Kensington and Chelsea – Shaping the future of public participation

Consultation report – July 2025

Introduction

Background

As part of the Grenfell Inquiry Report commitments, the Council is reviewing the Charter for Public Participation with our residents to update the Council's commitments to public involvement. Following a period of pre-engagement, a formal consultation was undertaken including a survey (directly with the Citizens' Panel and open to residents generally) and face-to-face engagement with different groups.

The Citizens' Panel is a large, demographically representative group of residents from across the borough who are regularly invited to give public preferences and opinions to inform Council decision-making. The Panel was launched in April 2021.

Methodology and report

Pre-engagement
Prior to the formal consultation, there was a period of pre-engagement which reached over 92 residents (including Councillors), five Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) leaders and 30 staff. This included one to one calls with residents, meetings with the Chairs of Ladbroke, Earl's Court and Kensington societies, attendance at the Voluntary and Community Sector Leaders meeting, the 'Challenging the New Housing Targets' meeting and the Tenants' Consultative Committee. Focus groups were held with the Council's Citizens' Panel and workshops held with the Youth Council. Councillors who participate in the Overview and Scrutiny and Communities select committees were also briefed.

Formal consultation
'The Future of Public Participation' 12 week public consultation closed on Monday 23 June. Over its duration we received 474 survey responses. This was made up of 342 responses from members of the Citizens' Panel and 132 responses to the general survey from local people. An Easy Read version of the survey was also produced and distributed for residents who might need this.

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In addition to the survey, since March of this year eight in-person sessions have been co-hosted – in partnership with the local voluntary and community sector - reaching 68 participants. These sessions were set up for lesser heard groups of people who live, work or study locally e.g. young people, ethnically diverse residents, those with disabilities and long-term health conditions and those who traditionally don't engage with the council.

We also experimented with using 'trust question' postcards in this consultation to make it easier for residents to input. Thirty five postcards were completed by residents. The postcards were particularly popular with young people.

A form of AI called large language models (LLM) was used to assist theming comments made in the survey. All comments received have been read by a Council officer who also reviewed and amended themes where needed. The LLM is accessed through Azure Open AI - no data is shared with external entities and no data is used for future training of large language models (LLM).

Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank the residents, Panel members and voluntary and community sector representatives that took the time to take part in the exercise and gave their views.

Executive summary

Executive summary – online survey

Influencing decisions – A total of 86 per cent of respondents said it is important for local people to have influence over major decisions in their area. However, views were mixed on whether they feel they currently have that influence, 38 per cent agreed, 35 per cent disagreed, and 25 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. Respondents from ethnically diverse backgrounds were significantly more likely to feel they could influence decisions (57 per cent) compared to White respondents (36 per cent).

Involving local people in decisions – When asked what types of decisions the Council should involve local people in, 72 per cent said changes to local services generally, even if they don't use them much. This was followed by 68 per cent who said policies affecting the whole borough and 63 per cent said matters that have a significant impact across specific neighbourhoods.

Involvement and participation in the past 12 months – The most common form of involvement was through local residents' or tenants' associations (24 per cent). Ethnically diverse respondents were more likely to be involved in local groups or volunteering (76 per cent) than White respondents (59 per cent). Ethnically diverse respondents also took part in more Council-led activities such as surveys and face-to-face events. Participation trends also varied by area: those in the north were more likely to attend meetings, while those in the south were more likely to complete surveys.

Future involvement and participation – The most popular approach for strengthening residents' voices was to gather feedback shortly after a service or decision is implemented and make adjustments if needed (66 per cent). When asked what would encourage local involvement, 58 per cent said believing that change is possible and worthwhile. When asked what one change respondents would like to see in future involvement, transparency, accountability, and trust in Council decisions was the most common theme.

Monitoring and reviewing – Three quarters (75 per cent) of respondents said providing direct feedback to participants on consultation outcomes is the best way to monitor whether the Council is listening, followed by requiring the Council to demonstrate how public input has shaped final decisions in key decision reports (68 per cent).

Integrating with local communities – When asked how the Council could better integrate with local communities, the most frequent suggestions focused on improving communication and feedback, offering more varied consultation methods, and supporting community and cultural events.

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Executive summary – in person sessions (pre-engagement and formal consultation)

Accessibility and inclusion – The need for all participation to be fully accessible and inclusive was consistently raised in the in-person sessions, with participants feeling the Council needs to be more creative in how it engages with residents with different needs. This includes providing consultation materials in a variety of formats and translations, ensuring event venues are fully accessible, providing refreshments, transport and childcare and not over-relying on digital methodologies. It was also felt the Charter should proactively address equalities and the issues of racial and social discrimination through engagement work going forward. This was a common theme in the survey element too, especially when looking at what would encourage respondents or their neighbours to get involved in making positive change locally.

Trust and Council transparency – Trust was seen as a key issue and the need for Council transparency was emphasised. The Council needs to openly share information, be honest about what can and can't be influenced, explain decisions and respond to feedback. This was also raised in almost all questions where respondents were able to write their own answer in the survey, in the final question asking respondents to share one change they would like to see in how decisions are made in Kensington and Chelsea to make participation more meaningful, Transparency, Accountability, and Trust in Council Decisions was mentioned 135 times. It was also suggested the Council could work with local voluntary and community sector organisations to help build trust with residents.

Outreach and visibility – Participants felt that there needs to be much more outreach, with staff and Councillors needing to get out of the Town Hall and talk directly to the community at their meetings or places they regularly visit. It was felt that it was important for both staff and Councillors to have a better understanding of the local area and the people who live there, as well as being more visible within the borough.

Participation methods – It was generally felt that there was an over reliance on online, email and surveys with participants wanting to see more face-to-face involvement. This was also a theme in the survey with only 25 per cent of respondents selecting participating in digital platforms and online forums as an effective approach in giving local people a stronger voice in local decision-making. There was also enthusiasm for genuine and consistent co-design/production. It was emphasised that participation needed to happen at an early/planning stage of decisions and that the Council needs to create space for residents to set the agenda with more two-way communication.

Executive summary – in person sessions (pre-engagement and formal consultation)

Closing the feedback loop - The Council needs to ensure that there are regular updates on what happens as a result of involvement including direct feedback to those who participated. Feedback needs to provide real examples of positive change/practical outcomes. When residents don't hear how their input has been used, they feel ignored and are less likely to participate again.

Recognising Participation - Participants emphasised the importance of valuing the skills, knowledge and lived experience of residents and stakeholders and the need to demonstrate that the time they give to participation is valued. This could include providing food/hospitality to participants, giving gift vouchers or payment, shadowing, mentoring or training opportunities and providing transport and childcare where necessary.

Postcard feedback – We widely distributed 'trust postcards around the borough. Feedback from these included the need for the Council to be clear and honest with residents about when how decisions are being made, making participation as accessible as possible and allowing enough time for residents to participate as well as the need to work with local community and voluntary organisations and Residents' Associations to widen participation and engagement.

Pre-engagement

Pre-engagement feedback

Prior to the formal consultation, there was a period of pre-engagement which reached over 92 residents (including Councillors), five voluntary and community sector leaders and 30 council staff. This included one to one calls with residents, meetings with the Chairs of Ladbroke, Earl's Court and Kensington societies, attendance at the Voluntary and Community Sector Leaders meeting, the 'Challenging New Housing Targets' meeting and the Tenants' Consultative Committee.

Councillors who participate in the Overview and Scrutiny and Communities select committees were also briefed. Their feedback fed directly into the design of the more formal consultation and included:

• Making the consultation as accessible as possible by making it available in different formats and translations and promoting the consultation through local community groups;
• Using a variety of methodologies to engage with different audiences; and
• Involving Councillors in the promotion of the consultation.

Two focus groups with the Council's Citizens' Panel were also arranged as well workshops with the Youth Council. The following slides summarise some of the key themes raised whilst the full writes ups of the sessions can be found in the appendices report. The feedback from the pre-engagement were used to inform the development of the consultation survey.

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Pre-engagement feedback – Citizens' Panel

Citizens' Panel Focus Groups:

- The overall consensus was that Citizens' Panel members do not feel adequately involved in Council decision-making. Some mentioned that they only feel included through voluntary organisations or residents' associations, there was agreement that more work is needed to engage residents more directly.

- Panel members felt that it was important to involve residents in decisions which directly impacted on them, such as the procurement of services like housing repairs. They also felt it was important to be involved in community safety and transport decisions. Other suggestions included mental health, budget allocation and youth services. Panel members recognised there were some occasions where the Council would not consult, for example if an issue was too specialised or technical or on some statutory decisions.

- Panel members recognised that there needed to be different approaches to involvement dependant on the topic. It was felt that different areas in the borough had very different problems so there needed to be area-based involvement in decisions around community safety and road safety whilst other involvements needed to be on a borough wide basis e.g. budgets or borough-wide approach to cycle lanes.

- It was felt that there needed to be less reliance on surveys and more face-to-face interaction with residents whether at community meetings or at drop-in sessions. Residents should also be involved at an early stage of decisions to feel they have any real influence.

- Trust was seen as a key issue and it was felt the Council needed to be more transparent/honest with residents about what they can and can't influence. It was also felt there should be stronger collaboration with voluntary sector organisations and residents' associations – it was felt that these could be a conduit to involving residents and could help re-build trust with the Council. The Council and its staff also needed to be more approachable/empathetic to encourage involvement. It was suggested that the Council could learn from other organisations who do resident involvement well.

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Pre-engagement feedback

- It was important to Panel members that participation is as accessible as possible – barriers included language, disability, the lack of confidence felt by some residents and childcare.

- Panel members recognised the importance of residents feeling listened to/heard and that their views matter. They want to feel that their views have been genuinely considered when making Council decisions. It was, therefore, key for Panel members that there was direct feedback to residents who had been involved to hear what a difference their views had made. There should be a 'You said, we did' produced for each engagement which clearly demonstrates how residents' views were taken into consideration when decisions were made,

- Other suggestions included using Ward Councillors to promote involvement more effectively, identifying residents preferred communication channels to promote involvement, identifying residents' skills and involving them where appropriate and offering training opportunities to residents

- It was generally felt that the current Charter was 'too wordy' and that a simplified more user friendly version could be produced for residents.

Pre-engagement feedback – Youth Council

Youth Council feedback:

Youth Council members were asked to comment on anything in the Charter that stood out to them:

- Youth Council members appreciated the Council taking into account residents' views and liked the reference to a two-way relationship. They felt it was important for the community to shape Council decisions.

- They felt that residents might be discouraged form being involved if they felt the Council couldn't deal with their issue, or they didn't feel listened to. They appreciated honesty around what can and can't be changed but wanted to see examples of where involvement had really made a difference.

- It was recognised it was a good Council ambition to try to listen and involve residents but Youth Council members questioned how good the Council is at delivering good participation. The recent community safety sessions were given as an example of good involvement of young people.

- It was generally felt that the Charter was too long and wordy, especially for younger people and those with disabilities. It was suggested a more youth/child friendly version could be developed by the Youth Council. It was felt this would need to be shorter and in more 'real world' language. It was also suggested it could be more visual using Canva, infographics, video, TikTok etc. It was also felt that there needed to be more information on where, when and how residents (including young people) can participate or express their views.

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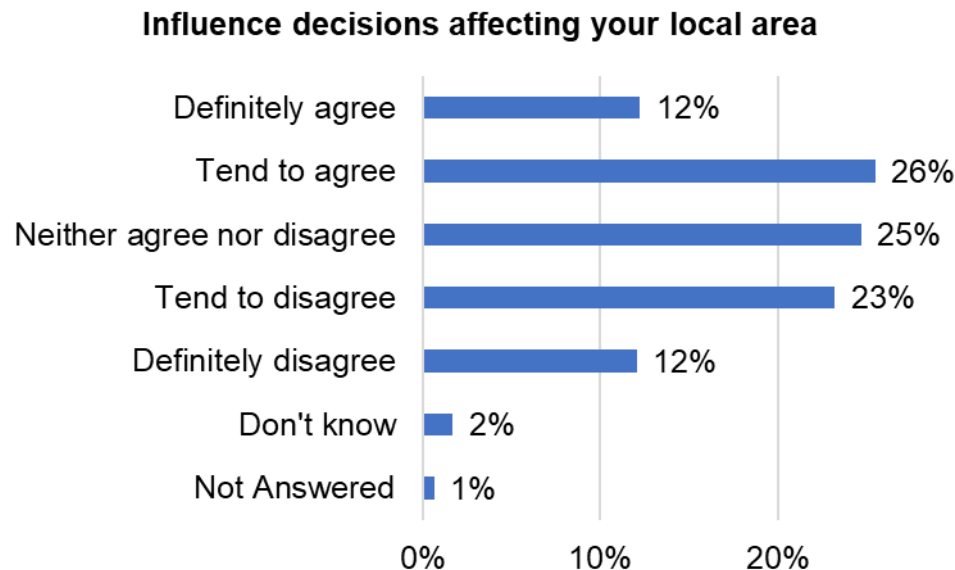KENSINGTON
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Survey results

Influencing decisions

When asked how far respondents agree or disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area, the response was mixed;

- 38 per cent agree - definitely agree 12 per cent and tend to agree 26 per cent,
- 35 per cent disagree – definitely disagree 12 per cent and tend to disagree 23 per cent,
- 25 per cent neither agree nor disagree.

Demographic differences (these percentages are definitively agree/tend to agree combined)

- **Gender:** A higher proportion of males (43 per cent) than females (37 per cent) felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area.
- **Age:** Residents aged 60 and over were more likely to feel influential (43 per cent) compared to those under 60 (36 per cent).
- **Ethnicity:** Respondents from ethnically diverse backgrounds were significantly more likely to feel they could influence local decisions (57 per cent) than White respondents (36 per cent).
- **Location:** There were no notable differences in responses based on where people live within the borough.

Influence decisions affecting your local area

Response	Percentage
Definitely agree	12%
Tend to agree	26%
Neither agree nor disagree	25%
Tend to disagree	23%
Definitely disagree	12%
Don't know	2%
Not Answered	1%

Base: 474 (all responses)

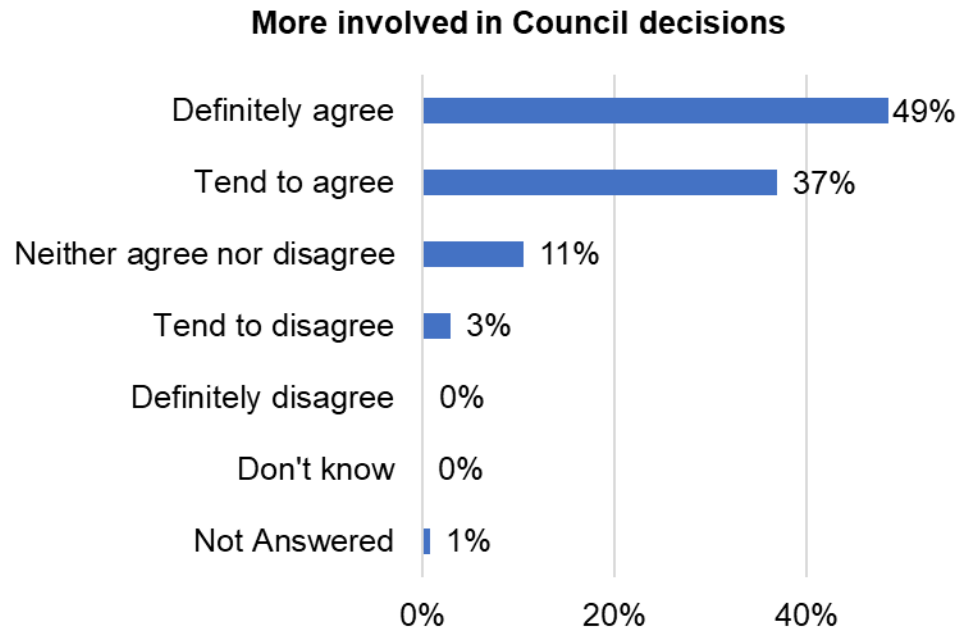THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
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Being involved in decisions

A total of 86 per cent of respondents either definitely agree (49 per cent) or tend to agree (37 per cent) they would want to be more involved in the decisions taken by the Council that affect their local area.

Demographic differences (these percentages are definitively agree/tend to agree combined)

- **Age:** Residents aged under 60 were more likely to want to be involved (88 per cent) compared to those 60 and over (83 per cent).
- **Ethnicity:** Respondents from ethnically diverse backgrounds were more likely to want to be involved (57 per cent) than White respondents (84 per cent).

There were no notable differences between gender and location.

More involved in Council decisions

Definitely agree	49%
Tend to agree	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%
Tend to disagree	3%
Definitely disagree	0%
Don't know	0%
Not Answered	1%

Base: 474 (all responses)

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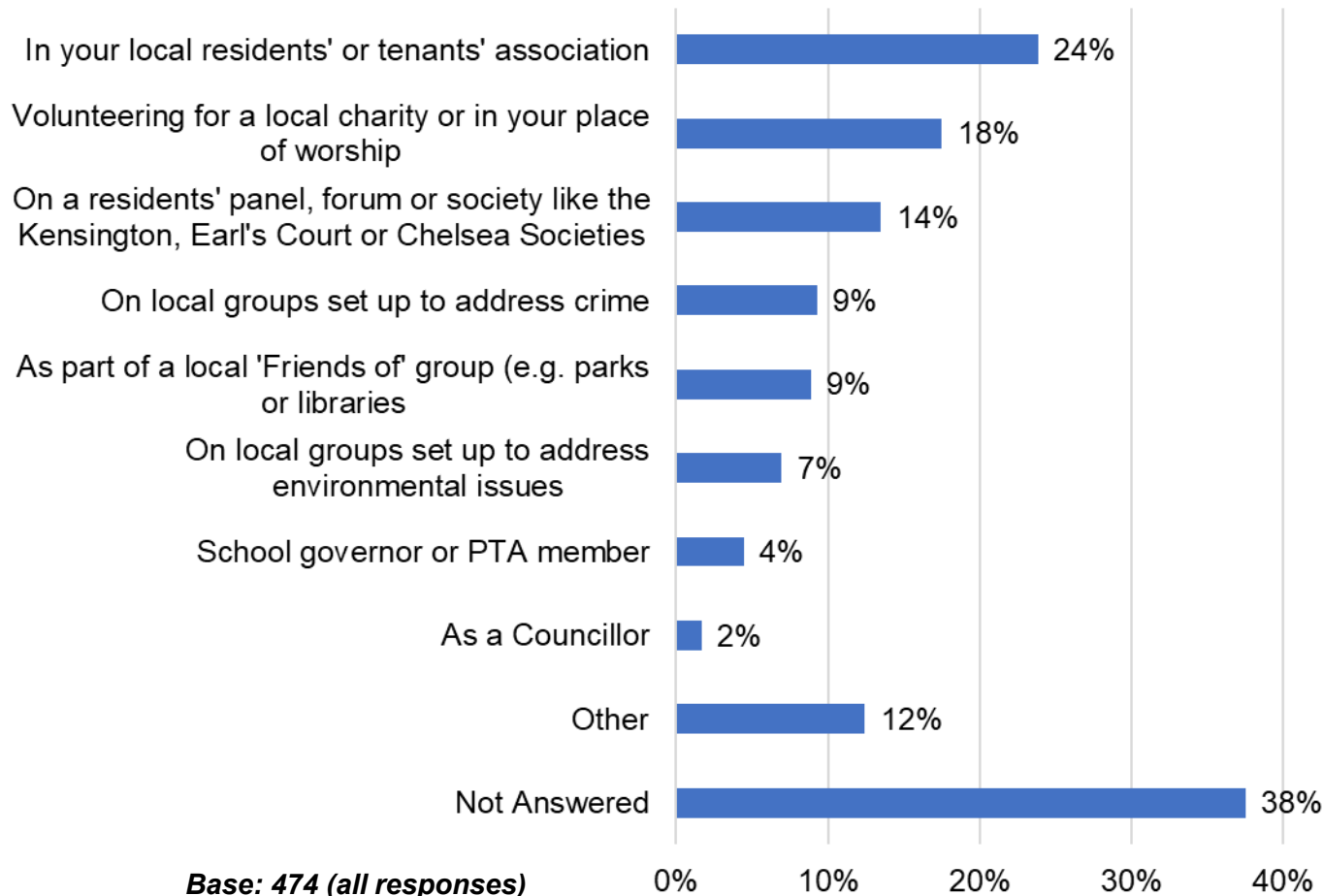
Involvement in the last 12 months

The most common local resident groups, or volunteering respondents have been involved in are in their local residents' or tenants' association (24 per cent), followed by volunteering for a local charity or in their place of worship (18 per cent) and on a residents' panel, forum or society like the Kensington, Earl's Court or Chelsea Societies (14 per cent).

Just over a third (38 per cent) of respondents didn't answer this question. Details of what respondents listed as other is covered on the next two pages.

Involvement in the last 12 months

Category	Percentage
In your local residents' or tenants' association	24%
Volunteering for a local charity or in your place of worship	18%
On a residents' panel, forum or society like the Kensington, Earl's Court or Chelsea Societies	14%
On local groups set up to address crime	9%
As part of a local 'Friends of' group (e.g. parks or libraries	9%
On local groups set up to address environmental issues	7%
School governor or PTA member	4%
As a Councillor	2%
Other	12%
Not Answered	38%

Base: 474 (all responses)

Demographic differences – Comparing the differences in respondents who answered

Ethnically diverse respondents were more likely (76 per cent) to be involved in local resident groups or volunteering compared to White respondents (59 per cent). Similarly, those living in the north of the borough were more likely (69 per cent) to be involved than those living in the centre or south (both 61 per cent).

There were no notable differences based on age or gender.

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Involvement in the last 12 months

Respondents, who said there were other local resident groups, or volunteering they have been involved in, were asked for details of this. A total of 104 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and are listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Volunteering or supporting for a local charity, community organisation or place of worship	23
Non-participation or unclear Involvement in community activities in the past 12 months	22
Council/Government/Political lead involvement	14
Barriers to participation in local groups and volunteering	14
As part of a local 'Friends of' group or neighbourhood activity (e.g. parks, libraries and environment)	10
On a residents' panel, forum or society like the Kensington, Earl's Court or Chelsea Societies	10
In your local residents' or tenants' association	7
Opposition to Local Policies and Environmental Concerns	5

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Involvement in the last 12 months

"I work in Avondale school as a volunteer 3 days a week Also run a football team for the kids on weekends and many other projects."

Volunteering or supporting for a local charity, community organisation or place of worship

"Personal circumstances have precluded such activities over the past 12 months."

Barriers to participation in local groups and volunteering

"Attended meetings and in contact with my local MP."

Council/Government/Political lead involvement

"Public Realm Inclusivity Panel (PRIP) for Earl's Court Development Company."

On a residents' panel, forum or society like the Kensington, Earl's Court or Chelsea Societies

"I'm always cleaning the surrounding areas around the houses. Road sweepers don't tend to sweep."

As part of a local 'Friends of' group or neighbourhood activity (e.g. parks or libraries)

"Not at all. No point. Municipal civil servants in the UK just do what they like and think best. Otherwise, they would stop electric bikes and scooters from knocking people over on sidewalks, stop electric bikes and scooters ignoring traffic lights and endangering pedestrians who are crossing, move the Notting Hill Carbuncle to a sensible location such as Hyde Park or the Olympic village area. But there is no point raising these things. All the councillors and civil servants dance the wokie-woke dance around these issues.."

Opposition to local policies and environmental concerns

"Via Friends of Holland Park."

As part of a local 'Friends of' group or neighbourhood activity (e.g. parks or libraries)

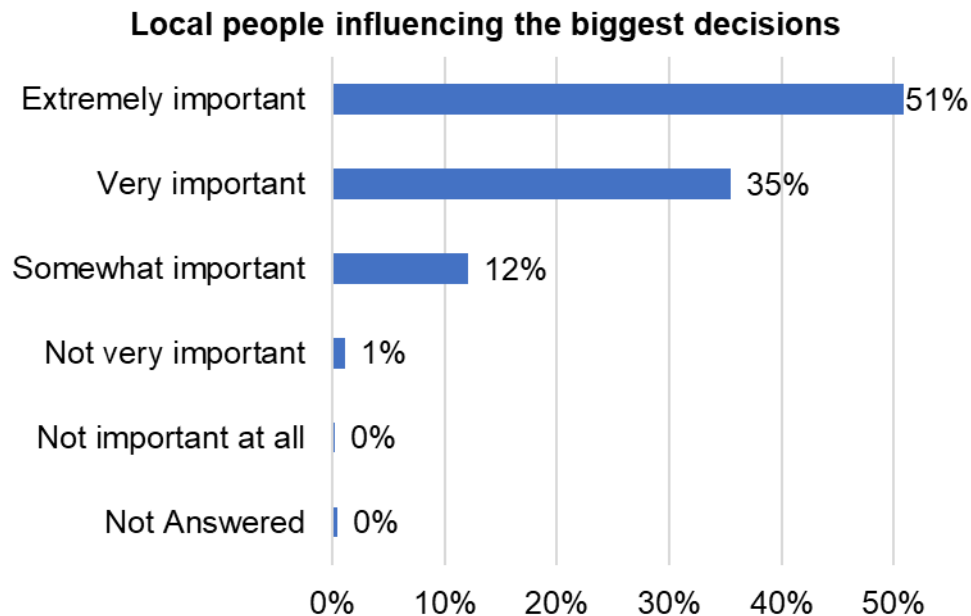THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
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Local people influencing the biggest decisions

A total of 86 per cent of respondents said it is important for local people to have influence over major decisions affecting their area, with 51 per cent saying it is extremely important and 35 per cent saying it is very important.

Respondents were also given space to add commentary to their answer, details of what was mentioned can be found on the next two pages.

Demographic differences (these percentages are extremely important/very important combined)

- **Location:** Respondents in the south (90 per cent) and north (89 per cent) were more likely to say it is important for local people to have influence over major decisions affecting their area thank those who live in the centre of the borough (82 per cent).

Local people influencing the biggest decisions

Category	Percentage
Extremely important	51%
Very important	35%
Somewhat important	12%
Not very important	1%
Not important at all	0%
Not Answered	0%

Base: 474 (all responses)

Local people influencing decisions expanded

A total of 241 people explained their answer, the comments made have been themed and summarised in the table below.

Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Community knowledge, ownership, and inclusivity	139
Democratic participation, accountability, and transparency	42
Local impact on safety, community well-being, and public spaces	35
Frustration and distrust in Council and decision-making processes	32
Balancing local input with expertise for effective outcomes	31
Importance of accessible, early, and inclusive engagement	17

Local people influencing decisions expanded

"Responsibility for decisions must remain with RBKC officers, having taken full account of the opinions of local people, and then justified in a transparent manner the decisions taken."

Democratic participation, accountability, and transparency

"Local people are the ones most local decision affect, for e.g. safe road crossings for pedestrians, doing something about the widespread parking and riding of electric bikes on pavements rather than new paving stones and wider pavements."

Local impact on safety, community well-being, and public spaces

"It is important that residents have adequate information and opportunity to enable them to contribute to, and actively support, the decisions being made in their community."

Importance of accessible, early, and inclusive engagement

"Getting people to participate in the decision making precedes reinforce the sense of belonging to a community + they have ideas too!!"

Community knowledge, ownership, and inclusivity

"It feels like everything is already decided and that this is just lip service to show that there is involvement in decision making. I don't see the difference this makes."

Frustration and distrust in Council and decision-making processes

"Be careful. We elect councillors to make decisions on our behalf. It is completely unrealistic and dangerous (also undermines democracy) if you then replace elected councillor decision making with decision making by those local people who shout the loudest."

Balancing local input with expertise for effective outcomes

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Involving local people in decisions

When asked what types of decisions the Council should involve local people in, 72 per cent of respondents said changes to local services generally, even if they don't use them much. This was followed by 68 per cent who said policies affecting the whole borough and 63 per cent said matters that have a significant impact across specific neighbourhoods.

Eight per cent of respondents selected other and were given the chance to expand on this. Details of what respondents listed as other is covered in the coming pages.

Demographic differences

Across all demographic groups, the two highest-ranked areas where residents want to be involved in council decisions are, changes to local services generally and policies affecting the whole borough. In contrast, the two lowest-ranked areas were savings, efficiency and the annual budget and the procurement of goods and services.

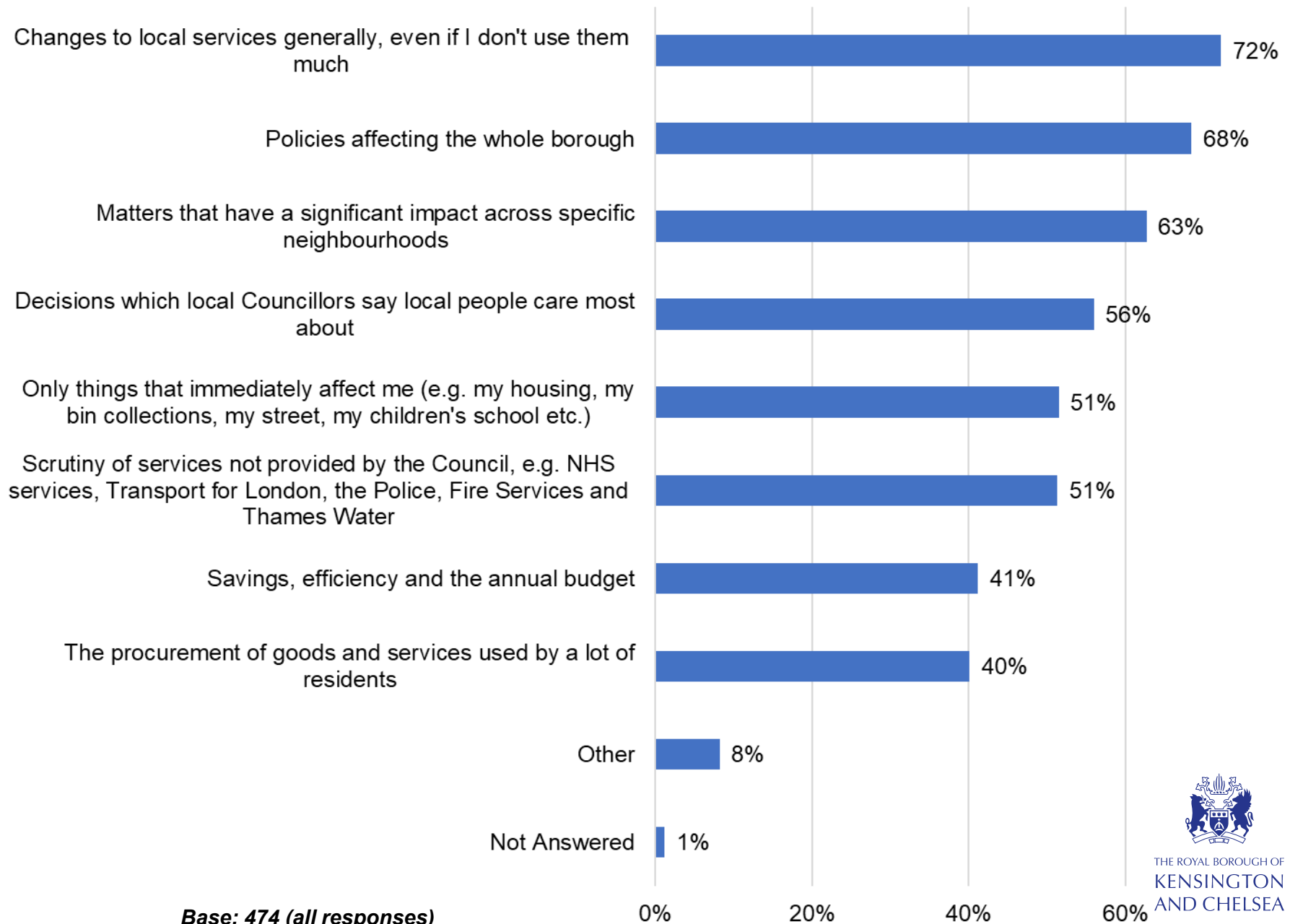**Breakdown of preferences by demographic:**

Gender: Female respondents are most interested in changes to local services generally (76 per cent) whereas males are most interested in policies affecting the whole borough (67 per cent).

Age: respondents aged under 60 prefer involvement in changes to local services generally (72 per cent) whilst those aged 60 and over prefer involvement in policies affecting the whole borough (73 per cent).

Ethnicity: The preferred topic for respondents from an ethnically diverse background is only things that immediately affect me (60 per cent) and White respondents prefer involvement in changes to local services generally (74 per cent).

Location: Respondents who live in the north of the borough most want involvement in policies affecting the whole borough (70 per cent). While those living in the centre and south prefer changes to local services generally (70 per cent and 76 per cent respectively).

Types of decisions the Council should involve local people

Decision Type	Percentage
Changes to local services generally, even if I don't use them much	72%
Policies affecting the whole borough	68%
Matters that have a significant impact across specific neighbourhoods	63%
Decisions which local Councillors say local people care most about	56%
Only things that immediately affect me (e.g. my housing, my bin collections, my street, my children's school etc.)	51%
Scrutiny of services not provided by the Council, e.g. NHS services, Transport for London, the Police, Fire Services and Thames Water	51%
Savings, efficiency and the annual budget	41%
The procurement of goods and services used by a lot of residents	40%
Other	8%
Not Answered	1%

Base: 474 (all responses)

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Involving local people in decisions

Respondents who said there were other decisions the Council should involve local people in, were given space to expand on this. A total of 80 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and are listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Planning and transport	24
Safety and policing, including enforcement around e-bikes	17
Transparency, Accountability, and Effective Representation	13
Finance, funding and asset decisions	11
Criticism of Council priorities and service effectiveness	6
Matters that have a significant impact across specific neighbourhoods	5
Local Councillors should be making the decisions	4
Housing	3
Young people and development	2

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Involving local people in decisions

"Greater awareness of planning applications, as present information seems to come primarily from the builder or local residents and not the Council. Often too late to make a valued impact on decisions."

Planning and transport

"Decisions on local policing coordination, CCTV monitoring, licensing that impacts night-time safety, and public space maintenance should involve direct resident participation. These are the issues that affect day-to-day life far more than wider political or sustainability agendas."

Safety and policing, including enforcement around e-bikes

"The sheer waste being spent on roads and pavements (e.g. Redcliffe Gardens) when the real need is to support the poor."

Finance, funding and asset decisions

"Issues that local people raise - not councillors because only a handful of people will contact a councillor for help compared to the amount who have problems. Also, the South and North of the borough are very different and different issues will impact on the various locations."

Criticism of council priorities and service effectiveness

"In the case of RBKC, the Carnival!"

Matters that have a significant impact across specific neighbourhoods

"Surely you have been elected to take decisions on our behalf. This sounds like virtue signalling, along with time and money wasting."

Local Councillors should be making the decisions

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Integrating with local communities

Respondents were given open space to say what more they think the Council could do to be integrated and part of local communities. A total of 324 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments will be available in the final appendix report.

Theme	Count
Suggested changes to communications and an ask for more feedback	91
Consultation	54
Support for community and cultural events	42
More in person engagement events	41
Community cohesiveness and resident empowerment	25
Nothing more to add	21
Request for more direct access to Council officers	21
More access to Councillors	21
Safety, Policing, and Social Issues	18
Culture	17
Council Integration and Local Employment	15
Balancing Tourism Impact with Community Interests	1

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Integrating with local communities

"To be even more visible and share what good you are doing and thinking of doing. In H&F Borough, they sent out leaflets every quarter and it was exciting to see and feel involved in what was coming and how people's feedback had been heard. I think we can do similar things for K&C."

Suggested changes to communications and an ask for more feedback

"Consult on everything- don't be paternalistic. Some of the most significant changes were agreed behind closed doors e.g. Sloane Sq., Exhibition Rd. We are told they will benefit us - no one asked if we agree."

Consultation

"Stage open day events in which the Council can communicate to local communities as exactly how they function and detail services they can offer in terms of community support groups etc."

More in person engagement events
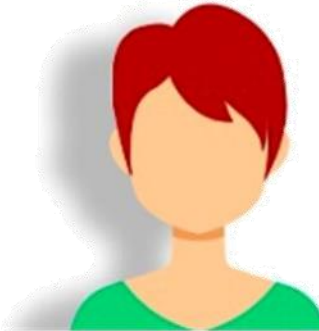
"Support community cohesion by supporting people cerebrating what they are in common and differences through cultural events."

Support for community and cultural events

"I don't feel connected or celebrated. I was born in north Kensington and no longer feel valued as a resident."

Community cohesiveness and resident empowerment

"Have a desk each week and locations around the borough - libraries, leisure centres, even Sainsbury's ... wherever people go. BE MORE ACCESSIBLE!"

Request for more direct access to Council officers

"More proactive involvement by counsellors - a surgery now and again is not enough - they need to be seen at social events - residents need to seek them out they need to be seen out and about at social events etc."
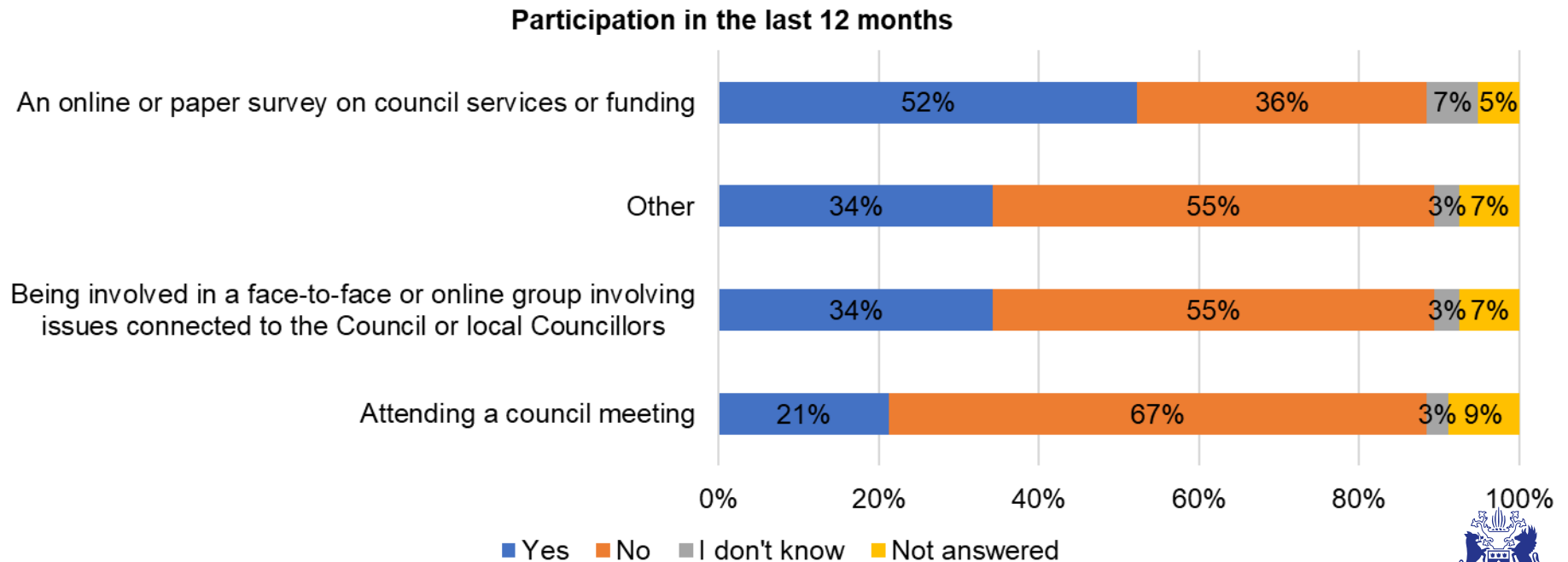
More access to Councillors

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Participation in the last 12 months

Respondents were asked if they had participated in three specific activities in the past 12 months;

- 52 per cent had completed an online or paper survey on Council services or funding,
- 34 per cent had been involved in a face-to-face or online group involving issues connected to the Council or local Councillors,
- 21 per cent had attended a Council meeting.

Just over a third (34 per cent) said they had been involved in something else. Details of what respondents listed as other activity is detailed on the two pages after the demographic differences breakdown on the next page.

Participation in the last 12 months

Activity	Yes	No	I don't know	Not answered
An online or paper survey on council services or funding	52%	36%	7%	5%
Other	34%	55%	3%	7%
Being involved in a face-to-face or online group involving issues connected to the Council or local Councillors	34%	55%	3%	7%
Attending a council meeting	21%	67%	3%	9%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ I don't know   ■ Not answered

Base: 474 (all responses)

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Participation in the last 12 months

Demographic differences

- When looking at respondents who had completed an online or paper survey on Council services or funding, there were no significant differences between gender and age.
- Respondents under 60 (28 per cent) were more likely to attend a council meeting than those aged 60 and over (16 per cent), there was no difference in gender.
- Males (40 per cent) were more likely to be involved in a face-to-face or online group involving issues connected to the Council or local Councillors than females (30 per cent), there was no difference in age.

There was a significant difference for all three activities based on ethnicity and by the area respondents live in. The following table summarises these differences. The percentage differences show, Ethnically Diverse respondents were more likely to take part in more of the specified activities than White respondents, those living in the north were more likely to take part in meetings and those in the south were more likely to take part in surveys.

	Ethnically diverse	White	North	Centre	South
An online or paper survey on council services or funding	55%	49%	51%	51%	56%
Attending a council meeting	43%	14%	26%	15%	23%
Being involved in a face-to-face or online group involving issues connected to the Council or local Councillors	38%	33%	37%	31%	32%

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Participation in the last 12 months

Respondents who said there were other activities they have taken part in in the last 12 months, were given space to expand on this. A total of 62 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and are listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Being involved in a face-to-face or online group involving issues connected to the Council or local Councillors	26
Barriers to participation	11
An online or paper survey on Council services or funding	8
Non-Council community engagement and participation	5
Resident associations	5
Criticism and distrust of local plans and consultation processes	4
Other	3

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Participation in the last 12 months

"Go to Local Accounts Group and RBKC's mobility forum."

Being involved in a face-to-face or online group involving issues connected to the Council or local Councillors

"There is no point. The RBKC civil servants just run things as they like, regardless of the councillors or the inhabitants."

Criticism and distrust of local plans and consultation processes

"I didn't get invited. I didn't receive Survey documents."

Barriers to participation

"Survey sent home."

An online or paper survey on council services or funding

"All of the above is a great way to communicate to people."

Other

"The experience of my local resident association meetings has left me totally disillusioned with engagement. The meetings I have attended via Zoom have been rowdy, with abusive and rude participants, agendas not followed, chair persons totally losing control of proceedings and often wonder if I should bother to attend at all!"

Resident associations

"Reviewing with members of the local Fire Dept the building fire safety features and measures."

Non-Council community engagement and participation

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A stronger voice in local decision-making

When asked which approaches respondents think would be most effective in giving local people a stronger voice in local decision-making, 66 per cent said seeking feedback from residents shortly after a service or decision has been implemented to check it's working as intended and commit to make adjustments if improvements are needed. This was followed by 50 per cent who said increasing resident involvement in scrutiny and decision-making meetings and 48 per cent said using our Citizens' Panel to deliberate on important public questions and provide recommendations.

The approaches selected least often were:
• Participating in neighbourhood forums in-person (29 per cent)
• Harnessing residents' skills and time to organise around specific issues (29 per cent)
• Participating in digital platforms and online forums (25 per cent)

A graph showing the full results is on the next page. Respondents were also given the space to detail other motivations, details of these are provided in the coming pages.

Demographic differences for the two highest-ranked methods of resident involvement:
• Seeking feedback from residents shortly after a service or decision has been implemented
This option received consistently strong support across every demographic group, it was particularly popular among female residents (69 per cent), residents aged 60 and over (69 per cent), and those living in the north of the borough (70 per cent).
• Increasing resident involvement in scrutiny and decision-making meetings
This was selected by over half of respondents aged under 60 (56 per cent) and those from ethnically diverse backgrounds (54 per cent). It also scored highly in the north of the borough (58 per cent).

Lowest-ranked methods of resident involvement:
• Participating in digital platforms and online forums
This option scored the lowest across all demographic groups, particularly among respondents aged 60 and over (17 per cent) and White respondents (22 per cent).
• Harnessing residents' skills and time to organise around specific issues
This method also saw low levels of support across all groups, with scores ranging from 25 to 29 per cent. Interest was lowest among ethnically diverse respondents (25 per cent) and those in the south (26 per cent).
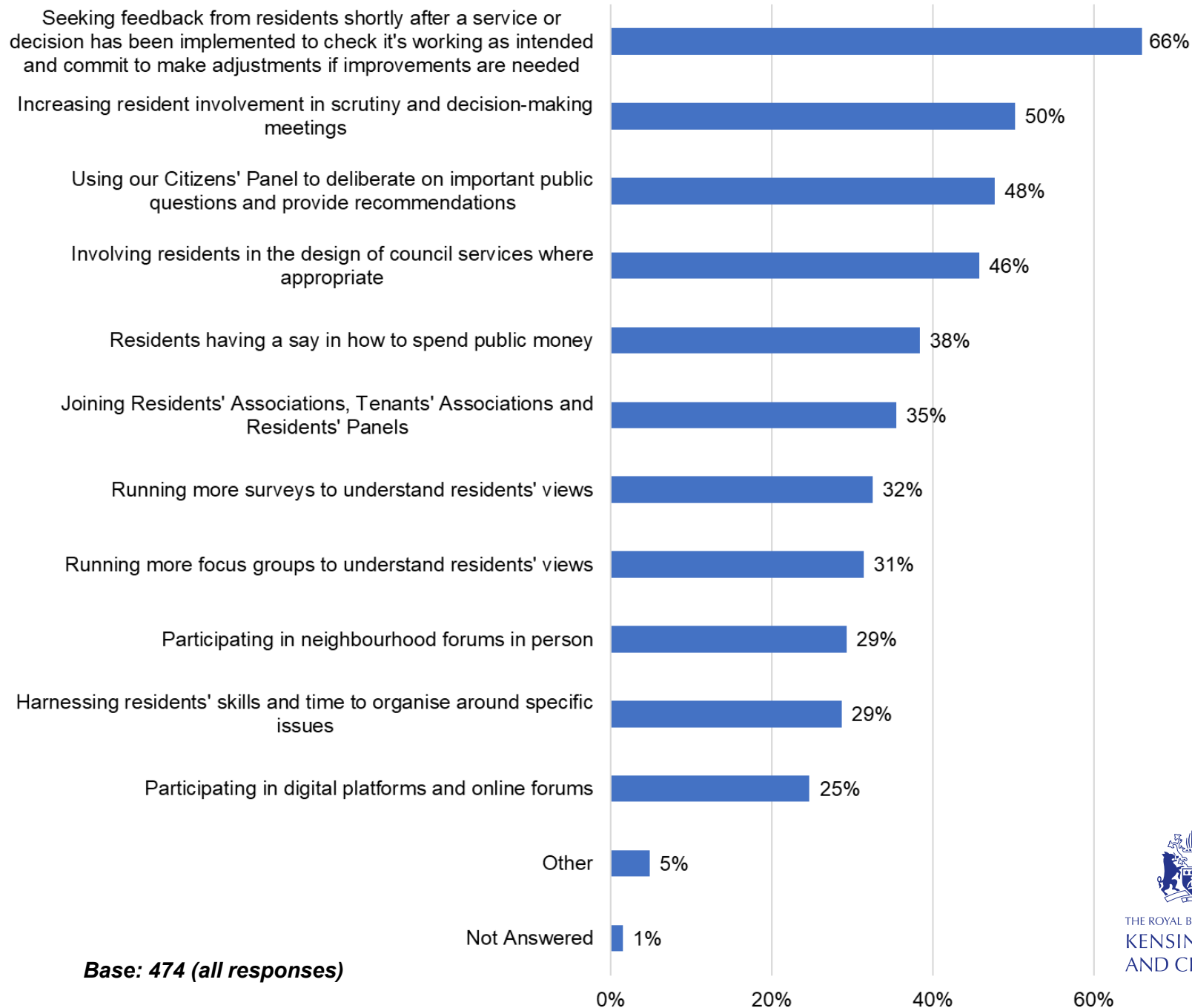
A more detailed breakdown of demographic differences for this question is given after the graph.

Giving local people a stronger voice in local decision-making

Category	Percentage
Seeking feedback from residents shortly after a service or decision has been implemented to check it's working as intended and commit to make adjustments if improvements are needed	66%
Increasing resident involvement in scrutiny and decision-making meetings	50%
Using our Citizens' Panel to deliberate on important public questions and provide recommendations	48%
Involving residents in the design of council services where appropriate	46%
Residents having a say in how to spend public money	38%
Joining Residents' Associations, Tenants' Associations and Residents' Panels	35%
Running more surveys to understand residents' views	32%
Running more focus groups to understand residents' views	31%
Participating in neighbourhood forums in person	29%
Harnessing residents' skills and time to organise around specific issues	29%
Participating in digital platforms and online forums	25%
Other	5%
Not Answered	1%

Base: 474 (all responses)

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A stronger voice in local decision-making

Demographic differences

Gender
The approach with the biggest differences based on gender is running more focus groups to understand residents' views selected by 37 per cent of female respondents compared to 23 per cent of male respondents.

Age
Generally, those under 60 selected more approaches they think would be most effective in giving local people a stronger voice, the biggest differences between those aged under and over 60 are, running more focus groups to understand residents' views selected by 41 per cent of respondents aged under 60 compared with 23 per cent of respondents aged 60 and over. Participating in digital platforms and online forums was also more often selected by respondents aged under 60 (34 per cent) compared to those aged 60 and over (17 per cent).

Ethnicity
Generally, ethnically diverse respondents selected more approaches they think would be most effective in giving local people a stronger voice, the biggest difference between ethnically diverse respondents and White respondents is running more focus groups to understand residents' views selected by 40 per cent of ethnically diverse respondents compared to 28 per cent of White respondents.

Location
The approach with the biggest difference depending on location of respondents was increasing resident involvement in scrutiny and decision-making meetings selected by 58 per cent of respondents who live in the north of the borough, 43 per cent in the centre and 47 per cent in the south.

A stronger voice in local decision-making

Respondents who said there were other activities they have taken part in in the last 12 months, were given space to expand on this. A total of 58 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and are listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Criticism of current consultation processes	22
Transparency, feedback, communication and accountability in decision making	20
Diverse and inclusive engagement methods	12
Focus on practical local issues and service improvements	9
Empowering residents with direct decision making power	4

A stronger voice in local decision-making

"BUT, don't make the mistake of thinking that focus groups or "forums" necessarily give an accurate representation of the views of residents as a wider group. You always need to have some sort of "sanity" check to make sure the issue isn't one that has been hijacked by unrepresentative activists."

Criticism of current consultation processes

"And following up on those surveys… we never hear the outcome…"

Transparency, feedback, communication and accountability in decision making

"Focus groups, while valuable are problematic and cannot be relied upon. People are often shy in groups, but have strong and valid opinions when encouraged to talk in private. There is not enough one to one to gather opinions. Online could be the best way, but should be followed up in person."

Diverse and inclusive engagement methods

"Suspect this survey and others completed are strictly 'box ticking' exercises as there has been little improvement in the general cleanliness of the surrounding area and especially a great increase in the litter and dog droppings on the pavements."

Focus on practical local issues and service improvements

"Let the residents decide where the funding should [go] generally goes to the wrong people."

Empowering residents with direct decision making power

Involvement in change

When asked what would encourage them or their neighbours to get involved in making positive change locally, 58 per cent of respondents said believing that change is possible and worth the effort. This was followed by 46 per cent who said having more information about opportunities to get involved, and 44 per cent who wanted to be involved in issues they personally care about.

A graph showing the full results is on the next page. Five per cent of respondents selected other and were given the chance to expand on this, details of these are provided in the coming pages.

Demographic differences for the two highest-ranked methods to encourage involvement in change:
- Belief that change is possible and worth the effort – Is the highest response across almost all demographic groups, selected most often by respondents who live in the south of the borough (68 per cent). The only demographic group who didn't have this as their highest choice was ethnically diverse respondents whose top choice was more information on the opportunities for involvement.
- More information about opportunities to be involved – Is the second most selected option across five of the nine demographic groups, this was especially favoured among ethnically diverse respondents (55 per cent) and female respondents 54 per cent. The second most selected choice by the remaining four demographic groups is involving me on the issues I care most about and want to be involved.

Lowest-ranked methods to encourage involvement in change:
- Not wanting to be more involved – This was the lest selected option across all demographic groups. This respond was most popular with respondents aged 60 and over and respondents who live in the north both with seven per cent of respondents selecting this option.
- More time to spend on this – Is the second least selected option across five of the nine demographic groups, this was especially low among ethnically female respondents (nine per cent) and those who live in the south, six per cent. The second least selected choices by the remaining four demographic groups is it being accessible for me to participate due to a specific need (e.g. disability, health condition, language, difficulties in getting online) and gift vouchers to encourage participation.

Involvement in change

Involved with making positive change in your local area

Category	Percentage
The belief change is possible and it's worth the effort	58%
More information on the opportunities for involvement	46%
Involving me on the issues I care most about and want to be involved in	44%
A nearby welcoming place to meet and organise	31%
I already do get involved in local initiatives	25%
Gift vouchers to encourage participation	15%
It being accessible for me to participate due to a specific need	14%
More time to spend on this	11%
I do not want to be more involved	5%
Other	5%
Not Answered	4%

Base: 474 (all responses)

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Involvement in change

Demographic differences

Gender
More information on opportunities received the biggest difference when considering gender with 54 per cent of females choosing this method of involvement compared to 37 per cent of males, however more male respondents (29 per cent) said they already do get involved in local initiatives compared to females (22 per cent).

Age
Generally, those under 60 selected more approaches they think would encourage them or their neighbours to get involved in making positive change locally, the biggest differences between those aged under and over 60 years is the use of gift vouchers selected by 23 per cent of those under 60 compared to eight per cent of those aged 60 and over.

Ethnicity
The use of gift vouchers also saw the biggest difference in responses based on ethnicity being selected by 37 per cent of respondents from an ethnically diverse background compared to nine per cent of white respondents. White respondents more often selected the belief change is possible and it's worth the effort (59 per cent) than those from an ethnically diverse background (50 per cent).

Location
The method with the biggest difference depending on location of respondents is involvement being accessible for them to participate due to a specific need selected by 20 per cent of respondents who live in the north of the borough, seven per cent in the centre and 10 per cent in the south.

Involvement in change

Respondents who said there were other ways to encourage them or their neighbours to get involved with making positive change in their local area were given space to expand on this. A total of 55 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and are listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Inclusive, accessible, and representative community participation	20
The belief change is possible and it's worth the effort	19
Specific local issues raised	7
Payment to encourage participation	4
Involving me on the issues I care most about and want to be involved in	3
Other	2

Involvement in change

"A welcoming environment, where persons feel that their concerns are listened to, and someone is going to look at it and come back with an answer, positive or otherwise."

The belief change is possible and it's worth the effort

"An issue I'm passionate about but which at the same time benefits many local residents."

Involving me on the issues I care most about and want to be involved in
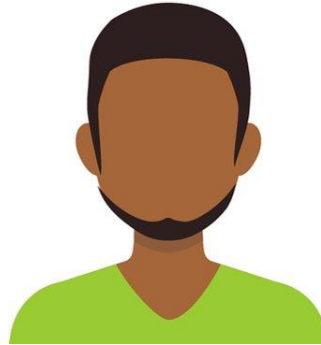
"Paid work. Vouchers say the person's time is not valued in the way a consultant, contractor or employee's is."

Payment to encourage participation

"Pedestrians appear to be at the bottom of the Totem Pole amongst users of public roadways.
Even pavements are being colonised by cyclists and e-scooter users."

Specific local issues raised

"Everyone is different and may have a different need or they own preference for example doodling meeting are survey some may prefer face to face meetings it may be a bit more work and sometimes a longer process to do things multiple ways but in the end do it that way will always have a better outcome and involvement which will give the council a lot more information and input and options to look at to see what could work for the best outcomes before make a decision."

Inclusive, accessible, and representative community participation

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Monitoring and reviewing

Three quarters of respondents (75 per cent) said that providing direct feedback to participants on the outcomes of consultations is an appropriate way to monitor how well the Council is listening and involving residents. This was followed by 68 per cent who supported requiring the Council to demonstrate how public input has shaped final decisions in key decision reports, and 41 per cent who favoured creating more formal structures where residents co-design services alongside councillors and officers.

A graph showing the full results is on the next page. Four per cent of respondents selected other and were given the chance to expand on this. Details of what respondents listed as other is covered in the coming pages.

Demographic differences for the two highest-ranked methods to monitor how well the Council is listening and involving residents:
- Feeding back directly to participants of consultations - This was the most widely supported approach across all demographic groups. It was especially favoured by ethnically diverse respondents (80 per cent), respondents who live in the south of the borough (80 per cent), and females (78 per cent).
- Requiring the Council to demonstrate how public input has shaped final decisions – Again all demographic groups were in agreement that this as the second most preferred method to monitor how well the council is listening with no significant differences between any individual groups.
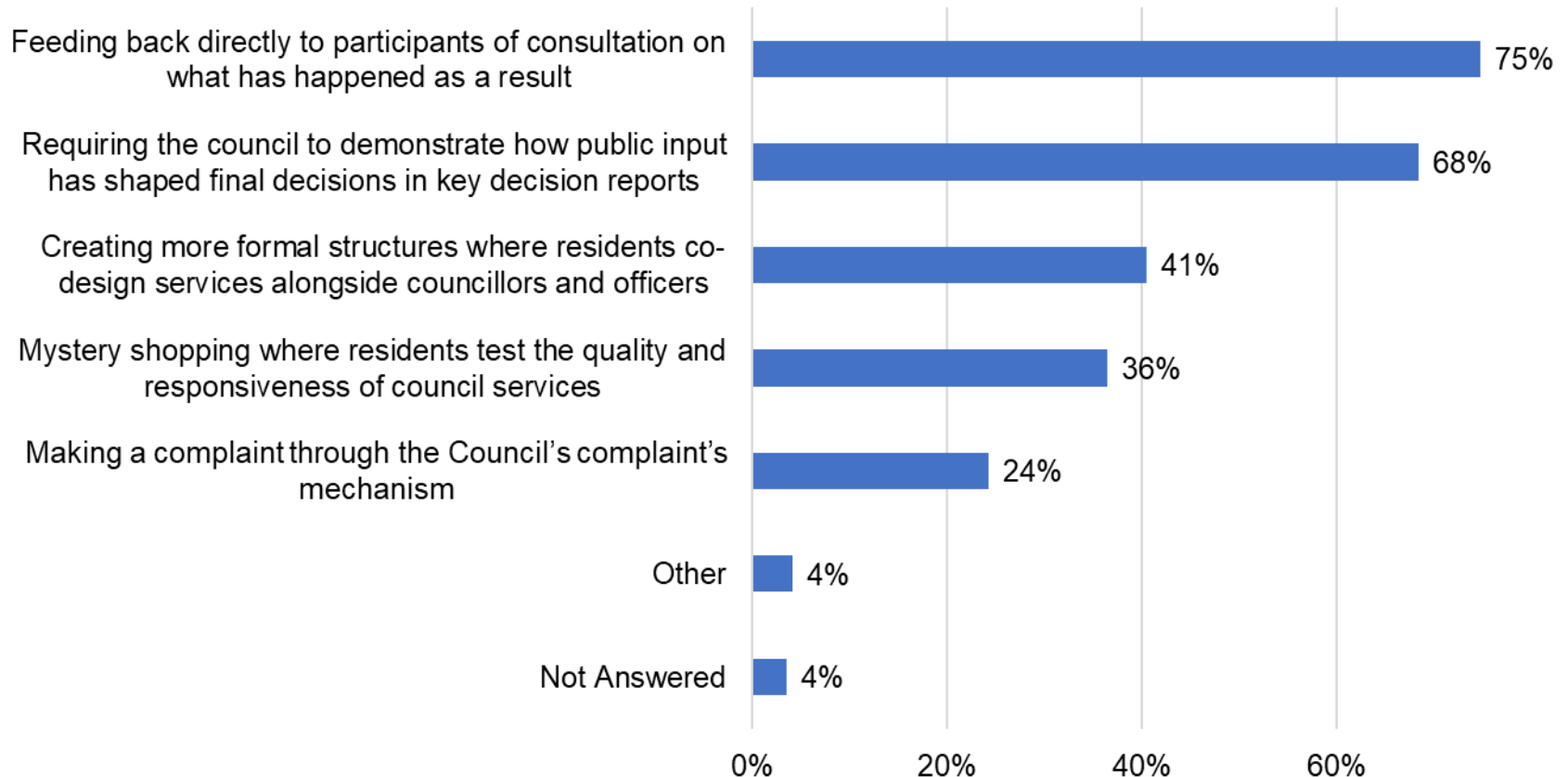
Lowest-ranked methods to monitor how well the Council is listening and involving residents:
- Making a complaint through the Council's complaints mechanism - The least selected method across all demographic groups, with no significant difference between most groups, although 30 per cent of ethnically diverse respondents selected it as a preferred method compared to 21 per cent of White respondents.
- Mystery shopping to test services - Again all demographic groups were in agreement that this as the second least most preferred method to monitor how well the council is listening however it was more favoured by those under 60 (46 per cent) than those 60 and over (29 per cent) and by ethnically diverse respondents (48 per cent) than White respondents (33 per cent).

Monitoring and reviewing

Monitoring and reviewing how well the Council is listening and involving residents

Category	Percentage
Feeding back directly to participants of consultation on what has happened as a result	75%
Requiring the council to demonstrate how public input has shaped final decisions in key decision reports	68%
Creating more formal structures where residents co-design services alongside councillors and officers	41%
Mystery shopping where residents test the quality and responsiveness of council services	36%
Making a complaint through the Council's complaint's mechanism	24%
Other	4%
Not Answered	4%

Base: 474 (all responses)

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Monitoring and reviewing

Demographic differences

Gender
The mechanism to monitor and review how well the Council is listening and involving residents with the biggest differences based on gender is feeding back directly to participants of consultation on what has happened as a result selected by 78 per cent of female respondents compared to 72 per cent of male respondents.

Age
Generally, those under 60 selected more monitoring and reviewing mechanisms than those 60 and over with the biggest differences being mystery shopping selected by 46 per cent of respondents aged under 60 compared with 29 per cent of respondents aged 60 and over.

Ethnicity
Generally, ethnically diverse respondents selected more monitoring and reviewing mechanisms than White respondents, the biggest difference is also around mystery shopping which was selected by 48 per cent of ethnically diverse respondents compared to 33 per cent of White respondents.

Location
Similarly to gender, the mechanism with the biggest difference is feeding back directly to participants of consultation on what has happened as a result selected by 72 per cent of respondents who live in the north of the borough, 77 per cent in the centre and 80 per cent in the south.

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Monitoring and reviewing

Respondents who said there were other appropriate mechanism for monitoring and reviewing how well the Council is listening and involving residents were given space to expand on this. A total of 41 people gave an answer, the comments made have been themed and are listed in the table below. Examples of the comments made can be found on the next page whilst the full list of comments is available in the appendix report.

Theme	Count
Accessible consultation activity	10
Transparency and independent verification	7
Feeding back directly to participants of consultation on what has happened as a result	6
Realtime updates and two-way communication	6
Other	4
Further comment on the complaints system	4
Officer culture change	3
Councillor involvement	2

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Monitoring and reviewing

"Transparency and accountability of the RBKC civil servants. I imagine that my responses will be deleted by them anyway, so no point. Still, hope springs eternal and all that. But pretty pointless, given that they are all little Sir Humphrey Applebys but without the education or intelligence, from what I have experienced."

Transparency and independent verification

"If consulting the public, Council employees should be knowledgeable about the area and the details and should be available at the advertised times."

Accessible consultation activity

"Maybe an end of year BRIEF report on what has been changed due to resident involvement, maybe the complaint system for this should end of year as well. I have often thought that there should be particular telephone number, or cheaper reporting system for each issue i.e. dog fouling, dog bites (I was bitten in a RBKC park in April 2025), noise nuisance, etc etc. This may be monitored by the on line reporting but I have given up reporting on line as it takes so much time and nothing is done."

Feeding back directly to participants of consultation on what has happened as a result
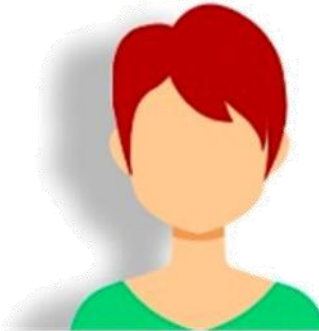
"Have a google review style anon dashboard to long list and search all complaints and queries on the dashboard to see qualitative data."

Realtime updates and two-way communication

"You can make a complaint but it is always ignored so I don't see the point in having a councils complaint service when the do not honour your complaint. It's a pointless waste of time. It's all a facade with RBKC."

Further comment on the complaints system

"Drop all work from home ensuring that residents can always meet council representatives face to face."

Officer culture change

"The Councillors have a responsibility to keep abreast of the strong feelings of local residents: they should be more active."

Councillor involvement

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One change

Respondents were invited to share one change they would like to see in how decisions are made in Kensington and Chelsea to make participation more meaningful. A total of 332 people provided responses. These comments have been grouped into key themes, which are summarised in the table below. Examples of individual comments are included on the next page, with the full list available in the final appendix report.

Theme	Count
Transparency, Accountability, and Trust in Council Decisions: Clear communication about decisions both good and bad, accountability for Council actions, responsiveness to issues, and trust-building through meaningful feedback and visible outcomes.	135
Inclusive and Early Public Engagement with Diverse, Accessible Methods: Involving a broad range of residents early and throughout decision-making using varied, user-friendly approaches including digital platforms and community spaces to ensure meaningful participation. Going for quality over quantity.	111
Local Representation and Democratic Participation: Decisions should be made by or closely involve local residents through active ward councillors, resident associations, citizen councils, and referendums to strengthen local democracy and authentic community input.	47
Criticism of Council Performance and Governance Failures: Highlights poor communication, lack of follow-through, disregard for public opinion, wasteful spending, enforcement failures, dissatisfaction with policies, and frustrations with external governance interference.	42
Fairness, Equality, and Practical Priorities in Decision-Making: Calls for borough-wide fairness by addressing unequal services, prioritising resident-driven needs, and grounding decisions in empathy, common sense, and realistic priorities rather than political agendas.	39
Uncertainty or Lack of Specific Suggestions: Some responses express uncertainty, lack of opinion, or no concrete ideas on how to improve participation meaningfully.	20
Better Community Coordination and Local Issue Resolution: Needs improved coordination between council, police, and local groups to tackle specific local problems and conduct targeted outreach on planning, safety, environment, and community wellbeing.	20
Safe, Non-Discriminatory, and Respectful Participation Environments: Emphasises that public spaces and participation processes must be safe, free from discrimination, protect vulnerable groups, and foster respectful, empathetic engagement.	6

One change

"Demonstrate to residents that voicing their views and concerns is both encouraged and taken seriously by examples where such input has made a difference. Most people do not believe that their input makes any difference to the policies and actions of the Council."

Transparency, Accountability, and Trust in Council Decisions

"Better communication and frequency around how decisions are being made - using more modern and dynamic methods including using social media more effectively."

Inclusive and Early Public Engagement with Diverse, Accessible Methods

"A process whereby council meetings are observed/monitored by not less than three local residents drawn from a panel on a rotating basis."

Local Representation and Democratic Participation

"Residents have almost no influence on decisions if opposed by business interests. The collusion of councillors with business leaders is both obvious and shocking."

Criticism of Council Performance and Governance Failures
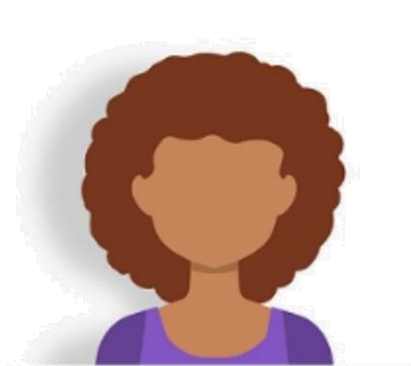
"Involve the elderly as well. Parents needs to be more aware of children behaviour in public
More info on children sports facilities available. Safe environment for the .
Published free schooling's facilities for adults. Example learning languages, Computer or exercises program."

Safe, Non-Discriminatory, and Respectful Participation Environments

"I would like to see a coordinated effort between police and neighbourhood groups to craft a plan to deal with the small issues which detract from common enjoyment of the borough. This is mainly irresponsible cyclists and scooters, on the pavement, running lights, generally not obeying traffic rules. It is increasingly troublesome for older residents like me."

Better Community Coordination and Local Issue Resolution

"To be paid or earn something while doing, after all your time and energy is involve and the officials are paid isn't it?"

Fairness, Equality, and Practical Priorities in Decision-Making
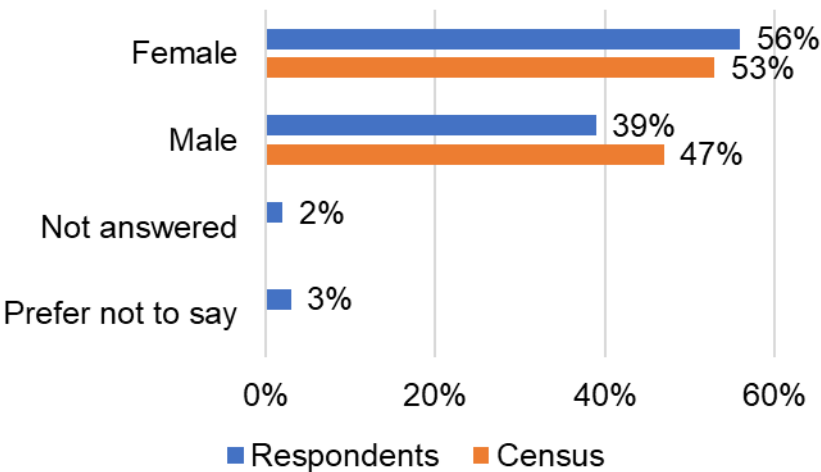
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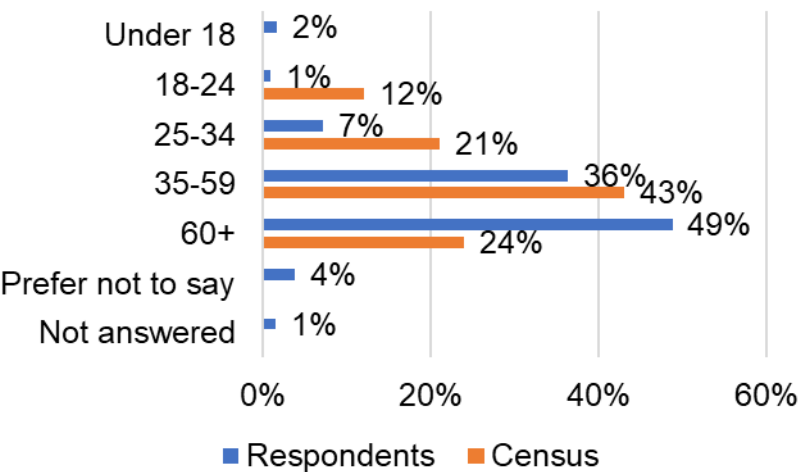KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Demographics of survey respondents

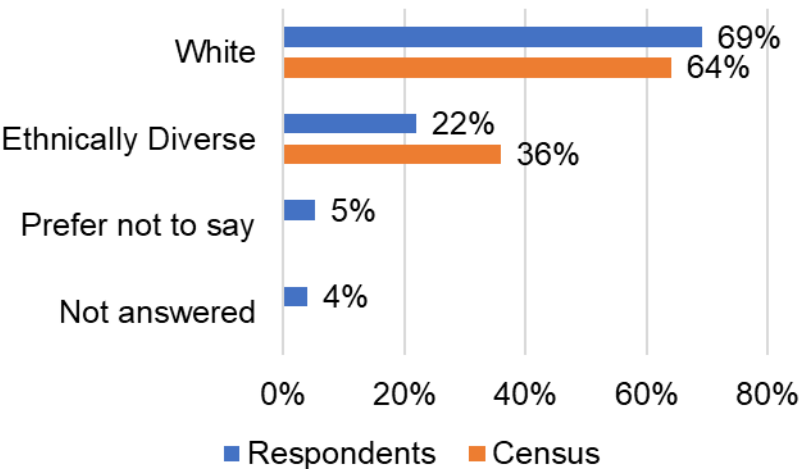# Demographic profile of respondents

Sex of respondents

	Respondents	Census
Female	56%	53%
Male	39%	47%
Not answered	2%	
Prefer not to say	3%	

Age range of respondents

	Respondents	Census
Under 18	2%	
18-24	1%	12%
25-34	7%	21%
35-59	36%	43%
60+	49%	24%
Prefer not to say	4%	
Not answered	1%	

Percentages for Census on age relate to those over 18

Ethnicity of respondents

	Respondents	Census
White	69%	64%
Ethnically Diverse	22%	36%
Prefer not to say	5%	
Not answered	4%	

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health issue or disability?

	Respondents	Census
No	74%	87%
Yes	18%	13%
Prefer not to state	5%	
Not Answered	3%	

Base: 474 (all responses)

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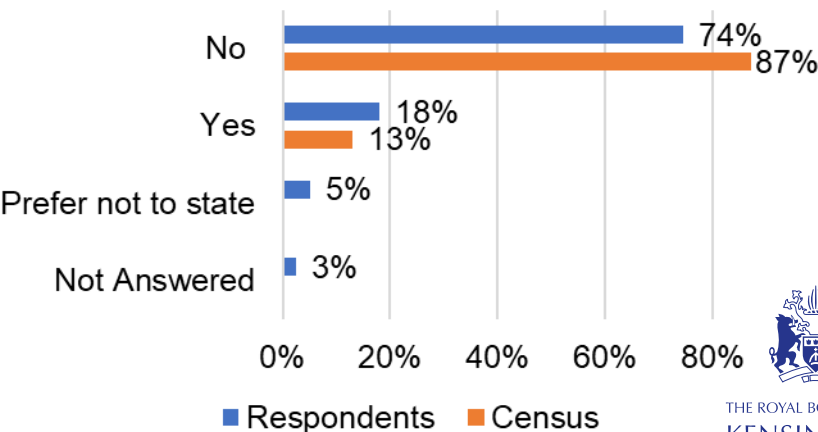
Demographic profile of respondents

Wards where respondents live

Ward	Respondents	Census
Abingdon	7%	6%
Brompton and Hans Town	3%	4%
Campden	6%	6%
Chelsea Riverside	6%	6%
Colville	5%	5%
Courtfield	3%	4%
Dalgarno	5%	7%
Earl's Court	5%	4%
Golborne	5%	6%
Holland	6%	6%
Norland	6%	6%
Notting Dale	7%	6%
Pembridge	6%	5%
Queen's Gate	4%	6%
Redcliffe	3%	6%
Royal Hospital	6%	5%
St Helen's	4%	6%
Stanley	7%	6%
Outside of the borough	2%	
Prefer not to say	0%	
Not answered	3%	

Base: 474 (all responses)

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In-person sessions

In-person sessions

In addition to the survey, since March of this year the Council have co-hosted – in partnership with the local voluntary and community sector - eight in-person sessions (three as part of the pre-engagement) in venues across the borough reaching 68 participants. The sessions were set up for lesser heard groups of people who live, work or study locally e.g. young people, ethnically diverse residents, those with disabilities and long-term health conditions, those who traditionally don't engage with the Council. Sessions were held with:

- Disabled adults - the Local Account Group and ADKC's Positive Rights Action Group;
- Ethnically diverse communities – Social Council's EDI thought leader's group;
- Young people – Youth Council new members; and
- Representatives of the voluntary sector at the Westway.

There was a general sense across the sessions that residents didn't feel as involved with Council decision-making as they could be and that the Council thinks it has a better understanding of its communities than it does. It was felt that the Council needed to get beyond those who were already engaged and needed to understand why some residents did not want to engage with them. It was emphasised that it was important for Council staff and Councillors to have a better understanding of the local area and the communities that live there.

A number of themes were regularly raised including:

- Accessibility and inclusion
- Trust and Council transparency
- A lack of follow up/feedback
- The need to value and recognise participation

The following slides summarise the key themes that emerged from the in-person sessions, whilst the full write ups of each meeting can be found in the appendices report.

How can we encourage greater levels of participation in the ways the Council involves residents?

The participants at the in-person sessions were asked how the Council could encourage greater levels of participation. The following are some of the key issues raised.

- **Accessibility and inclusion** - This was a recurring theme across the in-person sessions. it was felt that inclusion and accessibility were often an 'after-thought' for the Council, rather than engagements being designed to widen their reach. It was agreed that all involvement needs to be fully accessible and inclusive to involve those with a disability, those with translation and/or cultural needs, young people and those who are digitally excluded. The Council, therefore, needs to be more creative in how it involves residents with different needs, Suggestions included:

  - Ensuring all event venues are fully accessible.

  - Providing consultation material in easy read, Braille and translations in multiple languages.

  - Making engagements more bite sized and visual for those with neuro-divergency and other needs.

  - Making more use of social media and videos.

  - Ensuring meetings are hybrid and using Zoom rather than MS Teams as this is more widely used by community members.

  - Providing telephone support to residents to help them participate, e.g., to complete a survey.

  - Providing transport and childcare where necessary.

  - Seeking help from community groups to support participation

  - Giving adequate notice of meetings and offering them at different times convenient to residents.

  - Offering food and refreshment to attendees at participation events.

  - Recognise lack of digital literacy and access to smartphones, so not using digital as a default.

  - It was felt that the Charter needed to be more explicit in relation to equalities and accessible participation.

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How can we encourage greater levels of participation in the ways the Council involves residents?

- **Trust** - Trust (or the lack of it) was seen as a key issue – it was felt residents needed to feel more connected with the Council to re-build trust. It was also suggested that the level of service and response residents receive when they contact the Council in everyday life impacts on their levels of trust and desire to be involved – poor experiences could lead to residents feeling 'alienated' and not listened to. It was suggested that local organisations like ADKC could be used to be a 'trust hub' between residents and the Council as they are well respected and valued by residents. Another suggestion was having surgeries at the Town Hall where residents could drop-in and get their issues dealt with which could help build trust.

- **Council transparency** - Concern was raised that residents struggle to get through to the right people in the Council and that it is important for the Council to be transparent and for residents to have direct contact with decision-makers. Council bureaucracy was viewed as a 'blocker' to involvement and it was felt that transparency and direct contact could engender and build trust between residents and the Council. The Council needs to openly share information, explain their decisions and respond to public feedback, especially when changes cannot be made. Participants want the Council to be open about what can and can't be influenced when they participate, they talked about being treated as partners and the need for the Council to be honest with them. It is also important to include residents at an early planning stage of decision making.

- **Communication** – It was felt that staff need to be empathetic/understanding towards residents. There is a need to create space for residents to set the agenda and for more two-way communication – not just the Council asking about specific issues. There was some concern about residents often receiving last-minute invitations to participate or being unaware of events that are facilitated by the Council, which limits their ability to engage. Communication about when, how and why stakeholders should participate needs to better promoted. It was mentioned that if residents don't have clear information regarding accessibility, then they won't risk attending. It was also seen as important to give context/information when consulting so that stakeholders have enough information to helpfully contribute.

- **Working with local organisations** – As well as using local organisations as 'trust hubs' as suggested above, participants felt the Council should partner with local voluntary and community sector organisations to do outreach with seldom heard groups and help with translating materials or using their interpreters. Feedback could also then be provided through these organisations.

How can we encourage greater levels of participation in the ways the Council involves residents?

- **Advocacy** - It was recognised that not all residents have the confidence to become involved so access to some sort of advocacy could help residents have their say. It was also felt to be important that there was more signposting to what residents' rights are. It was also suggested that free training could be offered to help residents feel confident to share their views.

- **Recognising participation** – Participants emphasised the importance of valuing the skills, knowledge and lived experience of residents and stakeholders and the need to demonstrate that the time they give to participation is valued. This could include providing food/hospitality to participants, giving gift vouchers or payment, shadowing, mentoring or training opportunities and providing transport and childcare where necessary.

- **Lack of follow up/feedback** - The Council needs to ensure that there are regular updates on what happens as a result of involvement including direct feedback to those who had participated. When participants see the results of what they fed into it makes a big difference to morale and purpose. It was suggested that all consultations should be listed on the Council website with a You said, we did - this is already done through the Council's consultation hub so demonstrates participants' lack of awareness of this. These should be available in different languages/accessible formats and provide real examples of positive change/practical outcomes. Other suggestions included more face-to-face feedback and hosting thank you/celebration events for those whose involvement has led to change/Council achievements. When residents don't hear how their input has been used, they feel ignored and are less likely to participate again.

Participation methods

Feedback was also given on different participation methods and it was noted how important it was to involve residents and stakeholders early in a decision or at the planning stage whatever the methodology :

- **Co-production/design** - Real co-production involving both parties having a more equal power balance in deciding how a service or a meeting develops. The importance of both a uniform definition and Council approach to co-design/co-production, which would help residents to understand the Council's approach and participate was also recognised.

- **Outreach work** – It was felt that there needs to be less reliance on email/online and more face-to-face engagement. There needs to be much more outreach with staff and Councillors needing to get out of the Town Hall and talk directly to the community. It was felt that it was important for both staff and Councillors to have a better understanding of the local area and the people who live there, as well as being more visible within the borough. It was suggested they could go out into parks, community centres, warm hubs, GP surgeries, libraries etc. where people already gather and speak to them. Other suggestions were pop up events in markets or parks. Council officers should be going to more local groups and involving people where they tend to go. It was felt the Council needed to do the research and get to know groups/residents before they interact with them. It was discussed how we can offer home visits during engagements if people are digitally excluded.

- **Events/meetings** – Making meetings hybrid is viewed as good practice as it helps include residents with different health needs. Also, when hosting events consideration should be given to providing transport (as public transport in the borough is not accessible for many) and providing childcare where necessary.

- **Surveys** – It was felt residents need step by step guides on how to leave feedback in different ways and how to complete surveys. Multi-choice questions are good with a small space to add any additional feedback. It was also recognised that some residents may need support in having their answers to surveys/consultations being recorded for them, either by telephone or in person.

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Participation methods

Other suggestions included:

- Community Steering Boards set up before decisions are made, the Council was encouraged to look at best practice from elsewhere.

- Using trauma informed practice.

- Communication festivals could be held where the Council can feedback on change and residents get to have their say.

- Could have a voice message service/dedicated telephone number where residents could raise issues which the Council could then 'triage' and ensure that residents get a response.

- Hosting an open day in the town hall to enable residents to raise their issues and ensure something happens as a result.

- Investing time in relational informal activities like regular coffee catch ups to build relationships with local communities.

- Support was expressed for the Local Area Coordinator pilots and it was felt that these could be expanded to other areas and used to reach out to residents.

What one change would you like to see in the way decisions are made in the borough to make participation more meaningful?

Participants in the in-person sessions were asked what one change they would like to see in the way decisions are made in the borough to make participation more meaningful. The following were some of the suggestions:

- **Co-production –** Participants would like to see genuine and consistent co-production/design from the start of a change/process/decision. It was recognised that the journey is as important as the end product and would make participation more meaningful.

- **Transparency** - More transparency and honesty about decisions (there is a feeling that they are being made 'behind closed doors') and devolution of power to residents to participate in decisions.

- **Evidence** - Clearer evidence when decisions are reached about how residents have been involved.

- **Tokenism** - Less tokenism and more lived experience involved in decisions being made about disabled, ethnically diverse and young residents.

- **Accessibility** Access needs resourcing e.g. transport costs, care and support to assist on public transport.

- **Visibility** - Council presence in the community should be more visible and there should be more community facing teams to build trust and accessibility.

- **Outreach** - More visible, proactive outreach in communities on a regular basis.

- **Information** - More information about how residents and stakeholders on how they can get involved and what happens as a result

- **Accountability** - Residents should play a role in monitoring the Charter's accountability.

- **Curiosity** - Start participation with a curiosity and open mind about what the community's issues are, and allow them to determine the scope of consultations based on their priorities - otherwise it feels like a one-way conversation.

- **Celebrate** – Celebrate the community and voluntary sector and the important public participation role it plays for the Council with residents who won't speak to the Council.

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Suggestions for the revised Charter of Public Participation

Some further suggestions about the revised Charter for Public Participation were made by participants:

- It was felt that the Charter's audience should be all that live, work or study in Kensington and Chelsea not just those that currently reside in the borough.

- The question was raised about what the Council could do if they were not in charge of a service/process. It was felt that the Council should 'carry the message of the Charter' to other organisations such as the Police or NHS.

- Participants raised the importance of accountability and would like to see a framework and action plan to govern the Charter, how it is enforced, and regular reporting on progress. Participants wanted mechanisms to challenge the Council if the Charter hadn't been adequately followed.

- It was felt that it was important for all Council officers and Councillors to understand the Charter and ensure it is implemented.

- The Charter needs to be co-designed with the community

- A vision for the Charter is important, that details what the Charter is trying to address and achieve.

- The role of Councillors in consultation and engagement could be stronger within the document and particularly valuing the role of ward councillors in sharing residents' views and experiences. It was suggested to include the role of Councillors in the diagram of involvement.

- It was recognised that engagement in the borough was in the context of the perceived history of racial and social discrimination and, therefore, the Charter should proactively address this through engagement going forward.

Postcard feedback

Postcard feedback

We experimented with using 'trust question' postcards in this consultation to make it quicker and easier for residents to input to this consultation, rather than completing a survey or attending an in-person session. The postcards asked residents to give their thoughts on 'For residents to have more trust in the Council and feel listened to on the decisions that affect us, I would like to see…' and were widely distributed around the borough. Thirty five postcards were completed by residents. Whilst a number of people used the postcards to feed back on service such as youth clubs, clean streets, leisure facilities and traffic, others provided feedback on participation between the council and residents.

A table of all the feedback received can be found in the appendices report whilst a summary is provided below:

- Be clear about when and how decisions are being made.

- Allow time for residents to participate in consultations.

- Make engagements accessible for all ages.

- Demonstrate how residents' views have been taken into account – provide a 'You said, we did' after consultation.

- Work with local charities who have better reach with different communities.

- Attend more face to face meetings, including community events and having drop in sessions for residents, to build a stronger relationship with the community.

- Ensure residents concerns are visibly followed up on.

- Be honest with residents about what can and can't be changed.

- Ensure regular communication with Residents' Associations and help with funding to build their capacity.

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Staff feedback

Community of Practice – Staff feedback

A Community of Practice (COP) in-person event was held on 20 April with over 60 members of Council staff in attendance to focus on the review of the Charter.

This involved some introductory questions (results of which can be found below) and discussion groups.

Staff were divided into two groups and were asked for feedback on how the Council can encourage participation. The two facilitation methods used were:

- Fishbowl technique – a facilitated session where a small group ('the fishbowl') engages in a conversation while a larger group observes from the outside. Participants can take their place in their fishbowl as and when.

- Appreciative inquiry – a discussion based on a strengths-based approach focussing on what is working well and building on those to create positive change.

How can we improve engagement with residents

- It was felt that the Council needs to have a genuine interest in residents' views and needs to ensure that their participation makes a difference, including on Council decisions. This needs to be communicated to those who have participated and to residents in general. Residents need to be involved at early stage rather than asking their views on already developed ideas. Examples of good practice included Residents' Panels to design a process/service from start to finish – giving residents real ownership, Tenants' Consultative Committee, Grenfell Projects Fund, having residents on interview panels and Future Neighbourhoods. It was recognised that good participation takes time and planning. It was also recognised there was a need for senior manager and Councillor buy in to promote good participation.

- The importance of feeding back to residents after participation and demonstrating where their feedback has made a difference was recognised by staff.

Community of Practice – Staff feedback

Engagement methodologies

- Teams around the Council need to be more aware of engagement options open to them, there tends to be an over-reliance on surveys. It was felt there needs to be a recognition that 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to participation, services need to get to know their target audience and design the appropriate engagement. The use of stakeholder mapping should be used. It was felt services needed to engage more with vulnerable residents and that they should recognise residents' 'lived experience'. It was also recognised that residents need to be given space to share their personal issues/casework before they can effectively participate in a consultation.

- It was felt there could be more outreach work by staff going into the community, as well as hosting 'fundays' or roadshows where staff are available and in direct contact with residents.

Making participation accessible

- It was felt that the resources used during consultation/engagement needs to be made as accessible as possible. It was also suggested it could be more creative e.g. easy read, use of visual resources like videos. The use of Council language/jargon was viewed by some as a barrier.

- It was also recognised that some residents don't have the confidence to participated and it was suggested the Council could provide training and support to residents on how to participate.

Joined up working

- It was recognised that there is a need a more joined up approach by services and that officers could work with those who already have the relationships and contacts in the community. It was also felt the Council should look to the skill set of staff and utilise these for participation. It was recognised that there was a need for staff to be empathetic and there could be staff training needs including around emotional intelligence and conflict resolution.

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Community of Practice – Staff feedback

Trust and building relationships with residents

- It was recognised that trust was a key issue for residents and the Council needed to work to establish this. Developing good relationships with residents is key (and should be on an ongoing basis). Council officers need to take the time to get to know their communities and be transparent and honest about what the Council can and can't do which helps to bold the trust.

- It was suggested the Council needs to work closely with grassroots organisations as they have access to people that we don't. They could then act as 'ambassadors'. Having a rapport with these organisations would help the Council reach a wider audience and help address trust issues felt by residents.

- The Council also needs to show residents and others that they value their participation and appreciate the time they give by incentivising their participation and/or having thank you community events.

Embedding the Charter

- There was a recognition that the Charter needs to be embedded in the organisational culture and that all staff needed to be aware of it and working towards it. There needs to be a consistent approach to raising awareness of the Charter and this should form part of the induction/onboarding of new staff with workshops/training for exiting staff.
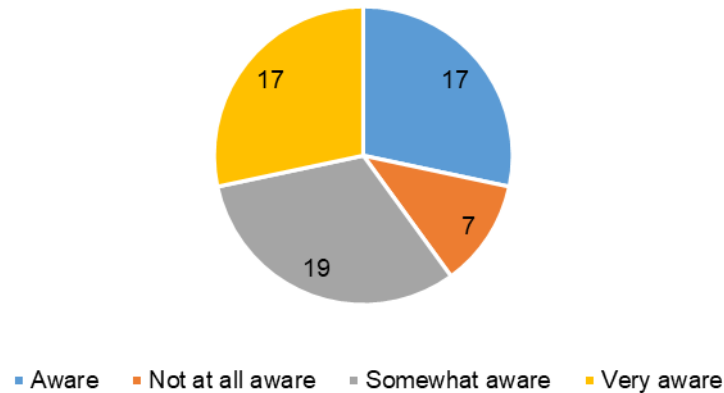
Community of Practice – online poll

We asked three questions about the Charter's principles. Sixty officers in total cast their votes live through an online platform.
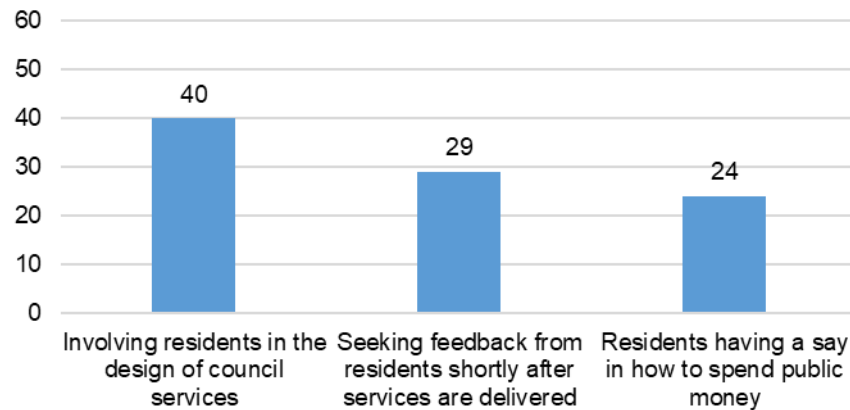
Awareness of the Charter

Before this meeting, how aware were you of the Charter of Public Participation?

- Aware
- Not at all aware
- Somewhat aware
- Very aware

Community of Practice – online poll

Which of the following approaches do you think would be most effective in giving local people a stronger voice in local decision-making? (choose 3)

What mechanisms should be in place to ensure the council is accountable for listening and involving residents? (choose 3)

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