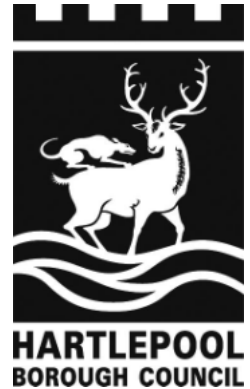


PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION SCHEDULE



Tuesday 26 October 2010

At 3.00 pm

**in Committee Room C
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillor J Brash, Cabinet Member responsible for Performance will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS

No items.

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

2.1 Single Status Agreement Appeals - *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

3.1 View point - Citizen's Panel Results – *Head of Performance and Partnerships*

3.2 Corporate Complaints – July-September 2010 – *Head of Performance and Partnerships*

3.3 Single Status Agreement Review - *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

4.1 Call-in of Decision – *Counselling Services – Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee*

5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006**

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

6. **EXEMPT KEY DECISIONS**

No items

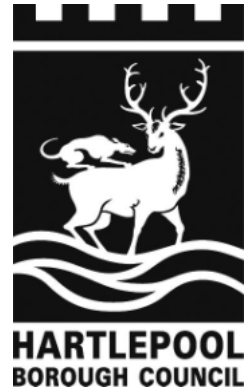
7. **OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

7.1 Approval for Compulsory Redundancy (Para 4) – *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

8 **EXEMPT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

8.1 Northgate Contract Renegotiations (Para 3) – *Assistant Chief Executive*

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION SCHEDULE



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At 3.00 pm

**in Committee Room C
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1. KEY DECISIONS

No items.

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6. EXEMPT KEY DECISIONS

No items

7. OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

7.1 Approval for Compulsory Redundancy (Para 4) – *Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

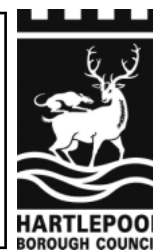
8. EXEMPT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

8.1 Northgate Contract Renegotiations (Para 3) – *Assistant Chief Executive*

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

26 October 2010



Report of: Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer

Subject: SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT APPEALS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on progress on appeals received and obtain ratification of Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of High Priority Appeals.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report provides a background to the Appeals Procedure together with an update on the progress of appeals received and requests ratification of Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of High Priority Appeals

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Corporate Issues.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio meeting only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To note progress on appeals received and ratify Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of High Priority Appeals.

Report of: Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer

Subject: SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT APPEALS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress on appeals received and obtain ratification of Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of High Priority Appeals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Single Status Appeals Procedure was agreed at the Performance Portfolio Holder meeting on 27 June 2008.

- 2.2 The agreed procedure provides

- “The Executive Member with responsibility for Workforce Services will be regularly advised of appeals received and progress made in dealing with them” and
- “All Appeal Panel outcomes must be ratified by the Executive Member with responsibility for Workforce Services or Governors (Governing Body, Pay Review Committee or Appeals Committee), as appropriate, prior to any changes being implemented.”

- 2.3 Provision for the ongoing costs of appeal outcomes has been made in the Council's base budget since 2007/08 to meet the cost of implementing any successful appeals from 1st April 2007. This provision was initially set at £400,000, inclusive of employers national insurance and pension costs, for 2007/08. This figure has been increased in the budget by the annual cost of living pay award and is currently £415,000. Schools have made separate provision in their own budgets for appeals by school staff.

3. PROGRESS ON APPEALS

- 3.1 Outstanding appeals (including where the outcome has not yet been ratified) are shown in the following table:

Department	Intention to Appeal submitted but appeal not submitted yet	Posts Appealed (and no of Employees appealing)/Priority				
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Total
Chief Executive's	0	0	21 (60)	1 (1)	3 (3)	25 (64)
Child and Adults	0	1 (3)	34 (64)	27 (54)	7 (7)	69 (128)
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	0	1 (1)	47 (60)	42 (54)	7 (7)	97 (122)
Schools	0	2 (2)	3 (7)	2 (2)	0	7 (11)
Total	0	4 (6)	105 (190)	72 (113)	17 (17)	198 (325)

3.2 Outcomes for High Priority Appeals have previously been ratified as follows

	Pay band increased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no of employees affected)	Pay band stayed the same on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no of employees affected)	Pay band decreased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no of employees affected)	Ongoing Financial Impact for the Council at the maximum of the Pay Band (inc. Employers costs)	Back pay costs processed through pay roll
Chief Executive's	3 (5)	11 (18)	0 (0)	£15,600	£12,801
Child and Adults	6 (7)	23(49)	4 (4)	£12,470	£19,532
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	8(8)	43(55)	4(6)	£10,963	£12,450
Schools	0 (0)	4 (4)	0 (0)	0	£0
Total	17(20)	81 (126)	8 (10)	£39,033	£44,063

4. APPEAL PROCESS

4.1 Administrative arrangements are in place to process the appeals and ensure employing departments are engaged in the process and Job Evaluation analysts are able to comment on claims.

4.2 Appeals will be prioritised in accordance with the Single Status Agreement as follows:

Priority	Type of Appeal	Due for Completion
High	Appeals received from current employees who are continuing to receive protection at 1 July 2008/Appeals which do not need an Appeals Panel to meet/ Appeals from employees who leave the Council from areas where job losses are needed/ Appeals from employees who retire from the Council due to ill health and the Teesside Pension Fund Doctor (for LGPS members) or the Council's Occupational Health Advisor (for non LGPS members) has determined that they meet the Local Government Pension Fund Tier 3 Ill Health criteria	Under Review
Medium	Appeals received from current employees who were receiving protection prior to 1 July 2008/Appeals received from current employees who do not gain initially	Under Review
Low	Appeals received from current employees who gained initially	Under Review
Very Low	Former employees	Under Review

- 4.3 Additional temporary resources have been allocated to assist with processing appeals. It should be noted that any increase in appeals as a result of recent or proposed restructures etc. could impact upon the ability to meet this timetable.
- 4.4 Since the last report the Appeals Panel has met on 1 occasion and has agreed outcomes, subject to ratification, in respect of 1 appeal (relating to 1 jobholder) of the 4 outstanding High Priority appeals.
- 4.5 In determining the appeal outcomes, the Appeal Panels have considered the submissions made by the appellant as well as 'sore-thumbing' the original evaluation. This is essential to ensure the robustness of individual evaluations and the job evaluation scheme

as a whole. Whilst there are 3 possible overall outcomes (pay band increases, pay band remains the same or pay band decreases), this may mask changes to particular factor levels and/or ‘tidying up’ evaluations.

4.6 A summary of the outcomes, of the Appeals Panels, subject to ratification is set out below

	Pay band increased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no of employees affected)	Pay band stayed the same on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no of employees affected)	Pay band decreased on Appeal and Outcome Ratified (no of employees affected)	Ongoing Financial Impact for the Council at the maximum of the Pay Band (inc. Employers costs)
Chief Executive's	0(0)	0(0)	0 (0)	£0
Child and Adults	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	£0
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	£4,563
Schools	0 (0)	0(0)	0 (0)	£0
Total	1(1)	0(0))	0(0)	£4,563

4.7 As indicated above, the Portfolio Holder is responsible for ratifying the outcomes in respect of Council employees whereas Governors are responsible for ratifying the outcomes in respect of school employees. Similarly, the Council is responsible for any changes in employee costs for Council employees whereas schools are responsible for any changes in employee costs for school employees (hence no ongoing costs are identified above in respect of school employees)

4.8 Further details of the outcomes of individual appeals is included in the “Not for Publication” **Appendix A** attached to this report.

This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) order 2006) namely, information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority (paragraph 4).

- 4.9 Assuming the outcomes for Council employees are ratified, a running total of £43,596 of the ongoing budget provision of £415,000 will have been utilised. The additional back pay costs at present are £44,063.
- 4.10 The Portfolio Holder will continue to receive regular reports regarding the appeals programme and appeal outcomes for Council employees that require ratification before they can be implemented and Portfolio Holder ratification is being sought as part of this report. Appeal decisions for school employees require Governor ratification before they can be implemented and arrangements are being made to obtain such ratification in respect of appeals from school employees.
- 4.11 Trade unions will be updated regularly at the monthly Single Table Meeting with Hartlepool Joint Trade Unions Committee Representatives regarding the appeals programme and appeal decisions which have been ratified.
- 4.12 Work will commence on processing Medium Priority Appeals once a review of processes, timetable and other arrangements has been concluded.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder notes the progress made and ratifies the Appeals Panel Outcomes in respect of Council employees (as detailed in the “Not for Publication” schedule attached to this report).

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Appeals Procedure is an integral part of the Single Status agreement and requires that the Executive Member with responsibility for Workforce Services be regularly advised of progress made in dealing with appeals received and ratifies the outcomes of Appeals Panels in respect of Council employees.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report 23 December 2007.
Cabinet report 27 May 2008.
Performance Portfolio report 27 June 2008
Performance Portfolio report 26 September 2008
Performance Portfolio report 2 February 2009
Performance Portfolio report 26 February 2009
Performance Portfolio report 17 April 2009
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 14 July 2009
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 5 November 2009
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 23 February 2010
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 23 March 2010
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 30 April 2010
Finance and Performance Portfolio report 18 May 2010

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

26th October 2010



Report of: Head of Performance and Partnerships

Subject: VIEWPOINT – CITIZEN'S PANEL RESULTS

SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the 32nd phase of Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's citizen's panel, that was distributed in March 2010.

2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 A report of the results from the 32nd Viewpoint questionnaire that included: Perceptions of crime; Awareness of benefits; Help yourself to council services; The internet and you; Free swimming initiative; and Viewpoint design.

2.2 Key findings are:

- Viewpoint members were relatively positive about their local area, largely saying they feel safe when walking around alone after dark, that anti-social behaviour is not a problem, that it is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, and that they satisfied with it as a place to live.
- Viewpoint members said they would either visit the Civic Centre or phone the council for advice and information about benefits; and would like to see information about benefits in local newspapers and council magazines or through leaflets delivered to their home.
- Members were more receptive to online forms or an automated telephone service as self serve methods to contact the council.
- Over a quarter of Viewpoint members have seen Hartlepool Borough Council's new website. Out of these, three out of five users found the site easy or very easy to use.
- Half of members had heard about the Free Swims schemes.
- Viewpoint members were supportive of nearly all suggested changes to the Viewpoint survey to make it more cost efficient.

3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

3.1 The Portfolio Member has responsibility for consultation issues.

4.0 TYPE OF DECISION

4.1 Non-key.

5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

5.1 Portfolio Holder meeting on 26th October 2010

6.0 DECISION REQUIRED

6.1 That the results of the survey be noted.

Report of: Head of Performance and Partnerships

Subject: Viewpoint – citizen's Panel Results

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results from the 32nd phase of Viewpoint that was distributed to panel members in March 2010.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's citizen's panel, is one of the ways that the council consults and involves local people in the governance of Hartlepool. It is a statistically balanced panel of local people who receive questionnaires at regular intervals throughout the year, asking for their views on a variety of local issues facing the council and Hartlepool as a whole.
- 2.2 Each phase of Viewpoint covers various topics and within this phase there were questions on:
- Perceptions of crime
 - Awareness of benefits
 - Help yourself to council services
 - The internet and you
 - Free swimming initiative
 - Viewpoint design
- 2.3 This survey was sent in March 2010 to all active members of the panel which, in this instance, was 1312 individuals. A response rate of 68 per cent was achieved with 879 questionnaires being returned.
- 2.1 The data obtained through Viewpoint surveys are weighted for analysis purposes. This is because, although the full panel is statistically balanced to provide a representative sample for Hartlepool, not all Viewpoint members complete the questionnaire at each phase.
- 2.4 The results have been reported back to the relevant departments within the council and will be reported back to Viewpoint members via a regular Viewpoint newsletter. A copy of the overall report has also been placed in the members' library, in all public libraries across the Borough for public access and has been placed on the council's website.
- 2.5 Since Viewpoint was launched in August 1999, the council has asked Viewpoint members to let us know their thoughts and opinions on 136 topics. Some of these topics have been repeated in order to monitor change over time; however, as a rule topics will only be repeated in

Viewpoint after three years. As we refresh a third of our panel annually, we should have a new panel every three years, and therefore Viewpoint members will not be answering questions they have already answered.

- 2.6 The Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department is the most frequent user of Viewpoint; however all departments have used Viewpoint at some point since it was launched. Cleveland Police Authority and Cleveland Fire Brigade have also asked questions through Viewpoint as external agencies. See table 2.1 for the breakdown of departmental use of Viewpoint.

Table 2.1 Use of Viewpoint by departments – number of topics covered up to and including Viewpoint 32

	%	(No.)
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	55%	(75)
Child & Adult Services	22%	(30)
Chief Executive's Department	20%	(27)
External agencies	3%	(4)
(N=136)		

- 2.7 This report includes a summary of the main results from the Viewpoint 32 questionnaire. Attached as **Appendix A**, is the full results report.

3. PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

- 3.1 Over half of Viewpoint members (53%) feel either very or fairly safe when walking alone in their local neighbourhood after dark.
- 3.2 Viewpoint members were most worried about becoming victims of the following types of crimes:
- Having their home broken into and something stolen (53%)
 - Having things stolen from their car (48%)
 - Being insulted or pestered while in the street or public place (49%)
 - Being mugged or robbed (48%)
- 3.3 Eight out of ten (79%) members had not been a victim of crime in the last 12 months. For those members who had been a victim of crime, they were more likely to be victims of vandalism or criminal damage to their car.
- 3.4 Out of the Viewpoint members who had been victims of crime in the last year, four out of ten members (39%) did not report the crime to the police. The main reasons given for this were:
- Police could not have done anything (54%)

- Police not interested / would not have done anything (42%)
- 3.5 Six out of ten Viewpoint members (60%) do not think they are well informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area.
- 3.6 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us whether various anti-social behaviour issues were problems in their local area; this question was also asked through Viewpoint in 2008. In 2010, respondents thought the following were big problems in their local areas:
- Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (54%)
 - Rubbish and litter lying around (54%)
 - People not treating others with respect and consideration (50%)
- 3.7 Viewpoint members were less likely to think any of the anti-social behaviour issues listed in this question were big problems in their local area in 2010 than they were in 2008.
- 3.8 Seven out of ten members do not think anti-social behaviour is a problem in their local area and six out of ten members agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 3.9 Viewpoint members were more likely to be concerned about the following in their local area:
- Speeding traffic (61%)
 - Parking on grass verges and pavements (48%)
 - Lack of safe areas for young children to play (47%)
- 3.10 Overall, the majority (84%) of Viewpoint members are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

4. AWARENESS OF BENEFITS

- 4.1 Viewpoint members were more likely to be aware that people could apply for benefits by visiting the Civic Centre. Members told us they would either visit the Civic Centre (52%) or phone the council (48%) for advice and information about benefits. They also said they would like to see information about benefits in local newspapers and council magazines (57%) or through leaflets delivered to their home (56%).

5. HELP YOURSELF TO COUNCIL SERVICES

- 5.1 Viewpoint members were more likely to have contacted the council by phone (56%) over the last 12 months.

- 5.2 If kiosks were to be used as a self serve method to contact the council, Viewpoint members would prefer to access one through the main office at the Civic Centre.
- 5.3 Viewpoint members were more likely to want to use online forms or an automated telephone service as self serve methods to contact the council to pay for things, apply for things, report things and to book things.
- 5.4 Members would be encouraged to use self serve methods more if they were quick and easy to use (69%), and if they could be sure that payments were secure (58%). The majority of respondents thought that the main benefits to being able to deal with the council via the internet or any other electronic means would be it would save time, they could deal with the council at more convenient times, and they would be dealt with more quickly. The main drawback identified by respondents to dealing with the council via the internet or other electronic means is that details may not be confidential.

6. THE INTERNET AND YOU

- 6.1 Nearly eight out of ten Viewpoint members have a computer with internet connection in their home, and three quarters of respondents are aware that they can access the internet for free from their local library.
- 6.2 Viewpoint members were more likely to tell us they would like to access local council services via the internet at:
- Shopping Centres (37%)
 - Supermarkets (32%)
 - The Post Office (30%)
- 6.3 Viewpoint members were more likely to say that lack of time (31%) or interest (28%) stops them from using the internet or from using it more.
- 6.4 Just over a quarter (27%) of Viewpoint members have seen Hartlepool Borough Council's new website. Out of these, three out of five users found the site easy or very easy to use (61%).
- 6.5 Viewpoint members were more likely to find the information they were looking for through using the A – Z of council Services search facility.
- 6.6 Eight out of ten (80%) members would like to use the council website to find information about local issues that affects them, and a similar number (77%) would like to get information about council services.

7. FREE SWIMMING INITIATIVE

- 7.1 Only a third of Viewpoint members had been swimming at the Mill House leisure centre pool in the last 12 months. And half of Viewpoint members had heard about the Free Swims schemes before receiving the Viewpoint survey.
- 7.2 Since these questions were included in Viewpoint, the free swims scheme has ceased.

8. VIEWPOINT DESIGN

- 8.1 Viewpoint members were more likely to say they would be happy to see the following changes to their Viewpoint surveys:
- Printing surveys as an A5 booklet (59%)
 - Receiving surveys in smaller envelopes (49%)
 - Printing surveys on thinner paper (43%)
 - Printing surveys in black and white only (41%)

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder note the results.

10. CONTACT OFFICER

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Corporate Strategy



32nd Viewpoint Survey Results Report

**Lisa Anderson
October 2010**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report details results from the March 2010 survey. The specific topic areas covered in this survey were:
- Perceptions of crime
 - Awareness of benefits
 - Help yourself to council services
 - The internet and you
 - Free swimming initiative
 - Viewpoint design
- 1.2 In March 2010, a questionnaire was distributed by post and via the council's e-consultation system to all 1,312 active members of the panel. Viewpoint members were given approximately four weeks to complete and return the questionnaire, after which time a reminder email and/or letter was sent out to those members who had not responded.
- 1.3 This report will comment on the key findings from the recent Viewpoint survey, and will also examine and comment on any differences between demographic groups, should one exist. If there is no difference between responses received from different demographic groups, the report will state "There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results."

Response rates

- 1.4 The response rate was 68% (879 returns). A small number of cases were excluded as ineligible, due to either the panel member having moved house or having died. A further group indicated that they no longer wished to participate in the Viewpoint initiative, often due to ill health (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Response rates

	Number of cases
Total sample	1312
Unsuitable / ineligible cases	15
Total possible sample	1297
Completed questionnaires	879
No response	418
Response rate	68%

2. Key findings

Perceptions of crime

- 2.1 Over half of Viewpoint members (53%) feel either very or fairly safe when walking alone in their local neighbourhood after dark.
- 2.2 Respondents were most worried about becoming victims of the following types of crimes:
- Having their home broken into and something stolen (53%)
 - Having things stolen from their car (48%)
 - Being insulted or pestered while in the street or public place (49%)
 - Being mugged or robbed (48%)
- 2.3 Eight out of ten (79%) members had not been a victim of crime in the last 12 months. For those members who had been a victim of crime, they were more likely to be victims of vandalism or criminal damage to their car.
- 2.4 Out of the Viewpoint members who had been victims of crime in the last year, four out of ten members (39%) did not report the crime to the police. The main reasons given for this were:
- Police could not have done anything (54%)
 - Police not interested / would not have done anything (42%)
- 2.5 Six out of ten Viewpoint members (60%) do not think they are well informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area.
- 2.6 Respondents thought the following were big problems in their local areas:
- Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (54%)
 - Rubbish and litter lying around (54%)
 - People not treating other people with respect and consideration (50%)
- 2.7 Seven out of ten members do not think anti-social behaviour is a problem in their local area and six out of ten members agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 2.8 Viewpoint members were more likely to be concerned about the following in their local area:
- Speeding traffic (61%)
 - Parking on grass verges and pavements (48%)
 - Lack of safe areas for young children to play (47%)

- 2.9 Overall, the majority (84%) of Viewpoint members are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Awareness of benefits

- 2.10 Viewpoint members were more likely to be aware that people who are unemployed (91%) and pensioners (88%) could claim benefits. They were also more likely to be aware that people could apply for benefits by visiting the Civic Centre.
- 2.11 Respondents told us they would either visit the Civic Centre (52%) or phone the council (48%) for advice and information about benefits. They also said they would like to see information about benefits in local newspapers and council magazines (57%) or through leaflets delivered to their home (56%).

Help yourself to council services

- 2.12 Viewpoint members were more likely to have contacted the council by phone (56%) over the last 12 months.
- 2.13 If kiosks were to be used as a self serve method to contact the council, Viewpoint members would prefer to access one through the main office at the Civic Centre.
- 2.14 Viewpoint members were more likely to want to use online forms or an automated telephone service as self serve methods to contact the council to pay for things, apply for things, report things and to book things.
- 2.15 Members would be encouraged to use self serve methods more if they were quick and easy to use (69%), and if they could be sure that payments were secure (58%). The majority of respondents thought that the main benefits to being able to deal with the council via the internet or any other electronic means would be it would save time, they could deal with the council at more convenient times, and they would be dealt with more quickly. The main drawback identified by respondents to dealing with the council via the internet or other electronic means is that details may not be confidential.

The internet and you

- 2.16 Nearly eight out of ten Viewpoint members have a computer with internet connection in their home, and three quarters of respondents are aware that they can access the internet for free from their local library.
- 2.17 Viewpoint members were more likely to tell us they would like to access local council services via the internet at:
- Shopping Centres (37%)
 - Supermarkets (32%)
 - The Post Office (30%)

- 2.18 Viewpoint members were more likely to agree with the statements that the internet allows people to access information 24 hours a day (96%) and it is really fast for finding out information (92%).
- 2.19 Respondents were more likely to say that lack of time (31%) or interest (28%) stops them from using the internet or from using it more.
- 2.20 Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents have seen Hartlepool Borough Council's new website. Out of these, three out of five users found the site easy or very easy to use (61%).
- 2.21 Viewpoint members are more likely to find the information they were looking for through using the A– Z of council Services search facility (48%).
- 2.22 Eight out of ten (80%) members would like to use the council website to find information about local issues that affects them, and a similar number (77%) would like to get information about council services.

Free swimming initiative

- 2.23 Only a third of Viewpoint members had been swimming at the Mill House leisure centre pool in the last 12 months.
- 2.24 Half of Viewpoint members had heard about the Free Swims schemes before receiving the Viewpoint survey.

Viewpoint design

- 2.25 Viewpoint members were more likely to say they would be happy to see the following changes to their Viewpoint surveys:
- Printing surveys as an A5 booklet (59%)
 - Receiving surveys in smaller envelopes (49%)
 - Printing surveys on thinner paper (43%)
 - Printing surveys in black and white only (41%)

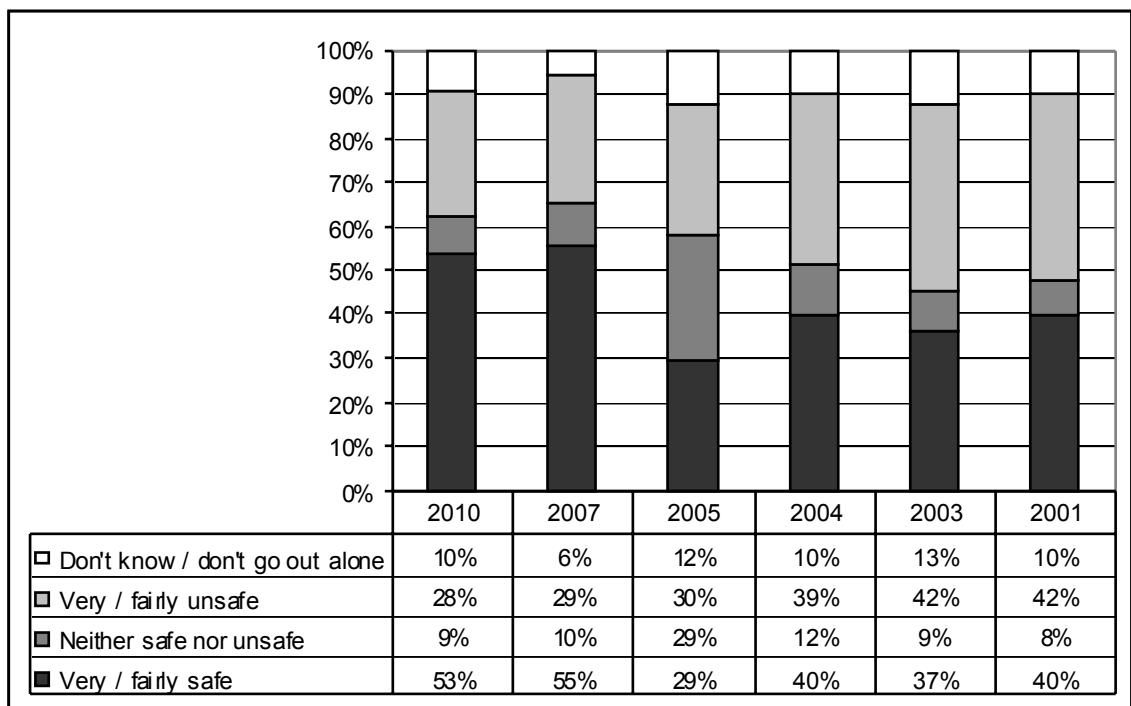
3. Perceptions of crime

3.1 In order to help the Community Safety Team to plan for the future, the Council asked Viewpoint members for their thoughts on crime and the fear of crime in Hartlepool. We also asked how worried members were about becoming a victim of crime, and if they had been a victim of crime in the past year. Finally, we asked for Viewpoint members thoughts on community safety, their perception of anti-social behaviour, and their crime and community safety concerns. These questions have previously been included in Viewpoint and so comparisons will be made where applicable.

Feeling safe after dark

3.2 First of all we asked Viewpoint members to tell us how safe they feel walking alone in their local neighbourhood after dark. In 2010, over half (53%) of Viewpoint members said they feel either very or fairly safe walking around their neighbourhood after dark. Three out of ten (28%) members felt either a bit unsafe or very unsafe. Results are largely similar to those obtained in 2007; however, we can see an increase in the proportion of Viewpoint members who feel either fairly or very safe walking around in their local neighbourhood after dark since 2001. See chart 3.1 for more information.

Chart 3.1 How safe do you feel walking alone in your local neighbourhood after dark? (2010: N=1149; 2007: N=1173; 2005: N=1200; 2004: N=1200; 2003: N=589; 2001: N=643)



3.3 Viewpoint members who are less likely to feel safe were:

- Female (43%)
- Aged 65 years and over (43%)
- Not working (41%)
- Disabled (41%)
- Living in rented accommodation (31%)
- Living with relatives (39%)

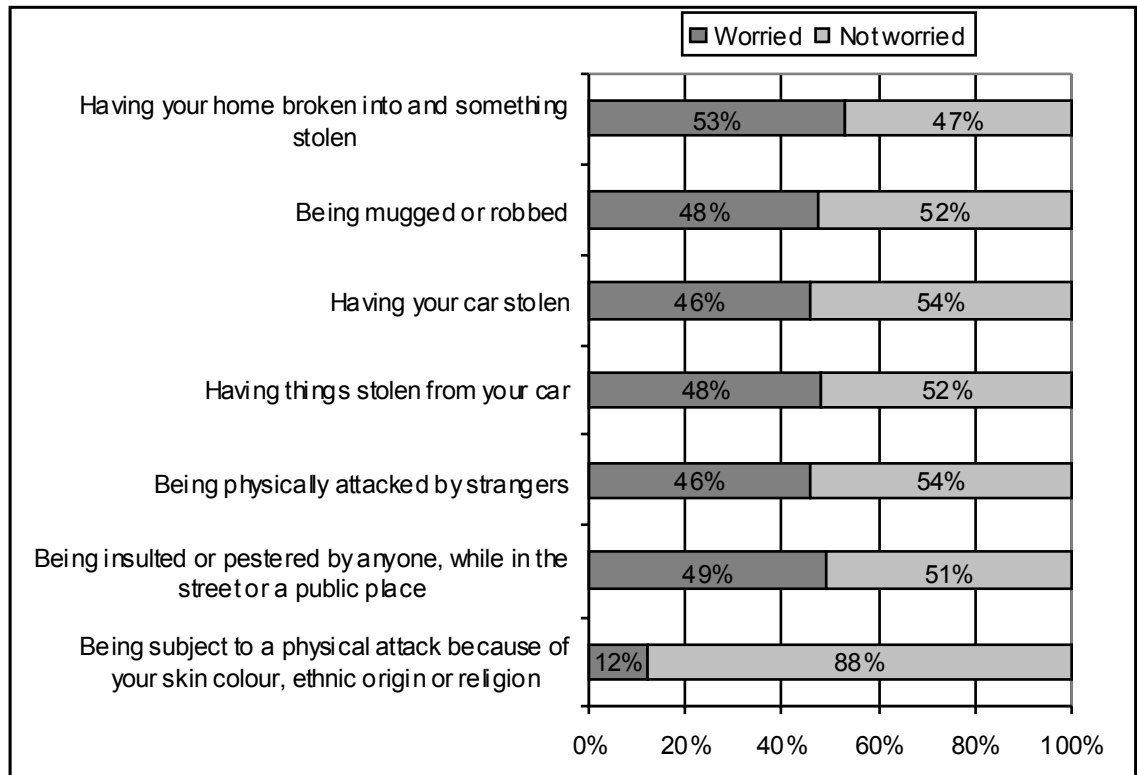
3.4 The Viewpoint members listed above were more likely to say they do not go out alone rather than say they feel unsafe (a bit unsafe or very unsafe). The exception to this was people who are living in rented accommodation or living with relatives. People from these groups were more likely to say they feel a unsafe.

