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# **Access to Council Services and Leisure Centre Usage**

*Final Report*

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*Prepared for*  
**Erewash Borough Council**

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July 2002

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Primary Author: Donna Cooper

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Other Author(s):

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Reviewer(s): Fiona McCorquodale

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# Summary

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## Introduction

In April 2002, Erewash Borough Council commissioned MVA to conduct the fourth postal survey with Erewash Citizens Panel to explore views on Access to Council Services and Leisure Centre Usage. It was also decided that a similar questionnaire was sent to Housing Benefit Claimants to see if their views differed from that of the Panel Members. This questionnaire excluded the questions on Leisure Centre Usage and concentrated on Access to Council Services.

## Methodology

### *Main Aim of Survey*

The main aim of the survey was to gather information on the following;

- The ways in which residents currently contact the Council;
- The preferred method of contact between residents and the Council;
- The quality of the Councils' Viewpoint magazine;
- The potential of developing the Internet as a means of contact;
- The success of the complaints procedure adopted by the Council;
- The overall opinion of the Council;
- How the views of socially excluded groups differ from that of the 'average citizen';
- Leisure centre usage within the Borough; and
- Measures that would encourage greater use of leisure centres.

### *Postal Mailout*

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2002, survey questionnaires, covering letters and reply paid envelopes were mailed out to all Erewash Borough Panel Members. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002.

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002, survey questionnaires, covering letters, a DPA disclaimer and reply paid envelopes were mailed out to a random sample of 2230 people selected from the Councils' database of Housing Benefit Claimants. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided by the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002.

### *Response Rate*

A total of 615 questionnaires were returned from the mailout to Panel Members, giving a response rate of 61.5%.

A total of 370 Questionnaires were returned from the mailout to Council Tax Benefit Claimants, giving a response rate of 16.6%.

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## *Weighting*

To ensure that the returns were representative of the population of Erewash, Panel survey data were weighted using the 1999 population figures for age, gender and ward. There was no similar data for Housing Benefit Claimants and so this data was not weighted.

## **Survey Findings**

### **Access to Council Services**

#### *Information about the Council*

The majority of Citizens' Panel respondents (78%) found out about Council services, activities and events through newspapers, 58% found out by word of mouth from friends and neighbours and 47% via notice boards.

Just over half of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents (51%) found out about Council services, activities and events through the Council's *Viewpoint* magazine, closely followed by Word of Mouth (49%), Newspapers (48%), Leaflets (41%) and Letters (41%).

When asked to list the method of communication they felt to be most useful, 48% of Citizens' Panel respondents chose newspapers as the method by which they obtained most of their information, and 23% of Housing Benefit Claimants chose the Council's *Viewpoint* magazine, closely followed by newspapers (21%).

When respondents were asked how well they thought Erewash Borough Council kept residents informed of about the services it provides, 48% of Citizens' Panel respondents felt 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed and 28% felt 'fairly poorly' or 'very poorly' informed. When the same question was asked to Housing Benefit Claimants, 68% of respondents said they felt 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed and 19% said they felt 'fairly poorly' or 'very poorly' informed.

#### *Current Methods of Contact*

Only 5% of Citizens' Panel respondents contacted the Council once a month or more and 24% had never contacted the Council.

Housing Benefit Claimants contacted the Council more regularly with 16% of respondents stating that they contacted the Council at least once a month and only 6% who had never contacted the Council.

The telephone was the most popular form of contact with the Council, with over 50% of Citizens' Panel respondents and over 70% of Housing Benefit Claimants contacting the Council by telephone over the last year.

Overall, respondents were satisfied with their last contact with the Council.

#### *Preferred Method of Contact*

The telephone was the preferred method of contacting the Council for 58% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 59% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents.

When asked to consider the way in which they would prefer to contact the Council for different purposes, the telephone was favourite to request or book a Council service (79% Citizens' Panel, 69% Benefit Claimants), and to enquire about a bill (70% Citizens' Panel, 56% Benefit Claimants). However, most Citizens' Panel respondents would prefer to pay a bill either in person (39%) or by post (39%) and the vast majority of Benefit Claimant respondents would prefer to pay a bill in person (70%). Most would prefer to take part in policy discussions and consultation in person (63% Citizens' Panel, 64% Benefit Claimants).

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The majority of respondents (59% Citizens' Panel, 60% Benefit Claimants) would prefer the Council to contact them by letter.

#### *Other Facilities*

Respondents felt they were most likely to make use of a one-stop shop (66% Citizens' Panel and 75% Benefit Claimants said 'fairly likely' or 'very likely'). Almost 40% of Citizens' Panel respondents said they were either 'fairly likely' or 'very likely' to use Council offices at weekends (mainly to query or pay a Council tax bill or for bins and bulky refuse items collection) and over 50% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents said they were either 'fairly likely' or 'very likely' to use Council offices at weekends (mainly for Council house repairs, housing/Council tax benefits or to query/pay Council tax bills).

Respondents were uninterested in receiving text messages from the Council (80% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 71% of Housing Benefit Claimants - uninterested). The majority of respondents didn't think they would personally benefit from any improvements in communication such as minicom, induction loops etc. Although 24% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents said they could benefit from help reading and filling in forms and 15% said they could benefit from large print.

#### *Viewpoint Magazine*

58% of Citizens' Panel respondents received the Council magazine but 31% did not. Those who did receive it rated the magazine quite highly but some suggested more frequent distribution. 4% of respondents threw the magazine away immediately, 36% threw it away after reading it, 21% kept it for around a week, 19% kept it for around a month and 4% didn't know.

Slightly more Housing Benefit Claimant respondents (66%) received the Council magazine but 21% did not receive it. Respondents rated the magazine quite highly and tended to keep hold of the magazine slightly longer than Citizens' Panel respondents; 1% of respondents threw it away immediately, 26% threw it away after reading it, 21% kept it for around a week, 22% kept it for around a month, 25% kept it for over a month and 5% didn't know.

#### *The Internet*

Over 60% of Citizens' Panel respondents currently have access to the Internet in some form or another. 43% of respondents were interested in receiving emails from the Council on press releases, 61% were interested in receiving emails of monthly Council news letters and 70% were interested in receiving emails about Council events.

In contrast to this, only 18% of Benefit Claimant respondents currently have access to the Internet and 77% of respondents claimed they were unlikely to have Internet access. Of the few respondents who currently had access or were likely to have access in the future 51% were interested in receiving emails from the Council on press releases, 56% were interested in receiving emails of monthly Council news letters and 61% were interested in receiving emails about Council events.

Those who had Internet access were asked if they were aware of the Council's web-site. 17% of Citizens' Panel respondents were aware of the web-site and had used it, 30% were aware of it but hadn't used it and 53% were unaware of it. 14% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents were aware of the web-site and had used it, 27% were aware of it but hadn't used it and 59% were unaware of it. Those who had used the web-site rated it quite highly.

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### *Complaints Procedure*

45% of Citizens' Panel respondents said they would not know how to make a complaint to Erewash Borough Council, this compared to 40% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents. Of those who had made a complaint to the Council, most (63% Citizens' Panel, 67% Benefit Claimants) were over the telephone and although around half of the Citizens' Panel respondents (45%) were satisfied with the procedure, and 44% were dissatisfied. Housing Benefit Claimant respondents were generally more satisfied with the complaints procedure, with 71% saying they were either very or fairly satisfied and 26% were fairly or very dissatisfied.

### *Opinion of the Council*

The majority of Citizens' Panel respondents (57%) stated that they like to know what the Council is doing but are happy to let them get on with their job, however, 37% would like to have more of a say on what the Council does and the service it provides. The vast majority of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents (71%) indicated that they like to know what the Council is doing but are happy to let them get on with their job, and only 13% said they would like to have more of a say in what the Council does.

### **Leisure Centre Usage (Citizens Panel Only)**

Over 60% of respondents had visited the Borough's leisure centres in the past 12 months, the most popular being West Park Leisure Centre in Long Eaton.

When presented with a list of six events and facilities and asked which would encourage greater use of leisure centres, music concerts was the most popular (38% of respondents indicating that this would encourage them to visit leisure centres more frequently), followed by swimming for fitness classes (29%).

40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that there is a lack of security in adjacent car parks at leisure centres, and 29% agreed or strongly agreed that the cost of leisure facilities is too high.

The majority of respondents (66%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the centres are not conveniently located and 54% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the opening times are not suitable.

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Erewash Borough Council Citizens Panel is made up of a 1000 people selected to represent as accurately as possible, the population of Erewash based on the 1999 population figures provided by Derbyshire County Council.

1.1.2 Since setting up the Panel in March 2001, Erewash Borough Council has made regular contact with Panel members. In April 2002 Erewash Borough Council commissioned MVA to conduct the fourth postal survey with Erewash Citizens Panel to explore views on access to Council Services and Leisure Centre Usage. This report presents the findings from the survey.

1.1.3 It was also decided that a similar questionnaire was sent to Housing Benefit Claimants to see if their views differed from that of the Panel. This questionnaire excluded the questions on Leisure Centre Usage and concentrated on Access to Council Services. The report also presents the finding from this survey.

## 1.2 Structure of the Report

1.2.1 The remainder of the report is organised as follows:

- Chapter 2 outlines the survey methodology and explains the method of weighting survey returns to better represent the population of Erewash;
- Chapter 3 presents the survey findings from Citizens' Panel Members on Access to Council Services;
- Chapter 4 presents the survey findings from Housing Benefit Claimants on Access to Council Services;
- Chapter 5 presents the survey findings on Leisure Centre Usage; and
- Chapter 6 draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the survey findings.

## 2 Methodology and Profile of Respondents

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### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter sets out the methodology for the fourth postal survey with Erewash Citizens' Panel on Access to Council Services and Leisure Centre usage and the first postal survey with Housing Benefit Claimants on Access to Council Services.

### 2.2 Main Aim of the Survey

2.2.1 The main aim of the survey was to gather information on the following:

- The ways in which residents currently contact the Council;
- The preferred method of contact between residents and the Council;
- The quality of the Councils' Viewpoint magazine;
- The potential of developing the Internet as a means of contact;
- The success of the complaints procedure adopted by the Council;
- The overall opinion of the Council;
- How the views of socially excluded groups differ from that of the 'average citizen';
- Leisure centre usage within the Borough; and
- Measures that would encourage greater use of leisure centres.

### 2.3 Questionnaire and Covering Letter

2.3.1 The survey questionnaire and covering letter were designed in close consultation with Erewash Borough Council and with due consideration for the main aims listed in section 2.2 above.

#### *Covering Letter*

2.3.2 The covering letter for both Panel Members and Housing Benefit Claimants explained the purpose of the survey and provided a contact name and number for any queries. The letter to Panel Members explained that the return address for completed questionnaires was for a company in Manchester commissioned to undertake the survey administration and analysis on behalf of Erewash Borough Council. The letter to Housing Benefit Claimants explained that the completion of the questionnaire was completely voluntary and any information supplied would be treated in strictest confidence. The return address for this questionnaire was Erewash Borough Council. A copy of the covering letters can be found in Appendix A.

#### *Questionnaire*

2.3.3 The questionnaires were divided into sections to cover the main themes. They were eight pages long and were designed using a mixture of closed and open questions to maintain respondents' interest. The actual questions relied heavily on the results of a 'focus group' previously undertaken by the Council on this same subject. A reply paid envelope was enclosed for returning the completed questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix B.

**2.4 Postal Mailout**

2.4.1 On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2002, survey questionnaires, covering letters and reply paid envelopes were mailed out to all Erewash Borough Panel Members. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in the reply-paid envelope provided by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002.

2.4.2 On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002, survey questionnaires, covering letters, a DPA disclaimer and reply paid envelopes were mailed out to a random sample of 2230 people selected from the Councils’ database of Housing Benefit Claimants. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided by Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002.

**2.5 Response Rate**

2.5.1 A total of 615 questionnaires were returned from the mailout to Panel Members, giving a response rate of 61.5%. Although this response rate was slightly below that for previous surveys it is well within the range expected given the number of survey questionnaires that have recently been sent to Panel members and also the subject matter.

2.5.2 A total of 370 questionnaires were returned from the mailout to Housing Benefit Claimants, giving a response rate of 16.6%.

2.5.3 Table 2.1 shows the response of Panel members by ward.

**Table 2.1: Unweighted Response to Panel Members Survey by Ward**

Ward	Respondents to Survey		All Panel Members	
	No.	%	No.	%
Abbotsford	27	4.4	41	4.1
Breadsall and Morley	7	1.1	12	1.2
Breaston	29	4.7	42	4.2
Cotmanhay	29	4.7	51	5.1
Dale Abbey	8	1.3	12	1.2
Derby Road East	18	2.9	46	4.6
Derby Road West	33	5.3	57	5.7
Draycott	18	2.9	26	2.6
Ilkeston Central	25	4.1	52	5.2
Ilkeston North	16	2.6	32	3.2
Ilkeston South	17	2.8	32	3.2
Kirk Hallam North	25	4.1	32	3.2
Kirk Hallam South	14	2.3	27	2.7
Little Eaton	6	1.0	23	2.3
Long Eaton Central	34	5.5	53	5.3
Nottingham Road	41	6.6	59	5.9
Ockbrook and Borrowash	47	7.6	67	6.7
Old Park-Ilkeston	17	2.8	34	3.4
Sandiacre North	27	4.4	40	4.0
Sandiacre South	28	4.5	40	4.0
Sawley	41	6.6	63	6.3
Stanley	14	2.3	20	2.0
Victoria-Ilkeston	19	3.1	33	3.3
West Hallam	37	6.1	46	4.6
Wilsthorpe	38	6.2	60	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>100.0*</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Results do not always add up to 100.0% due to rounding of figures.

## 2.6 Weighting of Citizens' Panel Survey Responses

2.6.1 In order to produce survey results that were representative of the population of Erewash, Citizens' Panel questionnaire data were weighted by age group, gender and ward using census statistics. The weights were then combined to produce an overall weight for each respondent, which was then applied to the data before conducting any analysis. Table 2.2 illustrates the weighted response by ward.

**Table 2.2: Weighted Response to Panel Members Survey by Ward**

Ward	Respondents to Survey		Population Figures	
	No.	%	No.	%
Abbotsford	35	5.7	3530	4.5
Breadsall and Morley	5	0.9	920	1.2
Breaston	25	4.0	3481	4.4
Cotmanhay	28	4.6	3917	4.9
Dale Abbey	6	1.0	1094	1.4
Derby Road East	27	4.4	3599	4.5
Derby Road West	37	6.0	4621	5.9
Draycott	15	2.5	1987	2.5
Ilkeston Central	27	4.3	3907	4.9
Ilkeston North	16	2.6	2226	2.8
Ilkeston South	22	3.5	2799	3.5
Kirk Hallam North	16	2.6	2543	3.2
Kirk Hallam South	19	3.1	2061	2.6
Little Eaton	15	2.5	1894	2.4
Long Eaton Central	33	5.3	3921	5.0
Nottingham Road	35	5.7	4472	5.6
Ockbrook and Borrowash	41	6.6	5459	6.9
Old Park-Ilkeston	20	3.3	2574	3.3
Sandiacre North	26	4.2	3164	4.0
Sandiacre South	26	4.2	3182	4.0
Sawley	42	6.9	4950	6.2
Stanley	11	1.7	1629	2.1
Victoria-Ilkeston	21	3.5	2807	3.5
West Hallam	27	4.4	3648	4.6
Wilsthorpe	41	6.6	4887	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>100.0*</b>	<b>79272</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Results do not always add up to 100.0% due to rounding of figures.

## 2.7 Profile of Citizens' Panel Respondents

2.7.1 Table 2.3 highlights the profile of Panel respondents with and without the weighting applied and compares it with 1999 population estimates and the 1991 Census.

**Table 2.3 Profile of Panel Respondents**

<b>Respondent Characteristic</b>	<b>Unweighted %</b>	<b>Weighted %</b>	<b>Population Figures</b>
			1999 Estimates
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	47.0	48.3	47.9
Female	53.0	51.7	52.1
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
			1999 Estimates
<b>Age Group</b>			
16-34 years	19.1	30.5	32.5
35-59 years	50.1	43.1	42.0
60 years and over	30.8	26.4	25.5
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Disability</b>			
Yes	12.4	10.7	
No	87.6	89.3	
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
			1991 Census
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Employed Full Time	38.5	43.2	41.7
Employed Part Time	15.9	14.9	10.6
Self Employed	5.2	4.0	6.1
Unemployed/Looking for work	1.5	1.5	4.8
Looking after the home	6.7	5.7	
On a Government training scheme	24.2	21.8	0.7
Wholly retired from work	0.2	0.4	18.9
Full-time education	1.6	3.7	2.7
Permanently sick or disabled	1.1	1.0	3.2
Carer	4.7	3.6	
Doing something else	0.5	0.3	11.3
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
			1991 Census
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White British or Irish	99.4	99.5	98.6
Ethnic Minority	0.6	0.5	1.4
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
			1991 Census
<b>Housing Tenure</b>			
Owned or mortgaged by you/family	92.2	92.9	76.0
Rented from Erewash Borough Council	5.2	4.4	16.3
Rented from Housing Association	0.3	0.3	0.9
Rented from private landlord	1.8	2.1	5.7
Other	0.6	0.3	1.0
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
			1991 Census
<b>Car Ownership</b>			
None	12.0	12.2	29.9
One	46.1	44.3	46.4
Two	33.4	33.2	19.9
Three or more	8.4	10.3	3.8
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(Base 615 Respondents)

## 2.8 Profile of Housing Benefit Claimant Respondents

2.8.1 Table 2.4 highlights the profile of Housing Benefit Claimant Respondents. There was no demographic information for Housing Benefit Claimants as a whole and so the data was not weighted.

