

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY 2017 – INITIAL ANALYSIS REPORT

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KEY FINDINGS

- In total, 2774 residents responded to the survey.
- Taking everything into account, 74% of respondents were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council. This compares to 78% in 2015. The proportion of those who were *very* satisfied was 16% compared to 18% in 2015.
- Telephone is the main method used for contacting the Council with 62% of residents who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months indicating that this was the main method used.
- Levels of satisfaction with different aspects of contacting the Council were high. In particular, 88% were satisfied with the helpfulness of front desk staff.
- “Newslines” is still considered to be a useful source of news and information by 82% of respondents.
- 60% of respondents were satisfied with local town centres for local services and amenities (a new question) whilst satisfaction with local town centres for shopping was 57%.
- 64% felt that the quality of life in their neighbourhood has got better or stayed the same. 63% felt that the quality of life in their town or village centre had stayed the same or got better.
- 54% were satisfied with the appearance of the streets in their neighbourhood while 56% were satisfied with the appearance of the streets in their local town and village centre.
- Main issues affecting the appearance of neighbourhoods and town centres were dog fouling, litter and waste accumulation and weeds and overgrowth.
- 51% of respondents agreed that the Police and Caerphilly County Borough Council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area. 63% felt that levels of crime and 54% felt that anti-social behaviour have got better or stayed the same in the last two years.
- Whilst still at a very high level, satisfaction with recycling has declined from 93% in 2015 to 85% in 2017. Satisfaction with refuse collection has declined from 89% in 2015 to 83% in 2017.
- 83% of respondents had used Household Waste Recycling Centres in the last 12 months. The preferred option for reducing this service was to reduce opening hours rather than reducing the number of sites.
- There has been a small reduction in satisfaction with the local bus service overall from 83% in 2015 to 81% in 2017.
- 51% satisfaction with road surfaces 61% satisfaction with pavement surfaces and 68% satisfaction with walking and cycling routes for active travel.
- Satisfaction with libraries remains high with at 96% of users indicating that they were satisfied.
- Levels of satisfaction with country parks have improved with 93% indicating satisfaction compared to 2015 when 88% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied.

BACKGROUND

In September 2017, a detailed household survey was carried out across the Caerphilly County Borough area to determine levels of satisfaction with Council services as well as establishing current perceptions on crime and antisocial behaviour. The survey also sought residents' views on what they consider to be key service in light of ongoing financial pressures facing the local authority. Previous household surveys have completed biennially since 2001.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was undertaken between 1st September 2017 and 29th September 2017. Late responses received up to 13th October were included in the analysis but only those who returned a completed survey by 29th September were entered into a free prize draw.

As in 2015, the survey was distributed in three main ways:

Newsline Survey

Every household in Caerphilly county borough receives the council's newspaper, Newsline on a quarterly basis. The full Household Survey was included as an 8 page fully bilingual centre fold supplement to the September 2017 edition of Newsline. Residents were given the option of returning the completed form in the post or via any council office, library, leisure centre, housing office or customer first centre. Readers were also made aware that an online version of the survey was available if this option was preferred.

Web Survey

The survey was displayed on the Council's Website for the duration of the consultation period. A paper version was also available on the Website in pdf format that could be printed if needed.

The survey was also promoted via the councils social media channels. Subscribers to the Council's "NewsONline" service received notification of the survey containing a link to the online survey and this was seen to have a significant impact on response levels.

Targeted distribution

To further encourage completion of the survey from a cross section of residents, the survey was promoted via Town and Community Councils, the 50+ forum, Menter Iaith, Caerphilly Parent Network, Caerphilly County Borough Council staff who are also resident, staff at neighbouring and partner organisations who live within the county borough and the Caerphilly Viewpoint Panel. The youth services team also encouraged young people to complete the survey.

The total number of responses to the survey overall was **2774**. Of these, 2311 were received online (17 in the Welsh language) and 463 were returned in paper format and manually entered onto the system, the majority of these came via Newsline.

The total number of completed surveys received has more than doubled since 2015 when there were 1258 responses. The proportion of surveys completed online has increased significantly on previous years with online responses accounting for 83% of the completed surveys returned.

Responses to the survey were analysed as a whole and the report that follows relates to **all** the responses received, regardless of source.

ANALYSIS

A number of changes were made to the survey for 2017 to reflect Council priorities and focus areas. To avoid duplication of effort, the biennial Public Services survey was incorporated into the current Household Survey. The survey also sought views on the areas that residents feel are important to them and their community. The responses to this question were fed into the medium term financial planning process through a report to the Leader of the Council for consideration.

In analysing the data, where it was possible to compare responses to questions in the 2017 survey with those from the previous years, this has been highlighted.

Throughout this report, the results are presented as percentage (%) responses based on the total number of responses to individual questions (which will vary due to respondents not answering all the questions).

For ease of reporting, categories “very satisfied” and “fairly satisfied” may be combined together and presented as “**satisfied**” with “fairly dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied” presented as “**dissatisfied**”. Similarly, “strongly agree” and “tend to agree” are combined together and presented as “**agree**” with “strongly disagree” and “tend to disagree” presented as “**disagree**”.

A full summary of percentage responses to each question can be found in **Appendix 1**.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Of those who provided a response 60% were female. For the county borough as a whole, the 2011 Census indicated that females accounted for 49% of the population aged 18 or over. Responses were skewed towards the older age groups with 40% of respondents aged between 31 and 50 years and a further 40% aged between 51 and 70 years. Those aged 18-30 accounted for 7% of respondents with 13% of respondents aged 71+.

Overall, 45% of respondents indicated that they were employed full time whilst 28% were retired which reflects the age profile.

Overall, 98.3% of respondents to the survey identified themselves as White, a figure which is in line with the resident population as measured in the 2011 Census. 98% of respondents indicated that their main language was English.

