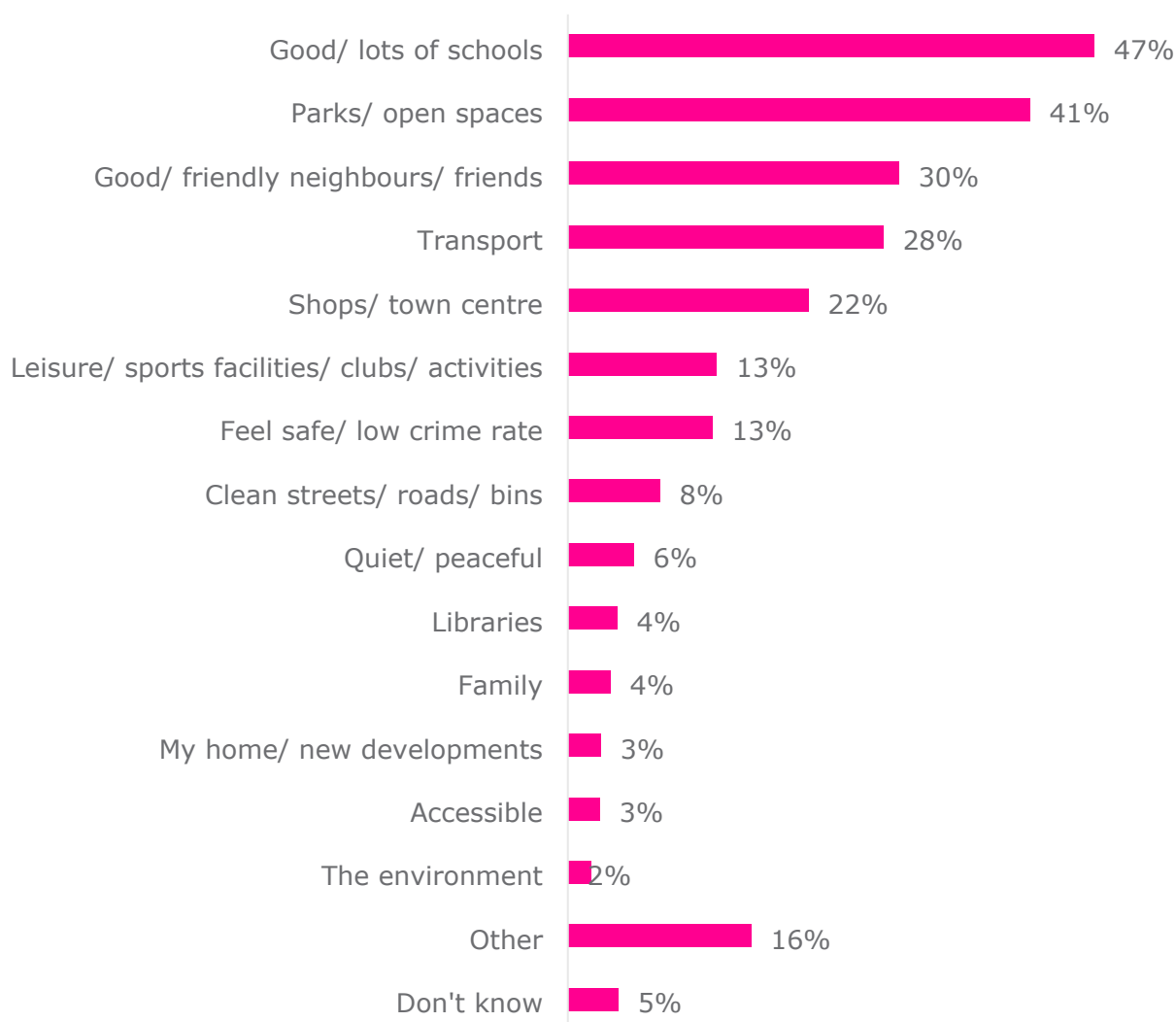
...secondary schools	21%	63%	12%	3%	0%	1%	84%	60%
...primary schools	17%	66%	11%	2%	0%	5%	83%	64%
...sixth form/ Further Education college	11%	60%	14%	2%	1%	12%	71%	47%
...nurseries	6%	52%	15%	2%	1%	24%	58%	NA
...children's centres	3%	40%	27%	5%	0%	25%	43%	NA

## Areas most valued by residents

Young residents were asked to say what they value the most about living in Merton. Their open comments were studied and allocated into recurring themes which are displayed in figure 65.