Worry about becoming a victim of crime

3.5 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how worried they are about becoming victims of different types of crime. Full results can be seen in chart 3.2. Viewpoint members were most worried about becoming victims of the following types of crimes:

- Having their home broken into and something stolen (53%)
- Having things stolen from their car (48%)
- Being insulted or pestered while in the street or public place (49%)
- Being mugged or robbed (48%)

Chart 3.2 How worried are you about the different types of crime listed below?



3.6 Viewpoint members most likely to be worried about having their homes broken into and something stolen were more likely to be:

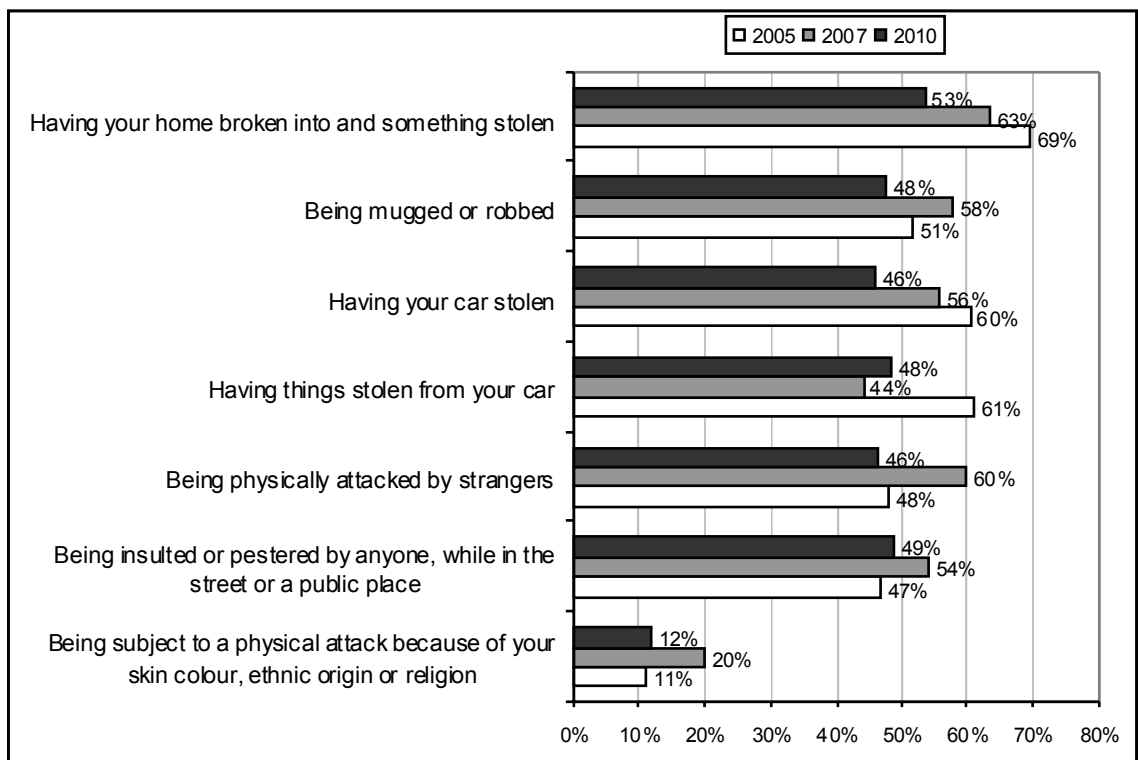
- In rented accommodation (70%)
- Disabled (68%)

3.7 This question was also asked in viewpoint in 2005 and 2007. Chart 3.3 shows the proportion of Viewpoint members who were either very or fairly worried about becoming victims of different crimes.

3.8 Since 2005 we can see there has been a large reduction in the proportion of people worried about becoming victims of the following types of crime:

- Having their home broken into and something stolen (reduced by 16 percentage points)
- Having their car stolen (reduced by 14 percentage points)
- Having things stolen from their car (reduced by 12 percentage points)

Chart 3.3 'How worried are you about the different types of crime listed below?' Data for 'worried' for 2010, 2007 & 2005



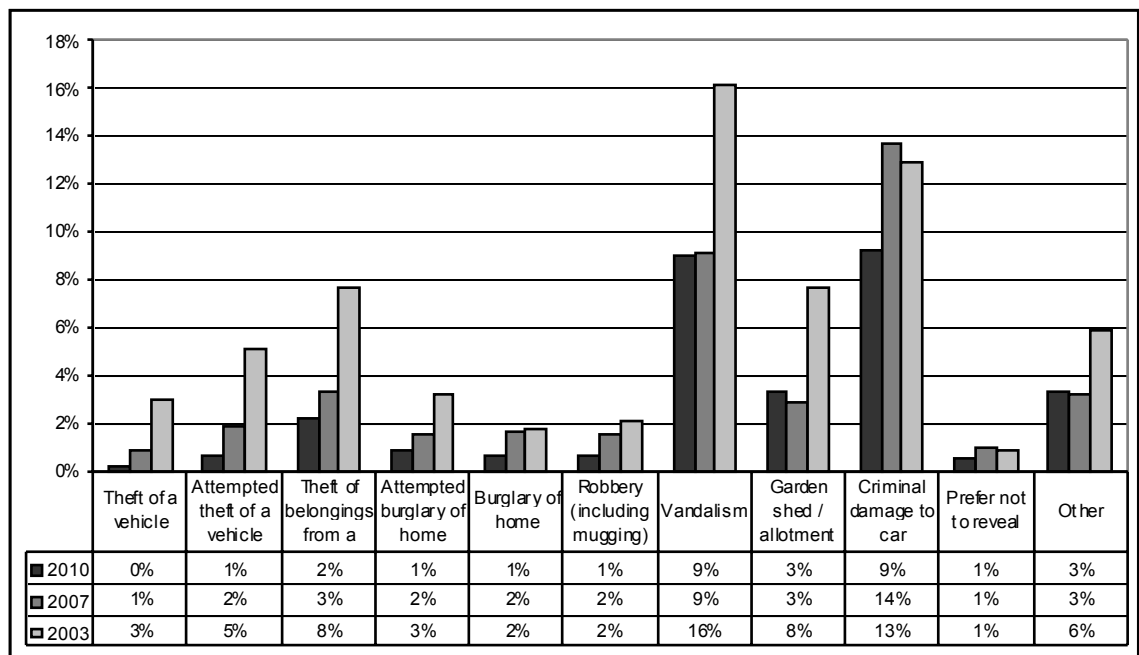
3.9 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Victim of crimes

3.10 In 2010, eight out of ten (79%) Viewpoint members had not been a victim of crime in the last 12 months (compared to 70% in 2007 and 59% in 2003). For those members who had been a victim of crime in 2010, they were more likely to be victims of vandalism or criminal damage to their car.

3.11 Table 3.4 shows the proportion of Viewpoint members who have been victims of various crimes in the last 12 months. It also shows a comparison with information received through Viewpoint in 2007, and 2003. This table does not include the proportion of Viewpoint members who told us they had not been victims of crime in the last 12 months.

Chart 3.4 During the last 12 months, have you been a victim of any of the crimes listed below?
(2010: N=1124; 2007: N=1200; 2003: N=589)



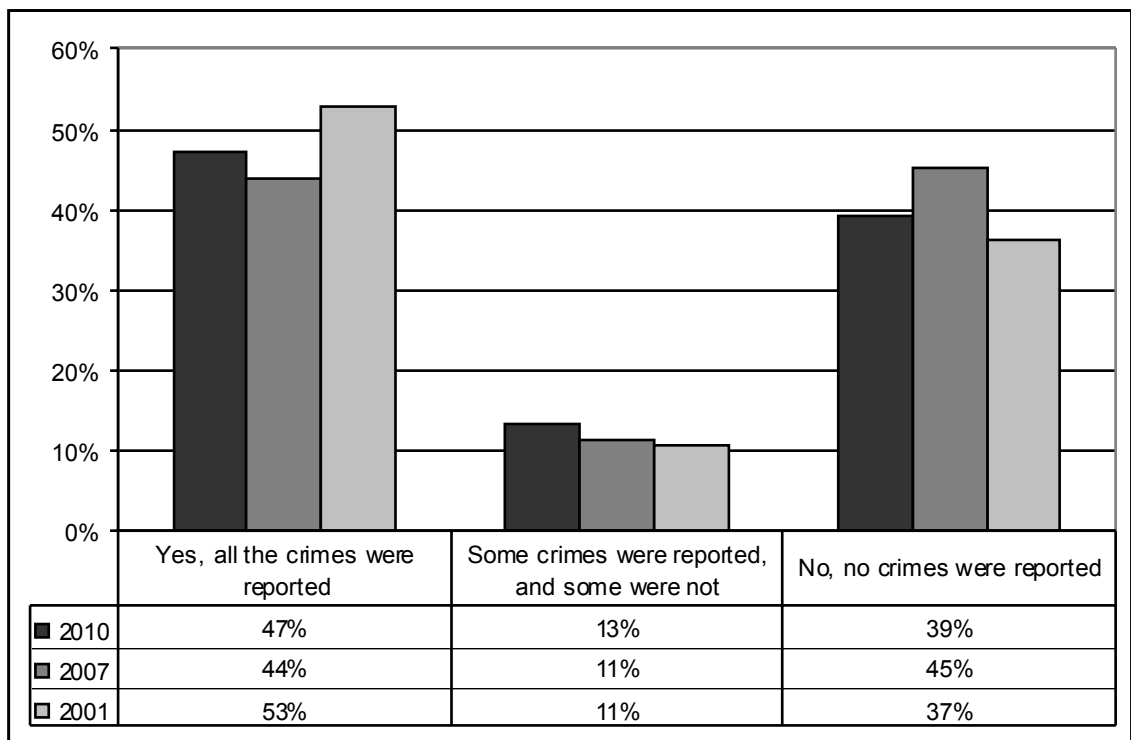
3.12 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Reporting crimes

3.13 In 2010, out of the respondents who had been victims of crime in the last year, four out of ten (39%) did not report the crime to the police.

3.14 Chart 3.5 below shows a comparison with data obtained through Viewpoint in 2007 and 2001. Results are largely similar in all three time frames.

Chart 3.5 Thinking about those crimes committed in the last 12 months, did you report them to the police?
(2010: N=268; 2007: N=320; 2001: N=178)



3.15 Viewpoint members aged 65 years and over were more likely to report all crimes they had been a victim of (59%).

3.16 Members aged between 45 and 54 years were less likely to report all crimes committed (35%) and more likely to not report any crimes that they had been a victim of (59%).

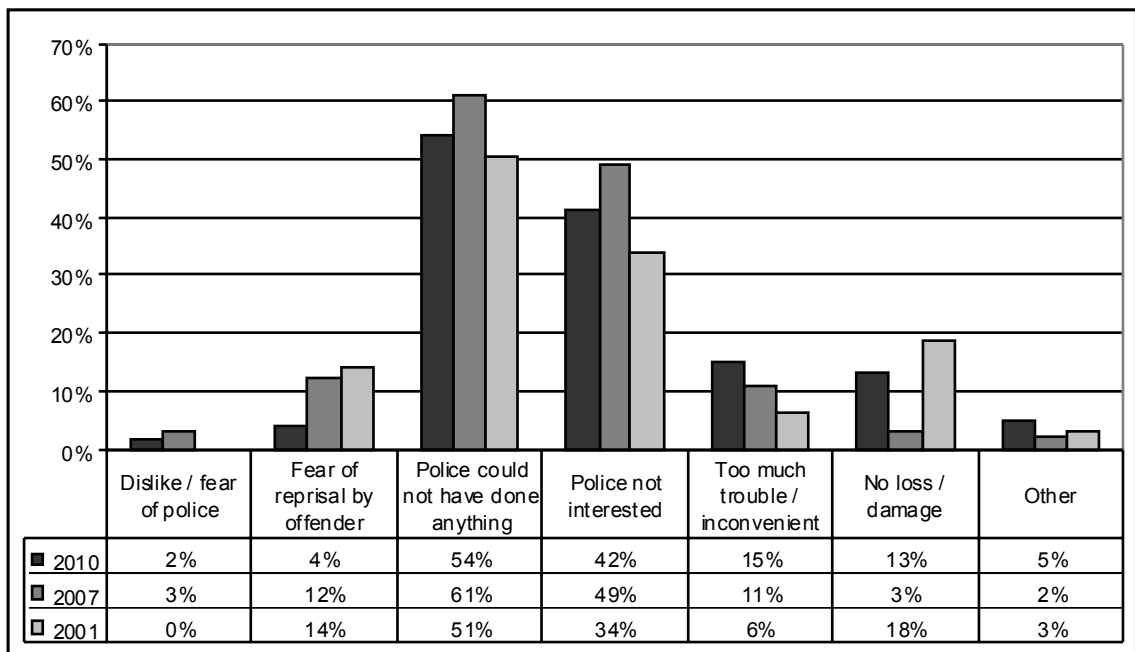
3.17 Finally, Viewpoint members who are not working were more likely to not report any of the crimes they were a victim of (51%).

Not reporting crimes

3.18 If Viewpoint members did not report a crime to the police, they were asked to tell us why this was. This question was also included in Viewpoint in 2007 and 2001, and chart 3.6 below shows the results for all three time frames. In 2010, the main reasons given for not reporting crimes to the police were:

- Police could not have done anything (54%)
- Police not interested / would not have done anything (42%)

Chart 3.6 If you did not report a crime to the police, please tell us why: (2010: N=138; 2007: N=115; 2001: N=84)



3.19 Viewpoint members more likely to think the police could not have done anything were:

- From Central Hartlepool (67%)
- Had children under the 18 living in the household (67%)

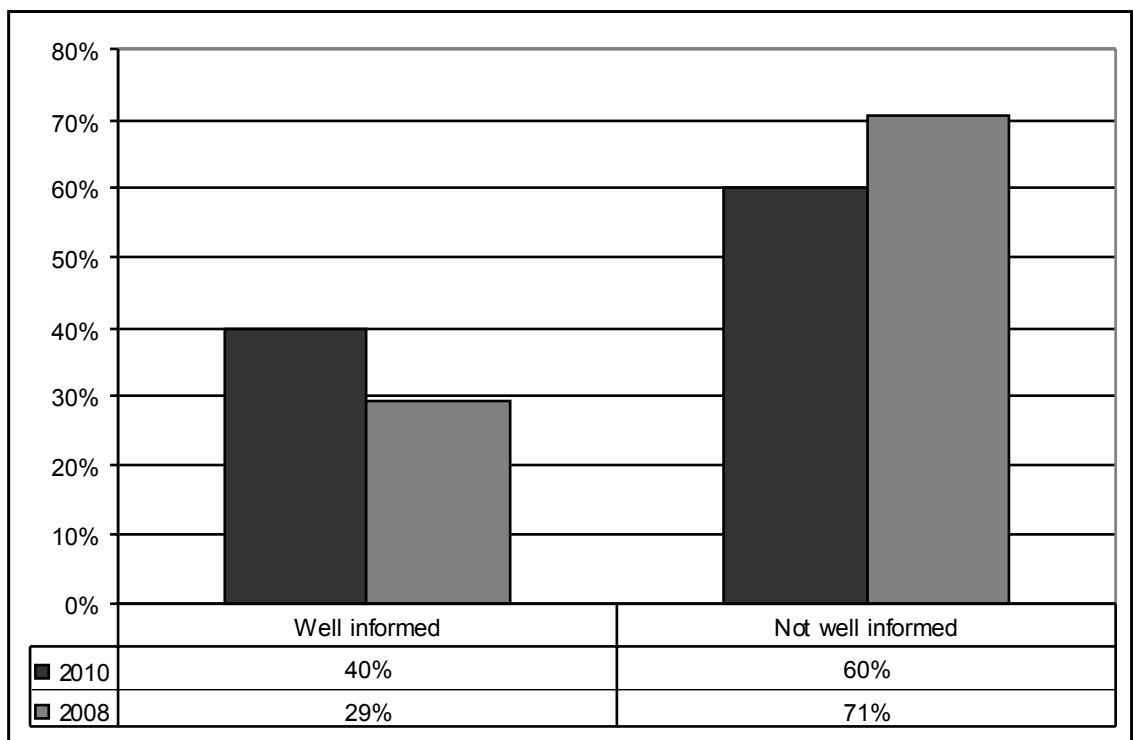
3.20 Members more likely to think the police are not interested or would not have done anything were:

- Male (52%)
- Those who were living with relatives (62%)

Tackling anti-social behaviour

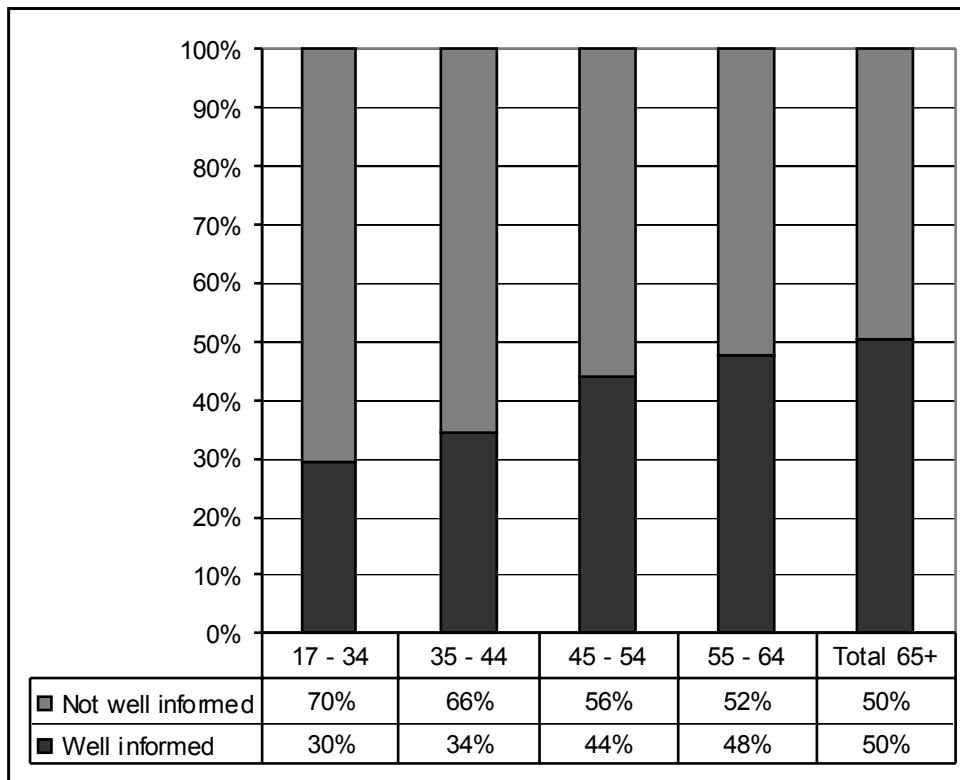
3.21 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how well informed they feel they are about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area. This question was also previously included in Viewpoint in 2008. In 2010, six out of ten Viewpoint members (60%) do not think they are well informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area. This is a reduction from 71 per cent in 2008. See chart 3.7 for more information.

Chart 3.7 How well informed do you feel you are about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area? (2010: N=1112; 2008: N=1146)



3.22 Chart 3.8 shows the proportion of Viewpoint members who feel either well informed or not well informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area, by age. What can be seen is that younger Viewpoint members are less likely they are likely to feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area.

Chart 3.8 'How well informed do you feel you are about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area?' By age (N=1112)

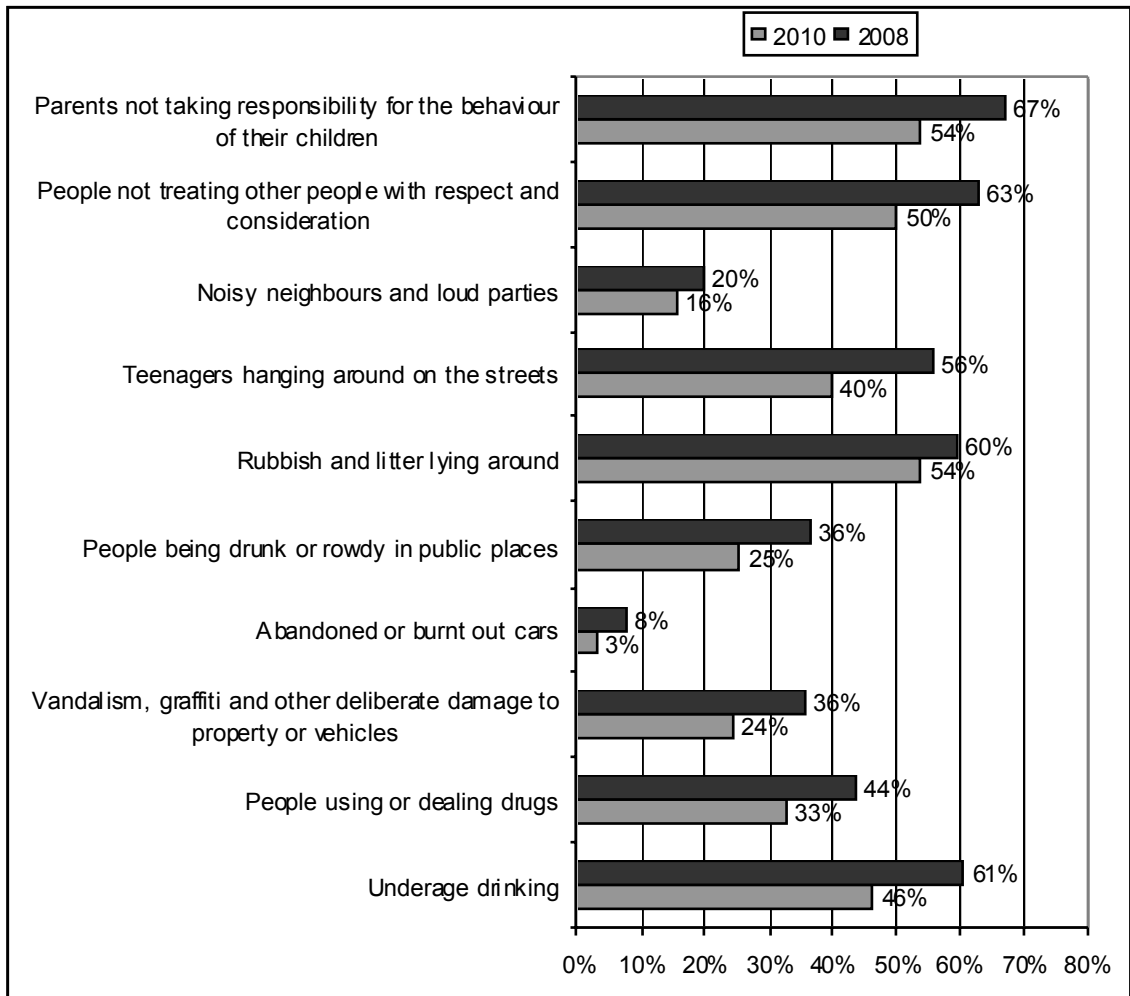


Anti-social behaviour problems in local area

3.23 In 2010 and 2008, Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how much of a problem they think are various anti-social behaviour issues are in their local area. Chart 3.9 shows the proportion of Viewpoint members who thought the various issues were big problems in 2010 and in 2008. In 2010, Viewpoint members thought the following were big problems in their local areas:

- Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (54%)
- Rubbish and litter lying around (54%)
- People not treating other people with respect and consideration (50%)

Chart 3.9 ‘Thinking about your local area, how much of a problem do you think are...’ Graph shows the results for Viewpoint members who said the following were either a very big problem or a fairly big problem for 2010 & 2008.

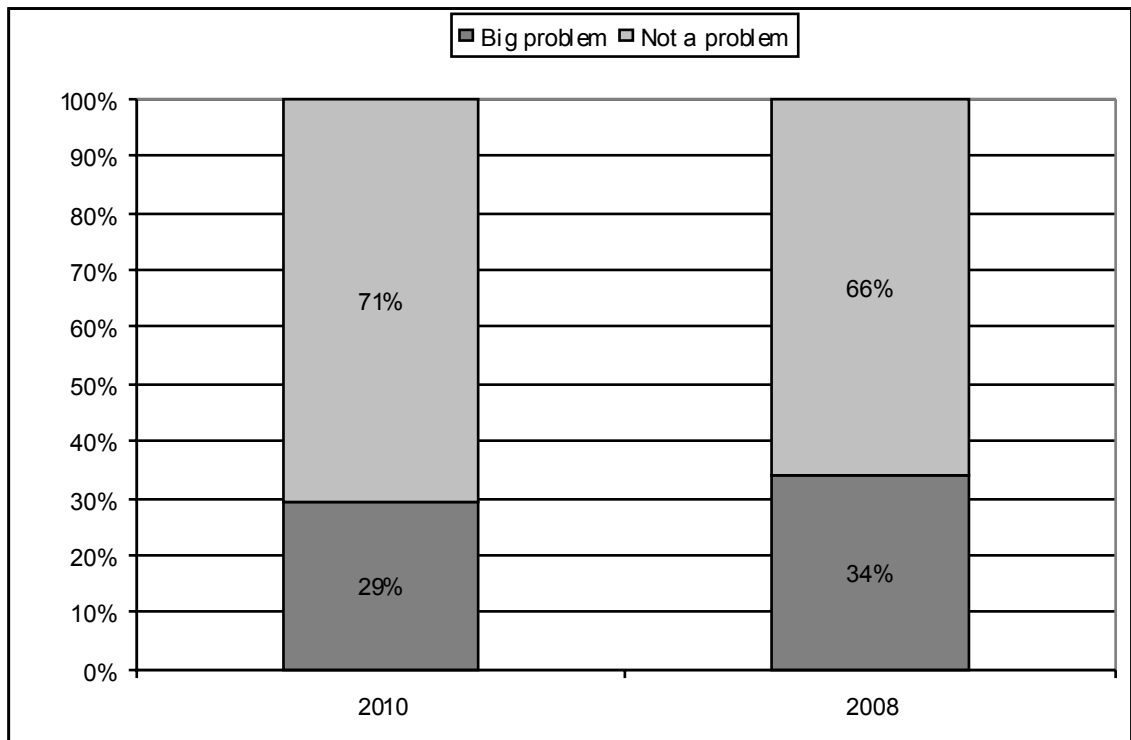


3.24 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Anti-social behaviour as a problem in local area

3.25 In 2010, as in 2008, Viewpoint members were asked to tell us overall, how much of a problem they think anti-social behaviour is in their local area. In 2010, seven out of ten members did not think anti-social behaviour is a problem in their local area. This is largely the same as results obtained in 2008. See chart 3.10 for more information.