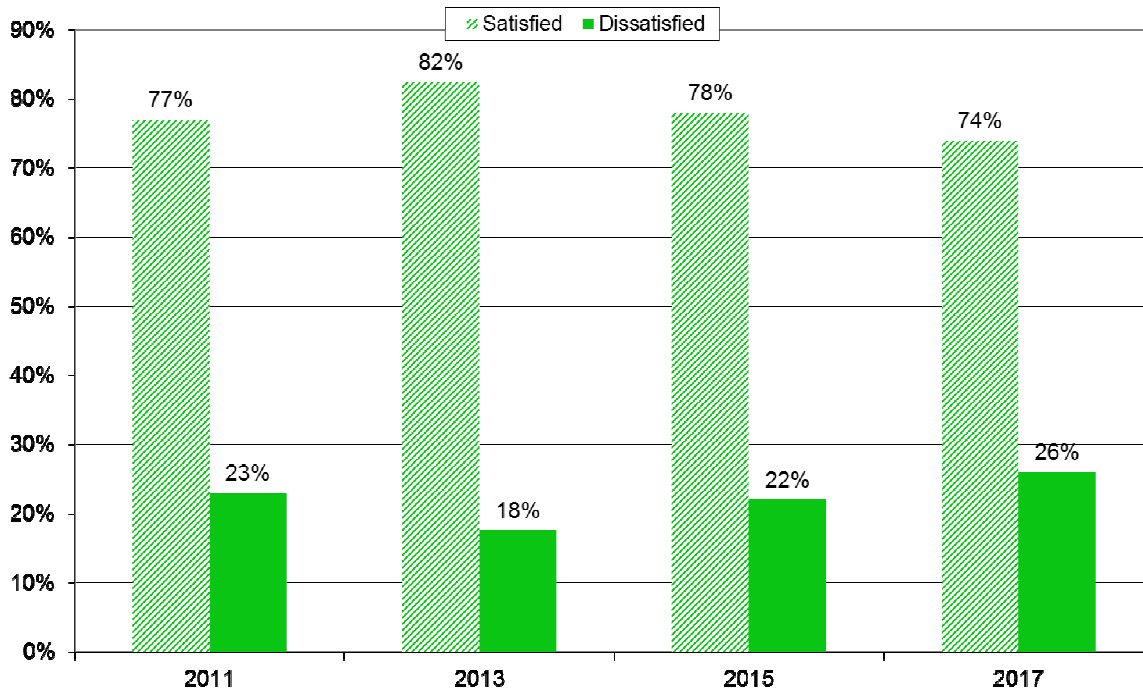
Of those who completed the question, 13% of respondents indicated that they had a disability and 23% had a long term illness or health problem. Of those who completed the question, 85% felt that their physical health was very good/good and 89% felt that their mental and emotional health was good/very good.

A high proportion of survey respondents (84%) were owner occupiers (i.e. indicated that they owned their property outright or with a mortgage) compared to the resident population as measured in the 2011 Census where 70% were owner occupiers.

YOUR COUNCIL

Taking everything into account, 74% of respondents were satisfied overall with the services provided by Caerphilly County Borough Council. **Graph 1** highlights the percentage of respondents who were satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall services provided by the Council since 2011.

Graph 1: Percentage of respondents who were satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall services provided by the Council (2011 - 2017)



Those who indicated that they were dissatisfied were asked to outline the reasons for their response and were also asked to highlight what the Council could do to increase their satisfaction with council services overall.

A digest of comments relating to reasons for dissatisfaction and views on what the Council can do to increase satisfaction can be found in Appendix 2.

A number of comments related to specific issues directly relating to individuals however, key issues raised frequently in the comments include:

- Roads – maintenance, pot holes
- Litter and waste accumulation and dog fouling
- General lack of maintenance, overgrown hedges, trees and weeds
- Refuse and recycling
- Not listening to residents' views
- Traffic issues – congestion and speeding
- Parking – including parking on pavements, parking charges
- Ongoing situation with the Chief Executive pay rise

Residents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements regarding *how* the Council provides its services.

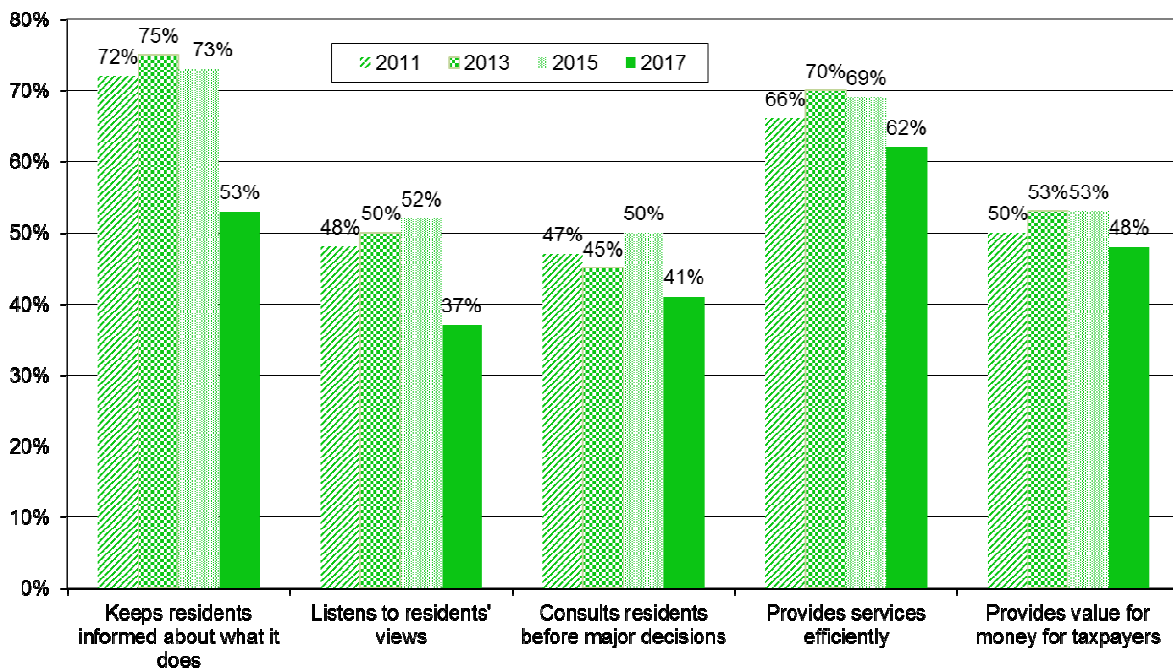
Two new questions were included in this section of the 2017 survey. The first of these asked residents whether they felt that they can influence decisions affecting their local area. Only 35% of respondents agreed that they felt that they are able to influence decisions affecting their local area such as planning applications, road layouts or wider issues that will affect where they live.

