Feedb@ck

Hyndburn Citizen's Panel Survey Report

March 2006

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1. Background

1.1. Rationale

Hyndburn Borough Council carries out two surveys of the Hyndburn Feedb@ck panel every year, in between two East Lancashire-wide surveys. This was the November - December 2005 survey, and included a variety of topics in order to respond to Service Managers' demands. The questionnaire had 5 main sections:

- Food Shopping, which was carried out on behalf of the Prospects Panel;
- Food and Health, for the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT;
- Perception of Hyndburn's Markets, for the Council's Markets section;
- Environmental Service Standards, for the Council's Waste Disposal team;
- Council Tax Budgets Survey, undertaken on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer.

1.2. Research Objectives

The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- Food shopping: to investigate the likelihood that increased access to quality food, along with awareness of the issues around this could an effect on patterns of consumption;
- Food and health: following on from the above, to investigate consumption patterns of healthy food and provide extra local data through the use of similar questions to the NHS Lifestyle Survey on how people might be encouraged to eat more healthily;
- Markets: to assess attitudes of users and non-users to Hyndburn's markets, providing contextual data for potential operators of the Accrington market hall and assessing the potential for increased footfall;
- Environmental Services: To provide feedback to Council officers on the nature and quality of service people expect from the waste collection and disposal teams;
- Council Tax: To provide contextual information on residents' attitudes to Council Tax and priority services for the authorities' 2006 budget discussions.

This report will be made available to all relevant service managers, and will be made available to other interested Council staff and the general public via the Feedback website at http://www.feedbackonline.org.uk. Key findings will also be reported to the panel members themselves along with the actions taken as a result of the data being received.

1.3. The Feedback Panel

At the time of this survey, the Feedback Hyndburn panel consisted of 1085 members. However, prior to this survey, the panel had not had its membership “refreshed” for a considerable time, meaning that the response rate of the panel has fallen as people move house, or choose to stop filling in surveys without asking to be removed from the panel. A refresh exercise, which involved the automatic retirement of people who had not responded to any of the last three exercises and a random retirement of longstanding members of the citizen’s panel, was commenced on the completion of this survey.

The refresh programme has been designed to target areas of the community which have traditionally been under-represented on the panel, and to achieve a spread of people across the borough. Notwithstanding the tendency of all citizen’s panels to under-represent transient and younger members of the public, it is hoped that, through the selective targeting of under-representative groups, the result will be a panel which better reflects the demographic makeup of the Borough. It is also anticipated that this will allow us to complete some of the missing demographic details on members who have been recruited on an ad hoc basis since the last recruitment exercise in 2002.

This has some implications for how the data in this report should be treated. As is mentioned later, there is some natural bias from people who are interested in being on the citizen’s panel in any case, as they are more likely to fit certain social criteria than people not interested in being on the panel. The concept of citizen’s panels has been the subject of considerable critiques amongst the research community given this fact, but they remain a popular way amongst Local Authorities of getting the views of the community in a cost effective way. As long as the basic limitations are recognised, the data gleaned from panels can offer a high level picture. Then, more detailed research carried out with specific groups can be used to drill down into the key issues arising.

2. Methodology

2.1. Contact methods

The survey employed a mixed postal and electronic methodology. Approximately 150 panel members have requested to receive surveys electronically, in the form of an emailed link to an online survey. The electronic survey was sent out one week in advance of the postal version, to give members time to respond and to reduce potential postage costs. If they did not respond before the postal version was due to be distributed, they were included on the mailing list for this survey.

A further two reminders were sent to non-respondents, which also notified panel members that they would be automatically "retired" from the panel if this were the third consecutive survey they had not responded to.

2.2. Response rate

557 responses were received, giving a response rate of 51%. This is lower than the average response rate for surveys carried out by other East Lancashire councils, and reflects the longstanding membership of the panel. Although the primary aim of the panel refresh exercise discussed in Section 1.3 is to make the panel more representative and reduce the need for data weighing, the refresh exercise will also improve this response rate. Generally, citizen's panels in other Councils enjoy a response rate of between 60% - 70%, with even higher responses for surveys dealing with high profile or contentious issues.

2.3. Profile of respondents

This section examines the characteristics of the respondents to the survey, in terms of their demographic profile. Note that where respondents chose to remain anonymous, their response could not be matched to their demographic information retained on file. This will be improved in the future by consistent use of reference numbers; meaning that individual surveys can be linked back to demographic data but not names and addresses.

2.3.1. Age

An error in the production of the last batch of recruitment leaflets by the East Lancashire E-Partnership meant that the age groups of people on the panel had to be converted into just 4 categories from the 8 normally used by Hyndburn. This has been corrected in the new leaflets for the next recruitment exercise. To exacerbate the problem, the age groups were not divided into equal categories, and the age ranges obtained were too large to be considered of use in detailed work. For this reason, the analysis uses age categories sparingly and no attempt has been made to weight the data. The table below is therefore included for information only.

Figure 1: Age of respondents compared to Hyndburn profile

Age Band	% respondents	% Hyndburn population (Census 2001)
16 – 24	2.2	14.7
25 – 44	25.3	36.2
45 – 64	35.0	29.8
65 +	17.4	19.2

2.3.2. Ethnic Breakdown

Note that, due to some respondents choosing to withhold their panel number, it was not possible to apportion every survey response to the demographic information we hold on them. This accounts for the discrepancy in the percentages.

Figure 2: Ethnicity of respondents compared to Hyndburn profile

Ethnicity	% respondents	% Hyndburn population (Census 2001)
British	75.9	91.7%
Irish	0.9	0.9%
Mixed	0.2	0.6%
Pakistani	1.4	6.7%
Other Asian	0.5	0.7%
Other	0.9	0.3%

2.3.3. Ward

As with other demographic information, approximately 20% of surveys could not be linked to the information on the ward the individual lives in due to respondents choosing to remain anonymous. The table below shows the difference between the response to the surveys and the proportion of Hyndburn's population as a whole:

Figure 3: Ward of respondents compared to Hyndburn profile

Ward	% Population (Census 01)	% respond'ts	Ward	% Population (Census 01)	% respond'ts
Overton	8.0	7.7	Springhill	6.4	3.8
Netherton	5.8	3.8	Central	5.9	2.2
Clayton	6.2	5.6	Milnshaw	5.6	3.4
Altham	5.8	4.5	Church	6.5	4.3
Huncoat	5.3	5.6	St Andrews	5.5	3.8
Barnfield	5.6	6.1	Immanuel	5.5	5.7
Peel	5.5	2.3	St Oswalds	8.2	7.2
Baxenden	5.3	5.7	Rishton	9.0	7.7

2.3.4. Council Tax Band

This is not part of the standard information held on panel respondents. However, as some of the questions asked in the survey concerned Council Tax, it was decided to include this as a question. Some respondents stated that they did not know the band or chose not to answer the question. As a result, analysis by council tax band is not given in terms of the full response to the question, but on a band by band basis.

In terms of the survey, this data was only used for the section on Council Tax. In the analysis, each band was treated as separate rather than comparing the results to give an extrapolated Hyndburn view to avoid possible errors arising from having to apply a multiplier of over two to get proportionate data weighting.

Figure 4: Council Tax Band of respondents compared to Hyndburn profile

Council Tax Band	% respondents	% Hyndburn households in each band (lancashireprofile.com, 2001)
A	30.0	61.0
B	16.3	13.5
C	19.7	15.0
D and over	16.9	10.5

2.4. Limitations of data

How well the sample represents the population is gauged by two important statistics – the survey's margin of error and confidence level. For example, this survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent at a 95 percent level of confidence. These means that if the survey were conducted 100 times, the data would be within 4 percentage points above or below the percentage reported in 95 of the 100 surveys. In essence, this means that slight differences in percentage results need to be treated with caution and for this reason, the narrative in this report only discusses significant variations between percentages.

Figure 5: Margins of error at 95% confidence

Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error Percent*
2,000	**+/- 2**
1,500	+/-3
1,000	+/-3
500	+/-4
400	+/-5
300	+/-6
200	+/-7
100	+/-10
50	+/-14

2.5. Structure of the report

Each subsequent section of this report deals with one of the five sections of the questionnaire. In the main, the topics were deliberately chosen for their compatibility, and so there will be a degree of cross-referencing in the report between the different sections. The final section echoes the executive summary at the front, but places the key findings in the context of wider Council policy, making a series of basic recommendations for the relevant service managers to consider.

3. Food Shopping

Key Issues

- The Internet is not used significantly by panel members for shopping, despite internet users being over represented on the citizen's panel;
- People shopping for more household members, older people and people not using cars to go shopping are much more likely to use low cost, medium-sized supermarkets;
- The quality of food, the need to eat a healthy diet and the price of food are the most important things to panel members in determining where they shop;
- Over 80% of people indicated that they could be persuaded to buy more ethically if encouraged to do so;
- Respondents tend to use approximately the same amount of time to get to the place where they spend most of their food budget regardless of the mode of transport they use to access the shop;
- Shops near to people's homes were perceived as offering poorer choice, quality, and value for money;
- 29% of panel members either grow a small amount of food currently or are interested in doing so.

3.1. Patterns of shopping amongst respondents

The survey attempted first of all to establish the pattern of food shopping amongst respondents, in order to contextualise their subsequent answers for this section and the one on Food and Health – for example, by establishing how frequently they would access fresh food. It did this by presenting a variety of scenarios and asking respondents to choose the one which best described their own shopping pattern.

56% of those answering the question did a weekly “big shop” with “top up” shops, with 19% favouring a monthly “big shop” with “top up” shops. The only other response which gained significant numbers of responses was for “small trips”, either as and when needed (13%) or on a regular basis (8%).

Over three quarters of respondents said that they spent most of their food shopping budget at a large supermarket, with the bulk of the other responses (16%) saying that most of their budget was spent at “medium” sized-supermarkets (such as Kwik Save, Aldi and the Great Harwood Co-Op). Convenience stores were seen as being much less likely to receive the largest share of people’s food budgets, though it should be remembered that this was based on people’s perceptions. No attempt was made to quantify people’s spend, and the reality could, in a limited number of cases, be somewhat different. Equally, just 2% said that the bulk of their spend went at specialist food outlets such as a butcher or greengrocer.

Despite having a disproportionate number of Internet users responding to the survey compared to the figure for the whole of Hyndburn (64%), only 19% of all respondents said that they ever used the internet for buying food, with the most common response being that 17% used it “from time to time”. There was little evidence that significant numbers of panel members used it to get shopping regularly.

3.1.1. Shopping pattern by quantity of shopping

A further qualifying question was asked in order to establish whether the number of people which the shopping was purchased for had any relationship to where the shopping was purchased from. Although the numbers involved were relatively small, there was a clear trend for people who were involved in shopping for food for more than more people doing more shopping at medium sized supermarkets. The examples of medium supermarkets given were generally shops regarded as lower cost supermarkets. The only exception to this was in Great Harwood where the Co-op, which was shown as a medium sized supermarket on the survey, increased the likelihood of people in Netherton and Overton wards saying they would use a medium sized supermarket regardless of family size.

