Reading Borough Council Residents' Survey 2020

Reading Borough Council

Working better with you

Report of findings

Opinion Research Services
January 2021

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Opinion Research Services
The Strand · Swansea · SA1 1AF
01792 535300 | www.ors.org.uk | info@ors.org.uk

Contents

The ORS Project Team

Project design, management and reporting

Kester Holmes

Alys Thomas

Alastair Layne

Dave Hammond

Fieldwork management

Robyn Griffiths

Max Davies

Amy Bone

Data analysis

Richard Harris

Sheng Yang

Peter Maggs

Callum Irvine

1. Project Overview

The Survey

1.1   Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by Reading Borough Council to undertake a survey with 1,000 residents using a telephone methodology.

1.2   The purpose of the survey was to gauge levels of satisfaction with the local area, the Council and the services it provides.

1.3   Where relevant, results are compared with national data for England obtained from the LGA's four-monthly telephone survey, which asks residents some of the same questions in relation to their local Council(s). This report uses October 2020 national data provided by the LGA.

Methodology and response

1.4   1,001 structured telephone interviews were undertaken between 11th September and 1st December 2020 with residents of the Borough of Reading aged 18 or over.

1.5   These interviews were conducted using random digit telephone dialling and a purchased sample of commercially available mobile numbers, with numbers dialled on a five-call algorithm. A quota-controlled sampling approach was used to ensure a broadly representative sample by age, gender and working status. Equal numbers of interviews per ward were also targeted, in order to better examine results within each ward and to compare between wards.

1.6   The tables that appear without commentary on the following two pages show the profile of the response to the survey. Please note that the figures may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

Weighting the data

1.7   The survey results have been weighted, where necessary, to correct for some over- and under-representation in the achieved sample. This ensures that the survey results presented here are representative of the population of Reading. When discussing weighted data, this report therefore refers to 'residents' rather than 'respondents'.

1.8   The returned sample was checked against comparative data (primarily the latest Mid-Year Population Estimates, and Census 2011) for age, gender, working status, ethnicity, tenure and ward, and subsequently weighted by each of these. The results presented should therefore be representative of residents of Reading, to within around +/- 4 percentage points.

Table 1:   Age - All Residents

Age	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population %
18 to 34	163	16	34	37
35 to 44	263	26	27	19
45 to 54	120	12	10	16
55 to 64	169	17	13	12
65 to 74	170	17	10	8
75 and over	116	12	6	7
Total	**1,001**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 2:   Gender - All Residents

Gender	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population %
Male	450	45	50	50
Female	551	55	50	50
Total	**1,001**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3:   Working status - All Residents

Working status	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population %
Working	588	59	66	65
Retired	283	28	16	15
Otherwise not in work	130	13	18	20
Total	**1,001**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 4:   Ward - All Residents

Ward	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population
Abbey	58	6	9	10
Battle	59	6	7	7
Caversham	63	6	6	6
Church	61	6	8	8
Katesgrove	59	6	7	7
Kentwood	66	7	6	6
Mapledurham	66	7	2	2
Minster	62	6	6	6
Norcot	66	7	6	6
Park	65	6	6	7
Peppard	62	6	6	6
Redlands	59	6	7	7
Southcote	63	6	5	5
Thames	66	7	6	5
Tilehurst	60	6	5	5
Whitley	66	7	7	7
Total	**1,001**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 5:   Tenure – All Residents

Tenure	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population %
Owned outright	395	41	21	22
Owned with a mortgage/ loan	292	31	35	37
Social rented	154	16	15	14
Private rented	116	12	30	28
Total	**957**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Not Known	*44*	-	-	-

Table 6:   Ethnicity – All Residents

Ethnicity	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population %
White: British	739	75	67	68
White: Other	84	9	12	10
BAME	162	16	22	22
Total	**985**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Not Known	*16*	-	-	-

Interpretation of the Data

1.9   Counts for the number of residents who did not answer or gave "don't know" responses are provided below each chart; these have also been treated as invalid when calculating percentages for headline results. The base numbers contained within or below each chart indicate the number of residents who gave a valid response to each question.

1.10 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers.

1.11 In many places within the commentary, the proportion of residents who are 'satisfied' or who 'agree' etc. has been calculated by grouping response options together (e.g. very and fairly satisfied/dissatisfied; strongly and tend to agree/disagree). Due to the effects of rounding, these grouped percentages may differ slightly from the sum of the smaller percentages shown in the charts.

1.12 Charts are used extensively in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The pie charts and other bar charts show the proportions (percentages) of residents making relevant responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a 'traffic light' system in which:

- Green shades represent positive responses

- Beige/yellow and purple shades represent neither positive nor negative responses

- Red shades represent negative responses

- The bolder/darker shades are used to highlight responses at the 'extremes', for example, 'very satisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

1.13 It should be remembered that a sample, and not the entire population of the Borough, has been interviewed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. When comparing results between demographic sub-groups, only results which are significantly different are highlighted in the text. Statistical significance has been calculated at a 95% level of confidence.

Acknowledgements

1.14 ORS would like to thank Jill Marston and Andrew Withey at Reading Borough Council for their help and assistance in developing the project. We would also like to thank the 1,001 respondents who took part in the survey, without whose valuable input the research would not have been possible.

2. Executive Summary

Summary of Main Findings

2.1 The following paragraphs selectively highlight some key issues, but readers are referred to the detailed graphics for the full story.

Residents' survey

2.2 Over three quarters (77%) of residents are either very or fairly satisfied with **their local area as a place to live**. A little over a tenth (12%) of residents are dissatisfied.

2.3 Just under two thirds (64%) of residents are very or fairly satisfied with **the way Reading Borough Council runs things**; just over one fifth of residents (22%) are dissatisfied.

2.4 A little under half (45%) of residents either strongly or tend to agree that Reading Borough Council **provides value for money**, whilst a quarter (25%) disagree, and just under a third (30%) neither agree nor disagree.

2.5 Just over three fifths of residents (62%) said they thought Reading Borough Council **acts on their concerns** either 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount', whilst just under two fifths (38%) said the Council does this either 'not very much' or 'not at all'.

2.6 Just under two thirds (62%) of residents think that Reading Borough Council **keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides**, with 17% having said 'very' well and just under half (45%) having said 'fairly' well. Over a third (38%) feel that residents are either 'not very well informed' or 'not well informed at all'.

2.7 Respondents were read a list of items and were asked to identify the three that they felt were **most important in making somewhere a good place to live**. The top five answers (from the list provided) were:
- 'the level of crime' (selected by 46% of residents),
- 'good schools' (35%),
- 'affordable, decent housing' (24%),
- 'road and pavement repairs (24%), and
- 'health services' (20%).

2.8 The five things (from the list) that were least commonly identified as making somewhere a good place to live were:
- 'job prospects' (12%),
- 'sports and leisure facilities' (10%),
- 'cultural facilities' (7%),
- 'facilities for older people' (6%), and
- 'nightlife' (2%).

2.9 When residents were asked what they thought were the **three things that are most in need of improving**, from the same list, the top five answers were:
- 'road and pavement repairs' (47%),

- 'the level of crime' (32%),
- 'the level of traffic congestion' (30%),
- 'affordable decent housing' (26%), and
- 'parking' (24%).

2.10   The things felt to be in least need of improvement (of those listed) were:
- 'parks and open spaces' (8%),
- 'job prospects' (7%),
- 'public transport' (7%),
- 'shopping facilities' (4%), and
- 'nightlife' (2%).

2.11   When these two questions of importance and improvement were compared, 'roads and pavement repairs, 'the level of crime', 'affordable, decent housing' and 'facilities for children and young people' were the most likely to be identified as being both among **the most important and in most need of improvement**, and therefore the Council may wish to consider these as being among residents' highest priorities.

2.12   Of the **services Reading Borough Council is responsible for**, around four fifths of residents are satisfied with:
- parks and green spaces (81%) and
- waste collection services (80%),

while more than two thirds are satisfied with:
- town centre cleanliness (73%),
- schools (72%) and
- street cleaning (68%),

And at least half are satisfied with:
- cultural services (i.e. the theatres, Abbey, Town Hall and Museum) (62%),
- the council's customer service (60%),
- sport and leisure facilities (54%),
- library services (54%), and
- services and support for children and young people (50%).