The second question asked residents to indicate whether they felt they understand how decisions are made in Local Government. In this case, 58% of respondents indicated that they understood how decisions in Local Government are made.

Comparable data is available for the other questions in this section and these are highlighted in **Graph 2**.

It can be seen that almost two thirds of respondents agreed that the Council provides services efficiently (62%) and over half felt that the Council keeps residents informed about what it does (53%). However, the proportion of residents who agreed with each of these statements has declined since 2015.

Graph 2: Satisfaction with how the Council provides its services (2011 – 2017). Percentage of respondents who agreed that the Council...



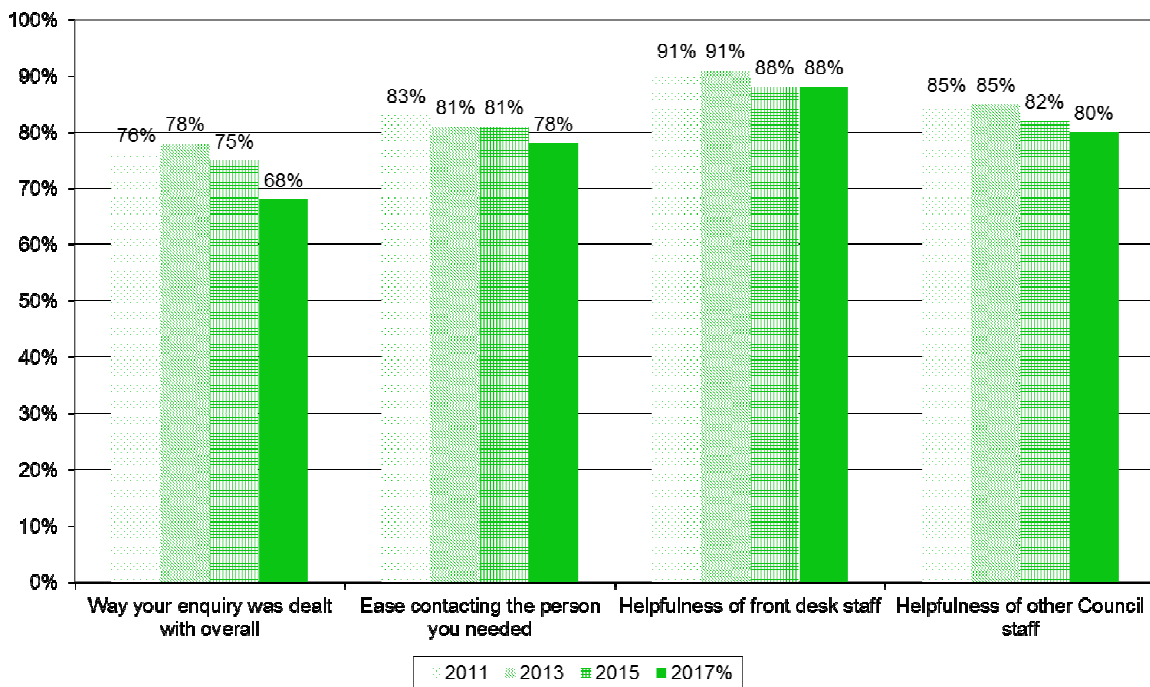
CONTACTING THE COUNCIL

In the 2017 survey, residents were asked their experience of contacting their local Councillor in addition to their experience of contacting staff at the Council (other than for paying routine bills) during the last 12 months. A third of those who responded (34%) had contacted their local Councillor in the last 12 months. Of those who had done so, 82% indicated that it was “easy” to contact their local Councillor. The main methods used to contact local Councillors were telephone and letter (30% each) and face to face (25%).

In comparison, 75% of respondents had contacted the Council during the last 12 months. 85% felt that it was easy to contact the Council. The main method used to contact the Council was the telephone with 62% having contacted the Council in this way. 19% had contacted the Council via e-mail.

Those who had contacted the Council in the previous 12 months were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with different aspects of contacting the Council. Overall, satisfaction levels were high. As can be seen from **Graph 3**, there were very high levels of satisfaction with front desk staff (note: this question was reworded from “reception” to “front desk” staff in the 2017 survey) and other council staff.

Graph 3: Percentage of respondents who were satisfied with aspects of contacting the Council (2011 - 2017)

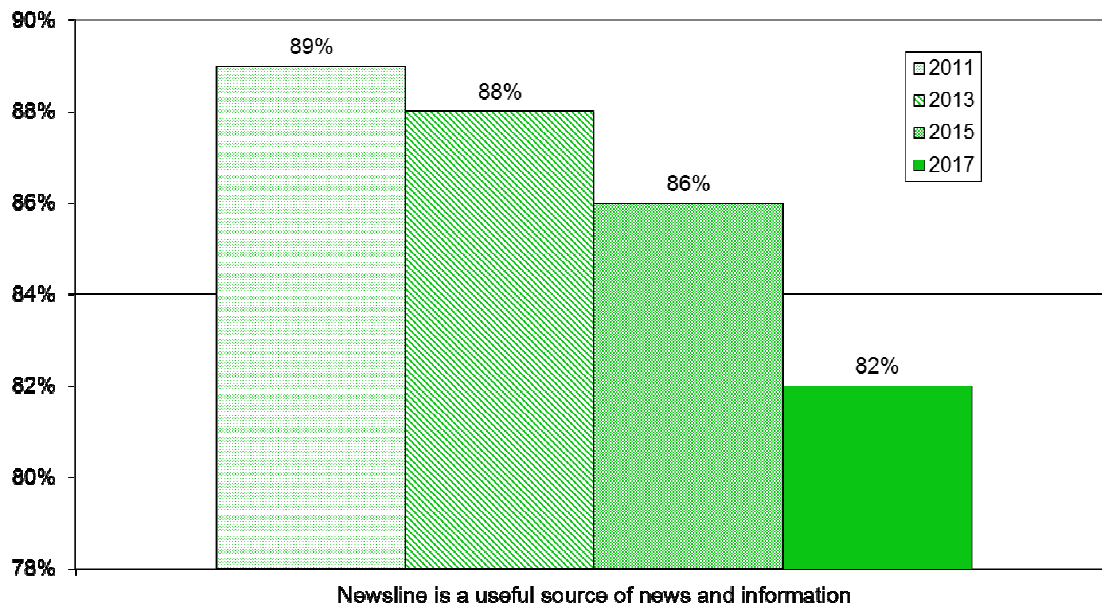


Three additional questions were asked in the 2017 survey relating to ease of contacting the Council. These related to the Website, social media and e-mail contact. 80% of those who responded to the question were satisfied with the ease of use of the Council Website. More than two thirds were satisfied with the responsiveness of social media (68%) and responsiveness via e-mail (67%).