3.1.2. Shopping pattern by age and council tax band

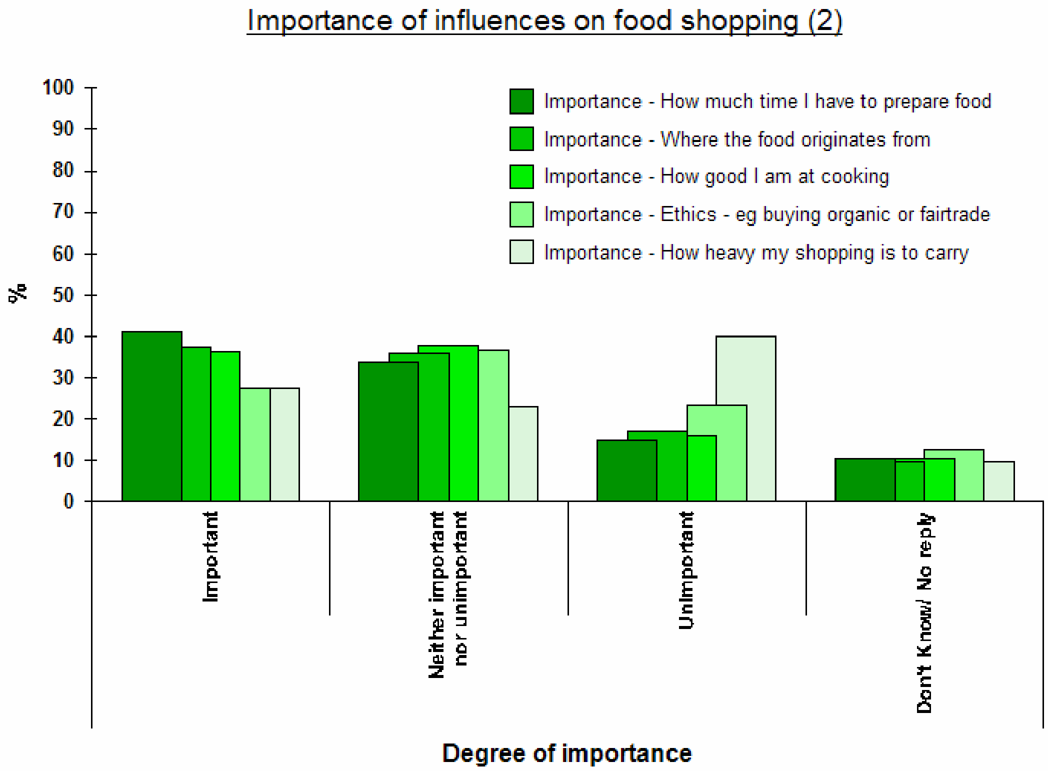
The same trend as outlined above is applicable to the over 65’s. 63% of these said they spent most of their food shopping budget at a large supermarket, compared to 74% overall, and 27% said they spent most of their money at a medium sized supermarket, compared to 18% overall.

Whilst Council Tax band is only a proximal indicator of income, the same trend was applicable to those living in Council Tax band A compared to all other Council Tax bands, with 22% of people living in a band A house compared to 16% of all respondents shopping at medium-sized supermarkets.

3.2. Influences in purchase of food

Due to the fact that ten influences were listed in the question, the graph has been divided into two halves. The first graph (above) shows the influences which respondents attached most importance to. Respondents listed the quality and freshness of food on offer, eating a well balanced diet, and the price of food as the most important factors influencing what food they buy. This was true across all age groups, although people in the 65+ year old category were slightly less likely to say things were important and more likely to say that they did not know.

Interestingly, respondents were much less likely (49% compared to 73%) to say that special promotions or offers were important as compared to the price of the food. Further work would be necessary to ascertain the reasons for this, which would need to delve into the complex area of shopping psychology - there is some work which suggests that some shoppers do not want to appear to be influenced with these special offers, but are influenced at the subconscious level when shopping.



Although divided into two graphs, there are three levels of importance attached to different groups. The first group with the three most important influences are as discussed in the paragraph at the top of this page, with the bottom group being that of "ethics" and the weight of shopping, with less than 30% of people saying that this was important. However, this masks the fact that certain groups attached much more importance to these groups. Regarding ethical shopping, 40% of 45-64 year olds regarded this as an important influence; whereas 43% of 65+ year olds said that the heaviness of shopping was an important influence, representing significant deviations from the overall figure.

Respondents were also asked to mention other important influences on what they buy. Very few mentioned anything of statistical significance, with the most frequently suggested answer being a preference to use local specialist shops (1% of respondents).

3.3. "Ethical" food consumption

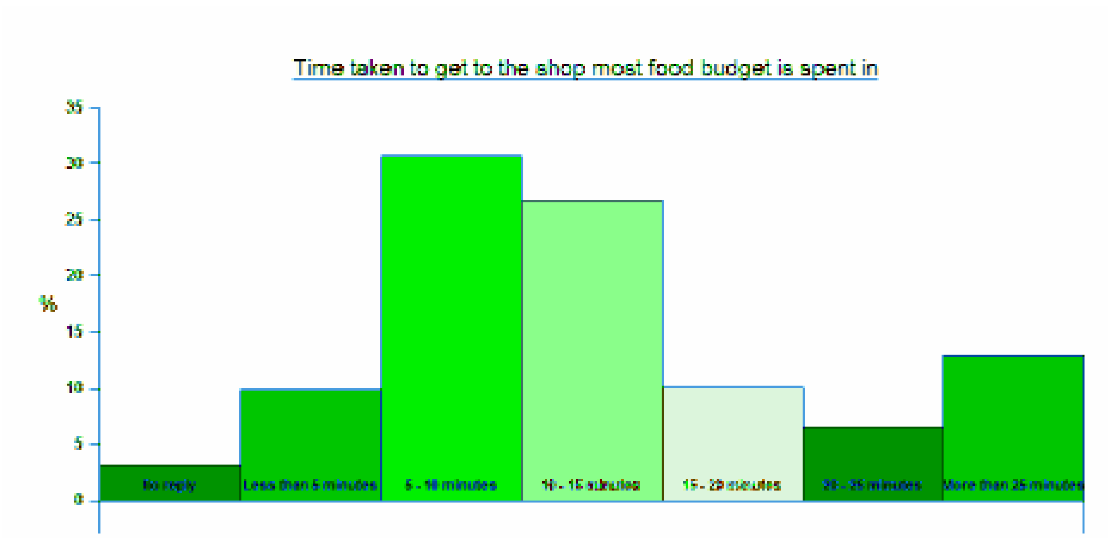
Part of the purpose of the survey was specifically to investigate people's attitudes towards ethical food, taking account both of those who already consume ethical food and attitudes towards it.

Initially, those who mentioned that they bought food ethically were asked where they bought from and what they bought. Almost all respondents volunteered information, with a spread of answers including farm food shopping, organic produce from the supermarket, and fair trade goods. Then, all respondents were prompted with information about what could be considered ethical reasons for purchasing certain foods in certain ways. Respondents could tick more than one answer. 35% said they would buy more if the price were lower, whilst 33% said they would be encouraged if ethical foods were more available. 15% wanted more information to help them make an informed decision. The interesting aspect of the responses to this question is that 82% of people returning the survey ticked one of the boxes or wrote a comment in about something which would encourage them to buy more or some food ethically, showing that there is a greater potential for reaching more people in this way than may have been inferred from the answer to the question about whether people felt ethical issues were important in choosing ethical food. It should also be noted that people on lower incomes not only stated that the food would have to be sold at a lower cost for them to be interested but were also the group most keen to be presented with additional information on the issues around ethical food consumption.

3.4. Access to food

Having established the shopping patterns and preferences of respondents, the survey went on to look at the general issue of access to food. The first question aimed to establish how people get to the place where they spend most of their food budget. This showed that 81% of people use some form of motorised transport (either by driving themselves, getting a lift, riding a motorbike or, in 1% of cases, using a taxi), with 8% walking and 6% catching the bus.

The next question investigated how long it usually took respondents to get to the shop they spend most of their food budget in.



The interesting aspect of this response is that this profile of time taken remained remarkably consistent across modes of transport, with similar proportions of people answering 5-10 and 10-15 minutes. Whilst this might seem obvious, it throws up a range of questions about whether access to food is determined by the amount of time people perceive it should take to go shopping rather than the amount of money they have to spend.

3.5. Quality of shopping location

3.5.1. Quality of place where respondents spent most of food budget

In line with 4.2 above, people tended to say that the location at which they carried out most shopping was “very good” for the choice of food (45%) and for ease of access (43%). However, they were less likely to say that the quality was very good (34%), that it represented very good value for money (33%) and that it was very good for fresh fruit and vegetables (31%). They were also much less likely to say it was very good for the availability of locally produced food (10%), and although 19% of people said they “didn’t know” how good their local store was, 20% nevertheless rated it as “very poor”.

3.5.2. Quality of shops within 15 minutes’ walk from your home

This question was then asked in order to facilitate a comparison between people’s views of the food available in walking distance and the place where they spend most of their food budget.

Category	Chosen food shop - % “very good”	Shops 15 mins walk away - % “very good”	% difference
Choice of food	45	12	37
Quality of food	34	10	24
Ease of access	42	27	15
Value for money	33	10	23
Availability of fresh fruit and veg	31	9	22
Availability of locally produced food	10	4	6

The striking thing about these results is the low proportion of people responding that locally produced food is “very good” although this was in part due to a large number of people saying that they didn’t know. Choice is clearly rated as the biggest advantage that the place where people spend their most food budget has over the local shop. Other results were more consistent, though interestingly ease of access to local shops scored lower than the result for the place where the main shopping was done – presumably because of the specific nature of the question, which stated the shops compared should be within walking distance, as opposed to the main place of shopping which (as demonstrated above) is mainly reached by those using cars.

3.6. Growing food

The biggest proportion of people responding to the survey, 70%, said that they do not grow their own food, with an additional 10% saying that they used to grow their own food. 16% of respondents said that they grow some food, with less than 1% saying that they grew most of their own food. A follow up question asked whether respondents were interested in growing their own food – of those who do not grow any food currently, 13% said they were interested; making the total number of respondents who said this 29%.

3.6.1. Reasons for not growing food

The survey then asked those who said they were not interested what the main reason for this was. The most common response, with 29% of respondents indicating this, was that they didn’t have an allotment or a space to grow food in. 18% said that time was a problem, and 13% said they weren’t interested at all. Although the numbers involved were small, the 65+ year old age group were more likely to say that the thing preventing them from seriously considering growing their own food was ill health; with this group also being less likely to say outright that they were not interested. Responses for other age groups were nearer to the profile of responses for all panel members.

3.6.2. Assistance required to help grow food

Of the people saying they were interested in growing their own food, 23% said they would appreciate general advice on growing food, and 21% said they would need access to an allotment or space for growing. Some people suggested that help with the cost of starting to grow was important (13%), access to equipment was considered by 12%, and 10% said that help with physical work would encourage them.

3.7. Policy Implications and Further Research

3.7.1. Lifestyle-led shopping

The survey did not attempt to assess the extent to which people shaped the frequency of their food shopping around their lifestyle, compared to the extent to which they allowed food shopping to dictate their lifestyle. This would be useful in assessing what could be done to improve people's diets if assistance could be given to make it easier for them to prioritise having a good diet.

It would also be useful if more detailed work could be undertaken investigating the reasons behind supermarket choices to complement the reasons behind the food choices made as explored in this survey, in order to assess the reasons behind the choice of medium sized supermarkets more closely than the conjecture that older people, people with larger families and people with potentially lower than average income shop there out of necessity due to the perception that they have lower prices.

This is also true of the findings on the length of time people travelled to get their food shopping. However, without a full geographical analysis using GIS software, this line of thought cannot be investigated further. Equally, although there is a little evidence to suggest that it takes older people longer to get to the shop they spend most money at, which could be investigated further.

3.7.2. The healthy diet "reality gap"

The survey shows that people consistently place the quality and freshness of food, the price of food and the need to eat a healthy diet at the top of their criteria in deciding where to shop. This is hardly a surprise. What is unclear is the extent to which people's knowledge and financial ability allow them to be able to achieve a healthy diet given their incomes. It is possible to achieve a healthy diet on a low income, given the necessary knowledge of cooking and food. A good next step would be to investigate the knowledge about healthy eating with a series of different groups to assess the relative prioritisation between cost, quality and diet. The hint offered by the data here is that some people may have understood healthy eating messages but associate their diets as "the best they can do" given their circumstances, or, and possibly more damaging, have grasped the basic messages but have re-interpreted these in the light of their own situation and come to a different understanding about what healthy eating is or means.

3.7.3. Knowledge about "ethical" food consumption

The word "ethical" needs to be treated with caution. The survey attempted not to be too prescriptive in what constituted "ethical" food, as different people have different beliefs in what is and isn't ethical. However, a series of commonly cited ethical standpoints were cited – for example, local production of food, organic growing, animal friendly products and fair-trade goods. The data seems to point to a lower understanding of the issues around ethical consumption than of the health message. Rather than investigating the gap between people's knowledge and what constitutes a healthy diet, the ethical agenda is at an earlier stage. Rather, many people need more knowledge about the issues around ethical consumption to be able to inform their own choices about what they prioritise, or whether they regard the issues as unimportant. There was more demand for this from lower income groups.