2.13   The services that residents said they were least satisfied with are as follows (although it is worth noting that higher numbers of respondents answered 'don't know' in relation to climate change and support for older people, than for most of the other services included in the survey):
- action on climate change (41%),
- services and support for older people (39%) and
- road maintenance (33%).

Comparisons with national results

2.14   In general, Reading Borough Council's results are slightly lower compared to the most recently available national data compiled by the Local Government Association (LGA), which are from October 2020.

2.15   For example, in relation to the three core questions: fewer residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live in Reading (77%) than nationally (83%); fewer Reading residents are satisfied with the way their council runs things (64%), than are satisfied nationally (68%); and fewer believe their council provides value for money in Reading (45%), compared to the latest national result (54%) – see Table 7 below.

Table 7:   Summary of comparisons with national results for the three core questions

Question	Reading 2020	LGA October 2020
Local area as a place to live	77% satisfied	83% satisfied
The way the Council runs things	64% satisfied	68% satisfied
The Council provides value for money	45% agree	54% agree

2.16   However, it is worth noting that results for urban areas are often less positive than those obtained elsewhere; for example, results for London obtained in the LGA's national polling are typically lower than the national result, while it is ORS's experience that areas that are rural or affluent also frequently report higher levels of satisfaction in residents' surveys.

2.17   Therefore, while it is useful to compare Reading's result with the national result, any differences need to be interpreted in this context; as such, a few additional comparisons to the London result have also been made in the commentary around the charts for the three LGA core questions, on the basis of proximity and shared urban character (NB this regional result is aggregated based on the *three* most recent waves of LGA polling, rather than solely the most recent October 2020 wave, in order to provide a more adequate sample size).
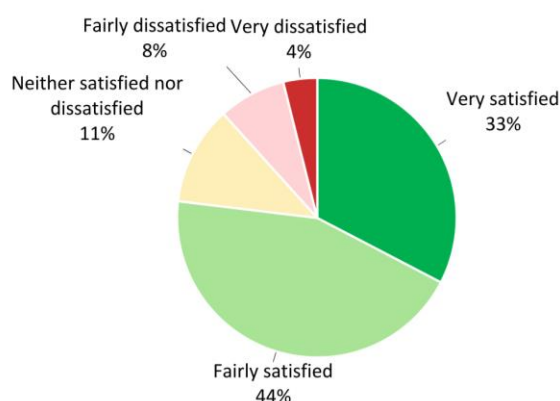
3. Results

Satisfaction with the local area

> *Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?*

3.1   Over three quarters (77%) of residents are satisfied with the local area as a place to live, with a third (33%) very satisfied and over two fifths (44%) fairly satisfied.

3.2   Just over a tenth (11%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and around 1 in 8 (12%) of residents are dissatisfied, with 8% being fairly dissatisfied and 4% being very dissatisfied.

Figure 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Base: All Residents (998)

3.3   Figure 2 shows that the level of residents' satisfaction with the local area as a place to live is lower in Reading (77%) than nationally (83%).

3.4   Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the cumulative result for London across the three most recent waves of LGA polling is 79%, which is closer to the result for Reading.
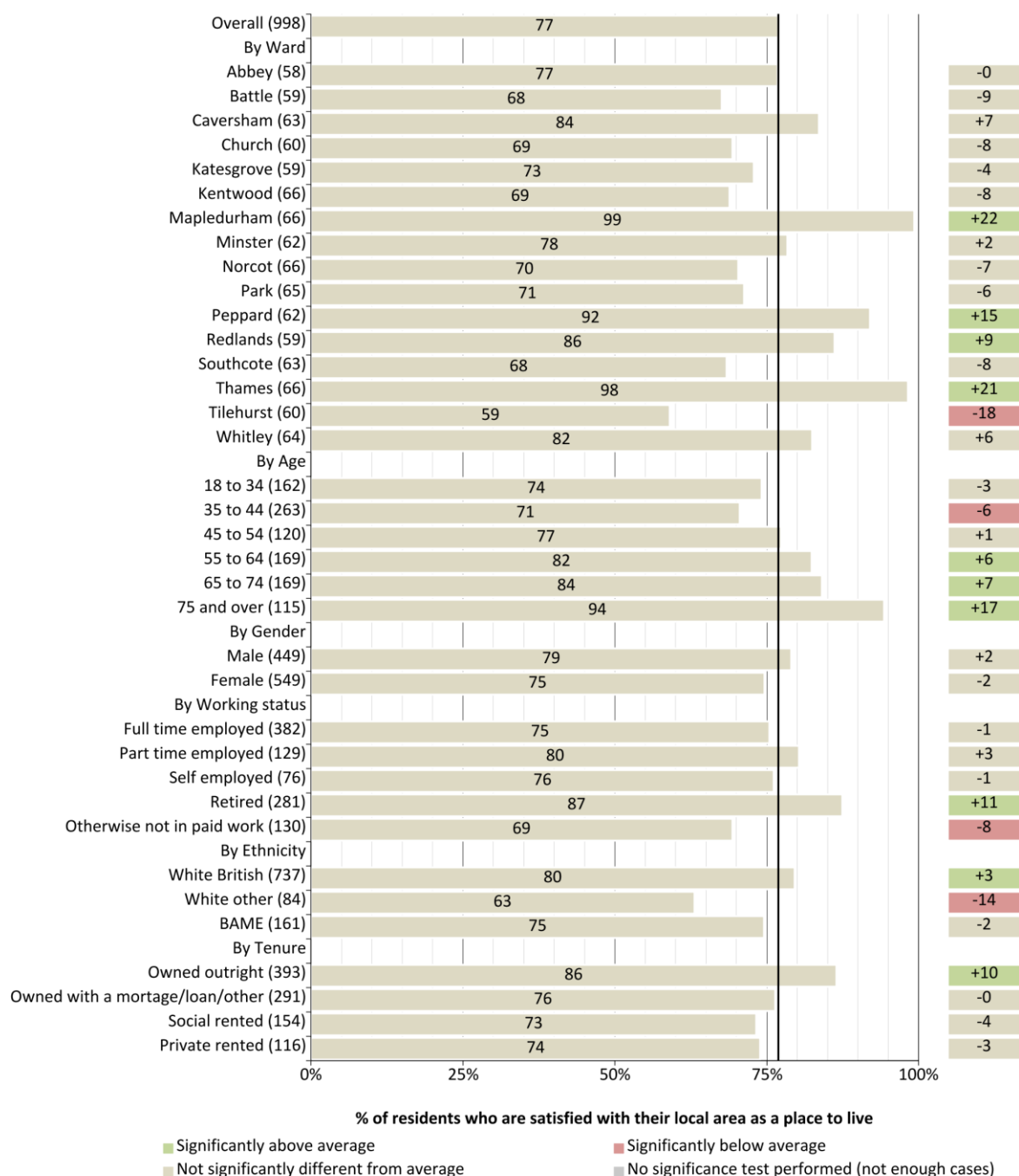
Figure 2:   Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live (benchmarked against national result)
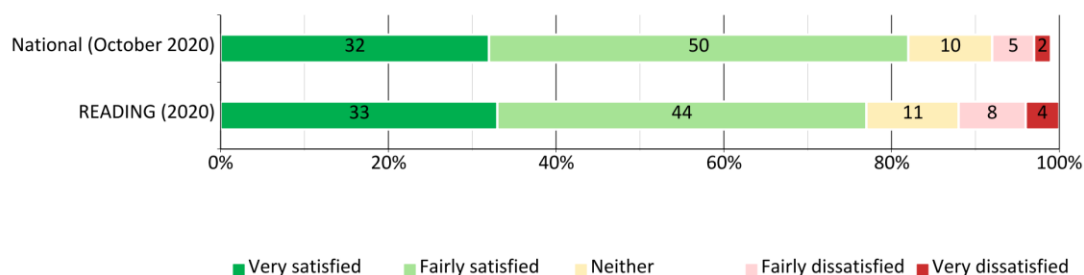
Base: National (1,001); Reading (998)

3.5 Residents who live in the Wards of Mapledurham, Peppard, Redlands, or Thames, those residents who are aged 55 to 64, aged 65 to 74, and aged 75 and over, residents who are retired, residents who are White British, and residents owned outright a property are significantly more likely than average to be satisfied with the local area as a place to live.

3.6 Those residents living in Tilehurst, residents aged 35 to 44, residents who are otherwise not in paid work, and residents who are of 'White - other' ethnicity are significantly less likely than average to be satisfied with the local area as a place to live.

Figure 3: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (Grouped Responses)

	% satisfied	Difference
Overall (998)	77	
By Ward		
Abbey (58)	77	-0
Battle (59)	68	-9
Caversham (63)	84	+7
Church (60)	69	-8
Katesgrove (59)	73	-4
Kentwood (66)	69	-8
Mapledurham (66)	99	+22
Minster (62)	78	+2
Norcot (66)	70	-7
Park (65)	71	-6
Peppard (62)	92	+15
Redlands (59)	86	+9
Southcote (63)	68	-8
Thames (66)	98	+21
Tilehurst (60)	59	-18
Whitley (64)	82	+6
By Age		
18 to 34 (162)	74	-3
35 to 44 (263)	71	-6
45 to 54 (120)	77	+1
55 to 64 (169)	82	+6
65 to 74 (169)	84	+7
75 and over (115)	94	+17
By Gender		
Male (449)	79	+2
Female (549)	75	-2
By Working status		
Full time employed (382)	75	-1
Part time employed (129)	80	+3
Self employed (76)	76	-1
Retired (281)	87	+11
Otherwise not in paid work (130)	69	-8
By Ethnicity		
White British (737)	80	+3
White other (84)	63	-14
BAME (161)	75	-2
By Tenure		
Owned outright (393)	86	+10
Owned with a mortage/loan/other (291)	76	-0
Social rented (154)	73	-4
Private rented (116)	74	-3

% of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live

■ Significantly above average   ■ Significantly below average
■ Not significantly different from average   ■ No significance test performed (not enough cases)

Base: All Residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

Satisfaction with the way Reading Borough Council runs things

> *Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Reading Borough Council runs things?*

3.7 Just under two thirds (64%) of residents are satisfied with the way Reading Borough Council runs things, with 17% very satisfied and 47% fairly satisfied with the way Reading Borough Council runs things.

3.8 Just over an eighth (14%) of residents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and just over one fifth of residents (22%) are dissatisfied, with 14% fairly dissatisfied, and 8% very dissatisfied.

Figure 4: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Reading Borough Council runs things?
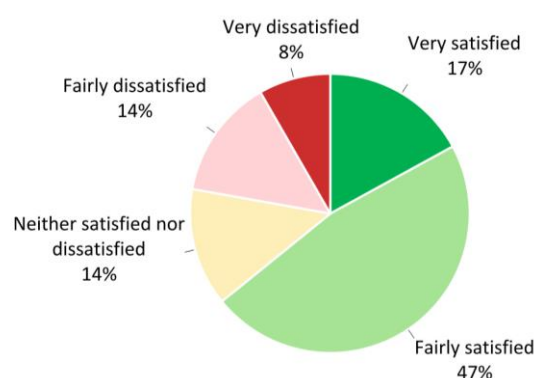
Base: All Residents (998)

3.9 Figure 5 below shows that the proportion of Reading residents who are satisfied (64%) is around 4 percentage points lower than the latest available national result (68%).

3.10 The result for Reading, however, is in line with the result for London obtained across the three most recent waves of national polling (64%).
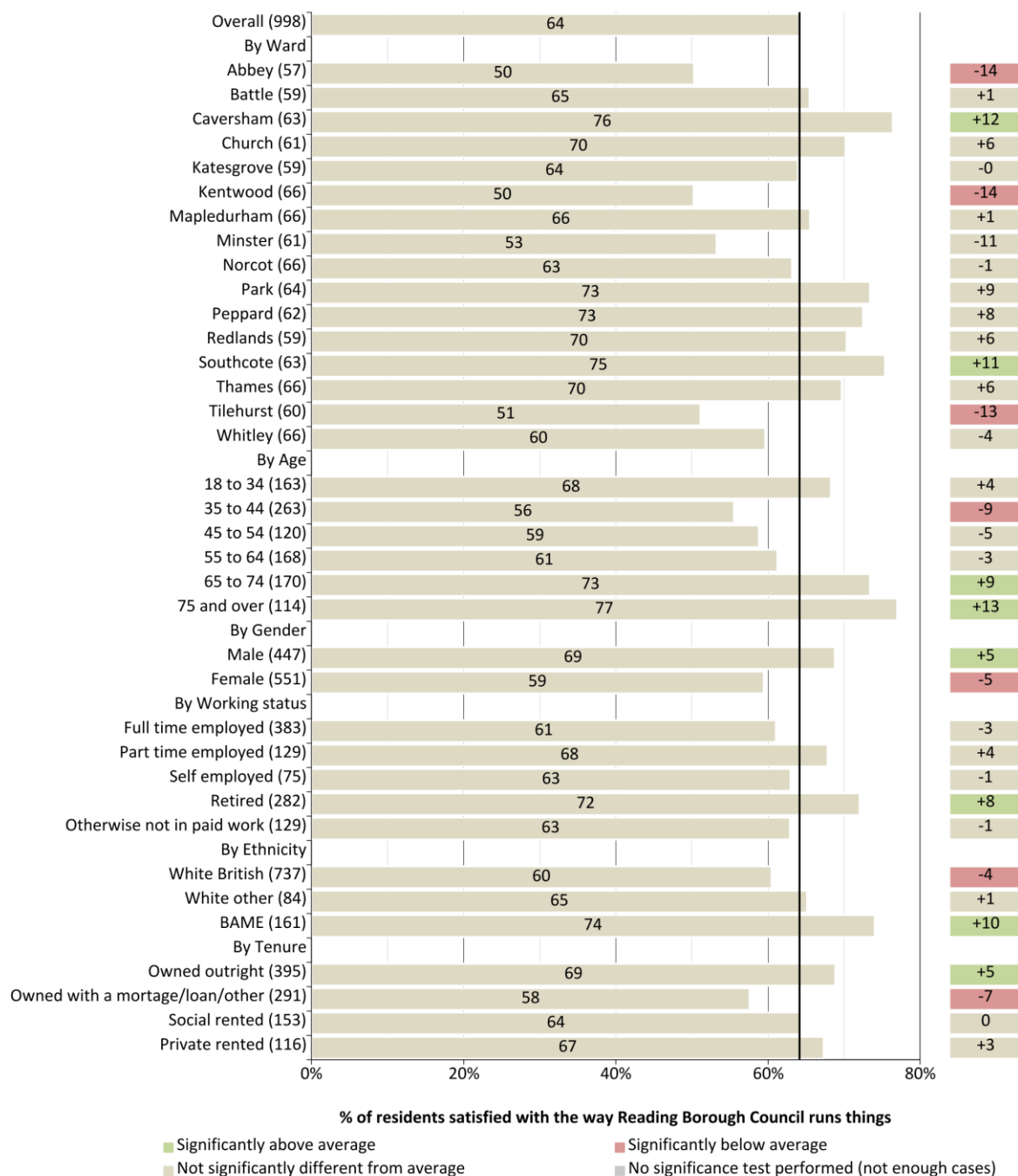
Figure 5:   Satisfaction with the way the council runs things (benchmarked against national result)
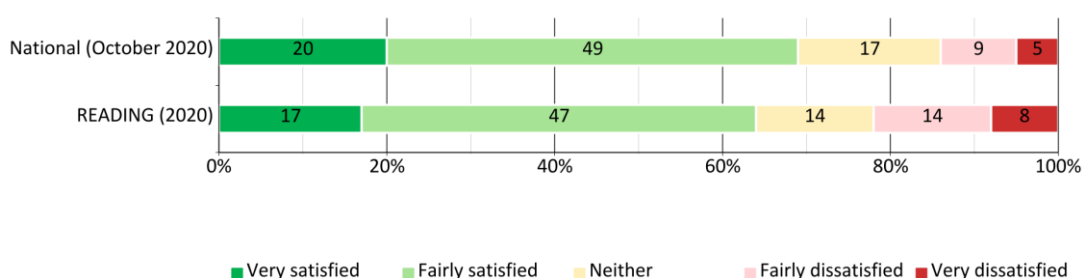
Base: National (1,000); Reading (998)

3.11 Residents who live in the Caversham or Southcote wards are significantly more likely than average to be satisfied, whilst those who are aged 65 to 74 or aged 75 and over, residents who are male, residents who are retired, residents who are BAME, and residents who own a property outright are all significantly more likely to be satisfied with the way Reading Borough Council runs things.

3.12 Residents who live in Abbey, Kentwood, or Whitley, residents who are aged 35 to 44 and residents who are female are among those groups that are significantly less likely to satisfied with the way Reading Borough Council runs things.

Figure 6: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Reading Borough Council runs things? (Grouped Responses)

% of residents satisfied with the way Reading Borough Council runs things

■ Significantly above average   ■ Significantly below average
■ Not significantly different from average   ■ No significance test performed (not enough cases)

Base: All Residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

Agreement that Reading Borough Council provides value for money

> *To what extent do you agree or disagree that Reading Borough Council provides value for money?*

3.13 Less than half (45%) of residents agree that Reading Borough Council provides value for money, with just 1 in 10 (9%) having said they strongly agree, and just over a third (36%) tending to agree.

3.14 Just under a third (30%) neither agree nor disagree, whilst a quarter (25%) disagree, with 16% tending to disagree, and 8% strongly agreeing.

Figure 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Reading Borough Council provides value for money?
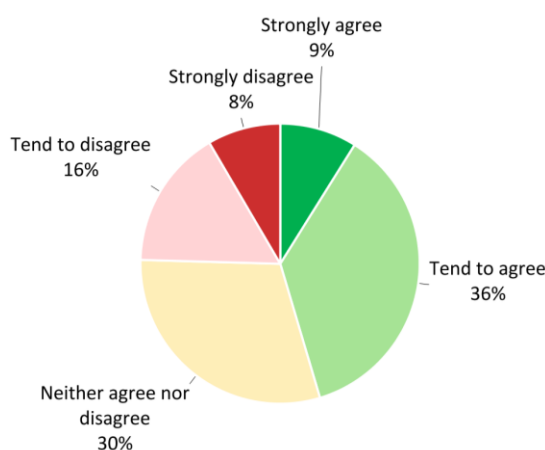
Base: All Residents (975)

3.15 Figure 8 shows that the proportion of Reading residents who are satisfied (45%) appears to be lower than the equivalent national result (54%).

3.16 The result for London from the three most recent waves of LGA polling lies in between these two results (49%).

Figure 8: Agreement that the Council provides value for money (benchmarked against national result)
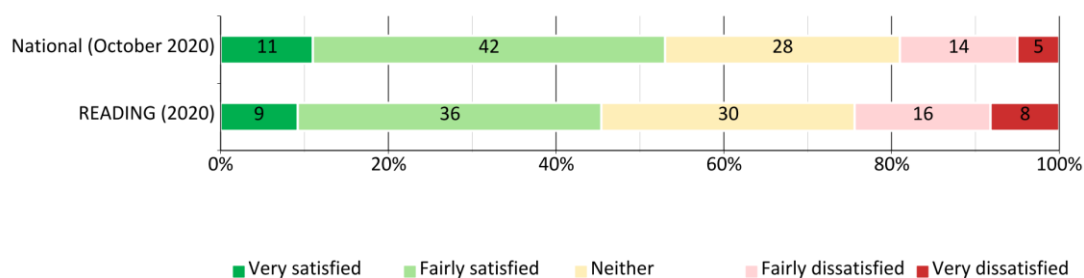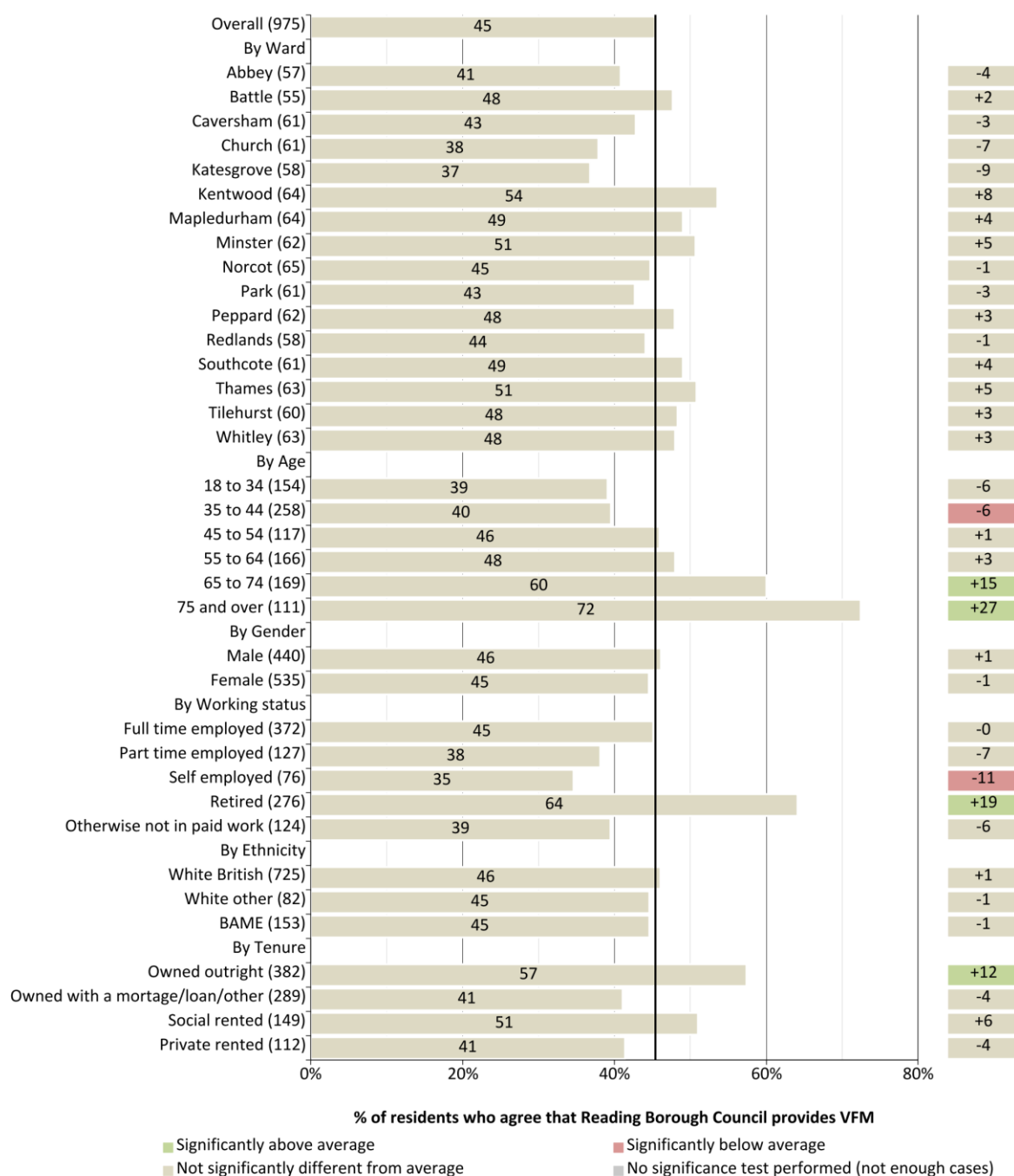

Base: National (997); Reading (998)

3.17 Figure 9 below shows that residents aged 65 or over, residents who are retired, and residents who own a property outright are significantly more likely to agree that Reading Borough Council provides value for money.

3.18 Residents aged 35 to 44 and those who are self-employed are significantly less likely to agree that Reading Borough Council provides value for money.

Figure 9:To what extent do you agree or disagree that Reading Borough Council provides value for money? (Grouped Responses by demographic sub-group)

% of residents who agree that Reading Borough Council provides VFM

■ Significantly above average   ■ Significantly below average
■ Not significantly different from average   ■ No significance test performed (not enough cases)

Base: All Residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

Extent to which Reading Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents

To what extent do you think Reading Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

3.19 Residents were asked to what extent they thought Reading Borough Council acted on their concerns. Over three fifths of residents (62%) answered either 'a great deal' (11%) or 'a fair amount' (51%), whilst just under a third (31%) said 'not very much', and less than 1 in 10 (8%) 'not at all'.
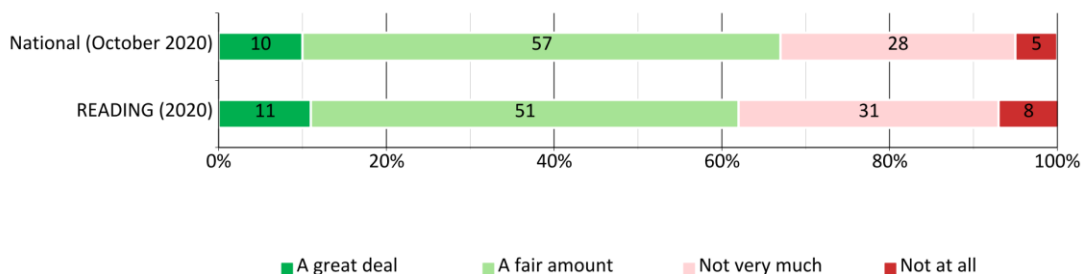
Figure 10: To what extent do you think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents?
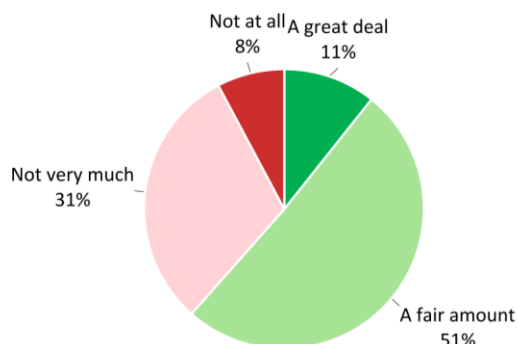
Base: All Residents (934)

3.20 Below shows that those residents in Reading who think that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents either a 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' (62%) is somewhat less than the latest national result (67%).
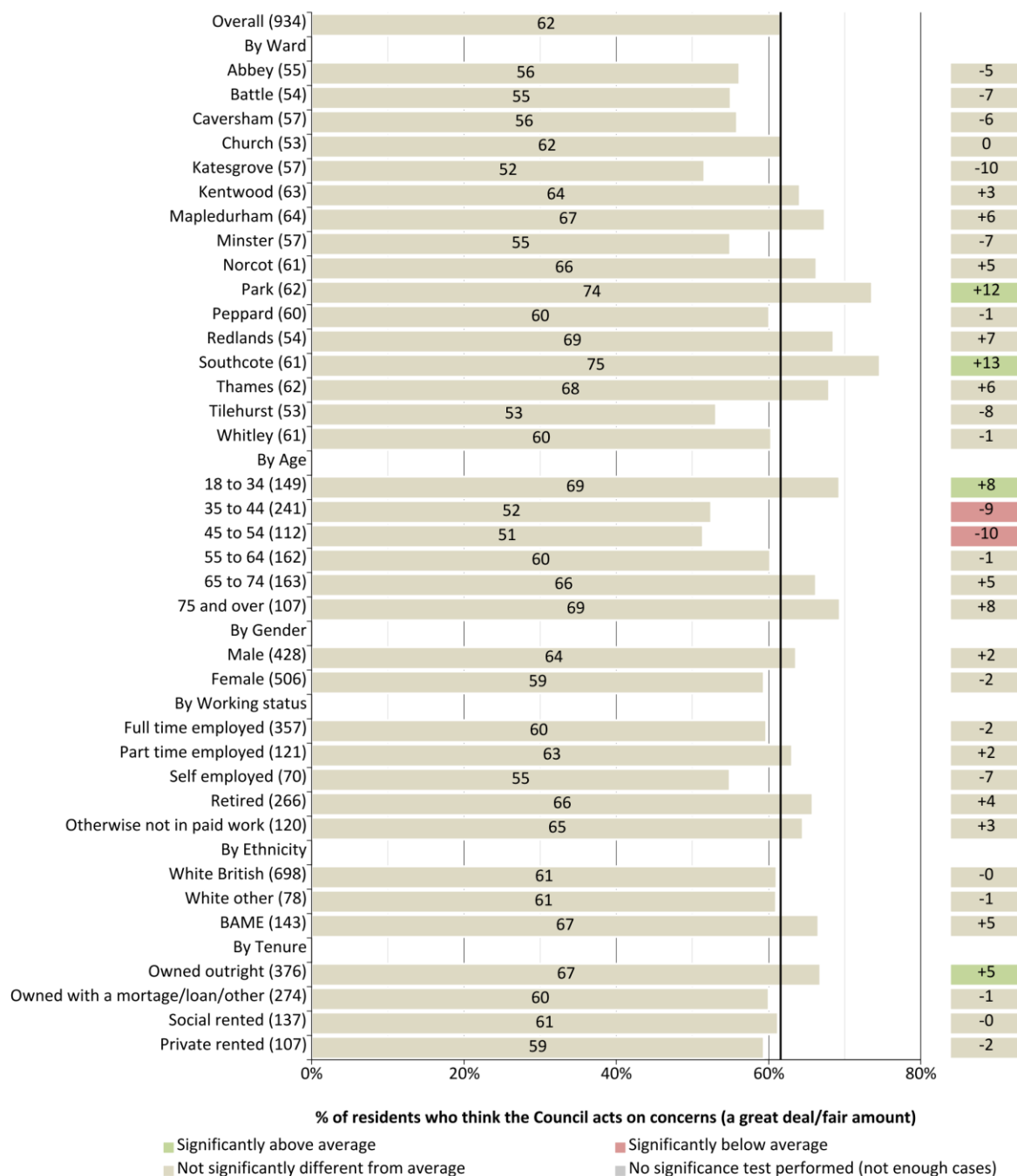
Figure 11: Extent to which Councils act on the concerns of their local residents (benchmarked against national result)

Base: National (962); Reading (998)

3.21 Figure 12 below shows that residents who live in Park or Southcote wards and residents aged 18 to 34 are significantly more likely to agree that Reading Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents.

3.22 Residents who are aged 35 to 54, however, are significantly less likely to agree that Reading Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents.

Figure 12: To what extent do you think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents?
(Grouped Responses by demographic sub-group)

Sub-group	%	Difference
Overall (934)	62	
By Ward		
Abbey (55)	56	-5
Battle (54)	55	-7
Caversham (57)	56	-6
Church (53)	62	0
Katesgrove (57)	52	-10
Kentwood (63)	64	+3
Mapledurham (64)	67	+6
Minster (57)	55	-7
Norcot (61)	66	+5
Park (62)	74	+12
Peppard (60)	60	-1
Redlands (54)	69	+7
Southcote (61)	75	+13
Thames (62)	68	+6
Tilehurst (53)	53	-8
Whitley (61)	60	-1
By Age		
18 to 34 (149)	69	+8
35 to 44 (241)	52	-9
45 to 54 (112)	51	-10
55 to 64 (162)	60	-1
65 to 74 (163)	66	+5
75 and over (107)	69	+8
By Gender		
Male (428)	64	+2
Female (506)	59	-2
By Working status		
Full time employed (357)	60	-2
Part time employed (121)	63	+2
Self employed (70)	55	-7
Retired (266)	66	+4
Otherwise not in paid work (120)	65	+3
By Ethnicity		
White British (698)	61	-0
White other (78)	61	-1
BAME (143)	67	+5
By Tenure		
Owned outright (376)	67	+5
Owned with a mortgage/loan/other (274)	60	-1
Social rented (137)	61	-0
Private rented (107)	59	-2

% of residents who think the Council acts on concerns (a great deal/fair amount)

■ Significantly above average   ■ Significantly below average
■ Not significantly different from average   ■ No significance test performed (not enough cases)

Base: All Residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

How well-informed Reading Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides

Overall, how well informed do you think Reading Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

3.23 Just under two thirds (62%) of residents think that Reading Borough Council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides, with 17% having answered 'very well' and just under half (45%) having answered 'fairly well'. Over a third (38%) feel that residents are either 'not very well informed' (30%) or 'not well informed at all' (8%).

