

Moray Citizens' Panel
Designing Better Services Survey

Report

by

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May 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Designing Better Services* survey was issued to all 1027 Moray Citizens' Panel members, and around 600 members of local equality groups active locally. The survey sought to establish views and experiences with regard to contacting the Moray Council including reasons for doing so, satisfaction with contact, potential areas for improvement and accessibility for people from specific equality groups.

A total of 687 responses were received representing a response rate of around 42%. This included 637 responses from Panel members and 50 from members of various equalities groups.

Extent of Contact with the Moray Council

Up to around three quarters of respondents had contacted the Council over the last two years (73%). The most commonly mentioned Council service areas were refuse collection and planning or building control - around a third of those having contacted the Council recently had used each of these services. Libraries and Council Tax and Benefits were also commonly mentioned service areas, each by around a quarter of those having recently been in contact with the Council.

By far the most common method of contact reported by respondents was telephone - as many as 96% of respondents indicated that they had contacted the Council in this way over the past 2 years. In addition around three quarters had visited a Council service in person. Other methods were less common, with only 50-60% using letter or email and around 40% using the Council website.

Experience of Contact with the Moray Council

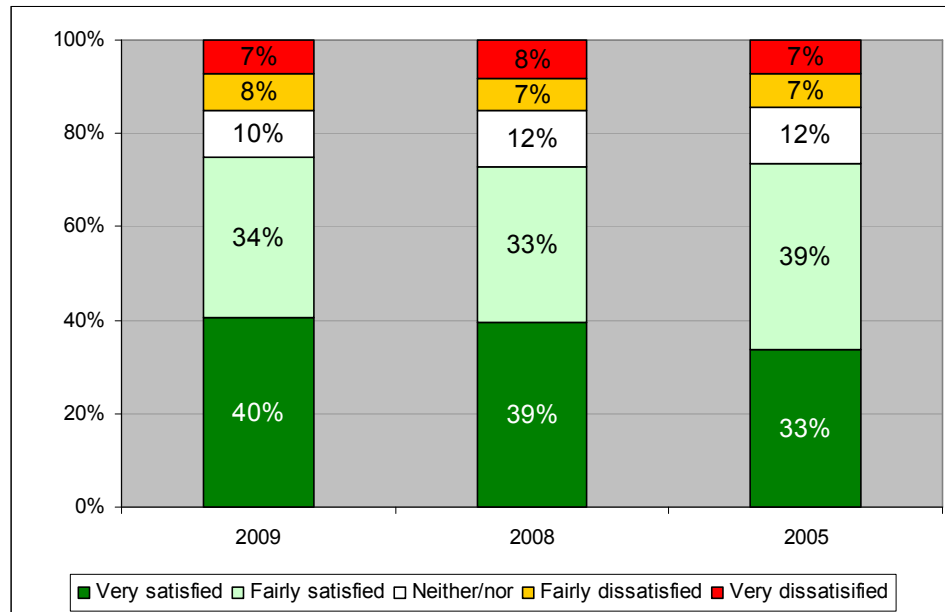
The survey also asked respondents about their experience of contacting the Council, and here we focused more specifically on their **most recent** contact.

As many as 43% of respondents indicated that their enquiry or request was resolved at the first point of contact. This shows an increase of around +10% across the previous 2 surveys focusing on contact with Council services. In addition a further 21% reported that their enquiry had been resolved within 2 weeks of their initial contact. Nevertheless there remained more than a fifth of respondents who felt that their enquiry was yet to be resolved (23%), similar to the level found in previous surveys.

Overall satisfaction with the service received from the Council was high. Almost three quarters of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the service they had received (75%), including as many as 40% being "very satisfied". This represents an increase in the proportion of "very satisfied" respondents of around +7% since 2005.

Nevertheless there remained 15% of respondents who indicated that they were dissatisfied with the service received, and there has been relatively little change in this figure since 2005.

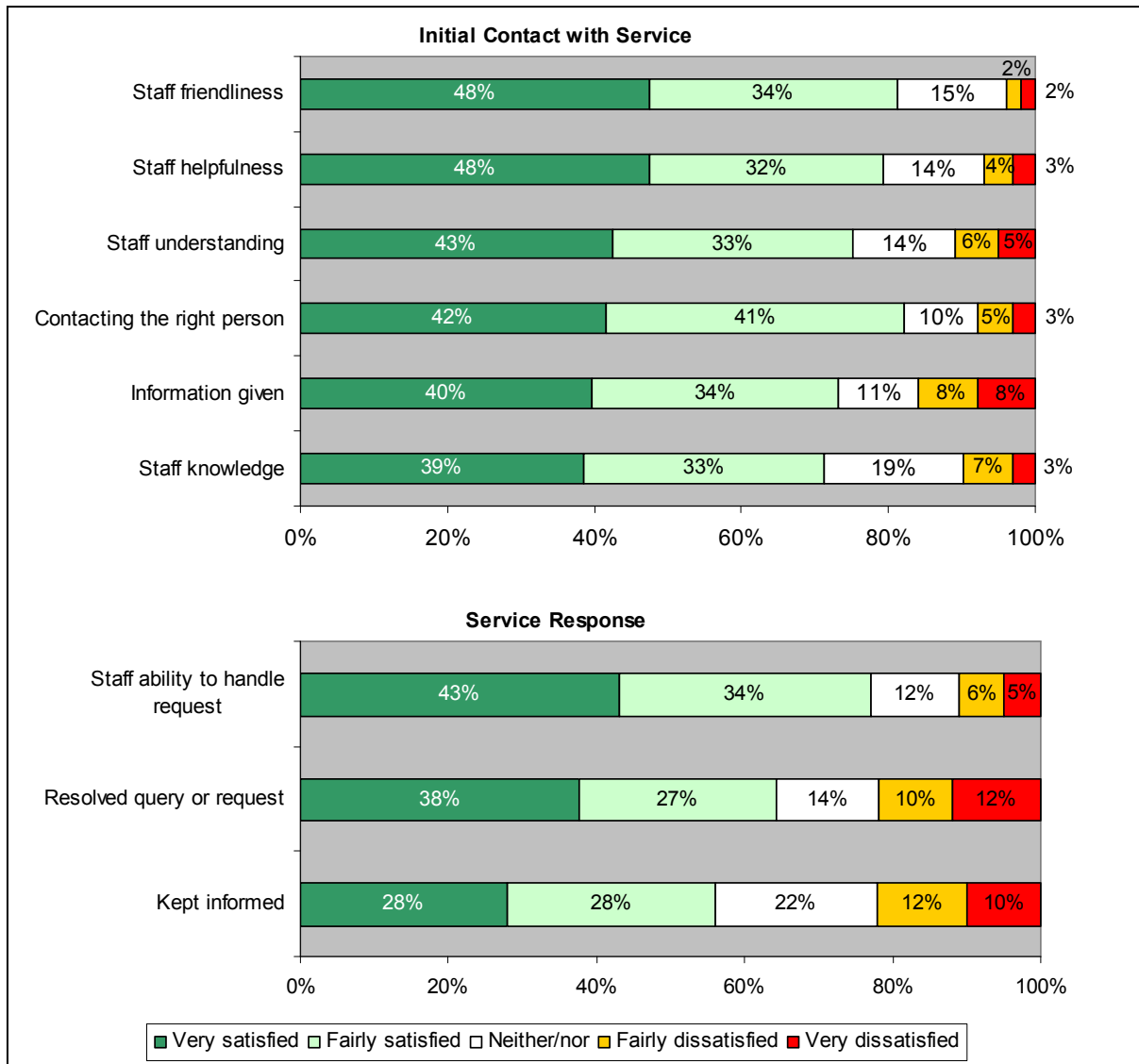
Overall satisfaction with Council service 2005, 2008, 2009



Satisfaction levels were generally high across all aspects of the Council service, and particularly in relation to the ease of making contact and staff attitude. More than 80% indicated that they were satisfied with the ease with which they managed to contact the right person, and similar satisfaction levels were reported in relation to staff friendliness and helpfulness. Satisfaction was also high in relation to staff knowledge and the quality of information provided at the point of first contact.

Satisfaction levels were notably lower regarding the service's response to customers' enquiries. In particular, a little over half of respondents were satisfied with the extent to which they were kept up to date regarding progress of their enquiry (55%).

Satisfaction with aspects of Council service



Accessing Council Services

Awareness of key ways of contacting Moray Council services was relatively high, with around 75% of respondents aware of the Council's Access Points, telephone service centre and website. In terms of contacting Council services in the future respondents were most interested in using the telephone service centre. Nevertheless online services remain relatively popular with around a third of respondents indicated that they would be "definitely interested" in accessing services via the Council website.

The survey also asked respondents more specifically for their views on key elements of accessing Council services in person, by phone and online.

- In terms of walk-in Access Points, respondents felt that the most important elements would be to have a wide range of services available and that Access Points are in convenient locations.