3.7.4. Access to food

As mentioned under the section above, there are some questions as to whether access to food is determined by the amount of time people have to go shopping rather than the amount of money they have to spend – or indeed, the amount of time they think it is reasonable to spend food shopping. The limited nature of this survey means it was not possible to investigate all of the reasons fully, and it is suggested that some qualitative work would be good to investigate this further.

One implication of the survey data is that people do not feel that the shops local to their houses are necessarily delivering the quality of food that they would ideally like to buy. It may be that a range of initiatives aimed at the local shops and shopkeepers could improve their perceptions in the eyes of the respondents.

3.7.5. Growing food

There seems to be some demand, albeit limited, amongst respondents to learn more about growing their own food. It could be the case that a local pilot scheme could be developed to investigate options on a practical level to make this happen. Such a scheme would have to pay specific reference to the disproportionate amount of people in the 65+ year old group who are interested but would need some form of assistance to get started.

4. Food and health

Key Issues

- A comparison with survey data from a panel survey in 2000 showed that there has been a growth in the number of people saying that they are not confused by healthy eating messages, and in people saying they eat healthy food;
- There are discrepancies between the amount of people agreeing that they try to eat healthily (81%) and the amount of people disagreeing with the statement “I don’t have time to prepare healthy food” (56%) – particularly amongst younger respondents;
- Respondents identified better availability in local shops and of local food as key issues in helping them to follow a healthy, balanced diet.

Following on from the questions in the first section of the report on shopping habits, the survey moved on to consider some aspects of people’s eating habits. The questions on this survey were limited due to a planned partnership survey to be carried out following on from this survey investigating these issues in more detail.

4.1. Attitudes to healthy eating

This question gave a series of statements relating to peoples’ views which respondents could either agree or disagree with.

Statement	% agree	Statement	% Disagree
I try to eat healthy food most of the time	81	I’m not physically able to cook healthily	75
I like the taste of healthy foods	62	I’m a bad cook so don’t bother cooking healthily	68
The shops I go to offer lots of healthy food	59	I get confused about what food is healthy/unhealthy	65
I find preparing healthy food easy	54	Other household members make eating healthy difficult	63
		I don’t have time to prepare healthy food	56

The table suggests first of all that an overall majority of people surveyed eat healthily, though the context of this being a citizen's panel survey should be remembered, as covered in section 1.3. However, for some, their attempts to eat healthy food are compromised by the circumstances of their lifestyle. So whilst 81% try to eat healthily, only 56% say they have time to prepare healthy food. Taking only the respondents who agreed that they tried to eat healthily, this went up to 64% saying they had time.

Several of the statements had much larger elements of respondents saying they neither disagreed nor agreed – principally that they found preparing healthy food easy (33%), the shops they went to had lots of healthy food on offer (29%), the time to prepare healthy food (26%), and liking the taste of healthy foods (26%). As the proportion of people who took the opposite view to the majority remained fairly constant between each of the nine statements (between 4-10%), these 4 statements, where over 12% more people said that they neither agreed nor disagreed, are clearly significant in determining whether people can and do eat healthily.

The survey therefore identifies a core of roughly 20% of panel members who do not try and eat healthily. There is a further group of 20-30% of respondents whose attempts to eat healthily are possibly compromised by lifestyle issues, the sense of taste they have developed, the perceived extra effort they would have to make to prepare healthy food and the availability of healthy food at the shops they go to. It is a moot point for the reasons why people were generally unwilling to disagree or agree outright with statements greatly at odds with a healthy eating philosophy. It could partly be due to the fact that the message of the need for a well balanced diet is well known throughout the panel members, but they were unwilling to "tell the truth" in the survey; or that panel members were aware of the healthy eating message but thought they should have a greater understanding of it than they do.

4.1.1. Comparison with data from 2000 survey

One question is directly comparable with data from a panel survey carried out in 2000 – the percentage of people disagreeing/agreeing that they get confused about what is healthy. 53% disagreed in 2000 compared to 65% in 2006.

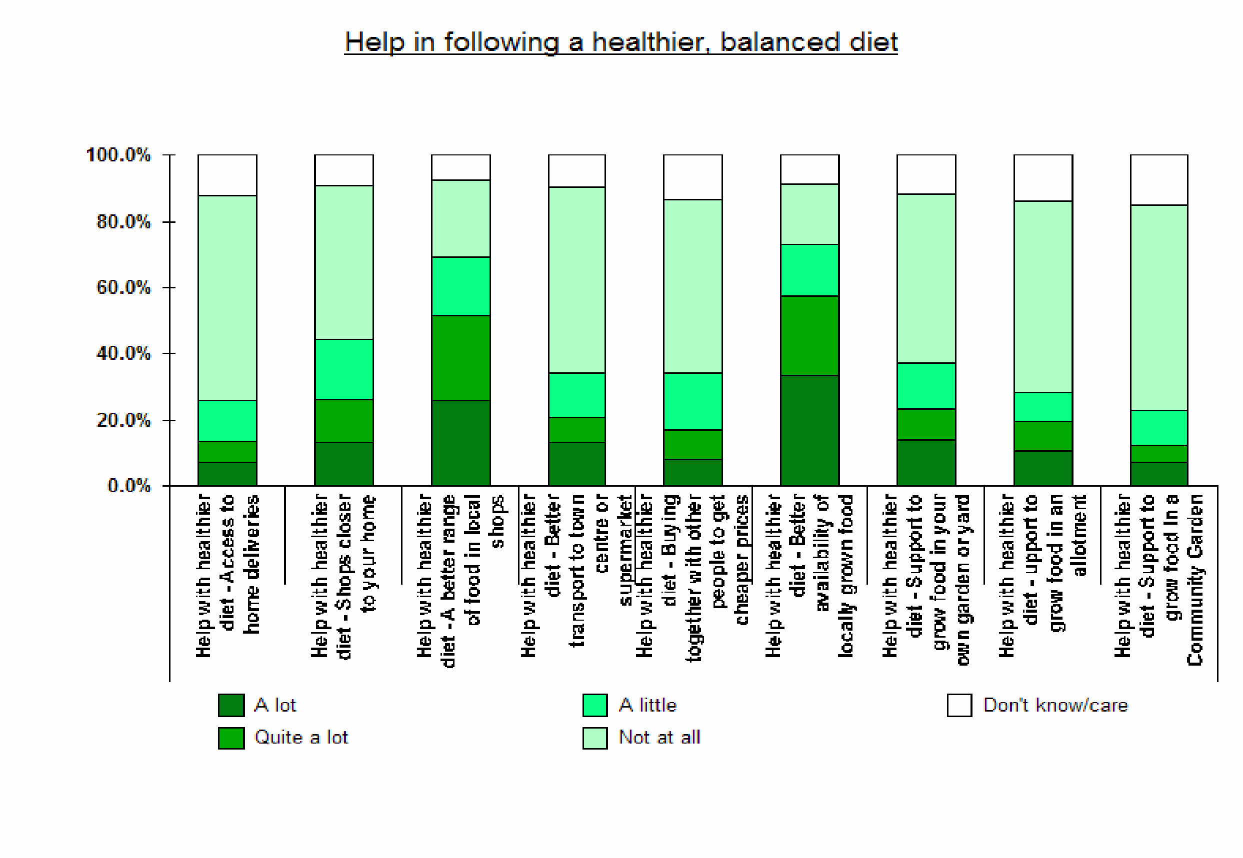
4.1.2. Attitudes to healthy eating by age

The data seems to show that although younger age groups are more likely to go to shops offering a healthy range of foods by 5% compared to other age groups, and are more likely to say that they like the taste of healthy foods (74% compared to 62% overall), they are the most likely to be compromised by lifestyle in achieving a balanced diet - 50% disagreed that they didn't have time to prepare healthy food compared to 64% of 45-64 year olds and 60% of 65+ year olds, with 40% saying that they didn't agree or disagree compared to 22% in older age groups.

4.2. Help in following a healthier balanced diet

The graph overleaf shows factors which respondents consider would be of help in following a more balanced diet. The suggestions in the question concentrated on practical issues relating directly to food shopping, rather than exploring things at a tangent to the immediate issue (such as education on what constitutes a healthy diet or offering healthy food for sale in locations close to places people have no option but to visit e.g. primary schools when collecting their children).

It clearly shows that the issues favoured by most respondents are that a better range of food needs to be offered in local shops, and also better availability of locally grown food. This second factor is particularly interesting as local food has not featured particularly in previous responses as an issue. It seems that when the word "local" is presented in this context respondents are automatically associating it with healthy food, presumably due to the positive health connotations created in the marketing of "local" food. The other ways of helping suggested attracted around 30% support at most.



4.3. Consumption of certain foods

A similar survey was carried out in Hyndburn in November 2000. Whilst a direct comparison is difficult, areas where the results differ substantially are noted under each of the relevant tables.

4.3.1. Type of bread, rolls, chapattis or parathas usually consumed

Type	Percentage of respondents
Don’t eat bread	1
White	29
Brown or Wholemeal	42
Granary or Multigrain	23
Other	6

Compared to 2000, this shows a large increase in the proportion of people eating either wholemeal, brown or multigrain-type bread. Just 41% ate these types of bread in 2000, meaning that there is an increase of 24% over six years. Correspondingly, the number eating white bread has fallen from 53% to 29%.

4.3.2. Type of butter, margarine or spread usually used

Type	Percentage of respondents
Don’t use	5
Low fat	36
Cholesterol lowering spread	17
Butter or full fat spread	22
Unsaturated spread	16
Other	5

Although this survey broke the categories down more for people, the proportion of people using low fat/cholesterol lowering or unsaturated spread has remained constant over time – 75% in 2006 compared to 73% in 2000. This is particularly interesting given the introduction of cholesterol lowering spread over this time – it seems that this type of spread is only attracting people who try and exercise healthier choices in the spread they consume.

4.3.3. Type of milk usually used

Type	Percentage of respondents
Don’t use	2
Whole milk	18
Semi skimmed	62
Skimmed	12
Sterilised	3
Soya milk	3
Other	1

Again, this survey offered more possible responded for people than the 2000 survey, and this was reflected in people’s responses. The main comparison was between the proportion of people drinking whole milk – this fell from 25% to 18%. Unfortunately the results from 2000 do not distinguish between drinkers of skimmed and semi skimmed milk.

4.3.4. Number of portions of fruit and vegetables eaten

This question was asked to get a feeling for people’s own perception of the amount of fruit and vegetables they eat, with no attempt being made to discuss what constitutes a portion.

Number	Percentage of respondents
1	13
2	21
3	23
4	17
5	16
6 or more	9

In total, only a quarter of respondents say they think that they are eating at least the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables. This compares unfavourably to the 81% who said they try to eat healthily (see 5.1 above).

This question was deliberately worded to tie in with awareness of the governments’ “5 a day” campaign. The 2000 survey asked about how often people ate fruit and vegetables, which means a direct comparison cannot be made – but for the record, 38% of people in 2000 stated that they ate fruit and vegetables more than once every day, and 27% said they ate these things once every day – though the amount of portions of fruit and vegetable in each instance was not investigated further.

4.4. Policy Implications and Further Research

Some more information will be available on eating habits from the joint East Lancashire panel survey carried out in December – January 06. Equally, the local PCT is preparing a piece of research investigating food consumption in deprived areas which will cover a wider area than allowed for in this study. However, in themselves these do not piece together the reasons behind why people choose to consume in the way they do in conjunction with their food knowledge. As a result, the conclusions under 3.7.2 have some relevance for further research, with the suggestion of needing to carry out some qualitative work remaining valid here.