**Table 2.4 Profile of Housing Benefit Claimant Respondents**

<b>Respondent Characteristic (Base = 370 Respondents)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>	
16-17	0
18-24	8
25-34	17
35-44	14
45-54	14
55-59	5
60-64	7
65-74	16
75+	18
	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	34
Female	66
	<b>100</b>
<b>Disability</b>	
No	42
Yes, affecting mobility	37
Yes, affecting hearing	11
Yes, affecting vision	6
Yes, a learning difficulty	3
Yes, other	2
	<b>100</b>
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Employed Full Time	1
Employed Part Time	5
Self Employed	0
Unemployed/Looking for work	9
Looking after the home	22
Wholly retired from work	32
On a Government training scheme	1
Full-time education	1
Carer	4
Permanently sick or disabled	24
Doing something else	1
	<b>100</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White British or Irish	98
Ethnic Minority	2
	<b>100</b>
<b>Housing Tenure</b>	
Owned or mortgaged by you/family	1
Rented from Erewash Borough Council	60
Rented from Housing Association	18
Rented from private landlord	20
Other	1
	<b>100</b>

<b>Respondent Characteristic (Base = 370 Respondents)</b>				
<b>Household Composition</b>				
	<b>Number in Sample</b>		<b>% of Respondents</b>	
<b>Single Parent</b>				
With 1 child	54		15	
With 2 children	33		9	
With 3+ children	14		4	
<b>Couples</b>				
With no children	58		16	
With 1 child	12		3	
With 2 children	8		2	
With 3+ children	10		3	
	<b>Males</b>		<b>Females</b>	
<b>Person living on their own</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Aged 18-24	1	0	0	0
Aged 25-59	34	9	19	5
Aged 60-74	21	6	35	9
Aged 75+	10	3	38	10

## 2.9 Analysis of Survey

2.9.1 All analysis for the Citizens Panel survey was carried out using data weighted by age, gender and ward. The list of weights can be found in Appendix C.

2.9.2 In order to analyse the Citizens' Panel data by geographical area, the wards were grouped as follows:

- **Cotmanhay** – Ilkeston North, Cotmanhay;
- **Ilkeston** – Abbotsford, Ilkeston Central, Victoria, Old Park, Ilkeston South;
- **Kirk Hallam** – Kirk Hallam North, Kirk Hallam South;
- **Sandiacre** – Sandiacre North, Sandiacre South;
- **Long Eaton** – Derby Road West, Derby Road East, Wilsthorpe, Long Eaton Central, Nottingham Road;
- **Sawley** – Sawley;
- **Rural South** – Ockbrook & Borrowash, Draycott, Breaston; and
- **Rural North** – Little Eaton, Breadsall & Morley, Stanley, West Hallam, Dale Abbey.

2.9.3 For both surveys frequencies were undertaken for each question on the survey form. Furthermore, where the number of respondents has permitted, additional cross-tabulation analysis was carried out to determine whether there were differences in the results between gender, age, disability (and geographical area in the Panel Members survey). Where there were notable differences, these have been reported.

## 3 Access to Council Services: Citizens Panel

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Erewash Borough Council asked respondents for their views on access to Council Services so that they could use the results to help them improve the facilities and services currently on offer.

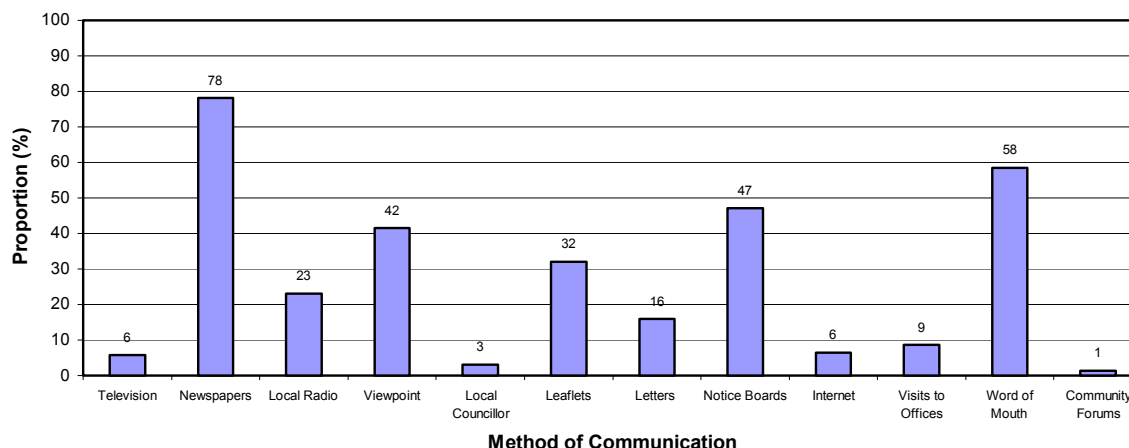
3.1.2 This section of the report presents the findings from the questions on the survey asking about access to Council Services.

### 3.2 Information about the Council

#### *Finding out about Council Services, Activities and Events*

3.2.1 The respondents were asked how they currently find out about Council Services, activities and events. Figure 3.1 below highlights the results.

**Figure 3.1: How Residents find out about Council Services, Activities and Events.**



**(Base = 615 respondents) Multiple answers could be given**

3.2.2 The majority of respondents (78%) said they found out about Council Services, activities and events through newspapers (including the local free newspapers), furthermore, 58% of respondents found out about Council Services by word of mouth from friends, neighbours etc. and 47% via notice boards. Only 1% of respondents found out about Council Services, activities and events through community forums and only 3% via their local Councillor.

3.2.3 Other methods of communication mentioned were through schools, libraries, parish/church magazines or by telephoning the Council (1 response each). Interestingly 1% of respondents felt they didn't get to hear about the Council at all.

3.2.4 Interestingly, younger people between the age of 18-24 were less likely to find out about Council Services, activities and events via the Council's *Viewpoint* magazine, 4% compared to between 12-17% within the other age groups. Younger people were more likely to use the Internet to find out about the Council compared to other age groups (6% of 18-24 year olds chose this compared to only 0-2% of other age groups).

3.2.5 The respondents were then asked to list which method of communication they felt to be most useful, 2<sup>nd</sup> most useful and 3<sup>rd</sup> most useful i.e. which gave them the most information. Table 3.1 below shows the results of this question.

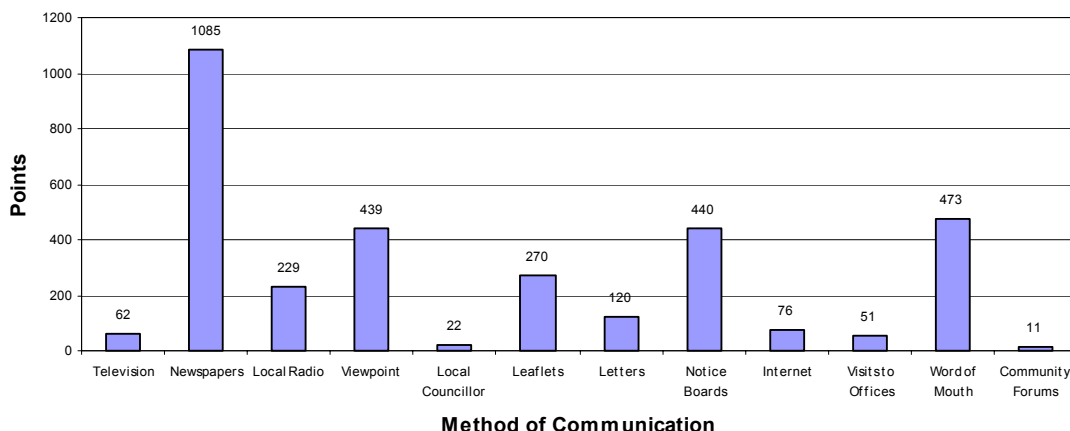
**Table 3.1 The Most Useful Methods of Communication**

	% of Respondents		
	Most Useful	2 <sup>nd</sup> Most Useful	3 <sup>rd</sup> Most Useful
Television	1	2	3
Newspapers	48	17	16
Local Radio	3	13	8
The Councils' <i>Viewpoint</i> magazine	14	14	9
Local Councillor	1	1	0
Leaflets produced by Council	7	10	11
Council letters to home/business	3	4	5
Notice Boards	11	17	16
Internet – Councils' website	2	2	3
Visits to Council offices	1	2	2
Word of mouth (friends, neighbours)	9	18	25
Community Forums	0	0	1
<b>Total (base)</b>	<b>100 (576)</b>	<b>100 (534)</b>	<b>100 (484)</b>

3.2.6 A total of 48% of respondents chose the newspaper as the method by which they obtained most of their information about Council Services, activities and events.

3.2.7 The results were aggregated (3 points for most useful, 2 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> most useful and 1 point for 3<sup>rd</sup> most useful) to provide an overall level of usefulness for each method of communication. The results are highlighted in Figure 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.2: Overall Usefulness of each Method of Communication**



3.2.8 Way ahead with over 1000 points was newspapers followed by word of mouth (473 points) notice boards (440 points) and the Councils' Viewpoint magazine (439 points).

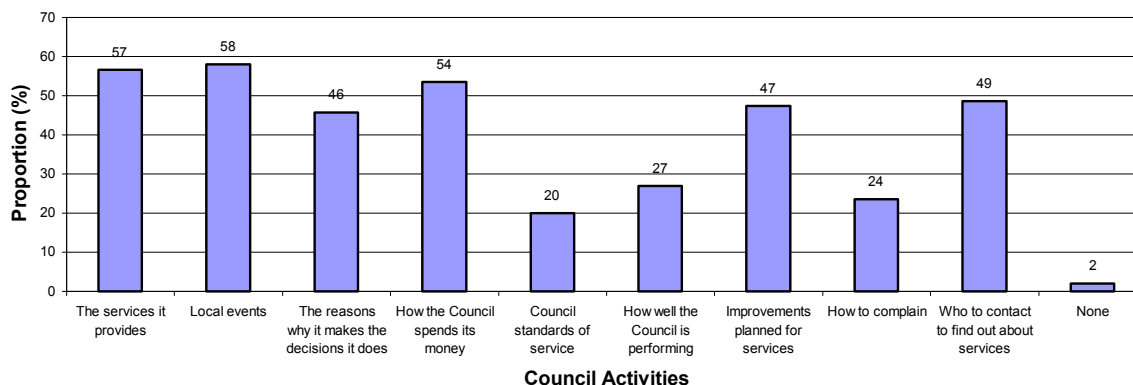
*How well the Council keeps Residents Informed*

- 3.2.9 When respondents were asked how well they thought Erewash Borough Council kept residents informed about the services it provides, 4% of respondents felt the Council kept residents 'very well informed', 44% said 'fairly well informed', 24% said 'neither', 23% said 'fairly poorly informed' and only 5% felt the Council kept residents 'very poorly informed' about the services it provides.
- 3.2.10 Interestingly, 47% of those respondents living within the ward of Sawley felt 'fairly poorly' or 'very poorly' informed about Council Services compared to between 18% - 32% of respondents within other ward areas. A total of 61% of respondents living within the 'Rural South' wards felt 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed about Council Services, this compares to between 43% - 52% in other ward areas.
- 3.2.11 Respondents aged over 60 years felt slightly more informed than younger respondents, with 58% of this age group saying they felt 'very well' or 'fairly well' informed about Council Services compared to 39% of those aged between 16 and 34.

*Council Activities for which more information is Required*

- 3.2.12 The respondents were presented with a list of Council activities and asked to state which (if any) they would like more information about. The results are highlighted in Figure 3.3 below.

**Figure 3.3: The Council Activities on which Residents would like more Information**



**(Base = 615 respondents) Multiple answers could be given**

- 3.2.13 The results are fairly evenly spread with 58% of respondents stating they would like more information on local events, 57% wanting more information about the services the Council provides and 54% saying they would appreciate more information about how the Council spends it's money. Respondents were asked if they would like any other information about Erewash Borough Council, comments were as follows;

- How to obtain information in general (1 response);
- Information about the environment (1 response);

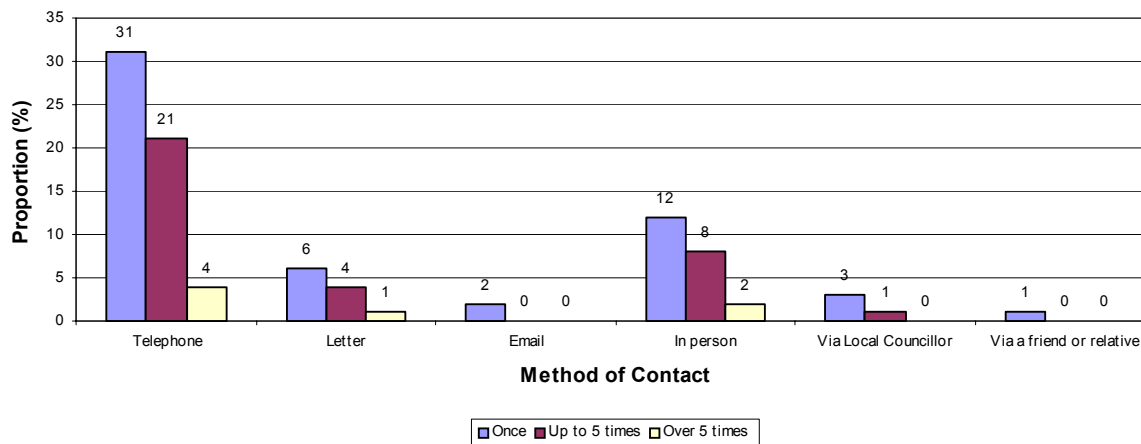
- How to suggest improvements (1 response); and
- What Council tax covers (1 response).

### 3.3 Contacting the Council

#### *Current Methods of Contact*

- 3.3.1 Erewash Borough Council was interested to know the ways in which residents currently contact the Council; how often, by what means and how satisfied they were with their LAST contact with the Council.
- 3.3.2 Only 1% of respondents contacted the Council on a weekly basis, 4% contacted the Council monthly, 25% a few times a year, 15% once a year, 30% less than once a year and 24% of respondents had never contacted the Council.
- 3.3.3 Notably 37% of those respondents aged between 16-24 had never contacted the Council compared to 15% of those aged between 35-59 and 22% of those aged over 60.
- 3.3.4 Those who had never contacted the Council were excluded from the following two questions on the questionnaire.
- 3.3.5 Figure 3.4 below illustrates the current method of and frequency of contact with the Council. Respondents were asked how they had contacted the Council offices over the last year.

**Figure 3.4: Method and Frequency of Contact with Council**



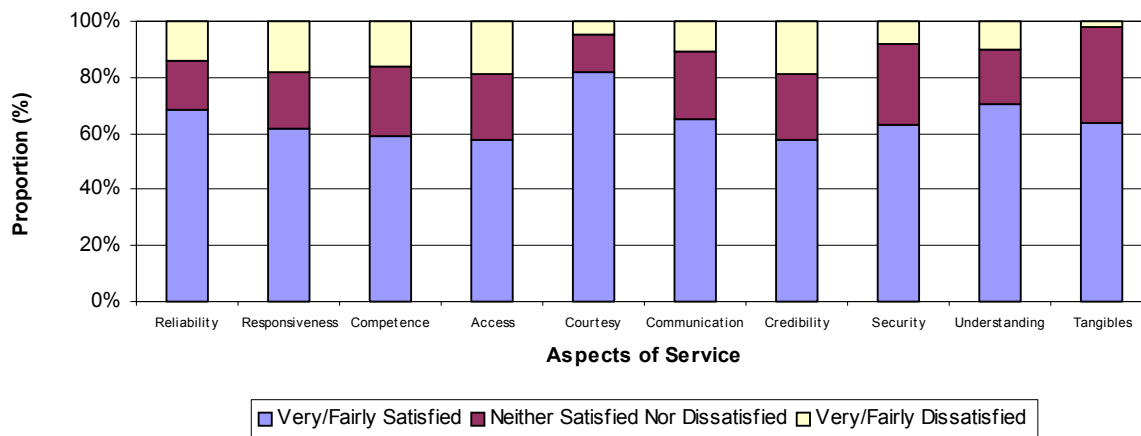
**(Base =471 respondents)**

- 3.3.6 The telephone was the most popular form of current contact with the Council. Over 30% of respondents had contacted the Council by telephone once within the last year, 21% had contacted the Council by telephone up to five times within the last year and 4% had contacted the Council over five times by telephone within the last year. There was no noticeable difference in the method and frequency of contact with the Council between the age, gender, disability or residence of respondents.

#### *Satisfaction with Last Contact with Council*

3.3.7 The respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with their LAST contact with the Council. They were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the service on a scale of 'very satisfied', 'fairly satisfied', 'neither satisfied or dissatisfied', 'fairly dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied'. Figure 3.5 below illustrates the results.

**Figure 3.5: Level of Satisfaction of LAST Contact with Council**



(Variable Base: see Appendix F)

3.3.8 Overall, respondents were satisfied with their last contact with the Council. The aspect of service receiving the most positive response was 'courtesy' (Were the staff polite and friendly to you?) with 83% of respondents claiming they were either very or fairly satisfied. The aspects of service receiving the most negative results were Credibility (Did you think that what was being done was reasonable and acceptable?) and Access (How easy was it to speak to the right person/visit the offices?) with 19% of respondents rating their satisfaction as 'very or fairly dissatisfied' with these aspects of service.

