



## Panel Budget Survey

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Summary Report of Findings for Dacorum Borough Council

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## The Survey

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) has been commissioned by Dacorum Borough Council to undertake a budget survey with members of Dacorum Borough Council's citizens panel. The survey contained questions on the council budget and public services.

## Methodology

- 1.2 The questionnaire was distributed by post and online to members of Dacorum Borough Council Citizens Panel during the week commencing the 18th of October, 2010. The cut-off date for returned questionnaires was 22nd November, 2010.

## The Response

- 1.3 The survey was distributed to 1,002 panel members in total. 624 completed questionnaires were returned (366 by post and 258 online), yielding a response rate of 62%.

## Interpretation of the Data

- 1.4 Although the survey was distributed to all panel members, the returned sample can be unbalanced due to non-response by some members. Therefore, the survey results are, where necessary, weighted to correct any imbalances in the returned sample.
- 1.5 Comparative data was available for gender, age, employment status, tenure, ethnic group and ward. Results were checked against these and then subsequently weighted by age and gender. The tables on the following pages show the un-weighted and weighted profiles of the responses to the survey. The results are therefore representative of the population of Dacorum Local Authority.
- 1.6 Throughout the volume an asterisk (\*) denotes any value less than half a per cent.
- 1.7 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers.
- 1.8 Where differences between demographic groups are discussed there is a 95% probability that the difference is significant and not due to chance.

## Respondent Profile

1.9 The tables that appear without commentary on the following pages show the profile of survey respondents in relation to a range of characteristics. Each table includes details about the number and percentage of respondents.

1.10 Please note \* denotes a percentage which is less than 1%

**Table 1: Gender – All Respondents**

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

| Gender       | Unweighted Count | Unweighted Valid % | Weighted Valid % |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Male         | 312              | 50                 | 49               |
| Female       | 309              | 50                 | 51               |
| Not Known    | 3                | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>624</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       |

**Table 2: Age Group – All Respondents**

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

| Age Group    | Unweighted Count | Unweighted Valid % | Weighted Valid % |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 16-24        | 6                | 1                  | 4                |
| 25-34        | 38               | 6                  | 25               |
| 35-44        | 73               | 12                 | 20               |
| 45-54        | 118              | 19                 | 18               |
| 55-64        | 157              | 26                 | 13               |
| 65+          | 218              | 36                 | 20               |
| Not Known    | 14               | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>624</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       |

**Table 3: Ethnicity – All Respondents**

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

| Ethnicity    | Unweighted Count | Unweighted Valid % | Weighted Valid % |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| White        | 598              | 98                 | 96               |
| Non-white    | 13               | 2                  | 4                |
| Not Known    | 13               | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>624</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       |

**Table 4: Employment Status – All Respondents**

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

| Employment Status | Unweighted Count | Unweighted Valid % | Weighted Valid % |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Working           | 357              | 58                 | 67               |
| Retired           | 190              | 31                 | 18               |
| Other             | 69               | 11                 | 15               |
| Not Known         | 8                | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>624</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       |

Table 5: Tenure – All Respondents

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

| Tenure           | Unweighted Count | Unweighted Valid % | Weighted Valid % |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Owned            | 470              | 77                 | 72               |
| Rented – Social  | 116              | 19                 | 21               |
| Rented – Private | 21               | 3                  | 7                |
| Not Known        | 17               | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>624</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       |

Table 6: Ward Group – All Respondents

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

| Ward Group    | Unweighted Count | Unweighted Valid % | Weighted Valid % |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Berkhamsted   | 98               | 16                 | 16               |
| Bridgewater   | 52               | 8                  | 8                |
| HH East       | 60               | 10                 | 8                |
| HH North East | 45               | 7                  | 9                |
| HH North West | 60               | 10                 | 12               |
| HH South East | 24               | 4                  | 4                |
| HH St Pauls   | 31               | 5                  | 7                |
| HH Town       | 97               | 16                 | 16               |
| Kings Langley | 59               | 10                 | 8                |
| Tring         | 92               | 15                 | 12               |
| Not Known     | 6                | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>624</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       |

## Rank Analysis

1.11 In this report reference has been made to ‘rank analysis’. This occurs when respondents have been asked to rank or prioritise a selection of different options. For rank analysis each priority is given a score (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> priority is given one point, 2<sup>nd</sup> priority 2 points, 3<sup>rd</sup> priority 3 points). A total score for each response option is then calculated. This total score is then divided by the number of respondents to give an average score. The response options are then ranked according to their average score, the lowest being the highest priority.