Young residents value the education provision within the Borough the most (47%), along with parks and open spaces (41%).

**Figure 65: Q03. What would you say are the best things about living in Merton?** (All responses: n=271)



## Local and personal concerns

### Concerns about the local area

Young residents were shown a list of 16 issues relating to their local area that could cause them to worry. They were asked to say which three they were most concerned about.

It is important to note that one in five (20%) are not worried about anything, selecting the option *None of these* as oppose to *Other* or *Don't know*.

Figure 66 shows that the main concerns amongst young residents are the amount of litter on the streets (28%) and that (in their opinion) there is not enough being done for young people in Merton (also 28%). This second concern has also risen dramatically since 2017 when just 7% selected this as one of their three main concerns.

Other notable variance between 2017 and 2019 relates to groups hanging around the streets (18%) which has fallen by 11% points.

Concerns appear to develop as younger residents age. One quarter of those aged 11 to 15 do not have any concerns that relate to their local area compared with 8% of those aged 16 or 17. Additional

analysis by age reveals that there are five issues for which concern grows significantly between the ages of 11 to 15 and 16 to 17:

- Pollution of the environment (4% cited by those aged 11 to 15 cf. 21%)
- Not enough being done for young people (25% cited by those aged 11 to 15 cf. 36%)
- People using or dealing drugs (10% cited by those aged 11 to 15 cf. 19%)
- Local housing (6% cited by those aged 11 to 15 cf. 15%)
- Access and/or quality of health care (1% cited by those aged 11 to 15 cf. 6%)

**Figure 66: Q04. Considering your local area, which three of these things are you personally most concerned about?** (All responses: n=271)

	Total	11-15	16-17	2017
Litter/dirt on the streets	28%	25%	34%	23%
Not enough being done for young people	28%	25%	36%	7%
Traffic congestion	20%	20%	20%	16%
Groups hanging around the streets	18%	20%	12%	29%
Lack of fun things to do	16%	16%	17%	18%
Anti-social behaviour/ bad behaviour in public	14%	13%	18%	11%
People using or dealing drugs	12%	10%	19%	7%
Pollution of the environment	9%	4%	21%	14%
Homelessness	9%	7%	13%	6%
Local housing	8%	6%	15%	5%
Lack of jobs	7%	5%	10%	11%
Economic disadvantage/ poverty	4%	4%	6%	NA
Lack of shopping facilities	3%	2%	6%	7%
Access and/ or quality of health care	3%	1%	6%	2%
Standard of education	2%	2%	2%	5%

Poor public transport	2%	2%	0%	9%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%
None of these	20%	25%	8%	13%
Don't know	5%	6%	1%	2%
Unweighted sample base	271	134	137	252

## Personal concerns

Young people were then asked to think of the concerns they have for themselves personally. As before they were shown a list of potential issues and asked to select the three that they were most concerned about.

Again, a notable proportion (26%) selected *None of these* which indicates that they are not concerned about anything. This figure is significantly higher amongst those aged 11 to 15 than amongst those aged 16 to 17 (34% cf. 7%).

The main concerns of young people living in Merton focus on their personal safety, with 28% worried about bullying, 27% anxious about crime, 25% nervous of gangs and 21% wary of online security (or lack there-of).