- Similar views were expressed in relation to contacting the Council by phone, with the range of services and ability to resolve requests over the phone being highlighted as the key points.
- Although relatively few respondents indicated that they would usually prefer to access services online rather than in person or by phone, as many as 64% indicated that they would prefer online access at least some of the time. Interest was strongest in using the Council website to access information, view planning applications and use the library service.

The survey also asked respondents to indicate the key service areas where they would like to see greater access online or by phone. Interest in online services reflected in part the profile of current service use. Interest was strong in relation to environmental services, road services and leisure services in particular, and it is notable that these areas include the services which respondents are most likely to access online (planning applications and libraries).

Environmental services was also commonly identified as a key area for expansion of telephone services, as were roads and transport services.

Survey respondents identified a number of barriers to accessing Council services. By some margin the most significant barriers identified were not knowing who to get in touch with, and a lack of car parking at Access Points. Each of these issues were mentioned by as many as 40% of respondents.

In addition, not having the appropriate Council contact details, the inconvenience of service opening hours and poor attitude of service staff were each mentioned by around a fifth to a quarter of respondents. These were somewhat less likely to be identified as the “most significant” barrier, although it is notable that as many as 16% saw inconvenient opening hours as the most significant barrier.

Improving Moray Council Services

Finally the survey asked respondents to rate the relative importance of a range of potential improvements to Council services.

The most commonly mentioned priorities were:

- More enquiries resolved at first point of contact (61% saw this as “very important”);
- Better information given on progress of request (55%);
- More knowledgeable service staff (54%); and
- More helpful service staff (46%).

This profile of suggested improvements generally reflects the experiences reported above. For example satisfaction was generally lower with the extent to which services keep customers informed of progress, and to an extent with staff knowledge and ability to answer queries. This also suggests that although a growing proportion of respondents indicate that their enquiry was resolved at the point of initial contact, there remains a majority for whom this is an important area for improvement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background and Study Objectives

1.1. The Moray Citizens' Panel was established by the Moray Community Planning Partnership (MCP) in Spring 2005. The MCP are also responsible for the ongoing management of the Panel. Current members are:

- The Moray Council;
- Grampian Fire and Rescue;
- Grampian Police;
- NHS Grampian;
- Highlands and Islands Moray;
- Joint Community Councils;
- Moray Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Moray Chamber of Commerce;
- Moray College;
- Moray Volunteer Service Organisation;
- Royal Air Force; and
- The Volunteer Centre Moray.

1.2. A total of 1329 Moray residents joined the Panel as a result of the initial recruitment process. There have been a number of further additions and deletions since the initial recruitment; at the time of the survey the total Panel membership stood at 1027 spread across the following community planning areas:

- Buckie;
- Elgin;
- Fochabers;
- Forres;
- Keith;
- Lossiemouth; and
- Speyside.

Methodology and Response

1.3. Craigforth undertook this survey on behalf of the Moray Community Planning Partnership (MCP) in March and April 2009. Questionnaires were issued to all 1027 current Panel members in March 2009, and also to c600 members of equalities groups operating within Moray. Reminder letters were issued to non-respondents in mid April 2009.

1.4. Members from the following equalities groups were invited to take part. We would like to thank all groups for their assistance in ensuring the survey reached as many individuals as possible.

- Capability Scotland
- Enable
- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Grampian Society for the Blind
- Grampian Racial Equality Council

- Gypsy Traveller Education and Information Project (GTEIP)
 - Moray Islamic Group
 - Moray Women's Aid
 - Patient Participation Forum
 - Scottish Association for Mental Health
 - Scottish Highlands and Islands and Moray Chinese Association (SHIMCA)
 - Scottish/Polish Association
- 1.5. The survey was similar in scope to previous Panel surveys conducted in 2005 and 2008, although here the focus was solely on use and experience of Council services (previous surveys had also asked about other public and voluntary sector services). The questionnaire asked specifically about contact with the Council:
- The extent and frequency of contact;
 - The reason for contact;
 - How contact was made;
 - Views on the service received; and
 - Barriers to accessing Moray Council services
- 1.6. A copy of the questionnaire used in the survey is provided as an appendix to this report.
- 1.7. A total of 687 responses had been received at the time of survey close in May 2009, representing a response rate of 42%.¹ This included 637 responses from Panel members (a response rate of 62%) and 50 from equalities group members.
- 1.8. This is a good overall level of response and compares favourably with other postal approaches. Moreover the survey was effective in incorporating views from a range of equalities group members, although the number was not sufficient to support robust analysis for this group specifically.
- 1.9. The profile of survey respondents in terms of gender, age, housing tenure and administrative area is provided in the Table 1.1.
- 1.10. Respondents were broadly representative of the Panel as a whole in terms of the five main indicators presented. However, differences in the profile of the current Panel and the broader Moray population mean that there is some over and under representation of specific sectors of the Moray population.
- There is a slight overrepresentation of females (+4%) and corresponding under-representation of males (-4%);
 - As is common among survey groups of this type those aged under 40 are underrepresented – in this case by -14%. The only age group notably over represented was those aged 50-59 (+12%);

¹ Of the 687 responses received, 658 were analysable and our reporting is based on these responses. This group included 615 Panel members and 43 equalities group members.

- Owners were over-represented by survey respondents (+17%), again a common feature of this type of consultation mechanism. Those in social rented accommodation are correspondingly under represented (-10%); and
- The achieved sample over-represented Speyside area residents (+10%), and under represented the Elgin population (-11%). This is in part a reflection of the initial Panel recruitment strategy which sought to ensure a minimum number of Panel members within each of the seven areas to support robust survey analysis. However, it may now be appropriate to refresh the Panel to achieve a more even geographic balance.

Table 1.1: Profile of Survey Respondents, Panel Members and Moray overall

	Survey Respondents (Total 658)		Panel Members (Total 1027)		Moray ²
	Num	%	Num	%	%
GENDER					
Male	293	45%	465	45%	49%
Female	358	55%	562	55%	51%
Base (n)	651				-
AGE					
Under 40	115	18%	255	25%	32%
40-49	145	22%	233	23%	20%
50-59	186	29%	276	27%	17%
60 plus	204	31%	259	25%	31%
Base (n)	650				-
HOUSING TENURE					
Owner occupied	534	82%	826	80%	65%
Social rented	70	11%	120	12%	21%
Private rented/ Other	44	7%	81	8%	14%
Base (n)	648				-
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
Buckie	79	13%	126	12%	16%
Elgin	78	13%	128	12%	24%
Fochabers	92	15%	150	15%	11%
Forres	89	14%	146	14%	18%
Keith	82	13%	141	14%	8%
Lossiemouth	77	13%	142	14%	14%
Speyside	117	19%	194	19%	9%
Base (n)	614				-

² Gender and age based on GRO(S) population estimates as at 30 June 2008; housing tenure based on the 2001 Census; geographic area based on the 2004 Moray Community Health Index (therefore not directly comparable to 2001 Census or GRO(S) population estimates).

Reporting Conventions

- 1.11. In the analysis we have focused on questions asked in the survey form. Overall frequency counts and percentages are presented where appropriate; with regard to open-ended questions the main issues and suggestions have been tabulated and highlighted in the text of the report. Additional tables with data on questions not presented in tabulated form within the main report are included at Appendix 2.
- 1.12. Where appropriate “net” figures are presented which are produced by subtracting the percentage of “negative” responses (e.g. fairly/very dissatisfied) from the percentage of “positive” responses (e.g. fairly/very satisfied). The result is presented as a positive or negative percentage rating.
- 1.13. We also conducted cross tabulations of some questions by key demographic indicators, including gender, age, tenure and the residential location of respondents (based on the seven geographical areas in Moray).
- 1.14. These variables offer helpful ways of understanding the survey data in greater detail and where significant differences between these groups were evident, these are highlighted in the report text. It should be noted that in cases where the affected group is underrepresented (e.g. those in social rented housing) the difference is likely to be exacerbated when applied to Moray as a whole rather than just survey respondents.
- 1.15. Due the relatively low sample numbers in some of the categories being used, we must be cautious about generalising from some of the cross tabulated data. Overall numbers of respondents are sufficiently high to provide reliable analysis, and cross tabulations are only presented and reported on where numbers are high enough to ensure that results are reasonably robust.
- 1.16. Where presented percentage values are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Consequently, for some questions this means that percentages may not sum to 100%. Certain questions provide the respondents with the opportunity to select multiple answers. Consequently the sum of the percentages of these responses will be greater than 100%.

2. EXTENT OF CONTACT WITH THE MORAY COUNCIL

- 2.1. The survey began by asking Panel and equality group members whether they had been in contact with the Moray Council during the last two years.

Frequency of Contact with the Moray Council

- 2.2. Around three quarters of respondents had contacted the Moray Council during the last 2 years (73%), while 26% said that they had not made any contact. Just over a quarter of respondents had only contacted the Council once or twice (27%). Nearly half of all respondents (46%) had contacted the Council three or more times over the past two years.
- 2.3. While the 2009 survey is not directly comparable³ to the 2005/2008 surveys, it does seem to be the case that the pattern of contact has changed somewhat since 2005. For example, the proportion of respondents who had contacted the council three or more times in the last two years has grown from 37% in 2005 to 46% in 2009.