## Graphics

1.12 Graphics are used extensively in this report to make it as user-friendly as possible. The pie charts and other graphics show the proportions (percentages) of respondents making relevant responses. Where possible the colours used in the charts have been standardised with a ‘traffic light’ system in which:

- Green shades represent positive responses
- Beige represents neither positive nor negative responses
- Red shades represent negative responses
- The bolder shades are used to highlight responses at the ‘extremes’ – for example, very satisfied or very dissatisfied.

1.13 Please note that the figures may not always sum to 100% due to slight rounding errors.

### **Acknowledgements**

1.14 ORS would like to thank Claire McKnight at Dacorum Borough Council for her help and assistance in developing the project. We would also like to thank the 677 people who took part in the survey, without whose valuable input the research would not have been possible.

### **Publication of Data**

1.15 As with all our studies, findings from this survey are subject to our Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication of the findings of this survey requires the advance approval of ORS. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

## Chapter 2: Key Findings

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### Council Services and Priorities

- <sup>2.1</sup> Residents feel that *bins/collecting waste* (91%) is the most important Council Service for them and their family; this is closely followed by *tackling anti-social behaviour* (84%) and *environmental services (such as street cleaning, removing graffiti, removing abandoned cars and preventing/cleaning up fly tipping)* (82%).
- <sup>2.2</sup> The largest proportion of residents believe that the *collection of waste* (65%) is the most important Council Service for the community as a whole; this is closely followed by tackling anti-social behaviour (60%) and parks and play areas (39%).

### Priorities

- <sup>2.3</sup> Residents believe that the top three priorities that the council and its partners should have for the local area are:
1. Reducing crime and creating a safer Dacorum
  2. Encouraging business and local employment
  3. Creating a cleaner and healthier environment

### Suggestions

- <sup>2.4</sup> Suggestions on how Dacorum Borough Council could save money and/or increase income, included:
- partnership working
  - paying councillors/staff less
  - reducing red tape/bureaucracy
  - using the unemployed and those have committed crimes to undertake work in the community
  - encouraging people to look after their community.

### Value for money

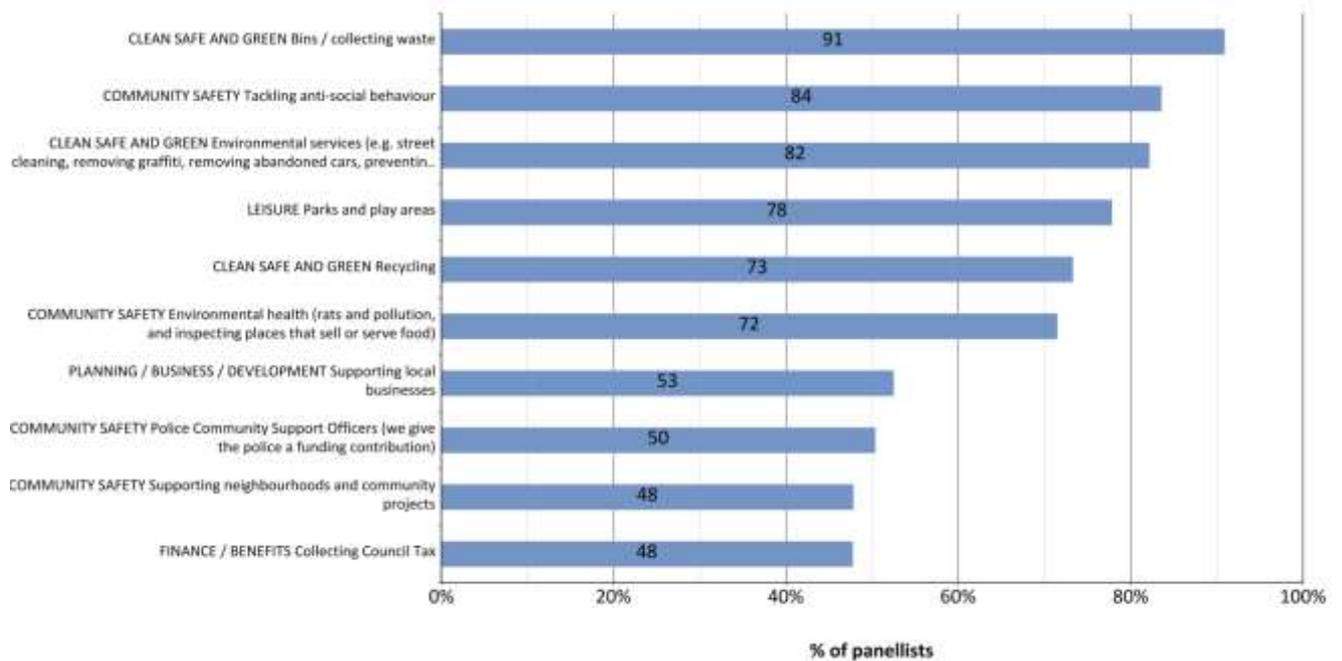
- <sup>2.5</sup> Just under two fifths of residents (39%) agree that Dacorum Borough Council provides value for money from their Council Tax.

