



RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2024 REPORT



The survey

The Residents' Survey, seeking views and satisfaction scores on the Council's core services (both mandatory and discretionary) ran from Monday 1 July to Sunday 8 September 2024.

The overwhelming majority of the 1,707 respondents to the survey submitted their responses online. The balance of responders completed a paper copy of the questionnaire, which was published in the summer Bulletin magazine and available at Community Centres, libraries and leisure centres.

Overall, Spelthorne Borough Council performed above Local Government Association benchmarking, with particular satisfaction in: how we run our services; the value for money we provide; how well-informed residents feel; the way we respond to concerns and the levels of trust in the Council.

Why conduct a survey?

We have pledged to 'putting residents at the heart of everything we do' in our Corporate Plan and committed to undertake a full Residents' Survey to find out what residents really think about the way we run our services. Survey responses are vital for the council to better understand our communities, improve our services and direct our resources at the issues that matter most. The extent to which residents feel informed and engaged with us, and the trust that they place in our decisions, directly affects their views about the Council and the services they receive. This in turn impacts on their levels of satisfaction and ultimately, our public reputation. Conducting this survey has also given the opportunity for us to understand what our communities think, providing a valuable insight into how Spelthorne Borough Council is perceived by our wider community. In line with our corporate values, it helps us to demonstrate transparency and accountability to the people we serve and helps us monitor and address any changes in satisfaction levels over time.

Engagement

The Residents' Survey was comprehensively communicated in a manner of ways before and during the consultation period. The survey was promoted by:

- the summer Bulletin magazine distributed to 46,000 homes
- paper questionnaires available at the Council offices, libraries, community and leisure centres
- posters on community noticeboards
- graphics on digital screens in Two Rivers, Elmsleigh Centre and on the high street in Staines
- presentation to Residents' Associations at the Spelthorne Partnership Assembly
- press releases
- eNews and daily roundup alerts via the Customer Portal
- dedicated web page www.spelthorne.gov.uk/residentsurvey and web chat links
- use of social media via organic posts (Instagram, Nextdoor, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn)
- the use of an email footer on Council staff communications
- prominent branding on the front page of Council's website
- web and social media advertising (geo-targeting on Facebook, Surrey Live and Google)
- Borough and County Councillor communications, intranet and staff meetings
- stakeholder direct mailing to KGE Ltd residents, Surrey Police, North West Surrey Alliance, Housing Prevention Forum Network, Spelthorne Business Forum, Visit Staines, Spelthorne Healthy Community Partnership, St Ashford and St Peters Hospital, Leisure Directory, Arts Mailing list, Voluntary Support North Surrey, Food and Welfare Network and Net Zero Community Network.

Benchmarking the results

Using the support services from the Local Government Association (LGA), the questions we asked were based on their 'Are you being served' model. The Survey measured how satisfied residents were with certain aspects of the Council, including:

- service delivery
- providing value for money
- listening and acting on resident views
- informing residents about services and benefits
- community safety
- trust in the council

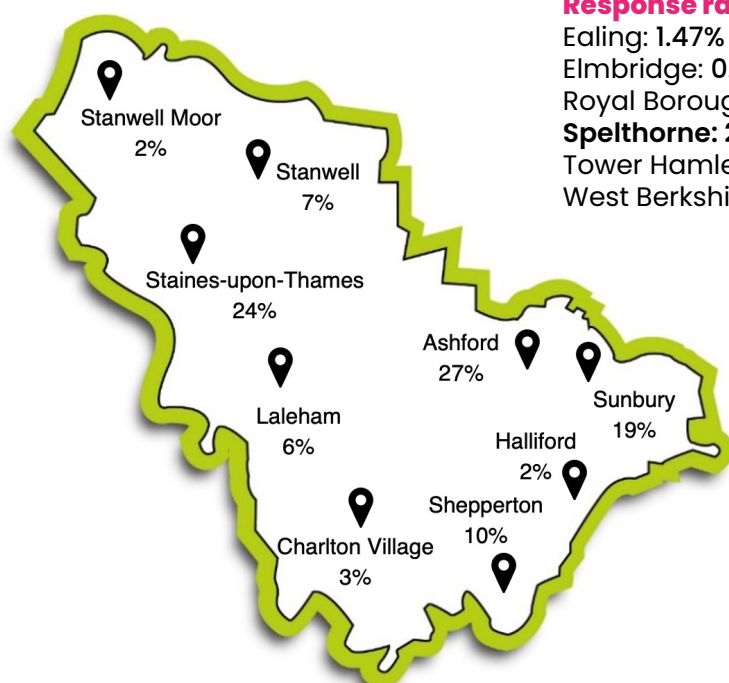
Since 2012, the LGA poll 1,000 British adults three times a year (February, June and October) and report a roundup of the results at a national level. By using this framework, we have been able to benchmark our results against six key indicators of resident satisfaction based on an average result for local authorities recorded over the last year (June 2023, October 2023, February 2024 and June 2024).