Figure 13: Overall, how well informed do you think the Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?
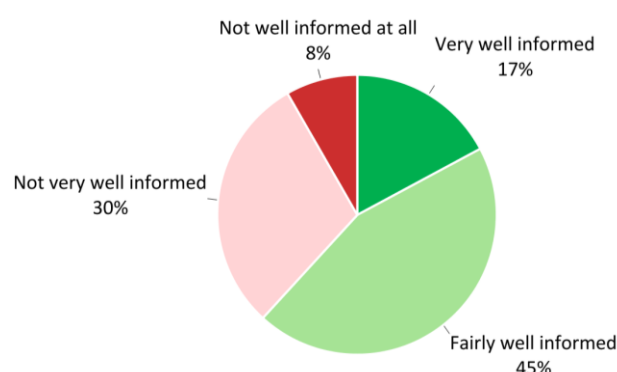
Base: All Residents (990)

3.24 Figure 14 below shows that Reading's result (62%) is just 3 percentage points less than the national figure (65%).

Figure 14: How well Councils keep residents informed about the services and benefits they provide (benchmarked against national result)
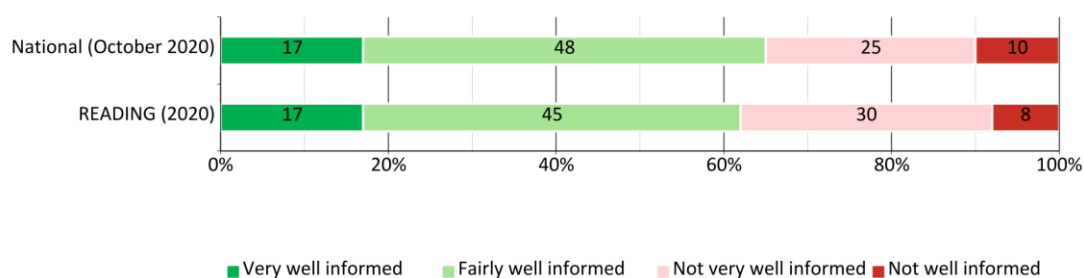
Base: National (992); Reading (990)

3.25 Figure 15 shows that residents who live in Kentwood or Norcot and residents who are aged 65 or over are among those significantly more likely think Reading Borough Council keeps them very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides.

3.26 Residents who live in Mapledurham or Tilehurst, and residents who are full-time employed are significantly less likely to think that Reading Borough Council keeps them very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides.

Figure 15: Overall, how well informed do you think the Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides? (Grouped Responses by demographic sub-group)

Sub-group	%	Difference
Overall (990)	62	
By Ward		
Abbey (58)	52	-10
Battle (59)	58	-3
Caversham (61)	64	+2
Church (61)	68	+6
Katesgrove (59)	66	+4
Kentwood (65)	73	+11
Mapledurham (66)	46	-16
Minster (61)	50	-12
Norcot (65)	73	+11
Park (64)	64	+2
Peppard (62)	70	+8
Redlands (58)	58	-4
Southcote (62)	71	+9
Thames (65)	69	+7
Tilehurst (59)	37	-24
Whitley (65)	64	+2
By Age		
18 to 34 (162)	57	-4
35 to 44 (259)	63	+1
45 to 54 (118)	55	-7
55 to 64 (168)	58	-4
65 to 74 (170)	79	+17
75 and over (113)	72	+10
By Gender		
Male (447)	61	-1
Female (543)	63	+1
By Working status		
Full time employed (380)	53	-8
Part time employed (127)	71	+9
Self employed (76)	60	-2
Retired (279)	77	+15
Otherwise not in paid work (128)	64	+3
By Ethnicity		
White British (729)	64	+2
White other (84)	64	+2
BAME (161)	56	-6
By Tenure		
Owned outright (389)	73	+11
Owned with a mortgage/loan/other (290)	57	-5
Social rented (153)	63	+1
Private rented (114)	59	-3

% of residents who think that the Council keeps residents very/fairly well informed

■ Significantly above average   ■ Significantly below average
■ Not significantly different from average   ■ No significance test performed (not enough cases)

Base: All Residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

> *Thinking generally, which three of the things I'm about to read out would you say are the most important in making somewhere a good place to live?*

3.27 Residents asked which three things (from a list of seventeen items) were most important in making somewhere a good place to live; Figure 16 shows that the top five answers were 'the level of crime' (selected by nearly half of residents i.e. 46%), 'good schools' (35%), 'affordable, decent housing' (24%), 'road and pavement repairs' (24%), and 'health services' (20%).

3.28 Fewer residents thought that each of the following was important in making somewhere a good place to live: 'job prospects' (12%), 'sports and leisure facilities' (10%), 'cultural facilities' (7%), 'facilities for older people' (6%), and 'nightlife' (2%).

3.29 There were some statistically significant answers in terms of age: residents aged under 35 were significantly more likely than average to identify 'affordable, decent housing', 'job prospects' and 'shopping facilities' as being important – even though overall, the most popular answer in this age group was still 'the level of crime'. Residents aged 65 or above, on the other hand, are more likely than average to identify 'road and pavement repairs' and 'public transport' as important.

Figure 16: Thinking generally, which three of the things I'm about to read out would you say are the most important in making somewhere a good place to live?
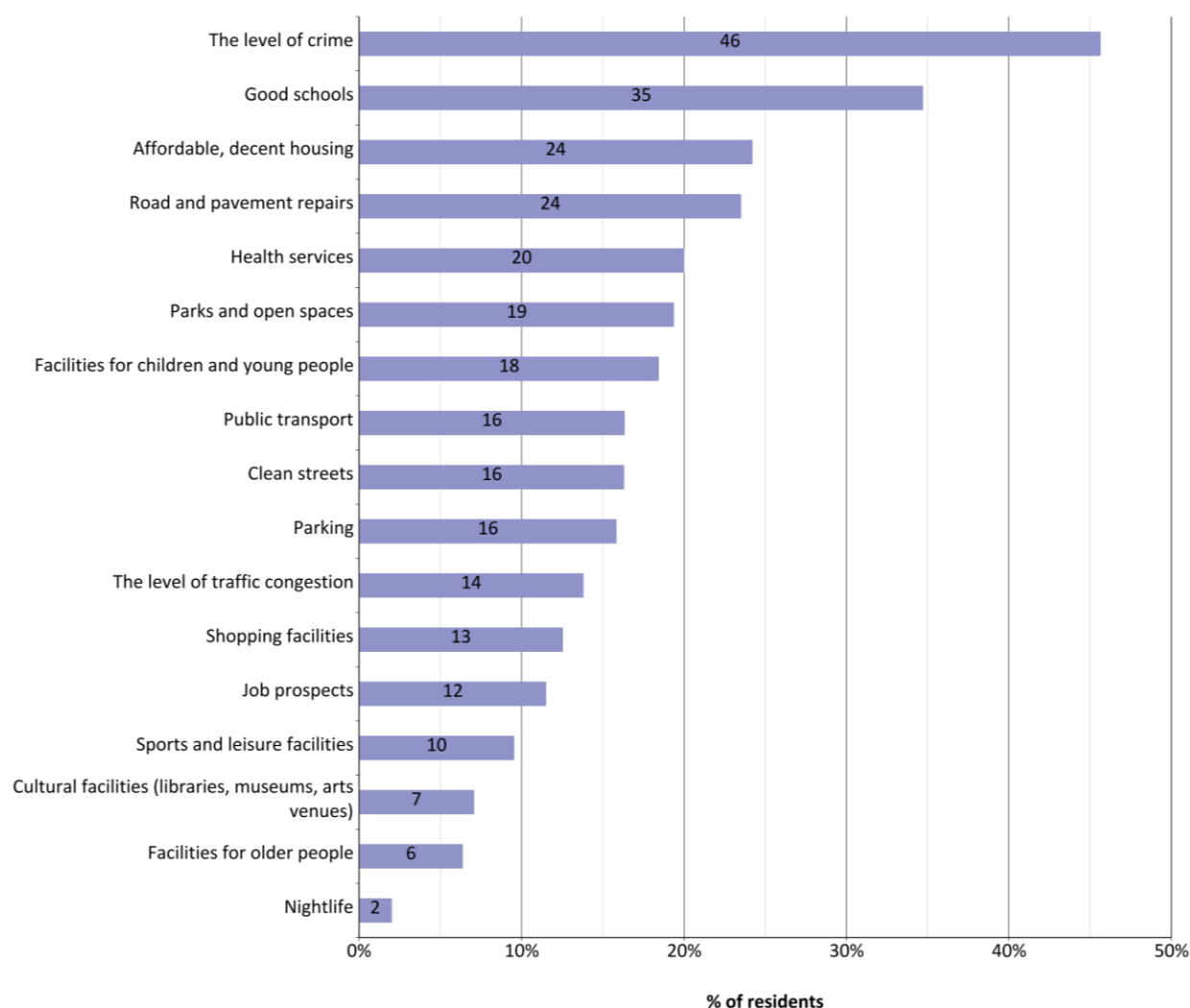
Base: All Residents (984)

> *Thinking about your local area (i.e. Within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home), which three of the things I'm about to read out, if any, do you think most need improving?*

3.30 Residents were then asked which three things from the same list of items were most in need of improving; Figure 17 shows that the top five most common answers were 'road and pavement repairs' (47%), 'the level of crime' (32%), 'the level of traffic congestion' (30%), 'affordable, decent housing' (26%), and 'parking' (24%).