Table 2.1 Frequency of Contact with the Moray Council

	No.	%
Once or twice only	169	27%
Three to five times	190	30%
More often	99	16%
No contact in the last two years	164	26%
I don't know	4	1%
BASE	626	

- 2.4. Those respondents who had got in touch with the Moray Council were asked to identify all of their reasons for making contact, and also to indicate the single main reason for doing so.
- 2.5. Enquiries relating to refuse collection and planning/building control were both the most common, and the main reasons for contact. Around a third of respondents mentioned each of these reasons (34% and 32% respectively). Planning and building control was somewhat more likely to be identified as the main reason for contact with the Council than refuse collection, and this may reflect the relative importance of planning/building issues for respondents.
- 2.6. Contact with libraries and Council Tax/Housing Benefit services were also relatively common, each mentioned by more than a quarter of respondents (28% and 26% respectively). It is notable that enquiries to the Council Tax/Housing Benefit were more likely to be identified as the main reason for contacting the Council, and again this may reflect the relative importance of these issues.

³ 2005/8 survey categories were "Once only, 2 or 3 times, 3+ times" – thus it is not possible to directly compare the 2005/8 categories with the "Once or twice" and "Three to five times" 2009 categories.

Table 2.2 Reasons for Contacting Moray Council

	All Reasons		Main Reasons	
	No.	%	No.	%*
Refuse/bin collection	141	34%	81	24%
Planning/building control	132	32%	94	28%
Libraries	115	28%	39	12%
Council tax or housing benefit	106	25%	61	18%
Social services or community care	66	16%	41	12%
Education, inc. further education and careers	67	16%	32	10%
Leisure services	66	16%	28	8%
Road repairs	58	14%	32	10%
Street lighting	57	14%	31	9%
Housing (e.g. tenants enquiries, repairs)	59	14%	41	12%
Winter maintenance	51	12%	31	9%
Environmental health	50	12%	29	9%
Registration of births, marriages and deaths	41	10%	24	7%
Street cleaning/dog fouling	35	8%	32	10%
Trading standards/consumer protection	34	8%	5	1%
Housing application enquiries	25	6%	15	4%
Pavements	15	4%	10	3%
BASE	418		336	

Method of Contact

- 2.7. Respondents were asked about the method of contact they used to get in touch with the Moray Council. The great majority of respondents had contacted the Council by telephone at least once, including nearly three quarters who contacted the Council by telephone “often” or “occasionally” (73%). In person contact was also relatively common. More than three quarters (78%) had visited the Council in person at least once, and more than half made contact in this was occasionally or more often (55%).
- 2.8. Letter/fax, email and online contact was somewhat less common. More than half had experience of letter or fax contact with Council services (57%). Fewer than half had contacted the Council by email or via the Council website, although it is notable that most of those using email contact did this occasionally or more often (35% of all respondents). It is possible that this reflects in part receipt of any regular email communication from the Council (eg newsletters, etc).

Table 2.3 Methods of Contact with the Moray Council

	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
By telephone	24%	49%	23%	4%
In person	17%	38%	23%	22%
By e-mail	10%	25%	13%	52%
Via the Council website	9%	18%	16%	58%
By letter or fax	7%	31%	19%	43%

- 2.9. There were a number of notable variations in extent and nature of contact with Council services across key respondent groups. In particular:
- Females were less likely than males to have contacted the Council by e-mail.
 - Those aged 60 and over were much more likely to have visited the Council in person than younger respondents, particularly those aged under 40. In contrast those aged 60+ were much less likely to have contacted the Council by e-mail or via the internet.

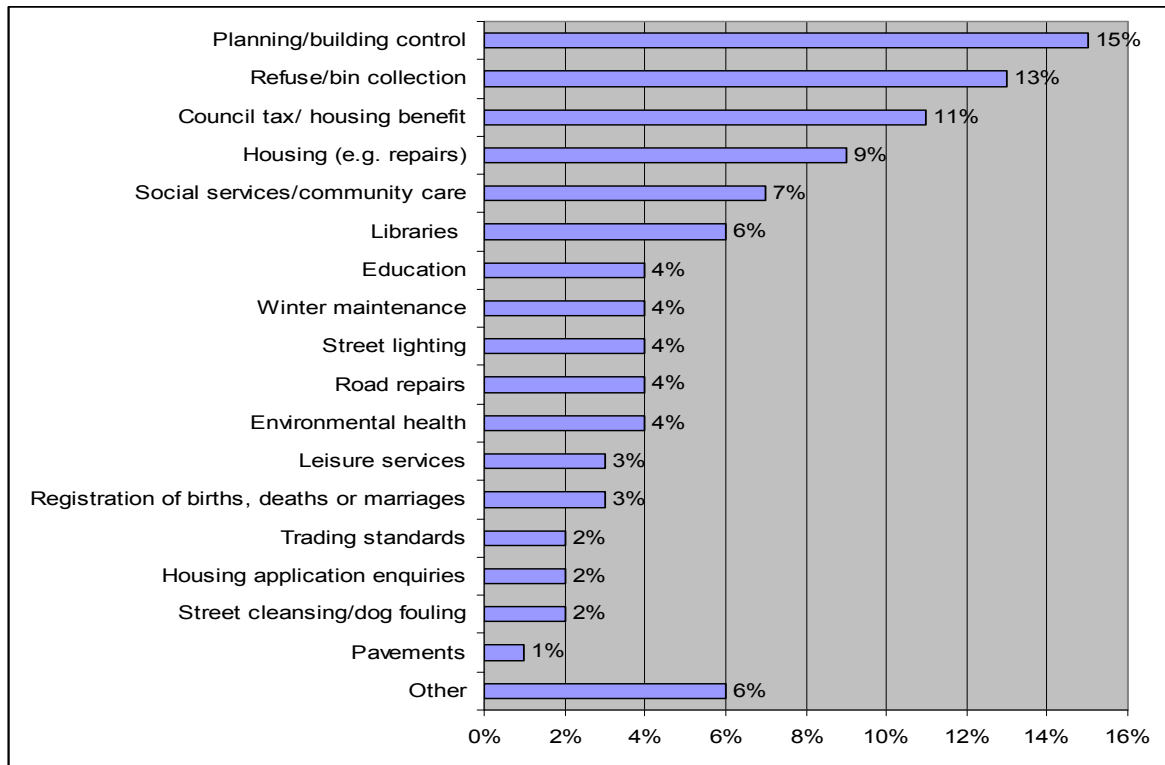
3. EXPERIENCE OF USING COUNCIL SERVICES

- 3.1. The survey moved on to ask respondents about their experience during their most recent contact with the Council. This included considering when this occurred, what the contact had been about, if the issue had been resolved and how satisfied they had been with the service.
- 3.2. Most respondents had been in touch with the Moray Council within the last three months (62%), including more than a third who had made contact in the last month (35%). A quarter of respondents had last made contact with the Council between 3 and 12 months ago, and a further 13% more than 12 months ago.

Table 3.1 Most recent contact with Moray Council

	No.	%
In the last month	164	35%
1 to 3 months ago	126	27%
3 to 6 months ago	55	12%
6 to 12 months ago	61	13%
1 to 2 years ago	49	10%
More than 2 years ago	13	3%
BASE	468	

- 3.3. The reasons mentioned by respondents for their most recent contact with the Council were broadly similar to the overall profile of contact reported in the previous section.
- 3.4. In particular planning or building control and refuse collection enquiries were most common, respectively accounting for 15% and 13% of most recent contact. In addition:
- Around a tenth of most recent contacts related to Council Tax/Housing Benefit services (11%);
 - A similar proportion related to housing issues such as to request a repair (9%); and
 - Social services and libraries services each accounted for the most recent contact for a little over 1 in 20 respondents (7% and 6% respectively).

Figure 3.1: Reason for Most Recent Contact

Method of Most Recent Contact

- 3.5. The majority of respondents chose to make their most recent contact by telephone (56%), again reflecting the overall profile of contact reported in the previous section. In addition around a quarter made contact in person (24%). Relatively few people chose to make contact via other means; 7% by email, 7% by letter or fax and 4% via the Council's website.
- 3.6. The survey also asked about motivations for using specific contact methods, and table 3.4 shows responses separately in relation to telephone and in person contact.
- 3.7. For both those making contact by telephone and in person contacts, the speed and convenience of contact were the key motivations. The suitability of these contact methods for discussing a complicated issue was also a relatively significant motivation. Indeed this issue, together with a need to discuss a confidential issue - was particularly likely to motivate an individual to contact the Council in person.