Total number of respondents to the survey: 1,707

Completed online: 1,528

Completed paper questionnaire: 179

This is the highest response rate that the Council has ever received for this type of survey, which equates to 2.05% of the adult population (83,319). To put it into context, we received 560 responses to the Leisure Centre consultation in 2020 and the next highest was in response to a public space protection order to ban legal highs, for which we received around 800 responses in 2021. The LGA recommends a minimum of approximately 500 people to give an effective perspective of the overall views of your general population.



Response rate comparisons:

Ealing: 1.47%

Elmbridge: 0.92%

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead: 1.14%

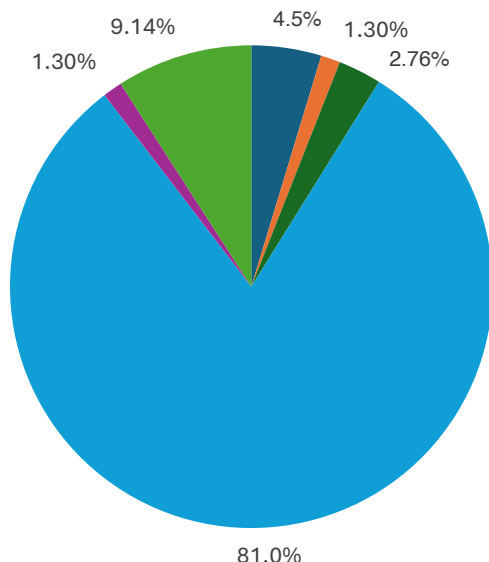
Spelthorne: 2.05%

Tower Hamlets: 1.15%

West Berkshire: 0.77%

Demographics of respondents

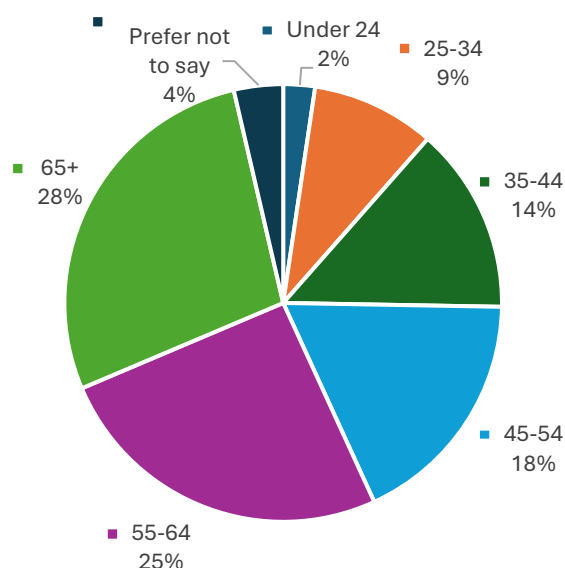
Ethnicity of Respondents



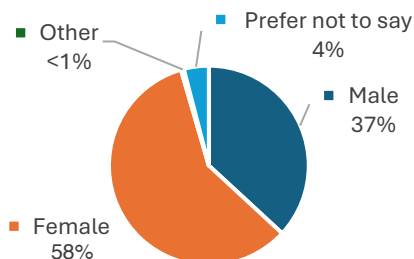
- the vast majority of respondents (71%) live in either Ashford, Staines-upon-Thames or Sunbury
- the age of respondents varies with approximately 53% over the age of 55
- 58% of respondents identify as female
- 12% of respondents consider themselves to have a disability
- 81% of respondents are from a white ethnic background

■ Asian or Asian British
 ■ Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
 ■ Mixed or multiple ethnicity
 ■ White
 ■ Other Ethnic Group
 ■ Prefer not to say

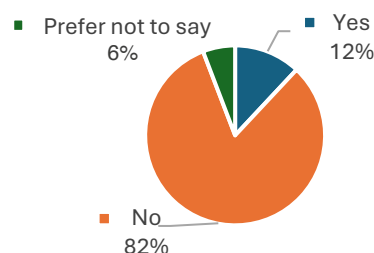
Age of Respondents



Gender of respondents



Residents who consider themselves to have a disability



Borough profile

Respondents of the survey were fairly representative of the Borough profile.

Gender: 51% female and 49% male

Age: 16-24 8.7%, 25-34 13.1%, 35-44 14.2%, 45-64 27.1% 65+ 18%

Ethnicity: 78.6% white, 12.8% Asian, 3.7% mixed or multiple ethnicity, 2.5% black and 2.4% other ethnic group

Long term health problems or disabilities: 2.2%

A full analysis of the Borough is on our website www.spelthorne.gov.uk

Corporate performance

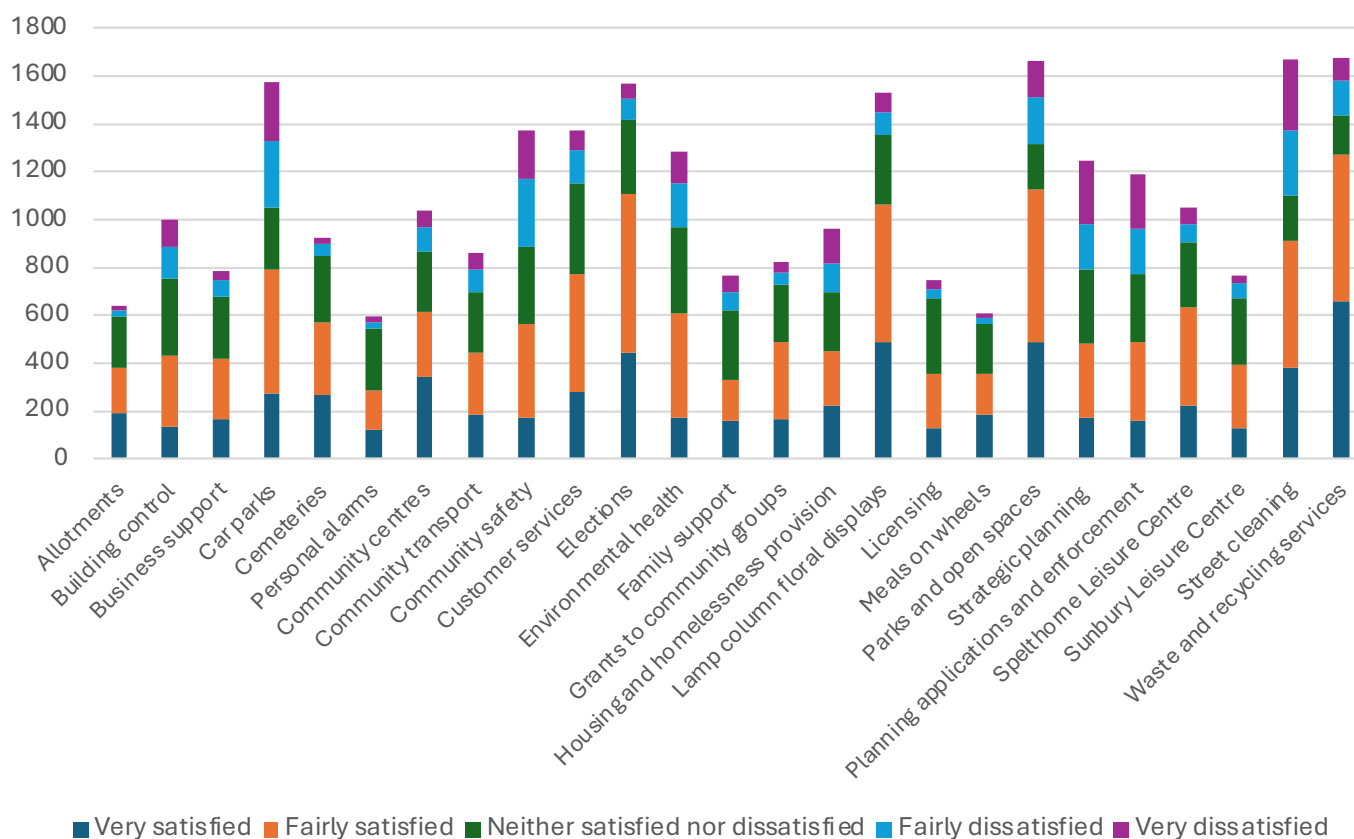
When comparing the Local Government Association's (LGA) national average statistics, Spelthorne Borough Council performs well in the following areas:

Question	LGA average	Spelthorne
Residents who are very or fairly satisfied with how the Council runs the services they provide.	56%	60%
Residents who strongly or tend to agree that the Council provides value for money.	40%	54%
Residents who feel that the Council listens and acts on concerns either a great deal or fair amount.	50%	52%
Residents who feel very or fairly well informed by the Council on its provision of services and benefits.	54%	65%
Residents who trust the Council a great deal or a fair amount.	55%	58%

Satisfaction with core services

Overall, the majority of residents who responded to the Survey and gave a rating for the Council's core services, were generally either very or fairly satisfied with each service area.

Resident satisfaction with core services



Residents were also given the option of 'don't know' for each core service area, which is not represented in the graph.

The satisfaction scores of those **who expressed an opinion, are listed below**. Of the residents who felt that they **were very or fairly satisfied** the following services scored:

- **71%** – Elections
- **70%** – Lamp column floral displays
- **68%** – Parks and open spaces
- **62%** – Cemeteries
- **61%** – Spelthorne Leisure Centre
- **60%** – Allotments
- **59%** – Community grants
- **59%** – Community centres
- **58%** – Meals on wheels
- **56%** – Customer services
- **55%** – Street cleaning
- **54%** – Business support
- **52%** – Sunbury Leisure Centre
- **51%** – Community transport
- **50%** – Car parks
- **48%** – Personal alarms
- **48%** – Licensing
- **47%** – Environmental Health
- **44%** – Family Support
- **47%** – Housing and homelessness provision
- **43%** – Building Control
- **41%** – Planning applications and enforcement
- **37%** – Strategic Planning e.g. Local Plan
- **36%** – Community safety

Your
opinion
matters!



The highest rating for being very or fairly dissatisfied with a core service was community safety at **36%** (see analysis on page 8), followed by dissatisfaction with Strategic Planning at **37%**, with **10%** specifically unhappy with the delay of the Local Plan and others concerned with the green belt development and housing numbers.

Where residents were dissatisfied with a service, they were prompted to give reasons why. In total, **673** gave further information. Of these respondents:

- **23%** flagged concerns around the lack of **street cleaning** and maintenance of vegetation such as **grass cutting, verge trimming and weeding**. Several comments denoted that they had seen a particular decline in service provision since the grass verges contract was taken back in-house by Surrey County Council. Several comments also noted sightings of **litter and dog fouling**.
- **21%** noted frustrations with **car parks** and busy **street parking**. There were mixed comments about the technology of car parks, with some finding them complicated to use and others advising they would like an App. Several comments were particularly focused on the closure of Ashford multi-storey car park and the impact on-street parking charges may be having on local businesses.
- **19%** advised that they were unsatisfied with **planning applications and enforcement**. The majority of comments reflected concerns around the approval of high-rise buildings with a lack of local infrastructure to support the increased number of residents. A further **10%** were specifically unhappy with the delay of the **Local Plan**.
- **18%** suggested that they felt increasingly **unsafe** and concerned about a rise in criminal activity within the borough. Many residents felt that more police presence was urgently needed.

Sample comments

"Community Safety – kids on bikes in balaclavas, regular shoplifting, children attacking animals with catapults, blatant drug taking, attempted car theft at night. Something really needs to be done."