NEWSLINE

The vast majority of respondents agreed that “Newsline” was a useful source of news and information (82%) although the level of satisfaction has declined from 89% in 2011. Receiving a paper copy through the front door is still the preferred way of receiving “Newsline” with 56% indicating that they would prefer to receive the publication in this way. An electronic version via e-mail was the preferred option for 35% of respondents with paper copies available at collection points throughout the borough being the least preferred option (9%).

Graph 4: Percentage of respondents who were feel that Newsline is a useful source of news and information (2011 - 2017)



LIVING IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH

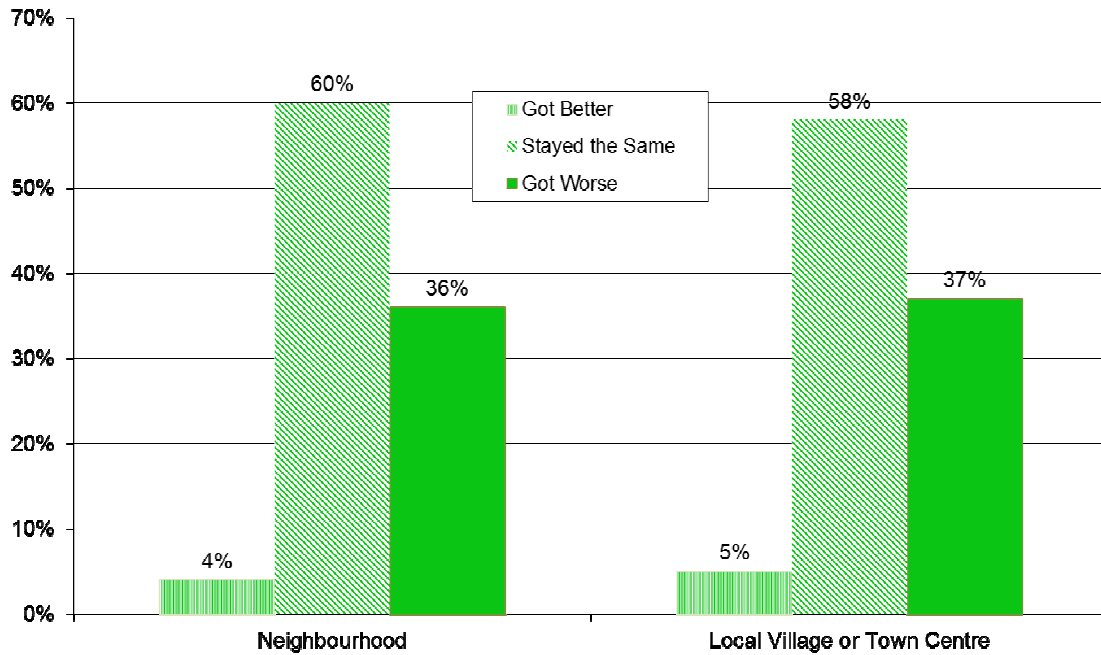
Residents were asked their views on their neighbourhood and local town centre for shopping and local services and amenities.

Over half (57%) indicated that they were satisfied with their local town centre for shopping whilst a slightly higher proportion (60%) were satisfied with their town centre for local services and amenities.

There is no comparative data for the question on services and amenities as this is a new question. However, satisfaction with local town centres for shopping has not changes significantly since 2011.

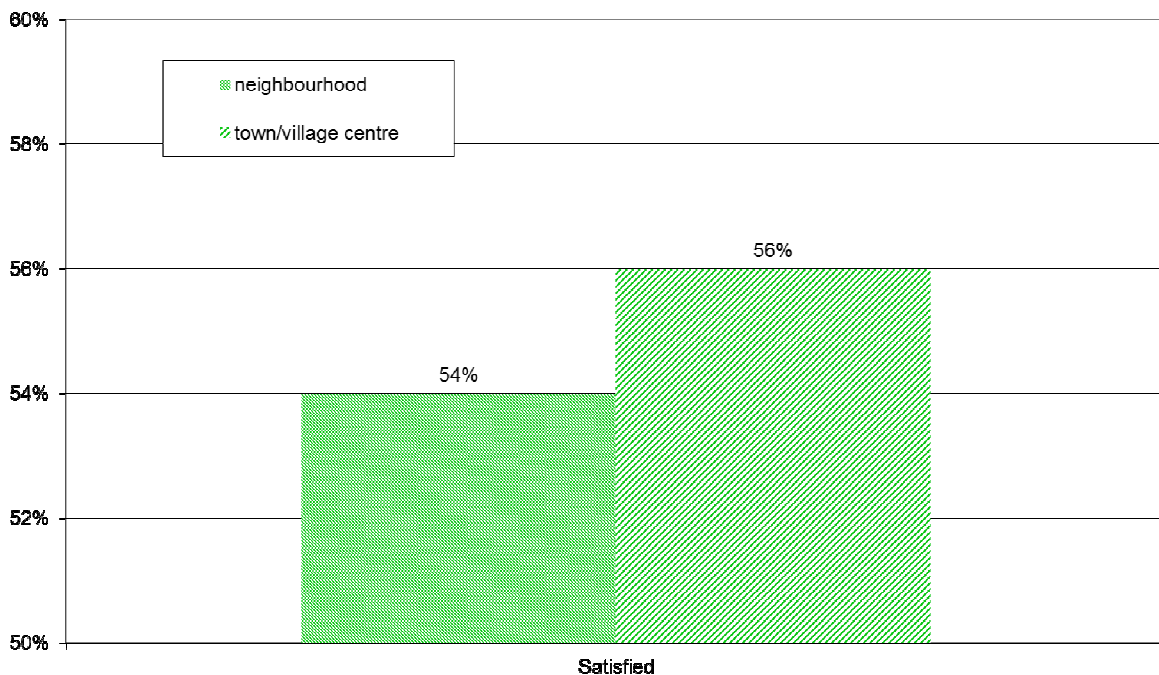
As highlighted in **Graph 5**, 64% of respondents felt that the quality of life in their *neighbourhoods* had got better or stayed the same and 63% perceived that the quality of life in their *local town or village centre* had got better or stayed the same over the past twelve months. Both of these figures show a decline in perception since the 2015 survey (76% for neighbourhoods and 70% for local town centres).

