ARGYLL AND BUTE
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

11TH CITIZENS' PANEL SURVEY

REPORT

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KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS SURVEY

Whilst all aspects of neighbourhood management are seen as being important, issues of litter and dog fouling stand out as priorities for respondents, closely followed by street lighting.

There is a very strong preference for multi-skilled teams, as opposed to specific professional teams, to have responsibility for these aspects of neighbourhood management.

Although awareness of the Drivesafe initiative is comparatively modest, a significant minority of those who are aware of the campaign believe that it has encouraged them to drive more safely. They are, however, more sceptical as to the impact of the campaign on safe driving more generally.

Only a minority of people feel able to say that Argyll and Bute is a safe place to drive and few people see a positive trend in terms of safer driving or fewer accidents.

The policing issues that were of greatest concern to residents included anti-social behaviour generally, drugs, vandalism, crimes of violence and road safety issues.

Most people who have had contact with their local police are satisfied with this contact although a significant minority do express dissatisfaction.

Few people are aware of specific biodiversity initiatives within Argyll and Bute, although a small number are actively involved in a range of such initiatives.

People generally do not feel able to comment on whether enough is being done to protect Argyll and Bute's biodiversity; amongst those who do express an opinion, the slight minority view is that enough is already being done to protect the area's biodiversity.

People have a strong desire for more information on the implementation of the Single Transferable Vote system for the Scottish Local Authority elections in May 1997.

In particular, they would like to know more about how the system will work and how they will be represented by Councillors from multi-member wards. The great majority of people would like to see this information communicated through a leaflet delivered directly to their door.

An overview of the survey findings is set out herein, supported by the detailed appendices which are provided under separate cover.

1.0 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

1.1 This document sets out the findings of the eleventh survey of the Argyll and Bute Citizens' Panel, fieldwork for which was conducted during October 2006.

The themes for the survey were identified by a number of Community Planning Partners and were collated by the Chief Executive's Unit at Argyll and Bute Council. A questionnaire, based on these data requests, was then produced by IBP Strategy and Research. This questionnaire is reproduced as Appendix 1 of the appendices which have been provided under separate cover to the Council.

1.2 The survey sought feedback from the community in Argyll and Bute with regard to issues relating to the following themes:

➤ Maintenance of Neighbourhoods

➤ Road Safety

➤ Anti-Social Behaviour

➤ Biodiversity

➤ The Single Transferable Vote.

These are addressed, in turn in sections 2 to 6 of this report.

METHODOLOGY

1.3 A postal survey of the Argyll and Bute Citizens Panel was conducted. At the outset of fieldwork, Panel membership was 1,284. During fieldwork, 42 people asked to be removed from the Panel, leaving on active membership of 1,242.

1.4 An initial questionnaire was mailed out to Panel members in the second week of October with a closing date of 27th October. A reminder mailing was then issued with a closing date of 11th November. In total, 696 responses were received, which is a response rate of 56%. This is slightly higher than that achieved in the previous two surveys, which may in part be due to the shorter questionnaire for this survey. Full details of the profile of responses is set out in Appendix 2, which has been provided under separate cover.

1.6   For illustrative purposes, a random sample of 696 provides data accurate to ±2.46% for the sample as a whole[1].

1.7   This document provides an overview of the survey results. The detailed data tables which form Appendix 3 to the report provide a more detailed breakdown of these responses. These should be read alongside Appendix 4 which provides full details of the verbatim responses to the open-ended questions that were included in the survey. For reasons of space, these have been provided under separate cover and are available from the Chief Executive's Unit at Argyll and Bute Council.

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[1] Based on a 50% estimate at the 95% confidence interval. Thus, if 50% of the sample answers in a given way, then we can be sure that if the whole population had been asked then the results would have been between 47.54% and 52.46%.

2.0 STREETS AND LANDSCAPED AREAS

2.1 The survey began by asking participants for their views on the importance of a range of issues relating to the maintenance of streets and landscaped areas. Figure 2.1 suggests that all of the five items on the list are rated as important by the great majority of respondents.