**Figure 67: Q05. Now thinking of yourself, which of these are you personally most concerned about?** (All responses: n=271)

	Total	11-15	16-17
Bullying	28%	29%	26%
Crime	27%	22%	41%
Gangs	25%	21%	36%
Online safety	21%	20%	23%
Mental health	11%	6%	23%
Substance misuse – drugs or alcohol	10%	5%	23%
Peer pressure	9%	8%	12%
Hate crime	8%	6%	14%
Domestic violence	6%	5%	8%



Physical health	5%	4%	5%
Sex and relationships	3%	2%	4%
Other	0%	0%	0%
None of these	26%	34%	7%
Don't know	9%	12%	3%
Unweighted sample base	271	134	137

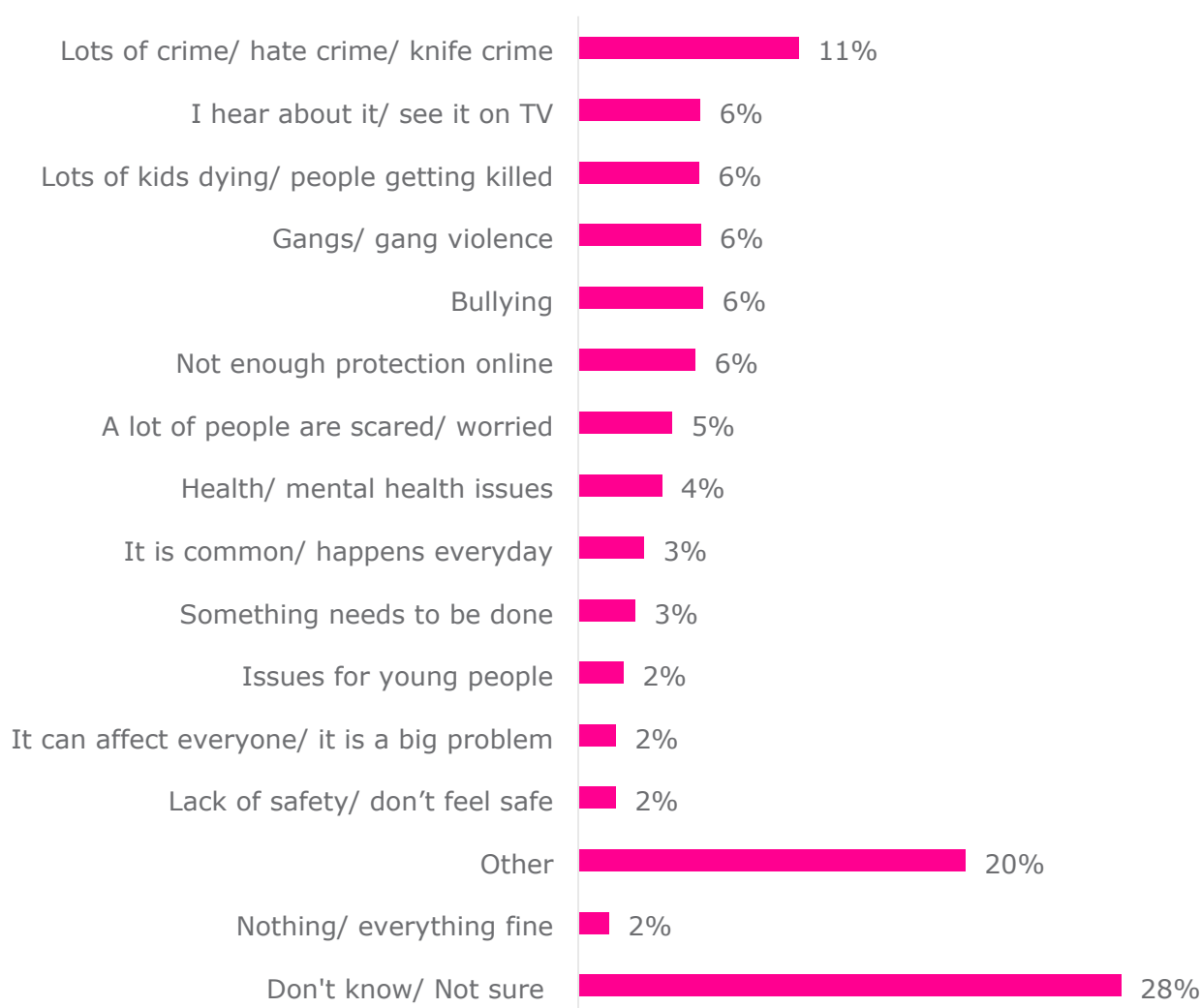
### Why young residents are concerned

Young residents who expressed concerns either at a local or at a personal level were then asked to explain why they were worried about the issues that they selected.

Quite a wide range of reasons lie behind the concerns of young residents with no clear main cause, however the most consistent theme relates to issues that are increasingly prevalent across the wider London area – hate crime and knife attacks (11%).



**Figure 68: Q06. Can you tell me why you are worried about these issues?** (All responses, those concerned about any issue, either in the local area or personally: n=234)



## Support

Young residents are not children, but neither are they adults and the process of becoming independent is challenging. The needs of young residents are very specific and across the UK they are unmet by existing support services that were not designed with current challenges in mind.

Young residents were asked to select from a given list which sources they would turn to if they needed help.