## Chapter 3: Results

### Council Services and Priorities

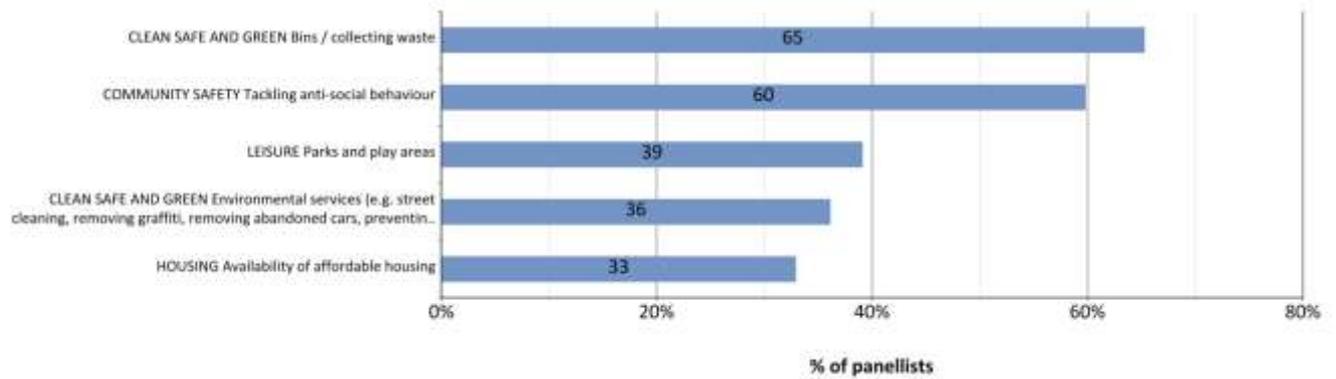
- 3.1 When residents were asked what Council services are important to them and their family, the vast majority of residents reported that bins/collecting waste are important (91%). More than four fifths of residents also reported that tackling anti-social behaviour (84%) and environmental services (such as street cleaning, removing graffiti, removing abandoned cars and preventing/cleaning up fly tipping) (82%) are important.

Figure 1: Please tell us what Council services are important to you and your family? 10 most important Council Services  
Base: All Residents (624)



3.2 When thinking about a range of listed Council Services, the five services that residents believe are the most important for the community as a whole are: the collection of waste (65%), tackling anti-social behaviour (60%), parks and play areas (39%), environmental services (36%) and the availability of affordable housing.

Figure 2: Thinking about the Council Services below, please can you tell us which FIVE you think are the most important for the community as a whole? 5 most important Council Services  
Base: All Residents (598)