Chart 3.10 Overall, how much of a problem would you say anti-social behaviour is in your local area?
(2010: N=1061; 2008: N=1 160)

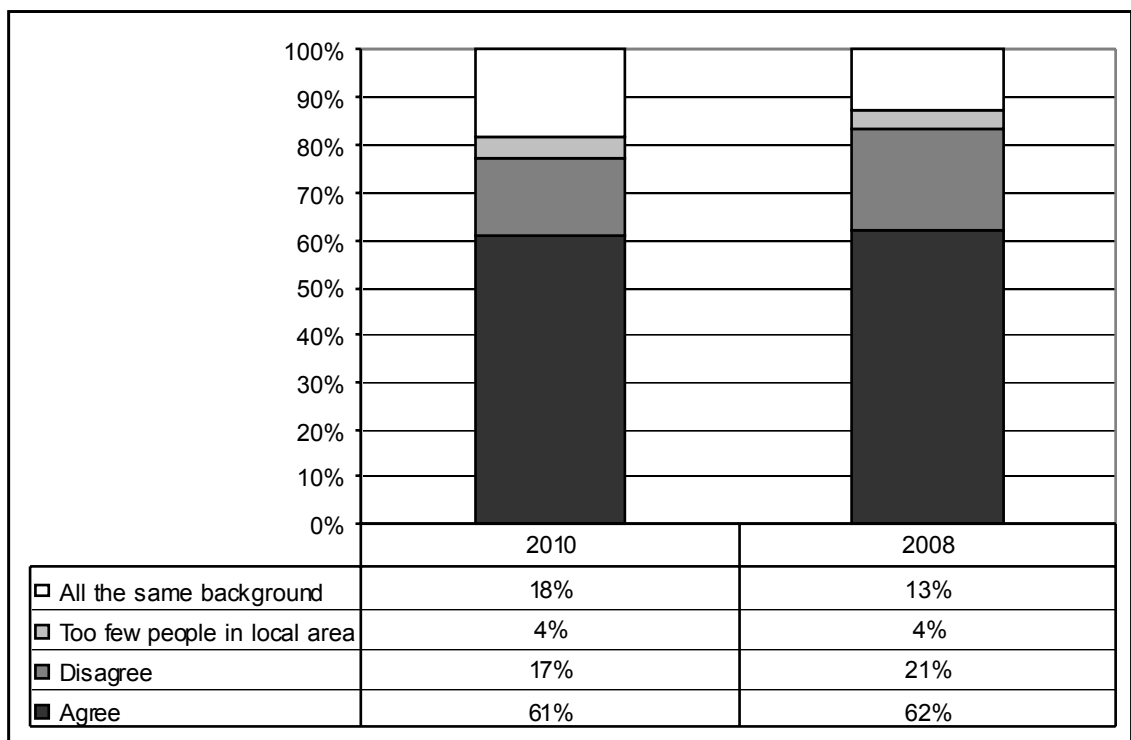


3.26 Viewpoint members aged 65 years and over were less likely to think that anti-social behaviour is a problem in their local area (18%). Viewpoint members from the North areas of Hartlepool were more likely to think that anti-social behaviour is a big problem in their local area (37%).

Different backgrounds getting on well together

3.27 In 2010, as in 2008, Viewpoint members were asked to tell us to what extent they agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. In 2010, six out of ten members agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Results are largely similar to those received in 2008. See chart 3.11 for more information.

Chart 3.11 To what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different back grounds get on well together? (2010: N=922; 2008: N=942)



3.28 The following Viewpoint members were more likely to disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together:

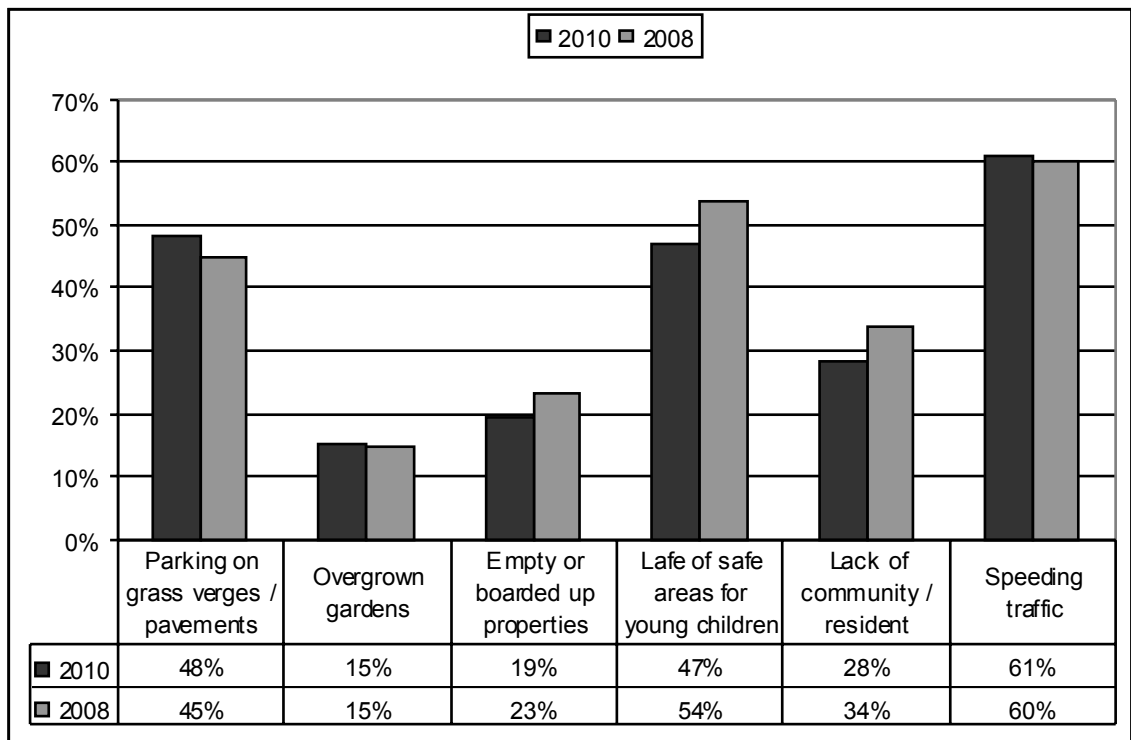
- Members with children under the age of 18 in the househdd (27%)
- Members aged between 17 and 34 (27%)

Crime and community safety concerns

3.29 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how concerned they were about various crime and safety concerns in their local area. Chart 3.12 shows the proportion of Viewpoint members who were concerned about the various issues in 2010 and 2008. Results are broadly similar between the two sets of data. In 2010, Viewpoint members were more likely to be concerned about the following in their local area:

- Speeding traffic (61%)
- Parking on grass verges and pavements (48%)
- Lack of safe areas for young children to play (47%)

Chart 3.12 How concerned are you about the following in your local area? Graph shows the results for Viewpoint members who said they were either very or fairly concerned.



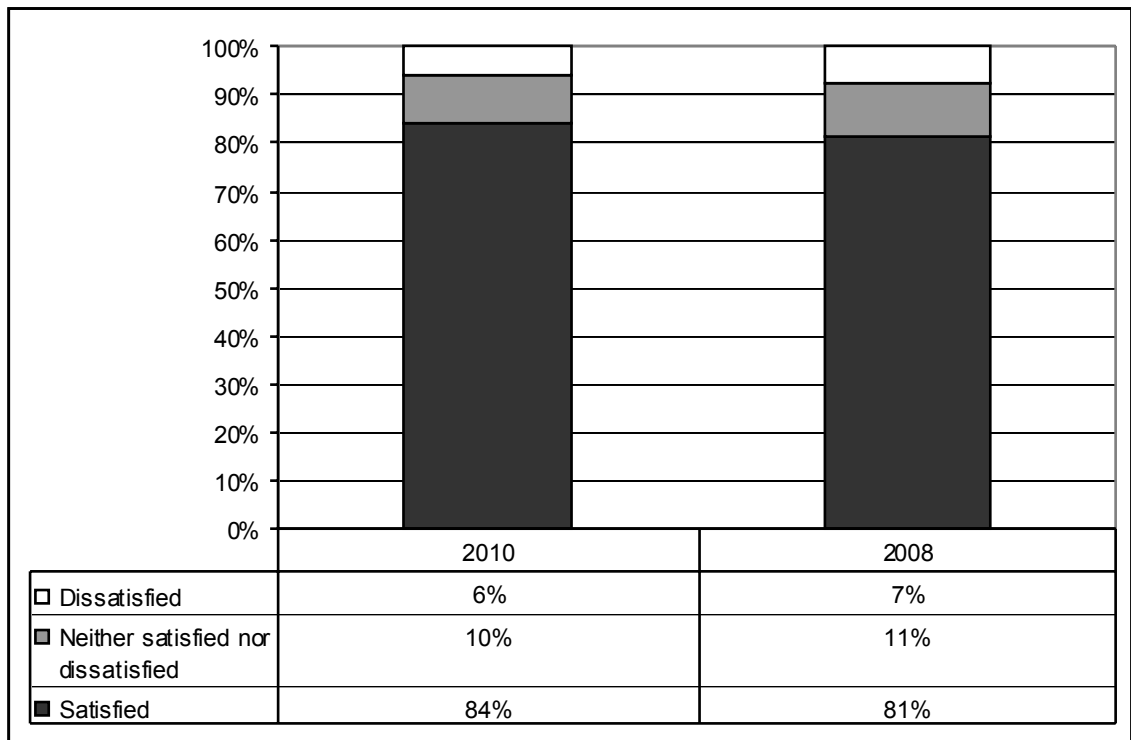
3.30 Viewpoint members from the Central area of Hartlepool were more likely to say they are not concerned about parking on grass verges or pavements (61%). Viewpoint members from the North areas of Hartlepool were more likely to be concerned about the following in their local area:

- Lack of safe areas for young children to play (56%)
- Lack of community / resident groups (36%)

Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

3.31 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how satisfied they are overall with their local area as a place to live. Results obtained in 2010 are broadly similar to those from 2008, and can be seen in chart 3.13. Overall, in 2010 the majority (84%) of Viewpoint members are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Chart 3.13 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (2010: N=1160; 2008: N=1173)



3.32 Viewpoint members aged 65 years and over were more likely to say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (93%).

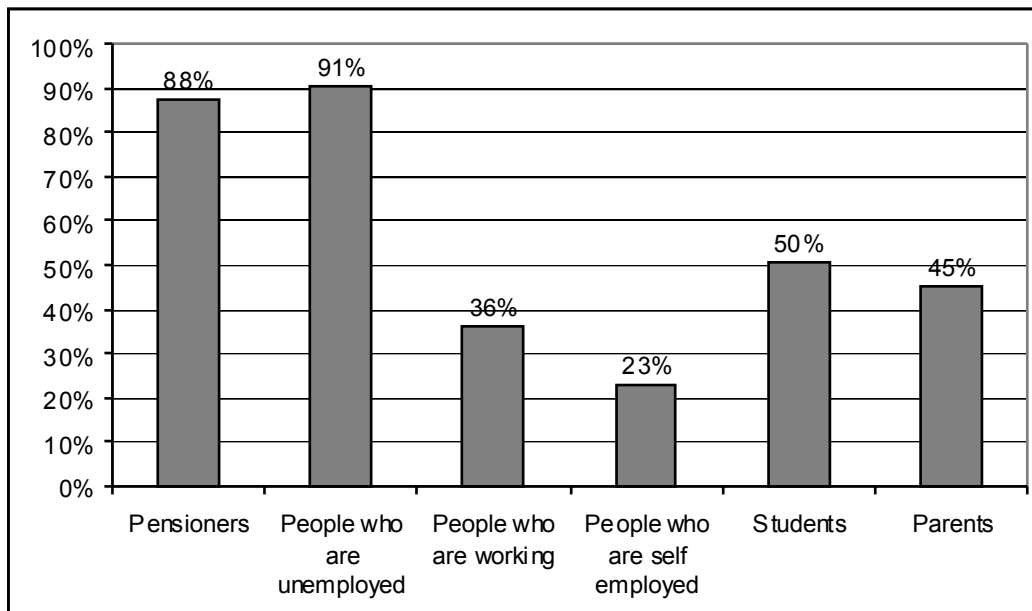
4. Awareness of benefits

4.1 Viewpoint members were told how Hartlepool Borough Council administers a range of benefits, such as council tax benefit and second adult rebate. However, some people who are entitled to these benefits do not claim them. We wanted to find out if people know where they can go for advice and information about benefits, and if they know how to claim.

People who can apply for benefits

4.2 Viewpoint members were more likely to be aware that people who are unemployed (91%) and pensioners (88%) could claim benefits. See chart 4.1 for more information.

Chart 4.1 Before receiving this survey, did you know that the following groups of people could claim benefits? (N=1109)

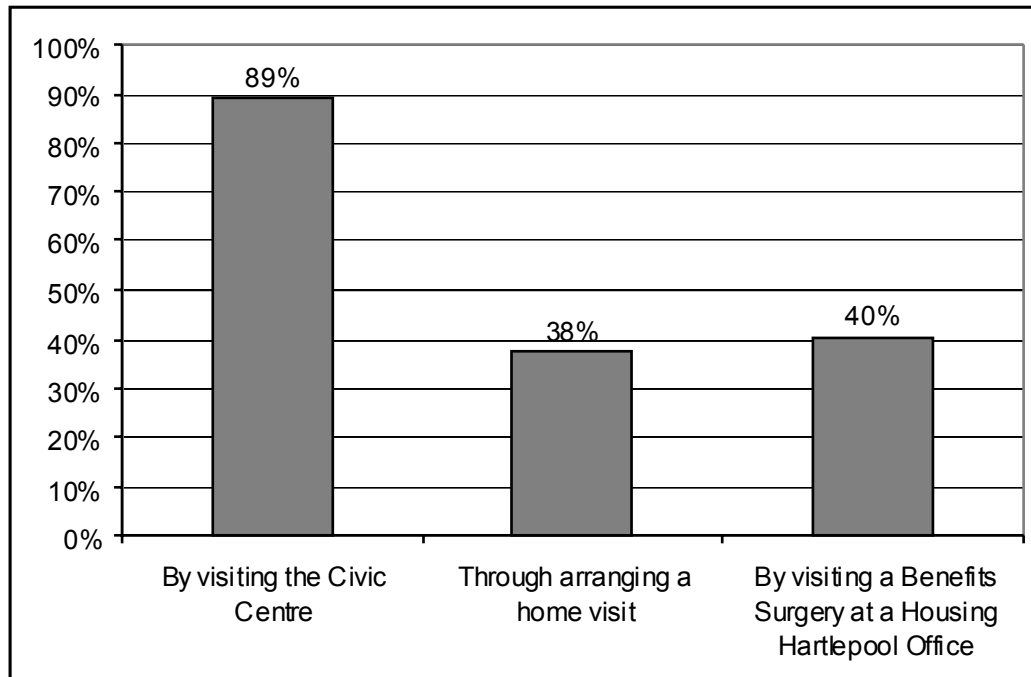


4.3 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Applying for benefits

- 4.4 Viewpoint members were more likely to be aware that people could apply for benefits by visiting the Civic Centre (89%). See chart 4.2 for more information.

Chart 4.2 Did you know you could fill out an application to apply for benefits in the following ways? (N=912)

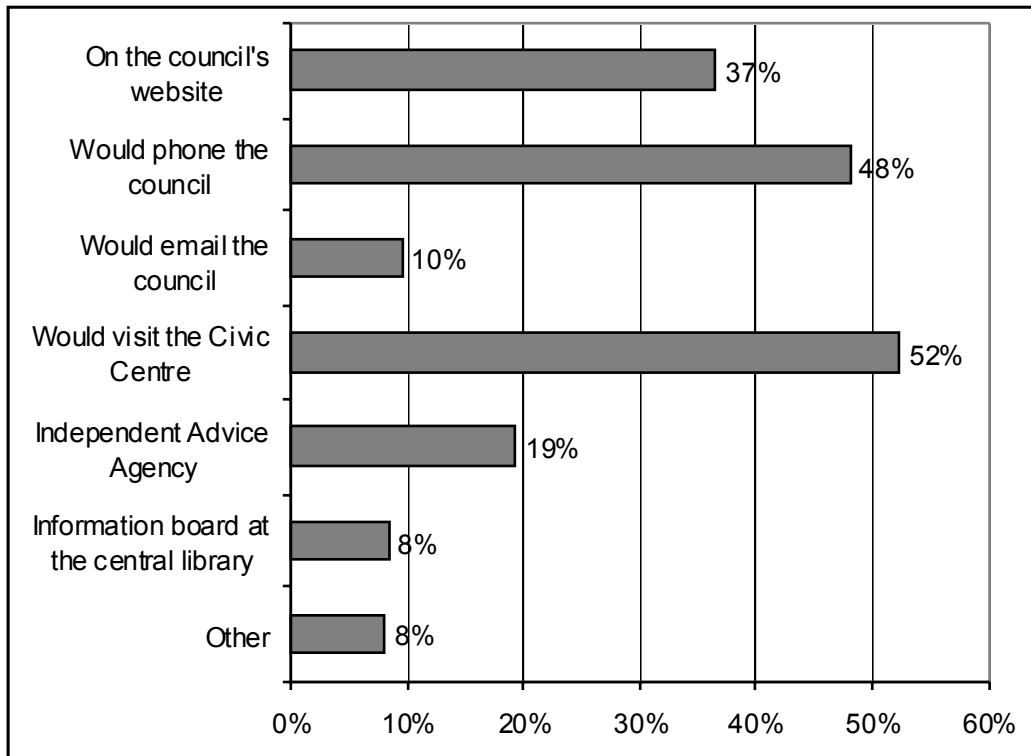


- 4.5 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Advice about benefits

4.6 Respondents told us they would either visit the Civic Centre (52%) or phone the council (48%) for advice and information about benefits.

Chart 4.3 If you needed advice and information about benefits, where would you go for it? (N=1090)

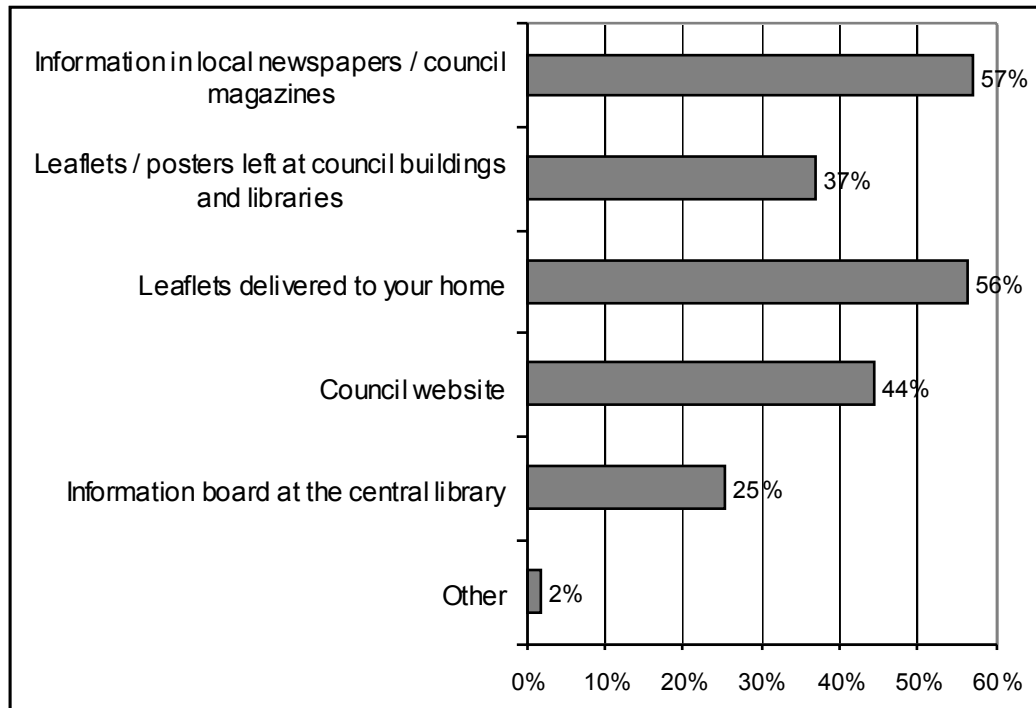


4.7 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Information about benefits

- 4.8 They also said they would like to see information about benefits in local newspapers and council magazines (57%) or through leaflets delivered to their home (56%).

Chart 4.4 Where would you like to see information about benefits?
(N=1101)



- 4.9 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

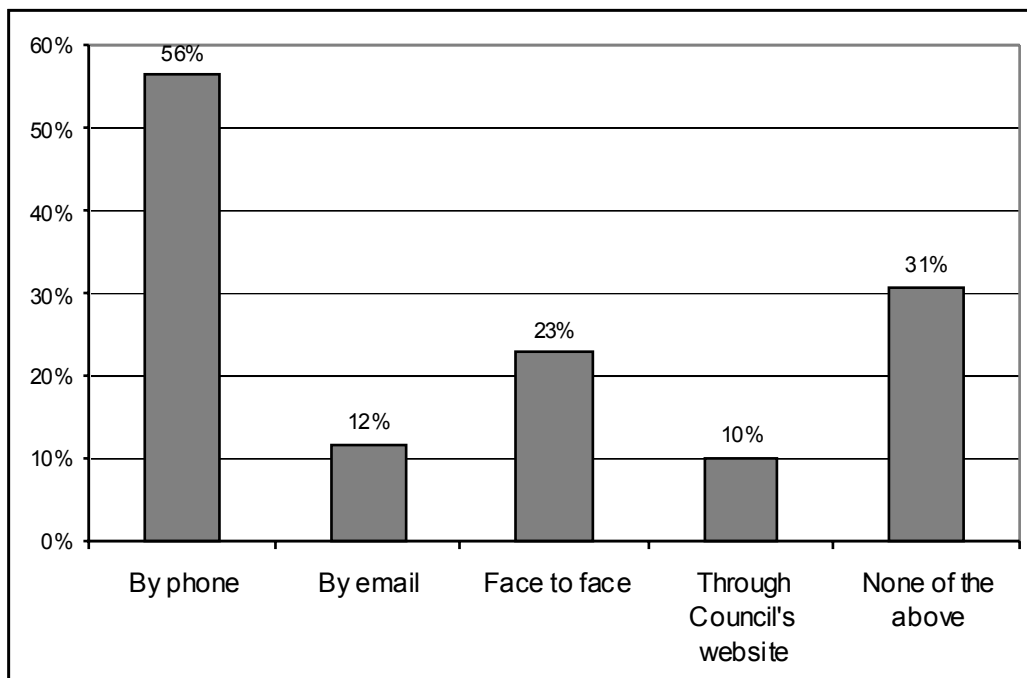
5. Help yourself to council services

5.1 Viewpoint members were told how the council is interested in developing methods to help members of the public to serve themselves to council services. Methods such as online forms, automated telephone services, speech recognition telephone services, by text or SMS, or kiosks with computers. We wanted to find out which methods Viewpoint members would be interested in using to contact the council.

Methods used to contact the council over the past 12 months

5.2 Viewpoint members were more likely to have contacted the council by phone (56%) over the last 12 months. See chart 5.1 for more information.

Chart 5.1 Firstly, have you contacted the council using any of the following methods in the last 12 months? (N=1147)



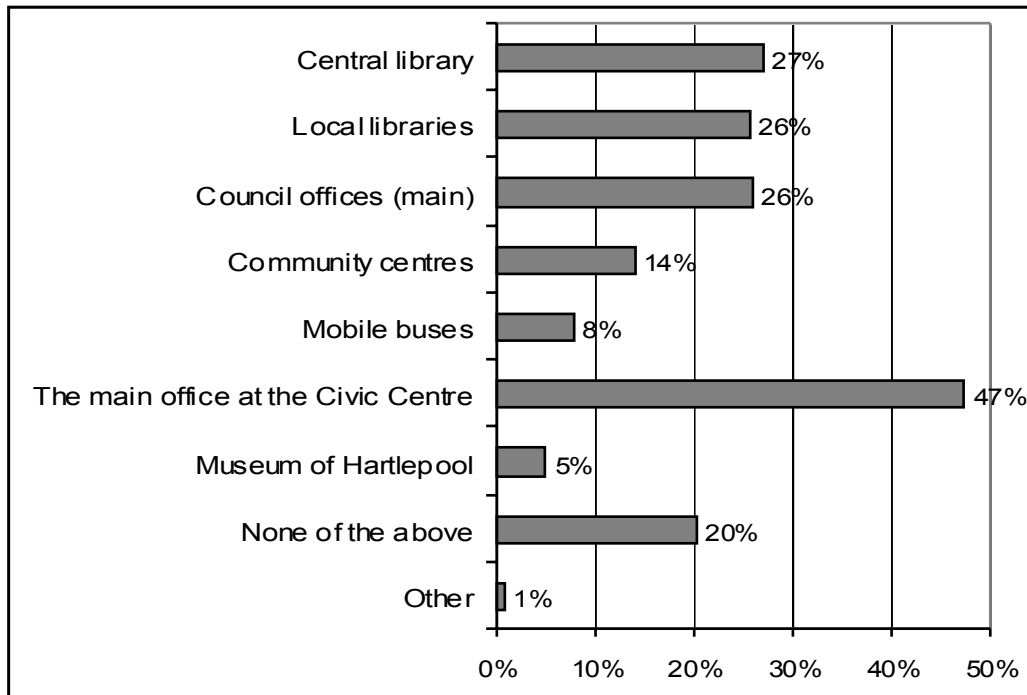
5.3 Viewpoint members with a disability were more likely to have contacted the council via the following methods than members without a disability:

- By phone (68%)
- Face to face (34%)

Using kiosks to contact the council

- 5.4 If kiosks were to be used as a self serve method to contact the council, Viewpoint members would prefer to access one through the main office at the Civic Centre. See chart 5.2 for more information.

Chart 5.2 If you would like to contact the council using? (N=1093)



- 5.5 The following groups of Viewpoint members were more likely to say they would use a kiosk if it were located at the Central Library.
- From the Central area of Hartlepool (31%)
 - Aged between 55 – 64 years (32%)
 - With no car in the household (33%)
- 5.6 The following groups of Viewpoint members were more likely to say they would use a kiosk if it were located at the local Libraries:
- From the South area of Hartlepool (34%)
 - Aged between 55 – 64 years (33%)
- 5.7 Finally, the following groups of respondents were more likely to say they would use a kiosk if it were located at the main office at the Civic Centre:
- Aged between 17 – 35 years (55%)
 - With no car in the household (58%)
 - With children under the age of 18 in the household (52%)

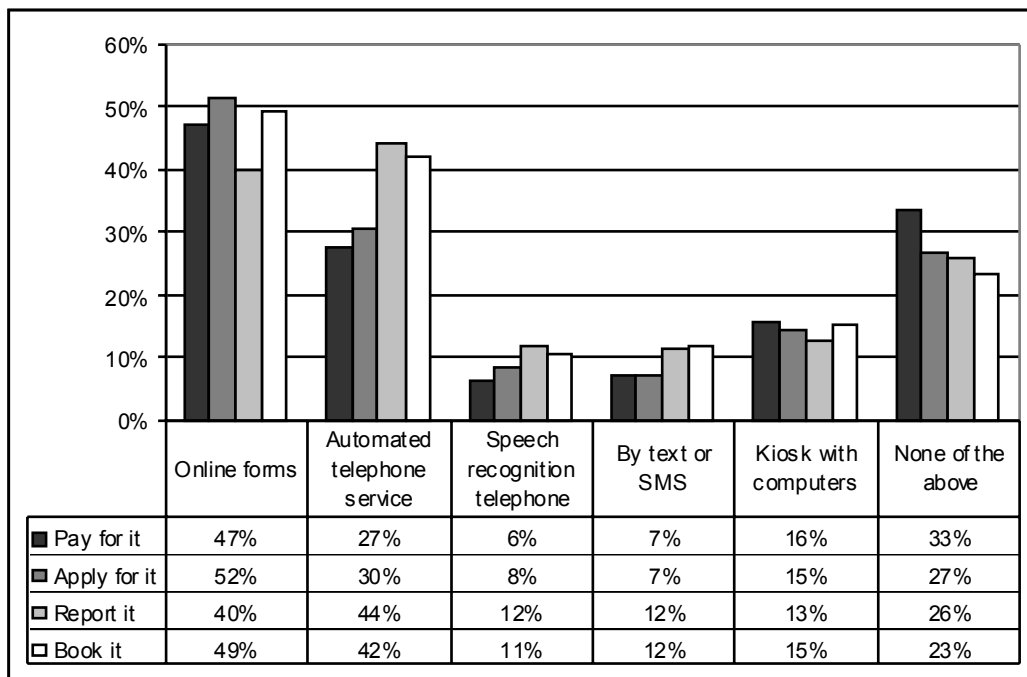
Methods to contact the council in the future

5.8 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us which self serve method they would prefer to use to get in touch with the council for each of the following services / reasons:

Pay for it	To pay for things, such as council tax, business rates, and car parking fines, etc.
Apply for it	To apply for things, such as planning applications, jobs at the council, assisted bin collections.
Report it	To report things such as abandoned cars, benefit fraud, drug related litter, missed bin collections, street lighting problems.
Book it	To book things such as tickets for the Town Hall, sports facilities, community centres, bulky household waste.