**Figure 2.1: Importance of Neighbourhood Issues**
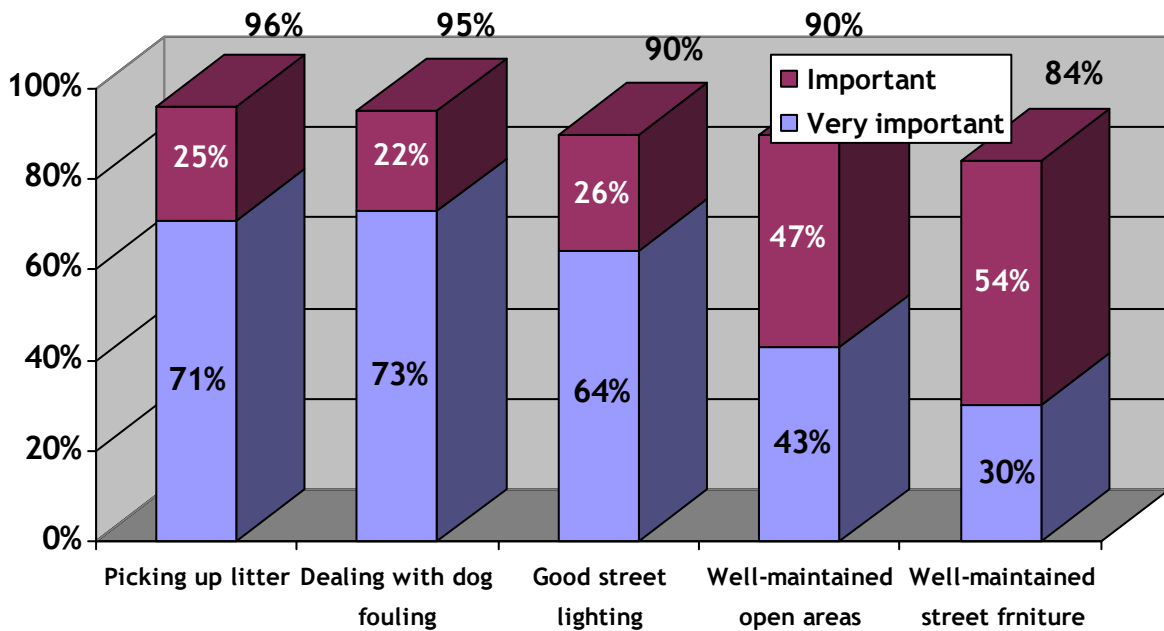
Base: 696

Clearly, however, issues of litter, dog fouling and, to a lesser extent, street lighting, are most likely to be accorded a "**very** important" priority by respondents.

2.2 This view is also evident when respondents are asked to select only two issues from this prompted list that they considered to be most important. The results of this are summarised in Figure 2.2 over the page.
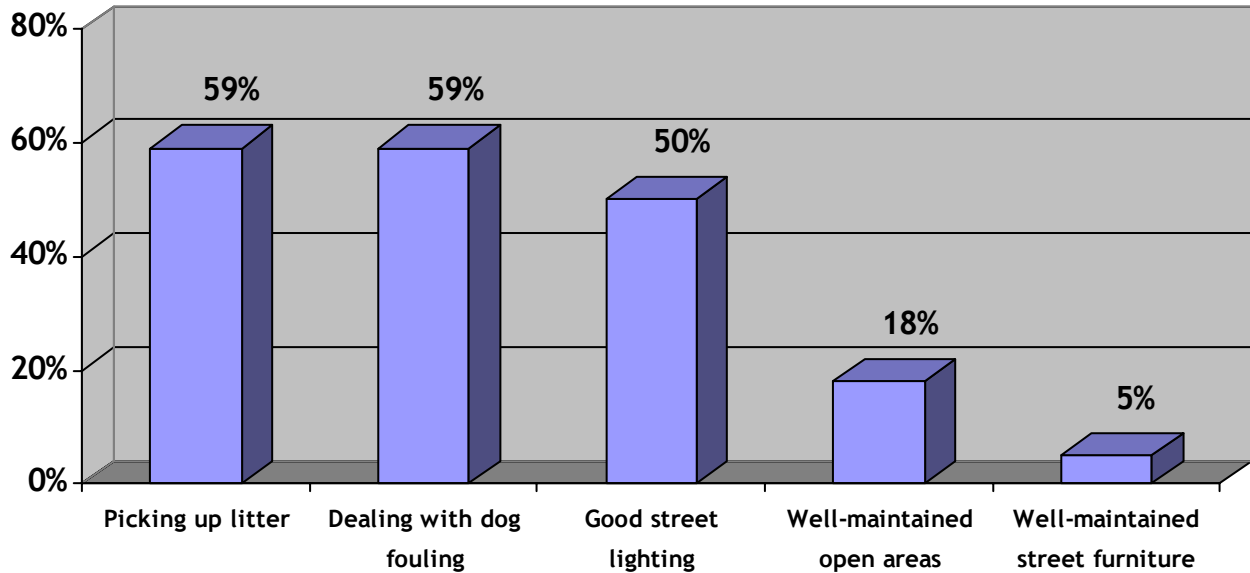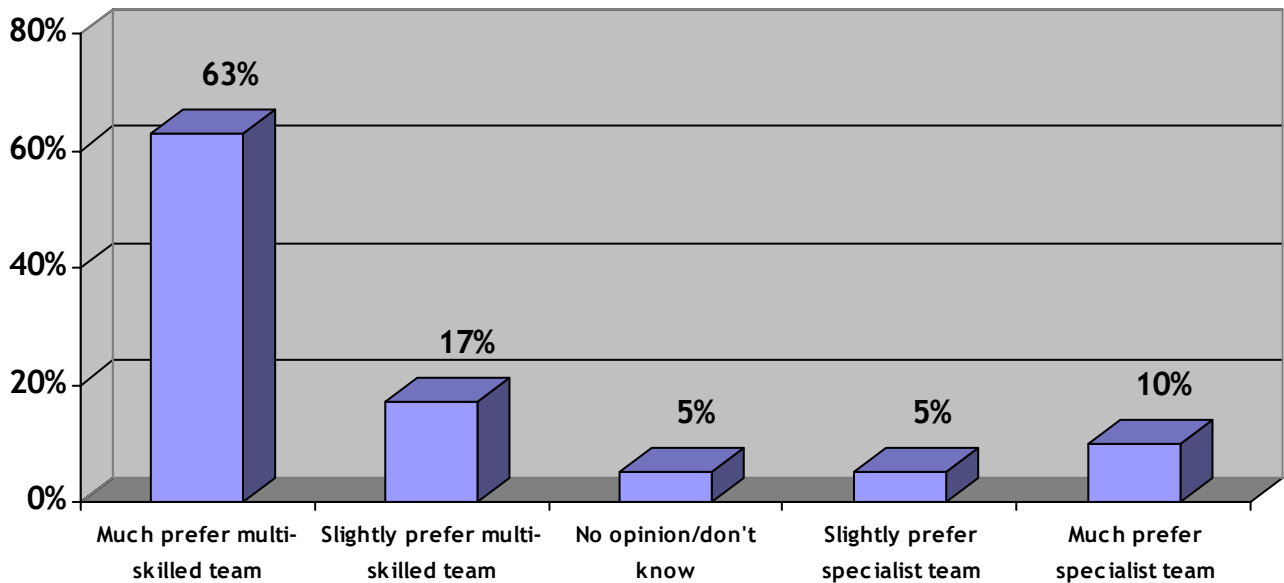
Base: 696

It is clear that when respondents are asked to choose between these priorities, litter and dog fouling are paramount, with well-maintained open areas and well-maintained street furniture some way behind.

2.3 Respondents were asked about their preference for two different approaches to the maintenance of local neighbourhoods, which were described thus:

➢ Multi-skilled teams – A single team of people that would be multi-skilled to carry out all forms of maintenance and cleaning work. Such a team would be focused on a single town or area.

➢ Specialist teams - A range of teams, each focusing on a specific issue (for example, litter, dog fouling, repairs and maintenance to street furniture, street lighting).

The results are detailed over the page.

Figure 2.3: Preferred Approach to Neighbourhood Maintenance

Base: 696

This is an exceptionally strong endorsement of the multi-skilled team approach, with 80% of people preferring such an approach compared to only 15% preferring the alternative, specialist team approach. The suggestion is that respondents place value on having the majority of issues dealt with as quickly as possible, in a cost-effective manner, and are prepared to accept that this could occasionally lead to some specific issues taking longer to resolve.

Key Points to Note

Whilst all aspects of neighbourhood management are seen as being important, issues of litter and dog fouling stand out as priorities for respondents, closely followed by street lighting.

There is a very strong preference for multi-skilled teams, as opposed to specific professional teams, to have responsibility for these aspects of neighbourhood management.