In 2017 the main sources of support were cited as *Family member* (92% in 2017) and *Teacher* (29% in 2017), and these remain the main support networks for young people in 2019. However, they are now less likely than they were to turn to a family member (83% in 2019) and more likely to approach a teacher (42% in 2019).

As young residents approach adulthood, they are less likely to rely on a family member for support, and more likely to involve a friend or turn to social media. This is demonstrated by the figures below:

- Family member – selected by 87% of those aged 11 to 15 cf. 74% of 16 to 17 year olds
- Friend – selected by 32% of those aged 11 to 15 cf. 53% of 16 to 17 year olds



- Social media – selected by 3% of those aged 11 to 15 cf. 15% of 16 to 17 year olds

**Figure 69: Q07. If you were worried about anything, where would you go to get help?** (All responses: n=271)

	Total	11-15	16-17	2017
Family member	83%	87%	74%	92%
Teacher	42%	42%	42%	29%
Friend	38%	32%	53%	NA
Police or other emergency service	23%	21%	28%	24%
Social media	6%	3%	15%	NA
Community leaders, such as religious leaders	4%	4%	5%	1%
NSPCC / Childline / other national helpline	3%	1%	7%	8%
Websites	1%	1%	1%	4%
Youth workers	1%	0%	4%	4%
GP	1%	0%	3%	NA
Other	2%	2%	1%	4%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	0%
Unweighted sample base	271	134	137	252

## Volunteering

Merton Council, working in close partnership with MVSC, encourages residents of all ages to get involved in volunteering as this not only boosts their confidence and expands their social circle, but also enhances their life skills and future employability.