*Preferred Methods of Contact*

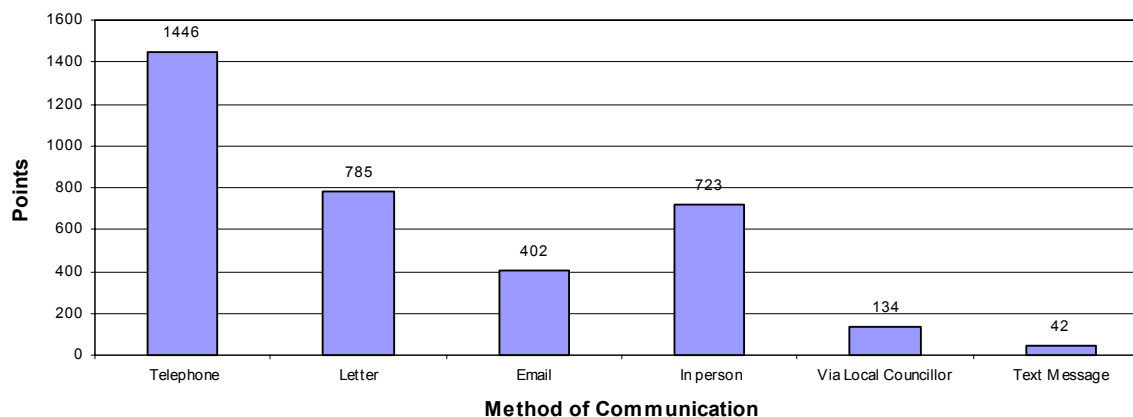
3.3.9 Respondents were presented with six different ways of contacting Erewash Borough Council about their services and activities and asked to consider their preferred method. They were asked to write in 1 for their top favourite, 2 for their next and 3 for their 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite. Table 3.2 below highlights the results to this question.

**Table 3.2: Preferred Method of Contact with Council**

	% of Respondents		
	Top Favourite	2 <sup>nd</sup> Favourite	3 <sup>rd</sup> Favourite
Telephone	58	22	8
Letter	12	37	37
Email	10	13	13
In Person	17	23	28
Via Local Councillor	2	4	9
Text Message (via mobile phone)	1	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

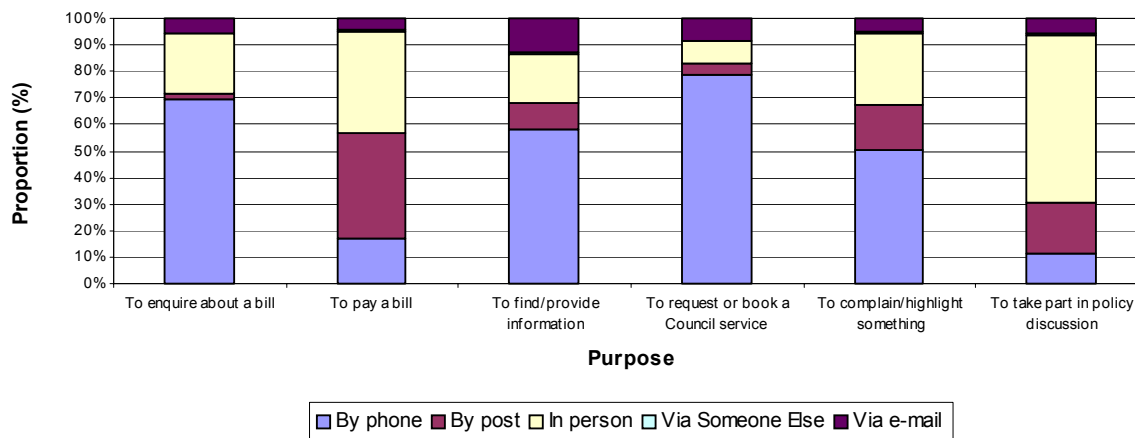
(Base = 615 respondents)

- 3.3.10 Over half of the respondents (58%) chose the telephone as their most preferred method of contacting the Council, followed by 17% choosing to contact in person.
- 3.3.11 The results were aggregated to give an overall preference (3 points for top favourite, 2 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite and 1 point for 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite). The results can be seen in Figure 3.6 below.

**Figure 3.6: Overall Preferred Method of Contact with Council**

- 3.3.12 Way ahead with 1446 points was the telephone, followed by letter (785 points) and in person (723 points). Text messaging was the least popular with just 42 points. One respondent mentioned he had contacted the Council via fax.
- 3.3.13 The respondents were then presented with a list of reasons why they might want to contact the Council and asked to consider the way in which they would prefer to contact the Council for each of the purposes listed. The results highlighted in Figure 3.7 below do not include 'not relevant' responses.

**Figure 3.7: Preferred Method of Contacting the Council for Different Purposes**



(Variable Base – See Appendix F)

3.3.14 The majority of respondents indicated that they would prefer to use the telephone to request or book a Council service (79%), to enquire about a bill (70%), to find/provide information (58%) and to complain/highlight something (50%). However most would prefer to pay a bill either in person (39%) or by post (39%) and would prefer to take part in policy discussions and consultation in person (63%).

3.3.15 Respondents were presented with six different ways in which Erewash Borough Council could contact them about their services and activities in the future and were asked to consider their preferred method. Again, they were asked to write in 1 for their top favourite, 2 for their 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite and 3 for their 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite. Table 3.3 below highlights the results to this question.

**Table 3.3: Preferred Method of Council Contacting Residents**

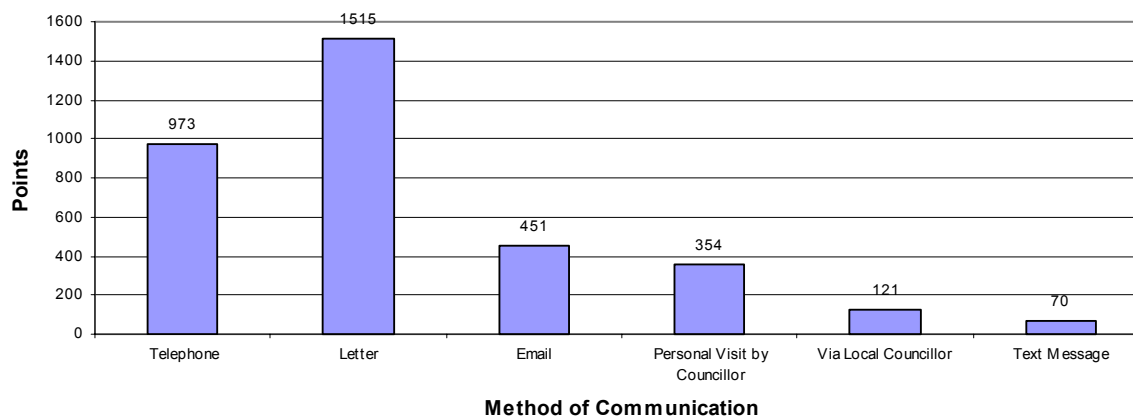
	% of Respondents		
	Top Favourite	2 <sup>nd</sup> Favourite	3 <sup>rd</sup> Favourite
Telephone	20	45	23
Letter	59	30	7
Email	11	13	18
Personal Visit by Officer	6	8	33
Via Local Councillor	2	3	12
Text Message (via mobile phone)	1	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(Base = 615 respondents)

3.3.16 Letter was the most preferred way of the Council contacting residents, with almost 60% of respondents choosing this method as their 'top favourite'.

3.3.17 Again the results have been aggregated to give an overall preference (3 points for top favourite, 2 point for next favourite and 1 point for 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite). The results can be seen in Figure 3.8 below.



**Figure 3.8: Overall Preferred Method of Council Contacting Residents**

3.3.18 The respondents' preferred method of contact from the Council was by letter (1515 points) followed by telephone (973 points) and then email (451 points). Least popular again was text messaging with only 70 points. Other comments included through leaflets (1 respondents) or via advertisements on television (1 respondent).

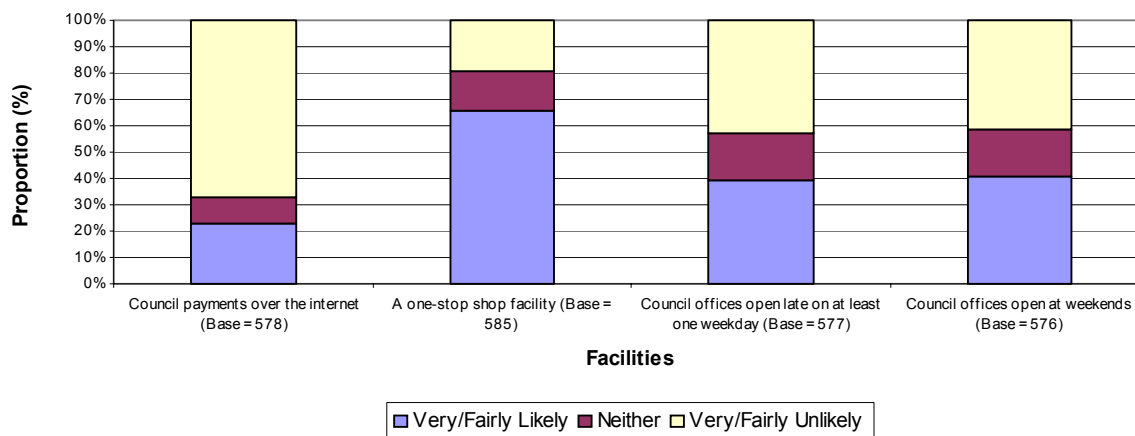
#### *Other Facilities*

3.3.19 Erewash Borough Council was interested to find out to what extent residents would make use of a number of facilities if they were provided. The facilities are listed below:

- Council payments over the Internet (e.g. council tax, direct debits, hiring of facilities etc.);
- A one-stop shop facility (where a whole range of Council Services can be accessed at the same place during one visit);
- Council offices open late on at least one weekday; and
- Council offices open at weekends.

3.3.20 The results are highlighted in Figure 3.9 below.

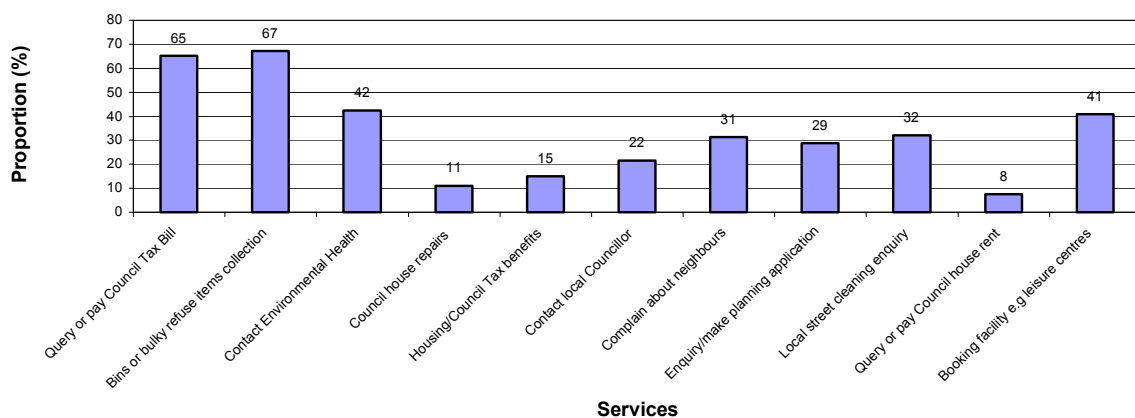
**Figure 3.9: The Extent to which Residents would make use of Facilities**



3.3.21 Respondents felt they were most likely to make use of a one-stop shop (with 66% of respondents saying they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to use this facility) and least likely to make use of Council payments over the Internet (with 67% of respondents saying they were 'fairly unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to use this facility).

3.3.22 The respondents who answered 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to using Council offices at the weekend (234 respondents) were then asked which type of services they would like to be able to access at weekends. The results are highlighted in Figure 3.10 below.

**Figure 3.10: Types of Services Residents would like to Access at Weekend**



(Base = 234 respondents)

3.3.23 Over 60% of those wishing to use Council offices at weekends said the services they would like to access would be to query or pay a Council tax bill and bins or bulky refuse items collection, (65% and 67% respectively).

*Text Messages*

3.3.24 Respondents were asked how interested they would be in receiving text messages from the Council for example about services of interest, leisure

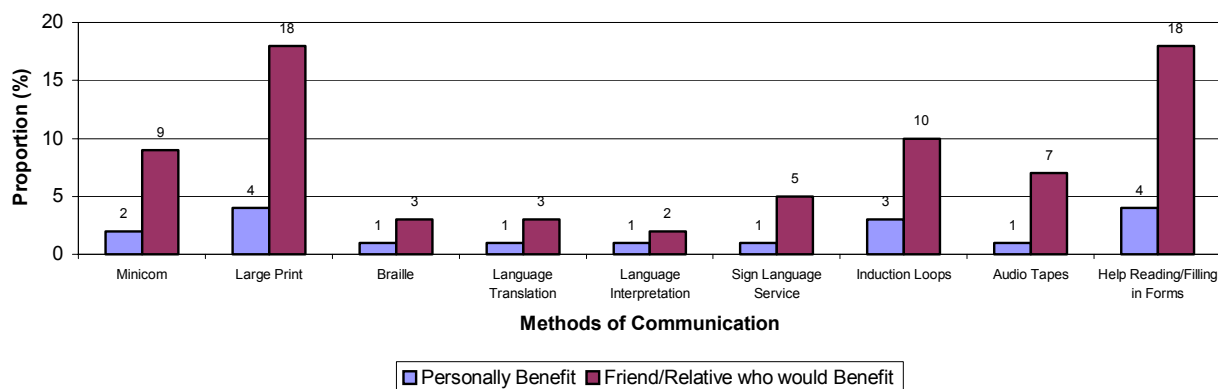
facilities, waste collection and finances. Only 5% of respondents said they would be very interested in receiving text messages, 15% said they would be quite interested and 80% said they would not be interested.

3.3.25 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the younger respondents were slightly more interested in receiving text messages (28%) compared to the other age groups (19% of 34-59 year olds and 12% of those over 60).

*Better Communication*

3.3.26 Erewash Borough Council was interested to find out if they could communicate better with their residents. Respondents were presented with a list of nine different forms of communication and asked if they could benefit personally from them or if they knew a friend or relative who could benefit. Figure 3.11 below highlights the results.

**Figure 3.11: Better Communication with the Council**



(Base =615 respondents)

3.3.27 Relatively few respondents felt they could benefit personally from the methods of communication listed, however 18% of respondents knew a friend or relative who could benefit from large print and help reading and filling in forms.

**3.4 The Viewpoint Magazine**

3.4.1 The *Viewpoint* magazine is produced by the Council for distribution to all residents within the Borough of Erewash on a bi-annual basis (i.e. 2 per year – July and November). The respondents were asked if they received the Council’s magazine, 58% said yes they did receive it, 31% said no they didn’t receive it and 11% didn’t know.

3.4.2 The distribution of the Viewpoint magazine varied slightly by ward area, Table 3.4 below highlights these differences.

**Table 3.4: Distribution of Viewpoint by Ward Area**

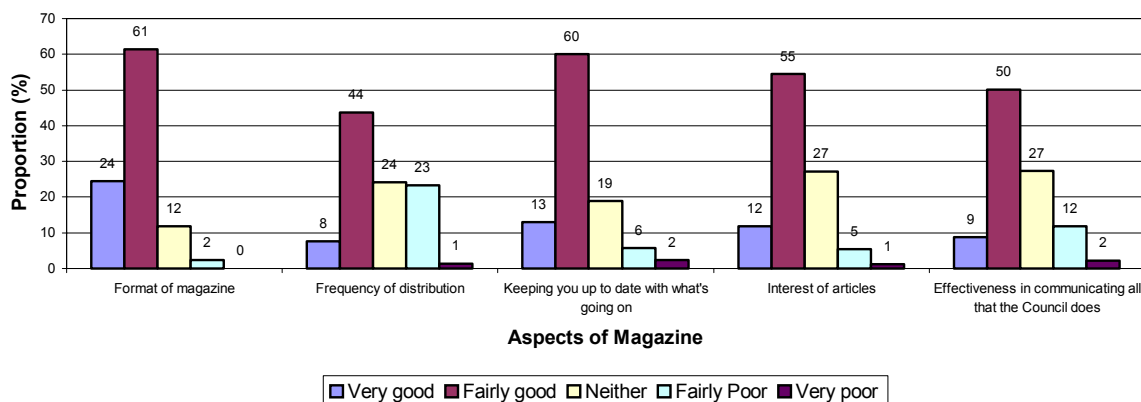
Ward Area	% of Respondents		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Cotmanhay	53	30	16
Ilkeston	67	23	11
Kirk Hallam	78	22	0
Sandiacre	51	41	8
Long Eaton	53	35	12
Sawley	63	21	16
Rural South	52	38	10
Rural North	62	29	9

(Base = 615 respondents)

3.4.3 Those living in Kirk Hallam (North and South) were most likely to receive the *Viewpoint* magazine, whereas those living in Sandiacre (North and South) were least likely to receive it.

3.4.4 Those who did receive *Viewpoint* were then asked to rate the quality of certain aspects of the magazine. The results are presented in Figure 3.12 below.

**Figure: 3.12: Aspects of Viewpoint Magazine**



(Base =354 respondents)

3.4.5 Overall, respondents rated the *Viewpoint* magazine quite highly with the majority choosing 'fairly good' for most aspects. The aspect causing most dissatisfaction was the 'frequency of distribution' with 24% of respondents rating the frequency of distribution as 'fairly poor' or 'very poor'. From the comments listed in the open-ended Question 26 on the questionnaire it is obvious that a number of residents would welcome more frequent distribution of *Viewpoint*. These comments are detailed in Appendix D.