"Our roads look an absolute mess with weeds growing in the gutters, overgrown trees and verges. In all the years I have lived here never have I seen it look so bad."

"Spelthorne Borough Council needs to be more assertive with Surrey County Council to ensure Spelthorne is not forgotten and is last on the list."

"The Council is approving too many high rise developments that change the nature of the town with no corresponding provision of infrastructure including schools and health services."

"The Borough is at risk without a sound current Local Plan. The Council has delayed for far too long in progressing this."

"I feel that the recycling centres are difficult to access for many elderly and disabled people. It is expensive to dispose of mattresses, fridges, white goods and excess garden waste or rubble and this is why fly tipping is so prevalent."

"Car parking in Ashford centre is inadequate and the proposed parking charges are unnecessary and will likely drive away trade for the businesses in the town."

Further LGA benchmark analysis

The following areas are the three questions that are possible to benchmark against the LGA average and further analysis has been undertaken on the services that Spelthorne Borough Council provide and support (waste, green space and community safety).

Question	LGA average	Spelthorne
Residents who are very or fairly satisfied with waste collection service	78%	75%
Residents who are very or fairly satisfied with green space	76%	66%
Residents who feel very safe or fairly safe during the day	92%	79%
Residents who feel very safe or fairly safe after dark	71%	52%
Residents who trust the Council a great deal or a fair amount	55%	58%

Waste collection analysis

In the free text comments 15% mentioned waste and recycling as an area that they would like to see improved, though equally many positive comments were made about the friendliness and efficiency of the refuse collection team. Some residents felt their roads were missed during collection or they were unhappy with how their bins were left after they had been emptied. Some respondents also felt that the prices charged at the Surrey County Council Community Recycling Centre for some waste materials and for bulky collections and suggested that this may be the cause for increased fly tipping, of which 3% flagged this as a specific concern.

Green space analysis

In the free text comments 9% mentioned green space as an area that they would like to see improved. Out of the 67 comments received on our parks and open spaces, 12 related specifically to resident satisfaction on the Esso Pipeline project at Fordbridge Park and 6 comments related to antisocial behaviour. Analysis also demonstrates that many residents' dissatisfaction regarding grass verge maintenance was incorporated into this section with 34 specific comments, namely that Spelthorne Borough Council should take back the service from Surrey County Council. Suggestions have been made to increase the number of dog poo bins, install a running track, increase public toilets, improve flood preparation with regular River Ash clearance and improve playground equipment in Shepperton Recreation Ground, Cedars Park and on Laleham Road. Equally, it is worth noting that positive comments were received on the facilities at Lammas Park and that Sunbury Walled Garden, and three Borough cemeteries are Green Flag and Southeast in Bloom winners.