## Priorities

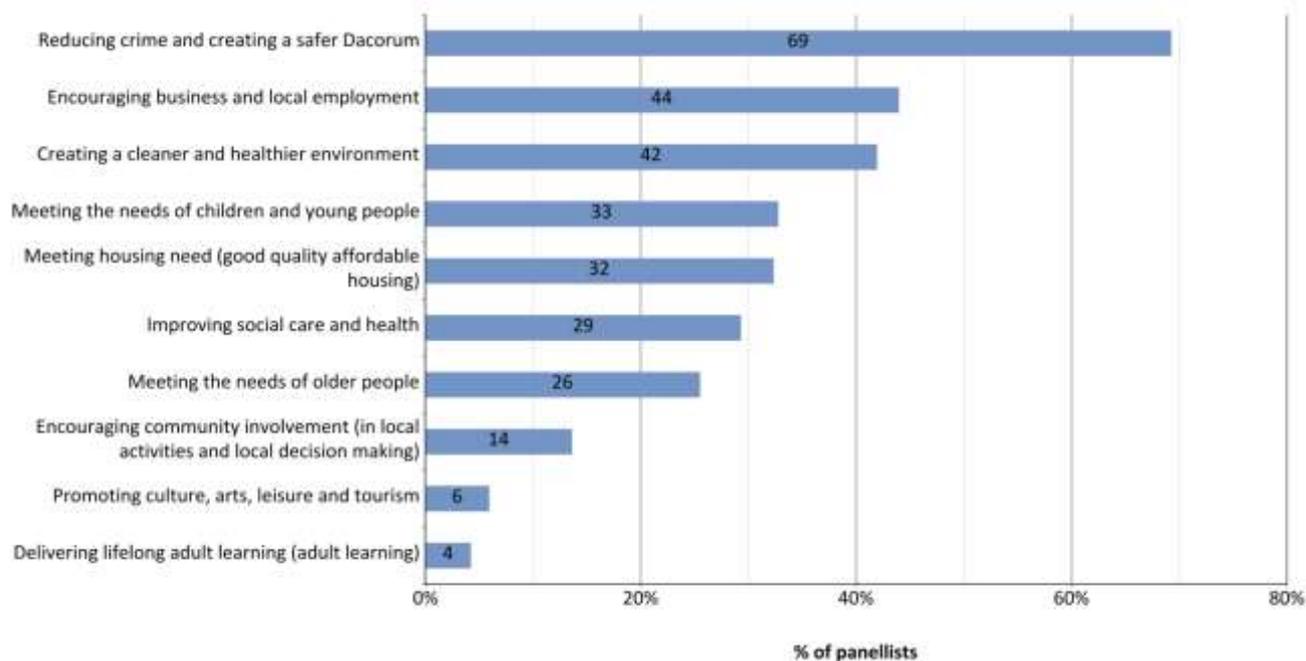
- 3.3 Residents were asked about the council priorities that they consider to be most important for the local area; they were asked to rank their three most favoured options. When a rank analysis was run, the results showed that the top three priorities residents think the council and its partners should have for the local area are: 1) reducing crime and creating a safer Dacorum (69%); 2) encouraging business and local employment (44%); and 3) creating a cleaner and healthier environment (42%). Therefore, Dacorum Borough Council should consider this when looking at their priorities for the local area. See Table 7 below and Figure 3 overleaf.

**Table 7: Rank order: The Council, with its partners, has committed to certain priorities for the local area. Looking at the priorities below, which do you consider to be the three most important?**

| Most Important Council Priorities  | Rank Order |
|--|------------|
| Reducing crime and creating a safer Dacorum  | 1          |
| Encouraging business and local employment  | 2          |
| Creating a cleaner and healthier environment (improve the environment and reduce global impacts) | 3          |
| Meeting housing need (good quality affordable housing)   | 4          |
| Meeting the needs of older people  | 5          |
| Improving social care and health   | 6          |
| Meeting the needs of children and young people   | 7          |
| Encouraging community involvement (in local activities and local decision making)                | 8          |
| Promoting culture, arts, leisure and tourism   | 9          |
| Delivering lifelong adult learning (adult learning)  | 10         |

Figure 3: The Council, with its partners, has committed to certain priorities for the local area. Looking at the priorities below, which do you consider to be the three most important?

Base: All Residents (619)



### How to Save Money and Increase Incomes: Suggestions

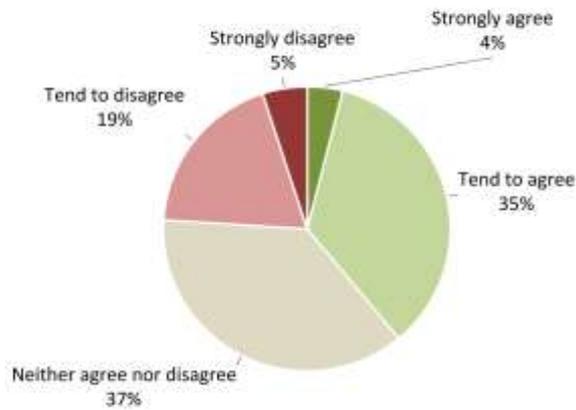
<sup>3.4</sup> When asked whether they had any ideas or suggestions on how Dacorum Borough Council could save money and/or increase income, suggestions included:

- outsourcing services
- partnership working
- sponsorship/donations
- paying councillors/staff less
- reducing the numbers of councillors/senior staff
- reducing red tape/bureaucracy
- encouraging volunteering/work experience
- using the unemployed and those have committed crimes to undertake work in the community
- cutting down on unnecessary leaflets/booklets/newsletters
- encouraging people to look after their community.

### Council Tax: Value for Money

- 3.5 Just under two fifths of residents (39%) agree that Dacorum Borough Council provides value for money from their Council Tax, with a similar proportion neither agreeing nor disagreeing (37%). However, around a quarter of residents (24%) disagree with this statement.

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Dacorum Borough Council provides value for money from your Council Tax?  
Base: All Residents (603)



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