3.4.6 When those respondents who received the magazine were asked approximately how long they kept each issue, 4% of respondents threw it away immediately, 36% threw it away after reading it, 21% kept it for around a week, 19% kept it for around a month, 16% kept it for over a month and 4% didn't know.

### 3.5 The Internet

- 3.5.1 The Council was interested in discovering the potential for new forms of communication with their residents, particularly the use of the Internet.
- 3.5.2 Respondents were asked if they had access to the Internet. The results are presented in Table 3.5 below.

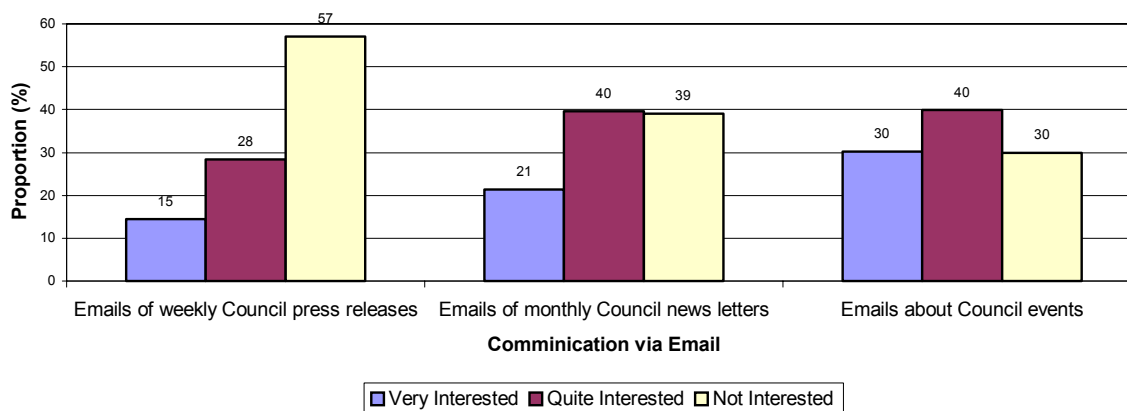
**Table 3.5: Access to the Internet**

Internet Access	% of Respondents
Access the Internet at home	36
Access the Internet at work	5
Access the Internet at home and work	18
Someone else can access the Internet for me	5
Likely to have access in the near future	3
Not likely to have Internet access	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

(Base = 615 respondents)

- 3.5.3 Over 60% of respondents currently have access to the Internet in some form or another (i.e. at home, work or via someone else). The younger respondents were more likely to have direct access than older respondents (79% of those aged between 16-34 had access compared to 59% of those aged over 60).
- 3.5.4 A total of 33% of respondents said they were unlikely to have Internet access in the future. (These people were excluded from the next three questions on the questionnaire.)
- 3.5.5 The remaining respondents were asked how interested they would be in receiving emails from the Council on press releases, news letters and information on Council events. The results are displayed in Figure 3.13 below.

**Figure 3.13: Potential of Communication via Email**



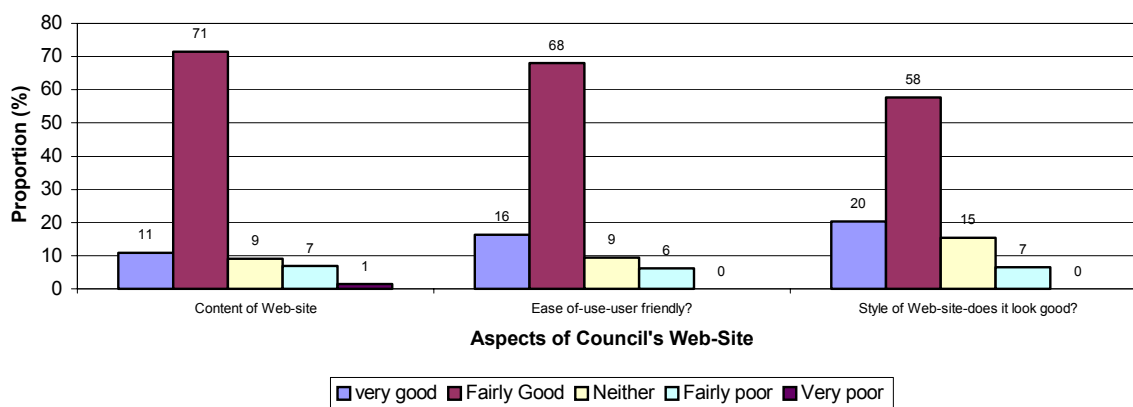
(Base = 412 respondents)

- 3.5.6 A total of 43% of respondents were very or fairly interested in receiving emails of weekly Council press releases, 61% of respondents were interested in receiving emails of monthly Council news letters and 70% were interested in receiving emails about Council events. This result, however, slightly contradicts the results

to previous questions where only 10% chose email as their preferred method of contact with the Council and only 11% chose email as the preferred method of the Council contacting them.

- 3.5.7 The Council has recently developed its web-site (*www.erewash.gov.uk*), and was interested to know how many respondents were aware of the web-site, who had used it and what they thought about it. Of the 412 respondents who were asked this question, 17% were aware of the Council’s web-site and had used it, 30% were aware of it but hadn’t used it and 53% were not aware of the web-site.
- 3.5.8 Interestingly, 73% of those respondents within the wards of Sandiacre (North and South) were not aware of the Council’s web-site compared to between 30% - 64% in other wards.
- 3.5.9 Males were slightly more likely to have used the web-site than females (21% of males had used it compared to 12% of females).
- 3.5.10 Those who had used the Council’s web-site (70 respondents) were asked how they rated various aspects. The results are presented in Figure 3.14 below.

**Figure 3.14: The Council’s Web-Site**



(Base = 70 respondents)

- 3.5.11 Overall the Council’s web-site was rated quite highly with the majority of respondents rating each aspect as ‘fairly good’.
- 3.5.12 The respondents were then asked if there was anything else they would like to see on the Council’s web-site. The following comments were received:
  - Information on where you can get married in Erewash;
  - The reasons for their decisions;
  - More information on local doctors, dentists, health facilities and local gardening attractions;
  - Statistics – census, shops, services and population;
  - Full record of Council meetings and/or a live web-cam showing meetings.

3.5.13 The following suggestions were also made:

- Check links – I tried to get access but the links didn’t work;
- Should have the ability to contact the Council from the web-site;
- The print is rather difficult to read – e.g. grey on grey; and
- Should be updated more frequently with events etc.

### 3.6 Complaints Procedure

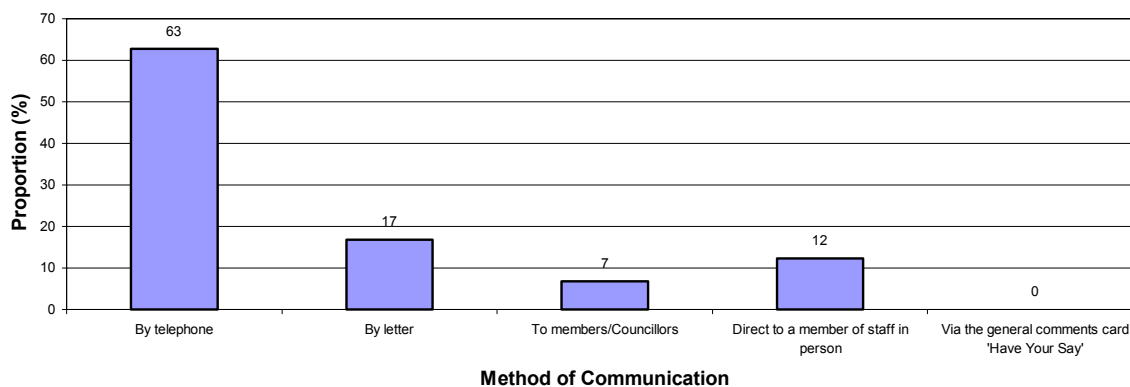
3.6.1 Respondents were asked if they would know how to make a complaint to Erewash Borough Council if they needed to do so. The results were as follows:

- Yes, and I have made a complaint 21%
- Yes, but I have never made a complaint 34%
- No, I would not know how to make a complaint 45%

3.6.2 Younger people were less likely to know how to make a complaint than older people. 57% of those aged between 16-34 year olds said they wouldn’t know how to make a complaint, this compares to 42% of 45-59 year olds and 36%B of those over 60.

3.6.3 Those who had made a complaint (129 respondents) were then asked how they made their complaint and how satisfied they were with the complaints procedure. The results are shown in Figures 3.15 and 3.16 below.

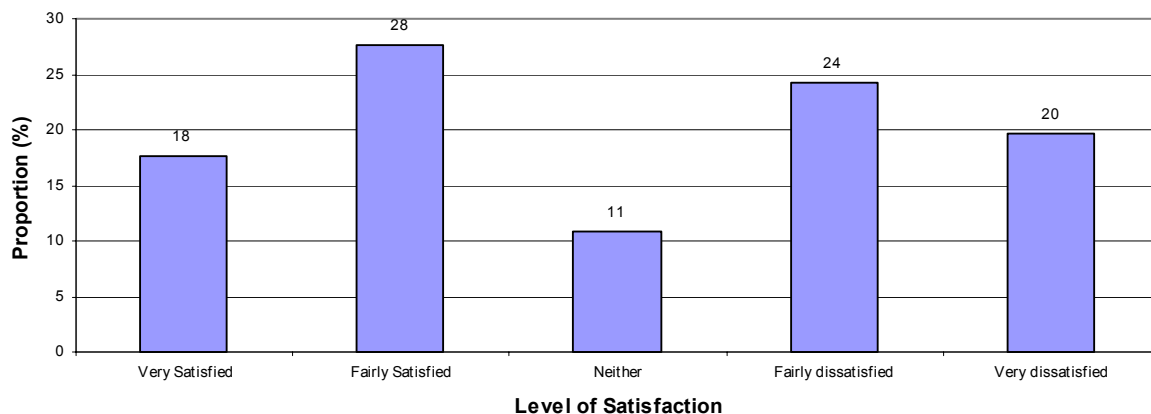
**Figure 3.15: Method by which Complaints were made**



(Base = 129 respondents)

3.6.4 The majority of complaints were made by telephone (63%) and none were made via the general comments card 'Have Your Say'.

**Figure 3.16: Satisfaction with Complaints Procedure**



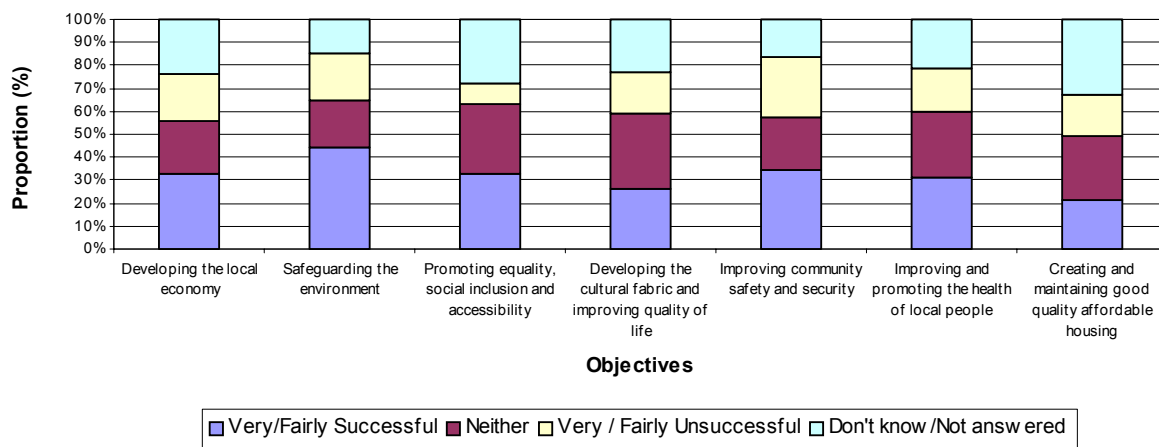
(Base = 126 respondents)

3.6.5 A total of 45% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the complaints procedure, however, almost the same number of respondents (44%) were very or fairly dissatisfied.

**3.7 Opinion of the Council**

3.7.1 Respondents were presented with a list of objectives and asked how successful they felt Erewash Borough Council was in dealing with each. Figure 3.17 below shows the results.

**Figure 3.17: Council’s Success with Objectives**



(Base = 615 respondents)

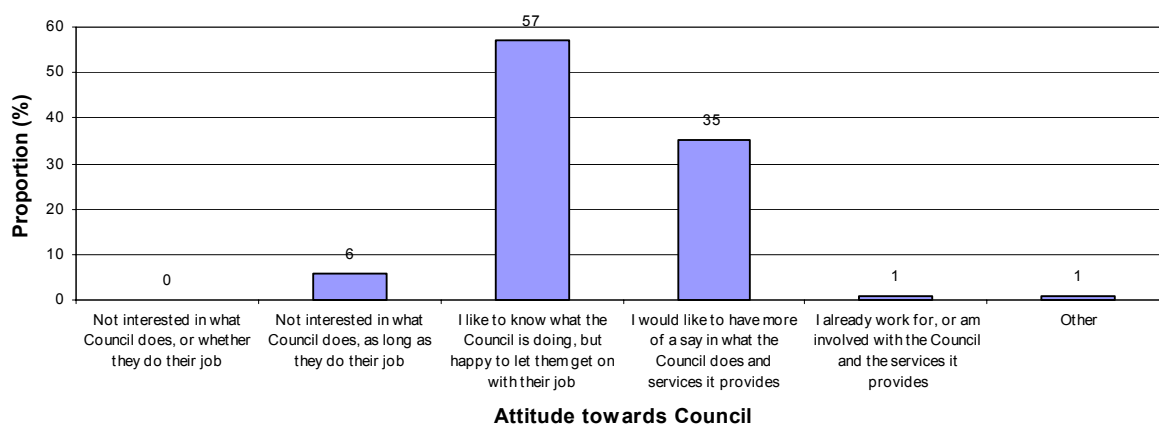
3.7.2 A total of 44% of respondents felt that the Council was ‘very or fairly successful’ in ‘safeguarding the environment’, however only 21% of respondents felt that the Council was ‘very or fairly successful’ at ‘creating and maintaining good quality housing’. Improving community safety and security received the least

support with 26% of respondents saying the Council was 'very or fairly unsuccessful' in dealing with this objective.

3.7.3 A large number of respondents (between 15% and 33%) answered 'don't know' for each of the above categories, this suggest there needs to be more publicity about the Council's success in meeting each objective.

3.7.4 The respondents were then presented with a list of five statements and asked to choose which best described their attitude towards Erewash Borough Council. The results are highlighted in Figure 3.18 below.

**Figure 3.18: Attitude towards Erewash Borough Council**



**(Base = 615 respondents)**

3.7.5 The majority of respondents (57%) like to know what the Council is doing but are happy to let them get on with their job, however 35% would like to have more of a say in what the Council does and the service it provides. This second figure seems rather surprising as the respondents are Panel members who already have a say in what the Council is doing. However, perhaps these are the types of people who like to be more involved and so this figure may differ amongst the general public.

3.7.6 Other comments included the following:

- I question whether what much of the Borough Council does is necessary;
- I feel the Council does things without consideration for residents;
- I would like Little Eaton to be more included in Council activities;
- I am interested but don't feel informed; and
- I would like to be better informed about what the Council intends to do and the reasons behind their decisions.

3.7.7 Finally, the respondents were asked to suggest how Erewash Borough Council could improve its communication with residents and businesses. A total of 107

comments were received and are listed in Appendix D. The most popular suggestions are listed in Table 3.6 below.

**Table 3.6: How the Council could Improve its' Communication**

<b>Comments</b>	<b>No. of Comments</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
More frequent communication (leaflets, newsletters, reports etc. posted to residents homes)	18	3
Improve Viewpoint magazine (e.g. content, distribution)	13	2
Use of more advertising space in local (free) newspapers	12	2
More access to Councillors (should go out and meet people - not just at election time)	11	2
Notice boards in places where people congregate	11	2
More use of email / Internet	10	2
More public / local meetings/open forums	9	1
Concise Info leaflet listing services and contact phone nos.	5	1

## 4 Access to Council Services: Benefit Claimants

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 As part of the Best Value Review on Social Inclusion Erewash Borough Council was required to examine how socially excluded groups (Housing Benefit Claimants) view Council Services.

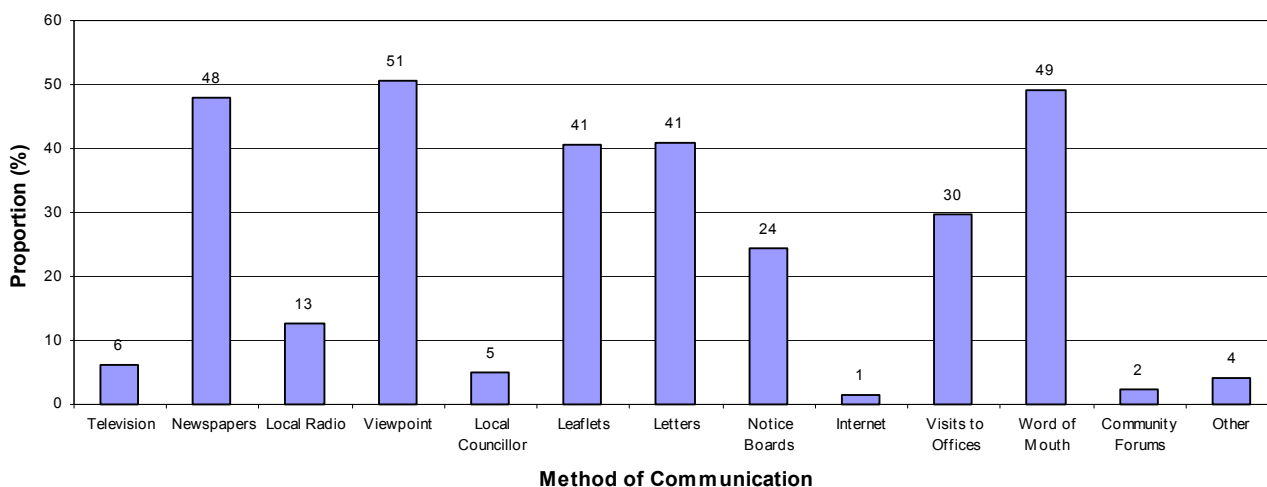
4.1.2 This chapter presents the findings from the survey posted to a random sample of 2230 Housing Benefit Claimants and provides a comparison with the previous chapter to see if their opinions and experiences differ in any way from the 'average citizen' (i.e. Panel Members).