3.31 Fewer residents identified 'parks and open spaces' (8%), 'job prospects' (7%), 'public transport' (7%), 'shopping facilities' (4%), and 'nightlife' (2%) as being among the three things which most needed improving.

3.32 Once again, there were some demographic differences: female residents and those aged 35 to 44 were significantly more likely than average to feel that facilities for children and young people need improving, while road and pavement repairs was widely identified as needing improvement across nearly all demographic groups, but particularly among those residents aged 55 and above.

Figure 17: Thinking about your local area (i.e. Within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home), which three of the things I'm about to read out, if any, do you think most need improving?
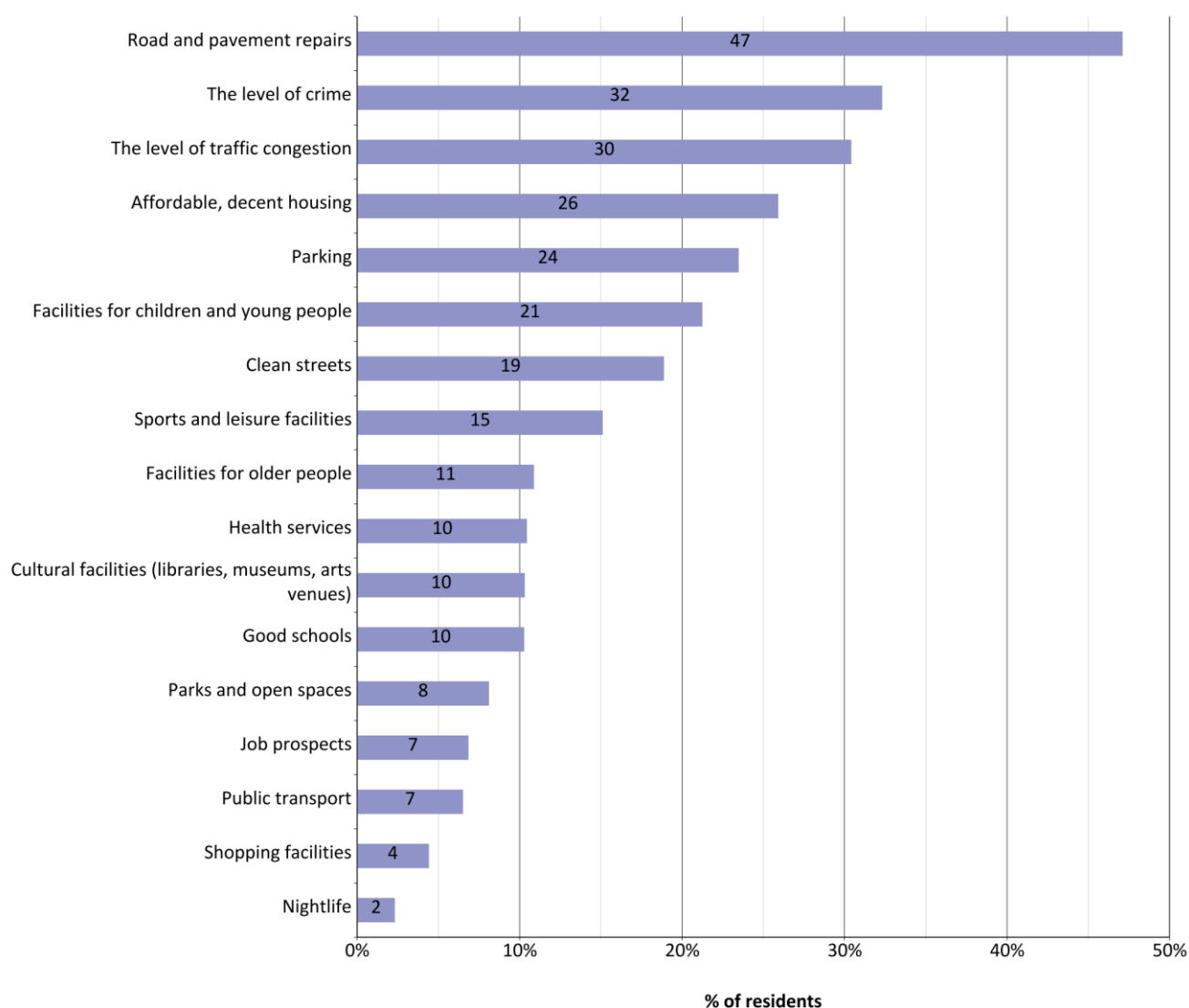
Base: All Residents (973)

3.33 The response options from the two questions above (i.e. the top three things that are most important in making somewhere a good place to live, and the top three things most in need of improvement) have been ranked based on the frequency with which respondents selected them, and the two sets of rankings have been plotted in Figure 18.

3.34 If a service appears in the top-right quadrant of the diagram, this indicates that respondents were likely to view it as *both* important *and* in need of improvement. On this basis, the Council might wish to consider 'the level of crime'; 'road and pavement repairs'; 'affordable, decent housing'; and 'facilities for children and young people' as being high-priority issues for local residents.

3.35 'Nightlife', 'job prospects', 'cultural facilities' and 'shopping facilities' were all identified as being both less important (relative to the other issues listed), as well as less in need of improvement – so might potentially be treated as lower priorities.