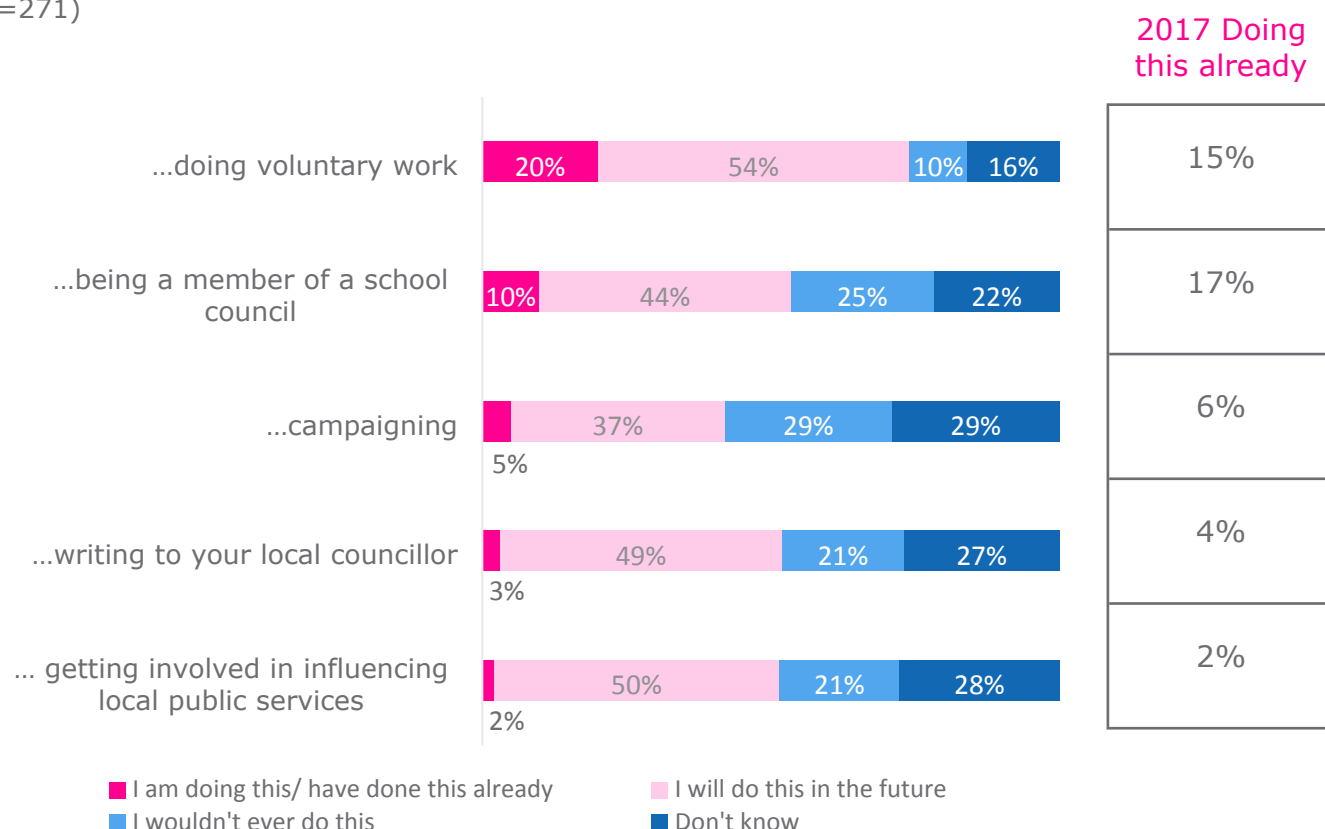
Young residents were shown five different activities they could get involved in that would help to shape the communities in which they live.

Interest in voluntary work is highest with 20% who are, or have been, involved in volunteering and a further 54% who will consider this in the future.

There are some significant differences by age in plans for future involvement:

- 49% of those aged 11 to 15 cf. 32% of those aged 16 to 17 plan to become a member of a school council
- 32% of those aged 11 to 15 cf. 49% of those aged 16 to 17 plan to campaign

**Figure 70: Q10. Which of the following activities have you done, would consider doing in the future or would not consider going?** (All responses: n=271)



## Out of school activities

Whether it's sports or the arts, a church group or help with homework, organised activities and programs outside school play a valuable, and valued role, in the lives of young people.

The vast majority of adults believe that young people are better off when they are occupied with a worthwhile activity rather than spending time on something with little value. In addition, those who participate in out-of-school activities give them high ratings for being fun, educational and as being good places to make friends but there are still many who are home alone after school at least three days a week.

Young residents were firstly asked to select from a list of activities those that they **are currently involved with** out of school hours and then they were asked to choose two that they **would like to be involved with**.

Almost two thirds (63%) go to a local park or playground, four in ten (40%) will go to the library and a third (33%) visit a gym or sports facility. Drama, dance or music are activities chosen by almost one quarter (23%), and almost one in five (18%) attend an after school club.