3.0 ROAD SAFETY

3.1   21% of respondents (143 people) were aware of the "Drivesafe" campaign. The most common responses in relation to how people found out about the campaign included:
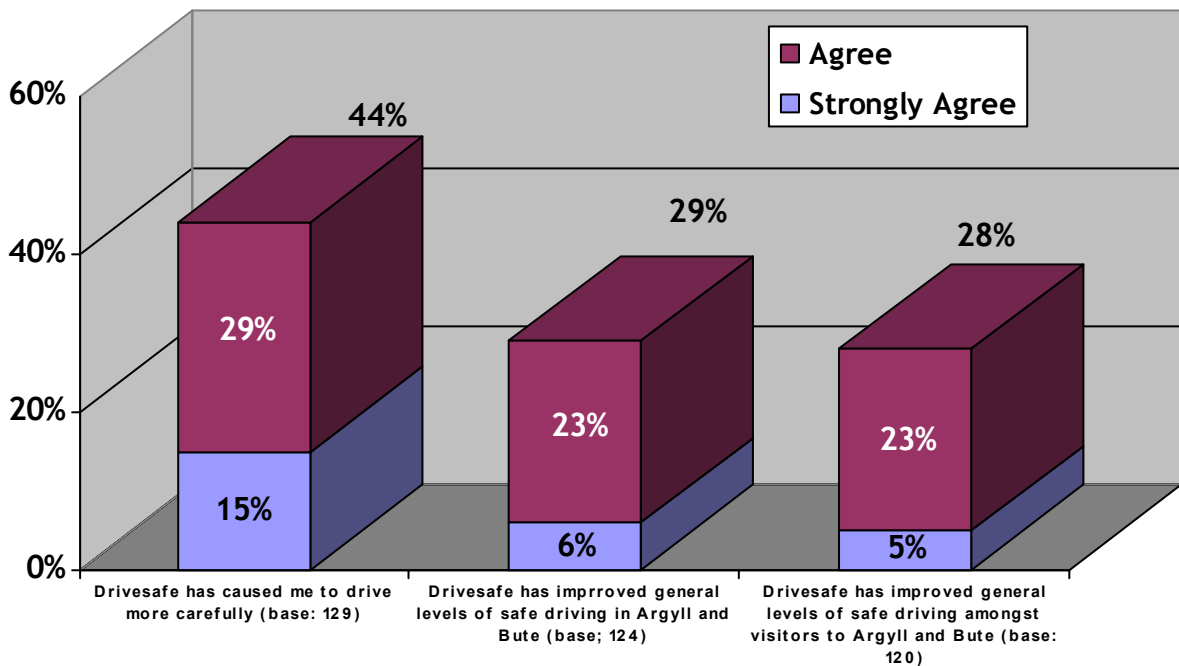
'Local press'

'Publicity material'

'Road signs'

'Adverts on Council vehicles'

'TV adverts'

3.2   Those respondents who had heard of Drivesafe were given the opportunity to comment on a number of attitudinal statements relating to the initiative, the results of which are set out in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Views on Drivesafe

The significant minority of respondents who are prepared to state that the Drivesafe campaign has caused them personally to drive more carefully should be seen as a positive finding, albeit people are somewhat less likely to perceive that the campaign gas had an impact on safe driving more generally and amongst tourists.

3.2 All respondents were given the opportunity to agree or disagree with a set of attitudinal statements about driving in Argyll and Bute generally ("don't know" responses have been taken out of these calculations). The results are summarised in Figure 3.2:

Figure 3.2: Views on Driving in Argyll and Bute Generally
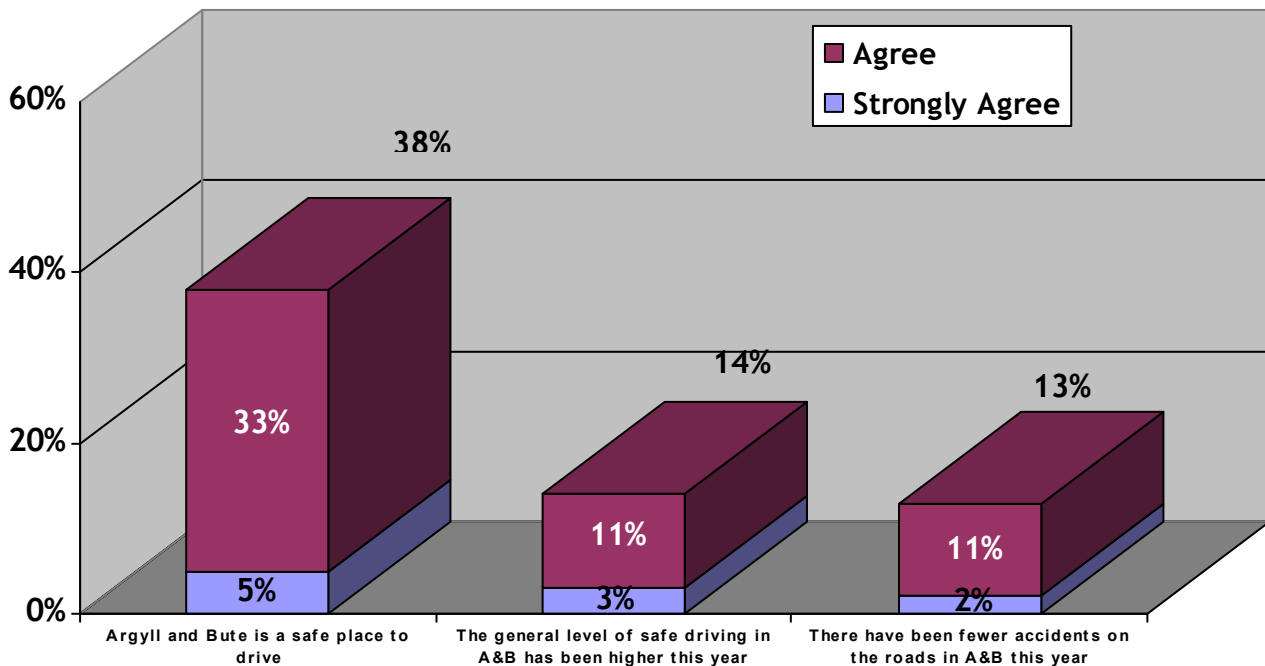
Clearly, only a minority of people feel able to say that Argyll and Bute is a safe place to drive (albeit there was a substantial "neither/nor" figure of 33%). Very few people believe that standards of safe driving have improved over the past year or that there have been fewer accidents in Argyll and Bute.