### 4.2 Information about the Council

#### *Finding out about Council Services, Activities and Events*

4.2.1 The Housing Benefit Claimants were asked how they currently find out about Council Services, activities and events. Figure 4.1 below highlights the results.

**Figure 4.1: How Respondents Find out about Services, Activities & Events**



**(Base = 370 Respondents) Multiple responses could be given**

4.2.2 The results show that just over half of respondents find out about Council Services, Activities and Events through the Councils' *Viewpoint* magazine (51%), closely followed by Word of Mouth (49%), Newspapers (48%), Leaflets (41%) and Letters (41%). Only 1% of respondents find out about the Council via the Internet.

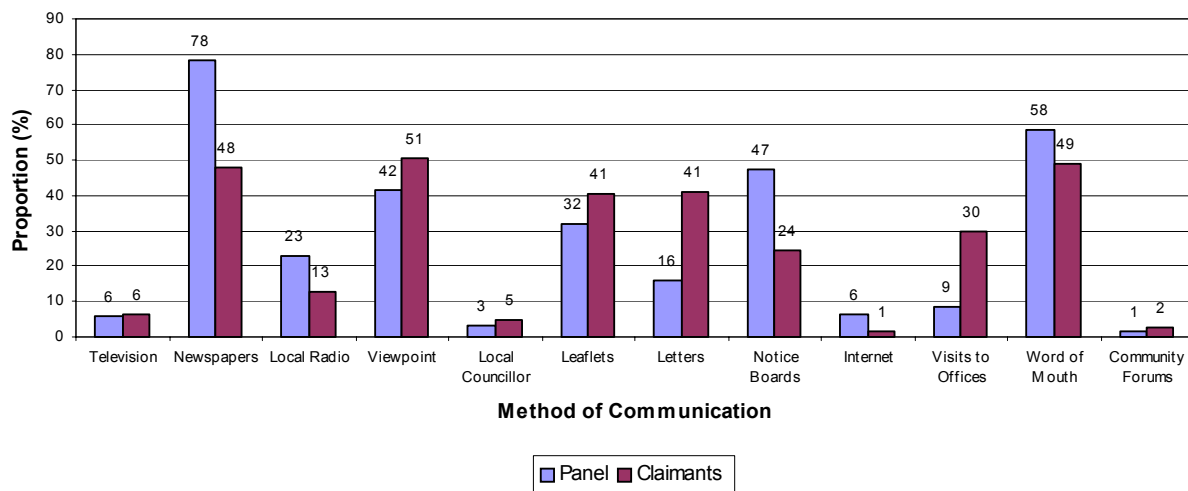
4.2.3 'Other' methods of communication included:

- None - don't hear about it (6 respondents);
- The library (4 respondents);
- Action Group (2 respondents);
- Play group (1 respondent);
- Council videos (1 respondent);

- Telephone direct (1 respondent); and
- Housing AC Derwent (1 respondent).

4.2.4 When compared to the results from the Citizens’ Panel survey, it can be seen that the Housing Benefit Claimants are far less likely to find out about the Council through newspapers (78% for Panel Members), and Notice Boards (47% for Panel Members) but more likely to find out about the Council through Letters sent to homes/businesses (16% for Panel Members) or Visits to Council Offices (9% for Panel Members). Figure 4.2 below highlights these differences.

**Figure 4.2: Comparison between Panel and Claimant Respondents**



(Base = 615 Citizens Panel Respondents and 370 Benefit Claimant Respondents)

4.2.5 The respondents were then asked to list which method of communication they felt to be the most useful, 2<sup>nd</sup> most useful and 3<sup>rd</sup> most useful i.e. which gave them the most information. Table 4.1 below shows the results of this question.

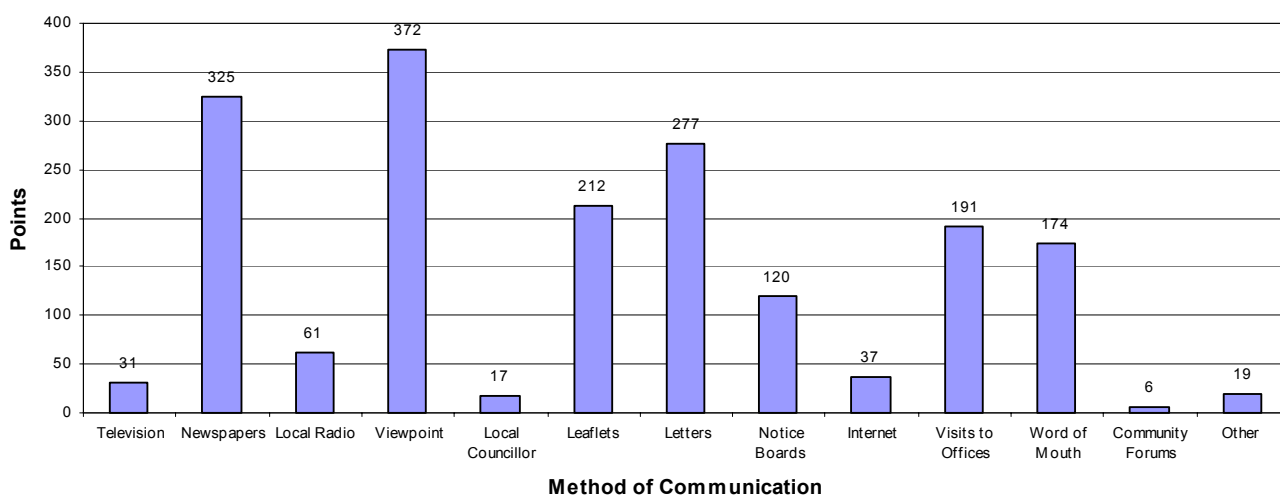
**Table 4.1: The Most Useful Methods of Communication**

	% of Respondents		
	Most Useful	2 <sup>nd</sup> Most Useful	3 <sup>rd</sup> Most Useful
Television	2	1	4
Newspapers	21	12	16
Local Radio	2	5	5
The Councils’ <i>Viewpoint</i> Magazine	23	19	10
Local Councillor	1	1	1
Leaflets produced by the Council	9	15	15
Council letters to home/business	16	16	8
Notice Boards	5	8	9
Internet – Councils’ Website	1	1	10
Visits to Council Offices	10	8	20
Word of Mouth (friends, neighbours)	9	14	1
Community Forums	0	0	0
Other	2	0	0
<b>Total (Base)</b>	<b>100 (324)</b>	<b>100 (305)</b>	<b>100 (260)</b>

4.2.6 A total of 23% of respondents chose the Council’s *Viewpoint* magazine as the method by which they obtained most of their information about Council Services, activities and events, closely followed by newspapers (21%). The newspaper was by far the most popular method of obtaining information amongst Panel Members with 48% of respondents choosing this.

4.2.7 The results were aggregated ( 3 points for most useful, 2 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> most useful and 1 point for 3<sup>rd</sup> most useful) to provide an overall level of usefulness for each method of communication. The results are presented in Figure 4.3 below.

**Figure 4.3: Overall Usefulness of each Method of Communication**



4.2.8 The Council’s *Viewpoint* magazine, came out top with 372 points, this was closely followed by newspapers (325 points) and then letters (277 points) and leaflets (212 points).

*How well the Council keeps Residents Informed*

4.2.9 When respondents were asked how well they thought Erewash Borough Council kept residents informed about the services it provides, 13% of respondents felt the Council kept residents ‘very well informed’, 55% said ‘fairly well informed’, 12% said ‘neither’, 13% said ‘fairly poorly informed; and 6% felt the Council kept residents ‘very poorly informed’ about the services it provides.

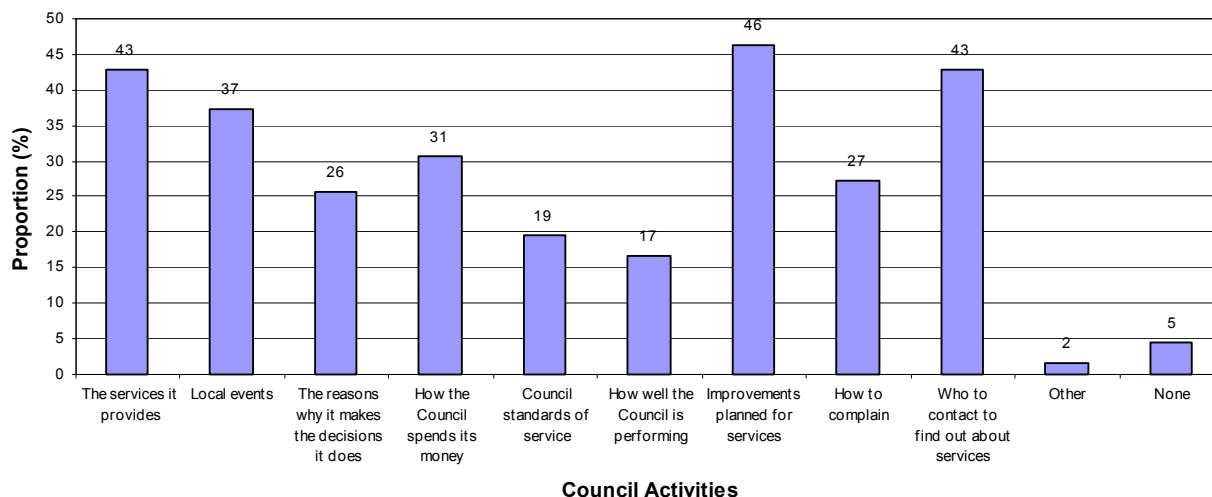
4.2.10 Notably, younger respondents felt less informed than older respondents, with 32% of those aged between 16 and 24 claiming they felt the Council kept residents fairly or very poorly informed, compared to 20% of those aged between 25 and 59 and 19% of those aged over 60.

4.2.11 The results imply that Housing Benefit Claimants feel better informed than Panel Members with 68% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents saying they thought the Council kept residents either ‘very well informed’ or ‘fairly well informed’ compared to 48% of Panel respondents.

*Council Activities for which more Information is Required*

4.2.12 The respondents were presented with a list of Council activities and asked to state which (if any) they would like more information about. The results are highlighted in Figure 4.4 below.

**Figure 4.4: The Council Activities on which Residents would like more Information**



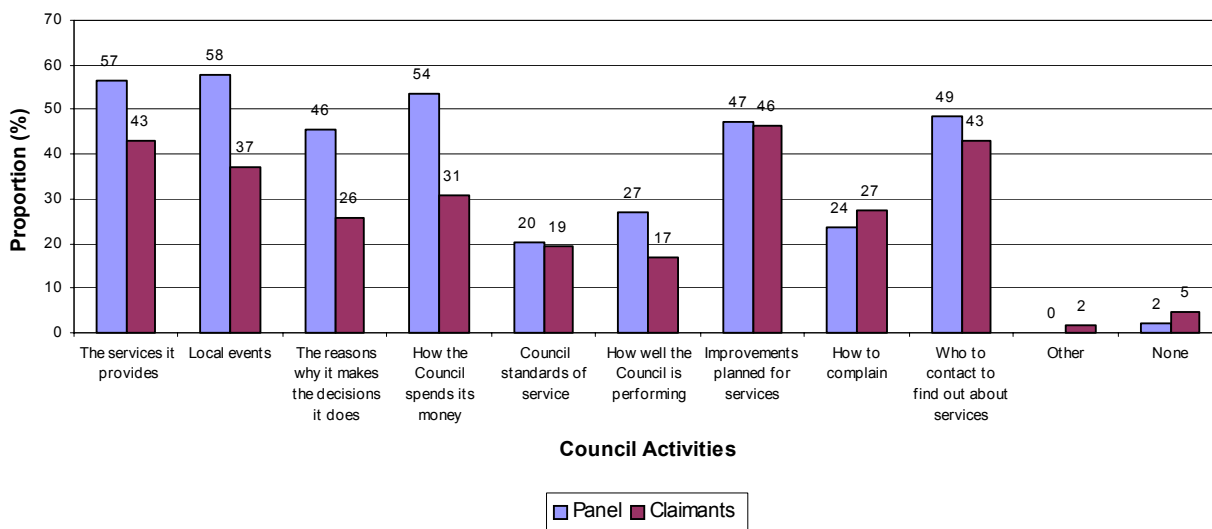
**(Base = 370 Respondents) Multiple answers could be given**

4.2.13 The respondents said they would like more information on improvements planned for services (46%), the service it provides (43%) and who to contact to find out about services (43%).

4.2.14 When compared to the results from the survey sent to Panel Members, the results suggest that overall, Panel Members seem slightly *more* interested in obtaining further information about the Council. Proportionately, more Panel Members had ticked the boxes than Claimants for the majority of Council activities (with the exception of the 'How to Complain' box) and only 2% of Panel Member respondents have ticked the 'none' box compared to 5% of Housing Benefit Claimants.

4.2.15 When the Council activities were studied individually, Housing Benefit Claimants seem less concerned about local events or how the Council spends its money when compared to Panel Members. 37% of Claimants said they would like more information about local events compared to 58% of Panel Members and 31% of Claimants said they would like more information about how the Council spends its money compared to 54% of Panel Members. These differences are highlighted in Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5: Comparison between Panel and Claimant Respondents**



**(Base = 615 Citizens Panel Respondents and 370 Benefit Claimant Respondents)**

4.2.16 Respondents were asked if they would like any 'other' information about Erewash Borough Council, comments were as follows:

- Information about Housing (4 respondents);
- Changes in and around town (1 respondent); and
- How to influence spending by Council departments (1 respondent).

### 4.3 Contacting the Council

#### *Current Methods of Contact*

4.3.1 Erewash Borough Council were interested to know the ways in which residents currently contact the Council; how often, by what means and how satisfied they were with their LAST contact with the Council.

4.3.2 In terms of the frequency of contact, 5% of respondents contacted the Council on a weekly basis, 11% contacted the Council monthly, 57% a few times a year, 11% once a year, 8% less than once a year and 6% had never contacted the Council.

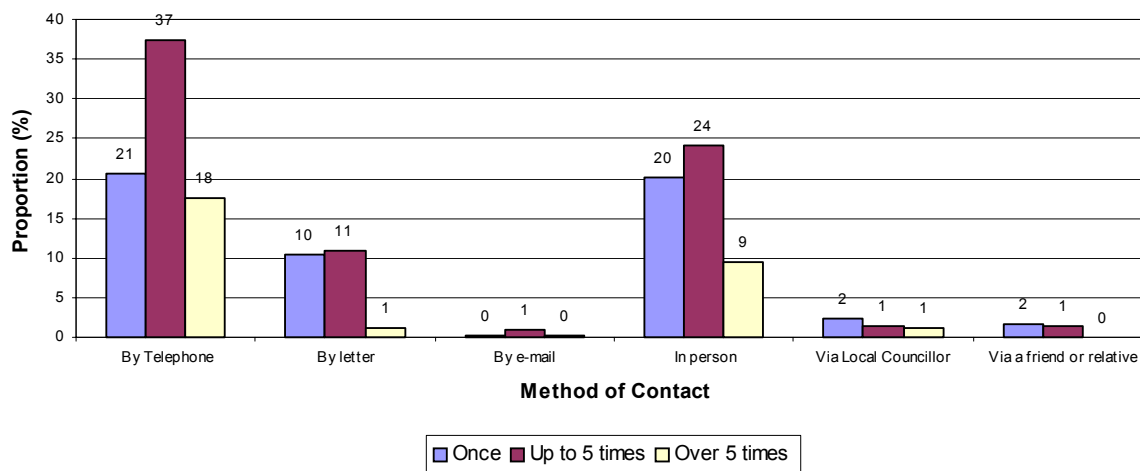
4.3.3 Respondents over 60 years of age contacted the Council slightly less when compared to younger age groups. 65% of over 60 year olds said they contacted the Council more than once a year, this compared to over 80% within the other age groups.

4.3.4 The results showed that Housing Benefit Claimants contacted the Council on a much more frequent basis than Citizens Panel Members, with over 70% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents contacting the Council at least a few times a year, compared to only 30% of Panel Members.

4.3.5 Those who never contacted the Council were excluded from the following two questions on the questionnaire.

4.3.6 Figure 4.6 below illustrates the current method and frequency of contact with the Council. Respondents were asked how they had contacted the Council offices over the last year.

**Figure 4.6: Method and Frequency of Contact with the Council**



(Base = 348 Respondents)

4.3.7 The telephone was the most popular form of current contact with the Council. Over 20% of respondents had contacted the Council by telephone once within the last year, 37% had contacted the Council by telephone up to five times within the last year and 18% had contacted the Council over five times by telephone in the last year.

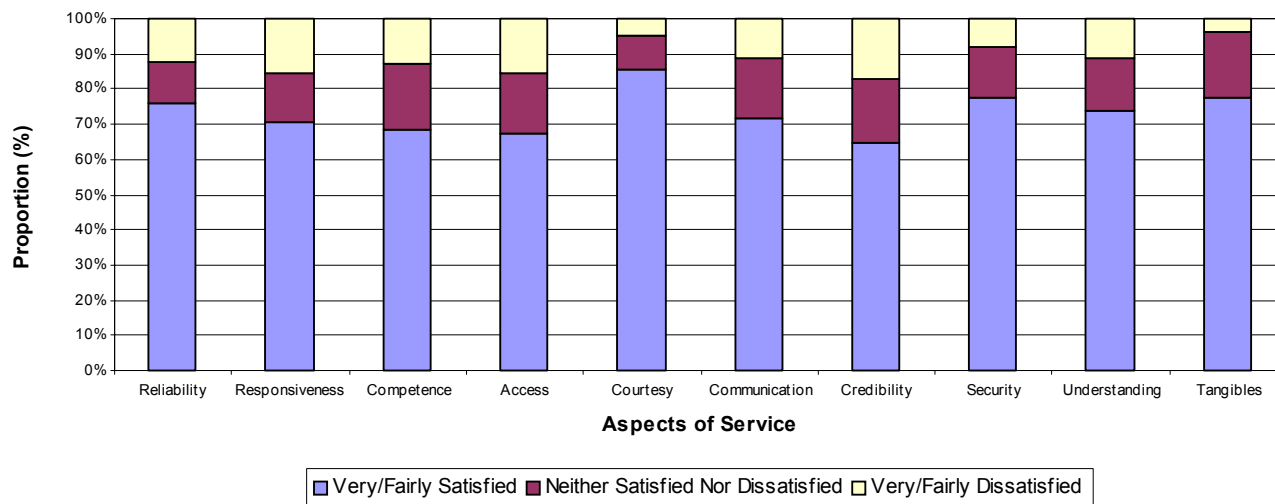
4.3.8 Those with disabilities were slightly less likely to contact the Council in person, 44% of respondents with disabilities had contacted the Council in person at least once over the last year, compared to 58% of those without disabilities.

4.3.9 A total of 55% of Housing Benefit Claimants had contacted the Council by telephone more than once over the last year, compared to only 25% of Panel Members. Furthermore, 33% of Housing Benefit Claimants had contacted the Council in person more than once over the last year, compared to just 10% of Panel Members.

*Satisfaction with LAST Contact with Council*

4.3.10 The respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with their LAST contact with the Council. They were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the service on a scale of 'very satisfied', 'fairly satisfied', 'neither satisfied or dissatisfied', 'fairly dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied'. Figure 4.7 below illustrates the results.

**Figure 4.7: Level of Satisfaction of LAST Contact with Council**



(Variable Base: see Appendix F)

4.3.11 The majority of respondents were satisfied with their last contact with the Council. The aspect of service receiving the most positive response was 'courtesy' (Were the staff polite and friendly to you?) with 86% of respondents claiming they were either very or fairly satisfied. The aspects of service receiving the most negative results were Credibility (Did you think what was being done was reasonable and acceptable?) with 17% of respondents rating their satisfaction as 'very or fairly dissatisfied' and Access (How easy was it to speak to the right person/visit the offices?) with 16% of respondents claiming they were either very or fairly dissatisfied with this aspect of the service. These results are very similar to those of the Citizens' Panel Members.

*Preferred Methods of Contact*

4.3.12 Respondents were presented with six different ways of contacting Erewash Borough Council about their services and activities and asked to consider their preferred method. They were asked to write in 1 for their top favourite, 2 for their next and 3 for their 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite. Table 4.2 below highlights the results to this question.

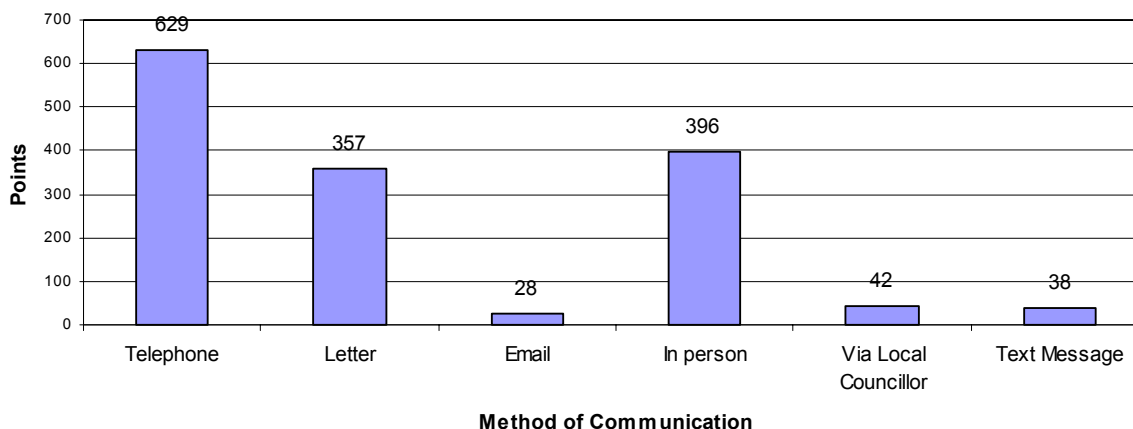
**Table 4.2: Preferred Method of Contact with Council**

	% of Respondents		
	Top Favourite	2 <sup>nd</sup> Favourite	3 <sup>rd</sup> Favourite
Telephone	59	27	9
Letter	13	32	46
Email	2	2	1
In Person	23	30	32
Via Local Councillor	1	3	7
Text Message (via mobile phone)	1	5	3
<b>Total (Base)</b>	<b>100 (271)</b>	<b>100 (234)</b>	<b>100 (219)</b>

4.3.13 Over half of the respondents (59%) chose the telephone as their most preferred method of contacting the Council, followed by 23% choosing to contact in person. These results are very similar to those for the Citizens’ Panel with the exception of email where only 2% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents chose this as their most preferred method, compared to 10% of Panel Member respondents.

4.3.14 The results were aggregated to give an overall preference (3 points for top favourite, 2 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite and 1 point for 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite). The results can be seen in Figure 4.8 below.

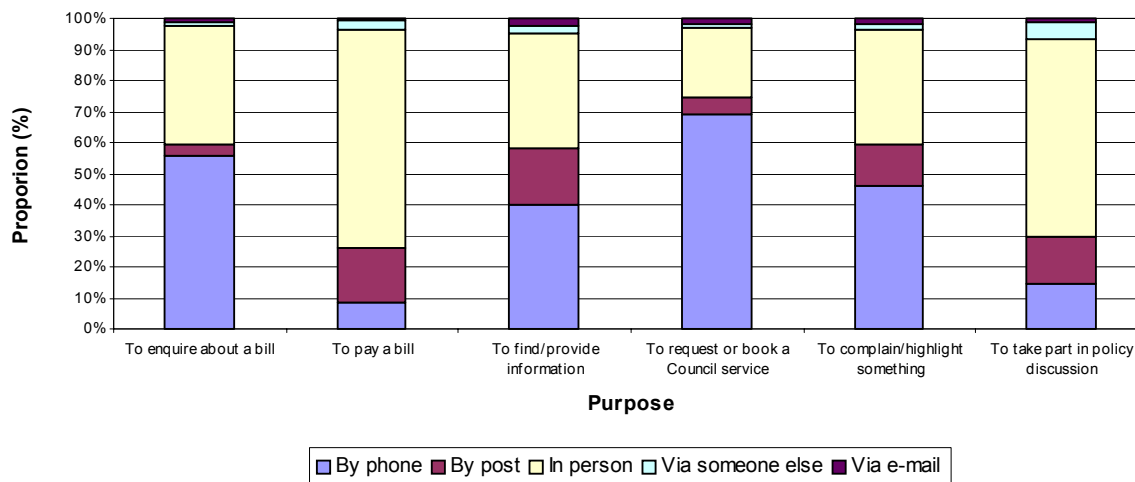
**Figure 4.8: Overall Preferred Method of Contact with Council**



4.3.15 The telephone is the most popular method of communication with 629 points, followed by ‘in person’ with 396 points and then letter with 357 points. The least popular is by email with just 28 points. The order of preference is slightly different than that for the Citizens Panel respondents where letter came before ‘in person’ and email came before ‘via local councillor’ and ‘text messaging’.

4.3.16 The respondents were then presented with a list of reasons why they might want to contact the Council and asked to consider the way in which they would prefer to contact the Council for each of the purposes listed. The results highlighted in Figure 4.9 do not include the ‘not relevant’ responses.

**Figure 4.9: Preferred Method of Contacting the Council for Different Purposes**



(Variable Base – See Appendix F)

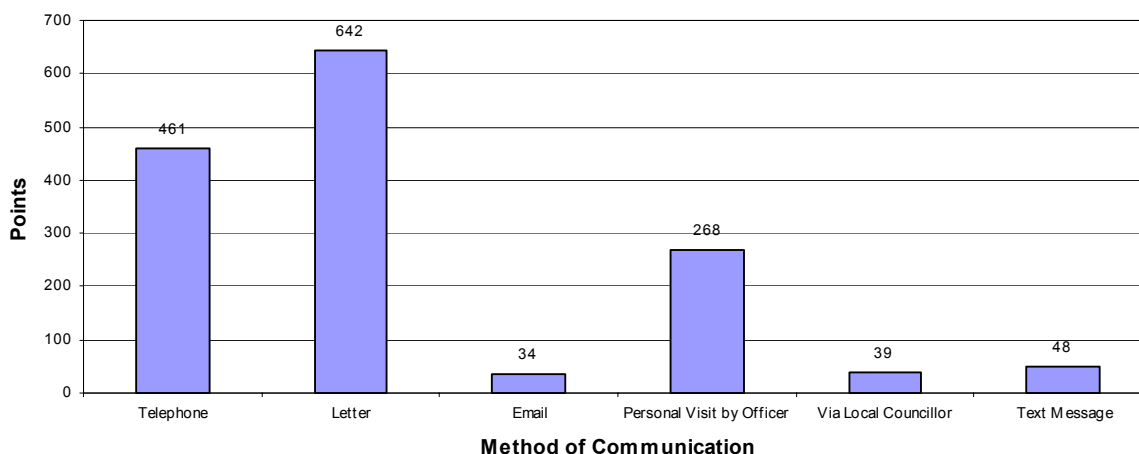
- 4.3.17 Most of the respondents indicated that they would prefer to use the telephone to request or book a Council service (69%) and to enquire about a bill (56%). Most would prefer to go in person to pay a bill (70%) and to take part in a policy discussion (64%). The results for finding and providing information were fairly evenly split between telephone (40%) and in person (37%) as was complaining/highlighting something about a Council service where 46% of respondents would prefer to do this over the telephone and 37% in person.
- 4.3.18 When compared to the results for the Citizens’ Panel respondents, it is clear that more Housing Benefit Claimant respondents prefer to deal with issues in person rather than over the telephone and are less likely to prefer contact via email.
- 4.3.19 Respondents were presented with six different ways in which Erewash Borough Council could contact them about their services and activities in the future and were asked to consider their preferred method. Again they were asked to write in 1 for their top favourite, 2 for their 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite and 3 for their 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite. Table 4.3 below highlights the results to this question.

**Table 4.3: Preferred Method of Council Contacting Respondents**

	% of Respondents		
	Top Favourite	2 <sup>nd</sup> Favourite	3 <sup>rd</sup> Favourite
Telephone	24	49	18
Letter	60	27	13
Email	3	0	3
Personal Visit by Officer	11	17	47
Via Local Councillor	1	3	9
Text Message (via mobile phone)	1	4	10
<b>Total (Base)</b>	<b>100 (271)</b>	<b>100 (233)</b>	<b>100 (213)</b>

- 4.3.20 Letter was the most preferred way of the Council contacting residents, with 60% of respondents choosing this method as their 'top favourite'. This result was very similar to that for Citizens' Panel respondents where 59% chose letter as their most preferred method.
- 4.3.21 The main difference between these results and those of the Citizens' Panel respondents was again the lack of interest in using email as a method of communication, with only 3% of respondents choosing email as their 'top favourite' or 'second favourite' compared to 24% of Panel Member respondents.
- 4.3.22 Again the results have been aggregated to give an overall preference (3 points for top favourite, 2 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite and 1 point for 3<sup>rd</sup> favourite). The results can be seen in Figure 4.10 below.

**Figure 4.10: Overall Preferred Method of Council Contacting Residents**



- 4.3.23 The respondents preferred method of contact was by letter (642 points) followed by telephone (461 points). Least popular was email with only 34 points.

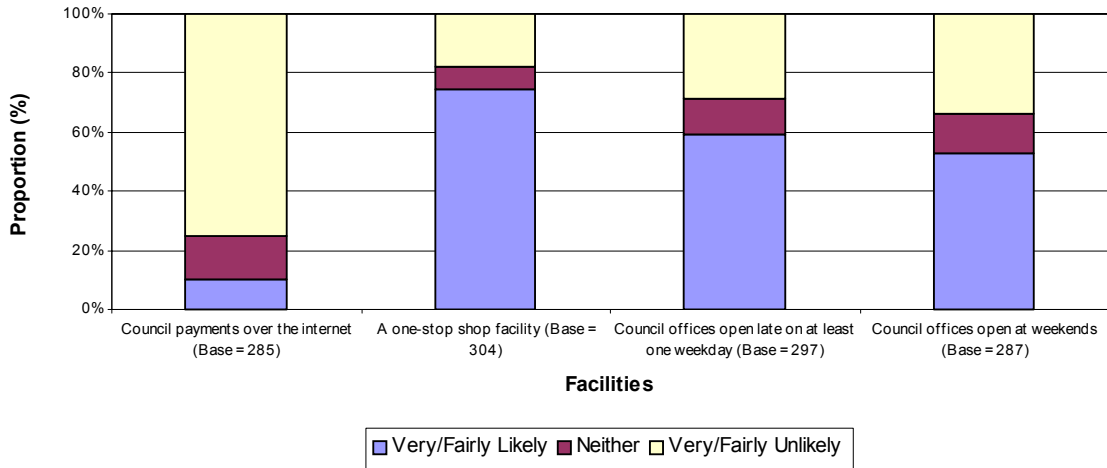
*Other Facilities*

- 4.3.24 Erewash Borough Council was interested to find out to what extent residents would make use of a number of facilities if they were provided. The facilities are listed below:

- Council payments over the Internet (e.g. council tax, direct debits, hiring of facilities etc.);
- A one-stop shop facility (where a whole range of Council services can be accessed at the same place during one visit);
- Council offices open late on at least one weekday; and
- Council offices open at weekends.

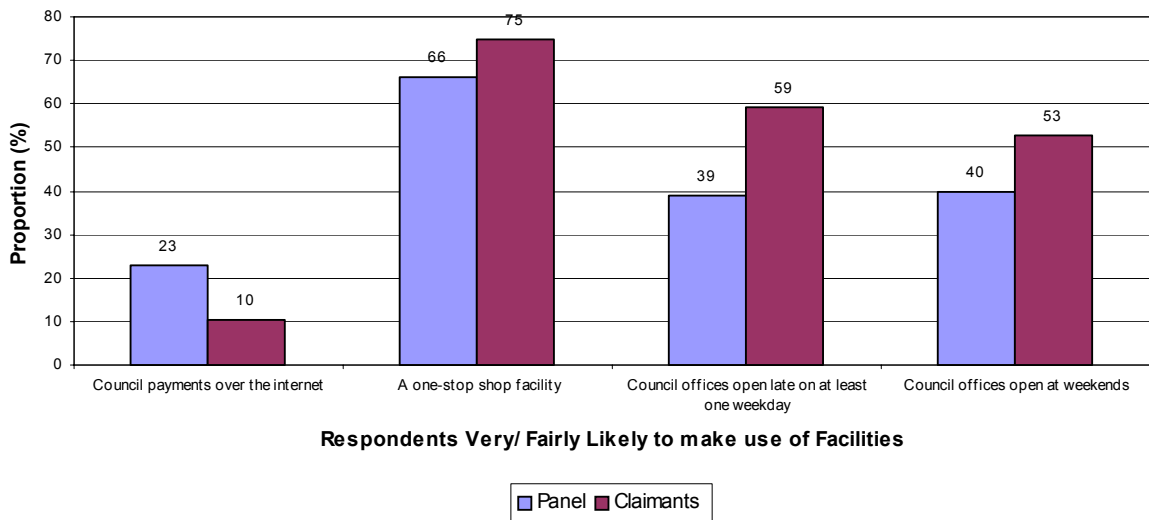
- 4.3.25 The results are highlighted in Figure 4.11.

**Figure 4.11: The Extent to which Residents would make use of Facilities**



4.3.26 Respondents felt they were most likely to make use of a one-stop-shop (with 75% of respondents saying they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to use this facility) and least likely to make use of Council payments over the Internet (with 75% of respondents saying they were 'fairly unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to use this facility). These results are fairly similar to those from the Citizens' Panel respondents, as shown below in Figure 4.12 below

**Figure 4.12 Comparison between Panel and Claimant Respondents**

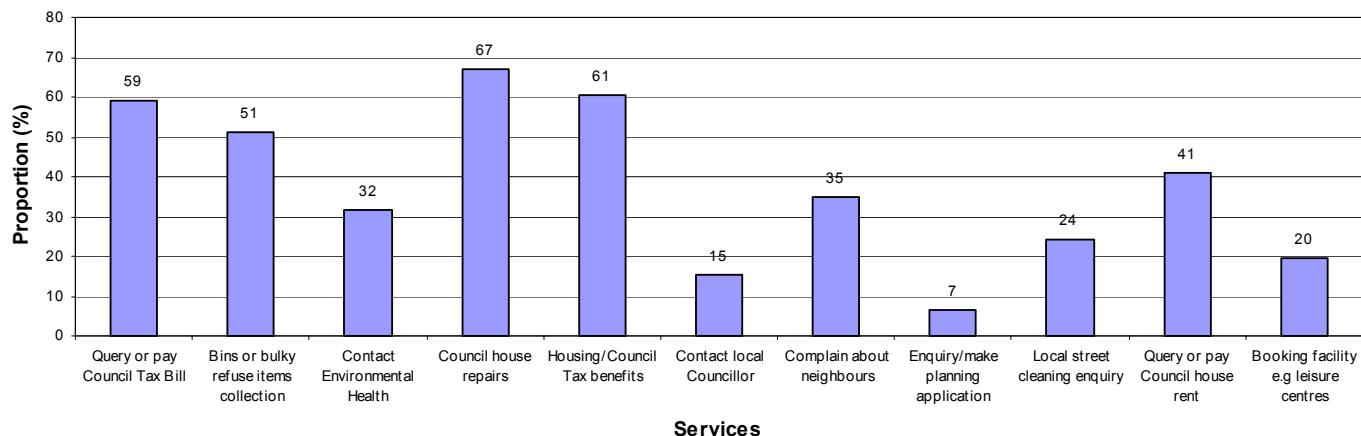


4.3.27 Benefit Claimant respondents were slightly more likely to make use of the facilities with the exception of Council payments over the Internet.

4.3.28 The respondents who answered 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to using Council offices at the weekend (152 respondents) were then asked which type of services

they would like to be able to access at weekends. The results are highlighted in Figure 4.13 below.

**Figure 4.13: Types of Services Residents would like to Access at Weekend**



**(Base = 152 Respondents)**

4.3.29 A large number of respondents wishing to use Council offices at weekends said they would be interested in accessing services such as Council house repairs (67%), housing/Council tax benefits (61%), to query or pay Council tax bills (59%) and bins or bulky refuse items collection (51%).

4.3.30 When compared to the Citizens' Panel responses, it is clear that Housing Benefit Claimants are much more interested in accessing the following services:

- Housing / Council Tax Benefits;
- Council House Repairs; and
- Query or pay Council house rent.

4.3.31 Conversely, they are less interested in accessing the following services:

- Booking facility e.g. leisure centres; and
- Enquiry / make planning application.

#### *Text Messages*

4.3.32 Respondents were asked how interested they would be in receiving text messages from the Council for example about services of interest, leisure facilities, waste collection and finances. Only 10% of respondents said they would be very interested in receiving text messages, 19% said they would be quite interested and 71% said they would not be interested. These results are similar to those of Citizens' Panel respondents although slightly more Housing Benefit Claimants were interested in receiving text messages.

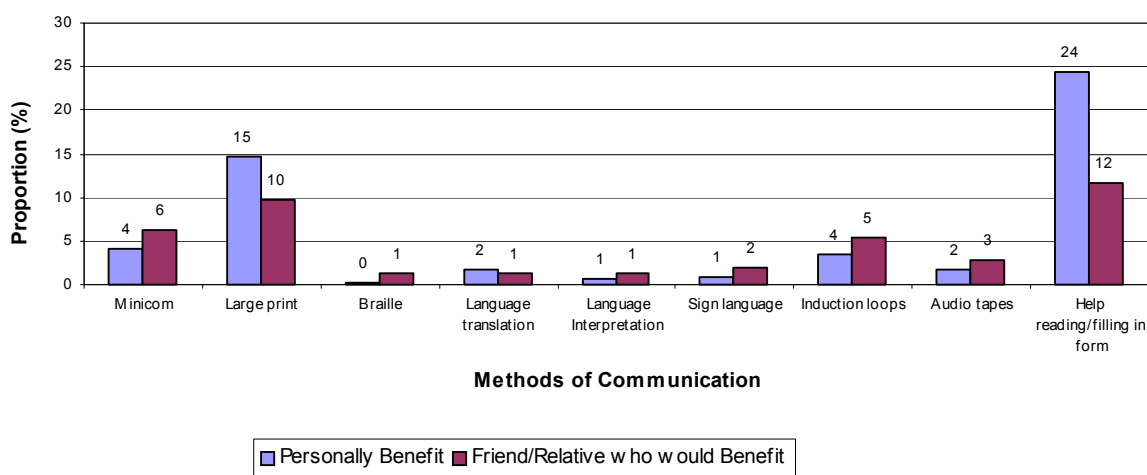
4.3.33 Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger respondents were much more interested in receiving text messages with 63% of 16-24 year olds saying they would be very

or quite interested, compared to 36% of 25-59 year olds and only 12% of those aged over 60.

*Better Communication*

4.3.34 Erewash Borough Council was interested to find out if they could communicate better with their residents. Respondents were presented with a list of nine different forms of communication and asked if they could benefit personally from them or if they knew a friend or relative who could benefit. Figure 4.14 highlights the results.

**Figure 4.14: Better Communication with the Council**



(Base = 370 Respondents)

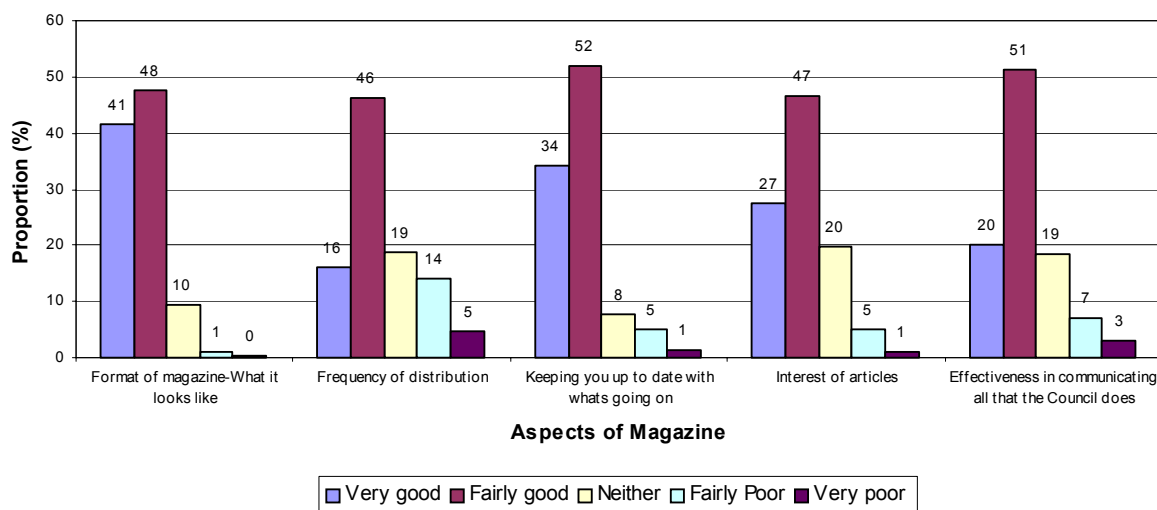
4.3.35 Relatively few respondents felt they could benefit personally from most of the methods of communication listed with the exception of 'help reading/filling in forms' where 24% of respondents said they could benefit and 'large print' where 15% of respondents said they could benefit. A relatively low number of respondents knew of a friend or relative who could benefit from the communication improvements. These results are fairly similar to those of the Citizens' Panel.

**4.4 The Viewpoint Magazine**

4.4.1 The *Viewpoint* magazine is produced by the Council for distribution to all residents within the Borough of Erewash on a bi-annual basis (i.e. 2 per year – July and November). The respondents were asked if they received the Council's magazine, 66% said they did receive it (slightly higher than the Citizens' Panel respondents – 58%) 29% said they did not receive it and 5% did not know.

4.4.2 Those who did receive *Viewpoint* were asked to rate the quality of certain aspects of the magazine. The results are presented in Figure 4.15 below.

**Figure 4.15: Aspects of *Viewpoint* Magazine**



(Base = 235 Respondents)

4.4.3 Overall, respondents rated the *Viewpoint* magazine quite highly with the majority choosing 'very good' or 'fairly good' for most aspects. The aspect causing most dissatisfaction was the 'frequency of distribution' with 19% of respondents rating this aspect as 'very poor' or 'fairly poor'. These results, again, are very similar to those from the Citizens' Panel respondents.

4.4.4 When those who received the magazine were asked approximately how long they kept each issue, 1% of respondents threw it away immediately, 26% threw it away after reading it, 21% kept it for around a week, 22% kept it for around a month, 25% kept it for over a month and 5% didn't know.

**4.5 The Internet**

4.5.1 The Council was interested in discovering the potential for new forms of communication with their residents, particularly the use of the Internet.

4.5.2 Respondents were asked if they had access to the Internet. The results are presented in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4: Access to the Internet**

Internet Access	% of Respondents
Access the Internet at home	11
Access the Internet at work	0
Access the Internet at home and work	0
Someone else can access the Internet for me	7
Likely to have access in the near future	4
Not likely to have Internet access	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

(Base = 370 Respondents)

4.5.3 Only 18% of respondents currently had access to the Internet in some form or another (i.e. at home, work or via someone else) and 77% of respondents claimed they were unlikely to have Internet access. Respondents aged over 60

were least likely to have Internet access in the future with over 90% of this age group saying they were unlikely to have access compared to 68% of 16-24 year olds and 67% of 25-59 year olds.

- 4.5.4 These results are very different from those of Citizens' Panel Members where 64% of respondents currently had access to the Internet and only 33% said they were unlikely to have access in the future.
- 4.5.5 Those who had said they were unlikely to have Internet access in the future were excluded from the next three questions on the questionnaire.
- 4.5.6 The remaining respondents (85 respondents) were asked how interested they would be in receiving emails from the Council on press releases, news letters and information on Council events. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Potential of Communication via Email**

Emails	% of Respondents		
	Weekly Press Releases	Monthly News letters	Council Events
Very Interested	18	18	27
Quite Interested	33	38	34
Not Interested	49	43	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(Base = 85 Respondents)

- 4.5.7 Over half of the respondents asked were interested in receiving weekly press releases (51%) and monthly news letters (56%) and slightly more respondents (61%) were interested in receiving emails about Council events.
- 4.5.8 The Council has recently developed its web-site ([www.erewash.gov.uk](http://www.erewash.gov.uk)), and was interested to know how many respondents were aware of the web-site, who had used it and what they thought about it. Of the 85 respondents who were asked this question, 14% were aware of the Council's web-site and had used it, 27% were aware of it but hadn't used it and 59% were not aware of the web-site. These were very similar to the Citizens' Panel results.
- 4.5.9 Those who had used the web-site (12 respondents) were asked how they rated various aspects. The results are presented in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6: The Council's Web-Site**

	No of Respondents		
	Content of Web-site	Ease of-use-user friendly?	Style of Web-site- does it look good?
Very good	2	4	2
Fairly Good	6	4	5
Neither	2	1	3
Fairly poor	0	2	1
Very poor	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>

(Base = 12 Respondents)

- 4.5.10 Of the few that had used the web-site, the majority were impressed with it, rating different aspects as either 'very good' or 'fairly good'.

#### 4.6 Complaints Procedure

4.6.1 Respondents were asked if they would know how to make a complaint to Erewash Borough Council if they needed to do so. The results were as follows:

- Yes and I have made a complaint 29%
- Yes, but I have never made a complaint 31%
- No, I would not know how to make a complaint 40%

4.6.2 Slightly more males (69%) said they would know how to make a complaint, compared to 55% of females.

4.6.3 When compared to the results of the Citizens' Panel respondents, slightly more Housing Benefit Claimant respondents had made a complaint to Erewash Borough Council (Citizens Panel = 21%).

4.6.4 Those who had made a complaint (107 respondents) were then asked how they made their complaint and how satisfied they were with the complaints procedure. 67% of complaints had been made by telephone, 15% direct to a member of staff in person, 11% by letter, 6% to Members/Councillors and 1 % via the general comments card 'Have your Say'. These results are very similar to those from Citizens' Panel members.

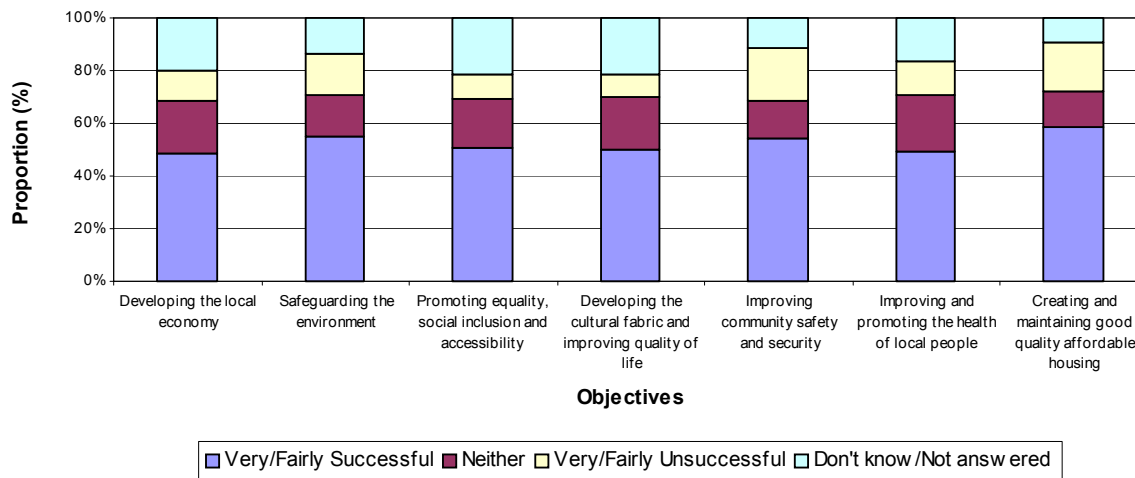
4.6.5 Over half of the respondents were fairly satisfied (56%) with the complaints procedure, 15% were very satisfied, 15% were fairly dissatisfied and 11% were very dissatisfied.

4.6.6 The Housing Benefit Claimant respondents were far more satisfied with the complaints procedure than the Citizens' Panel respondents, with over 70% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents stating that they were either very or fairly satisfied with the procedure, compared to just 46% of Citizens' Panel respondents. Despite this, a relatively high proportion (26%) of respondents were dissatisfied.

#### Opinion of the Council

4.6.7 Respondents were presented with a list of objectives and asked how successful they felt Erewash Borough Council was in dealing with each. Figure 4.16 shows the results.

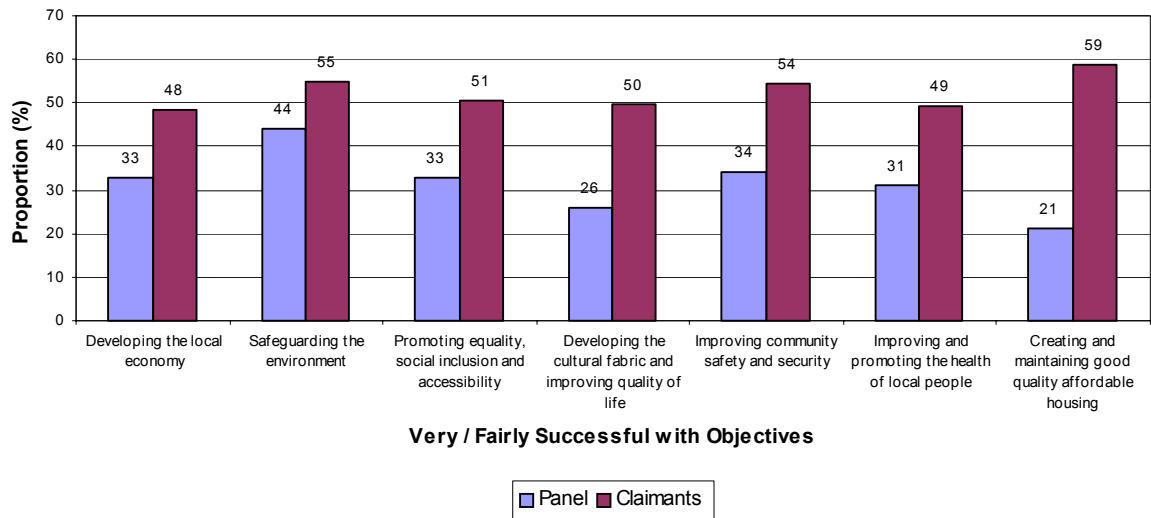
**Figure 4.16: Council’s Success with Objectives**



**(Base: 370 Respondents)**

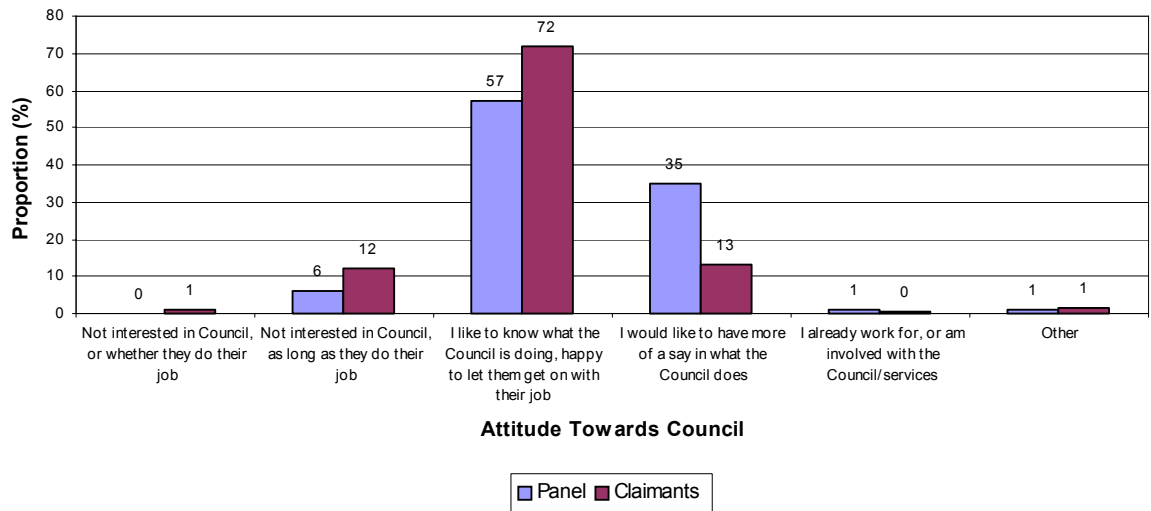
- 4.6.8 Around half of the respondents felt the Council was very or fairly successful with all the objectives listed. The objectives receiving the most negative response were ‘Improving community safety and security’ and ‘Creating and maintaining good quality affordable housing’ with 20% and 19% respectively saying they felt the Council was very or fairly unsuccessful in dealing with these objectives.
- 4.6.9 A fairly large proportion of respondents (between 9% and 22%) answered ‘don’t know’ for each of the above categories, this suggests there needs to be more publicity about the Council’s success in meeting each objective.
- 4.6.10 When compared with the Citizens’ Panel results (see Figure 4.17) it is apparent that Benefit Claimant respondents feel the Council are more successful in achieving its objectives than the Panel respondents.