5.9 Viewpoint members were more likely to want to use online forms or an automated telephone service as self serve methods to contact the council to pay for things, apply for things, report things and to book things. See chart 5.3 for more information.

Chart 5.3 If you could choose how to get in touch with the council for each of the following services / reasons, please tell us which self service methods you would prefer to use?



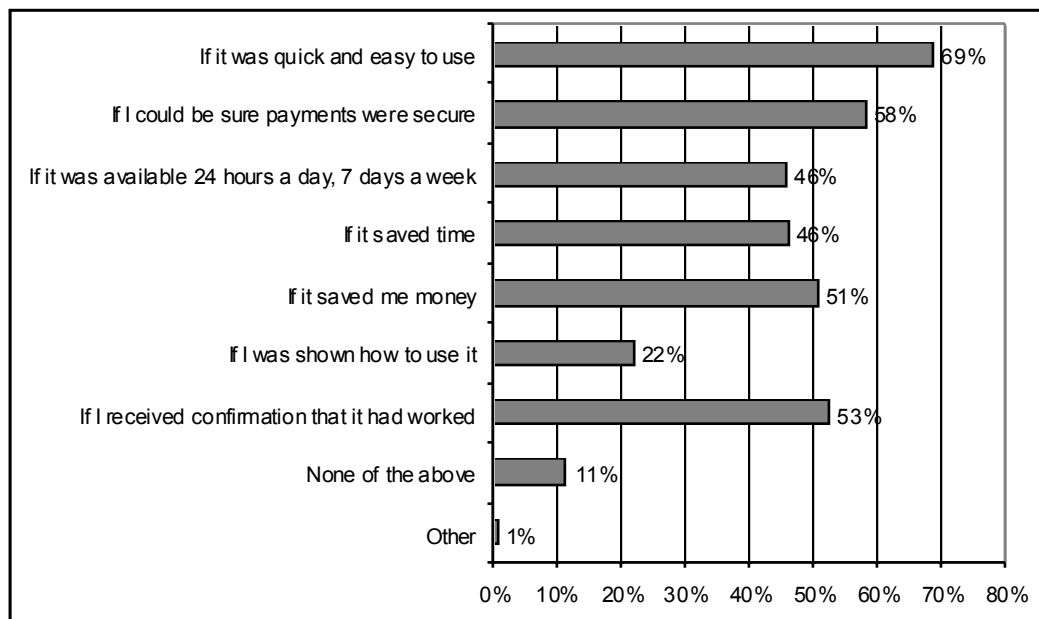
5.10 Younger Viewpoint members were more likely to say they would use online forms, text or SMS, or kiosks with computers, and older Viewpoint members were least likely to say they would use these methods.

5.11 Viewpoint members who are employed or who have children in the household were more likely to say they would use online forms. Members who are not working or who have a disability were less likely to choose this method.

Encouraging use of self serve methods

5.12 Members would be encouraged to use self serve methods more if they were quick and easy to use (69%), and if they could be sure that payments were secure (58%). See chart 5.4 for more information.

Chart 5.4 What would encourage you to use self serve methods more? (N=1134)

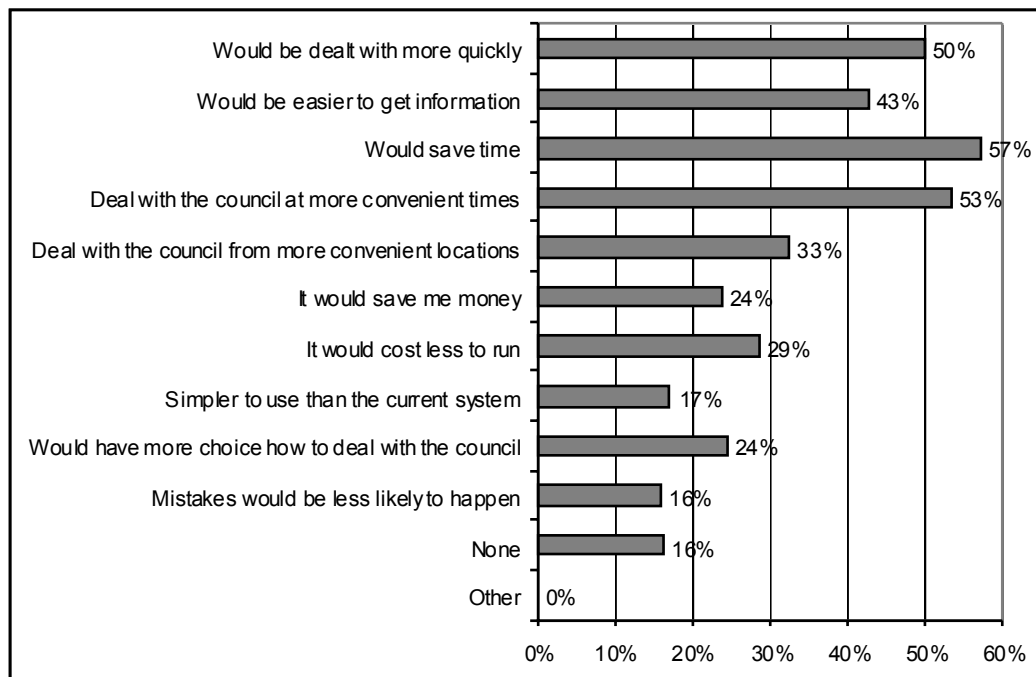


5.13 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Benefits to using self serve methods

5.14 The majority of Viewpoint members felt the main benefits to being able to deal with the council via the internet or any other electronic means would be it would save time, they could deal with the council at more convenient times, and they would be dealt with more quickly. See chart 5.5 for more information.

Chart 5.5 What, if anything, do you think would be the benefits of being able to deal with Hartlepool Borough Council via the internet or any other electronic means? (N=998)

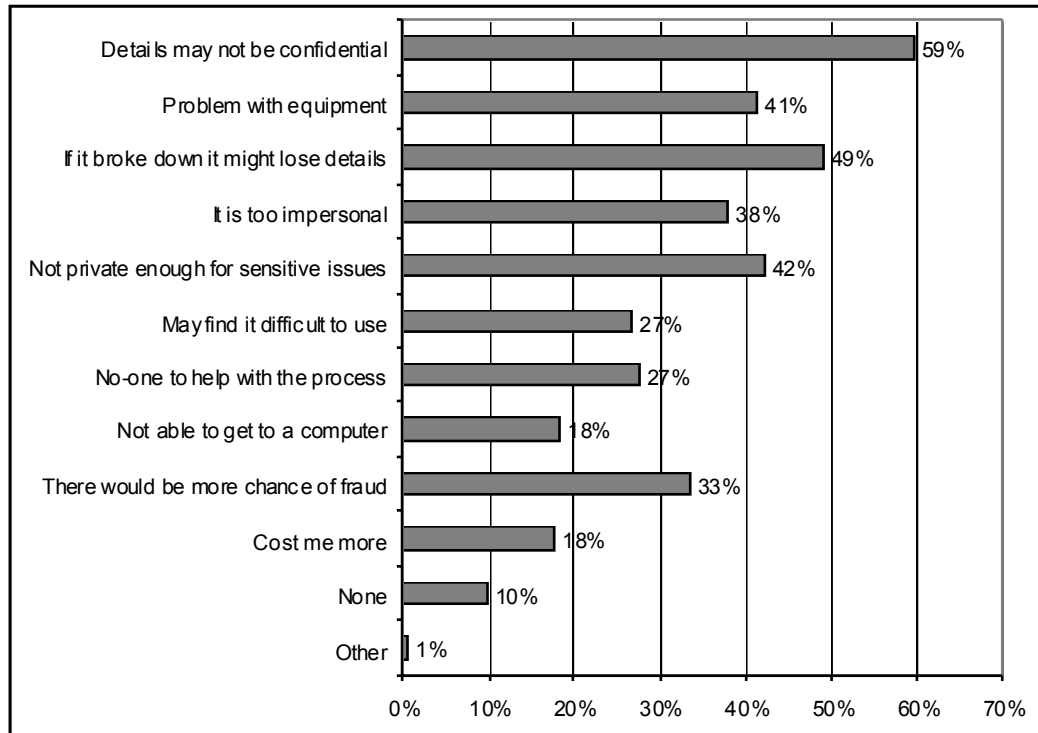


5.15 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Drawbacks to using self serve methods

- 5.16 The main drawback identified by Viewpoint members to dealing with the council via the internet or other electronic means is that details may not be confidential (59%). See chart 5.6 for more information.

Chart 5.6 What, if anything, do you think would be the drawbacks of being able to deal with Hartlepool Borough Council via the internet or any other electronic means? (N=1077)



- 5.17 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

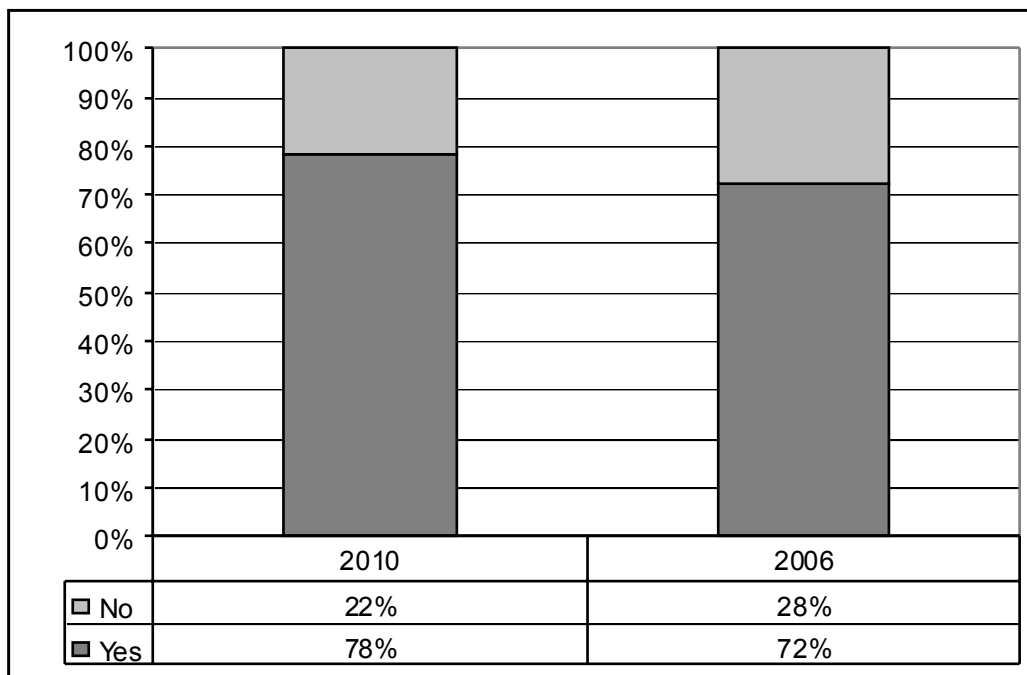
6. The internet and you

6.1 Hartlepool Borough Council launched its new website in February 2010. We wanted to find out if Viewpoint members had seen the new website, and how they would like to use it to contact the council. We also wanted to find out if members had a computer with internet connection in their home and if they were aware they could access the internet for free from their local library. Some questions, specifically the questions about the Council's new website, were asked in Viewpoint in 2006, just after the council launched its previous new website. Therefore, for these questions, comparisons will be drawn between the two sets of data.

Accessing the internet from home

6.2 In 2010, 78 percent of Viewpoint members have a computer with internet connection in their home. This is a slight increase from 72 percent in 2006. See chart 6.1 for more information.

Chart 6.1 Do you have a computer with internet connection in your home? (2010: N=1173; 2006: N=1074)



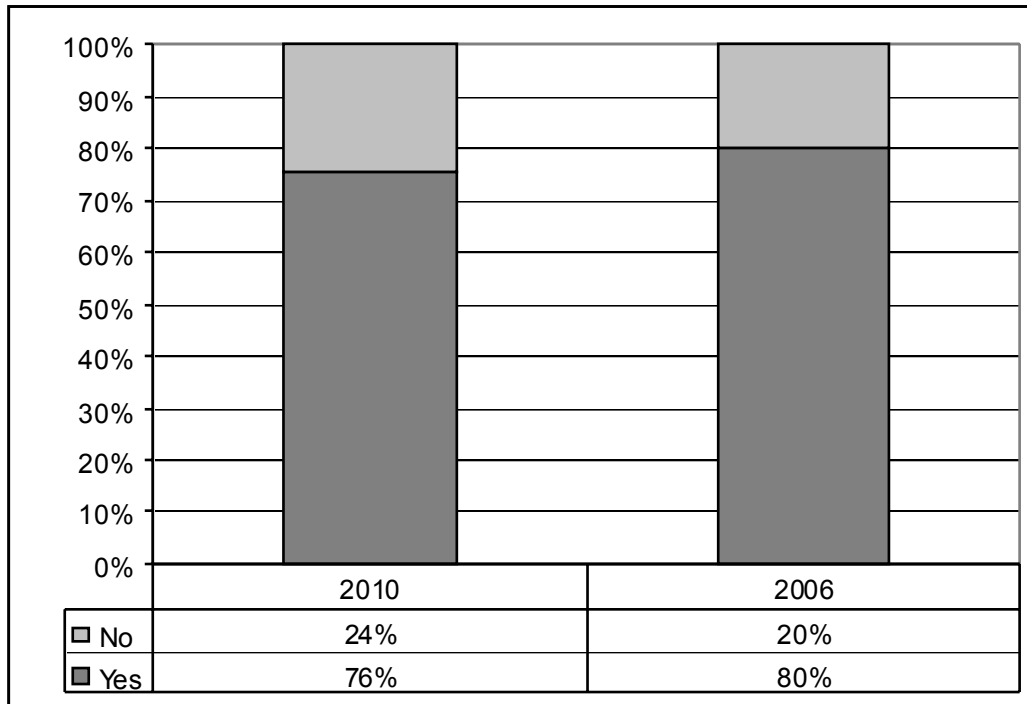
6.3 Viewpoint members less likely to have a computer with internet connection in their home are usually:

- aged 65 years and over (45%)
- live in rented accommodation (47%)
- have a disability (55%)

Accessing the internet from libraries

- 6.4 In 2010, just over three quarters of respondents were aware that they can access the internet for free from their local library. This is a slight decrease from 80 percent in 2006. See chart 6.2 for more information.

Chart 6.2 Are you aware that you can access the internet for free from your local library? (2010: N=1166; 2006: N=1057)



- 6.5 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

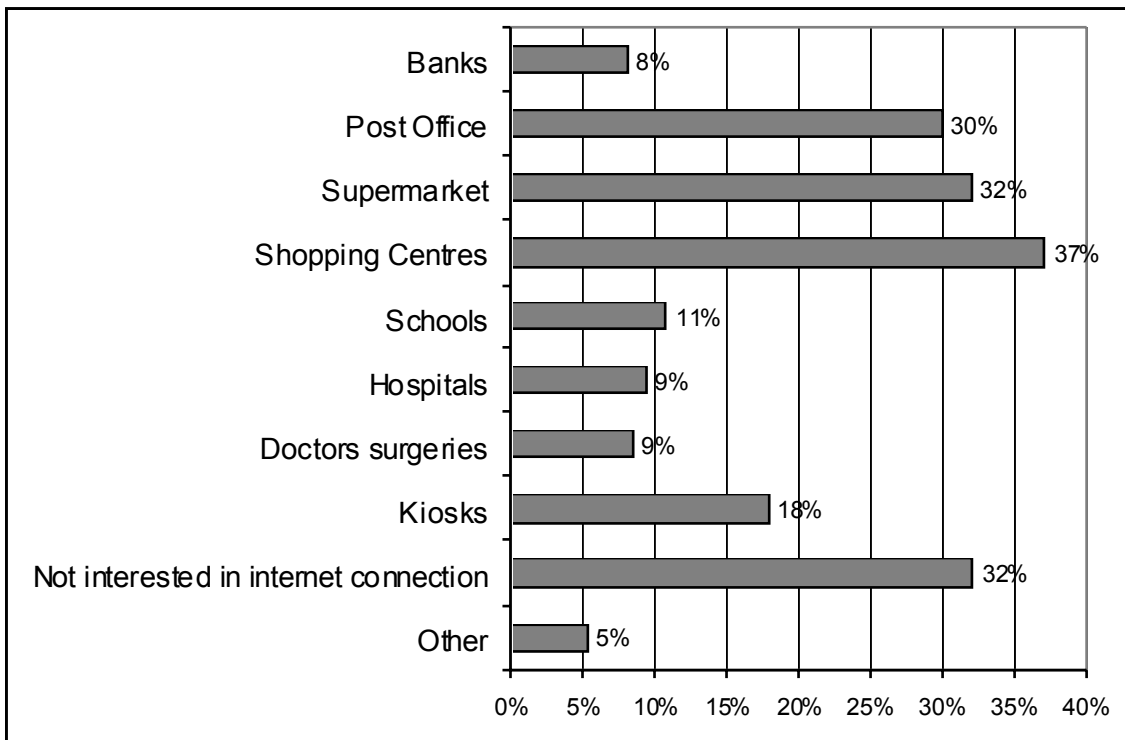
Accessing the internet from other public places

6.6 When asked where they would like to be able to access local council services via the internet, Viewpoint members were more likely to say:

- Shopping Centres (37%)
- Supermarkets (32%)
- The Post Office (30%)

6.7 A third of Viewpoint members told us they were not interested in internet contact. See chart 6.3 for more information.

Chart 6.3 Please tell us where you would like to be able to access local council services via the internet (N=1038)



6.8 Viewpoint members who are most likely to say they are not interested in accessing local council services via the internet are members:

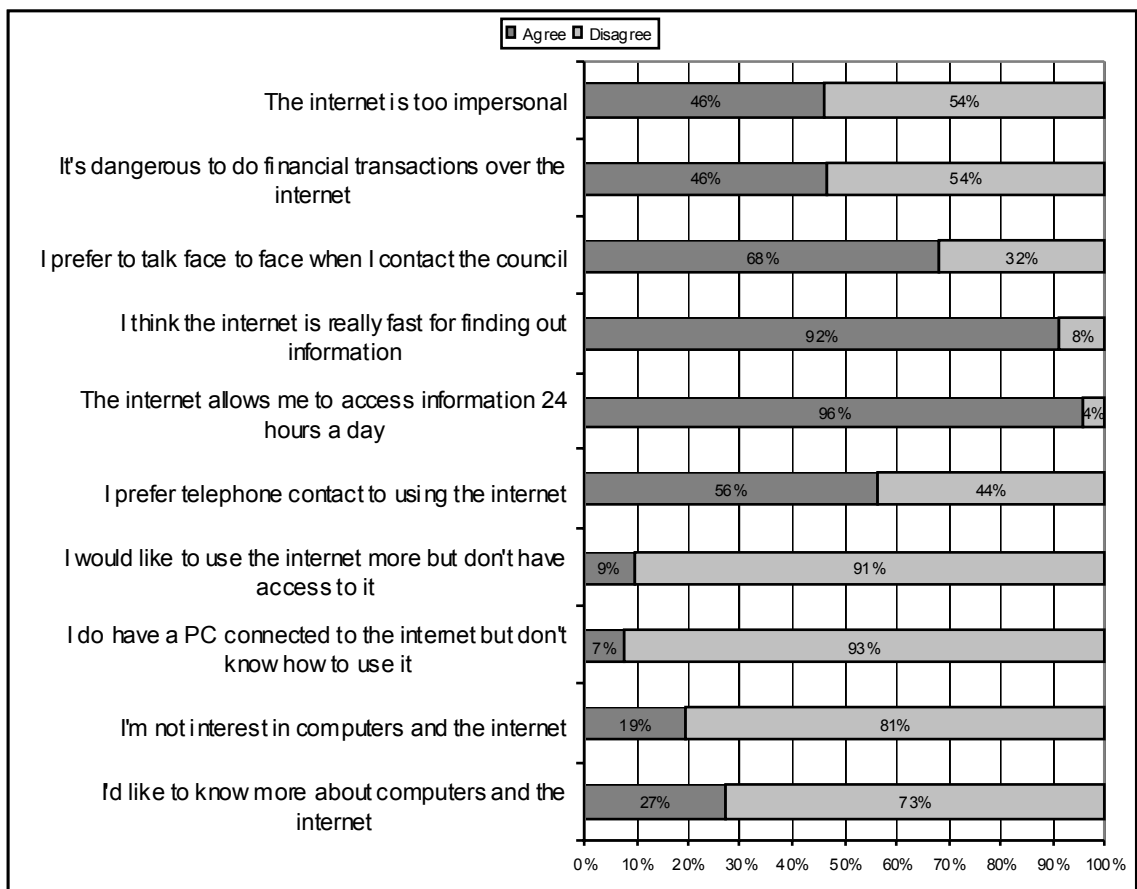
- aged 65 years and over (62%)
- with a disability (45%)
- who are not working (45%)

Statements about the internet

6.9 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how much they agreed or disagreed with various statements about the internet. Chart 6.4 shows the responses for all statements. Viewpoint members were more likely to agree with the following statements:

- the internet allows people to access information 24 hours a day (96%)
- the is really fast for finding out information (92%)

Chart 6.4 Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

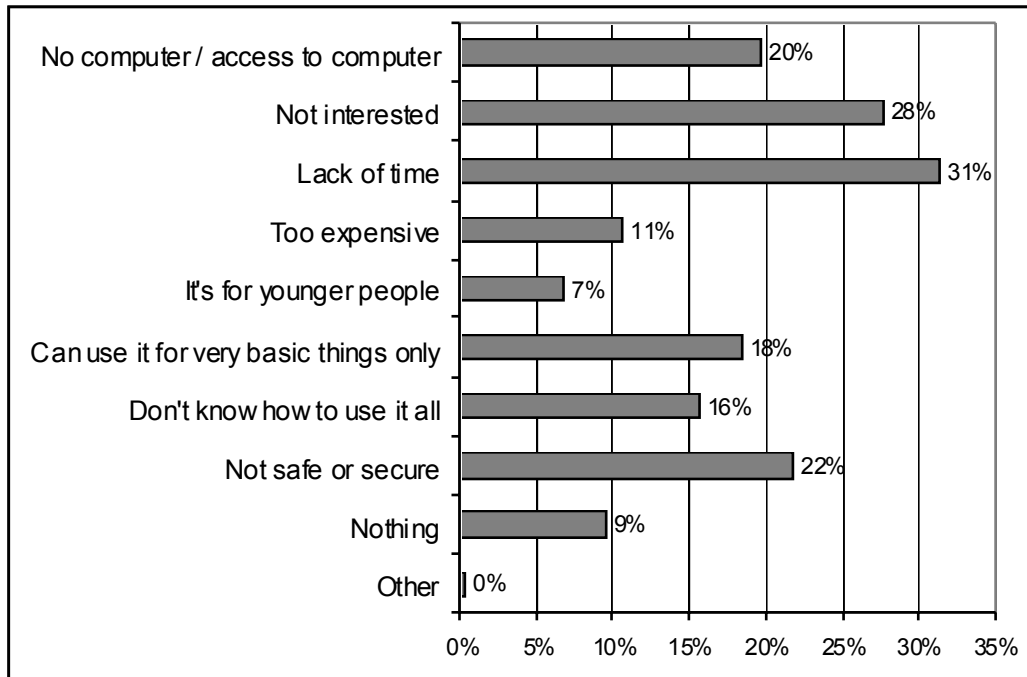


6.10 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

What stops people from using the internet

- 6.11 Viewpoint members were more likely to say that lack of time (31%) or interest (28%) stops them from using the internet or from using it more. See chart 6.5 for more information.

Chart 6.5 What stops you from using the internet or using it more?
(N=761)

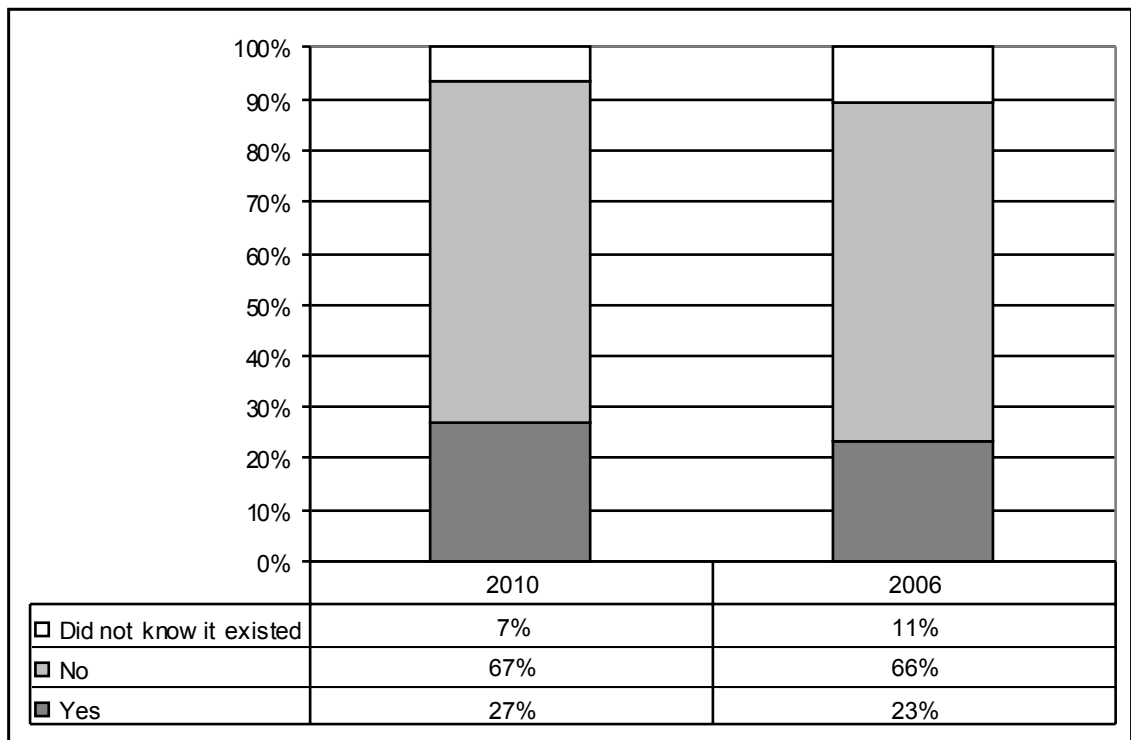


- 6.12 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Seeing Hartlepool Borough Councils new website

6.13 Hartlepool Borough Council launched their new website in February 2010. Viewpoint members were asked to tell us if they had seen the Council’s new website. This question was also asked in 2006, shortly after the launch of the Councils previous website. In 2010, just over a quarter (27%) of respondents had seen Hartlepool Borough Council’s new website. Results are largely similar to those obtained in 2006. See chart 6.6 for more information.