Figure 18: Cross tabulation of what residents think is most important in making somewhere a good place to live about local area, and the things residents think most need improving.
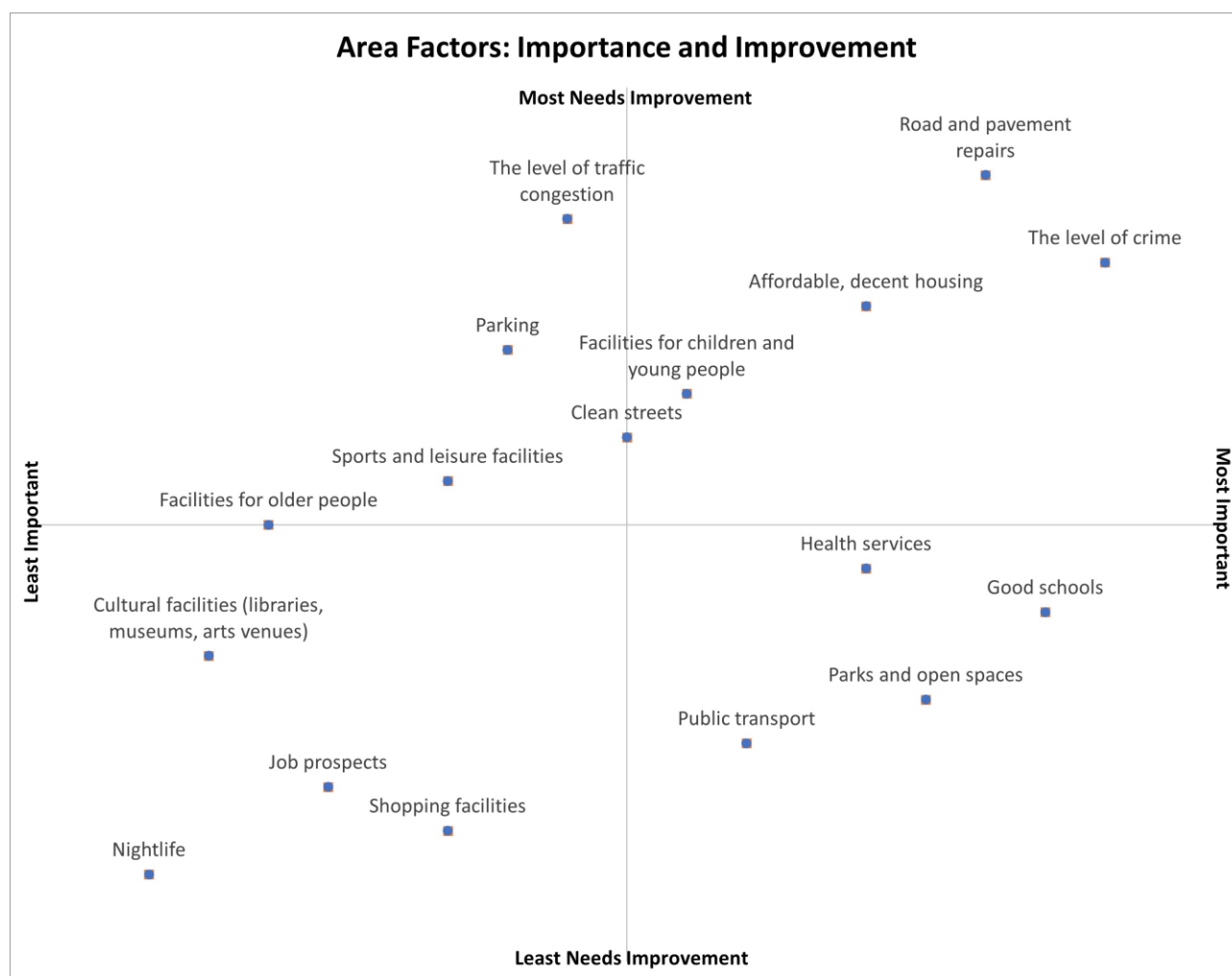
Base: All Residents (973/984)

Satisfaction with Reading Borough Council services

I am going to read out a number of different types of services that are provided by Reading Borough Council in your area

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with you council's…?

3.36 Respondents were asked to give their view on a number of council services. To try and mitigate the effects of respondents answering from very different perspectives due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, an additional clarification was provided to be read out if needed, asking respondents to think about their overall perceptions over the last 12 months or so.

3.37 As can be seen in Figure 19 overleaf, around 4 in 5 residents of residents were satisfied with parks and green spaces (81%) and waste collection services (80%).

3.38 Nearly three quarters are satisfied with the cleanliness of the town centre (73%) and with schools (72%), while around two thirds are satisfied with street cleaning (68%).

3.39 In addition, most residents are satisfied with cultural services (e.g. theatres, Abbey, Town Hall and Museum) (62%), the Council's customer service (60%), sport and leisure services (54%) and library services (54%), while half are satisfied with services and support for children and young people (50%).

3.40 Lower levels of satisfaction were seen in relation to action on climate change (41%) and services and support for older people (39%) – however, it is worth noting the somewhat lower base sizes in relation to these questions (indicating higher levels of 'don't know' responses), and higher levels of neutral 'neither' responses (29% and 36% respectively), suggesting fewer respondents have specific knowledge or experience of these services, compared to certain others.

3.41 The most negatively viewed service of those listed in Figure 19 was clearly road maintenance – only a third (33%) of residents were satisfied, and more than half (56%) were dissatisfied.

Figure 19: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with…?
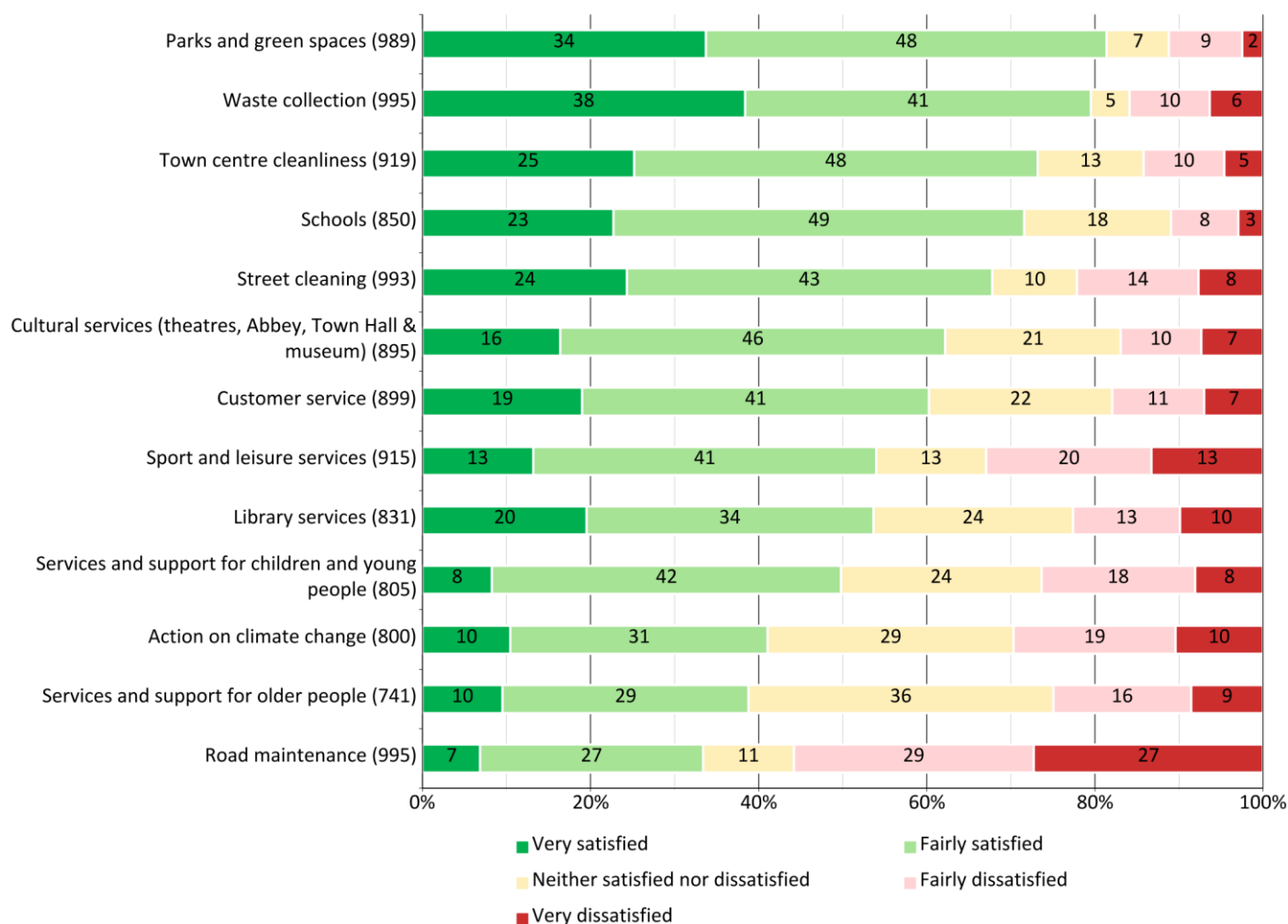
Base: All residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

3.42 Some comparisons with national results are possible, which show that:

The level of satisfaction with parks and green spaces is in generally in line with the national result (both 81%);

Views of waste collection services (80%) appear to be slightly lower than those seen nationally (83%);

Satisfaction with street cleaning (68%) is broadly the same as the national result (69%) (albeit a slightly higher proportion - 73% - in Reading are satisfied with the cleanliness of the town centre);

Levels of satisfaction with sport and leisure services (54%) and libraries (54%) both appear to be lower than the equivalent national results (66% and 64% respectively);

The proportion in Reading who are satisfied with support and services for children and young people (50%) is in line with the national result (also 50%); however the proportion satisfied with services and support for older people (39%) is somewhat lower than that seen nationally (51%).

While road maintenance is one of the most negatively viewed services nationally, satisfaction is lower in Reading (33%) compared with the most recently obtained national result (43%).

4. List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures