



**Aberdeenshire Council**

**2010 Residents Survey**

**Kincardine and Mearns Area Report**

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

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## **SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FOR KINCARDINE AND MEARNs**

Overall satisfaction levels with the Council as a provider of local services are below those of the Council as a whole but improved more rapidly than the Council average between 2008 and 2010.

Ratings for a variety of aspects of customer service and communications are also slightly poorer than those achieved by the Council as a whole.

Ratings for the achievement of certain community wellbeing priorities are less positive in Kincardine and Mearns than in the Council area as a whole (this is particularly the case in relation to recreational opportunities, a number of aspects of anti-social behaviour, the range of housing opportunities and, especially, road safety). Ratings for a number of aspects of towns and villages are broadly in line with the Council average but they are slightly poorer for availability of affordable housing (whether to rent or buy).

Having said this, overall ratings for quality of life are marginally better in Kincardine and Mearns than the Council average.

The achievement of strategic priorities associated with the jobs and the economy theme are more positively rated in Kincardine and Mearns than the Council average.

Ratings in Kincardine and Mearns for the achievement of some Lifelong Learning priorities is also poorer than average (mainly with regard to issues such as youth work / participation and sports and leisure activities).

This is also true with regard to the achievement of a range of strategic priorities under the Sustainable Environment theme.

The ratings achieved for a range of universal services in Kincardine and Mearns are, however, very much in line with ratings amongst respondents from the Council area as a whole. Kincardine and Mearns ratings are slightly better than average for winter gritting / snow clearing and slightly worse than average for road maintenance and recycling).

Ratings amongst actual users of a number of specific services are more positive in Kincardine and Mearns than the Council average (this is the case, for example, in relation to schools, before and after school care, youth clubs and services and Council housing services). Ratings for planning and building control are somewhat lower than average, however.

Kincardine and Mearns residents have similar views to residents of the Council area as a whole as regards services that should be prioritised for budget protection although they place even greater emphasis than average on the protection of refuse collection and road maintenance services.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### ***BACKGROUND***

- 1.1 This 2010 Residents survey is the sixth full-scale survey of residents' views which Aberdeenshire Council has undertaken since 2000 (such surveys have now been undertaken in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010). Specific in-depth items of research have also been conducted in the intervening years (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009). The survey repeats a number of questions from the previous surveys, to allow for tracking of changes in perceptions over time. In some cases, it is possible to track changes back to the 2000 survey.
- 1.2 As in previous years, the results obtained for each of the Council's six Administrative Areas have been compared to the overall results from all responses received across Aberdeenshire Council as a whole. This report sets out the results for **Kincardine and Mearns**.
- 1.3 Until 2008, the survey questionnaire had evolved over time, with only fairly modest changes being made. However, for 2010 much more substantial changes were made both to capture information on perceived achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and to capture new information on budget priorities and charging issues. The resultant questionnaire was more comprehensive in nature but also more challenging to complete. It forms Appendix 1 of this report (appendices have been supplied under separate cover).
- 1.4 The original broad aims and objectives of the 2010 Residents' Survey were:
- To identify issues of importance to Aberdeenshire residents.
  - To determine perceptions of the Council's performance against these priorities.
  - To track changes in residents' perception over time.
  - To provide an overall "headline" measure of public satisfaction.
  - To consider residents' priorities for the future, with particular reference to future budget priorities.
  - To assist the process of setting goals, and planning actions, for future improvement.

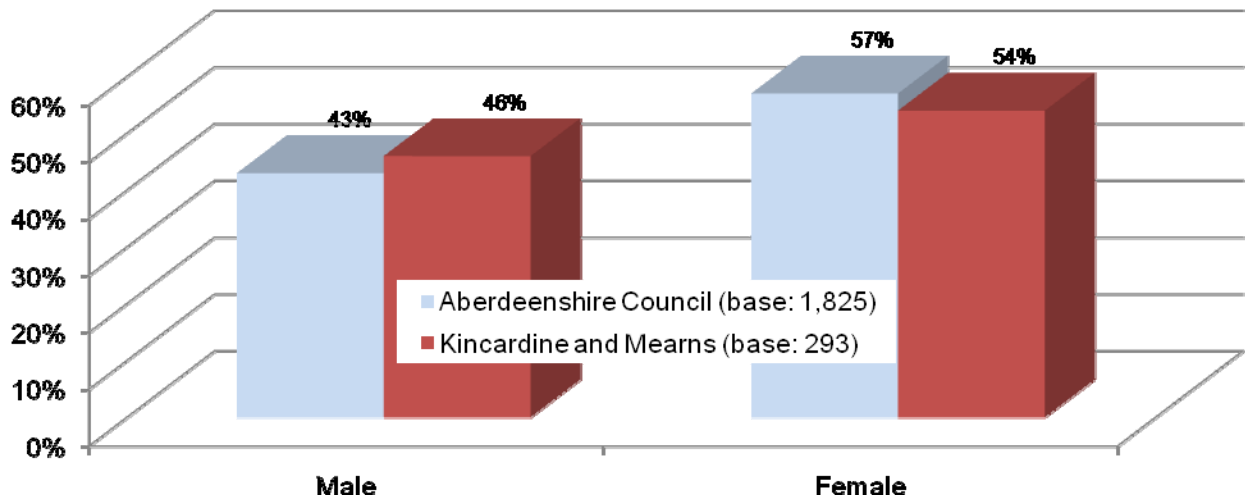
These broad aims were pursued in the first instance through the large scale postal survey as described below. An additional element of the survey for 2010 was a survey of young people, which included both an online response option (which school pupils were encouraged to complete) and self-completion surveys completed by young people engaging with the Council's youth services. In many cases the results of these two surveys have been merged to provide an overall view although there were also a number of questions asked in only one or other of the surveys. The survey of young people, however, did not gather data on respondents' geographical location so these results cannot be ascribed to a particular Administrative Area.

### ***SURVEY RESPONSE***

- 1.5 The "main" survey was conducted on a postal basis, with a total of 12,000 invitations being issued, at random, to households in Aberdeenshire, selected to be representative of the population in the Council's six administrative areas. This approach was similar to that undertaken in previous years. The fieldwork period covered late-May and June 2010.
- 1.6 A total of 1,799 responses were received for this survey including 1,780 postal and 19 online responses. This represents a response rate of approximately 15%. This is within the anticipated range of response rates for surveys of this nature which IBP would normally cite at between 10% and 20%. It is, however, lower than response rates achieved for the Council's previous residents' surveys, which ranged between 19% and 26% between 2002 and 2008. The main variable to have changed is the questionnaire content. A number of blank questionnaires were returned leaving 1,734 usable questionnaires. For the **Kincardine and Mearns** area specifically, a total of 302 completed questionnaires were received from a total of 2,023 invitations, giving a response rate of approximately 15%, in line with the Council average.
- 1.7 There were a total of 161 responses to the young person's survey including 107 hard copy and 54 online responses. Taken together with the main survey, the total sample size is therefore 1,895.
- 1.8 For illustrative purposes, a randomly selected sample of 1,895 people provides a level of accuracy of +/- 2.24% for the Aberdeenshire population as a whole, which compares to a confidence interval of +/- 1.86% for the 2008 survey. The response numbers are therefore large enough for us to have an acceptable level of confidence in the findings. For the **Kincardine and Mearns** area specifically, there were 302 responses to the main survey and a random sample of this size gives a confidence interval of +/- 5.62%. The actual total number of respondents to the Kincardine and Mearns survey will be slightly higher than this but, as noted previously, we are not able to allocate respondents to the young person's survey to a specific geographical area.
- 1.9 It is, however, important to consider the profile of the achieved sample in an individual area when considering the comparability of the data to the overall results.

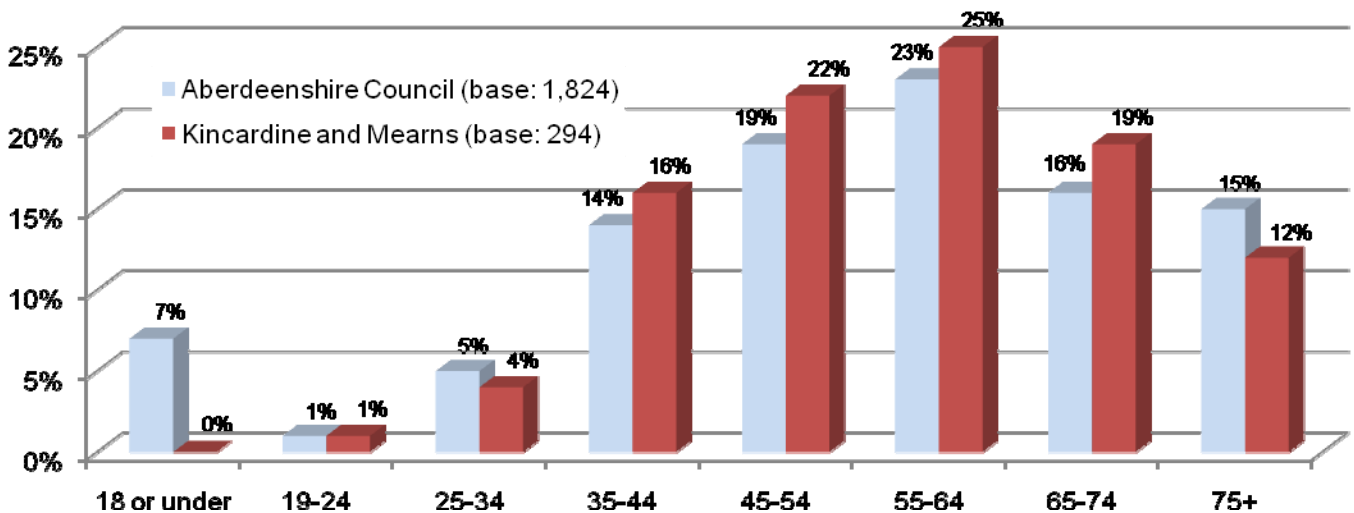
Figure 1.1 below illustrates that Kincardine and Mearns respondents were very slightly more likely to be male than female compared to Aberdeenshire Council as a whole. It is worth noting at this point that, throughout the report, numbers may not add to 100% due to the effects of rounding.

**Figure 1.1: Profile of Respondents (Gender)**



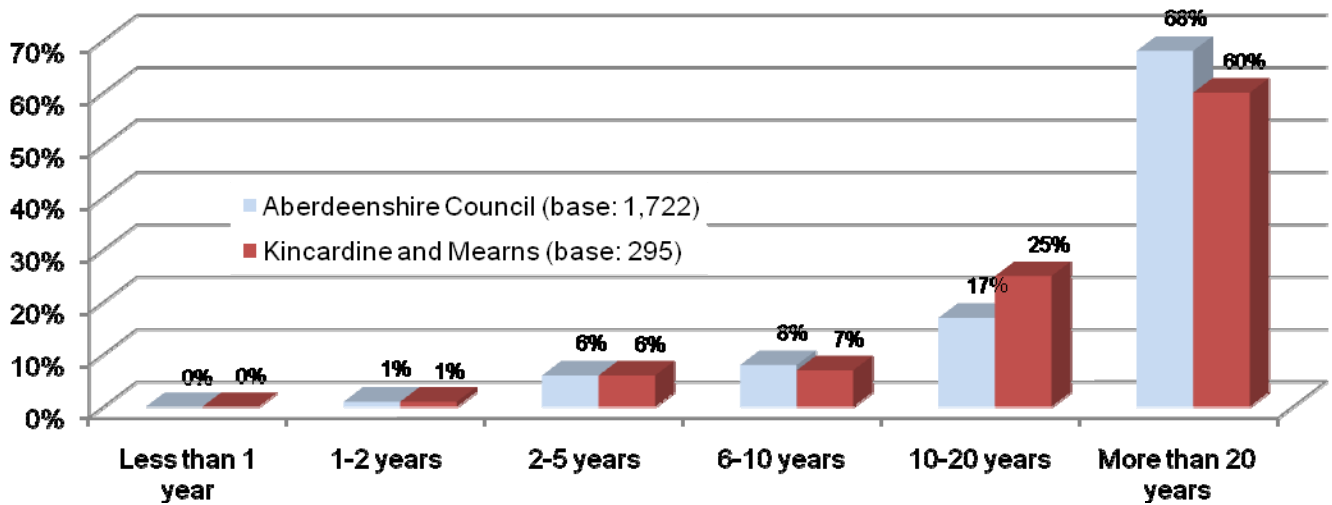
1.10 Due to the addition of the young person’s survey, the age profile of the overall survey has changed somewhat, with the addition of a significant number of responses from young people in the overall results. This is not reflected in the profile for Kincardine and Mearns below, which does not include the responses from the youth survey.

**Figure 1.2: Profile of Respondents (Age)**



1.11 Most survey respondents have lived in Aberdeenshire for some period of time as shown in Figure 1.3 below with Kincardine and Mearns residents being more likely to have lived in the area for between 10 and 20 years and less likely to have lived in the area for more than 20 years. It should be noted that not all descriptive questions were asked of young people so some aspects of the sample profile are based on the results of the main survey only.

**Figure 1.3: Profile of Respondents  
(Time Lived in Aberdeenshire)**



1.12 The profile of responses by employment status is set out in Table 1.1 below, with slightly more Kincardine and Mearns residents being in employment, with fewer respondents being in the long term sick or disabled category.

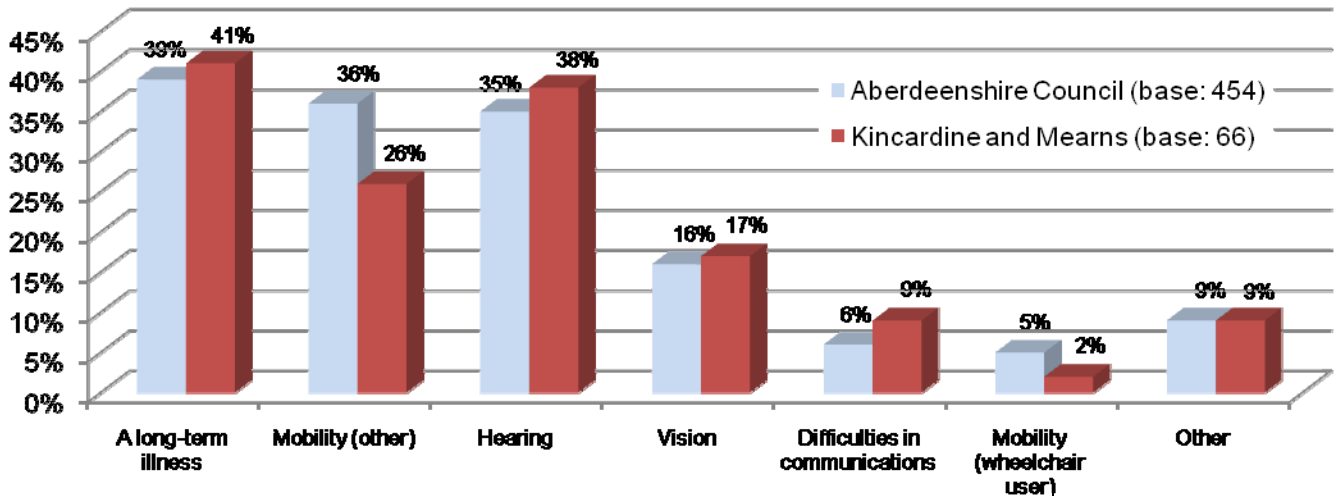
**Table 1.1: Employment Status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council</b>	<b>Kincardine and Mearns</b>
Employee	39%	44%
Self-employed	9%	7%
Government employment and training programme	1%	2%
Unpaid family worker	1%	0%
Other employment	1%	0%
Unemployed	1%	1%
Student	0%	1%
Looking after family home	3%	3%
Temporarily sick or injured	1%	0%
Long-term sick or disabled	4%	1%
Waiting results of job application	0%	0%
No jobs available	-	0%
Not yet started looking	0%	0%
Do not need or want employment	1%	1%
Retired from paid work	35%	34%
Other	2%	4%
Not answered	3%	3%
<b>Base:</b>	<b>1,734</b>	<b>302</b>

1.13 74% of Kincardine and Mearns respondents described themselves as being of Scottish ethnicity (75% of all respondents) whilst 11% said English (12%). A further 10% described themselves as British (8%). 3% of people did not answer this question (3%) with the remaining 3% of responses being from people of various ethnicities (2%).

1.14 22% of Kincardine and Mearns residents consider themselves to have a disability (26% of all respondents), with the profile of such disabilities being as shown on the following page:

**Figure 1.4: Profile of Respondents (Disability)**



1.15 A specific breakdown of the Kincardine and Mearns results by ward is enclosed, under separate cover, as Appendix 2. A full listing of the Kincardine and Mearns responses to the open-ended questions in the survey is included as Appendix 3.

## 2.0 OVERALL SATISFACTION

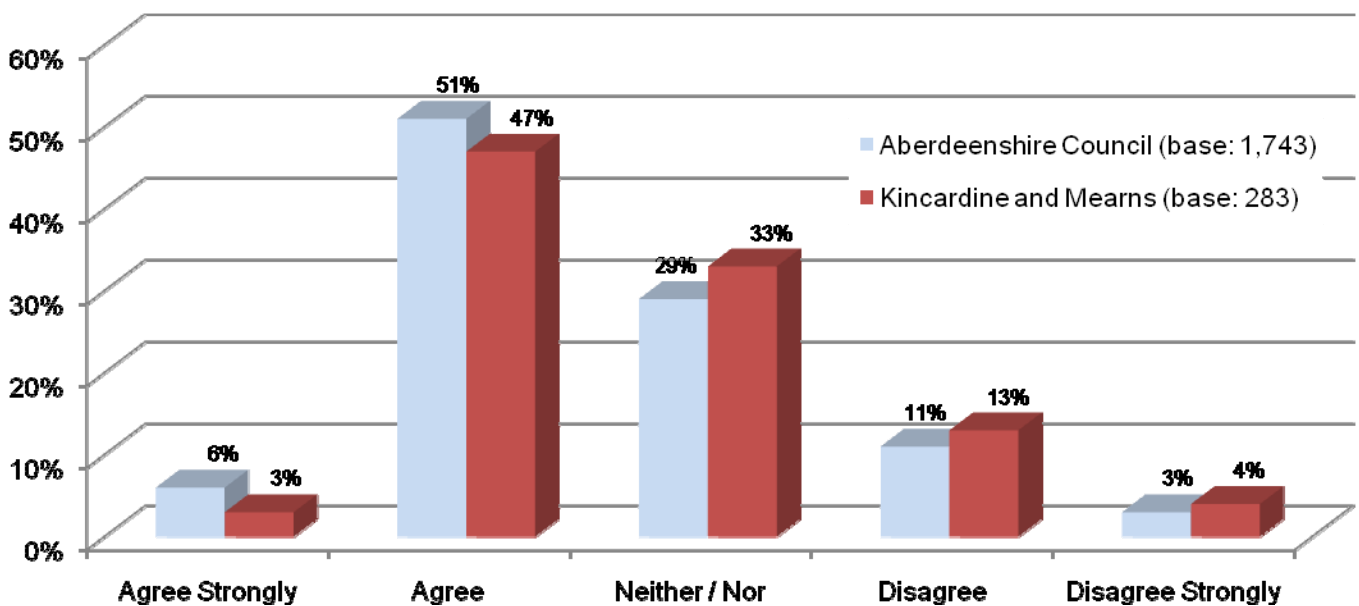
2.1 This section sets out patterns of overall satisfaction with Aberdeenshire Council, as identified by the quantitative survey.

A “headline” picture of overall satisfaction comes from levels of agreement with the statement *“I am satisfied with Aberdeenshire Council as a provider of local services”*.

The pattern in responses to this question shows that whilst overall satisfaction in Kincardine and Mearns is 51% (allowing for rounding), this is below that of Aberdeenshire Council as a whole as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

Within many of the graphs in this report, “net agreement” figures will be given. That is to say, the figure quoted is the % agreeing with a statement (or expressing satisfaction) less those disagreeing (or expressing dissatisfaction). This allows for agreement and disagreement levels to be taken into account in a single figure, thus allowing for large amounts of data to be summarised easily.

**Figure 2.1: Overall Satisfaction**



2.2 Figure 2.2 over the page profiles the trend in relation to net satisfaction with the Council as a service provider, based on the above statement.

**Figure 2.2: Overall Net Satisfaction**

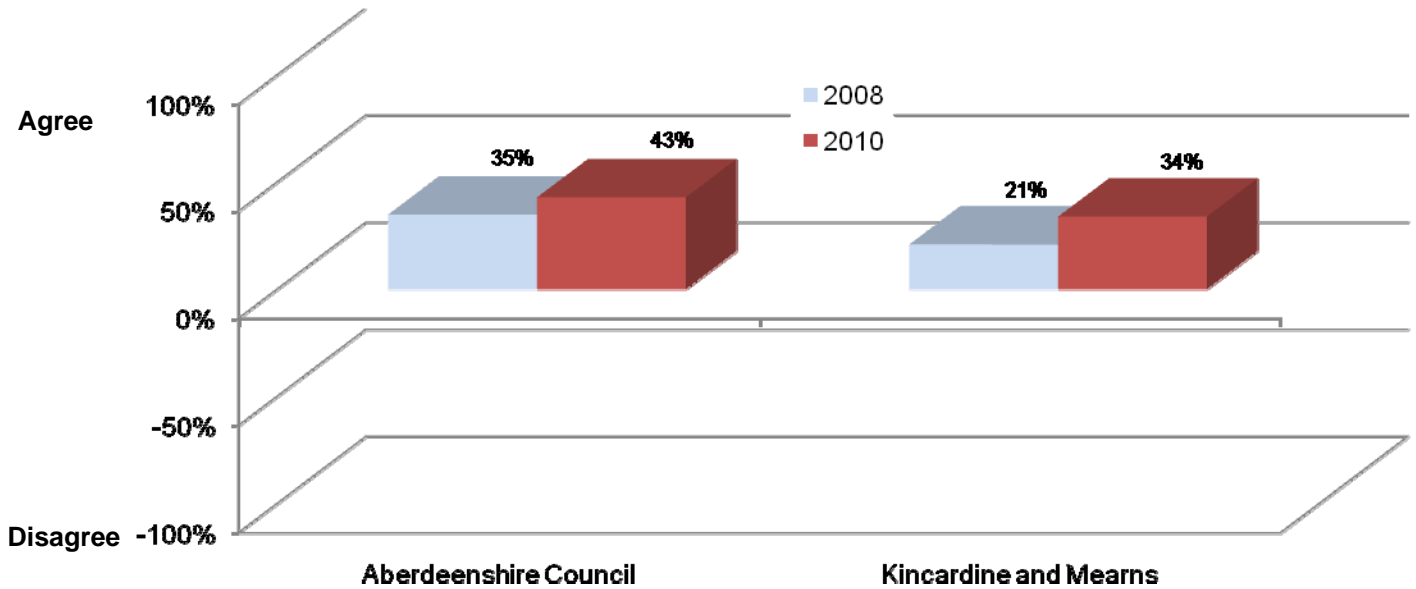
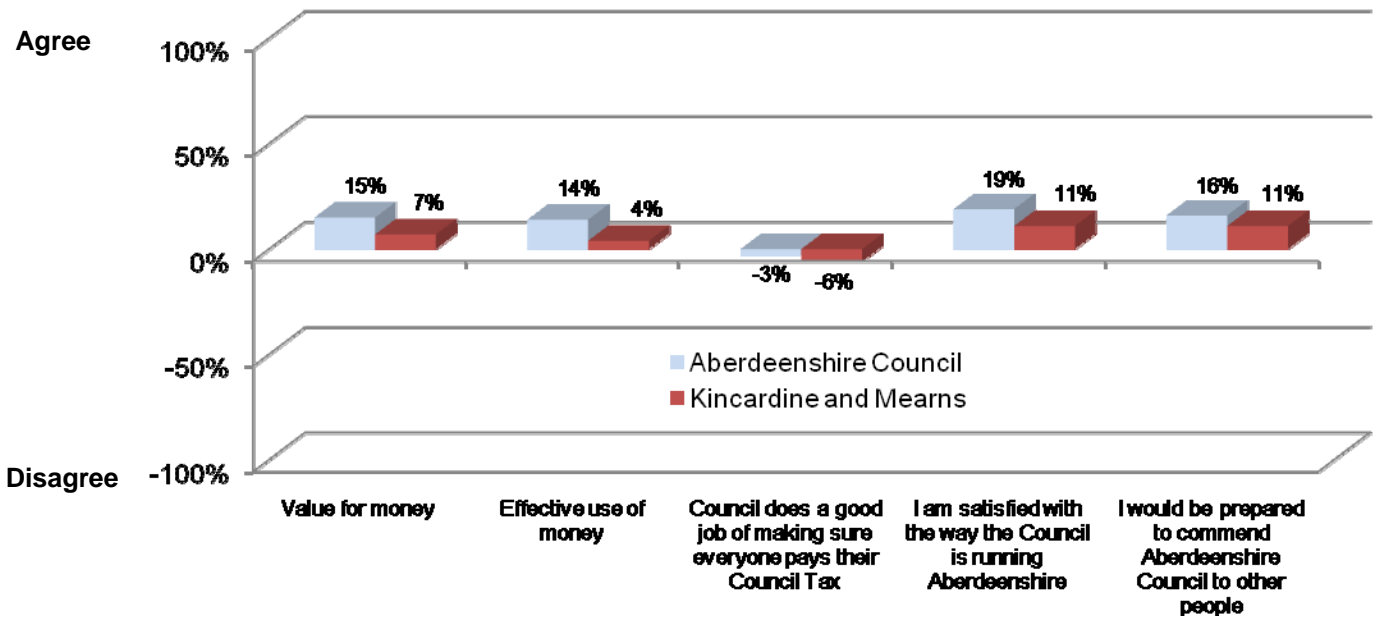


Figure 2.2 demonstrates that net satisfaction in Kincardine in Mearns has improved considerably over the past two years from +21% to +34% although it remains below that for the Council area as a whole.

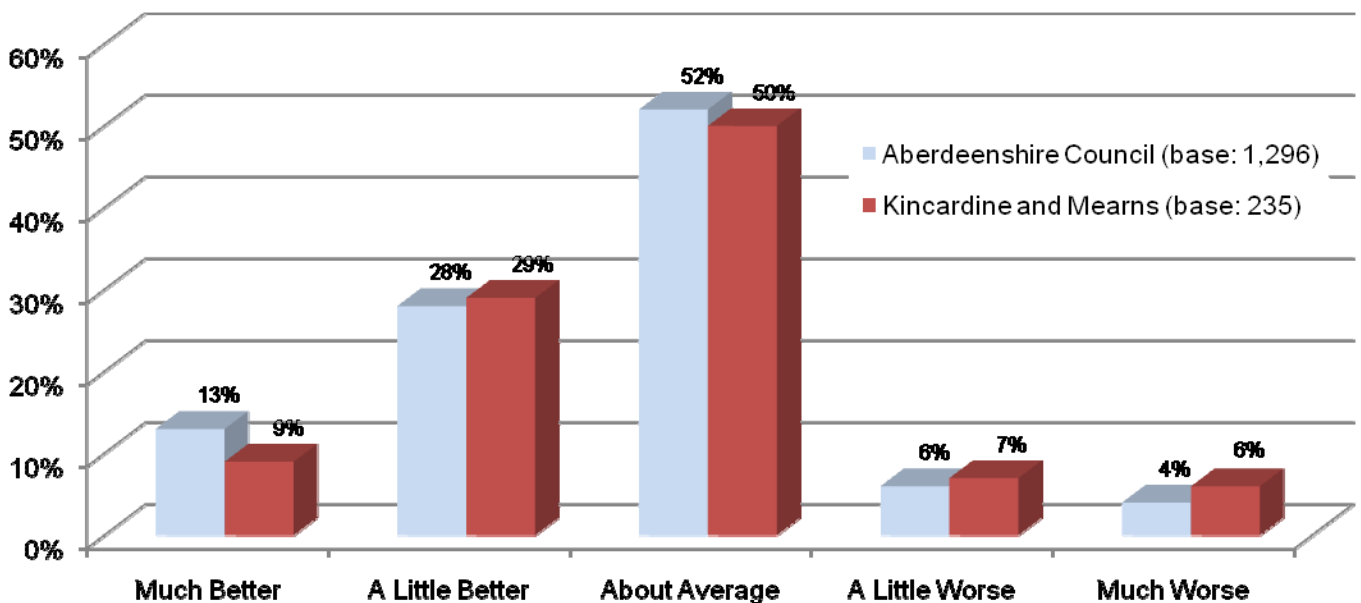
2.3 The overall views of respondents were explored by reference to a number of attitudinal statements. As can be seen in Figure 2.3, Kincardine and Mearns residents are less positive than those in the Council area as a whole about a number of these statements.

**Figure 2.3: Overall Views on Key Issues**



2.4 Aberdeenshire residents are generally more likely to view the Council more favourably to other Councils than unfavourably, with this view being almost as prevalent in Kincardine and Mearns as elsewhere.

**Figure 2.4: Overall Views (Compared to Other Councils)**



### 3.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 20% of Kincardine and Mearns respondents do not remember ever having been in contact with the Council and these are excluded from the figures below, which profile reasons for the most recent contact with the Council (12% of all respondents fall into this category).

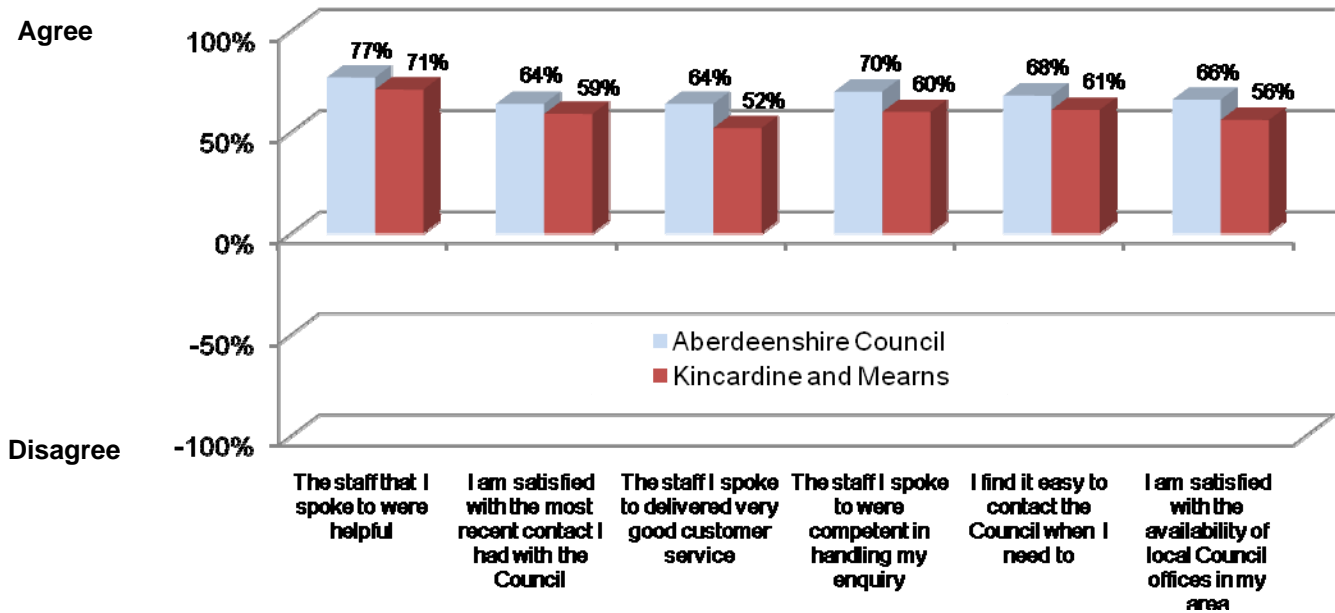
**Table 3.1: Reason for Most Recent Contact**

Reason for Contact	Aberdeenshire Council	Kincardine and Mearns
To make a payment	18%	17%
To request a Council service	15%	13%
To make an application for something	13%	13%
To report a problem	13%	10%
To get information or advice about a Council service	11%	11%
In response to a communication from the Council	6%	6%
To make a complaint about a Council service	4%	6%
To get more general information or advice	4%	5%
To make a complaint about something else	3%	3%
On a business-related matter	2%	3%
For another reason	11%	12%
<b>Base:</b>	<b>1,434</b>	<b>241</b>

There are no notable differences in the reasons for Kincardine and Mearns residents' most recent contact with the Council compared to Aberdeenshire as a whole.

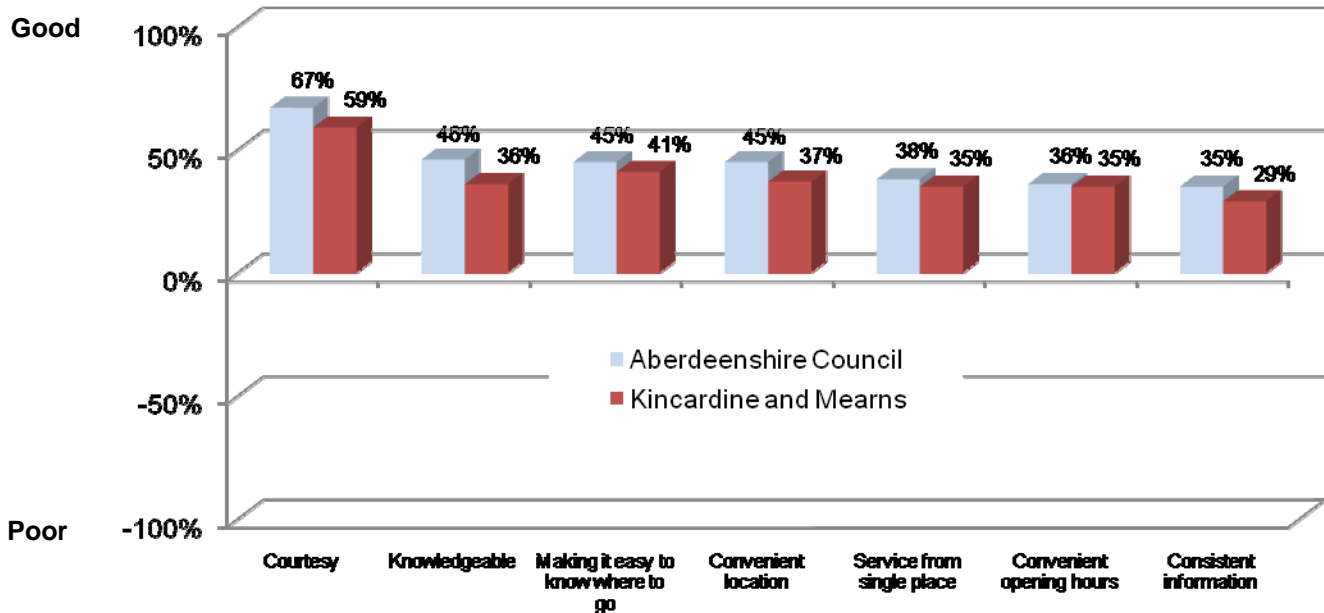
3.2 Figure 3.1 on the following page profiles net agreement with a number of statements concerning how such contacts have been managed, with Kincardine and Mearns respondents generally giving somewhat poorer ratings as compared to respondents from the Council area as a whole. There are varying base numbers of responses to these questions, which are detailed in the appendices.

**Figure 3.1: Agreement with Attitudinal Statements**

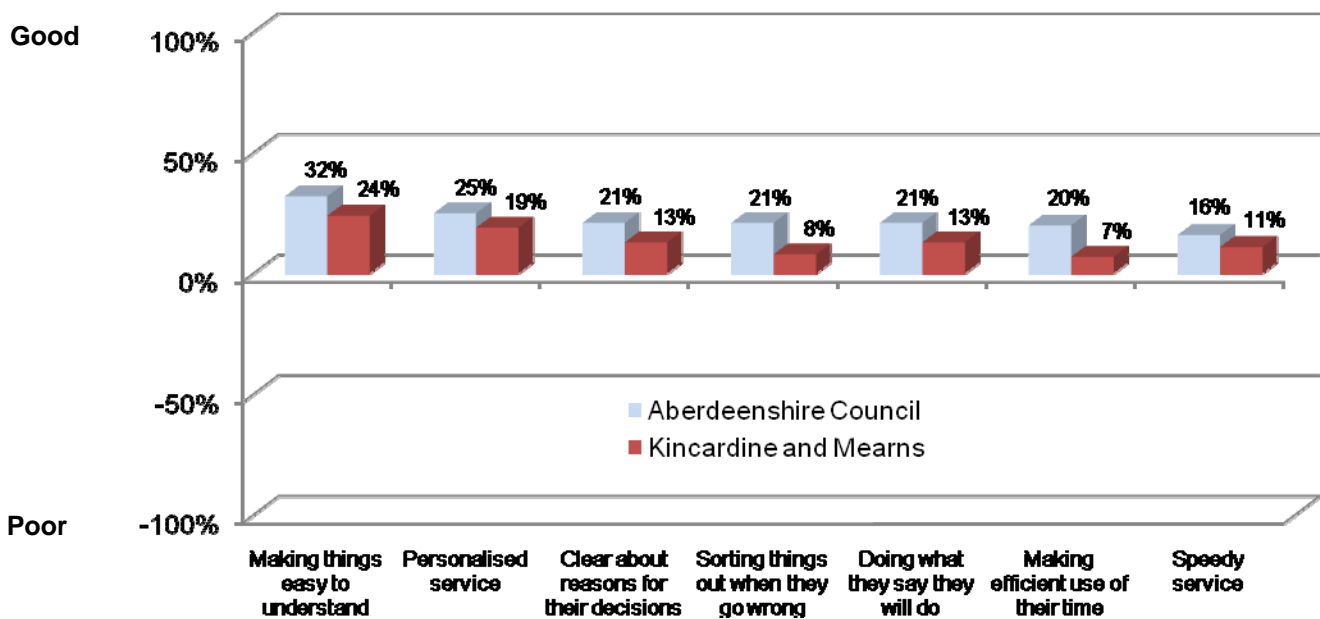


3.3 The ratings observed for Kincardine and Mearns in Figure 3.1 are reflected in ratings for a range of service attributes. For example, Kincardine and Mearns residents gave poorer ratings with regard to issues such as staff courtesy, knowledgeable staff and being able to access services from a convenient location.

**Figure 3.2(a): Customer Service and Contact Management**



**Figure 3.2(b): Customer Service and Contact Management**



3.4 The 2010 survey profiled preferred methods of contacting the Council for a range of services as illustrated below with the figures for Kincardine and Mearns shown above and the figures for Aberdeenshire Council shown below in italics and brackets (bases vary and are detailed in full in the appendices).

**Table 3.2: Preferred Methods of Contact**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Personal visit to Central Office of Service Point</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Electronic methods (such as email or internet)</b>	<b>Other</b>
Apply for a Council house and track your position on the waiting list	17% <i>(9%)</i>	31% <i>(31%)</i>	17% <i>(25%)</i>	34% <i>(33%)</i>	0% <i>(2%)</i>
Apply for Council Tax Benefit and / or Housing Benefit	19% <i>(15%)</i>	29% <i>(35%)</i>	25% <i>(24%)</i>	25% <i>(24%)</i>	2% <i>(2%)</i>
Arrange and / or pay for a bulky uplift	2% <i>(1%)</i>	8% <i>(10%)</i>	63% <i>(64%)</i>	27% <i>(24%)</i>	1% <i>(1%)</i>
Book and pay for a leisure activity	5% <i>(5%)</i>	20% <i>(18%)</i>	39% <i>(39%)</i>	37% <i>(36%)</i>	0% <i>(1%)</i>
Book and / or pay for an evening class	4% <i>(4%)</i>	22% <i>(19%)</i>	31% <i>(35%)</i>	41% <i>(41%)</i>	1% <i>(1%)</i>
Book and / or pay for school-based activities	10% <i>(7%)</i>	18% <i>(20%)</i>	26% <i>(26%)</i>	44% <i>(43%)</i>	3% <i>(4%)</i>
Inform the Council of a change of address	22% <i>(19%)</i>	8% <i>(12%)</i>	30% <i>(32%)</i>	40% <i>(37%)</i>	0% <i>(1%)</i>
Pay a parking fine	34% <i>(30%)</i>	17% <i>(19%)</i>	11% <i>(11%)</i>	35% <i>(38%)</i>	3% <i>(2%)</i>
Pay your Council Tax	6% <i>(8%)</i>	15% <i>(20%)</i>	7% <i>(5%)</i>	40% <i>(41%)</i>	23% <i>(25%)</i>
Report a housing repair	4% <i>(2%)</i>	13% <i>(15%)</i>	52% <i>(57%)</i>	27% <i>(23%)</i>	4% <i>(2%)</i>
Report an incident of anti-social behaviour	1% <i>(2%)</i>	10% <i>(14%)</i>	68% <i>(65%)</i>	20% <i>(17%)</i>	1% <i>(1%)</i>
Report and track a road or street light fault	1% <i>(1%)</i>	5% <i>(7%)</i>	62% <i>(61%)</i>	32% <i>(30%)</i>	0% <i>(1%)</i>
Submit a social work assessment form	19% <i>(20%)</i>	23% <i>(26%)</i>	23% <i>(24%)</i>	36% <i>(29%)</i>	0% <i>(2%)</i>
Submit and / or pay for a planning application	25% <i>(25%)</i>	26% <i>(30%)</i>	7% <i>(9%)</i>	41% <i>(34%)</i>	1% <i>(1%)</i>

3.5 The 2010 survey asked how residents currently contacted the Council and went on to ask their preferred method of contact as set out below:

**Table 3.3: Methods of Receiving Council Information**

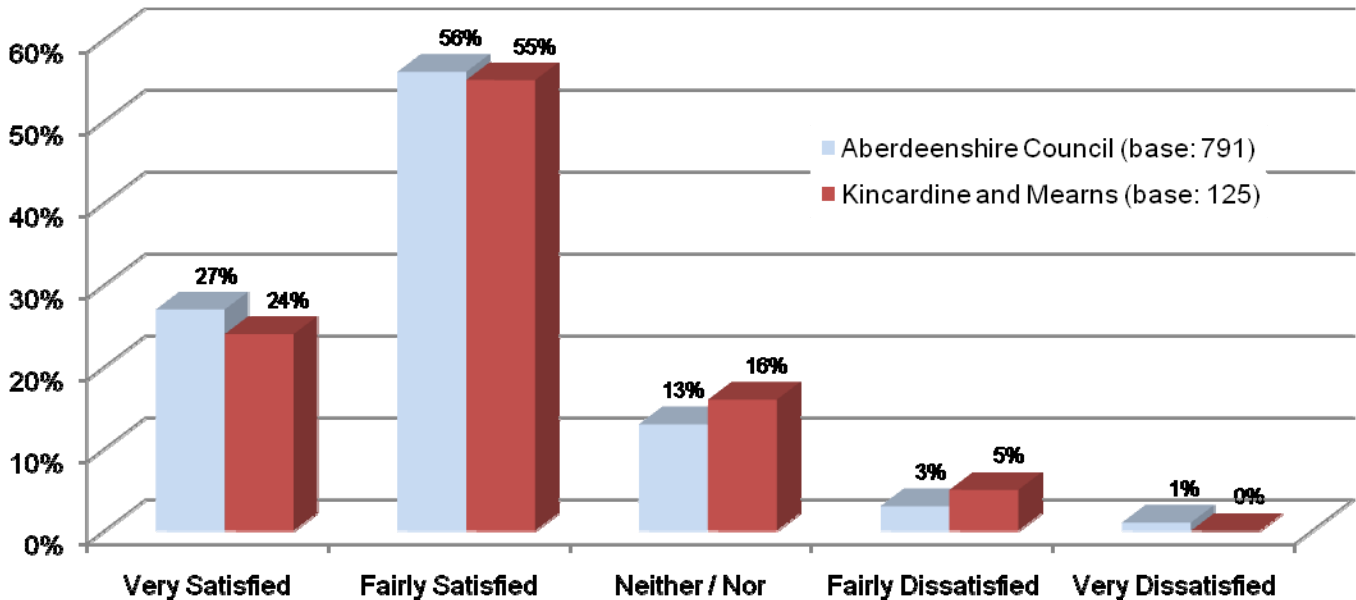
Method of Contact	Current		Preferred	
	Council	K&M	Council	K&M
Through the Council's website	38%	39%	37%	47%
Through the Council Tax mailing	45%	49%	36%	47%
Leaflets, posters or newspapers provided directly by the Council	52%	50%	47%	45%
From direct mailings	29%	29%	38%	43%
From pages of information contained in the local newspaper	49%	48%	38%	40%
Local Councillors	7%	7%	12%	11%
Community Councils, community groups or tenants' groups	9%	11%	11%	11%
Word of mouth	33%	29%	12%	11%
Text messaging	1%	2%	5%	1%
Through social networking sites	<1%	0%	6%	<1%
Other	1%	2%	2%	1%
<b>Base:</b>	<b>1,678<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>296</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>295</b>

Kincardine and Mearns respondents were somewhat more likely than average to prefer contact through the Council's website and also through the Council tax mailing.

3.6 44% of Garioch respondents said they had previously used the Council offices (compared to 48% of all respondents). A reasonably high level of satisfaction with offices was apparent as shown in Figure 3.3 on the following page, although Kincardine and Mearns respondents were marginally less likely to be satisfied overall.

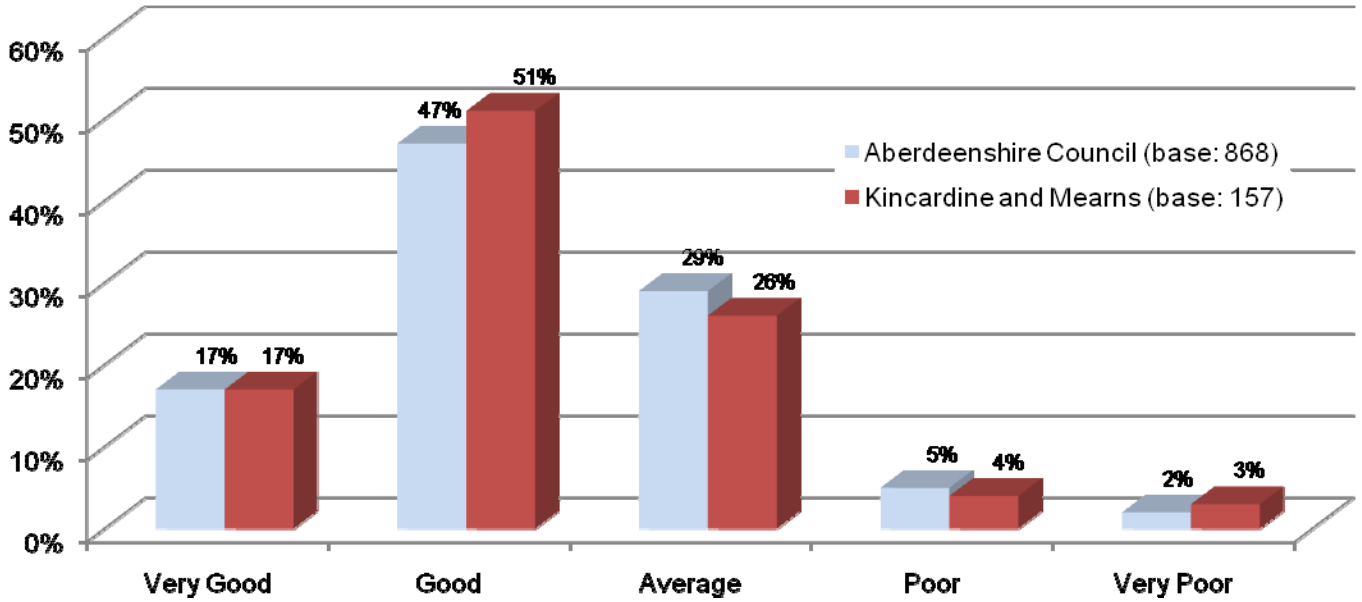
<sup>1</sup> Young people were not asked this question for reasons of space.

**Figure 3.3: Satisfaction with Council Offices**



- 3.7 68% of those Kincardine and Mearns respondents who answered the question said that they had seen the Council's Guide to Council Services, which was issued in 2010 with Council Tax demands (compared to 65% of all respondents). Of these, 77% say that they have a copy available to them (compared to 81%) and 93% of those who express an opinion believe it to be a useful publication (compared to 90%).
- 3.8 18% of Kincardine and Mearns residents (compared to 18% of all respondents) were aware of the network of digital screens that have been located in a range of libraries, community centres and supermarkets. Of these respondents, 82% said that they had seen the screens (compared to 77%) and 59% of those who had done so considered them to be useful (compared to 67%).
- 3.9 52% of Kincardine and Mearns respondents had used the Council's website (compared to 47% of all respondents) and expressed an opinion about it, the results of which are summarised on the following page.

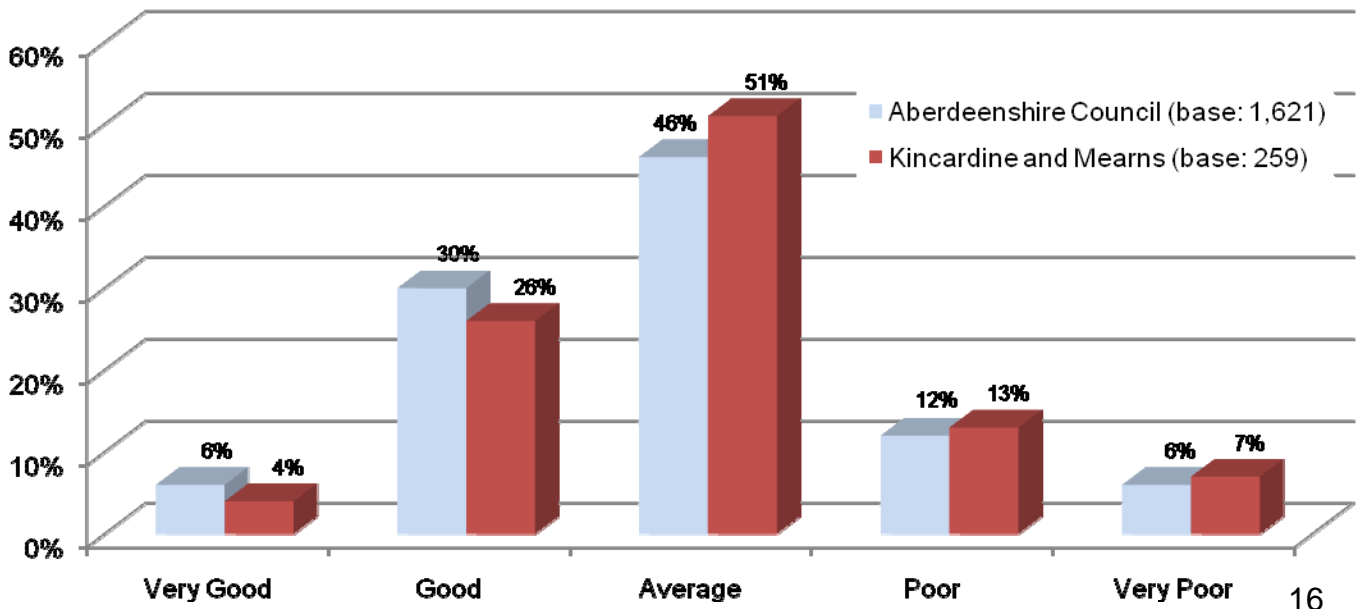
**Figure 3.4: Experience of Using Council Website**



Kincardine and Mearns residents are somewhat more likely to rate their experience of the Council's website as good.

3.10 Overall, more people express a positive view than a negative view when asked to rate the Council's overall communications although Kincardine and Mearns residents are slightly less likely to be positive about this compared to respondents from the Council area as a whole.

**Figure 3.5: Council's Overall Communications**



## 4.0 THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – COMMUNITY WELLBEING

4.1 The 2010 survey asked residents how well they perceived the Council to be achieving its strategic priorities. These are set out in a number of themes:

- Community Wellbeing
- Jobs and the Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Sustainable Environment.

Chapters 4 to 7 detail the results of responses in relation to each of these strategic priorities.

4.2 The Council's strategic priority in relation to Community Wellbeing was described as thus in the questionnaire:

*“The Council is committed to working with its partners to ensure that people in Aberdeenshire feel safe, live in good quality affordable housing, located in thriving communities and have access to resources and services which encourage and support healthy and productive lifestyles. The Council is committed to ensuring that individuals, families and communities are actively involved in Council decisions and to ensuring that vulnerable people receive care and support to enhance the quality of their lives.”*

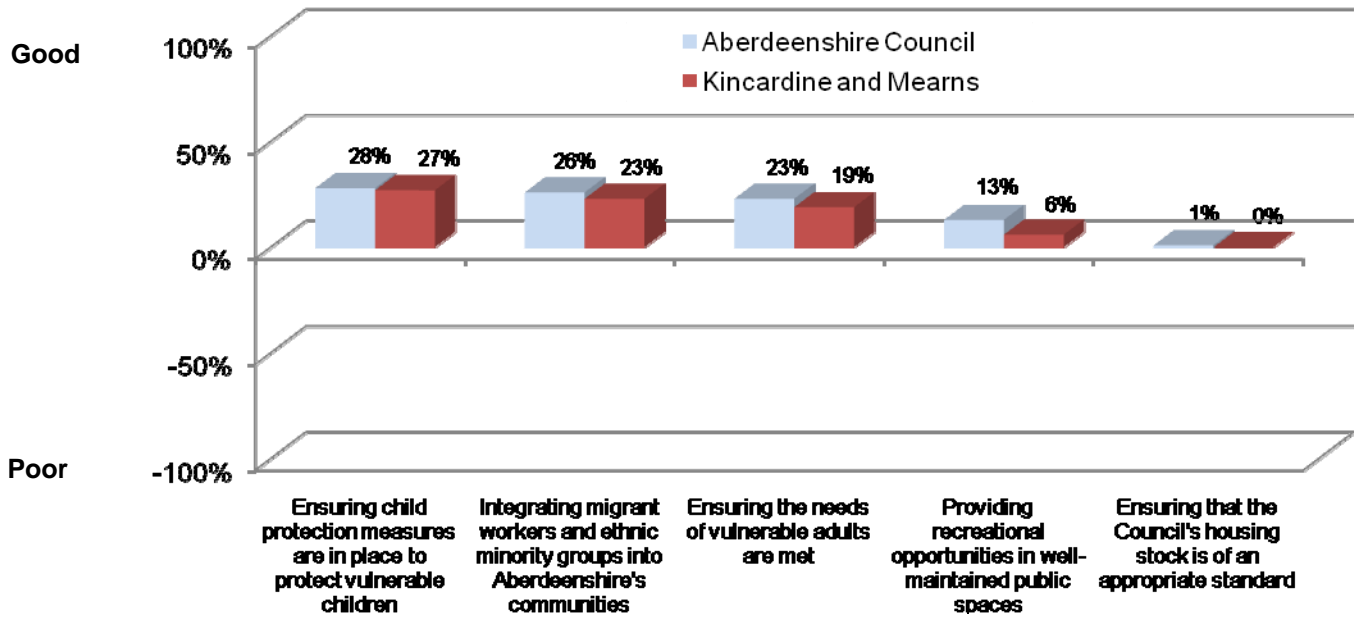
4.3 Respondents were then asked to rate the Council's performance in relation to a range of issues. In the first instance we have tabulated responses to these questions in Table 4.1, setting out the results in detail. Again, the results from Kincardine and Mearns are shown above, with the results from Aberdeenshire as a whole shown below in italics and brackets.

**Table 4.1: Detailed Rating of Community Wellbeing Activities**

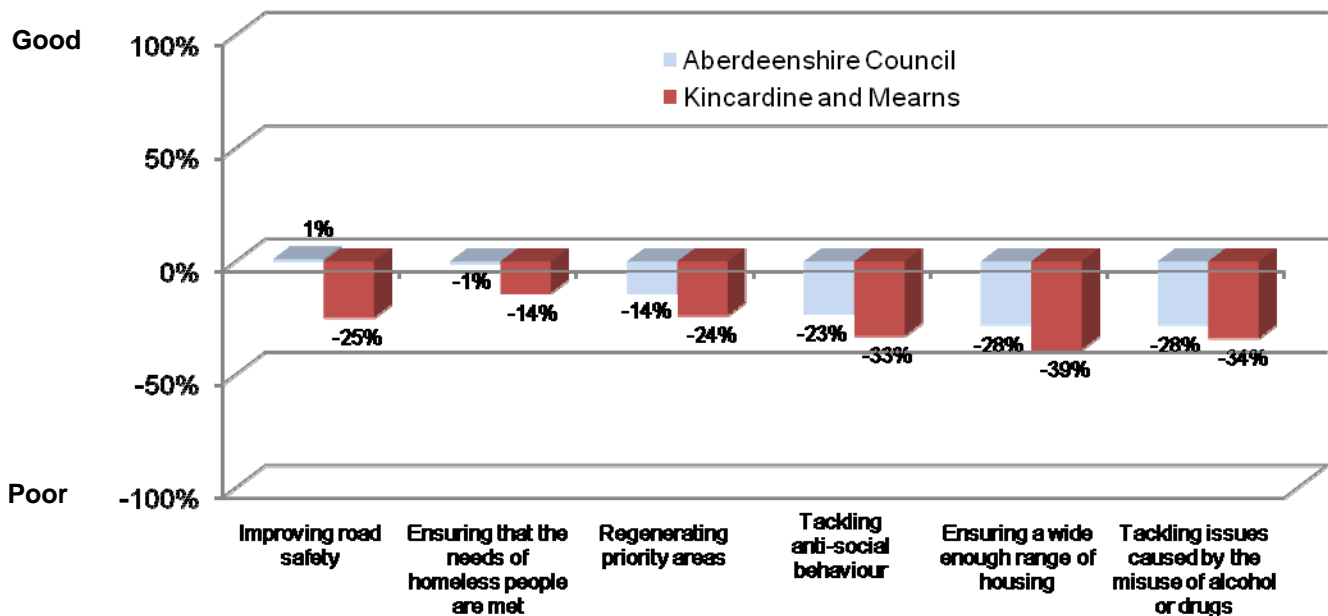
	Very Good	Good	Neither / Nor	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Improving road safety	1% (3%)	15% (24%)	20% (21%)	25% (20%)	9% (7%)	30% (26%)
Tackling anti-social behaviour	0% (1%)	8% (12%)	16% (17%)	19% (20%)	6% (7%)	51% (43%)
Tackling issues caused by the misuse of alcohol or other drugs	0% (1%)	8% (10%)	15% (16%)	18% (19%)	6% (7%)	54% (46%)
Ensuring child protection measures are in place to protect vulnerable children	2% (2%)	16% (17%)	13% (13%)	5% (5%)	2% (2%)	63% (60%)
Ensuring the needs of vulnerable adults are met	1% (2%)	17% (19%)	14% (13%)	7% (8%)	3% (3%)	57% (56%)
Ensuring a wide enough range of housing choices	0% (0%)	5% (8%)	11% (12%)	12% (14%)	7% (5%)	66% (60%)
Ensuring that the Council's housing stock is of an appropriate standard	1% (1%)	8% (11%)	10% (11%)	6% (8%)	3% (4%)	73% (66%)
Ensuring that the needs of homeless people are met	0% (2%)	7% (9%)	9% (12%)	6% (7%)	5% (4%)	73% (66%)
Regenerating priority areas	0% (1%)	5% (8%)	14% (16%)	11% (10%)	2% (4%)	68% (62%)
Integrating migrant workers and ethnic minority groups into Aberdeenshire's communities	1% (3%)	10% (11%)	12% (12%)	3% (4%)	1% (2%)	73% (68%)
Providing recreational opportunities in well maintained public spaces	1% (3%)	27% (28%)	21% (19%)	18% (16%)	6% (6%)	27% (29%)

4.4 These issues are analysed further in Figures 4.1(a) and (b), which summarises the findings **amongst those who gave a response**, although care should be taken in comparing results as a number of low base numbers exist (a full breakdown is included in the appendices). Results for Kincardine and Mearns are poorer than the Council average in a number of areas (most notably in relation to recreational opportunities, various issues relating to anti-social behaviour, the range of housing available to people and, in particular, road safety).

**Figure 4.1(a): Rating of Community Wellbeing Activities**

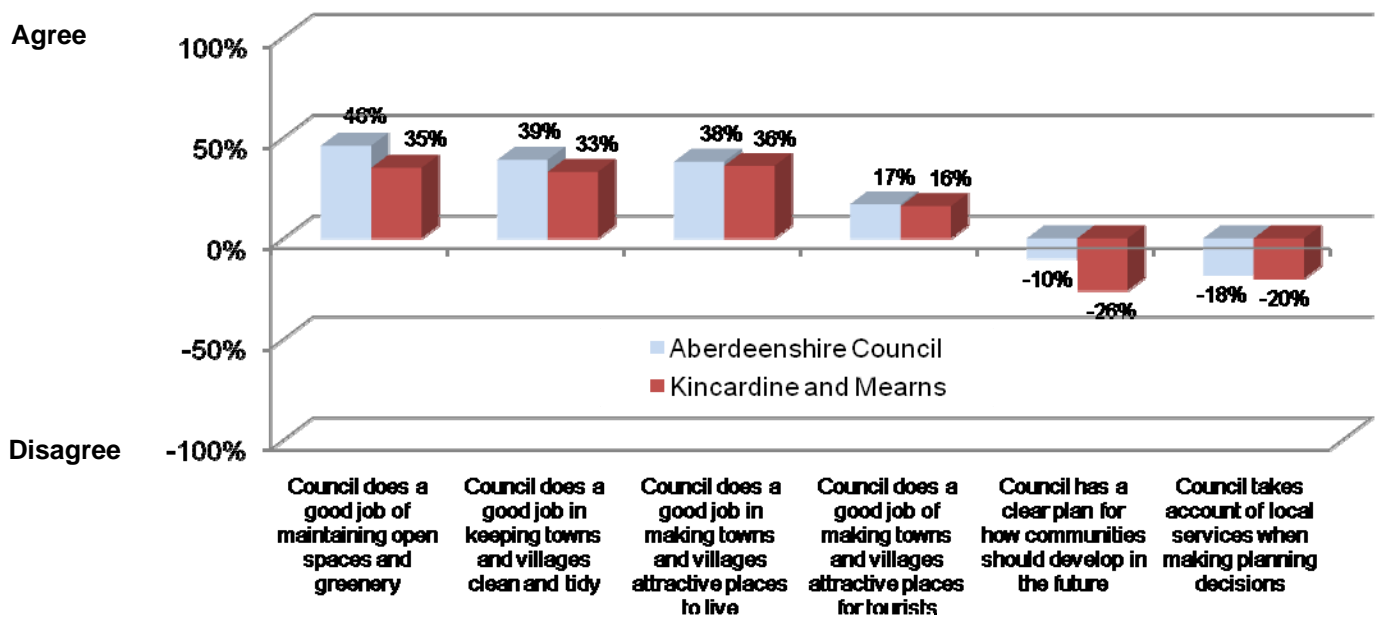


**Figure 4.1(b): Rating of Community Wellbeing Activities**



4.5 The strength of agreement / disagreement with a number of issues concerning Aberdeenshire’s towns and villages is set out below (bases for these questions vary).

**Figure 4.2: Towns and Villages**

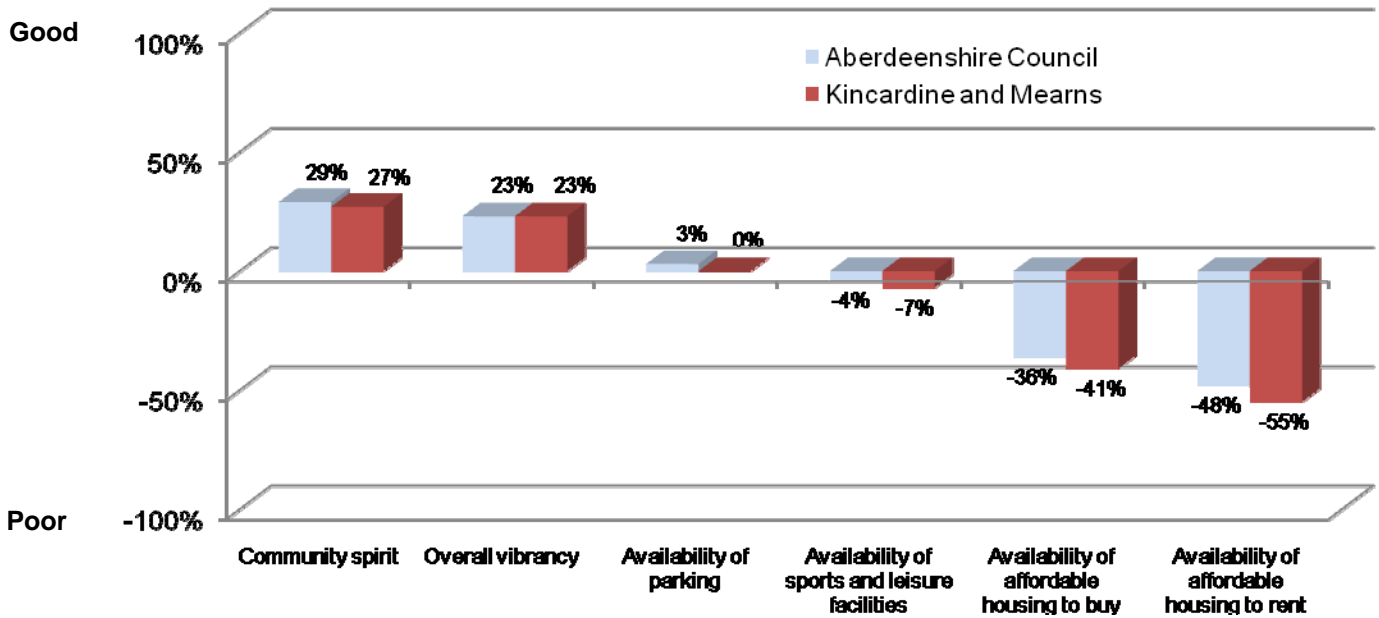


The ratings provided by Kincardine and Mearns respondents are broadly in line with those from respondents in the Council area as a whole but they are slightly poorer in relation to maintenance of open spaces and greenery and also in relation to perceptions of the Council having a plan for how communities should develop in the future.

4.6 Respondents were also asked to provide ratings for a number of features of the town or village in which they live, the results of which are set out on the following page (the figure given is a net figure whereby very good / good ratings are calculated and poor / very poor ratings are subtracted from this).

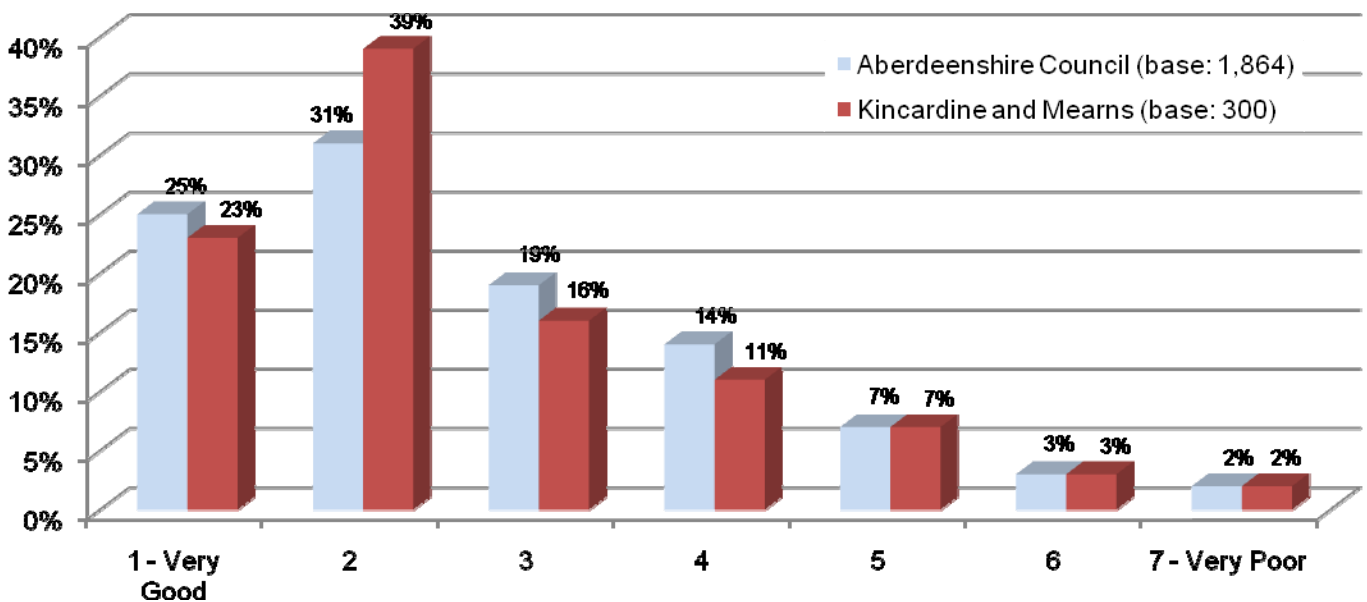
Kincardine and Mearns ratings were again broadly in line with the Council average but they were slightly poorer than average for issues to do with affordable housing.

**Figure 4.3: Community Issues**



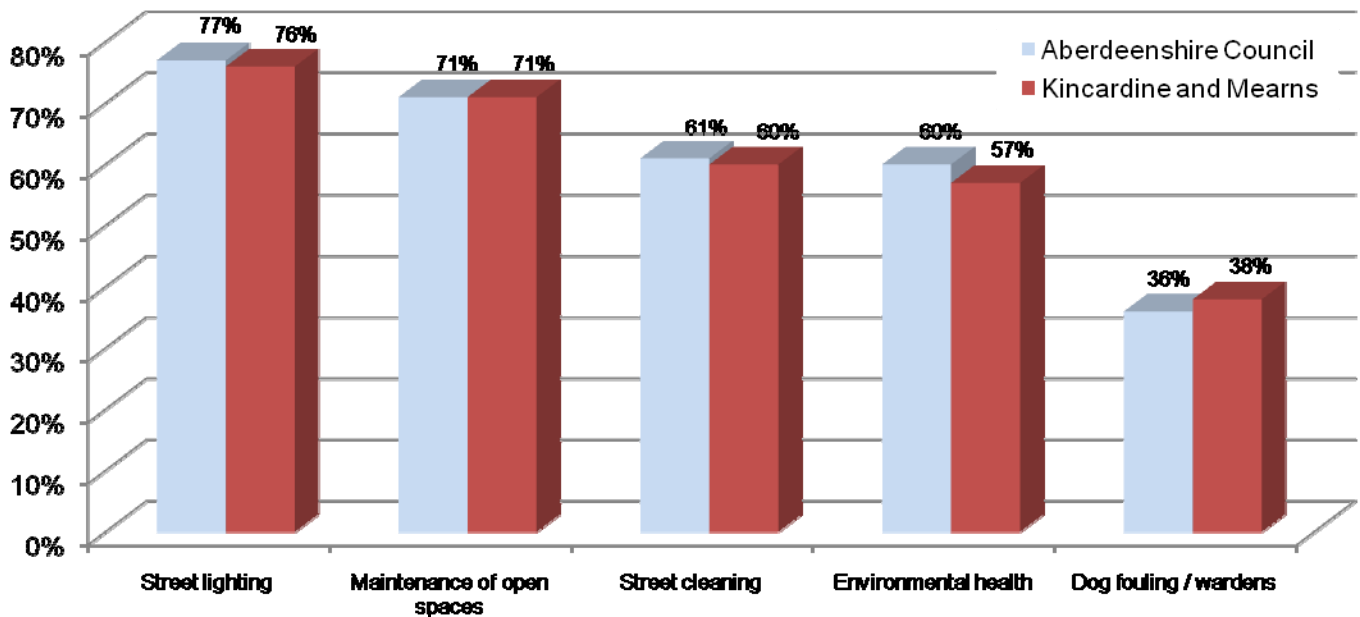
4.7 To provide an overall baseline of perceptions of quality of life, respondents were asked to rate their overall quality of life on a scale from 1 (very good) to 7 (very poor). Results for this showed an overall mean score of 2.58 for Kincardine and Mearns residents (compared to all respondents' overall mean score of 2.63) meaning that, on average, people in Kincardine and Mearns are very slightly more likely to rate their quality of life positively.

**Figure 4.4: Rating of Quality of Life**



4.8 A number of questions regarding certain “universal” Council services that were posed in the questionnaire relate to the issue of community wellbeing. These results are detailed below (figures given are overall satisfaction figures, not net satisfaction):

**Figure 4.5: Rating of Universal Services  
Community Wellbeing**



These ratings are generally in line with the overall Council figures.

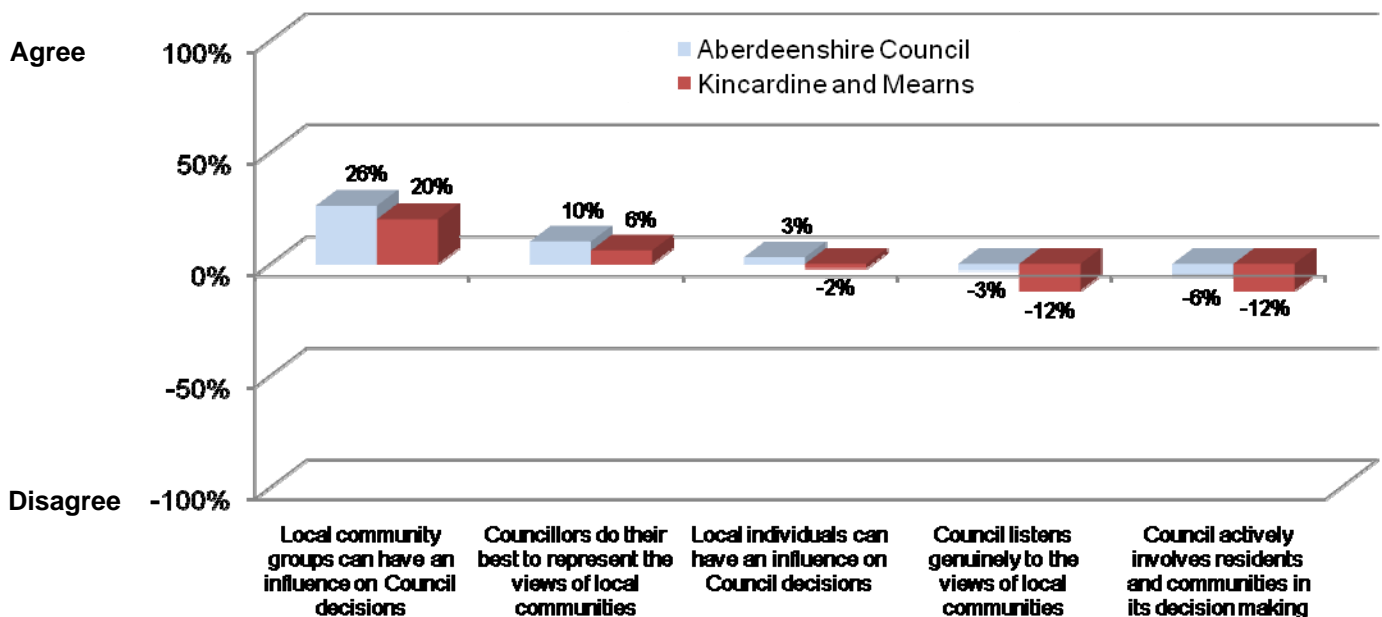
4.9 Certain of the questions asked of people were users of specific services also relate to the strategic priority of community wellbeing. Satisfaction levels amongst **users** of these services are tabulated on the following page. The figures given are for Kincardine and Mearns with the comparative figures for Aberdeenshire as a whole in brackets (bases vary and are detailed in full in the appendices).

**Table 4.2: Rating of Specific Services – Community Wellbeing**

Service	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither / Nor	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not answered	% of respondents who use service
Burial grounds	33% (30%)	40% (47%)	13% (9%)	7% (6%)	2% (2%)	4% (5%)	15% (28%)
Council housing services	29% (23%)	46% (43%)	13% (14%)	0% (6%)	0% (5%)	13% (8%)	8% (11%)
Council-run leisure / sports facilities	14% (14%)	55% (56%)	13% (15%)	16% (9%)	2% (4%)	0% (2%)	43% (39%)
Country parks	20% (29%)	63% (55%)	13% (10%)	3% (3%)	0% (1%)	2% (2%)	58% (63%)
Social work services	40% (37%)	26% (35%)	20% (10%)	6% (7%)	0% (2%)	9% (8%)	12% (14%)
Trading standards	13% (19%)	46% (40%)	25% (19%)	8% (8%)	4% (6%)	4% (8%)	8% (8%)

4.10 Figure 4.6 below shows ratings for a number of issues relating to Council decision-making and consultation, which is itself an important dimension of community wellbeing. Kincardine and Mearns residents' levels of net agreement were generally slightly below the Council average.

**Figure 4.6: Council Decision Making and Consultation**



## 5.0 THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

5.1 The following description of the Council's strategic priority for Jobs and the Economy was set out as:

*“Aberdeenshire has a broad economic base from traditional industries such as agriculture, fishing and forestry to those that have grown over the last 30 years such as the energy and service sectors. The Council is committed to working with partners to help the Aberdeenshire economy become more resilient and adaptive to change. With the lowest unemployment rate in mainland Scotland, Aberdeenshire is an attractive area to live in and aims to have the necessary infrastructure for new and existing businesses, both large and small, to thrive.”*

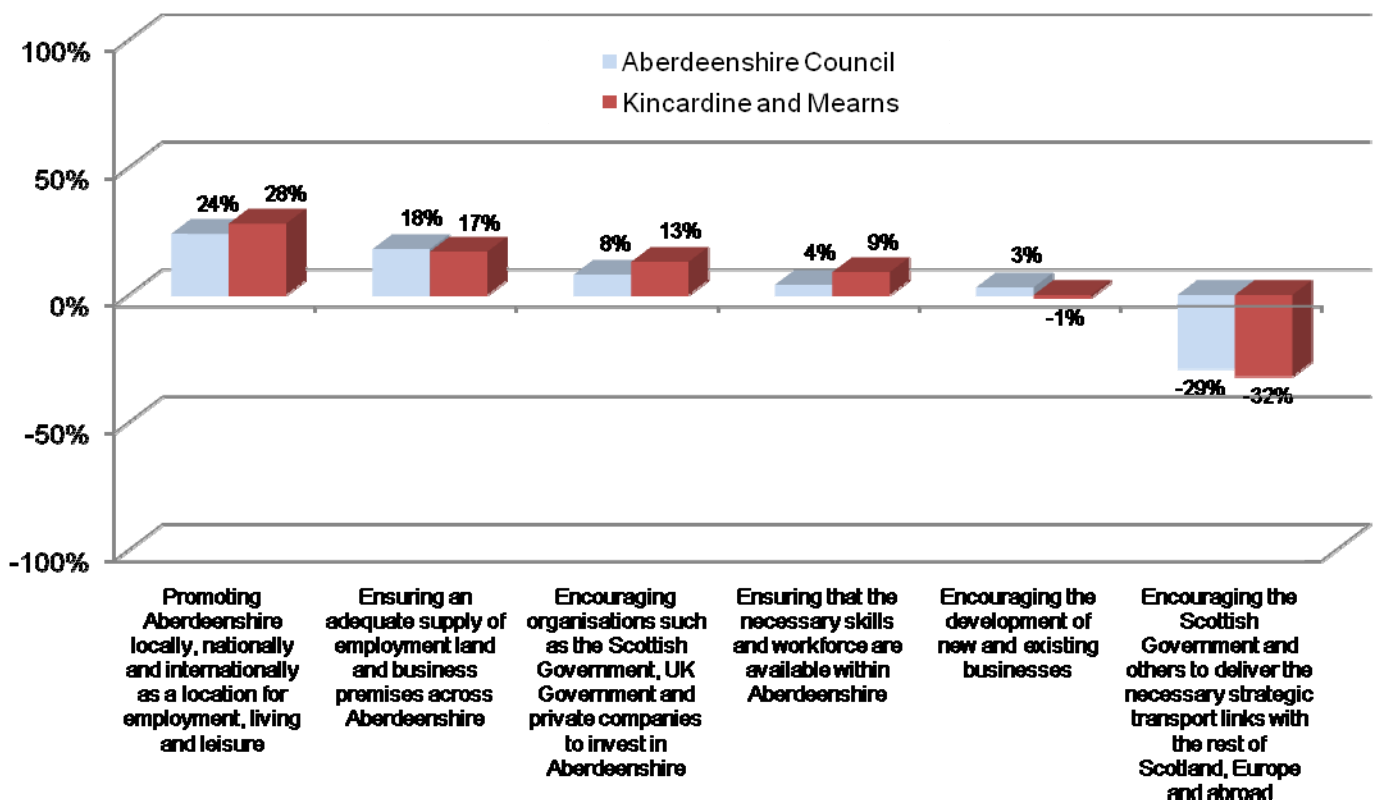
5.2 With regard to residents rating of the Council's performance with regard to Jobs and the Economy, Table 5.1 sets out the results obtained. The figures given are for Kincardine and Mearns with overall Aberdeenshire Council figures in brackets (bases vary and are detailed in full in the appendices).

**Table 5.1: Detailed Rating of Community Wellbeing Activities**

	Very Good	Good	Neither / Nor	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Promoting Aberdeenshire locally, nationally and internationally as a location for employment, living and leisure	3% (3%)	22% (22%)	29% (28%)	7% (8%)	1% (2%)	39% (37%)
Encouraging organisations such as the Scottish Government, UK Government and private companies to invest in Aberdeenshire	1% (2%)	18% (16%)	24% (25%)	10% (11%)	1% (3%)	45% (43%)
Ensuring an adequate supply of employment land and business premises across Aberdeenshire	2% (2%)	15% (18%)	24% (25%)	7% (8%)	2% (3%)	50% (44%)
Ensuring that the necessary skills and workforce are available within Aberdeenshire	2% (1%)	13% (14%)	23% (26%)	8% (10%)	2% (4%)	52% (45%)
Encouraging the development of new and existing businesses	0% (2%)	14% (16%)	27% (27%)	11% (12%)	4% (4%)	43% (39%)
Encouraging the Scottish Government and others to deliver the necessary strategic transport links with the rest of Scotland, Europe and abroad	0% (2%)	10% (10%)	21% (23%)	17% (18%)	14% (12%)	38% (37%)

5.3 Amongst those respondents who gave an answer with regard to the aspects of Jobs and the Economy previously noted, Figure 5.1 details these results in further detail. Please note that comparison between Aberdeenshire and Kincardine and Mearns should be treated with some caution due to low base numbers (full details are included in the appendices). Having said this, it would appear that ratings amongst Kincardine and Mearns respondents for achievement of these strategic priorities are broadly in line with the figures for the Council area as a whole and actually slightly better in relation to issues such as encouraging inward investment and skills / workforce development.

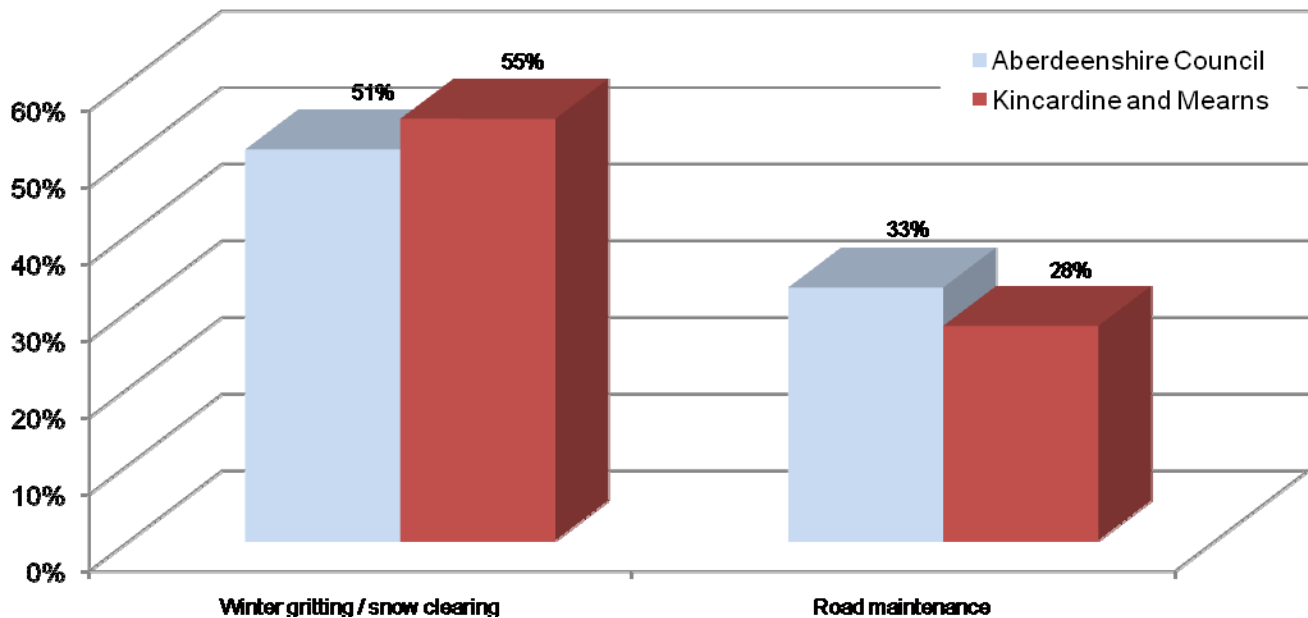
**Figure 5.1: Rating of Jobs and the Economy Performance**



5.4 The following questions regarding universal Council services are considered to relate specifically to Jobs and the Economy, with the figures quoted being the overall satisfaction<sup>2</sup> of residents who expressed an opinion. Kincardine and Mearns respondents are more likely to be satisfied with winter gritting / snow clearing but less likely to be satisfied with road maintenance.

<sup>2</sup> Overall satisfaction is defined as the proportion of respondents who stated that they were either very or fairly satisfied with a service. Respondents who gave a don't know response or did not provide an answer have been excluded from the analysis.

**Figure 5.2: Rating of Universal Services – Jobs and the Economy**



5.5 A small number of specific services used also related to this theme as tabulated below. The figures given are for Kincardine and Mearns with the figures for Aberdeenshire as a whole in brackets (bases vary and are detailed in full in the appendices).

**Table 5.2: Rating of Specific Services – Jobs and the Economy**

Service	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither / Nor	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not answered	% of respondents who use service
Planning and building control	11% (13%)	32% (42%)	17% (16%)	29% (18%)	8% (7%)	4% (4%)	25% (28%)
Support to local businesses	7% (9%)	45% (42%)	24% (22%)	14% (13%)	0% (4%)	10% (10%)	10% (10%)
Training and employment initiatives	17% (16%)	50% (33%)	8% (18%)	0% (15%)	17% (6%)	8% (13%)	4% (7%)

## 6.0 THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – LIFELONG LEARNING

6.1 The following description of the Lifelong Learning priority was included:

*“With over 400 facilities including schools, recreation centres, community centres, libraries, museums and other cultural venues the Council plays a vital part in making Aberdeenshire a great place for learning and leisure.”*

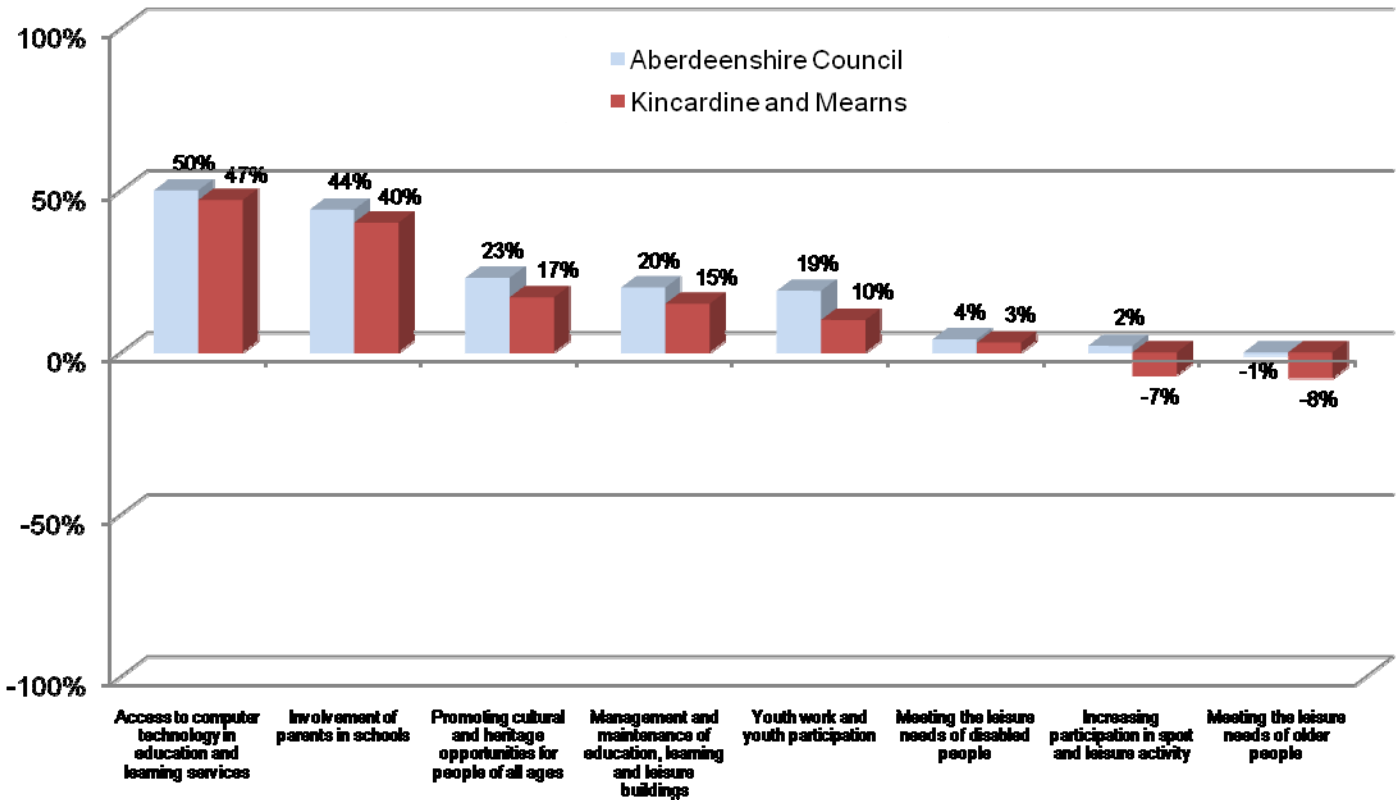
6.2 Detailed ratings in relation to the Council's performance with regard to the issues explored under “Lifelong Learning” are shown below, including “don't know” responses (the small number of people who did not answer the question are excluded and base numbers therefore vary for each question and are set out in full in the appendices). The figures given are for Kincardine and Mearns with the figures for Aberdeenshire Council as a whole provided in brackets.

**Table 6.1: Detailed Rating of Lifelong Learning Performance**

	Very Good	Good	Neither / Nor	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Management and maintenance of education, learning and leisure buildings	3% (4%)	23% (24%)	29% (29%)	11% (10%)	4% (4%)	30% (32%)
Access to computer technology in education and learning services	5% (6%)	26% (30%)	23% (21%)	3% (4%)	1% (1%)	42% (37%)
Youth work and youth participation	2% (4%)	11% (16%)	18% (18%)	8% (7%)	1% (3%)	59% (52%)
Involvement of parents in schools	5% (5%)	18% (22%)	18% (17%)	4% (4%)	1% (2%)	53% (50%)
Promoting cultural and heritage opportunities for people of all ages	2% (2%)	16% (19%)	25% (25%)	8% (7%)	1% (2%)	48% (45%)
Meeting the leisure needs of disabled people	2% (2%)	12% (12%)	14% (16%)	9% (8%)	4% (5%)	61% (58%)
Meeting the leisure needs of older people	2% (2%)	14% (15%)	18% (19%)	14% (12%)	6% (5%)	47% (46%)
Increasing participation in sport and leisure activity	2% (2%)	13% (15%)	26% (25%)	13% (12%)	6% (4%)	40% (42%)

6.3 Perceptions of the Council’s performance in delivering these strategic priorities are summarised below, based on those respondents that expressed a view (base numbers vary and are detailed in the appendices).

**Figure 6.1: Rating of Lifelong Learning Performance**



Again, direct comparison of results should be undertaken with caution due to the low base numbers in Kincardine and Mearns. However, it would appear that ratings for the achievement of these strategic priorities are slightly lower in Kincardine in Mearns (particularly with regard to issues such as youth work / participation and sports and leisure activities).

- 6.4 Certain specific services that people use relate to the Lifelong Learning theme. Results in relation to these are tabulated below, again with the Kincardine and Mearns results followed by Aberdeenshire results in brackets (full details of the base number of responses are set out in the appendices).

**Table 6.2: Rating of Specific Services – Lifelong Learning**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Fairly Satisfied</b>	<b>Neither / Nor</b>	<b>Fairly Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Not answered</b>	<b>% of respondents who use service</b>
Adult education	30% (34%)	55% (48%)	7% (6%)	7% (5%)	0% (4%)	2% (3%)	15% (10%)
Before and after school care	50% (39%)	39% (36%)	6% (4%)	6% (5%)	0% (11%)	0% (4%)	6% (4%)
Education and training for people with disabilities	26% (27%)	26% (35%)	16% (12%)	16% (15%)	5% (2%)	11% (10%)	6% (6%)
Library services	37% (45%)	46% (41%)	8% (6%)	6% (3%)	0% (1%)	3% (4%)	51% (51%)
Museums and arts	22% (28%)	56% (53%)	14% (9%)	5% (5%)	1% (1%)	3% (4%)	39% (37%)
Your child / children's school(s)	49% (31%)	39% (47%)	8% (9%)	2% (7%)	0% (1%)	2% (5%)	20% (25%)
Youth clubs and services	31% (30%)	50% (44%)	6% (9%)	6% (6%)	0% (4%)	6% (7%)	5% (13%)

## 7.0 THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

7.1 The following description of the Sustainable Environment priority was included:

*“The Council is committed to ensuring that what the economy and society does now in terms of meeting the needs of the current generation does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We are committed to providing a range of initiatives promoting renewable energy, energy conservation, waste management, strategic development, cultural heritage and education. The Council is further committed to reducing its carbon emissions with the aim of being a carbon neutral organisation in the short to medium term.”*

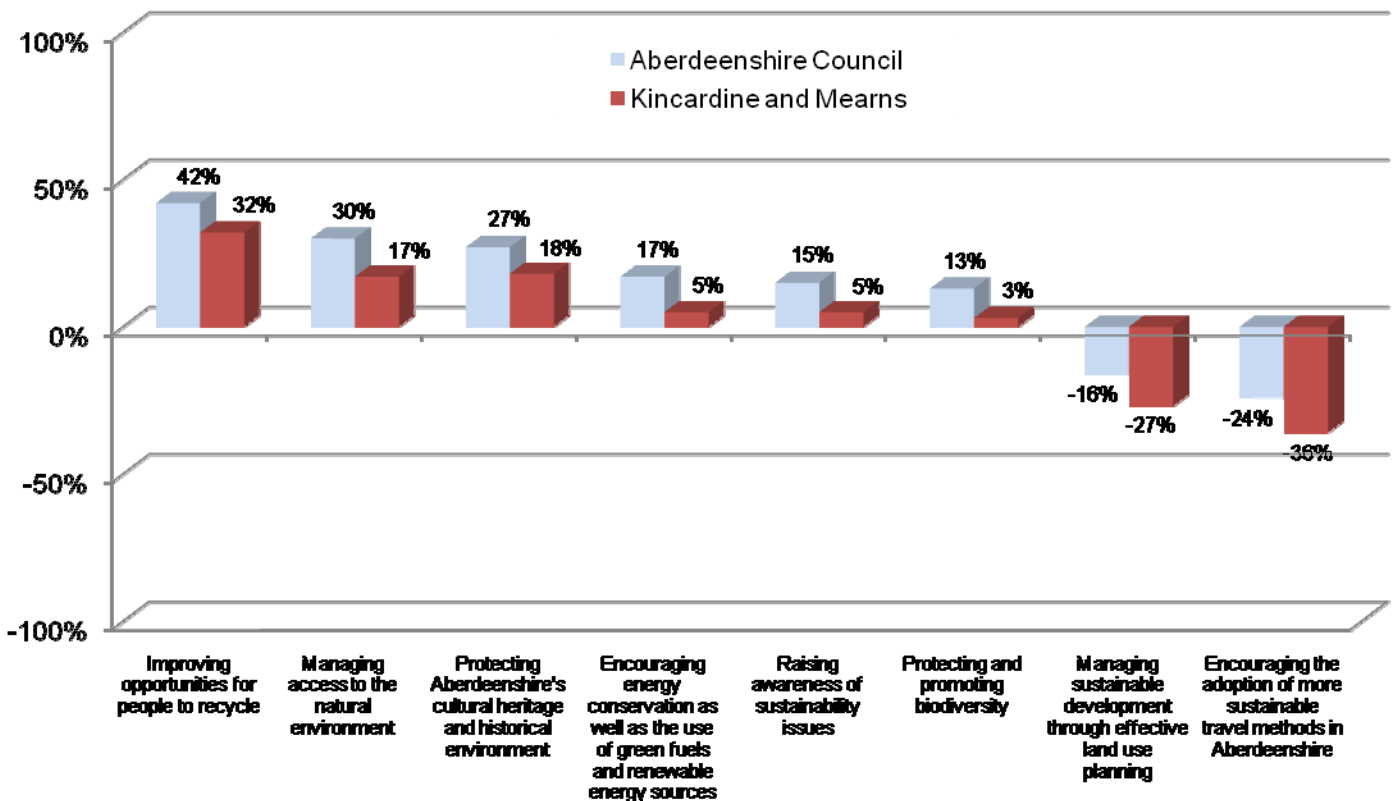
7.2 The detailed results in relation to perception of the Council's performance with regard to these aspects of the Sustainable Environment priority are detailed below, including “don't know” responses (the small number of people who did not answer the question are excluded and base numbers therefore vary for each question and are set out in full in the appendices). The figures given are for Kincardine and Mearns with the figures for Aberdeenshire Council as a whole provided in brackets.

**Table 7.1: Detailed Rating of Sustainable Environment Performance**

	Very Good	Good	Neither / Nor	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Encouraging energy conservation as well as the use of green fuels and renewable energy sources	0% (3%)	21% (21%)	25% (28%)	15% (10%)	3% (2%)	36% (36%)
Raising awareness of sustainability issues	1% (3%)	18% (20%)	28% (27%)	14% (11%)	1% (2%)	37% (37%)
Managing sustainable development through effective land use planning	0% (1%)	5% (8%)	24% (20%)	14% (13%)	4% (4%)	53% (54%)
Encouraging the adoption of more sustainable travel methods in Aberdeenshire	0% (2%)	9% (12%)	26% (23%)	21% (19%)	13% (9%)	31% (35%)
Protecting Aberdeenshire's cultural heritage and historical environment	2% (3%)	22% (25%)	30% (29%)	8% (7%)	4% (3%)	34% (33%)
Managing access to the natural environment	1% (2%)	20% (25%)	31% (27%)	8% (6%)	3% (2%)	37% (37%)
Protecting and promoting biodiversity	1% (1%)	8% (12%)	27% (22%)	6% (6%)	2% (2%)	57% (57%)
Improving opportunities for people to recycle	7% (12%)	40% (39%)	25% (24%)	10% (8%)	8% (5%)	10% (12%)

7.3 Ratings of performance in relation to the Sustainable Environment priority are set out below amongst those that expressed a direct opinion (base numbers vary and are detailed in the appendices):

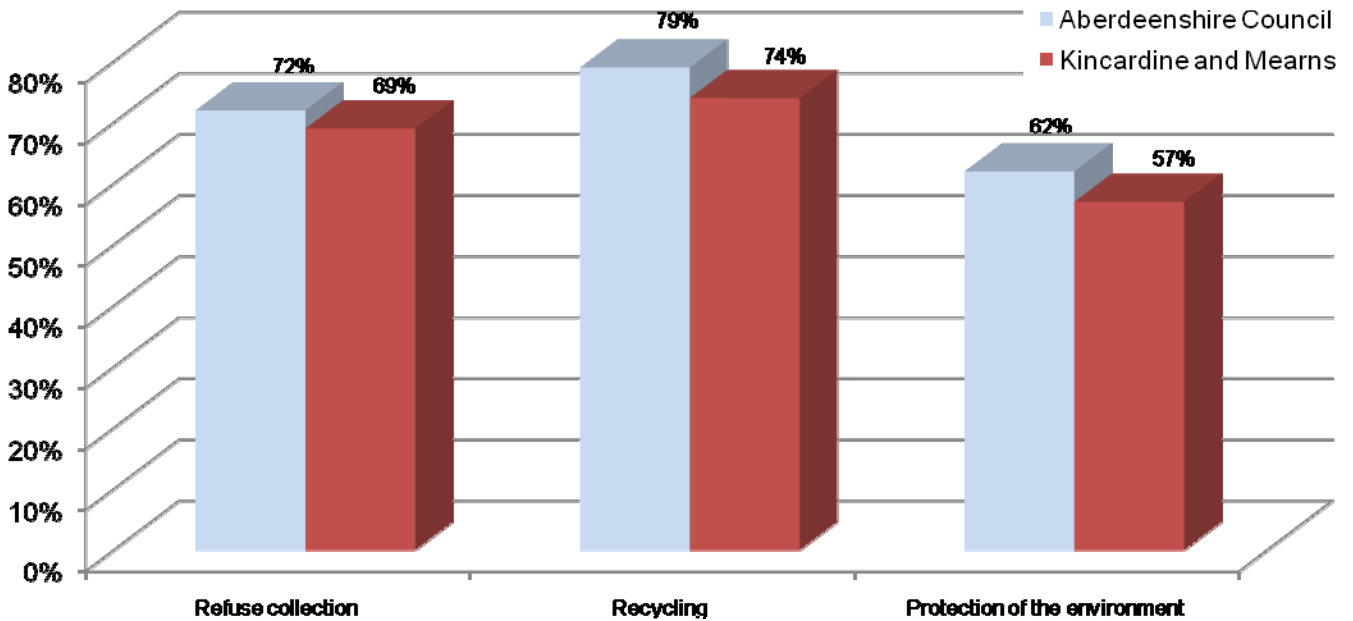
**Figure 7.1: Rating of Sustainable Environment Performance**



Comparison between Aberdeenshire Council's overall results and Kincardine and Mearns should be undertaken with some caution owing to low base numbers. It can be seen, however, that ratings in Kincardine and Mearns are somewhat poorer for the achievement of these strategic priorities than is the case in the Council area as a whole.

7.4 Certain of the universal services for which ratings were identified related to the Sustainable Environment priority. These ratings are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 7.2: Rating of Universal Services – Sustainable Environment**



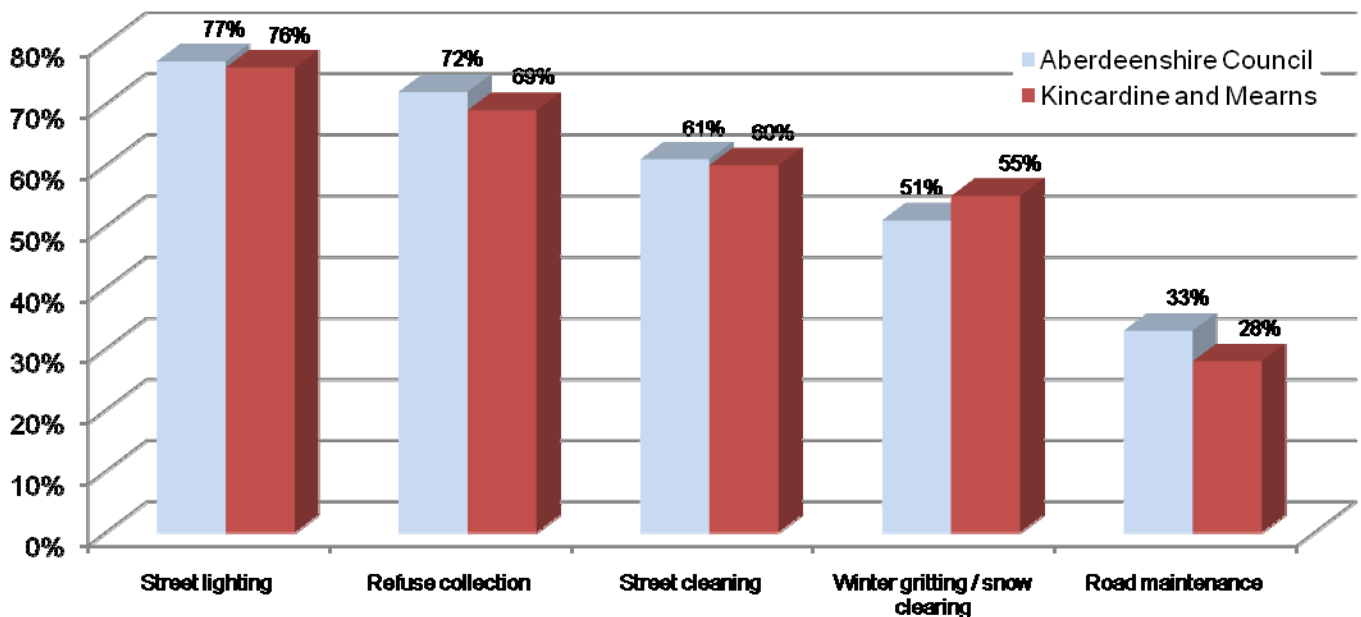
Kincardine and Mearns residents were slightly less likely to be satisfied with these services compared to Aberdeenshire residents as a whole.

## 8.0 SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES

8.1 The various satisfaction ratings have already been incorporated in chapters 4-7. However, as these have previously been incorporated in a single chapter of the Residents' Report we have included these results here, for completeness.

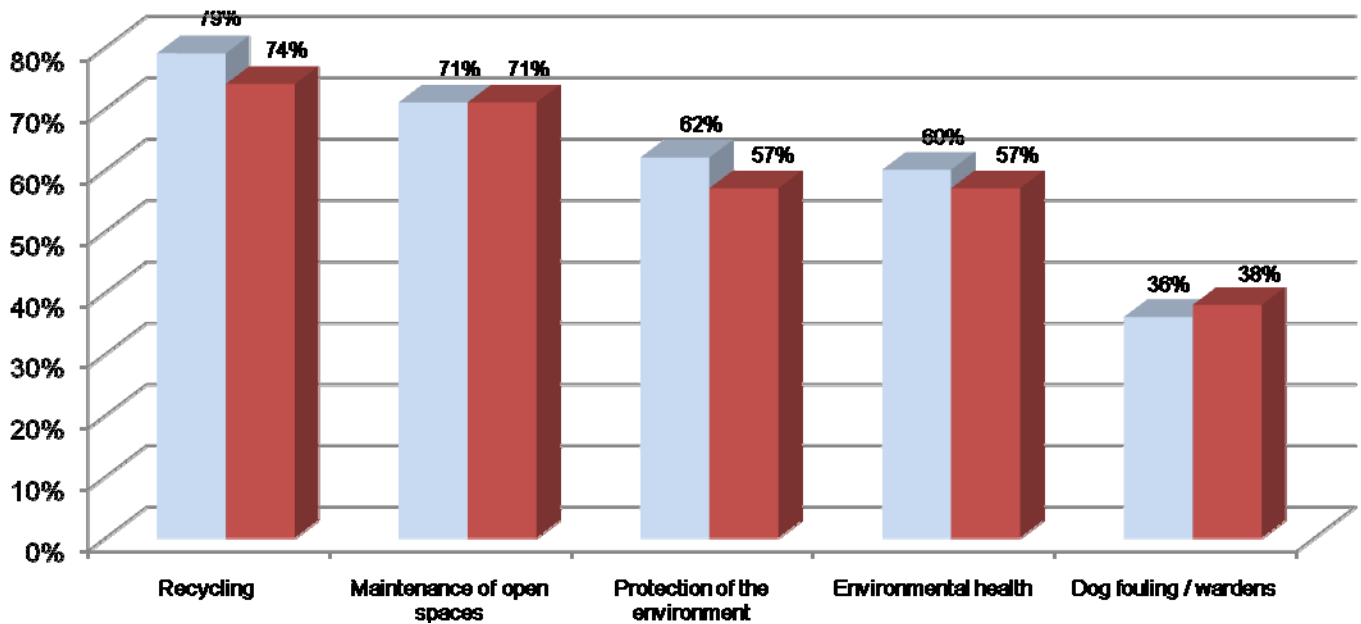
8.2 Ratings for a range of universal services are set out below:

**Figure 8.1(a): Rating of Universal Services**



8.3 In 2010, a number of new questions were asked under this heading and ratings for these are summarised on the following page:

**Figure 8.1(b): Rating of Universal Services**



These ratings are broadly in line with the Council average with some minor exceptions (ratings are slightly better for winter gritting / snow clearing but slightly worse for road maintenance and recycling).

8.4 Ratings for a number of specific services that people either have a need for or choose to use are tabulated below (not answered responses included). Results are provided in full for reference but the very low base number of respondents in some cases should be noted.

**Table 8.1: Usage and Satisfaction with Services**

Service	Aberdeenshire Council			Kincardine and Mearns		
	% of respondents who use service	Base	Satisfaction	% of respondents who use service	Base	Satisfaction
Library services	51%	967	86%	51%	148	86%
Country parks	63%	1,195	84%	58%	171	84%
Adult education	10%	166	82%	15%	43	86%
Museums and arts	37%	696	81%	39%	115	80%
Local Council offices	48%	825	80%	49%	125	79%
Burial grounds	28%	472	78%	15%	43	77%
Your child / children's school(s)	25%	481	78%	20%	58	90%
Before and after school care	4%	67	75%	6%	18	89%
Youth clubs and services	13%	245	74%	5%	15	87%
Social work services	14%	262	73%	12%	32	72%
Council-run leisure / sports facilities	39%	730	70%	43%	130	69%
Council housing services	11%	191	67%	8%	21	86%
Education and training for people with disabilities	6%	110	62%	6%	17	59%
Trading standards	8%	144	59%	8%	23	61%
Planning and building control	28%	486	55%	25%	73	44%
Support to local businesses	10%	180	52%	10%	26	58%
Training and employment initiatives	8%	132	48%	4%	11	73%

Whilst noting the small base numbers it can be seen that a number of these specific services appear to be somewhat more positively rated by their users in Kincardine and Mearns than the Council average including schools, before and after school care, youth clubs and services, Council housing services and training and employment initiatives (although the particularly small base for this should be noted). On the other hand, planning and building control achieves poorer ratings than average amongst Kincardine and Mearns respondents.

## 9.0 FUTURE PRIORITIES

### ***BUDGET PRIORITIES***

- 9.1 A new section of the questionnaire concerned issues around the Council's future budget priorities. The following preamble was included in the questionnaire:

*“Due to the well publicised expected reduction in government grant funding, all local authorities will need to make significant budget savings over the next few years. Your answers to questions in this section will be one of the things that the Council takes into account in setting its budgets in the future.”*

- 9.2 Respondents were then asked to nominate up to 10 service options they considered MOST important to protect and up to 10 that they considered LEAST important.<sup>3</sup> The results of this are set out over the page, organised in order of the “net figure” accorded to each service (it should be noted that the information in Figure 9.1 is based only on the results of the “main” survey). The figures given are for Kincardine and Mearns with the figures for Aberdeenshire Council as a whole provided in brackets.

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<sup>3</sup> For reasons of space, young people were only asked the question as to what was MOST important to protect and the information in Table 9.1 is based only on the results of the main survey.

**Table 9.1: Protection of Services**

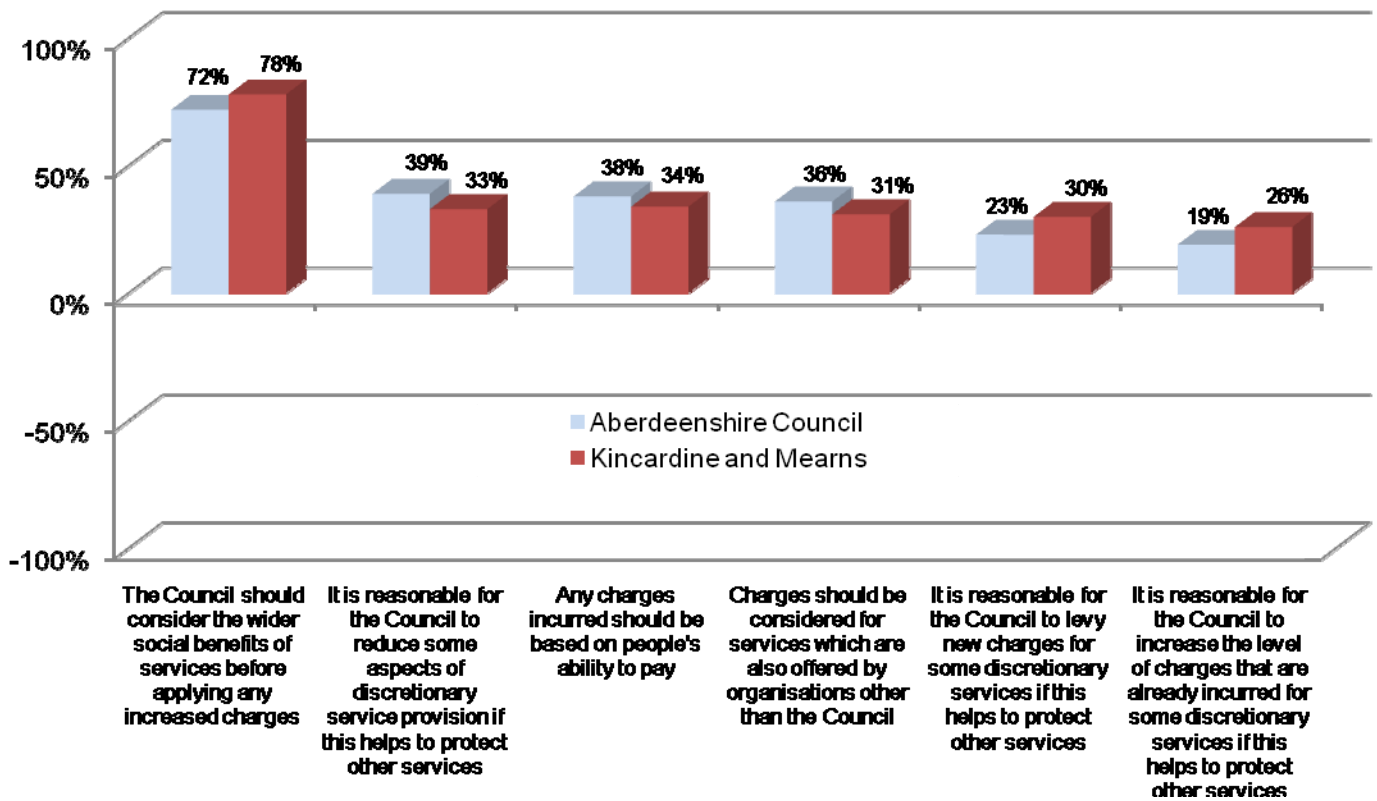
Service	Proportion Nominating as Most Important to Protect	Proportion Nominating as Least Important to Protect	Net Figure <sup>4</sup> (proportion nominating as most important less proportion nominating as least important)
Refuse collection	76% (72%)	2% (3%)	+74% (+69%)
Road maintenance	79% (71%)	1% (2%)	+77% (+69%)
Winter gritting / snow clearing	69% (69%)	5% (5%)	+64% (+64%)
Child protection	60% (61%)	4% (4%)	+55% (+57%)
Recycling	54% (56%)	12% (10%)	+42% (+46%)
Your child / children's school(s)	45% (45%)	10% (10%)	+35% (+35%)
Street cleaning	39% (38%)	11% (12%)	+27% (+26%)
Education and training for people with disabilities	36% (38%)	10% (11%)	+26% (+27%)
Maintenance of burial grounds	28% (38%)	16% (16%)	+13% (+22%)
Council-run leisure / sports facilities	44% (36%)	14% (19%)	+31% (+17%)
Library services	38% (37%)	20% (22%)	+18% (+15%)
Street lighting	33% (33%)	20% (17%)	+13% (+16%)
Council housing services	28% (31%)	15% (17%)	+13% (+14%)
Social work services	26% (27%)	14% (14%)	+12% (+13%)
Protection of the environment	28% (29%)	17% (19%)	+10% (+10%)
Maintenance of open spaces	33% (31%)	17% (22%)	+16% (+9%)
Environmental health	30% (28%)	21% (21%)	+10% (+7%)
Country parks	23% (26%)	28% (24%)	-5% (+2%)
Planning and building control	29% (24%)	21% (22%)	+8% (+2%)
Youth clubs and services	19% (22%)	26% (23%)	-6% (-1%)
Training and employment initiatives	20% (19%)	31% (27%)	-11% (-8%)
Dog fouling / wardens	25% (25%)	36% (35%)	-11% (-10%)
Before and after school care	24% (21%)	30% (32%)	-6% (-11%)
Adult education	16% (18%)	33% (31%)	-17% (-13%)
Local Council offices	17% (18%)	35% (33%)	-18% (-15%)
Support to local businesses	18% (18%)	39% (35%)	-21% (-17%)
Trading standards	7% (8%)	41% (41%)	-33% (-33%)
Museums and arts	10% (11%)	43% (46%)	-33% (-35%)
<b>Base</b>		<b>302 (1,734)</b>	

The priorities of Kincardine and Mearns residents are broadly in line with those of respondents from the Council area as a whole but they do appear to place even greater emphasis on the protection of refuse collection and road maintenance services.

<sup>4</sup> Allowing for rounding

9.3 Respondents to the main survey were then asked to agree or disagree with a range of statements regarding the Council’s approach to charging, with the results of this being set out below (the figures provide represent “net agreement”):

**Figure 9.1: Agreement with Charging Statements**



Kincardine and Mearns respondents’ views generally match those of Aberdeenshire respondents as a whole.