5. Markets in Hyndburn – views of users

Key Issues

- Shoppers at the market tend to be older, although 25-44 year old respondents were marginally more likely to say that they were more likely to shop at the market than 12 months ago;
- The highest proportion of users said that they used the market weekly;
- Almost all users of the market stated that quality, choice and value for money as important in determining their use of the market. The least important factor was shopping routine, followed by the presence of unique or unusual shops;
- The markets rated highly amongst users for the friendliness of the stall holders and the location. It rated less well for the presence of unique or unusual shops, but these were considered less important by users;
- Older users of the market tend to spend less at the market but visit more frequently than younger users.

5.1. Visits to markets in Hyndburn

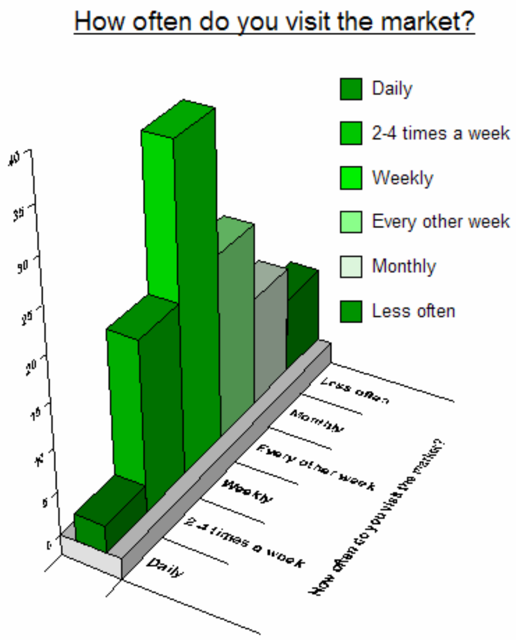
The first question of this section tried to establish how frequently people responding to the survey visited the markets. 71% of respondents said they visited markets in Hyndburn. This figure should not be misinterpreted as saying that 71% of all people in Hyndburn visit the markets, but it helps to establish two pools of respondents – those who say they visit the markets and those who don't. The sample size for the questions looking at visitors' views was therefore 296 people, and that of those who said they don't 119. Of the 296, the proportion of 45-64 year olds was double that of the two other age categories, however this is of little relevance in itself. The more important fact is that 80% of 65+ year old respondents said they visited the markets, compared to 73% of 45-64 year olds and 66% of 25-44 year olds.

5.1.1. Market most commonly visited

The most commonly visited market was the indoor market at Accrington, with 64% of respondents visiting this most often, followed by 32% visiting the outdoor market at Accrington. A minority (5% - equating to 18 people) said they visited the Great

Harwood market most often, with all of these respondents being from Great Harwood.

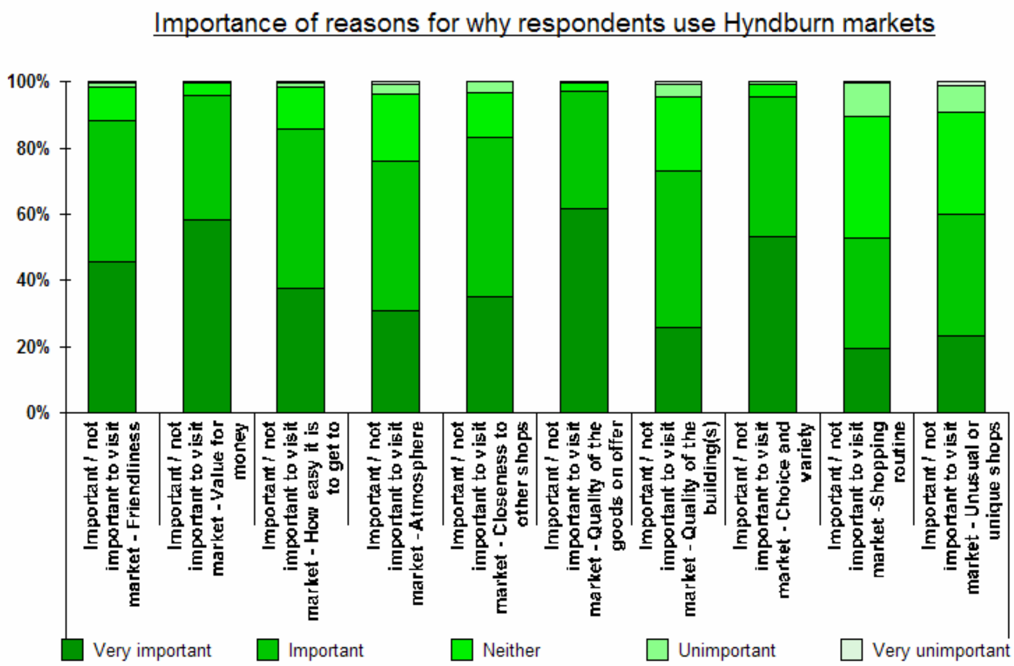
5.1.2. Frequency of visit



This chart shows the percentage frequency of visits to the market. Most visitors go to the market weekly (36%), with lower proportions going 2-4 times a week (19%) and every other week (21%). The proportions remain relatively constant for the Accrington markets when considered individually, although the Great Harwood market, which is only open once a week, inevitably has people only saying that they visit weekly or less frequently.

5.2. Factors influencing use of Hyndburn's markets

Please note in everything that follows, the "market" covers answers for all three separate markets unless specifically stated.



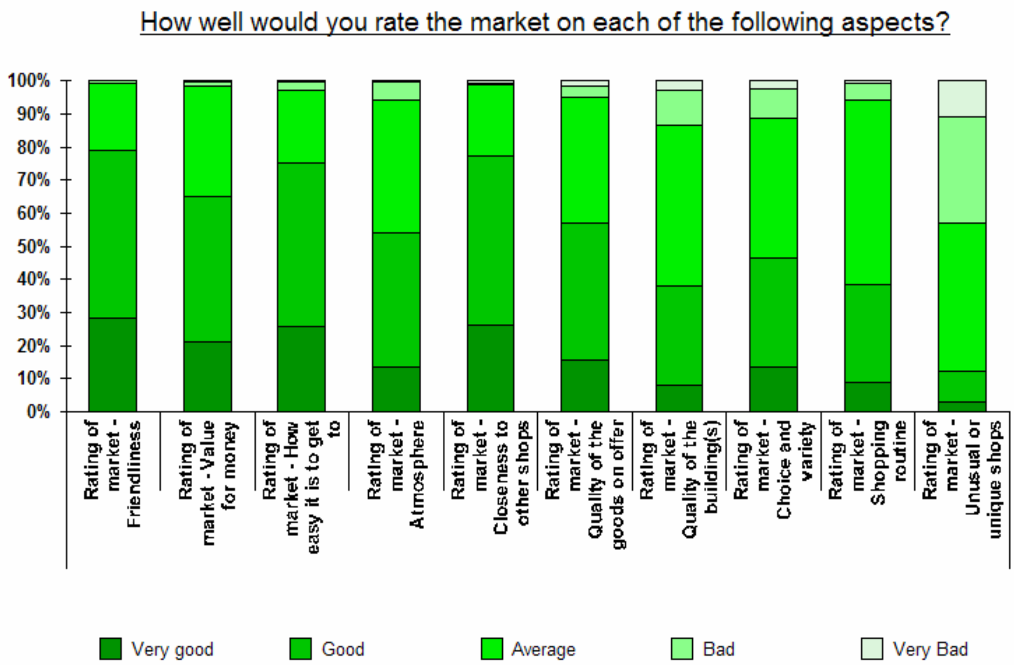
The majority of factors identified were considered by respondents to be of some importance in determining why they visited the market. Reasons considered to be less important – although over half of the people responding still considered them to be important – were the presence of unusual or unique shops and their own shopping routine. The most important things were considered to be the quality of the goods on offer (97%), value for money (96%), and the choice and variety of goods (96%). Respondents were also asked to comment on other important reasons, with the most common suggestion being that the provision of good or free parking (19%) – an extremely high response for a question inviting suggestions without prompting.

5.2.1. Comparison of views of users to non-users

Comparing the two sets of views (non-user views are set out in 6.2 below) reveals an interesting divide between the views of the two sets of respondents. The most interesting division comes between the areas most valued by users which are also the factors deterring non-users from using the market the most. So whilst 97% of users said that the quality of the goods on offer was important in determining use of the markets, 58% of non-users attributed as important in their non-use of the markets the poor quality of the goods on offer. 62% of non-users said the lack of choice and variety of products was important, compared to 96% of users saying it was important. A full comparison would be misleading as the questions were asked in a slightly different way – users were asked what is important and not asked to judge how good or bad it was, whereas non-users were specifically asked what put them off visiting markets in Hyndburn.

Nevertheless, picking these two points out clearly illustrates a discrepancy in how the markets are seen by users and non-users. However, it is too simplistic to simply say that this is because non-users haven't come to the market and experienced the quality of the goods for themselves. It is true to say that familiarity and loyalty are important in determining the perception of users that the products they buy are of good quality; and the same loyalty of non-users will affect their perceptions of the market.

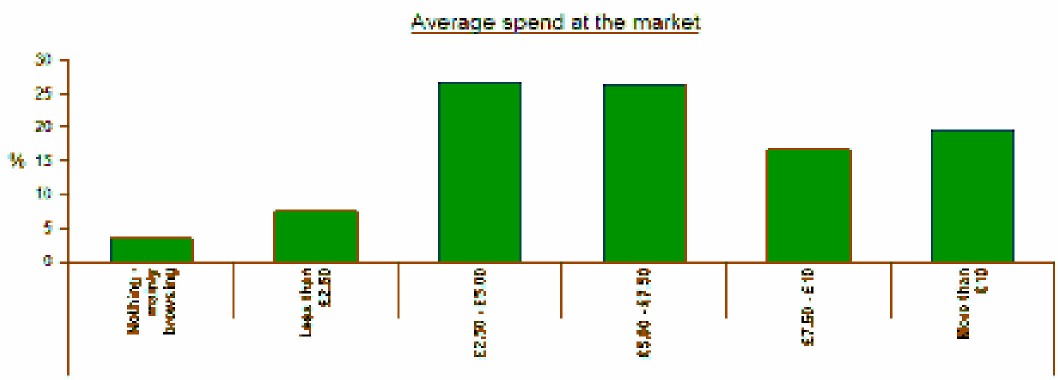
5.3. Rating of Hyndburn markets



Perhaps unsurprisingly, the same issues which are coming out as very important or important tend to be seen as areas of strength for the market. So 79% of people using the market say that they would rate the market as “good” or “very good” on friendliness, 78% of people welcome its closeness to other shops, 75% say it is easy to get to, and 65% rate it as value for money. Equally, areas where the ratings are lower are the issues which people are less concerned about – such as the presence of unusual shops (12% rate the market as very good or good for these), saying that it is fits into their shopping routine to go there (38%), and the quality of the buildings (38%).

5.4. Spend at the market

Of the 392 people who said they visited markets in Hyndburn, 384 answered this question:



From respondents as a whole, there seems to be a fairly even pattern of spend above the £2.50 mark. When analysed by age, although the data is fairly limited, the pattern appears to be for 65+ year olds to be more likely to spend less than other age groups (42% spend less than £5, compared to 32% of 45-64 year olds and 29% of 25-44 year olds), but visit the market more often and are less likely to visit the market purely to browse (no 65+ year olds said this compared to 6% of 45-64 year olds).

In considering gender, the data revealed that men were much more likely to spend more than £10 (a quarter of male respondents indicated this, compared to 14% of female), with women more likely to spend less than £5.

5.5. Shopping trends

54% of respondents said that they shop at the market less often compared to a year ago. The survey was carried out in October-November 2005, so the reference date would be October 2004. The remainder said that they either shopped at the markets more (10%) or as often (36%). People saying either more or less were then invited to say why this was the case, but of people saying “less”, insufficient numbers took up this suggestion to gain any meaningful information from it. Whilst there were much fewer people who shopped at the market more, the most popular reasons for this was having more time or being less busy.

5.6. Other comments on shopping at the markets

Finally, respondents were encouraged to give any other views on the shopping experience. Most of the views expressed were negative. These related to the poor quality of the shopping environment, the higher cost of shopping at the market, the quality of the stock, and the problems caused by the proximity of the bus station. It should be noted that many of the issues with the environment appeared to relate to the outdoor market and the poor quality of the pavements and drains. Others cited a lack of facilities, some empty stalls, and a lack of produce they would want to buy (such as organic food).

Some positives expressed by people related to the friendliness and the warm welcome, having a good selection of produce and speciality foods.

5.7. Policy Implications and Further Research

These will be discussed under the section dealing with the views of non-users.

6. Markets in Hyndburn – views of non-users

Key Issues

- Younger respondents were less likely to use the market;
- 84% of non-users said they had visited a market in Hyndburn in the past;
- Over half of non-users said they didn't use the market because it wasn't part of their routine; because they thought there was a lack of choice; due to poor quality goods; and because of the poor quality of the buildings;
- Farmers markets were regarded as the most likely event to attract these respondents to shop at the market, with half of the respondents being keen on these.

6.1. Demographics of non-users

Respondents in younger age groups were more likely to say that they did not use the markets in Hyndburn. The proportion of non-users who were aged 25-44 was 35%, compared to the overall figure of 29% and a figure for the over 65's of 20%.

6.2. Previous market visits

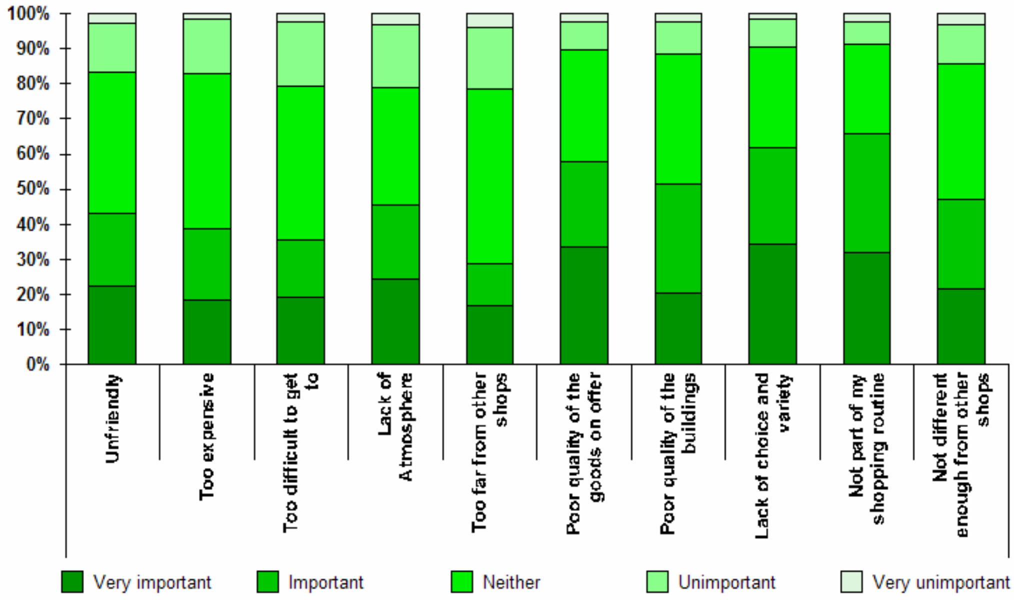
Non-users were first of all asked when they last visited a market in Hyndburn. 84% said that they had visited a market in Hyndburn compared to 6% who said they had never done so; with 46% saying this was within the last 12 months and 48% saying it was more than 12 months ago.

The same group of people was also asked if it visited markets elsewhere, to assess whether or not they didn't visit markets in general or whether it was specifically markets in Hyndburn they did not shop at. 60% said they did not, which leaves 40% of this group as people who have specifically chosen not to shop at markets in Hyndburn despite living in the Borough.

6.3. Factors influencing non-use of Hyndburn markets

11 factors were listed for respondents to review and assess how important or not they were in putting them off using Hyndburn markets:

Importance of reasons for why respondents don't use Hyndburn markets



As can be seen from the graph, over half of non-users stated that four of the suggested factors are felt to be very important or important in determining why they don't use the markets in Hyndburn. 66% said it wasn't part of their routine, 62% said it was due to a lack of choice and variety of products, 58% said it was due to poor quality of the goods on offer, and 51% said it was due to the buildings being of a poor quality.

6.4. Ideas encouraging use of markets in Hyndburn amongst non-users

The questions asked under this section related to some high-level ideas for encouraging trade at Hyndburn markets generally rather than specific promotional ideas. To test such ideas out, it would be more useful to take a sample group of shoppers and investigate their shopping routines in detail and test out some promotional material. However, respondents had the option to write in their own thoughts on what would make them more likely to shop at the markets in Hyndburn. The majority did not respond, but common suggestions were – more variety and bigger choice, with more stalls, which 10% of non-users suggested, and 34% suggested it would take more specialised stalls or "something different" to tempt them.

6.4.1. Would any of these make you more likely to shop at Hyndburn markets?

Change	Yes (%)	Possibly (%)	No (%)
Farmers markets	50	28	21
Improvements to town centre	46	28	25
Themed shopping e.g. Christmas Fair	31	36	32
Continental Market	39	34	28

As can be seen from the above table, there was a degree of support amongst people for initiatives involving special events, but of comparable popularity was an event outside the control of the market itself – improvements to the town centre. (Again, it should be noted that this survey pre-dates the improvements to Broadway).

6.5. Policy Implications and Further Research

6.5.1. Further Research

The first thing to note is that these questions only represent the start of some detailed work which should be carried out. Ideally this would include a market-wide customer satisfaction survey, some focus groups of users and non-users and mystery shopping exercises. The research also needs to involve stallholders. In addition to these factors, they could be invited to film or photograph the market from their perspective to show what they feel the key issues are.

The research could also focus on the identification of groups of non-users and focus on ways to encourage them into the markets. A factor relating to the demographics of the users (covered below) is whether people will naturally start to use markets when they get older due to having changing needs and less time restrictions – or whether the current user base of the markets is shrinking, and therefore that the target audience of the market is changing and requires the traders to adapt with it.

6.5.2. Demographics of users

Thought needs to be given to the strategic direction of the market service based on the demographic information gathered, but the further research outlined above is essential to ensure that this is not misdirected.

6.5.3. User expectation and quality of market service

Although the question was not asked as the survey needed to cover users and non-users, there seems to be a good fit between the expectations of the current users and their familiarity with the traders, their products and their environment. Whilst this is beneficial for customer loyalty, it may mean that this same familiarity has made it easier for traders to be more conservative in their offer. Tough decisions and changes may be needed to bring new people into buy at the market, but risk alienating existing customers.

7. Environmental Services

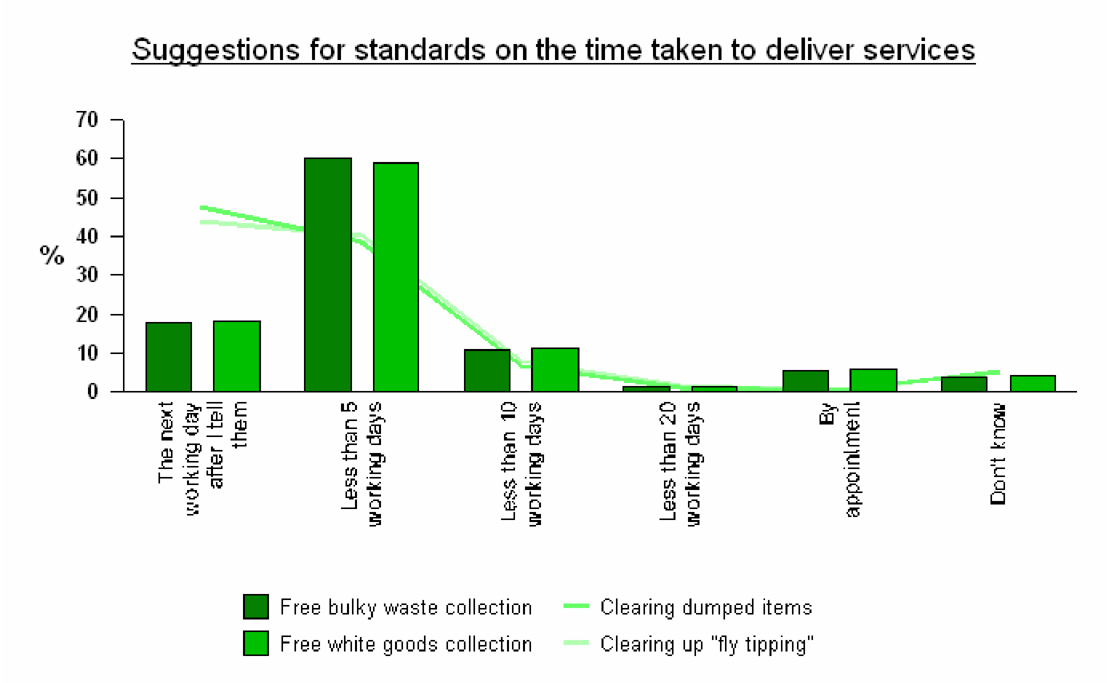
Key Issues

- Respondents prioritise the clearing of dumpings and fly tippings above the collection of bulky waste and white goods from their own houses;
- Service standards for non-routine services align more closely with residents' thoughts than those for standard services delivered;
- The bulk of respondents were satisfied with the opening hours of the telephone helpline, though the under 65's were more likely to request extended opening hours. Various ways exist of providing an extended service within existing resources and piloting of these should be considered;
- Over half of respondents felt that the Environmental Services team were good at keeping the streets free of litter and over 60% felt that litter bins are emptied often enough;
- Cardboard was the most popular additional doorstep recycling service requested, with 80% of respondents saying they would like to see this. Respondents were also keen to see collections for Tetra Pak (49%) and Textiles (44%);
- A thorough review of the Services' Customer Charter, which contains the service standards, in line with these results is desirable. This should include some thought around additional service standards to be developed with the public via further consultation, and consideration of how to re-design the service in order to deliver the service standards requested by the public.

7.1. Views on service standards

7.1.1. Suggestions for standards on the time taken to deliver services

The first question relating to Environmental Services looked at "on demand" services not related to the routine provision of a waste and recycling collection service. It asked about two aspects of service delivery relating to collection from people's homes, and two relating to general clearing of dumped items. The questions were based on the services provided being free of charge.



In all cases, over half of respondents felt that the rubbish should be removed in less than five working days. The main difference was in the degree to which they felt this about general dumpings compared to the Council collecting items from their homes. In the latter case, when asked about the collection of general bulky waste and of white goods (shown by the bars on the graph on the previous page) the majority of respondents (59% and 57%) stated their preference for collection within five working days. For dumping and fly tipping (shown by the lines on the graph) a much higher proportion wanted collection on the next working day (46% and 42%). In all cases, over three quarters of respondents wanted a collection within 5 working days, with dumping and fly tipping having a slightly higher proportion of people requesting it on the whole than the collection service.

Unsurprisingly, few people opted to answer that they would like to know a specific time by which dumpings would be removed, but a small minority (6%) said that they would prefer an appointment system for the removal of items from their homes. Whilst some people may choose to store items within their houses and only place them out for collection when they know the Council will arrive, others will merely want certainty over the collection date – which can be achieved to an extent by telling people when they report the item what the service delivery standard is.

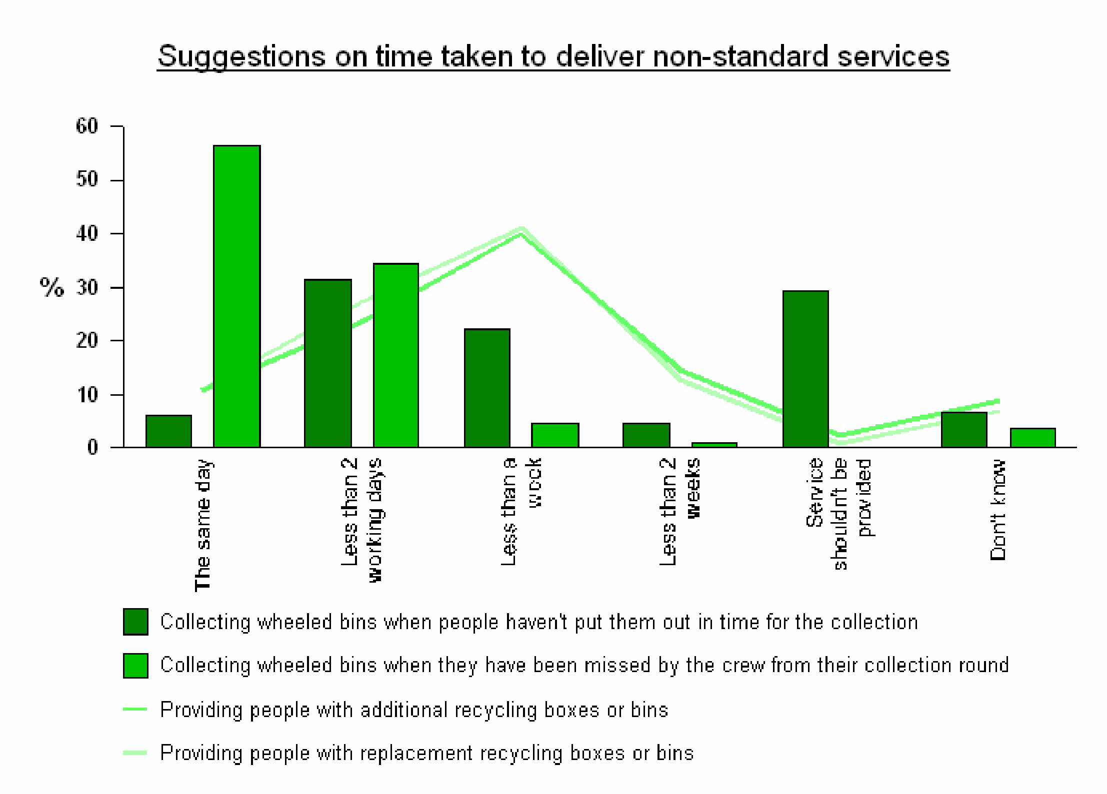
It should be noted that the scale used will necessarily affect responses to this question. The grading of the scale in terms of the options given for the number of days to remove the problem was based on the service standards published on the

Hyndburn website by the service. The results generated by the survey have some important policy implications, which are detailed in Section 4.6.

7.1.2. Suggestions on time taken to deliver non-routine services

The survey then asked panel members to consider four non-routine services which resulted from service failure, resident error, or the service provided being insufficient to meet the residents' demands. The four areas considered were collection of wheeled bins when they were missed by the crew or not presented for collection in time, and the provision of additional or replacement recycling boxes or bins. The timescales given to respondents reflected the nature of these services, which are likely to be provided much less frequently due to their very nature.

The service standards were not clear on whether recycling boxes were also collected when "missed", the provision of replacement/different wheeled bins, and whether replacement recycling boxes are offered. In the first case the question was not asked; in the second two the questions were worded to allow for all possibilities regarding additional boxes and bins. Some suggestions are made in Section 4.6.2 as to which service standards need to be reconsidered in light of this.

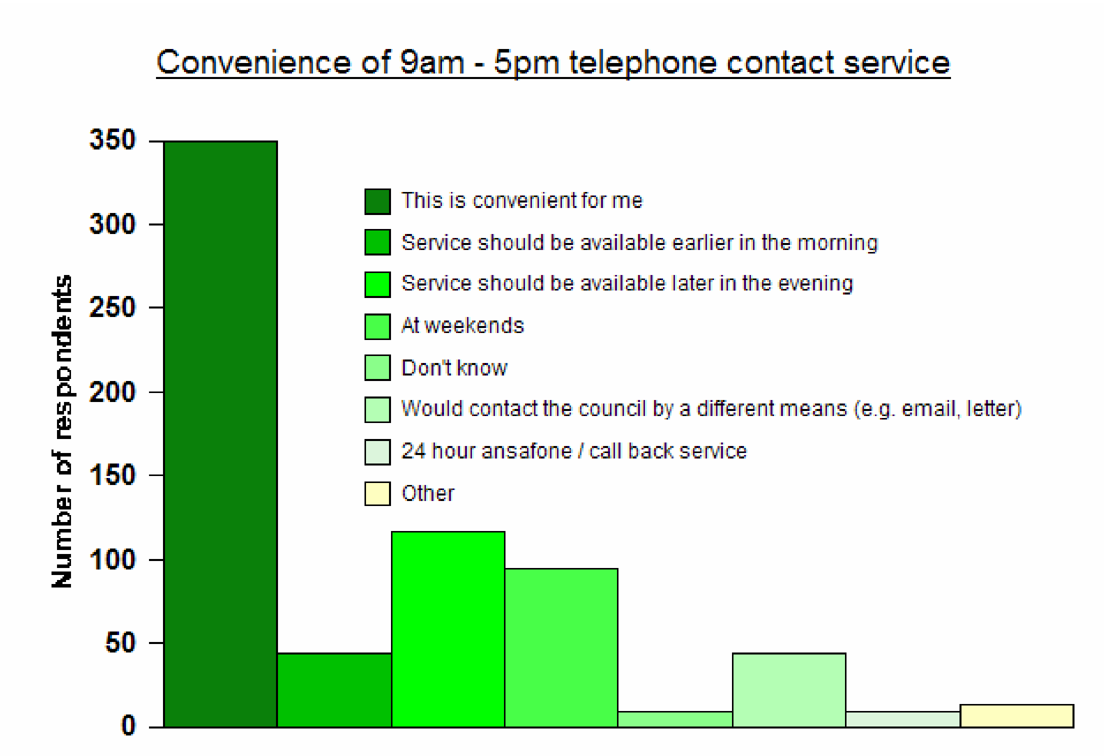


The graph shows an interesting difference in attitudes regarding the provision of additional wheeled bin collection services. As may be expected, where the Council has failed to collect a bin on its collection round, respondents were keen to see it collected on the same day, or at least within 2 working days. Equally, where people have missed the collection time, respondents were most likely to suggest that the bins were collected in two working days. However, a similar proportion of people suggested that the service should not be provided at all, with these respondents presumably thinking of the cost to the Council and the need for individuals to take responsibility for putting their bins out in time. This has a series of policy implications set out in Section 4.6.

The provision of additional or replacement boxes and bins is regarded as less of a priority by respondents, although the result does suggest that there needs to be some minor work rewording the existing service standards (see section 4.6.3).

7.2. Contacting the service by telephone

Respondents were asked to assess the convenience of the current opening hours of the telephone Helpline for requesting services. At the time of asking the question, the service was available from 9am to 5pm, although the Council's new Contact Centre opened shortly after the survey was distributed and the opening time on Wednesdays altered to 10 am to give staff time to train.



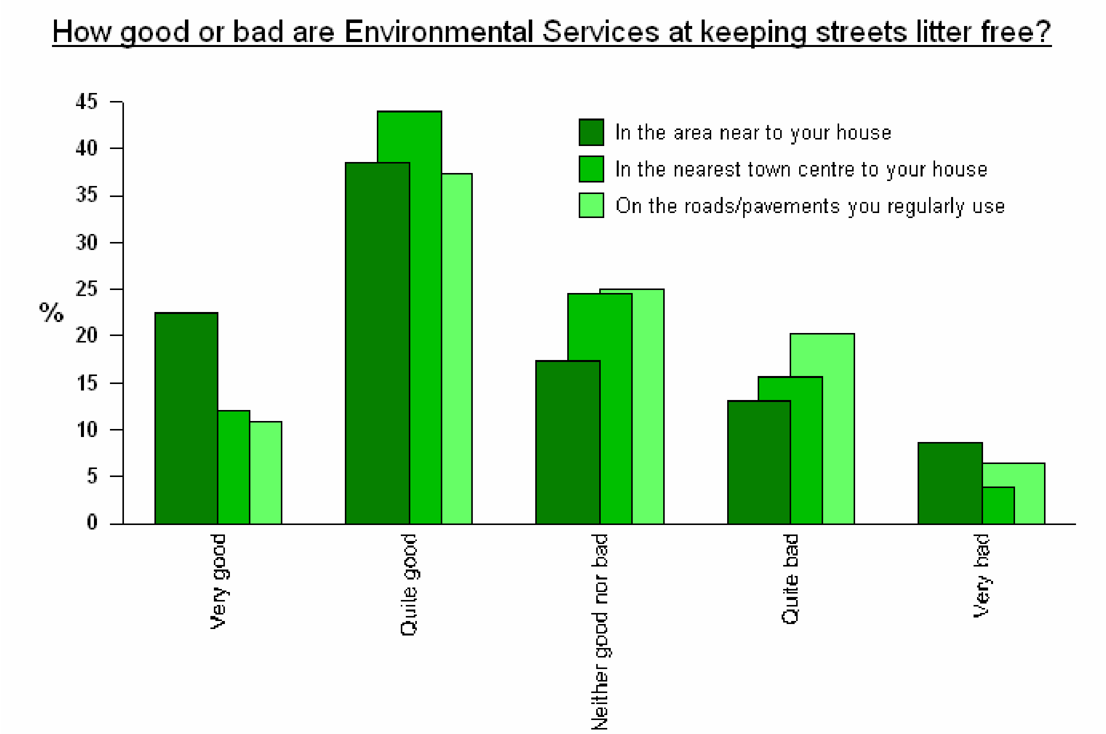
Note that 65% of all panel respondents were happy with the opening hours of the service. Multiple responses were allowed to this question to account for people who wanted opening hours both earlier and later in the day. The most popular suggestion was that the service should be open longer into the evenings, with the weekend being another category attracting a significant number of responses. In terms of people responding to more than one answer for alternative availability, there was no consistency between the multiple responses – in other words, people were as likely to suggest the service should be available earlier **and** later as to say that it should be available later **and** at weekends.

7.2.1. Responses by age

Respondents aged 65 and over were much more likely to say that the 9-5 opening hours were convenient for them, but more than half of the 25-44 and 45-64 age categories also felt this way. The proportion of these two age categories saying that they would like weekend and evening opening was consistent across the groups, and was correspondingly higher than the over 65's group.

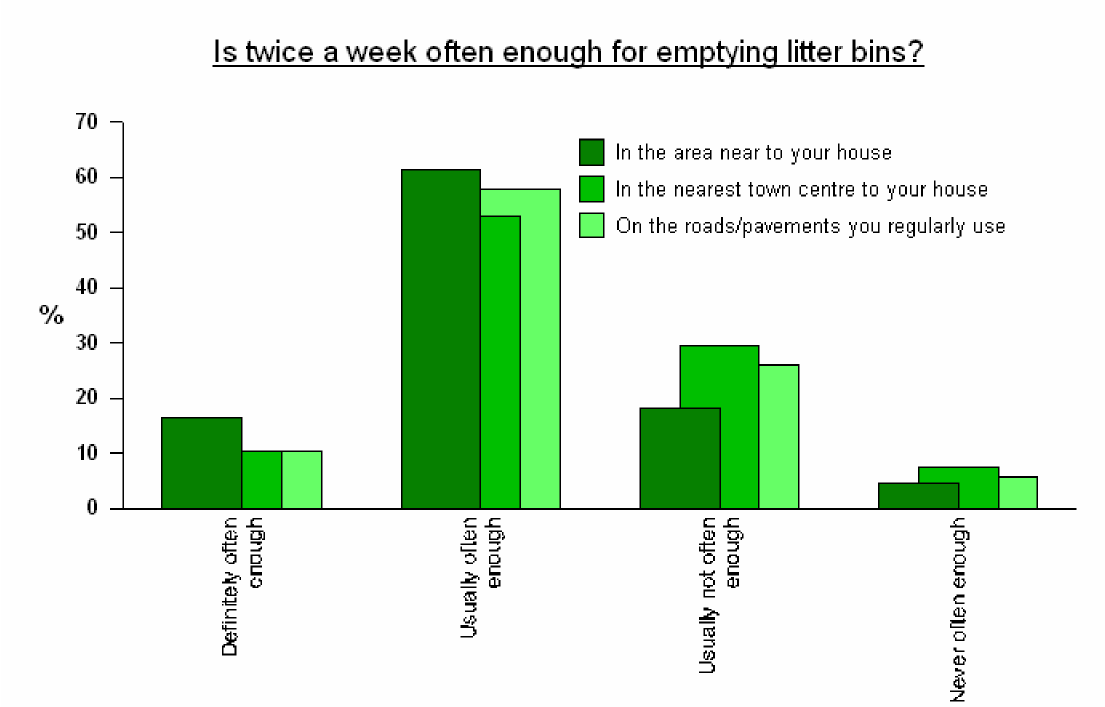
7.3. Frequency of street cleaning and litter bin emptying

Two questions were asked regarding the perceived quality of service delivered on the streets. The first of these examined how good people thought Environmental Services were at keeping streets free from litter in a variety of locations:



Encouragingly, around half of all respondents felt that the service was "very" or "quite" good at keeping streets litter free in all three suggested locations, with respondents being slightly less positive about the situation regarding nearby town centres. The original intention was to analyse the results to this question by ward, in order to deliver a picture of where respondents felt there may have been problems. However, due to the small number of responses on a ward by ward basis, insufficient data was gathered to make this a meaningful exercise.

The second question was similar, but took as its starting point the fact that litter bins are emptied at least twice a week by the Environmental Services team. This fact was put to the panel and they were invited to comment on whether this was often enough given their experiences of bins in each of the same locations.

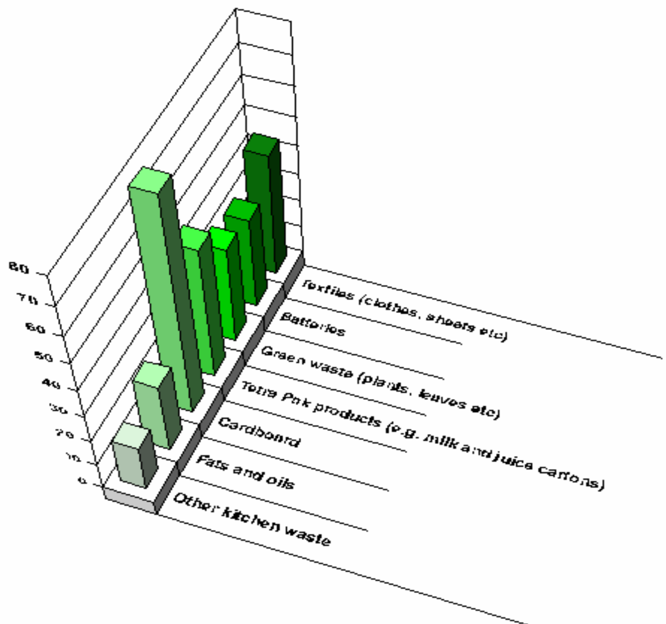


Again, the majority of respondents felt that litter bins were usually emptied often enough; and again, the perception was more negative regarding the situation in the nearest town centre. Given that the public are not aware whether litter bins are, in reality, emptied twice a week or not, the situation really depends on how often the service actually empties litter bins as to whether the service standard is realistic.

7.4. Preferences on additional recycling materials for doorstep collection

The questionnaire also asked about additional material which respondents would like the Council to collect for recycling. By far the most popular was cardboard, with 80% of respondents saying they would like this recycling, despite (and possibly because of) some cardboard recycling already taking place in parts of the borough. Other responses attracting significant support were Tetra Pak products such as juice and milk cartons (49%) and textiles (44%). A third of respondents would like to see Green waste and Batteries added to recycling collections, with fats and oils/other kitchen waste being supported by a quarter of respondents or less.

Other materials to be included in recycling doorstep collection



7.4.1. Responses by age

In the main, responses to this question were consistent across age categories in terms of the statistical robustness of this survey. The exceptions to this were that 65+ year olds were less likely to agree that the Council should provide doorstep textile recycling or doorstep milk/juice carton collection, and less 25-44 year olds were likely to agree that the Council should provide green waste recycling.

7.5. Policy Implications and further research

7.5.1. Charging for a higher standard of service

The questions regarding bulky waste removal were asked were based on the provision of a free universal service. This is not a statutory function of the Council, and as a result suggestions have been made regarding the provision of a higher quality service which is chargeable in addition to the free universal service. Further research would be necessary to determine the extent to which people would be prepared to pay to receive a quicker service or one with a guaranteed appointment time.

In saying this, it should be emphasised that the original policy decision made to offer free collection on bulky waste was in response to specific problems in the borough with flytipping, and that there would need to be additional research investigating the likely environmental effect of charging based on more challenging service delivery standards were this under consideration. Research would also have to be undertaken on the amount people would be prepared to pay to ensure that there was a market for a paid-for service, and a pilot carried out to assess the demand, backed with work checking the effect on the number of dumpings in the pilot area.

7.5.2. Revision of service provision and standards

According to the research, people prioritise general dumping collection above collection from their homes. The table below compares the views of the panel members to the Council's current service standards:

Service	Current Council Standard	Panel Suggested Standard (based on most common response to timescale suggestion)
Bulky Household Items	10 working days	5 working days
White Goods	5 working days	5 working days
Dumpings	10 working days	Next working day
Fly tippings	10 working days*	Next working day

** Service standard notes this depends whether officers need to investigate the case*

Whilst it may not be possible for the service to deliver a "next working day" service within existing budgetary constraints, the important thing to note is that residents want to see quicker action on issues in the local environment, and that priority needs to be given to taking action on dumpings over home collection. With respect to fly tippings, the service either needs to consider setting a realistic target including provision for Council officers to investigate fly tippings, or, to deliver the service more quickly, give consideration as to how the process of investigation can be speeded up. For example, the service may decide that prosecuting offenders is very important. However, if the offender is caught in only a small number of cases, the way the tipping is investigated should be reconfigured to presume in favour of a quick removal of the problem if there is no compelling evidence.

Service	Current Council Standard	Panel Standard (based on most common response to timescale suggestion)
Collection of bin – missed	48 hours	Same day
Collection of bin – not presented	5 working days	2 working days/ don't provide
Replacement bin	10 working days	5 working days
Additional box	5 working days	5 working days

Again, the most important thing to consider in this table, assuming that no additional resources are available to the service, is the differential times between the services. In this case, there is a better fit between the Council's current service delivery and what the panel want to see, other than a tighter standard regarding replacement bins. It may be the case that if the service revisits its performance data, it is already achieving a better rate than 10 working days, and that this service standard can be raised in line with residents' expectations with no impact on service delivery. Section 7.8.4 considers the specific issues around the non-presentation of bins, which represents the other anomaly between panel standards and service standards in the table above.

The current wording of the elements of the Customer Care Charter in relation to keeping streets clean (see also Section 7.6.3 below) is "We will endeavour to keep your roads and footpaths clean of litter and detritus given the level of resources available" and "All litter bins will be emptied at least twice a week". It is suggested that the former is revised to make the targets more explicit, whilst the latter needs to be considered in the context of the current level of service provision. For example, it may be the case that town centre bins are currently emptied more than twice a week, but in order to deal with respondents' concerns it may either be that the service standard for litter collection should be made even more frequent in town centres, or that the service standard promoted to the public is for more frequent emptying than twice a week.

7.5.3. Rewording of service standards or additional measures

The current standard for the collection of missed or non-presented wheeled bins does not make specific reference to collection standards for recycling boxes. In order to reflect the prioritisation of recycling services, it is suggested that if this standard is the same as the wheeled bin standard then reference to recycling is included in the service standard; and if recycling boxes are currently not collected if they are missed, then a standard for the delivery of this service needs to be considered for inclusion on the same basis as the wheeled bins.

It should also be noted that this consultation exercise was carried out based on existing standards only. It would be good to consider carrying out further research with focus groups on what people's priorities are for "street scene" issues, to fully assess whether the service is measuring service delivery against people's top priorities. The service also needs to give consideration to the introduction of new service standards reflecting the need to deliver against BV199. Again, these could be developed through discussions with focus groups, with the data collected and presented in Section 7.3 forming a useful starting point.

7.5.4. Service standards for "missed" bins

The problem with service standards for the exceptional collection of missed bins is one of perception, in that many bins which clients think have been "missed" have often been presented too late for collection. Whilst it is useful for the service to distinguish between resident and crew error, the service may wish to consider a single service standard of same day collections of all non-collected bins, whatever the reason for their non-collection. It could retain the distinction between missed and late bins for internal performance management. This would have the advantage of reducing the environmental impact and service demand arising where bins are left out and the contents blown or thrown over the surrounding area.

Alternatively, the service may wish to discontinue the service of bin collection where the resident has not presented them in time, alongside a campaign ensuring that people are aware of the reasons for not offering this service and the time by which their bins should be presented. It may be the case that the revision of the bin collection routes provides an opportunity to revisit the current instruction that all bins should be presented by 7:30 am in favour of a more specific instruction on an area by area basis.

7.5.5. Availability of telephone service for service requests beyond 9-5

The bulk of respondents are happy with the service currently offered. There is some evidence to suggest that younger respondents would value the ability to report calls out of hours. Whilst there was little support for an answerphone or callback service, this was not offered as an option in the original question and was the most popular “other” suggestion made. One possible route to explore would be to marry statistics from the MacFarlane telephone system on people trying to reach the Council’s waste services Helpline beyond the standard office hours, and offer a trial answerphone service on one day of the week initially. This would not need to be publicised, but would be to allow the Contact Centre to consider how dealing with calls in this way would impact on resources and working arrangements. It would also allow the waste service to see if there were any more demand for longer service hours amongst the public as a whole, by comparing the number of calls made to the number of messages left, though it should also be remembered that the Contact Centre hours have been established for many years and users of the service are used to calling between 9 and 5. Following such a trial, the service and Contact Centre could consider whether launching and fully publicising an answerphone service was a worthwhile venture.

8. Council Budgets

Key Issues

- **Over 80% of Panel members identified Community Safety and actions relating to Community Safety as their top priority;**
- **Corporate Governance/Community Leadership and Culture/Leisure were generally seen as the lowest priorities, although actions under these priorities with links to Community Safety were seen as priorities;**
- **Over 50% of respondents said that they would like <u>at least the same amount of money</u> being spent next year on <u>all five</u> Council priorities;**
- **The panel was split between people who would be happy for there to be cuts in their non-priority areas to fund their priorities (45%) and those who were not (48%);**
- **Respondents identifying Community Safety as top or second top priority were twice as likely as those saying Corporate Governance to say that <u>more</u> money should be spent on top priorities;**
- **Respondents placing Corporate Governance as a low priority were much more likely compared to the other four priorities to say that <u>less</u> money should be spent on it.**

8.1. Respondent views on specific Council priorities

Panel members were given a list of actions intended to deliver the Council's priorities to comment on, taken from the Corporate Plan. It should be noted that the citizen's panel had not previously been involved in determining the priorities, though respondents may have been primed by questions on previous surveys investigating various aspects of the Council's work. They were then given a list of items in the Council's Corporate Plan relating to each priority and asked their views on how important they were.

Very few of the items were regarded as "unimportant" or "very unimportant", with only "Arranging special events (such as the Christmas lights switch on, Continental Markets and festivals in the parks)" (9%) and "Providing payments for Housing rent and Council Tax to those who need it" (13%) being seen as unimportant/very unimportant by respondents. As a result, the table below concentrates on the degree to which respondents attached great importance to the priorities. Responses were clustered around certain percentages, with sufficient distinction between each cluster to allow categorisation into “bands”:

Figure 6: Percentage responses to actions, allocated to bands according to priorities

% stating “very important”	“Band” of prioritisation 1 = highest, 5 = lowest
80 – 83%	1
61% - 68%	2
47% - 54%	3
42% - 30%	4
19% - 20%	5

The table of priorities as described by the respondents can be constructed as follows:

Figure 7: Action Plan priorities allocated to bands

Corporate Priority	Item	Priority
Community Safety	Tackling Anti Social Behaviour	1
Culture/Leisure	Tackling Youth Nuisance (via youth work in the community)	1
Community Safety	Reducing crime	1
Housing/Environment	Street cleansing	2
Housing/Environment	Collecting rubbish/bulky waste/recycling from the doorstep	2
Housing/Environment	Environmental Health – pest control/food hygiene/licensing	2
Leadership/Governance	Improving services and saving money	2
Community Safety	Making Town Centres safer	2
Culture/Leisure	Providing Parks/Play areas/Pitches	2
Leadership/Governance	Regeneration of housing/town centre	3
Economy/Employment	Attracting better paid jobs to the area	3
Community Safety	Improving road safety	3
Economy/Employment	Improving open areas e.g. Broadway*	3
Leadership/Governance	Asking your views (via Area Councils, Feedb@ck Panel etc)	4
Economy/Employment	Help for local business promotion	4
Housing/Environment	Providing free car parks	4
Economy/Employment	Planning/Development Control	4
Economy/Employment	Improve Accrington’s Indoor Market	4
Leadership/Governance	Providing Council Tax/Housing Benefit payments	5
Culture/Leisure	Arranging Special Events (lights/markets/park festivals)	5

** Note that the refurbishment of Broadway was underway when this survey was in the field*

The purpose of asking the question on Council priorities was twofold. First of all, it was to act as a reminder for panel members of the Council's priorities, in order that respondents could comment on the budget process in the rest of the survey. Given the extensive nature of the action plans, the priorities were compressed into the above for reasons of space and question intelligibility. Secondly, it resulted in the ranking above, which can act as a reference point during the budget setting process.

Despite the difficulties of getting across that some priorities can be cross cutting in areas which people see as lower priority, citizen's panel members clearly demonstrated their commitment to alternative measures which would assist in targeting their key priorities. So, for example, although youth work may not be seen as a priority in itself, when linked in to the anti-crime agenda, it was allocated a high level of priority. This has implications in terms of how schemes should be promoted to residents and how policy initiatives should be driven forward.

8.1.1. Priorities by age

The data was analysed by age, with consistent results coming across the board. The only aspect which should be noted here is that people in the 65+ year old age group were slightly more likely than average to answer that things were "very important" in all of the items listed except for: the provision of parks and open spaces, the provision of special events and being asked their views.

8.1.2. Priorities by gender

The table overleaf shows the difference between male and female responses to the question, which seems to be much more significant than the difference between age groups. Females were less likely to respond to some of the following questions than men, and yet a straight comparison from all returned surveys still reveals some significant differences between female and male attitudes, with women in the main being much more likely to answer "very important" for all priority items listed. In the table below, the percentage difference is shown positively where the % of women answering "very important" was higher than men, and with a minus in front where more men answered "very important" than women. (Note that, due to the margin of error, significant difference can only be inferred from a score of +/- 4% or greater).

The highest priority items had a low difference between the male/female responses, simply because the overwhelming majority of respondents supported them, with other priorities being more variable. The most significant results based on the table below were that women were much more likely to say that they regarded rubbish collection, park provision, road safety and arranging special events. As there were more respondents than expected to the survey in the female 25-44 age group, each of these results was investigated in more detail to ascertain whether this bias was a reason for the skewed findings in these cases. In all cases, it was found that female respondents were simply more likely to answer “very important” across all ages, with the responses rising amongst the female over 65’s even on issues such as the provision of parks and road safety, strong “very important” responses to which would normally be attributed to young women thinking about young families.

Figure 8: Comparison of Male/Female prioritisation of action plans

Item	Comparison of male/female % answering “very important” (negative figure indicates % more men than women answering “very important”)
Tackling Anti Social Behaviour	- 1
Tackling Youth Nuisance (via youth work)	1
Reducing crime	1
Street cleansing	9
Doorstep rubbish/bulky waste/recycling	14
Environmental Health – pest control/food hygiene/licensing	8
Improving services and saving money	0
Making Town Centres safer	7
Providing Parks/Play areas/Pitches	15
Regeneration of housing/town centre	8
Attracting better paid jobs to the area	3
Improving road safety	17
Improving open areas e.g. Broadway*	1
Asking your views (Area Councils Etc.)	- 3
Help for local business promotion	8
Providing free car parks	9
Planning/Development Control	9
Improve Accrington’s Indoor Market	8
Providing Council Tax/Housing Benefit payments	6
Special Events (lights/markets/ festivals)	11

Highlighted numbers indicate statistically significant differences

8.1.3. Priorities by ethnic background and ward

The numbers of questionnaires received, when broken down to ward and ethnic background levels, was insufficient to allow for meaningful conclusions to be drawn from analysis of these groups. The panel refresh exercise will deal with this situation.

8.1.4. Priorities by council tax band

Analysing the results by Council Tax band is a useful proxy for income in the absence of statistics on all panel members. However, whilst there is a perception that people tend to live in the most expensive house they can afford due to the quality of the local area and environment, this is not a universal truth. As a result, data analysed in this way needs to be treated with caution.

In any case, the only statistically significant difference between respondents saying something was very important between Council Tax bands was in terms of free car parking. 27% of people in Band A felt it was “very important”, compared to 40% and over in all the other Council Tax bands – presumably due to a lower level of car ownership. It should nevertheless be noted that 40% of people living in Band A properties still felt that free car parking was “important”.

8.2. Views on the Council’s Strategic Priorities

The table below shows the most common priority ranking assigned by survey respondents to each of the corporate priorities (hence why two “bottom” priorities have been identified). The question asked respondents to rank priorities from 1 to 5. Some incorrect responses were received and are excluded from consideration in the table below:

Figure 9: Most common rankings assigned by respondents to priorities

Priority	Ranking (1 – 5: 1=top, 5=bottom)	%	Next most common rank (rank; %)
Corporate Governance and Community Leadership	5	41%	4 (28%)
Community Safety	1	53%	**2 (21%)**
Housing and the Environment	2	38%	**3 (27%)**
Economy and Employment	3	29%	**2 (25%)**
Culture and Leisure	5	49%	**4 (31%)**

As may be expected from earlier answers, Community Safety is considered the top priority by respondents. Housing/Environment and Economy/Employment are both ranked at similar levels (with Economy/Employment being the priority most likely to be ranked top other than Community Safety), whilst Culture/Leisure and Corporate Governance are each ranked bottom priority by almost half of all respondents.

8.3. Views on spending against Strategic Priorities

A supplementary question was asked in relation to spending against corporate priorities. The table below shows all respondents' views on whether the Council should spend more or less money on each of the priorities.

Figure 10: Suggested spending against priorities

Priority	% saying the Council should spend "more" or "a lot more" on the priority	% saying the Council should spend "less" or "much less" on the priority
Corporate Governance and Community Leadership	7%	42%
Community Safety	73%	2%
Housing and the Environment	58%	5%
Economy and Employment	56%	6%
Culture and Leisure	25%	22%

This table indicates that views are consistent across the panel in that respondents are most likely to suggest that lower priority items should receive less money, but not across the board. The priority with the most polarised views was Culture and Leisure. The key difference between this and the other area generally regarded as being a low priority, Corporate Governance, is that respondents saying that Corporate Governance was their top priority were more likely to say that the Council needed to spend "about the same" on it, whereas respondents prioritising Culture and Leisure tended to suggest prioritising the spending of money along with it.

It should be noted that all priorities had over 50% of respondents suggesting that they would like to see at least the same amount of money being spent on Council services. The question did not attempt to distinguish between the position stated and the fact that, due to inflation, providing the same level of service would actually require an increase in Council spending.

8.3.1. Views on spending against respondents' own priorities

Figure 11: Suggested areas for extra spending against respondents' own priorities

Individual respondents' prioritisation	% saying "a lot more" or "more" money				
	Corp Gov	Safety	Hsng/Envt	Econ/Empl	Cult/Leis
Top or 2nd top priority	40%	80%	66%	73%	56%
Middle Priority	5%	47%	49%	39%	20%
Bottom or 2nd bottom priority	3%	21%	30%	25%	18%

When respondents' own stated priorities were analysed against additional expenditure in priority areas, significant differences emerged in the level of support for additional expenditure depending on the priority identified by the individual. On one hand, 80% of those saying that Community Safety was their first or second top priority stating that the Council should spend "a lot more" or "more" money on it, to just 40% of those saying Corporate Governance was their top or 2nd top priority and that the Council should spend "a lot more" or "more". This seems to reflect a view amongst panel members that the Council can achieve further savings from it's running costs, rather than service delivery costs – and it is tempting to suggest that the 60% of those prioritising Corporate Governance who do not want more money spending on it, would like it prioritising because they feel there needs to be a focus on reducing costs. Alternatively, they may be thinking about the Community Leadership role and not associating additional costs along with the prioritisation of this remit.

Looking at the reverse picture, comparing priorities to respondents' views on spending less money, a different picture emerges.

Figure 12: Suggested areas for less spending against respondents' own priorities

Individual respondents' prioritisation	% saying "a lot less" or "less" money				
	Corp Gov	Safety	Hsng/Envt	Econ/Empl	Cult/Leis
Top or 2nd top priority	8%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Middle Priority	22%	-	6%	4%	6%
Bottom or 2nd bottom priority	54%	19%	19%	24%	28%

This indicates that respondents de-prioritising Corporate Governance were much more likely to indicate that they would like to see less money spent in this area, than respondents de-prioritising other areas, which corresponds to the findings in Figure

11. In the main, this is because it is the priority most closely linked to perceptions of bureaucracy and inefficiency. When asked if there were anything else they wanted to tell the Council about their approach to priorities, roughly one third of those making comments from the group who placed Corporate Governance as a low priority and stated less money should be spent on it, made comments about “Councillor pay increases”, “desk jobs for the sake of it”, “less admin” and so on.

Whilst efforts were made to explain the different elements of the priorities in the course of the survey, it should be remembered that this result should only be treated as a rough indicator. Nevertheless, three quarters of the panel felt that sufficient or too much money was being spent on Corporate Governance and Community Leadership.

8.4. Views on cutting services to improve priority services

Panel members were asked to give their views on whether the services they had identified as priorities should receive extra funding by cutting services in their non-priority areas. Taking responses as a whole, the panel was evenly split between those who thought they should be (45%) and those who thought they should not (48%).

Respondents’ views on this were slightly different according to their priorities. Of people saying that their lowest priority was Corporate Governance and Community Engagement, and saying that less money should be spent on their lower priorities, 66% said non-priority services should be cut. When the other priorities were analysed in the same way, there was no statistically significant difference between these results and the result for the whole panel.

8.4.1. Cutting services by demographic groups

Female respondents, those aged 65 years and over, and those in receipt of partial or full benefits were most likely to resist cuts on non-priority services. Of course, there is substantial overlap between these categories, but it points to a keen sense of vulnerability felt by those who may rely on Council services more that their priorities may be different from panel members, who use services less and who are therefore more likely to suggest cuts in their non-priority areas.

8.5. Summary

The results suggest that the panel feels there are three levels of priority:

1. Community Safety and cross cutting actions relating to Community Safety.
2. Housing/Environment and Economy/Employment
3. Culture/Leisure and Corporate Governance/Community Leadership

Half of the respondents were open to the possibility of cutting their low priority services to fund improvements to their top priorities. Respondents whose own top priorities were in priority level three of the above list were less likely to say that these priorities should be funded by cutting other services, emphasising that whilst they might be happy with the level of service provision in non-priority areas, they did not wish these to be affected by extra attention on their priorities.

Views on services were broadly similar across all ages and across the borough. The main difference was in the relative prioritisation of services between male and female respondents, with females much more likely to say than men to say any service was important or very important. There were also slight variations according to whether people were in receipt of benefits.

Over 50% of respondents said that they would like at least the same amount of money being spent next year on all five Council priorities. In saying this, they are interpreting the level of service provision they receive in terms of money, and are saying that they do not want any priority services to decline. That said, the work also identifies areas within priorities which they would be more willing to see cutbacks in than others; and hints at a suggestion that the people of Hyndburn are not seeing enough work being done corporately to deliver savings in the back office. It may be that this work needs to take a greater priority in the next financial year, or if this work is being undertaken, to publicise it more effectively.

8.6. Policy Implications and Further Research

This information has been fed into the budget setting process at the Council and as such the political parties are free to interpret this information during budget discussions.