> **Key Points to Note**
>
> Although awareness of the Drivesafe initiative is comparatively modest, a significant minority of those who are aware of the campaign believe that it has encouraged them to drive more safely. They are, however, more sceptical as to the impact of the campaign on safe driving more generally.
>
> Only a minority of people feel able to say that Argyll and Bute is a safe place to drive and few people see a positive trend in terms of safer driving or fewer accidents.

4.0 POLICING ISSUES

4.1 In this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their level of concern with respect to a number of policing issues within Argyll and Bute. The results of this are summarised in Figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4.1: Concern with Policing Issues**
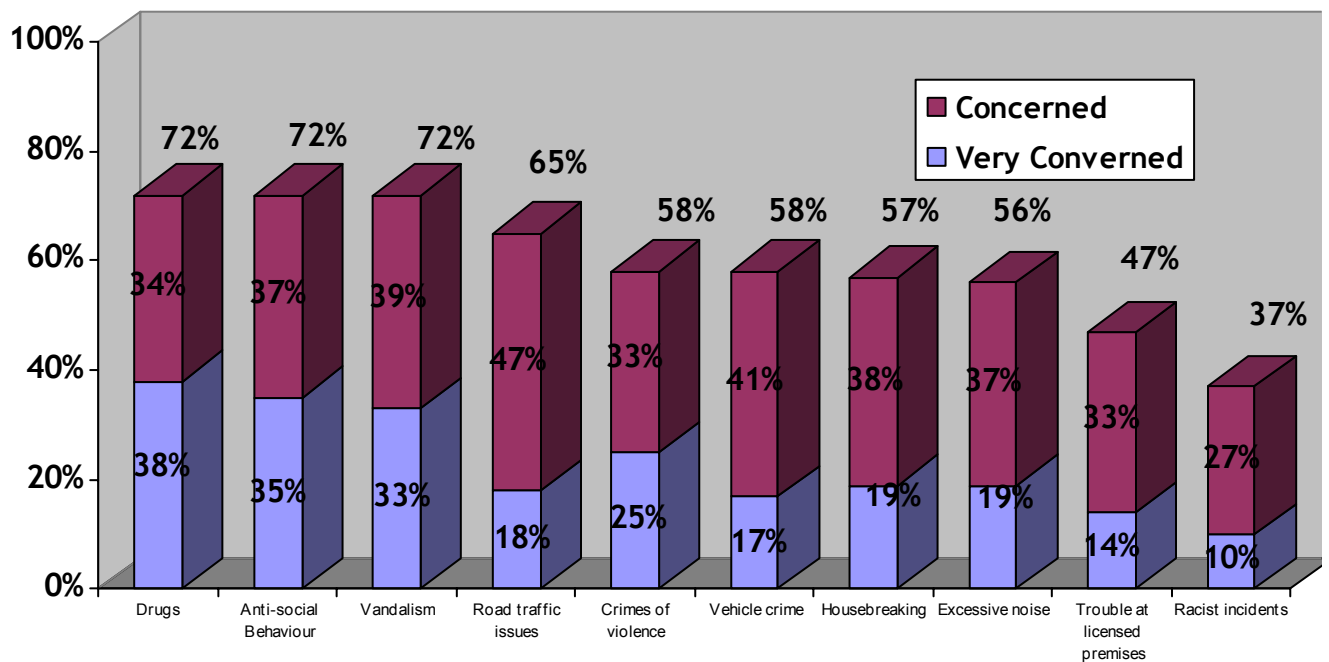
Base: 696

Figure 4.1 illustrates widespread concern with respect to a number of issues but, most particularly, drugs, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and, to a slightly lesser extent, road traffic issues.