Younger students are more likely to:

- Go to a park or playground (66% cf. 53%)
- Attend an after school club (22% cf. 10%)

**Figure 71: Q11. Do you attend any of the following activities out of school hours?** (All responses, those still at school: n=269)

	Total	11-15	16-17	2017
Parks and playgrounds	63%	66%	53%	NA
Libraries	40%	42%	36%	NA
Sports and Gym	33%	33%	35%	45%
Drama, Dance or Music	23%	23%	23%	18%
After school club	18%	22%	10%	36%
Youth Club	9%	10%	7%	9%
Scout/adventure/Cadet groups/girl guides	6%	6%	6%	7%
Breakfast club	5%	7%	2%	7%
Other	1%	1%	1%	3%
Don't attend any	14%	13%	17%	
Don't know	0%	0%	1%	1%
Unweighted sample base	269	134	135	252

The list of options shown for the two questions varied considerably but there were some activities included in both. Comparing figures 71 and 72 it becomes apparent that more young people spend time at a park or playground than would like to, more visit a library than would like to, and for a notable number after school club is not their preferred option:

- 63% use a park or playground whilst just 24% would choose to do so
- 40% visit a library whilst just 6% would choose to do so
- 18% go to after school club whilst just 5% would choose to do so

**Figure 72: Q12. Which of the following activities would you like to attend out of school hours? You may choose a maximum of two.** (All responses, those still at school: n=269)

	Total	11-15	16-17	2017
Sports/gym Activities	30%	28%	35%	37%
Parks and playgrounds	24%	31%	9%	17%
A place to meet my friends and other people	22%	20%	28%	40%



A place for play and my hobbies	22%	22%	24%	28%
A place for dance, drama, music or art	17%	16%	18%	27%
Youth Club	14%	13%	16%	NA
A place where adults will organise activities for me and my friends	13%	13%	13%	3%
A place to do my homework	7%	6%	9%	25%
Libraries	6%	7%	4%	NA
After school club/Breakfast club	5%	7%	2%	NA
Scout/adventure/Cadet groups/girl guides	3%	3%	2%	NA
A place where adults will listen to my problems	2%	1%	4%	4%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%
Would not like to attend any	6%	7%	3%	1%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	2%
Unweighted sample base	269	134	135	252



# Appendix 1: Profile of the sample

		N	%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1000</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	478	49%
	Female	522	51%
<b>Disability</b>	Yes	139	15%
	No	857	85%
	Prefer not to say	4	0%
<b>Age</b>	18-24	52	6%
	25-34	180	20%
	35-44	292	32%
	45-54	180	16%
	55-64	123	11%
	65-74	103	9%
	75-84	64	6%
	85+	6	1%
<b>Time spent living in Merton</b>	6 months - 1 year	74	9%
	1-2 years	117	12%
	3-5 years	200	21%
	6-10 years	172	17%
	More than years	410	41%
<b>Cluster ward</b>	Village	191	19%
	Dundonald	149	15%
	Cannon Hill	202	20%
	Lavender Fields	150	15%
	Ravensbury	149	15%
	Colliers Wood	159	16%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White British	537	54%
	BME	459	45%
	Prefer not to say	4	0%
<b>Tenure</b>	Owner / occupier	506	49%
	Rented from Housing Association	119	12%
	Rented from private landlord	335	35%
	Shared ownership	8	1%
	A residential home	8	1%
	Other	15	2%
	Refused	9	1%



<b>Household composition</b>	One adult under 60	69	6%
	One adult aged 60 or over	90	7%
	Two adults both under 60	181	19%
	Two adults, at least one 60 or over	121	11%
	Three or more adults, 16 or over	222	22%
	1-parent family with child/ren at least one under 16	33	3%
	2-parent family with child/ren at least one under 16	262	28%
	Other	20	2%
	Refused	11	1%
<b>Type of disability</b>	Mobility / physical	100	72%
	Learning	4	4%
	Mental health	7	7%
	Visual / hearing	24	14%
	Other	12	8%
	Prefer not to say	5	4%

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