Chart 6.5 Have you seen Hartlepool Borough Council’s new website? (2010: N=1157; 2006: N=1167)



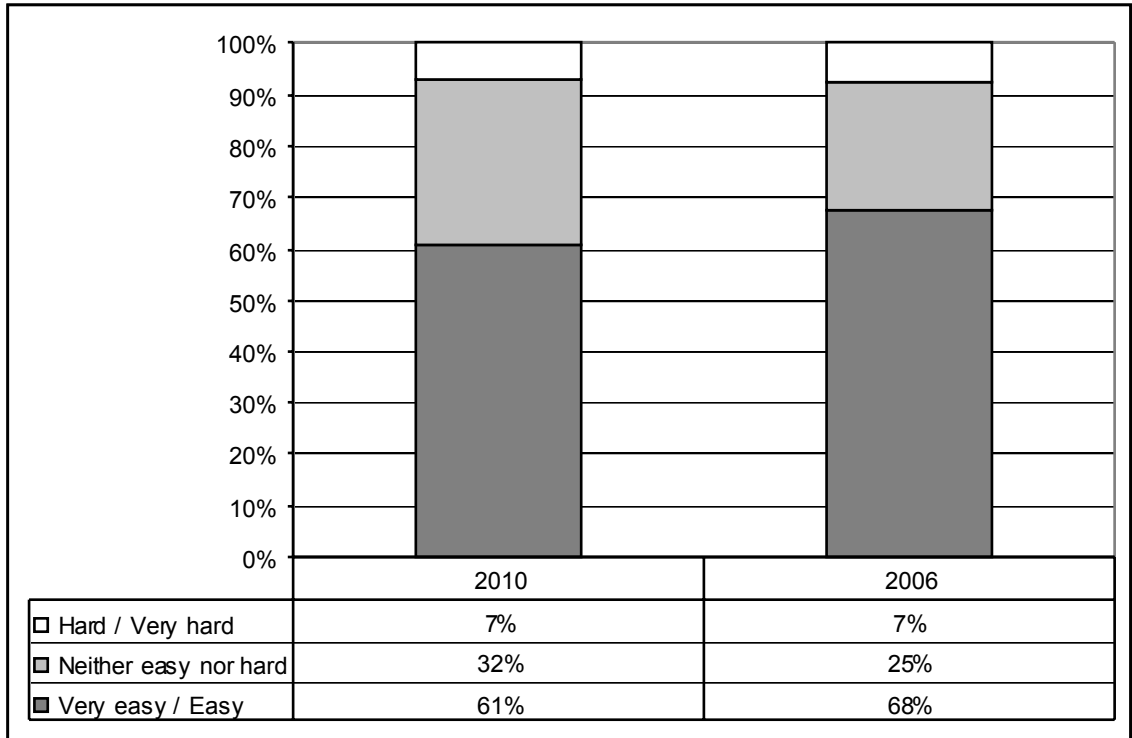
6.14 Viewpoint members who were less likely to say they had seen Hartlepool Borough Council’s new website were:

- aged 55 years and over
- not in employment
- not owner occupiers

Using Hartlepool Borough Councils new website

6.15 In 2010, 61 percent of users found the council’s new website easy or very easy to use. This is compared to 68 percent of users in 2006. See chart 6.7 for more information.

Chart 6.7 What stops you from using the internet or using it more?
(2010: N=305; 2006: N=266)

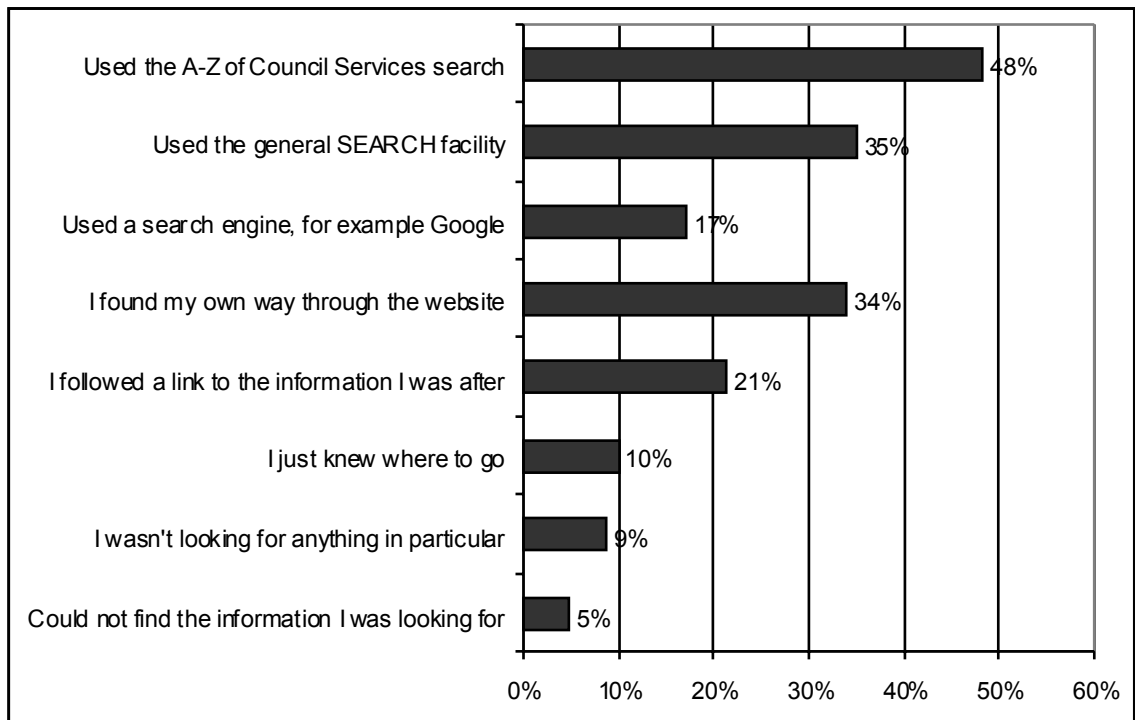


6.16 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

Finding information on Hartlepool Borough Councils new website

6.17 Viewpoint members were more likely to find the information they were looking for through using the A – Z of council Services search facility (48%). See chart 6.8 for more information.

Chart 6.8 How did you find the information you were looking for?
(N=306)



6.18 Viewpoint members aged 65 years and over were more likely to say they found the information they were looking for by:

- Following a link to the information they were after (44%)
- Finding their own way through the website (40%)
- Using the general search facility (39%)

6.19 If Viewpoint members could not find the information they were looking for, they were asked to tell us what it was they were looking for. In total, 12 comments were received. See chart 6.1 for more information.

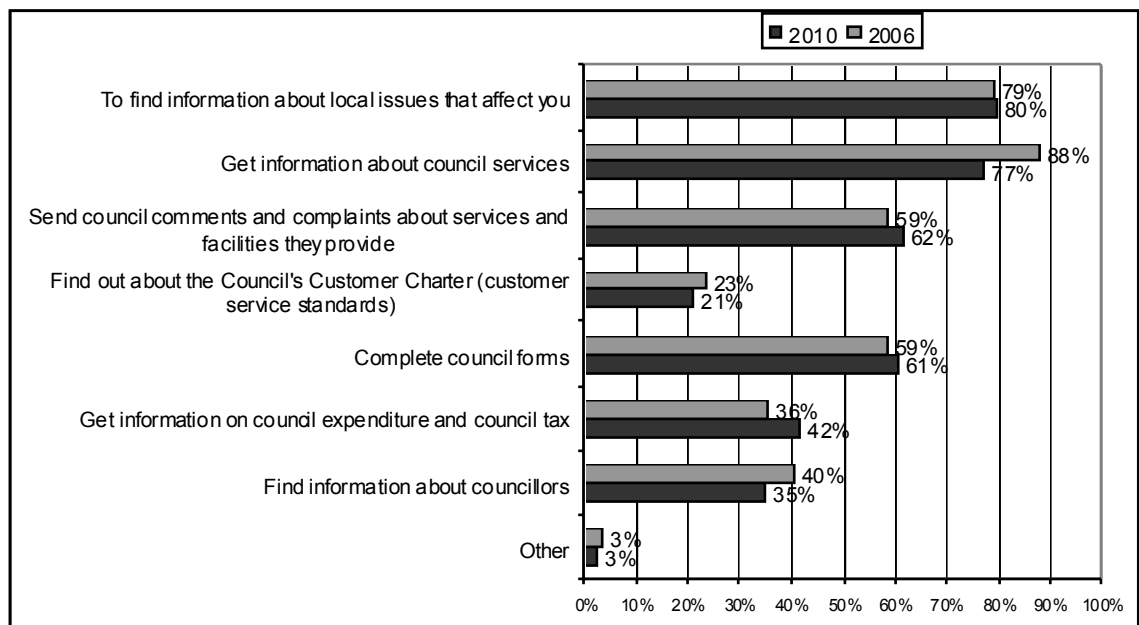
Table 6.1 If you were not able to find the information you were looking for, please describe what it was you were looking for.

	No. of comments
Information about leisure facilities	4
Council Tax Benefit information	2
Council employment application forms	2
Other	4
Total	(12)

Using Hartlepool Borough Councils new website in the future

6.20 In 2010, as in 2006, Viewpoint members were asked to tell us how they would like to use the council's website, and chart 6.9 below summarises the main findings. In 2010, eight out of ten (80%) members would like to use the council website to find information about local issues that affects them, and a similar number (77%) would like to get information about council services.

Chart 6.9 How would you like to use the Council website?
(2010: N=901; 2006: N=267)



6.21 There was no real difference to report upon from the detailed results.

7. Free swimming initiative

- 7.1 Viewpoint members were told how the government was running a Free Swim initiative for children under 16 and people aged 60 years and over. We wanted to know if Viewpoint members were aware of this.

Swimming at the Mill House Leisure Centre

- 7.2 First of all, we asked Viewpoint members if they, or anyone else in their household had been swimming at the Mill House leisure centre pool in the last 12 months, and over a third (35%) of respondents said they had.

- Yes - 35 per cent (405 respondents)
- No - 65 per cent (757 respondents)

- 7.3 The detailed results show that the following groups of people were less likely to say they, or members of their family, had been swimming at the Mill House leisure centre pool in the last 12 months:

- Members from the Central area of Hartlepool
- Members aged 65 years and over
- Members who are not working
- Members without children in the household

Knowledge of Free Swim Initiative

- 7.4 Next, we asked members if they had heard about the Free Swim scheme before receiving the latest Viewpoint survey, and exactly half of respondents said they had.

- Yes - 50 per cent (582 respondents)
- No - 50 per cent (578 respondents)

- 7.5 The detailed results show that the following groups of people were less likely to say they had heard about the free swim scheme:

- Males
- Members with children in the household
- Members with no cars in the household

Additional comments about the Free Swim Initiative

- 7.6 Finally, Viewpoint members were asked to tell us any suggestions they may have for improving or changing this scheme, and in total 203 comments were received (Table 7.1). Viewpoint members were most likely to suggest that free swimming is available for all, to improve the facilities, or to publicise 'Free Swims' more.

Table 7.1 Suggestions for future inclusion in Viewpoint surveys

	No. of comments
Make it free for all	(42)
Improve the facilities	(40)
Publicise it more	(39)
Free for students	(11)
Free for the young	(6)
Other	(65)
Total	(203)

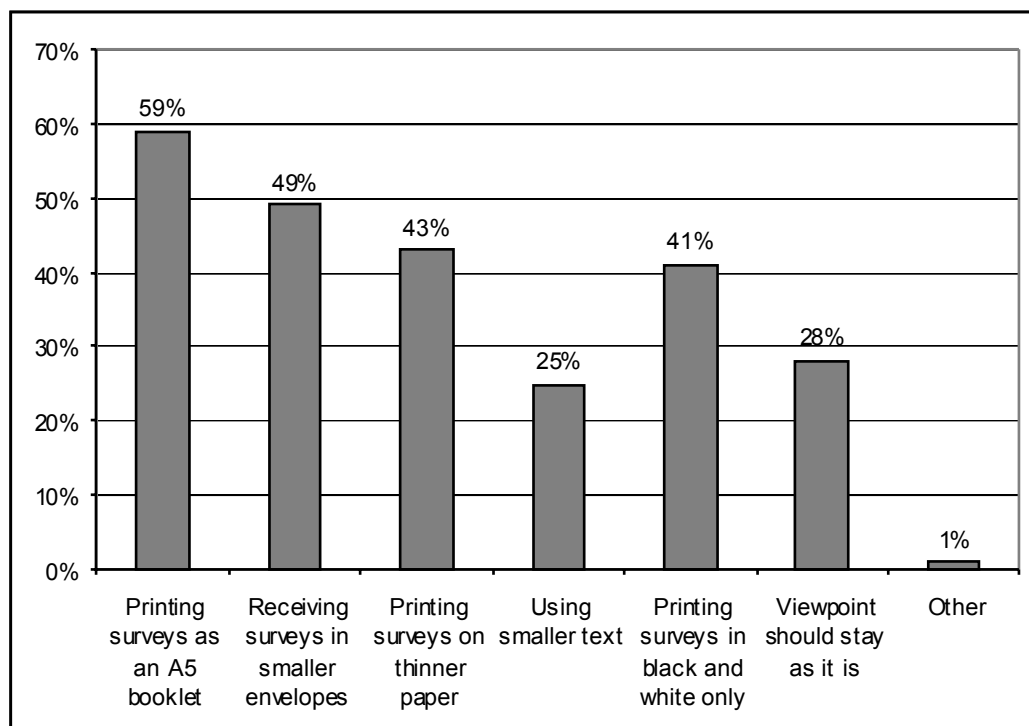
8. Viewpoint design

8.1 We told Viewpoint members how we were looking at ways to get the best value for money through Viewpoint. We presented members with a list of small changes we could make when producing this survey, which could make Viewpoint a little bit cheaper to produce. We wanted to know which changes members would be happy to see made to the paper survey.

Changes to the Viewpoint paper survey

8.2 Viewpoint members were more likely to say they would be interested in receiving surveys as an A5 booklet (59%), and to receive surveys in smaller envelopes (49%). There was not much support from Viewpoint members for surveys to use smaller text size (25%). See Chart 8.1 for more information.

Chart 8.1 Which of the following changes would you be happy to see made to the Viewpoint surveys? (N=1028)



8.3 Women were more likely than men to say they would be happy to receive Viewpoint surveys:

- As an A5 booklet
- In smaller envelopes
- Printed on thinner paper

9. Subjects for future Viewpoint surveys

9.1 Finally, Viewpoint members were asked to suggest any subjects they would like to see covered in future surveys (Table 9.1). In total 315 comments were made. Top of the list of suggestions was conditions of roads, followed by parking, and the Tall Ships event.

Table 9.1 Suggestions for future inclusion in Viewpoint surveys

	No. of comments
Condition of roads	35
Parking	20
Tall Ships event	16
Leisure facilities	15
Level of Council Tax	13
Dog fouling	13
Anti-social behaviour	10
Condition of pavements	10
Council spending	10
Viewpoint is good	9
Litter / street cleaning	9
Refuse collection	8
Environmental issues	7
Affordable housing	7
Traffic speed	7
Immigration	7
Councillors roles / expenses	6
Recycling	6
Other	107
Total	315

Appendix 1: Background Information on Viewpoint

Background

Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's Citizens' Panel, is one of the ways that the council consults and involves local people in the governance of Hartlepool. It is a statistically balanced panel of local people who receive questionnaires at regular intervals throughout the year, asking for their views on a variety of local issues facing the council and Hartlepool as a whole.

The panel was refreshed in 2009 with one third of the panel being replaced to ensure that each member only serves for a limited period of time. The refreshment was done by sending out a recruitment questionnaire to a number of Hartlepool residents who were selected at random from the electoral roll. From the returns approximately 1,400 local residents, with characteristics matching the profile of the local population, were selected for Viewpoint. The panel members are kept informed of the findings of the Viewpoint project, and what the council is doing in response, via a regular newsletter.

Aims of Viewpoint

The Viewpoint panel aims to:

- Listen to the community
- Involve local people in the council's decisions and in its policy planning and reviews
- Consult the panel regularly on important local issues
- Discover what the community priorities are for future council activities

Methodology

Viewpoint was launched in August 1999. Under its original name, Viewpoint 1000, a random sample of 10,000 residents was selected from the electoral register and each was sent a self-completion recruitment questionnaire. This provided all the necessary background information needed to obtain a statistically balanced sample of the total population.

Just less than 2,500 people from the 10,000 sample volunteered to take part and from this group a panel of 1,000 was selected to mirror the Hartlepool community as closely as possible. A range of variables was used to balance the sample, including gender, age and geographical location.

The panel is refreshed at regular intervals, a third of members having been replaced in 2009. Recruitment questionnaires were sent to 4,900 people selected at random from the edited electoral register. When the Place Survey was carried out in 2008, respondents were asked if they would be interested in taking part in the Viewpoint panel and during this recruitment exercise they were invited to join

the refreshed panel. Refreshing the panel in this way helps avoid the problems of drop-outs, consultation fatigue and respondents becoming local government “experts”.

The Viewpoint panel gives the authority the advantage of access to a large group of people from across the community willing to be involved in consultation exercises. The principal disadvantage is that, because all panel members are volunteers, there is a possibility that they may not be typical of the community as a whole. However, every effort has been made to ensure that the panel membership is in line with the demographic make up of the area and includes all sectors of the community.

As with most surveys there is a tendency for certain groups to respond less than others, for example, young male respondents. To address this, the data have been weighted slightly by age, gender and geographical location. However, when the weighted and unweighted results are compared there is very little difference in the overall results. The weighting has most effect when small minority groups are examined.

The report

All percentages in tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. In some instances the number of responses is greater than 100 per cent due to the fact that respondents have been asked to choose multiple answers. Also, because data are weighted, the total number of respondents shown in tables could be anything up to 1,200. Finally, in some questions, respondents who did not reply or answered “don’t know” were excluded from the analysis reported here.

Appendix 2: Background information on respondents

Table A1 Location of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
North	32	(382)	28	(244)
Central	38	(457)	40	(355)
South	30	(361)	32	(280)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

Table A2 Gender of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Male	47	(566)	47	(413)
Female	53	(634)	53	(466)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

Table A3 Age of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
17 to 34	28	(331)	15	(134)
35 to 44	20	(238)	17	(146)
45 to 54	18	(211)	21	(183)
55 to 64	14	(165)	24	(207)
65 years plus	21	(255)	23	(206)
No answer	-	-	#	(3)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

- = no response

= less than 0.5%

Table A4 Employment status of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Working	56	(668)	52	(456)
Not working	44	(526)	47	(417)
No answer	#	(6)	1	(6)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

= less than 0.5%

Table A5 Socio Economic Group of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
AB	20	(235)	20	(175)
C1	30	(361)	28	(250)
C2	25	(297)	26	(228)
DE	18	(215)	18	(161)
Don't know / no answer	8	(92)	7	(65)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

Table A6 Disability of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Yes – disabled	15	(183)	18	(156)
No – not disabled	84	(1007)	81	(714)
No answer	1	(10)	1	(9)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

Table A7 Car ownership of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
No car	20	(243)	18	(161)
One or more car	79	(952)	81	(713)
No answer	#	(5)	1	(5)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

= less than 0.5%

Table A8 Children under the age of 18 living in the household

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Children (0-18) in household	36	(432)	29	(254)
No children in household	62	(747)	67	(603)
No answer	2	(21)	3	(22)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

Table A9 House tenure

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Own your home	76	(910)	80	(704)
Rent your home	12	(147)	12	(104)
Live with relatives / other	12	(140)	8	(68)
No answer	#	(3)	#	(3)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(879)

= less than 0.5%

Appendix 3: Category definitions

Social Economic Group Definitions :

Social group		Occupation of Chief wage earner
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle class	Intermediate or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	Long term unemployed (6 plus months), State pensioners, etc. with no earnings, Casual workers and those without a regular income

Children in household definition:

Children in household	Children under the age of 18 living in the household
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Working and not working definitions :

Working	Full or part time or self employed
Not working	Full time education, unemployed, sick or disabled, retired or looking after the home

Older and younger definitions :

Younger	17 to 34 year olds
Older	65 years and over

Rented accommodation definition:

Rented accommodation	Rent from a private landlord or from a housing association
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Viewpoint Your Views are Important

This latest Viewpoint questionnaire seeks your views on a variety of local issues. It aims to find out what you and others from across the community think about these matters so that we can take your views into account when making decisions that affect your daily life. The questionnaire should only take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The issues covered in Viewpoint 32 include:

Perceptions of crime
Awareness of benefits
Help yourself to council services

The internet and you
Free swimming initiative
Viewpoint design

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions; we just want to find out what you think of our services and other important issues that affect your daily lives. If you can't complete a question or feel you don't want to answer a particular question, don't worry, just leave it blank and move on to the next one.

We will look at what Viewpoint members say and the council's response in the next Viewpoint newsletter, which you receive with your next Viewpoint questionnaire. All the information you provide is confidential and we will never pass your name or address to any other organisation. What's more, if at any time you wish to leave Viewpoint, for whatever reason, simply let us know.

If you require any further information, need a large print questionnaire or any help filling it in then please contact Lisa Anderson, Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY, Telephone: (direct line) 01429 523041, Email: lisa.anderson@hartlepool.gov.uk

We're back online! Remember, you can fill out this survey via the Internet.

If you think you would like to try this please contact me and let me know your email address in the space provided below. You can also use this space to let me know if you have already given us your email address, but have changed it. You will still receive your paper questionnaires, but will have the option of filling them out on paper or online!

To have a look around our online consultation site, 'Your Town, Your Say' go to:

<http://consultation.hartlepool.gov.uk>

My email address is: - _____

VP32 67% response rate, 879 completed questionnaires (all results are weighted to 1200 responses). # = less than 0.5%; - = no responses; * = excluded from calculations

Perceptions of crime

The council's Community Safety Team works closely with the Police and others, on a range of initiatives and problems, to help reduce crime and the fear of crime across Hartlepool. In order to help the Community Safety Team to plan for the future, the Council would like to know your thoughts on crime and the fear of crime in Hartlepool. We would like to find out how worried you are about becoming a victim of crime, and also if you have been a victim of crime in the past year. We would also like to find out your thoughts on community safety, your perception of anti-social behaviour and your crime and community safety concerns.

If you would like any further information on this topic please call Alison Mawson (01429) 284342 or e-mail alison.mawson@hartlepool.gov.uk.

1. How safe do you feel walking alone in your local neighbourhood AFTER DARK?
(Please tick one box only) (N=1149)

Very safe	11%
Fairly safe	43%
Neither safe nor unsafe	9%
A bit unsafe	19%
Very unsafe	9%
Don't know / don't go out alone	10%

2. Most of us worry at sometime about becoming a victim of crime. How worried are you about the different types of crime listed below?
(Please tick one box on each line)

	Very worried %	Fairly worried %	Not very worried %	Not at all worried %	Total worried %	Total not worried %
Having your home broken into and something stolen (N=1143)	15	39	40	7	53	47
Being mugged or robbed (N=1145)	18	30	41	10	48	52
Having your car stolen (N=1016)	14	32	46	8	46	54
Having things stolen from your car (N=1119)	13	35	45	7	49	32
Being physically attacked by stranger (N=1139)	19	28	43	11	46	54
Being insulted or pestered by anyone, while in the street or a public place (N=1144)	16	33	39	12	49	51
Being subject to a physical attack because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion (N=905)	6	6	32	57	12	88

3. During the last 12 months, have you been a victim of any of the crimes listed below: (Please tick all that apply) (N=1124)

Thief of a vehicle	#	
Attempted theft of a vehicle	1%	
Theft of belongings from a vehicle	2%	
Attempted burglary of home	1%	
Burglary of home	1%	
Robbery (including mugging)	1%	
Vandalism	9%	
Garden shed/allotment	3%	
Criminal damage to car	9%	
Prefer not to reveal	1%	
No crimes in last 12 months	79%	Go To Q6
Other (please specify _____)	3%	

4. Thinking about those crimes committed in the last 12 months, did you report them to the police? (Please tick one box only) (N=268)

Yes, all crimes were reported	47%
Some crimes were reported and some were not	13%
No, no crimes were reported	40%
Not applicable/not a victim of crime	*

5. If you did not report a crime to the police, please tell us why: (Please tick all that apply) (N=138)

Dislike/fear of police	2%
Fear of reprisal by offender/could make matters worse	4%
Police could not have done anything	54%
Police not interested/would not have done anything	42%
Too much trouble/inconvenient	15%
No loss/damage	13%
Don't know	*
Not applicable	*
Other (please specify _____)	5%

Views on Anti-social Behaviour

6. How well informed do you feel you are about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area? (Please tick one box only) (N=1112)

Very well informed	6%
Fairly well informed	34%
Not very well informed	39%
Not at all well informed	21%
Don't know	*

7. Thinking about your local area, how much of a problem do you think are...? (Please tick one box on each line)

	A very big problem %	A fairly big problem %	Not a very big problem %	Not a problem at all %	Very/ fairly big problem %	Total not a problem %
Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (N=1132)	25	29	34	12	54	46
People not treating other people with respect and consideration (N=1138)	19	31	36	14	50	50
Noisy neighbours or loud parties (N=1130)	6	10	43	41	16	84
Teenagers hanging around on the streets (N=1142)	16	4	43	17	40	60
Rubbish and litter lying around (N=1153)	21	33	34	17	54	46
People being drunk or rowdy in public places (N=1129)	8	17	48	27	25	75
Abandoned or burnt out cars (N=1077)	1	2	21	76	3	97
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles (N=1128)	7	17	40	35	24	76
People using or dealing drugs (N=981)	14	19	29	39	33	67
Underage drinking (N=1049)	20	26	31	23	46	54

8. Overall, how much of a problem would you say anti-social behaviour is in your local area? (N=1061)

A very big problem	6%
A fairly big problem	24%
Not a very big problem	55%
Not a problem at all	15%
<hr/>	
Big problem	29%
Not a problem	71%

9. **To what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?**
(Please tick one box only) (N=922)

Definitely agree	10%
Tend to agree	51%
Tend to disagree	11%
Definitely disagree	6%
Don't know	*
Too few people in local area	4%
All the same background	18%

Crime & Community Safety Concerns

10. **How concerned are you about the following in your local area?**
(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EACH LINE)

	Very concerned %	Fairly concerned %	Not very concerned %	Not at all concerned %	Concerned %	Not concerned %
Parking on grass verges / pavements (N=1124)	24	25	30	21	48	52
Overgrown gardens (N=1114)	5	11	45	40	15	85
Empty or boarded up properties (N=1105)	7	12	30	51	19	81
Lack of safe areas for young children to play (N=1111)	16	31	29	24	47	53
Lack of community / resident groups (N=1059)	7	22	42	29	28	72
Speeding traffic (N=1137)	26	35	22	17	61	39

11. **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?** (N=1160)

Very satisfied	34%
Fairly satisfied	50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%
Very dissatisfied	2%
Don't know	*

Awareness of benefits

Hartlepool Borough Council administers a range of benefits, such as council tax benefit, housing benefit and second adult rebate. However, some people who are entitled to these benefits do not claim them. We would like to find out if people know where they can go for advice and information about benefits, and if they know how to claim. Please try to answer the questions even if you do not currently claim any benefits.