4.2 To further assess respondents' levels of concern with respect to these issues, they were asked to choose which two issues they considered to be most important from the prompted list. The responses to this are summarised in Figure 4.2 over the page.

Figure 4.2: Most Important Policing Issues
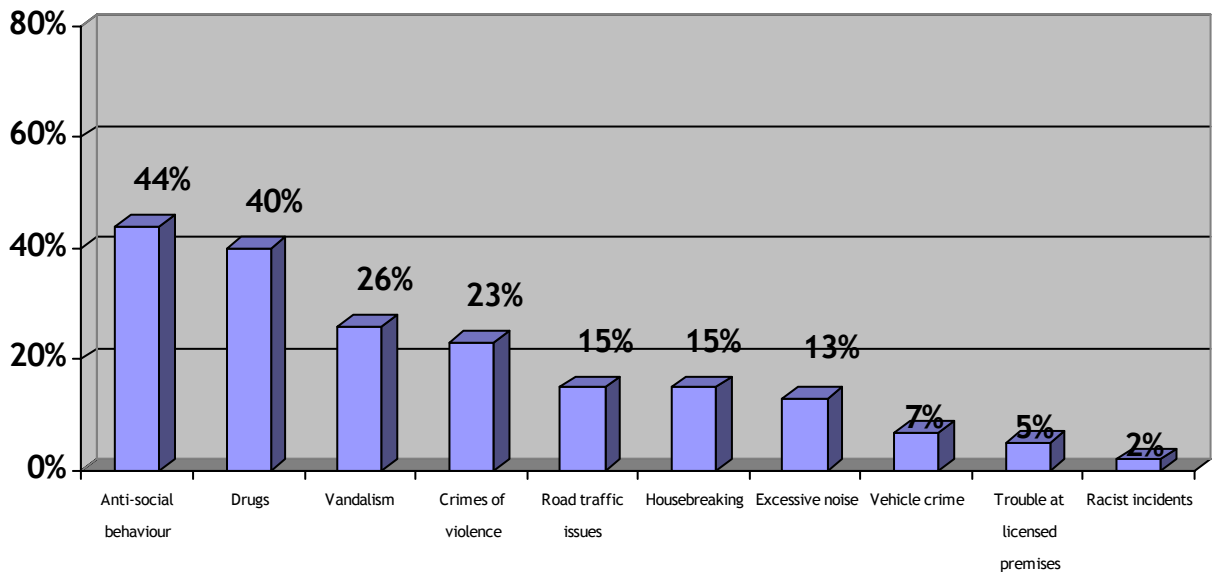
Base: 696

When looked at in this way, the issues of anti-social behaviour generally, and drugs, take on a particular importance. Vandalism is clearly an issue but crimes of violence also become more apparent as an important concern amongst respondents.

4.3   31% of respondents said that they had had some form of contact with their local police over the past 12 months. A full list of the reasons for such contact is set out in the appendices but typical examples concerned the reporting of incidents, most commonly of anti-social behaviour, particularly, drunkenness, vandalism and noise. Contact was less common for general advice and for routine matters, with a small minority having been in contact with the police through their own actions.

4.4   Satisfaction levels amongst those who had such contact are summarised below:

Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with Contact with Police
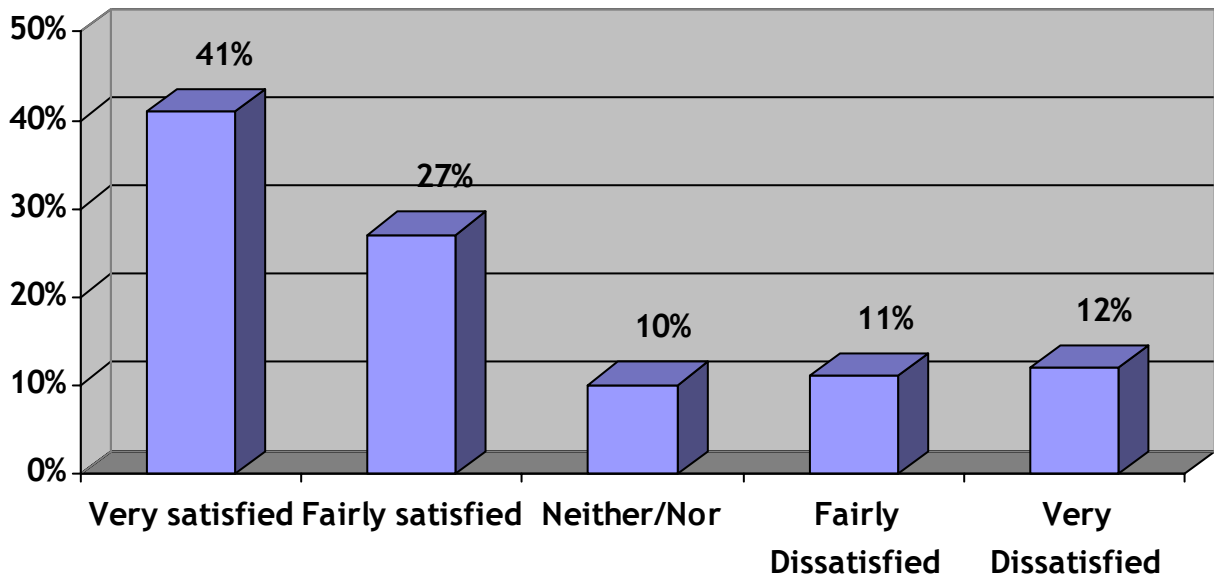
Base: 217

Whilst the great majority of respondents were happy with the contact that they had with their local police, this was not the case for a significant minority of respondents.

Key Points to Note

The policing issues that were of greatest concern to residents included anti-social behaviour generally, drugs, vandalism, crimes of violence and road safety issues.

Most people who have had contact with their local police are satisfied with this contact although a significant minority do express dissatisfaction.

5.0 BIODIVERSITY

5.1 "Biodiversity" was described within the survey questionnaire thus:

'Biodiversity is about the variety of plants, animals and other living things in an area. It encompasses diversity of both habitat and species.'

16% of respondents said that they were aware of biodiversity initiatives within Argyll and Bute, with some of the examples cited including:

SAC; Recycling; Marine National Park; GRAB; Renewable energy; LBAP; FWAG; SAMS; SNH; RSPB

A full listing of responses to the open-ended questions referred to in this section is available in the appendices.

5.2 Of those who were aware of any such initiatives, 31% said that they personally were involved in such initiatives (this amounted to 34 people, just under 5% of the total sample.

The initiatives in which people were involved were similar to those described above, with the most common including:

SNH; land management; woodlands

5.3 Perhaps unsurprisingly, given this limited awareness, many people do not feel able to comment on whether they think enough is being done to protect the biodiversity of Argyll and Bute. Of those who responded:

➢ 20% thought that enough was being done to protect the biodiversity of Argyll and Bute.

➢ 13% did not think that enough was being done

➢ 67% did not feel able to comment.

Amongst those who did express an opinion, there are clearly many (though not a majority) who feel that more should be done.

5.4 Amongst the suggestions for additional steps to protect Argyll and Bute's biodiversity, the most common suggestions included:

More education / information available to the public

Publicising initiatives

Recycling

Concern over development in green belt areas

Key Points to Note

Few people are aware of specific biodiversity initiatives within Argyll and Bute, although a small number are actively involved in a range of such initiatives.

People generally do not feel able to comment on whether enough is being done to protect Argyll and Bute's biodiversity; amongst those who do express an opinion, the slight minority view is that enough is already being done to protect the area's biodiversity.

6.0 ELECTORAL CHANGE

6.1 In the final section of the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the implementation of the Single Transferable Vote system for the Scottish Local authority elections in May 2007.

Respondents believe it is important that they are informed as to the different aspects of the working of this system.

Figure 6.1: Importance of Voters Being Informed on Aspects of New Voting System
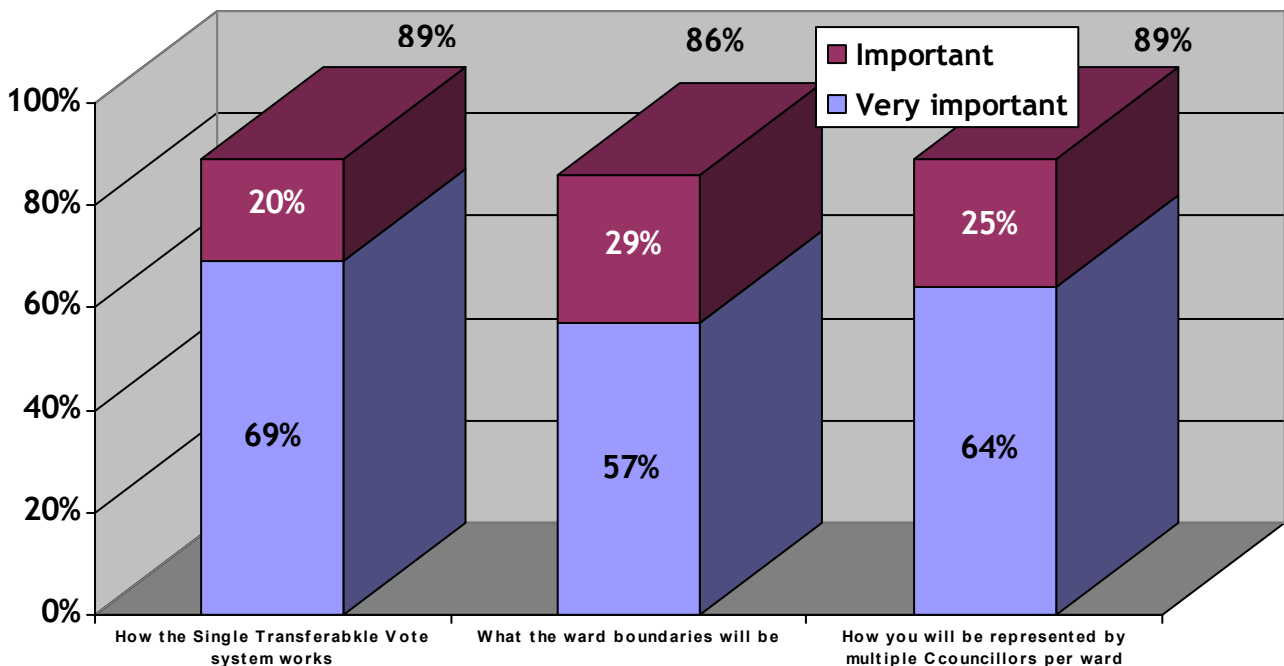
6.2 When respondents are asked to choose only one of these issues as their priority, then a strong desire for information on how the Single Transferable Vote system will work, and how people will be represented by councillors in multi-member wards, becomes apparent, with fewer people seeing ward boundaries as the top priority.

Figure 6.2: Most Important Information Needs on New Voting System
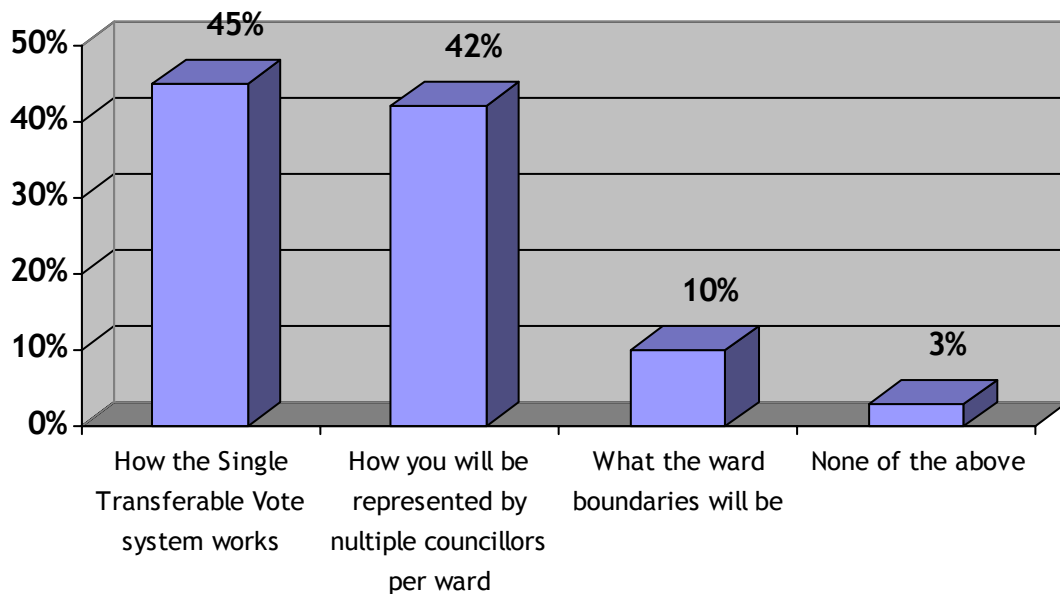
Base: 696

6.3 By far and away the most common method by which people would like to be informed about these changes is through a leaflet sent to their home address (suggested by 79% of respondents from a prompted list). The next most common suggestion is television or radio advertising (8%) followed by public meetings (4%), leaflets in offices or libraries (4%) and information on the Council website (3%).

Key Points to Note

People have a strong desire for more information on the implementation of the Single Transferable Vote system for the Scottish Local Authority elections in May 1997.

In particular, they would like to know more about how the system will work and how they will be represented by Councillors from multi-member wards. The great majority of people would like to see this information communicated through a leaflet delivered directly to their door.