**Figure 4.17: Comparison between Panel and Claimant Respondents**



4.6.11 The respondents were then presented with a list of five statements and asked to choose which best described their attitude towards Erewash Borough Council. The results (for both Citizens Panel and Claimant respondents) are highlighted in Figure 4.18 below.

**Figure 4.18: Attitude towards Erewash Borough Council**



**(Base = 615 Panel Respondents and 352 Claimant Respondents)**

4.6.12 The vast majority of Claimant respondents (72%) said they like to know what the Council is doing but are happy to let them get on with their job. Only 13% of

Benefit Claimant respondents said they would like to have more of a say in what the Council does compared to 35% of Citizens’ Panel respondents, this suggests that those on the Panel are the sort of people who like to be more involved.

4.6.13 Other comments included the following: (1 respondent each)

- You do what you want to regardless;
- I do not really understand the role of the Council;
- I am quite satisfied; and
- The Council are not interested.

4.6.14 Finally, the respondents were asked to suggest how Erewash Borough Council could improve its communication with residents and businesses. A total of 64 responses were received and are listed in Appendix D. The most popular suggestions are listed in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: How the Council could Improve its Communication**

Comments	No. of Comments
More frequent communication (posted to residents’ homes) e.g. newsletters, leaflets, letters, reports	14
Council Inspectors should call to see if anything needs doing/inspect what has been done. More visits from Estates Office	7
Have departments that communicate with each other/improved communication/better management	7
Have a van going round different areas on a monthly basis – explaining what services the Council can offer residents/businesses/more visits	4
A more personal approach – pleasant manner, not just standard excuses, better communication skills of staff	4
Get more involved with respective communities/ appoint independent liaison officers	4

## 5 Leisure Centre Usage (Citizens' Panel Survey Only)

### 5.1 Introduction

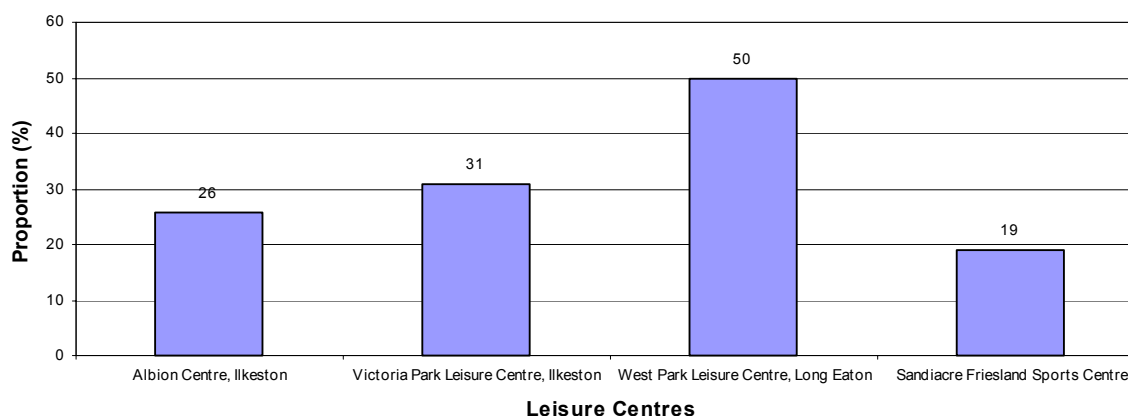
5.1.1 The Council was interested to know to what extent their leisure centres were currently being used and measures that would encourage greater use.

### 5.2 Leisure Centre Usage

5.2.1 The respondents were asked if they had visited any of the Borough's leisure centres in the past 12 months. A total of 63% of the 615 respondents had visited the leisure centres in the past 12 months and 36% had not. Notably, 62% of those aged over 60 had not visited any of the leisure centres over the last 12 months (this compares to 27% of all other respondents) and 55% of those with a disability had not visited any of the leisure centres compared to 34% of those without a disability.

5.2.2 The respondents were then presented with the names of four different leisure centres and asked which (if any) they visited or would consider visiting. The results are highlighted in Figure 5.1 below.

**Figure 5.1: Centres that Respondents Visit or would Consider Visiting**

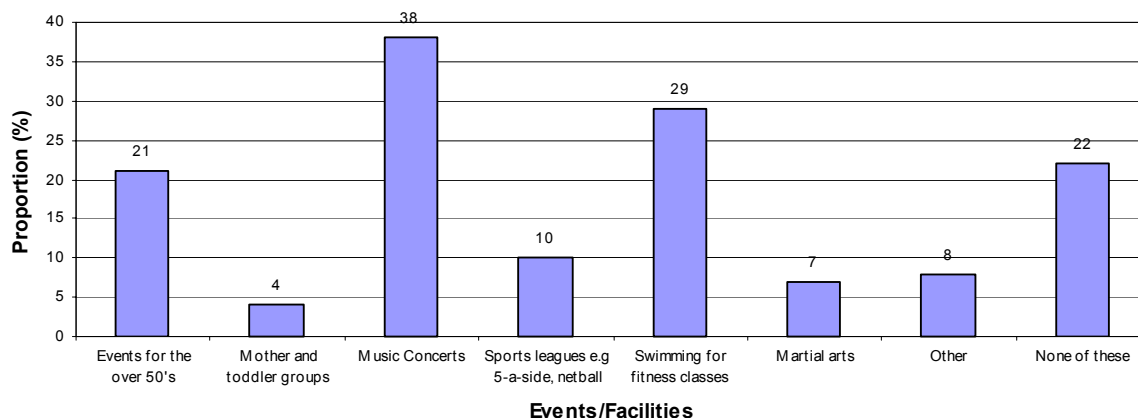


(Base = 615 Respondents) Multiple answers could be given

5.2.3 The most popular leisure centre of those listed was West Park Leisure Centre in Long Eaton, with 50% of respondents visiting this centre already or saying that they would consider visiting it.

### 5.3 Measures that would Encourage Greater Use

5.3.1 The respondents were then presented with a list of six events/facilities and asked which (if any) would encourage them to visit the leisure centres in the Borough more frequently. The results can be seen in Figure 5.2 below.

**Figure 5.2: Measures that would Encourage Greater Use of Centres**

**(Base = 615 Respondents) Multiple answers could be given**

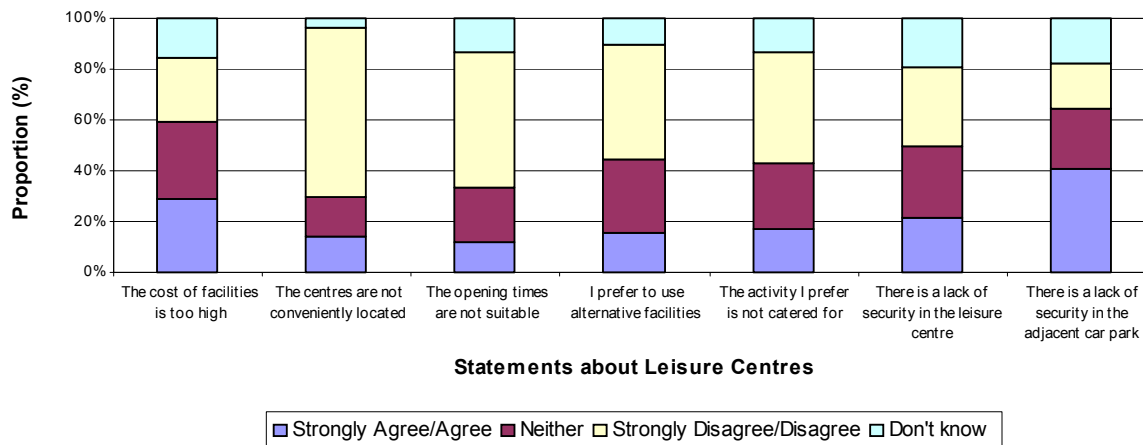
5.3.2 Music concerts were the most popular of the events/facilities listed amongst all age groups with 38% of all respondents saying that this would encourage them to visit the leisure centres more frequently, followed by swimming for fitness classes (29%). Women were more likely to visit leisure centres for swimming for fitness classes than men (26% of females compared to 19% of males), whereas men were more likely to visit for sports leagues (11% of males compared to 4% of females).

5.3.3 The events/facilities mentioned under 'other' are listed in Appendix E and include the following:

- Yoga / pilates (5 respondents);
- Family sessions (5 respondents);
- A night club (4 respondents);
- Shows (e.g. craft, animal) (3 respondents);
- Fitness classes (3 respondents);
- Bowls (3 respondents) and
- Spas (3 respondents).

5.3.4 The respondents were then presented with a list of seven statements about the leisure centres in the Borough and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each. The results are presented in Figure 5.3 below.

**Figure 5.3: The Quality of Leisure Centres in the Borough**



(Base = 615 Respondents)

- 5.3.5 The results show that 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that there is a lack of security in the adjacent car parks at leisure centres and 29% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the cost of leisure facilities is too high.
- 5.3.6 The majority of respondents (66%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the centres are not conveniently located and 54% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the opening times are not suitable.
- 5.3.7 The large number of respondents answering 'don't know' for certain statements e.g. The cost of facilities is too high (16%) suggests there needs to be more information provided about facilities at leisure centres.
- 5.3.8 Finally, the respondents were asked if they had any additional comments to make about leisure centres. A total of 122 comments were received and are listed in Appendix E of this report. A few of the more popular comments are listed in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1: Additional Comments about Leisure Centres**

Comments	No. of Comments
Staff are helpful, Very satisfied, Impressed, Good value for money	19
Could be cleaner especially swimming pools/ changing rooms/ toilets	16
Insufficient car park spaces and security, need better lighting, bad in wet weather, should be free, pay stations too far away	17
Hours (especially for swimming pools) are very limited	9
Facilities are so expensive (they are on a par with private facilities but not as good)	7
Improve existing facilities rather than building new ones	5
Access for disabled needs to be improved	4

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

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### 6.1 Survey Aims

6.1.1 This postal survey with Erewash Citizens' Panel aimed to gather information on the following:

- The ways in which residents currently contact the Council;
- The preferred method of contact between residents and the Council;
- The quality of the Councils' Viewpoint magazine;
- The potential of developing the Internet as a means of contact;
- The success of the complaints procedure adopted by the Council;
- The overall opinion of the Council;
- How the views of socially excluded groups differ from that of the 'average citizen';
- Leisure centre usage within the Borough; and
- Measures that would encourage greater use of leisure centres.

### 6.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

#### ***Information about the Council***

6.2.1 The majority of Citizens' Panel respondents (78%) said they found out about Council services, activities and events through newspapers (including the free local newspapers). Just over half of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents (51%) found out about Council services through the Council's *Viewpoint* magazine, closely followed by Word of Mouth (49%), Newspapers (48%), Leaflets (41%) and Letters (41%).

6.2.2 The Council could perhaps utilise newspapers more as a means of communication by using advertising space to inform people about forthcoming events and list services with contact telephone numbers.

#### ***Current Methods of Contact***

6.2.3 Overall, there was relatively little contact with the Council, only 5% of Citizens Panel respondents contact the Council once a month or more and 24% had never contacted the Council. However, it could be that the respondents may contact the Council indirectly (i.e. through schools, leisure centres etc.) without realising that they are actually doing so.

6.2.4 Housing Benefit Claimants had more regular contact with the Council with 16% of respondents contacting the council at least once a month and only 6% who had never contacted the Council .

6.2.5 The majority of contact over the last year had been via the telephone (56% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 76% of Benefit Claimant respondents had contacted the Council by telephone at least once within the last year.)

6.2.6 Overall, respondents were satisfied with their last contact with the Council.

### ***Preferred Method of Contact***

- 6.2.7 The majority of respondents preferred to contact the Council via the telephone (with 58% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 59% of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents choosing this option as their top favourite).
- 6.2.8 When asked the preferred method for different purposes, telephone was the preferred option for the following:
- To request or book a service (79% Citizens' Panel, 69% Benefit Claimants); and
  - To enquire about a bill (70% Citizens' Panel, 56% Benefit Claimants).
- 6.2.9 Most Citizens' Panel respondents would prefer to pay a bill either in person (39%) or by post (39%) and the vast majority of Housing Benefit Claimant respondents would prefer to pay a bill in person (70%). Most would prefer to take part in policy discussions and consultation in person (63% Citizens' Panel, 64% Benefit Claimants).
- 6.2.10 These results suggest resources be directed into improving telephone communication so that those contacting the Council by telephone receive a prompt, courteous, efficient and effective service.
- 6.2.11 The preferred method of contact **from** the Council was by letter, with 59% of Citizens' Panel respondents choosing this method as their top favourite and 60% of Housing Benefit Claimants.

### ***Other Facilities***

- 6.2.12 Respondents felt they were most likely to make use of a one-stop shop (66% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 75% Benefit Claimant respondents likely to use this) but were least likely to make use of Council payments over the Internet (67% of Citizens Panel respondents and 75% of Benefit Claimant respondents unlikely to use this.) The Council should therefore direct resources at the preferred facilities.
- 6.2.13 Respondents were uninterested in receiving text messages from the Council (80% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 71% of Benefit Claimant respondents - uninterested) and most didn't think they would personally benefit from any improvements in communication such as minicom, induction loops etc.

### ***The Council's Viewpoint Magazine***

- 6.2.14 Over 40% of Citizens' Panel respondents and over 50% of Benefit Claimant respondents said they currently found out about Council services, activities and events through the *Viewpoint* magazine. The magazine could perhaps be used to better potential by ensuring a wider distribution, more frequent distribution and including information such as Council contacts with telephone numbers, and more news and information on forthcoming events.

### ***The Internet***

- 6.2.15 The potential of using the Internet as a means of providing information on Council Services and activities is huge, especially given that over 60% of Citizens' Panel respondents have access to the Internet and a large number of them are interested in receiving emails from the Council (press releases, newsletters and event information). Many respondents, however, seem to

distrust the Internet to do certain things such as paying a bill, this may change as general use of the Internet becomes more widespread.

6.2.16 In stark contrast to the Citizens' Panel results, only 18% of Benefit Claimant respondents currently have access to the Internet and 77% said they were unlikely to have access. More resources clearly need to be directed into making the Internet accessible to less advantaged people.

6.2.17 Those who had Internet access were asked if they were aware of the Council's web-site. Only 17% of Citizens' Panel respondents and 14% of Benefit Claimant respondents had used the Council's web-site but 47% of Panel respondents and 41% of Benefit Claimant respondents were aware of it. Those who had used it rated it quite highly.

### ***Complaints Procedure***

6.2.18 Over 40% of Citizens' Panel respondents and Benefit Claimant respondents said they would not know how to make a complaint to Erewash Borough Council if they needed to do so. This clearly needs to be addressed. The majority of people who had made a complaint had done so over the telephone (63% Citizens Panel, 67% Benefit Claimants), and only one person from both surveys had used the general comments card 'Have Your Say'. Of those who had complained, 45% of Panel respondents and 71% of Benefit Claimants were satisfied with the complaints procedure, but worryingly, 44% of Panel respondents and 26% of Benefit Claimants were dissatisfied.

### ***Attitude towards the Council***

6.2.19 The majority of respondents (57% Citizens' Panel, 71% Benefit Claimants) like to know what the Council is doing but are happy to let them get on with their job, however, 37% of Citizens' Panel respondents would like to have more of a say on what the Council does and the service it provides. This compares to only 13% of Benefit Claimant respondents, suggesting that those on the panel are the sort of people who like to be more involved.

### ***Leisure Centre Usage***

6.2.20 63% of respondents had visited the Borough's leisure centres in the past 12 months. Notably, 62% of respondents over the age of 60 hadn't visited them but in a later question 77% of this age group said they would be interested in visiting leisure centres if there were more events for the over 50s. More resources need to be directed to this age group.

6.2.21 Over 35% of respondents said music concerts would encourage them to visit the leisure centres more frequently.

6.2.22 A total of 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that there is a lack of security in car parks at leisure centres, however the majority of respondents felt that the centres were conveniently located and that the opening times were suitable. More resources need to be directed to the security of car parks.