Table 3.2: Reason for Choosing Mode of Contact

	By telephone	In person
The quickest way to contact the council	55%	34%
The easiest/most convenient way	52%	35%
The best way to discuss a complicated issue	18%	28%
The only contact method I knew	7%	6%
The best way to discuss a confidential issue	5%	14%

Other	3%	11%
BASE	255	108

- 3.8. Respondents whose most recent contact had been in person or by telephone were asked supplementary questions about their experience of reaching the right person.
- 3.9. More than half of those making contact in person or by phone indicated that the first person they had spoken dealt with their enquiry (56%). A substantial proportion - around a third, 31% - were passed on to someone else. In addition around a tenth were advised that someone would get back to them or asked to call back at another time (13%).
- 3.10. The majority of those who had been passed to someone else indicated that this person had been able to deal with their enquiry. In particular 80% indicated that the second person they spoke to was able to help, although this included 19% who had to give a further explanation of their request. A further 16% indicated that they were referred onto someone else who could help. Very few indicated that they had not managed to have their request dealt with.

Table 3.3 Initial handling of telephone and in person contact

	No.	%
Dealt with by first person spoke to?		
The first person I spoke to dealt with my enquiry/request	206	56%
I was passed to someone else	115	31%
I was told someone would get back to me	36	10%
I was told to contact the service again at another time	11	3%
BASE	368	
Second person able to help?		
Understood my request and were able to help	110	61%
Able to help once I had explained my request again	34	19%
Could not help but referred me to someone who could	29	16%
Not the appropriate person and did not know how to help	5	3%
I don't know/can't remember	2	1%
BASE	180	

Resolution of Most Recent Enquiry

- 3.11. Three quarters of respondents felt that their enquiry had been resolved (75%). This represents a small increase from 71% in 2005.
- 3.12. Although not directly comparable to previous surveys, responses suggest an increase in the speed of resolution to enquiries. For example more than half of respondents indicated that their enquiry had been resolved either at first point of contact or within 24 hours (54%). Crucially this includes a substantial proportion whose enquiry was resolved at the first point of contact (43%).
- 3.13. Despite an apparent increase in the proportion of respondents reporting a resolution to their enquiry, there remained nearly a quarter who felt that their enquiry had not been resolved (23%). This included a tenth of all respondents who did not expect their enquiry to be resolved (10%) although it

is not clear the extent to which this is a reflection of a problem with the service or the nature of problems being reported.

- 3.14. It is important to note that despite apparent small increases in the proportion of respondents indicating that their enquiry has been resolved, there has been no significant change in the proportion indicating an unresolved enquiry. Rather there has been a reduction in the proportion of respondents who are unsure about the status of their enquiry (just 2% “don’t know” responses in 2009).

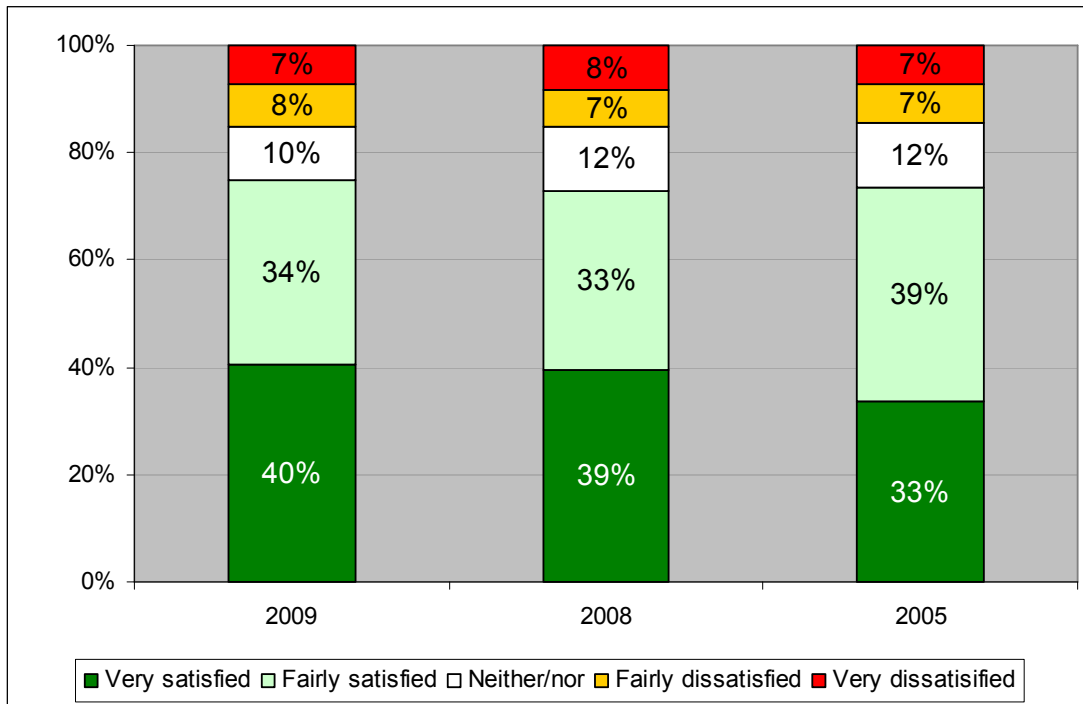
Table 3.4 Has your enquiry been resolved?

	2009		2008	2005
	No.	%	%	%
Yes, it has been resolved	338	75%	75%	71%
<i>Yes - at first point of contact</i>	193	43%	38%	31%
<i>Yes - within 24 hours</i>	48	11%		
<i>Yes, within 2 weeks of contact</i>	47	10%	23%	25%
<i>Yes, 2-4 weeks after my contact</i>	25	6%	7%	8%
<i>Yes, a month or longer after my contact</i>	25	6%	7%	7%
No, it has not been resolved	102	23%	20%	23%
<i>No, but I expect it to be resolved</i>	58	13%	9%	11%
<i>No and I do not expect it to be resolved</i>	44	10%	12%	12%
I don't know/I can't say	9	2%	5%	6%
BASE	449		528	877

Source: Craigforth 2009

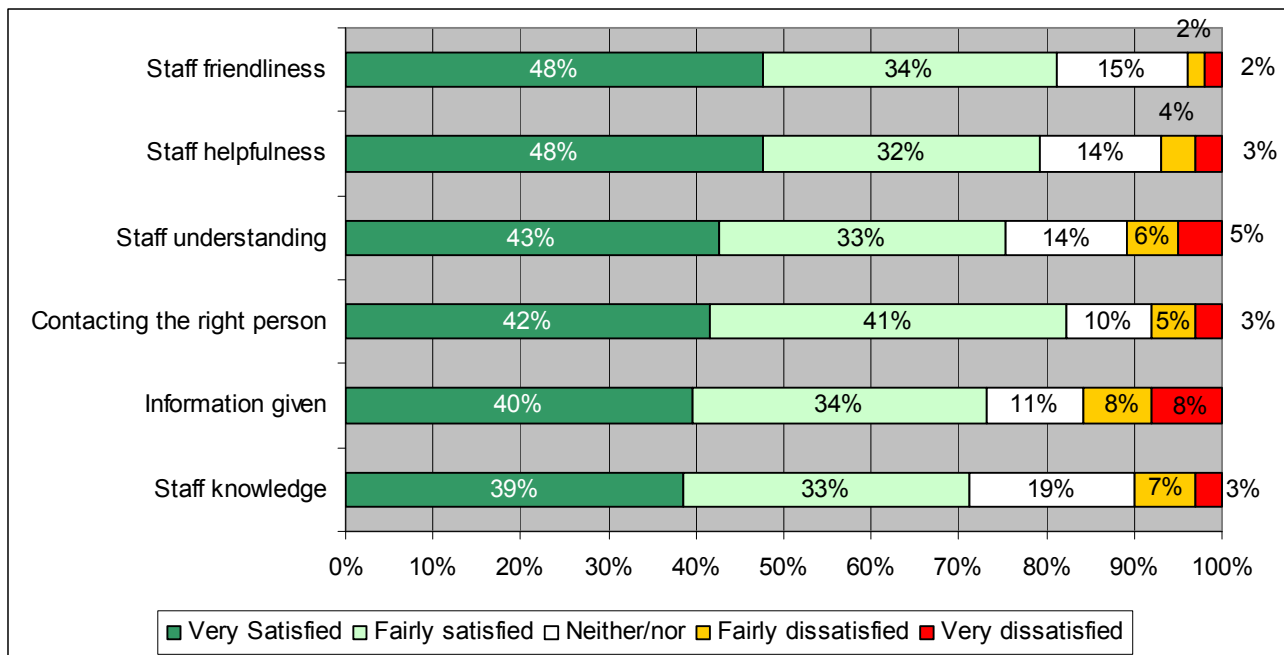
Overall Satisfaction with Council Services

- 3.15. Respondents were next asked to rate the standard of service received during their most recent contact with the Council.
- 3.16. Overall satisfaction was high with 74% indicating that they were very or fairly satisfied. This is broadly similar to that reported in previous surveys. However at 40% the “very satisfied” indicator shows an increase of +7% since 2005. This is a significant indicator as research suggests that services users who describe themselves as “fairly satisfied” are likely to have at least one significant concern about the service they received. Current survey results may suggest some improvement in service standards, but it will be important for future research to monitor this and ensure it is a consistent trend.
- 3.17. Despite high overall levels of satisfaction, the proportion indicating that they were fairly or very dissatisfied remains at around 1 in 7 respondents (15%). This figure has remained generally unchanged since 2005.

Figure 3.2 Overall Satisfaction with Council Services 2005 2008 2009

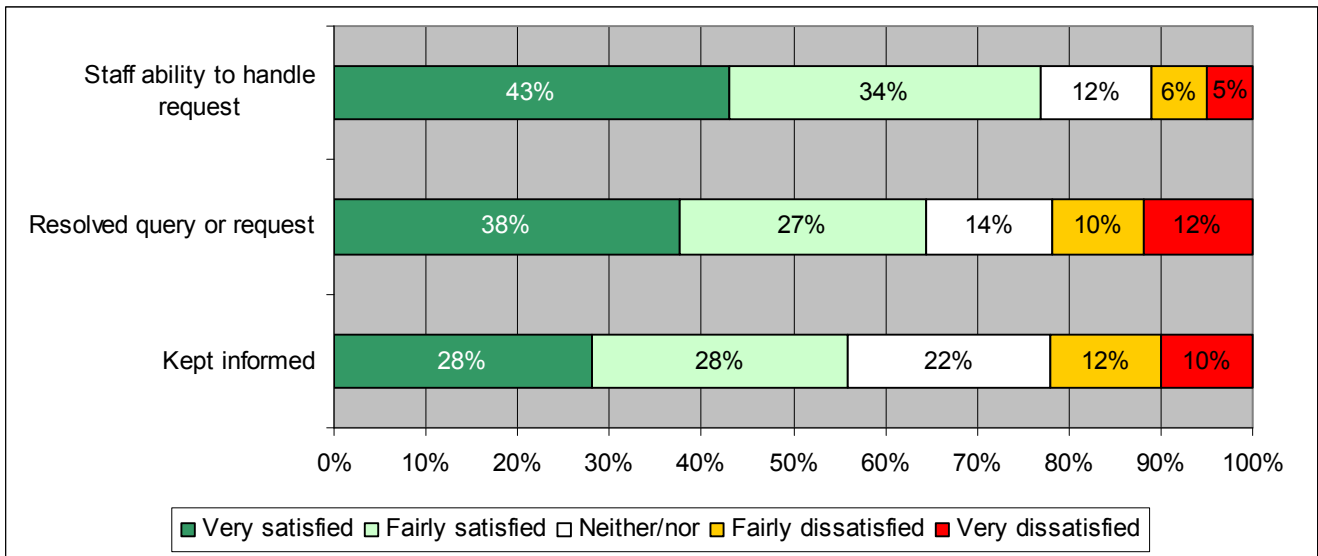
Satisfaction with key aspects of service

- 3.18. In addition to monitoring overall satisfaction levels the survey also asked Panel members to rate their satisfaction with individual aspects of the service provided. This related first to initial contact with the service, and secondly to the service's response.
- 3.19. Looking first at initial contact with service, satisfaction was high across all aspects with 71% to 83% indicating that they were very or fairly satisfied. Satisfaction was highest in relation the ease of contacting the right person (83%), and also with service staff attitude (82% satisfied with friendliness and 80% with helpfulness). Moreover staff attitude scored most highly on the key "very satisfied" measure - nearly half of respondents were very satisfied with staff friendliness and helpfulness.
- 3.20. Satisfaction was somewhat lower with staff understanding of respondents' requirements, information provided and staff knowledge. In particular it is notable that respondents were more likely to be *dissatisfied* with the information provided to them than with other aspects of service. Nevertheless there remained between 71% and 76% of respondents who were very or fairly satisfied with these aspects of their initial contact with the service.
- 3.21. This profile of satisfaction is broadly similar to that reported in previous surveys, in particular being high for ease of contacting the right person and staff attitude, and somewhat lower for staff knowledge.

Figure 3.3 Views on initial contact with service

- 3.22. Satisfaction levels were more varied - and somewhat lower - with the service's response to their enquiry.
- 3.23. Again satisfaction was higher in relation to staff; more than three quarters were satisfied with staff ability to handle their request (77%).
- 3.24. Satisfaction levels were lower with regard to resolution of respondents' enquiry or request with around two thirds satisfied (65%) and more than a fifth dissatisfied. This reflects the close link between resolution of enquiries and satisfaction; for example overall satisfaction with the service received rises to more than 90% amongst respondents who felt their enquiry had been resolved.
- 3.25. Overall satisfaction was lowest in relation to the extent to how well respondents were kept informed of progress with their enquiry. However although only a little over half were satisfied (56%) this is primarily due to a large proportion indicating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (22%). This is likely to reflect cases where this aspect of the service was not relevant (ie where request resolved at first contact). Levels of dissatisfaction suggest that in terms of respondent views, keeping respondents informed of progress is no more of an issue than resolution of enquiries - although it is notable that in some cases the Council may have more control over keeping service users updated than problem resolution.

Figure 3.4: Views on Service’s Response



Likelihood of Recommending Service Used

- 3.26. Finally respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend the service they had most recently used to others with similar requirements.
- 3.27. The majority indicated that they would be very or fairly likely to recommend the service (70%), although only 41% would be “very likely” to do this. Nevertheless, relatively few indicated that they would be unlikely to recommend the service (14%)..
- 3.28. It is notable that - in line with trends in satisfaction levels - those who felt that their service enquiry had been resolved are much more likely to recommend the service. In particular where enquiries had been resolved, as many as 85% of respondents would be likely to recommend the service. In contract this falls to just 27% of those whose enquiry was yet to be resolved.

Table 3.5 How likely would you be to recommend the service?

	No.	%
Very likely	182	41%
Fairly likely	129	29%
Neither/nor	73	16%
Fairly unlikely	29	7%
Very unlikely	33	7%
BASE	446	

4. ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES

- 4.1. The remainder of the survey focussed more generally on experiences and views of accessing Council services, and on how services can be improved. In this section we look at respondent awareness and views on some of the main ways in which residents can contact Moray Council services.

Awareness of Services

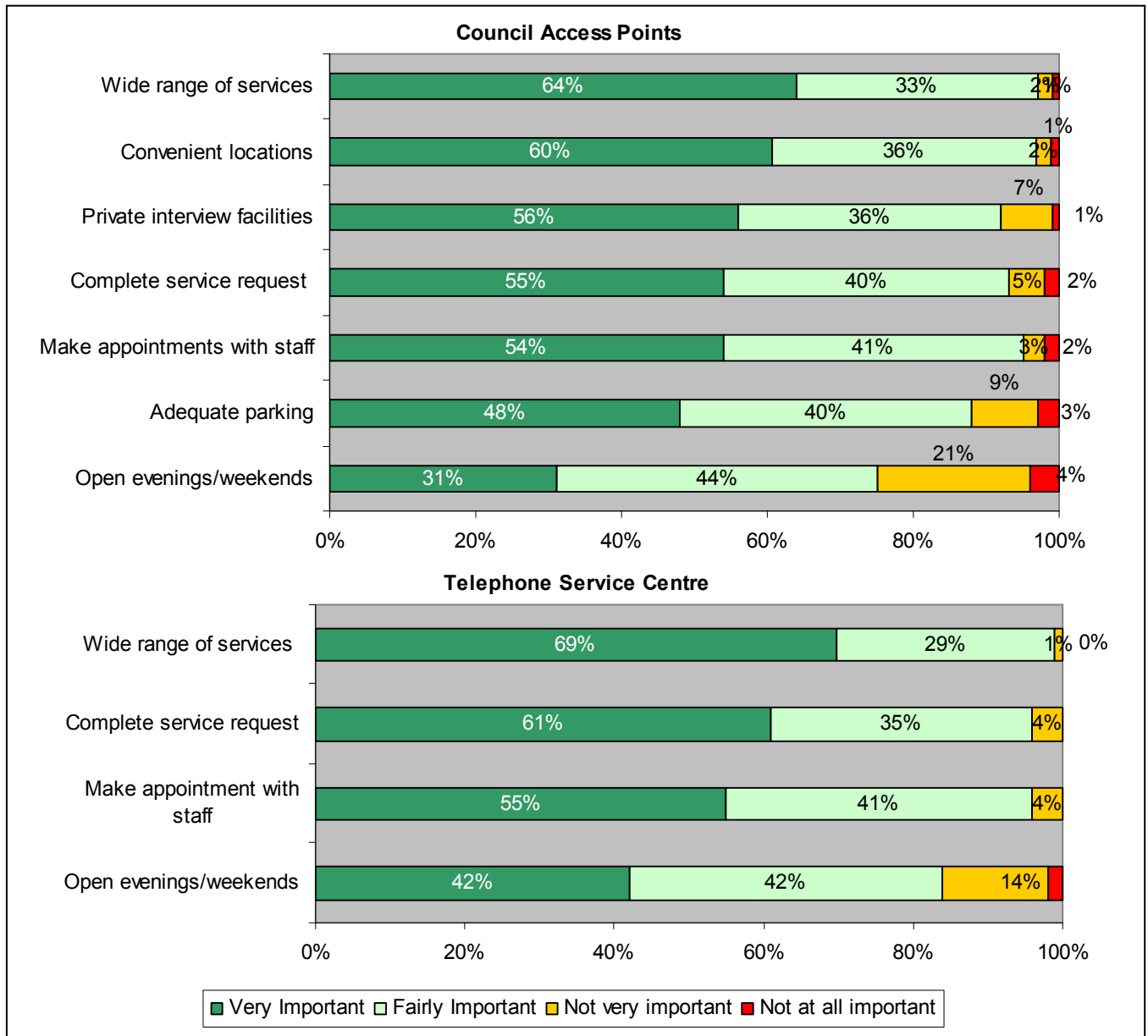
- 4.2. First Panel members were asked about their use and awareness of three ways of accessing Moray Council services:
- Moray Council walk-in Access Points;
 - Moray Council Telephone Service Centre; and
 - Self-service via Moray Council website
- 4.3. Awareness of all three access methods was relatively high with up to around three quarters aware of each method of contacting the Council - 76% for Access Points, 72% for each of the Telephone Service Centre and online services. There remained a tenth of respondents who indicated that they had “never heard of” any of these means of accessing Council services (10%), although around half of these indicated that they had no reason to contact Council services over the past 2 years.
- 4.4. Although awareness of these three methods of contact was broadly similar, the extent to which respondents had used each method varied more significantly. Respondents were most likely to have used the Telephone Service Centre (40%) or Access Points (38%). Respondents were less likely to have used self-service via the Council website, although there remained around a quarter of respondents who had done this (23%).
- 4.5. The extent of interest in using specific contact methods in the future is broadly in line with the profile of previous usage. Overall interest was strongest for Council Access Points and Telephone Service Centre with nearly 90% of respondents interested in each. Nevertheless in relation to online Council services there remained around three quarters of respondents who indicated they may be interested in using this access method.
- 4.6. “Definite” interest in contact methods may be a more reliable indicator of the potential for future use of services. Here is it notable that interest was relatively similar across all three access methods with at least a third of respondents interested in each method. There was also quite significant overlap in interest across contact methods - particularly between interest in Access Points and the Telephone Service Centre, and between online services and the Telephone Service Centre.
- 4.7. It is also notable that interest in accessing online services in particular was much higher amongst working age respondents, and particularly those aged under 40.

Table 4.1 Awareness and Interest in Contact Methods

Awareness	I've used	I haven't used but I've heard of	Never heard of
Moray Council Access Points	38%	39%	24%
Telephone Service Centre	40%	31%	28%
Self-service via Council website	23%	50%	28%
Interest	Definitely interested	Possibly interested	Definitely not interested
Moray Council Access Points	37%	50%	13%
Telephone Service Centre	43%	46%	11%
Self-service via Council website	34%	40%	26%

Access Point and Telephone Service Centre

- 4.8. The survey moved on to ask Panel members to rate the importance of key features of the Access Points and Telephone Centre. As is evident above these methods of contact are more widely used than online services and the aim here was to assess the key perceived benefits of each contact method.
- 4.9. In relation to Council Access Points all aspects were rated as important to some degree. However focusing on the key "very important" indicator some significant variations emerge:
- The availability of a wide range of services and the convenience of Access Point locations were seen as the main benefits, rated as very important by 64% and 60% respectively.
 - The availability of private interview facilities (56% very important), the facility to complete a service request rather than just leave a message (55%) and the option to make appointments with staff (54%) were also seen as significant benefits.
 - Evening and weekend opening hours appear to be seen as less significant benefits for Access Points, although this was very important for around a third of respondents and particularly for those of working age.
- 4.10. The ranking of key features of the Telephone Service Centre was broadly similar to that for Access Points:
- The availability of a wide range of services, and to a lesser extent the facility to complete a service request rather than just leave a message, were seen as the key benefits.
 - Evening and weekend opening hours were again seen as less important, although this aspect was seen as more important for the Telephone Service Centre than for Access Points.

Figure 4.1: Important Features of Access Points

- 4.11. Finally respondents were asked to identify up to three service areas where they would like see more extensive services available by telephone.
- 4.12. The most commonly identified priorities were Environmental Services, Roads and Transport, and Community Services - each selected by up to half of respondents. It is notable that together these service areas account for the four most common reasons for contacting the Council (as reported in section 2 of this report); refuse/bin collection, planning/building control, libraries and Council Tax/ Housing Benefit.

Table 4.2 Priorities for Telephone Service Expansion*

	No.	%
Environmental services	253	50%
Roads and transport services	251	50%
Community services	230	45%
Social care and health services	208	41%
Housing services	167	33%
Education services	156	31%
Leisure services	142	28%
Other	10	2%
BASE	507	

5. ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES VIA THE INTERNET

- 5.1. The survey asked a series of more in depth questions around interest in and experience of using the internet to access Moray Council services.
- 5.2. The majority of respondents indicated that they would prefer to use an online option to access at least some Council services. In total 62% of all respondents indicated this, including around a tenth who would definitely or usually prefer an online option (12%). Interest in an online option was higher for working age respondents and particularly those aged under 40, 75% of whom indicated that they would prefer to access at least some options via the Council's website.
- 5.3. Nevertheless there remained more than a third of respondents who would rarely or never prefer to access Moray Council services via the internet (37%). This rose to more than 60% for those aged 60 and over.

Table 5.1 Preference for Accessing Services Online

	No.	%
Definitely prefer the online option	76	12%
Prefer the online option for some services	309	50%
Rarely or never prefer the online option	227	37%
BASE	612	

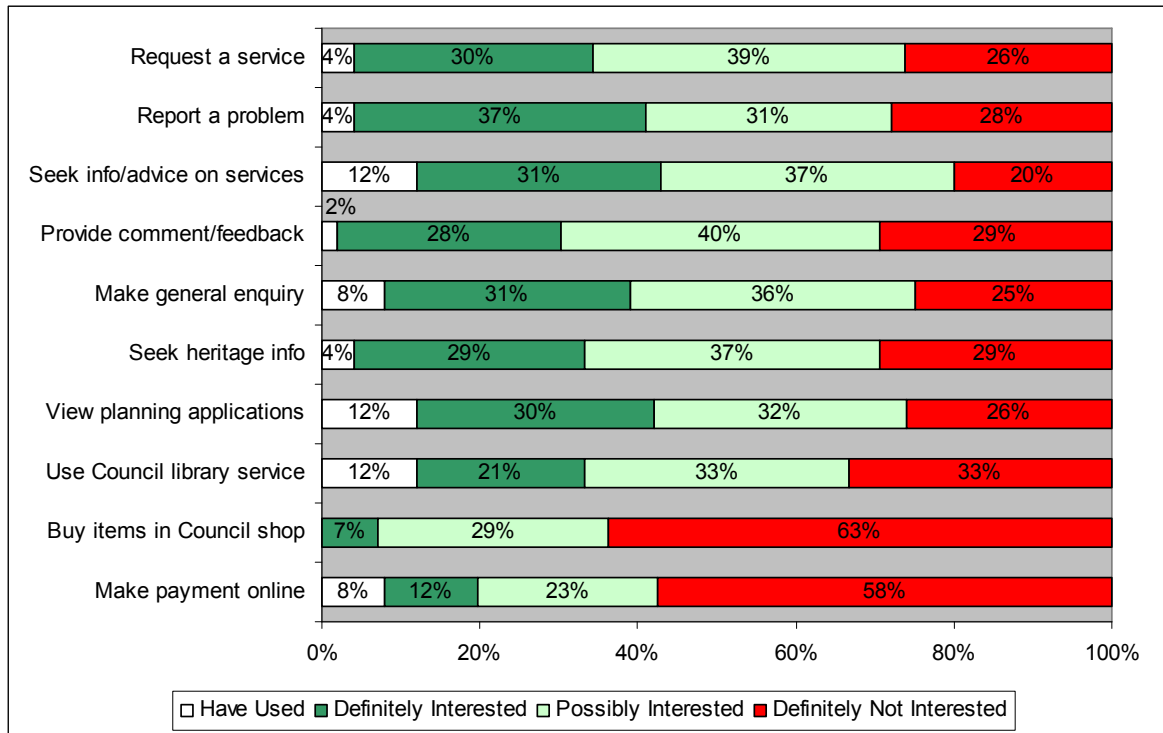
- 5.4. Those who would prefer not to use the internet to access at least some Council services were asked if there were any factors that put them off accessing Council services in this way.
- 5.5. Preferring to speak to a real person about a service request or enquiry was - by some margin - the most common barrier to accessing services online. Indeed as many as three quarters of respondents cited this (76%).
- 5.6. It is notable that this most common barrier to using services online - preferring a real person - is a difficult one for the Council to address directly. However other potential barriers cited by respondents suggest some ways in which the design or presentation of the Council's self-service facility could be modified to encourage wider usage. In particular a substantial proportion of respondents suggested that the speed of response and security or confidentiality of an online service request was a concern for them (45% and 39% respectively).
- 5.7. It is interesting to note that concerns around the speed of response were more likely to put younger (aged under 40) respondents off using online services. In contrast older respondents - who expressed much less interest overall in online services - were more likely to prefer to speak to a real person or to be unfamiliar with using the internet.

Table 5.2 Barriers to Accessing Services Online

	No.	%
I prefer to speak to a real person	402	76%
I don't think I would receive a quick response to an online query	237	45%
Concerns about security/confidentiality	205	39%
I don't have access to the internet	99	19%
I'm unfamiliar with using the internet	92	17%
Other	37	7%
BASE	530	

Using the Internet for Specific Services

- 5.8. The survey moved on to ask about interest in and prior usage of the internet to access a range of specific services offered by the Moray Council.
- 5.9. Relatively few had used specific services available via the Council's website; around a tenth of respondents had used the internet to seek information or advice on Council services, view planning applications online and access the Council library service.
- 5.10. Interest in these options was relatively strong with more than half of respondents indicating that they might be interested in using the Council website to access most of the services listed. Interest was strongest in relation to the following specific services online:
- request a service (69% interested);
 - report a problem (68%);
 - seek information or advice on available services (68%);
 - provide comment or feedback (68%);
 - make a general enquiry (67%); and
 - seek heritage information (66%).
- 5.11. In particular it is notable that in terms of respondents being "definitely interested", the option to report a problem online was most popular (37% definitely interested).
- 5.12. Interest was less significant in relation to buying items through the Council's online shop or for making Council Tax, rent or other payment online. Only around a third of respondents were interested in these options (36% and 35% respectively), few being "definitely" interested. In relation to online payments it is notable that interest was particular low amongst those aged 60+, and this may reflect the common concern expressed amongst this group around security of online services.

Figure 5.1: Accessing Specific Services Online

Experiences of Using Web-Based Moray Council Services

- 5.13. Around 190 respondents indicated that they had used web-based Moray Council services. The survey asked these respondents to rate the quality of key aspects of these services.
- 5.14. Satisfaction was generally high with up to around three quarters of respondents satisfied with key aspects of the online service. In particular satisfaction was high in relation to the range of online services available - 75% were very or fairly satisfied and only 6% dissatisfied.
- 5.15. Satisfaction was also high in relation to ease of using online services, standard of information provided and ease of finding what they were looking for - around 70% of respondents were satisfied with these aspects of service.
- 5.16. Satisfaction was somewhat lower for speed of response to enquiry with 61% very or fairly satisfied. It is notable that speed of response also emerged as one of the key barriers to respondents using Council services online. However respondents were more likely to be dissatisfied with the ease of finding what they were looking for than with speed of response (17% and 9% dissatisfied respectively). This suggests that site navigation may be an issue for a minority of online service users

Table 5.3 Satisfaction with Aspects of Online Services

	Very/Fairly satisfied	Neither/nor	Very/Fairly dissatisfied
Range of online services available	75%	18%	6%
Ease of finding what you were looking for	69%	14%	17%
Ease of using online services	71%	20%	10%
Quality of information provided	71%	18%	11%
Speed of response to enquiry	61%	29%	9%

Expanding Online Council Services

- 5.17. Finally for online Council services, and in line with questions asked in relation to telephone services (table 4.3), the survey asked respondents to identify up to three service areas where they would like see more extensive services available online.
- 5.18. Environmental services was the most common suggestion, mentioned by 58% of respondents. Also commonly suggested were Roads and Transport services (46%) and Leisure services (45%). As was found in relation to telephone based services, preferences for future online services is broadly in line with current service usage (refuse/bin collection, planning/building control and libraries being most commonly used).

Table 5.4 Priorities for Online Service Expansion

	No.	%
Environmental services	274	58%
Roads and transport services	218	46%
Leisure Services	214	45%
Education Services	191	41%
Community services	160	34%
Social Care and Health Services	147	31%
Housing services	112	24%
Other	12	3%
BASE	471	

6. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES

- 6.1. Next the survey focussed on potential barriers to accessing Moray Council services (across all access methods). Here respondents were asked to identify the full range of barriers they had experienced when using Council services, and also to identify the single most significant barrier.
- 6.2. Two issues emerge as the main barriers for respondents access Council services - not knowing who to contact and a lack of adequate car parking at Access Points. Around 40% of respondents mentioned these as issues, with around a quarter citing each as the single most important barrier for them. In particular it is notable that lack of adequate car parking was much more likely to be an issue for older (60+) respondents than those of working age.
- 6.3. A range of other issues were mentioned, although these were less likely to be cited as most significant barriers:
- Opening hours not convenient (24% mentioning);
 - Do not have the Council's contact details (22%); and
 - Poor attitude or manner of Council staff (20%).

Table 6.1 Barriers to Accessing Moray Council Services

	All	Most Significant
I do not know who to get in touch with	41%	27%
Lack of car parking at Access Points	39%	23%
Opening hours are not convenient for me	24%	16%
I do not have the Council's contact details	22%	8%
Poor attitude/manner of Council staff	20%	11%
Difficulty getting to Council offices	12%	6%
Difficult to get a convenient appointment time	11%	3%
Difficulty/lack of help with written material	7%	1%
Poor physical access to Council offices	5%	1%
Doors to Council offices are difficult to manage	3%	-
Signs unclear to those with sight problems	2%	-
Hearing induction loop not available	2%	-
Signs not in my first language	1%	-
Translation/interpretation not available	1%	-
Other	10%	4%
BASE	399	315

Impact of Disability, Impairment and Language

- 6.4. The survey also asked respondents more specifically about any disabilities, impairments or language barriers that made it more difficult for them to access Moray Council services.
- 6.5. A small but significant group of 90 people (14% of all respondents) indicated that at least one of the listed factors made it more difficult for them to access Council services. Mobility difficulties were most common, mentioned by more than half of those reporting difficulties (7% of all respondents). In addition a smaller number of respondents reported a more specific physical disability, or a sensory impairment.
- 6.6. Few indicated that difficulty reading or writing, or English not being their first language made it difficult to access Council services (13 respondents). It should be noted that this is likely to reflect in part the fact that postal survey based research is not a particularly successful means of gauging the views and experience of those people who have difficulty with written English.

Table 6.2 Impairments and /or Disabilities Affecting Contact with Moray Council

	No.	%
No, none	568	86%
Yes...	90	14%
<i>Mobility difficulties</i>	45	7%
<i>Physical disability or wheelchair user</i>	23	3%
<i>Poor sight, blindness</i>	15	2%
<i>Impaired hearing, deafness</i>	15	2%
<i>Difficulty reading or writing</i>	9	1%
<i>English not my first language</i>	4	1%
<i>Other</i>	12	2%
Base	658	

- 6.7. Respondents were also asked to rate the usefulness of a range of potential changes in terms of assisting people with disabilities, impairments and/or language difficulties in accessing Council services.
- 6.8. Help with written material such as assistance completing forms, and making material available in large print or other formats were generally seen as the most useful potential changes. More than 80% of respondents felt that these approaches would be useful to some degree, including nearly half who felt that providing help with written material would be “very useful”. Better availability of hearing induction loop facilities was also seen as useful by a large majority of respondents, although this was less likely to be seen as “very useful”.
- 6.9. Changes around online or email access to services were also highlighted as potentially useful. Again more than 80% felt that more services being available online or by email, or a Council website more accessible to those with visual impairment would be useful. This includes around a third who rated these options as “very useful”.

- 6.10. In contrast relatively few respondents felt that the availability of translation and interpretation services, provision of written material available in other languages and access to services via text messaging would be useful. Given language and translation services in particular would have a relatively narrow focus in terms of Council service users, views expressed here may reflect how widespread respondents think use of specific services would be (rather than their usefulness for specific customer groups).

Table 6.3 Usefulness of Potential Service Improvements

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful
Large print material	33%	53%	7%	6%
Information in other formats (e.g. Braille, audio)	32%	54%	8%	6%
Help with written material (e.g. completing forms)	46%	43%	6%	5%
More hearing induction loop facilities	25%	57%	9%	9%
Availability of text type	15%	45%	27%	13%
More access to services via e-mail	28%	53%	14%	5%
More services available online	33%	52%	10%	5%
Council website more accessible for those with impaired vision	30%	52%	9%	9%
Access to services via text messaging	11%	34%	32%	22%
More written material in other languages	15%	46%	21%	19%
More translation/interpretation services	14%	48%	18%	19%

7. IMPROVING MORAY COUNCIL SERVICES

7.1. Finally in relation to Council services, the survey asked respondents to rate the importance of a range of potential improvements to Moray Council services. Respondents were also invited to detail any other improvements they felt would be useful.

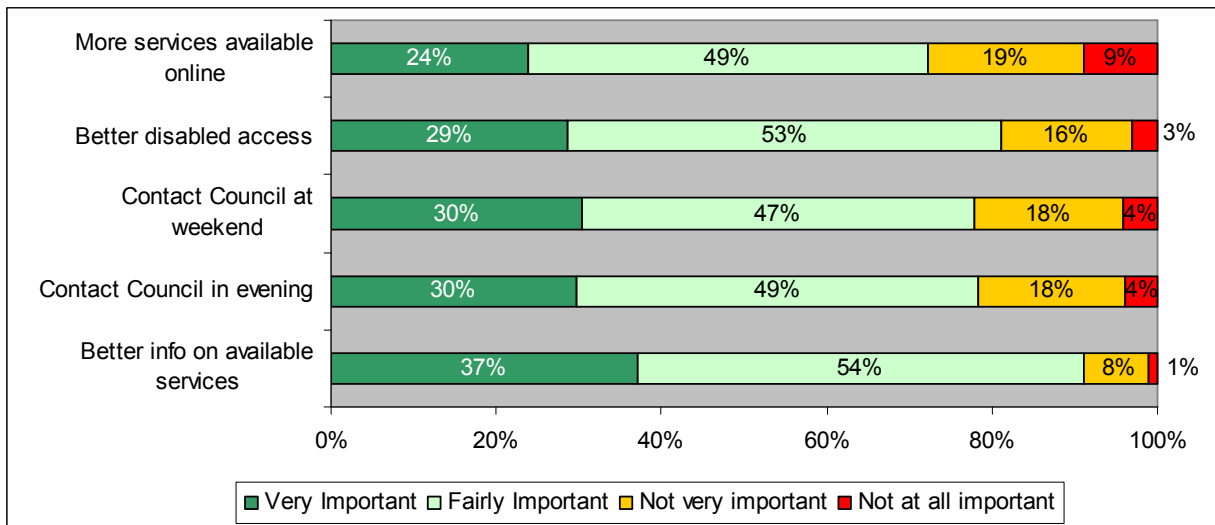
Accessing Council Services

7.2. Looking first at accessing Council services, better information on available Council services was seen as most important - more than 90% rated this as important to some degree, including 37% rating it as “very important”.

7.3. Nevertheless all other respondents were rated as important by a large majority of respondents:

- Better disabled access to Council premises (82%);
- Being able to contact the Council in the evening (79%);
- Being able to contact the Council at the weekend (77%); and
- More Council services available online (73%).

Figure 7.1: Importance of Service Improvements – Accessing Services



Quality of Services

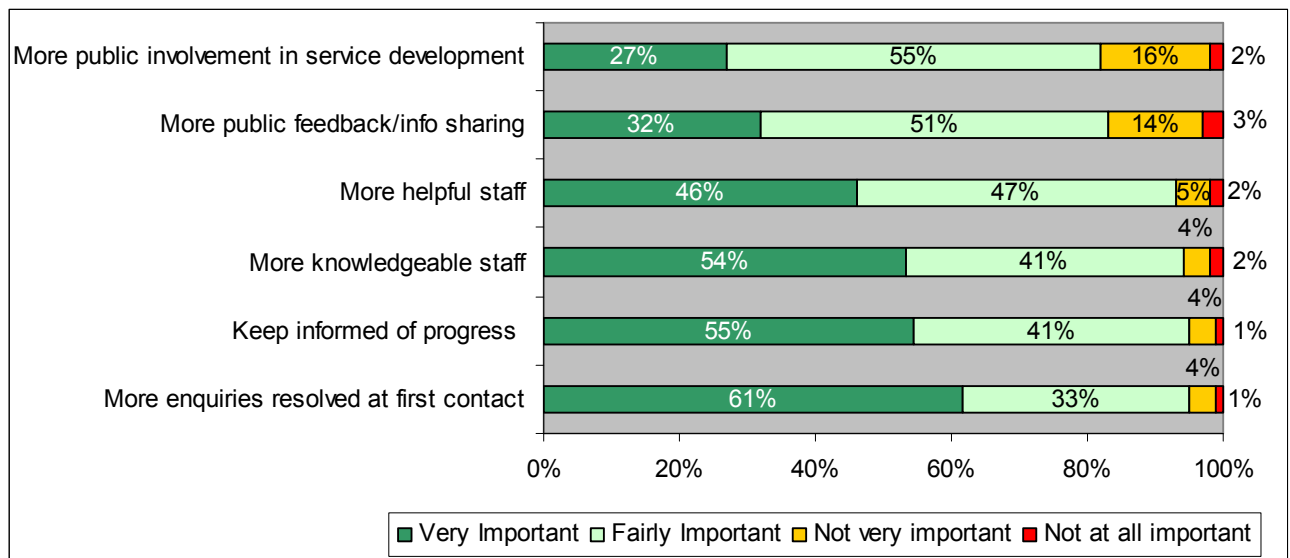
7.4. In relation to the quality of Council services, views suggest that the focus should be on:

- keeping customers informed of the progress of their request (96% very or fairly important);
- more knowledgeable Council staff (95%);
- resolving more enquiries at the first point of contact (94%); and
- more helpful Council staff (93%).

7.5. In particular it is notable that resolving more enquiries at first point of contact was the most likely to be ranked as “very important”.

7.6. The perceived importance of keeping customers informed of progress appears to link with lower satisfaction levels in relation to this aspect of service (see figure 3.3). However other improvement areas highlighted as important - particularly staff helpfulness - scored highly in terms of satisfaction rating. This suggests that, for some, views expressed here reflect the perceived importance of this aspect of service rather than necessarily reflecting a widespread perception that significant improvement is required.

Figure 7.2: Importance of Service Improvements – Quality of services



Other Improvement Suggestions

- 7.7. A minority of respondents (182) suggested other improvements which they felt were required for Council services.
- 7.8. Most suggestions reflected concerns around specific services. For example concerns were raised regarding the extent and quality of street cleaning, road repairs, winter maintenance and local availability of recycling services.
- 7.9. The main suggestion made directly in relation to aspects of service delivery was for greater efficiency, transparency and accountability across Council services. This was mentioned in the context of service operation (eg responding promptly to enquiries) and also more strategically (eg making financial savings or more 'joined-up' working between services).

Table 7.1 Respondents Suggestions for Service Improvement

	No.	%
Improve efficiency/transparency/accountability	43	24%
Street cleaning issues	18	10%
Road maintenance and winter gritting issues	18	10%
More/ better waste and recycling	17	9%
Planning service issues	16	9%
Staff attitude	11	6%
Accessibility (inc. ways to access services, clear language etc.)	12	7%
Online services	8	4%
Housing/repairs to housing	8	4%
Support for elderly and disabled (inc. Dial a Bus)	6	3%
Leisure and culture services (inc. libraries, heritage information)	5	3%
Social work/care	3	2%
Education	3	2%
Avoid an Elgin bias to service provision	3	2%
Other	11	6%
BASE	182	

8. FUTURE CONSULTATION

- 8.1. The survey also gave respondents an opportunity to express an interest in taking part in future consultation around the improvement of Moray Council services. Interest was relatively strong with around a third expressing an interest in this - 208 individuals.
- 8.2. Table 8.1 below sets out the summary profile of those expressing an interest in future consultation. This suggests the group offers the Council an opportunity to engage with a wide range of local residents being relatively well balanced in terms of socio-demographic profile. In particular:
- Most are current Citizens' Panel members, although 12 individuals replying through Equalities Groups also expressed an interest in future consultation;
 - The group is split evenly in terms of gender (102 male, 102 female);
 - A range of age groups are represented although this profile is skewed somewhat towards older groups. Nevertheless the group includes a total of 134 working age people, including 33 aged under 40;
 - The group is biased towards owner occupier households - typical for this kind of exercise - but does include 36 renters; and
 - Representation is fairly even across local community planning areas, with around 30 individuals in each.

Table 8.1 Profile of those interested in future service consultation

	No.	%
Source		
Citizens' Panel	196	94%
Equalities Groups	12	6%
BASE	208	
Gender		
Male	102	49%
Female	102	49%
Unknown	4	2%
BASE	208	
Age		
Under 40	33	16%
40-49	44	21%
50-59	57	27%
60 or over	70	34%
Unknown	4	2%
BASE	208	
Housing tenure		
Owner Occupier	166	80%
Social Rented	24	12%
Private Rented	12	6%
Unknown	6	3%
BASE	208	
Area		
Buckie	28	13%
Elgin	32	15%
Fochabers	28	13%
Forres	24	12%
Keith	23	11%
Lossiemouth	30	14%
Speyside	29	14%
Unknown	14	7%
BASE	208	