If you would like any further information on this topic please call Julie Pullman (01429) 523108 or e-mail Julie.pullman@hartlepool.gov.uk

- 12. Before receiving this survey, did you know that the following groups of people could claim benefits, such as housing and council tax benefit and second adult rebate? Please tick all that you knew about. (N=1109)**

Pensioners	88%
People who are unemployed	91%
People who are working	36%
People who are self employed	23%
Students	50%
Parents	45%

- 13. Did you know you could fill out an application to apply for benefits in the following ways? Please tick all that you knew about. (N=912)**

By visiting the Civic Centre	89%
Through arranging a home visit	38%
By visiting a Benefits Surgery at a Housing Hartlepool Office	40%

- 14. If you needed advice and information about benefits, where would you go for it? Please tick all that apply. (N=1090)**

On the council's website	37%
Would phone the council	48%
Would email the council	10%
Would visit the civic centre	52%
Independent Advice Agency	19%
Information board at the central library	8%
Other (please specify _____)	2%
Other website	2%
Consumer Advice Bureau	2%
Job Centre	1%

15. Where would you like to see information about benefits? Please tick all that apply.
(N=1101)

Information in local newspapers / council magazines	57%
Leaflets / posters left at council buildings and libraries	37%
Leaflets delivered to your home	56%
Council website	44%
Information board at the central library	25%
Other (Please specify _____)	2%

Help yourself to council services

The council is interested in developing methods to help members of the public to serve themselves to council services. Methods such as online forms, automated telephone service, speech recognition telephone service, by text or SMS, or kiosks with computer Pay for it, apply for it, report it and book it. We would like to ask you some questions about which methods you would be interested in using to contact the council.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact Christine Armstrong on (01642) 523016 or via e-mail Christine.Armstrong@hartlepool.gov.uk

16. Firstly, have you contacted the council using any of the following methods in the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) (N=1147)

By phone	56%
By email	12%
Face to face	23%
Through Council's website (online services)	10%
None of the above	31%

17. If you would like to contact the council using a kiosk, where would you like to go to use one? (Please tick all that apply) (N=1093)

Central library	27%
Local libraries	26%
Council offices (main)	26%
Community centres	14%
Mobile buses	8%
The main office at the Civic Centre	47%
Museum of Hartlepool	5%
None of the above	20%
Other (please specify _____)	1%

18. If you could choose how to get in touch with the council for each of the following services / reasons, please tell us which self service methods you would prefer to use?

a. To pay for things, such as council tax, business rates, and car parking fines, etc. (Please tick all that apply) (N=1153)

Online forms	47%
Automated telephone service (press 1, press 2, etc)	27%
Speech recognition telephone service	6%
By text or SMS	7%
Kiosk with computers	16%
None of the above	34%

b. To apply for things, such as planning applications, jobs at the council, assisted bin collections. (Please tick all that apply) (N=1155)

Online forms	52%
Automated telephone service (press 1, press 2, etc)	30%
Speech recognition telephone service	8%
By text or SMS	7%
Kiosk with computers	15%
None of the above	27%

c. To report things such as abandoned cars, benefit fraud, drug related litter, missed bin collections, streetlight problems. (Please tick all that apply) (N=1156)

Online forms	40%
Automated telephone service (press 1, press 2, etc.)	44%
Speech recognition telephone service	12%
By text or SMS	12%
Kiosk with computers	13%
None of the above	26%

d. To book things such as tickets for the Town Hall, sports facilities, community centres, bulky household waste. (Please tick all that apply) (N=1158)

Online forms	49%
Automated telephone service (press 1, press 2, etc.)	42%
Speech recognition telephone service	11%
By text or SMS	12%
Kiosk with computers	15%
None of the above	23%

19. What would encourage you to use self service methods more?
 (Please tick all that apply) (N=1134)

If it was quick and easy to use	69%
If I could be sure payments were secure	58%
If it was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	46%
If it saved time	46%
If it saved me money	51%
If I was shown how to use it	22%
If I received confirmation that it had worked	52%
None of the above	11%
Other (please specify _____)	1%

20. What, if anything, do you think would be the benefits of being able to deal with Hartlepool Borough Council via the internet or any other electronic means?
 (Please tick all that apply) (N=998)

Would be dealt with more quickly	50%
Would be easier to get information	43%
Would save time	57%
Deal with the council at more convenient times	53%
Deal with the council from convenient locations	33%
It would save me money	24%
It would cost less to run	29%
Simpler to use than the current system	17%
Would have more choice how to deal with the council	24%
Mistakes would be less likely to happen	16%
None	16%
Don't know	*
Other (please specify _____)	#

21. What, if anything, do you think would be the drawbacks of being able to deal with Hartlepool Borough Council via the internet or any other electronic means? (Please tick all that apply) (N=1077)

Details may not be confidential	59%
Problem with equipment	41%
If it broke down it might lose details	49%
It is too impersonal	38%
Not private enough for sensitive issues	42%
May find it difficult to use	27%
No-one to help with the process	27%
Not able to get to a computer	18%
There would be more chance of fraud	33%
Cost me more e.g. phone bill	18%
None	10%
Don't know	*
Other (please specify _____)	1%

The internet and you

Hartlepool Borough Council has a new website, which was launched in February 2010. Through the Council website you can access all sorts of information on council services, councillors, and local information. We would like to ask you a few questions about if and where you use the internet, whether you have seen the council's new website, and how you would like to use it to contact the council.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact Paul Diaz on (01429) 284280 or via e-mail paul.diaz@hartlepool.gov.uk

22. Do you have a computer with internet connection in your home? (N=1173)

Yes	78%
No	22%

23. Are you aware that you can access the internet for free from your local library? (N=1166)

Yes	76%
No	24%

In some towns across the country, councils provide public internet access points for people who are not on the internet at home or who want to contact the council quickly.

24. Please tell us where you would like to be able to access local council services via the internet. E.g., where would you like to report a missed bin collection or enquire about your council tax? (Please tick all that apply). (N=1038)

Banks	8%
Post Office	30%
Supermarket	32%
Shopping Centres	37%
Schools	11%
Hospitals	9%
Doctors' surgeries	9%
Kiosks (similar to telephone boxes but with a computer in it)	18%
Not interested in internet contact	3%
Other place (please specify _____)	1%
At home	2%
In libraries	2%

25. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Please tick one box on each line)

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
The internet is too impersonal (N=985)	46%	54%	*
It's dangerous to do financial transactions over the internet (N=985)	46%	54%	*
I prefer to talk face to face when I contact the council (N=1059)	68%	32%	*
I think the internet is really fast for finding out information (N=951)	92%	8%	*
The internet allows me to access information 24hrs a day (N=968)	96%	4%	*
I prefer telephone contact to using the internet (N=1015)	56%	44%	*
I would like to use the internet more but don't have access to it (N=917)	9%	91%	*
I do have a PC connected to the internet but don't know how to use it (N=955)	7%	93%	*
I'm not interested in computers and the internet (N=1019)	19%	81%	*
I'd like to know more about computers and the internet (N=949)	27%	73%	*

26. What stops you from using the internet or using it more?
 (Please tick all that apply) (N=761)

No computer/access to computer	20%
Not interested	28%
Lack of time	31%
Too expensive	11%
It's for younger people	7%
Can use it for very basic things only	18%
Don't know how to use it at all	16%
Not safe or secure	22%
Don't know	*
Other (Please specify _____)	#
Nothing	10%

27. Hartlepool Borough Council launched their new website in February 2010. It includes information on council services, councillors and local events. Have you seen the Hartlepool Borough Council's new website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk? (Please tick one box only) (N=1157)

Yes	27%	Go to Qu28
No	67%	Go to Qu31
Don't know	*	Go to Qu31
Did not know it existed	7%	Go to Qu31

28. If you have used Hartlepool Council's new website, how easy did you find it to use? (Please tick one box only) (N=305)

Very easy	21%
Easy	39%
Neither easy nor hard	32%
Hard	6%
Very hard	1%
Very easy / easy	61%
Hard / very hard	7%

29. How did you find the information you were looking for?

(Please tick all that apply) (N=306)

Used the A – Z of Council Services search	48%	
Used the general SEARCH facility	35%	
Used a search engine, for example Google	17%	
I found my own way through the website	34%	
I followed a link to the information I was after	21%	
I just knew where to go	10%	
I wasn't looking for anything in particular	9%	
Could not find the information I was looking for	5%	Go to Q30
Don't know	*	
Other (Please specify _____)	0	

30. If you could not find the information you were looking for, could you please describe what it was you were you looking for in the box below. If you found the information you were looking for, please go to Qu31. (12 comments)

Information about leisure facilities (4 comments)
 Council tax benefit information (2 comments)
 Council employment application forms (2 comments)
 Other (4 comments)

31. How would you like to use the Council website? (Please tick all that apply) (N=901)

To find information about local issues that affect you	80%
Get information about council services (e.g., planning, recycling, council jobs)	77%
Send council comments and complaints about services and facilities they provide	62%
Find out about the Council's Customer Charter (customer service standards)	21%
Complete council forms (e.g., to arrange to get your bulky waste collected)	61%
Get information on council expenditure and council tax	42%
Find information about councillors	35%
Don't know	*
Other (Please specify _____)	3%

Free swim initiative

At present the government is running the Free Swimming Initiative. In Hartlepool this means that children under 16 can swim free after school, at weekends and in the holidays. And people aged 60 and over can swim for free at most times when the Mill House pool is open for general use.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact Ian Gray on (01642) 284123 or via e-mail ian.gray@hartlepool.gov.uk

33. Have you, or anyone else in your household, been swimming at the Mill House leisure centre pool in the last 12 months? (N=1162)

Yes	35%
No	65%

34. Had you heard about the Free Swims scheme before today? (N=1160)

Yes	50%
No	50%

35. Do you have any suggestions for improving or changing this scheme – perhaps changing the times or days for free swims or who can swim free? Please use the space below to tell us about them. (203 comments)

Make the free for all (42 comments)

Improve the facilities (40 comments)

Publicise it more (39 comments)

Free for students (11 comments)

Free for the young (6 comments)

Other (65 comments)

Viewpoint design

We are looking at ways we can get the best value for money through Viewpoint. We have thought about a range of small changes we can make to produce this survey, which could make Viewpoint a little bit cheaper to produce. We would like to know which changes you would be happy to see made to the Viewpoint paper surveys.

36. Which of the following changes would you be happy to see made to the Viewpoint paper surveys? (Please tick all that apply) (N=1028)

Printing surveys as an A5 booklet (half the current size)	59%
Receiving surveys in smaller envelopes (current size folded in half)	49%
Printing surveys on thinner paper	43%
Using smaller text (such as this size, or this size)	25%
Printing surveys in black and white only	41%
None of the above, Viewpoint should stay as it is	28%
Don't know	*
Other (please specify _____)	1%

And finally.....

Please use the space below to suggest any subjects that you would like to see covered in future Viewpoint surveys or any further comments you would like to make about Viewpoint in general. (315 comments)

Condition of roads (35 comments)
Parking (20 comments)
Tall ships event (16 comments)
Leisure facilities (15 comments)
Level of Council Tax (13 comments)
Dog fouling (13 comments)
Anti-social behaviour (10 comments)
Condition of pavements (10 comments)
Council spending (10 comments)
Viewpoint is good (9 comments)
Litter / street cleaning (9 comments)
Refuse collection (8 comments)
Environmental issues (7 comments)
Affordable housing (7 comments)
Traffic speed (7 comments)
Immigration (7 comments)
Councillors roles / expenses (6 comments)
Recycling (6 comments)
Other (107 comments)

Thank you for completing this round of Viewpoint please return the questionnaire in the post-paid envelope by 16th April 2010

Viewpoint

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us. Tel No: 523041

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको अनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

(Hindi)

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

(Arabic)

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

(Bengali)

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

(Cantonese)

ئەگەر دەتەوی ئەم بەلگەییەت بە زمانیکی که یا بە فۆرمیکی که هەبی، یا پیویستت بە موتەرجم هەییە، تکایە پەویەندیمان پیوه بکه

(Kurdish)

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

(Polish)

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

(Urdu)

By completing this questionnaire you give Hartlepool Borough Council the authority to collect and retain information about you. The information collected about you will be held securely and will be processed to produce statistical reports. No personal data will be disclosed. In order to run Viewpoint Citizens Panel, the Council has entered into a contract with ADTS, and will share the information with that organisation.

For the purposes of provision of this service, ADTS acts as a department of the Council and is bound by the contract to treat your information confidentially. Hartlepool Borough Council is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.



Viewpoint

Welcome to the Summer 2010 Viewpoint newsletter

This newsletter includes:

- **Results from Viewpoint 32, which asked you about:**
 - ✓ Free swimming initiative
 - ✓ Anti-social Behaviour
 - ✓ Victims of crime
 - ✓ Crime and community safety concerns
 - ✓ Help yourself to council services
 - ✓ Awareness of benefits
 - ✓ The internet and you
 - ✓ Viewpoint design – what you said, and what I plan to do
- **Feedback from the following past Viewpoint topics:**
 - ✓ Climate change
 - ✓ The future of Viewpoint
 - ✓ Night time economy
 - ✓ E-safety and young people
 - ✓ Operation Cleansweep
 - ✓ Taxis & private hire vehicles

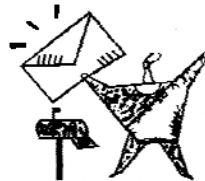


Viewpoint 32, March 2010

Response rate 68%

Questionnaires returned: 879

- I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for making the time and effort to complete and return this survey.



- As you can see, we had a response rate of **68%** with **879** Viewpoint members returning their surveys.

Free Swimming Initiative

- We wanted to find out if Viewpoint members or anyone else in your household had been swimming at Mill House Leisure Centre in the last year and 35% of you said you had.
- Next I wanted to know if you had heard about the Free Swims scheme. This scheme allows children under 16 years and adults over 60 years to swim for free at certain times when Mill House pool is open for general use. Half of you said you had heard about this scheme.



Anti-social behaviour

- Six out of ten Viewpoint members think you are not well informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area.
- When thinking about your local areas, you were more likely to think the following were big problems:
 - ✓ Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (54%)
 - ✓ Rubbish and litter lying around (54%)
 - ✓ People not treating other people with respect and consideration (50%)
- Seven out of ten Viewpoint members do not think anti social behaviour is a big problem in their local area and six out of ten of you agreed that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Victims of crime

- You said you were worried about becoming a victim of the following types of crime:
 - ✓ Having your home broken into and something stolen (53%)
 - ✓ Having things stolen from your car (49%)
 - ✓ Being insulted or pestered by anyone, while in the street or public place (49%)
 - ✓ Being mugged or robbed (48%)
- Thankfully, the majority of you had not been a victim of crime in the last 12 months. For those members who had been victims of crime, they were more likely to be victims of vandalism or criminal damage to their car.
- Out of the Viewpoint members who had been victims of crime in the last year, four out of ten members did not report the crime to the police. The main reasons given for this were:
 - ✓ Police could not have done anything (54%)
 - ✓ Police not interested / would not have done anything (42%)



Crime and community safety concerns

- You said you were more likely to be concerned about the following in your area:
 - ✓ Speeding traffic (61%)
 - ✓ Parking on grass verges and pavements (48%)
 - ✓ Lack of safe areas for young children to play (47%)
- We asked you how safe you feel walking alone in your local neighbourhood after dark and three out of five of you said you feel either fairly or very safe.
- Overall, the majority (84%) of Viewpoint members are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.



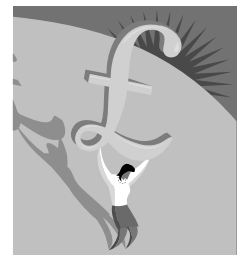
Help yourself to council services

- We told you how the Council is interested in developing methods to help members of the public to serve themselves to Council services. Methods such as online forms, automated telephone services, speech recognition telephone services, by text or SMS, or through kiosks with computers. You said you would prefer to use:
 - ✓ Online forms to pay for things such as council tax, business rates, and car parking fines, planning applications, jobs at the council, and assisted bin collections;
 - ✓ Automated telephone service OR online forms to report things such as abandoned cars, benefit fraud, drug related litter, missed bin collections, and streetlight problems, to book things such as tickets for the Town Hall, sports facilities, community centres, and bulky household waste collections.
- When asked where you like to go to contact the council using a kiosk, the majority of you said you would like to go the main office at the civic centre.
- You thought the main benefits of being able to deal with the Council via the internet or by any other electronic means would be it would save time, enable you to deal with the council at more convenient times, and be dealt with more quickly. Finally, you thought the main drawbacks of being able to deal with the Council via the internet or by any other electronic means would be that details may not be confidential, if it broke down it might lose details, and there may be problems with equipment.



Awareness of benefits

- We wanted to find out if people know where they can go for advice and information about benefits and if they know how to make a claim.
- Viewpoint members were more likely to tell us they did not know that people who are self employed and people who are working are entitled to claim benefits. You were also least likely to know you could fill out an application to apply for benefits through arranging a home visit and by visiting a Benefits Surgery at a Housing Hartlepool office.
- If you needed advice and information about benefits, you said you would visit the civic centre or call the council. Viewpoint members were least likely to say they would look on an information board at the central library or email the council
- Finally, Viewpoint members told us they would like to see information about benefits in local newspapers such as the Hartlepool Mail, and in council magazines such as Hartbeat. Viewpoint members would also like to see leaflets delivered to their home.



The internet and you



- Nearly eight out of ten of you have a computer with internet connection in your home, and three quarters of you are aware you can access the internet free from your local library.
- You told us you would like to be able to access local Council services via the internet at:
 - ✓ Shopping centres (37%)
 - ✓ Supermarkets (30%)
 - ✓ The Post Office (30%)
- We told you how the Council launched their new website in February 2010. We wanted to know if Viewpoint members had seen the Council's new website, and a quarter of you said you had. Of these, six out of ten found the website easy or very easy to use.
- Viewpoint members were more likely to find the information they were looking for by:
 - ✓ Using the A – Z of Council Services facility (48%)
 - ✓ Using the general search facility (35%)
 - ✓ Finding your own way through the website (34%)
- Finally, Viewpoint members told us they would like to use the Council website to find information about:
 - ✓ Local issues that affect them (80%)
 - ✓ Council services (77%)

Viewpoint design: what you said

- I asked you what changes you would be happy to see made to the Viewpoint paper survey to help the Council get the best value for money. You said:
 - ✓ Printing surveys as an A5 booklet (59%)
 - ✓ Receiving surveys in smaller envelopes (49%)
 - ✓ Printing surveys on thinner paper (43%)
 - ✓ Printing surveys in black & white only (41%)
 - ✓ Viewpoint should stay as it is (28%)
 - ✓ Using smaller text (25%)

Viewpoint design: what I plan to do

- I would like to say a big thank you for this feedback. It has helped me to see what changes you would be happy to see and which ones you do not want to see made to Viewpoint.
- After looking at what you have said, I have decided to use smaller envelopes to send out surveys when possible, and to print the majority of the survey in black and white.
- I will look into the cost and quality of printing surveys on thinner paper and see how well Viewpoint questions will fit into an A5 booklet.

What has happened because of Viewpoint?

- We've asked you questions about a lot of topics over the past couple of years and you may sometimes wonder what happens to the information you give us. The following section is to give you some feedback about how the council has used some of the Viewpoint findings.

Climate change (Viewpoint 23, November 2007)



- In November 2007 we asked you what, if anything, would motivate or encourage you to do more to help lessen the impacts of climate change, and over half of you said if Hartlepool Council and Hartlepool businesses lead by example.
- As reported in the Hartlepool Mail on 7th April 2010, the Council is committed to minimising its environmental impact and has produced a Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan to address the issue of climate change and to take action to reduce carbon dioxide emissions resulting from the provision of services by the council.
- In order to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 35% over the next five years, which in total could make financial savings of £2.6 million, the Council propose to take the following actions, amongst others:
 - ✓ Installing a Voltage Optimisation unit at the Civic Centre, which regulates the voltage of the incoming electricity supply to reduce energy consumption and extend the life of electrical appliances;
 - ✓ Undertaking an education and awareness raising campaign for all staff to ensure good housekeeping practices are adopted, which alone can lead to a 10 per cent reduction in energy use;
 - ✓ Installing LED streetlights, which are more efficient and provide a better quality of white light, have a longer lifespan than conventional streetlights and require less maintenance. This will not only reduce carbon emissions and running costs significantly, but will also make streets safer;
 - ✓ Trialling low carbon vehicles, including electric vehicles. Electric charging points are being installed around the town to make the transition to low carbon transport possible;
 - ✓ Relighting the sports hall at Mill House Leisure Centre which will significantly reduce running costs and carbon emissions.
- For more information about the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan, or to find out what else the Council is doing to reduce it's carbon footprint, please contact Paul Hurwood on 01429 284276 or paul.hurwood@hartlepool.gov.uk

The future of *Viewpoint* (Viewpoint 28, April 2009)

- Last year I asked you some questions about Viewpoint. I wanted to know how easy you find it to fill in your Viewpoint surveys and what you think about the Viewpoint newsletters.
- You told me you needed more space in the surveys to write in comments. As a result, I have increased the amount of space available for comments in both the paper survey and online version. And remember – there is always space at the end of the survey to continue comments, to provide additional comments or to let me know about any ideas you may have for future surveys.
- When thinking about the newsletter, Viewpoint members told me they would like to see more detail included, and they would like to find out more about what has changed as a result of filling in their Viewpoint surveys. Over the past couple of years I have regularly included feedback about what has been done with the information you have provided. Where possible, all topics included in Viewpoint will have some feedback provided through this newsletter.

Night Time Economy (Viewpoint 25, May 2008)

- In May 2008 we asked for your views on the Night time Economy in Hartlepool – particularly your thoughts on the town centre after 9 o'clock in the evening.
- Many people thought there were too many pubs/clubs in the area and, as a result, the Council's Licensing Policy is likely to make it harder for new pubs/clubs to open.
- The Council has also formed a task force with Cleveland Police and other agencies to tackle the problems of crime and disorder that occur in the area.



E-safety and young people (Viewpoint 28, April 2009)

- We recently asked you some questions about e-safety and young people and the information you provided has been used to help create the Council's e-safety strategy and action plan. This plan has been written to help parents and people who work with children throughout Hartlepool.
- In addition to this, you told us you thought parents would like to receive information about what they can do at home to help protect their children, and said that this information should be sent out through leaflets from schools.
- As a result, all secondary schools in Hartlepool have received the 'Ashleigh's Rules' cards to distribute to all students. This card outlines the rules for keeping safe on social networking sites, and will also be available through youth groups and in youth venues.

Operation Cleansweep (Viewpoint 27, November 2008)



- In November 2008 we asked you some questions about Operation Cleansweep, which is a campaign that brings together a number of organisations to tackle issues in neighbourhoods.
- Before receiving the questionnaire, less than half of you had heard of Operation Cleansweep, and only ten per cent of you said you remember Operation Cleansweep visiting your local area. Operation Cleansweep has recently been rebranded, and now uses the same logo (see above) on advertising boards, posters, vehicles, and hi-visibility vests of Operation Cleansweep staff.
- Another key change to Operation Cleansweep is that areas are now chosen based on need, rather than just rotating through the different areas of Hartlepool. Also, each Operation Cleansweep is tailored to suit the needs of that particular area. These needs are identified by Police Community Support Officers, residents, key Council officers, and elected members.
- We asked to let us know what you would find useful should Operation Cleansweep visit your area again. You said you would find the following useful:
 - ✓ Patrols by police and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) (66%)
 - ✓ Home safety checks / crime prevention goody bags / police leaflets (43%)
 - ✓ Security marking peoples property with 'Smartwater' (31%)
- For each Operation Cleansweep campaign, Police Community Support Officers will knock on each door within the Cleansweep area to explain the concept of Operation Cleansweep, to provide information on community safety and introduce residents to Ringmaster (Neighbourhood Watch), to offer to Security mark property with Smartwater, and to offer Fire Safety checks.

Taxis and private hire vehicles, (Viewpoint 27, November 2008)

- In 2008 we asked questions about taxi provision in Hartlepool. Just under half of you said you would appreciate the availability of a female driver service. This information was passed on to local taxi providers who have been encouraged to employ more female drivers.
- We also asked whether the introduction of a 5 Star rating scheme for taxis would be a good idea. The majority of you thought it would and, as a result, Hartlepool Council is now working with the other Tees Valley local authorities to see how taxi standards can be improved across the region.

And finally...

e-consultation Your Town, Your Say

<http://consultation.hartlepool.gov.uk>

- Because of the recent changes made to the Council's website, Your Town, Your Say looks different too. But don't worry, it is still as easy to use as before. We hope you will like it just as much as the previous site.
- In case you didn't know by now - you can fill out your Viewpoint surveys online. All you have to do is let us know your email address.
- You will still receive paper questionnaires, but will have the option of filling them out on paper or online. Anyone who does not complete their online survey within the first two weeks will automatically be sent out a paper survey.
- Even if you don't want to fill out your surveys online, why not have a look around the website to see the results, reports and newsletters from past Viewpoints. You can also take part in and see the results from other consultations. We even have an anonymous **Comments and Queries** consultation where we do our best to upload a response from the Council.
- If you have any problems finding your way around the new look site, please just get in touch with me.



Please contact me if...

- You require any more information about this newsletter.
- You would like more detailed results from any of the previous phases of Viewpoint (full copies are also available online and at all local libraries).
- You think you would like to try filling in your surveys online.
- You have previously given us your email address but have changed it.
- You have any questions about Viewpoint or the council's e-consultation system.

My contact information is...

Name: Lisa Anderson

Phone: 01429 523041

Email: lisa.anderson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Website: <http://consultation.hartlepool.gov.uk>



**Please complete the latest questionnaire and
return it by 6th August 2010.
Your views are important!**



PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

26^h October 2010



Report of: Head of Performance and Partnerships

Subject: CORPORATE COMPLAINTS – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2010

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to the Portfolio Holder on corporate complaints performance for the second quarter of 2010/11.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report covers performance information on numbers of complaints, timescales for investigation and outcomes of investigations for formal complaints dealt with in the second quarter of 2010/11. A total of 20 formal complaints were received in the quarter. Sixteen of these were responded to within authority deadlines. Fourteen out of 20 complaints were upheld in full or in part.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Member has responsibility for performance management issues.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio Holder meeting on 26th October 2010

6. DECISION REQUIRED

That the report be noted.

Report of: Head of Performance and Partnerships

Subject: CORPORATE COMPLAINTS – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2010

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to the Portfolio Holder on corporate complaints performance for the second quarter of 2010/11.

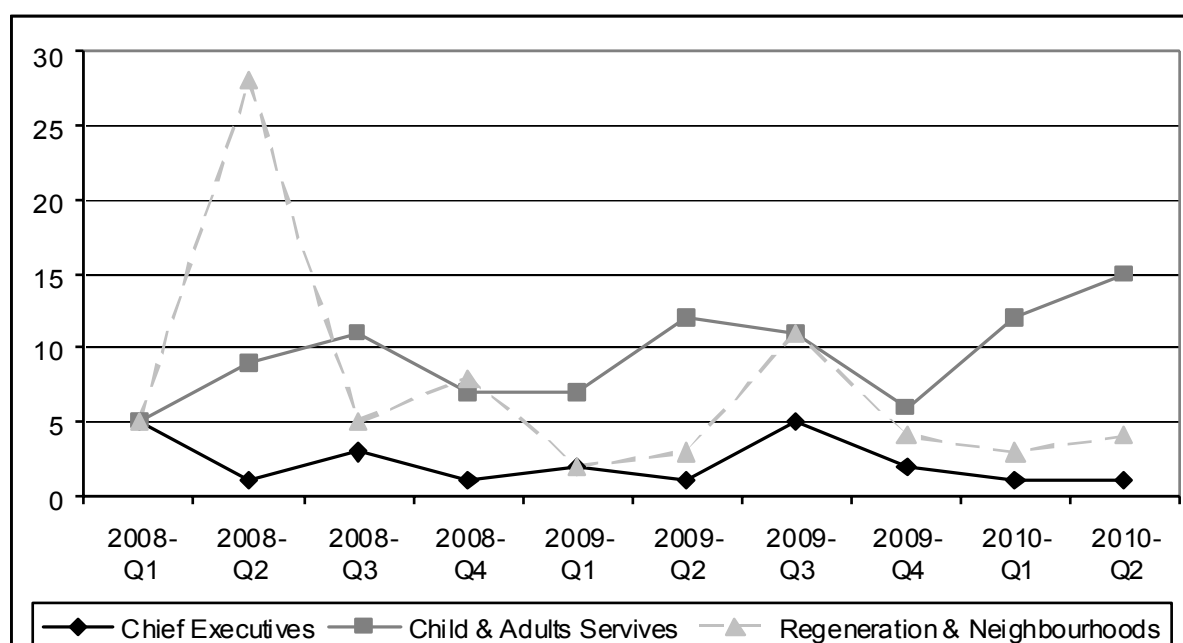
2. FORMAL COMPLAINTS INFORMATION – April – June 2010

- 2.1 In the second quarter of 2010/11, a total of 6 formal corporate complaints were recorded by departments and 14 social care complaints. In quarter 1 of 2010/11, 16 formal complaints were recorded. See Table 1 for a break down of complaints received by department for 2010/11, and Graph 1 for the number of complaints received by department between 2008-Qtr 1 and 2010-Qtr 2.

Table 1: Complaints received by Department

Department	No. of complaints Qtr 2 – 2010/11	No. of complaints Qtr 1 – 2010/11
Chief Executives	1	1
Child & Adult Services	15	12
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	4	3
Total	20	16

Graph 1: No. of complaints received by Department; 2008-Qtr 1 – 2010-Qtr 2



* See top of page 3 for footnote relating to Quarter 2 of 2008.

* Please note, the increase of complaints recorded in Quarter 2 of 2008 for Regeneration and Neighbourhoods was due to a large number of complaints being received on the same issue, which was the closure of Falcon Road.

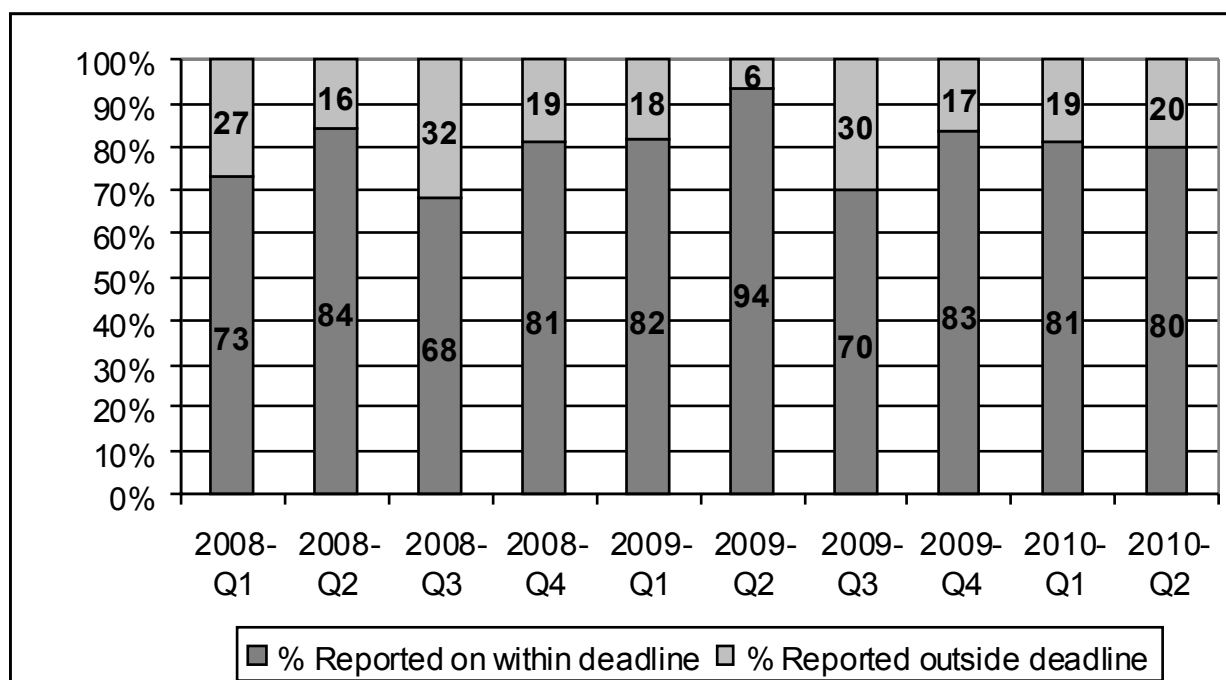
- 2.2 The number of complaints recorded by the Child & Adult Services Department for 2010/11 Quarter 2 increased when compared to 2010/11 Quarter 1 from 12 to 15.
- 2.3 The social care complaints received by the Child & Adult Services Department are dealt with under statutory procedures which differ from the corporate procedure in terms of time scales and investigative process. However, for the sake of completeness, basic statistics on numbers of complaints received are included in this report.

Responding to complaints within deadlines

- 2.4 The corporate complaints procedure has a deadline of 15 days for reporting back to a complainant with a written response to their complaint, after a thorough investigation. For social care complaints, deadlines vary depending on the level of the complaint - within 10 working days for the Local Resolution stage, 25 working days for the Formal Investigation stage and 30 working days for the Complaint Review Panel stage. There is scope for extending the social care deadlines should this become necessary. Prompt investigation is always a priority for all types of complaints, but in some cases the complexity of a complaint and/or the number of people to be contacted during the investigation can mean that the deadline cannot be met.
- 2.5 In the second quarter of 2010/11, the deadline was met in 80 percent of cases. This is largely the same as the figure of 81 percent of investigations completed within the deadline, for quarter 1 in 2010/11. See Table 2 for a breakdown of complaints responded to within deadlines for quarter 1 & 2 of 2010/11, and Graph 2 for the proportion of complaints responded to within and outside of deadlines between 2008-Qtr 1 and 2010-Qtr 2.

Table 2: Complaints reported to within deadlines

Reported	Qtr 2 – 2010/11		Qtr 1 – 2010/11	
	No.	%	No.	%
Within deadlines	16	80	13	81
Outside deadlines	4	20	3	19

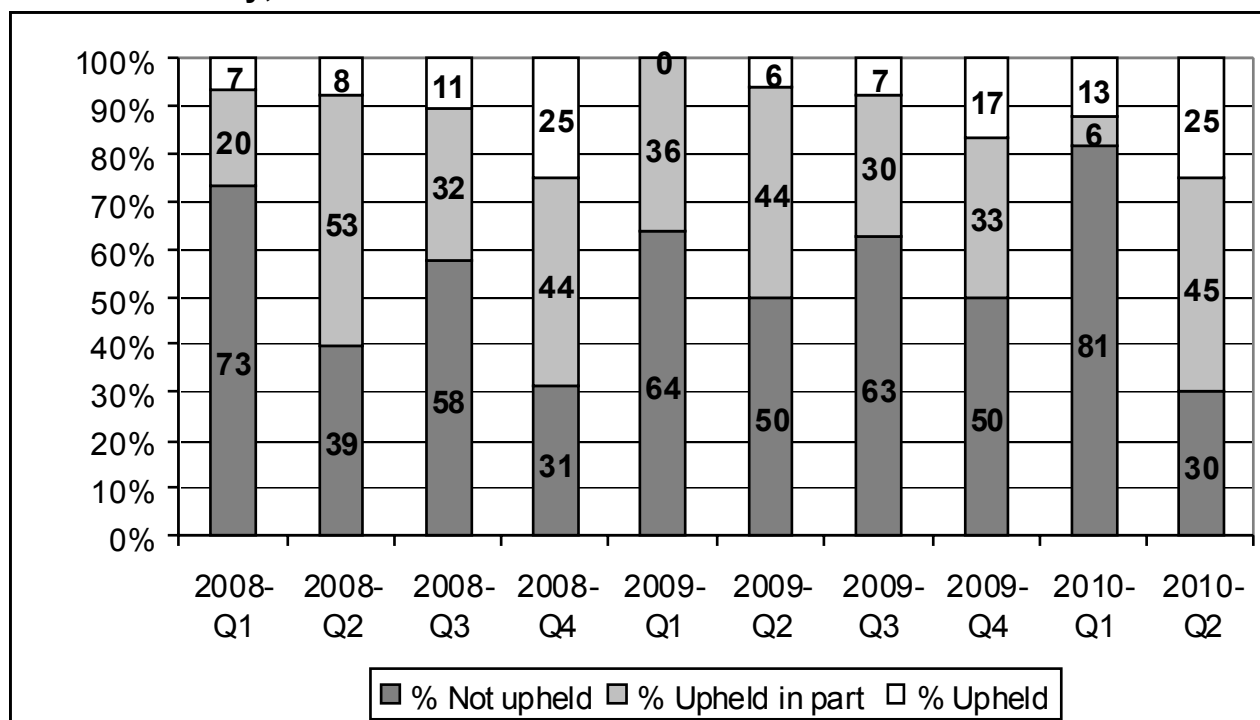
Graph 2: Proportion of complaints responded to within and outside of deadlines; 2008-Qtr 1 – 2010-Qtr 2**Outcomes of complaints investigations**

- 2.6 When a complaint investigation has been completed, a judgement is made by the investigating officer as to whether or not the authority has been at fault and hence whether the complaint is upheld fully, in part or not upheld.
- 2.7 In the first quarter of 2010/11, 5 complaints (25%) were fully upheld and 9 cases (45%) were partly upheld. This compares with the figures for the first quarter of 2010/11 of 2 cases (13%) being fully upheld and 1 case (6%) partly upheld. See Table 3 for the outcomes of complaints investigated for quarter 1 & 2 of 2010/11, and Graph 3 for the proportion of complaints not upheld, upheld in part or upheld in full between 2008 – Qtr 1 and 2010 – Qtr 2.

Table 3: Outcome of complaints investigated

Outcome	Qtr 2 – 2010/11		Qtr 1 – 2010/11	
	No.	%	No.	%
Not upheld	6	30	13	81
Upheld in part	9	45	1	6
Fully upheld	5	25	2	13

Graph 3: Proportion of complaints not upheld, upheld in part, or upheld fully; 2008-Qtr 1 – 2010-Qtr 2



Remedies for complaints

- 2.8 Departments are asked to provide information on what remedies have been offered to people whose complaints have been upheld either in part or in full. In some cases, a remedy can put a complainant in the position they would have been in but for the Council’s error but this is not always possible.
- 2.9 In the second quarter of 2010/11, apologies have been given to complainants; and explanations provided as to how the problem arose and of the action taken to prevent the problem recurring.

Learning from complaints

- 2.10 Complaints can provide useful information on how a service is performing and what problems are being experienced by service users. Departments have provided information on what lessons have been learnt from the complaints that they have received and what actions have been taken to prevent their recurrence.
- 2.11 In the second quarter of 2010/10, wherever possible, departments have taken action. For example, parents will be informed appropriately and timely in relation to the Department’s plan for their child; Children’s Social Care staff will be reminded of the Council’s policy in respect of ID badges; and Adult Social care staff are to make referrals to the User Property and Finance Team on the same day as a placement to avoid any delay in the person being aware of the charges they are going to be expected to pay.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be noted.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Corporate Complaints - April to June 2009 - Report to the Performance Management Portfolio Holder, 14th August 2009.
- Hartlepool Borough Council Corporate Complaints Procedure 2008.

5. CONTACT OFFICER

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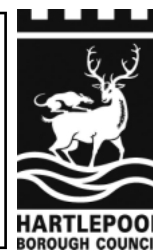
APPENDIX 1 – COMPLAINTS MONITORING – 1st July – 30th September 2010

	NUMBER		MEETING DEADLINES				OUTCOMES					
	Total no. of complaints		Reported on within deadline		Reported outside deadline		Not upheld		Upheld in part		Upheld	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Corporate Strategy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Finance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Customer and Workforce Services	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Legal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CHILD & ADULT SERVICES	12	15	11	12	1	3	9	4	1	8	2	3
Corporate complaints	7	1	6	1	1	-	6	-	-	1	1	-
Adult Social Care complaints	1	3	1	3	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-
Child Social Care complaints	4	11	4	8	-	3	3	2	-	6	1	3
REGENERATION & NEIGHBOURHOODS	3	4	1	3	2	1	3	2	-	1	-	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	16	20	13	16	3	4	13	6	1	9	2	5
	-	-	81%	80%	19%	20%	81%	30%	6%	45%	13%	25%

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

26 October 2010



Report of: Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer

Subject: SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT REVIEW

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Portfolio Holder with a report which reviews the learning from undertaking and implementing the Single Status Agreement in Hartlepool.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report sets out the objectives and context of the exercise, the 'As Was' position, transitional and assimilation arrangements, the 'As Is' position, legal appraisal, project management appraisal, the Trade Union perspective, impact on employee morale and a summary.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Performance Management.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Performance Portfolio Holder only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That the Portfolio Holder notes the report.

Report of: Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer

Subject: SINGLE STATUS AGREEMENT REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To provide the Portfolio Holder with a report which reviews the learning from undertaking and implementing the Single Status Agreement in Hartlepool.

2. OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. In 1997, the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Green Book) was formed following the merger of the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Services (Purple Book) and the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Services (Manual Workers) (White Book). The overriding objective was to provide one common pay structure and conditions of service which was fair and non-discriminatory.
- 2.2. In order to achieve this, the Green Book included a provision that the grading structures and certain allowances for former White Book and Purple Book employees would remain in effect until superseded by local arrangements following a review of the grading structures and conditions of service. However no timescale was set for achieving this and, across the country, little progress was made initially. This was addressed in 2004 when the national pay agreement stipulated that local pay reviews must be completed and implemented by all authorities by 31 March 2007.
- 2.3. The retention of the White and Green Book pay structures and other allowances and the national pay assimilation arrangements in 1997 left Hartlepool Borough Council at risk of successful 'equal pay' claims. The grading hierarchy whereby Scale 1 employees were paid on the same pay scale as all manual workers (with all other Purple Book employees being paid on higher grades) was potentially not reflective of the relative 'size' of jobs and was not sustainable. This was addressed to a certain extent by the payment of bonuses to some groups (mainly predominately male groups of employees). However this created its own difficulties as predominately female groups of employees generally did not have access to bonus schemes, and where they did have access, the value of bonus were less.
- 2.4. Inconsistencies existed in terms of conditions of service. These arose as a result of:

- National differences between Purple and White Book conditions of service;
- The statutory transfer of different interpretations of conditions of service and other local agreements for former Cleveland County employees who transferred to Hartlepool Borough Council as a result of Local Government Re-organisation in 1996;
- New pro-rata term time only arrangements in schools from 1998 (new starters only).

Initially, whilst significant preparatory work was undertaken locally, little progress was made in actually reviewing the local grading structures and conditions of service. This pretty much reflected the national position until 2003 when private litigation proceedings were started in relation to 'equal pay' claims against Councils in the North East and Hartlepool in particular. This was slightly in advance of the 2004 National Agreement and the Council had started to make some progress on reviewing the local grading structures and conditions of service in advance of the requirement to complete and implement reviews by March 2007.

2.5 Regionally, a small number of Councils (small district councils) had completed and implemented their reviews in respect of all Green Book employees in advance of the 'equal pay' claims starting to be submitted. The first Unitary Council (Redcar and Cleveland) to complete and implement their review did so in respect of employees graded Scale 3 and below, in response to a commitment made in Employment Tribunal. This started a regional trend whereby reviews were restricted to employees in the lower end of the Green Book grading structure. Generally the reviews being undertaken were either focussed only on the pay and grading structure or 'touched upon' terms and conditions of service.

2.6 Hartlepool Borough Council took a different approach inasmuch as:

- all Green Book employees in all grades, including those beyond the national pay spine were included in the review and;
- the review was extended to include a comprehensive review of terms and conditions as well as a review of the pay and grading structure.

2.7 It was recognised that such an extensive review would take some considerable time to complete and it was agreed with the trade unions at an early date that the effective date of any new pay and grading structure would be 1 April 2007. Whilst the approach taken increased the risk of successful 'equal pay' claims in the short term, the longer term benefits were considered to outweigh the short term risks. It took much longer than expected to conclude the review and the new pay and grading structure and conditions of service did not start to be

implemented until Spring/Summer 2008, although the effective date remained at 1 April 2007.

2.8 The objectives of the local review were to develop and implement:

- an affordable and modern pay and grading structure which is 'equality proofed', competitive in the market place and meets current and future business needs;
- a rationalised and modernised set of terms and conditions of service which meets current and future business needs.

2.9 The legal position changed on a regular basis during the course of the review as a consequence of Employment Tribunal decisions in respect of Hartlepool Borough Council and other, predominately, North East Councils. In order to manage risks:

- Compromise agreements were entered into with almost all the predominately female former manual employees in 2004 and 2007 which prevented them pursuing 'equal pay' claims. As part of these arrangements the Council made payments to individuals and paid the resulting tax and national insurance liabilities. These arrangements were less costly than cases being resolved through Employment Tribunals.
- Bonus payments were 'bought out' on 31 March 2007 and therefore did not form part of employees earnings when they were being assimilated to the new pay and grading structure effective from 1 April 2007.

3 The 'As Was' position

3.1 As indicated above, the White Book and Purple Book grading structures remained in effect until superseded by local arrangements. As a consequence the Council was operating a grading structure with the following features:

- Former White Book grades consisting of a single point;
- Former Purple Book grades consisting of more than one point, ranging from 3 -7 points;
- More than 40 grades;
- Some overlapping grades.

3.2 In addition there were a significant number of inconsistencies in conditions of service, as summarised above.

3.3 The most significant inconsistency in conditions of service related to the differing arrangements for employees who worked 'term time only'. Some groups of employees were paid on a whole time basis, others received full pay whilst at work and a half-pay retainer during school holidays whilst others received full pay whilst at work plus pro-rata holidays. The pro-rata leave varied depending upon whether the

employee started before or after the pro-rata term time only arrangements in schools changed in 1998. As a consequence, employees working the same number of days in a school in a year working term time only could receive between 42.67 and 52.14 weeks pay.

- 3.4 Whilst all employees classed as full time and on the same spinal point were paid the same annual salary most worked a standard 37 hours working week, whereas one group of employees in schools worked either a 30 or 32.5 hours standard working week and another group who TUPE transferred from the PCT to the Council on 1 April 2007 worked a 37.5 hours standard working week.
- 3.5 Generally the leave entitlement for employees (excluding long service leave) was as follows:

Grades & Scales	Days leave
Up to and including Scale 4 - Up to SCP 17	24 days
Scale 5 and Scale 6 - SCP 18-28)	26 days
Above Scale 6 – SCP 29 and above	28 days

However, some groups of employees who transferred from Cleveland County in 1996 retained lower leave entitlement

- 3.6 Overtime rates were payable as follows:
- Time and a half on weekdays and Saturdays and double time on Sundays for all hours worked in excess of the standard working week up to and including Scale 6 (i.e. up to spinal point 28)
 - Single time for all hours worked as an extension of the normal working day in excess of 5 hours more than the standard working week above Scale 6 (i.e. spinal point 29 and above)
 - Single time for all hours worked not as an extension of the normal working day in excess of the standard working week above Scale 6 (i.e. spinal point 29 and above)
- 3.7 Different weekend working rates as part of the normal working week applied as follows:
- Employees on spinal points 4 – 12 – time and a half for Saturday working, double time for Sunday working
 - Employees on spinal point 13 and above – time and a half for all weekend working
- 3.8 Former Purple Book employees were paid monthly and were required to give a minimum of one month's notice. Former White Book

employees were paid weekly and were required to give a minimum of one week's notice.

- 3.9 Employees in tied accommodation were living rent free as well as being paid a Residential Caretakers Allowance. The requirements of the Residential Caretakers were either not well documented and/or varied between sites. In addition, the pension arrangements for the rent free allowance needed to be reviewed. Unsatisfactory arrangements existed when employees left employment and at the same time had to leave their tied accommodation.
- 3.10 A variety of allowances were paid to employees who provided flexibility in their working arrangements and/or worked unsocial hours. In some instances former Purple Book and former White Book employees working the same working pattern were being recompensed on a different basis.
- 3.11 A variety of different standby arrangements and payments existed within the Council. In addition some employees may be on 'standby' (e.g. school caretakers who are required to be a key holder for the school and respond to burglar/fire alarm activations) but received no payment for this whereas others in a similar situation may have received payment. The call out rates also varied from group to group.
- 3.12 An area where there may be inconsistency of arrangements is in the provision of free meals when supervising children or when required to take meals with service users. Further research is needed to establish the current provision.
- 3.13 There is no consistency in the provision of landline and mobile telephones where there is a need to maintain contact with employees.
- 3.14 The determination of whether posts carry an Essential User Car Allowance was mainly made at Local Government Reorganisation in 1996. Recently changes have been agreed to remove the essential user car allowances.
- 3.15 The allocation of car parking spaces in employee car parks is mainly determined by reference to the car allowance attached to posts, although some provision is made for employees with disabilities. This is under review.
- 3.16 Part 2 Paragraph 13.2 of the Green Book stipulates that "Employees will be reimbursed the additional costs arising from a compulsory change in their place of work, according to locally negotiated schemes establishing approved items of expenditure and periods of reimbursement". Appendix E of the former Purple Book and Appendix C of the White Book continue to apply pending review (which is needed to complete the review of Green Book Part 2 provisions).

- 3.17 Employees willing to act as first aiders receive an allowance which has been unchanged for over 20 years and was previously closely linked to the first aid payments detailed in the White Book. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance has changed in respect of first aid provision over recent years and the current provision for first aid does not reflect this.
- 3.18 Some ad hoc arrangements exist whereby employees hold the keys for buildings during the period when Caretakers are away from home and are expected to respond to burglar/fire alarm activations and give authorised people access to the building. This links with the standby arrangements detailed above.
- 3.19 A small number of schools have made arrangements with their caretakers to pay differing percentages of basic pay as a lump sum in exchange for receiving no claims for payment for any additional hours worked. The circumstances when Caretakers can claim for any additional hours worked also need clarifying.
- 3.20 Work was being undertaken to prepare for a pay and grading review and this stood the Council in good stead when the legal challenges started to be made. However a key aspect (i.e. equality) of the Single Status Agreement had not been implemented.

A key learning lesson ...

Where national agreements are to be implemented, an assessment of risk is undertaken to determine pace of implementation and the resources required.

A key learning lesson ...

When it is decided to not implement national agreements immediately, there needs to be capacity to move quickly once legal challenges are made.

4 Transitional and assimilation arrangements

- 4.1 New pay rates applied to all basic and overtime hours worked and paid in the period 1 April 2007 and 30 June 2008. Employees were assimilated to the new pay and grading structure with effect from 1 April 2007, based on an assimilation earnings package comprising basic pay and a small number of conditions of service. Employees:
- Who did not suffer a detriment were assimilated at the lowest spinal point needed to ensure that they did suffer a reduction pay.
 - Who suffered a detriment were assimilated at the maximum spinal point within their new grade and were protected.

- 4.2 New arrangements for conditions of service (excluding those included in the assimilation earnings package) were typically implemented with effect from 1 July 2008. The monetary value of these conditions of service were not changed as a result of changes in spinal column point during the period 1 April 2007 to 30 June 2008.
- 4.3 In recognition of the amount of work involved in implementing the new pay rates, conditions of service and back monies, a staggered programme of implementation was applied.
- 4.4 As indicated above, it took much longer than expected to conclude the review and the new pay and grading structure and conditions of service did not start to be implemented until Spring/Summer 2008, although the effective date remained at 1 April 2007.
- 4.5 School employees were generally assimilated in August/September 2008 as it was not always possible to agree the matching of employees to evaluations with Headteachers before the summer 2008 school holidays.
- 4.6 Some groups of employees were more problematic in terms of the application of the new arrangements and/or evaluations were not always available to match employees against and implementing the new arrangements was delayed until the summer of 2010.
- 4.7 Whilst the overall project took far longer than anticipated, there were some aspects which worked well. The provision of information to employees about the draft Agreement at a series of dedicated briefings was key in obtaining a 'Yes' vote in the trade union ballot. The additional moderation work undertaken once the initial Job Evaluation outcomes were fed into the pay modeller was key in terms of minimising the impact on employees and in reducing the number of successful appeals. However the additional moderation work did delay the project by several months.
- 4.8 Communication and consultation with schools was extremely resource intensive and the school holidays did not always fit in with the project plan, particularly when the plan was changed on a number of occasions. Indeed, the implementation of the Agreement was delayed for employees in schools until some time after its implementation for the bulk of the non school workforce as it was not possible to agree the matching of employees to evaluations/profiles with Headteachers during the summer holidays.

A key learning lesson ...

Consulting with Head Teachers is more complex and time-consuming than might be anticipated and needs to be planned carefully around school holidays.

A key learning lesson ...

Clear, consistent and timely communications of the actual proposals was key to acceptance by the workforce.

A key learning lesson ...

The Project Plan should have anticipated the impact of volume and quality of checking stages required.

5 The 'As Is' position

5.1 A detailed Predictive Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken on the data available on 24 April 2008 and is based on 3478 employees in 700 jobs, this representing approximately 80% of the workforce. The overall predicted impact of the new pay and grading structure on basic pay is that

- 57.85% of employees will receive an increase
- 32.83% of employees will remain unchanged
- 9.32% of employees will suffer a detriment

5.2 In terms of pay gaps, it was predicted that:

- The gender pay gap would narrow slightly from 80.67% to 80.97% and that there would be convergence towards 100% in 12 out of the 15 grades
- The ethnicity pay gap would broaden slightly from 109.95% to 110.44%
- The disability pay gap would narrow slightly from 106.27% to 106.00%

5.3 Whilst it was not possible to accurately predict the impact for each change in conditions of service, they were expected to have a greater negative impact on female employees (as the main impact was on term time only workers), although the new arrangements apply equality principles and provide a defence to equal pay claims.

5.4 Many of the inconsistencies in conditions of service have been addressed. Action plans are in place to undertake further work.

5.5 A consistent 'term time only' calculator has been introduced to replace the various pay arrangements for term time only employees.

5.6 A standard working week of 37 hours has been introduced for all employees.

5.7 Leave entitlement (excluding long service leave) is 26 days for all employees. Band 13 -15 employees receive an additional 2 days leave

as compensation for some differential provisions elsewhere in the Single Status Agreement

- 5.8 All overtime in excess of the standard working week is paid at time and a half to all employees. Band 13-15 employees are not paid overtime for the first five hours per week in excess of the standard working week where the additional hours are worked as an extension of the normal working day on weekdays only.
- 5.9 All employees working on weekends are paid time and a half for all hours worked as part of the normal working week.
- 5.10 A programme was completed in March 2010 to transfer all staff to monthly pay.
- 5.11 The following notice periods have been agreed for monthly paid employees. Previous notice periods applied until employees moved to monthly pay.

Bands	Notice Periods
Modern Apprentices	Four Weeks
Bands 1-12	Four weeks
Bands 13-15	Eight weeks

- 5.12 A review of the Residential Caretaker arrangements was implemented from 1 September 2010.
- 5.13 Consistent arrangements have been made to premium and flexibility allowances.
- 5.14 A timetable for reviewing the remaining issues detailed in Section 2 above has been agreed as follows

Timetable for review of the rates and criteria for various allowances

Allowance	Rates Paid	Eligibility Criteria	Review by
Standby Duty	Yes	Yes	30 June 2011
Free meals when supervising children or when required to take meals with service users	Yes	Yes	31 March 2011
Telephone allowance	No	Yes	30 June 2011
Car, Motor Cycle and Cycle Allowances	No	Yes	31 March 2011
Car Parking	No	Yes	31 March 2011
Excess Travel	No	Yes	31 March 2011
First Aid allowance outside job	No	Yes	31 March 2011

Keyholding outside working hours	No	Yes	30 June 2011
Out of hours arrangements for caretakers/ site supervisors in schools (excluding replacing Lettings arrangements by standard overtime arrangements)	Yes	Yes	30 September 2010

- 5.15 Agreeing a timetable for reviewing some aspects of conditions of service has enabled the core Agreement to be implemented without the need for all issues to be addressed immediately. This has enabled the appropriate resources to be allocated.
- 5.16 Approximately 400 appeals were received and prioritised based on the financial impact on employees earnings. High Priority appeals (approximately 100) have been considered and outcomes agreed at an on-going additional cost of £45,000 to the Council. The planned review of the process to date is currently ongoing and a revised timetable for considering the remaining appeals will be developed once the review has been concluded.
- 5.17 A key element in the project plan is to review whether the expected outcome was achieved (or bettered). This is planned for the Autumn of 2010 (as all employees will have been assimilated) and also after the appeals have been dealt with and thereafter to undertake regular equal pay audits.

6 Financial Appraisal

- 6.1 It was initially reported to Cabinet in December 2007 that provision for the estimated costs of implementing Job Evaluation had previously been made within the budget forecasts for the period up to 2010/2011. These forecasts were based on the completion of 90% of Job Evaluations, an assessment for the net impact of changes in various allowances and the potential costs of appeals. This assessment was updated and completed in February, 2008. Implementation of the new pay and grading system took place over the period April to September, 2008 and resources were dedicated to paying staff new salaries and arrears of pay.

A key learning lesson ...

Implementing the new pay and grading system was significantly more complex and time-consuming than anticipated and successful completion of this task in a timely manner was only achieved with significant support from staff and overtime working over a sustained period.

- 6.2 Once this exercise was complete a detailed costing exercise was commenced to establish the actual costs of the new pay and grading system. This exercise identified an additional increase in basic pay of £0.72m - £0.9m when account is taken of employer's National Insurance and Pension costs. The additional cost reflected a reduction in the number of employees in protection, which increases ongoing costs, changes in job matchings and allowances from the initial planning assumptions.
- 6.3 As detailed in the previous paragraph and as reported to Cabinet and Council previously it is anticipated that Job Evaluation costs will be within the projected budget by 2011/12. This assumes the annual cost of appeals (including NI and pension costs) do not exceed the available budget provision of about £0.4m per year. To date £0.04m has been committed as a result of High priority appeals. This is an area of risk which will need managing. This position also assumes that the actual increases in pay costs arising from pay awards, changes in National Insurance and Pension contributions are in line with forecasts.
- 6.4 In implementing the details of the Job Evaluation scheme the rate at which individuals are proceeding through the incremental points has been slower than expected when the budgets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 were prepared. These forecasts assumed increments would be greater in the earlier years as lower bands have fewer incremental points. Further work has now been completed to roll forward future years' salary budgets on the basis of actual year one JE salaries and future incremental progression. This has identified that incremental costs will be phased differently owing to changes in the grades staff have been allocated to and the impact of development scheme posts. These changes mean that in budget terms incremental costs will be incurred later than expected. Therefore, there will be a temporary benefit to the budget in 2009/10 and 2010/11. In total this temporary benefit is expected to be £1.2m, over the two financial years - assuming appeals do not exceed the £0.4m level.
- 6.5 There are still risks around the resources available from Job Evaluation and the key risk relates to the cost of appeals. Thus whilst in total some £1.2m of resources could be made available to assist the one off funding of Business Transformation it would be appropriate to withhold say some £0.3m of this as a means of mitigating any risks of appeals exceeding the budget position until these risks are resolved. This would leave a sum of £0.9m which is part of the package of funding Council has recently agreed to earmark to fund outright up front costs of Business Transformation.
- 6.6 Arrangements are in place for the relevant Portfolio Holder and School Governors to ratify decisions made in respect of appeals on an ongoing basis and for any financial impact to be reported to Cabinet as part of the quarterly financial management reports.

A key learning lesson ...

Pay modelling was more complex than anticipated and final costs were not always in line with estimated figures based on the completion of 90% of evaluations

7 Legal appraisal

- 7.1 Job evaluation through the Single Status Agreement provides a structured mechanism for the comparison of posts and the differences in terms of duties and responsibilities with the aim of being able to position those posts within the organisation in terms of levels of authority and remuneration. Whilst there are a number of job evaluation schemes, all are based on a set of defined factors (which should be applied properly and robustly to ensure consistency of approach) and crucially should also accord with anti-discrimination legislation. Potentially the Council's job evaluation scheme is open to legal challenge and the Council is aware that proceedings have been initiated against a local authority in the North East region over the robustness of its scheme and its application.
- 7.2 For its part, this Council, during the formative stages of the introduction of the scheme, received notification of 'collective grievances' pursuant to the Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004, in relation to former APT&C employees. Such claims relate to the evaluation of posts on a comparator basis and resonate from the provisions of the Equal Pay Act, 1970 (subsequently incorporated into the Equality Act 2010), i.e. where a worker has been treated less favourably on grounds of gender. For the avoidance of doubt, such claims can also relate (often as an alternative ground for proceedings) to applicable anti-discrimination legislation. The effect of the 1970 Equal Pay Act, is to imply into every contract of employment an equality clause which overrides any unequal term by which an employee is paid less than a comparator. A claim will not succeed where an objective and non-discriminatory job evaluation assessment has been undertaken, which has properly concluded that an employee and his/her comparator do work which is not of equal value. Of note, pay protection schemes associated with the introduction of job evaluation, can be applied, provided the same fall within a 'genuine material factor' criterion and on the facts, such a scheme is objectively justified following the decision in *Redcar & Cleveland BC –v- Bainbridge and others* [2008 IRLR 776 CA]. Where there is a 'lack of transparency' in any pay structure, then this will promote claims against an organisation.
- 7.3 For its part the Council will need to continually assess the risks associated with its employment practices and also the associated risks (where applicable) from the provision of indemnities to other entities, particularly schools and colleges within the Borough.

A key learning lesson ...

The Council and trade unions have to continually monitor and respond to changes in case law during the development of the Agreement.

8 Project Management Appraisal

- 8.1 The project started in earnest in 2004 and Cabinet made an early commitment that the effective date of any Agreement would be 1 April 2007. The initial intention was that the project would be completed by this date and therefore the Agreement would be implemented in advance of this. However the complexity of, and the resources needed for the project were underestimated and it was necessary to allocate additional resources. Collecting the pay data for loading into the pay modeller was problematic, mainly due to the lack of a HR system. As indicated above, the Agreement was implemented from July 2008 onwards.
- 8.2 A Bridging the Gap Group (with the remit of overseeing the project) was formed comprising regional and local trade union officials, ACAS, members of Corporate Management Team (Assistant Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Personnel Officer) and other senior officers from Accountancy and HR. The involvement of the regional trade union officials was extremely helpful as they were able to draw upon their experience of undertaking similar projects at other Councils locally. Involving ACAS meant that the group worked as a problem solving group rather than the traditional negotiating arrangements. The members of CMT were able to provide a very useful link between the group and CMT. And finally the involvement of senior officers from both HR and, perhaps more significantly from Finance, meant that any agreement reached could be properly costed and all financial implications addressed. The Chief Accountant was seconded to the project full time for 14 months. This secondment provided dedicated financial support for the Job Evaluation process, which is the largest single financial change to affect the Council since Local Government Reorganisation in 1996.
- 8.3 Over a lengthy period, regular briefings took place with Cabinet, the Single Status Working Group (comprising some Cabinet members, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee members and group officials), CMT and Headteachers / Chairs of Governors and guidance sought from them regarding the development of the Agreement. This informed the ongoing discussions within the Bridging the Gap Group whilst they were developing the Agreement.
- 8.4 Whilst this level of briefing and consultation was resource intensive, it meant a significant number of key decision makers
- were kept up to date during, and were able to shape, the development of the Agreement

- understood the complexities of, and inter-relationships within the Agreement for example how amending the annual leave entitlement impacted upon the term time only calculator.
- 8.5 Employees were briefed about the Single Status Agreement over a period of two weeks. Following this, the trade unions undertook a ballot of their members and over 74% of votes were in favour of accepting the Agreement. This is a reflection on the way the briefings were undertaken as well as the content of the Agreement.
- 8.6 The Agreement was approved initially by UNISON national office and GMB regional office with some time later, UNITE national office also approving the Agreement
- 8.7 Cabinet made the decision to approve the Single Status Agreement and funding was approved as part of the overall budget process by Council. . Thereafter, Governors at each Community, Aided and Foundation school in Hartlepool adopted the Agreement, although serious concerns were raised by schools with Residential Caretakers in respect of the arrangements proposed for this group of employees. The concerns are being addressed by the review outlined earlier in this report.
- 8.8 The implementation of the Agreement extended the project to payroll staff. Revised rates of pay needed to be processed as well as back money entitlements to 1 April 2007. This was a huge task in itself and additional resources were needed and considerable overtime was worked.
- 8.9 Given the number of stages the project had to accommodate, and the interlinking between activities e.g. Governors could not adopt the Agreement prior to Cabinet agreeing it, it is hardly surprising that the project plan changed, and was extended over time. However the additional time taken significantly improved the Agreement and was worthwhile in the end.

A key learning lesson ...

Involving the Chief Accountant in the Single Status Agreement team meant that financial advice was based on a full awareness of the options and proposals.

9 Trade Union perspective

- 9.1 Developing and implementing the local Single Status Agreement and a revised Pay and Grading Structure represented the achievement of a key national trade union aspiration of ensuring equality in the workplace through negotiation rather than litigation. This helped

preserve jobs as significant legal costs and settlements were not needed.

- 9.2 The Trade Unions approach changed to include 'joint problem solving' as the remit was not simply to enhance the pay and conditions of service of members but to achieve pay equality whilst minimising the adverse impact on some members whose pay and conditions of service could worsen. This was a significant challenge and it is testament to the trade union officials involved that they were able to 'negotiate' and support the eventual outcome.
- 9.3 The 'joint problem solving' approach was successful as the trade union ballot returned a 70+% majority in favour of the new arrangements. This approach marked a new era in local industrial relations as the challenges now being faced require a similar 'joint problem solving' approach. It, however, meant that the trade unions have joint ownership, and are accountable to their members for, the new arrangements.
- 9.4 Removal of bonus prior to the introduction of the new arrangements was critical to protecting the Council from future successful equal pay claims. The trade unions were able to shape the Council's approach to this.
- 9.5 It took some considerable time to finalise the Agreement. This was time well spent as it enabled complex issues to be thoroughly explored and options considered to minimise any detrimental impact on members, whilst ensuring equality for all.

A key learning lesson ...

'Joint problem solving' requires a different approach to traditional negotiation but ensures full involvement in the process and accountability for the outcome.

10 Impact on Employee morale

10.1 The 2009 Employee Survey identified

- 68% of employees considered the Council was either very good or good at paying competitive wages/salaries (compared to 65% in 2005)
- 68% of employees agreed strongly or agreed that the Council was a good employer (compared to 71% in 2005)
- 71% of employees agreed strongly or agreed that they would recommend the Council to other people as a good place to work (compared to 76% in 2005)

- 58% of employees agreed strongly or agreed that the Council has a pay structure which is fair and equal for all employees (compared to 52% in 2005)
- 12% of employees agreed strongly or agreed that they were actively seeking to leave the employment of the Council (compared to 9% in 2005)

10.2 Sickness levels in 2008/9 (9.93 days per FTE) and 2009/10 (9.43 days per FTE) were lower than in the two previous years (12.04 days per FTE in 2007/8 and 13.52 days per FTE in 2006/7).

10.3 Although not indicative of strong positive shifts in employee attitudes, it is equally not evidence that the organisation has been damaged by the process or outcomes.

11 Summary

11.1 A summary of what worked well, what could have worked better and learning points is detailed in Table 4.

11.2 Although the Council does not expect to have to respond to another exercise of equivalent complexity or impact in the foreseeable future, there are some elements of the project which may have relevance elsewhere.

11.3 The Key Learning Lessons (as outlined above) will be shared across the organisation to help improve how we respond to future challenges.

Table 4 - Summary of what worked well, what could have worked better, learning points and future actions

Issue	What worked well	What could have worked better	Learning points
Developing the Agreement	Joint Problem Solving with the Trade Unions	Underestimation of the work involved	Set realistic targets by breaking down the work required into smaller detailed stages
	Recognising that not all inequalities could be addressed at the same time	Time taken to reach agreement	Set realistic targets by breaking down the work required into smaller detailed stages
	Involving ACAS	Time taken undertaking and moderating Job Evaluations	Set realistic targets by breaking down the work required into smaller detailed stages
	Keeping abreast of changes in Equal pay case law		
	Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments on pay models		
	Use of Job Profiles		
Financial Appraisal	Involving Finance Staff at an early stage	Pay modelling on 90% of the workforce	Base decisions on the best data available and build in contingency provision
	Undertaking Financial Impact Assessments on pay models	Quality and quantity of pay data used for pay modelling	Base decisions on the best data available
Decision Making	Briefings to employees, Elected Members, Corporate Management Team, Governors and Head teachers	Setting key dates which coincided with school holidays	Factor school holidays into any project plans which involve schools
	Involving Key decision makers at appropriate stages		
	Trade Union Ballot arrangements		
	Agreeing an implementation date of 1 April 2007 up front		
Implementation	Application of new rates of pay and processing back monies	Time expected to be taken to apply new rates of pay and processing back monies for a relatively small number of employees	
	Phased implementation of changes to terms and conditions		
	Programme to address outstanding inequalities		

12 Conclusion

12.1 The development and implementation of the Single Status Agreement is one of the Council's biggest projects. It made a fundamental change to the pay and conditions of service for the majority of Council employees. It is testament to the hard work and perseverance of all involved that such a fundamental change was achieved without an adverse impact on:

- staff morale
- Council performance
- delivery of Council services

12.2 Lessons have been learnt from the project and will be implemented in respect of other projects.

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

26 October 2010



Report of: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Subject: CALL-IN OF DECISION - COUNSELLING SERVICES

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To report the outcome of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee meeting on the 24 September 2010 (adjourned and reconvened on the 6 October 2010) at which consideration was given to the Call-In of the following decision taken by the Performance Portfolio Holder on the 13 August 2010:-

Minute No. 6 – Counselling Services

“The Portfolio Holder noted the content of the report and approved the procurement exercise on the basis of 60% quality and 40% price”

- 2.2 To refer decision taken in Minute No 6 of Performance Portfolio Holder on the 13 August 2010 (as outlined in section 2.1 above) back to the Portfolio Holder for further consideration.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report outlines the key concerns of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in relation to the ‘call-in’ of the decisions taken by Performance Portfolio Holder on the 13 August 2010 in relation to the intention to procure a provider of counselling services.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 As per the Authority’s Call-In procedure, the Performance Portfolio Holder is required to consider the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee’s comments and respond to them. In considering comments the Performance Portfolio Holder has two options in terms of a way forward:-

- (i) Reaffirm the original decision, or
- (ii) Modify the original decision.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

4.1 Non key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

5.1 The decision making route is as follows:

- Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 27 August 2010 and 24 September 2010 (reconvened on the 6 October 2010);
- Performance Portfolio Holder meeting on 26 October 2010; and
- Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 12 November 2010 (subject to availability of Portfolio Holder).

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

6.1 To note the views expressed by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in response to the 'call-in of decision taken on the 13 August 2010; and

6.2 To reaffirm or amend the decision taken by Performance Portfolio Holder on the 13 August 2010 (minute no. 6 refers), setting out the reasons for doing so in response to the issues raised by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Report of: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Subject: CALL-IN OF DECISION - COUNSELLING SERVICES

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Performance Portfolio Holder meeting on the 13 August 2010 a report was submitted for consideration in relation to the intention to procure a provider of counselling services. Following consideration of the report provided, the Performance Portfolio Holder made the following decisions:-

Minute No. 6 – Counselling Services

“The Portfolio Holder noted the content of the report and approved the procurement exercise on the basis of 60% quality and 40% price”

- 1.2 To assist the Performance Portfolio Holder, copies of the report and an extract of the minutes from the Performance Portfolio Holder meeting on the 13 August 2010 are attached at **Appendix A and B**, respectively.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee gave initial consideration to a ‘call-in’ notice in relation to the Performance Portfolio Holder decision (as outlined in Section 1.1 above) taken on the 13 August 2010. Following consideration of the information provided, the Committee received and accepted a ‘call-in’ notice on the basis that the decision had been taken in contravention of the principles of decision making (as outlined in Article 13 of the Constitution). The reason identified in the Call-In Notice being ‘Best value, clarity of aims and desired outcomes: due consideration of options available, efficiency, reasonableness’.
- 1.4 A further meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee was convened on the 24 September 2010 (adjourned and reconvened on the 6 October 2010) to give full consider the ‘call-in’. Those in attendance at during the course of the three meetings included the Performance Portfolio Holder, Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer and Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager and the outcomes of discussions at these meetings are outlined in Section 2 of this report.

2. KEY ISSUES / CONCERNS

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee met on the 24 September 2010 (adjourned and reconvened on the 6 October 2010) to determine whether it agreed with the members submitting the call-in notice. The Committee discussed in detail the decision and expressed views as follows:-

(a) **The Appropriateness of Going Out to Tender at This Time.** Members queried the basis and timing of the decision to go out to formal tender. It was highlighted that:-

- (i) *Contract Procedure Rules* - The 'trigger' figure for the initiation of the formal tender process was expected to rise to £50,000 and that this would remove the need to go out to formal tender. Members also suggested an approach should be made to the current provider to explore the potential for them to provide the service at either a fixed price or reduced rate, both of which options would keep the contract figure under £25,000. Whilst this would allow the informal arrangement, which some Members felt would be beneficial given the external factor detailed below, to continue it was recognised that this option would need further exploration given the requirements of the Contract Procedure Rules.
- (ii) *The Impact of External Factors* - Particular attention was drawn to the possible impact of GP Commissioning on the provision of the services in the future. Concern was expressed by Members that should GP Commissioning come through, and we have put in place a 3/5 year contract, we could be at risk of having to continue with the contract. Whilst it was recognised that a notice period could be included in the contract, Members were concerned that this would be unfair to a provider who had geared up its operations and staffing to accommodate the workload.

In response to this query, Members were advised that the current arrangement was provided on a 'call off' contract basis (which either party could stop at any time). Emphasis was placed upon the benefits of a longer term formal contract in:

- Demonstrating a commitment from both sides, creating an environment for effective partnership working;
- Enabling the successful company to effectively gear up its services (i.e. staffing resources) to meet the Council's needs; and
- Ensuring the provision of an effective long term service provider.

In addition to this, it was also highlighted that increased usage of 25% between 2008/9 and 2009/10 had prompted the view that the market should be tested to obtain the best for the Council and its employees.

(b) **The Information / Evidence Utilised in Making the Decision.** In exploring the decision, Members sought clarification as to the number of providers used and were interested to find that an additional provider was used for those individuals whose relatives work for MIND. In addition to this, Members highlighted the importance of exploring and evaluating the

following factors as part of any decision on the future provision of the service:

- (i) *Usage and Future Need* – The Committee was advised that evaluation of future usage was very difficult to undertake, given factors such as seasonal variations (resulting in an inability to extrapolate figures and statistics from the first 6 months) and the potential challenges facing the authority. It was noted by the It was also highlighted that the allocated budget (£20,000) was often over-spent, with the shortfall often financed through savings elsewhere.

Members were surprised that a decision on the provision of the service had been taken without knowledge of future demand and expressed concern that finding of the shortfall from savings could not be expected to continue in the future. The Committee did, however, note that work was being undertaken to identify ways of minimising future shortfalls (via reduced cost), although it was recognised that this would be a difficult balancing act given potential increased usage.

- (ii) *Effectiveness, Quality and Value* - The Committee reiterated its views in relation to the importance of undertaking appropriate evaluations as part of any decision making process. Members were again surprised to find that a decision on the provision of the service had been taken without knowledge of the effectiveness, quality or value of current provision.

In discussing these issues, Members:

- Highlighted the importance of the service in getting people back to work without delay and the positive benefits this has on reducing costs to the authority (both financial in terms of sick pay and practical in terms of increased workload stress on colleagues). On this basis, Members were of the view that to some degree the cost of the service was far out weighed by its potential benefits;
- Welcomed indications that whilst a 6 session limit was in place, this could be increased to respond to individual needs;
- Drew attention to the 60:40 quality / costs approach to be tender, and strongly indicated that quality must be the prime criteria in the provision of the service. Whilst the need to obtain value for money was recognised welfare of staff was paramount;
- Acknowledged the effectiveness of the service in providing access to counselling services faster than any other route, although it was noted that the service would be free should a member of staff go direct to MIND.

- Noted that the effectiveness, quality and value of the service was very difficult effectively evaluate and that data was not easily accessible on an individual case basis. Whilst a basic evaluation of the service had been on an anecdotal basis, with views from staff and the providers being good, shown the following, Members felt strongly that a more formal and detailed process needed to be undertaken.

2.2 Taking into consideration the evidence provided, Members expressed concern that insufficient information had been made available to the Performance Portfolio Holder in relation to usage, future need, effectiveness, quality and value of the service. Members were of the view that this information was essential to the implantation of a decision in relation to the provision of the service.

2.3 The Committee was in no way against the concept of undertaking a tendering process and recognised the need to balance a robust business case against the provision of a quality service. However, Members felt strongly that now was not the time to enter into a long-term contract of this type, given the potential implications of GP Commissioning and the financial / staffing challenges facing the authority in the coming year. On this basis, the Committee identified the following proposal for consideration by the Performance Portfolio Holder as a potential way forward:-

- (i) Current arrangements for the provision of counselling services should continue in the short term to allow time for an 'informal' quotations procedure to be undertaken;
- (ii) As part of the 'informal' procedure, 3 quotations be sought from local companies to facilitate the award of a 12 month contract for the provision of counselling services on a 60:40 (quality: price) basis;
- (i) During the 12 month duration of the contract, a full evaluation of the counselling service provided be undertaken, including consideration of demand, effectiveness / quality and the impact of external factors (i.e. GP commissioning); and
- (ii) At the end of the 12 month contract, the results of the evaluation are used to inform a decision as to whether a 'formal' quotations procedure should be undertaken to award a full / longer term contract.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Committee disagreed with decision of Minute 6 (as outlined in Section 2.1 and 2.3 of the report) and refers this back to the Performance Portfolio Holder for further consideration.

3.2 That in reconsidering his decision, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee recommend to the Performance Portfolio Holder that:-

- (iii) Current arrangements for the provision of counselling services should continue in the short term to allow time for an 'informal' quotations procedure to be undertaken;
- (iv) As part of the 'informal' procedure, 3 quotations be sought from local companies to facilitate the award of a 12 month contract for the provision of counselling services on a 60:40 (quality: price) basis;
- (iii) During the 12 month duration of the contract, a full evaluation of the counselling service provided be undertaken, including consideration of demand, effectiveness / quality and the impact of external factors (i.e. GP commissioning); and
- (iv) At the end of the 12 month contract, the results of the evaluation are used to inform a decision as to whether a 'formal' quotations procedure should be undertaken to award a full / longer term contract.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report and Minutes of the Performance Portfolio meeting held on 11th August 2010.
- (ii) Report and Minutes of the Joint Health Scrutiny Forum and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee meeting held on 27th August 2010.
- (iii) Report of the 24th August 2010.
- (iv) Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 24 September 2010 and 6 October 2010.

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

13 August 2010



Report of: Chief Customer & Workforce Services Officer

Subject: COUNSELLING SERVICES

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Portfolio Holder of the intention to procure a provider of counselling services and seek Portfolio Holder's approval to letting the contract on a price/performance basis.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report provides background to the planned procurement project and proposes a basis for selecting the successful contractor.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Performance Management.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Performance Portfolio Holder only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the planned procurement project and approve conducting the procurement exercise on the 60:40 quality/price basis proposed.

Report of: Chief Customer & Workforce Services Officer

Subject: COUNSELLING SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Portfolio Holder of the intention to procure a provider of counselling services and to obtain Portfolio Holder's approval for the procurement exercise and to letting the contract on a price/performance basis is also sought.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 One of the Council's strategic objectives is to improve corporate plans to promote Healthy Working and one of the ways to achieve this is by the Council taking a proactive approach to the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health, safety and general well being of all employees and those affected by the activities of the Council. To assist the Council in this regard it requires pro-active professional advice and clear management responsibilities.

2.2 In addition the Council through its performance management system strives to reduce sickness levels. To assist managers and employees it aims to provide attendance management systems that are transparent and supportive to employees who want to be at work and robust for those who do not. The Council is also committed to adjusting working arrangements to support individual needs wherever it is reasonable to do so.

2.3 The counselling service provides support to employees to ensure that staff who have reported mental health issues do not have these conditions aggravated by the work they do on behalf of the Council. The service also provides support during periods of poor mental health, help them stay at work and, where this is not possible, to support employees to return to work.

2.4 Access to counselling is normally via a referral from a manager to the occupational health service who would recommend counselling as a way to progress a case. The occupational health adviser would then monitor progress in order to facilitate a return to work.

2.5 At the current time, the Council utilises the services of an external counselling service provider, Hartlepool Mind. The current service is now well used by managers and employees to provide support, and as

such, it allows appropriate sickness case management to help maintain people at work and provide advice on appropriate support or workplace adjustments.

- 2.6 The current service is provided on a call-off contract but the success of the service is such that in order to provide continuity of the service and to allow closer working between a service provider and the Council it is proposed that the service is procured on a longer term contract. It is proposed that this contract will be subject to open competition through a tender process, will operate for three years with the potential, subject to satisfactory performance, for an extension of a further 2 x twelve month periods.
- 2.7 Discussion has been held with other authorities within the Tees Valley regarding their services, and Middlesbrough Borough Council are in a similar position, and as such it is proposed to undertake a joint procurement exercise between the two authorities although any successful provider would have to ensure that the service was available locally.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Initial informal investigations have shown that there are some potential suppliers in the marketplace. However, the Council does not have an approved contractors list that can be used. Therefore it has been deemed necessary to invite initial expressions of interest to begin the selection process. The Public Contract Regulations 2006 (Schedule 5) determine that services categorised as “Health and Social Services” can be classed as Part B services. This means there is no requirement for any contract notice to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.
- 3.2 It is proposed that an invitation for Expressions of Interest be advertised in the local press at the end of September 2010. It is further proposed that a restricted tendering procedure is used and a pre qualifying questionnaire is used for the initial short listing purposes.
- 3.3 Organisations that are short listed will then be invited to tender for the contract. It is anticipated that tender submissions will be available for opening at the Contract Scrutiny Panel meeting on 1st November 2010, although this date may be subject to slight change.
- 3.4 It is proposed to conduct the tender exercise using a 60% quality and 40% price assessment ratio.
- 3.5 The assessment criteria will be based upon the content of the submission and pay particular attention to the experience and competency of the provider as well as the proposed fees. The

assessment criteria will be developed in accordance with appropriate procurement rules.

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It can take up to 12 weeks from GP referral for Counselling for an appointment to be provided and as such most of the cases currently referred would be absent during this time with little ability for a manager to progress or deal with the underlying cause of the ill health.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 By market testing and working in partnership with Middlesbrough Borough Council it is hoped that efficiency savings can be achieved for the cost of the service.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That the Portfolio Holder notes the content of the report and approves the procurement exercise on the basis of 60% quality and 40% price.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

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PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

13 August 2010

Minute Extract

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Jonathan Brash (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Caroline O'Neill, Assistant Director (Performance and Achievement)
Joanne Smithson, Head of Performance and Partnerships
Stuart Langston, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

6. Counselling Services – *Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the intention to procure a provider of counselling services and seek the Portfolio's Holder's approval to letting the contract on a price/performance basis.

Issues for Consideration

The report detailed why it was important for the Authority to provide counselling services for employees and that feedback from those using this service had expressed support for this service. It was proposed to undertake a joint procurement exercise with Middlesbrough Borough Council. By working in partnership with the other Local Authority it was hoped that efficiency savings could be achieved, however it was clarified that services for Hartlepool would be local to its area. It was acknowledged that the provision of this service was a contributory factor towards the reduction in the number of staff sickness days.

The Portfolio Holder sought clarity on the reasoning behind the 60:40 quality price ratio for evaluating any tender submissions received and was informed that due to the limited variation in prices associated with such services the weighting in favour of quality was necessary to ensure the appropriate service

was procured. The portfolio holder expressed his support for this. The Portfolio Holder asked whether consultation had been undertaken with the NHS and was informed that links were being developed with the assistant director of public health.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the content of the report and approved the procurement exercise on the basis of 60% quality and 40% price.

**P J DEVLIN
CHIEF SOLICITOR**

PUBLICATION DATE: 19 August 2010