Graph 5: Percentage of respondents who felt the quality of life in their local neighbourhood or town centre has got better, stayed the same or got worse over the past 12 months



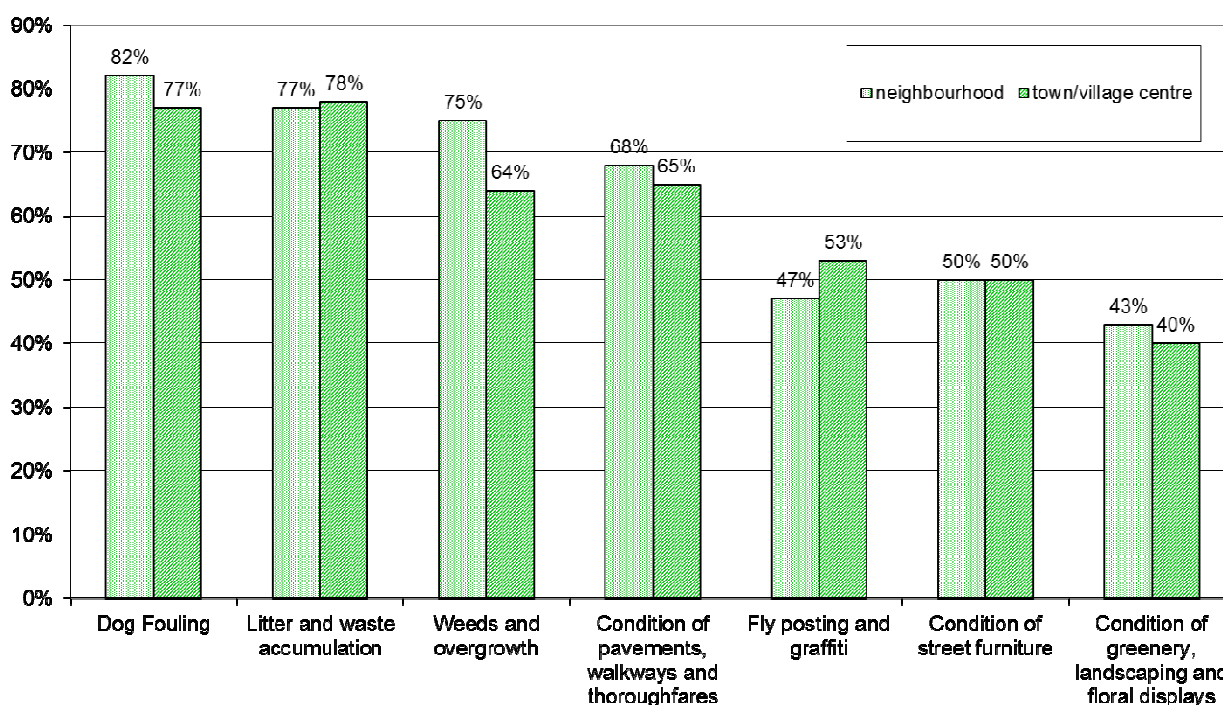
Residents were asked their level of satisfaction with the appearance of the streets in their neighbourhood and local village or town centre. (Previous years questions relating to appearance of streets did not separate neighbourhoods and local town or village centres.) **Graph 6** shows that just over half (54%) were satisfied with the appearance of streets in their local neighbourhood with 56% being satisfied with the appearance of the streets in their local town or village centre.

Graph 6: Percentage of respondents who were satisfied with the appearance of the streets in their neighbourhood and local town or village centre



The main issues affecting the appearance of both neighbourhoods and town and village centres were dog fouling and litter and waste accumulation although dog fouling was considered more of a problem in local neighbourhoods than in town centres. Weeds and overgrowth were also considered to be more of a problem in local neighbourhoods whilst fly posting was more of an issue in town centres. **Graph 7** highlights the issues considered to be a big or a small problem.

Graph 7: Problems affecting the appearance of streets in neighbourhood and local town centre (Percentage who considered each issue to be either a big or a small problem)

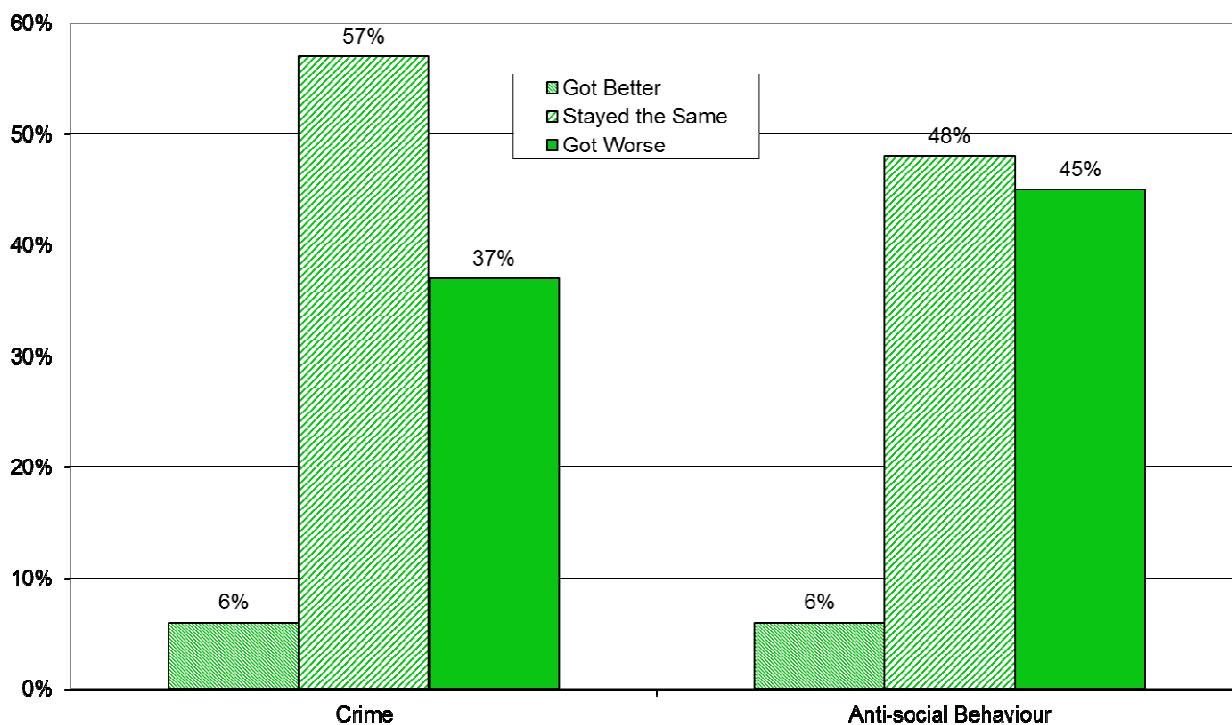


CRIME AND ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

In the 2017 survey, 51% of respondents agreed that the Police and Caerphilly County Borough Council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area. This is significantly lower than the survey in 2015 where 63% agreed.

Residents were asked whether they felt that levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in their community has got better, stayed the same or got worse in the last 2 years. **Graph 8** shows that 63% felt that levels of crime and 54% felt that anti-social behaviour have got better or stayed the same in the last two years. These figures are lower when compared to survey responses in the 2015 survey where 71% felt that levels of crime and 65% felt that anti-social behaviour have got better or stayed the same in the last two years.

Graph 8: Do you feel the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in your community have got better, stayed the same or got worse in the last 2 years?



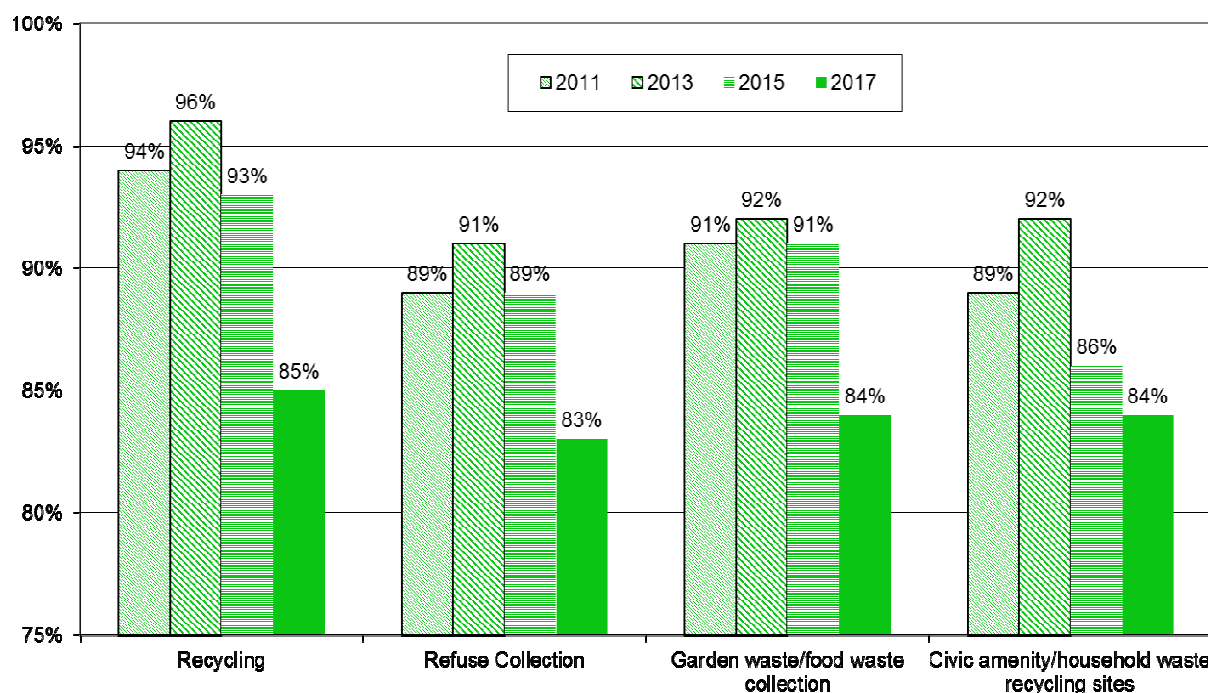
REFUSE, RECYCLING AND CLEANSING SERVICES

Respondents were asked about satisfaction with recycling and refuse services. The results are summarised in **Graph 9**. The graph highlights that there are very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of recycling and refuse services provided by the Council however these have declined in each area since 2015. One further question was asked in this section for the 2017 survey relating to street and environmental cleansing. 64% of residents were satisfied with street and environmental cleansing in the current survey.

To promote recycling while considering longer term options, residents were asked to indicate their preference for how Caerphilly Council should move forward. Significantly, 78% would prefer no change to the current system with only 8% indicating that they would prefer a smaller refuse bin and 15% preferring the council to introduce requirements for residents to separate and sort recyclable materials prior to collection.

A digest of comments outlining the reasons for the responses given can be found in Appendix 3.

Graph 9: Percentage of respondents who were satisfied with recycling and refuse collection services (2011 - 2017)



The Council provides six household waste recycling centres where residents can drop off waste and recyclable materials throughout the year. Some neighbouring authorities only provide one or two such sites for this purpose. 83% of survey respondents had visited a household waste recycling centre in the last year. Over half had visited a site six times or more. Trehir and Penmaen were the most commonly used site amongst respondents.

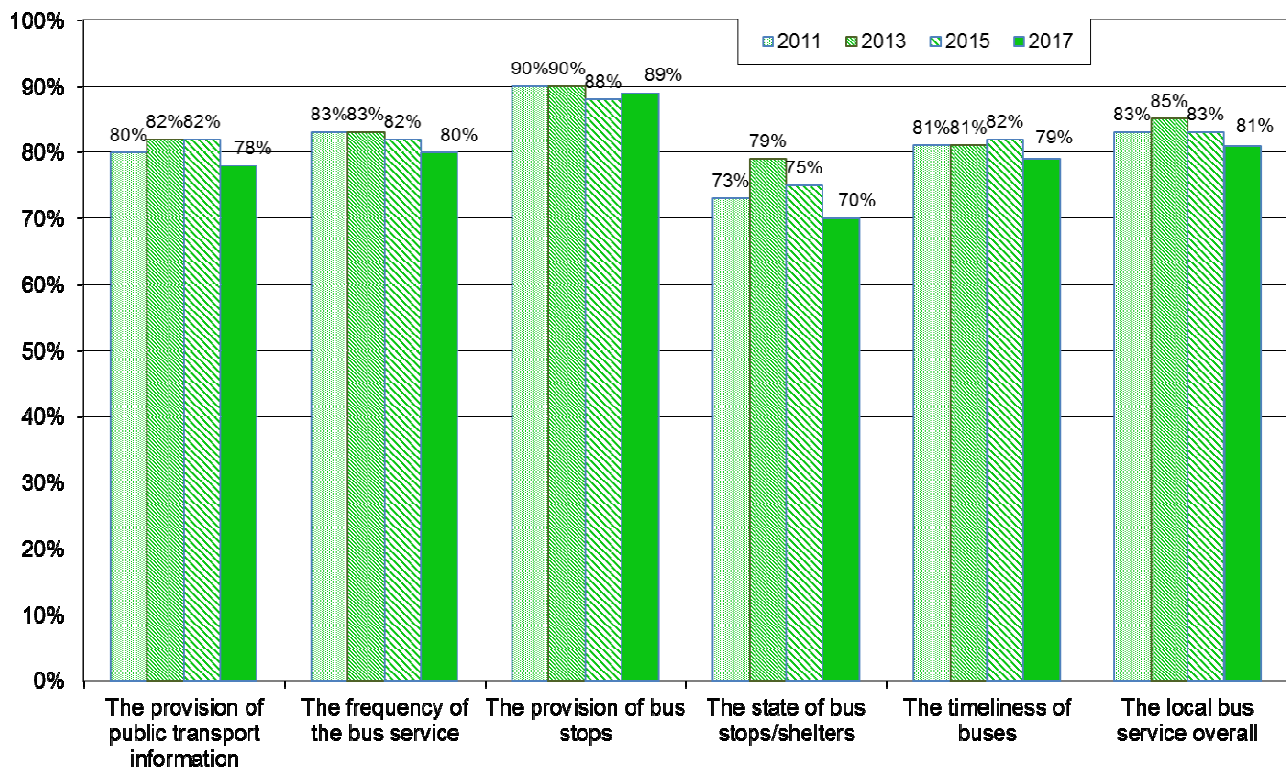
Looking at more cost effective ways of delivering the household waste recycling centre service, if public finances prevent the Council from maintaining its current provision, the preferred option of 48% of respondents would be to reduce the opening hours of sites. Reducing the number of sites was only the preferred option of 11% of respondents.

Additional comments related to accessibility for those without transport, ensuring evening and weekend opening and concerns relating to fly tipping if facilities are not available. A digest of other preferred options suggested can be found in **Appendix 3**.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

Respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with various aspects of their local bus service, whether they normally use them or not. **Graph 10** evidences that there are high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the local bus service in 2017 albeit with a small decline in satisfaction with most elements with the exception of “the provision of bus stops”.

Graph 10: Percentage of respondents who are satisfied with different aspects of their local bus service (2011 - 2017)



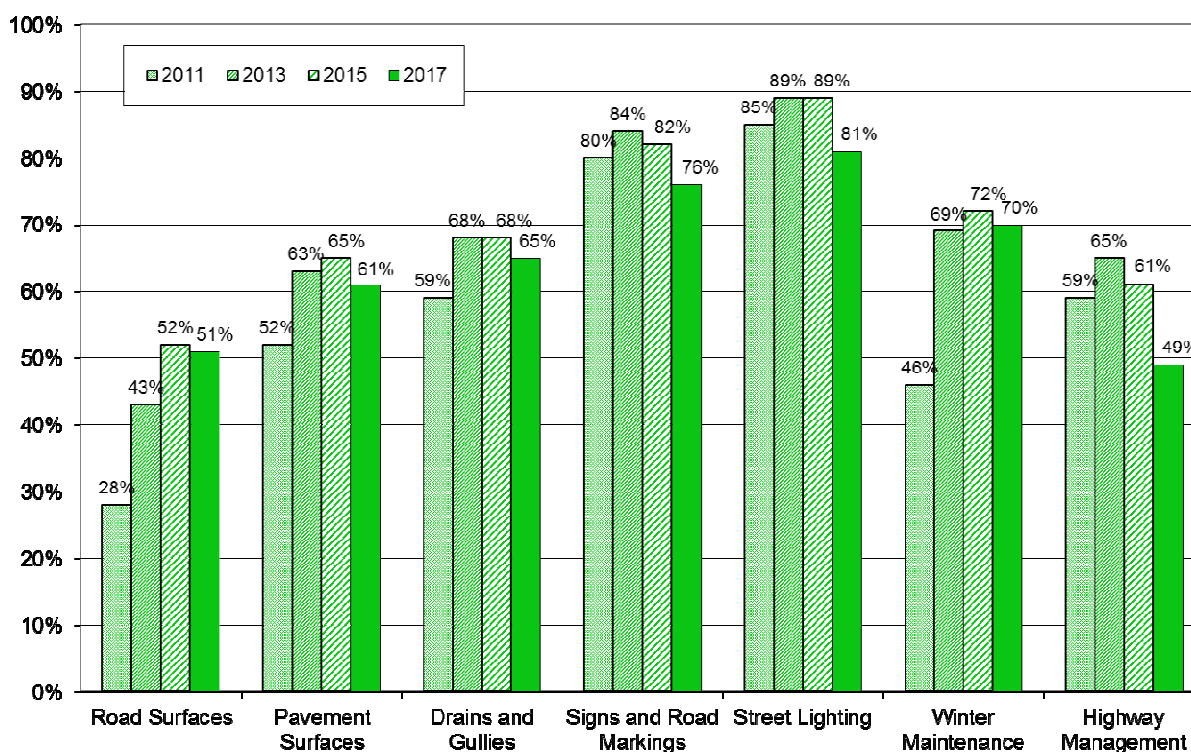
A number of questions were asked in relation to the standard of maintenance of certain elements of the road network and the percentage of respondents who were satisfied is shown in **Graph 11**.

As in previous surveys, satisfaction levels were highest in relation to the maintenance of street lighting (81%), followed by signs and road markings (76%). Respondents were least satisfied with road surfaces, however, this area has shown a significant increase since 2011 with satisfaction levels having increased from 28% (2011) to 51% in 2017.

One additional question was included in the 2017 survey in relation to satisfaction with walking and cycling routes for active travel. 68% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with this aspect of the neighbourhood road network.

Satisfaction with all areas of neighbourhood road networks has declined since the 2015 survey, most significantly in relation to highway management (congestion).

Graph 11: Satisfaction with standard of maintenance of neighbourhood road network: Percentage of respondents who were satisfied (2011 - 2017)



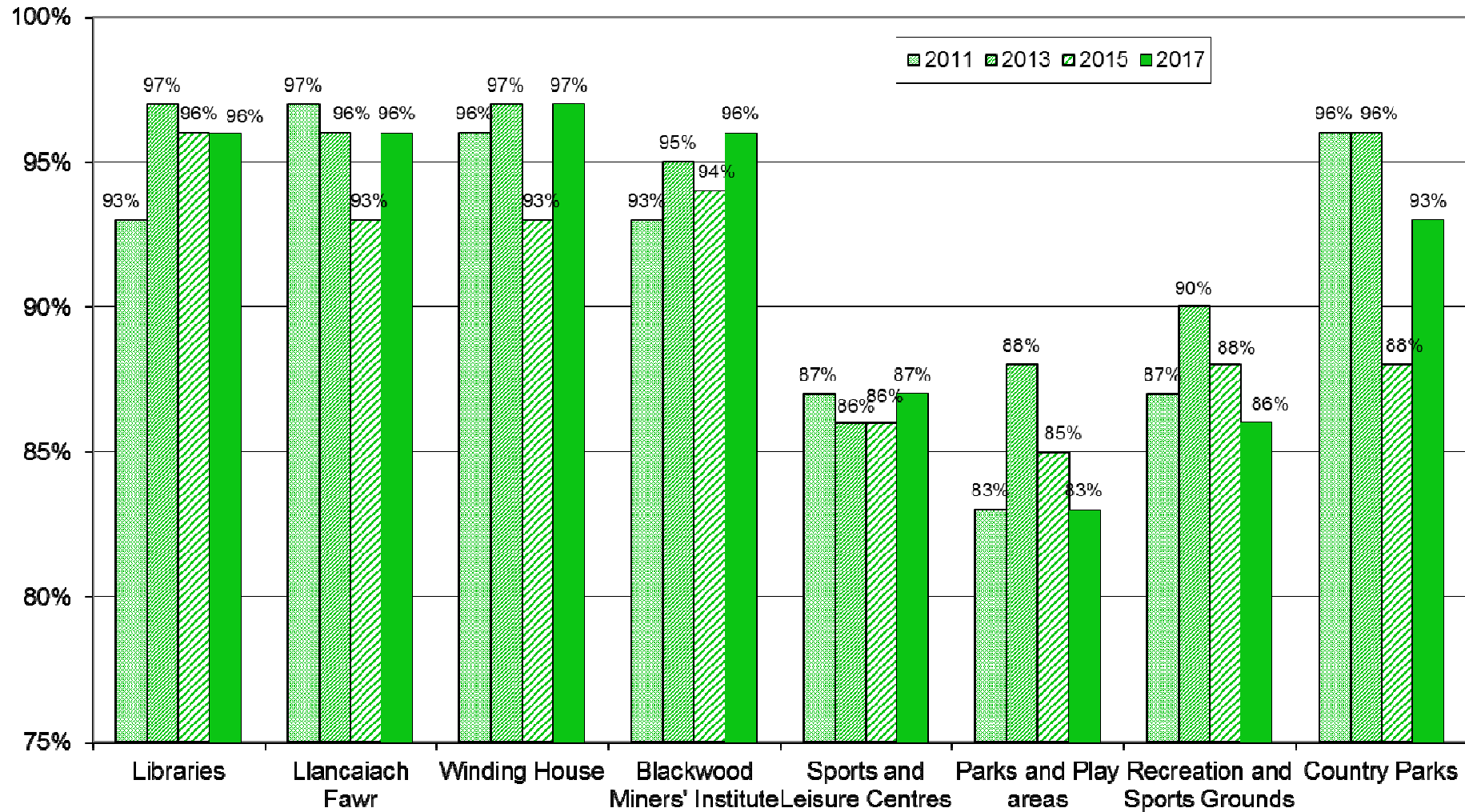
LEISURE LEARNING AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The survey asked residents to indicate which leisure and cultural facilities they had used with responses available ranging from 'almost every day' to 'never used'. The survey then went on to determine satisfaction levels with each of the facilities for leisure and cultural activities included. Where respondents indicated that they had used a particular facility at some point, their satisfaction levels were noted in the analysis that follows.

Sports and Leisure Centres, Libraries, Parks and Play areas and Country Parks were used widely by respondents whereas 65% of respondents had never used the Winding House, 39% had never used Llancaiach Fawr and 38% had never used Blackwood Miners' Institute.

As can be seen from **Graph 12**, satisfaction with all aspects of leisure and cultural facilities is high amongst service users. Satisfaction with Country Parks has increased since 2015 as has satisfaction with Llancaiach Fawr, Blackwood Miners' Institute and the Winding House.

Graph 12: Satisfaction with leisure, learning and cultural activities provided by the Council: Percentage of respondents satisfied (2011 - 2017)



KEY SERVICE AREAS

Caerphilly County Borough Council, like all other local authorities across Wales, is under severe financial pressure as a result of a reduction in funding from Central Government. The Council has already made significant savings in recent years and will need to meet further efficiency savings targets in the years to come. Once cut, there will be little or no opportunity for these services to be reinstated in the foreseeable future. Residents were asked their views on which services are important to them and their community. The responses to this question and a summary were shared with the Leader of the Council in November 2017 to help inform the budget planning process (**Appendix 4**).