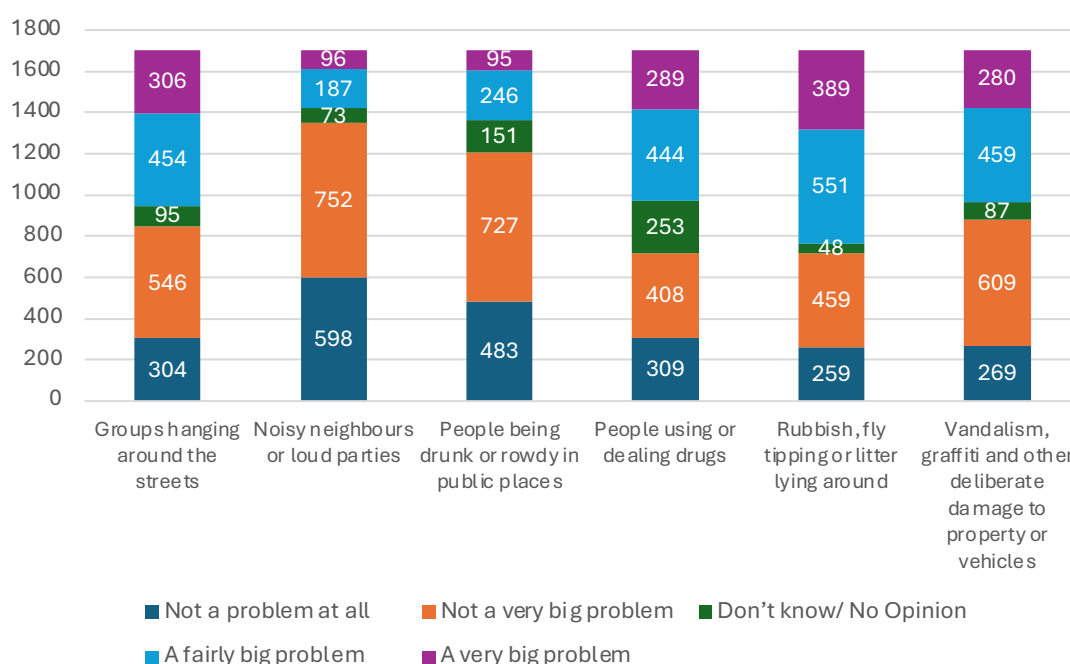
Community safety analysis

Against the LGA benchmarking, response on community safety received the lowest score. Respondents were invited to flag specific issues in relation to safety in the borough.

1. 55% of respondents felt that rubbish, fly tipping and littering were either a very or fairly big problem
2. 45% identified groups hanging around the streets as a concern
3. 43% felt people using or dealing drugs, vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate property and vehicle damage were a problem locally
4. however, 79% didn't feel noisy neighbours or loud parties were a particular problem and 71% didn't feel people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces was a major issue in the borough

To further understand residents' concerns a community safety survey is currently live, the Police Borough Commander is holding a residents' meeting at the Council Office in October and a specific Public Space Protection Order consultation to tackle balaclavas and catapults is due in November 2024.

Community safety concerns



The final question that it is possible to benchmark against the LGA average is on satisfaction as a place to live.

Question	LGA average	Spelthorne
Residents who are very or fairly satisfied with Spelthorne as a place to live	74%	65%

The breakdown below demonstrates town comparison area satisfaction (for fairly and very satisfied). Five of the towns score above the LGA average (Charlton Village, Halliford, Laleham, Shepperton and Stanwell Moor), the highest scoring town is Charlton Village at 86%, closely followed by Halliford and Laleham. Four towns scored below the 74% LGA average (Sunbury, Staines-upon-Thames, Ashford and Stanwell.)



The lowest score for area satisfaction was from residents from Stanwell. Of the 117 respondents who live in Stanwell, 51 free text comments were provided and of those comments 22% were on the direct impact of Heathrow airport. A selection is provided below:

"My health and for my community needs a better environment and Heathrow makes it worse letting flights take off at all times of the night. They rob us and give back nothing to the community. Stop night flights and make them pay community compensation for being crap neighbours."

"Heathrow expansion must be resisted to protect our community."

"We, Spelthorne having given so much away over the years in supporting London and especially the growth of Heathrow Airport and yet we have nothing! Look at the North side, Overground, Underground, Elizabeth Line and many TFL buses to Heathrow! Ashford has two trains an hour to London Plus NO Oyster Freedom Pass!!"

Additional comments were provided on fly tipping, public transport, drug activity, lack of activities for children and safety.

Resident thoughts on Spelthorne Borough Council, its local areas and community efforts

Residents were asked whether they speak positively or negatively when considering their thoughts about Spelthorne Borough Council:

- 34% advised that they would speak positively of the council if asked about it as opposed to 23% that would speak negatively
- 9% advised that they would speak positively about the Council without being asked about it as opposed to 7% that would speak negatively
- 22% had no views one way or the other and 5% said they didn't know
- 71% of respondents felt very or fairly strongly that they belong to their local area as opposed to 27% who didn't feel very strongly or strongly at all, 2% were unsure
- 56% definitely or tended to agree that people in their local area pulled together to improve the local area, 23% definitely or tended to disagree that this was the case, 21% did not have a strong view either way

Additional thoughts

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments at the end of the survey with a prompt to invite residents to identify one thing that they would like to change about Spelthorne Council's services.

Responses varied in nature. However, the following conclusions can be drawn from the 683 responses:

- 17% referenced police presence as one area that they would like to see improved with a further 7% noticing a rise in anti-social behaviour and 4% noting illegal drug usage.

"I don't believe the council is responsible for all of the above, but the police need to do more, be visible".

"Crime is happening, and the police do nothing. They don't even turn up."

- 13% advised that they had seen a decline in vegetation management (e.g. verge trimming, grass cutting and weeds) with a further 7% suggesting that they would like services brought back in-house from Surrey County Council who they felt were neglecting the local area.

"Take back looking after the grass verges. Parks always look carefully managed but the streets surrounding them look untidy and dirty."

"Spelthorne were much more efficient with upkeep of grassed areas/verges. Surrey are very poor and do a very inadequate job since they took over".

- 8% noted that Surrey County Council road maintenance (potholes, road surfacing and highways) was a service that they wanted improved in Spelthorne. A further 8% raised that parking provision was also a concern with some residents commenting that street parking in particular is causing issues on residential roads.

"Parking on double yellow lines, what's the point of double yellow lines when there is no monitoring, and on pavement parking, [...] this is preventing pedestrian walkways."

"Failing road surfaces, potholes, illegal parking, un-enforced double yellows."

- 7% suggested they would like to be better informed on the Council's service provision and ensure that this information is accessible. Several residents commented on wanting better reporting tools and better outcomes to issues that are flagged by them.

"The council provides some amazing services given the constraints it operates under. The council need to do more of highlighting how hard they are working with such little resources."

"More information could be provided about improvements and good things happening in the area."

"Make it more straightforward to report issues instead of having to find out if it is a county or borough issue and then source the particular department."

Overall, residents varied in opinion on what one thing they would like to change about the Council's services. Some other examples are given below.

"There is a need to increase funding of youth services because young people have nowhere to go or to occupy them in the evening."

"I continue to be concerned about the strategic financial decisions made by the Council and therefore financial sustainability alongside the fact we don't have a Local Plan and so do not have appropriate evidence to challenge any attempt to increase housing without investment in infrastructure."

"I would like to see an increase in targeting litter, vandalism, and fly tipping. As well as general street cleaning."

"Introduce more items for kerbside recycling collection in line with other local authorities. Tetra pack, coffee pods etc."

Many positive comments were also made about the Council's services, including:

"Big shout out to the recycling / waste collectors, always do a great job, polite, great representatives for the council."

"Our community Greeno centre is fantastic, a community treasure."

"The magazine bulletin is very informative and useful."

"On a positive note, my mum does get meals on wheels which she loves. The parks are kept very clean and are a lovely place to go when the sun is shining as we don't all have big gardens. When I come into the offices everyone is helpful."

"I like the outdoor gyms and looking forward to the leisure centre opening."

"I use the SPAN alarms for my mum and I am really happy with the service".

"I would like to express my thanks to the workers who tend to Staines cemetery".

"I read about the White House hostel a few years ago and think it is a great provision this borough offers homeless people".



Closing summary

Corporately, when compared with the LGA average, Spelthorne Borough Council scores fair to well in its recent resident satisfaction survey. Particularly when considering areas such as trust, value for money, service delivery, keeping residents informed, and listening and acting on resident views.

The survey provided an opportunity for residents to feedback concerns which have been captured through both a scoring matrix and analysis of free-text answers.

There was an overwhelming concern for services that are the responsibility of either Surrey Police or Surrey County Council. With many residents advising that they are dissatisfied with road maintenance, verge maintenance and on-street parking.

Next steps

- this report will be published on our website available for all residents to read and shared directly with Councillors, Resident Associations and relevant stakeholders
- the full data and free comments have been provided to Senior Management and relevant service leads to help shape the future service and corporate plans
- community safety has been highlighted as an area that residents are most concerned about and further views are being captured via the crime and safety survey
- comments will be shared to partners including Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and the Stronger Safer Partnership group for consideration, particularly on safety, crime, grass verges, highways and on-street car parking
- commit to run a repeat Residents' Survey every two years to help us monitor and address, any changes in satisfaction levels over time



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THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2024. YOUR FEEDBACK IS VERY IMPORTANT TO SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL.